

Update | Written 24 June 2020

This newsletter details some of the measures announced by the Government to support businesses and individuals during the COVID-19 crisis.

We can provide pro-active advice to help you come out stronger on the other side so please contact us if you wish to discuss any of these issues.

Best wishes

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England - PM Announces Easing Of Lockdown Restrictions

From Saturday 4th July, the Prime Minister has announced that pubs, restaurants and hairdressers will be able to reopen, providing they adhere to COVID Secure guidelines.

From the same date, he has set out that two households will be able to meet up in any setting with social distancing measures, and that people can now enjoy staycations in England with the reopening of accommodation sites.

In order to begin restoring the arts and cultural sector, some leisure facilities and tourist attractions may also reopen,

if they can do so safely – this includes outdoor gyms and playgrounds, cinemas, museums, galleries, theme parks and arcades, as well as libraries, social clubs, places of worship and community centres.



Following a review, the Prime Minister has also set out that where it is not possible to stay two metres apart, guidance will allow people to keep a social distance of 'one metre plus'. This means staying one metre apart, plus mitigations which reduce the risk of transmission

England - Opening Certain Businesses And Venues From 4 July 2020

All businesses and venues can reopen from 4 July, except for the list below, which remain closed in law:

- Nightclubs
- Casinos
- Bowling alleys and Indoor skating rinks
- Indoor play areas including soft play
- Spas
- Nail bars, beauty salons and tanning salons
- Massage, tattoo and piercing parlours
- Indoor fitness and dance studios, and indoor gyms and sports venues/facilities
- Swimming pools including water parks

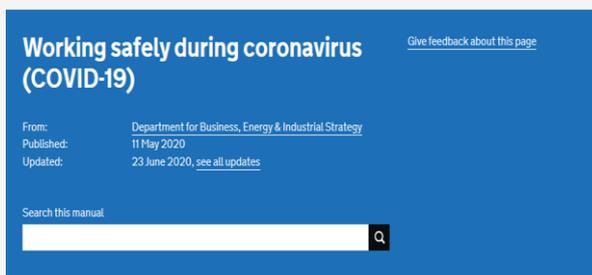
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Exhibition or conference centres must remain closed for events such as exhibitions or conferences, other than for those who work for the business or organisation who run the venue. Cafes, restaurants and shops that are self-contained and can be accessed from the outside, will still be permitted to open.

England - Working Safely During Coronavirus

These 10 guides cover a range of different types of work. Many businesses operate more than one type of workplace, such as an office, factory and fleet of vehicles. You may need to use more than one of these guides as you think through what you need to do to keep people safe. Further guidance will be published as more businesses are able to reopen.



Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Step By Step Guide For Employers

The Government have released a step by step guide explaining the information that employers need to provide to HMRC to make a claim through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. It also describes the processes involved.



See:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-step-by-step-guide-for-employers?utm_source=71b15dc4-4767-4c4e-84d0-0b94e794340a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

New Plans To Get Britain Building In Coronavirus Recovery

The Government is to extend planning permission deadlines, saving construction projects' permissions from expiring and introduce Flexible working hours on construction sites to support social distancing, helping people return to work safely.

There are new changes to speed up the pace of the planning appeal process.

Planning permission deadlines will be extended, planning appeals will be sped up and builders will be allowed more flexible working hours following agreement with their local council. Planning permission usually expires after three years if work has not started onsite.

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Sites with consent that have an expiry date between the start of lockdown and the end of this year will now see their consent extended to 1 April 2021. This will prevent work that has been temporarily disrupted by the pandemic from stopping altogether.

The government estimates that by the end of this month alone, more than 400 residential permissions providing more than 24,000 new homes would have expired. The new measures will help these developments and more resume as the economy recovers.

New measures will also permanently grant the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) the ability to use more than one procedure - written representations, hearings and inquiries - at the same time when dealing with a planning appeal, enabling appeals to happen much faster.



Last year a pilot programme tested this approach and implemented recommendations of the Rosewell Review, which more than halved the time taken for appeal inquiries, from 47 weeks to 23 weeks.

This will also help builders to agree more flexible construction site working hours with their local council for a temporary period. This will make it easier to follow public health guidance onsite and by staggering builders' arrival times, public transport will be less busy, and the risk of infection will be reduced.

Changes To Notifying An Option To Tax Land And Buildings During Coronavirus (Covid-19)

If you are notifying HMRC of a decision to opt to tax land and buildings, you are normally required to notify them within 30 days by either:

- printing and sending HMRC the notification, signed by an authorised person within the business
- emailing a scanned copy of the signed notification

Social distancing in response to coronavirus has made these rules challenging to follow. HMRC have temporarily changed the rules to help businesses and agents.

HMRC have temporarily extended the time limit to 90 days from the date the decision to opt was made. This applies to decisions made between 15 February and 31 October 2020.

You can email notifications to optiontotaxnationalunit@hmrc.gov.uk.