



As a result of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, UK airlines have grounded hundreds of aircraft and UK airports are operating at minimal capacity. Requests for ticket refunds are outnumbering new flight bookings, our tourism industry lies dormant as visitors rightly stay at home and aerospace manufacturing faces challenges to sustain jobs and cashflow for the duration of this crisis.

Unfortunately, these dramatic impacts of COVID-19 on our sector are likely only the start. Passenger demand is likely to return only slowly, as consumers regain their confidence to travel and travel restrictions are lifted.

That is why ADS, Airlines UK and the Airport Operators Association are jointly calling for Government to extend support schemes before companies face difficult decisions affecting their workforces.

Making sure the aviation and aerospace sectors can quickly and fully recover when restrictions are lifted will support the wider recovery in UK trade that is vital to limiting the economic cost of the COVID-19 crisis. Not only are 1.6 million jobs and £92bn in GDP dependent on aviation, aerospace and the tourism sectors, aviation is also one of the engines of the UK economy, enabling other businesses to reach customers, trade goods and build new relationships.

ADS, Airlines UK and the AOA welcome the steps taken so far by the UK Government to support businesses. However, further urgent steps and better coordinated actions are urgently needed to support our industry's and thus the UK's future recovery.

Specifically, we call on the UK Government to:

- Extend the business rate relief measures already taken for retail, leisure and hospitality to include aviation, as the Scottish Government has done.
- Swiftly extend the Job Retention Scheme beyond May and allow for more flexibility, enabling UK aviation and aerospace businesses to avoid unwanted redundancies, safeguard our staff's regulatory compliance and scale up operations in the coming months.
- Make financial support schemes available to all businesses, amend the current caps on lending to boost accessibility and be better suited to the needs of our sectors, and ensure flexibility is built into the support to ensure it can be repaid in line with the sector's recovery.
- Work internationally to ensure a coordinated approach is taken to the lifting of travel restrictions and other related measures to boost consumer confidence.

Other countries are acting decisively, with unprecedented financial support for airports and airlines in the US, Australia, France, Norway and many other countries. Without clear steps by the UK Government, including those outlined above, the UK aviation, aerospace and travel sectors are at risk of being left behind in the recovery.

With the UK's ambition to become a global actor after we have left the EU, aviation will be more important than ever to realising the Government's long-term goals. Equally, the UK's communities and visitors will see their fortunes restored more rapidly, if aviation can quickly recover from the current pandemic. The UK Government has an opportunity to make both those things possible, if it acts decisively now.

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