



8 April 2020

## To those working in manufacturing and industry in the UK

At this unprecedented time for the UK I want to pay tribute to you for the work you are doing to keep the UK economy going.

As you know, the Government's priority is saving lives and we have advised that where possible, people should stay at home and work from home. However, our country needs your support to keep supply chains moving and key workers mobile, as well as to protect the economy as much as possible. Every business has a role to play in helping the country defeat coronavirus.

Manufacturing is a critical part of our economy and I would like to be clear that **there is no restriction on manufacturing continuing under the current rules.** Guidelines from Public Health England provide best practice advice on how this can be done safely. Many across aerospace, chemical, automotive, steel, aluminium, pharmaceutical, packaging and other sectors, including those providing essential services and materials, have answered the call to action and are playing a direct role in combatting COVID-19 by producing the material we need to fight the spread of the virus. It is vital that we ensure that servicing, parts and raw materials are available to keep vehicles and services on the road and operating. I would like to give you all my personal thanks for everything you are doing.

Those who cannot work from home and have to travel to work can continue to do so, consistent with the Chief Medical Officer's advice. I would remind both you and your employers that good practice on hand-washing and social distancing where possible remains an important part of efforts to keep COVID-19 from spreading, as explained in the latest [guidance on operating safely in the workplace](#). Further Government guidance is available on [GOV.UK](#).

As you know, the Chancellor has announced a far-reaching package to support businesses including government-backed and guaranteed loans, making available an initial £330bn of guarantees during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the Coronavirus Job Retention and VAT deferral schemes. I have also recently announced changes to insolvency rules, to help UK businesses which need financial rescue or restructuring to keep trading, and want to reassure you that we are working round the clock to protect our people and businesses. Please visit our business support webpage for further information: [gov.uk/business-support](http://gov.uk/business-support)

I, my fellow Ministers in BEIS and the department's officials, are in regular contact with industry leaders and the Trade Associations representing businesses operating across the economy to monitor the effect of COVID-19 on industry and its workforce,

and this close working will continue. I am fully committed to continuing to engage through the coming days, weeks and beyond to ensure that we can support our manufacturing sectors.

I realise this will be challenging for you personally, but you are contributing to the resilience of our nation and I am grateful for the enormous efforts you are making in order to support the UK at this testing time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alok Sharma', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**THE RT HON ALOK SHARMA MP**  
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy