

Written 3 July 2020

C19 BUSINESS NEWS UPDATE

The Prime Minister shared the government's further plans to reinvigorate the economy as a more localised approach to COVID-19 was introduced this week.

Stock markets remain broadly positive as they reflect on the increasing level of stimulus being offered by central banks across the world. Understandably, many are agreed on where we want to go, but the precise details of how that will be achieved remains unclear. So please talk to us about how we can help with planning and "what if" scenarios, taking some time to set targets and reviewing your options is essential just now.

In this newsletter we remind you to be extra careful about pension scams which are becoming more frequent during these tough times.

FLEXIBLE FURLOUGH INFORMATION COLLECTION FORMS

The big news this week is the introduction of Flexible Furlough for employees from 1 July. The good news is we have developed an information collection form in PDF and Excel format so you can accurately record whether employees are full time, furloughed or part working and part flexible.

Work/ Payroll Number	Employee Name	NI Number (optional)	Date furloughed	Dates must be within the same month e.g, 1 July - 31 July		Enter W - if back to work full time T - furloughed for whole period - not worked F - flexible furlough - worked some hours					Hours worked
				Pay Period		Enter F - fixed hours/on salary or V - variable hours					
				From	To	W/T/F	F/V	Hours/wk	Normal Work pattern e.g. 5 days/week 4 days	In Pay period	

Work/ Payroll Number	Employee Name	Enter below the number of hours worked each day in the month e.g for 7 1/2 hours enter 7.5 You only need to enter the hours for staff that are flexibly furloughed i.e. working just some of their normal hours Please enter this even if the staff member is paid a regular salary																														Total	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		31
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If you would like the information collection form please contact us and will can email it to you with guidance notes and a link to a training video or see the Job Retention Section of the client resources website: <https://clientresources.co.uk/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme/>

We have also developed a claim calculator to give you an estimate of how much you can expect per claim. Please talk to us about running the figures through if you would like to know this.

CHECK IF YOU CAN CLAIM FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES' WAGES THROUGH THE CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME – FLEXIBLE FURLOUGH CLAIMS NOW OPEN

Employers can now submit furlough claims for periods starting on or after 1 July.

If you cannot maintain your workforce because your operations have been affected by coronavirus (COVID-19), you can furlough employees and apply for a grant to cover a portion of their usual monthly wage costs where you record them as being on furlough.

From 1 July, employers can bring furloughed employees back to work for any amount of time and any work pattern, while still being able to claim the grant for the hours not worked. From this date, only employees that you have successfully claimed a previous grant for will be eligible for more grants under the scheme. This means they must have previously been furloughed for at least 3 consecutive weeks taking place any time between 1 March and 30 June 2020. For the minimum 3 consecutive week period to be completed by 30 June, the last day an employee could have started furlough for the first time was 10 June. This may differ if you have an employee returning from statutory parental leave.

From 1 August 2020, employers will be asked to contribute towards the cost of their furloughed employees' wages.

Who can claim?

You can claim for any employees you have furloughed if you have:

- furloughed that employee for at least 3 consecutive weeks between 1 March and 30 June 2020
- a UK PAYE scheme started on or before 19 March 2020
- enrolled for PAYE online
- submitted a report under the Real Time Information (RTI) reporting system for that employee on or before 19 March 2020
- a UK bank account

For employees that meet the criteria above, the amount you claim for in any single claim period starting from 1 July cannot exceed the maximum number of employees you claimed for under any claim ending by 30 June.

For example, an employer had previously submitted three claims between 1 March 2020 and 30 June, in which the total number employees furloughed in each respective claim was 30, 20 and 50 employees. Then the maximum number of employees that employer could furlough in any single claim starting on or after 1 July would be 50.

Agreeing to furlough employees

Employers should discuss with their staff and make any changes to the employment contract by agreement. When employers are making decisions in relation to the process, including deciding who to offer furlough to, equality and discrimination laws will apply in the usual way.

