

Secretary of State announces additional funding for IFI

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- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Support package for legal providers will ensure access to justice during coronavirus outbreak

- Initiatives will support civil, family, and criminal legal aid practitioners to keep the justice system running
- Changes will make hardship payments easier to access
- Some debt repayments to LAA will be paused for legal firms

Introduced by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the move follows wider economic measures for businesses already outlined by the government and will ensure timely support for those needing legally aided services.

New steps were also announced by the department last week in a bid to protect court users, the judiciary and legal professionals by consolidating work into fewer buildings and pausing jury trials.

This will maintain temporary safety measures in courts and tribunals, in line with public health advice, while helping to maintain a core justice system focused on the most essential cases.

As a result of these necessary short-term changes, legal practitioners have faced subsequent delays in cases progressing through the justice system and a reduction in new cases in some areas. This has impacted those that rely on government-funded legal aid and provide essential services in upholding access to justice.

These additional steps will therefore help legal aid practitioners manage their funds in the short term.

The package includes expanding the scope and relaxing the evidence requirements for hardship payments in crown court cases – including reducing the threshold for work done to £1,000, rather than the current £5,000.

We will also align legal aid fees for First Tier Tribunal immigration and asylum appeals with HMCTS' move to an online system for these cases.

LAA has already:

- Introduced measures to increase payments for virtual hearings in appeals before the Mental Health Tribunal, as well as remote advice in police custody to ensure they are in line with in-person hearings
- Halted pursuit of outstanding debts owed to the Legal Aid Agency
- Encouraged legal firms to use existing avenues of financial help, such as the ability to apply for early payment for work already done on a case, benefitting cashflow in the short-term.

Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland, said:

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the legal aid practitioners who have shown immense flexibility and determination throughout this outbreak.

These measures are a clear indication of their important status both in times of crisis and beyond and the role they play in ensuring the justice system continues to function effectively.

I will continue to work with the sector to ensure that the most vulnerable in society are provided with the representation and support they need through our legal aid system.

MOJ and LAA are working closely with practitioners during this time and will keep these measures under review. Future additional measures will be considered alongside the industry to uphold access to justice now and in the future.

Notes to editors

1. The [measures we have announced](#) are available on GOV.UK
2. The [measures to consolidate courts](#) are available on GOV.UK

[Help find new ways to ease global disruption: apply for funding](#)

Businesses and individuals across the world are facing huge challenges in the

face of the coronavirus pandemic.

The requirement to stay at home and to social distance or self-isolate presents new threats to a wide range of businesses and services, from delivery businesses to food manufacturers, entertainment, financial services, healthcare, hospitality, retail, transport and community support.

Business innovation can play a significant role in developing ways to ease the disruption from COVID-19 and any future global disruption.

Innovate UK is investing up to £20 million in business projects to develop innovative and ambitious ideas to significantly address the needs of society or industry resulting from the coronavirus outbreak.

Business can develop ambitious solutions to society's needs

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The response of researchers and businesses to the coronavirus outbreak have been remarkable. This new investment will support the development of technologies that can help industries, communities and individuals adapt to new ways of working when situations like this, and other incidents, arise.

Dr Ian Campbell Interim Executive Chair, Innovate UK, said:

The Covid-19 situation is not just a health emergency, but also one that affects the economy and society. With that in mind, Innovate UK has launched this rapid response competition today seeking smart ideas from innovators.

These could be proposals to help the distribution of goods, educate children remotely, keep families digitally connected and even new ideas to stream music and entertainment. The UK needs a great national effort and Innovate UK is helping by unleashing the power of innovation for people and businesses in need.

Help key industries and services disrupted by pandemic

This fast-track competition is open for 10 working days.

Businesses can attract up to £50,000 as an upfront grant payment to cover the full costs of a project lasting up to 6 months.

Projects with strong potential could attract follow-on funding.

Ideas should aim to help key industries and services disrupted by the pandemic and its aftermath. For example, this could include:

- new platforms and software for music artists to stream live performances, connect remotely to their fan-base and allow global audiences to enjoy their live experience
- new ways for families to connect with and remotely monitor their elderly or vulnerable relatives and ensure they are receiving what they need, including food deliveries, doctor appointments and help to pay bills
- technology to help retailers to better respond better to spikes in customer demand, including to ensure they can deliver country-wide
- new education tools that allow teachers to remotely set tasks that keep the whole class together, support vulnerable children and ensure no-one is left behind

Competition information

- the competition opens today Friday 3 April 2020, and the closing date is at midday on Friday 17 April 2020
- businesses of any size may apply
- we expect projects to be awarded grants of up to £50,000 and for them to last up to 6 months
- businesses can attract 100% of their project costs
- projects must start by June 2020

[SQPs temporarily allowed to prescribe and authorise supply of veterinary medicines remotely](#)



In light of the enhanced precautions on social distancing we must take as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has relaxed the enforcement of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR) to

allow SQPs to prescribe and authorise supply of veterinary medicines remotely for the categories of veterinary medicines they are allowed to prescribe and supply under the VMR.

The VMD will not issue an improvement notice if there are breaches of the relevant provisions of the VMR that require SQPs to prescribe and authorise the sale of veterinary medicines in person and from certain premises.

This decision has immediate effect and will last until 31 August and then cease.

All other requirements of the VMR on the Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) as the person responsible for the prescription and supply of certain veterinary medicines continue to apply. The SQP must:

- be the person that has the conversation/consultation with the animal owner
- be the person that makes the prescribing decision
- be satisfied that the person handing over or dispatching the prescribed product is competent to do so

More information is available on the [statement from the VMD](#) (PDF, 170KB, 2 pages).

Published 3 April 2020

Last updated 31 July 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 31 July 2020

Phasing out COVID-19 facilitations

2. 26 June 2020

Date of temporary facilitation changed to 31 July

3. 28 May 2020

Temporary facilitation will last until 30 June when we will review it.

4. 29 April 2020

SQPs temporarily allowed to prescribe and authorise supply of veterinary medicines remotely – Review date now 31 May

5. 3 April 2020

First published.

All VMD inspections postponed due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

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