



## Government Support for Businesses - COVID-19

### Business & Domestic Rates

- 25% reduction in business rates plus delay in issuing of rates bills to June. Calendar for DD extended June-March.
- Domestic rates deferred until June also, but not reduced.

### Business Support Grant Scheme

- £10k grant for business receiving Small Business Rates Relief (NAV <£15,000) - deadline to apply is 20th May
- Automatically paid where rates are paid by DD. Otherwise, businesses must apply through Dept. for the Economy website (<https://www.covid-19smallbusinessgrants.economy-ni.gov.uk/>)
- Grants intended to support the business, not the landlord if the landlord is dealing with rates. In this instance grants are not being paid out automatically. Businesses occupying property where the landlord receives the rates will should apply using a separate form available [here](#). Deadline is also 20th May
- £25k grant for business in the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector whose NAV is between £15k and £51k. Deadline is also 20th May and businesses can apply [here](#)
- Payments taking 15 working days to process.

### Hardship Fund

- Announced last week for businesses that fell through the cracks and didn't qualify for the £10k or £25k grants.
- Details due this week (W/E 15/05/2020)

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### **Self Employed Support Grant**

- Grant for 80% of average monthly earnings from 2016/17 - 2018/19.
- Must have tax return in for 2018/19
- Majority of income must be from self-employment and trading profits must be less than £50,000. It looks like HMRC will use profits *after* capital allowances in their calculations of average monthly earnings.
- Individuals can check their eligibility [here](#) and apply through their Personal Tax Account
- Scheme runs for 3 months (initially). Payments expected 6 days after application.

### **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

- Government to subsidise up to 80% of wages of “furloughed” workers.
- Cap of up to £2,500 per employee per month
- Includes Employers NIC and Pension Contributions so payroll becomes zero cost
- Extended to run until the end of July without any changes. Runs August to October with more “flexibility” and with 80% funding likely to be gradually being reduced but with employers having to top employees up to 80% (or £2,500/month).
- Furloughed workers cannot work for the business during the furlough period but directors can still perform statutory duties
- Business must intend to bring employees back from furlough once business resumes.
- Qualifying date for employees being on employers payroll has been moved from 28th February 2020 to 19th March 2020 so the scheme will now support those who moved jobs in the period between those two dates.
- Payments are taking around 6 days to process from submission of claims.
- Claims can be made up to two weeks in advance, but the business must be sure that those staff they are claiming for will not be taken off furlough before then.

### **Tax Payment Deferral**

- July payments on account - deferred until January
- VAT due to be paid between 20th March and 30th June, now deferred until March next year (cancel DD to avail of deferral). No need to apply/ask permission.
- Business Payment Support (Time-To-Pay) - all other taxes can be put on a payment arrangement with HMRC (0300 200 3835).

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### **Business Interruption Loan Scheme**

- Available through any of the major banks (mixed reports)
- Loans of up to £5m available but assessment process the same so same affordability checks
- First 12 months effectively interest free as the government will cover the interest in this period

### **Bounce Back Loan Scheme**

- Businesses can borrow up to the lower of £50,000 or 25% of annual turnover.
- Loans are 100% government backed with the government covering the first year's interest and no repayments to be in the first 12 months.
- Loans are for a fixed term of 6 years (although can be repaid early with no fees for doing so) and are at a fixed rate of 2.5%

### **Other Measures**

- SSP refundable for up to two weeks per employee where employees are advised to self-isolate.
- Measures introduced to allow employees to carry over up to 4 weeks of holidays into the next two leave years.
- Universal Credit for the Self Employed increased to match rates of SSP for employees
- All banks offering mortgage repayment holidays of three months
- Utility companies also offering payment holidays (phone, electric, water)

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