**Direct Payment Schemes – COVID-19 Q&A**

**Force Majeure or Exceptional Circumstances (FM/EC)**

**Can I apply for FM/EC because of COVID-19?**

Yes. If you have been prevented from meeting the conditions of the scheme(s) despite taking all reasonable measures to counteract the effects of COVID-19 you can apply for FM/EC. You will have to provide detailed information as to why the pandemic prevented you from meeting those specific conditions.

Cases of FM/EC are determined against their particular circumstances and on an individual basis.

**How do I apply?**

1. **Email**

As all our DAERA Offices are currently closed we ask that you or your agent email the electronic FML1 form

[<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/force-majeure-covid-19>]

to areabasedschemes@daera-ni.gov.uk **no later than 15 May** if you are aware that you have been prevented from meeting the conditions of the scheme(s) before this date.

If you become aware of a FM/EC event after 15 May, you should tell us **within 15 working days** of the date of being in a position to do so

1. **Single Application (SA) Advisory Team**

If you do not have access to email or an agent, contact the SA Advisory Team on 0300 200 7848. A staff member will complete the FML1 form on your behalf.

Make sure you have all your information to hand and that it is accurate before ringing the SA Advisory Team as their role is purely to input data on the form.

**What evidence do I have to supply?**

There are a number of different circumstances under which FM/EC will be considered therefore the evidence will be varied depending on the circumstances. You should read Section 9 of the Guide to Basic Payment Scheme for more advice.

**How will I provide my supporting documentation?**

When our offices reopen we will request that you post your supporting documentation within a certain timeframe.

**Note:** If you do not provide the supporting documentation within the timeframes, we may reject your application for force majeure.

**My land has been taken out of production due to a FM/EC event which is not related to COVID-19, when and how do I apply?**

If, for reasons of FM/EC, some, or all, of your land is not available to you on 15 May, or is ineligible for BPS or any other area-based scheme, you should tell us when you submit your single application no later than 15 May 2020, or if you have already submitted your application you should tell us within 15 working days of the date of being in a position to do so.

As all our DAERA offices are currently closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak you should follow the steps at 1 and 2 above in relation to you or an agent emailing form FML1 to areabasedschemes@daera-ni.gov.uk. In the event that you or your agent do not have access to email, then you or they should contact the SA Advisory Team on 0300 200 7848 to complete the form on your behalf.