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14 July 2020

Mr Mark Drakeford MS  
Welsh Government  
5th Floor  
Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear First Minister of Wales

### **Reopening of the Beauty, Wellness and Spa Industry**

First, allow me to introduce myself. I am the President of the Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT), the UK's largest professional association for complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists, representing 16,000 members a year. Established in 1962, we have been committed to developing and promoting high standards in therapy training and practice for more than 58 years. We also run the largest Accredited Register of complementary therapists independently approved by the Professional Standards Authority, as part of a Government-back programme, covering 17 different therapies that can be used safely alongside standard medical care.

I am writing to express my dismay that hairdressers and barbers have recently been given the 'green light' to reopen in Wales from 13 July, while other personal/close contact services – including those in the beauty, wellness and spa industry – are to remain closed until 27 July.

The longer these businesses are forced to stay shut, the more jobs are at risk, as many may never be able to reopen their doors. This also disproportionately impacts the livelihoods of the high number of women working in the industry, many of whom work part-time or on a self-employed basis, providing them with the necessary flexibility to support themselves and their families.

A recent UK-wide survey\* by the Federation of Holistic Therapists found that:

- 78% of professional therapists have had to close their business entirely as a result of COVID-19 and have generated **no income since 23 March**.
- 59% said that having to close their business has had a **major or moderate financial impact** on the them/their household.



- 56% said that they have **suffered increased anxiety and stress**, with 5.5% having to seek professional support for their mental health (eg. counselling or prescribed medication).
- 58% said that their **clients' mental health and wellbeing and/or physical health has been negatively impacted** by not being able to access their therapist's services
- 82% said their **clients want to resume having treatments as soon as possible**.

The continued uncertainty around when beauty, wellness and spa businesses can reopen has caused heightened anxiety on the long-term future of the industry and the thousands of practitioners it supports.

We urge you to reconsider the reopening of the beauty, wellness and spa industry as soon as possible, and provide immediate clarity to us as to why we are unable to reopen at the same time as other businesses offering close contact services.

Best regards,

*Christopher Byrne*

President, FHT

*\*FHT survey: How the continued lockdown and COVID-19 has affected your therapy business. Conducted online, 2 to 3 July 2020 – 2,042 respondents (professional complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists). [www.fht.org.uk](http://www.fht.org.uk)*