

# Make It York

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury

Dear Chancellor,

We are writing on behalf of the hospitality and retail sectors in York, including hotels, pubs, shops, restaurants and other leisure venues.

While we are very appreciative of the support government has provided to our sectors, most recently through the one-off grants of up to £9,000, we believe the industry, together with its extensive supply chain, has reached such a critical point that its survival in any recognisable form is now in doubt. In York alone, hundreds of businesses, all previously going concerns, and 10,000 jobs are at immediate risk of being lost unless decisive action is taken now.

As such, we are calling for coordinated, comprehensive package of support for the sectors, including:

1. Confirmation that the current reduced level of VAT will be maintained for a minimum of 12 months following the end of any final lockdown.
2. Confirmation that Business Rates relief and the furlough scheme will similarly be extended.
3. The replacement of the government's current *Code of Practice for Commercial Property Relationships During the COVID-19 Pandemic* with mandatory provisions requiring landlords to reduce rents by 50% on properties occupied by tenants whose businesses are prohibited from trading by COVID-19 restrictions. This is necessary to avoid the accumulation of impossible levels of rent arrears which will preclude otherwise viable businesses opening again post-pandemic. With respect to smaller landlords, it may be necessary for government to underwrite the 50% rent loss.
4. A range of targeted government grants for the sector to deal with the ongoing challenges. In particular, grants to facilitate the installation of air scrubbing UV ventilation systems, so important in dealing with indoor transmission and eliminating COVID and any future similar outbreaks.

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5. The introduction from April 2021 of a new government-guaranteed, zero interest business loan scheme, with realistic repayment thresholds and flexible timescales. Without these loans otherwise viable businesses will not have the working capital or cashflow necessary to restart post-pandemic.

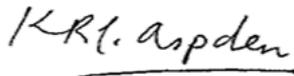
We fully appreciate the enormous current demands on government and on the public purse. We make this appeal however on the basis that this package, and its ability to secure the futures of hundreds of viable businesses, will prove to be significantly less costly to UK plc than the alternative of not acting now.

We are very happy to meet, virtually or if conditions allow in person, to discuss further and provide any necessary additional information if that would be helpful.

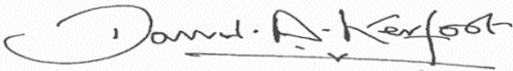
Yours sincerely



Greg Dyke, Chair, Make It York



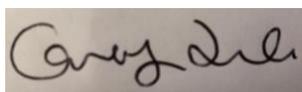
Cllr Keith Aspden, Leader, City of York Council



David Kerfoot MBE, DL, Chairman, York and North Yorkshire LEP



Andrew Lowson, Executive Director, York Business Improvement District

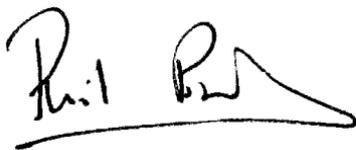


Carolyn Frank, Development Manager for Federation of Small Businesses North Yorkshire - On behalf of FSB York

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Martin Bradnam, Chairperson, Hospitality Association York



Phil Pinder, Chairperson, York Retail Forum



Harkirit Boparai, York Music Venue Network



Paul Crossman, Operator of three public houses in York

cc. Julian Sturdy, MP for York Outer  
Rachael Maskell, MP for York Central