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| Dear Sir Oliver ,  With September underway I wanted to write to inform you of the latest developments at Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), and to share the progress we have made to give customers more certainty and stability over the summer.  I have been in my role for eight weeks and have spent some time on the network talking to customers and colleagues. I understand the difficulties they faced when the timetable change took place, and customers have told me they expect a reliable journey, that they can plan for when travelling on Thameslink and Great Northern services. The senior leadership team and I are focusing all our efforts on stability so there are no surprises when travelling on our services, particularly as commuters start to return after the summer holidays.  My key focus over the next few months will be to deliver an improving and stable service for customers and to ensure that all GTR employees are 100% behind this common goal.  **Performance update**  We have improved reliability and punctuality on Thameslink and Great Northern since we introduced the interim timetable on 15 July, with almost eight out of ten trains arriving on time during August, and with 200 more services in operation than before May. The service has improved significantly, as the below figures indicate:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | PPM | TL | GN | Combined TL/GN | | 2 July to 14 July | 60 | 61 | 61 | | 12 August to 25 August | 85 | 80 | 83 |   On Southern, performance over the summer has been strong with PPM reaching an average of 89 % between 12 August and 25 August.  These are encouraging results, and performance has exceeded 90% on several days in the latter part of August, but there is, of course, more to be done and we will continue to work internally, and with our colleagues at Network Rail to bring more reliability more consistently across the network.  During July and August, we have scrutinised performance, assessed its stability, and have reviewed the new schedules further. We have already added in services, and it is our intention to continue to build further consistency and stability over the next month, when we are confident that this can be done reliably.  **Industry Compensation for Thameslink and Great Northern customers**  On 4 July, GTR announced an industry compensation scheme for qualifying Thameslink and Great Northern season ticket holders most affected by the May timetable change. I know many of you have campaigned for the scheme to be expanded to include non-season ticket holders, and I was pleased to be able to announce this last week.  The compensation scheme for season ticket holders opened on 29 August, and we expect this will take around 4 – 6 weeks. Following this, we will open an online claim form for customers who believe they are eligible but who have not been contacted perhaps, for example, because they have bought their ticket through a third party and we may not have their details. Finally, we will move to applications from regular travellers who have a minimum of three days’ return travel in any week, Monday to Sunday, in the period 20 May to 28 July from the stations most affected (including holders of carnet tickets).  **New Chief Operating Officer**  As many of you know, in March this year Nick Brown announced his plan to retire in September, after nearly 40 years in the rail industry. I would like to thank Nick very much for the hard work, dedication and leadership that he has brought to GTR during a very challenging period. He has made a major contribution to the business, from strengthening the team to collaborative working with a wide range of stakeholders. I know many of you have worked with Nick over the past couple of years, and will join me in wishing him well for the future.  I’m pleased to confirm that Steve White has joined the company this week as Chief Operating Officer. Steve has worked at Silverlink Trains, Eurostar and Siemens PLC in executive roles and joined London Underground (LU) as Operations Director. At LU he was responsible for operations and infrastructure during a period of major change on the ‘subsurface’ railway. He has most recently has been implementing the new signalling system on the Metropolitan, Circle, Hammersmith and City and District Lines, and is a chartered engineer.  I look forward to working with Steve to continue the recovery plan and move GTR through the next stage of our modernisation programme, to increase capacity on the most congested part of the UK rail network.  **Opportunity to meet in September**  I understand the past few months have been difficult for many of you, and I fully appreciate just how important it is that you are being kept informed about progress and plans. My team has organised a drop-in session on **Wednesday 12 September**, between **12:30 and 14:00** in Room M in Portcullis House to give us a chance to meet, listen to your concerns and explain what our plans are going forward. I will be there alongside Nick Brown, Steve White and other members of the management team from GTR and Network Rail to discuss any aspect of the service or infrastructure with you. If you are unable to make that session, my senior team and I are happy to meet with you separately. Otherwise, I will be pleased to meet many of you there.  Yours sincerely,  **Patrick Verwer**  **Chief Executive Officer** |