

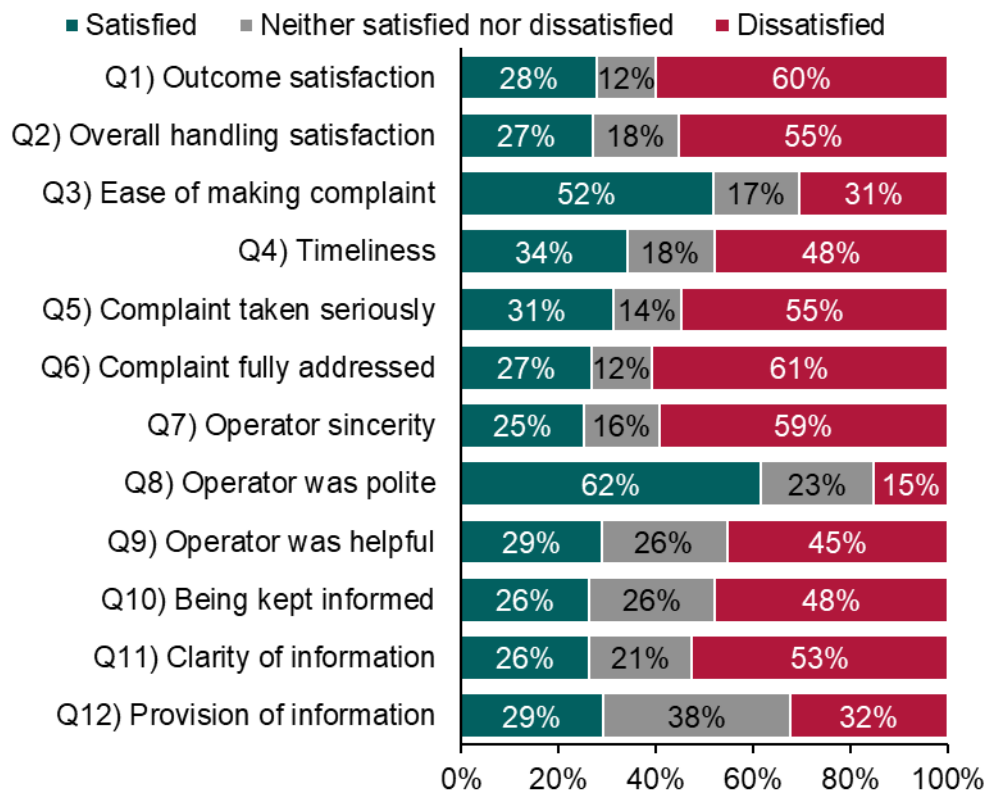
# Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling

## April 2022 to March 2023

31 August 2023 (revised 11 September 2023)

Overall, 27% of respondents were satisfied with how the train operator **handled their complaint** in the latest year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023). Satisfaction with the **complaint outcome** was 28%. The survey was conducted by M.E.L Research for the first time in the year April 2022 to March 2023; there were 31,394 responses. However, they were unable to survey complainants at some operators until a number of railway periods into the year (see annex).

**Figure 1 Passenger satisfaction with the outcome and handling of their complaint, all surveyed operators combined, Great Britain, April 2022 to March 2023 (Table 4170)**



See the annex for precise wording of questions asked and revisions to Figure 1.

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 **handling** 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 2022 to 31 March 2023

### Contents:

Complaints handling – p2  
Complaints outcome – p3  
Passenger sentiment – p4  
Annex – p5

### Responsible Statistician:

T Leveson Gower

### Public Enquiries:

[rail.stats@orr.gov.uk](mailto:rail.stats@orr.gov.uk)

### Media Enquiries:

Tel: 07856 279808

### Next publication:

July 2024

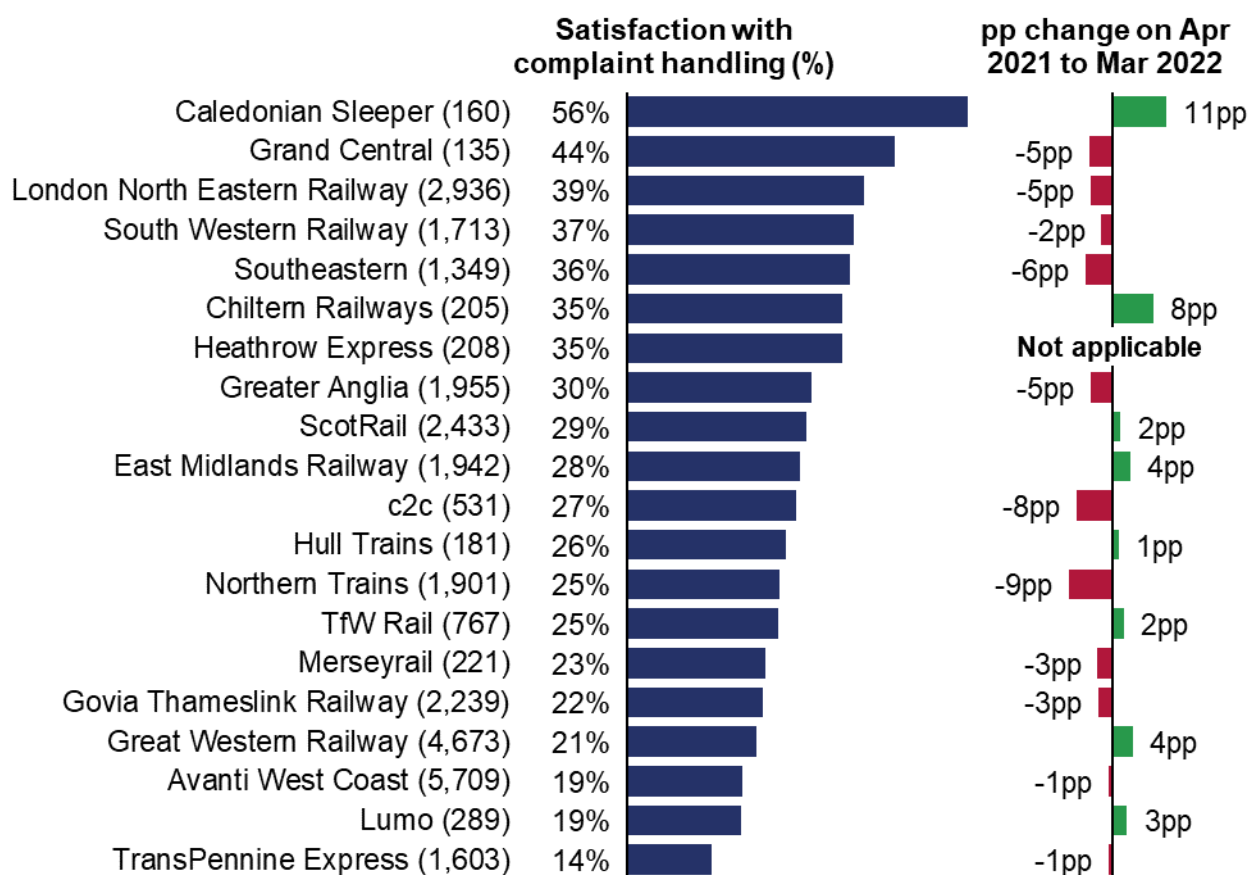
# 1. Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling by operator

In the latest year, Caledonian Sleeper (56%) had the highest level of satisfaction with overall complaint handling. TransPennine Express (14%) had the lowest satisfaction.

Caledonian Sleeper saw the largest increase in satisfaction with overall complaint handling compared with the previous year (up 11 percentage points (pp)). Northern Trains saw the largest decrease in satisfaction (down 9pp).

**Figure 1.1 Caledonian Sleeper had the highest level of satisfaction with overall complaint handling**

Passenger satisfaction with overall complaint handling, by operator, Great Britain, April 2022 to March 2023 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 (CrossCountry and West Midlands Trains) are not shown in the chart. Where operators had 100 or fewer responses in the previous year (Heathrow Express), the comparison is shown as 'Not applicable'.
- London Overground and Elizabeth line have not participated in the survey since March 2021.

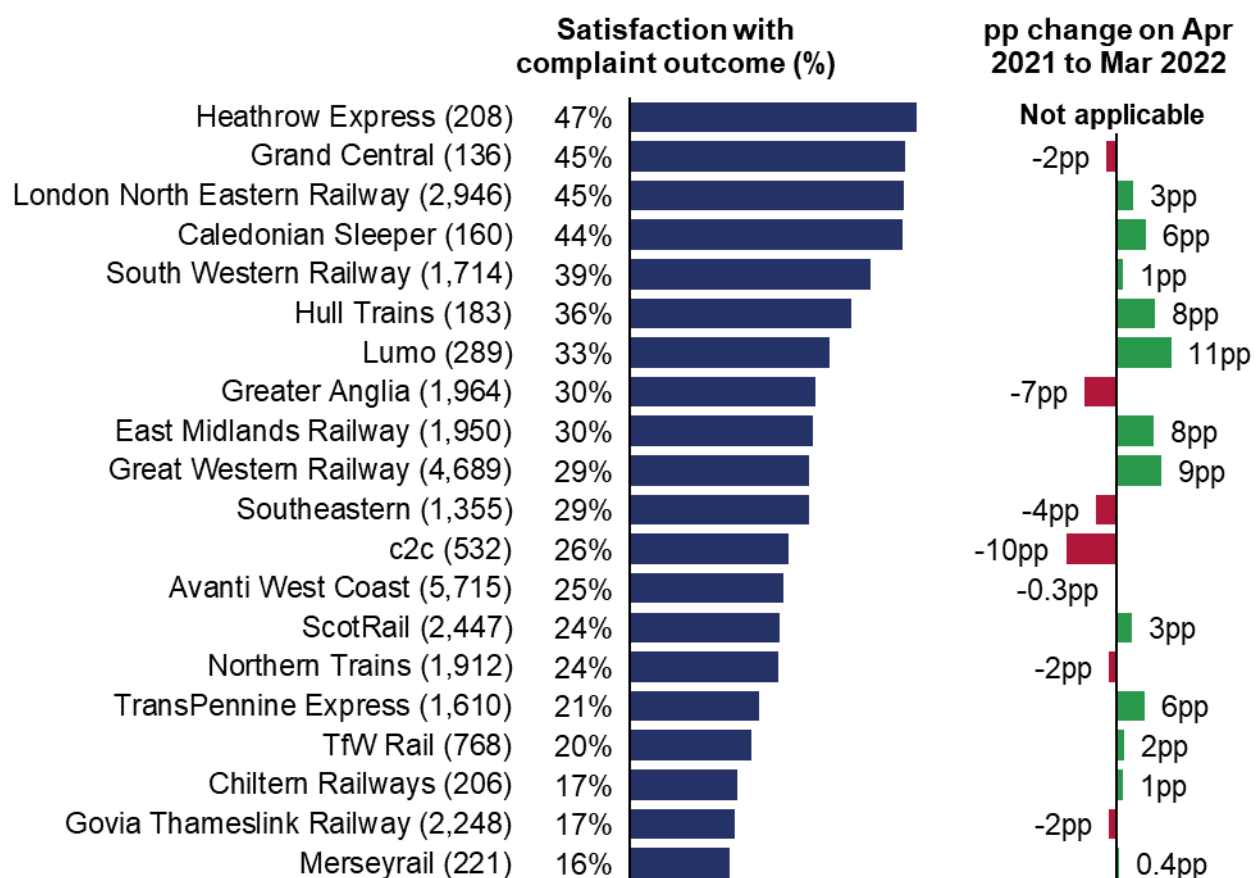
## 2. Passenger satisfaction with complaint outcome by operator

In the latest year, Heathrow Express (47%) had the highest level of satisfaction with complaint outcome. Merseyrail (16%) had the lowest satisfaction with complaint outcome.

Lumo saw the largest increase in satisfaction with complaint outcome compared with the previous year (up 11pp). c2c saw the largest decrease compared with the previous year (down 10pp).

**Figure 2.1 Heathrow Express had the highest level of satisfaction with complaint outcome**

Passenger satisfaction with complaint outcome, by operator, Great Britain, April 2022 to March 2023 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 (CrossCountry and West Midlands Trains) are not shown in the chart. Where operators had 100 or fewer responses in the previous year (Heathrow Express), the comparison is shown as 'Not applicable'.
- London Overground and Elizabeth line have not participated in the survey since March 2021.

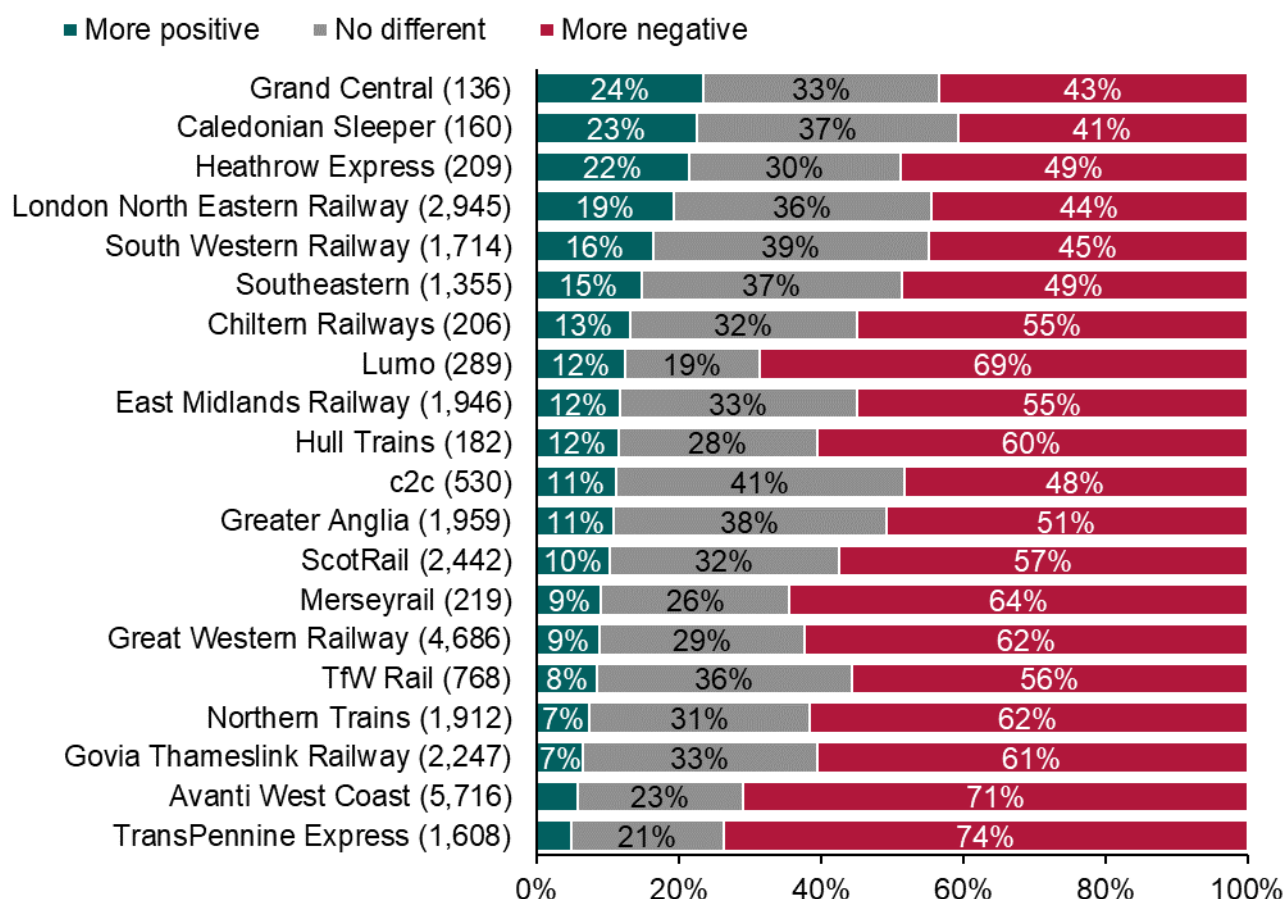
### 3. Passenger sentiment about operators

In the latest year, 10% of complainants to all surveyed operators combined reported that the way their complaint had been handled had made them feel more positive about the operator. Around a third (32%) reported that they felt no different, while 58% reported that they felt more negative about the operator.

