



## **This is the thirty first in our COVID 19 Business Support Information**

### **Business Closures: Alert Level 4**

Guidance has been issued regarding what businesses and premises are required to close at Alert Level 4 in Wales (as [announced by First Minister of Wales](#) on 19th December 2020).

The guidance, and the restrictions in the coronavirus regulations, are directed primarily at premises open to the public. Those premises may be indoors or outdoors. The primary purpose of closing premises is to reduce the number of gatherings between people, and to reduce the number of journeys that people make, in keeping with the overall rule that people should stay home as much as reasonably possible.

This [link](#) provides full information by Welsh Government

### **Chancellor extends furlough and loan schemes**

The furlough scheme has been extended until the end of April 2021 with the government continuing to contribute 80% towards wages – giving businesses and employees across the UK certainty into the New Year, the Chancellor has announced.

Businesses will also be given until the end of March to access the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme. These had been due to close at the end of January.

[Read more here](#)



## Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme updated guidance

The UK Government has reviewed the terms of the scheme, and announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) will remain at the current level of 80% of usual wages for the hours not worked, and will be extended until the end of April 2021.

**You can now make December claims!** You can now submit your claims for periods in December. These must be made by **14 January 2021**.

If you have furloughed employees because of the effect of coronavirus on your business, you can claim under the CJRS for periods of paid leave they take while on furlough, including for bank holidays such as Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

If your employee is flexibly furloughed, you can count any time taken as holiday as furloughed hours rather than working hours. This means you can claim 80% of their usual wages for these hours. You should not place employees on furlough just because they are going to be on paid leave.

**To help you plan ahead to meet the monthly deadlines, here's a list of the key dates:**

- 14 January 2021 – final date to submit claims for December 2020 by 11:59pm
- 15 February 2021 – final date to submit claims for January 2021 by 11:59pm
- 15 March 2021 – final date to submit claims for February 2021 by 11:59pm
- 14 April 2021 – final date to submit claims for March 2021 by 11:59pm
- 14 May 2021 – final date to submit claims for April 2021 by 11:59pm

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



## **Reminder: Claim 3<sup>rd</sup> grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme on or before 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

The SEISS scheme has been extended, and to make a claim for the third grant your business must have had a new or continuing impact from coronavirus between 1 November 2020 and 29 January 2021.

The third taxable grant is worth 80% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £7,500 in total.

If you were not eligible for the [first and second grant](#) based on the information in your Self-Assessment tax returns, you will not be eligible for the third.

Further information can be found at: [Check if you can claim a grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Import tariffs on Covid-19 products to fight virus suspended**

Tariffs on medical products used to help fight against coronavirus have been suspended by the UK Government in the fight against the pandemic, lowering costs on these critical items for organisations across the UK.

The new measures, which ensure no tariffs will be due on imports of goods including face masks, gloves and other protective equipment, will come into effect from 1 January 2021.

These build on tariff reliefs in place through 2020, are available to all importers and are automatically applied, with the suspensions planned to last for a year, subject to regular reviews.

For further information please visit the [GOV.UK](#) website.



### **Economic Resilience Fund: Phase 3:**

The Welsh Government has launched the Restrictions Business Fund to support businesses (principally in the hospitality, tourism, leisure and non-essential retail sectors) with cash flow support and to help them survive the economic consequences of the additional restrictions put in place to control the spread of Covid-19 starting on Friday 4th December 2020.

The fund consists of two separate grants.

- **Restrictions Business Fund Non Domestic Rate Grant**
- **Restrictions Business Fund Grant (Discretionary)**

#### **Restrictions Business Fund Non Domestic Rate Grant**

**Grant A** - A £3,000 cash grant payment for hospitality businesses / hospitality not-for-profit organisations and non-essential retail businesses with Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) qualifying hereditaments with a rateable value of £12,000 or less.

**Grant B** - A £5,000 cash grant payment for hospitality businesses / hospitality not-for-profit organisations and non-essential retail businesses occupying hereditaments with a rateable value between £12,001 and £51,000.

**Grant C** - A £5,000 cash grant payment for hospitality businesses / hospitality not-for-profit organisations and non-essential retail businesses occupying hereditaments with a rateable value between £51,001 and £150,000.

**Hospitality and non-essential retail businesses that received the Forced Closure element of the recent Firebreak Grant and who fall into Grant A and Grant B categories above will receive automatic payments, these business are not required to re-register their details.**

These grants will also be available to hospitality, tourism and leisure businesses / hospitality, tourism and leisure not-for-profit organisations and their supply chains and retail businesses with qualifying properties that can evidence (on a self-declared basis) greater than 40% reduction in turnover as a direct result of new restrictions.



Those businesses will be asked to self-declare whether they have experienced a 40% reduction in turnover for December 2020 as compared to December 2019. If the business was not trading in December 2019, the comparison in turnover should be for the monthly turnover for December 2020 vs September 2020. The turnover reduction must be as a direct result of the new restrictions introduced on and since 4th December.

Eligible hospitality and non-essential retail businesses and not-for profit organisations do not need to make any form of self-declaration in respect of their turnover.

The applicant's hereditament must have been on the NDR rating list as of the 1st September 2020 and the ratepayer needs to have been in occupation of the property as of the 30th November 2020.

For further information please read the [Restrictions Business Fund NDR Grant Guidance Document](#).

You can apply for the [Restrictions Business Fund NDR Grant](#) here.

### **Restrictions Business Fund Grant (Discretionary):**

#### **Applications open from 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

A discretionary grant of £2,000 is available to assist businesses that have:

- Been forced or required to close as a result of the national restrictions put in place for hospitality businesses
- The grant will also support supply chain businesses linked to the hospitality sectors and some retail businesses that estimate that the latest restrictions put in place will result in at least a 40% reduction in their turnover for December 2020 as compared to December 2019 (or September 2020 turnover if not trading in December 2019)

For further information please read the [Restrictions Business Fund Discretionary Grant Guidance Document](#).

Businesses cannot apply for the NDR grant and the Discretionary Grant.

You can apply for the [Restrictions Business Fund Grant](#) here.



### **ERF Sector Specific Grant:**

**The fund will open to applications on the week commencing the 11th of January.**

The ERF Sector Specific Support (operating cost) package is targeted at Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure (HTL) businesses and associated supply chain businesses that will be materially impacted by a greater than 60% impact of turnover as a result of the restrictions introduced on 4 December 2020 until the 22 January 2021.

Businesses who have accessed the ERF Restrictions Business Fund can also apply for this fund.

A triage tool is available on the [Business Wales website](#) for businesses to check their eligibility for the fund.

**The above information is correct to the best of our knowledge at time of printing/publication and is subject to change.**

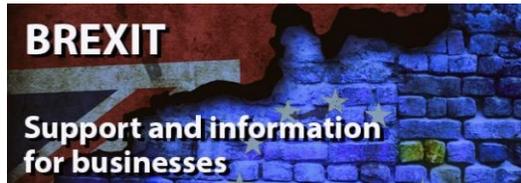
### **Business Support Virtual Clinics starting in the New Year**

Starting in January we will be holding a monthly on line Business Support Clinic to help any existing or starting 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.

**Thursday 28th January 2021 - 10:00am - 12:00pm**

[Book your 20 minute slot](#)



## Customs Grants Scheme: New grants now available

The Customs Grant Scheme has been set up to help businesses prepare for new customs arrangements from 1 January 2021. This includes supporting businesses who trade with the EU to undertake training to improve their understanding of customs requirements and working with customs intermediaries. It also helps customs intermediaries increase their capacity to complete customs declarations and accelerate growth of the sector in order to meet the increased demand it will see from 1 January 2021. Three grants are now available:

- [Grants for Trader Training: up to £1,000](#)
- [Grants for IT, Training and Recruitment: up to 200,000 Euros](#)
- [Grants for a Co-Funded Training Project: up to 2 million Euros](#)

More information [available here](#)

A red graphic with white and yellow text. On the right side, there is a photograph of Lynne Neagle, a woman with blonde hair, smiling. The text on the left reads: 'INVITE: Torfaen Manufacturing in the new economy'. Below this, it says: 'Lynne Neagle MS and Economy Minister, Ken Skates invite Torfaen manufacturers to a roundtable discussion on Torfaen's economic future. With the U.K. / EU transition period ending in January, this is your chance to discuss future challenges and opportunities with local MS, Lynne Neagle and the Welsh Government's Economy Minister, Ken Skates.' At the bottom left, there is a small white logo of a stylized wave. At the bottom right, the text reads: 'Lynne Neagle MS/AS Putting Torfaen First / Rhoi Torfaen yn Gyntaf'.



**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](#)