

Midlothian MP calls for swift action for business and workers

Owen Thompson MP for Midlothian has called for swifter, clearer action from government to support workers and businesses devastated by the coronavirus crisis.

Mr Thompson wrote to the Chancellor seeking greater clarity about the emergency measures already announced and how to access the funds.

He also called for salaries to be guaranteed over the crisis period to keep businesses afloat, and a minimum guaranteed income to be introduced for all citizens, to make sure no-one falls through the holes in the welfare safety net.



Owen Thompson MP

Mr Thompson said: "While I welcome the support that the UK

Government has already announced the scale of this crisis leaves a lot more needing done, and needing done quickly. It's a confusing picture and too many people are at risk of falling through the gaps.

"We are doing all we can to protect lives in this public health crisis, but people are fighting for their livelihoods too. Swifter and more sweeping government intervention is needed.

"Businesses are at risk of immediate collapse – they shouldn't be scratching their heads wondering if they qualify for support.

"Immediate measures like guaranteeing the salaries of affected staff for a few months will keep people afloat. Such a lifeline would cost far less in the long term by preventing unemployment soaring.

"The UK Government should also bring in a guaranteed national income to protect people from poverty and save on the delays and bureaucracy of the universal credit system. We have to make sure everyone has the basic income they need to keep going during these difficult times.

"Across many sectors of society, from taxi drivers to hotel workers, people suddenly and unexpectedly lost their income overnight. We need to do more to protect them and keep people in work where possible.

"In these times of crisis every day matters so I urge the UK Government to go further and faster to help those in need of support."