

New Bounce Back Loans to launch today

- small businesses will be able to apply for quick and easy-to-access loans from today
- businesses will be able to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000 with the cash arriving within days
- loans will be 100% government backed for lenders, and businesses can apply online through a short and simple form

Thousands of small firms and sole traders – including high street staples like hairdressers, coffee shops and florists – will be eligible for 100% government-backed Bounce Back Loans to help them make it through the coronavirus outbreak.

From 9am this morning, small business owners can apply to accredited lenders by filling out a simple online form, with only seven questions.

The government has also agreed with lenders that an affordable flat rate of 2.5% interest will be charged on these loans. And any business that has already taken out a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan of £50,000 or less can apply to have these switched over to this generous new scheme.

The Bounce Back Loan scheme is the latest step in a package of world-leading support measures launched by Chancellor Rishi Sunak – with £7.5 billion already awarded in business grants, 4 million jobs supported through the job retention scheme and generous tax deferrals supporting hundreds of thousands of firms. To apply, see further information about the [Bounce Back Loan scheme](#).

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Small businesses will play a key role creating jobs and securing economic growth as we recover from the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Bounce Back loan scheme will make sure they get the finance they need – helping them bounce back and protect jobs.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

We are backing small businesses, which are the backbone of our communities, with the support they need to stay afloat.

This new scheme of 100% government-guaranteed loans gives owners of even the smallest businesses the confidence and flexibility to borrow a sum which works for them. This will help ensure they can continue to trade, and be a key part of our efforts to reboot the British economy.

As part of the scheme, small businesses can borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. The government will provide lenders with a 100% guarantee and cover the cost of any fees and interest for the borrower for the first 12 months. No repayments will be due during this period to enable firms to get back on their feet.

The loans are available through a network of lenders, including the five largest banks.

Further Information

- Eligible companies will be subject to standard customer fraud, anti-money laundering (AML) and Know Your Customer (KYC) checks prior to any loan being made. Some State Aid restrictions may apply to applications.
- The borrower always remains 100% liable for the debt.

Government support for business of all sizes:

Firm Size	Turnover < £45m	Turnover > £45m	Investment grade
Bounce Back Loans (up to £50,000)	X	X	X
Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)	X		
Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)		X	X
Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF)			X
Job Retention Scheme	X	X	X
Business Grants (dependent on rateable value of the property)	X	X	X
VAT deferrals	X	X	X
Covering the cost of statutory sick pay	X	X	X
Future Fund (only if VC funded)	X	X	

Reactions from business groups:

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

“We know many small firms have struggled to secure small loans speedily. We are pleased that the Chancellor has listened, and swiftly developed this new scheme for small businesses to access finance quickly, interest-free for the first year and at an affordable fixed interest rate for the remainder.”

Tej Parekh, Chief Economist at the Institute of Directors (IOD) said:

“The government has kept an open ear to businesses, and continues to adapt its coronavirus response, which is very welcome. The business interruption loan scheme has started to reach firms, but small firms were still having difficulty accessing finance. This additional measure should help more of those firms get the cash they need to see them through the weeks and months ahead.”

Stephen Jones, CEO, UK Finance said:

The Bounce Back Loans Scheme will help smaller businesses and sole traders rapidly access the finance they need by filling in a simple form online with an accredited lender.

This builds upon the broad package of support that lenders are already offering to help SMEs through these tough times, including capital repayment holidays, extended overdrafts and billions of pounds worth of lending.

Accredited lenders approved to offer Bounce Back Loans have worked at pace with the Treasury to get this scheme up and running by Monday, and staff are now focused on processing applications and getting money to businesses as quickly as possible.

Rob Hattrell, Vice President of eBay UK said:

This is extremely welcome news for small businesses up and down the country who trade online and offline, including the 300,000 who trade on eBay on a daily basis. Many of Britain's SMBs are really struggling financially in the current crisis. Hopefully, this move from government will help our very smallest businesses get the financing they need quickly to manage their cash flow or replenish their stock.

While the existing CBIL scheme may be appropriate for some businesses, our smallest businesses told us that they were finding it hard in practice to access this support from banks. By extending the current government guarantee from 80% of each loan to 100%, we hope this will make it more likely that banks will extend finance at a critical time. And by making it simpler to apply, SMBs should be able to get the help they need quickly just when they need it most.

Dr. Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) said:

"The launch of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme is an important milestone in getting credit flowing to small firms who have so far struggled to access the financial support they need. The standardisation of the interest rate that can be charged after the first 12 months is a welcome step in helping firms manage their ongoing costs. > "We look forward to working with the government, British Business Bank and UK financial institutions to ensure that the new scheme supplies cash to businesses on the ground quickly."

