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BEF Update: Grant funding announcements to support businesses and charities impacted by COVID-19

The current COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has had a significant impact on the equestrian sector. In the past few days, a number of grant funding opportunities have been announced in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to help provide support, some of which may be applicable to equestrian businesses, community projects and charitable organisations.

National

Charities Aid Foundation

The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) have launched a rapid-response fund to help smaller charitable organisations affected by the impact of COVID-19. Grants of up to £10,000 are available to help organisations to continue to deliver much-needed support to communities across the UK.

You can apply for unrestricted funding for core costs, staffing, volunteer costs, supplies and equipment, communications or other critical charitable areas. You must be able to describe how an emergency grant will improve the situation for your organisation and community. CAF aim to make payments to selected organisations within 14 days of application.

The fund can be used to support organisations with a charitable purpose and charitable activities, which had income of £1million or less in their last financial year. This includes:

- UK registered charities (registered with Charity Commission, Scottish Charity Regulator or Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, or as shown in the Charities Act 2010)
- Organisations registered with Companies House or the Public Mutuals Register, as a charitable or not-for-profit entity such as Community Interest Companies, Companies Limited by Guarantee and others
- Unregistered entities and social enterprises

Further information can be found from [Charities Aid Foundation](#).

England

Sport England have announced £195m of funding to support the sport and physical activity sector. This represents a package of support for many different organisations throughout the sector, which could include some equestrian centres, clubs etc.

The first of these funds to launch is the £20m Community Emergency Fund, which is designed to deliver immediate funding to those most in need. It's specifically targeted to organisations who have a role in supporting the nation to be active, but who are experiencing short-term financial hardship or the ceasing of operations due the impact of COVID-19. Grants are available from £300–£10,000.

This fund can support a wide range of expenditure, including:

- Rent
- Utility costs
- Insurances

- Facility or equipment hire
- Core staffing costs (including casual workers) that can't be met elsewhere by other government funds
- Retrospective losses dating from 1 March 2020

This fund is designed to help grassroots sport and physical activity providers and, therefore, is unable to help some organisation types, including commercial sport and physical activity providers and individuals who are either employed or self-employed within the sport and physical activity sector. Companies limited by guarantee are eligible, but we are seeking clarification on limited liability partnerships and sole traders.

If we clarify this and you find out that you are not eligible for funding but still in desperate need for support, please email coronavirus@sportengland.org with some information about your situation and your set-up – they are keen to listen to any sport or physical activity provider who falls through the cracks of the current funding available.

The funding can't be used for activities or costs already covered by Government funding, including rates, new activities, capital works or costs beyond July 2020. It is expected that applicants have exhausted all other sources of funding available from the Government before applying for this fund.

Further information can be found from [Sport England](#).

Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund

Further details about these Government grants, originally announced last week, have now been made available and can be found [here](#).

Wales

Sport Wales Emergency Relief Fund

The Welsh Government has confirmed they are making £200,000 available to provide support to not-for-profit sports clubs, including equestrian sport. This is being match-funded with £200,000 from Sport Wales. Each club will be able to apply for a maximum of £5,000. You will be eligible only if you are a voluntary sports organisation.

The funding will be targeted at those who are already facing significant challenges after a difficult few weeks, and who are likely to need immediate financial support over the next 12 weeks.

More information is provided [here](#).

Economic Resilience Fun

A new £500m Economic Resilience Fund has been launched for Wales.

The fund aims to plug the gaps in the support schemes already announced by the UK Government, including the Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, which will guarantee 80% of people's wages and income.

It will support firms of all sizes, including social enterprises, with a focus on those that have not already benefited from the COVID-19 grants already announced by the Welsh Government.

Further information can be found from the [Welsh Government](#).

Scotland

Grant funding is available through your local council of up to £10,000 if you are in receipt of the Small Business Bonus Scheme. This applies to those with a rateable value of up to £18,000.

The application form will ask you for your Rates Reference Number, available [here](#), and you need to apply to your specific council

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) has announced that the [Third Sector Resilience Fund](#) is open for applications from charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations working in Scotland. An initial £20m emergency fund is available to help organisations stabilise and manage cash flows.

Please check the [Scottish Government](#) website for information on business support.

Northern Ireland

Businesses in Northern Ireland can access the following schemes:

- COVID Small Business Grant – Small business grants of £10,000 to be issued immediately with a cost of £267m providing support to 27,000 businesses in NI. This is for all businesses with a net asset value up to £15,000
- Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Sectors Grant Scheme – An immediate grant of £25,000 will be provided to companies in these sectors with a rateable value up to £51,000

[Information on these schemes will be made available at NI Business Info.](#)

Further to this, the Department of Finance has announced a [£100m emergency rates package for businesses](#). All NI businesses will pay zero rates for the next three months (April, May, June). This automatically reduces rates by 25%, in addition to any existing rate reliefs. This applies to all businesses and does not need to be repaid.

Invest NI have provided practical advice for businesses online [here](#).