



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

22 June, 2017

Dear Colleague,

Last week Govia Thameslink Railway offered ASLEF, the drivers' union, 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 leadership of the union turned down the pay rise, even though the union leadership and their members have accepted the same pay deal for their Thameslink drivers. As you will be aware, despite the generous pay offer, ASLEF have announced they will ballot Southern drivers for strike action over pay. And this is on top of their overtime ban – which starts next week on 29 June.

I am very disappointed that ASLEF could again disrupt passengers on the Southern network.

Performance on Southern has been significantly better since the new year with the Public Performance Measure – which measures performance across train operators - currently at 85% on Southern, compared to 62% in early December 2016. We want and expect this figure to improve further, but that can only happen if industrial action by the trade unions stops.

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.

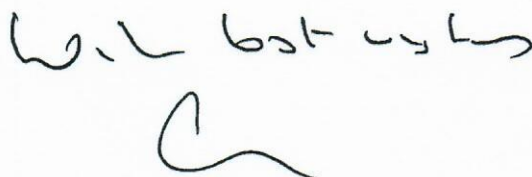
You will have seen that Chris Gibb's report into the Southern Rail system was published today. Chris Gibb found the main cause of widespread disruption was union action and unusually high levels of sick leave. The report makes

absolutely clear that passengers would have had reliable services had staff come to work as normal – despite the other challenges faced by the network.

You can read a copy of the report here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/southern-rail-network-gibb-report>
and my response here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gibb-report-on-southern-rail-network-government-response>

Possible strike action, and an overtime ban on Southern will cause widespread disruption on the Southern network, affecting passengers daily lives. Please be assured, and pass on to your constituents, that my Department, the rail industry and Govia Thameslink Railway are all working hard to resolve this issue and keep Southern services running for as many passengers as possible. I can imagine how disappointed passengers must be, and I share their disappointment. Only the unions can call off industrial action and I urge them to do so.

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W.L. Grayling" with a stylized flourish below.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT