

Independent businesses

Independent businesses have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. As the nation moves towards lifting remaining restrictions, they must be financially supported to get them back on their feet. The Greens [set out a five-point plan](#) last December for small businesses and want big and small businesses alike to play a leading role in a Green Recovery that prioritises the wellbeing of the planet and of people. We would support the creation of a bigger, more diverse future for business, through stakeholder finance, ownership rooted in communities and business done for the common good. The Greens place huge value on the importance of small, family-run businesses and realise how hard it can be to start and run these enterprises. Three important areas of focus are:

Recovery from the pandemic

- Greens would increase the money provided through grants for businesses that had to close due to lockdown. Currently, the payment tallies £1,300 per month for those with a rateable value of £15,000, which is simply not enough.
- Many businesses, like nurseries, have had to remain open throughout lockdown at extra cost to them. Greens are pledging a discretionary grant, administered by councils and paid for by the government, to cover these extra costs.

Extending the business rate holiday and VAT cut

- Greens would extend the business rate holiday for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, with the government providing compensation to local authorities for loss of income. With business rates devolved in Wales, we would also call on the Welsh government to do the same.
- Greens would extend the current tourism VAT cut and expand it to: food and drink served in pubs, bars and restaurants, theatre, music concerts, museum and gallery tickets, and hotel bookings.
- This would be part of a process to review our VAT system so it differentially supports smaller shops compared to larger and online ones.

Greater access

- The Green Party wants 15% of government contracts to be granted to small or micro businesses, while making it easier for a business to apply for a contract.

We would provide independent businesses access to lending at affordable rates by establishing a network of regional mutual banks; these would provide funding for locally-led economic initiatives and opportunities, including co-operatives and non-profit businesses.