



Department  
for Transport

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To Local Transport Authority Officers outside London

4<sup>th</sup> April 2020

via email

Dear colleague,

### **COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant**

I wrote to you, and others, last week to outline the measures that the Government had taken to support the bus and coach sector in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Government continues to recognise the importance of maintaining appropriate bus services for people on the frontline of the battle against COVID-19, including NHS staff, to get to work, and for other essential journeys. I am therefore pleased to confirm that Ministers have agreed new funding of up to £167 million under a new COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG).

The CBSSG is an England-wide, outside of London, funding mechanism to ensure that sufficient bus services continue to operate in the right places, and at the right times of day, during the COVID-19 outbreak to meet expected demand whilst maintaining appropriate patronage levels. The CBSSG is designed to provide additional funding on top of continued payments from the public sector to bus operators (such as BSOG, concessionary travel reimbursement and home to school transport and tendered service contract payments) at pre-pandemic levels, as requested by Ministers.

All bus operators who receive the grant<sup>1</sup> 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 will write again in the next few days with further information on this new grant, including the details on the terms and conditions of the scheme and the specific ways in which we expect operators to engage with local transport authorities. But I thought it would be helpful to highlight now the important role that local transport authorities will play.

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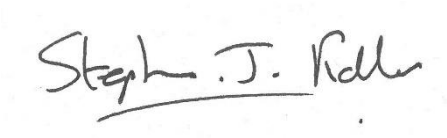
<sup>1</sup> And are receiving continued funding from the relevant local authority (including for tendered services, home to school transport and concessionary travel) at pre-pandemic levels.

We would expect that, where they wish to do so, local transport authorities (and combined authorities in particular) would have significant influence in agreeing service patterns that meet the needs of local communities and people for whom journeys remain essential. Where relevant, we would expect local transport authorities to ensure that services align across modes. This could, for example, involve re-deploying bus capacity to cover gaps from any reduced rail or metro operating hours. Operators will be expected to be able to demonstrate that they have engaged effectively with local transport authorities and met their reasonable requests where there is capacity to do so.

I would also like to take this opportunity to confirm that the Rural Mobility and All-Electric Bus Town funds remain open for local authority expressions of interest, to an extended deadline of 4<sup>th</sup> June. However, reflecting the need to re-prioritise some of our funding and resource, the Department will not be proceeding, at this point, with the proposed 'Superbus' pilots for which expressions of interest were also being sought. We will return to the Superbus pilots and update you on revised deadlines for the expressions of interest following the COVID-19 outbreak. The relevant Gov.uk pages will be updated to show this shortly.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen J. Fidler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Stephen Fidler  
Director of Local Transport