

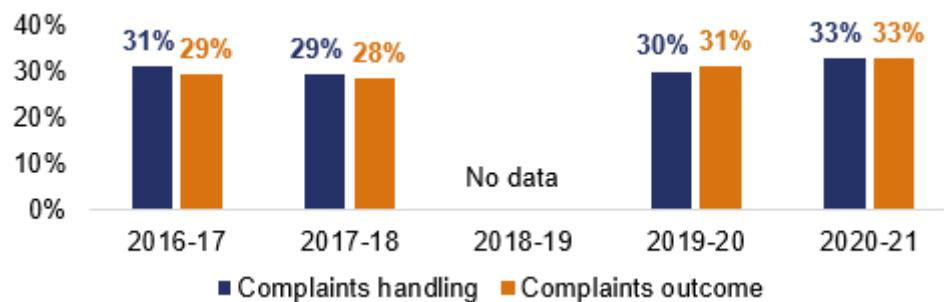
Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling 2020-21

6 July 2021

Overall 32.6% of respondents were **satisfied with how the operator handled their complaint** in 2020-21. This is an increase of 2.7 percentage points (pp) compared with 2019-20.

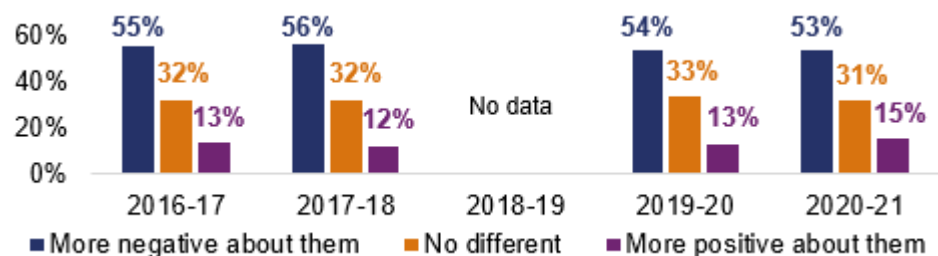
Satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint was 32.8% in 2020-21. This is an increase of 1.8pp compared with 2019-20.

Passenger satisfaction with the handling and outcome of their complaint (%), Great Britain, 2016-17 to 2020-21 (Table 4170)



Of the people surveyed, 15.3% of passengers felt more positive about the operator following how their complaint was handled in 2020-21. This is 2.3pp higher than 2019-20.

How the passenger felt about the operator in light of how their complaint was handled (%), Great Britain, 2016-17 to 2020-21 (Table 4170)



The data table and quality and methodology report associated with this factsheet is published on the [passenger satisfaction with complaints handling](#) page of the data portal.

Background:

This factsheet shows survey results on passenger satisfaction with operators' complaints handling processes.

This factsheet contains results on satisfaction with the **outcome** and **handling** of the complaint. It also covers how the passenger **felt about the operator** following the complaint.

Source: ORR survey of passengers' satisfaction with complaints handling

Latest year: 2020-21 (April 2020 to March 2021).

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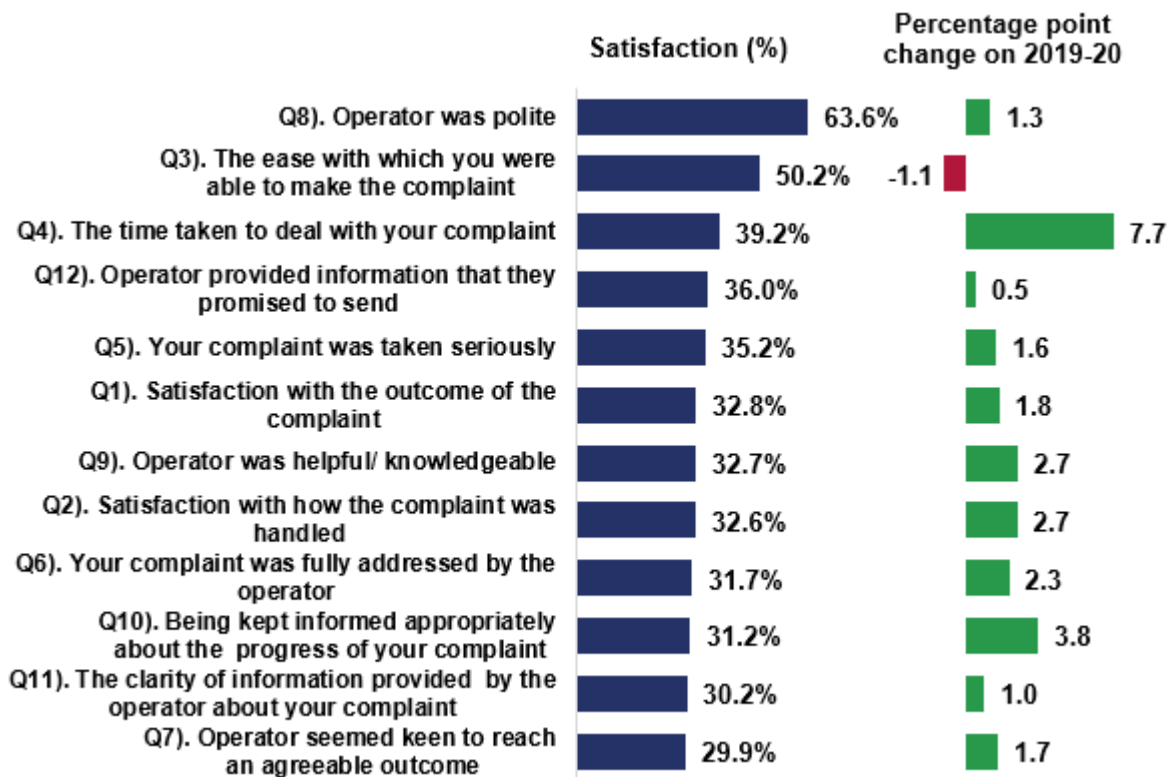
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1. Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling

- The highest satisfaction was with the politeness of operators when dealing with complaints. Overall, 63.6% of complainants were satisfied in 2020-21, a 1.3pp increase compared with 2019-20.
- The lowest satisfaction was with the operator seemed keen to reach an agreeable outcome. For this question 29.9% of complainants were satisfied, a 1.7pp increase compared with 2019-20.
- All questions saw increased satisfaction in 2020-21 when compared with 2019-20 except for the ease of making a complaint (a 1.1pp decline compared with 2019-20). However, this question still had the second highest satisfaction in 2020-21 (50.2%).
- Satisfaction with the time taken to deal with the complaint had the biggest increase in satisfaction in 2020-21 compared with last year. Overall 39.2% of complainants were satisfied, a 7.7pp increase compared with 2019-20. This may be due to operators improving their response rate to complaints for most of 2020-21 (please see the [passenger rail service complaints](#) statistical release for more information).

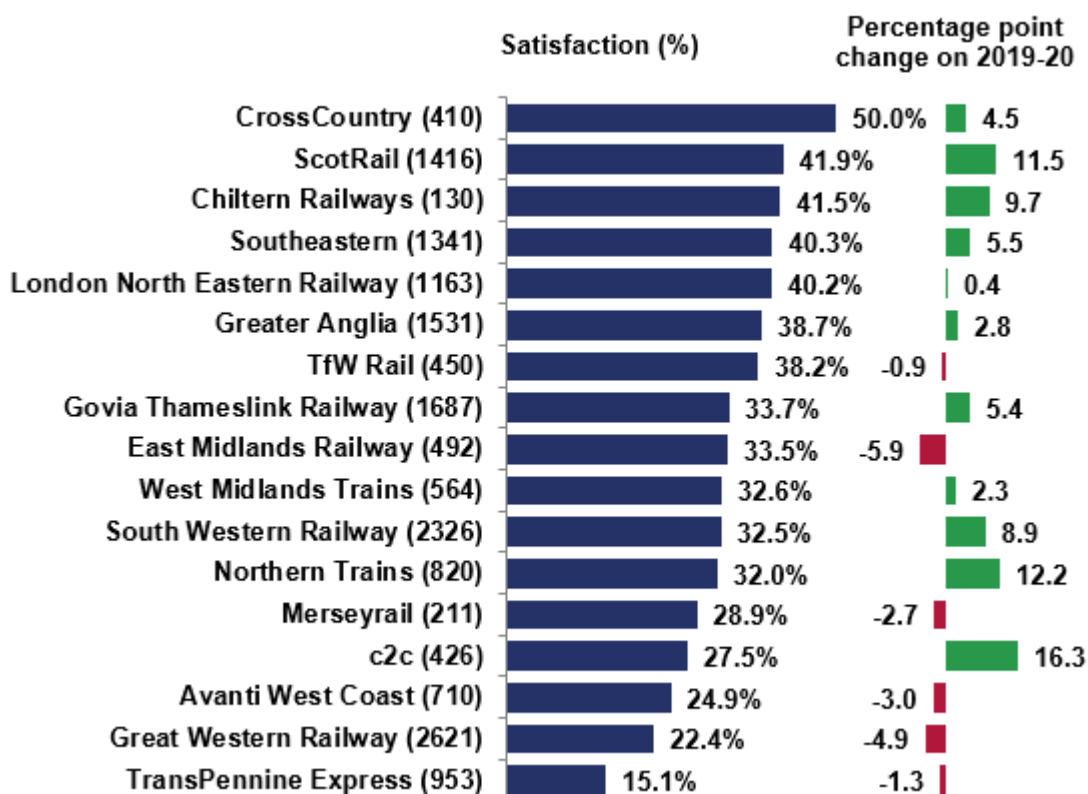
Figure 1.1 Passenger satisfaction with each question on complaint handling, Great Britain, 2020-21 (Table 4170)



2. Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling by operator

- CrossCountry had the highest satisfaction (50.0%) with how the complaint was handled in 2020-21, and TransPennine Express had the lowest satisfaction (15.1%).
- c2c saw the biggest increase in satisfaction with complaints handling compared with 2019-20. Overall, 27.5% of complainants were satisfied in 2020-21, a 16.3pp increase compared with last year.
- East Midlands Railway had the largest decrease in satisfaction with complaints handling compared with 2019-20. Overall, 33.5% of complainants were satisfied in 2020-21, a 5.9pp decrease compared with last year.

Figure 2.1 Passenger satisfaction with the handling of the complaint, by operator, Great Britain, 2020-21 (Table 4174)

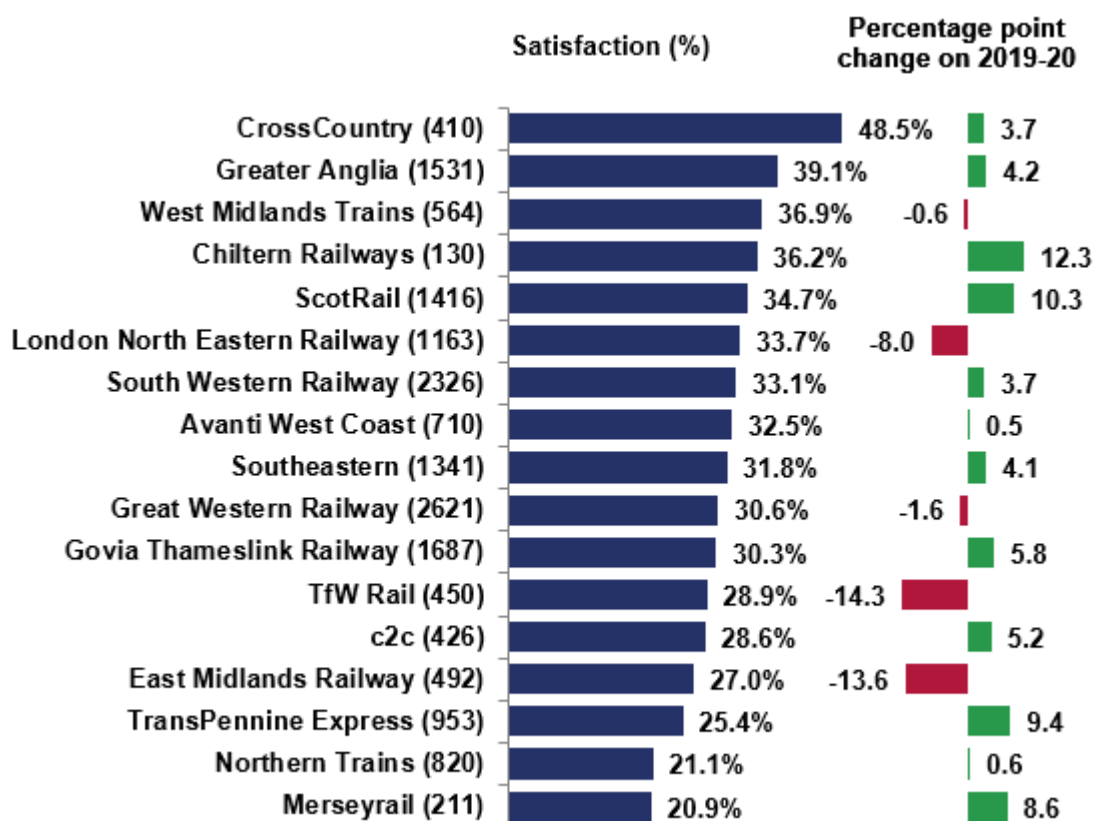


Note: Survey responses for each operator are shown in brackets. Operators with 100 or fewer responses are not shown in the chart above.

3. Passenger satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint by operator

- CrossCountry had the highest satisfaction (48.5%) with the outcome of complaint in 2020-21, and Merseyrail had the lowest satisfaction (20.9%).
- Chiltern Railway saw the biggest increase in satisfaction with the complaints outcome with 2019-20. Overall, 36.2% of complainants were satisfied in 2020-21, a 12.3pp increase compared with last year.
- TfW Rail had the largest decrease in satisfaction with the complaints outcome compared with 2019-20. Overall, 28.9% of complainants were satisfied in 2020-21, a 14.3pp decrease compared with last year.

Figure 3.1 Passenger satisfaction with the outcome of complaint, by operator, Great Britain, 2020-21 (Table 4174)



Note: Survey responses for each operator are shown in brackets. Operators with 100 or fewer responses are not shown in the chart above.

4. Annexes

Annex 1 – Quality and Methodology

After a passenger makes a complaint to an operator, they are invited to participate in a follow up survey by an independent research company, commissioned by ORR, about their experience of how the complaint was handled. The survey asks questions relating to the complaints process and resulting outcome.

The complainant is asked to rank their satisfaction with each question on a five-point scale or, in some instances, to provide a qualitative response via an open text box. This survey allows us to monitor industry performance over time and improve the transparency of passengers' experiences. The survey started during October 2015. Operators have joined the survey at different points since the survey started.

The number of responses to the survey vary by each operator and do not necessarily reflect the volume of complaints closed by each. Therefore, the national results have been weighted by complaint volumes: weighting helps to ensure the results from the survey are representative of complaints received by operators. The weights are produced by calculating an operator's percentage of overall responses to the passenger satisfaction survey and dividing by the percentage of all complaints that an operator is responsible for.

Table 4.1 Response by financial year

Financial year	Responses
2016-17	29,606
2017-18	41,789
2018-19	3,896
2019-20	54,573
2020-21	17,476

For 2020-21 13.1% of all complainants took part in the survey (17,476 responses out of 133,003 complaints).

Operators with a low sample size

Operators with 100 or fewer responses in 2020-21 not shown in figures 2.1 and 3.1 are: Caledonian Sleeper (86 responses), Grand Central (41), Heathrow Express (32), Hull Trains (19), London Overground (25) and TfL Rail (22).

Comparability of the time series

The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect on 25 May 2018. GDPR required ORR to change the methodology for the 2018-19 survey which resulted in less robust data due to lower sample sizes. This caused a decrease of 91% in the sample size in 2018-19 compared with 2017-18. This resulted in many operators having a too low sample size to report robust results on.

For 2019-20 we revised the methodology which resulted in an increase to the sample size while still being compliant with GDPR. This resulted in the sample size increasing substantially from 2018-19, and creating robust data at operator level.

During 2020-21 survey responses have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to fewer rail journeys, and therefore lower complaints made by passengers. The [volume of rail passenger complaints](#) declined by 75% in 2020-21 compared with the year before.

Margin of error

The following table shows the 2020-21 margin of error (95% confidence interval). As passenger satisfaction with complaints handling data is based on a survey, the margin of error tells you how many percentage points the results will differ from the real population value.

Table 4.2 2020-21 survey margin of error

Year	Question	Satisfied (%)	Margin of error (pp)
2020-21	Q1). Outcome	32.8%	+/- 0.7
2020-21	Q2). Complaints handling	32.6%	+/- 0.7

For more information about quality and methodology, please see the [quality and methodology report](#).

Other related data

Rail Passenger Complaints statistics:

ORR publish statistics about [rail passenger complaints](#). These statistics shows complaints volumes, the type of complaints passengers are making and response times to those complaints. The statistics also include appeals closed by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch.

Rail Ombudsman statistics:

The [Rail Ombudsman](#) provides a service to help sort out unresolved customer complaints about service providers within the rail industry. The Rail Ombudsman publishes statistics on the number and type of cases it is dealing with.

National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS):

The [NRPS](#) provides a network-wide picture of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel. Passenger opinions of train services are collected twice a year from a representative sample of journeys. The latest survey available is the spring 2020 report which was published on 2 July 2020. Due to the impact of the pandemic and reduced passengers using the railway the survey was paused. Since May 2020 Transport Focus have undertaken a [weekly survey exploring people's recent travel behaviour](#).

Key drivers of passenger satisfaction with complaints handling:

ORR is due to publish a report containing the results of independent analysis on the key drivers of passenger satisfaction with complaints handling. The report will be used to feed back to the rail industry and to inform our review of the complaints handling guidance. This report is due to be published in summer 2021 and will be available on the [ORR website](#).



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