



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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

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Dear Colleague

Following our meeting yesterday, I am writing to give you a brief update about the situation on Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) services this week. I am clearly not satisfied with the GTR performance on this network, but equally I am not happy with the performance of Network Rail's infrastructure, which, along with the industrial action, has been the principal cause of delays in the last few weeks. It is a problem that we have started to work to resolve, but any progress is being held back by completely unnecessary industrial action. To be clear, both official and unofficial walk out of key members of train staff have left passengers with services that are frankly unacceptable.

In order to stop this action, GTR has brought a court case seeking to halt the planned strike action by ASLEF next week and we are likely to get a verdict by tomorrow, Thursday 8 December.

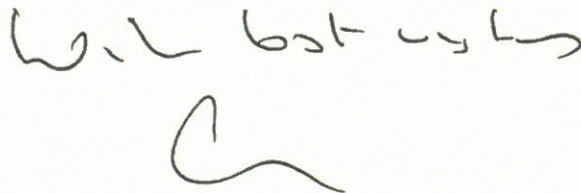
Having met with a number of unions to discuss issues since my appointment in July, yesterday I wrote to the RMT and ASLEF offering to meet them for discussions about the future, on the condition that they suspend their strike action.

It is worth stressing again that the independent rail safety regulator has ruled that the use of Driver Only Operation on Southern is safe. Indeed it has been used for years across the whole of this network and the country – even on Southern, where Southern trains from my home, which I frequently use to Victoria, have been 10 coach trains with a driver and no guard for many years. The unions did not strike then, and there is no reason for them to do so now. The current extension of this

way of working arises from a major new investment in modern trains for the GTR network. And there are no plans to remove the additional member of staff from any train that currently has them. Indeed, GTR is currently recruiting additional people to the role of on-board supervisor, so more trains than today will be staffed to help passengers.

I know how frustrated you and your constituents have been. It is a problem that we urgently need to resolve, but any progress is now being held back by completely unnecessary industrial action.

I hope the unions accept my offer and hold talks so GTR can start to improve service for passengers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. L. best us L" with a large flourish underneath.

**Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP**

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**