



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

21 March 2020

Dear Chancellor,

Coronavirus – Support for Charities, Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprises

We are writing to you as a cross party group of MPs and peers to ask for urgent action to be taken on supporting charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises, given the unprecedented situation, and their ability to play a crucial role in the national response to Coronavirus.

Charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises offer crucial support to many parts of our society every day, and in the coming months will be vital in tackling the spread and impact of Coronavirus / COVID-19. Many can help alleviate the pressure on our NHS and social care services and provide support to people suffering from the economic and social impact of the pandemic, as well as helping with everything from mental health impacts to support for vulnerable families.

But without an immediate injection of money, many charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises of all sizes will soon close. Funds are running out.

Crucially, the NCVO predicts that there will be a loss in the sector of £4.3bn in income over the coming 12 weeks. The figure could be far higher.

Your announcement of further financial support for employers, businesses, and people – including that these should apply to charities – is welcome, but charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises require detailed clarification of where they are eligible for such support.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), and the Charity Finance Group have issued their own urgent calls, and we endorse these and call on you to take the following urgent actions, working directly with the Devolved Administrations, to protect the charity, voluntary and social enterprise sector at this crucial time:

- Provide immediate emergency funding for frontline charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises supporting the response to the coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis, especially where they are alleviating pressure on the health service or providing support to people suffering from the economic and social impact of COVID-19
- Provide a ‘stabilisation fund’ for all charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises to help them stay afloat and continue operating during the course of the pandemic.
- Provide confirmation that all charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises as employers will be eligible for the Government action to cover 80% of the salary of retained workers, and clarify the situation for the differing governance models of charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises – including CICs.
- Establish an emergency grant fund – NCVO have recommended that the mechanism most effective for this would be the National Emergencies Trust (NET) – which has established links with Community Foundations.
- Confirm that charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises are eligible for the other business interruption measures announced for business. Particularly can you urgently confirm how the following measures will be available to charities: the £330bn loan guarantees; the criteria for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises being eligible for the business interruption loan scheme; and whether additional business rates measures include premises that are not retail charity shops?
- Work with the UK’s largest philanthropic organisations and foundations, the National Lottery and others to identify grant funding which can be drawn down early over the coming days, or in addition from their reserves and existing grant programmes to help fill the growing gaps in the sector.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, and the Minister for Civil Society.

We look forward to hearing your urgent response.

Signed,

Stephen Doughty MP
and

Julian Lewis MP
Ian Blackford MP
Wendy Chamberlain MP
Colum Eastwood MP
Liz Saville-Roberts MP
Gary Streeter MP
Vicky Foxcroft MP
Alistair Carmichael MP
Rushanara Ali MP
David Amess MP
Kevin Holynrake MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Apsana Begum MP
Hilary Benn MP
Clive Betts MP
Paul Blomfield MP
Chris Bryant MP
Karen Buck MP
Dawn Butler MP
Ian Byrne MP
Ruth Cadbury MP
Sarah Champion MP
Bambos Charalambous MP
Joanna Cherry MP
Daisy Cooper MP
Rosie Cooper MP
Yvette Cooper MP
Neil Coyle MP
Stella Creasy MP
Alex Cunningham MP
Janet Daby MP
Wayne David MP
Geraint Davies MP
Alex Davies-Jones MP
Anneliese Dodds MP
Jack Dromey MP
Rosie Duffield MP
Jonathan Edwards MP
Chris Elmore MP
Bill Esterson MP
Chris Evans MP
Preet Kaur Gill MP
Mary Glendon MP
Kate Green MP
Lilian Greenwood MP
Andrew Gwynne MP
Claire Hanna MP
Carolyn Harris MP
Sharon Hodgson MP
Rachel Hopkins MP
George Howarth MP
Darren Jones MP
Gerald Jones MP
Ruth Jones MP
Sarah Jones MP
Barbara Keeley MP
Stephen Kinnock MP
Peter Kyle MP
Ben Lake MP
David Lammy MP

Barbara Keeley MP
Stephen Kinnock MP
Peter Kyle MP
Ben Lake MP
David Lammy MP
Tony Lloyd MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Holly Lynch MP
Angus MacNeil MP
Seema Malhotra MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
Siobhain McDonagh MP
Andy McDonald MP
Catherine McKinnell MP
Anna McMorrin MP
Layla Moran MP
Stephen Morgan MP
Grahame Morris MP
Ian Murray MP
James Murray MP
Matthew Pennycook MP
Toby Perkins MP
Jess Phillips MP
Yasmin Qureshi MP
Angela Rayner MP
Steve Reed MP
Christina Rees MP
Rachel Reeves MP
Marie Rimmer MP
Naz Shah MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Barry Sheerman MP
Alex Sobel MP
Wes Streeting MP
Zarah Sultana MP
Mark Tami MP
Alison Thewliss MP
Gareth Thomas MP
Nick Thomas-Symonds MP
Stephen Timms MP
Derek Twigg MP
Catherine West MP
Matt Western MP
Philippa Whitford MP
Mohammad Yasin MP
Lord Adonis
Baroness Armstrong