



Alex Brewer MP
House of Commons
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

By email only

28.07.2025

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: South Western Railway network reliability

I am writing to raise serious concerns about the ongoing disruption on the South Western Railway (SWR) network, which is causing significant difficulties for my constituents.

Weeks of high temperatures have led to repeated track issues and uncomfortable, and sometimes dangerous journeys. On top of this, there have been two complete signal failures in recent weeks, and weekend services remain unreliable due to frequent cancellations and engineering works.

On the 14th, 19th and 21st July there were signal failures which caused widespread disruption. The most significant being on Monday 21st when 14 platforms in Waterloo station were out of use due to a technological failure with the system that routes trains into and out of the station. According to Network Rail the fault was found on Saturday morning; it is appalling that this was not sufficiently fixed to work seamlessly by Monday when an estimated 220,000 people use SWR trains daily.

While infrastructure is currently the responsibility of Network Rail, another public body, the Government's stated ambition is to use public ownership to reduce delays, and it is the responsibility of SWR, and therefore the Department for Transport, to ensure that services return to normal as quickly as possible with minimal disruption.

Following Labour's nationalisation of the operator, we were told to expect better, improved services, sooner. Yet, in the first period since nationalisation, 25th May – 21st June, 34.51% of SWR train services did not run on time.

These problems are not just an inconvenience; they are actively damaging lives. Constituents have missed job interviews, hospital appointments, many working hours and other vital commitments due to the unreliability of the service.

The 4.6% rise in regulated rail fares, which took effect in March following the Chancellor's announcement in the 30th October Budget, has only deepened public frustration. Passengers are paying increasingly high prices for a service that continues to fall short. With fares rising and delivery falling, my constituents, along with many others across the SWR network, feel neglected and let down.

Given that your Department now runs the operation of SWR services, I urge you to set out what action the Government is taking, through both SWR and Network Rail, to improve infrastructure resilience, prevent further signal failures, and ensure SWR delivers a reliable service going forward.

Member of Parliament for North East Hampshire
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I look forward to your response and to hearing how you plan to restore trust in our railway network.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Brewer".

Alex Brewer MP

Member for North East Hampshire

Danny Chambers MP

Adam Dance MP

Sarah Dyke MP

Will Forster MP

Zöe Franklin MP

Monica Harding MP

Clive Jones MP

Paul Kohler MP

Helen Maguire MP

Edward Morello MP

Anna Sabine MP

Munira Wilson MP

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