



**Statement Against the Planned Closure of 1000 Rail Ticket Offices on Behalf of the GMCA Women and Girls’ Equality Panel, Greater Manchester Disabled People’s Panel and the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel**

26th July 2023

As representatives of women, girls and LGBTQ+ people across the city region, we oppose the proposed closure of 1000 rail ticket offices across the country, in particular the 50 tickets offices in Greater Manchester which are set to close, including Manchester Piccadilly, Stockport and Wigan North Western.

We are concerned that the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups such as older and disabled people has not been assessed. We believe these closures will also have a detrimental effect on women and LGBTQ+ people’s safety and accessibility, and we urge decision-makers to reconsider this plan.

Safety Concerns:

Rail ticket offices provide a sense of security, particularly during evening hours or in less populated areas. The closure of these offices could result in deserted stations, making women and LGBTQ people more vulnerable to harassment, assault, and other forms of violence.

Accessibility:

Rail ticket offices offer an essential resource for people with disabilities or those who may require additional assistance. Ticket office staff can provide guidance on accessible routes, help with purchasing appropriate tickets, and accommodate specific needs. The closure of these offices hinders the ability to use public transportation with ease.

Digital exclusion:

It is estimated that 1.2 million people are digitally excluded in Greater Manchester. Only having digital ticketing options or ticket machines will leave many people unable to purchase a ticket prior to boarding making them liable to paying a fine or an increased fare for a ticket.

Inadequate consultation:

The opportunity to contribute to the consultation has been very limited, both in the time allowed and the fewer options for non-digital participation.

In light of these concerns, we recommend a halt to the proposed closures to allow for a more comprehensive consultation and a review of alternative accessibility and safety measures.