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Coronavirus testing for key workers

REGULATORY

The UK Department for Health and Social Care has launched a national testing programme to test key workers with symptoms of COVID-19 as well as any symptomatic members of their household. Key workers include passenger and freight transport workers who are critical to the continuity of essential public transport and the production and distribution of food, drink and essential goods.

A new questions-and-answer guide (www.is.gd/itoyac) covers England, Northern Ireland and Scotland (but not Wales). It says that an employer referral portal is available to simplify the process. Employers can upload lists of essential workers, and the system will generate invitations via text and email. Employers should



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email portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk for access to the employer referral portal (www.is.gd/esiwun).

Here are summary guidelines about acting on the tests. Employees with negative results should only return to work if they feel well enough. If everyone with symptoms in their household who was tested receive a

negative result, the employee can return to work immediately, providing he or she has not had a fever for 48 hours. If a household member tests positive but the worker tests negative, the worker can return to work on day eight from the start of symptoms if he or she has not had a fever for 48 hours.

REGULATORY

Furloughs extended

Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced in mid-May that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (government furloughs) will be extended until the end of October 2020. We understand that until the end of July 2020 there will be no changes. From August to October 2020, the scheme continues on the basis that furloughed employees can be brought back part-time. Sunak also indicated that the government will ask companies to 'start sharing' the cost of the scheme from August, but as of mid-May no details of what this means were released.

REGULATORY

Furlough guidance revised

The government has published a revised guide to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme explaining the information that employers need to provide to HMRC to make a claim, and the processes involved. It is available via www.is.gd/utufar

FINANCE

Small business loans

A new 'Bounce Back' loan scheme launched on 4 May to provide small businesses with loans of between £2,000 to £50,000. There will be no fees or interest to pay in the first year.

COMPLIANCE

Temporary waiver of D4 medicals

DVLA has made temporary provisions for existing bus and lorry drivers aged 45 and over to forego the need for a D4 medical to renew their driving entitlement. These changes are temporary and will only apply if the licence has not expired before 1 January 2020.

REGULATORY

Rail replacement PSVAR delayed

The full implementation of new accessibility rules has been pushed back until 31 December (see also www.is.gd/elufah).

Fact File

Submitting a driver's licence application

DVLA is trialing a new process from 4 May 2020 for acknowledging receipt of vocational driving licence applications. Section 88 of The Road Traffic Act 1988 can allow drivers to continue driving once their licence has expired, provided a number of conditions are satisfied, including that the renewal form has been received by the DVLA.

DVLA will now acknowledge receipt of applications via email or SMS (if no email address is provided). If no email address or mobile phone number is provided, DVLA will confirm receipt of the application by letter. Applicants should therefore ensure full contact details are provided in their application.

This new process means that, once receipt of a renewal application has been acknowledged by DVLA, drivers can continue to drive under Section 88 whilst their licence application is being processed by the DVLA, so long as the other Section 88 criteria are met.

For more information, see the full document on www.is.gd/aiwola.