



### COVID-19

This guidance is to update ECA Members on the latest guidance from Government on the COVID-19 outbreak.

The UK Government is supporting businesses and their employees through a package of measures during this period of unprecedented disruption. The [Business Support](#) website helps businesses find the right support, advice and information to help with the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the support measures that are available. ECA's [COVID-19 website](#) has more detailed information on specific aspect of the support measures.

Some aspects of business support are devolved. Specific information for businesses and employers in [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#), and [Wales](#) is available.

## 1. Government supports continued efforts of UK Construction

Alok Sharma the Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, has written to the UK construction industry

His comments included:

*“to pay tribute to all those who are working tirelessly within the construction industry. Delivering on large or small construction sites across the country*

*“our economy needs all our support. And the construction industry has answered the call to action”*

*“constructing the infrastructure that society needs to function or ensuring that people have safe and healthy homes to live in, you are delivering for our Nation through this difficult time. My heartfelt and personal thanks for everything that each and every one of you is doing to support our joint national effort.”*

*“Thank you again to everyone operating in the UK construction sector. You are making a hugely valued and critical contribution to the resilience of our Nation and I salute you for the enormous efforts you are individually undertaking to support the UK economy.”*

Read his letter here: [Secretary of State Letter to UK Construction Industry](#)

On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, Matt Hancock opened the COVID-19 media briefing by paying tribute to all involved in the construction of the new Nightingale hospital. He specifically name-checked military, construction (mentioned suppliers and their expertise), engineers, electricians, plumbers- all playing their part of 'building a place of healing'- stressed the impressive teamwork.

## 2. Essential worker COVID-19 Testing

All [essential workers](#) and members of their households who are showing symptoms of coronavirus are now able to get tested.

Testing in England has been expanded out to include any worker who needs to leave home to travel to work and cannot work from home. The guidance has now been [updated](#) and the full list for testing now includes:

- anyone who goes into work because they cannot work from home (for example, **construction workers**) and has symptoms

- all other essential workers with symptoms
- people who live with essential workers and have symptoms
- people over 65 with symptoms

You can find further information [here](#).

Further information on construction site continuity has been outlined in a separate ECA Guidance Note.

### 3. Construction Leadership Council

Andy Mitchell (Chair of the Construction Leadership Council) has sent a letter to the PM co-signed by all the Taskforce members putting forward a plan to sustain the industry and accelerate recovery of the economy.

You can read the letter here: CLC letter to PM 01 April 2020 asking the Prime Minister for the following measures to support industry:

1. Suspending PAYE and CIS tax due to HMRC in April and May for construction and consultancy firms and workers, with no financial penalty.
2. Deferring/cancelling Apprenticeship Levy payments due for the duration of the crisis.
3. Ministers to continue to encourage all public sector clients, regulated utilities and firms in the private sector working on public infrastructure to expedite cashflow through the supply chain
4. Support for the Directors of micro-businesses
5. Release of retentions to aid industry cash-flow
6. Extend the £25k SME business continuity grants scheme to the construction sector.

### 4. Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is open for application. Employers can now claim online for a grant for 80% of their furloughed employees' salaries, up to a maximum of £2,500 per employee. [Click here](#) to make a claim.

In addition to the ECA's own guidance documents, the CLC has produced new guidance on the employment issues raised by the coronavirus crisis. The document provides the industry with everything it needs to know on furloughing staff, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme.

An important change has been made to the scheme extending employee eligibility:

- Employers can now claim for employees that were employed and on their PAYE payroll on or before 19 March 2020. This means that the employee must have been notified to HMRC through an RTI submission notifying payment in respect of that employee on or before 19 March 2020.
- Employees that were employed as of 28 February 2020 and on payroll and were made redundant or stopped working for you after that, and prior to 19 March 2020, can also qualify for the scheme if you re-employ them and put them on furlough.
- Government is advising claimants that payment "takes six working days from when a claim is submitted". It also advises businesses not to call HMRC to 'chase' payment as they will not be able to help before six working days, adding that payment "will automatically be sent to the bank account nominated in a claim".

HMRC have produced this step by step guidance on how to make a claim. There is also a calculator to help you work out your claim. The system can process up to 450,000 applications per hour and employers should receive the money within 6 working days of making an application. Please keep a note or print-out of your claim reference number as you won't receive a confirmation SMS or email.

The Chancellor has also announced a one month extension to the scheme until the end of June, to reflect continuing lockdown measures.

HMRC are holding live webinars providing an overview of the scheme to help employers and employees deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus. Register for a live webinar [here](#).

Any entity with a UK payroll can apply, including businesses, charities, recruitment agencies and public authorities. To prepare to make your claim you will need:

- a Government Gateway (GG) ID and password – if you don't already have a GG account, you can [apply for one online](#), or by going to GOV.UK and searching for 'HMRC services: sign in or register'
- be enrolled for PAYE online – if you aren't registered yet, [you can do so now, or by going to GOV.UK and searching for 'PAYE Online for employers'](#)
- the following information for each furloughed employee you will be claiming for: Name, National Insurance number, Claim period and claim amount, PAYE/employee number (optional)
- if you have fewer than 100 furloughed staff – you will need to input information directly into the system for each employee. If you have 100 or more furloughed staff – you will need to upload a file with information for each employee; HMRC will accept the following file types: .xls .xlsx .csv .ods.

Furloughed workers planning to take paid parental or adoption leave will be entitled to pay based on their usual earnings rather than a furloughed pay rate. Find out more [here](#).

You should retain all records and calculations in respect of your claims. You can find more information on the scheme and eligibility to claim [here](#).

A series of in-depth FAQs are included in the guidance for the two major employment schemes designed to protect jobs whilst the economy is in partial suspension. View a recording of the HMRC webinar [here](#).

Your engineering service furlough and job retention scheme guidance is found here: [www.eca.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.eca.co.uk/coronavirus)

Download the guidance here: [Coronavirus Employment Schemes – CLC](#)

Further guidance on CJRS is available here.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

## 5. New lending facility from the Bank of England to help support liquidity among larger firms, helping them bridge coronavirus disruption to their cash flows through loans

Under the new Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility, the Bank of England will buy short term debt from larger companies through commercial paper - an unsecured, short-term debt instrument issued by a company.

The facility will offer financing on terms comparable to those prevailing in markets in the period before the Covid-19 economic shock.

Further guidance on Government loans can be found here:

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/news/2020/march/the-covid-corporate-financing-facility>

## 6. CLBILS: £5-50m loans

The **Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)** will ensure that more firms are able to benefit from government-backed support during this difficult time. It will provide a government guarantee of 80% to enable banks listed on the British Business Bank website to lend to:

- all viable businesses with turnover of more than £45m will be able to apply for government-backed support
- businesses with turnover of more than £250 million can borrow up to £50 million from lenders
- businesses with a turnover of more than £45 million will now be able to apply for up to £25 million of finance, and up to £50 million for firms with a turnover of more than £250 million.

This will apply to finance already offered under the CBILS scheme, to ensure that all business owners receive the same level of government protection.

## 7. Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme: up to £5m

The Government will provide retail lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to a per-lender cap on claims) to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs, i.e. retail and business banks will continue to act as lenders putting in place the necessary due diligence and taking the ultimate risk, but with the additional security that Government will stand behind them for 80% of the risk.

The Government will not charge businesses or banks for this guarantee, and the Scheme will support loans of up to £5 million in value

Finance terms are from three months up to ten years for term loans and asset finance and up to three years for revolving facilities and invoice finance.

For further guidance on Government loans see here: <https://www.eca.co.uk/coronavirus>

## 8. Bounce Back Loans

Small businesses will benefit from a new fast-track finance scheme providing loans with a 100% government-backed guarantee for lenders. Small businesses can borrow between **£2,000** and **£50,000** and access the cash within days. The loans will be interest free for the first 12 months, and businesses can apply online through a short and simple form

The scheme has been designed to ensure that small firms who need vital cash injections to keep operating can get finance in a matter of days

No repayments will be due during the first 12 months.

If you've already received a loan of up to £50,000 under CBILS and would like to transfer it into the Bounce Back Loan scheme, you can arrange this with your lender until 4 November 2020.

Further guidance on Government loans can be found here: <https://www.eca.co.uk/coronavirus>

## 9. Small business grant funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief

The Government will provide additional Small Business Grant Scheme funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no business rates because of small business rate relief (SBBR), rural rate relief (RRR) and tapered relief. This will provide a one-off grant of £10,000 to eligible businesses to help meet their ongoing business costs.

You are eligible if:

- your business is based in England
- you are a small business and already receive SBBR and/or RRR
- you are a business that occupies property

Your local authority will write to you if you are eligible for this grant.

Data has been [published](#) on the amount of money distributed to SMEs by every local authority in England as part of 2 grant schemes launched to help businesses deal with coronavirus. To find out more about the grants themselves, click [here](#).

Guidance can be found here; <https://www.eca.co.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-business-support-grant-funding>

## 10. Self-employed

The coronavirus (COVID-19) Self-employment Income Support Scheme can be used if you're self-employed or a member of a partnership and have lost income due to coronavirus.

You can apply if you're a self-employed individual or a member of a partnership and you:

- Have submitted your Income Tax Self Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018-19
- Traded in the tax year 2019-2020
- Are trading when you apply – or would be, except for COVID19
- Intend to continue to trade in the tax year 2020-2021
- have lost trading/partnership trading profits due to COVID-19

Your self-employed trading profits must also be **less than £50,000 and more than half of your income come from self-employment.**

More detailed guidance can be found here: <https://www.eca.co.uk/coronavirus>

## 11. Billion-pound support package for innovative firms hit by coronavirus

UK businesses driving innovation and development will be helped through the coronavirus outbreak with a comprehensive package which includes a new £500 million loan scheme for high-growth firms, called the Future Fund, and £750 million of targeted support for small and medium sized businesses focusing on research and development.

## 12. Personal loans & credit card payments

If you are experiencing difficulties paying back personal loans or credit card bills as a result of COVID-19, you should read the following information:

- The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) called on lenders to use flexibility built into their rules to support consumers, taking into account customers' individual circumstances. Many major lenders have already made statements to this effect.
- If you are experiencing difficulties paying back loans or credit card bills because of COVID-19, you should talk to your lender.
- If you agree a payment holiday with your lender, they should record these in such a way that will not impact on your credit score.

## 13. Mortgages and tenancies

Mortgage lenders will offer a three-month mortgage holiday for those who cannot pay and have no means to pay.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties meeting your mortgage repayments because of COVID-19, you may be entitled to a mortgage or rental holiday for 3 months. This includes if you are a landlord whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19.

If you are a tenant experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19, the Government will ensure you do not face the threat of eviction for at least 3 months:

- The Government has agreed with mortgage lenders that they will offer repayment holidays of 3 months to households in financial difficulty due to COVID-19.

- This will also apply to landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19.
- The offer of a payment holiday can be made available to customers who are up to date with payments and not already in arrears.
- Customers who are concerned about their current financial situation should contact their lender at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss if this is a suitable option for them.
- Emergency legislation will be taken forward so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a 3-month period. This applies to private and social renters.
- At the end of this period, landlords and tenants will be expected to work together to establish an affordable repayment plan, taking into account tenants' individual circumstances.
- **Renting: guidance for landlords, tenants and local authorities** - New [guidance](#) provides advice to landlords and tenants on the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020, and further advice for landlords, tenants and local authorities more broadly about their rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 outbreak.

## 14. Protection from eviction for commercial tenants

Commercial tenants who cannot pay their rent because of COVID-19 will be protected from eviction.

[Further details](#) are now available.

[New guidance](#) provides advice to landlords and tenants on the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020, and further advice for landlords, tenants and local authorities more broadly about their rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 outbreak.

## 15. HMRC/Tax & relaxation of Companies requirements

- **IR35** - Government has announced that the reform to the off-payroll working rules that would have applied for people contracting their services to large or medium-sized organisations outside the public sector will be delayed for one year from 6 April 2020 until 6 April 2021.

This is part of additional support for businesses and individuals to deal with the economic impacts of COVID19. This means that the different rules that exist for inside and outside the public sector will continue to apply until 6 April 2021. This announcement is a deferral of the introduction of the reforms, not a cancellation.

- **Deferring VAT** - Government have deferred VAT payments for 3 months - the deferral will apply from 20 March 2020 until 30 June 2020. Businesses will not need to make a VAT payment during this period. Taxpayers will be given until the end of the 2020 to 2021 tax year to pay any liabilities that have accumulated during the deferral period. VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the Government as normal.
- **Income Tax payments** - For the self-employed, Income Tax payments due in July 2020 under the Self-Assessment system will be deferred to January 2021. No penalties or interest for late payment will be charged in the deferral period.
- **Time to Pay scheme** - All businesses and self-employed people in financial distress, and with outstanding tax liabilities, may be eligible to receive support with their tax affairs through HMRC's Time to Pay service.

These arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis and are tailored to individual circumstances and liabilities.

You are eligible if your business:

- pays tax to the UK Government
- has outstanding tax liabilities

If you have missed a tax payment or you might miss your next payment due to COVID-19, please call HMRC's dedicated helpline: 0800 0159 559 **before the due date of your tax payment in order to get the best chance of a successful arrangement.**

HMRC are delivering a programme of webinars on the measures to support employers, people and self-employed individuals through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19.

You can watch a video of the recorded webinar on the HMRC YouTube channel [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): helping employers to support employees](#). You can also register to attend a free webinar to learn more about the support available to help you deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus by registering [here](#).

- **Companies House relaxes requirements during COVID-19** - Companies House have announced that businesses will be given an additional 3 months to file accounts to help companies avoid penalties as they deal with the impacts of COVID-19.

Companies House will temporarily pause the strike off process to prevent companies being dissolved. This will give businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak the time they need to update their records and help them avoid being struck off the register.

In addition, companies issued with a late filing penalty due to COVID-19 will have appeals treated sympathetically.

As part of the agreed measures, while companies will still have to apply for the 3-month extension to be granted, those citing issues around COVID-19 will be automatically and immediately granted an extension.

Companies will under proposed legislation, temporarily be extended greater flexibilities, including holding AGMs online or postponing the meetings.

- There are approximately 4.3 million companies on the Companies House register, and all companies must submit their accounts and a confirmation statement each year. Companies that file accounts late are issued with an automatic penalty. Companies House also has powers to strike off a company from the register if these documents are not ultimately filed.
  - For companies who make an application for voluntary dissolution, the DS01 (striking off application by a company) will be registered at Companies House and a notice published in the Gazette. However, after this point, any further action to strike off the company will be suspended.
  - Any person with an interest in a business which is nearing strike off should register an objection to dissolution at Companies House. This also applies to those who may have already registered an objection, but where the time period for that objection is due to expire.
  - These changes do not apply to businesses which are being dissolved as the result of an insolvency procedure such as administration or liquidation. Businesses in this position will continue to be dissolved by operation of the Insolvency Act.
- **Gender pay gap reporting** - Enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines are suspended for this reporting year (2019/20) due to the Coronavirus outbreak. The decision means there will be no expectation on employers to report their gender data.

## 16. Coronavirus job retention scheme

Under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, all UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis.

All UK businesses are eligible.

You will need to:

- Designate, subject to their agreement, affected employees as 'furloughed workers,' and notify your employees of this change - changing the status of employees remains subject to existing employment law and, depending on the employment contract, may be subject to negotiation.

The position of being 'furloughed' as opposed to 'laid off' is not clear. An educated guess may mean that the employer is able to suspend the employee, but unlike 'lay off' the employee cannot necessarily claim redundancy. Indeed, employers may yet be required to ensure the employees have continuation of employment contracts, when 'normal service' is resumed, in order to be eligible for the scheme.

- Submit information to HMRC about the employees that have been furloughed and their earnings through a new online portal (HMRC will set out further details on the information required)
- HMRC will reimburse 80% of furloughed workers wage costs, up to a cap of **£2,500** per month – which we have to assume is based on 'take-home' pay'.
- Payments will be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> March and available for three-month period initially (i.e. to the end of May). The scheme has since been extended to the end of June.
- HMRC are working urgently to set up a system for reimbursement. Existing systems are not set up to facilitate payments to employers – although through HMRC's VAT system and Making Tax Digital, they are set up for repayment systems on a monthly VAT trading basis, so this issue should not be difficult to resolve at speed.

Guidance can be found here: [gov.uk/business-support](https://www.gov.uk/business-support)

## 17. Statutory Sick Pay relief package for SMEs

Government is bringing forward legislation to allow small and medium-sized businesses and employers to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19. The eligibility criteria for the scheme are as follows:

- this refund will cover up to 2 weeks' SSP per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19
- UK based employers with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible - the size of an employer will be determined by the number of people they employed as of 28 February 2020
- employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP (according to the new eligibility criteria) as a result of COVID-19
- employers should maintain records of staff absences and payments of SSP, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note. If evidence is required by an employer, those with symptoms of coronavirus can get an isolation note from [NHS 111 online](https://www.nhs.uk/111) and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk)
- the eligible period for the scheme will commence the day after the regulations on the extension of SSP to those staying at home comes into force
- the Government will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible – as stated above there currently is no such mechanism for repayment of employers, but given the HMRC monthly VAT repayment system and the Making Tax Digital infrastructure already in place, this should not be difficult

The scheme is to allow small and medium sized employers, with fewer than 250 employees, to apply to HMRC to recover the costs of paying Statutory Sick Pay to their employees. HMRC has published [new online guidance](#) which includes information about who can use the scheme and the records employers must keep.

HMRC is working urgently to set up a system for reimbursement. Existing systems are not set up to facilitate payments to employers. Details about when the new Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme can be accessed and when employers can make a claim, will be announced as soon as possible. HMRC will continue to update employers and the new GOV.UK guidance when these details are available.

[gov.uk/business-support](https://www.gov.uk/business-support)

You can also get a fit note from NHS 111, rather than having to visit a GP's surgery in person (which is advised against if you suspect you are suffering from the virus).

Further ECA guidance can be found here:

<https://www.eca.co.uk/downloads/business-support/employee-relations/coronavirus-employment-guidance>

Guidance on isolation notes can be found here <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

## 18. Government amends insolvency law to help companies keep trading while they explore options for rescue

Under new plans from the UK Government, the UK's Insolvency Framework will add new restructuring tools that mirror the USA's Chapter 11 procedure, a well-established model adopted by countries around the world. This includes:

- *A moratorium for companies giving them breathing space from creditors enforcing their debts for a period of time whilst they seek a rescue or restructure;*

The reality is that under current UK insolvency law a 'moratorium' mechanism already exists once an insolvency process is instigated, freezing all debts and actions against the insolvent business whilst the insolvency process is undertaken.

There are no details on what this announcement actually means at present and given the process of administration was invented in the 1990s to allow a failing business to enter into an insolvency process, take advantage of the *moratorium* and trade back out of administration into a solvent position, it will be interesting to see how Government adapts the existing system to cater for COVID19 insolvency issues.

This announcement meets demands as some businesses are already taking advice from insolvency practitioners as to how to 'moth-ball' their business until the COVID19 storm has passed.

- *Protection of their supplies to enable them to continue trading during the moratorium; and*

We saw under the Carillion insolvency process that the insolvency practitioner could engage suppliers to create new legal relationships in order to safeguard either winding-down the business or business continuity, and that the contracts created were with the insolvency practitioner for monies due under those contracts. We therefore assume this statement will relate to enhancements around the abilities of failing business to continue to trade in order to recover themselves into a solvent position.

- *A new restructuring plan, binding creditors to that plan*

Even in liquidations, as well as administrations, creditors plans have always been a key feature of UK insolvency law, so we are yet to see the detail of how profoundly this will enhance trading conditions beyond what already exists within insolvency processes.

The proposals will also 'include key safeguards for creditors and suppliers to ensure they are paid.' At present there is no detail around what this means, but we must welcome the opportunity for a more flexible trading position under insolvency law which has always been sacrosanct within the UK.

### Wrongful trading provisions

While laws against fraudulent trading and director misconduct will continue to provide a deterrent against poor practices, wrongful trading provisions in the Insolvency Act will be temporarily suspended specifically to give confidence to company directors to use their best endeavours to continue to trade during this pandemic emergency, without the threat of personal liability, should the company ultimately fall into insolvency. Find out more [here](#)

Existing laws against fraudulent trading and the threat of director disqualification will continue to act as an effective deterrent against reckless misuse of these new measures.

Find out more [here](#)

## 19. Commercial insurance

Most commercial business interruption insurance policies are unlikely to cover pandemics or unspecified notifiable diseases, such as COVID-19.

However, those businesses which have an insurance policy that covers Government ordered closure and pandemics or Government ordered closure and unspecified notifiable disease should be able to make a claim (subject to the terms and conditions of their policy).

Insurance policies differ significantly, so businesses are encouraged to check the terms and conditions of their specific policy and contact their providers – There have been instances whereby extensions to policies have covered business disruption due to COVID19. [Further information is available.](#)

## 20. Rules on carrying over annual leave to be relaxed

Workers who have not taken all of their statutory annual leave entitlement due to COVID-19 will now be able to carry it over into the next 2 leave years. These measures will ensure workers won't lose their leave entitlements and gives more flexibility to business at a time when it is needed most.

Find more information [here](#).

## 21. Intellectual Property Office services

Following the coronavirus outbreak, the Intellectual Property Office have made a number of alterations to their services. This includes alterations to [trademarks and designs](#), [patents](#) and [interrupted days](#).

## 22. Renting: guidance for landlords, tenants and local authorities

This [new guidance](#) provides advice to landlords and tenants on the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020, and further advice for landlords, tenants and local authorities more broadly about their rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 outbreak.

## 23. MOT Suspension

Businesses utilising heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and public service vehicles (PSVs):

- Annual MOTs suspended for three months for all HGVs and PSVs
- Vehicles to be issued with a certificate of temporary exemption (CTE)
- Available as of 21 March 2020

Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-mots-for-lorries-buses-and-trailers> from the DVSA <https://www.gov.uk/Government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-standards-agency>.

For information on normal MOTs see here <https://www.gov.uk/Government/news/vehicle-owners-to-be-granted-mot-exemption-in-battle-against-coronavirus>

## 24. Temporary changes to Right to Work (RTW) checks during the coronavirus outbreak

Since 30 March 2020, Right to Work checks have been temporarily adjusted to make it easier for employers to carry them out during the coronavirus outbreak. Until further notice, employers do not need to see original documents and can complete Right to Work checks over video calls.

Prospective workers are now able to submit scanned documents, rather than originals, to show they have the right to work. Checks continue to be necessary and it is an offence to knowingly employ or let property to anyone who does not have legal immigration status in the UK.

If prospective or existing employees cannot provide any of the accepted documents, employers should use the [Employer Checking Service](#). Once the temporary changes end, employers will be asked to carry out prescribed checks on existing employees who started work during the pandemic.

Further guidance on what this means for employers can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

A condensed Fact Sheet on RTW checks can be found by visiting [www.eca.co.uk](http://www.eca.co.uk).

## 25. Maintaining further education provision

The [operational guidance](#) for further education (FE) providers on maintaining education and skills training provision has been updated.

## 26. Temporary relaxation of the enforcement of the drivers' hours rules: all sectors carriage of goods by road

Anyone driving under the EU drivers' hours rules or the GB drivers' hours rules and undertaking carriage of goods by road can use the relevant relaxation where necessary. The relaxations are not limited to specific sectors or journeys. These [two temporary relaxations](#) will run until 23:59 on Tuesday 21 April 2020.

## 27. Apprenticeship programme response

[This document](#) sets out guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of Coronavirus. The guidance has been updated with new information on continuing training and end point assessment for furloughed apprentices and pausing new funding audits.

## 28. Free online learning platform

A new [online learning platform](#) to help boost the nation's skills while people are staying at home, has been launched today by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

Free courses are available through [The Skills Toolkit](#). The new platform gives people access to free, high-quality digital and numeracy courses to help build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects.

These are the skills which are highly valued by employers and sought after in a wide range of jobs. With more people expected to be working and studying remotely in the coming months, the platform offers a great opportunity to learn new skills to help to get ahead online and gain the knowledge we'll all need for the future. The platform also offers employees who have been furloughed an opportunity to keep up their skills development while they are at home.

