

COVID-19: KEEPING YOU INFORMED

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Update: High Street Businesses to be protected against 'aggressive' rent collection

Welcome

Dear Kingston First member,

In our weekly roundup of essential national and local announcements, we focus on the announcement yesterday that the Government has pledged to support and protect High Street businesses from 'aggressive rent collection and closure'. Additionally, within 48 hours of the opening of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme portal, employers have claimed support worth over £2.6 billion.

UK retail sale figures for March 2020 have been announced today and are also outlined below. Alongside this announcement, we are restarting our 'Town Centre Insights' footfall data sharing to include our monthly reporting alongside new, weekly tracking. Information on Kingston's footfall over the past 5 weeks is below.

Stay safe and well.

Best wishes.

Kirsten Henly, Chief Executive,
and all the team at Kingston First

BUSINESS SUPPORT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATED GUIDANCE

PROTECTION FROM 'AGGRESSIVE' RENT COLLECTION

The Business Secretary yesterday announced that the Government would temporarily ban landlords from using statutory demands and winding up orders for commercial tenants who are unable to pay bills or rent due to the coronavirus. The Business Secretary did acknowledge that the majority of landlords and tenants are working well together to reach agreements but the measures were set out to protect those tenants who were experiencing 'aggressive' tactics to receive payments. This comes after the British Retail Consortium and British Property Federation called for a rental support scheme for non-essential businesses that were ordered to close during the pandemic.

Find out more: Read the [Government's press release](#)

CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME (CJRS) PORTAL OPEN

During Monday and Tuesday, the scheme has seen 309,000 firms apply for 2.2million employees and £2.6 billion of support had been claimed. The Chancellor confirmed that businesses should receive payments within 6 days and that businesses that are eligible are still able to apply.

Find out more: [Visit the scheme's](#) website to find out more about payment dates.

SURVEY TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUR ORGANISATION

We have worked with Kingston Council and Kingston Chamber of Commerce to launch a [Covid-19 \(Coronavirus\) business survey](#) to assess the economic impact of the crisis on businesses locally. Please fill this out to help influence and shape ongoing support.

[Click here](#) to complete the survey.

LATEST INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS

RETAIL SALES MARCH 2020

In March 2020, monthly retail sales volume fell by 5.1%, which is the largest fall since the ONS' series began, as many stores ceased trading from 23 March following official government guidance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Online sales as a proportion of all retailing reached a record high of 22.3% as consumers switched to online purchasing. Compared to the previous month, clothing sales fell -34.8% and with food stores seeing the strongest growth on record, 10.4% compared to the previous month. [Click here](#) for more details.

KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE FOOTFALL INSIGHTS

Footfall under lockdown has been markedly down, in line with the national response to the Government's restrictions introduced on 23rd March. Footfall in the month of March was -42.8% compared to the previous year. The past five weeks of footfall, compared with 2019, are outlined below:

W/c:	29 Mar: -85%
15 Mar: -32%	5 April: -82.3%
22 Mar: -80.1%	12 April: -84.4%

CORONAVIRUS BUSINESS INTERRUPTION LOAN SCHEME (CBILS)

Warnings about the performance of the continue CBILS week, with a range of national bodies calling for reform. UK Finance announced for the week of 14-21 April, 9,000 loans were approved worth £1.45 billion. According to UK Finance, 36,000 applications have been received in total, with 16,624 being approved - a noticeably low number compared to the CJRS. The [CBI](#), FSB and British Chambers of Commerce are among many national bodies calling for acceleration in access to financial support for businesses.

COVID-19: LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS TO UK CONSUMERS

This month Mintel released the first in a series of reports measuring consumer confidence and lifestyle changes during the pandemic. The most central and relevant change in consumer behaviour has been an increased focus on community, and this sentiment to 'stay local' is set to live long after the pandemic - on-going community initiatives will therefore need be a key part of the recovery. The focus on wellness and fitness was another key theme. A summary of Mintel reports can be found on [their website](#).

FOR FURTHER SUPPORT AND INFORMATION VISIT KINGSTON FIRST:

Kingston First: [Covid-19 Business Advisory Service](#) or speak to our team, please contact us 9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, by:

Phone: 0208 547 1221 | Email: support@kingstonfirst.co.uk

Or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) for the latest updates