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**Casework report**

Author: Susan James, Head of Casework

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**Casework Report covering 1 January to 28 February 2023**

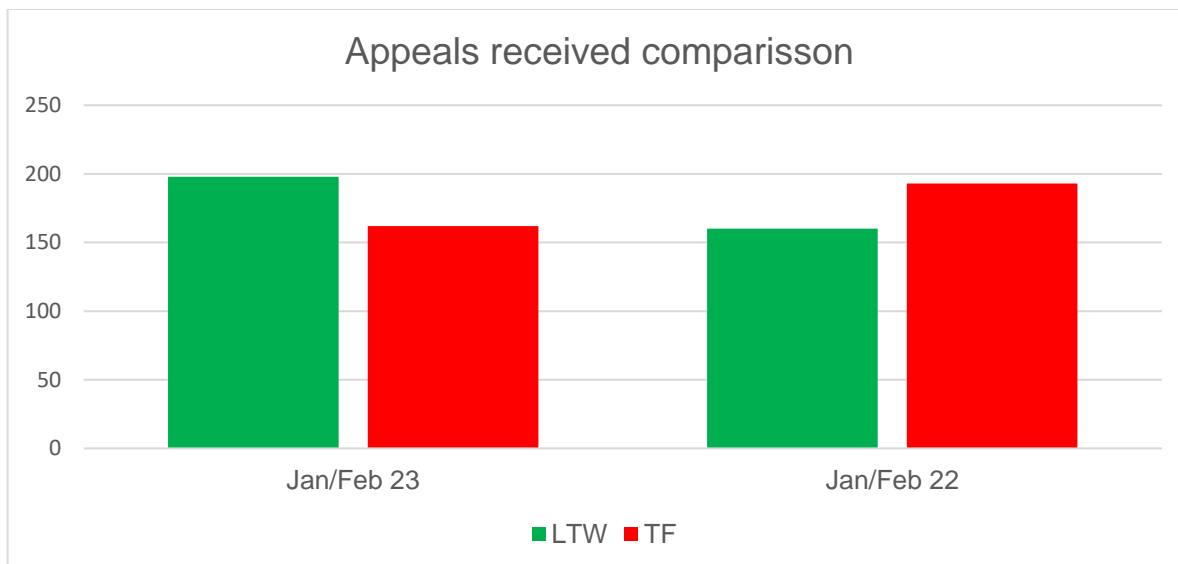
**Spotlight on casework**

The casework reports are usually written at the end of each quarter with one report covering both London TravelWatch and Transport Focus. This means the statistics will be comparable with previous quarters in previous years.

As this Board meeting falls short of the end of quarter four, this report is from 1 January – 28 February 2023 and focuses primarily on London TravelWatch casework.

