



E-NEWS UPDATE...

Volunteers' Week: 1st-7th June 2020

Thank you...Thank you...Thank you!

As this week is Volunteers' Week across the nation, the team at LALC wanted to reiterate our messages of thanks to not only the Council's for all that you have done and continue to do to support your communities during the Covid-19 outbreak, but also to ask you to extend our thanks to those voluntary groups and individuals in your Towns and Parishes that have pulled together during this difficult time and supported one another in the most loving and selfless ways imaginable. Whilst it is often easy to become acutely aware of the negative news stories which seem to endlessly cover all forms of media, the stories of kindness and support that we have heard over the past few months have been absolutely inspiring and serve to completely restore faith in the good nature and care which remains an integral part of our nation.

We truly thank each and every one of you and are so proud to be a part of the system of those working on the ground, with the public where it really does matter the most.

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Lincolnshire Councils Covid-19 Impact Survey

A huge thank you to those Councils that have taken the time to complete and return the Covid-19 Impact Survey.

Although the closing date has now passed, we are asking those Councils which have not yet responded to please do so as the information we are asking for is extremely important in assessing the impact of Coronavirus on the Councils and Communities in Lincolnshire

As previously highlighted, the information gathered is being used to feed back to Lincolnshire's MP's about the financial implications faced by some Councils in the region but also to shout up about the fantastic support each of you are currently offering your communities.

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LALC News Summer Edition 2020 – Share Your Good News Stories!

As always, we are looking to share Good News Stories in the next edition of LALC News which will be published in July. Most especially, for this edition, we are looking to receive stories of fantastic community support and Councils and community members going above and beyond during the Covid-19 Outbreak.

Please could those interested share a small article with us at amy.bestwick@lalc.co.uk by Friday 20th June 2020 and we will endeavour to share as many of these as possible.



Open Letter to all Councils from NALC Chairman Sue Baxter- Building Back Communities

29 MAY 2020

Dear colleagues,

As we move to a new phase of the coronavirus pandemic, I want to express my thanks for all your hard work and dedication over the last few challenging months.

Our sector stepped up and acted swiftly to support residents and the most vulnerable in our communities by setting up volunteer networks, establishing emergency response groups, opening food banks or offering funding to local bodies. You can read more about your incredible work in our Coronavirus case studies publication, which has been shared widely with the government and stakeholders.

Just as impressive has been the alacrity with which many local (parish and town) councils have embraced remote working and online meetings to uphold democracy and continue vital work.

This crisis has demonstrated how important our sector is in building stronger communities, and we will continue to make the case to the government and others that we should be at the heart of building back communities as we move into the recovery phase.

If there are any positives to come from this, it is the greater sense of community spirit and civic action. Our task now is to harness this to support the work of our councils and encourage more people to stand at future elections.

I want to pay particular tribute to clerks and council staff, who have diligently kept the show on the road. They are working under immense pressure — having to not only cope with the anxieties we all share but additionally the difficult task of balancing home working with other responsibilities. It is crucial as councillors and local leaders that we recognise their challenge and support their efforts.

As the country moves forward, it is imperative as councillors we work closely with clerks and council staff. Maintaining our collective focus to ensure our local councils are well run and safe and that we continue to support our communities and play a pivotal role in leading our places and making the most of the opportunities that lie ahead.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) will continue to keep you updated through the pandemic with our dedicated coronavirus webpage. The page has over 100,000 hits, and I'm delighted our resources have been so useful. We are pleased to make the latest edition of LCR magazine free online — it features a range of topical information to help you.

NALC and county associations are working on your behalf to ensure the government is aware of the financial constraints we face and their consequences. We are pressing them for a dedicated

package of support, which includes funding. I would ask all councils and councillors to contact their MPs to seek their backing and ask them to lobby the government.

Thank you for everything you are doing to support your communities

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Sue Baxter
Chairman of NALC

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CORONAVIRUS — INFORMATION FOR LOCAL (PARISH AND TOWN) COUNCILS **Updated 26th May 2020**

SOURCES OF ADVICE

The coronavirus situation is fast-moving and there is an increasing amount of misinformation online. We should be using government advice to inform decisions and be checking that advice regularly.

- On 11 May the government released [Our plan to rebuild: the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#) — this includes detail of new government guidelines that come into effect from 13 May
- The [government's main source of advice on coronavirus](#) includes information on the social distancing alongside a wide range of other information. There are also useful [coronavirus FAQs](#) that provide useful additional information
- GOV.UK provides a range of information on [working safely during Coronavirus](#) related to different sectors. This further guidance, developed with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, aims to [assist employers and businesses in providing advice to their staff](#).
- You may find the advice from [ACAS](#) useful in considering any employment-related matters that may impact your local council.

Financial impact survey

NALC has gathered evidence on the [financial impact of the coronavirus on local councils](#). This information is vital to our representation to the government on the loss of income to local councils during these difficult times, and the need for a tailored financial support package for the local council sector. A short survey was sent to local councils and NALC's Super Councils Network to complete. We are also working with county officers on a separate survey on the financial impact on county associations.

Supporting communities

Local councils are ideally placed to inform and support residents as they already do in so many spheres — from assisting during flooding and other emergencies to supporting vulnerable or lonely people. And this will almost certainly be the case in the current situation. Cllr Sue Baxter, chairman of NALC, met Nigel Huddleston MP (DCMS minister and their representative on COBRA) on NALC's Lobby Day on 10 March, who saw a potentially big role for parishes during the current period, including keeping an eye on vulnerable people and encouraging new volunteers to come forward to help.

NALC has also engaged with PHE and communicated the desire from local councils to support their communities and the need for information on how best to do this within the scope of

government advice on social distancing. PHE is launching further guidance to support community activities next week which we will share widely.

We know already the coronavirus has affected every community in a multitude of ways, with local councils doing a brilliant job in difficult circumstances. Playing their part to support the community and its residents, businesses, and groups at this challenging time.

Such as Woodbridge Town Council in Suffolk, which has set-up an emergency response group of councillors and volunteers which will assist with collection/delivery of medicines, shopping, walking the dog or simply being a voice at the end of the phone, and Hagley Parish Council in Worcestershire, which is acting as an information hub and plans to publicise restaurants offering a delivery service and contact details for NHS helplines. And Backwell Parish Council, Somerset, has a dedicated team of over 30 volunteers who can organise to have someone check in regularly with the elderly or at high-risk either by phone, Skype or FaceTime.

You can read more about their work, and that of other local councils, in our newly published [Coronavirus case studies](#) publication.

Useful national resources for supporting your community

- On 26 March, the government produced information on [how to help people safely](#).
- Public Health England has also produced a range of material to support the [Stay Home, Save Lives](#) campaign which is free to download and use.
- [NHS England has launched a national volunteer initiative](#) which you can share with your residents.
- The British Red Cross also has [a number of volunteer schemes](#) to help communities in emergency situations.
- Communities Prepared has created [free training resources](#) for volunteers and local groups wishing to support their communities during the pandemic — they also provide free training and resources around wider emergency preparedness too.
- NALC partners, Parish Online, has [published information](#) on how digital mapping can help local councils support their communities during this crisis. To support local councils at this time Parish Online is offering a [30-day free trial](#) to new subscribers.

Local council meetings

On 2 April, the government published [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#). These regulations came into force on 4 April.

NALC has also responded to the government, feeding back issues relating to the regulations – this information can be found in the engaging with government section.

Understanding the regulations:

- NALC has a [legal briefing](#) on our interpretation of the regulations
- Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) have also produced [guidance on the regulations](#) on how they affect all local authorities – NALC was pleased to contribute to sections related to local councils.

Guidance for holding meetings remotely:

- NALC has produced guidance for local councils on [how to hold effective remote council meetings](#).
- [Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils](#) has created a [video](#) to demonstrate what a virtual meeting of (the fictional) Great Pipping Parish Council would look like. It is a training video designed to show how a chairman would deal with councillors joining by computer and phone, declarations of interest, public participation and confidential items where members of the public and press are excluded.

- The National Centre for Cyber Security (NCSC) has [issued updated guidance](#) to help individuals and organisations choose, set up and use video conferencing safely and securely.
- We have received a large number of queries related to Zoom. If you do choose to use Zoom, there is a range of free [information and training](#) to help people use the platform which is definitely worth having a look at to help get you started. A recent update on the Zoom blog has been [guidance on hosting public meetings](#) including how to keep uninvited guests out of your meeting.

