
Secretariat memorandum

Author: Susan James

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Casework report for the period April to June 2015.

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To record the performance of operators in handling appeals for the period April to June 2015, to identify any issues of concern regarding operator performance 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 five 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 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: Cases received

This report covers incoming casework received from April to June 2015.

This part of the report records the volume of casework received during April to June 2015. A total of 1,175 contacts were received by London TravelWatch via telephone, email and web form.

Case types	Apr to Jun 2015	Jan to Mar 2015	Oct to Dec 2014	Jul to Sep 2014	Apr to Jun 2014	Jan to Mar 2014
Casework related telephone enquiries	233	188	188	392	451	436
Enquiries email	29	25	111	36	24	30
Initial cases	352	445	418	446	434	472
Request for papers	77	107	103	95	110	93
Appeals made to operator	237	306	210	287	296	274
Appeals responded to directly	247	302	244	306	320	347
Appeals sub total	484	608	454	593	616	621
Total contacts	1,175	1,381	1274	1562	1635	1652

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.

The increase in calls received is because previously the upgraded casework system did not allow the caseworker to add the 'quick call' without closing but not saving the case currently being worked on. Caseworkers were therefore dealing with telephone calls but not recording them.

The increase in the record of telephone calls received demonstrates system amendments made by the Casework Manager has resolved the problems and all incoming calls to London TravelWatch are recorded on the casework system.

Initials

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

Papers

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

Appeals made to operator

Where the passenger has already complained to the operator and London TravelWatch take 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.

2: Operator response times – closed cases

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 2015		January to March 2015	
	No of cases closed	Percentage closed	No of cases closed	Percentage closed
Days 0-10	91	61%	111	71%
Days 11-20	17	12%	14	9%
Days 21-40	21	14%	22	14%
Day 41+	20	13%	10	6%
Total	149		157	

During quarter one the caseworkers received delays to many of their appeals sent to TOCs as indicated in the table above.

The casework manager contacted those operators with whom we are in regular contact to advise them of the response delays and response times will continue to be monitored to look for improvement.

Also, the casework manager added a new section to case notes on the casework system. Each time the caseworker has to chase for a response this section will be completed. This will enable evidential information to be given to the operator without the case having to be opened and scrutinised.

Transport for London

Transport for London has no franchise obligation to respond to London TravelWatch but have traditionally followed the same policy. However, late 2013 TfL reduced their response targets for passengers and London TravelWatch from 20 to 10 days.

TRANSPORT for LONDON				
Working days elapsed	April to June 2015		January to March 2015	
	No of cases closed	Percentage closed	No of cases closed	Percentage closed
Days 0-10	21	57%	45	61%
Days 11-20	3	8%	16	22%
Days 21-40	8	22%	9	12%
Day 41+	5	13%	4	5%
Total	37		74	

Transport for London's response times have been getting worse over the last 12 months. London TravelWatch received the fewest appeals regarding TfL modes in quarter one but these were managed with the worst recorded response times.

The casework manager notified the team manager of this poor performance and was asked to visit the team to work on a solution. No single reason was found to be an issue, but additional work given to the TfL team and reduced staffing is considered responsible. The team manager is keen to improve response times immediately. To achieve this, the casework manager will notify the TfL team manager of outstanding cases on a weekly basis and copy her into any communications the caseworkers have to send to chase for a response. Quarterly meetings have also been put in place as any case with a slow response time will be scrutinised on an individual basis.

It must be noted that some delays were due to errors made by London TravelWatch. Old email addresses were used to contact TfL on a least two occasions which meant that there TfL did not initially receive the appeal. On all occasions and regardless of the reason for the delay, the casework team have made sure passengers were kept up to date.

National Rail operators' response times – closed cases

Operator	Apr to June 2015		Jan to Mar 2015		Oct to Dec 2014		Jul to Sept 2014		Apr to June 2014	
	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		4	1	2	1	11	1	1		
BTP										
c2c	3	36	1	7	3	2	2	1	2	8
Chiltern	1	55	2	53	1	5	5	28	6	3
CrossCountry										
Department for Transport					1	29				
Deutsche Bahn										
V East Coast	12	50	3	2	4	14	11	18	6	15
East Midlands Trains	1	60							1	1
Eurostar	4	0	7	2	4	1	7	1	1	1
FCC/Thameslink/GTR	14	7	22	10	11	1	16	12	20	12
First Great Western	2	8	4	11	4	9	5	19	8	22
Grand Central										
Gatwick Express										
Greater Anglia	20	15	17	10	13	13	14	13	11	12
Heathrow Express									2	18
First Hull Trains	1	0	1	9			17	4	21	2
IAS	10	0	19	1	10	1	14	0	6	2
IPFAS	18	0	12	2	5	1	1	0	2	8
London Midland			2	37	2	50			1	5
National Rail Enquiries			1	29	1	8	3	12		
Network Rail	5	35	1	31	1	42				
ORR										
RailEurope										
RPSS	2	1	6	1	1	1				
Rail Easy										
ScotRail										
Southeastern	17	40	6	31	7	11	12	14	12	8
Southern	15	11	29	18	20	6	26	6	40	10
South West Trains	18	11	18	15	15	9	19	7	27	6
Trainline							1	0		
Virgin West Coast	2	82	1	58			1	0		

Transport for London

Operator	Apr to Jun 2015		Jan to Mar 2015		Oct to Dec 2014		Jul to Sept 2014		Apr to Jun 2014	
	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	16	4	1	7	2
London Overground	4	1			1	1	3	4	5	2
TfL London Buses	13	13	21	15	21	10	20	11	24	9
TfL London Underground	7	24	20	10	4	14	16	6	16	8
TfL Roads & Streets	1	1	4	17	1	1	6	14	4	9
TfL Dial-a-Ride			1	4			2	0	1	2
Oyster	6	6	22	12	18	7	27	6	25	9
TfL Other	6	10	6	3	3	9	16	15	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 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.

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 necessary investigation and other cases can have ongoing negotiation between London TravelWatch and the operator. This is acceptable as long as the caseworker keeps the appellant updated on a regular basis.

TOC cases with longer response times

Southeastern and Virgin East Coast

The delay in responding to London TravelWatch by Southeastern and Virgin East Coast were for all appeals rather than individual cases. To manage and reduce response times, the casework manager has taken this forward with both TOCs. Both TOCs have had some disruption within their own internal customer service processes and early indication does appear to show improvement. However, response times will be monitored more frequently in an effort to ensure further response delays do not occur.

Network Rail

The appellant complained about a lack of response from Network Rail beyond an acknowledgement. After waiting for two months the appellant contacted London TravelWatch who took up the case on the basis of lack of response. The caseworker was advised that Network Rail was liaising with GTR (Thameslink) regarding the complaint. After repeated prodding by the caseworker to respond, the appellant received responses, albeit directly, from both Network Rail and GTR (Thameslink) which the passenger found satisfactory.

A repeat complaint from an appellant regarding the delay announcing platforms at Kings Cross station was causing passengers, who have reduced mobility, to feel anxious when rushing to their trains. The trains in question were the GTR (Thameslink) trains which normally depart from the north side of the station but sometimes depart from the platforms used by Virgin East Coast. This was reinvestigated and looked at by the London TravelWatch safety officer who said they that this would be taken forward as policy. Network Rail (eventually) said that they empathised with the problem but they could not add anything of further value to the first complaint response.

GTR (Thameslink)

This appellant purchased a ticket from GTR which included all London zones to travel from St Albans to Horsham via London although he only travelled through London on the GTR Thameslink train. The appellant discovered he could have purchased a point to point ticket which would have been substantially cheaper but he was not offered this option. London TravelWatch took the case forward and GTR Thameslink responded to all contacts in a timely manner. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the casework team and the Director of Research and Policy, GTR Thameslink refused to make any substantial gesture other than a one off gesture of goodwill.

An error was made by staff responding directly to the passenger instead of London TravelWatch. GTR apologised for the error and when the caseworker checked, the passenger confirmed that they were satisfied with the outcome to their complaint.

East Midland

East Midland did not explain why there was a delay in responding to the caseworker. They did accept the request made by the caseworker and the passenger was sent compensation.

c2c

c2c apologised for the delay in responding to the caseworker and stated that human error caused the delay on this occasion.

