

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.

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.

Q When and how will this support be available?

The rates relief will be operated through the non-domestic rates system for 2020-21.

The £25,000 grant will be available to around 8,500 businesses and the £10,000 grant to a further 63,500 businesses throughout Wales.

We have been working with local authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association and Business Wales to cut the red tape and make it as easy as possible for businesses to receive this much-needed funding.

Information about how businesses can access the funding is available via the Business Wales website <https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice>

The business grants will be distributed by local authorities on behalf of Welsh Government from the week beginning March 30.

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.

The UK Government has announced a temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. This will be available to businesses in Wales via the [British Business Bank](#). The HMRC Time to Pay scheme applies in Wales <https://www.gov.uk/difficulties-paying-hmrc>

We are working on a package of further support for 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 is bringing forward legislation to allow small and medium-sized businesses and employers to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to coronavirus. The eligibility criteria for the scheme will be as follows:

- 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
- The 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 government will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible.

Q What support is there to help businesses pay their employees' wages if they have to close during the pandemic?

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to open to any employer in the country and provides a grant to cover the wages of people who are not working but are furloughed and kept on payroll, rather than being laid off.

Government grants will cover 80% of the salary of retained workers up to a total of £2,500 a month.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will cover the cost of wages backdated to March 1.

Businesses in Wales will be eligible for the scheme.

Q What support is available for the self-employed?

The UK Government has announced it will pay self-employed people who have been adversely affected by coronavirus, a taxable grant worth 80% of their average monthly profits over the last three years, up to £2,500 a month.

The scheme will be available for at least three months but could be extended.

It will be open to anyone with income up to £50,000, who make the majority of their income from self-employment but only those who have a tax return for 2019, will be able to apply.

People who are eligible will be able to access the scheme by June.

Self-employed people in Wales will be eligible for the 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.
- HMRC Coronavirus Helpline 0800 015 9559.