

New service allows DBS to respond quicker to recruitment requests during COVID-19

In response to coronavirus (COVID-19), the Home Office and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) have put temporary arrangements in place, to provide DBS checks and fast-track emergency checks of the Adults' and Children's Barred Lists free-of-charge.

This will apply to healthcare and social care workers being recruited in connection with the provision of care and treatment of coronavirus in England and Wales, including some of those who have volunteered to help the NHS.

These arrangements will provide employers with the option to appoint new recruits into regulated activity with adults and/or children, as long as the individuals are not barred and appropriate measures are put in place to manage the individual until the full DBS check is received.

DBS works to support recruiters and voluntary organisations by allowing employers to make safer recruitment decisions. The whole country is coming together to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and thousands of volunteers have come forward to support the health service although the vast majority of these people will not require a DBS check.

Dr Gillian Fairfield, DBS Chairman said:

We understand the vital role that DBS has to play in the country's response to the pandemic. We have been working closely with the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care in order to introduce measures that allow us to respond quickly to the applications, as we recognise that the care sector needs immediate support from new recruits and volunteers.

The introduction of a fast track Adults' and Children's Barred List check will allow the NHS, and other healthcare and voluntary sector organisations to get the right people into the right place quickly and safely.

Eric Robinson, DBS Chief Executive added:

The organisation is fully prepared, and we have measures in place to ensure we can continue to operate with minimal disruption to our services.

This new fast-track check is designed to help support the national effort to fight coronavirus. We need to make sure that only those eligible for those checks are requesting them as misuse of the emergency provision will delay the urgent deployment of health and social care personnel.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): an update on the Grenfell Tower site](#)

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[Steelwork complete on UKAEA Yorkshire building](#)

[Harworth Group plc](#), a leading regenerator of land and property for development and investment, has completed the steel superstructure ahead of the unit's practical completion in September.

The UKAEA Yorkshire facility will provide a unique testing centre for fusion reactor components such as blankets and divertors. It will evaluate novel metals and ceramics in conditions akin to the inside of a fusion reactor, including high heat flux, in-vacuum, and strong magnetic fields.

Its location on the [Advanced Manufacturing Park](#) at Rotherham puts it at the heart of the UK's manufacturing region, allowing UKAEA to work with industry and research organisations on fusion technology.

The 22,300 sq.ft. unit, which is being built by Sheffield based contractor, JF Finnegan, on Harworth's behalf, will comprise office accommodation split

over two floors and a research laboratory at ground floor level. UKAEA will be taking a 20-year lease and will employ 40 highly skilled people – continuing the authority’s close working relationship with the University of Sheffield’s Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) and Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (Nuclear AMRC).

The new facility is being funded as part of the Government’s Nuclear Sector Deal delivered through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. An additional £2 million of investment is coming from Sheffield City Region’s Local Growth Fund, thereby helping UKAEA join other leading occupiers at the Advanced Manufacturing Park including Rolls-Royce, Boeing and McLaren Automotive, and further strengthening the park’s standing as being at the centre of high-value employment in the UK.

Colin Walters, Director of the National Fusion Technology Platform, UKAEA, said: “We are delighted that the construction of the unit is on-track and the completion of its superstructure helps to bring the project alive. This facility will provide fantastic opportunities for UK businesses to win contracts and put UKAEA in a great position to help deliver the necessary expertise for the first fusion power stations.”

Duncan Armstrong-Payne, Associate Director – Major Projects, Harworth Group plc, added: “We and our contractors have battled the elements to get to this point and I delighted to announce that we have reached this milestone in the project and are on track to complete this game-changing facility. We look forward to UKAEA’s staff joining the 2,000 people already employed at the Advanced Manufacturing Park, continuing the site’s ongoing success as one of the North’s key developments offering exciting employment opportunities.”

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for Community Interest Companies (CICs)

Understandably, CICs are concerned about the business and community impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The Regulator’s approach to registration and regulation will be as flexible and pragmatic as possible during this period.

In response to the spread of the virus the Regulator’s office is following Public Health guidelines. The situation is dynamic and may change quickly so we’re preparing for a number of situations.

The Regulator’s priority is to ensure compliance with all guidelines to reduce the spread of Covid-19. This includes ensuring social distancing of all staff. As a result of measures in place, paper submissions, such as conversion applications and special resolutions, under the current conditions now take longer to process. Please be assured we are working hard to clear

these as soon as possible. The Regulator is investigating alternative methods of considering any paper filings and payments. We're doing this urgently to ensure we can maintain services for CICs.

File Online

Use our online services to help us process your information as quickly as possible. You can:

Many [other online filings](#) can also be completed online via the Companies House website:

- Directors and company secretaries – new appointments, resignations & changes to personal details
- Changing a company name
- Changing a registered office address
- Changing an accounting reference date
- Changes to 'people with significant control' (PSC) information
- Changes to a company's share structure
- Details of new mortgages or mortgages paid

The Regulator recognises that some CICs will have a period of time where they may be unable to provide normal services and meet the community benefit that they were set up to serve. This can be reported in the Annual CIC report, filed with CIC Accounts, to explain any change in the delivery of the community interest company.

What if I can't meet the deadline to file my Accounts and Annual Report?

The Companies House Registrar is responsible for account filing; late filing penalties and company dissolutions:

Account Filing

CICs, affected by COVID-19, may be eligible to apply for an extension to their filing deadline. Further information is [here](#).

Please note, CICs have to apply for the 3-month extension to be granted, before the date they are due. If an extension is agreed by Companies House, the new account filing date will also apply to the CIC Annual Report as both documents – together with a £15 fee – are filed and placed on the Public Register at the same time.

Late Filing Penalties

Companies House Registrar will:

- Treat late filing penalty appeals sympathetically – if the late delivery

of accounts was caused by the coronavirus outbreak. However, if you do not apply for an extension before your filing deadline, and your accounts have been filed late, an automatic penalty will be imposed. The Registrar has very limited discretion to not collect a penalty.

- Provide a break for companies to pay late filing penalties and
- Provide additional support with payment plans for late filing penalties

Further information is [here](#)

Dissolutions

Companies House is, temporarily, easing 'strike off' activity to prevent most companies being dissolved. This will give businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak time to update their records and help them avoid being struck off the register. This is a temporary measure and the Companies House Registrar will keep the impact of Coronavirus under review & publish further updates on their [website](#).

How do I get support to pay my staff?

The government announced that organisations, including CICs, will get support to help them pay wages via [The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#). This will support business through paying 80% of the wages of furloughed workers for three months. Employers will be able to contact HMRC for a grant to cover most of the wages of their workforce who remain on payroll but are temporarily not working (furloughed) during the coronavirus outbreak. Any employer in the country – small or large, charitable, CIC and/or non-profit – will be eligible for the scheme.

HMRC are responsible for the job retention scheme and have published further guidance for [employers](#) and [employees](#)

Furloughing, volunteering & return to work

Up until 30th June, people who are furloughed under [The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#) cannot do any work or volunteer for their employer who placed them on furlough. The employer can agree to find furloughed employees new work or volunteering opportunities whilst on furlough if this is in line with public health guidance.

Individuals who have been furloughed cannot volunteer for the same organisation which has furloughed them.

From 1 July, employers can bring previously furloughed employees back to work, while still being able to claim the CJRS grant for their normal hours not worked. Employees who have been furloughed for any amount of time and shift pattern are eligible for the scheme, and employers when claiming the CJRS grant will need to report and claim for a minimum period of a week.

Closure – The CJRS scheme will close to new entrants from 30 June: employers from that point will only be able to furlough employees that they have

furloughed for a full 3 week period prior to 30 June. Meaning that the final date by which an employer can furlough their employee for the first time will be 10 June.

Guidance on the CJRS can be found here for employers and [here](#) for employees. This includes advice on flexible furloughing and how employers should calculate claims.

Can I apply for Government Support?

Yes. The Government is supporting all businesses, including Community Interest Companies, and their employees through a package of measures during this period of unprecedented disruption.

