



Department
for Transport

Mr Steven Burton
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Department for Transport
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Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: F0018800

9 September 2020

Mr Glynn Magheramorne
[By email:
request-670346-ed20dbe4@whatdotheyknow.com]

Dear Mr Magheramorne,

Freedom of Information Act Request – F0018800

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request of 23 August 2020. You made the following request:

'Many thanks for your response.

You stated:

"The Department permitted certain operators to implement mandatory reservation requirements during the COVID-19 outbreak as a way of managing social distancing on board their trains. There are particular benefits to this over alternative approaches for long distance operators, because it can help to prevent queues from forming at stations, it protects the ability to travel for passengers at intermediate stations, and it can enable passengers to plan ahead effectively by being certain of which trains they will be able to use. It is a temporary measure which will be subject to review every two months"

As LNER implemented this for journeys made from 18 May onwards, the first review was due on 18 July. I am therefore requesting a copy of this review, as applicable to any relevant operators who have been granted permission to enforce mandatory reservations.

I am also keen to learn if the review includes consulting any relevant organisations such as Transport Focus, London Travelwatch etc; also I am keen to see if the review takes into account the fact that many trains are "Sold out" in Standard Class, thus forcing passengers to purchase expensive First Class tickets.'

I am writing to let you know that your request has been considered under the FOI Act 2000 and that the Department has completed its search for the information. I can confirm that the Department does not hold information which falls within the scope of your request.

The decision to review this measure was made in July 2020 and set to take place every two months. The first review is due to take place later during September 2020. We should

explain, however, that the review is designed to be an informal policy review rather than a formal review or inquiry and will therefore not produce a formal, written report.

The remit of the review concerns the underlying social distancing policy by Public Health England and the rail industry. Given this scope, the Department will not be consulting Transport Focus. The policy is not in place to force the purchase of first class tickets but to facilitate social distancing. At the time of the COVID-19 outbreak, travel was for essential use only and therefore passenger demand was being managed by spreading demand out.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by email to the Department's FOI Advice Team at:

E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DfT@dft.gov.uk

Please send or copy any follow-up correspondence relating to this request to the FOI Advice Team to help ensure that it receives prompt attention. Please also remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Please see attached details of the Department's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

Steven Burton
Senior Correspondence Manager – Passenger Services

Your right to complain to the Department and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition, a complaint can be made that the Department has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF