

Date of meeting: Wednesday 06th July

Time: 18:30-20:00

Location: Virtual online meeting and Cutlers Court, London.

Attendees:

Passenger Panel members present:

Jill Allen-King

Chris Gorman

Daniel Pepper

Train operator representation present:

Amandeep Sogi

Ben Martin

Donna Thorpe

Savannah Lawrence (minute taker)

Apologies and resignations:

Alan Newing

Anthony Finn

Bola Odunlami

Agenda Item 1: Business Updates

- DP asked about revenue protection at Barking station? Mobile revenue protection units use the portable machines to sell tickets. Where are we losing revenue to not enough revenue protection staff?
- ACTION to request the Security Manager to attend the next meeting.
- JAK asked about the Chalkwell lift and the communications that were put through regarding incorrect dates. BM confirmed that the lift will be completed in 2024 and that comms have been given to the local MP regarding their information.
- RMT have balloted their members for action regarding commitments that they want. These are difficult due to non-sustainability of finances. A number of reform areas such as pensions, terms and conditions for staff, rostering practising were discussed with RMT.
- Further strike action is a real possibility, however, tessa have also got the mandate for strike action on the c2c route. Our train drivers are not striking, however, the signallers did strike which severely affected the service.
- DP asked about if the service was automatic and thus could save on staff striking? DT confirmed that staff are needed to supervise the systems for health and safety due to the nature of some disruptions that can occur on the railway.

- DP asked if c2c was in the same financial position as other railways? DT confirmed that c2c was in a similar situation as other train operating companies. Although c2c carried more key workers so did not drop as low as other companies, the yield per passenger has dropped due to the changing working patterns of passengers.
- Try a train was a plan to empower students with disabilities to travel independently as part of our commitment to making the rail accessible for all. 20 students from USP college which is located in South Essex travelled from Benfleet to Shoeburyness.
- ACTION to send the link for the Try a Train video.

Agenda Item 2: Accessibility

- The recent strike action went really well for c2c with no failed assistance reported and no complaints yet received regarding accessibility during those days. Social media was also positive with mostly questions about services and some praise for the frontline staff who were working.
- We communicated out that passengers should pre-book their journey if they were travelling those days with extra comms regarding those assistance requests.
- The normal procedure for pre-booked assistance is an email sent out twice a day (with more emails if more assistance is booked) and stations checking this. However, due to unknown staffing levels at stations, assistance could not be confirmed until there was written confirmation that staff were at the station or were being moved to be attending the station. Passengers that had booked several weeks prior were also contacted a week before the strike action to advise and see what their preference would be. If they were still travelling, then passengers were advised to be flexible with their journey.
- DP asked about adding booked passenger assistance to the passenger ticket purchase page? It has been confirmed that it was brought forward to the website design team.
- Ridership as well as our records show that TUAG and pre-booked assistance continues to increase with each month and so we can expect our number of complaints to increase as well with that. Our focus is staff that work weekends primarily as they do not have the same level of resources such as managers that staff working during the week get and so by providing this guide, this will allow better communication as well as a more comprehensive guide for any possible scenario.
- Primary concerns regarding log entries are from weekends which can be due to staffing issues, miscommunication or not being able to contact certain members of staff. By re-briefing and ensuring that staff have understood the process particular emphasis on communication then this can mitigate the cases of miscommunication that can occur such as where a member of staff meets someone at the wrong part of the train. This will include Amulet staff and confirmation of this process will need to be provided. Additional information such as notifying CDMs and SDC about the station being unmanned for a period of time will also be briefed to frontline staff so that it can be checked against pre-booked assistance and in addition to stations calling through for turn up and go assistance.
- Long line radios will be vital in improving passenger assistance as stations won't be as reliant on being able to pick up the phone within stations and gateline staff will have better access to the long line radios and will be able to assist passengers

independently. Currently, the handover protocol has calling the destination station as the first step in the process, however, long line radios will replace this as the first step. A staff brief on how to operate the long line radios is being done and an updated handover protocol with this replacement has already been drafted.

Agenda Item 3: The Service Quality Regime

- The service quality regime (SQR) launched on 22nd August 2021. The SQR is a key part of our National Rail Contract with the DfT. The goal of the regime is to enhance the customer experience through the rigorous assessment of the quality of our customer facing areas and staff.
- It also seeks to hold c2c accountable for any issues with tight timescales for the rectification of any reported failures. It consists of a minimum of 186 surveys each period, completed by an independent auditing company and is split into: stations, trains, station customer service and social media interaction.
- Our stations are audited against the following criteria: ambience and assets which include car parks, seating, lifts and toilets & cleanliness and graffiti. Also information and ticketing & staffing.
- Any item which fails must have a re-inspection completed. Depending on the nature of this failure this may need to be done as quickly as 24 hours. If this has not been resolved, this will be flagged once and should it fail again then this will be reported to the DfT.
- The audit is done by a supplier (ESA) who employ mystery shoppers and they have to provide photographic evidence, an asset number and reason should it fail. It is a binary system so no grey areas.
- BM also confirmed that the deadlines are contractual throughout the supply chain so it will not matter who reports the fault, it should be fixed within the defined contractual timescales.
- For assessing the trains, this includes ambience and assets, cleanliness and graffiti as well as information that is available on the service.
- JAK asked about the tactile paving at stations and has there been any improvement to stations that do not have them? BM confirmed that all stations now have tactile paving on all platforms. c2c worked closely with Network Rail to ensure that this was delivered.
- DP asked if there were any surveys on the passengers that come through the station and use the service. This is due to anti-social behaviour that happens on the c2c route. AS confirmed that this criteria was agreed with DfT but will be discussed with head of revenue protection. JF confirmed that there will be an impact on the scores from anti-social behaviour but should be fixed for fare-paying customers.

Agenda Item 4: GSMR Introduction

- GSMR stands for Global System for Mobile Telecommunications for Railways and this will replace the train operators fixed terminal. Announcements can be pushed through to the train without a need for a signaller to be involved in talking to the driver.

- Benefits will include more frequent announcements to give explanations for reasons behind disruption from control staff. Passenger re-assurance for any long waiting times. The current plan is to use solely for disruption information.
- DP asked if it will be similar to the volume of underground services. SC confirmed that it will be through the same speaker as previously so will be the same volume as before.
- This will be rolled out in the summer but includes testing, staffing and training & delivery. Future enhancements include automated “text to speak” announcements generated onto the individual trains created by the control team to send trains during disruption.
- DP asked what the emergency location is for the control centre? SC confirmed that in the unlikely event this happens then services will be sent to the nearest station and will not move. Network Rail have risk assessments on the building and have said that it is suitable.

Agenda Item 5: AOB

- BM confirmed that the area outside of Chalkwell station is outside of c2c control and resides with the local council.
- JAK asked about a local event of missed passenger assistance? AS confirmed that talks are active with the passenger who was missed and he will be included in the next passenger panel meeting.
- JAK also asked if people who wrote into the panel members about issues could possibly be recruited? AS confirmed that this was a good idea and can be moved forward with.
- DP asked about the ticketing system and how the smartcard works. This included limits on how many tickets can be used and where is it within the purchasing system? c2c confirmed that only five tickets can be loaded at any time, however, the digital planning team will be involved in the next meeting.
- CG asked about the short-form trains and when they will be back in service? DT confirmed that there is issues with Alstom staffing who conduct the tests for the services. It is a daily concern and c2c are working hard with Alstom to resolve.

Next meeting will be the 5th of October.