

**Written evidence submitted by Paul Jephcott**

I am responding on behalf of two of the questions posed by the Committee with respect to Covid 19, namely:-

- To what extent do Government measures protect viable jobs in the future and reduce the risk of long-term unemployment?
- To what extent are Government measures value for money for the taxpayer?

And even then am restricting my comments to only one particular issue, the stamp duty holiday which is due to expire on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The aim of this, as I understand it, is to provide stability to the property market and also the construction market involved in the construction of new build houses.(also impacts on the employment of solicitors, estate agents , surveyors etc)

My concern is that on March 31<sup>st</sup> there is a cliff edge on stamp duty which is already causing a lot of uncertainty as to whether property transactions can take place prior to that date, especially after allowing for some inevitable Covid interruption at local authority for searches, solicitors, funders and in particular interruptions in the construction of new build houses.

To help avoid some of this uncertainty, and to help purchasers avoid defaulting on purchases when an unforeseen delay after exchange of contracts means the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline is missed and unaffordable stamp duty payable, can I suggest the following change to the legislation.

**Consideration should be given to extending the stamp duty exemption timewise for all house purchase contracts where contracts are exchanged prior to March 31<sup>st</sup> and where completion takes place within a period of (say) 2 months thereafter eg June 30<sup>th</sup>**

At a potentially zero cost to the Treasury (which would have assumed no revenue on pre March 31<sup>st</sup> completions anyway), confidence can remain in the property market and unforeseen Covid related delays post exchange of contracts will not result in individuals potentially having to default on their purchases.

This in turn I think will help prevent a major loss of confidence in the housing market which could easily knock on elsewhere. It will also help prevent the related construction sectors having to switch off early resulting in destocking and the adverse economic issues that could result

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