

Coronavirus Business Advice and Support Update for Cambridge – 18 May 2020



The information in this newsletter is correct as of Monday 18 May, 2020, but the situation is fast-moving so we suggest monitoring the key webpages outlined below as well as [Cambridge City Council's website](#) for any changes in advice and support.

Sources of information and support for businesses

- The Government's '[support finder](#)' tool helps businesses and self-employed people to quickly and easily determine what financial support is available to them during the coronavirus pandemic.
- The [Government Business Support Hub](#) brings together up-to-date information, advice and guidance published by Government, including for sole traders and the self-employed as well as businesses in general.
- You can speak directly to an advisor on the Government's Business Support Helpline: [0300 456 3565](tel:03004563565).
- You can also speak to advisors on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Growth Hub's new Coronavirus business helpline: [01480 277923](tel:01480277923).

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1. Financial updates

COVID-19 Micro Capital Grant Scheme

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority have launched their [COVID-19 Micro Capital Grant Scheme](#). Eligible applicants are sole traders, partnerships and

employers employing no more than 5 FTE employees in the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority area. The maximum grant request is £5,000.

The Grant can only be applied to the outright purchase of capital equipment, this can be equipment that has already been purchased between January 2020 and April 2020. They cannot accept applications for equipment that will be purchased using Hire Purchase, Lease Purchase or any type of Credit Sale.

Furlough scheme extended until October 2020

The Government has announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will [remain open](#) until the end of October. The scheme will continue to apply across all regions and sectors in the UK economy. Furloughed workers across the UK will continue to receive 80% of their current monthly salary, up to £2,500.

From the start of August, furloughed workers will be able to return to work part-time with employers being asked to pay a percentage towards the salaries of their furloughed staff. The employer payments will substitute the contribution the government is currently making, ensuring that staff continue to receive 80% of their salary, up to £2,500 a month.

The scheme will continue in its current form until the end of July. Changes to allow more flexibility will come in from the start of August. More specific details and information around implementation will be made available by the end of May.

Tax credit payments

The government has [confirmed](#) that those working reduced hours due to coronavirus or those being furloughed by their employer will not have their tax credits payments affected if they are still employed or self-employed.

There is no need to contact HMRC about this change. HMRC will treat those applicable as working their normal hours until the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme close, even if they are not using either scheme.

Apply for a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant

From 13 May 2020, self-employed individuals or members of partnerships whose business has been adversely affected by coronavirus have been able to apply for a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant, worth 80% of their average monthly trading profits, up to a maximum of £7,500, paid in a single instalment.

Businesses can check if they are eligible for the scheme [here](#).

People will be able to make their claim on a specified date between 13-18 May, based on their Unique Tax Reference number. HMRC has assigned eligible self-employed individuals a specific date to apply on and this can be checked on HMRC's [online checker](#) at any time. People will not be able to apply before their claim date but can make a claim after that day. Those eligible will have the money paid into their bank account by 25 May 2020, or within six working days of completing a claim.

Additional business grants for small businesses

The Government recently announced a new [discretionary fund](#) for certain small businesses in England previously outside the scope of the business grant funds scheme (see Existing Business Grants section below). This additional fund is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs.

Councils are being asked to prioritise businesses in shared spaces, regular market traders, small charity properties that would meet the criteria for Small Business Rates Relief, and bed and breakfasts that pay council tax rather than business rates. Businesses must be small, under 50 employees, and they must also be able to demonstrate that they have seen a significant drop of income due to Coronavirus restriction measures.

Further guidance on the new fund has [now been published](#). We are currently working to establish the eligibility criteria for the grants and to develop processes for distributing them. Please keep an eye on future issues of this newsletter and on our website for more information. To register your interest in the upcoming discretionary grant scheme, please email: enquiries@cambridge.gov.uk with 'LA discretionary grant' in the subject line.

Existing Business Grants

[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 already successfully paid grants to more than 90% of the businesses that are eligible for these grants in the district.

We have previously sent emails and letters inviting eligible businesses to apply for the grants using our online form: <https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/BUSINESSGRANTS/launch> We have also called all of those eligible businesses that have not yet claimed. This process is continuing with officers working to ensure that we reach the remaining eligible businesses.

If, having looked at the Government's guidance, you think you might be eligible for one of these grants please contact our team as soon as possible so that we can help you access the funding you are entitled to. Email businessrates@cambridge.gov.uk

Business rates

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.

Government to support businesses through Trade Credit Insurance guarantee

Businesses with supply chains which rely on Trade Credit Insurance and who are experiencing difficulties maintaining cover due to Coronavirus will [get support from the government](#).

The Government will temporarily guarantee business-to-business transactions currently supported by Trade Credit Insurance, ensuring the majority of insurance coverage will be maintained across the market. This will support supply chains and help businesses to trade with confidence as they can trust that they will be protected if a customer defaults on payment.

2. Sector funding and support

City council support for market and street traders

Following national guidance, the market remains open until further notice.

We have introduced a rent-free period for traders who need to self-isolate, for the duration of self-isolation. This will be backdated to the start date of the isolation if necessary.

We'll give market traders a rent-free period of up to three months, with immediate effect, if they are not eligible for government support. For those who are eligible for government support, we'll work with them through an initial rent holiday period to ensure they can access the support they need to cover their costs.

We'll waive the normal four-week notice period for any traders who want to end their lease.

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>

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

Financial support for the electrical waste reuse and recycling sector

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Fund ([WEEE Fund](#)) has announced its “WEEE Support Grants and Loans Package” to help support the electrical waste reuse and recycling sector as a result of the impact of the coronavirus.

The package will help support the continuation of the UK WEEE reuse and recycling system as the sector deals with the impact of the coronavirus. The funding will provide £5 million of interest free loans to electrical waste treatment facilities and £0.6 million of grants to charity sector reuse organisations.

Applications for the loans are open until the end of May 2020. Loans are available to all registered commercial AATFs based on the evidence they issued for the treatment they undertook in 2019. The application process for the grants will be confirmed shortly.

Emergency funding for artists and freelancers in the visual arts sector

The [Freelands Foundation](#) has committed a total of £3m in emergency funds to support artists and freelance creative practitioners in the visual arts sector in urgent need of financial support as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Open from Thursday 7 May, the new fund supports grants of £1,500 to £2,500 per person, assessed by need.

Small swimming and aquatics organisations

The Swimathon Foundation has launched a [COVID-19 Relief Fund](#) to help support small swimming and aquatics organisations which need and may not have access to financial support to deal with the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Funding for outdoor organisations

The North Face [Covid-19 Explore Fund](#) is available to registered companies that match one of the below criteria:

- Conservation groups and organisations

- Outdoor charities
- Outdoor industry associations
- Organizations or companies involved in the following sports/ activities: camping, environmental education, hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, indoor rock climbing, skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, trail running, alpinism

The fund is open until 22 May 2020.

Supporting vulnerable young people at risk of youth violence

The [Youth Endowment Fund's COVID-19 grant round](#) will fund and evaluate work which supports vulnerable young people at risk of youth violence, and can be delivered whilst adhering to UK government social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines.

The average grant is expected to be around £50,000. The minimum grant that organisations can apply for is £25,000. There is no maximum, however grants awarded will be proportionate to the turnover of the organisation(s) applying. Both charities and social enterprises and for-profit companies are eligible to apply.

In this grant round, the fund will focus on funding and evaluating two key areas of work:

- 1) Digital/virtual delivery of programmes
- 2) Face-to-face activity that can be delivered whilst adhering to social distancing/stay at home guidelines

Applications close midday Wednesday 3 June 2020.

3. Opportunities to help

Guidance for businesses seeking to help voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has published [guidance](#) on how businesses can offer services, funds and volunteers to civil society during the coronavirus outbreak.

Help Government shine a light on the stories of key workers

The Government want to hear about key workers you know that are helping to keep the UK moving during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Please fill in [this online form](#) for key workers in the following sectors: manufacturing, construction, consumer goods, scientists/researchers, servicing, postal workers, and oil/gas/electricity/water/sewage/chemical workers.

4. Changes to Government guidance and legislation

Working safely during coronavirus

The UK government, in consultation with industry, has produced 'COVID-19 secure' [guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible](#). The new guidance covers eight workplace settings which are allowed to be open, from outdoor environments and construction sites to factories and takeaways. This sets out practical steps for businesses focused on five key points, which should be implemented as soon as it is practical:

1. Work from home, if you can
2. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, in consultation with workers or trade unions
3. Maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible
4. Where people cannot be 2 metres apart, manage transmission risk
5. Reinforcing cleaning processes

The eight guides cover a range of different types of work. Many businesses operate more than one type of workplace, such as an office, factory and fleet of vehicles. You may need to use more than one of these guides as you think through what you need to do to keep employees safe.

- [Construction and other outdoor work](#) – Guidance for people who work in or run outdoor working environments.
- [Factories, plants and warehouses](#) - Guidance for people who work in or run factories, plants and warehouses
- [Homes](#) – Guidance for people working in, visiting or delivering to home environments as well as their employers
- [Labs and research facilities](#) – Guidance for people who work in or run indoor labs and research facilities and similar environments
- [Offices and contact centres](#) – Guidance for people who work in or run offices, contact centres and similar indoor environments
- [Restaurants offering takeaway or delivery](#) – Guidance for people who work in or run restaurants offering takeaway or delivery services.
- [Shops and branches](#) – Guidance for people who work in or run shops, branches, stores or similar environments.
- [Vehicles](#) – Guidance for people who work in or from vehicles, including couriers, mobile workers, lorry drivers, on-site transit and work vehicles, field forces and similar.

The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy

Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 [recovery strategy](#) has been published, outlining the UK Government's plan for rebuilding and recovering from the coronavirus pandemic. The roadmap to lift restrictions step-by-step will be of particular interest to businesses and employers. In step 1, which has applied since Wednesday 13 May in England:

- Workers should continue to work from home rather than their normal physical workplace, wherever possible.
- All workers who cannot work from home should travel to work if their workplace is open. Sectors of the economy that are allowed to be open should be open, for example this includes food production, construction, manufacturing, logistics, distribution and scientific research in laboratories. The only exceptions to this are those workplaces such as [hospitality and non-essential](#) retail which during this first step, the Government is requiring to remain closed.
- As soon as practicable, workplaces should follow the new "COVID-19 Secure" guidelines.
- It remains the case that anyone who has symptoms, however mild, or is in a household where someone has symptoms, should not leave their house to go to work. Those people should self-isolate, as should those in their households.

As the rate of infection may be different in different parts of the UK, this guidance should be considered alongside local public health and safety requirements for [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

Closing certain businesses and venues in England

The Government's guidance on business closures [has been updated](#) to reflect current regulations. This includes those businesses that must remain closed to members of the public and the legal exemptions to this list, for example garden centres and outdoor sports facilities.

Construction sites

Last week the Government published a written ministerial statement on planning and construction working hours. This statement expects local planning authorities to approve requests to extend construction working hours temporarily to ensure safe working in line with social distancing guidelines until 9pm, Monday to Saturday, unless there are very compelling reasons against this. Construction update [Q&As](#) have also been provided.

Staying alert and safe (social distancing) guidance

New guidance on social distancing has been published. The guidance includes information on [businesses and venues](#) and [going to work](#).

Staying safe outside your home guidance

[New guidance](#) has been published on the principles that should be followed to ensure that time spent outside the home is as safe as possible.

Frequently asked questions on what you can and can't do during the coronavirus outbreak have [been updated](#). These include Q&A's on going to work and workers' rights.

