

£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.