



ORR's Consumer Expert Panel

This note sets out the main areas of discussion at the ORR Consumer Expert Panel meeting of 15 June 2017.

Attendees

Panel members:

- Carol Brennan
- Ray Kemp
- Trisha McAuley
- Diane McCrea
- Rob Sheldon
- Claire Whyley

Nominated members:

- Mike Hewitson – Transport Focus
- Stephen Locke - London TravelWatch

ORR attendees:

- Siobhán Carty
- Emily Bulman
- Yasmine Ghozzi
- Marcus Clements
- Simon Chapman
- Nadia Kinkead
- Stephanie Tobyn (Chair)
- Anne Heal (ORR Board member)
- Harriet Gamper

Introductory message

1. Stephanie Tobyn welcomed the Panel and introduced Anne Heal, ORR Board member, who will attend future meetings and will act as the link between the ORR Board and the Panel.

Annual Consumer Report (Measuring Up), and Complaints

2. Harriett Gamper presented the proposed structure for the forthcoming Annual Rail Consumer Report – Measuring Up - to the Panel. Harriet explained that the report would focus on the passenger journey and include comparative tables, individual train company performance summary sheets, and case studies.
3. The Panel discussed at length the language and tone of the report and commented on how statistics should be presented to the audience. The use of case studies in the report was highlighted as a useful way to identify the different issues facing consumers. The Panel also raised the use of social media and how it could be used as an effective method to increase the speed with which ORR shares messages with the public.
4. It was agreed that the Panel would provide feedback on the published report at their next meeting in September.
5. Marcus Clements gave an overview of the extensive engagement and audits on complaints handling carried out by the Consumer Policy Team with both good and poorly performing train companies. He highlighted how some train companies handle their complaints backlogs and discussed the advice ORR had given to companies to help them improve their complaints handling procedures.
6. The Panel felt strongly that ORR should be demanding better performance from train companies and that it should consider what powers are available if there was no improvement. Panel members gave examples of how other industries had taken action against companies for their non-compliance with complaint handling standards and noted that there had been a number of high profile cases to support their view. The Panel also encouraged ORR to develop best practice principles to help ensure improvement across the industry.

Measuring performance of England’s strategic roads: what users want, and developing the performance specification for RIS2

7. Simon Chapman discussed ORR’s approach to the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2), which was published in December 2016, and presented the research undertaken by ORR and Transport Focus. The purpose of the research was

to identify the key themes that road users believe should be covered by the performance specification for RIS2.

8. The Panel suggested a different approach to categorising data, and that further development into 'what good looks like' was required to help incentivise the industry and assist efforts to become more customer focussed.
9. The Panel also shared experiences of how other regulators measured performance and provided some examples of good practice that could help Highways England measure performance and make data more controllable.

PR18 and Schedule 4 research on passenger awareness

10. Emily Bulman and Yasmine Ghozzi presented the findings from the research they had commissioned into passenger awareness of planned disruption. They explained that Network Rail pays compensation to operators when it takes planned possession of part of the network through Schedule 4 of the track access contract. Emily gave examples of the occasions when Network Rail had cancelled possessions at short notice even when they had been planned up to 2 years in advance.
11. The Panel discussed at length how this could affect passengers where services are disrupted. This included the impact on different consumer groups, in particular passengers with disabilities. The Panel also noted that how disruptions are communicated to the public would affect satisfaction levels.

PR18 and stakeholder accountability: the role of stakeholders in holding Network rail to account

12. Siobhan Carty initiated a discussion on PR18 and stakeholder accountability, and sought the views of the Panel on the role of stakeholders in holding Network Rail to account.
13. The Panel discussed the key issues for consumers. They felt that stakeholder accountability would provide Network Rail with the opportunity to improve enhancements and provide greater stakeholder insight to each individual route.
14. The Panel asked Siobhan to return in September for a further discussion focussing this time on the guidance the ORR is providing to Network Rail about stakeholder engagement.

Next meeting: 27 September 2017