

Luton BID are committed to helping the BID businesses.

This guide sets out further information on how your business can access support if you are experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19.

Please view the table of contents below, we will focus on delivering you the information to manage the impact of COVID-19. Latest update **26/04/21** and should be read as correct at the time of publication.

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[Financial support for self-employed, small and large businesses](#)

Find your COVID financial support for your business

You may be eligible for loans, tax relief and cash grants. Use the [business support finder](#) to see what support is available for you and your business.

Please see a comprehensive summary of the existing support on offer, please click [here](#).

Register for free webinars to learn more about the support available

Take advantage of the free webinars that have been launched by HMRC to help and support if your business is affected by coronavirus (COVID -19). To register and watch the free the webinars please click [here](#).

Reopening businesses and venues

Some of the rules on what you can and cannot do changed on 12 April. However, many restrictions remain in place. You should continue to work from home if you can, minimise the number of journeys you make where possible, and follow the rules in the Coronavirus Restrictions guidance. You should refer to the closures guidance for the latest rules for closing certain businesses and venues in England, this includes full details on exceptions to closure and other restrictions.

Find out the date of when your business sector can reopen [here](#).

Closing certain businesses and venues in England

The Government has set out this guidance sets out the restrictions that certain businesses and venues in England are required to follow. To reduce social contact, the regulations require some businesses to close and impose restrictions on how some businesses provide goods and services.

For further information please click [here](#).

Restart Grant

The Restart Grant scheme supports businesses in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation sectors with a one-off grant, to reopen safely as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Check if you're eligible for a coronavirus Restart Grant [here](#).

[This link](#) provides guidance of the Restart Grant for the local authorities.

How to apply?

For further details and to apply for the Restart grant click [here](#)

Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRS) (Closed) Addendum

Who can apply?

If your business was open as usual, but then required to close due to national restrictions imposed by government between 5 November and 2 December 2020 and also again from 5 January 2021, you may be eligible for the LRS (Closed) Addendum schemes:

- If your business has a property with a rateable value of £15,000 or less, you may be eligible for a cash grant of £2,001 for each 42-day qualifying restrictions period.
- If your business has a property with a rateable value over £15,000 and less than £51,000, you may be eligible for a cash grant of £3,000 for each 42-day qualifying restrictions period.
- If your business has a property with a rateable value of £51,000 or above, you may be eligible for a cash grant of £4,500 for each 42-day qualifying restrictions period.

How to apply?

No application is required and details will be taken from previous applications

Further information regarding the Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRS (Closed) Addendum) can be found [here](#)

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)

The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) provides local councils with grant funding to support closed businesses that do not directly pay business rates as well as businesses that do not have to close but which are impacted.

This could include:

- businesses which supply the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors
- businesses in the tourism and events sectors
- business required to close but which do not pay business rates

How to apply?

Applications for the third lot of Additional Restriction Grants are now welcome and details and form are available [here](#)

Further information regarding the Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRS (Sector)) can be found [here](#)

Recovery Loan Scheme launched

The Recovery Loan Scheme will ensure businesses continue to benefit from Government-guaranteed finance throughout 2021.

With non-essential retail and outdoor hospitality reopening, Ministers have ensured that appropriate support is still available to businesses to protect jobs. Businesses – ranging from coffee shops and restaurants, to hairdressers and gyms – and can access loans varying in size from £25,000, up to a maximum of £10 million. Invoice and asset finance is available from £1,000.

Further information can be found [here](#)

Bounce Back Loan borrowers will now have the option to tailor payments

The government announced, Businesses that took out government-backed Bounce Back Loans to get through Covid-19 will now have greater flexibility to repay their loans.

- Bounce Back Loan borrowers will now have the option to tailor payments according to their individual circumstances
- Government provides an option to delay all repayments for a further six months
- Pay as You Grow will be available to over 1.4 million businesses, which collectively took out nearly £45 billion through the Bounce Back Loan Scheme
- For further information please click [here](#).

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – Furlough

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been extended until **30 September 2021**.

From 1 July 2021, the level of grant will be reduced and you will be asked to contribute towards the cost of your furloughed employees' wages. To be eligible for the grant you must continue to pay your furloughed employees 80% of their wages, up to a cap of £2,500 per month for the time they spend on furlough.

Click [here](#) to view the table which shows the level of government contribution available in the coming months, the required employer contribution and the amount that the employee receives per month where the employee is furloughed 100% of the time.

Wage caps are proportional to the hours not worked.

A step by step guide has been prepared to explain the information that employers need to provide to HMRC to make a claim through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. It also describes the processes involved, to view please click [here](#).

Find out how to pay all or some of your grant back if you've overclaimed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme [here](#).

Find out if you're eligible and how much you can claim to cover wages for employees on temporary leave ('furlough') due to coronavirus (COVID-19) [here](#).

Kickstart Scheme opens for employer applications

As part of the government's Plan for Jobs, a new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme will create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the country. There will also be extra funding to support young people to build their experience and help them move into sustained employment after they have completed their Kickstart funded job.

Employers will receive funding for 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum auto-enrolment pension contributions.

For further information please click [here](#).

Employers can now apply for a £1000 cash boost

Employers can now apply for a £1000 cash support for businesses to help with the cost of providing a traineeship. The new scheme will support young people to gain the skills and experience they need from the very start, helping them to get a job, an apprenticeship, or pursue further study. The cash boost – which is available until 31 July 2021. For further information please click [here](#).

Business rates relief boosted with new £1.5 billion pot

Ministers have today set out plans to provide an extra, targeted support package for businesses who have been unable to benefit from the existing £16 billion business rates relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses. Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses have not been paying any rates during the pandemic, as part of a 15 month-long relief which runs to the end of June this year.

For further information click [here](#).

VAT: reduced rate for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions

The government made an announcement on 8 July 2020 allowing VAT registered businesses to apply a temporary 5% reduced rate of VAT to certain supplies relating to:

- hospitality
- hotel and holiday accommodation
- admissions to certain attractions

The temporary reduced rate will apply to supplies that are made between 15 July 2020 and 31 March 2021. For further information, click [here](#)

New raft of measures to prepare our high streets and seaside resorts for summer

A new £56 million Welcome Back Fund will help councils boost tourism, improve green spaces and provide more outdoor seating areas, markets and food stall pop-ups – giving people more safer options to reunite with friends and relatives.

Part of this funding will be allocated specifically to support coastal areas, with funding going to all coastal resorts across England to safely welcome holiday makers in the coming months.

For further information click [here](#).

Further support for commercial and residential tenants

Ban on commercial evictions extended to 30 June to ensure businesses are supported as they re-open. Business owners – many of whom have had to cease trading entirely during lockdown – are being given extra support after the government extended the ban on commercial evictions for a further 3 months. The decision will help those worst affected by the pandemic, such as bars and restaurants, get back to business in May when doors fully reopen for hospitality no earlier than 17 May. Further information can be found [here](#).

Twice weekly rapid testing to be available to everyone in England

Everyone in England will be able to access free, regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing from 9 April, the government has announced.

For further information, please click [here](#).

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

If you are a small- or medium-sized business, you may be entitled to reclaim the costs of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for sickness absence due to COVID-19:

- This refund will cover up to two weeks' SSP per eligible employee who are either ill or been told to self-isolate because of COVID-19. This is in line with the recommended isolation period. To view Guidance on self-isolation please click [here](#).
- Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible. The size of an employer will be determined by the number of people they employed as of 28 February 2020. If you're an employer, find out if you can use Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme, to view click [here](#).
- Employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP (according to the new eligibility criteria) because of COVID-19. How to use the Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to claim back employees' coronavirus-related Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to view click [here](#).
- Employers should maintain records of staff absences, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note.
- The eligible period for the scheme began on 13th March.