

Shapps goes to Downing Street; construction minister resigns

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In a shocking 24 hours that has seen more than 40 ministers resign over Boris Johnson's leadership, politicians familiar to those working in or around the rail industry have found themselves in storm.

Construction minister Lee Rowley resigned yesterday afternoon, in a joint letter with four other members of the government, saying "it has become increasingly clear that the government cannot function given the issues that have come to light and the way in which they have been handled." As well as construction, Rowley has in the past pushed for the Barrow Hill line between Chesterfield and Sheffield to be reopened to passengers.

Then, in the evening, it had been reported that transport secretary Grant Shapps had been part of a "delegation" going to Downing Street which included Welsh secretary Simon Hart (who, like Rowley, has resigned) and home secretary Priti Patel. The purpose of the delegation was, it is widely believed, to tell Boris Johnson to step down.

Patel is said to have told Johnson to resign, and Shapps apparently told the Prime Minister he would not win a second confidence vote.

Johnson said he was not stepping down and Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, was subsequently fired.