

## **Clarity of information for transport users – train company website assessment**

Transport Focus wants to make sure transport users have the information they need to travel with confidence as the coronavirus lockdown is eased – or to choose not to.

We are pushing for information to be crystal clear on bus company, train company and motorway services websites. We're after clarity about – among other things – face covering rules, social distancing arrangements and whether hand-sanitiser is or isn't available. Our qualitative research and weekly *Travel during Covid-19* survey show that these are things of concern to transport users. They are often the simple things that will give reassurance and let people set out knowing what to expect and what they need to do.

For rail passengers, we conducted an initial assessment of how clear information was on train company websites. The questions are set out below, which included a section about ticket refunds. We then worked with train companies to secure improvements. We carried out a second assessment on 23 June 2020 which led to further engagement with some companies.

The exercise has resulted in significant improvement. All train company websites are now providing clear information about the things we assessed. We thank the rail industry for its positive engagement to bring this about. It is a great example of the watchdogs helping companies to help their passengers.

For the record, you can see the findings of our 23 June second assessment *after* subsequent engagement with those train companies which had recorded red crosses. This covers the reassurance/confidence questions and another set about ticket refunds. Please note that they represent snapshots in time and will not be updated: if a train company makes subsequent changes to its website resulting in something no longer being clear it will not be reflected here.



Is it clear...	1. who may and may not travel by train?	2. what the advice is about covering your face?	3. what the railway will do to maximise social distancing – at stations?	4. what the railway will do to maximise social distancing – on trains?	5. what passengers should do to maximise social distancing – at stations?	6. what passengers should do to maximise social distancing – on trains?	7. when is best to travel and when best to avoid? (that is, is least busy)	8a. what happens if the train you want is full?	8b. If so, is it clear what happens if the last train is full?	9. whether there will be hand sanitiser at stations and on trains?	10a. whether reservations are mandatory, advised or not required?	10b. If mandatory, how to change your flexible ticket reservation at short notice?	11a. that Passenger Assist is still being provided?	11b. If so, how the service may be different from normal?	12. whether cash is still accepted?	13. which ticket offices are open (with hours stated) and which are closed?	14. what timetable is being operated (for example, a Saturday service)?	15. what additional cleaning has been carried out?
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Note: checks were not made of the London Overground or MTR Elizabeth Line websites as passenger information is provided by Transport for London; checks were not made of the Gatwick Express, Grand Central and Hull Trains websites as services are currently suspended.

## How clear are train company websites about the following coronavirus related refunds?

An assessment by London TravelWatch and Transport Focus carried out on 23 June 2020

Is it clear ...	16. if there is a season ticket refund calculator or link to <a href="#">NRE</a> .	17. that refunds will be backdated by 56 days from the day you hand it in?	18. that if you present evidence of a certified illness that prevented you handing in your ticket sooner, your refund could be backdated further than 56 days.	19. when, approximately, a season ticket holder will get their refund money?	20. that refunds are also available for car park season tickets, backdated 56 days if not used.	21. that refunds are also available for a PlusBus season ticket, backdated 56 days if not used.	22. what to do if you have a National Rail Travel Voucher that expired since 17 March or is nearing its expiry?	23. that it is under consideration whether Railcards will be extended, or a discount given on renewal, to reflect the period when travel was restricted?
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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ThamesLink/								
								
								
								

Note: checks were not made of the Caledonian Sleeper, Gatwick Express, Grand Central, Heathrow Express, Hull Trains, London Overground and MTR Elizabeth Line websites.

## Reassurance questions

Is it clear...

1. who may and may not travel by train?
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- 8b. If so, is it clear what happens if the last train is full?
9. whether there will be hand sanitiser at stations and on trains?
- 10a. whether reservations are mandatory, advised or not required?
- 10b. If mandatory, how if you have a flexible ticket you change your reservation at short notice?
- 11a. that Passenger Assist is still being provided?
- 11b. If so, how the service may be different from normal?
12. Is it clear whether cash is still accepted?
13. which ticket offices are open (with hours stated) and which are closed?
14. what timetable is being operated (for example, a Saturday service)?
15. What additional cleaning has been carried out?

## **Refund and other questions**

Is it clear ...

16. if there is a season ticket refund calculator or link to NRE
17. that refunds will be backdated by 56 days from the day you hand it in?
18. that if you present evidence of a certified illness that prevented you handing in your ticket sooner, your refund could be backdated further than 56 days
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20. that refunds are also available for car park season tickets, backdated 56 days if not used
21. that refunds are also available for a PlusBus season ticket, backdated 56 days if not used
22. what to do if you have a National Rail Travel Voucher that expired since 17 March or is nearing its expiry?
23. that it is under consideration whether Railcards will be extended, or a discount given on renewal, to reflect the period when travel was restricted?