



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
The Rt Hon Grant Shapps

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Our Ref: MC/389324

Sir Peter Bottomley
Chair of the Transport Safety APPG

c/o Secretariat to the Transport Safety APPG
Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety
78 Buckingham Gate
Westminster
London SW1E 6PE

11 March 2022

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February about vehicle safety regulations, which I note has the support of five other former Transport Ministers.

As you will be aware, the package of European measures known as the General Safety Regulation (GSR) includes vehicle construction requirements covering pedestrian safety and a wide range of additional and enhanced technologies. The Department for Transport was involved in developing these requirements which have a phased implementation in the EU. Some elements apply to new vehicle types from July 2022, while others apply from 2024, and direct vision requirements for buses and trucks apply from 2026. As these dates fall after Brexit, it will be for the Government to decide whether to mandate the same requirements in GB.


In this respect, I note with interest the cost and benefit information you have provided from TRL, and I am aware that it also prepared the original impact assessment for the European Commission. At that time, Departmental analysts undertook a validation exercise to check the proportionality of UK costs and benefits. They estimated a present value cost to the UK, assuming a central baseline uptake scenario and low uptake scenario, at around £587m to £2bn respectively over a 10 year period, with implied benefits to the UK over the same period at around £0.8bn. I know that several factors will have changed since the original analysis and Departmental officials have requested further information from TRL on their latest assessment to help inform Government decisions.

Regarding timing, on the day of Brexit, the Government introduced a provisional GB Type Approval scheme for road vehicles to ensure there was no disruption to the market. The Department for Transport is now working to deliver a full scheme, which is expected to become mandatory in spring 2023. Once this is in place, and subject to having sufficient powers to amend retained EU legislation, we will be able to make amendments to the requirements for vehicles registered in GB. Any changes to the mandatory requirements for vehicle approval in GB, including elements of the GSR, will be subject to the standard consultation protocols and the availability of parliamentary time.

Although Government has made no decision yet as to which technologies from the GSR might form part of our national vehicle approval requirements, the Department remains a member of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP). Euro NCAP is an independent, not-for-profit, organisation that provides motorists with objective information on the crash safety of cars. The 1-5 star rating system helps consumers compare the safety potential of different models; helping to include safety in their purchasing decision. In turn, this provides market incentive to drive delivery of innovative road safety solutions into the vehicle fleet far quicker than regulations alone. The car rating programme already incentivises many of the technologies called up in the GSR and Euro NCAP is increasingly turning its attention to the light and heavy commercial vehicle sectors.

I am grateful for the interest shown by you and the other former Transport Ministers in this important issue and my Department will continue towards delivering this important work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT