Dear (MP NAME)

I hope you are keeping safe during this troubled time.

As my local MP for many years, I am writing to ask you to bring to the attention of the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and government regarding the issue that many charities are experiencing.

I am diagnosed with Atrial Fibrillation (AF), a heart rhythm disorder which when undiagnosed can lead to a life changing AF-related stroke, and currently I am relying on the services of AF Association [www.afa.org.uk](http://www.afa.org.uk) which provides information, support, awareness and education to patients, carers, healthcare professionals, allied professionals, general public, NHS, PHE and policy makers for all those living with or involved in the care of atrial fibrillation.

Under current restrictions and guidance, I cannot visit my GP or attend hospital appointments therefore AF Association is providing a lifeline to people like me.  They answer questions, they have access to healthcare professionals to seek guidance when necessary and without them patients would be even more worried and anxious which can further exacerbate the condition.

I know that the government is offering furlough for staff which includes charities – however if this charity closed or reduced its staff, we would lose such an important support system – they are supporting patients, carers AND NHS staff in this troubled time.

I think the provision for employees to be furloughed is wonderful. However for many charities, especially those which are health-related, it is not that they do not have the work. They are absolutely inundated with calls and e mails from worried anxious patients but their income has all but ceased.

I wonder if you can influence the decision to furlough staff so that if a charity providing healthcare services has the work but not the finances, the staff can continue to work (from home where possible) providing much needed services and supporting the NHS yet receive 80% from government funding.  Funding to charities has abruptly ceased, fundraising events are cancelled, they do NOT receive any government funding – all quite understandably however we must at this time support our charities when we need them most yet they have lost all means of continuing their great work without funding.

1. **URGENT NEED FOR OUR SERVICES:**
	1. **AF Association is providing life-saving work with no income due to COVID-19**
	2. **AF Association is relieving workload on NHS and cardiac clinics**
	3. **AF Association is providing support, information and education to patients and carers who are anxious and worried during this time and many have had appointments and surgery cancelled due to COVID-19**
2. **ISSUES WE ARE FACING:**
3. **Furlough – if charity staff are furloughed due to financial constrains then we lose life-saving support and increase pressure on NHS**
4. **Furloughed staff cannot work or even volunteer their expertise to the charity, instead they are at home with nothing to do whilst we add the burden onto NHS over-stretched staff**
5. **RESOLUTION:**
6. **Can the guidance be amended so that furloughed staff who are providing vital support can continue to work (from home) and charities can continue to operate with furloughed financial support**

Please help.  The charities are **not** asking for more money – **they are asking that staff be furloughed but can continue working to provide life-saving services**.