



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister,
Welsh Government,
By Email

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Re: Covid-19 Business Support

Dear First Minister, Mark,

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as First Minister of Wales.

Whilst we have been elected to represent different parties and communities, I believe that it would be in the best interest of Wales and our constituents should we be able to cooperate on matters, including recovery and business support.

Having read your announcement that businesses in Wales still affected by coronavirus restrictions will be able to claim up to £25,000 more in support to help meet ongoing costs, I was initially pleased to learn that 'Ministers have made an immediate decision to release funding to support businesses affected by the restrictions'. Indeed, I regarded this as positive progress following concerns I have previously raised during the last Senedd, including during Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister, that announcements made are not immediately accompanied by the necessary detail and action.

Unfortunately, you have guided us to a similar position yet again. It seems that the aforementioned comment in your press release is rhetoric only. The releasing of funds is far from 'immediate'. In fact, the eligibility checker will not open until 17 May; an application for funding cannot be made until the end of the month; and no timeframe is provided for assessment. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that some businesses in Aberconwy and across Wales could be waiting a whole month after election day for a much needed financial lifeline.

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is that support is made available to businesses this month so to help the many which are in considerable debt, struggling to keep on employees, and continuing to record reduced takings. In fact, I would encourage you to listen to Mr David Chapman, Executive Director, UK Hospitality Cymru, who has rightly stated this week that 'the last tranche of finance ran out more than a month ago'. Consequently, I would be grateful if you could backdate financial support to the start of the financial year so that enterprises across Wales are compensated for every week of restrictions they have been subjected to due to Welsh Government regulations.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS