



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Kevin Hollinrake MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

**Department for Business,
Energy & Industrial Strategy**
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

www.gov.uk

Our ref: MCB2022/32260

Mr Chris Young
Coordinator - The Real Bread Campaign
Sustain, The Green House
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA

30 January 2023

Email only.

Dear Mr Young,

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 November 2022 to the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs Ministers, Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey and Rt Hon Mark Spencer and 22 November to the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak, regarding your initial letter and outstanding responses. Your correspondence has been passed to BEIS for response, and I apologise for the delay.

Small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) are the backbone of our economy and have a key role to play in driving economic growth. The Government has taken action to support UK SMEs, including support with business rates; increasing the employment allowance; and exempting small and micro businesses from regulations where possible. The Government has also acted to reverse the National Insurance rise, which will save small businesses £4,200 on average and brought in the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which protects small businesses from high energy bills over the winter. Eligible customers do not need to take action or apply to the scheme; suppliers automatically apply reductions to the bills of all eligible non-domestic customers.

Following an HMT-led review into the Energy Bill relief Scheme, a new energy support scheme has been announced. The Energy Bill Discount Scheme will continue to provide a discount to eligible businesses and non-domestic customers from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Organisations with primary operations in the list of eligible Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) sectors for the scheme, as published on gov.uk and found [here](#), will be eligible for a substantially higher level of support.

We hope that will help give time for businesses to include this in their forward planning.

We have recently announced an extension to the Recovery Loan Scheme to help small businesses access the finance they need to grow and invest. Businesses can access finance of up to £2 million through the scheme in cases where their lender is unable to provide finance without a government guarantee or is only able to do so on less favourable terms.

You may find it helpful to contact Alternative Business Funding, which has a wide range of funders offering over 140 products. This is a free-to-use, designated funding platform, approved by HM Treasury and the British Business Bank. You can use the platform to identify potential finance options and can talk to an adviser by telephone on 0800 027 7065. All information and direct application forms are available online at www.alternativebusinessfunding.co.uk.

The Government has also invested in the creation of 38 Growth Hubs across England providing businesses with free one-to-one support and advice. Growth Hubs offer a triage, diagnostic and signposting service to make sure that all businesses, whatever their size or sector, know what help is available and can access the most appropriate support. I would recommend that you get in touch with his local Government-backed Growth Hub. Details are available online at www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts and by telephone on 0118 209 0000.

Additionally, I would like to highlight that advisers at the Government's Business Support Helpline (England) can provide free support and guidance about local and national business support offers. Further details can be found at www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline or by calling 0800 998 1098. All individuals and businesses can access core services, information and guidance on starting up and running a business, as well as their statutory rights and obligations, on gov.uk at www.gov.uk/browse/business.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope you find this response useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Hollinrake". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

KEVIN HOLLINRAKE MP
Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business