

Minutes

Passenger Contact Group

Nov 14 BM 09.4

Date: 11 September 2014
Location: Fleetbank House, London
Time: 1030 - 1130

Present

Paul Salveson	PS	Board Member (Chair)
Stephen Locke	SL	Board Member
Marian Lauder	ML	Board Member
David Sidebottom	DS	Acting Chief Executive
Katie Armstrong	KA	Passenger Team Manager
Martin Clarke	MC	Business Services Executive

1. Welcome

PS welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies for absences.

2. Minutes and actions from last meeting

ML asked if the contact team's caseload had increased since the winter storms. KA reported that First Great Western (FGW), CrossCountry (XC) and South West Trains (SWT) had been most affected by the storms in terms of customer complaints, but that FGW and XC had been able to deal with the volumes of cases quickly. SWT had suffered a significant backlog of cases and the team had been working with SWT to resolve the issue, which was finally now returning to normal.

SL asked if there had been any progress on understanding the level of awareness and visibility of Passenger Focus among passengers, especially when they need to contact us.

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	
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The group recommends that the Board considers the outcomes of Action PCG005.

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KA updated the group on the findings and actions of the DfT Audit.

No.	Meeting	Issue	Action	Who	Due	Notes
PCG001	17/03/14	Passenger Team KPIs	Update the wording to the PAS7 key performance indicator	KA	Sep 14	Complete, delete
PCG002	17/03/14	DfT audit specification	Amend the Audit terms of reference to ensure that "Quality assurance processes" is in scope	KA	Sep 14	Delete
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 to discuss quality monitoring due Oct14. Action expected Mar 15
PCG004	17/03/14	Ventrica	Arrange a PCG visit to Ventrica's office in Southend	KA/M C	Sep 14	PS still to visit. Mar 15

The minutes and actions from the last meeting were **agreed**.

3. Key achievements to date

DS updated the meeting on case numbers, which remained steady, though he noted that the numbers of cases were down as compared with two years previous. Satisfaction in our work dipped in July, and this was attributable to a drive to clear older, more complicated cases. In particular, East Coast was in a healthier position than was previously seen in terms of numbers of active cases, and no was no longer top of the list.

FGW was doing less well due to teething problems with their new complaints handling system. We were receiving weekly updates on the situation, and were working with FGW to resolve the issues.

PS asked if the issues surrounding the Northern Rail evening peak restrictions were having an effect on case loads. DS said that it wasn't noticeable yet, but that we would monitor the situation over the months ahead.

SL asked about Southern and South Eastern. DS suggested that the companies were unsure about our role. They appeared to be concerned with the process we used for considering and dealing with cases, rather than focussing on our duty to represent the interests of passengers.

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	
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4. Feedback from visit to Ventrica

ML and SL reported that they found their visits helpful. Passenger Focus was small compared to other clients of Ventrica, and there was an ongoing risk that we could be squeezed out. KA stressed the importance of her monthly visits to Ventrica to remain visible, relevant and help keep them interested and engaged. She encouraged colleagues to visit – in particular Guy Dangerfield had visited recently and gave a presentation about his work, which was popular with Ventrica staff.

5. Role of Passenger Contact Group

PS asked the Group whether the terms of reference were appropriate in allowing the Group to provide support, advice and oversight to the Passenger Contact function.

SL suggested adding a new item 2.6 under “Tasks and Duties” reading:

“Advise the Board on key issues arising from complaint handling experience.”

ML queried item 2.2, and in particular the involvement of Board Members in such a quality assessment exercise. KA reported that the team had started this work this year, and SL suggested formalising that approach by replacing “conduct” with “define and oversee”. Feedback from the exercise would be reported at the next meeting.

PS expressed concern that by the time the meeting minutes are reported to the Board formally at a Board Meeting, they are already somewhat dated. He suggested giving a verbal update to the Board at the Members’ Event immediately following the Group’s meeting.

Any other business

- ML asked whether there were complaint handling implications relating to our potential new remit to represent users of the Strategic Roads Network. DS said there were none currently, but that Ventrica were being briefed on how to handle roads-related contacts. He also said that we should monitor any developments on this front, as there was no existing similar service available for road users. These issues were similar for bus complaint appeals, which we did not currently cover.
- DS said that we should consider carefully whether we should look at overhauling how we deal with Passenger Contact to deliver an even more effective, efficient and relevant service for passengers and the Department. The Group resolved to look at this in more detail at the next meeting.

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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	
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The meeting **closed** at **11.30** hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Paul Salveson
Chair
Passenger Contact Group

Date