**[INSERT YOUR NAME]**

**[INSERT YOUR ADDRESS]**

**XXXX MP**

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

Sent via email to:

Dear XXX

As your constituent, I am writing to you to highlight the threat our justice system is facing and the precarious position that barristers like me are in as a result of COVID-19 and to ask for your urgent support.

Barristers and solicitors across [INSERT CONSTITUENCY] provide a vital public service, as the Government has recognised by describing legal practitioners as key workers, essential to the delivery of justice in this country.

Sustainability of the profession is critical to the future delivery of justice and maintaining law and order. There is no substitute for experienced barristers who advocate on behalf of people who would otherwise not have a voice. Without urgent relief, this expertise will be lost and very difficult to regain when business returns to normal and demand returns.

As a result of COVID-19, many barristers have experienced a very significant reduction in work because [OPTIONAL TO INSERT PERSONAL EXAMPLE OF WHY THE SITUATION IS DIFFICULT FOR YOU] very few trials are taking place; even with jury trials resuming, the volume of work will not return in the near future because of the need to observe social distancing measures. These problems are particularly impacting junior practitioners (who form the most diverse part of the profession), and those doing legal aid work, representing the most vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged in society.

The situation has become dire very quickly. Our representative body, The Bar Council, is urging the Government to implement the following recommendations to help alleviate the situation:

1. Expand the types of acceptable evidence required to be eligible for self-employed relief, to include those under the threshold but without 2018/2019 tax returns.
2. Increase the threshold above the £50,000 trading profit for self-employed barristers, to ensure that more junior barristers are eligible for relief, thereby going some way to ensuring the sustainability of the profession.
3. Extend business rates exemption relief to barristers’ chambers.
4. Provide an urgent rescue package for those at the publicly funded Bar who provide a vital public service but are ineligible for the self-employed scheme.
5. Provide an urgent rescue package for chambers doing publicly funded work.

These measures would help many barristers [like me OPTIONAL] from having to abandon the profession and can play a crucial role in ensuring our justice system is maintained post-lockdown. As chambers rely on contributions which are based on the receipts barristers are paid for work, where that work has dried up, chambers in [INSERT CONSTITUENCY or LOCAL AREA] are at serious risk of going under. As my local MP, I would like to ask for your support in writing to the Treasury putting forward these recommendations and outlining the need for urgent financial relief measures.

In the interests of access to justice, I would appreciate your support.