railfuture

Ticket Offices Consultation Summer 2023
A submission to Transport Focus & London TravelWatch – All stations, all Train Operators

Contents

Summary

Railfuture has very significant concerns with the proposals from every Train Operating Company (TOC) applicable to every station in-scope and does not believe that any should be allowed to proceed in their current state. In making this statement, it is not that we believe that Ticket Offices need to continue in their current form for ever, simply that (1) the proposed alternatives are not fit for purpose, and this will still be the case once already identified improvements are delivered; and (2) in-person ticket selling remains an essential option for some intending travellers.

We have decided to still submit our document to the original deadline, so our view becomes available to everyone well in advance of the revised deadline of 1 September 2023.

An approach built around 6 key principles could well receive our support:

> **Transport Focus's tests**
>
> ❶ Easily buy the right ticket.
>
> ❷ Assistance to travel provided in a timely and reliable manner.
>
> ❸ Get the information they require including during disruption.
>
> ❹ Feel safe.
>
> ❺ Not penalised if they cannot buy a ticket.
>
> ❻ Can continue to use facilities at a station.

1. The principle that intending passengers are encouraged (but not forced) towards self-service via online, contactless and Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) is supported ❶.
2. That all of these are made fit for purpose first – and the fares & tickets system is simplified so that self-service customers can develop confidence that they are choosing the right fare / ticket ❶❺.
3. That all types of tickets continue to be sold by skilled rail staff (such as those currently in ticket offices), with a clear recognition that the preferred alternatives of online, contactless and TVMs will never be suitable for some customers for a variety of reasons ❶❺.
4. Some move of ticket office staff to the multi-skilled role, but the retention of dedicated ticket selling staff at the busiest stations for longer hours – and at medium sized stations at the busiest times. These ticket selling staff do not need to be behind the ticket office glass but should be easily findable and always at the same place on the station ❶❺.
5. That stations retain a clear meeting point / welcome desk for passengers to be able to find staff ❷❸❹.
6. That hours of staffing are not reduced at stations – and facilities such as toilets and waiting rooms ❷❸❹❻.

We believe that a sensible immediate way forward could be as follows:

1. At the stations with the quietest ticket offices – and at quieter times at many medium based stations, staff should become 'multi-skilled' and take on a wider role. But the station ticket office should remain open – and accessible to the staff – for ticket sales that cannot be completed by other means (or the immediate demand for tickets can be most efficiently met at the ticket office window).
2. The TVM Concierge role should be trialled at larger stations – both helping intending passengers with their purchase and directly entering the journey requirement when sensible.
3. Other than the initiative described immediately above, ticket offices at virtually all stations should remain open for now, with very minimal changes to hours.
4. A proper analysis is undertaken to determine why ticket office users visit and use it – and the barriers to switching to the alternatives, such as online.
5. Work is initiated to improve the usability and accessibility of TVM software and hardware.

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6. Natural language AI (eg ChatGPT) and/or voice recognition is trialled as an additional assistance mechanism to sell tickets both online and via TVMs – to convert human speech into ticket choices.

We also consider it essential that the Government acknowledges that the railway is a public transport service for those unable to drive (eg sight challenges, other physical and mental disabilities) and that the ticket purchase process must not prevent them travelling. As we outline below, for some of these people, in-person ticket purchase is by far the most realistic way for them to obtain tickets and the railway should continue to be meet this need where there is sufficient demand for a station to be staffed.

Finally, we accept the headline rationale for the scale of these changes, that 10% (sometimes 12%) Tickets are now sold at Ticket Offices. But we think that this masks very different scenarios – stations inside London's zonal system with very low percentages (eg Peckham Rye: 1.1%) vs stations outside (eg Luton (Town): 30.0%), where there is no simple, well established PAYG ticketing option (see 'The basis that Ticket Office usage has reduced'). We believe that there are many medium sized stations with higher percentages of ticket offices sales where dedicated in-person ticket selling needs to continue to be offered, either with, or without, a ticket office window between customer and staff member.

More generally, as we have considered the proposals, we have concluded that a key point for all the alternatives is:

1. In some cases, the alternatives can be made fit for purpose (or at least much better) quite quickly. For instance websites could be enabled to sell Rangers and Rovers, booking cycle spaces online could be improved (see box).
2. In other cases, the alternatives can be made fit for purpose, but this will take time. For instance, we suggest below that TVMs might become operable in staff mode to take over functions currently only possible at a ticket office and we believe that more large screen TVMs are needed.
3. There are some situations where the alternatives will never be fit for purpose – as described above, usually applicable to the personal circumstances of the ticket buyer.

> Comment from a member
>
> On some websites (e.g. Avanti) the cycle booking facility is available if the whole journey is on Avanti. If I try to book e.g. Carnforth to Wolverhampton, using Avanti from Lancaster, cycle booking is not available at all.

We think there is too much focus on decommissioning an office, when the focus needs to be on how the people in, and the services provided from, that office are provided, with an emphasis on using slack time between sales more usefully. There seems to be a view that a ticket office can only be used for selling tickets. We think this is wrong – there are many stations where it could have a multiple role – improve revenue control, supervise gate lines, provide information and passenger security.

Subject to layout, an ideal is a window overlooking the concourse either side of a barrier, so giving advice public and ticketed sides, supervising the barrier and platforms. Staff should be visible, but some do not sell tickets, and cash sales are managed separately, so obviating a secure area. The staff should therefore be able to come out and assist where passenger including disabled access, need help.

- TfL have done this at many locations, mostly at locations far busier than National rail stations. The DfT should refer to TfL with a view to actually improving the environment for passengers.

Railfuture responses / Our national response in context

This is the national Railfuture response, covering all stations for all TOCs currently consulting on Ticket Office changes. We will also be submitting specific responses to some TOCs commenting specifically on their plans – expanding upon issues in this submission in more detail. Our Branches may also be commenting on individual stations. These submissions are designed to be complementary to, and supportive of one another; but in the case of accidental conflict, this, the national response is the primary submission. Affiliated Rail User Groups and individual members are making their own responses as well; they may, or may not, agree with Railfuture's view.

Our national response is the result of consultation with our branches, input from our passenger specialists, and the opinions of our members at our National AGM on Saturday 15 July; that included the passing of an Emergency Motion (Appendix C: National AGM 15 July 2023 – Emergency motion).

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in development and transport planning.

The concept of self-service "first"

The entire consultation seems to be based on 'self-service only' as a concept. We cannot support that vision, but could support "self-service first", recognising that self-service can, and often it, a convenient option for the intending passenger, who can buy their tickets at a convenient time (and location) or have post-pay and pre-pay options available to them.

But we cannot support the self-service model set out in the TOC consultations for the following reasons:

1. Some intending passengers will really struggle to use any of the self-service options, usually because of disability, unavailability of relevant payment methods and because they are not digitally literate.
2. Some intending passengers do not possess debit or credit cards (or do not have any spending power on their cards) and TVMs and cash is often not a good combination.
3. Many intending passengers are not confident of their ticket selection choices, whether online or at a TVM because of the complexity of the UK fares & ticketing system.

> Comment from a member
>
> Trying to buy on line sometimes does not work. I have an A4 side full of a saga I had earlier this year, only solved at Carlisle ticket office.

More generally, as a public service, we consider it totally inappropriate to exclude passengers by removing the universally usable option of buying from a person. By all means, encourage the use of other channels, due to cost to operate and to free up staff for wider roles, but the aim of this needs to be reduction, not elimination.

Context

The UK Ticketing and Fares environment is incredibly complex – and still getting more complex. For instance, initiatives such as LNER's Single Leg pricing have the impact that for anyone who travels on LNER and other operators and is now completing two

transactions, not one[1] and also now has to understand that on LNER only single fares are an option – and on other routes return fares need to be considered as well.

Railfuture is of the view that, until this occurs, intending passengers will always want to gravitate towards a staff member, and therefore fares and ticketing reform is an essential part of this programme of activities.

We are not burdening this response with the detail of our view as to what reforms are sensible; these are available on our website: https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Fares.

However, we would observe that the trend to complexity continues even in the last 7 days with TfL's announcement of the withdrawal of the Day Travelcard – a simple product disappears, and complexity comes in its place.

Ticket offices

What services do ticket offices provide?

Our analysis starts with a review of the benefits of Ticket Offices, which identified 15 key benefits. We emphasise, though, that it is not the fabric of a ticket office that matters, but the people inside it, the services they offer, and the equipment and facilities needed:
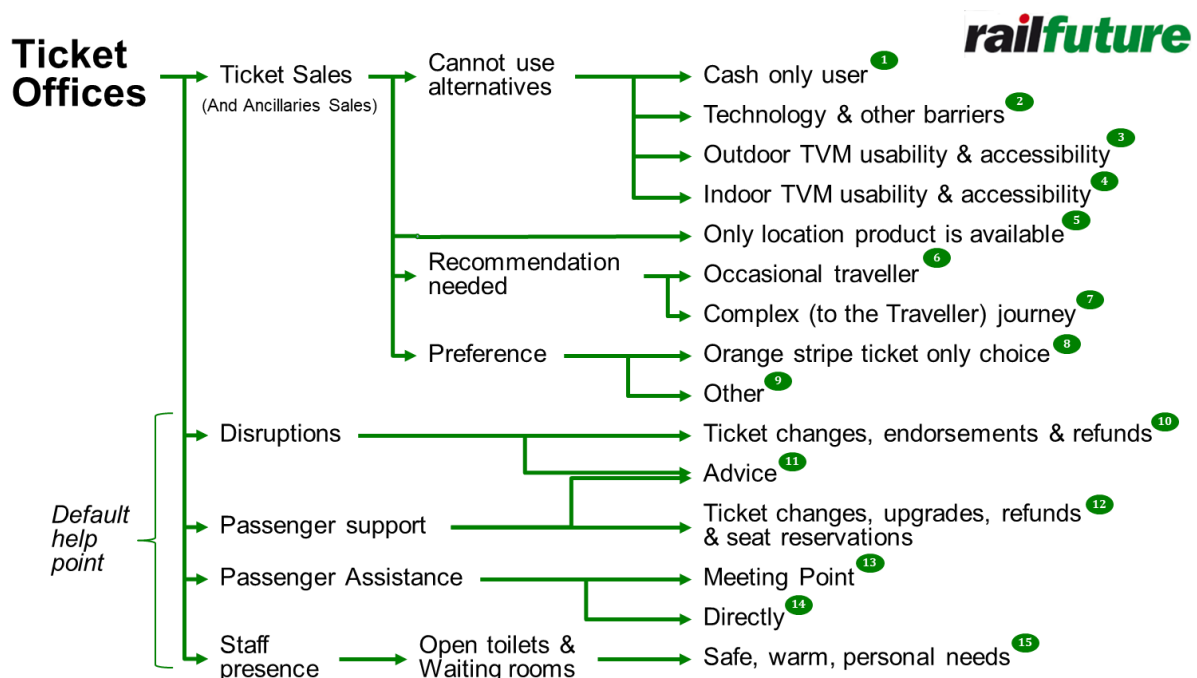
This has been compared Transport Focus's 6 tests to be used in their assessment and this is available at 'Appendix A: Railfuture's Ticket Office needs vs Transport Focus's tests'.

1 Cannot use the alternatives / Cash only user.

Some passengers can only pay for tickets with cash. This includes those denied bank accounts and those without spending power on their accounts. It can also include those who do not use Chip and Pin (ie Chip & Signature) such as the elderly & children, which are less likely to be accepted by TVMs. Whilst TVMs that accept cash are available, our experience is:

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[1] And now has two separate transactions to complete.

- They are rare at many TOCs.
- Where TOCs do accept cash, it is only a small portion of machines, which increases the likelihood of non-availability.
- The cash handling element is more prone to failure.
- Machines taking cash are more at risk of theft and vandalism.

We believe it needs to be always possible to pay with cash at a staffed station and the change should be refused for a station if paying with cash is not possible. If there is a TVM accepting cash at a station, a TOC needs to be able to demonstrate that the machine has high availability, and that it can normally dispense change.

The Financial Conduct Authority carry out regular research on the size of the 'unbanked' population; they report "the unbanked make up 2.3% of the UK adult population (1.2m) in February 2020."[2]. But we consider others will be effectively unbanked as well:

- Adults who have a bank account(s), but no available spending power on these account(s) and be unable to purchase by card.
- School age children who will have a bank account, and often will not have been given a bank card by their parents / carers.

Note: Whilst non status debit cards are often available to the unbanked, there are usually charges for loading money, particularly cash, the user often needs access to a computing device and the Internet, so this cannot be regarded as a universal panacea.

2 Technology and other barriers

The alternatives to the ticket office all involve using computers, whether it is their own for online, or the Train Operator's for TVMs. This is a significant barrier for some. Specific reasons include:

- Sight issues.
- Neuro diversity, including dyslexia.
- Hand dexterity issues including arthritis and missing limbs.
- Do not use the Internet, which leads to unfamiliarity of the TVM interface.
- Do not possess a smartphone so cannot purchase when away from home.

> Comment from a member of a Sustainable Travel Group
>
> I'm partially sighted + my brain damage makes it difficult to understand new things. I tried once to use the ticket machine. It had no disabled discount plus I couldn't use it so had to go to the ticket office. Plus ticket staff are always helpful eg finding the best and cheapest routes. Ticket machines don't do anything.

We consider some of these barriers to be immutable – yes, a blind person may well be able to buy a rail ticket from a website that has the necessary supplementary functionality, such as screen reader compatibility, but that is always going to be a long and tedious task for them. We therefore believe that they should be able to buy in-person, as a quick and simple activity.

For some factors, improving the usability of the alternatives may encourage / allow an alternative to be used, but this should not be seen as universally applicable.

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[2] https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/research/financial-lives-survey-2020.pdf

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3 Outdoor / 4 Indoor TVM usability & accessibility

We analyse usability and functionality of TVMs in detail at the heading 'Only currently available at a Ticket Office' and 'Ticket Vending Machines'. In summary:

1. There are substantial and regular shortfalls in the functionality of TVMs as regards the types of tickets available.
2. Many TVMs, particularly those outdoors are difficult to operate due to factors such as low sensitivity on the Touch Screen and glare and other environmental factors.

> A member reports "Recently, I purchased the following tickets at Hebden Bridge Ticket Office
>
> - AP Grand Central 1st class Halifax to London KX
> - AP Grand Central 1st class London KX to Halifax
> - Day return Standard Class Balham to Basingstoke (not via Waterloo) on a specified future date."
>
> That's 52 steps on a TVM!"

5 Only location product is available

Ticket offices remain the only location where some ticket types and a significant number of services are available. We comment in more depth on the issues with the alternatives at the headings 'Only currently available at a ticket office', 'Ticket Vending Machines' and 'Online' below.

6 Occasional traveller / 7 Complex (to the Traveller) journey

In both cases, the key requirement is the provision of advice as to which tickets to purchase. With the vast array of Advance Tickets, numerous flexible tickets, flexi-seasons, seasons, rovers & rangers et al, intending travellers simply don't know what product to purchase.

The small screen of many TVMs exacerbates this by needing to limit information displayed and requiring multiple steps.

The complicated and varying restrictions on Off-Peak tickets, which are not consistent between routes, mean that such purchases cannot be regarded as 'Easy' unless an expert (ie the rail staff member) is available to guide and support.

We recognise that sometimes, it may be possible for the intending Traveller to be coached in the use of a TVM, but we do not think it sensible for this to be the only option.

> A member comments: "Told to me by a ticket office clerk yesterday: Couple wanted to go to York; I sold them A WY Family DayRover to Leeds and a Northern Duo ticket York><Leeds. Total cost £35.70.
>
> Ticket machine would have sold two day returns for £44."

8 Orange stripe ticket only choice

Whilst some journeys, most notably across London, can only be undertaken when holding an orange striped ticket, the ticket office remains an option for 'easy' as it is a one step transaction (buy and collect), whereas online is buy, then collect. TVMs are an alternate option, but being more difficult to use (vs online), the Ticket Office becomes appealing.

The Government and the RDG should be negotiating with TfL to find a solution to this. We recognise this could be expensive, but savings from TfL not needing to maintain paper ticket readers will offer an offset.

Consideration should be given to both some tactical fitting of QR code readers and the offering of cross London Tickets that exclude the use of TfL[3] (at a lower cost).

9 Other (reasons to buy at a ticket office)

We recognise that for some, with support, they will find the alternatives acceptable, even preferable, and that a concierge role to assist with the transition will be helpful.

10 Ticket changes, endorsements & refunds (when disrupted)

TVMs do not allow ticket changes, do not support refunds, nor can they endorse a ticket. These tasks remain essential; we agree that for endorsements, a ticket office isn't necessary, but a good knowledge of ticketing and fares is. Apps and mobile websites do not yet offer this functionality.

11 Ticket changes, upgrades, refunds & seat reservations

These services are not normally available on TVMs. Seat reservations can be an immediate need, and whilst available online, not all travellers have a smartphone.

12 Advice

Ticket Offices can also be giving other advice, particularly when the layout of the station naturally routes passengers past ticket offices. We fully recognise that this advice doesn't require a ticket office, but it does require that there is an alternative and that this alternative can be easily found (well signposted) and staff are present there. Those staff need to be knowledgeable and with the right equipment (most noticeably a Smartphone).

13 Passenger Assistance meeting point

Ticket Offices can be the current meeting point for Passenger Assistance; they have two key features – an easily findable location and the presence of staff.

A meeting point need not be in a ticket office, but it does need to be visible, easy to find and properly staffed.

14 Passenger Assistance delivery

At stations with very small staff numbers, Ticket Office staff regularly directly provide Passenger assistance; if this is the case and the ticket office is to be closed, alternative arrangements are needed.

15 Safe, warm, personal needs

The presence of Ticket Office staff is often linked to the availability of station facilities such as Toilets and Waiting Rooms. These facilities need to be open at least as long as present, and preferably longer.

Our Herts & Beds branch has been in dialogue with GTR, who have given good reasons for not opening a toilet at Hadley Wood when the Ticket Office isn't open (which are applicable to all stations when unstaffed); we believe this needs to be resolved before any reduction in staffing hours. A particular challenge could be that many of these station facilities have been constructed to a standard suitable to the risk levels associated with staff presence. Absent

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[3] But include the use of Thameslink where relevant. The Elizabeth Line does not have suitable barriers at Paddington and Liverpool Street.

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these staff, vandalism risk might increase exponentially. The writer has in mind that his local station uses porcelain, whilst the nearest unattended toilets (owned by the local council) use metal fittings. Our latest correspondence with GTR is summarised at 'Appendix H: Hadley Wood toilet saga emails'.

We are aware that this is not a unique issue; for instance, the Branch is also aware of issues at Biggleswade.

The basis that Ticket Office usage has reduced

The consultation is based on a very significant reduction in demand for purchasing from ticket offices, and we agree that has occurred and our own anecdotal evidence supports this very substantial reduction – eg a ticket inspection on a Northern Trains service where virtually everyone, including the author of this submission showed a QR code from their mobile phone.

However, we are far from convinced that the reduction is sufficiently uniform:

1. Great Western Railway's own data shows that at Barnstaple, 46% of tickets are bought at the ticket office, 5% at the TVM and 49% online. And that 22% of transactions have cash payments. Whereas Maidenhead is 26%, 42% and 26% (and 19% are cash payments)
2. Our affiliated Rail User Group SERUG (Salisbury to Exeter Rail Users Group) comments "SWR have stated that 75% of passenger journeys are already made using "Smart Media". That percentage includes the successful "Pay as You Go" or "Smart Card" ticketing for the many thousands of daily short journeys in the London Area, but is not available elsewhere on the SWR network. There may be short terms plans to extend this to another 53 stations in the South East, but none of these will include the further reaches of SWR's network. Whilst SERUG can agree that online booking/ticketing is available for the majority of journeys, it is our view that the figure of 75% is grossly misleading if applied to the whole of the SWR network".
3. GTR shared data with our Herts & Beds Branch in response to a query about 9 stations:

St Albans	18.2%	Salfords	12.9%	Peckham Rye	1.1%
Harpenden	9.1%	Downham Market	21.2%	Haywards Heath	19.6%
Luton (Town)	30.0%	Palmers Green	0.8%	Ifield	12.5%

Our analysis shows:

- 13.6%[4] of journeys from all these stations (together) involved a purchase at the ticket office.
- 1.0% of journeys from the two stations inside TfL's zones involved a purchase at the ticket office.
- 19.8% of journeys from the stations outside TfL's zones involved a purchase at the ticket office.

We think this data is typical of many stations and think that the entire Consultation process cannot be judged on the frequently quoted "Only 10% [or 12%] of tickets are bought at a ticket office. Whilst the data needs to be calculated, around 20% does not seem unreasonable for stations outside London.

In Railfuture's view a much more nuanced approach is needed, based on individual station circumstances and ticket options in the area. For instance GWR's data suggests that the

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[4] Based on ORR 21/22 Passenger data, excluding Season Tickets. GTR data Q1 2022.

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Cheltenham data is 6%, 4% and 90% respectively, making earlier adoption here more appropriate.

Productivity of ticket office staff / retention of equipment / wider use of the space

We accept that the Department for Transport has legitimate concern that some Ticket Office staff are unproductive (in some cases for some of the time) if devoted to only in-person selling.

Only two options seem to have been considered:

1. To allocate them entirely to other tasks (eg assisting passengers to use in TVMs).
2. Make them redundant.

We believe these other options should have been considered:

1. Evolving the role of the Ticket Office staff member. When not serving customers in person they could become part of the call-centre pool to increase their utilisation (including for other types of queries, such as help-point calls - which we know currently often go un-answered for a long period of time since they're often routed through to Network Rail Control Centres). Clearly that would require a training investment to allow staff at stations to be able to become part of this resource pool when not serving customers face-to-face and may also require some incremental IT investment (such as headsets).
2. Developing the ticket office into a wider community hub. Stations could act as community Post Offices, banking hubs, tourist information points and Council Customer Service points, to name just a few suggestions. There appears to have been no innovative thinking around the role of staffed stations in rural and mid-sized market town communities.
3. To support satellite ticket retail hosted at locations such those listed above, cafes and convenience stores, where a Ticket Vending Machine could be supported by both on-site staff for simpler questions and remote ticket office staff for more complex ones.

> A member comments:
>
> Our ticket office lady can be found in the office during the period leading up to the next train departure(s), safe and secure for handling money, able to sell tickets and answer queries (with PC and other tech alongside) and also do a multitude of back office tasks. As train arrives and between trains she is usually out and about on platforms, changing litter bags, watering planters, checking the toilets, servicing the TVM (conveniently just outside the booking office) and engaging with the public. The ticket office has a nice large ticket window, information leaflets, a departure screen (not visible from outside) artwork and seating.
>
> It all works brilliantly - what needs changing?
>
> OK, the toilets could be open for longer (locked up at 11am).
>
> Subsequent emails commented:
>
> I agree sounds perfect but why does it need a window, why can't it be open plan? An office customers can go into? Think of how the few banks which are open now operate.
>
> Yes, agreed. However, there still needs to be a secure room/cubicle for cash, IT equipment, handbag/coat etc.

