

Jenrick acts to safeguard affordable homes during pandemic

Press release

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Following unavoidable delays in the construction industry due to coronavirus, it is estimated that the building of 53,000 new affordable homes have stalled. The Government is stepping in to safeguard funding and make sure these much-needed homes are not lost altogether, extending the current Affordable Homes Programme until March 2023.

Homes to be built under the Government's £9 billion scheme originally needed shovels to be in the ground by March 2022. However, today's announcement means that housing associations and councils have a year longer to begin building these homes while still receiving Government support, giving them the flexibility and certainty they need to keep building across the country.

The announcement follows confirmation last week that the new £12 billion Affordable Homes Programme – which will start next year – will support up to 180,000 new affordable homes, including for shared ownership and social rent. The programme will lead to a further £38 billion in public and private investment in affordable housing.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Today I am announcing that we are giving more flexibility to housing associations and councils to help them deliver affordable homes. We've listened closely to the sector and agreed that there

will now have a longer deadline for using Government funding to get these homes built.

Building the homes the country needs is central to the mission of this Government as we prioritise uniting and levelling up the country.

More than 1.5 million new homes have been delivered since 2010, including more than 460,000 affordable homes.

This follows the announcement last week of a package of measures to support home building across England, including:

- An ambition for the Affordable Homes Programme to fund a 1,500 unit pilot of 'First Homes': homes that will be prioritised for local first time buyers and key workers at a 30% discount. The discount will be locked-in to the property in perpetuity, keeping them affordable for generations of families to own.
- Allocating £360 million of funding from the £400 million Brownfield Land Fund to the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, North of Tyne and Tees Valley to support around 24,000 homes.
- Helping smaller developers to access finance for new housing developments by boosting the Home Building Fund with an additional £450 million of investment. This is expected to support delivery of around 7,200 new homes.
- Reforming the planning system to kick start the construction industry, speed up rebuilding and make it easier to build better homes where people want to live. This includes making it easier to repurpose more commercial premises without requiring a planning application, builders no longer needing a planning application to demolish and rebuild unused buildings if they are rebuilt as homes, and property owners being able to build additional space above their properties through a fast track approval process.
- A new, ambitious cross-Government strategy, to be published ahead of the Spending Review, looking at how public sector land can be managed and released so it can be put to better use. This would include measures for home building and improving the environment.

Further Information

- Housing associations and councils will now have a longer deadline to deliver new affordable homes, with the new homes to be started by March

2023.

- Previously, homes delivered using the Government's current £9 billion Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) had to have spades in the ground by March 2022.
- This extension applies to homes which are in contract to be delivered by the current £9 billion Affordable Homes Programme.
- The new £12 billion for affordable housing announced at Budget is in addition to the homes being secured through this extension.
- Today's announcement follows news last month that planning permission deadlines will be extended.
- Planning permission usually expires after three years if work has not started onsite. Sites with consent that have an expiry date between the start of lockdown and the end of this year will see their consent extended to 1 April 2021.
- The Government estimates that by the end of June alone, more than 400 residential permissions providing more than 24,000 new homes would have expired. The extension of planning permission deadlines will help these developments and more to resume as the economy recovers.

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[Ofsted to visit when schools and colleges return in the autumn](#)

Ofsted has announced a programme of 'visits', not inspections, that will aim to reassure parents, ministers and the public about how schools and colleges are managing the return to full education of their pupils and students. Inspectors will use the visits to work collaboratively with leaders, listening and providing appropriate challenge. Ofsted will report back on the national picture across England.

The visits will not be graded. Instead, the outcomes of the discussions with school and college leaders will be published in a brief letter so that parents can understand what steps are being taken to help children back into full time education.

The visits will be piloted with volunteer schools and colleges from September. A return to full education inspection is planned for January 2021, but this date will be kept under review.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, said:

I've been impressed at the hard work and can-do attitude of so many teachers, heads and pupils in such uncertain and difficult times. When schools and colleges open their doors fully in September, they will face a new set of challenges, but also a huge opportunity to rekindle children's love of learning.

Ofsted will be part of the rebuilding effort from September. Our visits will help parents understand how schools and colleges are getting children and students back up to speed after so long at home. And we want to help schools, by having constructive conversations and not passing judgement. We all share the same aim – helping this unique generation make up for lost time and get the high-quality education they deserve.

Ofsted's vital regulatory work in children's social care, nurseries and childminders has continued throughout lockdown to make sure that standards are being maintained and that there is well-run, safe and effective social care and childcare available when needed. Where necessary, enforcement action has continued.

From the autumn, visits will also be made to regulated nurseries and childminders to monitor progress and regulatory standards, prioritising those where we have concerns as well as looking at a wider sample. Local authorities and children's social care providers, including children's homes, will also receive visits from Ofsted inspectors, to check on the experience and progress of children needing protection or care. These visits will not be graded, but if we have serious concerns, we will use our enforcement powers.

[HMCI commentary: Our plans for the autumn](#)

The enormous and desperately sad loss of lives has of course been the most devastating aspect of the coronavirus pandemic. But as we have taken the necessary steps to stop the spread of the virus, there has also been growing concern about the impact on children. The closure of schools to most pupils has not only limited education for millions, but it also makes far too many vulnerable children almost invisible to care services.

I know that teachers and headteachers have been working hard to sustain education through the lockdown. We've seen new ways of working and challenges overcome. The vast majority of schools have remained open – first for key worker and vulnerable children, now for selected year groups.

I've been impressed at the tenacity and resolve of so many school staff, pupils and parents in these uncertain and difficult times. And schools will face a new set of challenges when they open their doors fully in September.

Unequal experiences

Although many children have continued to learn well, and will bounce back straight into their studies, it's a sad fact that children will have had very unequal experiences at home. Not every child will have had a quiet place to work, a supportive adult on hand to help, or access to technology; many will have become demotivated, even with all of these. For some, catching up on lost learning won't be easy. Schools will be thinking hard about how to help the children who need it most, while taking into account the health restrictions, finite resources, staff and space.

But children are resilient, as are schools and teachers. I have every confidence that with clear guidance and careful planning, schools will get pupils where they need to be.

Ofsted's role as schools return

As [schools reopen for all](#), there is an important role for Ofsted. It will be helpful for parents, government and the wider public to get some insight on how schools and other providers are bringing children back into formal education after such a long time away. That's part and parcel of how we recover and set children back on the right path.

In gathering that insight, we need to meet schools where they are, and also to play our part in the rebuilding of education. So our routine inspections will remain suspended for the autumn term, with a plan to resume in January. In the autumn term, Ofsted will be carrying out 'visits' to schools and colleges, not inspections. Our visits will look at how schools and colleges are getting pupils back up to speed after so long at home. And we will help them through collaborative conversations, without passing judgement – this isn't inspection by stealth. We'll use our visits to listen to school leaders' experiences and plans, and to provide constructive challenge.

The visits will not be graded. We'll publish the outcomes of our discussions with leaders in a short letter so that parents can understand what steps are being taken to help children back into full-time education. And we will use what we learn from our visits to report on the picture across England.

The visits will be piloted with volunteer schools and colleges from September, with the full programme starting from October. We'll be having further conversations with unions and others about how the visits will operate and we'll publish more details as appropriate; but I would stress again that this is about a constructive conversation – we're not trying to catch schools out. After all, we share the same aim: helping this generation of children and young people make up for lost time and get the high-quality education they deserve.

Our regulatory work

Of course, our work covers more than just schools and colleges. Our vital regulatory work in children's social care and early years has continued throughout lockdown, even though regular inspections have been suspended. We have worked to make sure that standards are being maintained and that there is well-run, safe and effective social care and childcare available for all who need it.

Going into the autumn, we will be making visits to a range of providers, and these will be designed to reflect the work those providers do and our regulatory role. Visits will be made to nurseries and childminders to monitor progress and regulatory standards, particularly looking at those where we have concerns, but including a wider sample. We will also be visiting local authorities and children's social care providers, including children's homes, to check on the experience and progress of children needing protection or care. These visits will not be graded, but if we have serious concerns, we will use our enforcement powers.

As in everything we do, we will be acting in the best interests of children – whether that's helping to improve their education, or keeping them safe from harm. Life may not return fully to normal yet, but a full return to school in September offers universal benefits to every child. And as education gets back on its feet, Ofsted will play its part.

£1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's world-class cultural, arts and heritage institutions

- Future of Britain's museums, galleries, theatres, independent cinemas, heritage sites and music venues will be protected with emergency grants and loans
- Funding will also be provided to restart construction work at cultural and heritage sites paused as a result of the pandemic

Britain's globally renowned arts, culture and heritage industries will receive a world-leading £1.57 billion rescue package to help weather the impact of coronavirus, the government announced today.

Thousands of organisations across a range of sectors including the performing arts and theatres, heritage, historic palaces, museums, galleries, live music and independent cinema will be able to access emergency grants and loans.

The money, which represents the biggest ever one-off investment in UK culture, will provide a lifeline to vital cultural and heritage organisations across the country hit hard by the pandemic. It will help them stay afloat while their doors are closed. Funding to restart paused projects will also help support employment, including freelancers working in these sectors.

Many of Britain's cultural and heritage institutions have already received unprecedented financial assistance to see them through the pandemic including loans, business rate holidays and participation in the coronavirus job retention scheme. More than 350,000 people in the recreation and leisure sector have been furloughed since the pandemic began.

This new package will be available across the country and ensure the future of these multi billion-pound industries are secured.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

From iconic theatre and musicals, mesmerising exhibitions at our world-class galleries to gigs performed in local basement venues, the UK's cultural industry is the beating heart of this country.

This money will help safeguard the sector for future generations, ensuring arts groups and venues across the UK can stay afloat and support their staff whilst their doors remain closed and curtains remain down.

Oliver Dowden Culture Secretary said

Our arts and culture are the soul of our nation. They make our country great and are the lynchpin of our world-beating and fast growing creative industries.

I understand the grave challenges the arts face and we must protect and preserve all we can for future generations. Today we are announcing a huge support package of immediate funding to tackle the funding crisis they face. I said we would not let the arts down, and this massive investment shows our level of commitment.

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer said:

Our world-renowned galleries, museums, heritage sites, music venues and independent cinemas are not only critical to keeping our economy thriving, employing more than 700,000 people, they're the lifeblood of British culture.

That's why we're giving them the vital cash they need to safeguard their survival, helping to protect jobs and ensuring that they can continue to provide the sights and sounds that Britain is famous

for.

The package announced today includes funding for national cultural institutions in England and investment in cultural and heritage sites to restart construction work paused as a result of the pandemic. This will be a big step forward to help rebuild our cultural infrastructure. This unprecedented package includes:

- £1.15 billion support pot for cultural organisations in England delivered through a mix of grants and loans. This will be made up of £270 million of repayable finance and £880 million grants.
- £100 million of targeted support for the national cultural institutions in England and the English Heritage Trust.
- £120 million capital investment to restart construction on cultural infrastructure and for heritage construction projects in England which was paused due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The new funding will also mean an extra £188 million for the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland (£33 million), Scotland (£97 million) and Wales (£59 million).

Decisions on awards will be made working alongside expert independent figures from the sector including the Arts Council England and other specialist bodies such as Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and the British Film Institute.

Repayable finance will be issued on generous terms tailored for cultural institutions to ensure they are affordable. Further details will be set out when the scheme opens for applications in the coming weeks.

For further details please call the DCMS press office on 020 7211 2210.

The government is finalising guidance for a phased return of the performing arts sectors that will be published shortly. The government is working with the sectors to get it back up and running as soon as it is safe to do so and is being guided by medical experts.

Further quotes:

Alex Beard, Chief Executive Royal Opera House, said:

The Royal Opera House warmly welcomes the newly announced package of Government support for the arts sector. This is a vital next step on the road to recovery for the industry and will help to support and sustain the UK's vibrant arts ecology through this crisis. There is much to achieve over the coming months and this package of support will be a catalyst for unlocking the extraordinary creativity embedded in the UK's world-renowned creative industries.

Over the months ahead we will need to draw all on our collective ingenuity and determination to adapt to the realities of re-opening

our theatres. We now look forward to the future and celebrating the return of our artforms, our community of staff and artists and importantly, welcoming our audiences back to the Royal Opera House.

Nicola Benedetti said:

This significant investment demonstrates a dedication to humanity that gives us all hope during times of unimaginable uncertainty. We will continue to ensure we tell the greatest tales of our past whilst creating a bold vision for our future.

Neil Constable, CEO, Shakespeare's Globe, said:

We at Shakespeare's Globe welcome this significant investment from the Government in our world-leading theatres and cultural institutions. As an independent charity, The Globe needs support throughout this difficult time and will now have the opportunity to plan to reopen fully by early 2021. We will of course be taking opportunities, if social distancing allows, to reopen earlier, and until then this investment allows us to offer our world-class performances and education online for audiences and students across the world, before safely bringing our actors, creatives, staff, and visitors alike together in our wonderful iconic theatres.

Julian Bird, Chief Executive, Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre:

The government's announcement of a £1.57bn package of support for the arts, culture and heritage sector in the UK is hugely welcomed – for the theatre and performing arts sector, we have worked intensively with DCMS and HMT to seek this clear commitment to our world-leading industry and we thank them. Venues, producers and the huge workforce in the theatre sector look forward to clarity of how these funds will be allocated and invested, so that artists and organisations can get back to work as soon as possible. Our industry's united ambition is to be able to play its vital role in the nation's economic and social recovery and this investment will allow us to do so.

Sir Ian Blatchford Chair of the National Museums Directors Council said:

This is welcome news for the museum sector, both in the scale of funding and as a strategic commitment to our role in the life of the country.

Mark Cornell, Group Chief Executive of Ambassador Theatre Group, said:

I am thrilled to see the government intervene in such a decisive fashion to protect our nation's cultural capital. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Treasury and DCMS have demonstrated their significant commitment to the arts. The Job Retention Scheme was a major supporting initiative, and this substantial financial package is another key milestone. No doubt this will give institutions across the arts, culture and heritage sector a welcome shot of confidence.

It is essential that these funds are made available to all areas across the cultural ecosystem, from the subsidised sector to independent contractors, artists, producers, technicians and venue operators. This is an important step towards securing the future of Britain's cultural life and I'm very grateful to the Secretary of State and his team for their determination and perseverance in bringing this about. We now need to unite to restore audience confidence and work in close partnership with the health authorities to remount British theatre as soon as is appropriately possible.

Mark Davyd, Music Venue Trust:

Music Venue Trust warmly welcomes this unprecedented intervention into Britain's world class live music scene. We'd like to thank the Secretary of State and the team at DCMS for the opportunity to work closely together throughout this crisis to develop genuine solutions to the challenges faced by grassroots music venues. This fund provides the opportunity to stabilise and protect our vibrant and vital network of venues and gives us the time we need to create a plan to safely reopen live music.

Lord Grade said:

This announcement is more than a life line for the arts in these challenging times, it represents an unprecedented investment. It demonstrates that this government understands the importance of our cultural assets and activities. Given the many calls on the public purse in this crisis, it will come as a massive relief to the sector, public and private. Three cheers.

Playwright James Graham said:

I am so incredibly grateful that the government has listened to the outpouring of not only concerns but also of great passion from audiences and artists over the threat to a much-loved part of our national life. Theatres and live performance venues play a vital economic and social role not just in places like London's West End,

but in every town and city across the country, and I am so relieved that Oliver Dowden, DCMS, and the Treasury recognise that this is a prize worth saving and celebrating.

In normal times, we are a profitable and world-beating industry, and we can be again. The scale and the ambition of this package is incredibly welcome and I have to say a huge relief to the hundreds of thousands of skilled workers (not to mention millions of audience members) who want to be able to get British culture back up and thriving as soon as it is safe to do so.

Nigel Higgins, chair, and Alistair Spalding, assistant director and CEO, Sadler's Wells, said:

We welcome the rescue package for the arts sector that has been announced today. We appreciate the many demands on the Government as a result of the coronavirus crisis, and are grateful that they have recognised the local and national benefits theatres like Sadler's Wells provide, and that support in this time is critical to our survival as ticket sales and other income sources have disappeared during the lockdown.

This package will help Sadler's Wells and organisations like ours to survive the immediate impacts of the crisis, but also put us in readiness to welcome back audiences, artists, and participants as soon as we can safely reopen our theatres. We are confident with this investment we will be able to support the national economic recovery through the employment we create for staff and freelancers, and we will continue to support the cultural life, health and well-being of the countless people and communities Sadler's Wells and the arts sector touch each year.

Sheku Kanneh-Mason said:

I am thrilled to hear of this support by the government for the Arts in this country. Music, art and the performing arts are critical for the vitality of our diverse cultural life. As artists we are desperate to return to what we love doing and to share the richness of our creative sector. That is why this news is so encouraging.

Ros Kerslake Chief Executive of the National Lottery Heritage Fund:

We warmly welcome this outstanding rescue package for heritage and culture. We look forward to working with others to ensure that this funding helps secure the future of heritage in the face of the unprecedented challenges from COVID 19.

Andrew Lloyd Webber said:

This news is truly welcome at a time when so many theatres, orchestras, entertainment venues and other arts organisations face such a bleak future. I know how hard Oliver Dowden has worked to secure this support. It is absolutely critical that Britain's cultural sector is restored to health as soon as possible, and I look forward to seeing the details of the rescue package and working further with Oliver and the Government to get all of Britain's theatres – both large and small – open as soon as possible.

RSC Executive Director, Catherine Mallyon and Artistic Director, Gregory Doran said:

We are very pleased and relieved to hear news of the government's support package and investment in the arts and culture sector during this critical time. Thank you to the DCMS, HM Treasury and the many people in the sector who have worked together to demonstrate the critical role the arts play in our economic well being and public life.

We hope this investment will provide meaningful support for the whole sector: for the skilled workforce who create world-class theatre, and for theatres and companies at every scale throughout the UK. We are all ready to be part of a powerful civic, emotional and economic recovery for the country, and will be invaluable contributors to the UK's ability to re-emerge from the pandemic locally, nationally and on a world stage.

We look forward to receiving the details of the support package when we will see in full how this will help the survival of the sector, and support our next steps to welcoming audiences back to live theatre.

Mark Pemberton, Association of British Orchestras said:

The ABO hugely welcomes the announcement of the government's significant additional investment in the arts. Orchestras and their musicians have been hard-hit by the Covid-19 crisis, from the cancellation of tours to Asia in January, followed by the enforced shutdown of concert halls across the UK in March. With a year of lost income in prospect, this much-needed investment, and the guidance for reopening, will help get orchestras back to work, starting behind closed doors this summer, and on to the point when we can welcome audiences both here and abroad, we hope, later this year.

Sir Simon Rattle, Music Director London Symphony Orchestra, said:

This is wonderful news and a huge relief for us all. This generous investment is both enormously welcome and desperately needed. Now that our survival is no longer at risk, we can start rebuilding our cultural life.

We are an immensely interconnected industry, so it is important that these funds percolate from the grassroots up, so that the whole landscape can be nourished, and we hope it will be distributed as fast as possible. Preferably faster, as so many institutions and individual artists have been staring into the abyss.

Let's work together with the government and scientists to get everything up and running once more, and most importantly, to start performing to live audiences throughout the country. We can now focus on serving the entire community and celebrate the richness of our cultural heritage.

Ben Roberts, BFI Chief Executive, said:

This is very welcome news for our independent cinemas, who play a vital cultural role across the country. Today's announcement will help many of them to reopen soon and safely for audiences and staff, and bring communities and film lovers together again. We are grateful to Government for recognising the importance of our film culture.

Tamara Rojo, Artistic Director and Lead Principal dancer of English National Ballet, said:

The Arts contribute so much to the social and economic fabric of our society. There was an urgent need for action and I am delighted and relieved that the Government has listened and responded. This package gives our sector a fighting chance of survival.

We are looking forward to seeing further details on the guidance for the phased return of the performing arts and thrilled to be on the road to bringing our dancers, performances and audiences back safely.

Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair, Arts Council England, said:

We greatly welcome this very significant investment by the government in the future of arts and culture in this country and look forward to working with them on next steps. I know our amazing

artists and creative organisations will repay the faith that the government has shown by demonstrating the range of their creativity, by serving their communities and by helping the nation recover as we emerge from the pandemic.

Duncan Wilson, Historic England's Chief Executive, said:

Covid-19 has hit all sectors of our economy hard, including our heritage. The historic places that help define our country are at risk of being lost forever. This emergency funding package from the Government, including £50m for heritage put at risk during the pandemic, will be a lifeline for our sector, kickstarting repair works at our historic sites which matter most to local communities. It also helps the organisations which look after so many of our precious historic sites, and protects livelihoods of skilled craft workers and businesses hit hardest by the pandemic. It will help to secure a sustainable future for the sector and those working in it, often with years of irreplaceable experience.

Ruth Wilson said:

I and everybody in the arts community have been hoping for this response from our government and we are incredibly grateful. This will be an extraordinary lifeline to everyone in the industry, from the actors to carpenters, to stage door managers, to musicians, make-up artists and all the freelancers that are the beating heart of our profession. The Arts are such an important part of the British economy and our society and whilst we know there are still challenging times ahead, this provides the opportunity for the industry to get back on its feet and come back stronger.

PM words for NHS birthday: 5 July 2020

This year has seen the NHS gallantly respond to the greatest challenge it has ever faced and rightly receive unprecedented support.

Week after week, we saw people take to their doorsteps, line the streets, lean precariously out of rainbow-bedecked windows to clap their hands and bang their saucepans to show their appreciation.

I am proud to be once again clapping for our heroic NHS staff, alongside Anne-Marie Plas who launched this inspirational initiative.

I am also celebrating today with staff from St Thomas' Hospital who, quite simply, saved my life.

As we mark seventy-two years of the NHS, I want to say how thankful I am of this world leading institution.

As Prime Minister, I have given the NHS a £34 billion funding increase, the biggest in decades, and made sure it has every penny it needs to cope with coronavirus.

I'm immensely proud that the organisation built by Beveridge, Bevan, Willink, Godber, and so many others, has grown into the spritely seventy-two year old we see today.