



Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Nigel Huddleston MP
Minister of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

21 May 2020

Dear Nigel,

On Tuesday, my committee took evidence from representatives across the UK tourism. During the session, our witnesses spoke extensively about problems the tourism industry has faced since the COVID-19 crisis began, and the further challenges which lie ahead as we move into the summer months.

The tourism industry, as you know, was one of the first sectors to be hit by the crisis. Seven per cent of coastal businesses have already permanently closed, and many others throughout the country which usually depend on the Easter and May bank holiday trade have lost out on a huge amount of business. Although many have benefited from the support schemes put in place by the Government, there is still significant uncertainty about which parts of the sector will be able to reopen and when.

It is clear to the Committee that there is much that the Government can do to help the tourism industry recover, not least in working to restore the confidence of the British public that, when the time comes, it will be safe to holiday in the UK. As it stands, only 17% of the public are currently intending to take a holiday in the UK this year whereas in other European countries such as Italy, over 40% of the population are planning a domestic holiday. Even with foreign holidays off the cards this year, VisitBritain is currently forecasting a loss in domestic tourism spending of approximately £22bn. Without a concerted effort on the part of the Government, the outlook for the British tourism industry will be bleak.

During Tuesday's session, the Committee was pleased to hear that DCMS has been helpful to, and receptive to suggestions from, the tourism industry during this period. However, the message from the sector is clear: the Government needs to do more. As well as clear messaging to encourage people to holiday in the UK, there have been suggestions of an additional bank holiday in October to 'replace' those which people have not been able to take full advantage of this month, and to encourage the uptake of domestic holidays at half-term. This idea undoubtedly has some merit, and an additional bank holiday could also provide an opportunity to celebrate the key workers who have made such an impact on national life at this time.



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I would be grateful if you could provide answers on the following:

- What measures does the Government intend to take to help kickstart the tourism industry?
- How will the Government promote the incredible holiday destinations across the UK?
- Does the Government support the proposal for an extra bank holiday?

It would be helpful to have your response in time for the return of the House on 2 June.

Yours sincerely,

**JULIAN KNIGHT MP,
CHAIR, DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

cc Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer