



Department for Transport

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Our Ref: MC/307202

1 October 2020

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 25 August to the Secretary of State about active travel as schools return. I am responding as the Minister responsible for this issue. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

I welcome your support for the active travel agenda. The £1.6 billion Extraordinary Funding and Financing Agreement agreed in May by Government and the Mayor of London to enable Transport for London (TfL) to continue operating services contained a series of conditions to facilitate safe travel on public transport in London.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, around a third of journeys in the morning peak period were made by young people travelling to school and many of these were short and could reasonably be made by walking or cycling. The suspension of free bus and tram travel for under 18s will help to reduce demand for public transport so that those who need to use it can do so safely.

The Department is engaging with TfL, the Department for Education, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and London Councils on how the suspension can be operationalised, whilst ensuring that any child eligible for free home to school travel under the Education Act 1996 will still receive this. The Department is also completing an Equality Impact Assessment, which will consider whether there are further categories of children that should continue to receive free transport.

As part of the Extraordinary Funding and Financing Agreement, TfL is pushing forward an ambitious active travel plan to promote cycling and walking, including new segregated cycle lanes, closures of roads to through traffic and pavement extensions. These measures will enable short journeys, such as home to school travel, to be made safely via active travel.

Thank you for getting in touch and writing in with your concerns.

Yours,
Charlotte

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON