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Mr Philip Dominey  
Stakeholder Manager  
South West Trains  
By email

Dear Mr Dominey

Aural announcements at Waterloo Station

I am writing further to our conversation of 12 September. I understand that, until the morning of 12 September South West Trains (SWT) intended to run a trial at Waterloo Station which would involve turning off aural announcements for train arrival and platform number information. You explained that in place of the normal announcements, you would make an announcement every few minutes directing visually impaired customers to seek assistance from a member of staff in order to find the arrival platform for the service they wished to use.

Aural announcements are a valuable tool to many passengers and are often relied upon by those with visual impairments. The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has told us that aural announcements allow many people with visual impairments to use trains without assistance. They can empower people with disabilities to make confident journeys and through that contribute to decreasing the many barriers that people with disabilities face in everyday life.

As a condition your Station Licence, you are required to have a Disabled Peoples Protection Policy (DPPP), which is approved by the ORR. As you know, we are currently reviewing your policy as part of the annual re-approval process.

We would remind you that the Guidance on how to write a DPPP<sup>1</sup> (the Guidance) includes a requirement for the provision of aural information at stations. At part C6.2 it states that operators should provide details of their policies for the provision of aural information at stations and that: "This must include a commitment to providing, wherever possible, clear consistent aural and visual information of train departures and other relevant messages, particularly in the event of delays or disruptions."

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<sup>1</sup> [http://orr.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/5604/how-to-write-your-dppp.pdf](http://orr.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/5604/how-to-write-your-dppp.pdf)

Your draft DPPP passenger document, submitted to us on 5 August 2014, stated that all of your stations have real time train running information systems on all platforms and booking halls. It went on to commit to making announcements that were clear and easy to understand.

Would you please explain now how your policy of conducting a trial for the removal of aural announcements at Waterloo Station is consistent with your obligations.

We would be concerned to see any measure introduced that would have a negative impact on the accessibility of the rail network.

Yours sincerely

**John Trippier**