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Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme – Application Portal Now Open

The portal for claiming under the SSP rebate scheme has opened today (26 May) as planned.

As a reminder **we will be making all claims on behalf of payroll clients.** We have already processed the majority of these claims today and expect to have completed them by the end of tomorrow.

For employers making their own claims the portal can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-your-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

HMRC have also today updated their related guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

The scheme allows employers **to recover up to 2 weeks costs of paying coronavirus-related SSP** to current or former employees who were unable to work on or after 13 March 2020 because they either:

- have Coronavirus; or
- are self-isolating and unable to work from home; or
- are shielding because they've been advised that they're at high risk of severe illness from Coronavirus

severe illness from coronavirus.

You can claim for periods of sickness starting on or after:

- 13 March 2020 - if your employee had Coronavirus or the symptoms or is self-isolating because someone they live with has symptoms
- 16 April 2020 - if your employee was shielding because of Coronavirus

The claims we have made today have been very straightforward and you will only need the following information:

1. The number of employees being claimed for
2. The start date and end date of the claim period
3. The total amount of Coronavirus related SSP you have paid for the claim period
4. Government Gateway user ID and password
5. The employer PAYE scheme reference number
6. A contact name and telephone phone number
7. A UK bank or building society account number, sort code, name of the account and address linked to the account

Your claim will be checked and if valid paid into the account you supplied within 6 working days. HMRC have confirmed that where employers knowingly and deliberately provide false or misleading information to benefit from the claim they will apply penalties of up to £3,000.

Discretionary Business Grants

As we reported last week, businesses who have not been eligible for existing Coronavirus business rates grants are now able to apply for a new Discretionary Business Grant that will again be administered by Local Authorities.

We have had a number of clients contact us today asking how to access the **Stockport MBC application portal** that was due to open last Friday 22 May.

Unfortunately as at close of business tonight this portal was still not open and the SMBC website had the following message:

'We've now received the software update from the Business Rates software

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supplier and we're working to try and get the application form live as soon as possible'.

As soon as it opens we will let you know as the window for applications is due to close at 5pm on Wednesday 3 June. Current guidance can be found at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/support-for-businesses-and-employers/discretionary-grant-scheme>

A number of clients have also asked what criteria each Local Authority will be using to decide who to make the grants payable to. The Government's guidance says that the funding will be used to support the following prioritised businesses:

- **Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible work spaces**, e.g. business centres and science parks etc. which do not have their own business rates assessment
- **Regular Market Traders** who do not have their own business rates assessment
- **Bed and Breakfasts** which pay Council Tax instead of business rates
- **Charity properties** in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief

The Government has also given each Authority the discretion to make support payments to businesses outside of the above list. However these grants can only be awarded to businesses that meet all of the following criteria:

- Businesses with ongoing fixed building related costs (i.e. rent/lease/mortgage on a commercial property)
- Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis
- Businesses with fewer than 50 employees
- Businesses that were trading on or before 11th March 2020.

The Discretionary grants will be capped up to a maximum of £25,000, although it is expected that the majority of the grants will be for less than £10,000.

The Allens Team



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