

Q&A – Furlough at LOROS

Selection for Furlough

How are people being selected for furlough?

Individuals who do not have a direct clinical facing role or who's role has been impacted by a reduction in activity in care services, education or income generation have been selected for furlough.

Are members of the SMC being considered for furlough?

Every member of staff is being considered for furlough based on the role they play in ensuring the future-proofing of the hospice. SMC colleagues have been included in this selection process and will continue to be considered should the situation develop and the need to make further savings becomes ever more pressing.

I haven't been selected for furlough but would like to be on the list. What can I do?

Please speak to your line manager in the first instance. They will liaise with the relevant director to establish whether it is possible for you to be considered. Other options such as working reduced hours may be considered more appropriate and will be looked at on a case by case basis.

What happens to the work and projects that the affected staff were working on?

It has been necessary to prioritise which work is deemed essential to the running of the hospice at this current time as well as to concurrently consider how best to future-proof the organisation financially. It is with both of these elements in mind that decisions have been made around the most appropriate furlough list.

In cases where work is required to continue but staff associated with projects have been furloughed, line managers have developed an action plan to ensure delivery.

How soon will people be bought back and who makes these decisions?

In this uncharted territory, activity and priorities are shifting on a daily basis. It is our intention to review the current workforce against those shifting priorities on a weekly basis.

In order to access the government funding, staff are required to be furloughed for a minimum of three weeks – they can be invited to return to work on a case by case basis after that period.

Are more staff likely to be furloughed and if so, can a timeline be shared?

As described above, our priorities are changing daily and therefore it is impossible, and also unfair to predict and communicate timescales. It is possible that others will be furloughed.

All colleagues will be kept informed of what is happening at the hospice as the situation develops and Line Managers are the first point of contact for questions in relation to your role specifically.

Has anyone from HoDS been furloughed?

Yes, some Heads of Department are on the furlough list.

Finances

Are other options available to me if I am on the furlough list as this will cause me significant financial difficulty?

We are making every effort to ensure that LOROS staff are supported through the process and we thank you for understanding that these decisions have been made to protect the organisation, and our workforce for the future. If you have been selected for furlough – we will require you to do this. You will appreciate that these are extremely unusual circumstances and as such we will be reviewing the situation, and our staffing requirements daily. You may be called back from furlough and required to return to work before the end of the 12 week period (12 weeks is based on current Government guidance and commenced on 1 March 2020 and is subject to change) and we will endeavour to keep everyone up to date with any change in strategy or workforce requirements.

Why aren't LOROS topping up wages so that staff do not lose any income?

The decision not to top up wages is based on the overall goal of future proofing LOROS and the workforce. We don't yet know how long the unusual measures that we are all now familiar with will be imposed for and it is felt that our approach is the most appropriate to protect the organisation and our staff longer term.

Will my pension be affected by going on to 80% salary?

Pension contributions are calculated on a percentage of gross pay, so unfortunately it will be affected. There is an option to top up your employee contribution to make up the difference. If you wish to do this you will need contact the Human Resources Department.

It is unclear at this time whether the contribution to wage costs will extend to benefits such as employer pension contributions. However we will continue to monitor the situation.

Is it possible for me to pause my pension contributions?

You can stop or take a break from paying contributions at any time and leave your fund in the plan. Any contribution break is likely to reduce your future pension. You should speak to your employer if you're thinking of taking a contribution break. Your policy conditions will give you more details.

I pay towards a 'Bike to work' scheme. Could these payments be put on hold during the furlough?

If you wish to pause your scheme, the best thing you can do in the first instance is to contact Evans Cycles to chat through your requirements. Unfortunately, they haven't issued any guidance to employers. If they agree to it, please ask them to contact the Director of Finance to facilitate the change

Will overtime worked in the last month (but past the payroll cut off) still be paid in next month's pay?

Yes

Am I able to be paid for any outstanding holiday?

Please see the question below in the HR section relating to annual leave. We do not intend to pay for any outstanding annual leave.

Volunteering and Alternative Work during Furlough

If I am furloughed, am I able to contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis?

