

Network Rail

Complaint Handling Procedure:  
Passengers and lineside  
neighbours

July 2016

# Introduction

Network Rail owns and looks after Britain's railway. We don't operate trains, but we do make sure they can run safely and reliably through our work in maintaining and enhancing the railway infrastructure. We also manage 18 of Britain's biggest and busiest stations. A full list of the stations we manage is on page 9 of this document.

At Network Rail we care about the people who live alongside our tracks and infrastructure. We know that our work can cause some disruption and noise so we do our best to limit this, but the nature and scale of our work means that sometimes, disruption is unavoidable.

Train stations are where people's journeys begin and we want passengers to have the best possible experience at our train stations. This includes any passenger assistance that has been booked with our staff at stations. If something isn't quite right, we want to know about it. With this in mind, we have developed this complaint handling procedure which describes what to do if you ever want to make a complaint to Network Rail.

This procedure explains what to do if you want to report a problem, and how we will investigate and respond to your concern. It has been designed with our passengers and lineside neighbours in mind. A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer or potential customer about a service delivery or company or industry policy.

In addition to the commitments made in this document, Network Rail will comply with the Data Protection Act at all times.

## Contacting us

You should contact Network Rail to report a problem, complain or provide feedback about:

- Work on the railway infrastructure, including track maintenance, work to electrify lines, and for major projects on the railway
- How we maintain our land alongside the track
- Our infrastructure (e.g. level crossings)
- One of the 18 major stations that we manage (see page 9 of this document)

If you ever need to report a problem or complain to Network Rail, we want to provide a response and, if possible, a resolution as soon as possible. Below, we have listed our various contact details:

- **Telephone** – 03457 11 41 41 ***[If you have a safety concern, please call us at this number.](#)***  
This is the National Helpline number. You can call our National Helpline 24 hours a day, seven days a week including bank holidays. You will be connected to a Network Rail employee who will attempt to resolve your query over the phone. This is usually the quickest way to find a solution. If the query can't be resolved immediately, we will log your complaint through our system.
- **Online** – [www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus)  
You can access frequently asked questions or choose to make a complaint to Network Rail from the above page, which is also where you will find our online contact form. We provide access to this document from the above page.
- **Social Media (Twitter)** - @networkrail  
For full details on how we manage contact through social media, please read our [twitter terms of service](#). We respond to as many queries as we can on twitter or will help and direct you to log a complaint if you would like to. We will always try to be as helpful as possible and understand your frustrations, but please remember @networkrail is managed by real people – abuse will not be

tolerated under any circumstances. Please note that we will not respond to complaints on social media that name staff members. Our National Helpline number and website details are on our twitter profile.

- **Our managed stations**

All of our staff are trained to help you resolve your query. Speak to any Network Rail member of staff at one of our managed stations and they will attempt to resolve the query there and then, or provide you with a station complaint form at your request. All of our frontline staff are trained and encouraged to try and resolve your query and provide assistance, or help you to submit your complaint if you wish to do so. Contact details and facility information for individual stations can be found [here](#).

- **Post**

Our central Contact and Communities Team is based in London. We also have six regional community relations teams throughout the country. If action is required, our central team will pass your query or complaint to the team that works in your area.

Contact and Communities Team  
Network Rail  
One Eversholt Street  
London  
NW1 2DN

Our contact details are available at the sign posted information points on, or close to, the main concourse of any Network Rail managed station. Alternatively our contact details are published in our Annual Return from 2016 onwards, or on the 'Contact Us' page of our website.

To be able to respond to your complaint, there is some essential information that we will need from you:

- **What?**

A summary of your issue. If the issue relates to an injury or damage it will be dealt with under our claims process and the incident will be reported to the Office of Rail and Road.

- **Where?**

Where the issue occurred

- **Who?**

Your name and contact details so that we can keep in touch with you about your complaint

- **When?**

As much information as you can provide for times and dates of incidents

The structure of the rail industry can be difficult to understand. We will respond to all issues relating to Network Rail, our contractors, or involving Network Rail and other railway organisations. If required, we will collaborate with the relevant organisation to provide you with a response. If you contact us about an issue which mainly or primarily relates to a Train Operating Company, we will forward your complaint to them. This includes any enquiries about claiming compensation as a result of a delayed train service. More detail about delay repay can be found on the national rail website. Staff at our managed stations will also be able to provide this information.

We will keep a digital record of your complaint and the action taken in our system. We do not apply a limit to the amount of time that we keep these records. Our privacy policy ensures that we only use the information you provide to us for the intended purpose and explains how you can request a copy of any information we hold about you and your complaint. For more information, please read our [privacy policy](#). Alternatively, please call our National Helpline to request a copy.

If you are contacting us about trees and vegetation, graffiti of damaged fencing along the railway line, it's a great help if you can email us a few photographs to show us the problem. Our helpline staff will provide the email address to send them to, or you can attach them to our online contact form.

## Alternative Dispute Resolution

If you are unhappy with a response you receive from us, you can contact either of the following organisations:

### London TravelWatch

[www.londontravelwatch.org.uk](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk)

For complaints about rail services within the London area (stations marked with \* on page 9 of this document)

**Email:** [info@londontravelwatch.org.uk](mailto:info@londontravelwatch.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 3176 2999

**Twitter:** @LonTravelWatch

**Post:** London TravelWatch  
169 Union Street  
London  
SE1 0LL

### Transport Focus

[www.transportfocus.org.uk](http://www.transportfocus.org.uk)

For complaints about rail services outside the London area (stations not marked with \* on page 9 of this document)

**Email:** [advice@transportfocus.org.uk](mailto:advice@transportfocus.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 030 0123 2350

**Twitter:** @TransportFocus

**Post:** Freepost RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ  
PO Box 5594  
Southend-On-Sea  
SS1 9PZ

If you tell us that you are unhappy with our initial response, we will respond again and also provide you with contact details of London TravelWatch and Transport Focus.

You can also contact an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) body to deal with us on your behalf. ADR bodies are in place to provide alternative resolution for disputes concerning contractual obligations. A contractual obligation arises when you pay Network Rail for goods or services, or any other contract is already in place. If your complaint relates to goods or services that you have paid Network Rail for and we have been unable to provide a resolution, we will provide you with the details of relevant ADR bodies. Alternatively, a list of the relevant ADR bodies for the rail industry can be found on page 9 of this document.

If you contact any of these organisations to launch an appeal on your behalf, they will request a copy of your case file including all of your personal information from us. By requesting that any of these bodies act on your behalf, you consent to the sharing of information relating to the complaints; therefore we may divulge some or all of your details where it is necessary. Full details on this can be found in the complaint handling procedures of London TravelWatch and Transport Focus at the websites listed above.

## Adjustments for Passengers

However you choose to contact us, you can authorise a carer, support worker or guardian to act on your behalf. We train our staff to be reactive to the needs of our customers so if you need any adjustments or

assistance in making a complaint our staff will be happy to help. Additionally, if you would like to receive any information in a more accessible format, please call our National Helpline.

# Service Standards

Our complaint handling procedure is owned by the Head of Contact Communities and controls are in place to ensure that our processes and people meet the commitments in this document. These procedures make sure that we fully, fairly and transparently respond to your concerns. This section tells you exactly what you can expect from us if you ever need to make a complaint.

## 1 – Acknowledgement

However you choose to contact us to make a complaint, we will send you an acknowledgment within five working days. This lets you know that we have received your complaint, as well as providing three important pieces of information about how we will handle it:

- **Your unique complaint reference number**  
When you first contact us about a query or complaint, we log this on our customer portal and give you a unique reference number. This number will be included in all communications you receive from us, and quoting it is the easiest way to get an update on the progress of your complaint if you need to. You can also use it to track your query or complaint online at: [www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus).
- **Response time**  
If you report a problem relating to safety, we will give this absolute priority. In other circumstances, we aim to respond to 95% of all complaints within 20 working days. We will explain this in the acknowledgement that we send to you. However, if there are any particular issues affecting our overall response time we will provide you with adjusted timescales in the acknowledgement. We will also provide this information to Transport Focus, London TravelWatch and the Office of Rail and Road.
- **The complaints process**  
The service standards provided here give you all the information you are likely to need about the process that your complaint goes through. We will also provide you with a brief summary of the process in the acknowledgement.

## 2 – Progress

As well as the initial acknowledgement we send to you, you can also expect further communication from us about the progress of your complaint.

- **Delays**  
Each complaint we receive is closely managed by a designated advisor who will do everything possible to respond to your complaint within our committed timescale. However, if we are unable to respond to your query within our target timescale of 20 working days, your advisor will notify you as soon as they are aware of the delay. We will let you know what we have done to address your complaint so far, the cause of the delay and when you should next expect to hear from us.

## 3 – Investigation

Every complaint that cannot be resolved at the first point of contact will be fully and fairly investigated by our dedicated customer teams.

