



The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

January 27th 2021

Dear Chancellor

As Chief Executive of the largest professional body for driver and rider trainers in the UK, I am writing to ask you to consider further financial measures to help support, stabilise and sustain this important sector.

The driver and rider training industry has been effectively shutdown in each lockdown, bar some limited key worker training and testing. It is worth remembering ADI's are regulated by a government agency (DVSA) and overall there are around 38,000 qualified ADI's in the UK generating income for the agency in terms of licence fees, and the fees paid by pupils they bring to test. In each and every lockdown to date government has closed down testing and issued directives that trainers should not work.

Unlike other areas of education and training, it is difficult to switch to a remote offering, and we don't have the benefit of other industries in being able to offer takeaways and click and collect versions of our services in order to generate some level of income and maintain some level of provision.

There are many in the driver and rider training industry who have seriously struggled financially throughout this crisis, and who have not been able to tap into available support. The SEISS scheme helps some, but there are many new entrants who have less than a year's trading history and who are not able to access such support, nor can those who operate limited companies or earn income from other sources (income which may equally have been compromised by COVID). Indeed the Institute for Fiscal Studies has today pointed to research, which concludes there is "*clear unfairness*" in some of the exclusions.

As driver and rider trainers generally do not have premises they cannot also tap into measures such as those designed for businesses with a rateable value. One existing area of funding which trainers could have made more accessible to them could come from the £1.1 billion discretionary funding granted to Local Authorities who are already doing much to support rateable businesses. If central government could highlight to local authorities that driver and rider trainers should be eligible for this funding, this would help greatly – as would any supplementary financial support measures for those who cannot access other schemes.

Additionally we would throw our support behind the proposed Directors Income Support Scheme being introduced in the UK, following on from the introduction of the Limited Company Director's Support Scheme (LCDSS) in Northern Ireland this month, and other proposed measures directed at the excluded.



We would also echo the concern expressed by many industry bodies and self employed businesses over the decision not to announce the fourth SEISS grant until after the Spring budget on 3rd March. Asking businesses to wait till March 3RD to know when they can apply for further financial support, and know what level of support that will offer, seems unnecessarily unfair and certainly does not allow them to budget effectively.

Whilst respectful of the unprecedented level of financial assistance the Chancellor has offered to businesses throughout the pandemic, the self-employed in general have felt somewhat second-class citizens. For example, furloughed individuals have not had to wait three months to receive any kind of financial assistance, they have been able to largely rely on a similar level of income every month and, in many cases, benefit from reduced monthly outgoings in terms of travel to work (plus they have no costs to run a business on top of the costs of running a household, unlike the self employed).

Furloughed workers have also received, in most cases, 80% of gross earnings, verses 80% of net profits for the self-employed. Additionally the self-employed have only received financial assistance 12 months out of 14, unlike furloughed workers who have continued to receive a monthly pay check throughout the crisis.

Whilst other industries are undoubtedly suffering, I would like to see some recognition of the unique challenges the driver and rider training industry finds itself facing - alongside a recognition of the important contribution trainers make to the UK's financial and public health in general, given the work they do to mitigate the cost of road risk to human life and the public purse, and the contribution they have made to safely mobilising necessary goods, services and key people throughout this crisis.

With an estimated backlog of over 400,000 driving tests in UK, for which a level of training will be required beforehand, driver and rider trainers are also an important route out of the crisis within government services, caused by the overarching crisis of COVID.

Therefore in economic, public health and public service recovery terms, we cannot afford to continue to compromise such an industry. I have also written to the Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment to argue for similar due consideration of driver and rider trainers in terms of occupational priorities within phase two of the vaccine rollout.

My thanks, and the thanks of the driver and rider training industry overall, in advance for your consideration of these matters.

Yours sincerely

Carly Brookfield
CEO, Driving Instructors Association