

Tuesday, 24 March 2020

To: Mrs Diane Dodds MLA  
Minister  
Department for the Economy  
Netherleigh  
Massey Avenue  
Belfast  
BT4 2JP

**Re. UK Government and NI Executive supports for businesses**

Dear Minister,

I refer to the series of UK Government measures announced recently to support businesses as they seek to respond to the unprecedented financial impact of Coronavirus. The impact on dental practices has been immense. All semblance of routine dentistry has ceased, and we are imminently moving towards emergency-only dental provision at central sites. While some important support measures have been announced by Department of Health relating to Health Service income, practices have lost access to private income. This could have simply devastating consequences for these small businesses.

A letter circulated by DoH to all General Dental Practitioners in Northern Ireland on 20<sup>th</sup> March: COVID-19: Financial Support to General Dental Services said: *'it is expected that dental practices in NI will be eligible for support from the UK-wide measures recently announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as the additional support provided for local business by the NI Executive'*.

We would be most grateful for any clarity you and your officials can provide us as to what financial supports are open to dentists availing of at this time. With time being absolutely crucial, perhaps you could instruct the appropriate official to liaise with us as we seek to provide our members, and the profession as a whole with additional clarity.

A quick response would be very much appreciated.

We wish you well in all your important endeavours in the days and weeks ahead.

Yours sincerely



Tristen Kelso  
BDA Northern Ireland Director

Tuesday, 24 March 2020

## UK Government support for businesses

The UK Government has set out a package of measures to protect public services, people and businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19. Businesses in Northern Ireland can access the following schemes and announcements:

- Businesses will receive government grants worth up to 80% of wages to keep workers in jobs. [The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) will pay up to £2,500 per worker each month, helping those who are self-isolating or caring for loved ones. This scheme will be open from Monday 23 March.
- Support for businesses through [the Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#), which will provide loans of up to £5m, with no interest due for 12 months. This scheme will be open from Monday 23 March and will be delivered through the [British Business Bank](#).
- [Support for businesses who are paying sick pay to employees](#)
- [Support for businesses paying tax](#)
- [VAT payments for the next quarter will be deferred](#), so no business will pay any VAT for the next three months.

## Northern Ireland Executive support for businesses

Invest NI have provided practical advice for business online [here](#)

Businesses in Northern Ireland can access the following schemes:

- COVID Small Business Grant - Small business grant of £10,000 to be issued immediately with a cost of £267m providing support to 27,000 businesses in NI. This is for all businesses with a NAV up to £15,000
- Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Sectors Grant Scheme - An immediate grant of £25,000 will be provided to companies in these sectors with a rateable value up to £51,000.

[Information on these schemes will be made available at NI Business Info.](#)

Further to this, the Department of Finance has announced a [£100m emergency rates package for businesses](#). All NI businesses will pay zero rates for the next three months (April, May, June). This automatically reduces rates by 25%, in addition to any existing rate reliefs. This applies to all businesses and does not need to be repaid.