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**Confidential Secretariat memorandum**

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Agenda item 15 (b)  
CA027  
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**How to complain leaflet**

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To apprise members of feedback on design of 'How to Complain' leaflet.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1. Members as asked to decide how to proceed with the leaflet.

**3 Information**

- 3.1. The last draft of the leaflet is attached for reference.
- 3.2. After it was explained that there was no budget this year for a wide distribution and design/print for a 'How to Complain' leaflet, it was decided that we would do a DIY leaflet, which was circulated to committee members for comment. These have been very useful, and are summarised below.

**4 General comments on 'style'**

- 4.1. It was felt that the leaflet had too much in it, and was, consequently, slightly muddled. It was commented that the 'who London TravelWatch is' page was unnecessary, and could be significantly truncated.
- 4.2. If the leaflet is just to be photocopied, then photographs should be taken off completely. There was a worry that the clip art looked casual and a question whether the photocopied leaflet should be two-colour and image-free. We could re-visit this if we upgraded this to a fully distributed printed leaflet in 2010/11.
- 4.3. The Communications Officer is concerned that the design as it is would not easily be translated to on-line, which is where it would get, potentially, its biggest audience.

**5 General comments on text**

- 5.1. The length was mentioned, and it was felt that the leaflet needed to be shorter (see previous paragraph). It was also felt that it should be written with less transport jargon and in plainer English. It was suggested that we added a sentence about how to approach London TravelWatch if the complainant was still not satisfied.

**6 Cover/Title**

- 6.1. The problem London TravelWatch encountered with the last 'how to complain' leaflet was that some train companies were loath to put a leaflet in its rack that felt negative. We were told that the industry kicked itself enough, without a 'Bad Journey?' (the last how to complain leaflet) leaflet in the rack.
- 6.2. We need to ensure that the leaflet title is explanatory without being unduly negative, if it is going to be placed (when it goes to proper print/design) in train stations. If we decide that that is not the audience, then perceived negativity would be less of a problem.
- 6.3. It was felt that this title could be confused for a leaflet about congestion. A new title needs to be decided. This needs to be punchy and self-explanatory.

## **7 Page 2**

- 7.1. It needs to be decided whether we are talking about a process, or processes, as both tenses are used in the leaflet. It is also suggested we drop the word process altogether, as it can be off-putting and bureaucratic.
- 7.2. It was suggested that the leaflet should be re-ordered thus:

Record the data  
Who do I complain to?  
When should I complain?  
How should I complain?  
How long does it take?  
What can I do if I'm still not happy? (contacting London TravelWatch)

### 7.2.1. Record the data

It was suggested that record the data should be a conflation of the present 'Record' paragraph and the What should I say? section to avoid repetition.

It was suggested that the record bit should suggest that people take down registration number, service number and also physical details of the driver to help identification. However, it was also suggested that the leaflet explains what the service number is: for trains, is it a number or just a scheduled time. For a bus, is it the registration numbers, etc? It was thought this needed simplifying.

### 7.2.2. Write

It was suggested that this bit could be put with the 'How Should I Say It' paragraph under a 'How to Complain' section.

### 7.2.3. When should I complain?

Re: CCTV. We should change the word 're-cycled' to 'recorded over' or 'used again'. It was proposed that we should start that paragraph by saying that complaints should be made ASAP, and then make the point about ticket refunds afterwards.

### 7.2.4. Who do I complain to? (suggested that this goes before when to complain)

If it is the operator in most cases, we should list those exceptions. It was also said that operator is 'jargon' and we should use another word: Suggestion: Service provider?

#### 7.2.5. How should I complain? (taking in the 'write' section?)

It was also suggested that we covered e-mail and website complaints here: including (for website complaints) telling people to keep all details and print out pages as they go along. It was also suggested that we should make clear that a written complaint is not necessary: e-mail and website forms are just as good. It was suggested that we should not use italics as the font.

Re: 'avoid being angry'. It was suggested that this should only be mentioned once, and also that it was, perhaps, patronising. A sentence along the lines of "Do not shout to staff, it may not be their fault, and they are not the right people to whom you should complain" etc

It was also suggested that the advice not to send original documents may well conflict with procedures (e.g. tickets need to be sent in the original)

#### 7.2.6. How long should it take?

It was asked whether it would be possible to give an average of median time for dealing with complaints. Would this be even more confusing?

## 8 **Contacts**

- 8.1. It was suggested that we should list all the TOC addresses. (NB: This would probably run to two extra pages). It was asked whether we should include phone numbers, as we have not advised people to phone. It was suggested that rather than put a CAB address in, it would be better to advice people to find about their local CAB in their local library or the CAB website. It was suggested we should delete 'river', as well as adding 'taxis'.

## 9 **Back page**

- 9.1. There was general consensus that the bit explaining what London TravelWatch is and does was unnecessary and also used too high a level of English. One or two sentences would suffice. This should include the advice to come to London TravelWatch if one is still unhappy with the response.

## 10 **Placement**

- 10.1. It needs to be decided where we are aiming this leaflet when it is distributed more widely. Previously, the complaints leaflet has been placed in train, tube and bus stations, as well as libraries and CAB offices, but we may feel that this is a consumer guide that should be aimed at libraries, council offices, CAB offices etc, and people who would not know how to complain rather than passengers already at station racks.

## Contacts

### Buses

Address one  
Address two  
Address three  
POSTCODE  
Telephone 0845 300 7000  
website

### Cycling

Address one  
Address two  
Address three  
POSTCODE  
Telephone ...  
website

### Trams, London Over-ground

Address one  
Address two  
Address three  
POSTCODE  
Telephone ...  
website

### Rail services terminating in London

If you know the name of the train operator we can help with contact details.

Address one  
Address two  
Address three  
POSTCODE  
Telephone ...  
website

### River

Address one  
Address two  
Address three  
POSTCODE  
Telephone ...  
website

### Docklands Light Railway

Address one  
Address two  
Address three  
POSTCODE  
Telephone ...  
website

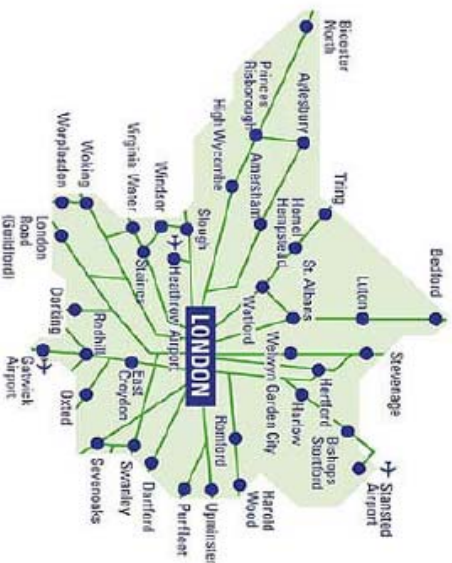
### Citizens' Advice Bureau

Address one  
Address two  
Address three  
POSTCODE  
Telephone ...  
website

## London TravelWatch

... is the official voice of travellers in London.

Our remit is to act as the official independent watchdog of the transport industry in London on behalf of the travelling public in the following region :



We undertake research and are consulted by all operators, Network Rail and the Department for Transport on any issue regarding transport in London.

We also escalate complaints which have not been satisfactorily resolved through the process described in this leaflet, working on behalf of passengers to ensure that each case is dealt with promptly, fairly and in accordance with agreed policies.

We are part of the Greater London Authority 'family' of organisations and are accountable to London Assembly.

Contact us : 6 Middle Street, London EC1A 7JA  
Phone: 020 7505 9000 Fax: 020 7505 9003

Email : [enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk)  
Web : [www.londontravelwatch.org.uk](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk)

A VOICE ABOVE  
THE TRAFFIC



A London TravelWatch guide :

how to complain effectively about transport



## Be heard above the traffic!

This guide lays out the **processes** for complaining about transport in London, gives **tips** on the best way to complain, and **contact** details to get you started.

### What is the **process**?

The process has three stages : record – write – resolution

#### **Record**

Before you contact anyone, make a note of everything about your complaint, or video incidents on your phone if appropriate. Record the time, date, location, what the service number was, and any other relevant details. If you need to send documents to support your case, find these too, and make copies of them.

#### **Write**

Next, write to the operator concerned (details at back of this leaflet). Even if you phone first, the operator will usually ask you to make your complaint in writing. Your complaint will also be easier to keep track of if it is in writing. If the company has a complaints procedure, make sure to follow it to ensure the fastest response.

If you need help with writing or English is not your first language, the Citizens' Advice Bureau may be able to assist you.



*Time is crucial : If your complaint is about ticketing, you have 28 days in which to submit all the information to the operator*

#### **Resolution**

This is when the complaint has been satisfactorily dealt with.

## When should I complain?

If your complaint is about tickets, most operators will only accept requests for refunds within 28 days of purchase.

If your complaint is about anything else, you need to complain as soon after the incident as possible. Delaying may affect how your complaint is dealt with - for example, CCTV footage from buses is often only kept for a week or so before being recycled.

## Who do I complain to?

In most cases you should complain to the company that runs the service, known as the operator. Details of who runs which service is given at the end of this leaflet, and they each have dedicated complaints teams.



## What should I say?

Record everything you need to make your complaint clear :

- Date
- Details of complaint
- Any names of people involved
- Bus or train number or time, and destination
- Details of your tickets etc if appropriate
- Receipts and any other documentation of the incident
- Location of the incident (on a platform / where on a bus / where exactly in the street)

## How should I say it?

**Do :**

- say it simply, without anger.
- include all the details
- keep your letter short and to the point



- be clear about what your complaint is.

say what you expect the operator to do about your complaint.

- make sure that your letter is legible – typed if possible, or written clearly in black ink.
- Send copies of supporting documents
- Keep copies of your letter and a record of when you sent it
- Keep a note of your complaint reference number

**Don't :**

- Send original documents
- Be angry. It is best to stay calm in person and in writing throughout the complaints process.

## How long does it take?

This can vary depending on the operator and the nature of the complaint. Operators usually have a code of practice which agrees a time by which they will respond to written complaints.

In our experience, complaints take **between two weeks and six months** to be resolved (Casework to confirm these figs), but very complex cases may require longer.