

RE: REBOOT supports for the Hair, Beauty and Spa Industry

Heather Humphreys TD
Department for Business, Enterprise and Innovation
23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2

22/04/2020

Dear Minister,

Following on from our previous correspondence on 01/04/2020, we welcome the adjustment to the online trading vouchers, which will allow many of our micro members to access valuable online trading support. Additionally, we recognise the value in the continuity vouchers and mentoring supports offered by the LEO and other organisations.

While we acknowledge the supports outlined in your correspondence dated 07/04/2020, we are still extremely concerned that the additional measures recently announced will not support the hair, beauty and spa industry in a meaningful way that will allow the industry to survive and reboot.

We recognise that you have, and will be announcing further measures to support enterprises in various stages. Our industry is now focused on the Reboot phase of COVID-19. As an industry, our doors are closed, our income has evaporated, while our liabilities keep growing. Nationally, our members are being forced to pay high commercial rents, along with all of the various overheads that are still accruing. These bills are mounting, and with no income being generated - the lack of liquidity is putting significant financial pressure on our members nationally.

Liquidity is a very serious issue facing our industry at this time, and the speed at which supports are delivered is essential to our members' ability to reboot their organisations. Again, we repeat our point that; No business owner should be placed in the position of taking on an additional debt burden during such volatile and uncertain times. For our members, debt cannot be the solution to this recovery. Finance available to SMEs must be available in the form of easily-accessed, **100%-funded grants or helicopter payments** to SMEs. We urge the Minister to support business during this time with additional liquidity measures.

Focusing on the Reboot phase, as per our previous correspondence, we are asking the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health to support our industry by **making available clear health and safety guidance and recommendations** in order to support business continuity and a return to daily trading activity in the reboot period of the COVID-19 Pandemic. **We ask that a document be developed** similar to the COVID-19 Retail Protection and Improvement Guide developed by the NSAI. Having reviewed the documents available via NSAI, these documents **do not** meet the needs of our industry due to the essential contact between the professional and client.

As an industry, we have started to prepare information that will assist and support the NSAI and the HSA with the development of a guide that will focus on COVID-19 in the Hair, Beauty and Spa industry. The industry needs expert disease prevention, health and safety, and PPE guidance for both workers and consumers ***that is in line with Ireland's COVID-19 National Health Policy***. Our industry needs time to prepare for a return to work, therefore we ask that this be done as a matter of urgency.

Additionally, we urge the Minister to make funding available to enterprises that will be financially impacted due to the significant costs of additional protection and improvement measures that will need to be implemented in the workplace. This includes the requirements of enhanced PPE and the costs and challenges this may bring, as well as the financial impact COVID-19 will have on our industry until a vaccine is readily available. We recognise that the business continuity voucher is available, but we are seeking additional and specific financial support for enhanced protection and improvement measures in the workplace.

We respectfully request that the Minister of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department for Health, facilitates a virtual meeting with members of the hair, beauty and spa industry in order to hear about the industry concerns and supports required as part of the National SME Recovery plan.

Yours sincerely,



Margaret O'Rourke Doherty, CEO, Hair and Beauty Industry Confederation (HABIC) & Vice Chairperson of ISME (Irish SME Association),
David Campbell, President of the Irish Hairdressers Federation
Sean Taaffe, President of the Hairdressing Council of Ireland
Catherine Finn, Chairperson of Synergy Hair Group

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Simon Harris TD, Minister for Health
Paschal Donohue TD, Minister for Finance
Neil McDonnell, ISME