

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Widdis, Hugh  
**Sent:** 03 March 2020 13:15  
**To:** Cooke, Michael (HR); Minne, Jill  
**Cc:** TEO HOCS (DS); Gray, Sue (DoF); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT, OFFICIAL AND SENSITIVE: HR matters relating to coronavirus within the NICS.

**Sensitivity:** Confidential

Michael

All good thanks.

Hugh

**HUGH WIDDIS**

Departmental Solicitor and Head of Government Legal Service NI  
Departmental Solicitor's Office

**Victoria Hall, 12 May Street, Belfast, BT1 4NL**

**Tel:** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

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**From:** Cooke, Michael (HR)  
**Sent:** 03 March 2020 13:11  
**To:** Widdis, Hugh [REDACTED] Minne, Jill [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** TEO HOCS (DS) [REDACTED] Gray, Sue (DoF) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT, OFFICIAL AND SENSITIVE: HR matters relating to coronavirus within the NICS.  
**Sensitivity:** Confidential

Hugh

Thank you for your e mail.

We are aiming to issue the guidance for managers / staff this afternoon to NICS Board members for their consideration so I will tidy up the wording to reflect your comments re the conflict in wording.

In terms of home wording we are trying to encourage homeworking where it is possible to do so; as you rightly say it is not possible for all roles – there a significant number of roles for which this would not work so it will very much be on a case by case basis, with a reliance on managers discretion / common sense, supported by advice from NICS HR. If we try and push a requirement for working from home we may create more problems than we solve, in particular with (a) TUS and (b) how we are seen to treating people equally.

Let me have a think about the wording.

Best regards,

Michael

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**From:** Widdis, Hugh  
**Sent:** 03 March 2020 13:01  
**To:** Minne, Jill [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** TEO HOCS (DS) [REDACTED]; Gray, Sue (DoF) [REDACTED] Cooke, Michael (HR) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT, OFFICIAL AND SENSITIVE: HR matters relating to coronavirus within the NICS.  
**Sensitivity:** Confidential

Jill

In relation to b (self-isolation) (and to a lesser extent c (caring)), if an employee is not ill but is not in the workplace, could we not *require* them to work from home if possible, rather than automatic special leave? I appreciate that this may not be possible for all roles but for many it will be; for example I had anticipated doing this for DSO legal advisers.

I note that homeworking is dealt with at para 6 to some degree but that seems somewhat in conflict with the description in b: 'where the absence has been advised it will be treated as paid special leave': if the person is on leave we can't require him or her to work.

Otherwise I am content thanks.

Hugh

**HUGH WIDDIS**

Departmental Solicitor and Head of Government Legal Service NI  
Departmental Solicitor's Office

**Victoria Hall, 12 May Street, Belfast, BT1 4NL**

**Tel:** [REDACTED]  
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**From:** Minne, Jill  
**Sent:** 02 March 2020 17:07  
**To:** [REDACTED] Brennan, Mike [REDACTED]  
Browne, Mark (Deputy Secretary) [REDACTED] Stewart, Chris (TEO) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Baker, Derek [REDACTED] DfE Permanent Secretary Support [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Godfrey, Katrina (DfI – Perm Sec) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]; Gray, Sue (DoF) [REDACTED]  
King, Brenda [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]; May, Peter [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] McMahon, Denis [REDACTED] Meharg, Tracy [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Pengelly, Richard [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Widdis, Hugh [REDACTED] Sterling, David [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Cooke, Michael (HR) [REDACTED] McNabb, Chris [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] NICS HR Director [REDACTED]; McLaughlin, Mark (DOF) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Rooney, Bernie [REDACTED]

**Subject:** URGENT, OFFICIAL AND SENSITIVE: HR matters relating to coronavirus within the NICS.

**Importance:** High

**Sensitivity:** Confidential

Dear NICS Board colleagues

As discussed at our meeting on Friday please find attached a paper setting out decisions required from the NICS Board on how absence relating to coronavirus will be managed within the NICS.

Following agreement on these matters NICSHR and communications colleagues will issue detailed guidance to managers and staff (agency staff will be covered in the guidance) and advise TUS.

Given the urgency of this issue I should be very grateful for a response on these particular matters by 2.00 pm tomorrow if possible.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Jill Minne**

**Strategic HR Director, NI Civil Service**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor | 2-4 Bruce Street | Belfast | BT2 7JD**

**Contact:** [REDACTED]



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