Annual rail consumer report 2024 to 2025

The Rail Ombudsman

The Rail Ombudsman is a free, impartial and independent service that passengers can use to escalate unresolved complaints about train and station operators.

It also plays an important role in driving continuous improvement in the rail sector by generating learning and insight from its casework that helps operators make improvements to their services.

Sponsorship of the Rail Ombudsman

We continue to hold the Rail Ombudsman to account for effective delivery of its contractual requirements. In the last year we also agreed a continuous improvement plan based upon the results of ORR commissioned research looking at awareness, perception and accessibility of the service.

As a result, the Rail Ombudsman has recently improved the passenger and train operator user experience of the service through the rollout of a new website and case management system. These new systems will meet the recently updated Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2AA), and the website will also provide consumers with a British Sign Language (BSL) video version of their quick start guide.

Other improvements include:

- the transition from text phone to Relay UK;
- the introduction of a new WhatsApp channel;
- targeted engagement and signposting of the service with vulnerable and lower awareness groups;

- introduction of an annual plain English audit across all its consumer interfaces; and
- improved quality assurance processes for documents and publications to ensure a high level of accessibility and readability.

Regulatory framework for the Rail Ombudsman

Under the Complaints Handling licence condition, operators are required to be members of the Rail Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is funded through charges to operators for the service it provides.

Our priorities for April 2025 to March 2026

We will continue to hold the Rail Ombudsman to account for its service delivery, driving continuous improvement where opportunities are identified, while also challenging industry to fully utilise the insight and learning generated from the Ombudsman's casework.

- ← Previous Complaints and compensation