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**Government says lap dancing clubs are worth saving**

**but inbound tourism isn’t**

**Monday 25 January 2021** – The [Business Visits and Events Partnership](https://www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com/) (BVEP), [Coach Tourism Association](https://coachtourismassociation.co.uk/) (CTA), [Confederation of Passenger Transport](http://www.cpt-uk.org/) (CTP UK), [English UK](https://www.englishuk.com/), [ETOA](https://www.etoa.org/), [Tourism Alliance](https://www.tourismalliance.com/index.cfm) and [UKinbound](http://ukinbound.org/) have collectively expressed their despair and disbelief that Government has again chosen to deny businesses in the inbound tourism sector, which generated £28.4 billion in export earnings for the UK economy in 2019, access to the latest Covid-19 support.

Since March 2020, the Government has stated that sexual entertainment venues and hostess bars are specifically eligible for Business Grants, Local Restriction Support Grants and Business Rates Relief. However, four incredibly valuable export earning tourism and transport sectors, which have been effectively closed for almost a year, continue to be excluded.

The following sectors generate £17.5 billion and 275,000 jobs for the UK economy, but they are not listed as businesses that should be eligible for support, even though inbound tourism figures are down 95% as a result of Coronavirus.

* Tour Operators/Destination Management Companies (DMCs)
* Coach Operators
* Language Schools
* Event Organisers

The Government’s latest “Business Support Package for January Lockdown”, which includes a Closed Businesses Lockdown Payment and LRSG (Closed) Addendum adds insult to injury by providing further support of up to £13,500 for sexual entertainment venues, while again excluding these tourism businesses from applying.

These associations and their members have contacted Ministers, MPs and Government Officials over 100 times to outline why these businesses should be supported (previously profitable, generate billions for the UK economy and will significantly aid the UK’s economic recovery) and to ask for the eligibility criteria to be changed to include them. These requests continue to be ignored by Government.

**Joss Croft, CEO, UKinbound** said “*By refusing to support these businesses the Government is undermining an integral economic recovery channel. International inbound tourism is the UK’s third largest service export, earning the UK economy £28bn in 2019, and tour operator/DMCs alone bring in over half of all international visitors. With our travel corridors closed these businesses are now on the brink of survival after being left in the cold by existing Government support schemes.*

*“Without support and a clear Government roadmap for reopening we risk the near total collapse of the UK’s inbound tourism industry. When we can travel again international visitors will choose to visit other European destinations rather than the UK, causing irrevocable damage to the communities and regions who rely on tourism, leaving the Government’s Global Britain and levelling up ambitions in tatters.”*

**Alison Edwards, Head of Policy, CPT UK** said *“Coach operators are a vital part of the tourism sector with over 23 million visits each year made to attractions across the UK by coach.*

*“If the Government wants coach tourism to help kick start our economic recovery it needs to ensure operators can access the support available to the wider leisure and tourism industry as a m*a*tter of urgency.”*

**Jodie Gray, chief executive, English UK,** said: “*Until Covid-19, the UK was a world leader in English language teaching, attracting more students than any of our global competitors, creating and supporting jobs at all levels all over the UK which brought at least £1.4bn to our economy and huge soft power benefits.*

*“But our teaching centres have been empty since they closed for face-to-face teaching to support the first lockdown in 2020, business was down at least 80 per cent last year, and travel restrictions look set to continue. Many centres have closed forever and we fear more will follow.*

*“Our students come from all over the world because they want to learn English and travel in the UK. It is inexplicable that our industry cannot get the support extended to other hospitality and tourism businesses when it brings nothing but benefit to our nation.”*

**Kurt Janson, Director, Tourism Alliance** said *“Supporting these businesses is key to the success of the Government’s Aviation and Tourism Recovery Plans. Ramping up marketing activity in overseas source markets through VisitBritain and the GREAT campaign later this year will be of limited success if there are no events for people to come to, no tour operators to convert the interest and sell the product, if the language schools have closed, and if there are no coach companies to transport tour groups around the UK.”*

**Robert Shaw, chair, Coach Tourism Association,** said “*Direct government support to coach tour operators during the pandemic has been patchy at best, with many left to cope without any significant support beyond furlough since the first lockdown. Our sector’s customers will be desperate to take coach holidays once it becomes safe to travel again, and it is vital that coach businesses are able to meet that need and continue delivering tourists and their significant spending power to destinations and regions across the UK.”*

**Simon Hughes, chairman, Business Visits and Events Partnership** said “*Event organisers have fallen through the cracks of government support. Yet they are the core of a £70 billion industry sector which employs 700,000 people. Many are small and individual businesses that do not have the means to survive a period of trading inactivity, that is already nearly 12 months long and could last well into the latter part of 2021. Given that there are over 5 million inbound visits to the UK annually to attend a business event, generating a spend of £3.5 billion, providing adequate support to event organisers is critical to the economic recovery of the UK*.”

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**Notes to editors:**

* Government will say that these businesses are eligible for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) but it has not instructed local councils to provide ARG funding to these businesses, so they will not receive this support either
* In addition to the sectors outlined above, Contract Caterers and Travelling Fairground Operators have also been excluded from these support mechanics
* In March 2020 the Government announced business rates relief and grants for businesses, including those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, due to Covid-19
* These relief packages were distributed to businesses via their local councils, with guidance on distribution provided to them via Government and the Local Government Association
* How to distribute support was at local councils’ discretion but they were instructed to follow the guidance
* The guidance included examples of businesses that should qualify but did not outline businesses that should not qualify
* Since March, any support mechanism that has been distributed through a local council has seen vast numbers of tourism businesses excluded
* Since the beginning of England’s third lockdown from the 4th January 2021, the Government has announced further support mechanisms including Business Grants, LRSG (Closed) Addendum and Business Rates Relief, which offer businesses a range of financial support
* The guidance to local councils still noy been changes and therefore many tourism businesses cannot access support

**For further information, contact Lauren Broughton**

lauren.broughton@ukinbound.org | + 44 (0) 7725 865 063