19 March 2020

To: Civilian Staff and their LMs

ADDITIONAL ADVICE FOR BFC/SBAA CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES AND THEIR LINE MANAGERS ON COVID-19

Introduction.

This document provides you with an update on the information and advice my Civilian HR team has provided so far in response to the COVID-19 situation. I would re-iterate that the principle remains that existing HR policies will be used wherever possible and that employees will not be disadvantaged if they are following COVID-19 medical advice and guidance.

Attendance/Absence Reporting requirements.

Previous instruction for staff to advise LMs of their non-attendance and the reasons for this has not been followed. Therefore, given the need to capture this information for TLB reporting purposes, with effect from 23/03/2020 until further notice, all COs/OCs/SO1s and equivalents will be responsible for ensuring daily reporting on the attendance of Civilian Staff under their control. You will shortly be receiving a proforma, along with guidance for completion that must be used for this purpose.

Vulnerable Groups.

Consistent with the guidance released by the Republic of Cyprus, all Civilian staff that fall within the categories below should discuss their concerns and/or health condition with their line manager and to agree whether protective measures can be taken in the workplace, or whether they can work from home.

- All employees over the age of 60 years
- Chronic respiratory system diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic asthma, pulmonary fibrosis (all should be following a daily medication treatment plan)
- Chronic cardiovascular disease conditions such as coronary heart disease, heart failure
- Diabetes
- Chronic renal failure (undergoing haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis)
- Chronic liver disease (Child Pugh score B or C)
- Chronic neurological or neuromuscular diseases
- Sickle cell anaemia and other haemoglobinopathies (eg. Homozygous thalassemia)
- Immunosuppressed (hereditary or acquired)
- Malignancy
- Organ transplant
- Pregnant ladies of any gestational age, post-natal and breastfeeding mothers
These groups may be amended according to the development of the epidemic and clinical advice that is received.

In cases where it is impractical to work from home, but individuals do wish to remove themselves from the workplace:

- If they are over 60 with none of the health conditions, they should consider what options are available to them (see FAQs).
- If they do have any of the health conditions above, they must obtain a medical certificate from their doctor stating their health condition and they will be considered to be on sick leave.

By now, you and your Civilian employees should have seen the information provided by Civ HR Covid-19-HR. You are reminded that:

- Employees in self isolation following international travel must obtain a medical certificate and will be marked as sick.
- Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 must obtain a medical certificate and will be marked as sick.
- Employees presenting with COVID-19 symptoms must self-isolate and obtain a medical certificate and will be marked as sick.

Cases where Special Leave is appropriate. We continue to review existing guidance relating to employee attendance and in the meantime you are advised that:

- Employees who are prevented from attending work due to border controls will not be disadvantaged and will be considered as on special paid leave.
- Employees whose workplace has been closed down on a temporary basis or have been sent home as a result of Business Continuity/remote working measures will not be disadvantaged and will be considered as on special paid leave.
- Employees who are prevented from attending work due to a domestic situation arising from COVID-19 measures will be given up to two days special paid leave. In cases where two employees work for BFC/SBAA only one person will be able to take SPL at any one time.
- Employees who voluntarily leave the country for non-urgent domestic reasons and trigger a self-isolation period requirement will be considered for special unpaid leave. To avoid any doubt before travel, the individual should apply via their line manager to Civilian HR Customer Services team BFC-HQ-CmdSec-HR-Pay-GpMailbox@mod.gov.uk who will clarify that position before the employee leaves island.
- Any employee that is required to attend work, but does not attend, does not inform LM of absence within 2 hours of normal start time, or give satisfactorily explanation for their absence will be considered Absent Without Leave (AWOL). In these cases advice can be provided to LMs by the Civilian HR Casework Team BFC-HQ-CmdSec-CivHRPolGpMailbox@mod.gov.uk

Staff within probationary period

At present new employees within the 6-month probationary period currently have no entitlement to paid sick leave. With immediate effect and for the next 3 months, employees that are required to self-isolate or are quarantined will be eligible for up to 30 days paid sick for Corona-19 related absence in this 3 month period.

The FAQs on the Covid-19-HR brief will be updated shortly to reflect the information above, along with any additional questions we are receiving on People Issues. You should check
this document regularly for updates and when you are asked a question by an employee. Where information is not available, contact Civ HR for advice.

Remote Working
Station Commanders, COs, Branch Heads have been instructed to consider and implement remote working practices as well as other changes to normal working arrangements across BFC/SBAA as we continue to deliver operationally essential and critical outputs and recognise that there may be constraints in enabling this (e.g. laptops). All employees can expect to be engaged in these discussions imminently.

Finally
We are all responsible for ensuring there is safe environment for us all to work in and now more than ever, there is a need for strict application of personal and workplace hygiene. We should also ensure we adopt the recommended social distancing rule i.e. a 2-metre (3 steps) separation rule with regards to interactions with work colleagues. Working collectively and individually we are best placed to better protect ourselves and our families during this difficult time.

We will keep this advice and guidance under continuous review during this fast-moving situation.

Phil Mallion

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Deputy Command Secretary