Dear Lilian,

RE: Rail tickets and visual impairment

Thank you very much for your letter of 18 September, writing on behalf of a member of the public regarding their concerns about the difficulties some visually impaired people experience when reading train tickets.

As an industry, we are absolutely committed to doing everything we can to assist people with disabilities and visual impairments, so they can enjoy the full opportunities and benefits of rail travel and ensure their journeys are as easy and hassle-free as possible.

We are aware that every customer is unique, and each person’s visual range will vary. With regard to printed material, it is therefore impossible to accommodate every person’s needs and that is why we are working hard to make digital ticketing the accessible alternative medium. Indeed, we are building the next generation of mobile tickets to provide travel information in a uniform format, making sure customers who cannot or are struggling to use printed tickets can still access their ticket information.

This is also in line with the wider shift we as an industry are witnessing towards the use of smart ticketing. New rail industry figures show that last month:

- More train journeys than ever before were made with smart tickets, reaching 65 million.
- 18.4 million more journeys were made with a smart ticket compared to the same time last year.
- Passengers chose smart tickets for half (50%) of all journeys, up significantly from less than four in 10 (37%) on year ago.

In addition, smart tickets can be kept securely, save passengers time with no need to queue and allow people to book online from anywhere for anyone. Covering both smartcards and barcode tickets on mobile phones, they are also less likely to wear out and stop working than paper tickets.

That said, we are aware that not all customers want to use mobile tickets, as a result of which our members are also working to make the ticket purchasing experience more accessible. Measures to achieve this include updating websites to meet the latest accessibility requirements as well as press-for-support systems at ticket machines, supporting customers, ensuring they purchase the right ticket for the journey they would like to make.
More broadly, as part of our plan to change and improve, we continue to work together with
disability groups to improve accessibility across the whole network and invest in projects that
will improve services, such as the Access Map – launched earlier this year – which provides
detailed information on the accessibility and facilities at each station in the UK; or Passenger
Assist which will facilitate the way customers can book assistance prior to or while travelling.

I hope you find this useful, but please do not hesitate to contact me again if you have any
remaining questions on this issue or if there is anything else with which I can assist you.

Your sincerely,

Paul Plummer
Chief Executive

Cc: Nusrat Ghani MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Transport