



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Alok Sharma MP  
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

*Dear Alok,*

25 March 2020

First of all please accept my thanks for all your work to support businesses in Scunthorpe and across this country during this difficult time. We are also grateful and will always remember the Government's support for British Steel in the past months.

Based on the correspondences I have received in the past week, I understand that businesses and employed individuals from Scunthorpe are in general quite pleased with the Government's announcement of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Thanks to the CJRS I was able to work with businesses to keep more people employed in Scunthorpe.

However, with limited information being released at this point some businesses in my constituency, including British Steel, have questions regarding flexibility when it comes to the CJRS's "furlough" policy. The current policy assumption is that employees who are "furloughed" will be expected to be "furloughed" for a minimum of 3 months and will in all likelihood not work for the duration of the entire COVID-19 Crisis.

This presents numerous issues in particular one of unpredictability as some workers who may be furloughed in the short term may be needed in the coming months. For example, British Steel may need to "un-furlough" some of its core blast furnace workers if those who were originally expected to work were asked to self-isolate or became ill and they became short staffed. Furthermore, employers will be forced to choose between the fairness of how shifts are allocated, and the economic viability of the business.

Please could you give a view on if a furloughed member of staff could be furloughed for say a planned 4 week period rather than three months. Please could you also confirm if staff can be un-furloughed if needed for essential tasks?

Lastly, can I reiterate the APPG for Steel's call for more consultation into ways which it could support the steel industry, in light of the industry's incompatibility with current Government support offered to large businesses?

I would like to once again voice my appreciation for your service to this country. Do keep safe and both my constituents and I will look forward to you or your team's response.

Take care,

*Holly Mumby-Croft*

Holly Mumby-Croft  
Member of Parliament for Scunthorpe