



24th March 2020, Latest news on Coronavirus from

It has been announced this morning that Jersey has extended measures for strict social distancing, including the immediate closure of some business premises in addition to those closed last week, as detailed below:

- Cinemas, theatres, and concert halls
- Museums and galleries
- Spas, wellness centres and massage facilities
- All indoor leisure and sports facilities, including gyms and swimming pool
- Betting shops

As well as the obvious impact of those businesses as employers, there will be wider effect as this impacts their suppliers and wider businesses. We await to hear the support measures that have been agreed by the Council of Ministers in relation to those whose jobs and businesses have been impacted and will continue to post updates as and when information becomes available.

In addition to these business premises closures, the advice is now to extend social distancing to a minimum of two metres (approximately six feet), which may also have an impact on working practices.

Please do not hesitate to contact HR Now if you have any queries regarding your employer responsibilities in terms of reacting to this latest update and its implications on your business.

20th March 2020

New information has come out over night the situation continues to become more serious and everyone has a personal responsibility to follow the formal advice for their own locations;

- Jersey has now followed Guernsey's approach with anyone arriving into Jersey needing to self-isolate for 14 days immediately. Businesses need to ensure they are aware of their employees' movements and anyone currently on holiday must self-isolate even if they show no symptoms. If they have the capacity to work from home then they can do so, otherwise they may get signed off from the doctor and their employers would then follow their normal sickness procedure.
- As social distancing becomes paramount businesses have a responsibility to ensure those remaining in the workplace follow the guidelines of keeping at least 2 meters away from each other. We are starting to see shops displaying guidelines on the floors at the till points. Business should consider doing the same at printers or breakout areas if possible.
- Here are our hints and tips for remote working with kids in tow!
 - Plan meetings early morning or evening when the kids are settled if you do not want to be distracted
 - Use technology to assist where possible through skype calls so employees still feel connected with their team

- Be flexible in your approach and be prepared to be interrupted
- Set up a comfortable working space that follows best practice of desk set up where possible
- Communicate often, you can never over communicate!
- Might be a good time to do the online learning you may have been putting off
- Take regular breaks
- Set yourself daily goals of what you want to achieve

Always check here for the latest [Jersey](#) or [Guernsey](#) advice

18th March 2020

Based on the further advice that has come out from Jersey Government this morning this is an unprecedented and challenging time for businesses. Focusing on the school closures, here are some thoughts for you;

- Schools are closed from 23rd March, we gave advice on the 11th March on this scenario. Some ideas for your employees to think about are, with the assumption the school is closed and they are not infected;
 - Can parents share the parental responsibility with each other?
 - Do they have family who could help, bearing mind any family who may be classed as vulnerable?
 - Do you have emergency special leave or dependent care leave that could be used?
 - Could they work from home or commit to reduced or part time hours from home – it doesn't necessarily have to be between the hours of 9am to 5pm?
 - Could they do flexi working or split shift working?
 - Could they use holidays or take unpaid leave for some or part of the next four weeks?
 - Could they reduce their hours slightly now and make the hours up later in the year?

Our advice is be really clear if the period of leave will be paid or unpaid and our strong recommendation is that businesses need to be flexible in their approach and consistent.

Currently, legally you are not required to pay employees for being out of the office.

- If an employee is signed off as sick then please ensure you follow your sickness policy. If the employee has exhausted sick pay then you may wish to consider annual leave, unpaid or allowing them to make the time up.
- If employees do make a formal request to change their hours there is a structured process which you must follow by law, for further guidance please see our guide [here](#)
- We are starting to see businesses discuss the options to manage costs and we have a flowchart for businesses, if you interested please contact cara@hrnow.je.

- Social distancing will become the new norm for the foreseeable future so ensure all events are reviewed and delayed where possible and ensure the office layout complies with ensuring employees have reasonable space around them.

17th March 2020

Further advice over the weekend has been released across the Channel Islands and this will continue to happen. Here is a quick summary for businesses;

Jersey;

- Employees who are pregnant should continue to attend ante-natal appointments but call the midwife first to confirm (A) the midwife and hospital are still accepting appointments and there has been no change to location or procedure, (B) to confirm they and their immediate household are all fit and well and exhibiting no symptoms, (C) that the household have not been advised to self isolate
- Any employee who is pregnant but has been recommended to self-isolate must notify the midwifery service and not attend the hospital. The midwife will recommend next steps.
- Any employee who is pregnant and due in the next 4 weeks should speak to the midwife to confirm the birth arrangements and whether the partner is restricted in access during the birth or to the maternity ward.
- An employee who has recently discovered they are pregnant and so in the first weeks may not require regular ante-natal appointments but should follow social distancing. No requirement to self isolate for pregnant mothers has been issued by Jersey government as yet. If an employee feels at particular risk at work due to pregnancy an employer is expected to try to assist in working from home or allowing social distancing and to try to make reasonable adjustments.

Working From Home;

- If the employer and employee agree that working from home is feasible there are steps to clarify the process:
 - There should be an assessment of the proposed domestic workplace (DSE assessment forms are available online for free to complete by each relevant employee)
 - The employer is responsible for the equipment they supply and it must be clear what use it is for (e.g. not for kids gaming on Company IT kit)
 - Costs should be clarified such as phone bills or internet connections and whether this should be claimed on expenses and what proportion and how quantified
 - Timesheets for hours worked and output achieved are recommended to ensure clarity for employee and employer
- Employers are still responsible for the Health and Safety of employees working from home and advice should taken if there are concerns or specific risks
- You may already have a lone worker policy but this should be reviewed and referenced for those who live alone or are self-isolating.
- To avoid disruption an agreed timeframe and process for reporting in on a regular basis at least twice per week should be put in place before any homeworking starts

Always check here for the latest [Jersey](#) or [Guernsey](#) advice

16th March 2020

Further advice over the weekend has been released across the Channel Islands and this will continue to happen. Here is a quick summary for businesses;

Jersey;

- Employees who are over 65 should limit unnecessary contact with people outside of their homes unless absolutely essential – businesses should look at the age profile of their employees and ensure employees understand their options. Further advice on social distancing can be found [here](#)
- Any employee with a combination of flu like symptoms, including fever, cough, muscle aches and headaches should self isolate until they are symptom free for 7 days – businesses should follow their normal sickness policy for this event or if the employee feels well enough and has the capacity to work from home this could be an option
- Employees can still travel for medical and compassionate purposes, however, employees are asked to only undertake essential travel - with this in mind it is important for businesses to understand where their people have been or are planning to go

Guernsey;

- From today anyone returning from Spain and France will need to self isolate for 14 days, regardless if they are showing symptoms or not – with this in mind it is important for businesses to understand where their people have been or are planning to go
- Encourage employees to adhere to the ceasing of non-essential travel advice
- Businesses need to enact their business continuity plans where appropriate

The advice from the 11th March still stands - keep good communication between managers and employees to ensure managers are checking in on the welfare of their employees regularly, especially any now working from home, and if any employee does start to feel unwell ensure they go home immediately and ask them to follow the advice of their doctor.

Always check here for the latest [Jersey](#) or [Guernsey](#) advice

13th March 2020

Coronavirus continues to be a hot topic of conversation in businesses and the need for clear communication and quick decision making is higher than ever. Leaders are being tested with continuity plans whilst still meeting the needs of clients and employees. We have put some further thoughts together on some new topics that you should be considering;

- Stop all external meetings where possible and if you do have any external visitors ensure they sign a declaration that they have not visited an affected area and do not display any symptoms
- If you are planning group events such as training and client gatherings postpone to a later date where possible
- Ensure your employee's emergency contact details are accurate in case you need to reach them at any point

- Remind employees that they have a responsibility to behave in a professional manner at all times, including basic hygiene as a preventative measure
- If you haven't already done so ensure you are aware of which employees can the technology to work from home
- Remember data relating to health is special category data, therefore if an employee in the business is confirmed you will not be able to advise the identity of the employee.

Always check here for the latest [Jersey](#) or [Guernsey](#) advice

11th March 2020

As the first cases have now been confirmed in Jersey and Guernsey we are starting to see businesses react and put their plans in place quickly to ensure employees are protected and any spread of the virus is contained.

Some of the aspects you should now be thinking of or putting in place are;

- Split teams where possible so the whole team will not be impacted and you can continue to run your business – the split teams could work from home, on different floors or in a business continuity site
- For those remaining in the office ensure they are reasonably spaced apart from each other where possible to limit any spread of the virus
- Think carefully about face to face meetings, hold meetings by phone where possible
- Continue to promote good hygiene and promote regular hand washing with posters in key areas
- Keep good communication between managers and employees to ensure managers are checking in on the welfare of their employees regularly, especially any now working from home
- If any employee does start to feel unwell ensure they go home immediately and ask them to follow the advice of their doctor
- Arrange for more regular deep cleans in the office
- Have disinfect wipes for employees to use on a regular basis
- Think about ensuring employees have given access to their emails and calendars to approved colleagues as a contingency if they are off at short notice
- Where possible, external meetings must be kept to a minimum inside and outside the office. It is important that any visitors coming into the office must declare they have not visited any country requiring self isolation recently and not showing any symptoms of the Coronavirus to the best of their knowledge

Hot topics we are being asked by our clients today;

- If the schools close what should we be advising our employees?

We recommend businesses are speaking to their employees to plan for such a scenario. Some ideas for your employees to think about are, with the assumption the school is closed and they are not infected;

- Can parents share the parental responsibility with each other?
- Do they have family who could help, bearing mind any family who may be classed as vulnerable?
- Do they have any friends they could join up with to share the duties of childcare?

Be really clear if the period of leave will be paid or unpaid. Our recommendation is that businesses need to be flexible in their approach and consistent. Currently, legally you are not required to pay employees for being out of the office, however, paid leave should be the preferred option at this stage. If an employee is signed off as sick then please ensure you follow your sickness policy. If the employee has exhausted sick pay then you may wish to consider annual leave, unpaid or allowing them to make the time up. If employees have chosen to visit a vulnerable area for a non-essential travel trip you may want to be clear up front this should be holiday or unpaid if they have to self-isolate with no symptoms.

- If one of my employees wants to work from home what should I do?
 - Understand why your employee feels that they need to work from home
 - Check if they live with a family member who is classed as vulnerable where they may pass it on
 - Assess if they have the tools to be able to do their job from home, can they borrow a company laptop, can you arrange a remote log in for them
 - Are there any jobs that can be done from home that you can give your employee short term
 - Also understand how long they would like this in place for as Coronavirus is changing on a daily basis
 - Be clear that the agreement is on a temporary basis and does not constitute a permanent change to terms

Times of change can cause a lot of stress for some employees and employers need to be reasonable in their approach taking into account the safety and welfare of their employees and also meeting business needs.

Allow employees to ask questions and where possible give a central point of contact for this matter.

Ensure you keep updating and communicating with staff, including those currently off sick for other health reasons.