

# Additional compensation offered to Northern and TransPennine Express season ticket holders

## Transport User Panel Survey

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

## **Background**

On 11 July Northern and TransPennine Express (TPE) announced details about additional compensation available to passengers with season tickets who had been impacted by disruption caused by changes made to the timetables in May.

Throughout the disruption Transport Focus has monitored the impact on these passengers, including asking members of the Transport User Panel about their experiences. In mid-August we re-engaged with these passengers to ask them about their awareness of this additional compensation and their experience of making a claim. The results of this survey are provided below.

## **Key findings**

### **Awareness of compensation**

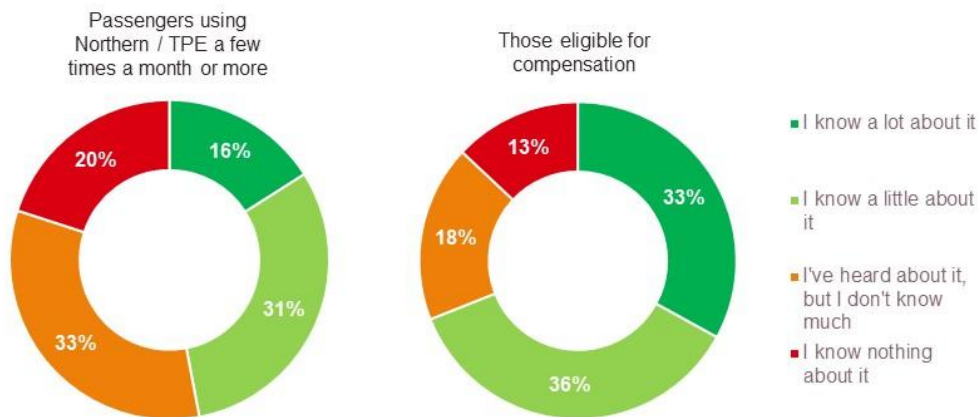
Awareness of the availability of the compensation amongst our panellists who use Northern or TPE trains at least a few times a month is good. 80 percent of these passengers say that they have at least heard about the compensation, with 16 percent saying that they know a lot about it. 20 percent say that they know nothing.

Results indicate that amongst passengers using season tickets and making journeys on routes where compensation is available, the level of awareness increases. 87 percent of these passengers say that they have heard about the compensation with 33 percent saying that they know a lot. 13 percent of these passengers say that they know nothing about it.

# Awareness of compensation

Northern / TransPennine Express have announced additional compensation for some passengers effected by disruption related to recent timetable changes.

How much would you say that you know about this compensation?



Base: Panelists using Northern or TransPennine Express train services at least a few times a month (458). Those eligible for additional compensation (89)

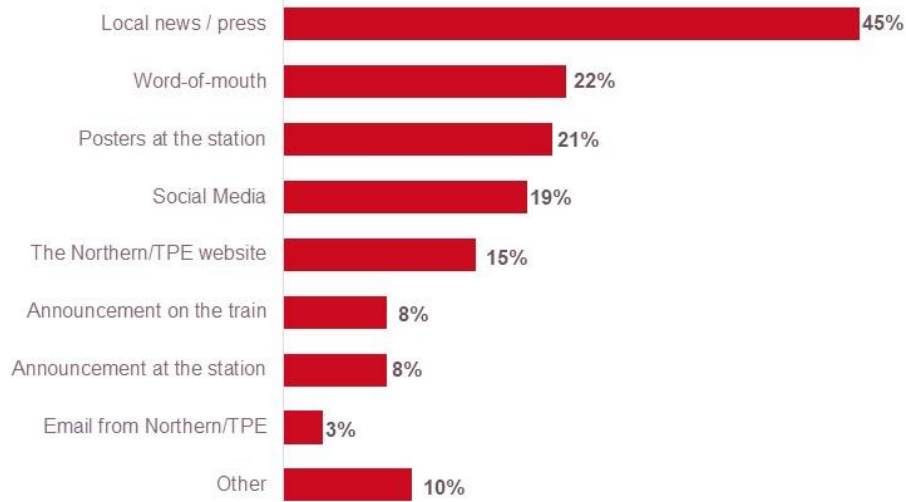
While it is encouraging that most eligible passengers are aware of the additional compensation we know from other studies that our panel tend to be more engaged than the wider population of transport users. Therefore, the level of awareness of the compensation is likely to be lower amongst those who are eligible more generally. A small number of panellists who appear to be eligible for the compensation still say that they know nothing about it. We therefore encourage Northern and TPE to continue efforts to increase awareness among these passengers before the scheme closes.

Panellists using Northern and TPE indicate that a range of sources of information have made passengers aware of the availability of compensation. The local news or press appears to have been particularly influential, with 45 percent citing this as a source of information. Posters at the station, word-of-mouth, and social media information sources have also had an important role.

