



## **This is the third in our weekly COVID 19 Business Support Information**

### **Two-metre rule to protect workers in Wales from coronavirus announced**

New rules to protect workers during the Coronavirus outbreak came into force on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April.

The regulations mean the 2 metre social distancing rule will apply to any workplace, including homes, where work and repairs are being undertaken and outdoor spaces. The new rules apply to those workplaces not already covered by the original stay-at-home rules introduced over 2 weeks ago.

All businesses will have to take all reasonable measures to ensure the 2m rule is maintained between people on their premises whenever work is being carried out. Guidance will be issued to explain what can reasonably be expected of employers and businesses.

[Full Guidance](#)

### **Torfaen council successfully awards grants to eligible businesses**

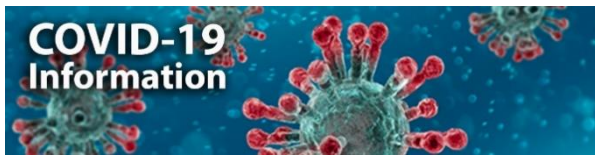
Following the announcement from the Welsh Government that two grants, to be administered through local councils, have been made available to support businesses in Wales through the Coronavirus pandemic, Torfaen council has already successfully awarded a total of £7,900,000 to local businesses.

These grants have been made available to businesses that are registered to pay rates on their premises on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and consist of two levels - a grant of £25,000 for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses occupying properties with a rateable value of between £12,001 and £51,000, plus a £10,000 grant to all businesses eligible for small business rates relief (SBRR) in Wales with a rateable value of £12,000 or less.

We are requesting that you complete the form below to allow us to collate all requests and to consider if it is appropriate to award the grant. Apply now:

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Forms/Request/BusinessRatesGrant-Covid19.aspx>

### **Welsh Government Guidance**



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## Furloughing staff during the Pandemic

There are an increasing number of businesses furloughing their staff due to the Corona Virus.

The **Job Retention Scheme** will allow businesses to furlough their staff and claim 80% of their wages, up to £2,500 per month. This has been put in place to safeguard workers who would otherwise be made redundant.

However, there are criteria that need to be followed to allow the business to claim these wages on the employees' behalf. The main points are as follows:

- Employee has to be employed before or on 28<sup>th</sup> February, is on the payroll and is in agreement to be furloughed
- Employer has to put the furlough agreement in writing to the employee
- The employee must be furloughed for a minimum of 3 consecutive weeks
- Once furloughed the employee cannot undertake work for, or on behalf, of the business
- While on furlough, the employee's wage will be subject to usual income tax and other deductions
- You can choose to top up your employee's salary, but you do not have to
- If contractually allowed, your employees are permitted to work for another employer whilst you have placed them on furlough

[Full information](#)

## COVID-19 Scam Emails

Following the announcement of the Self-employment Income Support Scheme, there has unfortunately been an increase in scam emails, calls and texts.

If someone gets in touch claiming to be from HMRC, saying that financial help can be claimed or that a tax refund is owed, and asks you to click on a link or to give information such as your name, credit card or bank details, **please do not respond.**

**HMRC will never contact you out of the blue to ask for these details.**



## Prince's Trust and NatWest Enterprise Relief Fund (UK) launched

The Prince's Trust and NatWest have launched a £5million grant fund for young entrepreneurs affected by coronavirus. It is available to entrepreneurs aged 18-30, who can apply for grants and tailored support from 6<sup>th</sup> April. Grants can be used to maintain core business operations during the crisis, as well as meet any existing financial commitments, such as paying for essential equipment or settling invoices from suppliers. In conjunction with these grants, the initiative will also offer one-to-one support and guidance to applicants who need it.

More information [here](#)

## £20m UK Innovate Competition opens for businesses with ideas to help society in the Covid-19 Pandemic

UK registered businesses can apply for a share of up to £20 million to respond to new and urgent needs in UK and global communities during and following the Covid-19 pandemic. Your application must demonstrate both realistic and significant benefits for society (including communities, families and individuals) or an industry that has been severely impacted and/or permanently disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Competition opens:** Friday 3 April 2020
- **Competition closes:** Friday 17 April 2020 12:00pm

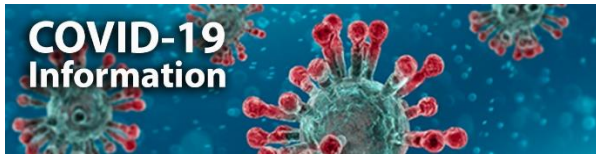
[Further information here](#)

## Welsh Water Assistance to Businesses

To help businesses during this time, Welsh Water have put in place temporary changes (since 23rd March) to offer payment holidays and revised payment plans, as well as stopping disconnection for non-payment.

Whilst a business is temporarily closed and no water is being used Welsh Water will not charge a service charge (as normal). They will still send bills for water and sewerage services used up to 23rd March.

If you have any questions about your bill or account, please contact Welsh Water on [0303 313 0021](tel:03033130021) (9am - 5pm Monday to Friday) or complete [this online form](#) and a member of their Commercial Collections team will be able to help you.



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## **COVID-19: guidance for employees, employers and businesses**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

## **COVID-19: Support for businesses**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>