



June 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about support for the travel industry.

I fully appreciate your concerns and the seriousness of the situation for the whole UK travel industry, which I know has faced significant challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As of the 17th May when we moved to Step 3 in the Prime Minister's roadmap to recovery, all remaining accommodation has reopened including hotels, hostels and B&Bs. As with all indoor settings, the rule of six or a maximum of two households applies. Prior to this, only self-contained accommodation could reopen, and it could only be used by members of the same household. This marks an important step forward to restoring travel in England and I hope that many jobs and livelihoods can resume as the wider hospitality sector reopens indoors.

On international travel, following the publication of the Global Travel Taskforce's report which contained recommendations on how international travel can resume safely, the Government announced that international leisure travel is no longer illegal as of the 17th May 2021. To protect public health and our vaccination programme, strict border controls have been put place and, under the new traffic light system, people should not travel to 'amber' and 'red' countries for leisure. Clearly travel is very different to what it was before the pandemic, and I suggest everyone reads the safety measures and rules well in advance of travelling, in addition refund and cancellation policies. That said, I am encouraged this is a crucial first step in the UK's cautious return to international travel.

I am pleased the Chancellor has extended and expanded business support schemes to help businesses during this difficult time. For example, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been extended until the end of September 2021 to protect jobs over the coming months as we begin our recovery.

The Chancellor also announced further financial support in the Budget, including reduced VAT rates for hospitality and tourism businesses and a one-off Restart Grant for eligible businesses of up to £18,000.

If applicable, I would also encourage businesses in the travel industry who are facing cashflow or other financial difficulties to explore the Government-backed loans and guarantees that have been made available. While the original Covid-19 Government-backed loan schemes have closed for applications, the Recovery Loan Scheme launched on the 6th April and is available to support eligible businesses as they reopen with loans of between £25,000 and £10 million, 80% guaranteed by the Government.

The UK Government has been engaging with both the package travel sector and consumer advocacy bodies to assess the impact of cancellations made due to the coronavirus outbreak. I am



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closely monitoring the situation too and taking on board the views of those living and working here in the Daventry constituency, including on introducing Government-backed vouchers.

While I do understand the reasons why travel companies are calling for bespoke help, I hope the £25 billion support which has been made available for all travel industry businesses who have struggled has been of some assistance.

Package travel agencies are required to comply with the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018, which protect consumers who have bought package holidays. Therefore, if a package holiday is cancelled due to unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances, consumers are entitled to a full refund which should be issued within 14 days.

The Competition and Markets Authority published further information on the rights and responsibilities of consumers and businesses. In addition, they have established a Covid-19 taskforce for consumers to register any complaints. This is available online at:

<https://www.coronavirus-business-complaint.service.gov.uk/>.

In cases where payments were made using a credit card, redress may also be sought from the credit card company under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY