



16 April 2020

Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for writing about the Government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19). During this difficult time for the country, we recognise the extreme disruption that coronavirus is having on people's lives, businesses, jobs, and on the nation's economy. The Government has been clear that it will take every step that it can to ensure that businesses are protected, and that the economy remains strong, which is why it has produced an unprecedented programme of support both for workers and for business.

We recognise that this situation affects everyone differently, and it is your own specific circumstance that has prompted you to write. Given the significant volumes of enquiries we are receiving during this exceptional period, and in order to try to share information with everyone who has written to us as quickly as we can, I am writing to provide links to the main sources of information and support available to assist you with your enquiry.

**Support for businesses** – the Business Support webpage is kept up to date with the latest information and guidance, including on the financial support available. You can access it at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support).

Commonly accessed information includes paying employees through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; claiming back statutory sick pay paid to employees due to coronavirus; help with tax, including deferral of VAT and self-assessment payments; business rates relief; business support grant funds; support for small and medium sized businesses through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; and support for large businesses through the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility.

The dedicated Business Support helpline can also provide information on the range of support available from Government to help businesses mitigate the effects of coronavirus: 0300 456 3565.

**Support for the self-employed** – information on all of the support available to the self-employed, including the new Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, is also available at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support), in the 'Self-employed people and sole traders' section.

The Business Support helpline can also provide information on the range of support available to the self-employed: 0300 456 3565.

**Business closures and operating your business safely** - to reduce social contact and help stop the spread of coronavirus, the Government has ordered certain businesses and venues to close. With the exception of these organisations, the Government has not required any other businesses to close – indeed it is important for business to carry on. You can find further information on business closures and operating your business safely at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support), in the 'Business Closures' section. This includes a link to sector specific guidance, where the direct link is [www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance).

**Guidance for employees** – guidance on going to work, staying at home, and the support available to employees is at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees)

**Individual employment issues** - businesses and employees can get advice on individual employment issues from Acas: [www.acas.org.uk/contact](http://www.acas.org.uk/contact). The Acas helpline can also be contacted on 0300 123 1100.

**Protections for consumers** – the Government has been made aware that a minority of retailers may be exploiting this situation for financial gain, which is completely unacceptable. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has created a COVID-19 taskforce to address and remedy these concerns and has set up an online form so that consumers and businesses can report a business behaving unfairly during the coronavirus outbreak. This form can be accessed at [www.coronavirus-business-complaint.service.gov.uk/](http://www.coronavirus-business-complaint.service.gov.uk/).

I am sorry that, due to the current volume of enquiries we are receiving, we have not been able to provide you with a more tailored response on this occasion. I hope that this information is helpful, but in the event that you are unable to find the answer to your query on the Gov.uk website or through the helplines, please do write to us again at [enquiries@beis.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@beis.gov.uk).

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