



Office for Life Sciences

Office for Life Sciences Bulletin – 31 July 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

Face coverings

Face coverings must be worn in additional enclosed public spaces in England, please find more information [here](#).

From 8 August the requirement to wear a face covering will be extended to other indoor settings where people are likely to come into contact with others they do not normally meet, such as museums, galleries, cinemas and places of worship. Please find Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19) of 31 July 2020 [here](#).

Reopening of further businesses and venues in England postponed

The Prime Minister has [announced](#) that until 15 August at the earliest, casinos, bowling alleys, skating rinks and remaining close contact services must remain closed, and that indoor performances will not resume. Pilots of larger crowds in sports venues and conference centres will not take place and wedding receptions of up to 30 people will also not be permitted. Data on the prevalence of the virus in the community in England will continue to be carefully reviewed in order to move forward with the intention to open up these higher risk settings as soon as possible.

Local restrictions

An outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) has been identified in parts of Greater Manchester, East Lancashire, and West Yorkshire. The government and relevant local authorities are acting together to control the spread of the virus. Please find more information [here](#).

Self-Isolation

The UK's Chief Medical Officers have extended the self-isolation period to 10 days for those in the community who have coronavirus symptoms or a positive test result. More information is available [here](#).

Flu programme

The most comprehensive flu programme in UK history will be rolled out this winter, find out more [here](#).

Travel corridors

'Travel corridor' countries continue to be reviewed to monitor the situation there and justify their exemption; and will be removed immediately should the public health situation change for the worse. Find out more [here](#).

REMINDER – UK Internal Market Consultation

The UK government are consulting on new measures to protect internal trade within the UK when powers return from the EU in January 2021. Measures will protect the UK's economy by preventing new burdens on cross-UK business and provide certainty to support coronavirus recovery. A consultation is open until **13 August**, sourcing views from businesses across all 4 nations of the UK. You can respond to the consultation [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](#), and watch past HMRC videos [here](#).

Wednesday 5 August – [Coronavirus COVID-19 Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme](#)

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

Various dates – HMRC webinar on changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, sets out how employers will be affected, flexible furloughing, key dates and support available. Sign up [here](#).



Workforce

NEW – Cogent Skills, on behalf of The Science Industry Partnership (SIP), is conducting a [survey](#) of apprenticeships across the science industries. This is the follow on to their [2018 Apprenticeship Survey](#), which provided a deeper understanding of the uptake of apprenticeships and use of the Apprenticeship Levy.

They are currently looking to collect as many responses as possible from organisations to get an accurate overview across the industry. Please fill this in if this is of interest.

NEW – The government is introducing a new Job Retention Bonus to provide additional support to employers who keep on their furloughed employees in meaningful employment, after the government’s Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends on 31 October 2020. Find out more information about the Job Retention Bonus [here](#). Full guidance will be published by the end of September.

NEW – From 1 August employers will have more discretion over how employees can work safely – whether by continuing to work from home or attending a [Covid Secure workplace](#).

NEW – Furloughed employees who are then made redundant will receive redundancy pay based on their normal wage, under new laws which come into force on 31 July. The changes will also apply to statutory notice pay and other entitlements. Further details can be found [here](#).

NEW – [New guidance](#) has been published for those who have claimed too much or not enough from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

UPDATED – Guidance on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme has been updated with information for those who have made a claim in error, have been overpaid or would like to make a voluntary repayment. Please find more information [here](#).



Support to business

UPDATED – The Companies House phone line has reopened on 0303 123 4500 and enquiries can be emailed to enquiries@companieshouse.gov.uk. Find out more [here](#).

UPDATED – The Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020 notice to display to show you have made your workplace COVID-secure has been updated to reflect the change in guidance on working from home. Find the notice [here](#).

NEW – [New guidance for businesses](#) and organisations on how to recognise, contain and report incidents of coronavirus has been published. Action cards have been developed to cover a range of businesses and organisations to provide specific advice on the issues each type of organisation may face now lockdown restrictions have been eased. The cards are designed to be printed or downloaded to keep on hand in your business or organisation. Find out more [here](#).

NEW – A new guide on Personal Protective Equipment guide for community and social care settings has been [published](#). It shows which PPE to wear depending on where and how you are working; and how to work safely using your PPE and safer working practices to protect staff and residents.



Regulation

UPDATED – the list of medical devices given exceptional use authorisations during the COVID-19 pandemic has been updated, please find more information [here](#).



Useful Links

- [Gov.uk/transition](https://www.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, 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
 - 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