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## Secretariat memorandum

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### Casework report for the period April to June 2014

#### **1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To record the performance of operators in the period April to June 2014, identify any issues of concern regarding operator report performance in handling appeals and highlight key issues reported by the public.

#### **2 Performance report**

- 2.1 The report is divided into three parts. The first part records the volume and the type of incoming work. The second part monitors the time taken by transport operators to deal with appeals and the third part gives more information about the issues passengers are bringing to us.
- 2.2 There is one appendix which summarises the volume and case type received over the past three years.

#### **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. 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: Cases received

This report covers incoming casework received from April to June 2014.

A total of 1,635 contacts were received by London TravelWatch during this period via telephone, email and web form.

An investigation was made into why we had a sudden drop in telephone enquiries at the beginning of 2013. No pattern, trend or correlation was found, nor does the quantity of calls reflect the quantity of cases received.

Case types	Apr to Jun 2014	Jan to Mar 2014	Oct to Dec 2013	Jul to Sep 2013	Apr to Jun 2013	Jan to Mar 2013
Casework related telephone enquiries	451	436	355	398	436	286
Enquiries email	24	30	87	48	43	40
Initial cases	434	472	405	320	326	327
Appeal cases	296	274	237	291	341	386
Direct cases	320	347	235	250	331	347
Request for papers	110	93	74	88	53	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1635</b>	<b>1652</b>	<b>1393</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>1530</b>	<b>1386</b>

### Enquiries telephone

This is a record of all telephone calls that have some connection to casework. It is not a record of all incoming telephone calls received by London TravelWatch.

### Initials

An initial case is one where the complainant has not yet approached the operator.

### Appeals

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

Passenger appeals to London TravelWatch reduced through 2013 but the weather causing damage to the infrastructure particularly in the south west is reflected in the increase in appeals received.

### Directs

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

The quantity of direct cases initially fell as the new 'papers' category was introduced. However the last two quarters have shown an increase in cases where the caseworker has responded to the passenger directly as we can provide the correct information without the need for appeal.

### Papers

A case classified as request for papers is asking the passenger to forward full correspondence between themselves and the operator. Historically this request was classified as a direct case.

## 2: Operator response times

### National Rail operators

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				
Working days elapsed	April to June 2014		Jan to Mar 2014	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases
Days 0-10	123	74%	149	89%
Days 11-20	21	13%	10	6%
Days 21-40	16	10%	5	3%
Day 41+	6	3%	3	2%
Total	166		167	

The National Rail operator's responses have slipped to 87% within 20 days rather than the 95% within 20 days achieved in the previous quarter. This appears a small drop but represents a lot of appeal cases.

London TravelWatch is aware that some transport operating companies (TOCs) have been dealing with some residual cases from the bad weather with caused infrastructure problems at the beginning of the 2014. Only a few passengers have added response delays to their original complaint but the issues is being monitored closely to establish if the trend will remain through quarter two.

There were six cases within this period which took over 41 days to receive a satisfactory response. More information on these is given after the operator response times breakdown.

## Transport for London

Transport for London (TfL) have no official agreement to respond to London TravelWatch, however they have reduced their response targets for passengers and London TravelWatch from 20 to 10 days from the beginning of the year.

TRANSPORT <i>for</i> LONDON				
Working days elapsed	April to June 2014		Jan to Mar 2014	
	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases	No of cases
Days 0-10	65	75%	85	80%
Days 11-20	15	17%	17	16%
Days 21-40	6	7%	4	4%
Day 41+	1	1%	0	
Total	87		106	

TfL's response time has also slipped this quarter to 75% within their 10 day target response time. Internal administrative issues have been highlighted as the main cause as there is no evidence of particular category of complaint causing difficulties. This will be monitored and reported on next quarter. These too, are being monitored and the 41+ day case is given in the operator breakdown response times.

## National Rail operators' response times

Operator	Apr to June 2014		Jan to Mar 2014		Oct to Dec 2013		Jul to Sept 2013		Apr to Jun 2013	
	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			2	7	1	52	3	6	1	55
BTP										
c2c	2	8	2	5					3	1
Chiltern	6	3	1	1	3	18	1	7	5	9
CrossCountry										
Department for Transport							1	3	1	1
Deutsche Bahn										
East Coast	6	15	6	10	1	61	3	17	6	33
East Midlands Trains	1	1					1	0	1	3
Eurostar	1	1	4	3	3	3	8	4	6	1
First Capital Connect	16	13	15	13	16	5	25	10	20	33
First Great Western	8	22	2	1	3	6	2	5	5	13
Grand Central					5	3			2	15
Gatwick Express										
Greater Anglia	11	12	15	2			8	14	14	2
Heathrow Express	4	10	1	0	2	11				
Hull Trains	2	18	1	0						
IAS	21	2	20	3	13	3	13	2	20	3
IPFAS	6	2	11	1	8	1	10	0	13	2
London Midland	2	8	5	1	3	2	7	16	9	7
National Rail Enquiries	1	5				6	2	8		
Network Rail									1	43
ORR										
RailEurope							1	20		
RPSS			1	1			2	4	3	1
ScotRail					1	1				
Southeastern	12	8	13	1	13	9	12	5	22	13
Southern	40	10	41	5	39	6	32	5	26	6
South West Trains	27	6	23	4	12	5	19	6	32	7
Trainline					2	4				
Virgin West Coast			4	3	1	1	5	1	3	8

## Transport for London

Operator	Apr to Jun 2014		Jan to Mar 2014		Oct to Dec 2013		Jul to Sept 2013		Apr to Jun 2013	
	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	7	2	6	3			2	1	2	4
London Overground	5	2	4	1			5	2	3	9
TfL London Buses	24	9	40	9	20	5	26	3	20	8
TfL London Underground	16	8	14	4	14	6	10	14	16	10
TfL Roads & Streets	4	9	4	8	2	5	2	23	2	3
TfL Dial-a-Ride	1	2								
Oyster	25	9	25	4	16	8	31	4	37	10
TfL Other	5	1	13	5	17	2	17	4	20	4

*\*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.

## **Information regarding cases with longer response times**

### **National Rail Operators**

#### **First Capital Connect**

One case open longer than average was where the passenger had the incorrect ticket and was looking for a refund for this and the one subsequently purchased. Also the passenger had received poorer than usual customer service. Delays to this case were incurred as there were difficulties reaching the appellant and longer time negotiating with TOC.

A second complaint was received regarding a safety issue at Hatfield Station and short stopping (where a train stops part way along a platform potentially leaving carriages not aligned with the platform and therefore poses a safety risk for passengers). Considerable liaison between FCC and our safety officer drew out the length of time which the case was open although the caseworker kept the passenger updated of progress.

#### **First Great Western**

This case was open for longer than average as First Great Western was still in communication with the passenger but the passenger had not informed London TravelWatch.

#### **Greater Anglia**

This delayed response case was an escalated penalty fare case. The original case had been closed but the casework manager looked for further information from Greater Anglia on the request of the parent regarding the vulnerability of passenger.

#### **Southeastern**

This appeal was regarding the passenger wanting an explanation of delays from Petts Wood. The case was complicated and it was felt that caseworker, who was on leave, was the best person to respond to both the operator and to the passenger. Both were informed and both confirmed agreement that the best course of action would be to wait for the return of the caseworker who had been working on case from the start.

#### **Southern**

This case was escalated as Southern seemed to have no record of dealing with it as a complaint. Further investigation revealed that the Southern had correctly passed the case to South West Trains but had forgotten to advise London TravelWatch in order for us to close the case.

A rise in cases received by London TravelWatch regarding Southern prompted investigation by both parties. It was found that there is no pattern to explain the increase but the quantity of cases received by both London TravelWatch and Southern will continue to be monitored and discussed again next quarter.

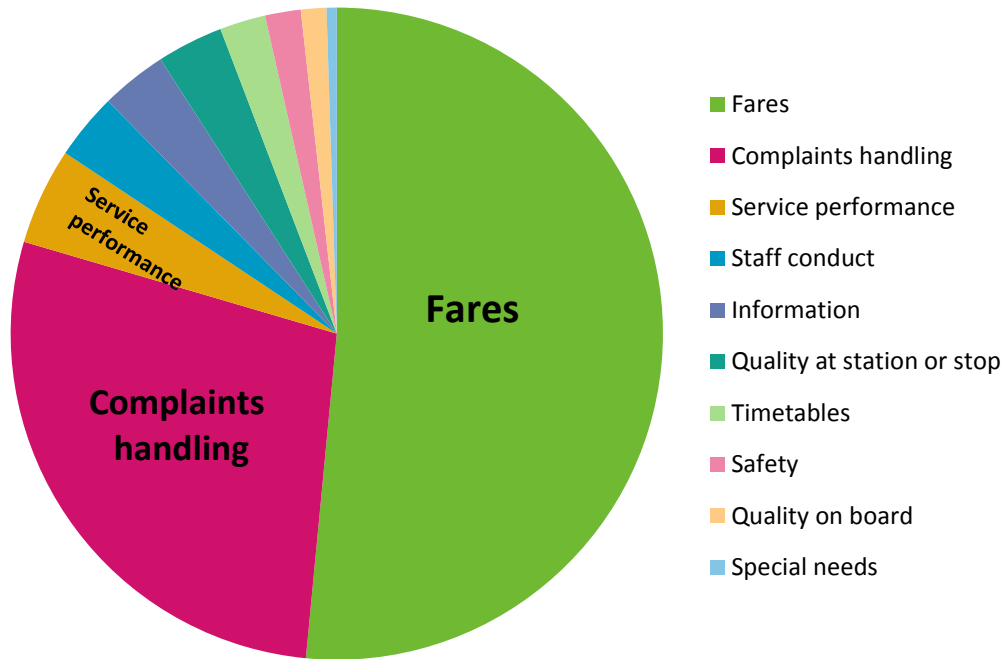
#### **Transport for London**

The case which took longer than 41 days was a taxi complaint. These are very difficult for London TravelWatch to deal with as our remit is limited. The passenger wanted to complain about a private hire company classing themselves as London taxis. The response from Taxi and Private Hire department took longer than average Transport for London response times.

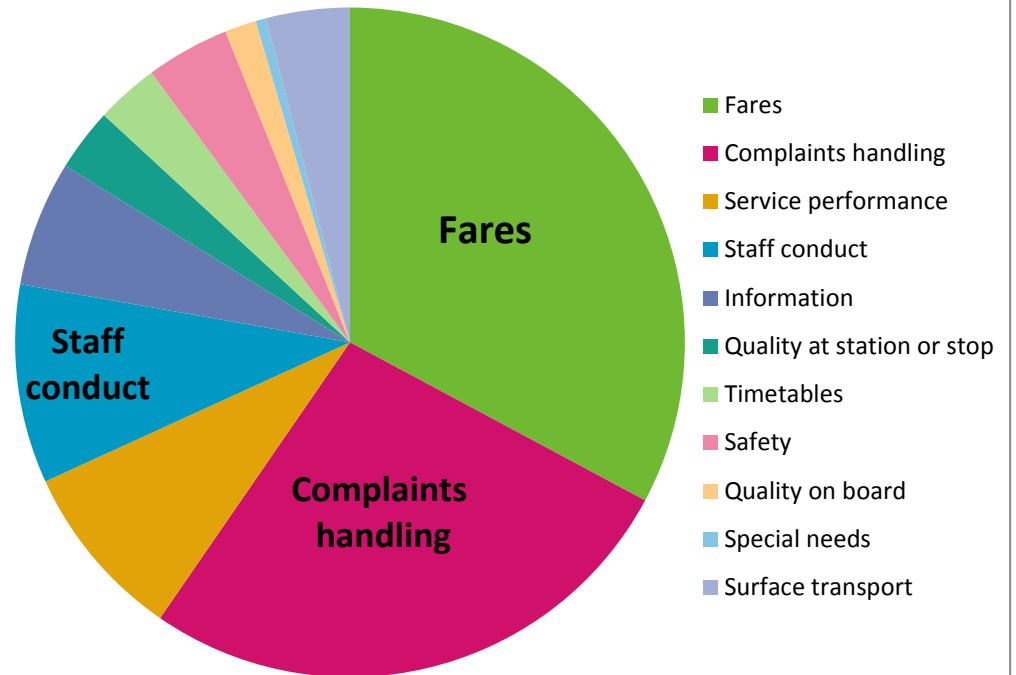
### Three: appeals by category

The charts below clearly demonstrate the categories of appeals received by London TravelWatch regarding both National Rail operators and Transport for London.

#### National Rail TOC complaint by category

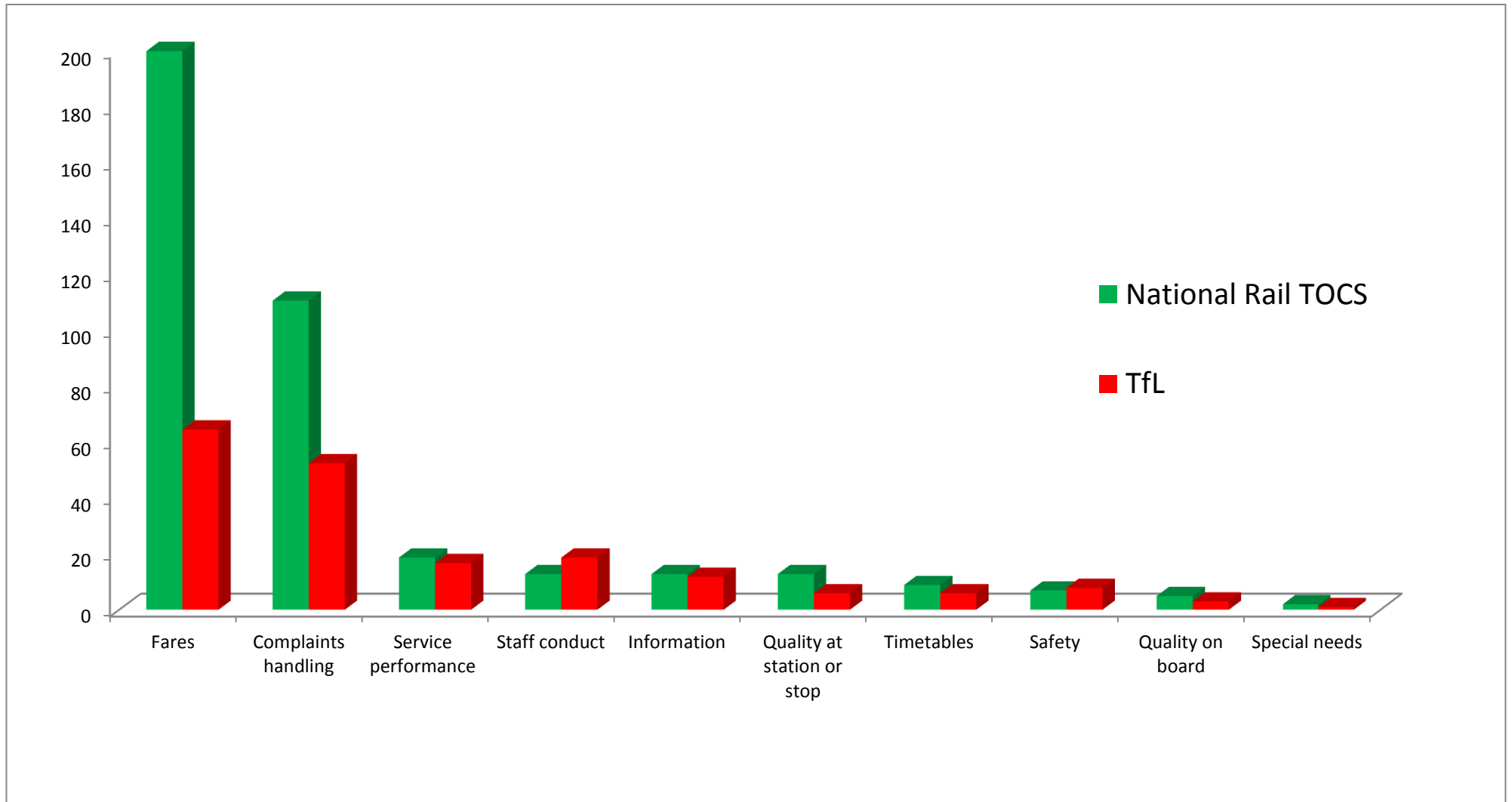


#### TfL Complaints by Category





The graph below shows the types of cases received by the National Rail TOCS in quarter one alongside Transport for London for the same time period



## **Main issues received**

This part of the report highlights some of the issues that were most complained about during quarter one 2014.

### **National Rail operators**

#### **Fares**

Season ticket refunds can cause problems when passengers receive less than they had anticipated. It is unlikely for mistakes to happen but the calculation is complicated and difficult for a passenger to understand. Showing the passenger the workings of a calculation can help this to be better understood. Also, not all TOCs are advising passengers where they may be a better alternative than surrendering their ticket. In some cases a change over ticket may be more beneficial to the passenger than a very small refund that they are likely to receive if there are only a few months remaining on their ticket.

Penalty fares and prosecutions also fall under the 'Fares' category. One of the appeals bodies covers penalty fares for both Transport for London and some of the National Rail TOCs. This can slightly blur the lines as to whether it is a TOC penalty fare appeal or a Transport for London penalty fare appeal.

#### **Complaints handling**

South West Trains have had a long correspondence backlog caused by the weather, new systems and new staff. They have now caught up although it has taken a long time for this to happen. However, there have been surprisingly few complaints and the SWT Customer Service Manager has updated both London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus on a weekly basis.

#### **Information**

One of the caseworkers noticed a sudden influx in telephone calls from passengers trying to contact the Gatwick Express. Taking a call from a passenger she asked why they were calling us. It transpired that the telephone number on the Gatwick Express website was incorrect. We were able to contact the operator who amended the telephone number the same morning.

#### **Other information**

There has been an increase in contacts about Chiltern and East Coast although there is no correlation in the cases.

## **Transport for London**

### **Staff complaints/Service performance**

Some bus complaints have remained unresolved because the bus details given by the passenger do not match any bus working on that route at the time and date given, so the driver cannot be identified. Further investigation from both London TravelWatch and Transport for London revealed that the details given by the passenger are frequently incorrect or when the passenger gives an Oyster number to identify a journey, a different Oyster number is given.

Bus complaints are generally about bus drivers. There is very little information that a complainant can receive in response to these issues which can leave them frustrated and unlikely to complain again in the future which in turn will give Transport for London an unrealistic positive view of the route and bus operator.

Transport for London do not issue refunds to passengers delayed during strike action. London TravelWatch receives complaints regarding this matter and also the lack of publicity provided by Transport for London on the subject.

Some passengers have complained about passengers travelling with alcohol on all modes of transport. It is been recognised that Transport for London no longer make announcements on this subject nor police it as they did when the initiative began.

Appendix one: Quantity of cases received

