



Department  
for Transport

From the Parliamentary  
Under Secretary of State  
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To: All MPs

## **Support for the travel sector due to the effects of Covid-19**

Dear Colleague,

You will know that many of your constituents have been seeking compensation for holidays or travel which had to be cancelled or postponed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am writing to update you on the steps the Government has taken to ensure that the protections afforded to consumers who book ATOL Protected holidays, with a flight element, continue to apply if they elect to accept vouchers in lieu of a cash refund.

The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 ensure that customers whose holidays have been cancelled are entitled to a full refund within 14 days. Under this regulation, airlines and travel companies can offer vouchers or credit notes to consumers as an alternative to a cash refund. The Package Travel Regulations will remain unamended, and so customers will retain their legal right to a full cash refund within 14 days, should they so choose.

We are now taking further steps to allow consumers to book with confidence, and to protect the position of consumers who take vouchers in lieu of cash refunds. The Trustees of the Air Travel Trust Fund (ATT) will introduce a policy statement that will ensure the consumer protections applied to the original booking continue to apply in the event that a consumer has accepted a voucher and the travel organiser subsequently becomes insolvent.

In addition, I am pleased to say that the Government has announced that it will stand behind the ATOL Scheme to ensure that it is able to cope with any calls on the fund, further strengthening consumer protection.

These new measures join a series of interventions which have been introduced to support the wider aviation sector. We have already published guidance for aviation operators, as well as safer air travel guidance for passengers, found here: [www.gov.uk/government/news/government-publishes-aviation-covid-19-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-publishes-aviation-covid-19-guidance).

From 10 July, this guidance was augmented by the introduction of travel corridors, which mean passengers can travel to certain countries and territories without having to self-isolate on their return to England. The full list of exempt countries can be found at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors). We are continuing to discuss this approach with the Devolved Administrations.

Now, by providing confidence to holidaymakers that their refund credit notes or vouchers are protected, we can help ensure that airlines and travel companies can maintain cashflow, helping to shore up the industry as it recovers from the pandemic.

I hope the information I have provided in this letter addresses many of the questions or concerns you or your constituents may have, and I am grateful for your support on this important issue.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Tolhurst'.

**KELLY TOLHURST MP**

**MINISTER FOR AVIATION, MARITIME AND SECURITY**