

Dear Member



This is just a quick newsletter, mainly to provide you with a copy of a Stakeholder news sent by FCC on the 31st:

FCC's Stakeholder news

Dear Stakeholder

As we approach the new year, I would like to provide you with an update on our service.

The Thameslink route will continue to operate a revised service for week commencing 4th January. Due to additional driver availability we have been able to add extra services to the timetable and full details can be found below or downloaded from our website:

www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk

We have also added additional stops on certain services in the interim following customer feedback. We are prioritising services to restore following stakeholder and customer feedback and as drivers return to restday and overtime working these will be reintroduced. The Great Northern route continues to operate a normal service.

We remain in consistent communication with our Thameslink route drivers, however indications point to drivers awaiting the outcome of the Aslef referendum on our revised pay offer. The results are expected to be announced by Aslef after 13th January. The service is improving, although a lot slower than expected which is very disappointing for our customers and indeed for ourselves.

As mentioned previously, compensation in addition to Delay Repay for Thameslink customers has been finalised and this will include a flexible ticket offer that equals five days free travel. We are now planning how this will be communicated to customers in January.

Vital engineering projects took place at Blackfriars and St Pancras over the Christmas period that continue to transform the Thameslink route for new and more trains. Further details can be found here: www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk. We have also frozen fares and car park tariffs at all station car parks this January. These are all positives for our customers but are rightly overshadowed by our continued revised Thameslink timetable.

Our sole aim remains to return the service as quickly as possible.

Restored services:

06:20 St Albans to Sutton (Previously 06:06 Luton)

06:14 Bedford to Sutton

07:32 Bedford to Sutton

08:04 Bedford to Brighton

16:46 Luton to Sutton

17:36 Bedford to Brighton

08:09 Sutton to St Albans

09:38 Sutton to St Albans

16:37 Sutton to Luton

16:24 Brighton to Bedford

17:42 Sutton to St Albans

Additional service stops:

16:02 Sevenoaks – Bedford to call additionally at Harlington

16:18 Elephant & Castle – Bedford to call additionally at Kentish Town, West Hampstead Thameslink, Cricklewood, Hendon, Mill Hill Broadway, Elstree & Borehamwood and Radlett

16:30 Brighton to Bedford calling at all stations between St Albans and Bedford.

18:02 Sevenoaks – Bedford to call additionally at Flitwick

18:07 Brighton – Bedford to call additionally at Mill Hill Broadway, Elstree & Borehamwood and Radlett

APTU's comments

1. The current version of the timetable is available at www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/content/doc/cms/FCC-TimetableTL-04-Jan-2010.pdf - but note that this is a date dependent link.
2. It is good to see that the compensation offer has been finalised; we will be seeking an extension in the days offered to compensate for the continued disruption we are suffering from.
3. As mentioned in our last newsletter, a potential issue is weekly tickets. The last newsletter read:

Ensuring it covers weekly tickets [if it does cover them, you will definitely have to produce original tickets, since FCC records do not show you have purchased a series of tickets]. I recommend you continue to keep expired tickets.

a. If this situation (the buying of a new weekly ticket each week) applies to you, please do let us know - I would like some evidence to support my case. It would be useful to get a brief explanation why you do not buy monthlies.

I did not hear of anyone in this situation - if this does apply to you, please let me know.

4. As regards individual large gaps in the timetable:
 - a. This version of the timetable does seem to tackle the issue of large gaps in the evening peak for Elstree and Radlett travellers.
 - b. The 15/45 gap does remain for the slow service in the off peak. We have previously tackled FCC about this and it seems as not possible to fix - this is because of a combination (a) of timings on trains on the Wimbledon loop; and (b) a need to stick to existing train paths, rather than create new ones.
 - c. There are still some large gaps in the evening peak for travellers to Luton Airport Parkway, Leagrave and Harlington. We will ask FCC to address these issues. If we succeed, in the short term they will appear as “stop orders” and will only appear in JourneyCheck or on Live Running (www.journeycheck.com/firstcapitalconnect/ & www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/Main.php?sEvent=LiveRunning).

A useful set of links for mobile phone / PDA users

If you access the FCC web site from a mobile phone or PDA (iPhone, Blackberry etc), then these two links may be useful:

1. <http://pda.journeycheck.com/fcc/>
2. <http://www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/text>

Meeting with Mary Grant

Arthur Taylor, BCA Chairman and myself will meet Mary Grant on the 7th of January. I will let you know the outcome of this meeting in due course.

Oyster

Just a quick reminder that Transport for London's Oyster card can now be used on FCC services from Elstree & Borehamwood and stations south thereof. More details are available at www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/Main.php?sEvent=News&sFileName=News.php&ild=205.

If you using Pay as You Go and are travelling north of Elstree on a conventional ticket, be aware that you need to alight at Elstree and touch out at a reader there in order to avoid the maximum single fare.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
3 January 2010