

Written 11 May 2020

## C19 BUSINESS NEWS UPDATE

### MORE SPACE FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

The Government has released details on its guidance for Local Authorities on managing their road networks in response to C19.

The Secretary of state for Transport comments:

“The coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has had a terrible impact on the lives and health of many UK citizens, as well as severe economic consequences. But it has also resulted in cleaner air and quieter streets, transforming the environment in many of our towns and cities.

And millions of people have discovered, or rediscovered, cycling and walking. In some places, there has been a 70% rise in the number of people on bikes - for exercise, or for safe, socially distanced travel.

When the country gets back to work, we need them to carry on cycling, and to be joined by millions more. With public transport capacity reduced, the roads in our largest cities may not be able to cope without it.

We also know that in the new world, pedestrians will need more space. Indications are that there is a significant link between COVID-19 recovery and fitness. Active travel can help us become more resilient.”

That is why towns and cities in the UK and around the world are making or proposing radical changes to their roads to accommodate active travel.

We recognise this moment for what it is: a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change in how we make short journeys in our towns and cities. According to the National Travel Survey, in 2017-18 over 40% of urban journeys were under 2 miles – perfectly suited to walking and cycling.

Active travel is affordable, delivers significant health benefits, has been shown to improve wellbeing, mitigates congestion, improves air quality, and has no carbon emissions at the point of use. Towns and cities based around active travel will have happier and healthier citizens as well as lasting local economic benefits.

The government therefore expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians. Such changes will help embed altered behaviours and demonstrate the positive effects of active travel. I’m pleased to see that many authorities have already begun to do this, and I urge you all to consider how you can begin to make use of the tools in this guidance, to make sure you do what is necessary to ensure transport networks support recovery from the COVID-19 emergency and provide a lasting legacy of greener, safer transport.”

See: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities?utm\\_source=9a88c9cc-fb6a-4017-ae83-b15086eb383b&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities?utm_source=9a88c9cc-fb6a-4017-ae83-b15086eb383b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

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## **ACTIONS FOR FE COLLEGES AND PROVIDERS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK**

Guidance for further education (FE) providers on maintaining education and skills training, changes to funding arrangements, data collections and assessment.

See: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision?utm\\_source=360bfa1e-c4a7-416c-924d-fa88461e90e1&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision?utm_source=360bfa1e-c4a7-416c-924d-fa88461e90e1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

## **SCOTLAND - EMERGENCY LOAN FUND FOR SME HOUSEBUILDERS.**

Housebuilders are now able to apply for short-term loans of up to £1 million from the Scottish Government to support them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with liquidity issues due to the temporary closure of the housebuilding sector will be able to apply to a £100 million Scottish Government emergency loan fund.

The aims of this funds are:

- safeguard jobs and protect suppliers
- support post-coronavirus economic recovery and the continued supply of homes
- retain diversity of the housebuilding sector

SME housebuilders will be able to apply for loan support from 2pm on 18 May on the Scottish Government website. Full details on the criteria for the Fund will be available shortly.

Applicants should be a SME housebuilder with a turnover of £45 million or less per year, building five or more homes per annum. They should only apply for funding that is necessary for the short term. They will be asked to explain why existing support mechanisms are not sufficient for their business.

These loans have been capped at £1 million, most if the loans are expected to be repaid within two years with interest rates set at 2%. The minimum loan amount is £50,000.

See: <https://www.gov.scot/news/emergency-loan-fund-for-sme-housebuilders/>

## **SCOTLAND - CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND GRANT STATISTICS**

By the end of 5th May 2020, Local Authorities reported that over 71,000 applications have been submitted for the Small Business Grant Scheme and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grant Scheme across Scotland. Of these applications, 53,765 grants valuing £621m have been awarded.

The total number of reported applications fell between 28th April and 5th May. The fall is due to an improvement in reporting, with double counting significantly reduced now. As stated in previous publications, the number of applications reported represented a best estimate based on available

information and Scottish Government were aware that the reported number of applications for some local authorities included duplicate, resubmitted applications.

