



Consumer Expert Panel

2 July 2025 Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

Name	Organisation
Anne Heal	Chair, Non-Executive Director, ORR
Sarah Chambers (Apologies Item 2)	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Kate Denham (Apologies Item 1)	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Ralitsa Hiteva	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Claudio Pollack	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Marie Pye	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Dan Taylor	Transport Focus
Jacqui Russell	ORR
David Kimball (Item 1)	ORR
Sarah Robinson (Item 2)	ORR
Claire Clark	ORR
Apologies: Lewis Shand-Smith, Andrew Williams	Consumer Expert Panel Members

Item	Speaker	Time
Welcome	Anne Heal	10.15
Update on work of Consumer Team	Jacqui Russell	10.20
1. Assistance benchmarking framework	David Kimball	10.35
2. Redress for failed assistance	Sarah Robinson	11.15

Item	Speaker	Time
3. Horizon scanning	Anne Heal	11:55
4. Panel ways of working	Anne Heal	12:10
Closing remarks and AOB	Anne Heal	12:25

Chair's Welcome

1. Anne Heal welcomed the Panel and noted that Lewis Shand-Smith and Andrew Williams sent their apologies for missing the meeting, and Sarah Chambers was unable to be present for items 2-4 and Kate Denham for item 1.

Consumer Team Update

2. **Jacqui Russell** firstly thanked David Kimball for his time as Secretary for the Panel and confirmed Claire Clark will be taking up the role ahead of the next meeting in October. Jacqui provided an update on three major pieces of recent ORR work, the first being the [independent review of train operators' revenue protection practices](#). The review, commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT), took place over six months and was informed by an extensive data collection exercise. A report was published in June and identifies five areas for improvement. DfT will consider the recommendations and how they should be implemented. The Panel expressed an interest in further discussion on the recommendations and next steps.
3. The second update was on stranded trains. Following [ORR and Transport Focuses' report in August 2024](#), ORR hosted an event in January with over 70 senior leaders across the rail industry to ensure collaborative work is underway to address the main recommendations. Next steps are to bring the industry together again in the autumn to review progress and explore how they will lead the work into 2026.
4. The third update was a [study on how train operators at busy stations communicate and record requests by passengers for assistance](#). The findings showed that a large amount of data is available but is not being well used to inform continuous improvement. It also found that technology is available to enable better communication but the take-up across operators is mixed. Next steps for ORR will be to focus on stations with high volumes of assistance, asking operators to review how they handover assistance information to other stations.

Item 1: Assistance benchmarking framework

5. **David Kimball** introduced a paper which provided a brief overview of the recent consultation on a rail passenger assistance benchmarking framework for station operators.

6. The Panel were asked for their views and experiences on using ‘confidence’ metrics as a supplement to satisfaction measures, the potential risks and benefits of publishing a ranked league table of operators versus grouping them into performance tiers; and whether focusing qualitative assessment on the worst-performing operators, rather than all, is a reasonable and effective approach.
7. The Panel responded with the following comments and observations:
 - There was support for the proposal to use a single ranked league table rather than three tiers of performance. Experience in this area shows that league tables can be a powerful tool to drive improvement.
 - Similarly, there was support for the inclusion of a confidence metric, though ORR need to bear in mind that a lot of things will affect the confidence of a passenger beyond the way that assistance is delivered, and for the focus to be on the worst-performing operators. When referencing best practice, it was noted that the aim should be to identify examples that underpin systemic change or good performance rather than isolated improvements.
 - It was suggested that ORR and operators could find value in applying the ‘Theory of Change’ model to help clarify how systemic change can be delivered.
 - There was a view that more clarity is needed around what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable performance, which depends also on more comprehensive data on assistance outcomes.
8. David thanked the Panel for the useful discussion and feedback.

Item 2: Redress for failed assistance

9. **Sarah Robinson** introduced the paper and provided some context on the current redress requirements in the Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) Guidance.
10. She sought views from the panel on the proposal to require operators to determine claims on a case-by-case basis, removing any provisions in ATPs that cap monetary compensation at the price of a ticket or a multiple thereof.
11. In response, the Panel made the following observations:
 - Any redress process should be simple, predictable, and easy to access. If a case-by-case approach was more complex it would risk deterring disabled

people from seeking redress, particularly if outcomes remain minimal or unclear.

- There is a risk that a case-by-case approach could inadvertently treat those who are more articulate or persistent differently from others.
- It was suggested that most failed assistance cases could be grouped into a small number of categories that could be used develop a streamlined framework, with those assistance failures that cause the most serious impacts on passengers escalated to be considered case by case.

12. Sarah thanked the Panel for their advice.

Item 3: Horizon scanning

13. Anne Heal invited the Panel to share their views on anything they think might be of relevance and interest and could be an item to discuss at future meetings.

14. The Panel shared the following views:

- Climate change impact on passengers' use of the rail network, including how the industry is preparing.
- Passengers' perceptions and expectations of the rail industry as it transitions to Great British Railways. It was agreed that Jacqui will provide an update on the latest rail reform activity as part of her update at the beginning of each meeting.

Item 4: Panel ways of working

15. Anne Heal invited the Panel to discuss ways of working and strengthening the approach to providing thoughtful and constructive feedback which can be effectively acted on.

16. ORR acknowledged that the Panel offers valuable challenge and brings a distinct perspective to its work. Panel members clarified that their role is to provide constructive challenge and contribute to alternative viewpoints, and they would welcome updates on how their input has influenced any changes or considerations.

AOB

17. Next meeting is 8 October 2025.

18. Anne thanked attendees and brought the meeting to a close.