

ADVICE SHEET: CLAIMING THE GOVERNMENT FURLOUGH SCHEME



THE BASICS

The government has introduced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Under the scheme, any employee out of work due to the coronavirus will have 80% of their wages paid by the government. The goal of the scheme is to maintain employment. Employers should not make redundancies in response to the crisis. Instead, your employer should put you forward for the scheme.

All employees on all contract types – including zero-hours workers and part-time workers – are eligible.

The details of the scheme are still being updated and the most current guidance can be found on gov.uk

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

WHAT YOUR EMPLOYER SHOULD DO

Your employer should provide you with information about the scheme and it is your employer who must make a claim on your behalf.

If you are not provided with information or if you are interested in being furloughed, you should ask your employer. Always put your requests in writing. If possible, raise the issue as a group with your workmates.

WHAT IF I'M DENIED FURLOUGH OR MADE REDUNDANT INSTEAD?

We're sad to say that some language schools have denied furlough requests or failed to adequately engage with or provide information to their staff about the scheme.

If you are in a similar situation, we offer the following guidance:

As a first step, share the guidance from gov.uk with your employer and ask them to reconsider their position: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

As a second step, write to your employer formally raising your concerns.→

Someone from the union can help you write the letter. Once written, you can either send it in from a personal email account or the union can send it on your behalf.

If your employer does not adequately respond, you should take out a grievance. The IWW will support you through this process and represent you in any meetings with management.

As always, issues are best addressed collectively: group letters, group email accounts, and collective grievances are always more powerful.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REDUNDANCIES

If anyone at your workplace has recently been made redundant, been dismissed, or had their hours reduced to zero, you should contact the union.

Redundancies need to go through a consultation process. This consultation is mandatory regardless of the contract type and regardless of the current crisis.

It is also important to note that, in law, 4 weeks in a row of reduced hours (or 6 weeks in a 13-week period) is technically redundancy and you may be entitled to redundancy pay.

CONTACTING THE UNION

If your employer has acted improperly in relation to the furlough scheme, has already made redundancies, or is simply failing to provide adequate support, contact the London IWW.

An experienced union representative will respond offering guidance and support to you and your workmates.

The London IWW has got your back!

Contact us at london@iww.org.uk for advice and support.
Outside of London, please contact info@iww.org.uk