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BLACKPOOL AIRPORT ENTERPRISE ZONE NEWS

23 MARCH 2020

Welcome to the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone newsletter bringing you updates on planning and development, business successes, Blackpool Airport and more.

Please email nicole.billington@blackpool.gov.uk or call Freephone 0808 1644922 or visit [BlackpoolEZ](#)



Launch of dedicated COVID-19 Business Support Helpdesk

Blackpool Council has set up a dedicated helpdesk to support local businesses during the coronavirus pandemic. The helpdesk will help businesses to understand and access the £330 billion package of rescue measures announced by the Chancellor earlier this week – including temporary loans, rate relief and cash grants to help meet ongoing costs.

The wide-ranging measures include:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme offering 80% wage subsidies up to a cap of £2,500 per month for 'furloughed workers'. Applies to all UK employers

- A business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in 2020-21; and cash grants of £10,000 (for premises with a rateable value of under £15k) and £25k (for premises between £15k and £51k rateable value)
- A one-off grant of £10,000 to all businesses currently eligible for Small Business Rate Relief (SBBR)
- Business rates holiday for nursery businesses for 2020-21
- A Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) offering loans of up to £5m to companies with less than £41m turnover
- Support for larger firms through the COVID-19 Corporate Financing facility – aimed at companies with short term cashflow issues
- Support for businesses with outstanding tax affairs through HMRC's Time to Pay service
- Support for businesses to defer VAT payments for 3 months (until 30 June 2020)
- For self-employed Income tax payments due on 31st July will be deferred until 31 January 2021
- Support for business paying sick pay to employees (a rebate scheme)

Further guidance is expected shortly to local authorities on how to administer rate relief and one-off grants – businesses do not need to register with the local authority as details are already held.

HMRC is currently setting up the IT system to enable claims for wage subsidies through the Job Retention scheme. The Council's helpdesk will be manned by business support experts assisted by colleagues in the business rates department.

Businesses should use this link [Blackpoolunlimited](#) to complete an enquiry form. The team will then respond with bespoke help and guidance. Regular updates on Government support for business during the pandemic will be available on the BlackpoolUnlimited.com website.

Further updates can be found on the government website: [Government Business Advice](#)

Please feel free to pass this information on to other businesses in the area who you think will benefit from this service.

URGENT UK GOVERNMENT REQUEST: SUPPLY OF COVID-19 ANTIGEN TESTING KIT

Any organisations that can supply for sale any or all of the below should email:

covidtestingtriage@dhsc.gov.uk

There is an urgent call out to the life sciences sector to help increase the supply of antigen testing kits for COVID-19.

The requirement is for commercial supply of the following:

- * Full testing packages (specification below)
- * Any of the separate components within the testing package
- * Any alternative tests government should be considering

The **specification** for testing kit is as follows:

1. Swabs:

- Nasopharyngeal (Florescent fiber tipped (polyester) or flocked swabs) with polystyrene shafts that are scored at 80 mm for a breakpoint
- Nasopharyngeal (minitip) are currently preferred
- No discoloration on the swab bud (i.e. yellowing or brown discoloration)
- Sterilised and individually wrapped
- No calcium alginate swabs
- No swabs with wooden shaft
- Nose and throat swabs (Rayon tipped – FDA review in process)

2. Sample Vial

- Glass (20.25 +/- 0.25 x 47.25 +/- 0.5) & Plastic (TBD)

3. Viral transport medium
 - Covid-19 transport medium
4. Alcohol/Sanitiser wipes
5. Re-packaging (storage/biohazard packaging)
 - Vial wrap – Specification TBC
 - Sealed zip lock bag
 - Second bag (plastic/cushioned)
 - Sealable container – 'Biobottle'
 - Postal 'biobox'

In addition, there is also a requirement for swabs for PCR diagnostic testing.

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