

**COVID 19 – General Tips for small businesses as of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – 9 am**

- ❖ Check your insurance for business interruption and pandemics. Insurance companies came to an agreement with government yesterday to be more flexible if the closure is not mandatory
- ❖ Look at Stock management - reduce stock ask supplier to take it back
- ❖ Look at items or work which can turn quickly into cash payments to keep liquidity
- ❖ Talk to banks about extending overdrafts or access loans
- ❖ Speak to the lease/rental companies about extending credit and payment holidays etc
- ❖ Talk to credit card companies
- ❖ Mortgage providers to support customers with options including a payment holiday of up to 3 months
- ❖ Awaiting details of support for Landlords and Tenants
- ❖ Ask suppliers to extend their terms or offer longer term payment plans
- ❖ HMRC have added a new payment helpline specifically to deal with COVID 19 - **0800 0159559** to help with businesses struggling to pay their tax. It is all tax and is based on individual cases
- ❖ Consider doing accounts early to establish if any July payment on account for tax can be reduced or potentially a partial repayment of the January 2020 tax payment
- ❖ Set up remote working facilities - Face time, Skype, Google hangout have said they are temporarily offering their service for free
- ❖ Use electronic means of transferring data – Drop box, Google docs, Portals
- ❖ Consider applying for universal tax credits including for staff
- ❖ Statutory Sick pay relief for small business cover up to 2 weeks of the statutory sick pay who have been off work due to COVID 19. Don't need to get a sick note. Let employers know in writing
- ❖ Statutory sick pay entitlement from day one - no waiting time. Rate of £94.25 per week
- ❖ If there is no entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay i.e. paid under £118 per week - apply for universal credit
- ❖ Self employed may be entitled to Employment support allowance - need to check your national insurance record and contact the Universal Credit Helpline 0800328 5644

## **Business Rates Relief/GRANTS**

English Rules and waiting on Wales for confirmation suspect they will be similar

- 1) If you are entitled to small business rates relief and have a single premises where the rateable value is £12k or less – then AUTOMATIC get 100% business rates relief for 2020/21
- 2) If entitled to the retail discount of up to 100% this has now been expanded to the leisure and hospitality industry – IT IS NOT AUTOMATIC – need to apply to local authority. (Guidance will come out 20<sup>th</sup> March).
- 3) Rules are that pubs and hospitality businesses with a rateable value of £51k or less will get 100% relief and those in the bracket of £51k to £100k will receive a £5000 reduction
- 4) **The initial £3000 cash grant to those businesses eligible to small business rates relief has now increased to £10000 - AUTOMATIC no need to apply the local authority will contact you. Funds likely to come from early April**

Check your rateable value on:

<https://www.gov.uk/correct-your-business-rates>

- 5) **A £25,000 grant will be provided to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses operating from smaller premises with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000.**

Business Interruption Loan Scheme - to launch in a matter of weeks to help business access bank lending and overdraft

## **Staffing**

- ❖ Staff layoff – check your staff contracts. Employees who are laid off are entitled to a statutory guarantee payment of up to £29 per day from their employer. Limit of 5 days in any period of 3 months
- ❖ Use holiday – if the employer decides to close they have the right to ask staff to take holiday – but they must give staff at least twice as many days notice as the period they want to close. I.e. to close for 5 days they must give 10 days' notice
- ❖ Breaking news - New off payroll working regulations - IR35 rules relating to contractors which were due to come in April 2020 have been delayed until April 2021

## **Useful Websites**

Gov.uk – COVID 19 section <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Small businesses - Federation of small business - <https://www.fsb.org.uk/>

Employment related – ACAS - <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

Public Health Wales - <https://phw.nhs.wales/>

Welsh Government - <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid19>