

Furlough scheme guidance updated

30 November 2020 is the last day employers can submit or change claims for periods ending on or before 30 October 2020. After this date you will not be able to submit any further claims or add to existing claims for the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#).

From October 1, the Government grant reduced to 60% and the employer is asked to contribute towards the cost of their furloughed employees' wages to ensure they continue to receive at least 80% of their wages for the time they're on furlough.

According to the latest [Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey](#) published by the Office for National Statistics, 11% of the workforce were on furlough and 85% of businesses were trading during the period 7 to 20 September, which is broadly comparable with the previous two week period (12% and 84%, respectively).

Checking eligibility for claiming the Job Retention Bonus

Employers can now check their eligibility for claiming the [Job Retention Bonus](#) and find out what you need to do to claim it.

The Job Retention Bonus is a £1,000 one-off taxable payment to you (the employer), for each eligible employee that you furloughed and kept continuously employed until 31 January 2021. You'll be able to claim the bonus between 15 February 2021 and 31 March 2021.

Support Grants for businesses affected by local restrictions

Businesses that have been open as usual, providing services in person to customers from their business premises, but which were then required to close for at least 3 weeks due to local lockdown restrictions imposed by government are being invited to check their eligibility to apply for the [Local Restrictions Support Grant](#).

Health and Social Care Secretary [Matt Hancock has extended measures](#) introduced in the North East, to cover the Liverpool City region, Warrington, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough, and confirmed that the Government will provide £7 million of funding to local authorities in these areas.

Claiming the new Self-Employment Support grant

The [grant extension](#), which is for self-employed individuals who are currently eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and are actively continuing to trade but are facing reduced demand due to coronavirus, will provide two grants and will last for six months, from November 2020 to April 2021.

Deferral of VAT payments due to coronavirus

Businesses who [deferred VAT](#) due from 20 March to 30 June 2020 will now have the option to pay in smaller payments over a longer period. Instead of paying the full amount by the end of March 2021, you can make smaller payments up to the end of March 2022, interest free. More information on the scheme will be available in the coming months.

Guidance updated on working safely during coronavirus

The Government has updated its [guidance on working safely](#) in a range of settings. Members will be particularly interested in the following updates:

- [Shops and branches](#). By law, staff and customers of retail settings are now required to wear a face covering, unless they have an exemption.
- [Face coverings at work](#): Face coverings must be worn by retail staff working in areas where they're likely to come into contact with a member of the public.

National survey shows changing attitudes towards work location

The proportion of working adults who travelled to work at some point during the week of 16 to 20 September fell to 59%, from 64% the previous week according to the latest [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#) published by the Office for National Statistics.

The survey also found that almost 3 in 10 (29%) working adults said they had changed their work location during the pandemic and were planning on continuing to work from home at least some of the time. Among those planning to work from home all or part of the time, 12% said they have considered moving to a different location in the UK, most commonly to rural or coastal areas.

Study shows 50% testing positive had no symptoms

[Interim results](#) from the fourth report of England's largest study on coronavirus rates of infection have been published, following the testing of over 80,000 volunteers between 18 and 26 September. It is estimated that 1 in 200 people in England were infected with the virus, reinforcing the need to remain vigilant. 50% of test positive volunteers did not have symptoms at the time of testing or the week before, but this does not mean they did not later develop symptoms.

The report shows prevalence of infection increased across all age groups and regions. Infection was highest in those aged 18 to 24 with 1 in 100 people infected, and cases increased seven-fold in those aged over 65. The North West had the highest levels of infection and the number of infections in London increased five-fold.

Infection rate across the UK continues to increase

As of today (2 October), the R number range for the UK is 1.3-1.6 which means that on average every 10 people infected will infect between 13 and 16 other people. The growth rate range is +5% to +9% per day meaning that the number of new infections is growing by 5% to 9% every day.

The latest R rates specifically for [England](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) are published on their respective websites.

Testing capability continues to ramp up as demand rises

[Figures published today](#) show that there are almost 500 testing sites now operational across the UK and 1-in-8 people in England have been tested to date. Work continues to expand testing capacity across the UK, to reach a target of 500,000 tests a day by the end of October.

People with coronavirus symptoms are now travelling shorter distances to get tested, with the average distance travelled being 4.3 miles, down from 5.2 miles the previous week. The time taken to receive a result from taking a test in person is now 25 to 29 hours, with 70.6% of results received the day after they were taken, this is compared to 52.9% in the previous week.