

Business Support Updater: Edition Nine with Summary Grid

A number of the business support schemes put in place to help businesses deal with the pandemic remain in operation and for some the terms are changing. Included below is a summary grid of the main business support measures implemented by the UK Government and the NI Executive which remain in place. There are a number of immediate issues in relation to business support worth drawing to the attention of members, including:

End of VAT Deferral Period

- **Reminder:** The **period of deferral of VAT payments ends on 30 June**. Members may wish to note this for the reinstatement of cancelled direct debits in enough time for HMRC to take payment. HMRC advise reinstatement of direct debits should be done **three working days before submitting their VAT return**. Members should refer to the guidance available [here](#).

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)- Frist Grant

- For those eligible, the deadline to make an application for the first grant is 13 July 2020.

Flexible Furlough- Work patterns, Claims and Parental Leave

- Members are aware that flexible furlough is available from 1 July for employees who have already completed a full three-week period of furlough before this date. **During flexible furlough, any working pattern may be adopted and employees can enter into more than one furlough agreement**. This is subject to a minimum claim period of seven calendar days (unless otherwise specified).
- **The general principle is that wage caps are proportional to the hours on furlough**, e.g. for an employee on furlough in July for 60% of their normal working hours, employers can apply for 60% of the £2,500 cap. The grid below includes a reminder of the progressive tapering of contributions from government and the corresponding increase in employer obligations. Employer contributions for hours not worked begin on 1 August with payment of ER NICs and pension contributions. Firms should note that they may be able to furlough an employee returning from parental leave for the first time, despite the general

deadline for first-time furlough passing on 10 June. Members should refer to the appropriate guidance if this is relevant to them. Any furlough period for any employee which was begun before 1 July must however last for the full three weeks. Guidance [here](#) and [here](#).

Outstanding Applications- Hardship Fund and Small Business Support Grant Scheme

With the closure of the NI Micro-Business Hardship Fund on 12 June, the link for information to check on the progress of applications is [here](#).

Any member who thinks they may have an outstanding award from the Small Business Support Grant Scheme (which closed on 20 May) can find information [here](#).

Code of Practice for Commercial Property- Landlord and Tenant Negotiations

The UK Government has published a **Code of Practice to support businesses in negotiating affordable rental agreements. The Code is voluntary and applies to the whole of the United Kingdom.** The Government has said this is part of a wider strategy to protect viable businesses and to facilitate agreements being struck between landlords and tenants. The Code emphasises the importance of sustainable agreements outside the letter of leases to support economic recovery. It emphasises candour and transparency in relation to the impacts of the pandemic on the business of landlords and tenants. It refers to the short-term shocks to cash flow as well as the impact of social distancing on trading as key factors in assessing what is reasonable.

The Code acts as a complement to the announcement of the extension of protection from forfeiture for the vast majority of commercial leases by the Department of Finance until 30 September 2020, using powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020. A range of representative bodies are signatories to the code (including the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and British Chambers of Commerce) and it is to remain in place until 24 June 2021.

The Code of Practice can be found [here](#).

Related guidance from UK Finance for Commercial landlords is available [here](#).

Summary Grid of Business Support and Access to Key Information

Scheme Summary	Eligibility Summary	Application Process and Key Dates
<p style="text-align: center;">Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Furlough Scheme)- Government Contribution for Hours Employee is on Furlough</p> <p>June: 80% of salary up to £2,500 plus ER NICs and pension.</p> <p>July: 80% of salary up to £2,500, plus ER NICs and pension.</p> <p>August: 80% of salary up to £2,500. Employer to pay ER NICs and pension.</p> <p>September: 70% of salary up to £2,187.50.</p> <p>Employers to pay ER NICs and pension contributions. Employers to pay 10% of wages to make up the 80% of salary up to the cap of £2,500 for hours on furlough.</p> <p>October: 60% of salary up to a cap of £1,875.</p>	<p>UK-Wide</p> <p>Employers with a PAYE scheme on or before 19 March 2020</p> <p>Employees must have completed a full three-week period of furlough by 30 June to be eligible for the scheme from 1 July.</p> <p>During furlough in June, employees must not work (other than training).</p> <p>If employers are operating flexible furlough from 1 July, they must pay for hours worked, with the government contribution making up the relevant capped level.</p> <p>For example, an employee on furlough for 60% of normal hours is eligible for 60% of the current £2,500 cap. See guidance on right for more information.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Application Process</p> <p>Online portal and guidance here.</p> <p>Online calculator for claims here.</p> <p>Guidance on tapering and flexible furlough here. HMRC webinar slots bookings here.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Key Dates</p> <p>1 July 2020: Introduction of flexible furlough.</p> <p>1 August 2020: Employer contributions to begin.</p> <p>1 September 2020: Increase in employer contributions.</p> <p>1 October 2020: Further increase in employer contributions.</p>

Employers to pay EE NICS and pension contributions. Employers to pay 20% of wages to make up the total of 80% salary up to cap of £2,500 for hours on furlough.		
Scheme Summary	Eligibility Summary	Application Process and Key Dates
<p>Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)</p> <p>First Grant: A taxable grant worth 80% of average monthly trading profits, up to a maximum of £7,500 to cover a three-month period. A single payment is made to cover the three-month period.</p> <p>Second Grant: A taxable grant worth 70% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering a further 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total.</p>	<p>UK-Wide</p> <p>All self-employed individuals or members of a partnership (Trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to your non-trading income).</p> <p>The second grant will apply the same eligibility criteria and businesses must declare they have been adversely affected by coronavirus on or after 14 July 2020.</p>	<p>Application Process</p> <p>Guidance here.</p> <p>Online eligibility checker here.</p> <p>HMRC's calculation methods here.</p> <p>Link to make a claim here.</p> <p>Key Dates</p> <p>Deadline to make an application for first grant of 13 July.</p> <p>Applications for the second grant open in August 2020 (we are awaiting a date).</p>

Scheme Summary	Eligibility Summary	Application Process and Key Dates
<p>Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs)</p> <p>The BBLs is designed to help small businesses borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. The Government will guarantee 100% of the loan to lender (the borrower remains liable for repayment).</p> <p>There are no fees or interest in the first 12 months. There are no repayments due in the first 12 months. The interest rate after 12 months is 2.5%. Loan terms are for six years, but early repayment is permitted without a fee.</p>	<p>UK-Wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business must be based in the UK; • Established before 1 March 2020 • Must have been adversely impacted by the coronavirus 	<p>Application Process</p> <p>Make contact directly with accredited lenders (online application forms). List of lenders can be filtered for NI here.</p> <p>Guidance here.</p> <p>Key Dates</p> <p>Scheme currently scheduled to run until 4 November 2020.</p>
<p>Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme ('CBILs')</p> <p>Loans up to £5m, guaranteed to 80% of the value to the lender by the Government. The first 12 months of the loans are interest and fee-free. Variable duration, depending on the finance product.</p>	<p>UK-Wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business must be based in the UK and have an annual turnover of up to £45 million; • would be viable were it not for the pandemic; • has been adversely impacted by the coronavirus. 	<p>Application Process</p> <p>Delivered by a list of accredited lenders which can be searched for Northern Ireland here.</p> <p>Guidance here.</p>

	There is a separate scheme for larger businesses.	Key Dates The scheme has been established initially for six months from 6 April 2020. On that basis, unless extended it will close in October .
Scheme Summary	Eligibility Summary	Application Process and Key Dates
Business Rates Holiday No rates will be charged for April, May, June and July 2020.	NI-Only All NI Businesses (certain other sectors benefit from 12 months relief).	Application Process Automatic.
Income Tax Deferral for the Self-Employed Income tax payments due by 31 July 2020 under the Self-Assessment System may be deferred until 31 January 2021.	UK-Wide All self-employed individuals	Application Process Automatic- you do not need to inform HMRC. Guidance here .

Scheme Summary	Eligibility Summary	Application Process and Key Dates
<p style="text-align: center;">VAT Payments Deferral</p> <p>Businesses have the option to defer certain VAT payments falling due between 20 March to 30 June 2020. VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the Government as normal.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UK-Wide</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All VAT-registered businesses.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Application Process</p> <p>Automatic- No application. If this is being paid by direct debit, this should be cancelled with the bank. Guidance here.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Key Dates</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The end of the deferral period for VAT payments is 30 June 2020. Direct Debits will need to be re-instated.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme</p> <p>This refund will cover up to 2 weeks' Statutory Sick Pay per eligible employee who has been off work due to COVID-19 from the first qualifying day if their period of sickness started on or after:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 March 2020 (those who have the virus or are self-isolating); • 16 April 2020 for those employees shielding because of coronavirus; • 28 May 2020 - if your employee has been notified by the NHS or public health bodies that they've 	<p style="text-align: center;">UK-Wide</p> <p>Businesses with a PAYE scheme on or before 28 February 2020 and with fewer than 250 employees on 28 February 2020</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Application Process</p> <p>The online system to reclaim SSP launched on 26 May 2020.</p> <p>Guidance here. HMRC link to webinars here.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Key Dates</p> <p>The Government has stated they will advise on the scheme's closure- nothing to date.</p>

come into contact with someone with coronavirus.		
Scheme Summary	Eligibility Summary	Application Process and Key Dates
Time to Pay If a tax payment is missed because of COVID-19 contact HMRC. You may get more time to pay or be able to agree a plan of repayment by instalments.	UK-Wide	Application Process Call the HMRC Coronavirus Helpline on 0800 024 1222. Guidance here .

Members should consult relevant government guidance and the NI Business Info website regularly to get more details on the full range of support available. A number of changes have been made to schemes at different stages throughout the pandemic, so it is important to keep this in mind and keep abreast of updates. The Society will also continue to consider and issue information to members as appropriate. Some additional links are included below for schemes which members or their clients may be interested in.

Coronavirus Future Fund [here](#).

Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme [here](#).

Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility [here](#).

For any queries in respect of our business support guidance, please contact frank.geddis@lawsoc-ni.org.