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Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
National  
Programme

# Supports for Businesses Impacted by **COVID-19**



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# Foreword

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The past few months have had a devastating impact. The personal and economic toll that COVID-19 has taken on every family, community and business is unprecedented.

We have seen businesses throughout the country respond with determination and an ability to adapt in what have been extremely difficult circumstances.

The government must do everything it can to help these businesses re-open and get people back to work. The July Stimulus will form a major part of our response. It is our plan to help our country recover, to repair the damage that has been done and to restore confidence and prosperity. Step by step, we will help businesses get back on their feet.

This document is intended to act as a practical guide to help businesses contend with the challenges posed by COVID-19, by setting out all the relevant information in one place. It includes information on grants, low cost loans, vouchers and training opportunities and I hope you find it useful.

My Department is also operating an Enterprise Information Centre call centre to advise businesses that are affected by COVID-19. The Call Centre can be contacted at 00 353 1 631 2002 / [infobusinesssupport@enterprise.gov.ie](mailto:infobusinesssupport@enterprise.gov.ie). Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Leo Varadkar T.D.

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment

# Introduction

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The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for businesses in Ireland and across the globe. These circumstances have presented great difficulties for employers and employees alike. The Government is continuing to address the changing situation and to assist companies and has introduced a range of measures and supports in this regard. This online, downloadable Guide was compiled to provide a comprehensive resource for businesses trying to manage their way through this current situation. This Guide contains detailed information on a huge range of supports from this Department and other Government Departments and Agencies.

To ensure ease of access to this information, the Guide is divided into 6 sections and also includes an Appendix which contains a COVID-19 Business Continuity Checklist which outlines some of the key risks to businesses as well as preparatory actions that can be taken to respond.

[Part 1](#) highlights the supports available from Revenue, such as Warehousing of COVID-19 debt, Reduction in VAT rates, the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) and the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS).

[Part 2](#) provides information on the supports available from the Department of Social Protection. The supports include the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, the Enterprise Support Grant and the Short-Time Work Support.

[Part 3](#) sets out in detail the business supports that are available, ranging from loans to grants to vouchers to mentoring. These include the €450m Strategic Banking Corporation Ireland (SBCI) COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme, Enterprise Ireland supports including the €2,500 Lean Business Continuity Voucher and the €5,000 Business Financial Planning Grant as well as supports from the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) like the Trading Online Voucher and the Mentor Programme.

[Part 4](#) of the Guide outlines other Government supports that are available to businesses. Details are provided on the Commercial Rates Waiver and the Annual Filing of Returns. In addition, links are provided to other important resources like the NSAI Workplace and Retail Protection and Improvement Guides.

[Part 4](#) this section highlights the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19, the Return to Work Safely Protocol and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) COVID-19 Templates, Guides and Checklists.

[Part 6](#) of the Guide highlights those websites where up-to-date official information is available. In addition, details of the DETE Enterprise Information Centre, the Occupational Health and Safety Helpline and the NSAI COVID-19 helpline are also provided.

**As the COVID-19 situation changes, Government supports also change to address new difficulties and provide solutions and guidance.**

# 1. Engage with Revenue

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## 1.1. Engage with Revenue

If you have concerns about your ability to pay your tax liabilities speak to the Revenue Commissioners, who have advised:

"On an on-going basis, Revenue engages with viable businesses experiencing temporary cashflow or trading difficulties that affect the timely payment of tax. Revenue works very successfully with businesses that engage early to resolve their tax payment difficulties. Revenue will engage with any viable business that experiences temporary cashflow difficulties, including difficulties arising from exceptional circumstances such as the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak." [Revenue](#).

It is vitally important that businesses affected by the pandemic and unable to pay tax liabilities as they fall due, **continue to file their tax returns on time** so that they may take advantage of these forbearance measures.

Revenue has also posted advice for businesses experiencing trading difficulties as a result of COVID-19. This includes information on tax returns, the application of late payment interest, debt enforcement, tax clearance and customs.

For more information, visit Revenue's [COVID-19 information and advice for taxpayers and agents](#) and [Revenue measures to assist SMEs experiencing cashflow difficulties as a result of COVID-19](#)

## 1.2. Supports from Revenue

### i. Employment Wage Support Scheme (EWSS)

The [Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme \(EWSS\)](#), provides a flat-rate subsidy to qualifying employers based on the numbers of eligible employees on the employer's payroll. The EWSS, operated by Revenue, has replaced the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme and is expected to run until 31 March 2021.

### ii. COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS)

The [COVID Restrictions Support Scheme \(CRSS\)](#), will offer a targeted, timely and temporary sector-specific support to businesses forced to close or trade at significantly reduced levels as a result of restrictions imposed on them in response to COVID-19. The relief will operate as a cash payment equal to 10% of the average weekly value of the 2019 business's turnover up to €20,000 and 5% thereafter, subject to a maximum weekly payment of €5,000, for the same number of weeks as the restricted period. Qualifying businesses can access the scheme through Revenue.

For more information, please visit [COVID Restrictions Support Scheme \(CRSS\)](#)

### 1.3. Revenue 'Warehousing' of COVID-19 related tax debt for businesses

Businesses that have had to close or have been significantly impacted by the restrictions will not be able to enter into arrangements to clear the COVID-related tax debt, pay their normal trade and other non-Revenue creditors, make any necessary restructuring to deal with the new trading arrangements in the context of social distancing, build up their stock, etc. In that context, Revenue will **Warehouse Deferred Tax Liabilities** associated with the COVID-19 crisis. This will represent a direct support for affected businesses where a commitment to a phased payment arrangement is not possible.

Arrangements will be put in place to allow debt that cannot be paid during the COVID-related period, to be warehoused interest-free for a year from recommencement of trading, during which time there will be no debt enforcement action taken by Revenue in respect of the debt. Prior to the expiry of the warehousing period, the business will be expected to engage with Revenue to reach an agreement on an exit strategy more suited to the specific business needs and the need for continued viability.

The scheme will apply to businesses in all sectors of the economy who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

For further details please visit [Revenue: Warehousing of COVID-19 related tax debt for businesses.](#)

### 1.4. Reduction of VAT Rates

#### Reduction in the standard rate of VAT from 23% to 21%

A six-month reduction in the standard rate of Value-Added Tax (VAT) from 23% to 21% will apply, effective from **1 September 2020**.

#### VAT rate reduction from 13.5% to 9%

A VAT rate reduction from 13.5% to 9% applies from **1 November 2020** in recognition of the unprecedented challenges facing the hospitality and tourism sector.

For more information, please visit [Revenue: Reduction in the standard rate of VAT](#)



## 2. Supports from the Department of Social Protection

### 2.1. COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment

The [Pandemic Unemployment Payment](#) is available to all employees and the self-employed who have lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2.2. Enterprise Support Grant

The [Enterprise Support Grant for businesses impacted by COVID-19](#) is available for eligible self-employed people who close their COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment on or 18 May 2020. This will provide business owners with a once-off grant of up to €1,000 to restart their business which was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2.3. Short-Time Work Support

Short-Time Work Support is a form of [Jobseeker's Benefit](#) and is a non-taxable income support payment for people who have been temporarily placed on a shorter working week by their employer.

Employees of businesses that need to reduce hours or days worked can avail of the Department Social Protection [Short-Time Work Support](#).

For more information, please visit the [Department of Social Protection](#)

## 3. Business Supports – Loans, Grants, Vouchers, Training & Mentoring

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### 3.1. €450m Strategic Banking Corporation Ireland (SBCI) COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme

Working capital is a measure of the short-term liquidity of a business and finances the day to day running of a business. This includes cashflow for operational purposes.

Eligibility applications for the COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme are accepted through the [SBCI website](#).

#### Who is it for?

Viable and eligible businesses (including sole traders) with up to 499 employees who are exposed to the impacts of COVID-19.

#### Qualify for the COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme

To qualify for eligibility to the scheme, businesses need to meet one criterion related to the impact of COVID-19 on their business and one criterion related to innovation. The details of the criteria can be found at [SBCI](#).

#### Key Features

- loans from €25,000 up to €1.5 million
- loan period of up to 3 years
- no security required for loans of up to €500,000
- competitively priced loans (maximum interest rate of 4%)
- you may be able to avail of a 3-month interest-only payment period

For more information, see [DETE Government Supports for COVID-19](#) and [SBCI](#)

## 3.2. Additional €500m COVID-19 Funding for Future Growth Loan Scheme for SME's, Farmers and Fishing

The Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) administers this Scheme. Eligibility applications for the Future Growth Loan Scheme are accepted through the [SBCI website](#). This Scheme provides longer-term loans to COVID-19 impacted businesses. Information on the release of lending under this Scheme can be monitored through the [SBCI website](#).

### Key Features

- loans from €25,000 to a maximum of €3,000,000
- loan terms ranging from 7 to 10 years
- no security required for loans of up to €500,000
- competitively priced loans (maximum interest rate of 4.5%)
- you may be able to avail of interest-only repayments at the start of the loan

For more information, see [DETE Government Supports for COVID-19](#) and [SBCI](#).

## 3.3. €2 billion COVID-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme

The COVID-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme is provided by the Government of Ireland to facilitate lending to Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, and Small Mid-Caps adversely impacted by COVID-19.

This includes Primary Producers – Agriculture/Fishing. The COVID-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme facilitates the provision of liquidity and working capital to businesses with an initial focus on term and working capital loans.

The Scheme enables a borrower impacted by COVID-19 to access credit. The borrower contributes to the cost of the Scheme by paying a guarantee premium on the credit advanced. This premium is separate from and is in addition to the cost of the credit advanced.

