

To: Secretary of State for the Home Department  
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
Secretary of State for Transport

Dear Secretaries of State,

Businesses across the country rely on the UK being connected to the global economy. Since March, international travel has slowed to a trickle. To the credit of companies up and down the country, not least in the aviation sector, the movement of essential goods has not been affected. However, as we look to recover from the economic shock that Covid-19 has delivered, it will be vital that we start to open the UK up to our trading partners.

Over 1.5 million jobs across the UK are supported by air transport and more than 40% of our trade with non-EU countries travels by plane. There are whole sectors of the UK economy – from SMEs to large employers – that simply won't recover and thrive without international connections: our manufacturers rely on air connections to export goods; our world-class universities get around £6.9 billion a year from international students; our tourism industry accounts for more than 7% of the UK economy; and much of our hospitality sector relies on international visitors. These are some of the UK's world-beating businesses, providing jobs and opportunity in every nation and region of the country, and they need urgent clarity on when they will be able to get flying again.

Any steps taken to relax the restrictions now in place must, of course, prioritise public health. They must be backed by the science and they must be able to command the confidence of the general public. As representatives of the business community from across the UK, covering a range of sectors, we therefore urge you to set out as soon as possible an integrated cross-Government plan that includes:

- A framework for establishing travel corridors between the UK and low-risk countries to enable exemptions from the blanket quarantine requirements for UK arrivals. A clear set of risk-based criteria should be set out so that businesses can start to plan for a controlled re-opening.
- A timeline for returning to risk-based travel advice from the Foreign Office. The indefinite and indiscriminate advice not to travel overseas prevents businesses and individuals from being able to plan with confidence. Government advice should recognise that whilst Covid-19 has struck every corner of the world, it has not struck evenly.
- A comprehensive approach to health screening for arrivals into the UK to help control the virus over the coming months. Combined with the Government's track and trace system, this could support the economic recovery by allowing a controlled lifting of restrictions on movement.

We are ready to work with the Government to help ensure that the UK not only recovers from the economic effects of Covid-19 but goes on to thrive as a global Britain that delivers prosperity and opportunity for people in every nation and region.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Liz Cameron OBE, Director & Chief Executive, Scottish Chambers of Commerce

David Camp, CEO, Association of Labour Providers

Dr Adam Marshall, Director General, British Chambers of Commerce

Emma English, Executive Director, British Educational Travel Association

Phil Smith, Managing Director, Business West Chamber of Commerce

Dame Carolyn Fairbairn, Director General, Confederation of British Industry

Scott Knowles, Chief Executive, East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire)

Steve Philips, Chair, English UK

Mike Cherry OBE, National Chair, Federation of Small Businesses

Paul Faulkner, Chief Executive, Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce

Clive Memmott, Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Richard Burge, Chief Executive, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Jasmine Whitbread, Chief Executive, London First

Stephen Phipson CBE, Chief Executive, Make UK

James Ramsbotham, Chief Executive, North East England Chamber of Commerce

Emma Degg, Chief Executive, North West Business Leadership Team

Henri Murison, Director, Northern Powerhouse Partnership

Neil Carberry, Chief Executive, Recruitment and Employment Confederation

Ana Christie, Chief Executive, Sussex Chamber of Commerce

Kurt Jansen, Director, Tourism Alliance

Kate Nicholls, Chief Executive, UK Hospitality

Joss Croft, Chief Executive, UK Inbound

Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive, Universities UK