

From furlough to meltdown: the letter to send to your M...

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I have gathered from Twitter, rather than from comments here, that people want to know what they can do to draw attention to the fact that we are facing mass unemployment in the UK, with multiple further consequences to follow, as I have laid out in [recent blog posts](#).

At one level the honest answer is that people need to hope you don't become one of the unemployed, because it's not going to be fun.

At another level, that is not, I know, the answer that people are seeking. Those asking are aware that this is a collective as well as a personal issue. A response at this collective level is always harder to offer. Eventually I have little doubt that this will involve mass protest, but for now it does not.

So there are three responses. The first is, share the message. Share my posts. Or do some short comments on Twitter or Facebook along the lines of this:

Economists think that not less than 3.5 million people will be unemployed by the end of this year. Others think it could be as high as 6 million. Either way it's going to be an absolute disaster. Please ask your MP what they're planning to do about it.

So what to write to the MP? I suggest this (and if you don't know who your MP is it's pretty easy to find out: type your postcode in [here](#) and it should tell you and provide an email address)

Dear X

It's been drawn to my attention that the Office for Budget Responsibility is suggesting that at least 3.5 million people are likely to be unemployed in the UK very soon. I know other reputable economists are forecasting unemployment for as many as 6 million people. It does not seem to matter which of these estimates is right: either is a disaster and something in this range seems certain. I am then writing to ask what you intend to do about this.

I stress that question is personal: I am aware, for example, of what the government has proposed and so do not need it repeated to me. I am seeking your opinion in what is happening locally in this letter so that I can understand what you are going to do about this crisis.

Might you answer the following questions for me?

- 1) How many people do you think will be unemployed in XXXX (constituency name) if even the lower of these two estimates proves to be correct?*
- 2) Do you have any suggestion to make as to the likely age range, gender or skill set of those who are likely to lose their jobs in this constituency so that the consequences can be planned?*
- 3) Do you know which industries or sectors will be hit hardest by the downturn and so make most people redundant in (constituency name)?*
- 4) How many new jobs will the government be supporting in your constituency? Can you specify which scheme will be supporting those jobs, for how long they will last, who will be eligible to apply for them and which employers or organisations have agreed to create these job opportunities?*
- 5) Can you suggest what job opportunities there might be for those who will not qualify for a government supported post?*
- 6) How many vacancies do you think there might be per person seeking to find work in your constituency over the next year?*
- 7) Might you advise what the average universal credit claim is per week within our constituency?*
- 8) Could you live on that universal credit payment if you were to lose your job and meet all your existing financial commitments?*
- 9) If a constituent can not achieve that goal because, for example, their mortgage could not be paid, what would you advise that they do? What would you also advise if this unemployment is long term, as the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts suggests it might be for many people?*
- 10) Can you tell me how many of those who might become unemployed in (constituency name) you think might lose their homes due to inability to pay their rent or meet their mortgage commitment?*
- 11) Can you tell me where you think those people might be rehoused if this happens, which given current Universal Credit rules seems likely in a great many cases?*

12) Can you tell me what you think the impact of even the lower of these estimated unemployment figures might be on child poverty in XXXX (constituency name) will be? Please specify this in terms of the number of children who will now suffer poverty and please advise how their needs will be met?

13) Do you think our local authority has all the resources it now needs to meet the needs of those who will now become unemployed in our area? Have you checked with them? Might you supply a copy of their confirmation that they can cope?

14) Likewise, do you think our local NHS services, including GPS and mental health services, have all the resources they now need to meet the needs of those who will now become unemployed in our area? Have you checked with them? Might you supply a copy of their confirmations that they can cope?

15) Similarly, do you think all our local schools have all the resources they now need to meet the needs of those children of those who will now become unemployed in our area? Their needs are very particular to deal with the disruption that this will create in their lives. Have you checked with them? Might you supply a copy of their confirmations that they can cope?

16) Can you please detail all the meetings and actions you have taken to address these issues locally.

17) Finally, might I ask what policy proposals you (not your party, but you individually) are proposing to deal with all the issues noted in this letter? Our community is going to need leadership to get through this crisis. What are you going to do to provide this?

I look forward to your reply.

I am sending a copy of this letter to my local councillors and to the leader of our local authority so that they too might comment.

Best regards

Name

Address

Phone

Email