

# Update on Fisheries Response Fund: support for aquaculture businesses

English aquaculture businesses producing seafood for the food supply chain may now apply for grants up to a maximum of £10,000 per farm from the government's £10 million Fisheries Response Fund.

The [£10 million fund for England's fishing and aquaculture sectors](#), first announced by Defra and HM Treasury on 17 April, supports fishing and aquaculture businesses that have been adversely impacted by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Around £1 million of the Fisheries Response Fund (FRF) has been allocated to payments towards aquaculture businesses operating costs. The grants of up to £10,000 will directly contribute to ongoing production costs.

Fisheries Minister, Victoria Prentis, said:

"Aquaculture businesses are a significant part of England's seafood industry – supporting local jobs as well as quality produce for consumption at home and export around the world.

"These grants from our £10 million Fisheries Response Fund will make a real difference to these businesses, ensuring that they can continue to operate and support both our export trade and the economy of many local communities."

The fund is being administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of Defra.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive of the Marine Management Organisation, said:

"MMO has mobilised quickly to deliver three financial support schemes.

"In the last two weeks, we've actioned all Fisheries Respond Fund applications received from the catch sector (so far, making payments directly to over 1,100 fishing vessel owners with a value of nearly £4m); launched the new £1m Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme to support projects that support the sales and consumption of locally caught fish; and are now about to start administering payments to qualifying aquaculture businesses.

"Our key focus is to ensure this significant financial support gets to fisheries and aquaculture businesses as quickly and smoothly as possible."

This final part of the FRF scheme is focussed on supporting aquaculture business that are active shellfish or trout farms in England, holding a business and a farm Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) authorisation number, and who produce shellfish and trout for direct human consumption.

From Thursday, 7 May 2020, eligible businesses will be contacted directly by MMO with further details on how to apply.

For further information on the fund criteria and eligibility, please see the [guidance](#).

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## Dedicated app for social care workers launched

- Care workers get access to guidance, learning resources, discounts and other support all in one place
- Support will be offered on mental health and wellbeing through toolkits and resources
- The Care Workforce app will unite 1.5 million care workers across more than 18,000 care providers

A new dedicated app for the adult social care workforce in England has been launched to support staff on-the-go through the coronavirus pandemic.

The social care workforce is spread across 18,000 providers and it can often be difficult to communicate with all staff in one clear way. The Care Workforce app, developed with NHSX and the NHS Business Services Authority, will be introduced under the new CARE brand and will act as a single digital hub for social care workers to access relevant updates, guidance, support and discounts from their phone.

The CARE branded app comes in response to calls from the sector for a more unified and connecting brand, and can be downloaded on Apple and Android supported smartphones or accessed by browsers on any device.

New mental wellbeing guidance will soon be published to further support the care sector with bespoke advice for care workers. This guidance will be signposted on the Care Workforce app when available. The tool will be the first of its kind provided for the care workforce, and will:

- act as a single one-stop-shop providing the sector with all the latest guidance, wellbeing support and advice they need to protect themselves from COVID-19 and keep themselves well
- provide access to learning resources on crucial areas such as infection control as well as practical advice and support for mental wellbeing
- show how care workers can take advantage of offers available to NHS and social care staff, including free car parking and discounts through organisations and initiatives like Discounts for Carers and the Blue Light Card
- signpost free access to apps like Silvercloud, Daylight and Sleepio, which can help boost users' mental wellbeing through programmes covering sleep, stress and resilience

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It builds on a cash injection of £1.6 billion for local authorities, as well as the recently launched [social care action plan](#), which set out a series of measures including ramping up testing and access to personal protective equipment (PPE).

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

“Our incredible social care workforce are on the frontline day and night providing quality care to the most vulnerable in our society during the most unprecedented time in our history. The whole country is incredibly grateful of the work they continue to do for our loved ones.

“As part of our continued work to back the care sector, we have launched a new app specifically for care workers to make sure they have the most up-to-date guidance to keep them safe, connected with their colleagues across the country, which also allows them to access discounts like their NHS counterparts.

“It’s available to download right now, and I would urge everyone in social care to do so.”

Helen Whately, Minister of State for Care, commented:

“The care sector is a vital part of our health and care frontline and this pandemic has shone a light on the skills, commitment and dedication of our care workers.

“The Care Workforce app is there to help those frontline care workers – from providing the latest news and guidance, to sharing stories to draw inspiration from in challenging times, and as a way of connecting colleagues from Cornwall to Carlisle. I hope it will help unite people working in care across the country.

“The care workforce have long asked for a single, unifying brand to connect them to each other and I am delighted that we are able today to launch this important new tool under the CARE umbrella.”

In the future, the app will act as a networking platform to bring the social care workforce together in one place to share learnings, best practice and inspiring stories from across the sector

A version of the app is also under consideration for NHS workers.

This follows the launch of the social care action plan, which set out a range of measures to protect staff and residents living in care homes.

The workforce will be expanded by 20,000 through a new recruitment campaign, while NHS nurses and student nurses are being deployed to support social care sector where appropriate.

Care homes are being supported with new ways to order PPE, with millions of items delivered so far. Care staff, alongside residents, are now eligible for testing, whether or not they have symptoms, and since this was announced on 28 April we have delivered over 30,000 tests.

An extra £1.6 billion has also been made available to local authorities to address the additional pressures from COVID-19, with a further £1.3 billion available to provide enhanced support for patients being discharged.

Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive, Care England, said:

“This new app will help to keep the social care workforce fully informed of all the issues in social care, and it will provide an easily accessible and portable resource for every care worker”

Kathryn Smith, Chief Executive at the Social Care Institute for Excellence, said:

“It’s more than welcome to see an app like this that’s specifically designed with the adult social care workforce in mind.

“That workforce has many challenges at the moment, including how to keep services running during the COVID-19 situation; but also how to ensure that issues such as safeguarding, mental capacity and rights under the Care Act are not lost. We’ve all been using technology a lot more in the last few weeks and I’m sure that this will be a really useful addition to help the workforce to provide the best care and support that they can during the current crisis.”

Vic Rayner, Executive Director, National Care Forum, said:

“Care Workforce is a welcome addition to the frontline. It brings together all the important guidance and information for staff into one place – making sure the workforce have at their fingertips the information they need to deliver great care.”

Alex Fox, OBE FRSA, Chief Executive, Shared Lives Plus, said:

“It has never been more important for everyone working in social care to be connected with each other and well informed about the latest changes in policy. The app will help all of us with this. Shared Lives Plus is working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care through the pandemic and we encourage everyone working in Shared Lives to sign up.”

Skills for Care CEO Oonagh Smyth said:

“Technology has proved to be incredibly valuable in keeping our workforce informed during this crisis and this new app specifically aimed at the social care workforce will help workers get easy access to the information they need, when they need it.”

“Hard-pressed care workers now have an app that offers them access to useful resources on the move. They can get details on offers they can take up from

companies recognising the great work that they are doing and information on how they can support their wellbeing during these very challenging times.”

1. The app will be available to download from on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, as well as being accessible online at <https://workforce.adultsocialcare.uk>.
2. It is available for anyone working in social care in England.
3. This follows the launch of the social care action plan which set out a range of measures to protect staff and residents living in care homes.
4. The workforce will be expanded by 20,000 through a new recruitment campaign, while NHS nurses and student nurses are being deployed to support social care sector where appropriate. Care homes are being supported with new ways to order PPE, with millions of items delivered so far. Care staff, alongside residents, are now eligible for testing, whether or not they have symptoms, and since this was announced on April 28 we have delivered more than 30,000 tests.
5. An extra £3.2 billion has also been made available to local authorities to address the additional pressures from COVID-19, with a further £1.3 billion available to provide enhanced support for patients being discharged.

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## [New funding to support dairy farmers through coronavirus](#)

England’s dairy farmers will be able to access up to £10,000 each to help them overcome the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

The new funding will help support dairy farmers – who together continue to produce over 40 million litres of milk every day – who have seen decreased demand for their products as bars, restaurants and cafes have had to close.

Today’s announcement is the latest action from the government to support dairy farmers, building on the unprecedented levels of support already announced by the Chancellor and our recent action to [temporarily relax some elements of UK competition law](#) to allow suppliers, retailers and logistics providers in the dairy industry to work more closely together on some of the challenges they are facing.

With some dairy farmers facing financial difficulties and excess milk, the new fund will provide support for those most in need. Eligible dairy farmers will be entitled to up to £10,000 each, to cover 70% of their lost income during April and May to ensure they can continue to operate and sustain production capacity without impacts on animal welfare.

It also comes as the government today backed a £1 million campaign to boost milk consumption and help producers use their surplus stock.

**Environment Secretary George Eustice said:**

Our dairy industry plays a crucial role in feeding our nation and we are doing all we can to ensure they are properly supported during this time.

We've already relaxed competition laws so dairy farmers can work together through the toughest months, but recognise there is more to be done. That is why today we have kick started a new campaign to boost milk consumption and have announced a further package of funding.

We will continue to stand alongside our dairy farmers through this difficult period.

The dairy sector is the UK's largest farming sector, with milk accounting for 16.85% of total agricultural output in the UK in 2018. Since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, the dairy industry has faced challenges of excess milk, falling prices, and reduced demand from the hospitality sector.

While many farmers have already rerouted their milk supplies to retailers and supermarkets – which have seen increased demand in recent weeks – today's move will give the farmers in the greatest need the financial assurance to ensure they can remain operational, sustain production capacity and continue to meet animal welfare demands at this time.

Eligible dairy farmers who have lost more than 25% of their income over April and May due to coronavirus disruptions will be eligible to access this funding for those qualifying months, with no cap set on the number of farmers who can receive this support or on the total funding available.

It comes as the [Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board \(AHDB\) has today launched a new marketing campaign](#) to increase consumption of milk in UK households, funded jointly by the AHDB, Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Executive and Dairy UK.

The £1 million promotional campaign will help to increase sales of dairy products by encouraging the public to drink more milk.

**Christine Watts, AHDB's Chief Marketing Officer said:**

This new innovative marketing campaign is a fantastic demonstration of what can be achieved when industry and Government join together to meet a common supply chain challenge.

It will support dairy farmers and processors in driving demand for milk within households across the UK. It will link consumers' love of the great taste of milk and dairy with how we are all having to manage these challenging times at home and at work.

The UK's food supply chain remains resilient and the Environment Secretary continues to meet regularly with representatives of the food and farming industry to ensure people can get the food and groceries they need.

**Further information:**

- The new hardship fund announced today can be accessed by eligible dairy farmers in England. More detail on the fund will be issued in due course
- The new AHDB dairy campaign is jointly funded by Dairy UK, Defra, the Welsh Government, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive and will be implemented across the UK
- The temporary relaxation of competition rules for the dairy industry is effective across the UK

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## **Bank of England consent to transfer of authorisation to issue Northern Irish banknotes**

- 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.

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## **Flexible operating hours pilots conclude at Manchester and Brentford**

News story

Pilots are now being independently evaluated after testing civil and family hearings at different times.



A pilot scheme to test whether more flexible operating hours can be used for court hearings has come to an end ahead of an independent evaluation process.

Courts traditionally sit between 10am and 4pm, but from September 2019 to March 2020, Manchester Civil Justice Centre and Brentford County Court operated outside of these traditional hours.

The aim of the pilot in civil and family cases was to test the impact of using court and tribunal hearing rooms more intensively, and how a wider range of hours offers the potential to improve access to justice. During the six-month pilot a range of cases were heard, including family financial dispute resolution, road traffic accident, small claims and rent possessions.

To assess the pilots, HMCTS has appointed IFF Research and Frontier Economics to provide an independent evaluation. The evaluation will include feedback from members of the public, court staff and the judiciary on their experiences. Their findings will be published in a report later in the year.

Huw Evans, HMCTS service manager for the flexible operating hours pilot, said:

Flexible operating hours have been piloted as part of HMCTS's £1 billion investment in reforming our courts and tribunals system, which aims to ensure our justice system is just, proportionate and accessible.

We're grateful to court users, our staff, the judiciary, local legal professionals and other organisations who have taken part in the pilot and given their feedback.

Any decision about the use of flexible operating hours in the future will only be made after careful consideration of the independent evaluation and the effects, costs and benefits of flexible operating hours across the justice system.

The independent evaluation report is due later this year. Once available, the report will be published on GOV.UK.

- Manchester has been testing late sittings (4.30pm to 7pm) involving

civil and family work

- Brentford has been testing early (8am to 10.30am) and late sittings (4.30pm to 7pm) involving civil work only

More information about [HMCTS' flexible operating hours pilot](#) and the wider [HMCTS reform programme](#) is on GOV.UK.

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