

# Devon and Severn IFCA News

## COVID – 19: Defra Marine & Fisheries Update 9<sup>th</sup> April

### Updated advice and links to further information

#### Local home delivery initiatives

Many fishmongers, seafood merchants and fishermen across the UK are now offering home delivery services. [FishIsTheDish](#) are continuing to promote seafood home deliveries and you can add your business to their [website here](#). Seafish has also [published advice](#) on food business requirements for mobile fishmongers and fish vans to its webpage on selling directly to consumers.



#### Updated guidance on safety at work

Public Health England have released [detailed guidance](#) for employers and businesses on staying open safely during coronavirus.

BEIS has also released various sector [specific guidance](#) which includes fishing or other short term offshore work, manufacturing and processing, retail and transport. It recognises that fishing and processing businesses play an important role in the economy and can continue to work if done in accordance with social distancing guidelines wherever possible.

#### Key points from the relevant sector specific advice include:

- Where it is not possible to follow the social distancing guidelines in full in relation to a particular activity, you should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to continue to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff.
- If you decide the work should continue, staff should work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face if possible. You should still advise staff to keep 2 metres apart as much as possible.
- When at sea those working on board the vessel or platform are not always able to be 2 metres apart. Where this is the case, staff should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face if possible.
- You should increase the frequency of cleaning procedures, cleaning vessels as often as is feasible, and pausing production in the day if necessary, for cleaning staff to wipe down workstations with disinfectant.
- You should communicate to all staff that they should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more at the beginning and end of every break, when they arrive at work and before they leave. To help with this, manufacturing and processing businesses should consider adding additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities, providing soap, water and/or hand sanitiser.
- You should not allow staff to congregate in break times; you should consider arrangements such as staggered break times so that staff can continue to practice social distancing when taking breaks.

- To protect your staff, you should remind colleagues daily to only come into work if they are well and no one in their household is self-isolating. Any queries should be directed to PHE and BEIS respectively, but please do feel free to feedback to Defra if relevant.

### **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme - Working whilst on furlough**

New guidance has been published by HMRC on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. It clarifies that if your contract allows, you may undertake other employment while your current employer has placed you on furlough, and this will not affect the grant that they can claim under the scheme.

You will need to be able to return to work for the employer that has placed you on furlough if they decide to stop furloughing you, and you must be able to undertake any training they require while on furlough.

If you take on new employment, you should make sure you complete the starter [checklist form](#) with your new employer correctly. If you are furloughed from another employment, you should complete Statement C.

This updated guidance has been reflected in our [document summarising](#) the financial support available to the industry.

### **£750 million support package for charities**

The Treasury has announced a [£750 million package](#) to support charities through the coronavirus outbreak. Defra are working with other government departments to explore how this might assist the fisheries sector.

### **Arms around the industry**

Tom McCormack, CEO of the MMO featured in the most recent Fathom Podcast explaining the support that is currently available to the fishing industry to support them during the COVID-19 crisis. You can listen [here](#).

### **Ocean event updates due to COVID-19**

Due to the coronavirus pandemic a number of international events have been postponed meetings this year, including the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) in June and UN Convention on Biodiversity (CDB) in October and [COP26](#).

Revised dates for UNOC and CBD are still being decided. Plans for a rescheduled COP26 conference in 2021 will be set out in due course, and this will still be hosted by the UK in Glasgow in partnership with Italy.

Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss remain key priorities for the UK and work on these and other important marine issues is continuing these issues this year. We look forward to continuing discussions in due course.

### **Exporting Seafood Products to the USA**

A reminder for UK businesses exporting seafood products to the USA. If you are exporting/planning to export fisheries products to the USA which were not originally sourced from the UK (e.g. imported raw material for processing), you will need to provide details to Seafish by 30th April 2020 in order to comply with new US regulations (the Marine Mammal Protection Act). Further details and a link to the form can be found [here](#).

Please contact <mailto:MarineFisheries.PreparednessCentre@defra.gov.uk> if you have any feedback on how Covid-19 is affecting you.

End.