

News and Updates

Local restrictions introduced in Aberdeen (5 August 2020)

Following an increase in coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Aberdeen, local restrictions on travel, indoor gatherings between households and the closure of indoor and outdoor hospitality will be introduced in the Aberdeen City local authority area.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/local-restrictions-introduced-in-aberdeen/>

Safety at work to calculate risk (30 July 2020)

The Scottish Government have introduced a new tool and guidance to help calculate individual risk assessment in the workplace. It is applicable across all industries and should be used by employers to support staff and line managers to understand and carry out effective risk assessments.

Read more [here](#)

Right care, right place (29 July 2020)

NHS Pharmacy First Scotland offers expert help in the community. People will be able to get healthcare advice and support to treat minor illnesses and common conditions in their local community following the launch of this new service.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/right-care-right-place/>

Families to be alerted to additional financial support (29 July 2020)

The Scottish Government is to actively inform families that they may be eligible for Best Start Foods and the Best Start Grant. A first for social security in Scotland.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/families-to-be-alerted-to-additional-financial-support/>

The UK Government further boosts chances of UK receiving COVID-19 vaccine (29 July 2020)

Deal announced which will secure early access to a promising new coronavirus vaccine, enhancing the UK's growing portfolio of vaccine candidates.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-further-boosts-chances-of-uk-receiving-covid-19-vaccine>

Eat Out to Help Out – look for the logo (29 July 2020)

Diners who eat-in will benefit from a 50% discount, up to a maximum of £10 per person, on food and non-alcoholic drinks, any Monday to Wednesday in August.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eat-out-to-help-out-look-for-the-logo>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): shielding advice and support (29 July 2020)

This advice applies to most people who have been asked to shield. This includes people who are pregnant. It also includes any children and young people who have been asked to continue to shield.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on individual risk assessment for the workplace (29 July 2020)

Risk assessment guidance and tool for staff across all industries which should be used by employers to support staff and line managers to understand and carry out effective risk assessments.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-individual-risk-assessment-for-the-workplace/>

If you've claimed too much or not enough from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (29 July 2020)

Find out what you need to do if you've claimed too much or not enough from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/if-youve-claimed-too-much-or-not-enough-from-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): countries and territories exempt from advice against 'all but essential' international travel (28 July 2020)

The FCO updated its global advisory against 'all but essential' travel, exempting destinations that no longer pose an unacceptably high risk for British travellers.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-countries-and-territories-exempt-from-advice-against-all-but-essential-international-travel>

Shielding to be paused (24 July 2020)

People who have been advised to shield because of COVID-19, will no longer have to do so from 1 August.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/shielding-to-be-paused/>

Sending your forms to Companies House during the coronavirus outbreak (24 July 2020)

As an emergency response to coronavirus (COVID-19), the UK Government has developed a service allowing you to upload a number of completed forms and send them to Companies House digitally. (Updated 23 July)

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sending-your-forms-to-companies-house-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy (24 July 2020)

The UK Government have published and updated the recovery strategy for the UK. The next chapter of the strategy has now been released.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

Check which employees you can put on furlough to use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (20 July 2020)

Find out which employees you can put on furlough and claim for through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Updated 17 July).

Find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-which-employees-you-can-put-on-furlough-to-use-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

Construction Scotland - Safe operating guidance (17 July 2020)

Construction Scotland have updated their guidance (15 July) for the construction sector to allow for Phase 4 of the restart plan to begin.

Access the construction restart guidance here:

<https://www.cs-ic.org/constructionscotland/resources/>

Scottish Government update construction sector guidance (15 July 2020)

The Scottish Government has updated their guidance on construction sites and associated works. As of 15 July, the sector is able to proceed into Phase 4 of the Restart Plan.

Read more here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-construction-sector-guidance/pages/progress-on-re-start/>

Construction moves to next stage of COVID-19 restart after PPE supply assurances (15 July 2020)

Close working can now take place on construction sites as the sector commences Phase 4 of its restart plan, the Scottish Government has announced. Until today, Phase 3 of the six-step phased model allowed for 'steady state operation' only where physical distancing can be maintained. The move to the next phase means that close working can now take place on-site - with appropriate PPE use - if necessary.

Read more:

<https://www.scottishconstructionnow.com/article/construction-moves-to-next-stage-of-covid-19-restart-after-ppe-supply-assurances>

Companies House to restart the voluntary strike off process (14 July 2020)

From 10 September 2020 Companies House will restart the process to dissolve companies that have applied for voluntary dissolution.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/companies-house-to-restart-the-voluntary-strike-off-process>

Scotland to move into phase 3 (9 July 2020)

The Scottish Government is moving into phase 3 of the route map through and out of the crisis. It mentions that Non-essential offices and call centres can re-open following implementation of relevant guidance (including physical distancing) most likely from August.

They have issued detailed guidance on the phase, [view it here](#).

Free advice to small business (9 July 2020)

The Recovery Advice for Business scheme, supported by the UK Government, provides small firms access to free, one-to-one advice with an expert adviser to help them through the coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for long-term recovery.

Read more [here](#)

Summer statement plan for Scotland (8 July 2020)

The Chancellor's Summer statement was released yesterday announcing a furlough bonus scheme, £2 billion Kickstart scheme to subsidise jobs for young people and 5% VAT cut for the hospitality sector.

Read more [here](#)

PPE expenses during covid-19 (7 July 2020)

If your employees work in a situation where there is a risk of COVID-19, then PPE is required and must be provided free of charge. Any PPE you provide must fit properly. The provision of PPE to your employees is non-taxable

If your employee requires PPE to carry out their role and you are unable to provide this, you must reimburse the actual expenses of employees who purchase PPE themselves. This is non-taxable and employees cannot claim tax relief on these expenses from HMRC.

Read more [here](#)

Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund (6 July 2020)

The Scottish Government and Business Gateway have introduced the newly self-employed hardship fund. If you're newly self-employed on or after 6 April 2019 and facing hardship, you will be eligible for a £2,000 grant. Applications are now open and will be managed by Local Authorities. Applications close on 10 July.

Read more [here](#)

Companies house guidance (6 July 2020)

The Upload a document service is now live. It will allow users to upload more form types, including Scottish limited and qualifying partnerships, articles and resolutions.

Read more [here](#)

Final Phase 2 measures confirmed (2 July 2020)

The First Minister today announced final phase 2 measures. These include:

- 5 mile limit for leisure travel will be lifted
- Children aged 11 and under will be able to play outdoors, without physical distancing
- mandatory face coverings in retail settings from Friday 10 July

Read more [here](#)

Deferral of VAT payments due to COVID-19 (1 Jul 2020)

If you're a UK VAT-registered business that deferred VAT payments between 20 March 2020 and 30 June 2020, you now need to:

- set-up cancelled Direct Debits in enough time for HMRC to take payment
- continue to submit VAT returns as normal, and on time
- pay the VAT in full on payments due after 30 June

Any VAT payments you have deferred between 20 March and 30 June should be paid in full on or before 31 March 2021.

Read more [here](#)

Flexible furlough scheme starts today (1 July 2020)

From 1 July there are changes to the Job Retention Scheme. Furloughed staff can be brought back to work for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim CJRS grant for the hours not worked Scheme.

Read more [here](#)

Driving and theory tests (1 July 2020)

If you're a critical worker, you can now apply for an emergency driving test and an emergency theory test. Non-emergency tests are currently suspended.

Read more on driving tests [here](#)

Read more on theory tests [here](#)

SCDI green recovery plan (30 June 2020)

The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) has published its plan for a Green Recovery from COVID-19. They are calling Scottish and UK governments to deliver 'green stimulus' to kick start the economy, create new jobs and fuel 'clean growth'.

Read more [here](#).

Safe return to college and university (29 June 2020)

The Scottish Government has issued guidance which maps out full reopening of Scottish campuses. Topics included are:

- Workforce planning and student support
- Public health measures
- Progressing through the phases
- Health and safety

Read the guidance [here](#).

MOT testing to be reintroduced (29 June 2020)

The UK government has announced that mandatory MOT testing is to be reintroduced from 1 August. The move will help ensure that vehicles are kept safe to drive.

Read more [here](#).

Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill now an Act (26 June 2020)

The act will relieve the burden on businesses during COVID-19 and allow them to focus all their efforts on continuing to operate. This includes:

- introduces temporary easements for Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and filing requirements for public limited companies (PLCs)

- introduces new corporate restructuring tools to the insolvency regime to give companies the time they need to maximise their chance of survival
- temporarily suspends parts of insolvency law to support directors during this difficult time

Most companies will also be given more time to file their accounts.

Read more [here](#).

Paying Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grants back (26 June 2020)

If you've overclaimed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, you can either:

- [correct it in your next claim](#)
- make a payment to HMRC (only if you're not making another claim)

Read more [here](#).

Updated information when claiming back statutory sick pay (25 June 2020)

Information about employees who have transferred under the TUPE regulations has been added.

Read it [here](#).

Skill support for furloughed or those facing redundancy (25 June 2020)

The Open University is encouraging those who are furloughed or those facing redundancy due to COVID-19 to apply for a selection of fully funded modules that offer vital post-pandemic skills.

Read more [here](#).

Returning to work safely (24 June 2020)

The Scottish Government has issued guidance for workers and employers on returning to work safely. The guidance looks at transport, test and trace and offers advice.

Read the guidance [here](#).

Companies House guidance (24 June 2020)

Users can now file their change of constitution forms using the temporary Upload a document to Companies House service.

Read more [here](#).

Scotland route map - Dates for phase 2 and early phase 3 (24 June 2020)

The Scottish Government has announced specific dates for the reopening of certain businesses and services. This includes:

- 3 July – travel distance relaxed
- 6 July – Outdoor hospitality
- 13 July - All holiday accommodation permitted
- 15 July – Hairdressers and barbers
- 15 July - Museums, galleries, cinemas, monuments, libraries

Read more [here](#).

Return to full-time schooling (23 June 2020)

The First Minister announced that schools in Scotland will return full time in August if Scotland continues to make progress in suppressing coronavirus.

Read more [here](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19): returning to work safely (22 June 2020)

The Scottish Government guidance for workers and employers on returning to work safely has been updated and includes details on which sectors are able to restart or can prepare to return to work and how to do this safely.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-1-returning-to-work/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): shielding support and contacts (22 June 2020)

Shielding is a measure to protect people who are clinically at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. The Scottish Government has updated their advice and guidance for people in this group.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding/>

Deferral of VAT payments due to coronavirus (COVID-19) (22 June 2020)

The guidance on the temporary changes to the VAT payments due between 20 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 has been updated with information regarding the ending of the VAT deferral period.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/deferral-of-vat-payments-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): construction sector guidance (22 June)

The Scottish Government has published guidance on construction sites and associated works that can continue under specific conditions (Updated 22 June).

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-construction-sector-guidance/>

NHS Scotland's Test and Protect advice (22 June 2020)

Households will be sent information explaining how the Test and Protect system works and setting out what to do if someone develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/nhs-scotlands-test-and-protect-advice/>

Construction Sector Given Green Light To Move to Phase 3 of Restart Plan (18 June 2020)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has announced today that Scotland's construction sector is to move into the next phase of its restart plan from Monday 22 June 2020.

Read more:

<https://www.scottishconstructionnow.com/article/construction-sector-given-green-light-to-move-to-phase-3-of-restart-plan>

Face coverings mandatory on public transport from 22 June (18 June 2020)

Face coverings will become mandatory on public transport from Monday 22 June, as part of operators' preparations for progress towards recovery and to reduce the risk of transmission.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/face-coverings-mandatory-on-public-transport-from-22-june/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): letter from the Planning Minister about the role of certification (17 June 2020)

Letter to local authorities from the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning Kevin Stewart MSP providing guidance on the role of certification as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-letter-from-the-planning-minister-about-the-role-of-certification/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): letter from Building Standards Division about construction industry restart (17 June 2020)

Stephen Garvin, Head of the Building Standards Division, has issued a letter to local authorities about the restart of the construction industry and site inspections.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-letter-from-building-standards-division-about-construction-industry-restart/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): construction sector guidance (12 June 2020)

The Scottish Government has published further guidance on construction sites and associated works that can continue under specific conditions.

Read more: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-construction-sector-guidance/pages/overview/>

Financial support for students (11th June 2020)

The Scottish Government has brought forward access of £11.4m of discretionary funds which will be administered by colleges and universities. Colleges now have flexibility to offer funds to help between bursary payments ending in June and Universal Credit payments starting. SAAS have also suspended all debt recovery in respect to grants and bursaries until September for students whose circumstances have changed and may have to return overpayments

Read more [here](#).

Updated advice for people shielding in Scotland (9 June 2020)

Outdoor exercise can be taken from later this month.

People who are shielding are being advised that though they should continue to do so until at least the end of July, they can if they choose, go outdoors to exercise from 18 June while maintaining strict physical distancing.

Those affected will receive letters from the Chief Medical Officer explaining that the decision on outdoor exercise has been taken after careful consideration by clinical advisors. Prevalence of COVID-19 has decreased and the evidence now shows the risk of outdoor infection is very low if people stay two metres apart. The exercise can be a run, wheel, walk or cycle but those shielding should not meet people from other households.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/updated-advice-for-people-shielding/>

New health measures for travellers to Scotland (8 June 2020)

New public health measures will come into force today (Monday 8th June) to help suppress coronavirus (COVID-19) and prevent new cases being brought into Scotland.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/new-health-measures-for-travellers-to-scotland/>

Trade Credit Insurance backed by £10 billion guarantee (8 June 2020)

The UK Government is to provide guarantees of up to £10 billion to Trade Credit Insurance schemes for business to business transactions.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/trade-credit-insurance-backed-by-10-billion-guarantee>

Important changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme from 1 July (5 June 2020)

The final date you can furlough an employee for the first time will be Wednesday 10 June. Find out if you're eligible and how much you can claim here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

Domestic Reverse Charge VAT for construction services – delayed to 1 March 2021 (5 June 2020)

The Revenue and Customs Brief 7 (2020) published by the UK Government explains that the introduction of the domestic reverse charge for construction services will be delayed from 1 October 2020 until 1 March 2021 due to the impact of the coronavirus on the construction sector.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenue-and-customs-brief-7-2020-domestic-reverse-charge-vat-for-construction-services-delay-in-implementation>

Chancellor extends Self-Employment Support Scheme and confirms furlough next steps (30 May 2020)

The UK Government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will be extended, giving more security to individuals whose livelihoods are adversely affected by coronavirus in the coming months, the Chancellor announced today.

Find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-extends-self-employment-support-scheme-and-confirms-furlough-next-steps>

Lockdown begins to ease in Phase 1 (29 May 2020)

Changes to Scotland's lockdown restrictions were confirmed yesterday by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. These changes come into effect from today (Friday 29 May).

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/lockdown-begins-to-ease-in-phase-1/>

Scottish Government publish Coronavirus Construction Sector Guidance (28 May 2020)

The Scottish Government has published guidance for the construction sector on how changes will be made over the course of the coming weeks and months as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-construction-sector-guidance/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Information for individuals and businesses in Scotland (29 May 2020)

The UK Government has published specific information tailored to individuals and businesses in Scotland to provide guidance and support during COVID-19.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-scotland>

Coronavirus: MOTs due from 30 March 2020 (28 May 2020)

Your car, van or motorcycle's MOT expiry date will be extended by 6 months if it's due on or after 30 March 2020 - but you must keep your vehicle safe to drive.

Read more here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-mots-for-cars-vans-and-motorcycles-due-from-30-march-2020>

Check if you can claim back Statutory Sick Pay paid to employees due to coronavirus (28 May 2020)

You can now claim for employees who are self-isolating because they've been notified by the NHS or public health bodies that they've come into contact with someone with coronavirus.

Read more [here](#).

Advice on how to travel safely (28 March 2020)

Transport Scotland has released guidance on keeping yourself and others safe while travelling. The guidance mentions steps to follow while walking, wheeling (wheeling refers to travelling by wheelchair), cycling, or travelling in private vehicles or on public transport during the coronavirus.

Read the guidance [here](#).

Colleges and universities prepare for phased returns (27 May 2020)

Scottish colleges and universities are gearing up for the next academic year as a phased return as lockdown restrictions are gradually lifted.

Under the Scottish Government's route map through and out of the COVID-19 crisis, the third phase would see universities and colleges return next term with most planning for an initial combination of digital and blended learning with public health measures, including physical distancing in place.

Read more [here](#).

MOT extension (27 May 2020)

MOT expiry dates are being extended by 6 months to help prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). If your car, van or motorcycle's MOT is due on or after 30 March 2020, the expiry date will be extended by 6 months, but you must keep your vehicle safe to drive.

Read more [here](#).

Guide to working safely during the COVID-19 outbreak (26 May 2020)

The Health and Safety Executive have published a short guide to working safely during the coronavirus outbreak. The guide is aimed at all employers and those who are self-employed and work with or near other people. Read the guide [here](#).

The HSE have also published a guide on 'talking with your workers about preventing coronavirus, read this [here](#).

Manufacturing sector guidance (26 May 2020)

The Scottish Government have released guidance which applies to the manufacturing sector including procedures to plan for and maintain a safe place for all. The guidance discusses topics such as:

- Assessing risk
- Workforce planning
- Operational guide and checklist
- Deliveries, distribution and visitors
- Training and compliance

Read the guidance [here](#).

Safer workplaces statement (26 May 2020)

The Scottish Government, Police Scotland, Health and Safety Executive and local authorities have released a joined statement on safe workplaces. The statement touched on the importance of working together, supporting businesses and workers and useful contacts and links.

Read the full statement [here](#).

Scottish Enterprise advise on how to thrive in a post COVID-19 workplace (26 May 2020)

Head of Business Models and Workplace Innovation at Scottish Enterprise, Clare Alexander provides online guidance on steps your company can take now to transition from survival to growth once COVID-19 lockdown measures are eased. These include:

- Return to work checklist
- Planning for change
- Building resilience

Read the full steps and advice [here](#).

Test and Protect advice for employers (26 May 2020)

The Scottish Government have published advice for employers to help understand the public health measure Test and Protect, Scotland's approach to implementing the 'test, trace, isolate, support' strategy. The measure will be rolled out across all health boards from Thursday, May 28.

Read the advice [here](#).

Claim back Statutory Sick Pay paid to your employees due to coronavirus (COVID-19) (26 May 2020)

The UK Government has published further information on how to use the Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to claim back employees' coronavirus-related Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-your-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

Home Secretary announces new public health measures for all UK arrivals (25 May 2020)

New measures at the UK border to "guard against a second wave of coronavirus infections" have been announced by the Home Secretary.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-new-public-health-measures-for-all-uk-arrivals>

Up to £15 million to support the Citizens Advice service during COVID-19 pandemic (23 May 2020)

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland are to receive a funding boost of up to £15 million to help them deal with increased demand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/up-to-15-million-to-support-the-citizens-advice-service-during-covid-19-pandemic>

MSPs support further emergency coronavirus legislation (21 May 2020)

The Scottish Parliament has supported new emergency measures to help people in Scotland navigate through the COVID-19 crisis.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/msps-support-further-emergency-coronavirus-legislation/>

Coronavirus: Framework for Decision Making (21 May 2020)

The Scottish Government has today (21 May 2020) published a COVID-19 Framework for Decision Making - Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis.

Read the framework here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

Everyone in UK now eligible for coronavirus tests (18 May 2020)

Everyone in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms can now get a test.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/everyone-in-the-united-kingdom-with-symptoms-now-eligible-for-coronavirus-tests>

Prime Minister's article in the Mail on Sunday: 17 May 2020

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's piece in the Mail on Sunday released 17 May 2020 can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-article-in-the-mail-on-sunday-17-may-2020>

Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund (PERF) is now open for new applications (14 May 2020)

The Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund set up by the Scottish Government is now open for new applications. The volume of applications will be closely monitored and it is expected that full capacity will be reached quickly. It is anticipated that the fund will close at 5pm on Monday 18 May 2020.

Apply here: <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/service/coronavirus/pivotal-enterprise-resilience-fund>

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (14 May 2020)

Applications are now open for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. If you are self-employed or a member of a partnership and have been adversely affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) you may be eligible for a grant under this scheme.

Check your eligibility here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy (12 May 2020)

The UK Government has published a roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Access the strategy plan here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

Chancellor extends furlough scheme until October (12 May 2020)

The UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is to remain open until the end of October, the Chancellor announced today (Tuesday 12 2020).

Read more:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-extends-furlough-scheme-until-october?utm_source=469e4bd6-b6c1-4149-a76b-97f84a86bb07&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Second Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill (11 May 2020)

Emergency measures to protect people financial hardship and allow public services to operate effectively have been introduced to Parliament in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read more:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/second-coronavirus-scotland-bill/>

Coronavirus in Scotland: Stay at home message remains as exercise rules ease (10 May 2020)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has stressed the "stay at home" message remains in place in Scotland after Boris Johnson announced his "conditional plan" to reopen society. During his statement, the prime minister urged people to "stay alert, control the virus and save lives". But Ms Sturgeon said there should be a "simpler" message and that people in Scotland should still stay at home.

The once-a-day exercise limit will be removed in Scotland from Monday. But Ms Sturgeon said people must still stay close to home and emphasised the move does not extend to picnics, sunbathing or barbeques.

You can read more here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-52605959>

PM address to the nation on coronavirus (10 May 2020)

Prime Minister Boris Johnson addressed the nation on the current status of the coronavirus threat.

Read the statement here: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-10-may-2020?utm_source=b6aa18ee-63ca-4913-b680-a288e858f6f3&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Bounce Back Loan Scheme – Over 69,000 loans approved (7 May 2020)

More than 69,000 Bounce Back Loans worth over £2 billion have been approved during the first 24 hours of the scheme, the Chancellor has announced. The scheme offers small businesses loans from £2,000 up to £50,000.

Read more: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-69000-loans-approved-in-the-first-day-of-the-bounce-back-loan-scheme?utm_campaign=566619_FindBusinessSupport%20-%20COVID-19%20Updates%2037&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Scottish%20Enterprise&dm_i=4X7B,C57F,3LJY8F,1CUWC,1

Coronavirus Act 2020: Status Update (7 May 2020)

This morning, the UK Government released a status update on the Coronavirus Act 2020, which was granted royal assent on 25 March 2020. The Act aims to facilitate legislative and regulatory changes to support the everchanging consequences of COVID-19.

Read the current status of the Coronavirus Act 2020 here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-act-2020-status/coronavirus-act-2020-status-table>

Economy Minister Diane Dodds announces £40 million microbusiness Hardship Fund for Northern Ireland (6 May 2020)

A new Hardship Fund aimed at microbusinesses across Northern Ireland which require financial support due to the impact of COVID-19 has been introduced.

Details on the scheme including eligibility criteria and arrangements for applying will be released next week.

