

How train companies say sorry when they do not help customers in the right way

What people told us



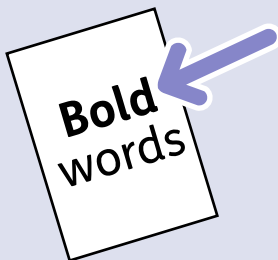
Easy Read



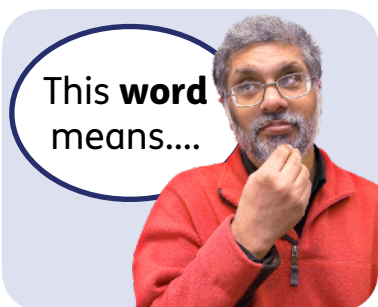
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read document uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the document.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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About this document



We are called the **Office of Rail and Road**. Or **ORR** for short.

We make sure that railways and roads are working well.



We are planning to change how train companies say sorry when they do not help older and disabled customers in the right way.



We asked people what they thought about what we should do.



We will tell you what people said and what we have decided to do.

What we asked people



We asked people about an idea we had to change how train companies say sorry to older and disabled customers when they have not given them the support they booked.



We want to make train companies always say sorry based on what is best for the person they are saying sorry to.



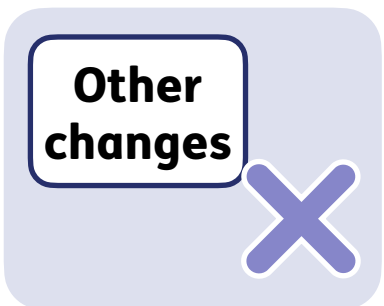
This would help to stop there being a limit on how much money they give to people they are saying sorry to.



We asked people what they thought about our idea that all train companies should say sorry in the way that is best for the customer.

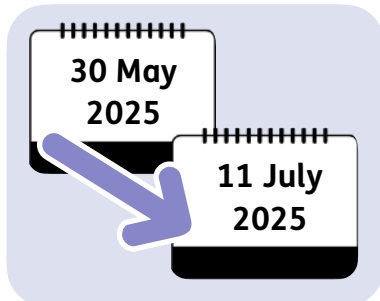


Making this change would mean that train companies could not limit the amount of money they might give to a customer they have let down.



We did not ask about any other changes to our guidance.

How we asked people what they thought



We did a survey to ask what people thought from 30 May 2025 to 11 July 2025.



30 people and organisations replied to the survey, including:

- Members of the public.



- Train companies.



- Disabled passenger organisations.



- Other transport organisations.

What we found out



We asked people what they thought about our idea that all train companies should say sorry in the way that is best for the customer.

Support for our idea



Most people told us they support our idea.



This included 13 train companies that use this idea in their rules already.



People told us that our idea makes sure that train companies think about how their mistakes affect customers.



Some train companies said our idea would help to make sure they worked in a fair way for everyone.

Limiting how much money train companies give to say sorry



A number of people and organisations told us they did not agree with limiting how much money could be given to customers.



They said that the amount of money should not be linked to how much the customer's ticket costs.



If the ticket did not cost very much, giving the person that amount of money would not be enough to say sorry.

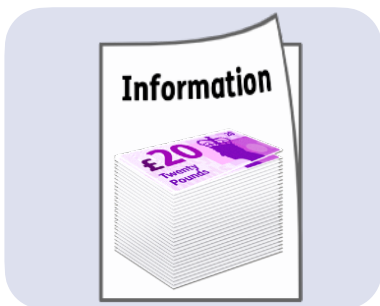
Costs of our idea



We asked people if they thought our idea might cost train companies more money.



Almost all train companies did not give us information to show that our idea would cost them more money.



A couple of train companies gave us an idea of how much it might cost them.

Some train companies and organisations told us our idea might mean that:



- Saying sorry becomes more complicated, and they would have to get more advice from lawyers.



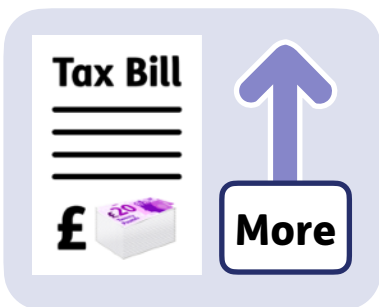
- More people complain who might not have complained in the past.



- They have to spend more on staff to deal with the complaints they get.



- They have to spend less on other things if they have to spend more on complaints.



- Any extra costs fall on taxpayers.

Other things people told us



In the survey, we also asked if there were any other comments about our guidance on saying sorry to customers.

Having clearer guidance



Some people said that we should be clearer about how train companies should decide how to say sorry and how much to pay customers.



This would help train companies across the country to work in the same way.



But a couple of train companies had concerns about there being more guidance or thought it would mean they could not think about each person's needs when they said sorry.



We will look into whether there should be more guidance for train companies.



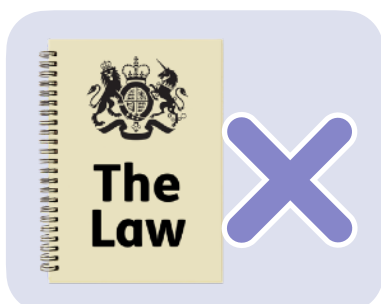
If it is needed, we will think about how it would work and who should write it.



We do not think we are the best organisation to decide how much train companies should pay customers when they say sorry.



