

The City of Edinburgh Council

Coronavirus pandemic - colleague absence guidance

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Permanent employees

Annual leave

1. **Should I be taking leave over this period?** Your wellbeing is important. Everyone needs to look after themselves over this difficult period and take some annual leave where this is possible. Annual leave requests should be submitted to your line manager for consideration in line with service needs and current circumstances.
2. **Do I have to take annual leave, even though there's nothing to do and I can't go anywhere?** It's important that you take your annual leave where you can. If you're in a non-critical role and unable to work from home your line manager may give you notice to take annual leave if you don't ask for it – this would be a minimum of two weeks' notice per one week's leave.
3. **I had annual leave booked and am now unable to go on my holiday. Can I cancel my annual leave?** Annual leave is at the discretion of services and is agreed based on the needs of the service. Annual leave can only normally be cancelled if you're required to work in a critical frontline role, or from home in a critical role. Your line manager will take your circumstances in to consideration and, so long as you are looking to take your leave at another time in the annual leave year, this should be accommodated where possible.
4. **What if I'm symptomatic with Coronavirus or need to self-isolate during booked annual leave?** If you have annual leave booked during a period of Coronavirus sickness or self-isolation your annual leave can be added back to your holiday entitlement.
5. **Will I be able to carry forward annual leave since I may not be able to take it all before the end September?** All employees are expected to take as much of their annual leave as they can by the end of the holiday year. If you can't take all of your leave because of operational reasons you can carry forward a maximum of 10 days in exceptional circumstances. We recognise there may be some individuals in essential services where this might be harder to achieve, and these will be looked at on a case by case basis. Employee balances will be reviewed by managers on an ongoing basis to ensure that remaining balances are managed and planned for effectively.
6. **I've checked my holiday balance and it's not correct.** All employees with access to myHR should ensure that any leave already taken is logged. In addition, all managers are being asked to ensure that annual leave for the year to date (October to April) is correctly recorded by the end of April at the latest. If you don't have access to myHR, speak to your manager in the first instance.

Easter

1. **I work in a school and have offered to work over the Easter holidays. Will I get paid for this and will I be due any extra holiday? Or pay?** If you're a permanent /fixed term employee and not already contracted to work, then additional hours will be paid in line with our standard terms and conditions, i.e. overtime or time in lieu.
2. **I'm scheduled to work Good Friday and Easter Monday, what will I be paid?** If you're due to work on these dates, either contractually or voluntarily, you'll receive the normal enhancements for public holiday working. However, if you're unable to work because you're off sick, self-isolating or your service is closed, these days will be treated as paid leave and you won't receive the enhanced rates for public holiday working or the day back to take another time.

3. **I don't normally work Good Friday or Easter Monday, will these days be treated as normal public holidays and I don't have to work?** These days should be taken as public holidays unless under these exceptional circumstances you've been asked by your manager to work. If you have been then you will receive the normal enhancements for public holiday working.

School or office closure

1. **If your place of work has closed.** You'll be paid your normal salary. We may however, require you to work from home or a different location.

Working from home

1. **Can I claim any allowances for working from home?** If you're working at home temporarily because of coronavirus, you may be eligible to claim tax relief directly from HMRC. Claims can be made online - details are available on the government website [here](#).

Coronavirus-related absence

1. **I'm symptomatic or need to self-isolate. Do I get paid?** Yes, you would be paid at your normal rate of pay, although you'd be expected to work from home if this is possible.
Self-isolation should only last for either 7 or 14 days, and you're expected to be available to work at the end of the self-isolation period, unless your symptoms worsen. You should keep your line manager updated, and they will contact you at day 7 or 14 to check your progress. You may also be referred for a [test](#) in line with national guidance.
2. **My symptoms develop and I become ill.** You need to call 111 and you'll be paid for time off until you recover.
3. **I live with someone who has symptoms, what do I do?** Follow NHS Inform guidance on self-isolation, 14 days, which should enable you to continue in your role. Where this isn't possible, individual circumstances will be taken into account. You or the people you cohabit with may also be referred for a [test](#) in line with national guidance
4. **I live with someone who has been advised to shield, what do I do?** Follow NHS Inform guidance on living with someone who needs to shield and self-isolate within the home enabling you to continue to work. Where this isn't possible, individual circumstances will be taken into account.
5. **I don't have symptoms but am worried about coming to work. Can I have special leave?** If you don't have symptoms and don't need to self-isolate, we expect you to continue to work, unless there's specific evidence that says you can't. If you have specific concerns check the NHS Inform website and speak to your line manager.

Non-Coronavirus related absence

1. **I'm sick for a reason that isn't related to Coronavirus, but my workplace is also closed, and I wouldn't be able to work from home. Is my absence now paid special leave?** No. If you're off sick for a non-Coronavirus related reason, the normal sickness absence policy and pay entitlements will apply.
2. **I was already on long-term sickness, but I think my condition means that I belong to a clinically vulnerable group. Is my absence now paid special leave?** If you are

otherwise fit to return but have been advised by the NHS, GP or Occupational Health that you are unable to return to work because you're in a clinically vulnerable group, your absence type will be changed to this reason code for this period.

3. **I've been on long-term sick for a reason that isn't related to Coronavirus but am fit to return. What do I do?** If you think you're fit to return, and your return for work was already broadly expected within those timescales, you'll be able to return. If your return was unexpected and we're concerned about your health we may refer you to Occupational Health to assess your fitness to return. If you're fit to return, you'll be expected to be available for work as normal.
4. **What if Occupational Health don't think I'm fit to return?** If Occupational Health assess that you're not fit for work, the normal sickness absence policy and pay entitlements will continue to apply.

Clinically vulnerable groups

1. **I think I may be in the clinically vulnerable or extremely vulnerable groups published by the government. Should I be at work?** If you've received a shielding letter from NHS Scotland, as detailed in the current NHS Inform guidance on 'shielding', you shouldn't be in face to face contact with other people for 12 weeks, but we expect you to work from home where possible. More information is available at: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/shielding>
If you haven't received a letter from the NHS advising you to shield, speak to NHS111 in the first instance, or your GP, and then speak to your line manager. They may need to refer you to Occupational Health (OH) for advice. You won't be expected to physically attend work until the outcome of the OH assessment is known.
2. **I'm not covered by the list of clinically vulnerable groups listed by NHS Inform, but I think I have a condition that means I should be shielding.** Speak to NHS111 in the first instance, or your GP, and then speak to your line manager. They may need to refer you to Occupational Health for advice. You won't be expected to physically attend work until the outcome of the OH assessment is known but we expect you to work from home where possible.
3. **Can I work from home if I'm in a clinically vulnerable group and need to follow shielding advice?** Yes, you would be expected to work from home if you're well enough and are able to.
4. **Will I be paid if I can't work from home and I am shielding?** Yes, you would receive paid special leave, at your normal pay. You'll need to provide your line manager with a copy of your shielding letter (or any other appropriate evidence).

Volunteering / temporary roles / secondary employment

1. **I'm not able to work from home but would like to help in another critical role in the Council.** There are details of temporary opportunities available at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/work-us/employee-volunteering/1>
2. **If I work in a different temporary role will my pay be affected?** You would continue to be paid on the basis of your existing role.
3. **Can I volunteer under the government's emergency volunteering provision?** Yes. You're entitled to Emergency Volunteering Leave (EVL) provided you're volunteering for an organisation that can provide an emergency volunteering certificate, and you give us the correct notice. This is unpaid leave. If you're thinking of volunteering, you should discuss this with your manager.

4. **Do I get paid during Emergency Volunteering Leave?** No, EVL would be unpaid leave, but you will be able to claim loss of earnings and expenses back through the government scheme. The Council will continue to pay your minimum pension contributions during unpaid EVL.
5. **I want to volunteer in another external organisation, or work for another organisation as a key worker, e.g. in a pharmacy.** If you're looking to volunteer or carry out work for an organisation that isn't covered by the emergency volunteering provision, you can do so as long as you're not needed to work in a critical role with the Council.

If you're doing this during your normally contracted hours, you need to take leave, which could be the following:

- a. annual leave
- b. unpaid special leave
- c. temporary adjustment to working hours.

You should discuss this with your manager before you make any arrangements.

Childcare

1. **Are there any other childcare provisions available so that I can continue to work in my key worker role?** Yes, arrangements have been made directly by private nurseries with Council contracts for key workers, You can find out more here: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schools/emergency-school-closures/2?documentId=11965&categoryId=20074>
2. **What if I don't want to use the Childcare provision?** If there's childcare provision available to you, you are expected to use it and be available for work.

Resignation

1. **I recently resigned, would I be able to withdraw my resignation?** This is at your manager's discretion. They'll consider factors such as the nature of the role, whether you work in an essential service, and whether there is meaningful work for you to do.

Delays in hearings

1. **I was going through a disciplinary / grievance / sickness absence process, which has now been delayed and my pay is affected.** Where hearings are delayed due to Coronavirus, for disciplinary, grievance or final absence meeting, and pay is affected, you will receive paid leave until the process can resume.

Flexitime system

1. **Can I use the flexitime system?** Not at this point. We have previously advised that flexitime was suspended, due to current circumstances, and this remains the case. In previous communications we also asked that colleagues worked their contracted hours where possible and not to accrue further hours. If you are a flexitime user, you will know that any hours accrued in March up to the maximum of 1.5 days would need to have been taken in April or lost and colleagues shouldn't have a negative balance anyway. Therefore, we are asking colleagues to bring their balance back to zero over the next four

weeks, which is in line with our current policy. We will continue to review this as we develop recovery plans.

Agency workers

As you're not paid by the Council, you should contact your agency in the first instance.

Scenarios

1. **Self-isolation.** You need to contact your employer (agency) directly and notify your manager that you're unable to attend work.
2. **Sick/infected.** You need to contact your employer (agency) directly and notify your manager that you're unable to attend work.
3. **Care for a dependant as a result of them having Coronavirus.** You need to contact your employer (agency) directly and notify your manager that you're unable to attend work.
4. **School or office closure as a result of Coronavirus.** The Council will notify your employer (agency) as soon as we're able to, to notify them of any closures. Where possible we will redeploy you to offices or services which are still running/open. As an agency worker, you may still be able to be engaged by us if you are able to work from home or can be suitably redeployed.
5. **You don't want to come to work.** You need to contact your employer (agency) directly and notify your manager that you're unable to attend work.

Casual workers (including Supply Pupil Support Assistants or Supply Early Years Practitioners)

Hours and pay

1. **The location/service I work at is closed because of coronavirus and I've not been offered any hours. Will I receive any pay?** Yes, you'll receive an "average" monthly payment based on the hours you worked between 1 January and 31 March 2020.
2. **How has the decision around average payment been arrived at?** This decision has been made following nationally agreed recommendations.
3. **How will my average pay be worked out?** Your monthly average pay will be calculated by looking at the total hours you worked in January, February and March and dividing this by the number of months in the period (i.e. 3).
So, if you worked 15 hours in January, 20 hours in February and 10 hours in March, you'll be paid an average of 15 hours (45 hours divided by 3).
4. **When will I start to receive an average payment?** Hours worked and claimed for in March will be paid in arrears as normal at the end of April. Your average monthly payment will then be paid from the end of May
5. **How long will I get an average payment for?** This will be reviewed on a monthly basis and discontinued when it's judged that working arrangements have regularised, or there has been a new national agreement.
6. **Will the average payment include holiday pay?** Yes, holiday pay will be calculated on the basis of the average hours paid in the month.
7. **Do I need to make myself available to work if there are hours available in my service?** Casual workers will still be needed in many services during the current

emergency, so you're expected to continue to advise of your availability to cover critical roles wherever possible.

If you provide no availability to work or are offered and decline work (including work of a type you don't normally do but are reasonably capable of accepting), you may not be eligible for an average payment.

8. **I've worked at least as many or more hours than my average, what do I get paid?** You won't receive an average payment but will be paid for all the hours you've worked in that month as normal.
9. **What if I joined the Council as a casual worker part way through the reference period for average pay?** You'll still be paid for the average hours you work over the reference period January to March 2020.
10. **I am currently working with the Council, but I've been offered fewer than my average hours (January to March) because of service disruption due to coronavirus. What will I be paid?** If you work fewer than your average hours, your pay will be topped up to your average payment.
11. **Can I be furloughed?** No. The UK government furlough scheme doesn't apply to the public sector. Instead we have a national negotiating body that collectively determines many aspects of our pay and conditions.

Coronavirus-related absence if you are engaged to work

1. **I've been offered and/or accepted hours but am symptomatic and need to self-isolate. Do I get paid?** Yes, you would be paid your average hours. You'd be expected to make yourself available to be offered hours at the end of the self-isolation period, 7 or 14 days. You or the people you cohabit with may also be referred for a test in line with national guidance
2. **My symptoms develop and I become ill.** You need to call 111 and you'll be paid your average hours during your absence. You'd be expected to make yourself available to be offered hours once you recover.
3. **I live with someone who has symptoms, what do I do?** Follow NHS Inform guidance on self-isolation, 14 days, which should enable you to continue to work. Where this isn't possible, individual circumstances will be taken into account. You or the people you cohabit with may also be referred for a test in line with national guidance
4. **I can't make myself available for work because I'm in the clinically vulnerable group and need to shield. Do I get paid?** If you've received a shielding letter from NHS Scotland you shouldn't be in face to face contact with other people for 12 weeks. You would be paid your average hours while you're shielding (subject to monthly review of the average hours arrangement). You'll need to provide your line manager with a copy of your shielding letter (or any other appropriate evidence).
5. **I live with someone who has been advised to shield, what do I do?** Follow NHS Inform guidance on living with someone who needs to self-isolate, which advises to self-isolate within the home enabling you to continue to work. Where this isn't possible, individual circumstances will be taken into account.
6. **I don't have symptoms or need to shield but am worried about coming to work. Do I get paid?** If you don't have symptoms and don't need to self-isolate, we expect you to continue to make yourself available to be offered hours, unless there's specific evidence that says you can't. If you have specific concerns check the NHS Inform website and speak to your line manager. If you decline work in these circumstances, you won't be eligible for average pay.

Non coronavirus-related absence

1. **I can't make myself available for work because I'm sick with non coronavirus-related illness. Do I get paid?** No, you wouldn't be entitled to paid leave or sick pay, although you may be eligible for statutory sick pay.

Tertiary workers

Hours and pay

1. **The location/service I work at is closed because of coronavirus and I can't work the scheduled hours I had agreed. Will I receive any pay?** Yes, if you had an agreed engagement in place at 20 March, your Manager will submit claims for any hours you would have been scheduled to work. You'll receive payment based on the actual hours scheduled to be worked and you will be paid as normal. This will commence in April for May's pay and will be reviewed monthly by national agreement.
2. **What if I'm asked to work?** If cover is needed, then you may still be required to work the hours you've accepted for your agreed engagement.
3. **I didn't have any hours agreed or scheduled, will I get paid?** No, you will only be paid for any hours you had agreed to work by 20 March 2020. If you're offered and accept hours in the coming weeks, you'll be paid as normal for any hours you actually work.
4. **Can I be furloughed?** No. The UK government furlough scheme doesn't apply to the public sector. Instead we have a national negotiating body that collectively determines many aspects of our pay and conditions.

Supply teachers with an agreed engagement/contract in place at 20 March

Scenarios

1. **The school I work at is closed and I can't work the scheduled hours I had agreed to between now and end of summer term. Will I receive any pay?** Yes, your Business Manager will submit claims for all hours you would have been scheduled to the end of the summer term. You'll receive payment based on the actual hours scheduled to be worked and you will be paid as normal.
2. **How has the decision around my pay been arrived at?** This decision has been made through national agreement with the SNCT. This decision supersedes any pay arrangements that may have been agreed previously.
3. **Will I still receive holiday pay?** Yes, holiday pay will be calculated on the basis of the claimed hours paid in the month.
4. **What if I'm asked to work?** If cover is needed, then you may still be required to work the hours you've accepted for your agreed engagement.
5. **Would I be paid extra for any hours I actually work?** If you work more than the scheduled hours you will be paid for, your Business Manager will submit the appropriate claim form for those hours and you'll receive payment for any extra hours worked.

Supply teachers without an agreed engagement/contract in place at 20 March

Scenarios

- 1. The school I work at is closed and I don't have any hours. Will I receive any pay?**
Yes, you'll receive an "average" monthly payment based on the hours you claimed for between 1 January and 31 March 2020.
- 2. How has the decision around average payment been arrived at?** This decision has been made through national agreement with the SNCT. This decision supersedes any pay arrangements that may have been agreed previously.
- 3. How will my "average" pay be worked out?** Your monthly average pay will be calculated by looking at the total hours you worked in January, February and March and dividing this by the number of months in the period (i.e. 3). So, if you worked 15 hours in January, 20 hours in February and 10 hours in March, you'll be paid an average of 15 hours (45 hours divided by 3).
- 4. When will I start to receive an "average" payment?** Hours worked and claimed for in March will be paid in arrears as normal at the end of April. Your average monthly payments will then start at the end of May and continue in June and July based on the average hours worked January - March.
- 5. Will the average payment include holiday pay?** Yes, holiday pay will be calculated on the basis of the average hours paid in the month.
- 6. What if I'm asked to work?** Supply teachers may still be needed during the period of enforced school closure, so you're encouraged to make yourself available to cover in the education hubs as necessary.
- 7. Would I be paid extra for any hours I actually work?** You won't receive an extra payment for any hours worked up to the average hours you're already being paid for. If you work more than the average hours, your business manager will submit the appropriate claim form for those hours. For example, if you worked 45 hours over the period January to March, you'll be paid an average 15 hours in your May, June and July pay. At the end of the summer term, we'll compare the average hours paid with actual hours worked and pay for any excess hours worked over the average.
- 8. What if I joined the Council as a supply teacher part way through the January-March reference period for average pay?** You'll be paid for the average hours you work over the reference period 1 January to 31 March.