

Rt Hon George Eustice MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
2 Marsham Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 4F



23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

Dear Mr. Eustice,

I am writing to you today, as CEO of the British Frozen Food Federation, to highlight the plight that many of our members currently face. These are companies that supply into the Out of Home Market – many of which have been decimated by the closures needed to support both the Tier System and National Lockdowns.

A lot of focus has been given on support for restaurants, pubs and the hospitality sector generally. Hopefully we will also see much needed support for wholesalers impacted by these various restrictions, all of which we fully support. However, there are also many companies that supply ingredients, or manufacture product for this market, that have seen their sales severely impacted by the collapse of the Out of Home Market. We call these the 'Squeezed Middle'.

Many of these companies are SMEs, quite often family owned, with actual skills that have helped to create a world-leading restaurant scene in London and other major UK cities. These companies have not sat idly by as events have unfolded but have strived to adapt and change. I have one member who went from a profitable business in Devon making a good profit to a loss-making entity. Indeed, they have only survived by restructuring their cost base and seeking other markets. Other have not been so fortunate.

Whilst the furlough scheme has helped many in this sector, this has been the only direct help as many were reluctant to take out the 'Bounce Back' or CBILS Loans as they do not want to increase debt – especially at a time of an uncertain future.

We have raised this issue with David Kennedy but to date we have seen no response on the issue. Whilst I work on behalf of the BFFF members I am aware that many other trade bodies have members in this situation. We would appeal for help with things such as Business Rates – whilst relief here may not return the companies to profit it will help them in discussions with their banks and aid cash flow.

We appreciate there are many calls on the public purse, but we feel it is vital that this vast array of SMEs remain viable to support the Out of Home Market and the Economy as we emerge from the Pandemic in 2021.

I look forward to your response on how we can find ways to support these businesses.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Harrow". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

**Richard Harrow**  
**Chief Executive**  
**British Frozen Food Federation**

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**British Frozen Food Federation**

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