

UK set to bring home hundreds more British travellers from across the Philippines

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Grant funding provided to businesses by local authorities in England



As part of the government's coronavirus business support package, the UK government has distributed £12.3 billion to local authorities in England.

As of 19 April 2020, £6 billion has been paid out to 484,166 business properties, approximately half of the grant funding allocated (48.65%).

The Small Business Grants Fund is a £10,000 grant per eligible business, originally announced at Budget. Businesses included in this scheme are those which on 11 March were eligible for relief under the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme (including those with a rateable value between £12,000 and £15,000 which receive tapered relief) or the Rural Rate Relief Scheme.

The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund was announced by the Chancellor on 17 March. Businesses in scope will be those that were eligible on 11 March for a discount under the Expanded Retail Discount scheme and with a rateable value of less than £51,000:

- eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000
- eligible businesses with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000

Grants will be provided in respect of each property (hereditament); therefore, businesses with multiple outlets would receive more than one grant and may receive grants from separate local authorities.

Figures for delivered grants are accurate as of 19 April 2020.

Businesses with multiple outlets can receive more than one grant and may receive grants from separate local authorities, if their different outlets are in different local authority areas. Only one grant can be paid per business premise.

Local authorities are contacting eligible businesses. It is important that businesses who have been contacted respond quickly and that any businesses who believe they are eligible check the arrangements in their area on their local authority website if they have yet to be contacted.

Businesses should refer in the first instance to the [grant funding schemes guidance](#).

Further information on support for business is available: [Financial support for businesses](#).

[Find out what support may be available to you and your business.](#)

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The data was updated on 22 April.

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[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Letter from the Local Government Minister to councils setting out further details](#)

of additional funding

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PHE response to a Sun newspaper column

On 20 April the Sun columnist Trevor Kavanagh made a series of claims and accusations about Public Health England's role and response to the COVID-19 outbreak. PHE have made the following corrections.

"...and the advice from those experts – the sprawling Public Health England in particular – was that Britain faced no more than a larger-than-usual dose of winter flu"

This is nonsense. We have never advised that the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak was going to be like a normal winter flu season. Working alongside the whole of government, we have been planning for a reasonable worst case scenario in the UK, with COVID-19 having the potential to kill many more people and cause more hospitalisation than seasonal influenzas.

"PHE was against German style mass testing and, when caught flat-footed, rejected help from commercial laboratories in providing those tests"

This is wrong. The UK was one of the first countries after China to rollout a diagnostic test. PHE published the protocol for a new test on the 23 January which meant any lab could replicate the test from that date. The roll-out of PHE's COVID-19 diagnostic PCR test across the network of PHE and NHS laboratories is the fastest deployment of a novel test in recent UK history. The DHSC testing strategy is clear that PHE is responsible for Pillar 1 of the plan – which is ensuring that all patients in hospitals that need a test have been tested. We are working to the maximum of PHE's laboratory capacity and this has meant that in addition to patients, NHS staff and other key workers can also be tested. Responsibility for what the Sun calls 'mass German-style testing' using the support of commercial labs is being taken forward by the DHSC and Office for Life Sciences.

“PHE failed to build stocks of personal protective equipment – including masks, gowns and gloves – despite a 2016 test run showing these were a priority”

PHE is not responsible for determining what stock is held in the pandemic stockpile. We are responsible for developing the UK guidance on PPE and advising how to keep clinicians safe. The DHSC is responsible for the procurement of PPE on behalf of the NHS, not PHE.

“PHE dragged its feet over sourcing ventilators for intensive-care patients and extra hospital beds”

Completely wrong. PHE does not source or procure ventilators or beds on behalf of the NHS.

“Frequently when running short of crucial gear, PHE resisted offers of outside help, leaving the NHS scrambling to catch up”

Wrong. PHE is not responsible for the supply of PPE. The DHSC and NHS England is leading this work including dealing with offers of help from private companies.

“...and when it came to opening London’s 4,000-bed Nightingale emergency hospital, it was the Army that did the job in nine days”

The work that has been undertaken to set up the Nightingale hospitals has been fantastic and is the result of much hard work by colleagues across the health system. PHE has not played a role in this but nor would we be expected to.

“It was also PHE who insisted the British public would be protected by ‘herd immunity’”

PHE has never suggested herd immunity as a strategy to protect the public against COVID-19. We have not made any statements about herd immunity and nor have we advised ministers that this should be a policy objective.

“PHE has a giant budget of 4.5 billion”

No we don’t. PHE’s annual budget from government is just shy of £300million – which is about half the cost of a district hospital. The 4.5bn figure the Sun quotes is the amount the Treasury allocates to local government for local public health services – not PHE budget.

Government launches new coronavirus business support finder tool

- New online platform helps businesses easily access the financial support they are eligible for during the coronavirus pandemic
- simple questionnaire takes business owners under a minute to complete and will signpost them to relevant government financial support

A new 'support finder' tool will help businesses and self-employed people across the UK to quickly and easily determine what financial support is available to them during the coronavirus pandemic.

The finder tool on GOV.UK will ask business owners to fill out a simple online questionnaire, which can take minutes to complete, and they will then be directed to a list of all the financial support they may be eligible for.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Businesses of all shapes and sizes play a vital role in our economy, which is why we want to make it as easy as possible for all of them to access our wide-ranging package of financial support during this challenging time.

This online questionnaire takes just minutes to complete and will quickly signpost a business to the loans, grants or other schemes they could be eligible for.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

We've launched an unprecedented package of support to protect jobs, businesses and incomes during these challenging times.

Millions are already benefitting and this new online tool will allow firms and individuals to identify what help they are entitled to in a matter of minutes.

We are doing everything we can to make our support as accessible as easy to navigate as possible.

To support business, workers and the self-employed during the coronavirus outbreak, government has:

- made up to £330 billion of loans and guarantees for businesses
- offered to pay 80 per cent of the wages of furloughed workers, up to £2,500
- deferred the next quarter of VAT payments for firms, until the end of

June – representing a £30 billion injection into the economy

- introduced £20 billion in tax relief and cash grants to help businesses with cash flow
- introduced the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Schemes for both SMEs and larger businesses to make it easier to access vital financial support
- offered to cover the cost of statutory sick pay
- entirely removed all eligible properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector from business rates temporarily;
- introduced the Self-employment Income Support Scheme, offering a taxable grant worth 80% of trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 a month
- deferred Self Assessment payments due in July 2020 until 31 January 2021
- allowed companies required to hold AGMs to do so flexibly, which may include postponing them or holding them online;
- suspended wrongful trading provisions for company directors to remove the threat of personal liability during the pandemic; and
- offered a 3 month extension for filing accounts to businesses hit by coronavirus.

Notes to editors

The new business support finder tool can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

More details on support for businesses can be found on the [coronavirus business support hub](#).