Dear <INSERT MP’S NAME HERE>

RE: Access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

I am resident within your constituency and I need your help to access the government’s Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

I have been working as <INSERT JOB TITLE HERE> for the last <INSERT YEARS/MONTHS HERE> and I have no further work assignments due to the impact of Coronavirus.

My work is secured by a recruitment business and I am employed by an umbrella firm. This gives me continuity of employment with all statutory rights and benefits whilst enabling me to work for numerous different short-term assignments.

As it currently stands, there is not enough clarity about the government’s Job Retention Scheme to enable my umbrella employer to offer the scheme to me. Therefore, I currently have no future income or work.

It is therefore essential that the Treasury provides further guidance on the specifics of the Job Retention Scheme and how it interacts with umbrella employees. Until such information is provided, I do not know what my financial situation will be and therefore I cannot make any decisions regarding my personal financial circumstances.

My umbrella employer is waiting for confirmation as to what proportion of my income can be considered for “furloughed pay”. There are a number of specific issues which need urgent guidance from the government, the most of important of which are:

* Umbrella employers guarantee to pay workers at least National Minimum Wage for hours worked even if the recruitment agency does not pay the umbrella. This is a contractual commitment which is intended to give umbrella employees additional stability and certainty. The balance of funds received from agencies is also paid to the workers and is often referred to as a discretionary commission or bonus (although it is not related to performance).
* The professional body for umbrella employers, the Freelancer & Contractor Services Association (FCSA), believes that umbrella employees should be classified as “employees whose pay varies” in the same way as agency workers are categorised. To classify umbrella employees differently would be unfair because they are also agency workers. I understand that the FCSA is very concerned that, in guaranteeing National Minimum Wage and simply referencing the balance of the pay as bonus or commission, it may be argued at a later date that the 80% payment should only be based on National Minimum Wage and that balance of the pay is misconstrued as a performance related bonus.

**Logically, agency workers should therefore be treated the same whether they have chosen umbrella employment or agency payroll as the method of being paid.**

Until my umbrella employer has confirmation from the government on this matter, then it is impossible for them to calculate my furloughed pay based on an average of all earnings because there is a significant risk that this amount will not be reimbursed by the government.

There are circa 625,000 umbrella employees who would be affected, many of whom fulfil critical roles within the health service as well all other sectors. It is essential that all umbrella employees have the option to receive furloughed pay based on their average earnings and not solely on 80% of NMW.

Please report my concerns to the Treasury urgently. I cannot stress enough the importance of this issue for <me/my family> and for the many thousands of other workers in the same situation.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely