

# Help for business extended by The Scottish Government

This morning the government announces a bit of a U-turn on business rates by adding some degree of discount on rates for a second and subsequent business property.

This is the second phase of funding offered by Holyrood to protect against the effects of Covid-19.

Around £220 million of further grants are now being made available for businesses – including the recently self-employed – to help them deal with the ongoing impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

The new package of measures includes £120 million to extend the Small Business Grant scheme which will now ensure that, in addition to a 100% grant on the first property, small business rate payers will be eligible to a 75% grant on all subsequent properties.

Only last week Nicole Bernard of The Wax Bar together with Edinburgh coffee shop business owner Jon Sharp launched an online petition on [change.org](https://www.change.org) that demanded equal support for jobs and businesses all over Scotland which they said were now at risk.

This has been the subject of appeals by Scottish business in recent days to get the same entitlement as their English counterparts. In Scotland until now one business could get a maximum of £25,000. Finance Secretary Kate Forbes has defended this saying that Scotland's Small Business Bonus Scheme was more generous. This offers £10,000 to help a business through this time.

A further £100 million fund is also being made available to protect self-employed people and viable micro and SME

businesses in distress due to coronavirus .

This fund will be channelled through local authorities and enterprise agencies to target newly self-employed people and businesses who are ineligible for other Scottish Government or UK Government schemes.

Applications for the £100 million fund will be open by the end of the month, and the new arrangements for the Small Business Grant will be in place to receive applications [on 5 May](#).

Finance Secretary Kate Forbes said: “The Scottish Government’s primary concern remains protecting people’s health, but it is still the case that the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak is having severe economic consequences for businesses around the country.

“We are doing everything we can to support business at this difficult time and we continue to listen to and engage with the sector.

“Our support for business now exceeds the £2.2 billion passed on from the UK Government and actively works to fill the gaps in the UK schemes.

“Around 100,000 businesses in total are already eligible for our small business grants and from today we will be extending that scheme in response to feedback from businesses on the frontline of this economic crisis.

“The creation of a £100 million fund is to help those micro and SME businesses who face immediate cash flow challenges, are ineligible for other schemes and are the productive base for supporting employment in the future. It will also support those newly self-employed people who are also ineligible for UK schemes and will be a vital lifeline for many businesses and individuals across Scotland.

“With UK Government support not being available until June, we

are going further to secure the future economic viability of Scottish firms and applications will be open by the end of the month.

“While many businesses are in difficulty, some are doing better than others or can pull through from their own resources.

“Just as we ask the public only to buy what they need in the supermarkets, we are asking businesses who do not need this vital help to refrain from claiming additional support unless absolutely necessary so we can direct as much help as possible to those who need it most.”