



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
London W1H 0ET

10 May 2020

Dear Alok,

We write following the PM's announcement tonight.

We stand ready as ever to work with the Government to deliver the confidence and trust that is needed. Regrettably, tonight's statement offered neither.

We are deeply concerned about the decision to ask workers who can't work at home, including those in manufacturing and construction, to go back to work tomorrow morning when no official guidance has been published about the rules to guarantee safety. Every worker deserves to work without fear. Without clear rules in place for workplaces, this cannot happen. Ordering a return to work in manufacturing and construction with 12 hours notice and no official guidance on how workers can keep safe is irresponsible and wrong.

The Government talks of new guidance for employers to make workplaces safe. Why has that guidance not been published ahead of the instruction for people to return to work tomorrow?

The Prime Minister said tonight he wanted workers to avoid public transport and use cars, bicycles or walk to work but did not explain how. What if none of those are viable options?

To get the economy moving safely, we must proceed in an orderly way, working with businesses and trades unions to put in place the measures necessary to protect workers.

As previously advised we strongly urge you to ensure that any such guidelines specifically address, amongst other things:

- safe social distancing in the workplace,
- the extra emphasis needed around the full provision of hand washing facilities and the provision of appropriate PPE commensurate with the current risks;
- mandatory specific Covid19 risk assessments for businesses with more than 5 employees, published and registered with the Health and Safety Executive or Local Authority,
- given the lack of capacity for inspections, consultation with workplace trade union Health and Safety Representatives in the settling of assessments, as well as their implementation and enforcement,
- that trade union health and safety representatives, in discussion with employers, be able to assist in non-unionised supply chain companies
- and finally, that employees will not be prejudiced in any way for drawing attention to safety failings in the workplace.

Yours sincerely,



Andy McDonald  
Shadow Secretary of State  
Employment Rights and Protections



Ed Miliband  
Shadow Secretary of State  
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy