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Chief Executive

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BY EMAIL

Passenger Information

Today we have published the findings and decisions relating to our investigations into Govia Thameslink Railway and Northern Trains' compliance with their obligations under Condition 4 of GB Statement of National Regulatory Provisions: Passenger (Information to Passengers). The findings will also be of relevance to Network Rail.

The purpose of this letter is to ask that you:

- 1) Provide written assurance that your customer information plans take adequate account of the key principles set out in this letter; and
- 2) Provide a copy of your arrangements and related contingency plans to support passengers that require additional assistance to travel during periods of disruption (both planned and unplanned).

Importance of passenger information

Condition 4 of the passenger licence requires train operators to provide appropriate, accurate and timely information to allow passengers to plan and make their journeys with a reasonable degree of assurance, including when there is disruption. Train operators must do so to the greatest extent reasonably practicable having regard to all relevant circumstances, including the funding available.

Network Rail also has an important role in providing information to passengers. As you will be aware, Condition 3 of Network Rail's station licence requires it to cooperate with train operators so far as reasonably necessary to enable them to meet their obligations to

provide information to passengers. Condition 2 of the network licence also sets a requirement on Network Rail to cooperate, as necessary, with train operators to enable them to provide appropriate, accurate and timely information to enable railway passengers to plan and make their journeys with a reasonable degree of assurance, including when there is disruption.

Our guidance¹ to support the passenger information condition in train operators' and Network Rail's licence sets out that where stations are operated separately to the trains, e.g. at Network Rail managed stations, the station operator should have its own customer information plan that sets out how information will be provided, both in normal operation and in disruption.

Rail passengers, like consumers in any other market, need access to good information about the products or services they intend to use or buy. In that context, our investigations demonstrate the importance of passenger information in operational decision-making, even during exceptional periods of disruption, and recognise that running a train service (or rail replacement bus) is only helpful to passengers if they know when and where the service will arrive, where it is going and how long the journey will take.

We have set out to train operators that they must be able to demonstrate, even during periods of unprecedented disruption that they have to the greatest extent considered and put in place reasonable measures to ensure that:

- the provision of increasingly appropriate, accurate and timely information for passengers should be a core component of delivering effective service recovery following severe and prolonged disruption;
- there is clear senior level responsibility for ensuring that the provision of passenger information is sufficiently considered, developed and (where necessary) adapted as far as possible to align with and support the operational recovery process so that passengers can benefit from the service improvements being made;
- feedback from passengers and staff regarding information failures is actively reviewed and used to inform ongoing improvement in information provision;
- clear, and to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, accurate communication regarding the cause(s) of disruption, the known or likely impact on passengers, and the steps being taken to recover the situation is provided; and
- they undertake a proactive review of the lessons learnt after such events to continuously improve how passenger information is managed and used.

The principles we have set out above are also of relevance to Network Rail. Please provide written assurance that your customer information plans take adequate account of the key principles set out above.

¹ http://orr.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/4353/information-for-passengers-guidance-on-meeting-the-licence-condition.pdf

Provision of information to support passengers that require additional assistance

The impact of disruption on passengers that require additional assistance to travel, including those who rely on booked or unbooked assistance, can be particularly severe. In our response to the Transport Select Committee report² into the May timetable change we referred to our recently published consultation on changes to the Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP) Guidance, which offers an opportunity to reassess contingency planning for assistance provision during disruption. We proposed a requirement for operators to set out how they will contact passengers to inform them and discuss alternative arrangements where assistance booked in advance can no longer be provided because of service disruption.

Please provide a copy of your arrangements and related contingency plans for assisting passengers that require additional support to travel in times of both planned and unplanned disruption. We will ensure that good practice in this area is included in both our final DPPP Guidance and in revisions to the guidance on meeting condition 3 (Information to Passengers) of the station licence.

Next steps

I would also welcome comments on lessons learnt from your experience of the May timetable change in the areas of passenger information and assistance provision, whether assistance has been booked or not.

As you are aware, we are currently working with Network Rail and a number of operators to look at the wider area of passenger information to understand what might stimulate measurable and sustained improvement in the quality and consistency of information provided to passengers. We are grateful for your positive engagement in this work to date. We will report on the outcome of this research later this year and discuss with you the emerging areas for improvement to the passenger experience.

I would be grateful for your response to this letter by **5 April 2019**. Please send your response to the following email address: passengerinformation@orr.gov.uk.

Please note that this letter and your reply will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely,



John Larkinson

² <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmtrans/1163/1163.pdf>