

Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling

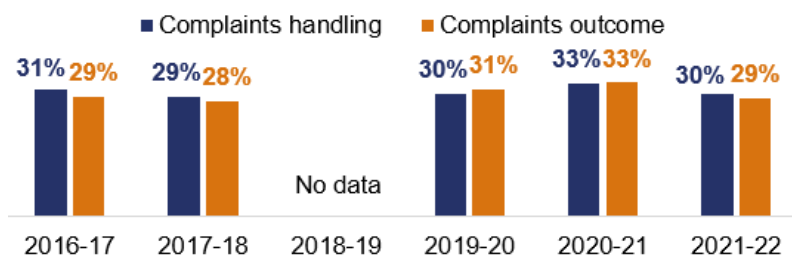
April 2021 to March 2022

5 July 2022

Overall 29.9% of respondents were **satisfied with how the train operator handled their complaint** in the latest year (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022). This is a decrease of 2.7 percentage points (pp) compared with the previous year.

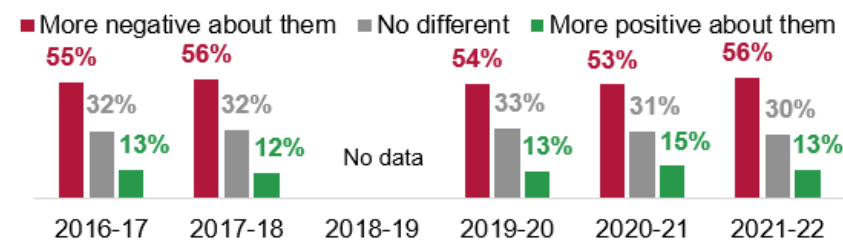
Satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint was 28.9%. This is a decrease of 3.9pp compared with the previous year.

Figure 1: Passenger satisfaction with the handling and outcome of their complaint, Great Britain, annual data, April 2016 to March 2022 (Table 4170)



Of those surveyed, 13.4% felt more positive and 56.5% felt more negative about the operator due to how their complaint was handled.

Figure 2: How passengers felt about the operator due to how their complaint was handled, Great Britain, annual data, April 2016 to March 2022 (Table 4170)



There were 45,147 responses to the survey in the latest year. This is over two and a half times higher than in the previous year (17,476), when the number of complaints operators received were affected by the pandemic.

All data tables and a quality and methodology report associated with this release are 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.

It includes satisfaction with the **outcome and handing** of complaints. It also covers how passengers **felt about the operator** following the complaint.

Source: ORR survey of passengers' satisfaction with complaints handling

Latest year: 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

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Responsible Statistician:

I Ritchie

Public Enquiries:

rail.stats@orr.gov.uk

Media Enquiries:

Tel: 020 7282 2094

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1. Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling

All questions on complaints handling showed a decrease in satisfaction in the latest year (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) when compared with the previous year. It should be noted that the number of survey responses is substantially higher in the latest year.

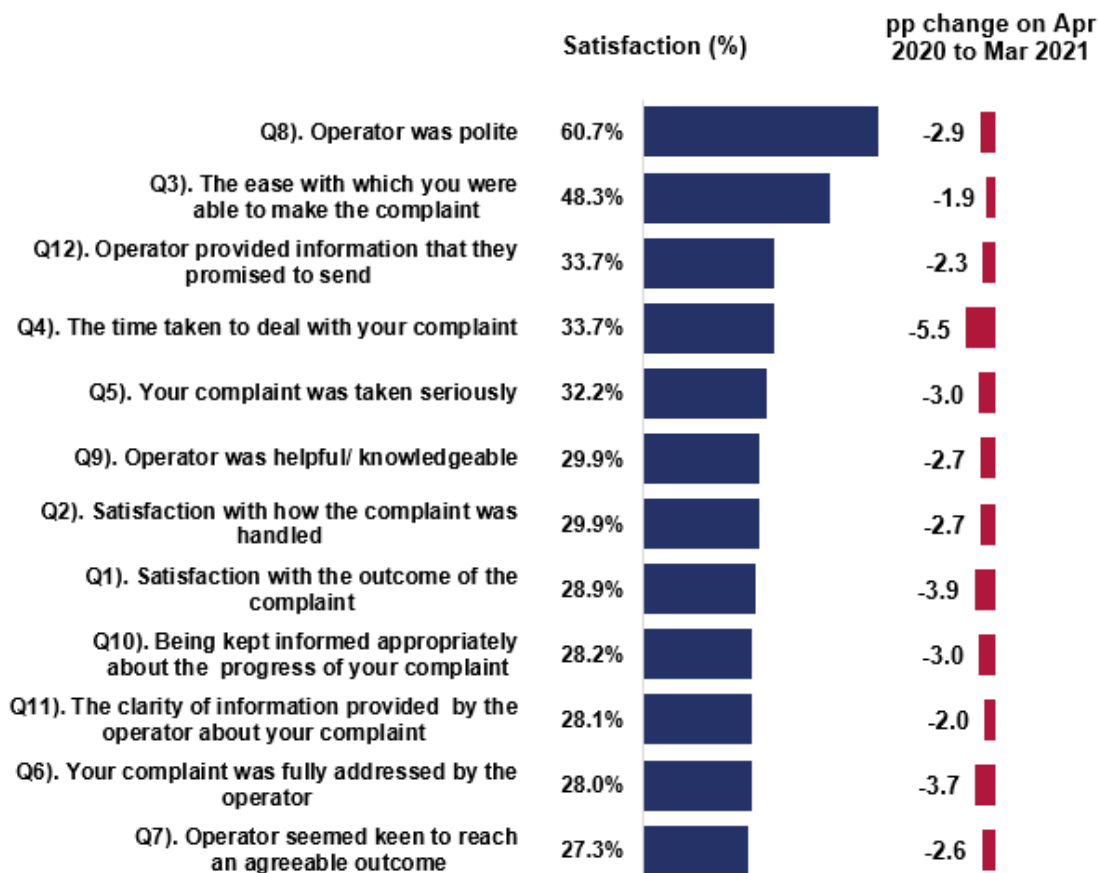
The largest decrease was with the time taken to deal with complaints, where the percentage of respondents that were satisfied fell by 5.5pp, to 33.7%.

The highest satisfaction was with the politeness of operators when dealing with complaints. Overall, 60.7% of respondents were satisfied in the latest year, a 2.9pp decrease compared with the previous year.

The lowest satisfaction scores were when passengers were asked if the operator seemed keen to reach an agreeable outcome. For this question 27.3% of respondents were satisfied, a 2.6pp decrease compared with the previous year.

Figure 1.1 Satisfaction decreased for all questions on complaints handling

Passenger satisfaction with each question on complaint handling, Great Britain, April 2021 to March 2022 and change compared with previous year (Table 4170)



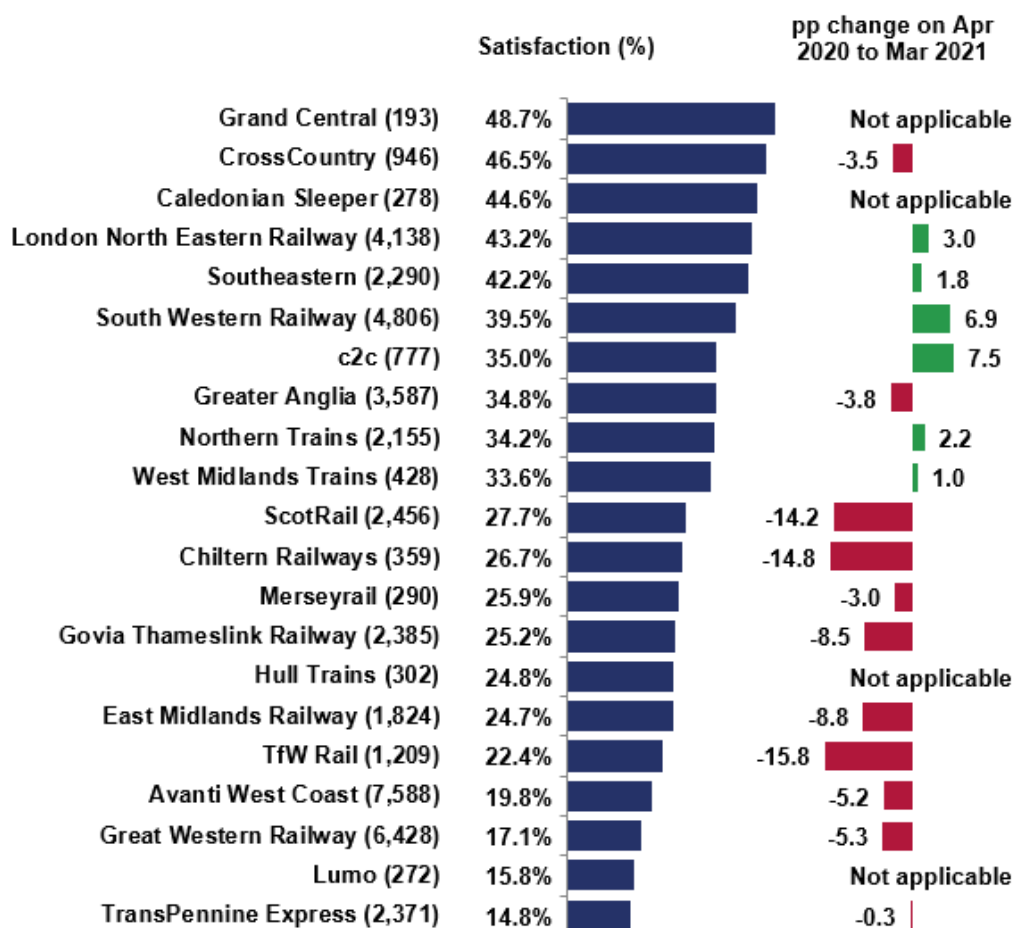
2. Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling by operator

Grand Central had the highest level of satisfaction (48.7%) and TransPennine Express had the lowest satisfaction (14.8%) with how the complaint was handled in the latest year.

c2c saw the largest increase in satisfaction with complaints handling compared with the previous year (up 7.5pp). TfW Rail saw the largest decrease in satisfaction with complaints handling compared with the previous year (down 15.8pp).

Figure 2.1 Grand Central had the highest level of satisfaction with complaints handling

Passenger satisfaction with the handling of the complaint, by operator, Great Britain, April 2021 to March 2022 and change compared with previous year (Table 4174)



Notes:

- Survey responses for each operator are shown in brackets.
- Operators with 100 or fewer responses in the latest year are not shown in the chart. Where operators had 100 or fewer responses in the previous year, the comparison is shown as 'Not applicable'.
- London Overground and TfL Rail did not participate in the latest year's survey.

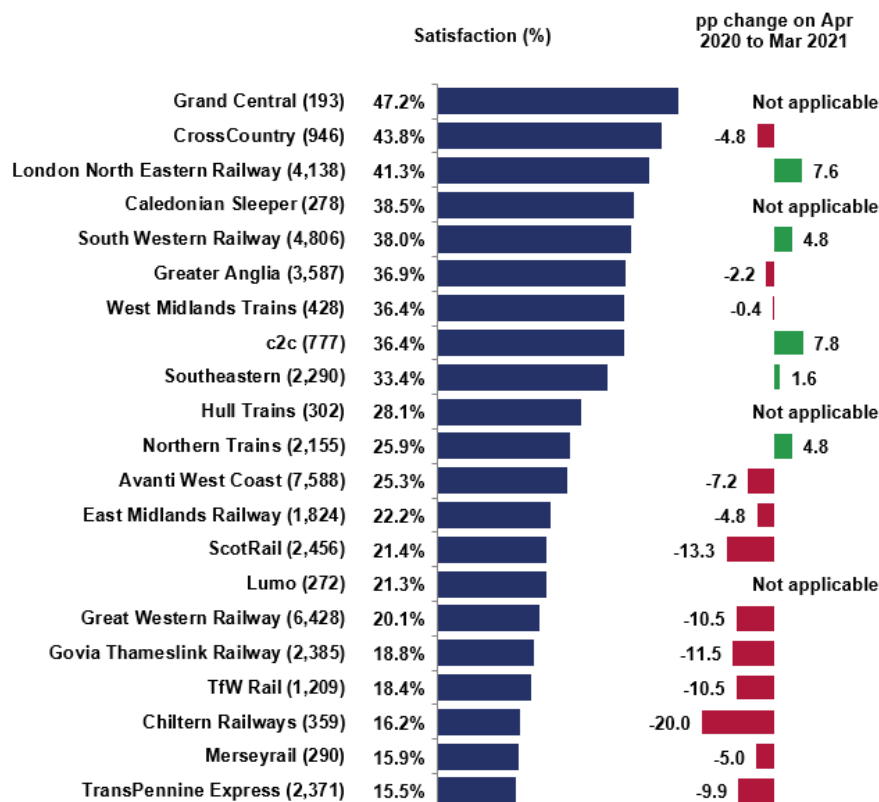
3. Passenger satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint by operator

Grand Central had the highest level of satisfaction (47.2%) and TransPennine Express had the lowest satisfaction (15.5%) with the outcome of the complaint in the latest year. These are the same operators that were highest and lowest for satisfaction with how the complaint was handled.

c2c saw the largest increase in satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint compared with the previous year (up 7.8pp). Chiltern Railways had the largest decrease in satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint compared with the previous year (down 20.0pp).

Figure 3.1 Grand Central had the highest level of satisfaction with outcome of the complaint

Passenger satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint, by operator, Great Britain, April 2021 to March 2022 and change compared with previous year (Table 4174)



Notes:

- Survey responses for each operator are shown in brackets.
- Operators with 100 or fewer responses in the latest year are not shown in the chart. Where operators had 100 or fewer responses in the previous year, the comparison is shown as 'Not applicable'.
- London Overground and TfL Rail did not participate in the latest year's survey.

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 Number of survey responses each financial year

Financial year	Number of responses
1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017	29,606
1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018	41,789
1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019	3,896
1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	54,573
1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	17,476
1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	45,147

In the latest year, 16.0% of those who complained to participating operators took part in the survey (45,147 responses out of 282,537 complaints).

Operators with a low sample size

Operators with 100 or fewer responses are not shown in Figures 2.1 and 3.1. In the latest year this applied to one operator: Heathrow Express (65 responses).

Comparability of the time series

Survey results are not published for the year April 2018 to March 2019. This is because of changes made to the methodology to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that came into effect on 25 May 2018, which resulted in a sample size that was too low to report robust results for many operators in that year.

From April 2019, revisions to the methodology allowed us to increase the sample size while still being compliant with GDPR. This enabled us to resume publication of operator level data.

Since April 2020, survey responses have been affected by the pandemic due to fewer rail journeys, and therefore fewer complaints made by passengers. More details on this can be found in our latest [Passenger rail service complaints](#) statistical release.

Margin of error

The following table shows the margin of error (95% confidence interval) for the April 2021 to March 2022 survey results. 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 April 2021 to March 2022 survey margin of error

Question	Satisfied (%)	Margin of error (pp)
Q1). Outcome	28.9%	+/- 0.4
Q2). Complaints handling	29.9%	+/- 0.4

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

Other related data

Passenger rail service complaints:

ORR publishes statistics about [Passenger complaints](#). These statistics shows complaint volumes, the type of complaints and response times to those complaints. The statistics also include appeals closed by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch.

Rail Ombudsman:

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

Transport Focus – National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS):

The [NRPS](#) provides a network-wide picture of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel.

Before the pandemic, passenger opinions of train services were collected twice a year from a representative sample of journeys. The [latest wave of the survey](#) was published on 2 July 2020. Due to the pandemic and a significant drop in the numbers of people using public transport, NRPS has been paused.

Key drivers of passenger satisfaction with complaints handling:

In August 2021 ORR published [independent statistical analysis of the key drivers of passenger satisfaction with complaint handling](#). The report is intended to provide useful feedback to the rail industry and has informed our current [consultation on a new Complaints Code of Practice](#).



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