

Covid 19 Update
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Dear Colleagues,

Yesterday, many of you received letters explaining changes to the way you work with the FSC. My previous emails had set out that we were pursuing options to help secure the future of the FSC, but even with some prior warning, there has been little time to prepare or come to terms with such a big change to daily life and routine. Some of you have not even been able to say a proper goodbye, and non-furloughed staff are having to readjust to the sudden gaps left by colleagues and managers. I completely understand the shock that many of you might be feeling and the levels of uncertainty that impact on all staff, whether furloughed or not.

Letters of that kind inevitably had to set out the formal position. We also had to ensure that we met the criteria of the government's scheme and therefore quite a lot of information had to be included. However formal and technical the letters had to be, it doesn't mean that we are not all acutely aware of how difficult this time is. I have received comments expressing relief and thanks citing our compassionate approach as well as emails from staff who are clearly very angry.

This is uncharted territory for many of us. Occasionally things go wrong despite heroic efforts to ensure that everyone gets the information in a timely manner – not easy when many staff are not at their desks and even simple things like access to the post and photocopiers are disrupted. The only thing I can say is that our intention is always to do our best. It's a good time to remember that staff on the receiving end of emails are your colleagues too, and many have been working very long hours whilst juggling additional responsibilities at home.

How we respond now, as individuals and as an organisation will be fundamental to our ability to cope and recover when we come back together again as a functioning, united charity. It's so important not to feel isolated. Joining in conversations via Slack and WhatsApp groups and catch up chats with colleagues do not count as work, but are instead a vital part of supporting each other. If these options are not available to you, remember that the Heads of Group can be contacted even if your usual manager is on furlough and HR can also be contacted via hr@field-studies-council.org or on 01743 852100. I will also write once a week to keep you updated on what is going on and, as with this email, staff unlikely to access to their emails will receive a copy in the post.

You know that I cannot promise that absolutely everything will be fine for everyone as a result of Covid-19, and I know that you would not expect me to. All I can reiterate is that everyone is working really hard to ensure that FSC gets through this pandemic and emerges in the best shape possible, whenever that will be.

Best wishes

Mark