

## News letter: February/March 2021



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### Business & Enterprise Support

Freston Road Hub is an enterprise hub, managed by Sobus (a Fulham based charity), and supported by our Landlords, Peabody Housing Trust and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Our aim is to support local enterprise – through the provision of affordable office and meeting room space, as well as through access to training and support.



Sobus is pleased to continue to offer significant discounts for desk hire, hot desk, room hire and mailbox services for local businesses and entrepreneurs at our Freston Road Hub – please contact us for further information: [reception.frh@sobus.org.uk](mailto:reception.frh@sobus.org.uk)

## **Tired of working from Home & of Lack of Funds? - We Can Help!**

### **Affordable, Flexible Office Space:**

Sobus are offering some great deals on desk space with full and half day options, at Freston Road Hub Road Hub, North Kensington, clean, bright, modern facilities close to a wide range of transport links and local amenities.

To find out more, please contact Carita Magnani, Sobus Facilities Coordinator:  
[carita.magnani@sobus.org.uk](mailto:carita.magnani@sobus.org.uk)

## **Covid News**

### **COVID-19: UK to fast-track modified coronavirus vaccines designed to combat new variants**

Flu vaccines are modified in a similar way each and every year to ensure that they remain effective for people most at risk.

Coronavirus vaccines that have been tweaked to deal with new variants of the disease will be fast-tracked for authorisation, the UK regulator has said. According to new guidance, manufacturers must provide robust evidence that the modified jab triggers an immune response, but lengthier clinical studies that don't offer data on safety or effectiveness **won't** be required.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) says researchers are now in a better position to measure immunity against **COVID-19** by monitoring antibodies after vaccination.

It claims this will "significantly reduce" the amount of time it takes to get a tweaked jab approved and ready for use, and it also means the three-phase safety trials required for the original vaccines **won't** be needed.

So far, both the **Oxford-AstraZeneca** and **Pfizer-BioNTech** jabs have shown to be effective against the so-called UK or Kent variant that emerged in the South East late last year.

There are still question marks over the **South Africa** and **Brazil variants**, which have both been detected in the UK and have resulted in emergency surge testing in certain areas. One first identified in the Brazilian city of Manaus is proving especially concerning - a study this week suggested that between 25% and 61% of people there who had previously had COVID-19 were susceptible to reinfection with the worrying P1 variant. Six cases of P1 have been found in the UK to date - three in England and three in Scotland.

## **Are you now eligible for a vaccine?**

If you are aged 65 or over or are clinically extremely vulnerable you can book your coronavirus vaccination appointment without having an invitation letter by visiting the NHS vaccination website [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination) or call 119 free of charge.

You can book your appointment at a mass vaccination centre (the nearest is Wembley stadium), one of three Primary Care Hubs in the borough, or a community pharmacy. The vaccination sites are run by NHS professionals and have extra measures in place to keep you safe during your visit.

There are over 15 million people who have already been vaccinated the sooner we are all vaccinated the sooner we can get back to normal.

## **Governments covid -19 roadmap**

At the end of February, the government announced plans to phase the country out of lockdown using four tests which must be met before we move through the steps outlined in the covid 19 road map. These plans rely on us all to continuing to follow the advice to stay at home, social distance and wear a face covering wherever possible.

The road map indicates the soonest possible date the Government aims to reopen various services and industries.

The four tests to be met in order for the lockdown to be eased are:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those who have been vaccinated.
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- Assessment of the risk is not fundamentally changed by new Variants

## **Be aware of Covid-19 scams currently circulating**

Make sure to be vigilant against fraudsters exploiting the Covid-19 pandemic to scam people. Scammers are claiming to provide information or support, such as fake support grants or fraudulent calls offering a fake Covid-19 vaccination, so it's important to be aware. Our best advice for spotting a scam is:

- **Don't** click on links or attachments in unexpected texts, emails or instant messages.
- **Challenge** every request for your personal details.
- **Don't** respond immediately to unexpected phone calls. Hang up, take five then verify their claims via a trusted method (such as the usual website or official phone number).

Over 7 million people in the United Kingdom have now been vaccinated against the Covid 19 virus.

If you have any of these symptoms you should **get a test as soon as possible** and not leave home for any other reason.

Anyone you live with, or who is in your support bubble, should also self-isolate until the test result arrives.

It takes **five days on average** from the moment you are infected to start showing the symptoms, but the World Health Organization says it can take up to 14 days.

If the test is positive, your whole household must all **continue to follow self-isolation rules.**

### **High levels of coronavirus in your area**

Public Health England and NHS Track and Trace have advised that there is a hotspot on increasing numbers of Coronavirus cases in this area of London. The latest increase is being attributed to a number of factors including residents not wearing face coverings in housing blocks, people gathering in public places and not adhering to social distancing or face mask wearing in and around the Westway, Ladbroke Grove transport hub and nearby supermarkets.

We are in a national lockdown we all need to be vigilant and take extra precautions. **You must stay at home** unless essential. This means you can go out once a day for exercise or if you need to go to the shops or have medical appointments, or if you are a key worker but other than this you should stay at home.

## **REMEMBER HANDS, FACE & SPACE**



### **New rules on business travel**

Under the current restrictions, you are unlikely to be travelling abroad, however if you are planning to travel to the [EEA](#) or Switzerland for work or business purposes in the future, you should:

- Check whether you need to apply for a [visa, work permit or other documentation](#).
- Additionally, check the relevant country's websites for details on application requirements and processing times if you need to make an application, and apply sufficiently in advance of travel. If in doubt you should apply as far in advance as possible.
- Further information is available at the GOV.UK page on [visiting Europe](#).

## **Support for businesses**

- Business travel and mutual recognition of qualifications are both topics explained in the new [on demand videos](#) which focus on priority topics for businesses. In the resources section you can also download a [step-by-step guide](#) on how to navigate the new rules on business travel to the EU.
  - You can also use the Brexit Checker tool on [uk/transition](#), which will provide you with a personalised list of the most up to date actions that your business needs to take.
1. A printed and digital guide to business services in the borough from Council and partners.
  2. A digital map and listings of local businesses.

[Click here for the latest Sobus Covid Bulletin](#)

## **News & Opportunities**

### **Budget 2021: What you need to know**

The Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced the Budget 2021 on Wednesday 3 March, which featured a range of new measures and extensions to existing support for businesses and the self-employed. Here are the top headlines:

- **Restart grants of up to £18,000** will become available in April for non-essential retail, leisure, and hospitality businesses
- **Business rates holiday extended** for three months from April to June 2021
- The temporary **5% reduced rate of VAT will be extended** until 30 September 2021, following which a 12.5% rate will apply for a further six months to 31 March 2022
- A **new Recovery Loan Scheme will be launched in April** to replace the existing government guaranteed schemes ending in March

- Incentive payments for businesses who take on apprentices extended to September 2021 and raised to £3,000 per new hire
- The Coronavirus Job Retention (furlough) Scheme will be extended to September 2021
- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue with a fourth and a fifth grant available

Also covered in the Budget; additional funding for arts, culture and sporting institutions, a new 95 per cent mortgage guarantee scheme, extensions of stamp duty holiday, increase of National Minimum Wage and more.

[More on the Budget](#)

## **The census is taking place in March 2021.**

It's a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. By taking part and encouraging others to do the same, you'll help make sure you and your community get the services you need. Find out more at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk). Follow the census @Census2021.

Your answers to the census questions will help organisations make decisions on planning and funding public services in your area, including transport, education and healthcare.

Census Day 2021 takes place on **Sunday 21 March** and is a chance for everyone in Kensington and Chelsea to be represented in this once-in-a-decade survey. It affects both residents and businesses based in the borough.

## **Get social media savvy in a free masterclass**

Next week, Portobello Business Centre are running a free 'Social Media for SMEs' course in four workshop sessions across two days, on **Tuesday 9 and Thursday 11 March**. The course covers choosing the right channels, how to use Facebook and Instagram ads, creating content, and more.

This course is open only for those registered with the London Community Covid-19 Response Fund Programme. If you are a resident in Kensington and Chelsea you can [sign up the programme via Portobello Business Centre](#).

## **London & Partners' Business Growth Programme**

Offers free impartial business advice and support to SMEs looking to grow across London.

This programme can help unlock your business potential by identifying barriers to growth and providing tailored solutions including mentoring, workshops, business growth advice and opportunities across London & Partners network.

Sign up to the programme via [businessgrowth.london](https://businessgrowth.london).

## **News for Entrepreneurs, Start-ups & Businesses**

**Entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses** get the latest news and information on events and opportunities in the borough – [Sign up here](#) **The K&C Life newsletter** to avoid missing out.

