

London Transport Users Committee

When is a train not a train?

A study of rail replacement bus services

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London Transport Users Committee

Speaking for transport users in and around London



LTUC is the official watchdog for transport users in and around London.

The Committee's role is to:

- Investigate suggestions and complaints from users who are dissatisfied with the response received from the service provider;
- Conduct independent research and produce publications on issues affecting transport users;
- Maintain a regular dialogue with operators on differing aspects of their services;
- Assess the impact and make recommendations if proposals are made for the closure of a railway line or a station.

Our remit covers transport in and around London including the Underground, the National Rail network, London's bus network, Docklands Light Railway, Croydon Tramlink, taxis and other users of the Greater London Road Network. To find out more about us see our website [**www.ltuc.org.uk**](http://www.ltuc.org.uk)

When is a train not a train?

A study of rail replacement bus services

Foreword by Suzanne May Chair of the London Transport Users Committee

It is stating the obvious to say that anyone who buys a rail ticket will want to use a train. The advantages of rail travel are clear : shorter journey times and generally a more comfortable service. But passengers accept that the railway has to be maintained, and that in consequence there will be occasions when parts of the system have to be closed. On such occasions, they will have to use an alternative route or another form of transport, which will often be a replacement bus.

Passengers have a right to be told why the service is disrupted, and to expect a proper alternative to be provided. But my Committee is aware that this does not always happen in practice. That is why we undertook an audit.

We were pleased to find that there were some well planned replacement bus services associated with extended, or repeated, line closures on the National Rail network. But, sadly, too many of these services (which most commonly operate on Sundays, when engineering work is carried out) seem simply to involve the train company in putting up the station shutters, contracting a bus company for the day, and abandoning their passengers to their own devices.

In London, comparisons can be made with practice on the Underground. London Underground actively plans its closures. As one would expect, it treats each closure individually, examines travellers' likely needs, and does its best to accommodate them with a good information at the stations about alternative routes, provides additional staff and good bus services where necessary.

This report describes passengers' actual experience of some replacement services, and makes recommendations for improvement. I do hope our findings will help to spur the rail industry to improve its performance in this critical facet of its service.



Comments on this report will be warmly welcomed. Please send them to :

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 When routine track maintenance or other engineering work is carried out on the railways, and trains cannot operate along a section of the line, the train operator will often provide a replacement bus service to enable passengers to continue their journeys. This traditionally happens on Sundays, when there are fewer regular passengers, but it is sometimes extended over a whole weekend or, occasionally, for a longer period which may last up to several weeks.
- 1.2 The Rail Passengers Council, which represents rail users nationally, has studied passengers' attitudes towards such engineering works. Its southern area committee has researched the quality of information given out by the National Rail Enquiry Service about such periods of planned disruption. The findings of these studies are appended.
- 1.3 London Transport Users Committee clearly recognises the need for this maintenance work to be carried out, and indeed it welcomes projects which enhance the network. But this is not a reason to be complacent if the replacement bus services provided are of a very poor or uneven quality.
- 1.4 This report looks at the actual experience of using a number of these replacement services on the National Rail network, offers comparisons with equivalent services run for London Underground, and makes some recommendations for improving this aspect of the railways' operations.



2 Methodology

- 2.1 Replacement services on the National Rail network are announced by Network Rail a few weeks in advance, and details can be found on the various train companies' websites. Members and officers of the Committee travelled on a selection of replacement services over several months, and recorded their experiences.
- 2.2 Our audit covered 23 replacement services, that fell into three broad categories :
 - Major blockades of long lengths of line;
 - Repeated closures of a single short length of line;
 - Routine, one-off Saturday night/Sunday morning closures.
- 2.3 We looked at many aspects of the replacement service, with the help of an aide memoire. Our surveyors recorded their impressions of what had been done well and of what had been done badly or could be improved upon. We looked at the quality of the information provided both in advance and in the course of the journey, and at the quality of the replacement service itself.
- 2.4 We also contacted all of the train operators (including London Underground) to seek details of their policies regarding the provision of replacement services. London Underground invited us to discuss its approach to such services. The responses we received from the train operating companies on the National Rail network are appended.
- 2.5 On some occasions we were able to visit stations before the day of disruption to survey the availability of pre-journey information.
- 2.6 We have picked out examples of good and bad practice from the surveyors' reports, and made recommendations for improvements.

3 Journeys surveyed

3.1 Barking – Grays (Sunday 8 December 2002)

Train operator : c2c

At Barking pre-journey information was displayed on the inner (platform) side of the barrier. It described all the engineering works planned over an eight-week period, so the font was very small. Our surveyor had difficulty reading it. A similar poster was displayed at Grays.

On the day of the disruption, our surveyor had difficulty getting information about the service from the ticket office but was able to find a station supervisor to help.

The bus stop for the replacement service was one of two outside the station entrance, but was unmarked.

The coach used for the service was of good quality and had plenty of capacity. It had a cardboard sign in the front window marked 'c2c' and 'Grays', but this was clearly inadequate as passengers were enquiring about the service and were unsure of its route.

Our surveyor had a good journey but noticed passengers at several stations waiting in the road for the bus without the benefit of a signed bus stop.

London Underground's replacement services have well marked bus stops.



At Grays, staff told our surveyor where the bus stops were located, but not from which of the ten stops the replacement bus service would depart. He was told that the departure time would be 1532, but the bus did not leave until 1620.

3.2 Victoria – Balham - Streatham Hill (Sunday 8 December 2002)

Train operator : South Central

At Victoria there were posters about the engineering works in place, and the customer information screens described the disruption reasonably well. But because the trains affected (08 and 38 minutes past the hour) were not shown as leaving at their normal times, passengers waiting for the service could be confused. There were no clear announcements, and no staff at the gate line.

On arrival at Balham, the train driver made an audible announcement that passengers should alight and join the special bus service. There were no platform announcements, nor were there any directional signs to the buses. In fact, they were across the road from a side exit. If passengers had carried on to the main road, they would have missed them. The one member of staff on duty was too busy dealing with a queue to be able to guide passengers.

In the booking hall there was no warning of disruption due to engineering works.

The buses did have destination displays, but there were no kerbside staff.

3.3 Dalston Kingsland - Hackney Central - Homerton (Sunday 8 December 2002)

Train operator : Silverlink

Before the Sunday in question, a poster was displayed in the ticket office describing the disruption, though it was a little difficult to understand. It stated where the replacement buses were to depart from, but there was no local 'Continuing your journey from....' map that would have showed the numerous local bus alternatives. This would have been particularly useful in respect of the frequent local buses that passengers could use to go to Homerton Hospital in preference to using the rail replacement bus that went to Homerton station.

On the day there was a hand written note on the ticket office stating that the service was curtailed at Hackney Central. Again, a 'Continuing your journey from....' map would have given passengers some genuine choices for their onward journey.

The customer information screens gave the correct details and an automatic public address system gave a regular update of the disruption.

The bus was waiting for passengers and a helpful bus company employee was on hand to assist them. The bus company had displayed a 'line of route map' on the bus, which was useful. The bus was a clean, low floor single-decker.

No railway employee was available at the stop and no ticket collection occurred.

Unfortunately, the driver was unaware of the location of Homerton station. Our surveyor knew the area and so was able to request that he stopped. There was no

obvious bus stop flag to guide him, and we eventually stopped some way past the station. A visitor would have been driven on to Hackney Wick. There was no signing to the station from the main road on which the bus stopped. Any visiting passenger would have had difficulty finding it without asking.

Homerton station was partially closed, but there was a ticket clerk on duty to direct passengers to the bus stops. These were at some distance, and unsigned. This line is frequently closed, so there should be a standard signing system which could be activated on days when engineering works occur.

3.4 Barnes – Hounslow (Sunday 15 December 2002)

Train operator : South West Trains

Before the day of the disruption, posters were appropriately sited at both Hounslow and Barnes.

On arrival at Barnes at 1330 our surveyor found an additional poster now on display informing passengers that the last special bus would run at 1350. The clerk in ticket office confirmed that this was indeed the case, and that this information had not been previously displayed.

Two passengers at the stop had been waiting some time by 1350. At 1425 they gave up waiting and sought alternatives : two walking and a third catching another bus. On enquiry at the ticket office it emerged that the buses were no longer running, but the trains were. Our surveyor informed a fellow passenger waiting at the bus stop of this, and then took the next train.

3.5 Kentish Town – Blackfriars – Farringdon (Sunday 29 December 2002)

Train operator : Thameslink

This was the final day of an extended stoppage between Christmas and the New Year. So it was hoped, by our surveyor, that the operation of the replacement bus service would be of a good standard.

At Kentish Town although there were no public address announcements, Thameslink staff were on hand to direct passengers to the buses just outside the station.

The buses were an assortment of double-deckers with insufficient capacity for the number of passengers with luggage travelling home from the Christmas break.

The driver helpfully called out the station stops on arrival, but at Blackfriars he stopped short of the temporary stop at the station. From there, passengers unfamiliar with the area might not have found the station easily, as there were no signs.

On the return leg, starting from within Blackfriars station, there were posters directing passengers to the street. No staff were on duty to assist passengers. Once in the street, passengers were left to work out where the pick-up point for the replacement service was. This was difficult after dark, as it was not immediately obvious.

On the return leg to Farringdon, the driver made no announcements. This created a particular problem, as the entrance to Farringdon station is not readily visible from the main road that buses have to use.

At Farringdon, there were posters in the ticket hall and maps of the bus stops, but again no staff to guide passengers. At platform level there were neither public address announcements nor posters for the benefit of passengers joining from the Underground rather than entering from the street. Even at the entrance to the Thameslink platform there was just a notice on the locked gate saying "this area is closed due to engineering works".

3.6 Tulse Hill - Streatham Common (Sunday 19 January 2003)

Train operator : South Central

At Streatham Common the "engineering information" was provided on part of the main notice board. Two posters provided details of the engineering works, the times of buses, and a map of South Central's network. These were in place prior to the day of disruption.

At Tulse Hill there was a single engineering works poster in a poor location in a pedestrian tunnel. This was also in place prior to the disruption.

On the day of travel bus times were displayed as minutes past the hour (08 and 38), but there were no signs to the bus stops or any notice on the bus stop to say that replacement buses stopped there. Fortunately, our surveyor was able to ask at the ticket office as it was staffed.

3.7 Battersea Park - Denmark Hill (Sunday 19 January 2003)

Train operator : South Central

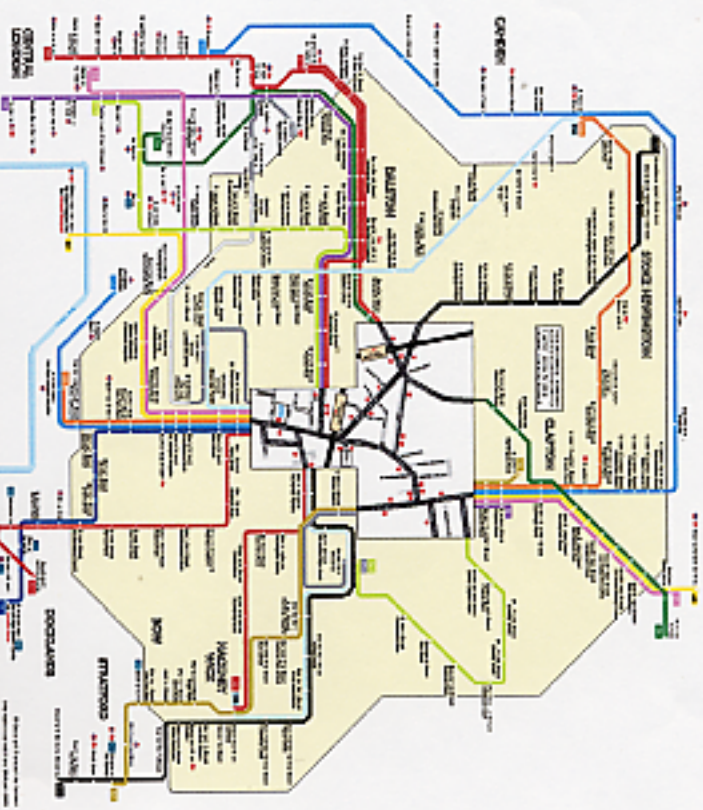
At Battersea Park the pre-journey information poster was well sited for passengers. Bus times were provided, but there was no information about where passengers should board the buses.

At Denmark Hill the poster was poorly sited, in such a way that only some passengers would see it. As the poster was located *en route* to platforms 2 and 3, passengers walking to platform 1 would not pass it.

At Clapham Junction, which our surveyor had visited during his journey, a poster was displayed saying 'no service to Battersea Park'. On enquiry at the Battersea Park

Continuing your journey from Hackney Central

Bus services from Hackney Central



Index to nearby places

Key

- Public Transport
- Bus Stop
- Major Road
- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Public House
- Police Station
- Post Office
- Library
- Health Centre
- Community Centre
- Religious Building
- Green Space
- Water Feature
- Other Landmark

Street Index

A list of streets in the area, each followed by a small icon representing a nearby facility or landmark. The streets listed include:

- Albion Road
- Albion Street
- Albion Way
- Albion Close
- Albion Lane
- Albion Court
- Albion Square
- Albion Park
- Albion Gardens
- Albion Fields
- Albion Wood
- Albion Hill
- Albion Dale
- Albion Valley
- Albion Stream
- Albion Brook
- Albion Pond
- Albion Lake
- Albion Park
- Albion Wood
- Albion Hill
- Albion Dale
- Albion Valley
- Albion Stream
- Albion Brook
- Albion Pond
- Albion Lake

ticket office, the staff seemed to believe that the engineering works notice was incorrect.

3.8 Queens Park - Wembley Central (Sunday 9 February 2003)

Train operator : London Underground

There was a pre-journey poster in place at Queens Park telling passengers that a replacement bus service would be operating. Our surveyor felt the instructions about how passengers should continue their journeys from Wembley Central could have been clearer.

On the day of disruption, there was good information on the posters and announcements on public address systems.

The buses provided were not fully accessible, and the windows were poorly cleaned. Our surveyor was not able to see where the bus was going. This was disconcerting for him as he was unfamiliar with the area.

3.9 Woking – Guildford (Sunday 16 February 2003)

Train operator : South West Trains

On the Wednesday prior to the disruption, there was an appropriately sited poster at Woking advising passengers that emergency buses would be replacing trains between Woking and Guildford on the following Sunday. At Guildford posters were well sited in both ticket offices, but as they described all of the January engineering works, their font was very small and difficult to read.

On the day of the disruption there were an adequate poster and bus timetable in the main ticket office at Guildford, but nothing in the subsidiary ticket office. There were no signs to the coach, although it was parked near the main ticket office entrance. The bus service was fair, but there was no destination shown in the front window, simply 'emergency service'.

3.10 Camden Road - Willesden Junction (Sunday 16 February 2003)

Train operator : Silverlink

Pre-journey information at Willesden Junction was good. There were posters describing the disruption, and a bus timetable, in appropriate locations in the station on the Wednesday before the engineering works. But there was no local map or information about regular buses and taxis.

At Camden Road, the engineering works posters mistakenly referred to Saturday.

On the day of the disruption there were no signs to the bus stops at Camden Road, but staff were on hand to advise passengers. The pick-up point was reasonably near to the station.

The bus was a single-decker, which left some passengers standing. The driver knew the route, but failed to announce his arrival at stations. This clearly confused some passengers who were forced to alight too late and would have had to retrace their journeys to get to their destinations.

3.11 Bromley South - station closure due to engineering works on the Catford Loop (Saturday 22 February 2003)

Train operator : Connex South Eastern

Our surveyor did not travel on the service provided on this day, but observed the arrangements made at Bromley South.

Pre-journey information was available prior to the disruption, but our surveyor did not find the poster easy to understand. An important poster was bizarrely mounted on an automatic sliding door that retracted when our surveyor went to read it! The National Rail Enquiry Service and train operator gave out correct information on telephone enquiries to them.

Bus stops were not signed, but staff were on hand to assist passengers.

The bus service was provided by coaches with 4-step access.

3.12 Dalston Kingsland – Camden Road - Gospel Oak (Sunday 23 February 2003)

Train operator : Silverlink

The poster display at Dalston Kingsland consisted of three A3 sheets sellotaped together and stuck onto the top of one of the “statutory” notice boards which the operator is required to display by the terms of its franchise - so obscuring its contents. It was sited in a reasonable location with a fair sized font. There was no poster showing a map of the engineering works.

As the train stopped at Highbury & Islington station, the public address system announced the disruption to services ahead. This was helpful to passengers

At Camden Road there were two helpful railway staff and a signpost to the bus stop, but this was 150m away.

On the bus journey, the driver used a mobile phone whilst driving, and took the wrong route. We passed the destination station (Gospel Oak) without announcement and without stopping. The driver was prevailed upon by passengers to stop further up the road, rather than continuing to the next station.

Drivers will often be unfamiliar with the route and so it should be properly marked.



The bus was accessible and of adequate capacity.

At Gospel Oak the bus stop was located directly outside the station. We observed a temporary, hand written and rather confusing poster in the ticket office area. Fortunately, there was a member of staff in the ticket office to help passengers.

3.13 Waterloo East – Lewisham – Hayes (Sunday 2 March 2003)

Train operator : Connex

There was an engineering works notice for the whole of February and March. There were public address announcements at Waterloo East, but none at Lewisham.

There were no signs to the bus pick-up point at Lewisham, and nor was it marked as the rail replacement stop, though fortunately passengers managed to work out by themselves which stop to use.

The service was provided with a coach and it was therefore not fully accessible. There was insufficient capacity for what our surveyor described as normal Sunday loading of passengers. Some passengers gave up waiting and either took taxis or caught ordinary local buses.

3.14 Purley – Coulsdon South – Redhill (Sunday 2 March 2003)

Train operator : South Central

At East Croydon station the operation of a replacement bus for passengers to Coulsdon South, Merstham and Redhill was clearly announced. There were also announcements on the train.

At Purley there were signs to direct passengers to the bus service – a standard double-decker vehicle.

At Coulsdon South, in the booking office, there was a hand written board telling passengers they should get the bus service at stops on the main road as opposed to the station approach road. But the booking office closes at 1600 and there was no notice posted outside it, although the replacement service was still running after that time.

On the platforms, customer information screens were also in use to tell passengers about the replacement service.

3.15 St Albans Abbey - Watford Junction (Sunday 9 March 2003)

Train operator : Silverlink

St Albans Abbey station was physically blocked off to the public because of the engineering works – contractors' vehicles and equipment were across the entrance. There were no train or bus operator's staff, but the maintenance men were helpful.

The bus stops were not signed, but were easily visible being just outside the station.

The bus was a modern accessible vehicle, well marked as a rail replacement service.

At Watford there was no information apparent, and the departure screens still indicated that the train ran from platform 11. The gate staff, when specifically asked, were able to inform passengers that there was in fact a replacement bus service.

3.16 Dalston Kingsland - Gospel Oak (Sunday 14 September 2003)

Train operator : Silverlink

At Dalston there was a hand written notice and bus timetable. Instructions about bus stop locations were hand written. There was a street map of the locality, but this was not of the standard set by the 'Continuing your journey from....' Series produced by Transport for London.

There were helpful rail staff at Dalston and a bus company employee at Gospel Oak.

The bus operated on time and was clean and accessible. Although the driver did not stop at all the stations, he did announce them en route. A member of the railway staff rode with the bus as its driver was unsure of the route.

Our surveyor continued on to Finchley Road & Frognal station by train. Here there was a map and poster, but these were poorly sited.

3.17 Marylebone – Amersham - Aylesbury (Sunday 14 September 2003)

Train operator : Chiltern Railways

On arriving at Marylebone, the customer information screens alerted passengers to engineering works, but implied that the train would depart from Baker Street. There was no indication that passengers should use the Underground from Baker Street to Amersham and then change there to a bus service to Aylesbury. This was perhaps a limitation of the customer information screens.

There was a clear alternative choice for passengers travelling from Marylebone to Aylesbury, i.e. to travel by train to Princes Risborough and then change to a second train to Aylesbury. Unfortunately, this information was not readily apparent to passengers.

No announcements were made about the engineering works during the Underground section of the journey.

There was no engineering poster or map at Amersham, but there was a train company employee assigned to assisting passengers to the bus replacement service.

The coach was good, but not fully accessible. Stops were not announced, but the driver pulled into each station and most passengers would have been able to see the station name clearly.

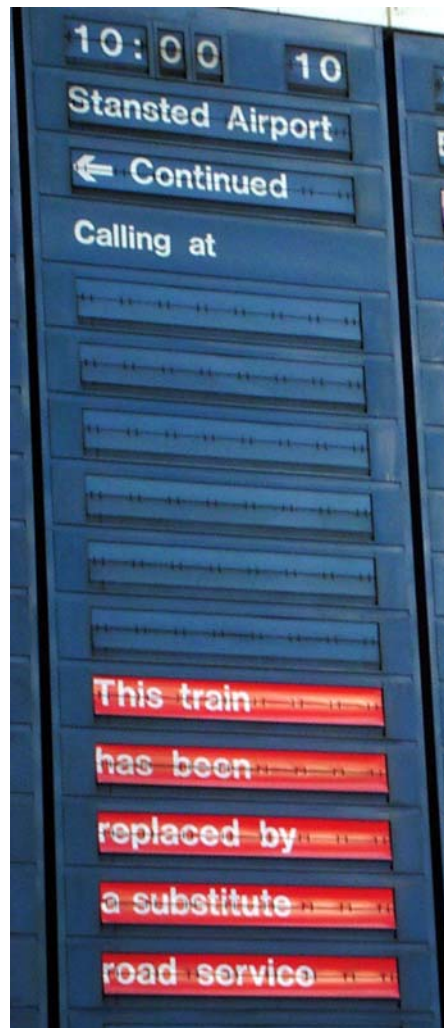
The customer information screens were in use at Aylesbury and there were both bus and train company employees to assist passengers. The option of travelling by train to Marylebone via Princes Risborough was detailed for passengers on the customer information screens at Aylesbury.

3.18 Liverpool Street - Stansted Airport – Liverpool Street (Sunday 19 October 2003)

Train operator : Stansted Express (WAGN)

Sunday engineering work on this route has been very protracted and therefore a replacement bus service has been operating for many months. A regular coach replacement service is in operation. The disruption to services is widely advertised through posters and leaflets.

At Liverpool Street both ticket office staff and the customer information screens directed passengers to the replacement service, but the public address system was not used to do so too.



At Liverpool Street the replacement service departed from an area within the station adjacent to a platform

The bus was boarded from an area within the station and in an orderly fashion. Passengers queued up, and staff counted them aboard. The often unseemly rush for a place in the queue that typifies many replacement bus services with a high number of passengers was avoided. So too was any fear that if passengers diverted from the scrum to board the coach, in order to put luggage in the hold, they would lose their place on the coach and be parted from their luggage.

The journey was a simple direct journey to Stansted where passengers alighted at the airport bus station.

The coach was not fully accessible. A wheelchair user was intending to travel and fortunately he was a strong young man who was physically able to lift himself onto the coach without assistance.

The return journey was similarly well organised, with signing from the terminal to the replacement services. But a few passengers missed the signs and found themselves on a deserted platform looking for the train. Overall, this was a very well-

run replacement service providing an acceptable alternative to the rail journey for all but those needing an accessible service.

3.19 Fenchurch Street – Grays - Tilbury Town – Grays – Fenchurch Street (Sunday 26 October 2003)

Train operator : c2c

All of the advance notice of Sunday engineering works on this line published by National Rail and c2c related to works between Barking and Grays via Rainham, and between Stanford-le-Hope/Laindon and Leigh-on Sea. On the day, the actual closure and replacement bus service included an additional stretch of line between Grays and Stanford-le-Hope. None of the information posters or maps reflected this unplanned closure. We understand this was due to a late request for line possession by Network Rail owing to a lack of power on this stretch of line.

This is a fairly complex line, and therefore a complex closure situation for passengers to understand. At Fenchurch Street there was an engineering poster, but no network map. The original information was displayed, but this was presented in a way that made it difficult to understand. There was a ticket clerk available and after some thought he was able to explain it. A network map would have enabled passengers to understand much more easily what was happening.

