



Complaints Handling Procedure

Valid from September 2016

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1. Welcome

Welcome to Virgin Trains. This Customer Complaints Handling Procedure explains how we differentiate between feedback and a complaint, our monitoring and reporting arrangements, how we use feedback and complaints to improve our services and how we develop our teams managing such contacts.

For details about how to submit a complaint and an explanation of that process, please refer to our policy document 'How we will deal with your complaint' which is available from all staffed stations our trains call at or from our website virgintrains.com.



Read our policy document 'How we will deal with your complaint'



2. Complaint or feedback

A complaint is defined as; "any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer or potential customer about service delivery by the company or its agents, and/or about company or industry policy". We classify any comments that meet this definition as a complaint.

Our Customer Relations team receive training on how to correctly log a complaint on our system and that includes how to separately classify a complaint and feedback. Both our Customer Relations and Social Media teams are trained to probe further when they receive negative feedback to help determine whether these are actually complaints.

All complaints and feedback are gratefully received and used to help improve our services. This policy document explains specifically how we process complaints.

3. Publicity

Customer information notices are displayed in each coach on Virgin trains to advise customers who experience a problem to contact our on board people who will always try to help 'on the spot'. The notices contain a Virgin Trains route network map and contact details of our Customer Relations team and of Transport Focus and London TravelWatch.

Our Route Timetable booklets contain advice on how to make comments and complaints, and also include details of Transport Focus and London TravelWatch.



Jump to details of
Transport Focus and
London TravelWatch



4. Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring

Calls and correspondence dealt with by our Customer Relations team are regularly monitored by team leaders within our contact centre on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure that all complaints are handled in a friendly and personal manner, that all points raised are suitably addressed and that appropriate compensation is awarded in a consistent way.

We carry out continuous surveys to assess customer satisfaction with the complaints procedure, and in particular the quality of our responses. The survey identifies the level of satisfaction with our response under the headings of promptness, clarity, helpfulness and fairness. Customers are asked to assess their reactions to the response given, their likelihood of making a future journey with Virgin Trains, and if they are willing to take part in a more detailed survey.

Reporting

We always welcome complaints and feedback from customers. Our Customer Relations team share the information with relevant managers and directors to help inform decisions made to make changes and improvements to our service. Managers can then also cascade key messages to their teams, specifically in relation to local issues so that our people are empowered to make the changes that will really benefit customers from local communities.



Complaints and queries, along with issues raised via Social Media and through our other feedback channels are brought together in our Customer Insight Steering group. From here the relevant senior leaders in the business define what issues need to be addressed and what approach we need to take to create the most impact for the customer. Our Customer Experience Strategy team use this information to tackle customer problems at the root cause as well as equipping our frontline teams with the tools to resolve individual issues on the spot where possible. We share local feedback regularly with our regional and route teams to ensure they are abreast of complaints and are able to act upon them. We equip our frontline managers with access to customer views gathered through our advocacy portal so that customer comments can be seen immediately by train and by station to ensure action can be taken to address any outstanding issues. We also work closely with suppliers and industry partners to drive down those complaints which we have a shared responsibility for.



Finally, every four weeks we submit a report or provide information to the Department for Transport, the Office of Rail and Road, Transport Focus and London Travelwatch that details such things as the quantum of complaints, complaint categories and our performance in dealing with them, as measured by such things as response times. We will also share results of our customer survey referred to earlier.

Where there is a sudden or unexpectedly large increase in the volume of complaints meaning that the target to process complaints is at risk, we will inform the Office of Rail and Road, Transport Focus and London Travelwatch. Within this notification we will include the reason for the increased correspondence, any mitigation plans, the procedures to ensure the quality of responses is maintained as well as any steps taken to advise our customers.

When we receive a complaint that cannot be resolved face to face or straight away by our Social Media team, we record the complaint and contact details on our dedicated Customer Relations Management (CRM) system. Electronic records currently date back to 2014 and hard copies, such as written letters we receive, are retained for 6 months.



5. Training and development

We are committed to ensuring our people have the knowledge, skills and are empowered to deal with a complaint about our services. Customer service training is provided in a regular and structured way and we only recruit individuals that have the right skills and behaviours.

In addition to the ongoing training for all our customer facing people, where policies or processes change or where we have identified a training need, additional action will be taken. This may include additional training or briefing either for a specific team or just an individual.

Our Customer Relations team, who handle all of our complaints, receive specific training on our regulated commitments such as those detailed in this procedure, the Passenger's Charter or our Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP). This is in addition to more tailored training such as letter writing, complaints investigation and resolution skills.



6. Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed regularly and changes made when appropriate. Any proposed changes will only be made when approved by the regulator, the Office of Rail and Road, following consultation with Transport Focus and London Travelwatch. Contact details for these three organisations are as follows:

Transport Focus

Freepost RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ
PO BOX 5594
Southend on Sea, SS1 9PZ
Tel: 0300 123 2350
Fax: 08458 501 392
Web: transportfocus.org.uk
advice@transportfocus.org.uk

London TravelWatch

169 Union Street
London, SE1 0LL
Tel: 020 3176 2999
Fax: 020 3176 5991
Web: londontravelwatch.org.uk
enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk

Office of Rail and Road

One Kemble Street
London, WC2B 4AN
Tel: 020 7282 2018
Web: orr.gov.uk
contact.cct@orr.gsi.gov.uk