### Key Features

- loans from €10,000 up to €1 million are available for SMEs who would not otherwise be able to access bank loans
- loan period of between 3 months to 5.5 years
- interest rates will be below market rate
- up to 12 months interest / or capital moratoria are possible
- Loan Amounts ≤ €250,000 will be unsecured (unless it is a requirement of the product feature e.g. asset finance, invoice discount facilities).

**\*\*The COVID-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme is open for applications until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**

For more information, see [DETE Government Supports for COVID-19](#)

### 3.4. Microfinance Ireland: COVID-19 Business Loan

The [COVID-19 Business Loan](#) from Microfinance Ireland is a government initiative to support micro-enterprises, through the current period of uncertainty, who are or may be impacted by the coronavirus in Ireland.

#### Who is it for?

Micro-enterprises (including sole traders, partnerships or limited companies) employing less than 10 full time employees and with a turnover of less than €2 million per annum, who are finding it difficult to access finance through banks and other commercial lenders and experiencing a negative impact on their business from COVID-19 that equates to a minimum of 15% of actual or projected turnover or profit in the business.

#### Key Features

- business loans between €5,000 and €25,000 for eligible micro-enterprises
- loans may be used for working capital and required business changes as a result of COVID-19
- loan terms up to 3 years (shorter if appropriate)
- the terms include a 6 months interest free and repayment free moratorium, with the loan to then be repaid over the remaining 30 months of the 36-month loan period.
- interest rate of 4.5% if an application is submitted through a Local Enterprise Office. 5.5% if submitted directly to Microfinance Ireland
- no fees and/or hidden costs with fixed repayments and with no penalty for early repayment
- no security required

For more information, please visit [DETE Government Supports for COVID-19](#), and [Microfinance Ireland](#)

### 3.5. €2 billion Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund (PSRF)

[The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund](#) (ISIF) will make available a €2 billion fund to support medium and large enterprises in Ireland affected by COVID-19. This fund, to be known as the Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund (PSRF), will have €2 billion in total capital and will be made available through a sub-portfolio within ISIF.

#### Who is it for?

The PSRF will focus on investment in large and medium enterprises employing more than 250 employees or with annual turnover in excess of €50 million. ISIF may consider investing in enterprises below these levels if they are assessed to be of substantial scale and of significant importance at national or regional level.

#### Key Features

- the fund will act as an accelerator, investing on a commercial basis in businesses that can meet the investment requirements and can use ISIF investment to return to long-term viability.

- investments can be across the range of instruments from senior debt, hybrid instruments to equity, and can be tailored to take account of the particular circumstances of each investee. This will enable businesses to access the capital they need in the most appropriate form that best suits their individual circumstances.
- in making investments, ISIF will seek to maximise the quantum of additional capital that the investee business can access from its existing shareholders and banks, from potential new co-investors and from European sources (such as the European Investment Bank), thereby minimising the amount of ISIF capital that may be needed.

For more information, please visit [Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund](#)

### 3.6. Enterprise Ireland Supports

#### i. €180m Sustaining Enterprise Fund

An EU approved €180 million Sustaining Enterprise Fund in line with EU State Aid rules, has been established to provide financial support to Irish companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

The fund will be administered by Enterprise Ireland as part of a suite of emergency supports to help Irish companies that are seriously and adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This support is available to assist companies with 10 or more employees to access the necessary liquidity and funding to sustain their businesses in the short to medium term.

The Scheme operates as an additional support to the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) [COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme](#) and supports available from banks and other financial providers.

#### Who is it for?

The Sustaining Enterprise Fund of up to €180m is open to eligible companies that:

- employ 10 or more full-time employees
- are operating in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors
- for SMEs - have applied for funding from a financial institution, including, where appropriate, through the SBCI COVID-19 Working Capital Loan Scheme
- for large companies – have completed a formal application process for funding with an appropriate financial institution.

#### Key Features

- a non-repayable grant of up to 50% of a funding package (up to €200,000) is now available
- funding of between €100,000 and €800,000 available
- no repayments for the first 3 years
- businesses qualifying under this EU supported scheme will be offered a Repayable Advance of up to €800,000.

- The Sustaining Enterprise Fund will be used to support the implementation of a Business Sustainment Project Plan which must be provided by the company outlining the eventual stabilisation of the business and a return to viability.
- the funding is open to all Enterprise Ireland, IDA and Údarás na Gaeltachta clients and other companies employing 10 or more in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sector.
- the first port of call for liquidity support will continue to be the SBCI/banks. The Sustaining Enterprise Fund will be a distinct offer of funding support via a repayable advance which would only be provided where all SBCI/bank options have been fully exhausted.

For more information, please visit [Enterprise Ireland](#)

## ii. Sustaining Enterprise Fund for Small Enterprise

As part of the Sustaining Enterprise Fund, Enterprise Ireland will also administer a specific Sustaining Enterprise Fund for Small Enterprise. This fund will provide a €25,000 to €50,000 short term working capital injection to eligible smaller companies to support business continuity and strengthen their ability to return to growth in 3 years time.

### Who is it for?

The purpose of the fund is to sustain eligible manufacturing and internationally traded services companies who have been impacted by a 15% or more reduction in actual or projected turnover or profit; and require access to liquidity to sustain business continuity.

### Key Features

Under this fund, eligible companies can apply for up to a maximum of €50,000 per undertaking in the form of repayable advances. Funding available to companies is based on the following threshold:

- companies with an annual turnover in their most recent financial statements **not exceeding** €1.5 million can apply for **funding up to €25,000**
- companies with an annual turnover in their most recent financial statements **greater than** €1.5 million but less than €5 million can apply for **funding up to €50,000**

For more information, please visit [Sustaining Enterprise Fund for Small Enterprise](#)

## iii. Lean €2,500 Business Continuity Voucher

The Lean Business Continuity Voucher is available to eligible companies to access up to **€2,500 in training or advisory services support** related to the continued operation of their businesses during the current pandemic. The voucher may be used to obtain services from approved providers.

The services may be in the form of management advice OR training of management or staff within the company or a combination of both. It is expected that this support would be delivered online in most cases.

The service provided should focus on the Operations of the company in terms of;

- crisis response where appropriate,
- sustaining Operations including process re-engineering (Lean, etc),
- planning for resilience post crisis.

For more information, please visit [Enterprise Ireland COVID-19 Supports](#)

#### iv. COVID-19 Business Financial Planning Grant

The COVID-19 Business Financial Planning Grant, worth up to €5,000, is a support for all Enterprise Ireland clients. It is also targeted at those manufacturing or internationally traded services companies that employ 10 or more full-time employees.

The grant is designed to help companies to develop a Business Sustainment Project plan. This is a robust financial plan, including the preparation of documentation required to support applications for external finance from banks and/or other finance providers (including Enterprise Ireland).

This grant will enable companies to engage the services of an approved Financial Consultant to develop this plan for use when applying for bank or investor funding and when developing their own medium-term financial strategy.

Enterprise Ireland will work with these companies on a one-to-one basis to support the implementation of the plan.

##### Key Features

- 100% funding of up to €5,000 to access an approved financial consultant
- help the company to understand its immediate financial position, secure the finance it requires to survive and provide a framework to sustain the business
- open to all Enterprise Ireland clients and companies employing 10 or more in the manufacturing and internationally traded sector

For more information, see [COVID-19 Business Financial Planning Grant](#)

#### v. COVID Products Scheme

The scheme allows for up to €200m in targeted State support to facilitate the research and development of COVID products, to enable the construction or upgrading of testing and upscaling infrastructures that contribute to the development COVID-19 relevant products, as well as to support the production of products needed to respond to the outbreak.

The scheme will be delivered through [IDA Ireland](#) and [Enterprise Ireland](#) under the terms of the **Temporary Framework**, which is aimed at supporting the research, development, and production of COVID-19 related products in Ireland.

##### Key Features

- The COVID Products Scheme will accelerate the production of vital medicines, potential vaccines and essential medical equipment.

- The Scheme allows for grant aid of up to 50% of eligible capital investment.

The COVID Products Scheme press release can be found on [DETE: COVID Products Scheme](#)

## vi. eiLearn

Enterprise Ireland's [eiLearn](#) is an online learning resource where you can access over 400 pieces of customised content designed for Irish SMEs.

## 3.7. Local Enterprise Office Support

The Local Enterprise Office network stands ready to assist businesses to address the critical challenges presented by the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Businesses which are seeking support to assist with business continuity and preparedness connected to the COVID-19 outbreak, may apply for a **COVID-19 Business Loan** subject to certain conditions and criteria. This offer is in addition to the current range of business supports for microenterprises.

[Local Enterprise Offices](#) can offer supports that can help your business respond. These include:

### i. Micro-Enterprise Assistance Fund

The new Micro-Enterprise Assistance Fund will help businesses with fewer than 10 employees, which are ineligible for existing grants, with a grant of up to €1,000 to help them adapt and invest to rebuild their business.

For more information, please visit [Micro-Enterprise Assistance Fund](#)

### ii. Trading Online Voucher Scheme

An initiative under the Government's National Digital Strategy, the expanded Trading Online Voucher Scheme helps small businesses with up to 10 employees to trade more online, boost their sales and reach new markets.

There is up to **€2,500** available through the Local enterprise Offices, with co-funding of 10% from the business.

Funding can be used towards adding payment facilities or booking systems to your website or developing new apps for your customers. The voucher can also be used towards subscriptions to low-cost online retail platform solutions to help companies quickly establish a retailing presence online.

Flexibilities to the Trading Online Voucher scheme are now in place allowing businesses apply for a second voucher where they have successfully utilised their first one.

To qualify for the scheme, businesses must have:

- limited or no e-commerce presence
- no more than 10 employees;
- less than €2m in turnover;
- be trading for at least 6 months and



- be located in the region of the local enterprise office to whom they are applying
- (additional T&Cs apply)

For more information, visit your Local Enterprise Office online at [LEO](#)

### iii. **COVID-19 Business Loan**

The COVID-19 Business Loan from Microfinance Ireland (MFI), in partnership with Local Enterprise Offices, is a Government-funded initiative to support small businesses through the current period of uncertainty.

It is designed for micro-enterprises that are:

- having difficulty accessing bank finance and
- impacted, or may be impacted negatively, by COVID-19 resulting in a reduction of 15% or more in turnover or profit

For more information, see [section 3.4. Microfinance Ireland on page 12](#) of this booklet.

### iv. **Local Enterprise Office Financial Supports**

For existing companies and potential start-ups that meet eligibility criteria (such as employing 10 or fewer people with the potential for growth and job creation), Local Enterprise Offices can also offer financial supports to help manage current market challenges:

- Priming Grants
- Business Expansion Grants
- Feasibility Study Grants
- Technical Assistance for Micro-Exporters Grant

For more information, visit your Local Enterprise Office online at [LEO](#)

### v. **LEAN for Micro**

LEAN for Micro is available to LEO clients to help build resilience within small companies.

Under this programme, clients can avail of consultancy support with a LEAN Expert (a qualified practitioner), who will work with the company to introduce lean principles, undertake a specific cost savings project and assist the company in benchmarking its performance.

LEAN for Micro can also be used to help implement new remote working and physical distancing guidelines.

For more information, visit your Local Enterprise Office online at [LEO](#)

### vi. **Mentoring**

**A free of charge service under the Local Enterprise Office Mentor Programme**, clients work with an experienced mentor to identify solutions to areas of exposure within their business. With advice and

guidance from their mentor, clients develop strategies that are more robust, which address issues and maximise potential opportunities around COVID-19 challenges.

For more information, visit your Local Enterprise Office online at [LEO](#)

### **vii. Training and Webinars**

Local Enterprise Offices have moved training programmes, workshops and networking meet-ups online, covering areas such as

- cash management in a crisis
- leading your business through COVID-19
- advice for employers impacted by the crisis

Most training programmes are free of charge or a nominal fee may apply in some cases. Places can be booked online through your Local Enterprise Office.

For more information, visit your Local Enterprise Office online at [LEO](#)

## 4. Other Government Supports in Place

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### Government – Brexit Information Hub

The Government has launched a Brexit Information Hub, which is a one-stop-shop for businesses to obtain practical information and training on how to prepare for Brexit. The new hub provides resources, practical information and webinars for businesses to prepare under the broad headings of Customs, Controls, Compliance, Supply Chain, Financial Management and more.

Visit: [Brexit Information Hub](#)

### Bord Bia:

#### COVID-19 Hub

[Bord Bia's 'Navigating Change' COVID-19 Response programme](#) offers a suite of supports for food, drink and horticulture businesses affected by COVID-19.

### Bord Iascaigh Mhara:

[Bord Iascaigh Mhara](#) is providing COVID-19 business support to the seafood sector.

### Code of Conduct for commercial rents:

A voluntary [Code of Conduct between landlords and tenants for commercial rents](#) has been developed based on examples from other jurisdictions and with input from other Departments, State agencies and key stakeholders. The aim of the Code is to facilitate discussions between landlords and tenants impacted by COVID-19.

### Commercial Rates:

#### Commercial Rates Waiver

With limited exceptions, all businesses will be granted a waiver of commercial rates to 31 December 2020. Updates will be available on [housing.gov.ie](https://housing.gov.ie) and from Local Authorities.

### CRO:

#### Filing of annual returns

The Companies Registration Office (CRO) has [extended current Annual Returns Arrangement](#) for companies.

### Cross-border companies:

InterTradelreland's [Emergency Business Solutions](#) offers professional advice, to the value of €2,250, to address key business challenges related to COVID-19.

The [E-Merge programme](#) provides €2,800 consultancy support to help cross-border businesses develop online sales and eCommerce solutions.

## Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

### €75 million funding for reopening Early Learning and Childcare Services

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth has announced a [funding package of €75 million for reopening early learning and childcare services](#). The grants will help with additional costs associated with reopening after COVID-19.

### Design Sector:

The [Design & Craft Council Ireland](#) delivers a range of support and development programmes, including webinars and FAQs in response to COVID-19.

### Employment Permits:

#### Employment Permits System Contingency Arrangements

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) has implemented a contingency plan to ensure that the Employment Permits system will continue to operate in all scenarios, see [COVID-19 Employment Permits System Contingency Arrangements](#).

### Fáilte Ireland:

#### COVID-19 Business Supports Hub

In response to the COVID-19 crisis and the impact on the tourism sector, the [Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Business Support Hub](#) is targeting its supports to respond to the most urgent challenges and threats tourism businesses are now facing.

#### Guidelines for re-opening

Fáilte Ireland has published [sector specific re-opening guidelines to support the re-opening and recovery of the tourism and hospitality sector](#).

#### €26m COVID-19 Adaptation Fund

A €26m [COVID-19 Adaptation Fund](#) to support tourism and hospitality businesses who have incurred related adaptation costs.

### Grants:

#### Grant Supports

The full range of [Enterprise Ireland](#), [IDA Ireland](#), [Local Enterprise Office](#) and [Údarás na Gaeltachta](#) grant supports will be available to firms to help with strategies to innovate, diversify markets and supply chains and to improve competitiveness.

### NSAI:

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) has compiled a number of resources in response to COVID-19. To access any or all of the resources below, please visit [NSAI updates and resources in response to COVID-19](#).

## **COVID-19 Guide for the Retail Sector**

The NSAI has published a COVID-19 Retail Protection and Improvement Guide to help retailers manage business continuity during the COVID-19 emergency. It addresses risks to both workers and the public.

## **Shopping Centre Recovery and Protection Guide**

The NSAI has published guidelines for shopping centres restoring business operations following a disruption or closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Standards for medical supplies made freely available**

The NSAI and SAI Global have developed the COVID-19 Response Package which will provide free access to Standards for medical devices and personal protective equipment.

## **Workplace Protection and Improvement**

The NSAI has published a Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide outlining preventative measures businesses can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## **Barrier masks for consumers**

NSAI has developed a Specification Written in Fast Track (SWiFT) to address an urgent need for a consensus-based specification for non-medical and non-PPE masks (barrier masks) for the general public.

## **Manufacturing and Importing**

The NSAI has produced a Quick Guide to manufacturing and importing PPE and Medical Devices to ensure compliance.

## **Online Collaboration:**

### **Online COVID-19 platform to help firms collaborate**

Companies aiming to help healthcare responses to the COVID-19 crisis can now [collaborate via a new online COVID-19 platform](#). Spearheaded by [InterTradelreland](#) and [TechIreland](#), the cross-border platform allows businesses to see quickly, in and beyond their region, who they can work with to combat the many supply chain and manufacturing challenges generated by the pandemic and meet pressing public need.

## **Posters & Signs:**

### **Posters and signs for your premises**

The Department of Health has issued a range of [COVID-19 posters and graphics](#) including new [stay safe guidelines](#) for work, home, public transport, outdoors and shopping.

Posters, leaflets and other resources for use in workplaces and communities are also available on the HSE website at [COVID-19 posters and resources](#) and the HSA website at [hsa.ie/covid19](https://hsa.ie/covid19).

## Restaurants:

### Restaurants to operate as takeaways

[Amendments to Planning and Development Regulations](#) temporarily allow restaurants to operate as takeaways - whereby members of the public can order food for collection for consumption off-premises or have food delivered for consumption off-premises - without being required to obtain change of use planning permission to operate as takeaways.

## Skillnet Ireland:

### The ReBounce Initiative

The [Skillnet Ireland ReBounce initiative](#) offers guidance to SME owners and managers on implementing the Return to Work Safely Protocol.

## Supply Chain:

### Supply Chain Workers

The Department of Transport has prepared COVID-19 guidance for supply chain workers. The guidance document is part of the cross-government response to COVID-19 and is available to download on gov.ie: [COVID-19 guidance for supply chain workers](#).

## Supply or Donate:

### How business can help with supplies and services to respond to COVID-19

From the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) webpage for information on how to supply or donate the goods or services of your business please go to [how business can help](#).

## Support for Artists:

### COVID-19 Support for Artists and those working in the Arts Sector

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media recognises that COVID-19, and the public health measures necessary to slow the spread of the virus, have had an unprecedented effect on the cultural sector.

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media has provided details of the [COVID-19 supports for artists and those working in the arts sector](#).

## Supports for the Sports Sector:

### €70 million support for the sports sector

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media has announced a funding package of up to [€70 million has been approved](#) to support the sport sector.

## Teagasc:

[Teagasc](#) is available to provide support on issues facing farm businesses in light of COVID-19.

## 5. Reopening Society and Business

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This section highlights the 5 Level Framework for Restrictive Measures, the Return to Work Safely Protocol and the Health and Safety Authority COVID-19 Template and Checklists.

### 5.1. Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19

On September 15 2020 the Government published the [Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19](#).

Ireland is moving from a short-term emergency response approach to a medium-term approach to managing risk and repairing the damage that COVID-19 has inflicted on society.

The Framework for Restrictive Measures will help us to go about our daily lives as much as possible, while managing the behaviour of the virus. The Framework consists of 5 Levels.

The lower Levels will be activated when there is low incidence of the disease, with isolated outbreaks, low community transmission. The higher Levels will be used to deal with higher incidences of the disease.

It will be possible for different regions and counties to be at a different Level to the National Level, depending on the incidence of the virus in that particular region or county.

At all times the priority guiding the plan will be to keep our schools open, while keeping people safe and protecting the resilience of our economy and communities.

The 5 Level Framework can be viewed online: [Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19](#).

### 5.2. The Work Safely Protocol

The Work Safely Protocol is a revision of the Return to Work Safely Protocol published in May 2020. The revised Protocol incorporates the current advice on the Public Health measures needed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community and workplaces as issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), the Department of Health and Government.

The Protocol is a general document applicable to all sectors. It sets out the minimum measures required in every place of work to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to facilitate the re-opening of workplaces following temporary closures and the ongoing safe operation of those workplace.

The HSA (Health and Safety Authority) will be the lead agency in terms of overseeing compliance with the Protocol in the workplace. If employers or employees need further guidance on the Protocol, the HSA Helpline can be contacted at **1890 289 389** or [wcu@hsa.ie](mailto:wcu@hsa.ie).

The Protocol is available online at [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)

### **i. Data Protection: Return to Work Safely Protocol**

The Data Protection guidance document has been prepared to assist in providing the necessary clarification to employers (and their representatives) where the measures set out in the Return to Work Safely Protocol may result in the processing of personal data.

The Data Protection protocol is available online at [Data Protection Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)

## **5.3. Health and Safety Authority (HSA): COVID-19 Templates and Checklists**

The HSA checklists and templates have been prepared to help employers, business owners and managers to get their business up and running again and to inform workers about what they need to do to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace.

They have been drafted based on the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) and should be read in conjunction with the Return to Work Safety Protocol. Employers and workers must work together to keep workplaces safe. These checklists will help you to do that.

To view or download the templates and checklists, please see [HSA: COVID-19 Templates and Checklists](#)

### **i. HSA Return to Work Safely Online Course**

The course has been developed by the HSA to help you to understand the Return to Work Safely (RTWS) Protocol requirements for returning to work.

The Return to Work Safely Induction course will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and a certificate is available on completion.

The course is available at [Return to Work Safely Online Course](#)

### **ii. Guidance on Working from Home**

The Guidance on Working from Home Guide will enable employers and employees to understand the requirements when working from home. The guide is broken into 12 sections.

To view or download the guide, please visit [HSA: Guidance on Working from Home](#)



## 6. Stay up to Date

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As the situation around COVID-19 continues to develop, so too do the Government supports available. For up-to-date information on the range of Government supports available to address COVID-19-related challenges, please visit:

[Government of Ireland – COVID-19](#)

[Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment – COVID-19](#)

### 6.1. Call Centre & Helplines

#### i. DETE Enterprise Information Centre

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) has established an Enterprise Information Centre for information on the government supports available to businesses and enterprises affected by COVID-19.

**Tel:** +353 1 631 2002 (Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm)

**Email:** [infobusinesssupport@enterprise.gov.ie](mailto:infobusinesssupport@enterprise.gov.ie)

#### ii. Occupational Health and Safety Helpline

For information on workplace health and safety please contact the Occupational Health and Safety Helpline.

**Tel:** 1890 289 389 or +353 1 614 7000

**Email:** [wcu@hsa.ie](mailto:wcu@hsa.ie)

#### iii. COVID-19 related prevention and recovery measures in the workplace

For support in relation to improving your COVID-19 related prevention and recovery measures in the workplace, contact the NSAI COVID-19 helpline.

**Tel:** +353 1 807 3800

**Email:** [covid-19-support@nsai.ie](mailto:covid-19-support@nsai.ie)

For more information, advice and guidelines from across government visit [gov.ie/covid19](https://gov.ie/covid19)

## 6.2. Other helpful links

[Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19](#)

[Central Bank COVID-19 information hub for consumers and businesses](#)

[Competition and Consumer Protection Commission \(CCPC\) – COVID-19 Information Hub](#)

[CCPC – Guidance for Business: COVID-19 Face Masks](#)

[Department of Social Protection – Information for employers and employees](#)

[Department of Social Protection – Short-Time Work Supports](#)

[Department of Social Protection – Pandemic Unemployment Payment](#)

[Department of Foreign Affairs \(DFA\) - Travel Advice](#)

[Department of Health – Updates](#)

[EU Export Controls for Personal Protection Equipment](#)

[Food Safety Authority of Ireland \(FSAI\)– COVID-19](#)

[Government of Ireland – July Jobs Stimulus Package](#)

[Government of Ireland – Travelling outside or to Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Health and Safety Authority \(HSA\) – COVID-19 Advice for Employers and Employees](#)

[Health and Safety Authority \(HSA\) – Placing PPE on the EU market: New conformity procedures](#)

[Health Services Executive – Information on COVID-19](#)

[Health Protection Surveillance Centre \(HSPC\) – Advice and Guidance](#)

[Local Enterprise Office – COVID-19 Pandemic: Business Response](#)

[National Standards Authority of Ireland \(NSAI\) – Barrier Masks for Consumers: Requirements](#)



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
National  
Programme

## Appendix 1 – COVID-19 Business Continuity Checklist

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An Roinn Gnó,  
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta  
Department of Business,  
Enterprise and Innovation

## Business Continuity Checklist

The following is a checklist of some of the key risks to the continuity of your business activities during the outbreak of COVID-19 and of preparatory actions that can be taken to respond.

Many of the actions are the same as you would have prepared during any type of similar threat such as preparations for influenza pandemics. Your organisation should consider appointing a planning coordinator and/or team with defined responsibilities and budget for planning and for preparedness. A deputy should also be appointed.

If your organisation already has a business continuity planning process, you should consider addressing COVID-19 within that process. In relation to COVID-19, it is particularly important that your organisation uses the national resources, posters and guidance that are available and updated on a regular basis to reflect the rapidly emerging situation.

The links to COVID-19 resources are available here:

Information	Link
For Employers and Employees	<a href="http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/employersemployeesguidance/">www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/employersemployeesguidance/</a>
FAQs	<a href="http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/">www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/</a>
Posters	<a href="http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/">www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/</a>
Guidance	<a href="http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/">www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/</a>

## Planning Activities

Not Started	Underway	Complete	
			1.1 Assign responsibility for planning and preparedness to a senior executive and a deputy
			1.2 Obtain information on COVID-19
			1.3 Consult within the company, with workers and worker representatives
			1.4 Consult with suppliers on measures they are taking and on potential disruptions to supply chains
			1.5 Assess 'high level' impact on your business and attach appropriate priority to the planning process
			1.6 Develop a business continuity plan
			1.7 Establish authorities, triggers and procedures for implementing plan
			1.8 Test the plan in exercises
			1.9 Share best practice with other businesses
			1.10 Revisit plan periodically

## Business Issues to Address

Not Started	Underway	Complete	
			2.1 Identify critical activities and the employees and inputs required to maintain them
			2.2 Consider the possible impact of employee absences
			2.3 Consider the possible impact of disruption to the supply of inputs from suppliers in Ireland and overseas suppliers
			2.4 Examine the likely impact of COVID-19 on your market and on your customers' requirements
			2.5 Identify and agree strategic imperatives
			2.6 Understand the business need for face-to-face meetings should there be community transmission of COVID-19 with a risk of person to person spread. Consider the potential for remote working.
			2.7 Establish authorities, triggers and procedures for implementing plan.
			2.8 Consider the issues for business related travel due to COVID-19
			2.9 Consider the financial management implications due to COVID-19
			2.10 Examine the extent to which others will be dependent on your business due to COVID-19
			2.11 Consider the circumstances under which you might decide to scale back or suspend operations due to COVID-19

## Measures to Underpin Continuity

Not Started	Underway	Complete	
			3.1 Nominate deputies
			3.2 Cross-train, and identify alternative sources of labour
			3.3 Communicate with staff in a manner appropriate to the current state of COVID-19 phase as guided by national recommendations
			3.4 Prepare emergency communications plan
			3.5 Plan for increased take-up of employee welfare services
			3.6 Prepare policies on sick leave and compassionate leave due to COVID-19
			3.7 Prepare policies on foreign travel during COVID-19 event
			3.8 Plan for the needs of staff overseas
			3.9 Make arrangements to assure supplies during the COVID-19 event
			3.10 Consider the possibility of changes to your product, your service, or your interaction with customers, due to COVID-19, and plan for any changes you consider appropriate
			3.11 Review insurance coverage

## Responding to Workplace Risks due to COVID-19

Not Started	Underway	Complete	
			4.1 Prepare policies on hygienic behaviour for employees and visitors to premises as guided by national recommendations. Adhere to respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene policies.
			4.2 Plan to provide for hand washing, hand hygiene, tissue disposal and other facilities as per national recommendations
			4.3 Plan for frequent and effective cleaning of the workplace as per national recommendations
			4.4 Prepare policies as per national recommendations to advise those who are infected, or are suspected to be infected with COVID-19
			4.5 Plan measures to reduce face-to-face contact with customers / suppliers and between employees from different sites
			4.6 Identify work organisation measures that can be taken to reduce potential for employees who are in the workplace to infect each other
			4.7 Prepare policies on flexible work locations (e.g. teleworking) and flexible working times (e.g. shiftworking)
			4.8 Provide ICT infrastructure to support teleworking and remote customer interaction

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Signed

(Executive Responsible)



Prepared by the Department of  
Enterprise, Trade and Employment



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland