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To: All NHS Scotland Board Chief Executives and
Employee Directors

Copied to: All NHS Scotland Directors of Finance
and Human Resources

3 April 2020

Dear Colleague

LEAVE AS A RESULT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

On Friday 27 March the Scottish Government issued a Variation Order confirming that where staff fall sick with Coronavirus (COVID-19) they should all be eligible for up to six months sick leave on full pay, regardless of length of service. For clarity, the arrangements below in [DL\(2020\)5](#) remain the same in terms of recording such absences:

- If medical advice has confirmed that, an employee's symptoms are consistent with COVID-19 then their absence must be recorded under Special Leave SP/32 Coronavirus/self-isolating.
- If the employee has been tested and confirmed as having COVID-19, the absence must be recorded as Special Leave under Coronavirus – COVID-19 Positive.
- Absence for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be recorded as Special Leave as they will not count towards sickness absence triggers.

Staff who fall sick with COVID-19, therefore, should be recorded as and placed on Special Leave on full pay. The intention of the Variation Order was to clarify that the leave arrangements being put in place for COVID-19 will extend to 6 months on full pay for all staff, regardless of length of service.

Boards will also wish to note that, whilst not counting towards triggers, all other sickness absence procedures apply, as per the revised Attendance Policy that went live on 1 March 2020, to COVID-19 absences.

The Variation Order was issued to reassure staff coming in to the service that if they should fall sick with Coronavirus they will be supported by their employer, in these



unprecedented times, as if they had full sick leave entitlement as if they had already been working in the service for 5 years.

Our guidance will be updated to reflect this in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Lea-Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Stephen Lea-Ross