

21st March 2020

We have put together a list of the current assistance available for businesses during the Covid-19 Pandemic. This information is based at the date above, given the speed things are changing we will make sure we keep you up to date with anything that changes. For further information please go to <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> The main support lines are as follows:

Paying my team's wages:

What Support can I get?

The Government have released unprecedented changes which will help employers who can't afford to pay their team's wages (**the important note here is that this employee is officially recognised as furloughed and although still employed by you they are not in work**), backdated to the 1st March 2020 and for a minimum of three months the Government will pay up to 80% of the salary (up to a cap of £2,500) per employee per month. Employers can choose to top this payment up to the employee's full salary if they wish to.

How do I get it?

This payment will be provided in the form of a grant from the Government and payments are expected to be in place by the end of April, this does mean that employers will have to cashflow the March payroll run for staff but will effectively have up to 80% of it reimbursed by the end of April.

Business rates for any business:

What support can I get?

If a business has premises which currently attract rates but they receive Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) then they will receive a cash grant of £10,000 from their local authority. For reference, if your rateable value is £15,000 or less you will receive some form of SBRR, it doesn't matter if you receive 100% relief and pay no rates, the grant still applies to you.

How do I get it?

Your local authority will be in contact, you do not have to apply for this grant. Our current understanding is that local authorities will receive the funds from the government in early April and they will start to provide these grants from there on. If you need any further information contact the business section of your local authority.

Business rates for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Businesses:

What support can I get?

You will receive the same grant as above if you qualify, however, there is potentially more available to you. If your rateable value is in between £15k and £51k you will receive a cash grant of £25,000. You will also receive a rates holiday for the whole of the 20/21 rates year (this is the same year as the tax year).

How do I get it?

As above, you will be contacted by your Local Authority, there is no need to apply for this, note that if you have a rateable value of less than £51k you will only fall into either the £10k or £25k grant category, you won't get both. If you're rateable value is above £51k you won't receive any grant but every business in this sector is getting the rates holiday, regardless of size.

Support for staff off ill

What support can I get?

If any of your team are off ill because of Covid-19, they are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from their first day of absence rather than the usual fourth. HMRC will refund up to two weeks of SSP to employers for SSP paid because of Covid-19 illness. This is available to any staff members who are advised to self-isolate regardless for symptoms.

How do I get it?

The current understanding (and this may change) is that this will be reclaimed in the same way that SMP is reclaimed, it will reduce your PAYE liability to HMRC and will be submitted as part of your monthly payroll reporting. There will be no need to obtain GP fit notes in order to reclaim this. Two items to note, if you employ more than 250 people or if your business is not UK based this won't be available to you.

Loans

What support can I get?

There is a temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme which will be delivered by the British Business Bank (BBB). The government will guarantee 80% of the loan to providers allowing a lower proof of capital for the business borrowing, the government will not charge the lender or the business for the 80% guarantee and the loans are up to the value of £5m. As an additional support the Government are also covering the first twelve months of interest on these loans.

How do I get it?

The loans are true loans and therefore require a proper lending proposal but insufficient capital, they are not a simple press the button and receive the cash. The scheme will be open from 23rd March, to apply you should talk to your bank or one of the accredited finance providers (list available on the BBB website) as soon as possible. Note that if you turnover more than £45m per annum you are not eligible for these loans but you may be eligible for funding through a Corporate Financing Facility provided by the Bank of England.

Time to pay:

What support can I get?

If you have bills to pay to HMRC, they are putting a lot of support and flexibility into Time to Pay arrangements to help businesses with much needed cashflow. HMRC have now deferred the VAT payment for any quarters up to June 2020 to the end of the financial year. That would defer a February quarter end VAT payment to nearly 12 months away. Self-Assessment second payments on account, the amount that would have been due at 31st July 2020 will now not be payable until 31st January 2021, this gives people six months longer to pay.

How do I get it?

Time to pay arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis, you need to contact HMRC on their dedicated Covid-19 helpline which is 0800 0159 559. We are awaiting further information regarding the VAT and Self-Assessment payment changes but it would appear it's something that you don't have to apply for, it's just a given. Watch this space.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to give us a shout, we are here to help and support people through these truly unusual times.

Thanks, and be safe,