At Fenchurch Street there was a good message on the public address system, but there were no announcements on the train.

At Grays there was an excellent network map with the planned works indicated, but the additional replacement bus service was not marked. At Tilbury Town there was a different, more rudimentary, network map having only the key stations marked.

The bus stops at Grays were not signed from the platform, though they were adjacent to the station and therefore easy to find. There was no indication on the bus of where it was going, though there were bus operator's staff. We heard the driver being given verbal directions to Tilbury Town. It became apparent on the return journey that on the outward journey the driver had used a much longer route than was necessary.

On the outward journey a double-decker was used. We returned on a coach. Neither was accessible.

3.20 Waterloo – Hounslow – Feltham (Sunday 15 February 2004)

Train operator : South West Trains

At Waterloo there was good information on the customer information screens. There were on-train announcements, which were exemplary and repeated at appropriate intervals. Unfortunately this was not replicated at Clapham Junction where the 'next train' screen showed the standard display of "all stations to Hounslow". The public

address announcement was the standard one, supplemented by an additional announcement by station staff, but this was unclear. Again, at Putney the screen showed only “all stations to Hounslow” and there were no announcements.

On arrival at Hounslow, staff directed passengers to an old-style coach with a narrow doorway and very steep steps. This was compounded by the fact that it had been parked away from any pavement or kerb, making an even steeper first step up from the roadway. Our surveyor thought that there ought to be a designated bus pick-up point. The one being used required passengers to go down a muddy/grassy slope to reach it. The coach was comfortable, but the loud rock music playing over the radio might not have been to everyone’s taste. There was no destination notice in the windscreen. The driver knew the route, and took advantage of the clear roads to drive fast to Feltham, where he called out the station name on arrival.

At Feltham there were no staff in attendance at or near the bus pick-up point. The nearby ticket machine carried a notice stating there were no trains that day, but contradicted itself by stating that buses would replace trains until 1700. It also stated, incorrectly, that buses were picking up passengers from the other side of the station. This notice was left in place until 1735 when trains had resumed (our surveyor took it down). Departure screens were giving correct information and a clear bus/train timetable was displayed. Trains resumed promptly at the scheduled time.

3.21 King’s Cross Thameslink – Streatham – Haydons Road – Wimbledon (Sunday 15 February 2004)

Train operator : Thameslink

Posters were present at the entrance to King’s Cross Thameslink station and the electronic display screens gave good information. On enquiring about the journey, the gate line staff suggested an alternative route to our destination using the Underground.

There were no engineering works posters or network maps on the platforms at Streatham. There were both staff and posters in the ticket hall. But because both Thameslink and South Central use this station, there were separate engineering posters on opposite sides of the ticket hall. This could lead to passengers being falsely reassured if they had previously checked only one poster without knowing that there are two that need to be checked for companies serving Streatham station. The random placing of engineering posters around the ticket hall is not helpful.

There were no announcements, or signs to the bus stop. We asked and were directed to stop ‘S3’ by staff. This was a fair distance to walk. There appeared to be a reasonable location (a red route loading box) directly outside the station where it should have been possible to locate a temporary bus stop on a Sunday. There were many regular buses to Tooting, for example, and it would have been beneficial to have had a ‘Continuing your journey from....’ map in the station ticket hall. When the replacement bus turned up, it passed our surveyor and chose to stop adjacent to the station - in the red route loading box!

The bus was a low floor double-decker, though our surveyor was the only passenger.

The driver did not announce Tooting station.

At Haydons Road the bus stopped at a convenient ex-service bus stop. The station was neither staffed nor signed from the stop. It was impossible to tell where to wait for the journey from Haydons Road to Streatham.

On one platform there was a South Central engineering works poster, and on the other a similar poster for Thameslink. This may have given false reassurance to passengers who checked a poster that did not, in the event, mention their intended route.

3.22 South Tottenham - Barking (Sunday 24 November 2002)

Train operator : Silverlink

When engineering works take place on the line between Barking and Gospel Oak during the winter timetable on a Sunday there is no replacement service. This has been a long-standing source of concern to the Committee and has been the subject of repeated representations by its members. There are posters detailing alternative routes for passengers, but in the case of those travelling east of South Tottenham such journeys are particularly problematical. Silverlink has pointed to an absence of earmarked funding as the reason for its failure to cater for passengers displaced from its trains.

Our surveyor visited South Tottenham, Blackhorse Road and Leyton Midland Road stations on the Wednesday before the disruption. Posters were on display, but the wording misled our surveyor into believing that trains were simply to run 10 minutes later than usual.

Details about the disruption were broadcast on the public address system.

3.23 Stratford – Leyton – Gant’s Hill (Saturday 6 March 2004)

Train operator : London Underground

There was an excellent poster at Stratford describing the disruption to services on each Underground line. The poster was well sited for passengers entering the station. The addition of a network map would have been an additional useful piece of information.

Between Stratford and Leytonstone there were no on-train announcements to prepare passengers. This would have been helpful.

At Leytonstone there were plenty of posters directing passengers to the replacement bus, public address announcements on the platforms, customer information screens describing the disruption. There were three well located posters with a line map

showing the part of the railway affected. The posters gave alternative travel options where they were possible. Three dedicated members of staff identified with tabards were on hand to assist / direct passengers.

Clear signage to the bus stops provides assistance and reassurance to passengers



The bus had plenty of capacity, but was not accessible. In the side window of the bus was a line-of- route map and in the windscreen was signage telling passengers the stations served. The destination blind displayed ' Rail replacement bus service'. The bus used a service bus stop and was waiting on arrival of passengers.

The route had been marked out by London Buses to ensure the driver knew where to go. The bus stops being used were signed as rail replacement stops. The bus stopped at every stop, though the driver did not announce the station. This would have helped passengers because some stops were not directly adjacent to the station. Bus stops used were service stops and as such had proper clearways.

Dedicated staff were available at all stations.

Our surveyor came back to Mile End station where again the very clear posters describing the disruption and alternative travel options were located at appropriate places.

4 Train company procedures

- 4.1 We approached all of the train operating companies serving the LTUC area, as well as Network Rail, Docklands Light Railway and London Underground. Responses were received from Network Rail, Anglia Railways, Midland Mainline, Docklands Light Railway, First Great Eastern, First Great Western and London Lines. Our letter and the companies' responses are attached. London Underground invited us to a discussion about how they planned such services.
- 4.2 We asked about policies and company procedures. The most striking feature of the responses from train operators was their lack of detailed plans. It appeared that generally there was generally not a great deal of preparation or standard practice.
- 4.3 This was in stark contrast with London Underground which demonstrated, with documents, that it planned each closure carefully and learned from how it had performed. It utilised the expertise of London Buses' local staff, though at its own expense. We were given a copy of an external assessment report looking at how London Underground's rail replacement services performed. This concluded that only small amendments to the procedures were necessary.
- 4.4 For each London Underground closure there is a specific plan to provide the travelling public with publicity/information about alternative routes or a replacement bus service. On some occasions, a possible option for passengers will be a bus provided by London Underground to an alternative line which is running.
- 4.5 Staff are provided at all Underground stations under normal operating conditions. During periods of disruption, these are supplemented by customer Information assistants where appropriate. Not all buses are yet accessible, but this is an aspiration for the relatively near future.
- 4.6 The routine announcement of stops by bus drivers is recognised as an issue that London Underground is hoping to address.

