

Press statement
Date: 9 April 2020

Coeliac UK's response to Chancellor's charity support package

Coeliac UK welcomes the announcement made by the Government yesterday, 8 April 2020 of £750 million funding to support the charity sector during the coronavirus crisis. However, it is currently unclear whether health and research charities will be eligible to receive any of these funds.

Coeliac UK, the national charity for people with the autoimmune condition, coeliac disease is currently investigating whether it will can apply for a grant, and if so when the funds will be released.

For over 50 years, Coeliac UK has provided information and support to thousands of people diagnosed or suffering with symptoms of coeliac disease and related conditions, but is now worried about whether they will be able to operate due to a significant downturn in income. They launched an appeal last week (www.coeliac.org.uk/save-our-future/) fearing that it would not be able to continue to provide a service without additional funds.

“Although we were grateful to hear the announcement by Chancellor Rishi Sunak, there are over 170,000 charities in the UK and it is currently unclear which of these will receive a part of the £750 million in order that they can continue their essential work in supporting the community. While the amount may sound a lot, it is a mere drop in the ocean compared to the income that charities have lost and need to survive,” said Hilary Croft, Chief Executive of Coeliac UK.

“Like many charities, Coeliac UK is suffering at this unprecedented time. It receives no government funding, and our existence depends on membership, fundraising, such as the postponed London Marathon, and commercial income through food safety schemes, advertising and sponsorship, which are all at risk as businesses try and weather the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis,” continued Ms Croft.

Coeliac disease is not an allergy or an intolerance but an autoimmune disease where the body's immune system damages the lining of the small bowel when gluten, a protein (found in wheat, barley and rye) is eaten. There is no cure and no medication; the only treatment is a strict gluten free diet for life. 1 in 100 people in the UK has coeliac disease but only 30% of those with the condition have been diagnosed. There are an estimated half a million people in the UK who have the condition yet don't know it.

To donate go to: <https://www.coeliac.org.uk/save-our-future/>

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For further information, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

- Coeliac disease is a serious illness where the body's immune system reacts to gluten found in food, making the body attack itself.
- Coeliac UK is the national charity for people who need to live without gluten, whether due to coeliac disease or another medical condition requiring a gluten free diet.
- 1 in 100 people in the UK has coeliac disease but half a million people in the UK are undiagnosed.
- Average time to diagnosis is 13 years
- A wide range of case studies are available on request from Coeliac UK
- Gluten is a protein found in wheat (including spelt), rye and barley. Some people are also sensitive to oats. Obvious sources of gluten include breads, pastas, flours, cereals, cakes and biscuits.
- The symptoms of coeliac disease range from mild to severe and can vary between individuals. Not everyone with coeliac disease experiences gut related symptoms; any area of the body can be affected.

Coeliac UK has a Helpline on 0333 332 2033 and further information can be found at www.coeliac.org.uk