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Dear Parish and Town Councils,

During these unprecedented times I would like to reassure you that the government is working round the clock to ensure the UK is protected both in terms of health and financial well-being. I am working closely with Norfolk County Council, the lead authority during this pandemic, to ensure the most vulnerable in the constituency are identified and support is given to them. I am also working with businesses and self employed to ensure they have all the relevant information in relation to government support. In my role as Secretary of State for Trade I am negotiating around the world with government leaders to secure the relevant provisions we need in the UK.

Covid-19

It is vital everyone follows Public Health England's guidance to prevent the spread of infection. Stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> which has information on businesses, health, employees, travel, workers, staying safe and will be updated as things develop.

Check the NHS website if you have symptoms and what to do next: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Local support and Norfolk County Council

All Norfolk MPs, local services and I are all working closely together to help everyone. Norfolk County Council is taking the lead for Covid-19 response in Norfolk. The Norfolk County Council website <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus> has all the relevant details and will be regularly updated with key information you need to know.

- [How to support your neighbours, and community](#)
- [How to access support if you need it](#)
- [Information for care providers](#)
- Education – [support at home](#)

This includes *Voluntary Norfolk*, which can be found here <https://www.voluntarynorfolk.org.uk/>, and is a great page for finding out how you can support the local community.

NHS

It has been incredible seeing how many people have signed up to volunteer to return to work at the frontline of our Coronavirus response in the NHS. If you previously worked in the NHS and feel that you could return, please visit: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/>

[coronavirus/returning-clinicians/](#) for information on the Returning Clinicians scheme. If you feel that you could help the NHS as a Volunteer Responder visit <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS>.

Personal Finance, Business and Self-Employment Support

Please be assured that the Government will do whatever is necessary to protect business and jobs. As part of the national effort to tackle COVID-19, the Chancellor announced the UK's single most significant post-war economic intervention to protect people's jobs and incomes. This online portal set up by the government is a place you can find answers to some common questions plus more information about the available business support schemes and when they might be rolled out: <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/>

- Businesses will receive government grants worth up to 80% of wages to keep workers in jobs- **enabling them to furlough staff**. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will pay up to £2,500 per worker each month, helping those who are self-isolating or caring for loved ones. Please note- business do not have to make up the other 20% of wages.
- VAT payments for the next quarter will be deferred, so no business will pay any VAT for the next three months - a direct injection of £30bn of cash to employers
- Self-employed people are able to claim 80% of their (up to £2,500 monthly) salary. This scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits (up to a maximum of £2,500 per month) for the next 3 months – if necessary the scheme will be extended. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme> for further details
- Please consult <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance> to see which businesses must close, and the exceptions to those requirements.
- If a company is an essential business, it is important that they operate within the government guidelines to keep yourself and your employees safe. Please check them out here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19#keeping-your-business-open>
- Universal Credit standard allowance and working tax credit basic element to rise by £1000 for a year. Additionally the Government has taken a number of steps on Universal Credit, making it more accessible for the self-employed and more generous overall. It is also already the case that people can get an advance payment almost immediately after they claim if they need one, so they do not have to wait five weeks if they have pressing bills to pay.
- The Government has also announced measures to help people with the cost of living during this unprecedented time. People can benefit from a three-month mortgage holiday and deferring the next three months of VAT, alongside further measures to protect renters and to help people with their energy bills. On top of this, the Government has also deployed extra resources into local authorities to help those who are most vulnerable with things like council tax bills, which can be a large bill for families every month.

Where to find help and information

- The Federation of Small Business has also provided a useful guide for self-employed people and small businesses: <https://www.fsb.org.uk/campaign/covid19>
- The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership is also providing support for local businesses <https://newanglia.co.uk/free-support-for-your-business-during->

[coronavirus/](#) email growthhub@newanglia.co.uk or telephone 0300 333 6536 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme-cbils/>
- My [website](#) now has live updates with the latest announcements and government advice.

The Norfolk spirit is strong and I am confident we can get through this difficult time and beat coronavirus. It is tremendous to see the community effort and local organisations coming together to support one another.

I would like to assure you that the government is working at great speed to implement all measures and get support in place. Please continue to stay at home to help the NHS and save lives.

As ever- please do not hesitate to contact me and my office if you need any help or assistance: elizabeth.truss.mp@parliament.uk

Best wishes,
Liz Truss MP