



May 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for taking the time to contact me on British Airways redundancies due to COVID-19.

To be frank, I could not agree more with the emails sent to me by many concerned employees across the constituency. Not only am I hugely sympathetic to the many employees likely to be affected by this but I also take pride in our national airline and would wish it to do the right thing for those who have contributed so much to its prosperity, reputation and success.

I would encourage airlines to make full use of the unprecedented support made available by the Government to assist with wages and financing. Support is on offer through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Time to Pay scheme, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and other schemes.

The Government has also taken action to help airlines specifically in dealing with the financial pressures they are currently facing. For instance, the UK voted in favour of giving airlines the ability to defer payment of charges for European air navigation services for February-May 2020, for 14 months. Given that in February alone the UK's ten largest airlines would have been expected to pay a total of £47.2 million for flights in European airspace, this deferral should go some way to help airlines manage their current financial burdens.

I have contacted the Department of Transport last Monday (4th May) and this is already with the Minister. I have been assured that he has already been in contact with British Airways regarding their position. I will also be happy to champion the cause more widely if required. As someone who is proud to fly with the national flag carrier and knows it is an eminent employer within our constituency, please be assured that I take this matter seriously as your MP and will be monitoring it closely.

Willie Walsh was extensively questioned by the Transport Select Committee on Monday and his appearance is available on Parliament.tv. Currently, the view amongst MPs is that Mr Walsh did not satisfactorily answer the questions put forward by the Committee and I will continue to lobby Ministers on potential Government

action. I trust that the Transport Select Committee will report to the Government with its findings and suggestions following Mondays meeting with the British Airways Chief Executive.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me. Please stay safe and well over the coming months.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Sunderland', is positioned above a light yellow rectangular highlight.

James Sunderland MP
Member of Parliament for the Bracknell Constituency
Bracknell, Crowthorne, Finchampstead, Sandhurst and Wokingham Without