

Shaping Rail's Future: Customer Community 2025-26

Centralising Delay Repay and
Customer Care services

December 2025

The Customer Community: 2025-26

Following the successful community insight programme which ran from February 2023 to April 2024, and again from July 2024 to June 2025, this is the third community of rail users brought together by Transport Focus and the Customer & Revenue Growth Team to help inform the future of rail travel in Britain



A unique vehicle for engagement

- ✓ Hear users' experiences and opinions of rail travel in Britain
- ✓ Identify strengths, weaknesses, and improvements
- ✓ Involve customers in potential solutions and new ideas to help shape the future of rail



40 rail users

representing
diverse needs &
experiences



Sep 2025 to
March 2026



Using flexible, engaging research methods

- ✓ Online research platform for continuous interaction
 - Feedback on a given topic each month
 - Via activities using video, text, images, polls
 - Participants work individually, interacting with a moderator, and each other
- ✓ Face to face workshops to discuss topics further, generate ideas, and explore proposed concepts

In Nov-Dec 2025 the community...

Told us about their current understanding and experiences of compensation and Delay Repay processes

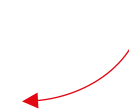
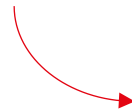


Outlined the information they would expect during rail disruption and who they would expect to interact with for this

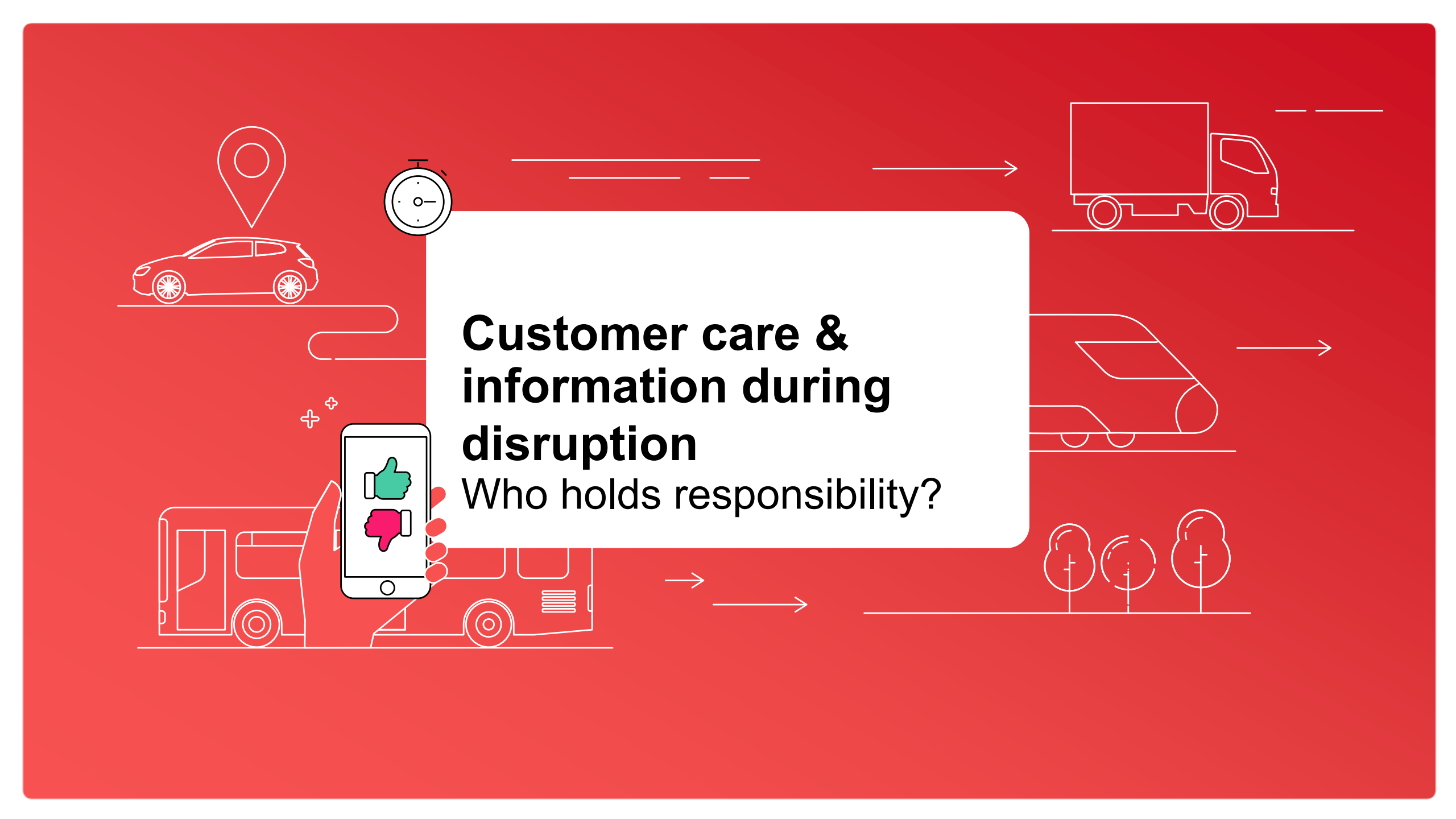
Discussed preferences for how Delay Repay could be unified in future



Responded to a straw-man proposal for centralising contact-centre support across the industry



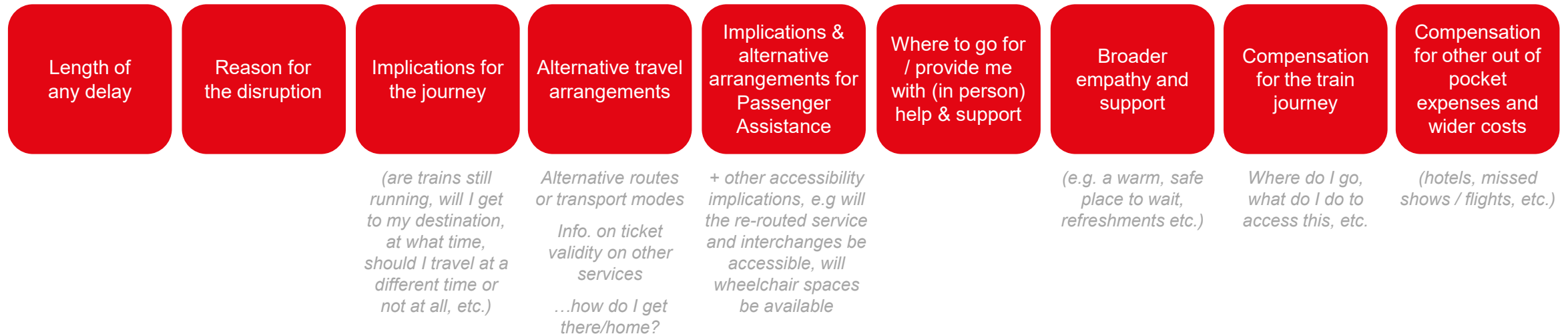
Explained their perspective on the sharing of customer information to help make these centralised services possible in practice



Customer care & information during disruption

Who holds responsibility?

Key areas of information and support that customers require when there is disruption to their train journey



Participants in the community made **few clear distinctions between information and support that should come from the train operator(s), compared to a third party retailer (if relevant).**

- There is a *slight* emphasis on information to the journey and the disruption coming from the operator, with information relating to compensation coming from both the operator and the retailer (where they are different).
- There is also a general expectation that if disruption is known about in advance of a journey, passengers should be informed and assisted by the organisation which they had interacted with thus far – usually the retailer (which may be either the operator or a third party). When disruption is happening during a journey (planned or unplanned), there is a strong expectation for the operator or staff at the station to keep people informed and supported.

However **overall they wish to be able to contact any one of these organisations and be able to find the information or support that they need.**

Customers were less sure on what information and support might be the responsibility of GBR.

For **pro-active comms** specifically, there is some expectation that different organisations *might* have different responsibilities, with heaviest expectation on the train operating company (TOC)...

For this pro-active communication:	Greatest responsibility should lie with:	
Notification of delay/disruption in the first place	  	Greatest expectation is for the TOC to provide initial notification and continued updates, but rail users want to know this information as quickly and saliently as possible, and see the whole industry as having a role in getting information to customers.
Notification of your right to compensation via D/R	  	TOC and retailer (if they are different) are expected to play an equal role here; GBR less so.
Instructions on how to submit a Delay Repay claim	  	TOC bears the greatest responsibility, followed by the retailer (if different). <i>This may be influenced by existing experience of TOCs giving announcements on where to find D/R forms, and/or providing paper forms directly (which is felt to be appropriate and useful).</i>
If you claim, notification that your details / case is being passed on...	  	Equal expectations on TOC and retailer . <i>Note that participants appeared to be less clear on what this process might involve, and that it does/could happen, so views on responsibility here are less well informed.</i>
Updates on the status of your claim if you make one	  	TOC bears the greatest responsibility, followed by the retailer (if different). Lower expectation on GBR than for other pro-active information.

There is a strong expectation that the **TOC is responsible for the disruption itself, so bears greatest responsibility for comms** in general

Ownership of the delay lies primarily with the service provider, the ticket seller has no influence on the running of the service.
Liam

Some see the **retailer as having a role around the financial transaction**, and therefore for compensation

Eventually, I would expect everything to come from GBR as a matter of course. In the meantime, I would expect the train operator's primary focus to be on the incident and its like effects and the retailer's on information on refunds and compensation if relevant.
Elijah

Linked to this, **the organisation which has had most interaction with the customer is expected to make pro-active contact**. This can be the retailer, or the TOC (where different from the retailer) given its direct, tangible interaction during the journey itself

Regarding delays I will do it through the app I bought it [from] but I do [also] expect the operator to make me aware.
Yasmin

And **GBR can be seen as having oversight**, with responsibility for the structures to facilitate who does what

Great British Railways could provide general guidance on passengers' rights, but individual claims should always go through the train company or retailer.
Maulika

All of the options pertain to the retailer and operator. However wide scale disruptions and planned engineering should also be available to view on GBR.
Alexander

....but ultimately customers want to hear a united voice from across the whole industry

Often people say they want to be able to expect repeated (consistent) messages from several sources

This is to minimise customer effort, and to increase opportunity for customers to receive the information

I believe all organisations should be responsible for providing correct, up to date information. It shouldn't be down to the customer to guess who to contact.

Jenni

...I would expect this [information] to be consistent in multiple locations for ease of access. Not everyone would necessarily know exactly where to look first time for this, and so if it is in multiple common places, where different people are likely to be looking for it, I think that would make this easier for customers to not only understand their rights but also have confidence in the process itself.

Luke

...notification of the delay I think should be covered by all bases, you would want to ensure everyone is notified of the delay.

Grace

This desire is partly a result of the existing landscape which is felt to be inconsistent.

...And **there is appetite**, even before prompting with the concept, **for a single, centralised point of contact**, with the hope that this will improve consistency and reliability.

I feel that all parties should notify of delays [and other information here] as that is the best way to get the information reliably and fast. [However]... the system is messy and ...A central party dealing with them all would be better.

Dan

...right now it's confusing who is responsible for what, and often it's like the system is set up to make people give up as [it's] too confusing.

Chloe

In the short to medium term, **co-branded communication looks to be a good solution that is sensible to customers**

Co-branded comms were specifically prompted as a potential solution

If all the information came from one place and was co-branded, that would probably feel clearer and less confusing... One clear update—signed by everyone involved—would likely be easier to trust and keep track of.

Maulika

Rather than a co-branded option it would be simplest if you issued the same message but across all platforms. That way the message is consistent, but by notifying people across all platforms it ensures the message isn't missed. Of course if we are moving to a single [operator] anyway this wouldn't be relevant anyway.

Grace

I would be much happier if the whole thing came back to me from one reliable source - the co-branding idea you mentioned seems good to me.

Ava

Operators and GBR are expected to communicate during the journey; push notifications are popular with this community, from all relevant organisations

Preferred contact method(s) for organisations to keep you updated when there is a delay or disruption

All community participants, Nov-Dec '25 (39)



The popularity of push notifications is likely due to their relevance and ability to cut through more effectively than email / SMS

Emails are easily missed. Or could go into junk folder. I would need it to be instant so WhatsApp or a normal text message or through the app but notifications would have to be turned on to get this.

Layla

The majority of participants felt that **each of the organisations should use multiple contact methods**, preferring to receive too much information than potentially missing it

I think it should be as many methods as possible, because it's better to over inform, than lack of information at all.

Chloe

I'm sure I'd get fed up with notifications pinging all the time from all parties but one party might be privy to information ahead of others?

Ava

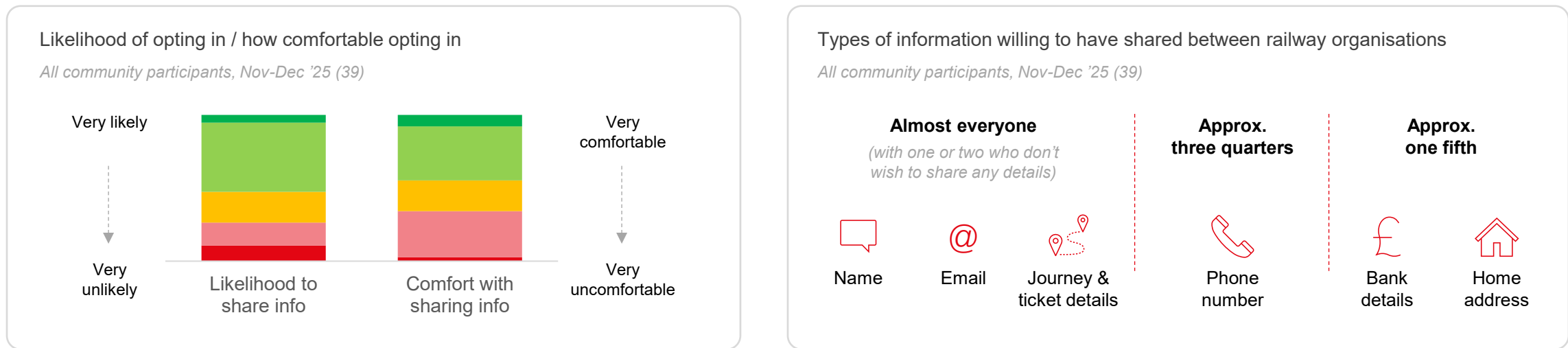
As many channels of information as practically possible should be used so that passengers who do not have access a particular form of communication (e.g. smartphones) are not overlooked.

Elijah

Customers should be able to opt in and out of all available communication methods, with the default being all are opted in - it is better for a customer to receive multiple notifications about the same delay/cancellation issue than receive none.

Benjamin

Only around half of participants feel comfortable about opting in to having their data shared between rail organisations, to assist with keeping them up to date



However, there is an acceptance that data sharing is somewhat inevitable, and that it can have benefits providing it is handled appropriately and that customers have ultimate control. **Participants in this community* are switched on about the implications of sharing their data, for good and for bad, suggesting that many will be willing to opt in, if they do receive good information about the purpose and benefit of doing so**

I just don't trust any company with data as leaks do happen

Dan

I don't really trust it ...but [I] might come round if it is particularly beneficial / easier for me / I know exactly what they're using it for, how long they keep it and how they store it?

James

It depends on the level of information that is shared. For example, bank information or home address does not feel at all relevant for any of these different options to retain for any period of time, never mind share with other organisations. I would also be interested to know how this is limited in use so that it does not stray beyond its intended purpose

Luke

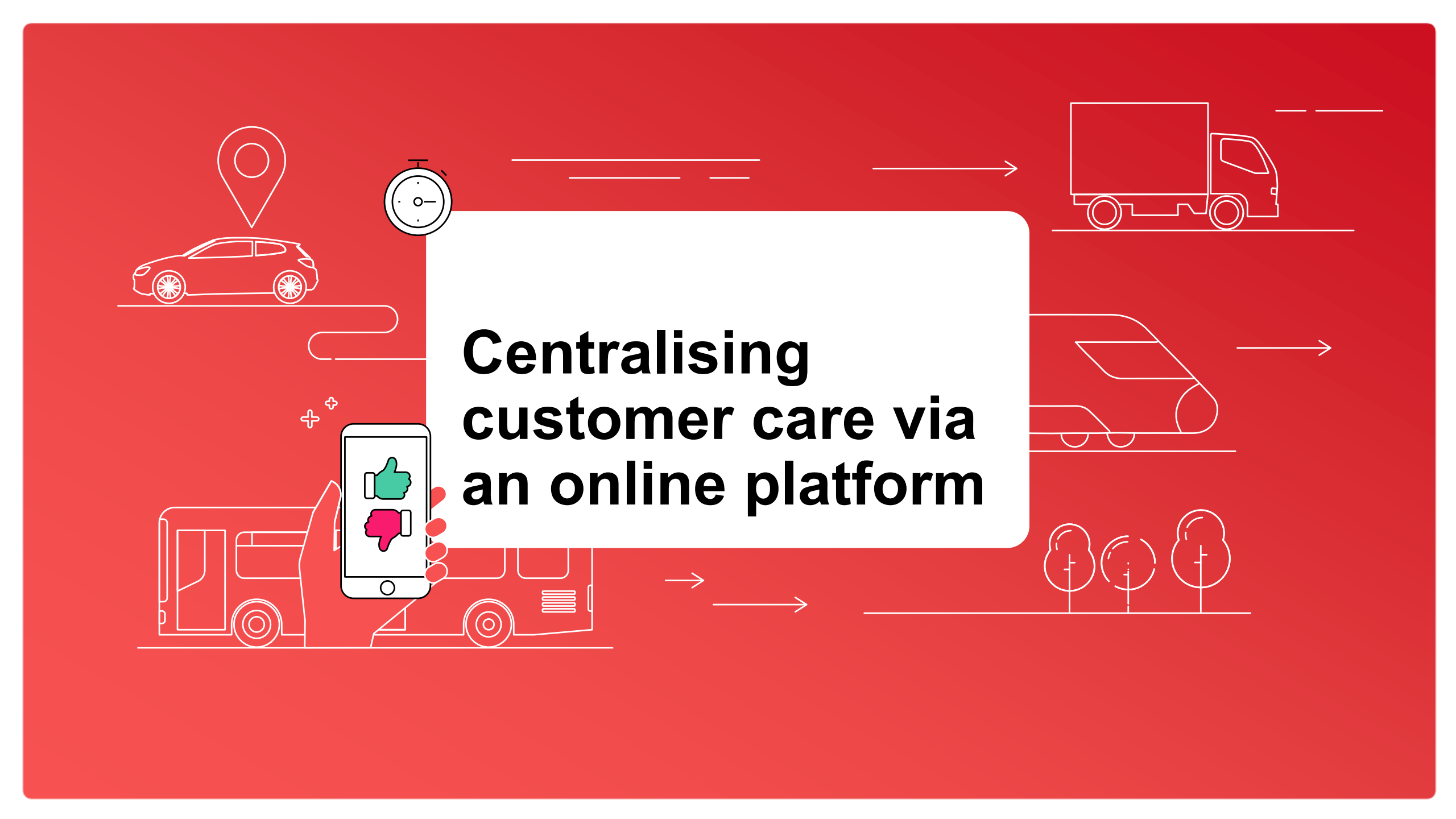
I'd be happy for them to share [my] email address, so I could be contacted regarding any disruption. I wouldn't be 100% comfortable, but it's a case of what needs to be shared for those organisations to contact me.

Michael

If it helps me to stay more informed, I don't mind. Also most of these already have this information so it's nothing new

Grace

*T*his community is managed largely online, and so although it represents a wide demographic range, and includes some people who are more and less comfortable with technology, for example, all do have at least some level of engagement with online services (including online banking). There may be a higher level of awareness of data sharing implications here than in the general UK population.*

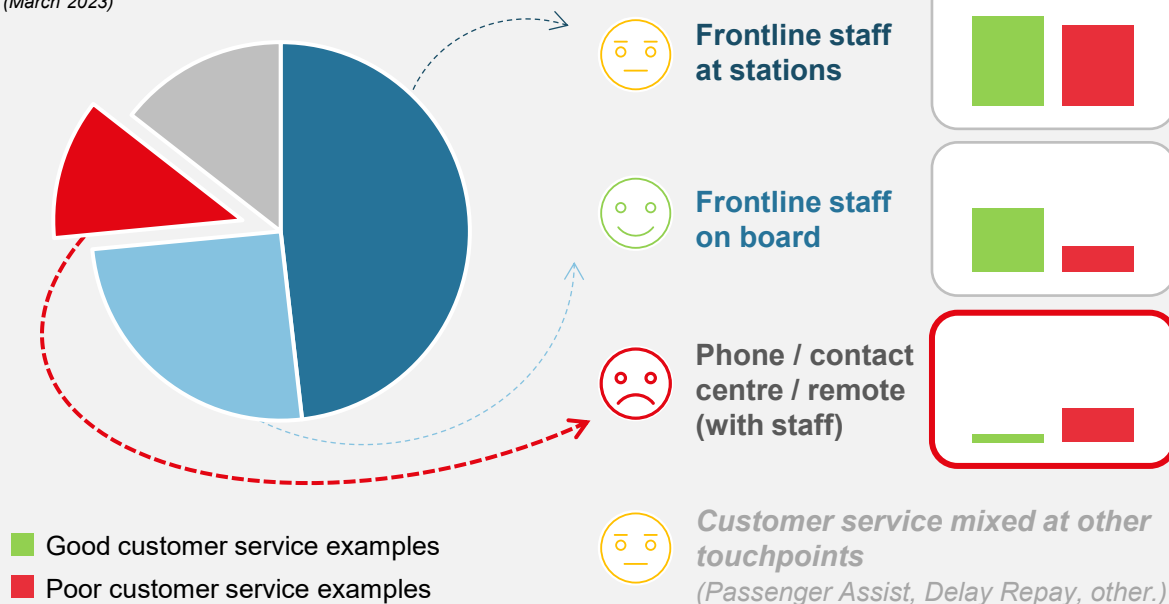


Centralising customer care via an online platform

Overall, the perception of existing contact centre customer service is typically quite negative

(Recap): in March 2023, as part of general customer service feedback, participants in an earlier community cohort indicated that **contact centres are a smaller part of overall customer care than face-to-face interactions** with staff, but that their **perception of it is, on balance, more negative**

Frequency of encountering, and rating of, customer service delivered by...
(March 2023)



Graphs give:

- a) a qualitative indication of how relatively often the community talked about different "touchpoints" for customer service among c.70 examples of it that they described in earlier activities about customer service more generally
- b) a qualitative indication of how often these examples were more positive or negative

And when giving more specific feedback about interactions via phone / email / webchat, in July 2023:



Participants described dissatisfactory service overall in about half of all examples that they gave

The remainder of examples were equally split between more positive, and mixed or neutral experiences.

I have never had one situation with [train] customer services that has been solved satisfactorily. I get that ...things can't be automatically done ...But when you're waiting 30 to 60 days, having to make multiple phone calls, being on the phone for an hour at a time, it's ridiculous.

So I've not really had any positive dealings with customer services...with train companies... I dread having to contact them by phone or email because I know it's going to be a fight... It's just going to drag on ... And I to have to keep dealing with it when I shouldn't have to.

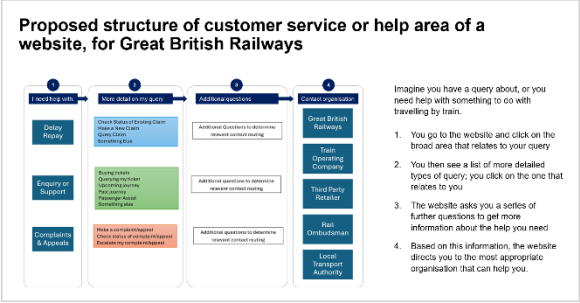
If there's an issue, it should be solved. Simple as that..

(Rob, leisure traveller)

The proposal for a centralised, online customer service “triage” platform was popular overall, with perceived benefits being **consistency** and **reduced customer effort**

Participants were shown a schematic structure of a proposed, centralised customer service platform

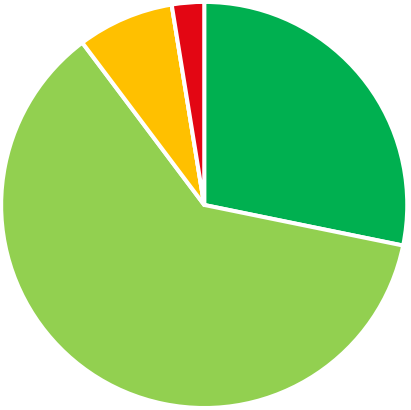
See Appendix for larger version



Overall response

All community participants, Nov-Dec '25 (39)

- Very positive
- Fairly positive
- Neutral
- Fairly negative
- Very negative



*It would most certainly be more **convenient** and **less time consuming**.*

Emily

*This unified approach **allows the user to get on with their lives** rather than further disruption which would only cause more complaint.*

Liam

*I like the idea that you give the information and **the right company contact you** instead of searching for the contact details.*

Aria

*I like the idea in principle because it **removes the guesswork about who to contact, which is one of the most frustrating parts of dealing with rail issues**. My only concern is that it needs to be done well. If the routing is inaccurate or the questions are too vague, people will end up going in circles. As long as the website is kept simple and the information stays up to date, it could genuinely make the whole process easier.*

Arjun

*I like the idea of a co-ordinated customer service - an **aligned platform** for peoples' difficulties and support as necessary would surely lead to a **more streamlined railway service**.*

Ava

Participants made some further suggestions for content on this centralised customer care platform

The most common additional areas of support that customers in this community would like to see

Live **status**, planned engineering
& other **disruption information**

Lost property

General feedback
especially opportunity to **report positive experience / praise an employee**, or to make suggestions

Passenger Assistance

Other support and information types are different for different individuals, but taken together, indicate that **customers are likely to expect a one-stop “customer care/service” platform to include much of the information that is currently offered by National Rail Enquiries, for example. They do not see a difference between customer care & support, and other types of rail information.**

Expectations include, for example:

Station information:

facilities, maps, onward travel & local area information, etc.

Journey planner & booking

(or a link to be passed on this resource)

Railcard application & renewal

Expansion of D/R topic area

to help people when they need to cancel / refund tickets (when there has not been disruption)

Emergency policies/plans and contact information

By-laws / passenger rights

broader information on when an ombudsman should get involved, etc.

Other related feedback

- Some appreciate the simplicity of the proposed website structure, and caution against over-complicating it with too many options. A balance is to be struck here if the platform is to truly work as a one-stop shop / triage for all possible customer enquires and information, without overwhelming people with options and pathways.
- ✓ “Something else” options under each of the main topic headings is appreciated
- ✓ Note there may be some confusion about the “appeals” section: currently under Complaints & Appeals, but for compensation appeals this might feel more intuitive to appear under the D/R section

...and some other broader feedback about ensuring the service works well (for everyone)



Ensure customers are aware of this customer service resource

I think it's a good idea, but you would need a lot of marketing to make sure people know about it. A lot of the time lack of awareness is the cause of the issues .

Grace



Ensure site itself doesn't "loop you around", or prevent the customer from following certain pathways or making certain types of complaint or query.

Participants describe frustrating experiences with other customer service websites (including non-rail) which appear to have no route to make a complaint

This means the overall reputation is further damaged as not only is the original issue not resolved, but the customer is further annoyed by the lack of positive action or response.

Chloe



Minimise the number of steps & questions

...and a **back-up option to call and speak to someone** in person is popular and feels logical

I think keep it simple, the more complicated it is made the harder certain demographics will find it to use. Easy to operate, not too many options, and a final step of where to call/contact the specific company to deal with it.

Wyatt



Suggestions for **how to facilitate interaction within the website content**, including:

- **Multiple communication methods** to aid access
- **Visual & video content** (e.g. "how to" videos)
- **AI interaction** within the website itself, to short cut to the right contact point without needing to go through the steps shown in the flow chart

(Suggested by a small number of participants only at this point, but feedback elsewhere also indicates that this type of expectation is growing.)

...having multiple methods like email, phone, chat would be ideal... An AI powered agent that can resolve without having to navigate the website

Dan

Easily accessible online customer service through live chats, forms, text messaging etc.

Mia

I notice recently a current trend with website help sections is that they generally tend to try and steer you away from calling the company directly, pointing towards chatbots, live help or web forms. For some people [calling] is the most direct way to resolve an issue and I think it is something that should always be retained if it is possible.

Luke



Multiple methods of onward contact, i.e. after triaging via the website, to maximise accessibility and contact opportunity, for everyone.

In particular, **f2f customer service** is strongly called for, in addition to online services

(Including chatbots and AI, as previously outlined – but not at the expense of human contact)

*The best service has been from the front line, every single time. **Those at end of systems, hiding behind phones or screens just don't have the same connection.** I've had staff sort taxis, hunt down food and challenge delays. But phone calls have said oh well. Because they haven't seen or experience the actual problem or its impact.*

Chloe

Participants also considered the scenario where they might have more than one query or support need

Strong consensus that it would be frustrating for customers if they were expected to work through the customer care decision tree structure more than once. This implies that the customer must fit with the industry's structure, rather than putting the customer first, so should be avoided at all costs.

Participants were asked how they would expect a customer care platform like this to help them if they had multiple queries, potentially about multiple journeys. These are given here in approximate order of popularity, as an indication of how intuitive these solutions feel, relative to one another →



Ability to identify more than one issue at the outset, and be routed to the relevant team / organisation to address each (if they are different)

That is, the outcome from working through the customer care path might be that you as the customer need to engage with different teams, but **this is recognised at the outset** and you **only need to work through the decision tree process once**

For me there would be two potential solutions:

- 1. I work through my first query and then return to the start to raise another one. ...[and] all relevant information I've previously entered should have been retained for subsequent questions (e.g. I don't need to enter my contact details again)...*
- 2. I can 'build' a multi-part query at the first stage and each part is farmed out to the appropriate organisation to deal with. The option I'd prefer personally is 2.*

Benjamin

Maybe there should be a box [in the first layer] saying more than one query?

Layla



Feature to check whether the customer would like to say / ask anything else

(And making it clear up front that this will be available. to avoid users wondering if this will be available or not)

The ideal process in my mind is that the companies should be asking the customer 'is there anything else we can help you with?' on the end of every interaction... For the website... there should be options for multiple selections or even a 'contact me back' option so that further items can be addressed. A simple enough fix but requires people and time, both of which come with a cost ... [but] quality service comes at a cost

Liam



Chat function in the website, facilitated by a human, or potentially powered by AI

To help you get to the right end point **without needing to navigate the website for a query or combination of queries that doesn't fit the website's structured process**

I would hate the idea of having to contact different teams to deal with all my queries- surely there should be just one team that deals with all the queries- it just needs to be simple and straightforward. Or have a chatbot that just asks you the questions and it directs you to the right team.

Anaya

...if they are using AI, and they might by then, it might ask if you needed help with anything else and go from there.

Tom



...or simply have one team that can help with any query

This is expected in the scenario where the customer is connected with a person, face to face or over the phone (which many call for).

This person is expected to be able to help in a truly comprehensive way, and to take ownership of the issue even if they bring in support from a dedicated separate team or colleague.

Customer preferences are not clear cut, in terms of how the centralised platform might direct them onwards to the best team or organisation

Participants were asked whether they would prefer to be signposted to an appropriate organisation / team, or to be taken there.



Two thirds preferred to be taken directly to the right team, involving a sharing of their information

You fill in a form with your details and the nature of your query, and this website uses it to contact the right people on your behalf.

This means you need to allow the website to share your information with the team they will contact for you.



But a substantial proportion – **around a third** – preferred to be signposted to the right team, and to contact that team for themselves, independently

The website tells you which organisation to go to, and gives you a link to get to the website, and/or a phone number to contact the right people.

You would need to explain your query again when you get there, or when you speak to them



Those who like this idea expect that this transfer and consequential action will be direct, “successful”, and rapid. I.e. the customer will be contacted quickly to resolve the issue or it will be resolved for them.

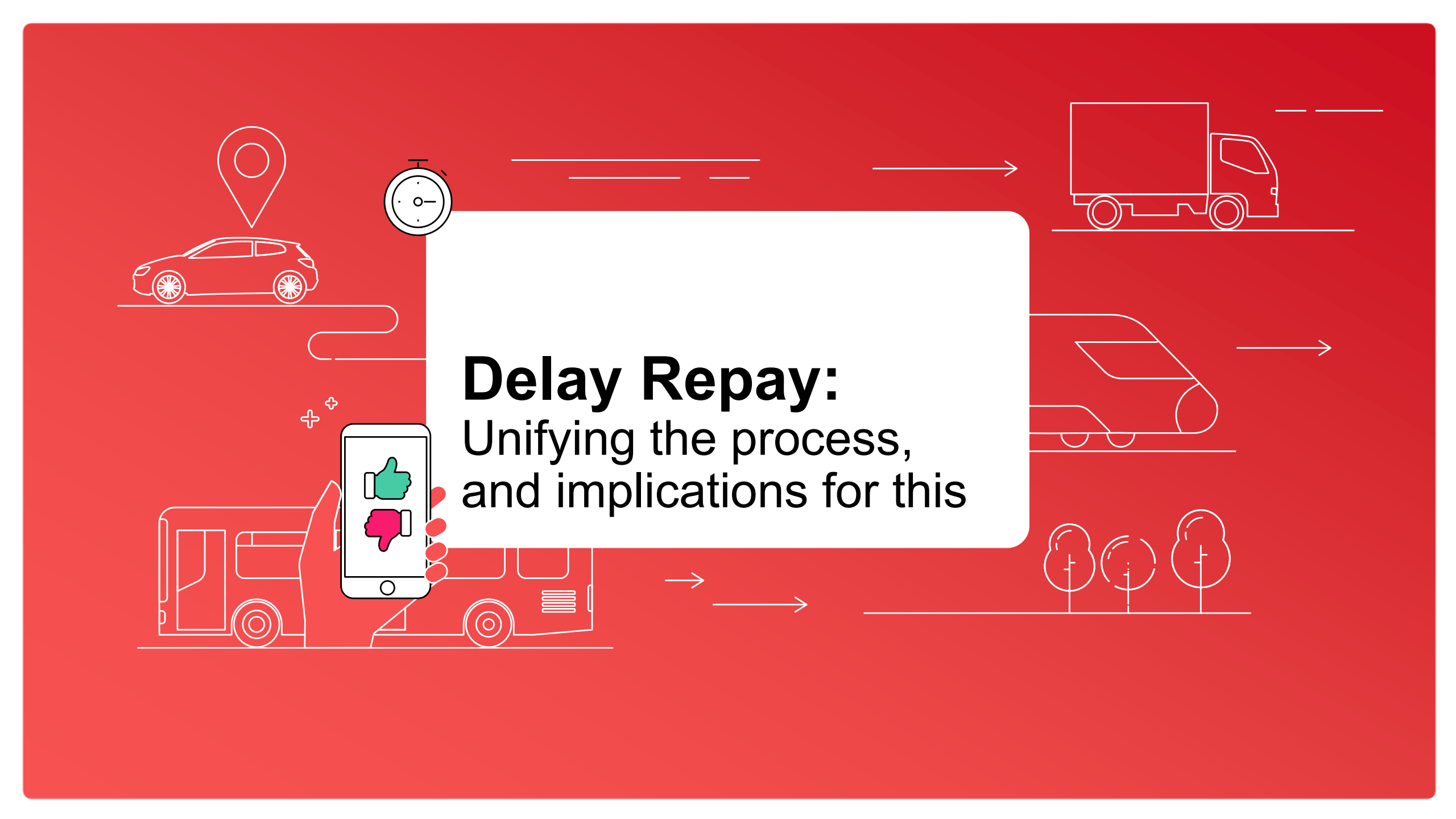
Providing this expectation can be met, this option is perceived to be:

- ✓ **Efficient**
- ✓ **Lower customer effort**, especially in context that the issue in question may have been caused by the rail industry – customers feel aggrieved at having to address a problem they shouldn’t have had in the first place
 - No need to search out the right team (which can be trial and error currently), or to be passed “from pillar to post”
 - No need to keep repeating yourself to different people
- ✓ **More like genuine “customer service”** – you get the help you need here, first time
- ✓ (A minority preferred the lower need for repeated contact, due to difficulty articulating their needs or enquiry, or anxiety in interacting with multiple people. Similarly, some who are less proficient in using websites find it arduous and error prone if they need to search and investigate several online resources. As such in these cases, **a more streamlined customer care process can aid inclusivity**).