Grand Central (24%) had the highest percentage of complainants reporting that they felt more positive about them while TransPennine Express (5%) had the lowest. TransPennine Express (74%) also had the highest percentage of complainants reporting that they felt more negative about them while Caledonian Sleeper (41%) had the lowest.

**Figure 3.1 Grand Central had the highest percentage of complainants reporting that they felt more positive about the operator**

How complainants felt about their operator given the way the operator had handled their complaint, Great Britain, April 2022 to March 2023 (Table 4174)



Notes:

- Survey responses for each operator are shown in brackets.
- Operators with 100 or fewer responses in the latest year (CrossCountry and West Midlands Trains) are not shown in the chart.
- London Overground and Elizabeth line have not participated in the survey since March 2021.

# Annex

## Quality and Methodology

After a passenger makes a complaint to a train operator, they are invited to participate in an ORR commissioned survey about their experience of how the complaint was handled. M.E.L Research have conducted the survey since April 2022. Between April 2016 and March 2022 it was carried out by Critical Research.

The complainant is asked to rank their satisfaction with the outcome and various aspects of the handling of the complaint on a five point scale and, in some instances, to provide a qualitative response via an open text box. For the data presented in the accompanying data tables and the analysis presented in this factsheet, the response 'satisfied' refers to both satisfied and very satisfied, and 'dissatisfied' refers to both very dissatisfied and dissatisfied. Any 'don't know' responses have been excluded from the data.

The table below lists the outcome satisfaction question, the 11 handling satisfaction questions, and the corresponding labels used in Figure 1 of this release. Complainants are also asked how they feel about the operator given the way they handled the complaint. For this question, the options are 'more positive', 'more negative', and 'no different'.

**Table A.1 Survey questions 1 to 12 and Figure 1 labels**

Number	Question	Label in Figure 1
1	Ignoring for the moment the operator's handling of the issue, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the outcome of your particular complaint?	Outcome satisfaction
2	Putting to one side the outcome of your complaint, we would like you to think about the process you went through. So overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way your complaint was handled?	Overall handling satisfaction
3	The ease with which you were able to make the complaint	Ease of making complaint
4	The time taken to deal with your complaint	Timeliness
5	Your complaint was taken seriously	Complaint taken seriously
6	Your complaint was fully addressed by the operator	Complaint fully addressed
7	The operator seemed keen to reach an agreeable outcome	Operator sincerity
8	The operator was polite	Operator was polite
9	The operator was helpful or knowledgeable	Operator was helpful
10	Being kept informed appropriately about the progress of your complaint	Being kept informed
11	The clarity of information provided by the operator about your complaint	Clarity of information
12	The operator provided you with any information that they promised to send	Provision of information

## Revisions

Data for all surveyed operators combined for April 2022 to March 2023 were revised on 11 September 2023. This was due to an error in the weightings for one operator.

The table below shows the changes to the data in Table 4170 that are presented in Figure 1 of this release. The total number of unweighted responses presented Table 4170 and the data for train operators presented in Table 4174 are not affected by this revision.

Revisions were also made for question 13 (passenger sentiment). The percentage more positive about the operator and the percentage feeling no different about the operator both increased by 0.2pp while the percentage feeling more negative about the operator decreased by 0.4pp.

**Table A.2 Revisions (percentage point changes) to all surveyed operators combined, April 2022 to March 2023**

Number	Label in Figure 1	Percentage satisfied	Percentage neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Percentage dissatisfied
1	Outcome satisfaction	0.7pp	0.1pp	-0.8pp
2	Overall handling satisfaction	0.3pp	-0.1pp	-0.2pp
3	Ease of making complaint	0.2pp	-0.1pp	-0.1pp
4	Timeliness	-0.2pp	0.0pp	0.2pp
5	Complaint taken seriously	0.5pp	0.0pp	-0.6pp
6	Complaint fully addressed	0.5pp	0.1pp	-0.6pp
7	Operator sincerity	0.4pp	0.2pp	-0.6pp
8	Operator was polite	0.0pp	0.0pp	0.1pp
9	Operator was helpful	0.4pp	0.0pp	-0.4pp
10	Being kept informed	0.2pp	-0.1pp	-0.1pp
11	Clarity of information	0.2pp	0.1pp	-0.4pp
12	Provision of information	0.4pp	-0.3pp	0.0pp

## Results for all surveyed operators and the margin of error

As the number of responses to the survey vary by each operator, the data for all surveyed operators combined are weighted by complaint volumes (however, the train operator data in Table 4174 are unweighted). Weighting improves the representativeness of the combined results. 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.

The following table shows the margin of error (95% confidence level) for the April 2022 to March 2023 results for all surveyed operators combined. The margin of error for each operator is available in the quality and methodology report. As passenger satisfaction with complaints handling data are based on a survey, the margin of error provides a range within which the true result is expected to lie for the given the confidence level.

**Table A.3 Margin of error, April 2022 to March 2023 survey**

Question	Satisfied (%)	Margin of error (pp)
Q1) Outcome satisfaction	28.0%	+/- 0.5pp
Q2) Overall handling satisfaction	27.1%	+/- 0.5pp

## Comparability of the time series

The mix of operators participating in the survey has varied over time. The [quality and methodology report](#) provides details of the operators present for each year of the survey. This should be considered when comparing results from different years. The table below details the total number of survey responses in each year of the survey. Not all complainants surveyed provided a response to all questions.

**Table A.4 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
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	31,394

In the latest year, 9.6% of those who complained to participating operators took part in the survey (31,394 responses out of 325,731 complaints to the surveyed operators).

## Inclusion of operators by railway reporting period

The survey was conducted by M.E.L Research for the first time in the year April 2022 to March 2023. They were unable to survey complainants at some operators until a number of railway periods into the year (see the table below for details). In the case of West Midlands Trains, no data are available for the whole year. London Overground and Elizabeth line have not participated in the survey since 31 March 2021.

The [quality and methodology report](#) includes details of the operators included by railway reporting period in previous year.

**Table A.5 Inclusion of operators in the survey, April 2022 to March 2023**

Operator	Periods in the survey
Avanti West Coast	Period 4 to Period 13
c2c	Period 1 to Period 13
Caledonian Sleeper	Period 1 to Period 13
Chiltern Railways	Period 4 to Period 12
CrossCountry	Period 9 to Period 13
East Midlands Railway	Period 1 to Period 13
Elizabeth line	Did not participate in the survey
Govia Thameslink Railway	Period 1 to Period 13
Grand Central	Period 4 to Period 13
Great Western Railway	Period 4 to Period 13
Greater Anglia	Period 1 to Period 10 and Period 13
Heathrow Express	Period 1 to Period 13
Hull Trains	Period 4 to Period 8 and Period 10 to Period 13
London North Eastern Railway	Period 1 to Period 13
London Overground	Did not participate in the survey
Lumo	Period 4 to Period 13
Merseyrail	Period 1 to Period 13
Northern Trains	Period 1 to Period 13
ScotRail	Period 1 to Period 13
South Western Railway	Period 6 to Period 13
Southeastern	Period 1 to Period 9 and Period 11 to Period 13
TfW Rail	Period 1 to Period 13
TransPennine Express	Period 4 to Period 8 and Period 10 to Period 13
West Midlands Trains	None

### Operators with a low sample size

Operators with 100 or fewer responses are not shown in Figures 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1. In the latest year this applied to one operator: CrossCountry (97, 99 and 98 responses respectively).



## Other related data

### **Passenger rail service complaints:**

ORR publishes statistics about [Passenger complaints](#). These statistics show complaint volumes, the type of complaints and response times to those complaints.

### **Rail Ombudsman:**

The [Rail Ombudsman](#) provides a service to which unresolved customer complaints about train operators can be escalated. 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. NRPS has since been discontinued. A new Rail Customer Experience Survey is in development and due to launch in 2024.

### **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 provided useful feedback to the rail industry and has informed the [Complaints Code of Practice](#).



© Crown copyright 2023

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit

[nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [dataportal.orr.gov.uk](https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [orr.gov.uk/contact-us](https://orr.gov.uk/contact-us)

