

COVID-19 Advice & Support

Fortnightly Update – 29 March 2021

This is our 28th update, providing a summary of all the information and key developments relating to the workforce implications of COVID-19.



Sharing Information

We have attached the latest update compiled in conjunction with the other Regional Employers and the LGA. The content is based on developments up to and including Friday 26th March 2021 and includes;

- COVID-19 case rates update
- Vaccine hesitancy research
- Vaccine roll-out podcast update
- Shielding Update
- Testing in care homes
- Easter Schools COVID-19 testing
- Weather the Storm – Mental Health Support for front line workers
- 80 new Temporary JobCentres created to support unemployed
- Local Government Apprentice of the Year - 22 April 2021
- NGDP deadline 31st March 2021
- DfE Call for Action Supporting 2021 Graduates
- Hybrid Working
- Local Government OD Network (NODN) Update
- Pay Updates
- Exit cap information note for employers
- Up and coming Workforce Webinars

We continue to meet with the LGA's workforce leads and our counterparts in other regions on a fortnightly basis – our next meeting is tomorrow 30th March. These meetings help to inform national guidance and support – if you have any issues or queries you would like us to take forward, then please email Sam or Lisa by start of play tomorrow.

Employment Law Update | Date for your diary | 28 April, 9.30 - Midday

We're pleased to announce that Darren Newman will be back to bring us up to speed with the latest employment law developments. The update will also include the opportunity to ask questions about some of the current issue relating to the legal implications of hybrid/home working and "long covid". Further information including how to book will follow this week.

East Midlands Exchange: Future Ways of Working – Early May 2021

Based on your feedback we are focussing our next virtual information exchange on future ways of working. As you know the exchange is a way for you to discuss and share your thinking and practices to help guide the development of approaches and plans that work for your authority. In this exchange, we will be able to hear from another region about what their working practices discovery group have been discussing and benefit from a sounding board on some of the legal issues. Information to follow shortly on the date and how to reserve your place.

FAQ's in relation to Long Covid

We have recently received queries relating to the how authorities are approaching the management of long covid as, in some authorities, the number of cases is now increasing. This has also been a regular discussion item at our LGA bi-weekly meetings.

You will be aware of the original and existing FAQ on the LGA website <https://local.gov.uk/covid-19-employment-law-faqs> which looks at how to manage the resulting sickness absence and at that time the focus was around preventing employees from not reporting as sick when they are and many employers also choosing not to take such absence into account for sickness absence management procedures. Further, if an employee's sick pay entitlement has expired or reduced to half pay, or is about to do so, then authorities were reminded that they have always had the discretion to extend sick pay entitlements in order not to impose financial hardship on employees.

We will update you if further FAQ's or Circulars are provided in respect of the changing situation around Long Covid and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable People. However, in the meantime NICE has published some guidelines in December 2020 www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188 which may help with thinking about when COVID becomes Long COVID and therefore the circumstances change. A small extract of this is below:

- Acute COVID-19 : signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for up to 4 weeks.
- Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19 : signs and symptoms of COVID-19 from 4 to 12 weeks.
- Post-COVID-19 syndrome (i.e Long COVID): signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis. On this basis we would only expect a diagnosis of long COVID if symptoms persist for longer than 12 weeks.

We hope this update, providing a round-up of all recent COVID-19 guidance in one place is useful to you. Contact Sam Maher and Lisa Butterfill at EMC with any workforce queries or issues relating to COVID-19 at:

sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk and lisa.butterfill@emcouncils.gov.uk

All guidance relating to COVID-19 can also be found by visiting our website: [Workforce Information - COVID-19](#)