

# DCMS Museums and Galleries Sector Coronavirus bulletin

23 March 2020

Museums & Cultural Property COVID-19 Response Mailbox  
[covid19-mcp@culture.gov.uk](mailto:covid19-mcp@culture.gov.uk)

## 1. Key updates

### **NEW** [Chancellor: support for business update 20/03/2020](#) **UPDATED INFO 23/03**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a package of support to help workers, in addition to the package set out for business:

#### **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

All UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis. Employers need to:

- Designate affected employees as 'furloughed workers,' and notify employees of this change. Changing the status of employees remains subject to existing employment law and, depending on the employment contract, may be subject to negotiation; and
- Submit information to HMRC about the employees that have been furloughed and their earnings through a new online portal. HMRC will set out details on the information required.
- HMRC will reimburse 80% of furloughed workers wage costs up to a cap of £2,500 per month.
- HMRC are working urgently to set up a system for reimbursement. Existing systems are not set up to facilitate payments to employers. If your business needs short term cash flow support, you may be eligible for a [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan](#).

#### **Deferring Valued Added Tax (VAT) payments for 3 months.**

- The deferral will apply from today until the end of June. This is an automatic offer with no applications required. Businesses will not need to make a VAT payment during this period. Taxpayers will be given until the end of the 2020-21 tax year to pay any liabilities that have accumulated during the deferral period. VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the government as normal.

#### **Income Tax payments due in July 2020 under Self Assessment deferred to January 2021.**

- Income Tax Self-Assessment payments due on the 31 July 2020 will be deferred until the 31 January 2021. This is an automatic offer with no applications required. No penalties or interest for late payment will be charged in the deferral period.

#### **HMRC Time to Pay**

- HMRC have also scaled up their Time to Pay offer to all firms and individuals who are in temporary financial distress as a result of Covid-19 and have outstanding tax liabilities. You can contact HMRC's dedicated Covid-19 helpline to get practical help and advice. This can be reached by calling 0800 0159 559

### **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme**

- A new temporary [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#), delivered by the British Business Bank, will launch early next week to support primarily small and medium-sized businesses to access bank lending and overdrafts.
- The government will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to a per-lender cap on claims) to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs.
- The government will not charge businesses or banks for this guarantee, and the Scheme will support loans of up to £5 million in value. Businesses can access the first 12 months of that finance interest free.

### **NEW** [Social distancing](#)

The Government has announced further measures on social distancing:

- Measures to close entertainment, hospitality and indoor leisure premises, including museums and galleries, across the country to take place from the end of Friday 20 March to limit spread of coronavirus
- New measures will further limit people's sustained social contact as we tackle the spread of coronavirus, guided by scientific evidence
- Public urged to stay at home and limit all but essential travel - people who can work from home should do so

The government has also urged the public to take further steps to protect themselves and the wider population from the coronavirus, including:

- Everyone to stay at home unless they need to get essential supplies such as food and medicines.
- All those able to work from home to do so, unless their work is essential.
- Only traveling if absolutely necessary - while public transport won't stop, this should only be used for essential travel – for example by key workers to travel to and from work.

### **NEW** [Filing charity annual returns during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

Any charity that needs an extension to the annual return deadline can ask the Charity Commission.

### **NEW** [Museums supporting the NHS and the Ambulance service](#)

[NMDC tweet](#)

[The National Archives tweet](#)

NHS currently needs PPE equipment, such as gloves, plastic aprons, hats/shoe covers and FFP3 masks. If you have these to spare following closure, pls drop a line to

[bethany.reynard@nationalmuseums.org.uk](mailto:bethany.reynard@nationalmuseums.org.uk) who will be able to tot up volumes + co-ordinate.

Or directly contact [StrategicIncidentRoom@lond-amb.nhs.uk](mailto:StrategicIncidentRoom@lond-amb.nhs.uk)

### **NEW** [Home working: preparing your organisation and staff](#)

National Cyber-Security Centre advice

### **NEW** [Support for renters](#)

- Emergency legislation to suspend new evictions from social or private rented accommodation while this national emergency is taking place

## 2. Guidance

### [Coronavirus: collected guidance](#)

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

- Latest government guidance for health professionals, businesses, schools and others..

#### [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus 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.

#### [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 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 and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together.
  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 practicable.

#### [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.

#### [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.

### 3. Support for business

#### [Support for businesses](#)

Homepage for government support for business

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

The two main schemes will be up and running from today. These are:

- Support for liquidity amongst large firms - [Covid Corporate Finance Facility](#)
- [The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan 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.

### 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](#)

### 5. Sector guidance

- [Joint statement from National Museum Directors' Council, Association of Independent Museums, Museums Association, Heritage Alliance and National Trust 21/03](#)
- [National Museum Directors' Council statement 17/03](#)
- [Arts Council England: coronavirus guidance](#)
- [Association of Independent Museums guidance](#)
- [Museums Association Statement 17/03](#)