

**Coronavirus**  
**Frequently Asked Questions for School Based Employees**  
**Number 4**

**Question:**

Is the Government's Job Retention Scheme "Furlough" available for my employees?

**Answer:**

Whilst the Government has recently confirmed that Local Authorities are able to access the scheme, it should be noted that their expectation is that public sector organisations will not do so except in certain exceptional circumstances.

Organisations receiving public money to assist in the response to Covid-19 are not expected to furlough staff.

**Question:**

I have some staff who are funded through a private income stream. I believe that these staff can be furloughed. How do I do this?

**Answer:**

The latest DfE guidance acknowledges that schools may have a separate private income stream that has reduced or stopped altogether. Where there is a workforce that typically work on activities relating to these private income streams it may be possible to furlough these staff, in some cases.

The DfE has made it clear that schools must first look to make the necessary savings from their existing budget or consider options to re-deploy these staff before deciding to furlough them. Only after all other potential options have been fully considered should schools furlough those affected staff and access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The following conditions will have to have been met:

- the employee works in an area of business where services are temporarily not required and/or whose salary is not covered by public funding
- the employee would otherwise be made redundant or laid off
- the employee is not involved in provision that has been already been funded;
- (where appropriate) the employee is not required to deliver provision for a child of a key worker and/or vulnerable child; and
- that the grant from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would not be duplicative to other public grants that you receive and would not lead to financial reserves being created for your organisation. (This means that schools must be able to demonstrate that all of the salary costs covered by the grant from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would normally have been paid using income outside GAG or LA delegated budget lines).

Derbyshire County Council is currently reviewing, as a matter of urgency, its approach to furloughing workers. It is important that we consider thoroughly the complexities surrounding this issue and align our approach, operations and systems. We will provide further advice to schools as soon as possible.

**Question:**

Do I need to pay my relief workers who work regularly but on an adhoc and unpredictable basis and how do I calculate what I have to pay them?

**Answer:**

Derbyshire County Council is currently reviewing, as a matter of urgency, its approach to the payment of relief staff. It is important that we consider thoroughly the complexities surrounding this issue and appropriately align the guidance to schools with the Local Authority's agreed approach to any payment of relief workers. We will provide further advice to schools as soon as possible.

**Question:**

Is it likely that "Reservists" are likely to be called up to assist with the Government's response to COVID-19?

**Answer:**

The Local Authority has received communication from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) regarding the mobilisation of Reservists during COVID-19, which confirms that at the present time there is no intention to call up those Reservists who are key workers or who are already involved in the response to COVID-19 in their civilian roles. It is, therefore, not anticipated that any Reservists employed in schools will be mobilised at the current time.

No doubt, Reservists will be eager to help, however, they can be assured that continuing in their civilian role is playing a crucial part in the country's response to COVID-19.

Should this position change, please be assured that the Local Authority will provide further advice and guidance to schools.

**Question:**

Will I be able to claim from the government for any additional costs occurred because of having to provide staff over school holiday periods including bank holidays?

**Answer:**

The government have outlined what financial support schools can claim for [here](#).

They have also indicated that they recognise that staff will need to be in school over the early May bank holiday and summer half term holidays when they would usually not be working. In order to protect staff wellbeing, and minimise any need for existing staff to work additional hours in order to cover the holiday periods, schools should consider:

- adopting rota systems to cover holidays, and offering staff time off in lieu for this
- approaching the local authority or academy trust to check whether staffing support is available from other institutions
- making appropriate use of their supply budget.

**Question:**

I am in the process of appointing a new member of staff: are there any changes to the recruitment checks that I will need to undertake?

**Answer:**

You must continue to ensure that all of the necessary safer recruitment checks have been undertaken before a new member of staff starts with you. These must include:

- Identity check
- Right to work check – under the Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- Satisfactory references
- DBS enhanced check and barred list check
- Disqualification check
- Qualification and professional status check
- Medical clearance

In relation to the right to work checks, the Government have advised that because of coronavirus (COVID-19) there are temporary changes to the way you can check documents. The [guidance about the adjusted process](#), provides more detail including enabling you to ask for documents digitally, making checks on a video call, and what you need to do if someone cannot provide any accepted documents. Once the coronavirus (COVID-19) measures have ended you will be asked to carry out retrospective checks on any employees who:

- started working for you during these measures
- required a follow-up right to work check during these measures

The Disclosure and Barring Service have also introduced a temporary change which allows you to undertake the ID verifying for a DBS check by a live video link too and more guidance can be found [here](#).

The new member of staff must present the original versions of these documents when they first start work (or within 8 weeks of the COVID-19 measures ending if only a right to work check was required). Copies of the documentation for the right to work check should be kept for your records.

Wording to make reference to the temporary arrangements at this time should be noted on your Single Central Record.

**Question:**

Can you give me any advice about recruiting a teacher to replace one of my staff who is leaving at the end of August?

**Answer:**

It is important that schools have the workforce they need, and recruitment should continue where it is necessary and practical to do so, in line with social distancing guidelines. Schools will need to use their judgment on whether recruitment is needed and how this can best be done given the circumstances. Schools will need to ensure that any recruitment that they undertake is robust. While the advice from the government is to remain at home schools should not be conducting face to face recruitment processes or encouraging applicants to visit schools. This means it will not be possible to assess the pupil interactions of candidates via a lesson observation or

similar at this time. Schools should ensure that applications and interviews are managed virtually via an online video or telephone interview, or be delayed to a later date. Keysupport.com have provided a free bank of COVID-19 guidance, which they have said we can share with schools. This hub includes advice on [how to manage a recruitment process remotely](#) which you may find useful.

It is essential that if you are recruiting new staff, you ensure that all employment laws are met and that applicants have equality of opportunity throughout the selection. The process should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes.

The DfE is asking publicly funded schools to use the Teaching Vacancies service. This is a free, national service for searching and listing teaching roles. Listing vacancies here will help save schools money and enable the department to gather information on the impact of school closures on teacher recruitment.

Please note that there is no automatic link between the Teaching Vacancies service and the Derbyshire County Council vacancies webpage, therefore schools will need to contact HR Services in the usual way if they wish to advertise on the Derbyshire County Council website.

**Question:**

Are there any pension implications that my staff or I need to know about?

**Answer:**

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The LGPS have produced a new section on their website FAQs, which provides information and Q&As about the coronavirus.

<https://www.derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/frequently-asked-questions/coronavirus/coronavirus.aspx>

This section includes two pages:

- FAQs for members - This page will reassure many of your employees in the scheme that their pension is safe and secure. It will also help reduce the volume of enquiries made to you. We need your help to let them know about the page, so please share this 'Coronavirus FAQ for members' link as soon as possible.
- FAQs for employers – This page includes a set of FAQs which answer many of the questions you may have. It covers topics such as furlough pay, employee contribution rates and Emergency Volunteering leave.

Derbyshire Pension Fund have indicated that due to the number of staff working remotely, there may be a delay to their normal response time in dealing with telephone, postal and electronic enquiries from employees.

As a temporary measure, their telephone helpline is currently only available for limited times, on weekdays from 9am to 1pm only.

Employees are asked to visit the website in the first instance if they have a query as it will provide answers to most questions.

[derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk](https://www.derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk)

If an employee needs to contact the fund, they are asked to use the online enquiry form. This is the best way to ensure your message is received and the enquiry is dealt with as soon as possible.

[derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/enquiry](https://www.derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/enquiry)

Link to Derbyshire Pension Fund

Newsletter: <https://www.derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/employers/newsletters-and-guides/newsletters-and-guides.aspx>

### **Teachers' Pensions**

Teachers' Pensions have also issued an [update](#) which includes answers to some questions.

#### **Question:**

Where can my staff get further advice/ support?

#### **Answer:**

The Government Website. Trade unions and professional associations. ASCL, NAHT and NEU have issued joint advice to their members and provide regular updates through their websites. UNISON and NASUWT have produced Q&As for members and the GMB issue daily updates to members and maintains dedicated pages on its website.

#### **Question:**

How should I manage the pay progression and performance management processes for teachers during this period?

#### **Answer:**

Schools are required to continue to adhere to the requirements contained in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. Schools will need to use their discretion and take pragmatic steps to take account of the current circumstances e.g. by basing performance on the period schools were open.

#### **Question:**

Are education and childcare workers eligible for coronavirus (COVID-19) testing?

#### **Answer:**

Yes. The government has announced that all essential workers, and members of their households who are showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), can now be tested. This list of essential workers includes education and childcare staff, including school support and teaching staff.

Booking is done through a new online system. Schools can register and refer self-isolating staff, and employees are able to book a test directly for themselves or members of their household who are exhibiting symptoms.

Employees can choose to visit one of the drive-through testing sites across the country, or to receive a home testing kit.

To obtain a login to the employer referral portal, employers of essential workers should contact [portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk).

For further information, read guidance on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) getting tested](#).

A suite of resources to help make it as easy as possible for you to use and/or brief your staff has been provided by Public Health England and includes:

- A step by step guide for using the self-referral portal
- An infographic to explain what happens when your staff self-refer
- A full Frequently Asked Questions document (with some key FAQs included within this pack)
- Printable, digital and social assets for you to share across your internal communication channels.