It is noteworthy that an email from the train company is rarely cited as a source of information. Given that this information is held for many season ticket holders, we might expect this communication method to be used more effectively.

## Sources of information

How did you hear about the availability of this compensation?



Base: Panelists using Northern or TransPennine Express train services at least a few times a month who have heard about the compensation (369)

### Awareness of entitlement

The majority of those who are using a season ticket and travelling on an appropriate route recognise that they are eligible for additional compensation. However, a small proportion indicate that they don't believe themselves to be entitled or are unsure about this.

Passengers confused about their eligibility tend either to mention that the trains which they were using were not overly disrupted, or that they believe (incorrectly) that the multi-modal season ticket that they hold makes them ineligible. For some the experience of being ineligible for Delay Repay compensation means they mistakenly believe that their ticket is not valid in this case. Others note issues to do with proving their eligibility for the compensation.

## Confusion among those eligible

Why are you unsure as to whether or not / why do you think that you are not entitled to claim this compensation?

*"My trains were not affected by severe disruption."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Altrincham to Knutsford

*"[I've] not suffered delays attributed to timetable problems."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Leyland to Manchester Oxford Road

*"Because we didn't suffer as much disruption as other lines did."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Normanton to Leeds

*"Because I have a 'M' Card not a season ticket and therefore do not qualify for the compensation."*  
TPE passenger, travelling from Morley to Huddersfield

*"I have an 'M' Card. I have seen some people on the Northern Fail group on Facebook who have successfully claimed using an M Card, so unsure whether it is worth my while trying to claim."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Mirfield to Leeds

*"Not sure if weekly season tickets qualify for compensation."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Bare Lane to Preston

*"Leaflet at station says it only applies to 'significant' delays. Don't know whether my delays would count as significant."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Holmes Chapel to Stoke-on-Trent

*"Unclear which tickets are eligible and how to demonstrate eligibility."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Liverpool Lime Street to Wavertree Technology Park

Base: Those eligible for additional compensation

### Intention to claim

The majority of those who believe themselves to be entitled to the compensation say that they have already made a claim. However, there are some who still intend to make one. Reading the panellists' comments, it would appear some still need to check their eligibility before they attempt to go through the claims process. Again, therefore, we would encourage Northern and TPE to continue to communicate about the compensation and aim to raise awareness, understanding and prompt passengers to claim.

Other panellists are adamant however that they will not be making a claim for compensation. Comments from these panellists, such as the one below, suggest that they have a perception, related to previous experience, that the financial rewards will not be worth the effort involved in making a claim.

*"It is more trouble than it is worth. It is so complicated to claim I can't be bothered."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Redcar East to Middlesbrough

Other panellists indicate that whereas previously they might have taken this attitude toward claiming compensation generally, the level of the recent disruption has led them to re-evaluate this position.

*"A week's worth of refund for numerous delays, cancellations and a much worse timetable with longer journeys? It's not a fair offer and should have been at least a*



*month, even then it would barely have covered the additional tickets and taxis I have had to pay for. Rest assured I will now be claiming EVERYTHING under delay/repay when previously I may have let things slide.”*

TPE passenger, travelling from Leeds to Manchester

### Experience of making a claim

It is pleasing to see that contrary to the statements of some panellists, the majority of those who have made a claim for compensation say that they found the process of doing so easy.

However, some comments from panellists suggest that for some passengers the communication during the process of claiming compensation has been a little haphazard. Some report not having received an acknowledgement confirming receipt of the application or a confirmation of the award of compensation. Others indicate confusion over the submission of appropriate evidence.

## Experience of making a claim

*Please tell us more about how you found the process of claiming this compensation. What happened?*

*“I have submitted an application including photos of season tickets and my photo card, but I haven’t received any acknowledgement so I am unsure if it has been received. I guess I will have to wait and see if I receive any compensation into my account.”*

Northern passenger, travelling from Warrington Central to Irlam

*“[I] had no acknowledgement of claim once completed so contacted them again and they assured me it had gone through and gave me a reference.”*

TPE passenger, travelling from Manchester Airport to Manchester Piccadilly

*“[It was a] very straightforward application process. I wasn’t told I had been awarded it - some money just turned up in my account from Northern. I assume this is the compensation!”*

Northern passenger, travelling from Warrington Central to Manchester Oxford Road


*“Had to fill in an online form which was straightforward enough. When I received the email from Northern to say my claim had been accepted they accidentally included some incorrect information to say I hadn’t provided enough evidence and wouldn’t receive the full compensation, so I had to email them back for an explanation. It turned out I was getting the full compensation and it was an error in their email.”*

Northern passenger, travelling from Urmston to Manchester Oxford Road

*“It was not clear which level of compensation I was entitled to. I have been told that I did not supply sufficient information to get the highest level of compensation and more evidence was required. As far as I was aware, I had supplied all the relevant information. My case is now in the appeal stage.”*

Northern passenger, travelling from Ashton Under Lyne to Salford Crescent

Base: Those eligible for additional compensation who have made a claim

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### General views on the compensation offered

Panellists provide a range of opinions on the additional compensation which has been offered by Northern and TPE. Some are pleased to have received it, while others feel it is inadequate considering the impact and continuing delays and disruption they are experiencing.

## Opinions on the compensation

How do you feel in general about the compensation which has been offered?

*"Pleased to receive it - but really doesn't make up for the huge issues recently."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Warrington Central to Manchester Oxford Road

*"Better than nothing but not enough considering the services continue to be unreliable."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Urmston to Manchester

*"I think it is an appropriate level of compensation for the disruption - the cost of one monthly season ticket."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from Glazebrook to Manchester Oxford Road

*"It could have been better - I've been right royally mucked about for more than 1 month."*  
Northern passenger, travelling from St Helens Central to Liverpool Lime Street

*"Poor really considering the impact on your commute to work when I've had to drive in to avoid being late and then incur high parking costs or the late mark you receive at work against you."*  
TPE passenger, travelling from Morley to Leeds

*"Poor. Weeks of hassle and only allowed to claim for one weekly ticket!!! Hassle ongoing too but notice no compensation offered for that!"*  
Northern passenger, travelling from St Bees to Maryport

*"I think that the amount is pathetic for all the disruption. Since May I have only arrived home on time a handful of times and although things have improved slightly there is still a 10 - 15 minute delay most days."*  
TPE passenger, travelling from Scarborough to York

Other panellists who are unable to claim because they do not use season tickets are generally unhappy. Some who purposely bought tickets on the day of travel to counter the fact that the service was unpredictable feel particularly aggrieved. Transport Focus has been calling for the industry to compensate these regular passengers too.



## Opinions on the compensation

How do you feel in general about the compensation which has been offered?

*"I'm not allowed to use my disabled railcard for season tickets so must purchase daily... Unfair on people who don't purchase season tickets. I've suffered the same disruption but can't claim."*

Northern passenger, travelling from Chorley to Manchester Piccadilly, Northern

*"Because I don't purchase any form of season, monthly or weekly pass, even though I have been as badly affected as those users. I travelled on the same trains!!"*

Northern passenger, travelling from Greenfield to Ashton Under Lyne

*"...I don't have proof of my weekly season ticket purchases. Also, I often bought tickets on the day rather than a season ticket as the rail service was so unpredictable. I strongly feel that people like me are being discriminated against as compensation is only available for season ticket holders, it is wrong."*

Northern passenger, travelling from Morecambe to Lancaster

Base: Those travelling more than three times a week on eligible routes

### Survey methodology

1,160 panellists who had told us previously that they use Northern or TransPennine Express trains most often were invited to complete the survey on Monday 13 August. Panellists who accessed the survey, but who had not used either Northern or TransPennine Express trains in the month before were screened out of the survey.

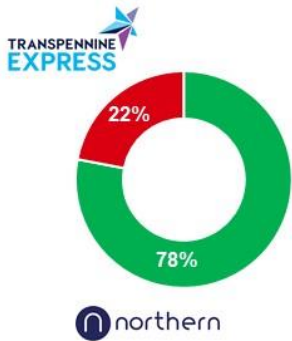
This report concentrates particularly on those panellists responding to the survey who use these trains at least a few times a month, and then on those who indicate they use a season ticket and that the journeys that they are making entitle them to claim the compensation that has been offered.

The fieldwork for the survey closed on 20 August with 458 panellists using Northern or TransPennine Express trains at least a few times a month completing the questionnaire. Of these more than three quarters used Northern trains most often in the last month, while 22 percent used TransPennine Express trains most often.

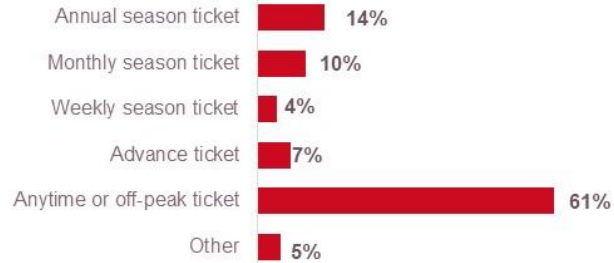
When making their most common journey 32 percent held a season ticket, while 7 percent used an advance ticket, and 61 percent an anytime off-peak ticket.

# Profile of respondents

Train used most often



Ticket held



Frequency of most common journey



Base: Panelists using Northern or TransPennine Express train services at least a few times a month (458).