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Dear Mr Kelly

Passenger Focus was disappointed to hear of the action taken by East Midlands Trains (EMT) in deploying staff on the footbridge at Sheffield station which has had the effect of denying the use of this facility to legitimate users of public transport in the city. We understand that EMT have taken this action in support of their intention to install automatic ticket gates at Sheffield. Passenger Focus has repeatedly stated that we recognise that installing automatic ticket gates can support efforts to ensure all revenue due to the rail industry is collected, and enhance passenger safety and security by deterring anti-social elements from stations. However, ticket gates are only one way to achieve these objectives and any scheme must take into account any relevant local factors.

In this case public transport users of all modes have become accustomed to using this facility as part of their interchange, to which both local and central government have contributed large sums in recent years, and to which your action will bring significant detriment. The right of way allowing an alternative means of accessing the city centre across the station does not provide an acceptable option for many public transport users, whether or not they are mobility impaired.

Public consultation on the scheme has not yet fully concluded and Passenger Focus regrets that EMT has chosen to take this action at this time in this manner. Public confidence in EMT will be severely undermined if actions are taken that pre-empt the consultation process. Given that discussions have centred around allowing tram passengers to access the city centre, it is particularly disappointing that this was not facilitated during this exercise. To help bring evidence to bear on this discussion, can I reiterate our request for EMT to place in the public domain the economic justification for automatic ticket gates at Sheffield, which despite requests from Passenger Focus, has not yet been done fully.

Yours sincerely

Ashwin Kumar
Passenger Director