

Coronavirus: Support for businesses in Northern Ireland

| Scheme details | Eligibility |
|---|---|
| <p>Apprenticeship Return, Retain and Result Scheme NI-only</p> <p>Incentive payments up to a maximum of £3,700 per apprentice for businesses that have had to furlough an apprentice under the terms of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, to support the return of those apprentices, their further retention and results in the successful completion of their apprenticeship.</p> <p>How to access? You must apply – scheme details and guidance on how to apply.</p> | <p>Employers participating in DfE-funded apprenticeship schemes, with furloughed apprentices + DfE criteria</p> |
| <p>New Apprenticeship Incentive Scheme NI-only</p> <p>Up to £3,000 available to employers to support the recruitment of new apprentices participating in Department for the Economy funded ApprenticeshipsNI or Higher Level Apprenticeship schemes.</p> <p>How to access? You must apply – scheme details and guidance on how to apply.</p> | <p>All NI employers + DfE eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Time To Pay UK-wide</p> <p>If you miss a tax payment due to coronavirus, contact HMRC as soon as possible – you may get more time to pay or be able to agree to pay in instalments.</p> <p>How to access? You must apply – contact the HMRC Coronavirus Helpline on Tel: 0800 024 1222.</p> | <p>Businesses paying tax to the UK Government</p> |

Coronavirus: Support for businesses in Northern Ireland

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| <p>£10,000 Small Business Grant NI-only £10,000 grant for businesses with a total Net Annual Value (NAV) of £15,000 and below, who are eligible for the Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) scheme or currently benefit from Industrial Derating. Closed on 20 May 2020</p> | <p>NI businesses with total Net Annual Value of £15,000 and below, eligible for SBRR or access Industrial Derating</p> |
| <p>£10,000 Small Business Grant: Rental Properties Total NAV £1,590 or below NI-only £10,000 grant for rental property sole tenants or owner of a business property with total NAV of £1,590 or below. Closed on 20 May 2020</p> | <p>NI businesses renting a property, or owning a property with total NAV of £1,590 or below</p> |
| <p>£25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Grant NI-only £25,000 for all businesses in these sectors with a total NAV of between £15,001 and £51,000. Closed on 20 May 2020</p> | <p>Sector-specific businesses with a total NAV between £15,001 and £51,000</p> |
| <p>£25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Grant: Rental Properties Total NAV £1,590 or below NI-only £25,000 for all businesses in these sectors which are sole tenants of a rental property or owner of a business property with a total NAV of £1,590 or below. Closed on 20 May 2020</p> | <p>Sector-specific businesses renting a property, or owning a property with a total NAV of £1,590 or below</p> |
| <p>Apprenticeship Challenge Fund NI-only One-off grants of up to £50,000 (or a maximum of £100,000 with multiple partners) to undertake activity to develop new or innovative solutions to grow and maintain the supply of apprenticeship opportunities in Northern Ireland. Closed on 23 October 2020</p> | <p>Any organisation that has experience or an interest in the NI apprenticeship system + DfE criteria</p> |
| <p>Artists Emergency Programme NI-only Awards of up to £5,000 to support those in the arts sector creating work making a vital contribution to the well-being of communities or to support proposals for research, design and future presentation of specific showcases, performance(s) and/or public presentation. Closed</p> | <p>Freelance individual artists, creative practitioners, performers and others who work in the arts</p> |
| <p>Bed and Breakfast, Guest House, Guest Accommodation, Hostel and Bunk House Support Scheme NI-only Financial support for eligible tourist accommodation businesses severely impacted through reduced income due to COVID-19. Extended scheme reopened only to hostels or bunk houses. Closed on 9 March 2021</p> | <p>Hostels and bunk houses only + Tourism NI criteria</p> |

