

Passenger Focus
Freepost (RRRE-ETTC-LEET)
PO Box 4257
Manchester
M60 3AR

18th March 2011

Dear Sirs,

LONDON MIDLAND PROPOSED REDUCTION OF HOURS AT HARTFORD AND WINSFORD TICKET OFFICES

Response on behalf of the Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association (MCRUA)

The Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association with over 650 members is the rail user group for the West Coast Main Line through Mid Cheshire. MCRUA is active in representing the interests of passengers on this line who use the services provided by the Hartford and Winsford Ticket Offices and those who use Acton Bridge Station. We work to improve the service and its usage, and provide information on timetable changes and news on future developments. To further this MCRUA believes in promoting the services on this line as an integral part of the local transport infrastructure.

We oppose the proposal to reduce booking office hours at Hartford and Winsford. London Midland say that it is a commercial decision. We do not accept their claim that it is not a cost cutting exercise. It is based upon DfT guidance **only** and not how the ticket offices are being used or taking into account the high standard of service currently being provided.

It is a pity that London Midland are only concerned with commercial efficiency and not meeting the general travel needs of people in a wide area of Cheshire. At times, Hartford and Winsford are the only staffed stations in the area bounded by Knutsford, Runcorn, Chester and Crewe.

Many passenger enquiries are made during the evening and on Saturdays and Sundays and many of them are for very complex journeys or multiple journeys which many people are not confident enough to do either on the telephone or the internet. How can the replacing of a friendly face by machines ensure passengers continue to enjoy their journey experience? It doesn't.

In closing I would just like to say that the people employed by London Midland at both Hartford and Winsford stations all appear to have great pride in providing excellent customer service which is appreciated by the passengers who use these stations. I would ask that rather than take the DfT figure for ticket sales alone as the basis for reducing the staffed hours at both of these stations they remain as they currently are for the foreseeable future so that this excellent customer service on behalf of London Midland can continue.

Yours faithfully

Harry W Boardman