



2 July 2020

Mr. Gerry O'Brien
Principal Officer
People Pay & Superannuation Unit – Resources Division
Department of Health
Block 1, Miesian Plaza
50-58 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2, D02 XW14

Our Ref: P018/029/2016

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Request for Extension on Waiver of Abatement

Dear Gerry

I refer to recent correspondence from your Department (22 June 2020) in which a request has been made for a 3 month extension of the COVID-19 related pension abatement waiver for 100 rehires. The original waiver was granted in accordance with Section 52(4) of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 (the Act).

I note that the primary justification for the request is based on current public health advice and the uncertainty which remains about the future course of the disease, taking into account the success in flattening the curve in Ireland but mindful of on-going global issues, the phasing of removal of lock-down measures and the behaviour of disease as Ireland re-opens.

Having reviewed the information provided and given the uncertainty that exists in relation to the risk of a second wave of COVID-19 cases, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has approved the proposal to extend the abatement waiver by a further three months for 100 Covid related rehires until end September and with effect from 1 July 2020. The extension of the waiver is subject to the following regular reporting/monitoring requirements i.e.

1. The HSE shall keep a record of all individuals recruited for the purpose of dealing with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) including staff category, service area, location, the duration of each contract, the work-sharing pattern of the individual and the cost involved taking into account the pro-rata/periodic method of abatement.



2. The Department of Health will provide monthly reports to this Department on the operation and implementation of the waiver at the end of each month. This should include an aggregate summary of the information requirements outlined in point 1 above.
3. The HSE shall ensure that all expenditure under this waiver can be tracked separately in order to ensure that all exceptional spending on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is capable of being identified.

Abatement policy remains a key component of the Act and addresses valid concerns about simultaneous payment of both pension and salary in the public service. Such waivers should only be granted in exceptional circumstances and for a limited period. This Department does not support long-term exemptions from the principle of abatement or, from a HR perspective, long-term reliance on retired workers. Accordingly, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has approved this request on the basis that no further extension beyond end September will be provided unless there is a significant deterioration in the public health situation.

Consistency in the application of abatement principles across the public service is also important. Therefore, it is vital that abatement policy in the Health sector returns to normal as soon as possible to bring it into line with other sectors i.e. waivers are only granted on a case by case basis and only in very atypical circumstances as provided under Section 52(4) of the Act.

Questions relating to the operation of the waiver will be a matter for your Department.

Yours Sincerely

Eoin Dormer
Principal Officer