

**Stagecoach South Western Trains**  
**Customer Comments and Complaints**  
**Handling Procedure**

**July 2011**

## Introduction

Stagecoach South Western Trains is committed to improving the service it provides to its customers. The aim is to provide a service, which customers use and trust. It will be:

**Safe:** Safety is our number one priority. We will ensure that we maintain our trains and equipment and adopt practices that help us achieve the highest levels of safety for our customers and staff.

**Reliable:** We aim to provide a reliable service and be consistent in its delivery.

**High Quality:** We are committed to achieving high quality standards throughout the company. We value our staff and customers and must go the extra mile to exceed their expectations.

**Accessible:** Quite simply, we aim to be easy to do business with. Customers must find our services easy to access and user-friendly.

**Personal:** Every customer should be given the personal touch!

No matter how hard we try, things will, unfortunately, go wrong on occasions. Stagecoach South Western Trains aims to provide customers with an explanation and insight into the reasons for any failure, whether it is the fault of Stagecoach South Western Trains, its contractors, or suppliers.

### Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by one of our customers or a potential customer about our service delivery or about our company or industry policy.

### Our Customer Complaints Handling Procedure

Stagecoach South Western Trains believes that having a caring after sales service will not just retain customers but will win new business and reduce the number of dissatisfied customers. The Customer Complaints Handling Procedure is one way in which Stagecoach South Western Trains can make this happen.

The Complaints Handling Procedure aims to:

1. Be easily accessible, well publicised and easy to use.
2. Ensure efficient handling of a complaint and provide a response within publicised targets.

3. Ensure full and fair investigations take place where appropriate.
4. Ensure a quality reply and observe Stagecoach South Western Trains' Customer Promise.
5. Respect customers' desire for confidentiality.
6. Include all customers, including where possible, those who have not complained.
7. Provide information to management so that improvements can be made.
8. Enable the company to respond to insurance claims made against it.
9. Adapt to changing circumstances through an annual review.

We will achieve these aims in the following way:

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## **1- Accessible, Well Publicised and Easy to Use**

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- If you have a complaint about the service we provide, our station, booking office or on-train staff can help you and in many situations they can resolve your concerns there and then. We encourage our customer interface staff to try to resolve problems for you in this way.
- If they are unable to do so their respective supervisor or manager may be able to help you instead and provide you with an immediate response or solution.

### **Our Customer Service Centre Team**

- It is appreciated that many complaints cannot be resolved immediately, or to your satisfaction, so we have a trained team of customer service advisors dedicated to dealing with your comments and complaints.
- Our customer service team is easily contactable and we will ensure that all our stations display a poster, and in every carriage of every train we display a notice, to provide you with their contact details. The information is also contained in our timetables, on our website at [www.southwesttrains.co.uk](http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk) and in your local telephone directory. At stations served by more than one train operator, we display all operators' contact details.

### **Opening Hours**

Our customer service team is available between 0600 and 2200 Monday to Sunday to deal with any comment or complaint that you would like to make about Stagecoach South Western Trains (this includes Island Line) and its service.

- The customer service centre is closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

## **How to Contact the Customer Service Centre**

### **By Telephone**

- The customer service team can be contacted by telephone during the above hours and the call is charged at a local rate. A textphone service is also available for customers who have such a facility.

### **In Writing**

- You may forward your complaint by letter or use one of our customer comments forms. The comments forms are available from all our staffed stations and from our on train guards. You may also fax or email your comment or complaint. Our website also has a 'contact us' facility to email your complaint or comment direct to the team.

### **Meet the Manager Events**

- We hold regular Meet the Manager events, which give customers the opportunity to ask questions, raise issues with or make a complaint in person to our Directors and Senior Managers. Further details of the locations and times of the events can be obtained from our customer service team and each event will be advertised locally by posters at stations and in local press. Details will also appear on our website.

**Full contact details may be found at the end of this booklet.**

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## **2- Response Times**

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We will respond to your comment or complaint as quickly as possible.

- We aim to respond to 90% of comments and complaints within 10 working days, on occasions it may take longer to provide a full reply. If this is required, we will update you within 10 working days. If we are still unable to give you a full reply within 20 working days, we will contact you again to give you a further update.
- We will use our best endeavours to keep to our promised response rates even when there is an unexpected sudden increase in the volume of complaints being received.

- Any complaint or claim referring to another rail service provider or Network Rail will be acknowledged and passed on to the relevant party within 3 working days of receipt. Where possible, there will be a co-ordinated response in normal timescales.
- If you telephone us to make a complaint or comment, we will do our best to resolve it during that call. If we cannot immediately resolve the issue at the time of the call and have to write to you, we aim to respond in the same timescales as for written correspondence shown above.

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## **3 - A Fair Complaints Procedure**

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We aim to satisfy your complaint with our first response.

- We will undertake a full and fair investigation into your comments and complaints, involving management and senior management where appropriate and ensuring a consistent approach to similar complaints. We will learn from customer complaints and, as appropriate, will make changes as a result.
- If you are unhappy with our first response and contact us again, a manager will review your complaint. A second response in writing will include the name and position of that manager and also explain the role of the Passenger Focus or London Travelwatch.
- After the second response, if you remain unhappy in relation to your complaint, you can contact us again or contact Passenger Focus or London Travelwatch. These are independent bodies set up by Parliament to protect rail users' interests. They are able to review your complaint and make representation to us on your behalf. Their contact details can be found towards the back of this booklet.
- Any appeal referred by either Passenger Focus or London Travelwatch is received by the Customer Service Centre Services Manager at the Stagecoach South Western Trains' Customer Service Centre and resolved within seven days of receipt.
- We reserve the right to terminate any correspondence that we believe to be frivolous, vexatious or abusive. Frivolous complaints are deemed to be those that are not serious or sensible. Vexatious complaints are deemed to be those that are instituted without sufficient grounds. Abusive complaints are deemed to be those that involve abusive behaviour or language. We will fully consult Passenger Focus or London

Travelwatch before we terminate any correspondence and we will advise you in writing of the reasons behind the decision.

