



Top Tips for Business Leaders & Owners



1 Getting Support

No business has faced this before and we are all in the same boat. First of all, accept that things are changing all the time and there is only so much that you can deal with in a day. Be kind to yourself and deal with the things you can deal with and don't be afraid to look for help and support for the things you're unsure of.

There are some great sources of help.

GfirstLEP is a great place to start if you need information about support for businesses that are affected by COVID. GfirstLEP are great at taking Government information and helping to distil it down so it is meaningful for the business in Gloucestershire. They also offer advice and support via webinars that you can register and log on to.

<https://www.gfirstlep.com/news/coronavirus-updates/>

Local councils - Your local council also have some advice on how to access support. Check out the information on their websites.

[Cheltenham Borough Council](#)

[Cotswold District Council](#)

[Forest of Dean District Council](#)

[Gloucester City Council](#)

[Stroud District Council](#)

[Tewkesbury Borough Council](#)

National websites such as .gov.uk also offer advice to support you in the difficult time. Logging onto gov.uk will enable you to access a whole range of guidance and from Keeping Employees Safe through to Employment and Financial Support.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

2 What you need to know

Businesses and workplaces should make every possible effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government.

Members of staff who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable, as well as individuals who they live with, should be supported as they follow the recommendations set out in guidance on [social distancing](#) and [shielding](#) respectively.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed fully in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate. If so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff. Potential mitigating actions are set out in these [illustrative industry examples](#).

Staff who are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) should not travel to or attend the workplace.

Staff may be feeling anxious about coming to work and also about impacts on livelihood. Workplaces should ensure staff are fully briefed and appropriately supported at this time.

Any member of staff who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature) should be sent home and stay at home for 7 days from onset of symptoms. If the member of staff lives in a household where someone else is unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) then they must stay at home in line with the [stay at home guidance](#).

Those who follow advice to stay at home will be eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP) from the first day of their absence from work.

Employers should use their discretion concerning the need for medical evidence for certification for employees who are unwell. This will allow GPs to focus on their patients.

If evidence is required by an employer, those with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can get an isolation note from [NHS 111 online](#), and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the [NHS website](#).

3 Good practice for Employers

It's good practice for employers to:

- keep everyone updated on actions being taken to reduce risks of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace
- ensure employees who are in a vulnerable group are strongly advised to follow [social distancing guidance](#)
- ensure employees who are in an extremely vulnerable group and should be [shielded](#) are supported to stay at home
- make sure everyone's contact numbers and emergency contact details are up to date
- make sure managers know how to spot symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and are clear on any relevant processes, for example sickness reporting and sick pay, and procedures in case someone in the workplace is potentially infected and needs to take the appropriate action
- make sure there are places to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, and encourage everyone to do so regularly
- provide hand sanitiser and tissues for staff, and encourage them to use them.

The Government has produced some great guidance on this. It helps you to understand everything from social distancing in the workplace, how to manage sickness and absences.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

4 Social Distancing in the Workplace

If you cannot work from home and your business is in one of the categories that can continue, you need to adopt social distancing measure to protect your staff (there is more information about the types of businesses that can continue here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>)

The advice on social distancing measures applies to everyone and should be followed wherever possible. Workplaces need to avoid crowding and minimise opportunities for the virus to spread by maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) between individuals wherever possible. This advice applies to both inside the workplace, and to where staff may need to interact with customers. Staff should be reminded to wash their hands regularly using soap and water for 20 seconds and particularly after blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing. Where facilities to wash hands are not available, hand sanitiser should be used. Workers should cover any coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in a bin and immediately wash their hands.

The practical implementation of this advice will depend on the local circumstances; see [examples for various industries](#).

A few general indicators will be relevant to the majority of business settings:

- make regular announcements to remind staff and/or customers to follow social distancing advice and wash their hands regularly
- encourage the use of digital and remote transfers of material where possible rather than paper format, such as using e-forms, emails and e-banking
- provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water, hand sanitiser and tissues and encourage staff to use them
- where it is possible to remain 2 metres apart, use floor markings to mark the distance, particularly in the most crowded areas (for example, where queues form)
- where it is not possible to remain 2 metres apart, staff should work side-by-side, or facing away from each other, rather than face-to-face if possible
- where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to 15 minutes or less wherever possible
- as much as possible, keep teams of workers together (cohorting), and keep teams as small as possible.

Additionally, for customer-facing businesses:

- use signage to direct movement into lanes, if feasible, while maintaining a 2 metre distance
- regulate entry so that the premises do not become overcrowded
- use additional signage to ask customers not to enter the premises if they have symptoms
- if feasible, place plexiglass barriers at points of regular interaction as an additional element of protection for workers and customers (where customers might touch or lean against these, ensure they are cleaned and disinfected as often as is feasible in line with standard cleaning procedures.



5 keep it clean

It is really important that we reduce any risks of spreading the virus. One way of doing this is to make sure that everyone pays careful attention to cleanliness.

Make sure that all employees have access to be able to frequently wash their hands, and for those that cannot access hand washing, they have gloves where applicable and also have ample supplies of hand sanitiser.

- Remind your employees to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently and always before and after they have eaten and drunk
- Remind them to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues and to dispose of these in a bin
- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products.

You can download posters and leaflets to use in the workplace from here:

<https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>

6 Staff Working at Home

Where possible people who can work at home, should be doing so. This will help to reduce the spread of COVID and will help to limit the impact on our care services.

Email workplaces@hsglos.org to get your copy

We have produced a TOP TIPS NEWSLETTER to support people who are working at home. You can share this with your employees.

7 What to do if an employee is a carer and needs time off

Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event or emergency. This would apply to situations related to coronavirus (COVID-19). For example:

- if they have children they need to look after or arrange childcare for because their school has closed
- to help their child or another dependant if they're sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital.

There's no statutory right to pay for this time off, but some employers might offer pay depending on the contract or workplace policy.

ACAS have more [information online](#) and can help with specific queries by phone.

8 Sick Pay

Those who follow advice to stay at home and who cannot work as a result will be eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP), even if they are not themselves sick.

Employers should use their discretion and respect the medical need to self-isolate in making decisions about sick pay.

Anyone not eligible to receive sick pay, including those earning less than an average of £118 per week, some of those working in the gig economy, or self-employed people, are able to [claim Universal Credit](#) and/or contributory Employment and Support Allowance.

For those on a low income and already claiming Universal Credit, it is designed to automatically adjust depending on people's earnings or other income. However, if someone needs money urgently they can apply for an advance through the journal in their Universal Credit account.

By law, medical evidence is not required for the first 7 days of sickness. After 7 days, employers may use their discretion around the need for medical evidence if an employee is staying at home. The Government strongly suggest that employers use their discretion around the need for medical evidence for a period of absence where an employee is advised to stay at home either as they are unwell themselves, or live with someone who is, in accordance with the public health advice issued by the government.



9 Funding & support for your business

A comprehensive range of business support measures have been made available to UK businesses.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

The above link will help businesses find out how to access the support that has been made available, who is eligible, when the schemes open and how to apply.

This includes information on:

- [Claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)
- [Claim back Statutory Sick Pay paid to employees due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Defer your VAT payments due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Defer your Self-Assessment payments due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Check if your retail, hospitality or leisure business is eligible for business rates relief due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Check if your nursery is eligible for business rates relief due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): business support grant funding - guidance for businesses](#)
- [Claim a grant through the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Self-employment Income Support Scheme](#)
- [Apply for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#)
- [Apply for the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#)
- [Apply for the COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility](#)

10 Can you help support in the fight against Corona?

There are lots of ways that businesses can help fight COVID-19. All playing our part and ensuring that we are supporting social distancing is a great place to start.

