



Furlough extended to include parents with childcare responsibilities

By **Deborah Margolis** - 28 January 2021

On 5 January 2021, the government's **guidance** was updated to clarify that employers may (but are not required to) furlough employees who have caring responsibilities for children who are at home as a result of school and childcare facilities closing.

The furlough scheme is currently available up until 30 April 2021. By way of reminder, the government will contribute 80% of wages (up to a maximum of £2,500 per month) for eligible employees. Employers are still required to pay employers' National Insurance and pension contributions. For more information on the furlough scheme see [here](#).

In addition to furlough, there are a number of other options that employers may want to consider where employees are unable to work due to childcare responsibilities, for example:

- Flexible working, such as changing working hours or days, or working part-time;
- Various types of unpaid leaves such as parental leave, or other leaves provided by policies; or
- Using accrued annual leave.

Some employers may want to consider non-financial support mechanisms (such as adjusting targets or providing additional support to employees with childcare responsibilities).

This is likely to be question that many employers need to address and the best approach will be fact specific according to each business.

If you would like to discuss this with a member of the team, get in touch with your usual contact or email [\[email protected\]](#).

