



As ever, the team at Butler & Co hope that everyone is staying well and keeping positive, despite the latest Lockdown news issued by the Prime Minister over the weekend.

COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORT: LOCKDOWN SUPPORT MEASURES – NOVEMBER UPDATE

With the announcements made over the weekend, the business support strategies provided by the government have radically changed from the last update made at the end of October. The key points are as follows:

1. **Extension** to the **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme** for furloughed workers - until the beginning of December
 - *The **Job Support Scheme [JSS]** has therefore been postponed until the end of the second lockdown period*
2. An extension to the **Business Grants** programme
3. **Mortgage Holiday guidance** has been extended
4. An update to the **Self-Employed Income Support Scheme [SEISS]**

1. EXTENSION TO THE CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME [CJRS]

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which was due to finish at the end of October, will now continue for at least a further month. Claims will be made exactly the same way as before, with the portal system remaining in use. Flexible furlough remains unchanged, for employees working one or two days a week.

Employers will be asked to cover National Insurance and employer pension contributions **only** which, for the average claim, accounts for 5% of total employment costs. This is a return to the terms and conditions last used in August. The practise of the employer paying for 10% or 20% of wages to make up some of the payment has been suspended for the time being.

If anyone requires details of how to apply for the scheme or needs further details on how this support programme works, please do not hesitate to contact us as soon as possible.

The Job Support Scheme [JSS], which was scheduled to come into effect from Sunday 1st November 2020, has been postponed until the furlough scheme ends. We anticipate that this will be brought in at the end of the national lockdown, so please maintain awareness of this measure for planning purposes.

2. EXTENSION OF BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS

Businesses required to close in England due to local or national restrictions will be eligible for the following:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15,000 or under, grants of up to **£1,334 per month**, or £667 per two weeks, will be available;
- For properties with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000, grants of up to **£2,000 per month**, or £1,000 per two weeks, will be available;
- For properties with a rateable value of £51,000 or over, grants of up to **£3,000 per month**, or £1,500 per two weeks, will be available;
- Other Discretionary Grants will be available for businesses not falling into the above categories, but these will vary area to area.

IMPORTANT NOTE: ALL GRANT FUNDING WILL BE ISSUED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES. Therefore, our advice is to contact your local authority directly, to find out the specific terms and conditions available in your area. The local authority websites have been kept up-to-date and list out the support mechanisms available, so our advice is to start with them and work from there.

If you do not fit the criteria for the application forms available online, contact the Business Team at your individual local authority without delay, e-mail or telephone are usually the best methods, and see what support is available. In the summer, the local authority discretionary grants were oversubscribed very quickly, so to maximise chances of financial support being made available to your business, do not delay in getting in contact.

As ever, if anyone needs any help with the application process, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will assist in any way that we can.

3. MORTGAGE HOLIDAYS

Mortgage payment holidays will no longer end at the end of November, as previously announced. Instead, borrowers who have been impacted by coronavirus and have not yet had a mortgage payment holiday will be entitled to a six month holiday – ending May 2021, and those that have already started a mortgage payment holiday will be able to top up for a further six months without this being recorded on their credit file.

The FCA will issue more details this week, but we recommend contacting your lender now if you wish to take advantage of this measure.

4. SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME SUPPORT SCHEME [SEISS] UPDATE

The Self Employment Income Support Scheme online application for the next grant will be available **from 14 December 2020**. From what has been announced over the weekend, this will remain at 40% although we are anticipating there may be an increase to this to bring the grant in line with the furlough scheme for the extent of the National Lockdown. We will e-mail round further updates when these become available following government announcements.

Qualification for the SEISS remains the same as for the two previous grants, so if you claimed either of these you will remain eligible for the third. If you did not claim the first or second grant but met the eligibility criteria, you can still make an application for the third payment.

If anyone requires further details of the full terms and conditions of this scheme, please do not hesitate to contact us.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Finally, we would like to make you aware of the increased number of scams and fraudulent activities taking place at the current time, including such things as people claiming to be HMRC and asking for

payments and personal information. Our advice is to be extra vigilant and not to make any payments or give any details to anyone claiming to be HMRC, or similar, if you are not completely certain whom you are dealing with. HMRC will confirm everything in writing through the post if requested, so please use this option if you are at all suspicious of any communication received from the tax authorities.

As ever, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding any of the points mentioned above. The Covid-19 Business Support Co-ordinator, Russell Nash [russell@butler-co.co.uk] remains available, alongside your regular primary contact(s), across the working week to answer anything arising.