

Furlough and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Employers might need to put some or all of their employees on temporary leave ('furlough') during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This means an employee or worker can agree with their employer to be put on:

- furlough to stop work temporarily but stay employed
- 'flexible furlough' to work some of their usual hours and be put on furlough for the hours they did not work

This can be a difficult time for both employers and staff. It's a good idea to make sure staff have a way to communicate with the employer and other people they work with.

1. Extension of the furlough scheme

The furlough scheme (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) has been extended until 30 April 2021.

Employers will continue to pay furloughed staff 80% of their usual wages up to £2,500 per month – or more if that's been agreed with the employee or worker.

Who can be furloughed

Employers can put someone on furlough, as long as they were employed on or before 30 October 2020. They do not need to have been on furlough before.

Any of the following can be put on furlough, whether they work full time or part time:

- employees
- workers
- agency workers
- those on zero-hours contracts
- apprentices

Employers can also furlough those who are temporarily unable to work because:

- they've been advised to stay at home by their doctor because of an underlying health condition ('[shielding](#)')
- they have childcare responsibilities
- they're caring for a vulnerable person in their household

Employers may also be able to re-employ and then furlough staff who've recently left their jobs or been made redundant.

[Find out more about putting someone on furlough.](#)

What furloughed staff can and cannot do

Furloughed staff can do:

- volunteer work, as long as it's for another employer or organisation
- training to keep their skills and learning up to date

Furloughed staff cannot:

- do tasks or activities that make money for their employer or an organisation linked to their employer
- provide a service for their employer or an organisation linked to their employer

If staff are on flexible furlough, they can do work for their employer during the hours they are not on furlough. They must get their full normal pay for any hours worked. An employer cannot claim for hours worked through HMRC's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.