

Man imprisoned for obstructing railway – causing more than £9k of delays

August 11, 2022



A man has been jailed for more than eight months for obstructing the railway, causing 13 trains to be delayed, following a British Transport Police investigation.

Stephen Harrell, aged 36, of Springfield Street, Wigan, pleaded guilty to obstructing the railway and was sentenced to 270 days in jail at Manchester and Salford Magistrates' court on Tuesday, August 2.

He was also ordered to pay £250 compensation.

The court heard how, on Sunday, July 31, British Transport Police were made aware of an incident of trespass at Salford Crescent station.

An officer attended and saw an intoxicated Harrell jump down from the platform onto the tracks and begin walking in the direction of Swinton.

A stop on all trains was put in place and the NPAS police helicopter was dispatched to locate Harrell after officers lost sight of him on the tracks due to darkness.

He was eventually spotted by the helicopter and located rummaging through a bin outside a pub on Agecroft Road.

Harrell was on the tracks and lineside for approximately 60 minutes causing delays of 287 minutes and 13 trains stopped. Network Rail have confirmed that the total cost of delays amounted to £9, 223.90.

Investigating officer PC Peter Hogg said: "Harrell's irresponsible and frankly reckless actions could have cost him his life.

"In order to protect his safety, numerous trains were stopped, causing completely unnecessary delays and inconvenience to passengers and a huge cost to Network Rail, not to mention the cost of deploying the police helicopter.

"The behaviour of one individual had a huge impact on others. Being intoxicated is no excuse."