

[insert MP name] MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

[insert date] March 2021

Dear [insert MP name] MP

Re: Urgent help to reach reopening

I am writing to you as a local business owner to ask for your help regarding the allocation of Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) by [insert local authority name] in order to safeguard the future of my business.

As you may know, to date a total of £1.6 billion has been allocated to local authorities including [insert local authority name] to support closed businesses during lockdown periods. Local councils can determine which businesses to target and determine the amount of funding from the ARG.

Despite the size of this fund, only 13% of the monies available have been allocated to businesses desperately in need. Central Government has now outlined that local authorities must spend this fund in order to receive a further £425 million allocated in the Chancellor's Budget last week.

As the discretion for fund allocation is with the local authority, I am urging you to help struggling businesses like mine by urging [insert local authority name] to -

1. Increase the rate and speed of fund allocation;
2. Expand their current eligibility criteria for ARG applications in order to feed vital funds through to the many businesses struggling in the current lockdown and needing to prepare for reopening.

As part of the Personal Care sector, we have been fortunate to be included in the Step 2 of the reopening roadmap with the provisional date set for 12 April. Recent data for our sector however shows that many businesses, including mine, are on a knife edge and without an immediate cash injection, will not make it to the point of reopening. Most notably:

- More than 10% of the sector has already closed its doors for good since the start of the pandemic
- 60% of businesses enter 2021 with no cash reserves (up from 27% in 2019)
- 1 in 7 business in the sector are acutely vulnerable to failure
- The average business has lost 45% of 2019 turnover (up to 59% in some areas)
- Even when open, social distancing restrictions mean salon capacity is down to 70% of what it was, losing on average two hours of appointment time per stylist per day.

I acknowledge grants including the Self Employed Income Support Scheme and the Restart Grant that may be available to Personal Care businesses like mine, however with the application process not going live until the beginning of April, it is unclear when this fund will actually be received and by this point it may be too little too late.

As my local MP, I would welcome a meeting with you at the earliest opportunity to discuss how you can engage with [insert local authority name] to urge them to distribute this vital funding now to save and protect businesses in the local area such as mine, as well as the jobs and livelihoods we provide. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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