[GOV.UK Coronavirus Business Support](#) has been established to provide the right support, advice and information to help with the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on businesses. This includes:

- Paying your employees
- Paying sick pay
- Paying tax
- Business rates relief
- Business support grant funds
- Support for the self-employed
- Support for small and medium-sized businesses
- Support for large businesses

There is also a 'business support finder' to see what financial support schemes businesses may be eligible for – this can be accessed [here](#).

The Business Support website will continue to be updated as new information becomes available.

Can I access other support available to the non-profit sector?

Possibly. This will depend on the scheme and the nature of your organisation. Many Social Enterprise bodies, who also support community interest companies, are providing bespoke advice and guidance which may be particularly helpful to CICs.

The £200 million Coronavirus Community Support Fund launched on 22 May. The fund, which forms part of the government's £750 million civil society sector support package, is designed to support charities and social enterprises supporting people and communities in England affected by Covid-19. Applications are also invited from organisations facing acute financial difficulties because of the pandemic.

Applications will be assessed in the order in which they are received and the National Lottery Community Fund, which is administering the funding, aims to get funding to organisations as quickly as possible. The funding is for a maximum of six months and there are two application pathways, one between £300-£10,000 and one for bids of over £10,000.

Funding is targeted at:

- Organisations supporting people and communities who experience disproportionate challenge and difficulty as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Organisations providing services and support for vulnerable people, for which there will be increased demand as a result of the COVID-19 crisis
- Organisations which connect communities and support communities to work together to respond to COVID-19

Find out more and apply [here](#)

Big Society Capital Fund

Big Society Capital have created a £100m fund for social enterprises, CICs, charities and small businesses in disadvantaged areas affected by the pandemic . Its Resilience and Recovery Loan Fund run by Social Investment Business will utilise the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to extend loans to organisations across the country. Further details are available [here](#)

Is there CIC specific support?

The Government recognises the pressures that community interest company, and the social enterprise sector more widely, is facing at this time. CICs are therefore eligible to access the range of government support packages being offered to business, subject to the specific requirements of each:

[Coronavirus Business Support](#)

CICs may also be able to access other sources of funding subject to specific criteria. This includes, but is not limited to:

Where can I get further help and guidance for my CIC?

Alongside government, many social enterprises and other bodies are providing advice and support to CICs at this time. They may be able to advise on more detailed enquiries which are outside the remit of the Regulator. These include, but are not limited to:

[Business Support Helpline](#)

[Social Enterprise UK](#)

[SE Mark CIC](#)

[Unltd](#)

[Big Society Capital](#)

[Good Finance](#)

[The National Lottery Community Fund](#)

For the welfare of employees, the main office is now closed.

Should you have any queries or need our help please email our team in the first instance at cicregulator@companieshouse.gov.uk. If you would like to speak to a member of the team directly you can either email your telephone number and/or leave a message on our voicemail number 02920 346228 and one of the team will get back to you within two days if not sooner.

Stay up to date

For the latest information and updates:

More information

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for employers and businesses](#)

[Corona virus \(COVID-19\) – Updates and changes to services](#)

Our response to Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs), Environmental Information Regulation requests (EIRs) and Subject Access Requests (SARs) may take longer for us to complete at the moment because of COVID-19 implications.

The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) has advised that although they are

unable to extend statutory timescales, they will advise people that they may experience understandable delays when making FOIs, EIRs or SARs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Is your request essential?

While your statutory right of access remains unchanged, our resources may be diverted away from usual compliance or information rights work at this time. Therefore, we would ask that where possible, before submitting any requests for information that you check our website first, as it may be already published and available. Because the national guidance is that people should work from home wherever possible and not come into the office unless absolutely essential, we would request that if you would like to make a request for information, you email rwmfeedback@nda.gov.uk instead of post.

Prioritising essential services

If you cannot find the information, or require copies of your own information under a subject access request, please be aware that under current circumstances and our need to prioritise essential services, you may experience a delay in your response.

Following guidance from the [ICO](#), we will keep requestors informed of any delays and will respond as soon as resources allow. We will also be keeping up to date on guidance from the [ICO](#) as the situation changes to ensure that we comply with any changes or amendments to information rights practice.

For further information on your information rights at this time please consult the [ICO website](#).