

## Job Retention Scheme (Furlough) FAQs

### Practical Guidance

#### **What is the Job Retention Scheme - Furlough?**

On Friday 20 March, the Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced that the government set up a new package of support for businesses which is called the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Under this scheme, the government plans to step in and help pay the wages of people who would otherwise be laid off without pay or made redundant as a result of the Coronavirus crisis. This means that under the scheme employers can claim a grant covering 80% of the wages for a furloughed employee, subject to a cap of £2,500 a month.

**1. Will I be put on furlough?**

We will initially look for volunteers, however, we will need to ensure that we have the right skill base in each business unit to ensure we can run our operations. If you are on furlough you will receive a letter outlining the details and what it means for you. You will be required to sign and accept the terms.

**2. How long will I be on furlough for?**

Initially this will be for a period of 3 weeks. The current scheme expires on 31st May 2020 although the government may decide to extend this.

**3. Will I be paid whilst on furlough?**

Yes, you will receive payment for 80% of your wages up to a maximum of £2,500 whichever is the lowest. The Company will pay an additional top up make up payment of 20% of your base salary

**4. What happens if I decline furlough?**

We are hoping that we can manage furlough through the voluntary process, however, if we cannot do this, we will base our decisions on the skills requirement of each business unit. Where possible, to apply a level of fairness, we will consider rotating employees on furlough.

**5. What happens to my pension payments?**

The Government fund covers 3% of your pension contribution, the Company will top up the remaining pension contribution; therefore, the pension contributions you receive will remain unchanged.

**6. Can I reduce my pension contribution during this period?**

Yes, employees can request to reduce their pension contributions providing that this does not go below the mandatory employee contribution of 4% (employer contributions are made up of the state paying 3% with 1% paid by Rivus).

**7. What will happen to my pension and NI payments, these will be continuing to be deducted/paid by Rivus?**

HRMC will pay 3% of your employer's pension contribution, Rivus will find the difference to maintain the current level of employment contribution being paid.

**8. What happens if I am on SSP currently?**

If you are on sick leave or self-isolating because of coronavirus (COVID-19) you will receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). When you well enough or due to return to return after self-isolating, you can still be furloughed.

- 9. If I am currently on self-isolation for 12 weeks as advised by the NHS, can I still be furloughed?**  
Yes. Your line manager will discuss this with you.
- 10. I am currently receiving SSP, but this may end, so will I be furloughed?**  
The government website states that if you're not eligible or your SSP ends you can apply for Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). You can use form SSP1 to support your application. More information can be found on the <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sickpay/eligibility>.
- 11. If I am off sick, can I be furloughed when I return?**  
Yes, once you return from sick leave, you may be considered for furlough. We are reviewing this on a weekly basis.
- 12. What happens if I am on Maternity leave?**  
If you are on Maternity leave normal rules apply and you will be in receipt of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance (MA). If you are on maternity leave please contact [Judith.marriott@rivusfleetsolutions.org.uk](mailto:Judith.marriott@rivusfleetsolutions.org.uk)
- 13. What happens when I return from Maternity/Paternity leave, will I be placed on furlough?**  
Yes, once you return from Maternity / Paternity / adoption / shared parental leave you may be considered for furlough. We are reviewing this on a weekly basis.
- 14. What happens if I am/or go onto Paternity/Adoption or Shared Parental leave**  
If you are on Paternity/Adoption/shared parental leave, then you will receive usual statutory payments as normal but may be placed on furlough before or following this period of leave.
- 15. What happens if I am on Long Term sickness leave?**  
If you are on long term sickness absence (4 weeks or more) and in receipt of SSP or exhausted SSP you will not qualify for furlough.
- 16. What date do I get paid whilst on furlough?**  
You will get paid in line with our normal pay dates.
- 17. How does Tax and National Insurance work if I am receiving reduced pay?**  
Any Tax or National Insurance deductions you make as an employee will continue to be deducted from the 80% payment (up to maximum payment of £2,500 a month).
- 18. What happens if I am 'Shielding'?**  
If you are 'shielding' in line with public health guidance, then please discuss this with your Line Manager/HR.
- 19. Will I receive my bonus/garage incentive payment if I am furloughed?**  
Any accrued bonus will continue to be paid in the usual way.
- 20. Will there be a delay to me being paid when on furlough, I don't have any savings so how will I be able to pay for my bills until I get paid?**  
No. The company will pay the 80% or £2500 of your wages whichever is lowest so your payday will remain the same. The company claims back these monies from the HMRC government job retention scheme.

## **Employment Impact**

**21. Could I be called at short notice to return to work whilst I am on furlough?**

Yes, if you are on furlough you could be requested to return to work where there is a requirement for you to do so i.e. where there is work available for your job role. We will contact you if you are required to return to work where we will discuss this with you.

**22. Could I be made redundant at the end of the furlough leave?**

Yes. The COVID-19 outbreak is an unprecedented and unknown situation and therefore we are unable to guarantee that redundancies may not occur following people returning to work after furlough. We are doing everything we can to safeguard jobs. If we are in the unfortunate position where we do have to make redundancies the appropriate consultation process will take place.

**23. Can I get another job whilst I am on furlough?**

While on furlough, and to comply with the terms of the Government's scheme, it is important that you do not do any work for us. If you wish to participate in any other work you will need to submit a written request to your line manager, given that we may need to shorten your furlough based on changes in operational delivery, specifically if we have high levels of absence in your work location.

**24. Will I be kept informed on what's happening in the business whilst I am on furlough?**

Yes, your manager will agree with you how you would like to be contacted during furlough, so please ensure your personal contact details are up to date. This might be by email or telephone.

**25. If I am furloughed then made redundant by Rivus, is the redundancy calculation affected?**

No, this support scheme does not impact any of your terms and conditions other than those outlined in your consultation for furlough.

**26. Will I get paid on the normal pay date in April and May?**

Yes.

**27. Will I still have access to 'Team Chat' while I am furloughed?**

Yes, but only for you to communicate with your manager and HR.

**28. If I am not furloughed, can I still book holiday?**

Yes, even if you are furloughed you can book a holiday and it is important that you continue to take it, especially as the work volumes have dropped. We would expect you to take any holiday that has already been booked.

**29. If I have booked annual leave whilst I am furloughed, can I still take the leave?**

Yes, you can, but you will need to speak with your manager to ensure we fall in line with the government guidelines.

**30. Do I continue to accrue holiday whilst on furlough?**

Yes, you continue to accrue annual leave whilst on furlough.

**31. Could I be called at short notice to return to work whilst I am on furlough?**

Yes, if you are on furlough you could be requested to return to work where there is a requirement for you to do so i.e. where there is work available for your job role. We will contact you if you are required to return to work where we will discuss this with you.

- 32. I am on an apprenticeship/professional training. Can I still study if I am furloughed?**  
You cannot do on the job training, but you can on-line/virtual training and research. If you are unsure about any element of your training, please contact your line manager.
- 33. If I have taken unpaid leave / COVID related SSP will furlough be backdated?**  
No, you cannot be paid furlough retrospectively for Sick leave whether COVID-19 related or otherwise.
- 34. If I am furloughed, could this change?**  
Yes. If you are furloughed now because there is no work for you to do, you could be requested to return to work if the needs of the operation significantly changes, for example, we have recently been asked to deliver services for the East of England Ambulance Service.
- 35. If I am not furloughed, could this change?**  
Yes. If the volume of work changes significantly we may have to review the number of employees that have been furloughed.
- 36. What if others in my garage/department are being asked to furlough and I am not – Do I have a choice?**  
We will initially look to use a voluntary process; however, we need to ensure we have the right skills mix in each business unit. If we do not have the right skills mix, we will consult with you outside of the voluntary process. If we are over-subscribed and if operationally possible, we will look to offer a rotational scheme.
- 37. Will being placed on furlough affect my length of service**  
No, being placed on furlough will not affect your length of service which will remain continuous.
- 38. What happens if there is work but only on a part-time basis?**  
If there is still work for you to do then you will not be eligible to furlough. All role activities will be reviewed to establish what critical tasks will still need to continue.
- 39. What are the criteria to select those who volunteer?**  
You will not automatically be selected; several criteria will be taken into consideration including:
- Skillset criteria to perform critical tasks
  - COVID High risk/vulnerable people i.e. +70, severe health condition
  - Childcare
  - Partner a key worker
  - Flexibility (AM/PM/Night working)
- If the mix of volunteers is not right, we will apply the same criteria as above to place people on furlough. We will be working in conjunction with the CWU on any selection.
- 40. If I claim Universal Credit with being placed on furlough. Will it affect this?**  
If you are earning less due to being on furlough, then your Universal Credit payments might change to reflect this. You should contact Citizens Advice if you are going to be bringing home less than you would currently.
- 41. If I fall sick whilst I am on furlough, do I need to report this to my employer?**  
Should you be unable to return to work at the end of furlough due to sickness then you will need to report your absence in the usual way (whether COVID related or otherwise).

**42. What notice period will be given if we require colleagues to come back to work, at the end of furlough?**

You will be expected to return at the end of the 3- week period unless we communicate otherwise with you. We may need you to come back early due to an increase in work volume- in this instance we will look to give you a minimum of 48hrs notice, (this will include weekends). If we need you to extend your furlough, we will consult with you for at least 5 days.