Even among those who are willing to have their information shared as part of this process, there is still a need to share only the minimal amount of data to enable the query to be progressed – and to reassure customers that this is the case.

• **Distrust of the proposed hand-off process**

- × **Scepticism that the query will be both passed on, and acted upon, in practice**. Some fear that they will need to chase their case up – and that having had the query passed on, they might not know who to contact to chase it.
 - × **...or that the query will be passed on and acted upon quickly enough**. Being signposted and allowing the customer to contact the right team independently keeps the timing of the case within the customer’s control.
 - **Preference to speak to someone**, and so requiring a phone number at this signposting point, not just a website or contact form
 - Discomfort with the idea of sharing personal information
-
- **Dislike of the idea of completing a form** – can be perceived as too rigid, not allowing the customer to express their enquiry or issue as they wish to. This issue could be overcome with the right form-completion process, and the right presentation.



Delay Repay:

Unifying the process,
and implications for this

Current understanding of compensation & Delay Repay, and how customers would or should go about claiming, is moderate but imprecise



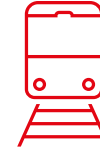
Rail users unanimously feel that **they should be refunded or compensated** in some form, if their train is delayed or cancelled

...although **some are unaware that this is possible**, and have not heard of Delay Repay



And awareness and understanding of when compensation applies, are quite varied:

- Around two thirds register / assume that there is some kind of **time limitation** to this – e.g. that you become eligible when the delay is a certain length of time.
- **Knowledge varies on how long this time criteria is...** some think it's 15 mins, some 30, some an hour, some don't know the time criteria but know there is one.
- About a third register or assume that the **level of compensation can vary depending on the length of the delay**.
- Some know or suspect that the rules for compensation **vary by operator**
- Other assumptions and expectations exist, e.g. that you should be compensated for a **missed connection, for other out of pocket expenses** (other transport), and for things like missed flights, missed theatre performances, etc.



Most feel that the train operator which ran the journey is responsible for the delay, and therefore for any compensation, but there is **no strong consensus on this, nor where passengers should expect to go to begin a claim**.

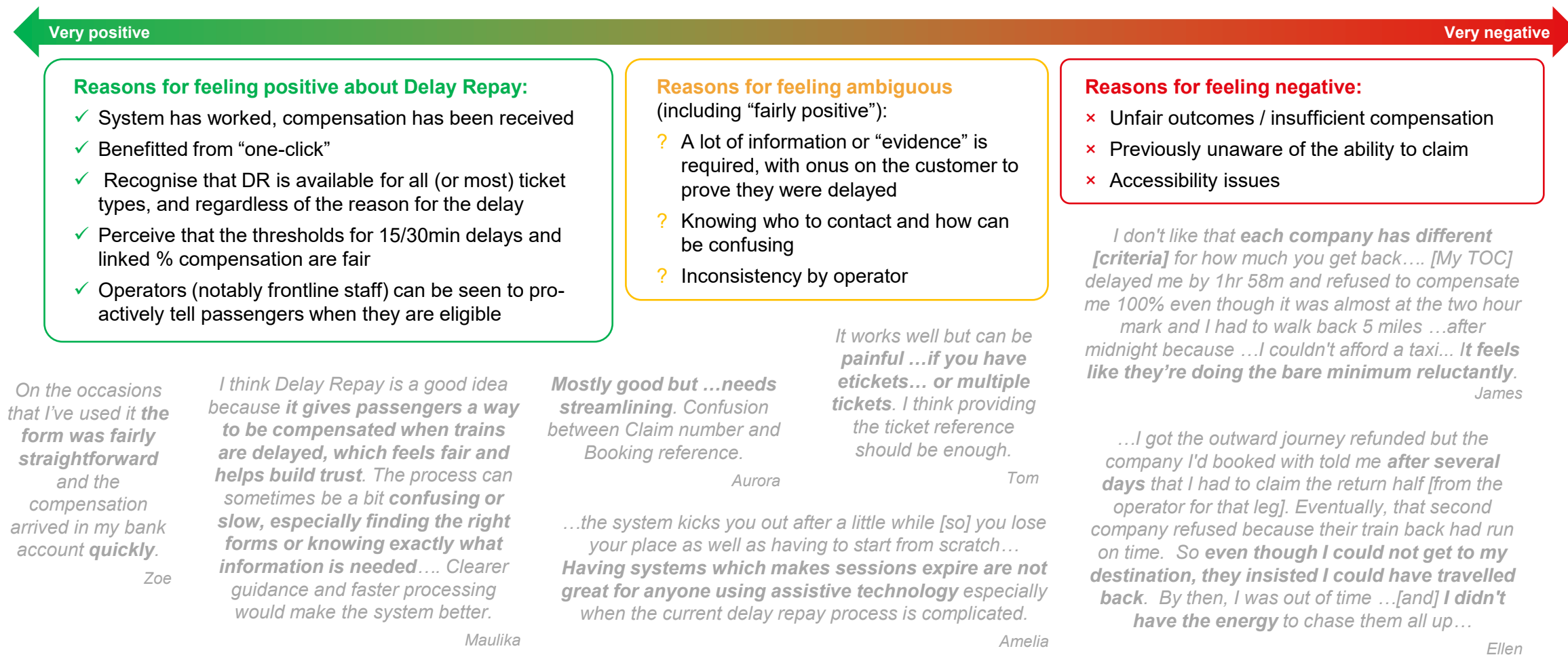
Some would approach either the train operator (online, or staff at a station / on board) for initial help with this, but many would default to whoever they purchased the ticket from, as the most recent point of interaction.

↓
Lack of clarity on this is a source of confusion and frustration, and does impact on the outcome and how passengers feel about this.

Current experiences of Delay Repay are very mixed

Of those that have used Delay Repay, experiences have been very varied, with even those (in the majority) who felt “fairly positive” about it, seeing it as **a useful and logical concept in principle but with common issues around efficiency, consistency and customer effort**.

Around a fifth of the community participants had never used it and so have little opinion.



A proposed, centralised account and handling service for Delay Repay

Participants were asked about their preference* between the existing Delay Repay process, with and without “one-click”, and a centralised Delay Repay scheme requiring the customer to create an account and to opt in to link this with other retailers



Almost all in the community preferred the centralised GBR scheme, over the existing model

This reflects similar feedback about the idea in principle, when tested at an early stage with the previous community cohort in summer 2024.

* See Appendix for full details of the options participants chose between

Quick and easy, don't have to fill in forms with different operators for each leg of your journey.

Anaya

Key benefits recognised as:

✓ **Easier / convenient**

All in one place rather than needing to go to different operators (for different journeys, or even for the same journey)

✓ **Consistent**

(rather than having different processes and eligibility criteria for different operators)

✓ **Burden is on industry, not customer**

(And in summer 2024, some also felt that a centralised Delay Repay service would mean greater accountability, with the removal of operators' ability to pass a claim on to another)

✓ **Faster, more efficient**

✓ **Pro-active**

GBR will tell you if you are eligible, rather than needing to find out (and potentially not realising, or not bothering)

It removes a couple of barriers that currently stop people claiming their fair compensation... Option A puts the full load on the passenger, Option B still assumes the passenger will chase and organise, while C recognises that the supplier of service should take on the responsibility of the delays, and does the majority of the work on the passenger's behalf.*

Chloe

There are some small areas in which customers may need reassurance:

- **That appeals can be made** / how to do so (given this can seem a little “black box”-like)
- That **transparency and accuracy** are reliable
- That idiosyncratic scenarios are addressed with **common sense** (e.g. the scenario where the outward journey was delayed and so the passenger did not reach the destination so could not make the return journey – but was refused compensation for the return ticket.)

