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Rail Commercial Contracts
Department for Transport
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR
Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk
Our Ref: F0007398

21 March 2011

Dear XXX

Freedom of Information Request F0007398 - Northern Services during Severe Weather

I am writing to confirm that the Department for Transport (DfT) has now completed its search for the information you requested.

Question 1: Would your Department please let me see any and all statements and evidence supplied by Northern Rail or their agents under Northern's Franchise Agreement, Schedule 1.2 Paragraphs 8.1 & 8.2, relating to the Cleethorpes—Barton service for the whole of the period 1st to 11th December 2010?

Answer 1: I have attached information relating to North Lincolnshire in relation to the ministerial debate. There are no further emails or other correspondence specifically relating to the Cleethorpes – Barton route, because it was closed by Network Rail under their key route strategy due to the snow. Because of this closure Northern did not apply for Departmental approval to make alterations to the services on this route.

The Department is satisfied that Northern undertook reasonable endeavours to deliver services between Cleethorpes and Barton, and elsewhere on its Network during the periods of extreme weather in late 2010.

Question 2: Northern Rail started running trains again between Cleethorpes and Barton on 13 December. Could you please ask Northern what publicity they gave to this, to whom, and when?

Answer 2: it is not possible to provide a specific answer to this question, however in general terms Northern provides disruption information to passengers on its own website, and like other Train Operating Companies through the National Rail Enquiries website. This information includes all cancellation information, or where applicable, details of an amended timetable.

National Rail Enquiries also provides a Twitter feed, showing live Northern specific disruption information, which can be accessed from the Northern Website, through National Rail Enquiries or by subscribing to the feed on directly on Twitter. Northern's own website contains the following advice on published notices about disruption.

"Passengers are advised to check for up to date train running information, before travelling, online via our Live Departures page at www.northernrail.org or by phoning the dedicated information line from National Rail Enquiries on 08453 017641. Alternatively, passengers can phone our Customer Relations team on 0845 0000125."

Unfortunately we are unable to provide physical evidence of the information provided to passengers at the time, for example screenshots of the relevant websites as these were not taken at the time of the disruption, and are not available retrospectively.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the Department's Information Rights Unit at:

Zone D/04
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Please see attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

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Your right to complain to DfT and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF