

Latest Covid Support Announcement November 2nd Following Lockdown Confirmation



A second lockdown is set to hit England from tomorrow, Thursday, with thousands of businesses forced to close for almost a month. The measures were announced at a press conference on Saturday evening, when it was also confirmed that the furlough scheme would be extended until December.

The new lockdown will come into force in England at 00:01 on Thursday, November 5, and is set to end on Wednesday December 2.

The furlough scheme was announced seven months ago as the country went into its first national lockdown and has supported the wages of millions of workers. The original furlough scheme is ending this weekend. But the Prime Minister said that it would be extended until December.

The initiative, which has paid up to 80% of the wages of millions of people unable to work due to the effects of coronavirus pandemic, was due to be replaced by the less generous Job Support Scheme (JSS) on 1 November. Under the **Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme**, to give furlough its official title, employees placed on leave received 80% of their pay, up to a maximum of £2,500 a month.

Will it be any different from the original furlough?

Employees won't notice any difference in their pay packet, but the scheme has become more generous for employers. In recent months, firms have had to top up furloughed wages by 20%, with the government paying 60%. Now, the state will put in the full 80%, with the employer only covering pension and national insurance contributions.

Since July, employers have been able to bring back employees part-time, and furlough them for the rest. This will continue. To be eligible for this extension, employees must have been on the payroll by 30 October 2020, but they don't need to have been furloughed before.

While the government updates the system, employers will submit their wage claim to the government, and be refunded afterwards. After that, they will be paid upfront to cover the cost.

What else can firms get?

The government will also give firms:

- Up to £3,000 per month under the Local Restrictions Support Grant if their premises is forced to close
- £1,000 for every furloughed employee kept on until at least the end of January
- £1,500 for every out-of-work 16-24 year-old given a "high quality" six-month work placement
- £2,000 for every under-25 apprentice taken on until the end of January, or £1,500 for over-25s

A grant available to self-employed people affected by coronavirus has also been doubled to 40% of profits, with a maximum grant of £3,750 over a three-month period.

What happens when lockdown ends?

Furlough will end in December, when England comes out of lockdown, the government says. Regions will then be classed into tiers as before, based on their coronavirus risk level, and the Job Support Scheme will kick in. Under that scheme, if a businesses has to close due to local restrictions, workers will be paid 67% of their wages - up to a maximum of £2,083.33 a month. Employers won't have to pay towards an employee's salary.

Firms that can stay open, but only have enough work for employees to return part-time, will also be eligible for help. Staff will have to be paid by their employer to work a minimum 20% of their hours per month. The employer must pay an extra 4% of total wages to cover some of the hours not worked, and the government will pay 49% of the total salary to cover hours not worked. So, overall, the employee would get at least 73% of salary. The maximum contribution the government will make is £1,541.75.

With schools, colleges and universities allowed to remain open, this lockdown will have differences compared to the last.

Here is a full list of the businesses that will be forced to close from Thursday in England.

Stop Press: Pubs will be allowed to sell takeaway alcohol in a relaxation of planned lockdown rules in England. Pre-ordered alcohol can be collected by customers as long as they do not enter the premises, legislation says. They must order their drink via a website, phone or text message. Deliveries are also allowed.

Pub bosses hailed it as a small victory but said the rules should allow venues to sell drink in the same way as an off-licence. Original plans published at the weekend suggested that while restaurants could sell takeaway food, takeaway alcohol was to be banned.