5 Discussion and recommendations

General

- 5.1 Rail passengers make their journey plans expecting to travel by train. And any interruption to their journey will be unwelcome. Research by the Rail Passengers Council has confirmed this and offers advice on how, with better information and management of the alternative services, passengers would be more patient about the disruption they experience.
- 5.2 Work undertaken by the Rail Passengers Committee (RPC) for Southern England has demonstrated that whereas the National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES) has greatly improved its ability to provide routine information about services, it is still failing to meet passengers' expectation of reliable information on occasions when their journey will be disrupted.
- 5.3 From our work, it is clear that the journey experience of passengers who have to use rail replacement services is very variable, and too often far from satisfactory.
- 5.4 At the good end of the scale was the well planned, long running Stansted Express coach service from Liverpool Street station to Stansted Airport (although even on this service there was the problem of the inaccessibility of coaches for some passengers).
- 5.5 At the poor end were the many occasions on Sundays when passengers were decanted at a strange station with neither staff nor directional signing to a bus stop, and waited in the cold and the rain for an antique bus. When it arrived, not always at the time advertised, passengers had to squeeze themselves and their luggage between parked cars to board it. Once on the vehicle, they found that the windows were too dirty to see through as they toured unfamiliar back streets of London. The driver would too often drive past their destination station without making any announcement.
- 5.6 One of our Committee members summed up the feelings of passengers travelling on these services :

"It's as though they [the train operator] hire a bus company to turn up on the day and then leave their passengers to their own devices."

Clearly, this is unacceptable. Below, we discuss what could and should be done to improve the passengers' experience.

Planning ahead

- 5.7 Often, passengers will be able to plan ahead to avoid engineering works. The Southern RPC has identified shortcomings in the NRES service that need addressing. A summary of its findings is appended.

- 5.8 We were almost always able to find, somewhere on each station, a poster about disruption due to engineering works that had been erected prior to the event. But too often the only available information at stations is the minimum station- or operator-specific poster that needs to be read with great care. Some of the 'posters' we saw were hand written on sheets of A3 paper sellotaped together and stuck over one of the existing "statutory" notices. But some of the operators do better and provide a map of their network, highlighting the location of works. If some can do this, all should be able to.
- 5.9 The printed engineering works posters and maps often have a very different format for each train company.



- 5.10 They are sometimes located at an obscure site in the station where only passengers using a particular platform will see them. On one of our visits to a station served by two train companies, there were two separate posters displayed, at different places in the station. Passengers seeking reassurance that there were no engineering works on their line would be misled if they had not checked both posters. This would be unlikely as they were randomly distributed around the ticket office.
- 5.11 At one station the poster was located in a ticket hall that routinely closed at 1600.
- 5.12 Passengers who intend to use the network need to know, within reason, what is happening beyond their own line or station. It is not acceptable for train operators merely to inform passengers of disruptions to their own services, as passengers' journeys routinely cause them to cross from one company's network to another.

- 5.13 We found engineering posters that contained many weeks' worth of information and were printed in too small a font to be read comfortably.

Recommendations

- (a) Passengers would like to see both a station- or line-specific map and poster, describing how a particular station/line is affected, and a network map showing the location of all engineering works across the region. Network Rail routinely produces a London-wide engineering map that could easily be modified for use by all train companies in the region (see opposite/over page). The network map should also indicate any London Underground line closures.
- (b) All train companies should produce engineering posters and maps in a similar format so that passengers can easily understand them wherever they are on the network, and not have to decipher each company's unique way of presenting the information. Posters should be printed and there should be a specified minimum size of typeface.
- (c) Engineering works are planned well in advance, so there seems no reason to tolerate handwritten A3 sheets in lieu of proper posters.
- (d) It is not acceptable to put posters up about engineering works at random sites around a station, or in an area that is locked when the station is not staffed. All such posters should be located at designated passenger information points. There is a model for this at some of the better stations on the pilot 'Overground Network' (ON), where information areas have been established.
- (e) These information sites should be accessible to passengers during all normal hours, when the service is running, and should not be not located in ticket offices which only operate part time and are otherwise locked out of use.

Presenting passengers with alternatives

- 5.14 In London passengers often have several alternative routes to choose between in order to reach their destination. But those arriving at strange stations are often given no option but to board the replacement service. For example, a passenger heading for Homerton Hospital via Homerton station, but being required to disembark prematurely at Hackney Central because of engineering works, should have been given details of the numerous buses which run direct to the hospital, or offered access to a map showing that the hospital is only a short walk away.
- 5.15 London Underground has a full-time official whose role it is to convene a meeting to think through the impacts on passengers of each forthcoming closure, and to present them with possible alternative routes. We found no evidence from our journeys, or

from train companies' responses to our letter asking them about their procedures, that this is happening on national Rail.

- 5.16 The Underground network is more complex than those of the National Rail companies, but there are often alternative routes for some passengers at some stations. On only one of the 22 journeys that we made was any information given about alternative routes or services.
- 5.17 The only pre-planning that appears to be taking place is the production of a poster and train company's network map, and the hiring of a bus to run between stations. Sometimes local staff prepare an ad hoc poster directing passengers to the bus stops.
- 5.18 When the Barking to Gospel Oak line is closed on Sundays during the winter for engineering works, no replacement service is offered. This is particularly problematic for passengers travelling east of South Tottenham, where there are no eastbound bus services

Recommendations

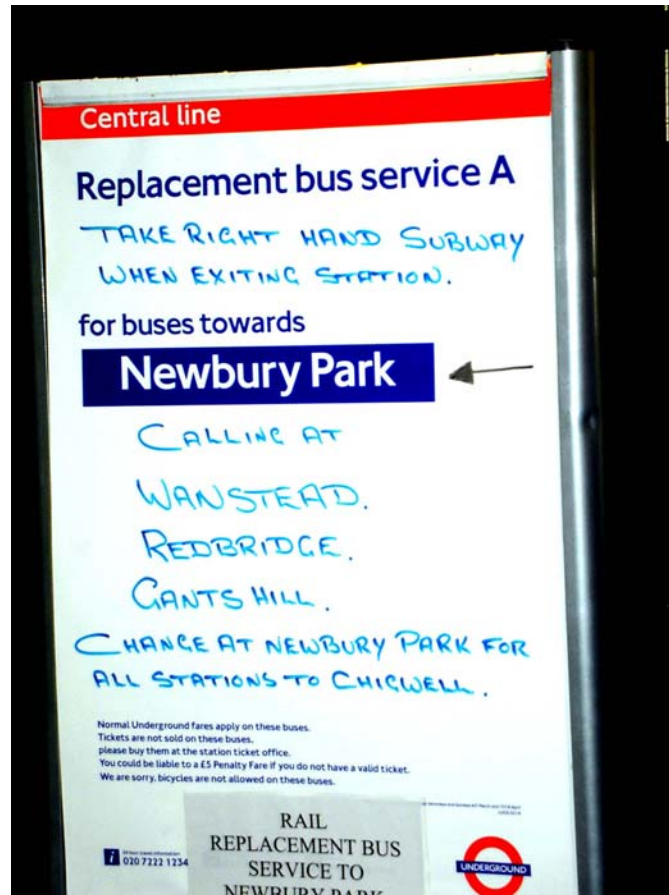
- (f) We would like to see some strategic planning to allow and encourage train companies to deal better with disruptions due to engineering works. Station specific planning is needed to identify the alternative routes available to passengers, where they exist.
- (g) For journeys that a significant number of passengers are likely to be making, these alternatives should be included on the engineering works posters.
- (h) We would like to see the TfL style 'Continuing your journey from....' map provided as a minimum.
- (i) Consideration should be given to the scope for transferring passengers by bus to alternative lines, whether operated by the Underground or National Rail.
- (j) Staff at stations with knowledge of these alternatives are desirable.
- (k) Franchise specifications for all services should make replacement buses mandatory, or require alternative arrangements to be made for passengers, during all planned periods of engineering works.

From station to bus

- 5.19 Even regular users of a particular line may well be unfamiliar with the stations to which a replacement service operates. It is not always possible for buses to use the road outside the station, and so the stops may be remote from - and out of sight of - the station. The lack of signing from the station to the bus stop and *vice versa*, even where the route was long or complex, was a cause of almost universal criticism by our surveyors.
- 5.20 Many of our surveys were conducted during the middle of the day. Some stations were staffed at these times, or additional staff had been provided because of the closure, but this was by no means universally the case. Outside these core hours much less staffing would be available to assist passengers to the bus service.
- 5.21 Rail passengers may have a disability or be encumbered with luggage, but are often asked to squeeze through a line of cars to board a bus that is only able to stop in the middle of the carriageway.

Recommendations

- (l) Planning for a line closure must include providing the signs needed for passengers to find where the replacement buses pick up.



- (m) Conversely, where the station is remote from the stop, or out of sight to passengers alighting from an arriving bus, there should be signing to the station.
- (n) If no ordinary stop is available, with an established clearway, then a suitable area should be designated to allow the bus to approach the kerb fully and allow passengers to board and alight easily.
- (o) It is clearly helpful for passengers if stations that are affected by such closures are staffed during operating hours. Access to station platforms should be locked or barred to prevent passengers waiting for train services that are not operating.

On the buses

5.22 Passengers are often driven through back streets that they simply do not recognise, even if they can see out of the bus windows. Many bus replacement services cannot

navigate the streets around stations, and so the bus stops they serve may be at some distance from the stations and can be out of sight of them.

- 5.23 It is apparent that too many bus drivers have not been briefed and do not have (or have not read) a map of their route. Whilst travelling on these services we witnessed drivers going the wrong way and missing stations.
- 5.24 Our surveyors only reported a few instances of lack of capacity on buses, and many of them were fully accessible. But coaches create accessibility problems for some passengers.
- 5.24 Replacement buses were often marked as such, often in the windscreen or on the bus blinds. But the destination was not always given.

Recommendations

- (p) As a very minimum drivers should be provided with a map of their route, there should be clear temporary signs at each stop on the route, and these stops should be clearly marked with their station name.
- (q) Drivers must stop at each station and announce its name to passengers. Where stations are close together, as is often the case in London, drivers should also announce the next station on departing from the previous one.
- (r) Bus windows should be cleaned at the start of the day, to ensure that passengers are able to see where they are.
- (s) Providing accessible buses should be a short-term aspiration for all replacement services.
- (t) The destination, and intermediate stations where appropriate, should be signed on the bus.



Information on the day of travel

- 5.25 Many of the pre-journey information issues will apply to provision on the day of the disruption as well, with the exception of public address announcements and customer information screens. On the North London Line, Silverlink Metro was particularly good in this respect, with regular announcements on platforms and as trains arrived at the station where the closure started. Customer information screens were generally used at the stations at which they were installed.

Recommendation

- (u) Much more use should be made of public address systems, both at stations and on trains.

Appendices :

- A Passengers' attitudes towards engineering works.
- B What kind of information do you call that.
- C Letter to operators and responses.

Appendix A

Passengers' attitudes towards engineering works

Research commissioned by the Rail passengers' Council showed that:

- The industry has little in its "goodwill reservoir". A significant proportion of passengers were negative about the industry, especially business travellers and commuters. Almost half of passengers had previously been delayed by planned engineering works, with a significant minority having been delayed on six occasions or more.
- Passengers' immediate reaction to the prospect of disruptions to their services is that any disruption is inconvenient and that any work should be undertaken when they personally were unlikely to be affected. There are few differences between the sub-groups of commuter, leisure or business travellers, except along the lines that one would expect given their interest in different levels and types of service. The least inconvenient options for engineering works are smaller disruptions that result in trains starting late or finishing early, or taking a break in the middle of the day.
- **Passengers' acceptance of disruption increased if they understood the reasons for the work** and the benefits it would bring, and if the works were being planned efficiently and in a way that would reduce the overall timescale of the disruption. Factors such as value for money/cost effectiveness for the taxpayer do affect attitudes. Passengers are more positive towards engineering options that are more cost effective, even if this causes more disruption to their journeys in the short term.
- Although 'major' disruptions are rated as inconvenient, there is evidence to suggest that passengers would prefer work to be over as quickly as possible. If notified sufficiently in advance, most passengers can plan around a longer blockade (of up to two weeks) or weekend closures. However, passengers on some particularly busy commuter corridors do not see they have an alternative to choose from.
- Passengers want to make informed choices about their travel plans. Information about alternative arrangements, length of disruption and increased journey time should be available when tickets are booked in advance. Effort should be made to inform passengers if situations change after tickets have been booked. **Regular travellers expect to see notices at stations and on trains for a month in advance.**
- Transport is seen as a nationally important issue and the media should be used to alert passengers of planned and current disruption.
- Passengers have a hierarchy of alternative modes of transport. Their choice depends on a number of factors, but includes the extended journey time by rail, the number of changes required, proximity to airports for longer journeys, congestion on alternative road routes, and availability of parking at destination. **Rail passengers rate replacement buses as highly inconvenient** and would rather spend an hour extra on the train than the time proposed for a replacement bus journey.

- **One size does not fit all** – geography and market segment affect passengers' flexibility and the availability of alternative routes or modes, and therefore their attitudes towards how disruption can be minimised. **Understanding the needs and constraints of passengers on particular routes needs to be done on a case-by-case basis.**
- **Passengers in the survey also wanted there to be adequate bus capacity, adequate staff, good frequencies and basic litter clearing.**
- **Passengers felt coaches were not suitable for replacement services** and that they should not pay the same price for a service that is replaced by a bus.

Appendix B

What kind of information do you call that?

A survey by the Rail Passengers Committee for Southern England of the quality of the information provided by the National Rail Enquiry Service to passengers intending to travel during engineering works found that :

- A successful outcome was achieved in only 32% of enquiries.
- The time of return travel was only checked in 42% of enquiries.
- Timings were open to slight variations.
- In 13% of enquiries, start times of as much as 41 or 60 minutes too early were given.
- Cyclists only received accurate information about the carriage of their machines on substitute buses in 50% of cases.
- When changing to a substitute service is necessary, it is important that customers are informed of the start and end points of this leg of the journey. In this survey that happened only 44% of the time.
- NRES call centres must be discouraged from sheltering behind automatic answering systems when their response times are measured.



LONDON TRANSPORT USERS COMMITTEE

6 Middle Street London EC1A 7JA

Telephone: 020 7505 9000 Fax: 020 7505 9003

www.ltuc.org.uk

Chair: Suzanne May OBE Director: Rufus Barnes

Your Ref:
Our Ref: EBS_Chn

Dear

Rail replacement bus services

This letter is addressed to you as a matter of courtesy. If you have a colleague who is better placed to respond, do please pass it to him/her for attention.

With the seemingly irresistible increase in the number of engineering “possessions” occurring on the railways, the members of this Committee have asked me to undertake an investigation of the industry’s policy and practice regarding the provision of substitute bus services.

The study relates to pre-planned blockades, and not to emergency arrangements introduced at short notice in the event of an accident, power failure or other unforeseen interruption to the normal timetable.

Topics I have been asked to investigate are :

- (a) criteria used for deciding whether, in what form and at what level to provide alternative services (normally by bus)
- (b) policies regarding the provision of advance publicity (including posters, leaflets, press releases, web messages, PA announcements, etc), and its form, content timing and siting
- (c) policies regarding information and assistance on the day, including posters, signage, and staff assistance, both at stations, stops, and on replacement vehicles
- (d) policies regarding the alternative services themselves, including stop locations, vehicle specifications, capacity, frequency, signage (on- and off-board), driver route knowledge, staff supervision, radio communications, monitoring of reliability, and arrangements for passengers with luggage/cycles/wheelchairs, etc.

The London Transport Users Committee is the statutory watchdog, representing the interests of the users of transport provided, procured or licensed by Transport for London, the Underground, Heathrow Express, Eurostar and the national railways in and around London

Nearest National Rail and Underground Stations to the LTUC offices are:
Barbican, Farringdon, City Thameslink and St. Paul's.

Nearest bus routes are:

4, 8, 17, 25, 45, 46, 55, 56, 63, 100, 153, 172, 242, 243 and 521



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Part of the



RAIL PASSENGERS COMMITTEE

Network

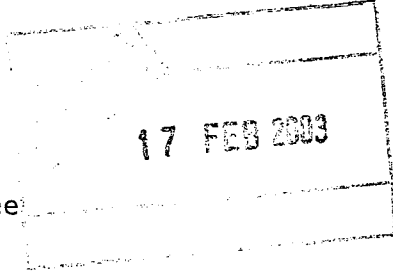
I assume that your company has a manual giving guidance to staff responsible for planning and managing such facilities, and if you are able to provide a copy of (or access to) this, we would find this most helpful. If you have conducted an analysis of lessons learned from any specific recent blockades, and modified your policies in the light of this, details of this too would be greatly appreciated.

I will, of course, treat any information which is commercially sensitive with due discretion, and anonymise any references to your company if so requested.

