

Casework report

Q1 April to June 2026/27

Overview

Casework performance Q1 headlines

- Far fewer London TravelWatch appeals were received in April than in preceding months. Despite month-on-month increases in May and June, overall the number of appeals received in Q1 was much smaller than in Q4.
- Transport Focus cases received fell in Q1 following a steady rise over the course of 2025/26.
- We resolved 159 cases for London TravelWatch and 126 for Transport Focus (248 and 143 in Q4).
- Case closure within 35 working days has been sustained at over 80% of appeals for the fourth consecutive quarter
- Initial contact received in this quarter was primarily around fares, penalty fares and the provision of information
- London TravelWatch's continued higher rate of success compared with Transport Focus reflects their different modal/operator remits

What has happened in the industry that has impacted the CW team

- Although still low numbers in total, there is an increasing amount of contact about performance across all rail operators. Passengers have an expectation that performance will improve following appeals raised which we are not able to achieve.
- The Rail Ombudsman have upheld more appeals this quarter than any other quarter since they started in 2018. The cases are primarily about delay repay.
- London TravelWatch case numbers related to penalty fares have reduced particularly since contactless payment started to be accepted at Stansted airport in April.
- We have noted, but not yet seen casework on, passengers who were advised not to travel during the heatwave, are being denied refunds.

Other issues impacting the casework team

- We have trialled the new survey and its working well. The survey information provided in the Q2 paper will separate responses made to London TravelWatch and Transport Focus.
- We are seeing more passengers claiming various issues such as ADHD as part of a revenue protection appeal. These are difficult to respond to whilst not diminishing the passengers individual challenges.

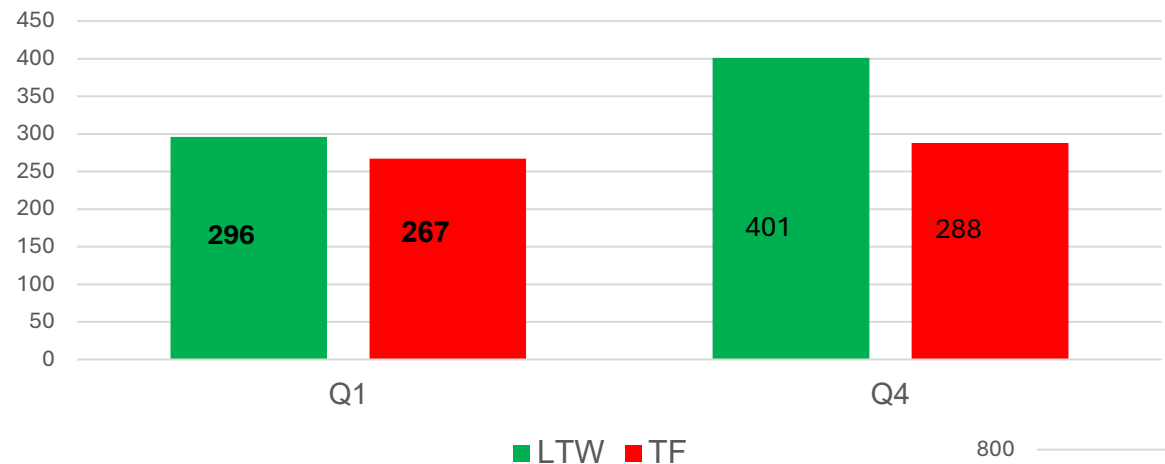
Glossary of terms	
Appeal	A complaint that has already been made to a transport provider or ticket retailer.
Case	Electronic file where all information from a passenger contact is held.
Consultation	The industry seeks to make changes and invites formal responses.
Enquiry	A passenger is asking questions 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.
Ticket 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.

Statistics and data

Q1

Appeals received recent and historic

Appeals received Q1 vs Q4

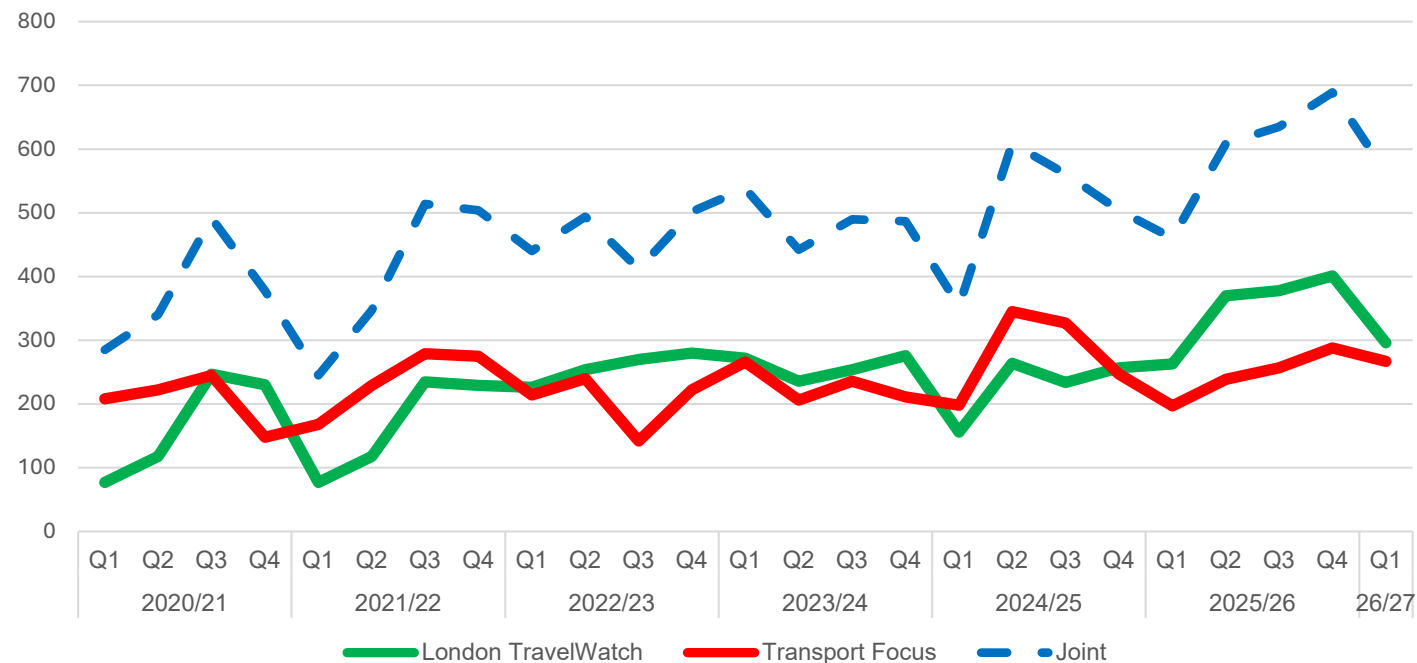


Both London TravelWatch and Transport Focus saw a decrease in appeal contact in Q1 compared to Q4.

