

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2020 14:58
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Position on Seat coverings

Hi [REDACTED],

Regarding your note below. I can confirm that [REDACTED] has informed RDG (Safety Leads) that we are taking this approach and Passenger Operations Safety Group (POSG) is also aware.

I attach three photos of the proposed covers, noting that the wording will say 'Out of Use' as below.



Alternative measures considered included stickers, tape and some use of the 'reservation system' on the new fleets to indicate which seats can be used/not used. I would emphasise that the seat covers we are ordering are not a 'gold-plated' option, compared to other proposals that we have seen, an example of which is also attached (cloverpod). We deem the covers to provide value for money given they are made out of fire retardant material. I set out below our analysis of these options considered:

Option	Advantage	Disadvantage
Seat covers	Clear and simple message for all customers Resolves a 'Failure to Agree'* matter with unions Easy to remove, wash, replace if dirty or damaged Unions support this approach Easy to make out of fire retardant material	Cost (£300k) for 50,000 covers Covers will need washing Theft of covers
Stickers / tape	Cheap to implement Quick to order/install Clear message	Limited stocks available due to high demand Durable tape will be difficult to remove and result in damage to windows, arm rests, floor coverings which will result in ROSCO claims against NTL (significant cost) Not supported by unions; potential IR risk Looks like a really cheap option
Reservation lights	Ease of implementation No physical seat markings needed Minimal to switch on system on new fleet	Only on new fleets (cl195/331) Inconsistent approach across all fleets Passengers aren't used to seeing this system in use on NTL services Confusing message: it's not an actual reservation; just an indicator of where to sit Not supported by unions; potential IR risk

*Failure to Agree: this has been an ongoing issue regarding Conductors. We have taped off the area around the door controls, but this was short term fix until we could agree a more appropriate

approach. Unions are happy with our new approach: using seat covers to mark all aisle seats as out of use and on-board screens, as in the photo below, as an alternative to tape. This means Conductors can walk from one set of door controls to the other without being in close contact with seated customers and have a barrier to protect themselves while they carry out safety critical duties.



We appreciate the various discussions on this matter, but we had to make a decision yesterday morning in preparation for the discussions with local Reps this morning.

I hope this provides sufficient evidence to support our decision that this is the right thing to do for both our Customers and staff, but also offers value for money compared with alternatives considered.

Please let me know if you have any further questions on this matter.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 15 May 2020 12:03
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Position on Seat coverings

Hi [Redacted]

Thank you for the response which is unfortunate given both RNP and NTL have been actively discussing this.

Nonetheless, as per my email, NTL now needs to urgently raise their position to the RDG, and we anticipate other TOCs will be doing the same.

To reaffirm, our position is stated in the email I sent this morning and I shall make the Department aware of NTL's position.

Could I please ask for details of the order that was placed including details of the seat coverings, and what alternative options were considered (e.g. tape) in determining this as the most appropriate value for money.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]

████████████████████

E [REDACTED]

M [REDACTED]

Rail North Partnership
Ground Floor, West Gate, Grace Street, Leeds, LS1 2RP



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2020 10:39
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Position on Seat coverings

Hi [REDACTED],

This was issued too late. We'd already placed orders for our fleet (circa £300k). Couple of points to reinforce our position as follows:

- Government guidance makes specific reference to risks to passengers and customers in the risk assessment
- Government guidance states that passengers and staff should minimise the time as much as they can that they spend at less than 2m
- Government guidance states that organisations should create a clear approach for social distancing for workers and passengers identifying areas of congestion
- Government guidance makes reference to removal of seats as a possible control measure
- If we don't do this on trains there is a significant imbalance with what we are planning for stations
- Other TOCs are progressing- First Group, TfW (note LD operators effecting through reservation)
- Ref above point if we don't do we are treating our passengers differently just because of our stock type
- We have already set expectations by socialising at JSC and RDs with local reps
- Absolute requirement on 195/331 if don't want staff to close off whole carriage
- Order has been place and suppliers expectations raised- if lower to quantities just for 195/331 we put this order at risk
- Designed to give confidence to travelling public and staff- re above point what message does this send if different on different fleets
- There is a strong belief from HR and Ops that if we don't do this we will get a strong response from an IR perspective.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2020 10:33
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Position on Seat coverings

Hi [REDACTED]

Please see below position for the Department regarding seat coverings which RNP have been discussing with NTL this week. Please feel free to contact me if you need any clarification.

"As communicated at JEOT on 14 May, the Department does not have a policy position on seat coverings or blocking out of seats. It is not something we are presently advocating as it might hinder those travelling as family or friends groups. It was agreed at JEOT that operators will not mark-up seats and that passenger behaviours on social distancing will be enabled through communications. Should any operator strongly desire to mark-up seats for the operational management of social distancing, we request that this is raised via RDG and that the Department is made aware as soon as possible."

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Senior Commercial Manager

E [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

Rail North Partnership
Ground Floor, West Gate, Grace Street, Leeds, LS1 2RP



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