

Key Information Summary

We thought it would be helpful to summarise the key information you need to know about COVID-19 and the economy – in a downloadable document – to help you better protect your business and employees.

The document will aim to cover the key topics that are being asked in the sector and by our clients, to cover what you need to know as an employer, employee or if you are self-employed. This document will be updated when new information becomes available.

Contents

Business Administration: Financial Support, Deadlines and More.....	2
HMRC Helpline	2
Government Business Support	2
Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme	3
Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme	4
COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility.....	4
Companies House: Accounts	4
Postponing extension of off-payroll working rules.....	4
Deferring VAT and Income Tax Payments.....	5
IR35 Reforms delayed for a year	5
HMRC's 'Time to Pay' Service	6
Support with Business Rates.....	6
Business rates retail discount increased	6
Tax tips for those forced to work from home.....	7
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.....	7
Flexi-furlough scheme	7
Furlough fines	8
★ Struggling to keep on top of things?.....	8
Sick Pay	8
Protection from eviction for commercial tenant.....	9
Claiming on insurance for Coronavirus related losses	9
Pay no import duty and VAT on medical supplies, equipment and.....	10
protective garments (COVID-19).....	10
Protecting your business from cyber crime	10
Automatic Enrolment & COVID-19	11
Supporting You Employee's Mental Health.....	11
£1.25 billion funding package	12
Coronavirus and the Self-Employed	13
The Self-Employed Income Support scheme	13
Other Financial Support.....	13
Useful links	14
Sources.....	15

Business Administration: Financial Support, Deadlines and More

HMRC Helpline

First Posted 30/03/2020
Updated:

HMRC has set up a phone helpline to support businesses and self-employed people concerned about not being able to pay their tax due to coronavirus. The helpline allows any business or self-employed individual who is concerned about paying their tax due to coronavirus to get practical help and advice. Up to 2,000 experienced call handlers are available to support businesses and individuals when needed.

For those who are unable to pay due to coronavirus, HMRC will discuss your specific circumstances to explore:

- Agreeing an instalment arrangement
- Suspending debt collection proceedings
- Cancelling penalties and interest where you have administrative difficulties contacting or paying HMRC immediately

The helpline number is **0800 0159 559** - and is in addition to other HMRC phone contact numbers.

Government Business Support

First Posted 30/03/2020
Updated: 24/06/2020

Find out what financial support you can get for your business. A full range of business support measures have been made available to UK businesses such as:

- Paying employees and sick pay support
- Business rates relief
- Business support grant funds
- Paying tax support
- And more

[Find out more](#) about these schemes.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

First Posted
30/03/2020

Updated:
13/04/2020

Smaller businesses with an annual turnover of less than £45m can apply for an interest-free loan of up to £5m to help them through COVID-19 related difficulties, using the [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#).

The government will provide a grant payment to cover the interest and initial fees for the first 12 months and will guarantee 80% of the loan amount to give banks and financial companies the confidence to lend. Under the scheme, which will initially run for six months, businesses will be able to borrow for up to six years. They will be liable to repay the money in full - the guarantee is for the lenders, not the borrowers.

Key Points:

- To apply, you should talk to your bank or one of the 40 accredited finance providers (not the British Business Bank) as soon as possible, to discuss your business plan.
- The government will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan. This applies for loans of up to £5m in value and for up to 6 years. No interest will be charged for the first 12 months. The government will pay to cover the first 12 months of interest payments.
- The major high street banks are on this list of 40 providers. Gov.uk states that more information can be found on their websites.

What type of borrowing is available?

Access to a range of revolving and term finance options including:

- Business loans and asset finance (terms of up to 10 years)
- Overdrafts
- Invoice finance and revolving facilities (terms of up to three years)

Following changes to the CBILS, eligibility is wider than originally the case, giving more businesses affected by coronavirus access to finance.

If you have previously been unsuccessful in securing CBILS funding from your lender, you may consider whether you can now apply again under the revised scheme. Find out whether your business is eligible using this [checklist](#), or check the [FAQs](#).

Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme

First Posted
24/06/2020

The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) provides financial support to larger businesses affected by coronavirus (COVID-19).

Updated:

The scheme helps medium and large sized businesses to access loans and other kinds of finance up to £200 million.

The government guarantees 80% of the finance to the lender.

[Find out more](#)

COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility

First Posted
30/03/2020

Bigger companies with a yearly turnover of more than £45m may be able to take advantage of the Bank of England's new [COVID Corporate Financing Facility \(CCFF\)](#).

Updated:

The Corporate Financing Facility is effectively a government promise to buy short-term IOUs from companies which are in sound financial health and have a very high credit rating, but which need help to boost their cash flows. The IOUs can be for any period between one week and 12 months.

Companies House: Accounts

First Posted
30/03/2020

Companies House has confirmed that any companies unable to file their accounts on time due to COVID-19, can make an application to extend the period allowed for filing by up to three months. Making an application is essential as any late filing companies will still receive an automatic penalty if they fail to do this.

Updated:

Find out more and apply [here](#).

Postponing extension of off-payroll working rules

First Posted
13/04/2020

Companies House has confirmed that any companies unable to file their accounts on time due to Covid-19, can make an application to extend the period allowed for filing by up to three months. Making an application is essential as any late filing companies will still receive an automatic penalty if they fail to do this.

Updated:

Find out more and apply [here](#).

Deferring VAT and Income Tax Payments

First Posted
30/03/2020

The Chancellor announced a [Deferring VAT and Income Tax Payments](#) on **20th March** to support businesses with cashflow during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Updated:

This means that all businesses with a UK VAT registration have the option to defer VAT payments due between **20th March and 30th June**. Businesses have until **31st March 2021** (the end of the 2020/21 Tax Year) to pay to pay any VAT liabilities that have accumulated during the deferral period.

VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the government as normal.

Key Points:

- Businesses do not need to inform HMRC if they wish to defer payment. They can opt into the deferral simply by not making VAT payments due in this period.
- Businesses who normally pay by direct debit should cancel their direct debit with their bank if they are unable to pay. This can be done online if they're registered for online banking. They should do so in sufficient time so that HMRC does not attempt to automatically collect on receipt of their VAT return.
- Should they wish, businesses can continue to make payments as normal during the deferral period. HMRC will also continue to pay repayment claims as normal. Businesses must continue to submit VAT returns as normal.

For business or the self-employed who have concerns about paying taxes due to coronavirus, HMRC have a helpline for help and advice: **0800 0159 559**.

IR35 Reforms delayed for a year

First Posted
30/03/2020

The Government have announced that the [IR35 tax reforms will be pushed back](#) one year to **April 2021**, as the Treasury looks to protect the economy from the coronavirus outbreak.

Updated:

The suspension of the changes to off-payroll working rules is, "in response to the ongoing spread of COVID-19 to help businesses and individuals" – but the move is "a deferral not a cancellation and the Government remains committed to reintroducing this policy."

HMRC's 'Time to Pay' Service

First Posted
30/03/2020

Businesses and self-employed people who are in financial distress and have outstanding tax liabilities may be eligible to receive tax affairs support via HMRC's Time To Pay service.

Updated:

Arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis and are bespoke to individual circumstances and liabilities.

To find out more information, contact HMRC's dedicated COVID-19 helpline on **0800 0159 559** or [read more here](#).

Support with Business Rates

First Posted
30/03/2020

Business rates holidays have been introduced for businesses in certain sectors that could be most adversely affected.

Updated:

These include:

- Business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses
- Cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses
- Business rates holiday for nurseries in England for the 2020 to 2021 tax year
- Businesses that pay little or no business rates because of small business rate relief (SBBR) or rural rate relief (RRR) are eligible for a one-off grant of £10,000 to help meet their ongoing business costs

For detailed, local information on how your business could receive support, please check **your local council's website**.

Business rates retail discount increased

First Posted
30/03/2020

The Government [decided to increase the business rates retail discount](#) to 100% for one year and extend it to the leisure and hospitality sectors. They have also increased the planned rates discount for pubs to £5,000.

Updated:

Merging this with the existing small business rate relief (which provides full relief for business using a single property with a rateable value of £12,000 or less), an estimated 900,000 properties will receive 100% business rates relief in 2020 to 2021.

Tax tips for those forced to work from home

First Posted
30/03/2020

Updated:
24/06/2020

Assistant Editor at The Sunday Times, David Byers, has provided tax tips for those forced to work from home because of COVID-19. Those that are an employee rather than self-employed can make claims from their employer or HMRC for associated working from home costs and any equipment that is used during the working day.

For example, an increase in energy bills can be claimed for and phone-calls should be claimed back on expenses. Equipment such as computers, printers other office furniture and stationery can also be claimed from HMRC using a P87 form.

Access the HMRC P87 Form [here](#).

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Through the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme, you can ask your staff to temporarily stop working and 80% of their wages (up to £2,500 per employee, per month) will be covered by the government.

The scheme has run since 1st March 2020 and has been extended until October 2020.

We've detailed exactly what the scheme entails, as well as answering all your FAQs on our blog, [here](#). Alternatively [check out GOV.UK](#).

Flexi-furlough scheme

From 1st July, flexible furloughing will be possible under an update to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. This means that employees could spend some days of the week working and others furloughed. The grant available to employers will remain at 80% of the employees' salary, in proportion to the hours worked.

It's important to note that flexi-furloughing only applies to those furloughed under the original scheme before 30th June 2020. This excludes anyone who has been using family leave such as shared parental leave or maternity leave.

Furlough fines

HMRC is actively monitoring fraudulent claims for furloughed employees. If a company is found guilty, HMRC has the right to seek repayment within five years of the claim, plus interest.

Furloughed employees are not permitted to carry out any work for their employer that provides services to or makes money for them.

★ Struggling to keep on top of things?

Outsourcing payroll will give you back time that you can reinvest into growing your business and making sure your business survives.

As part of our payroll service, we will take care of any staff who have been furloughed, meaning another job you don't have to worry about. We are keeping up to date with the latest government schemes and funding available, so we can make sure clients are getting the financial support they need to survive.

Find out more [here](#).

Sick Pay

First Posted
13/04/2020

The Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme will repay employers the current rate of SSP that they pay to current or former employees for periods of sickness starting on or after 13 March 2020.

Updated:

If you're an employer who pays more than the current rate of SSP you can only claim the current rate amount.

The repayment will cover up to two weeks starting from the first day of sickness, if an employee is unable to work because they either:

- Have coronavirus
- Cannot work because they are self-isolating at home

Employees do not have to give a doctor's fit note for you to make a claim.

Find out if you can use the Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to reclaim employee's coronavirus-related Statutory Sick Pay (SSEP) [here](#).

Protection from eviction for commercial tenant

First Posted 13/04/2020 Commercial tenants who cannot pay their rent because of coronavirus will be protected from eviction.

Updated: The amendment to the Coronavirus Bill on commercial leases will apply to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It applied to all commercial tenants.

This will mean that will mean no business will be forced out of their premises if they miss a payment in the next 3 months. It will last until 30 June, with an option for the government to extend if needed.

Get more guidance for landlords, tenants and local authorities in the private and social rented sectors [here](#).

Claiming on insurance for Coronavirus related losses

First Posted 13/04/2020 The government has said it would declare coronavirus as a "notifiable disease", a classification required by many insurance policies. However, the Association of British Insurers says most business insurance policies are still "unlikely" to cover losses. Many policies will only cover firms if the virus is found on-site.

Updated: Generally, business interruption insurance will need to have been specifically requested to be added on to a business insurance package and even this will normally just cover if the premises or equipment is damaged by fire, flood or storms or if essential equipment breaks down.

Under the Business interruption insurance, your business might be entitled to claim if it has bought a 'non-damage, denial of access' extension to a business interruption policy if infectious diseases are unspecified, or you have included 'notifiable diseases' (which Covid-19 has been made by the government) or if you have specifically included Covid-19. And your business should be covered if it has cover for both pandemics and government-ordered closure (if it has been ordered to close).

If you are in any doubt you should check your policy documents and with your insurance broker as to what cover you have. If you don't have any relevant cover, you may be able to take advantage of the government schemes to support businesses and individuals, outlined above in this document.

Pay no import duty and VAT on medical supplies, equipment and protective garments (COVID-19)

First Posted
21/04/2020

Pay no import duty and VAT on protective equipment, relevant medical devices or equipment brought into the UK from non-EU countries during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Updated:

This relief can be claimed by any person importing goods into the UK if certain conditions met.

The goods must be imported by or on behalf of an organisation based in the UK who are:

- state organisations, including state bodies, public bodies and other bodies governed by public law
- other charitable or philanthropic organisations approved by the competent authorities

[Find out more.](#)

Protecting your business from cyber crime

First Posted
13/04/2020

Although working from home and use of remote desktops are necessary measures following recent government advice, they have opened up an advantageous opportunity for cyber criminals. Techniques seen since the start of the outbreak include phishing emails, malware and fraudulent websites claiming to sell goods.

Updated:
24/06/2020

Some measures you can implement to protect your business:

- **Ensure the correct authentication is in place**

Everyone should be varying their passwords, however firms need to be sure multifactor authentication is set up immediately. This is a process that requires more than just a password to protect an account, it consists of two pieces of unique data that can prove their identity.

- **Train employees on how to identify a bogus email**

- **Prepare for business interruption**

In short, prepare for the worst. With a whole firm working from home, one cyber incident could cause the whole company to go into turmoil. Therefore it's imperative to have an incident response plan in place. If you are a cyber-insurance policyholder you will have a breach manager who will guide you through the whole process getting you back on your feet as soon as possible.

There is a helpful Entrepreneur article which lists give ways to protect your company against cyber-attacks.

[Read more.](#)

Automatic Enrolment & COVID-19

First Posted
28/04/2020

During COVID-19 you still need to continue with automatic enrolment or re-enrolment duties as normal, whether staff are still working or being furloughed as part of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

Updated:

The Pension Regulator has published guidance on their website which sets out what to if you are struggling to pay workplace pension contributions.

They have also answered frequently asked questions regarding the pensions elements of the CJRS including:

- Payroll processes and pension contributions
- Employers paying more than the statutory minimum contribution
- Reducing the employer contribution to the statutory minimum
- Employer consultation requirements

[Read more.](#)

First Posted
28/04/2020

Supporting You Employee's Mental Health

Updated:

We're all feeling the impact of COVID-19, it's not just the physical health of many individuals but mental health too. You're not alone if you're feeling anxious, depressed or struggling to sleep through the night.

Alan Kohll who covers corporate wellness, employee well-being and health trends for Forbes has published an article which gives five ways you can support your employees' mental health during a pandemic.

To summarise he suggests:

- Utilising technology to offer mental health recourses.
- Using this opportunity to reduce stigma - the fear of stigma prevents some employees from getting the help they need. This is not an easy topic to discuss but starting the conversation can lessen the stigma and provide education.
- Doubling-down on communication - clearly communicating with employees the mental health and well-being resources available and showing empathy can go a long way.
- Prioritising well-being in benefit plans.
- Showing empathy and leadership - employees are feeling a sense of uncertainty and heightened stress about health, job and financial security. Leaders who show they care, providing mental health guidance will help boost spirits.

[Click here for the full article](#)

[£1.25 billion funding package](#)

First Posted
12/05/2020

UK businesses driving innovation and development will be helped through the coronavirus outbreak with a £1.25 billion government support package.

Updated:

Rishi Sunak said the targeted and tailored help would ensure firms in some of the most dynamic sectors of the UK economy – ranging from tech to life sciences – are protected through the crisis so they can continue to develop innovative new products and help power UK growth.

The comprehensive package includes a new £500 million loan scheme for high-growth firms, called the Future Fund, and £750 million of targeted support for small and medium sized businesses focusing on research and development.

[Find out more.](#)

Coronavirus and the Self-Employed

The Self-Employed Income Support scheme

First Posted
30/03/2020

The Government has launched a ground-breaking scheme to help self-employed people remain solvent through the worst of the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis.

Updated:
21/04/2020

The Self-Employed Income Support scheme will pay a direct cash **grant** of 80% of their profits, up to £2,500 per month.

Find out more [here](#).

Other Financial Support

If you're getting/less no work because of the current pandemic you can also:

- Apply online for Universal Credit
- Apply for 'new style' Employment and Support Allowance

Find out more [here](#).

Useful links

First Posted
30/03/2020

Updated:
24/06/2020

- [Information on the GOV.UK's website about COVID-19](#)
(You can sign up to get emails when they change any coronavirus information on the website)
- [Advice for employers and employees from ACAS](#)
- [Working capital support from NatWest](#)
- [Working capital support from Lloyds Bank](#)
- [GOV.UK COVID-19 employer, employee and businesses guidance](#)
- [GOV.UK COVID-19 support for businesses](#)
- [Tax-helpline for businesses](#)
- More detailed proposals in the Coronavirus Bill: [Detail on Coronavirus Bill](#)
- Coronavirus Bill- Self-employed pay: [Statutory self-employed pay](#)
- [UK Government's COVID-19 Recovery Strategy](#)
- [Sage Coronavirus: UK government funding support tool](#)
- [Government loan scheme – urgent alternatives for businesses that don't make the grade](#)

Sources

First Posted	AAT
30/03/2020	ACAS
Updated:	Bank of England
24/06/2020	British Business Bank
	Entrepreneur
	First Intuition
	Forbes
	GOV.UK
	HM Treasury
	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
	Lloyds
	Phipp & Co. Accountancy
	RBS
	The Pensions Regulator