



GMB
Mary Turner House,
22 Stephenson Way, Euston
London, NW1 2HD
020 7391 6700
info@gmb.org.uk
www.gmb.org.uk

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

16 April 2020

Dear Chancellor

Re: Job Retention Scheme and the National Minimum Wage

I am writing to you to express my deep concern regarding the treatment of workers who are paid on National Minimum Wage (including the Treasury's 'National Living Wage' rates) under the Job Retention Scheme, commonly known as the furloughed workers' scheme.

As you know, workers furloughed under the scheme are supported up to 80 per cent of their normal wages by the public purse. This provision applies even when workers were paid by their employer on minimum wage rates (with the exception of training hours). In other words, the Government is sanctioning wages below its own estimate of the rates required to maintain a minimum standard of living, causing significant hardship.

Ahead of the formal opening of the Job Retention Scheme next week, I call on you to use your powers under the Coronavirus Act to mandate that workers must be paid at least National Minimum Wage rates for their normal contracted hours of work, or an average of hours worked over a reference period where they do not have regular working hours.

Failure to guarantee at least minimum wage rates will be rightly regarded as in violation of the spirit of the National Minimum Wage Act, and a breach of the social contract.

I call on you to use your powers to remedy this deficit in a scheme that we have otherwise broadly supported. I look forward to your positive response, and in the interests of openness I will be sending a copy of this letter to the press.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim J. Roache'.

Tim Roache
GMB General Secretary