

CHRIS HODGKINS

[REDACTED]

Customer Service Centre
South East Trains
Overline House
Blechynden Terrace
Southampton
SO15 1EW

24th February 2006

Dear Sir or Madam

I had the egregious misfortune to catch the 6.13 train from Waterloo to Richmond on Friday 10th February 2006. The train was full to bursting and in my view posed a serious threat in terms of health and safety. The guard apologised for the train being half of its normal length and if anyone wanted assistance to contact him. As the train was so tightly packed this suggestion was risible at best.

As a consequence I was unable to buy an extension to my Oyster card which covers Zones 1, 2 and 3, as I had forgotten to buy one at Waterloo. When I got to Richmond I was charged £20 surcharge for not having an extension ticket to take me to Zone 4. If I had been able to see the guard this could have been avoided. There was no announcement about tickets or validity of tickets on days of travel as is the case with other railways.

All in all it was a vexing experience that was not helped by South West trains and its operational procedures.

Yours sincerely

Ch Hodgkins

[REDACTED] London [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr C Hodgkins

[REDACTED]
London
[REDACTED]

Customer Service Centre

Overline House
Blechynden Terrace
Southampton SO15 1GW
Telephone 0845 6000 650
Fax 023 8072 8187
email customerrelations@swtrains.co.uk

Our ref:1371460

09 March 2006

Dear Mr Hodgkins

Thank you for your letter of 24 February 2006.

I am sorry to hear about the 0613 service from Waterloo to Richmond being formed of fewer coaches than it should. If there is a problem with a particular train it is not always possible to provide a replacement train of a similar size. It is thought better to at least run the service with a short-formed train rather than cancel it altogether, which would cause more inconvenience to more of our customers. I do apologise for the inconvenience this caused you – please be assured that a train will only be short-formed after we have explored other options to provide the required number of coaches.

I note your point about safety and overcrowding. All the trains we operate do so in full compliance with all safety requirements and are safe to operate on all the routes they are passed to run on. Every train is designed to operate safely, even when full and standing, with no adverse effect on structural integrity and braking performance.

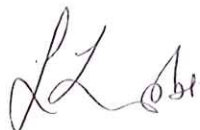
There is no statutory limit on the numbers travelling on a train and to enforce such a limit would be difficult unlike a bus or plane, where access is restricted to a particular door for example. Many stations are unstaffed and trains have many doors all providing access. We do not therefore normally limit the numbers boarding a train as experience has shown that most of our customers prefer to be able to join the service of their choice, even though this may entail standing. If our staff members are unhappy with the situation on a particular train or carriage, they have instructions to ensure that the train does not move until they have persuaded some customers to leave the train and join the next service. A study by the Health & Safety Executive concluded that overcrowding on trains was not an issue of safety per se, but was an issue of comfort.

We want our customers to travel in comfort and I very much regret your disappointment. Crowded trains, are a particularly difficult problem for us, and indeed, other passenger rail and tram operators to resolve. We are working with the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) and Network Rail to improve capacity and seek a long-term solution to the problem. I am afraid however that the SRA has to consider this amongst other rail investment priorities but South West Trains is doing what it can within the existing franchise to minimise overcrowding as much as possible.

With regard to you receiving a penalty fare, whilst your feelings are understood, there are Penalty Fare notices displayed at all of our stations advising passengers of the need to purchase a ticket before boarding a service.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to us.

Yours sincerely



Linda Lipscombe
Customer Relations Officer

CHRIS HODGKINS

[REDACTED]

Linda Lipscombe
Customer Relations Officer
South East trains
Overline House
Blechynden Terrace
Southampton
SO15 1EW

16th March 2006

Dear Ms Lipscombe

Your ref 137 1460

Thank you for your letter of 9th March in reply to my letter of 24th February 2006.

Unfortunately you miss the point of my letter. Your conductor announced that if customers had any problems then they should see him. As the train was so full this was of course impossible.

Therefore with regard to your penultimate paragraph, I had a ticket that was valid for transit from Waterloo - i.e. my Oyster travel card. Furthermore perhaps you could be so kind as to inform me where your penalty fare notices are displayed at Waterloo Station.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED] London [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr C Hodgkins

[Redacted]

London

[Redacted]

Customer Service Centre

Overline House

Blechynden Terrace

Southampton SO15 1GW

Telephone 0845 6000 650

Fax 023 8072 8187

email customerrelations@swtrains.co.uk

Our ref:1371460

23 March 2006

Dear Mr Hodgkins

Thank you for your letter of 16 March 2006.

Your comments are noted and understood that it was not possible to seek the guard due to the overcrowded conditions.

However, notices are displayed above all the platforms on the concourse at Waterloo Station advising passengers of the need to purchase a ticket valid for the whole journey they are taking before boarding the service.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to us.

Yours sincerely



Linda Lipscombe

Customer Relations Officer

CHRIS HODGKINS

[REDACTED]

Linda Lipscombe
Customer Relations Officer
South East Trains
Overline House
Blechynden Terrace
Southampton
SO15 1EW

24th March 2006

Dear Ms Lipscombe

Your ref 137 1460

Thank you for your letter of 16th March 2006.

