

As you are now aware all hospitality businesses have now been instructed to close by midnight today (20th March) and will now be closed for the foreseeable future.

New and further packages of support have been laid out today especially aimed at supporting businesses, so they do not have to make staff redundant.

This includes:

- a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- deferring VAT and Income Tax payments
- Statutory Sick Pay relief package for SMEs
- a 12-month business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England & Scotland
- small business grant funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief
- grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with property with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme
- HMRC Time To Pay Scheme

Support for businesses through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, all UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis.

To access the scheme will need to:

- designate affected employees as 'furloughed workers,' and notify your employees of this change (changing the status of employees remains subject to existing employment law and, depending on the employment contract, may be subject to negotiation)
- submit information to HMRC about the employees that have been furloughed and their earnings through a new online portal (HMRC will set out further details on the information required)

HMRC will reimburse 80% of furloughed workers wage costs, up to a cap of £2,500 per month. HMRC are working urgently to set up a system for reimbursement. Existing systems are not set up to facilitate payments to employers.

Support for businesses through deferring VAT and Income Tax payments

Valued Added Tax (VAT) payments will be deferred for 3 months. The deferral will apply from 20 March 2020 until 30 June 2020.

This is an automatic offer with no applications required. Businesses will not need to make a VAT payment during this period. Taxpayers will be given until the end of the 2020 to 2021 tax year to pay any liabilities that have accumulated during the deferral period. VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the government as normal.

Income Tax

For Income Tax Self-Assessment, payments due on the 31 July 2020 will be deferred until the 31 January 2021.

This is an automatic offer with no applications required. No penalties or interest for late payment will be charged in the deferral period.

Support for businesses who are paying sick pay to employees

Employers can reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19.

- this refund will cover up to 2 weeks' SSP per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19
- employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP as a result of COVID-19
- employers should maintain records of staff absences and payments of SSP, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note. If evidence is required those with symptoms of coronavirus can get an isolation note from [NHS 111 online](#). Those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the [NHS website](#)
- eligible period for the scheme will commence the day after the regulations on the extension of SSP to those staying at home comes into force
- the government will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible

You are eligible for the scheme if your business is UK based and employs fewer than 250 employees as of 28 February 2020

A rebate scheme is being developed. Further details will be provided in due course once the legalisation has passed.

Support for businesses that pay business rates

Business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses

Introduction of a business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses for the 2020 to 2021 tax year.

You are eligible for the business rates holiday if:

- your business is based in England or Scotland and is in the retail, hospitality and/or leisure sector

Properties that will benefit will be occupied premises that are wholly or mainly being used:

- as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues
- for assembly and leisure
- as hotels, guest & boarding premises and self-catering accommodation

There is no action for you. This will apply to your next council tax bill in April 2020. However, local authorities may have to reissue your bill automatically to exclude the business rate charge. They will do this as soon as possible.

Cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses

The Retail and Hospitality Grant Scheme provides businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with a cash grant of up to £25,000 per property.

For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of under £15,000, they will receive a grant of £10,000.

For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000, they will receive a grant of £25,000.

Disclaimer: No responsibility can be accepted for the accuracy of the information in this newsletter and no action should be taken in reliance on it without specific advice given in writing regarding your business.

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Properties that will benefit will be occupied premises that are wholly or mainly being used:

- as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues
- for assembly and leisure
- as hotels, guest and boarding premises and self-catering accommodation

You do not need to do anything. Your local authority will write to you if you are eligible for this grant. Guidance for local authorities on the scheme will be provided shortly.

Any enquiries on eligibility for, or provision of, the reliefs and grants should be directed to the relevant local authority.

Support for businesses that pay little or no business rates

The government will provide additional Small Business Grant Scheme funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no business rates because of small business rate relief (SBBR), rural rate relief (RRR) and tapered relief. This will provide a one-off grant of £10,000 to eligible businesses to help meet their ongoing business costs.

You are eligible if you are a small business already in receipt of SBBR and/or RRR occupying a premises and based in England or Scotland

You do not need to do anything. Your local authority will write to you if you are eligible for this grant. Guidance for local authorities on the scheme will be provided shortly.

Any enquiries on eligibility for, or provision of, the reliefs and grants should be directed to the relevant local authority.

Support for businesses through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

The change to this announced today is that businesses can access the first 12 months of that finance interest free, as government will cover the first 12 months of interest payments.

You are eligible for the scheme if:

- your business is UK based, with turnover of no more than £45 million per year
- your business meets the other British Business Bank eligibility criteria

The full rules of the Scheme and the list of accredited lenders is available on the [British Business Bank website](#). All the major banks will offer the Scheme once it has launched. There are 40 accredited providers in all.

You should talk to your bank or finance provider (not the British Business Bank) as soon as possible and discuss your business plan with them. This will help your finance provider to act quickly once the Scheme has launched. If you have an existing loan with monthly repayments you may want to ask for a repayment holiday to help with cash flow.

The scheme will be available from early next week commencing 23 March.