
Secretariat memorandum

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Casework report for quarter two June to September 2017

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To record the operator performance in handling appeals made by London TravelWatch on behalf of passengers, and identify key concerns.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The error on the Transport for London (TfL) website has been corrected which means that the volume of initials received by London TravelWatch has returned to more usual levels.

- 2.2 There are eight parts to this report:

- i. Contacts received – breakdown of contacts received during the previous five quarters
- ii. National Rail operators and TfL response times to London TravelWatch appeals
- iii. National Rail operators and TfL response times
- iv. Examples of appeals where the National Rail operator has taken longer than 20 days to respond or where TfL has taken longer than 10 days
- v. Pie graphs depicting appeals received by category
- vi. Issues received - information on issues received by the casework team
- vii. Appendix A shows the incoming casework over the previous years
- viii. Appendix B shows the outcomes to appeals closed in quarter four

3. Equalities and inclusion implications

- 3.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

4. Legal powers

- 4.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider – and, where it appears to it to be desirable, to make representations with respect to – any matter affecting the services and facilities provided by TfL which relate to transport (other than freight) and which have been the subject of representations made to it by or on behalf of users of those services and facilities. Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon it in respect of representations received from users or potential users of railway passenger services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications for London TravelWatch arising from this report.

1: Contacts received

This report covers incoming casework received from July to September 2017.

In quarter two a total of 1,684 new contacts were received by London TravelWatch via telephone, email and web form.

Case types	Jul to Sep 2017	Apr to Jun 2017	Jan to Mar 2017	Oct to Dec 2016	Jul to Sep 2016
Casework related telephone enquiries	253	440	401	617	738
Enquiries email	88	83	173	140	51
Initial cases	497	1155	631	791	1241
Initial plus cases	144	226	246	235	
Request for papers	188	156	212	194	137
Appeals made to operator	208	208	227	248	246
Appeals responded to directly	196	209	212	223	353
Appeals responded to directly plus	110	107	107	58	
Appeals sub total	514	524	592	529	599
Total contacts	1,684	2,584	2,209	2,506	2,766
Appeals carried over from previous quarter	41	57	46		
Total cases	1,725	2,641	2,255		

Enquiries telephone

This is a record of all telephone calls that has been received by London TravelWatch.

Enquiry

These are cases where the passenger has contacted London TravelWatch looking for information that is not a complaint.

Initials

An initial case is one where the complainant has written to London TravelWatch but has not yet approached the operator.

Initial plus

An initial plus case is where the passenger has not yet approached the operator but where the caseworker has felt the need to respond to the passenger and/or forward the complaint to the operator.

An example of this type of case is one where a passenger's initial contact clearly demonstrates that they are struggling with the English language. In these cases, we forward the complaint to the correct operator and ask that they respond directly to the passenger and we then close the case. In these circumstances, we would usually also advise the passenger of our actions.

Papers requested

A case classified as request for papers is one where we have asked the passenger to forward copies of all correspondence between themselves and the operator. We cannot consider taking forward a case without this information.

Appeals made to operator

Where the passenger has already complained to the operator and London TravelWatch has taken it forward as an appeal.

Appeals responded to directly

A 'direct' categorised case is one where London TravelWatch responds directly to the passenger without needing to contact the operator. This is because London TravelWatch already has the information needed to answer the passengers query.

Appeals responded to directly (plus)

These are cases where more correspondence is required but London TravelWatch is not appealing. Examples of this type of case would be one where we do not have to appeal to an operator but we do need some additional information, usually from the passenger, in order to respond fully.

Appeals carried over from previous quarter

Where the appeal was started at the end of one quarter and carried over to the next. It was previously very difficult to separate cases carried over from cases received. However, with some system changes, we can now see the both the newly received cases and those that are existing without duplication.

2: Operator response times – closed cases

National Rail operators

This target, agreed with the rail operators, requires them to respond to 75% of appeals referred to them within 10 working days, and 100% within 20 working days. It is accepted that in some complex cases it may not always be possible to meet these deadlines. We expect to receive a holding response from an operator followed by regular updates on progress. Performance to this target relates to the substantive response from the operator rather than the holding response.

Working days elapsed	July to September 2017		April to June 2017	
	No of cases closed	Percentage closed	No of cases closed	Percentage closed
Days 0-10	109	71%	90	70%
Days 11-20	18	11%	25	19%
Days 21-40	20	13%	14	11%
Day 41+	7	5%	0	
Total	154		129	

There was an expected increase in appeals from national rail passengers which is usual for this time of year. It is disappointing to note that the rail operators response times to our appeals are not as timely as in the previous quarter.

2. Transport for London

TfL has no franchise obligation to respond to London TravelWatch but has traditionally followed the same policy as the rail operators. TfL have set their response targets for complaints from passengers and appeals from London TravelWatch at 10 working days.

TRANSPORT for LONDON				
Working days elapsed	July to September 2017		April to June 2017	
	No of cases closed	Percentage closed	No of cases closed	Percentage closed
Days 0-10	29	59%	16	67%
Days 11-20	14	29%	8	33%
Days 21-40	5	10%	0	
Day 41+	1	2%	0	
Total	49		44	

It is disappointing that TfL's response times to London TravelWatch's appeals are not as timely as in the previous quarters. However, the responses to our appeals have been largely favourable so while the casework team are aware of the response delays and work to reduce them, they do balance this with the passengers satisfaction at with our getting the outcome they are looking for.

3. National Rail operators' response times – closed cases

Operator	July to Sept 2017		Apr to June 2017		Jan to Mar 2017		Oct to Dec 2016		July to Sept 2016	
	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days
ATOC	1	7							1	1
BTP										
c2c	1	31	1	2	4	2	5	18	3	13
Chiltern	2	5	1	13	6	30			5	5
CrossCountry										
DfT										
Deutsche Bahn										
V East Coast	9	22	1	0			1	5	1	0
East Midlands Trains	2	33	1	17						
Eurostar	16	4	6	3	4	1	6	1	19	3
GTR	23	10	21	9	22	9	32	5	20	5
GWR	27	7	18	15	35	15	7	14	6	3
Grand Central							1	33		
Greater Anglia	5	4	3	7	11	6	6	7		
Heathrow Express	2	8	4	9	6	1	7	9.5	2	11
Heathrow Connect	1	1			1	0				
First Hull Trains										
AS*			6	4	2	0	2	1	6	0
IPFAS/PFS*					0	0	1	1	2	0
London Midland	1	33	1	5	1	0			1	1
NR Enq	1	46	1	2						
Network Rail	1	2					1	11		
ORR										
RailEurope										
RPSS*										
Rail Easy										
ScotRail										
Southeastern	17	18	15	10	8	14	15	7	6	5
Southern	24	7	20	6	30	12	38	10	55	6
SWT/SWR	11	16	22	6	15	8	20	6	25	4
Trainline			1	1			2	4		
Virgin West Coast	10	3	7	1	16	4	10	5	8	4

Transport for London

Operator	Jul to Sept 2017		Apr to Jun 2017		Jan to Mar 2017		Oct to Dec 2016		Jul to Sept 2016	
	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days
Docklands Light Railway	1	17			1	18	2	5		
London Overground	5	9	1	7	2	31	4	40	3	9
TfL London Buses	11	15	3	5	9	13	10	9	15	5
TfL London Underground	8	9	2	11	4	11	2	10	5	5
TfL Roads & Streets	11	10	8	8	13	14	1	9	2	3
TfL Dial-a-Ride	1	17							1	0
Oyster	11	7	9	11	9	13	13	9	10	7
TfL Other	1	8	4	5			1	1	7	3
Tramlink									1	7
TfL Rail					4	20	4	1		
TfL cycles										
Victoria Coach Station									1	10

**Penalty Fare Services, IPFAS, AS and RPSS are all appeal or revenue collection bodies. AS also manages the first stage penalty fare appeal for Transport for London.*

AS was formerly known as IAS and IPFAS is closing and being replaced by Penalty Fare Services.

The table above and on the preceding page shows the average time taken by each operator or TfL mode, to respond to appeal cases. The average response times should be treated with caution, as a delay in responding to a single case may significantly affect the average.

4. Response delays

Not all cases that are open longer than usual are because the operator has not responded to the caseworker. Some cases take longer to deal with as they require further investigation and other cases can be kept open to allow ongoing negotiation between London TravelWatch and the operator. This is acceptable as long as the caseworker keeps the appellant updated on a regular basis.

Some cases where the transport operator has taken what could be considered too long to respond to London TravelWatch, have nevertheless been resolved to the passenger's satisfaction. The caseworkers are aware that response delays from operators do not necessarily mean negative outcomes for passengers and keep this in mind when chasing the transport operator for a response.

The transport operator sometimes asks for further information that can delay the case being closed while the caseworker requests this from the passenger. Such cases can become lengthy; particularly if the passenger is away at the time the request is made.

Rail cases with longer than 20 days response times

During quarter two there were 27 cases where the rail operator took over 20 days to send a response to London TravelWatch. Below are some representative examples of these cases.

C2C

Mr P complained to C2C about overcrowding during peak times on the London to Upminster service. He said that large numbers of passengers boarding at Barking and West Ham stations were making the problem worse. C2C assured Mr P that since the timetable change more carriages had been added to trains running during the peak period. Mr P came to London TravelWatch as, in his opinion, there were still not enough carriages added. C2C apologised for an administration error which caused them to take almost seven weeks to respond to us. They advised that in order to ease congestion, a reduced number of trains were now stopping at Barking and West Ham during peak periods.

Greater Anglia

Mr K had discovered that the ticket vending machines at Liverpool Street station were selling the same tickets for different prices. The information button on the screen gave also held no information regarding the different ticket costs. Greater Anglia failed to resolve the issue so London TravelWatch was contacted. Greater Anglia was able to confirm that they had run a software update, but that the issue remained. The delay in receiving a full response to our appeal was because the case was kept open until Greater Anglia's engineers resolved the issue.

Southern

Ms O's journey to Gatwick was cut short due to a fire so she applied to Southern for a ticket refund, plus a refund of her taxi fare to Gatwick airport. Southern would not refund taxi fare as it is classed as consequential loss. Ms O challenged this with Southern but received no response. Ms O then contacted London Travel Watch. Her case was appealed as she had allowed sufficient time for her journey. The caseworker also noted that a rail replacement service did not appear to have been provided. Southern responded that tickets were being accepted on alternate services and that a rail replacement service had been provided but not from all affected stations. In view of lack of available information during disruption, Southern was asked to consider a goodwill gesture to which they agreed. Ms O was happy with this outcome and the case was closed.

GWR

Mr L contacted GWR to complain of his general dissatisfaction with the service due to constant delays, cancellations and overcrowding. GWR's response assured Mr L that services would improve. Mr L remained unsatisfied so wrote to the Managing Director but no response was received. Mr L appealed to London Travel Watch who chased GWR. They responded with an explanation that disruption was unfortunately inevitable due to works on infrastructure. Mr L was advised that the email address he used to write to the managing director was incorrect and therefore not received. He was also assured that services would improve when the works were completed. Mr L was also invited to send in a copy of his ticket with a view to payment of compensation. Mr L continued directly with GWR and London Travel Watch closed the case.

Southeastern

Mr O was initially unable to purchase an Annual Season ticket due to a failure in the registration process. For several weeks he had to purchase daily tickets at a greater cost. When he complained to Southeastern they accidentally sent him another customer's response and closed the case. Mr O contacted London Travel Watch chasing for a response. Southeastern admitted human error on two counts blaming a backlog of work. They offered a goodwill payment for the difference between the annual ticket daily fare price and the daily price he paid. Mr O was satisfied with this outcome and the case was closed.

Virgin East Coast

London Travel Watch had four VTEC cases that took over 20 days to get a response. All cases were settled to the passenger's satisfaction but London Travel Watch still reminded VTEC of their service level agreement response times.

Transport for London cases with longer response times than 10 days

There are 20 cases that took longer than TfL's 10 day response target and a representative example of these are detailed below.

Streets

Mr P was unable to pay his penalty charge notice on-line due to a repeated system failure. Four and a half months later and through no fault of his own, TfL increased the penalty. When he complained to TfL they acknowledged that there had been a problem and offered him a £65 goodwill gesture. Mr P was unhappy with this as he wanted reassurance that the central issue had been addressed. London TravelWatch appealed this but apart from a holding response did not hear back from TfL for several weeks. It was then agreed that TfL would respond directly to Mr P and the case was closed.

Buses

- i. Mr S complained to TfL regarding buses on route R1 no longer stopping in Tower Road, Orpington. TfL explained this was because they had been unable to install fixed bus stops due to complaints from local residents and MPs. Unhappy with this, Mr S came to London TravelWatch and the case was appealed. TfL responded a month later to say that a consultation was currently underway and that the bus stops should be installed within three months.
- ii. Mr S complained to TfL regarding poor ventilation on a route 259 bus TfL promised to look into it. After eleven weeks the problem had not been fixed so Mr S came to London TravelWatch. The case was appealed, and kept open until confirmation was received (four weeks later) that the ventilation system had been repaired.
- iii. Ms C had been complaining about poor service on the W12 bus route for a year before involving London TravelWatch. The main problems were early curtailment of service and general delays. TfL had told us that the traffic delays were due to ongoing roadworks and failure by Redbridge Council to introduce parking restrictions which would have effectively widened the road. TfL were still liaising with the council which was causing delays so it was agreed that TfL would include Ms C directly rather than via London TravelWatch in effort to speed up communications.

Underground

Mr D complained to TfL regarding there being an insufficient number of Oyster readers at Woodside Park station which he believed contributed to overcrowding and bottle neck in the station. After no substantive responses or action from TfL he came to London TravelWatch. The case was appealed following which TfL undertook to install an additional Oyster reader machine. The case was kept open until the work had been completed.

Dial a Ride

Mr S complained to Dial-a-Ride over their failure to process a regular booking application for his mother. After two weeks without response he came to London TravelWatch. Dial-a-Ride admitted that Mr S's emails had not been processed properly and therefore not passed to the right department. London TravelWatch closed the case after Mr S had resumed direct contact with Dial-a-Ride.

Oyster

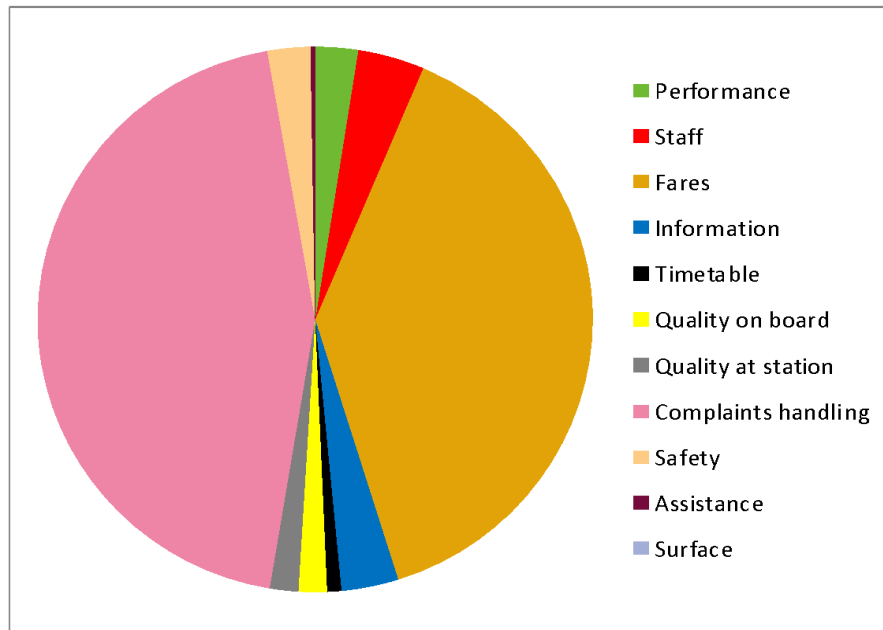
Mr M purchased a zone 1-4 travelcard whilst cancelling a zone 1-3 travelcard. The old travelcard was cancelled before the new one was activated forcing Mr M to purchase new tickets in the interim. TfL were not addressing the issue so Mr M approached London TravelWatch. We appealed the case, and TfL agreed to refund him for all additional tickets Mr M had to purchase. They are also going to look into their processes to ensure the same problem does not happen to other passengers.

5: Appeals by category

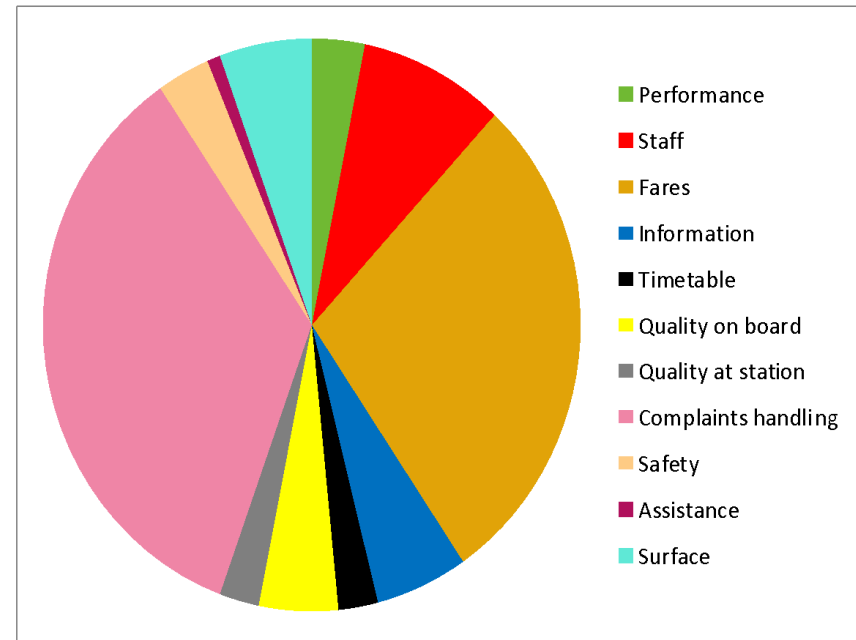
The charts below summarise the main types of appeals received by London TravelWatch regarding both National Rail operators and Transport for London.

There was an increase in appeals regarding TfL staff, service performance and surface issues such as PCNs.

Rail operators



Transport for London



6. Main issues received

This part of the report highlights some of the issues that were raised from passenger contact.

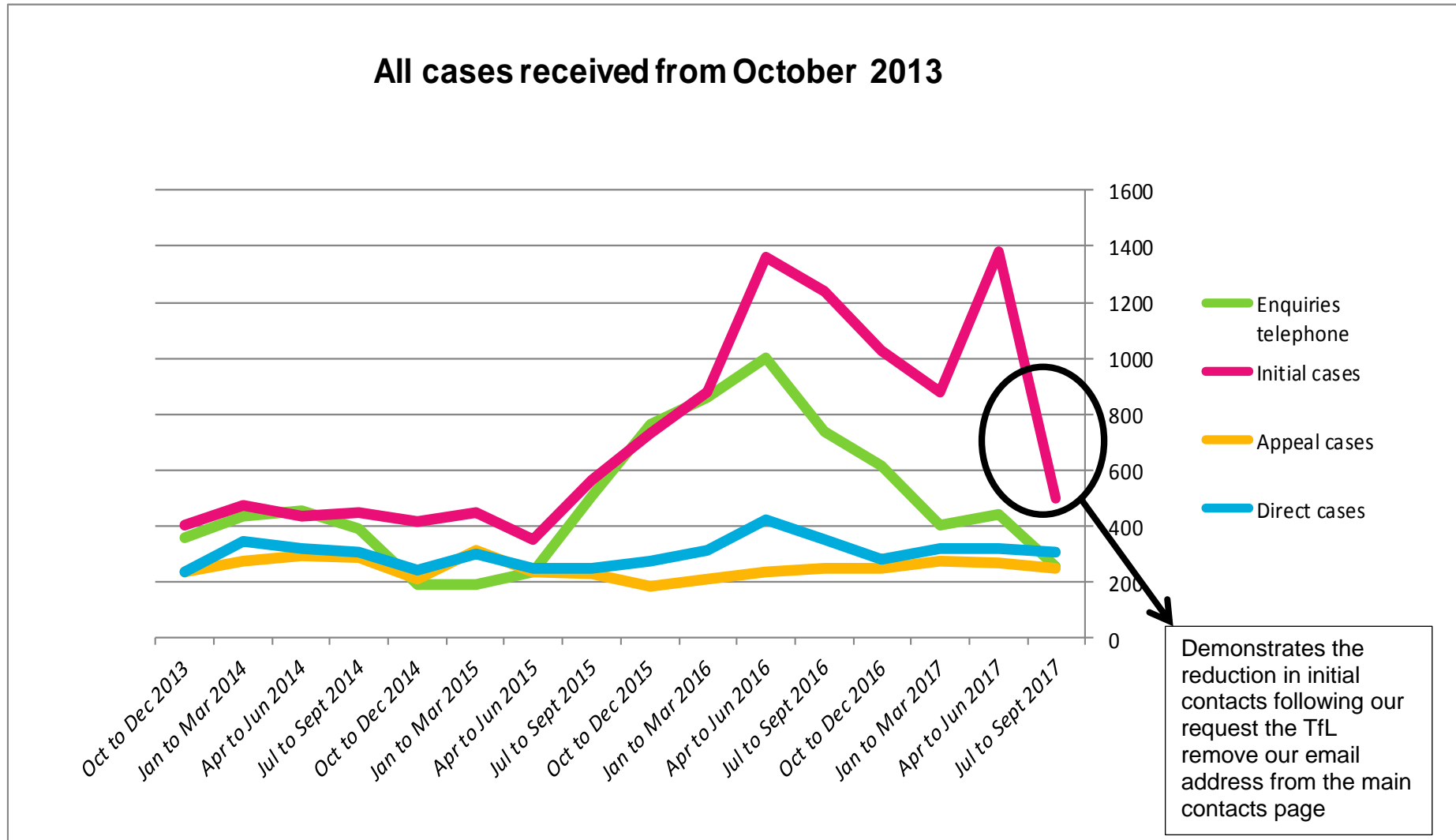
National Rail operators

An increasing number of cases are being received by passengers who have used Oyster/Contactless payment on the rail network, but are advised by staff to claim delay compensation from TfL. Passengers are also reporting problems at the lack of helpful advice at rail-staffed ticket gates, when their Oyster/Contactless payments don't work.

Transport for London

The executive team at TfL who manage the Transport for London appeals are being very thorough with their investigations. This has increased response times but has improved outcomes and passenger satisfaction.

Appendix A: Quantity of cases received



Appendix B: Outcomes to appeals – quarter two

The casework team continue to achieve positive outcomes for passengers, despite not have the powers to compel the industry to respond favourably to their appeals.

