

# HANNAH BLYTHYN AM

ASSEMBLY MEMBER FOR DELYN/AELOD O'R CYNULLIAD DROS DELYN

STANDING FOR THE COMMUNITY THAT SHAPED ME  
YN SEFYLL DROS Y GYMUNED A'M FFURFIODD

## COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORT

As we are in challenging and unprecedented times I wanted to share with you what the Welsh and UK Government are doing to support businesses through this difficult period.

If you cannot find the answers you are looking for in this document then please contact my office and my team will do their best to find the correct information.

### **What support is available for business rates?**

The Welsh Government has announced that all retail, leisure and hospitality businesses with a rateable value of £51,000 or less will receive 100% business rates relief and pubs with a rateable value of between £51,000 and £100,000 will receive a £5,000 reduction on their bill in 2020-2021.

The Welsh Government is allocating every penny of the funding it will be receiving as a consequence of the schemes the UK Government announced in England, to support Welsh businesses.

### **Are there any grants available for me?**

The Welsh Government has announced a grants scheme for Welsh businesses impacted by coronavirus:

- A £25,000 grant for businesses in retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, with a rateable value of £12,001 - £51,000.
- A £10,000 grant to all businesses eligible for small business rates relief with a rateable value of £12,000 or less.

If your business is eligible for a grant please complete the online application form at [flintshire.gov.uk/businessrates](http://flintshire.gov.uk/businessrates)

### **What happens with my Annual Accounts and Tax Payments?**

Businesses are able to apply for a three-month extension to their deadline to return their Annual Accounts to Companies House. This **must** be applied for by the business and COVID-19 must be cited as the reason for the extension request.

This can be done at [gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-more-time-to-file-your-companys-accounts](http://gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-more-time-to-file-your-companys-accounts)

A Time to Pay scheme is also available whereby all businesses and self-employed people in financial distress and with outstanding tax liabilities may be eligible to receive support with their tax affairs through HMRC's Time to Pay service.

This is also available to businesses in Wales. These arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis and are tailored to individual circumstances and liabilities.

If you are concerned about being able to pay your tax due to COVID-19, call HMRC's dedicated helpline



### **USEFUL NUMBERS**

There are lots of organisations which will continue to offer their support for as long as they are able to.

Here are some important numbers where businesses can get further advice:

- Business Wales  
<https://businesswales.gov.wales/> or 0300 060 3000.
- The Development Bank of Wales  
<https://developmentbank.wales/> or 0800 587 4140.
- The Welsh Revenue Authority  
<https://gov.wales/welsh-revenue-authority> or 03000 254 000 for queries related to Welsh taxes.
- HMRC Coronavirus Helpline 0800 015 9559.

**This document is available in Welsh. Please contact my Office to request a copy.**

#### HOW TO CONTACT ME

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### **Can I apply for any loans?**

The Development Bank for Wales has equity and loan funding it can make available immediately to otherwise healthy small businesses to help them through the cash flow and other challenges they may face in the next, difficult, few weeks and months.

The Welsh Government has announced that all businesses supported by Development Bank of Wales will have a three-month capital repayment holiday. Other measures are being considered and we will circulate further information as soon as possible.

The UK Government have established a temporary coronavirus business interruption loan scheme through the British Business Bank. This will be available to businesses in Wales via high street banks and the Development Bank for Wales and it will support businesses to access bank lending and overdrafts.

The UK Government currently say this will take a few weeks to roll out. As soon as information on roll-out is available, we will circulate it.

Lenders will be provided with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to a per-lender cap on claims) to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs. Businesses and banks will not be charged for this guarantee, and the Scheme will support loans of up to £1.2 million in value.

### **What if my staff have COVID-19 or are self-isolating?**

The UK Government is bringing forward legislation to allow small and medium sized businesses and employers to reclaim statutory sick pay paid for sickness absence due to COVID-19. This will be available to businesses in Wales and the Welsh Government is working on supporting employers in Wales to make sure they have the right mechanisms in place to access this.

Here is some further detail about the scheme:

- This refund will cover up to 2 weeks' SSP per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19
- Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible - the size of an employer will be determined by the number of people they employed as of 28 February 2020
- Employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP (according to the new eligibility criteria) as a result of COVID-19
- Employers should maintain records of staff absences and payments of SSP, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note
- Eligible period for the scheme will commence the day after the regulations on the extension of Statutory Sick Pay to those staying at home comes into force

### **What if I cannot afford to pay staff wages?**

The Government have committed to paying 80% of employees wages for employees that would otherwise be dismissed, up to a maximum of £2,500 a month per employee as a grant.

This will last for at least three months and can be backdated and can be applied to employees who were on payroll as of 28 February 2020, even if they have since been dismissed.

Further information can be found at [businesswales.gov.wales/government-support-businesses](http://businesswales.gov.wales/government-support-businesses).

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### **What if I am Self-employed and or a Freelancer?**

The UK Government announced a taxable grant up to 80% of average monthly income over the last 3 years up to £2,500 a month. You do not need to contact HMRC, they will use existing information and invite applications. Payments will be made at the beginning of June. In the interim you can still be able to access other available government support, including more generous universal credit and business continuity loans where they have a business bank account.

The minimum income floor in Universal Credit will be temporarily relaxed for those directly affected by COVID-19 or self-isolating, ensuring self-employed claimants can have some income support.

The UK Government has delayed tax reforms known as IR35 for a year, given coronavirus, an important boost for freelancers. This complex piece of counter-tax avoidance law, was intended to be widened to the private sector from April this year, with the aim of targeting those who work as an employee but under their own private company in order to reduce their tax bills.

It has also announced a three-month mortgage payment holiday.

### **What if my business doesn't meet the criteria of any of the above?**

A new £500m fund to provide extra support to the Welsh economy, businesses and charities experiencing a sharp drop in trading as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Economic Resilience Fund aims to plug the gaps in the support schemes already announced by the UK Government, including the Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, which will guarantee 80% of people's wages and income.

The new Welsh fund will support firms of all sizes, including social enterprises, with a focus on those which have not already benefited from the coronavirus grants already announced by Welsh Government.

The £500m fund is made up of two main elements:

1. A new £100m Development Bank of Wales fund will be available for companies experiencing cash flow problems as a result of the pandemic and will provide loans of between £5,000 and £250,000 at favourable interest rates
2. Businesses will also be able to benefit from a £400m emergency pot providing:
  - Grants of £10,000 for micro-businesses employing up to nine people. This includes sole traders employing staff. Qualifying businesses will be able to apply by mid-April.
  - Grants of up to £100,000 for small and medium sized firms with between 10 and 249 employees. Qualifying businesses will be able to apply from next week.
  - Support for larger Welsh companies, which are of critical social or economic importance to Wales. This element will be open to qualifying businesses within the next two weeks.

More information can be found at <https://gov.wales/new-500-million-economic-resilience-fund-launched-wales>

### **My Office**

As your AM I am always available to offer advice. These are unprecedented times and I am on hand to assist with any questions you have to support your business through this. Although my office will be closed, both myself and my team will continue to be contactable by telephone and email to offer advice and support throughout.

If you would like to discuss any of the support above, learn more about my work across Delyn or even showcase what your business offers our communities then please get in touch with my office on the details below.

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