

promoting quality public transport.....

NEWS RELEASE - Immediate

Friday, 14th December 2012

TravelWatch surveys Northern Rail services.

TravelWatch NorthWest, (TWNW), the independent passenger champion in North West England, today launches a report analysing 100 journeys made on Northern Rail's services over the last few months.

The report shows that passengers are largely content with their travel experience on Northern trains, but it is of concern that, in 25% of the journeys surveyed, the conductor was not seen at all and tickets not checked. This is an area that requires management attention to reduce the scourge of ticketless travel and also give reassurance to passengers that there is a staff presence on the train.

Northern Rail has to run its services with a fleet of some of the oldest and timeworn trains running on Britain's railway network and it has had to deal with an unpredicted growth of 40% in passenger numbers. Northern has made valiant efforts to maintain its old trains and its standards but, as a train operator in receipt of deep government subsidy, it is severely restricted from modernising its fleet and providing extra capacity to keep pace with demand.

North West electrification will hopefully enable more capacity to be provided on both electrified and, by releasing diesel trains, non-electrified routes. However, with no movement towards **new** and more comfortable and spacious trains in sight, the stakeholders face a challenging dilemma if they are to continue to provide train services to meet the needs of the North West of England in the next decade..

ENDS

Notes – Report attached, for further information contact - Chris Dale, Chair, TWNW - 07948 551809 or John Moorhouse, Co Sec, TWNW - 07807 768124