

## **Supplementary written evidence submitted by Great Western Railway (GWR) (RTC0031)**

Network Rail contacted us after their recent appearance at the Transport Select Committee regarding a question you asked about services from Oxford on the 7 June. On investigation it became clear that as the train operator concerned we were best placed to reply.

I should start by introducing myself as the Head of Public Affairs for GWR. [...] should you wish to discuss this event or indeed anything about GWR services, or future plans.

I am really sorry for the delay and lack of information at Oxford. There was a fatality at Didcot Parkway at 2030 that evening involving the 19:48 London Paddington to Worcester Shrub Hill service.

This led to the closure of the line through Oxford while police and the Coroner's office attended the scene. The train involved was moved at 2159. It took a sometime from then to start moving services through to Oxford and we are really sorry for the long delay, and the lack of clear information.

We sent the first message to our website at 2035 to advise customers that services were on hold. This was also displayed on station information boards and communicated via social media and through station staff. As it became clear that the incident would take some time to resolve, efforts were made to provide onward road transport by our Customer Control team. Despite attempts being made to source coaches/buses from an increasingly wider area none were available for us to use that evening.

This did mean that although staff at the station made announcements we were not able to give customers information about when they would be able to continue their journeys.

We fully appreciate how frustrating this is, and we are committed through our Customer Experience During Disruption (CEDD) procedures to provide as much detail as we can about when customers will be able to restart their journeys. This should be done as quickly as possible. Where we don't have full information we should explain why. On this occasion the emergency services were not able to give a firm time for the line to reopen and as we struggled to find coaches we were also not able to offer an alternative service.

We are concerned that there was not a good flow of information between the GWR Control team and the station, particularly on the difficulties sourcing coaches. This meant customers did not have information about the efforts being made and we will be investigating further to make sure this is improved for the future. We are also working with our bus and coach provider to look at how we can improve the response from companies in the area for short notice provision in the evening.

We would welcome any further feedback on the way the incident was handled by station staff, or indeed by on board staff once the service resumed. We want to learn from the incident and we will be happy to look into any further specific concerns. These can be sent to me, or if you prefer directly to Mark Hopwood our Managing Director

This was not a good experience, we should have done far better and I am sorry for the inconvenience and frustration caused.

*9 August 2016*