



## This is the forty fourth in our COVID 19 Business Support Information

### COVID-19 Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) Business Support – July and August 2021 Eligibility Checker

The Welsh Government has announced further emergency support until 31 August 2021 for businesses that remain closed or severely impacted by restrictions shown via a greater than 60% impact on turnover compared to the corresponding timeline in 2019 or equivalent.

The Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) will provide support in the form of cash grants for businesses, social enterprises and charities and associated supply chain businesses that continue to experience a severe negative impact as a result of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. The grants will help meet operating costs (excluding staff wages) for the period 1 July 2021 to 31 August 2021. The ERF will support businesses that are either:

- a. Forced to remain closed or unable to trade by on-going restrictions between 1st July 2021 and 31st August 2021
- b. Event Space and attractions severely impacted by ongoing social distancing regulations
- c. Other businesses with >60% impact on Turnover as a direct result of ongoing restrictions since 1st of May and were unable to open indoors before the 17th May 2021
- d. A supply chain business that generates 60% or more of its sales revenue from businesses falling into categories a), b) and/or c)

#### **And (applies to all):**

Have experienced a severe impact through reduced turnover of 60% or more in July and August 2021 as compared to July and August 2019 caused directly by on-going COVID-19 restrictions.

Any future Covid 19 funding which may be available for specific groups or sectors will take into account funding awarded under this round of the Economic Resilience Fund. This may lead to an adjustment or deduction in any future schemes.

You can now use the [Eligibility Checker](#) to check your eligibility for this further package of ERF Support.

- **Applications for the ERF WITH A TURNOVER OF MORE THAN £85K will reopen on the 13 July 2021 at midday until midday Tuesday 27 July 2021.**
- **Local Authorities across Wales will reopen applications for those businesses that are eligible WITH A TURNOVER OF LESS THAN £85K on the 26 July 2021. This grant application will remain open until 9 August 2021. Read the [Guidance Notes](#)**



## Torfaen Council seeks Expression of Interest for New Grants programme

Businesses in Pontypool, Blaenavon and Cwmbran town centres can register their interest for funding to help regenerate vacant and under used building space.

Funded by the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme, and administered by the Council, the soon to be available 'Torfaen Town Centre Placemaking Fund' will support improvements of vacant or underutilised business or residential buildings.

Grant of up to £250K could be available, subject to eligibility, under the Placemaking Fund. New and existing businesses within the town centres interested in applying for the funding need to submit an **Expression of Interest form by 14 July**. All work must be completed by March 31 2022.

Councillor Joanne Gauden, Executive Member for Economy, Skills & Regeneration, said: "Last year a number of businesses took advantage of this grant which helped them to and recover from the impact of Covid, and grow as a business.

"Some businesses expanded, others used it to make sure they could remain Covid compliant, and others simply used the money to expand their current trading space. Some properties also added residential space."

"I encourage existing and new businesses to apply for the funding because you never know what great opportunities it could hold."

### Find out more

To download an Expression of Interest [click here](#)

To request further information, email [ryland.llewellyn@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:ryland.llewellyn@torfaen.gov.uk) referencing "TCBC PMF EOI" or phone 07773 812559



## COVID-19: Reopening guidance for food businesses

The Food Standards Agency have published guidance to support food businesses to reopen safely during COVID-19 after a period of inaction. The guidance includes:

- [a reopening checklist for food businesses](#)
- [planning and preparation for start-up](#)
- [site checks](#)
- [equipment checks](#)
- [ingredient and product checks](#)
- [social distancing measures](#)

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

## Full business rates discount continues in Wales

The Welsh Government is reminding retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in Wales they won't have to pay any rates until April 2022 as full discounts in England come to an end on 1 July 2021.

In Wales, the Welsh Government has extended the full 100 per cent discount for all businesses and charities in the leisure and hospitality sectors until April 2022.

Retailers in properties with a rateable value of up to £500,000 will also continue to receive full discounts on their rates for the remainder of the year. For further information please visit [GOV.Wales](#).

## SEISS: Fifth grant

If you're eligible for this 5<sup>th</sup> grant based on your tax returns, HMRC will contact you in mid-July to give you a date that you can make your claim from. It will be given to you either by email, text message, letter or within the online service.

The online service to claim the fifth grant will be available from late July 2021.

You must make your claim on or before 30 September 2021.

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



## **Welsh Government extends measures to protect businesses from eviction until end of September 2021**

Businesses affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will now be protected from eviction until the end of September 2021.

As part of interventions the Welsh Government is making to support businesses, the moratorium against forfeiture for the non-payment of rent will now be extended until September 30, 2021. It was originally due to end on June 30, 2021.

This measure will ensure businesses will not forfeit their business tenancies for non-payment of rent until 30 September this year, but businesses should continue to pay rent wherever possible, and it is in the interests of both landlords and tenants to reach negotiated agreements on any arrears.

The move will help a range of sectors including retail, hospitality, leisure and tourism at what continues to be an incredibly challenging trading period, whilst Coronavirus restrictions ease.

For further information visit [GOV.Wales](https://gov.wales).

## **Providing information for Revaluation 2023**

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is contacting businesses to request information to support the current revaluation of business rates in England and Wales.

Once ratepayers receive a request via letter, they need to go online and submit their up-to-date details. For some specialist property classes you'll be asked to provide your information by email instead, so once you receive a request please follow the instructions on your letter.

The information ratepayers submit is used to set rateable values, which are in turn used to calculate business rates. To ensure your business rates are accurate and reflect the current property market as well as the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, VOA are requesting that information is submitted as soon as possible.

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



## **Torfaen Community & Volunteer Awards: nominations now open**

Have you ever wanted to highlight the qualities of someone who shows remarkable selflessness, devotion, and service to the community and who, in your view, deserves wider recognition?

Perhaps you want to bring attention to an organisation whose activities have given a buzz to your community?

Nominations are now open for the Torfaen Community & Volunteer Awards which include an award for Business of the Year (**Recognising a local business, for their contribution and impact in the community**). Nominations close: 30th July 2021

Further details and criteria at <https://tvawales.org.uk/nominate-your-volunteer-2021/>

## **Outdoor civil wedding and partnerships registrations to be legalised**

Outdoor civil wedding and partnership ceremonies in England and Wales are set to be legalised for the first time – offering greater choice to couples in a boost to the wedding sector.

Under current laws for approved premises such as a hotel, the legal wedding or civil partnership ceremony must take place in an approved room or permanent structure. It will now be possible for a couple to have the whole ceremony outside at such a venue.

This change will give more options to couples and the sector in terms of how they celebrate and host the big day by allowing all aspects of weddings to take place outdoors, from 1 July 2021 – providing greater flexibility especially during the pandemic when there are important public health considerations to take into account.

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



## **National Cyber Security Centre: Training for small organisations and charities now available**

The training demonstrates how you can improve your organisation's resilience, and covers five key areas:

1. Backing up your organisation's data correctly
2. Protecting your organisation against malware
3. Keeping the devices used by your employees secure
4. The importance of creating strong passwords
5. Defending your organisation against phishing

The training is primarily aimed at SMEs, charities and the voluntary sector, and has been designed for a non-technical audience.

More information at [Training for small organisations and charities now available - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

## **Business Banking Resolution Service**

The BBRS provides a free, accessible and independent service to resolve disputes between eligible businesses and participating banks.

Business representatives and the banking sector have worked together to design the BBRS to address ongoing complaints from businesses that are not eligible for the Financial Ombudsman Service and so that they have an alternative to challenging a bank in court.

The BBRS has two schemes: a historical scheme for unresolved complaints dating back as far as 1 December 2001 and a contemporary scheme for complaints that have arisen since 1 April 2019.

Visit <https://thebbrs.org/>



## **Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure – Preparing UK airports for zero emission aircraft grants**

The Department for Transport (DfT) has commissioned the Connected Places Catapult to undertake the Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure (ZEFI) programme.

The programme will run within the 2021/22 financial year with a range of opportunities for industry and academia to participate in grant funding, workshop and demonstration activity.

As part of the programme, this new competition has been launched. Grants of up to £50,000 will be available for organisations developing technology that could help the aviation industry transition to zero carbon emission flight.

Projects that involve research/feasibility as well as prototyping or operational testing are of particular interest.

Key themes are:

- Hydrogen storage, handling, aircraft refuelling/defueling, distribution, and associated technologies
- Electric charging, storage, handling, batteries, electric distribution, and associated technologies
- Research into future demand scenarios for airside use of green hydrogen and electricity at UK airports.

In order to apply to this scheme, you must be:

- Based in the UK or have a UK registered office; and
- A business or university of any size

Submissions by midnight 1<sup>st</sup> August - More information and applying

[Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure - Project - Connected Places Catapult](#)



## **Business Support Virtual Clinics – Do you need a chat?**

### **July bookings now open!**

We are holding monthly on line 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 22<sup>nd</sup> July 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](#)