



Department  
for Transport

**Lord Davies of Gower**  
Minister for Maritime, International and  
Security

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Our Ref: MC/00010528

Karl Love  
Vice Chairman of the Isle of Wight Council  
Member for East Cowes

7 March 2024

Dear Councillor Love,

Thank you for your letter of 28 February to the Secretary of State about Red Funnel. I am replying as Minister responsible for this issue.

The Department for Transport recognises the importance of reliable and accessible cross-Solent ferry routes for the communities that rely on them. That is why those services were protected by the Government during the pandemic.

I sympathise with the issues you highlight regarding the recent cancellations of Red Funnel services. My officials have received reassurances from Red Funnel that the company is confident the particular level of service interruptions experienced in recent weeks will not persist.

More broadly, the Department is of the view that the current Solent ferry market is functional, as it offers a range of services for islanders, with multiple operators providing commercially viable routes, competing for passengers.

The Department is therefore not considering the introduction of Public Service Obligations or other interventions in the market.

I would, however, encourage you to ensure that such issues are discussed through the Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Board, and work collaboratively to identify local solutions.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Department.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Davies of Gower". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Davies" and "Gower" being capitalized and prominent.

**LORD DAVIES OF GOWER**