



10 things employers should be doing for furloughed staff

1. COMMUNICATION AND FINANCIAL WORRIES

Regularly keep in touch with employees on furlough leave to sign-post them to available financial support (managing finances, energy bills, water bills, mortgage, loan and credit card breaks, support with rent and council tax reductions etc).

2. COMMUNICATION AND WELL-BEING

Regularly check in with employees on furlough leave and remind them of available support such as their Employee Assistance Programme or Occupational Health. You could also provide them with well-being tips such as creating and keeping a daily routine, health eating, exercise and the importance of keeping in touch with family and friends. Employers should also direct employees to external sources of support such as the charity Mind and the Mental Health UK website. Employers could also direct employees to well-being apps Headspace.

3. COMMUNICATION, HOME AND RELATIONSHIPS

Some people on furlough leave may find themselves in vulnerable situations at home. If possible, relevant managers should try to stay in touch with these individuals. Employers should also sign-post individuals on furlough leave to external resources such as Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK which offers support for vulnerable people such as migrants, people with disabilities or autism, LGBTQ+ communities, and people affected by domestic violence. Carers UK also offers advice for those who are caring for the elderly or who are highly vulnerable. Working parents can also get advice and support from Unicef's COVID-19 guide for parents.

4. VOLUNTEERING

Employees who are on furlough leave may be feeling that they have lost a sense of purpose. Employers could direct furloughed employees to local charities and support groups who need volunteers to support vulnerable people during these times.

5. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT GROUPS

Employers should consider setting up employee support groups whereby employees on furlough leave can have regular virtual catch ups. This will enable furloughed employees to share their experiences with each other and it will also help with any feelings of social isolation and loneliness.



6. TRAINING

Employers should consider whether they can offer any training to employees who are on furlough leave. Employees can complete job-related training provided that it does not involve them providing services to, or generating revenue for or on behalf of their organisation. Employers must pay employees at least the National Minimum Wage rate for any time spent completing training.

7. EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

Employers should provide furloughed employees with a HR contact who can address any queries or concerns that they may have whilst on furlough leave.

8. EMPLOYEE UPDATES - CHANGES TO CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME (CJRS)

Employers should provide furloughed employees with updates as and when the CJRS is updated. This will ensure that furloughed employees are kept up to speed with the relevant changes. It would also be good practice for employers to produce a FAQ document which can be regularly updated and circulated to furloughed employees.

9. BUSINESS UPDATES

Employers should continue to notify furloughed employees of any business communications which outline changes to the business and any other relevant updates such as plans to re-open and return to the workplace.

10. COMMUNICATION AND THE RETURN TO WORK

Employers should ensure that they ask furloughed employees to share any of their concerns or worries in relation to the return to work. Furloughed employees who have been off work for a number of months will understandably be feeling anxious about their return. Employers should take their views on board and address any worries that they may have.

For more information on furlough, or if you need any legal advice in relation to any employment law topics, do not hesitate to get in touch.

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