

# ScotRail Customer Information Plan

## Introduction

This document outlines the processes and procedures we have in place to manage any disruption to our service and customer information. This document acts as a guide and helps to reassure you that when things go wrong, we have plans in place to get you on the move to your destination as soon as possible.

## Customer Pledges

We are an active partner in the Smarter Information, Smarter Journeys. Our commitment to the customer pledges outline what you can expect from us before, during and after your journey by train.

Working together, train operating companies, Network Rail and Rail Delivery Group make sure we deliver a consistent approach to information no matter where you are travelling on the UK network, while allowing us to provide local information to suit our needs.

## Planned disruption

We have scheduled work to take place throughout the year, and this means that we will amend timetables to allow the work to take place

We will develop and deliver communications campaigns for specific projects jointly with Network Rail and Transport Scotland. The campaigns will help you understand the full benefits we will deliver when the work is finished. The main aim will be to make sure existing and potential customers are aware of the work so that we reduce, as far as possible, the negative effect on your journey.

We will let you know about our plans using several channels, including the press, social media, station posters, our website, and individual messages to registered customers. There will also be regular on-train and station announcements about alternative transport and extra journey times.

## Unplanned service disruption levels and customer service levels 2 (CSL2)

We have four levels of service disruption.

**Green** is when the service is operating normally or with a minimal number of delays.

**Yellow** is when there is moderate disruption and usually delays, but customers can continue their journeys, with some delay.

**Red** is when the service has deteriorated to a level where customers are experiencing significant delays to their journey and we are giving customers alternative travel options (such as replacement transport, getting local buses or other train operators to accept our tickets, or diverting trains via other routes).

**Black** is when we may have to introduce a reduced timetable or advise customers to avoid travelling as we cannot guarantee that we will be able to get them to their destination (an example of this could be during severe weather).

If there is severe disruption, both customers and front-line staff need rapid and consistent information about the circumstances and choice they have. There may not be much information at the start of an incident, and it is likely to change over time as more detail becomes available. On this basis, it is important to:

- rapidly provide any information that is available which, at the start of an incident, may not be detailed but should include an estimate for sorting out the disruption as soon as possible; and



- update the message as the situation changes, or at least every 20 minutes.

If incidents are ongoing, it is possible to achieve a 'steady state,' where we can reduce the frequency of messages. If the situation is unlikely to change for some time, we will change the frequency of updates to intervals of no more than two hours. When this happens, customer messages must include the time by which we will send the update. For example, 'We will give you an update by 16.30.'

During disruption, we will send out regular route messages with updated information. We will distribute messages using our information systems and they will follow the format of the example below.

Problem – What has happened?

Effect – What does it mean for customers?

Advice – What should customers do?

Examples of when a steady state is achieved include:

- incidents that continue overnight.
- when we have put contingency timetables in place.

### **Letting staff know**

When disruption levels are triggered, we advertise them to our staff using our own messaging system, and these levels govern how we respond.

When we trigger yellow, red, or black disruption, we will put in place a number of responses appropriate to the incident. Where possible these will include:

moving extra staff to stations and trains to help customers.

providing information in the agreed format of **problem, effect, and advice**.

organising alternative transport.

making arrangements with local transport providers to accept our train tickets on local buses, trams, and the Glasgow subway free of charge.

liaising with our communications and customer relations teams as well as National Rail Enquiries; and

giving extra information on our website and at stations, to let customers know about the problem, the effect, and our advice.

We have an on-call process, where operational managers are allocated to a geographical area of the business to provide a suitable response to any incident.

These managers are trained to deal with any incident and to provide support to our customers and colleagues, whether by providing alternative transport options and information or simply supporting teams on the ground.

### **Alterations to train services**

We are connected to the national Darwin database. Our customer information team will update any changes to our train services into the database as they happen. This information automatically updates Darwin. This then updates CIS screens displaying our services, live departure boards and apps. This has improved the speed and accuracy of information given to customers.

Changes to services can occur at short notice. Please check your entire journey before you travel.



## Contingency plans

We are committed to updating information when we need to use temporary timetables. During extreme weather, we monitor the forecast and make decisions based on how it may affect train services. If we are going to use a temporary timetable, we will tell customers by 4pm on the day before.

We will keep you informed about changes to train times using a variety of methods. This includes station and on-train announcements, social-media updates, customer alerts and website updates. We will also work with media channels to make sure the message is communicated widely.

As part of our preparations for severe weather we will make effective use of social media to let you know about our plans.

## Cause of the disruption

To make sure that the information given to customers and front-line teams is consistent between all TOCs and Network Rail, we appoint a lead information controller in our control office. They are responsible for communicating the reason for the disruption to customers and staff. There is a list of industry-approved reasons which we use in our control room. These give staff and customers a more detailed explanation of the cause of the disruption.

## Customer information channels

We will communicate with you in several ways.

## Customer information screens (CIS) and announcements



At most of our stations, we provide customer information screens, which include departure boards with a summary of trains from that station and what platform the train will stop at.

Our screens show the number of carriages and the last station that the train departed from. This helps you decide where to get on the train and reassures you that the service is running. We also provide next-train indicators which show the next three trains from that platform. At our busy city-centre stations there is a 'countdown' which tells customers how long in minutes it will be until the next service. Estimated times of arrival at stations the train will call at are also included on some screens across the network. Keeping these systems updated and relevant is a priority for us. During disruption we will post a special notice on these screens to provide more detail on the problem, the effect on services and advice on alternative travel.

During severe disruption where the number of cancellations is more than the number of services running, we may use disruption mode' on CIS. This means screens will be changed to show only trains that are running. This makes sure that train information is clear for customers, helping them make informed decisions about their

travel arrangements.

### Station announcements

Many of our stations are connected to a long-line public-address system. This system makes sure we announce train arrivals and departures at stations. It will also announce any alterations to services. The system automatically announces the number of carriages on the train and the reason for any delays or alterations to services.

During disruption, we will play a recorded message at affected stations, explaining the problem, the effect and advice. We will remove non-critical messages, such as improvement work and general updates. At staffed stations we will provide a more detailed message.

We currently make announcements relating to planned improvement work at least seven days before the work. This timescale may increase depending on the nature of the work.

### Help points



Our stations have a help-point facility that is connected to our customer-service centres which are staffed continuously every day. Customer Information Advisors can provide help and guidance on train times, connections, and passenger assistance. Help points should be answered within 30 seconds by one of our customer-service operators. All calls to the help points are recorded.

Some people think that the help points are for emergency use only, so we have rebranded them to encourage customers to use them.

### On-train announcements

Our on-train staff have smartphones which provide access to information for customers and our own sources of information. They can use this information to keep customers updated during the journey.

There are electronic passenger information systems (PIS) in all our trains. The PIS provides visual and audio information on calling points and interchange locations.

During service disruption, on-train staff will make their own announcements or walk through their train to keep customers updated throughout the delay. The recent introduction of remote announcements on trains means we can now communicate directly with customers from our control room.

### Station Facilities

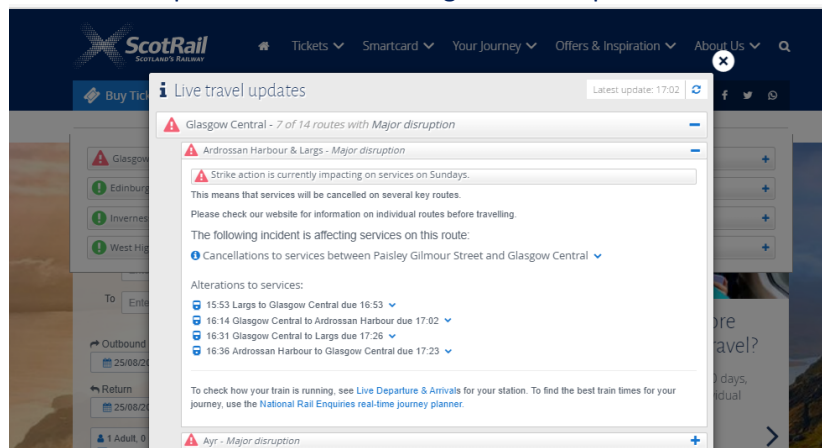
ScotRail provides information about station facilities on the ScotRail website. Each station also has a Station Facilities poster which provides information on the facilities available at the station.

We also have Customer Service Information posters at our stations. These include information about the various information channels available online and station. They promote the station help points and provide visual representations replacement bus pick up point. Where applicable they will detail any ticket acceptance arrangements that are in place.

## Website

Our website gives clear and consistent information during planned and unplanned disruptions.

Information published on our website is powered by Darwin, the rail industry information system. It features a panel on the home page, which offers you two methods of checking the status of your journey. The panel will display a general status of the network, accompanied by green (good service), yellow (minor disruption) or red (severe disruption) icons. Details of specific services will be given in this panel.



We also have a 'Check your journey' panel, which allows you to enter your specific journey. The panel will then display a message with specific details. This is more sensitive and will keep you informed of minor journey changes (short delays, for example).

