



CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 INFORMATION ABOUT BUSINESS SUPPORT FROM THE FARMER NETWORK 17th JULY 2020

This briefing provides information about the Government support available to businesses during the Coronavirus outbreak. For more details, click [Coronavirus business support](#) and with any questions, please contact the Farmer Network on 01768 868615, or E mail: Veronica@thefarmernetwork.co.uk.

1. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK

The Chancellor's announcement last week included additional support for businesses as follows:

Job Retention Bonus.

This is a one-off payment of £1,000 to employers that have used the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for each furloughed employee who remains continuously employed until 31 January 2021. Employers will be able to claim the bonus from February 2021.

“Eat Out to Help Out” Scheme

From Monday to Wednesdays in August, diners can get 50% off meals and non-alcoholic drinks, up to £10 per person, when eating at participating establishments that have registered.

VAT reduction

From 15 July until 12 January 2021, the UK government will cut VAT from 20% to 5% on any eat-in or hot takeaway food and drinks from restaurants, cafes and pubs, excluding alcohol. This VAT reduction also applies to all holiday accommodation in hotels, B&Bs, campsites and caravan sites, as well as attractions like cinemas, theme parks and zoos. Click [HERE](#) for information on hospitality and accommodation businesses.

Increase in the Stamp Duty Threshold

With immediate effect and until 31 March 2021, the threshold under which no Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT is paid on the purchase of a main home has been increased from £125,000 to £500,000.

2. GRANTS

a) SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME SUPPORT SCHEME

If you are self-employed, or a member of a partnership, you may be able to claim a taxable grant based on your average monthly trading profits. The deadline for claiming the first round of funding has now passed but a second and final round of funding will open on 17th August. For the second claim you will need to confirm your business has been adversely affected on or after 14 July 2020. You can claim for the second grant even if you did not make a claim for the first grant.

b) LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANTS

(i) Small Business Grant Fund

Grants of £10,000 have been available to businesses with a rateable value of up to £15,000 that receive Small Business Rate Relief Rate, Rural Rate Relief or tapered relief. Note farm businesses and some diversified enterprises such as B&Bs do not pay business rates so have not been eligible.

(ii) Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund

Grants of £25,000 have been available to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 - £51,000. There is also a business rate holiday for the 2020-21 tax year.

(iii) Discretionary Grant Fund

The [Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund](#) is aimed at small and micro businesses with fixed property costs that are not eligible for the Small Business Grant or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. Businesses need to demonstrate relatively high ongoing property-related costs and that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis. The application deadline has passed for the first round, but some Local Authorities have opened second rounds of the Scheme including Allerdale and Barrow Councils. Businesses being targeted include Bed and Breakfasts paying council tax instead of business rates and businesses with a rateable value exceeding £51,000. For more information go to the relevant website: [Allerdale](#) (deadline 10th August), [Barrow](#) (deadline 29th July)

For more information about these schemes, please contact your Local Authority on the following links: [Allerdale](#), [Barrow](#), [Carlisle](#), [Copeland](#), [Eden](#), [South Lakeland](#), [Craven](#), [Harrogate](#), [Richmondshire](#).

c) DAIRY RESPONSE FUND

The [dairy response fund](#) opened on 18th June for applications. To be eligible, farmers need to demonstrate that they suffered a reduction in the average price paid for their milk of 25% or more in April 2020 when compared with February 2020. Qualifying farmers are entitled to up to £10,000 to cover 70% of their losses across April and May incurred as a result of this drop in price, following a reduced demand for milk with the closure of restaurants, bars, and cafes during lockdown. Note that basing the criteria on milk price only will mean that many farmers will not qualify, for example, those on an average price of 25ppl in February would have had to have their milk price reduced to less than 18.75ppl in April to qualify. It also does not help those that have lost supply contracts, or had reduced demand for their milk

d) PRINCE'S TRUST AND NATWEST ENTERPRISE RELIEF FUND FOR 18-30 YEAR OLDS

The [Prince's Trust Enterprise Relief Fund](#) offers grants to 18 to 30-year olds who are self-employed and/or running their own business. You must have set up your business in the last four years without any other source of income during the crisis. The initiative is also offering one-to-one support and guidance.

3. LOANS

a) "BOUNCE BACK" LOAN SCHEME

Bounce Back loans are 100% backed by the tax payer (rather than 80%) with the government paying the interest for the first 12 months and with no capital or interest repayments due for one year. The loans are from £2,000 up to a maximum of 25% of turnover, or £50,000. The interest rate is fixed at 2.5% with the capital to be repaid over 6 years with no early repayment charge. Eleven lenders are participating in the scheme including most of the main banks. You should approach your own bank in the first instance, or a list of lenders is on the following website: [Bounce Back Loan providers](#).

b) CORONAVIRUS BUSINESS INTERRUPTION LOAN SCHEME

This scheme helps SME businesses access finance of up to £200 million (increased from £5 million) and is 80% underwritten by the Government. You apply via your lender's website or through one of 40 accredited finance providers offering the scheme. For more details: [click here](#)

c) CORONAVIRUS FUTURE FUND SCHEME

The Government launched its Future Fund Scheme on 20th May. This offers convertible loans of between £125,000 and £5 million to companies which can obtain match funding from the private sector.

4. SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES WITH EMPLOYEES

a) CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME

The Job Retention Scheme provides a grant to help cover the costs of retained workers who are "furloughed". Recent changes announced to the scheme include:

- The scheme effectively closed to newly furloughed staff from 10th June.
- From 1st July (rather than 1st August), a "flexible" furlough will allow staff back part-time.
- From August, employers will be asked to pay National Insurance and Pension contributions but with the Government still covering the full 80% of furloughed staff's salary. In September, the Government's contribution will reduce to 70% with the employer expected to pay a contribution of 10%; in October, the employer's contribution increases to 20%.

The furlough wage cap will decrease each month and the scheme will close on 31st October. The guidance page was updated on 12 June 2020 to include details of the changes to the scheme - see [Furlough scheme guidance](#).

b) STATUTORY SICK PAY REBATE FOR SMEs

The [Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate scheme](#) provides a refund to cover up to 2 weeks' Statutory Sick Pay per eligible employee who has been off work because of coronavirus.

5. OTHER SUPPORT

a) DEFERRAL OF TAX PAYMENTS

If you have a VAT payment due between 20 March 2020 and 30 June 2020, you have the option to defer the payment until a later date or pay the VAT due as normal. Taxpayers will be given until the end of the 2020/2021 tax year to pay any liabilities that have accumulated during the deferral period. You will still need to submit VAT returns and VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid as normal. If you are self-employed, Income Tax payments due in July 2020 under the Self-Assessment system will be deferred to January 2021. See HMRC's [Time to Pay scheme](#).

b) UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND SELF EMPLOYMENT

Universal Credit is a monthly payment to help with living costs and you may qualify if you are on a low income. See: [self-employment & universal credit](#).

6. HELP FROM THE FARMER NETWORK

If you need help during the Covid-19 crisis, please call the Farmer Network to get information about business support schemes, sourcing supplies, preparing contingency plans and finding emergency labour for your business in case of illness or if workers have to isolate.

The Farmer Network has created a register of potential emergency farm workers and want to hear from farmers who might need this support - this may be skilled staff able to work full time on a paid basis, or unskilled volunteers willing to help with basic tasks under supervision, or with collecting or delivering supplies. We can also help with preparing contingency plans.

Our grants adviser, Veronica Waller, is available for one to one advice about the support schemes and how relevant they might be to your business. Call 01768 868615 for help.

We send out an E News update every Friday afternoon to Farmer Network members and please call us on 01768 868615 if you are not receiving E News (also check your “junk” folder).

**We post information and updates on our social media pages:
Facebook “@thecumbriafarmernetwork” or “@theyorkshirefarmernetwork”**

Please visit our Facebook pages to join our Coronavirus Group.

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