

Covering: April 2024 – March 2025
(For submission to ORR and publication on TPE website)

Introduction

Each year, we review how we manage customer complaints and delay compensation to improve the experience for everyone who travels with us. This report explains what we've changed in the past year, based directly on customer feedback, and the impact those improvements have made.

We've also included specific steps taken to better support disabled passengers, in line with the expectations set by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

1. Improving the Complaints Process – and What We've Learned

We've made a number of improvements to make it easier for passengers to raise and resolve complaints, and we've used customer feedback to drive meaningful change across our business.

Clearer Communication and More Transparency

- We updated email sender names and subject lines in Nov 2024 to help customers recognise official messages, reducing confusion and increasing response rates.
- A new "Awaiting HQ" case status in our system gives better visibility on progress, allowing for quicker follow-ups and resolution.

Smarter Tools and Training for Better Support

- 52 new and 71 updated knowledge base articles ensure our advisors have accurate, up-to-date guidance.
- Refresher training in Jan 2025 (building on August 2024 training) covered GDPR, escalation handling, and consistent categorisation.
- Advisors are now encouraged to personalise responses rather than use standard templates, to create more meaningful conversations with customers.

Focus on Accessibility: Supporting Disabled Passengers

- Our Passenger Assist team was restructured under dedicated leadership for better coordination.
 - A new Passenger Assist complaints form allows advisors to quickly escalate cases to the right team.
 - We introduced a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to ensure timely resolution of assistance complaints.
 - Advisors now access industry ticketing systems directly to reduce the burden on passengers.
 - Working groups at Sheffield, Doncaster, and Rotherham stations, and a new cross-industry group, help us spot and fix patterns of failed assistance.
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2. What Customers Complained About Most – and Our Response

Train Cancellations

- Customers told us cancellations were their biggest frustration.
- We launched a GDPR-compliant QR code system to capture disruption details quickly, replacing slower paper forms.
- We improved driver availability (71.9% → 77.4%) and expanded engineering capacity to make our fleet more reliable.
- We work with Network Rail and British Transport Police to prevent trespass and support vulnerable individuals near the railway.

First Class Catering Unavailability

- Catering is only available on about 50% of our services—and often limited to parts of the train, which can cause confusion.
- We updated our website with a catering coverage map and are working to make this info more visible during booking.
- New TransPennine Kitchen roles help us deliver service even with fewer staff on board.

Staff Behaviour and Penalty Fares

- Some complaints were about how penalty fares were handled.
- All complaints are independently reviewed and supported by on-board managers to ensure fairness.
- As the role of the Revenue Protection team continues to evolve, we are committed to developing our colleagues to ensure they uphold the highest standards. While this role can be challenging, particularly when delivering difficult messages, we support our teams to engage with professionalism and empathy. Refresher training is delivered regularly and reviewed to reflect current best practice as well as legal and regulatory changes.

Crowding and Seat Reservations



- Overcrowding and inaccessible reserved seats were key themes.
- We added four trains per hour between Manchester and Leeds, adding 1,300 seats per day.
- We monitor train loadings in real time to adjust ticket quotas and seat availability.
- Counted Place allocations help us offer tickets during disruption without promising unavailable seats.
- Customers receive 50% journey compensation if reserved seats aren't available.

3. How We Used Complaint Feedback to Drive Change

- CSAT comments and sentiment analysis led to revised templates and more personalised replies.

- Common repeat issues were tackled with better guidance, advisor training, and clearer processes.
- Escalation processes were standardised and improved through targeted staff coaching.
- Customer complaint themes are reviewed every six weeks with business leaders and Transport Focus, with 82 active actions tracked.

4. What's Changed – and How It's Helping Customers

 Impact Area	 Result
Complaints CSAT Score	Increased from 1.65 → 2.5
Timely Complaint Responses	97% replied to within the 20-day ORR target
Refund Processing	24,339 refunds processed in average 3.07 days
Passenger Assistance Complaints	Faster, more consistent handling after centralisation
Journey Satisfaction	Averaged 81%, peaking at 90% in March 2025
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	Up +8 points YoY, reaching +20 in Period 13

5. Delay Compensation – Making It Easier and Faster

Process Improvements

- We processed 303,587 Delay Repay claims—119% of forecast—while still resolving 95.7% within five days.
- Automation of split ticketing claims increased from 70.3% to 78.8%, saving time and around £4.9K per period.
- A new Global Pay Retry system prevented 364 failed payments in its first month and is expected to save £84,000 per year.
- Portal text was updated to clearly direct customers with third-party tickets, cutting misdirected claims by 14.8%.
- Our Salesforce platform now tracks outcomes more accurately and flags failed redress for governance reviews.

Summary

This report shows how we've listened, learned, and acted on customer complaints from April 2024 to March 2025. From clearer communication and faster refunds to better support for disabled passengers, we're committed to making every journey better.

We'll keep reviewing our performance and sharing updates regularly.