

State Aid limit on COVID-19 grants

The Government has updated its [guidance for businesses](#) setting out details of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) to include further information about State Aid restrictions.

For the SBGF, which provides grants of up to £10,000 per site, the cumulative state aid limit on what can be claimed is 200,000 euros per organisation. For the RHLGF, which provides grants of up to £25,000, the cumulative state aid limit on what can be claimed is 800,000 euros.

Can furloughed employees undertake other employment?

HM Treasury has published further information on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, providing clarity on whether employees are able to undertake other employment while on furlough.

In case it is helpful to your organisation or those in your networks, [full guidance can be found here](#), but key points for affected individuals include:

- If your contract allows, you may undertake other employment while your current employer has placed you on furlough, and this will not affect the grant that they can claim under the scheme
- You will need to be able to return to work for the employer that has placed you on furlough if they decide to stop furloughing you, and you must be able to undertake any training they require while on furlough
- If you take on new employment, you should make sure you complete the starter checklist form with your new employer correctly

FCA sets out expectations for SM&CR during crisis

The Financial Conduct Authority [has outlined its expectations for solo-regulated firms](#) adhering to SM&CR during the Covid-19 crisis.

The regulator has confirmed that it does not require firms to have a single Senior Manager responsible for their coronavirus response and that firms should allocate these responsibilities in the way which best enables them to manage the risks they face.

They also clarify the procedure under the SM&CR for where staff in a Senior Manager position are furloughed.

Key points to note include:

- Firms do not need to submit updated Statements of Responsibilities (SoRs) where a change in Senior Manager is made to cover multiple sicknesses, or other temporary changes in responsibilities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, as long as the change is temporary.
- Firms must clearly document everything internally, to ensure that everybody understands who is responsible for what.
- The FCA intends to issue a Modification by Consent to the 12-week rule to support firms using temporary arrangements during the crisis. The 12-week rule allows an individual to cover for a Senior Manager without being approved.
- The FCA states that individuals performing required functions such as Compliance Oversight, the money laundering reporting officer and the Limited Scope Function, should only be furloughed as a last resort.

The FCA does not expect firms to loosen their compliance procedures during this time.

Support for apprentices and employers

The Government has published [guidance to support apprentices, employers and training providers](#) to ensure that the UK continues to build the skills and capabilities that the country needs now and in the future.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency is taking steps to ensure that, wherever possible, apprentices can continue and complete their apprenticeship, despite any break they need to take as a result of COVID-19, and to support providers during this challenging time.

The use of face masks in the workplace

The guidance for employees, employers and businesses has been updated with [guidance on the use of face masks](#) in the community.

The UK does not currently advise use of face masks outside of care settings, in line with PPE guidance, however, Public Health England recommends that employers should ensure that:

- Spaces in the workplace are optimised to allow social distancing to occur, wherever possible
- Signs are visible in the workplace reminding employees not to attend work if they have a fever or cough and to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Employees are provided with hand sanitiser for frequent use and regular breaks to allow them to wash their hands for 20 seconds.