

Written submission by Cruise Lines International Association

COVID-19 is the biggest challenge for the UK cruise industry in its history. The total shutdown of cruising since March 2020 has decimated an industry worth £10 billion to the UK economy, and one that supports more than 88,000 jobs in the UK. This submission highlights the impact of COVID-19 on the industry, as well as the route to recovery.

Cruise Lines International Association calls for the FCDO to immediately remove cruise-specific advice, which does not apply to other industries in the travel sector. This would reflect the progress made by the industry in collaboration with the Department for Transport and health experts through the Framework measures that it has provided for safe cruises. It is necessary for the advice to be removed promptly, considering the extensive lead time required by cruise lines to prepare for future sailings, which is often up to 12 weeks.

With a safety Framework in place, we feel that it is right that the government focus should now shift to the question of where cruises might safely go, and when – subject to the usual FCDO geographic travel advice.

This would bring cruises into line with the rest of the transport industry.

The impact of COVID-19 on jobs and investment in the cruise sector

The cruise sector is worth £10 billion to the UK economy and supports more than 88,000 jobs in the UK.

New data modelling to the end of September 2020 shows the impact of pausing cruise operations due to COVID restrictions. In that time, **£6.77 billion** in expenditure has been lost, along with **52,659 jobs** in and supported by the industry.

The longer the industry cannot sail, the more jobs will be at risk, not just on ships but throughout the wider supply chain across the UK.

This paper sets out a plan to allow for a phased, safe resumption of cruises, with the industry working with the government at every step and reflecting collaboration with PHE to make cruises safe. This plan would go a long way towards restoring customer confidence and therefore giving the industry the best chance to recover, and to protect jobs and investment.

We propose five phases towards a resumption of cruises.

Phase 1: Adoption of UK Framework on safe resumption of cruising

The cruise industry recently published a COVID-19 Framework for cruise ship operators. The Framework documents advise on what measures should be implemented on board cruise ships for the safety of crew and passengers.

The Framework reflects months of hard work and collaboration between the cruise industry, health experts and Government and will see a variety of extra health protections on board ships.

It sets out clearly how operators can plan for the return of passengers and how they can support them from the moment they book, to joining the cruise, to returning home. The safety of passengers and crew has always been the top priority for the cruise industry, which already implements some of most stringent safety and hygiene standards compared to other sectors.

The industry will keep its Framework for safety measures up to date, reflecting latest medical and scientific advice

Phase 2: Updating cruise-specific travel advice and agreeing the next phases

We recognise that the cruise sector will not fully restart in the short term, which is why we want to resume operations at the right time, based on the latest scientific advice. As an industry, we want to continue the collaborative approach which led to the Framework guidance.

The next steps in that partnership between the industry and government should be for government to reflect the progress made in the Framework by updating FCDO travel advice to remove specific advice against cruises. We feel that this is no longer appropriate, as the industry now has a Framework in place to manage the risks around COVID-19, reflecting our collaboration with health experts. With this safety Framework in place, we feel that it is right that the

government focus should now shift to the question of where cruises might safely go, and when – subject to the usual FCDO geographic travel advice.

This would bring cruises into line with the rest of the transport industry.

As an industry, we want to collaborate with government over setting out clearly the timing of the future phases for resumption, and gradually expand their range, in line with FCDO travel advice.

This would also allow us to begin to discuss with government what a resumption of operations will look like in detail, and plan early, efficiently and effectively.

It is important to note that an estimated lead time is required at this stage of as much as 12 weeks before sailing can resume.

This lead time is due to a significant programme of required work, including sourcing crew, health screens in country, transportation to the UK, testing, quarantining and then training, re-certification, and familiarisation with operational changes. There are also multiple operational elements to consider, such as stores replenishment, restarting hibernated services (such as satellite communications contracts), as well as maintenance and servicing of plant and machinery, and bringing concession holders back onboard.

Phase 3: Resuming cruises from UK ports

We propose a resumption of some cruises from UK ports initially, calling only at UK ports and accepting only UK residents as passengers.

In the industry's view, such resumption from UK ports is already fully in line with FCDO travel advice, which relates only to "international" travel. However, we are keen to maintain a close collaboration with government, reflecting the work we have been doing with health experts, and would therefore welcome endorsement of this phased approach with the government.

As part of the phased approach, we propose to continue to collaborate with DfT on the transition beyond cruises from UK ports and from one cruise profile to the next.

This would be a modest beginning, especially in light of progress elsewhere in Europe, where, for example, several cruise operators continue to operate around mainland Greece and the Greek islands. In Spain, the Government of the Canary Islands has recently authorised several shipping companies to operate cruise trips from November 5, subject to local health protocols.

Phase 4: Cruises from UK ports to continental European ports

In this phase, we propose to allow cruises starting from and returning to UK ports to call at other European ports. This would be restricted, however. The choice of European ports of call will be dependent on the FCDO Travel Advice at the time, as well as quarantine requirements and the restrictions of other countries allowing UK passengers within their cruises. No embarkation of passengers overseas would be permitted.

We would move to this profile in collaboration with DfT and fully applying FCDO travel advice.

Phase 5: Full resumption of cruises

We would move to this final profile on the basis of satisfactory assurance that the cruise environment continues to provide COVID-19 risk mitigation. The previous profiles would have provided evidence of this.

We would move to this profile in collaboration with the DfT.

The countries at which passengers will be able to join a cruise will be limited to those which fall within the FCDO Travel Advice for foreign travel, as well as the restrictions of other countries allowing UK passengers within their borders.

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