

T: 0300 244 4000  
E: [scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)

Social Care Employers  
Via email

4 December 2020

## EXTENSION OF UK GOVERNMENT JOB RETENTION SCHEME (JRS)

Dear Social Care Employer

Our social care workforce is very much valued by the Scottish Ministers, and never more so than now. I cannot stress enough the level of appreciation that I and my colleagues have for our social care workers. They are invaluable, and I know that you share my desire to ensure that they are supported as well as possible in these difficult times and treated fairly.

I am writing to make you aware that the UK Government has confirmed that the JRS is available again to new applicants and will run until March 2021. If you have workers who are eligible to be furloughed, please access the JRS for them, to enable them to receive the level of income they are entitled to from the scheme. Applications can be made at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

As you will know, the Scottish Government has made additional funding available through local mobilisation plans to cover costs such as additional staffing due to such absences.

I am aware that there was some uncertainty at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic around whether social care workers were eligible for the UK Government JRS. While most social care employers did apply to the JRS for eligible workers, some did not, which resulted in a small number of workers having to survive on only sick pay.

In light of these exceptional circumstances, I have agreed to pay workers who were not placed on the JRS, but were eligible for it for health reasons (because they fell into the “Extremely high risk of severe illness” or “Higher risk of severe illness” group as defined in guidance issued by NHS 24) during the period the original JRS was open to applications, and who were paid either nothing at all, or a level of sick pay. This payment will provide them with the amount of

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pay they would have received from the JRS for **relevant periods between March and October only**.

Details of how to apply for this exceptional payment, including eligibility criteria, will be issued shortly. After October, we expect that all eligible workers will be placed on the UK Government schemes.

You will also be aware of the [Social Care Staff Support Fund](#), which aims to ensure social care workers do not experience financial hardship if they are ill or self-isolating due to coronavirus.

Once again, let me thank you for all that social care providers and workers are doing to support people during the pandemic period. I have heard from many sources just how much this is appreciated by the people you work with and their families.

Kind Regards,



**JEANE FREEMAN**

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