



Department
for Transport

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From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

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Our Ref: MC/285274
Your Ref: JM/SH25622

20 April 2020

Dear Sharon

Thank you for your letter of 3 April 2020, about transport provision in the North East during the Covid-19 outbreak.

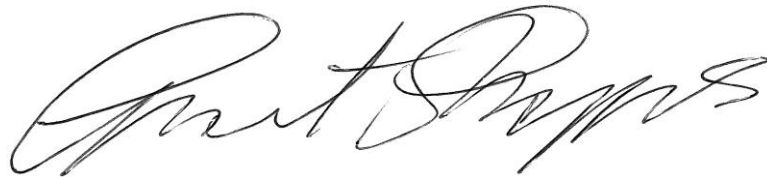
The Government announced on 3 April that England's buses will continue to serve those who rely on them thanks to a funding boost totalling £397m for vital bus operators. The package, agreed jointly with the bus industry, will keep key routes running to provide a lifeline for those who cannot work from home, including those travelling to jobs on the frontline of the UK's fight against Covid-19, such as NHS staff. New funding of up to £167 million will be paid over twelve weeks under the new Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG). The CBSSG will be subject to regular reviews and as a condition of the funding, bus operators will be required to maintain necessary services at a level which is sufficient to meet much reduced demand, but also to allow adequate space between passengers on board.

All bus operators who receive the grant will be expected to provide up to 50 per cent of normal service capacity and to engage with the relevant local authorities to determine what bus services should be operated, when and on which routes. The funding paid by the Department will, over time, be adjusted to reflect the actual level of service each operator is asked to provide.

I and my Lords Minister, Baroness Vere have met with the Metro Mayor of the North of Tyne, Jamie Driscoll and MD of Nexus Toby Hughes who share your concerns regarding the Metro. The Government understands the importance that the Metro network has to the Tyne and Wear region and its role in transporting critical workers.

We need to consider light rail across all of the systems that fall within England, outside London and I have, as a matter of urgency, asked officials to work up further details of the impact of the revenue shortfall as a result of Coronavirus.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT