

HENRY SMITH MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

16th July 2020

Dear Rishi

Post-shielding financial support for people with blood cancer who are unable to return to work

I write to ask for your help in protecting people with blood cancer that have been shielding, but are unable to return to work, by providing additional financial support for this group.

It is estimated that over 200,000 people with blood cancer have been designated 'clinically extremely vulnerable' across the UK, entitling those of working age to sick pay, if they are unable to work from home.

The shielding scheme has been a lifeline for these people, because emerging data shows that people with blood cancer are more likely to die than people with most other health conditions if they catch COVID-19. Although infection rates are lowering, coronavirus is still active in the community and the risk of a poor outcome if someone with blood cancer becomes infected is unchanged.

It is therefore likely that around 9,000 working-aged people with blood cancer will either be advised to continue shielding by their doctors or will choose to do so because they have not been given enough evidence to feel safe.

However, for these people who have been shielding, they will, from August, face the impossible choice between returning to work and risking their health or staying at home and potentially risking unemployment.

I ask that you either extend the furlough scheme for these small numbers of people for an additional three months, or consider other forms of financial support, to protect them from life-threatening ill health or unemployment.

Thank you for your consideration.

As ever

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry Smith".

Henry Smith
Member of Parliament for Crawley
Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Blood Cancer

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