

Government urged to promote public transport as new campaign is launched to get people back on board

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A national campaign to help get people back on board public transport is being launched outside the House of Lords and across social media today (19 May) by sustainable transport charity, Campaign for Better Transport.

The Way Forward campaign is calling on the Government to support public transport by actively encouraging people to use buses, trains, coaches and trams as restrictions ease, and introducing an incentive scheme to help boost passenger numbers as part of a national plan to place public transport at the heart of a green recovery.

Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said: "The events of the last year have made people less confident about using public transport, but as restrictions continue to ease, we all need to start getting back on board. That's why we've launched this campaign to urge the Government to reassure people that public transport is safe again and to introduce a national scheme of discounted fares to encourage people to use it. By getting back on board we can all help to reduce congestion, protect the

environment and boost the economy in a way that is fair and sustainable.”

As more workplaces, shops and businesses reopen in the coming months, campaigners argue it will be crucial that people return to public transport to avoid increased congestion and air pollution, and help communities recover. To protect public transport services both now and in the long term, and encourage people back on board, *The Way Forward* campaign is calling on the Government to:

- Lead the way with a national campaign that encourages people to see public transport as a safe way to travel and to launch an incentive scheme that helps to get people back on board
- Continue the emergency financial support for public transport services until passenger numbers have recovered
- Place public transport at the heart of a green recovery with a passenger-centred approach to getting people back on board. Public transport needs to evolve to suit new ways of working and living to offer a genuine alternative to the private car. It needs to be easier and simpler to pay for with contactless payments as standard and multi-modal tickets that can be used on buses and trains, and more affordable with flexible tickets that fit new travel patterns
- Protect services and renew the public transport system by restoring lost rail links and reconnecting communities to the network.

Mr Tuohy added: “A public transport network shaped around passengers that provides the services people need, at a price they afford, as we adapt to new ways of working and living is crucial to rebuilding the economy and tackling climate change. By placing public transport at the heart of its transport policy the Government can make sure we all have access to easy, convenient and affordable journeys no matter where we live.”

Jessica Shipp from South Brent in Devon, said: “Using public transport has always been important to us as a family. Our children have been used to jumping on and off trains and buses from a very early age. We have always found traveling on the train with them to be a really enjoyable experience. We get to look out at the scenery, play games and chat to fellow travellers... that kind of thing, so it’s quite relaxing really.

“As this latest lockdown eases, we’re really looking forward to travelling further afield again and we’ve even worked with the children to put a little list together of the places we’d like to visit. We’ve promised them several trips to the beach, a night away in a hotel, and best of all we’re going to visit Grandad for the first time in 14 months, so we’re looking forward to that.”

In response to the campaign, Robert Nisbet, Director of Nations and Regions for the Rail Delivery Group, said: “The railway is a crucial part of Britain’s economic recovery and train companies have worked hard to ensure passengers can travel with confidence as they return to the network. With Government backing public transport as a priority, we can make sure we avoid a car-led recovery and instead better utilise cleaner, greener means of transport to connect the country.”

Photo credit: Campaign for Better Transport