
Written 10 June 2020

C19 BUSINESS NEWS UPDATE

Today we catch up with the launch of the Local Authority Discretionary grant funds in England and how you can watch videos and register for the free Government webinars to learn more about the support available to help you deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus.

The Government has been updating a lot of the support and guidance pages so please take time to flick through the newsletter to look for anything that may affect you or your business.

In addition, there is news about high street shops reopening and parents returning to work after leave.

Stay safe!

APPLY FOR THE CORONAVIRUS LOCAL AUTHORITY DISCRETIONARY GRANTS FUND – ENGLAND

The Discretionary Grant Fund supports small and micro businesses that are not eligible for other grant schemes opened on the 8 June.

Small and micro businesses with fixed property costs that are not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund may be eligible for the Discretionary Grants Scheme.

What you get

You can get a grant of £25,000, £10,000 or any amount under £10,000.

Eligibility

You may be eligible if your business:

- is based in England
- has relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs
- occupies property (or part of a property) with a rateable value or annual mortgage/rent payments below £51,000
- was trading on 11 March 2020

You will need to show that your business has suffered a significant fall in income due to coronavirus.

The Government has asked local councils to prioritise businesses such as:

- small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, such as units in industrial parks or incubators
- regular market traders
- bed and breakfasts paying council tax instead of business rates

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- charity properties getting charitable business rates relief, which are not eligible for small business rates relief or rural rate relief

Local councils have discretion about how to prioritise this funding. Please check with your council for details of their scheme.

You cannot apply if your business is in administration, insolvent or has received a striking-off notice.

If you are already claiming funding

You cannot apply if you are already claiming under another government grant scheme, such as:

- Small Business Grant Fund
- Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant
- Fisheries Response Fund
- Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme
- Zoos Support Fund
- Dairy Hardship Fund

Businesses that apply for the discretionary grants scheme can still apply for coronavirus-related loans if they are eligible.

You are still eligible if you have applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

If you already get state aid

The discretionary grants fund counts towards state aid.

Payments of £10,000 or less count towards the total de minimis state aid you are allowed to get over a 3-year period - €200,000. If you have reached that threshold, you may still be eligible for funding under the COVID-19 Temporary Framework.

Payments of £25,000 count as state aid under the COVID-19 Temporary Framework. The limit for the framework is €800,000.

Your local council will ask you to complete a declaration confirming that:

- you will not exceed the relevant state aid threshold
- you were not an 'undertaking in difficulty' on 31 December 2019. This applies only to the COVID-19 Temporary Framework

To find your local council see: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Full report see: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-local-authority-discretionary-grants-fund?utm_source=281bab0e-92ec-4a01-ab95-81f8181c1364&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

GOVERNMENT HELP AND SUPPORT IF YOUR BUSINESS IS AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Watch videos and register for the free webinars to learn more about the support available to help you deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus.

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-is-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=cb5adab3-5b2b-401f-94b8-78e3fd6779a7&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

SENDING YOUR FORMS TO COMPANIES HOUSE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

As an emergency response to coronavirus (COVID-19), Companies House has developed a temporary online service to upload a number of completed forms and send them to Companies House digitally.

As part of their response to coronavirus, they are currently working new ways to allow users to file documents with them. They have introduced a temporary service to upload a document to Companies House during the coronavirus outbreak.

Read the guidance to find out which documents you can upload using the new upload service. They are continually working to improve the service. As this service is updated, it will include more document types and features such as acknowledgments and payments.

This service will not be available for Companies House documents you can already send to them online.

You must use the existing online services to:

- file your accounts
- file your confirmation statement
- make changes to your company
- close your company

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sending-your-forms-to-companies-house-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak?utm_source=104c5999-09f3-4ec1-9284-fc67b50b87f8&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

HIGH STREET SHOPS, DEPARTMENT STORES AND SHOPPING CENTRES TO REOPEN IN ENGLAND

Shops in England selling non-essential goods will be able to reopen from Monday 15 June.

High street retailers and department stores, including book shops, electronics retailers, tailors, auction houses, photography studios, indoor markets, and shops selling clothes, shoes and toys, will be allowed to open their doors again provided they follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines set out by the government in May.

Retailers will need to take certain steps to protect customers and staff, including limiting the number of customers allowed inside at one time, placing protective coverings on large items such as sofas which may be touched by passing shoppers, and frequently checking and cleaning objects and surfaces.

Employers should also display a notice visibly in their shop windows or outside their store to show their employees, customers and other visitors that they have followed this guidance. In summary:

- All non-essential retail shops to reopen in England from Monday 15 June, provided they follow government guidelines to keep staff and customers as safe as possible
- the government issued detailed COVID-19 secure guidance for retailers and other sectors in May, following extensive consultation with businesses, trade unions and devolved administrations
- businesses should display a downloadable notice to inform customers and staff they have followed COVID-secure guidance

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-high-street-shops-department-stores-and-shopping-centres-to-reopen-safely-in-england?utm_source=c9eb05d7-a79d-4542-9de0-74563debe6cd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

PARENTS RETURNING TO WORK AFTER EXTENDED LEAVE ELIGIBLE FOR FURLOUGH

People on paternity and maternity leave who return to work in the coming months will be eligible for the government's furlough scheme, HM Treasury announced 9 June.

In essence:

- Parents on statutory maternity and paternity leave who return to work in the coming months will be eligible for furlough scheme even after 10 June cut-off date
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will close to new entrants at the end of June as new flexibilities are introduced to support economy
- This will only apply where they work for an employer who has previously furloughed employees
- This also applies to people on adoption leave, shared parental leave, and parental bereavement leave.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-returning-to-work-after-extended-leave-eligible-for-furlough?utm_source=55d26224-7200-4eed-b333-f3c4f11ce1f9&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

BUSINESS LOAN SCHEME STATISTICS

HM Treasury has released management information about the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) and Future Fund Scheme.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-treasury-coronavirus-covid-19-business-loan-scheme-statistics?utm_source=40dce93e-df4b-4575-a362-fea625208398&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) RESPONSE

Updated 9 June this is a series of documents and updates regarding the 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Programme and the response to COVID-19.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-coronavirus-covid-19-response?utm_source=4f26ff89-509e-41f8-8f94-67641f3a78ef&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME: PEOPLE RECEIVING DIRECT PAYMENTS

How the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) can be used by direct payment holders who employ people for their care. This guidance helps people who buy care and support through a direct payment to know how and when they can use the CJRS to furlough employees during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

It includes examples of when direct payment holders may or may not choose to use the CJRS, employ people for their care.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-people-receiving-direct-payments?utm_source=6dc998fd-c24c-4159-b209-8c5aa1bbbde2&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

SUPPORT FROM BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

The government is working with Business Representative Organisations and Trade Associations to support the national response to coronavirus.

On the link below is a list of organisations you can speak with to get advice. Many of these organisations are also happy to respond to non-member queries related to coronavirus.

Many of these websites also include sector-specific guidance and Q&A. This list does not cover all trade associations and business representatives.

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-support-from-business-representative-organisations-and-trade-associations?utm_source=678d6de7-0c07-4720-b300-6401ae4559d2&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

TRAVELLERS EXEMPT FROM BORDER RULES IN THE UK

This guidance explains who will be exempt from new border rules in the UK introduced due to coronavirus.

Some travellers will be exempt from new border rules in the UK. This means they may not need to provide their journey or contact details or self-isolate for 14 days after they arrive.

There are different self-isolation rules and penalties depending on whether you are travelling to:

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

If you are asked to show a letter from your employer, you do not need to show a physical copy. For example, you could show a Border Force official the letter on your smartphone.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules?utm_source=0442da9f-b07d-4769-a81c-9d2ae78cf98d&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

FORESTRY COMMISSION OPERATIONAL UPDATE: CORONAVIRUS

This update provides details on the Forestry Commission's working practices during the coronavirus outbreak.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/forestry-commission-operational-update-covid-19?utm_source=142f41ac-459b-44d7-9300-6beb31150840&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

PROCUREMENT POLICY NOTE 04/20: RECOVERY AND TRANSITION FROM COVID-19

This note sets out information and guidance for public bodies on payment of their suppliers to ensure service continuity during the coronavirus outbreak.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0420-recovery-and-transition-from-covid-19?utm_source=ea2816ca-6acc-4084-a640-611e5b1d578f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate