

Dear Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Chancellor Rishi Sunak,

As you must surely be aware, the last 16 months has been catastrophic for the UK travel industry – and tragically still remains so today.

While other industries have been able to restart and welcome cash back into their businesses, the travel industry remains stalled, with consumer confidence at an all time low. Even with (limited) numbers of customers booking further ahead into 2022/23, travel agents will not see any of this money until these holidays take place next year and beyond.

The upshot is hundreds of travel businesses are quite literally now on the brink of failure – with hundreds of thousands of jobs on the line.

The furlough scheme has been a lifesaver for these businesses, but the withdrawing of this in September will sound a death knell for hundreds of companies. This will be a tragedy – not just for the thousands of people who will lose jobs, but because this is an industry that is crucial to the UK economy.

There is a misperception that international holidays take money out of the UK. On the contrary, these holidays are booked with UK-based businesses who pay taxes and employ hundreds of thousands of staff. The UK travel industry - including both the outbound leisure and business travel sectors, is in fact worth an estimated £37.1bn to the UK economy, and the inbound sector, is worth an estimated £28bn to the UK economy.

We are calling on you to recognise the urgent plight of this sector. We urge you to acknowledge that while most other industries have been able to restart, overseas travel has largely been on hold this summer in the wake of the decision to roll countries on and off the green and amber lists, while headlines around “amber plus”, and later, the rumoured “amber watchlist”, have served only to further deplete consumer confidence.

The #SaveTravelJobs campaign, led by TTG Media, is urging the government to:

- Provide furlough support beyond September 30 until at least March 2022
- Introduce dedicated financial support for this industry, including 100% business rates relief for the full financial year as well as a dedicated grant scheme
- Use your position to publicly voice support for the travel industry – especially travel agents – to restore confidence in this sector, in the same way that you spoke up for restaurateurs when you launched the Eat Out to Help Out scheme.

We're aware the government has provided £7bn to the aviation sector and that a further £25bn has been provided to tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors. But there are thousands of businesses – including travel agents and tour operators – who do not fall into the categories stipulated by government.

We urge you to recognise the heartrending plight of this sector, and fulfil your role as the “party of business”. Abta has already warned 200,000 jobs in travel have been lost or are at risk of redundancy. We, the travel industry, are asking you to save them.

Yours sincerely,

TTG Media and the #SaveTravelJobs campaign



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