We are committed to reaching fair conclusions and resolutions for our passengers and lineside neighbours. In order to deliver this, our process follows these four principles:



#### 4 – Response

We will always attempt to resolve your issue at the point of contact. If this isn't possible, we will respond fully, in writing. In this response, we will let you know the results of our investigation and, if appropriate, advise you on the action we have taken. Our response will be in plain English and jargon free.

If it is determined that there has been a fault in one of our processes, we are committed to learning from the mistakes we make and will adapt and improve our processes as required. If a complaint is made about a specific member of staff, the employee's line manager will take the appropriate action but the complainant will not be provided with the details of this action.

In our response, we may ask you to give us feedback on the service you have received. If you choose to provide this feedback, you will have the option to opt-in to providing your information to the Office of Rail and Road to allow them to seek feedback on our performance as part of their role as rail regulator. If you do not opt-in to provide your information for the Office of Rail and Road's research, we will not provide your information to them.

#### 5 – Escalation

If you are not happy with our initial response, please let us know as soon as possible. You can do this by responding directly to the lead contact that provided the initial response. If you ask us to escalate your complaint, or we believe it should be investigated at a senior level, we follow a formal process. This ensures that passengers who are not satisfied with the initial response have the opportunity to have their complaint investigated further.

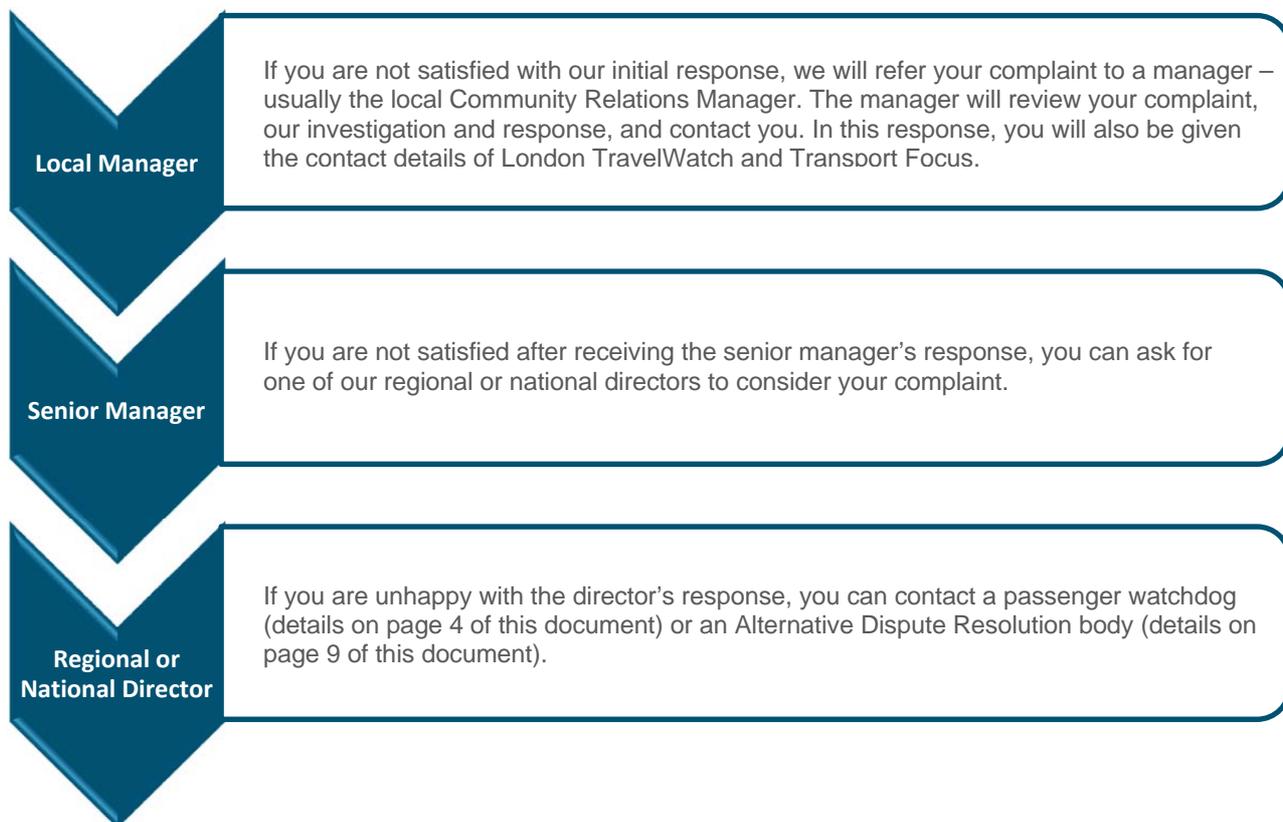
Our teams may choose to escalate an issue for senior review for any of the following reasons:

- **Repetition** – there have been several complaints received on the same issue and we believe the cause of the problem requires senior management attention.
- **Severity** – there has been disruption or distress to the complainant as a result of inherent bad practice within our operations.

If we escalate the initial complaint for senior review, we will honour the committed response timescale for all complaints of 20 working days. If the escalation has been requested by you, each further review and

response will be subject to our 20 working day response commitment. This is because each review of a complaint will be thorough and consider all the relevant details.

Below, you can see who will be reviewing your complaint at each stage of escalation when it is required:



If a complaint is escalated, your case will be reviewed by someone who has not previously been involved in the investigation. Each review of the case will consider all of the information from the original complaint, evidence gathered and analysis to determine if the correct process has been followed to reach a fair conclusion.

If your complaint is escalated, at either your request or ours, this does not affect your right to appeal with London TravelWatch, Transport Focus or any other ADR body.

## 6 – Appeals

You may choose to appeal the result of our investigation with London TravelWatch, Transport Focus or any other ADR body. By nominating any of these organisations to appeal on your behalf, you consent to the sharing of information related to your complaint.

The appeals process will involve the following steps:

- **Contact**  
We will appoint a primary and secondary contact to every appeal we receive. This helps us to meet our committed timescales for responding to appeals, and to make communication as effective as possible.
- **Escalation**  
An appeal will follow the same process of escalation as detailed above for every complaint. Where possible, each escalation will be handled by a different person than the original complaint.

- **Acknowledgement**

We will acknowledge receipt of an appeal as soon as possible, and no later than two working days after we receive it.

- **Providing case details**

By nominating an appeals organisation to act on your behalf, you consent to the sharing of information related to your complaint. We will share information within five working days of receiving a request for case details. If the appeals organisation has additional information since our initial review of the case, we will consider this in our review of the procedures followed.

- **Response times**

When we receive an appeal, we will review the complexity of the case and agree a timescale for response with the appealing body. Where possible, we will respond to the appeal within ten working days. However, our timescale target for appeals response is the same as that for every complaint. We aim to respond as soon as possible within a maximum of 20 working days. If there is a specific cause for delay, we will communicate this and agree amended timescales. If there is any major disruption that is affecting our overall response time we will provide the appeals organisation with adjusted timescales.

## Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 gives you the right to ask for information that we hold. We will always seek to comply with such requests, unless there are specific reasons that we cannot (for example, if the information is commercially sensitive or if disclosure would endanger health and safety of individuals).

A request for information must be made in writing. Requests can be sent by email to [foi@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:foi@networkrail.co.uk) or by writing to:

Network Rail  
Freedom of Information  
1st Floor Willen  
Area C  
The Quadrant  
Elder Gate  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 1EN

Please note that the FOI procedure is not intended to deal with standard work requests or complaints.

If you are unhappy with the way we have managed your request for information or the way we have limited the use or re-use of information, you can contact the Information Commissioner.

**Telephone:** 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 if you prefer to use a national rate number.

**Post:** Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

**Online:** [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

# Stations managed by Network Rail

Birmingham New Street  
Bristol Temple Meads  
Edinburgh Waverley  
Glasgow Central  
Leeds  
Liverpool Lime Street  
London Bridge\*  
London Cannon Street\*  
London Charing Cross\*

London Euston\*  
London King's Cross\*  
London Liverpool Street\*  
London Paddington\*  
London St Pancras International\*  
London Victoria\*  
London Waterloo\*  
Manchester Piccadilly  
Reading

\* London station

To report a problem with any other station, you should contact the train operating company that manages the station. You can find the company's name and contact details at the National Rail Enquiries website [www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations)

## Alternative Dispute Resolution Bodies

Transport Focus and London TravelWatch already provides a mediation service for customers in the rail industry, however you may alternatively choose to contact the Consumer Ombudsman if you are unhappy with our response to your complaint.

**Official name of ADR body:** Consumer Ombudsman

**Address:** PO Box 1263, Warrington, WA4 9RE

**Tel:** 0333 300 1621

**E mail:** [complaints@consumer-ombudsman.org](mailto:complaints@consumer-ombudsman.org)

**Web Address:** [www.consumer-ombudsman.org/](http://www.consumer-ombudsman.org/)

## Next Destination

You may also find the following documents useful:

[Making Rail accessible – Guide to policies and practices](#)

[Making Rail accessible – Helping older and disabled passengers](#)

[National Rail Conditions of Carriage](#)