



All-Party Parliamentary Loan Charge Group

www.loanchargeappg.co.uk

Rt Hon Theresa May, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
SW1A 2AA

8th March 2019

By email

Dear Prime Minister,

URGENT – Suicide of a person facing the 2019 Loan Charge – open letter

We are writing to let you know, as a matter of urgency, that the All-Party Parliamentary Loan Charge Group has been informed in writing of another suicide directly related to the Loan Charge. We received an email confirming this and that the person concerned was desperate due to the demands of HMRC. As you will know, the Loan Charge comes in on 5th April 2019, in just a few weeks' time.

This appalling and tragic news follows the harrowing testimony that the APPG heard, in person, from family members of a man facing the Loan Charge who took his own life. The victim said he felt criminalised by HMRC as a result of the Loan Charge. The family members wished to give this heart-breaking testimony in person to MPs and peers as they themselves said they just wanted to stop this happening to any other family. Alas, it already has. Another person facing the Loan Charge has killed themselves and, again, made clear that this was the reason.

This testimony has been raised on the floor of the House of Commons by our Vice-Chairs Ruth Cadbury MP and Ross Thomson MP. You will recall, Ross raised the issue with you at Prime Minister's Questions and requested a suspension of this pernicious legislation and a full independent inquiry. We now reiterate this request and make clear that your answer to Ross was wholly unacceptable (by asking the Treasury to respond) when the Treasury have stubbornly and steadfastly refuse to listen and indeed have failed to respond to both of the known suicides of people facing the Loan Charge. Ruth raised the Loan Charge with the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride MP, in the Commons on March 4th. Her mention of a suicide victim was not even acknowledged by the Minister, let alone did he adequately respond to her question.

The suicide risk amongst people facing the Loan Charge is high and the evidence sent to our Loan Charge Inquiry shows it is serious and widespread. The risk of suicide and suicidal thoughts of those facing the Loan Charge has been mentioned by several MPs now in the House of Commons, by Peter Bone MP, by Stephen Lloyd MP and by Ann Main MP. This is unprecedented. Yet the clear and known risk to people has so far been callously ignored by the Treasury and by HMRC. Despite HMRC being asked in writing by the Loan Charge Action Group to set up a 24-hour helpline for people facing acute anxiety and expressing suicidal thoughts and with Mel Stride also being asked to put this emergency measure in

place in Treasury questions, this has not been done. Worse still, the only thing HMRC say is people should call them to discuss settling their affairs. Considering that it is precisely their tax affairs that have led to this mental health crisis, this advice is quite appalling.

The Treasury are not listening. HMRC are engaged in sending out misleading propaganda and figures that do not stand up to scrutiny. We will be publishing the evidence of this in due course. We are now imploring you to intervene to delay the Loan Charge and suspend settlements immediately. More lives are increasingly at risk and the evidence to the APPG shows how serious this issue is.

We believe that it would be reckless in the extreme now to not listen and not act. The only prudent course at this time is to allow a genuine and independent review to take place. This cannot be undertaken by the Treasury: their reputation has already been seriously damaged by their handling of this matter.

We urge you, now that you are aware of the mental health crisis that has been created to by the Loan Charge, to personally intervene to prevent further risk to life by immediately delaying the Loan Charge.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Ed Davey
Chair



Ruth Cadbury
Vice Chair



Ross Thomson
Vice Chair

On behalf of the APPG