

ABENA OPPONG-ASARE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ERITH AND THAMESMEAD

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE SHADOW CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1 May 2020

Dear Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP

I am writing to you to raise concerns regarding the announcement that British Airways plans to reduce its staffing numbers by 12,000. I have been contacted by several constituents who are currently employed by British Airways and are rightly concerned about their jobs and livelihoods.

IAG, BA's owner, said its actions to cut costs would include grounding surplus aircraft, reducing and deferring capital spending, cutting non-essential and non-cyber related IT spending, freezing recruitment and discretionary spending, implementing voluntary leave options, temporarily suspending employment contracts and reducing working hours.

IAG said it had cash and deposits of €7.4bn as at 12 March plus undrawn financing facilities of €1.9bn.

Just over a month after this announcement IAG released the devastating news that it needed to impose a "restructuring and redundancy programme" and that "it is likely that [the proposals] will affect most of British Airways' employees and may result in the redundancy of up to 12,000 of them."

British Airways has used the Government furlough scheme to furlough 23,000 employees. I think all Members of the House, and the public, can agree that if a business is accessing taxpayer money to fund staff wages during this time, whilst it has cash and deposits of €7.4bn; then the decision to lay off staff in the future to save the company money is unacceptable.

I am sure that you are equally as concerned about the prospect of rising unemployment following the Covid-19 crisis. I ask that you, as a matter of urgency, enter discussions with IAG regarding saving the 12,000 jobs with BA.

This prospect threatens a large number of people within my constituency and as they are not able to advocate for themselves due to fear of being dismissed by the company; I will be

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representing their cases to you.

I hope that I will not be making representations on behalf of my constituents who have found themselves financially unstable due to this decision in the coming months.

I would be grateful if you could please inform what actions you propose to take on this issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abena', is set against a light yellow rectangular background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Abena Oppong-Asare MP