
Casework report

Agenda item: LTW792

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Glossary of terms

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Appeal | A complaint that has already been made to a transport provider or ticket retailer. |
| Case | Electronic file where all information from a passenger contact is held. |
| Consultation | The industry seeks to make changes and invites formal responses. |
| Enquiry | A passenger is asking questions directly of London TravelWatch, or Transport Focus, or other contacts that do not fall within the categories of appeals and initials. |
| Initial | The passenger has complained directly to London TravelWatch or Transport Focus before first approaching the transport provider or ticket retailer. |
| Rail Ombudsman | The alternative dispute resolution (ADR) provision for rail passengers in England, Scotland, and Wales. NB: Not all issues are considered in (within the) scope for (of) the Rail Ombudsman. |
| Tickets Retailers | Sell rail tickets. but do not provide any form of transport. |
| Foundever | The current outsourced contact centre manages the telephone calls and first contacts. This provision is currently being market tested. |

April to June 2025

Overview

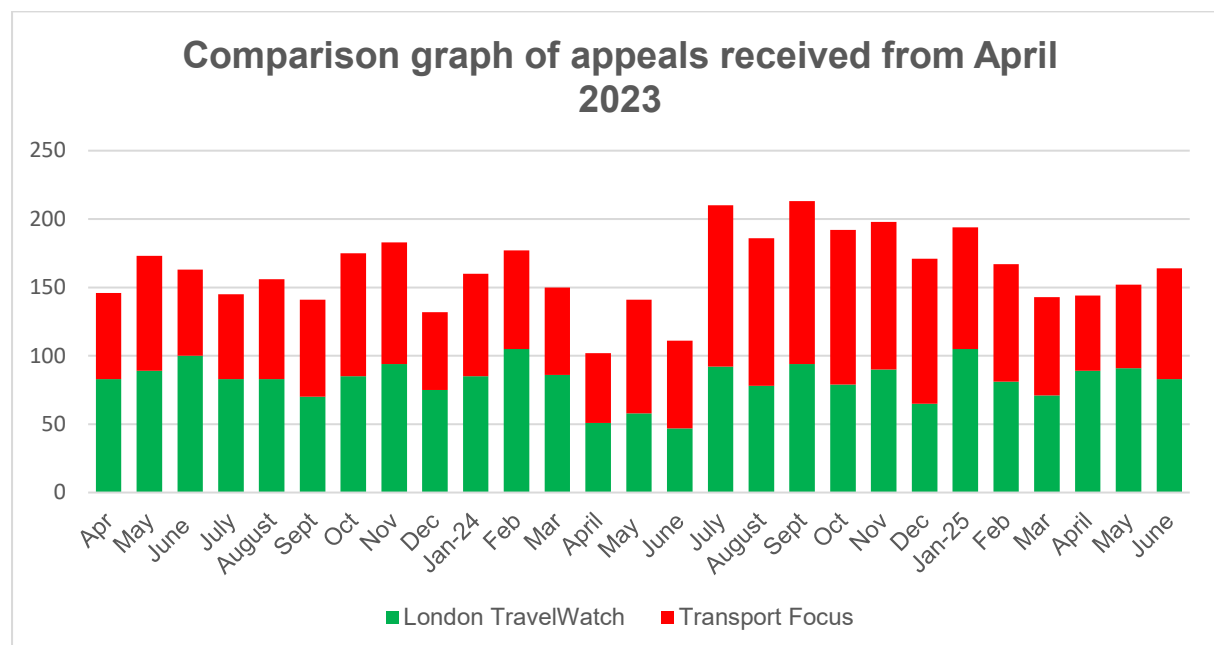
This report gives details on the types and numbers of cases we have received and our responses. Information is also provided about contacts with Foundever and the Rail Ombudsman. Appendix one contains the anonymous responses to our passenger survey.

It is envisaged that the Q2 Casework report will be presented in a different format following discussion at the May Board meeting. The Q2 report will be available for the 12th November Board meeting.

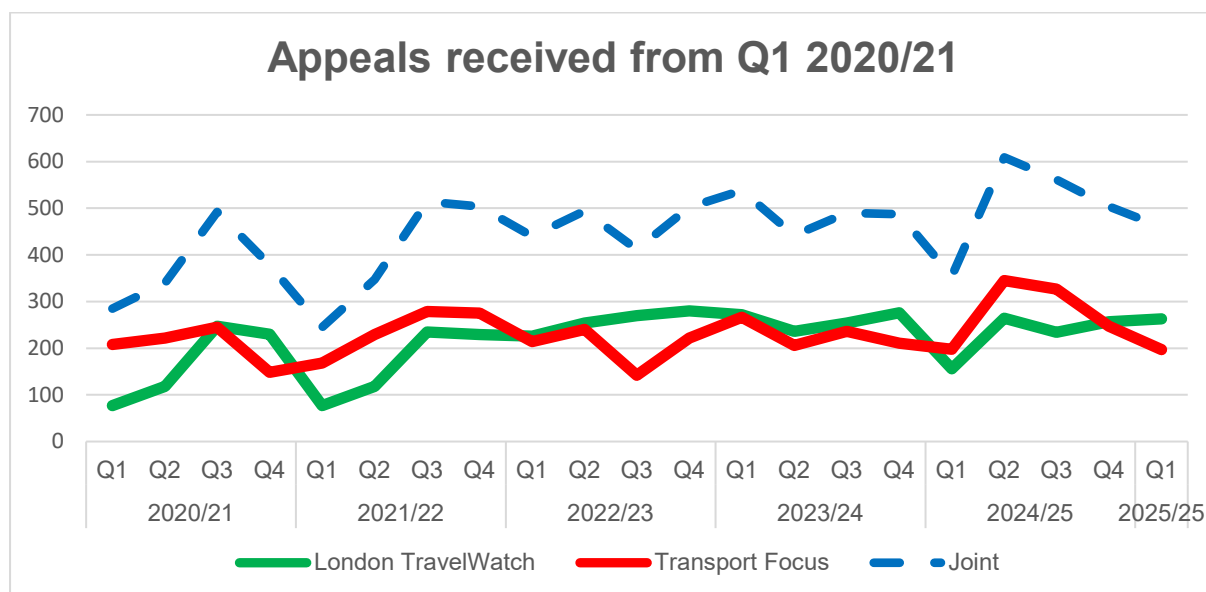
Appeals Casework

460 appeals were received in total in Q1, compared with 504 in Q4. The figures for London TravelWatch were 263 vs 257 and for Transport Focus 197 vs 247. Q1 is usually quieter than other quarters in the year so it is unusual that London TravelWatch has seen a slight uplift in cases received. This increase is largely due to an increase in rail PFNs in our geographical remit.

The graph below shows the comparison between appeals received from April 2023 to March 2025. In the last 12 months, September and January were the busiest months for London TravelWatch and September and November were the busiest months Transport Focus.



The graph below shows appeals received since April 2020. Passenger contact has reduced slightly this quarter although contact about revenue protection remains high.



Forecasting casework for 2025/26

Early spring was unusually busier for London TravelWatch with more appeals received than the same time last year. It is expected that TfL appeals will continue to increase in the coming 12 months as infrastructure issues cause delays on the Tube network – Piccadilly, Bakerloo and Central lines. For Transport Focus it is likely that we will see an increase of policy type appeals as passengers are unsatisfied that terms and conditions do not support their complaint.

Rail operators and penalty fares

Penalty fares (PFN) remains the most complained about topic for rail passengers and general lack of awareness of the requirement to have a ticket, or an out of date Railcard, appear to be the most appealed about subjects.

Neither London TravelWatch nor Transport Focus are official penalty fare appeals bodies. We do not have any authority to cancel penalty fares, reduce costs or prevent unpaid notices from escalating. In addition, appeals do not usually reach us until they have gone through the three stage official process.

Although there are instances where we can't help, and we advise the passenger of this, all appeals are considered on a case by case basis and we will try to help wherever we can, regardless of the terms and conditions. The Casework team are

successful in achieving at least some improvement for passengers in about 30% of the PFN appeals taken up.

In early June, the ORR released their paper following research into revenue protection <https://www.orr.gov.uk/independent-review-train-operators-revenue-protection-practices> The report makes a number of short and long term recommendations. These include improved information at point of ticket sale and appointment of a forum or body tasked with identifying and promoting best practice across all aspects of revenue protection policy and enforcement. It is not yet clear how the recommendations will be adopted by the industry.

Railcards

Passengers who have difficulties with uploading electronic Railcards when changing handsets has driven some contact. It's difficult for any agent to help with this unless we can see the information displayed on screen on each handset meaning these case types are difficult to resolve. Some local libraries offer help with using mobile devices, but this service is not provided everywhere.

Eurostar

We are currently receiving lower numbers of appeals from Eurostar passengers. There was a power outage on 15 May. The Senior Caseworker immediately liaised with Eurostar about any additional compensation that may be offered to passengers affected by the disruption. Eurostar advised that no enhanced compensation was offered as they did not cancel any services and their standard delay compensation was thought to be sufficient.

Visa update: The requirement for visas (EES) has been pushed further back into late autumn 2025 or even into 2026. The other visa (EITAS) requirement is unlikely to be required until the EES visa issues have been resolved. However, as the UK has started their own visa programme (ETA) on 2 April, Europe may hasten to start their own schemes.

TfL

We received an email from a Dial a Ride (DaR) passenger who raised significant concerns that DaR are not providing a service along the lines advertised. We found that TfL do not currently have an online 'leaflet' which outlines the DaR service provision. Passengers have expectations based on the old leaflet which is on other organisations' websites. DaR advised that they do not offer a guaranteed service although they will telephone if unable to honour a reservation and may provide (and pay for) alternatives **if** no other service is available at all. But they will not do the

same if a vehicle is delayed. They also no longer offer an arrival time service as they found that this was impossible on London's road network coupled with the unpredictability of providing a service in a shared vehicle.

The DaR service provision is detailed on TfL's website, and it has not yet been decided whether or not a new 'leaflet' will be drafted. The DaR manager left the service in June with the new manager not coming on board until July. The staff managing in this interim are experienced DaR agents and fully engage with London TravelWatch.

We have seen contact from drivers who have paid congestion and ULEZ charges on official looking websites, but which are not connected to TfL. Some more nefarious companies do not pass on the payment to TfL and the driver then incurs additional charges for non-payment. TfL will usually reduce any fines back to the original cost, but this does mean that the user would have paid twice. TfL do challenge such organisations but cannot be held responsible for their operation.

Casework and Policy

TfL's Accessible Travel Policies (ATP) are separate for each mode meaning that a passenger would have to read more than one document if making a multi modal journey. London TravelWatch has asked if these could be joined to make it easier for passengers, but TfL have said that separate policies is a requirement of the ORR.

The TfL terms and conditions were created as single document (for most modes) a number of years ago at the request of the London Assembly and supported by London TravelWatch. Although added to over the years, the document needs a complete overhaul as there is information not provided under the correct headings.

Ticket retailers (including Trainline)

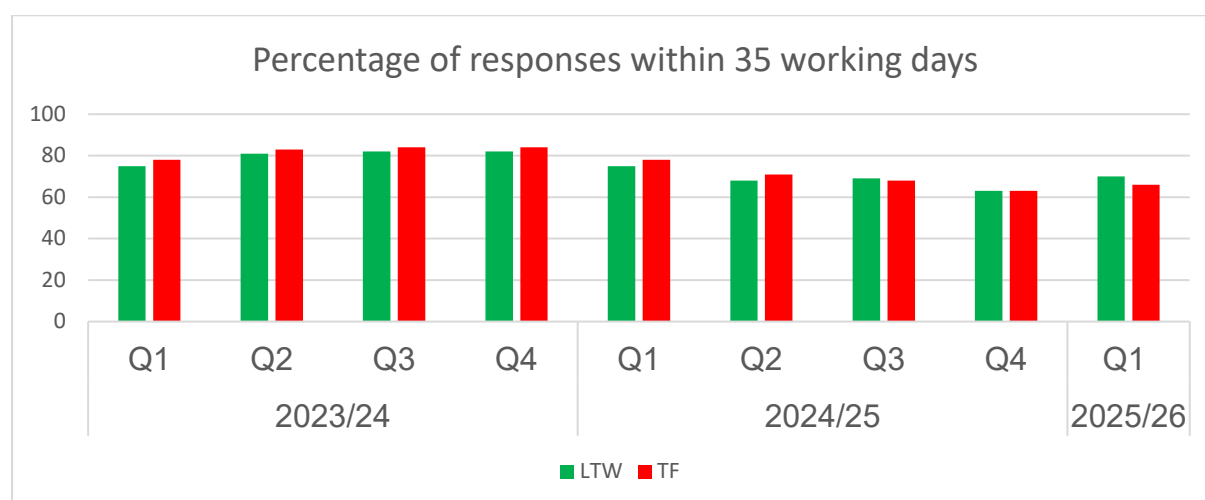
London TravelWatch has picked up some discrepancies on TOC and NRES websites that are still not advertising the cheaper Oyster/contactless fare. This appears to be linked to the Trainline information provision which many TOCs use to display fares on their websites. Casework, with the Policy and Advocacy Team, have spoken to the Rail Delivery Group and will ask the pricing managers of key TOCs to better understand the issue of how the ticket prices are advertised.

Casework performance

The aim for closure for appeal cases is 35 working days. However, operators only have to respond to our appeals within 20 working days. If we are unsatisfied with their response, it can take a further 20 working days to get a new response.

Where it is helpful to provide an appellant with our response aim, both London TravelWatch and Transport Focus colleagues actively support the Casework team in their efforts to secure a reasonable response on behalf of an appellant. We do not want cases to be closed simply because staff are concerned about meeting timeframes. We advise the appellant and explain any delay as the case progresses. Transport Focus Engagement Officers will take responsibility for TOCs (in Transport Focus' geographical remit) providing responses in a reasonable time frame.

The chart below shows how many cases the team have managed to close within 35 working days since April 2023. In Q1 and following some consistent stakeholder engagement on behalf of London TravelWatch appellants, there has been a marked improvement in response times to our appeals. It is hoped that now Transport Focus has a full team of Engagement Managers in place, they will encourage their TOCs to response to appeals within a reasonable timeframe.



Research has been carried out to find out why some cases appear to be open for a very long time. We have found that some cases will appear as if open for a considerable time if the Caseworker has 'reopened' a case following receipt of further information from a passenger or if the promised TOC action has not been forthcoming. The case will show as outstanding from the first date the passenger contacted us until it is resolved.