Alternatives to the Ticket Office

Principles for replacing Ticket Offices

Consultation proposals we have seen have the following features:

Element	Observation	Railfuture view
Suggest that larger stations will have a Customer Welcome Desk or similar instead.	Some TOCs promise the same issuing capability	We can support this.
	Some TOCs say that most tickets can be issued	We think this is unacceptable – all must be capable of being issued.
	TOCs are often clear that they will encourage TVM use	Generally this is acceptable, but TOCs need standards / protocols as to when this is not acceptable: eg not for a blind person.
	TOCs are generally silent on how cash sales will be handled	Cash needs to be an explicitly acceptable option (and staff need a way to securely store it pending collection).
	TOCs are generally silent on efficiency – a Ticket Office can sell a ticket (and take payment) very quickly as the equipment is optimised for this.	This needs more attention – with both fewer staff on ticket selling duties (or wider responsibilities) and a less efficient sales operation (including guiding or using TVMs) capacity could be a real issue.
	TOCs are silent on the potential need to increase TVMs if they are to be used more frequently	An exercise is required at each station to determine if more or different TVMs are required. We comment elsewhere on the need for some of these to be large screen TVMs.
Suggest that other stations primarily rely on TVMs with staff support	Some TOCs keep staffing hours very similar to the present, but others envisage very significant reductions in hours	We disagree with such reductions. Passengers value a staff presence (and are thus encouraged to travel) and if they are taking on a wider role, then this indicative of "more demand".
	Some TOCs promise the same issuing capability in time	We can support the end point, but not the suggestion that this occurs sometime after a ticket office is closed; we think this unacceptable.
	Some TOCs say that most tickets can be issued at TVMs	We think this is unacceptable – all must be capable of being issued.
	TOCs are often clear that they will encourage TVM use	Generally this is acceptable, but TOCs need standards / protocols as to when this is not acceptable: eg not for a blind person.
	Some TOCs suggest that TVM concierges will not be able to issue tickets using their own equipment	We think this is unacceptable.
	Some TOCs suggest that TVM concierges will be able to issue tickets using their own equipment – but not all ticket types	We think this is unacceptable – all must be capable of being issued.

Element	Observation	Railfuture view
	TOCs are generally silent on how cash sales will be handled	Cash needs to be an explicitly acceptable option (and staff need a way to securely store it pending collection).
	TOCs are silent on the potential need to increase TVMs if they are to be used more frequently	An exercise is required at each station to determine if more or different TVMs are required. We comment elsewhere on the need for some of these to be large screen TVMs.
	TOCs are generally silent on efficiency – a Ticket Office can sell a ticket (and take payment) very quickly as the equipment is optimised for this.	This needs more attention – with both fewer staff on ticket selling duties (or wider responsibilities) and a less efficient sales operation (including guiding or using TVMs) capacity could be a real issue.

A member of our London & South East Committee visited Gatwick Airport station during the consultation period. The Ticket Office at this station has already been abolished. Their report is at 'Appendix E: Gatwick Station visit report'. A key feature is that staff can sell tickets 24 hours a day.

The need for a good meeting point

At many stations the ticket office is a natural place to head for advice and support (including the official passenger assistance service). It is essential that all stations have an obvious meeting point. If it isn't to be the Ticket Office, then we believe that the start point is that there should be a Meeting Point / Welcome Desk in the ticket hall as the default option. That is not to say it should always be there; at the writer of this submission's local station, the Ticket Gateline is also a natural home. We consider that all Meeting Points must meet these tests:

1. Easily findable as a passenger arrives at the station, including those with sight challenges (we note that campaigners for the blind are observing that guide dogs are trained to find ticket offices).
2. Contain a Hearing loop for the hard of hearing.
3. Give the staff member access to real time travel information on a medium to large screen (not just a mobile phone).
4. Ticket issuing facilities.
5. Have a TVM nearby (so the staff member can provide support effectively).

Only currently available at a Ticket Office

The talk in the consultation documents is often about "Tickets not available at TVMs and Online". But we think that this masks a wider, and at least as important issue, which could broadly fit under the heading "customer service". We have seen a list widely circulated on Twitter that lists 34 activities only completable by GTR at a Ticket Office. And we are aware of at least 3 others. The list is enclosed at 'Appendix D: GTR's only from a Ticket Office services'; our analysis suggests that 16 of them are an important service, including one that is an Equality issue.

We think that some of these can be relatively easily put on TVMs and online (eg Purchasing Rover Tickets, offering the Herts & Beds Bus Pass discount). But others cannot.

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A particular feature of Ticket Offices is that they offer immediate authorisation for special situations – because the evidence can be presented / handed over by the passenger / seen and the decision taken by the Rail Staff member immediately. Additionally, transactions that cannot be printed on an orange stripe ticket, on plain paper or shown on a mobile device can be completed immediately.

- An example of "Authorisation" is standalone "Kids for £2" ticket sales for GTR; these aren't sold online or at TVMs because they are considered to be at considerable risk of abuse and the Rail Staff member provides an important filter in judging that the transaction is legitimate (eg by sight of the accompanying adult's ticket).
    - Authorisation can be addressed for TVMs by creating a staff mode for them, in a similar manner as used on Supermarket self-service tills for age authorisation etc.
- An example of immediate delivery is Railcards in card / cardboard form. Where a passenger does not have a smartphone, or otherwise prefers to hold their Railcard in physical form, this can be completed immediately by a staff member.
    - Whilst a TVM is probably not going to print specialist items like a railcard, together with staff mode, it could take payment and the staff member then issues it manually (or it could print a temporary one on an orange striped ticket).

The alternative – posting evidence to a central contact point, processing there and then returning is, we think, a distinct retrograde step and many of these services need to be immediately deliverable.

We think two fundamental changes would help:

1. TVMs should have a staff mode, in a similar manner as used on Supermarket self-service tills for age authorisation etc. Activities such as refunds, and Kids for £2 standalone tickets could be processed this way.
2. Both staff at a station and at Tele-sales should be able to send "anything" to a ticket machine for immediate payment and print out. For instance, in the GTR example, a through ticket to the Isle of Man is processed by Tele-sales and sent to a TVM for payment and printing.

Hub station concept

Some TOCs are offering a hub station concept where the full product set will still be available at a selection of larger stations (and in some cases we are told that if a visit is needed a refund of the cost to travel there will be given). We think this concept is:

1. Always unacceptable given present services usually offered by TVMs. Core products such as Advance Fares are frequently missing, and we do not see why an intending passenger would need to devote the time to such a visit.
2. Once a much fuller set of functions are available from TVMs we can see the case for travel from a nearby station to a hub. For instance, the writer's nearest Hub station is around 6 minutes and there are 6 trains an hour.
3. However, often much longer distances are being suggested and, when combined with a less frequent train service, it is easy to see a trip taking two or three hours. We don't think this is acceptable.

Ticket Vending Machines

We consider TVM functionality to often be woefully short of the functionality needed to replace Ticket Offices. We think that the core functionality required is often present at least one TOC's TVMs, particularly the newer, large screen TVMs (those with screen dimensions of 100-200cm), but coverage is significantly below the need if ticket office hours are to be significantly reduced.
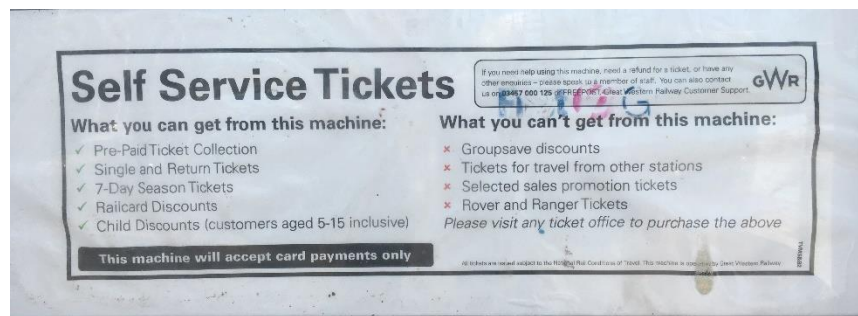
We think that small screen outdoor TVMs, at best only meet the test of "easy" when selling tickets for flexible travel for travel now and in the near future from the current station. But factors such as low sensitivity on the touch screen, glare and other environmental factors can easily make this more difficult than "easy". This should include Rover and Ranger tickets. The requirements for protection from the weather and resilience against attacks often makes the screen unresponsive and difficult to use, particularly when many taps are required (eg when using on on-screen keyboard). Even achieving the 10 or so taps required to retrieve a pre-bought ticket can be challenging.

Larger screen TVMs are much more 'user friendly', but the member comments in the box to the right are relevant.

A member writes: As an intending ticket purchaser approaches the ticket office, they will have a mental list of the information they need to impart: railcard held, day and/or time of travel (if not 'now'), number of passengers, destination (may be Zone 1' or 'as far as 'Hammersmith' etc rather than the official "Travelcard."). The clerk will register this information in whatever order the customer chooses to say it and will issue tickets accordingly.

A ticket machine on the other hand is quite inflexible in this regard, and the purchaser might miss or overlook a step and end up inadvertently buying the wrong ticket and innocently laying themselves open to penalty charges.

Our analysis of TVM functionality showed that none of 14 machines at 10 different TOCs had what we regarded as the absolute minimal functionality (full results available in PDF & Excel formats.

	Conclusion	Comments
1. Tickets to travel immediately to common destinations from the station	Available / easy	To include Advance fares if an option. And see below on Dore & Totley.
2. Tickets to travel in the near future to common destinations from the station (most noticeably for an Off-Peak starting within the next 30 minutes)	Available / easy	It is typically available but needs to be more intuitive (that exists) to allow for purchasing off-peak tickets towards the end of the peak.
3. This station to any station flexible tickets (Do specific trains have to be selected?)	Available / Mixed	Should be no requirement to select a specific train (should be clear on the times of the trains, list all the valid trains)

		Conclusion	Comments
4. Any station to any station flexible tickets (Do specific trains have to be selected?)		Varied - sometimes not possible	This is a basic feature for someone planning a journey, including from a station without a TVM, or for a multi part journey and needs to be available
5. Season tickets		Limited	Often issue weeklys, renew monthlys
6. Advance Fare Tickets		Rare	Including seat reservations
7. Multiple passengers – a mix of Railcards / some with & some without Railcards (in one transaction)		Difficult	But as a secondary reaction. So if relevant offer GroupSave, and then prompt
8. GroupSave is available		Mixed - often not available	Needs to be available
9. A Basket feature – Ie can buy multiple unrelated tickets together		Available, sometimes difficult	Needs to be clear, can address #7 in part
10. Seat Reservations (as standalone transaction)		Rare	Needs to be available
11. Rover & Ranger tickets		Unusual	Needs to be available
12. Cash payment accepted		Some machines	At least one per station.

We did see some beacons of good practice, but these were then marred by shortcomings. For instance on the machine at Dore & Totley (a Northern station):

2. Tickets to travel in the near future to common destinations from the station (most noticeably for an Off-Peak starting within the next 30 minutes)	Available / easy	Display shows next five available services, with cheapest fares for each. Option to display later/earlier services. the cheapest through fares are indicated (including Advance), but I don't think split-ticketing.

But then our reviewer goes on to make these comments:

- "For all ticket options it is necessary to specify which trains will be used. In the case of immediate travel, once the scheduled departure time of a train has passed it is no longer possible to buy a ticket for that train, even if it is running late (the TVM can show real-time running information). Thus, any passenger arriving between the scheduled and actual departure must specify a later scheduled train to purchase a ticket. Potentially confusing."

- "TVM offers assistance in the form of a video call with a help centre, but this didn't work. Called twice but no response in the time I was there (50 minutes). I know from other users the facility does work but only very occasionally".

We did not include it in our survey because it is rarely available except on Greater Anglia, but we regard a video assistance feature as a key improvement particularly if the video assistant can "send" a ticket to the TVM for purchase.

We also saw no real innovation, such as voice control.

Finally, we believe that it is time for TVMs to start to specialise – some for local journeys (which can be existing machines, repurposed) and others for more complex journeys, with larger screens etc (and also able to sell simple journeys).

> A member writes: At Hatfield (Herts) ticket machines don't understand Moorgate (the National Rail station) or Kings Cross – you have to input "London Terminals". Also the first screen shows a quick option of a specific point to point ticket to "Underground Zones 1-2" – but to select that as a destination for a different ticket, you have to input "London Underground Zones 1-2".
>
> To which our Chair commented "Similarly SWR TVMs don't understand Waterloo."

We conclude that the TVM service needs substantial improvement to be an effective substitute for Ticket Office sales (note: as explained elsewhere, we think some travellers will always need the to be able to purchase from staff.

Online

Compared to TVMs, a wider range of tickets are available for online purchase. We believe that the following improvements would enable them to become more effective as a ticket office replacement:

1. Provision of all tickets, including tickets such as Rangers & Rovers.
2. Provision of all discount types, including local ones, often linked to Local Authority Bus Passes.
3. Effective provision of ancillaries such as comprehensive support for cycle bookings (refer above).

PAYG

PAYG is not yet widely available and offers a potentially strong incentive to self-serve, but, yet again, we are seeing that the railway is not offering a product that can be self-served without support.

For instance, some stations near London already allow Bank contactless cards to be used – but this can be noticeably more expensive than a National Rail ticket. The infrastructure and pricing mechanism is delivered by TfL using the service they developed for their own needs and so it is simply supports a single peak and a single off-peak fare. The single fares (and capping) are benefits, but the TfL product doesn't cover the range of national rail products. These typically include:

- At least three fares – peak, off-peak and super off-peak/weekend
- Railcard discounts

The complexity of these products is a disincentive to self-serve and also a generator of advice questions for self-servers.

Typical station hours

Although Train Operators promise that equality impact assessments have been completed, these have not normally been published. A typical promise is that everyone will still be able to travel as they do at present, and mobile teams and on-board staff are promised to allow this to happen. However, we have seen no formal assessment of the impact on timeliness of travel, in particular the removal of turn up and go opportunities which can currently be achieved because there are staff at the station. Reduced hours may require travel to be booked and we consider this to be a material disadvantage.

We note that where hours are planned to be reduced these seem to align with the traditional peaks of travel on the railway. We are unconvinced this is appropriate; we believe that:

1. Hours at the weekend, particularly on Sunday often need to be increased to recognise the greater importance of leisure traffic to the railway.
2. Monday to Friday there is a case for shifting ticket selling hours later in the day. The more regular commuter traffic should be more amenable to self-service options than the less regular leisure traveller, who is also undertaking journeys to more destinations.

We are particularly unimpressed by the proposals from East Midlands Railway for stations to be served by mobile ticketing staff at unspecified times. If in-person ticketing support and issuing is to be provided by mobile staff, at the very least this needs to be at specified, published times – and the percentage of planned attendance that is actually achieved is measured and published.

Whilst the headlines in this consultation are all about ticket sales, we also think that staff presence is essential for Transport Focus's tests on feeling safe, getting information during disruption, and continuing to use facilities. On information during disruption, a staff presence is often essential to provide accurate information. SENRUG (The South East Northumberland Rail User Group) is affiliated to Railfuture, and the extract from their submission (at 'Appendix G: SENRUG – Examples of "Bad data" Customer Information Screens') shows the risks with relying on automated Customer Information systems.

> A member writes: "Journey Makers" hours. At Hebden Bridge, Northern proposes they work 50 hours less a week than current Ticket Office hours. Included in this is a reduction on Sundays at Hebden Bridge and Todmorden stations from 7hrs 20mins to zero.

At some TOCs (most notably Northern, TPE and EMR) they are often very substantial reduction in staffing hours and, absent any evidence to show that they aren't needed at times now to be unstaffed, we think this is unacceptable.

Model station

We have seen little detail on how stations will function if these changes are implemented. Most noticeably, there has been little detailing about how intending passengers will be able to locate staff members to get help.

We believe this feature – easy finding of staff to be critical, and any approval to proceed can only be given when this has been addressed. Whilst the core arrangement will very much be driven by the number of staff present at anyone time, the station layout and configuration should also have a very significant influence.

As regards the principles of the core arrangement at a station, 'Appendix B: Model stations' sets out a set of core arrangements for stations with varying numbers of staff present. Other than the very largest stations, we expect them to operate in different modes at different times of the day and the week.

In all cases though there must be a clear meeting point; at larger stations this should be a welcome desk, and other than at stations with only a few staff at that moment in time, we believe there should be a staff member present at all times; at smaller stations, they should be regular visitors and based their when their work doesn't take them elsewhere.

We have not seen any systematic analysis that contemplates current station facilities and how the new arrangements might work. Take, for instance, three Thameslink operated stations on the Midland Mainline.

1. Harpenden currently has entrances from both sides of the railway, with the west side having the heritage station building with the ticket office. The station is gated on both sides, with the east side usually unstaffed and a video / audio help point that connects to the west side that can remotely release gates if need. The west side gateline is closer to the road than the ticket office. In this case, we think that the west side gateline could become a natural home for the meeting / welcome point and equipping staff there with suitable portable ticket machines seems sensible. There are no new, large screen TVMs at the station and at least one needs to be added inside and outside the gateline building (there are also two small screen TVMs immediately outside the gateline building, and 5 others elsewhere). The ticket office is not on a thoroughfare and so is only used for ticket purchase. If, as described elsewhere in this submission, the alternatives are improved, closing the ticket office window seems a possibility.

2. Elstree and Borehamwood has one entrance and building on the east side and a similar passenger count to Harpenden. The gateline is inside the building and there is a night entrance. In this case, the ticket office is on the main thoroughfare and keeping it in use seems to us to make more sense, even if only at the busiest times or at very specific hours – eg around the end of the morning peak. Changes such as new doors might be needed to allow staff to get in and out quickly.

3. Harlington (Beds) has a much smaller passenger count and a single entrance on the west side. It does not have a gateline and has a night entrance The current ticket office is a natural meeting / welcome point to the station – and the only area on the station with shelter – none of the platforms have canopies. Whilst this change may well mean no staff member is based in the ticket office, keeping it open and available may well make sense.

In all three cases, we believe the current ticket office staff area cannot be decommissioned as it will still be needed by staff based at the station – as a rest area, and somewhere to retreat to if threatened. We are unconvinced that some of the savings envisaged will be realised.

Other matters

Penalty fares & incentives to purchase a ticket.

The National Rail Penalty Fare has recently increased to £100 (reduced to £50 if paid within 21 days) plus the price of the full single fare applicable for your intended journey. National Rail defines them as "A Penalty Fare is an exceptional fare charged if you do not comply with the normal train ticket purchasing rules without good reason"[5].

The removal of many Ticket Offices does, in our view, increase the number of "good reasons" that can be offered by a passenger without a ticket, particularly if linked to

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[5] https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/tickets-railcards-and-offers/buying-a-ticket/penalty-fares/

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departures when a station is now to be unstaffed or staff numbers are to be reduced (so support is not available) or, for instance, TVM cash handling has failed – or tickets or discounts are not available.

We have seen no evidence that TOCs are planning to change their staff briefings to ensure that more discretion is given to passengers without a ticket, who instead are simply required to purchase a ticket, and not be subject to the Penalty Fares regime on some occasions.

We believe this is an opportune moment to take a look at revenue protection for stations and lines where the expectation is pre-purchase at the station (vs some routes, often rural, where some stations don't have TVMs and on-train purchase is expected). This would cover rates of ticket inspection, the possibility of a convenience fee, rather than a penalty fare (unless ticketing facilities are out of order at the start station etc).

Whilst it is not a matter for the TSA process, we have seen no sign that the revenue losses linked to increased difficulty in purchasing tickets have been assessed and included in the decision making process.

Protection of the new arrangement – Ticket Settlement Agreement II

It is essential that there is an immediate change to the National Rail Ticketing & Settlement Agreement Regulations, to extend the requirement to consult to include any proposals to reduce the Ticketing Assistance Hours at any station, irrespective of whether the station has a Ticket Office. Otherwise, despite fine words to the contrary, this current consultation may be the start of reducing or even removing assistance-staff from some stations.

The Consultation process

Even though the consultation date has now been extended, we still have significant concerns about the process. we think that starting with station specific proposals, with a wide variety of types and depths of proposals from TOCs, some without critical information such as current sales data and types of tickets planned to not be available is wrong and severely damages the credibility of the process.

It is appropriate to note that given the scale of the change, we didn't think 21 days was long enough and we are pleased it has been extended.

We think a better solution would have been as follows:

1. Design a nationally consistent approach and vision to improving the alternatives to the ticket office – Welcome desks, mobile ticket issuing for staff, TVM improvements, online improvements, clarity on pay as you go etc.
   - It is clear some types of work can be initiated "now", as they are inevitable, such as making all products available online and on TVMs.
2. Consult on the above, and at the same time start prototyping – at busier stations having TVM concierges as well as ticket offices and at some very quiet stations, test moving staff away from the ticket office (but retain it, not staffed for when the prototype does not have an option for needed services
3. Once the approach and vision is finalised – and steps have been taken to improve the alternatives, then consult individually on changes at each station, including taking into account the station layout.

Appendices

Appendix A: Railfuture's Ticket Office needs vs Transport Focus's tests

Transport Focus test / *Railfuture ticket office services*	Easily buy the right ticket	Assistance to travel provided in a timely and reliable manner	Get the information they require including during disruption	Feel safe	Not penalised if they cannot buy a ticket	Can continue to use facilities at a station
1. (Buying tickets) Cash only user	No: Many (TVM availability & vandalism)			No: Some (cash use outdoors away from staff)	No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear)	No: Some (TVM availability & vandalism)
2. (Buying tickets) Technology & other barriers	No: Some				No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear)	No: Some (Cannot / will not use TVMs)
3. (Buying tickets) Outdoor TVM usability & accessibility	No: Many			No: Many (Stressed and could be alone)	No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear)	No: Some (Cannot / will not use TVMs)
4. (Buying tickets) Indoor TVM usability & accessibility	No: Some			No: Many (Stressed and could be alone)	No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear)	No: Some (Cannot / will not use TVMs)
5. (Buying tickets) Only location product is available	No: All				No: All	No: All
6. (Buying tickets) Occasional traveller	No: Some (simple, short)			No: Many (Stressed and could be alone)	No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear)	No: Many (no longer sufficiently certain)
7. (Buying tickets) Complex (to the Traveller) journey	No: All			No: Many (Stressed and could be alone)	No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear)	No: Many (no longer sufficiently certain)
8. (Buying tickets) Orange stripe ticket only choice	No: Some (TVM difficulty)					See above
9. (Preference for ticket office) Other	No: Some (difficulty of transition)			No: Many (preference not available)	No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear	See above
10. (Disruptions) Ticket changes, endorsements & refunds	No (not TVMs at all, limited online)		No (not TVMs at all, limited online)		No: Some implications [eg Penalty Fares] not clear	No (not TVMs at all, limited online)
11. (Disruptions | Passenger Support) Advice	Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)	Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)	No (not TVMs at all, limited online)		No: Some (less understanding)	
12. Ticket changes, upgrades, refunds & seat reservations	No: Many (functionality)	No: Functionality not available	No: Functionality not available			Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)
13. (Passenger Assistance) Meeting Point		Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)		No: Many (stress of uncertainty)		Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)
14. (Passenger Assistance) Directly		Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)		No: Many (stress of uncertainty)		Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)
15. (Station Facilities) Safe, warm, personal needs		Not clear (safe opening of unattended toilets)	Not clear (safe opening of unattended toilets)	No: Many (lack of staff)		Yes (if staffed; simple and consistent to find)

The full Transport Focus Tests: https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/train-station-ticket-office-consultation/ and https://d3cez36w5wymxj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/05081732/Transport-Focuss-role-in-assessing-major-changes-to-ticket-office-opening-hours.pdf.

Appendix B: Model stations

Note (1): Many stations will need to address items from more than one column, as they will operate in differing 'modes' at varying times of the day; the physical layout of the station and the facilities on it will also be big influencers of the finer detail.

Note (2): Numbers below exclude staff dedicated to Train despatch and associated tasks such as assistance with boarding trains. They include gateline staff.

	When: unstaffed	When: single staff member present	When: a few staff members present	When: more than 'a few' staff	When: Multiple dedicated roles can be supported	When: "large" numbers of staff members present
Key passenger contact methods	- Voice Help Points - Designated meeting point	- Voice Help Points - Designated meeting point	- Designated meeting point usually with staff present	- Designated meeting point with a staff member present - Possibly: Welcome Desk - Possibly: Dedicated Ticket sales point	- Welcome Desk (is meeting point) - Separate dedicated Ticket sales point	- Welcome Desk (is meeting point) - Separate dedicated Ticket sales point – expected to be a "Ticket Office"
Finding staff / help	- Voice help point on each platform ❶ - Designated meeting point (for mobile staff)	- Voice Help point on each platform / entrance ❷ - Meeting point at or very near main entrance and staff member based here when not otherwise engaged; if needed, bell or the like to attract attention. - Signage at other entrances on how to get help; dependent on layout, the ability to contact the staff member (voice button et al)	- Meeting point at or very near main entrance and staff members based here when not otherwise engaged; usually one present. - Signage at other entrances on how to get help; dependent on layout, the ability to contact staff (voice button et al)	- Meeting point at or very near main entrance and staff members based here when not otherwise engaged; one always present. - Possibly, a 'Welcome desk'. - Signage at other entrances on how to get help; dependent on layout, the ability to contact staff (voice button et al)	- Welcome desk (or Ticket Office) at or very near main entrance and at least one staff member is always located there ❹ - Roaming staff available - Signage at other entrances on how to get help; dependent on layout, the ability to contact staff (voice button et al)	- Welcome desk (or Ticket Office) at or very near main entrance and at least one staff member is always located there ❹ - Roaming staff available - Signage at other entrances on how to get help; dependent on layout, the ability to contact staff (voice button et al)
Buying tickets	- Ticket Vending machine, except at the very smallest ❸	- Ticket Vending Machine(s); staff member actively supporting use when available. - Staff member has portable ticket machine capable of selling every ticket ❺. - If demand (eg University, Port), able to issue products like Railcards (might be during set, quieter, hours) ❺.	- Ticket Vending Machines: staff actively supporting use when available. - Staff members have portable ticket machine ❺ capable of selling every ticket. One could be designated as the 'specialist' (but the others can still sell the full range) ❺. - If demand (eg University, Port), able to issue products like Railcards (might be during set, quieter hours) ❺.	- Ticket Vending Machines - At busiest times at least two staff share Welcoming, TVM Concierge and Ticket Sales - Staff members have portable ticket machine ❺ capable of selling every ticket (unless their duties always keep them away from passenger arrival points). One could be designated as the 'specialist' (but the others can still sell the full range) - Staff have ability to issue all types of tickets and ancillaries (eg Railcards) – and do so quickly and efficiently.	- Ticket Vending Machines. - At busiest times at many staff share Welcoming, TVM Concierge and Ticket Sales - Ticket sales point open at busy times; otherwise, and to support, all Staff members have portable ticket machine capable of selling every ticket (unless their duties always keep them away from passenger arrival points). - Staff have ability to issue all types of tickets and ancillaries (eg Railcards) – and do so quickly and efficiently.	- Ticket Vending Machines. - At busiest times at many staff share Welcoming, TVM Concierge and Ticket Sales - Classic "Ticket Office" usually open; otherwise, and to support, all Staff members have portable ticket machine capable of selling every ticket (unless their duties always keep them away from passenger arrival points). - Staff have ability to issue all types of tickets and ancillaries (eg Railcards) – and do so quickly and efficiently.

❶ Also easily visible to a Guard / Conductor on the Train or to visiting mobile staff.
❷ Because the member of staff will not always be available – engaged elsewhere, taking a Personal Needs Break etc.
❸ Full range of tickets for both cash and card to be available from the conductor/guard. Penalty fare regime cannot apply, even if the station is in a Penalty fare zone.
❹ If multiple entrances, it could be appropriate to base staff members separately at each entrance (but one entrance should be designated 'primary')
❺ When a station is operating with lower staff numbers it will often be sensible to still make available some or most of the facilities defined for stations with larger staff – eg a station with never more than one staff member is less likely to be able to issue Railcards than a station that has (eg) 8 staff members at the peak. Railcard issue would still be sensible when lower staff numbers are present.

railfuture

Appendix C: National AGM 15 July 2023 – Emergency motion

Ticket sales – keeping the human touch

This AGM (15 July 2023):

- welcomes Railfuture campaigning on ticket offices

- argues that a staff presence is essential and rejects ill-considered closures of ticket offices, ie without effective alternatives being in place

- values the expertise of ticket office staff, which must be retained

- recognises the need for central help points, not least for those with special needs or disabilities. These hubs attract people to stations for human contact unobtainable online or by vending machine

- notes concerns about the short timing and the use of the TSA framework for the present consultation

Railfuture will:

- encourage urgent responses to the consultation

- create a vision of how stations should work

- be open to broadening station retailing – selling snacks, travel goods etc - alongside full-range ticket sales. Any reforms should be appropriate to location, putting passengers first:

→ "**One size" does not fit all**.

Appendix D: GTR's only from a Ticket Office services

Tickets & procedures that cannot be completed at a TVM
- Issuing & registering Smartcards ←

  The problem inherent in the proposal – self-service is wanted, but then made difficult
- Loading products onto Smartcards (not possible in-boundary) ←
- Changeover seasons – paper and Smartcard
- Refunds - paper and Smartcard ←

  This will include decide not to travel during disruption
- TVM issued tickets – non-issues and refunds ←
- TOD collection without a physical card ←
- Change of journey or date – including Advance and 'walk up' tickets
- Ticket purchase by Warrant or Travel Voucher
- Exchanging GTR vouchers for cash

  Not necessarily TVM ... (online only)
- Group One Day Travelcards for 10 or more passengers ←
- Replacing tickets lost / damaged in gates
- 'Encode Exchange' season tickets – 7-day and period ←
- Replacements for lost, stolen or damaged Railcards ←

  But with a delay
- Purchasing tickets with £50 notes / copper coins / NI, Channel Islands or IoM notes
- Excess tickets including e-tickets ←
- Issuing Railcards on demand ←
- Purchasing Rover tickets ←
- Processing manual 'paper' refunds
- Issuing discounted tickets for disabled customers who don't hold Railcards ←
- Issuing Carnet tickets ←
- Sleeper & seat reservations ←
- Through tickets to Ireland and the Isle of Man

  Material risk of abuse: alternative probably not TVM, but staff handheld device (or TVM in 'staff mode')
- Child flat fare tickets when adult ticket already held ←
- Accepting company cheques for season tickets
- Accepting Travellers' Cheques & Postal Orders
- Accounting for Money Found and Money Refunded
- Accounting for Transfer Vouchers when refunding on behalf of other TOCs
- Processing 'SILK' arrangement requests
- Selling tickets for TOD collection anywhere in GB
- Issuing Privilege tickets and Season Tickets
- Reprinting TODs following a TVM failure or 'part printed' ←
- Processing Police requests for free ticket issues
- Issuing tickets with EASIT discounts
- Issuing individual PlusBus tickets

Known to be missing from this list
- Herts & Beds bus pass discount ←
- Boundary tickets ←
- CIV Ticket for Eurostar (links the national leg for delay etc ←

← **Equality issue**

← **Important service**

← **Available online**

Appendix E: Gatwick Station visit report

Gatwick Airport: Has already closed the ticket office and has installed 19 ticket machines of which 14 are card only *(of 2 types)* and 5 also take cash. It has one customer service/ticket assistant desk along with around 6 additional customer service assistants to help passenger use the machines. It was visited twice; on a Friday evening and on Monday mid-morning, there were very large queues.

This is an example of where the proposed system can work well. As it is in a large well light and ventilated space. There are sufficient knowledgeable and helpful staff to deal with large queues and the staff have a reasonable location for their rest periods and are not exposed to the elements. They are available 24 hours a day.

However, there are still a number of issues that need to be addressed. This includes the range of tickets that can be brought both from the ticket machines and the customer service/ticket assistant *(a comparison is below).* Some other improvements are needed. The ticket machines have only three languages English, French and German, inclusion of Italian and Spanish is needed. This would also apply at other large stations. Oyster cards are no longer sold nor are Keycards. The ability to sell Oyster and Keycard would be helpful. Sign posted information on the ability to use Oyster, and Bank card for journeys at present here are only verbal loud speaker message. Poster information on the type of tickets to advise passengers of what is available before and while queuing. Ticket machines could take £50 notes at this location. Some foreign bank cards won't work in ticket machines but will work at the desk.

| Tickets available at Gatwick Airport now booking office has closed		
Ticket Machine		Customer Assistant
No	Advance tickets	Yes
Yes	Another station	Yes
No	Boundary Zone	Yes
No	Privilege	Yes
No	Plusbus as separate transaction	Yes
Yes	Monthly Season	Yes
Yes	Collect pre-booked ticket	Yes
Yes	Travelcard Not Gatwick Express	Yes
Yes	Travelcard Thameslink Only	Yes
Yes	Travelcard All routes	Yes
Yes	Travelcard Family	Yes
No	CIV ticket for Eurostar	No
No	Oyster card	No
Yes	Oyster card top up	No
No	Keycard	No
No	Keycard top up	Yes

Note there may have been some additional tickets that were not asked.

Appendix F: TVM Can't dos
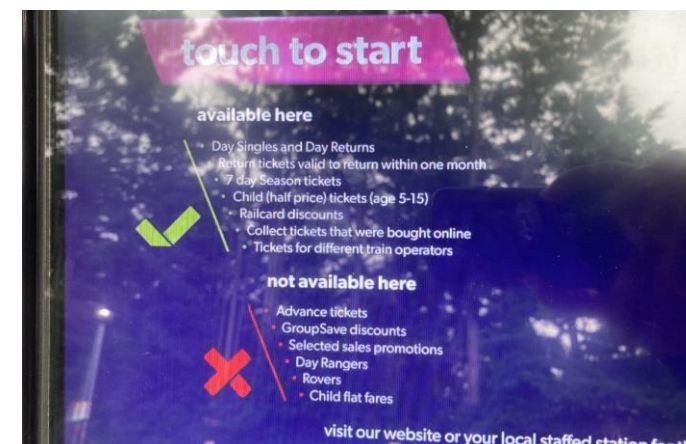
South Western Railway

Great Western Railway
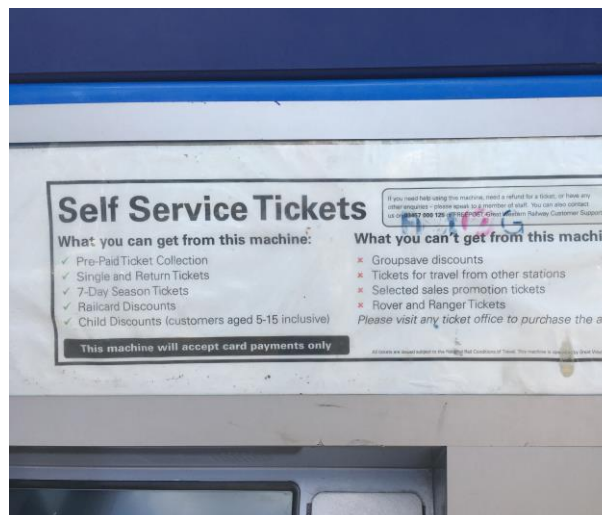
Thameslink
(note: the reference to GroupSave is incorrect: they are available) – and also the glare.

Appendix G: SENRUG – Examples of "Bad data" Customer Information Screens

Alnmouth: 15th July 2023. Is the 11:58 Edinburgh service cancelled or not?

Morpeth: 10th Feb 2016. Station unstaffed. Is the 14:50 Edinburgh service cancelled or not? With the next Edinburgh departure not for several hours, passengers flying from Edinburgh Airport didn't know whether to call for a taxi.

Morpeth: 21st March 2022. The 12:34 Lumo service does not stop at either York or Doncaster. But what will happen to it between these stations? Will it actually arrive at London, or disappear en route?

Cramlington: 7th October 2016. Station unstaffed. Does the 13:02 refer to that morning's train, which is curiously shown as on time despite it being over 4 hours overdue, or does it mean the next morning, in which case all the evening trains and all the following morning trains from Cramlington, until 13:02 are presumably cancelled, although no cancellations are listed?

Appendix H: Hadley Wood toilet saga emails

From: Neil Middleton (Railfuture) <neil.middleton@railfuture.org.uk>
Sent: Saturday, June 3, 2023 10:02 PM
To: <GTR>
Subject: RE: A request for an update to the Standard for unattended Toilets on Railway stations

Thanks, _____

A belated reply due to my holiday. On paras 2 & 3, whilst that's not the wanted answer, it is a perfectly understandable one. On para 4, again I can understand the aversion to unilateral action – but we are keen that a solution is found. In particular, I do think it essential that a way to achieve opening without staff presence is defined; with workplace reform – and indeed now, this is an important service and business cases can then be prepared for the necessary investment on a case by case basis.

Do let me know when you have news.

Regards

Neil

From: GTR
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 4:57 PM
To: Neil Middleton (Railfuture) <neil.middleton@railfuture.org.uk>
Subject: RE: A request for an update to the Standard for unattended Toilets on Railway stations

Neil, thank you for the email and raising the issue about toilets being open when a station is unstaffed. It is an issue we reviewed at length when discussing the Hadley Wood toilet, particularly as you mention the lack of toilets on the trains. We also had another meeting last week with our safety, accessibility and customer experience teams to review the issue following your email.

Currently Stannah, who provide our lifts, have a 24/7 service to respond to any help buttons pressed when a lift breaks down. They can then decide if the fire brigade are needed to deal with the issue or emergency. GTR currently doesn't have a similar 24/7 resource to manage such a situation in relation to toilets, as none are open beyond the closing time of the station.

We also looked at whether the new Mobile Assistance Teams could provide emergency response cover. However, as they are, on average, based a maximum of 20 minutes away from a station and maybe busy assisting passengers, the risk of them not being available or in time was deemed too great by our safety team.

This issue is also being currently discussed at an industry level as part of equality impact assessments being conducted around the workplace reform agenda. We are keen to understand what conclusions are made as part of these discussions before taking on any unilateral approach on this industry wide issue. As soon as we hear any more about these discussions we will provide an update.

With regards

railfuture

___

From: Neil Middleton (Railfuture) <neil.middleton@railfuture.org.uk>
Sent: 01 May 2023 22:24
To: GTR
Subject: A request for an update to the Standard for unattended Toilets on Railway stations

Hi ____

You will be aware of the long running saga of the desire for the new toilet at Hadley Wood to be open when the station isn't staffed and the GTR risk assessment that concluded this wasn't possible due to the level of risk caused by an inability to detect someone who has fallen ill in the toilet.

We discussed this at our most recent Herts & Beds meeting (as ____ may have mentioned). We could see why GTR reached the conclusion they did given the identified risks and current approach. But we think that the presence of an open toilet at stations that aren't staffed at that moment is an important facility (and itself, an important disability support – it's a hidden disability that for some people, very regular access to a toilet is essential if they are to get out and about like most of us).

Thus, there was a view that the Standard needs to be revisited (created?), to define an approach / equipment need / operational practice to allow toilets to be open when the station isn't staffed. Then, decisions can be taken on a case by case basis to upgrade toilets at a station. Hadley Wood might well pass the test (no toilets on trains + regularly 30 minute service intervals + passenger numbers); another station might not (more passengers + toilets on trains + a more frequent service). A measure like TTT might be needed – Time to Toilet (on train or at station).

The consensus in the meeting was that the standard needed to address both vandalism risk mitigation and looking after someone who might fall ill whilst in the toilet. The lifts at Harpenden can be used when there is no staff member present, through remote operation, and (presumably) cameras at footbridge, platform and in the lift car (and speakers). Presumably, some evolution of this is needed, with the big difference that the inside of the lift car can be permanently on screen and recorded, whilst this isn't appropriate for the inside of a toilet. Specialists would need to set the requirement, but variations such as camera is off, door is unlocked (remotely), timer starts, if door not opened and exit detected, announcement made in toilet, if button not pressed (a la driver digital device), camera turns on and remote staff investigate as needed etc are presumably appropriate. This would need to included scenario planning – first guest gets door unlocked, then when leaves, holds door open for second guest etc.

Can this please be sent off to the appropriate team for contemplation, please, with a view to setting a new national standard on "how toilets can operate when staff are not on the station".

(and introducing ____, who is one of our disability champions).