

Written 24 January 2022

BUSINESS NEWS WALES

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!

Prepare your business for Making Tax Digital (MTD) for VAT

Making Tax Digital for VAT becomes mandatory for all VAT registered businesses from 1 April 2022



Businesses with a taxable turnover above £85,000 have already been required to follow Making Tax Digital, keeping digital records and filing VAT returns using compatible software since April 2019.

From 1 April 2022, all VAT registered businesses must file digitally through Making Tax Digital from 1 April 2022, regardless of turnover.

We can sign you up to MTD, although you will be responsible for meeting your VAT obligations. Those who do not join Making Tax Digital for VAT may be charged a penalty for failure to do so.

If your business has not signed up to MTD compatible bookkeeping software then please talk to us urgently about how we can help your business comply with the new law.

Submitting your tax return

If you've already sent us your information and we have submitted your return to HMRC, thank you! You don't need to do anything else other than pay any amount due.

If you have not sent us your information and (because of Coronavirus) HMRC are waiving late filing and late payment penalties for one month – giving you extra time, if you need it, to send your information to us so we can complete your tax return and submit it to them.

You will not receive a late filing penalty as long as your tax return is filed online by 28 February. Interest will be charged from 1 February on any outstanding liabilities you have not paid. You will not be charged a 5% late payment penalty if you pay your tax or make a Time to Pay arrangement by 1 April.

If you can't pay in full by 31 January because of financial difficulties, HMRC may be able to help by arranging a payment plan. Payment plans or payments in full must be in place by midnight on 1 April to avoid a late payment penalty. If you owe less than £30,000, you may be able to do this online without speaking to them. Go to GOV.UK and search 'HMRC payment plan'.

Please contact us if you need assistance.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - recent and upcoming changes

Since 21 January there are no longer any legal limits on the number of people that can meet outdoors but a COVID Pass is needed for large outdoor events.

From 28 January nightclubs will be able to re-open, a COVID Pass will be needed for large indoor events, nightclubs, cinemas, theatres and concert halls. Working from home remains important but moves from law to guidance. In hospitality, no restrictions on meeting people and no requirement for table service or 2 metre physical distancing.

See: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | Topic | GOV.WALES](#)

Police CyberAlarm

The Police CyberAlarm is a free tool to help your business understand and monitor malicious cyber activity. Police CyberAlarm acts as a "CCTV camera" monitoring the traffic seen by your businesses' connection to the internet. It will detect and provide regular reports of suspected malicious activity, enabling your business to minimise your vulnerabilities.

Once you become a 'Police CyberAlarm' member, you install a 'CyberAlarm Virtual Server' on your system, which will be used to collect and process traffic logs identifying suspicious activity from your firewall/internet gateway.

What are the benefits to my business?

- regular reporting
- identify your business vulnerabilities
- business information and intelligence
- helping the police help you

See: [Police CyberAlarm](#)

Discover 5G technology in Japan

Japan is embracing 5G and is expected to become the leading force in cellular technology by 2026. With this Innovate UK-funded Global Business Innovation Programme (GBIP), this is your chance to showcase your business to Japan's game-changing cellular technology business ecosystem, with a four-day market visit.

Up to 15 ambitious UK businesses will be selected to explore the growth opportunities in this market, and an exclusive chance to connect with innovation collaborators, partners and those like-minded.

This initiative is relevant for businesses that focus on the diversification of the UK's 5G ecosystem, including enhanced cybersecurity, speed of deployment and a reduction in the integration barriers.

See: [Innovate UK's Global Business Innovation Programme Flyer \(ukri.org\)](#)

Hydrogen BECCS Innovation Programme

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has launched a new programme to help develop innovative technologies to produce hydrogen, a clean energy source, from sustainable biomass and waste.

The Hydrogen BECCS Innovation Programme is funded through the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, which aims to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative clean energy technologies and processes through the 2020s and 2030s.

BECCS technology can uniquely offer the ability to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, as the CO₂ absorbed during the growth of the sustainable biomass and the organic content found in waste can then be permanently removed from the atmosphere using carbon capture technologies. Hydrogen BECCS technologies therefore have a key role to play on the UK's path to net zero emissions, providing hydrogen as a clean fuel for hard-to-decarbonise sectors such as transport and heavy industry, while also removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

See: [New scheme for technologies producing hydrogen from biomass \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](#)

Diffuse Coastal Pollution Challenge

Geovation and the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) have launched a challenge to find a sustainable solution to diffuse coastal pollution.

Diffuse pollution is pollution from multiple, often unidentified sources. Diffuse pollution causes significant damage to the coastal environment. Impacts of diffuse pollution are disturbing, including eutrophication, loss of biodiversity, human health, and adverse effects to the food chain.

The main source of water quality degradation worldwide is diffuse pollution. Half of the world's population suffer from polluted water; freshwater diversity has declined by 81 per cent and 500 marine locations are now dead zones. All these issues are significant effects of diffuse coastal pollution, the ripple effect is global.

Geovation's approach is grounded in research and collaboration - working together with innovators and start-ups is key to proposing the most effective and long-term real solutions.

The challenge is open to UK residents over 18 years old and UK registered Ltd companies. Joining the challenge offers several benefits including:

- up to £5,000 for challenge winners
- a chance to collaborate with UKHO and Ordnance Survey
- PR opportunities
- getting access to the most cutting edge data

On initial registration for the challenge you will get access to the data, information and primary and secondary research Geovation and UKHO have carried out, which will help you create your solution.

You can then make a full application to the challenge - applicants will need to submit a slide deck and video. After the successful start-ups have been announced, Geovation will work with them to refine, and challenge proposed solutions. Following that, pitching will take place and the winners will be announced and awarded the cash prize.

See: [Diffuse Coastal Pollution Challenge | Geovation](#)

Driving the Electric Revolution – Building Talent for the Future 2

Innovate UK's Driving the Electric Revolution challenge, part of UK Research and Innovation, is investing up to £4.5 million in grants for projects building talent for the future.

The aim of this competition is to create and deliver course content and materials that will support skills, talent and training across Power Electronics, Machines and Drives

(PEMD) manufacturing and supply chains; building awareness of PEMD and filling key gaps in the UK's workforce talent and training capabilities.

Opportunities could include but are not limited to:

- schools' engagement
- apprenticeships and internships
- upskilling and reskilling of existing workforce
- technical courses and vocational training
- undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional development (CPD)

This is an expression of interest (EoI) stage of a two stage competition. There is no funding at this EoI stage. If you are successful in this stage, you will be invited to apply into the full stage competition, which will open in March 2022.

See: [Competition overview - Driving the Electric Revolution – Building Talent for the Future 2: EoI - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Leaseholders to own their own buildings under government proposals

Leaseholders in England and Wales could find it easier and cheaper to buy the freehold of their building under new proposals to create a fairer housing system.

A government consultation has opened to look at proposals that could make it cheaper and easier for leaseholders to buy the freeholds of their homes. The consultation follows the reset of government approach to building safety, and forms part of the reforms to property law.

As part of a consultation, homeowners and the housing industry are being invited to give their views on proposals from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to allow more leaseholders in mixed-use buildings to take control and ownership of their building.

See: [Reforming the leasehold and commonhold systems in England and Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Guidance on making wills using video-conferencing

The Government is introducing legislation to allow people to use video-conferencing technology for the witnessing of wills being made.

The legislation recognises that:

- An increasing number of people have sought to make wills during the Covid 19 pandemic, but for people shielding or self-isolating it is extremely challenging to follow the normal legalities of making a will - namely it being witnessed by two people.

- In response to this The law (the Wills Act 1837) will be amended to state that whilst this legislation is in force, the ‘presence’ of those making and witnessing wills includes a virtual presence, via video-link, as an alternative to physical presence.

The legislation will apply to wills made since 31 January 2020, the date of the first registered Covid-19 case in England and Wales, except:

- cases where a Grant of Probate has already been issued in respect of the deceased person
- the application is already in the process of being administered

The legislation applies to wills made until 31 January 2024, however this can be shortened or extended if deemed necessary, in line with the approach adopted for other coronavirus legislative measures. The Government will consider whether to change the law permanently in due course. The advice remains that where people can make wills in the [conventional way](#) they should continue to do so.

See: [Guidance on making wills using video-conferencing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

£1 million available to mitigate Covid in the fishing industry

Wales’ fishing community is being invited to submit applications to a £1m fund to help mitigate the ongoing impact Covid is having on the industry and adapt to the rapidly changing market conditions for seafood products.

The European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is co-financed by the Welsh Government and the European Commission and has supported many projects in Wales since being introduced in 2014.

The funding will support investments in the small scale coastal fleet and aquaculture, together with improvements to the marketing and processing of fishery and aquaculture products. However, any project selected and supported under the programme will have to be completed within a 12-month period, starting from July this year.

The EMFF application window is open. Guidance is available for those interested in applying and a Project Outline Form should be submitted to Rural Payments Wales as soon as possible. A full application will then be issued and will need to be completed and returned by the closing date of 25 March 2022.

See: [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

ERF Business Support – December 2021 to February 2022 is open

The Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) is targeted at businesses in the hospitality, leisure and attraction sectors and their supply chains who have been materially impacted by a greater than 50% reduction of turnover between 13 December 2021 and 14 February 2022.

The funds seek to compliment other COVID-19 response measures to support businesses, social enterprises and charitable organisations in Wales.

The ERF will support:

- Businesses impacted between 13 December 2021 and 14 February 2022 and closed by regulations from 26 December 2021.
- Event Space and attractions materially impacted between 13 December 2021 and 14 February 2022.
- Other businesses with greater than 50% impact on turnover between 13 December 2021 and 14 February 2022.

And (applies to all):

- Who have experienced a material impact through reduced turnover of 50% or more between December 2021 and February 2022 as compared to December 2019 and February 2020.

See: [COVID-19 Support for Business | Business Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

Emergency Business Fund open

Local Authorities will deliver a discretionary fund for businesses ineligible for Non Domestic Rates support with a turnover of less than £85,000 via a short application process. Sole traders, freelancers and taxi drivers will be able to apply for £1,000 and businesses that employ people can apply for £2,000.

This funding is also available to freelancers in the creative sectors.

See: [Emergency Business Fund | Business Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

The Renting Homes Act – six months to prepare

From 15 July 2022 the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 will change the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties. It will change how people rent, manage, and live in rented homes in Wales.

Social and private tenants, social and private landlords, including those who rent their properties through management companies or agents, will be affected.

Whether you're a landlord or a tenant it is important you know what the changes mean for you.

See: [Housing law is changing: Renting Homes Wales | GOV.WALES](#)