

Information Sheet No.77

Support Measures to mitigate Covid -19 released by Cyprus Government**A. Granting of Special Leave for the care of children**

1. The application is submitted by employed persons who were insured with the Social Insurance Fund in January 2020.
2. The Special Leave benefit is granted to employed parents whom their last gross monthly salary did not exceed euro 2.500. Applications of single parents whose last gross monthly salary exceeded euro 2.500 will also be examined on a case by case basis.
3. The Special Leave benefit will be calculated as follows:
 - a) Family with both parents: For part of salary below euro 1.000, 60% will be received and between euro 1.000 - euro 2.000, 40% will be received. Thus, the maximum amount to be received for a month is euro 1.000.
 - b) Single parent family (as per the Regulations' definition): For part of salary below euro 1.000, 70% will be received and between euro 1.000 - euro 2.000, 50% will be received. Thus, the maximum amount to be received for a month is euro 1.200.
4. The period of Special Leave can commence from 16 March 2020 for a maximum period of 4 weeks in total for both parents. The relevant calculations will be applied pro-rata to the days of leave taken by each of the two parents. The benefit cannot be provided to both parents for the same period.
5. Provision of the Special Leave benefit need to be approved by the employer.
6. The benefit will not be provided for any period whereby the applicant received unemployment benefit, special unemployment benefit, sickness benefit or special sickness benefit. The benefit is not granted when one of the two parents is not working due to the above mentioned reasons, is unemployed or not working for other reason (unless the parent not working is infected by COVID-19, is disabled or is under mandatory quarantine).
7. Working parents eligible for the Minimum Guaranteed Income could also apply for the Special Leave benefit, subject to conditions.

B. Special Sickness benefit

1. The Special Sickness benefit is provided to employees falling under the below categories:
 - a) Persons falling under the list of requiring special attention, as indicated by the Ministry of Health on 16 March 2020 or any future amendment and have a relevant certificate from their doctor;
 - b) Persons under mandatory quarantine or self-isolation as per the instructions of the Ministry of Health who hold the relevant Medical Certificate issued by the Ministry of Health or based on the instructions of the Ministry of Health from the personal doctor;
 - c) Persons infected with the virus Covid-19 holding a certificate for the Ministry of Health;
 - d) Persons aged 63-65 who do not receive a pension and are included in categories a-c above and hold the relevant certificate.

2. The benefit is granted only to persons who are under employment for the period of their application, are insured with the Social Insurance Fund, are up to 65 years old and do not receive a pension.
3. The maximum amount to be paid as Special Sickness benefit for employed of the private sector and self-employed persons cannot exceed euro 1.214 per month. The period of cover is between 16 March 2020 to 12 April 2020.
4. The benefit is not provided for a period during which the applicant receives unemployment benefit, special unemployment benefit, sickness benefit and benefit of Special Leave for the care of children.
5. It is clarified that the benefit for persons under self-isolation can be received only if they cannot work from home or work under flexible arrangements.
6. The employer is released from his obligation to pay the salary to the employees receiving the Special Sickness benefit.
7. Working parents eligible for the Minimum Guaranteed Income could also apply for the Special Sickness benefit, subject to conditions.

C. Special Benefit for the Self-Employed

1. The Special Benefit for the Self-Employed is granted to self-employed persons who:
 - a) Have fully suspended their operations, on the basis of Order issued by the Ministry of Health and relevant decisions of the Council of Ministers, can be found at www.piogov.cy/coronavirus.
 - b) Have partially suspended their operation, for example there is a deduction of over 25% in their turnover during March 2020 and they foresee a similar deduction of their turnover during April 2020, compared to the corresponding months of the prior year due to Covid-19 pandemic. In the event the business did not operate during 2019 the comparison will be made against the months preceding March 2020.
2. The following classes of self-employed persons are excluded from the Special Benefit plan:
 - a) Pharmacologists, microbiologists, and similar;
 - b) Doctors (excluding dentists);
 - c) Pharmacists;
 - d) Operators of medical devices and equipment;
 - e) Insurance brokers and agents;
 - f) Owners of mini-markets, convenience stores and grocery shops;
 - g) Producers of dairy products;
 - h) Teachers in public institutes (their remuneration will be paid from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth).
3. The weekly benefit will be equal to 60% of the mandatory amount of insurable earnings during the fourth quarter of 2019.
4. The Benefit cannot be lower than euro 300 (for a 4 week period) or exceed euro 900 (for a 4 week period).
5. The benefit is not provided for a period during which the applicant receives unemployment benefit, special unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, special sickness benefit and benefit of Special Leave for the care of children.

6. The benefit applies if the self-employed has not laid-off any of his/her employees since 1 March 2020 and in case of approval, not to proceed with the dismissal of any of his/her employees for the period(s) (s)he is to receive the benefit plus one month (unless such dismissal is for reasons justifying the non-provision of notice).
7. The Special Plan for the Self-Employed applies from 16 March to 12 April 2020, considering the dates the Orders of the Ministry of Health or the decisions of the Council of Ministers were announced and it may apply for a period preceding the 16 March 2020 if the decision for mandatory suspension of their business was taken before 16 March 2020.
8. Self employed persons eligible for the Minimum Guaranteed Income could also benefit.

