

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into the future of the Wales and Borders Rail](#)

Evidence from James Bird – WBF 31

I am a student at Aberystwyth University and have some feedback, which I hope you will find useful.

I am from Shrewsbury and my main form of transport from Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth and vice versa is the train.

One of the issues raised was the two hour gap between trains. I feel that this is not an issue for the service as the gap between each departure suits different students. For example, if I wish to go home at the weekend, any train departing Aberystwyth from 1300–1900 is suitable for me. Obviously certain times are more popular than others but this was never an issue for me.

My main criticism of the service would be the lack of carriages at peak times of the year.

Returning home for Christmas, Easter and the summer was a nightmare as the trains were over crowded.

For example, when I returned home for Easter, I took the 0700 train, thinking this would be less popular, and immediately regretted it as all four carriages were full.

This leads me on to my next point, whether at Shrewsbury or Aberystwyth, the train leaves with four carriages. When we reach Machynlleth, the train splits into two. This isn't always an issue as during the quieter months of the year the trains aren't that full. It only becomes an issue during the peak times of the year where at each station, more and more people get onto the train which has been reduced to two carriages, much to the frustration of the passengers. One more problem for this split is that not everyone realizes that the train does split at Machynlleth and nine times out of ten the sound system that announces this is either too quiet or not understandable.

Adding to this, I don't why this happens, but sometimes at Shrewsbury, instead of the usual four carriages arriving, only two did. That trip I had to stand with all my luggage in the entrance section of the carriage for the whole two hour journey. This isn't the first time that this has happened to me.

To summarize,

1. The two hour gap between departing trains, I feel, isn't an issue as different times suit different students.
2. Journeys made during the peak times of the year, Christmas, Easter etc, are not catered for.
3. The provided standard service isn't always met (2 carriages for the full journey)
4. The sound system to announce each station etc isn't clear all the time.

One thing I must comment on is the quality of the staff.

I have never had a problem with any member of staff and found they are always helpful and understanding.

Yours sincerely,

James Bird