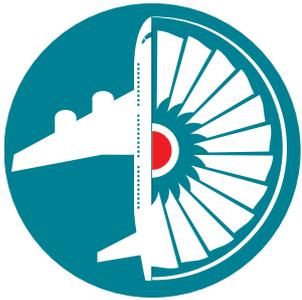


UNITE BLUEPRINT FOR AVIATION



UKaviation

flying into the future



URGENT UPDATE

Unite's Blueprint for Aviation "*Flying into the Future*" still remains the roadmap we need to follow. The overall approach is widely supported.¹ This Urgent Update sets out what now needs to happen building on the first Urgent Update from August 2020. The Unite Blueprint for Aviation was first developed in March 2020, as the reality of Covid19 began to devastatingly impact aviation, and promoted at every opportunity. It was further developed and launched in Parliament in May 2020 in a major online call with MPs.

Unite represents people who work throughout aviation – in airlines, airports and the supply chain: ground-handling, catering, cleaning, refuelling, as well as the related aerospace industry. The threat to thousands of jobs in the sector as well as to pay, terms and conditions is a daily reality Unite is dealing with. Unite is uniquely placed to identify key issues facing the entire sector, and has direct links with aviation unions and the TUC, sector bodies and the wide range of aviation employers across the UK, throughout Europe and globally, including the ETF² and ITF³, all of which has informed the development of this Unite Blueprint for Aviation and this Urgent Update.

Aviation has suffered a devastating impact from Covid-19, with tens of thousands of workers furloughed on the Job Retention Scheme that Unite successfully campaigned for, and with additions to government minimum standards negotiated by Unite wherever possible. While Unite is strenuously representing our members still at work in aviation and ensuring protections for both passengers' and aviation workers' safety and security, it is the threat to jobs and incomes in aviation that needs immediate action. Unite is clear that **the sector urgently needs a plan for a post Covid-19 lockdown and for the months and years ahead,**

which actively includes environmental concerns and developments in automation and digitalisation⁴. Government support needs to be there with clear pre-conditions to protect decent jobs and treatment for everyone working in aviation, and to ensure the future of the entire sector. The measures announced post-JRS do not protect workers in aviation.

Unite recognises that we are in a period of severe financial pressure in aviation but is equally clear that this requires ALL to play their part. It is not acceptable for aviation workers to be expected to pay the price in the short, medium and long-term. Temporary solutions developed on a joint basis, are possible and receiving workers' support. Imposition and threats will not achieve the way forward the sector needs.

Unite is therefore calling for government too to play its part to strategically support aviation infrastructure, as well as decent treatment of aviation workers, through the following coordinated strategy and approach. Developing a package of strategic support for aviation, through an established aviation task force where all parts of aviation can come together, with unions fairly and effectively represented and 'at the table', is vital.

1. RESTORING CONFIDENCE

As long as a vaccine is not available for Covid-19, fear will be a key element in a post lockdown aviation world. In order to support people to fly again, **the industry must implement new standards and operational models globally and throughout 'the passenger journey', with testing, tracking and tracing and scaling of quarantining on a national and regional basis.** Regular assessments should take place and a progression of measures should be brought in when responding to Covid-19 increases in infection rates. These should move from open 'travel corridors', to airport arrival testing, to double testing with quarantining between tests and full 14 day quarantining. Such escalated measures would reflect the graded geographically based traffic light tiered approach to local lockdowns.



2. PROVIDING STABILITY DURING A TIME OF EXTREME VOLATILITY

Government measures (both domestic and overseas) in response to the Covid19 pandemic have suppressed air travel, dramatically impacting on the sector and its revenue streams at a critical time in the cyclical seasonal nature of aviation. Industry predictions identify that passenger demand and revenue streams will gradually rebuild, with increasing numbers of skilled, experienced aviation workers being required in all parts of the sector. However, aviation workers and aviation as a whole are facing a further threat to tens of thousands of jobs, to extensive skills and experience, and to the very existence of some airports and parts of the supply chain as a result of severely suppressed demand.

As Unite's Blueprint for Aviation sets out, **we need strategic support for aviation, with clear pre-conditions to any companies receiving government loans and support; which not only protects aviation workers and all parts of aviation between now and Spring 2021, it also ensures that the sector is in the strongest position to rebuild into the future. In addition there should be no extension of the slot usage alleviation for winter 2020/21 into summer 2021, in order to ensure a schedule that consumers can have confidence in, employers can plan to and employees can be certain of.** The introduction of an additional financial support mechanism for areas which face specific Covid-19 measures should be applicable to aviation.



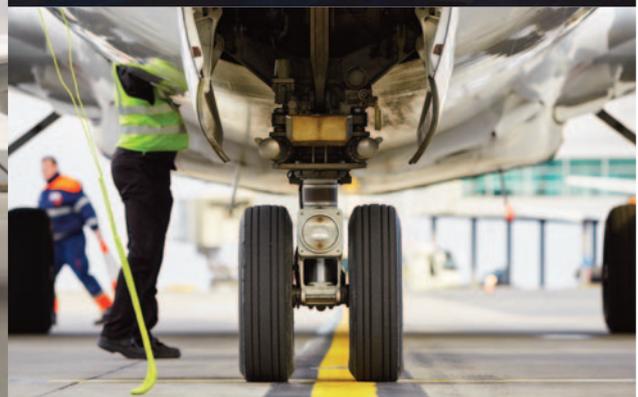
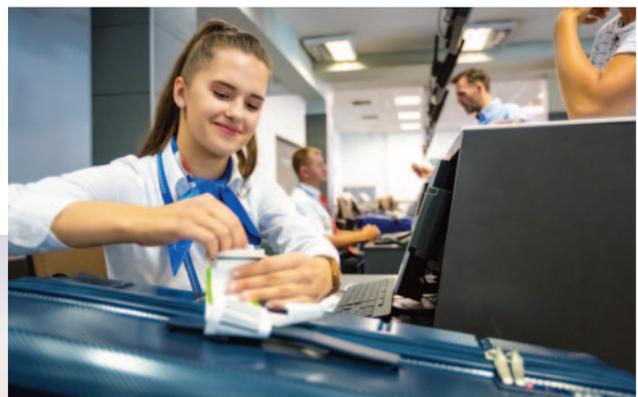
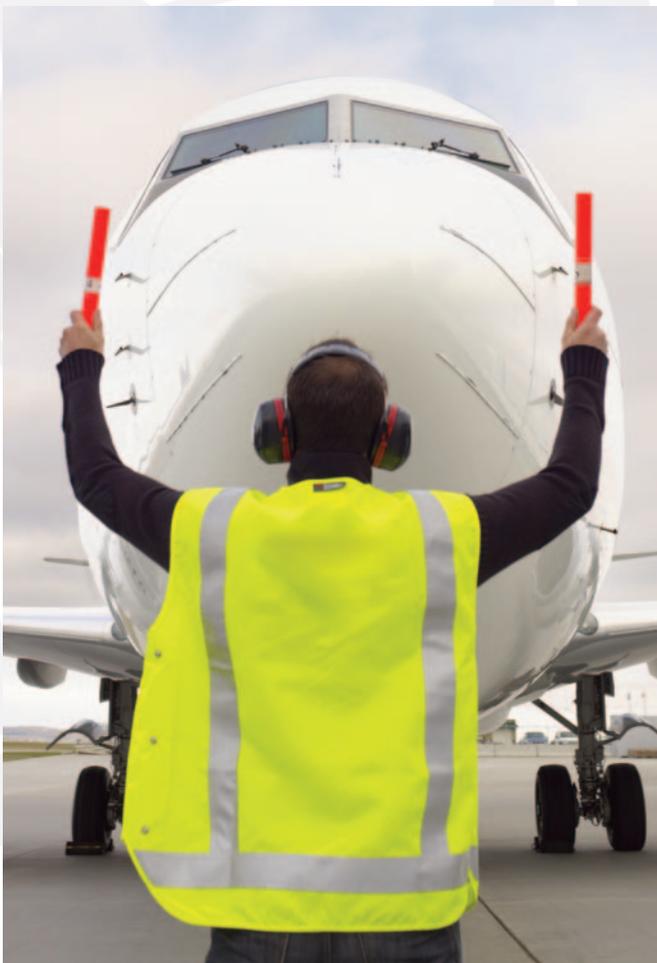
3. ALL MUST PLAY THEIR PART IN SUPPORTING THE FUTURE FOR AVIATION

Unite and other unions are currently negotiating with employers for the very future of the aviation sector. This has included reaching agreements in these very difficult circumstances to safeguard jobs through agreeing redundancy mitigation measures, such as temporary pay reductions, and agreed 'pools' of workers on set proportions of their pay, available to return as the sector rebuilds.

Government needs to ensure that there are clear pre-conditions to support for aviation, which protect aviation workers and the aviation sector as a whole. The crisis is temporary, not permanent and equally so should the solutions should be. Support for legislation ending the ability to 'fire and rehire' is critical to stop further abuses similar to the case of BA.

4. PROTECTING REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY – PUBLIC SERVICE OBLIGATION ROUTES

Regional connectivity is about communities being supported and linked up. The loss of Flybe means the a critical reduction of regional connectivity, threatening the future of a number of airports and further isolating and undermining communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This part of the sector no longer has the capacity to scale up, and the margins and returns are such that without support the routes will be the last to resume. **Public Service Obligation routes need to be protected and increased as part of the overall aviation infrastructure strategy.**



5. SUPPORTING AVIATION WORKERS IN JOBS NOT UNEMPLOYMENT

Unite is calling for a **longer-term direct support for retaining employment within the aviation sector**. Such a proposal which has the backing of business, airports, trade unions and cross-party politicians alike who recognise that this would provide some much-needed stability to the industry and would be a vital lifeline to aviation workers across the country.

Whilst the extension of the CJRS and the update to the JSS have provided a measure of support, the restriction on international and national travel have had a further and significant suppression of the demand that was forecast to come back into the sector. This has further delayed the predicted period for passenger return and without further support for job retention in aviation between now and March 2021 there will be further and immediate jobs and skills loss⁵, making it much harder for the sector to rebuild safely and cost-effectively as demand increases. Skilled dedicated, professional aviation workers will be forced to claim a range of unemployment and other benefits, and all the resulting losses to local communities and the aviation supply chain. In addition, the cost of unemployment – in terms of lost tax revenue and benefits payments – is such that supporting employees in retaining jobs has a less detrimental impact for the treasury and public finances. The average pay of an aviation worker (sic51 coding) is £26620 and a support worker (sic52.23) £22821 pa. The respective minimum cost to the treasury (loss of tax, NI and payment of benefits) is £9497 and £9274 respectively. The levels of financing that would be cost effective for the treasury and provide a support mechanism for the industry should be commensurate to the figures above.⁶

6. TOGETHER WITH THE TUC AND ALL AVIATION UNIONS, UNITE IS CALLING SPECIFICALLY FOR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION ON THE ECONOMIC AND FISCAL MEASURES NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE SECTOR INCLUDING:

- The introduction of a sector specific scheme within aviation to support employers in retaining employees and protect employment through at least coming winter season in the aviation sector
- Ending of the current slot alleviation rules and support for continued route and networked operation
- suspension of APD
- public service obligation routes to ensure regional connectivity
- government to meet air navigation charges / nationalisation of NATS
- business rate relief for airports (as in Scotland and NI)
- extending the period of repayment of loans to aviation companies beyond the current two year maximum
- implementation of the airline insolvency review
- utilisation of the suspension of the European ground handling directive – allowing for sustainable supplier operations, with a review of the regulation post brexit

October 2020

References

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See Labour Party call for support to aviation <https://labourlist.org/2020/05/condition-airline-bailouts-on-jobs-and-climate-commitments-says-labour/>
See Airport Operators Association call for support for aviation <https://www.aoa.org.uk/uk-falling-behind-major-economies-in-supporting-aviation-industry/>
See Airlines UK and MPs and former Aviation Ministers call for aviation support <https://airlinesuk.org/mps-former-aviation-ministers-write-to-chancellor-to-call-for-more-support-for-sector-to-deal-with-covid-19/>
- 2: See ETF Covid19 call for support for European aviation <https://www.etf-europe.org/covid-19-a-plan-for-european-aviation/>
- 3: See Joint ITF/IATA call for global support for aviation <https://www.itfglobal.org/en/news/iata-and-itf-joint-statement-aviation-support>
- 4: New Economics Foundation report 'Crisis support to aviation and the right to retrain' is available at <https://neweconomics.org/2020/06/crisis-support-to-aviation-and-the-right-to-retrain>
- 5: Job Support Scheme leave two million jobs unprotected, New Economics Foundation, <https://neweconomics.org/2020/10/job-support-scheme-leaves-two-million-jobs-unprotected>
- 6: The fiscal impact of unemployment arising from COVID-19 in the aviation and hospitality sectors, Landman Economics ([link](#))