

Coronavirus SSP rebate scheme to launch

The government has confirmed that the Scheme, which will allow eligible companies to claim back some statutory sick pay (SSP) paid as a result of the coronavirus, is to open on 26 May 2020. We take a closer look at how employers can make use of the Scheme below:

- The Scheme will provide a rebate for SSP payments of up to two weeks for each employee. It does not cover any additional, contractual sick pay employers may offer.
- To be eligible, employers must have started a PAYE payroll scheme on or before 28 February 2020, had fewer than 250 employees on 28 February 2020 and be claiming for coronavirus SSP payments.
- The rebate can be claimed for current and former employees.
- Eligible SSP payments are those made to employees whose absence started on or after 13 March 2020 due to having symptoms of the coronavirus, or self-isolating in line with government guidance.
- Payments of SSP to employees whose 'shielding' absence started on or after 16 April 2020 are also covered to the maximum limit.
- Employers will be able to use an online portal to make the claim.
- Certain records should be kept for 3 years after the date the rebate payment is received, including the dates of absence.

Shortage Occupation List (SOL) to be reviewed

The Migrant Advisory Committee (MAC) has launched a consultation on the composition of the SOL, which identifies occupations where there is a shortage of UK workers. It considers which jobs could require overseas workers with Recognised Qualification Framework Level 3-5 (around A Level standard).

Did you know?

At present the SOL only covers occupations where the skills required to do the job are RQF6 (approximately Bachelor's degree) and above. From January 2021, as part of new immigration laws, occupations where the skills required are RQF3 or above can be included on the SOL.

Hiring and pay intentions take heavy fall

As a direct result of the coronavirus crisis, research from the CIPD show that more than half of private sector firms are preparing to freeze pay over the next 12 months. Furthermore, 29% are considering cutting bonuses, whilst 27% may cut training budgets. 44% are implementing recruitment freezes.

Did you know?

If employees are entitled by their contract to benefit from wage increases or bonuses, failing to provide such payments could amount to a breach of the contract. Changes to contracts of employment should be done carefully and employers should seek to obtain the agreement of employees in the first instance.

Dismissal was unfair due to long investigation

An employee who was accused of sexually harassing a colleague, and later dismissed for gross misconduct, has subsequently been successful in their unfair dismissal claim. This was because the investigation into his actions, undertaken as part of the disciplinary procedure, took 16 months.

Did you know?

Unfair dismissal claims can be successful if it is found that the procedure that led to the dismissal was flawed, even if there is strong evidence that the employee did what they were accused of. It is important that investigations consider all evidence, are fairly conducted and do not take longer than reasonably necessary.

Methods of making a claim for the Coronavirus SSP Rebate Scheme without using the online portal are expected to be announced soon. Our 24-hour Advisory Service is on hand to provide up-to-date guidance on how to make the claim.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.