

Covid-19 Bulletin

05 March 2021



Budget focused on Covid recovery

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) [has announced](#) how it will play a key role in delivering the Spring Budget, which was designed to focus on protecting jobs and livelihoods of the British people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The [BVRLA has published](#) a short video alongside an explanatory overview of what Covid and other fiscal measures were announced in this week's Budget that will be of particular interest to members.

The [BVRLA responded](#) to the Budget, welcoming the focus on Covid support, having previously [written to the Chancellor](#) to make clear that support measures were critical to the survival of SMEs.

Roadmap out of lockdown stimulates optimism

[Latest social indicators](#) monitoring the impact of coronavirus on society on a weekly basis, show that following the Prime Minister's [roadmap](#) announcement, adults in Great Britain reported feeling more optimistic about the speed with which life will return to normal.

The data, published by the Office for National Statistics shows that around a third (32%) felt that life will return to normal in six months or less, up from 22% the week before. 20% of adults felt that it will take more than a year for life to return to normal, down from 27% the previous week.

Ventilation required to make workplace Covid-secure

The Government has [published guidance](#) on ventilation for the workplace, advising that this should be considered as part of [making your workplace or indoor public space Covid-secure](#).

It is important to identify and deal with areas that are not well ventilated. The more people occupying an area that is poorly ventilated, and the longer they remain in it, the greater the risk of spread of Covid-19.

ONS publishes data on job vulnerability

The Office for National Statistics has published information on what jobs are being most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and which socio-economic groups are identified as most vulnerable.

Findings from the ONS' Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings shows that men, those aged 16–19-year-olds, and those in lower paid jobs are the workers being most impacted by the pandemic.

[The data](#), which looks at 25,763,000 employees working across 365 different occupations, reports on average hourly pay, annual percentage change, gender representation, whether they have been furloughed, and whether they fall under the high, medium or low vulnerability score.

Low paid workers represent 88% of those with a high vulnerability score, and 66% are men.

[An overview](#) document has also been published to accompany the data.

FCA guidance on consumer payment deferrals

The Financial Conduct Authority is reminding consumers that the deadline for applications for new payment deferrals under the Payment Deferral Guidance (PDG) is 31 March 2021. Only consumers still in a payment deferral under the PDG on 31 March will be able to extend their payment deferral beyond that date. All deferrals under that guidance will end by 31 July 2021 at the latest.

From 1 April 2021, consumers who are newly impacted by coronavirus, or find themselves impacted again, whether or not they have previously had a payment deferral, should receive support from their lender under the Tailored Support Guidance (TSG) which reflects their individual needs and circumstances. This could include short-term support such as a payment deferral.

In January the regulator updated its [Information for firms on consumer credit](#) as well as its [Tailored Support Guidance](#) enabling firms to repossess goods and vehicles from 31 January 2021, but only as a last resort.

Kickstart Scheme guidance updated

The Government has [updated its guidance](#) for employers using the Kickstart Scheme, adding the funding schedule to 'How you will get the funding' and also adding more detail to the steps in 'Getting the young people into the job placements.'

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Contactless payment limit increased to £100

The Financial Conduct Authority announced on 3 March that it had changed its rules to allow for an [increase in the single transaction contactless payment](#) threshold from £45 to £100. The contactless threshold for multiple transactions will also increase from £130 to £300.

The changes have been brought about to support consumers and merchants during the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and is a response to changing behaviours. The first change was introduced in April 2020, when the FCA increased the contactless limit from £30 to £45.