

Transport Focus, Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX

0300 123 0850  
anthony.smith@transportfocus.org.uk  
www.transportfocus.org.uk

Charles Horton  
Chief Executive  
Govia Thameslink Railway  
Monument Place  
24 Monument Street  
LONDON EC3R 8AJ

13 June 2018

Ref: AS/2018/0105



### **Railway timetable crisis**

I am writing further to my letter dated 7 June and following yesterday's Transport Focus board meeting at which the current timetable crisis was considered.

#### **Stability and communication**

The board is concerned that passengers on parts of Thameslink and Great Northern are not getting the service they are paying for and that it appears GTR cannot reliably deliver even the pared back timetable. Lack of transparency about the service you are currently seeking to run is also a concern.

Transport Focus requests that you consider the following as a matter of urgency:

1. That you introduce a formal interim timetable on Thameslink Great Northern which you are fully confident you can operate, day-in day-out, while driver training is completed. A similar approach at Northern appears to have stabilised the situation. The current approach involving on-the-day cancellations on top of pre-planned service reductions is unacceptable.
2. That as part of that interim timetable you introduce an hourly Kings Cross-Peterborough service, Monday to Friday, calling at all stations from Hitchin, restoring at least some normality for passengers badly affected by the inability to reliably run the Horsham to Peterborough service.
3. That you advertise the interim timetable on your and the National Rail Enquiries websites, showing the trains that you can run, the trains you cannot and the replacement buses that will plug the gaps.
4. That in respect of buses replacing trains on a pre-planned basis, you 'bid' the bus schedules to Network Rail in order that they are published in industry data used by National Rail Enquiries, your own website and by all other information providers and ticket retailers.
5. That you 'bid' your interim timetable to Network Rail considerably further ahead than one week. A journey plan today will show that next Monday you will be operating the full, intended 20 May timetable, when clearly you will not. We suggest bidding the interim timetable on a rolling six-weeks-ahead basis, given the industry's current Informed Traveller target. There is nothing to stop you adding extra trains if you are confident that they can be delivered, but it is not fair on passengers to advertise the full service when you know it cannot be delivered.



### Compensation

We welcome your commitment to base Delay Repay entitlement on the full, intended 20 May timetable. However we do not think GTR's 'sustained poor performance' enhanced compensation for season ticket holders is adequate. 12 out of 20 journeys over 30 minutes late is an unreasonably high bar. And in any case, we are now well beyond the stage where two free return journeys/vouchers to the value of a single journey, is sufficient redress for what passengers are going through. It simply does not reflect the scale of impact on people's lives.

We believe you should go beyond the Passenger's Charter and offer:

- a lump-sum payable to season ticket holders to reflect the hardship experienced
- a package to recognise the impact on regular travellers who do not buy season tickets – this could take the form of a number of free journeys, similar to the London Midland offer after their driver shortage crisis a few years ago.

I look forward to your early reply.

Regard

**Anthony Smith**  
Chief executive