



Mr Christopher Byrne
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29 June 2020

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

Reopening of the Beauty, Wellness and Spa Industry

First, allow me to introduce myself. I am the President of the Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT), the UK's largest professional association for complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists, representing 16,000 members a year. Established in 1962, we have been committed to developing and promoting high standards in therapy training and practice for more than 58 years. We also run the largest Accredited Register of complementary therapists independently approved by the Professional Standards Authority, as part of a Government-back programme, covering 17 different therapies that can be used safely alongside standard medical care.

I am writing to express my dismay at your recent announcement that hairdressers and barbers can open on 4 July, while what the Government has termed 'massage parlours' and 'nail bars' – along with the rest of the beauty, wellness and spa industry – is to remain closed, with no clarity on when we will be able to reopen.

By way of example, the beauty/hair industry alone contributes £6.6bn to the UK economy, which equates to at least 8% of the value generated by the retail sector. It also employs up to 337,687 people, predominately women, across 49,371 businesses and provides over 16,500 apprenticeships.

The longer beauty, wellness and spa businesses are forced to remain closed, the more jobs are at risk, as many businesses may never be able to reopen their doors. This also disproportionately impacts the livelihoods of the high number of women working in the industry, many of whom work part-time or on a self-employed basis, providing them with the necessary flexibility to support themselves and their families.



Our industry has asked the Government to allow the industry to reopen in line with very strict safety guidelines, but our calls have not been heard.

We are also dismayed by the Government's use of the phrases 'massage parlours' and 'nail bars' in its communications and announcements. As noted above, the industry is a significant contributor to the economy and jobs market and underpinned by hard-working professionals who adhere to high standards of training and practice. They are the beating heart of the high streets and local communities they serve, up and down the country. We urge you to recognise the industry as a serious economic player in the UK, not to mention the significant role we play in supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of the communities and people we serve.

The beauty, wellness and spa industry has been patiently waiting to reopen at Step 3, making all the necessary preparations to ensure the safety of staff and clients. It is illogical that guidance has been published on keeping workers and clients safe in close contact services including hair, beauty, wellness and spa facilities, while only some of these services have been given the go ahead to open. Furthermore, the Government has not outlined its scientific reasoning on why many comparable sectors and services can operate 'in a COVID-secure way' while our industry cannot.

The continued uncertainty around when beauty, wellness and spa businesses can reopen has caused heightened anxiety on the long-term future of the industry and the thousands of jobs it supports.

We urge you to reconsider the re-opening of the beauty, wellness and spa industry alongside hairdressers and barbers, and provide immediate clarity to us on when we will be allowed to restart work.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Byrne'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President, FHT