

**Marcus Clements**  
Head of Consumer Policy  
Directorate of Economics, Markets & Strategy  
Office of Rail and Road



Prea Duhra  
Franchise Manager  
Avanti West Coast

17 December 2020

Dear Prea,

## **Complaints handling satisfaction**

In July, we published the results of our survey on passenger satisfaction with train operators' complaints handling. This showed low levels of passenger satisfaction with Avanti West Coast's complaints handling arrangements<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this letter is to ask you to set out your plan to make improvements in this area.

### **Complaint handling survey**

As you are aware, ORR commissions this large-scale survey with passengers who have made a recent complaint to a train operator. The survey measures the passenger's satisfaction across a range of indicators related to the relevant operator's complaint handling process and subsequent outcome. We share the survey results with train operators quarterly to provide them with the opportunity to analyse their own performance and to identify areas driving dissatisfaction in order to make the necessary improvements.

An analysis of Avanti West Coast's results between December 2019 and March 2020 (Periods 10-13) showed that of the 3,707 Avanti West Coast complainants surveyed, only 27% were satisfied with the complaint handling process. This score is below the national weighted average for all operators<sup>2</sup> and indicates that Avanti West Coast's complaint handling arrangements are currently falling short of what we, and your passengers, expect.

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<sup>1</sup> Avanti West Coast began operating the West Coast Partnership franchise in December 2019, replacing Virgin Trains.

<sup>2</sup> National weighted average for satisfaction: Outcome: 31.0%. Process: 30.0%. For further details see: <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/media/1756/passenger-satisfaction-complaints-handling-factsheet-2019-20-q4.pdf>

## **Complaints handling**

Good complaint handling not only builds passenger trust, but also generates essential management information that operators can use to identify systemic or recurring problems to be corrected. In turn that helps build a culture of continuous improvement geared to meeting the evolving needs and expectations of passengers.

**Therefore, I shall be grateful if you will set out how you have used the survey results to understand the drivers of dissatisfaction in your complaints handling process, and the steps Avanti West Coast has taken, or has planned, to make the necessary improvements.**

## **Next steps**

I look forward to receiving your reply by **Friday 15 January 2021**.

Please send your response to my colleague Denise Brown:  
[Denise.Brown@orr.gov.uk](mailto:Denise.Brown@orr.gov.uk)

This letter and your reply will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcus Clements', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Marcus Clements**