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## **BUSINESS NEWS NORTHERN IRELAND**

Welcome to our round up of the latest business and Covid-19 news for our clients. Please contact us if you want to talk about how these updates affect your business. We are here to support you!

### **Covid-19 update**

The Department of Health has published guidance on the latest walk-in mobile vaccination clinics with no appointment necessary for first dose jabs. These drop in centres can be found here: [How to get your jab | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/information/how-to-get-your-jab)

Last week the Department of Health published a report on antibody and vaccination data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS). In Northern Ireland, it is estimated that close to 9 in 10 adults, or 87.2% of the adult population would have tested positive for antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 on a blood test in the week beginning 14 June 2021, suggesting they had the infection in the past or have been vaccinated. An estimated 87.4% of the adult population have been vaccinated (at least one dose) against SARS-CoV-2 in the week beginning 14 June 2021.

### **The Economy**

UK Monthly gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 0.8% between April and May 2021 but remained 3.1% below its level in February 2020, which was the most recent month not affected by the Pandemic. The rise in GDP was led by a month-on-month rise of 0.9% in services, although this sector remained 3.4% below its February 2020 level.



The accommodation and food service activities sector contributed 0.87 percentage points to the month-on-month growth in services, with output growing by 37.1% from April; this was driven by growth in food and beverage service activities, which grew by 34.0%, as coronavirus restrictions were eased.

Monthly production grew by 0.8% between April and May 2021 leaving it 2.6% below its February 2020 level; the monthly growth was led by the electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply sector, as cold weather and low wind speeds contributed to high demand for gas production in May.

Monthly construction declined by 0.8% between April and May 2021 leaving it 0.3% above its February 2020 level.

Overall it seems the UK is now starting to “bounce-back” and as restrictions ease further we expect this growth to continue.

### **Optimal Programme for Antrim and Newtownabbey businesses**

Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council’s Optimal Programme is now open for new applications. If you have less than 50 full-time employees and are based within Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council area, the programme can offer free support through mentoring, workshops and networking.

See: [Optimal Programme for Antrim and Newtownabbey businesses \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](https://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)

### **SBRI: EuropeWave Innovative Wave Energy**

EuropeWave is an innovative research and development (R&D) programme which will combine almost €20 million of national, regional and EU funding for wave energy.

The five-year collaborative programme opened its [competitive call for tenders](#), which will see several wave energy projects selected for the first stage of ‘concept development’.

The call will be open until **1 October 2021**.

See: [SBRI: EuropeWave Innovative Wave Energy \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](https://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)

### **Marine Litter Capital Grants**

Funding is available for community groups, businesses and statutory bodies to purchase equipment for projects to reduce marine litter. The £175,000 Live Here Love Here Marine Litter Capital Grants funding programme is open for applications.

The grants are being provided by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) through the Live Here Love Here collaborative partnership involving:

- DAERA
- ten local councils
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful

The Marine Litter Capital Grants will support organisations and groups to purchase items to:

- prevent litter and plastic pollution from entering the marine environment
- enhance the environmental management of a local area to reduce marine litter
- improve the health and wellbeing of communities and marine biodiversity recovery by helping to improve and/or maintain the quality of public open spaces
- improve the quality of their local environment by changing behaviour through creative concepts to reduce the incidence of littering

Financial support of between £500 and £40,000 will be available to constituted groups, businesses and statutory bodies meeting the eligibility criteria. Between £500 and £5,000 will be available to non-constituted groups.

[Find guidance notes and how to apply online on the Live Here, Love Here website](#)

### **Zero Emission Flight Competition Launched**

Grants of up to £50,000 to at least 12 businesses and universities developing technology to support the transition to zero emission flight.

Connected Places Catapult is working with the Department for Transport (DfT) on the Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure (ZEFI) programme. A key element of this work is bolstering research and development into enabling the introduction of hydrogen and electric aircraft, and their supporting infrastructure, into UK airports.

As part of the ZEFI programme, Catapult has launched a new Transport Research and Innovation Grant (TRIG) competition. The competition will offer grants of up to £50,000 to at least 12 innovative businesses and universities developing technology into the following priority areas:

- hydrogen storage, handling, aircraft refuelling/defueling, distribution, and associated technologies
- electric charging, storage, handling, batteries, electric distribution, and associated technologies for electric-powered aircraft
- research into future demand scenarios for airside use of green hydrogen and electricity at UK airports

This R&D programme will be complemented by demonstrations of sustainable aviation technology that will inform the UK's phased transition towards zero emission flight.

The competition is for projects with a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) between 2 and 5, meaning projects that involve research/feasibility as well as those involving prototyping or operational testing.

You can [find application forms and guidance documents on the Catapult website](#)

## More details on New Company Loss Carry Back Rules

HMRC have updated their guidance on claiming relief for company trading losses to take account of the extended carry back announced in the Spring Budget and now legislated in the Finance Act 2021. The guidance sets out the details required by HMRC where a company is making a claim for loss relief in advance of submitting its CT600 corporation tax return, where the loss is no more than £200,000.

### Temporary extension to carry back of trade losses

In the Budget 2021, the Chancellor announced a temporary extension to the carry back of trading losses from one year to 3 years, for losses up to £2,000,000 for accounting periods ending between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2022. Losses must be set against profits of most recent years first before carry back to earlier years.

There is no change to the current one-year unlimited carry back of trade losses, however, for the extended relief, the amount of loss that can be carried back to the earlier 2 years of the extended period is capped for each of those 2 years. This is a cap of £2,000,000 of losses for all relevant accounting periods ending in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (financial year 2020).

Groups will be subject to a group cap of £2,000,000 for each relevant period.

Extended loss carry back claims will need to be made in a return, however, claims below a de minimis limit of £200,000, may be made outside a return. This means that any stand-alone or group company with losses capable of providing relief up to a maximum of £200,000, may make a claim in respect of a relevant accounting period without having to wait to submit its company tax return.

### Make a de minimis claim

If you want to make a de minimis claim outside the company tax return, you can [send a claim submission to HMRC](#).

You will need to give relevant information such as:

- UTR
- company name
- agent code (if applicable)
- start and end dates of loss making accounting period
- amount of loss
- dates of accounting periods to carry the loss back to and the relevant amounts
- management accounts as a PDF if a tax return has not been completed for the loss-making accounting period

More information about the changes can be found in the [Extended Loss Carry Back for Businesses](#).

See: [Work out and claim relief from Corporation Tax trading losses - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-out-and-claim-relief-from-corporation-tax-trading-losses)

## COVID-19 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT NEWS

Below is our weekly roundup of changes to government support information generally and for businesses, employers and the self-employed.

### HMRC publish details of the Fifth SEISS grant claim

Full details of the fifth Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant, including a new turnover test which determines the level of the grant, were published by HMRC on 6<sup>th</sup> July.

Unlike the CJRS Furlough Grants to support employees' wages, Tax Agents are not allowed to make SEISS grant claims on their client's behalf. This seems unreasonable as most self-employed traders will find the HMRC guidance inexplicable and will need their accountant/tax agent's assistance in determining how much they are entitled to!

Although the eligibility for the fifth grant is the same as the fourth grant, the amount of the fifth grant will be determined by how much the turnover of the business(es) have reduced compared to the turnover in the reference year.

See: [Check if you can claim a grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-claim-a-grant-through-the-self-employment-income-support-scheme)

The fifth grant is 80% of three months' average trading profits capped at £7,500 for those whose turnover has reduced by 30% or more. Those with a turnover reduction of less than 30% will receive a grant based on 30% of three months' average trading profits, capped at £2,850.

We have been waiting for the precise rules for determining turnover, but HMRC guidance provides more questions than answers and further clarification is still required.

See: [Work out your turnover so you can claim the fifth SEISS grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-out-your-turnover-so-you-can-claim-the-fifth-seiss-grant)

The turnover figure required is for a 12-month period starting on any date between 1 and 6 April 2020. Those who prepare accounts on a tax year basis will be able to use the same figure that will appear on the 2020/21 tax return.

That turnover figure is then compared to the turnover in the "reference period" which for most individuals will be the turnover figure from their 2019/20 tax return and there is an option to use 2018/19 if 2019/20 was not a normal year for the business.

The turnover figure will be the sum of all of the taxpayer's businesses but should exclude coronavirus support payments (for example previous SEISS grants, eat out to help out payments and local authority grants).

The rules for partners seem particularly illogical, especially where they are also involved in another business. We will keep you updated if and when further clarification is published.

Please contact us if you need help with making the claim.

### **Income Tax and National Insurance contributions exemption for employer-provided coronavirus antigen tests**

This tax information and impact note is about a temporary exemption from Income Tax benefit in kind charge for employees who get a coronavirus antigen test from their employer.

Information about the extension to the Income Tax and National Insurance contributions exemption for coronavirus antigen tests has been added. The extension means that the exemptions and disregards will apply to any coronavirus antigen test provided by an employer, for the tax year 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022. They will also apply to any reimbursement to an employee for a coronavirus antigen test for the tax years 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022.

See: [Income Tax and National Insurance contributions exemption for employer-provided coronavirus antigen tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/income-tax-and-national-insurance-contributions-exemption-for-employer-provided-coronavirus-antigen-tests)

### **Private providers of coronavirus (COVID-19) testing**

The lists of and information about private providers who have self-declared that they meet the government's minimum standards for the type of commercial COVID-19 testing service they offer has been updated.

See: [Private providers of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/private-providers-of-coronavirus-covid-19-testing)