

Rail regulator proposes better way to claim compensation for delays

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Passengers will be able to claim compensation more easily when their train is delayed under a new licence condition proposed by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

The licence condition will require train companies to meet new standards set out in a new code of practice that requires them to provide passengers with clear information about their entitlements to compensation both before and during the journey.

Train companies will also have to improve the way they process delay compensation claims, and publish data on how well they are meeting these obligations.

In 2019-20, there were 6.3 million delay compensation claims closed by train companies in Great Britain, an increase of 17.6% compared to the previous year. However data shows only a third of passengers eligible for compensation actually made a claim.

This 'compensation gap', between those who could claim compensation and those that actually do so, has stayed the same in recent years. The low claim uptake is blamed on many passengers not knowing when

they are eligible to claim. The claims process is confusing and train companies operate different schemes.

To tackle these issues ORR is now consulting on requiring this of train companies:

- Ensure clear and accurate information is provided to passengers on their rights to claim delay compensation, both during the booking stage and during their journey, should it be delayed.
- Simplify the process to make it as easy as possible for passengers to submit claims for delay compensation, making it simpler and quicker for passengers to claim.
- Show continual improvement through enhanced monitoring and publication of data, and where new initiatives are trialled, share findings for the benefit of the broader industry and travelling public.
- Enable passengers to submit claims via ticket retailers and intermediaries who meet the standard of a new ORR Code of Conduct.

Stephanie Tobyn, Deputy Director for Consumers at ORR said: “These proposed reforms will make it as easy as possible for people to better claim delay compensation, protect the interests of passengers and promote positive behaviours amongst train companies.

“Providing compensation when a passenger has experienced a delay to their journey is one way in which the train company is able to demonstrate to the passenger that it recognises it has failed to provide the service that the passenger expected. It builds trust, and can provide a tangible acknowledgement of where the industry has fallen short.”

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