

Backing Wales' Coaches



An Agenda for the next Welsh Parliament

The 2021 Senedd elections come at a critical time for the coach industry with Covid-19 placing significant pressure on the sector.

It is crucial that all parties work together in the next Senedd term to help foster a strong recovery.

Coach operators are often family-owned local companies. They know how to run successful businesses; but they need the support and interest of Wales' politicians during this period to help them realise success.



average CO₂ emissions

per passenger per journey are around

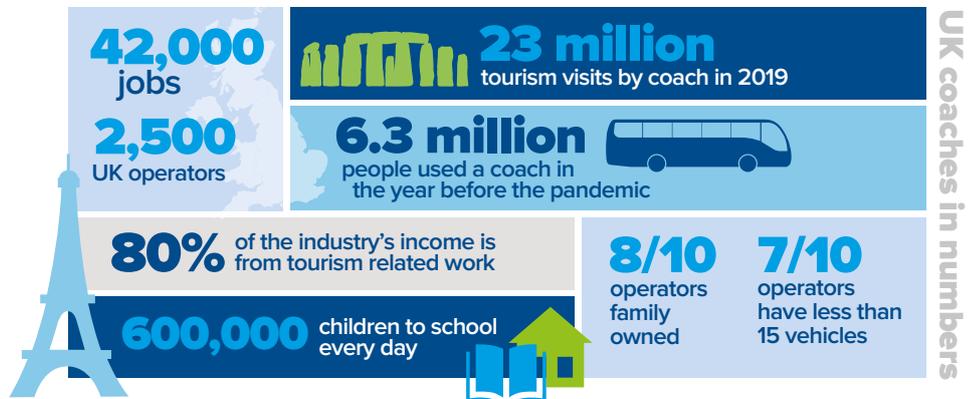
1.5X higher
5X higher
6X higher

than travel by **coach**



Understanding the coach industry

Coaches play a vital role in moving people from A to B and keep millions of car journeys off our roads. Millions of visits are made each year by coach to attractions and places across Wales contributing £14bn to the UK tourism economy in 2019. Thousands of children regularly rely on a coach to get them to and from school safely and coaches frequently step in to provide emergency transport such as rail replacement or when flights are diverted. They also help sports fans follow their team across the country, schools arrange educational visits and provide a cost-effective alternative to train or air travel.



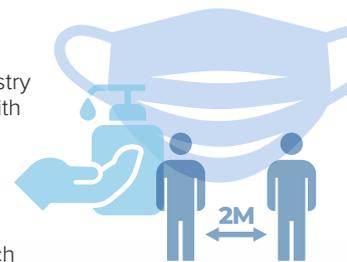
A thriving and prosperous coach industry should be a central plank of Wales' plans to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and be a world leader in fighting the climate emergency and improving air quality in our towns and cities. As the activities highlighted above demonstrate, coaches impact on all of our wellbeing in a number of ways.

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on an industry that is normally fundamentally healthy and profitable. However, with lockdown restrictions gradually easing, it is likely that trips can get underway this summer and is an opportunity for the industry to play a leading role in Wales economic recovery.

During the pandemic, home to school transport contracts have been supported at a rate of 75% of contract value and many coach operators have been able to access the Economic Resilience Fund as part of the tourism and hospitality supply chain. This assistance has undoubtedly been welcome.

But there is pent up demand for travel and with the right support the industry can recover and continue to provide both essential journeys and play a key role in kickstarting the Wales' tourism economy.



Delivering net zero and improving our air: the role of coaches

Coaches will play a central role in the Wales' drive towards net zero and cleaner air by reducing the number of cars on our roads. Just a 15% increase in coach travel across the UK would mean 47 million fewer cars on our road reducing carbon dioxide emissions by over a quarter of a million tonnes. A greater focus on encouraging more journeys to be made by coach, both for leisure and essential purposes, will help Wales meet its climate change and air quality targets.

Although coaches are already amongst the cleanest vehicles on our roads, through improvements to the coach fleet across Wales and the UK we can reduce carbon dioxide emissions even further, by around 56,000 tonnes over the next decade, and reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides equivalent to £225m in damage cost savings. Coaches also have a positive role to play in improving air quality, with Euro VI coaches reducing particulate levels and helping reduce the negative health impacts of travel.



Backing Wales' coaches: What we need to see

Coach travel is an inclusive, sustainable, environmentally friendly travel option that reduces air pollution, carbon emissions and road congestion. It will be crucial for the Wales' long-term environmental targets and economic recovery.

The industry is ready to work with the next Welsh Government and Parliament to raise the profile of coach travel with individual passengers, local areas and society as a whole. For the coach industry to deliver its full potential we need the next Welsh Government to commit to providing a coach-friendly operating environment.

Below are the policies we need the next Welsh Government to deliver:

Helping the sector in Wales recover from Covid-19

A £7.5m Wales Coach Recovery Fund to support Welsh coach operators to get up and running while social distancing is in place. This should be based on the model currently being rolled out in Scotland to help the industry recover from Covid-19.

£7.5 million
coach recovery fund

Ensuring that any future rounds of funding, such as the Economic Resilience Fund, are open to coach operators who are a key element of the supply chain in many sectors.

Restoring confidence by providing a clear message to the people of Wales that travel by coach is Covid-19 safe as we exit restrictions.



Coach facilities and access being a priority for locations that are expected to receive a large volume of visitors

Ensure Wales' planning legislation is fit for purpose for coach access.

Alongside operators committing to best practice when visiting attractions and places, endorsement by all the UK's governments of CPT's coach friendly guide for local authorities for new economic development.



A joint industry and government strategy to reduce the number of long-distance car journeys

This strategy should include:

Measures that ensure clean air strategies support modal shift from the private car to sustainable forms of mass transport. This must mean prioritising mass transport like coaches over cars.

A national clean air fund to support coach operators to invest in new vehicles or retrofit to meet Clean Air Zone requirements, similar to the BEAR fund in Scotland.

Incentives for manufacturers to develop ultra-low and zero emission vehicles solutions and support the development of associated infrastructure.

An exemption from any road pricing schemes for vehicles like coaches that reduce congestion and pollution.



CO₂
NO_x

developing the coach offer as a key component of Wales' tourism strategy

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Welsh Government and Visit Wales backed campaigns to promote coach travel to passengers and locations including encouraging the return of educational trips by coach.

Managing peaks in demand at key attractions, such as in Snowdonia National Park, by making coaches the solution to the problem of overcrowding and congestion.

Ensuring the coach sector is seen as part of the solution for increasing visitor spend in Wales by facilitating longer stays.



Encouraging young people into the industry

Provide a route for school and college leavers into the industry by encouraging Careers Wales and other employment programmes to support a career in the coach sector.



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