



**Príomhoifigeach Daoine**

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- Each Regional Executive Officer**
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- Each Employee Relations Manager**
- Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery**
- Each Group Director of Midwifery**
- Each Clinical Director**
- Director National Ambulance Service**

**From:** Anne Marie Hoey, Chief People Officer

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024

**Subject:** HR Circular 014/2024 - Extension of the Temporary Scheme of Paid Leave for Public Health Service Employees Unfit for Work Post COVID-19 Infection until 30th June 2025

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Dear Colleagues

I refer to the *Temporary Scheme of Paid Leave for Public Health Service Employees Unfit for Work post COVID-19 Infection* as set out in [HSE HR Circular 22/2022](#).

I wish to advise that approval has been received from the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP and Reform to extend this Special Scheme of Paid Leave to existing beneficiaries for a 12-month period from the current cessation date of 30th June 2024 to a revised concluding date of **30th June 2025**.

Sanction for the 12-month extension is on the same basis as the Second Special Extension of the Scheme i.e. the extension provides for basic pay and fixed allowances only for the period. Unsocial hours premium payments are **not** included. Those remaining

unwell beyond 30th June 2025 may utilise the full provisions of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme as appropriate.

This 12-month extension is sanctioned on a final basis and applies only to those public health service employees who are currently availing of the Scheme and excludes any new applications. All eligibility criteria and terms remain as per the original Scheme as set out in HSE HR Circular 22/2022 and additional conditions will also apply as set out below.

It is a condition of the payment that each employee must comply with their employer's Managing Attendance and Rehabilitation policies, and that they be fully supported during their absence, and where possible, be supported in returning to work. Each employee will be required to attend their employer's Occupational Health Physician (OHP)<sup>1</sup> every 3 months for assessment. The employee's line manager will advise the employee that specific information will need to be provided to the Department of Health in order to facilitate ongoing application of the scheme. This data will be inputted into a template which is designed to ensure that only **anonymised non-identifiable data** will be provided by each employer to the Department of Health (via HSE National Employee Relations).

The employee's line manager is required to send an updated management referral form to Occupational Health to request this 3-monthly assessment process, with written consent from the employee. The details required for data collection will be laid out in a template (to issue separately from National HR), and the manager should include these questions in the management referral form.

The employee must provide a brief report to their employer's OHP from their treating specialist/consultant where they are under the care of same, for each OHP review, or where discharged, provide a letter setting out same from the treating specialist/consultant whose care they had previously been under. The OHP will provide a report to the employee's referring manager outlining the specific information requested.

The initial OHP review is to take place by **23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024** or at the next earliest date available (in-person). Further subsequent OHP reviews are required for each employee every 3 months thereafter. These subsequent reviews may be remote or in-person (to be determined by the OHP at the initial in-person review) and must be completed by Friday 22nd November 2024, Friday 21st February 2025 and Friday 23rd May 2025.

The information requested will be shared between the line manager and appropriate HR manager. The HR manager will then be required to ensure that this information is inputted into the template form that they will have received from National HR. The template is designed to ensure that only **anonymised non-identifiable data** will be provided by each employer to the Department of Health (via HSE National Employee Relations). This template must be updated by each employer every 3 months in respect of each employee following their OHP review and submitted to HSE National Employee Relations.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes external Occupational Health Physicians who are engaged by Section 38 employers that do not directly employ an OHP.

HSE National Employee Relations will provide a single anonymised collated return in excel format, that facilitates the tracking over the 12 months, of each anonymised employee on the Special Scheme to the Department of Health, no later than 1 week after each OHP review deadline as set out above.

Please ensure that impacted employees within your area of responsibility are notified without delay that the Scheme is being extended for 12 months only up to **30th June 2025**. Employees should also be advised that payment will be conditional upon them complying with the existing and new conditions of the Scheme and this information will be provided to them shortly<sup>2</sup>. Should any employee fail to comply with any of the existing or new conditions, they will no longer be eligible for payment under the Special Scheme. The Public Service Sick Leave Scheme may be utilised in these cases.

Costs arising must be met within existing resources.

Please ensure that this Circular is brought to the attention of all relevant managers in your area of responsibility and the impacted employees are notified without delay.

#### **Queries**

Queries from individual employees or managers regarding these arrangements should be referred to local HR Departments/Employee Relations Departments. Please note that the National HR Employee Helpdesk is also available to take queries on 1800 444 925 or email: [Ask.HR@hse.ie](mailto:Ask.HR@hse.ie).

Queries from HR Departments on the contents of this Circular may be referred to National Employee Relations, HR Directorate, 63-64 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 Tel: 01 6626966, Email: [info.t@hse.ie](mailto:info.t@hse.ie).

Yours sincerely



**Anne Marie Hoey**  
**Chief People Officer**

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<sup>2</sup> The additional conditions will be set out in a template which will issue shortly to employers.