

# Office of Rail and Road calls for all train companies to implement automatic passenger information notifications

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The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has today called for all train companies to implement a system that automatically notifies passengers who have booked tickets online if their trains are cancelled or changed before travel.

Passengers want to be able to plan their journeys in advance and when they do, to be kept informed of any changes.

A timetable comparator system was developed last year through the Smarter Information, Smarter Journeys programme. The system enables notifications to be sent to ticket retailers (whether train companies, independent retailers, or travel management companies) when trains are changed or cancelled. The passenger is then sent an email or text notifying them of any changes up to 48 hours before travel. For shorter notice and emergency changes, ORR has advised train companies to make it simple for passengers to sign up for travel alerts.

Many train companies and ticket retailers are already using the system successfully to inform passengers when their booked journey is affected by cancellations or timetable amendments. It is important that all ticket retailers and train companies that sell tickets in advance are signed up to the system so that as many passengers as possible benefit.

The rail regulator has written to train companies today setting the expectation that they should be using this system by the end of March 2023. ORR also expects that providing such notifications will become a **Customer Information Pledge** between operators and their customers.

Stephanie Tobyn, Director of Strategy, Policy and Reform at ORR said: "Letting people know of a change to their travel booking well in advance is an important first step in improving passenger information and it is disappointing that not all passengers are benefitting from a system that has been in place since May 2022.

"Train companies need to remain consistent with the passenger information licence condition which requires passengers to be able to plan their journey with a reasonable degree of assurance. So there should be no further delay in companies putting this system in place now."

*Photo credit: Office of Rail and Road*