



# Janet Finch-Saunders AC/AM

Aelod Cynulliad dros Aberconwy

Assembly Member for Aberconwy



Ken Skates AM,  
Minister for Economy, Transport, and North Wales,  
Welsh Government,  
*By Email*

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1 May 2020

**URGENT**

**Re: Economic Crisis**

[Janet.Finch-Saunders@Assembly.Wales](mailto:Janet.Finch-Saunders@Assembly.Wales)

Dear Minister, Ken,

I hope that this letter finds you and your team well. Whilst I appreciate the pressure you are under I would be extremely grateful if you could give your urgent consideration to a looming **economic crisis** in Aberconwy.

This week analysis by the RSA has provided a robust and localised insight into which areas of Great Britain are set to be most and least affected by COVID-19. Conwy is the top area in Wales and one of the top twenty areas in the UK where the highest percentage of jobs are at risk. In fact, we are on par with Cornwall, Pembrokeshire, and the Isle of White, all of which have around 31% of jobs at risk.

The reality is that we could lose 13,000 jobs here.

As I am sure you can imagine, a major contributory factor to this looming crisis is the importance of tourism to the local economy. Indeed, Llandudno and the Conwy Valley is the beating heart of Wales's tourism offer, and it is true that the economic benefit of tourism in Conwy County is worth around £900million, generated from 9.5 million visitors. Clearly, the figures for the 2020-21 financial year are set to be extremely different and potentially result in thousands of jobs and many businesses being lost.

The above is corroborated by the report published by Centre for Towns: *The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on our towns and cities*. It has found that 'The closure of hotels, bed and breakfasts, campsites and caravan parks due to COVID-19 impacts upon coastal towns, with towns like Newquay, St Ives, Skegness, Llandudno and Rhyl particularly affected'. More so, the following is noted in relation to Llandudno: it is in the highest 5% of places in England and Wales for people employed in the accommodation sector; highest twenty places for people employed in the arts and leisure sector; highest 10% of places for people employed in the non-food retail sector; highest 10% of places for people employed in the pubs and restaurants sector; and has 40.9% of employees working in the four at risk sectors – the highest percentage in North Wales, and second highest in Wales.

[Cont...]

Mi wnaff Janet Finch-Saunders cadw unrhyw wybodaeth bersonol yn gwbl gyfrinachol, ac fel arfer mi fydd rhaid iddi rannu'r wybodaeth 'efo aelodau o staff i'w galluogi nhw i ddellio 'efo'r awdurdodau perthnasol er mwyn eich helpu a'ch cynorthwyo chi. Efallai mi fydd angen i rywun ysgrifennu atoch er mwyn darparu'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf o bwys. Gadwch wybod i ni os nad oes diddordeb gennych mewn cael eich cysylltu at y diben hwn.

Janet Finch-Saunders will treat in confidence any personal information which you may pass on to her, and she will normally allow her staff to see it, so that they can consult with relevant authorities in order to help and advise you. We may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let us know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

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[Cont...]

It is clearly stated in the report that additional interventions will be required to avoid the initial shock caused by COVID-19 turning into permanent damage. I agree, and as such, ask that you kindly consider:

- undertaking a virtual meeting with me so that we can discuss a strategy to help Llandudno and Conwy County going forward;
- developing an effective commercial support mechanism at a local level to assist businesses plan their recovery strategies;
- introducing skills retention and development programmes as soon as practical in the identified sectors to ensure no loss of capability and the opportunity to upskill the local workforce during a period of enforced inactivity;
- provide a programme of financial support that targets the most at-risk sectors, such as further business rate grants, amendments to rate relief policy, and market and seaside town funds

If we do not act now, there is a real possibility that Aberconwy and Conwy will face an economic crisis. The crux of this would be the partial collapse of the tourism sector, but its affects would be far reaching – impacting on the State and public services through lost revenue and increase in unemployment, and on constituents' health and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

**Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC**

Enc - <https://www.thersa.org/about-us/media/2020/one-in-three-jobs-in-parts-of-britain-at-risk-due-to-covid-19-local-data-reveals;>

[file:///C:/Users/jonesm12/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/SIGP5H2A/COVID\\_19%20and%20Towns.pdf](file:///C:/Users/jonesm12/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/SIGP5H2A/COVID_19%20and%20Towns.pdf)

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