

Help for gig economy/zero-hour contract workers

Working for the 'gig economy' generally means someone is in low-paid, flexible work such as running errands, giving lifts or providing delivery services, where people are offered piece-work through a website or app.

Zero-hours contracts are usually defined as casual contracts. They are usually for 'piece work' or 'on call' work.

For the people on such contracts, this means:

- they are on call to work when you need them
- you do not have to give them work
- they do not have to do work when asked

During the pandemic, many people working in the gig economy or on zero-hours contracts will not be able to earn money.

According to Martin Lewis, if you work in the 'gig' economy or are on a 'zero-hours' contract it's important to check whether you're eligible to be furloughed.

Unsure? Just check how you're taxed. If you're taxed through PAYE, then you're considered as an employee, so you should have the same rights as an employee.

If you are taxed through PAYE, then one of your rights is that you're eligible for furlough (the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme), where the Government will pay 80% of your salary up to £2,500/month. You'll need to discuss furlough with your employer, or the relevant agency or umbrella company where applicable. If you are put on furlough, you won't be able to do any work for them or on their behalf until the furlough ends.

If your pay varies from month to month – for example, because you're employed on a 'zero-hours' contract – the 80% will be calculated based on the higher of:

Your earnings in the same month of the previous year.

OR your average monthly earnings from the 2019/20 tax year. If you've worked for your employer for less than a year, it'll be calculated based on your average monthly earnings while you've worked there.

If you are self-employed (therefore taxed through self-assessment and not PAYE), you won't be eligible to be furloughed, but you may be eligible for the support being offered to the self-employed, or be able to claim benefits.

[Watch this video of Martin Lewis explaining.](#)