

### **BVRLA seeks temporary Consumer Credit Act relief for motor finance providers**

The BVRLA has written to HM Treasury asking for a temporary relief from Consumer Credit Act (CCA) forbearance provisions. At present, lenders are desperate to 'do the right thing' and assist their customers, but they are constrained by some of the procedural rigidities within the CCA. Some of the CCA provisions that are, in normal circumstances, intended to protect consumers are now hamstringing those who want to assist them in their time of need.

Under CCA rules the process for offering forbearance requires a modifying agreement to be signed and agreed. In the current circumstances, this adds unnecessary administrative pressure and customer complexity. Firms are already administratively stretched to breaking point by the Coronavirus pandemic and customers need rapid solutions to their financial challenges.

Firms wanting to take swift action to support their customers are instead being forced to use informal agreements. These agreements leave them open to later challenges and the potential situation where their lease contracts are unenforceable. By acting in their customer's best interest firms can be opening themselves up to later litigation and ruinous costs. These risks are currently preventing some lenders from providing more support to customers.

There are also potential impacts for the customer in an informal agreement. Such agreements can technically leave them in breach of their contract, which can have an impact on their credit score. Lenders are also obligated to send Arrears Notices which can be deeply unsettling for the consumer at what is already a worrying time.

The BVRLA is working with the FLA as it proposes some emergency secondary legislation aimed at providing temporary relief from CCA forbearance provisions. These measures recognise the extraordinary circumstances of the current crisis and the need to give lenders the tools they need to treat their customers with compassion.

### **Independent lenders can now access the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme**

The British Business Bank (BBB) has now confirmed that FCA regulated credit brokers, finance houses and leasing providers could be eligible to access the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS). CBILS provides financial support to smaller businesses across the UK that are losing revenue or seeing their cashflow disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The scheme provides lenders with up to £5m which can then be provided to SMEs in the form of asset finance. CBILS gives lenders a government-backed guarantee for the loan repayments to encourage more lending. More details can be found on the [BBB website](#). The BBB has said it is doing everything it can to try and speed up the accreditation process.

The scheme is a part of a wider package of government support for UK businesses and employees. Read more at the [Government's Business Support website](#).

### **Company Car Benefit in Kind Tax during the COVID-19 outbreak**

HMRC has provided the following update on the issue of whether company car tax should be paid while vehicles are unavailable or unused by workers:

*“You have asked if the car is ‘unavailable’ to the employee for a period of time could HMRC confirm that the car benefit charge would no longer apply. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as not using cars for a particular period of time, whether that be for 30 days (the period of minimum ‘unavailability’ stated in legislation), or any shorter period that the government might consider.*

*The benefit charge applies where a car is made available for private use, whether or not it is so used. For example, a car kept on an employee’s driveway during a period of furlough would still be considered to be made available. Neither would HMRC accept a SORN declaration as proof of unavailability. Guidance explains when HMRC would not accept that a car is unavailable and includes when there is no road tax, MOT or insurance.*

*In most cases, HMRC would expect that the car is handed back to the employer so that it cannot be used. However, we recognise that under the current circumstances it may not be possible to hand the car itself back, so exceptionally, we would accept that where all the keys (or tabs) are in possession of the employer, and the employee does not have the authority to request the keys are returned to them, the car would be ‘unavailable.’”*

### **Food supply chain needs refrigerated vehicles**

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) is working with the Department for Transport to better understand the spare capacity of temperature-controlled trucks and vans within the vehicle rental and leasing sector.

The COVID-19 outbreak has put more pressure on the food supply chain, with increasing demands for deliveries in and out of retail distribution centres and to individual homes.

Members that have refrigerated vehicles available should get in touch with Chris Seaton at the RHA (c.seaton@rha.uk.net), who is co-ordinating the logistics sector’s response on this issue.

### **New website for businesses wanting to offer Coronavirus support**

The Government has launched a new website for businesses that feel they might be able to help in the response to Coronavirus.

Some of the help being sought includes:

- transport and logistics, for moving goods or people
- warehouse or office space, for medical use or storage
- expertise or support on IT, manufacturing, construction, project management, procurement, engineering or communications

Business that feel that they can help, can register on the new [COVID-19 support website](#).

### **HGV licensing and inspection update**

The Office of the Traffic Commissioner has confirmed a more flexible approach to adding and removing vehicles from operator licences and the ability for operators to maintain their regular inspection programmes. The latest advice is on their [website](#).

### **Update on DVLA operations during the Coronavirus pandemic**

The DVLA has confirmed that its telephone-based driving licence check service will not be available for the foreseeable future. Members are advised to get customers to generate a check code via the [Government's Driving Licence Check website](#).

DVLA systems have now been updated to enable fleets to electronically tax vehicles that have been temporarily exempted from requiring an MOT. This service can only be used on a vehicle-by-vehicle basis.

### **Extra support for critical vehicle movements**

Cox Automotive has launched a new service to facilitate the movement of vehicles for critical service fleets.

The service is accessed via the company's Movex platform, an online marketplace that gives trade customers access to a large number of transport providers.

Some of these transport businesses are still operating and providing essential movement services (strictly within the UK Government guidelines) to support a wide variety of critical services.

Any companies needing a transport provider for essential business should visit <https://movex.co.uk/>

### **How is Coronavirus impacting the public EV charging network?**

BVRLA members and customers are being asked to provide details of EV charge point availability for key workers and essential services.

ZapMap is working with the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology (REA) to run a survey to understand:

- the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on EV charging in the UK
- how EVs are being used for essential travel
- to identify key workers who are using EVs and require access to EV charging facilities to continue their work

The results of the survey will be made available to the UK Government, charge point operators and other organisations who are working hard to ensure that EV charging infrastructure is available for all key workers during the coronavirus outbreak.

The survey will be open for the next few days and can be found [here](#).

# Covid-19 Bulletin

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## **Temporary changes to Driver CPC regime**

The Department of Transport has put in place temporary changes in professional driver qualifications requirements. This means that truck drivers whose Driver CPC card expires between 1 March 2020 and 30 September 2020 can continue driving.

Most professional lorry and bus drivers must complete 35 hours periodic training every 5 years to maintain a Driver CPC card (sometimes called a 'driver qualification card' or 'DQC').

The changes have been introduced due to the difficulty drivers will have in completing the required training during the COVID-19 outbreak. More details are [available here](#).