

24th April 2020

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Sent by e-mail to: boris.johnson.mp@parliament.uk



Dear Prime Minister

**Re: Stay Focused; Protect the Economy and Save Jobs
Further support needed urgently to prevent an additional 5 million unemployed**

As a national organisation whose members represent more than 150,000 SMEs across the UK, we will do whatever it takes to support SMEs and it is in this regard that we write this letter.

New research that we have conducted in the last 3 weeks (see the full research [survey findings](#) here) shows that 5 million people are at risk of unemployment. This is a stark and worrying number, but this is the reality of what the UK may be facing.

31% of the 1,793 SME businesses who participated in our research believe they could close permanently if the lockdown continues beyond June. Given there are 16.7 million people employed by SMEs according to the government's own statistics released in 2019, this could result in over 5 million people being unemployed.

This is not what anyone wants. Clearly therefore one of the most important issues for you and your Government is to rebuild the economy. SMEs, who account for a significant proportion of the UK's economy and workforce, need to be a priority.

Our research has highlighted 3 key areas of concern for SMEs. These are:

1. Access to bank funding to preserve their business;
2. Help rebuilding their business once the pandemic eases; and
3. More support for the self-employed to tide them over.

The various schemes that have been introduced are very welcome but could be improved further. The following 3 measures, that could be realistically provided, would go a long way to support SMEs and address their biggest challenges at this time:

1. Removing some of the administrative hurdles of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme;
2. Continued support for furloughed employees, rather than a hard end to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme;
3. Refining the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to ensure it is well targeted.

In these unusual times we need to ***Stay Focused; Protect the Economy and Save Jobs***. We are committed to doing our bit to support you and collaborate with others to achieve these goals.

We look forward to receiving your feedback and response.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Jackson
Chair UK200Group's Tax Panel

Declan Swan
CEO UK200Group

Enclosed (by post) – Business Survey Results

N.B. Letter also sent to Rt Hon Rishi Sunak and Rt Hon Alok Sharma and submitted by the No 10, on-line form <https://email.number10.gov.uk/>