

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

26 June 2020

Dear Constituent,

Re: Fair4Hospitality

Thank you for contacting me about support for hospitality businesses in Burnley and Padiham.

Like you I am very concerned about the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on the hospitality industry, from restaurants and pubs through to the wider supply chain. I have met with a huge number of businesses during this period to understand the challenges they face and how I can help.

I am clear and having spoken to the Government on this they are also clear, that we should be supporting as many businesses as possible so when the economy turns the corner, we can rebound quickly. Unfortunately, that will not mean every job or business is saved but I am confident that there are now the schemes and tools in place to help ensure businesses operating in the hospitality sector are given as much of a shield from Coronavirus as possible.

We've seen several financial support schemes created, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, giving employees financial security by paying up to 80% of wages and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. But hospitality has been particularly impacted. That's why we have provided a complete business rates holiday for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors for 2020-2021, saving tens of thousands of pounds for many; and given immediate support of either £10,000 or £25,000 through the grant scheme. This financial lifeline has helped many businesses 'tick-over'.

From the conversations I had I was also aware of the concern that at 2m for social distancing, many hospitality businesses could not find a way of operating in a viable way for the long-term. I lobbied the Government on this extensively, as did other colleagues, and so was pleased to see that the Chief Medical Officer has now confirmed it is safe to relax this to '1m plus'. This means people should stay 1m apart with mitigation in place, including face coverings.

The news earlier this week that the Covid Alert Level had decreased to 3 was very welcome and allowed the Prime Minister to announce the re-opening of pubs, clubs, restaurants, cinemas and other venues from 4 July.

From that date we need to give businesses the best chance of getting back on their feet. The Government has brought legislation to Parliament that will give businesses a quicker route to getting permission to use outdoor space – including to serve food and drink. I will be backing that legislation next week, demonstrating what being the party of business is.

Rest assured you can count on my support to push for the sustained recovery outlined by your campaign and I thank you for contacting me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Higginbotham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Antony Higginbotham MP
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