

Over 90% reduction in rail passengers: Rail Minister update on coronavirus

April 8, 2020



The Rail Minister has praised the transport sector for the critical role it is playing in the fight against coronavirus.

Chris Heaton-Harris was giving an update to the Transport Select Committee, in which he also spoke about passenger numbers and Personal Protective Equipment for those key workers.

- Domestic rail passenger journeys down by 95%
- Network Rail stations daily footfall down 94%
- Eurostar journeys down 99%

He said: “The Department and the transport sector continues to play a critical role in the fight against coronavirus and I’d like to thank everyone in the transport sector for their continued efforts and work to delay the spread of the virus and to keep transport networks open for those who cannot work from home.

“This includes a lot of our frontline workers and ensuring critical goods like food and medicines can get to the places they are needed. Key workers across the transport sector are helping other key workers get to where they need to be safely and ensuring our supply chains stay fluid.

“Can I also thank the public for taking heed of the advice given and for staying at home and not travelling

in vast numbers. The public are taking heed and leaving our transport network open for key workers and freight movements.”

Unfortunately in recent days it has been revealed that a number of people working across the transport sector have sadly died as a result of COVID-19.

During the update, Mr Heaton-Harris paid tribute: “Our thoughts are with their families, friends and fellow workers.

“They were playing their part in the national effort to fight this virus and doing their job, a vital job, in keeping our transport network going.

“Indeed, all our transport workers do a vital job in keeping essential journeys going and we are committed to keep them safe.

“We are encouraging all transport sector employees to check with Public Health England guidance on the use of PPE and we are working with the sector and trade unions, who I would like to thank very much for their cooperation in this area, to identify areas where there is a risk of short supply.

“My officials are working with key industry stakeholders to better understand the measures organisations are putting in place to protect those staff and the further need of PPE going forward.

“We are working closely with the sector on resilience with the sector on resilience planning to ensure that the operation and vital services can continue in the event that absences of staff increase. This includes looking at cross-modal opportunities to help keep the sector moving.”

Photo credit: Network Rail