



Coronavirus Business Advice and Support Update

Please note that the information provided in this newsletter was correct as of the afternoon of Friday 17 April, with some additional information added on Monday 20 April. The situation is fast moving and we will be sending out regular updates to local businesses. However, we would suggest monitoring the key webpages outlined below as well as the [council's website](#) for changes in the advice and support available.

Sources of information and support for businesses

The new [Government Business Support Hub](#) brings together all of the up-to-date information, advice and guidance published by Government. It contains information for sole traders and the self-employed as well as businesses in general.

If you can't find the information that you need on the Hub you can speak directly to an advisor on the Government's Business Support Helpline. The number to call is: [0300 456 3565](#).

You can also speak to advisors on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Growth Hub's new Coronavirus business helpline: [01480 277923](#).

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Financial updates – government schemes

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The Government has announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be [extended by one month](#) until the end of June.

Two important changes have also been made to the Scheme relating to employee eligibility:

- you can claim for employees that were employed as of 19 March 2020 and were on your PAYE payroll on or before that date; this means that you will have made an RTI submission notifying HMRC of payment of that employee on or before 19 March 2020
- employees that were employed as of 28 February 2020 and on payroll, and were made redundant or stopped working for you after that but prior to 19 March 2020, can also qualify for the scheme if you re-employ them and put them on furlough.

The Government have provided the following information regarding the claim process:

- the [online claim service was launched on GOV.UK](#) on 20 April
- the only way to make a claim is online – the service should be simple to use and any support you need available on GOV.UK; this will include help with calculating the amount you can claim
- you can make the claim yourself even if you usually use an agent
- claims will be paid within 6 working days; you should not contact HMRC unless it is absolutely necessary – any queries should be directed to your agent, representative or HMRC's webchat service
- HMRC cannot answer any queries from employees – they will need to raise these with you, as their employer, directly.

In order to ensure that you are prepared once the claims service is up and running, please read the [guidance provided by Government](#) and ensure you have the information that is required to submit a claim. This guidance is being regularly updated, so please review it frequently. HMRC have also indicated that you will need prepare the following:

- to have a Government Gateway (GG) ID and password – if you don't already have a GG account, you can [apply for one online](#), or by going to GOV.UK and searching for 'HMRC services: sign in or register'
- to be enrolled for PAYE online – if you aren't registered yet, [you can do so now](#), or by going to GOV.UK and searching for 'PAYE Online for employers'
- to have the following information for each furloughed employee you will be claiming for:

1. Name

2. National Insurance number
 3. Claim period and claim amount
 4. PAYE/employee number (optional)
- if you have fewer than 100 furloughed staff – you will need to input information directly into the system for each employee
 - if you have 100 or more furloughed staff – you will need to upload a file with information for each employee; HMRC will accept the following file types: .xls .xlsx .csv .ods.

Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loans Scheme

The Coronavirus [Large Business Interruption Loans Scheme](#) (CLBILS) was launched on Monday 20 April. All firms with a turnover of more than £45 million will now be able to apply for up to £25 million of finance, and up to £50 million for firms with a turnover of more than £250 million. The scheme has been set up to help firms that do not qualify for the existing Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme – for small and medium sized businesses - and the Bank of England Covid Corporate Financing Facility – for investment grade companies.

£1.25 billion government support package for businesses driving innovation

The Chancellor has announced a new coronavirus package to protect firms driving innovation in UK. The package includes a new £500 million loan scheme for high-growth firms, called the Future Fund, and £750 million of targeted support for small and medium sized businesses focusing on research and development.

The £500 million Future Fund, delivered in partnership with the British Business Bank and launching in May, will provide UK-based companies with between £125,000 and £5 million from the government, with private investors at least matching the government commitment.

The £750 million of targeted support for the most R&D intensive small and medium size firms will be available through Innovate UK's grants and loan scheme.

Read the full announcement at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-support-package-for-innovative-firms-hit-by-coronavirus>

For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/future-fund>

Business Grants

As part of the Government's two grant funding schemes for small businesses, *the Small Business Grant Fund* and *the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund*, we have already successfully granted over £13 million to more than 50% of the 1,350 eligible businesses in Cambridge.

[Grants for small businesses that already pay little or no business rates](#) because of small business rate relief (SBBR), rural rate relief (RRR) and tapered relief will provide a one-off grant of £10,000 to eligible businesses to help meet their ongoing business costs.

[Grant funding of up to £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses:](#)

- businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of under £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000
- businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000.

We have previously contacted eligible businesses by email, text and telephone inviting them to apply for the grants using our online validation form.

However we urgently need businesses who have not yet received a grant to complete a brief online verification form at: <https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/BUSINESSGRANTS/launch>

The form will take a few minutes to complete and once received and verified we will pay the grant direct to your bank account.

If you receive a message from us and have already submitted a form, you do not need to do so again.

We are exceptionally busy at this time, so please continue to refer to these web pages for updates, and only contact us if really urgent at businessrates@cambridge.gov.uk

For more information for small businesses and retail, hospitality and leisure businesses take a look at the government's FAQs here: [Grant funding schemes: Frequently asked questions \[PDF, 0.3MB\]](#)

Business rates holidays

For all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England

The council has identified business accounts eligible for this relief and revised bills will be issued soon. If you do not receive a £0.00 balance bill within the next two weeks, and you think you should qualify for the relief, please email businessrates@cambridge.gov.uk The full criteria for this relief can be found at www.cambridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-for-businesses

We know that in light of the Chancellor's announcement in March about business rates relief, businesses may have questions about what it means for them.

Business rates bills that were printed before announcements in March were already delivered to businesses.

Businesses that qualify for the new [expanded retail rate relief](#) can ignore their bills.

We took action and did not collect direct debits on 1 April, and qualifying ratepayers who pay by other methods were asked not to make payments.

Businesses do not need to contact us to claim the relief – we will proactively identify them and resend updated bills.

For children's nurseries

The Government announced a [business rates holiday for nurseries](#) in England for the 2020 to 2021 tax year. Properties that will benefit from the relief will be ones occupied by providers on Ofsted's Early Years Register and wholly or mainly used for the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Council will be re-billing all eligible properties/businesses identified shortly. We thank you for your patience while we do this.

Funding for organisations adapting to support people during Coronavirus

Emergency funding for food redistribution

Funding is available from WRAP and Defra to assist surplus [non-for-profit food redistributors](#) in overcoming challenges that they are currently facing in obtaining surplus food from food businesses (such as retailers and food manufacturers) and distributing this to people in need or those considered vulnerable. The grant can be used to fund both capital and revenue costs associated with redistribution activities such as:

- access to surplus food through logistical collections;
- sorting, storing, freezing, labelling / repackaging food; and
- onward distribution of food to charities or end beneficiaries.

Funding for space enabled solutions to the Coronavirus crisis

An initial £2.6 million is being made available to fund a number of projects to develop hi-tech solutions to the challenges created by the Coronavirus crisis, in a joint initiative with the European Space Agency (ESA) in support of NHS England. The [space-enabled solutions](#) could include satellite communications, satellite navigation, Earth observation satellites or technology derived from human spaceflight. The funding is for projects which will address at least one of the following:

- Logistics within the health delivery system, e.g. with drone deliveries
- Managing infectious disease outbreaks
- Population health and wellbeing
- Recovering health system function and handling backlogs after the crisis
- Preparedness for future epidemics

Free support to help SMEs rapidly innovate

An accelerator run by the [University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership](#) (CISL) is offering free support to help SMEs rapidly innovate during the Covid-19 crisis. SMEs based in the Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough area will be eligible for support to enable them to find new innovative ways to operate, rewire supply chains, and

ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met. Support will be delivered through a combination of one-to-one business support, capacity building and mentoring, as well as convening partnerships, and drawing on the collective knowledge of CISL's global network to support small businesses via webinars tailored to local business needs. SMEs, start-ups and entrepreneurs can express their interest via this website: <https://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/work-with-us/smes-start-ups-and-entrepreneurs/news/free-support-to-help-smes-innovate-business-and-redress-supply-chain-shocks>

Opportunities for businesses to help the national effort to tackle Coronavirus

Help the government increase coronavirus testing capacity

The government wants help from businesses to [increase testing capacity](#) in the UK as part of its strategy to protect the NHS and save lives. They are asking businesses to:

Help [supply materials and equipment](#)

Help [supply complete testing methods](#)

Help [provide laboratory capacity](#)

Help [provide new testing methods in 4 key areas](#)

The many ways your manufacturing business could help

The institute for Manufacturing (IfM) in Cambridge is maintaining an up-to-date list of the many ways that manufacturing businesses can help the UK respond to the Coronavirus outbreak both [nationally](#) and [locally](#). The opportunities to help range from responding to national funding calls, to manufacturing or donating PPE or other equipment to volunteering your knowledge and expertise.

Help vulnerable people in your community

The **Cambridge Hub** has been set up to support residents by responding to requests for help and offers of help. It also connects with and supports local mutual-aid and community-led initiatives. The [countywide hub](#) supports shielded residents who are at the highest risk.

If your business or organisation can offer help in Cambridge, please contact one of the lead organisation or lead councillors who have been appointed for each ward in the city. [Contact details for each ward are available on the city council website here.](#)

For more information contact the Cambridge Hub on 01223 457000 or email community.resilience@cambridge.gov.uk

Other funding opportunities available

Funding and support for SMEs and start-up brands to help tackle childhood obesity

Big Society Capital and Guy's and St Thomas's Charity have partnered to fund the [Good Food Fund](#), a new growth Venture Fund with supporting Accelerator which will be backing challenger SME and start-up brands to help tackle childhood obesity.

This prototype fund will provide debt or equity investment to viable businesses committed to improving options for families with young children across all income groups. The supporting Accelerator will be run by Mission Ventures and offers 12 months of business support, free of charge to qualifying businesses. Particular focus will be given to healthier snacking brands and to retail initiatives to test ideas in the field across Lambeth and Southwark. The deadline for applications is 27 April 2020.

Grants to support the reuse or recycling of textile waste

WRAP is offering £1.5 million in grants to support projects that provide [innovative ways for textile waste to be recycled or re-used](#), keeping it out of landfill or incineration so that it remains a valuable resource.

The grants, of between £20,000 and £170,000, are available to organisations of any size, both commercial and not-for-profit. The money is for capital expenditure only; either for equipment or technologies (excluding software and apps) that enable recycling or re-use of clothing or linen waste textiles. Each project will require match funding: 10 per cent from not-for-profit and 50 per cent from commercial organisations. Successful projects will need to demonstrate "innovation beyond normal practice" and will be assessed against a number of criteria. The deadline for applications is 18 June 2020.

Support for businesses during Coronavirus

City council support for market and street traders

Given the impact of the Government's Covid-19 measures on Cambridge City Council's market and street trading businesses, and the most likely available Government business support for these traders not being available until June, the council announced a revised support package for traders including:

- A rent-free period of up to 12 weeks from March 23, for all its licensed market and street traders

- To allow all eligible traders, as defined by the Government, to continue to operate on the council's city centre market, and for this to be kept under review, should the situation change and the council need to close the market during the national Covid outbreak
- A waiver of the current four week written notice period term, for its registered traders to withdraw from their market license with immediate effect.

For more information read a full news release here:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2020/04/03/council-support-for-market-and-street-traders>

Council suspends rent arrears action and provides additional assistance for its commercial tenants

The city council announced that it would be suspending potential rent arrears action for its 400-plus commercial tenants for at least three months, and is discussing the possibility of shorter notice periods for termination, lease surrenders and negotiations on space reductions. For more information read this news release:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2020/03/23/city-council-announces-initiatives-to-support-business-during-coronavirus-emergency>

Fully funded bespoke online training for you and your employees

[Fully funded bespoke training](#) for employers and their employees is available through online and distance learning to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) across Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough.

Skill's Support for the Workforce's (SSW) network of expert delivery partners are now able to offer a wide range of funded training courses. Making use of technologies such as; Skype, Zoom, webinars, online distance learning platforms and training portals, means that both new and existing learners can access training at a time and location that best suits the learner and the needs of the employer. Distance and online learning now available in the following areas*:

- Digital Marketing and IT
- Business
- Health and Social Care
- Leadership and Management
- Information, advice and guidance
- Customer service
- Construction

*subject to availability

If your employees are currently furloughed they can still take advantage of the free training. Government [guidance](#) states that "Furloughed employees can engage in training, as long as in undertaking the training the employee does not provide services to, or generate revenue for, or on behalf of their organisation or a linked or associated organisation. Furloughed employees should be encouraged to undertake training."

SSW also provides [Skills Support for Redundancy](#) (SSR) which is designed to support employers and individuals affected by redundancy.

Advice on business closure, licensing, food hygiene or health and safety

The Environmental Health Commercial team would like to thank businesses in Cambridge for operating in such a compliant way despite this requiring difficult decisions or significant adaptation to your ways of working. We are dealing with low numbers of concerns from employees and members of the public regarding business closure or Covid-19 controls. If your business requires advice regarding business closure, licensing, food hygiene or health and safety, please contact us at commercial@cambridge.gov.uk

Diversifying your pub and supporting your community

Public is the Hub's [Community Services Fund](#) can help pubs to diversify and support their local community. The free of charge initiative can provide:

- More information on developing your pub into a hub for your community
- Access to experts in the licensing trade
- A grant of up to £3,000, subject to meeting their guidelines
- PR and Media coverage

CBI Coronavirus Business Hub

The CBI has a dedicated [Coronavirus Hub](#) with a range of information and help available to business. It includes a daily webinar which is viewable live or after the event featuring a series of high-profile participants adding their insights on the effects on business and ways to mitigate the impacts.

Companies House support for businesses hit by COVID-19

The Government has [announced](#) that Companies House will temporarily pause the strike off process to prevent companies being dissolved. This will give businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak the time they need to update their records and help them avoid being struck off the register. In addition, companies issued with a late filing penalty due to COVID-19 will have appeals treated sympathetically.

The Government has also announced that they will introduce legislation to ensure those companies required by law to hold Annual General Meetings (AGMs) will be able to do so safely, consistent with the restrictions on movement and gatherings introduced to address the spread of coronavirus. Companies will temporarily be extended greater flexibilities, including holding AGMs online or postponing the meetings.

Skills & Trade Swap Cambs

A new skills swap service for the county has been created by a local business. [Skills & Trade Swap Cambs](#) is a Facebook page that introduces local people with different skills and talents that can be exchanged. The initiative is not just for trades. Website designers and accountants can, for example, swap their professional expertise with electricians, plumbers, builders.

Changes to Government guidance and legislation

Temporary changes to the Statutory Residence Test

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has [proposed a change to the tax legislation](#) to allow highly skilled individuals from across the world to come to the UK and help us respond to this unprecedented health emergency. The Statutory Residence Test (SRT) will be amended to ensure that any period(s) between 1 March and 1 June 2020 spent in the UK by individuals working on COVID-19 related activities will not count towards residence tests that potentially bring global earnings within the purview of UK taxation. These changes are time limited and will only support those people whose skillsets are currently required. Further details on the eligibility and scope will be provided in due course and this change will be legislated in the forthcoming Finance Bill to take effect from 1 March 2020.

Visa applications

The [advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents](#) has been updated with information added about applicants who can start work or study in the UK before their visa application has been decided. Areas addressed include:

- If you're in the UK and your leave expires between 24 January 2020 and 31 May 2020
- If you're a doctor, nurse or paramedic working for the NHS
- Details of how to contact the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre

Personal protective equipment (PPE) hub

A [new hub](#) containing guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE), and infection prevention and control (IPC). It includes the following advice for non health and social care settings:

- where possible, alter business-as-usual ways of working to ensure social distancing can take place. In some circumstances this could involve the erection of physical 'splash barriers' to decrease staff anxiety, or redesign of customer flows to minimise contact opportunities
- ensure staff are aware and signs are visible in the workplace reminding employees and customers not to enter the premises if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as a high temperature or persistent cough (or a member of their household displays symptoms) and to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- that employees are provided with regular breaks to allow them to wash their hands for 20 seconds. Break areas and break times should also be set up to allow for social distancing to occur to minimise contact during these times

Guidance on Coronavirus testing for critical workers who are self-isolating

[Guidance](#) is available on Coronavirus testing for critical workers who are self-isolating. As part of the key worker testing programme NHS and social care critical workers who are self-isolating because of coronavirus symptoms are currently being tested. This list will be updated as testing becomes more widely available. If you are not covered in this list, you should continue to follow the [government guidance for self-isolating](#).

Information and guidance for the Social Care sector

The Government has issued [information for the social care sector](#) on responding to the Coronavirus pandemic including updated guidance on [shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#).

Other Government guidance

Defra have [updated their page](#) with requirements for travelling and moving goods to France.

The Department for International Trade has revised arrangements for [processing licence applications](#) during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Export Control Joint Unit has provided updated guidance on [compliance checks for open licences](#).

The Government has brought together a list of the rules that have been [temporarily relaxed](#) to make it easier for businesses to continue working through the disruption caused by Coronavirus.

[An updated version of the specification](#) for ventilators to be used in UK hospitals has been published.

Free webinars

Cambridge BID are holding a Business Support Seminar on Thursday 23 April at 11am. Ian Sandison, CEO of Cambridge BID will be hosting, and will be available to go through the Grant Scheme or answer any questions. To submit a question in advance, please email becky.burrell@cambridgebid.co.uk and to register in advance [click here](#)

The CBI has a [daily Coronavirus Webinar](#).

You can watch current and future [FSB webinars](#).

There are a range of webinars for businesses from [the British Library](#).

Webinars are available from the [Department for International Trade](#).

HMRC are delivering a [programme of webinars](#).

Take a look at [Cambridge Network's events pages](#) to find a range of webinars that could help your business through the next few months.

Feed your experience back to Government

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is capturing the health of local business and the impact Coronavirus is having across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It will use this data to send back to Government and it will use the intelligence gathered to develop targeted support, information, advice and guidance. You can [fill out a survey](#) to let them know how Coronavirus is impacting your business.

The Department for Business, Enterprise, Innovation and Skills also welcomes information from businesses on the impacts of Coronavirus across supply, demand and labour markets, actions to address these impacts, and any gaps in the Government response from your perspective. Please send your intelligence to intel@beis.gov.uk. Please do copy enquiries@cambridge.gov.uk into your email as we are keen to understand the impacts of the crisis on the district's businesses.