Final Report

Office of Rail and Road - Research into the provision of information to passengers, including during disruption

May 2019

Winder Phillips Associates ▶▶

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This Report has been prepared for the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) by Winder Phillips Associates (WPA) in accordance with the remit for research into the provision of rail passenger information, with an emphasis on Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD). Our research was undertaken between 14th January 2019 and 29th March 2019.

This research was undertaken in response to the Remit prepared by the ORR and investigates how the GB Mainline rail industry meets the challenge of ever-increasing rail passenger expectations for prompt and helpful information in a society where web and IT developments place boundless information at people's fingertips.

A key feature of our approach is the emphasis we have placed on "customer-centric" values throughout the review. Customer-centric characteristics are those whereby actions, behaviours, processes and other inputs are driven by an all-consuming, all-embracing desire to drive increased satisfaction to customers and add value to the customer experience. It is where the needs of customers are the top priority

Our research has generated a wealth of information, and the industry has been open and helpful in exploring how further change and improvement could be driven forward. It is clear that the rail industry and its constituent parts currently "wants to do the right thing for customers", but is neither "customer-led" and is certainly some way off being "customer-centric".

The desire of the industry to progress further down the journey towards achieving "customer-centricity" and the openness with which it has engaged with our Review gives us confidence that the outputs from this report have the potential to help the sector deliver the significant improvements we have identified

Findings

The provision of information on the GB Mainline Rail network is manifestly more complex than the comparator transport undertakings we have examined in the course of this research. In spite of these differences, there are still valuable lessons which can be learned which would enable the rail industry to take an improved approach and, in doing so, obtain better outcomes for rail passengers, both during normal service operation and in all types of disruption.

There is no explicit **GB Mainline Rail Passenger Information strategic imperative** that provides high level direction on what the industry must aim to achieve and deliver.

There is no clear **industry strategy** for passenger information provision.

The **accountabilities** for the delivery of good passenger information do not sit well in the current TOC and Network Rail organisational structures.

There is no clearly articulated or widely recognised view as to **'what good looks like'** in the provision and delivery of passenger information, particularly during disruption.

There is a need to map **the entire information process** within GB Mainline Rail to provide understanding of the importance of individual elements, and the inter-dependencies and inter-relationships which exist.

Support – strategic, tactical, managerial and financial - for the progressive adaptation, development and exploitation of the **IT systems architecture** is critical to good, timely, accurate and consistent passenger information.

Efficient operational arrangements that are centred around **Control Office procedures** and incorporate PIDD requirements for information from incident sites must be established across the industry.

The industry has a limited appreciation of **the needs of different customer types** for information, particularly during disruption and must respond better to the information needs of different types of customers**.**

The provision of high quality passenger information at all times is heavily dependent on **suitable, properly trained and competent staff**, working to clearly defined requirements at all levels within their organisations.

Establishing relevant and meaningful **measures and metrics** for passenger information provision across the industry is a high priority.

Establishing **an independent assessment and review process** for passenger information delivery, based on a recognised and robust methodology such as EFQM, would be an important step in the drive for consistent and measurable improvement.

Ensuring **governance and regulation arrangements** which incentivise improvements in performance and delivery of good customer information is an essential requirement, to provide strategic leadership, direction, prioritisation, development programmes and funding.

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2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Overview

This Report has been prepared for the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) by Winder Phillips Associates (WPA) in accordance with the remit for research into the provision of rail passenger information, with an emphasis on Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD). Our research was undertaken between 14th January 2019 and 29th March 2019.

This research took place against the Remit prepared by the ORR which is reproduced at paragraph 2. It sets out the challenge of ever-increasing rail passenger expectations for prompt and helpful information in a society where web and IT developments place boundless information at people's fingertips. The remit context is against the background of the well-publicised May 2018 timetable change, the disruption to which exposed passengers' dissatisfaction about the rail travel information being provided. Transport Focus reports and ORR's own monitoring all pointed to a need to review the state of current provision of passenger information and identify opportunities for significant improvements. The aim of this work is to address that ORR remit and to set out what should be done to get train and station operators to think like the passengers that they serve so that appropriate information is easily available when and where it is needed.

2.2 Aims of this Report

The main aims of this Final Report are:
- To outline the Approach and Methodology we have used to undertake our research;
- To provide a description of our view of 'What Good Looks Like' in terms of the Enablers necessary for the delivery of customer–centric information – particularly during disruption. (Note: The term 'Enablers' encompasses - Leadership, People, Policy & Strategy, Partnership & Resources, and Processes)
- To give a fact-based assessment of the current arrangements deployed by GB Mainline Rail, using information based on comprehensive reviews of representative TOCs and Network Rail Managed Stations, plus input from Transport Focus. This has been supplemented by Live Monitoring of incidents and Mystery Shopping within the chosen areas of operational focus
- To highlight good practice and transferable lessons identified during our fact-finding visits to the Aviation, Coach and Bus sectors
- To identify areas in each of the critical factors and components that we believe require improvement in order to better deliver timely, consistent customer–centric information during disruption.
- Summarise our exploration of the options for "Metrics" for PIDD, including the potential for an industry Maturity Model
- Make recommendations concerning the best ways to successfully deliver the necessary changes across the industry in a timely and structured way.

2.3 Customer-Centric Focus

A key feature of our approach is the emphasis we have placed on "customer-centric" values throughout the review. Customer-centric characteristics are those whereby actions, behaviours, processes and other inputs are driven by an all-consuming, all-embracing desire to drive increased satisfaction to customers and add value to the customer experience. It is where the needs of customers are the top priority. Organisations that deliver excellent customer service tend to be those that are customer-centric in the way they are organised and the manner in which they do business - a relentless pursuit of customer satisfaction is enshrined in the corporate psyche at such companies.

A key message is that our chosen approach and methodology has generated a wealth of information, and the industry has been open and helpful in exploring how further change and improvement could be driven forward. There is a recognition that the rail industry and its constituent parts currently "wants to do the right thing for customers", but is neither "customer-led" and certainly some way off being "customer-centric", as evidenced not only by NRPS scores but also the various other strands of customer insight and research commissioned by consumer bodies and rail operators themselves.

The desire of the industry to progress further down the journey towards achieving "customer-centricity" and the openness with which it has engaged with our Review gives us confidence that the outputs from this report have the potential to help the sector deliver the significant improvements we have identified. This will assist in achieving sustained improvements in the delivery of 'customer-centric' information – particularly during disruption.

2.4   Acknowledgment
WPA would like to extend our thanks to all those we spoke with in order to conduct this complex research. Without exception, whether within GB Mainline Rail or working in the selected comparator sectors, they spoke openly and honestly about the issues and challenges involved in delivering excellent passenger information.

2.5   Guidance on Terminology
Throughout the report, we have used the acronym PIDD ("Passenger Information During Disruption") to refer to the subject matter in the rail industry, the associated Approved Code of Practice, and the plans and activities which have been developed from it or have been developed by industry parties to address their customers' information needs.   It is acknowledged that the industry has a preference for the term 'Customer' rather than 'Passenger'. However, the focus in this Report has been on passengers – those travelling or intending to travel by train – rather than the wider group of rail industry customers, many of whom will be using retail facilities at stations (particularly NR Managed Stations), and will not necessarily have an interest in train service information. For this reason, the term 'passenger information' is deliberately used to recognise this differentiation.

The term CSL2 (or Customer Service Level 2) is used in a number of sections of the Report. CSL2 is an industry term, defined and described in the Approved Code of Practice that is used to describe the information-focused arrangements that are introduced when disruption exceeds certain levels. In some TOCs, enhanced Customer Care arrangements are also linked to this trigger point.

We have used the term "GB Mainline Rail" throughout this report to describe our primary area of focus which encompasses Train Operating Companies (TOCs), Station Operators, Network Rail and the Rail Delivery Group (RDG).

3. THE ORR REMIT

The ORR Remit is reproduced below in full:

"Background to the Project

The initial findings from the ORR into the May 2018 timetable change have highlighted significant concerns regarding the quality of information provided to passengers to enable them to plan and make journeys with a reasonable degree of assurance.

Despite the focus on this area over recent years, passengers often remain dissatisfied with how the rail industry performs, particularly as their expectations are often set or exceeded by experiences in other sectors. This can often be an issue when train services are disrupted due to planned and unplanned engineering work, weather conditions and other incidents.

Getting good quality - appropriate, accurately and timely - information for rail passengers relies on successful collaboration and integration between many parties. Each must be clear on the importance of their role in this process. They must be committed to putting passengers' interest front and centre of their decision making in a variety of real-time, complex and challenging operational scenarios. Previous work has shown that operators often focus on getting information into industry systems but rarely consider the quality and usefulness of the information actually received by passengers online (including apps), on trains or at stations.

Our aim is to help train and station operators to think like the passengers that they serve – e.g. commuters, leisure travellers, passengers with disabilities, those on trains, at stations or still planning their journey - so that appropriate information is easily available when and where it is needed.

ORR Project Objectives & Scope

The ORR objective is to stimulate measurable and sustained improvement in the quality of information provided to passengers and for all train operators to deliver information to an agreed minimum standard.

The work required aims to identify what currently works in the interests of passengers, what is not working and why. This research should:

- *identify where good practice exists so that this can be shared more widely;*
- *identify critical improvements that the industry can make to deliver measurable and sustained progress;*
- *highlight gaps or weaknesses in the current industry code of practice;*
- *identify minimum standards that will improve the passenger experience while not stifling the scope for future innovation from individual operators over and above such standards; and*
- *should enable the ORR to provide both direct and specific feedback for the participating parties but also the development of emerging areas for improvement for further discussion across the industry.*

This work will have 2 elements. We have suggested below how these might be structured but are open to alternative approaches which will deliver the outcomes we are looking for. There may also be learning from other sectors for example aviation which may be helpful.

(1)   Undertake a comprehensive, end to end review of communication and information flows within train operators for a number of defined case studies to identify good practice and potential deficiencies or disconnects. This should specifically consider the needs of different passenger groups - e.g. commuters, leisure passengers and passengers with disabilities - and focus on a number of challenging scenarios that would significantly disrupt travel at each stage of the passenger journey, comparing these to information provided on a normal day.

The studies should allow a maturity model to be developed that provides objective assessment of the delivery of information to passengers at each stage of their journey. This should also allow the development of metrics that can form an information dashboard for each train operator.

One approach could be to pilot this customer-centric approach on a limited set of selected operators. It is for the consultant to propose up to 4 initial studies for this phase of work.

There should be engagement with Network Rail routes within each study given their critical role in the development of the source information, e.g. development of the prioritised plan that is then communicated to passengers by the train operator.

We are also keen that the passenger experience be captured: what information do passengers receive and from whom; is it what they want; how useful is it; and how could it be improved. We are open to suggestions on how this element could be delivered.

*(2)   Within each case study chosen we would also expect an examination of how information is captured, managed and disseminated to passengers at **Network Rail managed stations** to be carried out. These are some of Britain's busiest stations and the start and finish of millions of journeys, every day. The onus on Network Rail here is to effectively cooperate with train operators to enable them to provide good quality information to passengers and prospective passengers, including when there is disruption.*

Managed stations often have multiple operators so we would need to understand responsibilities and liabilities in disruption and to understand how any standard contingencies are introduced and advertised should the station be closed."
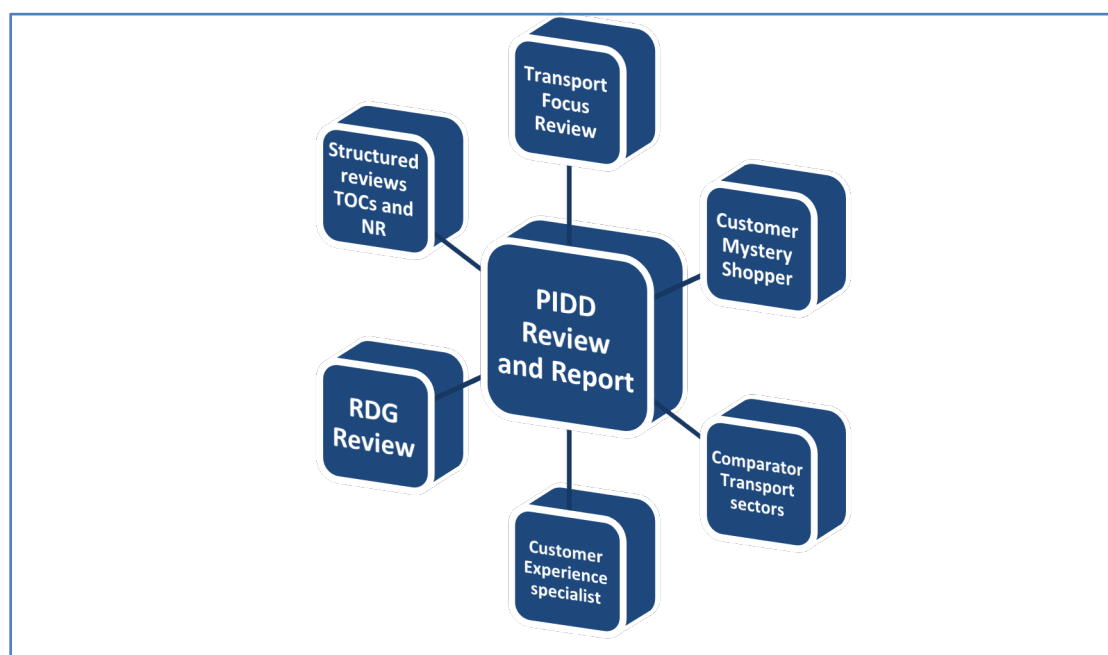
4. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

Throughout our review we have used a series of different perspectives to gain a better understanding of the importance of information to passengers and the opportunities for further improvement in the GB Mainline Rail network's approach. These included review meetings with a range of Train Operators and with Network Rail using a structured assessment protocol, literature reviews, Mystery Shopper activities and examination of information provision in comparator transport sectors (Coach, Bus, Air and London Underground). In addition to the discussions with the ORR throughout this work, we also reviewed Transport Focus's findings from their extensive surveys and research into the industry's record on information provision. We also held two reviews with RDG in its role to:

"provide services and support to enable our members to succeed in transforming and delivering a successful railway, benefiting customers, taxpayers and the economy".

Our work has been robustly and rigorously challenged by a Customer Experience Specialist whose specific focus is to act as "the grit in the oyster. Pictorially as shown below these differing perspectives have minimised the potential for subjectivity and maximised the coverage of the issues from different viewpoints.

Figure 1 - Multiple perspectives were employed as part of our methodology

The sequence of our review followed a logical flow:

Discussions with Stakeholders
- Inception briefing meeting with ORR representatives to gain their insights into the work;
- With the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) to explore the industry strategy, systems and supporting arrangements;
- With Transport Focus to understand the passenger champion's view on the fitness for purpose of the arrangements currently in use within GB Mainline Rail;

Comparator Industry Visits
- Transport for London (TfL), to compare arrangements and identify good practice;
- The Civil Aviation Authority;
- Heathrow Airport Ltd.;
- National Express Bus and Coach operations;

Development & Application of a Structured Assessment Protocol
- Creation of the protocol for GB Mainline information providers, based on both a model of communication and on the EFQM model, and using a variety of customer types and incident types to help explore how information is tailored to different needs;
- Using the assessment protocol to undertake in depth research into all critical passenger information factors in our TOC and NR review meetings, comprising sessions with 4 different TOCs

Live Monitoring
- Concurrent live monitoring during disruption and "mystery shopper" activities on a range of GB Mainline routes, including routes on all four reviewed TOCs;

Development of Options for Metrics & measures
- Exploration of the options for "Metrics" for PIDD including the potential for a Maturity Mode (see section 9).

Our research has concentrated on the key elements of concern about passenger information, as expressed in the Remit for the research, and Table 1 below summarises how we have addressed those concerns within the Report;

Table 1 – How this report addresses ORR Remit & Concerns

ORR Remit/Concern	*How Addressed within the Report*
Passengers . . .often dissatisfied with how the rail industry performs (in provision of passenger information)	*Reviewed agreed selection of TOCs and NR Routes/Managed Stations. Reviewed agreed comparator organisations outside GB Mainline Rail. Review of rail industry data and data of comparators. Consideration of relevant measures and metrics for industry parties.*
(Passenger information is) an issue when train services are disrupted due to planned and unplanned engineering work, weather conditions and other incidents	*TOC/NR Review meetings focus on differing customer types, and how TOCs/NR respond to needs of different types of customers in a range of disruption scenarios.*
Good quality - appropriate, accurate and timely - information for rail passengers relies on successful collaboration and integration between many parties	*TOC Reviews attended by relevant partners from NR. Meeting agenda included review of collaborative behaviours in response to Incidents, including information provision at NR Managed Stations.*

ORR Remit/Concern	How Addressed within the Report
(Industry parties must be) committed to putting passengers' interest front and centre of their decision making in a variety of real-time, complex and challenging operational scenarios	*TOC Review focus; live monitoring of 'real' disruption; 'mystery shopper' records of real-time information during disruption; meeting with senior NR personnel. Review of extensive research carried out by Transport Focus.*
Operators . . .rarely consider the quality and usefulness of the information actually received by passengers	*TOC Review focus on the extent of provision of guidance and advice to passengers as well as factual information about delays to services and how TOCs capture, evaluate and act on feedback from customers.*
Identify where good practice exists so that this can be shared more widely	*Agenda item at TOC/ NR Reviews. Reviews of comparator organisations outside rail.*
Identify critical improvements that the industry can make to deliver measurable and sustained progress	*Conclusions and recommendations.*
Highlight gaps or weaknesses in the current industry code of practice	*Section 7.2 of this Report*
Identify minimum standards that will improve the passenger experience while not stifling the scope for future innovation from individual operators over and above such standards	*Conclusions and recommendations.*
We are also keen that the passenger experience be captured: what information do passengers receive and from whom; is it what they want; how useful is it; and how could it be improved	*Live monitoring and 'Mystery Shopper' sampling. Review of Transport Focus passenger monitoring, and conclusions.*
An examination of how information is captured, managed and disseminated to passengers at **Network Rail managed stations.** *The onus on Network Rail here is to effectively cooperate with train operators, understand how any standard contingencies are introduced and advertised should the station be closed.*	*TOC Review focus, with representatives of NR Managed Stations at Reviews which covered a sample of four NR Managed Stations Subsequent meeting with senior NR personnel.*

4.2   Structured Reviews

Structured reviews were undertaken with four representative TOCs agreed with ORR and their Network Rail colleagues. The aim was to cover all service types (London and South East Commuter, Rural, Inter Urban and Long Distance) whilst avoiding TOCs that were undergoing franchising change and those recovering from recent periods of difficulty (e.g. Northern and GTR).

We also held discussions with identified rail industry organisations and more wide-ranging discussions with a selection of external organisations agreed with ORR, which included non-rail transport companies and regulators. Full details are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Organisations engaged during this research

Organisation	Discussions held with
Civil Aviation Authority (Consumers & Markets Group)	• Senior Policy Advisor • Consumer Enforcement Manager
Rail Delivery Group	• Information Strategist, Customer Directorate • Customer Experience Manager-Information
c2c TOC	• Head of Customer Experience, c2c • Control Manager c2c
Transport Focus	• Head of Strategy • Passenger Services Director
Abellio Greater Anglia TOC	• Information Control Manager, Greater Anglia • Incident Officer, Anglia (Network Rail)
London Underground (LUL)	• Head of Information, Designs & Partnerships, LUL
Network Rail Major Stations HQ (including coverage of Liverpool St. Network Rail Managed Station).	• NR Managed Stations Specialist • NR National Operations Centre Manager
Heathrow Airport	• Business Resilience Manager, Airport Operations; LHR • Corporate Communications Manager, HAL
Virgin Trains West Coast TOC and Euston Network Rail Managed Station	• Disruption Manager, Virgin Trains • NR Station Manager, Euston Station • VT Stations Manager • Control Room Manager, Network Rail • Head of Performance & Customer Relationships (VT), Network Rail
National Express Coach	• NX Customer Experience Director, Coach Division
National Express Bus	• Managing Director, Bus Division and also a cross-section of Bus Station Supervisors and Operations Managers
Cross Country TOC and Manchester Piccadilly and Birmingham New St. Network Rail Managed Stations	• Customer Service Director, XC • Head of Customer Operations, XC • Station Liaison Manager, XC • Station Operations Manager (Birmingham), NR • Station Manager (Birmingham), NR • Station Manager (Manchester) XC • Customer Relationship Executive, Cross Country, Network Rail

4.3 GB Mainline Rail Reviews

4.3.1 Description of Research

This has been the central focus of our research project and comprised in-depth assessments of four Train Operating Companies (TOCs) plus structured review meetings with the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), and those Network Rail (NR) managers responsible for Managed Stations, liaison with TOCS, and NR National Control arrangements. The main issues and challenges identified in each of these areas of activity are described in the following sections;

4.3.2 Rail Delivery Group

RDG is the Industry body that aims "to bring together the companies that run Britain's railway into a single team with one goal - to deliver a better railway". This group was set up

to provide guidance and direction on crucial issues (such as passenger information) to all Rail Industry companies and, in particular, TOCs and NR. As such, it has responsibility for strategic oversight of information delivery arrangements - with a strong focus on systems, plus guidance through the "Provision of Customer Information - Approved Code of Practice" and the associated 50 Point Plan. RDG has responsibility for the National Rail Enquiries website (NRE), National Rail Communications Centre (NRCC) at Doncaster, the on-line systems strategy, Darwin and the "Knowledge Base" (Good Practice Guidance). RDG works with 3rd party Web and App developers who wish to make use of the information in industry systems.

The RDG Customer Board has overall responsibility for Passenger Information and this is discharged by the Customer Proposition Group which in turn oversees the Customer Information Group (CIG), comprised of TOCs, TF, ORR and NR. CIG is focused on improvements to information (including PIDD). The RDG Customer Board is predominantly made up of TOC Owning Groups. The Customer Information Group is particularly relevant to our research.

4.3.3   Train Operating Company Case Studies

TOCs are at the heart of this research as they have a clear, direct supplier/customer relationship and are accountable, in the eyes of the customer as the fare recipient, for the end-to-end journey experience. When customers comment on their satisfaction with the railway, they are often basing it on their perception of the train operator(s) that have provided the service and not, generally, Network Rail (even if there is still a mistaken belief among some customers that Network Rail is the operator of services).

Following discussion with the ORR, four TOCs were selected for review that allowed all main train service types to be reviewed.

