

COVID-19 UK Employment Update: New Lockdown, Furlough Extended, JSS delayed

The UK Government announced on Saturday evening (31 October) that there will be a new national lockdown from Thursday (5 November) for four weeks. Whilst not as severe as the previous lockdown, many workplaces including non-essential retailers, gyms and pubs will have to shut, whilst “everyone who can work effectively from home must do so”. Details can be found on the .gov.uk website, [here](#).

In connection with this, it was also announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (“CJRS”) - also known as furlough - which was due to end on 31 October, will now be extended “until December”. Under the extended CJRS, the Government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 a month. This is more generous than was the case under the CJRS during October, when the grant from the Government had been reduced to 60% of pay. Employers will still have to pay employers’ National Insurance and pensions contributions. As previously, flexible furloughing will be permitted, and full-time furloughing will also continue to be an option.

There are new eligibility rules for the extended CJRS. Employees must have been on the employer’s PAYE payroll as at the end of 30 October. This means a Real Time Information (RTI) submission must have been made to HMRC notifying payment for a relevant employee on or before that date. Neither the employer nor the employee has to have used the CJRS before. As before, employers may choose to top up wages but are not obliged to do so. Details of the extended CJRS can be found [here](#).

There is no suggestion that there will be any change to the previous requirement that furlough must be implemented by agreement and confirmed in writing.

As the CJRS is being extended, the Job Support Scheme, which had been lined up to replace it from 1 November, is now postponed until the furlough scheme ends. The lockdown is scheduled to end on 2 December, but there are already suggestions that it may be extended. It is unclear whether the CJRS will end at the same time as lockdown

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or some time afterwards.

Further details are expected soon and as we have seen throughout the pandemic, measures can be introduced or changed with little or no notice.