

Edinburgh Leisure Update

Changes to staff benefits

You will be aware of the recent changes to how you access Edinburgh Leisure facilities. I want to make it clear that UNISON did not agree to these changes. Whilst your employer has explained the need to make these changes, we still believe it could have been handled differently. They have stated that the changes are for safety reasons i.e. to enable track and trace, all activities must be bookable and also due to venues having reduced capacity.

We do appreciate that Edinburgh Leisure has had virtually no income from customers for over 6 months and that paying customers must be the priority at this time. We do expect however that as restrictions start to ease (eventually) and we gradually return to normal this will be revisited. This is a non-contractual change but has often been referred to in the overall discussions on pay, we will be ensuring this stays on the agenda.

Self-isolation procedure

As a result of the pandemic Edinburgh Leisure created a new procedure outlining what happens if staff must self-isolate. The procedure explains what is required in each scenario and is generally in line with Government guidance. However, the procedure indicates that any absence from work relating to Covid-19, including self-isolation (except travel), will be recorded as sick and be subject to normal sickness absence monitoring and attendance management triggers. This means that those who have to self-isolate will receive occupational sick pay unless their entitlement has already been paid. We have made it clear that we disagree with this approach as we believe staff should receive normal pay when following government guidance. This is in line with the Scottish Governments Fair Work Statement which says no one should face any financial detriment either now or in the future. By paying occupational sick pay during these periods,

members may be penalised in future if they suffer non Covid related ill health. We do not believe these absences should count towards monitoring and triggers and we will support our members who find themselves in this position. There is a concern that this approach does not support members to self-isolate and people may be less inclined to follow government guidance especially if it means they will be financially penalised.

Reopening of venues

As Edinburgh Leisure gradually reopen venues, we have been keeping a watchful eye ensuring your health and safety is at the forefront of decision making. Our members need to feel safe as they return to work. Some members have been in touch regarding changes to their normal working hours/days. Unfortunately, contracts generally allow for this type of flexibility, but you should get in touch if this is causing you significant difficulty.

Membership

Membership has increased over the summer. With so many uncertainties around what the future holds, many of your colleagues have realised the benefit of having the support of the trade union. We will need the strength of numbers in the coming months to fight for the best possible conditions and pay (which has been put on hold!) Please share this bulletin with your colleagues and encourage them to join. Our strength lies in unity and we have never been more in need of uniting!

UNISON Welfare

Did you know that UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch is one of the very few branches that has its own welfare fund which supplements UNISON UK welfare 'There For You'. Both funds help members who have a particular financial need. If you have found yourself to be in financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic please get in touch.