

# Nearly a million workers used flexible furlough in July

News story

950,000 workers got back to work part-time in July according to new figures.



- number of workers in retail on furlough halved from the start of the pandemic from 1.85 million to 789,000.
- stats also show construction sector received more than £2 billion in support with SEISS grants for self-employed workers

Nearly a million workers returned to their jobs part-time in the first month flexible furlough was introduced, statistics published today show.

Flexible furlough began on the 1st July – giving businesses the flexibility to bring employees back part-time, with the government paying 80% of their wages for the hours not worked.

950,000 workers – 20% of those furloughed nationally – went back to offices, shops, restaurants and factories to work on a part-time basis.

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer said:

These figures show the success of our furlough scheme- making sure people's jobs are there for them to return to.

That so many businesses have been able to get back to trading, and bring their staff back to the workplace is a testament to the impact the scheme has had.

At the height of the pandemic, 1.85 million employments in the retail and wholesale sector were furloughed, but by the end of July this number had dropped to 789,000 with more than a million people off furlough.

New figures for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme also show which

sectors have taken up the second grant, with 693,000 claims worth £2 billion being made in the construction industry as the country's builders get back to work.

Today's news comes as 9.6 million jobs have been supported through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. This support for furloughed workers and businesses will continue through the £9 billion Job Retention Bonus, and other interventions in the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs – including the £2 billion Kickstart scheme.

## Notes

- [view the CJRS statistics publication](#)
- the CJRS figures in this data release are up until the 31st July for claims submitted to HMRC by 31 August
- the SEISS claims are for 17 to 31 August under the second SEISS grant

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## [Dr Liam Fox through to 2nd round in WTO Director General contest](#)

Dr Liam Fox said he has the experience and vision to revitalise the World Trade Organization (WTO) after making it through to the second round of the selection process for the next Director General (DG).

Today, three candidates, Dr Jesús Seade, Tudor Ulianovschi and Hamid Mamdouh, have withdrawn from the race. Dr Fox thanked them for such positive contributions to the debate surrounding our global trade. The next round of the process begins on Thursday 24th September.

**Speaking from Geneva where Dr Fox has been meeting representatives from around the world, the former UK International Trade Secretary said:**

I want this DG election to be a real choice – we need the best qualified candidate for the job with the ability to deliver what the Membership is demanding. I believe I am that candidate.

The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson nominated Dr Fox to be a candidate to replace current Director General, Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down after seven years in charge.

Dr Fox is campaigning to restore the credibility of the WTO at the heart of the rules-based trading system, reform its Appellate Body, deliver genuine

gender equality by ensuring that at least half of his top team are women and work more closely with other international organizations.

He says that from the first day of his appointment he will work to ensure the global pandemic does not lead to a rise in protectionism, and will make smaller developing countries, small businesses and 'ensuring global trade works for everyone' his key priorities.

Today he warned it is vital the WTO selects a leader with the right qualifications for a series of urgent challenges.

**He said:**

It cannot be a 'business as usual'. The WTO was facing very significant challenges before COVID-19. Those headwinds are made all the more urgent by the pandemic.

Declining trade volumes, disagreements about the normative agenda, and most importantly, a breaking down of the multilateral consensus which enabled the WTO to be established are challenges we need to tackle head-on.

The WTO needs leadership at the top with an unswerving belief in the power of open markets to drive economic development and prosperity.

It is one of the world's great institutions. It has tremendous technical expertise, a wealth of experience and a long institutional memory. But it lacks political momentum at a time when most of the blockages in the global trading system are political and will need to be sorted out in national capitals as well as in Geneva.

I see the role of the DG as building bridges and rebuilding trust across the world.

My time as a UK Minister in one of the world's biggest economies with a respected development agenda allowed me to get a real sense of both opportunities and frustrations across the Membership. I am looking forward to continuing this campaign.

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## [New parents urged to have their say on available early years support via new online questionnaire](#)

- New parents, healthcare staff, charities and volunteer groups encouraged to share their views on the government's existing early years support
- Early Years Health Adviser Andrea Leadsom MP to lead new review commissioned by the Prime Minister into improving health outcomes of babies and young children
- The review will consider the barriers that impact on early years development, including social and emotional factors, and early childhood experiences

New parents are being invited to [have their say](#) on what support they need, and how it is best delivered, so that every baby is given the best start in life, no matter what their circumstances.

A major new [review into improving the healthy development of infants](#) was launched by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in July, aiming to break down the barriers that can impact on early years development and level up the opportunities given to every newborn.

Led by Early Years Healthy Development Adviser Andrea Leadsom MP, this review will focus on improving the support available to babies and their families in the period from conception to age 2, often referred to as the 1,001 critical days.

New parents, health service professionals, charities and volunteer groups are being asked to share their views to help shape the outcome of the review, by completing an [online questionnaire](#) which will go live on GOV.UK today (Friday 18 September).

Public Health Minister Jo Churchill said:

To help inform our work on the Early Years Development Review we want to hear from new or expectant parents, carers and healthcare professionals about their experiences of life with baby throughout this recent critical and unusual time living with coronavirus. What worked well and what could have been improved – so we can ensure babies and young children are supported and nurtured during these vital early years.

Now is your chance to help shape this important piece of work, so please let us know your views through our online questionnaire so we can better understand what building blocks we need for those

first critical 1,001 days.

The first 1,001 days – from conception to age 2 – provide the foundation for every human being, and have a significant impact on physical health, mental health and opportunity throughout their life.

The review is part of the government's commitment to levelling up the country and helping every child reach their full potential, building on policy already in place.

Throughout the pandemic, community health and mental health services have continued to deliver vital safeguarding functions and to provide support for new parents or parents of small children, with greater use of digital and remote technologies. During lockdown, a further [£3.3 million in funding was also awarded](#) to the Health and Wellbeing Fund to support mothers and babies, including improving perinatal mental health.

The government has also committed to transforming maternity services as part of the NHS Long Term Plan, backed by an extra £33.9 billion a year by 2023 to 2024, to help the NHS become the safest place in the world to give birth.

Early Years Healthy Development Adviser, Andrea Leadsom MP, said:

As well as helping the review to shape the services needed by new babies and their parents, this questionnaire will help to gather experiences of parents who had a baby during the coronavirus lockdown.

This will help us to understand the many challenges faced, as well as to learn what worked well and what new innovations we can build on. The findings of this questionnaire will help the review to shape our recommendations and to promote the best start in life for every baby.

The review will focus on the needs of the baby from conception to the age of 2 – seeking a broad improvement in outcomes, ranging from reducing disparities in birth weight, improving social and emotional development in early years, and reducing the impact of vulnerability and adverse childhood experiences in infancy.

Research from NHS England suggests that 1 in 5 mums and 1 in 10 dads experience mental health problems during pregnancy and after birth. Pregnancy can often be a trigger for domestic abuse, with between 15 to 30% of domestic violence cases starting during this time.

Understanding lessons learned from COVID-19, including how to provide better support for parents during childbirth, minimising the risks from the pandemic to very young children, and the better use of technology, the government will work with academics, health professionals and other experts to identify policies and services that will improve the outcomes for vulnerable babies,

children and their families.

As part of the next phase of the review, Andrea Leadsom MP will be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including independent academic experts, maternity and children's specialists, leading commissioners, service providers and volunteers, and parliamentarians.

Building on conclusions from the Inter-Ministerial Group on Early Years Family Support, Andrea Leadsom MP is expected to submit her findings and policy recommendations from the first phase of the Review into Early Years Healthy Development in January 2021. This 'vision for excellence' in the period from conception to age 2 will be rolled out across England during 2021.

In July 2019, the government launched the green paper [Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s](#), making a commitment to support parents and modernise the Healthy Child Programme to enable effective services to those who are in need.

The government is investing more than £3.6 billion in 2020 to 2021 on free early education entitlements, helping parents to work more flexibly and supporting children's early development. This includes the universal offer for every 3 and 4-year-old of 15 hours per week of early education, as well as for the most deprived 2-year-olds, and our 30-hours offer for working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds.

The government is also investing in early years organisations to help them boost disadvantaged children's development, with grants targeted at improving outcomes for young children at risk of falling behind by age 5, and for those with special educational needs.

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## **Reforms to Companies House to clamp down on fraud and give businesses greater confidence in transactions**

- Compulsory identity verification to be introduced to help trace people who are committing fraud or money laundering
- Companies House will be given greater powers to query, investigate and remove false information
- changes will give businesses confidence in who they are doing business with, with greater accuracy of data on the register, without impacting the speed of service

The UK's register of company information will be reformed to clamp down on

fraud and money laundering, the government has announced today (Friday 18 September).

Under the plans, directors will not be able to be appointed until their identity has been verified by Companies House.

The changes aim to increase the reliability of the data showing who is behind each company so that businesses have greater assurance when they are entering transactions with other companies, such as when small businesses are consulting the register to research potential suppliers and partners.

It will also improve the ability of law enforcement agencies, such as the National Crime Agency, to trace their activity for suspected fraud or money laundering. Identity verification will take place through a fast, efficient, digital process and is expected to take a matter of minutes.

