

I am writing to you as a local business owner in your constituency to ask for your support in raising my concerns over failure of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to support the Local Government Association's view that coach operators should be eligible to access the Covid-19 support package for leisure businesses.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the leisure industry, including coach operators, who have been hit with unprecedented cancellations levels and a dramatic fall in future booking. **My business itself has suffered from XXXXXXX.**

While the support offered to leisure businesses via business rates relief and grants would not cover the cost my business is facing at the moment, it would help provide my business with a much needed lifeline.

On 2 April the Local Government Association, having worked with a range of organisations, issued an advice note to local authorities which identified some leisure-related businesses that are not explicitly mentioned in the guidance but, in their view, fall into the intended category. This included coach operators in light of their central involvement in the industry. Unfortunately, following a request from MHCLG, who do not believe coach operators are part of the leisure industry, this advice note has reluctantly been withdrawn.

It is frankly puzzling to see how MHCLG, having been aware of the advice note in advance of publication, could retrospectively have reached such a view with coach operators undertaking a range of activities which are clearly within the leisure industry, including:

- Multi centre domestic and international tours.
- Day trips to a range of UK destinations including theme parks, historic towns and cities and beauty spots.
- Bespoke packages for sporting events and cultural experiences such as theatres and concerts.
- A range of private hire bookings such as weddings, birthdays and funerals.

Specifically, in the last 12 months my business has undertaken **DATA ON NUMBER OF LEISURE TRIPS AND MONEY BROUGHT IN.**

The position of MHCLG on this issue is confusing and frustrating for all involved and seems to focus too narrowly on the definition of leisure as something location based and not recognising the significant number of businesses that are central to the leisure industry but are not destinations in themselves.

Once the Covid-19 outbreak is over we will all need to work together to repair the damage done to our local economy. If we want to bring tourists back into our local areas, get people back in our theatres, shops, restaurants, cafes and bars, reinstate educational trips and help those who have been forced to spend a considerable length of time in isolation get back out and about, not to mention get people back to school and work, it is vital that coach businesses have the financial support to withstand the current crisis.

I would be grateful if you could please raise my concerns with both ministers in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and with Baroness Vere in the Department for Transport.

