

MATTHEW OFFORD MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
11 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Chancellor,

**Coronavirus Epidemic: Financial Support for the Self- Employed**

I warmly welcome and commend the measures you announced last week to mitigate the economic and financial effects of the unprecedented situation in which we currently find ourselves.

Many of my constituents were understandably worried about how they were going to support themselves and their families on a reduced or, indeed, non-existent income and the Job Retention Scheme has brought great relief to many.

However, I have a significant number of self-employed in my constituency who feel that the Government's support for them is not at an equivalent level.

I recognise that changes have been made to the operation of Universal Credit to support the lowest paid in the zero hour and gig economies but many self-employed are not eligible for Universal Credit. These include builders, decorators, plumbers, electricians, taxi drivers, osteopaths, chiropractors, hairdressers, beauticians, private teachers, driving instructors, cooks, actors, people working freelance for major companies, to name but a few of a long list.

The self-employed account for 15% of GDP, many have thriving businesses, they are the backbone of our economy and they will be vital for our economic recovery when this crisis is over. I appreciate that providing financial help for the self-employed is not as straightforward as providing support for employees on PAYE - but I believe we must make clear that the Government is looking for a workable solution. This will provide those concerned with the reassurance they currently do not have.

There are a number of ideas being put forward that could address this situation. I urge you to consider them as a matter of urgency and view support for the self-employed with the same degree of importance as support for employees.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew".

MATTHEW OFFORD MP

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