

## **RAIL OMBUDSMAN BOARD MINUTES**

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors of Rail Ombudsman (Company Number 14303967) (the "company") held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025

### Present:

Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman: Kevin Grix (KG)

Executive Directors: Judith Turner (JT) Richard Puckey (RP)

Non-Executive Directors: John Peerless-Mountford (JP) [Chair]

James Walker (JWA), Helen Saxon (HS) and Gobi Ranganathan (GR)

Matt Thomas (MT)

Apologies for Absence: Jonny Westbrooke (JW)

### **1. NOTICE, QUORUM AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair reported that sufficient notice of the meeting had been duly given and that a quorum was present.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Declaration of Directors' interests notice was circulated prior to the meeting and will be updated accordingly.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING**

The minutes of the Rail board meeting 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were approved by the board and signed by the Chair on behalf of the board.

### **4. FINANCIAL SUMMARY AGAINST CONTRACT**

RP summarised the financial position against contract with the board

### **5. OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

#### **Operations and contract update**

##### *Case volume*

MT shared slides depicting closed case volumes year-to-date and a comparison with the previous year and explained that volumes had been quite steady and within initial assumptions, noting that the accuracy and precision achievable through forecasting as a result.

#### **Service Level Agreement**

MT briefed the Board on performance against the SLA.

### **Scheme Member Engagement**

Typical regime of service reviews and ad-hoc support to members continues. No significant issues to report. Work completed and underway with regard to transition of operators into public ownership. Activity underway to onboard a new member for licence compliance purposes – MT noted related discussions with ORR regarding applicability of ADR to certain charter operators.

MT noted that the Scheme Member Survey would launch soon and referred to unsolicited positive feedback received by ORR from a rail service provider.

### **Key activity**

New website and CMS launched – enhancing accessibility, functionality and data insight for internal and external users. Some ongoing work and also positive feedback received.

Contract changes – change discussed at last Board meeting implemented. New changes regarding named roles and charging mechanisms in flight at present, with related variation to Scheme Member Agreements to reflect annual rather than quarterly invoicing regime, following the annual Efficiency Review and consultation of scheme members.

MT noted upcoming annual contract audit, preparatory works in relation to evolution of the landscape, with DfT's response to the consultation regarding the new passenger watchdog expected in the near future. MT described discussions with DfT and other key stakeholders.

MT referred to past and upcoming engagement with the Accessible Transport Policy Commission and other accessibility landscape stakeholders.

HS sought clarity on format of the Scheme Member Survey following previous discussions about adopting anonymous format – MT confirmed that it would be completed anonymously and would present on the results at the next Board meeting.

## **6. OUTPUTS OF ADVISORY PANELS**

### **Themes & Improvements**

Complaint Themes: The majority of all complaints received related to the decisions which had been made, with no service failures identified. However, a couple of complaints referred to process, requesting further clarification on remit. We also had one complaint which identified some minor errors which had been made within the wording of the adjudication. An apology was made to the consumer. This did not impact the decision which had been made.

- We have reiterated to the team the importance of ensuring that our process and remit is outlined clearly within the initial contact.
- We have also introduced peer reviews of adjudication prior to submission for approval.
- We reviewed our complaints processes across all services, in an effort to reduce time spent on complaints which are purely decision related, enabling us to focus on service issues.

**IA referrals**

We received 3 IA referrals across the 3 periods. The IA confirmed within their response to the first complaint that the Rail Ombudsman had followed process within their assessment of the case. However, a recommendation was made for the Rail Ombudsman to discuss within the next panel meetings, the difficulty of procuring objective evidence in cases concerning accessibility issues. This is scheduled to be discussed within the next Panel meetings.

The IA confirmed within their response to the second complaint that the Rail Ombudsman had followed their set processes and the complaint was not upheld. The third referral is currently being considered by the IA.

Next meeting planned for October.

**7. AOB**

Nothing to note.

There was no further business, and the Chair declared the meeting closed.

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John Peerless-Mountford  
For and on behalf of the Board