Read more: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/dodds-announces-ps40-million-secured-microbusiness-hardship-fund>

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (6 May 2020)

This week, HMRC will be contacting customers who may be eligible to apply for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. However, you can also use the HMRC checker to find out if you are eligible.

More information can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme?utm_campaign=564884_FindBusinessSupport%20-%20COVID-19%20Updates%2035&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Scottish%20Enterprise&dm_i=4X7B,C3V8,3LJY8F,1COHH,1

Bounce back loans launched (4 May 2020)

Small businesses in Britain can now apply for quick and easy to access loans of up to £50,000. Businesses will be able to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000 with the cash arriving within days. Loans will be 100% government backed for lenders, and businesses can apply online through a short and simple form.

Click here to [apply](#).

Clear your head campaign (1 May 2020)

The Scottish Government has launched a new campaign to help people cope during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 'clear your head' campaign highlights ways you can look after yourself whilst staying at home.

View the campaign [here](#).

Guidance on construction sector (1 May 2020)

The Scottish Government has published Guidance on construction sites and associated works that can continue under specific conditions. It covers:

- Non-essential services
- Essential Projects
- Compliance and future development

Read the guidance [here](#).

Treasury to cut tax on PPE (30 April 2020)

PPE purchased by care homes, businesses, charities and individuals to protect against Covid-19 will be free from VAT for a three-month period. The move will save businesses and care homes more than £100m.

Read more [here](#).

Support scheme now open (30 April 2020)

The Scottish Government have opened their support scheme for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and newly self-employed people this afternoon. An extra £100m will be available to firms. The three funds available are:

- Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund
- Creative, tourism and hospitality enterprises hardship fund
- Newly self-employed hardship fund

Find the support [here](#).

Primary care to stay open over May public holidays (28 April 2020)

GP services and community pharmacies have been asked to remain open on the May public holidays, with NHS 24 operating with an increased number of call handlers.

Read more [here](#).

Use of face coverings (28 April 2020)

The Scottish government has issued guidance on the use of face coverings during COVID-19. They are recommending using face coverings when you are entering enclosed spaces where it is hard to social distance, such as supermarkets and public transport. It is important that you wash your hands before applying and removing the covering and wash your covering after each use.

Given that the evidence of impact on transmission is relatively weak, the public use of facial coverings is not being made mandatory and will not be enforced at this stage.

Read the guidance [here](#).

New skills for furloughed workers (28 April 2020)

Skills Development Scotland have launched a new online platform to encourage furloughed employees to learn new skills. The My World of Work platform has thousands of free learning materials from companies such as Amazon, Open University and IBM. This is a great opportunity to learn something new to enhance your career.

View the portal [here](#).

New loan scheme for small businesses (27 April 2020)

Small businesses are to benefit from a new fast-tracked finance scheme which will provide loans of between £2,000 and £50,000 with a 100% government-backed guarantee for lenders. Businesses can apply easily online and the first 12 months will be interest free. No repayments will be due during the first 12 months.

Read more [here](#).

Furloughed workers to receive full parental leave entitlement (27 April 2020)

Furloughed workers who are taking paid parental or adoption leave will be paid based on their usual earnings rather than a furloughed pay rate. This applies to maternity pay, paternity pay, shared paternal pay, parental bereavement pay and adoption pay.

Read more [here](#).

Framework for decision making (24 April 2020)

The Scottish Government has published a document outlining how decisions will be taken to control coronavirus (COVID-19) while restoring a degree of normality to everyday life. The document included:

- Preparing for transition
- Renew- living with the virus
- Options for imposing or easing restrictions
- Controlling the pandemic and recovering
- Framework for decisions

Read the framework [here](#).

Information for the bereaved (23 April 2020)

The UK Government has published a support document for the bereaved. The document includes:

- Funeral preparation
- Death registration
- Financial support
- Emotional support

Read the document [here](#).

Scottish Enterprise welcomes more support for businesses affected by COVID-19 (22 April 2020)

Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop has stated that an extra £100m will be available to firms suffering hardship and the newly self-employed. Applications for the funding will be open by the end of the month and the FindBusinessSupport website will be updated with all the relevant information for those seeking to access the funds.

[Read more here](#).

Business support finder tool (21 April 2020)

The UK Government has launched an online platform to help businesses easily access the financial support they are eligible for during the coronavirus pandemic. Owners will fill out a quick online questionnaire and then be directed to a list of financial support available to them.

[Click here for the support finder tool](#).

Extra support for Northern Ireland (20 April 2020)

The UK Government has confirmed an extra £50m of funding to help Northern Ireland tackle COVID-19. This takes the total funding the UK Government has made available to the Northern Ireland Executive to support its efforts to tackle coronavirus to almost £1.2 billion.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis, said, "The additional £50 million for the Northern Ireland Executive announced today will help bolster vital public services as they respond to the challenges of Coronavirus."

Read more [here](#).

Companies House support for businesses (20 April 2020)

Companies House are giving businesses affected by COVID-19 more time to update their records and avoid being struck off the register. They are temporarily pausing the strike-off process to prevent businesses dissolving. They will also be sympathetic to businesses who have been issued with late penalties.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is now open (20 April 2020)

The HMRC portal for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is now open. Businesses are able to claim £2,500 a month towards staff wages. HMRC has 500 staff operating the scheme and millions of people across the UK are expected to benefit from the scheme.

[Click here for the online portal](#).

The Government have also published a step by step guide for employers to help them while applying for the scheme. [Read it here](#).

Guidance for consumers on food during COVID-19 (17 April 2020)

The UK government have provided advice to maintain good food hygiene during the COVID-19 outbreak. The advice mentions points such as:

- Hygiene at home
- Hygiene when shopping
- Social distancing while shopping
- Takeaway food

Read the full advice [here](#).

Loan scheme expands for large businesses (17 April 2020)

The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme has been expanded to cover more businesses.

Ahead of its launch on Monday, The Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, said all firms with a turnover of more than £45 million will now be able to apply for up to £25 million of finance, and up to £50 million for firms with a turnover of more than £250 million. Business with turnovers of more than £500 million was originally not eligible for the scheme. The change will help ensure even more firms can benefit from the support.

Read more [here](#).

Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC) launches initiative to support the construction industry (16 April 2020)

The i-Con initiative is a bid to support the built environment sector during the current global coronavirus crisis. It offers three key elements:

- Innovation Challenge Fund
- Knowledge Hub
- An Online Learning Platform

The fund will be available through an online collaboration portal. CSIC would like to hear from industry partners and stakeholders who are facing an immediate challenge in the current crisis, and from industry and academic experts who can respond to these challenges.

Read more [here](#).

Furlough scheme cut-off date extended (16 April 2020)

Thousands more employees will be able to receive support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme as the eligibility date has been extended to 19 March 2020. The change makes the scheme more generous and will help a lot of people.

Read more [here](#).

Added information for those who work in the construction sector in Scotland and Northern Ireland (16 April 2020)

Following on from a letter that Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, issued to those who work in the construction sector on the 31st March. Guidance to those in Scotland and Northern Ireland has been updated.

Read more about the guidance for Scotland [here](#).

Read more about the guidance for Northern Ireland [here](#).

Read the letter in full [here](#).

Added information for those who work in retail in Scotland and Northern Ireland (16 April 2020)

Following on from a letter that Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, issued to those who work in retail on the 8th April. Guidance to those in Scotland and Northern Ireland has been updated.

Read more about the guidance for Scotland [here](#).

Read more about the guidance for Northern Ireland [here](#).

Read the letter in full [here](#).

Northern Ireland restrictions extended for 3 weeks (15 April 2020)

Northern Ireland's First Minister, Arlene Foster, has decided to extend the 'lockdown' to 9th May. In a press conference today, Deputy First Minister, Michelle O'Neil, said now was the time to "dig in, to stay strong and save lives". She added that as soon as the first wave of the virus is deemed to have passed, the executive would review its decision around restrictions.

