

HR Advice

These are challenging and unprecedented times with uncertainty of what is ahead, I just wanted to assure you that the team here are here to help both in regards to providing you with our normal HR support but also to provide advice on the coronavirus, self-isolation, payroll, home-working arrangements and exploring options if you are projecting financial difficulties.

Please ensure that any temporary measures are confirmed in writing to all employees because currently we do not know how long we may have to implement changes to working environment or hours, but at some point, all employees will need to return to their normal working environment and contracted hours. It is vital that they are aware that this is a temporary measure and we can help with this, as well as being a sound board to consider options and even just to be that friendly person to chat things through with.

We have taken steps to ensure that the team are here to support you during these challenging times; All of the team have predominantly work from home and we have video conferencing facilities so we can continue to hold meetings with all parties being remote if needed. So please be assured that our support will continue during these challenging times.

Please call for advice, guidance and assistance as we are here to support you and also pull together as a community. It is now even more evident that people are the most important resource that we all have; without them our businesses would not exist; but these challenging times will affect every business and every individual the extent to which is unknown currently.

Contact Numbers

HR Advice Lynda Goncalves 07905 155 707

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The remaining members of the team can be contacted via the office number 020 8460 2245

Sickness Absence Guidance

We can provide payroll services to many clients and I have copied below our guidance in regards to sickness absence this is copied below:

Payroll Guidance - Employee Absences

Further to new legislation announced by the government in reference to staff absences we have outlined below our guidance in relation to employee absences for payroll purposes:

Payroll Guidance for reported Sickness Absence

- If an employee is unable to come into work, they need to contact their line manager and explain why they are absent.
- If an employee is absent due to childcare this will be unpaid dependants leave.
- If an employee is absent due to general sickness your sickness absence policy will apply.
- If an employee is absent due to self-isolation or are showing symptoms of coronavirus, new legislation effective from the 13th March 2020 means all employees are able to get SSP (Statutory Sick Pay) from the first day of absence.
- Please ensure your timesheets clearly state the reasons for any employee absence using the following explanations:
 - Dependents leave (this will be unpaid)
 - Sick (not absences not related to self-isolation)
 - Coronavirus – if they have been diagnosed
 - Self-isolation – if showing symptoms or if household is in self-isolation
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What are the changes to Statutory Sick Pay for Coronavirus (Covid-19) from the 13th March 2020?

They are entitled to:

- £94.25 (£95.85 from the 6th April 2020) a week SSP for up to 28 weeks
- SSP is an entitlement from day 1 of sickness with effect from the 13th March 2020 for any absence for employees with the coronavirus or required to self-isolate

How payments are made:

- SSP is paid by the employer in the same way as wages, for example weekly or monthly.
- Tax and National Insurance will be deducted.

Eligibility – To qualify for SSP they must:

- Be classed as an employee and have done some work for your employer
- Have been ill for at least 4 days in a row (including non-working days), but would be entitled to SSP from day 1
- Earn an average of at least £118 per week (£120 per week from the 6th April 2020)
- Informed their employer they are sick before their deadline - or within 7 days if they do not have one
- Agency workers are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay

Exceptions – they will not qualify if they:

- have received the maximum amount of SSP (28 weeks)
- are getting Statutory Maternity Pay

Fit Notes

- Employees must provide employers a fit note if they are off sick for more than 7 days in a row (including non-working days). This has not changed
- If their absence exceeds 7 calendar days, a Fit Note is required. Given the pressures on the Health Service the government have stated that it is the employer's discretion as to whether this is required for those diagnosed with Coronavirus or in self isolation.

Recovery of coronavirus related SSP

- Companies with less than 250 employees will be able to reclaim SSP payments made as a result of coronavirus.
- HMRC recognises that existing systems are not designed currently to facilitate the employer refunds but are working with payroll software developers to set up repayment mechanisms and further guidance will be released as soon as possible

We will continue to monitor the developments as the situation progresses and keep you up to date with any changes but please don't hesitate to speak to us if you have any questions at all in relation to the above. We are here to help and support you during this challenging time and we will be providing a full service as we are prepared for home working if required.

Best Wishes and keep washing those hands singing Happy Birthday twice 😊

Lynda 07905 155 707