

# Recovery Loan Scheme Launches today

- new loan scheme will provide further support to protect businesses and jobs
- loans will include 80% government guarantee and interest rate cap
- government has backed £75 billion of loans to date as part of unprecedented £350 billion wider support package

The Recovery Loan Scheme will ensure businesses continue to benefit from Government-guaranteed finance throughout 2021.

With non-essential retail and outdoor hospitality reopening next week, Ministers have ensured that appropriate support is still available to businesses to protect jobs. From today, businesses – ranging from coffee shops and restaurants, to hairdressers and gyms – and can access loans varying in size from £25,000, up to a maximum of £10 million. Invoice and asset finance is available from £1,000.

## **The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:**

We have stopped at nothing to protect jobs and livelihoods throughout the pandemic and as the situation has evolved we have ensured that our support continues to meet businesses needs.

As we safely reopen parts of our economy, our new Recovery Loan Scheme will ensure that businesses continue to have access to the finance they need as we move out of this crisis.

This is in addition to furlough being extended until 30 September, and the New Restart Grants scheme launched last week, providing funding of up to £18,000 to eligible businesses. The Government is also supplementing this with the Plan for Jobs, focused on protecting, supporting and creating jobs across the country through the Kickstart scheme, T-level and a National Careers Service.

The scheme, which was announced at budget and runs until 31 December 2021, will be administered by the British Business Bank, with loans available through a diverse network of accredited commercial lenders. 26 lenders have already been accredited for day one of the scheme, with more to come shortly, and the government will provide an 80% guarantee for all loans. Interest rates have been capped at 14.99% and are expected to be much lower than that in the vast majority of cases, and Ministers are urging lenders to ensure they keep rates down to help protect jobs. The Recovery Loan Scheme can be used as an additional loan on top of support received from the emergency schemes – such as the Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme – put into place last year.

So far, the government's emergency loan schemes have supported more than £75 billion of finance for 1.6 million British businesses and this new scheme

will build on that success. This is part of the government's unprecedented £350 billion support package which has included paying millions of workers' wages through the furlough scheme and generous grants and tax deferrals.

**Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:**

We're doing everything we can to back businesses as we carefully reopen our economy and recover our way of life.

The launch of our new Recovery Loan Scheme will provide businesses with a firm foundation on which to plan ahead, protect jobs and prepare for a safe reopening as we build back better from the pandemic.

**Reactions from business groups:**

**Rain Newton-Smith, CBI Chief Economist, said:**

The coronavirus loan schemes have provided a critical lifeline to businesses, and so its successor – the new Recovery Loan scheme – comes as a huge relief to firms.

These loans can be taken alongside existing COVID loans to help firms refinance, restructure and go for growth.

It's vital support remains as restrictions relax and demand returns to normal, allowing businesses to recover, save jobs, and support for reopening.

Accessing finance remains crucial to the lifeblood of a business and so the launch of the Recovery Loan scheme is welcome. The new scheme can play a potentially pivotal role in supporting the recovery by getting credit flowing to the firms who most need it.

Chambers of Commerce will continue to work with government and the banks to ensure that businesses have the clarity they need to enable them to use the new scheme to help them return to growth.

**David Postings, Chief Executive of UK Finance, said:**

The banking and finance industry remains committed to supporting businesses of all sizes through the next phase of the pandemic response. As focus turns to economic recovery, we know that many firms are still facing uncertainty. The new Recovery Loan Scheme, alongside other commercial financial support, will help firms rebuild and invest for future growth.

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## £4m for councils to support more families to resolve parental conflict

The Department for Work and Pension's Reducing Parental Conflict programme is working with local family services including health and social care, the courts and emergency services such as the police, to help them spot parental conflict, provide initial support and refer parents to further interventions such as therapy for a constructive resolution.

This includes:

- Almost £4 million for councils in England to help resolve conflict between parents
- Councils can now bid for the new cash so more children can thrive in happier homes – a new cash pot of £3.87 million for councils to help support parents and their families experiencing severe relationship difficulties goes live today (Tuesday 6 April 2021).

Research published by DWP today shows nearly 9 in 10 councils believe the programme's practitioner training is important to embedding support into their services and are positive about the programme's potential to improve outcomes for children in the areas.

Today's announcement means more funding to help them train more of their services to intervene in difficult situations. DWP Lords Minister Baroness Stedman-Scott said:

Every child deserves the best start in life and this programme aims to do just that by protecting child mental wellbeing through healthier relationships between parents – whether together or separated.

The pandemic has been a difficult for everyone, with families cooped up or apart from each other for longer periods of time.

That makes our work in this area all the more important and this new funding will help councils do even more to support parents.

The programme is designed to resolve parental conflict, not domestic abuse. Those in abusive relationships will instead be referred to specialist support.

Since 2017, the department has worked with nearly 150 councils to help them develop strategies for approaching conflict below the domestic abuse threshold. This includes investigating the issue of frequent, intense and poorly resolved conflict between parents and how it impacts children's wellbeing.

DWP is funding councils to increase understanding of these issues at a local level, undertaking innovative projects working with charities and sharing evidence on what works. For example, the successful #SeeItDifferently videos which have attracted almost a million views by parents in court.

The clips emotively showcase through the eyes of children, the emotional damage of arguments between parents, and how differently it could have played out if disagreements were communicated calmly and constructively, resulting in a happier family.

Reports published by DWP today (Tuesday 6 April 2021) show just how significantly the department is raising the profile of parental conflict, which councils overwhelmingly recognise as an important, but often blurry issue that can lead to difficult consequences for children.

Research shows the programme's effectiveness in:

- helping parents to take responsibility for their actions and understand the impact on their families;
- improving communication between a couple and within the family as a whole;
- and skills training focused on emotional coping strategies, both to manage triggers to substance use and to improve parenting practices and conflict management.

With this new round of funding, the DWP will be able to take the programme to the next level, giving more children the opportunity to thrive in happier homes.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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[Early Access continues during the](#)

# coronavirus pandemic

The MHRA is committed to speeding up access to innovative new medicines for patients. The [Early Access to Medicines Scheme \(EAMS\)](#) gives patients with life threatening or seriously debilitating conditions access to medicines that do not yet have a marketing authorisation when there is a clear unmet medical need. The scheme has remained fully operational throughout the coronavirus pandemic, ensuring that patients with serious conditions can still be offered new treatment options for their conditions.

As an example, the MHRA issued a positive scientific opinion for Roche's atezolizumab (Tecentriq) in a new combination regimen for patients with unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) in June 2020. Atezolizumab is a monoclonal antibody that directly binds programmed death-ligand 1 (PD-L1). PD-L1 may be expressed on tumour cells and/or tumour-infiltrating-immune cells and can contribute to the inhibition of the anti-tumour immune response in the tumour microenvironment.

Through EAMS, MHRA has been able to work with Roche since 2017 to ensure that over 600 UK patients with limited treatment options, have been among the first in the world to benefit from 8 breakthrough treatments prior to licence. This has paved the way for accelerated routine access in the NHS. To date, this working collaboration between MHRA and Roche has represented roughly a quarter of all EAMS run in the UK, including patients benefiting from receiving Tecentriq in five new cancer indications.

## **The Challenge**

Cases of primary liver cancer are rising in the UK. HCC is the most common form of primary liver cancer and tends to be diagnosed at an advanced stage, often in cirrhotic livers, when very limited treatment options are available. For these patients, there is a high unmet need for alternative treatment options as their prognosis is poor, with rapid progression and short overall survival.

## **Role of the MHRA**

### **EAMS**

Roche benefitted from the MHRA validating the evidence generated at an early stage during the first step of the EAMS, the PIM (Promising Innovative Medicine) designation. The PIM designation gave an early indication from the MHRA that atezolizumab in combination with bevacizumab, was a potential candidate for EAMS. This enhanced opportunities for Roche to work with other stakeholders in the UK around patient access. Subsequently, Roche presented their positive Phase III clinical data at a pre-submission meeting with MHRA. This provided the company with an opportunity to discuss the dossier of evidence and consider data collection aspects with the MHRA in advance of a formal application. At this point, the MHRA recommended Roche submit an

application for step II of EAMS, the Scientific Opinion (SO). During the SO assessment, the MHRA fully assessed the data generated for atezolizumab to ensure that the EAMS criteria were met and the benefits outweighed the risks. A resultant positive SO was issued.

## **Post-EAMS pilot**

There often is a time period between granting of a marketing authorisation (when EAMS closes) and NICE reimbursement, during which new patients may be unable to access the innovative medicine. Following a partnership between Roche, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the MHRA, the first Post-EAMS pilot was created to enable new patients to gain access to atezolizumab and bevacizumab during this time period.

## **The Outcome**

During the EAMS period, 63 patients with HCC were able to access atezolizumab (in combination with bevacizumab) after discussions with their doctor. Submission through EAMS accelerated patient access to the treatment by around 4 months.

The Post-EAMS pilot has enabled Trusts in England to order medicine for patients using the same processes that were used for EAMS, saving capacity and NHS resources. During the relatively short duration of this pilot, 13 more eligible HCC patients were able to access treatment with atezolizumab and bevacizumab.

Tecentriq, in combination with Avastin, is now the first cancer immunotherapy treatment recommended by NICE for HCC.

Milestone dates include:

- May 2019: PIM designation awarded
- June 2020: MHRA issued positive Scientific Opinion for atezolizumab through EAMS
- October 2020: NICE appraisal committee meeting
- November 2020: European Commission (EC) granted an EU licence for Atezolizumab triggering closure of EAMS to new patients – existing EAMS patients continued to gain access to the medicine until FAD, and new patients gained access via PEAMS
- November 2020: NICE Final Appraisal Determination (FAD) was recommended marking closure of the PEAMS in England and transition of patients to NHS funding.

## **Reflections**

**Tim Meyer, Professor of Experimental Cancer Medicine in UCL, said:**

The IMbravel150 trial was published in New England Journal of

Medicine in May 2020 and established the superiority of atezolizumab and bevacizumab for advanced hepatocellular carcinoma compared to the existing standard of care. The Roche EAMS allowed us to offer this new standard of care to our patients within 8 weeks of the publication and the Post-EAMS pilot facilitated seamless transition to NHS provision.

The close collaboration between Roche and regulators has enabled the translation of research, partly conducted in the UK, into patient benefit with minimal delay and great efficiency.

**Matt Whitty, Chief Executive of the Accelerated Access Collaborative said:**

Roche's EAMS journey with atezolizumab (in combination with bevacizumab) is a good example of the NHS continuing to support patient access to innovative treatment throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

Thanks to the partnership working between Roche, NHS England and NHS Improvement, and the MHRA, access continued through the Post-EAMS pilot, allowing clinicians to choose this treatment to support their patients and demonstrating the potential for this collaborative approach to be expanded for an enhanced EAMS programme.

**Gemma Boni, Head of Liver Cancer, Roche Products Limited said:**

Raising awareness of EAMS, especially during the coronavirus pandemic is important to ensure patients with high unmet medical needs such as these HCC patients, do not miss out on potentially life-changing new treatments.

The MHRA and Roche have been steadfast in their commitment to the assessment of the EAMS Scientific Opinion, ensuring no delay to early access for HCC patients even amidst all the challenges presented by the pandemic.

The addition of the Post-EAMS pilot to EAMS demonstrates that UK health agencies in collaboration with industry partners may be able to feasibly offer a more streamlined process to enable equitable early access to innovative treatments in the UK. Learnings from

this pilot will help to refine the process for future EAMS programs.

## How to apply for EAMS and supporting innovation

EAMS aims to give patients with life threatening or seriously debilitating conditions access to medicines that do not yet have a marketing authorisation when there is a clear unmet medical need. [Visit EAMS](#) to find out more.

You may also find help to expedite your medicines to patients by visiting the [MHRA Innovation Office](#) which provides free and confidential expert regulatory information and advice. Find out more about how the innovation office has helped support innovation; [read our case studies](#).

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## [PM call with President Zelenskyy: 5 April 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, this evening.



The Prime Minister spoke to the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, this evening.

They discussed the UK's significant concerns about the recent Russian military activity on Ukraine's border and in illegally-annexed Crimea.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed our unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He expressed his solidarity with President Zelenskyy's government in the face of this destabilising activity and commended Ukraine's approach to the situation.

They agreed to continue working closely with international partners to monitor the situation and ensure there is no further escalation.

The Prime Minister also noted the fruitful ongoing security cooperation between the UK and Ukraine, including through the Operation Orbital training programme.

Published 5 April 2021

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## Further easing of Covid restrictions confirmed for 12 April

Outdoor hospitality will be among those reopening in England next week after the Prime Minister confirmed the [roadmap](#) is on track and planned easements can go ahead.

Significant parts of the indoor economy and further outdoor settings will reopen from 12 April, after data confirmed the government's "four tests" for easing Covid restrictions had been met.

However he continued to urge caution, with no changes to social contact rules and many restrictions still in place. Outdoor gatherings must still be limited to 6 people or 2 households, and you must not socialise indoors with anyone you do not live with or have not formed a support bubble with.

Confirmation Step 2 of the roadmap would proceed came after the measures were agreed at a "Covid 0" meeting and discussed on a Cabinet call earlier today (Monday).

Before proceeding to this step, the government studied the latest data to assess the impact of the first step, which began when schools reopened on 8 March.

The assessment was based on four tests:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

As set out in the roadmap, around four weeks is required to see the impact in the data of the previous step.

The government also committed to provide a further week's notice to businesses, provided through the update from the Prime Minister today.

From Monday 12 April additional premises will be able to reopen – with the rules on social contact applying. Indoor settings must only be visited alone or with household groups, with outdoor settings limited to either six people or two households.

This includes non-essential retail; personal care premises such as hairdressers, beauty and nail salons; and indoor leisure facilities such as gyms and spas (but not including saunas and steam rooms, which are due to open at Step 3).

Overnight stays away from home in England will be permitted and self-contained accommodation can also reopen, though must only be used by members of the same household or support bubble.

Public buildings such as libraries and community centres will also reopen.

The majority of outdoor settings and attractions can also reopen, including outdoor hospitality, zoos, theme parks, drive-in cinemas and drive-in performances events.

Hospitality venues will be able to open for outdoor service, with no requirement for a substantial meal to be served alongside alcohol, and no curfew. The requirement to eat and drink while seated will remain.

People should continue to work from home where they can, and minimise domestic travel where they can. International holidays are still illegal.

The number of care home visitors will also increase to two per resident, and all children will be able to attend any indoor children's activity, including sport, regardless of circumstance.

Parent and child groups of up to 15 people (not counting children aged under five years old) can restart indoors.

Funerals can continue with up to 30 attendees. Weddings, outdoor receptions, and commemorative events including wakes will be able to take place with up to 15 attendees (in premises that are permitted to open).

The government is also publishing today an update on the 4 reviews established in the roadmap to determine what measures may be necessary from summer onwards.

A Covid-status certification system will be developed over the coming months which could allow higher-risk settings to be opened up more safely and with more participants. Over the coming months, a system will be developed which will take into account three factors: vaccination, a recent negative test, or natural immunity (determined on the basis of a positive test taken in the previous six months).

Events pilots will take place from mid-April to trial the system. All pilots

are checking Covid status, initially this will be through testing alone but in later pilots vaccination and acquired immunity are expected to be alternative ways to demonstrate status.