Other activity related to remote council meetings:

- NALC has been pleased to be involved with a number of national organisations to provide [guidance and support on holding remote meetings](#).
- NALC engaged with the Crown Commercial Service and Zoom regarding a discounted package. This discount is only available for a minimum of 10 licences per subscription, so is unlikely to be appropriate for many local councils, but if you would like to find out more do contact your county association.

Managing risks to the council

We would recommend that local councils consider different scenarios and what actions might help mitigate any risks to the council. This will vary for individual councils and it may be that no specific actions or changes are required. As examples:

- It may be helpful to review your scheme of delegation to ensure it is fit for purpose and would ensure minimal disruption to the work of the council if councillors are not able to attend meetings and committees. For example, you may wish to consider if certain decisions could be delegated to the clerk, in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman, as a contingency plan in case council meetings are postponed due to the coronavirus.
- You may wish to review critical functions or services and consider how these would continue in the case of staff absence.
- You may have local residents with queries about coronavirus, in which case we would advise you signpost them to government information and advice as highlighted above.
- On 25 May, the [government announced](#) a series of dates for loosening of the lockdown restrictions that apply to retail. This is accompanied by [updated guidance](#) on how to assess and manage risk to be able to re-open shops and branches. This guidance contains a list of the types of shops that will be able to re-open which includes a number that many local councils may run or manage such as gift shops and retail spaces in theatres, museums, libraries, heritage sites and tourism sites, indoor and outdoor markets and craft fairs.

Impact on year-end accounts and audit

Following NALC's engagement with government around local council audit timeframes final regulations [were published](#) on 7 April and will come into force on 30 April. These extend the statutory audit deadlines for 2019/20.

The Joint Practitioners Action Group (JPAG) has produced updated flow charts and step-by-step guides related to the changes to audit time frames. These can be found on our [JPAG webpage](#). We are pleased the government has listened to the sector and recognises the need for an extension to the timeframes for audit. This extension is for two months and not the minimum of at least three months which NALC called for in [our response to the consultation](#) on the draft regulations.

On 22 April, Max Soule, Deputy Director, Local Authority Accountability and Oversight at MHCLG has [emailed a letter to all local authority chief executives](#) in England, confirming the extended audit deadlines for 2019/20, just in case they were not aware through other sources. The letter is also being published on Gov.uk to ensure that it is in the wider public domain.

Will elections be affected?

The Coronavirus Act, which the government introduced on 19 March, postpones any elections that were due to be held in May 2020 until 6 May 2021. Any other electoral events, such as the council or parliamentary by-elections, will also be postponed until May 2021.

NALC has published a [legal briefing](#), which gives guidance on the implications for local councils of the Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. This includes commentary on the prohibition on holding elections to fill casual vacancies until 6 May 2021.

Government engagement

NALC is continuing to engage with the government, and other stakeholders such as the LGA and PHE, on how local councils are responding to the current public health crisis, and raising issues regarding any impact on the operation of our local councils.

The fast-tracked Coronavirus Bill was considered by the House of Commons on 23 March and House of Lords on 24/25 March. It has now received Royal Assent and is an [Act of Parliament](#). Provisions of particular relevance to local councils are on the postponement of local elections and local authority meetings. We are pressing the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to work with us on any subsequent regulations. We don't have the timeframe for those at present but will keep you updated.

A summary of issues which we have been raising with MHCLG, including those which relate to the Coronavirus Act, include:

- Holding of statutory meetings (such as annual parish meeting and the annual council meeting) – We are communicating the concerns that councils have around their ability to hold meetings within the statutory deadlines.
- Audit deadlines — We are communicating the concerns that local councils have around their ability to hold meetings within the statutory deadlines.
- Local elections — With the postponement of local elections we are seeking clarification on the implications of this, including on by-elections and neighbourhood planning referendums.
- Democratic decision-making (e.g. if councils are unable to be quorate for an extended period of time) — We are communicating the difficulties that councils are experiencing or expecting, this includes the question of phone/online attendance.
- Public Works Loan Board – We have sought clarification on whether repayments would be subject to deferral in keeping with other measures announced regarding mortgages and loans.

On 16 March, local government secretary Robert Jenrick MP addressed over 300 council leaders and sector bodies in a call on the government's response to coronavirus. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting councils to focus their efforts on the priority area of social care, providing vital support for vulnerable people and supporting their local economies — [read the full press release on MHCLG's website](#). NALC is still pressing for clarification on how some of these changes not covered in the Coronavirus Act will be applicable to local councils.

On 30 April, Robert Jenrick MP, secretary of state for Housing, Communities and Local Government, wrote a [letter to town and parish councils](#) thanking them for their work supporting communities during this pandemic. Cllr Sue Baxter, chairman of NALC, [responded](#) saying "I am pleased the local government secretary has acknowledged and praised the fantastic response from local (parish and town) councils across England in supporting their communities during this pandemic. I welcome the recognition of the financial challenges facing local government and the need for support. We will continue to discuss how best to address this with the government and the Local Government Association."

NALC will continue to engage with the government on these issues.

Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2020

On 6 April, the government brought regulations into force to change audit deadlines – you can read more in the *local council activity and operations* section.

On 30 March, NALC responded to proposed regulations from the government which would extend the deadline for the inspection/publication requirements in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Their communication stated that at that point the government was not currently planning to amend the requirements for smaller authorities. NALC has undertaken a rapid engagement exercise seeking input from the local council sector, including representatives from different sizes of local councils, county associations, SLCC, and also from the Association of Drainage Authorities and National Audit Office.

[Read NALC's response on behalf of the local council sector](#)

Local council meetings

On 2 April, the government published [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#). On the same day, NALC wrote to the government to feedback issues and queries related to the new regulations — [read NALC's comments on behalf of the local council sector](#).

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The government have introduced a scheme to allow some employers to furlough certain members of staff and reclaim a proportion of their salaries — [find out more about the scheme](#).

The government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is available to public sector organisations and the guidance states that "the government expects that the scheme will not be used by many public sector organisations, as the majority of public sector employees are continuing to provide essential public services or contribute to the response to the coronavirus outbreak".

NALC feels that the government guidance at this point is not clear on whether local councils could reclaim salaries from furloughed employees or not. We have continued to seek more detail from the government to clarify this situation.

It would appear to be possibly relevant for those staff whose jobs have fallen away as a result of the restrictions being put in place to fight COVID-19 and where they cannot be reallocated to other roles. At the heart, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is to help avoid redundancies. For example, where a local council has community facilities that have been closed as a result of COVID-19, there will be no income from these facilities to pay for the caretaker or other staff who run the facilities.

So where local councils have staff who are unable to work in their current roles, where that role is funded from income other than precept, and they are unable to be redeployed to another role to support the response to coronavirus, the council may wish to consider furloughing those staff with the hope of being able to reclaim a portion of their salaries. But at this stage, while NALC could not be certain that the council would be successful in claiming back that salary, we are hearing from councils that have been successful in applying. Therefore if councils believe it is appropriate to apply then they should consider doing so.

The government has [opened applications](#) to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and produced [guidance](#) to support organisations who wish to make a claim through this scheme. If a local council is considering furloughing any staff then NALC and HR Service Partnerships (HRSP) have produced template letters for members to aid this process.

[Template letter asking to be furloughed](#)

[Template letter to confirm furloughed arrangements](#)

HRSP has also uploaded [FAQ's on their website](#) this morning with the latest updates on the scheme.

Getting tested

The government guidance on [getting tested for COVID-19](#) is available which includes information on who would be regarded as an essential worker and so be prioritised for testing. On 1 May, Robert Jenrick MP [wrote to all local government employees in England](#) thanking them for their support during the pandemic, and outlining how staff can get tested.

Homeworking

As an employer, if the council provides homeworking expenses for your employees, you have certain tax, National Insurance and reporting obligations. The council as the employer is has the same health and safety responsibilities for staff working from home as they do for those in an office. The Health and Safety Executive has [useful information](#) that could inform your approach.

HR-related issues

NALC's partner HR Services Partnership are [keeping their website updated](#) with issues related to the coronavirus.

National Joint Council guidance on working from home

On 17 March the National Joint Council for local government services has issued [guidance for councils and council staff on working from home](#).

