

Numbers on furlough fall to lowest level since start of pandemic

- around 340,000 people have moved off furlough across the UK over the course of July, according to the latest data
- a total of 1.6 million people were on furlough as of 31 July, down from almost two million on 30 June, in a sure sign the government's Plan for Jobs is getting people back to work
- around 800,000 people have claimed the latest self-employment scheme grant

The number of people on furlough has fallen to the lowest level since the start of the pandemic as the UK economy continues to rebound and businesses reopen, according to new statistics.

Figures published today show the number of people on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) in July stood at 1.6 million – down 340,000 from almost two million at the end of June and a peak of nearly nine million at the height of the pandemic in May last year.

The figures also show a striking fall in the number of young people on furlough, showing that our Plan for Jobs is continuing to support young people back into work. A total of 121,600 people between the ages of 18-34 came off the CJRS during the months of June and July.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

It's fantastic to see furlough levels at their lowest since the start of the pandemic with young people in particular getting back to work and kickstarting their careers as the UK gets back to business.

With furlough naturally unwinding and coming to a close at the end of the month we are doubling down on our Plan for Jobs – focusing our support on giving people the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in the jobs of tomorrow.

The number of people on furlough in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, as well as accommodation and food services have seen particularly large reductions in the number of jobs on furlough over the course of the summer, with numbers furloughed from these sectors declining by 26,200 and 96,700 in July respectively.

The latest statistics for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme show a consistent fall in demand since the beginning of the scheme. Across all five grants, 9.9 million claims have been made and more than £27 billion has been claimed by almost three million people.

The furlough scheme has protected nearly 12 million jobs over the last 18 months, with nearly 2 million fewer people now expected to be out of work than was previously feared. Last summer, the OBR forecast that the unemployment rate would reach nearly 12%, but they now think it will peak at just over half that number. The scheme is naturally unwinding as the economy rebounds and businesses reopen and will come to a close at the end of this month.

This comes after the announcement of a Government-backed insurance scheme for the live events sector, which will help them plan events with confidence through to next year, and boost a sector that supports more than 700,000 jobs.

In another positive sign for the economy and jobs, the latest Insolvency Service figures also show that fewer potential redundancies were notified in August than any other month in 2020-2021.

Furlough was the right thing to do at the height of the pandemic, when necessary health restrictions were in place – this way we were able to protect lives and livelihoods. As the economy reopens and businesses trade again it's right that employees can get back to work. The Government is doubling down on its Plan for Jobs as the UK economy rebounds – focusing our support on giving people the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in the jobs of tomorrow through schemes including Kickstart, Restart and apprenticeships.

Further information: