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Factsheet for case GB-2020-12/534

Deferral of VAT payments due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Factsheet generated on 25 April 2020, 21:15

Country	United Kingdom, applies nationwide
Time period	Temporary, 20 March 2020 - 30 June 2021
Type	Legislation or other statutory regulation
Category	Supporting businesses to stay afloat – Direct or indirect financial support
Case created	13 April 2020 (updated 20 April 2020)

Background Information

This measure was announced as part of Budget 2020 and is part of the raft of measures introduced to support businesses through the coronavirus crisis. The measure allows businesses to defer payment of VAT to HMRC until next year. Generally, businesses are required to submit a VAT return and pay the VAT they owe on a quarterly basis. However, in his statement on the 20th of March, the Chancellor announced that the next quarter of VAT payments would be deferred. Details are given on the Government's Business Support site.

The legislative background is the Coronavirus Act 2020, within section 79 (HMRC functions) - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/section/76>

Content of measure

Value Added Tax (VAT)

Generally, businesses are required to submit a VAT return and pay the VAT they owe on a quarterly basis. In his statement on 20 March, the Chancellor announced that the next quarter of VAT payments would be deferred. Details are given on the Government's Business Support site.

The deferral will apply from 20 March to 30 June 2020 and will be offered automatically so that businesses will not be required to make an application. All VAT-registered businesses will be eligible. Taxpayers will be

given until the end of the 2020-21 tax year to pay any liabilities that have accumulated during the deferral period. VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the government as normal. HMRC have advised that customers who normally pay by direct debit should cancel their direct debit with their bank if they are unable to pay. They should do in sufficient time so that HMRC do not attempt to automatically collect on receipt of your VAT return.

On 26 March, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) issued further guidance on this scheme. This underlines that HMRC will not charge interest or penalties on any amount deferred as a result of the Chancellor's announcement. Businesses will still need to submit their VAT returns on time. VAT payments due following the end of the deferral period will have to be paid as normal, and HMRC have stated that further information about how to repay deferred VAT will be available soon.

Generally

Use of measure

As yet unknown how many companies will take up this option. No information available.

Actors, target groups and funding

Actors	Target groups	Funding
National government	All companies	National funds

Social partners

Role of social partners	No involvement
Form of involvement	Unknown

This was a unilateral government measure and did not ensue as a result of social dialogue. However, it can be assumed that business groups at least were consulted with on an informal basis.

Sectors and occupations

This case is not sector-specific.

This case is not occupation-specific.

Sources

- 26 March 2020: UK Government Deferral of VAT Payments due to Covid-19 (www.gov.uk)