

[date] September, 2020

Dear [MP name]

I am writing as a matter of great urgency concerning my business, against the backdrop of the dire effect covid restrictions are having on the wedding sector.

As I am sure that you appreciate, exclusive-use venues and related businesses took a massive hit during lockdown. Our ongoing situation is no better. Given the unique and emotional nature of weddings (the majority of our events) most couples do not want to restrict their guest list to 30. They are therefore postponing their event, hoping for the wind to change.

Many other couples are cancelling - accelerated this week by the CMA's statement (07/09/2020) on cancellations and refunds. You may also be aware that insurers have avoided paying out on any score.

We spend huge amounts of time and money preparing for our clients' events, both in retaining the right team and the fabric and condition of our venue, all of which contributes to huge monthly overheads.

As we go into our seventh month of postponements, my venue, like so many others, now has to make some big decisions. With events disappearing from the diary daily, and the furlough scheme winding up, we are having to **make all non 'key' staff redundant**.

Looking ahead, if Covid is tamed as we hope, our fear is that we will therefore not be able to 'bounce back' as the Chancellor hopes. For us, scaling-up the team again will mean months of re-hiring.

However, we are a seasonal industry and currently have exceptionally high levels of consumer confidence on our side. Almost all of our 2020 business has been deferred to 2021 and beyond.

To that end the right government intervention and financial support **now** would give us the lifeline we need through to 2021, when we can then focus on fulfilling our contractual obligations. Without this urgent support, we and our sector face the very real and imminent threat of collapse.

In terms of the bigger picture you may have seen the [#whataboutweddings](#) campaign over the last few weeks? The impact on the UK economy from postponing weddings is huge. The wedding sector is worth £14.7 billion, whilst the 107,000+ weddings already cancelled has affected 400,000 employees.

There is now a desperate need to focus Government attention on the real stories behind these big figures. The hard working family businesses and the myriad of suppliers, many in your constituency, who are now in grave danger of going under. The employees for whom redundancies are now a reality, many living in rural areas. This will have an enormous impact on the long term finances of the UK.

We urgently need a roadmap which covers the following key points:

1. Financial support

As a sector we need further financial support to avoid mine and other businesses from going under, and the large scale redundancies that are just beginning.

Unlike the hospitality, heritage and arts sectors, we have received no VAT breaks for wedding packages and no sector specific government grants or recognition.

The longer term cost to the Treasury will be substantially increased without continued financial support; unemployment benefits and retraining costs, reduced tax revenues from employment and VAT.

Financial support to help our industry through to next year would not only assist in securing jobs, but create new ones to keep up with the huge number of events now scheduled for 2021. 'Spend now to save later' will help to avoid societal damage, large scale redundancies and enable the wedding sector to make a significant contribution to the recovery of the economy.

2. Wedding / Event Insurance

Insurance companies are still resisting payouts for both couples and for business. This importance of a decision on this has been magnified by the CMA statement this week (07/09/2020).

3. Covid-secure Events

The wedding sector has some unique characteristics:

- Weddings are the most important day of a couple's life, and celebrating properly has a direct effect on the wellbeing of all attendees and therefore the nation.
- Weddings are invite only which means that guest lists are already in place, making track and trace is significantly easier. Low cost event management platforms like [Hostology](#) facilitate guest list and consent management, and twinned with the new NHS Track and Trace barcode app will mean we have the tools to follow up on any outbreaks immediately.
- Our venue team is trained to ensure that the big day goes off without a hitch. As a sector we have sophisticated risk assessment and health and safety plans to ensure that our weddings for 30 are Covid-secure.

If the hospitality sector can welcome customers on a regulated capacity model we feel that the wedding sector should be trusted to operate within the same parameters.

Again, I urgently ask for your help in representing our case to the Government.

The sector has shown that weddings can be delivered safely for 30. With immediate financial support I will be able to retain the right team, ready and trained to fulfil larger events as soon as possible.

To that end we desperately need a **roadmap** for re-assessing weddings, which will enable consumers and businesses to plan their future with a degree of confidence.

I have worked tirelessly to establish my business and the continued restrictions are devastating both to me and my team but also to the many local suppliers in our constituency. Time is short and all of our livelihoods depend on the right government intervention in the coming days.

Very best wishes

[Name]

[Venue Name]