Phased return of sport and recreation

There is new guidance for the public, providers of outdoor sport facilities, elite athletes, personal trainers and coaches on the [phased return of sport and recreation](#).

Coronavirus: safer public places – urban centres and green spaces

[New guidance](#) has been issued for the owners and operators of urban centres and green spaces to help social distancing. This guidance applies in England only. Measures suggested in the guidance include:

- introducing new cycle paths or extending existing paths
- making high streets pedestrianised or introducing one-way traffic
- separate entry and exit routes in shops
- changing car parking layouts
- widening footpaths, temporary barriers or spray markings outside shops to support queueing
- signs to encourage people to wait to allow others to pass on footpaths

Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators

The Government's [new guide](#) aims to help businesses, agencies and others understand how to provide safer workplaces and services for themselves, their workers and passengers across all modes of private and public transport. It outlines measures to assess and address the risks of coronavirus in the transport sector across England.

Guidance for passengers on how to travel safely

[This guidance](#) provides advice on how passengers should make journeys safely. The advice sets out that if people who cannot work from home and have to travel for work, they should first consider alternatives to public transport. Those driving their own cars have been asked to avoid busy areas. For those who have to use public transport, the guidance recommends:

- Keeping 2 metres apart wherever possible;
- Wearing a face covering if you can;
- Using contactless payment where possible;
- Avoiding rush hour travel where feasible;
- Washing or sanitising your hands as soon as possible before and after travel;

- Following advice from staff and being considerate to others.

All the latest guidance for people using transport or working in the transport sector during the coronavirus outbreak can be found [here](#).

Public advised to cover faces in enclosed spaces

The public is advised to consider wearing face coverings in enclosed public spaces such as shops, trains and buses to help reduce the spread of coronavirus. They do not need to be worn outdoors, while exercising, in schools, in workplaces such as offices and retail, or by those who may find them difficult to wear. Find [more information here](#).

Travelling overseas

The Government's guidance for British people [travelling overseas](#) during the coronavirus pandemic has been updated.

New portal for care homes to arrange coronavirus testing

A [new online portal](#) that makes it easy for care homes in England to arrange deliveries of coronavirus test kits has been launched.

Schools and education

All the guidance and advice about coronavirus in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students is available on the [Government's website](#). This includes what [parents and carers need to know](#) about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak about the wider opening to nurseries, schools and colleges from 1 June.

Holiday entitlement and pay during the coronavirus pandemic

To help employers understand their legal obligations, there is new guidance that provides an explanation of how [holiday entitlement and pay](#) operate during the coronavirus pandemic, where it differs from the standard holiday entitlement and pay guidance.

Business rates revaluation delayed

A revaluation of business rates will [no longer take place](#) in 2021. Legislation had been introduced to bring the next revaluation forward by one year from 2022 to 2021, but following the recent economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, ministers want to ensure businesses have more certainty during this difficult time.

The government is continuing work on the fundamental review of business rates, with the key aims of reducing the overall burden on businesses, improving the current business rates system, and considering more fundamental changes in the medium-to-long term. The call for evidence for the review will be published in the coming months.

Personal protective equipment (PPE): export control process

Information for economic operators who will temporarily need a licence to export PPE outside the EU, EFTA member states and certain other territories has been [updated](#): with removed notification form, clarification of the date the changes came into force and an added link to the EU's updated FAQ.

Alterations to services – patents and trademarks and designs

There is [updated information](#) regarding new patent applications and subsequently filed documents, patent applications under section 22 of the National Security Act, international applications, time periods for reply, requests, correspondence and journal and publication.

There is also [updated information](#) on time periods for reply, replying to the Intellectual Property Office (IPO), publishing in the trademarks journal, registration and certificates, and international designs and applications.

Coronavirus important update on IPO services

Information on Certified Office Copies (COCs) and payments and refunds have been added to the [IPO's webpages](#).

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.