To be eligible for the grant, employers must have confirmed to their employee (or reached collective agreement with a trade union) in writing that they have been furloughed. You must:

- make sure that the agreement is consistent with employment, equality and discrimination laws
- keep a written record of the agreement for 5 years
- keep records of how many hours your employees work and the number of hours they are furloughed (i.e. not working)

The employee does not have to provide a written response and you do not need to place all your employees on furlough.

Prior to 1 July 2020, employees on furlough cannot undertake any work for you other than training. From 1 July, you will:

- only be able to claim for employees who have previously been furloughed for at least 3 consecutive weeks taking place any time between 1 March and 30 June 2020
- be able to flexibly furlough employees – this means you can bring your employees back to work for any amount of time, and any work pattern
- still be able to claim the furlough grant for the hours your flexibly furloughed employees do not work, compared to the hours they would normally have worked in that period.

If you flexibly furlough employees, you will need to agree this with the employee (or reach collective agreement with a trade union) and keep a new written agreement that confirms the new furlough arrangement. You will need to:

- make sure that the agreement is consistent with employment, equality and discrimination laws
- keep a written record of the agreement for 5 years
- keep records of how many hours your employees work and the number of hours they are furloughed (i.e. not working).

You do not need to place all your employees on furlough, and you can continue to fully furlough employees if you wish. Employees cannot undertake any work for you during time that you record them as being on furlough.

Using minimum furlough periods

Until 1 July 2020, any employees you place on furlough must be furloughed for a minimum of 3 consecutive weeks. When they return to work, they must be taken off furlough. Employees can be furloughed more than once, but they must be furloughed for a minimum of 3 consecutive weeks each time they are furloughed.

From 1 July, agreed flexible furlough agreements can last any amount of time. Employees can enter into a flexible furlough agreement more than once.

Where a previously furloughed employee starts a new furlough period before 1 July this furlough period must be for a minimum of 3 consecutive weeks. This is the case regardless of whether the 3 consecutive week minimum period ends before or after 1 July.

For example, a previously furloughed employee can start a new furlough period on 22 June which would have to continue for at least 3 consecutive weeks ending on or after 12 July. After this the employee can then be flexibly furloughed for any period. However, after 1 July, employers cannot make claims that cross calendar months, so the employer will need to make a separate claim for the period up to 30 June.

Although flexible furlough agreements can last any amount of time, unless otherwise specified the period that you claim for must be for a minimum claim period of 7 calendar days.

If you make an error when claiming

If you want to delete a claim in the online service, you must do this within 72 hours.

If you have made an error in a claim that has resulted in an overclaimed amount, you must pay this back to HMRC.

If you are making another claim then you can tell HMRC about an overclaimed amount as part of this. When you make your next claim you will be asked whether you need to reduce the amount to take account of a previous overclaim. Your new claim amount will be reduced to reflect the overclaimed amount and you should keep a record of this adjustment for 6 years. If you have made an error in a claim and do not plan to submit further claims, you should contact HMRC to let them know about your error and find out how to pay back any overclaimed amounts. Once you have contacted HMRC you will be given a payment reference number and directed to make a payment.

If you have made an error that has resulted in an underclaimed amount, you should contact HMRC to amend your claim. As you are increasing the amount of your claim, they need to conduct additional checks.

For more information see: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme?utm_source=b8bc2614-b5a2-4841-ad9b-e3255de6c543&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

FIND EXAMPLES TO HELP YOU CALCULATE YOUR EMPLOYEES' WAGES

Check examples to help you calculate your employee's wages, National Insurance contributions and pension contributions if you are claiming through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Documents



[Examples of how to calculate your employees' wages, National Insurance contributions and pension contributions](#)

HTML



[Example of how to calculate the amount you should claim for an employee who is flexibly furloughed](#)

HTML

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-examples-to-help-you-work-out-80-of-your-employees-wages?utm_source=c11e17df-f95b-47c2-9a4d-71232bc5f907&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

AVOID PENSION SCAMS

In these tough times savers might increasingly look to transfer their pension, prompted by the instability of their employer or the financial markets.

Savers could be increasingly targeted by scammers attempting to lure them to 'safe havens'. Fraudsters promise high returns and low risk, but in reality, pension savers that are scammed can be left with nothing.

When savers realise they have been scammed, it can be devastating – many lose their life savings. Once the money is gone, it is almost impossible to get it back.

How pension scams work

Anyone can be the victim of a pension scam, no matter how savvy they think they are. It is important that everyone can spot the warning signs.

Scammers try to persuade pension savers to transfer their entire pension savings, or to release funds from it, by making attractive sounding promises they have no intention of keeping.

The pension money is often invested in unusual, high risk investments like:

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- overseas property and hotels
 - renewable energy bonds
 - forestry
 - parking
 - storage units

Or it can be simply stolen outright.

Warning signs of a pension scam

Scammers often cold call people via phone, email or text – this is illegal, and a likely sign of a scam. They often advertise online and can have websites that look official or government backed.

Other common signs of pension scams:

- phrases like ‘free pension review’, ‘pension liberation’, ‘loan’, ‘loophole’, ‘savings advance’, ‘one-off investment’, ‘cashback’
- higher returns – guarantees they can get better returns on pension savings
- help to release cash from a pension before the age of 55, with no mention of the HMRC tax bill that can arise
- high pressure sales tactics – time limited offers to get the best deal; using couriers to send documents, who wait until they are signed
- unusual high-risk investments, which tend to be overseas, unregulated, with no consumer protections
- complicated investment structures
- long-term pension investments – which often mean people who transfer in do does not realise something is wrong for a number of years

See the FCA and Pensions Regulator ScamSmart guidance on “Four simple steps to protect yourself from pension scams“ here: https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/-/media/thepensionsregulator/files/import/pdf/16423_pensions_consumer_leaflet_screen.ashx

If you are an employer or trustee of a pension scheme you can support the ScamSmart campaign by downloading the Pensions Regulator awareness toolkit and help by:

- Sharing our social posts
- Promoting articles in your blogs, intranets or newsletters
- Sending our leaflets and posters to your audience

However you choose to support is hugely appreciated by the Regulator and goes a long way in helping to protect consumers from harm to their pension pots.

See:

<https://b6877e08816e416cb6b1b4391bc6a878.marketingusercontent.com/m/view/etDV7wL5sZPbjvOYG26ekxjS8QuQaUNHmeXx3rk2x08x>

ENGLAND - SELF-ISOLATION LIFTED FOR LOWER RISK COUNTRIES

From 10 July 2020 you will be able to travel to several countries without having to self-isolate on return to England.

- passengers returning to or visiting England from certain destinations including Germany, France, Spain and Italy, will no longer need to self-isolate on arrival from 10 July 2020
- FCO will set out exemptions for a number of destinations from its global advisory against 'all but essential' international travel, with changes coming into effect on 4 July 2020
- all passengers, except those on a small list of exemptions, will still be required to provide contact information on arrival in the UK

The full list will be published later today (3 July) so keep an eye on:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/self-isolation-lifted-for-lower-risk-countries-in-time-for-holidays-this-summer?utm_source=f054c448-4e4d-4a8b-a296-73e50ab5d386&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

ENGLAND - INFORMATION FOR FARMERS, LANDOWNERS AND RURAL BUSINESSES

Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier applications – exception requests

The deadline to receive CS Mid-Tier applications is midnight on 31 July. If you have not yet submitted your form, annexes, and any supporting documents, please submit these by the deadline if you are able to do so.

Remember that email is the safest and quickest way to submit your application.

If you believe you will not be able to meet the 31 July deadline due to coronavirus (COVID-19), you must email RPA by 31 July to advise of this. Email: ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk, and use 'CS 2020 Mid-Tier application exception' as the subject title. If you are unable to email, call the helpline on 03000 200 301.

Once you have received an automatic receipt to your email, please submit your application, annexes and supporting documents as soon as possible. RPA will not accept any applications, including annexes and supporting documents, after midnight on 31 August.

For Wildlife Offers, there is no exception and we must receive your application before midnight on 31 July.

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-farmers-landowners-and-rural-businesses?utm_source=33102a37-9d17-4eeb-9bc2-00c23481af32&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate