

## More restrictions lifted in Scotland and Wales

**From Monday 26th April 2021, a number of businesses are able to reopen for the first time in months as lockdown restrictions are eased further:**

- In Scotland, outdoor hospitality can reopen subject to local licensing laws. Indoor hospitality can also resume, however serving alcohol is not permitted and indoor trading must stop at 8pm.
- Non-essential retail can reopen fully, as can gyms and swimming pools for individual exercise.
- Those who were previously advised to shield can now return to work if they cannot work from home.
- In Wales, hospitality can also reopen for outdoor service, however indoor service is still not permitted.
- Outdoor attractions including swimming pools and funfairs can open.
- Shielding was already paused in Wales, and England, from 1 April 2021.
- More employers who have previously furloughed staff under the Job Retention Scheme in order to retain them through lockdown, despite having no work for them, will now consider asking staff to return to work.
- Furloughed staff should be provided with 'reasonable notice', of their return, or the notice outlined in the original furlough agreement.
- Part-time return through flexible furlough also remains an option if employers are currently not able to bring staff back full-time.

### Digital right to work checks stopped from 17 May

Prior to the pandemic, employers not using the online right to work service had to check the validity of the relevant document, eg passports, in the presence of an employee. From 30 March 2020, employers can use a video call to compare the original document to a copy they have been sent. However, virtual checks are no longer permitted from 17 May.

#### Did you know?

Documents that can be used for proving right to work have remained the same despite the UK having left the EU. However, a new process is expected to come into force from 1 July 2021. The government is set to confirm how this will work at some point soon and employers will need to be ready for this.

### Consultation launched on 'flexi' job apprenticeships

Views are being sought on a new scheme that would allow apprentices to move between employers through short-term contracts, with the aim of expanding their skill set and increasing the use of apprenticeships in certain sectors and professions. The consultation will be open for comments until 1 June 2021, which include those from employers.

#### Did you know?

In order to encourage employers to take on apprentices, the government is now providing an incentive payment of £3,000 for every apprentice that joins a company from 1 April 2021. This will remain in place until 30 September 2021 and is in addition to other payments employers can already receive.

### Refusing to come into work during lockdown

The employment tribunal has dismissed a claim of automatic unfair dismissal. The employee was dismissed after staying away from work during the first Covid lockdown due to concerns over his children's safety but had failed to demonstrate that the Covid mitigation measures taken by the company were not sufficient for the safety of their staff.

#### Did you know?

Employees who have a 'reasonable belief' their workplace poses a danger to them have the right to leave that workplace and not face a detriment or dismissal. However, they will need to clearly show why they had such a belief, which the employee in this case failed to do.

Further restrictions are expected to be lifted across England, Scotland and Wales next month. Our 24-hour Advisory Service is on hand to provide real-time updates on plans to reopen the economy in all three countries, alongside the continued use of the furlough scheme until it ends on 30 September 2021.

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