Rain Newton-Smith, CBI Chief Economist, said:

The Chancellor is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with small businesses to help them through the crisis.

A 100% government guarantee on loans and a simple way of applying will be a lifeline to many small businesses and sole traders under pressure.

Banks have been operating at full throttle and must stay in overdrive to get more money out of the door faster. Time is of the essence.

[Regulator concludes regulatory case involving Alzheimer's Society](#)

Press release

Charity Commission reports on outcomes of its regulatory case involving the dementia charity



The Charity Commission has concluded its regulatory compliance case into the [Alzheimer's Society](#), finding that the trustees acted in line with their legal duties.

The case was opened in February after the national media reported allegations about the handling of bullying and harassment within the charity, including the use of confidentiality clauses in settlement agreements.

After reviewing detailed records and information, the regulator found no evidence that confidentiality clauses used by the charity were designed to or would have had the effect of preventing staff from reporting any whistleblowing, bullying, harassment or discrimination complaint. Allegations reported in the national media around the amount of money paid out in settlements were not substantiated by the evidence the Commission saw.

The Commission is satisfied that there were processes in place to ensure that settlement payments were properly scrutinised. The regulator has reviewed the Society's updated policy on settlement agreements, instigated following the allegations. It notes that the policy includes new explicit provisions stating that settlement agreements and confidentiality clauses cannot be used to hide improper behaviour or prevent lawful disclosures.

The Commission also welcomes the launch of a review of the Society's procedures for staff raising concerns to ensure these meet best practice. It has advised the Society that in making payments, thought should be given to how the decision might affect public trust and confidence in the charity.

In the interests of accountability and transparency, the regulator has also advised the charity to explain its decision-making and use of compensation payments in its annual report.

The charity provided evidence that work continues to strengthen its internal culture to ensure a positive environment for staff.

The regulator is satisfied that the trustees cooperated with its enquiries and took its guidance on board.

Tracy Howarth, Assistant Director of Casework at the Charity Commission said:

Our case did not find evidence of wrongdoing at the Alzheimer's Society, or that its use of settlement agreements would stop people from whistleblowing. This is crucial – the Alzheimer's Society has an important role in ensuring the wellbeing of so many, and so it is important that its working culture allows staff to raise concerns. Like all charities, the Society must continue to ensure that staff settlements are only made where that supports the charity's purpose. Donors expect charities to be different from other organisations and to spend their money carefully. We also welcome steps being taken to further strengthen procedures at the Society and to strengthen the charity's internal culture.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. Any new evidence that might change our assessment would be of serious concern and would be examined closely.
2. Our case did not examine individual instances of bullying or harassment; our role is to look at a charity's governance, policies and processes, to assess whether trustees are complying with their duties in line with the charity law framework.
3. We received a complaint about the Alzheimer's Society in February 2018, detailing concerns about the charity's approach to dealing with staff grievances, including the extent to which the trustee board was aware of

and overseeing decisions appropriately. We did not follow up on the complaint at the time, and have acknowledged that this did not meet the high standards we set ourselves.

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[Joint statement on domestic and sexual violence risks under Covid-19 in the OSCE region](#)

Mr Chair

On behalf of Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and members of three gender networks: Women in the First Dimension, Men Engage, and the Women Ambassadors, I wanted to bring the attention of the Permanent Council to a potentially hidden security risk related to COVID-19 in the OSCE area.

Alongside unprecedented health risks for individuals, economic security risks, risks for human rights and democratic institutions and enhanced risks in the OSCE's conflict areas, there is a greater risk of domestic and sexual violence during the COVID-19 crisis.

Domestic violence often increases during times of heightened stress. This is particularly the case when it is linked to economic instability and fears of job losses. The last weeks are no exception. Women and girls are the overwhelming majority of victims of gender-based violence; however, it is also important to recognise that anyone can be affected, regardless of gender.

The OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, adopted in 2018, recognises the persistence of gender-based violence experienced by women and girls, and the many forms it can take.

At this challenging time, the social isolation of lockdowns means women and girls, as well as other victims, may be trapped in their homes with their abusers, isolated from the people and the resources that could help them. They may also have fewer opportunities to contact domestic abuse support services. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that these risks do not remain hidden. We need to address them and ensure that victims are able to

access the support they need.

On 5th April, the UN SG shone a spotlight on the 'horrifying global surge in domestic violence' and urged 'all governments to make the prevention and redress of violence against women a key part of their national response plans for COVID-19.' We also greatly appreciate that this issue was raised by the OSCE's SG, the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR in their press release of 2nd April.

We should also be concerned about the possible increased occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse. We stress the need to remain alert to this risk, and we underline the need for effective preventative and safeguarding measures in responding to the crisis.