I am delighted that your comments are noted and it is understood that it was not possible to speak to a guard due to the overcrowded conditions.

However, I require further information. Is it possible to purchase a ticket from the guard on the train?

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr C Hodgkins

41 Bedford Road

London

W13 0SL

Customer Service Centre

Overline House

Blechynden Terrace

Southampton SO15 1GW

Telephone 0845 6000 650

Fax 023 8072 8187

email customerrelations@swtrains.co.uk

Our ref:1371460

29 March 2006

Dear Mr Hodgkins

Thank you for your letter dated 24 March

It is possible to purchase a ticket from the guard on a train if you could not buy a ticket because there was no ticket office at the station where you started your journey (or if there was it was closed) and there was no machine to issue or validate a ticket (or if there was it was not in working order).

South West Trains operate a Penalty Fares policy and warning notices are displayed at our stations advising that if

- a) you travel on a train without a ticket or permit to travel or
- b) you travel in a class of accommodation where your ticket does not allow you to do so, you may be liable to pay a penalty fare.

If you travel further than your ticket allows, to a station or zone beyond the one specified on your ticket, you will be treated as having joined the train without a valid ticket for that additional part of your journey, and the rulings regarding penalty fares comes into effect.

I trust the above clarifies the situation.

Yours sincerely



Linda Lipscombe
Customer Relations Officer



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CHRIS HODGKINS

[REDACTED]

Linda Lipscombe
Customer Relations Office
Southwest Trains
Customer Service Centre
Overline Hosue
Blechynden Terrace
Southampton
SO15 16W

31st March 2006

Dear Ms Lipscombe

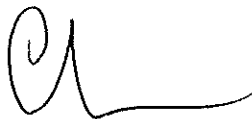
Thank you for your letter of 26th March.

Firstly, thank you for informing me that you can purchase a ticket from the guard on the train. However if you cannot get to the guard due to the train being overcrowded, what then?

Secondly, I do not think you have ever had to queue for a ticket at Waterloo. The ticket service is, to put it mildly, execrable, and the machines are impossible to work, and furthermore there is no information as to how you can upgrade a travel card to the next zone. Perhaps you could therefore explain how South West trains hinders the purchase of a ticket and then uses a "penalty fares scheme" to milk extra revenues from customers.

I would be grateful for an explanation.

Yours sincerely



[REDACTED] London [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr C Hodgkins

41 Bedford Road

London

W13 0SP

Customer Service Centre

Overline House

Blechynden Terrace

Southampton SO15 1GW

Telephone 0845 6000 650

Fax 023 8072 8187

email customerrelations@swtrains.co.uk

Our ref: 1371460

06 April 2006

Dear Mr Hodgkins

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2006.

The conditions applicable to purchasing a ticket from the guard on the train have already been explained, and if this is not then possible, every effort must be made to purchase the correct ticket as soon as possible. Staff receive page messages relevant to ticket offices being closed and are therefore aware when a passenger from such a station approaches them and requests a ticket.

With regard to the purchase of tickets at Waterloo Station, a new queuing system has been introduced to make serving customers at Waterloo fairer. We have introduced a floorwalker during the peak times to help maintain the Ticket Vending Machines and direct customers to points of sale. We have also just recruited an additional six part-time staff to cover the peak hours. (3 in the mornings and 3 in the evenings).

All of the Ticket Vending Machines (14) will be replaced with new machines in early May. These will be more reliable and all 14 will be accepting credit cards. Two of the quickfare Ticket Vending Machines that are located near the Eurostar terminal, will be moved to the south side of the station. This will then create a bank of 4 machines to ease the queues at the main ticket office.

I trust this shows we are aware and taking steps to improve our standards.

Yours sincerely



Linda Lipscombe

Customer Relations Officer



CHRIS HODGKINS

[REDACTED]

Linda Lipscombe
Customer Relations Office
Southwest Trains
Customer Service Centre
Overline House
Blechynden Terrace
Southampton
SO15 16W

12th April 2006

Dear Ms Lipscombe

Thank you for your letter of 6th April 2006 in response to mine of 31st March 2006.

Some points that you may care to note:

- The vending machines do not give an extension to an oyster card or indeed the travel card
- The signs telling passengers of the penalty fare scheme are above the entrance to the station concourse and are not at eye-level where they can be read. It is as if Southwest Trains do not want to inform passengers of the egregious penalty fare scheme. It might help as South West trains is not very good at selling a £1 extension.
- The guard on the train I travelled on (please see previous correspondence) - did not announce details of the penalty fare scheme. Please note First Great Western and GNER are very careful in this regard. Unfortunately your correspondence does not recompense me in any way for the rotten train journey I had to undertake, followed by the jackbooted antics of your staff at Richmond. - who by the way failed to show any identification.
- My opinion of Southwest Trains unfortunately has not been helped by your correspondence. The simple word 'sorry' concerning the appalling journey I undertook at the hands of South West trains would have gone a considerable way to ease my vexation.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CHRIS HODGKINS

- I am left with the indelible impression that as you would appear to be incapable of selling tickets on or off your trains your only course of action is to rely on your squads of ill-mannered goons to fleece the general public.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED] London [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]