



Alyn Smith MP
Member of Parliament for Stirling

House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

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

14th January 2021

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to raise the case of many of my constituents who have contacted regarding financial assistance for workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. As you are aware, one year on from the start of the pandemic, there remain significant gaps in government provision for workers who have been unable to continue working as normal directly due to the pandemic. These workers include PAYE freelance workers and the newly self-employed, many of whom are in sectors which have been unable to reopen.

There is a significantly gendered aspect to this. A recent survey of 50,000 women in the UK found that more than 70% of working mothers who asked to be furloughed for childcare reasons since schools shut have been refused. The Government's lack of support for working parents has caused, and continues to cause, huge financial hardship and stress – and hitting low-paid mothers and single parents hardest.

Time and time again throughout this pandemic, this Government has shown itself unwilling to help the most vulnerable in our society. One year on, this cannot be explained away as anything other than a deliberate policy decision.

The harm this exclusion is causing to people and families across the country cannot be overstated. Beyond the financial hardship and emotional distress resulting from these policies now, it is plain to everyone watching that this will have long-term economic implications for the country as entire sectors are decimated and wealth- and job-creating SMEs forced to close their doors for good.

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We are now almost a year into this pandemic. We know where the gaps are – they have been repeatedly highlighted to the UK Government. The continued failure to address them is an abdication of responsibility to the most vulnerable, an indictment of this Conservative Government's priorities and nothing short of a total failure of government.

The UK Government is failing to meet its responsibilities to its citizens and deliver a financial package for the three million excluded who have been living without a single penny of support for 10 months now. This includes people from all walks of life, employment statuses and sectors across the country. It is an untenable situation.

We cannot wait for the Budget in several weeks' time. The Treasury must immediately set out a package of measures to address the three million who remain excluded from the financial support measures offered by the UK Government.

Chancellor, this is not a party-political issue – as evidenced by the cross-party support this campaign has seen in recent months. Your constituents need this help just as badly as mine do.

Myriad potential solutions have been offered, as I am sure you are aware. They are not complicated or impractical and the UK Government's repeated refusal to consider them and provide the vital support needed for the 3 million excluded looks increasingly like an active policy decision.

On behalf of my constituents, I am asking you once again: act, and act quickly.

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Alyn Smith'.

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