Dear [Member of Parliament]

I am writing today as the [owner/director/manager] of [insert business name], in response to both the publication of the Prime Minister’s roadmap out of lockdown and the recent Budget announcement, to urge you to write to the Chancellor to ask him to consider expanding the ‘Restart Grant’ scheme to include travel businesses, like mine, who have been excluded from previous grant funding.

While the roadmap has provided us with a potential way out of the crisis, and the extension of both the furlough scheme and businesses rates relief were welcome announcements, the future of international travel is far from certain. As a travel agency business, we receive most of our income through commission that is paid close to the departure of clients. Having had to refund nearly all monies earned for holidays due to depart over the past year, and with the outlook for travel non-existent in the coming weeks, we need financial support to help us through to the summer.

In his Budget, the Chancellor announced new, one-off Restart Grants of up to £6,000 per premises for non-essential retail businesses, and up to £18,000 per premises for hospitality and other sectors that are scheduled to re-open later as restrictions are eased. As a non-retail travel agent, if all goes to plan, I will not be able to start making money again until at least 17 May, and yet, I am not eligible for any grant funding, despite the heavy restrictions imposed on my ability to trade. The Chancellor must move beyond the Government’s blind-spot concerning the impacts of international travel restrictions, and make support available to all travel companies whose businesses have been effectively closed by public health policy. Liquidity is the single biggest challenge facing travel businesses, and with the vaccine rollout progressing well, targeted grants support would help us through the crisis and into recovery.

The [Office of National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheukeconomy/october2020) published data in December 2020 which showed that the travel sector has been the hardest hit service sector in the UK economy because of COVID-19. This follows almost a year of severe restrictions on trade across the travel industry, including constantly changing travel corridors, FCDO Travel Advice against many destinations across the globe, and local and national restrictions in the UK, such as ‘stay at home’ orders. Together these measures have destroyed consumer confidence and demand.

[Consider adding personal circumstances here, including any specific difficulties in accessing Government support schemes]

Other countries, including competitors in Europe, such as France and Italy, have recognised the seriousness of the situation and have offered grant funding designed to ensure businesses can survive through to the recovery of international travel. The Scottish Government has also introduced specific grant funding for travel agents, and the Northern Ireland Executive is in the process of establishing their own scheme.

We urge the UK Government to reconsider their own approach by making grants available to all travel businesses, not just those with retail premises, recognising that the reopening of overseas travel will come later than many other sectors and will likely be gradual. The Chancellor has said he will do all that is necessary to support struggling businesses and these words should be matched with action to support the whole travel sector.

In the context of often rapidly changing circumstances, Government and industry must also work together through the Global Travel Taskforce, alongside public health experts, to ensure the time during which travel is subject to current restrictions is not wasted, and that travel can re-open safely as soon as possible. Backing the travel industry now will help to position us to act as a driving force in the economic recovery of the UK, and I hope you will consider lending your support.

Yours sincerely,