

**British Air Line Pilots' Association**  
BALPA House  
5 Heathrow Boulevard  
278 Bath Road  
West Drayton  
UB7 0DQ

**Tel:** +44 (0) 20 8476 4000  
**Fax:** +44 (0) 20 8476 4077  
**Email:** [balpa@balpa.org](mailto:balpa@balpa.org)

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

[www.balpa.org](http://www.balpa.org)  
[www.facebook.com/BALPApilots](https://www.facebook.com/BALPApilots)  
[www.twitter.com/BALPApilots](https://www.twitter.com/BALPApilots)



15<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Prime Minister

While the Government's Covid vaccination programme appears to be a great success and hopes are rising of lockdown measures easing, sadly the aviation industry feels as though it is at a moment of acute crisis. British pilots and the whole UK aviation industry need your help.

We do not envy the decision making that ministers have to take in order to tackle the pandemic and protect public health. However, as you know, those decisions have huge knock-on effects, and in the case of the air transport industry, extremely serious ones.

Government policy has effectively shut down UK aviation. We understand the reasoning behind those decisions, but the effects have already been disastrous. Covid has seen permanent closure of Flybe and Norwegian Air UK. Thousands of pilots in airlines across the country have lost their careers or are furloughed, along with tens of thousands of other front-line staff members. These are the same people who, in the face of this terrible virus, repatriated British citizens and ensured important cargo made it to the UK to protect the NHS and save lives. Now their careers and livelihoods have been permanently damaged.

The industry cannot survive any longer without a clear way out of this crisis. We are dealing with a three-pronged problem: damaging mixed messaging around summer holidays from Ministers, insufficient economic support, and no road map out of the situation. All three of these matters need resolution.

I note that the CEOs of ten UK airlines plus Airlines UK wrote to you of 26th January urging you to provide a bespoke economic support package for this industry. We believe the need for such a package has been clear for some time, but in light of recent announcements, containing no timeline and hurting consumer confidence, the need is now extremely urgent.



Your roadmap announcement one week from today is your opportunity to reset public confidence in travel and end the confusion and mixed messages. The public and the sector need to know where we stand. Months and months more of grounded aircraft, and travel restrictions will mean the end of UK aviation unless we see significant compensation.

As you know, UK aviation has been a massive success story. We are a vibrant, competitive sector and we need it in order to power our economic recovery post-Covid. But without your support now, we are concerned that it simply will not survive in anything like its current form. Failure of the UK to protect the industry now will see the benefits of the recovery shifted to other countries. In a post-Brexit era this is unconscionable.

As I see it there are two choices: change government policy to end the aviation shutdown and in the meantime provide significant economic support; or sacrifice our aviation industry which would be a disaster for UK plc.

I urge the Government to save UK aviation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Strutton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Brian Strutton  
**BALPA General Secretary**