

£14 million financial support for England's zoos unveiled

The government has today (Monday 4 May) launched [a £14 million support fund for zoos and aquariums](#) in the latest step to protect businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The social distancing guidance, urging people to stay at home and save lives, has meant that zoos and aquariums have had to close temporarily for the safety of their staff and customers.

Zoos are undertaking valuable work at this time to ensure that their animal welfare standards are upheld and the animals' health needs continue to be met. This funding will help zoos cover costs relating to animal keeping such as feed, heating and security.

Animal welfare remains a top priority for this government and Defra will continue to work with some of the largest zoos to discuss additional concerns about funding in the longer term.

Lord Goldsmith, Animal Welfare Minister, said:

Even in these very difficult times, the government remains absolutely committed to high standards of animal welfare. We know that many of our zoos are facing real pressure as a consequence of coronavirus, and we have made support available to them, including business rates relief and the business interruption loan scheme.

This new Zoo Support Fund is designed to help those that need additional support to maintain the welfare of their animals. We are continuing to engage with some of the largest zoos to respond to their additional specific concerns.

Establishments covered by the Zoo Licensing Act will be able to bid for a portion of the £14 million that has been made available. Individual grant awards will be capped at £100,000.

The measures will support the English industry, in particular smaller zoos, during this challenging time and follow an unprecedented package of financial support already announced by the government.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Steve Barclay MP, said:

Zoos don't just provide a great family day out, but are vital for education, protecting endangered species and conservation work.

This fund, on top of the existing package of support we're offering

businesses, will mean that zoos across the country are helped to get through the coronavirus outbreak.

Dr Madelon Willemsen, CEO of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA), said:

BIAZA zoos and aquariums have gone to extraordinary lengths to mitigate and adapt to the Covid-19 outbreak while maintaining excellent care for their animals despite the loss of income.

We are pleased to have worked with Defra in shaping this much needed crisis support for zoos and aquariums. We continue to work to ensure those most in need have access to this and other forms of support.

There are a number of support schemes already available to zoos, including business rates relief, the business interruption loan scheme and the job retention scheme. This is additional to other available relief such as VAT deferral.

[The UK and Egypt establish basis for cooperation during COVID-19](#)

The British Ambassador to Egypt, Sir Geoffrey Adams, has agreed with Minister of International Cooperation Dr. Rania Al-Mashat the key elements of the UK's engagement with Egypt in the two countries' shared fight against the Coronavirus.

In a letter addressed to Minister Al-Mashat, the British Ambassador set out the UK's support for the Ministry's efforts, in line with its People, Projects, and Purpose framework.

Under this framework, the Embassy and British businesses will work together to address the immediate medical needs of both Egypt and the UK. The UK has already provided training to over 250 Egyptian medical staff, equipping them with advanced skills in Intensive Care, Basic Life Support, and Cardiovascular Life Support. Vodafone has donated EGP10 million, while BP has offered EGP2 million to equip quarantine hospitals with ventilators and to support the treatment of COVID-19 patients. AstraZeneca has also donated 20,000 rapid Coronavirus-related tests worth USD100,000, in addition to 100,000 surgical masks, 100,000 gloves and 3,000 disposable gowns.

The UK is placing emphasis on support to healthcare provision, social protection, and the economic reform agenda in its programs in Egypt. On 20

January this year a [joint statement](#) was issued by the then Secretary of State for International Development of the United Kingdom and Minister Al-Mashat, outlining a number of areas of enhanced economic cooperation.

Meanwhile, the UK is playing a leading role in the global campaign against the Coronavirus. It is the G7 lead on support to vulnerable countries during the crisis. The UK has confirmed a responsive funding package of more than GBP 700m, including GBP 130m contribution to the UN, GBP 65m of which is allocated to the WHO. The UK is co-hosting the virtual Global Coronavirus Response Summit on 4 May, and will host the virtual Global Vaccines Summit on 4 June.

[PHE priorities in health and social care: 2020 to 2021](#)

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

[Fiona Dickie on becoming the Pubs Code Adjudicator](#)

Today I step up to become the Pubs Code Adjudicator at a time when the pubs sector faces an unparalleled threat from COVID-19 and the livelihoods of tied tenants are on the line. It is vital that my focus is on upholding the principles of the Pubs Code through this emergency. It is now more important than ever that tenants have the benefit of their statutory rights and protections, and that the regulated pub-owning businesses (POBs) are adhering to the Pubs Code principles of fairness and transparency.

Directors of all the POBs regulated by the PCA have signed a declaration which stops the clock on many important Code rights. These arrangements ensure that these rights are preserved and protected, but do not stop any tenant from taking any available Code step to access their rights.

It is important that the industry as a whole has a safe journey through the difficult days the country is facing. We all want to see a strong tenanted pub sector at the other end, and this means taking an intelligent approach to regulation. The PCA is here to assist the journey. However, I am acutely aware of the stress and uncertainty tied pub tenants are facing at this time, and of the potential for a long-term impact on their businesses and their relationships with their POB of large rental debts from the period of lockdown. My involvement in promoting Code rights as the industry pulls itself out of the impact of the outbreak will be sustained for as long as it takes

I am expecting POBs to make themselves accountable for how they are supporting, and can support, their tenants to ensure they survive the outbreak, by being transparent and fair about their approaches. This includes being consistent and documenting their conversations with individual TPTs, in line with Pubs Code requirements . I understand that tenants may be feeling financial and mental strain in these uncertain times, and this makes it all the more important that POBs take care to ensure that they behave towards them in ways which cannot be received as oppressive or unreasonable.

While my immediate priorities include ensuring the POBs are complying with the Pubs Code and their individual declarations and are supporting their tenants through the emergency and as they return to trading, I am also focusing on wider priorities around the promotion and upholding of the Code.

I will be working with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the delivery of the statutory review of the Pubs Code with the aim of supporting and strengthening Code rights . In addition, I will be leading on concluding the investigation against Star Pubs and Bars.

It is critical that tenants are aware of the rights and how to access them and so I have made efforts to raise and maintain awareness of the Pubs Code among tenants and the wider industry a personal priority. My team and I will be working to adapt different methods of communications during this time to make them more accessible. More information will be published on the PCA website and we will be launching social media channels to provide more regular updates.

I was new to the pub trade 30 months ago when I took up post as Deputy Pubs Code Adjudicator, but I am not now. I have worked closely with the sector and understand the challenges of the role, but I know the PCA now needs to make a difference at an extraordinary time.

I intend to be clear and frank with the POBs about my expectations that they deliver on their statutory obligations. I will be a strong champion for the rights and protections Parliament has given to tied tenants through the Pubs Code.

As PCA my objective will be to drive the progress forward and ensure that tied tenants can emerge from today's emergency and prosper tomorrow.

Tax credits customers will continue to receive payments even if working fewer hours due to COVID-19

News story

People who can't work their normal hours because of coronavirus (COVID-19) will still receive their usual tax credits payments.



The government has confirmed that people who can't work their normal hours because of coronavirus (COVID-19) will still receive their usual tax credits payments.

Those working reduced hours due to coronavirus or those being furloughed by their employer will not have their tax credits payments affected if they are still employed or self-employed.

These customers do not need to contact HMRC about this change. We will treat customers as working their normal hours until the [Job Retention Scheme](#) and [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme](#) close, even if they are not using either scheme.

We'll use the information we hold about the number of hours they normally work.

Customers can still report any other changes in income, childcare and hours in the normal way. However, they must tell us if they or their partner lose their job, are made redundant or cease trading.

Customers can continue to claim Working Tax Credit and be treated as though they are working their normal hours, but they should check GOV.UK to see if [additional or alternative support](#) is available based on their personal and financial circumstances.

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