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.

2. Changes

Two additional provisions are being included in the Public Service Sick Leave Regulations. Full details are provided in <u>section 6 and 7</u> 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).

4. 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. **31**st **March 2014** for the majority of the Public Service and **1**st **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). <u>It should be noted</u> 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* <u>and</u> *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:

(i) 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).

(ii) 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

	Record		Calculation	
L.	4-year sick leave record:		Access (4-year record)	
	- Non-PRSL:	80	- Sick Leave Total (120 – 40*)	80
	- PRSL Extension (Regulation 19):	40*	- Potential Access (i.e. 183 limit – 80)	103
	- Total:	120		
			Rate (1-year record):	
	1-year sick leave record:		- Non PRSL Total:	80 full pay
	- Non-PRSL:	80 at full pay	- Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max – 80 Non-PRSL):	12 full pay
	- Total:	80 at 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 pa	ay

	Record		Calculation	
2.	4-year sick leave recor	d:	Access (4-year record):	
	- Non-PRSL:	132	- Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 193 Total - 61 PRSL):	132
	- Pre-Scheme PRSL:	61**	- Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 132 Non-PRSL):	51
	- Total:	193		
			Rate (1-year record):	
	1-year sick leave record	d:	- Non-PRSL Total:	0 full pay
	- Non-PRSL:	0 full pay	- Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max):	51 full pay
	- Pre-Scheme PRSL:		 Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 51 Access - 51 Full Pay): 	0 half pay
	- Total:	0 full pay		
_			Potential Access: 51 days at full pay	
3.	4-year sick leave record		Access (4-year record):	<u> </u>
	- Non-PRSL:	60	- Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 90 Total - 30 PRSL):	60
	- <u>Pre-Scheme PRSL:</u>		- Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 60 Non-PRSL):	123
	- Total:	90	Rate (1-year record):	
			- Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 30 Total - 30 PRSL):	0 full pay
	1-year sick leave record		 Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max): 	92 full pay
	- Non-PRSL:	0 full pay	 Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 max). Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 123 Access – 92 Full Pay): 	31 half pay
	- Pre-Scheme PRSL:		- Remaining Hall Pay (i.e. 125 Access – 92 Full Pay).	ST Hall bay
	- Total:	30 full pay	Potential Access: 92 days at full pay and 31 days at ha	lf pav
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4.	4-year sick leave record		Access (4-year record):	4.60
	- Non-PRSL:	160	- Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 250 Total - 90 PRSL):	160
	- <u>Pre-Scheme PRSL:</u>		- Potential Access (i.e. 183 Limit - 160 Non-PRSL):	23
	- Total:	250	Rate (1-year record):	
			- Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 170 Total - 90 PRSL):	80 full pay
	1-year sick leave record		 Remaining Full Pay (i.e. 92 Limit – 80 Non-PRSL): 	12 full pay
	- Non-PRSL:	80 full pay	c , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	
	- Pre-Scheme PRSL:		- Remaining Half Pay (i.e. 23 Access - 12 Full Pay):	11 half pay
	- Total:	170 full pay	Potential Access: 12 days at full pay and 11 days at ha	lf pav

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

	Record		Calculation	
8.	-Non-PRSL:0 has-Post-Scheme PRSL:92 has-Post-Scheme PRSL:91 has	ll pay alf pay full pay <u>half pay</u> (equals limit) ditional leave only paid	 Access (4-year record): Sick Leave Total: PRSL Total: Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 183 Total - 183 PRSL): Potential Access: 183 days at half pay 	183 183 0
9.	4-year sick leave record:-Non-PRSL:80 f-Non-PRSL:0 h-Post-Scheme PRSL:52 f-Post-Scheme PRSL:58 f	ull pay alf pay ull pay <u>half pay</u> (exceeds limit) ditional leave only paid	 Access (4-year record): Sick Leave Total: PRSL Total: Non-PRSL Total (i.e. 190 Total - 110 PRSL): Potential Access (i.e. 183 limit - 80 Non-PRSL): Potential Access: 103 days at half pay	190 110 80 103 half pay
10.	 4-year sick leave record: Non-PRSL: Post-Scheme PRSL: Post-Scheme PRSL: Post-Scheme PRSL Extension (Reg 19): Total: 1-year sick leave record: Not relevant as ac at half rate 	0 full pay 0 half pay 92 full pay 91 half pay <u>30 half pay*</u> 183 (equals limit) ditional leave only paid	 Access (4-year record): Sick Leave Total: PRSL Total: Non-PRSL Total: Potential Access (183 days before reaching normal limit) Potential Access: 183 days at half pay	183 183 0 183 half pay

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

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

	Record		Calculation	
L 6.	4-year sick leave record:		Transitional Arrangement applies to pre-Scheme PRSL.	
	- Non-PRSL:	12 full pay		
	- Non-PRSL:	48 half pay	Access (4-year record):	
	- Pre-Scheme PRSL:	50 full pay**	- New Sick Leave Total (i.e. 140 Total discount 50 Pre-Schem	ne PRSL) 90
	- Post-Scheme PRSL:	30 full pay	- <u>Note:</u> Sick Leave Total (i.e. 90 days) still includes 30 days o	f post-Scheme PRSL
	- Total:	140		
			Rate (1-year record):	
	1-year sick leave record:		- Sick Leave Total (i.e. 92 Full Pay - 50 Pre-Scheme PRSL)	42
	- Non-PRSL:	12 full pay	- Note: Sick Leave Total (i.e. 42 days) still includes 30 days o	f post-Scheme PRSL
	- Pre-Scheme PRSL:	50 full pay**		
	- Post-Scheme PRSL:	<u>30 full pay</u>		
	- Total Full Pay:	92 full pay	New Ongoing Arrangement doesn't apply as new 4-year sick le	ave total is below 18
			Access to and rate of paid sick leave calculated in the normal w	vay.
			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 a	at full pay): 42 full pa
			- 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	

	Record		Calculation	
17.	4-year sick leave record:		Transitional Arrangement applies to pre-Scheme PRSL.	
	- Non-PRSL:	102 full pay		
	- Non-PRSL:	40 half pay	Access (4-year record):	
	- Pre-Scheme PRSL:	40 full pay**	- New Sick Leave Total (i.e. 242 Total - 40 Pre-Scheme PRSL) 202	
	- Post-Scheme PRSL:	60 full pay	- Note: Sick Leave Total (i.e. 202 days) still includes 60 days of post-Schem	ne
	- Total:	242	PRSL	
	1-year sick leave record:		Rate (1-year record):	
	- Non-PRSL:	102 full pay	- No pre-Scheme PRSL in 1-year record.	
	- Post-Scheme PRSL:	60 full pay		
	- Total Full Pay:	162 full pay	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	