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| **GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON CHANGES TO TREATMENT OF**  **SICK LEAVE FOLLOWING PREGNANCY-RELATED SICK LEAVE** |

1. **Introduction**

The purpose of this Guidance Document is to assist HR practitioners in the Public Service to apply the changes that are being made in relation to the treatment of sick leave following pregnancy-related sick leave (PRSL) under the Public Service Sick Leave Regulations.

1. **Changes**

Two additional provisions are being included in the Public Service Sick Leave Regulations. Full details are provided in **section 6 and 7** below but, in general, they provide for the following:

1. **Transitional Arrangement:** Discount PRSL taken prior to the Scheme for sick leave taken under the new Scheme.
2. **Ongoing Arrangement:** all PRSL will be credited back to public servants at the half rate of pay within the normal sick leave limits.
3. **Rationale for the Changes**

The Public Service Sick Leave Scheme currently provides that PRSL taken at the half rate of pay will not count towards sick leave limits. In certain parts of the Public Service (mainly the Education sector) sick leave at the half rate of pay was not available in previous sick leave schemes. This meant that any PRSL on full pay taken prior to the introduction of the Sick Leave Regulations would count towards sick leave limits and could result in a public servant exhausting paid sick leave due to a pregnancy related illness. Following consideration of this issue, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform decided to allow for additional provisions in relation to sick leave following PRSL. The new provisions are more beneficial than the current provision and go beyond the minimum legal requirements as set out in the European Court of Justice ruling in *North Western Health Board v McKenna* C-191/03 (2005).

1. **Effective Date**

The changes are being brought in by administrative arrangement with effect from the commencement of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme (i.e. ***31st March 2014*** for the majority of the Public Service and ***1st September 2014*** for the Education Sector) and will be reflected in amended Public Service Sick Leave Regulations in due course. These changes will apply to public servants covered by the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme.

Please refer to the examples provided at Appendix 1 when reading this document which will assist in the practical application of the revised arrangements.

**5. Treatment of PRSL [No change to existing provision]:**

The Sick Leave Regulations currently provide that where a public servant takes PRSL and exhausts their access to paid sick leave, they will have access to sick leave at the half rate of pay for the duration of their pregnancy-related illness (Regulation 19). It should be noted that there are no changes being made to this provision.

**5.1 Application**

In practical terms, this means that:

* where a public servant takes PRSL under the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme; and
* the public servant exhausts their access to paid sick leave (i.e. 183 days over 4 years/365 days over 4 years) either before or during their PRSL,
* they will have access to extended PRSL at the half rate of pay for the duration of their pregnancy-related illness.

This extended PRSL at the half rate of pay will not count towards sick leave limits.

See example 1 in Appendix 1.

**6. Treatment of Non-PRSL – Transitional Arrangement:**

The following transitional arrangement will apply to public servants covered by the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme:

***Discount all PRSL that occurred before the introduction of the new Public Service Sick Leave Scheme for the purpose of calculating access to paid sick leave under the Scheme.***

The transitional arrangement is time-limited and will become less relevant as time moves on as PRSL that occurred prior to the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme begins to drop off 4-year sick leave records.

**6.1 Application**

In practical terms, this means that where a public servant takes non-PRSL under the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme, the following will apply:

**4 year look back:** Access to paid sick leave will continue to be calculated by reference to a public servant’s 4-year sick leave record but will exclude any PRSL taken ***prior to*** the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme (i.e. before 31st March 2014 for the majority of the Public Service and before 1st September 2014 for the Education Sector); and

**1 year look back:** The rate of sick pay will continue to be calculated by reference to a public servant’s 1-year sick leave record but will exclude any PRSL taken prior to the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme (i.e. before 31st March 2014 for the majority of the Public Service and 1st September 2014 for the Education Sector).

See examples 2 to 7 in Appendix 1.

**7. Treatment of Non-PRSL – Ongoing Arrangement**:

The following arrangement is being introduced for public servants as an ongoing provision under the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme:

***A public servant who has exhausted their access to paid sick leave due to PRSL in the previous 4 years may have access to additional non PRSL at the half rate of pay. The number of additional days allowed:***

* + ***will be the equivalent number of days taken on PRSL in the 4 years;***
  + ***must not exceed normal sick leave limits (e.g. 183 days) for non PRSL (when counted with other non PRSL in the previous 4 years).***

This arrangement applies to both PRSL in the previous 4 years paid at the full and half rate of pay.

**7.1 Application**

In practical terms, where a public servant takes non-PRSL following PRSL under the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme, the following process will apply:

* Where a public servant has exhausted their access to paid sick leave (i.e. 183 days for ordinary illness/365 days for critical illness), their 4-year sick leave record should be examined to determine whether there is any PRSL that occurred ***on or after*** the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme. If there has been any such PRSL, the public servant may have access to additional sick leave at half pay. The access to additional sick leave will be equivalent number of days taken on PRSL in the 4 years as long as it does not exceed normal limits for non-PRSL.

For example, a public servant’s 4-year sick leave record indicates that they have taken 200 days of sick leave and that 50 of these were for PRSL. As the public servant has exhausted their access to paid sick leave and their PRSL occurred after the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme, they will have access to additional sick leave at half pay. As they has already taken 150 days of non-PRSL, they will have access to a maximum of 33 days of additional sick leave at half pay because this will bring their up to their non-PRSL limit (i.e. 150 + 33 = 183 day non-PRSL limit).

* If the public servant has already been credited with a certain number of additional non-PRSL days at half pay due to this ongoing arrangement, these days count towards the normal limits.

For example, using the case above if the public servant had already been credited with 13 days of additional sick leave at half pay, they would have taken 163 days of non-PRSL (i.e. 150 + 13) and had access to a maximum of 20 days of additional sick leave at half pay as this would have brought their up to their non-PRSL limit (i.e. 163 + 20 = 183 day non-PRSL limit).

See examples 8 to 15 in Appendix 1.

**8. Treatment of Non-PRSL – Transitional Arrangement and Ongoing Arrangement**

Where a public servant has taken PRSL both ***prior to*** and ***on or after*** the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme, it may be necessary to apply both the transitional arrangement and the ongoing arrangement.

**8.1 Application**

In practical terms, where a public servant has taken PRSL both prior to and on or after the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme:

* The transitional arrangement should be applied in the normal way to exclude any PRSL that occurred ***prior to*** the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme from the 4-year and 1-year sick leave records.
* If, having applied the transitional arrangement, the 4-year record continues to exceed the paid sick leave limit (i.e. 183 days over 4 years/365 days over 4 years), the ongoing arrangement should be applied in the normal way in respect of any PRSL that occurred ***on or after*** the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme.
* If, having applied the transitional arrangement, the 4-year record no longer exceeds the paid sick leave limit (i.e. 183 days over 4 years/365 days over 4 years), the ongoing arrangement is not required. Access to and the rate of paid sick leave should be calculated in the normal way by reference to the 4-year and 1-year sick leave records.

See examples 16 and 18 in Appendix 1.

**9. Cases already processed affected by these changes**

There may be a number of sick leave cases already processed since the commencement of the new Scheme that may be affected by these changes. However, the number of cases are limited and should be identifiable as follows:

1. **Transitional Arrangement:**

Public servants who took:

* PRSL prior to the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme; and
* sick leave on or after the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme which was pay-affected due to the previous PRSL. (e.g. transitioned to half pay/ TRR/ off pay since the introduction of the new Scheme due to PRSL on their record ).

1. **Ongoing Arrangement**:

Public servants who took:

* PRSL on or after the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme; and
* sick leave on or after the introduction of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme where they were taken off pay to the previous PRSL (e.g. transitioned to TRR/ off pay due to PRSL on their record ).

When such cases are identified, it may be necessary to review cases in order to revise the sick leave calculations, adjust the sick leave record and restore pay, if appropriate.

