

JEREMY QUIN MP
Member of Parliament for Horsham



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th February 2017

Dear Constituent,

RE: TALKING BUSES

Thank you for contacting me about the audio-visual announcements on buses. I fully agree that all disabled people should have the same access to transport services and opportunities to travel as other members of society.

Audio-visual systems on buses are not currently mandatory and, for this reason, levels of provision does vary. The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) do, however, require all new buses and coaches on local or scheduled services and designed to carry more than 22 passengers to be accessible to disabled passengers. In addition, all existing public service buses will have to comply with PSVAR by January 2017. As a result, local buses are steadily becoming more accessible, and the most recent figures show that 89 per cent of the bus fleet in England met the PSVAR requirements compared to just 59 per cent in 2009/10.

Specifically in terms of audio-visual announcements, I do understand the benefits that these can bring to bus passengers and Ministers have encouraged bus operators and local authorities to invest in audio-visual announcement systems for their buses where possible. Previously, however, the systems to provide such information have been expensive to fit and maintain, so Ministers have supported projects to design innovative and low-cost approaches to providing accessible on-board information.

This Bill, which will have its Second Reading in the Commons in due course, would allow 'enhanced partnership schemes' between local authorities and bus operators to require all buses within a local area to provide audible and visual next stop information. Authorities using the new bus franchising powers will also be able to place similar requirements on affected operators.

You may be interested to know that a Government amendment, which will allow the Secretary of State to require service operators to make such information available to passengers, is now also part of the Bill as Clause 17. I look forward to discussing the Bill in the House of Commons.

I know that the Government also intends to publish an Accessibility Action Plan for consultation shortly, which will present its ambition for further progress on this agenda.

Thank you however for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Quin'.