



Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee

The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 07870 541021

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP,
Chief Secretary to the Treasury,
UK Government

economyenergyandfairwork@parliament.scot

Sent by email only

16 June 2020

Dear Steve,

COVID-19 – impact on businesses, workers and the economy

I refer your response (dated 5 June) to the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee's letter of 26 May on COVID-19 and its impact on the economy, businesses and workers in Scotland.

The Committee notes from your response that the UK Government has published UK-wide data on the CJRS, SEISS, BBLs, CBILs and CLBLs. We also note that geographic data on CJRS and SEISS was made available by the UK Government on 11 June.

The Committee was very disappointed with the UK Government's response to its letter; the response did not specifically indicate that geographic data would be made available in the near future. This data is vital for the Committee in carrying out its scrutiny of what steps are needed to support the economy in Scotland as the crisis abates.

We note from your response that the UK government is also considering what further data it will be possible to publish on the lending schemes in the future, while balancing the sensitive commercial nature of this information for lenders. The Committee would urge you to provide geographic data on BBLs, CBILs and CLBLs; the Committee needs this data to assess the scale of debt taken on by businesses in Scotland. This will enable the Committee to establish what support is needed by businesses in Scotland going forward.

In response to the Committee's invitation to give evidence, you responded that the UK government is accountable to the UK Parliament and that you need to proceed with this in mind. The Committee would highlight that UK Government Ministers and Cabinet Secretaries have previously appeared before Scottish Parliament committees on cross-cutting issues. Given that

assistance is being given to businesses in Scotland by both governments, the Committee believes that it is appropriate for a UK Minister to appear before it on these issues. The Committee is open to suggestions from the UK Government on who might be best placed to appear, possibly a colleague from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

I would be grateful to receive a response within one week of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Ballantyne', followed by a small comma.

Michelle Ballantyne MSP, Convener