

Minutes

Passenger Contact Group

Date: 30 April 2015
Location: Piccadilly Gate, Manchester
Time: 1330 - 1500

Present

Paul Salvesson	PS	Board Member (Chairman)
Stephen Locke	SL	Board Member
Marian Lauder	ML	Board Member
David Sidebottom	DS	Acting Chief Executive
Martin Clarke	MC	Business Services Executive

1. Welcome

PS welcomed everyone to the meeting. He had received apologies for absence from KA.

2. Minutes and actions from last meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 11 September 2014 were **agreed** as a true and accurate record, and the meeting **authorised** PS to sign them.

Action matrix:

3. Key achievements to date

DS said that the team was down by two members of staff since the last meeting. It comprised four senior passenger team advisors plus one senior passenger team advisor (workflow). There were typically between 280 – 350 outstanding cases at any one time, but DS said that, in contrast to the previous years, he hadn't detected any significant spike in case numbers over the winter months. The number of active cases had fallen below 300 in the last fortnight. Some staff time was dedicated to the team review, looking at how to improve processes. An additional member of staff had joined the team on a temporary contract to assist during the change process and over the summer.

SL asked if the disruption over Christmas at King's Cross and Paddington had resulted in a higher caseload. DS said it hadn't, which suggested that operators had generally been able to deal with complaints successfully.

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4. Contacts team performance and KPIs

DS reported a couple of dips in passenger satisfaction with Transport Focus in July 2014 and March 2015. The July dip was caused by a drive to clear a backlog of older, potentially more complicated cases. PS asked about complaints against Transport Focus recorded in November and March, but DS said there were no significant issues of concern.

SL asked how we differentiate between passenger satisfaction with our work and satisfaction with the case outcome. DS said that Louise Coward had carried out some deeper analysis of feedback from passengers who had submitted a case, to understand what drove satisfaction in our complaint handling function. He was looking at how to use this helpful work in how we measure success.

Passenger satisfaction in our work was increased when we had explained the wider context of our work in the area of the complaint, regardless of whether the specific case was successful.

ML asked about PAS4, '90% of appeals acknowledged within five working days', and whether the

No.	Meeting	Issue	Action	Who	Due	Notes
PCG003	17/03/14	Quality monitoring	Discuss quality monitoring with LTW – with a view to comparing how we do it, plus the possibility of quality monitoring each other as a benchmarking exercise	KA	Sep 14	Meeting was planned with LTW but it had to be rearranged. New plan for Contact Team to meet LTW. Ongoing – Sep 15
PCG004	17/03/14	Ventrica	Arrange a PCG visit to Ventrica's office in Southend	KA/MC	Sep 14	PS still to visit. Sep 15
PCG005	11/09/14	Visibility and awareness of Passenger Focus	Conduct a factfinding mission on the information available to passengers about the role of Passenger Focus, including how to contact us, with a view to producing a paper for the Group and ultimately the Board.	KA	Mar 15	Reviewed ORR guidance, to be released May 15, and contacted operators with a reminder of our role as part of the rebranding. Ongoing. Sep 15
PCG006	11/09/14	Meeting with ATOC customer relations managers	Share notes from the forthcoming meeting with ATOC customer relations managers with the group.	KA	Mar 15	Complete, delete

target was appropriate. DS explained that, whilst we had been struggling to meet the target, there

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PCG007	11/09/14	Future of passenger contact role	Produce a paper looking at the options for the future of passenger/user contact, how we deal with complaint cases and how these are recorded by operators, us, DfT and ORR.	DS	Mar 15	Part of wider change process. Sep 15
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had been a change in process in March, so we should see at the next meeting whether this had had an effect.

5. Escalated appeal complaints

DS said that the number of escalated complaints had been larger than usual due to pressures on workload and competing priorities for DS and KA. This had created a small backlog of cases. The issue had been resolved in the last fortnight with some cases closed and others re-opened with passengers and the rail industry.

6. Industry update

DS reported that relations with train operator Southern had improved, following changing how we manage the relationship and also changes within the contacts at the operator. Relations with penalty fares appeals body, The Independent Penalty Fares Appeals Service (IPFAS), were more challenging. DS pointed out that IPFAS was owned by the Go-Ahead Group, which also ran the South Eastern franchise. As part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) proposed overhaul to rail penalty fare appeals, appeal bodies would need to become truly independent, and so the Go-Ahead Group could need to sell IPFAS.

KA and DS had visited the traffic penalty appeals body to learn about their systems and processes. They had discovered that all correspondence was shared between the parties involved, to make appeals more open.

7. Contacts team review

SL asked whether there were lessons from the DfT's triennial review of Transport Focus in relation to its complaint handling function. MC said he was compiling and coordinating an action list based on the findings from the review.

a) Action plan

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DS outlined the action plan. The website had been updated as part of the rebranding process, but we wanted to include some 'self assessment' questions for those submitting cases, to help direct people to the right place and outcome.

The team was creating a knowledge base of policy questions and issues with responses that could be used for future reference and ease of answering questions.

SL asked about how we ask train operators to comment on our complaint handling function, as opposed to just the organisation as a whole.

PCG008	11/09/14	TOCs' opinions of our complaint handling function	Share the questionnaire that we use to gather feedback from TOCs with the group	DS	Sep 15	
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There had been a plan to hold a 'speed dating with the contact team' session at the most recent Staff and Board Awayday to promote cross-team communication. Unfortunately time pressure caused this session to be postponed, but the team now planned to use slots at other team meetings to pick up ideas on how they could better communicate their work across the organisation.

PCG009	11/09/14	Review of Contacts Team – action plan	Define priorities and timescales to items on the action plan	DS	Sep 15	
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b) Communicating to staff

DS summarised the briefing note to staff about the review action plan, which was noted.

c) Are team KPIs appropriate

DS thought that generally there was scope for revising the target for passenger satisfaction in our work, which was currently set at 70%. However, he said that for a year of change the current target seemed appropriate. However, there was scope for additional internal measures taking into account Louise Coward's analysis of passenger feedback in our work.

d) Updated complaints handling procedure

DS presented the updated procedure. PS expressed concern that passengers might be expected to know which operator they had travelled with, whereas in reality most didn't.

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DS said that the website and staff were able to guide people to giving the correct information, and that he wasn't aware of a significant issue. PS also said that the document should be consistent when referring to 'companies' and 'operators'. SL said that it should make explicit the fact that it only refers to rail passengers, and should provide advice on how to deal with bus, coach, tram and highway complaints.

SL also asked who specifically the document was designed for, and said that we should clarify its role. DS said that it was relevant to everyone involved in the complaint handling process. SL added that, whilst he thought this was a good idea, it might be clearer just to provide a single-side summary of the process in the first instance.

Finally SL provided DS with some detailed notes and suggested amendments to the document, including pointing out that we should clearly define the 'London area' in relation to London TravelWatch's remit.

PCG010	11/09/14	Complaints handling procedure	Revise complaints handling procedure based on feedback from the PGC meeting on 30 April	DS	Sep 15	
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8. Outsourced contact centre (Ventrica) contract

DS said that the contract was entering its third and final year. Performance from Ventrica continued to be good. KA had continued to visit their offices on a quarterly basis, with monthly telephone conferences.

Any other business

- SL asked about the passenger satisfaction survey in our contact function, an example of which was provided for the meeting to consider. He said we should add 'personal recommendation' and 'referred by London TravelWatch' to the options for 'How did you hear about us?'. He also suggested we add 'don't know' as an answer option to 'Would you recommend Transport Focus to a friend?'. He said that we should describe the request for personal details at the end as 'optional', to be used if the passenger wanted a response from us, and otherwise say that the responses would be anonymous.

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PCG011	11/09/14	Passenger contacts satisfaction survey	Revise feedback survey based on recommendations from PCG on 30 April	DS	Sep 15	
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The meeting **closed** at **15.00** hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

 Paul Salvesson
 Passenger Contact Group Chairman

 Date

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