

Dear Anthony

21 September 2020

Ref: Informed Traveller T-12

Thank you for your reply dated 4 September 2020. I am pleased to say we have moved forward since the original letter was issued in July and we have revised the timeline, particularly focusing on providing stability around the Christmas and Easter periods when we know customers want to be able to plan ahead. The industry is planning to be able to publish customer information on fares and timetables 4-5 weeks prior to Christmas and 6 weeks prior to Easter. It is currently planned that we will reach T-12 publication in September 2021 for the timetable operating in December 2021.

Using ticket sales data from 2019 we can see that 9 in 10 people (91%) buy their tickets within a fortnight of travel and most of our customers typically purchase/book their ticket within 6 weeks of travel. By achieving T-6 earlier we meet 97% of customers' expectations and needs of booking a ticket. That being said, we are aware that customers do book other modes of transport if they cannot book in advance and have concerns that short booking horizons mean ticket prices will be more expensive. We understand the importance of this and are working hard to meet the expectations and needs of the 3% of our customers that like to book between 6 to 12 weeks in advance and continue to explore options in this area.

There are a number of challenges along the way to reaching T-12 including planned timetable changes in the interim and peak short-term planning changes during the year which we need to balance with high impact access requirements, such as the King's Cross interventions next year. Following engagement with Regions, we believe the plan to be deliverable around these access requirements.

We will also work towards achieving pockets of increased 'T- compliance' throughout the year to service the demands of peak periods. The current T-12 recovery plan is outlined in the table below:

Timetable Operates	Bid	Offer	Publication
December 20	TW-5/TW-6	TW-4/TW-5	TW-4/TW-5
Jan/Feb 21	TW-6/TW-7/ TW-8	TW-5/TW-6	TW-5/TW-6
Mar/Apr 21	TW-8/TW-9/ TW-10	TW-6/TW-7/ TW-8	TW-6
May/June 21	TW-10/TW-11	TW-8/TW-9	TW-6/TW-7
July/Aug 21	TW-11/TW-12 /TW-13	TW-9/TW-10/ TW-11	TW-7/TW-8/ TW-9
Sept/Oct 21	TW-13/TW-14 /TW-15	TW-11/TW-12/ TW-13	TW-9/TW-10/ TW-11
Nov/Dec 21	TW-15/TW-16	TW-13/TW-14	TW-11/TW-12

At a high level, in the early weeks of the recovery plan, bids will be submitted at T-5 for the timetable to be published at T-3. The recovery plan is based around processing five planning weeks in four working weeks and has been spaced so that bids and offers are not planned in

weeks where there are only four working days. We expect to have recovered back to T-12 publication in late September 2021 for the timetable that operates in December 2021.

As discussed with Transport Focus, ORR and operators, we now have an agreed weekly check performed by the NRCC that reviews all operator websites and National Rail Enquiries against an agreed set of criteria for the top 20 customer information measures for customers. What the checks do are three-fold:

- 1) Check that what the TOCs are saying about when the timetable is correct to;
- 2) Cross-check the Weekly Engineering Circular with the journey planner to ensure its correct; and
- 3) Check to see reference to when the booking horizons are open to.

The performance against these measures is sent to operators each week for them to monitor and highlight areas that require focus. Operators also discuss best practice at the weekly customer information calls, so that we can learn from each other and offer customers a more consistent experience. We also will now be publishing on National Rail Enquiries, by operator, the latest informed traveller dates, and we will continue to work with operators to ensure customers have the latest information.

We are also looking into the possibility of using ticket booking systems in a different way where passengers can make a reservation on long-distance services before the timetable is published, on the understanding that they will receive a notification about any changes to the timing of the service when it is published. We are in the process of setting up a cross-industry working group to understand the viability of this with current ticket booking systems and processes. It is hoped this new way of working will create a hybrid methodology to planning timetables and selling tickets. We will share further information about what this looks like when it becomes available and would welcome your involvement and support.

Regarding your suggestions of a price promise and fee-free refunds, there have been discussions around these ideas, it has been raised with the with DfT who have said it is not something they would currently consider. Usual refund rules and processes will apply and provide at least an informed position at the time of purchase. We will continue to look at what can be done to encourage customers back, as we certainly want to welcome our customers back and indeed attract new customers.

Your Sincerely



Susie Homan

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Rail Delivery Group