

Lee Waters AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1346  
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/01051/23

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

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15 June 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 25 May regarding the Petition P-06-1346 which calls on the Welsh Government to provide free and accessible public transport for under 18s in Wales to lower carbon emissions and boost growth.

I recognise how current arrangements around public transport fares and ticketing are very complex and inconsistent across Wales. In order to make public transport more appealing and accessible, my officials have undertaken a comprehensive piece of planning work and reviewed a range of options to deliver a Fairer Fares offer for bus passengers in Wales. This includes the potential introduction of capped single fares, zonal fares, integrated bus and rail ticketing and enhanced young person's ticketing.

We are looking closely at recent free and discounted bus trials held over the last twelve months in Swansea, Newport, and Cardiff, including the trial for free weekend travel on the TrawsCymru network. These trials have shown that low bus fares can encourage more people to travel by bus.

We are closely monitoring developments in England, where the Department for Transport has provided funding to offer £2 flat fares until the end of October 2023, and in Scotland where free travel was introduced for young people aged 5 to 21. As soon as robust data is available from these initiatives, we will use this to inform our thinking on 'Fairer Fares' for bus travel in Wales to make bus travel more affordable and bus use more attractive to all in the community.

Unfortunately, we have been faced with a challenging funding settlement from the UK Government and have had to prioritise our bus funding to ensure essential bus services are maintained for communities as part of our Bus Emergency Scheme. As soon as the funding position improves, we are keen to progress our bus fare initiatives.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

You will also be aware of this government's plans to reform the bus system through regulation as set out in our white paper *One network, one timetable, one ticket*. The current system allows operators to build their services around profitability rather than passenger need and puts barriers up between different operators which have nothing to do with the journeys people want to make.

Taking public control of the bus system through a franchised network will allow us to put people before profit and make buses as easy and attractive to use as we can. That means we can redesign networks around providing the best and most convenient range of connections we can, rather than overserving commercial corridors and underserving people in other areas.

It also means making tickets as affordable and simple as we can, so all buses run on the same ticketing system, and people's tickets are based on their journey rather than the operator on whose route they happen to be.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**

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