This is because we don't decide what train companies should pay customers when other things go wrong, like delays.



And we don't have specific powers in law to tell companies what they should pay.

Vento bands



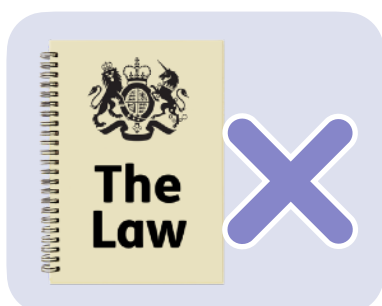
Vento bands are a way for courts to decide how much companies should pay their staff if they have been treated unfairly.



A couple of train companies said it might cost them more money if Vento bands are used to decide how much to pay customers.



Another body said linking payments to Vento bands could create high costs for the railway.



By law, train companies do not have to use Vento bands to decide how to say sorry to older and disabled customers when they don't give them the support they booked.



But train companies could use them if they wanted to.

What customers can complain about



Some people asked us about different things that customers might be able to complain about.



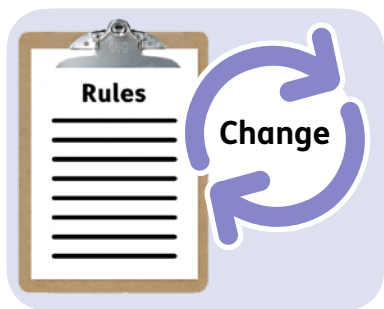
Some people said our rules on how companies should say sorry to older and disabled customers should cover support that is asked for on the day, as well as support that is booked in advance.



All customers can complain about any part of their journey, including the train company not helping them to get on a train.



Our rules say that train companies must look into every complaint and respond to their customers.



We will do more work to look at our rules for saying sorry when support is booked in advance, and our rules for complaining more generally, and decide if anything needs to change.

How train companies deal with complaints



Some people told us the way to make complaints should be easier for customers.



One organisation said that not many customers complain when they do not get the support they booked.



We will carry out more work in this area and decide if anything in our rules needs to change, or if we need to give more advice to train companies.

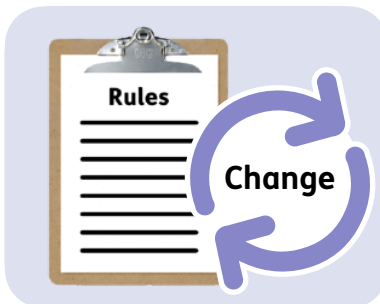
Who is in charge of dealing with the complaint



Some train companies said there are issues with the rules that say the train company that the person travels with is in charge of dealing with their complaint.



If there is a problem at the station before the customer gets on the train, the train company might not be responsible for that.



Some train companies suggested that we change this rule.

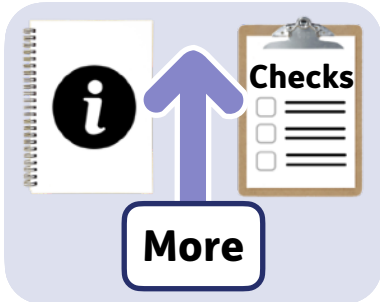


Another said that the train companies should work out who is responsible.



We will look into this issue and check if we should change our rules.

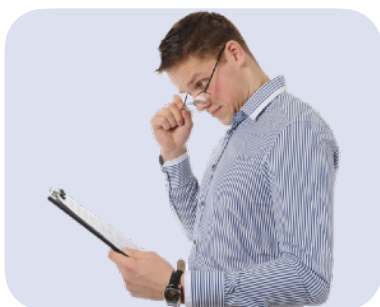
Checking what train companies are doing



Some people said there should be more checks and more information to show whether train companies are giving older and disabled customers the support they asked for.



They also said that we should take action when train companies don't give older and disabled customers the support they ask for.



We will be looking at how we check that train companies are following our new guidance.

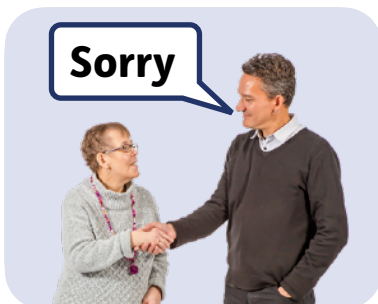
What we decided



We thought about everything that people told us.



We have decided to make **the change** to our guidance.



The change means all train companies will have to say sorry to customers in the way that is best for the customer.

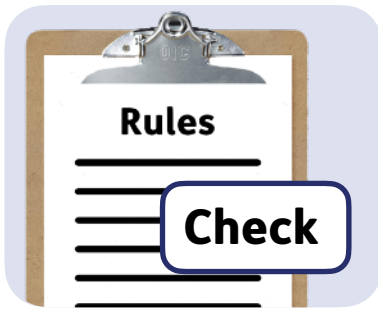


We understand that this might cost train companies more money.



But we think this is fair because it will help older and disabled customers.

What happens next



We will now write to all rail companies to ask them to check their rules on how they say sorry to customers.



They will need to do this quickly.



If needed, they should make changes to their rules so that they have to say sorry in the way that is best for the customer.



They will need to take out anything in their rules that says there is a limit on how much money they will give to say sorry if they do not give disabled or older customers the support they booked.



Train companies will need to tell us about any changes they have made to their rules.



Sometimes giving the person money might be the best way to say sorry.



The train companies can still decide if this is the best way to say sorry to each customer.

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