

Date issued: 10 November 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.

Your Questions Answered

- 1. Why was disabled/wheelchair access disregarded at Cogan Station in 2019? The old footbridge was demolished and a new one installed. We ask why the new footbridge was not installed with Lifts which would allow disabled and wheelchair users to access platform 2. Platform 2 is currently impossible to access for those in a wheelchair, and according to a survey carried out by myself, many residents and commuters are unhappy that they are unable to access their closest rail services, and choose to use alternative public transport instead.**

The footbridge at Cogan Station is a listed structure and as such, it was not demolished but was in fact removed and refurbished. The footbridge is owned by Network Rail, and it is Network Rail who were responsible for any decisions taken to remove/refurbish the bridge and the subsequent work completed. TfW is unable answer this question, and politely suggest that you redirect your query to Network Rail, either by approaching those involved with the 'Transformation Station' project or by submitting a formal Freedom of Information request to the following address: FOI@networkrail.co.uk.

- 2. Does TfW have any plans for the improvement of small scale stations in rural and peri-urban areas, such as Cogan? If yes, What are the proposed plans?**

TfW does have some plans for the improvement of these stations, however we are currently developing the scope of this work and have nothing specific to share at this time.

- 3. Does TfW feel there is a lack of amenities and public services for customers and local people in smaller stations such as Cogan?**

Please be advised that the Freedom of Information Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities and does not cover, for example, the thoughts, judgements or opinion of any individual within the public authority in question, unless it is already recorded. As your question asks for a subjective opinion which we do not hold as a record, it falls outside the scope of the Freedom of Information Act.

- 4. How has Covid 19 Pandemic affected the rail travel network?**

The Coronavirus Pandemic has impacted all modes of transportation across the country, including rail. In particular, we have witnessed a sharp reduction in passenger demand; an impact on our supply chain and project delivery; the implementation of additional protection measures; and the significant organisational changes experienced by TfW as a result of the pandemic (more information about this can be found here). Our response to the pandemic has necessitated a number of actions, including:

Direct and Operational Impact

- Protecting our own employees by facilitating safe home working for those not in front-line operational roles. Further considerations are given to vulnerable employees, to whom we have an additional duty of care.

- Implementation of task reviews to ensure working practices are COVID-safe;
- Implementation of new safer working methodologies for front-line staff, including social distancing measures and face covering requirements throughout the working day (including shift changes and breaks).
- Issue and distribution of, as well as further training on, additional Personal Protective Equipment and face coverings.
- Maximising fleet availability to support social distancing.
- A review of train air cooling and heating systems to ensure fresh air is drawn into the train rather than recirculated.
- Enhanced process and procedures for dealing with members of the public in regard to first aid, wheelchair access, etc.
- Removal of catering services and retraining of the teams affected to support cleaning activities on trains and at stations.
- Introduction of new cleaning equipment and practices, as well as additional cleaning regimes.
- Reduction of footfall to less than 5% of pre-COVID levels experienced during the peak of the first lock down (23 March - 29 May 2020). Demand has still not fully recovered to pre-COVID levels as the Welsh Government requirement to work from home where possible remains in place.
- Reduction of staff availability as a result of self and household isolations.
- Establishment of new industry forums to share best practice and standards regulatory authorities.
- Close working with Trade Union colleagues to approve new ways of working and risk management.
- Reduction in close proximity training.
- Managing and navigating supply chain impacts.

Customer and Industry Impact

- Additional security to support/enforce social distancing measures, face-covering requirements and non-essential travel.
- New queuing systems implemented to manage social distancing on trains.
- Increased ticketless travel options.
- Mobilisation of our Travel Safer Campaign to keep customers aware, informed and updated, and to promote active travel.
- Introduction of the capacity checker to support customer decision-making about when it is best to travel by train.
- Support for key and essential workers.
- Deployment of staff and British Transport Police to manage customer behaviours and compliance with regulatory requirements.
- New COVID-associated antisocial behaviour experienced, such as spitting, shouting and refusal to adhere to social distancing requirements.
- A change of passenger travel behaviours experienced. This includes a reduction in commuter travel; larger seasonal, UK holiday and seaside travel during weekends, bank and school holiday periods.
- Managing concerns from members of the public in regard to COVID-safe measures.
- Engagement with venues to encourage compliance to COVID rules whilst travelling.

5. *What are the effects on the numbers of people using rail travel compared to pre-pandemic?*

At the end of the last rail reporting period in September 2021, ticketed journeys on the Wales and Borders network were at 60.7% of pre-COVID levels.

6. ***How does TfW plan to attract more people to small stations and encourage them to use the Rail Network more often?***

TfW develops an annual plan to grow network use, encompassing a broad range of activities. Our plans seek to attract passenger journeys across the entire network and do not focus on specific station sizes. Our activities include initiatives focused on ticketing products and prices, marketing and communications, station experience, digital technology and operational activities. Our brand-led marketing campaign will also work to support growth across the whole of sustainable transport, including bus, active travel and rail, and is the start of the broader modal shift activity which will be needed to support the delivery of Welsh Government's de-carbonisation targets.

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".