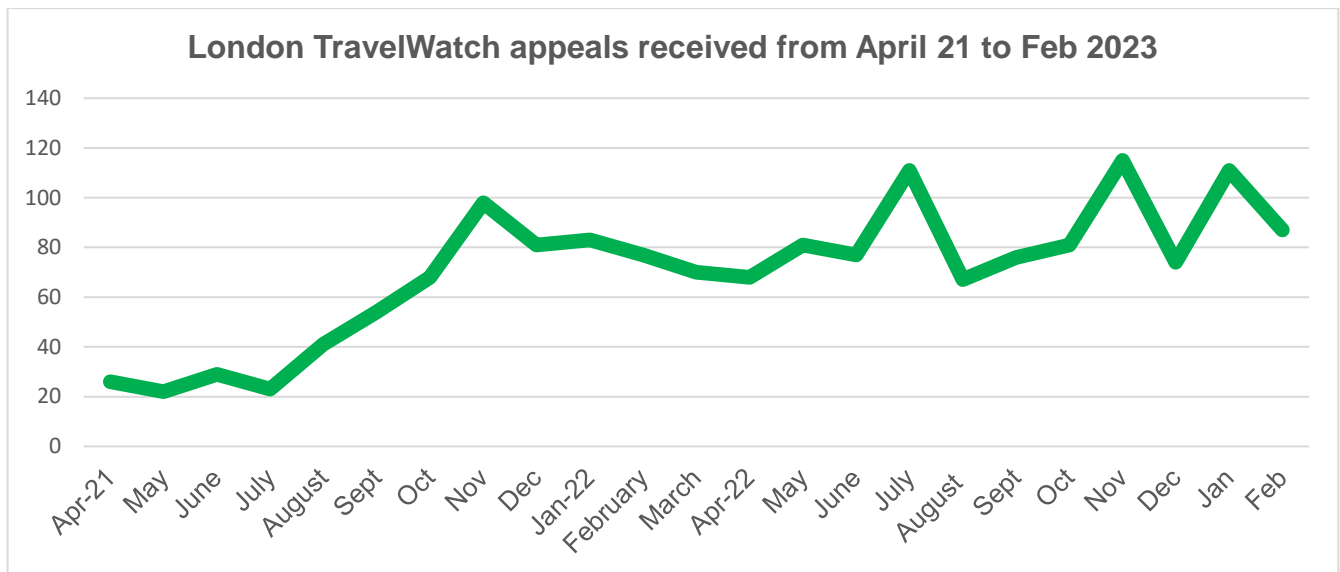
**Casework and appeals**

In January and February of this year, London TravelWatch received 339 contacts of which 198 were appeals. Compared to 253 contacts of which 160 were appeals (received in the same time frame) in 2022.



In January and February 2023, the casework team also dealt with 338 contacts from passengers in Transport Focus geographical remit, of which 162 were appeals. Compared to the same months last year we received 355 contacts for Transport Focus of which 193 were appeals.

## Historical data – appeals received



The casework team continue to record the complexity of cases being received and the time taken to handle them, with some cases taking many hours to investigate and provide an outcome.

### Outsourced provider

The contract for the outsourced initial contact providers has been in place since 2012 and is long overdue to be market tested. The contract will be primarily between Transport Focus and the provider as London TravelWatch is re-charged via the collaboration agreement. The tender document has been drafted by the Head of Casework and it is envisaged that the tender will be published in May and awarded in November 2023. If the contract is awarded to a different organisation than the current one, the new and incumbent provider will supply the service in tandem to ensure a smooth transition with the new provider taking sole responsibility from 1 April 2024.

### Making improvements

Transport Focus carried out a review to assess the work of the London TravelWatch casework provision in 2022. This led to conversations about Transport Focus expectations on case handling which will conclude before the start of the new financial year.

### Eurostar

Eurostar are reporting a more manageable number of outstanding cases and are responding to passengers within a reasonable timeframe. The easements put in place during Covid, such as vouchers if you cancel your journey, have now been withdrawn and passengers are unhappy with this. Eurostar have continued to maintain more flexibility than prior to Covid by allowing passengers to change their journey (with notice) without incurring cost.

The Casework team have noted some passenger complaints travelling from Amsterdam and Rotterdam as these stations do not have a specified area for Eurostar. To manage this, Eurostar provide information on their tickets – for example in Amsterdam Eurostar departs from platform 15B.

Eurostar have advised London TravelWatch that travel agents who book with Eurostar are required to make refunds and/or investigate delays and cancellations via SNCF (French railways) as this is their link into Eurostar. Our Senior Caseworker investigated into why it was taking in excess of three months for passengers to obtain refunds via third parties and found that SNCF had a large backlog due to issues with their IT. London TravelWatch cannot insist that Eurostar bypass this process and refund passengers but we try to obtain confirmation of delays and cancellations directly from Eurostar and provide this information to third parties. However, all refunds booked via a third party must be returned from SNCF before it can be passed to the passenger.

### **Transport for London**

There are still delays in passengers received responses to their complaints and this is due to staffing issues at TfL. London TravelWatch has asked TfL to amend their advertised SLA response time of 10 working days to 20 to better manage passenger expectations. The increasing number of passengers who have contacted London TravelWatch due to lack of response is partly the reason for our recent rise in TfL appeals.

London TravelWatch has also seen appeals from bus passengers unhappy with time it takes to recover a bus service during disruption. One passenger waiting outside a hospital and who uses a route that provides a 12-minute service frequency, waited over 90 minutes for a bus. During times of high disruption, the bus controllers should be linking in with the TfL central team to coordinate buses being turned early to ensure that passengers can connect onto different routes rather than leave passenger without any provision for a long period of time.

### **Number of appeals closed**

Between 1 January and 28 February we closed 135 London TravelWatch appeals and 111 Transport Focus appeals.

## An example of types of London TravelWatch closed appeals



10 of the TfL appeals were about Penalty Charge Notices or non payment of the Congestion/ULEZ charge



26 appeals related to Oyster or contactless payment cards



33 appeals were from Eurostar passengers.



13 appeals related to buses, such as not stopping or a complaint to TfL not being answered.

## Complaints closed by mode



6 of the TfL appeals were from users of the Underground.



32 appeals received from rail passengers



6 appeals from Santander cycle users (low numbers of appeals reflect lower usage during winter)