



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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I&S

[@no10.gov.uk](mailto:PS.FirstMinister@gov.wales)

28 April 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Welcome back to work. I hope that, in all the circumstances, you have made as complete a recovery as possible.

I wanted also to write to welcome your words yesterday morning in Downing Street, urging patience with the current unprecedented restrictions and making clear that there should be no rushed attempt to throw the measures we have jointly taken into reverse.

As you will know, the Welsh Government last week published a Framework which set out our thinking about the evaluation of any proposals to ease elements of the lockdown (enclosed). We did so as a contribution to the way in which these challenging decisions are being considered across the United Kingdom. Our view is that any steps taken at the end of the current three-week period should necessarily be modest and cautious. My preference remains that we agree the steps together and implement them to a common timetable.

I would like to stress how important it is that the UK Government does not step back from the financial support which has been offered to businesses and employees in a way which would put pressure on them to return to work before they are confident it is safe to do so, and that necessary adjustments to allow for social distancing have been introduced.

In particular, the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) is absolutely fundamental to preventing business bankruptcies and enabling employers to prioritise measures to reduce transmission of the virus. It is essential it is not withdrawn too soon.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Even in the case of sectors which our Governments have not instructed to close, many businesses have chosen to do so. Re-starting production/activity in these businesses, if done on the basis of responsible adaptations, will mean they will be operating initially with lower employment, lower output and little opportunity to operate profitably. Even in these sectors some continued JRS support will be needed to secure a safe return to work.

In this context, can I also draw to your attention the regulations which the Welsh Government has made to require employers to make 'reasonable measures' to the workplace to enable social distancing and protect health and safety.

<https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace>

We believe this has helped give confidence to employees that a return to work, when it comes, will not involve unnecessary risks to their health, as well as, of course, helping to keep transmission rates of the virus low.

I am copying this letter to the First Minister of Scotland and to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland as well as to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Secretary of State for Wales.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

MARK DRAKEFORD