



House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Ref: ZA11171

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
The Correspondence & Enquiry unit  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

30 March 2020

Dear Rishi,

**Re: Support for Third Sector & Charities**

I am writing on behalf of the charities in my constituency who are struggling to survive due to financial instability in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Charities across the country are on the front-line of this crisis, doing everything they can to maintain critical services and respond to growing need in communities during this crisis. In my constituency, Cheshire West Voluntary Action (CWVA) is actively involved in coordinating the borough-wide response to Covid-19. They are working with charities to mobilise volunteers cross Chester in this time of need. Moreover, numerous charities such as The Unity Centre are also at the frontline of action to support the most vulnerable to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Yet, the rapid collapse of revenue for charities is forcing many to shut down. Fundraising events are being cancelled and trading revenues are drying up overnight, resulting in immediate cash flow problems. Most charities have few or no cash reserves to tide them over situations like this. Many are already planning redundancies or even to close down. Without swift and substantial financial support from the government, vital charities will simply collapse.

Whilst the measures announced during the budget are appreciated, they do not go nearly far enough to stop many charities from collapsing. Therefore, I would be extremely grateful if you could respond to the below requests and outline what action is being taken to respond to each:

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1. **Establish a £4.3 billion emergency stabilisation fund** for the charity sector to help it support the crisis response and avoid charities collapsing. This figure is a conservative forecast based on the best available data about the income charities will lose over the next three months. This fund would help charities to: a) not close down at short notice; b) keep providing key services of all kinds; c) mobilise and organise the necessary volunteering effort to combat the pandemic.
2. **Make the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme eligible for all charities**, not just those that receive over 50% of their income from trading (which is the current position). This scheme has been put in place to support businesses through the economic interruption but all charities should be eligible
3. **Make it your policy to support all charities and recognise their critical front-line role across communities in the UK.**

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C Matheson'.

**Christian Matheson MP**