

# COVID-19

best practice in local government  
For the self-employed and  
freelancers

## Support through difficult times

Community wrote to Council leaders across England and Wales to collate the best practice Councils are leading on to further support self-employed and freelancers in their borough during Covid-19.

Councils across the country recognise the vital importance of small and sole trader businesses within their economy and understand the vital role they will play in our economic recovery.

We've collated some examples of their best practice and encourage our members to sign post this practice with their Councils, and to explore the support available if they are based in any of the areas highlighted.

### Wirral Council

Set up a [Local Welfare Assistance Scheme](#) to provide a safety net to the self-employed workers struggling to make ends meet as a result of the crisis. The Council has set aside £100,000 to help those worst affected whilst they await access to benefits such as Universal Credit.

### Warrington Council

Improved their [online business relief tool](#) to ensure businesses who recently commenced trading receive support, grants and guidance. So far, they have supported 24 local start-ups and almost 300 self-employed people.

### Cambridgeshire Peterborough Combined Authority

[Growth Hub triage service](#) to support business growth through signposting and referring to existing business support provision and identify the gaps.

Weekly communications to all local businesses, including [1-2-1s and webinars](#).

Augmentation of their [Small Capital Grant Scheme](#) ringfencing funds specifically for sole traders.

Signposting to local lenders for Bounce Back Loans.

Development of a [local talent and retraining portal](#) to help businesses in need of employees and connecting them with local people in need of employment.

## Staffordshire County Council

[Staffordshire County Council Emergency Grants schemes](#) – a £500,000 business fund to support small, micro and one person businesses that are not eligible for the grants and rate relief packages offered by the government. The maximum grant is £1,000 and is awarded on a first-come-first-serve basis.

## Chelmsford City Council

Developed an agreement with [COLBEA](#) to provide the self-employed start-up advice, training courses and workshops, office space and networking.

Work with the [BEST Growth Hub](#) supporting the self-employed identify relevant programmes, initiatives and funding schemes to help their business grow.

Specific Cabinet appointment that covers small business.

Created an [online business recovery survey](#) to develop a greater understanding of how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting local businesses.

## Portsmouth City Council

Established the [Crowdfund Portsmouth Pay It Forward Scheme](#) as a direct response to supporting the self-employed who are missing out on the current government financial support packages. The scheme helps local businesses, social enterprises and individuals to raise money from the crowd and unlock match-funding from the Council and other grants available.

Developed a dedicated coronavirus business support helpline for those unable to find support online or a guide through the available support.

## South Oxfordshire District Council

Access to [free mentors to provide support and guidance](#), a wide range of online resources from how to stay healthy to the free pop up business school online workshops, and access to local short-term vacancies.

Developed an ['are you still open?'](#) list and map to share the services of local business who are still trading.

## Swindon Borough Council

Developed a Local Welfare Assistance scheme and a [Swindon Emergency Assistance](#) fund to help provide residents with food, gas and electric.

Supporting households with Council Tax support to reduce the burden of having to pay Council Tax. By accepting 'nil' income declarations from households that rely solely on self-employed earnings, and providing any capital is less than £6,000, residents will be eligible.

Individuals will business property and rent and rates expenses, [Rates Relief and Business Grants are available to help all small business.](#)

## Newport City Council

Distributing the business grants available and have so far paid out £24m to local business in just under four weeks.

Business support team linked to the Welsh Government's economic resilience fund and is advising local businesses and residents on how to access funds and support.

## Reading Council

In partnership with [Reading UK CIC](#) developed courses for small businesses and self-employed working with the [Real Business Club](#), as well as [start up business courses](#), and an [advice and support service for small businesses](#) on government funding and advice due to coronavirus.

One stop shop for advice on government policy and financial assistance during Covid-19 and lock down [provided by the Council](#), as well as administering grant funding to eligible businesses, and providing wide scale communication and a [regular podcast by the leader of the Council](#).

Developed a Covid-19 newsletter with updates, views, local stories and signposting through small business organisations and support such as FSB and Chamber of Commerce.

## Enfield Council

Developed a Financial Support referral form to access welfare advice, debt support, as well support on bills and food. Also, an Emergency Support Scheme has allocated money for welfare assistance and to help residents on a case by case basis.

Continue to work hard to protect businesses to make sure they have access to support. This includes expansion of the Business Support Team and a regular newsletter to businesses.

**We are Community. The modern union for a changing world.**  
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