

Marcus Clements

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Alan Penlington
Customer Experience Director
South Western Railway
(By Email)



Dear Alan

Compliance with Condition 5 of your Station Licence and GB Statement of National Regulatory Provisions: Passenger

I am writing to you regarding the performance of South Western Railway (SWR) and its compliance with its obligations under the Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP).

In its DPPP, which we approved in August 2017, SWR committed to providing an Assisted Travel service which enables disabled and older people to arrange, in advance, the assistance they require for boarding and alighting trains and moving through your staffed stations. In 2017-18, the last year for which we have figures, SWR received over 73,000 booked assistance requests. As you will be aware, ORR has commissioned ongoing research into the experience of passengers who have booked assistance. The most recent research results show that at the stations managed by SWR, in rail periods 1-8 in 2018-19, only 78% of passengers surveyed received all or some of the assistance they had booked in advance¹. We were particularly concerned that, although almost all reached their destination, 16% of passengers stated they had received none of the assistance they had booked. We note that SWR was also below the national average for 'all assistance received' in 2017-18.

Your DPPP also states "*[t]here is a member of staff on every train who can help you on or off the train to the platform*". Transport Focus has received complaints of multiple failed assistances at Wareham station, details of which have already been shared with SWR. It is possible that the assistance failures at Wareham may be indicative of the challenges faced by staff in providing assistance at other unstaffed stations.

It is clear that the ongoing level of reliability of service for passengers who require assistance is currently below that which we, and passengers expect. This can have a negative impact on their confidence of using assistance services. Therefore, I shall be grateful if you will explain the reasons for the shortfall in performance together with the steps you plan to take to improve the reliability of the assistance provided to passengers at stations, including those such as Wareham, and on-board trains to achieve the necessary compliance with requirements.

¹ Based on a sample of 116 passengers surveyed by Breaking Blue. Data for the entire 2018-19 year will be published in the ORR consumer report, Measuring Up, in July.

Next steps

I shall be grateful if you will provide me with your response by **Friday 12 April 2019**. Please note that this letter and your reply will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and flourishes, likely representing the name Marcus Clements.

Marcus Clements