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Lee Waters MS
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

29 March 2022

Dear Deputy Minister,

I am writing regarding the experience of passengers travelling on a TfW rail service yesterday afternoon (the 12:31 Manchester Piccadilly to Milford Haven), who were involved in a significant disruption incident.

We are acutely aware of the impact on passengers as a result of this rare and exceptional disruptive event, and we know that they will be concerned as to how we responded to the incident. We know that this has been raised directly with the Welsh Government – including at today's Plenary session, by Members of the Senedd who were travelling on the service.

As a result of this incident, I have personally initiated an urgent investigation into the matter to understand the fundamental issues which may have led to it occurring. The scope of this investigation will include the following:

- The root cause of the failure of the initial train, both within the control of TfW and our supply chain
- The provision of information to customers on board all affected services, including via frontline colleagues, automated services, and digital/social media
- Our ability to secure rail replacement services from our supply chain within a timely manner
- The ongoing support to all customers affected and colleagues involved.

An initial review into the incident shows:

- The incident saw a 2-car class 175 train break down just north of Abergavenny at 16.02. An empty 3-car class 175 train was used to rescue the train from the South end.
- TfW initiated a 'Gold On-Call' response to the incident, ensuring that supporting the trains and passengers affected was a priority for all teams. Passengers were removed from the train as soon as it was safe to do so, and extra staff were deployed to the station to support them.



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- The trains in front and behind the service immediately sought to assist but were unable to, as the train in front was not the same kind of train, nor was the next train travelling northbound, and the train crew was unable to unlock the train's emergency brakes.
- At this point, road transportation was ordered, and a Conductor Manager was dispatched to support an evacuation of the train, alongside a Fitter (an on-site train engineer). Network Rail blocked the line to allow this to take place.
- The train driver managed to unlock the emergency breaks before the fitter arrived and travelled slowly to Abergavenny, where passengers were unloaded at 18.45. Refreshments were provided at Abergavenny.
- Unfortunately, TfW's supplier struggled with sourcing road transport, after exhausting all options, only one coach was able to be sourced. Some passengers were provided with taxis to complete their onward journey. The rail replacement supplier continued to seek coaches and four more were dispatched to Hereford.
- The incident had a knock-on effect, both because the railway line was blocked and because many members of train crew reached their working limits.
- An ambulance was called to assist a passenger who is reported to have fainted.

Our investigation will provide further detail in addition to our initial findings and we will ensure any learning is taken forward as soon as possible, to prevent these issues from occurring in the future.

I would be happy to meet with the Members to discuss their personal experience and concerns – and those raised on behalf of other passengers who were travelling with them – to help them understand TfW's initial and ongoing response, and to feed their experiences into our review.

We will work to ensure that customers are fully aware of their rights to compensation and will actively encourage them to contact us. For those who were affected by the incident, and given the exceptional circumstances, we will apply our compensation policies as generously as possible.

I will ensure that you and Officials are kept updated on further findings.

Yours sincerely,

James Price
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive