



Payroll in a Pandemic:

Make sure your practice isn't
left behind

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In this guide, we look at how accountants can structure, organise and build a high-performing payroll processing service that is built for the next challenge. Discover common sense ways savvy accountants are ensuring that COVID-19 doesn't slow down their payroll performance. Plus, you will learn how you can respond quickly and effectively to avoid payroll disruption in the future.



What's inside?

- What payroll performance issues you shouldn't accept
- Top tips to ensure that COVID-19 doesn't impact your payroll performance
- How COVID-19 has impacted payroll forever
- How BrightPay can help your bureau
- Your next steps

About BrightPay

BrightPay is created by Ireland's number one payroll software provider - Thesaurus Software. With over 30 years' industry experience, BrightPay are supporting over 300,000 accountants and businesses. We've helped employers across the UK and Ireland in the complexity of COVID-19 and payroll, including COVID-19 webinars, payroll upgrades and online guidance. During this difficult period, BrightPay has maintained an impressive 99% customer satisfaction rating.



Getting your clients through the coming months is not going to be plain sailing. Once the initial impact of COVID-19 has been alleviated, it is going to take some time for the full repercussions to present themselves.

How will the increased impact of COVID-19 on your clients affect the firm's payroll workload in the long run? And how can you give clients the best possible advice and support in these challenging times?

Dealing with the impact of an ongoing crisis

A lot of pressure has been put on small business owners since the pandemic first started. The Government may be offering some support, but there's also an expectation that business owners will keep employees in a job. It's a big responsibility for your clients and it's causing high rates of stress and worry.

According to recent research, over 66,500 employers received TWSS subsidy payments totalling €2.9 billion in respect of approximately 664,000 employees through the scheme. In addition to this, 41,200 employers registered for EWSS in total with 22,100 subsidies processed so far in 2020 totalling to €143.5 million. These figures take account of the impact of the Level 5 restrictions and also reflect the impact of the changes to the EWSS rates which took effect from 20 October and which will remain in place until 31 January 2021.

Ensuring that a business can survive the crisis is no walk in the park, and accountants are having to shoulder the burden of providing essential advice, becoming business key workers during the pandemic – and not always being paid for the extra work that this involves.

Top tips to ensure COVID-19 does not slow down your bureau's payroll performance

Reduce Business Overheads:

As businesses look at creative ways to save jobs, many are moving to reduce their business overheads. Savvy bureaux have already saved thousands by opting for a payroll provider that does not have an additional charge for PAYE Modernisation, payslips or customer support. BrightPay is one of the most [competitively priced payroll software](#) on the market with no contract ties applicable.



Working from Home Policy:

Most bureaux have successfully adopted a work from home policy. Your [payroll software](#) should easily facilitate remote working with additional user access. Check the costs of remote access or additional users with your payroll provider as these hidden costs can soon add up. Users can access BrightPay from 10 different locations which minimises any additional outgoings for your bureau.



Achieving Business Continuity in the Cloud:

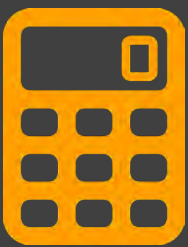
In the 'new normal', clients and employees expect to access their payroll information in the cloud. [Self-service online portals](#) are changing the way bureaux interact and communicate with their clients. Cloud access should facilitate the ability for clients to manage their employee's annual leave, submit employee hours to the payroll processor, approve the payroll run, access employee payslips, run payroll reports and distribute HR documents to their employees. BrightPay Connect, our cloud add-on offers all these things whilst providing the cloud functionality to get things done smarter and faster.





Quality and Speed of COVID-19 Updates:

The Government schemes are constantly changing, and it is vital your payroll provider can cater for the schemes well in advance of the changes being implemented. In a recent survey, BrightPay achieved 98.4% rating for our overall handling of COVID-19 including customer support, payroll upgrades, COVID-19 webinars and online support. Learn more about [BrightPay's COVID-19 response plan](#).



Automation of EWSS Calculations in BrightPay:

Although the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) is a subsidy payable to employers only and will not impact employee payslips, several steps need to be performed within the payroll software in order to operate the EWSS. As the government schemes change, BrightPay includes step-by-step online documentation to assist users.

Mandatory COVID-19 Response Plan:

The Government published the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace as the Irish economy reopens. As part of the protocol, employers need to appoint a Lead Worker Representative, complete a COVID-19 Risk Assessment, develop a COVID-19 Response Plan, implement pre-return to work forms, keep a log of group work, review other company policies and keep up-to-date with the latest advice on returning to work. BrightPay Connect allows users to distribute pre-return to work forms and other HR documents to employees and gives the employer or manager visibility as to when the employee views the document.



Continuity Planning & The Risk of Data Loss:

Most businesses are now working remotely for the foreseeable future which leaves many businesses exposed to data loss. Do you have safeguards in place to minimise business interruption and restore your organisation to normal? One of the main advantages of having cloud access is that you can back up your client's payroll data instantly. BrightPay Connect will automatically backup your payroll data every 15 minutes, allowing you to restore your client data should the unforeseen happen.



Automate your Payroll Workflows:

A major bottleneck for many bureaus is requesting and receiving employee hours from their clients each pay period. This can result in numerous emails back and forth to clients and can typically result in errors being sent from clients. The current COVID-19 environment should be a catalyst to make the leap to automated payroll workflows that save time and reduce those errors. BrightPay Connect is designed with a **facility to request hours from clients**. Clients can upload a CSV file or manually enter their employees' hours including new starter details which then synchronises back to the payroll software on your desktop. From there, bureaus can complete the payroll run and send it to the client for their approval through a secure online portal.



Excellent Customer Support:

During COVID-19, a common frustration for accountants is poor customer support and long wait times, often resulting in customers not renewing with their payroll provider.

BrightPay's COVID-19 response plan involved additional staffing and increased hours to assist customers. Our dedicated team answered 74,000 support calls and responded to over 67,000 emails (March to September 2020); a 64% increase compared with 2019. An additional 122 hours of customer support overtime resulted in 97% of support emails being responded to within 24 hours.

Adapt Your Long-Term Business Strategy:

For many bureaus, the strategy is simple - stay in business with minimum job cuts. Once the initial impact of COVID-19 has been alleviated, it is going to take some time for the full repercussions to present themselves. It is wise for bureaus to take action by putting in place cost savings strategies that could see additional profits. Payroll market trends are taking a dramatic shift with payroll bureaus looking for more affordable solutions but also innovative products. BrightPay is a [multi-award-winning payroll software](#) that boasts a 99% customer satisfaction rating and 5-star review, costing in a range from €339 to €659 per tax year.



In summary

Payroll firms and accountants are being massively impacted by COVID-19 and are very much on the front-line assisting clients, often at no additional charge. It is crucial to understand where your vulnerabilities lie and how to mitigate any further potential impacts. Now is the time to plan and future-proof your payroll bureau business for survival. Payroll bureaus must make the right changes and shift the way they operate to better achieve a long-term sustainable plan.

It is worth the time and money to invest in your people and even more so in automating your payroll processes. Being in control of [clients' payroll systems](#), and having automated payroll processes at your fingertips, has never been more important. A resilient approach should involve managing people differently, streamlining manual processes and migrating to cloud portals. Making simple changes and investing in payroll solutions with integrated cloud access can save money, improve productivity and increase profits.

It is important to choose the right payroll provider that will ensure COVID-19 does not slow down your bureau's payroll processing. Research different payroll software systems and compare them against what you are currently using. Choose the right [payroll technology](#) that not only streamlines your payroll processes but supports your business continuity needs. Ask other providers if they have any hidden costs, what their customer satisfaction rating is, and how they have helped their customers through COVID-19.

For further information:

- [Join the BrightPay webinars to hear from payroll experts](#)
- [Visit the BrightPay COVID-19 Hub](#)
- [BrightPay's Response to COVID-19](#)

Payroll Software You Can Trust...



Payroll Software of
the Year 2018 & 2019



Trusted by over
300,000 Businesses



99% Satisfaction Rate
& 5-Star Rating



30 Years' Experience
Developing Payroll

Your next steps:

1

Join our free webinars

Hear from the payroll experts on how the latest updates are impacting payroll and how you can best support your clients.

[Register Now](#)

2

Attend a free online demonstration of BrightPay

Discover more ways that BrightPay and BrightPay Connect can help your accountancy practice or payroll bureau come back stronger from this challenging time.

[Book a Payroll Demo](#)

3

Start a 60-day free trial of BrightPay

BrightPay's 60-day free trial is a great way for you to discover just how easy BrightPay is to use without having to make any commitment.

[Download Now](#)