Statutory Sick Pay

The Statutory Sick Pay (General) (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations 2020 were made on 12 March 2020 and came into force on 13 March. They amended the Statutory Sick Pay (General) Regulations 1982 and provide that statutory sick pay will be available to anyone isolating themselves from other people in such a manner as to prevent infection or contamination with coronavirus disease, in accordance with the guidance published by Public Health England, NHS Scotland or Public Health Wales and effective on 12 March 2020, and by reason of that isolation is unable to work. The government has said that the Statutory Sick Pay will be payable from the first day (not, as previously from day four) and that employers with fewer than 250 employees will be able to reclaim the cost from the government up to a maximum of two weeks' Statutory Sick Pay. The Secretary of State is required to keep the operation of the Regulations under review and they will cease to have effect eight months after they come in to force.

Are national events and celebrations being affected?

Many local councils were planning to get involved in national events and celebrations such as [Great British Spring Clean](#) and [VE Day 75](#), these have been postponed.

In the meantime Keep Britain Tidy have launched their [#LoveWhereYouLive campaign](#), as in the current climate a lot of activities that communities do are not possible, but that doesn't mean that we can't still love where we live.

The national commemorations to mark VE Day 75 on 8 May are being scaled back and the government is working on new plans to ensure the nation can still thank the Second World War generation on VE Day in May and provide the fitting tribute they deserve. Local councils are instead being encouraged to support local digital solutions for celebrations. Once this immediate crisis abates, communities may also be encouraged to turn their attention to planning for VJ day on 15 August. The Great British Spring Clean has also decided to postpone its annual event and relaunch later in the year, with the postponed campaign hoping to take place between 11 and 27 September 2020. For these and other events, local councils should check the relevant event website for the latest information and updates.

Coronavirus and cybersecurity

The [National Centre for Cyber Security](#) has [launched a campaign](#) geared towards the public during COVID-19 times. This includes useful best practice we can all be following at work, but also it is useful information to share with residents.

Two of NALC's partners have also provided advice for local councils on cybersecurity:

- Microshade has provided additional [advice for local councils as fraudsters are exploiting the spread of coronavirus to facilitate various types of fraud and cybercrime](#).
- BHIB Councils Insurance has developed [cybersecurity tips to help keep local councils and their staff to stay secure and keep online data safe](#).

CiLCA deadlines pushed back

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, all CiLCA candidates who are currently registered will be granted an additional three months to complete their portfolio. This extension will be automatically granted for all candidates and you will not need to contact the CiLCA administrator. This automatic extension will be reviewed at the end of June. In the meantime, all registered candidates who have attended relevant training should continue to submit work when it has been completed to an appropriate standard. New candidates are reminded that they should not register for CiLCA until they have a training programme in place.

Data protection and GDPR

On 12 March the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) [released a statement](#) to reassure organisations seeking to support their communities at this time. It includes this information:

"Data protection and electronic communication laws do not stop Government, the NHS or any other health professionals from sending public health messages to people, either by phone, text or email as these messages are not direct marketing. Nor does it stop them using the latest technology to facilitate safe and speedy consultations and diagnoses. Public bodies may require additional collection and sharing of personal data to protect against serious threats to public health.

The ICO is a reasonable and pragmatic regulator, one that does not operate in isolation from matters of serious public concern. Regarding compliance with data protection, we will take into account the compelling public interest in the current health emergency."

To support this statement the ICO has also produced [further guidance around data protection and coronavirus](#).

Local death management powers

The government has produced [statutory guidance](#) issued under s.58 and Schedule 28 to the Coronavirus Act 2020. The 2020 Act introduced new powers for local authorities and government to support the resilience of local death management systems, and step in if they become overwhelmed.

Parish councils are excluded from the definition of the local authority for the purposes of s.58 and Schedule 12 to the 2020 Act. Their role as burial authorities is recognised. Essentially the role of parish councils under the 2020 Act is one of co-operation should they choose to do so:

- The powers in Part 1 of Schedule 28 enable local authorities to require persons and national authorities to provide information to assist those authorities to ascertain the capacity to deal with transportation, storage or disposal of dead bodies and other human remains in a particular area or nationally. The guidance on Part 1 confirms that parish councils "are not included in the definition of what constitutes an English local authority. However, as parish councils are often burial and/or cremation authorities, they may cooperate with local authorities to ensure appropriate death management occurs".
- Part 2 of Schedule 28 gives powers of direction to local and national authorities in order for them to manage capacity in the death management system. The guidance on Part 2 provides that parish councils "are not included in the definition of what constitutes an

English local authority. However, as parish councils are often burial and/or cremation authorities, they may cooperate with local authorities to ensure appropriate death

Managing green and outdoor spaces

On 13 May the government published [safer public places - urban centres and green spaces](#). This has a dedicated section on green spaces with clear and succinct information on key issues to consider.

On 13 May the government also published [guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation](#). This contains a section for providers of outside sports facilities which may be relevant to many local councils.

The National Allotment Society has issued [useful guidance on how to manage allotments](#) in accordance with government regulations.

BHIB Councils Insurance has developed advice on [expectations of local councils regarding playgrounds and outdoor fitness equipment](#).

Neighbourhood planning

The government has provided [guidance](#) where the coronavirus situation impacts on neighbourhood planning including the referendum process, decision-making, oral representations for examinations, and public consultation — find it by scrolling to the very bottom of the [neighbourhood planning guidance](#).

LCR Magazine

The recently published issue of NALC's flagship magazine, LCR, features a coronavirus-themed special section.

As local councils stepped up to help the vulnerable in their communities at the outset of the pandemic, there was clear evidence that the magazine could provide some must-read practical tips to local councils and also present some great leadership cases studies.

So, in this issue, there are coronavirus features on:

- how local councils can manage their volunteers;
- how they have been responding to, and leading on, the pandemic;
- how they can keep their momentum going while working from home.

But please do read the rest of the magazine, which puts a spotlight on those councillors, councils and county associations doing excellent work. It also gives information and advice and guidance on a range of topical issues – from actions being put in place to speed up rural mobile coverage, to advice on how to get to grips with the new web accessibility regulations.

[Subscribe to LCR](#)

[Read LCR Spring 2020 for FREE](#)

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Advice &
Solutions Ltd**

Corona Virus Job Retention Grant Scheme – Furlough Leave – Update

Latest Update issued 3/6/20

1 Cut-off date

Employees who have not been furloughed before 10 June cannot be furloughed after that date.

2 Flexible furloughing

From 1 July Employers will be able to arrange for Employees to work part time while on Furlough Leave. It is entirely up to Employers what hours their staff can work.

Employers will only be able to claim the grant for hours that furloughed employees do not work. Businesses will have to pay furloughed employees their normal pay for the hours they do work.

3 Tapering the grant

July

Employers will still be able to claim up to 80 per cent of furloughed employees' wages up to a maximum of £2,500 per month, plus national insurance contributions (NICs) and pension contributions.

August

The job retention scheme grant will stay the same from 1 August, but employers will have to pay NICs and pension contributions.

September / October

The government will reimburse 70 per cent of wages (up to a maximum of £2,190), which will then drop to 60 per cent (up to a maximum of £1,875) from 1 October. This means that employers will have to pay 10 per cent of wages in September and 20 per cent of wages in October, plus NICs and pension contributions, with the scheme due to close on 31 October.

Also, if employers have previously 'topped up' the grant, they will have to continue these arrangements, unless agreed otherwise with each employee.

4 Holiday

Employees can take leave while they are on Furlough Leave. The Govt had previously said this cannot happen, and had stated that unused leave might be able to be carried over for up to two years. That has now changed.

Employers can make staff take any leave that has already been booked before the lockdown began, even though those Employees are already at home. The Employer has to ensure that they pay 100% of the holiday pay entitlement, but they can claim back 80% of this pay through the Job Retention Grant.

In addition, Employers can inform all staff now that they have to use up this year's holiday entitlement, and to get holiday requests submitted as soon as convenient. If they leave it and try to book holiday at the end of the year, the Employer may need to refuse requests for dates that have already been booked by other Employees.

One final option is that you could force people to take leave, and unilaterally nominate dates which they will have to take as annual holiday. Which can be at the same time that they are on Furlough Leave. This is perfectly legal. An Employer's only statutory obligation is to ensure that staff have an opportunity to use up their annual entitlement.

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