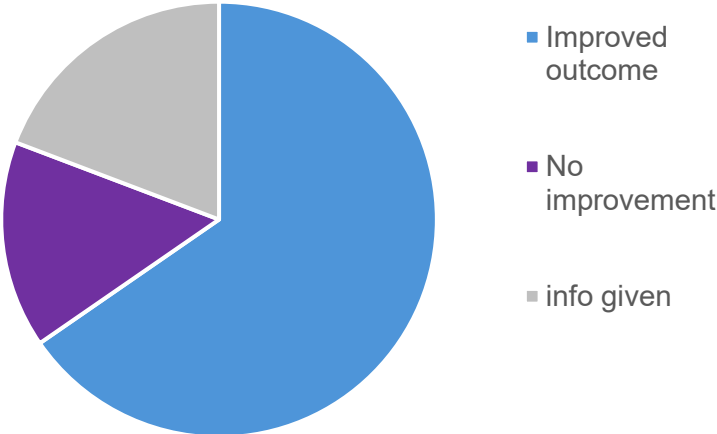
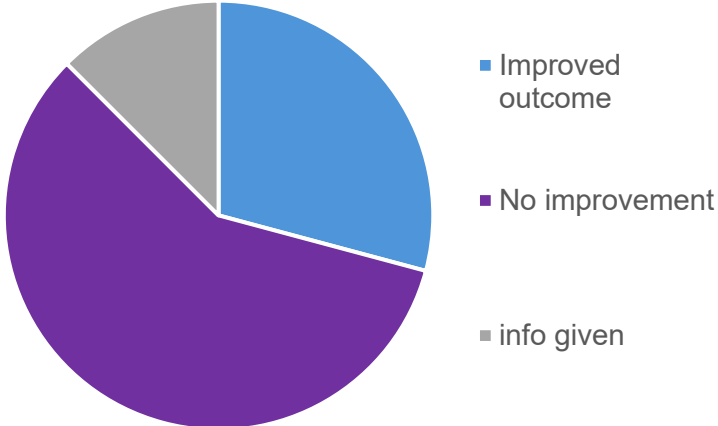
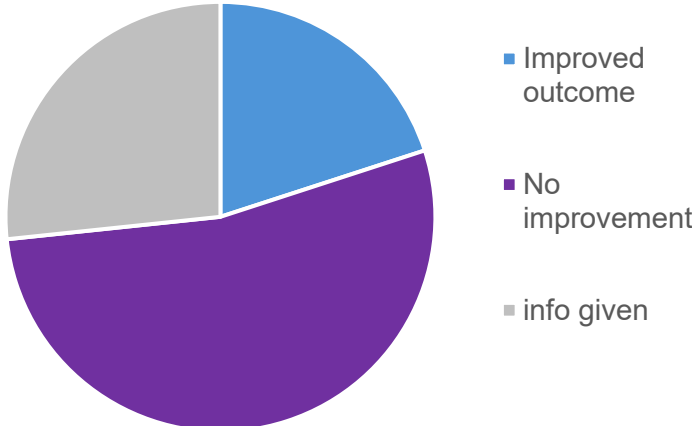
London TravelWatch received a considerably lower number of appeals in Q1 compared to Q4.

Transport Focus appeals received has remained fairly steady in the last few quarters.

Appeals received from Q1 2020/21



Transport Focus – resolved appeals. Top three TOCS

Northern – 33 appeals	WMT – 32 appeals	GWR – 18 appeals																		
 <table><tr><td>Improved outcome</td><td>79%</td></tr><tr><td>No improvement</td><td>14%</td></tr><tr><td>info given</td><td>7%</td></tr></table>	Improved outcome	79%	No improvement	14%	info given	7%	 <table><tr><td>Improved outcome</td><td>19%</td></tr><tr><td>No improvement</td><td>62%</td></tr><tr><td>info given</td><td>19%</td></tr></table>	Improved outcome	19%	No improvement	62%	info given	19%	 <table><tr><td>Improved outcome</td><td>17%</td></tr><tr><td>No improvement</td><td>61%</td></tr><tr><td>info given</td><td>22%</td></tr></table>	Improved outcome	17%	No improvement	61%	info given	22%
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Over 79% of appeals are about penalty fares or other revenue protection. 14% about refund policy. 52% of appeals about revenue protection had an improved outcome.	81% of appeals are about penalty fares or other revenue protection. 22% of appeals about revenue protection had an improved outcome.	22% of appeals are about penalty fares or other revenue protection. 21% quality on board 17% of appeals had an improved outcome																		

Case example including outcome

Mr M incurred a penalty fare whilst travelling with WMT but Mr M stated that he had a valid ticket. All appeals via the official channel had been rejected. Although not part of the penalty fare appeal process, both watchdogs will always assess appeals to see if there is something we can do to help. When the Caseworker looked through the notes, it was clear that there was only one minutes different to the timestamp on the ticket purchase and that of the penalty fare. This meant that the passenger had boarded a train without a valid ticket so any appeal would be rejected.

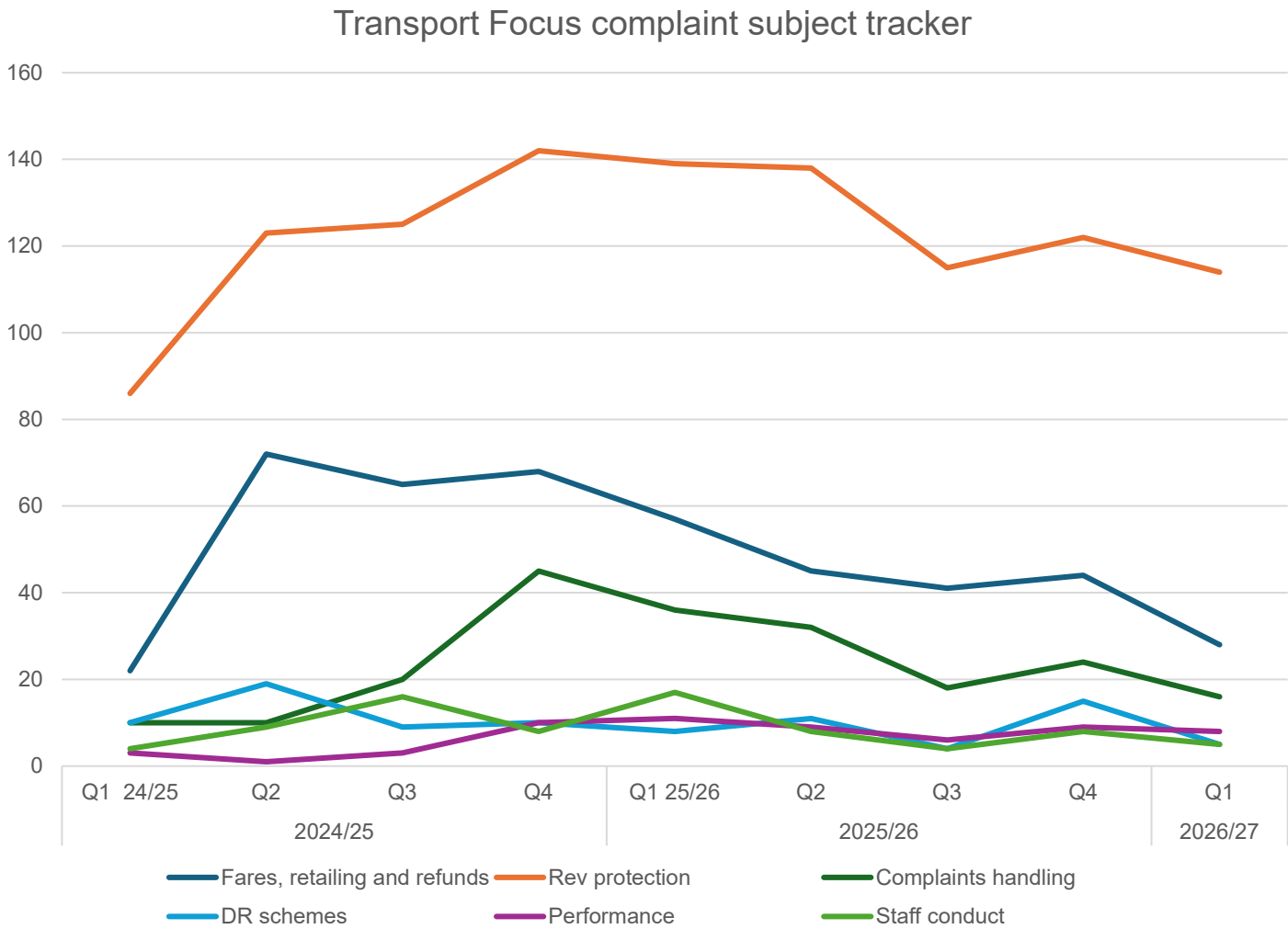
Transport Focus case study and subject tracker

Case study

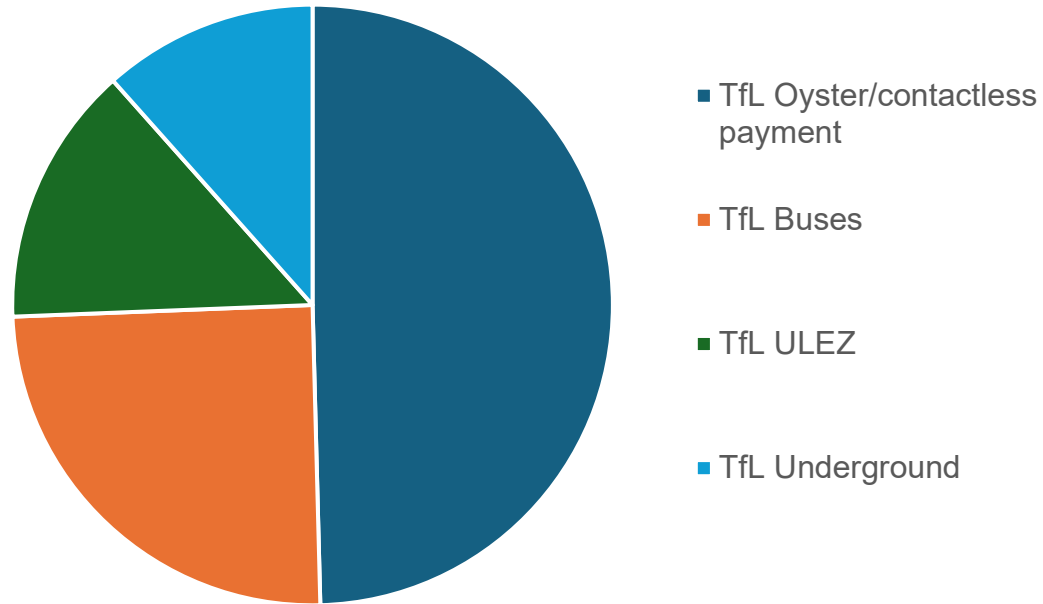
Mr G doesn't travel on the trains very often. He booked his ticket on line and unknowingly purchased an advance ticket for his return journey. Because he was none the wiser, he then travelled on a train different to that on his ticket.

Mr G ticket was inspected on board and because it was not valid he was then asked to pay the full fare. Mr G paid but appealed to Transport Focus because he felt this to be unfair.

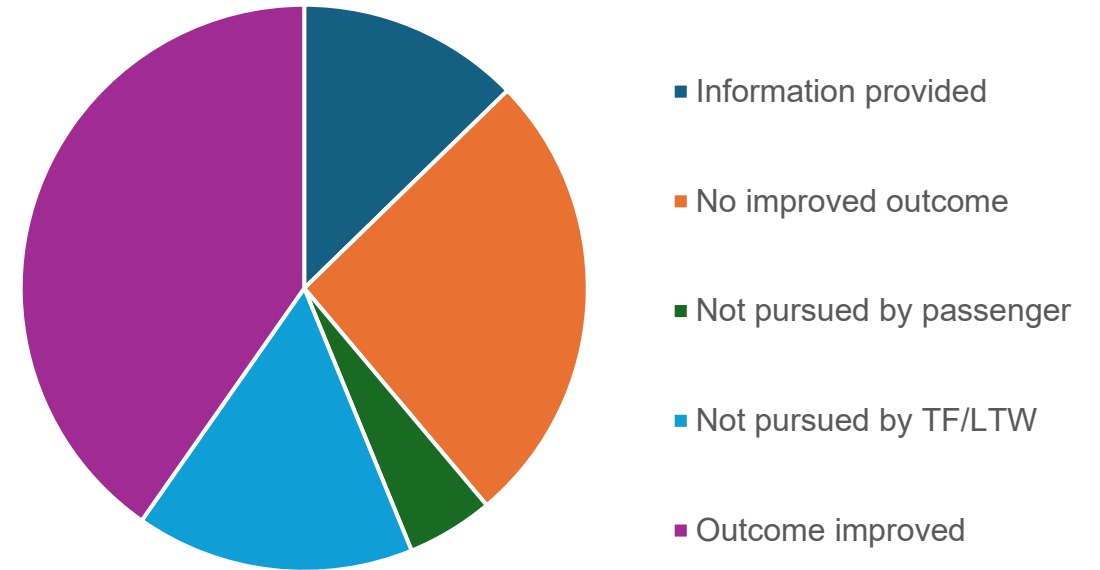
Following Mr G's appeal to us, we asked Trainpal if they would consider making any offer as it was an error due to unfamiliarity. Although, advance tickets do not usually attract a refund, Trainpal offered to refund this as a good will gesture. We were also able to help Mr G understand the fare structures for his future journeys so he would not fall foul of this again.



TfL – appeal information



TfL appeal outcomes

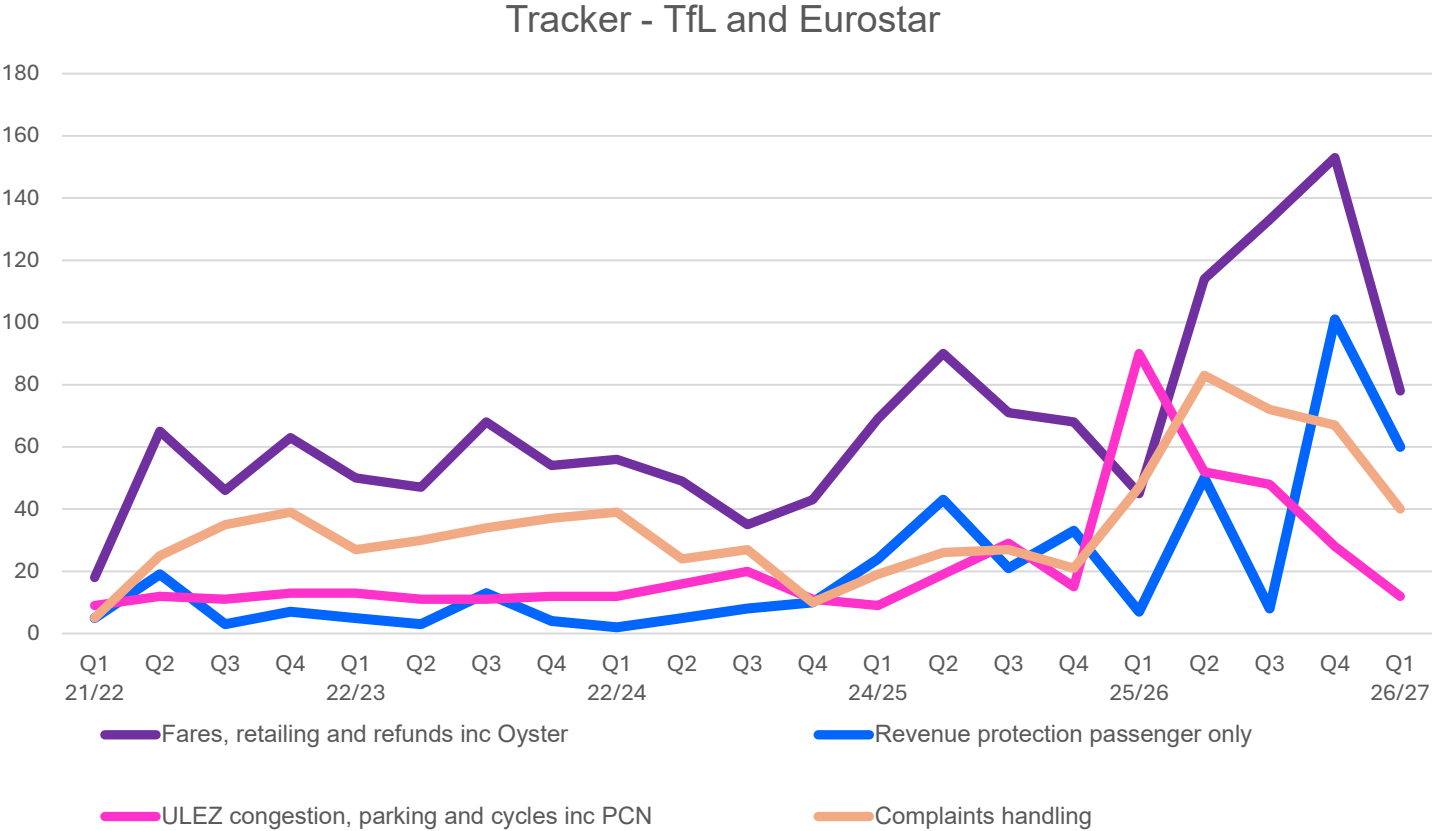


TfL appeals

Oyster and contactless can be used for payment on all TfL modes plus many rail operators in the London area. It is therefore expected that appeals for these payment types would be higher. Appeals are general around quality of station, stop or bus//tube, penalty fares, Oyster issues, refunds, staff complaints and delays.

Non passenger appeals includes contact from drivers about penalty charge notices for ULEZ, congestion charge, Blackwall and Silvertown tunnels and parking.

TfL and Eurostar case study and tracker



TfL Oyster case example

Passenger believed that due to a faulty gateline at a Tube station, she was overcharged. She tried to resolve directly with TfL but felt that she wasn't being listened to.

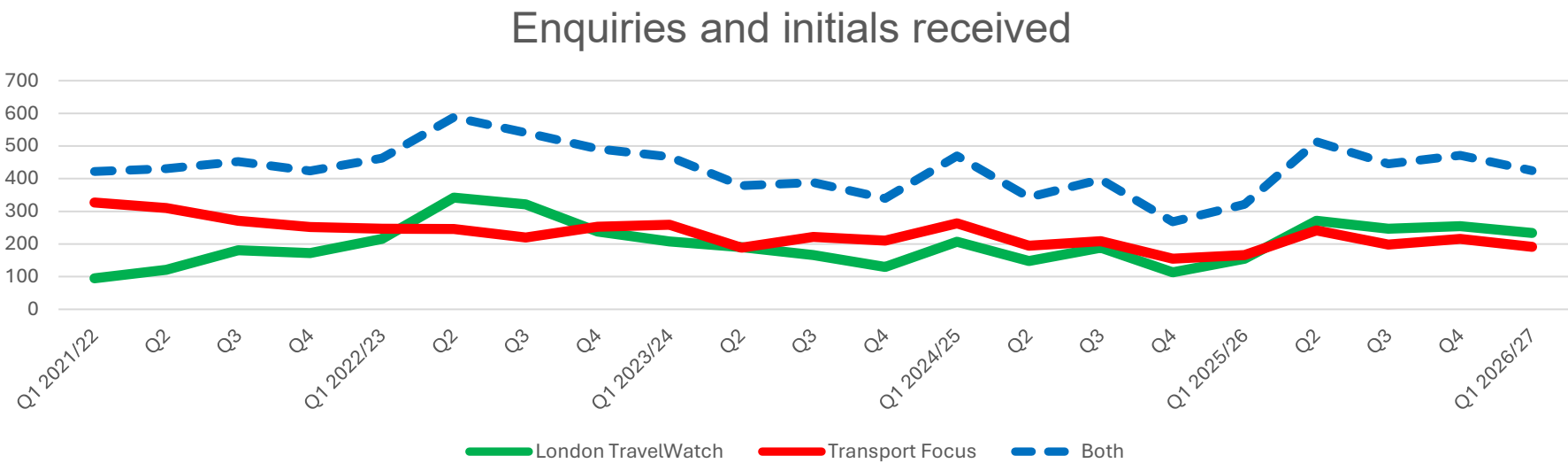
After London TravelWatch took up the case, TfL confirmed that the correct fare had been charged but offered a small good will gesture in recognition of the initial poor customer service.

And the passenger said

Thank you for your help.

Initials and Enquiries

The majority of enquiry and initial contacts are from those who have not yet contacted the transport provider or ticket retailer.



London TravelWatch

Contact was primarily around fares, refund inc refund policy, penalty charge notices, penalty fare notices, staff (including bus driver complaint) and service performance.

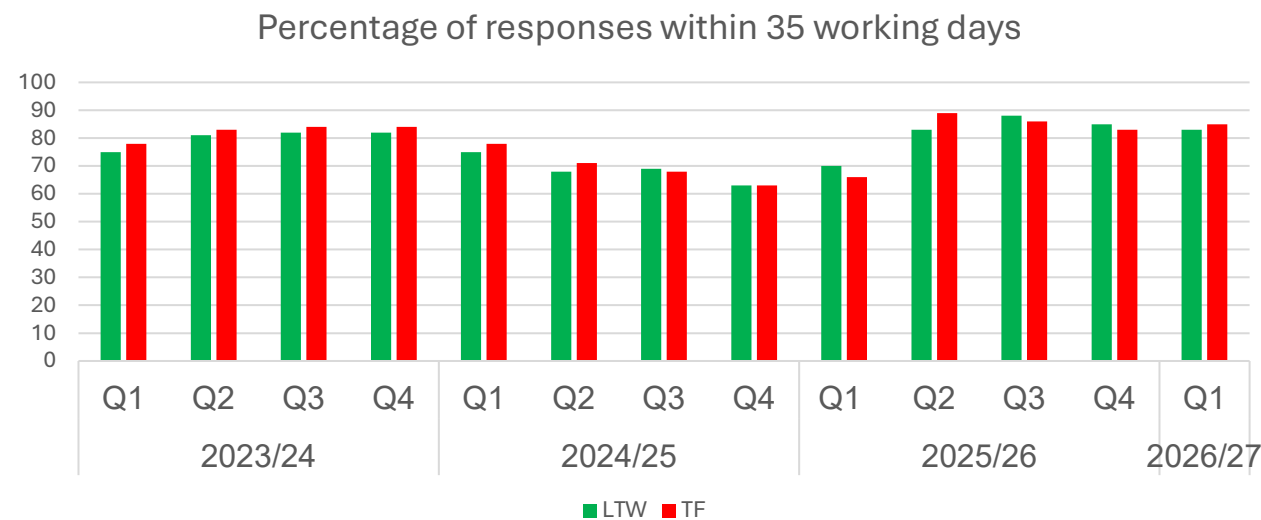
Modes/TOCs – TfL Oyster, Streets, Buses, Rail and Eurostar.

Transport Focus

Contact was focused on fares, penalty fares, provision of information or the lack of it and refunds.

TOCs - Railcards, WMT and Cross Country.

Casework performance and quality



Response time update

The percentage of cases closed within 35 working days is 83% for London TravelWatch and 85% for Transport Focus.

CW monthly checks

Monthly checks on Caseworkers case administration, challenges and passenger liaison have demonstrated that the team are performing well.

These checks are recorded each month and shared with Transport Focus.

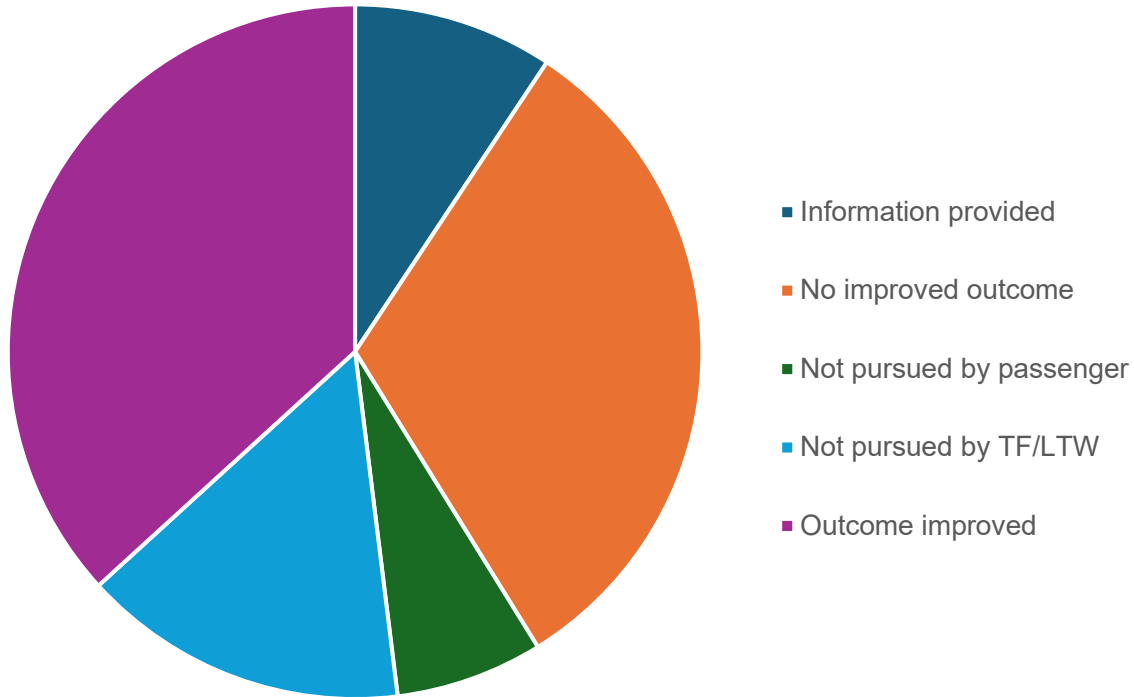
Cases reopened (comebacks)

Cases are reopened if the passenger sends additional information to support our ability to appeal or is unhappy with our response and wants further information.

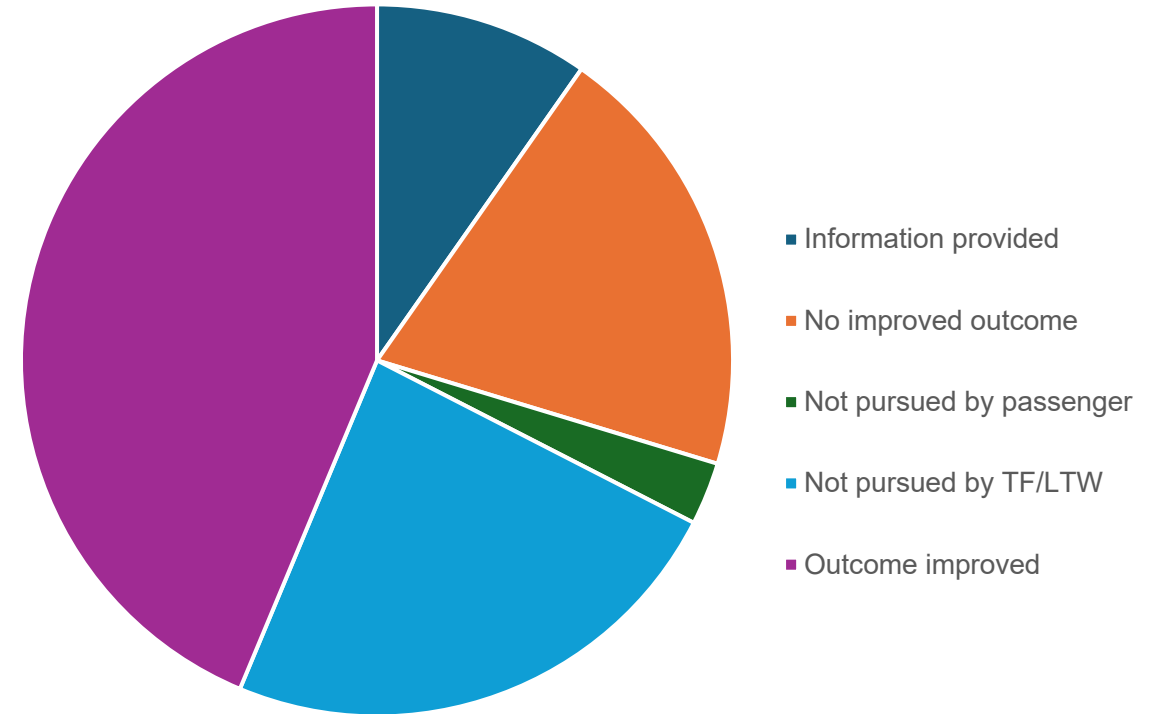
We received 39 comebacks overall in Q1 and all cases were re-opened so that a new response could be sent. One Transport Focus and four London TravelWatch cases that was reopened and challenged further resulted in an improved outcome

Appeal outcomes

Transport Focus appeal outcomes



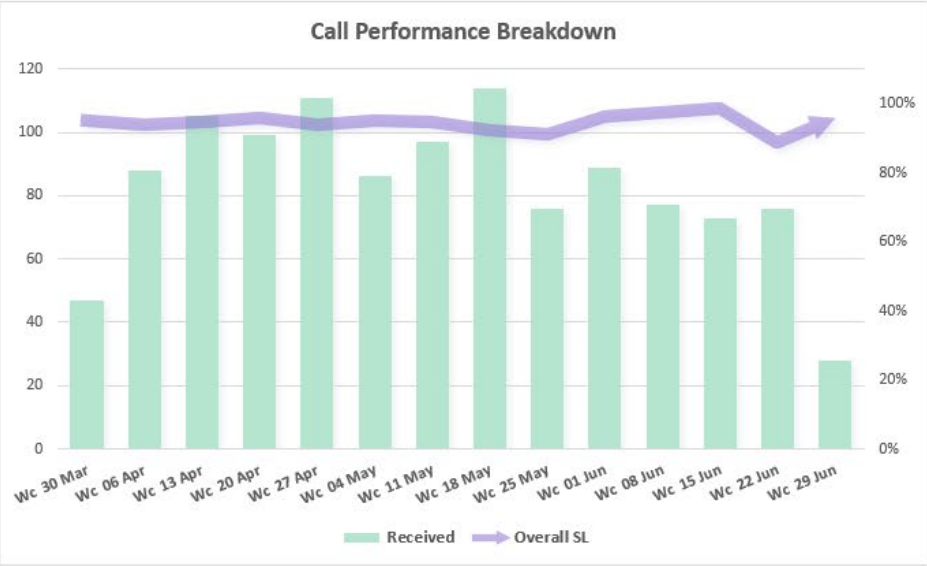
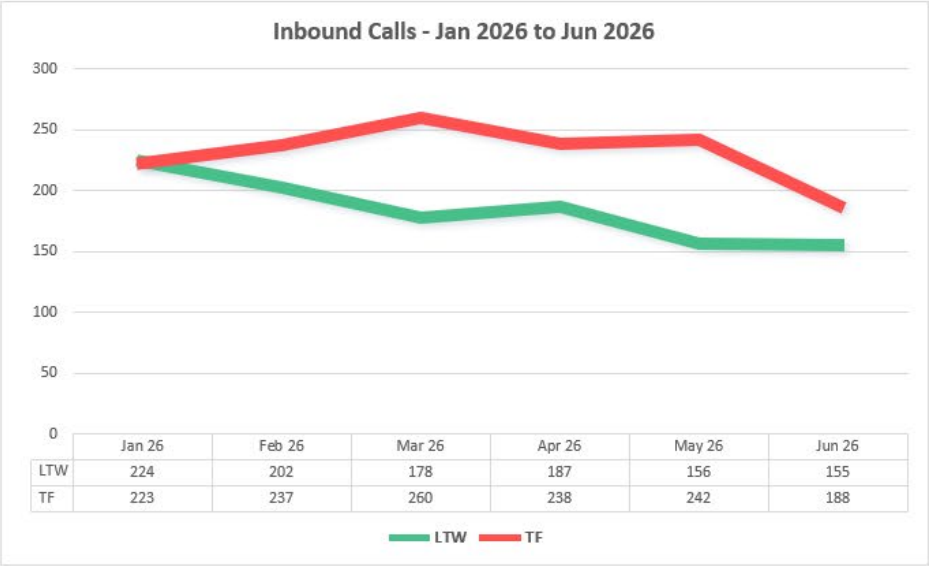
London TravelWatch appeal outcomes



London TravelWatch is still the appeals body for most of TfL and all of Eurostar. This means that we are the first and frequently only body who will assess passenger appeals.

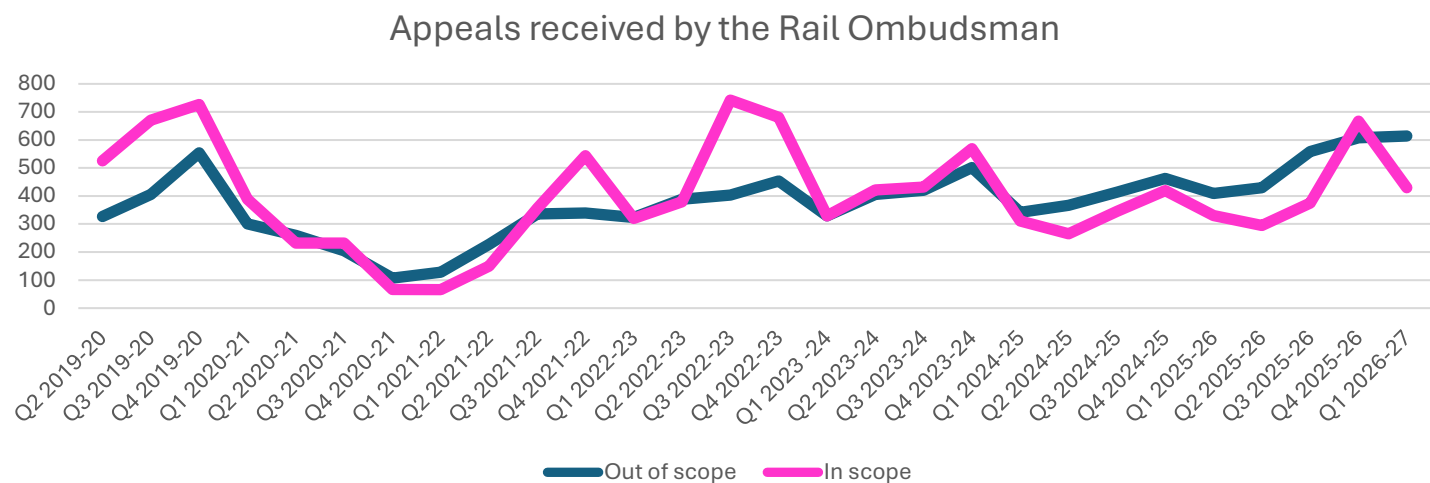
Transport Focus mode is rail for which there is a Rail Ombudsman. The majority of appeals sent to Transport Focus are related to policy or have already been via the independent penalty fare appeal process.

Foundever (outsourced provider)



Foundever reported that contact volumes remained consistent, with volume dropping in the latter part of the quarter. There are no as service levels were maintained and finished strongly.

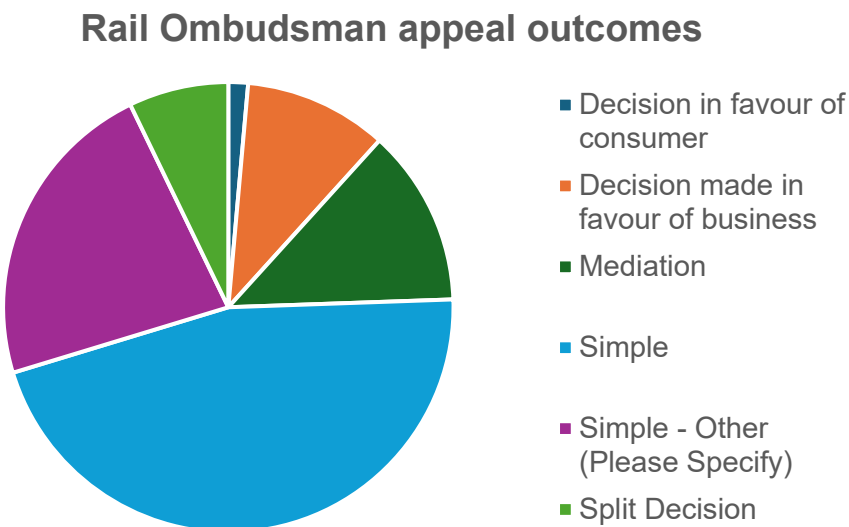
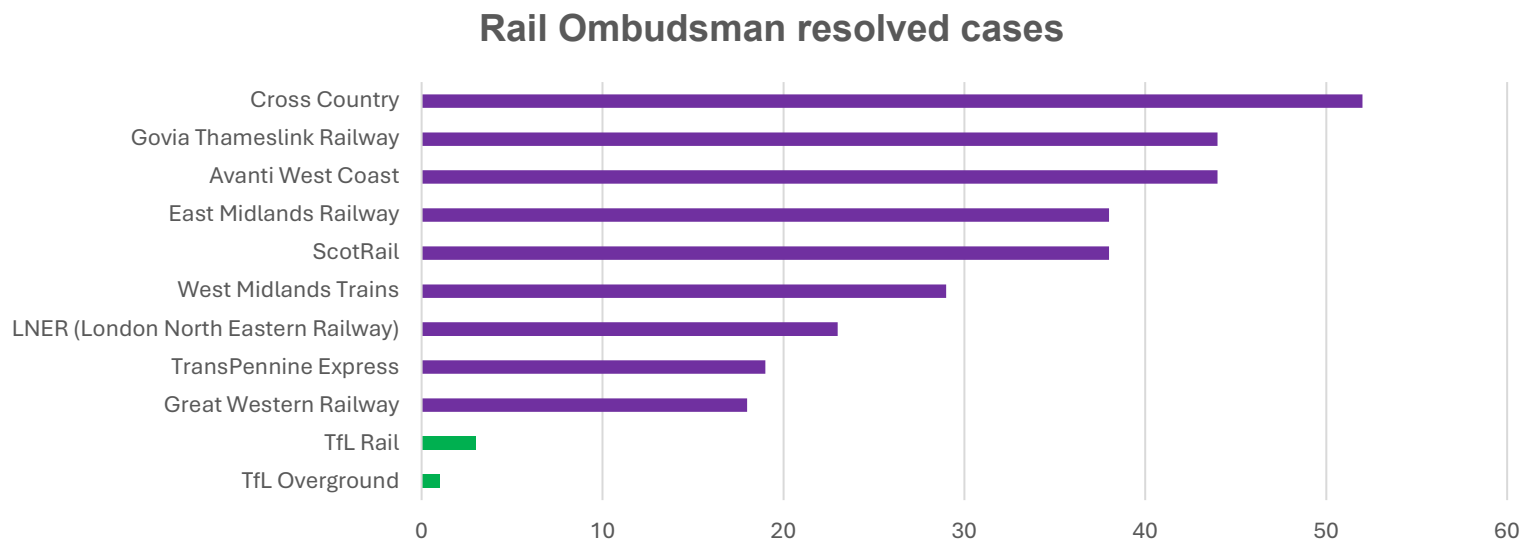
Rail Ombudsman appeals stats



The Rail Ombudsman received 403 in scope cases in Q4.

Of the 614 out of scope cases

- 25 were transferred to LTW
- 78 were transferred to TF



Graph above shows top nine TOCs that the RO received the most contact and the three London specific TOCs

Rail Ombudsman appeal information

The information below related to information contained in an appeal made to the Rail Ombudsman but not is not necessarily the primary issue. The sample data is quite small – less than 600 cases.

Avanti West Coast, Thameslink, Southern, Great Northern, CrossCountry and West Midlands Trains/London Northwestern Railway (LNWR)

Many complaints are no longer about the original rail disruption, but about how the complaint was subsequently handled.

Impact of disruption

Other issues that appears is the lack of real world understanding of impact of rail issues has on the passenger. Many operators were willing to provide statutory delay repay compensation or refund the original ticket where appropriate, but declined to cover costs passengers incurred as a direct result of disruption particularly persistent and ongoing disruption.

