

## Meeting of Scheme Member Panel

### Minutes

**Meeting date: 10/02/2025**

**14:00 – 16:00 Held virtually**

### Present:

Julie Allan – Govia Thameslink Railway (Chair)  
Mike Ross - LNER  
Nicola Mayers – Network Rail  
Paul Jackson – Hull Trains  
James Shuttleworth – West Coast Railways  
Lynsey Flack – Greater Anglia  
Micky Ball – National Rail Enquiries  
Judith Turner – Rail Ombudsman  
Natalie Freeman – Rail Ombudsman  
Matthew Thomas – Rail Ombudsman

### Apologies

Joanne Ferguson – Scotrail  
Julie Balmain – Nexus  
Jason Ness – Great Western Railway

Minutes prepared by the Rail Ombudsman secretariat.

The Chair declared the meeting open at 2pm and introduced the session by referring to the Panel's role and remit in driving continuous improvement. The Chair noted an upcoming period of significant industry change including the nationalisation of Govia Thameslink Railway from the beginning of June, and the impending changes to ticket refunds under the National Rail Conditions of Travel (NRCoT) in April.

### **A) Actions from the last meeting**

MT presented an update against the action log, including published data by a range of Ombudsman schemes on outcome profiles. It was noted that uphold rates varied and also not all data was like-for-like. The granularity of the Rail Ombudsman's data was apparent. The Panel discussed interpretation of outcome profiles – in particular how claims upheld in part should be viewed as an indicator of train company performance. Engagement across the broader industry and governing bodies around case outcomes was discussed. The advisory statement

made at the last meeting had been relayed to the Rail ADR Service Board, where it was agreed for action at an operational level.

## **B) Operational update and Summary Performance Report**

MT presented on operations, notably case volumes, which have remained high. Seasonal variations factored in to forecasting remain, but the volume itself has been notably higher.

Panel members discussed volumes in their respective organisations.

Panel members referred to the increasing complexity of Consumer contacts with Train Operating Companies (TOCs), with the increase in the use of AI changing the landscape. It was confirmed this would be an agenda point in a future meeting of the Rail Delivery Group's Redress Support Group.

MT presented the Summary Performance Report and discussed with the Panel. Seasonality in case statistics was observed with an upward trend in new cases across like periods from the previous year, by over 100 cases (in period 11, 2025/2026 in comparison to 2024/2025). The view of the panel was that this appeared consistent with increases in volumes being seen by TOCs. A shared portal space was discussed which would allow TOCs to report directly on incidents which may impact Ombudsman volumes. One Panel member reported approximately 20,000 delay repay claims for one incident therefore queried what would be useful for the Rail Ombudsman to understand. The Rail Ombudsman indicated that the earliest possible sight of potential volume changes would be welcome.

## **C) Independent Assessor recommendations**

The Rail Ombudsman presented a series of recommendations arising from the Independent Assessor's review of cases. The themes addressed were:

### Consolidation of multiple cases into one for administration.

The Panel discussed pros and cons. It was acknowledged that it can be unwieldy administering multiple claims, but it can make for clearer responses if keeping cases separate. There were no strong views as to whether the Rail Ombudsman should or should not consolidate as a general practice – rather than discretion should be exercised with the relative merits in the particular instance in mind. The Rail Ombudsman proposed adding content to its FAQs to address when consolidation might be envisaged; the Panel felt this adequate.

### Issuing addendums to decisions

The value of addendums in certain circumstances was recognised. Whether to set a timescale for addendums was the key point of discussion raised by the Panel. Mirroring the 20 working days established for acceptance of an award was suggested. The next step was for the Rail Ombudsman to iron out its process and

establish whether this requires a rule change or can be addressed through consumer-facing content.

Role of the Rail ADR Service Board in complex cases

With reference to the following requirement: *If the Dispute is about something that is not covered by the Rail ADR Service Rules or raises a complex issue of law, it will be for the Rail ADR Service Board to determine the extent of its eligibility.* The Panel felt that the Board's role was clear. No change to the Rail ADR Service Rules was considered necessary; rather, the Rail Ombudsman would consider further consumer-facing content to better illustrate this.

No formal advisory statement was made to the Rail ADR Service Board in respect of the above; rather that the Panel was satisfied that the Rail Ombudsman was taking appropriate steps to ensure that the Rail ADR Service Rules were applied and would consider whether further information could be made available in consumer-facing content.

**D) Member updates - brief update on any key activities or issues impacting passengers from the perspective of the Panel Member**

Brief updates were sought from the Panel; there were no substantive matters arising – the Panel had prioritised agenda time for the matters above.

**E) Review of matters arising, actions and close**

The Chair summarised the actions and closed the meeting.

Actions from last meeting – complete.

Action	Date to achieve	Responsibility
RO to implement proposed actions covered in discussion of IA recommendations	Report next meeting	RO
Industry to consider earliest forecasting info that could be provided to RO	Next meeting	Panel members