



Complaints Handling Procedure 2020



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Introduction

Welcome to CrossCountry

Our network stretches from Aberdeen to Penzance, Bournemouth to Manchester and Stansted Airport / Nottingham to Cardiff, covering over 1,400 miles and serving over 100 stations. We want you to enjoy your experience with us, from the moment you start to plan your journey to the time you reach your destination, however in the event things don't quite go to plan, we want to ensure you know what options are available to you and how you can provide us with your feedback or make a claim.

This is our policy on handling complaints. It tells you:

- How to contact us when you wish to complain
- How your complaint will be treated
- How quickly we will respond to your complaint
- When we will pay you compensation
- What action you can take if you feel we have not handled your complaint fairly
- When we will not respond to your complaint

Our Commitment to you

If you would like to make a comment, complaint, write to us or phone us for information, we will ensure that our response is correct and easy to understand.

We will ensure that our complaints handling procedure:

- is easily accessible and well publicised
- is simple to understand and use
- provides a response within published targets
- is respectful of customers' desire for confidentiality
- addresses all the points raised and provides an effective response and appropriate redress
- is regularly monitored and audited to ensure it is effective and to allow improvements to be made
- provides information to management so that services can be improved
- complements our Passenger's Charter commitments

Our Complaints Handling Procedure will be reviewed regularly and changes made when appropriate. This will be carried out in consultation with Transport Focus, London TravelWatch and the Office of Rail and Road.

Contact Information

Our Customer Relations team can be contacted easily. We will ensure that we provide a poster in every coach on every type of train that provides address and telephone details for sending customer comments and complaints.

Information on how to contact The Rail Ombudsman can be found at the end of this document, in our Passenger's Charter, timetables and on our website at crosscountrytrains.co.uk.

If you require a comment/complaint or claim form, these can be obtained from our train staff or from stations we stop at (when the ticket office is manned). 'Passenger's Charter' leaflets are available at stations we call at or from our website - crosscountrytrains.co.uk.

We can also provide literature in audio and large print on request. A Text Phone service is also available. We will also be happy to accept complaints or feedback from guardians, carers or support workers, on behalf of a passenger with their written permission or authority.

Our contact details are

CrossCountry Customer Relations
FREEPOST RRXU-HUEC-GLLY
Cannon House
18 The Priory Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6BS

Telephone: 03447 369 123*
Website: www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk
Twitter: [@crosscountryuk](https://twitter.com/crosscountryuk)
E-mail: customer.relations@crosscountrytrains.co.uk

* Calls cost no more than calls to standard UK landlines and must be included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way. Calls from landlines are typically charged up to 10p per minute; calls from mobiles typically cost between 10p and 40p per minute. Calls from landlines and mobiles are included in free call packages. (Check with your provider).

Methods of contact

Telephone

When you telephone us you will get through to our automated answering service almost immediately. You may then choose from the options on offer, or wait to speak to a member of our Customer Relations Team.

Speaking to our front-line staff

Our staff will do all they can to resolve the problem straight away. If this is not possible, they will provide you with details of how to contact Customer Relations. Our Customer Relations Team members will investigate your complaint and make sure you get the appropriate response.

As well as training our own staff to receive and pass on complaints, we also brief other staff who work for CrossCountry under contract, such as coach operators and other operators (such as station teams) along with other regular suppliers, so that they can direct you to our CrossCountry Customer Relations team also.

In writing by email, letter, or via our website

Every complaint received by our Customer Relations Team (including those made at stations) is logged and recorded on our central database. This allows us to analyse the reason for your contact and is used to help improve the service we provide.

Via Social Media

Our Social Media team are available to help with any comments, queries or suggestions you may have on both Facebook and Twitter. We do ask that any complaints are sent to us in writing so that we can investigate your concerns in full and respond accordingly. As a result, you may be asked to Direct / Private Message us or to contact our Customer Relations team directly to discuss the details of any formal complaint made using this contact method.

Please be aware that we will not reply to any issues regarding a member of our staff in the open forum and so would suggest that you contact us via direct message or by a more traditional method for complaints of this nature. We may also request that any images or tweets which identify a particular individual be removed (this is in accordance with our privacy and confidentiality procedures).

If you require material in alternative accessible formats or if you need a little extra help

Both our frontline and Customer Relations teams are trained to deal with queries and complaints from passengers with all types of needs. They receive regular training and briefing sessions to ensure that your enquiry or complaint is handled sensitively and in an appropriate way. More information relating to this can be found within our Accessible Travel Policy available online or upon request.

When corresponding with our customers we will make a provision for those who require a response in a different format, or in a language other than English (this will be provided upon request). We also make provisions for customers who are visually impaired or hard of hearing.

Customers can contact us using their preferred language and we will, through the services of a translation agency, respond to the correspondence in the same language. This can however take longer than the timescales we normally set ourselves, although we will endeavor to respond as quickly as possible.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as *'any expression of dissatisfaction by a passenger, or potential passenger, about the service delivery or about company or industry policy'*

How to make a complaint?

You and your feedback are very important to us. The information you provide will help us to make changes that can develop and grow our business. When you wish to make a complaint, it is very important that you feel you can do so safely and be responded to politely, with a promise of action and/or compensation when this is appropriate. Where we have got it wrong, we will accept responsibility and say we are sorry.

There are some pieces of information we will need when you get in touch, helping us to investigate and respond to your complaint as quickly as possible. This includes:

- your name and the address for our reply;

and if applicable;

- information about your journey - the date you travelled, where you were travelling from and to, or
- information about the nature of your concern(s) and specific details if possible
- either the original ticket, or in the case of Season tickets a photocopy of the ticket and your photo-card, your booking confirmation e-mail, or your unique journey number

You may make your complaint in a number of different ways

In person

If a complaint is received about the service we provide, we will ensure that our staff can help and in many situations they are able to resolve it there and then. We will always encourage our frontline staff to try to address your concerns immediately however if they are unable to do so they will refer you to our Customer Relations team.

In writing

You may make your complaint in writing (directly to our Customer Relations team) in several ways.

- You can write us a letter
- You can email us
- You can complete a feedback form on our website

By telephone

Comments can be made by calling 03447 369 123. Customer Relations staff are available*:

- 08.30 - 20.00 Monday to Friday
- 09.00 - 16.00 Saturdays
- 08.30 - 16.00 on Christmas and New Years' Eve
- Closed on Sundays, Christmas Day and Boxing Day

*Out of hours, our recorded message will confirm the details of National Rail Enquiries who are available to assist with any urgent queries.

By textphone

You can contact us using a special Text Phone number (0800 030 9230) during the times shown above.

Via Social Media

You can contact us on Facebook and Twitter 7 days a week (24 hrs.) except Christmas Day and Boxing Day when we are closed

- www.twitter.com/crosscountryuk ( @CrossCountryUK)
- www.facebook.com/Crosscountrytrains ( /Crosscountrytrains)

Speed of response

E-mails

All e-mails will be automatically acknowledged within 24 hours, a unique case reference number will be allocated to you upon receipt of your email and the details will be included on our auto-response.

Our aim is to respond in full within 10 working days. If further investigation is required a further holding email will be sent. We will aim to finalise more complicated issues within 20 days.

Written correspondence

Our aim is to respond within 15 working days of receipt of a written complaint, whether it is a written letter or pre-printed form.

If further investigation is required a further holding letter will be sent. We will aim to finalise more complicated issues within 20 days.

Telephone calls

We aim to answer 95% of incoming telephone calls within 90 seconds.

If we cannot immediately resolve the complaint at the time of the call we aim to respond in the same timescales as for written correspondence shown above.

Social Media

We aim to reply to the majority of comments, feedback and suggestions posted on social media forums within 30 minutes of receipt (during our operating hours). However, if you wish to make a formal or specific complaint we advise that you do this via one of the channels detailed above.

Busy periods and extended response times

We will use all reasonable endeavours to keep to our promised response rates even when there is an unexpected sudden increase in the volume of complaints received. Under exceptional circumstances during times of disruption we may seek to ease this target and will work closely with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Transport Focus / London TravelWatch to advise them of any changes to our response times and the steps being taken to remedy the situation.

In the event we are unable to reply in full within the timescale published, we will endeavour to make you aware of any potential delays and provide regular updates regarding the progress of your case and when you can expect to receive a full response from us.

How will my complaint be handled?

Quality of response

Whenever possible, a complaint will be handled by one member of the Customer Relations team from receipt to reply and it will address the points you raise. All complaints will be fully and fairly investigated and we will make reasonable endeavours to address all issues identified.

We will identify the reason for you contacting us and will register your feedback or complaint accordingly within our case management system. This may mean we need to ask you some further questions (or additional points of clarification), but we want to make sure that all elements of your case are recorded accurately in order for us to drive improvements.

Compensation will be offered when appropriate as explained in our Passenger Charter and in line with the National Rail Conditions of Carriage. Copies of the Charter may be found on our website at www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk, staffed stations that we stop at or on request from Customer Relations.

We prefer to handle any complaint or query directly with the individual affected and so we may request that, where possible, they contact us with their account of a situation in order for us to investigate more thoroughly (unless it is being handled as an appeal via a passenger body). Complaints sent to us via third party organisations or websites such as Resolver will be acknowledged and a request made for the claimant (or complainant) to contact us directly for a more detailed response.

We have high expectations when it comes to delivering customer service and all members of our Customer Relations (and frontline) teams undergo a comprehensive induction and training programmes to ensure they are able to deliver the excellent standard of service our customers deserve. This includes them spending some time with other customer facing functions across the business, helping them understand how their role impacts the customer and what the most effective way to handle a complaint is if we want to provide an excellent level of service, first time and every time.

Providing 'Great Journeys and a Great Service' is embedded in every aspect of our business and our staff are encouraged and empowered to make decisions which reflect this. Individuals are recruited not only based on their knowledge and experience but also on the soft-skills required for effective complaints handling. They also receive specific training modules in complaints handling (including the most effective way to investigate a complaint) and achieving a first-time resolution for the customer.

We undertake regular surveys and internal audits of a sample of our replies to customers in order to measure customer satisfaction with the way our customer relations team has performed and to ensure they meet our quality targets. This information is also used to improve the team's performance. We will endeavour to identify reasons why customers are unhappy with the way their case has been handled and will regularly monitor the level of feedback received, seeking ways to improve our process and delivering additional training or coaching modules accordingly.

We will pass on any complaints wholly regarding another train operator, and we will tell you which train operator will be responding to your comments and how to contact them should you not receive their response.

Full and fair investigation

We aim to resolve complaints in our first response, and this will include a frank and honest reply to any concerns raised. We promise to investigate all complaints made to us, fully and fairly.

We will:

- ensure we follow this Customer Complaints Handling Procedure
- make every effort to address all the issues raised in your complaint in our responses to you
- provide full and relevant explanations for the actions or policies being complained about
- explain how you can contact independent bodies if you are unhappy with our second response.

Our Customer Relations team handle any comment or complaint that requires an internal investigation. If we carry out an in-house investigation, it will be thorough and fair. We will:

- thoroughly check the relevant facts
- ensure we are not biased towards anyone involved
- obtain responses from all appropriate staff and suppliers.

We will provide a full response to your complaint, which will include:

- confirmation of when an internal investigation has been completed
- the actions we have taken to improve our service to you
- any compensation we are offering you if appropriate.

Please note, for investigations involving CrossCountry staff (or any third party provider), while we will confirm when these are required and the role of the person carrying out the investigation, we are not able to inform you of any action taken against an individual. This is to protect employee confidentiality and is in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

If you are unhappy with our first response and you contact us again, your complaint will be reviewed and responded to by a manager. This second response will include the name and position of the manager and also explain the role of The Rail Ombudsman. If you continue to remain unhappy with our response to your complaint you should contact The Rail Ombudsman.

Complaints regarding another company or operator

All train companies follow the same principles when dealing with complaints referring to more than one company. To save you any trouble, we will work together with the other companies to provide you with one response and will tell you who is leading that response.

Any complaint which relates to a third party supplier who is acting on behalf of CrossCountry, such as security personnel, cleaning and catering staff, revenue protection services or suppliers of rail replacement services, will be treated in the same way as a complaint relating to any directly managed services of CrossCountry. We will work with the provider to investigate thoroughly the details of your complaint and co-ordinate a response accordingly.

In the event that a complaint or claim which is received relates to services provided solely by another operator's services or staff, or any other agencies, this will be acknowledged and forwarded onto them within 10 days of us receiving it.

If the complaint refers in part to another transport provider, (for example a bus or aviation operator), we will explain this in our reply and aim to give you the correct address you would need to complain to. If you ask us to do so, we will forward your complaint to them directly.

Complaints relating to the Independent Penalty Fares Appeals Service, Transport Investigations Limited or British Transport Police will be handled by them directly; this is in accordance with their own complaints handling policy.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Keeping your personal information safe and secure is our priority, for more information please see our (www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/privacy-policy). We will store and use any personal data which you provide to us when contacting us for the specific purpose of investigating your claim or complaint and to contact you regarding such investigation or to request further information or confirmation regarding the complaint in question. Please also see the dedicated 'Monitoring and Reporting' section within this document for further information on some purposes for using your personal data.

At all times such use and storage will be in accordance with the General Data protection Regulation (GDPR) and any other relevant legislation from time to time.

CrossCountry Trains and the Office of Rail and Road are undertaking some joint research into passenger satisfaction with complaints handling, which involves a short online survey about your experience of how your complaint was handled. This will be sent to you by a professional research company called Critical Research. If you prefer not to be contacted please email us at customer.relations@crosscountrytrains.co.uk or by calling 03447 369 123 (option 3).

Claims and Compensation

Compensation

We know that when we fail to meet expectations, providing an explanation and a sincere apology is often enough. Any compensation that is provided will be issued in accordance with the National Rail Conditions of Carriage, our Passenger's Charter and our own internal guidelines. If appropriate, we will also offer compensation or a goodwill gesture, so that you will feel satisfied and wish to travel again with us.

Compensation will usually be offered as:

- National Rail Travel Vouchers for payment or part payment of a future journey, or
- a cash alternative (for example BACS)
- PayPal or
- a complimentary ticket(s) for a future journey.

Our Passenger's Charter explains our compensation policy, including the levels you can expect during service disruption. You can get our Passenger's Charter from our Customer Relations, team, staffed stations and our website, crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Regardless of the method you used to contact us, we will always do our best to let you know if you are entitled to claim compensation for any element of your journey under the terms of our Passenger's Charter.

Delay Repay Claims

If you arrive at your destination station late (by 30 minutes or more, as a result of a delay incurred on one of our services), you will be entitled to claim compensation under our Delay Repay scheme and in line with our Passenger's Charter and National Rail Conditions of Carriage.

Claims must be submitted within 28 days of the delay being experienced. We do not normally accept claims for compensation if trains are delayed or cancelled and you were aware of the delay before you bought your ticket. In the event that we introduce an emergency timetable, compensation will be based on the emergency timetable.

So that we can process your application and get your compensation back to you, please make sure that you let us have:

- Either the original ticket, or in the case of Season tickets a photocopy of the ticket and your photocard, your booking confirmation e-mail, or your unique journey number;
- Your name and the address for our reply; and
- Information about your journey - the date you travelled, where you were travelling from and to, and how long you were delayed

Interface with insurance claim publicity and procedures

If you wish to make a claim for losses, property damage or personal injury this should be made in writing or e-mail to Customer Relations who will ensure it is forwarded to our Claims Handler.

The rail industry has an arrangement called the Claims Allocation and Handling Agreement (CAHA). Under this agreement, compensation should be dealt with by the companies for their own customers. If some or all responsibility is allocated to another party, the insurance companies balance the payments behind the scenes. Claims will be dealt with in accordance with this agreement.

Unreasonable, aggressive or abusive customers

If you believe we have not met our customer service standards, we understand that you may feel angry or upset. Whilst we respect the rights of our customers to express their views, we will not tolerate aggressive, threatening or abusive behaviour of any kind.

By telephone

Our Customer Services staff are trained to remain polite at all times. In return, we do expect our customers to maintain a level of courtesy and politeness whilst we are given the opportunity to resolve their complaint. We do not expect our staff to tolerate verbal abuse or threats or any other manner of intimidating behaviour from customers. Should instances of this nature occur, our staff have our full support in terminating a call, or written correspondence.

In person

If you use abusive language or behaviour towards a member of our staff, they may walk away, or seek assistance from another member of staff. In extreme circumstances the Police may be called.

Via Social Media

Our Social Media forums are there to offer help and advice to those who need it and so we aim to respond to all post and tweets we receive. However, it is accessible to young and old alike and so we ask that you remain polite and avoid abusive language. We will respond to messages which contain swear words, but we will remind you to refrain from using this language within future conversations. Repeated incidents of an unacceptable nature will result in the content being removed or the account being blocked to prevent further instances being viewed.

By letter, email, or via our website

If a complaint contains abusive language or is aggressive in tone, we will reply, but will advise you in our response that this is unacceptable.

Our firewall technology will intercept any email which it believes contains profanities, therefore a delay in responding may occur whilst the email is released by our IT security team.

If in the unlikely event that this escalates to a situation where we are receiving abusive or threatening calls and letters from a specific person, we will take appropriate action and notify the British Transport Police and our solicitors. We have a duty to ensure the welfare of all our employees and are grateful for our customers' cooperation with this policy.

We also reserve the right to terminate any correspondence or communication that we believe to be unreasonable, aggressive or abusive, voluminous, frivolous or vexatious and which specifically diverts resources. The decision to take this action will only be made by a senior manager after ensuring the involvement of Transport Focus or London TravelWatch, and we will always advise in writing our reasoning behind this decision.

Escalations and contacting Independent Consumer Watchdogs

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 on going 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 their recommendations.

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.

Website: (including online chat): www.railombudsman.org

Telephone: 0330 094 0362

Textphone: 0330 094 0363

Email: info@railombudsman.org

Twitter: @RailOmbudsman

Post: FREEPOST – RAIL OMBUDSMAN

The Ombudsman Contact Centre team are available: **Monday to Friday 09:00 - 17:00**

In the event that we are unable to meet the above requirement, we will agree a suitable timescale with Transport Focus with an explanation or reason for the delay.

There are occasions where a customer feels so aggrieved with a particular experience that they feel the need to speak to a Senior Manager or Managing Director. Whilst we will always endeavour to consider these requests, we would ask our customers to contact our Customer Relations team in the first instance in order for their complaint to be dealt with in a consistent manner.

Additionally our Customer Relations team is best placed to log a complaint, record the customer's experience and offer a resolution. Our Senior Managers are kept up to date with customer correspondence and will take appropriate action where necessary to improve our services as a result of complaints received.

Monitoring and reporting

We welcome feedback in relation to all aspects of the service we provide, whether this be negative, positive or neutral as we believe it helps us to plan and deliver the service which our customers require from us. To help us to do this, we ensure that the comments and complaints we receive are communicated right across the organisation, helping drive improvements (right from the planning process through to delivery and beyond).

Every telephone call, email, letter and web form we receive is logged in our Customer Relations case management system as soon as we receive it and assigned a unique reference number. Our support team will then categorise each case based on the 'reason' for contact, e.g. complaint (standard and non-standard), comments & suggestions (feedback), praise, claims or enquiry. As the case is being worked, the agent will also record additional categories to help the business identify the reasons for customer contact, e.g. 'complaint regarding unavailability of seats or 'marketing promotion enquiry'. The details of the passengers' journey (including time and date) are also recorded, where applicable, to enable us to drill down by service / route / facility offered etc.

Monitoring

We actively monitor our Customer Complaints Handling Procedure to ensure it is effective and complies with any industry changes (for example revisions to guidelines).

- Our Customer Relations team undergo an intensive induction and a comprehensive training programme upon joining the team and continue to receive regular coaching sessions to ensure that they can confidently deliver excellent customer service to our passengers
- We monitor telephone calls to our Customer Relations team to ensure your complaint is handled in a friendly, appropriate and professional manner
- A detailed quality assurance programme is in place for every team member. This includes a minimum of 10% of all activities automatically quarantined for approval before it can be progressed, and the response issued to the customer
- Regular performance reviews and feedback sessions are conducted to ensure any training needs or coaching requirements are identified quickly and addressed efficiently
- Our in-house Customer Relations team enter details of complaints onto our Customer Relations Management System, which allows us to record and monitor the number and type of complaints received along with average response times.
- Regular reviews and monitoring of third-party providers (Telesales and web support) are conducted to ensure SLA's and quality assurance are being achieved. These reviews are conducted at least once quarterly.
- Undertake quarterly customer satisfaction surveys to determine what our passengers think of the services we provide

In addition to this, every month:

- The Head of Customer Experience reviews the results of the optional survey link provided with every electronic response (sent by the Customer Relations team), identifying areas of improvement and implementing recommendations in-light of customer feedback into the way their complaint has been handled.
- Our Team Coaches and Directors sample and review the written responses made by our team with our Customer Relations Management Team to ensure complaints are dealt with promptly and effectively and that the correct level of compensation has been awarded (rectifying any errors identified)
- The Customer Relations Team Manager(s) monitor and review the information and responses communicated using our Social Media channels

Management reports

Our monitoring processes help us assess whether we are handling complaints efficiently and that customers are satisfied with our responses. Your feedback helps us identify where we can make things better, all feedback data is anonymized and no personal information is shared.

To ensure our managers drive improvement, we:

- Ensure every comment, complaint or suggestion received is logged onto our central Customer Relations database (CRM system) and stored in a way which allows us to analyse data and ensure it can be used as source of intelligence.
- Keep electronic / hardcopies of all correspondence locally for a minimum of 3 months (before they are sent for archiving)
- Send appropriate managers and Directors comment and complaint details for their areas of responsibility at least every four weeks. Managers are expected to use the information to identify areas for improvement and make the necessary changes
- Any complaint / praise received relating to staff members are recorded before being forwarded onto the relevant manager for their information and appropriate action (information is also stored centrally).
- Provide a summary of comments and complaints to the Board of Directors every four weeks so managers at all levels are aware of the issues
- Actively contribute to post-incident reviews and strategic event planning to ensure that the voice of the customer is communicated, and any feedback obtained is actioned
- Constantly monitor performance targets for handling customer comments and complaints and seek improved processes
- Every month, we provide information to the Department for Transport and the Office of Road & Rail Regulation on the number of comments and complaints we receive and our performance in dealing with them.
- All allegations of damage, loss or injury are sent to our Safety team for their action as soon as we are made aware (either by the passenger, the on-board teams or via a third party such as station staff). In the event that the incident is reportable to ORR under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), this is done so in accordance with the processes and timescales agreed.