In addition, we should be alert to the repercussions of school closures. Girls are least likely to return to school following a crisis, facing increased risks of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, including on-line sexual exploitation, and the loss of vital sexual and reproductive health services as resources are diverted elsewhere.

We call on all OSCE participating States to do their utmost at this time to mitigate against these risks. This includes through appropriate scaling up of response services, adapting prevention activities and recognising that a public health response to screen for domestic violence could be life-saving.

We want to ensure that this major security risk does not remain hidden in the OSCE area. We are committed to retaining a focus on this topic. We would like attention to be drawn in a subsequent week on broader gender implications of COVID-19.

Self-employed invited to get ready to make their claims for coronavirus (COVID-19) support

From today (Monday 4 May), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will begin contacting customers who may be eligible for the government's [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme \(SEISS\)](#).

Those who are eligible will be able to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their average trading profits up to a maximum of £7,500 (equivalent to three months' profits), paid in a single instalment.

HMRC is also inviting customers, or their agents, to [go online and check their eligibility for SEISS](#).

In order to receive quick confirmation from the eligibility checker, individuals should:

- have their Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) and their National Insurance Number to hand
- make sure their details are up-to-date in their Government Gateway account

Once the online check is complete, eligible customers will be given a date when they can submit their claim. They will also be encouraged to update their contact details.

Claims service opening shortly

The claims service will open on 13 May and is being delivered ahead of the original timetable. This will help millions of self-employed people, covering a wide range of industries and jobs, whose livelihoods have been adversely affected by the coronavirus.

The claims process will be very simple, and those eligible will have the money paid into their bank account by 25 May, or within six working days of completing a claim.

Who's eligible

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 is using information that customers have provided in their 2018 to 2019 tax return – and returns for 2016 to 2017 and 2017 to 2018 where needed – to determine their eligibility and is contacting customers who may be eligible via email, text message or letter.

Wider government support

This scheme brings parity with the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#), where the government committed to pay up to £2,500 each month in wages of employed workers who are furloughed during the outbreak.

Where individuals are ineligible for the scheme, HMRC will direct people to guidance setting out the scheme conditions to help them understand why they are ineligible, and advise on other support available to them such as:

- income tax deferrals
- rental support

- Universal Credit
- access to mortgage holidays
- various business support schemes the government has introduced to protect businesses during this time

Further information

Guidance and information on the scheme is available on GOV.UK:

[Government support package for universities and students](#)

New measures to protect students and universities, including temporary student number controls, have been announced by the Education Secretary today (4 May), answering sector calls on the Covid-19 response.

Gavin Williamson has announced the [package of measures](#), drawing on proposals from the universities sector, to stabilise university admissions this autumn and to help the universities and students are safeguarded at a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

Through the plans, English higher education providers will be able to recruit full-time undergraduate UK and EU students for 2020/21 up to a temporary set level, which is based on their forecasts for the next academic year, plus an additional 5%. The Government will control these numbers through the student finance system.

The Government will also have the discretion to allocate an additional 10,000 places, with 5,000 ring-fenced for nursing, midwifery or allied health courses to support the country's vital public services.

The measures aim to allow students, who want to go to university and meet their entry requirements, to access higher education while avoiding competition among providers taking a form which would go against the interests of students and the sector.

Through the proposals from Government and the sector, students will benefit from a new proactive and personalised [UCAS Clearing process](#) this summer, which will help to broaden their horizons, and funding to support those in financial hardship.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway has also announced that £100m of public funding will be brought forward to this academic year to help protect vital university research activities. On top of that, an estimated £2.6bn of tuition fee payments will be bought forward to help universities better manage financial risks over the autumn, including taking steps to improve

efficiencies and manage their finances in order to avoid cash flow problems further ahead.

The Government has also confirmed that providers are eligible to apply for its support packages, including business loan support schemes, which the Office for Students (OfS) the regulator in England, estimates could be worth at least £700m to the sector, depending on eligibility and take up. The Government has also published further guidance about how providers should access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to safeguard staff jobs, in particular stating that any grant from the scheme should not duplicate other sources of public funding where these are being maintained, such as UK home student tuition fees.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We are committed to supporting our world class universities and students through this unprecedented challenging time. So we are putting measures in place to help protect students and staff from the impact of coronavirus.

I know this is an unsettling time for all involved, and we are working tirelessly with the sector to do everything we can to stabilise admissions and protect a vital part of our country's economy and society.

I am very grateful to universities for their innovation and dedication in their frontline response at this time.

Universities Minister Michelle Donelan said:

I know this is a very difficult and anxious time for students, universities and higher education staff, and we are working determinedly with the sector and my counterparts across the UK, to support them during this time.

Universities have an integral part to play in our economy, society and culture, which is highlighted now more than ever through their important role in the fight against the virus.

That is why we are introducing a package of measures to boost support for students, stabilise the admissions system and ease pressures on universities' finances.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The UK is home to some of the world's leading scientists and researchers. From the study of disease to vaccine development, their work has already proved itself to be invaluable to our

response to coronavirus.

This £100 million we are bringing forward will provide immediate help to ensure the excellent research taking place in our universities continues throughout this period of uncertainty.

The full range of measures, bringing together collective action from the Government and sector organisations to help mitigate the impact of coronavirus, include:

- Stabilising admissions – Temporary measures mean providers will be able to recruit full-time, domestic students up to 5% above their forecasts in the next academic year, which is in line with proposals originating from the sector, to help reduce volatility and ensure a fair and orderly admissions. The Government will also have the discretion to allocate an additional 10,000 places, with 5,000 ring-fenced for nursing, midwifery or allied health courses to support the country's vital public services.
- Preventing exploitative admissions practices – The OfS will consult on a [new temporary registration condition](#) so it can intervene if providers take actions that are harmful to the sector and students.
- Enhanced Clearing process – UCAS is developing a new, personalised Clearing system for students this summer. This includes Clearing Plus, a new service which matches students to universities or other opportunities based on their achievements and course interests. If students' calculated grades exceed their predicted ones, it can suggest alternative courses with higher entry requirements.
- University research funding – The Government is bringing forward £100m of [Quality-related research funding](#) (QR) for providers in England into this current academic year as immediate help to ensure research activities can continue during the crisis.
- Research sustainability taskforce – DfE and BEIS Ministers will set up an advisory sector working group with the Devolved Administrations to consider how best to respond to the challenges universities face on research as a result of Covid-19, and so university research can continue to support the UK's economic recovery following the crisis.
- Government business support – The Government has confirmed that universities are eligible to apply for the Government support schemes, including business loan support, which the OfS estimates could be worth at least £700m, depending upon eligibility and take-up. Providers can also access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to safeguard staff jobs, including for those with short-term contracts.
- Changes to tuition fee loan payments – The Student Loans Company will bring forward tuition fee payments of students in the in the 2020/21 academic year to providers, expected to be worth £2.6bn, to help cash flow. This will not affect the loan liability, amount of interest charged to students or the timing of their maintenance loan payments.
- Financial opportunities – As part of existing programmes and using established procedures, the DfE will consider purchasing assets, such as land and buildings, where they can be used for new or expanding schools and colleges. This financial year the DfE has budgeted for up to £100m to acquire sites for planned projects across purchases from suitable

vendors, including higher education providers among others.

- Financial help for students – The Government has worked with the OfS to help clarify that providers can use existing funds, totalling £46m across April and May, to boost their hardship funds for students in financial difficulty. This can include help for IT equipment and internet access.
- Supporting international students – The UK continues to welcome overseas students, and Ministers are working across Government as a priority to ensure universities can continue to attract international students. DfE and DIT Ministers will also chair a group, including key sector representatives, to consider how the International Education Strategy can be updated to respond to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. The student number controls will only apply to domestic and EU domiciled full-time undergraduate students in the 2020/21 academic year.

The OfS is proposing a new temporary condition for registered higher education providers in England, allowing it to intervene if universities and colleges act in ways which puts at risk students' interests, or the stability or integrity of the sector. This could include making unconditional offers or pressuring students to accept places that would not be in their best interest through incentives, such as free laptops.

The Government continues to work closely with the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, to mitigate the challenges the entire UK sector faces as a result of coronavirus.

It also continues to support the recruitment of critical workers, such as nurses and doctors, during this important time and aims to use this summer's enhanced Clearing to help this.

In January the Education Secretary wrote to the OfS asking it to prioritise funding through the teaching grant to STEM and specialist subjects. This move will be of more importance in responding to coronavirus.

The research funding plans follow the announcement by Government earlier this month that UKRI-funded PhD students whose studies have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic will receive further support, including additional grants of up to six months.

The Government's key focus will be on ensuring the country's world-class higher education system delivers for all students and the wider economy. As part of this, it expects all providers and their creditors to behave responsibly.

The Government expects access to the business support schemes, reprofiling of public funding and student number controls should be sufficient to help stabilise most providers' finances, and that should certainly be the first port of calls for providers. Should that not be sufficient, such that a higher education provider finds themselves at risk of closure, the Government will only intervene further where we find there is a case to do so, and only where it believes intervention is possible and appropriate, and as a last resort. In such instances, the DfE will be working with HMT and other

Government departments to develop a restructuring regime, through which we will review providers' circumstances and assess the need for restructuring. Where action is required, this will come with attached conditions. The Government will work with the Devolved Administrations on this approach.