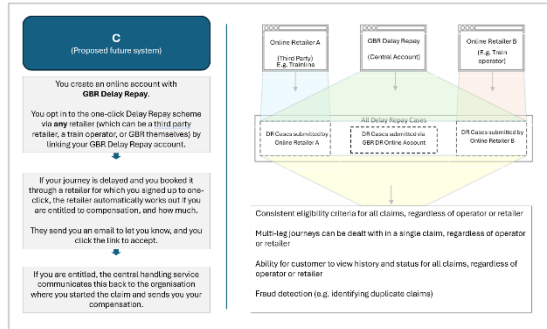
It's a million times better and exactly what I want. My journey often involves three operators, split tickets etc. and it's awkward to know who to contact. The form is so long and tedious currently [so] this would be an enormous improvement and how it should be.

Dan

Once the benefits of linked services are understood, most in this community are willing to create and link a GBR Delay Repay account with retailers

Participants were shown an outline of the proposed relationship between rail organisations that would facilitate a centralised, one-click Delay Repay process

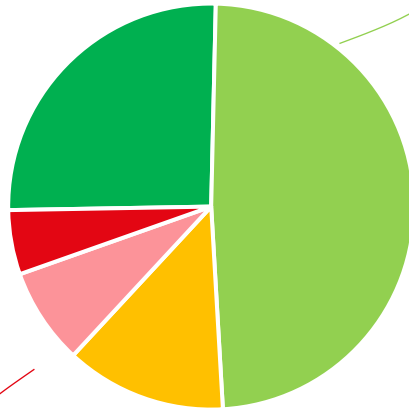
See Appendix for larger version



How participants feel about creating an account with the centralised service, and linking it with retailer(s) to benefit from centralised DR

All community participants, Nov-Dec '25 (39)

- Very positive
- Fairly positive
- Neutral
- Fairly negative
- Very negative



- ✓ Most see **longer term benefits to the initial admin** involved in creating and linking accounts
- ✓ And are **comfortable with thier information being shared** between relevant, pre-authorised organisations (which they have or would need separate accounts with anyway) – **where they recognise a genuine customer benefit**
- ✓ Some register that their **claim history** will be easily accessed in one place

- A minority are **put off by the idea of creating “another” account**
 - This often stems from misunderstanding of the reason for linking, so further explanation will be worthwhile when the service is launched, around why an account is necessary, and its benefits
 - Some query whether this is a separate account for DR, and that this would feel excessive in addition to a more general GBR account. Again, can this concern be put to rest if customers can be reassured that this is not the case?
- ...or are concerned about the **centralised service being “down” / hacked, with a negative effect on everything else**
- (A small cohort remain **wary of sharing any data**)

The linking I assume is fairly automatic and with the retailer is no issue. Train operators are redundant, you don't get a choice in who you use so what's the point in having to engage with them. I'm very excited about this being the new normal and it sounds so much easier.

Dan

I make accounts for almost everything these days so it isn't too big a deal, [and] it keeps me from having to remember 5 different accounts with train operators ... It also is a service that will mostly likely be used multiple times, unlike these other websites or services that require you to make an account for a once off service.

Wyatt

Why should you have to create a separate account just for delay repay? Shouldn't this service be a part of your GBR rail account?

Alexander

(Indeed, when they see a tangible benefit to sharing their information, many people feel more comfortable about doing so, than they are “in principle”)



In the context of sharing data via a form, to enable GBR to triage a query

Although, I [said before that I] didn't want to share my details, this is the more suitable option in this instance [and I prefer to have my query passed on, involving some information about myself]. [However] there shouldn't be spam or marketing.

Omar



In the context of enabling faster / automatic Delay Repay regardless of operator

I'm comfortable with the organisations sharing only the information that's needed ... If the data sharing is limited, transparent, and secure, I'm fine with it. If not, I'd have concerns.

Arjun

*[I feel more comfortable with this and] I assume that **only information relevant to the claim will be shared**, thus minimising the risks of unnecessary information sharing*

Elijah

*Although I have stated I **am wary** of providing my details to companies and retailers, I **understand the simplicity of [the centralised D/R proposal]***

Ava

*I feel more comfortable with this, when thinking about Delay Repay specifically. Sharing my information through a centralised handling service feels safer and more practical [in this context] because **it's directly connected to making a claim and getting compensation...** I can see the benefit of having all the relevant organisations linked ... It feels **more controlled and transparent** than sharing information more broadly, and **I still have the ability to approve the claim before any compensation is sent.***

Maulika



After discussing some proposed joined-up services that will be enabled via GBR (a centralised customer care platform, and a unified Delay Repay service), approx. two thirds of this community felt more comfortable with sharing relevant and necessary information about themselves to facilitate this, or equally positive if they had been relaxed about this already.

This is reassuring that the services feel logical and that customers are likely to get on board with them, and **cements how important it is to make the benefits – and the security – of any data-sharing activity very clear.**

There does also remain a third of customers in this community* who are unsure about sharing their data for these purposes, or who are resistant to it. **To be inclusive, the management of customer support and Delay Repay will need to be robust and effective for those who are not comfortable (or able) to use online and / or linked-up digital services.**

Sharing my details again with a centralised centre-just doesn't sit right with me! So many companies are being targeted - customer information being leaked, compromised etc.

Anaya

*This research community is managed online, with a broad demographic mix of rail users, and with a range of people who are more and less frequent travellers, and heavier and lighter users of technology. However, by nature of their involvement in this online research study, they are all reasonably proficient with using online services. There may therefore be more resistance to using and linking online services among the general public than is represented here.

Some other key points were highlighted by the community in relation to Delay Repay

In addition to unifying the contact point, **the process and evidence gathering for DR claims can be onerous** currently – a top area in which users want to see improvements

A simpler format that captures the travel information in an automated way, removing the need to try and remember or take a photo of a travel ticket before it's consumed by the barrier.
Samuel

The **speed of payment will remain a priority** (and arguably **expectations may be higher**, given a more streamlined service)

With delay repay. How long would it take someone to know they will receive compensation.
Omar

...as will **communication around the claim**

It would also be helpful if passengers could get real-time updates on the status of claims and any delays, so they feel informed throughout the process.
Maulika

Developments in technology are raising expectations for the speed and connectedness of all services like this.

(In particular, if tickets can increasingly be bought to cover multi-mode journeys, will this take compensation claim expectations beyond the rail leg alone?)

Not sure if this process will ever be fully automated but that would be even better.
Imagine a train being cancelled and by the time you get to your destination you have already been refunded. Not sure if there are any plans to add **more than the refund.... hotel fees, taxi fees... I recently heard similar news about the apps used by car parks being combined** and that will be so helpful too.
Tom

Existing options for receiving compensation **should be retained**

I like the option to donate to charity. Although I haven't used it I think it's a nice option to have.
Isaac

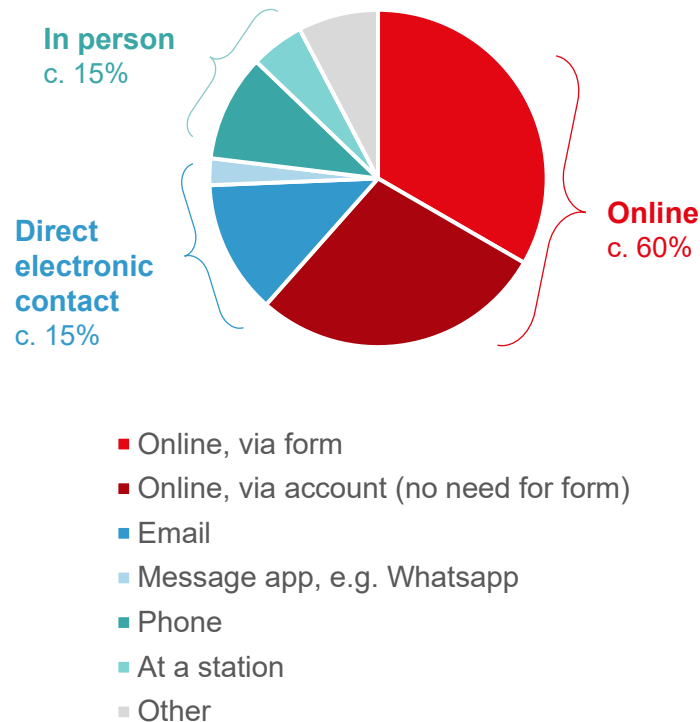
Offline options for claiming DR will remain critical for some

I really like the being able to do delay repay in person and online - makes it easier and more accessible so 99% of people shouldn't have an issue claiming. Maybe make sure there's a sign at stations saying you can claim here.
James

Make sure there's a number you can call to get through and talk to a human being....
Anaya

(Reminder that when we tested the central handling service concept in principle in 2024, we heard that in-person contact for compensation claims can be necessary)

Preference for contact method, to claim compensation



There are benefits to each of these, suiting different types of customer

Online via form / account

- ✓ Convenience – especially where it is possible to link back directly to the original purchase, to avoid providing “unnecessary” details

Email / other direct contact

- ✓ On my terms: explain the situation and attach photos without needing “unnecessary” or hard to find details
- ✓ Convenient
- ✓ Creates perception of ownership of the claim

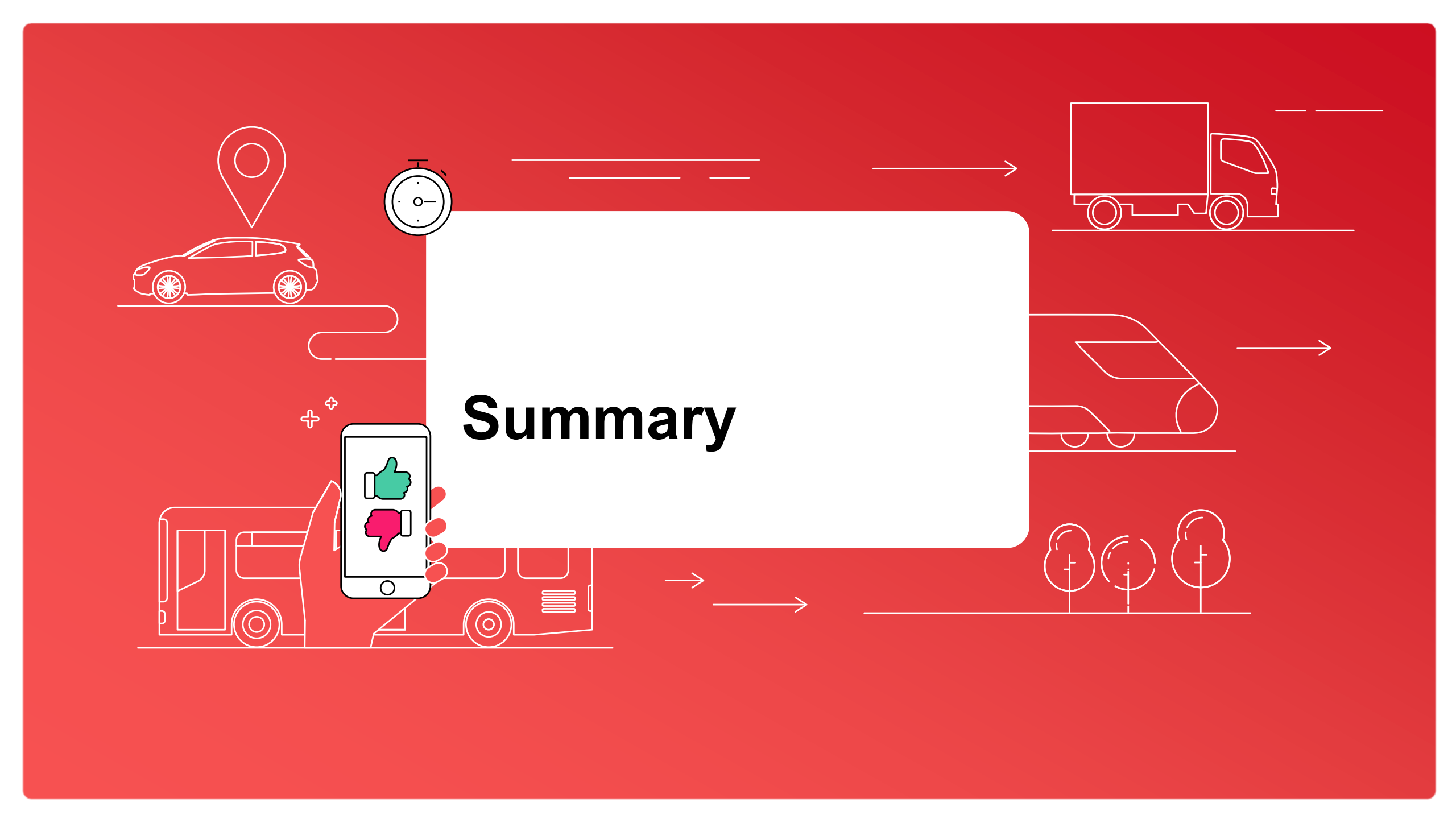
Station / by phone

- ✓ Intuitive, if you bought the ticket there – just as you might go back to a shop to return an item in person
- ✓ (Some also assume that refund will be given immediately, as in a shop)
- ✓ Prefer to speak to someone:
 - Opportunity to explain scenario (and its wider implications), ask questions, and understand process
 - Creates perception of ownership of the claim
- ✓ Necessary for those less tech-able or using assistive tech



From customers' perspective, compensation should be processed:

- Automatically, by default, where this is possible and agreed with the individual
- By a centralised, dedicated, independent team...
 -accessed via a range of possible shop windows, which should include both online and offline interfaces
 - And acknowledged as such regardless of interface used by the individual

A graphic on a red background featuring a central white rounded rectangle with the word "Summary" in bold black text. Surrounding this rectangle are various white line-art icons: a car with a location pin, a clock, a truck, a train, a hand holding a smartphone with thumbs up/down icons, a bus, and trees. White arrows indicate a flow from left to right across the top and bottom of the central box.

Summary

Summary: (1/2)

The rail customer community has provided feedback to inform the development of centralised services for customer information and support, and for processing Delay Repay claims, as the industry comes together as a unified GBR.

Customer care

- **The perception of customer service via existing contact centres across the rail industry is typically quite negative.**

While there are lots of good examples of customers getting help via online or phone support centres, they also often say it can be hard to get heard and acknowledged in these contexts, and that when they do strike up an interaction that they can feel unimportant, or that the resolutions to queries and support requests can lack practical application.

- **In contrast, the proposal for a centralised, online customer service “triage” platform was popular, with perceived benefits being consistency and reduced customer effort**
- Rail users did have further expectations for a platform like this, notably that **they might conflate it with a broader information and journey planning hub** (akin to NRE). **It would be prudent to consider expanding it to cover this**, to prevent unintentional confusion and frustration in future.
- **Customer preferences are not clear cut, in terms of how the centralised platform might direct them onwards** to the best team or organisation that will deal with their query.

While most would appreciate it if their query was pass on automatically and dealt with behind the scenes, a substantial minority preferred to keep control of the conversation (and their data) and interact directly with the appropriate people that will help them.

It is likely that both options will need to be made available.

Summary: (2/2)

Delay Repay

- **Current understanding and experience of Delay Repay is very mixed.**

There is varied awareness and knowledge of when compensation can be claimed – and even if it can be claimed.

Some customers have had very smooth interactions with the process in practice, while others have found it to be confusing and hard work, and have the perception that the rail industry deliberately makes this difficult so as to reduce the pay-outs it makes.

- **(Reflecting other previous feedback) the proposal for a centralised Delay Repay system was very well received**, and seen as having the potential to remove many of the existing frustrations that customers have with it.

Sharing customer information

- As a general rule, **only around half of the participants in this study are comfortable with the idea of having information about themselves shared** between railway organisations.
- However, **when they are clear on the benefits that this can bring, for more unified customer information and support, and more efficient and consistent Delay Repay processes, most are more relaxed about this** – providing the information is limited to that which is relevant and necessary, and that it is handled appropriately.
- Nevertheless, there does remain a fairly large proportion of customers that is unwilling to have their data shared – there is a lot of fear (and some experience among the group) around scams, privacy leaks, spam marketing, and other negative outcomes from losing full control of their data.

Partly for this reason (but also for broader inclusiveness and accessibility needs) **it is always likely to be necessary to make services available via any given operator / retailer / GBR individually, as well as via a central service.**

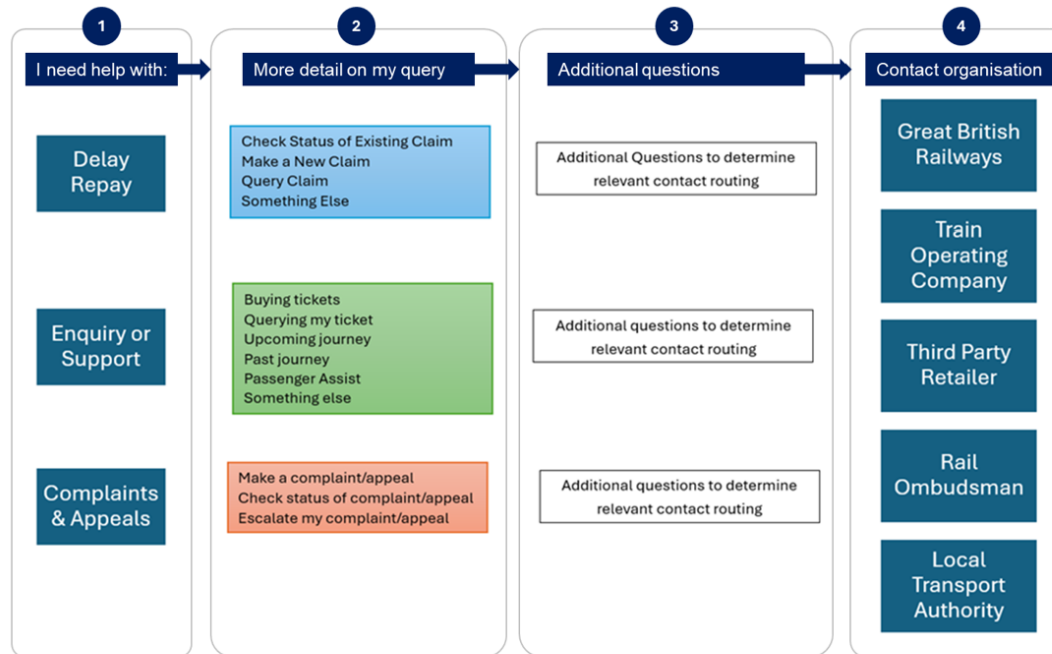
As part of this, offline options will also be necessary for some.

Appendix



Participants were shown a schematic structure of a centralised, online customer service resource

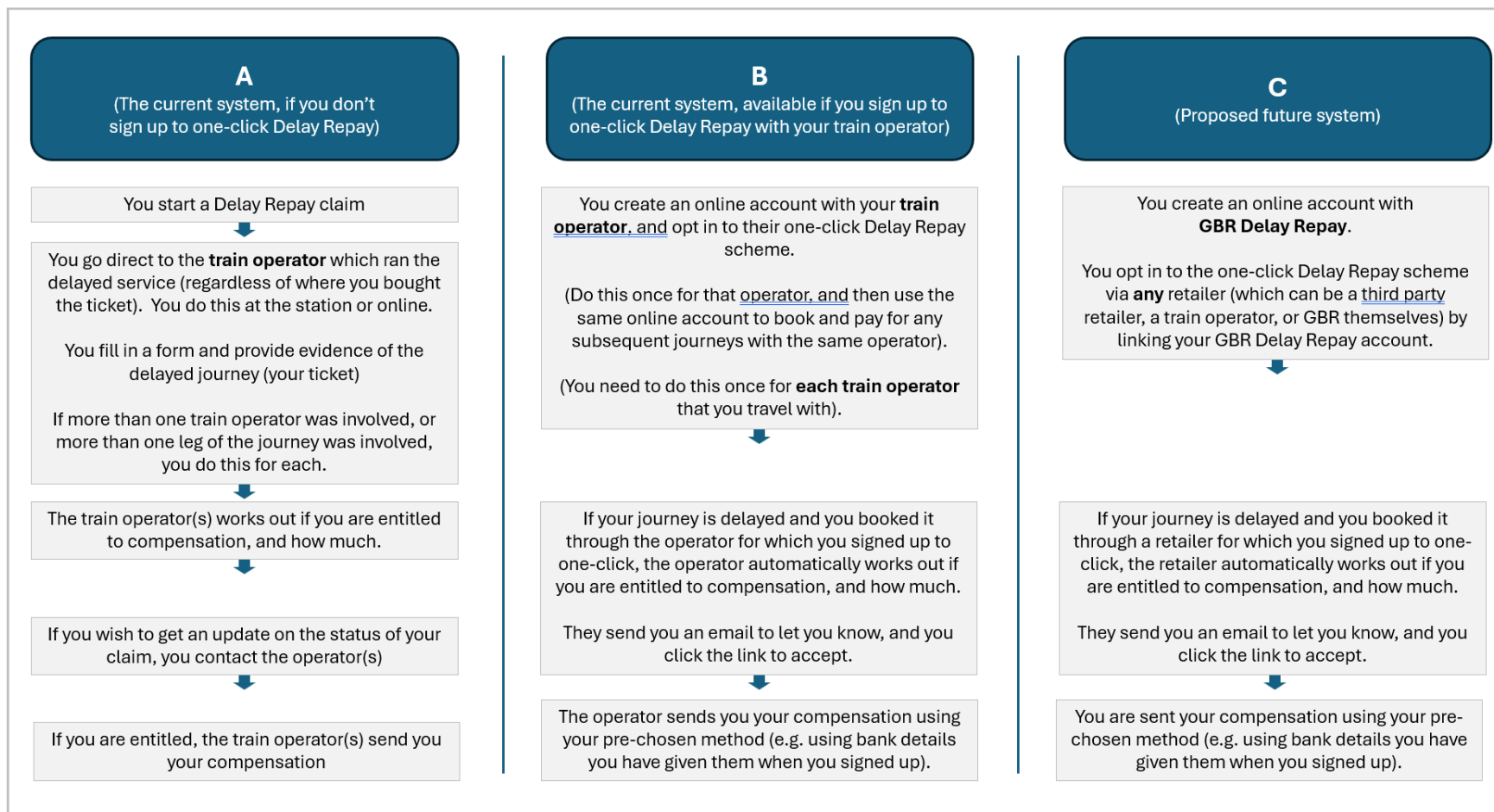
Proposed structure of customer service or help area of a website, for Great British Railways



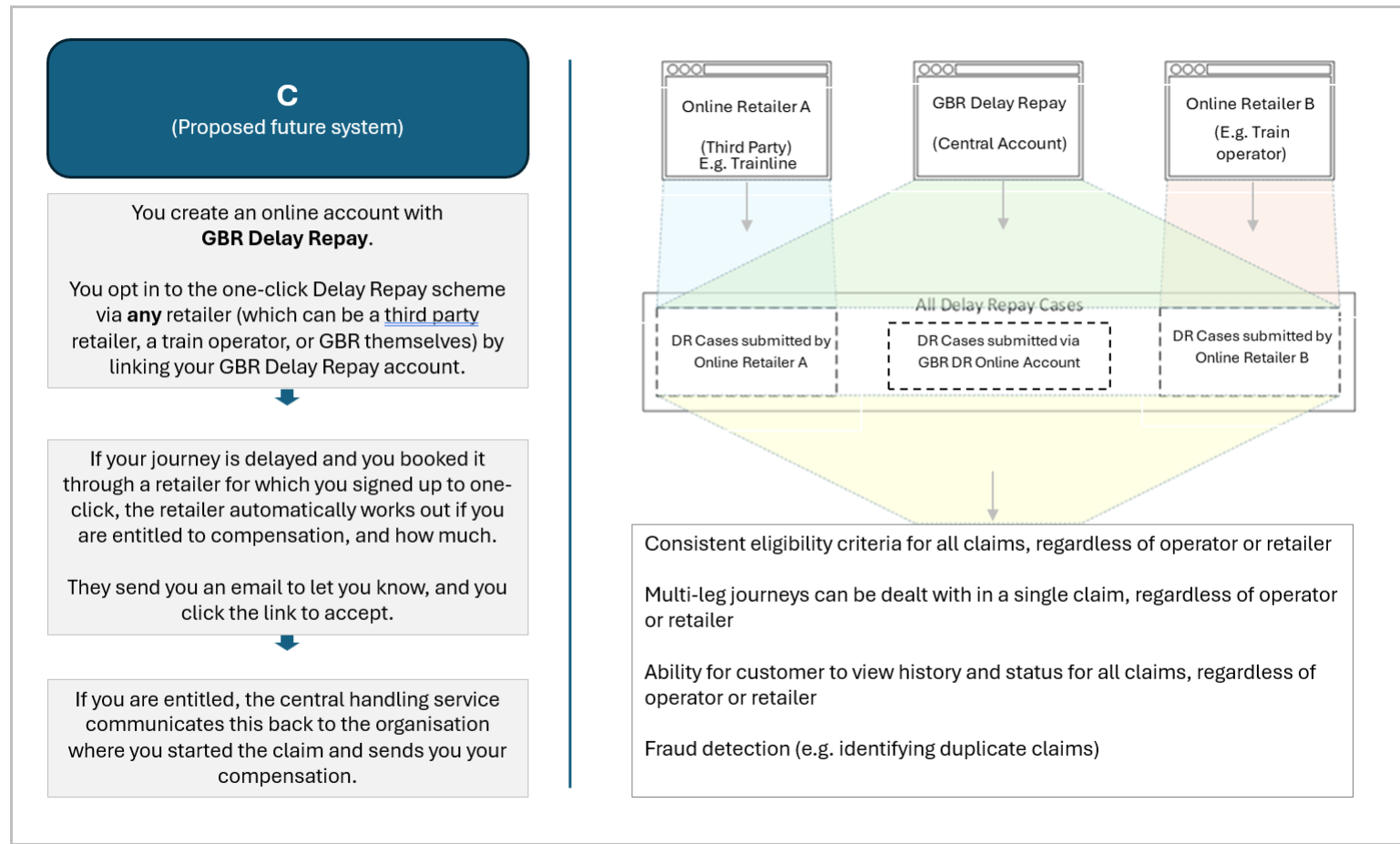
Imagine you have a query about, or you need help with something to do with travelling by train.

1. You go to the website and click on the broad area that relates to your query
2. You then see a list of more detailed types of query; you click on the one that relates to you
3. The website asks you a series of further questions to get more information about the help you need
4. Based on this information, the website directs you to the most appropriate organisation that can help you.

Participants were shown a summary of existing Delay Repay processes (A&B) and a proposed, centralised scheme (C)



Participants were shown an outline of the proposed relationship between rail organisations that would facilitate a centralised, one-click Delay Repay process



About Transport Focus

Transport Focus is the independent consumer organisation representing the interests of:



Bus, coach and tram users across England outside London.



Rail passengers in Great Britain.



All users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads (the Strategic Road Network).

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

We work to make a difference for all transport users.