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BUSINESS NEWS SCOTLAND

Welcome to our round up of the latest business 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

People aged under 40 who have still to receive their second dose of the vaccine are being urged to book an appointment or go to a drop-in clinic and maximise the protection offered. The number of cases is rising and around two thirds of new cases are in under 40s. Over the past month, 30% of COVID-19 related hospital admissions were in those aged under 40, and the majority of hospital admissions amongst unvaccinated individuals were in the under 40s age group (58%).

Coronavirus vaccination certificates are now required to enter certain events and higher risk venues, such as nightclubs, music festivals and some football grounds.

There are currently no plans to introduce certification for the wider hospitality industry, but this will be kept under review over the autumn and winter months.

People can now download a PDF copy of their vaccination certificate, with a personalised QR code, to print off instantly or store on their mobile phone for use domestically or internationally. This is in addition to the existing paper letters that can be requested from NHS Inform and the Covid Helpline.

Back to school - Remind employees about HMRC support with childcare costs!



With children starting to go back to schools and nurseries in September, and more employees going back to work full time due to the withdrawal of CJRS support, they may need to start thinking about childcare. HMRC have issued a reminder that there is support available for families towards their childcare costs. If they haven't already done so they should set up a "Tax-Free" Childcare Account to help pay towards the cost of childminders, breakfast and after school clubs, nursery fees and approved play schemes. For every £8 an eligible family pay into the special account the government adds £2, up to £2,000 a year, or up to £4,000 a year if a child is disabled.

The scheme is available to parents or carers who have children aged up to 11, or 17 if their child is disabled. Parents can get Tax-Free Childcare in addition to 30 hours free childcare if they are eligible for both. If the employee or their partner have an expected 'adjusted net income' over £100,000 in the current tax year they will not be eligible. This includes any bonuses they expect to get.

For more details see: [HMRC can help with childcare costs as children head back to school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmrc-can-help-with-childcare-costs-as-children-head-back-to-school)

Intellectual Property renewal service goes digital

A new digital renewals service that reduces bulk renewal time for IP rights from 5 days to 5 minutes has now been opened up to all customers by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO).

Customers who need to renew a registered design can do so online. Customers can also renew up to 1,500 IP rights - including combinations of patents, trademarks and designs - in a single digital transaction. The IPO say that they will bring forward these design principles to their One IPO Transformation Programme, which will provide a single, integrated system for all registered IP rights.

See: [Renew a patent, trade mark or registered design - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renew-a-patent-trade-mark-or-registered-design)

Businesses given more time to apply new product safety marking

The UKCA marking replaces the product safety labelling the UK previously used while a member of the EU, such as the CE mark.

Businesses will have an additional year to apply new product safety markings for most products placed on the market in England, Scotland and Wales. The UK Conformity Assessed (UKCA) marking allows the UK to have control over its goods regulations, maintaining the high product safety standards expected in the UK.

Recognising the impact of the pandemic on businesses, the UK Government will extend this deadline to 1 January 2023 to apply UKCA marks for certain products to demonstrate compliance with product safety regulations, rather than 1 January 2022.

See: [Businesses given more time to apply new product safety marking - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/businesses-given-more-time-to-apply-new-product-safety-marking)

Queen's Awards for Enterprise 2021

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise are the most prestigious awards for UK businesses of all sizes and sectors. The awards can provide:

- excellent marketing opportunities and press coverage
- worldwide recognition as an outstanding British company
- increased turnover and international trade
- a boost to staff morale, and also to partners and stakeholders

The awards are a self-nominating process and are free to enter. The application period is currently open and will close on 8 September 2021.

See: [The Queen's Awards for Enterprise - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/the-queen-s-awards-for-enterprise)

Digital Leaders 100 Awards

These awards celebrate the individuals and organisations from the public, private and non-profit sectors who are demonstrating a pioneering and sustainable approach to digital transformation in the UK.

The categories are:

- Digital Leader
- Young Digital
- Digital SME
- AI Innovation
- Digital Skills or Talent Initiative
- Big Data Innovation
- Digital Public Service Innovation
- Geospatial Innovation
- 5G Innovation
- HealthTech Innovation

You can nominate yourself or your organisation in any relevant category, entries and nominations close at midday on Friday 10 September 2021.

See: [Digital Leaders 100 \(digileaders100.com\)](https://digileaders100.com)

Brexit - International HGV and trailer, bus or coach services and tours: vehicle documents

From 28 September 2021, you will need a UK sticker instead of a GB sticker on your vehicle to drive abroad.

For HGV see: [International road haulage: HGV and trailer documents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/international-road-haulage-hgv-and-trailer-documents)

For bus or coach services see: [International bus or coach services and tours: vehicle documents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/international-bus-or-coach-services-and-tours-vehicle-documents)

Brexit - New rules for international road haulage in 2022

Prepare for new rules for transporting goods to or through Europe using cars and trailers, vans and HGVs from 2022. The rules are part of the UK's deal with the EU ([The Trade and Cooperation Agreement](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-trade-and-cooperation-agreement)).

The new rules will affect you if you transport goods using:

- cars and trailers
- vans or other light goods vehicles (for example, if you run a European courier service)
- heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)

The new rules mean that you might need:

- to register some journeys within Europe on an online service from 2 February 2022
- a vehicle operator licence if you use vans or car and trailers to transport goods to or through Europe from 21 May 2022

Check which types of journeys you will need to register online if you transport goods within Europe using a car and trailer, van or HGV from 2 February 2022.

See: [New rules for international road haulage in 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-rules-for-international-road-haulage-in-2022)

Managing drug and alcohol misuse at work

Employers have a legal duty to protect employees' health, safety and welfare.

Understanding the signs of drug and alcohol misuse (or abuse) will help you manage health and safety risk in your workplace. The Health and Safety Executive website has [step-by-step guidance](https://www.hse.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/step-by-step-guidance/) to help you manage drug and alcohol misuse at work. This includes advice on how to [develop a drugs and alcohol policy](https://www.hse.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/develop-a-drugs-and-alcohol-policy/) and what you can do to [support your employees](https://www.hse.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/support-your-employees/)

See: [Managing drug and alcohol misuse at work - Overview - HSE](https://www.hse.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/managing-drug-and-alcohol-misuse-at-work-overview/)

ICO consultation on data transferred outside of the UK

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is seeking responses on their draft international data transfer agreement (IDTA) and guidance, which replace Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs).

The ICO's IDTA and associated documents form part of a wider UK package to assist international transfers, including supporting the government's approach to [new adequacy assessments](#) of third countries.

The consultation is split into three sections:

- proposal and plans for updates to guidance on international transfers
- transfer risk assessments
- the international data transfer agreement

The ICO is also asking for views on any relevant privacy rights, legal, economic or policy considerations and implications. Your responses will help them understand the practical impact of their proposed approaches on your organisations.

See: [ICO consults on how organisations can continue to protect people's personal data when it's transferred outside of the UK | ICO](#)

Improving broadband access

Thousands of rural and island homes and businesses in Scotland are set to access the UK's fastest and most reliable broadband. Scottish Government investment of £384 million through the Reaching 100% programme (R100) will see building of full fibre connections begin in September 2021 around Oban, Argyll and Bute, and Portlethen and Newtonhill, Aberdeenshire.

The R100 North contract will deliver full fibre broadband capable of one gigabit per second download speeds. This is more than 30 times faster than the original commitment to deliver 30 megabits per second. More than 220km of subsea cables will ensure 15 more islands across Argyll and Bute, Highlands, Shetland and Orkney are connected to fast and reliable broadband.

See: [Improving broadband access - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Pig Producers' Fund

Applications now open for hardship support scheme. The scheme will provide up to £715,000 of financial support to pig producers affected by the temporary closure of the abattoir at Brechin earlier this year.

The Pig Producers Hardship Support Scheme delivers essential funding to eligible pig producers who supplied the Quality Pig Processors (QPP) plant at Brechin between 8 February and 31 March and were paid £15 less per pig by the abattoir during this period.

See: [Pig Producers Hardship Support Scheme: form and guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/09/20200916_PigProducersHardshipSupportSchemeFormAndGuidance.pdf)

International travellers to Scotland will be able to use private sector COVID tests

People will be able to use private sector tests when returning, or visiting, from green or amber list countries under a change to international travel restrictions. The step will allow people to choose from a list of approved providers when booking the tests they will need to take after arriving in Scotland. People previously had to book NHS home PCR tests via the UK Government's booking portal.

The opportunity to ease the restriction – which will come into effect in early September – has been made possible by enhanced monitoring of the performance and reliability of private testing providers to ensure public health safeguards are maintained. There is also the additional safeguard of removing any provider that does not meet stringent performance measures.

See: [International travellers to Scotland will be able to use private sector COVID tests - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/09/20200916_InternationalTravellersToScotlandWillBeAbleToUsePrivateSectorCovidTests.pdf)

Funding support for fishing and marine businesses

Fishing businesses and marine organisations have been awarded funding to mitigate the impacts of Brexit and help the sector recover from effects of COVID-19.

The financial support of almost £800,000 – part of the £14 million Marine Fund Scotland - was announced by Rural Affairs Secretary, Mairi Gougeon, in a food and drink debate in the Scottish Parliament last week.

See: [Funding support for fishing and marine businesses - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/09/20200916_FundingSupportForFishingAndMarineBusinesses.pdf)

Help employers with the Kickstart Scheme (Kickstart gateway)

There is now a link to the online application for adding more jobs or employers to your grant agreement (grant variation).

The Kickstart Scheme employer prospectus has also been updated and can be found here: [Kickstart Scheme - A guide for employers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/534222/kickstart-scheme-a-guide-for-employers.pdf)

The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to create new jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment. Employers of all sizes can apply for funding which covers:

- 100% of the [National Minimum Wage](https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage) (or the [National Living Wage](https://www.gov.uk/national-living-wage) depending on the age of the participant) for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months
- associated [employer National Insurance contributions](https://www.gov.uk/employer-national-insurance-contributions)

- [minimum automatic enrolment pension contributions](#)

Employers can spread the job start dates up until 31 December 2021. They'll get funding until 30 June 2022 if a young person starts their job on 31 December 2021.

See: [Help employers with the Kickstart Scheme \(Kickstart gateway\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Private providers of coronavirus (COVID-19) testing

The general list of providers has been updated in 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.

See: [Private providers of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)