The first TOC selected was c2c. This has the advantage of being a relatively small, self-contained operation. The predominant customer journeys are commuting to and from London, and leisure. This TOC also provided the opportunity to test the chosen approach and methodology on a relatively straightforward operation, albeit with a central London terminus at Fenchurch Street which is not operated by Network Rail.

The second TOC reviewed was Greater Anglia which manages London commuting and intercity services into London Liverpool Street, as well as rural services in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. It also operates airport services to London Stansted.

The third TOC reviewed was Virgin Trains (West Coast) which operates intercity services between London Euston and Birmingham, North Wales, North West England and Scotland.

The final TOC was Cross Country which operates long distance inter-urban services across much of England and Scotland. This TOC was included as it has a very different customer base to the other TOCs and has a different relationship with NR; Cross Country is a "national" TOC, and is not sponsored by or aligned to any one of the devolved Route organisations. It operates no stations and therefore relies on other TOCs and Network Rail to provide the station experience for customers travelling by Cross Country.

4.3.4   Network Rail Managed Stations

NR manages the 20 largest and busiest stations on the GB Mainline Rail Network, and it was vital to understand how NR and TOCs integrate information arrangements in order to present a seamless output to customers. Our review also included

- Discussions concerning a range of NR and TOC interface issues (both current and future) that have a material influence on the provision of information to rail customers
- Consideration of the integration between TOC and NR Managed Station processes, particularly those associated with contingency planning for disruption or special events
- Detailed review of control centre and operational arrangements at one of the Managed Stations
- Consideration of how the potentially conflicting requirements of the different TOCs are managed by the NR management teams
- Identification of any good practice which could be adopted more widely – at both other Managed Stations within NR or within larger TOC-operated stations
- Discussion of the process by which good practice in passenger information is shared across all managed stations
- Discussion of the particular challenges at one managed station which has a very high rate of passenger interchange – with its own information challenges

4.4   Summary of Good Practice, Challenges and Concerns

4.4.1   Rail Delivery Group

There has been a clear emphasis on improving customer service within RDG during the past 5 years and much effort expended to look at the end-to-end experience for customers. Focus has been on customer-journey mapping to define the best practice customer experience, and analyse customer priorities at each touch-point - evident, for instance, through the "Customer Heart Beat" programme, and the work of the Customer Board.

However, for a variety of reasons, RDG has not yet developed a coherent industry information strategy, and the primary focus to date appears to be on IT systems. Some of these are software and systems developments and are doubtless very good, but RDG has confirmed that there is a significant backlog of outstanding issues which are compromising current functionality, and the outputs to customers.

Funding for improvements is contributed by members on a variable basis and allocated to improvements in an apparently piecemeal fashion. In the absence of an overarching passenger information strategy, any improvements tend to be commissioned in a less than structured manner. The "Provision of Customer Information - Approved Code of Practice" was last revised in 2016 and does not address many of the issues that are necessary to adequately deliver the information needs of passengers. The reasons for this poor situation are complex, but unsatisfactory funding arrangements, and an unwillingness to treat information provision as something that requires higher priority and much greater cross-industry standardisation, are central.

4.4.2   TOCs

The TOCs that were reviewed displayed many positive attributes. However, the "light touch" industry direction and guidance (from RDG) coupled with the degree to which passenger information has been addressed in franchise competitions and subsequent contracts, has clearly resulted in variations in approach. The nature of franchised operation also allows TOCs considerable commercial freedom in how they organise and deploy their customer facing arrangements, but each owning group will be different, and even different TOCs

inside an owning group may apply the arrangements differently. Whilst this has resulted in some clear examples of good practice, it has also led to inconsistency in terms of priorities, deployed arrangements and resources. The short-term nature of many franchise contracts has also led to the process of embedding disruption guidelines, best practice techniques and behaviours into frontline staff being cut short through a changeover of operator or management; or just curtailed due to managers being deployed onto other initiatives.

Creating a legacy of culture change in relation to the provision of information during disruption supported by processes that become ingrained ways of working, requires constancy of purpose, conviction and longevity of management. Such commodities are often in limited supply within the current franchising model.

Examples of good practice seen include:
- c2c has developed contingency plans for 'all line' section closures (e.g. no access to Fenchurch Street) which include the Passenger Guidance that will be provided. Checklists are used in the Control, (borrowing from good practice in airline and medicine) to compensate for potential limits of human memory and attention, and to help ensure consistency and completeness in deployment of passenger information.

- Greater Anglia has an impressive scheme underway to replace the Passenger Information displays on every station. This is a Committed Obligation in the Abellio Franchise Agreement and is overseen by a very positive Information Manager. It is a classic example of clear goals delivering a good organisational response, with the likelihood of equally good results

- Virgin Trains has created a strong internal focus on the management of disruption, and associated passenger information requirements, through their experienced and energetic Disruption Manager. Virgin's management team's normal way of working is to be out and about amongst customers, and this role includes direct sampling of the quality of passenger information.

- Cross Country is developing an app to improve the targeting of messages to train crew on their various service groups. This will allow Train Managers to quickly identify information which is relevant, not just to their own route and service, but also to routes and services into which passengers on their train may be connecting.

We are also aware through our extensive work in the rail industry of other good practice being undertaken – one other London-based TOC, for instance, undertakes intensive mystery shopping of the management of customer information in disruption, whilst another large TOC operating London commuter, long distance and Regional services has developed an interactive, bespoke training course for managers, supervisors and frontline staff.

Overall, however, it was clear from the reviews that whilst the TOCs reviewed were doing many of 'the basics' well, there was little incentive, and no imperative, to push the boundaries, and limited motivation to commit funds unless there was a clear business case or other financial reason to do so. Only one TOC reviewed had such an incentive, through Committed Obligations in its Franchise Award to replace all station CIS displays with modern, leading edge equipment which will be capable of giving not only accurate train service information but also advice and guidance to passengers.

4.4.3 Network Rail

NR Managed Stations are some of the most important transport interchanges in Britain and increasingly, large stations strive to be "destinations in themselves", such as Birmingham New Street's "Grand Central" retail plaza, and St Pancras International. There was considerable evidence in our reviews of robust and proactive engagement and relationships with Train Operators across the range of Managed Stations responsibilities. A particularly strong and effective bond was seen at London North Western Route, where London Euston, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly and Liverpool Lime Street are in the Managed Stations portfolio, these are key stations for two of our selected TOCs, Cross Country and Virgin Trains. At times during the review discussions, it was difficult to distinguish whether someone commenting worked for the TOC or for Network Rail, and this must be evidence of alignment and collaborative behaviour. Another good example is the TfL Rail relationship with Network Rail at Liverpool Street.

Network Rail has Customer Relationship Executives for each TOC whose role is to act as "champion" for their TOC. This is the key contractual, commercial and customer relationship point of contact by which Network Rail ensures it is serving its customers well, aligned to their particular needs. Issues such as punctuality and the relationship with each Network Rail Route are key focuses. Balanced scorecards are used to evaluate the performance of Network Rail against agreed criteria, such as PPM and Right Time, at certain key stations that are important to the TOC - for example on time arrivals for Cross Country at the major interchange of Birmingham New Street. However, passenger information is not currently a metric within these scorecards.

We were advised that the only centrally-driven specification in Managed Stations relates to security. The drive for devolution appears to have eroded consistency in other areas of delivery, and there must be concerns regarding further devolution unless the benefits of greater inter-NR and NR/TOC consistency in the approach to information delivery are both understood and grasped.

Different types of displays, wayfinding and signage at the relatively new stations in Manchester Piccadilly and Birmingham (New Street) are not what should occur in a National Rail system, however it is organised, and contrasts starkly with the uniformity and standardisation seen in airports and other branded retail establishments with a nationwide footprint. Ideally, a more uniform approach would also extend to other large stations – those not managed by NR - albeit with some infusion of the TOCs' brands. For example, there is an inconsistent approach to the deployment of Train Arrival screens – even those stations which do have them, they have been provided as an addition rather than as part of an integrated suite of information systems, and often not in places where customers would necessarily expect to find them. Of greater concern, Managed Stations tend also to be deficient in provision of the kind of display screens which allow 'free form' messages to be displayed. As a result, even the largest and busiest stations in the country are unable to adequately display the PIDD message trilogy of Problem; Impact; Advice in a consistent manner.

Where there is good practice in Network Rail, such as special event planning in LNW, and initiatives for communicating with non-English speakers at Birmingham New Street, there needs to be strong encouragement to sharing, and firm leadership on the wider adoption of such good practice. In particular, there appears to be a reticence for TOCs to draw on best practice at NR Managed Stations and use this as a blueprint for their own stations. Wider external benchmarking, both within transport and beyond, is also fairly limited and the

overall approach can be viewed as insular. This is in direct contrast to the air transport sector which faces similar (though not identical issues) and where there appears to be a culture of looking for good practices from other transport and retail undertakings.

Devolution within Network Rail may disrupt the NR HQ focus on consistency in many things, if the devolution programme were not to be planned and implemented well. Different Routes already have different ideas and approaches on these issues, and a further multiplication of Regional organisations and Route boundaries might lead to TOCs experiencing even greater levels of different treatment particularly those which cross several organisational boundaries. Crossrail operations as an example, will cross through Anglia route, GW route and TFL, and a consistent approach to information provision will become very challenging. Benchmarking and best practice sharing will become a more pressing issue as further devolution is implemented.

4.5   Customer Centric Focus

Our approach adopted a strongly customer-centric emphasis throughout the review. All our work has focused on customers' perspectives and the information, advice and outcomes that they need and expect in times of service disruption. Our assessment protocols, questioning and analysis have all been structured from the position of a customer and this has been our sole focus throughout the work. This included:

- Mystery Shopper sampling of PIDD information in real time; not merely from a "compliance" perspective but in more detail, assessing customers' emotional needs and the impact of decisions taken by the operators on these. Our reviews included walkabouts to look at and listen to the information being provided on trains and at stations;
- Bringing in a pan-sector Customer Experience Specialist who is also a high-profile media commentator on public transport customer issues - "the grit in the oyster" to ensure our team has been rigorous in applying our approach;
- Using a communications model to structure the assessment questionnaire utilised in TOC/NR meetings;
- Using five incident scenarios and six representative customer types (that were agreed with ORR), we explored how their needs are addressed, rather than just starting from the angle of the current PIDD ACOP or how the TOC/NR implement specified requirements.

4.6   Customer Types and Incident Categories

In order to test the usefulness of supplied information to customers with differing needs in a structured way, we probed a selection of the agreed incident categories and customer types at each TOC review:

- Incident categories – short notice cancellation at the beginning of the journey; train out of service mid-journey; unplanned closure of a major station; 30 min + delay to multiple services on a route; Day A for Day B amended timetable
- Customer Types – On train, business/ commuting journey; on train, leisure family, Smart phone 'connected'; on train, leisure family, not Smart phone 'connected'; at station, meeting & greeting; Intending to travel, not left home/ office; on train, with connections onto a disrupted route

To consider this matrix of needs in a systematic way, we prepared a notional description of 'what good might look like' compared with what one would typically experience today within the industry. Each of the TOC Reviews covered a sample of incidents and customer

types to test how each TOC would manage the various scenarios against customer requirements. In particular, these were used to drive conversations as to how, for example, a TOC would address the information needs of an elderly inexperienced leisure traveller whose direct train was cancelled, and who now had unplanned changes to make *en route*.

4.7   Live Monitoring - "Mystery Shopper"

Live monitoring and mystery shopper activities were a key part of the review. They enabled us to further verify and validate the findings at the reviews from a customer-centric perspective. We made extensive use of Social Media and online industry information systems, websites, and apps; both official and "open-sourced", supplemented by personal travel observations and experiences on trains and at stations.

Gaining a truly "uninformed appreciation" of the adequacy of PIDD is challenging because of the pre-existing knowledge that consultants, and indeed most commuters, have. However, we are all customers of the industry, and have identical experiences to most customers, and this is clearly reflected in the richness of the Live Monitoring and Mystery Shopper reports compiled for this project. We worked closely with a customer experience mystery shopping company (who also provided some of the reviews) and they have validated our approach and the reviews undertaken. This included guidance in advance, to ensure that our reviews were entirely objective and from a customer perspective. Our mystery shopping experiences are, we believe, a valuable illustration of the kind of situations faced by customers every day of every week and serve to highlight real issues and real challenges for the industry to tackle.

A comprehensive description of the findings from our live monitoring is provided in Section 6.

4.8   Societal Expectations

Changes in society's expectations are being driven not just by the transport sector but by Google, Uber, WhatsApp and other platforms where the user can share their position and others can see where they are (perhaps a partner at home, or a "meeter and greeter"). Such instant updating of positional information is increasingly regarded as the norm and self-service users contrast this with the comparatively poorer offerings from transport providers in terms of showing the location of services to help customers.

An example of how this affects an operator in the coach sector was seen at National Express. The integrity of their coach positional information to predict lateness and arrival times is a key challenge. Google Maps and other open platforms will not know timetable routings and tend to provide information in a simpler style, taking away from the customer much of the chore of figuring-out "what question to ask the app?" Google also can "reach into" bus, rail, metro and pedestrian journey timetables and timings and offer an integrated journey plan from door to door, again removing a sometimes complex burden from the enquirer. Explaining to customers why information on such platforms is different from their own timetabled routing information is proving difficult and can be a source of customer dissatisfaction. These comparisons apply equally to rail and during the Mystery Shopper activities we noticed how intuitive and complete the journey planning function in Google Maps was, integrating all modes seamlessly

5. OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER & COMPARATOR REVIEW MEETINGS

5.1 Transport Focus (TF)

5.1.1 Background Research
Prior to meeting TF, we read many of their published Reports on PIDD, including particularly:

- Passenger information during the 'Beast from the East' and "Storm Emma" in March 2018: Transport Focus: July 2018
- Passenger information when trains are disrupted - Research Report: Passenger Focus: May 2014
- National Rail Passenger Survey Main Report Autumn 2018

We also reviewed the NRPS (National Rail Passenger Survey) scores published by Transport Focus and downloaded the spreadsheets of questions and results which aggregate up to each of the headline metrics; we focused on the metrics underpinning:

- Provision of information about train times/platforms
- Provision of information during the journey
- How well train company deals with delays
- Usefulness of information about the delay.

5.1.2 NRPS Findings - Passenger Dissatisfaction
The Autumn 2018 NRPS results are illuminating. The biggest impact on overall dissatisfaction nationally, is how train companies dealt with delays (48%). This is, of course, a matter of concern, albeit this attribute consistently, over time, scores lower than others, largely due to the fact that customers are naturally unhappy about the fact that they are being delayed, even before they experience the delivery of information (or lack of it) regarding such disruption.

Provision of information about train times/platforms has a dissatisfaction score of only 6% and provision of information during the journey has a dissatisfaction score slightly higher at 10%. But when things go wrong it is clear that passenger dissatisfaction climbs markedly. The level of dissatisfaction with how well the train company deals with delays was 30% and the usefulness of the information about the delay scores worse at 31%.

Clearly passengers are not happy with how they are treated when delays occur and the usefulness of the information which they are provided with under current industry PIDD arrangements.

It is also evident that there is a significant variation in levels of satisfaction - for example, analysing the relevant NPRS measures of PIDD we find that "How well train company deals with delays" has a score range of between 4% and 38 % dissatisfied and for "Usefulness of information about the delay", the range of dissatisfaction across all TOCs is from 11% to 43% dissatisfied.

5.1.3 Transport Focus Discussions
The discussions with TF were held against a pre-circulated agenda aimed at understanding the TF position on 3 key points:

- The Fitness for Purpose of the current GB Mainline Rail information arrangements

- What Good Looks Like (from a TF perspective)
- Good/Best Practice (within the rail industry and externally)

TF consider that there has been progress in several areas but many of the remaining issues are quite fundamental and it is probable that the industry cannot (for whatever reasons) justify the necessary expenditure to invest in providing better information.

A key point made by TF was the poor use made of data by a very data rich industry. TF observes a reluctance to use available data, with or without predictive Information Technology, to provide more robust recovery and restoration estimates following disruption.

TF maintain the view that the widely understood passengers' and customers' requirements remain unchanged:

- Messages in plain English
- How long to resolve a problem?
- If I turn up now how will I be impacted?

Accordingly, TF considers the industry must firmly focus on:

- What people need to know (information, and crucially advice), and
- When they need it
- Delivery by channels that are accessible by passengers.

The ability of industry to meet these fundamental needs remains a TF concern. They have an emerging view that the current industry systems may not be able to process the changes to the various databases that drive customer information systems quickly enough, or in a synchronised way.

TF also described an apparent lack of true "visionaries" in the current rail industry who could see clearly the long-term needs for passengers and the route map to meeting those needs. This impacts on prioritisation and leadership of key customer service attributes, including passenger information.

The propensity of PIDD working groups, such as those sponsored by RDG, appears to be to "pile into the detail" rather than look at the Big Picture - they try to "do existing things better", rather than "do better things".

The potential benefits of using trained communication specialists to craft core messages in customer-friendly 'plan English' appears to be a missed opportunity.

Compared with other transport modes, the TF view is that Rail is actually slightly better than bus/coach and highways and, whilst information is critical at airports, the challenge for airport authorities and airlines has none of the complexity of the rail environment, largely because passengers gather in very few single places, and all airline passengers' contact details are known in advance. Nevertheless, recent (August 2018) research for the CAA amongst UK air passengers shows that most passengers (85%) were satisfied about flight status information provided at airports.

Where TOCs have direct access to customer details (email, mobile numbers) through ticket and reservations, they are already using these channels to push information, as with airlines.

However, a key problem remains that many rail passengers buy tickets through 3rd-party websites and access to their contact information is therefore difficult, as the TOC sales and 3rd Party sales teams are in competition.

In conclusion, TF consider that their data, research and reports present a clear manifesto of customer needs. The industry challenge - how they are to be addressed and fulfilled when current blockers and lack of incentivisation do not afford passenger information the priority it needs – remains unmet. In short, Transport Focus does not consider that passenger information is currently treated as an important priority in GB Mainline Rail.

5.2   Comparator: Transport for London Concessions and LUL

5.2.1   Description of Research

Discussions with Transport for London (TfL) were focused on how they manage the provision of customer information, primarily on the TfL train networks (Underground, Overground and TfL Rail). As a relatively unified, multi-mode, urban transit network we sought to identify contrasts and comparisons for reasonably direct application into GB Mainline rail.

The main measure of information provision used by TfL is Customer Satisfaction and current results are:

Normal   - 85% to 93%
During Disruption   - circa 53%

TfL cited two main reasons for the depressed results during disruption as:

- Customers do not like disruption and scores will always be depressed when things go wrong- possibly through passengers "venting."
- Staff attitudes deteriorate when things go wrong.

Consequently, TfL have undertaken significant research into staff attitudes and behaviours in other customer service environments and retailing in particular, especially as examples such as John Lewis are regarded as "light years ahead" in providing excellent customer service when things go wrong. Furthermore, it is not only high-end high street retailers who have addressed these issues well. TfL described the approach taken by a leading sandwich retailer where staff selection and recruitment is skewed heavily towards only taking people with pre-existing customer service skills, or those who through careful selection demonstrate they have the capability to acquire such skills. By setting the bar high, the retailer has chosen not to try to train people in customer service who they perceive will struggle to acquire and develop the right approach.

TfL work to a very clear "strategic imperative" issued by the London Mayor (21/06/17) that:
> '*By 2041 80% of all journeys in London must be made by Public Transport, cycling or walking*' [1]

This provides TfL with clarity of purpose and from this they have developed and documented a defined strategy for information provision that includes mapping of how information is to be provided at all points of customers' journeys, including pre-journey.

A lesson for the GB Mainline network here is that setting a clear, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) goal to lift passenger information to a higher overall level of performance, would serve to motivate and catalyse the industry. It

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[1] https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/plan-to-persuade-londoners-to-reduce-car-use

would also show leadership and direction, in contrast to the current approach which largely remains focused on ACOP compliance. Setting a stretching goal, would match the current customer expectations and would start to drive material, rather than incremental change. This is acknowledged to be a significant challenge in UK Mainline Rail, where the service offer is very diverse, and the needs of different customer segments are extremely varied. However, the need – for prompt, relevant, accurate and consistent information and advice, updated regularly – must be capable of being packaging into an appropriate strategic objective which all Operators can buy into on behalf of their customers.

TfL's defined Passenger Information needs during disruption are very similar to those in use on GB Mainline Rail and are focused on fulfilling 3 key customer information needs:

- What has happened? (explain)
- What is the likely impact? (inform)
- What do I do? (advise)

These three information needs align well with the problem/ impact/ advice needs identified in the GB Mainline Rail ACoP. The powerful underpinning imperative used by TfL, and quoted at our research meeting, to define the customers' needs is:

> *'You got me into this mess - now get me out of it'*

There is a sizeable TfL information team at HQ level dealing with Customer Satisfaction Policy and HQ oversight of actual delivery by the operating units (Tube, Bus, Overground etc.). This team, which also includes social media and customer experience design has 85 employees, of which at least a third focus on Customer information and the planning of the approach to disruption management.

The TfL information strategy appears largely aimed at IT/Web - based solutions and they justify this approach by research which suggests that approximately 98% of Londoners currently have a smart phone; this compares with reported ownership nationally of 85% in 2018.[2]

It is interesting to note that a plan to remove the well-known "Rainbow Boards" -showing "good service" or otherwise on Tube and rail lines - was reversed after obtaining customer feedback that they were well-liked and relied upon. The current TfL plan is to make them more locally relevant.

In all disruptive situations, staff are trained to tell passengers at their station useful factual information rather than generic high-level information. This allows staff to have more control of the message content, and encourages greater local ownership, and a degree of personalisation, in information dissemination.

Staff are encouraged to turn-off automated Passenger information systems announcements during disruption and make locally relevant announcements. Staff are also encouraged to make good use of Service Update Boards which often contain gentle humour and philosophy to lighten the day for commuters. However, TfL warned against "over-empowering" staff who may then *ad lib* on these whiteboards in ways that unintentionally can reverse

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[2] https://www.consultancy.uk/news/14113/uk-smartphone-penetration-continues-to-rise-to-85-of-adult-population

customer satisfaction quickly. From our experience in one of our mystery shops, however, the shift in emphasis towards providing a more local approach during disruption led to some confusion, with station announcements being made at the same time as on-train announcements (thus rendering them inaudible) and different explanations by station (and train) provided for the same disruption.

TfL are currently revising their core information training to make information provision even more localised and to upskill people to provide such information within clear boundaries of behaviour in ways that are tailored to local commuters.

TfL PIDD arrangements are NOT segmented by customer type, but they do informally differentiate between "Self-Informing" - usually regular travellers that are IT smart and others who may not be able to easily access information or are unfamiliar with London's transport system. Overseas visitors, for example will need personal help, however good the TfL graphics, maps and systems are. Training for staff in dealing with customers who are disabled or in some other way impaired is of a high standard and does cover the needs of such customers for information.

TfL ensure that all Concessions and operators who provide transport services under the TfL brand (for example, TfL Rail and Overground) follow the TfL policies and training requirements rigorously. Such operators are obliged to tender against clear specifications and contract measures, and KPIs are focused on outputs, to reward good customer satisfaction results as well as penalise non-compliance in the delivery of the customer experience proposition. An intensive audit regime, which includes mystery shopping, stringently monitors compliance and from our interactions with TOCs, this has tended to focus local managers more intently on the granularity of the service proposition and standards than their counterparts in GB Mainline Rail. This is particularly evident with the increased number of standards documents and procedures, as well as operator-led checks, self-scrutiny and audits, as well as objectives and indicators.

TfL is a publicly owned and operated transport system, but significant elements of the service delivery are provided by private operators. There are strong lessons to be learnt regarding the benefits of a clear strategic imperative, sufficient people to develop clear network-wide information provision arrangements, a relentless review process that is underpinned by comprehensive Customer Satisfaction research, and financial investment in customer service. At the same time, the intensity of TfL's contractual and Concession regime ensures that the Operator is focused only on delivery rather than revenue. This has spawned a culture that concentrates on customer service delivery, and in turn, benefits aspects such as information provision during disruption.

5.3   Comparator: Aviation

5.3.1   Description of Research

Prior to our meetings within this sector, we had undertaken background reading of a number of relevant documents relating to air passengers, consumer research, air passenger attitudes to journey disruption and CAA guidance on passenger welfare at times of major disruption at UK Airports. Details of this literature are given in section 12 of the Report.

Two meetings were held with the aviation sector – the first with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which regulates UK aviation, and has a particular regulatory focus on Heathrow and Gatwick airports. The second meeting was with Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL). The purpose of

these meetings was to understand the regulatory framework within which passenger information sits, and to understand how passenger information is managed, and improved, in a complex customer/ supplier environment where good, accurate and timely information is essential. Air travel presents challenges similar to rail, so the aim was also to draw lessons from a comparator transport sector.

5.3.2   Findings - Regulatory Activities

The CAA advised that there was a limited airport regulatory regime in place, extending only to Heathrow and Gatwick airports which, because of their monopolistic positions, are subject to formal commercial regulation by the CAA. The passenger information obligations are contained within licence conditions covering airport resilience and passenger welfare during disruption. For instance, in the case of Heathrow, CAA have in the past published their requirements with regard to Airport Licence condition D2:

"These should also include dissemination of information to passengers and a provision of a 'backstop' level of passenger welfare where the airlines are slow or unable to do so".[3]

Other UK Airports, whilst regulated for technical and safety matters are regarded as in competition with each other and are not therefore regulated commercially.

CAA Guidance Note CAP 1244[4] sets out a series of high-level principles and recommended practices to help airports check that they have the right procedures and plans in place to deal with disruption, provides guidance on planning ahead, and provides a framework which gives the best chance for passengers to receive the service they expect from both airports and airlines. This guidance was put together by the CAA and Airport Operators Association. It is not specific about how the detail of good information should be provided; rather it is a summary of principles and recommended practices. Reading CAP1244 (which is available from the CAA website) we could see that the *principles* at work are directly analogous to the GB Mainline Rail sector's goals in providing good passenger information during disruption:

- *"Develop a dedicated passenger communications plan for times of disruption that meets the following criteria: prominent information on the airport's website; uses everyday language; utilises appropriate channels (for instance social media) to reach passengers; provides consistency of information across key channels; and ensures staff have access to at least the same information as passengers with a smartphone.*
- *Consider whether airports are better placed than airlines to provide information to passengers about their rights, which can help ensure passengers get what they need (and are entitled to) during disruption."*

CAP 1244 also has some innovative thinking which could be deployed in rail, for it prompts airports and airlines to review major incidents and in particular urges them to:

- *Learn lessons from non-aviation related incidents as well as aviation-related disruptive events. 'Isomorphic learning' can be facilitated through effective corporate intelligence networks and participation in cross-industry and cross-sectoral initiatives designed to share experience and best practices.*
- *Consider how lessons can be learned from consumers' own experiences of disruption by engaging directly with them.*

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[3] Heathrow Airport Limited's economic airport licence: additional guidance for operational resilience plans required under Condition D2. Letter from the CAA dated 23 September 2014

[4] CAA: CAP 1244: Passenger welfare at times of major disruption - guidance for UK airports

We endorse this guidance as being capable of application directly to rail.

5.3.3 Passenger Information Performance

Whilst overall, research[5] shows that the total population of air passengers appear to be highly satisfied with information on flight status when travelling, for those passengers sampled who had encountered delays, the feedback about the quality and timeliness of information covers familiar issues: no reasons given, initial announcements not promptly followed up and lack of reliable estimates as to when flights would proceed. The research concluded that:

"Dissatisfaction with the handling of a flight delay or delay taking off after boarding is usually driven by a lack of official communication from the airport or airline, giving a reason for the delay or sufficient updates regarding the status of the flight".

Aviation 2050[6] sets out government proposals for ensuring that consumers have timely access to the information they need to make informed choices and to provide comprehensive and timely information when delays and cancellations occur. This DfT White Paper contrasts air travel information unfavourably with rail:

"In some respects, the sector is behind other transport industries when it comes to making data more open, and the government wants to work with the UK aviation sector to improve its offer. For example, the rail industry has opened substantial amounts of its core datasets which has led to the development of many applications that deliver benefits to passengers. Some examples include operational and performance data, real-time running information, platform numbers, delay estimates, and timetable data".

5.3.4 Findings - Roles and Responsibilities for Information

Customer expectations go well beyond the licence conditions and passengers who are disrupted focus almost entirely on the airlines and the airports for their information, even though other 3rd party sites may have been used to book flights. Similarly, passengers' expectations for information are ever-increasing.

The key responsibilities for information rest with airlines, and when delays occur the arrangements which apply are those which are EU legal requirements. In recent years, though, airports, whether regulated or not, have increasingly taken a role in provision of information. The main drivers for airports seeking to step-up to address customer information needs are varied. As with rail, the ever-increasing expectation of quality information from customers, means that they were demanding that airports provide information directly rather than being a post-office for such requests to the passenger's airline. There are some cases when airports struggle to obtain reliable information from airlines, particularly those with few flights into the UK (and therefore few or no ground staff).

As in rail, current arrangements have also been influenced by a number of major disruptive events, the Inquiries/ investigations which have been conducted as a result, and the learning which has come from these. At Heathrow, the major IT failures suffered by British Airways in 2017 and 2018 were huge disruptive events, but which are believed to have showcased the collaboration between the Airport authority and the airport's major customer at its best. Events of major disruption (such as occurred at Gatwick on Christmas Eve 2013) have also

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[5] ComRes: Civil Aviation Authority: Consumer UK Aviation Consumer Survey: August 2018

[6] DfT White Paper: "Aviation 2050 The future of UK aviation - A consultation" Cm9714 December 2018

triggered airports into taking a much more proactive role in the care of waiting passengers. Major airports also face rapidly-escalating crowding issues if major disruption occurs. A further key driver is one of business resilience and reputational image - anything more than minor delay at a major UK airport generates intense news media focus.

Passenger information obligations are based mainly on EU Regulation 261 which specifies compensation obligations to customers for disruption.

It is also in the airlines' interests to ensure that passengers receive information about disruption as far in advance as possible, in order that the intending passengers can be prevented from coming to the airport which will be busy with disrupted customers anyway. Once severe disruption sets in the key message is "not to travel to the airport and to contact your airline", if this were not deployed then Heathrow Airport would very quickly become full and have to deal with various crowding disorders and discomfort issues which would be avoided if customers wait at home. Even a small series of delays can quickly escalate. Nowadays, airlines are encouraged by airports to take pre-emptive action to reduce schedules in advance of – for instance - forecast bad weather, in order that customers can be contacted in advance to reduce pressure on airport facilities. Clearly, the fact that airlines are rendered harmless from onerous compensation obligations by the "Extraordinary Circumstances" clause in EU261 makes these decisions easy for airlines to take. (EU261 allows airlines to claim *force majeure* protection for all manner of circumstances which are, or can be claimed to be, beyond the Operators' control). Train Operators, of course, have no such protection, as Delay Repay provisions cover all delays in all circumstances, and is a clear benefit enhancement for customers over and above the provisions previously seen in the Passenger Charter.

Aside from CAP 1244 described earlier, there has been no attempt that the CAA is aware of to harness or bring together examples of good practice in passenger information during airport/ airline disruption. and therefore, there is no *detailed* exposition of 'what good looks like', nor any equivalent to the RDG ACoP on PIDD within rail. This is despite a number of Inquiries (with recommendations) in recent years into major disruption at Gatwick and Heathrow airports. While there is active sharing of good practices in operational and safety process, good customer information processes (and customer service standards in general) are viewed as a service differentiator – and therefore commercially useful to retain for competitive advantage, rather than share.

In summary, the provision of information to passengers and other customers in the passenger airline industry has no codified arrangements which are directly equivalent to the PIDD ACoP. Instead commercial and consumer pressures (reinforced by CAA Regulation at LHR and LGW) are expected to drive the provision of good information, though no examples were quoted, or good practice cited. In general, the arrangements appear less advanced than in rail, despite the *prima facie* parallels of operation in a highly-timetabled, regulated environment, with close control over aircraft position at all times, but which benefit significantly from the 'single site of deployment' – the airport itself.

5.3.5   Findings - Learning from Heathrow Airport Practices

Much of our discussions centred around the nature of the collaborative relationships at Heathrow. Whilst these were admitted as being "not perfect", there was a strong sense that all the players, big and small at the Airport, had a keen – and shared – understanding of the capacity constraints, and the impact that even minor disruption can have on current operations. This appears to have created a relatively mature approach to managing

disruption, with a more "we're in this together" attitude prevailing and rather less of the 'contractual stand-off' instances which tend to be seen in the rail industry – reinforced by the structured deployment of HAL staff during disruption, as noted below.

As a result, the framework within which the various obligations and responsibilities are set is 'light touch' in contractual and regulatory terms, in contrast to rail, especially in the relationship between TOCs and NR. HAL reps suggested there was no significant difference between the behaviours and attitudes of the major players, such as BA, and those with a much lesser interest (of which there are several airlines which operate only a handful of flights each week). However, the smaller airlines had many fewer or even no regular staff at LHR so that when their flights were disrupted, they had to rely on their ground handling agents or on HAL staff.

The means by which information about flight arrivals and departures reaches the main flight 'line up' screens in the Airport was discussed. At Heathrow there is no one source of information and that the screens display information from a number of sources, some of which is automated, including much of the flight arrivals information. A great deal of the information which appears on these screens is also a bi-product of the operational planning system which allocates a stand for each departure and provides the basic information for all the supply-side activity involved in preparing each planned departure. HAL allocates stands in Terminals 2, 3, and 4, BA undertake the role in Terminal 5.

A feature of customer care at Heathrow that has great merit is the expectation that back office airport staff will deploy during disruption to supplement and help the front-of-house personnel. Staff receive appropriate training and refreshers to ensure they are competent and capable for these roles and can discharge the responsibilities professionally. Even when not on standby, there is a willingness (and an expectation) to volunteer to help in this regard, even if it is just low-level help to waiting passengers (for example, handing out bottles of water or going to a particular gate or departure area to get an accurate picture of events and reporting back.

As far as possible, HAL undertakes joint training with airline staff. HAL is also very keen to ensure that staff remain fresh in their roles – whatever they do – and endeavours to arrange job swaps for front line and back office staff, to provide opportunity for different experiences. This also helps to avoid staff becoming set in their ways, or out of touch. As a result, HAL has a significant number of personnel who are 'customer comms' trained, experienced and competent, and can help populate the 'tactical' level of the communications command structure which is implemented when significant disruption occurs. HAL has also found (not surprisingly) that using trained and experienced personnel in these 'Here to Help' roles tends to improve the quality of advice to customers, and encourages more realistic responses, without the 'optimism bias' that is often seen with less experienced personnel.

Deployment of staff in these ways not only assists with information provision and re-assurance to customers but it also reinforces a customer ethos throughout the organisation. The expectation/willingness to help at times when help is most needed has engendered a strong customer-centric culture.

Deployment of passenger information from the Heathrow Airport Control has several features that have transferrable lessons for rail: HAL has a Control Centre on site which is integrated with the emergency services, key airlines and others including their own

information teams. This approach ensures that decisions in delay situations are taken with regards to the impacts on the whole airport and neighbours, and are capable of being turned into information for customers more quickly than if multiple phone calls to other dispersed controls/offices had to take place.

HAL Information management in major disruptive events is structured in a Gold/Silver/Bronze format:

- Gold: Strategic Business Decisions and "information upwards" (for example, to Government, DFT, CAA etc.)
- Silver: co-ordinating of the messages and information across the site and across the airlines
- Bronze: Delivery of the information to staff, press, passengers (split into these groupings)

The staff are trained in how to craft messages to each of these different audiences to provide meaning, clarity and facts, and do so using language and terms which will be understood clearly. Aviation jargon - useful for clarity in operational discussions is avoided when communicating to customers.

Press officers who are professional journalists (trained and skilled at quickly writing clear, high-impact, jargon-free messages), also help with the crafting of the key messages to ensure they are understandable and useful to passengers. This can lead to potentially negative messages being turned into positive ones. These press officers also back-up each communications channel. The thought, planning and co-ordination that has been developed within the HAL communications arrangements ensures a clear single version of the truth.

The accuracy and timeliness of displayed information is not routinely or formally audited by HAL. The airlines have the primary responsibility for informing and advising their customers, and are expected to do so. Where HAL does take an intrusive interest is in the timeliness of contingent decision making – all the experience at Heathrow suggests that early planning, and early decisions when disruption is likely, leads to the best (least bad) passenger outcomes. In some cases, HAL has had to "compel" airlines to take tough decisions to create schedule firebreaks rather than trying to continue to run the full flight timetable despite ever-increasing reactionary delay - HAL effectively "pulls the realism in". This is analogous to NR stepping in to ensure service recovery.

Through the course of our other work in the industry, which has included engagement with other airports, it is evident that competition between airports has intensified and is a key driver of focus on the customer experience and in particular, customer information during disruption. With airports competing for customers over a wide geography, customer service is a real differentiator which has motivated hearts and minds. Focus on development and retention of brand image and loyalty is an important part of customer service, particularly where customers have choices. To an extent this motivates providers to recognise the key drivers of customer satisfaction in order to retain confidence in their brand. TOCs could do more (some already do) to explore what drives high customer advocacy and we believe that great passenger information will be an integral element of this.

5.3.6   Summary

- Regulation is 'light touch' and is based upon advice and guidance to the airport operator, rather than imposition. The principal focus is ensuing passenger's rights to compensation are adhered to.
- Many of the triggers of dissatisfaction that airline customers face when things are disrupted mirror those found in rail and the two sectors have a clear opportunity to learn from each other.
- The relationship between airport and airlines is very collaborative, and more consensual than tends to be the case in rail. Other than the obvious shared requirement to avoid or minimise disruption to customers, it is not entirely clear why collaboration between organisations with very different commercial imperatives and drivers works so well here.
- Airports have taken a greater role in the provision of information to customers as it has become clearly in their interests to do so (from a corporate reputation perspective, from the viewpoint of keeping passengers happier while at the airport, and retaining their competitive position above other airports serving the same or similar markets), even though the airlines have the prime responsibility for passenger information.
- The deployment of all HAL staff for a period each year in front line positions is a powerful commitment to engaging the whole organisation in the ethos of customer service and customer experience and the expectation/willingness to help at other times has engendered a strong customer-centric culture
- The training of staff in precise communications, tailored to different audiences, and the deployment arrangements within HAL Control to focus on real-time information, appear to be good practices from which rail could learn.

5.4   Comparator: National Express Coach and Bus

5.4.1   Description of Research

Prior to our meetings within this sector we had undertaken background reading of a number of relevant documents which are referenced in Section 12.

We held two meetings with National Express in Birmingham, (their headquarters); one focused on coach operations and one on bus. These meetings were structured around an agenda designed to tease out the key transferable lessons from Coach and Bus that could be applied to rail.

National Express's long-distance Coach operations are commercial services and are not subject to regulation. Bus operations tend to be focused around Urban or Rural essential transport needs, often for short distance travel and often subject to frequencies, routes and services specified by the local authorities who provide grant or other financial support. In the case of National Express' bus services, these are based in the West Midlands and Dundee, with the majority being operated at revenue risk to them, rather than on a tendered basis. In the case of the West Midlands, National Express operate the largest bus company in the UK and have traditionally achieved the best revenue performance in the sector, partly due to the volume of customers and a legacy of management recognising the correlation between high levels of focus on customer service, patronage and revenue growth.

The results of our meetings are presented here in combined form, except where it is necessary to point out distinct differences.

5.4.2　General

The discussions with the coach and bus operational management of National Express also revealed some new perspectives on passenger information and point to some areas from which rail could learn. National Express view information as a key customer need, across all customer touch-points, including at the point of sale. The difficulty of accessing the right information is a key issue for customers.

National Express' view is that the delivery of information during disruption was generally good and not a cause of high disquiet (road congestion and driver attitude were the key complaints). In the Bus Division, in contrast to the Coach Division, the success in providing information was not necessarily because of a high degree of structure and governance, more due to "everyone rallying round and instinctively knowing what to do".

Having the Customer Experience element in one single line management function (reporting to the Bus and Coach MDs respectively), suggested a joined-up approach to assessing incidents affecting customer satisfaction in both bus and coach divisions and responding to customers in a coherent manner, rather than on a disjointed basis.

It is also fair to say that the road transport sector is a relatively straightforward one within which to operate, compared to the regulated and complex air and rail networks. Passengers who are car drivers or passengers are also slightly more likely to empathise with bus and coach delays caused by roadworks or traffic congestion, as they can relate to these obvious causes of disruption readily.

5.4.3　Accessing Customers' Needs

The Coach business has a significant grasp on who exactly is on each coach as the majority (around 75%) of customers provide email and some, their phone number when booking. Pushing personalised journey information to customers via email and text, available on their Smartphones is easy. They conceded that it is much more difficult to get information to customers who have entered the National Express system through anonymous points of entry (3rd party bookings or walk-up). For these, customers rely on announcements, and broadcast-type channels such as display screens and websites.

There was an interesting discussion around key customer "wants" when things are disrupted. One simple message from National Express customers is the plea: *"If you had told me earlier then I could have made arrangements",* typically from customers who were being met at destination, or who needed to re-arrange activities at destination. The view at National Express is that transport providers need to think about their networks not as a series of coaches (or trains); rather they should think about where customers are going, why and what they will do when they get there, when formulating messages and information.

While some may perceive that the National Express business model seeks to compete (with rail and private car, mainly) on price, the company is determined to grow customer loyalty, reduce complaints, and not just compete on price/route choices. Loyalty is driven by how people feel about the overall experience, rather than factors like punctuality and coach cleanliness, which are perceived to be just hygiene factors. This has driven more intense focus in recent years on the strength of the brand by different coach companies, and brand positioning, as well as investment in the on-board experience. Maintaining brand integrity, through a more meticulous management of customer service standards has also been evident as the market has become more competitive, with relatively new entrants such as Megabus, and more recently from Snap.

5.4.4   National Express Bus - Birmingham

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) have taken a more prescriptive role in the provision of bus services and although this is not a quality contracts arrangement, there is a high degree of mutual collaboration for the delivery of the customer experience and the relationship is very good. An increasing number of buses are not branded by the operator, but on a regional basis as specified by WMCA. National Express has around 90% of the market share for bus in the West Midlands. WMCA and National Express bus are seeking to collaborate to pursue joint initiatives to drive improvements, including possibly looking at funding for schemes, ranging from mystery shopping through to bus priority, to measure and also improve performance (and reliability). There is a good relationship between WMCA and National Express with commonality of purpose and shared vision in terms of driving customer satisfaction. Unlike in some other regions of the country, the operator does not regard the local authority as negatively encroaching on decision-making or suppressing creativity.

5.4.5   Control and Management

National Express's Coach National Control is staffed with a Customer Response Team 07:00-22:00, 7 days/week. They have access to most customer contact information and, via a system called U-Track, can see where coaches are late or will miss connections in order to push information direct to customers. They have the capability to identify individually impacted customers by name, for example those who are likely to miss the connection at the next interchange.   The Control can also arrange refreshments/token gestures (teas/coffees) by bulk-buying ahead at next stops and can re-arrange connections to minimise disruption to those affected. This response team try to act proactively. Coaches are tracked by GPS so have very good positional information.

They have incident management plans in Control for typical scenarios and these include information management. The aim is to empower and focus – when things go wrong - on:

- Compensatory service (e.g. free refreshments)
- Meeting passengers in advance (e.g. those who have connections) and assist them
- Helping those with particular needs (e.g. retrieve medicines from the hold).

There is no equivalent to the PIDD ACoP or TOC Local Plan, albeit for major incidents there is a "Gold Control" type structure but this is more around restoring service continuity and safety, rather than specifically customer information.

The key elements of Bus Control and Information in the National Express Bus operations in the West Midlands area are focused around WMCA's Control Room in Summer Lane, which monitors CCTV and takes action, predominantly in relation to security and anti-social behaviour issues but also to look at mounting congestion or incidents.

WMCA is expanding its Control Centre later this year to increase CCTV coverage. It felt that their staff could perhaps be more pro-active in identifying issues that might affect service performance and require at the earliest stage the provision of information (relayed to the National Express Operations Control for them to then relay to customers).

National Express' Operations Control at Bordesley Green in Birmingham oversees the Coach services. It receives information, insight and observations from drivers around congestion and also service issues, and then disseminates this to other drivers, bus stations and also the Customer Contact Centre which is at Digbeth Coach Station

The Twitter feed is staffed up to 22:00 and this can mean a vacuum when disruption occurs beyond this time and before 07:00, particularly as from Thursdays to Saturdays inclusive, services are busy due to the strong night-time economy. From our experience elsewhere in the bus sector, this is a common issue for operators, with most social media feeds constrained even to office hours only. There will often be little or no provision of service updates outside of these hours.

5.4.6   Information at Coach Stations

As with mainline rail stations, coach stations will generally use PA and CIS screens to advise people of delays. Equipment and facilities at coach stations vary. Where National Express trade with others for access to their coach stations, it is normal to have to compromise their approach to customers to fit with that station operator, and work within their parameters, and the level of facilities which happen to exist. This can sometimes frustrate what they are trying to do. National Express audit and check on service quality (including information) at coach stations operated by others and there is a penalty/reward mechanism; but the level of facilities varies between those found at Digbeth or Victoria, to fairly basic facilities such as are found at municipal bus stations.

Staff at coach terminals should also go and talk to waiting customers proactively - for example those observed staring at the screens.

5.4.7   Information at Bus Stations, Bus Stops and on Line of Route

The provision of information during disruption is generally locally specific as the expansive nature of the network means that on one particular route or area, a delay might be relevant to a small location but be completely irrelevant to the rest of the route or network. Customers are very localised in their interest and network-wide information is often irrelevant. As such, there are very rarely "control room" blanket messages, more usually phone calls to the individual bus stations or radio messages between specific staff. This was supported by discussions that we had with Bus Station staff.

The WMCA bus station teams were described as well focused on customer needs; however, they do not have objectives aligned to the provision of customer information and reviews of disruption management are sketchy. This would appear to be the case for National Express too.

A culture prevails of everyone observing delays where they are materialising and sharing information to help each other, rather than following a structured protocol or governance structure. The individual bus station staff have radios and they can contact individual drivers if required. The key tends to be for drivers to contact Operations Control and Operations Control notifying the Bus Stations whose supervisors will then walk up and down and advise customers, as well as talk to drivers when they alight from buses and for those starting their service. There is the capability to make announcements at bus stations, though this is rarely used.

Almost all bus stations in the WMCA area have Travel Shops open during office hours and these are staffed by National Express. There is a high level of customer focus from these, and they can be the conduit for information during disruption. The relationship between the West Midlands Combined Authority management and supervisors and the Travel Shops is positive and there is a continuous flow of information and mutual support. Most bus stations are not staffed after 19:00. Depot Allocators and Supervisors will brief drivers of delays when they book on for duty.

Around 40% of the network has electronic real time information at bus stops. The screens do not have the facility to provide apologies or explanations for disruptions and would just show delays in terms of the minutes to the next service. They cannot provide alternative advice.

On several key corridors, the service, whilst branded as a West Midlands route, could be operated by two competitors (e.g. National Express and Rotala). Where, for instance, Rotala's own Operations Control and information arrangements might not be as well-resourced as National Express', this could lead to inconsistency in the customer experience over the same timetabled and branded route. This tends to be mitigated by staff on the ground at the bus stations communicating information to all customers, irrespective as to whose service they are travelling on.

5.4.8   Information On-board Coaches
Provision of information directly on-board coaches is limited. The Control Centre can call coach drivers; however, drivers are not allowed to take calls or make announcements while driving due to risk of distraction. This means that pushing information to those on board via text and email is the main means of provision. Drivers can only make such interventions when stationary, for example at comfort stops or coach stations.

5.4.9   Information On-board Buses
There is an increasing focus on the quality of customer service provided by drivers. Training around customer information provision is provided, though not a specific course – more so through briefings, induction and refresher training. Drivers are encouraged to provide information when services are delayed or there is congestion or short notice changes (such as turning services round short of their destination). This is a big cultural challenge, though gradual progress is being made as reflected by the continued climb in Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey (BPS) scores. National Express has an intrusive, online tool to identify and capture (through CCTV) in real time any event affecting drivers' performance from a safety/driving standards perspective and to monitor individual performance. This was claimed to have driven a reduction in incidents but also brought about improvements in professionalism, which has also had a knock-on positive impact around other aspects of their job, including customer service and information provision.

New buses, invariably on the high-volume "Platinum Routes", have CIS displays and these specify destinations and can be used to provide information regarding service alterations (but they need to be pre-programmed, so more "planned", rather than "short notice" changes). Bus stops appear to be well maintained, by WMCA, in comparison with other regions.

5.4.10   Frontline Staff Culture and Behaviours
Successfully addressing cultural barriers holds the key to providing better information for customers. Drivers are a challenge as they are the face of the company's brand, and quality can be hindered by the difficulties in recruiting and retention, due to low salaries in the bus sector - the downturn in revenue across the industry due to societal changes creates a vicious circle. Traditionally, recruitment has tended to be focused on drivers' technical skills, rather than customer service.

In the coach industry, we were advised that drivers are renowned for being "old school, lonely people", attracted to the sector because of the long distances, few stops, and limited need to interact with customers. They are often not instinctively adept at engaging with

customers and passing on information to passengers is a challenge. The equivalent role in 'private charter' coach operators engenders a different set of behaviours (the driver often has his/her own coach, takes care of it, and is expected to focus more on customers, not just have technical/driving skills). The smaller size of such charter business tends to ensure that a greater value is placed across the organisation on retaining customers and growing patronage through word of mouth advocacy.

National Express is implementing a culture change programme called the "NX Way" to effect changes amongst staff who face the customer. This is aimed at empowering and upskilling staff to stimulate the behaviours and confidence to do the right thing. This programme focuses on six behaviours:
1. Welcoming
2. Sincerity
3. Involved
4. Proactive
5. Knowledgeable
6. Considerate

National Express is also using the Facebook Workplace function[7] to share information on skills and customer experiences, good news stories to promote teamwork and wider context of the business, its customers and how they can be helped.

5.4.11 Measuring Quality and using to Drive Improvement
National Express runs a Customer Experience Working Group which uses data, customer feedback and sampling techniques to review progress and trigger improvements. Customers are encouraged to text feedback on their travel experiences.

Managers from the top two tiers are encouraged to walk about, and this often enables local managers to raise issues which although tactical to their routes or coach stations, are actually indicative of wider systemic issues (such as poor quality information). This has helped local managers to get apparently local intractable problems solved as they were not confined to one locality, but it takes top-level oversight to expose the wider issues.

In addition to audits and management walkabout, National Express also undertake some mystery shopper activities, but felt these had become overloaded with too many aspects to check and were looking to re-tune them to be representative of customers' emotions as part of the end-to-end experience that they receive, rather than purely a compliance type "inspection".

Information relating to customer service delivery and customer insight is shared with local managers together with suggestions for improvement. Key areas of focus currently are:
- Punctuality
- Driver relationship with passengers
- Boarding process
- Functionality
- Ease
- Emotion - this is the area with the biggest impact on improving satisfaction with the travel experience.

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[7] https://en-gb.facebook.com/workplace/about?path=about

We explored the issue of "emotion" further, because it is clear there are analogies with rail. During periods of disruption passengers become frustrated and annoyed, quickly destroying their positive perceptions of their journey. Addressing customers' information needs promptly and in ways that anticipate and meet their overall journey requirements on an individually tailored basis can go a long way to defusing this frustration and restoring positive customer perceptions. This message is commonly understood by the representatives that we met across both bus and coach, and is a theme to emerge in the various research they have each undertaken.

5.4.12 Key Learning Points

- There is commonality of customer expectations across bus, coach and rail. The needs of coach customers are analogous to those of longer-distance rail customers, whilst a bus customer's needs mirror more accurately those of short distance rail commuters.

- A key customer priority when disruption occurs is the plea: "If you had told me earlier then I could have made arrangements". This typically relates to the need to change plans involving them being met at the end of their journey, or for activities planned when arriving at their destination. Transport companies need to think about where customers are going, why and what they will do when they get there, when formulating their passenger information, rather than confining their thinking just to the time in which they are on their network. Focusing on how the customer's journey relates to their wider needs, transcending the trip itself, will create a more emotionally intelligent, attentive and responsive approach, of which pastoral care will be the key priority and an experience that is genuinely customer-centric.

- National Express views the provision of good information not as a chore, or a corrective action, but as an opportunity to build loyalty and this is a key perspective that underpins their Strategy and derivative action plans and behaviours. To an extent, this is borne by a realisation that they operate in an increasingly competitive coach sector but also by the opportunity to abstract revenue from a rail industry that is currently experiencing a downturn in customer satisfaction. Where there is, in particular, disaffection with value for money, this is an area where coach operators are most capable of exploiting.

- Relationships with sponsoring authorities (analogous, say, to TfW or Transport Scotland) are close and tailored closely to what the authority wants, with the operator concentrating on the best way to address their requirements.

- Ensuring that staff are empowered and with the right skills, confidence and demonstrating values and behaviours that reflect a prevailing customer-centric culture is key.

6. MYSTERY SHOPPER FINDINGS

6.1 Approach

We undertook a total of 21 Mystery Shopper samplings of PIDD information in real time as customers, as part of our research work. These sampled the provision of information for passengers during January, February and March 2019. Our approach was predicated on the fact that disruption had, or was about to occur, and we were mainly interested in how well passenger information was handled.

Each mystery shopper was asked to focus on at least one of the TOCs who participated in the Review. They were asked to adopt the perspectives of different customer types not just take their own viewpoint. Some of the mystery shoppers were heavy users of technology whilst others relied on traditional information channels. There were also a number of "wildcard"

Mystery Shopper activities undertaken as information during disruption unfolded - these provide different perspectives.

Mystery shoppers were requested to provide observations (both good and bad) and suggest ways in which PIDD could be improved, crucially not just about tactical issues they encountered but also about systemic issues that should be addressed. Mystery shoppers were allowed freedom at look at station and train information systems and displays, train and station announcements, websites and App information. In some cases, mystery shoppers endeavoured to buy tickets for known disrupted journeys to test whether the systems flagged the problem and gave suitable advice and information.

We reiterate that this specifically included examples of good PIDD practices capable of wider development and replication elsewhere. The findings from this sampling were used concurrently in our assessment work, to bring further customer perspectives to bear, for example we discussed several of these mystery shopper experiences in our direct discussions with TOCs and Network Rail. The salient observations from these Mystery Shopper activities are reported below.

6.2   Key Findings

Our key findings are summarised below, grouped into a series of topics, though each of the events we experienced as mystery shoppers contained a range of issues. We believe this is a key learning point in itself - there is no 'silver bullet' to obtain good information to customers. Each passenger has individual priorities for their journey, uses different sources of information and in many cases will compare and "triangulate" information from these different sources to reach conclusions when trains are delayed. So, consistency of messaging across all channels is important. Equally at times of disruption there should not be over – reliance placed on any one channel (for example Twitter) at the expense of others (such as information support to front line staff). The availability of staff is highly valued by customers, and the increasing automation of customer information processes must not be to the detriment of personalised interaction.

6.3   Good information provision

We encountered many staff who clearly understand the need for personal, direct contact with passengers and the need to be empathetic, patient and understanding when providing information if things go wrong. Similarly, we witnessed many railway staff whose approach to announcements and in providing information was professional, helpful and personalised. We met Train Managers who made announcements that were prompt, clear and jargon-free and then supported this by walking through the train to address any particular passenger needs.

Staff at stations were, on several occasions, proactively trying to do their best to provide alternative travel advice to customers whose train was cancelled and doing so professionally and in a personable way. Increasingly, train companies seem to encourage their traincrew to be out and about on terminus concourses when waiting for their next train working. This provides a visible person who passengers can ask for advice and information, and this seems to have become ingrained as an expected behaviour at a number of TOCs. This is something that all TOCS could adopt readily.

On one occasion, we even observed passengers empathising with a Train Manager about the disruption and his sterling efforts to obtain and provide information on a busy train. From anecdotal conversations and insight supplied to operators, customers are critical of staff

who do not measure up to these standards of excellence, but they also appreciate staff who try to help. There is a correlation over time between operators that score well on overall customer satisfaction and those with good results for staff "attitude and helpfulness" attributes and in turn patronage and revenue growth, thus supporting the view that pro-active and attentive staff help build brand loyalty and customer advocacy. Such care and attention to passenger information needs is commendable.

Recruiting, training and motivating good people to provide great customer service, who are then able to address information needs – particularly during disruption - is a key challenge.

6.4   The Importance of Staff

However effective and clear the various communications channels are at obtaining accurate helpful information and advice to passengers, customer insight gleaned by Train Operators and Transport Focus continually illustrates that a key passenger "want" underpins all requirements - the ability to talk to staff and receive tailored information. This is particularly true for less-experienced or less-confident customers or those on complex journeys. Quite often, passengers will ask other passengers to confirm what was just announced or what a message means. One of our mystery shoppers was approached by a passenger to check whether the announcements were "really true" and confessed that she did not believe the information displays either and preferred to talk to people.

We encountered some efforts at announcements that were apologetic, yet had a cold and impersonal tone, giving little detail regarding how late a train was. On a busy but short-formed commuter train, one might expect some mindfulness and empathy from staff in announcements about the crowding?

Station information points on large concourses conceptually seem a good idea but during serious disruption to peak services, we observed the full range of behaviours from the three staff at one of these in a major London terminus. One person was handing out useful advice walking up to customers outside of the booth, one other was re-stocking leaflets and a third was sitting staring at a screen looking pretty unapproachable. Passenger information staff should step out from behind desks and booths in times of significant disruption provided that judgement is used, a single person may become swamped and this slows down their ability to give information compared to serving an orderly queue of people and ensuring that information systems are backing up their activities. In serious disruption these help desks are supposed to be supported by other back-office personnel who can help support by floor-walking.

Station automated announcements have improved in tone and fidelity over the years and when trains are running to time are a good source of advice on the platform to use, the trains' approach and such like. When serious disruption occurs, there seems to be a point where these systems can no longer cope. The tipping point often coincides with the threshold of despair of passengers and their need for accurate information means that the best plan is to switch off the automated systems and make personal announcements instead. There is a clear and long-standing recommendation within the industry's PIDD action plan to this effect, alongside guidance as to where automated apology announcements should, and should not be used.

On trains which have the benefit of an on-board Conductor or Train Manager, there is the opportunity not only to make announcements tailored to that service, but the staff members should, when possible support the use of public address announcements by

walking through the train and personally dealing with customers' questions. On crowded trains or where operational duties are occupying time, this may not always be possible of course. We saw examples where this happened, and we saw instances where it did not. In one instance, we witnessed a member of staff making an announcement asking customers to look for fellow customers with headphones on and to inform them of the information being provided as it was likely they could not hear the announcement. It is also important (where the train technology has the capability) to link the audio announcements with the visual information displays so that passengers can read as well as listen. These do, of course have to present consistent information as variations in message content will make passengers disbelieve both sources.

Alongside our mystery shops, we also witnessed several instances during normal service of frontline employees being engrossed on their electronic tablets, either reading related information or non-company websites. Whilst the provision of devices for staff is a tangible step forward, it can create an impression of being distracted, engrossed looking at their screens, rather than anticipating customer needs and interacting with them. This is a key finding from mystery shopping programmes overseen by the customer service specialist that we engaged to support us with this assignment.

If staff are to answer passenger questions correctly or provide information and advice that is helpful, they must be properly equipped to do so. This means not only people with the right interpersonal skills and customer ethos, it also means that they are out there, visible, noticeable and prominent on stations and walking through trains. It also means they are equipped with fast, accurate information feeds that they can quickly understand (ideally with the minimum of jargon to avoid the staff member having to become an impromptu "jargon-buster") and use to explain and advise the passengers they are caring for. In some cases, we found that operational staff had no better access to accurate information than the passengers - including our mystery shoppers- who they were trying to assist. This is a common source of disaffection amongst frontline staff who recognise that their credibility is undermined in such situations. This is not the case everywhere, for some TOCs have gone further than others in equipping their front-line staff with personal devices to access real-time information.

6.5   Use of Jargon, Technical or Confusing Terms

Across the industry, there has been a legacy of some locations and regions using obscure railway terminology and jargon, rather than talking in simple customer-centric language. Whilst there has been some improvement, substantial work is still required. However, we did hear one passenger say that they thought information was produced "*by railway people for railway people*" thus underlining the opportunity for improvement. This is not just a question of coaching and training individuals. The production of style guides and a focus on core messaging from Network Rail and TOC Controls when disruption occurs are important if people are to have the confidence and correct vocabulary to explain things to customers in plain English.

A few moments extra care to draft messages in simple, clear language and cleanse them of operational jargon would have made a serious delay we encountered so much better. Amongst the jargon we heard were the terms "platform clearance" which was actually about a train ahead being slow to leave the platform to enable the mystery shopper's train to proceed, but this could have been explained in a simplified way.

Jargon persists on websites also; we saw: "*Train Company have requested buses*", (this frankly looks like cut and paste from another internal source): instead why not say: "*buses will be provided leaving from the front of each station to take you between these stations….*" Instead of: "*residual delays while the service recovers*" say: "*there will be some minor delays until things get back to normal*".

But it was also clear in the same disruptive event that some good efforts were made here with simple, clear language. Most people will know what a "*broken down train*" is, and not the usual: "*failed train*". It was pleasing to see that passengers can "*use their ticket*" rather than "*ticket restrictions are lifted*" or "*ticket acceptance arrangements*" or occasionally "*tickets are available*". The last of these is unnecessary, of course tickets are available, why buy another?   Lack of information regarding whether a ticket can be used by a different route undoubtedly causes some customers to just sit and wait, or abort their journey, or – worst of all – pay again.

6.6   Professional Communication Skills

The quality of visual and audible information messages exhibits a wide and variable range of quality, and even within a single incident the composition of the message can vary. At its very best we saw, for example, professionally produced bulletins, posters and leaflets about engineering work and heard announcements that were clear and articulate. However, this is not yet universal.   We believe more could be done to recruit and deploy professional information and communications specialists to help craft messages and to train Control, Communications and front-line staff. Most TOCs use design agencies and brand experts to produce their marketing and customer publicity literature, though stop short of using them for planned and/or short-notice service changes, thus creating a two-tiered experience in terms of information to customers and one which potentially dilutes brand integrity.

It is also clear that many front-line staff do understand the importance of good communication skills as a key job-competency. Some we met were proud of the fact they could speak a second language and were pleased to help overseas visitors who appreciate help if they do not comprehend English. Those who did not speak other languages showed us how modern apps can also help in this area and gave examples of appreciative customer feedback.

6.7   Opportunities

Where there is positive news to relay during disruption - for example an incident has been resolved on time or even (as we saw in one case) ahead of time, this is on balance a good thing and should be highlighted to customers. Most passengers will feel relieved that a predicted delay has been mitigated. Staff might take the opportunity to be slightly upbeat about relaying such good news in announcements and information displays, providing a more favourable message. This need not be verbose, but prefacing the information with a simple: "*We are pleased to say that…*" or potentially drawing to customers' attention when time has been partially or fully made up.

6.8   Own Goals

Too frequently, we experienced "own goals" where a little more care and thought about the provision of information would have turned a disruptive incident into an example of good customer care.

Where potential delays are known in advance (but the train is currently on time), it is frustrating that, in some cases, this was not announced at the station before boarding to

give passengers the option not to travel. This is particularly annoying when the train is then running non-stop to its destination. A moment's thought to inform customers so they can decide whether to travel or make alternative arrangements for the rest of the day would help.

An announcement heard on a train about an initial delay was timely and had good content, including reassurance that the delay would be minimal. This created expectations that were then not fulfilled and thus heightened anxiety when a further delay occurred. This was a difficult judgement to make for the staff member but one which, unfortunately, damaged trust in the further announcements, particularly as it was on a train full of anxious football supporters travelling to a match. Their train sat between stops either side serving the stadium (with them frustrated that, had they known there would be a delay, they would have disembarked at the previous station). Once again, the member of staff could have had a heightened awareness of the particular needs and emotions of the predominant group of customers on the train.

The opportunity to purchase food and drink for a long journey exists at many stations. A similar "own goal" experience was where one mystery shopper boarded a train that was delayed after waiting at a major station, only to find there was no catering on board, and this was announced *after* the train departed.

A further example was of connectional trains held to provide cross-platform interchange because of late running earlier in the journey. This cross-platform connection was not announced by the Train Manager, whose announcements earlier in the journey had been clear, helpful and informative. He either didn't know the connection was to be held or didn't feel sufficiently confident about it to let passengers know. While this was an example of excellent real-time re-planning by the Control to help passengers, the connectional opportunities created were not fully exploited for the benefit of those delayed on their journey by not ensuring the full information reached that Train Manager, who could then rely upon it. A touch more focus would have seen this delay turned into an example of excellence.

We saw more than one example of the use of whiteboards at stations to supplement information provision that is provided via systems. The visual quality of such whiteboards needs to be of a high standard. Neat, clear handwriting and understandable messages, perhaps with a touch of gentle humour are helpful and eye-catching to passengers and can become a regular touch point to keep customers updated. Scruffy whiteboards in indecipherable writing just detract, and are a clear sign of local empowerment gone wrong. We saw more of the latter than the former, yet London Underground appear to be able to get this right at several hundred stations. We examined some research[8] that TfL had undertaken on the pros and cons of this medium of communication and this 31-page report (available free on-line) provides comprehensive guidance on exactly how best to use whiteboards and explains how to maximise the value of them through the eyes of the customer.

6.9   Websites and Ease of Use

Of all the websites available, the National Rail Enquiries (NRE) website is probably the most reliable and functional; yet it has significant room for improvement. It is not always clear what the differences in information availability and meaning are between: "Latest travel

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[8] "TfL Whiteboard Posters" October 2015 Final Debrief

news", "National service indicator", "Journey Planner" and "Live Departure Boards" and there is a case to be made for having one uniform title to encompass all of these. In more than one mystery shopper assessment we had to use several or all of these options and then reconcile the different information provided to figure out exactly what was happening. Rail staff, regular and curious customers might enjoy the intellectual fascination of such an approach, but it certainly does not work for the majority. Passengers should not have to reconcile differing inputs to arrive at information and facts. It ought to be possible to re-arrange various options on the home page of the website to make it more intuitive - for example offering "click here" targets for such options as:

• I want to plan a journey
• I want to check my journey
• I want to buy a ticket
• I want to know if my train is running on time today
• I want to know if the Underground line has a good service
• I want to know if my onward National Rail connection is running
• I want to know if my bus or coach connection is running

This should then take people to the correct part of the website where the relevant options and information would be available to them and from where they can then find their information.

Some TOC websites and Apps we used had obviously wrong information on them that had been left behind by the rapidly changing operational reality which our mystery shopper could see on the platform and on his train. Credibility is lost and that channel will probably not be used again. Websites need to be easier for all types of users to navigate, reflecting the chronology of the customer journey experience and decision making. A button that says, 'find out the impact on me', or something similar is intuitive and could lead the user through some menu driven questions to obtain tailored information (such as a choice of whether they are waiting to travel, at home, at station, on train, or waiting to meet someone).

Too often the TOC apps, and certainly the websites and apps of 3rd party suppliers, focus on ticket sales rather than getting information on the move, perhaps giving an idea of both TOC priorities and commercial imperatives.

6.10 Inconsistency Across Different Sources

There would appear to be numerous challenges and issues regarding the consistency and accuracy of information about the same incident or event across the various websites apps and the railway's own CIS and PIS systems. Quite often information does not get shown sufficiently quickly to reach those who need it (even if, like the reviewers, they know where to look).

Passengers may be tempted to give up if they cannot find information easily and yet in several instances, the mystery shoppers had to hunt around online for several minutes to find precise details for their journey, or to check alternative trains or find what new arrival times were. Then we found that, across the various websites, the information – about the same incident- varied in detail and quality, and in some cases some ticket sales websites seemed reluctant to display even basic warnings about delays that were clearly obvious on other sites.

This inconsistency appears also on stations. For example, we heard announcements being made to help passengers which explained in a clear and understandable way the cause of a delay was a "broken-down train" but the passenger information screens continued to show everything on time. Not only does this make passengers question the veracity of the information, it makes them less trusting in general of displays and announcements which, if used properly, are a good means of reaching large numbers of people waiting for their train. In cases like this, many passengers will tend to look for staff to ask and this quickly draws a crowd around a staff member who may be trying to find out more or help keep trains moving but feels obliged (rightly) to stop and help the customers gathered round them.

6.11 Stretching Credulity and Optimism Bias

Putting a positive spin on messages and information is an understandable human trait - no-one likes bad news. However, we found several instances of over-liberal interpretation of what constitutes a 'Good Service'. To describe multiple short-formation trains in peak hours or planned alterations that use buses and with a doubled journey time as a 'Good Service,' is stretching credulity. We note that this was a feature of the information provision after the May 2018 Timetable problems, and it was difficult to determine whether lessons had been fully-learned from that experience.

NRE's website appears to have an endemic "optimism bias" in forecasting timings when trains run late. As mystery shoppers, we did not know nor were interested in where these forecasts come from and how they are input to NRE. However, predictions of the recovery of late running services are regularly unrealistic and, in some cases actually impossible to achieve. Station information systems can sometimes display this trait also - showing a train to be a few minutes away only for it to get later and later, when a cursory check of the NRE App and some rough calculations are enough to arrive at a more accurate prediction oneself, if one is a railway-savvy customer. In practice, on an increasingly busy and congested network, and especially on routes into and through large cities, once a delay has occurred, late running trains will generally get later and not recover their late running, unless there is some form of operational intervention – to divert, skip stops etc. Consistent information is key and unnecessarily optimistic, unrealistic estimates of delay recovery serve no purpose and are actually counter-productive. There is a fine balance between obtaining information quickly and getting it right - as such, intermediate estimates would be beneficial to customers, until accurate predictions can be developed.

6.12 Implied Meanings

We were concerned by the numbers of events where we (and other customers) were left to deduce information and decide upon actions through a lack of explicit or detailed information. The nature of some passenger information we experienced remains very "operational" - for example the fact that a train advised as cancelled (or skipping stops) from "A" to "D" says nothing to help those about what their alternative departure times from the intermediate stations "B" and "C" where the cancelled train would have called. Regular users - such as commuters - may know their alternatives but other passengers need help to make their choices and in one case, the late notice non-stop running caused young, first time customers to feel disorientated and insecure. Information around alternatives for those stations being missed out should be specific. Staff, whether providing feeds to website, making announcements or tweeting should not assume passengers know anything other than their origin time and destination details. The route taken, train origin and operational information means nothing to most people. Information around alternatives for those stations being missed out should be specific.

A number of incidents we encountered underlined the absolute importance of robust operational estimates from those at the scene of the incident (almost always a Network Rail rapid responder) and the need to keep the information flow coming from site to be used in feeds to train and station operators. While estimates usually tend towards the optimistic (evidence of the "can-do" spirit in incident management), happenstance can intervene with an earlier recovery than was predicted, leaving passengers with an earlier resumption than they might have been expecting. This is fine if they are still on a delayed train or waiting at the station, but if the earlier estimates have been taken as advice to go elsewhere and have refreshments or come back later; this could be frustrating if things start moving earlier than advised. Incident recovery and the information flows that surround it are not a science and judgement, skill and communications are important elements. We encountered a few examples of this, in one case the cause of the incident kept being modified and in another a passenger had to tweet the TOC to advise them the incident was concluded.

6.13   Advice not just information

The accuracy of alternative travel advice is a key need for passengers. Advising people that a train is late, or cancelled, apologising, and giving a reason are necessary but insufficient. People also need to know what to do. Some of the advice required in such circumstances will be fairly obvious, such as waiting for a following train. But if the intervals between successive trains are significant or disruption is extensive, passengers will want to know what the options are and what is entailed in taking them: *"Is my ticket valid?" "What time will I get there now?" "Can I take my wheelchair?"*

We encountered some good and some poor examples of advice. Positive examples explained that buses were arranged and would take people between intermediate stations, though advising where the bus could be boarded would have helped. From our experience of working with many operators and from customer insight, there is clearly work to be done more widely around the interface arrangements between rail and replacement buses or taxis during disruption, including signage to stops, clear signage for rail replacement at the stops themselves, destination information on vehicles and the general level of customer service and information provided by bus drivers regarding the situation encountered by customers.

The North of London Agreement positively addresses the kind of advice required. If trains are stopped, for instance, on the West Coast Main Line, alternative arrangements for travel by way of St Pancras (East Midlands Trains), King's Cross (LNER) and Marylebone (Chiltern) are automatically approved, with the parallel lifting of ticket restrictions. Leaflets are distributed that explain how to reach these stations (which Tube to take and walking routes) and where on those TOCs' networks one has to change to reach the ultimate destination.

Poorer examples include suggesting to customers to leave the train and take an alternative route, which in the knowledge of one mystery shopper was patently not the right advice given the train was about to resume its journey without being delayed significantly.

A key weakness is that many stations' Customer Information Systems are incapable of showing 'free form' Special Notice information or advice. If the system only shows the conventional train departure line-up with factual information about a delay or cancellation, the customer is left to work out for him or herself whether the problem is a 'train' problem, affecting one service, or an 'infrastructure' problem affecting all services on the route, with no guidance as to how long the problem might persist, or indeed what the customer can do to mitigate the impact. Unless these shortcomings are compensated by public address

announcements, or through the availability of suitably briefed staff, the impact on customers can be very damaging. In such circumstances, being on the station can be the worst place to obtain information and help – it would be easier to get appropriate information about this particular train and journey with an internet-connected computer from anywhere else in the world. Several of our mystery shoppers used large or medium sized stations where this was the case, where the "information deficit" was sizeable, and where passenger footfall is significant.

Factual information about a train running so late that it would terminate short of its destination was given promptly to one Mystery Shopper but with misleading advice as to how to reach the destination that the train would not reach - the advice was to wait for the next train when that 'alternative' was over an hour later, and itself was already running late. It may have been better for passengers to continue as far as the train was going and then seek onward road transport for the remaining 5 miles. Advice that turns out to provide the wrong choices causes frustration – or simply deters people from travelling.

Paradoxically we also encountered announcements about delays which gave good advice about alternative travel arrangements for customers requiring stations that were being missed out, but which were unapologetic and did not give explanations.

6.14 Complex Train Arrangements

There appears to be a problem with the NRE website when it comes to accurately depicting or describing trains which combine or split during their journeys ('portion' trains). Given that this is routine working by many TOCs across the UK – TransPennine, GTR (Southern), Southeastern for instance – this is an unsatisfactory situation, whatever the cause. The trend is towards more train operations of this kind so it would seem an imperative to equip information sources to be able to cater for them. If portion working is a problem on the NRE website, which is clearly known about, and has been brought to RDG/ NRE attention, then it is hard to understand why it remains an issue – other than because it is possibly one of many 'glitches' in the software which require to be cleansed, and it hasn't had priority for funding. The drive for greater connectivity and passenger preference for through journeys, avoiding interchanges is likely to mean more portion working in future. However, the information must be accurate and not require railway experience and training to figure it out.

6.15 Engineering Work

We reviewed some planned engineering work disruption to sample the PIDD quality and formed a mixed view. In one case, the information in Twitter was confusing rather than helpful and will have caused intending passengers to either try and access an alternative information source for clarification or change their travel plans.

We also undertook a deep-dive into a planned weekdays engineering closure lasting several weeks to explore how the information needs of passengers were addressed. Posters, leaflets and the NRE website gave good information and attempts to buy a ticket in ignorance, correctly flagged the engineering work on the NRE site and others. If one knew where to look, or used these sources and had a reasonable understanding of railway geography, then there was very good information (especially on TOC and NRE sites). The calendar month dates of the poster cannot easily cope with works that straddle monthly dates (as this one did, straddling the February and March posters. An easy fix was to show clearly that the dates for work which carries on beyond the nominal end date of the poster.

A leaflet collected was neat, clear and easy to keep and refer to, though there was still space to add some helpful details - *"how will I know where to find the bus when I get off the train? Will someone be there to help me?"* Again, a few moments to think through a journey such as this through the eyes of a customer might have triggered a few further lines of really helpful information. Irregular or unfamiliar travellers might struggle or even be put off by the idea of buses and some websites are more honest and open than others. There was little information for passengers with restricted mobility about whether travel on the buses was feasible, for example with wheelchairs, though this might be inferred by reading the back of the leaflet which gave details about how to pre-book assistance. It would be better if this was made explicit.

Some of the information explaining the nature of the work and the temporary transport arrangements appears to be arranged and displayed to suit railway engineering and operating people rather than customers. What the customer really needs to know is what the alternatives are (if any) and when will the trains be running through again if their journey can wait and if they prefer not to take a bus.

The posters contain a lot of information; particularly the GB national map version and one would need to know where on the map (and which lines) one is travelling on, to determine if a potential journey is affected. Not all passengers will have this knowledge of railway geography, but this is at least a visual way of helping people see affected routes, so criticism would be a little unfair.

One of the points made by Transport Focus, by the ORR Report[9] into the May 2018 Timetable problems, and within the PIDD Action Plan, was probed. This is, if there is engineering work going on, to try and explain the ultimate benefits that passengers will have. In the case of this event, we dug into the detail. The NRE website explained the nature of the work in fair detail (the age of and need to maintain Whiteball Tunnel) and other websites referred to engineering improvements (when it is actually maintenance). We surfed on, through to the Network Rail website and could see that Network Rail were trying to show the benefits of work, though in this case, they are unexciting, as it was simply the need to keep the railway maintained, so the assurance of a reliable journey in future is a rather intangible benefit. In all, a good campaign approach to keep passengers advised in advance, with a few pointers for improvement which, when we discussed them at the TOC review meeting, were welcomed.

6.16 Twitter

Twitter is a particularly popular channel for getting basic information out rapidly to all passengers – provided, of course, they are Twitter users and follow the particular TOC. Our mystery shopper sampling found that some tweets directed people to where they should look for the detail or where the tweeted information is amplified through other channels. Other tweets did not contain sufficient information leaving passengers knowing that trains are certainly disrupted but being unable to easily deduce *"what does this mean for me and my journey"?* Regular travellers may be able to work this out but not those who travel infrequently or whose railway geography knowledge is hazy.

Twitter has limitations (number of characters and the relative informality of the medium) which make display of this kind of information difficult and TOCs may be better to focus on a

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[9] Office of Rail and Road: Independent Inquiry into the Timetable Disruption in May 2018 - Final Report: ORR: 7 December 2018

simpler set of messages and clearly signpost in the tweet where detail can be found (for example the NRE website). We believe there is a need to commission research to determine whether GB Mainline Rail is properly understanding the importance of Twitter. Our view is that its relevance may be over-exaggerated for anything other than initial flash alerts or listing of specific train cancellations (which are, once again, useful for regular customers but require greater context and alternative travel suggestions for those less frequent customers). Tweets need to be rapidly followed up through information channels which have greater capability and content - it is not a universal panacea.

6.17 Excluded Minorities

A final but crucial realisation was apparent to all our mystery shoppers – there appears to be increasing dependence on website, apps and search engines to push information to customers. While smart-phone, tablet and laptop ownership and usage are very high, there are still significant numbers of passengers who rely on traditional means of accessing information. If 85% of the UK population[10] has a smartphone, that leaves 15% without- or 10 million people. Leisure travellers, for example represent an attractive customer for the TOCs and the growth in travel from older, affluent people also means a segment of passengers who are also rather less likely to be "connected" than other, younger customers.

This issue parallels trends in wider society and a variety of research showing concerns of social exclusion from those groups that are either remote from online access, not confident using it or disinclined to do so. The closure of rural pubs, shops, banks and post offices, and withdrawal of cash machines, all reduce access to essential facilities, and are creating unfulfilled requirements for those customers and potential customers who are uncomfortable with the 'virtual reality' of internet transactions. Such customers are also more likely to need personal face to face or telephone help, advice and guidance during train disruption than others, if they are not to become an increasingly excluded minority. The industry should not ignore such customers and should not assume that web-based and smart-phone information systems are a cure-all, or in any way universal. The real need here is for the resources provided within the industry – staff, CIS, information points etc. – to become more focused on, and targeted towards, those customers who find it difficult to self-serve. This issue is wider than information, of course, and extends to ticket retailing, booking of disabled assistance and a range of other services, and is a challenge for all the comparator industries reviewed, just as much as GB Mainline Rail.

7. GB MAINLINE RAIL FINDINGS

This section sets out the findings of our review meetings with GB Mainline Rail, and is set out in order of the critical PIDD Factors/Components that WPA consider essential to the delivery of good customer information. This does not necessarily constitute a complete list of every link in the PIDD chain but we are satisfied it covers the critical elements. For each issue we have attempted to define "What Good Looks Like" and then described our assessment of the deployed arrangements which we found during our research.

7.1 Strategic Imperatives and Industry Contractual Drivers

What Good Looks Like – Irrespective of how the rail industry is structured and arranged it is vital to have a unified strategic imperative and supporting objectives in order to ensure that good, accurate and timely customer information is delivered in a consistent way across all information channels at every journey phase. The Department for Transport appears to be best placed to lead on this issue, with the RDG taking a lead in terms of ensuring consistency

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[10] https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2017

of approach and quality across all parts of the industry. TfL has offered a possible model for the future in GB Mainline Rail.

Assessed Position – In the current GB Mainline Rail model, the Franchised Train Operators and Network Rail have primary responsibility for information delivery. Awarding franchisees against a rolling programme is fine if the DfT maintain an evolving information strategy that can be applied as franchises are let. Bidders can then bid against clearly-defined outcomes and committed obligations (which would include PIDD, and offer their best approach, systems and capabilities to deliver).

However, the rapid pace of change in customer expectations - nowhere more obvious that in the hunger for accurate, helpful and timely information - demands additional flexibility. Technical innovation in an increasingly connected and digital world has also raised people's expectations. Traditional patterns of daily life which divide "working time" from "leisure time" are no longer universal, and people exploit digital connectivity to arrange their work and social time in a more fluid way. All these aggregate into an explicit desire for the right information and advice, instantly. After all, if a commuter or business customer can find out instantly such matters as the day's business agenda, current stock market results, availability of holiday cottages, and arrange their home delivery shopping, it is not unreasonable of them to expect that a transport network can enable them to find out easily how trains are running, and when delays will be resolved?

These matters (and future as-yet-unforeseeable digital changes) cannot be fixed for 7-14 years of a Franchise and will require agile changes, led by the DfT during Franchise terms. The DfT should, therefore, also be capable of retrospective application of such requirements to existing franchises in a way that the contractual terms and Franchise Change mechanisms allow. Otherwise, the basis on which franchises were bid and let several years ago will gradually fail to keep pace with passengers' information needs and digital connectivity. The reality we have found is that the Passenger Information specification in franchise competitions does vary. We have noted that one more recently-let franchise has a clear committed obligation focused on information management, and is investing heavily in new, state-of-the-art, display screen equipment. Conversely older franchises lack such imperatives, and these TOCs are driven more by straight commercial choices within their existing franchise terms. These do not necessarily place an appropriate value on information provision.

As an example of the lag between customer need/ expectation and provision, when some earlier franchises were let, it was the case that Wi-Fi on trains was very much an exception or even a rarity. Initially, the growing demand for Wi-Fi was met by offering it for a fee, but now the DfT requires free Wi-Fi for new Franchises. DfT has also retrospectively required Wi-Fi provision as a variation to some Franchise contracts. Similarly, the provision of power points for charging phones and laptops has generally lagged behind the customer need, especially retro-fitting of existing rolling stock. Even today, there are trains operating on services in excess of six hours' duration, with considerable numbers of long-distance customers, which do not have any power points for customer use - and of course the need to have a charged electronic device is ever more important on a railway network where so much emphasis is placed on the provision of information updates through digital means.

We believe that PIDD requires to be placed high on the DfT's agenda and that this can be achieved by contracting all existing and future Franchisees to deliver a defined (base) level of outcomes and outputs, rather than leaving it entirely to market forces.

Network Rail should also be part of the same strategy. As will be well-known, Network Rail funding cycles comprise 5-year Control Periods. Funding is tied to defined outputs and specifications that the Secretary of State for Transport sets, against the 'SoFA' (Statement of Funds Available). The ORR has the role of final determination that the Network Rail plans for delivery of the outputs are efficient and robust. Within the present arrangements it is difficult to see, once a funding plan is agreed prior the commencement of a Control Period, how changes to deliver better information systems (for example a replacement for TRUST) can be funded and prioritised.

Network Rail's agenda in respect of information provision is not sufficiently aligned with the TOCs or, most importantly, the industry's customers, and the proposed further devolution of authority to Routes in the near future creates the potential for differing devolved agendas particular to each route. This industry-wide aspect is exacerbated by the lack of agreed measures (see Section 8.11).

The available evidence leads us to believe that the lack of a clear and robust industry approach to mandating current PIDD requirements is a serious flaw. It is worth noting that the position is in marked contrast to the clarity we have seen at TfL, albeit within a very different contract structure. There is, as yet, only limited experience of longer term effects and impact of these contractual arrangements.

7.2   Strategy

What Good Looks Like – A clear unified industry strategy for Information provision that is derived from 7.1 is essential. The Rail Delivery Group should develop, own and lead a detailed strategy that covers all passenger service operators and Network Rail. Such a strategy will have been signed off by the RDG Board, on behalf of its TOC membership.

Assessed Position – There is no explicit Strategy held by the RDG and whilst there is a focus on PIDD via the Customer Information Group (CIG), the current primary documents do not constitute a Strategy. The relevant documents are:

- Provision of Customer Information ACoP - this was last revised in 2016 and is far from comprehensive. It is also classed as 'Advisory Only', despite detailing some of the few standard industry processes for managing information during disruption, such as CSL2, the holding/core message format, and message content. The current document is an amalgam of the Passenger Information and PIDD ACoP's which were previously issued as separate documents. The original industry intention had been to introduce a strengthened PIDD ACoP but this was withdrawn whilst awaiting sign-off by Network Rail and ATOC, due to concerns at the increased levels of prescription (albeit self-imposed prescription) and because of the risk of being in breach of the then-newly introduced licence condition. The replacement document that is effectively still in use today (despite its October 2016 issue date) was issued by ATOC, and applies to 'passenger railway undertakings and Station Facility Owner' whereas the intention, in 2010, had been to explicitly tie Network Rail into more comprehensive arrangements. The un-issued ACoP covered every crucial link of the information chain in greater detail, from actions on site to delivery to customers through the available mediums/channels (social media was not in common use at this time). The consequence of the diluted approach has, in our view, contributed to the rather muddled industry approach to passenger information provision.
- 50-Point Plan - following the TF research carried out for ORR in 2014, RDG recognised the shortcomings in the ACoP-based industry approach and this led to the development

of the '50-Point Plan'. This supplemented the ACoP and contains identified areas for improvement. Following several changes of governance at RDG they are now being progressed and monitored by the CIG Group. It is however out of date and customer information expectations have increased since the last revision.

- Work in progress - RDG has a "deep dive" review of PIDD underway, concurrent with the timescales of this Review for ORR; it is not clear whether this RDG review is aligned to the same goals, how the ORR findings will feed RDG and whether the RDG work will lead to the development of a much more ambitious strategy for change. However, the review will consider the two current publications governing PIDD; these are the ACoP and the Good Practice Guide. It will also review the PIDD-50 actions to see which are still current and which, having been delivered by the industry, need to be added to the revised code of practice as' business as usual' activities.

RDG also appears to be constrained by what TOCs and owning groups will consent to, both in terms of the scope of change and the scale of investment. It is clear from our discussions that money for improvements is in short supply and there is a wide range of views about PIDD priorities amongst Train Operators. As a consequence, any available money is allocated in a piecemeal fashion according to the tactical priorities of RDG. These are invariably bottom up incremental improvements that do not have the benefit of being prioritised according to an overarching RDG-owned Industry Information strategy.

During our industry-wide discussions, we heard several comments concerning the focus of RDG on IT systems and very little focus on 'the person on the platform with a ticket'. Conversely, we also heard concerns that the labyrinth of Information systems was creaking, had failed to be updated in line with agreed enhancements (the NRE website has 3 years of stalled upgrades waiting authority) and that the untapped potential of Darwin needed to be better exploited.

As of 12th March 2019 (during the final weeks of our research) RDG has established a new Customer Information Directorate which is to focus on: Information, PIDD and Delay-Repay. This is a promising development, but no more details were available at time of writing.

On the subject of funding, it appears that CP5 spending on information systems by Network Rail had been cut, and that there appeared to be little new money in CP6 for customer information investment. The Rail Technical Strategy[11] was to have developed some ideas for better information systems but this has been rolled back and the RTS appears focused more on network asset information and asset management innovations. The current version of the RTS published by RSSB shows that, under the Twelve Capabilities, there is £725million identified for "More Value from data" and £40million identified for "Personalised customer experience" which is defined as:

"Data collection and real-time information that helps rail staff to make better decisions and provides customers with useful and up to date information" (Capability 04)

*"Providing customers with tailored information and services so that travel by rail becomes a seamless part of their overall journey" (*Capability 09)

The status of the RTS and its level of funding to address and deliver these capabilities is currently uncertain. Together, these shifts in funding have created a funding gap for

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[11] RSSB: The Future Railway: The Industry's Rail Technical Strategy 2012 Supporting Railway Business

information systems work where TOCs need national changes to systems. It is inevitable that with this funding hiatus, individual TOCs then progress their own patchwork of solutions which are either bespoke to, or intellectual property is owned by their TOC (or owning Group) and therefore not shared widely. At franchise change, even these TOC-tactical improvements can be lost if the franchisee changes. These challenges appear to require national action.

RDG confirmed that the NRE website is quite focused on "sales" and that, combined with the lack of funding for information-specific changes, means that it does not realise its potential. The NRE App in turn is based on the NRE website and therefore is in the queue for enhancement, despite the NRE App being what many people appear to use for up to date information. Certainly, during our mystery shopper sampling we found NRE reliable, though with opportunities to be better than it currently is.

RDG confirmed that Darwin had potential for development, but that funding was cut in CP5 and not ring fenced in CP6. Despite this, both "Darwin for Trains" which allows better on-board information, and the Train Location and Movement Service, which uses GPS to give better train location information, have been delivered in CP5 although only slowly adopted by the TOCs.

There is also a dormant opportunity here to link Digital Railway Traffic Management (DR) outputs to Darwin. The information potentially capable of being provided by TMS, including its ability to predict and give accurate reforecasts of delays is of significant value. RDG has undertaken work with Network Rail's DR team to explore this potential but is now waiting for DR. It is instructive to note the vision in the Rail Technical Strategy[12] which included:

"Passengers could be kept better informed through intelligent traffic management systems that identify real-time train location and distribute this information to passengers. Personal mobile devices could automatically receive updates about train positions and other relevant information. Through strategic relationships, technological advances in the telecoms and entertainment industries could be exploited to provide rail customers with better information and on-board entertainment services.

From what we found, these aspirations remain unfulfilled.

7.3 Accountabilities

What Good Looks Like – Clear documented accountabilities at senior level in every TOC, NR Route, NR HQ (for those with a responsibility for NR Managed Stations) and within RDG. Ideally those with responsibilities for PIDD delivery and internal governance would report to the nominated individual with overall accountability.

Assessed Position - TOCs have still not identified a common workable solution to this issue. It is symptomatic of many of the identified problems that accountabilities for PIDD do not sit easily in the separate Directorates of Operations and Customer Service/Experience, or the equivalent roles, that are found in most Train Operators.

If the PIDD portfolio is given to Operations, it tends to receive a lower level of attention and often lacks an adequate customer-centric focus. Yet if placed in the Customer Service/Experience portfolio, then many of the crucial operational aspects that underpin

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[12] RSSB: The Future Railway; The Industry's Rail Technical Strategy 2012 Supporting Railway Business

delivery of good PIDD are not adequately addressed or particularly well integrated. TOCs where PIDD works well tend to achieve this as a result of the personal enthusiasm and commitment of the managers directly responsible - not necessarily due to the actions of any one Director. Arrangements also work better where Control Operating staff and customer information staff are co-located and can absorb and understand each other's needs in real time. In NR Routes, the position (may) be even more uneven, as the current 8 Routes function as independent entities that in many ways are as diverse as individual TOCs. This lack of uniformity is allegedly exacerbated by the reluctance of routes to allow any direct contact between NR HQ Managers with PIDD responsibilities and the TOCs. Whilst the thrust for greater devolution of authority in NR is understood, it is not hard to see how this could further undermine consistency in policy and practice towards the provision of customer information across NR, in all circumstances.

7.4   Outcomes Specification

What Good Looks Like- Published Franchise Agreements will contain details of the passenger information specific requirements where the DfT has specified these during the tendering process. These should form a tight specification of information requirements that are underpinned by comprehensive measures and metrics (see section 7.11). In addition, the need for continuous improvement should be protected by specified review dates at which the information requirements can be revised to reflect changes in good practice, growth and change in customer expectation and emerging technology. The mechanisms for meeting any significant cost implications as a result of this should be explicitly addressed within contracts.

With regard to Network Rail, the appropriate guidance and direction provided on behalf of the Secretary of State should mirror the arrangements applied to the TOCs.

All contracts/guidance should stress the need for close cooperation and inter-working between the industry parties.

Assessed Position - Information provision including PIDD is poorly/inadequately specified in many of the agreements with TOCs or the guidance and direction given to Network Rail. The only unifying requirement that is commonly used appears to be the PIDD ACoP (and associated 50 Point Plan), but as stated earlier, this document is far from comprehensive, is out of date, and "For Guidance Only".

It appears as if PIDD, in the main, relies on unspoken, informal "gentleman's agreements" to do the right thing. Despite the genuinely honest intentions of many of the dedicated railway managers we met with, this type of "laissez faire" approach is not appropriate for such an essential customer deliverable.

7.5   Information Process Architecture

What Good Looks Like – All information providers should develop an Information Process Map in order to ensure that the required information - and advice - can be delivered to customers in all travel phases. Crucially, all the processes must be devised to ensure that information can be provided within specified timescales. Such processes must also include verification loops to ensure consistency between different channels is maintained at all times, and that information updates are being consistently posted. The requirement for regular reviews of the effectiveness of the deployed arrangements are covered in section 7.12.

Assessed Position – The examples that we witnessed were largely schematic and only served to prove how complex information provision is. It is possible that no TOC or NR route has managed to develop a version that fulfils the 'What Good Looks Like' criteria; it is disappointing that the Rail Industry is averse to documenting this key delivery process. There is an abundance of in-house analytical and process expertise in the industry and the production of a 'good practice' example that other TOCs and NR could follow is vital if real improvements in the timeliness, accuracy and consistency of customer-centric information delivery is to be achieved.

7.6   IT Systems Architecture

What Good Looks Like – The IT systems in use should support and facilitate delivery of passenger information as a crucial part of the overall process specified above. They should enable innovation and continuous improvement BUT only as an integral part of the industry Information Process Architecture. An industry focus must be maintained on IT systems development and investment to ensure the industry can keep pace with rapid change, in terms of technological developments, passenger requirements, and delivery media,

Assessed Position - We understand RDG maintains a full "map" of the IT systems in use for delivering passenger information and has had a focus on IT systems developments for some time. All TOCs we reviewed had some type of map of the information arrangements although some of these were somewhat fragmented. There was a consensus that the IT systems in use were adequate but fell short in a number of areas, which necessitated retrospective "fixes". There is a long backlog of such "fixes" to implement, and the ones relating to information are generally second order priorities to those which are critical to ticket retailing and revenue generation. The extensive queue of software improvements reflects the incomplete nature of the industry's information processes when IT systems were being developed, as the industry got what was available rather than being procured against a clear specification. Even now, there does not appear to be an agreed model or configuration of the arrangements the industry needs in order to deliver the customer-centric information that is required.

This is further complicated as some of the existing IT systems are based on infrastructure dating back to the 1970s.

7.7   Integrated Operational Arrangements

What Good Looks Like - The Information Process Architecture outlined in section 7.5 should cover all the operational information arrangements that support delivery of each company's identified customer information requirements. This will cover all disruption - not just larger events that trigger the introduction of CSL2 arrangements.

Information requirements must be incorporated into the relevant operational processes so that the information needs of customers can be routinely met during all disruptive events as an integral part of the operational management and reporting arrangements.

Control Managers have a critical role in ensuring that the identified information requirements are treated as primary, time sensitive deliverables.   The specified requirements should also cover the information responsibilities of all operational and technical staff involved in fault identification, repair and rectification. The areas that will have the greatest potential to elongate delays if robust estimates are not provided include:

- Time to attend site

- Situation assessment
- Problem solving, and
- Rectification timescales

For this reason, the provision of regular updates against realistic plans is vitally important and crucial to the delivery of information that is as robust and dependable as possible.

A key Control management task is the "common-sensing" of operational estimates in order to provide information managers with the best possible information. For serious events, Control Managers will produce a "Prioritised Plan" covering all of the above elements and introduce a regular timed review structure that engages all key managers (including the Information Manager) and checks progress against agreed milestones for the duration of the disruptive event and if necessary the Service Recovery phase. Ensuring the information teams in the Control Offices do not get drawn into incident resolution, or other ancillary duties, at the expense of their core duties and responsibilities, is also important.

Other key operational issues may include:
- Appointment of a Lead Operations Controller to act as the focal point for managing the disruptive event.
- The ability to dispense information and advice reliably and consistently on trains with only a driver on board.
- Contingency Plan deployment to ensure an integrated response can be delivered.
- Contingency Plans should be underpinned by pre-planned train crew arrangements and train set workings.
- Deployment of Customer Action Teams (or similar) to provide extra resources at stations.

Assessed Position - TOC and NR Control Office arrangements remain variable, though the increasing move to co-location in Route Operating Centres (ROCs) is creating a more collaborative and collegiate approach to the management of disruption, and the information requirements that are integral to this. Initiatives such as TOCs basing their Social Media response staff in the Control Office, creating a single roster for Control Office Customer Service, Comms and Social Media personnel, and establishing passenger information support in the Gold Command Centre during serious incidents, are helping to improve the provision of accurate and timely information across the various media. However, it is important that where operational staff are involved in social media information provision that they are properly trained and managed such that messages are customer focused (and not "operational"), clear, jargon-free and produced in a way that is consistent with the brand values.

Providing information to passengers on board services which have only a driver on board remains a challenging area for TOCs. Not only is it difficult to advise the driver of the relevant information when they will have no access to the necessary media, and cannot be contacted directly by Controllers or Signallers (other than by a General Call – but see below) but most drivers may be inexperienced or have insufficient formal training on the use of the on-train PA system. This remains an area which the industry must tackle robustly in the near future.

An additional complication is the inability to provide drivers with certain types of passenger information via the GSMR General Call facility. Originally the Cab Secure Radio (CSR) system General Call facility was freely used to update drivers of affected trains. Whilst some of

these messages contained operational information about the incident and recovery estimates, others were more passenger specific - e.g. "Passengers for Newtown will need to change at Oldtown for a connecting rail replacement bus service". Such messages are apparently no longer allowed as they constitute 'misuse' of a safety-related communication system, and is an issue which the industry should be challenging. GSM-R does allow berth-triggered messages that can be broadcast to each train arriving at a particular location and there is also the facility in GSM-R to allow TOC controllers to speak directly to the train. Correctly, the driver cannot hear such messaging to avoid distraction. We only encountered one instances of active use of these facilities.

7.8   Detailed Customer Requirements

What Good Looks Like – Transport Focus has repeatedly stressed to the industry the fundamental need for customer information messages to be provided in simple, coherent language and this remains an essential component of 'What Good Looks Like'.

A description of what information each customer type (segment) needs during typical disruptive events at each stage of their journey seems an obvious starting point. We would expect RDG to produce such a document so that every TOC and NR Managed Station could then modify this template to meet the individual needs of their dominant customer types. There is certainly plenty of information available in the common domain about what customers expect at different journey phases (for example from Transport Focus research and briefings). This information could be used to develop information needs better matched to scenarios and customer requirements.

This would then enable individual TOCs and associated NR Managed Stations to tailor the deployed information arrangements accordingly.

The deployed arrangements should reflect the contractual requirements and/or guidance and direction, and be based on industry codes of practice and acknowledged good practice. Most importantly they should be capable of enabling the consistent delivery of timely, reliable, customer-centric information, irrespective of train staffing arrangements, station staffing arrangements, IT systems in use and the kind of customers involved.

Assessed Position – The industry has a limited appreciation of the needs of different customer types for information, particularly during disruption. Whilst the imperative for the industry to respond to and create new or revised arrangements for passengers with reduced mobility, the same cannot be said of other "customer types". As an example, reference was made earlier to the difference in industry approach to meeting the information needs of those who are Smart phone, and internet connected, compared with those who are not. Yet the industry has seen significant growth in patronage from an increasingly aged, but mobile and affluent senior citizen community who are also rather less likely to be "connected" than other, younger customers. Such customers are also more likely to need help, advice and guidance during disruption than their more youthful fellow travellers, if they are not to become an increasingly excluded minority. The industry will ignore or marginalise such customers at its peril, as increasingly mobile senior citizens have become a growing and important factor in filling off-peak services where leisure capacity is largely under-utilised. A better understanding and appreciation of the customer mix is therefore an essential element of industry strategy for passenger information.

Customer satisfaction with information always deteriorates during disruption, because disruption is unwelcome. But if the provided information is in technical jargon and fails to

meet the needs of even the broadest customer groups then the industry is ignoring a fundamental aspect that influences the quality and relevance of information during disruption. We could not find any documented guidance, in any TOC that we reviewed, which dealt with language, terminology or the needs of particular customer types, and we are reasonably certain that this is likely to be similar in other TOC and NR Managed Stations. This lack of focus on differing customer needs during disruptive events does not engender confidence that the supplied information will satisfy customer requirements.

Some managers we interviewed commented that the Customer Information Group focused almost exclusively on IT, and other, equally customer-centric considerations do not receive sufficient attention. This appears to be one reason why the 3rd PIDD information imperative "Advice" is not being adequately addressed from a segmented, customer-centric perspective.

In overall terms, the deployed arrangements vary, and the lack of commonality is a cause for concern. The small number of common features that are in place as part of TOC PIDD arrangements are:

- The production of the required Local Plan – required by the ACoP to meet Licence Conditions, although there was evidence that some of these are still 'work in progress'.
- Adoption of the PIDD ACOP - the concept of CSL2, 20-minute frequency of updates, core messages and message content are generally well applied but the quality of delivered messages is very variable and does not entirely meet the needs of customers
- Some TOCs were going beyond the requirements of the ACOP and were developing their own thinking on information management - for example,
  - The guidance that VT supply to waiting passengers at Euston if all lines on the WCML are blocked; this helps people not only find their route to their destination via other TOC services, but helps people with the walking routes and tube directions to get to the other terminus.
  - the use of "single page" Contingency Plans by c2c with clear, pre-determined PIDD actions integrated with the operational contents.
  - The use of software by Cross Country to customise information to train crews which highlights issues not just on the route of the particular service but also on routes or services into which passenger may be connecting
  - The comprehensive station CIS renewal on Greater Anglia which was offered in the franchise bid, and which will introduce 'leading edge' information quality into an area of provision which is recognised as weak in many TOCs

It is clear that the TOCs we reviewed all try to provide good information to their customers during disruption but the following common issues have been identified:

- The Industry systems do not always appear to work well together and there are a number of outstanding niggles, some of which are highlighted in our Mystery Shopper reports (section 6), which result in the provision of misleading, contradictory or unhelpful "information". These include inaccurate description of trains involved in 'portion' working, and over-optimistic forecasts of recovery of late running.
- The industry does not appear to have recognised that providing better incident 'impact' information in the future will depend on the correct functionality being included in Traffic Management Systems. Unfortunately, the Business Case for Digital Railway Systems is silent on this crucial issue, as noted below.

- The relative speed and integration of industry systems and processes is critical in ensuring that there is 'One Version of the Truth' and that it reaches customers in a consistent way with minimal time lag. We have not seen any evidence that this aspect is checked and/or monitored but we did hear concerns that TOC customers receive information before staff, or receive it in conflicting and confusing messages from different sources;
- There are known issues with the provision of good information consistently by front line staff. The primary example of this is on-train announcements when only a driver is on board the train (see section 7.9 below);
- Better use of simple, clear language, including the use of agreed industry-wide, customer-centric terminology (that is stringently monitored and applied), particularly for sensitive issues such as suicides, is still an issue that remains unresolved. Rail staff require further training and assessment to eradicate the use of jargon and to present facts and advice in a clear meaningful and understandable form. It is vitally important that the Holding and Core Messages issued in accordance with the ACoP become exemplars of the use of simple language.

The predictive capability of Train Management Systems, as part of the Digital Railway investment, should improve the quality and robustness of real time running forecasts, as an aid to operational and Control Office forward planning. It could also significantly improve the quality of passenger information on late running and delays. We examined the most recent Digital Railway strategy document[13] and found that passenger information management as a benefit of the Digital Railway is mentioned almost in incidental terms. Much greater prominence is given to big data for better asset performance. We understand that passengers clearly benefit from the utterly reliable railway that modern asset management can deliver, but we wondered why the clear and obvious richness of train running information that TMS offers has not been recognised as a key way that Network Rail can fulfil its Customer Vision. The provision of high-quality customer information should be prioritised higher within the objectives of the Digital Railway.

7.9   Delivery Roles and Responsibilities

What Good Looks Like – Defining all the relevant staff roles and interfaces is essential if correct information is to be delivered within defined timescales. We would also expect to see pre-rehearsed and robust arrangements for strengthening front line and information control staff during serious disruption, even if it is through the use of trained agency support staff or HQ resource (on a rostered/"on-call" as well as voluntary basis).

Assessed Position - This was probably the strongest area with many robust arrangements in the TOCs we reviewed, but to varying degrees, and with little standardisation or uniformity between TOCs. There was a commendable focus on strengthening front line staff during disruption and some clear examples of good practice, which included;

- A formal assessment and accreditation programme at Greater Anglia, in which a number of Information Controllers are undertaking NVQs in Customer Service.
- Customer Action teams at c2c which can be mobilised for serious disruption, either to supplement and support staff at stations or to assist on stranded trains. (However, it was admitted that there is no formal means of retaining the customer skills of such personnel, and c2c has no assessment or accreditation regime in place currently).

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[13] Digital Railway Strategy: Network Rail: April 2018

- The Competency Management System within Virgin Trains specifies a range of non-technical skills which include dissemination of customer information, construction of messages, and use of PA etc. Periodic one day, off-the-job training and refresher courses are run by VT (and NR have asked for their relevant staff to be included). An on-train information protocol with sample scripts was produced and introduced in November 2018, and something similar is in production for stations. Virgin Trains, with support from NR, is keen that the personalisation and individuality of manual announcements be retained, and the scripts are for guidance rather than mandated.

- The CMS arrangements are not subject to external validation or accreditation but information, PIDD and customer skills are formally assessed, alongside other non-technical skills, on a two-yearly cycle for all staff except Drivers (3-yearly), 4 days 'off the job' training per annum. VT believe the strength of their brand is heavily associated with the visibility and actions of their staff and managers, and therefore training is geared to providing staff with the skills to undertake their customer-facing and information roles effectively - to turn them into "problem-solvers who care"

- At Cross Country (XC), there are no formalised competency standards or requirements in relation to passenger information provision and dissemination, in either XC or NR, though the Cross Country Customer Services Director recognises that if a wider pool of staff, such as catering staff and on-board cleaners, are to be able to give passenger information during disruption - which is his aspiration – there will need to be focused training, and a mechanism for assessing and assuring competence. XC is moving towards making PIDD part of formally assessed competence. Both TOC and NR admitted to being reliant on staff 'experience' for good performance in this area, including through 'cross-fertilisation' of skills and experience

- As noted in section 5.3.5 above, we did find that in one of our comparator visits (Heathrow Airport) that this aspect had advanced beyond what we found in rail. At least one TOC Owning Group, responsible for a range of very different TOCs, was in the process of developing a Customer Excellence strategy which would 'own' customer information policy for the Group.

On-Board Announcements – the different methods by which TOCs staff their trains can have a significant impact on the ability to provide passenger information on board. Services which only have a driver on board cannot deliver information in the way that those with a Train Manager or Conductor can. Where drivers on single-manned services can and do make PA announcements, the information they have may be limited and contain little if any guidance or advice. They will generally be delivered by an employee who has had little or no training for this role, no guidance on etiquette, terminology or the essential requirements of passenger information provision, and no formal competency assessment beyond that which pertains to safety and operational matters. Some modern trains recently introduced to service do have standardised messages which can be selected by Drivers to reduce workload and to obviate the need to think carefully about what they might personally say. This is an area where Franchise Specifications could be tightened to address the need in this way.

As noted earlier, this situation is not unique to the rail industry – National Express coaches have similar issues with their drivers, and the apparent conflict between safe driving and keeping customers informed. The company has explored and implemented different means of keeping customers abreast of information they need to have. If the rail industry is to perpetuate single manning with only a driver on board, this is a nettle which must be grasped as part of the strategy for long term improvement in passenger information.

Information Controllers - the degree to which Information Controllers can cope during serious disruption still appears to be a neglected area, and the difference in frequency and, in many cases, the quality of the delivered information on Twitter to that provided by "traditional" means is stark. Some operators have recognised this and are now putting the Social Media personnel in the Control Office to try and ease staffing problems and encourage cross-fertilisation of message quality, including the use of plain English. At Cross Country, the establishment of a Customer Hub, combining all customer response and information responsibilities into a fully resourced unit in the Control Office appeared to be a significant step in the right direction. Again, Heathrow Airport has some valuable lessons here; having thought about their Control and the four types of information flow that incidents require, they have dedicated teams with particular skills focused on anticipating and generating quality information for these target groups:

- Stakeholders - DfT, Government
- Media
- Staff
- Customers

7.10 Staff Selection, Training and Competence Management

What Good Looks Like – Empowered staff exhibiting the right behaviours and a strong customer focus are essential in order to establish the right customer-centric culture. We would expect to see that any and all staff who are required to work in a customer-facing (or inter-facing) role (including in Control Offices) are selected, trained and subject to regular assessment based on their ability to anticipate and address customer information needs to an excellent level and against a competency that assesses their performance against values and behaviours that represent customer-centricity. All staff with a role in information provision should have specified competence requirements ideally linked to recognised qualifications such as NVQs in Customer Service.

We would also expect to see that organisations empower and trust their staff to think about where customers are going, why and what they will do when they get there, when engaging in the provision of information.

Assessed Position – The recruitment of customer-focused people into Control Office environments is not something that has generally happened in the rail industry and it is only recently that the importance of quickly crafting core messages with clear and simple plain English language and content has been recognised.

This is an area where the split in Director's responsibilities highlighted in section 7.3 becomes crucial. Seasoned operators are not necessarily good wordsmiths and they also have the tendency to use jargon. Conversely, staff that are responsible for information provision need to understand operational arrangements without lapsing back into the use of railway jargon. The recruitment of employees that have benefited from media training and/or have journalistic skills would seem appropriate, but this might import unsustainable cost increase. Where such media training can be provided to existing staff, then this would be really beneficial.

