



Thank you for responding to the debate last week on the future of the coach industry. The number of MPs wanting to speak clearly demonstrated the strength of feeling about the lack of support to date for our sector.

We were pleased to hear you recognise the vital role we play in moving people from A to B helping local economies prosper across the country. Millions of visits are made each year by coach to attractions and places across the UK and this demand has not gone away but has been suppressed by the pandemic. In addition, our role in providing home to school and emergency transport, when something goes wrong with the railways or planes, often goes unnoticed and undervalued.

The industry is fundamentally healthy and profitable and will have a key role to play in securing a green recovery, but has been critically impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as passengers numbers have collapsed. To help secure the long term future of the coach sector and protect jobs across the wider tourism sector we need short term support to ensure we survive the winter.

While measures such as the furlough scheme have helped minimise job losses to date, this will not be the case should businesses fail and so far support elsewhere has been limited and patchy. The vast majority of the additional funding for home to school transport, which while perhaps intended to aid the coach sector, is not reaching coach operators. Meanwhile, the failure to confirm that coach operators should be considered part of the tourism and leisure sector has meant that some of us have received support from our local authorities while others have not.

What we need is well known to government. Help facilitating the extension of finance holidays and automatically including coach as a sector eligible for payments made to the leisure and tourism businesses. We also need to see the topping up of home to school payments to reflect the true cost of running those services during the pandemic and an aid to trade scheme to help us get back up and running once restrictions allow.

In reflecting on the debate we would ask you to join our call in making the case for providing support to a sector that should it fail will impact on both the country's economic and social recovery and the delivery of important environmental goals.

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