Written evidence submitted by Mr Matthew Moore (RTC0024)

My submission is personal (from myself, a 51 year old nurse who has been commuting between Brighton and South London for 20 years). Key points in this submission are:

- Rail travel has been erratic since 2015, but more so in the past two months;
- Now unable to travel directly between Brighton and Clapham Junction;
- Can no longer arrive at work on time for work;
- Have no idea what is happening on a day to day or strategic basis;
- Find the cost of train travel prohibitive.

1. I have commuted between Brighton and South London for 20 years. Until 2015, this journey reliably took 1 hour and 30 minutes from door to door and left me with multiple change options (east Croydon, Clapham junction) for connections. This journey only ever involved 2 changes;
2. Since 2015 the journey has been less reliable (many cancellations at any stage) but there was sufficient flexibility in the route to alter my change terminus (e.g. East Croydon vs Clapham Junction) if an ongoing connection was cancelled at one. This was because most trains stopped at both East Croydon and Clapham Junction;
3. Since the timetable change, there are so many cancellations and delays (at short notice) that this is impossible and average journey time is 2.5 hours;
4. As I am no longer able to travel directly to Clapham Junction (and changing on route is prohibitive: a) because the train change co-ordination is impossible due to cancellation, delay or service pattern alteration; or b) because connecting trains are overcrowded), I now have to travel from Brighton to East Croydon, change for the tram and walk 2 miles to work. This journey takes 2 hours;
5. I am required to start work at 7am when working clinically. I can no longer do that reliably (7 days a week-or ANY day of the week) and now drive on those days. This process takes me 1.5 hours but costs me more money as I will drive whilst holding a rail season ticket;
6. As I now experience delays in train travel multiple times a day and there is no reliable information source (due to very late notice information, or no information), I have no clue as to how my day is going to progress. I have been late for work and personal appointments more often than not and live in constant fear of losing my job or my personal relationships;
7. It should cost me £3630 annually to travel to work by train on the optimal route (under the current pricing). However, I no longer buy an annual season ticket because the current rail system does not give me confidence to invest in this annual purchase. I now buy daily/weekly tickets and spend large amounts of money on petrol and parking with an estimated annualised cost of travel to be £5000. I do not claim delay-repay money back any more as it is:
   a. More time wasted with the rail network;
   b. Does not allow claims which involve 2 train badges (e.g. Thameslink train late causing failed southern connection), even though they are both GTR;
   c. Object to where the delay repay is sourced from (DfT rather than GTR);
8. The result of all the above is that I cannot function at home or at work. I am tired, depressed and irritable and take out my frustrations (I tend to introvert myself which is out of character) on those around me. I am broke as I spend more on travel and can no longer commit to extra work opportunities (it is simply too much to consider commuting any more than I have to). I am 51 and should work until I am 67, I am now committed to taking early retirement at 55 simply to get rid of this journey (I am an experienced Senior Nurse and the NHS will lose 12 years of my expertise).

9. I feel frustrated that the DfT who are ultimately responsible for service delivery have no control or apparent responsibility in this. I feel angry because I feel that GTR is running a fraudulent operation (taking money for non-delivery of goods/services). I am astounded that DfT, Network Rail, and GTR cannot work together to deliver a cheap, reliable, comfortable rail service.

My recommendation is clearly that this is resolved so that I may be allowed to see a future both at home and at work. Moreover, I would plead with you to hold those that have allowed this to happen both on a corporate level and personal to be held to account in the greatest possible fashion. The harm that has been done to me, my fellow commuters and the south of England by this large scale farce is so significant that I see no option but to recommend that those held to account and found wanting are dealt with in the most severe fashion. It is not enough to accept resignations or non payment of bonuses but it would be appropriate to see dismissal from employment, large fines, or legal action against those found wanting in whichever arena.

I am not interested in financial compensation. I want my life back and an appropriate punishment for all who have contributed to the last 3 years of hell to be held to account.

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