

Filing charity annual returns during the coronavirus pandemic

During the coronavirus pandemic the charity sector will face challenges of looking after its staff, volunteers and trustees who may fall ill, have to self-isolate, or have to look after loved ones. The sector also has a vital role to play in looking after its beneficiaries, many of whom will be amongst the most vulnerable during this public health emergency.

We want to assure charities that our approach to regulation during this period will be as flexible and supportive as possible. Charities' primary interest, and ours, must be looking after the public and the communities that we serve. Charities can feel confident that we will, where possible, act in a pragmatic way by taking account of the wider public interest during this unprecedented period.

Where you face real and urgent legal issues, you should take advice on these.

Charities can also call our contact centre.

As an immediate step, charities that are due to submit an Annual Return imminently, but feel unable to do so, can call us to request a filing extension.

We have been discussing the impact of the current situation with government and the sector and will continue to do so over the coming days. Any further measures we can take to help will be communicated in due course.

Please use GOV.UK as the main source of [information about the pandemic](#)

PM statement on coronavirus: 16 March 2020

Good afternoon everybody, thank you very much for coming. I wanted to bring everyone up to date with the national fight back against the new coronavirus and the decisions that we've just taken in COBR for the whole of the UK.

As we said last week, our objective is to delay and flatten the peak of the epidemic by bringing forward the right measures at the right time, so that we minimise suffering and save lives. And everything we do is based scrupulously on the best scientific advice.

Last week we asked everyone to stay at home if you had one of two key

symptoms: a high temperature or a new and continuous cough.

Today, we need to go further, because according to SAGE [the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies] it looks as though we're now approaching the fast growth part of the upward curve.

And without drastic action, cases could double every 5 or 6 days.

So, first, we need to ask you to ensure that if you or anyone in your household has one of those two symptoms, then you should stay at home for fourteen days.

That means that if possible you should not go out even to buy food or essentials, other than for exercise, and in that case at a safe distance from others. If necessary, you should ask for help from others for your daily necessities. And if that is not possible, then you should do what you can to limit your social contact when you leave the house to get supplies.

And even if you don't have symptoms and if no one in your household has symptoms, there is more that we need you to do now.

So, second, now is the time for everyone to stop non-essential contact with others and to stop all unnecessary travel.

We need people to start working from home where they possibly can. And you should avoid pubs, clubs, theatres and other such social venues.

It goes without saying, we should all only use the NHS when we really need to. And please go online rather than ringing NHS 111.

Now, this advice about avoiding all unnecessary social contact, is particularly important for people over 70, for pregnant women and for those with some health conditions.

And if you ask, why are we doing this now, why now, why not earlier, or later? Why bring in this very draconian measure?

The answer is that we are asking people to do something that is difficult and disruptive of their lives.

And the right moment, as we've always said, is to do it when it is most effective, when we think it can make the biggest difference to slowing the spread of the disease, reducing the number of victims, reducing the number of fatalities.

And as we take these steps we should be focusing on the most vulnerable.

So third, in a few days' time – by this coming weekend – it will be necessary to go further and to ensure that those with the most serious health conditions are largely shielded from social contact for around 12 weeks.

And again the reason for doing this in the next few days, rather than earlier or later, is that this is going to be very disruptive for people who have

such conditions, and difficult for them, but, I believe, it's now necessary.

And we want to ensure that this period of shielding, this period of maximum protection coincides with the peak of the disease.

And it's now clear that the peak of the epidemic is coming faster in some parts of the country than in others.

And it looks as though London is now a few weeks ahead.

So, to relieve the pressure on the London health system and to slow the spread in London, it's important that Londoners now pay special attention to what we are saying about avoiding non-essential contact, and to take particularly seriously the advice about working from home, and avoiding confined spaces such as pubs and restaurants.

Lastly, it remains true as we have said in the last few weeks that risks of transmission of the disease at mass gatherings such as sporting events are relatively low.

But obviously, logically as we advise against unnecessary social contact of all kinds, it is right that we should extend this advice to mass gatherings as well.

And so we've also got to ensure that we have the critical workers we need, that might otherwise be deployed at those gatherings, to deal with this emergency.

So from tomorrow, we will no longer be supporting mass gatherings with emergency workers in the way that we normally do. So mass gatherings, we are now moving emphatically away from.

And I know that many people – including millions of fit and active people over 70 – may feel, listening to what I have just said, that there is something excessive about these measures.

But I have to say, I believe that they are overwhelmingly worth it to slow the spread of the disease, to reduce the peak, to save life, minimise suffering and to give our NHS the chance to cope.

Over the last few days, I have been comparing notes and talking to leaders around the world and I can tell you that the UK is now leading a growing global campaign amongst all our friends and allies, whether in the G7, the G20, the UN, the IMF – all those bodies in which we play a significant role.

We're leading a campaign to fight back against this disease.

To keep the economy growing, to make sure that humanity has access to the drugs and the treatments that we all need, and the UK is also at the front of the effort to back business, to back our economy, to make sure that we get through it.

I know that today we are asking a lot of everybody. It is far more now than

just washing your hands – though clearly washing your hands remains important.

But I can tell you that across this country, people and businesses in my experience are responding with amazing energy and creativity to the challenge that we face, and I want to thank everybody for the part that you are playing and are going to play.

Bona Vacantia Referrals



Please send any new referrals of deceased estates and dissolved company assets or cash balances by email rather than by post to the appropriate following email addresses:

Deceased person's estates to bvestates@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Dissolved company assets (not cash assets) to bvcompanies@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Dissolved company cash assets (bank accounts, etc.) to bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk

If you need to send us copies of documents, letters etc. please send us scanned copies in PDF format and attached to your email.

Please note that if you have already received confirmation of a case reference from the Bona Vacantia Division, correspondence should be emailed directly to your allocated case officer using the email address quoted on the correspondence received.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Published 16 March 2020

Last updated 19 March 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 19 March 2020

Update on recommended format of scanned documents.

2. 16 March 2020

First published.

Devolved administrations will receive £1.5 billion for coronavirus response

- this means £780 million for the Scottish Government, £475 million for the Welsh Government and £260 million for the Northern Ireland Executive
- this adds to the support people across the country will receive through UK-wide measures tackling the impact of COVID-19 including extending Statutory Sick Pay

The Devolved Administrations will receive at least £1.5 billion from the UK Government to make sure they have the resources they need to support people and businesses through COVID-19. This will mean they can increase funding for the NHS and provide grants to businesses.

Through the £1.5 billion package, the Scottish Government will receive £780 million, the Welsh Government £475 million and the Northern Ireland Executive £260 million – worked out through the Barnett formula.

This funding is in addition to the UK-wide support that people in all four corners of the country will receive from the UK Government. This includes extending Statutory Sick Pay, making it easier and quicker to access benefits, and providing a Business Interruption Loan Scheme, among other measures.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

We will do what is right to help businesses and individuals in every part of the UK. That is why we announced a special funding package at the Budget last week to support those affected by COVID19.

Today I am confirming this additional funding that will ensure the devolved administrations can support vulnerable people, businesses and vital public services, including the NHS, in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack, said:

The UK and Scottish Governments are working closely together in the

fight against COVID – 19 as we do all we can to delay the spread and alleviate pressure on our public services, people and businesses.

The £780 million for the Scottish Government announced today is in addition to the £1.9 billion spending increase for 2020-21 confirmed at the Budget last week. This will help ensure the Scottish Government has the resources it needs to support those affected by COVID-19.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart, said:

The UK Government will do everything possible to help individuals, business and communities across Wales which are being affected by coronavirus.

Following the response package announced in the Budget last week, nearly half a billion pounds is now being allocated by the UK Government to help the Welsh Government meet this exceptional challenge and we will continue to work closely with the Welsh Government to ensure the money reaches those who need it.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis, said:

I wholeheartedly welcome today's announcement from the Chancellor. This additional £260 million for the Northern Ireland Executive demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to making sure everyone in every part of the UK receives the support they need to cope with the spread of COVID-19.

This £1.5 billion announcement is part of the £12 billion response plan announced last week to support public services, people and businesses through the disruption caused by COVID-19. This included a £5 billion COVID-19 Response Fund for the NHS and public services, a £500 million local authority hardship fund, business rates reliefs and £3,000 grants for the smallest businesses – all of which cover devolved policy areas meaning additional funding is being made available for the devolved administrations.

The UK government will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations as the situation develops to ensure they have the funding needed to tackle the impacts of COVID-19.

The one that didn't get away

A boat-owner from Ashford in Middlesex has been convicted of failing to register the craft for use on the River Thames, in spite of warnings he could face legal action.

The Environment Agency discovered Leighton Lewis had no legal registration for his 18-foot long cruiser, The One That Got Away, during routine checks at Walton-on-Thames last summer.

Navigation officers attached a warning notice to the boat in July 2019, requiring Lewis to comply with the law within 14 days.

It is a criminal offence to keep, use or let for hire an unregistered vessel on a waterway.

Guildford magistrates' court was told riverside inspections by officers revealed Lewis had skipped the annual £186.39 fee, determined by the length and width of the boat.

A month after the first visit, in August last year, the Environment Agency wrote to Lewis after officers found the boat still unregistered and moored in the same place. The letter warned Lewis to register the boat inside a week, or enforcement proceedings would begin.

Despite this second warning, Lewis, of Doris Road, Ashford, still failed to log the vessel with the Environment Agency.

Similar to excise duty for road vehicles, boat registration fees allow the Environment Agency to manage and maintain more than 600 miles of inland waterways across England, keeping them open and safe for thousands of river-lovers.

Nick McKie-Smith, waterways enforcement manager for the Environment Agency, said:

You can't escape vehicle duty on the road. Why on the river? Boat registration fees go towards the upkeep of our waterways, providing enjoyment for river-users and support for boating businesses.

Lewis had a number of opportunities to register The One That Got Away, which, in the end, proved an inaccurate name because he didn't.

Tried in absentia at Guildford magistrates' court on 9 March 2020, Leighton Lewis was found guilty of breaching the Environment Agency (Inland Waterways) Order 2010. He was fined £400, and ordered to pay costs of £85 and his

outstanding boat registration fee of £186.39 for 1 January to 31 December 2019.