

Anthony Smith  
Chief Executive  
Transport Focus  
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25 February 2020

Dear Anthony

Thank you for your letter dated 18 February 2020 regarding the Railcards website. We are sorry for the ongoing issues that customers are experiencing. We have made significant improvements to the website since your letter of 17 January, with account login and renewal issues now resolved. The backlog of orders that require eligibility checks has been cleared, and we have successfully sold over 480,000 Railcards since launching the new site. As at 24 February we had resolved all email enquiries and have a small number of residual social media queries which we will have responded to by 29 February.

We acknowledge that 300 complaints to Transport Focus is too many, but it is important to note that this represents only 0.06% of all card sales since launch of the new website. The complaints that you have passed on to us have been resolved very quickly and these customers have indicated that they are happy with how we have resolved their issues. We appreciate that more customers were significantly impacted, and we dealt with a number of complaints ourselves but there are many more customers that have benefited from the changes. The website maintenance was needed to upgrade and improve existing technology and enable a much quicker, smoother buying process.

We continue to engage pro-actively with customers, with updated messaging across our customer-facing channels and briefings to front-line staff (who are relaxing rules around proof of Railcard ownership at this time). Everyone's queries will be answered, and no-one will be left out of pocket.

Unfortunately, we experienced a systems outage on the weekend of 15/16 February which increased the number of customer contacts and therefore the queue times at our contact centre. This coincided with the temporary redeployment of some Railcards contact centre advisors to the National Rail Enquiries contact centre because of the travel disruption caused by Storm Dennis. The Railcard outage was caused by a worldwide update of software we use to process transactions and we have put measures in place to ensure that this is not repeated.

Telephone queue times have since reduced to 20 minutes on average, but we acknowledge that this is still too long. We have increased our staffing numbers threefold and have returned to normal transaction levels and SLAs. A further tranche of temporary staff is being brought in on 26 February to expedite resolutions for customers.

Although the service has improved significantly (with the exception of the outage on 15/16 February), we recognise that it is not yet at the levels that customers expect and deserve and, again, we are sorry about this. We are working tirelessly to fix remaining bugs, improve system monitoring by suppliers, and transition to Business As Usual in a steady and stable state.

We are commencing a lessons learned exercise to investigate what could have been done differently and how similar issues will be avoided in future. We will share the conclusions of this exercise with you in March and will keep Transport Focus updated on a weekly basis until all outstanding issues are resolved.

We take our responsibility to our customers very seriously so please be assured that we are doing everything in our power to ensure Railcard services are maintained to the highest possible levels.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Plummer', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Paul Plummer**  
Chief Executive