

Written 4 January 2022

## **BUSINESS NEWS SCOTLAND**

Welcome to our round up of the latest business 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!

We wish you a happy new year and let's hope 2022 is more stable from a business perspective and that by the end of the year we can return to some kind of "normality".

### **What is the best use of your time in January?**

We encourage all clients to consider taking time to prepare a 2022 Strategic plan.

*"A sailor Without a destination will never get a favourable wind"*

It is easier to get to your destination with a plan. We all know this simple truth. If you are driving from A to B it helps to know where A is and the directions you need to take.

If you have a vision of what you want your business to look like when it is "complete" then you are in a position to drive your business towards the vision and you can monitor how you are doing as you go along.

If you do not have a strategic plan then you could get blown around like flotsam in the sea. This way and that way without any control.



If you agree it is hard to accomplish anything without a plan, let's start thinking about putting one in place. A plan looks at all the things a business could do and narrows it down to the things it is actually good at doing. A strategic plan also helps you determine where to spend time, resources and money.

### How do you do a strategic plan?

1. Take time to review your own personal objectives – the business is there to provide you with what you want from life, do not forget this.
2. Look at where you are now, your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats so you have a clear understanding of your position in the marketplace, the competition, your systems and the way you do things and what you are good at and what you are not.

3. Focus on where you want to be (say) in 2 years, what you want your business to look like when it is running profitably and successfully. Then you can determine your priorities – the big issues that you need to focus on – this is the strategic plan!
4. Write down your vision and define what you must achieve and the actions you need to take. Monitor how you are doing each month and what actions have been completed and what needs to be done to keep you moving towards your plan.
5. Allocate responsibility for taking the actions.
6. Review and adjust your regular activities to keep you on track.

We have useful tools and checklists to help you analyse where you are now, set a strategy, agree actions and monitor them. Please talk to us about how we can help you achieve your goals – we have helped many other businesses grow and succeed!

### **Remember to declare COVID-19 grants on your tax return**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding Self-Assessment tax payers to declare any COVID-19 grant payments on their 2020 to 2021 tax return.

These grants are taxable, and you should declare them on your 2020 to 2021 tax return before the deadline on 31 January 2022.

The Self Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) application and payment windows during the 2020 to 2021 tax year were:

- SEISS 1: 13 May 2020 to 13 July 2020
- SEISS 2: 17 August 2020 to 19 October 2020
- SEISS 3: 29 November 2020 to 29 January 2021

SEISS is not the only COVID-19 support scheme that tax payers should declare on their tax return. If you received other support payments during COVID-19, you may need to report this on their tax return if you are:

- self-employed
- in a partnership
- a business

You need to report grants and payments from the following COVID-19 support schemes:

- the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- test and trace or self-isolation payments in England, Scotland and Wales
- the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)
- Eat Out to Help Out
- Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate
- Coronavirus Business Support Grants

For information on reporting coronavirus (COVID-19) grants and support payments see:

[Reporting coronavirus \(COVID-19\) grants and support payments - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## **Full customs controls started on 1 January 2022**

HMRC have written to traders with a reminder of the changes coming into force from 1 January 2022 and how they might affect the way goods are imported and exported between Great Britain and the EU. You can read this letter, along with more information about these changes by going to [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

### Temporary arrangements for movements from Ireland and Northern Ireland

The UK government has announced that current customs arrangements for goods moving from Ireland and Northern Ireland to Great Britain will be extended for as long as discussions between the UK and EU on the operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP) are ongoing.

This means that full customs controls will be introduced as planned on 1 January 2022 for goods moving between the rest of the EU and Great Britain, and for goods exported from Great Britain to Ireland.

If you move goods into or out of Northern Ireland, the free [Trader Support Service](https://www.gov.uk) can guide you through the process.

### Where you can get help with importing and exporting

HMRC have a range of webinars and YouTube videos on importing and exporting with the EU that you can watch by going to their [help and support for UK transition](https://www.gov.uk) page.

If you export to the EU, the Export Support Service is a free service giving you access to online and phone support. You can find more information on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or by calling 0300 303 8955.

HMRC customer service advisers are available to answer your queries on the Customs and International Trade (CIT) helpline. They'll help you with importing, exporting and customs reliefs. The standard opening hours for the CIT helpline over Christmas and New Year period are below and you can call 0300 322 9434 to speak to an adviser.

- 29 to 31 December: 8am to 10pm
- 1 to 3 January: 8am to 4pm
- 4 January onwards: normal opening hours

If you need urgent help with goods at the border outside of these hours the helpline will divert your call to 24/7 support – choose option one on the helpline menu.

See: [Full customs controls start on 1 January 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## **Statutory Sick Pay Rebate scheme (SSPRS)**

The government is reintroducing the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme (SSPRS). This will be a temporary scheme to support employers facing heightened levels of sickness absence due to COVID-19. The SSPRS will refund small and medium-sized employers' COVID-related SSP costs for up to two weeks per employee. To qualify for the scheme employers must have less than 250 employees.

Employers will be eligible for the scheme if they are UK-based, employed fewer than 250 employees as of 30 November 2021, they had a PAYE payroll system as off 30 November 2021, they have already paid their employees' COVID-related SSP.

Employers will be able to claim the costs for up to two weeks of SSP per employee that has to take time off because of COVID-19. This two-week limit will be reset so an employer will be able to claim up to two weeks per employee regardless of whether they have claimed under the previous scheme for that employee.

The scheme is being reintroduced so that employers can claim for COVID-related sickness absences occurring from 21 December 2021 onwards. Employers will be able to make a claim through HMRC from mid-January onwards, using this website:

[Claim back Statutory Sick Pay paid to your employees due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-your-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19)

This is a temporary scheme to support employers facing heightened levels of sickness absence due to COVID-19. The government will keep the duration of the scheme under review.

Employers must keep records of Statutory Sick Pay that they have paid and want to claim back from HMRC. Employers must keep the following records for 3 years after the date they receive the payment for their claim:

- the dates the employee was off sick
- which of those dates were qualifying days
- the reason they said they were off work due to COVID-19
- the employee's National Insurance number

See: [COVID-19 economic support package - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-economic-support-package)

## **Fairtrade Fortnight 2022**

Fairtrade Fortnight will be back Monday 21 February to Sunday 6 March 2022. For two weeks each year thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come together to share the stories of the people who grow our food and drinks and who grow the cotton in our clothes.

See: [Fairtrade Fortnight - Fairtrade Foundation](https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/)

## **December and January Business Support Top Up**

The December and January Top Up will provide a one off payment to support businesses affected by latest public health advice in December.

Eligible hospitality businesses that previously received support through the Strategic Framework Business Fund (SFBF) will receive a top up payment and will be contacted directly by their local authority. Guidance and eligibility for the hospitality sector is on the [Scottish Government website](https://www.scotland.nhs.uk/).

A further round of the Scottish Wholesale Food and Drink Resilience Fund will run later this month.

Further information for the worst affected parts of the tourism sector, including international inbound tour operators, is on the [VisitScotland website](#). Further details will follow shortly.

Wedding supply chain businesses that previously received support through the Scottish Wedding Industry Fund (SWIF) will receive a top-up payment and be contacted directly from 10 January. Businesses that previously received (SWIF):

- £5,000 will receive an additional £625
- £10,000 will receive an additional £1,250
- £15,000 will receive an additional £1,875
- £25,000 will receive an additional £3,125

Venues not eligible for the SWIF will be eligible for the Strategic Framework Business Fund (SFBF). Venues not eligible for the SFBF will receive the additional payment from the Scottish Wedding Industry Fund (SWIF).

See: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): December and January Business Support Top Up - Hospitality - information for businesses - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

### **Startup accelerator programme for North East of Scotland entrepreneurs**

Robert Gordon University welcomes applications from early-stage entrepreneurs in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to apply for the Regional Startup Accelerator.

Ideas accepted onto the programme will get £5,000 in funding, business training from January to May 2022, co-working space in Aberdeen, industry mentorship and support. The programme is open to ideas from any business sector and is free to apply to.

The Regional Startup Accelerator programme from Robert Gordon University seeks to support early-stage innovators living in the North East of Scotland to develop and grow their entrepreneurial ventures.

The programme will involve:

- Five months of business training from January to May 2022
- Access to £5,000 in seed funding
- Connection with industry mentors
- Free city centre co-working space
- Opportunity to win prizes at our showcase event

The programme is open to ideas from all sectors, especially those focused on climate change. There's a fund of £250,000 to allocate to teams, thanks to the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council as part of the North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund (NEERSF).

Applications are open until 16 January 2022.

See: [Regional Startup Accelerator | Supporting Startups | RGU](#)

## **TravelTech for Scotland - support for the tourism and hospitality industries**

TravelTech for Scotland is an organisation which provides support to the Scottish technology and tourism sectors. It's helping businesses make a sustainable recovery through technological innovation and is leading the way to a cleaner, greener and more inclusive Scotland.

To do this, the organisation is bringing together the growing community of Scottish travel-tech organisations within the tourism and hospitality sector, to help Scotland's economy sustainably recover, rebuild and thrive.

The organisation's activity includes:

- Awareness raising, peer-learning and networking events and webinars
- One-to-one sessions
- Opportunities to connect with other businesses in Scotland and beyond
- Signposting to opportunities, funding and business support
- Facilitating conversations and introductions, via the online community platform
- Relaying the trends and market intelligence that organisations need to make informed decisions
- Sharing consumer insights, funding calls and new market opportunities
- Providing support for travel-tech funding applications
- Supporting tourism and hospitality organisations to understand and find the technology that's needed to succeed

TravelTech for Scotland is jointly funded by Scottish Enterprise and the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Fund.

See: [TravelTech for Scotland | Traveltech for Scotland is here to get behind Scotland's traveltech pioneers](#)

## **COVID-19 Cancellation Fund for Creative Freelancers**

The Scottish Government has committed £8m for creative freelancers who have lost income following the cancellation of work that was due to take place in the period 27 November 2021 - 31 March 2022 as a consequence of COVID-19.

The fund offers a one-off award to those who are most deeply impacted and disadvantaged by the cancellation or postponement of activity because of the current emergency situation. This can include the cancellation or deferral of performances, productions, exhibitions and shows from which freelancers would have received income. This fund will not replace income lost through cancellation but will provide a contribution to partially offset its adverse impact.

Freelancers can request between £500 and £2000 to help offset the financial impact of cancellation of activity.

Applications open 6 January 2022.

See: [COVID-19 Cancellation Fund for Creative Freelancers | Creative Scotland](#)