

Subject: CoronaVirus Update No13
Date: Wednesday, 1 April 2020 at 15:55:15 British Summer Time
From: EHA Secretary
Attachments: image001.png

Dear Member

Please kindly see below **the EBN Cobra update held today**, from Kris:

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Dear Member,

Mark and I attended “virtually” the latest Cobra meeting this morning and as with previous weeks, we wanted to pass that information to you as soon as possible. It was a really productive meeting and very humbling to see how all parts of our community are really coming together during this crisis. Whilst attending the meeting Caroline Ansell was dialled into a Cabinet meeting and took all of the issues that the EHA has raised direct to Ministers.

Here are the main updates:

Business Rate Grants

It has been brought to our attention that our members have been given differing information when contacting the council direct about the upcoming grants. We raised directly with Tim Whelan – Director of Service Delivery and his colleague who is in charge of creating the process for the grants to be distributed. They have been dealing with a changing landscape and as of late last night they had received a third set of guidance. This it seems is why the call handlers are not fully up to date as the information keeps changing and hasn’t had the time to disseminate.

This is definitive information so please if you do have any further queries, direct them to the EHA office and we will be happy to answer them. We understand that these grants are a lifeline for most of our members and we need them as soon as possible. As an association we need to support the council, as it is under immense pressure with huge call volumes, a lot of which are from the most vulnerable members of our society needing support. In addition its customer service teams are short of staff due to social distancing or illness.

Below is all the information surrounding grants that is accurate as of today:

- Any business within hospitality, retail and leisure that has a rateable value of £51,000 or less. If your rateable value is below £15,000, you will receive £10,000. If you rateable value is £15,000 to £51,000 , you will receive £25,000.
- **The grant is not a loan** and you will not be required to pay it back.

- It does not matter if your business receives 100% SBRR, you will still receive the grant.
 - If you have more than one property that is registered for business rates, then the grant will be applied to each separate property.
 - If you live in your premises like most guest house members then **you are still eligible for the grant.**
 - 4,000 businesses have been identified within Eastbourne and Lewes that are eligible with an overall grant pot of £50M to be distributed.
 - The council are working with a software company to create a portal that can capture your information, validate it and then process the payment to your bank account efficiently.
 - **ALL eligible businesses** will need to register their information via this portal, which will include your bank details, in order to receive the grant.
 - The council and software company are testing next week (w/c 6th April) and aiming to have the portal up and running by **17th April.**
 - Letters and emails will be sent out to all those businesses that they have identified, detailing where to apply for the grant and the information required. **These will be sent out by 17th April.**
 - If you are not registered for business rates then unfortunately at this present moment will not be eligible for a grant. We have however championed those businesses in this situation direct to Caroline.
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Business Interruption Insurance

The government is not happy about the lack of cooperation from Insurance companies and the evidence that we have provided so far has helped raise the issue to being one of the top priorities. We are setting up a sub group between EHA, Chamber and Caroline Ansell, so that we can put together an evidence based case that will be taken direct to the Chancellor. We are also receiving some specialist advice from a retired Claims Director to help navigate around the push back from Insurers.

Please keep communicating any cases of push back from Insurers and any positive outcomes, so that we can build a solid picture.

PAYE Support for Furloughed Staff

HMRC held a webinar this morning and the portal for applying for the support won't be available until the end of April. It was stressed that there needs to be some interim support as a lot of our larger members do not have the liquidity to undertake a full April payroll. Phillip from Caroline's office said that they would follow this up and look to see what pressure they can put on HMRC to reduce timelines.

Commercial Fridge/Freezer space

There are various community groups working to support the most vulnerable people in Eastbourne and the demand for their services is growing at a fast rate. Some of our members are already offering their commercial fridge/freezer space to support their lack of storage. If you are able to offer any commercial fridge/freezer space please can you let the office know. We can then share that information to the Cobra group.

The next meeting is scheduled for the same time next week – **Wednesday 8th April at 9.30am.** Please do keep sending through any questions, concerns or updates to the office. The Association is here to support you and if we can answer questions straight away then we will, if not we can take them forward to the Cobra network for clarification.

We hope you all stay safe and healthy.

With best wishes

Kristian

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