At this time, we do not have a way of recording if a case has been reopened or changing the date to recognise this difference. If we open a new case, there is no way to transfer the data between cases. Resolving this issue would affect other areas of the CRM meaning careful consideration will be required to best manage this.

Rail operators/ticket retailers with highest number of closed appeals in Q1

| <i>Operators about whom we have closed the most appeals</i> | <i>No of appeals</i> | <i>Subject of appeal</i> | <i>Outcome</i> |
|--|-----------------------------|---|--|
| WMT | 30 | Mostly penalty fares with a very small number of other issues | 13 improved outcome, 3 information provided* |
| GTR | 29 | | 8 improved outcome, 2 information provided |
| Northern | 20 | | 5 improved outcome, 4 information provided |

* An example of information provided is where the Caseworker has been able to answer passenger questions or provide more information so that the passenger was in a better position for having contacted us.

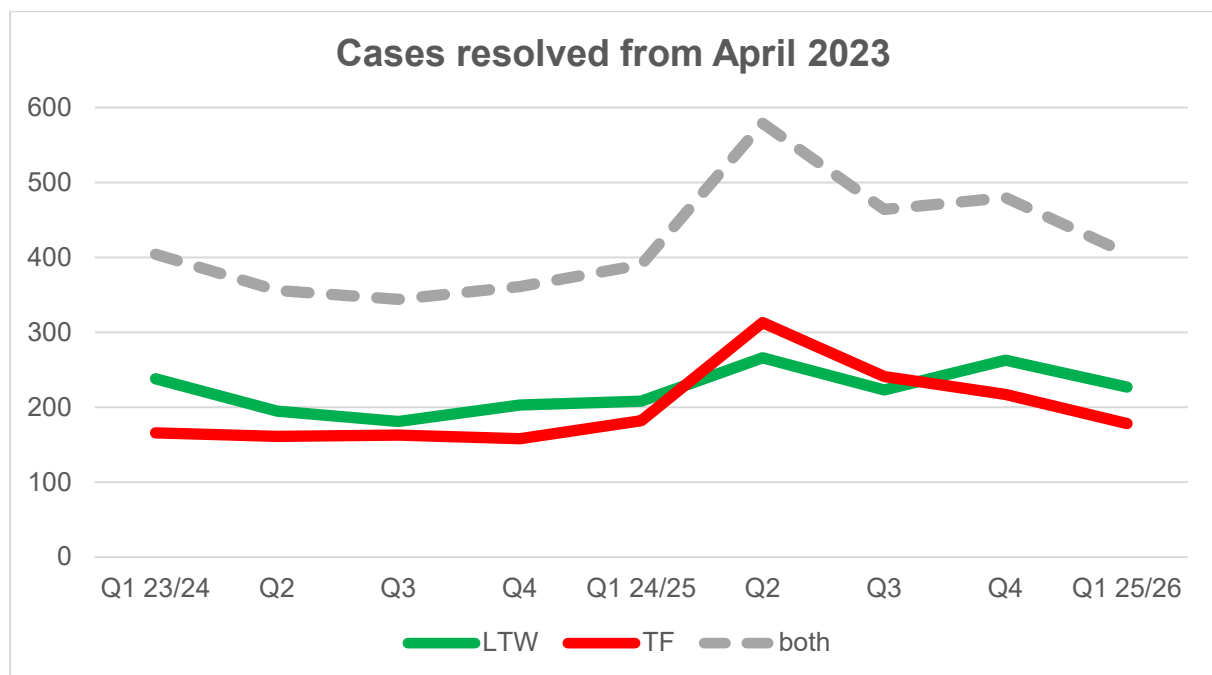
London TravelWatch appeals closed by issue/mode with the highest number of resolved appeals.

| <i>TOC</i> | <i>No of appeals</i> | <i>Subject of appeals</i> | <i>Outcome</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Oyster/Contactless payment | 51 | Refunds, refund policy, and complaints handling. | 38 improved outcome, 8 information provided. |
| Eurostar | 38 | | |
| Non passenger ULEZ, Congestion, Parking and tunnels | 29 | Penalty charge notices and refunds | 21 Improved outcome, 2 information provided |

Closed appeals for Q1

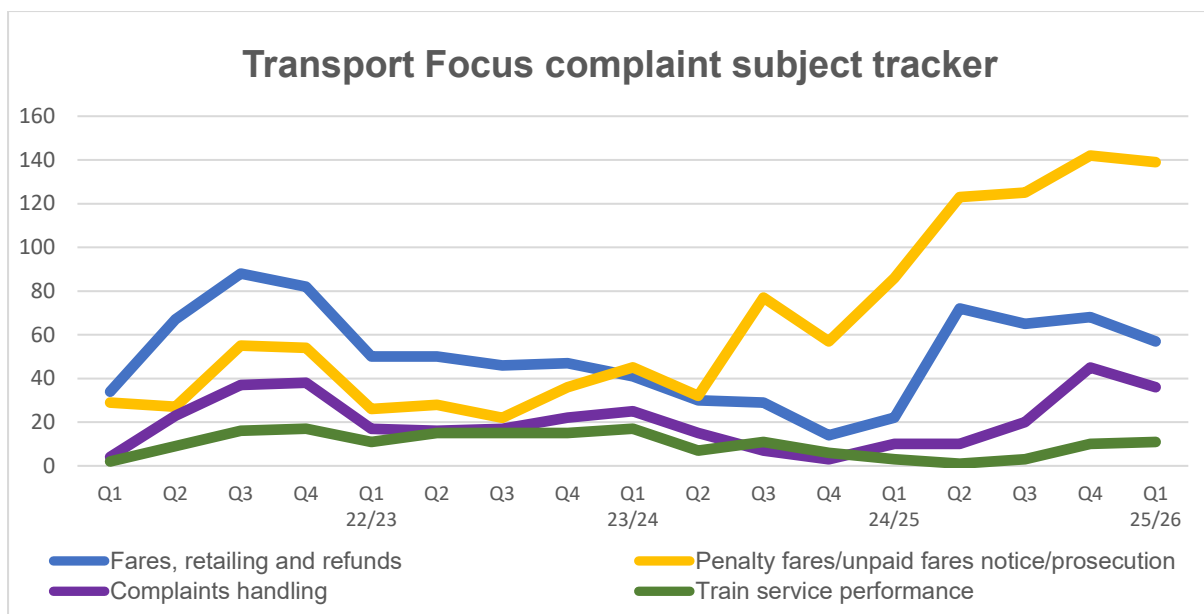
The casework team do not have the authority to insist that a transport provider or ticket retailer respond favourably to our appeals. All the successes are achieved through negotiation, persuasion, and the relationships the casework team cultivates with their industry contacts.

In this period, 227 (263 in Q4) appeals were closed for London TravelWatch and 178 (217 in Q4) appeals were closed for Transport Focus.

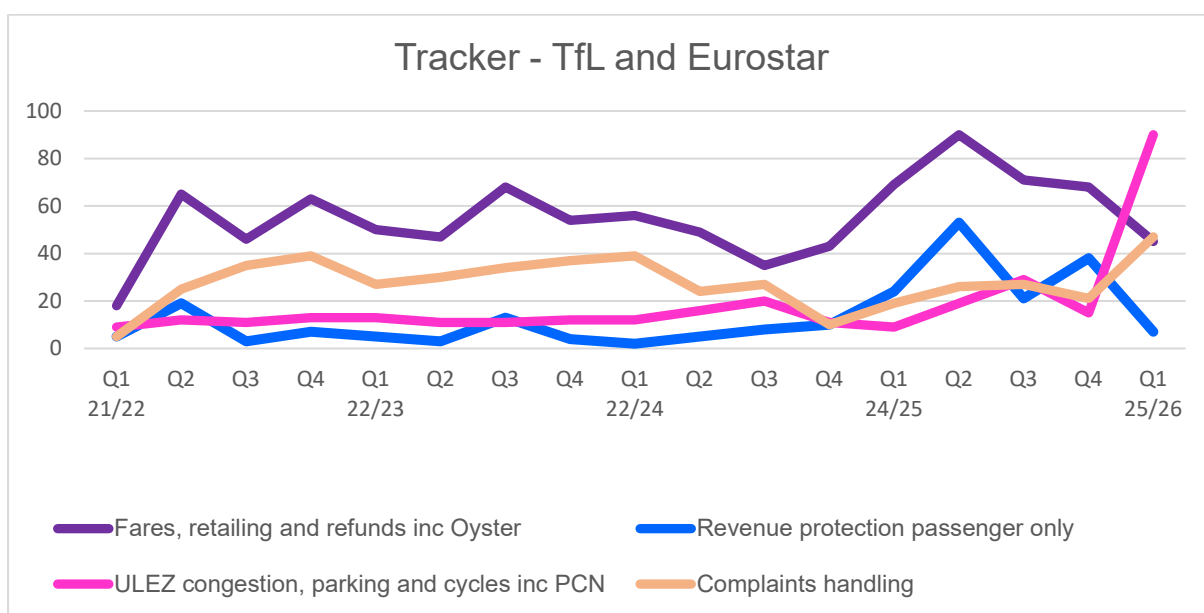


Case types received.

The four categories of appeals that London TravelWatch and Transport Focus usually receive relate to fares (including refunds), penalty fares, service performance, and complaint handling. We track these categories to look for any trends. Appeals about train service performance have slightly increased this quarter but not enough to prompt concern.



The above and below tracker graph suggest that the rail industry is increasing revenue protection on their services, which we see reflected in more contact from passengers who have incurred penalty fares or other revenue protection action.

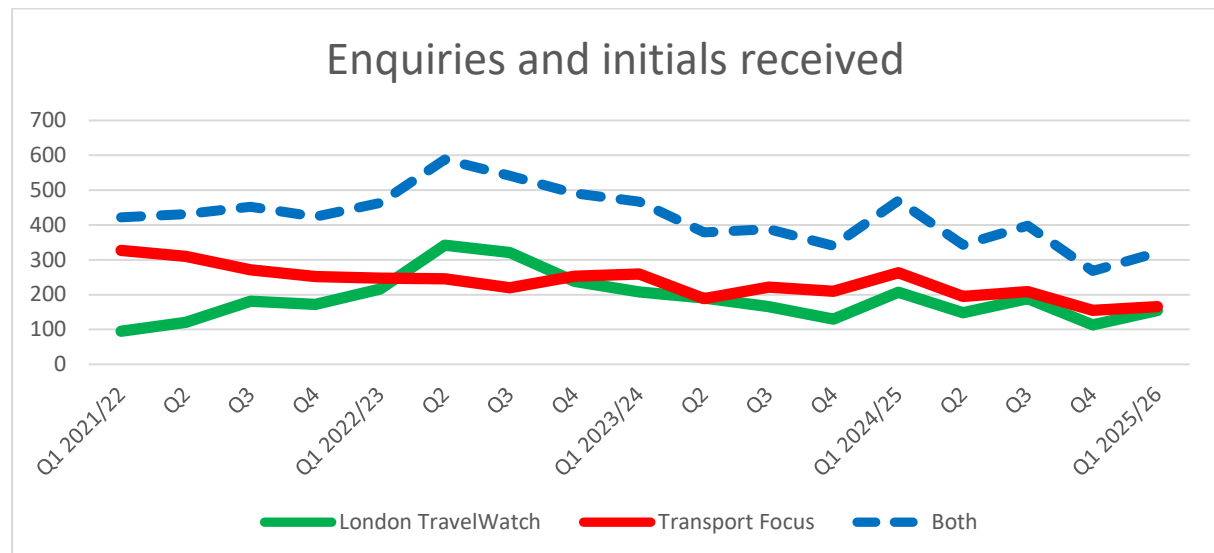


The sharp increase in the pink line is purely because we can now separate PFNs issued on public transport and PCNs issued to road users. The blue line has decreased.

The top four complaint categories received in the London TravelWatch-only geographical remit are slightly different, as we also take complaints from drivers who have incurred parking, congestion, and ULEZ fines. Appeals from drivers have increased slightly and managing this case type can take up a lot of resources.

Initial and enquiry contacts

The new outsourced provider has been handling our initial contacts for a year. Transport Focus have a contract review meeting later in April.



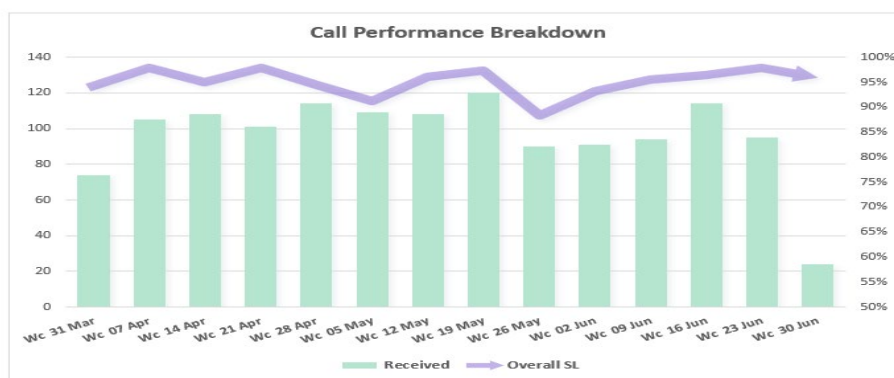
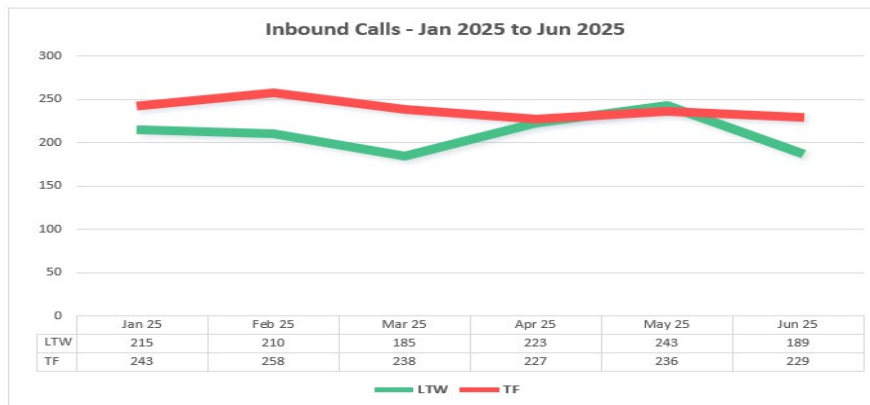
For London TravelWatch, the most contact received was about Oyster/contactless (fares) and PCNs

For Transport Focus, contacts were mostly about passengers questioning the policy around fares, refunds and penalty fares.

Outsourced provider - Foundever

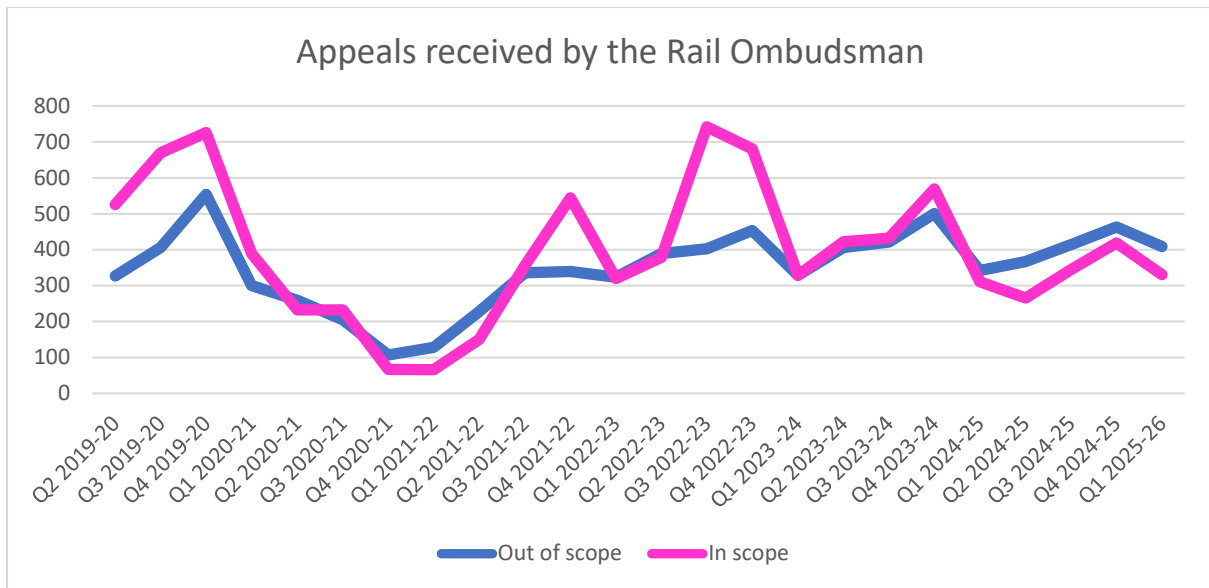
Call answering is part of the SLA between the watchdogs and the outsourced provider. Inbound calls increased during the middle part of the quarter for London TravelWatch but tailed off for both organisations in June. Performance meets the

SLA requirement of 95% of calls answered in 20 seconds in most weeks. Those weeks where this is reduced usually coincides with bank holidays.



Rail Ombudsman

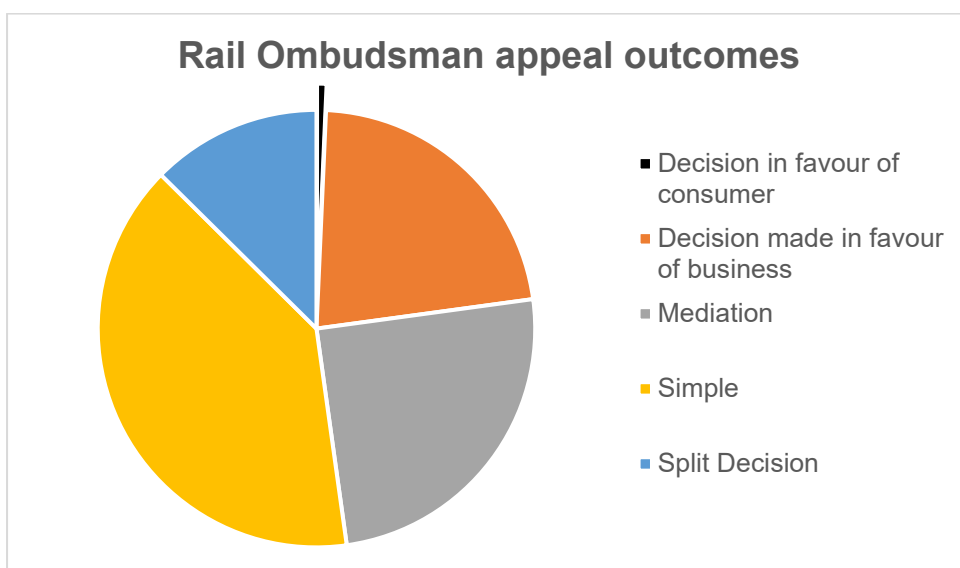
In Q1 the Rail Ombudsman received 330 in scope cases which is a decrease of 21% compared to appeals received in Q4.



29% of appeals received by the Rail Ombudsman were regarding delay compensation and 14% about rail performance/quality on board. During this quarter, there were 409 cases that were considered out of scope of the Rail Ombudsman. 25 of these were considered in scope for London TravelWatch, and 74 were in scope for Transport Focus, and these were transferred to us.

The Rail Ombudsman have updated their website and global data. At this time, we are unable to access a breakdown of numbers of cases received per TOC.

Rail Ombudsman appeal outcomes

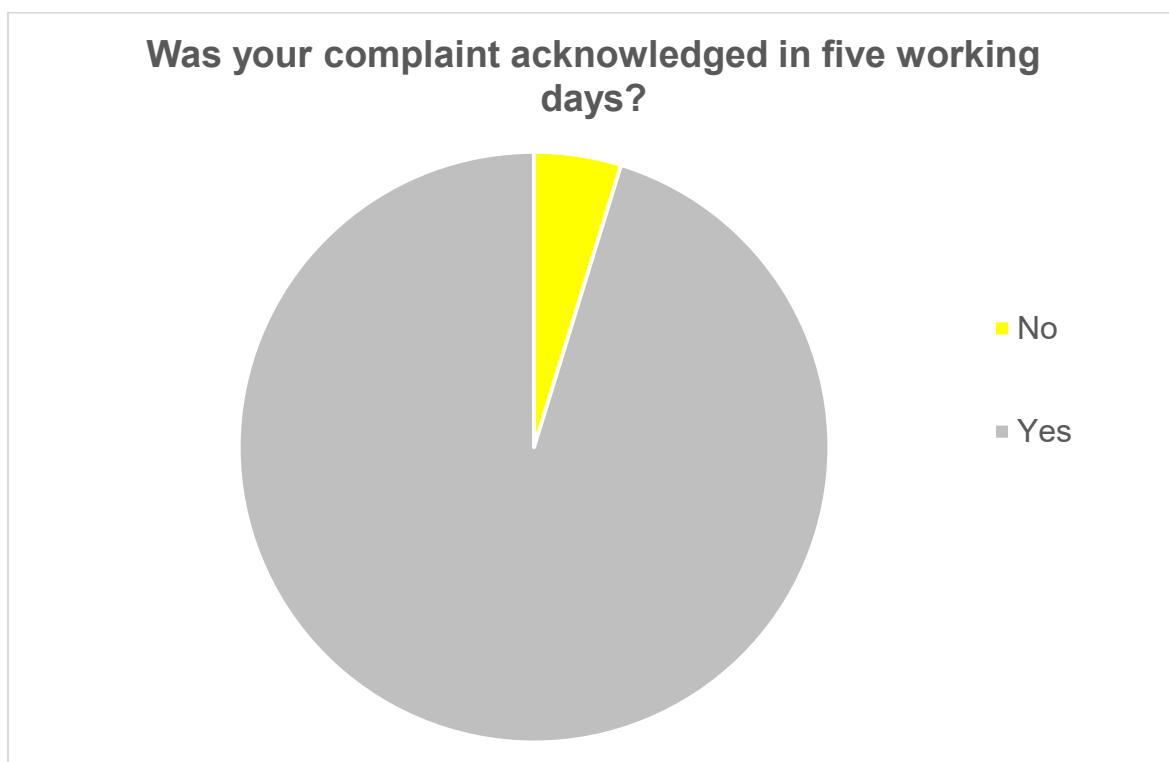
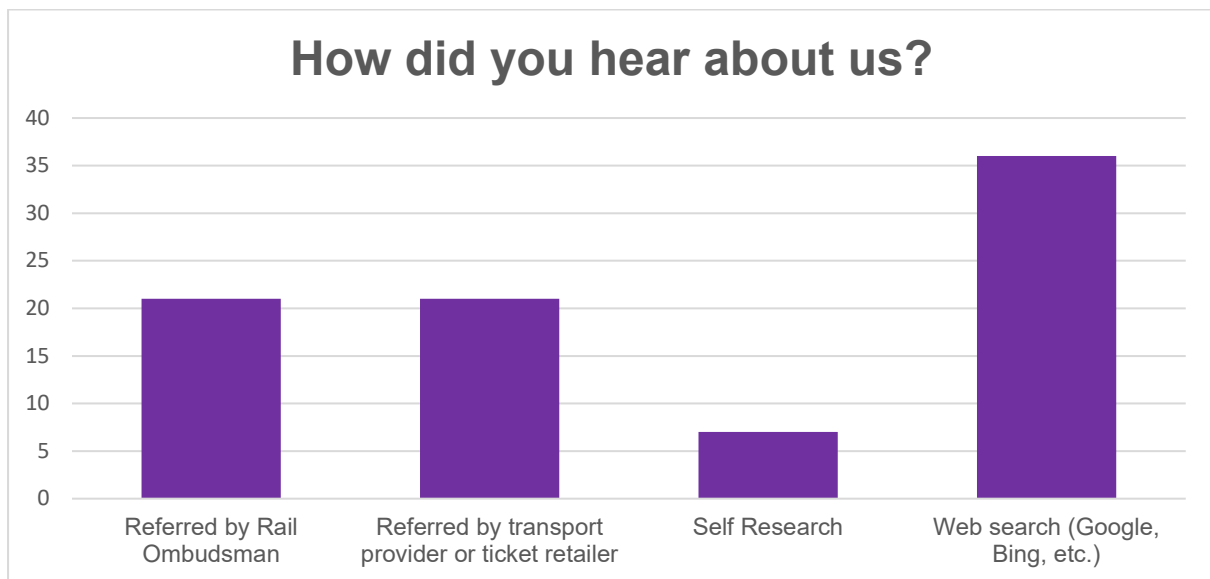


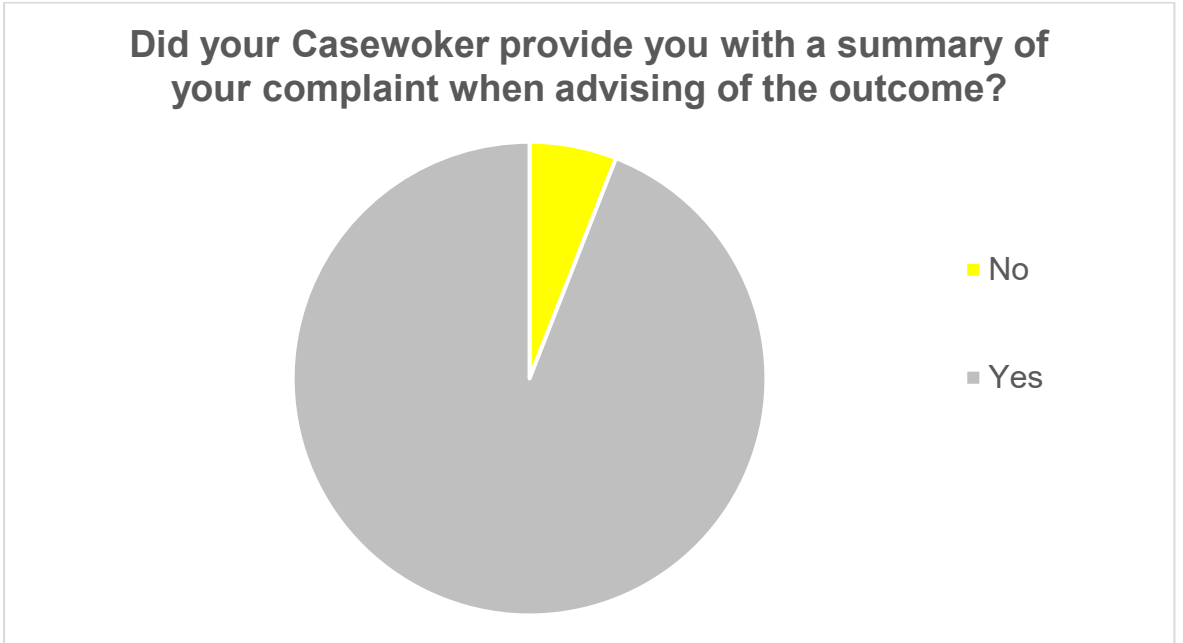
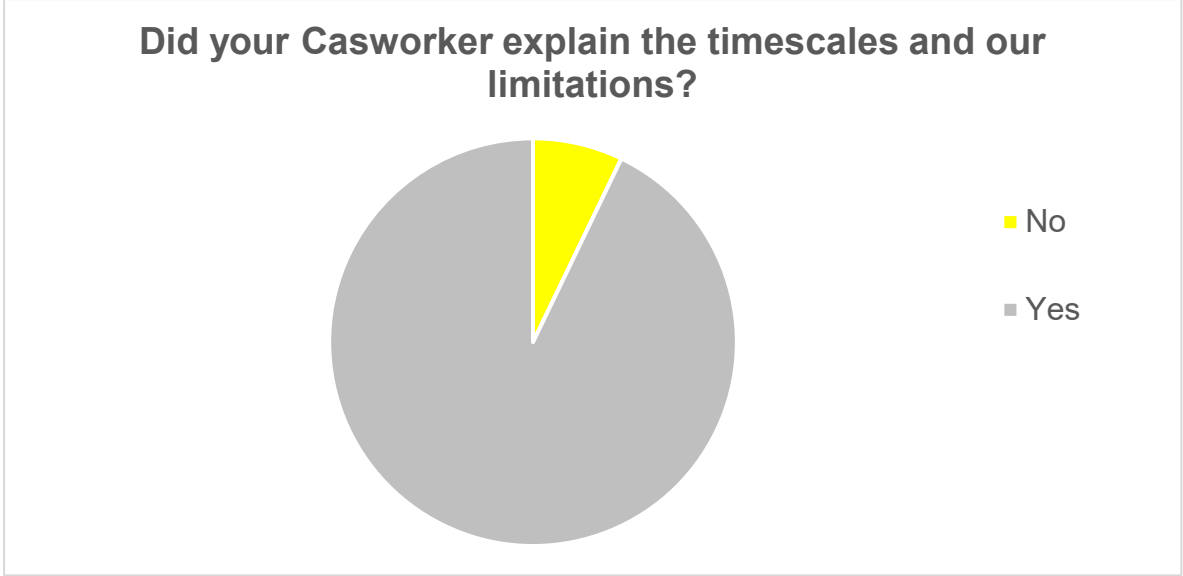
Considerations

The Board/Committee are asked to provide guidance and feedback on issues mentioned on page 5 regarding TfL ATPs and terms and conditions. The Head of Campaigns and Advocacy and the Head of Casework have made some initial enquiries into improving the TfL terms and conditions and the joining up of the ATPs of various modes. These are important issues but likely to be a time-consuming piece of work not easily absorbed into this years workload.

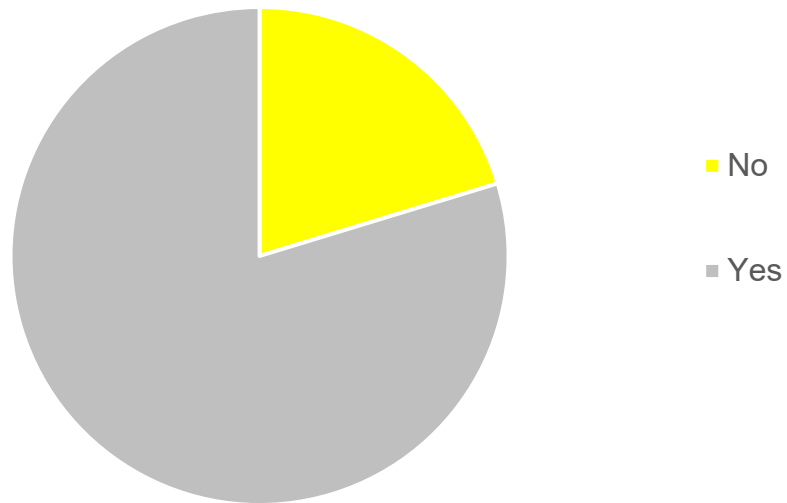
Appendix one – Survey responses

Although we receive a very low response rate (16% or 89) to our survey requests, comments nevertheless show that by strengthening the information of our limitations at the outset, some passengers better understand our position and scored us highly despite us not getting the outcome they were looking for.

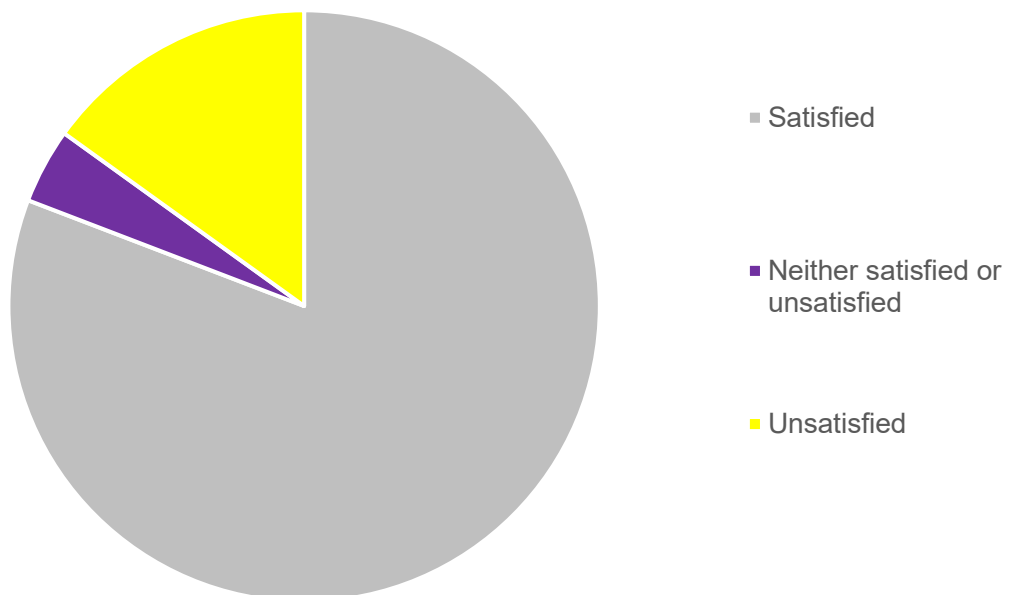




If we were unable to help, did we explain why?



Satisfaction results



In Q1, 81% of those who responded to our survey reported that they were satisfied which is the same as Q3

Passenger feedback from surveys.

Positive

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| Excellent service that fills the gap(s) between customer & operator |
| after contacting tfl many times, sean at london travelwatch was able to sort this for me to a favourable outcome |
| This has been a long and torturous process and I'm delighted that Sean has been able to achieve a positive outcome on my behalf |
| Sean Goss who was my case worker communicated well with me and acted professionally and got resolution for me. I was highly impressed with the timely correspondence and showing interest in my case. Well done Sean ! |
| Helpful and informative |
| Margaret couldn't of been more helpful I only had to send an email if I had a problem and Margaret was on the phone to me within the hour telling me what she had done about the problem and the next step. I felt very much supported at once thanks to Margaret. |
| The main issue was the time it took for TFL to respond- it took from September to march for them to effect a refund !! |
| Received quick resolution to my concern which was quite encouraging |
| thank you! |
| Natasha was brilliant from the start. She kept me updated and explained every step |
| A big thank you to Natasha Reed for her professionalism and the positive outcome of the appeal |
| Sean Goss was amazing and helped sort the situation with TFL smoothly and swiftly. I am really grateful. |
| Natasha Reed dealt with my case efficiently and professionally. She kept me updated all along and she informed me with the outcome stating my complain then stating TfL response in clear and understandable manner. I am grateful to her and all London Travel Watch team who assisted me in my case. |
| Sean has been great, I genuinely believe his intervention has had a positive impact for all Metrolink passengers due to changes they have made to contactless ticket inspection at Manchester Victoria |
| Although my case was ultimately resolved positively, I want to especially thank Natasha Reed for the way she handled it from the very beginning. She was honest about what Transport Focus can and cannot do, explained everything clearly, and made sure I was informed at every step. Even if the outcome had been different, her professional and supportive approach gave me confidence that our concerns were taken seriously. I truly appreciate the human, respectful way in which she dealt with our case. |
| I was impressed that Maggie, the caseworker, immediately understood the issues of the case as it is a little unusual and got back to me almost by return. She then asked the right people the right questions and got a perfect result for me. |
| Once again, I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mags for all the support and help you've given me. |
| Extremely helpful service and as a result I was given a full refund on my ticket that was centre of the issue |

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| Thank you for all your help - accurate, speedy and useful! |
| I was completely satisfied with the service I received. This was my first ever dealing with the transport watchdog and was very grateful for the help I received. I would particularly like to note that my case officer Natasha Reed was extremely helpful and would like to place on record my thanks for her help in bringing this matter to a conclusion. |
| Not the watchdog's fault, but it was very frustrating to have to go through multiple complaints with the TOC, then the Ombudsmen, then Transport Focus - only to be told that they have little coercive power over TOCs. I hope that TF and the Ombudsmen will respond to the government's consultation on the future of the rail industry post-nationalisation vis a vis this issue. Train companies are not truly held to account; and there is dubious behaviour on issues such as delay repay, and pushing prosecutions incorrectly on revenue protection issues (eg the recent SJPN scandal, lack of clarity from RPIs over issuing penalty fares, TOCs having incorrect guidance - eg Northern to conductors, GTR over Gatwick Express fares). There needs to be an industry regulator which stands up for passengers, and has genuine coercive power; I'm not convinced that the DFT, ORR, Ombudsmen or TF currently does this. Additionally, if companies were charged by complaint, or for use of the Ombudsmen in deadlock cases (who pays currently?), might cases get resolved quicker and more satisfactorily, and might TOCs think twice before employing said dubious practices? |
| Even though the watchdog has no authority the fact they supposed our appeal gave us the confidence to challenge the rail operator. |
| Reaching out your service was really helpful. Thank you |
| My case worker Natasha Reed was amazing and got me the result i wanted which was cancellation of the ticket as my appeal had been rejected 3 times. Reaching out to yourself made all the impact as without her appeal I wouldnâ€™t have got the result as I had tried 3 times prior and with her support and explanation of everything, we gained positive outcome. Iâ€™m so pleased, everything was achieved within 3 days. Thankyou Natasha for your support and understanding - I will always remember your efforts & understanding of my daughters case and appealing this for us. X |
| Caseworker, had clear communication and followed up on numerous occasions on my behalf. |
| Margaret Croucher, who handled my complaint, was extremely efficient, keeping me informed at all points of the investigation progress. A real credit to the Transport Watchdog Team. Many thanks to her and any other colleagues that assisted in sorting out Eurostar's Incompetence. Yours sincerely, W.J.Freebury. |
| Initially I was given the wrong information by an inexperienced member of your staff. An experienced member of staff had to oversee eventually and told me to pursue my enquiry with the Rail Ombudsman. But only after I had submitted all my evidence to your organisation; a long winded and time consuming process, on top of my complaint with Greater Anglia. |
| I found Mags Croucher and TraveWatch to be most helpful in resolving my case on my behalf. She was very professional and gave a clear understanding throughout the case. Her advice was much appreciated. The outcome was |

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| positive which I am thankful. My case was handled proficiently and expertly. Thank you TravelWatch and I would highly recommend. |
| It was perfect service, very happy and relived with the help that was provided. |
| The caseworker got to the heart of the problem immediately and put this to TfL. This resulted in an apology from them and the refund that I was seeking plus compensation. |
| Margaret was a great handler and I hope the organisation works towards having more authority over the train operators |
| I would like to thank Margaret very much for resolving my issue. I shouldâ€™ve been able to resolve this myself. I have sent numerous emails filling in forms making phone calls and no one was listening to me so Iâ€™m extremely grateful to Margaret for resolving my complaint. |
| I received a prompt response to my issue and my caseworker followed up very quickly with Greater Anglia, who in turn responded positively and reimbursed me for the inconvenient taxi fare. Overall, I was relieved it was dealt with so quickly and efficiently. |
| I am grateful that this watchdog exists and operates as intended, without it I would have pretty much lost faith in the rail industry and that is coming from someone who worked in the industry for 4 years within Network Rail |
| While I appreciate the contribution Travel Watch made, the outcome fell short of LNR coming in the open to apologize for the pain the inflicted on my life and explaining to me where my first instalment postal order was. By saying that they can't trace the postal order in their system, they are exposing themselves to me by giving me a picture that LNR has some fraudsters working within their system, hence, the unanswered question of where is my postal order and who cashed it if it's not LNR? |
| Very good service. Worthwhile and helpful Very much needed |
| Sean Goss contacted Trainline and they issued a refund on 21 March 25, after months of excuses. Well done Sean. |
| You were awesome and the caseworker was fantastic |
| Thanks for all your efforts but what I feel I gained from this is that TOCs can basically do what they want without listening to anyone and itâ€™s no wonder they end up being shamed in public, often many years later, for their actions. I was told that my case was outside of the Rail Ombudsmanâ€™s scope but that Transport Focus have no power. So Northern can basically do what they like with regard to penalty fares. Roll on the next SJP or Â£12 minimum fare with a railcard fiasco. |
| A partial refund was offered. Better than nothing. |
| Case officer empathised with my complaint against Southern Railway. Southern Railway had to be really pressed to get any detailed information. They still do not accept responsibility for on board passenger safety it is all up to us if no conductor. I learnt towards the end that Passenger Focus have no real power over Operators. If they are intransigent like Southern Railway they just get away with it. I hoped that this case would lead to safety accountability for me and others for future journeys. However this did not happen. You are operating with your hands tied behind your back. Thanks for trying. |

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| FRIST CLASS Service - WOW was not expecting such attention, I felt it was human to human, well done, shame on Railcard for wasting such time on such a reasonable matter. |
| Without your help, we would not have got the honest response that we eventually did from Northern. Thank you! |
| Really pleased in the outcome of my case, and you could not have been any more professional |
| I thought the support and service you offered was excellent and just hope that TFL are held to task over the level of service they provide and that borders between poor and abysmal. |

Negative

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| I,m very disappointed |
| I feel absolutely let down with the manner at which the support was rendered and the tone on the summary given. |
| Felt bit of a waste of time |
| It appears the train companies can do what they want and are not held accountable. |
| What is the point of your existence if you have absolutely no leverage over private transport companies, which (can) do whatever they want. |
| Very disappointed that the Rail Ombudsman is making referrals which it must have already concluded that you have no authority to address the underlying issues. |
| As a rail user it has proved impossible for any party to respond to my complaint. It feels I am being pushed around the system in a Kafkaesque manner with no one wanting to deal with GWR. Who can help me challenge the fairness of a clearly unfair and deeply punitive GWR policy??? |
| For some reason my original communication by letter was returned address unknown, Despite the fact I used address given on website |
| My complaint was lost. |
| This was not a helpful experience for me. If the outcome is that this service cannot in fact secure an outcome from the relevant train operator, then I do not understand the point of the service. For over 15 years, the TOC in question has simply declined to address the problem. If you cannot require it to do so, who can? How can a TOC - which is after all spending public money - be unaccountable in this way? |
| I have been sending emails since 2022 to TFL in regards to the case of their disruption of my bank accounts and driving discounts Only when finding TravelWatch was there a response â€¦. TfL offered Â£50 that I thought would get the case opened for proper discussion seeing this took years â€¦. I then asked for TravelWatch to appeal against such a small sum that doesnâ€™t equate the 8 months of disruption to my schedule, the TravelWatch reply was that Iâ€™d need to find a solicitor, theyâ€™ve done all they can â€¦.ive searched , Iâ€™ve emailed a few from the London list of pro bono & community solicitors (2) have suggested other places & Iâ€™m still on the search , I havenâ€™t cashed the check & a barrister friend advised that the sums of money that were debited and other cost should be compensation |