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Government needs a common-sense approach to small business, says SME Alliance

SME Alliance, the support, knowledge sharing and lobby group, has called for the Government to take a common-sense approach to small businesses in the Covid-19 crisis to avoid them being laden down with excessive debt.

While the SME Alliance welcomes the slightly improved terms of the Coronavirus Interruption Load Scheme (CBIL), it is concerned that all it will do is push more debt onto already weakened businesses, hampering them for years to come.

It proposes an alternative scheme, with the Government either offering grants or guaranteeing overdrafts for businesses, to allow the businesses to survive through this crisis.

Said Andy Keats, director of SME Alliance: "What most businesses need is the ability to stand still for however many months it takes to go back to trading normally. They need the ability to pay outgoings for those months - either by a grant or by an overdraft. In the majority of cases, this would require between £5,000 to £50,000 a month - all of which would be ploughed back into the economy and would not laden SMEs with huge debt that might lead to problems down the road."

"The Government needs to use its common sense and do what is best for the small businesses that are the lifeblood of this country."

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SME Alliance is a not for profit organisation

And for completeness/analytical support

Table: The Times Source: [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#)

Business populations

Estimated number of businesses in the UK, 2019

	Totals	Businesses	Employment	Turnover
All businesses		5.87m	27.5m	£4,150bn
All SMEs		5.86m	16.6m	£2,168bn
By Size				
With no employees		4.46m	4.8m	£305bn
1-9 employees		1.16m	4.2m	£595bn
10-49 employees		0.21m	4.1m	£629bn
50-249 employees		0.04m	3.5m	£639bn