



Petitions Committee

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Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
10 Downing Street

19 January 2021

Dear Prime Minister

In the Liaison Committee's latest session, I raised with you the need for a more coordinated approach to the hospitality industry.

This a sector that has always relied heavily on social mixing and travel and was consequently extremely vulnerable when Covid-19 hit the UK. Although the industry has done everything it can to adapt, I'm sure you know that the last nine months have been extremely challenging.

Hospitality is one of the few industries that exists in every corner of the country and it will play a crucial role in our recovery from the Covid-19 recession, particularly in providing jobs for our young people. It also impacts on the arts, culture and tourism and it's crucial that we draw on the expertise that exists in the sector and ensure there is a strong voice for it in Government to help get things right going forward.

On Monday 11 January, the Petitions Committee held a debate on support for the industry. Members across the House called for a dedicated Minister for Hospitality to ensure the whole of this diverse sector is heard, from the pubs and takeaways on our high streets, to the hotel and restaurant chains with which we are all familiar. As the Minister responding to the debate said, you are the only person in Government with the authority to create such a position.

More than 200,000 people have signed the petition that led to this debate and it is gaining support still. It was started by publisher Claire Bosi and supported by industry leaders including chefs Tom Kerridge and Angela Hartnett, and hotelier Robin Hutson. I know they would be keen to meet with you to discuss their proposal and their concerns for the industry's future.

There is enormous gratitude for the support the Government has already given the sector – from the Job Retention Scheme, the business rates holiday and the various grants. However, this doesn't amount to a long-term strategy and without fully understanding and representing the needs of the industry, I fear the Government risks repeating the mistakes that were made in last summer's reopening.

I urge you to take time, alongside your Ministerial colleagues who currently share responsibility for the sector, to meet with Claire and her fellow petitioners to listen to their concerns and fully consider this request.

Catherine McKinnell MP
Chair of the Petitions Committee