



Review of Service Performance on the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line December 2023

1 Introduction / Overview

1.1 Whilst overall service performance would appear to have improved slightly as compared with the previous month, the line has been subject to a number of issues including ASLEF strike action, weather incidents and continuing crew allocation problems. We believe that there remains scope for improvement in key areas.

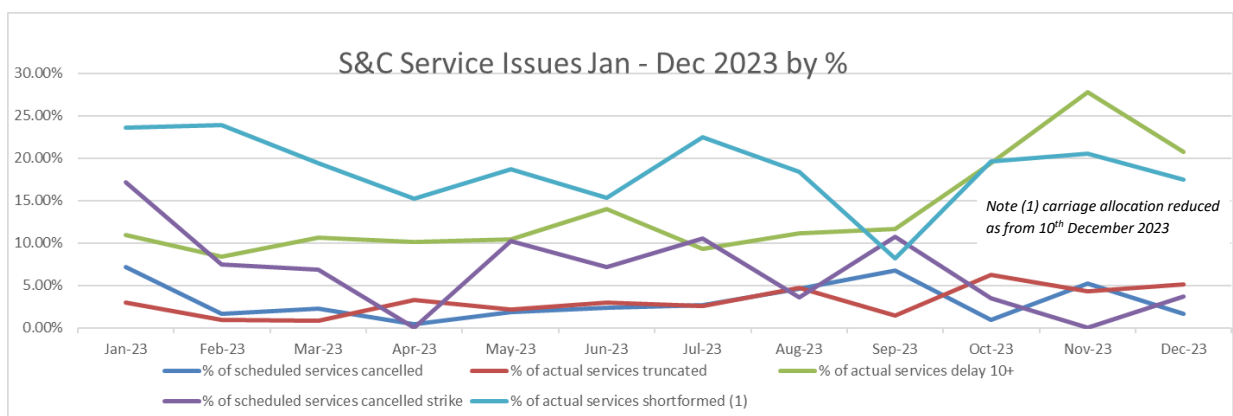
1.2 Headline performance figures for December 2023:

- 5.26% of all scheduled services cancelled due to industrial action or otherwise.
- 20.68% of those services actually running were significantly late (10 min or over).
- 5.12% of those services actually running were truncated (usually at Skipton).
- 17.48% of those services actually running were short formed (as compared with promised allocation).

1.3 The report narrative is intended to complement the data contained in the accompanying spreadsheet and relates, essentially, to the period 1st to 31st December 2023.

2 Train Service Performance

2.1 Train service issues are shown on the following graph illustrating the percentage of services subject to cancellation, strike, late running, truncation, and short formation:



2.2 Cancellations: 1.62% of scheduled services suffered cancellation (excluding strike) as compared with 5.19% in November. In all, 8 services were cancelled. Reasons included the failed Colas timber train, crew allocation issues, train fault and flooding on the track.

- 2.3 Strike cancellations: industrial action accounted for 3.64% of cancellations in December as compared with 0% in November. There was a single strike day on 8th December accounting for the loss of 18 services.
- 2.4 Late Running instances (10 min or more at any station on the journey) reflect 20.68% of those services actually running as compared with 27.79% in November. Reasons were various including, late arrival of crews, the failed timber train, late presentation from the depot, flooding on the line, OHL failure in Aire Valley, Storms Pia and Gerrit, trespassers on line, train faults and signalling.
- 2.5 Truncation instances at 5.12% (mainly at Skipton) of those services actually running have increasing from 4.26% in November, reasons including failed timber train, crew allocation, flooding and OHL failure.
- 2.6 The detail for the last 12 months is shown below:

Mon – Sun Service Issues January 2023-December 2023

Month	Cancelled Services	% of scheduled services cancelled	Truncated services	% of actual services truncated	Delay 10+	% of actual services delay 10+	Strike cancelled services	% of scheduled services cancelled strike	Short formed services	% of actual services shortformed (1)	Actual services ran	% of scheduled services actual ran	Scheduled Services
Jan-23	38	7.14%	12	2.98%	44	10.92%	91	17.11%	95	23.57%	403	75.75%	532
Feb-23	8	1.65%	4	0.91%	37	8.41%	36	7.44%	105	23.86%	440	90.91%	484
Mar-23	12	2.23%	4	0.82%	52	10.63%	37	6.88%	95	19.43%	489	90.89%	538
Apr-23	2	0.39%	17	3.31%	52	10.14%	0	0.00%	78	15.20%	513	99.61%	515
May-23	10	1.86%	10	2.12%	49	10.38%	55	10.24%	88	18.64%	472	87.90%	537
Jun-23	12	2.31%	14	2.97%	66	14.01%	37	7.12%	72	15.29%	471	90.58%	520
Jul-23	14	2.63%	12	2.59%	43	9.29%	56	10.51%	104	22.46%	463	86.87%	533
Aug-23	25	4.65%	23	4.66%	55	11.13%	19	3.53%	91	18.42%	494	91.82%	538
Sep-23	35	6.72%	6	1.40%	50	11.63%	56	10.75%	35	8.14%	430	82.53%	521
Oct-23	5	0.96%	31	6.21%	97	19.44%	18	3.45%	98	19.64%	499	95.59%	522
Nov-23	27	5.19%	21	4.26%	137	27.79%	0	0.00%	101	20.49%	493	94.81%	520
Dec-23	8	1.62%	24	5.12%	97	20.68%	18	3.64%	82	17.48%	469	94.75%	495

2.7 Significant issues:

- Crew allocation issues: cancellations of 2H10 and 2H85 on 9 Dec, 2H12 and 2H89 on 21 Dec, plus a number of crew related delays on other days. In all, there were some **39** significant crew related issues involving late running or cancellation as compared with 56 incidents in the previous month.
- Failed 1Z99 Colas timber train on 4 Dec causing cancellation of 2H95 and delays.
- Train faults on 4 Dec and 27 Dec: cancellation of 2H90 and 2H97 (4 Dec) and significant delay of 2H94 (27 Dec)
- Late presentation of 2H10 from Neville Hill on 6 Dec and 18 Dec causing delay to Carlisle service and return service to Leeds.
- Flooding at Hellifield on 9 Dec and 21 Dec causing cancellation of 2H96 (9 Dec) and delays.
- Flooding in the Aire Valley (Kirkstall) on 11 Dec causing delays and truncation at Skipton.
- Overhead line failure at Armley on 14 Dec causing truncation and delays.
- Movement of earlier failed Colas loco on 14 Dec causing delays to Northern services.

- Trespassers on the line at Steeton on 20 Dec causing delays whilst investigated by BTP.
 - Storm Pia on 21 Dec causing significant delays.
 - Storm Gerrit on 27 Dec causing delays and truncation of services at Skipton.
- 2.8 The key morning Mon-Fri commuter services (2H10 northbound to Carlisle and 2H81 southbound to Leeds) have suffered cancellation or delays involving 25% of scheduled services (27.12% in November); cancellation being due to industrial action (one day) with late running due to late presentation from the depot (2 occasions), signalling, trespassers on the line and flooding. Ridership has diminished due to reliability issues and the removal of the Dales Railcard, and it is vital that passenger confidence is re-established in these services going forward. Meanwhile, we note that there has been significant housing development, particularly in the Eden Valley, over recent years, and an increased need for reliable public transport.
- 2.9 We note a significant number of crew related issues resulting in late running and sometimes cancellation. One possible explanation might be unrealistic diagrams combined with an underlying lack of resource. We would, of course, urge that this is resolved. Whilst we entirely understand the reluctance to 'P code', it is often the case these cancellations occur at short notice and without adequate warning to the passenger.
- 2.10 The failed 1Z99 Colas freight train on 4th Dec and resultant disruption highlights the need for better mitigation measures to be in place. We would welcome comment from Network Rail.
- 2.11 We note an increasing number of flooding incidents at Hellifield (9 Dec and 21 Dec) as well as other locations on the line and we would urge that mitigation measures are put in place to address this. We welcome comment from Network Rail.
- 2.12 It is of concern that there have been two further instances of late presentation of units from Neville Hill depot. A late running train to Carlisle has a potential follow-on effect on the return service to Leeds. We would urge that this is addressed with the depot management as soon as possible.
- 2.13 Whilst the issue of trespassers on the line is outside the control of Northern, we do question the response time of British Transport Police in attending to the incident (we assume from Leeds) and declaring the line safe to run. We would ask that this might be raised with BTP.
- 2.14 We again raise the issue in the event of the cancellation of southbound 2H97 and 2H04 (as on 4th Dec) being the last stopping services for some of the smaller intermediate stations. We have previously requested that in such circumstances the semi fast 2H99 should call at these stations, involving a slight delay from Ribbleshead onwards. We would welcome assurance that such mitigation is in place.
- 2.15 Truncation of services at Skipton for operational expediency creates significant inconvenience for passengers and should be resisted where possible. Inevitably, this creates a 17-minute wait

at Skipton for the next Leeds-bound Aire Valley stopping service or, potentially, a missed connection at Leeds.

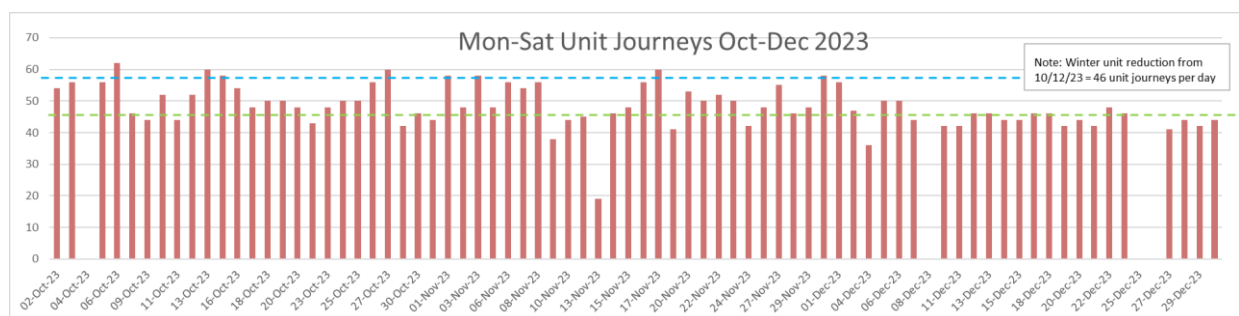
- 2.16 **It is vital that any control decisions are customer-focused and not for operational expediency. With only 8 full line trains running each way we suggest that these should be 'ring fenced' as the cancellation of a service can potentially lead to a 6-hour gap in the timetable at some of the intermediate stations.**

