



Sent on behalf of



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

JAMES PALMER
CAMBRIDGESHIRE &
PETERBOROUGH MAYOR



THE BUSINESS BOARD

ISSUE NUMBER 1

Important information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and your business

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Business Board want to keep you up to date with guidance for business during this uncertain time regarding the potential impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

The content of this email includes information about employees as well the Government's COVID-19 support package for business announced in the Spring Budget yesterday.

If you are a Business Membership Organisation, please forward this widely amongst your member companies and networks.

The Combined Authority are monitoring the situation daily and will be proactively updating our information for business via this channel as well as on our website and social media sites.

[Guidance to employers and business about COVID-19](#)

Government Guidance in the Workplace

- How to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19
- What to do if someone with suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a workplace setting
- What advice to give to individuals who have travelled to specific areas
- Advice for the certification of absence from work resulting from Covid-19
- Latest public information and advice

[Guidance to employers and business about COVID-19](#)

If you are concerned about being able to pay your tax due to COVID-19, call HMRC's dedicated helpline on 0800 0159 559.

Guidance on supporting Business experiencing increasing costs or financial disruptions

In yesterday's budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak announced a series of measures to support business experiencing increase in cost or financial disruption due to the Coronavirus.

- The government will increase the **Business Rates** retail discount to 100% for one year and expand it to the leisure and hospitality sectors, and increase the planned rates discount for pubs to £5,000. Taken together with existing **small business rate relief** (which provides full relief for businesses using a single property with a rateable value of £12,000 or less), an estimated 900,000 properties, or 45% of all properties in England, will receive 100% business rates relief in 2020 to 2021:
- businesses that received the **retail discount** in 2019-20 will be re-billed by their local authority as soon as possible; those businesses eligible for the newly expanded retail discount and/or the new pubs discount may need to apply to their local authority to receive the discount; any enquiries on eligibility for, or provision of, the reliefs should be directed to the relevant local authority;
guidance for local authorities on the application of the expanded retail discount will be published by MHCLG by 20 March
- The government will provide an additional £2.2 billion funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no Business Rates because of Small Business Rate Relief (SBBR). This will provide a **one-off grant of £3,000 to around 700,000 business currently eligible for SBBR or Rural Rate Relief**, to help meet their ongoing business costs. For a property with a rateable value of £12,000, this is one quarter of their rateable value, or comparable to 3 months of rent.
- A new temporary **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme**, delivered by the British Business Bank, will launch in a matter of weeks to support businesses to access bank lending and overdrafts. The government will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to a per-lender cap on claims) to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs. The government will not charge businesses or banks for this guarantee, and the Scheme will support loans of up to £1.2 million in value. This new guarantee will initially support up to £1 billion of lending on top of current support offered through the British Business Bank.
- All businesses and self-employed people in **financial distress, and with outstanding tax liabilities**, may be eligible to receive support with their tax affairs through **HMRC's Time To Pay service**. These arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis and are tailored to individual circumstances and liabilities.
- These businesses can contact HMRC's new dedicated COVID-19 helpline from 11 March 2020 for advice and support. To ensure ongoing support, HMRC have made a further 2,000 experienced call handlers available to support firms and individuals when needed.

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The government will bring forward legislation to allow small- and medium-sized businesses and employers to reclaim **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19**. The eligibility criteria for the scheme will be as follows:

- this refund will cover up to 2 weeks' SSP per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19
- 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
- employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP (according to the new eligibility criteria) as a result of COVID-19
- - employers should maintain records of staff absences, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note
 - eligible period for the scheme will commence the day after the regulations on the extension of Statutory Sick Pay to self-isolators comes into force
 - the government will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible. Existing systems are not designed to facilitate employer refunds for SS
 - [Click here for further information about what the government is doing to provide support](#)

[Read here for the latest public information and public health advice about COVID-19](#)

Please forward this widely amongst your networks

Business Continuity Planning

For up to date information check the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority website and social media channels:

[Facebook](#)

[Linkedin](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

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