



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

Rt Hon George Howarth MP  
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Dear George,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 June 2020 to the Department of Health and Social Care, about protections in the workplace for people with diabetes during the coronavirus outbreak. Your correspondence has been passed to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and I am replying on behalf of the Department. I apologise for the delay in replying.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. The Government is asking employers to work with us to ease the transition back to a more normal way of life for their clinically vulnerable employees, including those with diabetes. It is important that this group continue to take careful precautions, and employers should do all they can to enable them to work. We encourage employers and employees to have these conversations as early as possible.

We have set out clear guidance for employers, which follows the scientific and medical advice that the Department for Health and Social Care and Public Health England provides regarding clinically vulnerable people.

I also want to reiterate the positions we have published in our guidance. It is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex, disability, race or ethnicity. The decision to return to the workplace must be made in meaningful consultation with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups where they exist). A meaningful consultation means engaging in an open conversation about returning to the workplace before any decision to return has been made. This should include a discussion of the timing and phasing of any return and any risk mitigations that have been implemented. It is vital employers engage with workers to ensure they feel safe returning to work, and they should not force anyone into an unsafe workplace.

If any of your constituents raise concerns, they can get advice on their specific situation and their employment rights by visiting the Acas website, [www.acas.org.uk/contact](http://www.acas.org.uk/contact), or calling the Acas helpline on 0300 123 1100. They can also raise them with their workplace union (where applicable), the Health and Safety Executive, or their local authority.

Thank you again for your letter. I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours ever,

**RT HON KWASI KWARTENG MP**  
Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth