

CoronaVirus COVID 19 – Bank Assistance

All the big banks have announced that they want to offer full support for small businesses during the crisis – each has set up dedicated advice services. If you or your business has financial problems, the best advice is to contact your bank as early as possible – they are likely to be besieged with similar requests, so the earlier you speak to your bank the better. Some banks are offering mortgage holidays, others may increase your overdraft facility or loan facility during this period. Find more information at:

- BARCLAYS <https://home.barclays/news/2020/03/supporting-our-customers-and-clients-impacted-by-coronavirus--co/>
- HALIFAX www.halifax.co.uk/helpcentre/coronavirus/
- HSBC www.hsbc.co.uk/help/coronavirus/
- LLOYDS www.lloydsbank.com/help-guidance/coronavirus.html
- NATWEST www.business.natwest.com/business/support-centre/service-status/coronavirus.html
- ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND www.business.rbs.co.uk/business/support-centre/service-status/coronavirus.html

CoronaVirus COVID 19 – The retail, hospitality and leisure sector

- 12 months business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure business in England from April 2020
- £25,000 grant for businesses operating from a premises with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000

What you need to do:

- The business rates holiday is automatic
- You can find out the rateable value of your business property by looking at your National Non-Domestic Rate Demand
- If you believe you are eligible, contact your local authority to claim the Grant

Businesses that pay little or no business rates

- One off grant of £10,000 to businesses that benefit from Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) or rural rate relief

What you need to do:

- Nothing – if eligible you will be contacted by your local authority

CoronaVirus COVID 19 - SSP and Self Isolation

As you may be aware the public have been asked to self-isolate for 14 days if they or any of their household have the symptoms of COVID-19, if your employees are self-isolating because of COVID-19: From 13 March, you can now claim SSP. This includes individuals who are caring for people self-isolating in the same household and therefore have been advised to do a household quarantine.

When does SSP apply?

The government is legislating for SSP to be paid from day 1, rather than day 4, of the absence from work if you are absent from work due to sickness or need to self-isolate caused by COVID-19. Once the legislation has been passed, this will apply retrospectively from 13 March.

Do I need a sick note?

From Friday 20 March onwards, those who have COVID-19 or are advised to self-isolate will be able to obtain an "isolation note" by visiting NHS 111 online and completing an online form, rather than visiting a doctor. For COVID-19 cases this replaces the usual need to provide a "fit note" after seven days of sickness absence. As yet this form is not available but as an employer you will need confirmation from the employee that they are off due to COVID-19.

How much SSP is paid?

SSP is paid at the rate of £94.25 per week and is recoverable in this instance from HMRC, usually by offset against other PAYE/NIC deducted from the individual/other employees.

Can I pay more than SSP?

Yes you can still pay above SSP if you choose or are contractually obliged.

What happens at the end of the 2 week period if the employee is still off sick?

Currently normal SSP rules will apply where a fit note from the doctor will be required.