



OFFICE OF **RAIL REGULATION**

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Mr John Oates
Chairman
Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association
Swallowfield
Slade Lane
Mobberley
Knutsford
WA16 7QN

Dear *Mr Oates*

TOCs informing passengers and potential passengers of planned replacement buses

Thank you for your letter dated 12 December 2011, relating to the provision of passenger information by TOCs. I am sorry for the delay in replying but I wanted to be clear what the position was on your concerns.

May I start by saying that ORR firmly believes that passengers are entitled to expect good quality information regarding delays that affect their journey so that they can plan accordingly. We do not accept that this is an optional add on.

I note with satisfaction the positive way in which Northern Trains has responded to you with regard to replacement bus services on the mid-Cheshire line. Hopefully information regarding such disruption will likewise improve.

It is only right that passengers should be informed about planned engineering work and alternative travel arrangements well in advance of them happening. This information should always contain the necessary detail and be both timely and accurate.

With this in mind, we are proposing that train operating companies need to provide effective passenger information regarding disruption as a specific condition of their licences. This should apply to all train operators in Britain – as your letter suggests.

ORR has written to all of the licence holders with its intention that this licence condition should take effect from February 2012. They were asked for any comments or objections by no later than 31 January. We are determined that all existing and future licence holders



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should accept this new condition.

We also believe TOCs should follow ATOC guidelines and our proposed licence changes will require licence holders to comply with the ATOC Approved Code of Practice and improvement plans. We believe that this will ensure the industry acts co-operatively to bring about improvements in passenger information. We note that the current ATOC code is clear on the need for passengers to be given "sufficient information to make informed alternative arrangements during service disruption" and that TOCs must have appropriate contingency plans in place to achieve this. Our reading, therefore is that the code does cover the area of concern to you.

I very much hope this reassures you and may I thank you once more for taking the trouble to write to me.

Yours
Anna Walker

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cc Cee Nathan trains