

Government extends coronavirus support for buses and trams, total funding tops £700 million

- government extends coronavirus support for bus and tram operators across England as part of wider efforts to safely get people back to education and work spaces
- new model will provide rolling support for bus operators with up to £218.4 million guaranteed over the next 8 weeks
- five tram systems in the North and Midlands to receive funding of up to £37.4 million over the next 12 weeks

England's bus and tram services will receive extra support worth up to £256 million to help them ramp up services ahead of expected increases in public transport use in September, the government has announced today (8 August 2020).

Bus services across the country will receive up to £218.4 million of support over the next eight weeks, with rolling funding at up to £27.3 million per week afterwards, until a time when the funding is no longer needed.

From today, tram services also have access to up to £37.4 million over 12 weeks, at a rate of up to £3.1 million a week, with funding to be reviewed at the end of the period.

Currently, passenger numbers on bus and light rail services are significantly below normal levels despite the bus network now running at over 80% of normal service levels. The 5 light rail systems are also running at similar levels. The funding announced today will enable operators to mitigate the impact of the loss of revenue, while continuing to build back to normal service levels.

The latest round of funding – key to safely getting young people back in education settings and workers back to their offices – means total support during the pandemic for bus and tram services will reach at least £700 million.

This means that we have supported tram services as follows during the pandemic:

Light rail system	£m allocated
Manchester Metrolink	44
Sheffield Supertram	6.8
Nottingham Express Transit	12.1
West Midlands Metro	5.7
Tyne and Wear Metro	24.7

Our announced allocations for bus services which now total at least £600

million alongside a further £27.3 million per week means that our funding has helped to support over 13,000 local bus services across England, outside of London, as at the end of July.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

As we continue to open up the economy more people are using public transport and need sufficient service levels in order to travel safely.

That's why we took swift action at the start of this outbreak to ensure that these services were maintained for key workers then and would still be there for people when the economy opened back up. This extension of funding pushes our overall support past £700 million and means people across the country will have access to the transport services they need.

CPT Chief Exec Graham Vidler said:

Continued social distancing measures mean capacity on buses remains reduced and income from passenger fares is still significantly lower than normal. This latest funding will help us keep running a comprehensive bus network that millions of people rely on.

Bus operators remain committed to working with government, passengers, businesses and local authorities to provide a safe, flexible and sustainable bus network for local communities.

Further to today's funding, the government is also actively working on ways to ensure the bus sector can operate independently and be commercially viable.

The government is committed to a sustainable future for bus services across the country recognising the services are vital to millions of people's everyday lives. To ensure future bus services work for everyone the government will publish a National Bus Strategy to set out how it plans to support this vital sector going forward.

All bus operators in England outside London that previously claimed the Bus Service Operators Grant, as well as operators who run services tendered by Local Authorities, are eligible to claim the new funding and future provisional funding. Five tram services in the North and Midlands – West Midlands Metro, Sheffield Supertram, Manchester Metrolink, Tyne and Wear Metro and Nottingham Trams – will be supported by the light rail funding, with the money going directly to operators, as with the previous rounds.