

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)

promoting quality public transport.....

Bolton closure 12/8/17 to 27/8/17 replacement services - a summary of some experiences

General

9 surveys were undertaken.

Information at stations, bus stops

Poor information at stations (6 out of 9 surveys) and at bus stops (5/9) was recorded.

For example at Manchester Oxford Road on 25th August very inadequate information was discovered. There were 2 general information posters at the station entrance (see picture) and reference to BUS on screens but no direction/indication of where to go to catch the bus. Staff had to be asked.



On that occasion, if there hadn't been a coach waiting at the replacement bus stop on Whitworth Street along with 2 staff members helping passengers, the surveyor would not have known where to wait as the stop had no information about the replacement services. (There was no destination information on a coach standing there).

At Wigan Wallgate on 16th August there was no information about how to access Bolton with no posters on the concourse other than general ones, in particular no specific information regarding the need to travel to Hindley for the coach connection. At Hindley there was no information for connecting passengers until outside the station where a member of staff was in control.

In contrast, also on 16th August, Bolton Station bus terminal exhibited staff actively seeking out passengers and guiding them to the correct vehicles and there was plentiful comprehensive poster information at the terminal featuring all routes and timings.

At Preston on 23rd August whilst passengers alighting from trains would find no information at platform level or staff directing passengers to buses, there were "Rail Replacement" direction signs at the top of the ramp from platforms 3 & 4 and above the underpass entrance.

Clitheroe station on 14th and 18th August only displayed an information poster for weekends, no weekday details.

Information on trains/buses

Similar to our previous experience in monitoring these events there was a lack of announcements on trains feeding into the area. On 16th August a Virgin service between Preston and Wigan provided no announcements about the Bolton closure and on 18th Aug no information was provided by the conductor on a Clitheroe - Bolton train regarding onwards connections at Bolton.

On Board experiences

Mainly good with on the whole attentive assistance to passengers. 2 areas warrant further examination –

- No or imperfect destination displays on buses/coaches.
- In the main no ticket examination.

Summary

This is a brief report from a small sample but it does echo much of our experience with previous surveys. It is not unreasonable to say that the experiences outlined here would be reiterated by other passengers using these replacement road services.

The key area still to address is the clarity and helpfulness of information at interchange points.

J Moorhouse 14th September 2017