

Furloughed Employees



In times of economic difficulty, an employer may not have work for their employees to undertake for some time.

In these circumstances, an employer may choose to put a member of staff on furlough, a temporary leave without pay. Due to the spread of coronavirus in the UK, many businesses are collapsing or being forced to stop working due to Government regulations. Rather than make staff redundant or lay them off, many companies are placing their staff on furlough.

A report from the British Chambers of Commerce's Coronavirus Business Tracker showed that almost half of

respondents (44%) expected to furlough at least half of their staff in the week commencing 30th March 2020, and a further 32% stating they expect to place 75-100% of their workforce on furlough in the same week. In this helpsheet, we will advise you on possible sources of Government help and what support CiC can provide through this difficult time. If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised, the CiC 24-hour Confidential Care Adviceline is available for practical and emotional support.

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Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

What Is It?

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was introduced on March 1st 2020 as a temporary scheme to operate for at least 3 months and is open to all UK employers. The scheme supports companies who have been severely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

What Are You Entitled To?

The Government will provide a grant to employers to cover 80% of wages for furloughed staff, up to a maximum of £2500 per month. The Government will also pay National Insurance contributions and the minimum pension entitlement. The employee's salary whilst on furlough will be subject to usual income tax and other deductions. Your employer can cover the remaining 20% of your wage if they are able to.

Who Is Eligible?

The scheme is open to all UK employers that had created a PAYE payroll scheme on or before 28 February 2020. This includes businesses, charities, recruitment agencies (using PAYE), and public authorities. Employees on any contract are eligible, including full-time, part-time, and agency. The scheme also covers those who were made redundant before 28th February, if their employer rehires them.

Wellbeing and Furlough

We are all different and react differently to situations. Some of us may welcome being placed on furlough, as perhaps we have children at home to look after or vulnerable people to care for. Some may even see it as a welcome break from work. However, others will find this a very difficult time and their wellbeing may begin to suffer. There are many ways to combat the difficulties that may arise whilst on furlough.

- ▶ **Create a New Routine.** Our jobs contribute significantly to our daily routine and suddenly being without this structure can have a negative effect on our wellbeing. You may find yourself becoming bored, unmotivated and unsure what to do with your time. It is important that you try to stick to a routine during this time. Try to wake up at reasonable times, ensure you get some daily activity in, make sure you socialise – telephone, Skype, and online games can be great for this - and use the time productively to learn a new skill or take up a new hobby. You might consider volunteering.



- ▶ **Face the Fear of The Unknown.** You may also be facing a fear of the unknown during this time. You may be worried about how 'temporary' this change might be. You may be concerned as to whether the Retention Scheme will change as time goes on. Perhaps you are anxious about whether your employer will close the business altogether at some point. The best thing you can do when faced with these kind of worries is to keep up to date with Government communications. It is also important to keep an open line of contact with your employer so you can express any worries to them.
- ▶ **Contact CiC.** As your EAP provider, we are here to help during difficult times such as this. Ensure you have all of the access information required and managers should be sure to pass this onto their teams. Encourage your team to make use of the service if they are in need of some extra support. We can provide assistance through our AdviceLine or you can make use of the wealth of information on our online portal Well Online.

Furloughed Employees

- ▶ **Talk with Those Around You.** The negative effect on your wellbeing can very quickly pass on to those you live with. It is therefore important that you are open with members of your household. Let them know if you are struggling with not being at work - they may be able to suggest ways of getting through this together. This may be a particular challenge if you live with people who are still working.
- ▶ **Support your Employees.** If you are a manager and still working, it is important that you continue to provide support to your team members. Some employees may be feeling guilty if other members of the team are able to work. They may be worried about the future of their jobs. Some may be worried about being isolated, especially if they live alone. Keep in contact with your team and reassure them if possible. Be open and transparent with them. It is important to explain the situation and avoid making any false promises. If you know they have a difficult home situation – perhaps

relationship problems, domestic violence or a vulnerable family member– be sure to signpost them to appropriate sources of help such as local authorities or CiC’s Adviceline

How Can CiC Support

If you have been placed on furlough or are a manager placing employees on furlough, we are able to support you in multiple ways during this time.

- ▶ **Emotional Support.** If your wellbeing is suffering whilst on furlough and you would like to speak with one of our trained counsellors, we are here to help as always. If you do not wish to speak with somebody, but would still like some advice on wellbeing, make use of the extensive website on our portal Well Online. Here you will find excellent information and guidance on a range of subjects from stress and anxiety to nutrition and sleep.



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- ▶ **Legal Advice.** We offer legal advice which is provided by a team of specialist barristers, solicitors and executives with legal, accountancy and banking backgrounds who share access to an extensive law library and online legal research materials. If you are unsure about any of the legalities surrounding furlough, we can help to clear these up for you and ensure you have the correct information.
- ▶ **Financial Advice.** If you are concerned about your finances during this period, we offer debt information which is delivered over the phone by specialist advisors who can examine financial commitments and spending patterns. Some of the areas our team can offer help with are unsecured debt, budgeting, spending habits, and negotiations with creditors.

Additional Resources

GOV on The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

Mental Health UK on Wellbeing and Furlough:
<https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/supporting-employees-on-furlough/>

Money Saving Expert on Employment Help during Coronavirus:
<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/coronavirus-self-employed-and-employment-help/>

Contact Us

If you are struggling with any of the subjects covered in this helpsheet, we urge you to make contact with our AdviceLine who will be happy to help you. Currently, due to large call volumes, it is more efficient to make contact with us via email. A member of our team will then get back to you as soon as possible.

Email: assist@cic-eap.co.uk