



Department
for Transport

Catherine West MP
House of Commons
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From the Minister of State
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13 July 2023

Dear Catherine,

Thank you for your letter of 6 July to Mark Harper, on behalf of your constituents, about changes to railway station ticket offices. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this issue.

I appreciate you sharing your constituents' concerns over the impacts caused by the proposed closure of Hornsey and Wood Green station ticket offices.

Together with the rail industry, we want to improve and modernise the experience for passengers by moving staff out from behind the ticket office screens to provide more help and advice in customer focused roles and additional support to those who need it. An estimated 99% of all transactions made at ticket offices last year could have been made at Ticket Vending Machines or online. We have been clear that no currently staffed station will be unstaffed as a result of this reform.

To propose any changes to the opening hours, or the closure of ticket offices, train operating companies must follow the process set out in the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA).

Train operators must consult on any proposed changes, advertising them at the relevant stations and inviting members of the public who wish to comment on the proposal to write to the relevant passenger body (Transport Focus or London TravelWatch) within a 21-day public consultation period.

Under the TSA, when proposing major changes to ticket office opening hours (including closures), operators are required to take into account the adequacy of the proposed alternatives in relation to the needs of passengers who are

elderly or disabled, and to include this in the notice of the proposal sent to other operators and passenger groups. We would also expect operators to consider other equality-related needs and make this clear in their consultation.

To ensure your constituents' views are taken into consideration, I would ask them to send their comments on the proposed changes to Transport Focus or London TravelWatch at the same freepost address: RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ, PO Box 5594, Southend on Sea, SS1 9PZ. Further information about the proposed changes will be available at your constituents' local stations and at the train operating company's website.

The UK's rail network is one of the safest in Europe and we will never compromise the safety of passengers on our railways. As the industry takes forward vital reforms, safety remains a top priority for all. Moving staff out of ticket office is expected to make them more visible to passengers.

There is no evidence to suggest that the removal of ticket offices on London Underground had any effect on safety or crime at a station. British Transport Police continues to support the rail network to ensure the safety and security of both passengers and rail staff.

Regarding ticketing technology, barcode ticketing is already available on many routes across the country and we are investing to roll it out across outstanding areas of the network, including c2c, Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Railway by the end of this year.

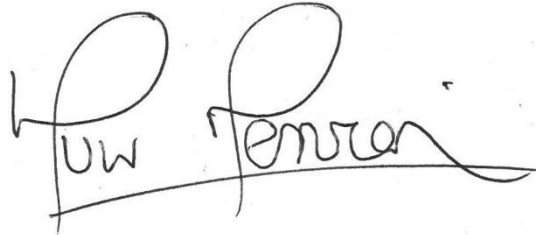
We have committed to extending pay-as-you-go (PAYG) to a further 52 stations in the South East by the end of the year, and are also currently working with Greater Manchester and the West Midlands are on the PAYG commitments in the trailblazer devolution deals, with pilots to be agreed by the end of this year.

As modern ticketing and payment methods are rolled out more widely, we will work with industry to ensure that all are able to buy a ticket, including those who need to use cash, or do not have access to a smartphone or the internet. We are also looking at upgrading ticket vending machines across the network so that the full range of fares and tickets are available for passengers to buy. Improvements have been and continue to be made.

The industry will work to avoid compulsory redundancies by redeploying some existing staff and offering voluntary redundancy for those who would like this option in the first instance. Exact staffing arrangements will vary by train operator and station, and will be subject to ongoing discussions with staff and their trade union representatives.

Thank you once again for your letter. I hope this response has been helpful.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Merriman'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

HUW MERRIMAN MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT