



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport

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11 June 2020

Harriett Baldwin MP  
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Your Ref: HB42038  
Our Ref: MC2020/07961/DT

Dear Harriett,

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 May to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, on behalf of your constituents, Mr Nick Phillips, CEO and Ms Elizabeth Fathi, Chairman of the National Association of Almshouses, Billingbear Lodge, Maidenhead Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 5RU, regarding government support for the Almshouse Association during the Covid-19 pandemic. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

I agree that the voluntary sector plays a fundamental role in supporting our local communities to thrive and The National Association of Almshouses work in this area is very much appreciated.

I recognise that charities are experiencing some particular pressures as a result of loss of income as a result of Covid-19, while for some demand for their services is unchanged or even increasing. The measures announced by the Chancellor in relation to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and support for self-employed will be of significant help to some charities. Moreover, the Charity Commission has published guidance on gov.uk, which sets out how charities can get support for their staff, advice on use of reserves, and other potential issues.

Government has also made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. This will provide support for thousands of charities on the frontline of helping vulnerable people affected by Covid-19.

We have allocated £360 million to other government departments, which will support the work of charities and social enterprises delivering services that are central to their policy agenda and public services. Within this, £200 million has also been allocated to support Hospices. Departments are disbursing these funds in a range of ways with much of the money distributed directly to specific organisations.

We have published clear and comprehensive guidance on the financial support for the sector and how organisations can apply for it:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-support-for-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-to-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19>. This guidance will be updated frequently.

The Department of Health and Social Care has taken steps to ensure that all staff operating in the health and care sectors can access adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), and as such has delivered millions of items of personal protective equipment for staff at care homes, home care providers and hospices as well as to hospitals, ambulance trusts, GP practices and



pharmacists. The needs of staff in non-health and non-care settings is also covered in the UK wide PPE Plan. Further information can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan>

The government is also working to update guidance and support the voluntary sector as restrictions are eased. Government guidance applicable to the voluntary sector signposts to guidance from Public Health England and BEIS covering personal protective equipment. We hope organisations will make use of this resource as restrictions ease.

Thank you again for contacting me.

With best wishes,



Baroness Barran  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Civil Society**