

## Hospitality sector set to reopen next week

**On Tuesday 23 June, the Prime Minister announced that lockdown rules are to be eased across most of the hospitality sector in England from 4 July. We explore what this means for employers below:**

- Lockdown rules were first introduced on 23 March after the coronavirus was declared a global pandemic.
- Restaurants, bars, cinemas, gyms, hotels and more were ordered to close all operations.
- The PM, Boris Johnson, has since announced that from 4 July, businesses across most of England's hospitality sector can reopen for business.
- 'Close proximity' venues such as indoor gyms and conference centres, however, must stay closed for now.
- Employers across this industry must adhere to health and safety regulations and apply mitigation measures to ensure that their businesses are Covid safe.
- For example, keeping in line with social distancing rules amongst staff and customers alike – the 'one-metre plus' rule.
- Employers in this industry will now need to think about bringing employees back to work by ending furlough.
- The new flexible furlough scheme is likely to be useful to this industry: the full workforce is not likely to be needed considering the restrictions that remain in the industry but an employer may decide to bring all staff back to work on part time hours to ensure that shifts are covered, and all employees have the opportunity to increase their earnings.

### Non-EU workers arriving in the UK overtake EU migrants

A report by the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford has found that, for the first time since 2006, non-EU workers account for 56% of 171,000 migrant workers relocating to the UK for work in 2019. Almost two thirds of long term migrants working in the UK were EU citizens between 2007 and 2019.

#### Did you know?

As coronavirus relief, the Prime Minister has scrapped the Immigration Health Surcharge for NHS staff and care workers from overseas. The surcharge for Non-EU migrants rose to £624 in October 2019. It is uncertain if this has influenced the 56% figure, but it could reflect on future data for as long as the exemption continues.

### Furlough fraud on the rise, according to employees

It is claimed that fraudulent claims have increased as exploitation of the furlough scheme becomes a new government threat. A survey has found that 34% of furloughed employees have felt pressure to continue working; 27% of 2,000 surveyed employees were asked to tend to emails and 17% were asked to make phone calls.

#### Did you know?

The government is considering giving tax officials at HMRC powers to hand out harsher punishments to those who are caught making purposefully fraudulent claims. Although it is still unclear what the punishment for this will be, it may be that a higher tax band is introduced and company directors may all be made liable.

### Pregnant worker awarded £4k in discrimination case

A pregnant worker was awarded £4,000 by the Employment Tribunal when her employer discriminated against her for taking time off for ante-natal appointments. Her employer claimed she would be 'letting the team down' if she took more time off and was awarded compensation for injury to feelings.

#### Did you know?

Pregnant employees have a legal right to take paid time off work to attend antenatal appointments. This includes medical appointments and relaxation classes. This right applies regardless of how long the employee has been working for the employer, and the employee's normal pay is payable.

Employers in the hospitality sector may now be thinking about returning their furloughed staff back to work. Our 24-hour Advisory Service is on hand to provide up-to-date guidance on the furlough schemes and more.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.