



Department for Transport



Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

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From the Secretary of State
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The Rt Hon Greg Clark
Secretary of State for Business, Energy
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**Department for Business, Energy &
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Dear Carolyn,

6 January 2017

We are writing to you ahead of further disruption due to industrial action by the ASLEF and RMT unions, which will severely affect Southern services next week (10,11 and 13 January).

We want to explain to you what the government is doing to try to bring to an end the planned strikes.

These strikes have been prompted by trade union claims that drivers pressing the button to close the doors on Southern trains is not safe. The independent rail safety inspector has said these trains and the Southern approach, which mirrors what has happened on our railways for 30 years, is perfectly safe. In fact, during the last strike ASLEF members continued to drive Thameslink trains, which operate in this way, on the same routes that their Southern colleagues were boycotting. The RMT, which represents conductors, is also fighting these changes, yet it is the case for both trade unions that none of their members will lose their jobs or face loss of pay. Southern and the unions have held talks at ACAS but have so far been unable to find a resolution. DfT ministers have also repeatedly offered to meet with the unions if they call off their strikes. Sadly, the unions are continuing with their industrial action and have not taken up this offer; we continue to extend it.

The Southern network is currently going through a major programme of change designed to significantly increase capacity by the end of this decade. This can only be achieved through the use of new technology and introduction of some of Britain's most state of the art, automated trains, which are operated in this way.

We are doing whatever we can to limit the impact of this strike on passengers and businesses during next week's ASLEF drivers' strike. Some additional measures have been put in place to help people get to work during the action.

Full details of these measures are available at www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/strike/aslef-strike, however, any services running will be very busy and passengers may have to queue. Even with these limited measures there will still be significant disruption.

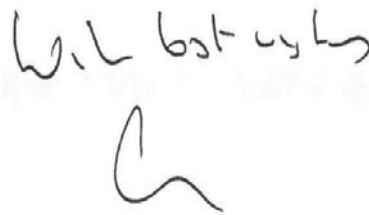
You may have seen that the strike has been reduced from six days to three, but the spacing of the dispute across the week will unfortunately mean significant disruption on most of those six original planned days. In addition to this, a further three days of strike action have been announced for January 24, 25 and 27, which will cause further disruption later in the month.

Southern is publishing guidance for commuters and employers setting out steps which would help make the best use of available space and to avoid delays. These include working remotely where possible, trying to car share and avoiding travelling during the morning and evening rush hours. We would like to ask for your help in promoting the guidance (enclosed) and in encouraging your members to support employees affected by these strikes.

We understand the impact the ongoing industrial action is having on your employees and your businesses. We have urged the unions to call off these unnecessary strikes, which are extending the misery for passengers, and to come to the table for talks.

There is no possible justification for strike action to continue. A further, more detailed review, published by the rail regulator this week is clear that driver-controlled trains are safe. We are investing record amounts in improving our railways and we need everyone in the rail industry to work together to deliver for passengers.

We very much hope that the operator and the unions can return to the negotiating table and find a resolution for the benefit of passengers. In the meantime we would like to thank you for your support and understanding of employees and patience during this difficult time.



Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT



THE RT HON GREG CLARK MP

Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

APPENDIX

Southern travel advice for strikes next week

Southern Rail has confirmed that none of its train services will run during next week's three-day ASLEF drivers' strike (10, 11 & 13 January). However, it is putting in place a number of alternative measures to try to help those commuters who have essential travel needs.

The train operator is organising 200 coaches/buses each day to provide road links for essential travel from nine Southern stations (see below) into nearby neighbouring train networks where they can connect into other train operators' services. These buses have been pulled from a wide range of bus and coach operators across the South East. Seats on the buses will be limited and journey times will take much longer. Ticket acceptance on other operators' transport has been put in place (full list on www.southernrailway.com).

It is also advising people to work from home or remotely if they can, avoid travelling at peak times if possible and only travel if it is essential and allow plenty of extra time for journeys. Other measures include:

- Thameslink services will continue to operate throughout each day.
- The Gatwick Express will provide a reduced service every 30 minutes between Gatwick Airport and London Victoria.
- Coach operator National Express is laying on extra services from Brighton to London throughout the week (nationalexpress.com)
- Details of car share schemes are being made available to passengers on Southern's website.

To ensure public safety, crowd control measures will be in operation at all its stations where trains or buses will operate.

Buses will link:

- Oxted with Sevenoaks (connect with Southeastern)
- Uckfield with Tunbridge Wells via Crowborough (connect to Southeastern)
- Eastbourne with Hastings (connect with Southeastern)
- Bexhill to Hastings (connect with Southeastern)
- Horsham to Dorking (connect with South West Trains)
- Hastings to Ashford calling all stations (connect to Southeastern)
- Chichester to Havant (connect with South West Trains)
- Seaford to Lewes calling all stations (local service, no onward connection)
- East Grinstead to Gatwick (connect to Gatwick Express)

Passengers are advised to check the Southern website for further details www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/strike/aslef-strike including how to claim strike compensation.