



The Right Honourable Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London, SW1A 2AB

15 February 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

You received a letter dated 15th January, 2020 from Mr. Richard Harrow, Chief Executive of British Frozen Foods. Mr. Harrow wrote on behalf of a number of Trade Bodies who represent those operating in the food service supply chain.

Today I am writing to you on behalf of London's wholesale fresh produce markets to echo Mr. Harrow's collective plea for urgent financial assistance for the hospitality food service supply chain. In order for there to be a viable food service supply chain that can deliver to the high standards required by London's world leading hospitality sector, this support is needed right now.

Together we make up all of London's iconic wholesale markets. As wholesale traders we have a long and very proud heritage of supplying the vast majority of London's hospitality industry. Anyone who has dined out in London will have eaten our food and seen our flowers. We are critical to the hospitality supply chain, and supply restaurants, hotels, airlines, workplace canteens, cruise ships, events, grocers, butchers, fishmongers and florists. We also supply public sector schools, hospitals, care-homes and prisons.

We are job creators and offer some of the more disadvantaged in our local communities the chance to learn and develop skills that are needed for the long-term sustainability of the sector. At New Covent Garden Market alone we employ over 2,500 local people, although sadly many have now been made redundant or remain on furlough.

Traders across London's wholesale markets are family run businesses, experts in our fields and have been supplying London, the South East and beyond for generations. Many of us offer niche, premium produce and unbeatable personalised service that is not available to the best in the hospitality sector through larger suppliers.

For most of us trade is down by 80% – 90% and we cannot sustain this as many are at the point of collapse. In order to survive and be here to help London re-open and thrive we urgently need your support.

As Mr. Harrow said, most of the support monies provided by UK Government has gone to the consumer facing part of the industry, such as restaurants and supermarkets. With the exception of the welcomed furlough monies little or none of this money has reached us.



At this late stage we are not writing only because of the lack of fairness in the way Government monies have been directed. We are writing because for us this is real. We are on a cliff edge.

We kindly ask for the following to be put in place with immediate effect.

- Extend the 12-month Local Authority Business Rates exemption to businesses supplying into the hospitality and food service market, using the existing legislative exemption for hardship.
- Put in place ongoing capital and tax break allowances to maintain the workforce. These could be prorated depending on how many staff a company is able to keep employed.
- Formalise the deferment of PAYE and NI payments until the end of 2021 for those in this sector, basing the final removal of that deferment on those businesses returning to a commercially viable level of operation.
- Increase the level of funding for the Additional Restrictions Grant and make the application process clear and the funding accessible.
- Provide grants for those companies that have had to dispose of fresh short life stock either through waste or charitable donations. These disposals have come about due to unplanned short notice restrictions related to lockdowns, that impact suppliers of perishable goods disproportionately.
- Allow Wholesale Food Distributors to be exempt from the ULEZ charge until greener refrigerated food distribution vehicles are available.
- Allow wholesale flower markets to safely open for in-person trade only customers in time for the Mother's Day trade, the largest date in the floristry calendar.

I look forward to your response.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Marshall", is positioned below the text "I look forward to your response.".

Your sincerely,

Gary Marshall  
Chairman of New Covent Garden Market Tenants Association



Counter-signed by representatives for:

**New Spitalfields Market**

*P Walker*

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