

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Businesses and Employers Bulletin - 20 April 2020

This bulletin is issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and provides the latest information for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19). All coronavirus business support information can be found at [gov.uk/business-support](https://www.gov.uk/business-support)

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Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – Open for applications today

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is now open for application. Employers can now claim online for a grant for 80% of their furloughed employees' salaries, up to a maximum of £2,500 per employee. [Click here](#) to make a claim.

HMRC have produced this [step by step guidance](#) on how to make a claim. There is also a [calculator](#) to help you work out your claim. The system can process up to 450,000 applications per hour and employers should receive the money within 6 working days of making an application. To receive payment by 30 April, you will need to complete an application by 22 April. Please keep a note or print-out of your claim reference number as you won't receive a confirmation SMS or email.

The Chancellor has also announced one [month extension](#) to the scheme. This means that the scheme will now be open until the end of June, to reflect continuing lockdown measures.

HMRC are holding live webinars providing an overview of the scheme to help employers and employees deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus. Register for a live webinar [here](#).

Billion pound support package for innovative firms hit by coronavirus

UK businesses driving innovation and development will be helped through the coronavirus outbreak with a [£1.25 billion government support package](#), the Chancellor announced today. The comprehensive 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 Future Fund will issue convertible loans to innovative companies which are facing financing difficulties due to the coronavirus outbreak. The Future Fund will provide government loans to UK-based companies ranging from £125,000 to £5 million, 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 the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. The scheme will be delivered in partnership with the British Business Bank and will launch in May 2020. Find out more about the scheme [here](#).

New Updates and Guidance

New

Government takes further action to support bus and lorry drivers who are keeping the country moving

Temporary change applies to drivers whose licences are due to expire or have expired since 1 January 2020. Find out more [here](#).

Business Secretary's announcement of a Vaccine Taskforce

Business Secretary Alok Sharma gave the 17 April 2020 daily press briefing which [included the announcement](#) that government has set up a Vaccines Taskforce to co-ordinate the efforts of government, academia and industry to accelerate the development of a coronavirus vaccine.

Financial support for education, early years and children's social care

Funding and financial support available for education, childcare and children's social care organisations. Find out more [here](#).

Government announces financial support for England's fishing businesses

£10 million fund for England's fishing and aquaculture sectors [announced](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19): letter from the Secretary of State to the local government workforce

The [letter](#) thanks the local government workforce for their help during the coronavirus pandemic

Updates

Government launches Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp

[Updated](#) with business support advice. Text 'hi' to 07860064422 via Whatsapp and there are business support measures highlighted under option 5 with the relevant links to gov.uk pages.

Requests for Business Intelligence and Assistance

Offer coronavirus support

Tell us how your business might be able to help with the response to coronavirus by using our [online service](#).

Share the impact coronavirus is having on your organisation

Let us know how the outbreak is impacting your business. Please send your intelligence to intel@beis.gov.uk. Commercially sensitive information will be treated accordingly. Please note that this inbox is only for receiving intelligence and does not provide business advice.

Other useful links

Some aspects of business support are devolved. Specific information for businesses and employers in [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#), and [Wales](#) is available. In England, [Growth Hubs](#) can advise on local and UK Government business support.

[Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#)

All previous Coronavirus Bulletins can be found [here](#). Please note the information in previous bulletins was accurate on the date it was published and will not be updated.

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