



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP  
Minister of State for Business, Energy  
and Clean Growth

Department for Business, Energy &  
Industrial Strategy

Holly Mumby-Croft MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

11 March 2021

Dear Holly,

Thank you for your email of 17 February

about the reopening of the wedding sector. Your correspondence has been passed to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and I am responding on behalf of the Department.

As you know, the Prime Minister announced on 22 February, that the national lockdown restrictions would be eased in a four-step phased approach.

We recognise the unique significance that marriages and civil partnerships hold in people's lives. However, weddings by their nature are inherently social occasions which are particularly vulnerable to transmission.

As such, we are setting out a staged return of weddings and civil partnerships:

- At Step 1 (8 March), weddings of 6 can happen but these should only be in exceptional circumstances. Receptions are not permitted.
- From 29 March, weddings of 6 can happen (with no requirement for this to be in exceptional circumstances). Receptions can only take place in line with social contact limits (i.e. outdoors in a group of six, or two households).
- At Step 2, which will be no earlier than 12 April, weddings and receptions are permitted for up to 15 people.
- From Step 3, which will be no earlier than 17 May, weddings and receptions can proceed with up to 30 people. A broader range of stand-alone life events will also be permitted at this step, including bar mitzvahs and christenings.
- Ahead of Step 4, which will be no earlier than 21 June, we will launch the Events Research Programme, to consider how and when restrictions can be lifted from large events including wedding receptions. Subject to the outcomes of the review, we hope to be able to lift restrictions.

Please note - at each of these steps we will make an assessment against the following four tests:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.

- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

I would like to make you aware that anyone working to help deliver the event is not included in the permitted number of attendees.

We are aware that couples require time to plan their wedding day and for suppliers to deliver these events. Therefore, we hope that this roadmap will provide the clarity needed for both businesses and consumers.

We recognise that the wedding industry is going through a difficult period. I am pleased to inform you that the Chancellor announced in his Budget on 3 March a raft of new measures to help support the sector.

Businesses will now be able to furlough employees who were on a PAYE payroll prior to 31 October 2020 until the end of September 2021. Employees will continue to receive 80% of their current salary for hours not worked. There will be no employer contributions beyond National Insurance contributions (NICs) and pensions required in April, May, and June. From July, the Government will introduce an employer contribution towards the cost of unworked hours of 10% in July, 20% in August and 20% in September, as the economy reopens.

To support the self-employed across the UK through the next stage of the pandemic, the Government confirms that the fourth Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant will be worth 80% of three months' average trading profits, paid out in a single instalment and capped at £7,500 in total. The grant will cover the period February to April and can be claimed from late April. Self-employed individuals must have filed a 2019-20 Self-Assessment tax return to be eligible for the fourth grant. This means that over 600,000 individuals may be newly eligible for SEISS, including many new to self-employment in 2019-20. All other eligibility criteria will remain the same as the third grant. Further details will be published in due course.

Furthermore, the Government announced that there will be a fifth and final SEISS grant covering May to September. The value of the grant will be determined by a turnover test, to ensure that support is targeted at those who need it the most as the economy reopens. People whose turnover has fallen by 30% or more will continue to receive the full grant worth 80% of three months' average trading profits, capped at £7,500. People whose turnover has fallen by less than 30% will receive a 30% grant, capped at £2,850. The final grant can be claimed from late July. Further details will be published in due course.

From 6 April 2021 the Recovery Loan Scheme will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on eligible loans between £25,000 and £10 million to give them confidence in continuing to provide finance to UK businesses. The scheme will be open to all businesses, including those who have already received support under the existing COVID-19 guaranteed loan schemes.

The Government will provide 'Restart Grants' in England of up to £6,000 per premises for non-essential retail businesses and up to £18,000 per premises for hospitality businesses, giving them the cash certainty, they need to plan ahead and safely relaunch trading over the coming months.

Local authorities in England will receive an additional £425 million of discretionary business grant funding, on top of the £1.6 billion already allocated. This brings the total cost of cash grants provided by the Government to £25 billion.

The Government will continue to provide eligible hospitality properties in England with 100% business rates relief from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021. This will be followed by 66% business rates relief for the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, capped at £2 million per business for properties that were required to be closed on 5 January 2021, or £105,000 per business for other eligible properties.

With regards to the VAT Deferral New Payment Scheme (DNPS), any business that took advantage of the original VAT deferral on VAT returns from 20 March through to the end of June 2020 can now opt to use the VAT DNPS to pay that deferred VAT in up to eleven equal payments from March 2021, rather than one larger payment due by 31 March 2021, as originally announced.

With regards to VAT reduction for the UK's hospitality sector. The Government will extend the temporary reduced rate of 5% VAT for goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sector until 30 September 2021. To help businesses manage the transition back to the standard 20% rate, a 12.5% rate will apply for the subsequent six months until 31 March 2022.

Further details of the new measures can be found on the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/budget-2021-what-you-need-to-know>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/budget-2021-sets-path-for-recovery>

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Marie Trevelyan', with a horizontal line underneath.

**THE RT HON ANNE-MARIE TREVELYAN MP**  
Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth