

Board meeting

15 June 2021

LONDON
TRAVELWATCH

Casework report – Paper 1

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Agenda item: 7

LTW653

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Quarter four

Overview

This report gives details on the types of cases we receive and our responses to them. Information is also provided about contacts to Ventrica and the Rail Ombudsman.

Rail operators

Many of the cases received in quarter four were similar in nature to those received in quarter three. Most consisted of ticket refund conditions and policy. Appeals concerning refunds or extensions for railcards continue to generate a number of contacts and it was disappointing that the DfT decided against allowing this.

Eurostar

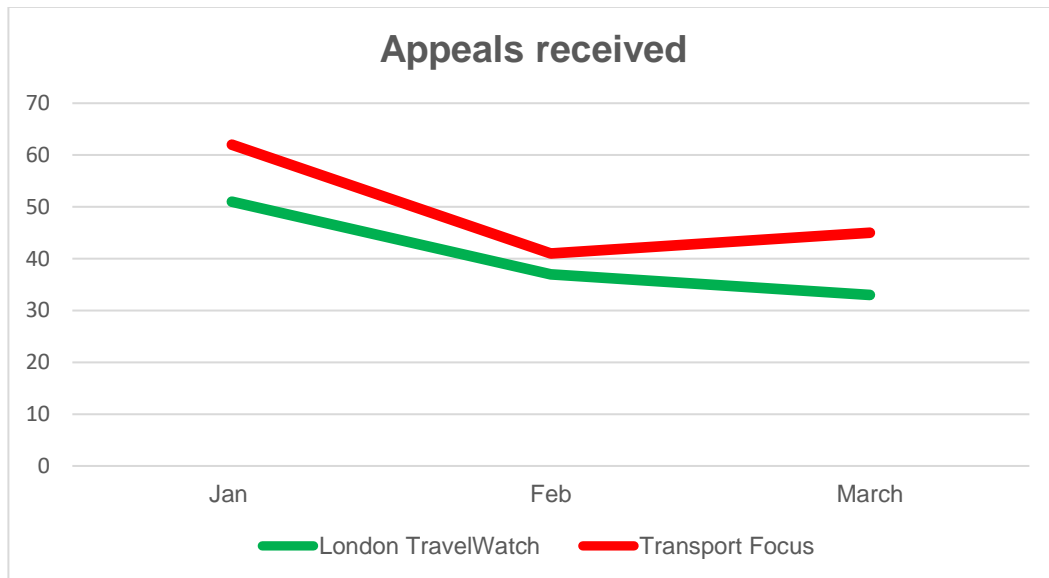
There have been very limited passenger numbers on Eurostar, and we have seen a reduction in contacts although there are still those coming to us who were due to have originally travelled some months ago. In April 2021 it was noted that Eurostar had removed their refund information from their website. London TravelWatch has contacted the ORR regarding this issue.

TfL

There has been an overall reduction of approximately 32% in appeals received by TfL passengers. This is unsurprising since the majority of quarter four London was in lock down with much reduced passenger numbers.

Appeals received by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch from January to March 2021

Total cases received - 269

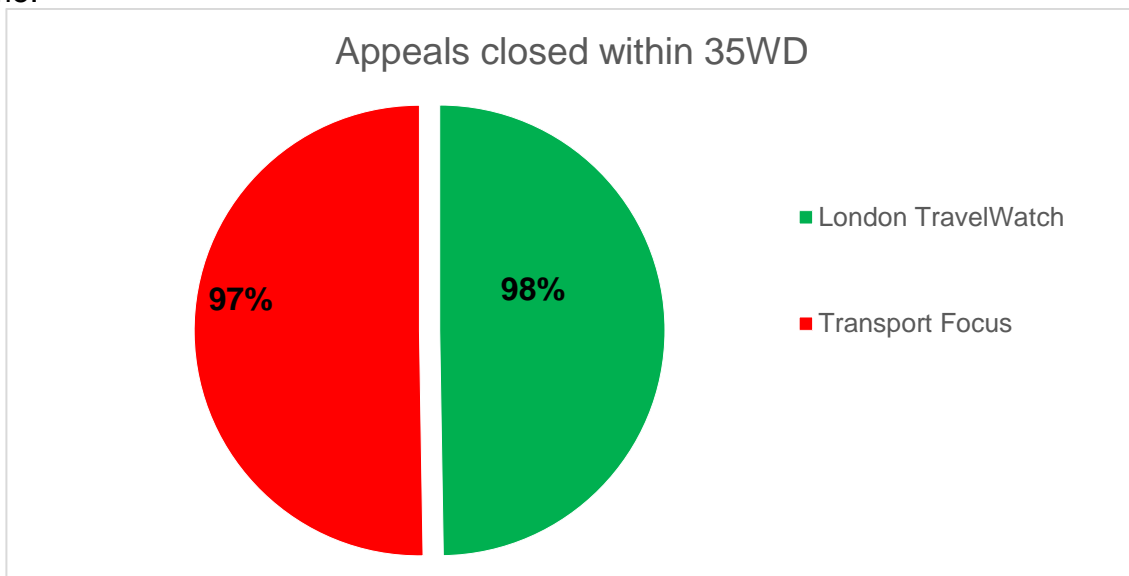


There was an approximate 30% decrease in cases received when compared to the previous quarter.

Casework performance

The target for closure for appeal cases is 35 working days (WD). It is acceptable for cases to be open beyond this time if the caseworker is negotiating with the operator or if the case is of a complex nature and the caseworker requires assistance from other staff members. However, the passenger must be kept informed of the situation no less than every 15 working days until the case is closed.

The responses within 35WD improved by 5% for Transport Focus and 4% for London TravelWatch in quarter four which reflects the lower number of cases received at this time.



Complaint information

Operators receiving the most complaints	No of complaints	Subject of complaint	Outcome
Trainline	50	refund conditions	16 successful, 29 neutral*
Eurostar	32	lack of refunds/extensions to railcard/unable to use	15 successful, 14 neutral*
TfL Oyster/contactless payment	18	season tickets, refunds in general, Oyster 60+ card revalidation	8 successful, 13 neutral*

*An example of a neutral outcome would be one where the passenger does not believe that their refund calculation is correct. The casework team would check the calculation themselves and with the TOC. A neutral outcome would be where the calculation is correct and the caseworker would reassure the passenger of this.

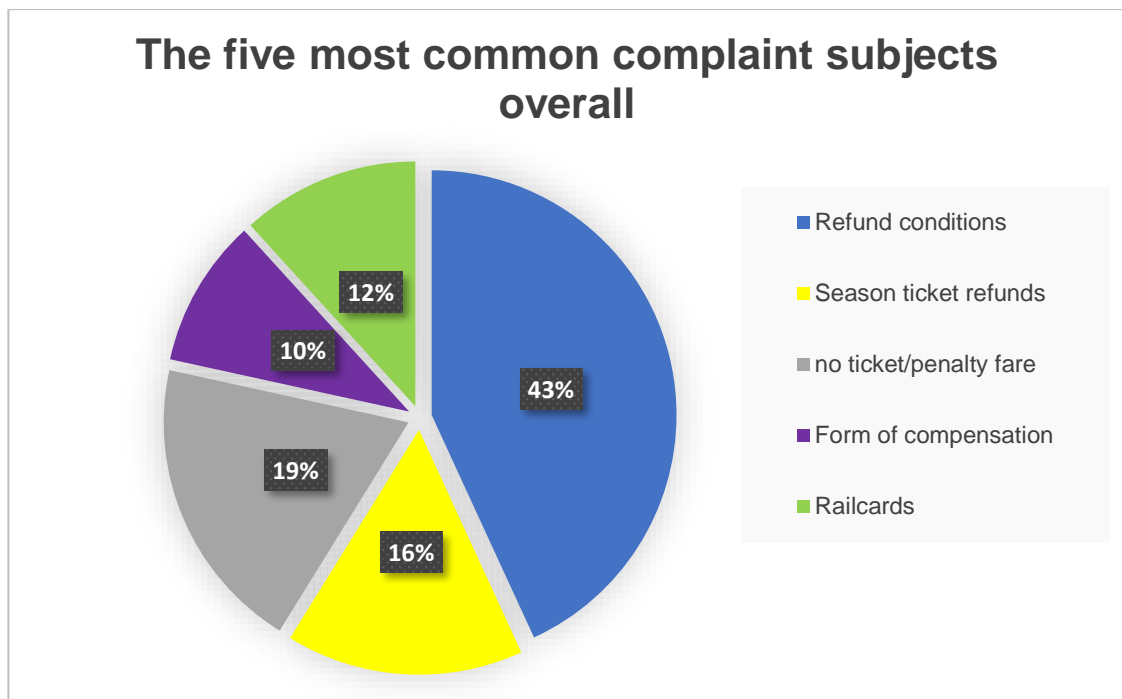
Trainline

London TravelWatch and Transport Focus are still the appeals body for Trainline and all ticket retailers as these organisations do not currently fall within the remit of the Rail Ombudsman.

TfL appeals

TfL by mode	No of complaints	Subject of complaint	Outcome
TfL Oyster/contactless payment	18	Refunds, lack of response and PCN parking and congestion charge notices	16 Successful 36 Neutral
TfL Congestion Charge	12		
TfL Underground	9		
Transport for London	8		
TfL Oyster 60+	4		
TfL Santander Cycle Scheme	3		
TfL LEZ	2		
TfL Crossrail only (MTR Crossrail)	1		
TfL Rail (MTR Elizabeth line)	1		
TfL Streets	1		
Total	59		

Case types received

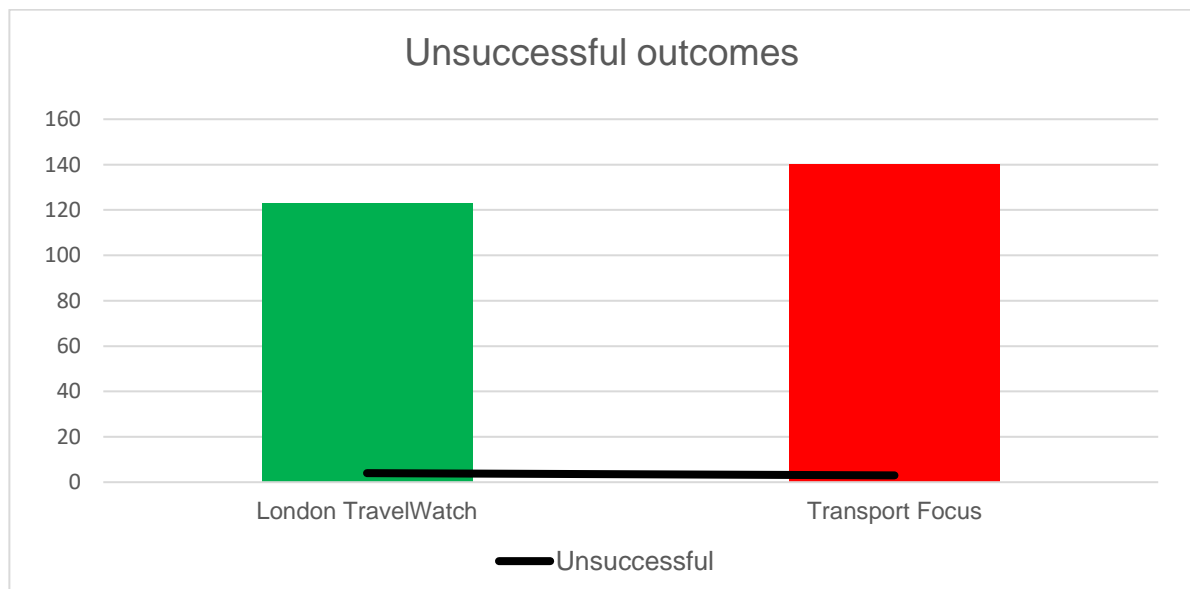


Closed appeals

122 appeals closed for London TravelWatch in this period

140 appeals closed for Transport Focus in this period

The number of cases closed in quarter four was very similar to the number closed in quarter three

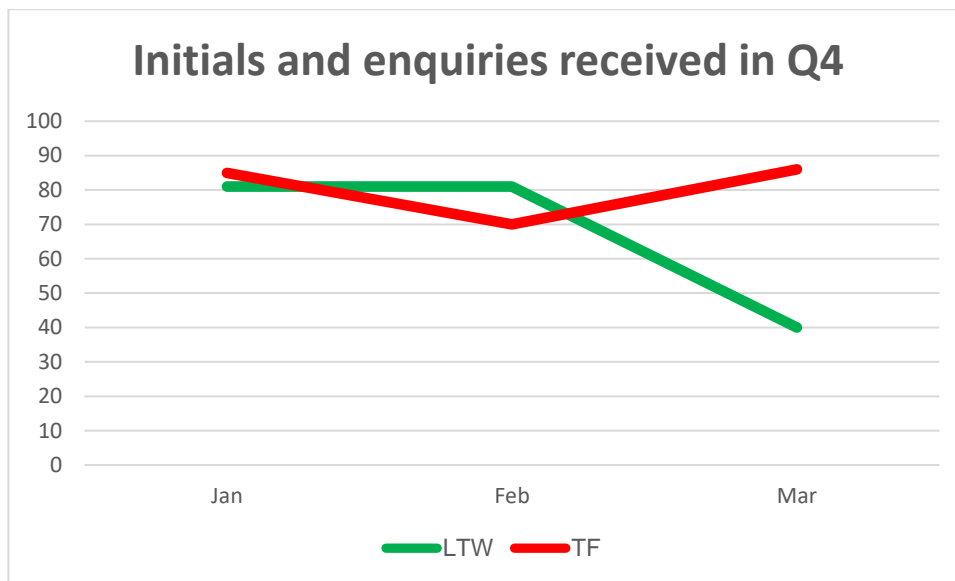


The graph above demonstrates the low numbers of unsuccessful appeal outcomes in this this period. London TravelWatch had 4 (3.5%) unsuccessful cases and Transport Focus had 3 (2%)

Initial and enquiry contacts

On behalf of Transport Focus and London TravelWatch, Ventrica received 443 initial and enquiry contacts in quarter four which is approximately 100 more than in the previous quarter. It is not unusual for passengers to ask more questions and make enquiries during quiet times.

The table below shows how many of these case types were received each for Transport Focus and London TravelWatch per month in the previous three months. The majority of passenger contacts were for those looking for help with TfL and Eurostar refunds – London TravelWatch and railcards and ticket refunds – Transport Focus.

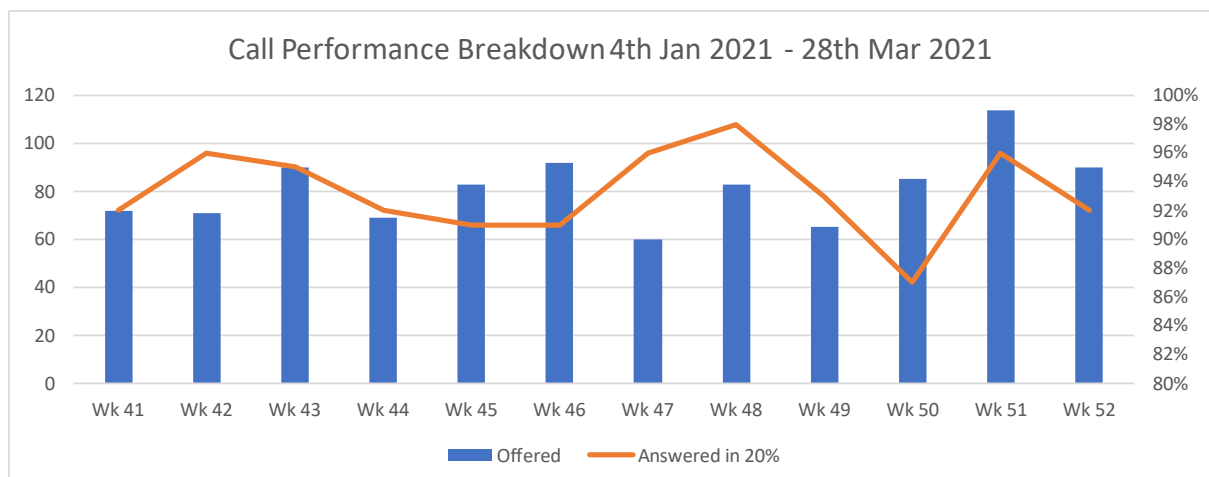


Total number of contacts received – 443

Ventrica – call answering and initial enquiries

Calls answered in 20 seconds by Ventrica.

Out of the 13 weeks that made up quarter three on average, Ventrica answered 93% of calls within 20 seconds and all calls were answered within 30 seconds.



Most contacts are regarding refunds with all TOCs. Many of these contacts had not yet approached the TOC for a refund and were signposted on. Other contacts had not allowed sufficient time (40 working days maximum) for the TOC to signpost them to the Rail Ombudsman and required the help and necessary information to enable them to continue with their complaint pathway.

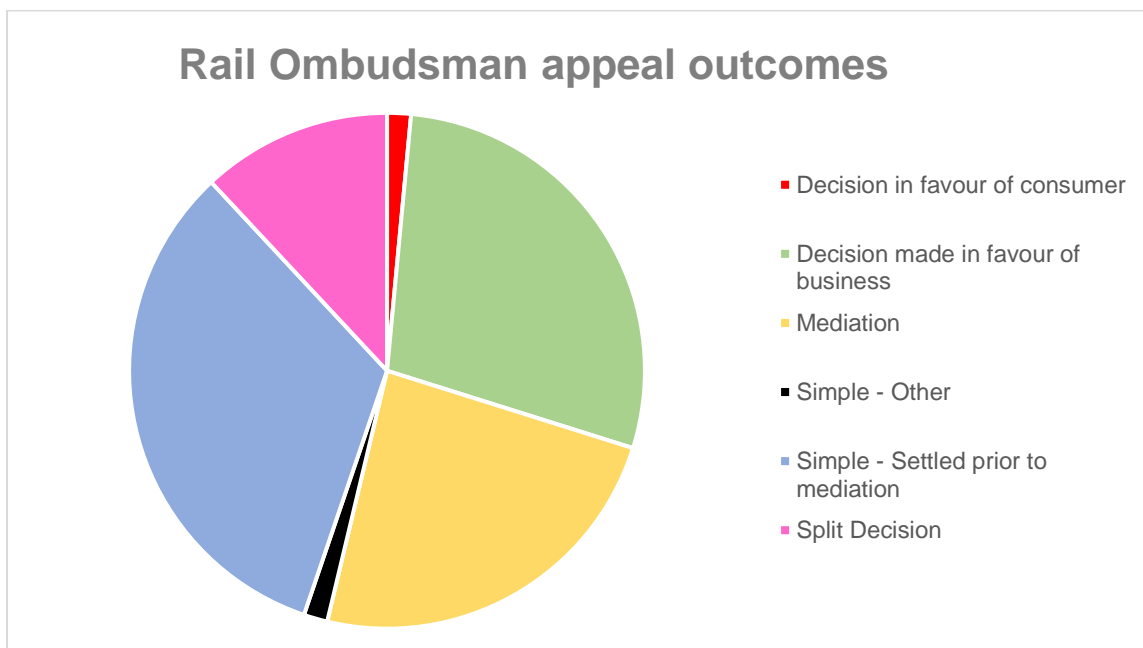
Rail Ombudsman

During quarter three, the Rail Ombudsman received more appeals from GWR and Avanti West Coast passengers.

Rail Operator	No of complaints	Subject of appeals	Outcome
GWR	12	Complaints handling and refunds.	Fairly equal mix of 'Simple outcome'* and 'Decision made in favour of Business'.
Avanti	19	Complaints handling, refunds and ticket buying facilities.	Fairly equal mix of 'Simple outcome' and Mediation.

*an example of a simple outcome would be the Rail Ombudsman advising the TOC that a cheque/refund had not been received by the passenger

Rail Ombudsman appeal outcomes



The number of appeals to the Rail Ombudsman has not increased in the this quarter most likely due to the low numbers of passengers travelling during this time. During

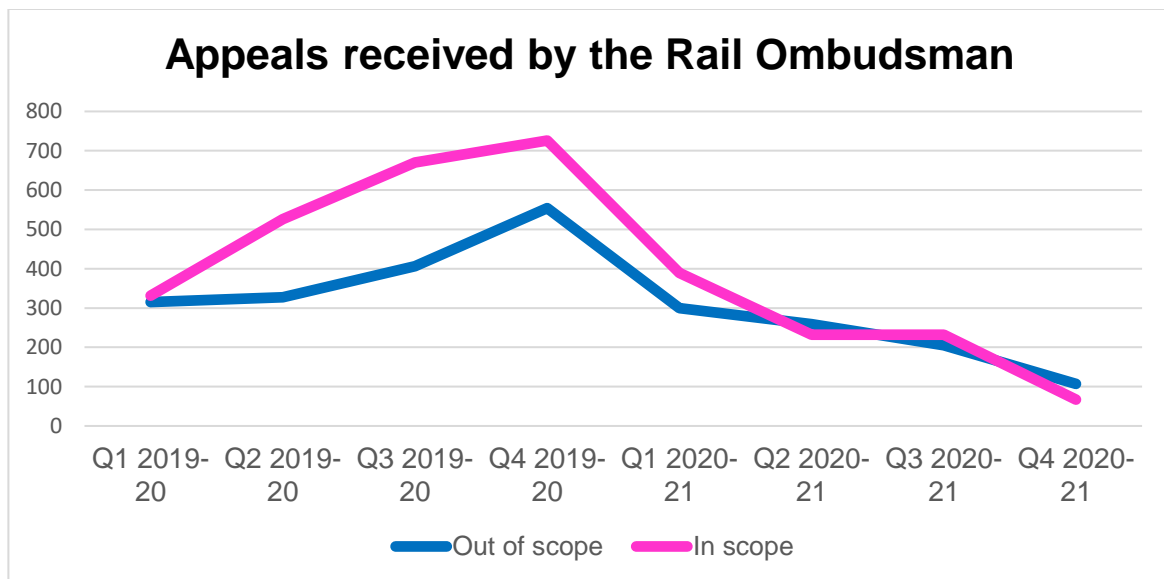
this quarter 37 cases were transferred to TF/LTW as they were out of scope for the Rail Ombudsman. Most of these transferred cases were regarding passengers questioning the policy surrounding their lack of refund.

Other Rail Ombudsman casework information

25% decision was made in favour of the business following mediation

1% decision was made in favour of the consumer following mediation

33% were settled prior to mediation. Of which 4 cases had no award



Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this report.