

Covid-19: HR Guidance – Absence Recording

Last updated: 15 June 2020

This guidance is regularly being reviewed.

1. Covid-19 Absence Recording

Managers must record all absences associated with Covid-19 in Oracle. This includes recording the status of employees who are isolating, well and working. The absence must be created on the employee's first day of absence and recorded in Manager Self-Service. It is extremely important that absences are recorded accurately as the council is using this information to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on our workforce.

Absences should be recorded as Special Paid Leave using one of the reasons shown below:

The screenshot shows the Oracle HR system interface for recording an absence. The 'Absence Status' is set to 'Confirmed'. The 'Absence Type' is set to 'Special Leave Paid'. The 'Absence Category' is set to 'Paid Leave'. The 'Absence Reason' dropdown menu is open, showing a list of reasons. The reasons are: Career Break, Compassionate, Jury Service, Parental, Personal Leave, Public Duties, Reserve Forces, Self-isolating and unwell, Self-isolating and unwell with confirmed coronavirus, Self-isolating, well and working, Self-isolating, well, but unable to work due to job role, Special Leave, and Study Leave. The reason 'Self-isolating and unwell with confirmed coronavirus' is highlighted with a red box. The reason 'Unable to work due to caring responsibilities associated with coronavirus' is also highlighted with a red box.

Managers are required to continually monitor all employee absence associated with Covid-19 and ensure their recording on Oracle remains accurate and up to date. If the reason for an employee's absence changes, the manager is required to update Oracle. For example:

- if an employee is 'self-isolating, well and working', an open-ended absence should be created
- subsequently, if the employee becomes unwell with a confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19, an end-date should be applied to the original absence and a new absence should be created using the reason 'self-isolating and unwell with confirmed Covid-19'

2. Categories for Covid-19 absence recording on Oracle

The following provides clarification on Covid-19 absence categories:

Self-isolating and unwell

Employee not working due to being unwell with Covid-19 symptoms, the employee should self-isolate (for 7 days). Managers should create, on day one of absence, an open ended absence. An absence end date is entered on Oracle when the employee is fit and ready to return to work. Managers are expected to carry out a return to work discussion to ensure the employee is well and able to return to full duties.

Self-isolating and unwell with confirmed Covid-19

Employee not working due to being unwell with confirmed Covid-19-tested positive-the employee should self-isolate (for 7 days). Managers should create, on day one of absence, an open ended absence. An absence end date is entered on Oracle when the employee is fit and ready to return to work. Managers are expected to carry out a return to work discussion to ensure the employee is well and able to return to full duties.

Self-isolating, well and working

This category should only be used for employees who are self-isolating because:

- a) Employee has symptoms but well and working from home (self-isolating 7 days);
- b) Employee has someone in their household that has Covid-19 symptoms (self-isolating for 14 days) and well working from home;
- c) Employee has been identified as clinically vulnerable but well and working from home, including:
 - those aged 70 or over (regardless of their medical condition);
 - those who are pregnant;
 - those under the age of 70 with a health conditions.
- d) Shielding – employees been defined on medical grounds as being clinically extremely vulnerable but are well and working. These employees have been contacted by NHS and have been advised to stay at home until 30 June 2020.

Although, employees in this category are 'well and working' from home, the Council requires the information to be recorded, in order for the Council to assess and report the impact of Covid-19 on the workforce. A Manager should create, on day

one of absence, an open ended absence. An absence end date is entered on Oracle when the period of isolation has ended.

Self-isolating, well, but unable to work due to job role

Employee is well and would ordinarily report to work, but is unable to perform their normal duties, or any duties, due to their job role i.e. service temporarily closed. Manager should create an open ended absence and keep the absence under review, when the employee returns to work the manager should enter an absence end date on Oracle.

Unable to work due to caring responsibilities associated with Covid-19

Employee is well but unable to perform any work duties due to caring responsibilities, e.g. child care. Manager creates an open ended absence and keeps under review, when the employee returns to work the manager should enter an absence end date on Oracle.

3. Sickness Absence

Staff sickness absence should be reported as normal in Oracle. For instance, an employee could be self- isolating, well and working from home i.e. the employee could be 'shielding' but during their period of self-isolation they may become unwell with an unrelated Covid-19 reason. The manager should end their self-isolating, well and working absence and create a normal sickness absence. If the employee subsequently becomes well, the manager should end their sickness absence and complete the necessary sickness absence policy requirements i.e. return to work, trigger level monitoring etc. If appropriate, a new open ended self-isolating absence should be created i.e. self-isolating well and working.

4. Frequently Asked Questions

Are employees required to provide medical evidence for their absence?

If an employee is unwell and required to self-isolate or has to isolate as a member of their household has symptoms, the council is waiving the requirement to provide a medical certificate.

If an employee has a positive test result or has been contacted by the 'test and trace' service, managers may request a copy of the relevant evidence. Similarly, managers should take reasonable steps to verify any absence, which may include requesting evidence for those employees shielding or clinically vulnerable. Managers should maintain regular contact with the employee during their absence. This could include the use of phone calls, Skype meetings, email, and messaging services.

Does a period of isolation count towards the council's sickness absence trigger levels?

No. Periods of isolation do not count towards the council's sickness absence trigger levels.

Does a period of absence due to confirmed Covid-19 count towards the council's sickness absence trigger levels?

No. Absence due to confirmed Covid-19 does not count towards the council's sickness absence trigger levels.