

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

21st February 2020

Dear Constance,

RE: NORTHERN RAIL.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Northern Rail franchise; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

For far too long, millions of rail passengers in the north of England have not had the rail services they deserve, and have had to put up with unacceptable delays and cancellations.

Railways should allow people to access education and highly skilled, well paid jobs, and of course enable them to socialise. I therefore welcome that the Government is taking action to bring about much needed change.

From the 1st March, the Northern Rail franchise will be taken into public ownership and the Government will begin operating Northern Rail services through the public-sector operator - the so-called 'operator of last resort' (OLR). The OLR already runs the London North Eastern Railway, and has seen passenger satisfaction rise in the 19 months it has run the service. Indeed, improving the performance and reliability of Northern Rail services, and substantially reducing the number of cancellations, will be a priority.

I am reassured by the Government's determination to see tangible improvements for passengers. I understand that the pacer replacement programme will continue. Pacers will be banished very soon on the western side of the Pennines and, in Yorkshire, they will be gone by the spring. In addition, all of Northern Rail's trains will be deep-cleaned. Cleaning patterns will also be reviewed to make sure the first and last passengers travel on trains in the same condition.

Ministers are committed to addressing overcrowding too. Platforms will be lengthened at 30 stations to allow for longer trains, and new technology to identify crowding pinch points will be trialled to ensure that trains are being deployed in the most effective way to meet demand. Tackling issues arising from inadequate infrastructure, though not straightforward, will also be key.

No stone should be left unturned improving this franchise for passengers, businesses, communities and town centres. The railways were invented in the north of England, and it's time the north's economy is strengthened, rather than weakened, by its rail network.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE