



Spotlight on

# Casework

**As this board meeting is not at the end of the quarter, the contents are instead focused on upcoming changes in the industry that may cause passenger dissatisfaction and an uplift in appeals. In addition, there is further information about bus complaints.**

**The four topics covered are**

- **Eurostar - visas and border control**
- **Changes to rail tickets refund policy**
- **Rail replacement services**
- **Bus driver complaints**

## **Entry/exit system at St Pancras (not live as of 17 February)**

As St Pancras is the border for France, passengers will need to complete the EES process via terminals for each passenger just before checking in. Eurostar have said that passengers will be advised on their ticket at what time they should arrive at the station to complete the process which will entail finger print scans and other information.

It is not yet known if the French Border Police at St Pancras may also require evidence of medical insurance, return tickets, sufficient funds and pre booked accommodation details from some or all passengers.

For passengers travelling by air, this process will be completed on arrival.



## Entry/exit system further information

- France has provided the processing terminals to the UK for passengers to use. There are three spaces within St Pancras Station. Premium passengers and those requiring additional assistance, will be able to use the machines near check in. Standard passengers will use the space opposite the entrance to Thameslink. The third space is located on the upper level and will be opened to departing passengers during very busy periods.
- The EES process must be completed each time a journey is made. Full biometric checks will be carried out the first time and every three years thereafter. The process in the intervening years will be quicker but still be completed.
- Eurostar have recruited staff to help and advise passengers to use the EES processing terminals. These staff cannot interfere with or override the system. Passengers experiencing issues will be sent to the staffed desks for help.
- It is important to remember that the information to be provided before travel including how and when, is the decision of the French border control and not Eurostar.

**The ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System) visa process will come on line about six months after the EES is up and running. Passengers will have to purchase a visa on line before arriving at St Pancras.**

# Changes to refund policy

The current refund conditions state that a passenger has up to 28 days to claim a refund if they decide not to travel.

On 1 April 2026, passengers will have to submit a refund request **by 23.59 the day before they travel** in order to claim a refund.

Some passengers may still be able to claim a refund if they have exceptional circumstances. These exceptions will not be written into the NRCoT and will instead be at a TOC's discretion.

This is a DfT led initiative and there has not been a consultation. The DfT have instigated this change as part of revenue protection. Some passengers are known to use a purchased ticket and then claim a refund if the ticket has not be scanned so therefore not registered on any system.



# Rail Replacement services

Under a derogation from Public Sector Vehicle Accessible Information Requirements, rail replacement bus services do not need to have announcements about stopping patterns and other information. The derogation expires in July and there is currently no indication that it will be allowed to continue.

There are currently only 244 coaches in the country that would meet these requirements and they are not spread out evenly. TfL-type buses cannot be used as rail replacement services as they have no luggage space, no seatbelts (required on a motorway) and are not very comfortable for longer journeys.

If the derogation is not extended, rail operators will be forced to issue “do not travel” notices which could be very challenging for emergency engineering works and for those passengers who book far in advance out of necessity or to get the best fare.

The DfT have run an innovation competition to come up with a cheap easy to install system that can be rolled out to all coaches. It remains to be seen if this will work or work in time.



# Bus driver complaints



A large number of bus complaints made to TfL and appeals to London TravelWatch are made as a 'bus driver complaint' or 'staff complaint'.

The next slide show common complaint themes where the passengers places blame onto the driver but, in reality, the driver has no control and cannot change the outcome.

## Bus driver appeals – the responsibility of the driver?

### Authentic driver complaint

The driver did not stop to pick me up.

The bus driver was rude/unhelpful.

The driver did not play the message to ask people to move out of the wheelchair space.

The driver let me on without a ticket but then I was penalty fared.

I didn't realise the bus was on diversion. No announcements were made.

Driver didn't stop to let me off.

The driver was driving too fast/slowly.

### Not a driver complaint

The driver did not stop to pick me up (stop was closed).

I've been waiting over 45 minutes for a bus.

The driver did not force buggies to move out of the wheelchair space.

Driver would not let me on with my buggy because he said the space was full. But I'd been waiting in the rain for 15 minutes.

The driver curtailed the bus early. Again.

The bus should at least curtail further down the road but the driver wouldn't listen to me.

Driver stopped for two minutes to 'regulate' the service. This made me late.

Driver wouldn't turn on the heating/AC