

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
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Dear Secretary of State

### **Rail fare reform**

I appreciate that there is much thought and effort going into post-lockdown planning for rail. Clearly there are some complicated and difficult decisions to be made and these will dominate planning for the immediate future. However, we have begun to turn some of our attention to the 'new normal' and to look at how people may want to use the rail network in the future. Perhaps one of the most striking features has been the way that many people have adapted to working from home (not least at Transport Focus). Indeed, it is hard to envisage a full return to the traditional Monday-Friday commute.

These changing work patterns will increase demand for flexible season tickets. People working from home for two-three days a week will not want to pay for a traditional season ticket offer but will still expect some recognition that they are a regular, if less frequent, traveller. We hope that consideration can be given to accelerating the provision of carnet/flexible season style tickets. As well as improving the work life balance for passengers this could also help manage demand in the coming months when capacity is scarcer.

Flexible season tickets were one of several recommendations for fares reform put forward prior to the coronavirus and we understood that the Rail Review would include some recommendations. While we can understand the financial pressures Government is facing, we would urge that this wider fares reform is not forgotten. Passenger views on the current structure are well known: complicated, illogical, expensive, low levels of trust. A new railway needs a 21<sup>st</sup> century retail offer, especially when it may need to stimulate demand and persuade passengers to return.

Transport Focus stands ready to help with this reform process.

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**Anthony Smith**  
Chief executive