

Supporting vital bus services: recovery funding

During the pandemic, the government has provided unprecedented levels of financial assistance to the bus sector through the [COVID-19 Bus Service Support Grant \(CBSSG\)](#), supporting bus operators and local transport authorities in England outside of London, with up to £1.4 billion in funding since March 2020.

With patronage falling and social distancing limiting passengers onboard, CBSSG has funded up to 100% of pre-COVID-19 service levels, ensuring key workers have continued to be able to travel easily and safely. Critically, as restrictions are lifted and passengers return, the bus sector is important in helping the economic recovery.

I appreciate that this presents bus operators with a fundamental financial challenge. To encourage passengers back, local bus services should be as available as they were prior to the pandemic. Without support, however, it may not be possible for operators to maintain the services they have provided up until now.

I can therefore announce that a further £226.5 million in financial support in the form of recovery funding has been made available for the bus sector. Funding operators and local authorities from 1 September 2021 until the end of the current financial year, this will succeed CBSSG, which ends on 31 August.

In addition to helping maintain services, recovery funding will support the key aims of the [National Bus Strategy](#) of encouraging local authorities and operators to work together to deliver better bus services. In return for receiving funding, operators will be asked to commit to co-operating with the process for establishing Enhanced Partnerships or franchising.

With the publication of the National Bus Strategy in March 2021, the government set out bold ambitions to address the long-term challenge of providing quick, reliable, simple and affordable bus travel. Local authorities have been asked to develop ambitious [Bus Service Improvement Plans](#) by this October, outlining what will be done at a local level to make travelling by bus as attractive as possible.

The Prime Minister has announced £5 billion for buses and cycling, to deliver the strategy and provide vital investment for the sector.