

Date issued: 10 Aug 2021

Freedom of Information Request

We are writing in response to your Freedom of Information request. Your request has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and our information access policy.

You asked for the following information:

“Thank you for the response which explains what you are doing. However you have not provided the information I asked for. You are required to confirm that you do indeed hold this information and, if you determine that you will not provide it to me, then you are required to state why. The response you have sent is highly selective and in fact missing key parts (for example, the table extracted from the route risk assessment, which does not relate to Covid, is cut short).

The "call a cab" scheme is not well advertised (for example it does not show on your booking system) and it is not obvious what exactly is being offered (free taxi from Llanbedr station to Harlech perhaps to meet the train??) It also seems as though the decision to close the station has been taken as an easy option without adequate consideration of alternatives (or perhaps the H&S risk assessment will show me wrong here?) and without assessing the risk to the public from station closure. As you say in a normal year 12000 passengers use Llanbedr station.

Perhaps you could also explain the role of the guard on the Machynlleth to Pwllheli train at present and the anticipated loss of revenue from tickets not being checked?”

Upon receipt of your request for further information, the following questions were posed to the appropriate department and are answers returned are as follows:

- 1. Please confirm whether a specific risk assessment form or document was completed in relation to the temporary closure of Llanbedr Station? If so, please could this be provided as it must be disclosed. If not, please advise why.**

There is no specific risk assessment for the temporary closure of Llanbedr Station. Rather, a single risk assessment was completed for the stations identified for temporary closure on a route-by-route basis. Llanbedr Station is considered under the risk assessment for the route between Dovey Junction and Pwllheli. An extract of that risk-assessment that was included in our initial response, and was cropped to display only the two entries relating to Llanbedr station. Though brief, this was simply intended to support the information provided outlining reason for the temporary closure (ie – the short platform).

As previously stated, Llanbedr Station was among those identified for temporary closure in 2020 as it was not possible to satisfy social-distancing laws due to the operational constraints of a short platform. Since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, conductors have not been allowed to walk through the train for customer service and retail duties if social distancing can't be maintained. As such, conductors are stationed in the cabins at the front and rear of the train. At a short platform, a conductor would be required to walk through the train and open the carriage door at the mid-way

point to allow a boarding point at either end of the platform, as only the front half of the train will fit onto the platform. By walking through the train in this way, our conductors would not be able to abide by the two-metre social distancing law set out in the Health Protection Coronavirus Restriction No.5. (see <https://senedd.wales/media/r1wlaaru/sub-ld14327-e.pdf>), meaning that these stations cannot be called at as a result. The fact that our conductors would be in breach of this law by stopping at these stations is enough to warrant the removal of this station from the timetable until the law is relaxed.

In support of this, please find attached the risk assessment for conductors along the Cambrian Coast Line. This was not provided in the first instance in light of your request for a risk assessment specific to Llanbedr Station, which as explained, does not exist. Personal information has been redacted under Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act. More information about this exemption can be found here: [s40 Personal information \(section 40 and regulation 13\) version2.3 \(ico.org.uk\)](#)

It is worth noting that we are now working with trade unions to re-instate these stations, with an anticipated date of 7 August. This, of course, will be subject to the Welsh Government proceeding with the further relaxation of Coronavirus restrictions and the associated social distancing laws, and our ability for our train planning department to include these stations in the timetable.

2. Is there any further information that can be provided about the call-a-cab service?

The call-a-cab service was advertised at stations when it was first introduced in mid-2020. Limited poster availability at some stations means that priority may have been given to other equally important Coronavirus information for customers that is displayed across the network. The service continues to be advertised on our website at the following address:

<https://tfwrail.wales/timetables/may-2021-timetables>

3. What is the role of the guard on the Machynlleth to Pwllheli train at present?

The role of our conductors (guards) is consistent onboard our services across Wales, including the Machynlleth to Pwllheli service. Our conductors are responsible for the safety of our passengers whilst also delivering customer service and encouraging adherence to social distancing requirements and other Coronavirus safety measures. Though our conductors do not walk the length of the train to open carriage doors at the mid sections or to check tickets at present, this is line with our commitment to ensure the safety of our staff as we work hard to navigate the challenges of the ongoing pandemic. At present, our conductors open carriage doors at the front and rear of the train; whilst they continue to provide customer service to passengers from a safe distance on the platform. Conductors also continue to make information and safety announcements using the onboard PA system.

4. What is the anticipated loss of revenue from tickets not being checked?

We respectfully seek your clarification in relation to this question. Please advise whether you are referring to a loss of revenue across our entire network, along this particular route, or in relation to Llanbedr station specifically. Ticketless travel remains an emerging situation in light of ambiguities around where passengers travelling without a ticket board alight our services, and the number of unmanned stations across our network. It is currently estimated that 25% of all journeys taken onboard our services are ticketless at present.

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".