

Written 16 August 2021

## **BUSINESS NEWS SCOTLAND**

Welcome to our round up of the latest business and Covid-19 news for our clients. Please contact us if you want to talk about how these updates affect your business. We are here to support you!

### **Workplace testing rolled out to help recovery**

Organisations with ten or more employees can now sign up for asymptomatic workplace testing as part of an enhanced drive to identify emerging Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and break chains of transmission.



Free Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests have been made more widely available as the country emerges from lockdown restrictions and moves beyond level 0.

The testing regime is voluntary, and organisations can adopt an LFD Collect model to distribute among workers or implement their own asymptomatic test site (ATS) model in workplaces.

See: [Workplace testing rolled out to boost recovery - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/workplace-testing-rolled-out-to-boost-recovery)

### **Scottish Aquaculture Review has commenced.**

An independent review of how fish farms are regulated is underway in a move to make Scottish aquaculture legislation one of the most effective and transparent in the world.

Professor Russel Griggs OBE has been appointed to lead the first phase of the review.

The appointment is the latest of the Scottish Government's 100 Days Commitments to be met, on day 81 since the First Minister was voted in and will highlight what improvements can be made to the environmental, economic and community aspects of aquaculture legislation.

See: [Aquaculture review underway - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/aquaculture-review-underway)

## **Investing in net-zero technology**

A total of £16.5 million has been awarded to the Net Zero Technology Centre to accelerate a range of energy transition projects that will help deliver Scotland's net-zero economy.

Seven projects will be developed through the centre's Net Zero Technology Transition Programme (NZTTP) to transform the North Sea energy system, with a focus on emissions reduction.

The programme is expected to deliver £403 billion for the economy and 21,000 jobs by 2050.

Funding is being provided through the Scottish Government's Energy Transition Fund and will be match-funded by the industry.

See: [£62 million fund for energy sector - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/press-releases/2022/06/20220620-01/)

## **Accounting for Import VAT on your VAT return**

HMRC have recently updated their guidance on accounting for VAT on goods imported from outside the UK which, since Brexit, includes the European Union.

Businesses registered for VAT in the UK can account for import VAT on their VAT Return for goods imported into:

- Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) from anywhere outside the UK
- Northern Ireland from outside the UK and EU

Businesses can also account for import VAT for goods moved between Great Britain and Northern Ireland that are declared into a customs special procedure when they are removed from that special procedure.

You do not need HMRC approval to account for import VAT on your VAT Return.

Accounting for import VAT on your VAT Return has significant cash flow benefits as you declare and recover import VAT on the same VAT Return, rather than having to pay it upfront when the goods are imported and recover it later.

For details see: [Check when you can account for import VAT on your VAT Return - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-when-you-can-account-for-import-vat-on-your-vat-return)

## **Going electric: building talent for the future**

UK registered organisations can apply for a share of up to £250,000 for innovative skills, talent, and training projects, that quickly fill immediate gaps in skills, talent and training for the power electronics, machines and drives (PEMD) industry.

This competition is open to single applicants and collaborations.

To lead a project or work alone your organisation must be UK registered and a business of any size, charity, public sector organisation or research organisation.

Competition timeline:

- 9 August 2021 9.30am - opening date
- 10 August 2021 10am - online briefing date
- 15 September 2021 11am - closing date

See: [Competition overview - Driving the electric revolution – building talent for the future - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Customs Declaration Service to become UK's single customs platform**

HMRC will be closing its Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system on 31 March 2023. From this date, all businesses will need to declare goods through the Customs Declaration Service (CDS). CDS is currently used for Northern Ireland and Rest of World declarations.

Ahead of the 31 March 2023 complete closure, services on CHIEF will be withdrawn in two stages:

- 30 September 2022: import declarations close on CHIEF
- 31 March 2023: export declarations close on CHIEF / National Exports System (NES)

See: [Customs Declaration Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Funding scheme to reduce plastic packaging's environmental impact**

UK Research and Innovation's Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging (SSPP) challenge has announced a new £7 million fund. This competition is open to projects solving the sustainability of plastic packaging. SSPP is looking for ambitious research and development projects that focus on solving the well-known issues with the sustainability of plastic packaging. Aligning with SSPP's remit, the aim is to drive a true shift from a linear to a circular economy solution for plastic packaging.

The competition closes at 11am Wednesday 8 September 2021.

See: [Competition overview - ISCF smart sustainable plastic packaging: business-led R&D - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Visa-free short-term touring for UK musicians and performers**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport has confirmed that visa-free short-term touring is allowed for UK artists in 19 European Union member countries.

These countries are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. Talks are ongoing with the remaining nations that do not allow visa and permit free visits for short-term tours.

See: [Visa-free short-term touring allowed in 19 member states - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Automotive Transformation Fund Expression of Interest: Round 13

Registered businesses can apply for a share of up to £1 billion for capital centric investment projects that help industrialise the electrified automotive supply chain at scale in the UK.

- Competition opened: Friday 30 July 2021
- Competition closes: Wednesday 18 August 2021 11:00am

The programme focuses on companies involved in batteries, including cells, electric machines and drives, power electronics, fuel cells, upstream supply chain for any of the above, recycling any aspect of the above

Round 13 of this funding is currently open for Expressions of Interest (Eol).

To be considered, your project should be looking to transform the automotive industry through significant business or production expansion, centred on a product, process or technology that you have already demonstrated and have confirmed as technically and economically feasible.

You can apply for capital investment only or capital and associated R&D activity.

Your proposal must prioritise the scale-up in areas mentioned in the [Automotive Transformation Strategy](#) for an electrified supply chain.

This is an Eol competition, which is the first stage in a two-stage process. Before you submit your Eol, you can first check the project's eligibility for funding through the [ATF funding tool](#).

The ATF team will contact eligible projects to provide guidance on how to submit a formal EOI application. If your application is successful, you will be invited to progress to a full application for the ATF competition.

See: [Competition overview - Automotive Transformation Fund Expression of Interest: Round 13 - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## COVID-19 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT NEWS

Below is our weekly roundup of changes to government support information generally and for businesses, employers and the self-employed.

### Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) - Update

The guidance has been updated with the CJRS end date and information on when claims for September must be submitted.

The CJRS has been extended until 30 September 2021. From 1 August 2021, the government will pay 60% of wages up to a maximum cap of £1,875 for the hours the employee is on furlough.

Claims for September must be submitted by 14 October 2021 and any amendments must be made by 28 October 2021. Find out more about [how the scheme is changing](#).

Claims for furlough days in July 2021 must be made by 16 August 2021.

See: [Claim for wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Kickstart Scheme grant

If you are an employer looking to create jobs for young people, you can apply for funding as part of the Kickstart Scheme.

Recent changes have been made to the guidance including advertising vacancies yourself to 'Getting the young people into the jobs', the remittance advice employers receive when they get the funding in the section 'How you will get the funding' and updated instructions for adding more jobs to the grant agreement following launch of online route for employers.

The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to create new jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment. Employers of all sizes can apply for funding which covers:

- 100% of the [National Minimum Wage](#) (or the [National Living Wage](#) depending on the age of the participant) for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months
- associated [employer National Insurance contributions](#)
- [minimum automatic enrolment pension contributions](#)

Employers can spread the job start dates up until 31 December 2021. You will get funding until 30 June 2022 if a young person starts their job on 31 December 2021.

Further funding is available to provide support so that young people on the scheme can get a job in the future.

You can apply for a Kickstart Scheme grant by either:

- applying online yourself
- applying through a Kickstart gateway who is already working with the Kickstart Scheme

If you already have a Kickstart Scheme grant agreement and reference number, you can [request to add more jobs to it](#). This is known as a 'grant variation'.

See: [Apply for a Kickstart Scheme grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Guidance for Companies House customers

Payment breaks for late filing penalties have now ended.

See: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for Companies House customers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Private providers of Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing

The lists of and information about private providers who have self-declared that they meet the government's minimum standards for the type of commercial COVID-19 testing service they offer has been updated.

See: [Private providers of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **How to do a coronavirus (COVID-19) rapid lateral flow test at home**

Find out how to do a rapid lateral flow test for COVID-19 and report the results. Rapid tests are only for people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

See: [How to do a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow test at home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/how-to-do-a-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-test-at-home)

## **Scotland Loves Local £10 million fund launched**

Projects aiming to help transform towns and neighbourhoods could apply to a new £10 million multi-year fund. The Scotland Loves Local Fund aims to encourage people to think local first, and support businesses and enterprises in their community. The fund will provide match funding of between £5,000 and £25,000 for projects run by groups like town centre partnerships, chambers of commerce or community and charity trusts.

Administered by Scotland's Towns Partnership it aims to bring new, suitable, creative projects and activity to towns and neighbourhoods - helping build local wealth and increase footfall and activity, while supporting local enterprise partnerships. Eligible projects could include things like community shops, marketing and digital schemes, or enabling larger construction projects delivery.

See: [Supporting local communities - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/supporting-local-communities)