This occurred, for instance, when initial applications missed vital information such as bank details and some local authorities, using specific billing software, needed to ask applicants to resubmit forms. The billing software used by other local authorities allowed them to ask applicants to update information online, resulting in fewer or no duplicate applications in reported totals.

Almost all local authorities have now since removed or reduced the number of duplicate applications in reporting – presenting a more consistent measure of the number of applications received. Whilst Local Authorities have undertaken significant efforts to improve reporting, we advise that application totals still remain a best estimate for some Local Authorities.

Read Full report here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-fund-grant-statistics/>

## **WALES - COVID-19: SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS FROM JOBCENTRE PLUS**

The Employer Help website from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are offering a range of advice guides and tools to help your business overcome challenges associated with the coronavirus.

Whether your business needs to expand quickly, or you are worried about redundancies, you can discover advice you need on the next steps and the best ways to support your staff.

These include:

- advertise your vacancies
- financial support for your business
- support from Jobcentre Plus
- Coronavirus business support finder and more

Read Full report here: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/news-and-blogs/news/covid-19-support-employers-jobcentre-plus>

## **WALES - COVID-19: NEW FUNDING TO SUPPORT WELSH DAIRY FARMERS**

The Welsh Government have just announced funding for Welsh dairy farmers who have been hit hardest by the recent exceptional market conditions as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The dairy sector felt the immediate impact of the COVID19 pandemic with the closure of the food service and hospitality sectors.

To aid the sector during these trying times, The Welsh Government recently confirmed that eligible dairy farmers who have lost more than 25% of their income in April and subsequently May will be entitled to up to £10,000, to cover 70% of their lost income.

This will help ensure they can continue to operate without impacting animal welfare and the environment.

[Read Full press release here](#)

## **NORTHERN IRELAND - CORONAVIRUS: LAND & PROPERTY SERVICES OFFICE AND PHONE LINE CLOSURES**

Land & Property Services (LPS) offices and phone lines are closed to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Based on government measures announced to limit the spread of COVID-19, Land & Property Services offices and phone lines have been closed since 24 March. LPS Customer Information Centres are remaining closed until further notice.

### **Rates and Valuation**

The helpline for rates and valuation (0300 200 7801) and the helpline for Housing Benefit and Rate Relief (0300 200 7802) reopen on Monday 18 May at 9am.

If you have an urgent query, you can direct it to one of their mailboxes. Please be aware that your query may take longer than usual to be processed because LPS is currently focused on supporting the COVID-19 Business Support Grant Schemes.

Rates: [rating@lpsni.gov.uk](mailto:rating@lpsni.gov.uk)

Valuation: [valuation@lpsni.gov.uk](mailto:valuation@lpsni.gov.uk)

### **Land Registration**

The helpline for Land Registration (0300 200 7803) reopens on Monday 18 May at 9am. If you have an urgent query, you can direct it to: [CustomerInformation.LandRegistration@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:CustomerInformation.LandRegistration@finance-ni.gov.uk)

See: <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-land-property-services-office-and-phone-line-closures>

## **GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES ON OFFERING SERVICES AND VOLUNTEERS**

For businesses that would like to play a role in helping the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector's response to COVID-19, there is guidance available on how they can offer services and volunteers.

### Providing PPE supplies and/or services

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is creating a central database of offers from organisations, businesses, and publicly funded and voluntary bodies (including educational institutions) who wish to offer PPE (personal protective equipment) supplies or services to help respond to COVID-19.

### Voluntary offers for the NHS

Helpforce Assist is connecting the needs of NHS and social care organisations with voluntary offers of time and resources from businesses.

### Providing business skills

Business in the Community Northern Ireland's SKILLS MATCH programme aims to match businesspeople with projects tackling social challenges during COVID-19 and beyond.

### Share your business' support services

Community NI are providing a database where businesses can detail their support services and type of help they offer.

Read Full report here: <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-guidance-businesses-offering-services-and-volunteers>