LTUC believes that this is an important topic, and one which can greatly affect public perceptions of the railways' quality of service. We are keen to help disseminate good practice within the industry. I do hope you will feel able to assist us.

Yours sincerely

Robert Brown
Service Performance Analyst



Robert Brown
Service Performance Analyst
London Transport Users Committee
6 Middle Street
London
EC1A 7JA

Your Ref: EBS/RTK
Our Ref: NR/LTUC/03/002

14 February 2003

Dear Robert

Re: Rail Replacement Bus Services

Thank you for your letter of 21st January 2003, and my apologies for the delay in responding. I have consulted with my colleagues in our Operational Planning team, and we have the following comments to make on the four topics you are investigating:

- a) Whilst this area is primarily the TOC's responsibility, Network Rail would normally be involved in discussions with the TOC(s) involved, at any early stage of development of the Rules of the Route.

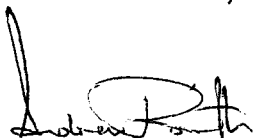
It may be, for example, not appropriate to run buses just between the stations at either end of the possession, if the locations are either

- awkward for terminating trains, or
 - difficult for bus provision (insufficient turning space, low bridges requiring single decker buses only, etc.
- b) This is definitely the TOCs' responsibility to manage, but it is worth noting that the "Informed Traveller" rules apply, i.e. T - 12, which means that publicity should be made widely available at least 12 weeks before the event(s) it is publicising.

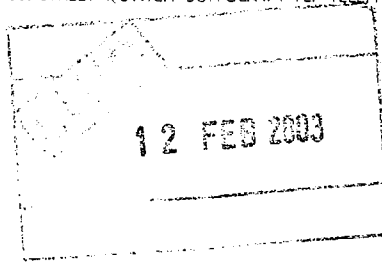
c) and d) These issues are all the responsibility of the TOC(s) to organise and publicise to travellers.

I hope these comments are helpful to you in your piece of research. We would be pleased to see a copy of your conclusions once they are finalised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andrew Smith
National External Development Manager



Anglia

Robert Brown
Service Performance Analyst
LTUC
6 Middle Street
London
EC1A 7JA

11 February 2003

Dear Robert,

RAIL REPLACEMENT BUS SERVICES

Thank you for your letter of 21 January 2003.

I attach a brief summary of our approach to managing the provision of replacement bus services for pre-planned engineering work,

- The process is planned through our normal train planning procedures.
- Where practical we will co-operate with other train operators using our routes, in order to provide the best level of service.
- Publicity is via informed traveller T12, special posters, website, press releases, PA announcements (on train), CIS screens (at stations), production of special leaflets / timetables for major engineering blocks.
- Additional staff are usually provided at interchange points (bus / train), signage as appropriate.
- Regarding the provision of replacement coaches, we have a contract with a single supplier who understands our needs, whom we ensure is able to provide the correct specification of vehicle, capacity, driver knowledge / customer service, etc. All drivers are contactable by radio / mobile telephone.
- We regularly review all such practices at our Service Planning Group meetings.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Meades
Public Relations Manager
Anglia Railways



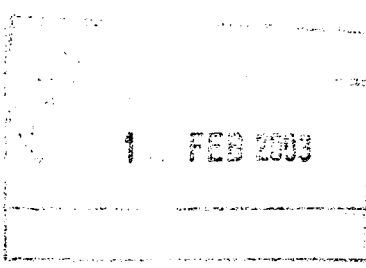
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1993



1996



10 February 2003

Robert Brown
Service Performance Analyst
London Transport Users Committee
6 Middle Street
London
EC1A 7JA

Midland Main Line Limited
Midland House
Nelson Street
Derby
East Midlands
DE1 2SA

Dear Robert

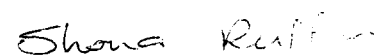
Rail replacement bus services

Taking each point in turn:

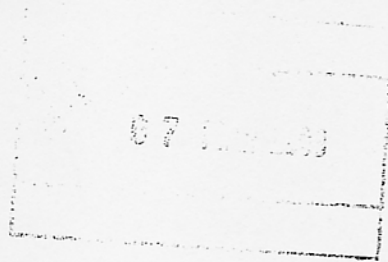
- a) Coaches are used to call at stations that are being missed in the revised timetable, but would ordinarily be captured in the normal timetable.
- b) There is an 'informed traveler' process agreed by the industry, which stipulates that Network Rail will load all changed information on to the Train Service Database (TSDB) 12 weeks prior to the date. This would usually mean that we could open reservations 9 weeks before the date. However, at the moment there's a 7-week arrangement in place, meaning that we're unable to release reservations until about 4/5 weeks before the date. The website will usually be updated about the same time. Posters and other literature are always available at stations a week before the date.
- c) Front line staff are always informed of the revisions and will help customers to the best of their ability. The driver on the coach will know his or her own specific route and timings.
- d) The coaches call at the stations as per the normal timetable. We usually request quotations from a choice of coach providers for 49/53 seat coaches. Midland mainline staff do not travel on the coaches, but station staff will direct customers to the coaches. Passenger feedback provides us with a performance monitor and passengers can make claims under our Charter as with usual journeys. Journey times can be verified using the coach's tachograph. Passengers with luggage or cycles can be accommodated in the coaches, but we order taxis for those that are wheelchair bound.

Please come back to me if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely



Shona Ruffin
Head of Customer & Community Relations
Direct 01332 262881
Fax 01332 263895



Robert Brown
London Transport Users Committee
6 Middle Street
London
EC1A 7JA

Docklands Light Railway

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London E14 0DX

Phone 020 7363 9898

Fax 020 7363 9708

www.dlr.co.uk

8 January 2003

Dear Robert

Re: Rail Replacement Bus Services

Further to your letter, I would give the following information on DLR's arrangements for replacement bus services in connection with possessions of the railway.

Taking your paragraphs in turn

a) Wherever there is a possession of a "leg" of the railway we would always supply a replacement bus service. The level of service supplied would be commensurate with the train service it was replacing. On Sundays for instance the level of service would be lower compared with a weekday. Where we are aware of particular events happening in our area, we would take this into account in the level of services to be provided at particular times of the day e.g. for a concert there would be a need for concentrated services at beginning and end. If there are big events, we would try not to schedule possessions at these times.

Where just one station is closed, it would depend on the location as to what services were provided. For example Heron Quays station was closed for re-building for about 12 months. In this case no replacement was provided as the nearest alternative station was very close and had accessible access. For other locations, a replacement might be necessary and would be provided.

b) As you are probably aware, services on our railway are provided through a franchise arrangement. As part of these arrangements, the franchisee is required to provide appropriate publicity a minimum of three weeks in advance of possession dates. Publicity would include posters, leaflets where there were complex

Docklands Light Railway Limited
trading as Docklands Light Railway
whose registered office is as above.

Registered in England and Wales.
Company number 02052677

VAT number 756 2770 08

Docklands Light Railway Limited is
a company controlled by a local
authority within the meaning of
Part V Local Government and
Housing Act 1989. The controlling
authority is Transport for London

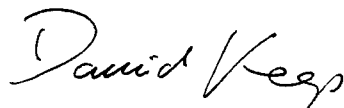
arrangements to get over, advice to local press, web site, announcements on our electronic platform indicators and announcements in trains particularly during the possession to advise passengers of alternative routes. Publicity includes details of location of bus stops used by the replacement bus service.

c) As stated above our staff on the trains give appropriate information and additional staff are deployed at strategic locations to help passengers.

d) Stop locations are as near as possible to the stations closed. We try to make intelligent use of facilities available. For example, we use the bus station adjacent to Blackwall station to provide good facilities for buses to turn and for passengers to access easily. Our franchisee specifies and liaises closely with providers of bus services and in addition to monitoring the service on the day, we analyse any passenger comments/complaints that we receive so that we can learn for the future. We require the bus operator to provide supervision of the service and to be able to react to circumstances on the day. The railway is fully accessible and arrangements are made for accessible vehicles to fill in when the railway is out of action (or indeed where a lift is out of order). We do not accept cycles on the railway and therefore no special replacement facilities are involved.

