



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
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Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

29 June, 2017

Dear Colleague,

As you will know, ASLEF, the train drivers' union have restarted their overtime ban from today, 29 June.

This will cause disruption on the network, and I am disappointed that the performance improvements Southern passengers have seen since the start of the year will be affected. The Public Performance Measure – which measures performance across train operators – reached 85% on Southern in May, compared to 62% in early December 2016. We want this figure to improve further, but that can only happen if industrial action by the trade unions stops.

I wanted to inform you of the plans to keep as many Southern services running for passengers as possible. I would appreciate if you can pass this information to your constituents and reassure them that my Department, Govia Thameslink Railway and the rail industry are all working hard to resolve this issue.

The contingency measures that have been put in place include:

Date	Expected Southern Service
29 and 30 June	75% of regular weekday services http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/dispute/travel-advice-for-aslef-industrial-action-on-29-30-june
Weekends from 1 July	Normal service subject to engineering works

	http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/dispute/travel-advice-for-aslef-industrial-action-on-saturdays http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/dispute/travel-advice-for-aslef-industrial-action-on-sundays
Monday to Friday from 3 July	<p>GTR are working to restore further services for passengers on top of the 75% of regular weekday services. Most routes will retain a Southern train service. On other routes tickets will be accepted on other train and bus operators.</p> <p>http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/dispute/travel-advice-for-aslef-industrial-action-on-weekdays-after-3-july</p>

Advice for passengers is:

- Passengers are advised to expect a reduced service on certain routes and to allow extra time for journeys, please check southernrailway.com/dispute
- Online journey planners are being updated and there are maps online for customers so they can check the status of their closest station
- Check regularly for travel updates before travel at southernrailway.com/dispute and during travel via station announcements and on board-information.

Peak services have been prioritised, so people can travel to and from work as normally as possible. I also asked GTR to make sure more stations were served than during previous industrial action, and I am pleased to report more passengers at more stations will be able to travel during ASLEF's overtime ban.

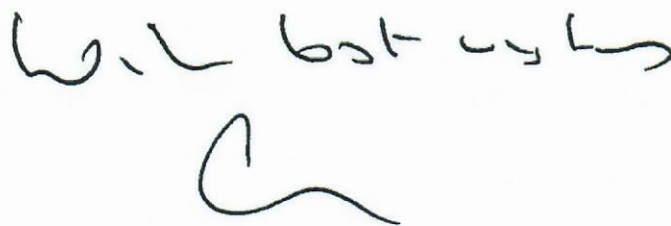
Last year I instructed GTR to expand their driver recruitment and training plans to decrease their reliance on overtime working. As it takes up to 18 months to train a driver it will take more time for GTR to complete this process and for passengers to see the benefits. I would like to assure you that GTR are currently undertaking one of the biggest driver recruitment and training campaigns ever, ahead of the huge changes the Thameslink Programme will deliver from 2018.

In addition to the overtime ban, the 29 of June will also see ASLEF executive balloting their members about strikes on Southern over pay. This is despite Govia Thameslink Railway's offer of a significant pay deal for Southern and Gatwick Express drivers. It would have seen driver pay go up by almost 24% over four years, to a basic salary of £60,683 for a four-day, 35-hour week.

The union executive turned down the pay rise, even though their members accepted the same financial conditions and pay deal for their Thameslink drivers. The ballot will take two weeks to complete and we will be able to provide you with more information when the result is known.

I can only imagine how disappointed passengers must be at the prospect of more industrial action, and I share their disappointment. Only the unions can call off industrial action and I urge them to do so. You may have seen Chris Gibb's report into the Southern Rail system, published last week. He found the main cause of widespread disruption was union action and unusually high levels of sick leave. The report makes absolutely clear that passengers would have had reliable services had staff come to work as normal – despite the other challenges faced by the network.

I am calling on ASLEF to work with Southern to help deliver the high quality rail services that passengers deserve. It must be a priority for passengers to have a reliable and efficient service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W.L. Grayling' with a stylized flourish below it.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT