

Coronavirus – support for businesses

Q What support is available for businesses to deal with coronavirus?

The Welsh Government announced a £1.4bn business support package on March 18 to help companies across Wales.

- The new package provides retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in Wales with a year-long business rates holiday in 2020-21;
- A grant of £25,000 for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses with a rateable value of between £12,001 and £51,000;
- A £10,000 grant to all businesses eligible for small business rates relief with a rateable value of £12,000 or less.

As far as possible, the rates relief will be operated through the non-domestic rates system for 2020-21. We will reduce the red tape for businesses to receive grants.

Q Does this match the support available in England?

Yes – this matches the measures the Chancellor announced this week for businesses in England, and provides a much-needed boost for small businesses in Wales, which are at the heart of our economy and are struggling to cope with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

The UK Government has announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. All UK employers 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. Businesses must apply to HMRC to receive this help.

HMRC will support businesses by deferring Valued Added Tax (VAT) payments for 3 months. For the self-employed, Income Tax payments due in July 2020 under the Self-Assessment system ('payments on account') will be deferred to January 2021.

HMRC have scaled up their Time to Pay offer to all firms and individuals who are in temporary financial distress as a result of Covid-19 and have outstanding tax liabilities.

The UK government will bring forward legislation to allow small-and medium-sized businesses and employers to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, delivered by the British Business Bank, launched on March 23 to support primarily small and medium-sized businesses to access bank lending and overdrafts.

Welsh Government

23 March 2020

Q Is this the only support available to businesses in Wales?

This £1.4bn package extends the emergency £200m rates relief support we were able to announce on March 17.

The Development Bank of Wales is offering all its business customers a three-month capital repayment holiday to help them manage the financial fallout from the virus.

Extensive advice and support is available from Business Wales – <https://businesswales.gov.wales/> or 03000 6 03000.

The childcare offer will continue to be paid to local authorities and childcare settings, which currently receive payments for children in their care, even where services are disrupted.

Economy Minister Ken Skates held an emergency meeting of the Council for Economic Development and met banks on March 19 to discuss what further support businesses will need to manage the coronavirus outbreak.

We are working on a package of further support for small businesses, which will not benefit from the schemes already announced.

We are absolutely committed to providing the support and assurance the business community needs. A small taskforce is being set up to look at wider support needed for the economy during the recovery phase.

Q What support is available to businesses who have to pay sick pay?

The UK Government will bring forward legislation to allow small-and medium-sized businesses and employers to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19. The eligibility criteria for the scheme will be as follows:

- this refund will cover up to 2 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 SSP to those staying at home comes into force
- the government will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible

Welsh Government

23 March 2020

Q What support is available to self employed people?

For self-employed people claiming Universal Credit who are required to stay at home or are ill as a result of coronavirus, the Minimum Income Floor (an assumed level of income) will not be applied for a period of time whilst they are affected.

From April 6 the requirements of the Minimum Income Floor will be temporarily relaxed. This change will apply to all Universal Credit claimants and will last for the duration of the outbreak. New claimants will not need to attend the jobcentre to demonstrate gainful self-employment.

Q Is further support needed from the UK Government?

We believe the UK Government needs to be more ambitious in its support for business. The First Minister wrote to the Chancellor setting out a range of UK-wide interventions he could take to support the economy during the coronavirus outbreak (a copy of the letter is available via the @FMWales Twitter account).

We believe the UK Government should be considering a National Insurance holiday. We have successfully called on the UK Government to introduce a wage subsidy scheme.

Q Where can businesses get help and advice?

- Business Wales <https://businesswales.gov.wales/> or 03000 6 03000.
- The Development Bank of Wales <https://developmentbank.wales/> or 0800 587 4140.
- The Welsh Revenue Authority <https://gov.wales/welsh-revenue-authority> or 03000 254 000 for queries related to Welsh taxes.
- HMRC Coronavirus Helpline 0800 015 9559.