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## **4 - Quality of Reply & Passengers' Charter Compensation**

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- When you complain to us, we will answer the points you raise.
- Whenever possible, a complaint will be handled by one member of the customer service team, (apart from registration) from receipt to reply and it will address the points you raise.
- Complaints involving staff conduct and safety will always be fully and fairly investigated, due to the potential severity of these complaints we always ask that they are made in writing.
- We will offer compensation, normally in the form of rail travel vouchers, in line with Stagecoach South Western Trains' Customer Promise and the National Conditions of Carriage. Copies of the Promise can be found in the Passengers' Charter at staffed stations or on our website.
- We may also consider goodwill gestures on an ex-gratia basis when we are unable to fulfil our promises to you.
- We will undertake regular surveys of a sample of our replies to customers in order to measure customer satisfaction with the way our customer service centre team has performed. We will use this information to improve the team's performance.
- We will carry out regular internal audits of a sample of our replies to customers to ensure that they meet our quality targets. We will use this information to improve the performance of our customer service team.
- We will regularly monitor the level of customers who contact us again because they are unhappy about the way their complaint has been handled. We will identify the reasons why customers are unhappy with the way their complaint has been handled and seek to improve this.
- If a complaint refers to more than one train operator, we will respond to the issues about our service and also forward your complaint onto the other operator(s)

concerned. We will tell you which train operator(s) will be replying to your complaint and how to contact them should you need to.

- We will pass on any complaints wholly regarding another train operator, and we will tell you which train operator is to reply to your complaint and how to contact them should you need to.
- We will try to make provision for customers whose first language is not English, and try to make our reply in the appropriate language. In this case, we will strive to meet our target response time but some further delay may occur.
- We will make provision for customers who are visually impaired or hard of hearing. Large print reply letters and a textphone service are available.

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## **5 - Confidentiality**

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We will ensure that your confidentiality is protected.

- Your personal details, or details about your complaint, will not be divulged to third parties unless we have your written consent.
- However, we may divulge some or all of your details to a third party without consent where it is necessary for us to fulfil our own obligations. This will include providing information to bodies such as other Train Operating Companies, Passenger Focus or London Travelwatch, insurers, or to the Department for Transport or any such body in carrying out their statutory duties e.g. the Police.

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## **6 - Our Commitment To All Customers**

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We aim to respond to customers however they make contact with us.

We also aim to contact customers who have not complained but who have also suffered serious disruption or an unpleasant experience on their journey with us.

- We will endeavour to do this by poster notices and public address announcements at relevant stations.

- We may also endeavour to do this using announcements on-train or in exceptional cases by distributing letters or notices on-train.
- In exceptional cases we may also apologise through the press and media where appropriate.
- Our Managers are also available at regular Meet the Manager events across our network.

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## **7- Providing Information to Management**

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Customer feedback is important to us. It helps us to identify areas where we can improve the service we provide.

To ensure that this feedback helps to drive improvements:

- We will provide regular reports, every four weeks, on complaints trends to managers at all levels of our company to enable them to identify areas in need of improvement and to take remedial action.
- We will make specific reports available to senior managers where we feel this will help them improve our performance and satisfy our customers.
- We will provide information in the format and at the intervals specified above on the number of comments and complaints received, and our performance in dealing with them to relevant regulatory bodies (such as Passenger Focus and London Travelwatch) where appropriate.

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## **8- Claims for Losses, Property Damage and Personal Injury**

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If you wish to make a claim against Stagecoach South Western Trains for losses, property damage or personal injury this should be made in writing to customer service team who will ensure it is forwarded to Stagecoach South Western Trains claims handlers. Your claim will then be dealt with in accordance with the Claims Allocation and Handling Agreement.

If your claim has a safety implication, the details will be passed on to the appropriate department to be investigated and action taken if appropriate.

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## 9 - Reviewing Our Complaints Handling Procedure

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Our Complaints Handling Procedure will be reviewed each year. This will be carried out in consultation with Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch.

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### Customer Service Contact Details

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#### Stagecoach South Western Trains Customer Service Team

Telephone: 0845 6000 650  
Fax: 02380 728187  
E-mail: [customerrelations@swtrains.co.uk](mailto:customerrelations@swtrains.co.uk)

Mail: Customer Service Team  
Customer Service Centre  
South West Trains  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Overline House  
Central Station  
Southampton SO15 1GW

Internet Address: [www.southwesttrains.co.uk](http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk)

Textphone: 0800 6920 792 (equipment for the hard of hearing)

**Passenger Focus**  
Freepost (RRRE\_ETTC-LEET)  
PO BOX 4257  
Manchester  
M60 3AR

Tel: 0300 123 2350  
Fax: 0845 850 1392

[info@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:info@passengerfocus.org.uk)

**London TravelWatch**  
6 Middle Street,  
London  
EC1A 7JA

Tel: 020 7505 9000  
Fax: 020 7505 9003

[enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk)