



S U R V I V E

Lockdown has been tough and we've all had to adapt.



R E S E T

It is time to concentrate on resetting and preparing to grow.



T H R I V E

Future success awaits if we get it right now.



INTRODUCTION

The last few months have tested all of us, personally and professionally. The Coronavirus pandemic put businesses into survival mode – quickly adjusting to new ways of working, having to make difficult decisions, and doing their best to weather the storm.

Although the uncertainty continues, and the future is far from clear, we can at last begin to see the path ahead as restrictions continue to be lifted. It's time to look forward.

The focus now must be on creating the best possible conditions for your business to successfully move out of survival mode and thrive in the future. Having the HR fundamentals, planning and training you need in place at this stage will enable your people to play their part in the success of your organisation.

We call this the RESET phase – and this 10-point document is designed to help you through it. It includes straightforward advice, links to more in-depth resources from the Reality HR team, and a checklist for a safe return to the workplace when the time is right for your business.

We hope you find it useful. If you need support during this phase, or at any time in the future, the team at Reality HR are here to help.

Sally-Ann Hall-Jones
CEO | REALITY HR

GET IN TOUCH TO FIND OUT HOW WE
CAN HELP...



01256 328428



info@realityhr.co.uk



The Manor House
Lutyens Close
Basingstoke
RG24 8AG



www.realityhr.co.uk

01

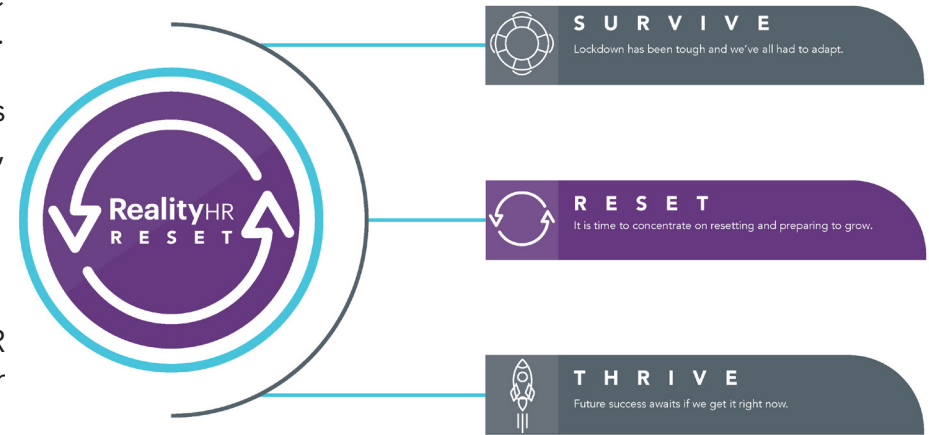
SURVIVE, RESET, THRIVE

Successful businesses are built on strong foundations. When a major shock like the pandemic comes along, those footings can be challenged and weakened.

During and after times of crisis, businesses go through three phases, sometimes referred to as Survive, Reset and Thrive. Some will still be in that first phase, getting through this as best they can.

However, as restrictions lift, many are now in the RESET phase.

This is a crucial time for reflection, planning, and action. Getting the HR fundamentals right now will set the conditions for your people, and your organisation, to prosper in the future.



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET

02

THE FUNDAMENTALS

First, let's go back to basics. During the first weeks of lockdown, you probably had to move quickly – changing working methods and patterns, putting staff on furlough, and doing whatever it took to keep your business going as the restrictions began to bite.

With all of that in mind, it's understandable that some of the HR fundamentals that otherwise would have been in place may have been overlooked. Also consider how your organisation may have changed during this period – is it time to think again about your company values and culture, or working patterns and practices?

Before taking any action, check that the legislative basics are in place and that you have caught up with HR essentials such as staff appraisals.

Think about:

- Furlough letters
- Risk Assessments
- Wellness Action Plans
- Company policies
- Safety equipment
- Staff Handbooks
- Staff contracts
- Pay and benefits
- Appraisals/performance reviews



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET

03

HOMWORKING VS A RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE – OR A BLEND?

With the basics covered, it's now time to start thinking about what you want your business to look like in the future. You'll want to draw up an overall structural or organisational plan to inform you in taking the next steps for your business.

Key to that plan is how you want your people to work. Before the pandemic, you may have had some or all staff working from home – or you may have been thrust into the world of remote work without warning.

How has it worked? Have your teams been thriving or struggling with their working arrangements? Is remote working the future for your business, or do you need your teams around you? Is a blended approach right for you and your people? Have your employees been working differently during lockdown – and if so, are they likely to put in a flexible working request that you must consider?

If homeworking is going to be part of your business's future, there are processes and policies that you will need to have in place to meet legal requirements, to ensure you stay in touch with your teams, and to manage performance. Your employees will also need support in working productively, flexibly and with their wellbeing in mind.

Our homeworking toolkits for [employers](#) and [employees](#) will be useful, as well as our [Flexible Working Requests factsheet](#). You may also wish to consider [training](#) for managers who will be responsible for managing remote teams.



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET

04

THE RETURN TO WORK FROM FURLOUGH

The word “furlough” has now become part of our everyday language. Although the furlough scheme is still open, it will come to an end.

Bringing staff back into work from furlough – either partially or completely – is a complex process and requires planning, including strategic thought around what resource your business may need to cover activity levels in the current months or weeks.

The flexible furlough scheme allows businesses to take a step-by-step approach. Some will use a phased return, or have workers return on alternate weeks to meet changing workloads or enable social distancing in the workplace.

For leaders and people managers there are difficult questions – who should return? How many hours should they work? How do we help with the stress of returning to work after a long period away?

When making decisions about returning staff from furlough, you must ensure you can fully justify your decisions about who returns, and how, in case you are challenged. Decisions should be objective, and not discriminatory in any way.

Our [Flexible Furlough Factsheet](#) will help you with that process.



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET

05

RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE – A CHECKLIST

The Government advice is still that those who can work from home should continue to do so.

However, the easing of restrictions has meant that many more businesses can start thinking about a return to the workplace.

It's not as simple as just going back to the office or place of work. Manage staff expectations so they understand that things may be very different, particularly to enable hygiene and social distancing.

Be aware that staff may be concerned about safety and do everything you can to communicate the measures you are taking.

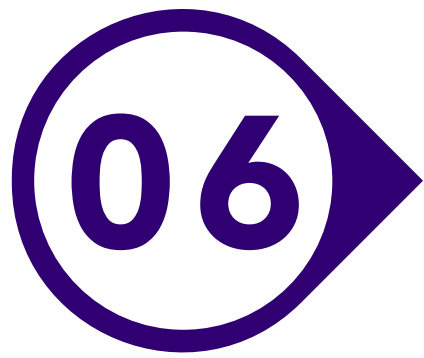
This [checklist](#) covers some of the considerations you will want to ensure you have covered off before staff can return.

If you need help with conducting risk assessments, contact the Reality HR team.

- Carry out a workplace risk assessment
- Do you need to change shift and working patterns or numbers in work for safety?
- How many employees do you need to return?
- Who can continue to work from home?
- How will the consultation and communications process with employees work?
- Are your managers trained to manage remote teams?
- Communicate changes to hours or contracts
- Do you need to send letters to end or extend furlough?
- Consider staff travel arrangements and car park spaces
- Do you need to seek HR advice on any redundancy issues?
- How do you plan to address any concerns such as childcare and those that are vulnerable?
- How do you arrange workspaces for social distancing?
- Have you carried out relevant risk assessments?
- Have you considered your cleaning regime?
- Are "1m+" safety measures in place?
- Have staff been informed about the Track and Trace scheme?



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET



REDUNDANCY, CHANGED HOURS, AND OTHER STAFF CONTRACT CHANGES

Ensuring that your business makes the transition from “Reset” to “Thrive” can involve some very difficult decisions. No business owner or manager wants to make redundancies, and they are usually a last resort.

The furlough scheme – officially titled the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – was introduced to help businesses pay their employees instead of making them redundant during the pandemic.

However, for some businesses, the lockdown will have an ongoing impact on staffing. It may be that you can make changes to contracts, such as reduced hours or reduced pay, as a way of avoiding redundancies. If that’s the case, take advice on how to carry out this process.

If you need to make redundancies, you will need to demonstrate that there is a genuine business reason that the employee’s job will no longer exist, and that an adequate consultation has been carried out.

One aspect of redundancy that is often overlooked is the impact on team members that remain – sometimes referred to as “Survivor Syndrome”. The aftermath of a restructure can be an uncertain time for employees even during ordinary times, and you should make sure you communicate with them clearly, regularly check in on their wellbeing, and take steps to rebuild teams and re-establish your business’s culture among those who remain with you.

Our [Redundancy Toolkit](#) provides step by step guidance for managers and includes an hour’s support from one of our experienced team.



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET

07

HANDLING FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUESTS

By law, managers must consider a request for flexible working arrangements from any employee who has more than 26 weeks' service. This could include a request to change the number of hours worked, the times that they work, or a request to work from home for some or all of their working hours.

Employers can decline such a request if they have grounds, which can include a detrimental impact on performance, or on the business's ability to meet customer demand.

We anticipate that for many businesses, it is going to become more difficult to reasonably refuse flexible working requests in a post-lockdown landscape. The pandemic has effectively imposed a flexible working and working from home trial on many organisations, and we expect increasing numbers of employees will wish to continue working in this way.

Requests should be made in writing by an employee, and responded to in the same way. You should make a decision within three months after considering how the request could work in practical terms, its advantages and disadvantages.

There is no statutory right to appeal a refusal but in refusing a request, it's good practice to give the employee the option to appeal. This demonstrates reasonable behaviour and can help avoid a time-consuming and costly tribunal claim.

For more in-depth advice, download our [Flexible Working Requests Factsheet](#).



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET

08

MANAGING HOLIDAYS

You may face challenges balancing employee and business needs this summer. Remember that the purpose of holidays is to provide rest and recuperation, and there is an obligation on employers to ensure staff take their statutory holiday allowance.

You may have some staff who wish to cancel their holiday as their flights or other travel plans are disrupted. You do not have to agree to cancel or postpone pre-booked dates, but you should take into account the needs of the business and the employee's personal circumstances.

Some businesses will be experiencing high demand for their products or services, and will want to avoid staff taking too much holiday during the summer. Consider rotas and apply a fair and consistent approach to accepting and refusing holiday requests. New holiday legislation which allows staff to carry forward up to 20 days of holiday each into the next two annual leave years will be helpful.

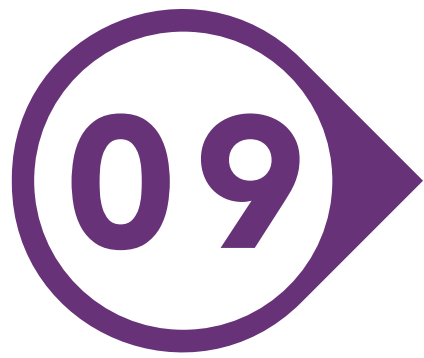
Other businesses will want staff to use as much of their holiday as possible now, to avoid leaving too much leave to take later in the year. Using holiday during furlough is a cost-effective method of paying for holiday, as you can claim back the furlough amount for furloughed staff.

If you wish to allocate holiday dates to individual staff members, you need to give double the amount of notice of the holiday you require them to take, or use a quota system – for example, require them to have taken 75% of their leave by September.

For more information you can download our [holiday factsheet](#).



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET



COMMUNICATING AND COPING IN THE NEW NORMAL

Communication is at the heart of all good people management. It's particularly important during times such as these when there is ongoing uncertainty, reassurance is being sought, and emotions may be running high.

Don't be tempted to assume that because people are returning to work, things are "getting back to normal". This has been a difficult, long and stressful period and now, more than ever, it's vital that your teams feel well-managed and supported and that their wellbeing matters to you.

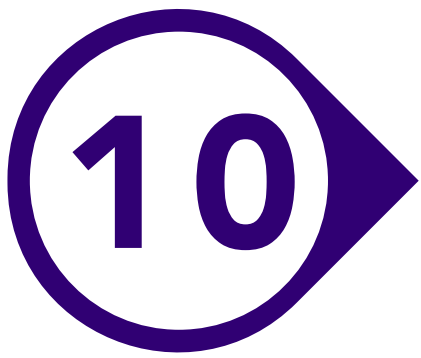
Keep an eye out for team members who may be coping less well than others. If there are concerns about attendance or productivity, approach them sensitively – some employees may be struggling to adapt, or they could be affected by problems outside work.

If you've fallen behind with regular one-to-ones, appraisals, Wellness Action plans or staff catchups, now is the time to put that right and invest some time in keeping up communication with your team.

Remember, too, that we are all individuals – and people with different personality types react to situations in different ways. Tools like [Insights](#) can help you gain a deeper understanding of your people and the dynamics of your team – skills that could help you through this period of transition and also set the scene for future success.



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET



BE EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE – TIME TO TRAIN

If you've followed the steps in this document, you should now be in a stronger position for the future. As your business ventures into its own version of "new normal", you may also have identified areas where your managers or teams would benefit from learning new skills, or building on existing ones.

Courses that you may wish to consider in particular at this time may include:

- Redundancy – the statutory and best practice processes to follow
- Homeworking for employees – handy hints and tips for safety, efficiency and productivity
- Homeworking for managers – the legal obligations, strategies, monitoring performance and supporting teams
- Managing flexible working requests – timescales, requirements and what to consider when rejecting requests
- Insights – a proven psychometric tool to help you understand personality types, manage team dynamics and get the best out of your people
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing (for managers)
- Understanding mental health, wellbeing and resilience for employees

The team at Reality HR offer a full range of courses, which are deliverable over video platforms. For more information see our latest [Training Brochure](#).



For the latest advice for employers, visit www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET

CONTACT US TODAY

If you have any HR concerns or questions around the RESET phase, please feel free to contact us.

www.realityhr.co.uk/RESET



www.realityhr.co.uk



The Manor House | Lutyens Close
Basingstoke | RG24 8AG

Third Floor | 207 Regent Street
London | W1B 3HH



info@realityhr.co.uk



44 (0)1256 328428



[@realityhruk](https://twitter.com/realityhruk)



[Reality-HR](https://www.linkedin.com/company/reality-hr)

RealityHR

People Driven Business Growth