



# Business Survival Guide for New Forest Businesses 2020/21



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## Introduction

This Business Survival Guide for New Forest Businesses has been produced by Enterprise Business South in collaboration with New Forest District Council's (NFDC) Economic Development team. Throughout the Coronavirus crisis both organisations have worked to provide a wide range of support to thousands of local businesses including distribution of grants, seminars and training.

This is undoubtedly a tough time for many businesses and this guide has been designed to help you get through it. Some matters are out of your control but there are others that you can definitely do something about and opportunities you can grasp. Our aim is to offer some practical ideas and things that you can do which will mean that you are in the best possible shape for the future, whatever that may hold.

Finally, please remember that you are not alone! The Coronavirus is affecting most business owners in one way or another. In addition to the support offered by NFDC's Economic Development team and Enterprise Business South, there are plenty of local organisations who are willing to offer you free support and guidance (see section 4. Local Business Support).

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## 2. Council & Government Support



New Forest District Council's Economic Development team are here to help your business thrive.

The Council supports businesses through a variety of services including Food Safety, Licencing and Planning.

In addition the Economic Development team can put you in touch with the organisations to help your business become more resilient, increase productivity, secure funding and ultimately, help your plans come to fruition.

You can find out more on our business support pages at [www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1380/Business](http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1380/Business)

We also produce a regular Business Support enewsletter to keep you up to date with new grants, Government support schemes and other useful information. You can sign up to receive it at [www.newforest.gov.uk/businessnewsletter](http://www.newforest.gov.uk/businessnewsletter)

You can also keep up to date by following us on Twitter via [@NFDCBizUpdates](https://twitter.com/NFDCBizUpdates)



### Government Support

For the most up to date and complete information about the Government's schemes to support UK businesses during coronavirus, continue to monitor the GOV.UK website at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

This includes an easy to use 'business support finder' to see what support is available for you and your business.

## 3. Local Business Support

There are a number of business organisations who have agreed to offer free support to local businesses. This ranges from telephone/online direct advice and guidance to group sessions covering the key issues of the day. They are keen to help you so please do make the most of their services.



### Enterprise South

We help people whatever stage they are at in business. Whether you are pre-start, a young business or a well-established one, we have services to support you on your journey.

**Web:** <https://www.enterprisesouth.co.uk> **Tel:** 0844 225 3130  
**E-mail:** [info@enterprisesouth.co.uk](mailto:info@enterprisesouth.co.uk)



### WSX Enterprise

Every day we provide practical support, advice, mentoring and training to people setting up and growing their businesses.

**Web:** <https://www.wsxenterprise.co.uk>  
**Tel:** 01329 223242 **E-mail:** [connect@wsxenterprise.co.uk](mailto:connect@wsxenterprise.co.uk)



### Solent LEP Growth Hub

The Solent LEP Growth Hub is a FREE service and acts as a first point of contact for all your business support requirements.

**Web:** <https://www.solentgrowthhub.co.uk>  
**Tel:** 02392 688055  
**E-mail:** [enquiries@solentlep.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@solentlep.org.uk)



### The New Forest Business Partnership (NFBP)

NFBP is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) supporting local businesses. It brings local businesses together and hosts opportunities throughout the year to help you stay informed and competitive. This can lead to useful connections, sharing of ideas, collaboration on projects and opportunities for new business. Find out more at [www.nfbp.org.uk](http://www.nfbp.org.uk)



### Hampshire Chamber of Commerce

Hampshire Chamber of Commerce is owned and led by its membership comprising of local business organisations of all sectors and sizes.

**Web:** <https://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk>  
**Tel:** 01329 242420 **E-mail:** [info@hampshirechamber.co.uk](mailto:info@hampshirechamber.co.uk)



### Go New Forest

Go New Forest is a not-for-profit community interest company (CIC) that delivers marketing and promotional support for the district, including the New Forest National Park, and its visitor economy businesses.

Find out more on the [Go New Forest website](http://www.gonewforest.co.uk).

## 4. Accessing Finance

Whilst it is easy to identify what it's needed for, finding the right source of finance and meet the eligibility criteria can be difficult. Below are some options to consider, what you can use them for and roughly how long it takes to arrange. We strongly recommend that you shouldn't overcommit yourself by taking on too much debt. Sometimes a mix of funding can resolve temporary financial challenges.

- **Savings/Own money.** Avoid additional borrowing if you can. Consider using personal savings instead if that is possible/practical.
- **Re-mortgage.** Releasing equity in a property to set up a business can be risky, therefore consider very carefully before putting your own home on the line.
- **Asset finance.** There are lenders who will allow you to borrow the money, with the loan being secured against the value of the item itself.
- **Lease finance.** Often used for vehicle finance. The interest rates can be high, but you'll get a quick decision.
- **Personal loans.** Interest rates are usually between 4% - 10% depending on the applicant's perceived risk profile. You can do this online and get instant decisions.
- **Business loans.** Available from the main banks and online finance providers. They'll ask you to provide a business plan and a financial forecast. The interest rate can be anything from 4% (usually only with secured loans) to 15% on unsecured loans.
- **Government start-up loans.** Loans available from £500 - £25,000. They have a reasonable fixed interest rate of 6.2% APR. They are treated as unsecured personal loans. Typical time scale is 2 weeks from the submission of your business plan and financial forecast to get a decision.
- **Overdraft.** Interest rates can be quite high though and is charged per day you use it, so it's best not to rely on this option for long term finance needs. It can take a week to get approval for an overdraft.
- **Business Credit cards.** Again, not a good way to borrow long term, but great for short term funding and you'll get a quick decision with the card despatched and live within a week.
- **Supplier/trade accounts.** Often this will mean that you do not have to pay for the item upfront, but can delay the outgoing payment. This is great for businesses who are awaiting invoices to be paid.
- **Invoice discounting/factoring.** Allows you to access the value of your invoice before your client has paid it. This can effectively plug cashflow gaps. Charges vary from one supplier to the next, so you'll need to get quotes from several and understand how each service differs first.
- **Investors.** Someone may wish to put money into your business in exchange for shares, profit share or a directorship. You will usually need to produce a business plan or 'pitch deck' to attract their attention.
- **Crowd funding.** This is the fastest growing type of funding. It does involve a bit of effort on your part in writing up a campaign, publishing and sharing it on social media. There are lots of different websites/platforms on which to publish your campaign, [www.crowdfunder.co.uk](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk) for example.
- **Peer lending.** This is an 'any purpose' loan where individuals or businesses put surplus funds in a 'pot' and applicants can then apply for funding from that 'pot'. Decisions are quick and interest rates are determined according to risk.

**Please contact Enterprise South ([info@enterprisesouth.co.uk](mailto:info@enterprisesouth.co.uk)) if you would like to know more.**

# 5. Review Outgoings

When business income decreases, or as in some cases at the moment, dries up altogether, it can make you have a really good look at where your money actually goes. Here is a checklist to highlight some of the most common areas where savings can be made.



## Business Overheads

### Premises

- Rent holiday?
- Work from home? You and/or employees?
- Downsize to smaller premises?
- Utilities - reduce usage and review providers?

### Regular Outgoings

- Review all standing orders and direct debits.
- Cancel or re-negotiate terms?

### Loans/overdrafts/mortgages

- Interest only period/payment holiday?
- Lower rates available?

### Travel/Vehicles

- Reduce mileage?
- Review lease arrangements?

### Employment

- Review current/future needs
- Redundancy or can hours be cut?
- Outsourcing - could this help?

### Marketing

- Cancel/postpone under-performing channels.
- Web/online alternatives?
- Social media - wide reach/minimal cost?

## Personal Overheads

If you are likely to experience financial difficulty, attend to major expenses as follows:

**Mortgage.** Contact your mortgage lenders as soon as possible to request a 3 month payment holiday. Lenders have been encouraged to offer this without damaging your credit history. Cancel your direct debit to prevent your bank account becoming overdrawn and more bank charges.

**Rent.** Contact your landlord as soon as possible to request a rent holiday. You can negotiate later how to clear the arrears.

**Utilities.** Make contact with each provider to tell them why you cannot afford to pay currently and to see if a payment holiday is acceptable. Explain that you will clear any arrears in future and, if necessary, make arrangement to pay a nominal sum in the meantime. All providers have a duty of care to assist clients in financial hardship.

**Loans, credit cards, leases.** As per above. Contact providers that you hold loans or outstanding credit card balances with and ask for repayment holidays. They are more likely to offer it at this time and should not penalise you with charges.

**Council tax.** If you cannot pay, contact your local authority to explain your circumstances. They should arrange for the arrears to be cleared in instalments when your situation improves.

### Universal Credit

If you are not eligible for the other support schemes and have no source of income, you can apply for Universal Credit. To check if you are eligible and how much you may be entitled to, see: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>

**Food.** If you are experiencing food scarcity, please contact your nearest [Food Bank](#)

**Mental health.** If you are having difficulty due to stress/anxiety, please see:  
NHS: [10 tips to manager coronavirus anxiety](#)  
NHS: [Mental wellbeing while staying at home](#)

## 6. Personal Survival Budget

Running your own business is challenging at the best of times; the task gets a whole lot harder if you are constantly worrying about whether you can afford to pay your domestic bills. Lack of money is stressful and could be detrimental to your health but the need for immediate income can also lead to making the wrong decisions.

You can take a whole lot of pressure off yourself if you work out exactly how much you need to SURVIVE.

### Personal Monthly Income

Main Income/Drawings	£
Spouse's/Partners Income	£
Regular Benefits/Interest/Rental income	£
Other Income	£
Other Income	£
<b>TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME (a)</b>	£

### Personal Monthly Expenditure

Where you know the annual or quarterly cost of an item please divide by 12 or 3 to get the monthly figure.

Mortgage/Rent	£
Loan/Hire Purchase/Leasing Payments	£
Credit Card Payments	£
Property Maintenance/Council Tax/Ground Rent	£
House Buildings/Contents Insurance Premiums	£
Life Assurance Premiums	£
Gas/Electricity/Water/Telephone	£
Car & Travelling Expenses (including car insurance)	£
General Household Expenses (eg food & clothes)	£
Other Expenses (eg.savings, investments)	£
Other	£
<b>TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENDITURE (b)</b>	£

**MONTHLY SURPLUS (a-b) = £**

# 7. Working from Home

While many business owners already work from home, for many, this has been a new experience. Whether you are already fully embedded or just getting used to the idea, here is a list of 20 top tips that should help make the experience more enjoyable and more productive.

## 1) Chose a dedicated space to work

Commit to working in this space every day. Be sure your workspace is quiet so you can focus on the task at hand.

## 2) Make sure that you have the required technology

Desktop, laptop, tablet, or remote phone system, high speed broadband, wi-fi. Additional hardware and/or software may also be required.

## 3) Make sure that your furniture is comfortable

Your workspace should be both practical and comfortable if you are going to look forward to spending time 'at work'.

## 4) Set working hours

Believe it or not, it is far easier to work too many hours rather than too few when you are home based.

## 5) Consider your family

Don't let work disrupt family/home life but do ask for your working hours to be respected.

## 6) When are you at your best?

Are you a lark or a night owl? Where possible, plan your working hours around the periods when you are most productive.

## 7) Plan your day

This should not be a new task but does become far more important when you are home based

## 8) Dress for work

You will get more done and this will also help to differentiate between work and leisure time.

## 9) Don't work in the lounge or bedroom (if possible)

Not only are there too many potential distractions, it blurs the lines between work/relaxation and could prevent others from using those rooms

## 10) Develop a routine

Make sure that you not only allow enough time to get your work done but also to have breaks. None of us are able to perform at maximum efficiency all day.

## 11) Exercise

Sitting behind a computer or working on the phone for long spells means that your body is not moving as much as it should. Build periods of exercise or, at very least, stretching into your routine.

## 12) Eat healthily

Avoid the temptation to snack and/or grab the easiest (and usually least healthy) foods to eat.

## 13) Manage your time

Allocate time to tasks and keep an eye on the clock. They are some very good time management apps that will keep you on track.

## 14) Limit your time on social media

Social media is a well known time-grabber. Make sure that you don't fall under its spell.

## 15) Switch off alerts

Switch off social media, and e-mail alerts both on your computer and phone. It is hard to do your best work if you are constantly interrupted by messages.

## 16) Video chat

One sector which has benefitted from the crisis is online communication. We can benefit too! There are distinct cost and time saving to be made by communicating via apps such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

## 17) Keep in touch

There is no denying that working from home can be quite isolating. All the more reason to keep in touch with colleagues, customers, and business connections. Much networking is now being done online as well.

## 18) Get outside

Sunshine and fresh air really do help with your general health, mood and productivity.

## 19) Motivation

Give yourself incentives to keep on going.

## 20) Positive thinking

Always look on the bright side of life!



## 8. Prepare for Better Days

This situation will not last forever but the business world may well look completely different in the future. You may now have the perfect opportunity to use this time to ensure that you are in the best possible shape, both personally and as a business, to tackle what lies ahead. Here is a brief list of suggestions.

### Business Model

- **Review how you do business.** This slow down has given us the chance to work 'on' our business rather than 'in' our business.
- **Birds eye view** - is your business model still fit for purpose?
- **Sector** - consider how your industry will change in the future.
- **Services** - are ALL of your products and service still relevant?
- **Services** - are there any new products or services that you can add?
- **Review all outgoings** - are they all essential?
- **Outgoings** - are there any alternatives which cost less or are more efficient?
- **Premises** - what are you likely to need going forward?
- **Employees** - are you staffed at the level that will be required in the future?
- **Outsourcing** - could this help more?
- **Customers/clients** - keep in touch (not just to sell!).
- **Competition** - analyse/learn what your competition is doing.

### Marketing

- Review marketing strategy.
- Existing/new markets?
- What is likely to be needed in future?
- List of possible marketing tools.

### Website

- Get a free audit - [woorank.com](http://woorank.com)
- Google Analytics - [analytics.google.com](http://analytics.google.com)
- Alexa rank - <https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo>
- [Domain Authority](#)
- SEO - <https://neilpatel.com/seo-analyzer/>
- Start or write articles for your own blog.

### Social media

- Create new content <https://topdogsocialmedia.com/creating-social-media-content/>
- Make a social media plan - <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-content-strategy/>
- Save time by using scheduling software like Hootsuite <https://hootsuite.com/en-gb> or Buffer <https://buffer.com>

### Accounts and administration

- Complete/review annual accounts.
- Clear out unwanted paperwork.
- Review/improve systems.
- De-clutter your office/filing cabinets.
- Sort out computer files/old e-mails.

### Personal

- Spend quality time with loved ones.
- Learn something new.
- Read books or listen to podcasts.
- Attend webinars.
- Re-charge your 'batteries'.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat healthily.
- Volunteer.
- Improve a skill.
- Write a book.
- Inspire yourself - Ted Talks - <https://www.ted.com>

### Support

Please do get in touch if you would like help!

