



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

T: 03459 335577  
helpline@defra.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

Port Health Managers  
(sent via email only)  
Dear Port Health Manager,

10 October 2023

**Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) – local authority recruitment and funding intentions**

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on our future funding intentions and to thank you and your teams for your continued support and engagement to prepare for the introduction of the BTOM.

Over recent weeks, my Port Health Authority (PHA) Engagement team has been in contact with you to discuss initial intentions surrounding future recruitment and funding needs following the final publication of the BTOM. As they advised you, we are now writing to confirm these arrangements.

To resource new BTOM requirements from 30 April 2024 we understand that some local authorities and PHAs will need additional staff, with recruitment commencing as soon as possible over the coming weeks. Defra is committed to assisting PHAs with associated staffing costs under the new burdens' doctrine.

Recognising the time it will take for recruitment, we have set the following funding principles:

- Begin recruitment and other operational preparations for the implementation of the BTOM now. These costs will be funded until 30 April 2024, after which PHAs should commence charging to recover staffing and associated costs. Note - if employment starts before November 2023 and earlier funding is needed, then you should discuss with the PHA Engagement Team and cases will be considered on an individual basis before being signed off by Defra.
- To provide some operational flexibility and help PHAs stabilise under the new regime, additional funding will be available between 30 April 2024 and 31 July 2024 in circumstances where you are unable to make the charges to recover your full costs. These costs will have to be submitted to Defra with a clear justification as to why the funds are required.
- Further detailed criteria will be set out shortly and will be included in the next call for bids as part of the ongoing transitional funding.

We recognise that the situation and circumstances of every PHA is unique. As such, our PHA Engagement Managers will reach out to you shortly to work together to agree a funding solution that balances your individual needs with our responsibility to manage public expenditure. To determine your individual funding commitment, we will work with you to consider your staffing estimate in more detail.

Following recent feedback, we recognise that some PHAs have concerns about staffing predictions, given this will be a new delivery model. I wanted to confirm that we are committed to working with you and your teams to consider any reasonable adjustments.

Funding to support our current biosecurity safeguarding controls is due to end on 31 March 2024. This will be extended until 30 April 2024. New policy and legislation on 'personal imports' is being finalised which is expected to include provisions for some cost recovery by PHAs after 30 April 2024. More detail on this policy will be communicated to you in due course.

For those PHAs currently receiving funding for the activities relating to biosecurity, we will shortly request bids for Q3 payments. We anticipate these payments will be made in January 2024. As future bids will include additional staffing requirements (to be agreed with Defra), we have extended the deadline for submissions for Q3 funding until early November 2023.

Thank you for your engagement in this process to date. I look forward to seeing these matters progress in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Director, Defra Biosecurity, Borders & Trade Programme  
Email: [joanne.bradshaw@defra.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.bradshaw@defra.gov.uk)