

Guidance for managers whilst staff are on furlough leave (January 2021)

Eligibility for furlough leave

The Government has extended its [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#) until 30 April 2021 to support employers whose operations continue to be severely affected by COVID-19.

Our University will continue to place some colleagues who are currently unable to do their job on furlough leave. This may be because there is no current requirement for their because of the impact of coronavirus on the University's operations and they cannot be redeployed elsewhere within the University or carry out their role from home, or because they have childcare responsibilities which mean they are unable to carry out all or part of their role.

[HR Partners](#) will work with line managers to identify any staff who are eligible to go on furlough leave. If you manage colleagues who you think should be on furlough leave, please contact your [HR Partner](#) as soon as possible. Staff with childcare issues may also approach their line manager to request to be put on either full or part-time furlough leave. If this is the case in your team you will need to balance the request from the member of staff with the impact that their period on furlough leave may have on other team members who may be expected to carry out some or all of the work of the colleague on furlough leave. You should encourage colleagues requesting furlough for childcare reasons to read our [Guidance for staff with childcare responsibilities](#) first to see if any alternative arrangements can be put in place.

Staff can be put on furlough leave either on a full or part-time basis and must have been on the University's payroll by 23:59 on Friday, 30 October 2020 to be eligible. You can put forward both colleagues who have previously been on furlough leave, or members of staff who were not previously on furlough leave but who you now believe are eligible.

Line managers and HR Partners will need to keep accurate records of staff on furlough leave on a weekly basis (if staff are on part-time furlough these records should include the number of hours per week staff are on furlough) to ensure that our University claims the correct amount from HMRC.

Under the Scheme, HMRC will reimburse organisations 80% of salary up to £2,500 per month. The University has agreed that it will pay any colleagues placed on furlough leave the remaining balance of their salary, so there will be no financial detriment and no change to their terms and conditions of employment. During the period of their furlough leave, colleagues cannot undertake any work for, or on behalf of, the University.

The beginning of furlough leave

You will have put forward roles for the CJRS based on the eligibility criteria your HR Partner provided. Your HR Partner will have worked with you to determine which roles were eligible for furlough leave and in these cases, details will have been sent to payroll to confirm that this role will be part of the CJRS.

When you and your HR Partner have agreed which roles are eligible for CJRS you should speak to those colleagues involved and let them know they will receive an email confirmation from HR Services.

What happens next?

Once your furloughed staff have received their letter via email from HR Services and know they are on furlough leave (the letter will include the date they commenced furlough leave and proposed end-date) they will no longer be able to do any work for, or on behalf of the University or subsidiary companies.

So whilst you can't contact them about work matters, as their line manager, it's really important that you do keep in touch with them whilst they are on furlough leave. For some useful advice on how to do that visit:

- [Guidance on supporting staff wellbeing during Coronavirus](#)

In summary, you should:

- Check-in with them on a regular basis
- Share information and updates
- Promote wellbeing
- Connect socially
- Encourage learning and development activity.

Colleagues on furlough leave will continue to receive eUpdate which is a weekly round-up of all the latest news and information for staff and we're also sending some additional emails to furloughed staff to help keep them connected.

Should I tell colleagues in my team who are still working who is on furlough leave?

Where entire teams are on furlough leave it is fine to let other colleagues know this so they are aware of the situation. You should encourage colleagues going on furlough leave to put an out of office message on their email so that anyone contacting them knows that they are unavailable – here is some suggested wording:

"Due to the coronavirus pandemic, I am now on furlough leave in line with the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Please re-send your email to [email address], otherwise, I will deal with this upon my return."

Where an individual or a very small number of colleagues are on furlough leave, line managers should agree with the individuals concerned about how they would like this to be communicated to colleagues more widely.

Handovers of work

In many cases staff are being furloughed because it's not possible for them to do their job at the moment so there won't be any work to handover. Colleagues who are on furlough due to childcare issues may however have to handover all or part of their workload and as their line manager you should have a clear idea of what this work is and assess how it can be handed over to other colleagues. In some cases it may be possible to delay or put on hold some of this workload until the member of staff has returned from furlough. Handovers of work should take place before furlough leave begins.

What if I'm worried about a colleague who is on furlough leave?

Some people will find this a really challenging time so if you're worried about a colleague or they contact you to say they are struggling, make sure you let them know about the support on offer from the University.

There's a range of [wellbeing resources](#) on StaffNet; there's [24/7 support line](#) and our University Counselling Service is available.

It's a good idea to remind colleagues on furlough leave to make sure their personal contact and next of kin details are up to date via [MyView](#).

If you have tried to contact a colleague on a number of occasions without success and are worried about their health and wellbeing please contact your HR Partner for advice.

What's the most important thing I can do as a manager?

Keeping in touch and listening to colleagues is vital. You won't have all of the answers to colleagues' questions, but they will be reassured to know that you're available to listen. If you are a line manager and are on furlough leave yourself, speak with your own line manager to agree who will keep in touch with your team members whilst you are on furlough leave.

What support is there for me as a manager during this time?

It's important that you look after your own wellbeing too. There are lots of wellbeing resources available on StaffNet and you should talk to your own line manager if you're struggling with managing staff on furlough leave.