



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

REDEPLOYMENT OF STAFF DURING COVID-19 INFECTION

13TH MARCH 2020

1. Scope

- 1.1 This Policy applies to all TUSLA employees and to all grades of staff during COVID-19. It has immediate effect and replaces all previous instructions in operation in the TUSLA.
- 1.2 As a result of World Health Organisation declaring a world pandemic and considering European Centre for Disease Control and National Public Health Emergency Team advice, the subsequent announcement 12th March 2020 by the Government on school closures and restricted social interaction, highlights the seriousness of emergency with regard to COVID 19. Both the Tusla and Health Sector Unions acknowledge the scale and unprecedented nature of the current situation and the need to respond accordingly. The Tusla policy on redeployment which is agreed with the Unions reflects the collaborative approach being adopted in an effort to protect the best interests and health of the citizens of the State. Normal agreed arrangements as per the Public Service Stability Agreement will apply when this crisis passes.

2. Purpose of this Document

- 2.1 Prioritisation of essential services and ensuring continuity of these services within Child and Family Agency and the effective redeployment of TUSLA Employees are one of the core elements of the TUSLA's response to COVID-19 infection. As COVID-19 progresses all public services will come under particular strain. As the demand for public services increases, the number of TUSLA employees available to provide services may decrease due to absenteeism.
- 2.2 Throughout COVID-19 infection employees will be treated in a manner consistent with established human resource principles and collective agreements with respect of the core values of the Child and Family Agency. Nevertheless, particular co-operation from all employees will be required during this outbreak. In such circumstances the following framework in respect of identified redeployment needs will apply.

3. Redeployment of Staff

- 3.1 When forward planning for COVID-19 infection, Tusla managers should identify and document all essential national, regional and local level activities that need to continue during the infection in line with local continuity business plans. The identification of non essential services should also be documented and all resources available for redeployment identified. This should be done as part of best practice emergency planning and reviewed if and when a national public health emergency is declared. Business continuity plans for each unit should be made available to the Chief Executive Officer (-CEO), the COO Chief Operations Officer and relevant National Director of Corporate Divisions in advance of any emergency.
- 3.2 When considering the redeployment of employees, local business continuity plans should direct the CEO, the COO and the National Crisis Management Team in deciding on the redeployment of staff resources.
- 3.3 In order to deal with the effects of COVID-19 infection there may be a requirement for some or all identified non-essential services to be cancelled or postponed. Employees in positions that are curtailed or temporarily suspended (non-essential services) will be

deemed available to be redeployed to assist in other essential service areas that are experiencing staffing shortages.

- 3.4 In the case of identified and suitably qualified essential staff that may be required to assist the HSE to maintain essential front line services e.g. Nursing and Admin, a voluntary request to these staff will issue. This is recognised as an evolving situation and these re deployments may require review as the emergency planning is reviewed.
- 3.5 Employees most at risk of contracting COVID -19 in the work place (e.g. age 60 years or over, have a long term medical condition, immune suppressed, pregnant) will be assigned to non-direct contact areas. Employees should advise their line manager of their particular circumstances in order to protect themselves from unnecessary risk.
- 3.6 All line managers must ensure confidentiality at all times.

4. How redeployment will be managed

- 4.1 In line with local business continuity plans, and in conjunction with service managers and the National Crisis Management Team, HR will lead the management and redeployment of employees. This will include consideration of appropriate skill sets and geographical redeployment limits.
- 4.2 If deemed necessary, decisions may be made to engage the services of members of staff retired during the past two years; other options maybe to discuss increased working hrs with those employees who maybe currently working a reduced working week. HR Departments should be consulted in these circumstances.
- 4.3 Employees with nursing, medical, health and social care professional or other skills required during COVID-19 infection, who are employed by the TUSLA but no longer engaged in frontline health duties should be identified and redeployed to assist where their skills are most required. Health and social care professionals are regulated, and redeployment decisions by the organisation must take account of scope of practice considerations. As regulated professionals' individuals have an obligation to remain within their scope, and if a regulated professional determines they are not competent in a proposed sphere of activity this decision must be respected.

5. Payroll

- 5.1 During COVID-19 infection redeployed employees will continue to be paid by their existing payroll department.
- 5.2 All employees 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 COVID-19 infection as redeployment needs will require assessment on a daily basis.
- 6.2 If necessary, employee's maybe 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 local business continuity plans. As soon practically possible this will be communicated to the affected staff .

7. Work / Redeployment Refusal

- 7.1 Refusals to work or to be redeployed, save where this arises from scope of practice concerns for a regulated professional, will be handled in accordance with the Grievance Procedure for the Child and Family Agency, 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 HR Department for support/advice in this regard.
- 7.2 If a national public health emergency is declared an examination of staffing levels will take place. It may be necessary for the cancellation of annual and discretionary leave. This will be considered by the National Crisis Management Team. In accordance with spirit of 1.2 of this document a collaborative approach will be adopted at all times.

8. Monitoring and review

- 8.1 The situation regarding COVID-19 will be changing rapidly so managers and staff should continue to check the HSE corona virus web pages and Tusla internal Communications for information.
- 8.2 This policy and procedure may be subject to regular review by the parties in light of the emerging situation concerning COVID-19.
- 8.3 There will be regular Telecom with staff partners, times and dates to be agreed.