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23 March 2020

*Dear Alex,*

**Covid-19 Small Business Grants Fund**

Thank you for your letter dated 23 March in relation to the grants fund the Chancellor has announced to help protect small businesses from the impact of Covid-19.

I have decided to issue a Ministerial Direction for the Covid-19 Small Business Grants Fund.

I recognise the Managing Public Money issues that this proposal causes for you as the Principal Accounting Officer. However, as you set out in your letter to me, there are broader issues that I am able to weigh in my decision that you are not able to accommodate in your own assessment.

We know that many small businesses are suffering as a result of the unexpected economic shock caused by Covid-19. Government has a responsibility to support these businesses and this grant funding will, as you point out in your letter, provide many small businesses with valuable and timely financial relief from the impact of Covid-19. This is a key component in the Government's comprehensive response to this evolving economic situation which is designed to support the economy through this time of crisis.

I am therefore directing you to work closely with HMT and MHCLG to deliver this scheme with immediate effect managing the identified risks as best you can.

*Kind regards,*



**THE RT HON ALOK SHARMA MP**  
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy