



Department
for Transport

Anthony Smith
Chief Executive
Transport Focus

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

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Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: MC/288949
Your Ref: AS/2020/101

By email: Anthony.Smith@transportfocus.org.uk

18 May 2020

Dear Anthony,

Thank you for your letter of 5 May 2020, about COVID-19 and its implications for rail fares reform.

The Government recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this will undoubtedly have long-term effects on commuter behaviour. Introducing better value options for part-time and flexible commuters was one of our fares reform priorities before the crisis and earlier this year we announced plans to trial a new product for these passengers on Govia Thameslink Railway. While this has been delayed as a result of COVID-19, it is clear that the case for such reform has been strengthened.

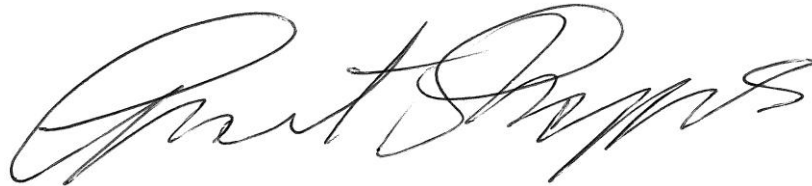
As we move from the lockdown into recovery, it is important that we get the balance right in the short and medium term between managing demand and ensuring that we provide better value for money for passengers going forward. We continue to work with the Rail Delivery Group and the industry to ensure we collectively understand what is already available today for part-time commuters, such as carnets, and what steps could be taken quickly to make these as useful and convenient as possible for passengers.

Once we have this clearer picture we would welcome a discussion with your officials.

We hope to publish a white paper based on the Williams Rail Review in the coming months. Both Keith Williams and I have been clear that better outcomes for passengers can be achieved by reforming fares and ticketing. We agree that fares reform is fundamental to the creation of a modern, customer focused railway and the review represents an essential step towards a major system change.

I would also like to thank Transport Focus for your ongoing engagement during the crisis on issues such as passenger refunds.

Yours sincerely,

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