Dear Transport Committee,

During a recent TV news/interview item, the public were asked to report on problems experienced with the rail service as part of an inquiry you are carrying out.

I have experience a cancelled train by Northern Rail of a journey from Widnes to Manchester on 8th May this year. I planned to catch the 9.20am (approx time) from Widnes which would arrive at Manchester Oxford Road at 10am.

I checked the timings on National Rail Enquiries on the 7 May evening and there was no indication of any cancellations the following day.

I had a 10.30am appointment at my dentist in Manchester, which was the reason for the journey. My dentist only offers private treatment, and to cancel on the day would result in a non-attendance cost to myself.

I therefore got my wife to drive me to Manchester for the appointment, and phoned the dentist during the journey to inform him I may be a few minutes late.

I would have thought that Northern Rail would have known the day before that their 9.20am service to Manchester would be cancelled? They could have then updated the National Rail Enquiry website so that customers like myself could have planned alternative journeys.

A news item has reported that different rail companies have different working hour contracts. Northern Rail for example, I understand has 6 day working and Sunday is optional overtime. Whilst other companies have a 7 day week rota system.

I would presume it would be easier to manage if all companies had the latter of the systems above. Relying on train drivers wanting to work overtime, in my opinion is not a way to guarantee a service.

Come back to me if you need any more information.

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