



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

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Julian Knight MP
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Dear Julian,

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 May, regarding the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee's recent discussions on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted UK tourism.

I recognise that these are extremely difficult conditions for tourism businesses across the country. I also appreciate that many seasonal businesses will have lost out on valuable trade during the recent sunny weeks. As we enter the traditional peak season, I will continue to listen to stakeholders' concerns and closely monitor the ongoing impact on the tourism industry.

To help them through the immediate period, I encourage tourism businesses and workers to continue to access the government's comprehensive support package. This includes the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, business rates relief and grants for eligible leisure and hospitality businesses, VAT payment deferrals for firms, £330bn worth of government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses, as well as the Bounce Back Loan Scheme. The Destination Management Organisation (DMO) resilience scheme has also been extended by one month.

With regards to the measures taken to kick start the tourism industry, I understand the importance of planning ahead for recovery. In the first instance, this means making sure that tourism businesses have the guidance they need so that they can reopen when it is safe to do so. DCMS has launched the Cultural Renewal Taskforce to help our sector's businesses prepare for reopening. Within the taskforce, we have launched a Visitor Economy Working Group to specifically focus on the practicalities of restarting tourism activity.

We are also looking closely at many of the recovery ideas suggested by the British Tourist Authority and other stakeholders. Any recovery activity will need to bear in mind the scientific advice and the need to avoid a second spike.

Regarding your question on how the government will promote UK holiday destinations, DCMS officials hold regular calls with tourism representatives across the country to gather as much intelligence as possible on the sector's priorities as we enter the recovery period. We will continue to engage with stakeholders to assess how we can most effectively support the sector when parts of the sector start up again.

Together with the British Tourist Authority and the devolved administrations, we will look into how we can promote the UK's exciting and diverse tourism. This information will be passed onto VisitBritain and VisitEngland, which undertake marketing activity to promote our tourism offer to both domestic and international audiences.



There are no current plans to change the bank holiday dates. The government will continue to look into all ideas put forward for supporting the tourism industry through the crisis, though it is worth acknowledging that an extra bank holiday comes with economic costs.

With regard to your point about the potential for a bank holiday to celebrate the work of our country's key workers, we are carefully considering the appropriate way to commemorate, reward and recognise those involved in the COVID-19 response. We will ensure that any recognition takes into account key workers and volunteers across all critical sectors. The government will ensure recognition is both timely and appropriate and that it reflects the nation's gratitude towards everyone on the frontline.

Thank you again for keeping me updated on the committee's discussions and for raising such pertinent questions. We are committed to helping the industry through this crisis - and as soon as it is safe to do so, we will be encouraging people to book holidays and support UK tourism once again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Huddleston', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nigel Huddleston MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Sport, Tourism and Heritage