



Ann Jones MS  
Chair  
Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[ScrutinyFM@senedd.wales](mailto:ScrutinyFM@senedd.wales)

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Dear Chair

I am writing in response to your letter of 22 February, following my appearance before the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister on 11 February, about the comparison of Covid-19 business support schemes across the UK.

A direct comparison across the four nations is challenging due to the variations in the terms and conditions and periods for which various grant schemes cover. However, for the period 20 December 2020 to 1 March 2021, a comparison is set out in the table below.

At a headline level, I would ask you to note the following factors:

- Eligibility and level of schemes in other parts of the UK are often discretionary and at different levels for different periods. Either side of the committee meeting, levels of rolling support available in Scotland and Northern Ireland were reduced.
- We do not control schemes in other areas. England, for example, now has two support schemes in operation, a block grant and a rolling 42-day scheme.

UK home nation grant comparator table: 20 December 2020 to 1 March 2021

- Comparisons are based on known data at the point of drafting only and are likely to change.
- Many of the schemes are discretionary so assumes eligibility and access and we are not sighted on approval or application rates.
- Statistics, eligibility, dates and rates changes regularly. For example, Northern Ireland has released 10 new schemes this year and has a total of 30 schemes, which are now closed to new applicants but the data continues to be available online.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400  
[YP.PrifWeinidog@llyw.cymru](mailto:YP.PrifWeinidog@llyw.cymru) • [ps.firstminister@gov.wales](mailto:ps.firstminister@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

<b>Period: 20 December to 1 March</b>	<b>Business property rateable value (RV) £15k and less</b>	<b>RV £15k-£50k</b>	<b>RV £50k-£500k (SME only)</b>
England (2 schemes)	£6,000	£9,000	£13,500
Northern Ireland – retail (to 5 March)	£8,000	£12,000	£16,000
Northern Ireland – hospitality	£8,000	£12,000	£30,000
Scotland – retail	£10,000	£10,000	£15,000
Scotland – hospitality	£10,000	£10,000	£32,000
<b>Wales – all business</b>	<b>£6,000 to £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000</b>	<b>£10,000</b>
Economic Resilience Fund – Wales (60% or more negative turnover impact for hospitality, leisure, tourism and supply chain only (£10k per business). Grant linked to employment and operating costs	£6,000 (four employees)	£15,000 (10 employees)	£100,000 would require costs over the two-month period – likely intervention of £35,000.
<b>Wales maximum*</b>	<b>£16,000</b>	<b>£25,000</b>	<b>£110,000/ £45,000</b>

*\* The maximum does not include the new £30m SME ERF sector fund in Wales for hospitality, leisure and tourism and associated supply chain businesses which would see a 10-employee company receive up to an additional £15,000 in March. Does not include £150m set aside for further round of NDR-based grants, pending the 12 March review of coronavirus regulations.*

The table shows that when combined, the non-domestic rates grants and ERF grants in Wales mean the value of the support package for the most affected group of businesses (hospitality, leisure and tourism) exceeds that available in other parts of the UK. The support available for smaller business in the non-essential retail sector is also higher in Wales.

There is a need for ongoing support for hospitality, leisure and tourism businesses to complement other UK Government and Welsh Government schemes. A further £30m from the Economic Resilience Fund will provide emergency financial support, targeted at small, medium and larger hospitality, leisure and tourism businesses and related supply chain businesses in February and March 2021. The eligibility checker opened on 3 March and the fund opened for applications on 9 March.

A grant will be provided to eligible businesses based on £1,500 per job safeguarded or fixed operating costs for February and March (whichever is the lowest) with upper limit of grant determined under Covid-19 Temporary Framework (£690k cumulative support).

We also recognise the critical importance to business of the March 12 review of the coronavirus regulations. A further £150m has been put aside to re-run the non-domestic rates-based grants if alert level three or four is extended. Eligible companies in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors will receive up to a further £5,000 of support. This means a hospitality business employing 10 staff could receive up to £45,000 in support for the period December to March.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**