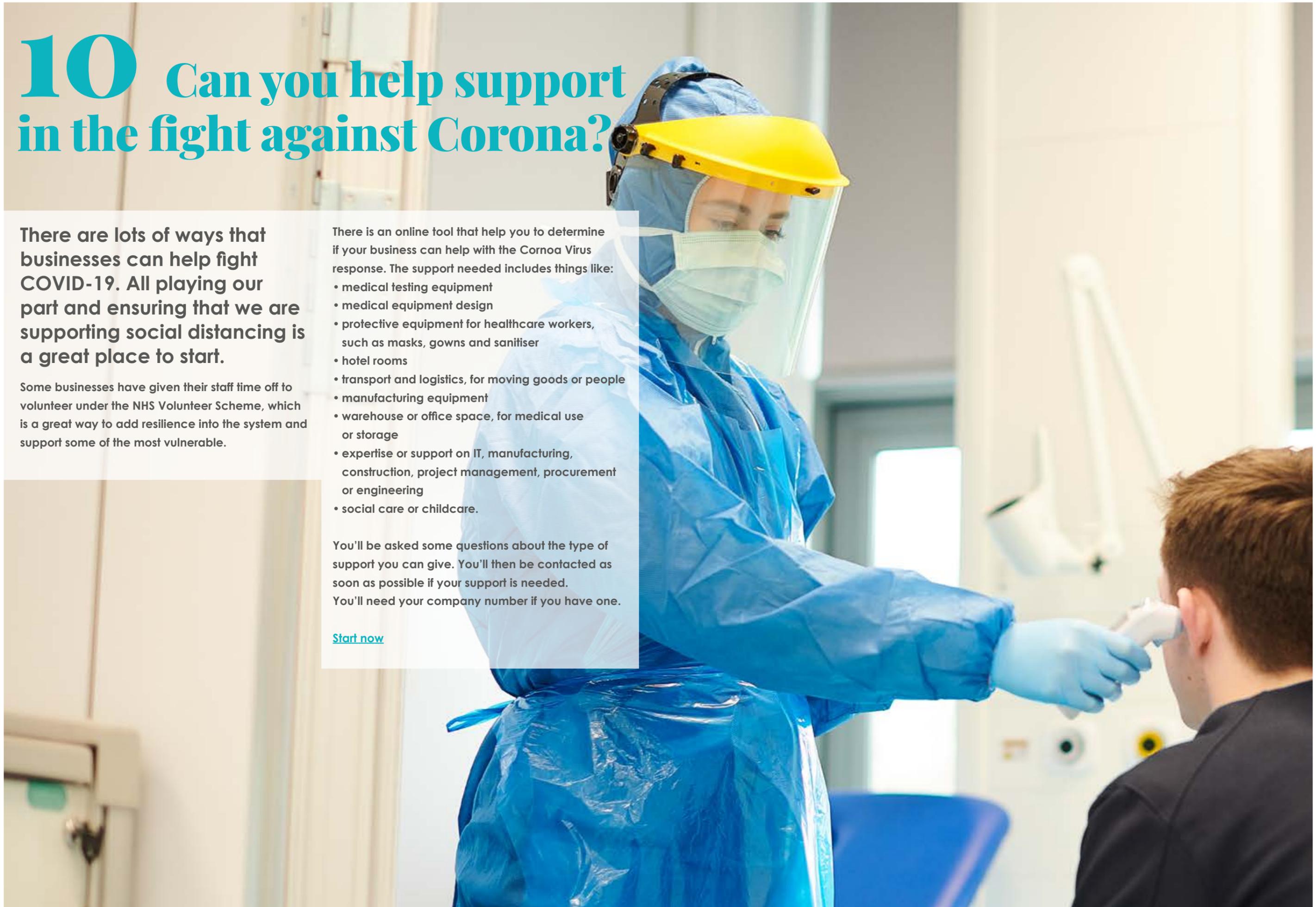
Some businesses have given their staff time off to volunteer under the NHS Volunteer Scheme, which is a great way to add resilience into the system and support some of the most vulnerable.

There is an online tool that help you to determine if your business can help with the Corona Virus response. The support needed includes things like:

- medical testing equipment
- medical equipment design
- protective equipment for healthcare workers, such as masks, gowns and sanitiser
- hotel rooms
- transport and logistics, for moving goods or people
- manufacturing equipment
- warehouse or office space, for medical use or storage
- expertise or support on IT, manufacturing, construction, project management, procurement or engineering
- social care or childcare.

You'll be asked some questions about the type of support you can give. You'll then be contacted as soon as possible if your support is needed. You'll need your company number if you have one.

[Start now](#)



11

Remember there is more to life than business

At times like this it is easy to become consumed by the needs of the business and your employees. Remember your business needs you to be well, so as we return back to a more normal life, you can lead your business forward.

Take some time to look after your own wellbeing. Heres some tips just for you:

1. Plan your time and make sure you plan in time to relax and to move away from work.
2. Stay connected with people both in and outside your business. Make sure you have people you can speak to about 'non-work' things.
3. Talk about your worries – if you are worried about your business, don't bottle those feelings up, try and talk through worries as they arise. Try speaking to others who are in a similar position to you, or speak to your local gFirstLEP about any support that may be on offer locally.
4. Look after your body. Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking or drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol.

5. Stay on top of difficult feelings. Concern about the coronavirus outbreak is perfectly normal. However, some people may experience intense anxiety that can affect their day-to-day life. Try to focus on the things you can control, such as how you act, who you speak to and where you get information from. It's fine to acknowledge that some things are outside of your control, but if constant thoughts about the situation are making you feel anxious or overwhelmed, try some ideas to help manage your anxiety.

6. Carry on doing things you enjoy. If we are feeling worried, anxious, lonely or low, we may stop doing things we usually enjoy. Make an effort to focus on your favourite hobby if it is something you can still do at home. If not, picking something new to learn at home might help.

7. Take time to relax. This can help with difficult emotions and worries, and improve our wellbeing. Relaxation techniques can also help deal with feelings of anxiety.

8. Think about your new daily routine. Life is changing for a while and you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines and set yourself goals. You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week. If you are working from home, try to get up and get ready in the same way as normal, keep to the same hours you would normally work and stick to the same sleeping schedule.

9. Look after your sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain your regular sleeping pattern and stick to good sleep practices.

10. Enjoy time with family and friends, use technology to connect with family and friends. They will get as much benefit from doing it as you will.





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