

£100 million rescue package for England's zoos and aquariums

Zoos and aquariums in England are set to receive up to £100 million to help mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith announced today (27 June).

This is a major expansion of a £14 million initial relief fund [announced in May](#) and will run until the end of March 2021 to ensure the necessary long-term support is in place to help with severe financial difficulties.

In England, zoos and aquariums have been able to reopen outdoor areas since 15 June, subject to social distancing measures being in place. From 4 July indoor areas such as cafés and exhibits will be able to follow suit. Allowing these businesses to fully reopen is a vital step towards enabling them to cover some of the cost of animal care.

Throughout the pandemic zoos have continued to ensure animal welfare standards are upheld and animals' health needs are met. This funding will help zoos cover costs relating to animal keeping such as feed, heating and security.

Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

We have a world-leading zoo and conservation sector, and I know how hard zoos have been working to safeguard the welfare of their animals in the face of real financial hardship and uncertainty.

Allowing zoos to reopen has taken off some of the pressure, but the coronavirus pandemic has left them facing long-term financial problems. This funding will therefore be a lifeline for our zoos and aquariums and ensure the quality of animal care continues over the coming months.

I will continue to work with the zoo and conservation community to ensure they get the support they need.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:

Whilst zoos and aquariums are now able to reopen their doors, we know how difficult the past few months have been. That's why we've been doing everything we can to support them.

This extra £100 million of funding will ensure those affected by the outbreak can continue to care for their animals as well as the important conservation and educational work.

Dr Simon Girling, Chair of the Zoo Experts Committee, said:

The Zoo Experts Committee is pleased that the UK Government has listened to the scientific advice of the Committee and not only provided an animal welfare fund at the start of the pandemic for zoos in financial difficulties associated with the lockdown, but they have now made the move to open all parts of zoos from 4 July with appropriate social distancing for public and animal safety.

ZEC welcomes these moves and believes this funding will ensure zoos are able to generate much-needed income to fund the ongoing care of their animals and much of their valuable conservation work at this challenging time for everyone.

Establishments covered by the Zoo Licensing Act will be able to bid for a portion of the £100 million that has been made available. There are already a number of support schemes already available to zoos, including the Job Retention Scheme, VAT deferral, Business Rates Relief, the Business Interruption Loan schemes, the option to reclaim the costs of Statutory Sick Pay and grant funding of up to £25,000 available through the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

The measures will help the sector recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and follow an unprecedented package of financial support already announced by the government.

Further details on the scheme and how to apply will be provided to the sector in due course.

Notes to editors:

- As with all government grants, applications will need to demonstrate that they adhere to strict requirements on delivering value for public money.
- For further enquiries please contact the Defra group press office on 0330 0416560 or 0345 051 8486 out of hours.