

Business Advice and Support

Monday 24 August 2020

Welcome to the latest newsletter created by South Cambridgeshire District Council's new Business Support Team.

In addition to the information in this newsletter, we suggest monitoring the [Council](#) and [Government](#) websites for the most up to date information and support.

Our dedicated [Business Support team](#) can assist with all business related enquiries – please get in touch with us and we will help you find the advice and support you need.

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1. Brexit

✔ Check ⚡ Change ✔ Go

The Government's '[The UK's new start: let's get going](#)' campaign includes a [checker tool](#) to identify the steps that businesses or individuals need to take ahead of the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December. The tool enables business to answer seven key questions which will return information specific to your business sector on the steps you need to take.

How business employers can take action now to prepare for new rules from 1 January 2021

While the Government continues to negotiate a free trade agreement with the European Union, there are actions your business can take now to prepare for the end of the transition period that are not dependent on the outcome of the negotiations. You can use the straightforward transition checker tool at gov.uk/transition to identify the specific steps you need to take to be ready by 1 January 2021. You can also [sign up to receive a regular Business Readiness Transition Bulletin](#) providing information on major announcements and recently published guidance.

The Federation of Small Businesses

Small businesses can find comprehensive advice via the Federation of Small Businesses website within the [Brexit section](#).

The Chambers of Commerce

The Chambers of Commerce has a Brexit Hub containing detailed [information](#) on what businesses need to do to be ready for the end of the transition period.

Chambers of Commerce Export Club event

Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce are holding their next monthly Export Club webinar on Tuesday 25 August. The focus of this webinar will be on international trade training courses, accessing government funding and providing an update on the latest trade announcement. [Registration](#) is free.

Chambers of Commerce Countdown to Change webinars

Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce are running a series of 'Countdown to Change' [webinars](#) starting on 22 September which will countdown to the end of the transition period. They will take place 100 days, 75 days, 50 days and 30 days before the end of the transition period. They will guide businesses through the complexity of change in import and export processes, systems and controls. Webinar dates are 22 September, 16 October, 11 November and 1 December.

Reminder - Apply for grants if your business completes customs declarations

The next phase of the [customs grant scheme](#) is now open for applications. It sees a record £50 million investment as part of the measures to accelerate growth of the customs intermediary sector and help meet the increased demand it will see from traders at the end of the transition period.

Customs intermediaries – including customs brokers, freight forwarders and express parcel operators – as well as traders who complete their own declarations, are among those who can now apply for grant funding to support with recruitment, training and IT to handle customs declarations.

2. Grants, funding and finance during coronavirus

Help to calculate your employees' wages

The Government has provided information to with 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. Examples have been added for September and October for working out how much to claim for a flexibly furloughed employee.

Second stage of Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

The second stage of the [Self Employment Income Support Scheme](#) (SEISS) opened for applications on 17 August. Those eligible will now be able to receive a second and final grant worth 70% of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total. The [eligibility criteria](#) remains the same as for the first grant, with people needing to have had trading profits of no more than £50,000 making up at least half of their total income. To make a claim for the second and final grant the business must have been affected on or after 14 July 2020. HMRC has published [guidance](#) on deciding if a businesses has been adversely affected by coronavirus. HMRC will contact all potentially eligible customers to advise them that they can claim for a second and final SEISS grant. The claim for the second and final grant must be made by 19 October 2020. There government has also provided a [webinar](#) on the second stage of the scheme, with a choice of dates that can be booked throughout late August and early September.

£5 million funding for social prescribing

The National Academy for Social Prescribing has been awarded £5 million in [funding](#) to support people to stay connected and maintain their health and wellbeing following the coronavirus pandemic.

Working with partners, including the Arts Council England, Natural England, Money and Pensions Service, NHS Charities Together, Sport England and NHS England, the academy will support a range of local community activities.

The funding will connect people to initiatives in their local communities to improve their mental health and wellbeing in response to the impact of coronavirus, including improved green spaces, singing and physical activities as well as access to tailored debt advice.

3. Guidance for businesses during coronavirus

Self-isolating after returning to UK: Employment rights

The Government has provided updated [guidance](#) for employees and employers on self-isolating after returning to the UK.

Access to Work

The Department for Work and Pension [factsheet](#) about the [Access to Work](#) scheme has been updated to include further information on getting help from Access to Work during the coronavirus outbreak. During the Coronavirus pandemic, the public can still get help from Access to Work if they have a disability or a physical or mental health condition that makes it hard for them to do their job. They may be able to get help with working from home, at their normal workplace, or a combination of both. If they cannot use public transport safely because of their disability, and their doctor or healthcare professional supports this, funding may be available for extra travel costs.

If workers employ their own support worker and have additional costs for personal protective equipment, Access to Work may also be able to provide funding.

Face coverings in businesses and venues

The [guidance](#) on the closure of certain businesses and venues has been updated to include the latest information on face coverings. The guidance provides a list of indoor settings where face coverings must be worn.

The public are also advised to wear a face covering in indoor places that are not listed where social distancing may be difficult and where they will come into contact with people they do not normally meet.

Places of worship guidance on singing, playing musical instruments and planning festivals

[Guidance](#) has been provided for small groups of professional or non-professional singers on singing in front of worshippers both outdoors and indoors. Singing in groups should be limited to a small set group of people and should not include audience participation. Wind and brass instruments can now also be played.

A festivals [checklist](#) has also been developed to support local planning for religious festivals.

Multi-purpose community spaces

The [guidance](#) for those managing community centres, village halls and other community facilities has been updated to reflect changes to restrictions on permitted activities. Indoor performances to socially distanced audiences can take place, if they are in line with the performing arts guidance. Small wedding receptions (up to 30 people at a sit-down dinner) can now also take place.

Safer public spaces

Guidance on the measures that may be undertaken to help social distancing for owners and operators of urban centres and green spaces has been [updated](#) to be in line with the government guidance on face coverings and easement measures.

Commercial waste

If the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service Commercial Team collects your rubbish, please note that they are still collecting business waste if bins are placed in their usual locations. If you need to discuss your commercial waste collections or arrangements, please email trade@scambs.gov.uk.

3. Innovation, Funding and Support

Solar Together Cambridgeshire

Solar panels are an excellent way to save money on energy bills and cut carbon emissions, and this is why we are working with Cambridgeshire County Council to deliver [Solar Together Cambridgeshire](#), a group-buying scheme to help you purchase high-quality and competitively priced solar panels and battery storage systems for solar panels. You have to be the owner of the roof on which you want to install a solar PV system, or have the explicit approval of the owner, in order to participate. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Commonhold Associations meeting this criterion can participate as well as residents.

The scheme is due to launch on 1 September 2020.

SMART grants

Innovate UK will open up the next round of the SMART grants on Friday 28 August. SMART grants are open to a wide variety of innovations with the potential to be game-changing in their industry. You can watch a [video](#) to find out more about the SMART grants opportunity.

Start Up loans

Start Up loans provide Government-backed personal loans for business purposes. They are available to individuals over the age of 18 who are eligible to start a business in the UK. Generally, loans of up to £25,000 are available at a fixed rate of interest and are repayable over 1 to 5 years.

Delivery partners for the loans in the East of England are listed on our [website](#). In addition to helping applicants prepare their business plan and cash flow forecast, the delivery partners are responsible for assessing final loan applications and providing ongoing mentoring support to successful applicants.

5. Other Business support and events

Championing business with the latest employment updates - reminder

The Chambers of Commerce will welcome the Minister for Employment, Mims Davies, to discuss employment and skills challenges at an online event on 27 August, from 3pm to 4pm. The talk will look at challenges stemming from the pandemic, leaving the EU, and a changing labour force. The Minister will provide updates on government employment support initiatives, including Kickstart.

[Registration](#) is free.

Cambridgeshire Virtual Networking Event

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) are hosting an on line virtual networking [event](#) on 9 September, from 10am to 11am. This event aims to continue to provide the opportunity for you to meet and expand your network with other business owners in the Cambridgeshire area and share information.

Open to all businesses, both FSB members and non-members are welcome to attend, so feel free to share with your networks. This event is hosted by Jeremy Reeve from the FSB and with a guest speaker from Form the Future on 'Re-connecting & Inspiring your employees'.

Apprenticeships

Are you an apprenticeship employer or have you considered the benefits of taking on apprentices for your business? Our [Business Support team](#) here at South Cambridgeshire District Council can guide you to one-to-one expert advice on the steps towards taking on apprentices.

Queen's Awards for Enterprise – reminder

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise are the most prestigious awards for UK businesses recognising and rewarding their outstanding achievements in the fields of: Innovation, Sustainable Development, International Trade and Promoting Opportunity (through social mobility). 90 per cent of 2020 winners were SMEs. The Awards can bring sustainable benefits to winners including increased staff morale, boosts to turnover and international trade, greater recognition and excellent marketing opportunities. Winners are also invited to a reception in Buckingham Palace. Almost all UK businesses can apply and [applications](#) are open until 9 September.

Our [Business Support team](#) is happy to answer any questions you may have relating to the Awards.