



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

17th June 2020

New Content,

RE: SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT & LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of support for independent and local newspapers during Coronavirus; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

Like you, I appreciate just how important independent and local newspapers are, and indeed, I have been working with the Editor of the *Northants Telegraph*, our main local newspaper, in raising their concerns and the challenges they have been facing, with Ministers during this difficult period for the industry.

I know that Ministers share your desire to help independent publications through this period of hardship and I have been assured that they are in regular dialogue with publishers to ensure that the Government response to the challenges they are facing is as effective as possible.

I am very pleased that a variety of support has been made available for local newspapers. Importantly, this includes the designating of journalists and ancillary staff as 'key workers', meaning they have been able to keep working and have access to childcare and education for their families.

A major Coronavirus public information campaign has also been launched, through which Ministers have sought to maximise advertising opportunities for news outlets. Worth up to £35 million in advertising revenue, this campaign brings together over 600 national, regional and local titles across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to reach 49 million people a month. As with any media planning approach, titles have been selected on their ability to engage with audiences and to ensure value for money, reach and targeting efficacy. It is my understanding that the vast majority of titles involved are local papers and additional titles have been selected in order to further reach priority audiences including BAME and older men.

The Chancellor also brought forward the zero rating of VAT on all e-publications to the 1st May - seven months ahead of schedule. The Government expects the tax relief to be passed on to consumers in the form of reduced prices, and publishers should benefit from increased sales.



Independent publishers may also benefit from several measures included in an unprecedented business support package, such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Job Retention Scheme, Bounce Back Loans, VAT deferrals, and coverage of Statutory Sick Pay costs.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**