

Community Wealth Building Business Bulletin

Supporting Newham businesses through the coronavirus crisis

COUNCIL ACTION

Applications are open for discretionary grants

In Issue 3 we reported that we were developing a discretionary grant scheme for certain types of small and micro-businesses. These are businesses with fixed property costs that are not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

We are now inviting Discretionary Grant Fund applications from small businesses in multi-tenanted properties and from market traders who have experienced significant financial hardship (reduction in revenue or market storage/pitch rental charges) since 11 March as a result of COVID-19. We will consider applications from the following:

- small businesses in multi-tenanted properties, excluding those who pay their rent on an hourly or daily basis. Grant amount: £5,000
- permanent market traders and other retailers which are not separately assessed for business rates and who have a pitch/unit which carries regular rental and other property charges. Grant amount: up to £3,000.

Due to the limited resources that have been allocated to Newham by the government, regrettably not all eligible businesses that apply are likely to be successful. We have endeavoured to maximise our relatively small allocation (£2.88m) to meet local

economic challenges, whilst staying within government guidelines.

[Find out more information and apply](#)

Positive feedback

Paul Sheedy, Director of Unifi.id Limited: "I have never had such outstanding professional service. If we had more people like Andrew Perkins and his Newham Business Desk colleagues, the world would be a better place."

COUNCIL ACTION

Safe opening of non-essential retail

Since 15 June non-essential retail businesses have been able to open to the public if the premises can be made COVID-secure. To support business with these changes, Newham Council sent an information pack to businesses across the borough with a leaflet outlining how businesses would know if they were allowed to open and the steps they must take before opening. The pack also included posters shops could put up to help them meet their obligations to ensure social distancing regulations were followed. Additional [copies of the leaflet and posters can be downloaded here](#).

To support social distancing along high streets we installed signage on pavements and lampposts reminding people to keep their distance. A programme of works to widen pavements is taking place, with measures completed in key shopping streets such as Green Street and High Street North.



Signage in Green Street

Trading Standards Officers visited all major town centres on the big day to ensure the re-opening of non-essential retail went smoothly and were pleased to see most businesses following regulations correctly. Many businesses were making use of the posters included in the Council's information pack.

Queen's Market in Upton Park reopened successfully on 16 June with a new social distancing system in place. Customers had plenty of space to safely visit market stalls and the Council was able to find space for all regular traders who wanted to return and be accommodated in the main hall.



Widened pavements

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Supporting business to be 'COVID-19 secure'



To show your business is 'COVID-19 secure' businesses should display a [downloadable notice](#) to inform

customers and staff that you have followed guidance.

The Council has created a template for smaller lower risk businesses that fall under local authority health and safety enforcement and who don't have dedicated health and safety advice. This is to help businesses go through the risk assessment process and document their findings. [Download the template.](#)



Newham Chamber of Commerce Chair Lloyd Johnson said: "It has been a hard time for everyone in every sector but I believe that leisure and certain parts of retail have been hit the hardest. Retail being allowed to open up is a real boost to all employers and employees in this area. Taking a cautious approach to opening up is the right thing to do and supporting local and national government by keeping us all safe and following guidelines. Businesses needs to focus on safety first and the sales will come naturally."

COUNCIL ACTION

Town centre reopenings webinars

Following a successful webinar for members of Stratford Original on 16 June about town centre reopenings, a second one is being held this week for Newham Chamber of Commerce and a third one will be held on 30 June at 2pm. Topics for this will be:

- supporting social distancing on footways
- enabling social distancing
- business support
- business facing communications and engagement
- resident facing communications and engagement.

To book your place at the seminar email NewhamBusinessDesk@newham.gov.uk

Government announcements

Providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus outbreak

Guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations has been updated with information on which apprentices should be prioritised in the offer of face-to-face training from 15 June, and details of the flexibility that enables apprentices to take end-point assessment ahead of receiving their calculated functional skills qualification results. [View the latest guidance.](#)

Advice for Tier 2, 4 and 5 sponsors

[Advice for Tier 2, 4 and 5 visa sponsors](#) in the UK who are sponsoring those affected by coronavirus has been updated to add information on scanned documents.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme



Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz pictured talking to the BBC on 18 June about the borough's furloughed employees

From 1 July businesses will be given the flexibility to bring furloughed employees back to work part time. This is a month earlier than previously announced. Individual firms will decide the hours and shift patterns their employees will work on their return, so that they can decide on the best approach for them and will be responsible for paying their wages while in work.

From August the level of government grant provided through the job retention scheme will be slowly tapered to reflect people returning to work. That means that for June and July the government will continue to pay 80% of people's salaries. In the following months, businesses will be asked to contribute a modest share but crucially, individuals will continue to receive that 80% of salary covering the time they are unable to work. [Find out more.](#)

The final date by which an employer could furlough an employee for the first time was 10 June, in order for the

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current three week furlough period to be completed by 30 June. Employers have until 31 July to make any claims in respect of the period to 30 June. [Read further information.](#)

▶ Late payment support

The Small Business Commissioner has helped small businesses recover over £7.2 million owed to them (Dec 2017 - May 2020) and £500,000 specifically during the coronavirus crisis. If you'd like more information or help:

- Email enquiries@smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk if you are looking for general advice
- If you have a complaint against a firm regarding non-payment email complaints@smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk
- For further information visit the [Small Business Commissioner website.](#)

▶ Chancellor extends Self-Employment Support Scheme

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 29 May that the Government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will be extended. [View a copy of the factsheet here.](#)

Those eligible will be able to claim a second and final grant in August. The grant will be worth 70% of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total. [Find out more about the scheme.](#)

▶ Plans announced for London's COVID-19 recovery

A new London Transition Board will co-ordinate London's response as it emerges from the lockdown and begins to reopen its economy while controlling the virus. [Find out more.](#)

▶ Sending your forms to Companies House during the coronavirus outbreak

As an emergency response to coronavirus, Companies House has developed a temporary online service to upload a number of completed forms and send them to Companies House digitally. [Find out which documents you can upload.](#)

▶ Suspension of evictions from social or private rented accommodation extended by two months

The government has extended the suspension of new evictions in England and Wales until 23 August. Where tenants do experience financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic, the government is clear that landlords and tenants should work together and exhaust all possible options such as flexible payment plans which take into account a tenant's individual circumstances, to ensure cases only end up in court as an absolute last resort. [More information is available here.](#)

▶ Introduction of the domestic reverse charge for construction services delayed until 1 March 2021

The introduction of the domestic reverse charge for construction services will be delayed for a period of five months from 1 October 2020 until 1 March 2021 due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the construction sector

Useful links

In England, [Growth Hubs](#) can advise on local and central government business support. You can also find helpful business case studies and other useful information on the [Coronavirus Business Support Blog.](#)

Business representative organisations and trade associations are providing coronavirus related support for specific sectors. The list of organisations you can speak with to get advice has been updated. [Find out more information here.](#)



Interior of Comfy Beds in East Ham