

## Introduction

During an influenza pandemic People In Aid will have to manage its workforce to respond to the needs of those that become infected and to maintain essential member services. Our response requires flexibility and co-operation from employees and consultants.

An influenza pandemic will affect our staffing in 3 ways:

- Staff may become infected, leading to unprecedented levels of sickness absence
- Stress levels will be high due to pressures on staffing
- Staff with caring responsibilities may be affected by local measures eg closure of schools. As a result, staff may need to stay at home to care for dependants (partner, children, elderly relatives)

The policy is for immediate implementation given the WHO has declared we are at phase 6 of the pandemic alert protocol (July 2009).

## Employee communication

Throughout a pandemic People In Aid will regularly communicate and update staff about the impact on services, and how they are affected, and what is required from them to implement contingency plans.

The Director of HR Services will liaise with the Executive Director to provide regular briefings.

## Redeployment

In our contingency plans we have identified essential services, and when we are impacted by staff shortages, then individuals may be redeployed to enable business continuity. Redeployment may take the form of

- Covering a different role
- Working at a different location
- Working in a different team

Appropriate training and support will be offered to those that are redeployed. Staff will only be asked to undertake duties / tasks:

- within their competence
- they have the required skills and experience
- they can be trained / briefed to undertake new similar tasks
- they agree/volunteer to receive any required training.

## Use of volunteers

It is possible that People In Aid would make use of volunteer support during a pandemic crisis, and if this eventuality materialises, then appropriate honorary contracts should be used and normal expenses met. Recruitment of volunteers should follow current good practice guidelines.

## Cancellation of training courses

The need to cancel individual external commitments (eg conferences, training courses) will be taken on an as and when basis. Similarly, the viability of People In Aid's external meetings will be reviewed on a case by case basis, and participants will be kept informed of the situation and given as much notice as possible in the event of any cancellations. Should an event be cancelled, then participants will be offered a credit or a refund.

## Payments to staff

Staff will continue to receive their usual pay during a pandemic provided they are available to attend work / work from home. Part time staff could be asked to increase their hours to fill gaps, and they would be paid for the additional hours.

Where additional hours are worked by full time staff then People In Aid's 'Time Off In Lieu' policy applies; no payment will be made for overtime.

Staff that are asked to cover a different job for more than a month will receive an appropriate adjustment to their usual rate of pay.

## Management of sickness absence

Absence from work due to pandemic influenza (for example swine flu) will be dealt with in accordance with People In Aid's sickness policy. Normal reporting and notification procedures apply, i.e. employees who are absent due to sickness, for whatever reason, are required to contact their manager on the first day of absence and once a week thereafter if they have not returned to work.

Self certification is required for absences in excess of 3 continuous days, and a GP / medical certificate is required for absences in excess of 7 continuous days.

Staff who are not sick but unable to attend work should call their manager and explain the reasons why they are not able to attend work, eg caring responsibilities, travel difficulties etc. In these cases normal dependency, parental and special leave provisions apply.

## Arrangements for staff unable to attend work

Other than staff who are unwell and not able to come to work, some staff will not be able to attend work because they need to care for a dependant or because of transport difficulties. Managers will be flexible and can agree to temporary home working arrangements where appropriate.

Staff who are not able to attend work or work from home should make use of the provision for paid and unpaid special leave, including emergency leave, annual leave.

Notwithstanding People In Aid's flexible working policy, refusal to come into work when reasonably requested will be treated as unauthorised absence

## Leave requests

All requests for annual and flexi leave are subject to People In Aid's need to maintain services. Managers will consider the reasons why leave is being requested and will prioritise those that need to take time off to care for a dependant or those employees that have worked additional hours during the pandemic.

Individual employees will be informed if any pre-booked annual leave must be cancelled to ensure essential services can be maintained. Leave for staff who perform critical roles during the pandemic may need to be more closely managed to ensure minimum levels of cover are maintained. Staff who incur any losses as a result of their leave being cancelled by People In Aid will be fully compensated e.g. the cost of flights or holidays not covered by insurance. These costs would cover the entire family. However, compensation would not be paid out if the member of staff was insured or was covered by the cancellation section in their insurance policy. However, no costs will be reimbursed if the airline or tour operator cancels a booking, and in view of this, all staff are encouraged to review their own travel insurance arrangements.

At the end of the leave year, staff will automatically be able to carry over any leave they have been prevented from taking into the next leave year.

## Team meetings; 1:1's; performance reviews

These will take place as usual throughout the pandemic, and will be scheduled flexibly according to staff availability.

## Employee support

It is recognised that the pandemic may place additional demands on employees at work and in their personal/family lives. In particular, the death of relatives, partners, friends,

service users or colleagues may place employees under emotional pressure. Employees will continue to have access to the support offered by People In Aid through third party providers such as InterHealth and CiC. However, if required we will attempt to provide additional counselling support where it is requested although demand on these services during and following a pandemic may limit their availability.

### **Recovery period**

Following each wave of pandemic influenza, People In Aid will attempt to return to normal operations as soon as possible. This will include allowing employees to take leave as normal and return to their substantive posts (where they have been redeployed).

Depending on needs and to maintain minimum service levels, it may be necessary for some employees to continue to work in the roles they were redeployed to or in other roles that People In Aid requires them to undertake. Where this is necessary the individual employees will be consulted.

London, July 2009