Protect Our Railways – Fund British Transport Police

Parliamentary Briefing – Summer 2025

Top lines

- Our railways are the backbone of Britain, connecting communities, facilitating commerce, and enabling millions of people to travel confidently and safely every day. The British Transport Police (BTP) plays a vital role in ensuring the security and efficiency of this crucial network.
- The BTP is facing an unprecedented £8.5m funding deficit that threatens jobs, and the safety and efficiency of our railways.
- TSSA is calling on the Transport Secretary to intervene and ensure that the BTP receives the necessary resources to maintain a safe and efficient rail network.
- Investing in the BTP is not just about protecting jobs; it's about safeguarding the public, supporting rail workers, and ensuring the reliability of our train services.

Background

- TSSA has sole collective bargaining rights for BTP staff, including PCSOs (but not police officers).
- The BTP plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety of everyone who uses and works on the railways. They handle crime prevention and investigation, respond to incidents, and minimize disruptions on the network.
- They are a specialised force with skills unique to working on the transport network – trained in rail safety, suicide prevention, and able to respond to trespassers on the line.
- For the 2023-24 period, the previous Conservative government asked BTP to find £5 million savings. At the time, TSSA warned that this was a mistake and that it would adversely impact recruitment and officer headcounts, making our transport system less safe and less accessible for both passengers and transport workers.
- This year, while the BTP requested a budget settlement of 9.8%, the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) have agreed only 4.6%.
- BTP is currently funded by an industry levy set by the BTPA. The movement to Great British Railways, which will take the Train Operating Companies into public ownership, presents a key opportunity to rethink funding arrangements for the force, and arrive at a funding settlement that will secure our railways, making them safer and more efficient for passengers and transport workers

The effect of the cuts

- It is no surprise that as resources have been cut, levels of recorded crime have increased. The rise in assaults on passengers, which reached a record 9,542 incidents in 2023-24, underscores the urgent need for a fully funded BTP.

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- With fewer officers and stations, response times will increase, leaving passengers and rail workers more vulnerable to crime and accidents.
- The proposed station closures and job cuts will leave significant gaps in coverage, particularly in the north of England, where there may be no BTP presence between Preston and Scotland. This lack of support puts rail workers at greater risk and undermines their ability to perform their duties effectively.
- TSSA's recent report 'Keep Transport Workers Safe – no to abuse and harassment on the transport network' showed that lack of resources has left confidence in BTP, and moral in general, at a low ebb amongst the transport workforce. One respondent said –

  > 'I work as a Railway Enforcement Officer and encounter abuse/threats/offensive language and physical threats on almost a daily basis. This occurs on train services and at stations that I patrol. BTP are nowhere to be seen, partly due to lack of officers. Kent police rarely turn up when needed as they try to pass the buck to BTP. We just do not have the tools needed to do our job or protect ourselves'.

- BTP officers are also essential in managing incidents that cause delays, such as trespassing, suicides, and cable theft. Their prompt response helps to minimise disruptions and keep trains running on time. Without adequate funding, the BTP's ability to respond quickly and efficiently will be compromised, leading to longer delays and increased frustration for passengers.

What you can do to help

Written PQs – we'd appreciate submission of the following -

- To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what is her assessment of the adequacy of current funding for the British Transport Police
- To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make a statement on future funding arrangements for British Transport Police a) during and b) after the transition to Great British Railways.

Apply for a Westminster Hall debate – We're keen that the future of BTP funding is debated in parliament. Again, we are happy to support in any way with a debate application.

Submit an Early Day Motion – We are happy to support with wording for an EDM.

More information

For more information or to arrange a meeting, please contact TSSA Political Officer, Sam Browse, on browses@tssa.org.uk.