

To whom it may concern,

I am getting in touch on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The Board of Deputies is the national representative body of the UK Jewish community with 180 constituent member groups that include synagogues and other charitable institutions. As part of our duties as an organisation, we have a responsibility to convey our members' key concerns to the Government; and to provide suggestions of steps which could be taken to alleviate such concerns.

Some of the charities and voluntary sector groups we represent provide key services to the most vulnerable in our society, including those most likely to be affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. Along with health and social care systems across the country, these organisations provide vital support to those affected by the economic and social fallout – in some cases alleviating pressure that would otherwise be faced directly by the NHS.

Due to the impact of Coronavirus, demand has vastly increased across all services. As a result, already stretched resources are currently at breaking point. Costs such as mortgages and taxes remain the same, but charities are dealing with a significant drop in income due to the falling value of investments, alongside a reduction in fundraising events and charitable giving.

It has been reported that around a quarter of UK charities have no reserves. Those with reserves are seeing their funds rapidly depleting. Many household-named charities are reporting that they have three to six months left before their cash reserves run out.

Charities are calling on Ministers to provide a swift and substantial emergency package including:

1. Allocation of additional funding to bolster and mobilise organisations working on the front line and directly contributing to tackle the impact of the Coronavirus.
2. Provision of a 'Stabilisation Fund' from the Government to enable charities to stay afloat and continue operating during the course of the pandemic.
3. Eligibility of charities, as employers and service delivery organisations facing business interruption, to benefit from the measures announced by the Chancellor for businesses.
4. An immediate halt to charities being required to pay VAT when purchasing essential items.
5. An option for charities to be able to defer National Insurance Contributions.

Quick action in this regard could not only save charities but would also prevent additional pressure falling upon the heroic staff of our NHS, who are already doing everything they can in this time of crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Sugarman

Daniel Sugarman
Public Affairs Officer

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