

# New data shows small businesses received £21.3 billion in COVID-19 local authority business support grants

- Government figures show £21.3 billion allocated to micro, small, and medium sized businesses in England through COVID-19 business grants scheme
- new data shows grants supported businesses in many sectors of the economy, including accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail, and arts, entertainment and recreation

Smaller businesses across the whole of England received £21.3 billion through the government's COVID-19 Local Authority Business Support Grants scheme, a new report has shown.

Micro, small, and medium sized firms across different business sectors benefited from the funds available under the scheme, which was created to support businesses during and to recover from the impact of the global pandemic.

[The new data](#) – which includes a sector breakdown for the first time – shows over one-third of all available funding was allocated to the accommodation and food services sector, a part of the economy hit hardest by the pandemic.

The grant scheme was created by the UK government and administered by local authorities, with all regions in England found to have allocated most of their total available funds to businesses in need.

Data shows the accommodation and food services sector received the most funding. Businesses in this sector have also seen significant support from the government's Hospitality Strategy, published in July 2021.

Firms operating in wholesale retail, arts and entertainment, recreation, and other services industries were also among the different business sectors to receive substantial help under the scheme. A full breakdown of allocations is below.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Percentage of funds</b>	<b>Value of funds</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	36%	£8.2 bn
Other Services*	19%	£4.3 bn
Wholesale and Retail Trade	16%	£3.5 bn
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	14%	£3.2 bn
Transportation and Storage	10%	£2.2 bn
Manufacturing	1%	£0.2 bn

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Percentage of funds</b>	<b>Value of funds</b>
All other sectors	4%	£0.9 bn

\*Other Services includes the activities of membership organisations, the repair of personal and household goods and a variety of personal service activities not covered elsewhere in classifications.

Small businesses and others have also been supported through initiatives including the government's Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS), which has backed almost 19,000 firms with average support of £202,000 each, as well as the increase in Employment Allowance, slashing of fuel duty, and the introduction of business rates relief for high street businesses.

The government remains committed to supporting small businesses, and firms of all sizes, as they recover from the impact of COVID-19 and prepare themselves for a bright, prosperous, and innovative future.

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## **A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road Improvement scheme development consent decision announced**

The application involves the dualling of the A428 between A1/A421 Black Cat Junction and A428/A1198 Caxton Gibbet Junction to high quality dual carriageway. Construction will include 19km of new Dual Carriageway, and Grade separated junctions.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by National Highways on 26 February 2021 and accepted for Examination on 23 March 2021.

Following an Examination during which the public, Statutory Consultees and Interested Parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, recommendations were made to the Secretary of State on 18 May 2022.

This is the 116th Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and 43rd transport application to have been examined by The Planning Inspectorate within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"The Planning Inspectorate has now examined more than 100 nationally significant infrastructure projects since the Planning Act 2008 process was introduced, ensuring local communities have had the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them.

The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in the six-month long examination.

The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views and the evidence gathered during the Examination before making its recommendation.”

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation are publicly available on the project pages of the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

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Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: <Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk >

Notes to editors:

The [Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

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## [Self-driving revolution to boost economy and improve road safety](#)

- government unveils plan to rollout self-driving vehicles on UK roads, sparking a transport revolution to improve road safety and better connect communities
- estimated 38,000 new jobs could be created in the UK from predicted £42 billion industry
- backed by £100 million to support industry investment and fund research on safety developments

UK roads could see self-driving vehicles rolled out by 2025 thanks to new government plans – backed by £100 million – which prioritise safety through new laws and create thousands of new jobs in the industry.

Some vehicles, including cars, coaches and lorries, with self-driving features could be operating on motorways in the next year, and today's (19 August 2022) plans set out new legislation which will allow for the safe wider rollout of self-driving vehicles by 2025. This enables the UK to take full advantage of the emerging market of self-driving vehicles – which could

create up to 38,000 jobs and could be worth an estimated £42 billion.

The government's vision for self-driving vehicles is backed by a total of £100 million, with £34 million confirmed today for research to support safety developments and inform more detailed legislation. This could include researching the performance of self-driving cars in poor weather conditions and how they interact with pedestrians, other vehicles, and cyclists.

The government is also today confirming £20 million, as part of the overall £100 million, to help kick-start commercial self-driving services and enable businesses to grow and create jobs in the UK, following an existing £40 million investment. Successful projects could help see, for example, groceries delivered to customers by self-driving vehicles, or shuttle pods assisting passengers when moving through airports. £6 million will also be used for further market research and to support commercialisation of the technology.

Self-driving vehicles could revolutionise public transport and passenger travel, especially for those who don't drive, better connect rural communities and reduce road collisions caused by human error. Further in the future, they could, for example, provide tailored on-demand links from rural towns and villages to existing public transport options nearby. They could also provide more direct and timely services that enable people to better access vital services such as schools and medical appointments.

Vehicles that can drive themselves on motorways could be available to purchase within the next year, which users would need a valid driving licence for, so they can drive on other roads. Other self-driving vehicles, for example used for public transport or delivery, expected on the roads by 2025, would not need anyone onboard with a driving licence because they would be able to drive themselves for the whole journey.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The benefits of self-driving vehicles have the potential to be huge. Not only can they improve people's access to education and other vital services, but the industry itself can create tens of thousands of job opportunities throughout the country.

Most importantly, they're expected to make our roads safer by reducing the dangers of driver error in road collisions.

We want the UK to be at the forefront of developing and using this fantastic technology, and that is why we are investing millions in vital research into safety and setting the legislation to ensure we gain the full benefits that this technology promises.

The government is today consulting on a 'safety ambition' for self-driving vehicles to be as safe as a competent and careful human driver. This ambition would inform standards that vehicles need to meet to be allowed to 'self-drive' on the roads, and organisations, such as manufacturers, could face

sanctions if standards are not met.

The new laws for the safe rollout of self-driving vehicles by 2025 will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows.

The legislation will build on existing laws, and state that manufacturers are responsible for the vehicle's actions when self-driving, meaning a human driver would not be liable for incidents related to driving while the vehicle is in control of driving.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

Self-driving vehicles have the potential to revolutionise people's lives, particularly by helping those who have mobility issues or rely on public transport to access the jobs, local shops and vital services we all depend on.

This funding will help unlock the incredible potential of this industry, attracting investment, developing the UK's growing self-driving vehicle supply chain, and supporting high-skill jobs as these new means of transport are rolled out.

AA president, Edmund King, said:

The automotive world is changing rapidly and so the government is right to embrace the positive changes offered by this new technology and back it by funding research and putting forward legislation. Assisted driving systems, for example, autonomous emergency braking and adaptive cruise control, are already helping millions of drivers stay safe on the roads.

It is still quite a big leap from assisted driving, where the driver is still in control, to self-driving, where the car takes control. It is important that the government does study how these vehicles would interact with other road users on different roads and changing weather conditions. However the ultimate prize, in terms of saving thousands of lives and improving the mobility of the elderly and the less mobile, is well worth pursuing.

Today also sees the publication of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation's (CDEI) Responsible Innovation in Self-Driving Vehicles report, which sets out proposals for a trustworthy approach to the regulation and governance of self-driving vehicles.

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# UK commits millions to helping the world's most vulnerable on World Humanitarian Day

- £36 million in UK funding committed to provide emergency care to those enduring conflict in Ukraine and Syria and food shortages in East Africa.
- The UK continues to be a global leader supporting vulnerable people experiencing devastating conflict, extreme weather and lasting impacts of the pandemic.
- Tributes paid to aid workers helping to deal with unprecedented humanitarian catastrophes, caused by global instability and exacerbated by Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

People whose lives have been upended by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, drought and food shortages in East Africa, and conflict in Syria will be among those to benefit from £36 million in UK humanitarian funding announced today.

The announcement comes on United Nation's World Humanitarian Day (Friday 19 August) as parts of the globe come under increasing strain from lasting effects of the pandemic, the increasing impact of climate change, and conflicts in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Local aid workers are at the forefront of the effort to alleviate the disastrous consequences of these crises as they provide humanitarian assistance for communities across the world. The UK's funding announcement will support them to continue their essential work.

In Ukraine and Poland, where the majority of Ukrainians who have fled the conflict have travelled, £15 million in UK funding will support up to 200,000 of the most vulnerable impacted by Russia's invasion. This includes children, older people and those with disabilities. International aid organisation Mercy Corps will work with grassroots civil society groups to provide emergency assistance to cover basic needs, including food, water and sanitation, psychological support and childcare services.

In East Africa, where severe food insecurity threatens over 48 million people, the UK has allocated an additional £14 million to the countries on the frontline of the world's worst humanitarian crisis. This new spending, which will work immediately to save lives and prevent more people experiencing famine-like conditions, includes:

- A £5 million boost to the UK Somalia programme, which is providing life-saving health, nutrition, food security and water and sanitation assistance to over half a million people in some of the most vulnerable families.
- £6 million for the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund which will provide vital

assistance to under-funded emergencies across Ethiopia, including drought and conflict-affected regions.

- £3 million in emergency humanitarian funding to the World Food Programme, Sudan, helping reach approximately 120,000 vulnerable people with food assistance.

Minister of State for South and Central Asia, North Africa, UN and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

In 2022 millions more people are now in desperate need of humanitarian support.

UK funding is ensuring that the UN and local partners can reach those affected by Russian aggression in Ukraine, drought in East Africa and ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan. We thank those on the ground who so often risk their own lives to help and protect them.

Britain has a proud humanitarian tradition, and we will continue to support the most vulnerable, wherever they are.

The Russian invasion is exacerbating the world food crisis, which is hitting the poorest hardest, particularly in East Africa. The UK and its allies have pushed hard for the UN grain initiative and the world is watching to ensure that Russia complies, so food continues to flow from Ukraine and feed the hungry.

The UK is also providing £1.5 million to deploy technology to identify whether grain sold by Russia on the world market has been stolen from Ukraine. A package of rail support to Ukraine will also ensure grain trains can run. Moreover, the UK is providing Ukraine with the military capability to help protect its ports, essential for the grain deal to be a success.

Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford said:

In the Horn of Africa, around 700,000 people are experiencing famine conditions – and in Somalia over 386,000 children are projected to be severely malnourished and at risk of death by the end of the year.

UK aid in east Africa is providing life-saving support to the most vulnerable people in the hardest hit countries.

We must now bring new stakeholders to the table to strengthen our international action towards the world's worst humanitarian crisis today.

The UK is also announcing a £7 million package to support Syrian refugees who

have fled the conflict to Lebanon, delivered through the World Food Programme. This funding will help provide more than 150,000 people with food, water and nutrition. This is part of the UK's pledge to provide up to £158 million earlier this year at the Brussels Pledging Conference for the Syria Crisis, which will support food production, protect women and girls from violence and ensure humanitarian access to the North East of Syria, where the situation is deteriorating.

The UK is the third largest bilateral donor to the crisis in Syria, having committed over £3.8 billion to date in our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. This includes support to the governments of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to cope with the protracted refugee presence by supporting displaced Syrians until they can return safely to Syria.

Since 2012, across Syria and the region, the UK has provided over 28.3 million food rations, over 24 million medical consultations, 6.3 million cash grants/vouchers, 11 million relief packages and over 15.2 million vaccines. Our aid provides life-saving support to millions of Syrians, supporting refugees to remain in countries in the region, and enabling their host communities to accommodate them.

The UK has consistently been one of the largest bilateral humanitarian donors globally and have been at the forefront of driving more effective and innovative approaches to crisis prevention, preparedness, and response. Since 2015, the UK has reached 32.6 million people with humanitarian aid, saving lives and alleviating suffering in places like Syria, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan.

Now in Ukraine, the UK is working alongside trusted partners to deliver its £220 million humanitarian pledge.

Mercy Corps Ukraine Response Director, Michael Young, said:

In Ukraine and Poland, we have partnered directly with local organisations that know their community needs best and are working quickly to deliver humanitarian aid.

With this funding, our partners will continue to deliver emergency assistance and ship essential supplies such as food and hygiene items to people affected by heavy fighting, as well as providing reliable information on where to access basic services, safe routes, legal rights for refugees and people displaced inside Ukraine.

**ENDS**

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# Historical UK breweries at New Zealand's biggest beer festival

World news story

10 iconic and sustainable British breweries are being featured on the GREAT Britain stand at Beervana in Wellington.



The UK Government has returned to Beervana with 10 UK breweries.

The UK Government in New Zealand have hand selected the group of UK companies who are being showcased on the GREAT stand at New Zealand's premier [beer festival](#).

The 10 breweries featured on the stand are:

Greene King Brewery and Shepherd Neame are members of the UK's 'Net Zero Now' initiative launched in July 2021. This scheme is an industry protocol and certification standard which will help bars and pubs across Britain reach net-zero before the national legal deadline of 2050.

Britain's oldest brewery, Shepherd Neame, founded in 1698 has repeatedly pioneered sustainable brewing methods. They recycle 97% of the grain and hops used in the brewing process and their waste management was restructured so they could convert it into biofuel. In 2013 Shepherd Neame also invested in a £3 million water recovery plant which enabled them to reduce their water consumption by 40%.

British High Commissioner to New Zealand, [Iona Thomas](#) said:

The UK and New Zealand share so much – whether it's our common values, our passion for sport, or our shared love of beer! Beervana is a wonderful celebration of some of the best beer in the world, so I'm delighted that ten British breweries are taking part this year.

You will find them at the GREAT Britain stand where you can also learn more about how British bars, pubs and breweries are greenifying the industry and tackling climate change – another important goal we share with New Zealand. Cheers!

British Consul General and Deputy Trade Commissioner Asia Pacific (Australia and New Zealand) [Louise Cantillon](#) said:

We are delighted to be showcasing these 10 British breweries at Beervana 2022. Beer is one of the UK's top food and drink exports valued at £413 million.

There are over 3,000 breweries in the UK. An impressive 441 million kilograms of beer is exported from the UK around the world each year.

Through the UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement we will strengthen opportunities to export high-quality British food and drink products so they can be enjoyed by even more New Zealanders.

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