

COVID-19: Important HR updates – 26 March 2020

Dear colleague

Thank you for your ongoing, outstanding support throughout this week. We have seen the COVID-19 outbreak continue to escalate and the response from all staff has been exceptional in these difficult circumstances.

We appreciate that there are many messages currently being delivered – not just across North Central London but also from NHS England and Improvement and through many other channels. The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly, and we are really thankful for your time in reviewing these key communications, and also acting where necessary.

In view of the recent advice from both the Government and NHS England and Improvement, we just wanted to cover some critical points during today's HR brief.

Working from home

In view of the Government advice this week, all staff should now be working from home. We understand that there will be some exceptions to this, where the CCG require staff to be in the office due to the nature of their role and in these cases, staff must explicitly agree working from the office with their line manager in advance.

If you are in an office, you **must comply with the Government social distancing advice at all time**. There should be no need to sit next to colleagues with so few people required to be office based at this time.

If you do find yourself required to be based in an office, for even a short time, please make every effort to travel outside of traditional 'peak' times. Transport for London is operating a reduced service and these times remain quite crowded, making it difficult for commuters to comply with social distancing advice.

Mandatory requirement to record working arrangements and absence on the Workforce System

During this critical period, all staff are required to accurately record their working arrangements and absence in real time on the workforce system. A separate reporting mechanism specifically for COVID-19 has now been developed on the workforce system.

There are four categories on the workforce system that that all staff should be recording:

1. Sickness absence as a result of COVID-19 (not working due to sickness)
2. Self-isolation (working, but in isolation).
3. Carer responsibilities (not working due to caring responsibilities).
4. Working from home (working as normal, but from home).

The workforce system enables staff to choose the start and end of the reported absence/working arrangement and **must be up to date at all times**.

It is extremely important during this period that we have access to up to date and accurate information on our staff. This will support both CCG workforce planning and the reporting requirements from NHS England and Improvement at a local, regional and national level.

Fuller guidance on logging your absence and working arrangements during this period can be found in the [Guidance on Coronavirus – Workforce System document](#).

If any staff have any issues logging onto the workforce system or recording their working arrangements/absence, please do contact the HR team – islccg.nclworkforce@nhs.net.

Dedicated HR address for COVID-19 enquiries

The updated HR guidance circulated earlier this week included a wide range of information. We expect to be updating this document regularly in the coming weeks and months as more is known about the impact of COVID-19. If you have a question related to your circumstances during this time, please email the HR team via the new dedicated email address: nclccg.hrcovid19@nhs.net.

Staff requiring letters to confirm their 'key worker' status to childcare providers and schools should request letters via this dedicated email address.

Transitional arrangements

The NHS is facing the greatest global health threat in its history. A huge effort is underway with the NHS mobilising to change the way that hospitals and GP practices run, freeing up tens of thousands of beds, bringing in more staff and ventilators, getting protective equipment to where it is needed and ramping up testing. The NHS – locally and nationally – will also have to deliver care in new ways to deal with the epidemic.

Staff across NCL CCGs are already undertaking new duties and we are continuing to assess capacity and where best to deploy our resources. We wanted to let you know that we are also looking at where members of staff might be able to undertake frontline activities or secondments into other NHS organisations where they could be of the greatest benefit to the system. Line managers and Directors will discuss such requirements with staff so that we can best support the efforts of our colleagues.

We would like to once again thank each and every one of you for your flexibility throughout this time. If you are feeling the pressure of your new or changing responsibilities, please address this with your line manager or contact the HR team.

Kind regards

North Central London CCGs' HR team