



Petitions Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
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30 March 2020

Dear Grant

I am writing because of the enormous public interest in coronavirus, which has resulted in more than fifty e-petitions on coronavirus being published to date, signed by over two million people. We are receiving hundreds of petitions on coronavirus on a daily basis, which show there is a lot of anxiety and concern about the support available to people affected by the outbreak, and the Government's response to the outbreak.

Following the large number of petitions on coronavirus we asked the people who had signed these petitions what questions they most wanted answers to. On Wednesday we held an evidence session with representatives from the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for Education, and the Department for Work and Pensions, putting many of these questions to Ministers and the Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

This was an extremely useful session, but the public also suggested a number of questions which are the responsibility of other Departments, including yours. I am therefore writing to ask you to respond to the following questions, which came through most strongly from our public engagement:

Will trains, buses and flights continue to operate? For how long?

What is being done to ensure deep cleaning of public transport, and make sure public transport is safe to use for people who have to travel to work or travel to buy essential goods?

What support is available to people whose holidays and flights have been cancelled as a result of the outbreak, and bring people who have been stranded abroad home?

If flights are stopped, will there be sufficient notice to allow international students to fly home if they want to?

Given the constantly evolving nature of the current situation, I would be grateful if you could provide a response to the above by Friday 3 April, so we can make these available to the public as quickly as possible.

I hope we will be able to continue the dialogue as the situation progresses and particularly as the usual parliamentary mechanisms for raising these issues have become more restricted. This might involve further sessions with Ministers and officials, and asking your Department to provide updated answers to the public's latest questions at regular intervals.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Catherine' in a cursive script.

Catherine McKinnell MP
Chair of the Petitions Committee