



Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer

**Mayor of Bristol**

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**Date** 24 November 2020

*By email only*

### **Support for campaigns - Alliance for Full Employment and Excluded UK**

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing firstly in support of the plan put forward by the Alliance for Full Employment, asking the Government to create a fully funded jobs guarantee scheme to cover all young people in need of work. We know it will be the most vulnerable and working people who will take the biggest hit from the economic down turn being faced across cities and regions of the UK. We also know it is they who will be least well placed to benefit from any economic upturn when it comes.

Past experience tells us that while recessions drive up unemployment across the labour market, the effects are larger for those who have only recently left full-time education, in particular those with lower-level qualifications; those experiencing poverty or those with adverse childhood experience (ACE) factors.

Until this year, the employment rate in Bristol was the highest of British Core Cities and 1% above the national average. But from March to August this year, we have seen unemployment double to 4.5% and over 70,000 people in the city have now been furloughed. Bristol has a young age profile, and many of our young people (approx. 40%) work in retail, hospitality and food sector employment; the areas of the economy most affected by the lockdown.

With large numbers of businesses reporting a loss of half of their turnover (37.3% of retail and wholesale and 61.5% of accommodation and food services in Bristol), there is expected to be ongoing job loss. Estimates for the retail sector in the city suggest a loss of 1,600 jobs.

The Council recently agreed a motion to support the Alliance for Full Employment in its call for various initiatives. This includes a UK Regional Growth Fund to increase equity for small businesses; investment to rescue our high streets; investment to ensure a fair transition and Green New Deal; increased payments to support people quarantining; and a permanent fiscal focus to take unemployment as seriously as inflation.

I also support the Alliance's call for a Youth Jobs Guarantee by extending Kickstart to provide direct support to hire 16-24 year olds. We know early spells of unemployment for young people are associated with more persistent unemployment spells in later life, particularly amongst men.

The challenges in helping young people to stay on in education are diverse. Many 16-17-year-olds planning to do an apprenticeship have had their hopes dashed due to substantially fewer apprenticeship vacancies on offer. We also know some 18-24-year-olds in England may struggle



to study in further education on a full-time basis because, unlike their counterparts in higher education, they do not have access to any maintenance support. In addition, most young people, across education levels, will have missed out on at least some learning.

With falling levels of vacancies in Bristol and ongoing uncertainty in the retail, hospitality and food sectors, there is elevated competition for jobs. Assistance to retrain or access sectors of employment less affected by the pandemic will be important to prevent growing levels of youth unemployment.

## **Excluded UK**

I am adding my voice as Mayor of Bristol to the 'Excluded UK' campaign headed up by Sadiq Khan, Steve Rotherham and Andy Burnham. The campaign asks UK Government to recognise the significant contribution made by the self-employed, freelancers and sole-traders to our city economies; and ensure these individuals and others do not continue to miss out on much needed support. Bristol's internationally recognised creative economy has delivered both for Bristol and UK GDP; it is vital that we support these innovators, wealth-creators and small businesses now, so that they continue into the future.

## **How Bristol is responding**

A key part of our response as a city is expanding the capacity of existing support services and tailoring national programmes to prevent a loss of pathways into skilled employment. We are working in partnership with businesses and employers across the city, (our long established Ways2Work network) to create opportunities for young people through meaningful work experience, work placements, traineeships and apprenticeships will be vital to re-establishing transition pathways to work. One Front Door Service will support the delivery of both the new Kickstart Jobs Scheme and the Youth Hub.

As an anchor organisation within the greater Bristol area, Bristol Council has led citywide efforts to increase diversity in apprenticeship participation. However, at present it is likely that a high percentage of those local apprenticeship opportunities that would be typically be advertised will not be available. This will impact the FE system, the population of 16 to 18 NEET young people and also the city's ability to 'bounceback'.

Supporting our young people at this time is vital. Alongside your commitments on Kickstart and an Expanded Youth Offer to enable DWP to better support young job seekers, I urge your department to work across Government to commit to a fully funded Youth Jobs Guarantee. This could be an opportunity to encourage the creation of sustainable jobs in every city, addressing the threats of unemployment, labour market inequalities and the climate crisis together.

Yours sincerely,



**Marvin Rees**  
**Mayor of Bristol**