

The COVID-19 crisis is presenting immediate and severe financial challenges for businesses.

## Here are some practical steps you can take:

### 1. Talk to your bank

All the banks have announced that they will offer flexibility to their customers, and they may be able to provide payment holidays or emergency working capital facilities.

### 2. Take immediate steps to manage your cashflows -- see page 3 for Financial Supports Available

Look for scope to:

- Lower variable costs
- Delay discretionary spend
- Extend your payables
- Expedite your receivables
- Explore supply chain financing options

### 3. Use available government supports for working capital

#### 4. Get advice

**\*\*\*County Wexford Chamber will help anyway we can**

Get advice from your accountant or use the advisory support available from [your local LEO](#).

**5. Check your insurance cover** Check if your insurance policy covers you for an interruption in your business, or a temporary business closure, caused by COVID-19.

#### 6. Engage with Revenue

**\*\*\* Do Not Ignore your Tax Liability**

**If you have concerns about your ability to pay your tax liabilities** speak to the Revenue Commissioners, who have advised:

*"On an on-going basis, Revenue engages with viable businesses experiencing temporary cash flow or trading difficulties that affect the timely payment of tax. Revenue works very successfully with businesses that engage early to resolve their tax payment difficulties. Revenue will engage with any viable business that experiences temporary cashflow difficulties, including difficulties arising from exceptional circumstances such as the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak."* See [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

Revenue has also posted [advice for businesses experiencing trading difficulties as a result of COVID-19](#). This includes information on tax returns, the application of late payment interest, debt enforcement, tax clearance and customs.

### 7. Be aware of government supports

For example:

- Employees of businesses that need to reduce hours or days worked can avail of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection [Short-time Work Support](#).

- For those workers who have been laid off without pay, there is no need to visit an Intreo Centre. The DEASP has introduced a new support payment for the self-employed who have lost business and to those who have lost employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the [COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment](#). This support pays a flat rate of €203 per week for a six-week period.
- Government is asking those employers who have ceased trading if at all possible, to continue to pay workers during this period – at least at the jobseeker rate of €203 per week. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is setting up a refund scheme for employers to pay staff the €203 per week for each worker. This means that workers retain their link with employers and there is no need for them to submit a Jobseekers claim.
- The full range of Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Local Enterprise Office and Údarás na Gaeltachta grant supports will be available to firms to help with strategies to innovate, diversify markets and supply chains and to improve competitiveness.
- The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation will provide a joint First Responder support service through the Intreo Offices and development agencies, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland in each region to provide tailored supports for impacted firms, with objective of avoiding mass lay-offs and buying time for firms to work through the short-term disruptions.
- Enterprise Ireland has published a [COVID-19 Business Response Plan](#).

#### **Business Continuity Planning: COVID-19 Checklist**

The Department has updated its checklist on Business Continuity Planning which provides a [checklist of preparatory actions for businesses in responding to COVID-19](#).

## Financial Government Supports include:

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation announced a number of supports for businesses facing challenges being presented by the current Covid-19 situation.

- Sole traders and companies with up to nine employees in need of [microfinancing](#) will see the maximum available amount for immediate loans increase from €25,000 to €50,000. Loans are available at an interest rate of between 6.8% and 7.8%. Businesses can apply through their Local Enterprise Office or directly at [microfinanceireland.ie](#). Eligibility criteria apply. [Microfinance Ireland COVID-19 Business Loan FAQs](#)
- **Finance in Focus** - “Finance in focus” grant of up to €7,200 available to Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta. A Finance in Focus grant of up to €7,200 available to Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta clients that want to access consultancy support to undertake immediate finance reviews/and or support financial planning.
- **Vouchers** for business continuity preparedness, innovation and productivity will be available through [Local Enterprise Offices](#) in every local authority area. Every LA will be providing vouchers from €2,500 up to €10,000 (with 50:50 match funding), in addition to their current range of business supports to microenterprises.
- **€200m Package for Enterprise Supports including a Rescue and Restructuring Scheme** available through Enterprise Ireland for viable but vulnerable firms that need to restructure or transform their businesses. Details of these supports are being finalised.
- The **€200m SBCI COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme** for eligible businesses will be available within the next week. Maximum loan size will be €1.5 million (first €500,000 unsecured) and the maximum interest rate will be 4%. Applications can be made through the SBCI website at [sbci.gov.ie](#). Eligibility criteria apply. [SBCI Covid19 Working Capital Scheme FAQs](#)
- The [Credit Guarantee Scheme](#) is in place and available now to SMEs subject to the relevant terms and conditions, and is a government supported product from the banks for small and medium businesses who have difficulty borrowing from their bank. Businesses can apply for loans of up to €1 million at AIB, Bank of Ireland or Ulster Bank. Loans can be for terms of up to 7 years. The scheme provides an 80% guarantee to participating banks which are AIB, Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank.
- [COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment](#) - from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will be available to all employees and the self-employed who have lost employment due to a downturn in economic activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The payment has a one–page application form and will be paid for a period of 6 weeks at a flat rate payment of €203 per week for jobseekers.
- [Short Time Work Support](#) - is available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and is an income support payment for employees who have been temporarily placed on a shorter working week and is intended to help employers during periods of temporary difficulty.

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