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Dear Paul

Railcards

I write further to my letters of 18 December and 17 January outlining Transport Focus' concerns regarding the ongoing issues with the Railcard system.

Despite repeated assurances from yourself and your team that fixes are being put in place to address the issues, no improvements have been seen. Transport Focus continues to receive contact from passengers who are not only inconvenienced, but also worried that they will be penalised on their journeys for being unable to produce a Railcard.

Passengers continue to tell us that they are unable to get through to your contact centre, have been charged for a product which has not been delivered and are unable to access their online accounts. Advice from Railcards has been for passengers to make contact with your team via telephone or email if they experience issues on the website. However, when they do so, passengers are being left on hold, sometimes in excess of an hour and emails remain unanswered. We appreciate that resource has been increased and opening hours extended but measures taken have evidently been insufficient.

Transport Focus has received approximately 300 complaints since this issue first arose three months ago and passengers continue to make contact with us. To provide you with some examples, here are some extracts from passenger complaints that have been received in the past week alone:

"I have been sent a download code for me to download the rail card onto the app. However the download code doesn't work. When I type it into the add section on the app it shows the message 'oops something went wrong'. This is getting ridiculous. How am I meant to get the rail card this system does not work."

"I have purchased tickets for a journey in May on the basis that I have this card and I will be liable for a penalty fare if I do not receive a replacement."

"It has been Very very frustrating on top of everything I was just left on hold!"

"The telephone waiting times are still unacceptable - I gave up after half an hour. Lack of coherent email response is also troubling."



The time taken to resolve this issue is now beyond unacceptable and the disappointing handling of the matter by Rail Delivery Group just adds to the frustration. Assurances provided to date have not been delivered and the improvement measures put in place do not appear to have made any notable difference.

I should be grateful if you could confirm what measures, beyond those already taken which do not appear to be resolving problems for many affected passengers, Rail Delivery Group will be taking to ensure that these issues are finally and fully resolved without further delay.

As also previously mentioned, we would be interested in your conclusions following an investigation in to this matter as to what has gone wrong, what could have been done differently to avoid prolonging the issues to this extent and what measures have been taken to avoid a reoccurrence.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Anthony Smith
Chief executive