

# Guide on communicating with furloughed employees

If your organisation has furloughed some employees, this means that these employees are no longer allowed to undertake any work for the organisation until their furlough period ends. Understandably, there are questions on what this means for organisations, particularly on how they should communicate with this group during this period. The most important thing to be aware of is that you cannot communicate anything work related while they are on furlough.

We've spent some time looking at the government guidance, and we've noted some advice below which we hope helps support you with your planning:

- Before you initiate any communication to furloughed employees, make sure you speak to your legal and HR representatives and seek their advice. Furlough is a new concept in the U.K, and many people have never heard of the term before, so it's essential that your organisation is clear on what is and isn't allowed when people are on furlough.
- Avoid using work email addresses for communication where possible. As furloughed employees are no longer allowed to do any work for their employers, emailing their work email address means you might be inadvertently encouraging them to log onto their work equipment.
- Some organisations are asking furloughed employees to opt-in with their personal email addresses if they want to receive updates from the organisation. Again, this isn't mandatory, and colleagues don't need to share if they don't want to.
- If you have a mix of furlough and non-furlough employees, then you will need to make sure that non-furloughed employees are aware of the rules in place and also who has been furloughed in their teams, so they don't chase for work or information.
- It might also be worth asking your employees to add a note to their out of office about being on furlough. If this is not possible, then your IT team should be able to add on their behalf.
- A few organisations have set up specific WhatsApp groups for furloughed employees so they can provide wellbeing guidance and keep them updated with official updates. Before you set-up this group, make sure you check with your legal team. Colleagues should not be using their work number to join this group, and no work-related information should be shared.
- If you want to keep colleagues informed with non-related work such as voluntary opportunities, wellbeing tips, etc. then you may want to consider creating a newsletter specifically for this group, so they still feel connected to the organisation. Again, this should only be opt-in and not mandatory.
- Line managers need to be briefed about what is and isn't ok in terms of content to share with their teams and also support those in their teams who might be impacted. It's also important that they don't forward things on to those on furlough from the organisation as this would be counted as work related content

If you have any questions or you're unsure speak to your HR or legal team and CIPR will also be here to help.