

Jacqui Russell
Head of Consumer



Sarah Copley
Executive Director, Commercial
Avanti West Coast
[by email only]

16 May 2023

Dear Sarah,

Enabling passengers to plan their journeys – fulfilment of recovery plan

I am writing to confirm that ORR is concluding its compliance engagement with Avanti on timetable production, following Avanti's return to releasing timetables in line with industry norms, and implementation of complementary improvements to passenger information.

Background

On 2 February 2023, Avanti submitted an improved recovery plan to ORR setting out a pathway to full and sustained recovery to timetable production in line with current industry norms by mid-May. ORR held Avanti to account against the plan, monitoring progress weekly, and for travel from mid-May (timetables released mid-March), Avanti was releasing timetables in line with industry norms as set out in the plan. Avanti has sustained the improvements and you have told us that you are confident that the new ways of working established under the recovery plan will enable the recovery to be maintained.

The weekly reports that Avanti has been submitting to ORR are no longer required. However, we request two further updates, one at the end of May and one at the end of June, to confirm that adequate standards have been maintained. For efficiency, these can coincide with any month end reporting at Avanti.

We acknowledge the significant effort that Avanti, together with the Network Rail System Operator, put into fixing this complex issue and welcome the fulfilment of the plan. However, the path to recovery was not as smooth or as swift as expected. Following ORR's initial engagement in September 2022, improvements were made in November 2022 but were not sustained, leading to our request for an improved



recovery plan. It was the second iteration of the plan that embedded a long-term solution.

During this protracted timeframe, going back to August 2022, Avanti passengers have faced an unacceptable level of uncertainty and inconvenience when trying to plan and book journeys.

Now that sustainable solutions have been put in place, ORR expects that similar issues will not be repeated. We appreciate that on occasion there may be factors out of Avanti's control, but we expect Avanti to be able to minimise negative impacts for passengers. Avanti will need to continuously review risks and mitigations aimed at ensuring an acceptable level of performance is achieved consistently and can stand up to unexpected events.

If any issues do occur that prevent Avanti from producing timetables in line with industry norms, even in the short term, these should be reported to ORR immediately.

Thank you for engaging constructively and being responsive to ORR's requests for additional information and clarifications during the process.

I am copying this letter to Chris Rowley (Capacity Planning Director) at Network Rail.

Yours sincerely

Jacqui Russell