

15<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Stakeholder,

### **Stabilisation of TransPennine Express services**

I hope you are well. I am pleased to have been appointed as Interim Managing Director at TransPennine Express (TPE), following the transfer of the business to TransPennine Trains Ltd which is a UK Government DOHL company, and look forward to working with you. TPE is an important train company due to the social and economic connectivity it provides to the major towns and cities across the North of England and into Scotland for the millions of customers it serves each year.

When TPE transferred to the ownership of DOHL on 28th May, we said that our immediate priority would be to re-set relationships, re-engage colleagues and review operations, in order to restore performance and improve reliability as quickly as possible and support the delivery of the Transpennine Route Upgrade. We understand that current service levels are not nearly good enough. Indeed, they have got worse for several reasons we inherited, as we advised they would just before we stepped in.

The issues facing the business are deep rooted and one of the core challenges we face is that we have at least 5,000 outstanding training days for drivers which is a consequence of the TPE operation being made very complicated over the years, as well as restrictions on the use of Rest Day Working over the past 18 months which has hindered driver training. Only 50% of TPE drivers are currently equipped to drive the trains and routes in their roster. The lack of qualified driver availability is the main contributory factor in ongoing service cancellations.

Following recent discussions with ASLEF, I can advise that we have reached agreement with the Union for it to suspend its current Action Short of a Strike and to reinstate the previously agreed Rest Day Working agreement. This is an important step forward in resetting relationships and I welcome the collaborative approach taken by ASLEF.

This agreement, going forward, will help to reduce the current backlog of driver training and in turn contribute to the delivery of improved reliability of TPE services. Whilst it does not remove all the issues that TPE is facing, it is a positive step forward. As we have already stated it will take a time for passengers to see an improvement in performance of the railway, but I hope this can be seen as a welcome step forward towards stabilisation.



**Rail Delivery Group**



We are also working through many other aspects of an operational review, in which this agreement plays an important role, to inform a new stabilisation plan, the details of which will be shared with stakeholders by September. We are leaving no stone unturned or lever untouched as part of that review, and while there might be hard decisions to be taken, I assure you that if it can have a direct and sustained impact on reducing cancellations, we will not hesitate in taking that action.

In terms of other matters affecting service delivery, prior to the transfer TPE were able to resolve their local dispute with the RMT which had affected services operated on Sundays. I am pleased to advise that on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June we reintroduced 51 additional services on Sundays for an initial trial period of eight weeks. This is good news for our customers, the environment, and the economy of the north of England and into Scotland, as it will support and enable additional leisure journeys by train over the summer.

I hope that these initial steps taken to deliver on our commitment to reduce cancellations and reset relationships is welcomed. I give you my personal commitment that I will be transparent with you on this journey and will be ready to be scrutinised on decision making and the effectiveness of our work.

I look forward to working with you and wish to thank you for your support as we continue with the hard work of re-setting operations and relationships that are critical to the success of TPE in reducing cancellations for customers across the North of England and into Scotland.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Jackson  
Interim Managing Director

