

Chilternrailways

Continuous Improvements Report 2024-25 Complaints Handling

April 2025

In the Summer of 2024, Chiltern Railways partnered with SignLive in order to introduce a video relay service for British Sign Language users who wish to make contact with Chiltern Railways. Whilst this improves the ability for British Sign Language users to make complaints to Chiltern Railways directly using an interpreter, this also improves the way such customers can contact us for other needs such as making enquiries or booking passenger assistance.

Contact us using British Sign Language (BSL)

We have partnered with Online BSL Interpreting Service, SignLive.

If you are a BSL user, you can use SignLive to connect to us via an Interpreter. Just log in to the SignLive app on iOS, Android, or a web browser and find us in the Community Directory. When you call, the Interpreter may confirm who you want to get in touch with.

Please [click here for a YouTube video](#) that describes the SignLive service.



How to Access SignLive:

The first time you use SignLive you will need to complete a one-time registration. This will keep your account secure and allow us to call you back if needed.

You can access SignLive via the app or a web browser. Visit www.signlive.co.uk/login for more information (this link will take you to an external website).

For frequently asked questions visit: <https://signlive.co.uk/faq/> (this link will take you to an external website).

For any SignLive technical issues, please contact:

Email hello@signlive.co.uk

Then in November 2024, we amended our online webform to make less fields mandatory. Following feedback from our Accessibility Panel, we understood that some enquiry types did not require certain information to be provided, such as journey details and these were

therefore made optional for many category types, including 'Accessibility Issues', making the process of completing our online complaints form much smoother and relevant.

Enquiry Type*

Accessibility Issues

Travel Date (optional)

Departure Time (optional)

Please enter the time in 24hr format (HH:MM), separated by a colon. For example, 16:25

Departure Station (optional)

-

Destination Station (optional)

-

In March 2025, we advertised a new Customer Relations Specialist role. This role will cover various tasks within our Contact Centre but one area they will start to focus is handling all Accessibility complaints, ensuring dedicated resource to this area.

We launched phase one of our chat bot in June 2024. Phase one focused on having this automated service for our most popular contact type (Refunds) whilst we ensured the technology worked for our customers. If a customer chose Refunds as their enquiry type within the Live Chat service, our Bot would triage the enquiry, ensuring the customer was directed to the right self serve channels to handle their enquiry.

Since launching this level of automation, 38% of Live Chat conversations with handled by the bot, freeing up our Contact Centre staff to assist other customers with more complex requirements. Of those customers who were passed through to agent, our 10 minute response time improved from 93% to 97% on average and 89% of customers who used the Bot to triage their enquiry answered our post chat survey to advise they found the bot to be helpful.

Due to the success of phase 1, we have been reviewing other popular category types where the Bot will be able to help our customers quickly and efficiently with the complaint / enquiry, allowing the Contact Centre to focus on more complex issues. This will also ensure that the customers are directed to the best and quickest place to get a resolution. Enquiry types the bot will now cover in phase 2 are Delay Compensation, Train Service Performance, Company Policy (for Revenue Protection and Lost Property enquiries) and Environmental issues such as litter / vegetation either at stations or trackside.

Top Complaints and Learnings

Type of complaint	Feedback
Sufficient for passengers to sit/stand	<p>We introduced 2 additional peak time services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, as well as providing additional capacity to existing services on Monday and Friday. These changes were aimed at our busier services to reduce crowding where most needed.</p> <p>We continue to monitor passenger numbers and load factors, along with complaint volumes in this area in order to react where needed and where possible.</p> <p>We also continue to hold conversations with Department for Transport in order to look to procure more trains.</p>
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff at station	<p>We rolled out 'Empathy Lab' training across all of our front line teams and Managers, allowing staff to experience first hand, similar situations our customers find themselves in and learn how to best help them. This training allows us to use virtual reality equipment to put our learning in to practice and we believe will really make a difference to our front line colleagues and customers in difficult situations.</p>
Punctuality / reliability (i.e the train arriving / departing on time)	<p>There have been a couple of major incidents across our network, most notably signalling faults, which are not maintained or managed by Chiltern Railways. We continue to work with colleagues across the industry to minimise disruption across our services. We continue to use technology to monitor trends where delays are occurring and meet with colleagues internally and externally to review, in order to rectify any ongoing problems and reduce delays on our network. We have also worked with industry partners to start using videos on our social media pages to highlight important information during certain disruptions, making information more accessible and understandable for our customers.</p>
Ticketing and Refunds Policy	<p>Changes were made to our Off-Peak restrictions once we went live with Contactless payments on a section of our</p>

	<p>route. This change caused some initial frustration to customers and we worked to make as many customers aware as possible in advance with social media posts and leaflets at stations, as well as a dedicated page on our website to the contactless payment rollout. Following some initial negative feedback, complaints in this area has since reduced.</p>
Upkeep and repair of the train	<p>Towards the start of the year, we had some seasonal complaints regarding air conditioning not working on board our trains, resulting in a higher complaint numbers in this area. We were behind on our fleet maintenance plan and the Engineering department worked hard to implement a plan to get us back on track, ensuring that heating / air conditioning were maintained , along with other maintenance better throughout the year. Since the initial negative feedback across the beginning of the year, complaints in this area have since reduced.</p>