



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London, SW1P 4DR

Reference No. HW55822

31 July 2023

Dear Mark

I am writing to you in my capacity as the MP for Faversham and Mid Kent about the planned closures of ticket offices in stations.

Since the announcement I have heard from several constituents worried about disabled and older people who need extra help to travel. These changes must not prevent anyone from travelling by train, particularly people who find travelling more difficult due to disabilities.

I would like assurances that if the planned closures go ahead, station staff will still be available to provide face to face help, giving passengers support where they need it most.

I would also like to be assured that if the specific ticket a customer is seeking to buy is not available from the ticket machine, they will be able to buy one during their journey or at their destination and will not be penalised for travelling without a ticket.

Some of my constituents with disabilities phone ahead of travelling to arrange assistance at the station. They would like to know that this service will continue, and particularly who will take the call given that there won't be a staffed ticket office.

Another point that constituents have raised with me is that some people find the ticket machines confusing and end up paying more than they need to for their ticket. I would like to know what measures will be put in place to make sure people only pay for the ticket they need.

I understand the need to modernise our railway, but I also want to make sure that everyone who wants to travel by train is still able to do so under the new arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Whately MP
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent