

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
HM Treasury
The Correspondence and Enquiry Unit
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

6th November 2020

Dear Chancellor,

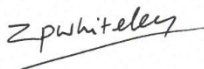
We are writing to express our concerns regarding Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme guidance that has been issued in the context of this month's new national COVID lockdown.

As you will know, a significant proportion of the UK's blood cancer patient community will be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19, due to the immune-suppressive impact of their disease or treatment. Many of those patients will no longer be able to work due to the need to follow the Government's new shielding guidance for this lockdown, and will be facing extreme stress and anxiety regarding the impact on their financial situation. We would therefore like to raise the following points:

- We are very concerned that in order to be eligible for support under the Self-employed Income Support Scheme, individuals must declare 'reduced demand' for their services. Reports suggest that the clinically extremely vulnerable patients who are unable to carry out self-employed work due to the need to shield will no longer be eligible for any support. We request urgent clarification, and confirmation that the shielding self-employed will continue to be able to access the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme during this lockdown.
- Government guidance puts the responsibility on employers for deciding whether staff can be furloughed onto the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme if they cannot work from home. We believe this has the potential to lead to distressing negotiations between blood cancer patients and their employers, with some patients potentially being in a situation where they are made to feel they have to decide between protecting their health or their income. It should be made absolutely clear in the guidance that any clinically extremely vulnerable patient has the automatic right to be furloughed if they cannot work from home and in accordance with shielding guidance. We urge a change to furlough scheme guidance to state that clinically extremely vulnerable patients should be put on furlough if the patient cannot work without being in breach of their shielding guidance.

I look forward to your prompt response on these urgent matters.

Yours sincerely,



Zack Pemberton-Whiteley

Chair

Blood Cancer Alliance

On behalf of: ACLT, Anthony Nolan, Blood Cancer UK, CLL Support, CML Support, DKMS, Leukaemia Care, Leukaemia and Lymphoma Northern Ireland, Leukaemia Cancer Society, Leukaemia UK, Lymphoma Action, MDS UK, Myeloma UK, Race Against Blood Cancer and WMUK.