

Dear Chancellor,

Rate relief for professions disproportionately affected by lock down

I am writing on behalf of 15 groups representing 12 professionals practicing through small businesses. They have been severely restricted in how they can operate due to the lockdown rules. In many cases they have not been explicitly required to close. They are therefore not included in the list of industries who are eligible for non-domestic rate relief.

In all cases our members have businesses which, due to their nature, require a significant degree of face to face contact with clients. By following public health requirements our businesses have been severely limited on how much trade they can actually do.

In theory they have been able to trade virtually, or in some cases provide emergency care for patients. But in reality, the nature of our professions requires high level of frequent and high volume personal contact with customers. Covid restrictions have therefore stopped most contact and therefore much of our incomes.

Private practitioners working in health and wellbeing all have direct contact with patients. Only some emergency treatment is allowed and only some patients can be seen virtually. As a result, the incomes of many small clinics has been minimal, whilst rates and other business costs still need to be paid. It is particularly unfair that these businesses are not able to secure rate relief given that that similar, but non- professionally based, businesses in the leisure sector can claim relief.

Personal contact is also important for other professions. Business service professionals rely on personal client relationships for business. Covid makes it particularly difficult to build the relationships needed to generate new business, at precisely the time this is needed to replace clients who are cutting back due to their own Covid pressures.

Although we represent a large number of businesses, they are mainly SMEs. The costs of extending the relief would therefore be relatively limited. We would therefore ask that you consider extending rate relief retrospectively to small businesses which provide the services of professionally qualified practitioners in the health, wellbeing or business service sectors.

Yours faithfully,

Rob Yeldham
Director of Strategy, Policy & Engagement
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

on behalf of:

British Association of Music Therapists,
British Association of Sport Rehabilitation Therapists,
British Chiropractic Association,
British Dental Association,
British Dietetic Association,
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants,
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy,
College of Podiatry,
Institute of Osteopathy,

MSK Partners Network,
Physio First,
Royal College of Chiropractors,
Royal College of Occupational Therapists,
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
and the Society of Sports Therapists.

CC Chairs of Treasury and Business select committees, Shadow Chancellor and Lib Dem Treasury spokesperson.