

Written 4 August 2020

C19 BUSINESS NEWS UPDATE

THE LATEST INDICATORS FOR THE UK ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produced an economic survey on Coronavirus on the 30 July.

The main points are:

- Of businesses still trading, the arts, entertainment and recreation industry had the highest proportion of the workforce remaining on furlough, at 47%, followed by accommodation and food services at 43%, according to the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).
- The proportion of adults wearing a face covering when leaving the home increased to 84% from 71% in the previous week, according to the latest Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).
- Between 19 and 26 July 2020, footfall in high streets moderately increased to just under 60% of its level the same day a year ago, while retail parks and shopping centres held steady at just under 80% and 60% respectively.
- The volume of job adverts remained at 52% of its 2019 average between 17 and 24 July 2020.
- Prices decreased for a number of high demand products (HDPs) in the week beginning 20 July 2020, and the High Demand products index fell by 0.1%.
- In the week commencing 20 July 2020, Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) lodgements for existing dwellings returned to similar levels observed at the end of February across all regions, while EPC lodgements for new dwellings were around 20% lower across England and Wales; as such, they can be used as a timely indicator for the number of completed constructions and number of transactions.
- Average daily visits of all ships have remained stable for a fourth consecutive week, and passenger ship visits reached their highest level since the week commencing 30 March 2020.

The ONS survey only reflects the characteristics of those who responded and can be considered experimental but what it does show is a moderate increase in footfall to shops and some signs of the economy opening up.

If your business needs a plan for the “New Normal” please talk to us we have experience of helping our clients to repurpose or pivot into new areas. Taking some time just now to think ahead is the most valuable exercise you can do!

See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronavirustheukeconomyandsocietyfasterindicators/30july2020#toc>

JOB RETENTION BONUS

The government is introducing a new Job Retention Bonus to provide additional support to employers who keep on their furloughed employees in meaningful employment, after the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends on 31 October 2020.

The Job Retention Bonus is a one-off payment to employers of £1,000 for every employee who they previously claimed for under the scheme, and who remains continuously employed through to 31 January 2021. Eligible employees must earn at least £520 a month on average between the 1 November 2020 and 31 January 2021. Employers will be able to claim the Job Retention Bonus after they have filed PAYE for January and payments will be made to employers from February 2021.

An employer will be able to claim the Job Retention Bonus for any employees that were eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and they have claimed a grant for. Where a claim for an employee was incorrectly made, a Job Retention Bonus will not be payable.

All employers are eligible for the scheme including recruitment agencies and umbrella companies.

Employers should ensure that they have:

- complied with their obligations to pay and file PAYE accurately and on time under the Real Time Information (RTI) reporting system for all employees
- maintained enrolment for PAYE online
- a UK bank account

Employers must keep their payroll up to date and accurate and address all requests from HMRC to provide missing employee data in respect of historic Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme claims. Failure to maintain accurate records may jeopardise an employer's claim.

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/job-retention-bonus/job-retention-bonus>

CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME (CJRS) - EXAMPLES TO HELP YOU CALCULATE YOUR EMPLOYEES' WAGES

Check examples to help you calculate your employee's wages, National Insurance contributions and pension contributions if you're claiming through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-examples-to-help-you-work-out-80-of-your-employees-wages?utm_source=42b982a3-cce5-43f1-a9b2-919a3ab56d6a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Remember to talk to us about any claims we can estimate your claim for August, September and October in advance.

CJRS - INDIVIDUALS YOU CAN CLAIM FOR WHO ARE NOT EMPLOYEES

You can claim a grant for individuals - as long as they're paid via PAYE. The groups you can claim for include:

- office holders (including company directors)
- salaried members of Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs)
- agency workers (including those employed by umbrella companies)
- limb (b) workers
- Contingent workers in the public sector
- Contractors with public sector engagements in scope of IR35 off-payroll working rules (IR35)

Individuals who are paid through PAYE but not necessarily employees in employment law, can continue to be furloughed from 1 July as long as you have previously submitted a claim for them for a furlough period of at least 3 weeks between 1 March and 30 June and submitted a claim for this by 31 July.

PROVIDING APPRENTICESHIPS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

The Government has updated its guidance on apprenticeships.

This sets out guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19).

It outlines the changes that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is making to the apprenticeship programme during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The information should be read alongside:

- guidance on financial support for businesses during coronavirus (COVID-19) - the salary support for furloughed employees, also applies to apprentices
- articles on the apprenticeship service for employers, training providers and end-point assessment organisations
- articles on the apprenticeship service for apprentices
- guidance from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) on the delivery of assessment

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response?utm_source=a5395aab-ccf6-4952-97a9-6261dac4790d&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

ENGLAND - NEW GRANTS TO BOOST RECOVERY OF SMALL BUSINESSES

Thousands of smaller businesses in England are set to benefit from £20 million of new government funding to help them recover from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government has announced.

Small and medium sized businesses will have access to grants of between £1,000 - £5,000 to help them access new technology and other equipment as well as professional, legal, financial or other advice to help them get back on track.

The support will be fully funded by the Government with no obligation for businesses to contribute financially and the support will be fully funded by the government from the England European Regional Development Fund and distributed through local enterprise partnerships (LEP) Growth Hubs, embedded in local areas across England.

LEPs are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses, set up in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.

Activities supported through the £20 million can include:

- One-to-many events providing guidance to respond to coronavirus,
- Grants (£1,000 - £5,000) to help businesses access specialist professional advice such as HR, accountants, legal, financial, IT and digital, and to purchase minor equipment to adapt or adopt new technology in order to continue to deliver business activity or diversify.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-in-new-grants-to-boost-recovery-of-small-businesses?utm_source=d73de287-c359-4e20-b0ee-3f50952053fd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

SMALL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS IN THE WAKE OF CORONAVIRUS

The Small Business Leadership Programme will focus on strengthening decision-makers' leadership skills, so they are able to address management challenges, some of which, such as remote working, have arisen from coronavirus.

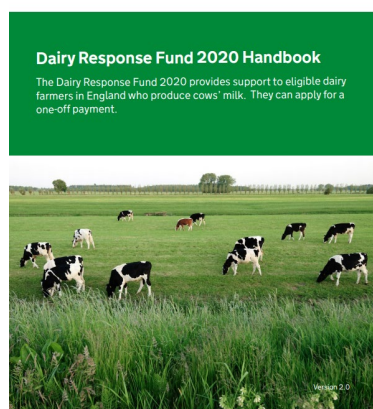
The 10-week programme – which will be delivered virtually by experts from university business schools – will teach participants how to maximise their business's potential by improving productivity, organisation and efficiency. Business will undertake a series of 90-minute webinars delivered by leading business experts and will also be required to complete up to two hours of independent study and peer supported learning per week.

Additionally, the Peer Networks Programme will focus on helping business owners improve their problem-solving skills, through a series of guided exercises. Participants will take part in sessions where common coronavirus related business challenges will be discussed, such as finding new customers and using technology such as customer record management and websites to adapt a business model. Members of the programme will be given skills in areas such as leadership and management, sales and marketing that they need to tackle these challenges head-on while growing their business.

Please see: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-to-improve-small-business-leadership-and-problem-solving-skills-in-the-wake-of-coronavirus?utm_source=8dcbc152-9073-4616-ba97-474cac229355&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

DAIRY RESPONSE FUND 2020 – APPLICATION DEADLINE 14 AUGUST 2020

The Dairy Response Fund 2020 provides support to eligible dairy farmers in England who produce cows' milk. They can apply for a one-off payment.



Please read the Dairy Recovery Fund handbook above to see if you are eligible to apply. Only use the application form if you meet the eligibility requirements detailed in the handbook.

To use the eligibility calculator in the guidance, we recommend you use the latest version of Internet Explorer or Google Chrome as the calculator might not work in other browsers.

If you are eligible to apply, complete a Dairy Response Fund 2020 application form and email it to dairyresponse@rpa.gov.uk. They must receive your application by midnight on Friday 14 August 2020.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dairy-response-fund-2020?utm_source=8338e7c1-e649-4544-a9b2-71ac2f1f1564&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

MOT UPDATE

Motorists are being encouraged to bring their MOT forward if it's due in September, October or November 2020, to help beat the expected rush for tests.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is encouraging motorists whose MOT is due this autumn to get their vehicle's MOT done as soon as possible to beat the expected rush for tests.

Cars, motorcycles and light vans that were due an MOT between 30 March and 31 July 2020 were given a 6-month extension to help keep motorists moving during the coronavirus pandemic.

Vehicles that are due an MOT from 1 August 2020 will not get an extension and will need to be tested as normal.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/beat-the-rush-by-getting-your-mot-done-this-summer?utm_source=43aba69b-9a7c-46cf-9ca1-43ad312f4c6e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

HGVs, buses and trailers have been given exemptions from needing an MOT, as tests were suspended because of coronavirus. This means that the deadline to get your MOT has changed.

You can now book an HGV, bus or trailer MOT as tests have restarted.

The deadline to get the test done depends on:

- when the MOT was originally due
- whether you qualify for a 3-month or 12-month

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-mots-for-lorries-buses-and-trailers?utm_source=dc48b698-814b-4549-b8c6-0c456cb45fc9&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

HELP AND SUPPORT IF YOUR BUSINESS IS AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS

Watch videos and register for the free webinars to learn more about the support available to help you deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus.

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-is-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=f842ee14-1aa8-431e-8d34-435f58a659b1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

WORKING SAFELY DURING CORONAVIRUS

There are now 14 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 people safe. Further guidance will be published as more businesses are able to reopen.

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=74eabfcb-5e92-490d-a0e2-109aa087adea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

EAT OUT TO HELP OUT LAUNCHES – WITH GOVERNMENT PAYING HALF ON RESTAURANT BILLS

Diners across the UK will see their restaurant bills cut by as much as 50% from today as the government's landmark Eat Out to Help Out scheme officially opens for business.

Anyone visiting a participating restaurant, café or pub on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays throughout August will receive the half price discount – keeping more money in hardworking families' pockets and giving a vital boost to the UK's hospitality sector.

The scheme – part of the government's Plan for Jobs that will spur the country's economic recovery from coronavirus – applies to all food and non-alcoholic drinks, with a maximum discount per person of £10.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eat-out-to-help-out-launches-today-with-government-paying-half-on-restaurant-bills?utm_source=0b72c8d4-3d30-42d5-8b4f-807e7c3f378d&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

ASK HMRC TO VERIFY YOU HAD A NEW CHILD WHICH AFFECTED YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME SUPPORT SCHEME

If you are self-employed or a member of a partnership, and having a new child affected the trading profits or total income you reported for the tax year 2018 to 2019, use the HMRC form to ask them to verify that you had a new child.

If you are already eligible for the grant based on your 2016 to 2017, 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 Self-Assessment tax returns, how HMRC will work out your grant amount will not be affected.

If you are not already eligible you can ask HMRC to check if you had a new child which either:

- affected your trading profits or total income you reported for the tax year 2018 to 2019
- meant you did not submit a Self-Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018 to 2019

For this scheme having a new child is any of the following:

- being pregnant
- giving birth (including a stillbirth after more than 24 weeks of pregnancy) and the 26 weeks after giving birth
- caring for a child within 12 months of birth if you have parental responsibility
- caring for a child within 12 months of adoption placement

You must have been self-employed in the tax year 2017 to 2018 and have submitted your Self-Assessment tax return on or before 23 April 2020.

You must also meet all other eligibility criteria.

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ask-hmrc-to-verify-you-had-a-new-child-which-affected-your-eligibility-for-the-self-employment-income-support-scheme?utm_source=d0c58b1c-9412-4027-9cb7-8868b1c199b5&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

APPLY FOR THE ZOO ANIMALS FUND

Apply for an animal welfare grant of up to £730,000 for your zoo or aquarium affected by coronavirus (COVID-19).

See: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-apply-for-the-zoos-support-fund?utm_source=746ea259-e3f2-41be-85a5-5e2130f4f72e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

DEVELOPING NHS TEST AND TRACE: BUSINESS PLAN

The Government has set out its plans for the next steps in the development of the NHS Test and Trace service and priorities for the next 3 to 6 months.

NHS Test and Trace brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management into an end-to-end service to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

The NHS Test and Trace business plan sets out ambitions to:

- double daily COVID-19 testing capacity to 500,000 by the end of October
- test 150,000 at-risk people without symptoms per day by September
- increase testing sites to more than 500 across the country by October
- introduce an app to support the NHS Test and Trace service
- have 100,000 people participating in research studies into COVID-19 immunity by September

- drive world-leading research into antibodies and immunity to help improve our understanding of the virus and our ability to contain it
- support local councils to refine and improve their local outbreak control plans and ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement those plans

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-nhs-test-and-trace-business-plan?utm_source=8926ec14-0213-412e-abae-a3b341ea8d11&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate