Annual Report and Accounts 2023 to 2024

Performance in other areas

Prompt payment

We are committed to the prompt payment of our suppliers and seek to pay all valid invoices as soon as possible. During 2023-24, 100% of invoices were paid within 30 days (99% in 2022-23) and 93% paid within 10 days (88% in 2022-23). In 2024-25 we are adopting the government standard of 90% paid within 5 days.

Complaints made to the Parliamentary Ombudsman

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). In 2023-24 ORR received three formal complaints which were investigated, with none being escalated directly to the PHSO.

Responding to public correspondence

The majority of correspondence we receive 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.

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. We aim to respond to 90% of freedom of information requests withing 20 working days or within a permitted extension deadline. In 2024-25 our target will be 100%.

	2023-24	2022-23
No. of general enquiries and complaints received	1,232	1,118
% cleared within 20 working days	97%	96%
No. of freedom of information requests received	135	114
% responded to within 20 working days or within the permitted extension deadline	99%	100%

Smarter regulation

Our work in this area this year was largely shaped by the publication of the government's smarter regulation to grow the economy programme in May 2023. Smarter regulation means only using regulation where necessary and ensuring its design and use is both proportionate and future-proof.

In support of this programme, we engaged with the Department for Business and Trade on the refreshed better regulation framework, the smarter regulation: updating growth duty guidance consultation and attended two roundtable workshops on the smarter regulation and the regulatory landscape: call for evidence.

Our statutory requirement to publish an annual business impact target report was removed under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023. We continued to participate in networks and forums with other regulators, for example, the Department for Science, Innovation and

Technology's regulators' innovation network and the Department for Business and Trade's regulators' forum.

Throughout the year, we worked collaboratively wherever appropriate with other economic regulators, principally through the UK Regulators Network (UKRN) of which we are an active member.

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. No incidents of fraud or bribery have been identified in 2023-24.

Engagement with Parliament

We are accountable to the House of Commons' Transport Select Committee and the courts for our role as an independent health and safety and economic regulator of the railways and in our role holding National Highways to account. Our parliamentary accountability manifests itself practically in several ways, including the appointment of our chair being subject to scrutiny by the Transport Select Committee and senior officials regularly contributing to parliamentary committee inquiries.

This year we have contributed to the parliamentary process at Westminster by submitting evidence to the Transport Select Committee inquiries on the draft rail reform bill, accessible transport legal obligations, and future of transport data. We also gave oral evidence to the committee on both accessible transport legal obligations and on minimum service levels for rail.

We offer expert and impartial information and advice to governments and parliamentarians, including members of the Welsh and Scottish Parliaments, to inform their scrutiny of rail and road issues. This year we have met with staff from the Transport Select Committee, the research and information service based in Parliament to assist MPs and their staff, on several occasions, and

with members of staff from the House of Commons library. We have also met with staff from the Scottish Net Zero Energy and Transport Committee and given evidence to a committee session on Scotland's railway. In addition, we have given evidence to the London Assembly's Transport Committee.

We also provide independent assessment of delivery across key transport strands. We actively engage with parliamentarians on issues which are of interest to them and their constituents through briefings, correspondence, and proactive engagement. In 2023-24 we met with a number of MPs, MSPs and Peers from across the political spectrum. We hosted a parliamentary drop in event at Westminster which all MPs and Peers were invited to as well as relevant members of staff and an online webinar for all parliamentarians with a Scottish constituency. We also produced three parliamentary newsletters which went to all MPs and Peers.

John Larkinson
Accounting Officer
17 July 2024

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