We should be very interested to see the results of your survey and any lessons we can learn for DLR.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Keep". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Keep
Company Secretary

11 FEB 2003

First 
transforming travel

9th February 2003
Tel: 020 7904 3303

Great Eastern
35 Artillery Lane
London E1 7LP

Mr. Robert Brown,
Service Performance Analyst,
LTUC,
6 Middle Street,
London EC1A 7JA.

Y/r EBS-FGE

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thank you for your letter of 21st January about replacement bus services.

Our tendering process covers any planned engineering work that requires bus replacement. We have contacts with every bus company based in our operating area and to gain admission onto our approved supplier list requires these companies to meet set down criteria covering quality of buses, insurance, availability, supervision by the bus company, route knowledge of drivers and many other factors.

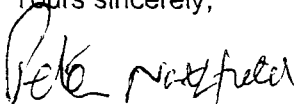
Having been selected for the approved supplier list, a tender document is issued that takes account of the type of vehicles required and the number to meet the known demand – this is based on train counts that we regularly carry out.

Advance publicity is by means of the timetable (providing the usual conditions for possessions have been met), posters at stations a week prior to the event and advance information is on our website. In the event of a major blockade requiring several weeks of replacement buses we would issue an emergency timetable/leaflet. This has not been required for several years but we are already considering this for a possible 8-week blockade in July next year. We will also buy newspaper advertising space for this.

On the day, depending on the situation, directional signs are provided, enhanced supervision is used (our staff and the bus company and, if, for example, Anglia Railways are replacing their services at our stations they also provide supervision).

We make it clear that we cannot carry cycles on replacement bus services. Disabled passengers should make advance arrangements through our customer service centre and we make suitable arrangements for such passengers that may include a taxi. Possessions are always reviewed and this includes how the bus service operated and was managed to enable any shortcomings to be addressed.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Northfield
Head of Corporate Affairs


member

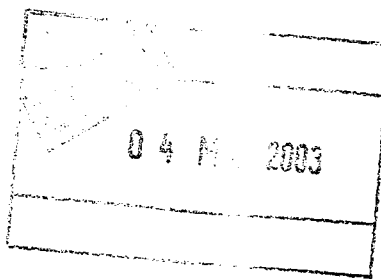
ATOC


The Railway Company
The Railway Company

UTP
Member
member
Mitglied

First Great Eastern
Registered in England number 3007936
Third Floor, Macmillan House
Paddington Station, London W2 1TY

Ref: BrownCR011.RG



28 February 2003

Mr R Brown
London Transport Users Committee
6 Middle Street
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EC1A 7JA

Great Western
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1 Milford Street
Swindon SN1 1HL
Tel: 01793 499400

Direct Tel: 01793 515315
Direct Fax:

Dear Mr Brown,

Thank you for your letter of 21 January 2003, your letter has been passed onto me for response.

The provision of alternative transport is usually decided by how much disruption we are going to cause to customers. Usually we provide alternative transport for such things as engineering works, which are going to have a substantial effect on the running of our services.

Customers are informed of any alterations to services via a number of different lines. Usually any engineering works take place at the weekend, which means that we keep the level of disruption to customers to a minimum. Customers are notified of alterations to services via our timetable alterations pamphlet available from all First Great Western stations (these are usually valid for four weekends e.g. 1 – 23 March).

We also have a daily email bulletin, which we will advertise major engineering works on e.g. Over the Easter weekend Paddington station is going to be closed, this has started to be advertised at the bottom of the email bulletin. Engineering works are also advertised on Newline Extra, a publication which goes out on train once a week. Posters of this are also placed around all major stations and it is uploaded onto our website to inform customers of any problems we may be experiencing. Engineering works posters are also placed around all major stations, which also inform customers of work that will be taking place.

Major engineering works are advertised well in advance, we have been informing customers of the engineering works taking place at Easter for the last month now and will shortly be starting to inform customers of the engineering works taking place over the summer. Engineering works are advertised right up to the date on which they finish, along with alternative transport arrangements and any alterations to services.

The Customer Information Screens will provide customers with information regarding times of buses and where they need to go to catch a bus. Extra staff

will also be around to ensure customers get on the correct buses. Staff do not travel with customers on the buses but there are staff waiting at the stations for customers to arrive.

Usually there will be a couple of buses one which will take customers directly to the final destination and another which will take customers via other stations along the way.

The frequency and the number of customers that buses can hold will all depend on how many customers would usually use these services and how frequently they would normally run e.g. a service which runs at 14.00hrs on a Sunday may only carry 30 customers therefore we would only order one bus and may run this bus a couple times that afternoon.

We only use certain bus companies for alternative transport these companies have been found to meet all safety requirements and the needs of our customers. We have found them to be reliable and the vehicles and drivers to be of an acceptable standard.

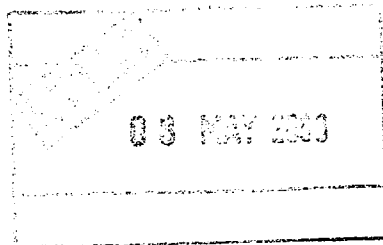
First Great Western does not actually have a company manual giving staff guidance for planning alternative transport. Derek Lloyd our Plan Implementation Manager organises all alternative transport prior to the date for which it is required.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us, I hope this is of some help to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Green', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

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Date:- 6th May 2003

Dear Mr. Brown,

Rail Replacement bus services

Thank you for your letter dated 22nd January 2003. I must apologise for not responding sooner, but I had to give priority to other pressing timetable and Franchise matters earlier in the year.

I understand your interest in Rail Replacement bus services, and I would agree that this trend seems ever-prevalent for pre-planned engineering work which, in itself, seems to increase in duration and complexity.

I answer to your particular questions:-

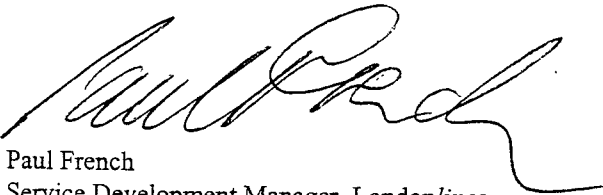
- Broadly, bus replacements will occur when advertised services cannot run either in part or in total. There are occasional exceptions to this; for example, individual stations may be inaccessible, reasonable equivalent scheduled services may mirror the disadvantaged route, or services funded by third parties can be based on rail operation only.
- Providing the nature of the engineering work is known within the industry-agreed timescales, outline publicity should occur eight weeks in advance, route diagram detail should occur four weeks in advance, and service change detail should occur one week in advance. All service alterations will be available on the web once specifics are known. For any major work, separate timetable replacement leaflets and PR activities will be progressed. Londonlines is currently exploring the option of regular weekly press advertisements for the WAGN route.
- In terms of actual operation, Revenue Protection staff will be deployed at key locations, and bus co-ordinators will be commissioned from whichever Operator is supplying the road service. Vehicles should be clearly identified as rail replacement services. However, interchange signage is a concern and, although human presence does help, is an area which needs some attention.
- Rail replacement service specifications are made clear to a panel of selected Bus Operators, and the vehicle type and frequency generally reflects known demand and the usual rail service pattern. Close liaison is maintained with all operators in the event of any deficiency or customer difficulty. In certain cases, formal pan-Operator meetings are held to ensure that qualitative initiatives are maintained. The question of luggage, bicycles, wheelchairs etc can vary depending on the type of operation. For long-haul jobs, special vehicles can be deployed for the conveyance of large or awkward items. However, on the more suburban replacements it is made clear that certain apparatus cannot be conveyed. Staff will do their best to assist disabled customers, although some station locations are more versatile than others in this respect.

I am afraid that I am unable to furnish you with a manual of rail replacement "standards", although the Londonlines contract with National Express for the current Stansted Express Sunday replacement is particularly exhaustively detailed. When vehicle procurement involves a third party, I envisage that this initiative will be perpetuated.

I do hope that this brief narrative will assist you. Please assume that I am responding on behalf of Silverlink, c2c, Wagn and Stansted Express.

If you need to discuss this issue further, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul French", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Paul French
Service Development Manager, Londonlines

Journeys undertaken by: staff and members

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The report is available on our web site: <http://www.ltuc.org.uk/>