

# Textile Services Association's open letter to the Government on Covid-19 outbreak and the response to the textile care hospitality industry



1 July 2020

For the attention of

**The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer**

**The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy**

Dear Sirs,

I am writing yet another open letter to you both regarding the desperate plight of the hospitality laundry sector as I simply do not know what else to do.

As the CEO of the Textile Services Association (TSA), which represents the UK laundry industry and its 28,000 employees, I feel I have let them down. We were promised early on in the pandemic that the industry would be looked after, and I have confidently relayed this message to our membership, believing it to be true. I was wrong. I have sent you open letter after open letter and also to the following contacts, the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Cabinet Office, HM Treasury (HMT), and many others, and we have also encouraged laundries to write to their local MPs.

All to no avail.

Hopefully, you may have read one of my letters and you will already be aware of our situation. So far, we have received lots of kind offers of support, lots of sympathy and a list of everything that has been done for everyone else but absolutely no action on the issues we have raised. I have made hundreds of phone calls to councils, rate offices, MPs, and cabinet officers, who all agree our circumstances are exceptional. They all understand how essential we are if the hospitality industry is going to bounce back, and it cannot without laundry. However, they all say their hands are tied without clear Government advice.

We have the support of UK Hospitality, all the major hotel groups, MPs, trade associations and so the list goes on. In fact, nobody disagrees. I believe even the Government agrees. But apathy seems to have set in, and you now seem to be focusing only on reopening and have "moved on". Laundries are forgotten.

Well our industry has not been able to move on. We are still shut, and many are now in desperate financial positions. All we ask is that laundries are included within the list of eligible businesses that can apply for the rate relief. All councils think we should be on the list but until the guidance is made clear they will not help.

Can somebody in Government take responsibility for one of the UK's oldest industries? If not, tens of thousands of workers may be forced onto the job market.

All I am asking is the opportunity to present our case to a decision maker within your Cabinet.

I honestly do not know what else to do, and one call may be enough to save thousands of jobs.

Yours faithfully,

**David Stevens**

CEO

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