Chiltern

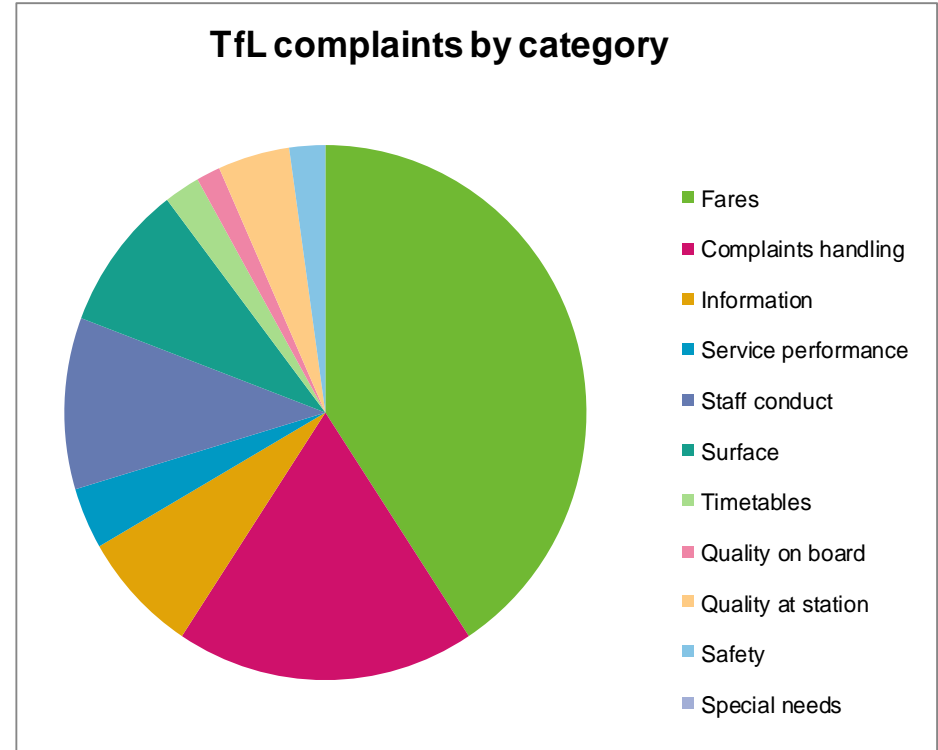
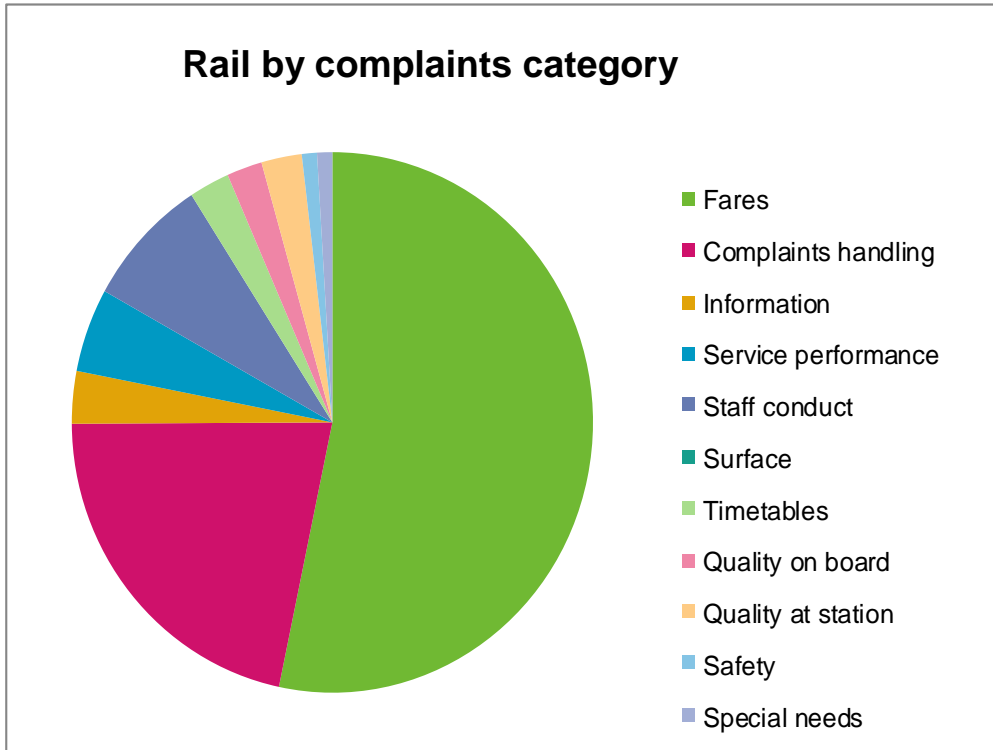
This TOC did respond to London TravelWatch within the usual time frame. However, London TravelWatch tried to unsuccessfully negotiate an improved outcome which caused a delay closing the case.

Transport for London cases with longer response times

Delays with responses from TfL have been addressed earlier in this paper. There is no individual case which was outstanding for any particular reason.

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.



3. Main issues received during quarter three

This part of the report highlights some of the issues that were raised in quarter one.

National Rail operators

Eurostar have incurred significant and ongoing delays caused by industrial action from French ferry works and trespassers on the line, both occurring at Calais.

Pierre Delalande from Eurostar came to London TravelWatch to discuss the problems passengers had experienced and the lessons Eurostar learnt from the disruption.

Response delays appear to be an industry wide problem at the moment and take time to manage and change. Some TOCs are more proactive to address the issue than others

Transport for London

Bus arrival delays and/or journey delays cases are increasing. Investigation and liaison with TfL reveals that the many types of road works such as cycle lanes and traffic management scheme are causing these delays. However the works may be located quite far from the passengers stop and journey so it is understandable why the passengers do not understand the reason they are being told for the delays.

Strike action continuing on the tube has caused passenger to be more vocal in their complaints. TfL are not very engaged with this issue so London TravelWatch are having to explain to passengers (both on the phone and in writing) that

1. If another mode is used – regardless of how a passenger normally travels - there is no refund applicable for those with travelcards – daily/weekly/monthly/annually as the passenger did travel
2. Strike action is considered outside of TfL control so refunds are not due
3. (for PAYG passengers) If a card has not been touched in on the tube then payment has not been taken so there is no payment to refund

It is clear that during tube strikes passengers are looking for compensation for the inconvenience of not being able to travel in their preferred method.

Appendix one: Quantity of cases received

