



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

HR POLICY / PROCEDURE

REDEPLOYMENT OF STAFF IN THE **EVENT OF A NATIONAL PANDEMIC OR** **OTHER MAJOR EMERGENCY**

SEPTEMBER 2010

1. Scope

1.1. This Policy applies to all HSE employees and to all grades of staff. It has immediate effect and replaces all previous instructions in operation in the HSE and in the former health boards.

2. Purpose of this Document

2.1. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance that can be readily communicated to the health sector regarding the redeployment of staff in the event of a national pandemic or other major emergency.

2.2. Reorganisation of the health service and effective redeployment of health service employees is one of the eight core elements of the HSE's national Pandemic Plan. As the pandemic progresses all health services will come under particular strain. As the demand for health services increases the number of health service staff available to provide service may decrease due to absenteeism from illness.

2.3. Throughout the pandemic event employees will be treated in a manner consistent with established Human Resource principles and collective agreements with respect of the core values of the HSE. Nevertheless, particular co-operation from all staff will be expected in the event of a declared Pandemic Event. In such circumstances the following framework in respect of identified redeployment needs will apply:

2.3.1. *'In the event of a National Pandemic Event or other major emergency, any industrial action, either official or unofficial, will be suspended and all staff will work under the direction of their line manager.'*

3. Redeployment of Staff

3.1. Nationally each Directorate, as part of planning for National Major Emergencies / Disasters, need to maintain a Major Emergency priority listing of services. This Major Emergency / Crisis service priority listing will categorise all services in hierarchical order by:

- Priority 1 Essential services that must be maintained at all times during a National Crisis
- Priority 2 Services that may be considered for suspension for a short period during a National Crisis (up to 1 week)
- Priority 3 Services that may be considered for suspension for a period during a National Crisis (up to 1 month)
- Priority 4 Non Essential services that could be suspended or the entire period of a National Crisis

- 3.2. On activation of the National Crisis Management Team, in response to a National Crisis, each National Director will be requested to urgently review their priority listing for their services. These lists will then be issued to the Regional Directors of Operations (RDO's) and the Regional Crisis Management Teams regarding service suspensions and redeployments of staff during the crisis.
- 3.3. Staff in positions that are curtailed or temporarily suspended will be deemed available to be redeployed to assist higher priority areas.
- 3.4. A Memorandum of Understanding on redeployment has been agreed through the Health Services National Partnership Forum by both management and unions, which recognises that during a pandemic event all staff may be required to accept redeployment assignment and continue to work as assigned by their Line Manager.
- 3.5. Employees most at risk of contracting flu in the workplace (e.g. immuno-compromised, pregnant) will be assigned to non-direct contact areas. Guidance on 'at risk groups' will be provided by the National Crisis Management team at the time of the pandemic.

4. How redeployment will be managed

- 4.1. In line with the Business Continuity Plans prepared by each Directorate, and in conjunction with the Service Managers, the Assistant National Director of HR in each Region will lead the Regional Crisis Management Teams in the management and redeployment of staff across the Regions. All staff resources located within the Regions (both Regional and Corporate) will be included in the redeployment of staff resources.
- 4.2. If deemed necessary by the Assistant National Director of HR in each Region decisions may be made by HR to engage the services of members of staff retired during the past two years.
- 4.3. Staff with nursing or other relevant knowledge and skills required during the pandemic, who are employed by the HSE but no longer engaged in nursing duties etc, should be identified, up-skilled as appropriate and redeployed to assist where their skills are most required.
- 4.4. Arrangements may be made to outsource some work or engage the services of agency staff where it is not feasible to redeploy HSE staff.

5. Payroll

- 5.1. During the pandemic event redeployed staff should continue to be paid by their existing payroll department
- 5.2. All staff will continue to be coded on their usual department timesheets regardless of where they are working or what they are doing
- 5.3. Appropriate line manager approval must be given on all overtime requests based on priority of need

6. Alterations to work location / grade

6.1. Notice requirements normally associated with alterations to the usual practice of scheduling shift changes, changes to hours of work and/or changes to work locations will be suspended for the duration of the pandemic as redeployment needs will require assessment on a daily basis.

6.2. If necessary staff may be required to work different hours or in a different location. In this regard redeployment will be based on need and urgency of need. Line managers will have discretion in this regard consistent with the Regional Crisis Management Team plan.

7. Work / Redeployment refusal

7.1. Work refusal or redeployment refusals will be handled in accordance with the HSE Grievance & Disciplinary Procedure which outlines the requirement of the employee to 'work under protest' in the event of a grievance arising relating to an instruction issued by a line manager, based on a service imperative. Line managers should consult their local HR Department for support / advice in this regard.

7.2. All scheduled annual leave will be cancelled from the point at which an emergency is declared in Ireland at the direction of the National Pandemic Group / National Crisis Management Team. Line managers for all services will cancel discretionary leave to ensure continuity of service.