
Secretariat memorandum

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PC010

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Casework report for the period January – March 2013

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To record the performance of London TravelWatch's Casework Team in the period January to March 2013 and identify any issues of concern regarding operator report performance in handling appeals.

2. Performance report

- 2.1 The report is divided into two parts.
- 2.2 The first part records the volume and the type of incoming work and shows internal performance against the time targets set for dealing with this.
- 2.3 The second part monitors the time taken by transport operators to deal with appeals and gives more information about the issues passengers are bringing to us.
- 2.4 There are two appendices. The first is a graph summarising the volume and case type received over the past three years. The second explains the different case types.

3. Future casework reporting

- 3.1 This method of reporting of the quantitative data was created some years ago by the Transport Committee of the London Assembly to monitor performance in areas where we were failing to meet target. Over the last three years all targets have been consistently met and often exceeded.
- 3.2 It is unlikely that the Transport Committee will require this level of reporting in future. Whilst we will continue to use this level of detail for internal management purposes, members may wish to consider what level of internal performance information they want in future.
- 3.3 We suggest that we should report only on volumes and types of incoming case work, with explanations of any exceptions to us meeting the targets. Members can then concentrate almost entirely on looking at performance of transport operators and the general issues arising from casework.

4. Equalities and inclusion implications

- 4.1 Due account will be taken whenever any such implications arise from cases brought to the attention of London TravelWatch.

5. Legal powers

- 5.1 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 Transport for London 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.

6. Financial implications

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

Part one: Internal case handling

This report covers cases received up to and including 31 March 2013. These targets have been consistently achieved for over two years. Previously the performance was frequently below target so this report was scrutinised each quarter. This data is analysed intermittently to ensure performance levels remain high.

Cases by type summary

This part of the report records the volume of casework received during January to March 2013.

A total of 1,386 contacts were received by London TravelWatch via telephone, email and web form.

Case Types	January to March 2013	October to December 2012
Enquiries telephone	286	460
Enquiries email/webform	40	28
Initial cases	327	342
Appeal cases	386	323
Consultation cases	0	0
Direct cases	347	271
Total	1,386	1,424

Appeals and directs – quarter four covers the beginning of the new calendar year, which is also the time for fare increases. London TravelWatch normally receives more cases during this time even if the appeal or question does not directly relate to a fare increase itself.

Enquiries telephone – There is more than one reason for the decrease in the telephone calls received by London TravelWatch.

- Our telephone number being removed from the buses continue to decrease in the number of calls we receive.
- The London TravelWatch contact details have not been updated on some modes. Many notices still give our old contact details. Passengers may not bother to try to find the current contact details. As the notices are updated, the quantity of telephone contacts may increase.
- Twitter is being used by many passengers to get instant answers directly from the operator. Those who don't tweet themselves could still find that their particular issue is addressed by following a feed. Using Twitter involves minimum engagement from the complainant but the information required can still be sourced.
- Fix my transport is also a popular method of looking at issues. The website can be accessed from any smart phone or tablet, so passengers can look at complaints in their geographical area or make complaints on line or via social network sites. Again this method of complaining and/or sourcing information requires minimum engagement from the user.

Targets

Acknowledgement

100% of appeals acknowledged (to passenger) within 5 working days

Working days Elapsed	January to March 2013		October to December 2012	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-5	1100	100%	811	100%
Days 6-10	0	0	0	0%
Total	1100	100%	811	100%

Referral to operator

75% of all newly received appeal cases referred to the relevant operator within five working days, and 100% within 10 working days.

Working days Elapsed	January to March 2013		October to December 2012	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-5	385	99.75%	329	98.75%
Days 6-10	1	0.25%	0	1.25%
Total	386	100%	329	100%

Final replies to appellant

90% of final replies to be written to the passenger within ten days and 100% within 20 days of receipt of the operators' response. Where there has been more than one response from an operator, the target is based on when the caseworker considers that an acceptable response has been provided.

Working days elapsed	January to March 2013		October to December 2012	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-10	337	99.4%	272	100%
Days 11-20	2	0.6%	0	0
Total	339	100%	272	100%

Direct responses

90% of responses to be written to the passenger within ten days and 100% within 20 days.

Working days elapsed	January to March 2013		October to December 2012	
	No of cases	% of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-10	347	100%	271	100%
Days 11-20	0	0%	0	0%
Total	347	100%	271	100%

Part two: Operator response times

This target, agreed with the Rail operators, requires them to respond to 66% of referrals from London TravelWatch within 10 working days, and to 100% within 20 working days. It is accepted that in some complex cases it may not always be possible to meet these deadlines, and in these cases 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.

The tables show the performance achieved during the period under review.

The national rail operators have steady performance with the majority of cases responded to within 20 days. The longer cases are normally those where London TravelWatch are unsatisfied with the response and continue to negotiate with the operator or where more extensive investigation is required to be undertaken by the operator.

NATIONAL RAIL				
Working days elapsed	January to March 2013		October to December 2012	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-10	174	82%	113	79%
Days 11-20	12	6%	13	9%
Days 21-40	16	8%	8	7%
Day 41+	10	4%	9	5%
Total	212	100%	143	100%

TRANSPORT <i>for</i> LONDON				
Working days elapsed	January to March 2013		October to December 2012	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-10	74	58%	55	43%
Days 11-20	38	30%	48	37%
Days 21-40	10	8%	13	10%
Day 41+	5	4%	13	10%
Total	127	100%	129	100%

Transport for London has taken effective steps to reduce the time taken to respond with only 12% of cases outside of the 20 days response target.

However from April 2013, Transport for London has implemented a 10 day target for all their responses which is being closely monitored and will be reported on in the next quarter.

Response times – all operators			
Operator	January to March 2013		October to December 2012
	Number of appeal cases	Average number of working days	Average number of working days
ATOC	1	1	-
BTP	-	-	-
c2c	4	1	5
Chiltern	2	1	12
CrossCountry	-	-	-
Department for Transport	-	-	-
Deutsche Bahn	-	-	-
Docklands Light Railway	8	1	37
East Coast	8	6	2
East Midlands Trains	1	23	16
Eurostar	14	2	2
First Capital Connect	18	8	14
First Great Western	11	30	14
Grand Central	-	-	1
Gatwick Express	-	-	-
Greater Anglia	18	16	3
Heathrow Express	5	32	-
Hull Trains	-	-	-
IAS*	14	9	-
IPFAS*	10	9	2
London Midland	5	34	1
London Overground	4	6	15
National Rail Enquiries	-	-	-
Network Rail	2	40	51
ORR	-	-	-
RailEurope	-	-	-
RPSS*	1	1	-
ScotRail	-	-	-
Southeastern	12	16	8
Southern	40	8	5
South West Trains	39	15	17
Trainline	1	1	-
Virgin West Coast	6	1	7
TfL London Buses	29	16	14
TfL London Underground	32	15	30
TfL Roads & Streets	2	1	5
TfL Dial-a-Ride	-	-	-
Oyster	49	14	11
TfL Other, Taxicard)	7	9	5

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

The table on the preceding page shows the average time taken by each operator to respond to appeal cases. Most operators are responding to cases within 20 working days. For those operators giving rise to relatively few cases, the average response time should be treated with caution, as a delay in responding to a single case may significantly affect the average.

Reasons for significant delays in response times

East Midland – Passenger had problems getting his prepaid ticket from the ticket machine and afterwards getting a refund. London TravelWatch helped secure the refund.

Greater Anglia – had three cases which took longer to resolve than usual. These cases increased the overall average response times.

1. Passenger complained that lack of signage and maps at Stratford caused in unnecessary inconvenience and expense and was unhappy with the assurances that these items were in place. Caseworker visited station and confirmed that maps and signage were much in evidence.
2. Information on board train incorrect and passenger suffered additional journey inconvenience and expense. Greater Anglia did not receive the first appeal from London TravelWatch, hence the delay, but offered goodwill gesture to passenger.
3. During emergency engineering works, passenger could not use her ticket. Delay in response but an offer of a goodwill gesture was made before the 20 day target.

Heathrow Express – this is run by BAA on open access rather than as a franchise and we rarely receive appeals relating to their services. On this occasion, the passenger was delayed by a previous journey so could not travel. London TravelWatch had difficulty making contact with Heathrow Express initially, but a refund was offered as soon as contact was made.

First Great Western – due to the poor weather damaging the infrastructure, this TOC had a large backlog of cases which impacted on their response times. There were also some cases where the caseworker believed the outcome could be improved and spent time negotiating with the TOC.

1. Passenger unhappy about the quality of responses regarding her delay complaints. London TravelWatch worked with the TOC to obtain the information and details necessary to provide a more meaningful response.
2. Passenger was pressured to pay a penalty fare on the spot which made her overdrawn in her bank account. After discussions with London TravelWatch, the operator offered a good will gesture and also offered to pay any bank charges incurred.
3. Complaint was about lack of trains during the Jubilee. Passenger had only been given a standard response. There was a delay in getting a full response from the TOC but a detailed response was eventually given.

Main issues received

This part of the report highlights some of the issues that were most complained about during Quarter Four

Service Performance

Greater Anglia had a large proportion of complaints. This was mainly due to the replacement bus service during engineering works.

Eurostar had larger than usual quantity of service performance complaints due to bad weather.

Penalty fares

A large proportion of our cases are related to penalty fares and prosecutions. IPFAS have changed some of their procedures to come in line with the other appeals body IAS. These changes only reduce the amount of contact the appeals body makes before administration charges are added. IPFAS have not embraced some of IAS more passenger friendly processes.

Announcements on the tube

Complaints about the lack of announcements on the underground have been received, paradoxically these are received alongside complaints of announcements on the underground being too frequent and too loud.

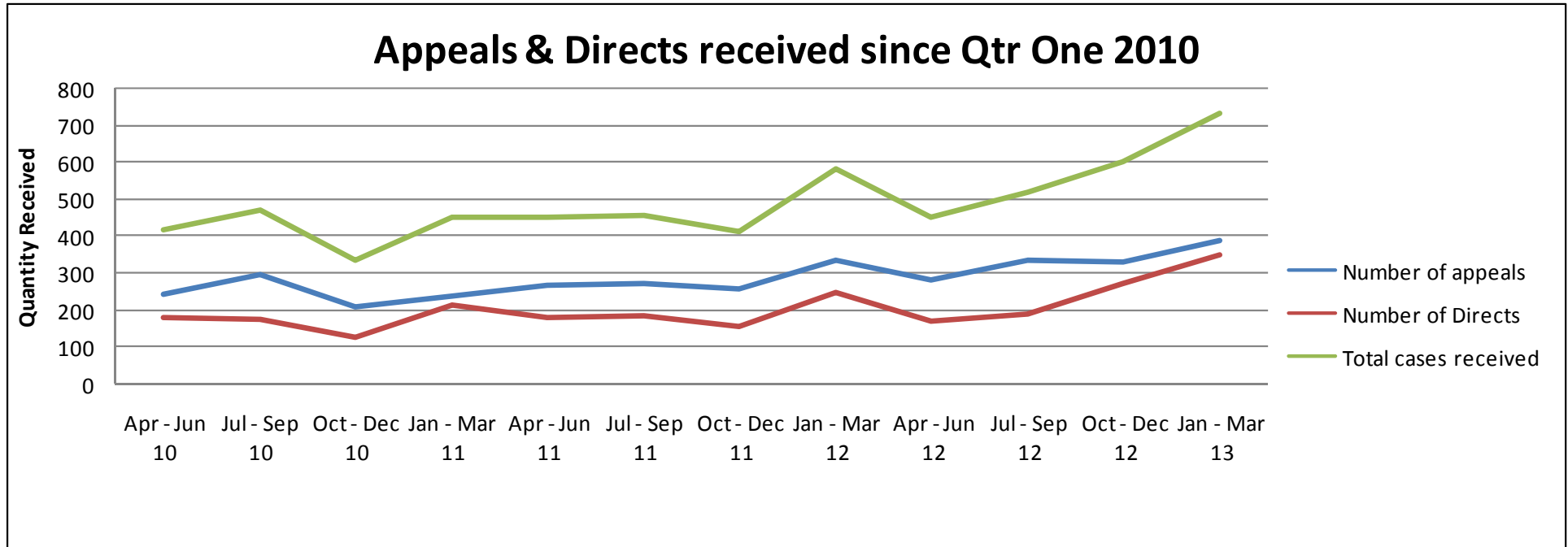
Lack of response

First Capital Connect, Greater Anglia and London Underground have generated appeals from passengers who have not received any communication from the TOC. Lack of response beyond the TOCS charter normally means a backlog of complaints. Some more proactive operators such as Virgin, advise London TravelWatch of potential delays, allowing casework staff to pass on this information to complainants without having to contact the TOC first and the contact from the passenger is logged as a direct rather than an appeal.

Consequential Loss

Most consequential loss cases are regarding operators which serve most of the main London airports – Gatwick, Luton and Stansted. Although it is surprising that very few consequential loss complaints are made regarding the London Underground and the Heathrow Express.

Appendix one: Quantity of cases received



Appendix two: Definitions of Case Types

Case Type	Explanation
Acknowledgements	All correspondence sent to 'enquires' or via the web form receives an auto acknowledgement which details the various methods of progressing an individual complaint.
Appeals	Cases we take up on behalf of the appellant who has already made a complaint to the operator.
Direct cases	Cases where we respond directly to a complaint, without going to the operator, either because we know the answer, or we have already got an agreed policy on the issue.
Initials	Cases which have not yet been dealt with by the appropriate transport company. We pass to the appropriate operator.
Consultation	Cases that are subject to consultation. For example, cases received as part of the proposed changes to booking office hours by an operator where we would respond once a Board decision has been made.
Enquiries	These are requests for information, and are dealt with primarily by telephone. For many enquiries, we act as a signpost informing complainants who the most appropriate operator is to deal with their enquiry. These often take the form of a request for information or a lost property request.