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BUSINESS NEWS ENGLAND

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

Last week the UK Government launched a UK-wide antibody surveillance programme for the general public with home antibody tests available for up to 8,000 people a day who opt in to the service through NHS Test and Trace. The Data will improve understanding of the protection provided by antibodies generated following COVID-19 infection and vaccinations.



The UK has agreed a contract for 35 million more doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, to be delivered from the second half of next year. The government, through the Vaccine Taskforce, is putting in place preparations to future-proof the country from the threat of COVID-19 and its variants through vaccines.

The cost of travelling abroad and specifically the cost of private testing pre and post travel has attracted government scrutiny of providers on misleading prices. Regular spot checks will be introduced to ensure prices are accurate and providers are legitimate, however the public still face additional travel costs as a result of government policy, and we can only hope the costs reduce over time or easier testing procedures are developed.

More countries – including Canada and the Azores – have been added to the green ‘traffic light’ list for international travel. Other countries turning green include Denmark, Finland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania and Switzerland. Additions to the red list include Montenegro and Thailand. Fully vaccinated people returning amber and green list countries are not required to isolate on return. The changes came into effect from 4am on Monday 30 August.

Help to Grow: Digital

Help to Grow: Digital is a new UK-wide scheme to help small and medium size businesses (SMEs) adopt digital technologies that are proven to increase their productivity.

The scheme will offer SMEs free and impartial advice on how technology can help their business. An online platform will help them to:

- identify their digital technology needs
- assess technology purchasing options
- implement new technologies in their operations

The scheme will also offer eligible SMEs a [grant token](#) worth up to £5,000 to cover up to half of the costs of pre-approved, digital technology solutions.



The Help to Grow: Digital scheme will be launched in Autumn. It will run for 3 years, taking a phased approach over a number of waves. Each wave will provide the opportunity to roll out new technologies and functionalities for SMEs and vendors.

See: [Help to Grow: Digital – apply to become a vendor - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Call for Research Engagement from Micro & SME Designers & Manufacturers

Future Fashion Factory is looking for fashion and textiles designers (and particularly those outside of London) to participate in research on the different types of support that micro and small businesses need.

For further information see: [Call for Research Engagement from Micro & SME Designers & Manufacturers \(google.com\)](#)

Business growth scheme open to next group of space entrepreneurs

The Leo Programme is a bespoke, one to one accelerator for high-growth and high potential entrepreneurs. Twenty businesses will be supported on the next phase of the Leo Programme, a free six-month accelerator run by the UK Space Agency and powered by Entrepreneurial Spark, where they will get access to tailored, specialist online and in-person support from space industry and business growth experts. The programme is open to businesses already in the space sector and those already exploring the possibilities presented by the industry. Firms working in a linked industry looking for a route into the space sector can also apply. The closing date to apply is 10 September 2021.

See: [Space Accelerator — Entrepreneurial Spark \(entrepreneurial-spark.com\)](https://entrepreneurial-spark.com)

Reimbursing Fuel for Company cars from 1 September 2021

As the result of recent increases in petrol and diesel prices HMRC have increased the advisory fuel rates that apply for the reimbursement of employees' private fuel for their company cars. The same rates apply when the employer reimburses employees for fuel used for business journeys in their company car. Curiously the LPG reimbursement rates have reduced, which appears to be an anomaly.

The new rates apply from 1 September 2021, but you can continue to use the previous rates for up to 1 month from the date the new rates apply.

Where there has been a change the previous rate is shown in brackets: -

Engine Size	Petrol	Diesel	LPG
1400cc or less	12p (11p)		7p (8p)
1600cc or less		10p (9p)	
1401cc to 2000cc	14p (13p)		8p (9p)
1601 to 2000cc		12p (11p)	
Over 2000cc	20p (19p)	15p (13p)	12p (14p)

For hybrid cars you must use the petrol or diesel rate which may differ significantly from the actual fuel costs. The advisory electricity rate for fully electric cars is 4 pence per mile.

Employees should carefully consider whether it is advantageous having private fuel provided for their company car. Remember that the P11d benefit for having private fuel provided for a company car in 2021/22 is £24,600 multiplied by the CO2 emissions percentage for that vehicle.

For example, a director driving a Mercedes Benz E200 saloon company car (CO2 emissions 169g per km) would be assessed on 37% = £9,102 for 2020/21. If they are a higher rate taxpayer that would mean £3,641 tax. That is an awful lot of private fuel!

Upcycling Protective Plastics from Offshore Wind Farms

KTN-iX™ (KTN-innovation eXchange) is a cross sector program supporting innovation transfer by matching industry challenges to innovative companies from other sectors. It does this through putting large businesses with technical needs in contact with companies who have the right innovative solutions, for faster development of novel solutions.

Ørsted is a renewable energy company that takes tangible action to create a world that runs entirely on green energy.

The iX challenge competition, delivered by KTN, is supporting Ørsted to identify innovative approaches for dealing with a significant and immediate challenge arising from a waste stream.

The challenge is looking for designers and innovators who would use this material for creative ideas such as materials for fashion, accessories, jewellery, footwear, coats, bags and others.

If you can turn the PVC into another product or craft such as covers, marquee/tent/outdoor product covers, or a charity that wants to make sustainable products from PVC then this challenge may be of interest.

The business(es) with the most promising solution(s), as selected by the challenge owner, may be given a commercial opportunity to deliver their solution and receive support from KTN and the wider Innovate UK network.

See: [Challenge | Upcycling Protective Plastics from Offshore Wind Farms | KTN-iX™](https://ktninnovationexchange.co.uk/challenge/upcycling-protective-plastics-from-offshore-wind-farms)
(ktninnovationexchange.co.uk)

Views sought on dispute resolution

A call for evidence has been launched by the UK Government seeking views on the best ways to settle business, individual, family and other civil disputes without the stress and cost of a court case.

Responses will shape future reforms to civil, family and administrative justice and will examine whether new technologies, as well as services such as mediation and conciliation, could provide smarter and less adversarial routes for finding resolutions.

Litigation will always remain as an option open to everyone, and some cases will inevitably require people to go to court. The consultation closes on 30 September 2021.

See: [Views sought on dispute resolution vision - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/dispute-resolution-vision)

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.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) – August claims

Claims under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are now open for pay periods in August 2021. You must submit your claim for August 2021 by 14 September 2021.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be ending on 30 September 2021. Claims for September must be submitted by 14 October 2021 and any amendments must be made by 28 October 2021.

For further information please see: [Claim for wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme)

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) - How to Work out your turnover so you can claim the fifth SEISS grant

For the fifth grant you will need to tell HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) about your turnover if you traded in 2019 to 2020 as well as any of the following tax years:

- 2018 to 2019
- 2017 to 2018
- 2016 to 2017

Turnover includes the takings, fees, sales or money earned or received by your business.

Before you claim you must:

1. Work out your April 2020 to April 2021 turnover.
2. Find your turnover from either 2019 to 2020 or 2018 to 2019 to use as a reference year.

You will need to have both figures ready when you make your claim.

[How to work out your April 2020 to April 2021 turnover](#)

You need to work out your turnover for a 12-month period, starting on any date from 1 to 6 April 2020.

You can use one of the following periods:

- 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021
- 2 April 2020 to 1 April 2021
- 3 April 2020 to 2 April 2021
- 4 April 2020 to 3 April 2021
- 5 April 2020 to 4 April 2021
- 6 April 2020 to 5 April 2021

You should check that your figure is accurate. HMRC will be able to check your figures after you submit your tax return for this period. Your figure must include the turnover from all of your businesses. Please contact us if you need assistance in making the claim.

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

Kickstart Scheme terms and conditions

Kickstart Scheme terms and conditions for employers and gateways receiving the Kickstart Scheme grant from the Department for Work and Pensions have been updated effective from 23 August 2021. This version includes a new annex 'Annex 5: Proof of concept'.

See: [Kickstart Scheme terms and conditions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/kickstart-scheme-terms-and-conditions)

Guidance for Companies House (CH) customers

The cut off time for using a same day service to electronically file a change of company name or incorporate a company (software filing only) has changed from 11am to 3pm.

CXH has developed a service to [Upload a document to Companies House](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/upload-a-document-to-companies-house) instead of sending a paper document by post.

It also includes features such as acknowledgments and online payment using GOV.UK Pay. CH say they are continually working to improve this service and include more document types.

See: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for Companies House customers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-companies-house-customers)

Companies House webinars

Companies House webinars offer useful guidance covering a range of topics including:

- starting a limited company and your responsibilities to Companies House and HMRC
- how intellectual property such as patents, trademarks and copyrights can affect your business
- guidance on starting a community interest company (CIC)
- how to register company mortgages and other charges at Companies House
- how to restore a company to the register

See: [Companies House webinars - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/companies-house-webinars)

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/private-providers-of-coronavirus-testing)

Open letter to PCR Providers on compliance with consumer law

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published an open letter to providers of PCR tests on how they should comply with consumer law. This letter has also been sent to all providers listed on GOV.UK.

See: [Open letter to PCR Providers on compliance with consumer law - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/open-letter-to-pcr-providers)

Red, amber, green lists: check the rules for travel to England from abroad

Montenegro and Thailand moved to the red list yesterday. The Azores, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania and Switzerland will move to the green list.

The webpage below tells you about the COVID-19 rules for travel to England. It lists countries and territories as red, amber or green and explains the different rules for each list.

Use this page to check which list a country or territory is on – red, amber or green and the 'travel to England' rules that apply for the countries and territories on each list.

See: [Red, amber, green lists: check the rules for travel to England from abroad - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/red-amber-green-lists)

Right to work checks

The end date for the temporary adjusted checks has now been deferred to 5 April 2022 (inclusive). The government has made the decision to defer the date following the feedback

they received about the ability to conduct checks remotely. The government initiated a review of the availability of specialist technology to support a system of digital right to work checks in the future. The intention is to introduce a new digital solution to include many who are unable to use the Home Office online checking service, including UK and Irish citizens. This will enable checks to continue to be conducted remotely but with enhanced security.

See: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): right to work checks - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-right-to-work-checks)