

Urgent Open Letter to The Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for an immediate suspension of the Loan Charge and associated HMRC activity

25th September 2019

Dear Chancellor,

We are writing this urgent letter to you calling for an immediate suspension of both the Loan Charge and other related HMRC activities, including APNs, until the Loan Charge Review has concluded and the Government has implemented its recommendations.

This is vital for two reasons. First of all, it is quite wrong and undermines the whole basis of the independent review for HMRC to continue pursuing people for arrangements subject to the Loan Charge. Assuming that this is a genuine review, the Loan Charge may be changed as a result, so it is wrong that people do not know if they may be later penalised for not settling now, whilst not knowing whether they will face the Loan Charge in its current form or not. A suspension of the Loan Charge and all associated activity is clearly fundamental to a genuine review.

Secondly and most importantly, an immediate suspension is vital due to the serious risk of suicide, if the Loan Charge is not suspended and if associated APNs are not put on hold. The delay that the Treasury have announced, not to the Loan Charge or APNs, but only to the process of finalising settlements, is inadequate and risks further suicides. (Six suicides of people facing the Loan Charge have been reported directly to the Loan Charge APPG). Now the Loan Charge Action Group volunteer helpline has reported an alarming increase in the number of calls of people reporting suicidal thoughts. This is as a result of people realising that despite the review, the threat of the Loan Charge remains in place and, in particular, that they are still being pursued for related APNs. It is simply outrageous, as well as reckless, for HMRC (or any appointed debt enforcement agencies) to continue to pursue people for APNs that are linked to schemes subject to the Loan Charge, whilst a review is taking place. In recent weeks, HMRC have clearly stepped up enforcement of outstanding APN's linked to loan schemes. HMRC's actions are contrary to the spirit of the announced delay to settlements and the review and are unreasonable and dangerous. We are urging you to instruct HMRC to cease all such action immediately.

Since the Loan Charge debate in the House of Commons, over 200 MPs signed up to the previous open letter which called for such a suspension of the Loan Charge and an independent review and over 100 MPs have written personal letters to the Prime Minister or the Chancellor supporting the calls for a suspension. It is notable that eight Ministers in the current Government, including three Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, have previously publicly supported a suspension.

So we call on you to announce a complete suspension of the Loan Charge, of HMRC debt enforcement for any signed settlements and for any outstanding APN's. This must include all interest or penalties. The suspension must continue for as long as the review lasts as well as for the review recommendations to be considered and responded to by the Government, and to be implemented. The appropriate length of the review must also be decided by the independent Reviewer free of any external pressures. Only by making this announcement can the Government give peace of mind to thousands of people, and their families, and to allow for a proper and thorough review.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Sir Edward Davey MP
Ross Thomson MP

Ruth Cadbury MP
Baroness Kramer

Teresa Pearce MP
Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP
Preet Kaur Gill MP
Helen Hayes MP
Nigel Evans MP
Mary Creagh MP
Dr David Drew MP
Nic Dakin MP
Lord Kerr of Kinlochard
Catherine West MP
Anna Turley MP
Jon Cruddas MP
Rt Hon Sir Alan Campbell MP
Robert Neill MP
Kate Green MP
Jeremy Lefroy MP
Stephen Lloyd MP
Emma Lewell-Buck MP
Jonathan Edwards MP
Laurence Robertson MP
Neil Coyle MP
Rt Hon Tom Brake MP
Gavin Shuker MP
Ivan Lewis MP
Adrian Bailey MP
Richard Burden MP
Ian Murray MP
Tulip Siddiq MP
Wes Streeting MP
Andrew Rosindell MP
Luciana Berger MP
Bob Blackman MP
Roger Godsiff MP
Jo Stevens MP
Rt Hon David Davis MP
Jim Fitzpatrick MP
Gareth Snell MP
Luke Graham MP
Geraint Davies MP
Richard Harrington MP
Dan Jarvis MP
Ruth George MP
Mike Gapes MP
John Woodcock MP
Dame Louise Ellman MP
Jim Cunningham MP
Angela Smith MP
Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
Rt Hon Dame Caroline Spelman MP
Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP
Andrea Jenkyns MP

Angus Brendan MacNeil MP
Jamie Stone MP
Hugh Gaffney MP
Alex Sobel MP
Martin Whitfield MP
Stephen Twigg MP
Sir Henry Bellingham MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Julian Sturdy MP
Richard Graham MP
Martin Vickers MP
Dr Sarah Wollaston MP
Christine Jardine MP
Paul Girvan MP
Wera Hobhouse MP
Mark Menzies MP
Andrew Bridgen MP
Rt Hon Sir Vince Cable MP
Rushanara Ali MP
Rt Hon Justine Greening MP
Layla Moran MP
David T. C. Davies MP
Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted
Bambos Charalambous MP
Philip Davies MP
Shailesh Vara MP
Gavin Newlands MP
Jim Shannon MP
Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP
Matthew Pennycook MP
Adam Holloway MP
Andy Slaughter MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Dr Paul Williams MP
Carol Monaghan MP
Craig Whittaker MP
Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP
Stephen Hammond MP
Shabana Mahmood MP
Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP
Derek Thomas MP
Stephen Metcalfe MP
Anne Main MP
Rt Hon David Hanson MP
Rt Hon Sir Hugo Swire MP
Ben Lake MP
Rt Hon Liz Saville Roberts MP
Hywel Williams MP
Emma Dent Coad MP
James Gray MP
John Grogan MP

Paul Farrelly MP
Janet Daby MP
Dr Matthew Offord MP
Rt Hon Sir Kevin Barron MP
Anna McMorrin MP
Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP
Mohammad Yasin MP
Neil Parish MP
Sir William Cash MP
Peter Bone MP
Alan Brown MP
Chris Elmore MP
Rt Hon Nigel Dodds MP
Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson MP
Chris Leslie MP
Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Harriett Baldwin MP
Crispin Blunt MP
James Frith MP
Gordon Henderson MP
William Wragg MP
Andrew Selous MP
Dr Phillip Lee MP
Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Tim Farron MP
Toby Perkins MP
Rt Hon Richard Benyon MP
Justin Madders MP
Hannah Bardell MP
Emma Little-Pengelly MP
Brendan O'Hara MP
Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Chris Williamson MP
Kelvin Hopkins MP
Ellie Reeves MP
Henry Smith MP
Barry Sheerman MP
Graham P Jones MP
Lucy Powell MP
Graham Stringer MP
Vernon Coaker MP
Mike Hill MP

Drew Hendry MP
Tracy Brabin MP
John Cryer MP
Chris Stephens MP
David Simpson MP
Maria Caulfield MP
Rosie Cooper MP
Rt Hon Sammy Wilson MP
Gavin Robinson MP
Gregory Campbell MP
John McNally MP
Rt Hon Mark Tami MP
Angela Crawley MP
Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods MP
David Linden MP
Stephen Pound MP
Martyn Day MP
Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne MP
Jess Phillips MP
Sheryll Murray MP
Siobhain McDonagh MP
Kate Hoey MP
Dr Rupa Huq MP
Richard Drax MP
Marion Fellows MP
Seema Malhotra MP
Marsha De Cordova MP
Andrew Bowie MP
Carolyn Harris MP
Rt Hon David Mundell MP
Karl Turner MP
Fabian Hamilton MP
Sir Graham Brady MP
Chris Law MP
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Marie Rimmer MP
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
Karen Buck MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond