

COVID19 – Apprentices in lockdown

Introduction

The following highlights results to date from the IMI COVID-19 survey which has the aim to find out about how individuals and organisations are responding in the current climate to furloughed working and the employment of apprentices, now and in the future. The survey was launched 9th April and will remain open while the current situation continues with results analysed periodically.

As part of this we were able to access all contact details of all apprentices who are currently registered on an automotive platform in England, Scotland and Wales and so we wrote directly to each of these asking them to complete the survey.

This analysis focuses on the experiences of apprentices while we are in lockdown, there will be further analysis of survey results taking a different focus at a later date.

These release results were downloaded on the 7th May 2020.

Summary of findings

The survey indicates that lockdown has been particularly challenging for apprentices working in the automotive industries:

- More than half (53%) of the apprentice respondents have been furloughed.
- All (bar 1) are working for organisations that are taking some change in how they are managing their workforce.
- 83% are unable to continue to study as they were prior to lockdown.
- 18% are unable to engage with their employer.
- 21% are unable to access learning materials.
- Although some employers have been trying to continue to engage with their apprentices, even at minimum keeping them up to date with business matters, this is not universal and there are many reports of no contact or engagement at all.
- Some apprentices have looked for other ways to continue their studies, using their initiative to access sources of learning materials and teaching themselves.

Respondents

Direct contact of apprentices via FISSS data

	No.
England	2290
Scotland	2865
Wales	45
Total	5200

160
Apprentices
responded

As of the 7th May 2020 we have received 277 respondents to the survey, 160 of which were apprentices.

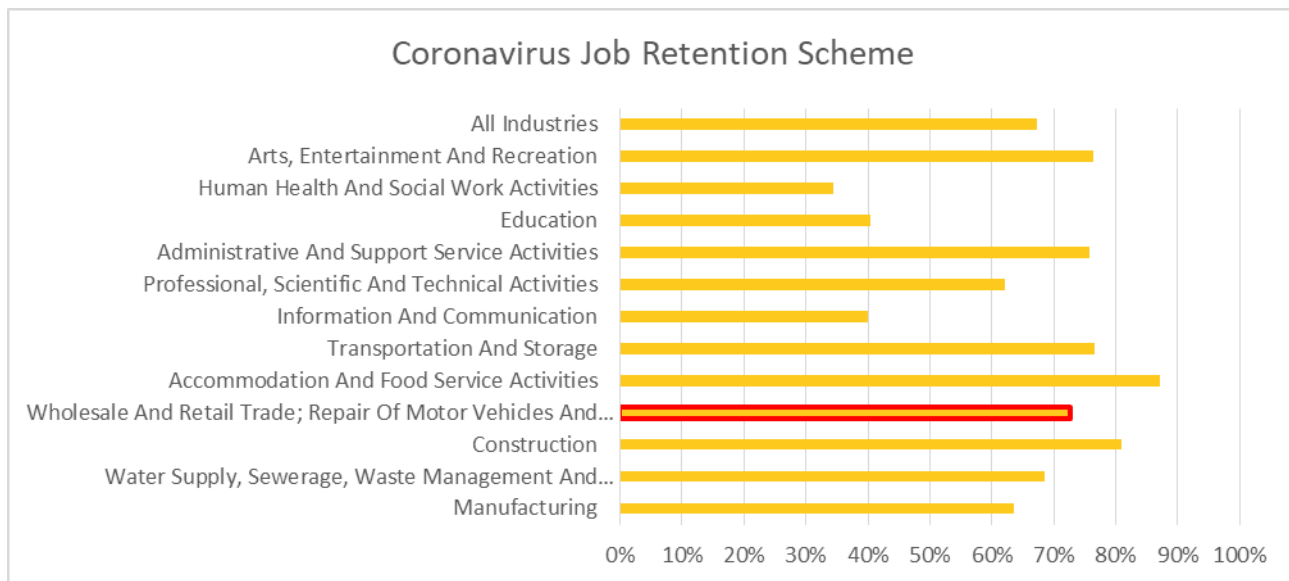
Furlough

Respondents were asked “Has your organisation furloughed staff or is it planning to do so?” and individuals were also asked “Have you been furloughed or are you in the process of being furloughed?”.

Furlough plans - Apprentices

	Respondents	Organisation furloughed	Personally furloughed	Signed up for furlough register
No.	160	93	85	33
Percentage		58%	53%	

- 58% of apprentice respondents stated that their organisation have or are planning to furlough staff.
- 53% of apprentice respondents have personally been furloughed.



Source: ONS - Business impacts of COVID-19 data released 7/5/20 [Data relates to the period 6 April 2020 to 19 April 2020.]

The most recent issue of the governments business impacts of Covid-19, which is based on responses from the new voluntary fortnightly business survey, captures businesses responses on how their turnover, workforce prices, trade and business resilience have been affected in the two week reference period. This release indicates that 73% of

“wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles” industries have applied for the coronavirus job retention scheme initiative. Apprentice respondents from our survey are reporting slightly lower rates of furlough (58%).

Methods to manage workforce

What measures has your organisation taken to manage your workforce as a result of COVID-19 (select all that apply)

Method	IMI Survey Apprentices Responses		IMI Survey Other Responses		ONS- Automotive industry**	ONS- All industry*
	No.	%	No.	%	%	%
No measures have been taken	1	1%	5	4%	14.2%	18.6%
Increased working hours	2	2%	0	0%	13.8%	11.9%
Decreased working hours	22	18%	20	17%	33.4%	30.1%
Staff are encouraged to work from home	10	8%	8	7%	- ***	- ***
Staff have to work from home	19	16%	20	17%	- ***	- ***
Reducing staff levels in the short-term	36	30%	35	29%	45.4%	41.4%
Recruiting staff in the short-term	3	3%	0	0%	10.3%	6.4%
Other (please specify)	26	22%	31	26%	17.7%	22.2%
Business closed	6		9			
Furlough	13		12			
Furloughed and closed	2		1			
Redundancy or similar			3			
Others	5		6			

Note:

* Source: ONS - Business impacts of COVID-19 data released 7/5/20 [Data relates to the period 6 April 2020 to 19 April 2020.]

** Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles

*** This option was dropped from the survey

- 36 (30%) of apprentices have stated that their organisation have reduced staffing levels or made individuals redundant.
- 7% of apprentices have stated that their organisation / business has been temporarily closed.

This question is explicitly designed to mirror the ONS fortnightly business survey to enable a comparison to the whole economy, although caution is required as our response rate is low. We can draw some comparisons:

- The most significant difference is that IMI respondent organisations are not implementing what could be judged as ‘positive’ measures such as increasing staff levels or working hours in comparison to the UK as a whole.
- IMI respondent organisations are not reducing staffing levels as much as the UK as a whole.

Methods of engagement

As part of the survey we asked apprentices – “Have you been able to continue to study for your qualification in some form as a result of COVID-19?” Responses are as follows:

Have you been able to continue to study for your qualification in some form as a result of COVID-19?

Response	No.	%
Yes no change	16	17%
Somewhat - I've been working with my employer to undertake some training	5	5%
A little - I've been able to undertake some learning independently	30	31%
No - I am unable to access learning materials	20	21%
No - my employer has been unable to engage with me	17	18%
Other (please specify)	8	8%

Other responses:

- *Continued to work on my own car but had to buy tools and equipment to do so.*
 - *Employer is doing nothing but college is helping.*
 - *Furlough.*
 - *I am unable to complete my work-based observations.*
 - *I do try a little to teach myself, but it does not work very well.*
 - *No but have been working with my dad.*
 - *No work has been given to us.*
 - *Working on portfolio but unable to hand in as training centre closed.*
- Only 16 apprentices (17% of those responding to this question) have been able to continue their studies with little or no change.
 - 39% of apprentices have outlined significant barriers for continuing with their studies. 18% stating that they have been unable to engage with their employer.

We also asked apprentices “We are interested to hear what, if any, your organisation has done to engage with you remotely, would you be able to provide details of some of the methods and tools they have implemented? Has your employer been able to support you remotely? If so, in what way?”

- Engagement between employer and apprentices varies greatly. Apprentices have reported some instances of continued engagement via email, messaging providing updates on employment and business status. A number have reported use of a dedicated app to keep them up to date.
- There have been reports of no support or engagement from employers since business has closed or furlough has been implemented.
- There have also been reports that training providers have ‘picked up’ the support element from the employer.
- Some apprentices have looked for other ways to continue their studies, using their initiative to access sources of learning materials and teaching themselves.

Appendix

Free text responses from “We are interested to hear what, if any, your organisation has done to engage with you remotely, would you be able to provide details of some of the methods and tools they have implemented? Has your employer been able to support you remotely? If so, in what way?”.

- A text every now and again just to check up and see how things are.
- Allow me an hour to study.
- Apart from encouraging us all to get tested so we can go back to work, no engagement has been made.
- Arnold Clark have kept in contact through The A.C.E app with updates 1-2 times a week.
- Clean down office, reception and workshop regularly.
- Constant updates through the company website.
- Emails through the Arnold Clark app.
- Frequent text messages checking on myself and my family, offering support where needed.
- Have not been given anything.
- I have been furloughed and been waiting to be told when to go back other than that I haven't had anything.
- I have been allowed to take video group chats with my college to try and keep up to date with my qualifications however I still have to do online tests which are currently taking place.
- Instead of attending college we have a virtual classroom online where lessons are done as a PowerPoint by our college tutor.
- Just in emails checking how everyone's doing.
- Microsoft teams to continue.
- My boss stays in regular contact to check up on staff.
- My employer has furloughed me for my own safety and my family's safety.
- My employer has given me remote access to some of the electronic programmes that I would ordinarily use in the workplace to keep my familiarisation levels high. I can also access my previous work completed for the Mercedes-Benz Academy.
- My mentor has helped with understanding issues regarding steering and suspension and if I have any issue as I am working on my own car I ask questions.
- No support.
- No, I've had no support as it comes to my education and no knowledge of what is going to happen.
- Online classes.
- Phone calls and text messages about the ace app.
- Regular updates about returning to work, and the next steps for going forward.
- They are using our app to keep us updated.
- They paid the other 20% to give us full pay.
- Using books to revise and to learn for college.
- We have an app which is updated regularly with personal updates and a WhatsApp group.
- We have weekly emails regarding the covid-19 and when we can go back to work.
- We have weekly phone calls with the employer to let us know the position of the company.
- Yeah... keep checking up and sending letters and emails.
- Yes, regular updates via messaging.