



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte

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To: Chief Executive Officer
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Each Hospital Group Director of HR
Each Chief Officer CHO
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Each CEO Section 38 Agencies
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies
Each Employee Relations Manager
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery
Each Clinical Director

From: Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of Human Resources

Date: 11th May 2020

Re HR Circular 038/2020: Update to HR Circular 007/2020, 008/2020 and 018/2020. Two new COVID-19 absence codes and Update to National Collection of Twice Weekly Absence for COVID-19

Dear Colleagues

Previous HR Circulars 007/2020, 008/2020 and 018/2020 advised of the requirement for twice weekly national collection of COVID-19 absence along with a new absence code **0403 COVID-19 Paid Leave**. This newly introduced code applied to periods of medically/HSE recommended self-isolation, and also to medical diagnosis of COVID-19 infection.

The application of **absence code (0403)** should further be in accordance with **HR Circular 034/2020**.

The purpose of this circular is:

- A. To provide details of an additional two new COVID-19 absence codes and;**
- B. To set out the revised arrangements for once weekly National Collection of COVID-19 Absence Data**

A. Additional New COVID-19 Absence Codes

Following recent revised guidelines from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) for Public Service Employers during COVID-19, National HR has approved a further **two new COVID-19 absence codes** follows and in accordance with the provisions set out in **HR Circular 034/2020**:

- i. **COVID-19 Available to work Cocoon – Circular 034/2020** identifies a further group who are extremely medically vulnerable. The advice for this group is to “cocoon” and stay at home and not attend the workplace. Employees who are deemed to be extremely medically vulnerable and are required to cocoon during this timeframe should be facilitated to work from home to the maximum extent possible. This may include temporary assignment to other duties/a different role which the employee can perform at home. As employees in this situation may be assigned alternative duties at any stage during COVID-19, they will continue to be paid their normal basic salary and fixed allowances (where applicable) pending identification/assignment of appropriate duties. Employees in this situation are considered to be **available for duty** and therefore should not be treated as being on special leave with pay for COVID-19, ordinary sick leave, annual leave or any other type of leave (unless such leave was already pre-booked/confirmed in the normal manner). This new Code is **only** to be used for those in this group, who are **awaiting** the assignment of work in the home.
- ii. **COVID-19 Available to work Caring arrangements – HR Circular 034/2020** sets out the working arrangements for those with caring arrangements. There is no special paid leave available for COVID-19 caring arrangements during this time. Employers/managers are required to identify and engage with employees on alternative arrangements e.g. staggering hours, wider opening hours including weekend work, and temporary assignment to another role. If employees cannot work outside the home and cannot perform their current role remotely, the employee is still to be considered as actively on duty and available to work, and therefore should not be treated as being on special leave with pay for COVID-19, ordinary sick leave, annual leave or any other type of leave (unless such leave was already pre-

booked/confirmed in the normal manner). This new Code is **only** to be used for those in this group, who are **awaiting** the assignment of work in the home.

For **SAP sites**, HPSA have confirmed the configuration of the two new absence codes for COVID-19 as follows:

Absence Type

- 0406 COVID-19 Available to Work Cocoon (COVID-19 COCOON AV TO WRK)
- 0407 COVID 19 Available to work Caring arrangements (COVID-19 CARING AV TO WRK)

Time ID

- A062 COVID-19 Available to Work Cocoon (COVID-19 COCOON AV TO WRK)
- A063 COVID 19 Available to work Caring Arrangements (COVID-19 CARING AV TO WRK)

This absence can be entered by Time Returning Officers via Time Manages Workplace (PTMW) or by HR via **PA30**. HR/ Payroll Systems & Analytics (HPSA) have confirmed they will issue a broadcast message to be published on the SAP HR/ Payroll system advising all SAP users about these new Absence Types and Time IDs. This will also be issued to all HR Managers by Business Support and to both Time and PA input staff by the Training Team. These two new codes will be available from **May 10th 2020**, with the **effective date** of these two new codes from **April 6th**.

Non SAP sites and voluntary Section 38 agencies, should update their own absence policies to reflect the two new COVID-19 codes.

B) Revised Arrangements for Weekly National Collection of COVID-19 Absence Data

From the week beginning May 11th 2020, the collection of **COVID-19 absence data** will **change** from twice weekly reporting to **once weekly reporting**. The collection of COVID-19 absence data from the week commencing **May 18th** will include all three codes as follows (0403, 0406, 0407).

The **deadline** for weekly submission of COVID-19 Absence Data is each **Wednesday by 12 midday**.

For HSE only agencies (Statutory) and for all fully integrated SAP sites, HBS HPSA has agreed to provide weekly absence reporting for COVID-19 directly to National HR.

For Non SAP sites and Section 38 agencies that are not recorded on SAP HR, a revised reporting template to record absence due to COVID-19 including the two new COVID-19 absence codes will be issued to each HR Hospital Group and HR Community Health Organisation from Strategic Workforce Planning & Intelligence for completion and return to nationalabsence@hse.ie once a week (each Wednesday, 12 midday).

Reporting of weekly COVID-19 absence is **mandatory** and critical in assisting national planning and co-ordination of the response to COVID-19.

Queries

For queries relating to the reporting of National absence template due to COVID-19, please contact nationalabsence@hse.ie.

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Hoey
National Director of Human Resources



“To view the Health Services People Strategy 2019 - 2024 please click [here](#).”

Need information and advice on COVID-19 Go to www.hse.ie/coronavirus