

Business Support

For information about the full range of support services for business, please go to: www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support.

Frequently Asked Questions

RATE RELIEF

I think I'm eligible for the Small Business Rate Relief / Rural Rate Relief grant of £10,000. How do I apply for this?

The Government released guidance to the Council regarding the processing of these grants on the 24th March.

All eligible businesses will be asked to confirm bank details using a short online form. Details to be given shortly.

The onus is on us to award the grants, not on you to apply for them.

I'm a Rutland County Council business tenant. I see that the Council has offered to defer payment of my rent for three months. Does that mean that in three months' time, in July, I'll get a huge rent bill?

No. If you choose to take up the option of three months' deferred rent we do not expect you to pay it all back in July. In principle, the three months' deferred charges will be spread evenly over the period July 2020 – March 2021 but we will discuss alternative options if that helps.

Why are you offering this deferment?

The deferment is intended to take some of the immediate pressure off businesses to give them breathing space to put contingency plans in place for example, accessing the Business Interruption Loan Scheme. We will keep the period of deferment under review as more information becomes available.

Why hasn't the Council simply cancelled my business rent payments for three months... or more?

The income from our business tenants is used by the Council to deliver essential services including healthcare and education which of course we need to maintain. We are unable to write-off three months' rent as it would damage our ability to meet our statutory responsibilities. Should additional funding be received from Government then of course we may revisit this decision.

I'm a business renting from the private sector. Surely the Council is showing favouritism towards businesses renting from them?

There has not been any legislation to direct private sector landlords to defer rents for their business tenant. The Council does not have power over private sector landlords to implement a deferral period; we hope our decision will encourage the private sector to take similar action.

I have a small business that is NOT in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector, with rates below £15k. I pay £5000 in rates a year. What am I entitled too?

You will be entitled to Small Business Rate Relief so will pay no rates. You will also receive a grant of £10k; as this is being paid to all small businesses that pay low or no rates.

The Government released guidance regarding the processing of these grants on the 24th March; we aim to making payments by early April.

You do not need to apply for this grant. The Council will process this but we may contact you if we don't have your bank details.

How do I know if my business has to close as a result of coronavirus?

The Government has produced a list of all non-essential businesses that are required to close and defines any exceptions.

The following link takes you to this list:

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874732/230320 - Revised guidance note - finalVF.pdf

Support Specifically for RETAIL, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM businesses

My hotel /pub/ shop/ restaurant/ café etc. has a Rateable Value below £15k; what am I entitled too?

You are entitled to 12 months rates holiday from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. You are also entitled to receive the £10k grant being given to all small businesses with a rateable value below £15k. We expect to issue revised bills by the end of March and grants by early April.

My hotel / pub/shop/ restaurant/ café etc. has a Rateable Value of over £51k; what am I entitled too?

You are entitled to 12 months rates holiday from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. You are also entitled to receive the £25k grant.

All eligible businesses will be asked to confirm bank details using a short online form. Details to be given shortly. We expect to issue revised bills by the end of March and grants by early April.

My hotel / pub/shop/ restaurant/ café etc. has a Rateable Value between £15k and £51k; what am I entitled too?

You are entitled to 12 months rates holiday from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. You are also entitled to receive the £25k grant

We expect to issue revised bills by the end of March and grants by early April.

Insurance- advice for RETAIL, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM businesses

Where else can I find support?

Check your insurance policy. A small number of businesses may cover for both pandemics and government-ordered closure should be covered (though this unlikely to apply to most policies which are dependent on damage to property and will exclude pandemics).

How do I set up my pub / restaurant to operate as a hot food takeaway?

The legislation is being developed to enable pubs or restaurants to operate as a takeaway. Once this is in place an update will be placed here.

Support Specifically for CHILDRENS' NURSERIES

You are entitled to 12 months business rates holiday from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Financial Loan Support

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)

Available to all businesses

I need finance to keep my business going; where can I get support?

The Government's temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme is live and is being managed by the British Business Bank. www.British-business-bank.co.uk

The Government will guarantee 80% of the loan and there is no charge for this.

NOTE: The borrower remains 100% liable for the debt

The loan is interest free for the first six month (with the government paying up the interest for this period).

Loans are available up to £5m.

Some sectors are not eligible e.g. financial services, education and religious organisations. Other sectors have lower loan thresholds e.g. agriculture and farming.

Repayment: Finance terms are from three months up to ten years for term loans and asset finance and up to three years for revolving facilities and invoice finance.

CBILS Eligibility Criteria

- Be UK based, with turnover of no more than £41 million per annum
- Operate within an eligible industrial sector (a small number of industrial sectors are not eligible for support – see below)
- Be able to confirm that they have not received de minimis State aid beyond €200,000 equivalent over the current and previous two fiscal years
- Have a sound borrowing proposal, but insufficient security to meet the lender's requirements
- Full eligibility criteria will be published shortly

LARGE BUSINESS SUPPORT: CORPORATE FINANCING FACILITY

Companies commonly sell short term debt ('commercial paper') to the market. This is a quick and cost effective way of raising working capital.

The new Corporate Financing Facility means the Bank of England will buy short term debt from companies. For further details follow this link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/launch-of-covid-19-corporate-financing-facility-ccff

HELP FOR EMPLOYERS AND THEIR STAFF

Where do I go to find out about accessing sick pay for staff who are unable to work as they are either ill or been told to self-isolate because of Covid-19?

Small and medium sized businesses (those employing less than 250 people on the 28th Feb 2020) will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed **statutory sick pay** (SSP); a repayment mechanism is being set up to enable this as existing systems are not designed to facilitate these refunds.

Employees are not required to have a sick note / fit note from their GP but employers should retain records of staff absences.

What support is there for employers to keep their staff when the business is struggling to meet the wage bill as a result of Covid-19?

The Government has introduced a system for furloughed staff. This includes supporting 80% of wages up to £2,500 a month. For more information please follow this link: www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees#furloughed-workers

PAYING MY TAX BILL (HMRC GUIDANCE TO BUSINESSES AND SELF EMPLOYED)

I am concerned that I will struggle to pay my tax bill.

HMRC has launched its 'Time To Pay' service. Call HMRC's helpline 0800 0159 559 to speak to an advisor. Arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis.

SELF EMPLOYED

I'm self-employed and do not have business premises but work from home.

Am I eligible for the £10k grant, what other support is available to me?

If the place you work from is not registered for rates, including Small Business Rate Relief, you will not be entitled to the £10k grant.

The Government has announced that self-employed / sole traders may be entitled to **Universal Credit** or the new style **Employment and Support Allowance**.

The links below takes you to these sites. The expectation is that all new claims will be dealt electronically so you won't need to travel to a **Job Centre**.

www.gov.uk/universal-credit and www.gov.uk/guidance/new-style-employment-and-support-allowance.

Also, please scroll down to the section 'What if I'm self-employed'.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees

I need help with tax payments, filing accounts self-assessment and VAT. What should I do?

The HMRC is putting measures such as postponing self-assessment deadlines. The best place to find out what you need to do is the HMRC website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-helpline-to-support-businesses-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19>

Or call their helpline: 0800 0159 559.

Filing Accounts: From 25 March 2020, businesses will be able to apply to for a 3-month extension to Companies House for filing their accounts. Applications can be made through a fast-tracked online system which will take just 15 minutes to complete. Go to the Companies House website to find out more:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house.

IR35 CONTRACTORS / OFF PAYROLL WORKERS

The intended reforms to IR35 that would have applied to people contracting their services to large and medium sized businesses outside the public sector will be delayed until 6th April 2021.

Businesses and individuals do not need to take any action.

INDIVIDUALS

For information relating to getting help and information about the virus please follow this link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

Use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service to check if you need medical help.

Also visit www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public for more information

I'm self-isolating. What financial help can I get?

You can claim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Talk to your employer to check your sick pay entitlement visit and for more information visit. SSP is paid from day one:

www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay

Is there any other financial help I can access?

If you think you may need financial support from your Local Authority, you may be entitled to support from the Hardship Fund.

- Most of this funding will be used to provide more Council Tax relief, either through existing Local Council Tax Support schemes, or through similar measures.
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have awarded us £121k to make additional awards to working age claimants to reduce their bills even further. Over the next two weeks we will be issuing revised bills for those impacted – there will be no need for claimants to apply.
- If you have any questions please contact us on localtaxation@rutland.gov.uk

I'm struggling to keep up with my rent / mortgage payments; what can I do?

The Government has agreed with mortgage lenders and landlords to offer three month repayment holidays to households in financial difficulty.

This only applies to households who are up to date with payments and not in arrears but are in financial difficulties due to COVID-19.

Emergency legislation is being put in place so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenant for at least a three month period. This applies to private and social renters.

At the end of this period landlords and tenants will be expected to work together to establish an affordable repayment plan, taking account of tenants' individual circumstances.

I have outstanding personal loans / credit card bills as a result of COVID-19 that I am struggling to pay. What should I do?

The Financial Conduct Authority has called on lenders to use flexibility built into their rules to support consumers, taking account of customers' individual circumstances.

Talk to your lender if you are experiencing difficulties paying back loans or credit card bills because of COVID-19.

If you agree a payment holiday with your lender, they should record these in such a way that will not impact on your credit score.

What other help is available?

Rutland County Council also have a special fund set up for anyone who is struggling due to sudden **financial hardship**. Our Crisis Support Fund Policy which can be found on our website gives you more detail about this. Please click contact **Citizens Advice Rutland** who manage all financial crisis support applications on our behalf

Rutland County Council is taking its direction from Government. This is a constantly moving situation. We are posting advice and guidance on our website www.rutland.gov.uk/coronavirus and update this regularly in order to keep everyone informed.

ENDS