

# Disabled passengers' experiences of complaints handling by train operators

18 April 2024



# Contents

---

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>3</b>
Next steps .....	4
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
The regulatory framework.....	5
<b>2. Key findings</b>	<b>9</b>
Key finding 1: Awareness of process.....	9
Key finding 2: Accessibility of the process.....	13
Key finding 3: Learning from complaints.....	17
<b>3. Next steps</b>	<b>22</b>

# Executive summary

---

In the year to March 2023, there were 346,758 passenger complaints closed by train operators. Every complaint offers insight to an operator on actions they can take to deliver a better passenger experience. Every complaint response is an opportunity for an operator to demonstrate that they are listening to, and care about, their passengers.

This report focusses on disabled rail passengers' experiences of operators' complaints processes. We want to see operators actively using complaints from individual disabled passengers to create a better experience for all disabled passengers.

In 2023, we introduced a new regulated Code of Practice on complaints handling, designed to embed a culture in operators where insights from passenger complaints are used to drive continuous improvement, and to incentivise quality and timeliness in complaints handling. The Code of Practice sets out requirements designed to ensure that complaints processes are accessible for disabled people. To ensure that disabled passengers can secure appropriate redress where their booked assistance fails, additional requirements on this specific issue are set out in our Accessible Travel Policy guidance.

For this report we have drawn together a range of evidence, including newly commissioned research, to explore disabled peoples' awareness of their ability to complain and seek redress, and whether they feel they are able to easily access and engage with operators' complaints processes.

Many disabled people reported positive experiences of raising a complaint or redress claim and securing the outcome they were hoping for. However, some are reporting very poor experiences, and we want to see operators continue to focus on how they can ensure that all disabled people can engage with, and feel value in engaging with, complaints processes.

We have identified three key findings:

- Most disabled people are aware of operators' general complaints processes. However, lack of awareness about the ability to seek redress where booked assistance fails is preventing many disabled people from raising claims.
- Operators' complaints processes are broadly accessible to most disabled passengers but not all.

- Disabled passengers would be more likely to complain if they felt it was a worthwhile use of their time and energy and that it would lead to change.

## **Next steps**

We will take the following actions to address the issues identified by our key findings:

We have identified some non-compliance with specific requirements in the Complaints Code of Practice and the Accessible Travel Policy Guidance that are designed to secure passenger awareness and ensure that complaints processes are accessible to all disabled people. We are writing to the relevant operators to ask them to set out their plans for securing swift compliance.

We want to see operators taking, and being seen to take, action in response to complaints from disabled passengers. Operators are already required to publish a report each year on how insights from complaints have informed continuous improvement activities, including with respect to the complaints handling process itself. We have introduced a new requirement for those reports to consider issues of particular concern to disabled people.

To inform this report, we added new questions to our ongoing passenger surveys on complaints satisfaction and experiences of Passenger Assist that provide new insight into disabled passengers' views and experiences of complaints processes and redress. We will maintain these questions on an ongoing basis and report data to individual operators from 1 April 2024. We will expect operators to use the data to inform their continuous improvement plans and will be better able to monitor disabled passenger experiences ourselves on an ongoing basis and to intervene where necessary.

We will invite operators to a workshop to discuss our findings and next steps, and to explore good practice across all the areas considered in our report.

# 1. Introduction

---

- 1.1 Complaints made to operators provide an opportunity for individual rail passengers to express their dissatisfaction with the standard of service they have received. In response passengers may receive, as appropriate, an apology, the award of compensation or redress, an explanation of what went wrong, and/or a description of steps taken to prevent the issue from arising again. For operators, complaints provide valuable passenger feedback and insight. They can be a sign that something is not working and offer an opportunity to improve processes and service provision.
- 1.2 We want to understand the barriers faced by disabled people when they travel by rail, increase their confidence to travel, and drive improvements in provision. Operators' complaints handling processes have the potential to make a real contribution. For these reasons we sought to explore:
- Whether disabled people can easily access operators' complaints processes;
  - Whether disabled people can easily engage with operators' complaints processes; and
  - Whether operators are using insights from complaints to identify business improvements that will benefit disabled passengers.

## The regulatory framework

- 1.3 The processes that operators must follow in handling all passengers' complaints, including those from disabled passengers, are set out in our Complaints Code of Practice. To ensure that disabled passengers can secure appropriate redress where their booked assistance fails, additional requirements on this specific issue are set out in our Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) guidance.

## Complaints handling

- 1.4 We introduced an updated regulatory framework for complaints handling on 1 April 2023. The changes were designed to embed a culture within operators where insights from complaints are used to drive continuous improvement; and to incentivise quality and timeliness in complaints handling, which are the key drivers of passenger satisfaction with the complaints handling process.

## Office of Rail and Road | Disabled passengers' experiences of complaints handling by train operators

- 1.5 All operators are required, by their operating licences, to establish and comply with a Complaints Handling Procedure. The mandatory core minimum requirements and good practice principles that must be addressed by operators' Complaints Handling Procedures are set out in a [Complaints Code of Practice](#).
- 1.6 Requirements that are intended to ensure that the complaints process is accessible for disabled people are embedded within the Code of Practice. For example:
- Information on how to complain must be easily accessible;
  - A choice of access routes for complainants must be made available, including via telephone and post;
  - Appropriate and proportionate provision must be made for customers who need assistance in accessing and using the complaints process; and
  - Carers, support workers and guardians must be able to act/advocate on behalf of a passenger with the passenger's authority.
- 1.7 In response to our consultation on the new Complaints Code of Practice in 2022, the Disabled Persons Transport Select Committee (DPTAC) said that it would like to see research undertaken by ORR specifically focused on people with lived experience of disability with the aim of identifying any issues and challenges with accessing the operators' complaints handling process. We agreed with DPTAC that there would be value in undertaking this type of research and it was their input that led us to initiate the work that is reported in this document.

### Redress where booked assistance fails

- 1.8 All operators are also required, by their operating licences, to establish and comply with an Accessible Travel Policy (ATP), setting out what they will do to help disabled people use the railway. The mandatory minimum requirements are set out in our [ATP Guidance](#).
- 1.9 Our ATP Guidance requires operators to provide and promote the availability of redress where disabled passengers do not receive the assistance they have booked. The form of redress is determined by the operator on a case-by-case basis and may for example be an apology, financial compensation, or other award with a monetary value. These requirements sit alongside those in the Complaints Code of Practice and operators usually direct passengers to complaints channels when they want to seek redress for booked assistance failure.

## Office of Rail and Road | Disabled passengers' experiences of complaints handling by train operators

1.10 In this report, when we refer to 'redress', we mean redress for booked assistance failures.

### Evidence base

1.11 To explore the questions set out in paragraph 1.2, we commissioned passenger research and surveys focussed on the perceptions and experiences of disabled people in relation to complaints processes and redress and assessed operators' compliance with particularly relevant aspects of the regulatory framework.

### Passenger insight

- 1.12 Our passenger research was designed to ensure we secured participation from people with a range of disabilities. We recognise that many individuals with a long-term condition or access need may not identify as disabled. For the purposes of this report, we use the term 'disabled' to encompass the range of different disabilities, conditions and access needs reported by participants in our research.
- 1.13 We gathered data in a way that enabled us to explore whether people with different types of disabilities reported different views and experiences. We did not identify significant differences, although we note that the sample size once segmented by disability type was sometimes small. Our findings should not be interpreted to mean that processes work in the same way for all disabled people.
- 1.14 **Joint passenger survey with Transport Focus.** We worked with Transport Focus, the independent watchdog for transport users, to deliver a survey to their Transport User Panel who are made up of members with and without disabilities. The survey sought members' views of operators' complaints processes and redress provision. Of the 3,269 respondents, 795 had raised a complaint in the last two years with 186 of those reported as having a disability. On redress, 38 had submitted a redress claim in the last two years.
- 1.15 **Research with passengers with disabilities.** We commissioned Trajectory (partnered with Open Inclusion) to conduct a quantitative survey that sought views from disabled rail users. We used the findings of the joint survey with Transport Focus to inform the survey design. The survey explored general awareness, perceptions and experiences of complaints processes and redress. There were 1,153 participants in the survey, all rail users, with 43% having used booked assistance within the past two years. Of the total sample, 327 had raised a complaint and 104 sought redress within the last two years. In-depth follow-up interviews were carried out with 12 participants. Their report, ['Rail passengers with](#)

[access needs and disabilities: experiences of complaints](#), is published alongside this report.

- 1.16 **Expert interviews.** We held interviews with ten individuals who were either from passenger and disability advocacy groups or have personal professional expertise on the experiences of disabled people and the rail sector. Organisations represented included: Disability Rights UK, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, London Travel Watch, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, Royal National Institute of Blind People, Transport Focus, and Transport for All. We sought their expert opinion on the key issues and improvements needed in complaints handling and redress.
- 1.17 **ORR ongoing passenger surveys.** We added new questions to our two ongoing passenger surveys: the Complaints Satisfaction Survey, which explores the experience of all those who have raised complaints with operators; and the Passenger Assist Survey, which explores the experiences of those who have booked assistance. This enabled us to segment the Complaints Satisfaction Survey data based on whether respondents reported that they are disabled, and whether their disability affected their ability to engage in the complaints handling process. The new questions to the Passenger Assist survey explore why people did not complain or seek redress when responses to other questions suggest that they had reason to.

### Operator insight

- 1.18 **Information request.** We issued an information request to operators to enable us to assess their compliance with key aspects of the Complaints Code of Practice that are particularly relevant to disabled passengers.
- 1.19 **Review of operator websites.** We carried out a compliance review of operators' websites in relation to the provision of information on complaints and redress.

### This report

- 1.20 The structure of this report is as follows:
- **Chapter 2** sets out our three key findings with a summary of the supporting evidence and our findings from our review of operators' compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.
  - **Chapter 3** sets out our planned next steps to address our findings.



## 2. Key findings

---

- 2.1 Through our review of the range of evidence available to us, we have identified three key findings. In this chapter we set these out with a summary of the supporting data. We then go on to assess operator compliance with requirements that are relevant to the key findings.
- 2.2 Satisfaction levels with experiences of travelling by rail are generally positive. Of the 1,076 disabled people who participated in our research, 75% were satisfied with their recent experiences of traveling by rail. For some disabled people, rail travel can provide clear advantages over other forms of transport and can provide more options for assistance and support. However, it is not uncommon for problems to occur during a disabled passengers' journey, and the emotional impact of a poor experience is likely to be greater than for a passenger who is not disabled.
- 2.3 Our evidence base helps us to understand the motivations that drive disabled passengers to complain about poor experiences and the barriers which are preventing them from complaining. We have used this information to identify what improvements need to be made to build passenger confidence in the complaints system. Ultimately operators should be learning from complaints and visibly driving improvement for their customers, which will in turn improve services and reduce the incidents being complained about.

### Key finding 1: Awareness of process

**Most disabled people are aware of operators' general complaints processes. However, a lack of awareness about the ability to seek redress where booked assistance fails is preventing many disabled people from raising claims.**

**“Better information is needed on what disabled passengers are entitled to when their assistance fails and what they need to do and how to do it. This information needs to be delivered in real time rather**

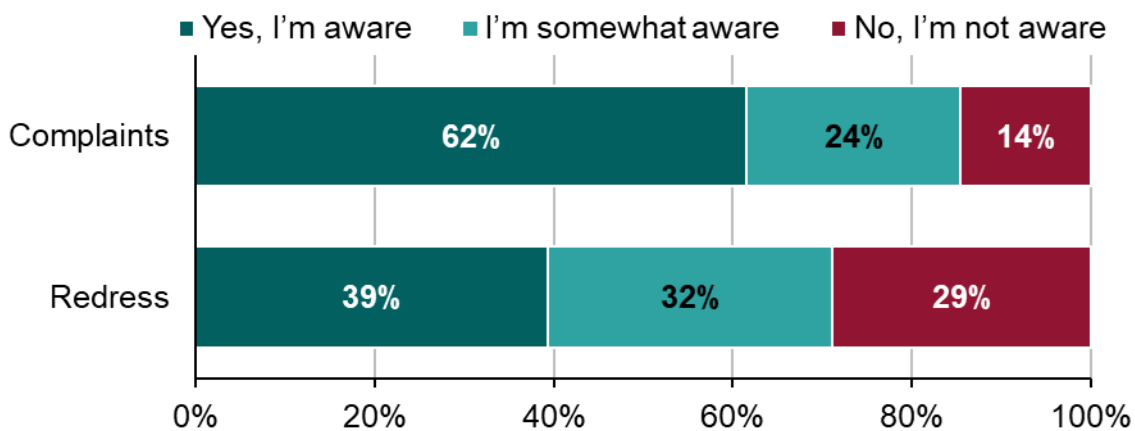
than passengers needing to find the information out on operators' websites.” (expert interviewee)

## Passenger research

### Awareness of operators' complaint processes and the ability to seek redress

- 2.4 We wanted to find out how aware people are of complaints processes and their ability to seek redress. Our research found that 86% of disabled passengers are aware of their right to complain when they have received an unsatisfactory service (comprised of 62% 'fully aware' and 24% 'somewhat aware'). In comparison, awareness of redress was lower at 71% with, notably, only 39% being 'fully aware'; and 32% 'somewhat aware' (all these respondents either needed assistance some or all the time to travel, or travel with someone who does).
- 2.5 Our ongoing Passenger Assist survey suggests that it is this low awareness that is a key barrier to passengers seeking redress. Of the respondents who had experienced a failed assistance, 61% said they did not seek redress because they were unaware they could do so.
- 2.6 Our research also found that disabled people will not always seek redress even when they are aware that they could and have reason to do so. This is because people are also making a judgment about how best to use their time and energy and whether raising a claim would bring benefits to them and others. Key findings two and three look further at these barriers. Nonetheless, an increase in awareness is the first step in providing people with the information they need to be able to make a choice about how to act.

**Figure 1: How aware are disabled passengers of operators' complaints process and the ability to seek redress when their assistance fails**



## Office of Rail and Road | Disabled passengers' experiences of complaints handling by train operators

Survey questions: Are you aware that you can make a complaint to a train or station operator when you have experienced an unsatisfactory service?

Are you aware that if any of your booked assistance fails, you can claim redress from a train operator?

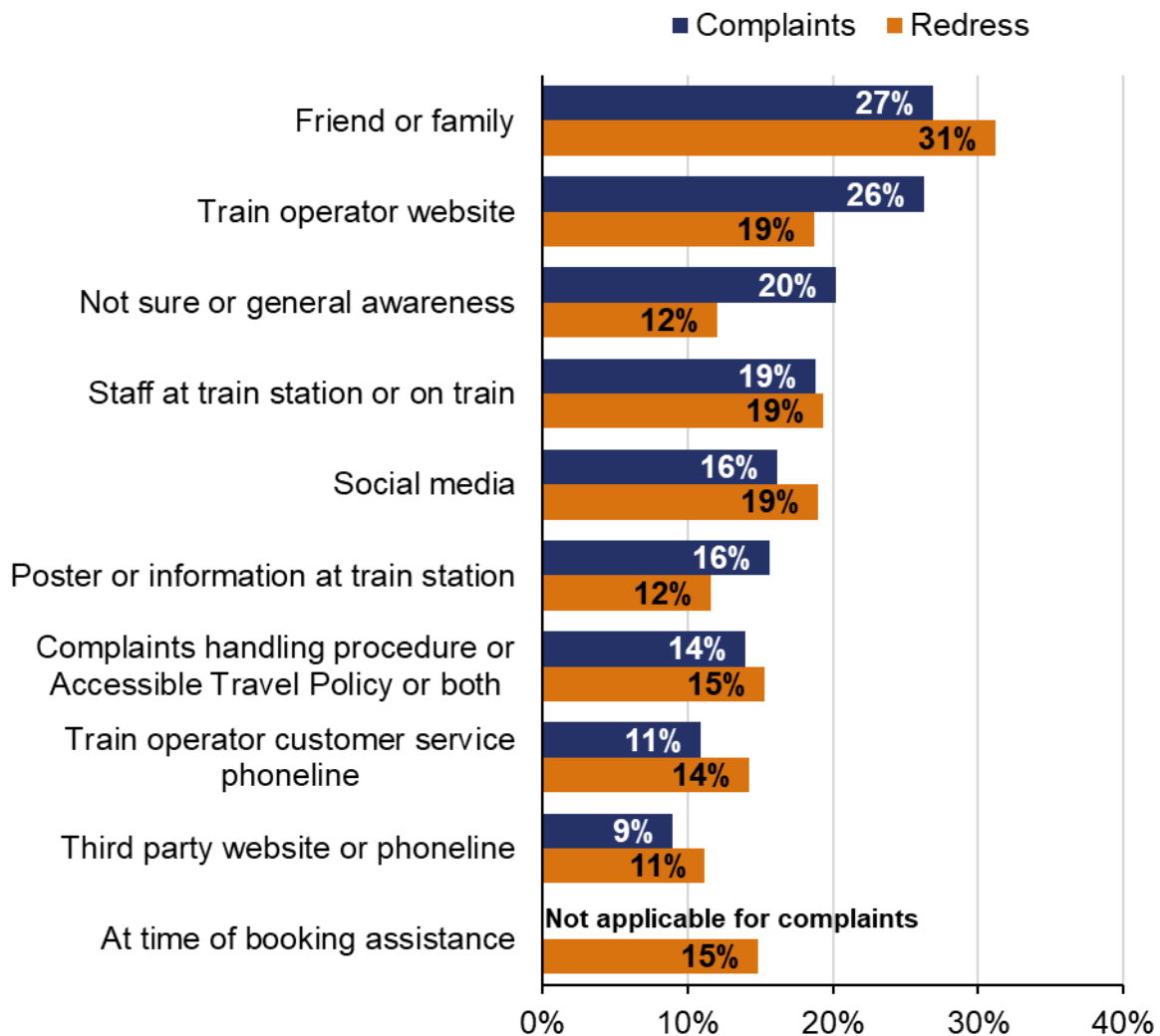
Sample sizes: Complaints (n=1,153), Redress (n=654)

Source: Rail passengers with access needs and disabilities: experiences of complaints, April 2024

### Sources of information about complaint processes and redress

2.7 Our research found that friends and family are the most common source of information (27% for complaints processes and 31% for redress). Operator websites are a more common source of information for complaints processes (26%) compared to redress (19%). Staff at a train station or on a train were also cited as key sources of information (19% for both complaints and redress).

**Figure 2: How disabled passengers find out about operators' complaints process and the ability to seek redress when their assistance fails**



## Office of Rail and Road | Disabled passengers' experiences of complaints handling by train operators

Survey questions: You mentioned you are aware that you can make a complaint to a train or station operator when you have experienced an unsatisfactory service. How did you find out about the complaints process? Thinking back to your earlier answer where you said you were aware of redress; how did you find out about this service?

Sample sizes: Complaints (n=986), Redress (n=465)

Source: Rail passengers with access needs and disabilities: experiences of complaints, April 2024

### Operators' promotion of their complaints process and redress

2.8 In recognition of the need to promote complaints processes to passengers, there are existing requirements on operators in both the Complaints Code of Practice and ATP Guidance that we established with the aim of raising passenger awareness.

### Operators' compliance with the Complaints Code of Practice

#### *Websites*

- 2.9 Our research identified operator websites as the primary route for disabled passengers to find information about complaints processes, after friends and family. Operators must include a direct link on their home webpage to their complaints page, and the complaints page itself must provide clear information in several areas including information on how and who to complain to.
- 2.10 We found that a small number of operators were compliant with all the Code of Practice minimum requirements; most did not meet one or more aspects. The two most common issues we identified were that operators did not provide a direct link to their complaints page from the homepage, and that information about the full range of routes for complaining were not provided on the complaints page itself. We require operators to accept complaints by phone and by post, recognising the importance of non-digital options to some disabled passengers, and it is important that disabled passengers can easily find information on how to do so.

#### *Passenger facing staff.*

- 2.11 Our research identified train and station staff as a key source of information for disabled passengers. All operators confirmed their passenger-facing staff are trained and expected to pass on complaints, including when a passenger's assistance has failed and how they can seek redress. A small number of operators' complaints handling training looks at situations from a range of passenger perspectives and experiences including disabled people. The training covers the importance of being open and empathic when responding to issues raised by all passengers.

## Operators' compliance with the Accessible Travel Policy Guidance

- 2.12 Operators are required to provide a range of information on assisted travel on one webpage, including instructions for passengers on how they can provide feedback or make a complaint, and details on the availability of redress. They must also publish a leaflet for passengers which, among other information about assisted travel, must set out when redress may be available and how to claim it.
- 2.13 All operators provide a link to an electronic version of their passenger leaflet on their websites, and all these leaflets provide an acceptable minimum level of information about redress processes. However, for ease of access we also expect information about redress to appear on the webpage itself. Just over half of operators provide information on redress on their webpage, with the level of detail varying. Those who provided the fullest information not only set out the process for claiming redress but also set out what information is needed from the passenger when making a claim and described the potential value and form of redress.

## Key finding 2: Accessibility of the process

**Operators' complaints processes are broadly accessible to most disabled passengers, but not all.**

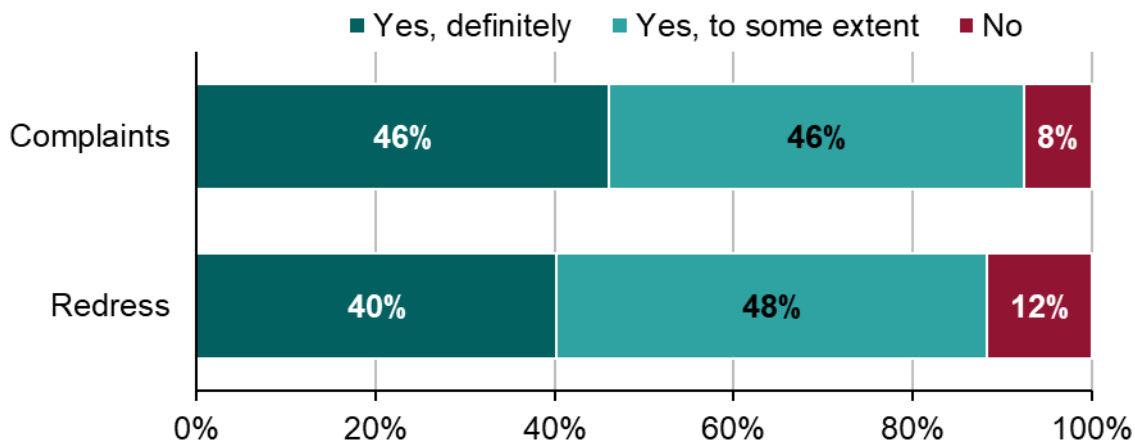
**“The ongoing communication during the complaint process was inaccessible to the complainant and no attempt was made by the operator to accommodate their needs”** (*expert interviewee*)

### Passenger research

#### Accessibility of operators' complaints and redress processes

- 2.14 Most of the disabled people (92%) who participated in our research and had raised a complaint reported the operator's complaints process to be accessible to them. However, of those, 46% report that they experienced some barriers and 8% found the complaints process to be inaccessible. The findings were similar for redress.

Figure 3: Are operators' complaints and redress processes accessible to disabled people?



Survey questions: Overall, would you say the complaints process was accessible to you?

Overall, would you say the redress process was accessible to you?

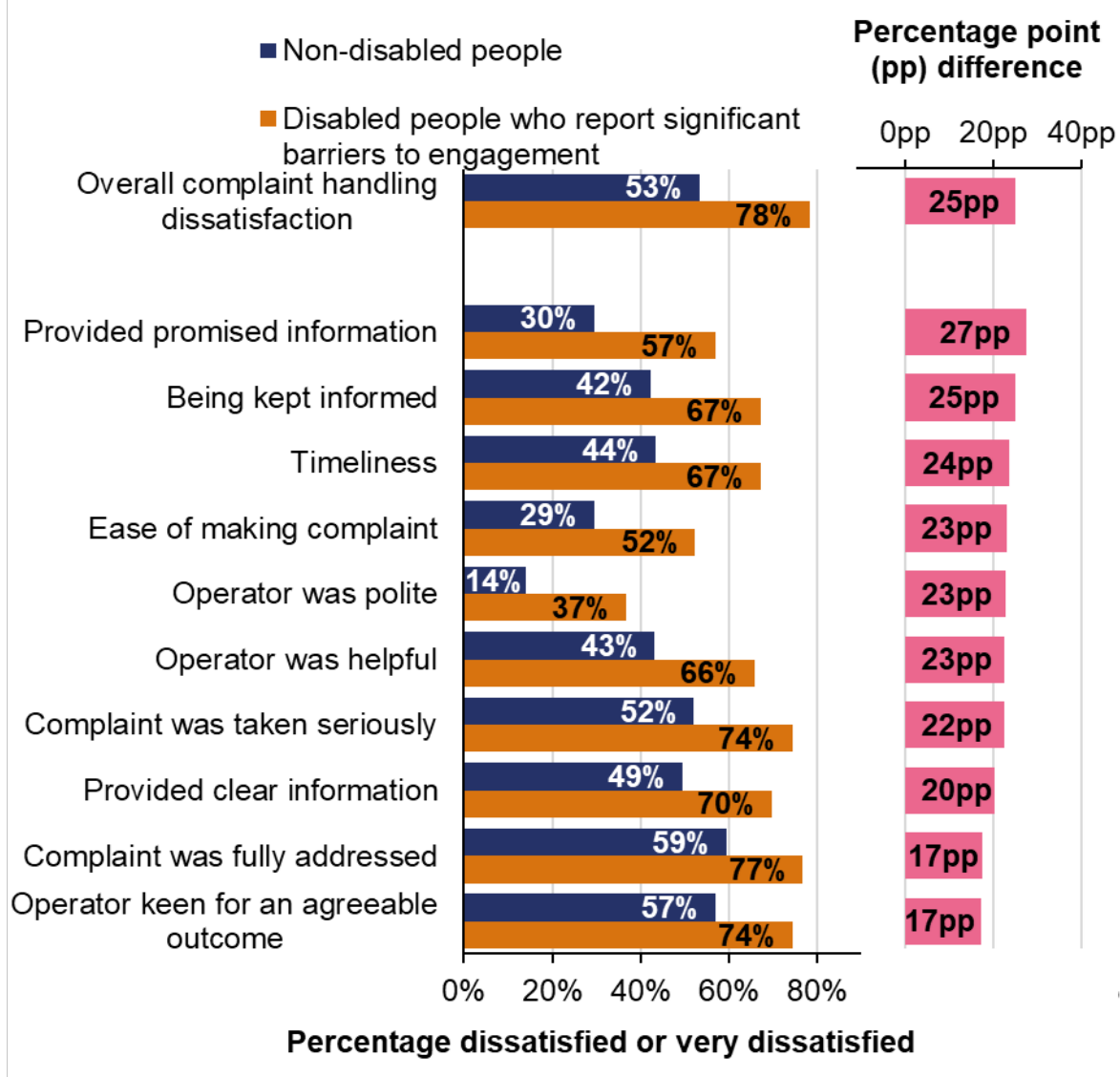
Sample sizes: Complaints (n=315), Redress (n=102)

Source: Rail passengers with access needs and disabilities: experiences of complaints, April 2024

### Key barriers to disabled passengers' engagement with operators' complaints processes

2.15 Our Complaints Satisfaction Survey enables us to explore people's experiences of different aspects of the complaints process. Overall, where disabled people report no barriers to engagement their satisfaction with complaints processes is very similar to those of non-disabled people. However, the greater the barriers to engagement, the higher the level of reported dissatisfaction with every aspect of the complaints process. For those who report that their disability affected their ability to engage a lot, dissatisfaction with the overall handling of their complaint is 78% compared with 53% dissatisfaction for non-disabled people.

Figure 4: Level of dissatisfaction with operators' complaints handling process



Survey questions: So overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way your complaint was handled?

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the complaint handling process:

Operator provided you with any information that they promised to send?

Being kept informed appropriately about the progress of your complaint?

The time taken to deal with your complaint?

The ease with which you were able to make the complaint?

Operator was polite?

Operator was helpful/knowledgeable?

Your complaint was taken seriously?

The clarity of information provided by the operator about your complaint?

Your complaint was fully addressed by the operator?

Operator seemed keen to reach an agreeable outcome?

Sample sizes: No disability (n=16,000+); People whose disability significantly impacted their ability to engage with the operator's complaints handling process (n=380+)



## Office of Rail and Road | Disabled passengers' experiences of complaints handling by train operators

Source: MEL survey on behalf of ORR, April 2023 to January 2024

- 2.16 The aspects of the complaints process where people report the highest levels of dissatisfaction are the same for both disabled and non-disabled people. However, where disabled people report significant barriers to engagement, their levels of dissatisfaction are much higher. Dissatisfaction was highest where we asked respondents whether they felt their complaint was fully addressed (77% of disabled people who reported significant barriers to engagement were dissatisfied and 59% of non-disabled people) and whether they felt the operator was keen to reach an agreeable outcome (74% and 57%).
- 2.17 These cross-cutting issues are important ones for operators to consider, especially where disabled people are reporting a significantly worse experience than others, as that may require a more tailored response. The two areas with the greatest discrepancy amongst disabled and non-disabled people relate to information provision. Those respondents who experience significant barriers to engagement are much more likely than non-disabled people to report dissatisfaction with the way they were kept informed about the progress of their complaint (67% vs 42%), and whether an operator provided information they promised to send (57% vs 30%).

### **Operators' compliance with the Complaints Code of Practice**

- 2.18 We reviewed operator's compliance with specific aspects of the Complaints Code of Practice that aim to ensure that the complaints process is accessible to disabled people. We did not, through this project, assess compliance with general requirements, such as to provide appropriate training for all staff who handle complaints, although we recognise that there are key opportunities to improve the experiences of disabled passengers through actions in these areas.

### *Contact methods*

- 2.19 Operators are required to accept complaints by telephone and post, as well as digitally. Most operators provide information on their website about digital and non-digital routes for raising a complaint although, for a small number of operators, we could not find any information about non-digital routes. As noted under finding one, for some operators, non-digital options are available but not promoted on the complaints page as is required for ease of access. Good practice we saw in this area included asking complainants what type of format they would like to receive a response at the point of submitting their complaint.



*Carers, support workers and guardians*

2.20 We asked operators to describe the process in place for carers, support workers or guardians to be able to act/advocate on behalf of disabled passengers. All operators confirmed that they provide this service.

## Key finding 3: Learning from complaints

**Disabled passengers would be more likely to complain if they felt it was a worthwhile use of their time and energy and would lead to change.**

**“Energy needed verses the outcome of the complaint is a key consideration when deciding whether to complain, especially where the outcome is unclear and there is little confidence that it [the complaint] will result in change.”** *(expert interviewee)*

### Passenger research

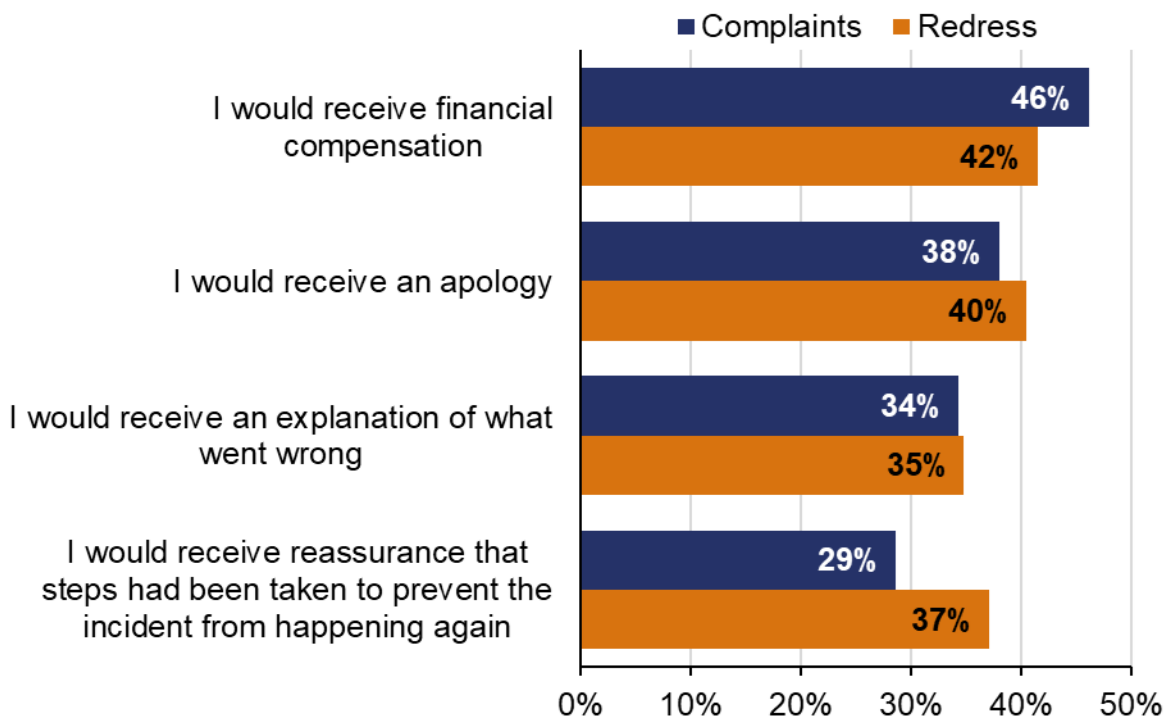
#### Why passengers choose not to complain or seek redress

- 2.21 Our research found that 36% of disabled passengers had never complained in the last two years when they had cause to and 45% had not sought redress on any occasion in the last two years where they could have.
- 2.22 The most cited reason for not complaining was that people did not see the benefit and did not think it was worth the hassle (41%), followed by not having the time or energy (35%) and not thinking their complaint would be taken seriously (29%). While the findings from the Transport Focus User Panel found that the reasons for not complaining are similar for both disabled and non-disabled people, our in-depth interviews indicated that the feelings may be more strongly held and impactful for disabled people.
- 2.23 For redress, low awareness of the ability to seek redress (32%) was identified as the primary barrier and is discussed further under key finding 1. The other key barriers were aligned with those for complaints: not having the time or energy (31%) and not seeing any benefit (27%).

### Disabled passengers' motivations for complaining and seeking redress

- 2.24 Of the 128 respondents who had reason to complain but chose not to, 48% said they would complain if they knew it would lead to change. Likewise, our in-depth interviews revealed that the main motivation that led participants to complain was a desire to see an improvement in services for themselves and others.
- 2.25 Most commonly, respondents who had complained or sought redress were hoping to receive financial compensation: 46% and 42% respectively. However, significant numbers also hoped for other outcomes including an apology (38% and 40%), an explanation (34% and 35%), and reassurance that the issue won't occur again (29% and 37%). When broken down into disability type, those identifying as disabled are likely to have slightly different priorities when they complain. Nearly half (44%) said that an apology was their desired outcome, and 41% wanted reassurance that it won't happen again.

**Figure 5: What disabled passengers hoped would be the outcome of their complaint or redress claim**



Survey questions: Which of the following were you hoping would be the outcome of your complaint?

Which of the following were you hoping would be the outcome of your redress claim?

Sample sizes: Complaints (n=329), Redress (n=89)

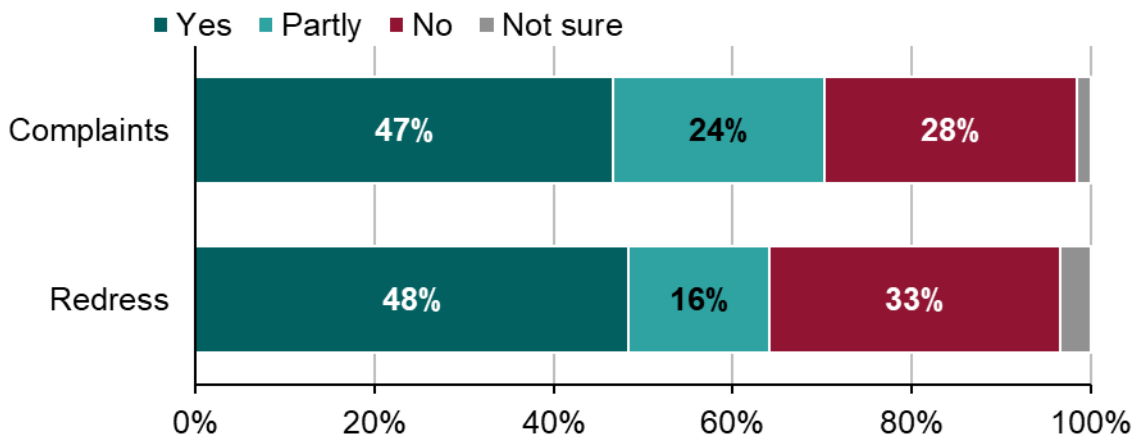
Source: Rail passengers with access needs and disabilities: experiences of complaints, April 2024

**Disabled passengers' views on complaint and redress outcomes achieved**

2.26 Just under half of the disabled people who participated in our research and had raised a complaint or redress claim confirmed that they had received the outcome they were hoping for (47% who had raised a complaint and 48% who had sought redress). A further 24% of complainants and 16% of those seeking redress partly received the outcome they hoped for. However, around a third did not get the outcome they were hoping for (28% and 33%).

2.27 For complaints, 35% of respondents stated they were confident that the reason for their complaint would not arise again. For redress, the figure was higher, with 50% confident that the reason for their claim would not arise again.

**Figure 6: Did disabled passengers get the outcome they were hoping for from their complaint or redress claim?**



Survey questions: Did you get the outcome you were hoping for?

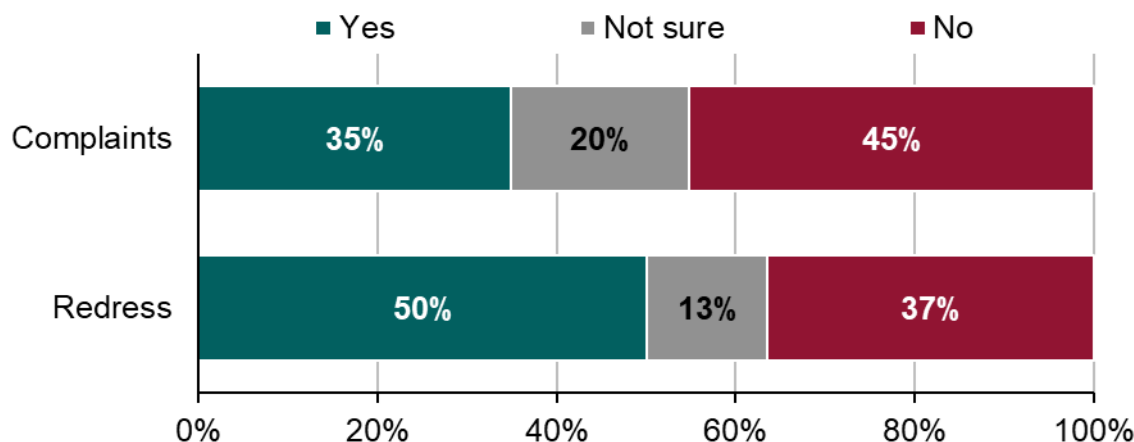
Did you get the outcome you were hoping for?

Excludes those who were not sure.

Sample sizes: Complaints (n=326), Redress (n=89)

Source: Rail passengers with access needs and disabilities: experiences of complaints, April 2024

**Figure 7: Are disabled passengers confident that the reason for their complaint or redress claim won't happen again?**



Survey questions: Are you confident that the reason for the complaint won't happen again?

Are you confident that the reason for the claim won't happen again?

Sample sizes: Complaints (n=327), Redress (n=104)

Source: Rail passengers with access needs and disabilities: experiences of complaints, April 2024

### Operators' processes for learning from complaints

2.28 In view of the findings that disabled passengers are significantly motivated to complain to an operator in the hope that it will lead to change, we assessed operators' compliance with existing requirements to use insight from complaints to inform continuous improvement, as set out in the Complaints Code of Practice.

2.29 All operators described processes for regularly analysing complaints data, and using the insights generated to develop action plans to drive improvement. Several operators described additional steps they take that are focussed particularly on complaints on issues of particular concern to disabled people. These included:

- Sharing complaints with their internal accessibility teams to determine where to target improvements;
- Sharing complaints with their forum of disabled passengers to prompt feedback and suggestions;
- Regular review at Director level of responses to accessibility complaints; and
- Reviewing the impact of changes made in response to complaints.

2.30 Operators should also be learning from assistance failures, and the case study below describes the good practice implemented by LNER.

### **Case study: Learning from booked assistance failures**

As part of its collaboration with the Equality & Human Rights Commission, LNER established a new process to better understand the reasons for failed assistance incidents occurring, with the aim of achieving a reduction in failed assistance and accessibility complaints and thereby improving its accessibility service.

Passengers who booked assistance which was not delivered are pro-actively contacted by LNER to discuss the matter and specific issues of that case, regardless of whether a complaint is made. Based on LNER's analysis of the data captured, they can identify the cause, evolving trends and themes and implement steps to address the underlying reasons for failed assistance occurring. LNER records all instances of failed assistance - not just instances raised through their complaints handling procedure, which provides a deeper understanding of the root cause of the issues.

## 3. Next steps

---

- 3.1 We will be writing to all operators where we identified gaps against specific requirements set out in the Complaints Code of Practice and the ATP Guidance that are designed to ensure that complaints processes and redress are accessible to disabled people, asking them to set out their plans for delivering swift compliance.
- 3.2 To ensure that operators maintain their focus on delivering progressive improvements in their complaints handling processes, we have introduced a new requirement for operators' annual complaints handling continuous improvement report to include specific consideration of the needs of disabled people. We have encouraged operators to include specific consideration of issues of concern to disabled people in their first report in May 2024 and required them to do so from May 2025.
- 3.3 We added new questions to our ongoing passenger surveys on complaints satisfaction and experiences of Passenger Assist to inform this report. We will maintain these questions on an ongoing basis. This will better enable us to monitor disabled passenger experiences on an ongoing basis and to intervene where necessary. We will also share the data with operators, and we expect them to use it to inform their continuous improvement plans.
- 3.4 For the operators whose disabled customers reported the most barriers to the complaints process, we will request an interim continuous improvement report focussed on disabled passengers' experiences of their complaints handling processes in Autumn 2024.
- 3.5 We will hold a workshop with operators to discuss the findings of this report and to disseminate good practice.



© Crown copyright 2024

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [orr.gov.uk](https://orr.gov.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [orr.gov.uk/contact-us](https://orr.gov.uk/contact-us)

