



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture,
Media and Sport
Department for Digital, Culture Media &
Sport
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ

House of Commons,
London,
SW1A0AA

Our Ref: AS17663

11 January 2021

Re: Tourism Businesses Eligibility for Grants

Dear Oliver Dowden

I am writing to you regarding the Chancellor's announcement on Monday that the Government will be providing one-off top up grants of up to £9,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses to help these businesses survive until the Spring.

Whilst I am supportive of this initiative I would like to be reassured that all tourism businesses are eligible for these grants. Namely:

- Tour Operators
- Coach Operators
- Language Schools
- Event Organisers
- Contract Caterers
- Travelling Fairground Operators

When the Chancellor announced the first round of Business Support Grants in March 2020 he stated that all businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors would receive these grants and businesses rates relief. However, when it came to the implementation of this policy, businesses in these sectors found that they were not eligible for the support for the extraordinary reason that their customers do not visit their business premises.

Since March 2020, businesses in these sectors have not received Business Rates Relief, Business Support Grants, or LRSG (closed) funding and essentially no LRSG (Open) or ARG support. With travel and events banned and attractions closed, they now find themselves in a situation where they have no cashflow and no reserves, and in desperate need of support.

They deserve this support because they are important and valuable components of the UK tourism industry. For example, tour operators generate £12bn pa of export earnings while language schools generate £5bn from young people who typically

come to the UK for two weeks to learn English and undertake cultural and sporting activities.

Supporting these businesses is key to the success of the Tourism Recovery Plan that your department is currently developing. Ramping up marketing activity in overseas source markets through VisitBritain and the GREAT campaign later this year will be of limited success if there are no tour operators to convert the interest and sell the product, if the language schools have closed and if there are no coach companies to transport tour groups around the UK.

Can I ask you to ensure that these businesses:

- Are eligible for the new Business Grants
- Are eligible for the LTSG (Closed)
- Are eligible for any extension of Business Rates Relief

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Sobel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'A' and 'S'.

Alex Sobel MP