

18 APR 2019



Department  
for Transport

Sir Mark Hendrick MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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From the Parliamentary  
Under Secretary of State  
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16 APR 2019

Dear Sir Mark

Thank you for your email of 27 March to Chris Grayling, enclosing correspondence from your constituent,

about his concern over the lack of update provided by the DfT in relation to 'Talking Buses'. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this issue.

Local buses and coaches provide a vital service for many people, enabling them to access education, employment, social and leisure activities. Yet I know that, for some disabled people, including those who are blind or partially sighted, travelling by bus can be an anxious experience, spent worrying whether they are heading the right way or if they will know when their intended destination is reached. This is why the Bus Services Act 2017 includes powers to require the provision of audible and visible information on-board local bus services, and why in 2018 we consulted on detailed proposals for Accessible Information Regulations, aimed at ensuring that all passengers have the on-board information they need to travel by bus with confidence.

We were clear in the consultation that it was important to get the balance right, between providing passengers with the information they need so desperately, and avoiding the creation of disproportionate financial burdens for smaller bus operators, potentially endangering the very services that people rely upon. Responses to the consultation indicated a range of perspectives on our plans, and it is important that we give them appropriate consideration in order to develop a requirement which works for bus passengers and operators alike. I expect to announce our next steps later in the year.

In the meantime, I responded recently to our public consultation on the provision of open data, committing to invest £4m in the creation of new systems to open up bus data and make it easier for any passenger to find out

where their bus is, how much it will cost and how long it will take. I also plan to provide £2m to help smaller bus companies to provide information on-board their services, without impacting negatively on the viability of the routes they serve.

In its Inclusive Transport Strategy, the Government reiterated its commitment to using the Bus Services Act powers to improve the availability of accessible information on-board local bus services. Today, passengers in Brighton, Edinburgh, Cardiff and a handful of other areas, can board a bus safe in the knowledge that they are travelling on the right route and will be alerted when their stop is reached, yet in too many parts of the country this is not the case. Being able to use public transport with ease should not depend upon the region in which a person travels, and I look forward to the Accessible Information Regulations ensuring that journeys are accessible wherever they take place.

Yours sincerely



**NUSRAT GHANI**

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*Signed by a Private Secretary to avoid delay*