



# TransPennine Express Complaints Handling Procedure

How to make a complaint and what you can expect from us

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## About this document

Inside, you'll find everything you need to know about how to make a complaint if you're unhappy with any aspect of our service. You'll find out what to expect when you get in touch with us, and what we do with the information you give us.

At TransPennine Express (TPE) we define a complaint as:

*'Any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer, or potential customer about service delivery or company or industry policy'*

## Other versions of this document

If you'd like this document in an accessible format like Braille, Large Print, audio or easy read, [please](#) get in touch with us. Our Customer Relations Team are here to help – here's how to get in touch with them.

Call: 0345 6001671\*

Email: [tpecustomer.relations@firstgroup.com](mailto:tpecustomer.relations@firstgroup.com)

Write to: TransPennine Express  
ADMAIL 3878  
FREEPOST  
Manchester M1 9YB

\*calls 0345 numbers cost no more than calls to geographic numbers (01 or 02) and are included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way. Calls from landlines are typically charged up to 9p per minute; calls from mobiles typically cost between 3p and 40p per minute. Calls from landlines and mobiles are included in free call packages.

## More information

For more information about our commitment to you, read this document alongside our Passenger's Charter and the National Rail Conditions of Carriage. You'll find them both at [www.tpexpress.co.uk](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk) and [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

## Giving you the best service we can

We want every experience you have with us to be an easy one so we work hard to give you a great service every time. But we know sometimes things go wrong. If they do, we want to hear about it so we can make it right, and stop it happening again.

If you do want to complain, we want to make it as easy as possible for you. But we know you'd probably prefer not to have to contact us at all. So we do whatever we can to make sure you don't have any reason to be unhappy. Here are just some of the things we do to make that happen:

- We have a scheme called Back on Track. This gives our frontline staff the ability to solve a problem on the spot, removing the need for you to get in touch after your journey. Some examples of when this may be used are: when catering is not available; to give pre-authorized confirmation that we will refund the costs of a taxi; to allow you to travel on a train other than the one you are booked to travel on; or for dry cleaning costs if a personal belonging has been spoiled as a result of something on our train/in our station.
- We work hard to understand the reasons why customers contact us – we try to address those reasons so you don't have to get in touch
- We make sure you can find the information you want quickly and easily
- We give our people the information, tools and training they need to answer your questions and resolve any problem on the spot
- If you do have to get in touch, we aim to put things right for you first time
- We're always looking for ways to improve our service, and working with our people and processes to make them a reality. To prove this commitment, we will produce a twice yearly Customer Report which will be available on our website or through our customer relations team.

In the meantime, we want to hear from you. If you tell us what went wrong, we can make sure it doesn't happen again.

## Handling complaints fairly and efficiently

Our complaint handling process not only makes it easy for you to tell us you're unhappy, but helps us to put things right for you as quickly and fairly as we can. Here's how:

- We will display this complaints handling process on our website [www.tpexpress.co.uk](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk) and make it available at our stations
- We write everything clearly and in plain English so there's no room for confusion
- We investigate every complaint fully and fairly
- We keep your details confidential (see page 12) full details of our privacy policy are available on our website
- We address every point you raise with us so you get a full reply
- We do everything we can to put things right for you first time
- We monitor and audit our responses to make sure they're of a high standard
- Our managers get regular updates about the complaints so we can make changes where we need to
- We review our complaints handling process every year to make sure it's effective

## When a third party's involved

If your complaint involves another rail company or Network Rail, we'll send your complaint to them and ask them to get in touch. And we'll always let you know when we've done that.

If your complaint involves a journey that features more than one rail company, we will liaise with the other companies involved to ensure you receive a co-ordinated response.

We sometimes work with third parties who can help us deliver one aspect of our service safely. If your complaint involves one of those parties, you won't need to contact them directly. We will always deal with your complaint as if we provided the service for you.

## How to make a complaint

If you're unhappy with any aspect of our service, there are several ways you can tell us.

### Tell our staff at the station or on the train straightaway

We train our staff to handle complaints fairly and efficiently, and to solve any problems there and then if they can and we provide a number of tools to enable this to happen.

If they can't, their manager or supervisor can help instead. That way, we can resolve everything for you as quickly as possible.

If you want your complaint to be formally recorded, or it involves a member of TPE staff and will require investigation into what happened, we will either provide one of our complaint forms or pass on your complaint to our Customer Relations Team directly.

### Get in touch with our Customer Relations Team

If you don't tell our staff on the spot, you can get in touch with our Customer Relations Team, between 6am and 11pm every day except Christmas Day, and outside of these hours a recorded message will advise when the centre will be open. They'll be happy to help with your complaint. Here's how to contact them.

Call: 0345 600 1671

Email: [tpecustomer.relations@firstgroup.com](mailto:tpecustomer.relations@firstgroup.com)

Write to: TransPennine Express  
ADMAIL 3878  
FREEPOST  
Manchester M1 9YB

Web: [www.tpexpress.co.uk/contact-us/](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/contact-us/)

In addition, all TransPennine Express stations and stations that we call at provide copies of both our Complaint and Your Views forms. Once completed, these can be sent to our Customer Relations Team via our freepost address. Just ask a member of staff and they'll be happy to give you a copy.

Our Customer Relations Team's contact details can also be found on all of our major publications, prominently displayed at our stations, website and via our Facebook page or our Twitter feed.

## Get in touch with our Social Media team

You can also get in touch with our Social Media team regarding your complaint. They'll be happy to help and will either pass your complaint onto our Customer Relations Team on your behalf or wherever possible offer an immediate solution. Here's how to contact them.

Twitter: @TPEassist

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TPExpressTrains/](http://www.facebook.com/TPExpressTrains/)

Please note that we respect the privacy of our employees so won't discuss complaints about our staff on Facebook or Twitter. Any post that identifies a member of staff will be removed and the complaint passed to our Customer Relations Team to investigate and respond.

## Meet our managers

We also hold regular sessions where you can talk to our senior managers and directors about our service, have the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues or complaints in person. Details of these will be promoted on our social media feeds or our Customer Relations Team will be able to supply you with details.

We also have a Customer Consultation Forum to help us in getting views directly from our customers. This membership group is in the form of an online forum, which has occasional meetings to discuss specific issues and initiatives that we want customers to have a say on. In addition to this we also have an Accessibility Consultation Forum to enable us to better understand the needs and opinions of customers who may have differing needs when travelling with us. These may include elderly, disabled or those whose first language is not English. Information on how to join these forums is available through our Customer Relations Team or on our website at [www.tpexpress.co.uk/contact-us/customer-consultation-panel/](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/contact-us/customer-consultation-panel/)

If you wish to speak to your local station manager directly about a problem you have encountered, staff at the stations will be able to arrange this for you. Alternatively, our Customer Relations Team will be able to assist with this.

## Making a complaint - what to include

The more information you give us about your complaint, the sooner we can get back to you with a full reply. For example, please include things like:

- the time and date of your journeys
- the stations you travelled to and from
- the names of any staff involved

- copies of your tickets and any other documents that might help

## Helping you make a complaint

You can ask a friend, family member, guardian, support worker or carer to make a complaint on your behalf although we will need your permission for us to deal with another person before we discuss the complaint. This does not apply if you are the parent or guardian of a child aged 16 or under.

## Unpaid Fares Notice/Ticket Irregularity Report

If your complaint relates to the issuing of an Unpaid Fares Notice or a Ticket Irregularity Report that has been filed and you want to make an appeal you should do so within 21 days of receiving the notice. Appeals can be made in writing to;

Revenue Protection Compliance Manager  
Platform 2  
Ferensway Kingston-upon-Hull North Humberside  
HU1 3QX

Full details of our Revenue Protection Policy can be viewed at [www.tpexpress.co.uk/about-us/customer/revenue-protection-policy/](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/about-us/customer/revenue-protection-policy/)

## Claiming for losses, personal injury or property damage

If you need to claim for losses, property damage or personal injury, please write to or email our Customer Relations Team. Where possible they will aim to resolve your complaint personally, however there are times when they may need to pass your details to our claim handlers. If this is the case they will ensure that this is done and inform you of the status of your case.



## What you can expect from us

We work hard to handle complaints effectively. And we do everything we can to put things right for you. Here's what you can expect from us.

## We'll get back to you quickly

When you contact our Customer Relations Team we'll always acknowledge receipt of your complaint.

We aim to get back to you within 5 working days if you make a complaint.

If we need to check any specifics before we reply or carry out a more detailed investigation, we aim to get back to you within 20 working days; we aim to close 100% of cases within 20 working days. We always let you know if we need to do this, and keep you up to date.

If the number of complaints we get goes up unexpectedly, or if our response is delayed for any other reason we may not be able to get back to you within 5 days. If this happens, we'll let you know and will keep you updated. Where we are facing a surge in contact we will ensure that our website advises of this.

We'll also update our website with the average time it's taking us to reply, and tell organisations like the Rail Ombudsman, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Rail North as well.

## We'll investigate your complaint carefully

We will fully investigate every complaint appropriately. This could mean:

- confirming the details of what happened
- collecting evidence
- interviewing any staff involved
- finding out what should have been done differently
- deciding on the appropriate response for you

## Staff complaints

Complaints made about TPE staff members will be recorded onto our customer relations management database and forwarded to the relevant line manager so a full investigation can take place. Due to staff confidentiality we will be unable to share the details of any disciplinary

procedures that may, or may not have taken place as a result of the complaint made but we commit to fully investigate feedback that we receive and act as appropriate.

## **We'll pay compensation when it's due**

If your train is delayed or cancelled, you may be able to get compensation through our Delay Repay scheme. You can find out more on our website [www.tpexpress.co.uk/contact-us/delay-repay-compensation/](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/contact-us/delay-repay-compensation/) or alternatively information is available in our Passenger's Charter which as well as being available on our website, can also be found at all of our station

If you complain about a delayed or cancelled train but haven't specifically requested compensation, we still will process a claim on your behalf and provide you with any compensation that may be due.

We look at each complaint individually so if we think you've had a particularly bad experience, that isn't covered by the Passenger's Charter, we may give you a gesture of goodwill to make up for it.

We reserve the right to terminate any correspondence or communication that could be construed as abusive or bullying in content, voluminous, frivolous or vexatious, or which specifically diverts resources and affects the customer relations area of the operation. Prior to taking this decision your case will be reviewed by a senior manager and we will always consult with Transport Focus and the Office of Rail and Road before making any such decision and will advise you in writing of the reasons behind the decision. This will not affect your right to appeal to Transport Focus and we will provide their details at the time the decision is made.

## **Taking your complaint further**

Please give us the opportunity to try to resolve your complaint. If you're unhappy with the response you receive, you have the right to appeal to the Rail Ombudsman. The Rail Ombudsman is there to help resolve complaints between us and our customers. It's free to use their services and they are independent of the rail industry. They don't take sides, but just look at the evidence available. They will help us both to try to reach an agreement, but if this doesn't happen, they will make a decision based on the evidence they've received. If you agree with their decision, then we have to act on what they say.

You can appeal to the Rail Ombudsman if:

- You're unhappy with our final response to your complaint which will be contained in a letter or email (sometimes called a 'deadlock letter'); or

- We haven't resolved your complaint within 40 working days of receiving it; and
- No more than 12 months have passed since we sent you our final response.

There are some complaints that the Rail Ombudsman won't be able to look into, for example if it's about the way one of our services has been designed, industry policy, or if your complaint relates to an event which took place before the Rail Ombudsman service was established. If that's the case, then they'll contact you to let you know. If possible, they will transfer your complaint to another organisation that may be able to help you further, such as Transport Focus, the independent consumer watchdog for the rail industry. They will independently review your complaint and where appropriate, follow things up on your behalf.

On-line chat: [www.railombudsman.org](http://www.railombudsman.org)

Telephone: 0330 094 0362

Textphone: 0330 094 0363

E-mail: [enquiries@railombudsman.org](mailto:enquiries@railombudsman.org) Rail Ombudsman

FREEPOST, 1st Floor, Premier House, Argyle Way, Stevenage SG1 2AD

## Your privacy and General Data Protection Regulation

Keeping your details secure is a top priority for us. So we follow our Privacy Policy and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) very closely.

Here's what you can expect from us when it comes to keeping your details secure:

- When you contact us, we store your personal details on our dedicated and secure systems
- We're committed to the GDPR and to protecting any personal data we hold on our systems
- We train all of our staff in how to follow the GDPR, and we review our processes regularly to make sure they're in line with the act
- All correspondence sent to our Customer Relations Team is stored electronically on our Customer Relationship Management system (CRM). Any paper mail is scanned onto the CRM and the original held in storage for 6 months before being securely destroyed

## How we deal with complaints and complaints data

### Improving our service

We know that the needs of communities and our customers change and we want to carry on living up to your expectations, and our own high standards.

So when you get in touch with us with a complaint or some feedback, we record all the details – good and bad. We share your comments with the relevant areas of the business in daily, weekly and monthly reports. They go to the managers and senior managers responsible, as well as our directors.

The reports help us work out where we can improve, and what changes we need to make to give our customers a great service. That's why we're always happy to hear from you.

We will.

- Use the complaint data to identify the root causes of complaints
- Take action to reduce the chance of a similar issue happening again
- Regularly review our performance when dealing with complaints to improve how we deal with them

We will also provide data to the Office of Rail and Road on the number of comments and complaints we receive and how quickly we deal with them.

## Recording complaints

All complaints, and any other comments, are recorded on our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system against a set of categories that cover every aspect of the service we provide. This data is collated centrally and used to generate a number of daily, weekly and monthly reports that are passed to the managers responsible for that area of the business so trends can be identified and problems resolved.

Further high level reports on TransPennine Express complaint data is made available to both the senior managers and board of directors within the business and used to contribute to high level governance and accountability for the service provided.

Each complaint made to us is important and valuable feedback on the service we have provided and feeds into an internal continuous improvement approach which seeks to identify the underlying causes of customer dissatisfaction. Each area of TransPennine Express meets regularly to review performance and to plan for the future, accurate complaint data contributes to this process.

TransPennine Express complaint data is also shared with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) on a periodic basis

## Record keeping

All complaints are recorded along with general information that helps us identify areas of improvement. They include:

- journey information such as where the journey began and ended
- the date of travel
- the class of travel
- the type of ticket held
- the date of the journey
- the name of the advisor who dealt with the complaint
- the date we received the complaint, and the date we responded

When recording complaint data, the contact details, and any information that could identify the complainant is not included.

## Staff complaints

All complaints regarding a TransPennine Express member of staff are recorded on our CRM system and a full report of the passenger's experience, along with any other supporting evidence is made

available to their line manager as soon as possible so an investigation can take place. This may, where appropriate, include CCTV.

Due to staff confidentiality we won't share the results of any disciplinary action that may, or may not have taken place as a result of the complaint.

We will also not discuss any staff complaints on any public Social Media forums.

## **Training**

All customer facing TransPennine Express staff receive training in how to identify and resolve customer complaints. An ability and empathy to do so also forms part of our recruitment process and is embedded into the customer focused culture within the company. To this end, all of our frontline staff undergo a training course called World Host. Part of this programme involves using live examples of complaints we have received from customers and challenging our teams on how we may better handle situations. This way we use real feedback to prompt change and make improvement.

We commit to ensuring all TransPennine Express staff, including any staff working on our behalf, are aware of our Complaints Handling Procedure and know how to direct complaints to the Customer Relations Team.

Our Customer Relations Teams receive extensive training regarding how to identify a complaint, how to ensure each issue raised with us within that complaint is accurately recorded on our Customer Relationship Management system and how to resolve the complaint to the passenger's satisfaction.

## **Quality assurance**

We regularly monitor our Complaints Handling Process to make sure it is as effective as possible and adheres to the standards and commitments we have made to our customers.

All calls to our Customer Relations Team are recorded and monitored to make sure we are dealing with complaints in the best way possible

The Customer Relations Manager regularly reviews a sample of both calls and correspondence sent to our Customer Relations Team.

Each Customer Support advisor has their work monitored each month against a Quality Assurance framework to make sure our high standards are maintained. When appropriate additional training and coaching is provided.

We also survey passengers who have used our Customer Support service to see how satisfied they were with the process, and outcome of their complaint.