

Government announces £300 million Sport Winter Survival Package to help spectator sports in England

- Emergency funding to protect the immediate future of major spectator sports in England
- Support will be provided to rugby union, horse racing, women's football and the lower tiers of the National League football
- Rugby league, motorsport, tennis, netball, basketball, ice hockey, badminton and greyhound racing also in line to benefit
- Unprecedented sport package by a national government in addition to hundreds of millions of pounds sports clubs have received through the covid business support schemes

Major spectator sports in England will receive a combined £300 million cash injection to protect their immediate futures over the winter period, the Government has announced.

The Sports Winter Survival Package will support sports – from national governing bodies through to clubs – impacted by coronavirus restrictions.

The funding, which will be largely composed of loans, is the most generous of any Government for its domestic sport sector in the world, and will focus on sports severely impacted over the winter.

Support will be provided to rugby union, horse racing, women's football and the lower tiers of the National League. Rugby League, motorsport, tennis, netball, basketball, ice hockey, badminton and greyhound racing are also in line to benefit.

Preliminary allocations have been made on a needs based assessment process and reflect the submissions made from the individual sports, and the funding process will be overseen by an independent decision-making board and supported by Sport England.

Today's announcement builds on support the government has already given the sport sector to help it stay afloat during this difficult time. Earlier this year the Government stepped in to [protect rugby league with £16 million in emergency loans](#), and in October [announced that £100 million would be provided to support council-run leisure centres](#) most in need. Sport England announced a £220 million emergency fund for grassroots clubs in April.

These interventions were on top of the multi-billion pound package of business support from the Treasury that have enabled many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive, including the furlough scheme and business interruption loan scheme. Sports have accessed many hundreds of millions of pounds of support through this.

Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Sports clubs are the beating hearts of their communities, and this £300 million boost will help them survive this difficult winter period.

We promised to stand by sports when we had to postpone fans returning. We are doing just that by delivering another £300 million on top of existing business support schemes.

Britain is a sports powerhouse, and this Government will do everything we can to help our precious sports and clubs make it through covid.

Nigel Huddleston, Sports Minister, said:

Over the past few weeks we have worked tirelessly with sport governing bodies and clubs across the country to fully assess what support is needed, as a result of the decision to postpone the return of fans.

We know the vast majority of sports – many of which operate on tight financial margins – have been making serious cost reductions, such as locking down grounds, taking up the furlough scheme for many staff and halting excess payments.

Whilst the Government's overall economic package has provided a significant buffer, it is absolutely right that we now intervene to protect entire sports, and the communities they support, as we navigate this pandemic.

Steve Barclay, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Sport is a key part of our national life, an important contributor to our economy and a key hub within many communities.

Protecting that sporting heritage and supporting as many jobs within the sports sector as possible is an important step in ensuring that our economy can bounce back from the impacts of the covid pandemic. Alongside this financial support, we now need to ensure that fans can return to sports events as soon as it is safe to do so.

Tim Hollingsworth, Chief Executive of Sport England, said:

These are unprecedented times for our sector, and those sports and

leagues that rely so heavily on spectators for their income that have been especially impacted by the pandemic. The role they play in their local communities is vital and this package of support from Government will be hugely welcomed.

Alongside our wider support for grassroots and community sport, Sport England is working very closely with Government colleagues on the design of this fund and we look forward to playing a key role in its successful and swift delivery.

Full details on the Sports Winter Survival Package, including when it will open, eligibility and how to apply, will be announced by Sport England in due course. It is expected that the first tranche of funding will be distributed in the coming weeks.

ENDS

Notes to editor

Preliminary breakdown of funding by sport, based on needs assessment:

Rugby Union: £135 million

- Rugby Football Union: £44 million
- Premiership Rugby clubs: £59 million
- Championship Rugby clubs: £9 million
- Rugby clubs below Championship: £23 million

Horseracing: £40 million

- Racecourses: £40 million

Rugby League: £12 million

Motorsport: £6 million

- Owners/operators of major circuits (Silverstone, Goodwood, The British Automobile Racing Club, MotorSport Vision): £6 million

Tennis: £5 million

- Lawn Tennis Association: £5 million

Netball: £4 million

- England Netball: £2 million
- Super League Netball: £2 million

Basketball: £4 million

- Basketball England: £1 million
- British Basketball League clubs (including Women's British Basketball League clubs): £3 million

Ice Hockey: £4 million

- Elite League: £4 million

Badminton: £2 million

- Badminton England: £2 million

Greyhound racing: £1 million

- Greyhound Board of Great Britain: £1 million

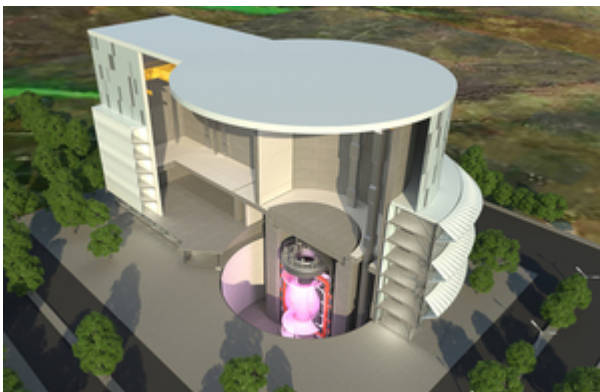
Please note these are all indicative figures based upon provisional returns provided to DCMS to produce an initial assessment of need. Each sport will need to go through an application process to access the support they are eligible for under the final design of the scheme. The final amount received by each sport/organisation may differ from the amounts set out above when final decisions are made by an independent decision-making board, and supported by Sport England.

The devolved administrations have been provided with an upfront guarantee this year of £16 billion above their Spring Budget 2020 funding to support their response to Covid-19. It is for the devolved administrations to decide how to use this funding irrespective of how UK government provides support in England.

UK fusion energy ambitions underlined in Government's 10-point green plan

News story

UKAEA has welcomed the Government's endorsement for fusion energy in its new plan for combatting climate change.



Conceptual illustration of the STEP fusion power plant

The [Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) includes fusion on the UK's pathway for transforming the country's energy provision by 2050, alongside renewables, nuclear fission, hydrogen, carbon capture and electric transport and other clean technologies.

In particular, the Government reaffirms its commitment to UKAEA's STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) programme, which aims to build a prototype fusion power plant in the UK by the early 2040s.

The Government plan states: "We are doubling down on our ambition to be the first country in the world to commercialise fusion energy technology, enabling low carbon and continuous power generation.

"We are already providing £222 million for the visionary STEP programme, which aims to build the world's first commercially viable fusion power plant in the UK by 2040, and £184 million for new fusion facilities, infrastructure and apprenticeships to lay the foundations of a global hub for fusion innovation in the UK."

Design work for STEP is well underway and the search for a site to host the plant will soon be launched.

UKAEA CEO Professor Ian Chapman said:

"The Government's ten-point plan lays a path for how the UK can combat climate change. UKAEA is delighted to see fusion included in the plan and the Government's continued support for realising its huge potential.

"The UK's Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production power plant aims to be one of the first in the world producing electricity from fusion power. This will open the way for fusion to provide clean energy around the world."

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[Bankruptcy restrictions extended for former Chief Executive](#)

Christopher Michael Hutcheson (72) of Wrotham Heath, Kent, received a four-year Bankruptcy Restrictions Order (BRO) from the High Court.

He is now banned from running limited companies and must disclose his status when he attempts to secure £500 or more in credit.

The Official Receiver found that Christopher Hutcheson had transferred his share of the sale proceeds of his family home in September 2017 amounting to more than £328,000.

Christopher Hutcheson transferred the money five months before applying for his own bankruptcy in February 2018 despite having promised the proceeds of the sale to the tax authorities, the court heard.

The Judge found that some of the evidence put forward by Christopher Hutcheson to explain these transactions were disingenuous.

A Bankruptcy Restrictions Order was made at the High Court by Chief Insolvency and Companies Judge Briggs on 5 November.

Fiona Cushley, Deputy Official Receiver at the Insolvency Service, said:

Christopher Hutcheson disposed of his only tangible asset to his wife knowing that this money should be shared amongst all of his creditors.

Christopher Hutcheson was in business for many years and knew how the tax regime works. This transfer only happened after the tax authorities started asking for payment.

The result of this case shows that further restrictions can be made if people do not follow the rules of bankruptcy and the Insolvency Service will not hesitate to take action where appropriate.

Christopher Michael Hutcheson is of Wrotham Heath in Kent and his date of birth is 14/05/1948.

He was the former Chief Executive of Gordon Ramsay Holdings Limited.

Bankruptcy restrictions are wide ranging. The effects are the same whether you are subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or to an undertaking. Guidance on the main statutory consequences flowing from a [bankruptcy restrictions order or undertaking](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[European Commission refers review of Virgin and O2 deal to CMA](#)

Press release

Following a request from the CMA, the European Commission has referred the proposed merger of Virgin Media and Virgin Mobile with O2 to the CMA for investigation.



Following the announcement of the deal on 7 May 2020, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) publicly indicated that it would make a formal request to the European Commission (EC) to review the proposed merger, given its potential impact on competition in several retail and wholesale telecommunication markets in the UK.

The CMA made its formal request for the case to be transferred on 8 October 2020, shortly after the opening of the EC's investigation. That request has today been accepted by the EC and the case will be transferred for the CMA's formal investigation to begin immediately.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive at the CMA, said:

We welcome the European Commission's decision to transfer the proposed deal between Virgin and O2 to the CMA for investigation.

These are incredibly important UK markets, that continue to evolve, and the deal needs to be carefully reviewed to make sure that consumers are protected.

We have worked closely with the European Commission so far and we will build on the work that has already been carried out to make sure that the case can be investigated as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Virgin and O2 have asked the CMA to move quickly to the in-depth Phase 2 stage of its review through a 'fast-track' process.

In most merger cases, a full Phase 1 investigation is needed to determine whether a deal can be cleared or whether further scrutiny is required.

However, merging companies can ask for the CMA's probe to be moved more quickly to Phase 2 where it is clear from an early stage that the deal requires an in-depth investigation.

The CMA expects to accept this request unless it receives any valid

objections to the use of the fast-track process.

The CMA is now inviting views by 26 November on how the merger could affect competition, and on the companies' request for a fast track process. Further opportunities to submit views will also be provided during the Phase 2 investigation.

Please visit the [Liberty Global plc / Telefónica S.A. merger inquiry case page](#) for more information.

Notes to Editors

1. Liberty Global plc (Liberty) owns Virgin Media and Virgin Mobile in the UK, and Telefónica S.A. (Telefónica) owns O2 in the UK.
2. Under the Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act) the CMA has a duty to make a reference to Phase 2 if the CMA believes that it is or may be the case that a relevant merger situation has been created, or arrangements are in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and the creation of that situation has resulted, or may be expected to result, in a substantial lessening of competition within any market or markets in the United Kingdom for goods or services.
3. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.

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[Statement on government procurement following this week's NAO report](#)

On Wednesday the National Audit Office (NAO) published their report into government procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the height of the crisis in April, health services around the world faced an unprecedented urgent situation where demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) far exceeded supply, and global production and supply chains were under severe pressure. The British Medical Association rightly warned at the time that "no doctor should ever have to be in harm's way when they go to work". The government pledged to do whatever it took to protect the people who protect us, deploying hundreds of officials to work night and day to source as much PPE as quickly as possible to protect the NHS and care sector and save lives.

We welcome the NAO report which recognises that the government 'needed to procure with extreme urgency' and 'secured unprecedented volumes of essential

supplies necessary to protect front-line workers'. So far we have delivered over 4.4 billion items of PPE to the frontline with over 32 billion items on order to ensure a continuous supply over the next few months. We are proud of our response and pay tribute to the hard work of officials who have secured these supplies.

We also note the NAO's recent investigation of the government's efforts to increase NHS ventilator capacity, which found that we put in place effective programme management, controlled costs where we could and recovered some costs where appropriate.

The government has rigorous due diligence and robust processes in place for contracts. These processes are led by impartial officials with commercial expertise and as the NAO acknowledged, they found no evidence ministers were involved in procurement decisions.

The vast majority of the PPE procured by the government during the coronavirus crisis met the required clinical safety standards, which is especially impressive given the supply chain issues, the urgency of the situation and the need to explore novel routes. So far only 0.5% of products bought have not met our high clinical standards. We note that governments and public authorities across the UK and around the world faced similar pressures and equivalent challenges.

We thank the NAO for their work, which was based on an analysis of just 20 out of 8,600 contracts. We have always accepted that there are lessons to be learned from how we responded to this unprecedented global pandemic and the government is fully committed to doing so. We will address the report's recommendations in due course.

Claim: The government 'ripped up' procurement rules

Response: This is untrue. All procurement has been done under existing procurement regulations, which predate the pandemic and explicitly allow for emergency procedures, as set out under paragraph 32 2.c of the Public Contract Regulation 2015. Many other [countries](#) including Japan, [New Zealand](#) and Finland, allow similar approaches to procurement, using direct awards to speed up the process of sourcing PPE to protect frontline workers. Direct awards were made by public authorities across the UK, with the Welsh Government adopting central government guidance on emergency procurement, including direct awards. We make no apology for doing everything to secure as much PPE as quickly as possible.

The shortest amount of time possible to run a competition is 25 days. Therefore in situations of genuine crisis, and extreme urgency, as presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was important that we acted quickly and decisively to secure the necessary PPE for front line medical and other services.

The NAO report itself recognises the need for urgency. In their report they say that "in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, public bodies have needed to procure enormous volumes of goods, services and works with extreme

urgency" (page 5), and our procurement activity "secured unprecedented volumes of essential supplies necessary to protect front line workers".

Claim: There was a 'secret referrals' inbox

Response: This is untrue, the inbox was available across government and with MPs.

The government received over 15,000 offers of support from businesses to help with PPE, and MPs were inundated with offers of help from their constituents. MPs rightly were keen to pass on offers.

The government remains hugely grateful for the outpouring of offers of help and the high priority mailbox allowed officials to more quickly assess offers from more credible sources, such as large companies with established contacts and more capable of supplying at speed. The government also ensured that offers of support raised by Opposition MPs, including in the letter of the shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster of 22 April, were dealt with expeditiously.

As the NAO report notes, all PPE offers, no matter from where they came, went through the same eight step official assurance process, including quality checks, price controls and other due diligence. This eight step process has been published in the NAO's report.

Claim: There are ministerial conflicts of interest in the government's procurement

Response: We completely reject this. As the NAO makes clear "we found that the ministers had properly declared their interests, and we found no evidence of their involvement in procurement decisions or contract management" (pg 10, para11).

Claim: There has been a lack of transparency in the government's procurement efforts

Response: We publish all contracts as part our commitment to transparency. We regret that some contracts have not been uploaded in a timely fashion as a result of prioritising staff's time on securing life saving PPE for the NHS. All will be published as soon as possible and significant information is already available online.

Claim: Work started before contracts were put in place

Response: In line with the rules for urgent procurement, and due to the urgency of the work required to respond to the unprecedented situation, in some cases work started before final contract details were put in place. All PPE procurement went through the same eight checks, including quality checks, price controls and other due diligence, and assessed against the same standards.

Claim: There was a lack of transparency on how contracts were awarded

Response: All offers were prioritised by officials based on volume, price, clinical acceptability and lead time. Suppliers were selected based on the product type, forecasted delivery dates, rigorous technical compliance and due diligence checks. These checks included company due diligence checks and systematic price benchmarking.

At the start of the pandemic, guidance was issued by Cabinet Office outlined that procuring with extreme urgency was permissible under the regulatory framework. The guidance referred to the need to keep proper records of decisions, transparency and publication requirements and the need to achieve value for money and use good commercial judgement during any direct award. This guidance is publicly available [here](#)