

Flexible furlough scheme starts today

- from today businesses can bring furloughed employees back to work on a part time basis
- firms will be given the flexibility to decide the hours and shift patterns of their employees – with the government continuing to pay 80% of salaries for the hours they do not work
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has so far helped protect more than 9.3 million jobs

The government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has so far helped protect more than 9.3 million jobs through the pandemic, with employers claiming more than £25.5 billion to support wages.

The scheme will remain open until the end of October and will continue to support jobs and business in a measured way as people return to work, our economy reopens and the country moves to the next stage of its recovery.

From today, a month earlier than previously announced, employers will have the flexibility to bring furloughed employees back to work on a part time basis.

Individual firms will decide the hours and shift patterns their employees will work on their return, so that they can decide on the best approach for them – and will be responsible for paying their wages while in work.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Our number one priority has always been to protect jobs and businesses through this outbreak. The furlough scheme, which will have been open for eight months by October, has been a lifeline for millions of people and as our economy reopens we want that support to continue.

Giving firms the flexibility to bring back furloughed workers on a part-time basis will help them work gradually and help them plan for the months ahead.

From August, the level of government grant provided through the job retention scheme will be slowly tapered to reflect that people will be returning to work. Businesses will be asked to contribute a modest share, but crucially individuals will continue to receive that 80% of salary covering the time they are unable to work.

More information about the changes can be found [here](#).

The government has also announced that businesses who no longer need the CJRS grants they previously claimed have the option to voluntarily return them.

This is in direct response to employers asking how they can return grants voluntarily – and businesses are under no obligation to do this, but should contact HMRC if they want to pay the grant back.

Companies across the UK who are bringing back furloughed staff today include The Drury Tea and Coffee Company, and Yes Energy Solutions.

Marco Olmi, Managing Director of London-based international coffee wholesaler The Drury Tea and Coffee Company, said:

The ability to bring our staff out of furlough in a flexible manner will be enormously beneficial as the industry eases out of lockdown. Without this flexibility we would really struggle to cope as we endeavour to grow turnover back to something approaching normal levels whilst trying to keep a lid on short-term costs.

Duncan McCombie, CEO of Yes Energy Solutions, said:

The approach lets us to better manage a fluctuating workload, where those working are doing some additional hours. The flexibility will allow us all to better balance the pressure on those working, support childcare responsibilities and a ease in a return to work after 100 days for those furloughed. A great addition to the options available for business leaders.