

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Furlough) FAQ's

The government is supporting businesses through this uncertain time by introducing a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. All UK employers who pay people on their own payroll will be able to access this support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis.

1. Who does this apply to at PDSA?

- This applies to employees who have been asked to stop working but who are continuing to be paid on our payroll.

2. How does this scheme work?

- HMRC have committed to reimburse 80% of your salary up to a maximum of £2500 per month, plus costs incurred by PDSA for employing you i.e. employer's National Insurance contributions and employer's minimum auto-enrolment pension contributions.
- Anyone who is put on furlough from the 28 April PDSA will be topping up the difference for your first 3 weeks of furlough to allow you to continue to receive full-pay. After a 3 weeks furlough period this will drop to 80% of your pay, we will not be applying the governments cap and if your salary would fall below National Living Wage (NLW) we will be topping that up to ensure that your salary is NLW

If you were furloughed before this date then your salary will be reduced to 80% as above from 8th May

3. How will my pay be calculated?

- For full time and part time salaried employees, your pay will be calculated using your salary as of February 2020 and any fixed allowances such as London weighting, car allowance or shift allowance (25% uplift)

4. What happens to my pension contributions whilst I am on the job retention scheme?

- Pension contributions will continue to be made as normal throughout this period. It will be calculated on your February salary and based on the your current pension contribution percentage. This will be deducted from your monthly salary and PDSA will continue to pay their contribution.

- Covid19 has been specified as 'a life changing circumstance' which means you are able to make changes to your pension contribution outside of the normal window for changes should you wish to
5. Can I make changes to other salary sacrifices such as childcare vouchers?
- Yes, due to Covid19 you are able to make changes to any of your salary sacrifice schemes, for childcare vouchers please contact the provider directly
6. I brought holidays as part of the buying and selling holiday benefit at the start of the year, can I sell these back to PDSA
- Yes, due to these unprecedented circumstance you are able to sell your holidays back to us, we are also allowing some holiday carryover so please refer to our holiday principles before deciding what is best for you
7. Can I take holidays when I am furloughed?
- Yes holidays can be taken, please see our Holiday Guidance for more information
8. What will I get paid whilst on holiday
- Any holidays whilst furlough will be paid at your normal rate of pay. This will include any additional payments that are normally made during a holiday period
9. Can we CANCEL annual leave we have booked during the furlough period? and are we following government guidance about rolling over any unused annual leave to the 2021?
- We are asking colleagues not to cancel any pre-booked holiday whether they are working or on furlough (please see holiday guidance) we have laid out our approach to carrying over unused annual leave in our Holiday Guidance document
10. Can I cancel holidays that are later on in the year so that I can use them during the furlough period
- Yes
11. Will my holiday entitlement continue to accrue whilst I am furloughed?

- If are a furloughed worker, your annual leave will accrue *normally*. This will mean that our furloughed employees will receive their normal annual leave and bank holiday entitlement for 2020.

12. I have a company car what will happen to this during my period of furlough?

- All your benefits remain the same, so you will continue to have use of your company car during this time. Because of this we are also maintaining car allowance at the same rate. Travel allowance will be calculated at 80%

13. Do I have to be available for work for PDSA if I am on the job retention scheme?

- Whilst you are on the job retention scheme you will not be expected to be available to work for us, however you do need to be contactable and available to return to work when requested and this could be at short notice 48hrs

14. How do I know if this applies to me?

- If furlough is applicable to your role you will receive notification from your line manager followed up by written confirmation. We will review roles on an on-going basis and will be in touch with any employees that we identify this applies to.

15. How long is this scheme open for?

- The government has announced that the Scheme will be open until the end of October.
- New entrants to the scheme will end on 10th June

16. If I am part of this scheme who will pay me?

- You would continue to receive your pay through the monthly payroll.

17. What if people are self-isolating or social distancing?

- People who are self-isolating or social distancing are expected to be available for work and working from home. If you are unable to work from home then this scheme may apply to you

18. What if I am sick?

- If you are currently off sick you will continue to receive occupational sick pay/statutory sick pay as you do now. If your role is identified to be moved to the job retention scheme we will discuss this with you

19. Can I be furloughed for a short period of time, e.g. a week or a couple of days, and then return to work?

- No – you must be furloughed for a minimum of 3 weeks for PDSA to be eligible to claim under this scheme.

20. Can I volunteer whilst a 'furlough worker'?

- If you are furloughed you cannot work or volunteer for PDSA during this period. You can, however, volunteer for other organisations.

21. What if I am on furlough when my maternity leave is due to start?

- Your maternity leave will go ahead as planned and you will switch from being a furloughed worker to being on Maternity Leave as you would in normal circumstances

22. Will I continue to receive PDSA benefits whilst I am on the job retention scheme?

- You will still have access to Fetch and your current benefit entitlement.

23. Does this scheme impact my length of service with PDSA?

- You will remain employed by PDSA and therefore this will not affect your continuity of service.

24. Can I undertake a second job whilst furloughed

- If you already have a second job then it is clear that this can continue as it is a separate form of employment that already complies with our second job policy. At this stage we would ask that should you wish to engage with a second job whilst furloughed from PDSA that you refer to our second job policy and inform us prior to taking up any further employment so that we can look at this on a case by case basis.

25. Can I return to work on a part-time basis?

The answer is yes from 1st July however we are currently awaiting government guidelines on how this can be applied and will update this as soon as we are able but any requirements to return to work will be based on operational requirements

26. If I have been un-furloughed am I able to be re-furloughed after the 1st July?

At present based on the limited information we have been given we believe that if you have been on the scheme for more than 3 weeks prior to the 1st July you would be eligible to be re-furloughed but we will confirm this as we get further guidance

27. Can I undertake training whilst furloughed

Yes the government have said that you can undertake training whilst furloughed. This includes continuing to undertake an apprenticeship and completing CPD.

28. What happens if an employee refuses to sign the 20% payment reduction form?

- We will seek to gain agreement but ultimately if we cannot reach agreement we may have to terminate the current contract with immediate effect although we hope that it wouldn't come to that

Returning to work

1. What is PDSA doing to make it safe for me to return to work?
 - Our people's safety is our priority. We have created and published a new working safely during Covid-19 policy and from this we have created risk assessments for each function & site to ensure that we have safe ways of working. We have also changed processes and practices to ensure we can operate safely. More information on this will be discussed with your leader
 - We have also looked at how we ensure our people 'feel' safe and return to work meetings will take place with your line manager where, if needed, we can discuss any particular concerns that you have
2. I have been shielding and am now required to return to work do I have to?
 - If you have been classed as an extremely clinically vulnerable person and you received a letter asking you to shield we will have supported you to work from home or furloughed you for reasons of needing to shield whilst this advice has been in place. As of 1st August for England Scotland and Northern Island and the 16th August for Wales the advice is that you no longer need to shield and therefore we will be unable to furlough for reasons of shield. Your line manager will complete a risk assessment with you on your return to work. Where ever possible we will continue to enable you to work from home, where this is not possible they will talk through the controls we have already put in place to make the work environment covid safe along with identifying if there are any additional controls that are required.
 - If you are classed as a clinically vulnerable person we will undertake a risk assessment on your return to work so that we can make any reasonable adjustments to your working patterns/procedures to support your return to work
3. I don't want to return to work can I remain on furlough?
 - No; The furlough scheme is a job retention scheme as was put in place to secure people in employment where there was no work for them to do. If you are being asked to return to work it will be because there is now work for you to do and therefore you are no longer eligible for the scheme

The answers to these questions are correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publishing. Should this change we will keep you updated.

28 July 2020

