

Government calls on industry for action to resolve rail disruption

- government requests Hitachi set out a comprehensive safety inspection plan, and longer-term repair strategy for damaged Class 800 fleet
- rail industry asked to deliver a rolling stock strategy to provide additional capacity on network, and a rail replacement schedule
- passengers warned disruption expected to continue for some time

The government has asked the rail industry to urgently set out a comprehensive plan to resolve prolonged disruption following the discovery of cracks in Class 800 Series Hitachi trains.

The vast majority of GWR's fleet and a significant number of LNER and TransPennine Express trains have been taken off the network to undergo a full and rigorous inspection, after checks of the Hitachi fleet early on Saturday (8 May 2021) morning first identified cracks on part of the chassis of some trains.

To combat the expected continued delays, Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris has requested a comprehensive plan from Hitachi to identify the extent of the cracking and whether carriages can still run safely with them.

To support this, Hitachi will also be expected to set out a comprehensive inspection regime guaranteeing that safety is prioritised, building on the work that is already underway.

The independent safety regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#) (ORR), will be closely involved in overseeing this work, providing confidence to staff and passengers, while also helping to ensure any issues are rapidly resolved.

The rail industry has also been asked to set out a plan for how it will manage capacity, by moving rolling stock and proposing where alternative trains can be sourced. These will be brought into service as safely and quickly as possible.

The industry has also been asked to deliver a clear rail replacement schedule, including additional bus and coach services that will be in place to help alleviate disruption.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris said:

Today (9 May 2021) I have directed the rail industry to urgently set out a comprehensive plan to ensure services can safely resume as soon as possible.

I expect operators to explore all options for replacement services to help people complete their journeys, and have asked Hitachi for

a safety inspection plan, as well as longer term repair strategy.

Our focus is to ensure trains are returned to service as quickly as possible, once they are fully approved as safe. Only then can we start to rebuild a reliable and punctual timetable for passengers.

I also want to thank passengers for their patience during what could be a significant period of prolonged disruption, likely to continue for some time.

The government has also commissioned Hitachi to present an initial assessment of when they expect problems to be resolved.

The Rail Minister called an urgent meeting with MPs today, to keep them fully updated on progress, with representatives from Hitachi and the train operators.

The department is working closely with operators to determine what level of train service is able to run into next week and are doing everything possible to minimise the impact on passengers, although significant disruption is expected throughout next week.