

Greens call for extra support for businesses hit by Covid ahead of Small Business Saturday



3 December 2020

The Green Party has called for additional measures to support small businesses that have suffered heavy losses during the coronavirus pandemic, ahead of Small Business Saturday this weekend. [1]

As small companies across the country struggle to keep afloat due to the pandemic [2], the Greens have called for a five point plan to help them keep going:

- **Extend the business rate holiday into 2021/22** for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with the UK government providing compensation to local authorities for loss of income. As business rates are devolved in Wales, we also call on the Welsh Government to do the same.
- **Increase the amount of support to small businesses who have had to close** during lockdown and expand the criteria for those eligible. The current payments offer a derisory £1,300 a month for those with a rateable value of £15,000, which for a lot of small businesses would not even cover rent.
- **Widen the amount of support to small businesses who have stayed open**, such as nurseries, but are struggling due to the additional costs of Covid, through an additional discretionary grant for councils to administer.
- **Grant 15% of government contracts to small and micro businesses** and revise the government contract application process to remove the current barriers for entry to small business
- **Extend the current tourism VAT cut through 2021** and expand by applying to food and drink served in pubs, bars and restaurants, on hotel bookings and on theatre, music concert and museum and gallery tickets. This should form part of a process to review our VAT system outside the

EU so that it differentially supports smaller shops compared to larger and online shops.

Green Party councillor Zoe Nicholson, deputy leader of Lewes District Council, said:

“Small businesses make a huge contribution to all of our lives and are at the centre of our plans for thriving local economies which work for the wellbeing of people and the environment.

“However, this year many have been left fighting for survival as a result of the pandemic. It is vital that the government steps up its support for these businesses which so many people rely on.

“The Green Party’s five point plan would ensure many more are able to carry on providing their essential services that contribute so much to their communities and keeps money local, rather than letting it be eaten up by multinationals and swooshed off to the nearest tax haven.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/>

2

Research released in September by insurer Simply Business found that coronavirus could have cost small businesses in the UK up to £69bn. The survey found coronavirus had cost the average small company £11,799, with 25% of firms believing they were at risk of closing.

<https://uk.style.yahoo.com/covid19-could-cost-small-businesses-up-to-69bn-coronavirus-103231334.html>

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