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- INDUSTRY NEWS
- PASSENGER & FREIGHT
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ORR asked to drop 90% punctuality target

BY NEWS IN RAIL NEWS | 28 AUG, 2013 | 1







The Office of Rail Regulation has been asked to abandon plans that require train operators to achieve 90 per cent punctuality by the end of control period 5 (April 2019).

Some long-distance operators, such as Virgin Trains, believe that the interests

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of passengers would be better served by a realistic average target for each TOC combined with a requirement to reduce the days of very poor performance.

Virgin would like a target figure of around 88 per cent, if it achieved a more consistent performance, as the ORR did not take into account the difficulties faced of trying to maintain a 90 per cent punctuality target on a 400-mile route.

The operator said that the difference between 97 per cent PPM and 88 per cent PPM on a particular day has relative little impact on passengers and that the real problem is when it has figures of around 70 per cent and below, which is an indication that the peak services have failed.

Virgin would like to see an incentive scheme that encourages Network Rail to work with the operator in order to achieve a consistent performance against a realistic average target with a reduction in very poor days.

Network Rail is in agreement with regard to the ORR's target of 90 per cent and says that on some routes it is just not a practical target and pointed out that a recent independent report said that 88 per cent is a realistic maximum PPM for the East Coast route, noting that the limited number of diversionary routes and older assets along with the exposure of the ECML to weather events place a cap on what can be achieved.

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