

Report no 8a

**North Wales Coast
Chester to Shrewsbury
Cambrian main
And Cambrian Coast line
Report**



Cllr I Hodge Cllr N Davies
Cllr Helen Roberts Cllr Alyn Ashworth
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Cllr V Blondek Robert Robinson (Secretary)

Approved on 20th October 2023

For more information or interviews please contact the secretary. 07767 267830 or email supercommuter@mailcom



FOREWORD.

The railways are represented by liaison committees and user groups covering most if not all of the lines in the UK. There was a strong liaison committee in place for the Cambrian Lines, a less strong one for the Shrewsbury-Chester line and nothing in place for the North Wales Coast.

With the introduction of new rail timetables supported by new trains there is to be extensive change over the coming few years. Particularly with changes in travel patterns and rail usage.

The Cambrian Lines has now combined with the North Wales Coast lines to form a single liaison committee taking an overview of the network between Mid and North Wales.

This report sets out the findings of surveys carried out in August 2023 and covers:

- i) Train usage
- ii) Travel patterns
- iii) Customer service
- iv) Trains and timetabling
- v) Comparisons between the current and proposed services

The main report will cover the results and conclusions from the surveys with evidence. There will also be a more detailed report on each survey conducted attached to the main report.

There will be another survey completed in the autumn to read alongside this one completed in the summer months. When the new 197 stock is introduced fully another set of surveys will be completed to compare the results. However, from the findings of this report actions may be required earlier as the traffic figures in our view are at DANGEROUS levels on many trains.

Finally the report offers an objective view with recommendations.

Due to the findings of this report a copy will be issued to Transport for Wales, Welsh Government, Avanti and the Health and Safety Executive.



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1. The North & Mid Wales Association of Local Councils

The Association was originally formed over 45 years to represent the residents in North Wales. In the last 25 years this has expanded to include Mid Wales.

The current membership comprises over 30 Town or Community Councils covering a whole range of communities who are full members. In addition there are 20 associate members with particular transport interests)

The Association meets every three months with all members present and every three months an executive meet. The day to day running of the Association is vested in the secretary.

In more recent times the Association has set up a particular interest section with regard to transport.

There are two transport committees within the Association which are:

The North Wales Coast Transport Group (Chair Cllr Ian Hodge)
(Chester-Holyhead, Llandudno – Blaenau Ffestiniog and
Bidston-Wrexham lines)

The Cambrian Lines Group (Chair Cllr Trevor Roberts)
(Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth with the Cambrian Coast)

These groups meet twice a year and in addition meet twice a year together.

Invited to the meetings are also our local MP's, Senedd Members, Transport for Wales, Avanti, Network Rail and the Cambrian Partnership.

Since 2103 the Cambrian Lines have conducted many surveys and where possible this report compares the current survey to these as appropriate.

For the North Wales Coast and Shrewsbury-Chester lines this report is the first but will be measured against future surveys as time progresses.

The survey has been conducted and put together by volunteers with the support of Transport for Wales.



2. Introduction and history

2.1 Introduction

The Cambrian Lines have seen many changes in recent years from the introduction of the new signalling system to the introduction of an improved timetable introduced in May 2015. This is the first of the combined Cambrian Lines, Shewsbury-Chester and North Wales Coast lines have been combined into a full survey with a joint report.

2.2 Brief history

The Welsh rail services have been covered for many years by a separate franchise along with further trains from Paddington – South Wales/Hereford and from Euston - Holyhead along the North Coast.

Wales and Borders held the franchise in the early 2000's followed by Arriva Trains Wales until a few years ago when Transport for Wales was formed being Welsh Government owned.

Transport for Wales has had a difficult start with many trains ageing, not enough stock being available along with the effects of the Covid epidemic.

Unlike the Arriva Trains franchise (based upon no growth) when the new franchise were giving their presentations part of the 'sales pitch' by all of them was that Welsh Government was looking to 'future proof' the rail services with increased capacity. This report will address some of these issues within its content.

2.3 Current rail services

The current rail services have the following features:

- i) The Cambrian Lines has more trains so that there is an hourly service in peak periods.
- ii) Many trains are short (i.e. two cars) and are extensively overcrowded.
- iii) Lack of rolling stock (partly the issues with the class 175 units, partly due to slow arrival of the new trains and in our view lack of good management).

Continued....

- iv) Journeys using class 150 units is not uncommon.
- v) Cancellations and delayed trains have become common place.
- vi) Information both on the stations and on board the trains is unreliable and often gives incorrect or conflicting information.
- vii) Investment into the infrastructure has been extensive.
- viii) Plans to open some more stations at Deeside, Wrexham and Holywell have been announced and a new station has been completed at Bow Street.
- ix) Some station improvements have been completed and others about to be completed (i.e. Newtown Lifts)
- x) Progress in many areas is slow and cumbersome.

2.4 Proposed rail services

The proposed rail services have the following features:

- i) New and faster trains.
- ii) The new trains are good for commuter traffic but not long distance journeys with many issues (noted elsewhere in the report).
- iii) Improved timetables in many areas but with some loss of capacity identified.
- iv) Metro systems are being introduced.
- v) Number of units due to arrive are not enough to meet the growing public demand as demonstrated by this report.

2.5 Working together

The relationship between the rail operating companies and the liaison groups continues to be good with worthwhile exchanges of views.

However, the liaison groups would like to see more notice taken of the real issues. It is too common to hear later the statement 'we have learned from it'.



3. Aims and objectives of this report

The aims and objectives of this report are:

- i) To compare customer satisfaction regarding rail travel with surveys carried out over past years to ascertain their views and to assess how well the railway companies are doing.
- ii) To take specific days and assess performance with regard to time keeping, cancellations and other timetable matters which affect the public on the lines surveyed.
- iii) To assess various aspects of the experience of travelling by train and to observe matters of importance.
- iv) To assess passenger numbers on the lines surveyed and to compare same with the past and to assess what effect such numbers will have in relation to the new 197 class trains due to coming effect.
- v) To make recommendations as to what might be considered due to the results of this report.
- vi) To make the survey available to Westminster and Cardiff governments, rail operators, councillors and the general public through publication of the final report.

The surveys the subject of this report were carried out as follows:

Friday 11 th August	Chester-Shrewsbury Lines
Saturday 12 th August	Cambrian Coast Line
Monday 14 th August	Cambrian Main Line
Friday 18 th August	North Wales Coast Line (part 1)
Friday 25 th August	North Wales Coast Line (part 2)



4. Survey method

4.1 Method statement

The survey method adopted is manual with people conducting the surveys on the trains and gathering information during the day of the surveys.

The individual train times on the day were measured by updates issued by the rail companies. A copy of the survey instructions is set out at appendix A.

4.2 Methods used

The survey was carried out as follows:

- a) 5 days on board train services between:
 - Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth.
 - Machynlleth and Pwllheli.
 - Chester and Shrewsbury (Birmingham lines)
 - Chester and Holyhead (Birmingham lines)
- b) A meeting of the Association to gather local council views.
- c) A meeting of the Youth over the area so that they can share their experiences and views.

The surveyors did not express views but gathered information. The results of the surveys are based upon evidence gained.



5. North Wales Coast

5.1 Date of survey

The survey was completed by Cllr Helen Roberts and Cllr Alyn Ashworth on Friday 18th August 2023 and by Cllr Ian Hodge with Cllr Norma Davies on Friday 25th August 2023.

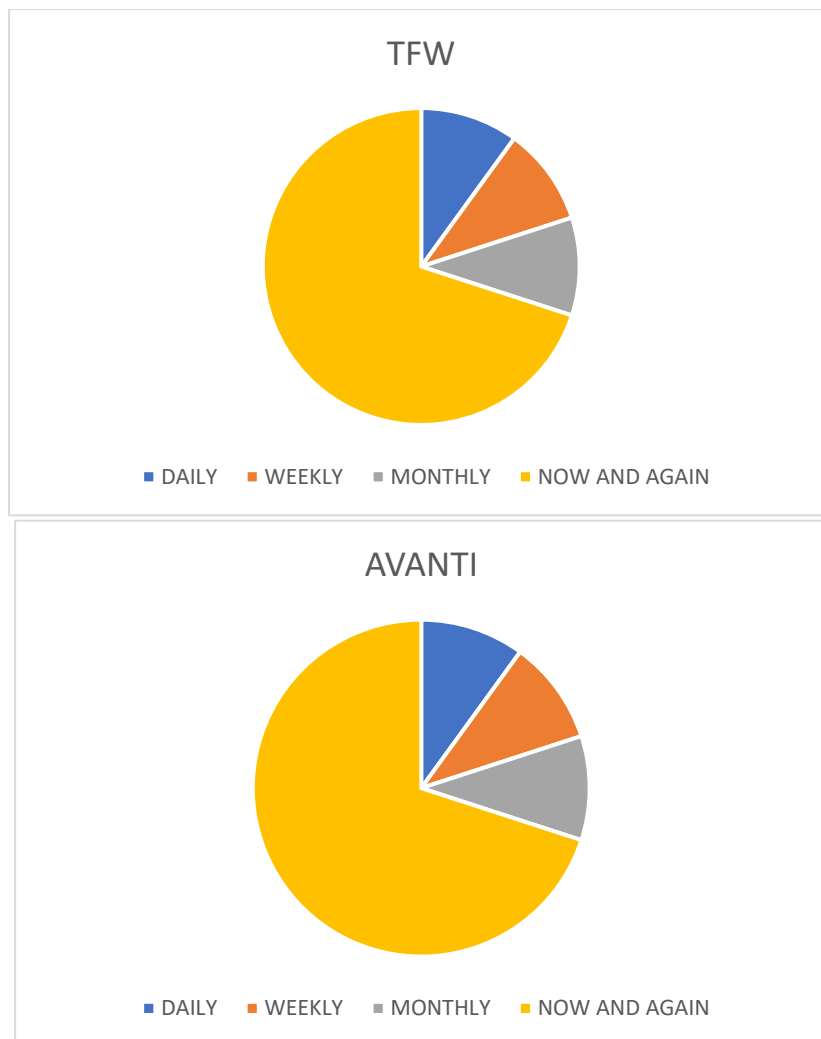
5.2 Overall results of survey

TRAVEL PATTERNS - REASON FOR JOURNEY



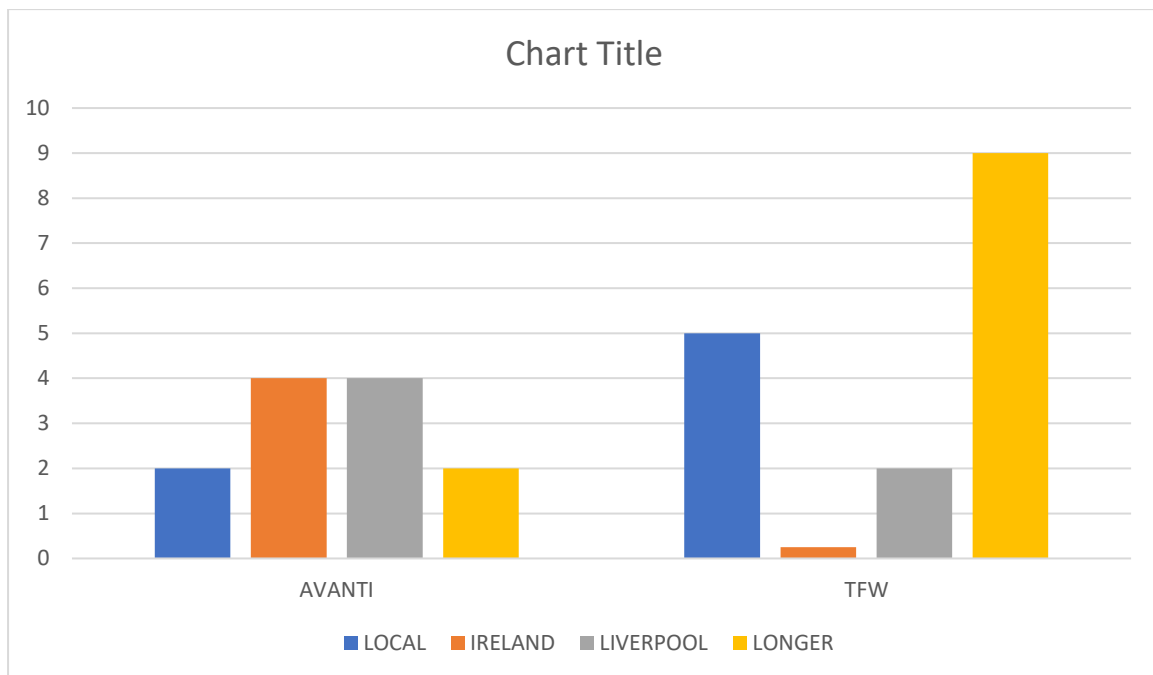
Note: a large drop in commuter and business traffic and big increase in leisure travel. Reasons given are around reliability. There were no travellers who were doing so for medical reasons.

TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW OFTEN PEOPLE TRAVEL



NOTE – from enquiries talking to passengers the drop in regular train use is due to reliability and overcrowding (Covid is still an issue for many). The number of occasional travellers is now the majority and for leisure use.

TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW LONG IS THERE JOURNEY



NOTE – The longer journey pattern is in line with the reasons for travel and frequency of travel.

TRAIN TIMES

During the days (taking all trains through this route) the following reliability pattern emerged:

TRAIN PERFORMANCE

On time	44%
Up to 5 minute late	22%
Up to 10 minutes late	10%
Up to 20 minutes late	15%
Over 20 minutes late	8%
Cancelled for all or part of journey	1%

TRAIN CAPACITY

The numbers of people on the trains at each station along the survey route were counted and recorded. The results are shown on the chart below. The second column shows the comparison between the current (4 car 158) which is to be replaced with a two car 197 unit.

Station	Cars	Class	Timetabled time	Depart	Passengers
Flint	2	197	0839	0840	39
Prestatyn	2		0852	0855	42
Rhyl	2		0858	0901	32
Abergele	2		0904	0906	33
Colwyn	2		0912	0914	27
Llandudno	2		0918	0921	38
Conway	2		0921	0925	35
Penmaenmawr	2		0927	0932	40
Llandfairfechan	2		0931	0935	39
Bangor	2		0941	0944	18
Holyhead	2		1009	1010	18
Holyhead	2		1040	1040	52
Valley	2		1046	1047	52
Bangor	2		1109	1110	Full standing
Conway	2		1124	1125	Full standing
Llandudno	2		1128	1129	Full standing
Colwyn Bay	2		1134	1136	Full standing
Rhyl	2		1144	1149	Full standing
Prestatyn ***	2		1149	1155	Full standing
Flint	2		1202	1204	Full standing

*** Passengers appear to have been prevented from boarding in Prestatyn

Note 0939 service ex Cardiff and 1040 service ex Holyhead to Cardiff.

NOTE – KEY to charts

Black- dangerous levels over 100% seating taken

Red-overcrowded Over 80% seating taken

Very busy Over 70% seating taken

Busy Over 60% seating taken

Space available Under 60% seating taken

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

From the observations made by the surveyors during their journey the following were of note:

Toilets were clean and working.

Standing room only on some services.

Security guards at Prestatyn to stop people boarding the overcrowded trains.

When trains are very overcrowded it was noticed that people were leaning against the doors with no space to move back. With so many people close to the doors the danger of people falling out is greater and with the gaps and height of the stop off is a hazard. On commuter trains people are more aware of this, however, on long distance journeys people forget.

The general view is that severely overcrowded trains are unsafe and bordering on dangerous – maybe even illegal. Where there is a mitigation, it should be put in place – i.e. more capacity.

FULL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

Copies of survey forms and date are retained by the Association but are available for inspection by arrangement.

The executive summary sets out the results of the survey taking into account all the lines covered.

CUSTOMER SERVICE on the North Wales Coast

From the papers returned on the day the following were the results of the customer service survey:

Key	Red	Very poor
	Brown	Poor
	Yellow	Average
	Blue	Good
	Dark green	Very Good

		AVANTI	TFW
1	Are your trains usually dependable?	4.1	3.4
2	Are your trains usually on time?	3.9	3.7
3	Are your trains clean?	3.8	4.0
4	Are your trains comfortable?	3.7	3.6
5	Are your trains overcrowded?	3.6	3.1
6	Are the toilets good?	3.0	3.2
7	Is there enough luggage space?	3.0	3.4
8	Were the staff helpful & friendly?	3.6	4.5
9	Was the information good before your journey?	4.3	4.0
10	Was the information on your journey good?	4.4	4.2
11	Did your station have good parking?	3.9	3.3
12	Did your station have adequate ticket facilities?	3.1	3.9
13	Did your train have easy access from the platform?	4.3	4.4
14	Did your train have good real time information?	4.3	4.6

Overall customer satisfaction is better than expected. Apart from overcrowding identified, luggage space and toilets the results are good.

Mixed feelings about train reliability – however this has to be measured against lack of regular users.



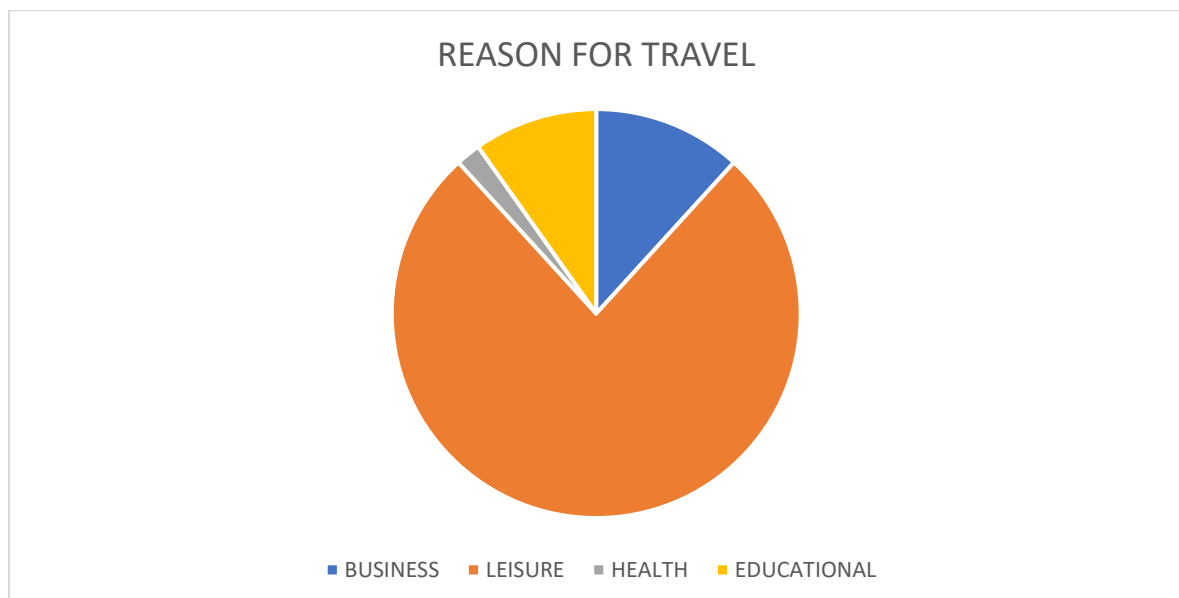
6. Chester-Shrewsbury

6.1 Date of survey

The survey was completed by Cllr Vivienne Blondek and Robert Robinson on Friday 11th August 2023.

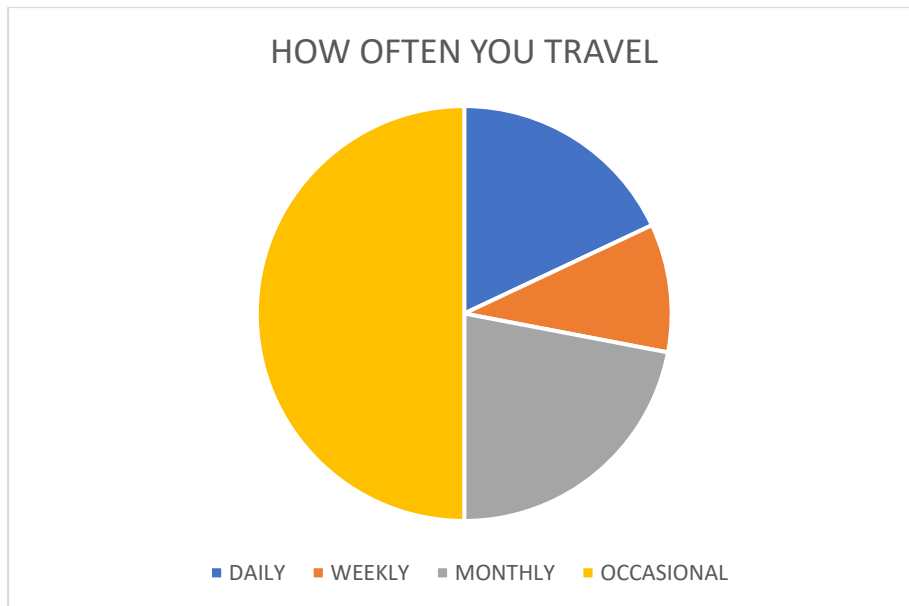
6.2 Overall results of survey

TRAVEL PATTERNS - REASON FOR JOURNEY



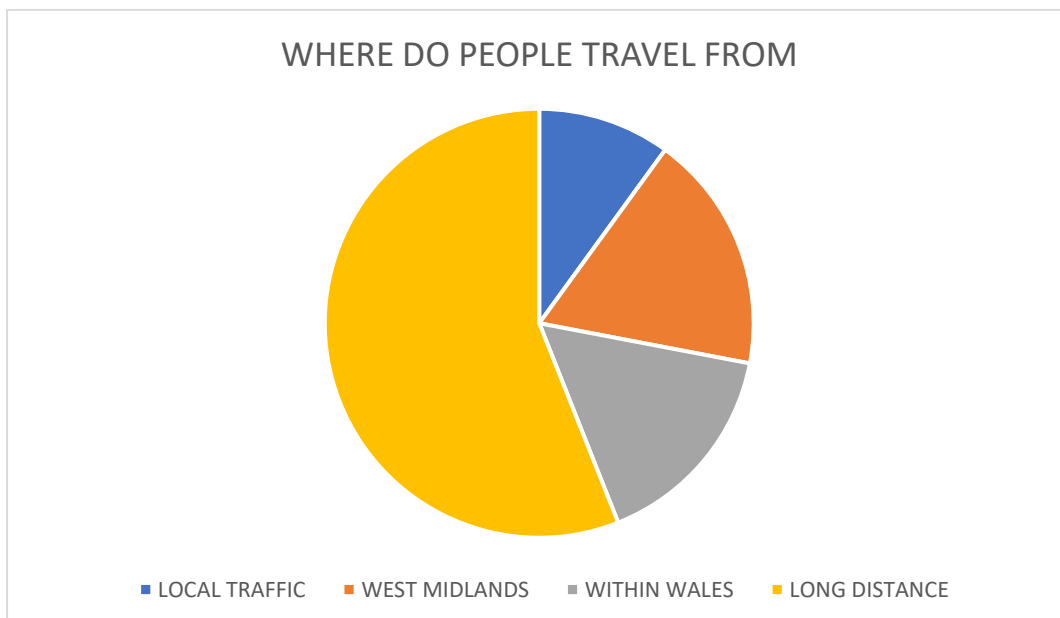
Note: a large drop in commuter traffic and big increase in leisure travel.

TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW OFTEN PEOPLE TRAVEL



NOTE – from enquiries talking to passengers the drop in regular train use is due to reliability and overcrowding (Covid is still an issue for many).

TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW LONG IS THERE JOURNEY



NOTE – The longer journey pattern is in line with the reasons for travel and frequency of travel.

TRAIN TIMES

During the day (taking all trains through this route) the following reliability pattern emerged:

Trains on time or up to 1 minute late	49%
Trains up to 5 minutes late	15%
Trains up to 10 minutes late	7%
Trains up to 20 minutes late	10%
Trains over 20 minutes late	10%
Cancelled altogether	10%

TRAIN CAPACITY

The numbers of people on the trains at each station along the survey route were counted and recorded. The results are shown on the chart below. The second column shows the comparison between the current (4 car 158) which is to be replaced with a two car 197 unit.

1025 Departure and 1525 Departure

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	276	116	276	116
TRAIN TYPE	4 car 158	197 2 car	4 car 158	197 2 car
SHREWSBURY	221	217	139	139
GOBOWEN	147	147	141	141
CHRIK	157	157	144	144
RUABON	163	163	148	148
WREXHAM	190	190	145	145
CHESTER	232	232	155	155

1224 Departure and 1650 Departure

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	204	116	276	116
TRAIN TYPE	3 car 175	197 2 car	4 car 158	197 2 car
CHESTER	187	187	186	186
WREXHAM	187	187	169	169
RUABON	192	192	163	163
CHIRK	188	188	161	161
GOBOWEN	192	192	157	157
SHREWSBURY	164	146	165	165

NOTE - At the terminus changeover is very busy with approx. same number getting off as getting on. Estimated train changeover 50%.

The overloading of trains of a 2 car 197 class train over the current 4 car 158 units shows that health and safety will be put severely at risk if the plan for this goes ahead.

All trains marked in black are considered to be at dangerous levels. It should be noted that all trains on this section of the line were full, there is therefore no capacity to move to another train in many cases.

EXAMPLE

There was a train (mid afternoon) bound for Llandudno on a platform away from the surveyors. The train was a new class 197 2 car unit. It was full when it arrived and there were some 70 people on the platform waiting for it. There was a lot of shouting and jostling, not pleasant for those travelling or the staff.

NOTE – KEY to charts

Black- dangerous levels over 100% seating taken

Red-overcrowded Over 80% seating taken

Very busy Over 70% seating taken

Busy Over 60% seating taken

Space available Under 60% seating taken

IMPORTANT NOTE – Passengers were asked if they would prefer a 4 car unit from Birmingham to Holyhead but changing at Shrewsbury or if they would prefer a 2 car unit which goes straight through.

The result was 67% in favour of a 4 car unit changing at Shrewsbury.

NOTE – The reduction in proposed capacity on this line appears not to work – the numbers using the service are too many. The report shows that occupation levels using 2 car 197 units as proposed is '**dangerous**'.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

From the observations made by the surveyors during their journey the following were of note:

- i) Electronic signage 'all over the place'. Lots of people confused at Shrewsbury. Example shown in the photographs at appendix G.
- ii) The Wi-fi was intermittent, when it worked it was good.
- iii) Due to lack of luggage space (holiday period) the trains were very full. Several families sitting on the floor in the lobbies. One family had their children sitting on cases in the toilets.
- iv) On one train (4 car class 158) two toilets at the same end were out of order.
- v) People could not get to the toilets; some were obviously in distress due to this.
- vi) The general view is that severely overcrowded trains are unsafe and bordering on dangerous – maybe even illegal. Where there is a mitigation, it should be put in place – i.e. more capacity.
- vii) Station staff were very good and helpful. However, it was clear that many were stressed.
- viii) The passengers interviewed felt that train travel was now more stressful than previously.

FULL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

Copies of survey forms and data are retained by the Association but are available for inspection by arrangement.

The executive summary sets out the results of the survey taking into account all the lines covered.

CUSTOMER SERVICE Shrewsbury to Chester section

From the papers returned on the day the following were the results of the customer service survey:

Key	Red	Very poor
	Brown	Poor
	Yellow	Average
	Blue	Good
	Dark green	Very Good

Q	Question	RATING
1	Are you trains usually dependable	3.45
2	Are your trains usually on time	3.5
3	Are your trains clean	4
4	Are your trains comfortable	4.1
5	Are your trains overcrowded	2.85
6	Are the toilets good	2.7
7	Is there enough luggage space	2.85
8	Were the staff helpful and friendly	4.35
9	Was information for your journey good before the train ride	4
10	Was information for your journey good on the train ride	4.3
11	Did the station you boarded the train from:have adequate parking?	3.15
12	Did the station you boarded the train from have adequate ticket machines or booking office?	4
13	Did the station you boarded the train from have easy access to the platform?	4.7
14	Did the station you boarded the train from have good real time information boards working?	4.4

Overall customer satisfaction is better than expected. Apart from overcrowding, luggage space and toilets the results are good.

Mixed feelings about train reliability – however this has to be measured against lack of regular users.



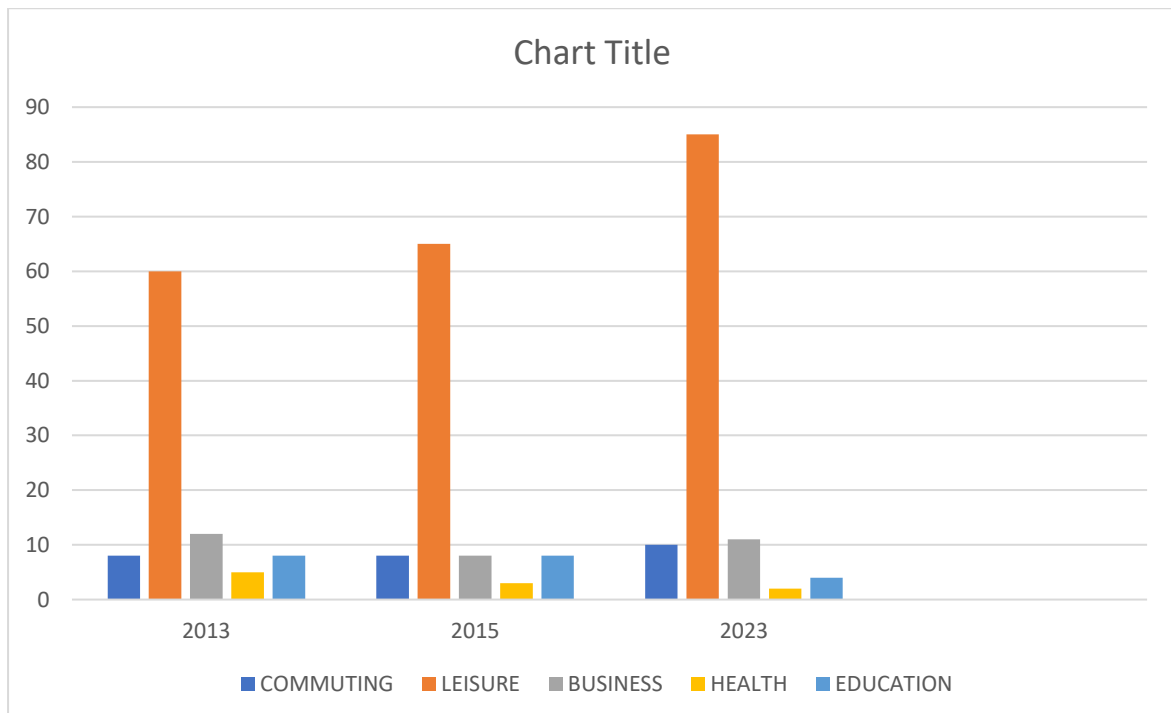
7. Cambrian Main Line (Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth)

7.1 Date of survey

The survey was completed by Robert Robinson and Frances Robinson on Monday 14th August 2023.

7.2 Overall results of survey

TRAVEL PATTERNS – REASON FOR JOURNEY

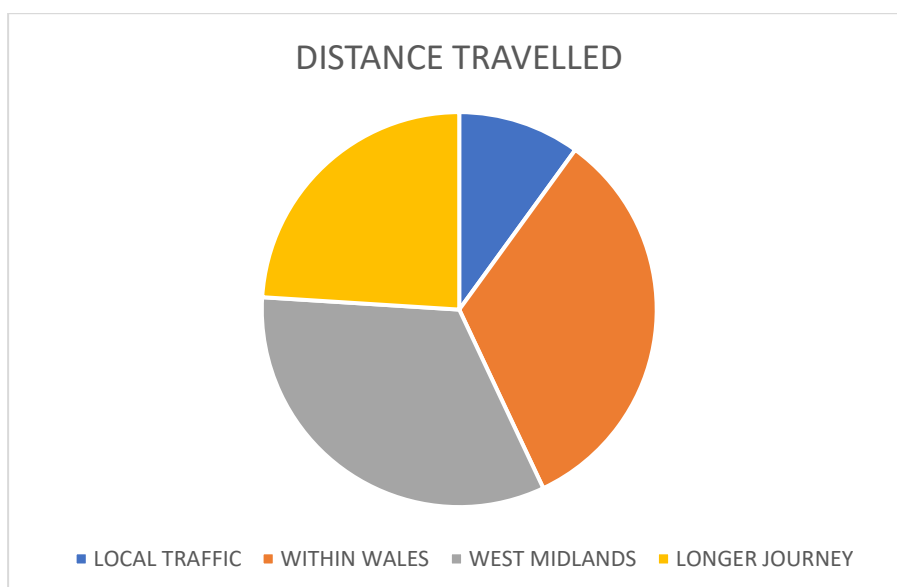


TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW OFTEN PEOPLE TRAVEL



NOTE – from enquiries talking to passengers the drop in regular train use is due to reliability and overcrowding (Covid is still an issue for many).

TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW LONG IS THEIR JOURNEY



NOTE – as reflected in other parts of the report local travel is the smallest portion of those travelling.

TRAIN TIMES

During the day (taking all trains through this route) the following reliability pattern emerged:

Trains on time or up to 1 minute late	49%
Trains up to 5 minutes late	15%
Trains up to 10 minutes late	7%
Trains up to 20 minutes late	10%
Trains over 20 minutes late	10%
Cancelled for all or part of the journey	10%

TRAIN CAPACITY

The numbers of people on the trains at each station along the survey route were counted and recorded. The results are shown on the chart below. The second column shows the comparison between the current (2 car and 4 car 158units) which are to be replaced with new trains (2 and 4 car 197 units).

See the chart overleaf.

0952 Departure

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	158	116
TRAIN TYPE	2 car 158	197 2 car
WELSHPOOL	103	103
NEWTOWN	109	109
CAERSWS	114	114
MACHYNLLETH	144	144

Departure

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	138	116
TRAIN TYPE	2 car 158	197 2 car
MACHYNLLETH	48	48
DOVEY JUNCTION	52	52
BORTH	63	63
BOW STREET	63	63
ABERYSTWYTH	63	63

Departure 11.30am

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	138	116
TRAIN TYPE	2 car 158	197 2 car
ABERYSTWYTH	99	99
BOW STREET	118	118
BORTH	123	123
DOVEY JUNCTION	116	116
MACHYNLLETH	116	116

Departure

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	276	232
TRAIN TYPE	4 car 158	197 4 car
MACHYNLLETH	177	177
CAERSWS	183	183
NEWTOWN	199	199
WELSHPOOL	221	221
SHEWSBURY	243	243

1328 Departure

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	276	232
TRAIN TYPE	4 car 158	197 4 car
SHREWSBURY	172	172
WELSHPOOL	193	193

NOTE - At the terminus changeover is very busy with approx. same number getting off as getting on. Estimated train changeover 50%.

NOTE – KEY to charts

Black- dangerous levels over 100% seating taken

Red-overcrowded Over 80% seating taken

Yellow Very busy Over 70% seating taken

Cyan Busy Over 60% seating taken

Green Space available Under 60% seating taken

NOTE – The reduction in proposed capacity on this line appears not to work – the numbers using the service are too many. The report shows that occupation levels using 2 car 197 units as proposed on many trains is '**dangerous**'.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

From the observations made by the surveyors during their journey the following were of note:

- i) Electronic signage 'all over the place'. Lots of people confused at Shrewsbury. Example shown in the photographs at appendix G.
- ii) The Wi-fi was intermittent, when it worked it was good.
- iii) Due to lack of luggage space (holiday period) the trains were very full. Several families sitting on the floor in the lobbies. One family had their children sitting on cases in the toilets.
- iv) On one train (4 car class 158) two toilets at the same end were out of order.
- v) Station staff were very good and helpful. However, it was clear that many were stressed.
- vi) The passengers interviewed felt that train travel was now more stressful than previously.
- vii) On one train, as an example, a family sat on their cases in the toilet as there was no other space available. Another passenger was a pregnant mother with a small child in arms, sitting on the floor.
- viii) The general view is that severely overcrowded trains are unsafe and bordering on dangerous – maybe even illegal. Where there is a mitigation, it should be put in place – i.e. more capacity.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

From the papers returned on the day the following were the results of the customer service survey:

	2013	2015	2023
1 Are your trains usually dependable?	4	3.9	3.45
2 Are your trains usually on time?	4	3.9	3.1
3 Are your trains clean?	3.7	3.7	3.31
4 Are your trains comfortable?	4.2	3.8	3.74
5 Are your trains overcrowded?	3.8	3.5	2.7
6 Are the toilets good?	3	3.1	2.96
7 Is there enough luggage space?	3	3	3.07
8 Were the staff helpful & friendly?	4.25	4.3	4.55
9 Was the information good before your journey?			3.32
10 Was the information on your journey good?			4.4
11 Did your station have good parking?	4.4	4.4	4.1
12 Did your station have adequate ticket facilities?			3.3
13 Did your train have easy access from the platform?			4.4
14 Did your train have good real time information?			4.1

Key	Red	Very poor
	Brown	Poor
	Yellow	Average
	Blue	Good
	Dark green	Very Good

Overall customer satisfaction is better than expected. Apart from overcrowding, luggage space and toilets the results are good.

Mixed feelings about train reliability – however this has to be measured against lack of regular users.

FULL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

Copies of survey forms and data are retained by the Association but are available for inspection by arrangement.

The executive summary sets out the results of the survey taking into account all the lines covered.



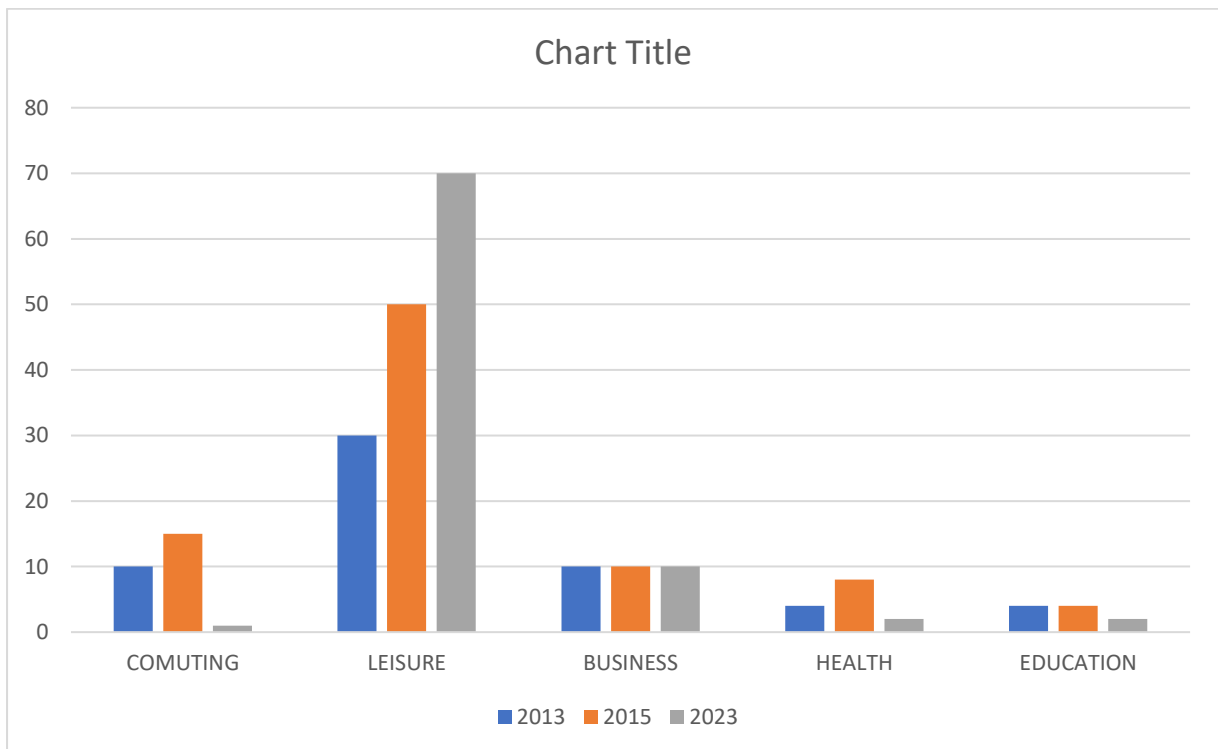
8. CAMBRIAN COAST LINE

8.1 Date of survey

The survey was completed by Trevor Roberts with help on Saturday 12th August 2023.

8.2 Overall results of survey

TRAVEL PATTERNS – REASON FOR JOURNEY



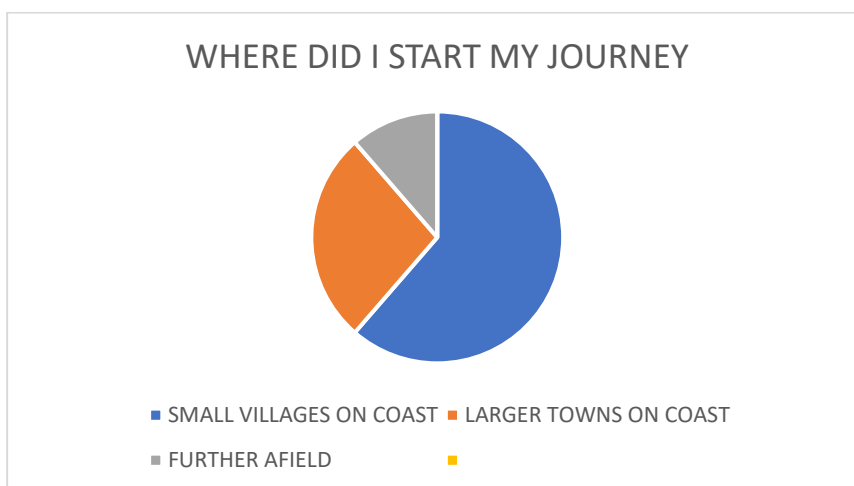
TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW OFTEN PEOPLE TRAVEL



NOTE – from enquiries talking to passengers the drop in regular train use is due to reliability and overcrowding (Covid is still an issue for many).

TRAVEL PATTERNS - HOW LONG IS THEIR JOURNEY

The Coast line has a different demographic than the other lines surveyed. Although leisure is the highest reason for travel it is clear that it is also used as a local transport line.



NOTE – Most of the people surveyed were doing a long journey – going on holiday.

TRAIN TIMES

During the day (taking all trains through this route) the following reliability pattern emerged:

EX Machynlleth to Pwllheli		EX Pwllheli to Machynlleth	
Timetabled	Actual	Timetabled	Actual
0509	On time	0629	On time
0643	2 minutes late	0724	On time
0853	7 minutes late	0934	On time
1055	1 minute late	1137	On time
1256	3 minutes late	1338	Cancelled
1456	On time	1537	On time
1655	4 minutes late	1742	On time
1904	Cancelled		

Trains on time or up to 1 minute late	53%
Trains up to 5 minutes late	27%
Trains up to 10 minutes late	7%
Trains up to 20 minutes late	0%
Trains over 20 minutes late	0%
Cancelled for all or part of the journey	13%

NOTE: The 4 carriage train due to run was run as a two car unit.

TRAIN CAPACITY

The numbers of people on the trains at each station along the survey route were counted and recorded. The results are shown on the chart below. The second column shows the comparison between the current (2 car and 4 car 158units) which are to be replaced with new trains (2 and 4 car 197 units).

STATION	ON ARRIVAL	NEW TRAINS
TRAIN CAPACITY	136	116
TRAIN TYPE	2 car 158	197 2 car
CRICCIETH	51	51
PENYCHAIN	59	59
ABERERCH	61	61
PWLLHELI	61	61
PWLLHELI	58	58
ABERERCH	58	58
PENYCHAIN	61	61
CRICCIETH	69	69
PORTHMADOG	83	83
MINFFORDD	86	86
PENRHYNDEUDRAETH	90	90
LLANDECWYN	92	92
TALSARNAU	98	98
TYGWYN	98	98
HARLECH	100	100
LLANDARWG	97	97
PENSARN	97	97
LLANBEDR	101	101
DYFFRYN ARDUDWY	115	115
TALYBONT	170	170
LLANABER	173	173
BARMOUTH	118	118
MORFA MAWDDACH	122	122
FAIRBOURNE	114	114
LLWYNGWROLL	127	127
TONFANAU	127	127

TYWYN	149	149
ABERDOVEY	154	154
PENHELIG	155	155
DOVEY JUNCTION	155	155
MACHYNLLETH	155	155

NOTE - The overloading of trains of a 2 car 197 class train over the current 2 car 158 units shows that health and safety will be put severely at risk if the plan for this goes ahead. The trains highlighted in black were overcrowded to dangerous levels.

NOTE – KEY to charts

Black- dangerous levels over 100% seating taken

Red-overcrowded Over 80% seating taken

Very busy Over 70% seating taken

Busy Over 60% seating taken

Space available Under 60% seating taken

NOTE – The reduction in proposed capacity on this line appears not to work – the numbers using the service are too many. The report shows that occupation levels using 2 car 197 units as proposed is **‘dangerous’**.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

From the observations made by the surveyors during their journey the following were of note:

1. Survey day Saturday was an error with a lot of holidaymakers and the National Eisteddfod near Pwllheli distorting the efforts to carry out a accurate survey.
Next time a weekday will be chosen.
2. Due to a last minute service cancellation, the planned train survey caused a last minute change to the helpers schedule but several services between Pwllheli and Machynlleth were survey completed successfully.
3. Due to the large number 27 of stations/halts the trains called at and the large number of people joining and leaving the trains approximately every 5 mins only 47 survey forms were completed including several completed in the Welsh Language.
4. One particular service the Pwllheli EX 1136 with 136 seats had 170 passengers at one point at Barmouth and this continued with 150 plus from Tywyn to Machynlleth.

5. Continued....
6. The 0748 Ex Barmouth had to be withdrawn from service at Machynlleth due to the disabled toilet being out of use.
7. Although the Guards moved through every service checking and issuing tickets on the one train above where Over 70 people joined the service at Talybont, it was impossible for the staff to pass through the train and at Barmouth it was noticed around 90 people got off without any attempts to call at the ticket machine or booking office. (Loss of revenue?).
8. The general view is that severely overcrowded trains are unsafe and bordering on dangerous – maybe even illegal. Where there is mitigation, it should be put in place – i.e. more capacity.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

From the papers returned on the day the following were the results of the customer service survey:

Q	Questions	2013	2015	2023
		Rating	Rating	Rating
1	Are your trains usually dependable	3.10	4.20	3.64
2	Are your trains usually on time	2.90	4.50	3.70
3	Are your trains clean	3.50	3.90	4.04
4	Are your trains comfortable	2.90	4.40	4.02
5	Are your trains overcrowded	2.90	3.10	3.00
6	Are the toilets good	3.50	3.70	2.70
7	Is there enough luggage space	3.50	3.50	3.36
8	Were the staff helpful and friendly	4.20	4.30	4.83
9	Was information for your journey good before the train ride	3.60	4.10	4.15
10	Was information for your journey good on the train ride	3.60	4.10	4.30
11	Did the station you boarded the train from have adequate parking?	3.40	3.10	2.17
12	Did the station you boarded the train from have adequate ticket machines or booking office?			1.77
13	Did the station you boarded the train from have easy access to the platform?			4.43
14	Did the station you boarded the train from have good real time information boards working?			4.40

Key	Red	Very poor
	Brown	Poor
	Yellow	Average
	Blue	Good
	Dark green	Very Good

Overall customer satisfaction is better than expected. Apart from overcrowding, luggage space and reliability the results are good.

FULL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

Copies of survey forms and date are retained by the Association but are available for inspection by arrangement.

The executive summary sets out the results of the survey taking into account all the lines covered.

9. Youth viewpoint

An attempt to gain the youth view was made, however to date this has not be completed. The November survey will specifically address this.

10. The class 197 units

The observations around the new 197 units are:

- i) A one train fits all was misguided and wrong. There are commuter services and long distance services in Wales and the 197 units do not fit both.
- ii) The 197 units are a good commuter train but totally unsuitable for long distance services.
- iii) The main issues with the trains are:
 - a) One toilet on a 2 car unit for long journeys is not enough.
 - b) The central doors and higher floor levels made the gaps the passengers have to navigate at a serious level and which is expected to cause injury.
 - c) The number of seats is less (not acceptable on long journeys).
 - d) Compared with the 158 class the 197 class has many seats which do not have a window view – on a long journey this is not acceptable.
- iv) The Welsh Government is reminded that the Arriva Trains Wales franchise was let on a no growth basis. To put this right at the franchise presentations it was stated that the trains would be future proofed. Even with the advent of Covid it is clear this is not the case.

- v) There are not enough units to provide the service required and on the Cambrian Lines not enough units are fitted with the ERTMS system. It is unlikely that the hourly train service (due to be introduced) along with more 4 car units can be achieved with the current plans.



11. Executive summary

The main points of note of the survey are:

The overcrowding on many trains (on all the lines surveyed) is at an unacceptable level and when measured against the proposed 197 class units leads us to state that levels expected when they are introduced will be unsafe and bordering on dangerous – maybe even illegal. Where there is a mitigation, it should be put in place – i.e. more capacity.

The reduction of 4 car units to 2 car on the Birmingham to Holyhead service after Shewsbury measured against passenger levels will put people at risk and the trains proposed with this level of use are unsafe and bordering on dangerous – maybe even illegal. Where there is a mitigation, it should be put in place – i.e. more capacity.

- i) The reason for stating they will be unsafe are:
- a. If a passenger goes ill there is no space for them nor can a member of staff get to them.
 - b. If there was to be an emergency stop or an incident such as a crash the devastation with such overloaded trains will cause death and life changing injuries that could be avoided.
 - c. If such an incident takes place and nothing is done to alleviate the issues highlighted in this report the Association will consider what actions to take to bring those responsible to account.

- ii) The reduction in business and commuters is of concern and this must mean they are using other forms of transport (even taking into account working at home).
- iii) The class 197 trains are not fit for purpose on long journeys and alternatives should be sought to stop what is heading for a catastrophic situation on the Wales railways. Cost should not be an issue when people's lives are put at risk. There is no way that a single train is suitable for commuting and long distance.
- iv) The customer care on train by the staff is good.
- v) Staff are stressed and put under constant pressure due to no fault of their own but due to the issues identified above.
- vi) Catering was available on most trains, however due to overcrowding could not get down the train.
- vii) The loss of revenue on trains because the guard cannot get down the train must be massive.
- viii) The height of the step onto the trains combined with many platforms with a gap gives a health and safety situation which should be investigated and rectified as needed.
- ix) The Association does not see how a subsidy reduction per passenger can be achieved by reducing the size and number of trains which this report shows is not an option.
- x) The guidelines as we understand them are that no passenger should be expected to stand on a train for more than 20 minutes, this is not being achieved now let alone with the new timetabled trains proposed.
- xi) A car and a coach are only allowed people who have a seat (a few standing on a bus) as it is considered unsafe. Compared with a train there appears to be an issue.
- xii) There is an issue around people on crowded trains, particularly with central opening doors. People are 'pushed close the doors' so when they open some were seen to fall out the train. With the difference in train and platform heights this can be dangerous.

12. Recommendations

The Association from the evidence of this and previous reports suggest the following recommendations:

- i) The current 158 stock should be retained on long distance lines (ie Cardiff and Birmingham to Holyhead and the Cambrian Lines) to supplement the new 197 stock whilst the situation is investigated fully and rectification put in place.
- ii) All long distance class 197 trains should be 3 or 4 car minimum. Two car units are not acceptable on all long distance timetabled services.
- iii) The Holyhead and Aberystwyth service out of Birmingham is due to split at Shrewsbury with 2 cars going to each. We recommend that the four car train out of Birmingham goes through in total to Aberystwyth. A 4 car train for Holyhead should then start from Shrewsbury to meet this train. The support for this proposal is shown in the survey results. (a two car unit on this service north of Shrewsbury is not acceptable and due to the number of passengers using this service would be unsafe and bordering on dangerous – maybe even illegal. Where there is a mitigation, it should be put in place – i.e. more capacity).
- iv) In the summer months a four car unit should be provided on all Cambrian Coast services. Again due to the numbers using these services a two car unit is unsafe.
- v) More class 197 units should be fitted with ERTMS to give the flexibility required.
- vi) The Health and Safety Executive should consider if there is a case to stop the current introduction of class 197's in the way proposed to ensure safety is observed.
- vii) The reduction in overcrowding on many lines will increase revenue (thus reducing the overall cost of subsidy per person) as at present on very busy trains the guards cannot get down the train to collect fares.
- viii) A meeting between the Minister and senior rail officials with the Association should be held as soon as possible.

- ix) If there is no satisfactory solution found within the immediate future (ie within 3 months) then the Association feels that due to the public interest this report should be released into the public domain.
- x) In the public interest this report will be made available to the press as well as Welsh Government, The Minister, Transport for Wales, Network Rail, the Rail Partnerships, H&S executive and the ORR.
- xi) Reference to be made to the ORR position statement on overcrowding of trains as set out at the end of this document.
- xii) An urgent high level meeting is to be arranged with Welsh Government and senior officials to present the report and seek some improvements to help what is considered to be a 'serious' situation.
- xiii) A further survey of numbers on trains should be carried out in November 2023 as an addendum to this report.
- xiv) The ORR statement on overcrowding and safety is to be noted.

13. Photographs

Here are some photographs taken on trains showing some of the issues raised:



WELSHPOOL STATION – CONFUSING BOARD – IT WAS A 2 CAR TRAIN
NOT UNCOMMON



SHREWSBURY – MONDAY 2nd October at 11.30am Ish – 2 CAR 197 UNIT
PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO GET ONTO AN ALREADY FULL TRAIN
MANY SENIORS WITH CASES STRUGGLING TO GET IN WITH PEOPLE IN THE WAY ON THE
TRAIN AND WITH THE HIGH STEP

**NORTH & MID WALES ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS
CAMBRIAN LINES AND NORTH COAST RAIL SURVEYS
AUGUST 2023 AND OCTOBER 2023**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to set out the survey plan for both the Cambrian Lines and North Coastline from Holyhead to Chester.

The plan is to inform and help us all to understand the changes over a long period of time and the customer view and perception of services over the same period.

The surveys will not be published other than to members of the Association/Transport for Wales/Welsh Government unless agreement to do so is in place.

2. Previous surveys

The previous surveys were carried out in 2013, 2015 and 2017.

These surveys were pre-Transport for Wales and pre Covid.

The survey proposed (2023) will identify changes post Covid and the second one (2024) will show the differences between the current status and those following the introduction of the new trains.

3. The survey

The survey would cover:

- i) Number of people on the train at each station stop.
- ii) Assessment of space
- iii) Train timings
- iv) Customer satisfaction survey

To give the full picture I enclose our report no 5 which covers one of the previous surveys and the surveys proposed will mirror those in this report.

The survey would be completed on the ground with volunteers. The persons carrying out the survey will be fully briefed before the day. They will visually record numbers on the train at the start of the journey and then estimate (as accurately as possible) the numbers getting on and off at each station.

They will between stations seek to gain a good sample of passenger's views via a paper-based survey given out and collected back on the trains.

The results will be assessed and analysed to provide a direct comparison to the surveys carried out in 2013 – 2015 and 2017.

The questionnaire will be bi-lingual and will be similar to that contained in report no 5 attached to this paper.

4. Dates and times

The survey dates and times would be as follows:

Summer Thursday 9th August (Cambrian) and 16th August (North Coast)

Winter Thursday 4th November (Cambrian) and 18th November (North Coast)

The trains covered by the survey would be those shown in yellow and red on the attached programme. Two teams for each day on each line.

5. Final report

The final report will be issued to Transport for Wales for comment prior to any distribution to members of the Association and Rail Liaison Committees.

The final report would be issued by the end of the year.

6. What we need to complete the work

The Association will carry out the survey work using volunteers.

Transport for Wales is asked to issue free travel for those carrying out the surveys on the days of the activity.

25th May 2023

OTHER EVIDENCE (1)

DATE **Saturday 16th September 2023**

JOURNEY **Birmingham International to Welshpool**

UNIT **4 car 158**

SEATS **276**

	NUMBERS ON TRAIN	NUMBERS ON TRAIN
TRAIN	Class 158	Class 197
SEATING	276	232
BIRMINGHAM INT	230	230
BIRMINGHAM NEW STR	350	350
SANDWELL & DUDLEY	330	330
WOLVERHAMPTON	330	330
TELFORD	305	305
WELLINGTON	325	325
SHREWSBURY	260	260
WELSHPOOL	230	230
90% plus passengers v seating	Dangerous	
80% plus passengers v seating	Overcrowded	
70% plus passengers v seating	Busy	
60% plus passengers v seating	Comfortable	

SURVEY BY R A Robinson

OTHER EVIDENCE (2)

Date 13-09-23
Time out 08.53 am

Transport for Wales train from Holyhead to Manchester Airport On time

3 Carriages (seemed new)

Plenty of seats, didn't seem to be any reserved

Toilets

No snacks available until Chester

Ticket office open in Chester and plenty of staff to give assistance

There was a brand new (not yet in services) Avanti train parked up at Chester Station

Date 1 3-09-23
Time back 4.29 pm

Transport for Wales train from Chester to Holyhead On time

3 Carriages (seemed new)

Plenty of seats, didn't seem to be any reserved

Toilets

No snacks on the train

On this train the digital screens with the next station displayed were **entirely in Welsh** which I find odd when the Train started at Chester, an English station, so if people didn't understand Welsh there was no service.

The speaker also seemed to be faulty, repeating messages over and over and not making much sense.

Transport Survey Report

Llandudno Junction – Holyhead and return

My Thoughts from the train survey,

Norma Davies and I completed our part of the North Wales Coast Line survey on the 25th of August this year.

Travelling from Flint, the train was the 0839 service to Holyhead, a two car 197 unit being used.

The trip to Holyhead was pleasant and informative. The maximum passengers at any one time, numbered 40, well within the safe capacity of the unit. We identified ourselves to the guard, who was happy to assist if necessary.

Apart from a ten-minute break to enjoy a coffee from the catering trolley, we handed out the surveys throughout the journey and found everyone was happy to assist.

It was usually one person from each party who signed, a combined effort, although one couple insisted on individual sheets.

We arrived in Holyhead at 10:00 Hrs and spent the forty minutes in Holyhead sorting out the completed surveys, preparing for the return journey and grabbing a drink and packet of crisps.

The 10:40 from Holyhead back to Flint was a different story.

This train, still the same two car unit was the 10:40 train to Cardiff.

The train pulled out on time, with 52 passengers onboard. It called at “Valley station”, with no passengers alighting or boarding. Next stop would be Bangor. We had decided, because of the short time period between Holyhead and Bangor, we would wait till Bangor and start survey collecting.

Unfortunately, that is where survey collecting stopped. The train very quickly filled up and to say “Standing Room Only” would be an understatement. There wasn’t even that amount of space. We couldn’t get out of our seats and were restricted to handing out the survey to those we could reach.

As more people tried to board in Llandudno Junction, I was observing severe overcrowding.

May I say, in my working career, in the Merchant Navy on ships carrying extremely dangerous cargoes, meant I had been trained as Advanced Safety Auditor. My immediate thought was “What If”? What if the train breaks sharply, someone becomes ill, someone gets injured or more simply, someone needs the bathroom. At the station, someone falls onto the platform, trips or gets crushed as people get on or off. The safety issues seemed off the scale.

This journey must be a nightmare for anyone going any distance, possibly even to Cardiff.

It reached its worst when in Prestatyn, security guards, standing arm in arm, prevented passengers getting on, many of them children. Safety first, and I applaud whoever made that decision. Better to miss the train than get injured. But in the 21st century, this is not acceptable. The guard made repeated announcements apologising and obviously was unable to check the train nor tickets.

We moved early to get near the door to alight in Flint and were greeted with even more attempting to board.

Norma and I are travelling the rails again in November, hopefully with a better experience.

Captain Ian Hodge

Chair North Wales Rail Liaison Committee.

Transport Survey Report

Llandudno Junction – Holyhead and return

This is just a very short report of observations of the day on the railway in September 2023.

We started at Llandudno Junction station, the platform had changed for the Holyhead train and we weren't quite sure where to stand as we didn't know how many carriages there would be. The train was slightly late. It was a pleasant wait, only a few minutes but gave us time to notice how clean and tidy the station was.

Most people we talked to were cheerful and not stressed. Of course for many a train journey represents the start or finish of a good day out or a holiday so I find there is usually quite a buzz on a station platform.

I have to admit I don't often use trains and so approaching people on the journey and walking up and down the carriages was quite a feat. Alyn was much more at home with this and I was extremely impressed by his ability to engage instantly with passengers and how many he got to fill out our questionnaires. I, on the other hand was far too polite and spent far too long explaining and requesting and actually found more refusals because of my approach.

Quite quickly we formed a teamwork approach and Alyn handed out and I collected in. Extremely successful, I think. The few people I had an opportunity to speak to were very happy to give their views and were honest about their gripes and satisfaction at their experience on the railway.

We observed several people in Transport for Wales uniforms travelling on the train, as passengers, not actively working on the train. I don't know if they were observers or just travelling to work. The TfW train was fresh, new and comfortable, toilet was automatic which does fill me with trepidation but was clean and large. It was an altogether pleasant journey and the only criticism I had was the lack of luggage space so that people had their wheely cases in the aisle, and possibly the fact that all stops other than Bangor were request only. There wasn't any refreshment on this train.

Holyhead station was not as clean and tidy as Llandudno Junction, there was quite a lot of litter on the rails at the station. There was a Town Council volunteer welcoming party for anyone coming into the station from a Cruise Ship, which was very nice and they were all keen to talk and welcome us and the survey, they filled one in. The Sealink café/shop was a pleasant surprise and the food and drink were surprisingly good value. We waited there until the return train which was an Avanti multi carriage and had refreshments and much more luggage space.

The conductor on this return train was extremely matter of fact and determined to develop a good customer relations atmosphere on the train and did this through shock tactics on the loudspeaker.

Alyn connected with many passengers and we collected tens of surveys which were duly returned to Robert for analysis.

I think we would do it again given the opportunity.

Cllr Helen Roberts
Conwy Town Council

WELSHPOOL – ABERYSTWYTH – SHREWSBURY – WELSHPOOL

Date 14th August 2023

Time **0952 from Welshpool**
 1130 out of Aberystwyth
 1330 out of Shrewsbury
Train **158 2 car unit to Machynlleth and 4 car unit out of Shrewsbury**

Memories of the day:

- i) Trains ran close to time.
- ii) Overcrowded with many people standing or sitting on the floor for over an hour.
- iii) Children sitting on suitcase cases in the toilets as there was no other room.
- iv) Mother with baby sitting on floor as there was no other space.
- v) Some distressed passengers who wanted to get to the toilet but could not due to overcrowding.
- vi) Announcements on platform not correct.
- vii) Catering trolley could not get down train for much of the Welshpool to Machynlleth journey.
- viii) Announcements on the train with one guard good, same train another guard not so good.
- ix) Staff friendly.
- x) One lady in a wheelchair was forced to block an access way with people trying to squeeze around her. She also said she did not feel safe and was a little stressed. Her family were with her to offer comfort.
- xi) This was an average day; I have been on much worse.

Robert Robinson MBE

SHEWSBURY – CHESTER - SHREWSBURY

Date 11th August 2023

Time **1025 and 1555 ex Shrewsbury to Chester**
 1224 and 1650 ex Chester to Shrewsbury

Train **158 4 car unit**

Memories of the day:

- i) Trains ran late so trains planned to be on were missed...
- ii) Overcrowded with excessive number people standing or sitting on the floor for over an hour.
- iii) Uncomfortable journey with many stressed passengers on board.
- iv) Children sitting in the toilets as there was no other room.
- v) Luggage all over the place, trip hazards evident in many areas.
- vi) Quite a few distressed passengers who wanted to get to the toilet but could not due to overcrowding.
- vii) Catering trolley could not get down train for much of the journey.
- viii) Staff friendly.
- ix) No one came down train to collect fares due to overcrowding.

Robert Robinson MBE

LLANFAIR CAEREINION YOUTH COUNCIL

MAIN LINE RAILWAYS DISCUSSION NOTES

19th October 2023

1. Travel

All those present had used main line trains.

2. Overcrowding

A lot of the trains used were comfortably full but also a number were standing room only. Youngsters felt stressed when the trains were very full.

3. Timekeeping

Some experiences were good with some not so good.

A mix of trains on time and very late.

4. General comments

The general view of the youngsters was:

- i) All trains should have enough seating for everyone.
- ii) Even when seats were available would stand as they did not wish to sit next to one person or another.
- iii) Some trains experienced delays due to people trying to get onto or off of a very full train.
- iv) Felt insecure on trains where there were a lot of people on board standing.
- v) One family experience 6 in their group, to get seats they had to sit in different carriages.
- vi) Do not use trains as much as they would like due to unreliability (ie cancellations).
- vii) Less seats on trains not a good idea

The ORR - Our role in relation to station and train crowding

Crowding on trains and at stations is common and we need to make sure railway companies protect passengers from any health and safety risks when it happens.

We oversee several obligations that companies have to their customers, including making sure the railway is accessible for all. We are responsible for making sure passengers are protected by railway companies from any health and safety risks, such as crowding, which we take very seriously. Where safety risks from crowding are being well managed and operators are meeting their obligations to customers, we do not have the powers to take further action.

While there isn't much evidence of a direct passenger health and safety risk from overcrowding, there are indications that it can increase the risk of fainting and 'slips trips and falls'. Passengers can also feel stressed, anxious or vulnerable in crowds. Anyone with visible or non-visible disabilities, older people or those travelling with young children can experience these negative effects more.

Our [position statement](#) sets out our view on crowding, including our expectations of rail operators. We are looking closely at how railway companies plan to reduce the health and safety risks connected to crowding. We are also focussing on the effectiveness of operators' plans for, and management of, events such as sporting fixtures or large festivals which can make crowding worse. We also expect operators to fully consider the impact of crowding on disabled people and people with reduced mobility.

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE ORR ON OVERCROWDING

ORR's Crowding Position Statement As the health and safety authority for Great Britain's railways, ORR has a responsibility for ensuring railway companies protect passengers from any health and safety risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Train and station operators protect passengers by identifying, reducing and alleviating risks, including crowding risks.

Our railway inspectors oversee this and can respond to any shortfalls according to our risk-based priorities and, if necessary, use their enforcement powers to require improvements.

ORR also oversees a number of other obligations train companies have to their customers.

of these responsibilities are part of their licences and some are applicable from general consumer law. In relation to crowding, we are particularly interested in how train companies provide information to customers during times of disruption and how the railway is made accessible for all passengers.

Where the risks from crowding are being well managed, and operators are meeting their consumer obligations, ORR does not have powers to require further action. We continue to talk to operators about their plans to mitigate crowding, and we use and promote the latest research to better understand any crowding health and safety risks and effects on passengers.

The number of passengers using the railways has been rising in recent years. Many train services run with large numbers of standing passengers, often preceded by crowding at stations, including on the platforms or at the platform–train interface ('PTI'). Crowding can occur on regular journeys, particularly at peak times.

When something disrupts the normal operation of the network, such as engineering works, cancelled services or special events, this can make crowding worse.

Crowding reflects the GB railway's flexible 'turn up and go' model. In theory, different models could eliminate crowding, but these are unlikely to be without consequences. For example, crowding on trains could be eliminated under an airline-style, booked-seat only model. But that would be at the expense of excluding many passengers from train services, particularly at peak times.

There is ongoing investment to increase the carrying capacity of trains, but the investment necessary to eradicate all crowding would be considerable.

Office of Rail and Road | 31 October 2019 Crowding position statement | 2 In 2019,

we expanded our position statement on crowding to cover crowding at stations, including at the platform.

We also now cover the effects on passenger wellbeing from crowding, which in this context means how crowding can affect moods, feelings and emotions during a journey. These are important additions in order to cover the whole of the passenger experience and encourage a more holistic approach to managing the effects of crowding.

The Office of Rail and Road's position on crowding 1.

There is little direct evidence of an increase to passenger health and safety risks from crowding. Trains are designed to operate safely, even when many passengers are standing.

However there are indications that; – crowding can increase the risk of slips, trips and falls, particularly at stations and when getting on and off trains (the PTI); – crowding means some passengers are more at risk of fainting, particularly on crowded trains in hot weather; – evidence on the health and safety risks would be further improved if the reports completed by operators after a passenger incident always considered, and recorded, whether crowding had been a factor.

ORR takes passenger concerns about crowding seriously.

There is now clear evidence that feelings of stress, anxiety and vulnerability are high in crowding scenarios. This can make passengers feel unsafe and can negatively affect their wellbeing.

Hazards and the negative wellbeing effects associated with crowding varies between passengers. For instance, feelings of stress, anxiety and vulnerability may be felt with greater intensity, or frequency, by some passengers with visible or non-visible disabilities, older people or those travelling with young children. There is no 'one size fits all' experience.

There can be a complex, dynamic relationship between passenger wellbeing and safety in some crowding scenarios. For instance, a passenger feeling anxious from being in a crowd might behave in a way that makes an otherwise unrelated safety risk worse, perhaps by moving past the platform yellow line in order to be nearer the doors of a shortly to arrive train. These negative effects on wellbeing can sometimes lead to entirely new risks, such as a passenger deciding to self-evacuate from a stranded train's crowded - but otherwise safe – carriage on to the unsafe track.

This interrelationship between health, safety and wellbeing is part of the reason ORR now takes a holistic view of crowding across our safety and consumer protection functions. What improvements can be made?

Crowding is a feature of many rail journeys. The currently high volumes of passenger journeys should not disguise the discomfort felt by many on crowded services and the effects of negative passenger experiences on the wider satisfaction and confidence in the GB rail network.

Although the safety risks from crowding are generally well-managed, improvements can still be made to address the remaining areas of risk. In addition, the industry is encouraged to further acknowledge and take action wherever practicable to reduce the negative effects from crowding on passenger wellbeing.

Whilst all crowding on trains and at stations cannot realistically be eliminated, new research in 2019 suggests actions by ORR, train and station operators and passengers themselves can improve the ways crowding is planned for and managed.

The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is expected to produce new good practice guidance for the industry in early 2020 which draws on this new research, which ORR is awaiting and will consider. What do we expect from train and station operators?

Train and station operators should continue to comply with their health and safety responsibilities to protect passengers from risks on crowded trains and at stations, so far as is reasonably practicable. ORR will pay close attention to how the railway industry plans to further reduce the health and safety risks of slips, trips and falls and fainting connected to crowding.

We will examine the control measures train companies and station operators have to mitigate this risk in particular. We will also focus on the effectiveness of operator plans to prepare for, and safely manage, known events such as sporting fixtures that can cause or exacerbate crowding. Emergency situations require competent and trained staff to manage any crowding risks that might arise, and we expect the industry to diligently apply the available good practice guidance.

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We also encourage train and station operators to apply recognised good practice in planning for, and managing, a wide range of crowding scenarios.

This includes new RSSB guidance expected in early 2020. Operators' plans should clearly set out how crowding hazards can be identified, and wherever possible reduced, and crowding's negative effects on passengers alleviated. When there is a passenger safety-related incident, operators should ensure they consider whether crowding either caused or contributed to it, and record that accurately.

All operators should monitor and continuously improve their planning, procedures and processes in the light of their learning about its effectiveness. Planning should relate to the 'real world', reflecting each operator's stations or services at different times and under both 'normal' and 'abnormal' situations.

Train and station operators should ensure timely and helpful information is shared with passengers about crowding conditions. Train and station operators should set out and comply with an Accessible Travel Policy (ATPs) as approved by ORR.

This is part of their licence requirements and covers a wider range of legal and good practice elements to ensure every rail company's policy, practises and procedures facilitate the use of the railway by disabled people and people of reduced mobility (DPRM). Crowding at stations and on trains can have a greater impact on passengers with both visible and non-visible disabilities.

We expect operators to consider the impact of crowding in their ATP strategies and how this is applied. For example, this could include how information about access to (as opposed to just provision of) accessible toilets on crowded services can be communicated. In accordance with our ATP requirements for operators, part of the training their staff will receive from 2021 (at the latest) will include hearing from disabled people about their experiences of using the railway. What can passengers do themselves?

Passengers can also take steps to reduce risks and the negative effects on their own and fellow passengers' wellbeing by practising good travel etiquette.

This includes the now long established need to keep luggage away from aisles and off seats and prepare for crowding in advance, especially by carrying water during journeys in the summer months.

Some train operators are using technology to provide up to date information about their busiest services and carriages, which can be helpful for passengers.

Passengers should remain alert in crowds and supportive of more vulnerable fellow passengers. In particular, passengers should remember to stand behind

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the yellow line markings at the platform edge, an essential safety feature in stations irrespective of any perceived advantage gained for embarking onto a busy train.

All passengers must take responsibility to prevent any feelings of stress from being in a crowded situation spilling over into confrontations with, or abuse towards, frontline railway staff or other travellers.

ORR supports passengers making full use of the channels available to them to raise concerns about crowding, directly with operators in the first instance