Annual report and accounts 2022 to 2023

Directors' report

ORR is a non-ministerial government department, which is independent of, but works closely with, the Department for Transport (DfT).

Executive and non-executive members of the ORR Board are listed in the Governance Statement.

Details of company directorships and other significant interests held by directors are available on our website. No conflicts of interest have been identified.

Prompt payment

We are committed to the prompt payment of our suppliers and seek to pay all valid invoices as soon as possible. During 2022-23, 99% of invoices were paid within 30 days (100% in 2021-22) and 88% paid within 10 days (86% in 2021-22). The target of 100% of invoices being paid within 30 days was narrowly missed in 2022-23 as a result of a finance system issue early in the year, which has been resolved, and due to some delays in receipting for goods and services received.

Personal data related incidents

Personal data related incidents are covered in the 'Governance Statement - Personal data related incidents'.

Complaints

Our public correspondence team handles all complaints and general enquiries received by ORR.

The majority of correspondence received relates to concerns about the rail industry and the strategic road network. ORR is represented at the cross-government complaint handlers' forum and the Department for Transport complaint handlers' working group.

In 2022-23 we received 1,118 complaints and general enquiries, which represents an increase of 39 cases, or 4%, on the previous year. 132 (12%) of these were requests for data or information that did not fall under the scope of the Freedom of Information Act. 69 enquiries (6%) related to fares and ticketing and the ability to obtain refunds.

We aim to respond to 95% of all such enquiries within 20 working days of receipt, excluding safety cases which can often take longer than 20 days to investigate due to the complexity of often multi-part enquiries. In 2022-23, 96% were cleared within the deadline. Frequent concerns being raised include problems with obtaining refunds and operational concerns raised by rail employees.

Details of whistleblowing complaints are published on our website separately.

Freedom of Information

In 2022-23 we received 114 requests which were all responded to within 20 working days or within the permitted extension deadline. Further details are published by the Cabinet Office.

Formal complaints received about ORR

If someone is unhappy with the service they have received from ORR, they can raise a formal complaint in writing with the head of the public correspondence team. Their complaint will be acknowledged and passed to the relevant director to respond. If the complainant remains unhappy, they can escalate their concern to the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman (PHSO). ORR received four formal complaints which were investigated, with none being escalated directly to the PHSO.

Better regulation

We published our annual Business Impact Target report in December 2022 as required under section 24A of the Small Business, Enterprise, and Employment Act (as amended). In January 2023,

we responded to the UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser and National Technology Adviser's Regulation for Innovation consultation and participated in a follow-up roundtable discussion.

We continued to participate in the BEIS Better Regulation Executive's work including the BEIS Regulators' Innovation Network, which allowed us to keep up to date with innovation activities across regulators. Additionally, we participated in the BEIS Regulators' Forum which provided an opportunity to learn from the experience of regulators across the United Kingdom's regulatory landscape. We look forward to participating in the above networks in 2023-24 with responsibility moving from BEIS to the Department for Business and Trade.

Throughout the year, we engaged with other government departments, and continue to work collaboratively wherever appropriate with other economic regulators, principally through the UK Regulators Network (UKRN) of which we are an active member. We expect this collaborative approach to continue in 2023-24.

Fraud prevention

We have a fraud prevention policy that ensures all employees understand how to prevent fraud and what to do if they suspect that fraud may be taking place. The policy sets out employees' responsibilities under the Fraud Act 2006, the Bribery Act 2010 and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, as well as under Managing Public Money. The policy is reinforced through ORR's conduct and discipline policies. We have assessed ourselves against functional standard GovS 013 Counter Fraud and consider that we comply with all mandatory elements. In 2022-23 all staff were required to complete mandatory training on The Bribery Act 2010. No incidents of fraud or bribery have been identified in 2022-23.

Auditors

The Comptroller and Auditor General carries out the audit of ORR's financial statements. The notional cost of auditing the financial statements was £55,000 (2021-22: £42,000). No remuneration, actual or notional, was paid to the National Audit Office for non-audit work (2021-22: none).

John Larkinson
Accounting Officer

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