



New post-lockdown recovery plans announced

Prime Minister Boris Johnson outlined, on 17 July, plans for the next stage of tackling the coronavirus. We explore what this means for employers below:

- The Prime Minister has urged employers in England to look at bringing staff back to the workplace from 1 August if it is safe to do so.
- Employers in England will be given more discretion to decide where staff can work, which may mean continuing to work from home or it may mean returning to a Covid-secure workplace.
- Employers should consult with employees about a return to work plan because there may be some issues which prevent an employee from returning, for example, a serious health condition.
- The Prime Minister also said that there are currently no plans to impose a further national lockdown in the event of a second coronavirus wave as local authorities are identifying and isolating local outbreaks.
- Instead, since 18 July, local authorities in England have been able to take action to implement localised lockdown measures.
- From 25 July, leisure centres such as gyms and swimming pools can reopen in England, and from 1 August most remaining leisure centres can reopen.
- Schools, colleges and nurseries will be able to reopen for all children in England from September.

Health & Care Visa for health professionals launched

The Government has announced a new fast-tracked entry to the UK of eligible health care professionals from overseas. The perks of the new Health & Care Visa are a reduced visa application fee; exemption from the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS); and an application turnaround of approximately three weeks.

Did you know?

In April, the Government granted some NHS healthcare professionals from overseas, who have visas due to expire before 1 October, an automatic visa extension at no surcharge. These professionals are also now exempt from paying the IHS for the foreseeable – currently standing at £400 per year.

Details on new immigration system released

A brand new post-Brexit immigration system is to be introduced in the UK from 1 January 2021. The details confirm three routes through which foreign workers will be able to legally work in the UK: Skilled worker route (using the points-based immigration rules), Global Talent Visa, and Start-up and Innovator route.

Did you know?

From 1 January 2021, EU and non-EU citizens will be treated the same under a 'points-based immigration system'. Under this new system, non-citizens who seek to work in the UK, following the end of EU free movement on 31 December 2020, will need to gain points totalling 70 before they can be allowed to work in the UK.

Royal Mail loses agency worker appeal

The Employment Appeal Tribunal has upheld that a worker supplied from one company to another met the definition of 'agency worker'. Having reached 12 weeks of service, the claimant was not being provided equal rights to those directly employed by Royal Mail, in contradiction to agency worker law.

Did you know?

The rules governing the supply and use of agency workers are found in the Agency Worker Regulations 2010. Such workers have some legal rights including a day one right to access staff facilities and amenities, and a 12-week right to the same basic pay, working hours, rest period, as an employee would have.

It is clear that the Government seek to utilise increased localised lockdown measures as a key component of working against a second wave of coronavirus. Our 24-hour Advisory Service is on hand to provide up-to-date guidance on the furlough scheme and more.

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