



# Office for Life Sciences

## Office for Life Sciences Bulletin – 12 June 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](mailto:Anisha.Visram@beis.gov.uk)

### **Border planning for the end of the Transition Period**

Government announced today that border controls for EU goods imported into Great Britain will be introduced at the end of Transition Period in stages to give businesses affected by coronavirus more time to prepare.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, has also formally notified the EU that the UK will neither accept nor seek any extension to the Transition Period.

Please find more information [here](#).

### **Business focussed working groups**

Business Secretary Alok Sharma is creating five [new business-focused groups](#) to unleash Britain's growth potential and create jobs, as part of the government's plans to help the economy bounce back from the coronavirus pandemic. Focused on 5 key themes, each group will explore how business can work with government to deliver economic growth and jobs:

- 1. The future of industry:** How to accelerate business innovation and leverage private sector investment in research and development
- 2. Green recovery:** How to capture economic growth opportunities from the shift to net zero carbon emissions
- 3. Backing new businesses:** How to make the UK the best place in the world to start and scale a business
- 4. Increasing opportunity:** How to level up economic performance across the UK, including through skills and apprenticeships
- 5. The UK open for business:** How to win and retain more high value investment for the UK

The membership of the five working groups will be published in due course. If you, your business or organisation would like to provide relevant insight or analysis on any of areas outlined above, a list of questions is available. Please email [Economic.Recovery@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Economic.Recovery@beis.gov.uk) by Wednesday 17 June.

### **Face coverings**

From 15 June, face coverings will be required when using public transport in England. Bus, coach, train, tram, ferry and aircraft passengers must wear a face covering on their journey to help reduce the risk of transmission when social distancing is not always possible. More information is available [here](#). The safer travel guidance for passengers is available [here](#).

From the 15 June all NHS hospital staff and visitors will also be expected to wear face masks and coverings. Find out more [here](#).

### **Help the government increase coronavirus (COVID-19) testing capacity**

The government wants help from businesses to increase testing capacity in the UK as part of its strategy to protect the NHS and save lives. We want to hear specifically from companies who can manufacture and supply:

- consumables and equipment for coronavirus testing, in particular test kits (such as nose and throat swabs, transport media and vials) and RNA extraction lab consumables (such as reagents, plates and pipette tips);
- new or existing types of coronavirus tests for antigens or antibodies; or
- public or private sector organisations that can offer laboratory capacity.

Find out more [here](#).



### **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 \(SEISS\)](#)



### **Workforce**

**NEW** – The Government has extended the suspension of new evictions in England and Wales until 23 August. More information is available [here](#).

**UPDATED** – The furlough scheme will close to new entrants from 30 June. From this point onwards, employers will only be able to furlough employees they have furloughed for a 3-week period prior to 30 June. Employers will have until 31 July to make any claims in respect of the period to 30 June. Find out more [here](#).

**NEW** – People on paternity and maternity leave who return to work in the coming months will be eligible for the government’s furlough scheme even after 10 June cut-off date. This will only apply where they work for an employer who has previously furloughed employees. This applies to people on adoption leave, shared parental leave, and parental bereavement leave. Find out more [here](#).

**NEW** – The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) is currently seeking evidence from business organisations and employers on what skills are currently in short supply across the UK labour market as part of a review of the shortage occupation lists. As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, alongside the main call for evidence, the MAC have created options for businesses to provide more limited evidence or to register that they would have responded in different circumstances. Find out more [here](#).

**UPDATED** – Advice for people who buy care and support through a direct payment, as well as local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and those who provide care and support. Find out more [here](#).



### **Support to business**

**NEW** – Guidance has been published to help providers of higher education in England to understand how to minimise risk during the coronavirus outbreak and provide services to students. You can find the guidance [here](#).

**NEW** – Guidance for research organisations on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been published. It applies to those involved in research, including research organisations in receipt of public funding. Please find more information [here](#).

**NEW** – PPE portal for healthcare providers to order additional personal protective equipment to top up their existing supplies for COVID-19 in an emergency. The PPE portal can be used by small social care and primary care providers. Providers who can use the service will receive an email invitation to register. Find out more [here](#).

**UPDATED** – Guidance on money laundering supervision has been updated to explain that you do not need to contact HMRC if you choose to defer payment. Find out more [here](#).

**UPDATED** – Companies House have updated information on strike-off policy. From 1 June 2020, there will be an exception to the suspension of strike off activity. In cases where our law enforcement partners have concluded that companies are no longer in operation following an investigation, the registrar will continue with strike off action for those companies. Find out more [here](#).

**NEW** – 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 [here](#).

**NEW** – Shops in England selling non-essential goods will be able to reopen from Monday 15 June. Non-essential retail will need to continue following UK [government guidelines](#) to keep staff and customers safe. Businesses should display a downloadable [notice](#) to inform customers and staff they have followed COVID secure guidance. Find out more [here](#).

**UPDATED** – The coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund supports small and micro businesses in England that are not eligible for other grant schemes. Guidance has been updated to include details on eligibility. Find out more [here](#).

**NEW** – Guidance from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure for businesses and insolvency office holders on managing security risks during the pandemic. The CPNI has drawn together [important security considerations for businesses in financial distress](#), including those in insolvency or administration, either directly or as a third party.

**UPDATED** – COVID-19 guidance for businesses and employers in [Northern Ireland](#) and [Wales](#) has been updated.

### **MHRA updates**

**UPDATED** – Guidance on regulatory flexibilities to include information on audits of Notified Bodies and manufacturers in the [medical devices](#) section.

**UPDATED** – Advice for manufacturers, members of the public and professional users of software or apps being used during the COVID-19 pandemic, please find more information [here](#). Please find more information on how to use current regulatory flexibilities or how to get an exceptional use authorisation [here](#).

**UPDATED** – Guidance on how tests and testing kits for COVID-19 work has been updated to include Target Product Profiles (TPP) for Enzyme Immunoassay (EIA) antibody tests to help determine if people have antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. Please find more information [here](#).



### **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](#).
- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:existing.ventilators@dhsc.gov.uk).
  - Share the impact COVID-19 is having on your organisation with [intel@beis.gov.uk](mailto:intel@beis.gov.uk)
  - To provide feedback on MHRA engagement please contact [engagement@mhra.gov.uk](mailto:engagement@mhra.gov.uk)

- To call the Business Support Helpline in England please dial **FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098**, Scotland 0300 303 0660, Business Wales 0330 060 300 and Invest Northern Ireland 0800 181 4422