London Euston, London Victoria, Paddington, York, Three Bridges, Manchester Piccadilly, Liverpool Lime Street and Heathrow Airport

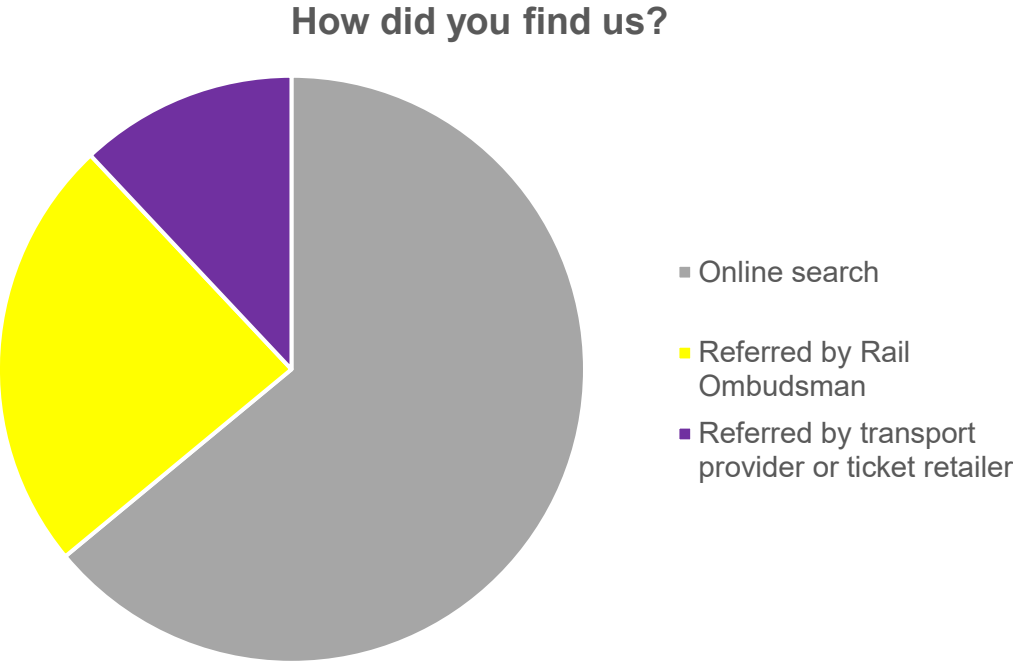
Complaints involving journeys through stations frequently became disputes over ownership rather than resolution, with the passenger being 'passed around' without any organisation taking responsibility.

Time taken

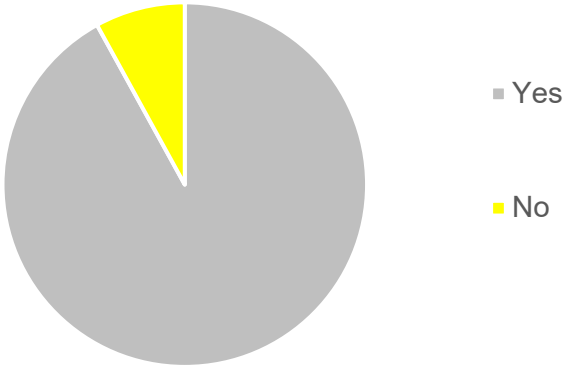
Several operators appeared to spend months disputing sums of only a few pounds.

Survey results (57 responses)

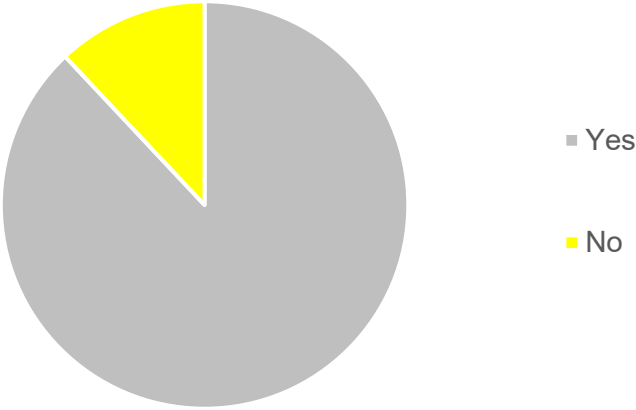
The survey has been amended. From Q2 the survey will be separated by Watchdog.



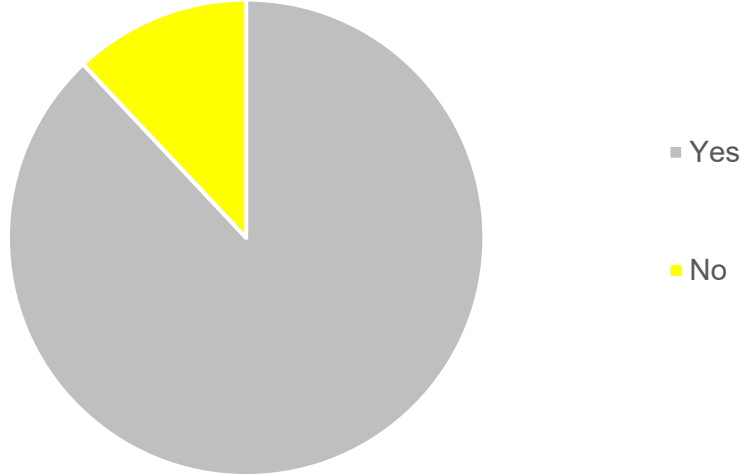
Did we explain what you could expect from our service and how long it was likely to take?



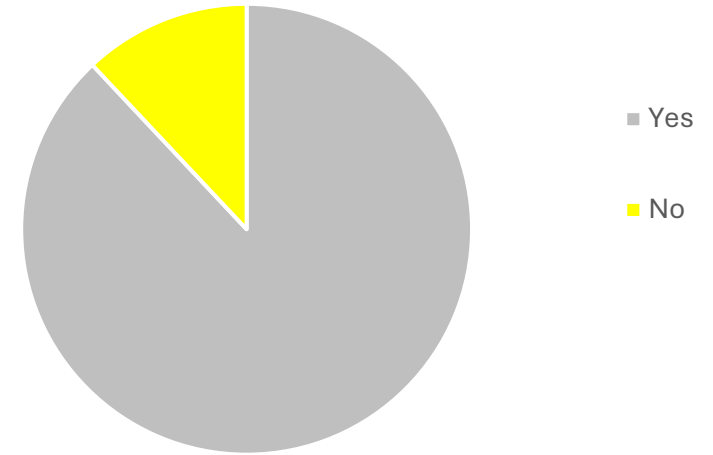
Did we provide a summary of your appeal in our final response?



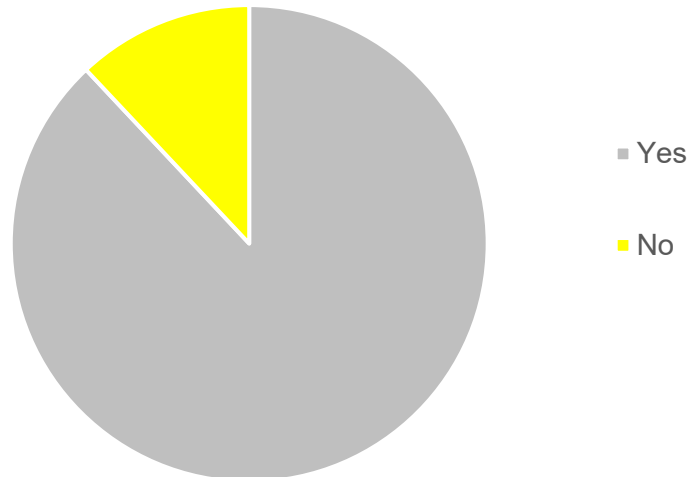
Was our service easy to use?



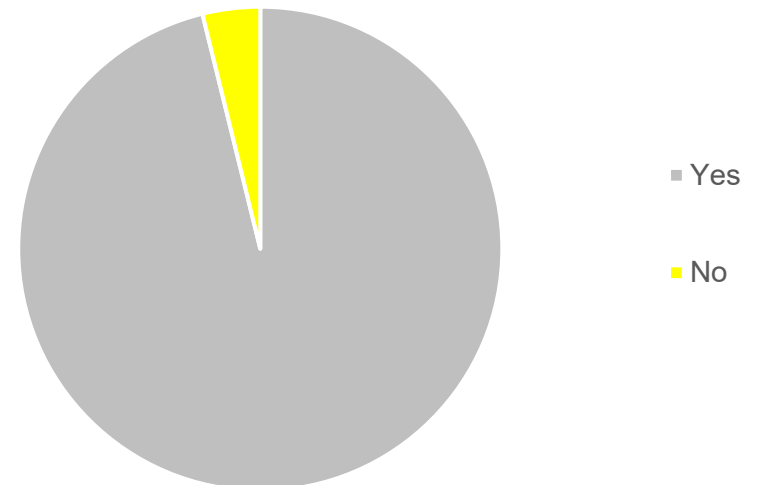
My Casework kept me informed about the progress of my case



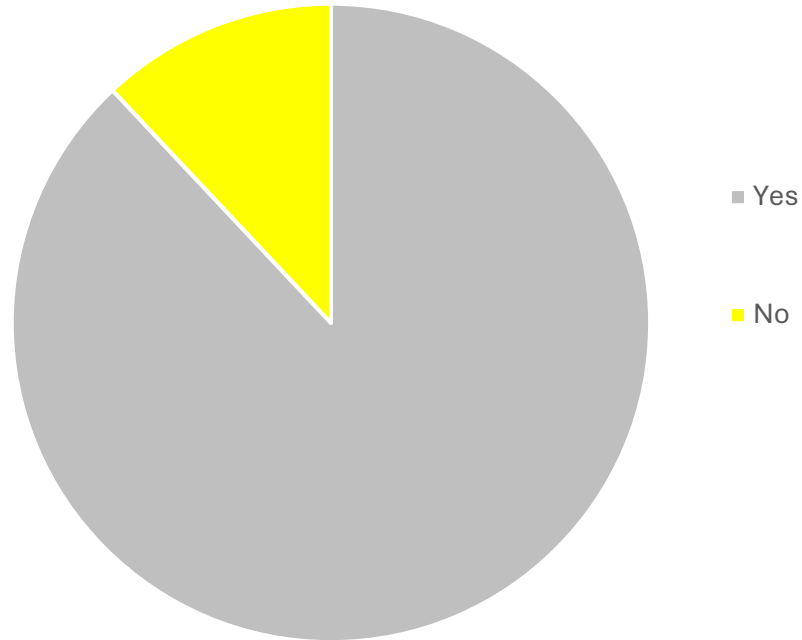
Was your Casework helpful and explained thing?



My Casework wrote clearly and in plain English



My Casework kept me informed about the progress of my case



In Q1, 76% of those who responded to our survey reported that they were satisfied with our service compared to 72% in Q4.

Four passengers said that we were powerless and lacked authority and one added that we were lazy and useless.

The majority of feedback was from those who made very positive comments and have clearly understood that their Caseworker achieved a positive outcome despite restrictions.

Positive feedback

The professionalism and customer care was exceptional, especially by Mags Croucher (Senior Casework Officer) who was above the norm in her attention and conclusion. Well done to her and all the team, and thank you for bringing my case to a satisfactory conclusion.

I was very happy with the outcome which wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't contacted you. For this, I say Thank you. once again.

Thank you so much for your help, you managed to obtain a partial reimbursement for me, while Eurostar was not cooperative at all to apply the law when I was contacting them as an individual.

Eurostar didn't answer me for more than a month, but when I wrote you they responded me the very same day and fulfilled all my requirements. I'm very happy with the service you have provided me. Thank you!

Thanks for your help and advice.

My issue was resolved by TfL only after I had referred my problem to you, but before you needed to take any further action. My conclusion was that your existence provides a valuable safety net for passengers. Thank you!

A lesson in not accepting the first answers to the complaint or to the Travelwatch response even. Grateful for Ms Croucher's help and clear communications throughout.

Positive feedback

Mags Croucher is amazing she got refund back in a quick time and kept me updated frequently! she was so kind and very detailed! thank you mags-

Mags Croucher was extremely helpful. I am very pleased with her response
great service! thanks again for everything

The caseworker was very helpful. It was not exactly the outcome I'd hoped for but I think she achieved the best possible outcome at that time and I am grateful to her for that.

My caseworker was really helpful and kept me updated at all times. I even had to recontact as the train provider hadnâ€™t done what they said they were going to do. I was really impressed with her and thank her for resolving my issue which had been discounted at each stage prior to her involvement.

I have used this service twice and believe it would benefit from greater awareness among potential users. The advisors are honest from the outset and provide clear, independent guidance. Although the outcomes were not what I had hoped for on either occasion, it is reassuring to have access to a service that offers impartial advice and actively supports clients throughout their claim.

Positive feedback

Really pleased with the outcome that was achieved. The communication from Sean Goss was sensitive and felt personalised to me (as opposed to an email template so many other organisations use).

Your case worker was great. I am just disappointed with the lack of power you have as a watchdog on TFL. TFL is a monopoly and when they fail to provide a service and then fail to refund a ticket, it should be in the power of the watchdog to enforce the policy of refund but where they are blatantly failing to follow their own process they should be fined. How do we get this power installed. its ridiculous that both your case worker and I had to send so many emails for them to do the right thing. disgusting. this process should be in place. I would like to know how i can support the watchdog further to making this happen. otherwise they are a monopoly that just does what they want and are not held accountable. please let me know. thanks

The senior caseworker officer managing my caseworker got my desired outcome in a timely manner. Her efforts were greatly appreciated.

Natasha reed was very very helpful and act on behalf of me fast did resolve the issue promptly and was in my favorite very impressed and happy

Positive feedback

I had met a dead end with the train company and my complaint fell outside the remit of the ombudsman so I was really grateful to have someone advocating for me. It very much seemed to me that as an individual, the train company were not prepared to listen to what I said or take into account the exceptional circumstances involved. I am absolutely certain that I would not have had such a positive outcome without the input of my caseworker. Interestingly, I didn't provide any new information to the caseworker but the train company reconsidered when approached by them whereas they would not accept the same information from me. The only issue I had was that I had to explain things over again when I thought I had given quite clear information.

Thank you so much Sean! I don't know what you said or did behind the scenes but I'm so pleased you managed to get my money back in full! Appreciate you and all your efforts!

The matter was simple: ridiculous signs forbidding stopping on a station forecourt which could have been removed in a week. Instead I was fuffed about for years from pillar to post with people whose clear responsibility it was to sort it out making silly excuses for inaction and trying to fob me off insultingly. It demonstrated public sector ineffectiveness at its worst. My caseworker was charming but was working within a straitjacket of demented procedures. Personally I would abolish the whole system and replace it with a couple of sensible middle-aged people empowered to make things happen. In the end the signs disappeared without explanation but with sighs of relief from railway customers. Apologies? Explanations? Forget it!

Negative feedback

Lazy and useless

Waste of time and this is a powerless regulator!

I take on board 'leaving aside the final outcome' means I am focusing on the way you deal with complaints. Effectively, you undertook one single round of correspondence with the train company. Although their reply addressed some of the matters you raised and pointedly ignored others, you showed no interest in following that up. Although their reply vindicated the complaint I had made, they did not indicate they intended to do anything about it, and you did not show any interest in following that up. If train companies are aware of this feature of your approach (and I am sure they are), then there will be no incentive to improve. That is why despite good ratings through most of this survey, I am relatively dissatisfied and unlikely to recommend you.

The assistance provided was entirely generic, without any meaningful effort to investigate the issues I reported, despite the detailed information I supplied and the fact that I had already spoken with bus drivers who confirmed that they repeatedly report the same problems but are ignored by TfL. The response amounted to nothing more than routine contact with bus operators, with no real willingness or authority to resolve anything. Based on my personal experience, Transport Watchdog functions as a resource with no practical value and no meaningful purpose.

You stated that you had no authority" to adjudicate, therefore it was a complete waste of time and effort and despite the operator now being supposedly back un der Government control, continue to do as they please. Totally unaccountable.