

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Businesses and Employers Bulletin – 1 April 2021

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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Workplace testing

Workplace testing programme expands to offer free rapid home testing: From 6 April, the workplace testing programme will supply home test kits to companies with over 10 workers where it is not possible to set up testing on-site, due to a lack of space or because companies operate across multiple sites. Businesses must [register interest](#) by 12 April to access free tests. Find out more [here](#).

Employer testing duty: If you are an employer that requires staff to travel regularly across UK borders you must take reasonable steps to facilitate your employees to take tests. Find out more [here](#).

Bespoke testing for eligible international arrivals travelling to England from outside the Common Travel Area. Some people do not have to quarantine if they are travelling for work, because of the jobs they do. Check this [list of jobs](#) to find out whether you qualify for an exemption from quarantine and whether you must follow a bespoke testing regime or day 2 and day 8 testing for international arrivals. Find more information [here](#).

Seasonal workers to receive free Covid-19 tests on farms: Employers of seasonal agricultural workers in the edible horticulture sector are [urged to register](#) for free workplace testing.

From the week commencing 12th April this bulletin will become the BEIS Bulletin, covering the whole breadth of BEIS policy and communications activity including coronavirus business information. If you would like to opt out of the new look bulletin you can [unsubscribe](#) at any time.

New grant funding and Business rates relief in England

From 1 April businesses in England in the non-essential retail sector will be eligible for one-off grants of up to £6,000, while businesses in the hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym sectors, which are reopening later, will be eligible for one-off grants of up to £18,000. Businesses can [check their eligibility for the Restart Grant here](#). This is coupled with £425 million of top-up funding for the ongoing Additional Restrictions Grant scheme for councils to distribute to businesses in particularly urgent need of additional support – which could also be businesses who don't necessarily pay business rates like tour operators, B&Bs, caterers, freelancers and wedding service providers. Find out more [here](#).

A new Business Rates relief fund of £1.5 billion for businesses affected by COVID-19 outside the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors has been announced to provide an extra, targeted support package for businesses who have been unable to benefit from the existing £16 billion business rates relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses. The £1.5 billion pot will be allocated to local authorities in England based on the stock of properties in the area whose sectors have been affected by COVID-19. Local Authorities will use their knowledge of local businesses and the local economy to make awards. Find out more [here](#).

Workplace Guidance

[Working safely guidance](#) has been updated to include changes to national restrictions. Other specific changes include:

- [The visitor economy](#) and [Hotels and other guest accommodation](#) guidance has been updated to include information on reasonable adjustments, changes to NHS Test and Trace regulations.
- [Providers of grassroots sport and sport facilities guidance](#) has been updated to include information on reasonable adjustments, changes to NHS Test and Trace regulations, as well as a new shorter format focussing on actions to make your workplace COVID-Secure.
- [Shops and branches guidance](#) includes additional information on ventilation, tests, how to operate fitting rooms safely and new requirements for collecting data for NHS Test and Trace (betting shops only).
- [Performing arts](#) and [Heritage locations](#) guidance is updated in a new shorter format focussing on actions to make your workplace COVID-Secure.
- [Vehicles guidance](#) has been updated with information on ventilation and tests.
- [Supported living services guidance](#) has been updated with a new 'Visits in and out of supported living settings' section.
- [Care homes](#) free COVID-19 PPE provision for health and social workers has been [extended](#) to March 2022.

Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace: [Guidance](#) has been updated to reflect the change in rules for when a group enters a venue. From 29 March 2021, every customer or visitor should be asked to scan the NHS QR code or provide their name and contact details, not just a lead member.

New and Updated Guidance

Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do from 29 March: [Guidance](#) has been updated with 'what's changed' from 29 March.

Statutory Sick Pay paid to employees due to coronavirus: Information on the weekly rate in the 'what you can claim' section has been updated to reveal new weekly rate from 6 April 2021 is now £96.35. For more information, click [here](#).

Automatic filing extensions granted by the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act due to come to an end: [Guidance](#) has been updated to reflect the automatic extensions granted by the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act for confirmation statement filings, accounts filings and event-driven filings will come to an end after 5 April 2021.

Advice for pregnant employees: [Guidance](#) has been updated to include information on the next stage of the roadmap.

Driver and rider trainer guidance:

- **Scotland:** [Updated guidance](#) confirms that all types of driver and motorcycle training will restart on 26 April 2021 at the earliest, lorry, bus and coach driving tests will restart on 26 April 2021 at the earliest, and that car driving tests, motorcycle tests and approved driving instructor tests will restart on 6 May 2021 at the earliest.
- **England:** [Updated guidance](#) confirms that motorcycle training, bus training and tests, Driver CPC part 4 (practical demonstration) tests, and specialist vehicle training and tests in England will restart on 29 March 2021, and that motorcycle tests in England will restart on 12 April 2021.

Job Retention Scheme

- [Guidance](#) has been updated with **dates for when your employer can claim for you if you were employed on or before 30 October 2020**, and details of when the employers claim will be publicly available. For periods from 1 November 2020 to 30 April 2021, your employer can claim for you if you were employed on or before 30 October 2020, as long as they have made a PAYE Real Time Information (RTI) submission to HMRC between 20 March 2020 and 30 October 2020. This may differ if you were made redundant, or you stopped working for them on or after 23 September 2020 and they then re-employed you.
- **Claim for some of your employee's wages if you have put them on furlough or flexible furlough because of coronavirus:** [Guidance](#) has been updated to explain that earliest you can make a claim for May 2021 is 19 April 2021.
- **Find out if you are eligible and how much you can claim to cover wages for employees on temporary leave ('furlough'):** [Guidance](#) has been updated with sections about the periods for when you can make a claim, if your employee does training and details of when the claim will be publicly available.
- **Steps to take before calculating your claim:** [Guidance](#) updated to reflect dates for when employers can make a claim.

Haulier Advice

From April 6, hauliers arriving in England from abroad will need to take a COVID-19 test if they are staying for more than 2 days. They need to take the first test within the first 2 days, then further tests every 3 days. This will apply to drivers and crews of HGVs and drivers of vans and other light goods vehicles. It applies to both UK-based and non-UK hauliers. Find out more [here](#).

- **Safer practice for international hauliers:** [Guidance](#) has been updated on the 'Stay in cab' requirement for international hauliers in England.
- **Haulier advice site locations:** [Guidance](#) has been updated to reflect Cannock Roadking, Markham Moor and Pont Abraham sites are now closed.
- **Driver CPC card extension for lorry, bus and coach drivers now expired:** [Guidance](#) updated to inform that the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) card extended by 7 months to complete 35 hours of periodic training, for card due to expire from 1 February to 31 August 2020 has now expired.

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. You can also find helpful business case studies and other useful information on the [Coronavirus Business Support Blog](#).