

Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

15th May 2020

Dear Chancellor,

As the UK makes a transition to a 'new norm', consideration is rightly being given to a return to work. We all want to get back to doing what we do as quickly as possible and it makes sense to consider a gradual change to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Whilst this is to be welcomed it is important that we remember the route to the 'new norm' will need to be different for many people. Some vulnerable workers may not be able to immediately re-join the workforce as restrictions are lifted.

For employers that specialise in providing employment for disabled people, such as Supported Businesses, Social Firms and some Social Enterprises this poses particular problems for themselves and their employees.

Often, with high levels of employees 'shielding' or particularly vulnerable and unable to return to work, such employers may not be able to immediately return to commercial activities. In such cases the loss of access to the furlough and Job Retention Scheme will lead to potential closures and job losses. This would undermine all the good work that has been done in keeping people safe and businesses viable.

If these specialised businesses are lost, their employees and thousands of future employees will struggle to re-enter employment, at a considerable long-term cost to the taxpayer.

We would like a commitment from Government to ensure that any changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be taken in consultation with employers of vulnerable workers, to fully consider the implications of the tapering of arrangements to ensure that employment is protected wherever possible.

We would urge the Government to consider variable tapers where employers can demonstrate that vulnerable workers are shielding due to increased risk of COVID-19.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Mayo
General Secretary, Co-operatives UK

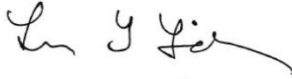
Diane Lightfoot
Chief Executive, Disability Business
Forum



Tony Armstrong
Chief Executive, Locality



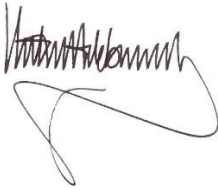
Ben Carpenter
Chief Executive, Social Value UK



Lucy Findlay MBE
Chief Executive, Social Enterprise Mark
CIC



Martin Davies
Chair, Supported Business Steering
Group



Lord Victor Adebawale CBE
Chair, Social Enterprise UK



Mark Norbury
Chief Executive, UnLtd