**Support for businesses impacted by coronavirus**

**National support package (as at 18 March 2020)**

The Government has announced a package of support for businesses in response to coronavirus, COVID-19. This note summarises the support offered, and sources of further information.

The package of support nationally includes:

* Statutory sick pay relief package for SMEs – Government is working with employers over the coming months to set up a repayment mechanism “as soon as possible.”
* A 12-month business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England for 2020-21. Businesses will be rebilled by local authorities (District Councils in Norfolk) as soon as possible. The Government will publish guidance to local authorities by 20 March 2020.
* A £25,000 grant will also be provided to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses operating from premises with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000.
* Small business grant funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief. Local authorities (District Councils) will contact eligible businesses directly and funding will be provided to local authorities in early April with additional guidance.
* the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme to support long-term viable businesses who may need to respond to cash-flow pressures by seeking additional finance. The first six months of finance will be interest free (funded by Government). This will launch next week delivered by the British Business Bank.
* the HMRC Time To Pay Scheme to help with tax for businesses and self employed individuals with support via HMRC’s dedicated helpline on 0800 0159 559.
* Government has confirmed with the insurance industry that government advice is sufficient to enable claims for pandemics and government-ordered closure.
* Providing support for liquidity amongst large firms, with a major new scheme being launched by the Bank of England to help them bridge coronavirus disruption to their cash flows through loans.
* The Government will be providing further support to other industries directly impacted in due course (including airports and airlines).
* Funding for the government’s early years entitlements will continue during any periods of nursery, preschool or childminder closures, or where children cannot attend due to coronavirus. The Government will continue to pay funding to local authorities for the free entitlements for two, three and four-year-olds, providing reassurance for early years settings.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Full details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

**Local support package**

These are the steps Norfolk County Council is taking to support and maintain critical services and service providers:

* Paying care providers on planned rather than actual activity levels to maintain capacity;
* Supporting redeployment of staff to maintain essential services (e.g. redeploying Day Services staff where possible).
* Procuring care packages to support prompt / accelerated discharge from hospitals to release capacity.
* Maintaining transport contracts on planned activity levels to retain capacity.
* Planning for central distribution of key equipment / supplies / cleaning products etc.
* Update about Free School Meals TBC from Children’s paper.

These are the steps Norfolk County Council is taking to help local businesses more generally:

* We will continue to pay promptly those businesses delivering services to the County Council – we already pay over 98% of our invoices within 30 days
* We will prioritise payments to those businesses in receipt of grants from Norfolk County Council.
* We are working closely with the LEP, Chamber and FSB to provide consistent advice and sign-posting to businesses that will be available on all of our online platforms and will make that advice available to district councils
* We are looking at how we create dedicated staff to support businesses directly if they are struggling with access to the Government resources that have been put in place.
* We will be sharing resource to maximise capacity to meet the needs of business across our areas.
* We will signpost apprenticeship providers and stakeholders to Department for Education guidance on supporting apprentices and their employers.

**Sources of further support and information:**

Government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Norfolk County Council: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus>

Norfolk District Councils: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/your-local-councils-mps-and-meps/local-councils>

*Information correct as at 18/03/2020 11:00am*

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-childcare-offers-to-continue-during-coronavirus-closures> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)