The Rail Ombudsman

Report: Joint Working Survey

Conducted by the Rail Ombudsman, Transport Focus and London TravelWatch.

October 2026

Report – results of the Statutory Appeals Bodies / Rail Ombudsman Joint Working Survey 2026

Introduction and purpose

The Statutory Appeals Bodies (Transport Focus and London TravelWatch) and Rail Ombudsman both have responsibilities in the consumer dispute landscape, including offering consumers a route for escalation via a 'single front door' experience. Both also have a key interest in the generation of insight relating to rail industry complaints. As such, the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman must interact closely and work collaboratively, to best serve consumers, the sector and their own operational considerations.

This survey is designed to ensure the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman can identify strengths and any opportunities to improve arrangements on an ongoing basis.

Methodology

Representatives of the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman independently complete a survey form, which uses a question set previously agreed by both sets of stakeholders.

Upon completion, the organisations meet to present their feedback and discuss the findings, agreeing on a combined document.

This report presents the results of a survey conducted in June 2024.

The questions used were:

1) Are the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman satisfied that the 'single front door' function is being delivered optimally for their respective organisations and the consumer?
2) Are the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman satisfied that data and insight is available and exchanged between the organisations?
3) Are the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman satisfied that effective relationship management structures are in place at operational and senior levels, and do these arrangements promote collaborative working and knowledge sharing?

Results

1) Are the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman satisfied that the'single front door' function is being delivered optimally for their respective organisations and the consumer?

Statutory Appeals Bodies response:

The Rail Ombudsman single front door function does provide the consumer with a streamlined approach to raise concerns. We would endorse continued efforts to ensure consumers are fully aware.

Rail Ombudsman response:

Yes, the function is streamlined through use of a system designed to deliver it and effective communications take place between the organisations over the transfer of cases. The organisations have jointly engaged in review of our working practices and although no substantive changes were deemed necessary by either party, the proactive approach to continuous improvement is helping to ensure that delivery remains optimal.

2) Are the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman satisfied that data and insight is available and exchanged between the organisations?

Statutory Appeals Bodies response:

Insight between organisations is comprehensive although there is always room for improvement. Further consideration could be given to this area once the forthcoming changes have been embedded.

Rail Ombudsman response:

Yes, the Rail Ombudsman facilitates direct access to its data, which the Statutory Appeals Bodies analyse. The organisations discuss respective learnings from both Rail Ombudsman casework and also the Statutory Appeals Bodies' own work.

3) Are the Statutory Appeals Bodies and Rail Ombudsman satisfied that effective relationship management structures are in place at operational and senior levels, and do these arrangements promote collaborative working and knowledge sharing?

Statutory Appeals Bodies response:

This relationship is very effective and streamlined. Processes are simple with mitigations in place to manage and resolve the challenges as they occur. It must also be mentioned that because of the collaborative nature of the relationship, very few issues arise.

Rail Ombudsman response:

Yes, the now well-established structures remain in place and from the Rail Ombudsman perspective, we feel the relationship promotes timely, open and constructive dialogue – whether that be through routine scheduled engagement or ad-hoc.

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www.railombudsman.org

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