



This is the forty eighth edition of our Torfaen Business Support E-newsletter

Update: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: September 2021 claims

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been extended until 30 September 2021. For claims relating to August and September 2021, the government will pay 60% of wages up to a maximum cap of £1,875 for the hours the employee is on furlough.

For all claims from 1 July 2021, employers must top up their employees' wages to make sure they receive 80% of their wages (up to £2,500) for the hours they are on furlough. The caps are proportional to the hours not worked. **Claims for September must be submitted by 14 October 2021 and any amendments must be made by 28 October 2021.** [For further information please visit](#)

Deadline for Covid-19 sick pay

The UK Government has updated its guidance for claims made under the Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme. Employers can only claim back statutory sick pay paid to employees due to Covid-19 who were off work on or before 30 September 2021.

The Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme will repay employers the [Statutory Sick Pay](#) paid to current or former employees.

This scheme is for employers. You can claim back up to 2 weeks of SSP if:

- you have already paid your employee's sick pay ([use the SSP calculator](#) to work out how much to pay)
- you're claiming for an employee who's [eligible for sick pay due to coronavirus](#)
- you have a PAYE payroll scheme that was created and started on or before 28 February 2020
- you had fewer than 250 employees on 28 February 2020 across all your PAYE payroll schemes

You must submit or amend claims on or before 31 December 2021.

For further [information visit](#)



End of temporary insolvency measures

Temporary measures brought in to support businesses from insolvency during the pandemic will be phased out from 1 October 2021.

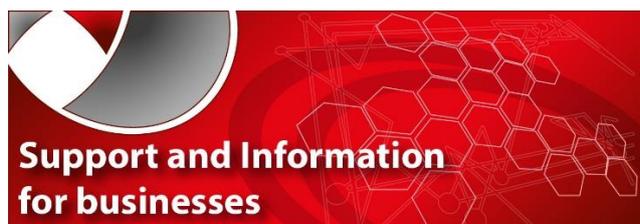
Companies in financial distress as a result of the pandemic have been protected from creditor action since June last year, through the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020.

This was to ensure that viable businesses affected by the restrictions on trading during the lockdown periods were not forced into insolvency unnecessarily.

New measures will be brought in to help smaller companies get back on their feet to give them more time to trade their way back to financial health before creditors can take action to wind them up. The new legislation will:

- Protect businesses from creditors insisting on repayment of relatively small debts by temporarily raising the current debt threshold for a winding up petition to £10,000 or more.
- Require creditors to seek proposals for payment from a debtor business, giving them 21 days for a response before they can proceed with winding up action.

These measures will be in force until 31 March 2022. For further information visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).



Tax change for Health and Social Care

National Insurance contributions (NICs) will increase by 1.25% for one year only for employees, employers and the self-employed from April 2022.

This will cover both Class 1 (employee and employer), Class 1A and 1B and Class 4 (self-employed) NICs. Those above State Pension Age are not impacted by the April 2022 changes.

From April 2023, a new ringfenced Health and Social Care Levy of 1.25% will be introduced which will apply to those who pay Class 1 (employee and employer), Class 1A and 1B and Class 4 (self-employed) NICs and will also be extended to those over State Pension age who are in work. When the new levy comes into effect, National Insurance rates will revert back to current levels.

The levy will also apply to individuals above State Pension age with employment income or profits from self-employment above £9,568.

The levy will be administered by HMRC and collected through the current reporting and collection procedures for NICs – Pay As You Earn and Income Tax Self-Assessment.

For more information please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Healthy Working Wales Podcasts

The Healthy Working Wales Team are pleased to share a series of podcasts they have developed as part of a new set of resources aimed at supporting employers.

- [Covid-19 and Mental Wellbeing of Employees](#)
- [Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
- [Fit For Work](#)
- [Keeping The Workplace Safe during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)

For further information visit [Podcasts - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)



Healthy Working Wales Covid-19 Commendation Event

The Healthy Working Wales (HWW) programme, delivered by Public Health Wales on behalf of Welsh Government, is delighted to announce their virtual Covid-19 commendation event taking place on Wednesday 8 December 2021.

This event will celebrate employers across Wales, who have demonstrated innovation, creativity and dedication to their staff wellbeing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The event will be a place where businesses can learn from each other and showcase their achievements during this challenging time.

There are six categories to enter:

- Best Mental Health Initiative
- Best Physical Wellbeing Initiative
- Best Covid-19 Company Response
- Corporate Social Responsibility – supporting the community or customers/service users
- Sustainability - Visionary Commendation for Sustainability
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The submission portal is now open to receive written or video entries.

Deadline for submissions: Friday 15 October 2021.

Submit your entry now: <https://bit.ly/3CjSKpi>

Any business in Wales can register to attend the virtual event, taking place from 10am on Wednesday 8 December to celebrate the successes of organisations, learn from their innovative practices and unique approaches to the challenges caused by Covid-19 and network with other companies from all around Wales.

Register to attend now: <https://bit.ly/3CjSKpi>



Requirement for all employers to pass on tips to workers

All tips will go to staff under new plans to overhaul tipping practices set out by the UK Government.

Most hospitality workers – many of whom are earning the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage – rely on tipping to top up their income. But research shows that many businesses that add a discretionary service charge onto customer's bills are keeping part or all of these service charges, instead of passing them onto staff.

The UK Government will make it illegal for employers to withhold tips from workers. The legislation will include:

- a requirement for all employers to pass on tips to workers without any deductions
- a Statutory Code of Practice setting out how tips should be distributed to ensure fairness and transparency
- new rights for workers to make a request for information relating to an employer's tipping record, enabling them to bring forward a credible claim to an employment tribunal

Under the changes, if an employer breaks the rules, they can be taken to an Employment Tribunal, where employers can be forced to compensate workers, often in addition to fines.

For further information visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).



Incentives for businesses to recruit apprentices further extended by Welsh Government

The Welsh Government is further extending incentives to support businesses in recruiting apprentices in Wales until February 2022.

The Apprenticeship Employer Incentive Scheme is a key part of Welsh Government's Covid Commitment to support businesses and workers in recovering from the impacts of coronavirus.

The incentives had been due to close on 30 September 2021 but will now continue to support businesses until 28 February 2022.

Under the scheme businesses are able to claim up to £4,000 for each new apprentice they hire under the age of 25. The £4,000 incentive will be available to businesses that are employing a young apprentice for at least 30 hours per week.

Welsh businesses could also receive £2,000 for each new under 25-year-old apprentice they employ for less than 30 hours a week.

For workers aged 25 and over, businesses can access £2,000 for each new apprentice they hire on a 30 hour or more contract, and a £1,000 incentive for apprentices working less than 30 hours.

Payments are restricted to ten learners per business. Dedicated funding is also available to recruit disabled people. For further information visit [GOV.Wales](https://gov.wales).



Applications are now open for Rising Stars 4.0

The competition for innovative, early-stage tech companies has been designed to showcase the best the country has to offer, providing a platform for businesses from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to shine bright.

Entrants are supported throughout the application process and given training and support at each stage of the competition to enable you to compete to ensure your business is investor ready and deliver the perfect pitch in front of leading investors, influencers and corporates.

Applications close 20 October 2021. For further information and to apply visit [Rising Stars - UK pitch competition for early-stage tech startups - Tech Nation](#)

Looking for a new home for your innovative high-tech business? Take a look at [Springboard Business Innovation Centre](#) here in Torfaen - home of high growth science and technology businesses!! [Contact us](#) today

The Digital Drivers Reshaping Cardiff Capital Region

With the digital revolution continually redefining the way we all live, work and play, Cardiff Capital Region has begun a series of features on the digital dynamics of our region – exploring the key drivers, discovering the up and coming innovators, spotlighting the major service providers and employers, celebrating the key collaborations, investigating the talent pipeline – and identifying where CCR can lead the UK (and the world) in digital.

Read the full feature [here](#) which includes:

Pillar 1: Pushing the boundaries through Digital Collaborations

Pillar 2: Building the Digital Infrastructure that drives Connectivity

Pillar 3: Nurturing Digital Talent and a Future-proofed Skills Pipeline

Pillar 4: Delivering Digital Opportunity



Steve Jones, CEO of insurance software company, Comparison Creator, wins Leader of the Year at Fintech Wales Awards

The CEO and founder of Cwmbran-based [Comparison Creator](#) has been awarded Leader of the Year at this year's Fintech Wales Awards.

Steve was named Leader of the Year at the Fintech Wales Awards, held last week in the Tramshed, Cardiff, in which 42 shortlisted finalists were nominated for 11 awards in total. The awards recognise the achievements of the thriving FinTech sector across the country, bringing Wales' leading innovators and digital experts together in an evening of celebration.

As an emerging tech region, Wales has the fastest growing digital economy outside of London and with solid growth of the financial and professional sector in Wales, the platform is set to support the country's digital revolution. [Read the rest of the story here](#)

More information about Comparison Creator can be found at www.comparisoncreator.com.

Comparison Creator is based at [Springboard Business Innovation Centre](#), Cwmbran, Torfaen, South Wales - the home of high growth science and technology businesses.



CCR launches 'Venture' to help shape the future of skills development across South East Wales

Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) has announced the launch of a new Skills and Talent hub, designed to meet the future skilling needs of employers and employees across South East Wales.

Brand-named 'Venture' this new employment and skills enterprise goes live on 13th September, to help connect the ambitions and aspirations of career-seekers and employers across the 10 unitary authorities that make up the CCR.

