



Introduction

It is the summer term already, and we hope that you were able to enjoy some of the warmer weather over the Easter break.

It does start to feel like we are finally emerging from the pandemic, and we have really enjoyed being back in schools and holding more face to face meetings.

We know too that the end of last term was not easy and there were still a lot of Covid absences that were impacting on everyone. Let us hope that the numbers start to finally reduce.

There is a national conversation going on about the impact of the pandemic on mental health, and we know from the situations we are asked to advise about that there do seem to be a growing number of people who need support with their mental health. We all recognize the importance of wellbeing, and there is very specific [support](#) to help schools on their wellbeing journeys.

The importance of enabling everyone to participate is something that both impresses us as we visit schools as well as being enshrined in legislation in the Equalities Act. We all share a belief in the importance of this, and the legislative notion of a Provision, Criteria or Practice (PCP) that could discriminate against some, is a useful tool to help us identify where barriers exist. It applies to all protected characteristics, but we wanted to highlight how recent employment case law has identified PCPs which have been discriminatory for people with disabilities. This emphasises the importance of considering reasonable adjustments including with the way in which policies are followed. Recent cases have particularly highlighted the way in which grievance and disciplinary hearings should be held, but the blanket application of a policy can also unintentionally be discriminatory. We would strongly recommend taking HR advice before departing from policies as every situation will be different and we need to work together to provide appropriate support to everyone.

Please do contact us if you have any questions about the items in this newsletter or any other workforce related matters.

The Schools HR team

Fit Notes

On 6 April this year, a change was made to fit notes.

The requirement for the doctor to sign the form in ink has been removed and replaced by the issuer's name and profession being included in the form as a digital form of authorising. There will be a period during which both the new and previous version of the fit notes are legally valid while GP systems are updated.

Although the new fit notes refer to the issuer's name and profession, we would normally expect that this would be a doctor.

Further information about the update can be found at [Getting the most out of the fit note: guidance for employers and line managers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/getting-the-most-out-of-the-fit-note-guidance-for-employers-and-line-managers)

Fit notes can contain advice about adjustments to aid the return to work, and potentially will also cover reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities. Occupational Health specialists can expand on the information and referrals to them play an important part in the implementation of medical advice.

Covid 19: latest developments

Government guidance has significantly reduced with regard to Covid 19 and we are seeing a rebranding to "respiratory infections including Covid 19".

There continue to be some people who are more vulnerable to these infections including those who are pregnant and those whose immune system is weakened either due to an illness or because of medication they are taking. There is specific [guidance](#) for this group of people which the government plans to review at the beginning of July.

Schools who employ anyone in this group should take into account individual circumstances, including advice from the individual's medical practitioner, when determining what steps need to be put in place to allow the individual to continue to work safely.

The government has published [guidance about reducing the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace](#) which provides general guidance for all employers.

Risk assessments continue to be a key tool for assessing measures that are in place generally in the workplace as well as the specific needs of individual members of staff. The Health and Safety Executive no longer requires every organisation to consider COVID-19 in their risk assessment or to have specific measures in place. Employers may still choose to continue to cover COVID-19 in their risk assessments.

The [COVID-19 workforce fund](#) is available to provide financial support to cover the cost of workforce absences from 22nd November 2021-8th April 2022. [The claim for is now open and available online, alongside guidance](#). The deadline for submitting a claim is 24th May.

Safer Recruitment Courses

We are happy to announce that we are running two online Safer Recruitment training courses in the Summer Term.

As we do each term, we will be running our full Safer Recruitment course. This term we are also going to be offering Safer Recruitment refresher training for the first time.

In the first half of term, there is the full Safer Recruitment course which is the nationally recognised Safer Recruitment Consortium training and is delivered by an accredited trainer. It focuses on the “safeguarding” aspects of recruitment, rather than general selection techniques. This is designed for school staff with responsibility for safer recruitment. This training is a statutory requirement for one person on every recruitment panel for school staff to have completed safer recruitment training.

The course is split into two parts. Part 1 will be held on 19th May 2022 for 4 hours (including a short break) followed by Part 2 on 26th May 2022.

The second half of term will see us running the Refresher Safer Recruitment training. It is designed to provide school staff with updates of recent changes. If you are interested, you **must** have attended the full course previously and provide your Safer Recruitment Training certificate to verify this.

The course will be held on 16th June 2022 for 5 hours (including short breaks for coffee and lunch).

For booking details for both courses, please refer to the Octavo website.

We can also offer Safer Recruitment training on a bespoke basis for an individual school. The value of this approach is that all those involved in recruitment – those making the appointment decisions, and those administering the process are trained together and have a full understanding of how safeguarding is woven into the whole process. Please contact us if you would like more details.

ECTs

From 10 May 2022, schools will receive an email from the DfE regarding next academic year’s ECT service. The main change is the registration process which depends on whether you choose the Full Induction Programme (FIP); Core Induction Programme (CIP) or School Induction Programme (SIP).

Full Induction Programme (FIP)

1. An appropriate body registration process
2. DfE registration process - <https://manage-training-for-early-career-teachers.education.gov.uk/>
3. A teaching hub/training provider registration process

Core Induction Programme (CIP)

1. An appropriate body registration process
2. DfE registration process - <https://manage-training-for-early-career-teachers.education.gov.uk/>

School Induction Programme (SIP)

1. An appropriate body registration process

Full Induction Programme (FIP)

For both the CIP and SIP a fidelity check is required by the AB to ensure that the programme delivery is faithful to the Early Careers Framework (ECF).

For more information, please contact Christine Lonsdale on christine.lonsdale@croydon.gov.uk or 07920657797.

Right to Work

The Covid 19 exception that allows businesses complete a virtual Right to Work Check for UK and Irish citizens has been extended to 30th September 2022. This is partly due to introduction of the use of Identification Document Validation Technology (IDVT) to carry put Digital checks on British and Republic of Ireland citizens who hold a valid passport form 6th April 2022.

From 6th April 2022 physical Biometric Residence Cards (BRC), Biometric Resident Permits (BRP) or Frontier Worker Permits (FWP) can no longer be accepted as evidence that a non UK and Republic of Ireland citizen can live and work in the UK.

When performing a right to work check on non UK and Republic of Ireland citizens, employers will need to verify the immigration status of the individual by utilising the individuals UK Gov Share Code whether that is a temporary or permanent status or a visa from the points-based immigration system.

Non UK and Republic of Ireland citizens should provide their UK Gov Share Code which will allow the employer to confirm online via the Gov website (<https://www.gov.uk/view-right-to-work>) their right to work and live in the UK.

Employers must ensure they retain evidence of the online right to work check by saving a copy of the 'profile' page that confirms the individual's right to work in the UK. This page includes the individual's photo and the date on which the check was conducted. The individual carrying out the check will have the option of printing the profile or saving it as a PDF or HTML file. Either the printed document or saved file should then be stored securely (either electronically or in hardcopy) for the duration of the individual's employment and for two years afterwards. The file must then be securely destroyed. Please note, that this check must be completed directly by the employer, you can not utilise a certificate provided by the employee. Employers are also required to conduct a virtual or face to face meeting with the employee to verify their identify with the photo and the details provided before they commence employment.

The Home Office confirmed that employers will not be required to conduct retrospective checks on biometric card holders who demonstrated their right to work using a physical card on or before April 5, 2022, until the expiry of their biometric card or permit.

The code of practice on preventing illegal working has also been updated due to the introduction of this new method of carrying out checks and came into effect on 6th April 2022. This code should be applied to all right to work checks from this date, including where a [follow-up check](#) is required to maintain a statutory excuse, even if the initial check was undertaken using a previous version of the code which was current at the time.

[Code of practice on preventing illegal working: 6 April 2022 \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

If you have any queries relating to any specific situations at your school, please contact your designated HR Consultant.

Statutory Payment Increases

The weekly rates for statutory maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental and parental bereavement pay increased from £151.97 to £156.66 per week. These increases took effect on 3 April 2022

On 6 April 2022, the weekly rate of statutory sick pay rose from £96.35 to £99.35 per week together with new limits on employment statutory redundancy pay. The redundancy pay statutory gross weekly cap has increased from £544 to £571 per week and the maximum statutory redundancy pay has increased from £16,320 to £17,130.

For further details please refer to Chapter 27 Statutory Benefit Rates April 2022 which can be found under the Resources - HR section of the Octavo website.

Contact Details

Advice Line: 020 8241 5483 octavo.hrservices@croydon.gov.uk

Cathy Brearley – Head of HR - catherine.brearley@croydon.gov.uk
Mobile: 07920657772

Gordon Mackenzie – HR Consultant - gordon.mackenzie@croydon.gov.uk
Mobile: 07920657757

Fiona Evans – HR Consultant – fiona.evans@croydon.gov.uk
Mobile: 07920657755

Christine Lonsdale – Recruitment and Development Consultant –
christine.lonsdale@croydon.gov.uk Mobile: 07920657797

David Wiggs – HR & Finance Service Centre Support Officer - croydonschools@croydon.gov.uk
or david.wiggs@croydon.gov.uk 020 8604 7251

Recruitment Queries:

Teach in Croydon website: www.croydoneducationjobs.org.

Adverts on Croydon Council website: 020 8667 8337; vacancies@croydon.gov.uk

DBS Queries: 020 8667 8337; schoolsdbcs@croydon.gov.uk

Occupational Health: Ritika Singh - Ritika.Singh@croydon.gov.uk

Teachers Pensions: Vicki Langston – 020 8604 7190; Julia McDougall – 0208 604 7383;
teacherspensionsteam@croydon.gov.uk

Local Government Pension Scheme: 020 8760 5768 x 62892; pensions@croydon.gov.uk

Liberata Payroll

Technical support: LiberataSchoolsTechnicalSupport@liberata.com

Team:

Richard Heywood - 020 8603 3340

Mary Rides - 020 8603 3343

Ann Smith – 020 8603 3352

Nandish Sheth – 020 8603 3335

Camila Politanski – 020 8603 3407

Octavo Partnership, 4th Floor, Croydon Clocktower,
Katharine Street, Croydon, CR9 1ET

Trust our knowledge and expertise

☎ 020 8241 5460
✉ enquiries@octavopartnership.org
🌐 octavopartnership.org

 [octavo-partnership](https://www.linkedin.com/company/octavo-partnership)