

Vehicles are the mode of choice for holidaymakers

The [BVRLA has reported that vehicle rental is a popular choice for UK holidaymakers](#) as more people are turning to the rental sector.

Demand from leisure and tourism customers fell off a cliff following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the association is now seeing green shoots as UK holidaymakers are hiring vehicles for staycations. An increasing number of holidaymakers are also taking their vehicles abroad.

Earlier this week, RAC Europe also reported that more people than usual are driving abroad this year. Its research suggested five million motorists were set to drive on the Continent this summer, with an estimated 1.5m of those driving abroad for the first time.

[Latest transport usage figures](#) from the Department of Transport also indicate that motor vehicles are the mode of choice for those needing to travel, with the numbers of cars on the road returning to pre-pandemic levels at weekends with midweek levels sitting at 80-92%.

In contrast, National rail usage continues to be low, peaking at 27% in the past week and London Underground usage also remains at around a quarter, reaching 31% last weekend.

Changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

[Guidance](#) has been updated for the furlough scheme to reflect the new rules. It now also includes a new section on the maximum number of employees you can claim for.

From 1 August 2020, employers are being asked to contribute towards the cost of their furloughed employees' wages. Find out more about [how the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has changed](#).

Government funds Small Business Leadership Programme

Those running SME's in England, who have between five and 249 employees can apply to attend a 10-week [Small Business Leadership Programme](#), fully funded by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

The Programme has been launched to support senior leaders to enhance their business's resilience and recovery from the impact of Covid-19, helping to develop their potential for future growth and productivity. It will be delivered online by small business and enterprise experts from world-leading business schools.

Government launches Peer Network to support SMEs

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy has launched [Peer Networks](#), a peer-to-peer networking programme for SMEs that is delivered locally by the network of Growth Hubs across England.

From finance and HR to sales and marketing, a team of expert facilitators will help to create a trusted support network that works for all, helping SMEs to build and strengthen the business and improve its overall performance.

The programme is available to any SME business in England that has operated for at least one year, has five employees or more and an annual turnover in excess of £100,000.

Dashboard provides Covid-19 data for your area

The Government has published a [coronavirus dashboard](#), which is updated daily and shows the number of cases and deaths in the UK, broken down by region and local authority area.

The 'more on cases' link takes you to more detailed information about [cases](#) in a geography of your choosing. Simply select the 'United Kingdom' dropdown at the top and select your area of interest.

DVSA confirms further MOT extension for HGVs

The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency has updated its [guidance on MOTs for HGVs, buses and trailers](#) to provide further exemptions from annual testing for the newest HGVs and those operated by the safest operators (green OCRS score or Earned Recognition operators).

The additional 12-month exemptions, that are being applied from 24 August 2020, were confirmed following discussions between the DVSA and industry bodies, including the BVRLA.

Less than half of trading businesses are running profitably

The Office for National Statistics has [published its weekly data](#) on the impacts of coronavirus on the UK economy and society.

It reports that 94% of businesses are currently trading, whilst 6% remain temporarily closed. Of those currently trading, 45% reported that their turnover is exceeding their operating costs, compared with 16% who reported their operating costs to be higher than their turnover.

Overall retail footfall continued to gradually increase this week, driven by an increase in visits to retail parks. The wearing of face coverings also continues to increase with the proportion of adults wearing a face covering when leaving the home rising to 96% from 84% the previous week.