



From the Minister of State  
The Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP



Department for  
**Transport**

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OUR REF: PH/TV/014339/10

Alan Keen MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
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18 AUG 2010

Dear Alan

Thank you for your letter of 7 June to Philip Hammond. I am replying as Minister for Aviation.

Risks of musculo-skeletal disorders among baggage handlers and other workers at airports are a matter of concern both at British airports and internationally.

However, mitigation of the effects of baggage weights on workers in the industry is primarily a matter for the Health and Safety Executive, who continue to work with all sides of industry to reduce these risks. I understand from HSE that baggage weights are only part of the issue, and that other factors include the work environment and rate of working. While HSE agrees that reduction in the weight of individual bags could reduce risks, it could also result in more bags being handled and an increased rate of handling and risk of injury. HSE has therefore concentrated its efforts on working with the industry to adopt safer systems of work, including use of automation and lifting aids which reduce the manual handling risks.

In view of the primary role of the HSE in this area, as well as my own heavy diary commitments, unfortunately, I am unable to accommodate a meeting at the present time. However I wish you every success in your "Packless" campaign to make the wider travelling public aware of what they can do to minimise the risks to baggage handlers and other workers in the industry.

Regards  
Theresa

THE RT. HON. THERESA VILLIERS