

Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQ's

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General Questions

“What happens now schools are closed?”

Though many schools are currently closed a lot of schools remain semi-operational for key-workers meaning we are still receiving requirements for supply work. Please speak to your consultant if you want more information regarding your situation or contact the Aspire People Covid Response Team on furlough@aspirepeople.co.uk

Will I be advised if I am covering a member of staff who has a confirmed case of Coronavirus before I am offered the role?

It's unlikely that this situation would arise, this is because a school is more likely to close to deep-clean than to cover the person who is poorly in this instance. However, if we are asked to specifically cover a member of staff who has tested positive for the virus, we will assess the situation in advance and we would let you know in advance of any booking of this nature

How will I know if a school I am going to work at has been affected by Coronavirus?

If you do need to go to work, it is our view that you should maintain good social distancing practices and hygiene practices. In effect all must take the precautions that the government has set out including regular handwashing. It is now, unfortunately more likely than not that a school may have had some recent impact of Coronavirus due to the level of the pandemic that we are experiencing. You should decide in advance of placement(s) whether working is something that you are willing to do in the current pandemic. If you have been contacted by PHE as a person of high-risk, you should mention this to your consultant before agreeing to work at any school.

Have Aspire People spoken to the Government directly?

No, we haven't had any direct contact with the Government. However, we are keeping up to date with the regular updates found readily available on the Government website, under information for the public and guidance for employers. We have been in contact with local MP's, Teaching Unions, Industry Regulatory bodies and the DfE with regards to impact of Covid-19 on Supply Teachers and how best we can support our workers.

I am in a long-term placement at a school and my school have asked me to prepare work to upload to the school's online portal. This is to provide the learners I look after, access to the work I would have otherwise provided, in case of an imminent school closure. Whilst I accept this approach and have no issues with ensuring continuity for the learners, the school have also confirmed that they will not be paying the agency, and therefore me, to continue with my long-term. What shall I do in this situation?

In this situation, you are advised to contact your consultant at Aspire People immediately. Whilst this is a very unusual and unprecedented time for all, Aspire People are committed to ensuring the learner's continuity of Education in our school

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partners but also mitigating as much as possible the tumultuous and negative outcomes to our Supply Teachers. We can and will speak to the school directly on your behalf to discuss any arrangement like this. It is likely that despite the school being closed your work is being used to educate learners and you will subsequently be invited in to mark the work provided. This provides a unique situation which your consultant will be happy to discuss with the school.

General Pay Queries

I was on a Long-Term placement; will I get paid as normal?

We cannot guarantee that you would get paid as normal even though you were on a long-term placement. Our commitment to you is that we have asked our schools to consider continuing to pay our long-term workers when closing schools. Some schools have already agreed to this. For information on furlough payments, please see further guidance further down under the section 'furlough payments'. It is our opinion the government guidance PPN 02 and PPN 04 will be renewed instructing schools to honour long term assignments.

Has the government given any guidance on how long-term candidates should be paid during this pandemic?

Yes, the government released the below guidance back in 2020. For information from the cabinet office regarding this please see here:

<https://peoplegroupservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Cabinet-Office-Update.pdf>

Statutory Sick Pay Queries

If you are sick or self-isolating:

You can claim statutory sick pay from day 1 as long as you're are eligible for SSP. Details taken from gov website for Eligibility below;

Eligibility

- ★ To qualify for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) you must:
- ★ be classed as an [employee](#) and have done some work for your employer
- ★ earn an average of at least £118 per week
- ★ tell your employer you're sick before their deadline - or within 7 days if they do not have one
- ★ If you are [self-isolating because of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), you can claim SSP. You must be eligible for SSP.
- ★ Agency workers are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay
- ★ Follow this link to claim SSP <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/how-to-claim>

Can I receive SSP and furlough payments together?

No, if you claim SSP you will automatically forfeit any furlough payment for the weeks that you have claimed SSP.

However, you can be brought off statutory sick pay (SSP) and then furloughed instead, providing there is no work for you. The guidance says you cannot claim for employees

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while they're getting SSP, but they can be furloughed and claimed for once they are no longer receiving SSP.

Furlough Payment Queries

Where can I find the most recent guidance on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)?

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

What is the criteria for an 80% furlough payment through Aspire People?

We are furloughing all candidates that have not been offered work and that have been working in the current academic year for Aspire People but are now as a result of the recent lockdown, not currently working for Aspire People due to coronavirus.

As you know it is the government's intention support 80% of the salaries for 'furloughed' workers. We now have the confirmation that the scheme will apply to supply staff paid through PAYE. The link and the criteria is below:

- Supply Teachers must have been on a PAYE payroll on or before 30 October 2020
- Payment will be based on the higher amount of the calculations below (up to a capped amount of £2,500):
 - The same month's earning from the previous year.
 - Average monthly earnings from the 2019-20 tax year.
 - If a person has been on the payroll less than one year, the average of their monthly earnings since they started work.
- Employers will have to write to their supply staff confirming that they have been furloughed and keep a record of this communication
- Employees contacted (supply staff) must acknowledge and agree to being 'furloughed' and agree to remaining on the employers payroll for the foreseeable future due to the fact that the option to furlough is not contained in the current contract for services, but that is the situation with regards to work
- Employees (supply staff) cannot then carry out work for the agency throughout the whole period of furlough
- Supply Staff registered with multiple agencies can be furloughed through each employer separately and must contact their respective agencies to discuss arrangements
- Supply staff employed or pay-rolled through umbrella companies or payroll bureau's must also contact their respective payroll providers. These companies

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administer the payroll and have the PAYE reference number to which HMRC will apply the grant.

- A furloughed employee can take part in volunteer work or training as long as it does not generate revenue for or on behalf of the organisation in question.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

I am furloughed through Aspire People, when and how will I get paid?

You will move to monthly payroll and payment will be forwarded to you once we are in receipt of it from HMRC.

How will my furlough payment be calculated if I am eligible?

Employees on varied pay who have been employed for 12 months or more, can claim the highest of either the:

- same month's earning from the previous year
- average monthly earnings for the 2019-2020 tax year

If you have been employed for less than 12 months, you can claim for 80% of your average monthly earnings since you started work. If you only started in February 2020, we would work out a pro-rata for their earnings so far and would claim for 80%.

How much will I get paid with my furlough payment?

There is a strict eligibility criterion for receiving the CJRS grant, as not everyone will qualify and this document nor the furlough letter or email you may have already received by no means confirms that you will receive the grant. However, it does put you in the best possible position to qualify.

The exact amount you will receive will be calculated and provided to you shortly before you are paid. We expect this to be at the end of April. You will receive this information in the form of a payslip.

Does holiday pay count as income?

Holiday pay taken is counted as income as it will be sent to HMRC during our RTI submissions.

How long will I get paid for, will I only get paid for January?

It would be for the whole period of furlough up until the point of payroll. We expect it to be up until the 15th February 2021, when schools return to normal operations.

Will the furlough pay begin from the day the schools were asked only to support key-worker children only, or from the day you declared furlough for your supply staff?

We will attempt to backdate it to the date that the schools changed from their normal operations, but this is reliant on HMRC agreeing to this course of action and is out of our hands unfortunately. If you have worked w/c 4th January 2021 we will not be able to claim furlough for that week.

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What if I don't want to be furloughed?

If you do not wish to be classed as a furloughed worker you must notify us immediately, and in any event within 24 hours of receipt of the email/letter that was sent to you to confirm your furlough. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you are in agreement with being a furlough worker.

I am with an Umbrella company, am I still entitled to furlough pay?

It is strictly down to the Umbrella Intermediary or the Payroll Intermediary to decide. In this circumstance, Aspire People can only advise as to whether the agency worker in question is working or not. Where an agency worker is paid through PAYE, they are eligible to be furloughed and receive support through this scheme, including where they are employed by umbrella companies. Furlough should be agreed between the agency, as the deemed employer, and the worker, though it would be advised to discuss the need to furlough with any end clients involved. As with employees, agency workers should perform no work for, through or on behalf of the agency that has furloughed them while they are furloughed, including for the agency's clients. Where an agency supplies clients with workers who are employed by an umbrella company that operates the PAYE, it will be for the umbrella company and the worker to agree whether to furlough the worker or not.

We have communicated to those paid through umbrella or payroll companies who is, and is not working so that they can start to make their own furlough arrangements. However, if you are not sure, please contact your umbrella company directly.

Can I work somewhere else if I am receiving a furlough payment?

Yes. Employees can start a new job with a different employer when on furlough. This was not prohibited in the earlier guidance, but the updated guidance expressly allows it.

"If your employee has more than one employer they can be furloughed for each job. Each job is separate, and the cap applies to each employer individually.

Employees can be furloughed in one job and receive a furloughed payment but continue working for another employer and receive their normal wages."

I have left Aspire People since the 30th October, can I still claim furlough payments?

Any employee who has left for any reason since 30th October can be put back on to the payroll and then furloughed. The previous guidance allowed this for staff who had been made redundant but was silent about staff who had left for other reasons. The new guidance would appear to cover employees who have been dismissed – for any reason – and those who have resigned. The sole requirement is that they must have been on the payroll on 30th October.

I've had a pay rise since 30th October, will this be accounted for with my furlough payments?

No, for employees whose pay does not vary, the employer can reclaim 80% of the employee's pay as at 30th October. This means that subsequent increases in pay that may have been awarded after that date should be ignored.

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Can I still work for Aspire People whilst furloughed?

In short, no. However, a furloughed employee can take part in volunteer work, if it does not provide services to or generate revenue for, or on behalf of your organisation. Aspire People can agree to find furloughed employees new work or volunteering opportunities whilst on furlough if this is in line with public health guidance.