



Dear Colleague

QUARANTINE (SELF-ISOLATION) FOR NHS SCOTLAND STAFF RETURNING TO THE UK

1. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) currently advises British nationals against all but essential international travel, although the situation will continue to develop as we move forward. Anyone considering travel abroad should check the most up to date information on foreign travel through the Scottish Government's "Coronavirus in Scotland" Information and Support portal - www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19.

2. The following guidance relates specifically to people returning from countries where a 14 day quarantine (self-isolation) period is required. As noted above, managers and staff should discuss this with reference to the most up to date advice on international travel.

3. From 8th June 2020 onwards, when returning to the UK from international travel, a mandatory 14 calendar day quarantine period (self-isolation) will follow. This is reviewed every three-weeks and the list of countries to which mandatory self-isolation applies is published and can be sought via the above link. It is important that we are all able to take breaks from work. However, as a result of the self-isolation rules now in force across the UK and on the basis of the FCO advice, we discourage foreign travel for recreational purposes at this time.

4. There are no exemptions for any NHS Staff in Scotland, and all staff will have to quarantine if returning to Scotland from a territory where the regulations in force at the relevant time require that a self-isolation period is undertaken.

Annual Leave for Foreign travel booked before 9 June 2020

5. All NHS staff are expected to have leave approved before booking any travel arrangements.

6. This section applies to staff who have already booked leave for foreign travel before 9 June 2020, and our aim will be to support staff to take their leave as planned.

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to take account of
changing position.

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS
Boards and Special Health
Boards and NHS National
Services Scotland (Common
Services Agency)
Directors of Human
Resources, NHS Boards and
Special Health Boards and
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For information

Members, Scottish
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7. Staff should take the following steps:

- Speak with their line manager (so that shifts can be worked out) and confirm the dates of the travel and provide details that confirm it was booked before 9 June 2020, and to cancel would incur financial detriment. (Emails, booking confirmation etc. will be accepted forms of confirmation)
- Work with their line manager to understand the dates of the self-isolation period and how this will impact on their ability to undertake the role.
- Work with their line manager to find a way to allow them to work from home during the self-isolation period (for all or part of the 14 calendar days) where possible.
- Only where home working is not possible should special leave be used (please use the Special Leave – COVID-19 – Quarantine category on SSTS). However, at any point during this 14 calendar day period where work becomes available, staff must be able and ready to undertake the work as directed by their manager. Employees will be expected to undertake work according to their skills and capabilities.

8. Line managers should do the following:

- After discussing the matter with the member of staff, update SSTS to reflect the self-isolation period, whether that be working from home for part of or all of the 14 calendar day period or (where that is not possible) special leave.

9. Should the staff member be required to isolate in the foreign country, that may add to their time away from work. This must be taken as additional annual leave.

10. Every effort should be made to allow the member of staff to work from home. This could include providing them with different work; for example, a nurse undertaking administration duties from home. Employees will be expected to undertake work according to their skills and capabilities. It is recognised that not all roles can be undertaken from home e.g. domestic/catering. Where home working is not feasible, the manager should approve special leave.

Annual Leave for Foreign travel booked before 9th June 2020 where no prior approval was sought

11. In these circumstances the leave should not be approved until staff who have sought authorisation have been considered first.

Foreign travel booked from 9 June 2020 onwards

12. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office currently advises British nationals against all but essential international travel.

13. Staff who are planning on booking foreign travel must take this into consideration and must first complete the following list of actions:

- Review the latest Scottish Government advice on traveling abroad.
- Discuss the dates of the future booking with their line manager.
- It may not be operationally viable to approve holidays in these circumstances and staff must always seek approval from their line manager before booking their holiday to ensure that the required leave can be approved.
- Discuss the dates of the self-isolation period with their line manager.
- Present a plan to their line manager as to how they expect to cover the self-isolation period, for example, additional annual leave, TOIL etc.
- Special leave and home working during any required self-isolation period will not be granted to individuals who booked their foreign travel after 9 June 2020, and staff must consider the impact when choosing to do so.

14. Line managers should consider the impact of the self-isolation period to the shift / department.

15. If the line manager approves the annual leave request, the following should be completed:

- Ensure that SSTS is updated to reflect the self-isolation period and how this is being covered (for example, annual leave, TOIL, etc).

16. Where a member of staff has to travel abroad in exceptional circumstances at short notice (for example, as a result of a family bereavement) special leave will be granted, as appropriate, during the self-isolation period.

Annual Leave booked after 9 June for countries where self-isolation is re-imposed

17. If staff have booked leave to travel to a country where no quarantine restrictions apply and the advice changes before they travel or whilst they are in that country and the employee is then required to quarantine on return, the employee should work from home as per paragraph 10 above if possible. If this is not possible, this time should be taken as Special Leave.

18. This advice will be kept under review as if the re-imposition of quarantine becomes a common occurrence then it may no longer be possible to book foreign travel “in good faith” on the assumption that a quarantine period will not be required.

Foreign Travel For Business Purposes

19. Staff who have to travel abroad for business purposes may be exempt from the requirement to self-isolate on their return. If this is the case, they will be given the relevant documentation to support this. Where travel is for business purposes and self-isolation does apply, homeworking will be supported where possible during that time. This does not apply to attendance at conferences.

Review

20. As with all policies put in place in response to COVID-19, this policy will be kept under partnership review to ensure it continues to meet the needs of NHS Scotland.

Action

21. NHS Boards and Special Health Boards should ensure that this policy is widely publicised to staff and managers.

Yours sincerely

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