



Department
for Transport

From the Minister of State
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Dear Colleague,

28 June 2018

Thank you for contacting me about the ongoing disruption on Thameslink and Great Northern services and providing me with feedback from your constituents.

We are of course aware of the ongoing frustration the disruption is causing passengers and this has been recently compounded by the hot June weather.

Please pass on to your constituents my assurance that the Department for Transport's first priority is to restore the reliability of services across the network – which on the Thameslink and Great Northern lines includes a focus on disruption hot-spots.

We are taking action and working with GTR and Network Rail to stabilise and improve services as quickly as possible. In the meantime we are working on programmes to compensate passengers and have commissioned reviews of the implementation of the May 2018 timetable.

You have raised the issue of overcrowding for passengers travelling on peak-time services and the possibility of opening up extra seats and space in first-class carriages. I agree this is a sensible option.

I have asked GTR to make sure that during peak-time travel, passengers can access any seat and space on trains, including first class carriages. This applies to all Thameslink and Great Northern services. I expect this will be implemented from 29 June 2018 and to continue until 15 July 2018, when a temporary timetable will make services more reliable for passengers.

I have asked GTR to convey this message to their staff and passengers quickly so customers are aware of the extra space available to them.

Access to seats and space in first-class carriages was already happening on an ad-hoc basis and I am hopeful this decision will help give passengers the more comfortable journeys they deserve. First class passengers travelling on peak services are encouraged to apply to GTR to have the first class premium refunded on their tickets.

We understand this is a simple and small step in the right direction when things are not working as they should. I am confident that once we have stabilised services, passengers will start to see the benefits of more frequent trains and better connections the new timetable is designed to deliver. Please be assured that I and my Department are doing everything we can to ensure passengers get the service they deserve from our railway.

JO JOHNSON MP