* Please adapt this letter – make sure to fill in any gaps (highlighted in yellow) and delete the sections that are not relevant for your situation.
* Local authorities have discretion in terms of applying rates relief to business premises, and business grants, based on local considerations in England, Scotland and Wales. We suggest you also consider contacting your local Councillor, asking them to raise it with the Leader of the Council or decision maker in your local area.
* Find details of your MP or MSP, AM, MLA, Councillor (as appropriate) at [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)

Dear [insert name]

**Covid-19: urgent support for local veterinary business**

I understand you will be incredibly busy handling urgent enquiries from local residents and businesses, but I hope you can help us to clarify our situation as a local business and essential service in your constituency.

I am writing to you as a veterinary surgeon in your constituency – [insert name & location of practice] - and a member of the British Veterinary Association (BVA) to ask for your help in securing access to financial support packages for our business.

I am extremely concerned that the veterinary profession has so far been overlooked in the government’s support package to businesses as we are in a unique situation - we must continue to operate to maintain the food supply chain and provide vital care and treatment to animals, but at the same time we are experiencing a profound loss of income (in order to comply with strict social distancing measures) and will struggle to cover our overheads.

In the first week of April, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) ran a survey to assess the immediate impact of Covid-19 on veterinary clinical practices. Two out of three veterinary practices had seen a decrease in turnover of over 50 per cent. A quarter of all practices have seen a decrease of over 75 per cent.

***[It’s really important and useful to add in your own situation and concerns so please include personal comments here.]***

**Business rates relief and grants – ENGLAND LETTER to MPs and local Councillors**

Business rates relief has been announced for businesses in retail, hospitality, leisure, and nursery. Government guidance notes that veterinary practices are not included within this relief scheme. This support is vital for our practice. Please can you help us in securing access to it?

The Retail and Hospitality Grant Scheme provides businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with a cash grant of up to £25,000 per property. This grant is currently unavailable to veterinary practices. Please can you help us to secure access to this support?

**Business rates relief and grants – SCOTLAND LETTER to MPs, MSPs** **and local Councillors**

Business rates relief has been announced for businesses in retail, hospitality, and leisure. This support is vital for our practice. However, it is not clear if this will include veterinary practices. Please can you seek urgent clarification and help us to secure access to this support?

Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with a rateable value between £18,001 and up to and including £51,000 will be able to apply for a one-off grant of £25,000. Please can you help us to secure access to this support?

**Access to business grants – NORTHERN IRELAND to MPs and MLAs**

The announcement that all NI businesses will pay zero rates for three months (April, May, June) is very welcome.

An immediate grant of £25,000 will also be provided to companies in hospitality, tourism and retail sectors with a rateable value up to £51,000. But it’s not clear if this will include veterinary practices. This support is vital for our practice. Please can you help us to secure access to this support?

**Business rates relief and grants – WALES to MPs, AMs** **and local Councillors**

According to correspondence between BVA and Welsh Government, I understand that veterinary practices are **not** considered as retail, leisure or hospitality use for the purpose of rates relief in Wales. However, it will be for local authorities to determine if hereditaments are similar in nature to those listed for Wales’ Non-Domestic Rates relief scheme. Please can you seek urgent clarification and help us to secure access to this support?

[The Welsh Government](https://businesswales.gov.wales/covid-19-grants) is working in partnership with local authorities to deliver the grants to businesses. A grant of £25,000 is being made available for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses occupying properties with a rateable value of between £12,001 and £51,000. This grant is currently unavailable to veterinary practices. Please can you help us to secure access to this support?

 **Furloughing (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme)**

In order to continue to provide veterinary care whilst also protecting our staff and clients, we are having to [insert detail here – split teams, run a different rota etc] so that, in the event of a team member being exposed to Covid-19, we have enough cover to provide vital services safely. This approach means that the job retention scheme recently announced, namely the commitment by the government to reimburse 80% of the wage costs of furloughed workers, although extremely welcome, does not appear to be applicable to veterinary businesses like ours which need to retain sufficient staff to cover emergency provision, yet follow government advice to maintain public health. For most veterinary practices this would mean financial support to move staff onto reduced hours, not to remove them from work entirely. Is it possible to provide further flexibility in the furlough rules to support our unique situation?

**Support for self-employed – INCLUDE IF RELEVANT TO YOUR BUSINESS**

Many veterinary surgeons are directors or joint venture partners within their practices and their own take home pay is derived from the practice income. [INSERT own circumstances here] As we are providing only emergency care and essential services our practice will be making a significant financial loss, leading to no income for those vets. The package announced for self-employed vets explicitly excludes those who derive income from dividends which will have an extremely detrimental impact on our finances.

We need support to protect the sustainability of our business, avoid disruption to essential service provision (both during this period of restrictions and in future) and consequently help to protect the jobs of our employees. Unlike some other sectors, we cannot reduce our overheads by closing our premises or furloughing all staff as we must maintain our services. Is there any additional support that could be made available?

**Early Day Motion**

You may also be aware that Ben Lake, MP for Ceredigion, is sponsoring an Early Day Motion recognising the value of veterinary practices and urging the Government to introduce further financial support measures to help them [EDM#339](https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/56810/government-support-for-veterinary-practices-during-the-covid19-outbreak). I would be really grateful if you could consider lending your support to this important call.

I thank you in advance for any help you are able to provide in asking the government for additional support for our practice. Please let me know if you require any further details.

Yours sincerely

***Include your name and contact details and/or your practice address if you are in practice within the constituency.***