Private Letter

Dear Chancellor and Secretary of State,

We are writing to you in regards to extending Business Rate Relief for dentists and other private and mixed healthcare providers such as physiotherapists and osteopaths during the current coronavirus crisis.

These are incredibly unsettling times for all businesses. However, it is clear that many private and mixed dental practices and other healthcare providers in our constituencies are struggling disproportionately.

NHSE, for example, has understandably said that all routine dentistry should cease. The very nature of the work dentists and other private healthcare practitioners undertake renders the continuation of their work impossible. Dentists which have NHS contracts are due to be remunerated for the NHS work they would have undertaken, affording them the same income stream as they have had in March 2019.

However, in stark contrast, private practices have seen their income stream completely collapse, yet they continue to be liable for their existing overheads. Aside from rent/mortgage repayments, for which many commercial landlords offer limited support, their liability for business rates is proving a particular strain.

The Government guidance currently states that mixed practices can furlough private dental staff in proportion to the amount of NHS work they undertake, and private practices must rely on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme or the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan. However, we have all received correspondence from those in the industry detailing the issues they have faced with these schemes.

These are not wealthy people; in many instances they are small local practices employing one or two dental or other healthcare practitioners. In many ways, they are very akin to the retail, hospitality and leisure sector, yet they supply an essential healthcare service which, in normal times, would ease the strain on NHS providers.

We would therefore call on the Government to allow for a twelve-month moratorium on business rates for dentists and private and mixed healthcare providers.

We are clearly aware that Government has been exceptionally bold and generous with the financial package it has offered to businesses and individuals and the public purse is not unlimited. We do however believe that dentists and other private health providers are facing extreme issues and so we would ask that they be treated akin to the retail, hospitality and leisure sector.
By extending the business rate relief, the Government would ensure the long-term viability of a vast number of businesses providing an essential service up and down the country, while similarly protecting individuals who would otherwise be forced to enter the welfare system. These are frontline staff, who are clearly as vital to the community and the economy as those in the retail, leisure and hospitality sector, and extremely deserving of this support.

We would be grateful if you could take our correspondence into full consideration, and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Felicity Buchan MP
Lee Anderson MP
Bob Blackman MP
The Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
Sir Graham Brady MP
Andy Carter MP
Greg Clark MP
Theo Clarke MP
Laura Farris MP
Simon Fell MP
Marcus Fysh MP
The Rt Hon Dame Cheryl Gillan MP
Andrew Griffith MP
Jonathan Gullis MP
John Howell MP

Pauline Latham MP
Tim Loughton MP
Jason McCartney MP
Esther McVey MP
The Rt Hon Maria Miller MP
Nigel Mills MP
Gagan Mohindra MP
The Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Laurence Robertson MP
Selaine Saxby MP
Craig Tracey MP
Laura Trott MP
Heather Wheeler MP