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Our ref: MC2020/66162

Catherine West MP

25 November 2020

Dear Catherine

As you may know, your email of 22 October to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on behalf of a number of your constituents about the Minimum Income Floor (MIF) in Universal Credit was forwarded to this Department. I am replying to you as the Minister for Employment.

Please pass on my thanks to your constituents for taking the time to write in raising this issue. I write to you with the latest update and I hope they will find the following comments to be helpful.

The Government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by the coronavirus and we have been clear in our intention that everybody should be supported to do the right thing.

We have always been clear that easements would be reviewed as public health guidance and the national working environment changes.

I can confirm that the MIF for self-employed Universal Credit claimants will remain suspended until the end of April 2021, extending vital support for hundreds of thousands of people.

The further suspension means that self-employed people will continue to receive crucial financial support from Universal Credit based on their current actual earnings – providing additional protection for those who see a drop in earnings due to the impact of coronavirus.

Extending the MIF suspension ensures that self-employed workers have security from the welfare safety net throughout the winter.

The latest announcements, advice and guidance during the coronavirus public health emergency can be found on the government website at:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

May I also take this opportunity to tell you, and your constituents, about Find a Job. This is the Government's official job matching service with more than 1.7 million people already registered on the site. It is one of the most consistently used online services at gov.uk.

More than 145,000 private and public sector employers large and small have already signed up, and the service is open to employers and recruitment agencies who recruit on their behalf.

By ensuring we advertise all urgent vacancies on one government-owned service, we shall be able to better direct jobseekers and those who have been furloughed and looking for temporary employment to available vacancies. The Department has also taken immediate action to put in place various digital and communications tools to support jobseekers and those who are furloughed and looking for temporary employment.

We have been promoting Find a Job (www.gov.uk/find-a-job) as the central place for employers to post their vacancies, and as the main channel to match people with vacancies. However, we also recognise that some jobseekers and employers will need additional information to align new and existing skills with current labour market requirements and have therefore launched two new websites: Job Help (<https://jobhelp.campaign.gov.uk>) and Employer Help (<https://employerhelp.dwp.gov.uk>) on 27 April.

These websites promote a range of guidance and advice, including support on identifying transferrable skills. They also promote other gov.uk provision such as the National Careers Service and the new Department for Education online skills training initiative, the Skills Toolkit, which launched on 28 April.

Additionally, Work Coaches offer all claimants, including those affected by the loss or reduction of self-employment, a comprehensive package of support including skills provision and job search support. They are supported by specialist staff to help claimants with more complex barriers to enter employment. In addition, the Department provides outreach services in partnership with national and local organisations, delivering Jobcentre services on a partner's premises. Local jobcentres frequently work alongside local organisations to help meet the needs of their communities.

Finally, on 5 July the Chancellor announced £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's Cultural, Arts and Heritage institutions. This package includes:

- £1.15 billion support pot for cultural organisations in England delivered through a mix of grants and loans.

- £100 million of targeted support for the national cultural institutions in England and the English Heritage Trust.
- £120 million capital investment to restart construction on cultural infrastructure.

The new funding will also mean an extra £188 million for the devolved administrations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mims', written in a cursive style.

Mims Davies MP

Minister for Employment