

DCMS Museums and Galleries Sector Coronavirus bulletin

18 March 2020

1. Key updates

NEW [Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement 17 March](#)

The Chancellor announced an extended support package. The two main schemes will be up and running next week. These are:

- Support for liquidity amongst large firms, with a major new scheme being launched by the Bank of England to help them bridge Coronavirus disruption to their cash flows through loans.
- Increasing the amount businesses can borrow through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme from £1.2 million to £5 million, and ensuring businesses can access the first 6 months of that finance interest free, as Government will cover the first 6 months of interest payments.

Key other measures:

- Confirmation that government advice to avoid pubs, clubs and theatres etc. is sufficient for businesses to claim on their insurance where they have appropriate business interruption cover for pandemics in place.
- Including new legal powers in the Covid Bill enabling the government to offer whatever further financial support we think necessary to businesses
- Providing £20 billion of business rates support and grant funding to help the most-affected firms manage their cashflow through this period by
 - giving all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England a 100% business rates holiday for the next 12 months
 - increasing grants to small businesses eligible for Small Business Rate Relief from £3,000 to £10,000
 - providing further £25,000 grants to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses operating from smaller premises, with a rateable value over £15,000 and below £51,000
- Mortgage lenders have agreed they will support customers that are experiencing issues with their finances as a result of Covid-19, including through payment holidays of up to 3 months. This will give people the necessary time to recover and ensure they do not have to pay a penny towards their mortgage in the interim.

NEW [PM Statement](#)

In response to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Prime Minister has announced changes to the advice on how we work, particularly for those who are more vulnerable, or who have a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus in their household.

The advice outlines the following measures:

- Households should self-isolate for 14 days if any one member of the household has symptoms of a cough or a fever

- Social distancing advice for everyone. This includes:
 - Advising against social mixing in the community (e.g. at the cinema, theatre, pubs, restaurants and clubs)
 - Remote access to NHS and other essential services
 - Advising varying of daily commute - less use of public transport or during off-peak hours
 - Advising working from home, where possible
- Advising more vulnerable groups (eg 70+, pregnant women and those with particular health conditions) that they should follow social distancing measures more rigorously for 12 weeks

NEW [Stay at home if you have coronavirus symptoms](#)

NEW [Guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection](#)

- if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when your symptoms started. (See [ending isolation](#) section below for more information)
- if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- for anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.

NEW [Guidance on social distancing and for vulnerable people](#)

- Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- They are:
 1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough;
 2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible;
 3. Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to [employer guidance](#) for more information;
 4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
 5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
 6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.
- Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as is pragmatic.
- For those who are over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant, we strongly advise you to follow the above measures as much as you can, and to significantly limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible.

NEW [Mass gatherings](#)

- In line with the social distancing guidance it is advised that large gatherings should not take place. While the risks of transmitting the disease at mass gatherings are relatively low, these steps will also allow emergency services that would have been deployed for these events to be prioritised in alleviating pressure on public services.

NEW [Foreign Secretary advises against all non-essential travel overseas](#)

- The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) has advised against all non-essential international travel, initially for a period of 30 days. This advice takes effect immediately.
- This change in travel advice reflects the pace at which other countries are either closing their borders or implementing restrictive measures in response to the global coronavirus pandemic.

NEW [Health Secretary statement to Parliament](#)

- Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock updated Parliament on the significant steps taken to control the spread of coronavirus.

2. Guidance

[Coronavirus: collected guidance](#)

- Find guidance about coronavirus (COVID-19) for health professionals, businesses, schools and other organisations.

[Covid-19: Guidance to employers and businesses](#)

- Guidance for employees, employers and businesses in providing advice about the novel coronavirus, COVID-19.

[National Museum Directors' Council statement](#)

[Arts Council England: coronavirus guidance](#)

3. Support for business

[Support for businesses](#)

- The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced support for businesses in the budget on 10 March 2020. The Chancellor set out a package of temporary, timely and targeted measures to support public services, people and businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19.
- This includes a package of measures to support businesses including:
 - a statutory sick pay relief package for SMEs
 - a Business Rate Relief for small businesses and pubs
 - small business grant funding of £3,000 for all business in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) and Rural Rates Relief
 - the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme to support long-term viable businesses who may need to respond to cash-flow pressures by seeking additional finance
 - the HMRC Time To Pay Scheme

[Support for those affected by Covid-19](#)

- More information about the package of measures announced at Budget 2020 to support public services, individuals and businesses affected by Covid-19.

[Tax helpline to help businesses affected by coronavirus](#)

- The helpline allows any business or self-employed individual who is concerned about paying their tax due to coronavirus to get practical help and advice. Up to 2,000 experienced call handlers are available to support businesses and individuals.

4. Key information sources

Check regularly for updates

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): UK government response](#)
[Sign up for email alerts](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance for employers and businesses](#)
- [Public Health England](#)
- [NHS guidance](#)
- [FCO Travel advice](#)
- [Government Action Plan](#)

Follow on Twitter

- [Public Health England](#)
- [Department of Health](#)
- [NHS England](#)
- [UK Prime Minister](#)