Written Evidence submitted by Mr Charles Mills (RTC0036)

Executive summary
My experience of the new timetable has not been as bad as for some – but it has still been horrible.

Detail
1  This submission is made more in the spirit of supporting a civilised process of government than in any real expectation of significant improvement in the rail service.

2  My experience is not as bad as many others I hear about.

3  Travelling on weekdays from Bedford to London St Pancras my inward is only 7 minutes a day longer when the train runs. Only 35 minutes a week extra. I always get a seat on the 06:22, whereas sometimes I did not get a seat on the EMT 06:30. Sometimes there is WIFI available, sometimes there is not. The seats are less comfortable than EMT and the noise level is higher than EMT.

4  The return journey is a much greater challenge. If I leave the office bang on 15:45 and the bus/tube link up effectively then I am usually able to catch the 16:21 with 2/3 minutes to spare. That would then deliver me to Bedford at 17:06, the same time as the EMT 16:30 used to. However the margin of safety to catch the train is much finer and, of course, the 16:21 has not run very often since the changes in May.

5  Of course, the nature of my work means that I am not always able to aim for that particular train: and the alternatives have often been crowded, delayed or both.

6  I have been commuting this route since 1987 and generally there have at least three or four Thameslink trains an hour to Bedford for most of that period. My recent experience has occasionally had waits of nearly 40 minutes at London St Pancras for a train to Bedford.

7  I used not to put in many claims for delays because they were infrequent and, frankly, not often a problem. Now I shall claim for every delay for which I am eligible.

July 2018