



Cllr Toby Morris

Deputy Leader of the Council

## Getting set for Tier 2

You will all be aware that the current lockdown is about to end and Oxfordshire will move to Tier 2 regulations from 02 December. The good news is that non-essential shops will be allowed to re-open which is important in the build up to Christmas. This Saturday is Small Business Saturday so let's all get out and support our High Street businesses.

The situation is slightly more complicated for pubs and bars which must close unless they are operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals and, when selling food or drink for consumption on their premises, are required to:

- provide table service only, in premises which sell alcohol
- close between 11pm and 5am
- stop taking orders after 10pm

Businesses selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through.

As frustrating as these restrictions are, we understand the Tiers will be reviewed by government on the 16th December looking at local data and trends. It is important that everyone abides by the rules so that the current downward trend in cases in Oxfordshire continues. Businesses help in this is greatly appreciated.

## [Full details of Tier 2 rules](#)

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### Grants

We are currently tasked with administering two government grants to help businesses, the Local Restrictions Support Grant for businesses that had to close for the current lockdown and the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) for those businesses that did not have to close but were severely impacted by the lockdown. **Please note that the ARG is only open for two weeks.** Details of both schemes are set out below.

There is likely to be further support for businesses that continue to be impacted by the Tier 2 restrictions. We will keep you updated via this newsletter as and when details are known.

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### LRSRG for businesses forced to close

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSRG) is for those businesses required by law to close during the latest national lockdown period. This includes:

- All non-essential retail
- Hospitality venues
- Accommodation
- Leisure and sports facilities
- Entertainment venues
- Personal care facilities

This grant differs from the grants for the first lockdown in that payment is not automatic and businesses need to apply for the grant. The application form is now live on our website and we are encouraging eligible businesses to apply as soon as possible.

[Grant for businesses forced to close](#)

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## Additional Restrictions Grant

The Additions Restrictions Grant (ARG) is discretionary scheme to help smaller businesses that might not have qualified for the initial grant but were nonetheless severely impacted by the latest lockdown restrictions.

To qualify for ARG, businesses must:

- Have been trading prior to restrictions coming into force on 5 November 2020 and,
- Have been instructed to close by national restrictions and not liable to pay business rates or,
- Have been severely impacted by national restrictions, regardless of whether the business is liable to pay business rates, have high fixed property costs and fall within one of the following categories:
  - Regular market traders with fixed building costs
  - Bed and breakfast establishments which pay council tax
  - Charity properties who do not have their own business rate assessment
  - Businesses supplying the retail, hospitality, leisure and events sectors
  - Travel companies or transport providers
  - Small businesses in shared office or other flexible workspaces
  - Those working from home with high fixed costs and not eligible for other support

Further details about eligibility are on our website. **Applications to the ARG will not be accepted after Sunday 13 December.**

[Additional restrictions grant](#)

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## Brexit - are you prepared?

The UK is leaving the EU's Single Market and Customs Union at the end of the year and there are some definite actions businesses need to take now, regardless of the trading arrangements we end up with.

Businesses can get a personalised summary of the actions they need to take by using the simple tool below.

[Check what Brexit actions you need to take](#)

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## **OxLEP Business Support Tool**

There is a variety of support available for businesses at the moment. The OxLEP Business Support Tool uses basic information about your business to create a bespoke support plan. The tool takes just five minutes to use and is a great way to ensure you are not missing out on help for your business.

[OxLEP Business Support Tool](#)

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## **Other helpful organisations**

Several business groups are coming up trumps with help and advice for businesses. The ones below are good but do also check the trade association for your own sector.

- [Enterprise Nation](#) - a vibrant community of small businesses and business advisers with a website packed full of resources
- [Federation of Small Businesses](#) (FSB) - the UK's largest grassroots business campaigning group
- [Prince's Trust](#) - useful advice, guidance and resources targeted at young entrepreneurs under the age of 30.
- [Institute of Directors](#) (IoD) - business organisation for company directors

- [Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed \(IPSE\)](#) - represents the UK's self-employed including freelancers, interim managers, consultants and contractors
  - [UK Hospitality](#) - represents the broad hospitality sector – covering everything from bars, coffee shops, contract catering, hotels, nightclubs, visitor attractions and other leisure venues
  - [Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership \(OxLEP\)](#) - Growth hub for Oxfordshire
  - [MD2MD](#) - helps managing directors compare notes on business MD to MD. Now operating online with a free trial period for qualifying business leaders.
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## Keeping up to date

Please forward this email to others to whom this might be useful and encourage them to sign up to further updates. Please note that you can access previous editions of this newsletter too.

[Sign up for this newsletter and see previous editions](#)

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## COVID-19 Latest information and advice

The council Coronavirus web pages have updates about business support, communities and leisure, bins and recycling, elections and council meetings, planning, building and council news.

[Visit our website](#)

We hope you found this newsletter useful. We would like them to be as relevant as possible so please let us know what you think and don't forget to send us your news to [business@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:business@westoxon.gov.uk)