3 Industrial Action

- 3.1 The line was affected by ASLEF industrial action on Friday 8th December plus action short of a strike over the period 1-9th December. As a consequence, there were no services on the line during the strike day. We are unaware of any future planned action at this point.
- 3.2 It is unfortunate but the continued action will inevitably impact upon the confidence of the public to make any long-term plans to travel.

4 Train Capacity

- 4.1 The planned stock reduction was implemented as from 10th December whereby the previous mix of 4 and 3 carriage trains has been reduced to 3 and 2 over the winter period. We are promised that the allocation will be reinstated as from late March 2024, in time for the Easter holiday period. We have raised our concerns that this might lead to under capacity on some services particularly with various offers running over the winter period.
- 4.2 We note that 17.48% of those services actually running were short formed as compared with 20.49% in November despite the reduction in carriage allocation which took place as from 10th December. The accompanying data document shows short-formed services highlighted in yellow and seems to affect some of the same trains on a re-occurring basis.
- 4.3 The graph below illustrates daily unit journeys during the 3-month period October-December 2023 (Mon – Sat). As from 10th December this should show a consistent 46 unit journeys a day (indicated by the dotted green line) but often falls below this, sometimes due to cancellation or due to strike action in the case of the gaps. The allocation of units to the line would appear to lack any consistency.



4.4 The occurrence of short-formed trains (Mon-Sun) when compared with the Northern promised allocation can be seen on the table below. Despite a reduction in carriage allocation as from 10th December 2023 to mainly 2 or 3 car sets, it does appear that a number of services still continue to be shortformed (i.e., running as 2 instead of 3 units). The figure is also shown as a % of those services which actually ran:

Month	Short-formed Services	As % of Actual Services Running
Jan-23	95	24.11%
Feb-23	105	23.86%
Mar-23	97	19.84%
Apr-23	78	15.20%
May-23	88	18.64%
Jun-23	72	15.29%
Jul-23	104	22.46%
Aug-23	91	18.24%
Sep-23	35	8.14%
Oct-23	98	19.64%
Nov-23	101	20.49%
Dec-23*	82	17.48%

**reduced carriage allocation as from 10th December 2023*

4.5 Whilst we do not have access to precise passenger numbers, anecdotal reports suggest that a few services have run ‘full and standing’ and particularly those on Saturday during the day. However, the poor weather over the Christmas period may have resulted in fewer passengers using the railway than might have normally been anticipated. Nevertheless, we would urge that the situation is monitored closely over the winter period with an increased number of offers, and we would expect to see the services revert to the normal allocations (as per May 2022) at the end of March 2024 as promised.

5 Key Points

5.1 We would summarise the key points as follows:

- Whilst overall service performance would appear to have improved slightly as compared with the previous month, the line has been subject to a number of issues including ASLEF strike action, weather incidents and continuing crew allocation problems.
- The industrial dispute appears to be continuing with a day lost to ASLEF strike action on 8th December. It is to be hoped that parties reach agreement as soon as possible to avert further disruption.
- We note continuing crew resourcing issues coupled with short notice cancellations and adequate customer information. We urge that these issues are swiftly resolved.

- The performance of the key weekday morning commuter trains in both directions remains poor and urgently needs to be improved, coupled with relaxation in the Dales Railcard pre 0815 exclusion if there is any chance of winning these customers back or re-establishing a commuter market.
- We note the increased number of flooding incidents affecting services on a re-occurring basis, particularly at Hellifield, and welcome comment from Network Rail.
- The late presentation of units from Neville Hill remains an issue with 2 instances in December.
- We have raised the issue of the response time of BTP in dealing with the reported trespasser incident at Steeton.
- We would ask (again) that mitigation measures are put in place for serving the smaller intermediate stations in the event of cancellations of the evening southbound trains.
- Truncation of services (usually at Skipton) for operational expediency creates significant inconvenience for passengers and should be resisted where possible.
- We have requested increased awareness of the consequences of late running trains for passengers wishing to join the few remaining connecting bus services and, in particular, from 1M53 (the 0920 ex Leeds service on weekdays and Saturday).
- **It is vital that control decisions are customer focused rather than for operational expediency. With only 8 full-line trains a day, and otherwise large gaps in the timetable, it is critical that these services are 'ring fenced'.**
- We have raised concerns as regards the reduction of carriage allowance over the winter period particularly with winter offers ongoing. Despite the reduction to largely 3 and 2 unit sets there would appear to be a lack of consistency. We would urge that loadings are closely monitored for instances of 'full and standing', and that normal allocation is resumed as from the end of March 2024.

John Carey
Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line
4 January 2024

Attached: S&C Service Data December 2023