



**Date issued:** 5 November 2019

**Reliability of services from Shrewsbury towards the Cambrian coast**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) Act request of 14 September 2019. You requested the following information:

- the number of train services from Shrewsbury to Machynlleth which have been replaced by buses since the Arriva franchise ended, and the cost of those buses;
- has there been an increase in the number and cost of replacement buses from Shrewsbury towards the Cambrian Coast, and in the number and amount of passengers receiving compensation, since the Arriva franchise ended?
- the number of those services which were replaced by buses for each of the last 3 years of the Arriva franchise, and the cost of those buses;
- the amount of compensation which has been provided to passengers travelling on journeys from Shrewsbury to destinations on the Aberystwyth and Pwllheli lines since the Arriva franchise ended, and the number of those passengers;
- the amount of compensation which was provided to passengers travelling on those journeys for each of the last 3 years of the Arriva franchise, and the number of those passengers.
- is there a problem with the box-driver communication system from Shrewsbury to Welshpool? If so, what is the problem and what is being done to address it?
- is there any truth in the statements that TfW have a shortage of train staff, that TfW do not have enough guards, and that there is a high rate of sickness amongst guards in Machynlleth?

We are writing to confirm that your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) and that Transport for Wales (TfW) has completed its search for the information and has some of the information requested.

**The number of train services from Shrewsbury to Machynlleth which have been replaced by buses since the Arriva franchise ended, and the cost of those buses**

To put together the exact detail requested in terms of the amount of trains covered by buses would be a significant exercise that would take a significant amount of time to put together and would take us over the £600 threshold for doing so. However, we have provided some data that might go a long way to answering the specific request:

Full/Partially Cancelled Trains (on the day) - 571

Full/Partially Pre-cancelled trains (at least one day in advance, including for engineering work, Christmas Day etc.) - 701

Not all cancellations will have resulted in a replacement bus service. If there is a train service following within an hour, we would not put a bus on to cover this as the next train would ultimately overtake the bus by its end destination.



To provide some context around what appears to be very high numbers of cancellations, one 'cancellation' (either full/partial/planned/unplanned) does not necessarily mean that we have not run a service. Rather, it indicates the amount of times that the base timetable head code has been amended.

For example, if the train usually runs from Birmingham to Aberystwyth, but for whatever reason we have had to plan a unit swap and run two separate trains - one train from Birmingham – Shrewsbury and another train from Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth (departing at the same time as normal, but with a different train set), this would be reflected in this data, as the second train would run under a different head code. Therefore, in reality the situation is not anywhere near as unacceptable as the data above suggests.

**has there been an increase in the number and cost of replacement buses from Shrewsbury towards the Cambrian Coast, and in the number and amount of passengers receiving compensation, since the Arriva franchise ended?**

We do not hold information relating to dates prior to October 14, when Arriva Trains Wales were operating the Wales and Borders franchise, we do not have the Arriva data to compare against. Therefore, we do not hold the information requested. We suggest contacting Arriva UK if you wish to obtain this information:

Arriva plc  
Admiral Way  
Doxford International Business Park  
Sunderland  
SR3 3XP  
UK

Tel: +44 (0)191 520 4000

E-mail: [enquiries@arriva.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@arriva.co.uk)

**the number of those services which were replaced by buses for each of the last 3 years of the Arriva franchise, and the cost of those buses**

We do not hold information relating to dates prior to October 14 2018, when Arriva Trains Wales were operating the Wales and Borders franchise. We suggest contacting Arriva UK if you wish to obtain this information.

**the amount of compensation which has been provided to passengers travelling on journeys from Shrewsbury to destinations on the Aberystwyth and Pwllheli lines since the Arriva franchise ended, and the number of those passengers**

There have been a total of 286 claims during the last year, totalling £2,555 in delay compensation. We do not hold information on the number of customers. We do not currently have the personal account data - this will be available from next year.



**the amount of compensation which was provided to passengers travelling on those journeys for each of the last 3 years of the Arriva franchise, and the number of those passengers.**

We do not hold information relating to dates prior to October 14 2018, when Arriva Trains Wales were operating the Wales and Borders franchise. We suggest contacting Arriva UK if you wish to obtain this information.

**is there a problem with the box-driver communication system from Shrewsbury to Welshpool? If so, what is the problem and what is being done to address it?**

We have determined that this information is exempt from release under section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) which states that 'Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to— (b) endanger the safety of any individual'.

Section 38 is a qualified exemption. This means that, even if the information requested is exempt from disclosure, we must consider and decide whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure.

Whilst we acknowledge that there is a public interest in understanding the reliability of communication systems on rail network, in this case we feel that sharing this information and making it available in the public domain could compromise the safety and security of passengers. This outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

**Is there any truth in the statements that TfW have a shortage of train staff, that TfW do not have enough guards, and that there is a high rate of sickness amongst guards in Machynlleth?**

Transport for Wales Rail Services currently has one vacancy for a train driver for a post based in the Holyhead depot, as advertised on the Transport for Wales Rail Services website. We do not currently have any vacancies for conductors.

A 'high rate of sickness' is a subjective statement and so we are not able to provide any information on this request.

Yours sincerely

Transport for Wales