



Dear Chancellor,

We are writing to you as the strongest Bristol partnership representing all of our leisure, culture, retail, hospitality and tourism businesses and organisations. These businesses are all being increasingly affected by the rising cases of the Omicron variant and the adjustments in government and public health advice.

With Bristol residents, commuters and those visiting the city taking prudent additional precautions as Christmas approaches, our retail, hospitality, cultural and leisure businesses and organisations are being disproportionately affected. This is particularly detrimental for city centres where the government advise is to work from home when you can, office workers in our city have heeded that advise and are staying away in significant numbers.

A dramatic surge in the cancellation of previously healthy Christmas bookings is widely reported with reductions of 45-70% commonly seen across the sector. There are clear reductions in footfall across our city centre as people take appropriate precautions to keep themselves safe.

Government and public health advice and guidance is making the hospitality and retail sectors increasingly financially unstable with UK Hospitality already forecasting that turnover will reduce by 40% in the crucial month of December. This number is reinforced by the cancellation levels that businesses here in Bristol are already experiencing.

The past 21 months have been particularly challenging for us all and the retail, cultural, leisure and hospitality sector has been affected most significantly. Recovery was just beginning to take off when this latest variant hit and again these sectors are suffering huge losses of revenue. Previously the government acted positively to put measure in place to support businesses and the population in general. We are calling upon you to take similar decisive and supportive action as this wave hits our businesses.

Additional impacts on business includes:

- staff shortages due to rising case rates and self-isolation to protect others.
- loss of temporary and seasonal jobs which also undermines the recovery of the reputation of the sector as a safe and stable industry
- suppliers to this sector having cancelled orders and residual short shelf life seasonal stock.
- significant reductions in bookings for businesses into January and February 2022.

Acting quickly is even more key on this occasion as businesses are already weakened by the impact of the pandemic and previous guidance.

We are appealing to you to support this crucial element of Bristol's wonderfully diverse business sectors. We ask you to consider and put in place the following measures:

- Business rate relief at 100% for all the affected sectors until March 2022
- Extending the reduced level of VAT for tourism, leisure and hospitality sector beyond March 2022.
- Allocate extra funds for local authorities to enable the provision of support grants to businesses being affected by the changes in guidance.



- Financial support, including sector specific furlough, for those employed and self employed who are affected by the current Omicron situation.
- A clear commitment to adapt support to reflect the impacts that businesses are suffering as the population is being kept safe.
- Clear and consistent articulation of the rationale behind any further restrictions or guidance that might become necessary
- Urgently address the limitations of the Live Events Reinsurance Scheme to support venues experiencing damaging levels of cancellations.

We're already seeing strong local businesses collapsing. Time is of the essence for the government to act and save this prized sector.

We look forward to your positive and early response

Yours sincerely

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Head of City Centre BID

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Bristol Nights

Kathryn Davis
Director of Tourism



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