Further grants available for Scottish businesses (15 April 2020)

The Scottish Government have announced the second phase of funding for businesses. Around £220m of further grants are available to businesses, including the self-employed. Included in the new packages is:

- 120 million to extend the Small Business Grant scheme
- A further £100 million fund is also being made available to protect self-employed people and viable micro and SME businesses

For more information [read here](#).

Secretary of State underlines commitment to support Northern Irish Businesses (15 April 2020)

Today the Secretary of State, Brandon Lewis, hosted a virtual meeting with business representatives in Northern Ireland to discuss the challenges brought by COVID-19.

He stated that he is committed to supporting businesses and ensuring they have all the information they need. He recognised the business leaders concerns and highlighted support packages including an additional £1.1bn given to the Northern Ireland Executive to support people and business in NI through COVID-19.

Read the statement [here](#).

Job retention scheme update (15 April 2020)

The UK Government has today published The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Sections 71 and 76) and stated that the HMRC are responsible for the payment and management of amounts to be paid under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The treasure direction can be [read here](#).

OFTEC extend registration of existing registered Technicians (14 April 2020)

In recognition that there will be limited working opportunities for the next while, OFTEC have extended all current business and technician registration for two months following their expiry date, free of charge. This will apply to all businesses that maintain their registration. The change will happen automatically, and they have stated they will monitor the situation and may have to extend the period further.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Protection for Business Tenants (14 April 2020)

The notice periods for commercial leases have been extended from 14 days to 14 weeks. Previously, commercial tenants served with a warning letter for non-payment of rent would have 14 days to pay outstanding rent. This has been extended due to the COVID-18 pandemic. It applies to all commercial property leases, including those where a warning issue has already been raised.

Read more [here](#).

Coastal business support (14 April 2020)

The Scottish Government are helping coastal businesses and third sector organisations who are affected by COVID-19 by providing £7.2 million Scottish Crown Estate fund which is devolved to councils.

The fund which is from Scottish Crown Estate net revenues is normally used for projects delivering coastal community benefit. This is on top of the £2.2 billion package of business support already announced by the Scottish Government.

Read more [here](#).

£600m COVID-19 funding for Scotland (14 April 2020)

Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack, has today welcomed additional funding of £600m to help Scotland respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Business and individuals in Scotland will also benefit from UK-wide support measures. This includes a £330 billion package of loans and guarantees for businesses, access to the Job Retention Scheme and support for the self-employed.

Read more [here](#).

Adoption Support fund (14 April 2020)

The UK Government have announced they will provide £8 million funding for adoptive family's needs. This will focus on online help and couples therapy to help meet needs arising from the outbreak of coronavirus.

Read more [here](#).

Furlough Webinar (9 April 2020)

If you need help understanding the furlough scheme, then make sure you register for the free Employment and Furlough FAQs webinar hosted by SCDI and Addleshaw Goddard. The webinar starts at 10 am on Tuesday 14 April and lasts one hour.

Register [here](#).

GPs to remain open over Easter (9 April 2020)

General practices and community pharmacies will remain open on Good Friday and Easter Monday to help relieve pressure on out-of-hours services. GPs will be open to offer treatment for non-coronavirus (COVID-19) related health issues, where it is safe to do so.

Patients with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms are asked to check nhsinform.scot/coronavirus first for advice or dial NHS 24 on 111, day or night, if their symptoms worsen or do not improve after seven days.

Letter to the manufacturing industry (8 April 2020)

The UK Government's Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma has issued a letter to those working in manufacturing in the UK. The letter states that 'there is no restriction on manufacturing continuing under the current rules and provides guidance on how to keep safe while working.

Read the full letter [here](#).

Providing unpaid care (8 April 2020)

The UK Government has issued guidance for anyone who cares, unpaid, for friends or family during the coronavirus outbreak. It includes information about:

- Caring for and protecting the vulnerable
- Looking after yourself during this time
- Accessing alternative care
- If you need time off work
- What to do if the person you care for develops symptoms of COVID-19

Read the full guidance [here](#).

Scottish Government Guidance for the construction industry (6 April 2020)

The Scottish Government released a statement announcing that all non essential work should stop. They state that work on construction sites unless it is for essential projects should stop immediately. According to the government, essential projects include:

- those to create or repurpose facilities which will be used directly in COVID-19 related activities
- projects to create or repurpose facilities which will be used to accommodate key workers, or free up space in facilities to be used directly in COVID-19 related activities
- projects which are considered essential public services
- the repair and maintenance of critical infrastructure

To provide some clarity the Scottish Government has published new guidance for the construction industry. This guidance goes on to say essential projects include:

- the essential maintenance and repair (but not improvement) of buildings including private homes and commercial properties. Routine maintenance should be deferred. and that
- any such project can only continue operating if it can comply with the guidance on the safety and welfare of people.

You can read the guidance [here](#).

Business Continuity Planning (7 April 2020)

The UK Government has published business continuity management tips in the UK Government's toolkit, which highlights issues you need to consider. Business continuity management (BCM) is a process that helps manage risks to the smooth running of an organisation or delivery of a service, ensuring continuity of critical functions in the event of a disruption, and effective recovery afterwards.

Learn more [here](#).

Relaxation of EU and GB Drivers hours (7 April 2020)

There is currently a temporary relaxation of the enforcement of the EU and GB drivers' house rules which has been extended to run until 23:59 on Tuesday 21 April 2020.

This relaxation of drivers' hours is an exceptional contingency measure. It must be used only where necessary, otherwise the normal drivers' hours should be followed.

Please read more [here](#).

Transport and travel guide (7 April 2020)

The UK Government has released guidance on transport and travel for both personal and business use. It states that you should only use public transport if you really must and how to keep yourself safe while using it. Such as:

- Avoiding rush hours if you can
- Wash your hands often

- Follow advice of staying away from others

[Click here](#) to read more.

New Government information leaflet (7 April 2020)

The UK Government has published a new information leaflet on what to do to help stop the spread of coronavirus, including information on symptoms and government support. It includes information on helping to stop the spread of the infection, symptoms and help for businesses and workers. View it [here](#).

Procurement Policy Note (7 April 2020)

The UK Government has introduced the Procurement Policy Note to set guidance for public bodies on payment to their suppliers so that there is business continuity through the COVID-19 crisis and after. This is so that authorities are helping their suppliers who are struggling currently, to resume normal business after the crisis. The guidance mentions:

- Payments
- Other contractual reliefs such as extension or waiver
- Force Majeure
- Accelerating payments of invoices

Read the full guidance [here](#).

They have also realised guidance on the use of procurement cards. They are recommending organisations should encourage the use of procurement cards which can improve efficiency and accelerate payments to suppliers while still ensuring robust controls. Read more [here](#).

Social Distancing for Businesses update (6 April 2020)

The Scottish Government has updated its Social distancing guidance for business. They are putting two questions to businesses:

- Is what you do essential or material to the effort against the virus or to the wellbeing of society?
- Are you able to demonstrate and give confidence to your workforce that you can consistently practice safe social distancing and comply with ALL other standard health and safety requirements?

If the answer to either of the above questions is no, the advice of the Chief Medical Officer on a precautionary basis is to close.

[Click here](#) for further information regarding this topic

Helping the UK Government with manufacturing tests or PPE (6 April 2020)

The UK Government is looking for companies who can help with the manufacture of:

- testing consumables and equipment
- personal protective equipment (PPE) for laboratories
- new or existing types of coronavirus tests for antigens or antibodies

If you can help with any of the above, please [click here](#) for more information.

Cyber Resilience Notice (6 April 2020)

The Scottish Government's Cyber Resilience Unit has launched the 'Cyber Resilience Notice' to help both businesses and the general public in keeping safe from COVID-19 related scams. There has been a significant rise in these and over the next few months the unit will share important information to keep your details secure.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Face mask use (6 April 2020)

The UK Government has stated that there is little evidence to show that the use of face masks, outside of clinical or care settings, is beneficial. Therefore, PHE does not advise masks in public places.

They do recommend that employers should ensure that:

- spaces in the workplace are optimised to allow social distancing to occur, wherever possible
- signs are visible in the workplace reminding employees not to attend work if they have a fever or cough and to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- employees are provided with hand sanitiser for frequent use and regular breaks to allow them to wash their hands for 20 seconds

Read more [here](#).

Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland Statement (3 April 2020)

The Chief Executive of HSENI, Robert Kidd, has assured workers that all complaints and queries related to COVID-19 will continue to be dealt with correctly. They have received an increase of 1800% complaints in a week – with concerns focused on the issue of social distancing in the workplace. Robert said that they have introduced new methods to cope with the surge and that they have had to adapt quickly due to the crisis.

Read the full statement [here](#).

Supply Chain help (3 April 2020)

If your business's supply chain has been disrupted by COVID-19 then look at Scottish Enterprise's guide on supply chain mapping to help identify risk points in your supply chain.

This will help you gain an understanding of the issue and offer alternative suppliers who can help you out in this difficult time.

[View it here.](#)

Employee Ownership Sector Support (3rd April 2020)

If you work within an employee owned company, please [click here](#) for advice on how the Employee Ownership Association can help you during the Coronavirus outbreak. They cover topics such as:

- Job Retention Scheme
- Financial support available
- What support EOA IS offering
- Upcoming EOA events

Redundancy support during Coronavirus (1 April 2020)

Skills Development Scotland are offering free advice and support, as the lead agency in PACE – Partnership Action for Continuing Employment. PACE is supported by 22 organisations including the Scottish Government. They understand the current labour market and have a vast knowledge with helping people who face redundancy.

This a free and fast form of support for both employers and employees.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Climate Change Plan to be delayed (1 April 2020)

The Scottish Government's Climate Change Secretary, Roseanna Cunningham, has announced that they will not be publishing the Climate Change Plan at the end of April.

She stated that it was no longer feasible or appropriate to publish the plan due to the current coronavirus crisis. And that their work is not on pause, it will continue but they now have to operate in a changed landscape.

Edinburgh Members – Clarity to construction workers from Edinburgh Council (1 April 2020)

After Nicola Sturgeon advised that all construction projects should cease during the coronavirus outbreak, other than delivering essential buildings like hospitals. The city of Edinburgh Council has written to all contractors delivering non-essential work to follow the guidance.

Full statement from Edinburgh Council:

“The council expects its contractors engaged on construction projects to ensure the health and safety of their employees and sub-contractors and therefore to follow Scottish Government advice to suspend work. The council encourages its contractors to engage with it to agree the steps necessary to address the risks of COVID-19, including suspension of

works on site. This is an unprecedented situation which the council anticipates will be dealt with as “force majeure” in its contracts and as such contractors will be excused from completing their projects by the contractual completion dates, in which case such dates will be appropriately extended. This will excuse contractors from any delay damages due to the consequence of COVID-19 – contractors should liaise with their council contact to agree any other consequences of suspension of work (e.g. security of sites).”

Low value construction adjudication service for SMEs (1 April 2020)

RICS has begun providing a low value construction adjudication service to give UK SMEs a simple and cost-effective procedure that will make solving disputes more accessible and quicker for lower value claims. Something that is badly needed in these challenging times to free up SME cash flow.

Check out the document titled Low Value Dispute Model Adjudication Procedure on our [homepage](#) or under the Financial Guidance heading in our member zone.

Edinburgh members – Edinburgh Council, Planning and Building Standards update (1 April 2020)

The Planning and Building Standards department within Edinburgh Council are trying to adapt to the constant changes met from coronavirus and they have let us know of their current arrangements:

- Please do not attend Waverley Court. The Planning and Building Standards Helpdesk and Counter area are closed, and surveyors are working from home.
- Online applications are still be accepted and validated.
- They have suspended the Pre-Application Advice Service to allow them to concentrate our efforts on processing current applications and enforcement cases

Please follow the [Edinburgh Planning blog](#) which provides their service updates.

Northern Ireland’s statement on the importance of the construction industry (1 April 2020)

Today, Northern Ireland’s Finance Minister, Conor Murphy, released a statement regarding the importance of the construction industry during [coronavirus](#) and complying with PHA guidelines. He realises that many businesses will be struggling right now, and their financial viability and staff safety will be at risk.

Therefore, he stated that contracting authorities should support suppliers at risk so that they can cope with the current crisis and be able to resume normal service and fulfil their contractual obligations once the outbreak is over.

He understands that the construction sector continues to support vital public services such as transport and hospital builds during this time. He emphasised the importance of sticking to guidelines and ended the statement with, “I urge all construction companies continuing to providing essential services to comply fully with the Public Health Agency guidelines on Covid-19.”

Read the full statement [here](#).

Letter to the Construction Sector (31 March 2020)

The UK Government has issued a letter from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma to the construction sector. The letter states that the industry has worked to develop Site Operating Procedures (SOP), that were published by the Construction Leadership Council. These align with the latest guidance and as this health guidance updates, the SOP will reflect any changes. While thanking the construction industry, Alok stated, “I am in regular contact with industry leaders about the developing situation that faces the sector. And I am fully committed to continuing to engage through the coming days, weeks and beyond.”

Read the letter in [full here](#).

Guide to looking after yourself (31 March 2020)

The UK Government have released an easy-read guide to looking after your feelings and your body. This guide provides advice on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

[Click here](#) to view the guide

Call for business to help make ventilators (31 March 2020)

The UK is looking for businesses to help them in the supply of ventilators and ventilator components as part of their coronavirus response.

As well as manufacturers, they need businesses with the following skills:

- design/specification
- rapid prototyping
- contract/product assembly
- certification/regulation/testing
- logistics
- medical training

[Click here](#) if you are interested

Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do (30 March 2020)

The UK Government has published a document stating what you can and can't do in the time of coronavirus. This includes information such as:

- Going to or not going to work
- Helping the vulnerable
- Seeing friends and family
- Where you can exercise
- Going to appointments
- What will happen if you break the rules

Click [here](#) to view the Coronavirus outbreak FAQs

Governments invest in mental health (30 March 2020)

The Scottish Government has confirmed they will add £3.8 million extra funding for mental health services to help them with increased demand due to coronavirus.

The funding will focus on expanding the NHS 24 Mental Health Hub and Breathing Space telephone helpline and web support service as well as providing extra capacity for Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CCBT).

Minister for Mental Health Clare Haughey stated, "Dedicated mental health professionals provide high quality care across Scotland – but in these trying times they are needed more than ever. The current situation around COVID-19, including concerns around social distancing, is an understandable cause of anxiety for many people."

For more information, [click here](#).

The UK Government has also issued extra funding and new advice to support mental health during this time. This includes links to helpful sources and online support. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Government cracks down on false coronavirus information (30 March 2020)

With up to 70 false narratives a week being recorded, the Government has introduced special units to combat false and misleading narratives about coronavirus, ensuring the public has the right information to protect themselves and save lives.

Here is five easy steps to follow to identify misleading information:

- Source - make sure information comes from a trusted source
- Headline - always read beyond the headline
- Analyse - check the facts
- Retouched - does the image or video look as though it has been doctored?
- Error - lookout for bad grammar and spelling

For more information, including how to spot and deal with suspicious emails related to coronavirus and mitigate and defend against malware and ransomware, [click here](#).

Guidance on Supplier Support (30 March 2020)

The Scottish Government's Economy Secretary, Fiona Hyslop has released guidance on how public sector organisations are to support suppliers during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance included:

- modifying terms of contracts to offer contractors relief
- agreeing interim payment proposals and modifications to current contracts
- accelerating payment practices to ensure suppliers are paid as quickly as possible

To read the guidance, [click here](#)

Rules on carrying on annual leave to be relaxed (27 March 2020)

Workers who have not taken their statutory annual leave will be allowed to carry it over for the next two years. Up to 4 weeks of unused leave can be carried over. This flexibility will help business during a time where the need their workers the most.

For more information, [click here](#)

Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) (27 March 2020)

MCS have advised accredited businesses that registration to MCS is still required to be upheld during the current Covid-19 situation and registration fees are required to be paid to uphold registration. It may be the case your business was due to be audited in the coming months. If a planned audit cannot be completed due to the current Covid-19 situation your business should contact your certification body, MCS have advised that audits could be carried out past the anniversary date of the MCS registration.

For more information: <https://mcscertified.com/installer-advice-covid-19/>

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) (27 March 2020)

Last night the Government announced the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). The scheme is available to self-employed individuals including members of partnerships who have lost income due to COVID-19.

HMRC will contact you if you are eligible for the scheme but please be aware of scams.

A taxable grant of 80% of trading profits (averaged over tax year 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19) up to a maximum of £2,500 per month is payable.

More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>.

Gas Safe Register – ACS Certification (26 March 2020)

The Gas Safe Register has issued the following information regarding ACS certification expiration and carrying out gas work during the time of Coronavirus precautions:

“Whilst Engineers are expected to take all reasonable measures to maintain their ACS qualifications, including planning ahead where possible, we appreciate that the current situation means this is not feasible. Maintaining gas safety competence is essential for registered gas engineers.

If engineers take all reasonable steps to update their expired ACS certification as soon as possible after the restrictions are lifted, and continue to work safely, HSE will permit registered gas engineers to remain on the Register for an additional period during the peak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) measures. Engineers may be required to demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to renew their qualifications. Engineers **MUST** maintain their Gas Safe registration during any extension of their ACS qualification period if they are carrying out gas work. This is a temporary measure and does not remove the standing requirement for registered gas engineers to maintain their ACS certification and renew certification every 5 years”.

For further advice and guidance on carrying out gas work during this period, please [click here](#)

Businesses and social distancing guideline (26 March 2020)

The Scottish Government has provided guidelines for businesses and social distancing in Scotland. The First Minister stated that, “Business should look critically at their role and operations. Non-essential business sectors – like construction (unless it is essential construction, such as a hospital) – should close unless and until we can all be clear how operations can be undertaken safely. We will work with the sector - and others - to consider if it is possible to produce appropriate guidance on that specific point. Unless and until such guidance is issued, non-essential construction sites should stay closed.

All individuals and businesses that are not being specifically required to close should consider a key set of questions– and at all times work on the precautionary basis:

- Is what you do essential or material to the effort against the virus or to the wellbeing of society?
- if so, can your staff work from home?
- if not can you practise safe social distancing and comply with ALL other standard health and safety requirements.

If the answer to none of the above questions is yes, our advice on a precautionary basis is to close.”

[Click here](#) to read the statement in full

Coronavirus Fair Work Statement (26 March 2020)

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Trades Union have released a joint statement on fair work expectations. The statement gives in detail, the Fair Work principles you should be applying through the crisis. This includes:

- Paying workers while they are sick or self-isolating
- Ensuring all workers are provided with clear and comprehensive information on work-related risks on an ongoing basis
- Protecting the position of contracted workers as well as core staff
- Protecting the health and safety of all workers, but particularly frontline or key workers who face particular risks
- Supporting those with caring responsibilities
- Ensuring all workers follow health protection advice to isolate either themselves or as part of their households

To read the statement in full, [click here](#)

Vehicle owners to be granted MOT exemption (26 March 2020)

Vehicle owners will be granted a 6-month exemption from MOT testing, enabling them to continue to travel to work where this absolutely cannot be done from home, or shop for necessities.

All cars, vans and motorcycles which usually would require an MOT test will be exempted from needing a test from 30 March 2020. Vehicles must be kept in a roadworthy condition, and garages will remain open for essential repair work. Drivers can be prosecuted if driving unsafe vehicles.

For more information, [click here](#)

Northern Ireland acts to support suppliers and businesses impacted by Coronavirus (25 March 2020)

Northern Ireland's Finance Minister, Connor Murphy, has outlined steps taken to ensure Government departments pay their suppliers as quickly as possible to maintain cash flow and protect jobs.

He has instructed all Government departments to continue paying suppliers who provide goods and services for which demand has reduced or been paused temporarily due to Covid-19. This will help cash flow through the supply chain and pay salaries and protect jobs. It will help suppliers who are struggling now to resume normal delivery when the outbreak is over.

OFTEC temporarily extend qualifications that expire during Coronavirus restrictions (25 March 2020)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, OFTEC is temporarily extending qualifications that will expire. They will automatically extend any technician's qualifications which expire before 31st May for a period of 3 months, subject to review of government advice.

The OFTEC Scheme Committee hope that this temporary allowance of the scheme in recognition of the challenging times ahead is of some relief to registered technicians who may be called upon to support the general public and those who most need heating and hot water during the height of this pandemic.

For more information: <https://www.oftec.org/technicians/extending-qualifications-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Support for Businesses in Scotland and Northern Ireland (25 March 2020)

The UK Government has published a [Scotland specific page](#) and a [Northern Ireland specific page](#) on their website with guidance for people in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Support for Apprentices (25 March 2020)

Skills Development Scotland have published [FAQs](#) for apprentices worried about the impact that the unprecedented disruption of COVID-19 is causing.

For more help please contact your Regional Training Officer or SNIPEF Training on 0131 524 1245 or training@snipef.org.

Commercial insurance (24 March 2020)

Most commercial insurance policies are unlikely to cover pandemics or unspecified notifiable diseases, such as COVID-19. However, those businesses which have an insurance policy that covers government ordered closure and pandemics or government ordered closure and unspecified notifiable disease should be able to make a claim (subject to the terms and conditions of their policy).

Insurance policies differ significantly, so businesses are encouraged to check the terms and conditions of their specific policy and contact their providers.

For more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees>

Virtual and Local Business Support from Business Gateway (24 March 2020)

Business Gateway is being responsive and reactive to the needs and challenges Scottish Businesses face due to COVID-19. They have free services that may be useful to you, both online and locally. This includes helpful webinars and online tutorials.

For more information: <https://www.bgateway.com/resources/coronavirus-support>

Effective 'lockdown' to be introduced (24 March 2020)

The First Minister has called for an immediate stop to public gatherings of more than two people in Scotland in a bid to flatten the curve of Covid-19 spread and protect the NHS. Following a meeting of the UK Government's COBR committee, an effective ban is in place on gatherings in public places, excluding household groups or in a work-related capacity.

In addition – as the First Minister set out earlier – all non-essential shops should be closed, as well as public spaces such as libraries, communal parks and playgrounds, and places of worship. The ban extends to ceremonial social events, such as weddings and christenings, with the exception of funerals which will be restricted to immediate family only.

From 23 March 2020 the only permissible reasons to leave your home are as follows:

- to shop for basic necessities and that should be limited to once a day
- to take exercise once a day - but alone or with your own household, not in groups
- for medical reasons or to care for a vulnerable person
- to travel to essential work if that cannot be done at home. Further guidance to employers is pending.

For more information: <https://www.gov.scot/news/effective-lockdown-to-be-introduced/>

Guidance for UK businesses trading internationally (24 March 2020)

UK businesses that export or deliver goods and services abroad and have been impacted by the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) can access support through the Department for International Trade. DIT can support businesses by:

- providing assistance with customs authorities to ensure smooth clearance of their products
- offering advice on intellectual property and other issues with business continuity

You can call the business support helpline on 0300 456 3565 and visit the [dedicated business support website](#) for more information. This team will discuss the challenges faced by UK businesses at home and overseas to understand how best the department can support them.

More information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses-trading-internationally>

Further businesses and premises to close (24 March 2020)

On 23 March the Government, stepped up measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus and save lives. All non-essential premises must now close. Takeaway and delivery services may remain open and operational in line with guidance on Friday 20 March. Online retail is still open and encouraged and postal and delivery service will run as normal. Retail and public premises which we expect to remain open must:

- Ensure a distance of two meters between customers and shop assistants; and
- Let people enter the shop only in small groups, to ensure that spaces are not crowded.
- Queue control is required outside of shops and other essential premises that remain open.

Parks will remain open but only for individuals and households to exercise once a day. Communal spaces within parks such as playgrounds and football pitches will be closed.

For a full list of business closures and more information:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close?utm_source=77e9a975-dcba-4146-b1f9-

[d36e8d01465f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-protection-for-businesses-with-ban-on-evictions-for-commercial-tenants-who-miss-rent-payments?utm_source=e34139d1-5c25-473c-98c4-4e67b356f642&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

Commercial Tenant Rent (24 March 2020) FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Commercial tenants who cannot pay their rent because of coronavirus will be protected from eviction; the government has announced.

Many landlords and tenants are already having conversations and reaching voluntary arrangements about rental payments due shortly, but the government recognises businesses struggling with their cashflow due to coronavirus remain worried about eviction.

These measures, included in the emergency Coronavirus Bill currently going through Parliament, will mean no business will be forced out of their premises if they miss a payment in the next 3 months.

The latest measure builds on the package of support for businesses already announced.

For more information: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-protection-for-businesses-with-ban-on-evictions-for-commercial-tenants-who-miss-rent-payments?utm_source=e34139d1-5c25-473c-98c4-4e67b356f642&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Online Isolation Note (23 March 2020)

People unable to work for more than seven days because of coronavirus (COVID-19) can obtain an isolation note through a new online service.

Isolation notes will provide employees with evidence for their employers that they have been advised to self-isolate due to coronavirus, either because they have symptoms or they live with someone who has symptoms, and so cannot work.

As isolation notes can be obtained without contacting a doctor, this will reduce the pressure on GP surgeries and prevent people needing to leave their homes.

For the first seven days off work, employees can self-certify so they don't need any evidence for their employer. After that, employers may ask for evidence of sickness absence. Where this is related to having symptoms of coronavirus or living with someone who has symptoms, the isolation note can be used to provide evidence of the advice to self-isolate.

The notes can be accessed through the [NHS website](#) and [NHS 111 online](#). After answering a few questions, an isolation note will be emailed to the user. If they don't have an email address, they can have the note sent to a trusted family member or friend, or directly to their employer. The service can also be used to generate an isolation note on behalf of someone else.

What to do if someone develops symptoms on site? (23 March 2020)

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in the business or workplace they should be sent home and advised to follow the [stay at home guidance](#).

If they need clinical advice, they should go online to [NHS 111](#) or call 111 if they don't have internet access. In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.

It is not necessary to close the business or workplace or send any staff home, unless government policy changes. Keep monitoring the [government response page](#) for the latest details.

New Scottish Forum (22 March 2020)

A new forum of construction bodies comprising SNIPEF, SELECT, CECA Scotland, SBF, FMB, LEIA, BESA, NRFC, the Scaffolding Association and the Stone Federation has been established. It is hoped that by joining together we can work with the Scottish Government identifying measures which would help our industries during COVID-19.

The Construction Industry Coronavirus (CICV) Forum, as it is known has already [issued a letter](#) to Fiona Hyslop, Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture, urging her to support the Scottish construction sector.

SNIPEF Members are encouraged to lobby their own MSP's asking for their support using the following [letter](#). You can find your MSP by clicking [here](#).

Gas Safe Register (21 March 2020)

Gas Safe Register has been reviewing the ongoing COVID-19 situation with HSE, and has published updated guidance on their website.

<https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/covid-19-advice-and-guidance/>

Social distancing (21 March 2020)

The government has urged the public to take further steps to protect themselves and the wider population from the coronavirus, including:

- Everyone to stay at home unless they need to get essential supplies such as food and medicines.
- All those able to work from home to do so, unless their work is essential.
- Only traveling if absolutely necessary - while public transport won't stop, this should only be used for essential travel – for example by key workers to travel to and from work.

The measures will be reviewed on a monthly basis, and are being implemented across the whole of the UK in agreement with the devolved administrations. If needed, the government will enforce these measures by law.

This will not affect supermarkets or retailers that supply fuel, medicines and other vital goods, which will continue to be open as normal for the public

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-further-measures-on-social-distancing?utm_source=2cae8217-c514-4e1a-8555-9af53317e776&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Supply chains affected by COVID-19 (21 March)

If your supply chain has been affected by coronavirus (COVID-19), the Department for International Trade (DIT) can help you to find alternative suppliers. The department has relationships with a global network of businesses across the world and will be able to advise you on the options available.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses-trading-internationally>

Job Retention Scheme (20 March 2020)

All UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis.

HMRC will reimburse 80% of "furloughed" workers wage costs, up to a cap of £2,500 per month.

Employers are required to designate affected employees as "furloughed" workers, notify employees of this and submit earnings information to HMRC on a new online portal which is being set up.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

Deferred VAT and Income Tax Payments (20 March)

VAT payments are being deferred for 3 months and if you are self-employed, Income Tax payments due in July 2020 will be deferred to January 2021.

VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the government as normal.

This is an automatic offer with no applications required.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

Closure of schools, childcare and other educational settings (20 March 2020)

The Government is asking schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders and other registered childcare settings to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children where they can.

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above, they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Critical workers (20 March 2020)

The Scottish Government has produced “Guidance on critical childcare and learning provision for key workers” which identifies key workers falling into 3 categories as follows:

- **Category 1** – Health and Care workers directly supporting COVID response, and associated staff; Health and Care workers supporting life threatening emergency work, as well as critical primary and community care provision; Energy suppliers (small numbers identified as top priority already); staff providing childcare/learning for other category 1 staff.
- **Category 2** – All other Health and Care workers, and wider public sector workers providing emergency/critical welfare services (e.g Fire, Police, Prisons, Social Workers, etc), as well as those supporting our Critical National Infrastructure, without whom serious damage to the welfare of the people of Scotland could be caused.
- **Category 3** – All workers (private, public or third sector) without whom there could be a significant impact on Scotland (but where the response to COVID-19, or the ability to perform essential tasks to keep the country running, would not be severely compromised).

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus---school-and-elc-closures-guidance-on-critical-childcare-provision-for-key-workers/>

MOTs for cars, motorcycles and light vans (20 March 2020)

DVSA has suspended MOTs (annual tests) for all heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and public service vehicles (PSVs) for up to 3 months from 21 March 2020.

The Department for Transport continues to keep MOT testing under review and will provide an update in due course.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/driving-tests-and-mots-for-heavy-vehicles-suspended-for-up-to-3-months-to-help-tackle-spread-of-coronavirus?utm_source=03acbaa7-a0da-4716-aeab-e574412e03fd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Critical workers (19 March 2020)

A full [list of critical workers and further information](#) has been published by the UK Government. In this the Government states that this includes staff needed for the oil, gas, electricity and water sector including sewerage (Utilities).

A secondary source has received confirmation from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) that while the definition of critical workers does not include any type of firm within the construction supply chain, it would include tradespeople undertaking emergency repairs.

SNIEF has written to the BEIS, the Scottish Government and NI Assembly for clarification that our members would be classified as critical workers and the scope of work this extends to.