Furloughed employees are able to undertake volunteer work while not in their usual job; but they are not permitted to do this for their own organisation.

They can volunteer in their communities to help people affected by COVID19 but cannot work free of charge for their own organisation.

Doing so could jeopardise the furlough status of the employee and affect LOROS' ability to reclaim under the government scheme, and we absolutely wouldn't want that to happen.

Am I able to undertake part-time work during furlough?

The scheme has been created to protect jobs in the longer term and therefore this is the 'spirit' of the funding. The decision to undertake part-time work is entirely your own and there is no intention from LOROS to police this. However, please be aware that you may be recalled from furlough at any time.

As a clinical member of staff who has not been furloughed, am I able to work clinically on other sites in my spare time?

Yes.

Health and Wellbeing

Being at home for this period of time will have a significant impact on my mental health.

We are developing a health and well being plan to support our staff over the forthcoming weeks. You will be able to access all activity remotely. We hope to have a schedule in place next week to share with you with a view to commencing the schedule on Monday 6th April. Activities will include mindfulness sessions, yoga and an interactive quiz and we are looking to set up a virtual 'wobble room' for staff who would like to talk to a mental health first aider and/or others who may have similar concerns / worries. All details for how to access the schedule will be uploaded to the hospice pinboard by Friday 3rd April and will be updated regularly.

Human Resources

I'm currently in my probation period and am on the furlough list. Am I treated the same as everyone else?

Yes.

Will I continue to accrue annual leave while I'm on furlough?

Annual leave will accrue as normal.

How will LOROS communicate with me if I am furloughed?

It will be necessary to provide a personal email address and phone number. A letter has been sent to you by post confirming your furlough status and you will be required to respond confirming acknowledgement of the letter and providing personal contact details. The hospice pinboard will also be kept up to date with the latest information.

Are un-furloughed staff required to forfeit anything? IE reduce hours, have a cut to their pay?

We will continue to monitor the financial situation and as ever are exploring options as to how to bolster our income which has significantly reduced as a result of recent events. You may be aware that many organisations, including Hospice UK are lobbying Government for financial support for charities – over time we will see if that approach is successful.

If the Government does not take steps to offer further financial support to the sector, we will need to explore other options which could include reduced hours and possible pay cuts as well as other measures. We are not at that point yet and reiterate that all steps are being taken with the long term goal of protecting our workforce.

Will I still have access to Select HR if I am on furlough?

Yes. Although line management in terms of updating sickness etc will be shifted from those on furlough. You will be able to use it to access wage slips etc.

You can access SelectHR from this page (www.loros.co.uk/staff) by scrolling to the buttons at the bottom.

We would be grateful if you could update your record with your personal details.

On returning to work will I still have my full holiday allowance or will it be pro-rated?

All we know at the moment is that there is provision for employees who, due to COVID-19 have not taken all of their statutory annual leave entitlement (4 weeks), to carry it over into the next two leave years. It is thought that this applies to all staff as the Gov.UK page states. Further details have not yet been published.

IT and Technology

Do I need to return my laptop / mobile phone if I am furloughed?

You will not need to return any equipment (EG. Laptops) to LOROS during your period of absence but if the situation changes and we require the return – you will be contacted directly.

It is important that LOROS equipment is not utilised for personal use due to security risks and the extra pressure that this will put onto the IT team should your equipment be recalled and is found to be corrupted.

I have been told I cannot access LOROS emails while I am off. What is the rationale for this?

The Government scheme strictly requires that staff on furlough should not undertake any work for their employing organisation. It is for this reason that we will be restricting access to emails and are requiring personal contact details. IT will be adding a generic Out of Office message to all affected accounts.

If I'm on furlough, where can I find the latest information about what's happening at the hospice?

The hospice pinboard should be your 'go to' for the most up to date information. Where you have provided a personal email address, we may also contact you through this route. If you cannot find the information you require, please contact your line manager or contact a member of the SMC.

What if my question does not relate to any of the points above?

Please speak to your line manager or director.