



Consumer Expert Panel

25 April 2023 – Microsoft Teams meeting

Name	Organisation
Anne Heal	Chair, Non-executive Director, ORR
Kate Denham	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Ralitsa Hiteva	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Claudio Pollack	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Marie Pye	Consumer Expert Panel Member
James Walker	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Andrew Williams-Fry	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Helen Parker	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Sarah Chambers	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Mike Hewitson	Consumer Expert Panel Member and Transport Focus
Jacqui Russell	ORR
David Kimball	ORR
Anna Saunders	ORR (Item 3 only)
Patrick Johnson	ORR (Item 4 only)
Gareth Clancy	ORR (Item 5 only)

Item	Speaker	Time
Welcome	Anne Heal	15.00
1. Intro to ORR / Consumer Expert Panel	Jacqui Russell	15.05
2. 'Knowing Me, Knowing You' exercise	David Kimball	15.15
3. Workforce Reform (2)	Anna Saunders	15.30
4. EV charging regulation	Patrick Johnson	16.00
5. Timetable publication consultation	Gareth Clancy	16.30
Closing remarks and AOB	Anne Heal	17.00

Notes

Welcome

- 1 Anne Heal welcomed the four new members of the Panel, Kate Denham, Sarah Chambers, Ralitsa Hiteva and Claudio Pollack.

Intro to ORR / Consumer Expert Panel

- 2 Jacqui Russell then provided for the benefit of the new members an overview of the panel's role and its importance to ORR, the work of ORR and its relationship with Transport Focus, and the train and station operator licensing scheme. She also set out the scope of ORR's consumer and competition powers.
- 3 Following this introduction, David Kimball led an exercise to allow panel members to get to know each other a little.

Workforce reform (2)

- 4 Anna Saunders introduced a paper setting out ORR's draft approach to reminding licence holders of their obligations to passengers when any changes to ticket operations may be made. The Panel considered the following issues to be of particular importance:
 - (a) Ongoing compliance with full range of requirements set out in ORR's consumer guidance and codes of practice (such as the Accessible Travel Policy Guidance)

- (b) The critical role played by staff, both at the station and in call centres, providing pre-travel information
 - (c) Consideration of passengers that may not be able to use digital platforms or technology such as ticket vending machines
 - (d) The benefits of measuring the quality of the passenger experience and perceptions of safety at the station
 - (e) The option of requiring licence holders to determine what evidence they would need to provide to ORR to demonstrate ongoing compliance with ORR's requirements, rather than ORR specifying this.
 - (f) A option of focussing on key risks to passengers of any changes, rather than a reminder of the broad sweep of obligations.
- 5 Mike Hewitson reiterated for the benefit of the new panel members the role of Transport Focus in any ticket office closure process, and how the implications of any closures must be made clear to passengers.
- 6 Anna thanked the panel for their helpful comments and indicated ORR would undertake further work on its approach.

EV charging

- 7 **Patrick Johnson** introduced a paper exploring competition and consumer protection in the electric vehicle charging market. He reminded members that the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles is responsible for funding and legislation, but invited the panel to consider if there might be gaps in the existing regulatory landscape. In response the panel considered:
- (a) The role of Ofgem, the effectiveness of its innovation fund, and how ORR might interact with Ofgem and other regulators in the sector – this could be done through customer journey mapping.
 - (b) The need for a medium and long-term view when considering competition and consumer protection issues
 - (c) The part played by the planning process in the roll-out of charging facilities and supporting infrastructure.
 - (d) The availability and accessibility of charging facilities and payment methods
 - (e) The risks of distance-based availability standards

- (f) The roles of the energy and motor ombudsmen
 - (g) Current regulatory requirements such as a database of availability and fault reporting.
- 8 Patrick thanked the panel for their contributions and indicated that much more work would need to be undertaken before consideration by the ORR Board.

Timetable publication consultation

- 9 Gareth Clancy introduced a paper on ORR's [Proposals to modify timetable publication in Network Rail's licence | Office of Rail and Road \(orr.gov.uk\)](https://www.orr.gov.uk/proposals-to-modify-timetable-publication-in-network-rail-s-licence) following an industry proposal to shorten the publication horizon from 12 to 8 weeks. He indicated that ORR was interested in any consequential licence changes and contractual processes with regard to timetable production and ensuring it is ready for passengers to view.
- 10 In response to a query from the panel, Gareth clarified that ORR had requested that the Rail Delivery Group provide on behalf of the industry evidence of the impact of this change on passengers. He also reminded the panel of ORR's powers to hold rail companies accountable for their licence conditions. Jacqui noted the different arrangements that had been put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 11 The panel noted their concerns regarding the impacts of the reduction in publication horizon for a range of passenger groups that may want to book 12 weeks in advance (including to access the cheapest tickets) or need significant time to change their arrangements when timetables change including disabled people, commuters working specific jobs, people in rural, semi-rural and coastal areas, people accessing education and healthcare.
- 12 The panel also noted its concerns about Network Rail's stakeholder engagement on its proposals, and reiterated the concerns of rail freight organisations.
- 13 Gareth thanked the panel for its comments and noted that ORR is considering how to hold NR to account for its licence obligations in this area.

Closing Remarks and AOB

- 14 Anne Heal thanked the members for their contributions and invited feedback from the new members on the meeting. Members also indicated they were keen to receive feedback on their contributions.
- 15 The next meeting would take place on 21st June 2023.



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