

Job Retention Bonus announced

In a speech to the House of Commons on 8 July, Chancellor Rishi Sunak outlined the next stage in the coronavirus economic recovery plan. We explore what this means for employers below:

- **Job Retention Bonus** – if employers bring back furloughed staff, and keep them on from November until the end of January 2021, they will get a £1,000 bonus from the government per employee retained.
- Employers must pay employees at least the lower earnings limit (£520 per month on average) during this period to qualify;
- The first bonus pay outs are expected in February 2021.
- **'Kickstart' scheme** – the Government will cover employers' costs if they provide jobs to young people aged 16 to 24. They will need to work a minimum of 25 hours per week and be paid at least the National Minimum Wage for six months.
- **Traineeships** – the Government will provide £1,000 to employers to take on new trainees for each work experience placement they offer.
- £100 million is to be provided to create places on Level 2 and 3 traineeship courses.
- **Apprenticeships** – the Government will also provide £2,000 to employers per new apprentice that they hire.
- A £1,500 bonus will be provided to employers who take on apprentices over 25.

First furlough fraud arrests made, announces HMRC

HMRC's investigation into a suspected furlough fraud, totalling £495,000, has led to nine arrests in the West Midlands. Funds kept in a bank account relating to the employer's business have been frozen, along with seizures of computers and other digital devices. HMRC are urging those who suspect such fraud to report it.

Did you know?

Employers who make genuine errors in their calculations under the furlough scheme are being given leniency to report and correct it. HMRC has updated its guidance on the scheme to enable employers who have overclaimed to either correct the error in their next claim, or make a payment directly to HMRC.

Demand in recruitment has increased post lockdown

Demand for new staff across industries in the UK has increased as a result of businesses reopening, particularly in the hospitality industry. Figures also show there has been an increase in job postings for glaziers by 21%, demand for barbers and hairdressers increased by 2.1%, and 9.3% in postings for school support staff.

Did you know?

Employers who are looking to fill roles within their business may want to think about offering jobseekers flexible working opportunities from day one. Flexible working arrangements could range from varied starting and finishing times (flexitime), part-time working and/or working from home initiatives.

Employer avoids sex discrimination claim

A FTSE 100 company has successfully defended a sex discrimination claim. The Employment Tribunal dismissed the claim that the claimant had been sacked because she did not socialise with her male colleagues or talk about football as the employer proved that no such culture existed, and that she was 'dictatorial'.

Did you know?

The Equality Act 2010 protects all employees from direct or indirect sex discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Direct discrimination occurs when an employee is treated less favourably because of their sex, whilst indirect discrimination is less conspicuous and may be unintended.

The Government are putting in place many measures, bonuses included, to reduce the number of redundancies across the country and we can help. 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.