

JT HRCONSULTANCY LTD



Introduction

The monkeypox virus may have emerged in the UK, but experts have said it is “not another Covid” and have urged employers to follow official guidance.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) found the symptoms for most people have been mild, only causing severe illness in some cases such as young children, pregnant women, and individuals who are immunocompromised.

If someone is infected with monkeypox, it usually takes between 5 and 21 days for the first symptoms to appear. These include a high temperature, a headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen glands, shivering (chills) and exhaustion.

In the early stages, a rash (which can be confused with chickenpox) often begins on the face, then spreads to other parts of the body.

Confirmed cases should be treated under normal sickness rules.

However, issues could arise where an employee is advised to self-isolate. Where possible, if employees can work from home then that should be the solution, however we are back to that issue of sick pay if an employee cannot work remotely.

The rule is statutory sick pay will not be payable for the isolation period unless the employee gets too ill to work during it. This is similar to the current Covid isolation position. The isolation period is 21 days. Employers will have to decide whether they will require close contacts with a confirmed case to not come to work for the 21 days or whether they will still require them to come in.

The situation is different in instances where an employer asks someone who has been in close contact with a confirmed case to stay away from the workplace. In this scenario, failing to provide full pay could lead to claims of unlawful deduction from wages, as it is the employer refusing to allow the employee to work.

So what is best practice? Support workers required to self-isolate or quarantine, and if you can, cover the cost of quarantine. Due to concerns about pay, employees may come into the workplace when they should not.

Alongside enabling workers to work from home and making reasonable adjustments for quarantined workers, you should protect workers from reprisals when reporting potential cases of illness or incidents, such as exposure to the disease

HELPING BUSINESS OWNERS WITH ALL THEIR HR NEEDS

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