

FCA to issue third Covid-19 Impact Survey

The Financial Conduct Authority is providing advance notice to inform regulated members that they will be receiving a request to input into the regulator's next Covid-19 Impact Survey.

Completion of the survey, being issued between 19 and 25 May, is mandatory.

With high prevalence of phishing emails and scams, members are advised to ensure that when they receive the survey, they check it is from either FCA@fcanewsletters.org.uk or an @fca.org.uk email address.

The survey will include 10 questions designed to collate information about:

- Liquidity/cash availability and needs
- Recent financial performance
- Scale of business activity
- Access to government schemes

Support for employers claiming Statutory Sick Pay Rebate

HMRC has published a [new 25-minute webinar](#) to provide information to employers about claiming back some Statutory Sick Pay paid to employees due to coronavirus-related sickness absence.

Payment deadline extended for local authority Grants

[Guidance has been updated](#) to reflect that payment deadlines have been extended for the following schemes: LRSG (Open), LRSG (Sector), LRSG (Closed), LRSG (Closed) Addendum, LRSG (Closed) Addendum: Tier 4, LRSG (Closed) Addendum: 5 January onwards (first 6-week payment only) and Closed Businesses Lockdown Payment.

Local Authorities now have until 14th May 2021 to make payments to businesses that have applied for any of these schemes.

International Travel Report outlines recommendations

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Coronavirus, established in July 2020, has published an [International Travel Report](#) outlining key recommendations, calling upon Government to:

- discourage all international leisure travel to prevent the importation of new variants into the UK.
- provide adequate financial support to businesses operating in the travel industry.
- improve Covid security in arrival halls at all UK entry points, including airports, ports and international train stations.
- lead calls for an international standard for proof of negative Covid-19 test and/or proof of vaccination.
- maintain funding for international research projects assisting the global fight against Covid-19, including those which support the genomic analysis and tracking of new Covid variants in other countries.

Government shares roadmap to recovery for general aviation

The Department for Transport has published a [General Aviation Roadmap](#) setting out a programme of activities including the short-medium term priorities around the recovery from Covid-19, and priorities to support the sector.

The aviation industry has been one of the hardest hit during the pandemic and the impact has been felt amongst those vehicle rental companies whose businesses rely heavily on tourism and passenger travel through airports.

Heathrow Airport passenger numbers fell by 83% in March 2021 compared to the same month last year, and during Q1-2021 passenger numbers were down 91% on the same period two years ago. [Heathrow reported](#) a £329 million loss in Q1 as only 1.7 million passengers travelled through the airport, bringing their total losses since the start of the pandemic to nearly £2.4 billion.

ONS indicators show signs of economic recovery

[Latest figures](#) from the Office for National Statistics show green shoots across a wide range of economic indicators with more people starting up new businesses, more companies resuming trade, more jobs being advertised, and more spending in shops.

Highlights from the report include:

- There were 14,292 company incorporations in the week to 24 April, down 9% on the previous week (15,771) but 21% higher than the equivalent week in 2019 (11,907) according to Companies House.
- The volume of UK online job adverts was at 103% of its average February 2020 level. The first time it has exceeded its February average since the pandemic began.
- Overall retail footfall in the UK was at 80% of its level in the equivalent week of 2019.
- The CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases for delayable goods (such as clothing and furnishings) saw a second successive sizeable increase of 21 percentage points from the previous week and is now 110% of its February 2020 average.

83% of businesses are now trading, up from 77% in the previous reporting period, and a further 4% of businesses intend to restart in the next two weeks.

Motor vehicle traffic is now close to pre-pandemic levels and on Monday 26 April 2021 was reported to be at 93% of the level seen in the first week of February 2020.

Guidance update for international hauliers

[Guidance for hauliers](#) has been updated to reflect that HGV or van drivers no longer need proof of a negative Covid-19 test to enter the Netherlands.

Trial assesses whether daily testing can replace isolation

The Government has announced the [launch of a pilot](#) scheme to check whether daily testing could be used as an alternative to self-isolation for those in close contact with a person testing positive.

Currently, anybody who has been notified through NHS Test and Trace as a contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 must self-isolate for 10 days. The [new scheme](#) will see close contacts of people testing positive being contacted by phone and sent 7 days' worth of lateral flow tests.

They will be required to test themselves each morning for a week and those who test negative and develop no symptoms will be exempt from the legal duty to self-isolate that day.

The announcement comes shortly after the Office for National Statistics [reported](#) that approximately one-third (32%) of survey respondents stated that self-isolation had a negative effect on their well-being and mental health, and 27% reported having lost income because of self-isolation.

Use of the BVRLA Amersham office

The BVRLA has confirmed that for the remainder of 2021, meetings, working groups, committees, and training courses will continue to be conducted remotely for the remainder of this calendar year.

Use of the BVRLA Amersham office will be restricted to a limited number of staff at any one time once the office re-opens on 1 July, and staff attendance will be on a voluntary basis as working from home will continue.

Office use will adhere to Government restrictions on meeting others outside the home and could be subject to change in accordance with those rules.