South Western Railway

WHOOSH

A South Western Railway One Scan Case Study:
Transforming On-Board Reporting into Operational Intelligence

The Challenge:

South Western Railway operates one of the UK's busiest commuter and regional networks, with a fleet spanning multiple unit classes and a Service Quality Regime that demands rapid response to on-board defects. Issues such as HVAC failures, cleanliness shortfalls, vandalism, and PA faults have traditionally relied on formal complaint channels – capturing problems days or weeks after the fact, long after resolution windows have closed and SQR penalties have already landed.

The question SWR faced was straightforward: how do you get real-time operational intelligence from the passengers travelling the network every day?

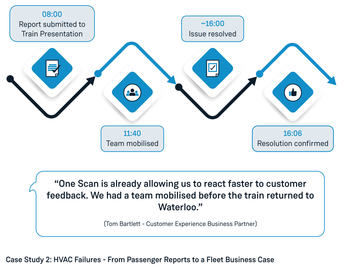
The Solution:

As part of SWR's One Scan information dashboard - developed and operated by Whoosh - the Tell Us module gives passengers a direct, frictionless channel to report on-board issues in real time. A single scan of a QR code on any seat, coach, or platform opens a pre-populated form, automatically tagged with the train unit, carriage, and sublocation. Reports are instantly categorised and routed to the relevant operational team.

The result is a live defect intelligence feed - built not from complaints, but from passengers who care enough to act in the moment.

How it works:

- Passengers scan a QR code on their seat, carriage wall, or platform
- A short, pre-populated form captures the issue, category, and location
- The report is sent in real time to the relevant team - Train Presentation, Station Operations, or Fleet Engineering
- Every on-train report is tagged to a specific rolling stock unit, building an ongoing maintenance data record



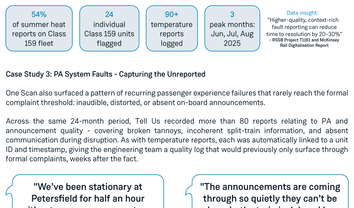
One Scan in Action - Three Operational Case Studies

Case Study 1: Graffiti Detection and Same-Day Resolution

In June 2025, a passenger used One Scan to report racist graffiti discovered in a toilet aboard a Class 444 unit at approximately 08:00. The report - filed under the Graffiti category and automatically tagged to the unit - was received immediately by SWR's Train Presentation team.

By 11:40, the Head of Train Presentation had reviewed the report and mobilised a cleaning crew. Arrangements were made to intercept the service on its return to London Waterloo, and by 15:58 the graffiti had been removed. Resolution was confirmed internally at 16:06 - within eight hours of the original report.

Without One Scan, this report would have been unlikely to surface through formal channels before the unit re-entered service.



> **"One Scan is already allowing us to react faster to customer feedback. We had a team mobilised before the train returned to Waterloo."**
>
> (Tom Bartlett - Customer Experience Business Partner)

Case Study 2: HVAC Failures - From Passenger Reports to a Fleet Business Case

During the summer 2025 heatwave periods, One Scan's Tell Us module recorded over 90 temperature-related reports across the SWR network. Each report was tagged to a specific rolling stock unit - creating a dataset that operational and engineering teams could analyse by fleet type, route, and frequency.

The data told a clear story. The Class 159 fleet accounted for 54% of all summer temperature reports - disproportionate to their share of the timetable. Across the peak heatwave months of June, July, and August, 24 individual Class 159 units generated temperature reports, with several units appearing multiple times across different services.

This pattern of repeat reports against identifiable units gave SWR's engineering team something a call centre log could never provide: evidence-based, unit-level data strong enough to support a formal business case. That case proposed the application of solar-reflective roof coating to the most-affected Class 159 units - a cost-effective intervention to reduce cabin heat gain during high-temperature periods.

> **"A great benefit of Tell Us reporting is that it automatically includes information that the customer wouldn't know themselves (like carriage & train unit number). This enables targeted actions without delay"**
>
> (Tim Mears - CX Improvement Lead)

What this demonstrates:

- Individual passenger reports, aggregated over time, can surface systemic engineering issues invisible to traditional feedback channels
- Unit-tagged reporting transforms anecdotal complaints into a quantitative case for infrastructure investment
- One Scan data can directly inform maintenance scheduling and capital planning

54%	24	90+	3	Data insight
of summer heat reports on Class 159 fleet	individual Class 159 units flagged	temperature reports logged	peak months: Jun, Jul, Aug 2025	"Higher-quality, context-rich fault reporting can reduce time to resolution by 20–30%" – RSSB Project T1065 and McKinsey Rail Digitalisation Report

Case Study 3: PA System Faults - Capturing the Unreported

One Scan also surfaced a pattern of recurring passenger experience failures that rarely reach the formal complaint threshold: inaudible, distorted, or absent on-board announcements.

Across the same 24-month period, Tell Us recorded more than 80 reports relating to PA and announcement quality - covering broken tannoys, incoherent split-train information, and absent communication during disruption. As with temperature reports, each was automatically linked to a unit ID and timestamp, giving the engineering team a quality log that would previously only surface through formal complaints, weeks after the fact.

> **"We've been stationary at Petersfield for half an hour without any announcement - no one knows whether to wait or abandon the journey."**
>
> (Passenger, May 2026)

> **"The announcements are coming through so quietly they can't be heard - the train is delayed by almost an hour and no one knew what was going on."**
>
> (Passenger, January 2026)

These reports reach SWR's operations team in real time - before the train completes its journey, and before the passenger raises a formal complaint. That shift in timing changes the nature of the response from reactive to preventative.

Importantly, One Scan captures the positive signal too. Guards who communicate clearly during disruption generate unprompted commendations through the same channel:

> **"The guard did an amazing job - updates on delays, tube line status, engineering works. Everything I needed."**
>
> (Passenger, March 2026)

24 Months of Operational Data:

Since One Scan's Tell Us module went live on SWR, the platform has recorded over 1,800 legitimate passenger reports in the past 24 months alone - 1,553 of them tagged directly to rolling stock unit numbers.

Metric	Figure
Total reports (Nov 2024 – Nov 2026)	1,800+
Reports linked to specific train units	1,553
Cleanliness and toilet reports	660+
Temperature / HVAC reports	242
PA and announcements reports	80+
Staff commendations captured	65+
Peak monthly submissions	160 (July 2026)

Operational Impact:

- **Reduced SQR Exposure:** Defects captured and resolved within the same service window are far less likely to escalate into scoreable SQR failures. Real-time routing eliminates the gap between passenger experience and operational response.
- **Evidence-Based Maintenance Planning:** Unit-level reporting aggregated over time identifies recurring offenders. The Class 159 temperature case study demonstrates how Tell Us data can directly inform capital investment decisions - not just reactive repairs.
- **Staff Recognition and Accountability:** Commendations and complaints arrive through the same channel, giving operations managers a balanced, evidence-based view of on-board service quality. Positive reports are automatically surfaced alongside defect data.
- **Passenger Trust:** Passengers who can report a problem easily are less likely to disengage. One Scan captures that intent at the moment it matters - turning a frustrating experience into a structured data point.

Conclusion:

South Western Railway's investment in the One Scan platform - and the Tell Us module at its core - has created an operational intelligence capability that didn't exist before: real-time, unit-tagged, categorised passenger intelligence, captured at the point of experience.

The results speak to the breadth of that value: a graffiti case resolved within eight hours, an HVAC pattern that became a fleet business case, and over 1,800 data points that give SWR's operational teams a live view of the network their passengers actually experience.

Contact us

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