

United Kingdom: Covid-19 job retention scheme extended

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The UK's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is to be extended until the end of June, the government announced on 17 April. Under the scheme, UK firms can ask the state to cover 80% of its workers' salaries during the pandemic, up to a limit of £2,500 (€2,875) per month per person (see articles [n°11747](#) and [n°11812](#)). Initially this support scheme, which came into force retroactively from 1 March, was supposed to last three months up to the end of May. However, UK chancellor Rishi Sunak says: "It is the right decision to extend the furlough scheme for a month to the end of June to provide clarity." Meanwhile Dame Carolyn Fairbairn, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, says: "This extension means that firms will no longer be forced to issue redundancy notices over the next few days." On the trade union side, Frances O'Grady, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, adds: "Employers must continue to make full use of the scheme to furlough workers and protect jobs. There is no reason to make any staff redundant." According to the Resolution Foundation think tank, more than 9 million British people will benefit from the partial unemployment measure during the Covid-19 crisis. The government, which announced the extension of its job retention scheme alongside a three-week extension of lockdown in the country, until 7 May, has said it will prolong the measure again if necessary.

Par Jessica Agache-Gorse