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| <p>Bounce Back Loan scheme UK-wide</p> <p>Loans between £2,000 and £50,000 for up to 6 years to help small and medium-sized businesses affected by coronavirus. Guaranteed by government with no fees, interest or repayments in the first 12 months. The scheme will remain open to applications until 31 March 2021.</p> <p>Closed on 31 March 2021</p> | <p>All UK businesses affected by coronavirus</p> |
| <p>Business Rates Holiday NI-only</p> <p>A four-month rates holiday for all NI business ratepayers, ie no rates will be charged for April, May, June and July 2020. This will be shown as a discount on the annual rate bill for business ratepayers. A subsequent 12-month rates holiday from business rates for the full 2021-22 financial year for specific sectors approved by the NI Executive.</p> <p>Closed</p> | <p>All NI business ratepayers excluding public sector and utilities</p> |
| <p>Business Rates Relief for Retail, Hospitality, Tourism, Leisure and Childcare Sectors NI-only</p> <p>A full year rates holiday for businesses in the hospitality, tourism and leisure, retail (excluding certain supermarkets and off-licences) and childcare sectors will pay no rates for the full financial year up until 31 March 2021.</p> <p>Closed</p> | <p>Sector-specific businesses</p> |
| <p>Bus Operator Financial Assistance Scheme 2022 NI-only</p> <p>Eligible private coach and bus operators will receive £13,350 for the first vehicle and £7,400 for each additional vehicle in their fleet, or their actual loss for the period April 2021 to January 2022 if the loss is lower.</p> <p>Closed on 3 March 2022</p> | <p>Eligible private coach and bus operators + DfI criteria</p> |
| <p>Childcare Recovery Support Fund NI-only</p> <p>Financial support for childcare providers to assist with the additional costs of operating within Department of Health COVID-19 guidance and to support their financial viability in the reopening phase.</p> <p>Closed to applications on 2 October 2020</p> | <p>Childcare providers as detailed under Department for Education eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Childcare Sustainability Fund NI-only</p> <p>Financial support for childcare providers to assist with the additional costs of operating within Department of Health COVID-19 guidance and to support their financial viability in the reopening phase while operating at reduced demand.</p> <p>Closed on 9 April 2021</p> | <p>Specific childcare businesses, reactivated by their HSCT, operating during Jan to Mar 2021 + DE criteria</p> |
| <p>Childcare Temporary Closure Support Fund NI-only</p> <p>Financial support for childcare providers who have had to close temporarily due to a COVID-19 related incident within their provision, eg a COVID-19 positive case of a child or staff in the setting, or inability to comply with staff:child ratios due to PHA-directed self-isolating of staff.</p> <p>Closed on 15 April 2022</p> | <p>Registered childminders, daycare providers, school age childcare providers, crèches and playgroups + DE eligibility criteria</p> |

Coronavirus: Support for businesses in Northern Ireland

Closed schemes

Eligibility

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme | UK-wide

Loans up to £5m guaranteed by government. Businesses can access the first year of that finance interest-free and fee-free, as the government will cover the first 12 months of interest payments and any lender-levied charges.

Closed on 31 March 2021

SME businesses with turnover under £45m + British Business Bank eligibility criteria

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme | UK-wide

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme **ended on 30 September 2021**. Claims for September must have been submitted on or before 14 October 2021. **Up until 28 October 2021 you can still make amendments to your September claim.**

Ended on 30 September 2021

Employers with a PAYE scheme

Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme | UK-wide

Loans up to £200m guaranteed by government. Businesses can access the first year of that finance interest-free and fee-free - the government will cover the first 12 months of interest payments and any lender-levied charges

Closed on 31 March 2021

Large businesses with turnover of more than £45m + British Business Bank eligibility criteria

Coronavirus: Creative Individuals Recovery Programme | NI-only

Awards of up to £2,000 for individuals and freelancers working in the creative sector to help them reactivate or maintain their trade, profession or vocation, as the sector emerges from coronavirus pandemic restrictions.

Closed on 6 October 2021

Individuals and freelancers working in the creative sector + Arts Council criteria

Covid Recovery Programme Employment & Skills Initiative | NI-only

Funding for the next three years for grants to support individuals and not-for-profit organisations with costs for a variety of new or enhanced roles within the Arts, Heritage, Creative Industries, Sports and Voluntary and Community sectors.

Closed

Sectoral businesses + specific criteria

Covid Recovery Programme for Heritage Individuals | NI-only

Up to £2,000 in grant funding for individuals working in the heritage sector whose income and earning potential been negatively impacted by COVID-19

Closed on 28 January 2022

Self-employed and freelance individuals in the heritage sector + DfC criteria

COVID Recovery Programme for Organisations | NI-only

Up to £50,000 in grant funding to address eligible organisations' operating deficits that have arisen in the 2021-22 financial year because of the pandemic.

Closed on 28 January 2022

Not-for-profit organisations in specific sectors + DfC criteria

COVID Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS) Part A | NI-only

For businesses named in the Health Protection Regulations (not eligible for Localised Restrictions Support Scheme) who are restricted or required to close/cease trading.

Closed on 7 April 2021

NI businesses significantly impacted by restrictions + DfE eligibility criteria

Coronavirus: Support for businesses in Northern Ireland

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| <p>COVID Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS) Part B NI-only For supply chain businesses impacted by customers who are restricted or forced to close/cease trading under the Health Protection Regulations. Closed on 7 April 2021</p> | <p>NI businesses in the supply chain / reliant on businesses impacted by restrictions + DfE eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate UK-wide This refund will cover up to 2 weeks' Statutory Sick Pay per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19. Closed to new claims on 17 March 2022</p> | <p>Businesses with less than 250 employees as of 28 February 2020</p> |
| <p>COVID Social Enterprise Fund NI-only Grants of up to £75,000 to stabilise short-term future cashflow need and to ensure business model resilience, for social enterprises that already deliver services and products but find themselves in financial difficulties directly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Closed on 23 October 2020</p> | <p>Social enterprises with a base in / operating in NI, trading in excess of one year, affected by COVID-19 + DfC criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Business and Financial Planning Grant NI-only Up to £8,000 grant support (for 80% of eligible costs) to engage with a consultant to assess the impact of COVID-19 and develop a strategic recovery plan with financial forecasts. Closed on 30 November 2020</p> | <p>All micro and SME businesses that are InvestNI customers or operating in certain sectors + INI criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Business and Financial Planning Support Programme NI-only Advisory support to tourism businesses operating in Northern Ireland to develop their recovery plans including a health check and financial plan, a review of business model and identifying funding shortfalls and/or debt restructuring. Closed on 30 November 2020</p> | <p>Existing NI tourism businesses in the private or voluntary / community sectors + Tourism NI criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Charities Fund NI-only Up to £75,000 of grant awards for eligible local charity organisations which have lost income due to the impact of lockdown and are unable to cover unavoidable costs between 1 October 2020 and 31 March 2021 (second phase). Closed on 22 January 2021</p> | <p>Local charities facing severe financial difficulty due to COVID-19 + DfC criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Childcare Support Scheme NI-only Financial assistance for eligible childcare providers - registered daycare settings, school age childcare settings and childminders that remain open for vulnerable children and those of key workers, and daycare and school age childcare settings which remain closed and are unable to reopen. Closed on 30 June 2020</p> | <p>Childcare providers as detailed under Department for Education eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) UK-wide The Bank of England will purchase commercial paper of up to one-year maturity, issued by firms making a material contribution to the economy. Closed to new firms on 31 December 2020</p> | <p>Larger companies that make a material contribution to the UK economy</p> |

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| <p>COVID-19 Digital Selling Capability Grant third call NI-only</p> <p>Grants up to £20,000 to support 50% of eligible costs (minimum eligible project expenditure of £10,000) for consultancy services or expertise from a digital marketing or e-commerce supplier to enhance digital offering, build e-commerce capability and increase online sales.</p> <p>Closed on 14 October 2021</p> | <p>SME retailers or wholesalers with an existing online presence and physical products which can be sold online + other eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Energy Efficiency Capital Grant – second call NI-only</p> <p>A maximum grant of £80,000 to support 20% of eligible costs to purchase new energy efficiency equipment to help businesses recover from COVID-19 and build resilience through green efficiency.</p> <p>Closed on 12 October 2021</p> | <p>Existing Invest NI customers and businesses that can become an Invest NI customer + INI criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Equity Investment Fund NI-only</p> <p>Equity investment or convertible loan notes of up to a maximum of £700,000 for early stage high-growth potential businesses, unable to access funding after maximising investment from all other funding sources, to progress business plans and prepare for recovery and growth.</p> <p>Closed on 31 December 2020</p> | <p>Unlisted NI SMEs, not in financial difficulty, but adversely impacted by COVID-19 + other eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Micro-business E-commerce Grant NI-only</p> <p>A maximum grant of £5,000 to support 80% of eligible costs for micro-sized retailers that want to prepare for growth, develop their customer base and find new markets by enhancing their digital offering, building e-commerce capability and increasing online sales.</p> <p>Closed on 12 March 2021</p> | <p>Micro-sized retailers + Invest NI eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Productive Investment Capital Grant NI-only</p> <p>Up to £250,000 grant to improve productivity by investing in new technology & processes, software and knowledge acquisition, automation or the adoption of digital manufacturing technologies.</p> <p>Closed on 15 February 2021</p> | <p>Sector-specific businesses + Invest NI eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Supply Chain Resilience Development Framework third call NI-only</p> <p>A 3-step graduated framework of support, primarily providing specialist advisory support to help manufacturers and internationally tradeable services businesses identify supply chain risks and appropriate mitigations, identify supply chain opportunities and develop supply chain capability.</p> <p>Closed on 28 February 2022</p> | <p>Manufacturing or internationally tradable service businesses in NI + Invest NI eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Eat Out to Help Out UK-wide</p> <p>A scheme for restaurants or other eating establishments, from Monday to Wednesday in August, to offer a 50 per cent discount – up to a max. of £10 per person, to diners for food or non-alcoholic drinks to eat or drink in – which businesses can claim back from the government by 30 September.</p> <p>Closed on 31 August 2020</p> | <p>Food businesses established on or before 7 July 2020 selling food for immediate consumption on premises with their own dining area</p> |
| <p>Film & TV Production Restart Scheme UK-wide</p> <p>Compensation funding for film and TV show productions for delays (up to 20% of budget) or abandonment (up to 70% of budget) due to coronavirus (capped at £5 million per production) to help struggling productions to get insurance for COVID-related risks and get back into production.</p> <p>Closed to registrations on 1 May 2022</p> | <p>All productions made by companies where at least half of the production budget is spent in the UK + DCMS criteria</p> |

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| <p>Future Fund UK-wide Convertible loans ranging from £125,000 to £5m for UK-based companies, matched by at least 50% investor funding, to be used for working capital purposes. Loan interest rate will be a minimum 8%. Closed</p> | <p>Unlisted UK companies with at least £250k recent investor funding + British Business Bank eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Heritage Recovery Fund Northern Ireland NI-only Grant support of £3,000 to £250,000 for non-profit or private heritage organisations, or grant support of £3,000 or £5,000 for individuals working in the heritage sector. Closed on 27 November 2020</p> | <p>Non-profit or private heritage organisations or individuals working in the sector + DfC eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Income Tax Deferral for the Self-Employed UK-wide Income Tax payments due in July 2020 under the Self-Assessment system will be deferred to January 2021. Late payment penalties won't be charged in the deferral period. Closed</p> | <p>All self-employed individuals</p> |
| <p>Individuals Emergency Resilience Programme NI-only Grants of £1,200, £3,000 or £5,000 for workers in the creative and arts economy to sustain and build their creative, professional and technical skills. Closed on 17 August 2020</p> | <p>Workers in the creative and arts economy + Arts Council for Northern Ireland / DfC criteria</p> |
| <p>Job Retention Bonus UK-wide A one-off £1,000 taxable payment to employers for each eligible employee that was furloughed and kept continuously employed until 31 January 2021. Cancelled (5 November 2020)</p> | <p>Employers who furloughed employees and made an eligible claim through the CJRS + HMRC criteria</p> |
| <p>Job Support Scheme UK-wide Help for employers retain their employees. Businesses that are operating but facing decreased demand can get support for wages through JSS Open. Businesses that are legally required to close their premises as a direct result of coronavirus restrictions can get support through JSS Closed. Postponed (5 November 2020)</p> | <p>All UK employers + HM Treasury criteria</p> |
| <p>Large NAV business grant NI-only Financial support to businesses that occupied commercial premises with an NAV (Net Annual Value) over £51,000 that had been awarded the 12-month rates holiday for 2020-21 at 1 March 2021, subject to some exclusions. Closed on 14 May 2021</p> | <p>Business ratepayers in specific sectors + DoF criteria</p> |
| <p>Large Tourism and Hospitality Business Support Scheme NI-only Financial support to large businesses significantly impacted by the Health Protection Regulations, to help meet fixed costs and overheads associated with business survival and job protection. Closed on 31 March 2021</p> | <p>Tourism and hospitality businesses that have a total NAV of £51,001 and above + DfE criteria</p> |
| <p>Limited Company Director's Support Scheme NI-only An initial one-off taxable grant of £3,500 to company directors who have been adversely impacted by COVID-19. Closed on 4 March 2021</p> | <p>Limited Company Directors + DfE criteria</p> |

