

The FHI remains in operation – COVID-19

In order to safeguard the health and well-being of fish and shellfish farmers, other stakeholders, and Cefas staff, and following advice from government, the routine aquatic animal health inspection programmes have been suspended until further notice. Aquaculture production businesses (APB's) in England and Wales will not receive their customary disease surveillance and compliance inspection visits by the Fish Health Inspectorate. However, Inspectors will be contacting APB's, endeavouring to remotely check records, complete aspects of compliance where feasible and ascertain the status of stocks onsite. We are grateful for your co-operation in this matter. We will continue to review our field programme week by week considering the current and changing situation with Coronavirus.

The Fish Health Inspectorate has essential statutory field duties that will continue to be delivered while government measures for the control of Coronavirus allow. Specifically, this is emergency response to serious exotic disease outbreaks and disease control and administrative support to the export trade while all health certification inspections are suspended at this time.

We have implemented additional sanitary measures to protect the health of stakeholders and Cefas staff while delivering this work following government advice regarding personal measures to mitigate the risk of [COVID-19](#).

Office based staff are working from home, however, our office services remain open and delivering business as usual for administration and queries relating to authorisation, registration, trade. Electronic correspondence is the preferred method and some enquiries may take longer to respond too than usual. We thank you for your co-operation at this time.

All suspicion of notifiable disease in fish, molluscs and crustacea must be reported to the FHI in the usual way.

Update on Fisheries Response Fund: support for aquaculture businesses

English aquaculture businesses producing seafood for the food supply chain, will now be able to apply for grants up to a maximum of £10,000 per farm from the government's £10 million Fisheries Response Fund, administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). Eligible businesses will be contacted directly by the MMO and for more information, please see the [guidance](#).

Guidance for fish farmers and angling

The Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) does not have a direct remit for fish welfare and cannot give approvals or direct guidance, this responsibility falls to [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#). Any enquires of this nature

need to be directed to them and you should contact your regional office for advice and direction. For movements of live aquatic animals the [Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#) have produced guidance and information for Fisheries and Aquaculture [Defra: Information and guidance](#).

Aquaculture – movements of live fish

As a result of the Government's requirement to keep movements to a minimum, we have received a number of queries about whether movements of live fish from fish farms can continue.

Where the movement of fish is essential to support the food chain, for restocking recreational angling waters (England only), or for fish welfare reasons, they can continue.

Recreational angling

[Follow the government guidance on spending time outside](#)

Contact

You can contact the FHI by:

Open hours are Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4:30pm.

We are maintaining a 24 hour on-call rota with a duty Inspector.

As a team we would like to send our very best wishes to industry, friends and family during such challenging times and thank-you for your co-operation.

Helpful guidance

You may find the following information pages helpful, this includes contacts for [APHA](#) to report animal welfare issues and government information for businesses.