

Coronavirus Business Advice and Support Update for Cambridge – Week beginning 29 June 2020



The information in this newsletter is correct as of Monday 29 June, 2020, but we suggest monitoring the key webpages outlined below as well as [Cambridge City Council's website](#) for the latest updates.

Calling all High Street and retail businesses

Join us at the next Greater Cambridge Business Forum

Share your experiences, hopes and needs as your retail or high street business returns to trading as lockdown restrictions ease.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council invite you to take part in an online Business Forum on **Wednesday 8 July at 6pm**.

Local MPs and Council Leaders want to better understand what it feels like to be a small business working in the high street environment in these unprecedented times, and the early challenges you face since reopening your doors.

The virtual session will give you the opportunity to raise any ongoing or new issues directly with Council Leaders and to hear from them and the three local MPs in Greater Cambridge. This will help the Councils to tailor the very best support for businesses who need it, and MPs can take your comments straight back to Westminster to raise as appropriate.

In order for us to send you a link to the live event, please [register your interest online](#) by 6 July. To help us to manage the available time most effectively, please submit any questions in advance when registering your interest using the above booking form.

Sources of information and support for businesses

The Government's [Business Support Helpline](#) number is FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098. The helpline provides free, impartial business support and signposting services to businesses in England – which currently includes business advice on Covid-19.

You can also find free support, advice and sources of finance through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough [growth hub](#) or [speak to an advisor](#) on webchat about support for your business.

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1. Grants, funding and finance

Discretionary Grants Scheme

OVER £420,000 of grants have been paid to small businesses, charities and not-for-profit organisations in Cambridge in the first three weeks of the Discretionary Grants Fund, the latest Coronavirus grant scheme being run by Cambridge City Council.

The good news for businesses and not-for-profit organisations is that there is more funding available for eligible applicants and the council is urging them check their eligibility now.

The grant fund is open to businesses and organisations that:

1. were already operating when the Coronavirus pandemic was officially declared on 11 March;
2. intend to keep trading;
3. have not been able to access previous Coronavirus-related government grant funding schemes, such as the small business grant or retail, hospitality and leisure grant (though receipt of the furloughing funding and self-employed income support scheme are not a bar to eligibility).

Local grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 are available to those who can meet the council's eligibility criteria, which is detailed, along with an application form, at:

www.cambridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-discretionary-grant-fund.

The key priority groups are charities and not-for-profit organisations, as well as small and micro businesses paying rent for shared premises where the landlord is paying business rates. Also eligible are certain B&Bs and market and street traders.

Grants will continue to be made on a first come, first served basis, although care will be taken to ensure all applicant categories receive a reasonable share of the overall grant funding available.

Cllr Richard Robertson, Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, said: “I know how tough it has been for businesses and organisations of all types and sizes since the Coronavirus crisis hit and we are working hard to get funding and other support to them as quickly as possible.

“I am pleased that these latest grants are already making a difference to many local small businesses, charities and not-for-profit organisations that play such an important part in the local economy and community life.

“However, we know there are other local small businesses, charities and not-for-profit organisations who haven’t already applied. We want to ensure that they are aware of the possibility of financial help and make a claim.

“The government has made clear that the funding available for this scheme (around £1.1 million in total) is finite. When it is gone, there won’t be any more available.”

Contact business-grants@cambridge.gov.uk if you have any questions about the scheme.

NatWest Social & Community Capital Coronavirus Response Fund

NatWest has launched a [new £1m fund](#) to help organisations across the UK who employ people from disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. Social enterprises, charities and community businesses can apply for grants of between £5,000 and £50,000 to help them survive the crisis. The closing date for applications is 9am on Monday 29 June 2020.

Live funding opportunities overview

The table below contains an overview of funding opportunities that have been mentioned in previous versions of this newsletter (back to 29 May 2020) that are still open to applications.

Fund/Source	Outline	Deadline
Benevolent Society of the BIPP	Support for those in the photographic industry who have been affected	Ongoing

	by the Coronavirus pandemic.	
Dairy Response Fund	Funding to support dairy farmers in England.	14 August 2020
Covid-19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund	Grants to fund urgent maintenance, repairs and surveys at historic buildings and sites to assist with re-opening.	28 June 2020 (for Expressions of Interest)
Edge Post Covid-19 Revival Fund	Funding for projects addressing a post Covid-19 education scenario.	9 July 2020
Art Fund Respond and Reimagine Grants	Funding to help museums, galleries and cultural organisations respond to Covid-19.	6 July 2020 (for the first round of applications)
GroceryAid Crisis Grants	Grants to help those who work or have worked in the grocery industry, with financial hardship caused during Covid-19.	Ongoing
Coronavirus Community Support Fund: funding under £10,000 ; funding over £10,000	Funding to support organisations delivering services to people and communities affected by Covid-19.	Ongoing
Forces Communities Together Programme	Grants towards projects for people from Armed Forces communities who are isolated as a result of Covid-19	30 June 2020
Clinks Covid-19 Response Grants	Funding for voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system.	Ongoing

Reminder – VAT deferral period ending

As outlined in last week's newsletter, HMRC's VAT payment deferral period [ends on 30 June 2020](#). If you have chosen to defer your VAT, this means you will need to:

- Set-up cancelled direct debits in enough time for HMRC to take payment;
- Submit VAT returns as normal, and on time;
- Pay the VAT in full on payments due after 30 June.

Any VAT payments you have deferred between 20 March 2020 and 30 June 2020, should be paid in full on or before 31 March 2021. You can make additional payments with subsequent returns.

You can contact HMRC:

- If you are [unable to pay](#) the VAT due and may need time to pay – get in touch as soon as possible, and before the payment is due;
- For advice and information on [other support](#) available.

2. Innovation funding and support

Government unveils £200m package to help innovative businesses bounce back

Innovative ideas and projects led by companies recovering from the impact of coronavirus could benefit from a new £200 million fund.

The government's Sustainable Innovation Fund will be open to companies across all parts of the UK who need urgent financial support to keep their cutting-edge projects and ideas alive.

Funding totalling almost £200 million could go towards developing new technologies focused on making homes and offices more energy efficient to cut bills, creating ground-breaking medical technologies to treat infections and diseases, or reducing the carbon footprint of public transport in our towns and cities.

In a move to support people across the country to establish more 'climate-positive' behaviours, businesses and start-ups could also make use of the fund to develop smart sustainability-focused projects – from apps encouraging people to cut down their food waste to sustainable biodegradable packaging.

The Sustainable Innovation Fund will help power the UK's economic recovery and develop new sustainable opportunities for businesses in any sector following the coronavirus pandemic, while helping the UK meet its ambitions to cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

This funding, delivered through Innovate UK, forms part of a wider £750 million package of grants and loans announced in April to support innovative firms. This sits alongside the new £500 million [Future Fund](#), which provides match-funding to private investors, and has already received over 500 applications since its launch on 20 May.

Businesses can apply for support through the Sustainable Innovation Fund by [visiting the Innovate UK website](#) from Monday 29 June.

Research funding for power electronics, machines and drives (PEMD) technologies

Innovate UK has up to £15m available to support business-led research that will develop supply chains and manufacturing capability for PEMD technologies across all sectors, and support the development of new technologies that enable zero-emission vehicles.

[Up to £5m is available](#) to support business-led projects that aim to improve the UK supply chain for power electronics, machines, and drives. [A further £10m is available](#) to support feasibility studies and research and development projects looking to develop technologies for zero or very low emissions vehicles, or electric vehicle charging. The deadline for applications for both strands of funding is the 29 July 2020.

3. Support for businesses

HMRC live webinars

With changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme set to kick in from the 1 July 2020, HMRC are hosting a webinar to take you through the changes, flexible furloughing, claim period and key dates. There are four opportunities to access the live webinar between 30 June and 1 July – you can [sign up to join one of the webinars](#) now.

HMRC have also added more dates to their popular Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate scheme webinar, which gives the latest on who can claim, who you can claim for, how to make a claim, what you may be entitled to, and more. They're currently offering two sessions on the 30 June and 7 July, which you can [sign up to](#) now.

Zoom event for businesses seeking specialist exporting support

Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce are hosting their latest monthly Zoom event for businesses looking to drive growth and expand their customer base through exporting. This month's event will cover the critical importance of cultural awareness in your global communications, and tricks and tips to get your key

messages right internationally. The event is free and open to all business. [Sign up via Eventbrite](#).

‘Bounce back’ plan for agriculture, food and drink industry launched by the Government

On 22 June 2020, the Government launched a [‘bounce back’ plan](#) of trade measures for the agriculture, food and drink industry, to help support businesses that have been impacted by coronavirus. The range of measures, announced by the Department for International Trade (DIT) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will offer immediate support to help businesses in those industries grow their trade activity overseas.

New Government measures to help the construction industry

Also on 22 June 2020, the Government announced [new measures to help the construction industry](#) boost building and return to work safely. These include extensions to planning permission deadlines, speeding up of planning appeals and more flexible working hours for builders following agreement with their local council.

4. Keeping your workplace safe

On 23 June 2020, [the Government announced a raft of changes to lockdown measures in England](#). Particularly, it announced that a range of business will be able to re-open on 4 July 2020, and that guidance will allow people to keep a social distance of ‘one metre plus’, where it is not possible to stay two metres apart.

In line with those changes, the Government has updated its [workplace-specific guidance documents](#), including introducing specific new guidance for [hotels and guest accommodation](#), [heritage locations](#), [close contact services](#) (e.g. hairdressers), [the visitor economy](#) and [restaurants, pubs and bars](#).

It has also updated its [guidance on staying safe outside your home](#) to reflect the changes to social distancing measures. Particularly, the guidance recommends that you keep two metres away from people as a precaution, or one metre when you can mitigate the risk by taking other precautions.

5. Updates to Government Guidance

Update to guidance on claiming back Statutory Sick Pay for TUPE transferred employees

Government [guidance](#) on claiming back Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), paid due to coronavirus, has been updated to outline how employers can claim back SSP paid to TUPE transferred employees, under certain conditions. As the new employer, you can only make claims for SSP that you have paid – a claim cannot include SSP paid by the previous employer.

Updated service to upload a document to Companies House

As part of its response to coronavirus, Companies House have introduced a [temporary service](#) to upload a document to Companies House. The latest release of the service allows users to upload their change of constitution forms.

Update to guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

With changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme set to kick in from 1 July 2020, HMRC have updated the [guidance available on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#), to provide more information for employers about flexible furloughing and overpayments.

5. 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.

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