

On Tuesday we updated you on our policy approach to employees with clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) status during the national lockdown in England from 5 November to 2 December 2020. We now have further details of the financial support we have put in place to facilitate shielding during the lockdown period.

We have decided to extend Royal Mail sick pay to colleagues with CEV status as we did during the last lockdown. Exceptionally, we will also offer full sick pay to support CEV colleagues who are due to move on to half pay/nil pay or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). This means CEV colleagues with less than a year's service are also covered. This will apply where you cannot work from home. Employees who are on half / nil / SSP and in this category will receive a letter confirming the arrangement.

This approach will be in place until 2 December when lockdown and shielding are due to end. The extension of our policy is at our discretion and we will review the situation again once we know whether lockdown or shielding are being extended.

As a condition of extending sick pay colleagues must:

- Provide their manager with the letter they received from the Government/NHS advising them to shield and not come to work, if they cannot work from home, during the lockdown period
- Agree to book and take all their full annual leave entitlement this holiday year (ending 31 March 2021) even if it overlaps with shielding.
- Agree to take any pre-booked annual leave, even if that overlaps with shielding

Employees will receive their usual pay when taking holiday.

Managers should record any shielding self absence on PSP using, 'Sick Coronavirus' from the absence type drop-down box then 'SDU070 – Shielding Self'. This absence code should only be used for CEV "shielding-self" employees who have received a Government/NHS letter, and not for any other COVID-19 related absence.

People who are defined as clinically extremely vulnerable are at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19, so if an employee receives a letter from the UK Government/NHS advising them to shield, they should do so. If they are unable to work from home, they should not come to work. We encourage our managers to contact them to check their current situation.

Please note, the clinically extremely vulnerable rules currently only apply in England. **Northern Ireland, Scotland** and **Wales** continue to have their own restrictions in place.

#### **Clinically vulnerable (listed in the UK Government guidance)**

People who are considered to be clinically vulnerable (but not the clinically extremely vulnerable group) can continue to come to work (if they cannot work from home) and should be especially careful to follow the rules and minimise their contact with others (Hands. Face. Space).

If you have employees in this group who are concerned about coming to work during the lockdown period, talk to them to try to understand their concerns and remind them of the measures in place and that our workplaces are 'COVID-19 secure'. Consider if there is alternative work they could do during the lockdown period.

### **Shielding others**

Employees living with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable can still come to work. However, if those employees have concerns about coming into work, managers should agree with them how they can cover their absence if they cannot work from home, by using either annual holiday and/or unpaid special leave. Record unpaid leave on PSP as, ZZSCCR - 'Special leave unpaid' from the absence type drop-down box; then 'COVID Shield Others'.

### **Further support**

For further help and support managers can either call 0345 604 2787 or contact [coronavirus.support@royalmail.com](mailto:coronavirus.support@royalmail.com).