

Guidance note 1/2020

Coronavirus COVID-19

Date: 19 March 2020



1. General advice

The purpose of this note is to provide guidance to Fisheries Management Scotland members in relation to the current Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic. The guidance relates to the health and wellbeing of staff and how the pandemic could impact on the operational activities of members. As you know this is a rapidly evolving situation and it is important that all members have access to the latest information and advice from the public health authorities. We therefore provided two links:

- 1) the [NHS 24 webpage](#) which provides up to date advice on the virus, symptoms, what action you should take if symptoms present and advice on reducing the risks in transmission.
- 2) the [UK Government advice](#) which provides similar advice, but also contains guidance for employers and businesses.

In assessing the overall risks to personnel for your organisation, the above resources which are regularly updated should be the key source of information; the advice contained should be sufficient to allow you to make an informed assessment for your organisation and to undertake appropriate adjustments to working practices.

Key advice for employers is:

- businesses and workplaces should encourage their employees to work at home, wherever possible
- if someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home and advised to follow the advice to stay at home
- employees should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues
- frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products
- employees will need your support to adhere to the recommendation to stay at home to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) to others
- those who follow advice to stay at home will be eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP) from the first day of their absence from work
- employers should use their discretion concerning the need for medical evidence for certification for employees who are unwell. This will allow GPs to focus on their patients
- employees from defined [vulnerable groups](#) should be strongly advised and supported to stay at home and work from there if possible

2. Issues for organisations

There are a number of areas of operational activity which will undoubtedly be impacted by the effect of virus. Whilst the foremost concern is staff health and welfare, there are a number of areas where activities at organisational level may be impacted and cause longer term problems. We are in regular dialogue with Scottish Government officials with a view to ensuring that the implications for members are understood and mitigated under these exceptional circumstances.

In particular, we are exploring the possibility of financial support during this period. Examples of operational activity under discussion include the following:

- how the uncertainty may reduce income to fishery businesses with potential knock on effects on members revenue;
- how fisheries management activities, including enforcement, might be compromised or how such activity may expose staff members to risk;
- Interruption to grant-aided projects and work programmes and issues associated with cashflow and grant award - please consider contacting any organisations that support your activities with grant funding to make clear what might be at risk in terms of delivery of the approved purpose or outcomes of the funding. This will help avoid any potential issues with non-payment of support.
- good governance legal requirements.

3. Further resources & information

Rates relief

We are aware that rates reliefs for businesses in Scotland & England have been proposed. However, this guidance is not yet fully clear and we will provide additional detail when that is available. At this stage, it appears that from 1 April 2020 in Scotland grant funding of £10,000 for all businesses in receipt of small business rates relief or rural rates relief will be applied; current guidance states that these grants will be given automatically without application.

Local Third Sector Interfaces

Third sector interfaces (TSIs) provide a single point of access for support and advice for the third sector within local areas. There is a TSI in each local authority area in Scotland and they have a range of resources and advice available for local stakeholders. Contact details for each TSI can be found [HERE](#).

If there are any issues not covered above on which you would like advice or guidance, please contact us.

Further advice will be provided to members should any circumstances change.

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