



Latest covid-19 relief announcements and related updates

Updated on: 23 December 2021



Statutory sick pay **rebate scheme**

This scheme will be reintroduced from mid-January 2022. Employers can claim for COVID-related sickness absences occurring from **21 December 2021** onwards.

Eligibility

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

- You are **UK based**.
- You have **already paid your employee's sick pay** (use [SSP calculator](#) to calculate).
- You're claiming for an employee who is [eligible for sick pay due to coronavirus](#).
- You **have a PAYE payroll system** as of 30 November 2021.
- You had **fewer than 250 employees** as of 30 November 2021.

The scheme covers all types of employment contracts.

Records you must keep

You must keep records of SSP that you've paid and want to claim back from HMRC and must keep the following records for 3 years after the date you receive the payment for your claim:

- The **dates** the employee was off sick.
- Which of those dates were [qualifying days](#).
- The **reason** they said they were off work.
- The employee's **National Insurance number**.

Application

You must have paid your employees' sick pay before you claim it back.

- You can claim back the SSP using the [online services](#).
- If you use an agent who is authorised to do PAYE online for you, they will be able to claim on your behalf.
- Employers who are unable to claim online should have received a letter on an alternative way to claim. If not, then [contact HMRC](#).

To know more, [click here](#).

Please reach out to your account manager for more details.



Recovery loan scheme

Benefits

The Recovery Loan Scheme is currently open to **small** and **medium** sized businesses to support them to access loans and other kinds of finance so they can recover after the pandemic and transition period. This has been **extended** until **30 June 2022**.

- Up to £10 million is available per business (this will change to **£2 million per business** from 1 January 2022).
- The actual amount offered, and the terms are at the discretion of participating lenders.
- The government guarantees 80% of the finance to the lender (this will be reduced to 70% from 1 January 2022).
- As the **borrower**, you are always **100% liable** for the debt.

Eligibility

The scheme will only be open to small and medium sized enterprises. You need to show that your business:

- Would be viable were it not for the pandemic.
- Has been adversely impacted by the pandemic.
- Is not in collective insolvency proceedings.

Except:

- Banks, building societies, insurers, and reinsurers (but not insurance brokers).
- Public-sector bodies.
- State-funded primary and secondary schools.

Application

- Find a lender accredited to offer Recovery Loans from the list on the [British Business Bank website](#).
- Please reach out to your account manager for more details.



Help to grow: management

Benefits

- A new UK-wide management programme to upskill 30,000 SMEs in the UK over 3 years.
- Combination of the national curriculum with 1:1 support from a business mentor, peer-learning sessions and an alumni network.
- Use of practical case studies and mentoring from experienced business professionals.
- The programme is 90% subsidised by government - participants will be charged £750.

Eligibility

Business:

- Based in UK
- Any sector
- Operating for more than 1 year
- Should have 5 to 249 employees

Note: Charities are not eligible.

Participant:

- Decision maker
- Member of the senior management team within the business

Process

You can sign up using the [online form](#) to register.



Help to grow: **digital**

Benefits

- A digital scheme to help 100,000 SMEs save time and money by adopting productivity-enhancing software, transforming the way they do business.
- Small businesses will be able to get free impartial advice on how technology can boost their performance through a new online platform.
- This will combine a voucher covering up to 50% of the costs of approved software up to a maximum of £5,000.
- Vouchers are initially expected to be available for software that helps businesses:
 - Build customer relationships and increase sales
 - Make the most of selling online
 - Manage their accounts and finances digitally

Eligibility

- All businesses will be able to benefit from free online advice on the platform.
- The voucher is expected to be available to UK business that:
 - Employ between 5 and 249 employees and are registered at Companies House
 - Have been trading for more than 12 months
 - Are purchasing the discounted software for the first time

Process

You can register up using the [online form](#) to register for interest. You will need your Companies House registration number for the same.



Apprenticeship

- A new “flexi-job” apprenticeship programme in England.
- From 11 January 2022 employers can apply for new apprentices with an employment start date from 1 October 2021 to 31 January 2022.
- An increase of payment to £3,000.

Eligibility

To start an apprenticeship, you'll need to be:

- 16 or over
- Living in England
- Not in full-time education
- Or in 2021/22 academic year.



Discretionary funds from local authorities

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)

- Local authorities in England have been given an additional £500 million discretionary funding to support their local businesses.
- In addition to £1.1 billion discretionary funding (worth £20 per head of population) which local authorities in England have already received to support their local economies and help businesses impacted.

Eligibility

Local councils have the freedom to determine the eligibility criteria for these grants. Businesses which are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions could include:

- Businesses which supply the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors
- Businesses in the tourism and events sectors
- Business required to close but which do not pay business rates



Reduced vat rate for tourism and **hospitality**

- The reduced rate was initially introduced to last for a temporary period between 15 July 2020 and 12 January 2021.
- This period was subsequently extended to 31 March 2021.
- In the Budget 2021, the temporary reduced rate got extended for a further six-month period at 5% until 30 September 2021.
- A new reduced rate of 12.5% will then be introduced which will end on 31 March 2022. The scope of the relief will remain unchanged.
- Applicable to:
 - supplies of food and non-alcoholic drinks from restaurants, pubs, bars, cafés and similar premises,
 - supplies of accommodation and admission to attractions across the UK.



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