

ORR launches 'lessons learned' review into crack issues on Hitachi Class 800 and 385 series trains

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The Office of Rail and Road is undertaking a review to understand the lessons the industry can learn from the discovery of cracks on Hitachi Class 800 and 385 series trains.

The review will cover both safety and passenger impacts.

ORR's safety review will work with Hitachi Rail and all relevant parties to find the root cause of cracks in the jacking plate and on the mount for the yaw damper bracket. It will examine industry processes relating to the assessment of safety risk, as well as the withdrawal and return of trains to service.

This part of the review will look in-depth at technical areas including design, manufacture and maintenance; process issues such as how all parties worked together; and responsibilities for inspection, maintenance, repair and remedial action, and how these could be improved.

ORR will also work closely with train operating companies – Great Western Railway, London North Eastern

Railway, TransPennine Express and Hull Trains – and other industry bodies to review whether the relevant travel information to passengers was consistent, both over the weekend of 8 May but also in the following week.

The regulator will check the correct ticket refunds information was provided and accepted by operators, as well as making sure the right steps were taken to contact passengers who had booked assistance to travel, and that alternative arrangements were offered.

ORR will publish its report on the passenger impacts by 25 June and produce an initial report in September covering the history, withdrawal and reintroduction of the rolling stock. A final report will follow when the long-term rectification programme has been established.

John Larkinson, Chief Executive, ORR, said: “The lessons learned review is an important step in ensuring something like this doesn’t happen again.

“Our wide ranging review will focus on the complex safety issues, covering technical, process and contractual issues. We will also review the impact on passengers and whether passengers received the right information and were appropriately compensated.”

Ian Prosser, HM Chief Inspector of Railways, ORR, said: “While we’ve continued to engage with Hitachi and train companies, to oversee their development of a safe and suitable plan to make sure the right checks are being carried out to enable trains to run, now is the right time to ensure we understand more and the industry can learn lessons.”

The service recovery plan saw the majority of trains become available to run in service safely from 13 May, following joint work between Hitachi Rail, train operators and the regulator.

Photo credit: Office of Rail and Road