



The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
1 Horse Guards Road
Westminster
London
SW1A 2HQ

Dear Chancellor,

We, the undersigned, are writing to urge you to introduce a new, internationally competitive, tax-free shopping scheme for international visitors at the next fiscal event.

As businesses operating across retail, tourism, manufacturing, hospitality, culture, and real estate, we collectively employ huge swathes of the public and contribute significantly to local economies in all UK nations and regions. The removal of tax-free shopping has had a negative impact on business revenue, and for some, forced us to downsize operations, take steps to reduce our UK footprint and mitigate the impact across supply chains.

We were encouraged by your comments on making the British tourism and retail industry competitive at the Autumn Statement and welcome your decision to review the economic impact of the removal of tax-free shopping. Research by the Association for International Retail shows that British shops are losing £1.5 billion per year as non-EU international visitors choose instead to spend in France, Italy, and Spain where tax-free shopping schemes are in place.

As business groups collectively operating across every nation and region of the UK, we want to make clear that a decision to introduce a new internationally competitive scheme would be welcomed across the entirety of the country. From manufacturers and retailers, to businesses and hospitality venues in great towns and cities nationwide, to both big and small businesses - we would all benefit from a boost in visitor numbers and spend increase to match those we have seen in nations we compete with on the world stage.

The Government seeks to position the UK as a global leader, secure its economic recovery, and boost the local economies up and down the country. We urge you to introduce a new, internationally competitive tax-free shopping incentive for all overseas visitors at the next fiscal event, a scheme that works for the Exchequer and the economy.

Yours sincerely,

Shevaun Haviland, Director General, British Chambers of Commerce
Craig Beaumont, Chief of External Affairs, Federation of Small Businesses
Ben Fletcher, Chief Operating Officer, Make UK
Dr Roger Barker, Director of Policy and Governance, Institute of Directors
Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive, British Retail Consortium
Russell Borthwick, Chief Executive, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Adrian Watson, Chief Executive, Aberdeen Inspired BID
Viv Watts, Founder, AGO Hotels and CEO Alternative Investments Exchange
Karen Dee, Chief Executive, Airports Operators Association
Wendy Hartley-Scarff, CEO, Association of Group Travel Organisers
Paul Barnes, CEO, Association of International Retail
James Foice, Chief Executive, Association of Serviced Apartment Providers
David Weston, Chairman, Bed and Breakfast Association
Brigid Simmonds OBE, Chairman, Betting and Gaming Council
Sarah Moorhouse, Chief Executive, Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Jan Etches, General Manager, Brighton Toy Museum
Duncan Edwards OBE, CEO, British American Business
Victoria Brownlie, Chief Policy Officer, British Beauty Council
Emma English, Executive Director, British Educational Travel Association
Caroline Rush CBE, Chief Executive, British Fashion Council
Andrew Goodacre, CEO, British Independent Retailers Association
Clive Wratten, Chief Executive, Business Travel Association
John Dickie, Chief Executive, BusinessLDN
Prof. Joshua Bamfield, Director, Centre for Retail Research
Paul Butterworth, CEO, Chambers Wales South East, South West and Mid
Chris Hayward, Policy Chairman, City of London Corporation
Kim Conchie, CEO, Cornwall Chamber of Commerce
Amanda Lumley, Chief Executive, Destination Plymouth
Liz McAreavey, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
Huan Japes, Membership Director, English UK
Roddy Smith, Chief Executive, Essential Edinburgh
Denise Rossiter, Chief Executive, Essex Chambers of Commerce
Tom Jenkins, CEO, European Tour Operators Association
Rachel Parker, Director, Events Industry Alliance
Hayley Beer-Gamage, CEO, Experience Oxfordshire
Rav Panesar, Policy Representative, FSB East Midlands
Les Phillimore, Regional Chair, FSB East Midlands
Laura Timm, Policy Representative, FSB Greater London
Michael Weeden, Chair, FSB Retail and High Streets Policy Unit
Andrew McRae, Policy Convenor, FSB Scotland
Yvette Lamidey, Policy Representative, FSB South-Central England
Ben Francis, Chair, FSB Wales Policy Unit
Ian O'Donnell, FSB West Midlands - West Midlands Mayor's Business Advisory Group
Adam Marshall CBE, Former Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce
Stuart Patrick CBE, Chief Executive, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
Kyron Keogh, Chair, Glasgow City Centre Retail Association
Stephen Lorton, Chair, Go New Forest
Deidre Wells OBE, CEO, GoToPlaces (Visit Kent/Hertfordshire)
David Andrews, Director, Great West Way
Yvonne Clay, Centre Director, Gunwharf Quays Portsmouth
Ross McNally, Executive Chairman, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
Ros Morgan, Chief Executive, Heart of London Business Alliance
Steve Oates, Chief Executive, Heritage Railway Association

Andy Sharma, Chair, Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce
Ben Cowell OBE, Director General, Historic Houses
Jackie Clare, Co-President, Institute of Tourist Guiding
Susan Spibey, Executive Board Chair, Institute of Event Management
Colin Marr, Chief Executive, Inverness Chamber of Commerce
Mark Allan, Chief Executive Officer, Landsec
Bill Addy, Chief Executive Officer, Liverpool BID Company
Paul Cherpeau, Chief Executive, Liverpool Chamber of Commerce
Karim Fatehi MBE, Interim CEO, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Charles Begley, Chief Executive, London Property Alliance
Cristian Marcucci, Managing Director, Marketing Cheshire
Nick Brooks-Sykes, Director of Tourism, Marketing Manchester
Ben Massey, CEO, National Association of Jewellers
Andrew Denton, CEO, National Outdoor Events Association
Dee Corsi, Chief Executive, New West End Company
Michael Kill, CEO, Night Time Industries Association
Babs Murphy, CEO, North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
John McCabe, CEO, North East Chamber of Commerce
Ian Thomas, Destination Director, North East Destination Development Partnership
Beth Bailey, Marketing Director, Premier Cottages
Alistair Handyside MBE, Executive Chair, Professional Association of Self Caterers UK
Paul Gardner Bougaard, Chief Executive, Resort Development Organisation
Richard Smith, Managing Director, Road Haulage Association
Dr Liz Cameron CBE, Chief Executive, Scottish Chambers of Commerce
David Lonsdale, Director, Scottish Retail Consortium
Marc Crothall MBE, Chief Executive, Scottish Tourism Alliance
Andy Fenner, Chief Executive, Short Term Accommodation Association
Claire Walker & Hannah Essex, Co-Chief Executives, Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre
Chris Plant, Deputy CEO, Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce
Louise Punter, Chief Executive, Surrey Chambers of Commerce
Ana Christie, Chief Executive, Sussex Chamber of Commerce
Paul Britton, Chief Executive, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group
Bernard Donoghue OBE, Director, The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions
Richard Toomer, Executive Director, Tourism Alliance
Roger Goodacre, Chairman, Tourism Consultants Network
Alison Cryer MBE, Head of the Executive Secretariat, Tourism Society
Michael Hirst OBE, Advocacy & Government Relations, UK Events
Adam Mansell, Chief Executive Officer, UK Fashion and Textile Association
Joss Croft OBE, CEO, UK Inbound
Nigel Keal, Chair, UK Travel Retail Forum
Asa Morrison, Chief Executive, Visit Great Yarmouth
Barrie Kelly, CEO, Visit Greenwich
Deborah Heather, CEO, Visit Isle of Man
Kayla Dunne, Brand Director, Visit North Norfolk
Megan Powell Vreeswijk, CEO, Visit Nottinghamshire
Jo Dilley, Managing Director, Visit Peak District & Derbyshire
Kathryn Davis, Managing Director, Visit West
Helen Brocklebank, CEO, Walpole
Andrew Dakers, Chief Executive, West London Business
Alan Rides, CEO, West London Chambers
Nicola Bates, CEO, WineGB