

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

24th August 2020

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Constance,

RE: CORONAVIRUS - GAPS IN SUPPORT.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding gaps in support during the COVID-19 emergency; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I understand the strength of feeling on this issue. The virus has indiscriminately affected everyone and ensuring that the right support and safety nets are in place for people across the country has been vital.

I understand that many have experienced financial uncertainty at this time and that some have missed out on financial assistance, whether it be in the form of grant payments for businesses, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), or other mechanisms of support. The Government's priority has always been to get money to the people most in need. To ensure that money gets to where it needs to be, the Chancellor announced in the Budget a £500 million Hardship Fund, which will be used by local councils to support residents on top of existing support packages. There is also a discretionary fund worth over £600 million for businesses that did not meet the criteria for other grant systems introduced to support those who have experienced financial disruption due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

I am encouraged by the level of support that has been in place since the start of the crisis. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has supported over 9 million jobs and 1 million employers. The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme has had over 2.6 million claims, which has guaranteed stability for self-employed people. Nonetheless, with the best will in the world, no government anywhere will get everything right, or be able to address every individual case, and it is regrettable that some have fallen through the cracks of Government financial support. I have, however, been assured by Ministerial colleagues that, further to the Treasury Committee's report, recommendations on how to best support those who have been excluded are being carefully considered to improve on the current schemes introduced during the outbreak.

Ultimately, as the country moves past the pandemic, I believe it is right to continue to offer the most support to those hit the hardest at this time, and I wholeheartedly support the Government in doing this, but also regularly emphasise that the package of support in place should be kept under constant review as circumstances change.

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 PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE