



Department  
for Transport

From the Secretary of State  
**The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling**

Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000  
E-Mail: [chris.grayling@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chris.grayling@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Web site: [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft)

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Dear Colleague,

## **GTR Performance**

I am writing to you concerning the wholly unsatisfactory levels of disruption on rail services following the huge timetable change last week.

I am frustrated that what should have been a good news story for passengers, with the introduction of new services, new routes and expanded capacity has had such a poor start.

The industry collectively has failed the passengers it serves. A combination of delayed Network Rail infrastructure works and reduced time to plan a modified timetable meant that the new timetable was finalised much too late to permit adequate logistical planning for the timetable changes.

Network Rail's System Operator division is responsible for taking all planned timetables and making sure that the plans for the whole network are workable and do not create conflicts between different types of service. If they are unable to do so to the expected timescales, it causes chaos for the train companies. A change on this scale requires reworking of train crew schedules, train deployment and a whole range of other complex issues that affect the running of what is a very congested service.

We were aware that there might be some disruption in the early days of any new timetable change of this size, but the scale of the problem has far outstripped any expectation. I am determined both that the problems are dealt with as quickly as possible, and that this is not repeated in the future.

We have been in regular contact with the leadership of Network Rail and GTR in the last few days, and Jo Johnson and I are continuing to monitor the situation closely. We are speaking to those involved on a daily basis and we have insisted that both organisations put whatever resource they need to into

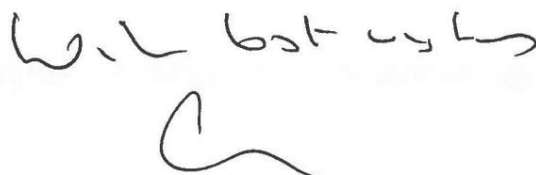
resolving the situation, and in making sure that there is proper leadership of the recovery effort.

We will be holding a meeting for affected colleagues as soon as the recess is over, when I hope we will be able to give you more encouraging news about the recovery effort. I have also asked both organisations to organise a briefing meeting for MPs next week so they can explain the detail of what has gone wrong and how it is being solved.

I am also clear that the way timetabling is done has to change. It is obvious that Network Rail's current timetabling system simply cannot cope with the volume of work that it has to complete, and I have asked both the current leadership and the incoming Chief Executive, Andrew Haines, to ensure that this issue is addressed as a priority. Network Rail's current performance on this is simply unacceptable.

Until this has been done, I will insist on a gradual approach to timetable change wherever possible and not the significant changes that we have seen this month.

Once these problems are resolved, we will have a much better service for passengers. That is small comfort to them when things are not working as they should, but once we are through this difficult period we will have a better railway.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Grayling', with a large flourish underneath.

**Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP**

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**