April 2020



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 recognise is facing real difficulty in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

I know that 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 closely monitoring the situation too and taking on board the views of those living and working here in our constituency. The Government has produced a huge and unprecedented programme of support both for workers and for business, and we’ll do everything we can to ensure people can pay their bills, stay in their home and put food on their table.

I also want to reassure you that support is available right now for businesses who are struggling. The Government is deferring VAT payments due between now and the end of June and all businesses in the retail, hospitality or leisure sectors are exempt from business rates for 12 months.

In addition, I would also encourage businesses in the travel industry who are facing cashflow and other difficulties to explore the Government-backed loans and guarantees that have been made available. The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme can offer loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank, with no interest for 12 months. The Chancellor has extended the scheme (3rd April 2020) so that all small businesses affected by Coronavirus and not just those unable to secure regular commercial financing, will now be eligible. The Government is also banning lenders from requesting personal guarantees for loans under £250,000.

To help workers during this difficult time, the Government has launched the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme – one of the most generous schemes of its kind in the world – to pay employers 80 per cent of the salary of any retained worker up to a total of £2,500 a month for at least the next three months. This is above the median income and will be backdated to the 1st March 2020. The scheme also covers employees who were made redundant since the 28th February 2020, if they are rehired by their employer.

Despite being one of the most generous schemes of its kind in the world – I recognise that there will be circumstances under which not every single last business or individual is helped. This is unfortunately the nature of something on this scale.

The full list of support available can be found through this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

Also, for all the latest information and guidance, please visit:

<http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**