April 2020



Thank you for contacting me about Government financial assistance for airlines.

The aviation sector is important to the UK economy, and like other sectors of the economy it will be able to draw upon the unprecedented package of measures that the Chancellor has announced to support businesses through the coronavirus outbreak. He has written to airline operators advising them on the steps they could take if they come into financial difficulty and as a Transport Minister (although my responsibility is for rail services) I know the Secretary of State and officials are in regular calls with all sectors of the industry.

The Chancellor has rightly made it clear that while the Government is willing to consider the situation of individual firms, airlines must in the first instance have exhausted all other methods of help.

These would include using the measures the Government has already announced, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which offers firms financial support to retain furloughed employees and contacting existing investors to ask for additional capital.

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.

Obviously, this is a fast-moving situation and I will continue to monitor it closely, but I completely recognise the importance of the aviation industry both in creating jobs and in improving regional connectivity.

We also, in the Department for Transport and other Government Departments, have 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. 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**