

Purpose of the paper

Approval by Board

Background and context

The spread of COVID-19, commonly referred to as the Coronavirus, is an exceptional event that is becoming an increasing workplace priority. As a new virus, it is unclear how long the threat will last but it is clear it is having significant impact on the health of the UK population.

The Health and Wellbeing of Healthy Mind's employees is integral to the smooth running of the business. The organisation has swiftly moved and adapted to remote working, but current predications are that social distancing may last until Autumn or Winter 2020.

Where are we now?

Under the contractual sick pay allowance all staff will receive at least two weeks full pay, going up after passing a probationary period and subsequently each year of employment. The maximum amount of time we would pay someone sick leave is 6 months full pay. This is based on a 12 month rolling cycle.

Employees can 'self-certify' for the first 7 days off work. This means following the workplace process but not having to get a note from a doctor or NHS 111.

Those self-isolating due to coronavirus for more than 7 days can get an online self-isolation note.

What are the key issues?

If an employee were to be unwell and presenting with symptoms of coronavirus we would not want them to attend work or risk infecting others. If someone is self-isolating due to a member of their household presenting with coronavirus symptoms, whilst they may be able to work from home, we would not want them to attend work or risk infecting others. If they had previously had an illness and used up their sick pay entitlement then they would not be eligible for further sick pay. As a sympathetic employer we would not want to financially disadvantage any staff due to the outbreak of Covid-19. This is an unprecedented situation, and as such this proposal only relates to time off due to coronavirus.

What is asked of trustees?

To approve the following proposal, pending further review in October 2020 or in light of new advice from the Government:

That sickness absence as a result of Covid-19 self-isolation, during and after lock-down, would not count against the eligibility to sick pay entitlement within a 12 month rolling cycle. The board of trustees will review this position, by October 2020, and/or later, until pandemic situation is resolved.

Finance

The financial implication may be paying an employee additional sick pay. Mitigation has been made to ensure that this additional pay will only relate to ill health as a result of the coronavirus and this proposal will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees as appropriate.

Recommendation

The board is asked to approve the proposal, and agree to review in October 2020, or when appropriate Government advice is published.