

### **Business closures eased across England**

The Government has updated its [guidance on business closures](#) to reflect the introduction of local restriction tiers that came into effect on 2 December 2020. The new restrictions enable most businesses and venues to open following [Covid-19 Secure guidelines](#).

Guidance has also been updated on [Test and Trace in the workplace](#) to reflect the end of the national restrictions and start of the new regional tier system.

### **Transport usage figures**

The Department for Transport has published its [latest transport usage figures](#) showing that road transport usage is at around three quarters of the normal levels for this time of year, whilst national rail usage is as low as a fifth of pre-pandemic levels and the London Underground around a quarter.

### **Christmas travel measures**

Transport Secretary Grant Schapps has [outlined a series of measures](#) focused on minimising disruption and helping people to travel safely over the Christmas period, urging passengers to plan their journeys carefully, consider quieter routes, and where possible, book ahead.

People thinking about going abroad over the festive period should [read the advice](#) from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

The Government has published its [full guidance for the Christmas period](#) covering a range of areas.

### **Guidance updated for employers using furlough scheme**

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme [guidance has been updated](#) to include a Step-by-step guide to reflect recent changes to the scheme, and a new key dates guide has also been published.

### **Changes to Local Restrictions Support Grant**

Guidance on [claiming the Local Restrictions Support Grant](#) has been updated, changing the 28-day claim period to 14 days for businesses that have not had to close but which have been severely impacted due to local Tier 2 or Tier 3 restrictions.

Eligible businesses may be entitled to a cash grant from their local council for each 14-day period under local restrictions.

Businesses with a property with a rateable value of £15,000 or less, may be eligible for a cash grant of up to £467 for each 14-day period. Those with a rateable value over £15,000 and less than £51,000 may be eligible for up to £700 for each 14-day period and on a rateable value of £51,000 or above, the cash grant rises of up to £1,050 for each 14-day period.

### **Half of UK firms have enough cash reserves to get through Q1**

[Latest indicators](#) for the UK economy and society published by the Office for National Statistics show that of UK businesses currently trading, 31% had between zero- and three- months cash reserves, 16% had between four and six months and 35% had more than six months. 18% were not sure. During the period 2 to 15 November, 43% experienced a decrease in profits compared with what is normally expected for this time of year, 35% experienced no change and 6% experienced an increase.

### **Vehicle testing and driving tests resume**

The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency has confirmed that [driving theory tests](#) have now restarted in England. [Driving lessons](#) have also now resumed across all three tiers.

The DVSA has confirmed that MOT garages can remain open and vehicle testing can continue across all tiers with Covid-19 secure measures in place. The Agency is encouraging members to only book vehicles or trailers in for its test close to its MOT due date.

### **Detailed data shows regional Covid picture**

The Government has published a new set of [detailed data](#) to ensure transparency in the data that is assessed when determining tier allocation for local restrictions across England.

### **Vaccine update**

The Prime Minister [announced on 2 December](#) that the [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency](#) has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for distribution across the UK, and a vaccination programme will start as early as next week.

The Government has published [an independent report](#) from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advising that the first priorities for any Covid-19 vaccination programme should be the prevention of Covid 19 mortality and the protection of health and social care staff and systems.

Secondary priorities could include those at increased risk of hospitalisation and at increased risk of exposure, and to maintain resilience in essential public services.