

As you will be well aware, the situation around the Coronavirus pandemic is continuing to evolve, with guidance changing on a daily basis. We understand that this may be a time of some concern for everyone, so we wanted to write to all payroll clients to try to confirm the current situation with regards to sick leave and pay. We hope that this may give employers, and their staff, some small reassurance at this potentially difficult time.

Sick Leave & Self-Isolation

The advice regarding who should “self-isolate” continues to change on a daily basis. Anyone who thinks they may have symptoms of the virus, or has come into contact with someone known to have the virus, should check the most up to date NHS and government guidance on the actions they should take. Some useful contacts can be found on the reverse of this newsletter.

If any employees are required to self-isolate and/or do contract Coronavirus, they will be able to take sick leave, as instructed by current advice. They may not necessarily need to provide employers with a GP/hospital sick line to prove this.

Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid to employees who contract Coronavirus and/or have to self-isolate as a precautionary measure. SSP has also been extended to be paid from day 1 of absence (rather than being paid from day 4, as is usual). Employers will be reimbursed for the cost of paying SSP for Coronavirus related absences (up to 14 days per employee).

SSP is currently paid at a rate of £94.25 per week (£95.85 per week from April 2020). Employees can choose to “top-up” sick pay by using some of their annual leave allowance, if they wish to.

To qualify for SSP, employees need to meet the eligibility criteria i.e. earning at least £118 per week (£120 per week from April 2020).

Alternatives to SSP

Those who do not earn enough to receive SSP from their employer may be able to claim appropriate benefits directly from DWP. As set out in the UK Budget earlier this month, the requirements for Universal Credit are to be temporarily relaxed for claims related to Coronavirus, and you may not be required to attend appointments related to this if you are required to self-isolate.

Employees in this situation should contact DWP directly for guidance and details on how to make a claim. Please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>



All information contained in this newsletter is provided in good faith and is up to date as of the date of writing.

However, as this is a continually evolving situation it is worth keeping up to date with new information as it becomes available. The following are good sources of up to date, reputable, information:

	<p><u>NHS Inform</u> Access to information from NHS Scotland – this will give ongoing, up to date, advice and guidance on when to self-isolate, if/when you need to see your GP, etc. www.nhsinform.scot www.facebook.com/NHS24 General Coronavirus information: 0800 028 2816 Call NHS24 on: 111 (medical queries)</p>
	<p><u>ACAS</u> ACAS provide workplace advice for employers and employees – they are regularly updating their advice as circumstances around Coronavirus evolve. www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus www.facebook.com/acasorguk/</p>
	<p><u>The Scottish Government</u> The Scottish Government have set up a separate webpage for information on Coronavirus. This includes their ongoing strategy, testing, travel advice, etc. www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/ www.facebook.com/TheScottishGovernment/ <u>Local Authorities and Government Organisations</u> We would also encourage all clients to keep up to date with their own local authority's advice and guidance. Contact details for all council areas can be found here: www.mygov.scot/organisations/</p>
 	<p><u>Employer Liability Insurance providers</u> It is likely that employer liability insurance providers will provide some guidance regarding Coronavirus, and insurers usually provide an employer advice phonenumber which will be of use for general employment law guidance and information. Please refer to your policy documents for your insurer's contact details.</p>
	<p><u>Quill Accounts</u> We will continue to update our clients on any relevant information as and when it becomes available. www.quillaccounts.co.uk/ www.facebook.com/quillaccounts Tel: 01337 827017 info@quillaccounts.co.uk</p>

