



Department
for Transport

Department for Transport
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Our Ref: 414116

8 November 2022

Damian Eaton

By email to:

damian.eaton@stockport.gov.uk

Dear Mr Eaton,

Thank you for your email of 13 October 2022 to the Rt Hon Kevin Foster MP, former Minister of State for Transport about ticket office closures. Your correspondence has been forwarded to the Rail Passenger Services team for reply.

As you are aware, we want to ensure the railway is as accessible as possible for all passengers, and that all our reforms, as outlined in the Plan for Rail¹ will be centred around simplifying and improving the customer experience. To help to achieve this, Government is embarking on a major overhaul to the way in which rail travel is bought and paid for. It is imperative that passengers should have access to a ticketing system that is user-friendly, where help and advice is available, and is accessible to all.

No currently staffed station will be unstaffed as a result of any reform. But there may be opportunities to bring some ticket office staff out from behind the windows to provide face to face passenger assistance around the station.

As modern ticketing and payment methods are rolled out more widely, we will continue to ensure that all passengers who need to use cash, or do not have access to a smartphone or the internet, can buy a ticket and have access to help and advice from a trained representative.

Benefits to modernising ticketing and retailing include increased accessibility (customers can buy a ticket when and where they want to), durability, reduced queues at ticket offices and vending machines, and the ability to enable train operators to offer products and services that passengers want such as auto delay-repay and multi-buy discounts such as carnet-style tickets.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-railways-williams-shapps-plan-for-rail>

The period for public engagement on changes at ticket offices is set out in the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA), which the Government is not party to and does not set out. This is an established process that would happen regardless of reform agreed by Government. The TSA regulates what train operators can do in terms of fares, ticketing and retailing across the network.

Part of this process requires train operators to put notices at stations, advising passengers of any proposals to change ticket office hours or close ticket offices, and what any changes could mean for them. If passengers have any objections these can be raised via the passenger bodies (Transport Focus and London Travel Watch) for consideration.

Thank you again for contacting the Department. We hope this reply has been helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence Team, Rail Passenger Services Directorate