
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) HELP PACK

APEX HR



GENERAL GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

Here's some general advice we'd like to share with you at this time:

- Remember that your team will have many of the same worries and anxieties as you about their health and ability to earn money in the coming weeks and months.
- Treat things on a case by case basis and trust your team.
- Avoid making redundancies wherever possible. Redundancies should only be considered when every other options has been exhausted.
- If you do need to make cuts, lay off temporary/casual workers, but make sure you do it in a truly human way and explain your decision to them, and keep communicating with your team throughout your decision making.
- Put hygiene measures in place where possible, such as enough soap to wash hands with, tissues etc. Make sure everyone follows hygiene advice. Always encourage good hygiene at work.
- Try to communicate with your team in terms of the immediate, short term and after the threat of the virus has passed.
- Stay up to date with developments and keep an eye on government advice.
- Encourage team members to work from home wherever possible.
- Make sure all emergency contact numbers are up to date.
- You have the right to “tell” employees when to take their holiday. We advise that you do this carefully and compassionately, and you must notify team members at least twice as many days before as the amount of days they need people to take.

FAQ'S

- **What are the symptoms?**
- A cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, a fever (high temperature) or chills.
- **How do we pay people who we have “sent” home?**
- If you have made the decision to send a member of your team home, they should get their usual pay.
- **When does Statutory Sick Pay begin?**
- SSP starts on day one of absence due to COVID-19 or self-isolation in line with medical advice following a government amendment. SSP is currently £94.25 per week for up to 28 weeks.
- **What happens if some of our staff are told to self-isolate by the government?**
- If members of your team are told to self-isolate, they are entitled to SSP from day one, or any contractual sick pay that they are entitled to.
- **What should we do if our team can work from home?**
- Anyone who can work from home, should be working from home. If this is happening they are entitled to full pay.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT?

■ **Temporary Lay-offs**

- If you have a contractual right to temporarily lay off a team member, there is no limit to how long they can be laid off for. However, if the lay off for 4 weeks in a row, or 6 weeks in a 13 week period, the team member could apply for redundancy and be entitled to redundancy pay.
- The laid off team member is entitled to guarantee pay, which is a maximum of £29 for five days within a three month period. If the team member's daily rate is less than £29, they will receive their usual rate. To be eligible for this, the team member must have been continuously employed for one month, reasonably make sure they're available for work, not refuse any reasonable alternative work, and not have been laid off due to industrial action.

■ **Redundancies**

- If lay offs cannot be agreed and redundancies are absolutely necessary, you should follow the usual redundancy procedure.
- If you wish to revoke the redundancy before it takes effect, the team member will need to agree to this.

■ **“Forced” Holidays**

- Your team do not necessarily have the right to choose when they take their holiday, and if needed the employer can “tell” team members when to take it. We advise that if this is necessary, to talk it through with the team member and explain your decision.
- You must give your team member two days notice for every day you need them to take.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR TEAM

- As much as this is a time of uncertainty for all businesses and employers, all team members are also under the same pressures.
- This is likely to be a defining time for relationships between companies and their teams, as the way they are treated during this time will be remembered.
- Team members should be kept informed about the commercial impact on the business and the effect this may have on them. In addition to this, team members should be regularly updated on the health of the team as a whole and whether it is safe to come to work.
- All employers have a duty of care to their teams, where you can help signpost them to relevant help.
- Communication works both ways and it is important for employers to understand what team members might be going through.
- The members of your team who might require time off for themselves or their dependants will need to notify you as soon as possible, and they will be more inclined to do so if there is a consistent channel of open communication.

MAKING GOOD BUSINESS DECISIONS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

As businesses there are various ways to mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus.

We urge all of our clients not to make permanent decisions in a temporary situation. The likelihood is that most businesses are going to be hurt in some way. However there are measures that businesses can take to limit the damage, and to make sure that the business is still strong once the virus threat has passed.

- Consult your employees to build a strong trusting relationship between you and your team.
- Consult with us at Apex to get a second opinion on any questions or issues.
- Think in terms of the immediate, short term and then longer term where business planning and impact are concerned. Your team will appreciate some conversation being around post Covid-19.
- Discuss options with your accountants to see what can be done with regards to the money, for example if there are any payments that can be paused, or if the company overdraft can be increased etc.
- Don't make anyone redundant unless it is absolutely necessary, there is a cost to it and once the virus threat has passed, they would have to be replaced, where you will have the cost of recruiting again.

If you look after your team during this period, they will look after you.

LEADING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

Leading through challenging times:

- We understand that as much as this is a difficult time for your teams, it is also going to be a challenging time for business leaders.
- You will likely be facing a number of queries from your team, so we advise that you stay as updated as possible so you are prepared to answer any questions.
- The best leaders will be able to support their teams through this period of uncertainty, which will benefit the company in the long term.
- Business leaders all over the world have begun to make gestures to show solidarity, support and understanding for their teams, here is an article showing some examples:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/blakemorgan/2020/03/17/50-ways-companies-are-giving-back-during-the-corona-pandemic/#3940dfc94723>
- Any gestures, however big or small, will go a long way with your teams.
- Showing compassion, and explaining to the team what is going on behind the scenes will help to build your relationship between you and your team.

SUPPORT FOR LEADERS

- While your team is in need of support at the moment, we realise that leaders are also likely to require some help.
- There are various channels of support at the moment, such as government updates and guidelines, local authority support and updates from the World Health Organisation.
- The government have also announced a £330bn help fund for the UK to support people and businesses.
- It is also helpful to discuss with other business leaders, and perhaps read updates from them on platforms such as LinkedIn, to see how others in similar situations are handling it.
- Also, contact us at Apex whenever you need us, we are always here as a sounding board to help and support.
- Let's all support each other in dealing with the short, sharp shock of the present while planning for the potential medium to long term impact and building resilience.

SIGNPOSTS TO RELEVANT SUPPORT AND OTHER SERVICES

These are some of the best places to look to for updates and support are as follows:

- <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>
- https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=359a81e7_6
- <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/newsroom/mainstories/informationandadviceaboutcoronavirus>
- <https://plymouth.foodbank.org.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/business-payment-support-service>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/income-tax-enquiries-for-individuals-pensioners-and-employees>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51935467>
- <https://www.apexhr.co.uk/news/update-from-apex-hr-regarding-covid-19-coronavirus/>
- **Get in touch with the Apex team on 01752 825697**

ONE LAST PIECE OF ADVICE

We want to give you advice that will ensure we can all have the best chance of getting through this challenging time together. Be honest with your teams, really take the time to understand their individual circumstances. This truly human approach is the right thing to do, it will go a long way to help morale for the foreseeable future. We must trust our teams – they have no choice but to trust us as leaders. If we can be open, honest and reasonable as businesses we will give our selves the best fighting chance of returning to more resilient, effective and functional business post COVID-19.

We are all in this together.