Buy Tickets

Check Service

Next Train

From 
To

☒ Good service between Glasgow Central and Paisley Gilmour Street

When we are experiencing severe disruption across many of our routes or plan to use a temporary timetable, we will display a prominent warning on the home page. When we plan to operate a reduced timetable the following day, we will try to publish information on our website by 4pm the previous day. This will link to a page which will



posters  
at the  
of the

provide information on the incident. The out-of-hours communications team will help prepare this page.

Details of planned improvement work will also be shown on the service indicator.

✓ Ayrshire & Inverclyde - *Good service*

! Kilmarnock, Dumfries, Carlisle - *Amended service*

! Glasgow - Carlisle/Newcastle - *Amended service*

! Vital repairs for south west rail line.

Emergency works to repair a land slip beneath the railway between Kilmarnock and Dumfries will continue for a further four weeks. The section of line has been closed since Monday 10th February after storms caused the River Nith to wash away an embankment beneath the railway.

Following detailed examination of the land slip by specialist engineers, the line is now expected to reopen for start of service on Monday 16th March 2020. Engineers are working to repair the land slip beneath a 50m stretch of track near Holywood in Dumfriesshire. Firstly, the engineers have to construct a new road and compound to bring material to the site to allow them to begin the process of stabilising and rebuilding the embankment.

To keep you moving, our services will continue to run between Dumfries and Carlisle and between Kilmarnock and Glasgow, with replacement buses running between Dumfries and Kilmarnock.

A Network Rail spokesperson said: Our engineers are working hard to reopen the line as quickly as possible for customers. Storm Ciara has caused significant damage beneath the track and we will need to rebuild the track-bed and supporting embankment before we can reopen the line. The land slip is located in a challenging location above the river and will also require our engineers to construct a haul road to bring equipment and materials to the site.

## Social media

Our communications team manage our social-media channels. They're on duty between 7.00 am and every day. Out with these times you can keep up to date through our app or the website. Out with these times customers can speak to an advisor via the station help point.

We use our Facebook page to give people information about our current campaigns and any offers that are available. We may use Facebook to tell people about prolonged or particularly severe disruption, but Twitter is the main way we provide information about this.

Our Twitter account (@ScotRail) is our most popular social-media channel and we use it to provide information about disruptions to services. During major disruptions, we tweet information direct from Scotland's Integrated Control room, and we aim to respond personally to as many customers as possible. For the most severe disruptions this isn't always possible. In these circumstances we will focus on messaging that reaches the widest possible audience, rather than try to respond to every enquiry. We can normally answer most queries quickly and easily through Twitter. If that isn't possible, we will point you in the right direction so that your query can be answered as quickly and as accurately as possible.

ScotRail also uses WhatsApp. We did this to make it even easier for customers to contact us. We use it to react to 'real-time' situations, but it gives you another way to ask us anything. WhatsApp is the most used, multi-platform messaging service in the world, so it's essential that we're available on it. Customers can send a message by using 07555 012345.

## ScotRail app and alerts

With our free easy-to-use customer app you can buy tickets and get real-time journey updates to your phone. Once you have downloaded the app you can:

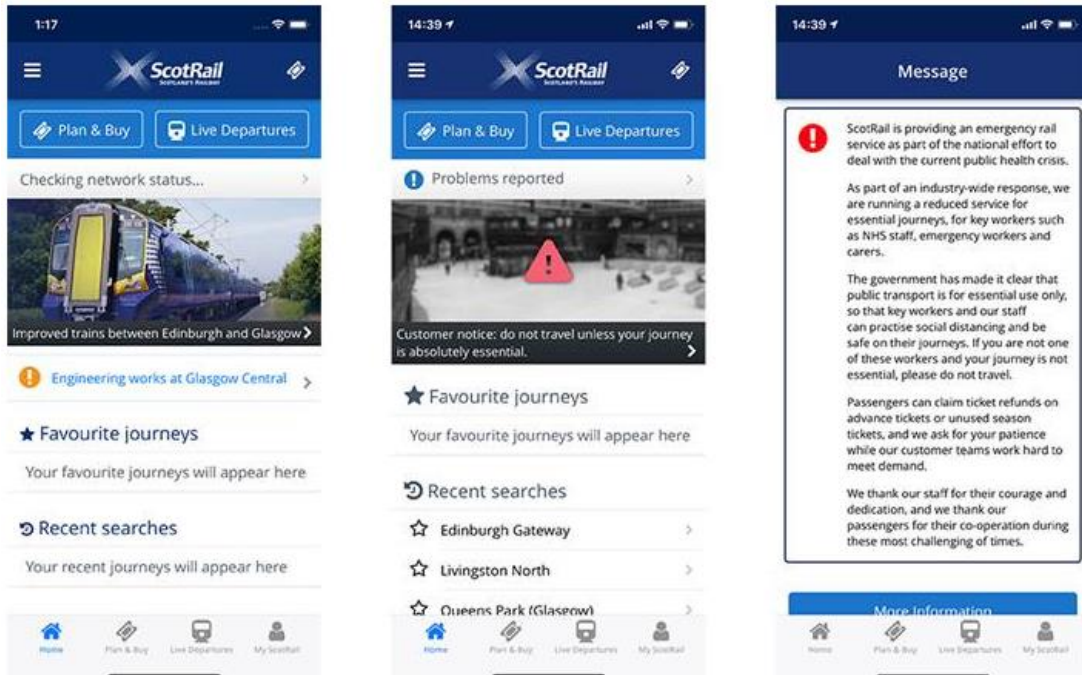
- purchase mtickets, load tickets to your smartcard or collect tickets at a station.
- check the status of your journey.
- see your recent journeys in your My ScotRail account.





