
Secretariat memorandum

Author: Susan James

Agenda item: 9

PC016

Drafted: 22.07.13

Casework report for the period April to June 2013

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To record the performance of London TravelWatch's Casework Team in the period April to June 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.
- 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 internal performance against the time targets set for dealing with these.

3 Equalities and inclusion implications

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

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 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.
- 4.2 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.

Part one: Case report – quantitative

This report covers incoming casework received from 1 April to 30 June 2013.

Cases by type summary

This part of the report records the volume of casework received during April to June 2013.

A total of 1,530 contacts were received by London TravelWatch via telephone, email and web form.

Case Types	April to June 2013	January to March 2013	October to December 2012
Enquiries telephone	436	286	460
Enquiries email/webform	43	40	28
Initial cases	326	327	342
Appeal cases	341	386	323
Direct cases	331	347	271
Request for papers	53	0	0
Total	1530	1386	1424

Appeals

The number of appeals is about average for this time of year.

Directs

A 'direct' categorised case is one where London TravelWatch respond directly to the passenger without needing to contact the operator.

To report more accurately on the incoming cases, the case management IT system is being altered. For example, sometimes an appeal is received but the correspondence between the operator and passenger has not been attached. The casework team would then write to the passenger to request missing correspondence and close the case under the category 'direct'.

A new category 'request for papers' has been added to the system. When analysing the data there will now be a clear distinction between the types of 'direct' cases received.

Enquiries telephone

At the end of the last quarter we could not give details regarding the marked drop in telephone calls. However, this quarter the number of calls appears to be back to normal.

Part two: Operator response times

This target, agreed with the rail operators, requires them to respond to 75% 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.

National rail

The national rail operators have steady performance with the majority of cases responded to within 20 days. Further effort will be made with these operators to reduce the response times.

NATIONAL RAIL				
Working days elapsed	April to June 2013		January to March 2013	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-10	150	77%	174	79%
Days 11-20	15	8%	12	9%
Days 21-40	20	10%	16	7%
Day 41+	9	5%	10	5%
Total	194		212	100%

There are nine cases which took over 40 days to resolve in this period and these are as follows:

ATOC and Network Rail cases are by nature always more complex than the usual types of cases received by London TravelWatch. Frequently, cases to these TOCs require the involvement of various different departments. The caseworkers remain in contact with appellants during this time regardless of whether there is substantive information to give.

Southeastern and First Capital Connect both had very long-term cases due to the changes to the programming of the barriers at St Pancras. This affected passengers who had season tickets for the high speed rail link from Kent to London Terminals which historically allowed them to travel to City Thameslink. The changes to the barriers at St Pancras meant that passengers had to purchase additional onward tickets to continue their journey. London TravelWatch found that tickets were still being sold by operators to City Thameslink but which would not work the barriers at St Pancras. London TravelWatch took the matter up as a policy issue and were successful in having the system reprogrammed. During this time the cases for individuals remained open. The caseworker who had all of these cases remained unsatisfied on behalf of her appellants. After further investigations the caseworker found a process by which the appellants could have any additional purchased season tickets converted into a changeover ticket.

East Coast have one long term outstanding case which, despite efforts from the caseworker and casework manager, have had difficulty getting any kind of written response from the operator. This has now been brought to the attention of London TravelWatch CEO.

South West Trains had a passenger who believed that a London zonal map should be displayed in Barnes station. London TravelWatch agreed as Barnes is in zone 3 and zonal maps are used by all TOCS as reasons passengers should be aware of the validity of Oyster during penalty fare disputes. This case took some considerable time to settle but a map on each platform is now in place.

It is worth mentioning that appeals from London TravelWatch are rarely resolved in a single TOC (including Transport for London) response. The casework team work are experienced and knowledgeable and are keen to continue dialogue if they believe that an issue could be better addressed or if the TOCs response raises further questions. This practice does prolong cases and as, for reporting purposes, London TravelWatch can only use the final response, it can seem that the TOC has taken extensive time to deal with the appeal. When in fact, the operator has responded within their target time but the ongoing dialogue has distorted the statistics.

Transport for London

TRANSPORT for LONDON				
Working days elapsed	April to June 2013		January to March 2013	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	% of cases
Days 0-10	63	59%	74	58%
Days 11-20	24	22%	38	30%
Days 21-40	19	17%	10	8%
Day 41+	1	1%	5	4%
Total	107	100%	129	100%

Transport for London are not meeting their target response time of 10 days for individual cases. However, an evaluation of the average response times for all cases in quarter two shows that overall that Transport for London are meeting their 10 day target.

The single complaint which took over 41 days to resolve is due to an error with a refund and Transport for London's finance department. The passenger declared himself very satisfied, via one of our questionnaires, with the efforts of London TravelWatch.

Further initiatives by Transport for London include regular updates of appeals received with the casework manager at London TravelWatch. The system at Transport for London will reject all cases with bad language and other anomalies contained within correspondence. The updates identify appeals sent but not received by Transport for London. These appeals are quickly logged onto their systems and prevents any delay to the responses sent to London TravelWatch.

As Transport for London is such a large organisation, their staff are often redeployed into other roles. This means that the casework staff frequently have to reintroduce the team and

the appeals system to new people. London TravelWatch and Transport for London now have nominated staff to lead on relationship building and technical training. The result should be that regardless of the staff situation, continuity of service to appellants will be maintained.

The casework team have also expanded their contact liaison to include the Community Safety Enforcement and Policing team at Transport for London. This team deals with the second stage appeals for penalty fares. By building effective working relationships with this team, the caseworkers have frequently been successful in having appeals which were rejected for the appeals being made out of time, re-evaluated on the appeal merit and not because the timeframe had not be met.

Operators' response times

Operator	April to June 2013		Jan to March 2013		Oct to Dec2013		July to Sept 2012	
	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	55	1	1			-	-
BTP							-	-
c2c	3	1	4	1	2	5	6	8
Chiltern	5	9	2	1	2	12	5	8
CrossCountry								
Department for Transport	1	1						
Deutsche Bahn								
Docklands Light Railway	13	3	8	1	9	37		
East Coast	6	33	8	6	4	2	8	4
East Midlands Trains	1	3	1	23	1	16	1	1
Eurostar	6	1	14	2	13	2	6	5
First Capital Connect	20	33	18	8	25	14	36	4
First Great Western	5	13	11	30	7	14	2	3
Grand Central	2	15			1	1	1	11
Gatwick Express								
Greater Anglia	14	2	18	16	16	3	14	1
Heathrow Express			5	32			1	
Hull Trains								
IAS	20	3	14	9	10		13	1
IPFAS	13	2	10	9	9	2	17	3
London Midland	9	7	5	34	1	1	3	72
London Overground			4	6	1	15	5	5
National Rail Enquiries								
Network Rail	1	43	2	40	1	51	1	
ORR								
RailEurope								
RPSS	3	1	1	1			3	
ScotRail								
Southeastern	22	13	12	16	17	8	26	7
Southern	26	6	40	8	15	5	30	4
South West Trains	32	7	39	15	26	17	35	4
Trainline			1	1				
Virgin West Coast	3	8	6	1	6	7	4	7

Operator	April to June 2013		Jan to March 2013		Oct to Dec2013		July to Sept 2012	
	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days	No of cases	Average working days
Buses	20	8	29	16	33	14	46	19
Underground	16	10	32	15	18	30	21	10
Roads & Streets	2	3	2	1	11	5	9	5
Dial-a-Ride							4	1
Oyster	37	10	49	14	37	11	55	14
TfL Other	20	4	7	9	2	5	5	1

**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 above and 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.

Part Three: Main issues received

This part of the report highlights some of the issues that were most complained about during Quarter One 2013.

Penalty fares

There appears to be a large number of penalty fares issued at London Gatwick Airport for those mistakenly using an Oyster card to make the journey from London. Further investigation will be done on this.

Rail operators

Some of the rail operators have had internal changes within their own customer services department and those to whom they outsource this work. East Coast have recently changed again to a different outsourced company, Serco. South West Trains have a completely new internal customer relations team.

Ticket machines continue to cause a problem across the network. Ticket machines are giving readings that tickets have been dispensed but the passenger has not received all coupons. The passenger then faces a difficult decision as travelling without a valid ticket can mean a penalty fare or an unpaid fares notice. Queuing up to speak to staff can result in missing a pre-booked train and paying a much higher priced ticket to travel later. This is particularly prevalent in the larger stations at busy times, such as Saturday mornings. Staff such as floorwalkers are often unable to help or staff are not present.

Consequential loss causes the occasional problem. Passengers do not understand that a rail operator is not responsible for refunding for missed events or flights. TOCs serving the busy international airports could sometimes be clearer about what consequential loss is rather than the standard apology and refusal to refund.

Transport for London

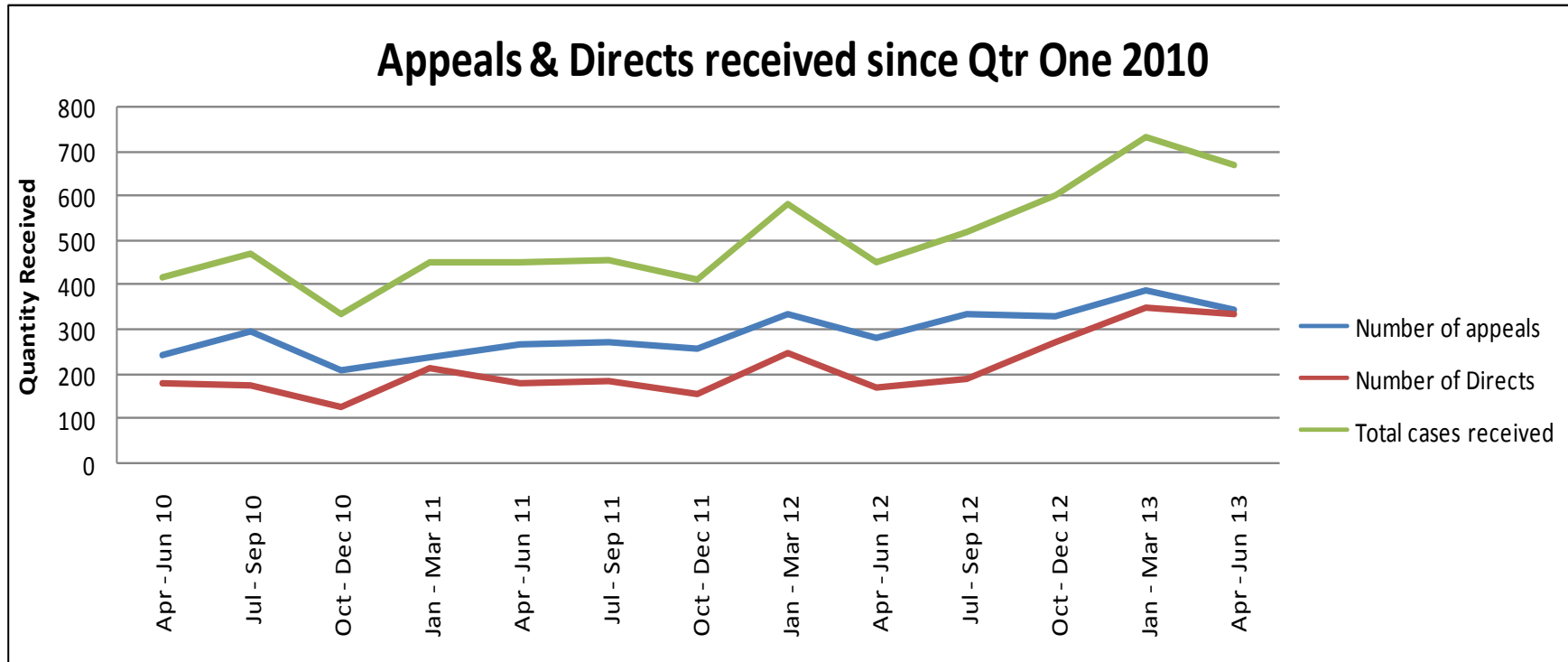
Overall, Transport for London have the highest number of penalty fare appeals but when broken down into individual groups have less than five appeals per mode.

A slightly higher level of appeals than normal have been received regarding DLR but closer analysis has not revealed any significant reason for this.

London TravelWatch still receives a large number of initial contacts regarding bus complaints. This could be because the Transport for London current on-line complaints system is not easy to navigate and does not allow a complainant to retain a copy of their complaint.

London TravelWatch has not received any appeals regarding London Overground this quarter.

Appendix one: Quantity of cases received



Appendix two: Targets

Type	Performance	Target
Acknowledgement	100% of 1,094 cases acknowledged (to passenger) within 5 working days	100% within 5 working days
Appeals Opened	100% of 341 appeals opened referred within 5 working days	75% within 5 working days
Appeals Closed	98.9% of 301 appeals final replies within 10 working days 100% within 20 working days	90% within 10 days 100% within 20 days
Directs	100% of 331 responses to appellant within 10 working days	Target 90% within 10 days 100% within 20 days