

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer, HM Treasury (via email)

2 February 2022

Dear Chancellor,

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR PERSONAL CARE SERVICES

As you know, the hair and beauty sector is 'essential' to the UK's health and wellbeing whilst contributing almost £30 billion to the UK economy every year and employing 288,000 workers, most women and young people, across the UK nations and regions. Pre-Covid, the sector was in the top three fastest growing parts of the retail sector.

The sector was grateful for the additional support you offered in December through the top-up of over £100m in Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG), reintroduction of the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate scheme for Covid-related absences and further funding provided to the devolved administrations.

However, it is important for us, as representative organisations, to draw to your attention that the ARG is not working for the sector despite assurances from HM Treasury officials that the fund was intended to support industries such as ours. We recognise the points made in a recent letter (dated 27 January 2022) from Paul Scully MP, Small Business Minister about the discretionary nature of the funds and the fact that local authorities are free to make local decisions about how to best channel the funding.

However, we have received a large number of emails and messages from business owners within personal care over recent weeks who have been unable to access ARG grants. Our own analysis supports this, finding that a number of councils are:

- Specifically excluding personal care services and prioritising hospitality, accommodation and tourism.
- Only referring to the hospitality fund or are only signposting businesses to the previous ARG grants offered, not the latest tranche.
- Still in the process of working out their policy and how the fund will function.

The intention of the ARG was to support businesses through the challenges that resulted from Plan B and the Omicron variant. You will know, as a close contact service sector, that these businesses do not have the ability to diversify to offer services via other platforms in the same way as other sectors such as retail, food, education and training etc. The need for the ARG grants is urgent. As we have communicated before, many well established, indebted businesses have already run through their reserves.

We would therefore ask that you work with BEIS to ensure that ARG funding is made available to the sector in a straightforward way, as quickly as possible. Please also keep the situation under review and consider further, targeted support to the sector in the short term.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

**BRITISH
BEAUTY
COUNCIL**
SUPPORTING A SUCCESSFUL, INNOVATIVE
AND INCLUSIVE BRITISH BEAUTY INDUSTRY

BABTAC
BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF
BEAUTY THERAPY & COSMETOLOGY



FHT
COMPLEMENTARY • BEAUTY • SPORTS

NHBF
Supporting the hair, beauty
and barbering industries

**Hair
Council**

**Barber
Council**

**SPA
UK** | UNITED KINGDOM
SPA ASSOCIATION