These reforms will not impact on the typical speed at which a company or organisation is formed and other filings are completed. Most companies will be able to be incorporated easily within 24 hours as is the case now.

Data on Companies House informs many transactions between businesses and underpins credit scores and lending decisions. Register data was accessed 9.4 billion times in the last year, and research suggests it is worth up to [£3 billion per year](#) to users.

The government's full response to the [Corporate Transparency and Register Reform](#) consultation has been published today. The reforms will give Companies House more powers to query and reject information, to improve the quality of data on the register, as well as affording users greater protections over their personal data, to help protect them from fraud and other harms.

Minister for Corporate Responsibility Lord Callanan said:

We are committed to making the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a business. The reforms we are making to the Companies House register will provide businesses with greater confidence in their transactions.

Mandatory identity verification will mean criminals have no place to hide – allowing us to clamp down on fraud and money laundering and ensure people cannot manipulate the UK market for their own financial gain, whilst ensuring for the majority that the processes for setting up and running a company remain quick and easy.

Where any new controls are introduced, Companies House will keep the burden on business as low as possible and will continue to look for ways to make incorporation and access to its services as smooth as they can be.

For example, to facilitate the new identity verification requirement, Companies House will develop a fast, efficient, 24/7 digital verification process to minimise any strain on business, and prevent delays in

incorporations and filings.

The government will consult on further changes to make Companies House more useful and usable, including reforms to the filing of company accounts.

Broader transformation of Companies House systems and processes will bring further business benefits through streamlining and digitising processes and improving the user experience.

The government will bring forward legislation to enact the reforms to the register when Parliamentary time allows.

Louise Smyth, chief executive of Companies House, said:

We are pleased that these significant and far-reaching changes are being announced.

We know how valuable our data is, not just to businesses but to law enforcement and these reforms will unlock that value even further.

Driving confidence in the UK economy is at the very heart of our plans to modernise Companies House, and we already have a substantial transformation programme in place to bring the government's ambition to life.

Security Minister James Brokenshire said:

We must use all the tools at our disposal to stop criminals profiting from their offending.

These changes will give law enforcement and the private sector more accurate information to crack down on dirty money and financial exploitation, to protect our security and prosperity.

The changes are a result of the government's 2019 consultation on Corporate Transparency and Register Reform. The government response is available on the [consultation page](#).

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**[New information campaign to help Brits prepare for EU travel changes](#)**

Press release



A public information campaign launches to help British travellers prepare for changes when visiting Europe from 1 January 2021, when the UK's transition period ends.



- rules around passports, access to healthcare, driving, pet travel and mobile phone roaming in EU and EFTA countries are changing from 1 January 2021
- travellers are urged to visit [gov.uk/transition](https://gov.uk/transition) to check the specific actions they may need to take
- the safety and wellbeing of British travellers remains the Government's priority, and anyone planning to go abroad should always check [travel advice](#) on GOV.UK

A new public information campaign is being launched today (Friday 18 September) by the UK government to help British travellers prepare for changes when visiting Europe from 1 January 2021, following the end of the UK's transition period.

It includes information about the new rules around passport validity, driving and travelling with pets, as well as reminding travellers to obtain comprehensive travel insurance and check official government travel advice before going abroad.

Minister for the European Neighbourhood Wendy Morton said:

The campaign launching today will help British nationals prepare for visits to Europe by bringing together all the information they need to know in one place so they can plan in advance and get on with their trip.

Ahead of visiting Europe, travellers are being asked to visit [gov.uk/transition](https://gov.uk/transition) to:

- check their passport validity using the [GOV.UK passport checker](#), and renew now if needed. There will be new rules around passport validity when travelling to Europe after 1 January 2021. This does not apply to Ireland
- purchase comprehensive travel insurance that covers all needs, including healthcare. European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) may no longer be valid from January 2021; details will be published shortly

- check and obtain driving documents for each country, such as an International Driving Permit, if planning to drive
- contact a vet at least 4 months before departure to arrange pet travel vaccinations and documents
- check roaming policies with their mobile phone provider
- check [travel advice](#) on GOV.UK for country-specific rules, including information on coronavirus restrictions

There are more than 60 million visits to Europe from the UK each year. To help travellers prepare, the UK government is working in partnership with the travel industry to communicate these changes to customers.

ABTA Chief Executive Mark Tanzer said:

Europe is home to some of the most popular destinations for British holidaymakers. Many people will be making plans for travelling to Europe next year, so ABTA and its members are keen to work with the UK government to make customers aware of any changes that will affect their travel arrangements.

The information campaign will be live from today across a range of online and print outlets and on social media.

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