

Reigate, Redhill and District Rail Users' Association

Representing rail users from Merstham, Reigate, Nutfield, Redhill, Earlswood, Salfords and Horley

This is an open letter on behalf of all the passengers who use Southern and Thameslink services

The Rt. Hon Theresa May
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London. SW1 2AA
United Kingdom

10 December 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

The Residents of Southern England are fed up with the continuing disruption to their daily lives cause by the problems at Southern and Thameslink Railway companies. The key fact in this disruption is the Industrial Dispute about Guards on trains and station staff. This dispute is leading to the breakdown of passenger's family life, health / stress issues, job losses and the reduced productivity for British Business lost waiting for trains that don't run.

We have listened to your rhetoric that your government will be for the ordinary people of this Country. We are Ordinary people and call on you to intervene directly in this dispute, to get it resolved quickly and swiftly for all our sakes.

It is no good stating this is a dispute between GTR and the Unions because that is not totally correct. Your Department for Transport is demanding modernisation which the Rail Company is trying to implement so your Government is a fully responsible party to this dispute.

As this is an open letter we also call on the leaders of ASLEF and the RMT to come back and negotiate swiftly on these issues with an open mind, whilst suspending all strikes and overtime bans. Entering the room and just saying no is inexcusable. It doesn't help your members or the passengers they serve. Come into the room with proposals that will resolve the dispute and make Driver Operation work. The world has moved on and technology is improving safety and process throughout life and you and your members need to embrace this.

Here are some suggestions from us: -

- Embrace Driver only door operation as it is safe within reason (nothing is 100% safe) but add conditions: -
 - Good Lighting at all stations where it operates
 - Dispatch staff at all large stations where crowding may occur such as Redhill
 - On Board Staff on all non-metro trains who are safety trained to evacuate trains in live rail situations.
- During disruption to avoid cancelling trains where On-Board Staff are delayed, drivers to be able to drive trains with passengers but without on-board staff to avoid further disruption to passengers, with processes in place for on-board supervisors to be placed on train as soon as reasonably possible.
- Extension of On Board Staff to Thameslink trains in non-metro area (for example South of East Croydon through Redhill)
- In Metro Areas Guarantee of at least 2 stations staff with full train safety training on all stations throughout day

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In Conclusion, we ask Madam Prime Minister, that you personally get around a negotiating table with the leaders of the RMT and ASLEF and create an agreement perhaps along the lines of our suggestions that can get Southern England back to work and resolve the issues once and for all.

When this is complete can you then please look to your Governments Infrastructure and Projects Authority, and ask them to invest in much needed improvements to the Brighton Main Line, which includes for our Redhill Line passengers, a flyover at Stoats Nest Junction, remodelling of Redhill station signals and points plus a 12-coach Platform 3 at Reigate Station.

Thank You

For and on Behalf of the Reigate, Redhill and District Rail Users' Association



Stephen Trigg
Chairperson