

Employers encouraged to continue to allow Employees work from home

Earlier this week the Government gave its latest update on the lifting of Covid-19 related restrictions. It had been hoped that all restrictions would be lifted on Friday, 22nd October but due to the ongoing high number of people getting infected, some of these restrictions have been put on hold.

So what does this mean for those working in the non-profit sector?

An Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar has said that a full return to workplaces may not be possible until next Spring. Public health advice is that employees should be allowed to continue to work from home where possible but that a return to workplaces will continue on a phased and cautious basis for specific business requirements.

In its letter to Government, NPHET said that working from home played a vital role in containing the spread of Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic. However, this is not always possible, particularly for those in the non-profit sector working in the community or providing services to the public in an office-type setting.

We have previously written about the Work Safely Protocols but in its latest advice, the Labour Employer Economic Forum stressed the importance of having a “go-to” person, known as the Lead Worker Representative, to help address any concerns employees have about Covid-19.

The group also pointed out that both employees and employers have a shared responsibility to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace by strictly adhering to the public health advice.

Along with adhering to public health guidance, wearing face coverings where appropriate, maintaining social distancing as well as prompt action if an employee displays symptoms will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace.

The role of Antigen Testing

At the announcement, An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin said that antigen testing will play a bigger role in managing Covid-19. He outlined that, in future, if a person is deemed to be a close contact of a confirmed case and are fully vaccinated, they will be sent an antigen test. Up to now, the advice has been that there is no need to be tested if not displaying any symptoms. For employers, this may also help support the return to the workplace.

Reminding employees of entitlements

It is also worth reminding workers that they are entitled to the Government’s enhanced illness benefit payment of €350 a week once they are certified by a registered medical practitioner as being diagnosed with Covid-19 or a probable source of infection of Covid-19.

If your Organisation requires any support with health & safety training or other Covid-related issues, please get in touch with our expert-led team at Adare Human Resource Management.