

# Protecting jobs: Furloughing workers and the Chancellor's statement

23 Mar 2020

GMB has been pushing hard for a bail out scheme that guarantees workers' pay if their employer is facing difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Our national efforts are working.

We welcomed the Chancellor's statement on Friday and, if employers act quickly and honourably, we will be able to save tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of jobs.

We are pushing hard to ensure greater protection for the self-employed, improvements to sick pay and enhanced health & safety measures.

There is now no excuse for any employer to be sacking workers, laying them off without pay or making them redundant. Where employers do, we have to be ready to mount a fightback and protect our members interests.

Here is a GMB checklist of questions that we urgently need to be asking of employers if there is any possibility of our members losing their jobs.

Please check in with whoever you need to (your senior rep/convenor, your Officer/Region or your National Officer) to ensure that we are getting the right commitments from employers about keeping workers on the books and that employers make the necessary arrangements to claim from the fund set up by Government.

The main measure now available to employers is to "furlough" workers – this means sending workers home without work but with pay.

The Government will give employers 80% of the cost of this. We expect employers to top this up to full pay by paying the additional 20%.

This isn't going to happen **automatically**, so we need to be making sure that we are making our case to employers and involving our members when we do so.

We need you to negotiate and agree with employers that they will make up the 20% of pay.

Where they can't you need to put a plan in place to see how we can address this from a bargaining position. We need to log each and every arrangement meticulously so we can return to them at a future date post pandemic.



We know some unscrupulous employers may use this as an opportunity to reduce the workforce and attack terms and conditions. The Chancellor's statement has made this morally indefensible and it our job to hold any such employers to account.

We have to leave no stone unturned to do this and your skilled bargaining and organising approaches could make all the difference. And I want to assure you that we will support your efforts in protecting our members pay and jobs.

We will be building on our online resources to help you to campaign to make sure that employers do the right thing.

Thank you for everything you are doing to protect our members and to make life that little bit better in very difficult times. The rules of industrial bargaining and organising are being rewritten because of this pandemic and we need to use all the skillset we have to get us through what is an unprecedented time.

Please keep up the fight. Our members need us more than ever and I know you will keep standing up for what is right.

