



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Tim Farron MP
House of Commons
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Lord Callanan
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Dear Tim,

Thank you for your email of 2 June to the Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, raising the concerns of the Windermere & Bowness Chamber of Trade, about the support available for reopened small businesses. I am replying on behalf of the Department.

I appreciate that this is a difficult time for businesses, especially small shop owners such as your constituents, whose customer base were severely reduced because of the lockdown. However, I am sure that they welcomed the announcement that all non-essential retail stores including high street shops are now able to re-open if they comply with the Covid-19 secure guidelines.

Independent and community shops play a vital role in our rural communities acting as hubs for local people and having a positive impact on those they serve. They are in a unique position to support the more vulnerable and isolated members of the community.

We have provided cash grants of £10,000 for several thousand businesses eligible for business rate relief and rural rate relief and have provided cash grants of up to £25,000 for retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses with a rateable value of between £15,000 and £51,000.

We recognise that businesses will take time to recover, that is why the Chancellor has announced an extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until October, enabling employers to have more flexibility to bring their furloughed employees back to work whilst still receiving support.

Your constituent and his fellow members of the Chamber of Trade may also wish to check whether they are eligible for the Bounce Back Loan Scheme. The scheme provides microloans for 25% of business turnover, up to a maximum of £50,000, with the Government paying the interest for the first twelve months. One hundred percent of the loan will be guaranteed by the Government to the lender. More information can be found at: www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support.

As a result of Covid-19, we have announced that all eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will pay no business rates in England for 12 months from 1 April 2020.

The Government is committed to supporting the businesses and communities that make our high streets and town centres successful as the nation responds to the impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak. To support town centres and high streets we are delivering for example, an accelerated £1 billion Future High Streets Fund, part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund to re-energise local economies. The Future High Streets Fund will support local areas in England to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth, and ensures future sustainability.

Government-backed Growth Hubs are able to provide businesses of all sizes with free advice and guidance from trained advisors who will be able to discuss potential funding, business planning and building resilience. They can also signpost further sources of support, including mentoring and networking opportunities. I would encourage your constituent and his fellow members of the Windermere & Bowness Chamber of Trade to contact their local government-backed growth hub for further advice regarding business support by email: info@cumbriagrowthhub.co.uk or by visiting their website: www.cumbriagrowthhub.co.uk/. Trained business advisors can offer one to one support via the telephone on 0844 257 8450.

I can assure you that we will continue to work with industry and businesses, and where gaps or issues are identified in support, we will provide clarity and explore potential solutions to help address these concerns.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope this information is helpful.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Callan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lord Callanan