

Coronavirus:
General support for businesses





Contents

Support for businesses through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	5
Support for businesses through deferring VAT and Income Tax Payments	6
End of VAT deferral actions	6
Support for the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme	7
Support for businesses paying sick pay to employees	8
Support for those ineligible for SSP	8
Support for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses who pay business rates	8
Cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses	9
Support for nursery businesses that pay business rates	9
Support for businesses that pay little or no business rates	9
Support for businesses through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)	10
Support for large businesses through the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)	10
Support for larger firms through the COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility	11
Support for businesses paying tax	11
Insurance	11
Permission for pubs and restaurants to operate as takeaways	11
Mortgages	11
IR 35 delay	11
Guidance for the charity sector	11
Key workers	11
Temporary changes to Companies House filing requirements	12
Delay in publishing annual accounts for listed entities	12
Government plans for enforced closure of businesses and other venues	12
Extra protection for businesses with ban for commercial tenants who miss rent payments	12
Support for businesses across the UK	12
Employers do not have to report gender pay gaps	12
Extension of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) arrangements	12
Six-month emergency MOT extension	12
Rules on carrying over annual leave to be relaxed to support key industries during COVID-19	13
Chancellor provides over £14 billion for the NHS and vital public services	13
Regulations temporarily suspended to fast-track supplies of PPE to NHS staff and protect companies hit by COVID-19.....	13
The Government also announces it will amend insolvency law to give companies breathing space and keep trading while they explore options for rescue	13
The government will introduce legislation to ensure those companies required by law to hold Annual General Meetings (AGMs) will be able to do so safely	13

continued...



Contents continued

HMRC have extended MTD ‘digital links’ deadline until 2021	14
HMRC have updated examples of HMRC related phishing emails	14
Construction work can continue	14
Dividend policy	14
No import duty and VAT on medical supplies, equipment and protective garments	14
School funding: Exceptional costs relating to COVID-19 for the period March-July 2020	14
Increase to working tax credits	14
Tourism minister launches £1.3m fund to support Destination Management Organisations	15
Other funding sources	15
Innovation funding service	15
HMRC have issued a stern warning that companies abusing Government assistance programmes will face criminal penalties	15
COVID19 support from Business Representative Organisations and Trade Associations	15
Extra support for the charity sector	15
Comprehensive list of rules that have been relaxed	16
Updated guidance on changes to primary eye care	16
The Government have published guidance for apprentices and their employers	16
More time for 30- day reporting of capital gains tax	16
The FCA have confirmed temporary measures to help customers impacted by coronavirus	16
Delaying import duty payments as a result of COVID-19 – Duty deferment account holders	16
Local Authority funding	16
Future fund	16
Coronavirus business support finder tool	17
Manage financial difficulties in your charity caused by coronavirus	17
New measures to protect UK high street from aggressive rent collection and closure	17
Vital routes for supplies and people kept open through Coronavirus support package	17
Guidance for UK businesses trading internationally	17
Apply for a Coronavirus Bounce Back loan	17
Treasury cut taxes to reduce PPE costs	18
Scrapping of the ‘reading tax’ has been fast-tracked	18
Top-up to local business grant funds scheme	18
Support for Dairy Farmers	18
Working safely during Coronavirus	18
Government to support business through trade credit insurance guarantee	18

continued...



Contents continued

Exemption for COVID-19 related reimbursed home office expenses announced	19
Tax-free allowance for home working	19
The government has introduced the corporate governance and insolvency Bill in Parliament	19
Dividend support pressure	19
HMRC is consulting on recovery powers for CJRS and SEISS	19
Domestic reverse charge VAT for construction services has been delayed	19
Tax status of government grants	20
Government outlines further support for pubs, cafes and restaurants	20
Sustainable innovation fund	20
£1.5bn support for the arts	20
Job retention bonus	20
VAT cut for restaurants, hotels and attractions	20
Stamp duty cut	20
Green homes grant	20
Eat out to help out	21
Support for young workers	21
Infrastructure and decarbonisation	21
Companies House to restart the voluntary strike off process	21
Companies House users can now request to have authorisation codes sent to home addresses	21
Guidance on SEISS and CJRS penalties has been published	21
Guidance on SEISS and CJRS error reporting has been published	21
EU rules on business loans has been eased	21
£20 million in new grants to boost recovery of smaller businesses	22
Support for zoos and aquariums	22
£20 million to improve small business leadership and problem-solving skills in the wake of Coronavirus	22
HM Government supported business interruption loan schemes closing for applications	22
Extension to the ban on evictions for residential property	22
Kickstart scheme is open	22
New grants announced for businesses affected by local lockdowns	23
#Wintereconomy plan	23
Job Support Scheme	23
Extended support for the self-employed	23
Extended support for hospitality and tourism	23
More time for individuals to pay their tax bills	23
Extensions to finance schemes	24
VAT deferral	24
Additional support for areas hit by local restrictions	24
Plan for Jobs: Chancellor increases financial support for businesses and workers	25



Please note, the information below is correct as of Thursday 22 October but may be subject to change.

**Support for
businesses
through the
Coronavirus
Job Retention
Scheme**

- Under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, all UK employers with a PAYE scheme will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis.
- This applies to all employees who have been asked to stop working, but who are being kept on the pay roll, otherwise described as 'furloughed workers'. HMRC will reimburse 80% of their wages, up to £2,500 per month. This is to safeguard workers from being made redundant.
- The scheme will cover the cost of wages backdated to 1 March and was initially open for three months, now extended to the end of October. Details of these changes are set out below.
- Eligibility – all UK businesses are eligible.
- How to access – There are some steps you will need to follow. Firstly, to designate affected employees as 'furloughed workers,' and notify your employees of the change – changing the status of employees remains subject to existing employment law and, depending on the employment contract, may be subject to negotiation.
- You will need to submit information to HMRC about the employees that have been furloughed and their earnings through a new online portal (HMRC will set out further details on the information required).
- During the first phase of the scheme HMRC will reimburse 80% of furloughed workers wage costs, up to a cap of £2,500 per month.
- Our understanding is that directors may be able to use this scheme, but this will not cover dividend payments. Duncan & Toplis are fully utilising their internal Human Resource expertise to provide further support. Please let us know if you have specific queries. We are here to help.
- The scheme is open to employees on zero-hour contracts.
- It has been announced that public sector contractors have been given access to the 80% furlough scheme.
- It has also been confirmed that dentists can utilise the furlough scheme for the private proportion of their practice.
- On 8 April the Government announced that the portal to make claims will be open from 20 April. Please see our detailed guidance at the link below for details.
- On 15 April the Government announced that the scheme was being extended to include employees starting up to 19 March. This was previously limited to 28 February. Please check the specific guidelines for eligibility.
- The process for a business setting themselves up on the PAYE online service has been sped-up to assist with applications.
- Please see <https://duntop.co.uk/covid-19/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-guidance> for detailed guidance covering the job retention scheme.

Developments announced at the end of May

- Flexible furloughing - from 1 July furloughed employees may be brought back part time. CJRS can be used to cover normal hours not worked.
- Closure to new entrants from July.
- Employer contributions – from August 2020 the level of grant will be slowly tapered.
 - In June and July, the government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 as well as employer NI contributions and pension contributions for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will pay employees for the hours they work.
 - In August, the government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 and employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions for the hours the employee does not work.
 - In September, the government will pay 70% of wages up to a cap of £2,187.50 for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 10% of wages to make up 80% total up to a cap of £2,500.
 - In October, the government will pay 60% of wages up to a cap of £1,875 for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 20% of wages to make up 80% total up to a cap of £2,500.
- See the link above for further detail regarding the CJRS.
- There remains a national issue with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) regarding company directors that pay themselves annually.
- Due to a technicality of the scheme, the director (or any other employee) is not eligible to make a claim if they were not registered with HMRC prior to 19 March.

Support for businesses through deferring VAT and Income Tax Payments

- The Government will support businesses by deferring Valued Added Tax (VAT) payments for three months.
- Income Tax payments due in July 2020 under the Self-Assessment system will be deferred to January 2021.
- VAT – For VAT, the deferral will apply from 20 March 2020 until 30 June 2020.
- VAT Eligibility – All UK businesses are eligible.
- VAT How to access - This is an automatic offer with no applications required. Businesses will not need to make a VAT payment during this period. Taxpayers will be given until the end of the 2020 to 2021 tax year to pay any liabilities that have accumulated during the deferral period. VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the government as normal.
- It is understood that VAT returns are still expected to be submitted on time.
- If you still wish to make your payment, you can do.
- If you normally pay by direct debit you should immediately cancel, unless you want to pay so that HMRC do not attempt to automatically collect on receipt of your return.
- Income tax – For Income Tax Self-Assessment, payments due on 31 July 2020 will be deferred until 31 January 2021.
- Eligibility – If you are due to pay your second self-assessment payment on account on 31 July. You do not need to be self-employed to be eligible.
- How to access – This is an automatic offer with no applications required. No penalties or interest for late payment will be charged in the deferral period.
- Please also see below for the scaled-up Time to Pay Offer from HMRC. Duncan & Toplis are here to help with communication with HMRC.
- If you have a direct debit in place for either of the above, you must cancel to ensure that payment is not taken. HMRC have confirmed that payment will be taken if an active DD is still in place.
- In early June HMRC announced that firms that failed to cancel their DD in time and payment was taken may be eligible for a refund.
- The quickest way for taxpayers to make a claim, according to HMRC, is to submit a DD Indemnity Claim to their bank, ensuring that they state they want to claim a refund under the Direct Debit Indemnity Scheme (DDI).

End of VAT deferral actions

- The VAT payment deferral period ended on 30 June 2020 (deferred until 31 March 2021). This means you'll need to:
 - set-up cancelled direct debits in enough time for HMRC to take payment
 - submit VAT returns as normal, and on time
 - pay the VAT in full on payments due after 30 JuneAny VAT payments you have deferred between 20 March and 30 June should be paid in full on or before 31 March 2021. You can make additional payments with subsequent returns.

Support for the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will support self-employed individuals (including members of partnerships) who have lost income due to coronavirus (COVID-19).
- This scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next three months to the end of May. At the end of May this was extended for a further three month period.
- Detail for claiming a grant through this scheme can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>
- Who is eligible - You can apply if you're a self-employed individual or a member of a partnership and you:
 - Have submitted your Income Tax Self-Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018-19.
 - Traded in the tax year 2019-20.
 - Are trading when you apply or would be except for COVID-19.
 - Intend to continue to trade in the tax year 2020-21.
 - Have lost trading/partnership trading profits due to COVID-19.
- Your self-employed trading profits must also be less than £50,000 and more than half of your income come from self-employment. This is determined by at least one of the following conditions being true:
 - Having trading profits/partnership trading profits in 2018-19 of less than £50,000 and these profits constitute more than half of your total taxable income.
 - Having average trading profits in 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 of less than £50,000 and these profits constitute more than half of your average taxable income in the same period.
- If you started trading between 2016-19, HMRC will only use those years for which you filed a Self-Assessment tax return.
- There is now an online tool to check to see if you are eligible (follow the link above).
- How much will you get – You will get a taxable grant which will be 80% of the average profits from the tax years 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.
- It will be a maximum of £2,500 per month for three months. This will be paid as a grant directly into your bank account, 1 one instalment.
- How to apply – HMRC will contact you if you are eligible and invite you to apply online.
- HMRC started approaching eligible individuals in mid May, inviting them to claim.
- Second Phase - On 29 May 2020, the Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced an extension to the SEISS. This second grant would be the final grant to be given under this scheme.
- This second grant would allow individuals to claim a taxable grant worth 70% of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of profit, capped at £6,570 in total.
- This represents a reduction from the first grant that enabled claimants to receive up to 80% of their average monthly trading profits, capped at £7,500.
- The eligibility criteria remain the same for the second grant as were in place for the first.
- Applications for the first grant closed on 13 July 2020, with applications for the second grant opening in August 2020. An individual does not need to have claimed the first grant in order to be eligible for the second and final grant.
- The Government have announced that parents whose trading profits dipped in 2018-19 because they took time out to have children will be able to claim for a payment under the SEISS.
- Eligible for parents who took time out of trading to care for their children within the first 12 months of birth of the child or within 12 months of an adoption placement.
- They will now be able to use either their 2017-18 or 2016-17 and 2017-18 self-assessment returns as the basis for their eligibility.

Support for businesses paying sick pay to employees

- Legislation has been brought forward to allow small and medium-sized businesses and employers to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19.
- This refund will cover up to two weeks' SSP per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19.
- Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible - the size of an employer will be determined by the number of people they employed as of 28 February 2020.
- Employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP (according to the new eligibility criteria) as a result of COVID-19.
- Employers should maintain records of staff absences and payments of SSP, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note.
- If evidence is required by an employer, those with symptoms of coronavirus can get an isolation note from NHS 111 online and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the NHS website.
- Eligible period for the scheme will commence the day after the regulations on the extension of Statutory Sick Pay to those staying at home comes into force.
- The reimbursement of SSP is expected to be net of tax. Business will therefore still pay the tax cost of paying statutory sick pay.
- Eligibility – Your business must be UK based and your business is small or medium-sized and employs fewer than 250 employees as of 28 February 2020.
- How to access - The government is developing a rebate scheme that will be open to applications from 26 May 2020.

Support for those ineligible for SSP

- 'New style' Employment and Support Allowance will be payable for people directly affected by COVID-19 or self-isolating according to government advice for from the first day of sickness, rather than the eighth day.
- People will be able to claim Universal Credit and access advance payments where they are directly affected by COVID-19 (or self-isolating), without the current requirement to attend a jobcentre.
- For the duration of the outbreak, the requirements of the minimum income floor in Universal Credit will be temporarily relaxed for those directly affected by COVID-19 or self-isolating according to government advice for duration of the outbreak, ensuring self employed claimants will be compensated for losses in income.

Support for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses who pay business rates

- A business rates retail holiday has been introduced for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England for the 2020-21 tax year.
- Businesses that received the retail discount in the 2019-20 tax year will be rebilled by their local authority as soon as possible.
- Eligibility – Your business must be based in England and your business must be in the retail, hospitality and/or leisure sector. Specifically, your property must be wholly or main being used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues, for assembly and leisure or as hotels, guest & boarding premises and self-catering accommodation. Bingo halls have now been included.
- How to access - There is no action for you. This will apply to your next council tax bill in April 2020. However, local authorities may have to reissue your bill automatically to exclude the business rate charge. They will do this as soon as possible.
- An estimate of the charge you will no longer have to pay can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-business-rates>
- Guidance for local authorities on the business rates holiday has been published. If interested it can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-retail-discount-guidance>
- Any enquiries on eligibility for, or provision of, the reliefs and grants (see below) should be directed to the relevant local authority.

Cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses

- The Retail and Hospitality Grant Scheme provides businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with a cash grant of up to £25,000 per property.
- For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of under £15,000, they will receive a grant of £10,000.
- For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000, they will receive a grant of £25,000.
- Please ensure that your local authority has the required details to make payments to you. If not, we are seeing that local authorities are issuing forms to provide this information to ensure that swift payments are made.
- Eligibility – Businesses are eligible if your business is based in England and is in the retail, hospitality and/or leisure sector.
- This includes property that are wholly or mainly used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues. Those being used as hotels and boarding premises and self-catering accommodation.
- Businesses which are not ratepayers in the business rates system are not included in this scheme.
- How to access – You do not need to do anything, other than ensuring your local authority has the information required to make payment to you.
- If the cash flow need is urgent, it would be advisable to contact your bank to see if a short-term arrangement can be reached until the funding is received.
- Detailed guidance aimed at local authorities has now been issued by the Government (last updated on 24 April) at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874772/small-business-grant-fund-and-retail-guidance.pdf
- Detailed guidance aimed at businesses can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-grant-funding-guidance-for-businesses?>
- On 1 April the Government announced that grants had started to be paid into the bank accounts of high street businesses.
- The Government have confirmed that the grants will be treated as taxable income.

Support for nursery businesses that pay business rates

- There will be a business rates holiday for nurseries in England for the 2020-21 tax year.
- Eligibility – The property must be based in England.
- This includes businesses on the Ofsted early Years Register and used wholly or mainly for the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How to access – No action is required. This will apply to your next council tax bill in April 2020.

Support for businesses that pay little or no business rates

- The government will provide additional funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no business rates because of small business rate relief (SBRR). This will provide a one-off grant of £10,000 to businesses currently eligible for SBRR or rural rate relief, to help meet their ongoing business costs.
- If your business is eligible for SBRR or rural rate relief, you will be contacted by your local authority – you do not need to apply.
- Businesses which are not ratepayers in the business rates system are not included in this scheme.
- You do not need to do anything, other than to ensure that the local authority has the information required to make payments to you. Funding for the scheme will be provided to local authorities by government from early April.

Support for businesses through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)

- A new temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, delivered by the British Business Bank through the main/secondary banks, launched on Monday 23 March to support businesses to access bank lending and overdrafts.
- The government will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to a per-lender cap on claims) to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs.
- The government will not charge businesses or banks for this guarantee, and the Scheme will support loans of up to £5 million in value.
- Businesses can access the first 12 months of that finance interest free, as government will cover the first 12 months of interest payments.
- The scheme will take the place of the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG). A range of options will be available through CBILS including business loans and asset finance (terms up to six years) overdrafts and invoice finance and revolving facilities (terms up to three years).
- From experience, there will be a process to follow and businesses need to be ready to make early applications.
- There will be an underwriting process, so businesses should ensure that their financial information is as up to date as possible.
- It is key that businesses are finance ready, by preparing in detail for application.
- The following is an example of the information/questions requested by a bank to process an application. Of course, Duncan & Toplis are here to help you with your application:
 - Full Background of the business and the level of impact the coronavirus is having on the performance of your business.
 - The measures being taken by you to ensure there's adequate cash flow in the business. What contingencies have been put in place with suppliers etc.?
 - What is the business doing to manage expenditure?
 - What additional funding you may require and for how long.
 - Term/structure required (number of months payment holiday required, is it a full holiday or reduced payments. For example, 50%, do you wish to extend the agreement by the number of payments in the holiday or spread over the remainder of the agreement?)
 - Other HP or lenders' positions. Are we the only funder? If not have you approached the other funders and what has been agreed?
 - What other funding options do you have in place? I.e. overdraft options? Formal HP lines
 - Please can you make available; Latest year end accounts, management information, forecasts and a clear understanding of ongoing fixed costs.
- Dependent upon the bank and your circumstances, you may be asked for more or less information to support your application. This may include:
 - Up to three years of full financial statements with a detailed profit and loss account.
 - Up to six months of business and personal bank statements.
 - Aged debtor and creditor lists.
 - Complete debt structure.
 - Statement of personal assets, liabilities, income and expenditure.
- It is understood that, at the discretion of the lender, the scheme may be used for unsecured lending for facilities of £250,000 and under. For facilities above £250,000, the scheme requires the lender to establish a lack or absence of security prior to businesses using CBILS.
- Eligibility – Your business must be UK based. CBILS is aimed at smaller UK business. Therefore, it is limited to companies with an annual turnover not exceeding £451m and the other British Business Bank eligibility criteria.
- How to access – The full rules of the Scheme and the list of accredited lenders is available at <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme-cbils>
- All the major banks will offer the Scheme once it has been launched. There are numerous providers. You should talk to your bank or finance provider (not the British Business Bank) as soon as possible and discuss your business plan with them. This will help your finance provider to act quickly once the Scheme has launched. If you have an existing loan with monthly repayments, you may want to ask for a repayment holiday to help with cash flow.
- You should also consider going to market with applications for CBILS. Please contact us to see how we can help with this.
- On 3 April the Chancellor announced new measures to ensure that banks start to deliver the much-needed funding to businesses. The changes included:
 - Applicants will no longer be limited to businesses that have been refused a loan on commercial terms.
 - Banks will be banned from asking company owners for personal guarantees when borrowing up to £250,000.

Support for large businesses through the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)

- This will provide a government guarantee of 80% to enable banks to make loans of up to £200m for firms with an annual turnover above £45m.
- Facilities backed by a guarantee under CLBILS will be offered at commercial rates of interest.
- This scheme allows lenders to specifically support businesses that were viable before the COVID-19 outbreak but now face significant cash flow difficulties.
- Eligibility – your business must be based in the UK.
- It must have annual turnover above £45m.
- Borrowers are able to borrow up to 25% of turnover, up to a maximum of £200m.
- Certain types of entity are excluded from the scheme.
- How to apply – The scheme launched on Monday 20 April through a series of accredited lenders. The list is on the British Business Bank website <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-schemes/clbils/>

<p>Support for larger firms through the COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the new Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility, the Bank of England will buy short term debt from larger companies. • This will support your company if it has been affected by a short-term funding squeeze and allow you to finance your short-term liabilities. • It will also support corporate finance markets overall and ease the supply of credit to all firms. • Eligibility – All UK businesses are eligible. • How to access – The scheme is now open for applications by following this link https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-covid-19-corporate-financing-facility? • More information is available from the Bank of England at https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/market-notices/2020/ccff-market-notice-march-2020
<p>Support for businesses paying tax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All businesses and self-employed people in financial distress and with outstanding tax liabilities, may be eligible to receive support with their tax affairs through HMRC's Time To Pay service. • These arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis and are tailored to individual circumstances and liabilities. This is normally only available to those in significant financial distress. • There is currently no confirmation from HMRC or Government that tax filing deadlines will be relaxed. Business should try to meet tax compliance obligations to avoid penalties being assessed by HMRC. • HMRC may be open to deferral of month 11 (March 2020) PAYE payments for two months, subject to specific agreement with HMRC. • We have already had several success stories of Duncan & Toplis clients being able to defer tax payments. HMRC are supporting this. • Eligibility – You are eligible if you pay tax to the UK government and have outstanding tax liabilities. • How to access – If you have missed a tax payment or you might miss your next payment due to COVID-19, please call HMRC's dedicated helpline: 0800 024 1222. • If you're worried about a future payment, please call nearer the time.
<p>Insurance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses that have cover for both pandemics and government-ordered closure should be covered, as the government and insurance industry confirmed on 17 March 2020 that advice to avoid pubs, theatres etc. is sufficient to make a claim. • Insurance policies differ significantly, so businesses are encouraged to check the terms and conditions of their specific policy and contact their providers. Most businesses are unlikely to be covered, as standard business interruption insurance policies are dependent on damage to property and will exclude pandemics. • On 24 March the Government released further details relating to insurance claims covering notifiable disease policies, unspecified notifiable disease policies, government ordered closures and event coverage.
<p>Permission for pubs and restaurants to operate as takeaways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities Secretary has confirmed that the government will set out measures so that pubs and restaurants can operate as hot food takeaways to serve people having to stay at home. • Relaxation of planning measures will be introduced as soon as possible and will apply for a limited period. • Currently planning permission is required for businesses to carry out this change. • This does not impact alcohol licencing rules.
<p>Mortgages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortgage lenders were originally offered at least a three month mortgage holiday for those borrowers in difficulty due to COVID-19. On 22 May this was extended by a further three months.
<p>IR 35 delay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government is delaying the new private sector IR35 regime until 1 April 2021.
<p>Guidance for the charity sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has provided general advice to the charity sector. This advice can be seen at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector • This was last updated on 26 June.
<p>Key workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been confirmed that food processing worker WILL be classed as key workers. Therefore, their children will be eligible for childcare. • It is also understood that only one parent of a child needs to be a key worker for that child to still be able to receive child care. • Full Government guidance can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision

<p>Temporary changes to Companies House filing requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 26 June 2020 the Companies etc. (Filing Requirements) (Temporary Modifications) Regulations 2020 (“the regulations”) were signed into law. They came into force on 27 June 2020. • The measures introduced by the regulations will relieve the burden on businesses during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and allow them to focus all their efforts on continuing to operate. • Full details of the changes can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-companies-etc-filing-requirements-temporary-modifications-regulations-2020/temporary-changes-to-companies-house-filing-requirements.
<p>Delay in publishing annual accounts for listed entities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This temporary relief will permit listed companies which need the extra time to complete their audited financial statements an additional two months in which publish them.
<p>Government plans for enforced closure of businesses and other venues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses who do not follow COVID-19 restrictions will be issued with prohibition notices. • Businesses who fail to comply will receive fines and could also face the loss of their alcohol license. • There will be no upper limit to the fines of businesses who continue to ignore restrictions. • Local government will be responsible for enforcing regulations requiring those businesses to close on 20 March 2020. • Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers, with support from the police if appropriate will work together to issues prohibition notices where restrictions are not followed. • The full guidance is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-and-other-venues-subject-to-further-social-distancing-measures
<p>Extra protection for businesses with ban for commercial tenants who miss rent payments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial tenants who cannot pay their rent because of coronavirus will be protected from eviction. • These measures will mean no business will automatically forfeit their lease and be forced out of their premises if they miss a payment up until 30 June. This may be extended by the government. • This is not a rental holiday and tenants will still be liable for the rent. • All commercial tenants in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are eligible. • No application is required.
<p>Support for businesses across the UK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that some elements of business support are devolved and therefore support may differ in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.
<p>Employers do not have to report gender pay gaps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines suspended for this year.
<p>Extension of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIDs will be able to extend the maximum duration of their BID arrangements until 31 March 2021 by delaying BID ballots. • This enables them to focus on the response to the current emergency.
<p>Six-month emergency MOT extension</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government has granted car, motorcycle and van owners a six-month exemption from MOT testing. • However, please note that this will only come into effect from Monday 30 March, meaning that vehicles due an MOT before then must still take it. • Drivers will still be liable if they are found driving a vehicle that is not road worthy.

<p>Rules on carrying over annual leave to be relaxed to support key industries during COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers who have not taken all of their statutory annual leave entitlement due to COVID-19 will now be able to carry it over into the next two leave years. • Government to amend regulations to allow annual leave to be carried over into the next two years. • Measures will ensure workers won't lose their leave entitlements. • Move gives flexibility to business at a time when it is needed most. • The regulations will allow up to four weeks of unused leave to be carried into the next two leave years, easing the requirements on business to ensure that workers take statutory amount of annual leave in any one year. • This will mean staff can continue working in the national effort against the coronavirus without losing out on annual leave entitlement. • The changes will also ensure all employers affected by COVID-19 have the flexibility to allow workers to carry over leave at a time when granting annual leave could leave them short-staffed in some of Britain's key industries, such as food and healthcare. • The changes will amend the Working Time Regulations, which apply to almost all workers, including agency workers, those who work irregular hours, and workers on zero-hours contracts. • The change is aimed at allowing businesses under particular pressure from the impacts of COVID-19 the flexibility to better manage their workforce, while protecting workers' right to paid holiday.
<p>Chancellor provides over £14 billion for the NHS and vital public services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than £14 billion from the Coronavirus emergency response fund will go towards public services.
<p>Regulations temporarily suspended to fast-track supplies of PPE to NHS staff and protect companies hit by COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help get personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitiser to NHS staff as quickly as possible, Business Secretary Alok Sharma is easing administrative requirements and barriers to imports of these essential tools, without compromising on their safety. • This includes asking the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authorities to fast-track PPE through the product safety assessment process and prioritise this activity over other market surveillance activity. • Also, allowing PPE equipment providing protection against COVID-19 which lack the CE mark onto the market provided products meet essential safety requirements. • Also, providing new guidance for local authorities and ports and borders enforcement officers on the import and safety testing of hand sanitiser.
<p>The Government also announces it will amend insolvency law to give companies breathing space and keep trading while they explore options for rescue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will also include enabling companies to continue buying much-needed supplies, such as energy, raw materials or broadband, while attempting a rescue. • Also, to temporarily suspended wrongful trading provisions retrospectively from 1 March 2020 for three months for company directors so they can keep their businesses going without the threat of personal liability. • However, directors must be careful, all of the other statutory requirements of directors remain in place.
<p>The government will introduce legislation to ensure those companies required by law to hold Annual General Meetings (AGMs) will be able to do so safely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies will temporarily be extended greater flexibilities, including holding AGMs online or postponing the meetings.

<p>HMRC have extended MTD 'digital links' deadline until 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTD for VAT businesses now have until 1 April 2021 to meet the requirement to have 'digital links' within their recordkeeping. • The previous deadline was either 1 April 2020 or 1 October 2020, dependent upon their original MTD start date.
<p>HMRC have updated examples of HMRC related phishing emails</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email, SMS, tax refund and rebate, bogus phone calls, WhatsApp messages, social media scams and refund companies are all highlighted as methods used by unscrupulous fraudsters at this time. • For full details, please follow this link https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phishing-and-bogus-emails-hm-revenue-and-customs-examples/phishing-emails-and-bogus-contact-hm-revenue-and-customs-examples • Similarly, HMRC have released details of genuine contact from them. Details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/genuine-hmrc-contact-and-recognising-phishing-emails/genuine-hmrc-contact-and-recognising-phishing-emails • Please report any such attempts against you to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and delete the message.
<p>Construction work can continue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 31 March Alok Sharma, BEIS Secretary of State wrote to the construction industry stating that they can continue to travel to work, consistent with the advice of the Chief Medical Officer. • Site Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been developed by the Construction Leadership Council that align with the latest guidance from Public Health England.
<p>Dividend policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the current crisis, Directors are being urged to look again at their dividend policy. • Is the policy still fit for purpose? • For any proposed dividend, how has the solvency of the company been assessed, including any potential impact of COVID-19? • Section 172 of the Companies Act contains the duty to "promote the success of the company for the benefit of its members as a whole." How does the dividend policy align with this requirement? • How can directors protect themselves from any suggestion that decisions to pay dividends were not influenced by the need of the director/shareholder for income, as opposed to the needs of the company, especially where the facts point to such a conclusion? • Should directors consider paying owner/directors on PAYE, rather than through dividends?
<p>No import duty and VAT on medical supplies, equipment and protective garments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMRC has published guidance to say that no import duty and VAT will be payable on medical supplies, equipment and protective garments from now until 31 October 2020 (extended from 31 July 2020). • Here is a link the HMRC website which gives more information on this https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-no-import-duty-and-vat-on-medical-supplies-equipment-and-protective-garments-covid-19
<p>School funding: Exceptional costs relating to COVID-19 for the period March-July 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding is available to cover exceptional costs incurred due to the virus. • Funding will be available for all academy schools and funding will be available to cover specific costs. • The system for application is expected to be simple. • For further details, please see the following link https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020
<p>Increase to working tax credits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working tax credits increased from 6 April 2020. • As part of the Government's support package during the COVID-19 pandemic, the basic element of Working Tax Credit has been increased by £1,045 to £3,040 from 6 April 2020 until 5 April 2021. • This could mean an extra £20 each week, dependent on circumstances. • No action is required, you will receive any increased payments automatically, if you are already registered. • If not already, we urge you to look at the support available to you. Please follow this link https://www.gov.uk/working-tax-credit/how-to-claim • Any questions, please ask your Duncan & Toplis contact, we are here to help.

<p>Tourism minister launches £1.3m fund to support Destination Management Organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding will provide immediate financial support to Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) who are at severe risk of closure due to the pandemic. • The funding is available to any DMO which usually received at least 50% of its income from commercial sources. • Further details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tourism-minister-launches-13-million-fund-to-support-destination-management-organisations
<p>Other funding sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many charities and other funding organisations have launched funding programmes to help support businesses and other entities through the coronavirus pandemic. Each will have its own criteria, eligibility and application process. Some UK wide examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Coronavirus Emergency Fund from Charities Aid Foundation (UK) for smaller charities and similar organisations. - The Emergency Fund from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support heritage organisations. - The Prince's trust and NatWest Enterprise relief fund that aims to support young entrepreneurs impacted by the virus. • If you need any help with preparing applications for grant funding, please let your Duncan & Toplis contact know.
<p>Innovation funding service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK registered businesses can apply for a share of up to £20 million to respond to new and urgent needs in UK and global communities during and following the Covid-19 pandemic. • The aim of the funding is to support UK businesses to focus on emerging or increasing needs of society and industries during and following the Covid-19 pandemic. • Your application must demonstrate both realistic and significant benefits for society (including communities, families and individuals) or an industry that has been severely impacted and/or permanently disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. • You can claim 100% of your project costs up to the maximum of £50,000. These will be paid in advance of the project start date. • The deadline for application is Friday 17 April 2020 at 12:00. • Please let your Duncan & Toplis contact know if you need any assistance making a claim.
<p>HMRC have issued a stern warning that companies abusing Government assistance programmes will face criminal penalties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMRC chief Jim Harra has urged furloughed employees to report firms that are still asking them to work. • “Depending on the nature of the behaviour, if it amounted to knowingly trying to defraud us then we could take criminal action against employers.”
<p>COVID19 support from Business Representative Organisations and Trade Associations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many organisations are providing coronavirus related support for specific sectors. • A detailed list can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-support-from-business-representative-organisations-and-trade-associations
<p>Extra support for the charity sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 8 April, the Chancellor announced a significant funding package for the Charity sector. • £750m will be made available, £370m going to smaller, local charities paid through funding bodies. • £360m will go directly to charities, specifically to those helping people in need. This will cover hospices, abuse charities and charities protecting vulnerable children, amongst others.

<p>Comprehensive list of rules that have been relaxed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government have issued a comprehensive list of rules that have been relaxed. • This can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-that-have-been-relaxed-to-help-businesses-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic
<p>Updated guidance on changes to primary eye care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although routine care has been suspended, optician practices do not need to close and can still be open to provide essential/urgent/emergency care. Funding will continue to be received for offering these services. • There does not need anyone to be present to be classed as 'open' and no specific permission is required to continue to provide essential care. • If services remain open the practice will receive a monthly payment based on your average monthly GOS (General Ophthalmic Service) claim from March 2019 – February 2020. This is a grant, not a loan. • Full details can be seen on the LOCSU website at https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/updates-and-guidance-for-optical-settings/
<p>The Government have published guidance for apprentices and their employers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidance is extensive but notes that there are a variety of options for apprentices, including then being furloughed through the job retention scheme. • Full details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro
<p>More time for 30-day reporting of capital gains tax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMRC will not charge late filing penalties for reports of CGT on disposals of UK residential property by UK residents made by 31 July 2020.
<p>The FCA have confirmed temporary measures to help customers impacted by coronavirus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The measures are now in-force and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offering a temporary payment freeze on loans and credit cards for up to three months, for consumers negatively impacted by coronavirus. - Allowing customers who are negatively impacted by coronavirus and who already have an arranged overdraft on their main personal current account, up to £500 charged at zero interest for three months. - Making sure that all overdraft customers are no worse off on price when compared to the prices they were charged before the recent overdraft pricing changes came into force. - Ensuring consumers using any of these temporary payment freeze measures will not have their credit file affected. • Full details can be found at https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/fca-confirms-temporary-financial-relief-customers-impacted-coronavirus
<p>Delaying import duty payments as a result of COVID-19 – Duty deferment account holders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty deferment account holders who are experiencing severe financial difficulty as a result of Covid-19 and who are unable to make payment of deferred customs duties and import VAT due on 15 April 2020 can contact HMRC for approval to enter into an extended period to make full or partial payment, without having their guarantee called upon or their deferment account suspended. • The account holder should contact the Duty Deferment Office 03000 594243 or by email cdoenquiries@hmrc.gov.uk or the COVID-19 helpline on 0800 024 1222. • Account holders will be asked to provide an explanation of how Covid-19 has impacted their business finances and cash flow.
<p>Local Authority funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government have pledged an additional £1.6 billion of funding for councils.
<p>Future fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme will issue convertible loans between £125,000 and £5m to innovative companies which are facing financing difficulties due to the coronavirus outbreak. • The scheme has been open for applications since 20 May 2020. • The scheme initially provided government loans to UK-based companies, subject to at least equal match funding from private investors. • These convertible loans may be a suitable option for businesses that rely on equity investment and are unable to access CBILS. • On 30 June the government increased the scope of companies eligible to apply. • Companies which have participated in accelerator programmes are now eligible to apply. • Further details and full headline terms can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/future-fund

<p>Coronavirus business support finder tool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new tool that will allow businesses and self-employed people to determine what financial support is available. • There is a simple questionnaire that takes under a minute to complete then indicates the relevant government support that is available. • The tool can be found at the following link https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder
<p>Manage financial difficulties in your charity caused by coronavirus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government have released guidance about COVID-19 related financial difficulties in charities and how to work through them. • This guidance specifically covers financial advice and guidance, considering the best interests of the charity and what to do if your charity cannot continue to operate because of the financial problems caused by COVID-19. • Full guidance can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-financial-difficulties-in-your-charity-caused-by-coronavirus
<p>New measures to protect UK high street from aggressive rent collection and closure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government to introduce temporary new measures to safeguard the UK high street against aggressive debt recovery actions during the coronavirus pandemic. • Statutory demands and winding up petitions issued to commercial tenants to be temporarily voided and changes to be made to the use of Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery, building on measures already introduced in the Coronavirus Act. • Landlords and investors asked to work collaboratively with high street businesses unable to pay their bills during COVID-19 pandemic. • The full release can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-protect-uk-high-street-from-aggressive-rent-collection-and-closure
<p>Vital routes for supplies and people kept open through Coronavirus support package</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government pledges support for freight services to protect flow of goods between the UK, mainland Europe and Northern Ireland. • UK, Ireland and France also agree joint commitment to protecting freight during pandemic. • Light rail systems in Sheffield, Manchester, West Midlands, Nottingham and Tyne and Wear also set to receive support. • Thousands of volunteers from transport sector are put on standby to support front-line services as new 'Transport Support Unit' established, alongside hundreds of government vehicles from the transport network.
<p>Guidance for UK businesses trading internationally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government have released specific guidance for UK businesses that export or delivery goods and services abroad and have been impacted by the spread of COVID-19. • Specifically, the guidance covers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Department for International Trade (DIT) for UK businesses trading internationally. - UK Export Finance (UKEF) support for UK exporters. - Accessing DIT support. - Export controls regarding personal protective equipment. - Further business support. • Full details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses-trading-internationally
<p>Apply for a Coronavirus Bounce Back loan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This scheme will help small and medium-sized businesses affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) to apply for loans of up to £50,000. • The Bounce Back loan scheme will help small and medium-sized businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. • The government will guarantee 100% of the loan and there won't be any fees or interest to pay for the first 12 months. • Loan terms will be up to six years. No repayments will be due during the first 12 months. The government will work with lenders to agree a low rate of interest for the remaining period of the loan. • The scheme will be delivered through a network of accredited lenders • The value of the loan will be limited to 25% of annual turnover of the business. • Eligibility – Your business must be based in the UK and has been negatively affected by coronavirus. There are some other exemptions. • You cannot apply if you are already claiming under CBILS. • How to apply – The scheme will launch on 4 May 2020. Follow this link for details of how to apply https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-coronavirus-bounce-back-loan?utm_source=49d2ce84-9fb1-498b-865b-e52468b3ef95&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

<p>Treasury cut taxes to reduce PPE costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 1 May 2020, PPE purchased by care homes, businesses, charities and individuals to protect against Covid-19 has been free from VAT. • A zero-rate of VAT applied to sales of personal protective equipment (PPE) for Covid-19 initially from 1 May 2020 until 31 July 2020. • On 3 July this was extended to the end of October 2020. • The move will save care homes and businesses more than £155 million. • This comes after import duty also removed from PPE.
<p>Scrapping of the 'reading tax' has been fast-tracked</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chancellor announced that from 1 May VAT will no longer be paid on e-publications.
<p>Top-up to local business grant funds scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discretionary fund has been set up to accommodate certain small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grant funds scheme. • £617m would be made available representing a 5% uplift to the previously announced grant schemes. • This additional fund is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs. • Local authorities have been asked to prioritise businesses in shared spaces, regular market traders, small charity properties and bed and breakfasts that pay council tax rather than business rates. However, local authorities may choose to make payments to other businesses on local economic need. • Businesses must be small, under 50 employees and must be able to demonstrate that they have seen a significant drop of income due to Coronavirus restriction measures. • There will be three levels of grants, with the maximum being £25,000. Local authorities will have discretion to make payments of any amount under £10,000. • The exclusion to SEISS claimants has been removed.
<p>Support for Dairy Farmers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new fund will enable eligible dairy farmers in England to access up to £10,000 each to help them overcome the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. • With some dairy farmers facing financial difficulties and excess milk, the new fund will provide support for those most in need. Eligible dairy farmers will be entitled to up to £10,000 each, to cover 70% of their lost income during April and May to ensure they can continue to operate and sustain production capacity without impacts on animal welfare. • It also comes as the government backed a £1 million campaign to boost milk consumption and help producers use their surplus stock. • Eligibility criteria has not been confirmed so far.
<p>Working safely during Coronavirus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government have released detailed guidance relating to the 'COVID-secure' conditions that businesses should comply with when re-opening. • There is separate guidance for construction and outdoor work, factories, plants and warehouses, labs and research facilities, offices and contact centres, other people's homes, restaurants offering takeaway or delivery, shops and branches and vehicles. • The detailed guidance can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19
<p>Government to support business through trade credit insurance guarantee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses with supply chains which rely on Trade Credit Insurance and who are experiencing difficulties maintaining cover due to Coronavirus will get support from the government, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen has announced. • The government will temporarily guarantee business-to-business transactions currently supported by Trade Credit Insurance, ensuring the majority of insurance coverage will be maintained across the market. • This will support supply chains and help businesses to trade with confidence as they can trust that they will be protected if a customer defaults on payment. • The Government is to provide £10 billion worth of guarantees. • The scheme will be backdated to 1 April and available for nine months.

<p>Exemption for COVID-19 related reimbursed home office expenses announced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Financial Secretary to the Treasury Jesse Norman, has announced details of a temporary tax exemption and National Insurance disregard to ensure that home office equipment purchase by employees as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, will not attract tax and NICs liabilities where reimbursed by the employer. • This measure will apply for 2019–20 from 16 March 2020 only, and 2020–21. • To be eligible for the exemption the expenditure must meet the following two conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The equipment is obtained for the sole purpose of enabling the employee to work from home as a result of the coronavirus outbreak; and - The provision of the equipment would have been exempt from income tax if it had been provided directly to the employee by or on behalf of the employer (under section 316 of ITEPA 2003, s. 316). • Further details can be found at https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2020-05-13/HCWS237/
<p>Tax-free allowance for home working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers can grant £6 a week working from home tax free allowance to employees. • Employees would be required to do nothing to claim. Alternatively, the rules have recently (15 May 2020) been relaxed so employees can make a claim directly with HMRC of £6 a week, either through their self-assessment tax return, or through form P87. • An amount greater than £6 can be claimed, but evidence would then be required of the expenditure incurred.
<p>The government has introduced the corporate governance and insolvency Bill in Parliament</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will put in place a series of measures to amend insolvency and company law to support business to address the challenges resulting from the impact of COVID-19. • The Bill consists of six insolvency measures and two corporate governance measures. • The measures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introducing a new moratorium to give companies breathing space from their creditors while they seek a rescue - prohibit termination clauses that engage on insolvency, preventing suppliers from ceasing their supply or asking for additional payments while a company is going through a rescue process - introducing a new restructuring plan that will bind creditors to it - enabling the insolvency regime to flex to meet the demands of the emergency - temporarily removing the threat of personal liability for wrongful trading from directors who try to keep their companies afloat through the emergency - temporarily prohibiting creditors from filing statutory demands and winding up petitions for coronavirus related debts - temporarily easing burdens on businesses by enabling them to hold closed Annual General Meetings (AGMs), conduct business and communicate with members electronically, and by extending filing deadlines - allowing for the temporary measures to be retrospective so as to be as effective as possible. • Details of how to apply for a moratorium were published by the government on 26 June. • Details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-for-a-moratorium-under-the-corporate-insolvency-and-governance-act-2020
<p>Dividend support pressure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There remains no indication from the government that support will be available for shareholders where the amount of their dividend has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.
<p>HMRC is consulting on recovery powers for CJRS and SEISS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under proposed amendments to the Finance Bill, HMRC will be able to recover grants issued for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), issue penalties and charge tax. • Recovery of SEISS paid that was not due by a 100% tax charge. • Penalties will only be levied in cases of deliberate non-compliance. • SEISS grants that were correctly paid are to be taxable on receipt in 2020/21, irrespective of the business accounting date and with no allocation of any part of the grant to March 2020. • Full details of the consultation can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-legislation-taxation-of-coronavirus-covid-19-support-payments
<p>Domestic reverse charge VAT for construction services has been delayed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of the domestic reverse charge for construction services will be delayed from 1 October 2020 until 1 March 2021 due to the impact of the coronavirus on the construction sector. • In addition to the five-month delay in implementation, the original legislation will be amended. • Now, for a business to be excluded from the reverse charge because they are end users or intermediary suppliers, they must inform their sub-contractors in writing that they are end users of intermediary suppliers. • Full details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenue-and-customs-brief-7-2020-domestic-reverse-charge-vat-for-construction-services-delay-in-implementation/revenue-and-customs-brief-7-2020-domestic-reverse-charge-vat-for-construction-services-delay-in-implementation

Tax status of government grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft legislation is suggesting that all SEISS claims will be taxable on receipt in 2020/21, regardless of the business accounting date. • All coronavirus government support grants are to be included in accounts as taxable income. • Claimants should be aware of this and budget for potential income tax and national insurance bills.
Government outlines further support for pubs, cafes and restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the relaxation of lockdown restrictions announced on 23 June 2020 the government have announced further support for businesses serving customers outdoors. • The government will simplify and reduce the costs of the licensing process for outdoor seating and stalls, making it easier for people to safely drink and dine outside. • Proposed planning freedoms will mean that outdoor markets, pop-up car-boot sales or summer fairs will not need a planning application, which will transform the way people shop and socialise. • Pubs and restaurants will be able to use car parks and terraces as dining and drinking areas, using their existing seating licenses. • Temporary changes to licensing laws will allow many more licensed premises, such as pubs and restaurants, to sell alcohol for consumption off the premises. Customers will be able to buy their drinks from a pub and consume them elsewhere, making social distancing easier. • Further details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-outlines-support-for-pubs-cafes-and-restaurants
Sustainable innovation fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government unveils £200 million package to help innovative businesses bounce back. • Almost £200 million boost to help businesses across the UK drive forward cutting-edge new tech and recover from the impacts of coronavirus. • government investment to support innovations ranging from AI systems managing city traffic flows to the latest reusable packaging materials. • research and development (R&D) intensive businesses urged to apply for funding to turn ingenious ideas into new technologies. • This funding forms part of a wider £750m package of grants and loans announced in April. • This sits alongside the £500m Future Fund. • Businesses can apply for support through the Sustainable Innovation Fund at the following link from Monday 29 June https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/search?ga=2.183748454.1105685484.1593413653-2120154938.1578658642
£1.5bn support for the arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government have announced a £1.57bn support package to support arts, culture and heritage organisations. • £1.15bn is going to England and is made up of £880m in grants and £270m in repayable loans. • NI is to receive £33m, £97m to Scotland and £59m to Wales. • The remaining funds are to go to national cultural institutions and to refund the restart of construction of cultural infrastructure paused by the pandemic.
Job retention bonus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announced in the summer statement, the Chancellor declared that there would be a one-off £1,000 payment made to employers for every furloughed employee retained to the end of January 2021. • This is a UK-wide initiative and applies to all workers earning over £520 per month.
VAT cut for restaurants, hotels and attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAT will be cut for eligible businesses from 20% to 5% from 15 July 2020 to 12 January 2021. • Food and non-alcoholic drinks will be covered on eligible businesses as well as hot takeaway food. • Accommodation in hotels, bed and breakfasts will benefit, as well as admission to theme parks and other attractions.
Stamp duty cut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The threshold for stamp duty on residential property in England and NI has been increased from £125,000 to £500,000. • This is applicable from 8 July 2020 to 31 March 2021.
Green homes grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to £5,000 per household will be available to make households more energy efficient. • This will be match-funding £2 to £1 of homeowners' expenditure. • Up to £10,000 fully funded grants will be available for low-income household.

<p>Eat out to help out</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% discount per diner, up to £10 from Monday to Wednesday throughout August. • Restaurants can claim the discount in full from the government via an online form. • Registration for the scheme opened on 13 July 2020. • Please follow the link for more information https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-your-establishment-for-the-eat-out-to-help-out-scheme • The Government have provided promotional material to help promote the scheme. This can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eat-out-to-help-out-scheme-promotional-materials
<p>Support for young workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick-start scheme that will pay for six-month work placements for 16-24 year olds in universal credit. • The payments will cover national minimum wage for 25 hours per week, plus NI and pension contributions across GB. • There will also be a £1,000 grant per trainee for employers who take on new trainees aged 16-24 in England. • There will be a £2,000 grant for employers per apprentice under 25 and £1,500 for the over 25s. This will be for six months starting 1 August 2020, in England. • There was also announced a raft of additional funding for job finding services and training.
<p>Infrastructure and decarbonisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1bn of grants have been made to public sector bodies to improve energy efficiency. • £50m towards social housing decarbonisation fund.
<p>Companies House to restart the voluntary strike off process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 10 September 2020 Companies House will restart the process for companies that have applied for voluntary strike off. • Further details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/companies-house-to-restart-the-voluntary-strike-off-process
<p>Companies House users can now request to have authorisation codes sent to home addresses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies House users can now request to have authorisation codes sent to home addresses instead of the company's registered office. • This is a temporary measure due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
<p>Guidance on SEISS and CJRS penalties has been published</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMRC has published guidance on the penalties due if HMRC is not told about ineligible receipts or overpayments under the self-employment income support scheme (SEISS). • Details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/penalties-for-not-telling-hmrc-about-self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-overpayments-ccfs47 • HMRC has published guidance on the penalties due if HMRC is not told about ineligible receipts or overpayments under the coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS). • Details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/penalties-for-not-telling-hmrc-about-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-grant-overpayments-ccfs48 • The guidance provides details of how HMRC decides how much the penalty will be, when you may have to pay a penalty and how to appeal against a penalty.
<p>Guidance on SEISS and CJRS error reporting has been published</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMRC has updated its guidance on telling HMRC about an ineligible receipt of grant or an overpayment under the self-employment income support scheme (SEISS). The update covers when HMRC must be told and the grant be repaid as well as penalties. • Details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-hmrc-and-pay-the-self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-back • HMRC has published guidance on what to do if you find you have claimed too much or not enough under the coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS). • Details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/if-youve-claimed-too-much-or-not-enough-from-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme
<p>EU rules on business loans has been eased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More small firms will now be able to secure government-backed loans under the CBILS scheme after the EC agreed to relax competition rules that had prevented businesses from applying for loans that were classified as "undertakings in difficulty". • Businesses in this category with fewer than 50 employees and a turnover of less than £9m can now apply.

<p>£20 million in new grants to boost recovery of smaller businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20 million new funding to help smaller businesses recover from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. • Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government announces £20 million new funding to help businesses across England get back on track. • Small and medium sized businesses in England can access grants between £1,000 - £5,000 for new equipment and technology and specialist advice. • The support will be fully funded by the Government with no obligation for businesses to contribute financially. • The funding has been allocated to Growth Hubs within each LEP area in line with the current ERDF Programme. • Some local allocations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater Lincolnshire - £507,928. - Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire - £720,398. - Humber - £357,993. - Leicester and Leicestershire - £408,785. • Grants (£1,000 - £5,000) to help businesses access specialist professional advice such as HR, accountants, legal, financial, IT and digital, and to purchase minor equipment to adapt or adopt new technology in order to continue to deliver business activity or diversify. • Details on how to apply should be available from the LEPs shortly.
<p>Support for zoos and aquariums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you run a licensed zoo or aquarium in England and are experiencing severe financial difficulties because of lost revenue, you can apply for a grant of up to £730,000. • Full details of eligibility and how to apply can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-zoos-and-aquariums
<p>£20 million to improve small business leadership and problem-solving skills in the wake of Coronavirus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new leadership programmes to help small business leaders grow their companies in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic have been launched. • The Small Business Leadership Programme will focus on strengthening decision-makers' leadership skills, so they are able to address management challenges, some of which, such as remote working, have arisen from coronavirus. • https://smallbusinesscharter.org/small-business-leadership-programme/ to register. • Additionally, the Peer Networks Programme will focus on helping business owners improve their problem-solving skills, through a series of guided exercises. • https://www.peernetworks.co.uk/ to register.
<p>HM Government supported business interruption loan schemes closing for applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HM Government supported business interruption schemes (CLBIS and CBILS) were due to close on 20 October and 30 September respectively. • For CBILS this has been extended to 30 November and 31 December for CLBILS. • These are the final dates that banks can approve applications by. • The deadlines for businesses applying for the loans from banks are earlier. For CBILS this is 30 September. • The deadline to apply for a Bounce Back loan is 4 November 2020.
<p>Extension to the ban on evictions for residential property</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ban on evictions continues for four weeks taking the total ban to six months. • New six month notice periods to be in place until at least 31 March 2021. • Once eviction hearings restart, the judiciary will carefully prioritise the most serious cases including those involving anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.
<p>Kickstart Scheme is open</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 2 September the Kickstart scheme has opened. • As part of the government's Plan for Jobs, the new £2 billion Kickstart scheme will create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the country. • The six month placements are open to those aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit and at risk of long term unemployment. They will be available across a range of different sectors in England, Scotland and Wales. The first placements are likely to be available from November. • There will also be extra funding to support young people to build their experience and help them move into sustained employment after they have completed their Kickstart funded job. • Employers will receive funding for 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum auto-enrolment pension contributions. • Full guidance for employers can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-apply-for-a-grant-through-the-kickstart-scheme

<p>New grants announced for businesses affected by local lockdowns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses in England that are required to shut because of local interventions will now be able to claim up to £1,500 per property every three weeks. • To be eligible for the grant, a business must have been required to close due to local Covid 19 restrictions. • The largest businesses will receive £1,500 every three weeks they are required to close. Smaller businesses will receive £1,000 (rateable value less than £51,000 or occupies a property or part of a property subject to an annual rent or mortgage payment of less than £51,000). • Further details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministers-announce-new-grants-for-businesses-affected-by-local-lockdowns
<p>#Wintereconomy-plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 24 September the Chancellor announced a series of new measures to continue to support businesses and workers moving into 2021. • Below are the details of the schemes available to us on 25 September 2020. • As with the other government support schemes, further detail is likely to be released moving forwards.
<p>Job Support Scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme will replace the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme from 1 November 2020 and continue for six months. • Employees will need to work a minimum of 33% of their usual hours, with every hour not worked the employer and government will each pay one third of the employee's usual pay. • The employer will be reimbursed in arrears for the government contribution. • The government's contribution will be capped at £697.92 per month. • Where government contributions do not hit the cap for a given employee, that employee will be receiving at least 77% of their pay. • Any employee set to be moved on to the Job Support Scheme cannot be on a redundancy notice. • Eligibility – Employers with a UK bank account and UK PAYE scheme and all small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). • Large companies may also be eligible, but they will be required to demonstrate that their business has been adversely affected by COVID-19. • The government has also emphasised that they do not expect large companies to be making capital distributions whilst using the scheme. • The scheme does not cover pension contributions.
<p>Extended support for the self-employed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has been extended to cover the six months from 1 November 2020. • The grant is available to the self-employed who are currently eligible for SEISS and are actively continuing to trade but are facing reduced demand due to COVID-19. • The extension comes in the form of two taxable grants. The first grant will cover a three-month period from the start of November to the end of January. This initial grant will cover 20% of an individual's average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of profits. This will be capped at £1,875 in total. • The second grant will cover a three-month period from the start of February to the end of April. The level of the second grant will be reviewed in due course. • Government details will be announced at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension • There will also be more time for self-employed individuals and other taxpayers to pay taxes that are due in January 2021, building on the self-assessment deferral provided in July 2020. • Taxpayers with up to £30,000 of self-assessment liabilities due will be able to use the HMRC's self-service 'Time to Pay' facility to secure a plan to pay over an additional 12 months. This means that self-assessment liabilities due in July 2020 will not need to be paid in full until January 2022. Any self-assessment tax payer not able to pay their tax bill on time or unable to use the online service can continue to use the 'Time to Pay' helpline to agree a plan.
<p>Extended support for hospitality and tourism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chancellor announced that the government will continue to support the cashflow and viability of over 150,000 UK businesses and protect 2.4 million jobs by extending the temporary reduced rate of VAT from 12 January to 31 March 2021. • This will continue to apply to food and non-alcoholic beverages from restaurants, bars, pubs, coffee shops and similar establishments, as well as the supply of accommodation and admission to attractions across the UK. This rate will remain at 5%.
<p>More time for individuals to pay their tax bills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will also be more time for self-employed individuals and other taxpayers to pay taxes that are due in January 2021, building on the self-assessment deferral provided in July 2020. • Taxpayers with up to £30,000 of self-assessment liabilities due will be able to use the HMRC's self-service 'Time to Pay' facility to secure a plan to pay over an additional 12 months. This means that self-assessment liabilities due in July 2020 will not need to be paid in full until January 2022. Any self-assessment tax payer not able to pay their tax bill on time or unable to use the online service can continue to use the 'Time to Pay' helpline to agree a plan.

Extensions to finance schemes

- Four temporary loan schemes are being extended. Businesses will now have until 30 November 2020 to apply for the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILs), Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILs) and Future Fund.
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme provides loans of amounts between £2,000 and £50,000, capped at 25% of turnover, with a 100% government guarantee to the lender to provide them with the confidence to support businesses of all sizes. Under the new Pay as you Grow options as outlined below, Bounce Back Loan borrowers will be offered the choice of more time and additional flexibility for repayments.
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme provides loans of up to £5 million with an 80% government guarantee to the lender. The government does not charge businesses for this guarantee and also covers the first 12 months of interest payments and fees. The Chancellor also announced that CBILs lenders can extend the term of a loan by up to ten years.
- Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme provides loans of up to £200 million at a maximum of 25% of turnover, with an 80% government guarantee to the lender.
- Future Fund is an investment scheme for innovative and fast-growing UK based businesses and has provided loans ranging from £125,000 to £5 million which are subject to at least matching funding from private investors. Businesses that have already accessed a Future Fund convertible loan cannot apply for another one.
- 'Pay as you Grow' has also been announced to give businesses the flexibility to pay back loans as and when business improves. The government will give businesses that have borrowed under the BBLs the option to repay their loan over a period of up to ten years. This will reduce their average monthly repayments on the loan by almost half. Businesses will also have the option to switch to interest only periods for up to six-month, which can be done up to three times, or pause their repayments for up to six months. This can only be done once, after making six payments.

VAT deferral

- There will also be more time for self-employed individuals and other taxpayers to pay taxes that are due in January 2021, building on the self-assessment deferral provided in July 2020.
- Taxpayers with up to £30,000 of self-assessment liabilities due will be able to use the HMRC's self-service 'Time to Pay' facility to secure a plan to pay over an additional 12 months. This means that self-assessment liabilities due in July 2020 will not need to be paid in full until January 2022. Any self-assessment tax payer not able to pay their tax bill on time or unable to use the online service can continue to use the 'Time to Pay' helpline to agree a plan.

Additional support for areas hit by local restrictions

- On Friday 9 October the chancellor announced that the job support scheme would be expanded to include firms required to close due to localised restrictions.
- Job Support Scheme will be expanded to support businesses across the UK required to close their premises due to coronavirus restrictions.
- Government will pay two thirds of employees' salaries to protect jobs over the coming months.
- Cash grants for businesses required to close in local lockdowns also increased to up to £3,000 per month.
- Under the expansion, firms whose premises are legally required to shut for some period over winter as part of local or national restrictions will receive grants to pay the wages of employees who cannot work - protecting jobs and enabling businesses to reopen quickly once restrictions are lifted.
- The government will support eligible businesses by paying two thirds of each employees' salary (or 67%), up to a maximum of £2,100 a month.
- Under the scheme, employers will not be required to contribute towards wages and only asked to cover NICS and pension contributions.
- Businesses will only be eligible to claim the grant while they are subject to restrictions and employees must be off work for a minimum of seven consecutive days.
- The scheme will begin on 1 November and will be available for six months, with a review point in January. In line with the rest of the JSS, payments to businesses will be made in arrears, via a HMRC claims service that will be available from early December. Employees of firms that have been legally closed in the period before 1 November are eligible for the CJRS.
- In addition to the expansion of the JSS, the government is making the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme more generous so that businesses in England can receive up to £3,000 per month, and are eligible for payment sooner, after only two weeks of closure rather than three. This could benefit hundreds of thousands of businesses, including restaurants, pubs, nightclubs, bowling alleys and many more.
- For more details please follow the link for the Government fact sheet: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/job-support-scheme-expanded-to-firms-required-to-close-due-to-covid-restrictions>

**Plan for Jobs:
Chancellor
increases
financial support
for businesses
and workers**

- Open businesses which are experiencing considerable difficulty will be given extra help to keep employees on as government significantly increases contribution to wage costs under the Job Support Scheme, and business contributions drop to 5%.
- Business grants are expanded to cover businesses in particularly affected sectors in high-alert level areas, helping them stay afloat and protecting jobs.
- Grants for the self-employed doubled to 40% of previous earnings.
- Job Support Scheme (JSS) - Recognising the pressure businesses in some sectors and areas are facing, today's announcement lightens the burden of keeping on employees.

When originally announced, the JSS – which will come into effect on 1 November – saw employers paying a third of their employees' wages for hours not worked, and required employers to be working 33% of their normal hours.

Today's announcement reduces the employer contribution to those unworked hours to just 5%, and reduces the minimum hours requirements to 20%, so those working just one day a week will be eligible. That means that if someone was being paid £587 for their unworked hours, the government would be contributing £543 and their employer only £44.

Employers will continue to receive the £1,000 Job Retention Bonus. The Job Support Scheme Closed for businesses legally required to close remains unchanged.

- Self-Employed Grant - Today's announcement increases the amount of profits covered by the two forthcoming self-employed grants from 20 per cent to 40 per cent, meaning the maximum grant will increase from £1,875 to £3,750.

This is a potential further £3.1 billion of support to the self-employed through November to January alone, with a further grant to follow covering February to April.

- Business Grants - The Chancellor has also announced approved additional funding to support cash grants of up to £2,100 per month primarily for businesses in the hospitality, accommodation and leisure sector who may be adversely impacted by the restrictions in high-alert level areas. These grants will be available retrospectively for areas who have already been subject to restrictions, and come on top of higher levels of additional business support for Local Authorities moving into Tier 3 which, if scaled up across the country, would be worth more than £1 billion.

The information which is summarised herein does not constitute professional advice and is general in nature. Please contact your Duncan & Toplis team for further detail of how these initiatives could help you and your business.