Lastly, if you have a Twitter account, why not give our tweets a like or RT to help spread the message? Follow us at [@RBKC](#). You can also follow our [Instagram](#) account for photo and video content from the Council.

### **Business Guidance - Help and support for VAT.**

Get help with VAT by using videos, webinars, online courses and email updates from HMRC. Click [here](#)

## **Funding**

### **Funding to Help BAME-Led Organisations Access Coronavirus Funds (UK)**

In response to the coronavirus, the UK Community Foundations is making a £250,000 Infrastructure Fund available for BAME-led infrastructure organisations that can help other BAME-led organisations apply for National Emergency Trust (NET) grants through their local Community Foundations.

Grants of between £50,000 and £20,000 are available to fund work such as for example:

- Awareness-raising via marketing and communications
- Mentoring/supporting of groups through the local Community Foundation application process
- Support with monitoring and reporting
- Provision of micro grants to enable applications for NET funding through community foundations
- Building relationships to help community foundations identify and address barriers to funding BAME-led organisations and communities

Applications can be made on a rolling basis and will be considered by an independent panel every week with awards made as quickly as possible thereafter.

For more information and/or to talk to the Community Foundation about applying please email: [b.a.m.e.support@ukcommunityfoundations.org](mailto:b.a.m.e.support@ukcommunityfoundations.org).uk

<https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/news-article/bame-infra-fund>

## **Utd Launches New Fund to Support Social Entrepreneurs (England)**

**Deadline: none stated.**

Un Ltd, the charity for Social Entrepreneurs has launched its new UnLtd Impact Fund.

The fund aims to address one of the key challenges for early stage social ventures: getting to access to capital. The Impact Fund will invest in around 35 social ventures over the next three-years. Initially, the UnLtd Impact Fund is looking to support social ventures tackling challenges related to training and employment - including school leavers and apprenticeships, further and higher education, unemployment and underemployment, and supporting those distant from the labour market. Social ventures will be offered access to between £50,000 and £150,000 (as well as business support) of debt investment, which will include an element of grant funding. The level of grant funding is decided on a case-by-case basis, but it is expected to be an additional 15% of the loan amount. The UnLtd Impact Fund offers unsecured business loans at an interest rate of 9.5% repayable over a maximum of five-years, with all Fund profits reinvested to support more social ventures. In order to apply, applicants need to complete an Expression of Interest through the UnLtd website. Successful applicants will be invited to complete a full application which will include submission of a financial model.

<http://bit.ly/2z43ufr>

## **Funding of Up to £500,000 Available to Encourage Female Innovators (UK)**

**No deadline stated.**

Funding of £500,000 is being made available to find and support the UK's most promising female innovators, helping them develop their ideas and expand their businesses. Grants of £50,000 each and a bespoke package of mentoring, coaching and business support are offered to female inventors to develop solutions that tackle major economic and societal change, such as climate change, developing new treatments and services for healthcare patients and cleaner transport.

Innovate UK's Women in Innovation 2020 is its third round of funding to find and support the UK's most promising female innovators as part of its campaign to boost diversity in science innovation. The aim of the fund is to find women with ambitious plans that will inspire others.

**Previous winners of the Women in Innovation Awards include:**



- Daniela Paredes Fuentes the creator of Gravity Sketch, software that allows designers to sketch in 3D.
- Agnes Czako who invented AirEx, a smart-tech airbrick that could help householders save money on their energy bills by improving the energy efficiency of tens of millions of UK homes.
- Dr Debbie Wake who is the CEO, co-founder and clinical lead for My Diabetes My Way – a self-management platform for diabetes patients.

<https://bit.ly/3axIAUG>

<https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/news-article/bame-infra-fund>

## **Match Funding for Community Businesses Responding to the Covid-19 Crisis (England) New**

**Applications can be made at any time until all the funding has been awarded.**

Power to Change has teamed up with Crowdfunder to launch Community Business Crowdmatch to support new or existing community businesses responding to the Covid-19 crisis.

The scheme will help community businesses, providing services or activities which help local people experiencing disproportionate challenge and difficulty as a result of the crisis, by match-funding for each £1 raised, to a maximum of £10,000.

Through this fund Power to Change are particularly keen to support new and existing projects in more deprived areas of the country, and to work with Black, Asian and ethnically diverse individuals and community business leaders across England. Funding could be used to support new ideas to help local neighbourhoods, help meet increased demand, save a community space or bridge a funding gap.

### **Useful Links:**

[Guidance Notes](#)

<https://www.powertochange.org.uk/get-support/programmes/community-business-crowdmatch/>

## **New Fund Launched to Support LGBT Communities Affected by Covid-19 (UK) New**

**There are no deadlines for this fund. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until all the funding has been awarded. Grants are for short-term work only**

**and all funds awarded through the programme must be fully spent by 31 May 2021.**

A new £350,000 funding scheme has been launched to address the additional needs of LGBT+ people and communities most adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and to support and strengthen LGBT+ organisations that have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The funding is available to any UK based non-profit groups, organisations or projects that work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans + (LGBT+) people.

Eligible organisations can apply through two funding programmes:

- Small grants programme for grants up to £5,000
- Main Grants programme for grants of between £5,001 and £15,00

The grants are likely to be awarded towards ongoing work, core costs and additional work which strengthens the position of organisations and their ability to respond to community needs at this challenging time.

The funding is being made available through the LGBT+ Futures Grant Programme and is financially supported by the National Emergencies Trust.

**Useful Links:**

[Application Guidance Document](#)

[Small Grants Application Form](#)

**[New Fund to Support Community Businesses Affected by the Covid-19 Crisis \(England\)](#)**

Power to Change, the independent trust that supports community businesses in England, is launching a new £5 million package of support to enable community businesses affected by the Covid-19 crisis to adapt, renew and rebuild their businesses so they can remain financially viable and best serve their local communities during the pandemic's 'new normal'.

The Community Business Renewal scheme is the second part of Power to Change's £12million response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In April 2020, the trust announced rapid emergency funding to support community businesses during lockdown.

## **Coronavirus Funds (UK)**

In response to the coronavirus, the UK Community Foundations is making a £250,000 Infrastructure Fund available for BAME-led infrastructure organisations that can help other BAME-led organisations apply for National Emergency Trust (NET) grants through their local Community Foundations.

Grants of between £50,000 and £20,000 are available to fund work such as for example:

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Applications can be made on a rolling basis and will be considered by an independent panel every week with awards made as quickly as possible thereafter.

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<https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/news-article/bame-infra-fund>

Through the Back to Business Fund, the £1m Back to Business Fund will match every pound raised by a business up to a maximum of £5,000 - or 50% of their campaign target. Find out more.

## **£5m Small business grants programme from Facebook**

Facebook has announced a major small business grants programme for small businesses in London, worth almost £5m in cash grants and ad credits to hundreds of small businesses in London. Find out more on their [dedicated website](#).

## **Funding to Support the Most At-Risk Young People Affected by the Covid-19 Crisis (UK)**

The 7stars foundation exists to support the most challenged, at-risk young people in the United Kingdom. In July the Foundation is launching an unrestricted Charity Support Fund for UK charities with a turnover of less than £1.5m, who are working with at-risk young people affected by the covid-19 crisis.

The funding will be made available across the themes of

- abuse;

- addiction;
- homelessness;
- and for those who are supporting young child carers.

The charity is offering grants of up to £2,500, which can be used for overheads, salary costs, and/ or wherever else the organisation needs to apply the money to ensure its survival and sustainable services in the future.

To apply, applicants are encouraged to email the Foundation.

<https://the7starsfoundation.co.uk/>

## **Resilience and Recovery Loan Fund for Charities & Social Enterprises (UK)**

**Applications can be made at any time.**

In response to the coronavirus, Social Investment Business have launched a Resilience and Recovery Loan Fund for social enterprises and charities which have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. The new £25 million fund will provide emergency loans of between £100,000 to £500,000 without requiring personal guarantees and charging no interest fees or interest for twelve months.

The £25m is part of a [wider package of support](#) announced by Big Society Capital.

The Fund is intended to provide working capital until normal business can resume for organisations that are facing financial difficulty. Loans could be used to cover delays in trade payments, or for business modification to meet increase in service demand.

The initial £25 million has been provided by Big Society Capital, with loans backed by the Government's existing Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

### **Useful Links:**

[Application Guidance Notes](#)

[Funding Guidelines](#)

<https://www.sibgroup.org.uk/resilience-and-recovery-loan-fund>