D. Special Plan for the Suspension of Businesses' operations

1. For a business to be eligible to participate in the plan should not have laid-off any of its employees since 1 March 2020 and, in case of the application's approval not proceed with any dismissal of its employees for the period it participates in the plan, and for an additional period equal to the period of participation to the plan plus one month (unless a dismissal is made for reasons justifying the non-provision of notice). Businesses will not be able to proceed with any lay-offs of employees due to financial difficulties during the above mentioned period.
2. For businesses with more than 9 employees, the Special Unemployment Benefit will be paid to 90% of their employees. The remaining 10%, including directors, shareholders, partners that hold over 20% of the shares, general managers and other managers will not be eligible to the Special Plan for Suspension of Businesses' operations. Nevertheless, where the number of the above positions exceeds 10%, the benefit may be payable to such employees subject to conditions.
3. For businesses with up to 9 employees the Special Unemployment Benefit can be payable to all employees.
4. The employer is released from his obligation to pay the salary to the employees receiving the Special Unemployment Benefit for that period.
5. The Special Unemployment Benefit is calculated as follows:
 - a) For employed persons who meet the defined insurable criteria as per the Social Insurance legislation – 60% of the value of their insurable units in line with the applicable legislation.
 - b) For employed persons who meet the defined insurable criteria as per the Social Insurance Legislation but were insured with the Social Insurance Fund in January 2020 – the benefit will be granted under conditions that will be determined in future Decision.
 - c) The amount of the Special Unemployment Benefit will not exceed euro 1.214 for an one month period.
6. The benefit is not provided for a period during which the applicant receives unemployment benefit, special unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, special sickness benefit and benefit of Special Leave or other similar benefits from the Social Insurance Fund.
7. The Special Plan for the Self-Employed applies from 16 March to 12 April 2020, considering the dates the Orders of the Ministry of Health or the decisions of the Council of Ministers

were announced and it may apply for a period preceding the 16 March 2020 if the decision for mandatory suspension of their business was taken before 16 March 2020.

8. Employers that had joined the Suspension of Businesses' operations of the tourism industry upon completion of the suspension period are eligible to the current Plan.

E. Special Plan for the Partial Suspension of Businesses' operations

1. This applies from 16 March 2020 to 12 April 2020 for:
2. Businesses (companies or individuals) that have partially suspended their operations, for example presents a reduction of over 25% of its turnover during March 2020 and expects similar reduction for April 2020, if compared with the corresponding months of the prior year due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic.
3. In the event the business did not operate during the prior year then the comparison is made with the months preceding March 2020.
4. For a business to be eligible to participate in the plan should not have laid-off any of its employees since 1 March 2020 and, in case of the application's approval not proceed with any dismissal of its employees for the period it participates in the plan, and for an additional period equal to the period of participation to the plan plus one month (unless a dismissal is made for reasons justifying the non-provision of notice). Businesses will not be able to proceed with any lay-offs of employees due to financial difficulties during the above-mentioned period.
5. Businesses employing up to 50 employees, can participate in the Special Plan and apply for payment of the Special Unemployment Benefit to 75% of their employees (if conditions apply).
6. Businesses employing more than 50 employees, can participate in in the Special Plan and apply for the payment of the Special Unemployment Benefit to 60% if their employees (if conditions apply).
7. Businesses employing up to 2 two employees can apply for all their employees.
8. For Businesses employing more than 2 employees, the Special Unemployment Benefit will not be granted to shareholders/ directors, partners holding more than 20% of the shares, general managers and other managers falling within the 25%/40% limits. In case the number of the above positions exceeds the mentioned percentages, the benefit may be also payable to such employees if conditions apply.
9. The employer is released from his obligation to pay the salary to the employees receiving the Special Unemployment Benefit for that period.
10. When participating in the scheme the employer has the right to continue employing staff receiving the Special Unemployment Benefit, by paying the employees' salary not "covered" by the benefit along with the contributions to the Social Insurance related funds. The part of the employee's salary not "covered" by the benefit could be adjusted, upon agreement with the employee, with a corresponding adjustment to the employee's working hours.
11. Businesses of the public sector and businesses operating in the below sectors do not have the right of applying to the plan:
 - a) Supermarkets;
 - b) Businesses engaged in the supply of foodstuff;
 - c) Trading of fruit, vegetables, meat and fish;

- d) Satellite and other telecommunication services;
 - e) Production of electricity;
 - f) Waste collection and management;
 - g) Credit and insurance operations, including licensed financial institutions;
 - h) Veterinary services;
 - i) Doctors (excluding dentists);
 - j) Hospitals;
 - k) Nursing homes;
 - l) Production of pharmaceutical supplies;
 - m) Wholesale trade in pharmaceutical products;
 - n) Pharmacies;
 - o) Trade in medical and orthopedic supplies.
 - p) The Special Unemployment Benefit is calculated as per Paragraph.
12. The Special Unemployment Benefit is calculated as per Paragraph 5(a)-5(c) as noted above in the Special Plan for the Suspension of the Businesses' operations.
13. The benefit is not provided for a period during which the applicant receives unemployment benefit, special unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, special sickness benefit and benefit of Special Leave or other similar benefits from the Social Insurance Fund.

NOTES:

The above is intended to provide a brief guide only. It is essential that appropriate professional advice is obtained. P.G. Economides & Co Ltd will be glad to assist you in this respect. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

2 April 2020