

COVID19 – Apprentices in lockdown (release 2)

Introduction

The following contains 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. This analysis focuses on the experiences of apprentices while we are in lockdown and is an update of the results issued in release 1. For this release results were downloaded on the 2nd June 2020.

Summary of findings

The survey indicates that lockdown has been particularly challenging for apprentices working in the automotive industries, however the very first green shoots of improvement are showing.

The challenges still remaining:

- More than half (54%) of the apprentice respondents have been furloughed, up 1% since last reporting.
- 97% are working for organisations that are taking some change in how they are managing their workforce.
- 84% are unable to continue to study as they were prior to lockdown, an increase of 1% since last reporting.
- 54 apprentices have signed up for the furlough register.

How employers, training providers and apprentices are adapting to these challenges:

- The proportion of apprentices reporting that they are unable to engage with their employer has fallen by 2% since the last report, down to 16%.
- The proportion of apprentices reporting that they are unable to access learning materials has also fallen by 2% since the last report, down to 19% indicating greater access and understanding of online materials available to them.
- Reports of lack of employer engagement or training provider engagement have also reduced over time as new ways of working are being introduced.

Respondents

218
Apprentices

As of the 2nd June 2020 we have received 359 respondents to the survey, 218 of which were apprentices.

Furlough

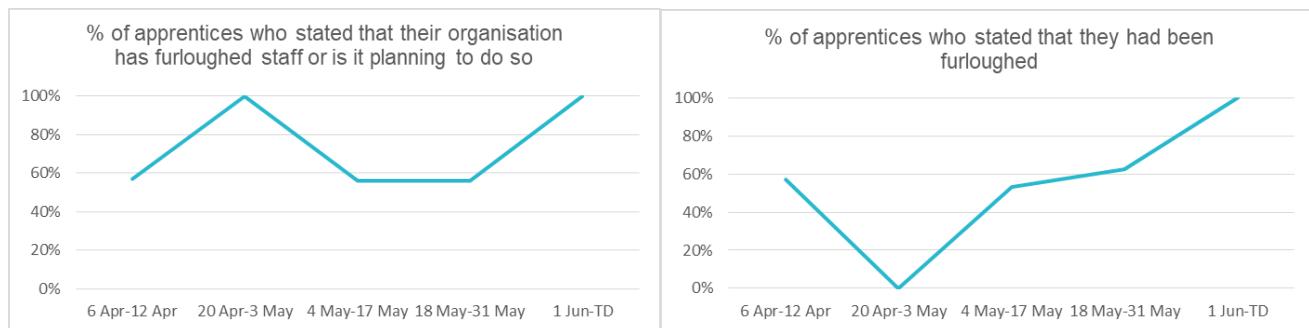
Respondents were asked “Has your organisation furloughed staff or is it planning to do so?” and individuals were also asked “Have you been furloughed or are you in the process of being furloughed?”.

Furlough plans - Apprentices

	Respondents	Organisation furloughed	Personally furloughed	Signed up for furlough register
No.	218	124	118	54
Percentage		57%	54%	

- 57% of apprentice respondents stated that their organisation have or are planning to furlough staff.
- 54% of apprentice respondents have personally been furloughed, and 54 individuals have signed up for the furlough register.

Furlough plans – Apprentices (over time)



The graphs above look at the percentage of apprentices who stated that their organisation, or they, had been furloughed in 2 weekly periods. This is highly dependent on the number of responses within that time-period and in the case of this survey this has not been consistent, for example 80% of apprentices responded within the time period 4th May-17th May. However considering these limitations the percentage of apprentices who have been furloughed is increasing.

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			ONS-Automotive industry**	ONS- All industry*
	No.	% of apprentices	% of all respondents	%	%
No measures have been taken	4	3%	2%	13%	19%
Increased working hours	2	1%	1%	14%	11%
Decreased working hours	36	16%	17%	35%	32%
Staff are encouraged to work from home	14	6%	6%	- ***	- ***
Staff have to work from home	24	13%	11%	- ***	- ***
Reducing staff levels in the short-term	50	25%	23%	42%	39%
Recruiting staff in the short-term	3	1%	1%	12%	6%
Other (please specify)	36	19%	17%	18%	22%
Business closed	6				
Furlough	19				
Redundancy or similar	0				
Others	11				

Note:

* Source: ONS - Business impacts of COVID-19 data released 21/5/20 [Data relates to the period 20 April 2020 to 3 May 2020.]

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

*** This option was dropped from the survey

- 50 (25%) of apprentices have stated that their organisation have reduced staffing levels or made individuals redundant.
- 3% 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, although this may simply be that they are not aware.

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	21	16%
Somewhat - I've been working with my employer to undertake some training	8	6%
A little - I've been able to undertake some learning independently	43	32%
No - I am unable to access learning materials	26	19%
No - my employer has been unable to engage with me	22	16%
Other (please specify)	14	10%

Some of the 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.*
 - *Have not received any work to do.*
 - *I am unable to complete my work-based observations.*
 - *I do try a little to teach myself, but it does not work very well.*
 - *I have completed my level 2 course but have not heard if I passed so I have not been studying.*
 - *I have had much more time to get assignments completed. I know that many if not all of the apprentices in my tutor group would agree that one week leave would greatly improve people's learning and work output.*
 - *No but have been working with my dad.*
 - *No work has been given to us.*
 - *Put on a break from learning from the National Learning Centre.*
 - *Working on portfolio but unable to hand in as training centre closed.*
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- Only 21 apprentices (16% of those responding to this question) have been able to continue their studies with little or no change.
 - 37% of apprentices have outlined significant barriers for continuing with their studies. 16% stating that they have been unable to engage with their employer.
 - Looking at the comments over time it appears that the number of negative comments regarding no engagement with employer are reducing as it appears new ways of working are being introduced.

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.
- Ace app.
- Allow me an hour to study.
- Allowing me time at work to complete my coursework as cannot go to college.
- 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.
- College lecturer asked us to complete items on our e-portfolio. Only contact I have received.
- Constant updates through the company website.
- Emails through the Arnold Clark app.
- Every week - an email from CEO including podcasts. Lots of details about the plans for the future.
- Frequent text messages checking on myself and my family, offering support where needed.
- Have not been given anything.
- I have been encouraged to stay at home through the use of email.
- I have been furloughed and been waiting to be told when to go back. Other than that I have not had anything.
- I have been given remote access to some of the software programmes that I would normally use in the workplace. I can also review the workbooks and assignments I have completed for the Mercedes-Benz Academy.
- 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 with targets and resources.
- Microsoft teams to continue.
- My apprenticeship which should be completed in September has been completely out on hold with absolutely no communication in over 2 months, therefore no update on my situation.
- My boss has contacted me once, I work in a salon so we haven't been able to put anything into place.
- My boss stays in regular contact to check up on staff.
- My employer has furloughed me for my own safety of myself and my family.
- 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 issues, as I am working on my own car, I ask questions.
- No action has been taken it's just like a normal work day.
- No contact whatsoever.
- No, I've had no support when it comes to my education and no knowledge of what is going to happen.
- No support.

- *None.*
- *Nothing.*
- *Nothing as yet.*
- *Online classes.*
- *Online studying and tests.*
- *Phone calls and text messages about the ace app.*
- *Post.*
- *Regular updates about returning to work, and the next steps for going forward.*
- *They are using our app to keep us updated.*
- *They have given me the book that I can study from home.*
- *They have kept in constant contact with me regarding updates on when we may go back to work.*
- *They paid the other 20% to give us full pay.*
- *Using books to revise and to learn for college.*
- *Virtual academy, YouTube videos.*
- *We have an app which is updated regularly with personal updates and a WhatsApp group.*
- *We have had weekly emails regarding the covid-19 and when we can go back to work.*
- *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.*
- *Weekly updates from the Chief Executive about plans the management are taking.*
- *Whilst being at home my work engage in weekly video conferences.*
- *Yeah... keep checking up and sending letters and emails.*
- *Yes, regular updates via messaging.*
- *Yes, my employer helps me by showing me visually some of the things to help understand my tasks.*