**APPENDIX 1 – EXAMPLES**

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| 1. **Treatment of PRSL [Existing Provision – No change]** | | |
|  | **Record** | **Calculation** |
| **1.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 80 * *PRSL Extension (Regulation 19):* *40\** * Total: 120   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 80 at full pay * Total: 80 at full pay | **Access (4-year record)**   * Sick Leave Total (120 – 40\*) 80 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 limit – 80) 103   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Non PRSL Total: 80 full pay * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max – 80 Non-PRSL): 12 full pay * Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 103 Access - 12 Full Pay): 91 half pay   **Potential Access: 12 days at full pay and 91 days at half pay** |

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| 1. **Treatment of Non-PRSL – New Transitional Arrangement** | | |
|  | **Record** | **Calculation** |
| **2.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 132 * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 61\*\* * Total: 193   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 0 full pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 0 full pay * Total: 0 full pay | **Access (4-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 193 Total - 61 PRSL): 132 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 132 Non-PRSL): 51   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total: 0 full pay * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max): 51 full pay * Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 51 Access - 51 Full Pay): 0 half pay   **Potential Access: 51 days at full pay** |
| **3.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 60 * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 30\*\* * Total: 90     **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 0 full pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 30 full pay\*\* * Total: 30 full pay | **Access (4-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 90 Total - 30 PRSL): 60 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 60 Non-PRSL): 123   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 30 Total - 30 PRSL): 0 full pay * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max): 92 full pay * Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 123 Access – 92 Full Pay): 31 half pay   **Potential Access: 92 days at full pay and 31 days at half pay** |
| **4.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 160 * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 90 \*\* * Total: 250   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 80 full pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 90 full pay\*\* * Total: 170 full pay | **Access (4-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 250 Total - 90 PRSL): 160 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 160 Non-PRSL): 23   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 170 Total - 90 PRSL): 80 full pay * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 Limit – 80 Non-PRSL): 12 full pay * Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 23 Access - 12 Full Pay): 11 half pay   **Potential Access: 12 days at full pay and 11 days at half pay** |

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|  | **Record** | **Calculation** |
| **5.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 0 * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 31\*\* * *Pre-Scheme PRSL Extension (Reg 19): 28\** * Total: 31   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 0 full pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 31 full pay\*\* * Total Full Pay: 31 full pay | **Access (4-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 31 Total - 31 PRSL): 0 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit – 0 Non-PRSL): 183   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 31 Total - 31 PRSL): 0 * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max): 92 full pay * Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 183 Access - 92 Full Pay): 91 half pay   **Potential Access: 92 days at full pay and 91 days at half pay** |
| **6.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 30 * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 31\*\* * *Pre-Scheme PRSL Extension (Reg 19): 28\** * Total: 61   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 30 full pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 31 full pay\*\* * Total Full Pay: 61 full pay | **Access (4-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 61 Total - 31 PRSL): 30 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 30 Non-PRSL): 153   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 61 Total - 31 PRSL): 30 full pay * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 Limit - 30 Non-PRSL): 62 full pay * Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 153 Access - 62 Full Pay): 91 half pay   **Potential Access: 62 days at full pay and 91 days at half pay** |
| **7.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 320 * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 90\*\* * Total: 410   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 80 full pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 90 full pay\*\* * Total: 170 full pay | **Access (4-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 410 Total - 90 PRSL): 320 * Potential Access (i.e. 365 CIP Limit - 320 Non-PRSL): 45   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 170 Total - 90 PRSL): 80 full pay * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 183 CIP Limit - 80 Non-PRSL): 103 full pay   **Potential Access: 45 days at full pay** |

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| **C. Treatment of Non-PRSL – New Ongoing Arrangement** | | | |
|  | **Record** | | **Calculation** |
| **8.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 0 full pay * Non-PRSL: 0 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 92 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 91 half pay * Total: 183 (equals limit)   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 183 * PRSL Total: 183 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 183 Total - 183 PRSL): 0   **Potential Access: 183 days at half pay** |
| **9.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 80 full pay * Non-PRSL: 0 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 52 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 58 half pay * Total: 190 (exceeds limit)   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 190 * PRSL Total: 110 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 190 Total - 110 PRSL): 80 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 limit - 80 Non-PRSL): 103 half pay   **Potential Access: 103 days at half pay** |
| **10.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 0 full pay * Non-PRSL: 0 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 92 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 91 half pay * *Post-Scheme PRSL Extension (Reg 19): 30 half pay\** * Total: 183 (equals limit)   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 183 * PRSL Total: 183 * Non-PRSL Total: 0 * Potential Access (183 days before reaching normal limit) 183 half pay   **Potential Access: 183 days at half pay** | |

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|  | **Record** | **Calculation** |
| **11.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 110 full pay * Non-PRSL: 0 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 73 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 0 half pay * *Post-Scheme PRSL Extension (Reg 19): 30 half pay\** * Total: 183 (equals limit)   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 183 * PRSL Total: 73 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 183 Total – 73 PRSL): 110 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 110 Non-PRSL):: 73   **Potential Access: 73 days at half pay** |
| **12.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 110 full pay * Non-PRSL: 0 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 150 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 0 half pay * Total: 260 (exceeds limit)   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 260 * PRSL Total: 150 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 260 Total – 150 PRSL): 110 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 110 Non-PRSL): 73   **Potential Access: 73 days at half pay** |
| **13.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 183 full pay * Non-PRSL: 67 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 80 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 0 half pay * Total: 330 (exceeds limit)   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 330 * PRSL Total: 80 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 330 Total – 80 PRSL): 250 * Potential Access (250 exceeds 183 limit): 0   **Potential Access: 0 days** |

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|  | **Record** | **Calculation** |
| **14.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 0 full pay * Non-PRSL: 0 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 92 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 91 half pay * Non-PRSL Extension (Reg 20) 30 half pay * Total: 213 (exceeds limit)   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 213 * PRSL Total: 183 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 213 Total – 183 PRSL): 30 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 30 Non-PRSL): 153   **Potential Access: 153 days at half pay** |
| **15.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 31 full pay * Non-PRSL: 149 half pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 152 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 58 half pay * Total: 390   **1-year sick leave record:** Not relevant as additional leave only paid at half rate | **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total: 390 * PRSL Total: 210 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 390 Total - 210 PRSL): 180 * Potential Access (i.e. 365 CIP Limit - 180 Non-PRSL): 185 half pay   **Potential Access: 185 days at half pay** |

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| 1. **New Transitional and Ongoing Arrangements Applied** | | |
|  | **Record** | **Calculation** |
| **16.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 12 full pay * Non-PRSL: 48 half pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 50 full pay\*\* * Post-Scheme PRSL: 30 full pay * Total: 140   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 12 full pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 50 full pay\*\* * Post-Scheme PRSL: 30 full pay * Total Full Pay: 92 full pay | *Transitional Arrangement applies to pre-Scheme PRSL.*  **Access (4-year record):**   * New Sick Leave Total (i.e. 140 Total discount 50 Pre-Scheme PRSL) 90 * Note: Sick Leave Total (i.e. 90 days) still includes 30 days of post-Scheme PRSL   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total (i.e. 92 Full Pay - 50 Pre-Scheme PRSL) 42 * Note: Sick Leave Total (i.e. 42 days) still includes 30 days of post-Scheme PRSL   *New Ongoing Arrangement doesn’t apply as new 4-year sick leave total is below 183. Access to and rate of paid sick leave calculated in the normal way.*  **Access (4-year record):**   * New Total (i.e. 140 Total discount 50 Pre-Scheme PRSL): 90 * Remaining Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 90 Taken): 93   **Rate (1-year record):**   * Total (i.e. 12 Non-PRSL at full pay + 30 Post-Scheme PRSL at full pay): 42 full pay * Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 Limit - 42 Taken): 50 full pay * Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 93 Access – 50 Full Pay): 43 half pay   **Potential Access: 50 days at full pay and 43 days at half pay** |

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|  | **Record** | **Calculation** |
| **17.** | **4-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 102 full pay * Non-PRSL: 40 half pay * Pre-Scheme PRSL: 40 full pay\*\* * Post-Scheme PRSL: 60 full pay * Total: 242   **1-year sick leave record:**   * Non-PRSL: 102 full pay * Post-Scheme PRSL: 60 full pay * Total Full Pay: 162 full pay | *Transitional Arrangement applies to pre-Scheme PRSL.*  **Access (4-year record):**   * New Sick Leave Total (i.e. 242 Total - 40 Pre-Scheme PRSL) 202 * Note: Sick Leave Total (i.e. 202 days) still includes 60 days of post-Scheme PRSL   **Rate (1-year record):**   * No pre-Scheme PRSL in 1-year record.   *New Ongoing Provision applies as new 4-year sick leave total exceeds 183.*  **Access (4-year record):**   * Sick Leave Total exceeds 183 limit: 202 * Post-Scheme PRSL Total: 60 * Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 202 Total – 60 PRSL): 142 * Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 142 Non-PRSL): 41   **Potential Access: 41 days at half pay** |