

Podiatry Business FAQs



For further information:
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For Employers in the Independent/ Private Sector

1. What changes have been made to contracts of employment since COVID-19 and the lockdowns?

Contracts of employment are agreed between employer and employee and can be changed by mutual agreement during employment. There has been no imposed change on anyone's contract of employment during COVID-19.

2. What are the furlough arrangements during the virus?

'Furlough' is the word to describe the UK Government's Corona Virus Job Retention Scheme. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme> The scheme runs to April 30 2021 (unless extended further). The scheme enables employers who cannot maintain their workforce to 'furlough' employees. The Government is able to make a grant to the employer for a portion of their usual monthly wage. The employer can claim 80% of an employee's usual salary for hours not worked up to £2500 per month.

3. Can I bring someone back into work who has been on 'furlough'?

If you have placed an employee on 'furlough' they cannot make money or provide services for your organisation or any organisation linked to you. If you bring back an employee from 'furlough' to work for you then they will be entitled to their normal pay and terms and conditions and will cease to be furloughed. You cannot have staff on 'furlough' who remain working for you in your business as normal.

4. My staff are asking to be furloughed but I have sufficient work for them to undertake – should I do this?

The decision to furlough staff is up to you (your company). If you have sufficient work for them to undertake then you are under no obligation to introduce furlough.

5. What do I do if my staff test positive for COVID-19?

Those who test positive for COVID-19 need to isolate for 10 days and should not be at work. Likewise staff who have ‘COVID-19 like symptoms’ but without a clinical diagnosis or test result should not be at work and should be self-isolating.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

6. Can I access the Self-employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

If you have been ‘carrying on a trade’ (and that you still intend to continue trading) that has been adversely affected by Coronavirus and have traded from 2018/19 then you may be able to apply for SEISS. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

Any payment under SEISS will be based on your average trading profit over three tax years 2016/17 to 2018/19.

If you have a business or financial adviser working for you then it may be a good idea to discuss this with them as well. Any grant received is taxable and subject to NI contribution deductions. You are able to continue trading while in receipt of an SEISS grant.

7. What do I do if my staff are self-isolating or off sick with COVID-19 or unable to work because they are shielding?

If your staff are unfit to work because they are isolating from COVID-19 then how they will be managed will be dependent upon what is in their contract of employment covering such

absences. If you pay sick pay and they are off sick then you do so however, you may be able to claim some money back from the government. More details about this can be found <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation-and-sick-pay>. If an employee needs to shield you could see if there is any remote work they can do such as remote consultations. If this is not possible then you can furlough them. More information on this <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/vulnerable-people-and-high-risk>.

8. My employer does not provide adequate PPE or is not providing enough time to carry out infection control measures between patients – what can I do?

If you have any concerns that your employer is not following national or college guidelines/standards initially you should raise this with them and direct them to the COP website for information. If they are still not following guidance, then please contact employmentsupport@cop.org.uk for advice.

10. Will my employer provide paid time off for vaccination/testing?

This is dependent on what is in your contract of employment, but it would be hoped that employers are flexible and understanding during this time to allow you to attend medical appointments relating to COVID-19 during work time.

For self-employed podiatrists (sole traders) / Associate Podiatrists

11. How is my work affected by COVID-19?

Those who are self-employed are, by definition, not an employee.

The self-employed work on their own account, often with a number of clients, and are not under the direction or control of an employer. They are not covered by any employment terms a client may have with their own employees. They are responsible for managing their own Tax and NI with the HMRC, holiday pay, maternity leave and sick pay etc. The self-employed will have a contract / agreement with each client as to what work services they will be delivering and upon what terms. If they are unable to deliver the service, they have contracted to provide they will be able to offer a substitute to undertake the work on their behalf.

For the self-employed the key document is their contractual agreement with their client. These contracts could be different between each client.

12. I am self-employed and I have tested positive for COVID-19 what do I do?

You should self-isolate as per Government guidelines.

You should, as soon as possible, notify your clients as to your unavailability to work. In this context this may mean both the client with whom you are contracted to provide services and also your individual patients/clients that you might be expected to see.



You should check any health insurance you may have to see if there is the ability to claim any sickness allowance.

You should not return to work until such time as you have completed isolation or have received a negative test.

You may substitute yourself with a colleague as per the substitution clause you should have in your contract.

13. I have been tested positive for COVID-19 what sick pay can I receive?

This will be dependent upon any health policy that you might hold. You should check your policy to see if you are covered for being unable to work on the basis of illness / isolating etc.

You may also be able to claim some money from the government

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/coronavirus-getting-benefits-if-youre-self-isolating/>

14. My client(s) has closed their practice what can I do – I am still available to work.

If this happens you should not be liable for any challenge that you have not delivered a service as per your contract with the client.

Whether there is any payment / compensation in this event will be dependent upon what the agreement is between you. You should continue to liaise with your client(s) regarding the possible future commencement of work.

You can continue to do any other work you may have such as domiciliary or working in other practices.



You might be able to apply to the Government for assistance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

15. My 'client' won't put me on furlough although they have done this with other staff.

As a self-employed person you are not an employee and as such cannot be furloughed by your client. It may be possible for you (as a Company) to furlough yourself through the Self-employment income support scheme (SEISS grant scheme).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

16. I am getting no or reduced work due to the pandemic – what can I do?

You may be able to claim government support <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-what-to-do-if-youre-self-employed-and-getting-less-work-or-no-work>