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|---|--|
| <p>Localised Restrictions Support Scheme NI-only Support payments for businesses (in defined sectors) operating from a property within Northern Ireland which have been required to close or have had business activities at their premises directly curtailed by localised coronavirus regulations. Closed on 7 April 2021</p> | <p>Sector-specific businesses + DoF eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Newly Self-Employed Support Scheme NI-only An initial one-off taxable grant of £3,500 to newly self-employed individuals (sole traders and those in partnerships) who have been adversely impacted by COVID-19. Closed on 19 February 2021</p> | <p>Sole traders or individual members of a partnership business operating in NI + DfE criteria</p> |
| <p>NI Micro-business Hardship Fund NI-only Fund to help Northern Ireland based micro-businesses and social enterprises unable to access other regional and national COVID-19 support measures. Closed on 12 June 2020</p> | <p>NI businesses facing immediate cash flow difficulties due to COVID-19 + DfE criteria</p> |
| <p>Omicron Hospitality Payment NI-only One-off grants for businesses affected by closures as a result of regulations brought in to manage the impact of the Omicron variant of coronavirus. Closed on 4 March 2022</p> | <p>Businesses in the hospitality sector + DoF / LPS criteria</p> |
| <p>Organisations Emergency Programme NI-only Up to £25,000 funding support to small and medium-sized arts organisations (which didn't receive support during the initial call in June 2020) to support the continuance of creative work in Northern Ireland and assist operational costs of arts organisations where necessary. Closed on 17 September 2020</p> | <p>Small and medium-sized arts orgs + Arts Council for Northern Ireland / DfC criteria</p> |
| <p>Recovery Loan Fund UK-wide A loan scheme to support access to finance (up to £2 million) for small to medium sized businesses as they grow and recover from the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. Closed on 30 June 2022.</p> | <p>All UK businesses (with specific exemptions) + HM Treasury criteria</p> |
| <p>Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) UK-wide Extended scheme with a (fifth) taxable grant calculated at 80% of 3 months average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment (capped at £7,500 in total) covering the period May 2021 until September 2021. Closed to claims on 30 September 2021</p> | <p>All self-employed individuals or members of a partnership</p> |
| <p>Sign Language COVID-19 Support Fund NI-only Grant support for self-employed individuals or community and linguistic organisations in the sign language sector currently experiencing difficulties due to work restrictions imposed by COVID-19 protocols, to continue their work in support of the deaf community. Closed on 1 December 2020</p> | <p>Sign language sector community and linguistic organisations or self-employed individuals + DfC eligibility criteria</p> |

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| <p>Sports Hardship Fund NI-only £2,000 grant for new applicant sports clubs and sporting organisations to cover obligations (eg rent/lease, utility costs, ground maintenance, insurances) that are no longer supported with revenue as a result of coronavirus. Returning applicants may also apply for a £1,000 top up to their award if they have fully expended their initial £2,000 award. Closed on 5 November 2020</p> | <p>Organisations delivering sport and physical recreation + Sport NI criteria</p> |
| <p>Sports Sustainability Fund NI-only Financial interventions to stabilise and sustain sports core governing bodies of sport, enabling them to withstand the worst impacts of COVID-19. Closed on 20 January 2021</p> | <p>Recognised governing bodies of sport + Sport NI criteria</p> |
| <p>Stability and Renewal Programme for Organisations NI-only Grants of up to £500,000 for organisations working in the arts and cultural sector to help them respond to the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, including help with re-opening, adapting and stabilising their organisations in the long-term. Closed on 27 November 2020</p> | <p>Arts, culture and community organisations, venues and constituted organisations/companies + DfC eligibility criteria</p> |
| <p>Taxi Drivers Financial Assistance Scheme 2021 NI-only A maximum £3,000 one-off bespoke support payment to eligible self-employed taxi drivers who were working or were available for work between 22 March 2020 and 21 March 2021. Closed on 26 February 2021</p> | <p>Self-employed taxi drivers + DfI criteria</p> |
| <p>Travel Agents Coronavirus Financial Assistance Scheme 2021 NI-only A one-off financial support grant payment to premises based travel agents and self-employed travel agents working from home who were operating between 5 March 2020 and 12 March 2021 that have suffered financial hardship as a result of the outbreak of coronavirus. Closed on 26 March 2021</p> | <p>Travel agents + Executive Office criteria</p> |
| <p>VAT payments deferral UK-wide Businesses who deferred VAT payments between 20 March and 30 June 2020 can pay their deferred VAT in full on or before 31 March 2021, or join the new payment scheme to spread their bill over 11 smaller monthly instalments, interest free. Closed in June 2021</p> | <p>All VAT-registered businesses</p> |
| <p>Voluntary, Community and Social Economy Sector Covid Recovery Fund NI-only Awards of up to £5,000 for purchase of PPE to help safely deliver essential VCSE sector services during the COVID-19 crisis and to assist with the safe reopening to maintain service delivery. Closed on 29 January 2021</p> | <p>Organisations in the voluntary, community and social economy sectors + DfC criteria</p> |
| <p>Wet Pubs Business Support Scheme NI-only Financial support for wet pubs to keep companies in business and protect jobs, and to help prevent business closure and promote economic recovery. Closed</p> | <p>Wet pubs identified by DfE + DfE criteria</p> |