

# 'MEASURING UP' ANNUAL RAIL CONSUMER REPORT AT A GLANCE SUMMARY

JULY 2017



## INTRODUCTION

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) is the combined economic and health and safety regulator for Great Britain's rail network and the economic monitor for England's strategic road network.

Our strategic objective is to support better customer service in the specific areas that we regulate. Therefore, we focus on:

- **Ticket retailing**, specifically the ease with which passengers can buy tickets;
- The provision of **passenger information**, including at times of disruption;

- The provision of **assistance** to passengers who require additional support to make their journey; and
- The provision of an accessible, effective and efficient **complaints handling** service, including providing compensation where passengers are subject to delay.

Our Measuring Up report covers our work for rail passengers, which derives from the passenger-facing obligations in train companies' and Network Rail's operating licences and from our consumer law role.

It demonstrates the work we are doing to recognise success and build a clear evidence base on which to press for improvement.

This 'at a glance' summary provides an overview of our report. If you want to see the full report you can find it here: <http://www.orr.gov.uk/rail/publications/reports/annual-rail-consumer-report>

## Ticket retailing

**ORR's work is focused on ensuring that buying tickets from machines and websites becomes easier for passengers.**

We worked with the Department for Transport (DfT), the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), *Which?*, and Transport Focus to identify actions that will improve fares and ticketing for passengers. The resulting

[Action Plan](#) is being implemented by train companies now.

We commissioned an [audit of train company websites](#) against the retail information Code of Practice (the 'Code'). The Code was designed to help make sure passengers have the information they need when they choose, buy and use rail tickets.

### Next steps

We will undertake a further review of websites and publish an update in December.

In February 2017, we also published the results of our research into passengers' experience of [Ticket Vending Machines \(TVMs\)](#). The results showed that although 80% of mystery shoppers selected the most appropriate ticket for their journey from a TVM, one in five mystery shoppers were unable to do this.

We recommended to train companies that they introduce a voluntary TVM price guarantee to give a refund of the additional ticket costs to passengers who find that they could have bought a cheaper ticket for the same journey. 12 train companies now have a TVM price guarantee in place.

### Next steps

We will repeat our mystery shopping research later this year to see what improvements have been made over the last 12 months.

**We recommended that train companies should make improvements in three areas:**

**GroupSave discounts**

**Live journey information**

**Key terms and conditions**

**80%** selected the most appropriate ticket for their journey

**1 in 5** mystery shoppers were unable to select the most appropriate ticket

**12** train companies now have a TVM price guarantee in place

## Passenger information

**ORR is focused on ensuring that passengers receive the right information at the right time to help them plan their journey.**

Train companies and Network Rail have been working towards the delivery of 46 industry actions to improve the provision information to passengers. This includes things like using banners to highlight disruption information on website homepages.

The RDG sampled 12,690 customers from April 2016 to March 2017. They found that the overall rating of how a train company deals with delays

and cancellations is poor, with four times as many negative ratings as positive.

The areas of information provision that most need to be looked at are:

- The availability of alternative transport if the train service could not continue;
- The time taken to resolve the problem;
- The amount of information provided; and
- The frequency of updates.

**46** industry actions

**12,690** customers sampled

**4** times as many negative ratings as positive

### Next steps

We will establish the gaps between the current industry work and what actions train companies and Network Rail may need to prioritise to deliver improvement in each of these areas.

## Passenger assistance

### ORR is working to make sure that disabled passengers can use the railway confidently and know what help is available.

In 2016-17, there were 1.2 million instances of passenger assistance to help passengers complete their journey. This is a 4.4% increase compared to 2015-16.

Over the past year we have been undertaking a large-scale programme of consumer research looking in depth at the provision of access and

travel assistance for passengers with disabilities. This work will be published in the autumn. We have:

- Surveyed almost 4000 passengers who have used the booking service Passenger Assist;
- Carried out 318 mystery shops to test unbooked (or 'turn up and go') assistance;
- Surveyed 1000 people to see whether people are aware of the assistance they can get on the rail network.

**1.2m** | increase of  
passenger assistance **4.4%**

**4,000** passengers surveyed  
who have used the  
booking service  
Passenger Assist

**318** mystery shops to test  
unbooked (or 'turn up  
and go') assistance

**1,000** people surveyed about  
assistance they can get  
on the rail network

## Next steps

We will continue to collect and improve core data.

Staff training also continues to be an important focus and we will review in depth the information provided by train companies on staff training and consider how good training practices could be better recognised and disseminated.

We will work with the DfT and remind all train companies of their obligations under the Code of Practice on Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations and provide clarification on when the Code is likely to be triggered.

We are working to understand more around the systems and processes being employed in relation to Driver Controlled Operation services and will be returning to this in the autumn, once we have finalised and published the results of our research, detailed above.

## Complaints and compensation

**ORR is dedicated to ensuring that complaint systems are accessible and individual's complaints are dealt with quickly and fairly.**

Complaints about train companies have been increasing. This year there were just over 500,000 complaints, an increase of 8%.

Train companies are required to provide a full response to 95% of complaints within 20 working

days. 12 out of 24 train companies have failed to achieve this target consistently in 2016-17.

We surveyed over 29,000 complainants in 2016-17 to measure passenger satisfaction with complaints handling. Whilst we found some positive aspects of complaint handling, 52% of respondents were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled.

### Next steps

We will continue to concentrate on improving train companies' complaints handling, with a key focus on the obligation to respond to complaints within the required timescales. We will increase our understanding of why some train companies are consistently performing better than others and will share good practices as a way of raising standards in this area.

We have supported the potential introduction of an Ombudsman in the rail sector and will continue to be proactively involved in discussions as arrangements are further explored.

Following our work on the **rail passenger super-complaint on delay compensation**, 8 train companies have improved information against the five standards we identified as good practice.

Our latest mystery shopping survey showed that one third (34%) of mystery shoppers received accurate information on their customer enquiry about how

to claim delay compensation. This represents an improvement of 4 percentage points from 2016.

Successful compensation claims have risen by around 10 percentage points in the past year. This represents important progress, although a substantial proportion of potential payouts still goes unclaimed.

### Next steps

We will expand our core data requirement to include information relating to delay compensation. This will help us track the volume of delay compensation claims each train company receives, the methods used to submit claims, the speed with which train companies process claims, and the methods used to pay compensation.

500,000+  
complaints

increase of  
8%

12  
out of 24

companies have not responded to 95% of complaints within 20 working days

52%

of respondents were dissatisfied with complaints handling

8

companies improved information against the five good practice standards

34%

of mystery shoppers received accurate information on claiming compensation

Increase in successful compensation claims

10

percentage points