- contact us from the main menu.
- sign up for alerts.

When we are experiencing severe disruption across many of our routes or plan to use a temporary timetable, we will display a prominent warning on our app. This will link to a page which will provide information on the incident. Examples of our app alert pages are shown below.



### Media and travel desk awareness plan

We work with contacts in the media to share updates on major disruption. We will share information about cancellations and alterations to our train services with travel desks to help our customers get the most up-to-date information. We will also use interviews and TV to help with more information if we think it is relevant.

### Alternative transport, routes and when tickets are valid

We do not have any pre-agreed arrangements with other train operators for accepting tickets on other train operators' trains. Each case is reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Control Duty Operations Manager, due to limited capacity on our trains. If train tickets are being accepted on other train operators' trains, we will update you and let you know how this applies.

You can get information on alternative routes from our website and app.

We will provide a replacement bus service where appropriate during planned and unplanned disruptions. We have a bus replacement coordinator, and they work closely with the team in Control to monitor the buses provided. They also work closely with the customer-service centres to provide updates on replacement buses. You must have a valid train ticket to travel on any of our replacement buses. The bus coordinator or driver will ask to see your ticket. Bus drivers who operate rail-replacement buses on our behalf must communicate clearly, letting you know the calling points and expected journey times. There will also be obvious signs displayed on the



bus to identify it as a rail-replacement bus.

During a disruption to our services, it can sometimes be difficult to get buses to operate a replacement service for customers. This will depend on the time of day and time of year or if there are any major events taking place within that area.

As a result of this, we have arrangements with local transport providers so you can be allowed to use your train ticket for travel on buses, trams, or the Glasgow subway. We will provide information updates on our website, social media, station announcements and on CIS screens at stations.

We may provide a taxi if the station is not accessible for replacement buses or where there are not enough customers at a station to justify using a replacement bus. The decision to order taxis will be made either by the control room or by the customer-service centres. We will not provide replacement transport if there is another train service within 60 minutes. You may be asked to give your contact telephone when a taxi is booked so that you receive a text confirmation.

We will make appropriate arrangements if the last train of the day has been cancelled.

### **Cheapest ticket and do not travel policies**

When services are diverted using a cheaper (or more expensive) route due to a disruption, we will sell you the cheapest ticket. You will be allowed to travel on any reasonable route during severe disruptions. If we lift restrictions, we will sell off-peak fares.

During severe disruptions we may consider putting in place a 'do not travel' policy. We will tell you about this using all our information channels.

### **Customer welfare**

Our approach to managing disruption is built on the basic principle of keeping you on trains and only using replacement transport as a last resort. We will provide advice on other rail routes which are available. If this is not possible, we will provide replacement-bus services through our rail replacement partner. Bus controllers in the control room will provide updates on bus times and schedules which we will add to Darwin.

We may provide free refreshments if journeys have been substantially delayed (60 minutes or more) or cancelled if there are catering facilities at the station.

During service disruptions we will give special consideration to the needs of disabled customers. Members of staff are responsible for identifying customers who may need more help. If a customer is unable to use a replacement bus due to a mobility problem, we will provide a taxi.

In some circumstances it may not be possible to provide replacement transport due to no availability. In these circumstances, we will advise you to consider other methods of transport until we can provide replacement road transport. We will broadcast this information using station announcements, CIS updates and social-media updates. Staff will be able to tell you where the nearest bus stop is.

If you have bought a single or return ticket, you can apply for a refund at a staffed station. If you have been



delayed for 30 minutes or more, you can apply for compensation through our 'delay repay' scheme. We will let you know about this using station and on-train announcements, CIS, and through website and social-media updates.

We have a quick and efficient online portal through which you can claim 'delay repay' compensation. All you need to do is fill in the details of your journey and submit the claim, and the system will automatically make the background checks needed to process it. You will receive an acknowledgement straight away with a reference number and you can go online any time to check the progress of your claim. The link to this process is on the delay repay page on the website.

Claims are paid out using the method you choose. The options are a voucher (which can be exchanged for cash), a debit card or credit card payment, PayPal, or a bank transfer. Or you can choose to donate your compensation to our nominated charity.

If you have missed the last service of the day or you are stranded due to a service disruption, we will consider the most appropriate course of action. We will authorise overnight accommodation or alternative road transport. If it is possible to use a train for part of the journey, this will normally be arranged. When we can't keep you moving on the same day, we will arrange overnight accommodation and you will be able to complete your journey the next day. We will make arrangements for your welfare, and you will be able to claim delay repay. If large numbers of customers are stranded, we will make arrangements for accommodation and refreshments at a local hotel. If it is impossible to get you to the station you were travelling to at a reasonable time, we will arrange for you to travel the next day. In the meantime, we will return you to where your journey started.

#### **Other train operating companies' customers**

We will make every effort to help customers from other train operating companies to complete their journeys on our network. If our staff are receiving enquiries from customers of other TOCs, and they are not being given the information they need from that TOC's control office, we will deal with the issue. This makes sure that if there is a breakdown in communication it is sorted out as soon as possible.

#### **Reviewing our performance**

Measures used to determine success will include customer feedback and social media comments relating to Customer Information and How We Handle Delays.

During disruptions we monitor how we provide information to make sure that it is consistent and timely. This includes checking that the content on our website is updating correctly and the information provided by National Rail Enquiries mirrors the information we are giving to customers.

We review our information daily, checking that train-information messages that have been sent were timely and accurate, and that all service alterations have been communicated as quickly as possible

Following a major disruption, we will carry out a review of the information we provided and how we managed the event. These reviews are overseen by a senior manager. We share what we have learned and advise staff from departments across the business on how what we can do to improve.



We continually work with Transport Focus to discuss passenger feedback, give them updates on our delivery plans and discuss the outcomes from Passenger Focus research. We ask Transport Focus to carry out extra National Rail Passenger Surveys (NRPS) each year on our behalf.

## **Improvement plan**

Over the last year we have:

- Been active contributors to the rail industry Smarter Information, Smarter Journeys Programme.
- worked with local transport providers to put arrangements in place to keep customers moving when we cannot provide replacement buses.
- updated our disruption information system for booking offices.
- utilised station CCTV to monitor customer flows and share regular updates on customer numbers with internal and external stakeholders.
- continued to broadcast live announcements to trains direct from our control room.
- started to use CCTV analytics and virtual trip wires in our stations to identify trespass incidents in real time.
- introduced additional night shift resource in our customer service centres to provide customer assistance via the help points 24/7.
- Simplified Delay Repay information on website
- Upgraded the Delay Repay system to quicken up process for customers claiming and receiving outcome of their claims

- **Over the coming year we will:**

- Continue to look at how we can improve information at stations through station announcements, interactive help points and customer information screens.
- Replace station autodiallers with Commend help points at rural station to improve reliability and access to information for customers.
- Upgrade our CIS and LLPA announcements to meet the industry standard for CIS.
- In conjunction with Network Rail, we will renew the LLPA systems for the Glasgow Central and Motherwell areas and CIS screens at: Edinburgh Waverley, Argyle Street, Glasgow Queen Street Low Level, Charing Cross, Glasgow Central Low Level, Inverness, Haymarket, and Glasgow Central High Level.
- Investigate the potential for utilising technologies such as text to speech for on train PIS.
- Introduce four permanent roles in our Control Centre who will be responsible for broadcasting remote on train announcements and updating the systems that report changes to station facilities such as lifts and escalators in real time.
- Work with our teams to develop and communicate contingency plans for service disruption
- Continue to share best practice with other transport providers and train operators
- Introduce CCTV trespass and linger analytics at 60 stations across the network to reduce the impact of trespass and suicide.
- Introduce new contracts for the provision of rail replacement and taxi provision with KPIs which will drive continuous improvement
- Work with alternative transport partners on contingency plans and make use of what 3 words to improve information on pick up points.

- Continue to support the roll out of the Passenger Assist App to support disabled customers in accessing our service.