



Office for Life Sciences

Office for Life Sciences Bulletin – 15 May 2020



OLS Introduction

The Office for Life Sciences (OLS) is a joint unit between the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

This bulletin aims to keep the life sciences sector up to date on the latest guidance whilst the UK is in the transition period and during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, providing you with information from Government to help your members and networks prepare.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please email Anisha.Visram@beis.gov.uk

Supporting your staff during Coronavirus: domestic abuse

The order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. As an employer, you can play an important role in reassuring staff that they can still leave their home if they are experiencing domestic abuse and that there is still support available, including online support, helplines, refuges and the police. We encourage you to share this important message with staff using the information provided in the [Home Office's employer pack](#).



Events

Government departments are hosting a series of free webinars to help businesses understand the support available. Keep up to date with all the latest available webinars [here](#).

Various dates – [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – How to make a claim](#)

Various dates – [Coronavirus COVID-19 Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme](#)

Various dates - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Self-Employment Income Support Scheme \(SEISS\)](#)

27 May - ABHI Webinar: Regulation in far from Regular Times, register [here](#)

You can now review recorded webinars:

- for topics that cover support from HMRC, [watch recorded sessions](#)

- for international trade, [watch recorded sessions](#)
- for small businesses and changes to reporting, regulation and tax, [watch recorded webinars](#)



Workforce

NEW – Guidance on social distancing, including information on [businesses and venues](#) and [going to work](#) which may be useful for businesses to share with employees

NEW – Guidance on the principles that should be followed to ensure that time spent outside the home is as safe as possible can be found [here](#), and may be useful for businesses to share with employees. New details on a range of outdoor activities which will be allowed in England from 13 May 2020, subject to social distancing rules, can be found [here](#).

NEW – The government has announced a £250 million emergency active travel fund to relieve pressure on public transport and launched a campaign to encourage more people to look at alternative ways to travel. Please find more information [here](#).

NEW - The public is advised to consider wearing face coverings in enclosed public spaces to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please find more information [here](#).

UPDATED – FAQs on what you can and can't do during the COVID-19 outbreak, please find them [here](#).

NEW – Guidance for passengers on how to travel safely can be found [here](#) for those who cannot work from home and must travel for work.

NEW - What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak. Updated information for parents and carers about the wider opening to nurseries, schools and colleges from 1 June is [now available](#).

UPDATED – The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) opened on Wednesday 13 May, allowing self-employed individuals or members of partnerships whose business has been adversely affected by coronavirus to apply for a SEISS grant. Check if you are eligible for the scheme [here](#).

NEW – Guidance outlines how holiday entitlement and pay operate during the coronavirus pandemic, please find it [here](#).



Support to business

NEW – The UK government, in consultation with industry, has produced ‘COVID-19 secure’ [guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible](#). The new guidance covers 8 workplace settings which are allowed to be open, from outdoor environments and construction sites to factories and takeaways. This sets out practical steps for businesses which should be implemented as soon as it is practical.

NEW – This week Prime Minister Boris Johnson [addressed the nation](#) on coronavirus. [Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#) has been published, outlining the UK Government's plan for rebuilding and recovering from the coronavirus pandemic.

UPDATED – The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will remain open until the end of October. The scheme will continue in its current form until the end of July. Changes to allow more flexibility will come in from the start of August. More specific details and information around implementation will be made available by the end of this month. Please find further [information](#) here.

UPDATED – Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme step by step guide for employers can be found [here](#).

NEW – [Five new ministerial-led taskforces](#) have been set up to develop plans for how and when closed sectors can reopen safely, following publication of the UK's [roadmap to rebuild Britain](#). Each taskforce will lead on developing new COVID-19 secure guidelines for the reopening of public places and businesses, where and when it is safe to do so.

NEW – Businesses with supply chains which rely on Trade Credit Insurance and who are experiencing difficulties maintaining cover due to Coronavirus will get support from the government. Please find further information [here](#).

NEW – Business Secretary's [statement](#) and [slides](#) from 12 May 2020.

NEW – The Government has announced the expansion of the expert team leading on the rapid nationwide roll-out of the coronavirus (COVID-19) test and trace programme. Find out more [here](#).

UPDATED – Guidance on the new Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme can be found [here](#).

UPDATED – Guidance from the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) for businesses on hand sanitisers and technical specifications for hand wash, please find more information [here](#).

UPDATED – Guidance on critical workers who can access schools or educational settings has been updated to reflect plans for wider opening of schools from 1 June 2020, at the earliest. Please find more information [here](#).

Guidance from MHRA

UPDATED – Guidance for industry healthcare professionals and patients covering the coronavirus outbreak has been updated to include warnings against purchasing fake or unlicensed coronavirus medicines. Please find more information [here](#).

NEW – Antibody research reagent now available for COVID-19. In support of the World Health Organization's response to COVID-19, the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) has fast-tracked the development and production of an [anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody research reagent](#). This reagent is plasma that has been treated to inactivate enveloped viruses and is derived from a donor that has recovered from COVID-19. Please see [the NIBSC website](#) for more information.

NEW – Guidance on [How tests and testing kits for COVID-19 work](#). The different types of tests and testing kits for COVID-19, and the specifications for manufacturers. The guidance provides Information for members of the public, patients, professionals and industry about COVID-19 tests and testing kits, including how they work, the different types of tests and the specifications manufacturers need to follow.

REMINDER – Please check the MHRA regulatory flexibility guidance page. The [regulatory flexibilities page](#) is regularly updated.



Useful Links

- [Gov.uk/transition](#) provides a central hub of resources for the transition period
- You can sign up to email alerts about the transition period on GOV.UK at this [link](#).
- EU citizens and other interested stakeholders can sign up for Home Office email updates about developments on the status of EU citizens in the UK after we leave the EU and the next steps for EU citizens in the UK at this [link](#).
- Access the 'Check How to Export Goods' tool [here](#) for the information you need to export goods out of the UK market.
- Click [here](#) for more information and advice on exporting.
- Click [here](#) for updated information on the Covid-19 response from the Department for Health and Social Care and Public Health England.
- Click [here](#) for a list of Business Representative Organisations and Trade Associations you can speak with to get advice.
- Specific information for businesses and employers in [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#), and [Wales](#) is available. In England, [Growth Hubs](#) can advise on local and UK Government business support.
- COVID 19 key contact details:
 - General offers of help from industry: gcfccovid19enquiries@cabinetoffice.gov.uk, or visit [this](#) webpage.
 - To offer your support producing ventilators please contact the Business Support Helpline for England on 0300 456 3565 or ventilator.support@beis.gov.uk.
 - If you have already offered to assist on the ventilators project but not received a reply, please contact existing.ventilators@dhsc.gov.uk.
 - Share the impact COVID-19 is having on your organisation with intel@beis.gov.uk
 - To provide feedback on MHRA engagement please contact engagement@mhra.gov.uk