



Helping people
in horticulture
Perennial

Perennial Coronavirus COVID-19 news update

3rd April 2020

Perennial's helpline is operating as usual on 0800 093 8543 or visit www.Perennial.org.uk to fill out the [contact form](#). The confidential helpline is open Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm.

"I didn't know who to ring, I'm glad you are there, and I got to speak to someone quickly"
A quote from someone who was pleased they picked up the phone.

During the first week of lockdown the number of people contacting us for help increased by nearly 400%! Our initial focus is on helping people who found themselves in a difficult position and sharing information with people working in horticulture. Following the many changes made during last week we've updated our website with helpful information.

Don't forget, we're here to help in the following ways:

- help people understand and get access to government arrangements for financial support
- help people make arrangements to reduce or delay bill payments, including credit debts where necessary
- provide financial assistance to cover essential items, particularly food and heating

To keep up to date with the latest information do keep checking our website which contains links to all the latest information [available here](#).

Don't miss out on the benefits you can claim!

There have been major changes in the benefits people can claim during this period and our message is don't dismiss benefits, and don't miss out! If you can manage now you might find that things change down the line so act now to prepare for the future.

We've put together a guide to the different benefits on our website so [click here](#) to find out more about the following:

- Benefits Advice: If you are self-isolating for health reasons
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit

If you would like to see what help you can get, please click here to access the gov.uk benefit calculators [Benefit calculators](#)

Alternatively find more information at Turn2us - [Turn2us](#)

If you're self-employed you can find the full guidance on the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme here Gov.uk/self-employment-income-support-scheme. We can help you explore all the options that are available at present to find the support that best suits your situation.



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Did you know?

We've also put together a handy summary of other points to consider during this time, so did you know...

Money Worries

- If your income has changed due to the outbreak and you are struggling to pay your Council Tax bill, please contact your council – you may be eligible for a reduction or a payment plan.

Self-Employed

- You have until 23/04/20 to complete your income Tax Self-Assessment tax return for 2018/19 to help qualify for the Self-employment Income Support Scheme (SISS).
- If you are eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, HMRC will contact you and invite you to apply online once the scheme is operational.
- The Federation of Small Business (FSB) has a host of advice and guidance for small businesses and the self-employed relating to Covid 19. Find out more at <https://www.fsb.org.uk/>
- The Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed (IPSE) has a host of Covid-19 resources you can access. Find out more at <https://www.ipse.co.uk/>

Universal Credit

- Universal Credit can include help with paying your rent.
- Some people in receipt of tax credits or housing benefit maybe worse off by claiming Universal Credit. Seek our advice to make sure you are receiving the correct support

Department of Work and Pensions

- If you request a call back from the Department of Work and Pensions they may do so on an unknown or anonymous number.

HMRC

- HMRC have a new helpline number to ensure those needing help and support during this difficult time can keep reaching their advisers. Please call **0800 024 1222 anytime from 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday.**

Free school meals

- Vital support for families - the government have announced the launch of a voucher scheme to allow children who are eligible for free school meals to continue to access meals whilst they stay at home. Parents will receive the voucher through their child's school. For more information please see https://www.gov.uk/government/news/voucher-scheme-launches-for-schools-providing-free-school-meals?utm_source=1e8e0f2f-de27-4ddc-8bb7-4c57b4725211&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate



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Businesses and Employers

- If you are a business owner, we highly recommend visiting [businessdebtline.org](https://www.businessdebtline.org/). You will find lots of information for sole traders and businesses along with a budget tool to give you visibility about your company finances and help you to budget. They also have a coronavirus factsheet which lists all the help available to help you through the current crisis.
<https://www.businessdebtline.org/> for England and Wales
<https://www.businessdebtline.org/S/Pages/default.aspx> for Scotland
- The Federation of Small Business has a host of advice and guidance for small businesses and the self-employed. Find out more at <https://www.fsb.org.uk/>

Looking after yourself

Don't forget that we have partnered with Big White Wall so everyone in horticulture can access this fantastic mental health support network. This week we're focussing on their courses. Big White Wall's online programmes are evidence-based courses which are designed to help people manage a variety of mental health difficulties and improve their health and wellbeing at a pace which suits them. There are also courses available which support members with their self-development, such as assertiveness training and managing procrastination. Find out more about their courses and how to access this support network [here](#).

We need your help too

We have sadly needed to cancel or postpone all our fundraising events planned for what is usually our busiest time of the year for garden tours and flower shows. Hence, like many charities, our fundraising income has taken a sudden dive, just at the time when demand for our help has increased hugely.

With the reduction in plant sales at a critical time of the year and the reduction in wages for many in our industry we're expecting the demands on our services teams to continue to grow over the rest of the year, and into next. So, we're asking you to please, do what you can to help us – join in with our HORTAID-20 campaign.

There are lots of ways to help fundraise from simply selecting Perennial as your charity of choice on Amazon Smile to taking part a fundraising challenge. Please [click here](#) to find out more.