

Chancellor announces extension of business support

The Government has confirmed that its Job Support Scheme will be expanded to protect jobs and support businesses required to close their doors as a result of restrictions.

[Today's announcement](#) confirms that the Government will support eligible businesses by:

- paying two thirds of each employees' salary (or 67%), up to a maximum of £2,100 a month.
- increasing the cash grants to up to £3,000 per month payable every two weeks, compared to the up to £1,500 every three weeks which was available previously.

Under the scheme, employers will not be required to contribute towards wages and only asked to cover NICS and pension contributions. Businesses will only be eligible to claim the grant while they are subject to restrictions and employees must be off work for a minimum of seven consecutive days.

The scheme begins on 1 November and will be available for six months, with a review point in January. It is UK wide and the Government will work with the devolved administrations to ensure the scheme operates across all four nations.

Cyber guide to help small businesses work securely online

The National Cyber Security Centre has re-launched its [Small Business Guide](#) setting s out five key areas for businesses to help improve their cyber security. The new-look guidance arrives at a time when many organisations have moved their operations online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Guidance for employers on self-isolating and support for staff

It is now a legal requirement to self-isolate if you test positive for Covid-19 or if you are identified as a contact and told to self-isolate by Test and Trace. Failure to self-isolate for the full time-period can result in a fine, starting from £1,000.

Employers should support workers who are told to self-isolate and must not ask them to attend work. See the [guidance on the NHS Test and Trace service for employers, businesses and workers](#). Guidance on the [NHS Trest and Trace](#) explains how the system works.

File your Companies House accounts online to avoid delays

As Companies House is approaching a 'peak filing' period, it is encouraging businesses to file online to ensure that accounts are filed by the deadline, warning that paper-based processes are taking far longer than usual due to reduced office-based staffing levels.

[Filing online](#) can take as little as 15 minutes from start to finish and you'll know your accounts have been delivered on time. The online filing service also has inbuilt checks to help you avoid mistakes.

GDP rose by 2.1% during August

Latest figures from the Office for National Statistics on the [impact of Covid on the output of the UK economy](#) show that although August saw the fourth consecutive month of growth, it was the slowest rate of expansion since April 2020 and was 9.2% below February 2020 levels.

This compares with rises of 2.7% in May 2020, 9.1% in June 2020 and 6.4% in July 2020.

Covid study shows socialising down and anxiety levels up

The Office for National Statistics has published its [latest Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#) covering 30 September to 4 October 2020, showing lower levels of socialising.

Levels of socialising varied by whether someone was in a “local lockdown” area; of those in lockdown 34% had not socialised with anyone outside their household, compared with 25% for those not in local lockdown areas.

Average anxiety scores for all adults have increased this week to 4.3, the highest figure since 3 to 13 April. Around 7 in 10 (72%) adults were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their life right now.

Latest findings on England’s largest Covid study

The Government has published its fifth [report of the country’s largest study on rates of Covid-19 infections](#) in the general population in England.

This latest study covers the period 18 September to 5 October and shows that the virus was growing by 45,000 new infections every day, doubling every 29 days. Out of 174,949 people tested, 824 were positive with 1-in-170 having the virus. Those aged 18 to 24 year were found to be suffering from high rates of infection, with 1-in-80 testing positive. The North West reported the highest regional infection rates, with 1-in-100 people testing positive.

The [R-rate for the UK](#), as of 9 October, is 1.2-1.5 and the growth rate range is +4% to +9% per day.