



## **Message from Kelly O'Neill, Director of Public Health for Hounslow**

### **Regarding advice and support for local Businesses**

#### Businesses of Hounslow

Further to my letter on Sunday regarding the closure of businesses in scope of the announcement from the Prime Minister last week, I want to thank you for responding to this important call to action. To ensure the Prime Minister's latest directions around business opening and social distancing, vital to protect our most vulnerable residents and the NHS, are followed, the Council's Enforcement teams and the police are making regular patrols and taking action where necessary.

I know that this is a worrying time for many businesses as the impact of coronavirus is starting to be felt. I can assure you that the Council continues to work closely with Central Government to get the best advice and support for our local businesses.

The Chancellor announced a set of [financial measures](#) to support our local businesses. We have now received clarity from Government on how various packages of relief and support should be administered. We are working with our system providers to upload the new reliefs, and once this is in place, we will ensure that funding support reaches our businesses as quickly as possible.

The increase in retail relief will be applied automatically to the qualifying businesses. You will not be required to do anything. We will write to the businesses once the changes have been implemented which we hope will be by the end of week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> March or early the following week. Payments / reliefs will begin in early April. This will include:

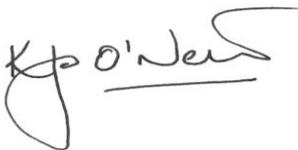
- Retail relief being increased from 50% to 100% and the scope extended to include all hospitality and leisure properties irrespective of their rate-able value (including Pubs).
- £10,000 grant to small businesses that pay little or no business rates and are eligible for small business rate relief or retail relief with a rateable value below £15,000
- £25,000 grant for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000. The government is also introducing a business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England for the 2020 to 2021 tax year.
- A £25,000 grant will also be provided to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses operating from smaller premises, with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000.
- The Department for Education have also announced that non-local authority child-care providers will also receive a 100% NNDR discount in 2020/21. This relief will apply to businesses occupied by providers on Ofsted's Early Years Register.

Central Government has announced supporting businesses through this period is a top priority. Help for businesses directly from Central Government:

- A new Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, delivered by the British Business Bank, will enable businesses to apply for a loan of up to £5 million, with the government covering up to 80% of any losses with no fees. Businesses can access the first 6 months of that finance interest free, as government will cover the first 6 months of interest payments.
- For businesses with fewer than 250 employees, the cost of providing 14 days of Statutory Sick Pay per employee will be refunded by the government in full. This will provide 2 million businesses with up to £2 billion to cover the costs of large-scale sick leave.
- A dedicated helpline has been set up to help businesses and self-employed individuals in financial distress and with outstanding tax liabilities receive support with their tax affairs. Through this, businesses may be able to agree a bespoke Time to Pay arrangement. If you are concerned about being able to pay your tax due to COVID-19, call HMRC's dedicated helpline on 0800 0159 559.

I know that there will be some businesses for whom there remains an absence of information about how they will be supported. As this information is communicated from government I will work with my colleagues in the council to ensure it is shared as quickly as possible.

Best wishes,



**Kelly O'Neill**

**Director of Public Health**

**London Borough of Hounslow**