

ABENA OPPONG-ASARE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ERITH AND THAMESMEAD

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE SHADOW CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear The Rt Hon Dr Coffey

I am writing to raise concerns regarding the rise in unemployment in my constituency, Erith and Thamesmead.

Claims for Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance have risen to an average of 5% across the UK. From March to April the number of claimants rose by 850,000, a total of 2.1 million. This is unprecedented and alarming, I am extremely concerned about the prospect of long-term unemployment facing my constituents.

In Erith and Thamesmead claims have risen by 2% to 5.6%, this amounts to an extra 1,605 people being unemployed compared to March 2020. It is undeniable that Covid-19 has caused this crisis in unemployment and we must find a way to provide new opportunities for people who have lost their source of income because of this.

I am concerned that residents in Erith and Thamesmead will face increased difficulties compared to the wider region of London post-Covid-19 due to decreased local job opportunities and restricted travel routes around London. It is already evident that my constituents have felt more severe impacts compared with the rest of London, as unemployment has risen 0.7% higher than the London average.

Many local businesses have contacted me throughout this crisis detailing their financial hardship and inability to access the SEISS or Job Retention Scheme. As more businesses fall into financial hardship residents in Erith and Thamesmead will be faced with more job losses.

Whilst I understand that this is a concern for the entirety of the UK, I would be grateful if you would take note of the issues facing Erith and Thamesmead in particular compared with more central London locations when developing a response to this crisis. If the working age population in Erith and Thamesmead is going to recover from this crisis there will need to be a specific focus on boosting the local economy, improving transport links and supporting industries that have been hit particularly hard.

I appreciate how busy you must be in responding to ongoing issues relating to Covid-19 but I would appreciate it if you could provide a response to my constituents who are concerned

Tel: 020 7219 4892

Email: abena.oppogasare.mp@parliament.uk

about their future job prospects detailing what plans you expect to put in place to help those affected by this crisis.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abena', is centered within a light yellow rectangular box. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Abena Oppong-Asare MP