All TOCs have established staff competence management systems of varying types. Some include customer care (including information) skills within the formalised Competence Management System Assessments and others have these outside such arrangements. Such competency management and assessment arrangements are not a formal GB Mainline Rail requirement and instead, customer service competence assessment appears to be viewed as

a luxury even though it is considered as a differentiator within the franchise bidding and award processes.

The staff competence management arrangements should be straightforward if accountabilities and delivery roles and responsibilities are fully specified. The need for industry standards and commonality in these should be self-evident given the volume of rail journeys that involve more than one operator.

The difference in training and competence management arrangements between TOCs and NR Managed Stations must be considered unhelpful to providing good and consistent customer information. It should be noted that one of the reviewed TOCs, which does have customer skills integrated into the formal CMS, also has very high customer net advocacy scores, even during and following disruption, and was described by Transport Focus as "at the better end of the PIDD scale". NR management have acknowledged the need for more 'joined up' arrangements between their own Managed Station staff and their TOC partners.

National Express Coach Division saw the provision of good information not as a chore for the staff or a corrective action, but as an opportunity to build loyalty and this is a key perspective they encourage and instil in their staff.

7.11 Measures and Metrics

What Good Looks Like – This is one of the most important factors in the successful delivery of any complex requirement. The mantra of "If it cannot be measured - it cannot be managed" is extremely relevant to the delivery of good information.

Clear Punctuality and Reliability measures such as PPM, On Time and CaSL are central to the delivery of the core GB Mainline Rail product and in our view, information provision is of equal status and importance. It is vital that metrics are customer-driven and reflect the experience and emotions felt by customers and the extent to which the GB Mainline Rail has managed to successfully respond to these factors. Accordingly, we have included specific proposals in section 8 of this report which suggest a mixture of in-process and customer-focused measures, based on customer insight.

Assessed Position - The industry has struggled for at least 8 years trying to establish and agree acceptable measures, but progress has not been good and the current measures are disparate and do not adequately measure the complex range of factors that are critical to the delivery of good information.

Some TOCs use additional NRPS-like customer surveys to complement the NRPS ones. Most also use customer feedback, often complaints information, feedback solicited via websites and texts, and Twitter, through social media customer sentiment monitoring systems. However, complaints about customer information are rarely segregated from complaints about service delivery, and tend, therefore, to not be measured, or reported, discretely. Furthermore, whilst written complaints – both by letter and email – are recorded, categorised and reported, telephone calls, generally, are not, and social media representations tend to be classified by the nature of sentiment (positive/ negative, favourable/ unfavourable, advocacy etc.), rather than on the substance of the communication. There is also seldom a post-disruption analysis of customer insight as part of any "lessons learnt" exercise. Quite often, we see a desire to undertake this, but the enthusiasm dissipates once the disruption is over and the normality of "business as usual" has taken over again.

One TOC uses net advocacy information to inform how well it is perceived and the provision of information is a key part of this.

Whilst there are some clear examples of good practice, a historic industry reluctance to put in place proper national measures means that this aspect does not attract the necessary relentless industry attention and focus.

Previous fears that such measures could become a means to expose industry flaws and take punitive action against operators have now lessened and establishing meaningful information measures will ensure that this key component of good Train Service Delivery is given the prominence that customers rightly expect.

7.12 Assessment, Review and Benchmarking
What Good Looks Like – Provided an adequate specification with appropriate measures and metrics is in place, then this issue is straightforward for the GB Mainline Rail industry. A proprietary Assessment, Review and Benchmarking methodology based on recognised good practice (such as EFQM) would be ideal. This does, however, depend on a greater degree of industry standardisation than currently exists.

Assessed Position – The industry has, in recent years, moved away from deploying independent assessment and review arrangements for testing its critical processes (other than those relating to safety), in favour of more self-certification and self-determination. Furthermore, with many elements of customer service being viewed by TOCs as brand-identifiers and bid differentiators, there would undoubtedly be an adverse reaction to any attempt to standardise or formalise passenger information arrangements across the industry, because this takes away another opportunity to showcase credentials within an already constrained franchise bid specification. However, the industry's information arrangements appear currently to be a patchwork quilt of the acceptable, the mediocre and the poor, with even the best Operators and NR Routes good only in parts, with no-one pushing at the boundaries of what is possible or desirable.

In practice, establishing minimum standards, and a series of criteria which support those standards, has already been achieved through the ACoP, the licence conditions, and ORR's own auditing process. However, it is now acknowledged that adherence to the ACoP will not, in itself, produce the step-change in customer-focused and customer-centric information provision in all circumstances which passengers now routinely expect, and appear to receive in other service delivery environments.

This is an area in which RDG can demonstrate real leadership, by devising and implementing a programme of independent reviews of all TOCs and NR Regions (or Routes) to reinforce the imperative of good information and consistency in delivery across the industry, and drive the improvement required.

7.13 Governance and Regulation
What Good Looks Like – an effective and appropriate governance structure for passenger information provision would place a number of critical activities in the hands of a senior industry body, to which all parties to passenger information provision within the industry would respond. This would include:

- Ownership of strategy and policy

- Development of tactical interventions and improvements,
- Budget and funding arrangements
- Development of business cases and investment proposals
- High level metrics and measures to be periodically reported
- The process for assessment and review of compliant delivery,

Such a body would render the need for overt regulation rather less necessary than is felt to be the case currently, and which would, at most, be 'light touch'.

Assessed Position – the current industry governance structure is reliant on democratic decision making and prioritisation by RDG delegates whose primary focus and motivation may not be investing in passenger information during disruption, even where a sound case can be made for doing so. It may be noteworthy that, in our review of RDG Board minutes over the most recent 12-month period (which included the period of the May 2018 timetable introduction); we could scarcely find any reference to, or discussion of, customer information.

The lack of a strategic imperative to provide incentives for players to excel in this area means it will always sit behind revenue generation, cost reduction/ minimisation, and contractually-specified obligations in the list of priorities within the industry. The generally-held view which we heard in a number of different review meetings was that funding for passenger information initiatives and developments within RDG is limited, and always at risk of being plundered to meet obligations with perceived greater priority and importance. At Network Rail, the Control Period 6 financial settlement for the five years commencing in April 2019 includes no specific funding for passenger information systems investment. Furthermore, within the Operators, those responsible for developing and monitoring implementation of the PIDD Plan often lack seniority within the organisation and/or gravitas and the financial and people resources to support their efforts.

Historically, Network Rail has adopted a supporting, rather than a primary role in passenger information provision with the TOCs. Since the formation of RDG, Network Rail has a more central and significant role in information provision through its Route Operations Controls and its Managed Stations. However, because the current industry strategy and direction is inadequate, the upstream PIDD critical activities relating to service disruption management and resourcing remain outside the scope of the current but outdated Approved Code of Practice - Provision of Customer Information. This is the only industry 'standard' that currently specifies industry-wide requirements relating to the delivery of passenger information. This may now change as a result of the appointment of a CEO at NR who has committed to cultural and organisational change which will deliver greater focus on the customer, including customer information.

The adoption of the PIDD ACoP, and the requirement for TOC Local Plans as a licence condition some years ago was a well-intentioned attempt to raise the profile of passenger information within the industry and provide appropriate incentive for TOCs and NR to do better through compliance with an approved standard. It appears, however, that an unintended consequence was the dilution by the industry leadership of the requirements set out in the ACoP to avoid unwarranted breaches of the licence obligations. This also meant 'lowering the bar' to achieve compliance; as a result, even complete compliance with the ACoP requirements will not assure good performance in the area of passenger information delivery.

7.14 Engineering Work - Train Information

What good looks like - Good passenger information during planned events requires clear advance communication of the event, if this involves weekend engineering work, or implementation of a major project change. Adjusting arrangements in preparation for events of significance requires planning and forecasting to ensure the needs of customers travelling at that time are met. A team whose sole focus is to anticipate and deal with engineering disruption and significant events should have specialist training and work to pre-determined, detailed plans. Timetables should be adjusted in line with the Network Code and new timetables for the duration of the event should be published on websites and other media well in advance. Where TOCs have passengers' contact details (e.g. email), notification pushed to them to inform of the upcoming event and to offer advice is extremely useful. Other passengers should be informed through posters distributed around stations, leaflets, regular station and train announcements, and banners on website. Where lengthy diversions or bus substitution are deployed, it is critical that the needs of unfamiliar rail users, PRMs and others – for example, weekend family travellers are considered specially in our research work - information should then be tailored to support and reassure these groups who have particular information needs.

It would be innovative if TOC train planning staff were deployed during such events to the most affected areas of the timetable alterations, to gauge how well the train plan is operating and to offer support, in real time, to the VSTP team, informing where the timetable is not working as planned. This kind of approach requires a shift to more flexible working arrangements than are normally found amongst TOC HQ staff.

Assessed position- There appear to be comprehensive, well-established and well-practiced procedures for planning, organising and implementing arrangements for special events, and these include robust arrangements for customer information during engineering blockades and diversions. Network Rail Managed Stations on NR LNW are particularly proud of these arrangements which are regularly reviewed and updated with experience from those events which have taken place. Network Rail also looks closely at national operators to ensure de-confliction of timetables affected by engineering works that otherwise might be encountered in succession in adjacent Network Rail Routes.

TOC "Events Managers" or similar roles look ahead to predict which engineering works require special arrangements and acts as an interface between Retail & Train Planning, including STP changes, additional Twitter staff, and a customer information plan. On commuter routes the majority of customers are often regular travellers during weekdays anyway, so can be targeted through their normal means of information provision (posters, announcements, tweets) with advance notice of planned engineering work.

During the Mystery Shopper activities, we undertook a deep dive into one protracted multi-week engineering blockade and found that, while there was room for some improvements, the level of information provision and the advice given was generally good. This is explored in more detail in section 6.

8. MEASURES AND METRICS

8.1 Introduction

Earlier in section 7.11, we reviewed the findings of our work on PIDD Metrics. One of the challenges in trying to energise and lift the standard of information provision to customers during disruption is whether suitable metrics exist that could be used to measure and incentivise better delivery and quality. Rail performance measures have existed for over twenty- five years and currently comprise PPM, CaSL and now the recently introduced right time metric. The punctuality measures are derived from an array of systems and infrastructure, and sit at the heart of the Track Access contracts between Network Rail and the TOCs.

Those systems are operated and monitored in real time through teams of performance and delay attribution staff and processed daily by systems which then enable detailed analysis, reporting, and the development of corrective action plans to address root causes. Because of the financial penalty/reward attached to the performance regime, it is relatively straightforward to create business cases for investment in actions to reduce delay and cancellations. Performance management is a highly-numerate activity, made so by the fact that punctuality and cancellations are measured as arithmetical deviations from an on-time train plan. There is little need of subjective judgement except where the root causes are unclear, shared or disputed.

None of that architecture or such systems exist for passenger information. The passenger perceptions of how well information is handled will vary considerably from individual to individual. Information is not easily amenable to numerate metrics without some interpretation and conversion of qualitative judgements into numerate measures. This situation is not unlike SQUIRE-type regimes or station and train quality regimes that are commonplace in Rapid Transit PPP contracts, which translate assessments into scores. PPP rapid transit projects commonly have KPIs which cover: satisfaction surveys, information (including timetabling and disruption to services), ticketing and fare options, and staff services at platforms and *en route*, among others.[14] So there would appear to be no fundamental reason why such a regime could not be applied to GB Mainline Rail.

Quality scoring regimes can prove tricky to moderate and refine in such a way that subjectivity or bias does not skew the results. A further factor is that nearly all the organisations we met referred to information provision as just one (important) aspect of the overall customer experience; and the challenge here is, and will be, why just aim for common metrics on PIDD and not for the whole Customer Experience?

8.2 Options analysis

During this review we have looked at the existing systems and metrics that TOCs employ and discussed what may be possible.

We have set 3 key "tests" that deployment of any such metrics must meet:

1. **Is it useful at driving change?** This needs a reliable numerate measure, or at least ranked metric, which evaluates what customers actually experience, and allows motivation for change and investment in better outcomes

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[14] "Private Sector Participation in Light Rail- Light Metro Transit Initiatives":Cledan Mandri-Perrot: Published by The World Bank 2010

2. **Does it employ readily-available data?** It would be best if suitable metrics could be adopted without significant investment in systems and processes, and;
3. **Will it be likely to be readily accepted?** Acceptance across the industry, including stakeholders, will be important

Note that these tests are not set as pass/fail; they are set to try to rank options and identify any remaining hurdles to overcome.

The candidate metrics appear to be:-

Option 1: TOCs use their own Metrics: TOCs continuing with the baskets of measures and dashboards which they each currently find useful which include some of the options mentioned below.

Option2: Develop new set of measures akin to a SQUIRE or PPP-type regime: this would enable a fresh start and could comprise a fresh set of indicators for the things that were felt to be relevant and important. We have not tried to define what these might be.

Option 3 "Surface" and use the NRPS detailed scores for PIDD: there are Transport Focus NRPS Scores, which underneath the headline indicators have detailed data available from their website on:

- How well delay was dealt with
- Information Provided
- Accuracy of Information
- Usefulness of the Information
- Speed of the information Provision
- Time taken to Resolve the delay
- The Availability of alternatives

If a broader set of metrics were desired, then those relating to Information at Stations and Information on Trains could be added.

Option 4: PIDD-29: RDG commission this quantitative research to answer the PIDD-29 objective from the PIDD 50-point plan:

> "*Ongoing quantitative research should be commissioned to measure the improvement in the quality of information during disruption for all train companies and that the results are published.*" *Collect responses from rail users on a national (Great Britain) basis by passenger type and by TOC sector.*

Table 3 below explores each potential approach against these "tests".

Table 3 – Metrics Options Evaluation

Potential approach	Test 1 Is it useful at driving change?	Test 2 Does it employ readily-available data?	Test 3 Will it be likely to be readily adopted?	Commentary
Option 1 Each TOC continues with its own basket of measures	**X** Allows comparisons within each TOC Only	**✓** TOCs could continue developing measures suitable to their customers and business	**✓** No change, so yes	This option appears attractive from a TOC perspective but would not allow easy or reliable comparisons across the GB Mainline network and impedes regulatory or franchise incentivisation. Unlikely to trigger renewed focus
Option 2: Develop new set of measures akin to a SQUIRE or PPP-type regime	**✓** Would allow measurement and incentivisation against nationally-accepted criteria across the GB Mainline network.	**X** Would require development, consultation and agreement of common definitions and data	**X** While due process would inevitably reach agreement (or be imposed) this is likely to take time and might focus PIDD effort on metrics rather than quality information provision.	This option appears attractive from Regulatory and franchise incentivisation perspectives and should allow reliable comparisons. Significant time would be entailed in developing and agreeing a new measure set and they may end up similar to those already available (such as NRPS). Unlikely to bring fresh insight.
Option 3: "Surface" and use the NRPS detailed scores for PIDD	**✓** Would allow measurement and incentive-isation against nationally-accepted criteria of actual passenger experience	**✓** Data already exists, is downloadable in Excel from the TF website, and is in widespread use.	**✓** There are no obvious drawbacks as TOCS use this data already, some double-up and commission additional NRPS surveys	This option appears attractive from a Regulatory perspective and would allow easy and reliable comparisons across the GB Mainline network.
Option 4: PIDD-29	**?** Would possibly allow measurement and incentive-isation against nationally-accepted criteria of actual passenger experience but only if individual scores shared openly	**?** Data already exists but only in printed report form and TOC to TOC comparisons are not available, though individual TOCs have access to their own data.	**✓** There are no obvious drawbacks as RDG and TOCS use this data already.	This option appears attractive from an individual TOC perspective but does not allow easy and reliable comparisons across the GB Mainline network.

8.3   A Proposed Way Forward

Using these tests, the only set of metrics which clearly meet the three tests is Option 3, to use NRPS scores. It might be questioned why, if these are available now, they are not proving useful to drive improvement. This may be because they have insufficient prominence, no mandatory status, or it may be because they are simply not used as rigorously as they could be - for example, in franchise incentivisation or in regulation. If the NRPS scores were used to incentivise penalty/reward payments, then we suggest that this would bring renewed focus. However, NRPS measures a range of customer experience touchpoints, of which information needs are a sub-set, so care needs to be taken to focus on the right ones.

The fact that Transport Focus has a well-developed mechanism for collecting, organising and producing the results from their work and the fact that their researchers are getting the scoring from actual passengers in a balanced way, are also powerfully attractive. It may be possible to modify or enhance the question sets that drive the data (provided such changes do not reduce impact or relevance or prolong the reaching of agreement).

9.   THE MATURITY MODEL

9.1   Introduction

During the work described earlier in this Report, we have also developed a draft Maturity Model for PIDD for ORR consideration. Maturity models are not a new concept in rail, one has existed for safety risk management since 2011 and ORR released the latest version in June 2017 ("RM3-The Risk Management Maturity Model": ORR June 2017) with consultation under way currently (2019) for a further update.

A PIDD Maturity Model provides a potential means by which each GB Mainline Rail company could evaluate where they are on the journey from basic "ad hoc" arrangements for Passenger Information during disruption, towards "Excellence". However, consideration needs to be given to the rather fundamental point about where PIDD sits in the wider Customer Experience area. Is PIDD important enough to demand its own maturity model, and if so by measuring it in this way does this start to skew behaviours to this element of Customer Experience, perhaps at the expense of others which are equally important? In addition to the user-testing and calibration that would need to be undertaken, these questions would require careful consideration.

The graphic below from our Draft Maturity Model illustrates how rail organisations might organise and evaluate their maturity in managing Passenger Information During Disruption. The criteria within this graphic were based on the structure and content of the assessment protocol, which we used to guide the reviews with TOCs; however, we have tweaked aspects of the Maturity Model in the light of feedback from those review meetings.

Figure 2 Draft Maturity Model showing elements of good information provision

9.2 Approach

The structure of the Draft PIDD maturity Model we have developed mirrors the structure of the Assessment Protocol that we used to assess how robust, mature and effective the TOC and Network Rail arrangements were during our review visits. There are four segments within which the Draft PIDD Maturity Model Criteria sit. These are:

1. Enablers
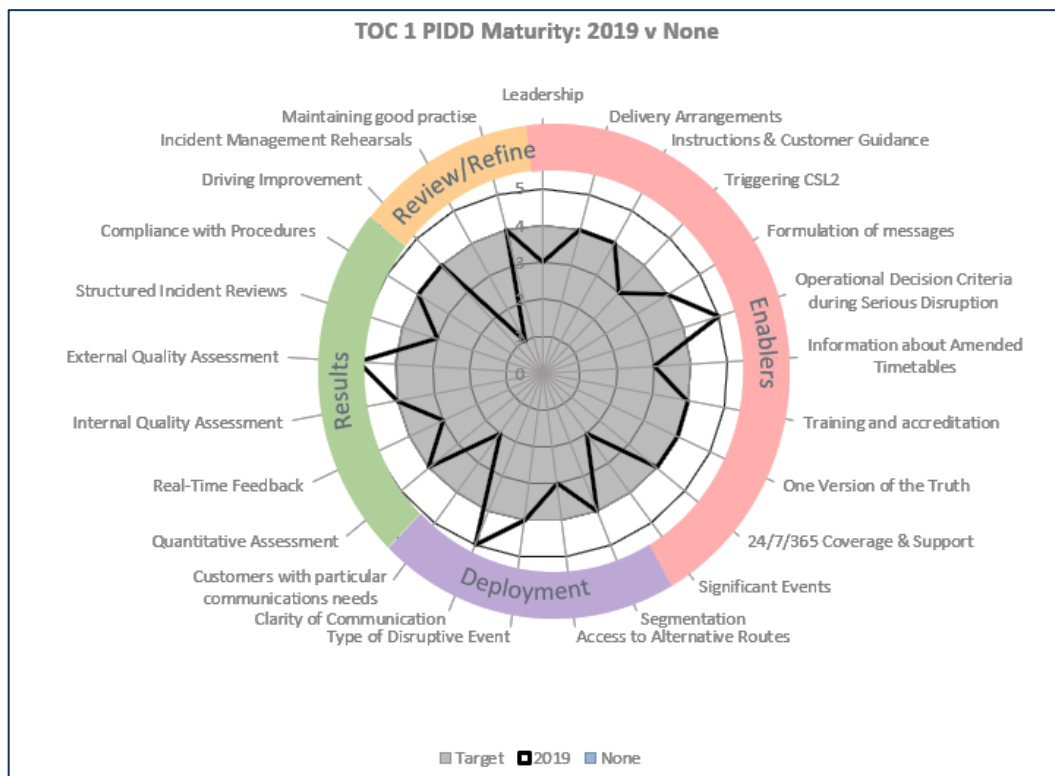2. Deployment
3. Results
4. Review and Refine

Within each of these 4 segments we have developed a range of criteria against which an organisation can evaluate its level of maturity, by looking at the qualitative descriptions for each element and then plotting the appropriate ranking in the model. Taken individually and together, the scoring against these criteria provides the indications of the level of maturity and, importantly, shows where focus and investment needs to be prioritised.

Ranking Level	Level of Maturity
5	Excellence
4	Embedded/Pro-active
3	Structured/Standardised
2	Maturing
1	Ad Hoc

Each of the criteria was developed from a range of sources - good practices we derived from the comparator transport sectors, good practices we observed and learned about in the assessment visits and researching published sources such as Transport Focus surveys. Observations from the mystery shopper work were also used. Together these were distributed across each of the 4 model segments. Increasing levels of maturity were defined for each climbing against progressively more challenging requirements for the journey from "ad hoc" (1) to "excellence" (5).

These definitions are not intended to set out definitively what an excellent PIDD management system should include, that is not it's function, but they do provide a robust start point from where a definition might be derived.

We have used fictitious test/ dummy information to populate the model and the graphic below illustrates the dashboard output. After some testing and refining including a workshop on 27/02/19, we have frozen this for review by ORR.

Figure 3 Generic example of Maturity Model Dashboard Output

In the example above, the fictitious TOC ("TOC 1") has broadly attained the goals it has set (grey shaded area). However, efforts might be prioritised on: Incident Management Rehearsals, Management of Significant Events, Customers with Particular Communication Needs as these are scoring 2, and rank as short of target. Good practices clearly exist in the Operational Decision Criteria during Serious Disruption, the Clarity of Communications and in the use of External Quality Assessments. These might be shared with others.

9.3 Benefits of a Maturity Model
There are a range of benefits that can be derived from use of a maturity model.

The actions needed to assess each score and determine a numerate ranking act to focus the mind of those responsible for passenger information on just how well the arrangements

work. Question and challenge can focus on areas where changes could lift the level of information provision higher.

As with similar models the very clear graphics show progress year to year, and if these are against goals set for team and executive responsibilities they can be tied into objective-setting. It also enables leadership teams to see where efforts can be devoted to improving aspects of PIDD beyond the minima already established as companies strive for excellence. For example, it would allow a TOC to see clearly that while enablers and deployment of PIDD are strong, there are opportunities for improving the review and refine approach to adjust information better to suit passenger needs.

Applying the criteria objectively also reduces innate bias and subjectivity, provided that assessors adopt an evidence-based approach to evaluation.

Those responsible for aspects of passenger information can also take each criterion and use them as benchmarks, perhaps for the enhancement of station and traincrew communications skills and competence development, or to help build the business case for investment in better systems to support staff in their interaction with customers.

Information on the performance of duty holders can be gathered in a variety of ways, through interviewing, observation, auditing, and observing at various levels through an organisation and in particular taking the perspective of the customers and passengers

This would enable the organisation to understand their strengths and target areas for improvement in a way that is objective and has consistency. Good practices can be identified and extended for wider use, and areas where support and investment is required to address deficiencies can be clarified.

9.4   Next Steps

It is clear from the draft maturity model produced here, that the concept is practicable to realise. We believe that the systematic approach it brings to increasing the maturity of information provision would bring clear benefits. Because the model is not yet calibrated, we have placed clear caveats on its use. We have developed this draft model to the point where it could be used unofficially to test and evaluate its usefulness. If these tests look promising, ORR could then proceed to have the model developed further.

10. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

10.1 General

The provision of information on the GB Mainline Rail network is manifestly more complex than the comparator transport undertakings we have examined in the course of this research. In spite of these differences, there are still valuable lessons which can be learned which would enable the industry to take an improved approach and in doing so, obtain better outcomes for rail passengers, both during normal service operation and in all types of disruption.

As society becomes increasingly data dependent, most people have a smart phone. TfL research indicates that as many as 98% of their customers in London have a smart phone. Changes in society's expectations about ready access to detailed information are being driven not just by the transport sector but by Google Maps, Uber, WhatsApp and other platforms. In short, customer expectations are ever- increasing.

10.2 Strategic Imperatives and Industry Contractual Drivers

There is no explicit GB Mainline Rail Passenger Information strategic imperative that provides high level direction on what the industry must aim to achieve and deliver.

It is not unreasonable to expect the Department for Transport to develop appropriate strategic imperatives for GB Mainline Rail and to incorporate these into future franchise specifications. Franchise change mechanisms also need to be deployed to allow current/ existing franchises to be re-specified in areas where rapid change in technology is driving customer expectations. Currently, the franchising system can 'ossify' a specification which has become out-dated, or superseded by technological advances.   There is a clear requirement and opportunity for beneficial changes to specifications during the franchise term. Due account would clearly need to be taken of any significant financial implications from retrospective change.

Finally, the issue of strategic leadership of the passenger information portfolio should be considered by the Williams Review, as it is an important "missing link" within the current industry arrangements that may be a significant factor in determining future arrangements.

10.3 Industry Strategy

There is no clear industry strategy for passenger information provision.

The establishment of the RDG in 2011, as a representative body comprising all train operators and Network Rail, provided GB Mainline Rail with the opportunity to develop a comprehensive Passenger Information Strategy covering all those organisations with a responsibility for information provision. RDG members have not yet, for whatever reason, given this sufficient priority in terms of focus or allocated resources.   As a direct consequence, there is no clear industry strategy for passenger information provision. The outdated ACoP - Provision of Customer Information - remains the only industry 'standard' that currently specifies industry-wide requirements relating to the delivery of passenger information.

The tactical developments to improve passenger information provision in the current industry appear to have focused on the available IT systems as the starting point, rather than a 'first principles' assessment of requirements from a customer perspective. The lack of "a picture on the box" of PIDD jigsaw pieces has resulted in piecemeal improvements rather

than prioritised changes against a "What Good Looks Like" set of arrangements. Without a clear strategy, there is no identified direction of travel, no funded tactical plan, no programme for enhancements to be introduced, and no prioritised order of delivery. The three years' worth of backlog enhancements requested to the National Rail Enquiries website and the potential for the Darwin system to deliver fuller capabilities are evidence of this lack of a clear strategy. The 'strategy gap' is directly responsible for the current unsatisfactory position in the industry and as a direct result there are too many weak links in the information chain.

With the appointment of a new CEO at NR, it is likely that NR will adopt a higher profile and take a firm leadership position on the industry's customer information delivery strategy.

10.4 Accountabilities
The accountabilities for the delivery of good passenger information do not sit well in the current TOC and Network Rail organisational structures.

Lack of clarity of roles, responsibilities and priorities between Operational and Customer Service/Experience portfolios is a recurring industry theme. Comparator transport modes do not appear to have the same difficulty in agreeing clear divisions of responsibility that cover all essential aspects of information delivery by key staff to all customers. Where there are such difficulties, we learned that they can be overcome either through sensible collaborative action or by leadership and clear directive action. The complexity of the GB Mainline industry is clearly a factor, with a wide range of organisational models seeking to dispense accurate, reliable and timely information (and advice/ guidance) to an even wider range of customers, and customer types, in a variety of different journey phases, through a complex range of media.

Network Rail has important responsibilities for providing passenger information at the 20 Managed Stations for which it is directly responsible, and which constitute the largest, busiest stations and interchange points on the UK network. However, there is very little central Network Rail specification of how information requirements are to be met or delivered. This has resulted in an inconsistent approach in the presentation and delivery of information to customers that use these stations. Variable specification in project delivery has created vastly different information displays at recently rebuilt and refurbished stations– in stark contrast with the standardisation and uniformity of information displays, signing and wayfinding which one finds at major airports all over the world, and not just in the UK.

10.5 Outcomes Specification
Identifying What Good Looks Like

We have met a large number of people in the industry as part of our Review; managers, front-line staff, and Control Centre personnel, and there have been copious opinions expressed about the current industry failings around passenger information. It has been rather more challenging to identify a comprehensive view as to what good looks like, both now and in the immediate foreseeable future. Again, without a picture on the box of PIDD jigsaw pieces, it is hardly surprising if the outcomes from the industry's efforts in this area are not optimised.

Transport Focus have by far the best and most complete view and can articulate many of the component parts of a 'good' strategy which would move the industry forward and would begin to address the long-term deficit in strategic thinking.

The research undertaken for this review of PIDD arrangements and delivery will help to provide a more complete picture of the necessary steps to compiling an Outputs Specification for passenger information across the industry.

10.6 Information Process Architecture
The need to map the entire information process

From our experience, the rail industry has never fully accepted the need to map the entire information process and incorporate the key activities within an industry standard or similar. As a direct result, many critical activities within the information chain, that can have a material impact on the timeliness and quality of delivered information, and the ability to provide appropriate advice and guidance to customers, are not routinely measured, assessed, reviewed, and updated, even less challenged for their applicability or relevance. The industry is largely reactive to the societal changes which are occurring with every technological development and is always 'behind the curve' of customer expectations and demands in the area of information provision. Without a clear picture of how each element of the mix adds to the whole, and without a clear understanding of the dependencies and inter-relationships between the various elements, the industry will continue to under-optimise its human and financial contributions to better passenger information.

An increasingly important feature in this mix of elements is timeliness of information delivery, and the essential need to maintain, at all times, 'one version of the truth', not just for those already inside the 'railway system' but increasingly for those intending passengers who have not yet left home, college, the office etc. In recent years, the divergence between the speed of communication over 'conventional' media, including station CIS and PA systems, compared with the very direct, one-to-one medium of Twitter, has become an increasing embarrassment for some frontline staff, who are less well-informed than the customers they are trying to advise and help. A good understanding of the process architecture and inter-relationships would help the decision-makers within the industry to pre-empt such situations before they become a problem, rather than reacting retrospectively.

10.7 IT Systems Architecture
Support for the progressive adaptation, development and exploitation of the IT information systems architecture is critical to good, timely, accurate and consistent passenger information.

The industry has a good grasp on the systems architecture which supports current information provision, and the various media through which it is delivered, a position which reflects the focus which RDG has had on this area for a number of years. The development of the Darwin platform has created a step-change in many aspects of information provision, and Darwin has potential and capacity for further development. In general, however, IT systems developments have pre-dated and preceded understanding of the process architecture. In practice, this means there is a wide ranging and extensive menu of additional changes and software "fixes" to implement, just to bring the IT systems to current standard. No adequate financial provision appears to have been established for these developments, and, in any case, the information-related "fixes" are not considered a priority. A further consequence is that the industry continues to take short or medium-term development decisions which encourage further building, iteratively, upon IT platforms with a heritage stretching back many decades, and which cannot be expected to have infinite capacity or the inherent reliability to allow this to go on indefinitely.

10.8   Integrated Operational Arrangements
Efficient operational arrangements must be established across the industry

Efficient operational arrangements that are centred around Control Office procedures and incorporate PIDD requirements for information from incident sites, estimates for resumption of normal working, declaration of CSL2 etc. have not yet been adequately established across the industry, and whilst "Prioritised Planning" arrangements were a major step in the right direction, there is a need for more comprehensive and consistent arrangements.

Network Rail has a vital role to play in excellent passenger information through the deployment of response to incidents on the network. Restoration of service is a key priority when incidents occur, but this must not be at the expense of providing rapid, concise, accurate information about the cause, accurate realistic estimates of the time to resolve the incident and importantly, keeping Train Operators updated regularly.

10.9   Detailed Customer Requirements
Responding to the information needs of different types of customers

The industry has a limited appreciation of the needs of different customer types for information, particularly during disruption, and is still generally guilty of delivering information using inappropriate language – either terminology which is too complicated, or couched in railway jargon.

Methods of delivery are also important. Whilst the industry has made good progress in meeting the information needs of those who are Smart-phone or internet connected, there remains a sizeable population of rail users who do not have such facilities, but who do have equal or at least similar information needs. The industry must be prepared to continue to meet the information needs of such customers, whilst continuing to respond to the fast-moving world of 'smart' connectivity.

10.10 Delivery Roles and Responsibilities
Ensuring that properly trained and competent staff can provide high quality passenger information at all times

- Staff Selection, Training and Competence Management – the adoption by TOCs and NR of competency standards and competency management arrangements for the provision of customer information, particularly during disruption, is overdue. These arrangements should extend to all staff who hold either permanent or occasional front-line responsibilities (such as those who staff CATs teams). The good examples which currently exist in the industry should be seen as good practice for others to adopt.
- On-Board Announcements – the question of how passengers on board trains operated without a Conductor or Train Manager are to receive reliable and timely information and advice remains unanswered, but is still a key area of concern.
- Information controllers – the means by which information and wider customer responsibilities are resourced within Control Offices are variable, and some TOCs have still to address peak workloads during times of disruption. Some good practice is however evident, and TOCs should be encouraged to review their arrangements with this in mind.
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10.11 Measures and Metrics
Establishing measures and metrics for passenger information provision across the industry

Measures and metrics are one of the most obvious missing components of the current industry information/PIDD arrangements and rectifying this omission must be a top priority. Clear, simple metrics that engage managers at all levels on a daily, weekly and 4-weekly basis are essential if information provision is to get the attention necessary to meet even minimum customer requirements.

Passenger information is very much out of sight and out of mind currently, and there will be no progress with overall improvement until and unless the industry players are exposed to the harsh reality of a suite of relevant, industry-approved and recognised measures each period. We have suggested how such a suite of metrics might be adopted. In due course, targets to be hit and those for improvement and league tables of achievement will attract the attention of all the industry's players and be a 'force for good' in the delivery of greatly improved arrangements across the industry. They will also serve to enable clearer and more supportable business cases for investment in the technical changes required.

10.12 Assessment, Review and Benchmarking
Establishing an independent assessment and review process for passenger information delivery

The purpose of the industry adopting such a process, based on a recognised and robust methodology such as EFQM, would be to drive consistent and measurable improvement. The industry has, in recent years, moved away from deploying independent assessment and review arrangements for testing its critical processes (other than those relating to safety), in favour of more self-certification, but adoption of the proposed Maturity Model approach may re-invigorate the drive for more independent, objective assessment against a range of relevant criteria within passenger information.

In practice, the minimum standards established in the ACoP have become 'de facto' targets to achieve, rather than the base from which to drive improvement, and a different means of incentivising longer-term change is now required.

10.13 Governance and Regulation
Ensuring governance and regulation arrangements which incentivise improvements in performance and delivery of good customer information

The lack of an appropriate governance structure for passenger information provision, which would provide strategic leadership, direction, prioritisation, development programmes and funding is one of the reasons that passenger information remains a lesser priority in the industry. It is also one of the reasons why improvements in this area have not kept pace with rising customer expectations. The fact that information during disruption is regularly one of the weakest categories in the NRPS twice-yearly customer satisfaction survey has not been sufficient to galvanise the industry as a whole to do better. Firmer regulation by ORR was conceived as a means of filling this void, but has probably, in some respects, had the opposite effect.

Ensuring an effective governance structure within the industry for passenger information provision, with whatever level of regulatory oversight is necessary or appropriate, is an important – indeed essential – step towards positioning customer information at the forefront of the industry's delivery responsibilities in the future.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The Strategic Imperative

The Department for Transport should develop appropriate strategic requirements for GB Mainline Rail passenger information provision and incorporate these into future contractual specifications for Operators. A mechanism is also required to enable existing contracts to be modified and funded, to take account of changes in customer needs, and to encourage appropriate behaviours by the franchisees.

11.2 Industry Strategy

The industry must develop a comprehensive passenger information strategy for GB Mainline Rail, and seek to agree robust funding arrangements which support its delivery. The strategy should confer for passenger information the same degree of importance and prominence as punctuality and reliability. The strategy should identify the range of desirable outcomes which would be expected over time, working with organisations such as Transport Focus to agree priorities within a clear forward plan. There will be a number of specific elements in this strategy;

- *Information Process Architecture*

  RDG must develop, publish and maintain a comprehensive 'map' of the information process architecture within GB Mainline Rail, in order to highlight areas which require improvement, areas where further development work is required to meet changing customer expectations, and to identify where measurement would improve the focus on consistency of delivery

- *IT Systems Architecture*

  Support for the progressive adaptation, development and exploitation of the IT systems architecture is critical to good, timely, accurate and consistent passenger information, and a clear, medium-term plan which fully takes account of customer needs, and delivers timely and effective IT upgrades and solutions should be agreed.

- *Approved Code of Practice*

  RDG must take the lead in revising and updating the Approved Code of Practice to provide a comprehensive, relevant and consistent methodology for GB Mainline Rail to deliver customer information during disruption.

- *NR Managed Stations*

  NR operates the largest and busiest stations on the network, and these must become exemplars of good practice in the provision of customer information. NR must initiate a comprehensive review of arrangements, procedures and delivery standards across the Managed Stations estate, with a view to improving the quality, consistency and effectiveness of both information regarding disruption, and the advice to customers whose journeys are disrupted. The review should also consider whether learning from aviation, captured in CAA guidance (CAP 1244: Passenger welfare at times of major disruption - Guidance for UK airports), could benefit GB Mainline Rail.

- *Detailed Customer Requirements*

  RDG will develop guidance for Train Operators and Network Rail on how to respond to the information needs of different types of customers, by exploiting all available media, and through use of simple language

- *Measures & Metrics*

  RDG should take the lead in developing a suite of relevant, industry-approved and recognised measures for passenger information delivery, which all Train Operators

and Network Rail would compile each period, and report in a national template. This must include and build on the Maturity Model approach developed in this Review

- *Assessment, Review & Benchmarking*
  RDG should establish an independent assessment and review process for passenger information delivery, to drive the delivery of consistent and measurable improvement over time. Arrangements should be based on an existing recognised and robust methodology, such as EFQM.

11.3 Accountabilities

Each passenger Train Operator and Network Rail Region must identify an Executive-level Director accountable for passenger information, and a business Champion to provide leadership across functional boundaries within each organisation, and across the range of involved delivery organisations.

11.4 Integrated Operational Arrangements

Network Rail must lead the industry development of good, standardised, consistent and effective operational procedures which deliver timely and accurate customer information. These procedures will centre largely on Control Offices, but will include the responsibilities and duties of first responders, and RIOs, at the site of incidents, and of those tasked with the wording of holding and core messages, and their updates. These procedures will also provide for passenger information issues to be included in all post-incident Learning Reviews.

11.5 Delivery Roles & Responsibilities

Train Operators and Network Rail have a key responsibility to ensure that those staff members involved in delivery of customer information are competent to do so and are assured as competent by periodic review and assessment. This must include those who undertake such duties infrequently, and must consider those circumstances where it is challenging to meet customer information requirements – such as on train services where only a driver is deployed, or in Control Offices where peaks of workload for Information staff are an issue.

11.6 Governance & Regulation

Ensuring an effective governance structure within the industry for passenger information provision, with whatever level of regulatory oversight is necessary or appropriate, is an important – indeed essential – step towards positioning customer information at the forefront of the industry's delivery responsibilities in the future. The industry must determine how best this can be achieved, and put the necessary arrangements in place as soon as possible.

12. RECORD OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN THIS REPORT

The following sources were referred to as part of the Literature search and review conducted during this research. These were used:

- As inputs to the structured assessment protocol
- To gain insights into the particular information needs of passengers and previous research
- To understand arrangements in non- rail transport undertakings

Rail

a) Information for passengers Guidance on meeting the licence condition: ORR: Version 2: June 2016
b) Informed traveller investigation Information for passengers – March 2018 review: ORR:25 May 2018
c) Office of Rail and Road: Independent Inquiry into the Timetable Disruption in May 2018 - Final Report: ORR: 7 December 2018
d) Office of Rail and Road: Independent Inquiry into The Timetable Disruption in May 2018: ORR: 20 September 2018
e) 'Measuring Up' Annual Rail Consumer Report 2018: ORR
f) Passenger information when trains are disrupted Research report: Passenger Focus: May 2014
g) Passenger information during the 'Beast from the East' and Storm Emma in March 2018: Transport Focus: July 2018
h) National Rail Passenger Survey Main Report Autumn 2018
i) PIDD-29 Research Wave 3-6 Report: Accent: Prepared for Rail Delivery Group: December 2017
j) PIDD-29 Research Waves 7-10 Interim Report Accent: Prepared for Rail Delivery Group: December 2018
k) PIDD-29 Year 1 Report: Accent: Prepared for Rail Delivery Group: May 2017
l) Network Statement: Network Rail Infrastructure Limited: 2018
m) RSSB: The Future Railway - The Industry's Rail Technical Strategy 2012 Supporting Railway Business
n) TfL Whiteboard Posters: Final Debrief: produced by 2CV: October 2015
o) NRPS Reports: Transport Focus: various dates
p) RDG Information Feeds Developer Pack: RDG: 6th March 2017
q) RM3: The Risk Management Maturity Model: ORR: June 2017
r) Digital Railway Strategy: Network Rail: April 2018

Aviation

s) ComRes: Civil Aviation Authority: Consumer UK Aviation Consumer Survey: August 2018
t) CAP1472: Consumer attitudes to journey disruption A qualitative research report: Prepared for: Civil Aviation Authority: November 2016
u) CAA: CAP 1244: Passenger welfare at times of major disruption - guidance for UK airports
v) CAA: CAP 1258 Passenger experiences during flight disruption: Consumer research report

w) Amadeus: Shaping the future of Airline Disruption Management (IROPS) (commercial think-piece by a software systems provider)

x) Disruption at Gatwick Airport: Christmas Eve 2013: Report by David McMillan to the Board of Gatwick Airport Limited 26 February 2014

y) DfT White Paper: "Aviation 2050 The future of UK aviation - A consultation" Cm9714 December 2018

z) "Communicate Positively with your Passengers" By David Carlisle www.flywithconfidence.com. (undated)

aa) Open Data on Air Travel: Provision of Information to the Consumer and the Public: Report for CAA: April 2013

Coach and Bus

bb) Good Practice Guide Bus Users: Undated: Bususers.org

cc) Bus passengers' experience of delays and disruption Research report: Passenger Focus: April 2013

dd) Bus Passenger Survey: Transport Focus: Autumn 2017 Report

ee) SI No. 1865: ROAD TRAFFIC: The Rights of Passengers in Bus and Coach Transport (Exemptions and Enforcement) Regulations 2013

Other

ff) The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in Winter: An Independent Review: Final Report (Commissioned by DfT): October 2010

gg) "Private Sector Participation in Light Rail- Light Metro Transit Initiatives": Cledan Mandri-Perrot: Published by The World Bank 2010

GLOSSARY

ACoP	**Approved Code of Practice**
ATOC	**Association of Train Operating Companies**
BA	**British Airways**
BPS	**Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey**
c2c	**Essex Thameside Train Operating Company**
CAA	**Civil Aviation Authority**
CATs	**Customer Action Teams**
CIG	**Customer Information Group**
CIS	**Customer Information System (at stations)**
CP5/ CP6	**Network Rail Control Periods**
CSL2	**Customer Service Level 2**
CSR	**Cab Secure Radio**
DfT	**Department for Transport**
EFQM	**European Foundation for Quality Management**
GPS	**Global Positioning System**
GW	**Great Western**
GTR	**Govia Thameslink Railway**
HAL	**Heathrow Airport Ltd.**
KPI	**Key Performance Indicator**
LGW	**London Gatwick Airport**
LHR	**London Heathrow Airport**
LNER	**London North Eastern Railway**
LNW	**London North Western Railway**
LUL	**London Underground Ltd.**
NR	**Network Rail**
NRE	**National Rail Enquiries**
NRPS	**National Rail Passenger Survey**
NVQ	**National Vocational Qualification**
ORR	**Office of Rail and Road**
PA	**Public Address**
PIDD	**Passenger Information During Disruption**
PIS	**Passenger Information System (onboard trains)**
PPM	**Public Performance Measure**
PPP	**Public Private Partnership**
PRM	**Person with Restricted Mobility**
RDG	**Rail Delivery Group**
ROC	**Route Operating Centre**
SQUIRE	**Service Quality Inspection Regime**
STP	**Short Term Planning**
TF	**Transport Focus**
TfL	**Transport for London**
TfW	**Transport for Wales**
TMS	**Traffic Management System**
TOC	**Train Operating Company**
TS	**Transport Scotland**
VSTP	**Very Short Term Planning**
VT	**Virgin Trains**
XC	**Cross Country Trains**
WMCA	**West Midlands Combined Authority**