The Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

11 May 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

As leaders of UK airlines and airports, we are writing to you to express our collective and serious concern and frustration about the proposed quarantine measure for UK inbound travellers announced yesterday.

An open-ended quarantine, with no set end date, will make an already critical situation for UK aviation, and all the businesses we support, even worse. People will simply choose not to travel to and from the UK, at the same time as economies in Europe and around the world begin opening up their borders and removing their own quarantines - making the UK aviation sector unable to compete.

In short, passenger travel cannot restart, and clarity from government is needed as to whether such an outcome is the intention or expectation of this measure, which was announced without any pre-consultation with the sector. Grounding airlines indefinitely will further exacerbate an already devastating economic impact on UK aviation, prolonging the revenue crisis and delaying even further the start of a recovery for a sector that supports over 1.5 million UK jobs.

We are concerned that despite yesterday's announcement (and media speculation for several weeks) we have had no clarity on key details of the proposal, including the Sage advice underpinning the measure against potential alternatives, its geographic scope (noting that travellers from France, whose own quarantine exempts EU countries and the UK and which has seen a similar COVID-19 trajectory to the UK, appears to be exempt from the quarantine), whether it only affects air travel or includes other transport modes, how enforceable such a measure will be in reality, the conditions and process for withdrawing it and, critically, what cross-industry measures UK Government will now take as a matter of urgency to support a sector which in effect will be grounded for the foreseeable future.

It is vital that we move forward, and that aviation - as well as the wider economy - has a road-map to normality. Any quarantine must be as limited and short in duration as possible, kept under permanent review and applied only in the absence of workable, evidence-led and risk-based alternatives. The industry understands that public health must remain the priority. That is why we are working at pace with Government to agree a set of new, effective health protocols guided by the science (such as face masks and temperature checks) and which can be implemented at UK airports and onboard as soon as possible.

Government has shown remarkable ambition and speed in many aspects of its COVID-19 response, and agreeing new such health protocols to get aviation going again should be the priority for the coming days, removing any need for wholesale quarantine measures.

We believe this is the right approach, permitting a cautious, controlled restart to passenger air travel, unlike a quarantine which takes no account of the status of the outbreak at the point of departure to the UK, nor the effectiveness of any other health measures applied to passengers.

We urgently request a meeting with you to discuss the impact and details of these proposed measures.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Alderslade
Chief Executive, Airlines UK

Steve Heapy
Chief Executive, Jet2.com

Jason Holt
CEO, Swissport Western Europe

Jonathan Hinkles
Chief Executive, Loganair

Johan Lundgren
Chief Executive Officer, EasyJet

Edward Wilson
Chief Executive Officer, Ryanair DAC

Kenton Jarvis
CEO, TUI Aviation

Andy Offer OBE
Director, 2Excel Aviation

Alastair Willson
Managing Director, Titan Airways

Dave Lees
CEO, Bristol Airport

Robert Hough
Chairman, Doncaster Sheffield Airport

Deb Bowen Rees
CEO, Cardiff Airport

Alberto Martin
CEO, London Luton Airport

Shai Weiss
CEO, Virgin Atlantic Airways

Karen Dee
Chief Executive, Airport Operators Association

Derek Provan
CEO, AGS Airports Ltd

Stewart Wingate
Chief Executive Officer, London Gatwick Airport

Robert Sinclair
CEO, London City Airport

Charlie Cornish
Group Chief Executive, Manchester Airports Group

Andrew Bell
Chief Executive, Regional & City Airports

Nick Barton
CEO, Birmingham Airport

John Irving
CEO Liverpool John Lennon Airport

Nick Jones
Chief Executive, Newcastle International Airport

Richard Thomasson
Managing Director, Cornwall Airport Newquay

John Holland-Kaye
CEO, Heathrow Airport

Gordon Dewar
CEO, Edinburgh Airport

Graham Keddie
Managing Director, Belfast International Airport

Glyn Jones
CEO, Stobart Aviation