

UK Travel Retail Forum concerned meaningful restart not possible with quarantine measures

The UK Travel Retail Forum (UKTRF) has stated that while it appreciates the UK government's discussion for easing lockdown restrictions, the organization has serious concerns that the planned mandatory quarantine will have a halting effect on the sector's capacity to restart.

Francois Bourienne, Chair of the UKTRF stated that the organization plus airports, ports, and travel retail operators remains extremely concerned by the effect a mandatory quarantine period for arriving passengers would have on the sector.

"While UKTRF firmly supports a science-led approach to all measures to combat COVID-19," he said, "We believe there may be more effective risk-based approaches that the Government is not considering. It is also alarming that the quarantine period has been announced without meaningful consultation and engagement with the travel sector to ensure the planned rules are understood, workable in the short term, and clear in their scope and duration.

"International travel and all the commercial activity associated with it cannot realistically begin to restart while the industry has no sight of how this rules will apply in practice, and when they will end. In the intervening period, the sector will also need support from the Government to ensure that jobs are protected and businesses with a viable long-term future are not allowed to fail in these unprecedented times.

"UKTRF understands and supports the Government's desire to follow the best scientific and medical advice during this time, but urges ministers to work closely with the industry over the coming days to ensure any quarantine rules are practicable and proportionate. In particular we urge the Government to move quickly to extend its Job Retention Scheme and provide the travel sector with the reassurance it needs before any quarantine comes into effect."