Date issued: 31 January 2022

Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for contacting Transport for Wales (TfW). Your request for information was brought to the attention of the Corporate Governance Team by Customer Relations colleagues, and has been dealt with under the auspices of the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Your request has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Act and our Data and Information Management Policy.

You asked for the following information:

'According to items that I have read and watched on the BBC, you advised that, *"regular cleaning of trains was one of the measures which meant coronavirus had not been detected on any of its services."* You also said, *"I appreciate it doesn't feel right to be on a crowded train in the middle of Covid, but all the tests that we have done and our colleagues in the rest of the UK have done about Covid on trains has not picked up any Covid on train services,"* and *"so we believe that with all the mitigations we're putting in place, trains are fundamentally a safe place to be in comparison to other places that people are going. But we want to do better."*

I would be so very grateful if you could forward me more details as to:
what type of testing was carried out; the specific rationale for this type of testing and how frequently the testing was done?

I am not an expert in this area, merely a member of the travelling public who is no longer travelling. I really need the confidence to travel at some point, but it is not there yet. Members of my family are vulnerable, and I would not wish to do anything which had even the slightest risk of introducing the virus into our home.

Having reviewed your request, we are able to provide the following information:

At TfW, we value and appreciate feedback from our customers. Thank you for taking the time to watch and read about our safety protocols and processes on the BBC. Throughout the pandemic, we have worked tirelessly to not only implement measures to protect against Coronavirus, but to also communicate these measures alongside any legal requirements with our passengers, so that we may come together and protect one another at this extraordinary time. We work hard to ensure that our customers have a clear understanding of the rules and regulations for travelling on public transport in Wales as restrictions tighten and then ease in response to new waves and variants.

From the very beginning of the pandemic, we have implemented many enhances safety measures. These include:

- Additional cleaning on trains and stations. This includes regular cleaning of frequently touched areas ('touchpoints');
- The use antiviral cleaning materials to protect surfaces;
- Modifying coaches with air conditioning to bring fresh air in from outside and not recirculate internal air;
- Issuing free hand sanitiser at Hub Stations;

- Promoting and managing face-coverings compliance in partnership with British Transport Police;
- Developing our Capacity Checker tool https://tfw.wales/service-status/capacity-checker The tool used real-time data to enable customers to see how busy a particular service is to information their decisions about when to travel and select quieter times or days;
- Training our staff to take extra precautions and measures to reduce the risk to our customers.

We have also worked with the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), Trade Unions and other train operators and infrastructure managers to share information and best practice in mitigating the risks of Coronavirus.

In the response to your request on "what type of testing was carried out; the specific rationale for this type of testing and how frequently the testing was done". We have worked with Transport for London and Network Rail who completed the required research and testing with Imperial College London. The following links will direct you to the published reports for more detail:

- Imperial College London: COVID-19 sampling study finds no trace of virus at major rail stations | Imperial News | Imperial College London
- Transport for London: Coronavirus publications - Transport for London (tfl.gov.uk)
- Network Rail: Tests show no traces of Covid-19 at four major railway stations - Network Rail

Key findings from these reports are outlined below in answer to your request for the rational behind our methodology (this information is available in full via the links provided above):

Initial industry sampling was completed by Imperial College with Transport for London in January 2021. Twenty samples were taken each month between September and December 2020 on frequently touched surfaces (e.g., ticket machines, seating areas, vending machines), as well as air samples. They encompassed three London Underground stations (London Waterloo, London Euston, and London Paddington), onboard a Northern Line train between Waterloo and Euston, and on the #21 bus between Euston and Paddington. All results were negative - no traces of SARS-CoV-2 RNA were found. Transport for London are currently repeating this with the results expected over the next few months. The BBC filmed this testing, and you can watch the footage here: Covid-19: Testing for coronavirus on London transport - BBC News

Second industry sampling was completed by Imperial College with Network Rail June 2021. 25 samples were taken in stations, again, on frequently touched surfaces in each station (e.g., ticket machines, seating areas, vending machines) as well as air samples (which were taken for 60 minutes on each concourse). Similar samples were taken on trains between each station on route (London Euston - Birmingham New St, Birmingham New Street - Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Piccadilly - Liverpool Lime Street and Liverpool Lime Street - London Euston). All results were negative, with no traces of SARS-CoV-2 RNA found on any of the surfaces tested or in the air, either in stations or onboard trains.

our Travel Safer programme (Travel Safer | TfW), we encourage customers to wear face-coverings onboard our trains and in our station buildings - unless exempt - as it is the law in Wales; to keep any windows open to aid ventilation; to be respectful and keep a safe distance from others; and not to travel if they have any symptoms. Of course, these measures rely on the engagement of our customers

and their safe behaviours. We do observe some non-compliance with these rules and as a result, we have either removed or declined travel to over 10,000 people. We do, of course, understand that not everyone can wear a face-covering and may be exempt for genuine health reasons, and acknowledge that there is always a risk of customers travelling when they are asymptomatic.

As evidenced, throughout the pandemic we have implemented a wealth of measures to protect our staff and customers from Coronavirus, and continue to keep these under review in line with Welsh Government guidance, law and industry knowledge. We complete audits and work with the Test Trace Protect team to review our controls. We continuously strive to provide a safe environment in which to travel and work hard to reduce risks as far as possible.

However, TfW cannot totally eliminate risks, we can only reduce them. We cannot always maintain social-distancing on all trains, much the same as many other industries spanning public spaces, open or enclosed. There is currently no legal requirement for social-distancing onboard trains in Wales.

We hope that this information is of use to you, and gives you confidence in both our approach and our commitment to our duty of care to valued customers, such as yourself. We would ask that you, too, follow the rules as outlined by our Travel Safer Programme and utilise the Capacity Checker when making a decision on whether to travel by train and any other public transport services in Wales.

Please note there several ways in which you can stay in touch and obtain information including:

- Transport for Wales web site Help and contact | TfW
- By email: contact@tfw.wales
- Rail Twitter: @tfwrail - Monday to Friday: 07:00 to 20:00, Saturday: 08:00 to 20:00 and Sunday: 11:00 to 20:00
- Rail WhatsApp (text messaging service): 07790 952 507 - Monday to Friday: 07:00 to 20:00, Saturday: 08:00 to 20:00 and Sunday: 11:00 to 20:00

We hope this information is of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

Transport for Wales

Appeal Rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the Head of Freedom of Information at either Transport for Wales, 3 Llys Cdwyn, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH or freedomofinformation@tfw.wales. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner (ICO) can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or you can contact the ICO through the 'Make a Complaint' section of their website on this link: https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

The relevant section to select will be "Official or Public Information".