



Department
for Transport

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

02 JUL 2018

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

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26 Jul

Thank you for your email of 4 June 2018, on behalf of your constituents, about securing funding for step-free access at Ash Vale rail station.

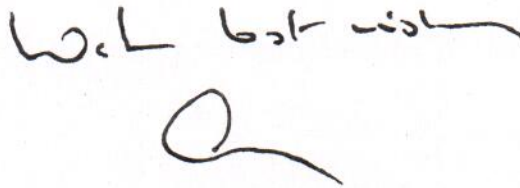
We remain committed to improving station accessibility. However, much of our station infrastructure is Victorian and is therefore not accessible to many disabled passengers. In recognition of the scale of the problem, the Access for All programme, launched in 2006, has provided step free access at more than 200 stations.

I am pleased to say that we will be able to make further funding for station accessibility available for the next Rail Control Period (2019-24) and we will be announcing further details of how this will be allocated later this year. Stations nominated by the industry have previously been selected based on their annual footfall, weighted by the incidence of disability in the area. Local factors, such as proximity to a hospital, and the availability of third party funding, were also taken into account. At this stage I expect the process to be broadly similar again.

For schemes such as Ash Vale station to be considered for future funding, it is likely that they will need strong support from the train operating company. Furthermore, some third party funding would help to secure funding. I would therefore encourage you to engage with South Western Railway, who are the current franchise holder, on this important issue.

In the meantime, as part of their licence to operate each train operating company is required to have a Disabled Persons' Protection Policy (DPPP) in place. This sets out the level of services and facilities that disabled

passengers can expect, how to get staff assistance and how to get help if things do go wrong. Within this policy the operator must commit to participating in the Passenger Assist system. Operators recommend that passengers requiring assistance book 24 hours in advance. While assistance can be provided in most cases without an advance booking, if the operator knows the details of the journey ahead of time they can arrange for a member of staff to be available on the train, and at the destination station. Failure to comply could be a breach of their license to operate and leave them open to enforcement action by the Office of Rail and Road.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. L. Grayling' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT