

Tourism Minister launches £1.3 million fund to support Destination Management Organisations

- Funding will provide immediate financial support to DMOs who are at severe risk of closure due to the pandemic

Destination Management Organisations at risk of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic will receive financial support thanks to a new £1.3 million scheme launched by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) today.

The funding, which is available to any at-risk DMO in England which usually receives at least 50% of its income from commercial sources, will be used to cover operating costs and the cost of employees that cannot be furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme because they provide crucial business support services.

Tourism Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

At the moment it is of utmost importance that everyone plays their part and stays at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

However, we also need to act now to help the tourism sector be as strong as possible when we get through this pandemic. Destination Management Organisations will play a vital role in this recovery and this fund will support their essential work.

DMOs provide expert advice and guidance to local businesses and are a crucial part of developing and promoting English tourism. As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, a number of DMOs are currently facing cash flow issues and loss of commercial income. This funding will ensure that DMOs can continue to provide critical business support and start to prepare for recovery.

Under the scheme, DMOs will be able to receive up to £2,500 per month for two members of non-furloughed staff who provide crucial business support services and up to £5,000 to cover operating costs.

VisitEngland Acting CEO Patricia Yates said:

Tourism has been one of the earliest and hardest hit of all economic sectors and this fund will help to ensure DMOs can continue to provide crucial support and expert guidance to the hundreds of thousands of small-to-medium sized businesses that make-up England's tourism sector. Our intention is to get the funds

out quickly to DMOs with a light touch application process as we work with them in recovery planning, to ensure that tourism rebounds and once again becomes one of the most successful and vibrant sectors of the economy.

Notes to editors:

The funding will last until 30th June 2020 and is repurposed from the Discover England Fund. DMOs play a vital role in the development and promotion of English tourism. There are an estimated 150 in England, each running marketing campaigns, providing advice to local tourism businesses and conducting research on behalf of their members. Many also manage central Government grant schemes like the Discover England Fund.