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NEWS RELEASE - Immediate

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New Trains for the North - Good but only a temporary measure

The Government's recently announced decision to transfer 22 train carriages to Northern trains can only be viewed as a temporary fix to the overcrowding problems in the North of England, according to TravelWatch North West, (TWNW), the independent passenger champion in North West England.

“We are in desperate need of extra train capacity to relieve overcrowding and whilst any addition to the present fleet is welcome this can only be a short term measure. In fact it only adds up to 11 extra train units for the whole of the North of England and these are from stock that is now around 25 years old. They are hardly likely to be a great advertisement for a modern railway system.” said Chris Dale, Chairman of TWNW. “It seems that whilst London, the South East and Scotland can enjoy the luxury of newly built spacious trains, we in the North of England have to endure the uncomfortable, and noisy second hand cast-offs that were built to cheap specifications in the 1980's and have been patched up to keep going until something better appears. The average age of many trains in London and Scotland is less than 5 years whilst Northern's fleet is almost 25 years and it is likely that they could be 40 years old before they get replaced. Additionally when the new electrified lines become operational in 2 years we only expect cascaded old stock to be provided to run on them. We really are the poor relation in comparison to the South and it is time the Department for Transport took the rail issues of the North seriously”.

ENDS

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