

BRITISH GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE: Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for employees, employers and businesses

Information on healthcare advice for employers and support for businesses.

If you are an employer or a business owner we encourage you to read and follow the [guidance for employers and businesses](#).

This guidance will assist employers and businesses in providing advice to staff on:

- the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)
- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19
- what to do if someone with suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a workplace setting

- what advice to give to individuals who have travelled to [specific areas](#), as outlined by the Chief Medical Officer

- advice for the certification of absence from work resulting from COVID-19

If you would like to receive updates on the government's response to COVID-19 you can [sign up for email alerts](#).

Business support announced in the Budget

On 11 March 2020, the Chancellor announced a [package of measures](#) to provide support for public services, individuals and businesses to ensure the impact of COVID-19 is minimised.

A new Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, delivered by the British Business Bank, will enable businesses with a turnover of no more than £41 million to apply for a loan of up to £1.2 million, with the government covering up to 80% of any losses with no fees. This will unlock up to £1 billion pounds to protect and support small businesses.

For businesses with fewer than 250 employees, the cost of providing 14 days of statutory sick pay per employee will be refunded by the government in full. This will provide 2 million businesses with up to £2 billion to cover the costs of large-scale sick leave.

A dedicated helpline has been set up to help businesses and self-employed individuals in financial distress and with outstanding tax liabilities receive support with their tax affairs. Through this, businesses may be able to agree a bespoke Time to Pay arrangement. If you are concerned about being able to pay your tax due to COVID-19, call HMRC's dedicated helpline on 0800 0159 559.

There will be a £3,000 cash grant to 700,000 of our smallest businesses, delivered by Local Authorities, and worth a total of £2 billion.

Finally, the government is temporarily increasing the business rates retail discount in England to 100% for 2020-21 for properties below £51,000 rateable value. Nearly half of all business properties will not pay a penny of business rates.

In addition, the decisions announced by the [Bank of England](#) on 11 March 2020 mean that banks are in a better position to provide additional credit to smaller businesses.

Additional resources

- the [government's coronavirus action plan](#) provides detailed information about the government's response
- the government has put a range of support in place for those who do not receive Statutory Sick Pay, including Universal Credit and contributory Employment and Support Allowance
- ACAS has published [information for employees and employers](#), including simple steps to help protect the health and safety of staff
- a number of private lenders are also making funds available to small businesses impacted by COVID-19, including £2 billion from [Lloyds Banking Group](#) and £5 billion from [NatWest](#)