



Great Western Railway

Freepost - GWR CUSTOMER SUPPORT

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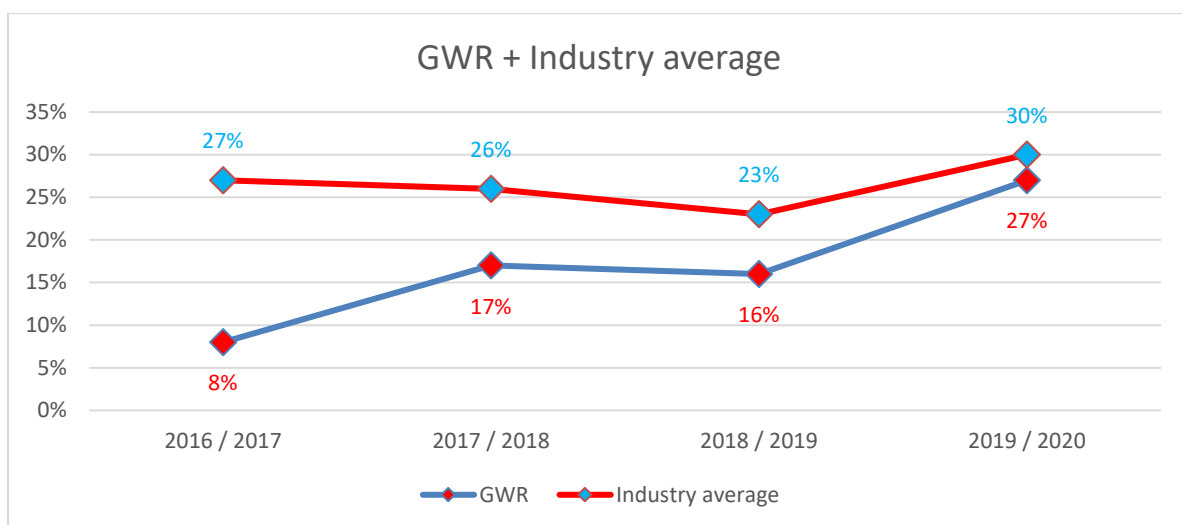
Marcus Clements
Head of Consumer Policy
Directorate of Economics, Markets and Strategy
Office of Rail and Road

15 January 2021

Dear Marcus,

Thank you for your letter of 15 December 2020 regarding Complaints Handling satisfaction. We're committed to providing an excellent service for any of our customers who have need to complain about any aspect of our service, and welcome the opportunity to set out our approach, how the ORR commissioned satisfaction survey contributes to this approach, and what activities we have, and will continue to undertake to improve how we manage complaints.

It was disappointing to see the GWR score below the industry average however, I'm heartened by the progress we've made over the last 4 years & referenced via the graph below. That said, there is clearly more to do to reach the standards our customer expect when dealing with complaints.



We've noted that the progress highlighted above has stalled in the first 6 months of 2021/22 and I've

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detailed some of the changes we've made to address this below.

It was also clear from the verbatim comments that issues surrounding refunds were the primary driver of complaint contacts in that 6 months, and therefore the primary source of dissatisfaction for Complaints Handling also.

Like all other TOCs we saw a huge volume of refund requests between P13 of 2019/20 and P3 of 2020/21. That resulted in a lot of system and process improvements to make the process as easy and as fast as possible for customers seeking a refund. Those changes worked well and the vast majority of GWR customers received their refund promptly, although it's clear that some customers didn't receive that good service & that dissatisfaction has impacted on the volume of complaints we received, and how well our customers felt we'd handled their subsequent complaint.

When looking at the Complaints Handling satisfaction survey we do so alongside several other measures to gain a holistic view of our complaints handling performance and to identify areas that require improvement. Our internal quality monitoring, CSAT scores, feedback from the Rail Ombudsman and direct customer feedback all contribute to that wider view and inform a continuous improvement approach to managing all customer contact through the contact centre, but with a specific focus on complaints.

That leads to changes to the texts we use to respond to complaints, changes to our internal escalation policy, formatting changes and the introduction of various tools to ensure we are eliminating common errors.

We have also made significant changes to our Customer Relations team with the majority of the work undertaken by a new, owning group led, contact centre rather than a 3rd party supplier. This new team will take time to bed in and find their feet, but once established will be able to provide a much better, and comprehensive complaints handling service for our customers. While it's certainly not the only reason we moved that work, improving how we deal with complaints was one of the core reasons we took such a large step.

The complaints handling survey is therefore a critical independent measure of how well our customers feel we are dealing with their complaints and will continue to inform how we prioritise our resource and focus with regard to our continuous improvement approach.

If I can be of any further help, or to clarify, or expand on any of the above, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me directly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Ness', written in a cursive style.

Jason Ness
Head of Customer Relations
Great Western Railway