

Applications for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme open early

- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme opens for applications today
- those eligible will receive government grant worth up to £7,500
- money expected to be in bank accounts by 25 May

From 8am this morning self-employed individuals or members of partnerships whose business has been adversely affected by coronavirus will be able to apply for a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant worth 80% of their average monthly trading profits.

Millions are expected to benefit from the scheme with the payments – to be paid in a single instalment covering three months and capped at £7,500 – expected to land in bank accounts within six working days of each claim.

Everyone eligible for the SEISS, which is one of the most generous support schemes announced by any government in response to coronavirus, will be able to receive the government grant by 25 May, or within six days of a completed claim.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

We're working ahead of time to deliver support to the self-employed and from today, applications open for the millions of people eligible for the scheme.

With payments arriving before the end of this month, self-employed across the UK will have money in their pockets to help them through these challenging times.

From today, people will be able to make their claim on a specified date between 13-18 May, based on their Unique Tax Reference number. HMRC has assigned eligible self-employed individuals a specific date to apply on and this can be checked on HMRC's online checker.

The SEISS is part of a comprehensive package of support for self-employed people, including Bounce Back loans, income tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays and the various business support schemes the government has introduced to protect businesses during this time. Derek Cribb, CEO of IPSE (the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed) said:

For the self-employed, Coronavirus is not only a health crisis, but also a pressing income crisis. It is therefore very welcome that the Government has managed to get this new scheme in place ahead of schedule, and that a section of the freelance community can now get

the help they need early. We are delighted that the government has heeded much of IPSE's advice by setting up the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, which extends a much-needed lifeline to those self-employed people who are eligible for it.

Mike Cherry, National Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses, said:

The self-employment income support scheme represents a lifeline for the millions of self-employed people who are expected to qualify. I would encourage all those who think they are eligible to use the online checker if they've not done so yet, and to apply on the date allocated.

We are particularly pleased to see the scheme opening earlier than scheduled, with a simple fast-track application and a promise for speedy payment. Getting the system designed and built ahead of schedule is impressive. Just like the Job Retention Scheme portal we hope it will cope with the high expected demand. I would like to pay tribute to the staff of HMRC for the behind the scenes work to get this scheme off the ground.

Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the Federation of Master Builders said:

The self-employed account for 40% of the construction workforce so the government's decision to bring forward the payment to the end May will be very welcome news for the many independent tradespeople who operate in construction. The government's support package to date has been targeted at businesses so the self-employed will be welcoming this cash boost at a time when they need it most.

Further information

Individuals are eligible if their business has been adversely affected by coronavirus, they traded in the tax year 2019 to 2020, intend to continue trading, and they:

- earn at least half of their income through self-employment
- have trading profits of no more than £50,000 per year
- traded in the tax year 2018 to 2019 and submitted their Self Assessment tax return on or before 23 April 2020 for that year

HMRC calculate the amount to be paid to each eligible claimant based on an average of the tax returns for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Customers have been invited to claim their SEISS grant on a specified date, from 13 – 18 May. They won't be able to apply before their claim date but can make a claim after that day.

People can check their date using HMRC's online checker at any time.

<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/self-employment-support/enter-unique-taxpayer-reference>

For further information, please read HMRC's guidance or speak to your tax agent. If you need further support, please use HMRC's webchat service or call the Covid-19 Helpline on 0800 024 1222.