For launch, the new skills hub features *Venture Graduate* a re-branded, redesigned and revitalised graduate recruitment scheme provided at zero cost to any organisation in South East Wales, by the expert in-house graduate recruitment team at CCR. New features include the introduction of structured cohort model which will run as 3 separate programmes throughout the year – the first of which opens to businesses on the 13th of September.

The hub also features *Venture Specialist* – a collection of niche skills initiatives that the CCR is directly supporting or funding.

The intention is that the hub will evolve and expand to cover an ever-increasing range of skills and talent initiatives designed to meet the future skilling needs of employers and employees across the region.

Please see attached [Venture Launch leaflet](#) and [Venture What's New](#) leaflet

[Read the full press release](#)



Get involved with the Optimised Retrofit Project

The Optimised Retrofit project will see more than 1,724 homes across Wales made more energy efficient. Optimised Retrofit is the retrofit of an existing home which provides effective, practical pathways to take that home to its lowest achievable carbon footprint.

This is achieved through a combination of building fabric improvements, low and zero-carbon technologies (such as solar panels, battery storage and heat pumps), and intelligent ongoing operational controls

The process of retrofitting these pathway homes will enable the trial and refinement of the digital tools required to enable the decarbonisation of homes across Wales, as well as help build the skills and training needed to underpin this.

The collaboration of 68 partners, including 26 social housing providers, has been awarded more than £13m in funding by Welsh Government through the Optimised Retrofit Programme that was introduced this year as part of the Innovative Housing Programme.

Find out more about the optimised retrofit process, what it means and to register interest [here](#). It's a growing area and a wide variety of skilled construction and tradespeople are needed to make sure the project is successful as well as other building industry professionals. Please see the full list on the [website](#). Please note the Residential Social Landlords will procure from the list of those who have registered

Communities & Housing Investment Consortium (CHIC) is using Delta eSourcing to run the tender exercise at [CHIC Wales Optimised Retrofit Consultancy DPS 2021 | Delta \(delta-esourcing.com\)](#)



Cyber Resilience: Secure Your Business, Secure Your Future

Is your business cyber-crime resilient? Did you know, there was a cyber-attack on UK firms every 49 seconds between April and June this year? Cyber-crime affects businesses of all sizes, but there are steps you can take to protect yours. Let us show you how on a special free Cyber Resilience Event.

Get free advice from the experts – join Superfast Business Wales, The Cyber Resilience Centre for Wales, and Tarian Regional Organised Crime Unit on 12th October, 10am-12pm.

Learn about:

· The 5 pillars of security - What to do if your business is attacked - · Practical help & further support available - Cyber Essentials Accreditation - The cyber experiences of other businesses

Eligible businesses can also receive free one-to-one support on completion of the webinar.

[Cyber Resilience \(Page 1 of 3\) \(office.com\)](#)

Torfaen Adult Community Learning

Level 2 Food Allergen Awareness and Control in Catering

The UK Food Information Amendment, also known as Natasha's Law, comes into effect from October 2021 and will require food businesses to provide full ingredient lists and allergen labelling on foods pre-packaged for direct sale on the premises. The legislation is being introduced to protect allergy sufferers and give them confidence in the food they buy.

Learning options to suit you: In the Classroom: £37.50*

09:30am - 2.30pm - Croesyceiliog CEC, NP44 2HF

- Tuesday 2nd November
- Tuesday 16th November 2021
- Tuesday 7th December 2021



Online Qualification: £50.00*

Learn in your own space at your own time and when you're ready, book your in-centre multiple-choice exam and gain a Level 2 Qualification in Allergen Awareness and Control in Catering.

Online CPD: £35.00*

This non-accredited option allows you to complete the Allergens Awareness Course online, although not accredited, you will receive 2 CPD points and learn the skills needed to comply with this new law.

What you will learn includes: -

- What is an intolerance • What is an allergy • Common symptoms of allergic reactions
- Food labelling and how to find ingredients • Communicating allergen information to customers

For more information about accessing our classes, please contact our friendly team on **01633 647647** or email power.station@torfaen.gov.uk

***You may be able to get this funded.**

Eligibility Criteria Apply - talk to our team today.

Business Support Virtual Clinics – Do you need a chat?

October bookings now open!

We are holding monthly online Business Support Clinics to help any existing or start up business within Torfaen with impartial advice and support.

This gives you an opportunity to speak to our business support team for 20 minutes about your enquiry. Our next business virtual clinic is:

Thursday 21st October 2021 - 10:00am - 12:00pm [Book your 20 minute slot](#)



Economy & Enterprise Team – Business Support - If you need to get in touch with an enquiry complete your [details here](#) and we will contact you as soon as possible.

COVID-19: [guidance for employees, employers and businesses](#)

COVID-19: [Support for businesses](#)

Watch our twitter for further updates [@Torfaenbiz](#)

All editions of our COVID-19 e-shot can be found/viewed [here](#)

All editions of our COVID-19 e-shot are also available in Welsh [here](#)