



The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Friday 22nd January 2021

Dear Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps,

The UK is facing unprecedented times, there is no denying that, and we believe that the support provided for businesses and the economy throughout the pandemic has been absolutely vital to protect livelihoods. However, we feel more needs to be done to assist driving instructors across the UK.

We understand the Scottish Government is offering targeted financial support for taxi and private hire drivers in the form of a £1,500 grant to assist with their fixed costs, providing much needed funds at a time when they are almost completely out of work.

Almost, but not completely, as there is still need for taxi services and private hire drivers. Driving instructors across the UK have been mandated by the Department for Transport, as communicated by the DVSA, to cease providing driving lessons altogether.

We understand and agree with the restrictions that are in place to help slow the spread of COVID-19 to keep everyone safe, but all driving instructors around the UK have had to close their diaries and stop working with immediate effect, with many left with virtually no form of support.

Whilst Bill Plant Driving School has been able to provide significant financial support for our driving instructors' costs across the UK throughout the various national lockdowns, it does not fully compensate for loss of earnings and may still not be enough to help them. We are also aware that those in other driving schools, alongside individuals that are "independent", haven't received comparable assistance.

Targeted support for excluded individuals, from funding provided to the devolved administrations, has been provided in Northern Ireland via the Newly Self-Employed Scheme, in Scotland via the Newly Self-Employed Hardship Grant and Wales via the Start Up Grant. These financial packages aren't remotely comparable to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, however at the very least, a degree of support has been offered.





In England, no such scheme has been implemented. The recently extended Local Restrictions Support Grants and Closed Businesses Lockdown Payments do not cover those who do not pay business rates and eligibility for the Additional Restrictions Support Grants is determined by local authorities, many of whom have excluded driving instructors as eligible businesses.

We urge the UK Government to think about all its driving instructors across the country, particularly those who have just entered this vital industry, who have been described by Rt. Hon. Jacob Rees-Mogg in the House of Commons as the 'unseen engines of the country'. Many have volunteered both their time and vehicles throughout the first two lockdowns to assist within their local communities by delivering goods to those shielding and assisting key workers to support efforts to defeat COVID-19.

We hope that this letter will prompt the introduction of new measures in support of the financial stability, mental health and well-being of driving instructors and their families.

Yours sincerely,

*Theo Tucker*

Theo Tucker  
Operations Director  
**Bill Plant Driving School**

