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Dear Richard

When I wrote to you recently regarding Christmas timetables I mentioned that we have general concerns about the industry's adherence to T-12/T-9. That is, not just at Christmas.

The table below shows the average number and range of discrepancies between passenger-facing information systems and the industry's Weekly Engineering Circular (WEC). Occasionally, an error in how a possession is described in the WEC causes 'rogue' discrepancies to be identified. However in the main these figures reflect the number of trains or replacement buses that are showing incorrectly in/are missing from the journey planning databases passengers use.

	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1
Average	1569	1490	1412	1282	1081	879	645	390	219	26
Max	5520	5502	5580	5568	5167	3688	3117	2902	2770	321
Min	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: National Rail Communications Centre, week 39 2011/12 to week 29 2012/13

Clearly, these numbers represent a small percentage of all trains in the timetable and there are weeks when the number of discrepancies is very small, indeed it is sometimes zero. However, you will see that the average number falls below 1,000 trains only at T-5. Not only could passengers be making or abandoning plans on the basis of inaccurate/incomplete information, they could be buying tickets to make journeys which, had the alteration been known about at the time, they would not have bought. There are also price implications: until the timetable is confirmed, train companies do not put cheaper Advance tickets on sale. The implications could be significant for passengers who plan a journey on the basis of what information systems show after T-12, only to find that engineering-related or other changes are subsequently made.

An example is that on 4, 5, 6 and 7 December "the 00:05 London Victoria - Worthing / Eastbourne train will be diverted via Brighton and be replaced by a bus between Lewes and



Eastbourne". A discrepancy was identified on 25 September with the note "cannot see any buses from LWS to EBN" – the bus remained missing from information systems as at 29 October. As a result, a passenger who could not make the 2247 departure would be led to believe – incorrectly – there was no means of travelling to Eastbourne until the following day.

It appears to us that too many discrepancies exist after T-12 and that small numbers of errors can remain very near to the day of operation. It also concerns us that the National Rail Communications Centre often highlights discrepancies for weeks without action appearing to be taken – the Eastbourne example is case in point.

While we acknowledge that a large number of trains **are** correct in passenger information systems at T-12, I should be grateful if ORR would investigate what is causing the remaining errors, whether Licence conditions have been breached and what can be done to improve matters.

Yours sincerely

**Anthony Smith**  
**Chief Executive**