



Department
for Transport

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
House of Commons
London
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20 AUG 2019

From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

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Thank you for your email of 18 April to Chris Grayling, about funding for step-free access at Ash Vale station. I am responding as the new Secretary of State for Transport and I apologise for the delay in replying.

We asked the industry to nominate stations for the Access for All programme last year, and we received nominations for over 300 stations. I understand that you were disappointed to learn that Ash Vale was not successful. This was largely because the station was given a low priority by South Western Railway and because of its low comparative footfall, making it difficult to justify its inclusion ahead of other busier stations with a higher industry priority. All inaccessible stations deserve funding, but we received many more nominations than we were able to support at this time.

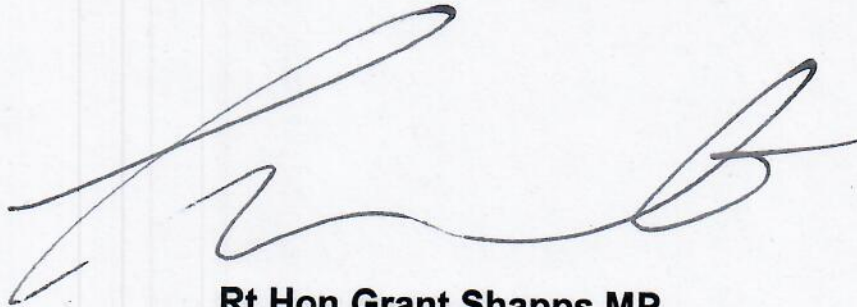
However, there are other funds available which may support the delivery of step-free access at Ash Vale station. For example, stations can also receive accessibility improvements as part of other projects. Whenever infrastructure work is carried out at a station by the industry, it must comply with the relevant accessibility standards. These can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-railway-stations-design-standards. You may therefore wish to contact Network Rail (rory.jee@networkrail.co.uk) to see if any work is planned at Ash Vale Station that might trigger these requirements

Additionally, as you may know from Nusrat's letter to you in early July, we have relaunched the Access for All Mid-Tier programme, which supports smaller scale access improvements with up to £1m of Government support, alongside third-party funding. If you wish to put the station forward, I would strongly advise you to talk to the local authority and the train operating

company (alistair.wright@swrailway.com) to see what funding might be available to support a scheme to improve accessibility at Ash Vale.

In the meantime, as part of their licence to operate each train operating company is required to have a Disabled Persons' Protection Policy (DPPP) in place. This sets out the level of services and facilities that disabled passengers can expect, how to get staff assistance and how to get help if things do go wrong. It also commits the operator to meeting their legal obligations in terms of making reasonable adjustments to their services to allow disabled people to use them. For example, by providing an accessible taxi, free of charge, to anyone unable to access a particular station. Failure to comply could be a breach of their license to operate and leave them open to enforcement action by the Office of Rail and Road.

Yours ever,



Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

All best wishes.