

## Coronavirus Business Advice and Support Update – Friday 24 April 2020

Please note that the information provided in this newsletter is correct as of the afternoon of Friday 24 April 2020. The situation is fastmoving and we will be sending out regular updates to local businesses. However, we would suggest monitoring the key webpages outlined below as well as the [Council's website](#) for changes in the advice and support available.

### Sources of information and support for businesses

The Government has introduced a new [‘support finder’ tool](#) to help businesses and self-employed people to quickly and easily determine what financial support is available to them during the coronavirus pandemic.

The new [Government Business Support Hub](#) brings together all of the up-to-date information, advice and guidance published by Government. It contains information for sole traders and the self-employed as well as businesses in general.

If you can't find the information that you need on the Hub you can speak directly to an advisor on the Government's Business Support Helpline. The number to call is: [0300 456 3565](#).

You can also speak to advisors on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Growth Hub's new Coronavirus business helpline: [01480 277923](#).

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# 1. Financial updates

## The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is open for applications

Employers can now claim online for a grant for 80% of their furloughed employees' salaries, up to a maximum of £2,500 per employee. You can [click here](#) to make a claim.

HMRC have produced this [step by step guidance](#) on how to make a claim. There is also a [calculator](#) to help you work out your claim. Employers should receive the money within 6 working days of making an application. Please keep a note or print-out of your claim reference number as you won't receive a confirmation SMS or email.

HMRC are holding live webinars providing an overview of the scheme to help employers and employees deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus. Register for a live webinar on the [Job Retention Scheme](#) or on [how to make a claim](#).

## The Coronavirus Future Fund

The Government's new [Future Fund](#) has been designed to ensure high-growth companies across the UK receive the investment they need to continue during the crisis.

It will provide government loans to UK-based companies ranging from £125,000 to £5 million, subject to at least equal match funding from private investors. These loans will automatically convert into equity on the company's next qualifying funding round, or at the end of the loan if they are not repaid.

To be eligible for a loan a business must be an unlisted UK company that has raised at least £250,000 in equity investment from third-party investors in the last 5 years.

The loans must be used solely for working capital purposes and must not be used by the company to repay any borrowings, make any dividends or bonus payments to staff, management, shareholders or consultants or, in respect of the Government loan, pay any advisory or placement fees or bonuses to external advisers.

The scheme will be delivered in partnership with the British Business Bank. It will launch in May and it will be open until September 2020 (although this end date may be subject to review).

## Support for R&D SMEs

The Government has [announced £750 million](#) of targeted support for the most R&D intensive small and medium size firms through Innovate UK's grants and loan scheme. [Innovate UK](#) will:

- accelerate up to £200m of grant and loan payments for its 2,500 existing Innovate UK customers on an opt-in basis
- provide an extra £550m to increase support for existing customers
- offer £175,000 to around 1,200 firms not currently in receipt of Innovate UK funding

The first of these Innovate UK payments will be made by mid-May. Further information on the details of this funding is awaited.

## Last chance to apply: Emergency funding for organisations and individuals in the cultural sector

The opportunity to apply for Arts Council England [Emergency Funding](#) for individuals and organisations in the cultural sector is closing soon. If you are an artist, creative practitioner, freelancer or arts organisation and you would like to apply, you will need to **register on Grantium by 27 April** in order to **make an application before the deadline of 30 April**.

## Grants for organisations, voluntary groups and self-employed contractors in the heritage sector

Historic England is [inviting applications](#) for grants of up to £50,000 for projects that might reduce risks to heritage through research, and grants of up to £25,000 to address specific organisation cashflow difficulties arising from Covid-19.

The funding is available to local or national heritage organisations, including privately-owned heritage attractions and heritage businesses (such as conservation specialists and suppliers of conservation materials).

The deadline for applications is midnight on Sunday 3 May 2020 and the funding for successful applications will be awarded from mid-May.

## Apply for the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme

The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan scheme, which helps large businesses affected by coronavirus access loans of up to £25 million, is now [open for applications](#).

## FAQs on the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

The British Business Bank (BBB) has produced revised and updated Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) [FAQs for SMEs](#) with more complex questions that SMEs have been asking Lenders including a Q&A on exporting.

## Business Grants

As part of the Government's two grant funding schemes for small businesses, *the Small Business Grant Fund* and *the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund*, we have already successfully paid over £17.5 million to just under 1,500 businesses in South Cambridgeshire - approximately 75% of eligible businesses in the district.

[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 previously sent emails and letters inviting eligible businesses to apply for the grants using our online form: [www.scambs.gov.uk/governmentbusinessgrants](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/governmentbusinessgrants). We have also called all of those eligible businesses that have not yet claimed their grant. This process is continuing with Councillors and officers working tirelessly to ensure funding gets to where it's needed as quickly as possible.

If you have received the email or letter invitation from us or you have been contacted by telephone, your account is pre-loaded with the payment, so if you are able to successfully complete the application form, the payment will be made by BACS within two working days, following which the payment should be received into your account (subject to the usual delay of a few days experienced with BACS payments).

If you have received the email or letter invitation from us but have not been able to successfully complete the application form (please note the information must EXACTLY match the information on your rates bill), please email our dedicated inbox with your account reference number, and a phone number to call you back on: [businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk). We will endeavour to respond to these emails within two working days to help people access these grants as quickly as possible.

If you have not received an email or letter invitation, but you believe you are eligible for the grants, please email [businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk), with the email subject 'ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT FUNDING' – this will help us to direct your email to relevant colleagues as quickly as possible. As the situation may not be as simple to resolve, this may take slightly longer for us to respond. Please bear with us as we want to help everyone to access funding they are entitled to as quickly as possible and we are working as fast as we can.

If you are not entitled to the two grants mentioned above but would still like some support in working out what other funding may be available to you, please [visit our website](#) where there is also information about a number of non-Government grant schemes. If you would like a member of our business support team to discuss any other support that may be available to you, please email [openforbusiness@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:openforbusiness@scambs.gov.uk).

## **Business rates holidays**

### **For all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England**

The Council has now identified and re-billed business accounts eligible for this relief. If you haven't received a £0.00 balance bill, but think you should qualify for the relief, please email [NDR@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:NDR@scambs.gov.uk) and we will look into your situation individually. Please use "Expanded Retail Claim" in the subject of your email. The full criteria for this relief can be found on [our website](#) by clicking on the 'Internal Policies/Guidance' link.

### **For children's nurseries**

The Government announced a [business rates holiday for nurseries](#) in England for the 2020 to 2021 tax year. Properties that will benefit from the relief will be ones occupied by

providers on Ofsted's Early Years Register and wholly or mainly used for the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This discount has now been applied to all eligible premises.

## 2. Support for businesses during Coronavirus

### Testing for essential workers who have symptoms

Coronavirus [testing has been extended](#) to all essential workers in England who have symptoms. You can find out if you or your employees are essential workers on the [Government's website](#).

### A new suite of support for local businesses

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has launched a new suite of support for businesses in the local area that have been affected by the Coronavirus crisis:

- The Covid-19 Business [1-2-1 Support Service](#): a free one hour consultation, on the phone or via video link, from an experienced business adviser to discuss your business needs and provide guidance on how to access relevant support from the Combined Authority and central government.
- Free access to a [range of webinars](#) that are designed to support your business through the impact of Covid-19. The next two webinars are:
  - HR– layoff v furlough: can it be backdated and how does it work?
  - Accessing finance - cashflow, funding options, business interruption loan scheme
- A new [Talent Portal](#) For Employers to find staff with the necessary skills to enable your business to operate during this difficult time.
- The [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Retraining Scheme](#) is a new pilot programme to prepare adults for changes to the economy.

The CPCA's [Covid-19 Capital Grant Scheme](#) also forms part of the suite of support. As reported previously, grants from £2k to £150k are available to small and medium-sized businesses for new capital investment projects. The objective of the scheme is to help the qualifying companies strengthen their capacity to survive the emergency and bounce back strongly when it passes.

There has been a great deal of interest in this grants scheme, therefore if you are interested in applying sign-up quick!

### Advice for small businesses on cyber security including video conferencing

The National Cyber Security Centre has [issued guidance](#) to help you to choose, configure and deploy video conferencing services within your organisation.

It also has a [range of information](#) to help SMEs to significantly increase their protection from the most common types of cyber crime including a [Small Business Guide](#) and an A-Z of cyber security.

## Avoiding scams

HMRC has also published a range of information and guidance to help businesses recognise genuine contact including:

- [Genuine HMRC contact and recognising phishing emails](#)
- [How to avoid and report scams](#)
- [Examples of phishing emails and bogus HMRC contact](#)

## Business learning opportunities

The Open University is offering free courses via its [OpenLearn](#) website including a wide range of business courses.

[FutureLearn](#) offers business courses from universities all over the world, including the Open University. Many of them are free.

LinkedIn is [opening up 16 of its learning courses](#) for free including courses that provide tips on how to stay productive, build relationships when you're not face-to-face, use virtual meeting tools and balance family and work dynamics in a healthy way.

Cambridge Network have a number of [existing](#) and [up-coming](#) webinars to support businesses, including with recruiting virtually:

- [Recruiting via video](#)
- [Interviewing via video](#), 29 April, 2pm - 3pm
- [Onboarding via video](#), 6 May, 11am-12pm

## 3. Changing direction and finding a new job

### New jobs matching service

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's new [Talent Portal](#) aims to help those people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough who have found themselves out of work because of Covid-19 and are looking to enter new industries and take up new roles. The portal provides opportunities to search for job opportunities and get support to move into new sectors of work.

### Identifying new opportunities

The Cambridge Network offers a range of support to help people to find permanent and temporary employment:

- [Hundreds of live jobs](#) and a [weekly jobsletter](#)
- Links to [jobs vacancies](#) that have become available as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak
- A [virtual jobs fair](#) on the 14 and 15 May introducing hiring companies via a series of webinars throughout this 2-day online event

- Free webinars specific to recruiting and job seeking including [How to stand out to employers](#).

## The 'Find a Job' Service

You can also use the Government's ['Find a job' service](#) to search and apply for full-time and part-time jobs.

## Careers and apprenticeship advice for all ages

While Form the Future ordinarily focus their support on school-aged young people, now more than ever they want to help people of all ages navigate an uncertain future.

They can offer free 1-2-1 careers and apprenticeship guidance for those who need it. If you're 16 or older, have left school and live in Cambridgeshire or Peterborough – and some of the surrounding areas – they can help. There's no upper age limit.

They will arrange a phone call or a Zoom video chat with one of their qualified Careers Guidance Professionals at a time and in a format that best suits you. If you're interested in finding out more about apprenticeships as part of your 1-2-1, this session is completely free. Using a career coaching approach, you will get support in exploring your options and help with your CV and applications, interview coaching and whatever else you need to take the next step in your career.

To get started, and to find out if you're eligible for free support, contact [apprenticeships@formthefuture.org.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@formthefuture.org.uk) or visit [www.gcapps.co.uk](http://www.gcapps.co.uk). The offer is funded by the European Social Fund and the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

## 4. Celebrating businesses in South Cambridgeshire

### Brogan Group

One of the UK's largest specialist access companies, with a base in Gamlingay, is celebrating the news that it has won the Queen's Award for Enterprise.

[Brogan Group](#), a specialist access contractor to the construction industry, has a purpose-designed 'Supersite' located just outside the village of Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire. During the period 2016-2018, the company experienced a staggering 158% international growth spurt, and by 2018, 37% of Brogan Group sales came from overseas markets.

More recently, the company has secured a number of prestigious contracts to help build part of the World Expo, the largest construction project in the UAE. It has also commenced work on the UK's largest regeneration project since the London 2012 Olympic Games (Old Oak in North Acton).

## Queen's Awards for Enterprise

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise are for outstanding achievement by UK businesses in the categories of:

- innovation
- international trade
- sustainable development
- promoting opportunity through social mobility.

The Award, which consists of a Grant of Appointment signed by Her Majesty The Queen, and a commemorative glass bowl, is presented by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire. Successful applicants are invited to send two representatives to a reception at Buckingham Palace (in the presence of a member of the Royal Family) while the business becomes entitled to fly The Queen's Award flag at their main office, and use the emblem on publicity materials such as their website, stationery and marketing.

The Awards are valid for five years and winners have reported benefiting from worldwide recognition, increased commercial activity, greater press coverage and a boost to staff morale. There are also potential opportunities to work with the Government on developing and testing policies and initiatives.

In order to apply please visit the [website for the awards](#). This year, applications can be submitted from May to September, and winners can expect to be notified on the Queen's birthday in April 2021.

## 5. Changes to Government guidance and legislation

### Further action to support bus and lorry drivers

The Transport Secretary has [announced](#) that it will be easier for bus and lorry drivers to renew their expiring driving licences. Under the scheme, drivers will be able to receive a temporary 1-year licence, providing they do not have any medical conditions that affect their driving and their current licence expires in 2020.

### Guidance for childcare services

There is [updated guidance](#) on what childcare services early years settings, childminders and local authorities need to provide during the coronavirus outbreak. This guidance is for providers registered with Ofsted and childminders registered with childminder agencies for children of all ages.

### Guidance for the Homecare sector

The Better Care Support Team are running a series of webinars that discuss coronavirus and the home care sector. The webinar will consist of an overview of the guidance through short presentations, followed by opportunities for Q&A.

You can catch the last seminar on Monday 27 April. Visit the event on Eventbrite for [more information and registration](#).

## **Guidance for Tier 4 sponsors, migrants and short-term students**

The Home Office has published [guidance](#) that sets out temporary policy concessions for Tier 4 sponsors, Tier 4 students and short-term study students in response to the outbreak of coronavirus.

## **6. 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](mailto:intel@beis.gov.uk). Please do copy [Openforbusiness@scambbs.gov.uk](mailto:Openforbusiness@scambbs.gov.uk) into your email as we are keen to understand the impacts of the crisis on the district's businesses.