Courses on offer cover a range of levels, from everyday maths and tools for using email and social media more effectively at work to more advanced training. Individuals will be able to access courses helping them to create great online content developed by the University of Leeds and the Institute of Coding, to understand the Fundamentals of Digital Marketing from Google Digital Garage and to learn how to code for data analysis from the Open University. All courses are online and flexible, so people can work through them at their own pace. Find out more information [here](#).

## 29. MHRA guidance on coronavirus

Guidance for industry covering the Coronavirus outbreak. Added link to Guidance for manufacturers and Good Practice (GxP) laboratories on exceptional flexibilities for maintenance and calibration during the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak in the Inspections and Good Practice section.

## 30. Temporary changes to the Statutory Residence Test

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has [proposed a change to the tax legislation](#) to allow highly skilled individuals from across the world to come to the UK and help the UK respond to this unprecedented health emergency. The Statutory Residence Test (SRT) will be amended to ensure that any period(s) between 1 March and 1 June 2020 spent in the UK by individuals working on COVID-19 related activities will not count towards residence tests that potentially bring global earnings within the purview of UK taxation. These changes are time limited and will only support those people whose skillsets are currently required.

### 31. Offer coronavirus (COVID-19) support from your business

Use this service to tell Government how your business might be able to help with the response to coronavirus. The support needed includes things like:

- medical testing equipment
- medical equipment design
- protective equipment for healthcare workers, such as masks, gowns and sanitiser
- hotel rooms
- transport and logistics, for moving goods or people
- manufacturing equipment
- warehouse or office space, for medical use or storage
- expertise or support on IT, manufacturing, construction, project management, procurement, engineering or communications
- social care or childcare

UK Government is looking for businesses who can offer support in the multiple areas and has set up an online tool where businesses can register. To find the list of areas and offer support click [here](#).

### 32. Help us shine a light on the stories of key workers

Tell Government about key workers you know that are helping to keep the UK moving during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Please fill in [this online form](#) for key workers in the following sectors: manufacturing, construction, consumer goods, scientists/researchers, servicing, postal workers, and oil/gas/electricity/water/sewage/chemical workers.

### 33. NHS asks people to share coronavirus symptoms to help others

A new Coronavirus Status Checker will help the NHS coordinate its response and build up additional data on the COVID-19 outbreak. It is open to anyone in the UK to use on the NHS website and in its initial phase the NHS is particularly keen for anyone who thinks they may be displaying potential coronavirus symptoms, no matter how mild, to complete it. Please share the checker with your employees and networks. You can find more information [here](#).

### 34. Government WhatsApp

[Keep updated](#) with business support advice. Text 'hi' to 07860064422 via WhatsApp and there are business support measures highlighted under option 5 with the relevant links to gov.uk pages.

### 35. Government feedback

Government welcomes information from businesses on impacts across supply, demand and labour markets, actions to address these impacts, and any gaps in the Government's response from your perspective.

Please send your intelligence to [intel@beis.gov.uk](mailto:intel@beis.gov.uk). BEIS are aware that individual company information may be commercially sensitive, and it will be treated accordingly. Please note that this inbox is only for receiving intelligence and does not provide business advice.

For more details on the Government's plans, visit:

[www.gov.uk/Government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses](http://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses)

We will track all Government-announced measures and keep Members advised of developments via further issues of this guidance note – please therefore always ensure you download the current version – they are dated on the top right-hand side.

The NHS also provide some useful information about Coronavirus.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Government Toolkit for Business Continuity Management:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/137994/Business\\_Continuity\\_Management\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/137994/Business_Continuity_Management_Toolkit.pdf)

The Government have created some useful guidance on Business Continuity Planning. A good introduction and step-by-step guide to planning for disruption to your business.

<https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/business-continuity-planning>



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*ECA wishes to identify and inform the engineering services sector and ECA Members' decisions on what represents 'fair, reasonable and good contractual practice'. ECA remains committed to fair and open competition and this document is not designed to in any way dictate what may be an appropriate risk allocation, or act as a substitute for ECA Members obtaining project and context specific legal advice and making their own commercial decisions.*