

## **Managers Guide**

### **Keeping in Touch with Furloughed Workers -**

Whether your employees were initially laid off in the lead up to the Government's announcement on 20<sup>th</sup> March of the Job Retention scheme and subsequently transferred to the scheme, or they continued to work for a longer period of time and have only recently been furloughed. You have a duty of care to keep in touch with your employees. Not only do you have a duty of care towards them, but it is always a good idea to keep in touch with them during this prolonged period of leave.

Regardless of your employees' home status, if they live with loved ones or live alone, there can still be feelings of isolation and of loneliness, by keeping in touch with them you can be combatting this in some way. It is also important to keep them informed about the business.

#### **What are the best ways to keep in touch with employees?**

Below are a few suggestions of how you could keep in touch with your furloughed workers, you don't have to use all of the suggestions, or any of the suggestions, but a combination of them may help you get started.

- Send a brief business update out to them all by email (personal email addresses) to keep them engaged and informed (be mindful of whether your employees are tech savvy, don't assume everyone will want to communicate by email, some may prefer a call or letter.
- Set up a WhatsApp Group(s) for purely fun, positive, social interaction only (no work stuff) to keep people feeling connected (or something similar) Again think of the variations of personal preference amongst the organisation and ensure you get everyone's consent to be part of the group, especially if you're using personal mobile numbers and not company mobile numbers.
- Do you have Perkbox or similar benefit scheme? Remind them of any employee assistance programs that are available to them to help them through this challenging time
- Regular calls from their line manager, to keep in touch, once a fortnight or every three-week cycle (agree in advance which medium you will use and schedule a time)
- Set up an area on your intranet or shared drive, for 'wellbeing' resources, ensuring they are only accessing for non work related purposes.
- Agree a communication matrix, confirming how you plan to communicate with all your employees, including furloughed staff (we have supplied an example copy of something you may wish to use for your employees.)
- Ask employees for ideas on how they prefer to be kept up to date
- Consider some sort of wellbeing survey that can be sent to home email addresses, we have teamed up with our partner Engagement Multiplier to provide you access to a free survey called 'Winning on Furlough'
- Ask them if they have any ideas of things they intend to do whilst they are furloughed? Jobs they keep putting off? Learning new skills? Picking up things they've previously enjoyed but haven't had the opportunity to complete recently? Have they considered volunteering to keep them busy during this period? For more information see our (Furlough and Wellbeing Guide)

## Keeping Employees engaged during this difficult period

### What is the best way to keep your employees engaged whilst furloughed?

There's no doubt that we are currently experiencing a period that is likely no one has experienced before now. Furlough, unlike holiday times doesn't have a guaranteed end date, you cannot plan activities to complete or places to visit during your down time, so how do you keep your employees engaged?

- Remote Team building activities, such as:
  - Team running or step challenges: Set a target for your runners each week and have them share the results
  - What/who I'm grateful for this morning: Randomly ask one or two people each morning to answer the question and share it across the company
  - Virtual water coolers: These are virtual spaces where individuals looking for a break can join over video call and see who's there – a great way to get to know new people!
  - We've Got Talent: Why not take the opportunity to learn about your colleagues and enjoy their talents – this could be anything from poetry to painting and singing to dancing
  - A Virtual Quiz at lunchtime, over Zoom cloud meetings?
- Training to keep them busy and focused on something (you will need to consider the salary impact here and whether they are being paid at least minimum wage for the training period)
- Consider whether they are teaching their children whilst furloughed, could you share ideas with them, get them to share ideas with each other on techniques they've found particularly useful, do you have a math genius amongst your staff who could help other parents in their team with schooling their children on this subject?