

Initial consultation: proposals to modify Network Rail's network licence requirement on timetable publication

Summary of responses from members of the public.

We received 100 responses by members of the public to the consultation. We have summarised the key comments for each of the three questions we asked.

Question 1 - Do you have any comments on the proposed licence modification text, which is designed to require Network Rail to meet the timeliness requirements as described in the Network Code?

Those responding to this question were generally unsupportive of the proposed licence modification. The following themes were noted in the responses to this question:

- Twelve weeks is already too short a notice period.
- Reference to other documents (such as the Network Code) would affect (adversely) transparency.
- A reduction to eight weeks could discourage people from taking the train.

Question 2 - Do you consider that confirming timetables with fewer than twelve weeks' notice will impact the abilities of end users to plan journeys with confidence and/or purchase tickets?

This question was addressed by all members of the public who submitted responses. Overall, respondents expected a negative impact on their ability to plan journeys with confidence and/or purchase tickets.

Views were that a move away from confirming timetables with less than twelve weeks' notice:

- Would negatively impact the vulnerable.
- Would most affect those who book long journeys as they are most likely to book further out.
- Could mean accommodation or cheaper hotel rates are not available.
- Will increase customer dissatisfaction.
- Would discourage train ticket buying because of impact on passenger confidence. Conversely it would encourage travel by car and plane. Some respondents commented on potential impacts on the climate.
- Must be accompanied by more accurate timetables beforehand.

- Is not competitive with airlines booking up to a year in advance or booking Eurostar up to 330 days in advance. EU counterparts can book six months in advance.
- People may want to plan using timetables before they purchase tickets, and this could already be before T-12 as it is.

We also received comments that it is not clear how a reduction from twelve weeks' notice would impact ticket prices or if there would be less time to purchase tickets.

Question 3 - Do you agree with the proposed modification to include the publication of the Working Timetable on a Timetable Change Date in the definition of “Relevant Timetable Changes”?

Responses to this question were mixed. Respondents who supported the proposed modification did so on the basis of improved clarity. Some respondents who did not agree with the proposed modification provided reasons as set out above in Question 2. A number of respondents noted that they had no opinion on this proposed modification, and some commenting that they did not understand the question or whether it was relevant to the travelling public.