

## Groups are “the key” to getting tourism in London back to normal

30 July 2020

**The chair of the Coach Tourism Association has said group organisers will play a major role in getting things moving again as the tourism sector urges the Prime Minister to help London cope with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.**

Thousands of attractions, restaurants and hotels have written to the Prime Minister asking him for help to kickstart tourism in the capital and to aid its recovery with a plan to welcome visitors back.

Led by Merlin Entertainments, which has attractions including Madame Tussauds and London



Dungeons, the campaign has been backed by Thames

John Wales, chair of the Coach Tourism Association.

Clippers, Big Bus Tours and the Coach Tourism Association (CTA) among many others.

John Wales, chair of the CTA said that groups in particular were hugely important to tourism in London.

He added: “It may be quite easy for very popular new theatre productions or successful exhibitions to sell out and build up waiting lists but as I know only too well from my time heading up the capital’s largest ticket agency, Encore, it is group travel organisers bringing ten, 20 or more people into the city that keeps the lights on in London’s theatres on a wet Wednesday night in February.

“Fingers crossed, we are now seeing some light at the end of the tunnel. Of course this may turn out to be a false dawn, but the tourism business is nothing if not an optimistic and resilient one.

“This is where group travel organisers can play such a vital role because what is needed now, more than anything, is a boost to the confidence of all holidaymakers and in particular, visitors to London.



Sunny Jouhal, General Manager of The lastminute.com London Eye, is urging the Prime Minister to aid the recovery of the capital's tourism industry or face the economic consequences as part of the 'SOS London' campaign.

“The capital's entertainment businesses will be very much reliant on home-grown business in the coming months and GTOs will play an important part in encouraging their customers to enjoy the delights of the capital once more. Of course, they have to be absolutely assured that it will be safe, which is why coach operators, theatres and attractions are following Government guidelines and putting in detailed safety plans.

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**“I think we all owe ourselves a break after lockdown and I know GTOs will be helping to satisfy the pent-up demand from their loyal clients who will be the key to seeing London's tourism get back to normal as soon as possible.”**

John Wales, chair of the CTA

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The signatories to the letter sent to Boris Johnson represent almost 11,000 businesses.

Sunny Jouhal, general manager of the lastminute.com London Eye said the Government needed to look further ahead to tackle future challenges that the tourism sector faced adding: “If the UK Government does not act now, we will see one of the biggest missed opportunities on Britain's road to recovery and prosperity