



19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Kate,

### Immediate Support Required for our Local Business Community

We are working tirelessly with our members to minimise the business and economic impact of the coronavirus but as you are aware, the scale and pace of the impact on businesses is like nothing we have seen before.

Urgent action is needed now from the Scottish and UK Governments to support businesses and protect jobs in our local community.

We have welcomed the financial assistance announced by both Governments but as we have entered into an escalated stage of the coronavirus, businesses require additional support, specifically immediate cash support.

After engaging directly with our business members, the Chambers of Commerce Network in Scotland have submitted the following business asks through the Scottish Chambers of Commerce:

1. **Employment Support Grants:** businesses need immediate and urgent support to keep employees in jobs. We are asking for a 100% contribution towards employee wages, or income for the self-employed in every sector of Scotland's economy for the first three months. Thereafter, a 50% contribution should continue for a further three months.
2. **Business Costs:** we have reiterated our position that upfront business costs including Business Rates, VAT, PAYE and NI must be suspended immediately for the next three months.
3. **Business Grants:** all businesses in Scotland must have quick access to business grants, with immediate priority given to the most vulnerable sectors.
4. **State Aid:** we are calling for the European Commission to move urgently to temporarily suspend rules on State Aid eligibility to enable all companies to receive the support they need quickly and accessibly.

These asks have been submitted to the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Secretary of State for Scotland, Alister Jack MP and to the UK Government's Chancellor, Rishi Sunak MP. **As our local politician, we urge you to support these asks and write to both Governments so that businesses and jobs in our local communities are supported immediately.**

In addition, the Scottish Chamber Network comprises 30 local Chambers and we are deeply embedded in our local communities. We have an expert pool of 200 staff, and our coverage, reach and presence means we are acting as the "first responders" to businesses in our local areas. We continue to offer our business support and advisory expertise to businesses and are ready to work in partnership with the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure businesses are supported quickly and effectively.

Yours sincerely,

Stewart Nicol  
Chief Executive

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