



# Department for Transport

From the Parliamentary  
Under Secretary of State

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Dear Paul

Thank you for your letter of 6 April enclosing correspondence from your constituent, D O Morgan of 2 Woodside, Welsh Newton, Monmouth, in which they refer to an article in the New Civil Engineer regarding train cuts.

The Government has not 'banned' train operators from introducing extra trains to cope with overcrowding. When the franchises are specified, the Government sets minimum standards. The train operating company can then add additional services if they wish providing that there is the capacity on the track and that there is no impact on other operator's premiums or subsidies.

The Government aims to provide the best level of service to meet passenger demand in rural areas. The Government is working to increase the number of passengers using rural services using mechanisms such as the Community Rail Development Strategy. As an example, the Huddersfield to Barnsley line in Yorkshire is one of six pilot schemes and has helped deliver a 25% increase in passenger demand over the last five years.

On the issue of fares, the levels set are about striking a balance between the needs of passengers and the interests of taxpayers, as fares revenue and subsidy together have to cover the costs of providing the service. The Government could require operators to lower their fares, but only if we paid higher subsidies to offset the reduction in revenue. This would reduce the funds available for other things, including investment in the train service.