

Northern Trains Customer Performance 2023/24



NORTHERN

Go do your thing

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Welcome

At Northern we are passionate about making sure your journey with us is as good as it can be. Our Customer Charter sets out our commitment to you, our customer, for the services we provide.

We review our Customer Charter every year in consultation with Transport Focus, the independent transport user watchdog. You can download a copy of our Customer Charter here or pick up a copy at staffed stations on our network or contact our customer experience centre and they will send you one.

Our people are here to help you, at our stations, through our customer experience centre (**0800 602020**) and our customer assist service (**0800 138 5560**). They can offer advice on all aspects of your journey, starting with journey planning. Whether you are talking to us face-to-face or on the phone, we are here to provide you with the help you need to make sure your journey is as easy as possible.

Assisted Travel

Northern strives to provide rail services which are accessible to everyone, so that customers can travel with confidence, safe in the knowledge that extra support is available at each stage of their journey, when needed. From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, we supported 57,395 pre booked assisted travel requests.

Note we currently do not measure the volume of unbooked assistance we support.

Our making rail accessible leaflet provides a practical guide to travelling with Northern, explaining what we do to assist disabled and older customers and the standards of service you can expect from us

<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/accessibility-hub>

Our Passenger assistance team are on hand to discuss and plan your journey 24 hours a day 7 days a week (excluding Christmas Day) Where possible we recommend booking assistance 2 hours in advance or by 2300 on the day before travel, by calling us on **0800 138 5560** (text relay **18001 0800 138 5560**), or using an online form on our web site

<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/accessibility-hub>

Mobility Scooters

Full details of our mobility scooter policy is available from our website

<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/accessibility-hub> or by contacting our Passenger Assistance team, using the details above.

Complaints and Compensation

Customers are at the heart of all that we do. However, sometimes things go wrong and we may not be able to provide the level of service that we promised. We value any feedback that our customers provide and use this in a positive way to improve the level of service we offer.

We aim to resolve and respond to all complaints within 10 working days. Response time may vary during busy periods.

All of our staff are here to help. In addition, you can register a complaint via our website

<https://northernrail.my.site.com/s/article/How-to-make-a-complaint> or contact our customer experience centre on **0800 602020**.

Between 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024, we received 16,166 customer complaints and responded to 15,724, of which 96.34% were within 20 days. The table below shows a breakdown of the top 5 complaint categories;

Reason for the complaint	% of complaints
Train service performance - punctuality / reliability	25.6%
Company policy – ticket and refunds Policy	9.0%
Staff conduct / availability - staff helpfulness and attitude on a train	7.4%
Staff conduct - helpfulness and attitude of staff at a station	6.2%
Delay repay – claims rejected	4.8%

Overall complaints across all categories reduced in 2023/24 by 10% even though passenger numbers increased by 5% compared to 2022/23.

We continue to review customer feedback, including complaints, which is used across the business to direct long term strategy, and tactically by customer-facing teams to help improve customer service.

Our customer service training programme continues to be rolled out and trained to front colleagues throughout 23/24 rail year, including onboard colleagues as well as station staff. Complaint data and customer feedback are continually used to identify key areas of focus, re-evaluate our training material and key course objectives.

Top 2 complaint themes

Train Service Performance

We continue to actively manage our train performance to support our customer's

Cancellations of services occur for many reasons including, but not limited to, weather impact,

infrastructure failure, train faults, theft and trespass, and traincrew unavailability. Working collaboratively through our close partnership with Network Rail, we develop mitigation for these occurrences on a continuous basis.

The main reasons for exceeding our cancellation target have been the high rate of traincrew unavailability through sickness, a high level of outstanding training creating a skills gap in our driver resource and limitations due to existing terms and conditions to work Sundays for many of our traincrew.

Looking forward, we continue to focus on providing a resilient and dependable service for our customers, working in collaboration with our colleagues, Trade Unions, and our industry partners to implement our Joint Performance Strategy with Network Rail.

We are finalising the deployment of automated customer count software to cover 100% of fleet, enabling us to use the onboard data to improve fleet capacity planning on specific routes. Where we anticipate increased foot fall due to special events, where possible we can strengthen the planned services with additional carriages or services, increasing capacity. We're already actively use Advanced purchase ticketing to manage customer demand, maximising pricing differential on advanced ticketing.

NTL are working in partnership with NWR to complete performance deep dives on key lines of route to identify potential challenges to performance. This has included Calder valley, where over 60 improvements have been identified for implementation. Our next focus area is the Harrogate line, where again we will focus in partnership to identify and deliver improvements to performance.

Ticket and Refunds Policy

As part of the penalty fare increase in January 2023, all signage was updated and replaced, improving the

size and readability of information. We continue to review placement of signage to ensure good visibility and continue to work with other train operators to improve potential hotspots, including in Manchester Airport where NTL works in partnership with TPT to support a comprehensive and cohesive approach.

NTL complete proactive visits prior to large events to ensure we are compliant with the station's risk assessment.

Additional Revenue Protection officers have been recruited to support customers and to ensure compliant customers are not footing the bill for non-compliant customers.

Revenue protection officers have received additional training, focusing on both seen and unseen disabilities, L3 investigative practice, including conflict de-escalation, as well as going through a 2 year rolling programme of customer service training.

Where we see specific challenges with school pupils fare evading, our scholastic travel team proactively reach out and work with schools to educate pupils and parents.

Where matters proceed to court, the public interest test is continually applied and out of court settlements are usually offered (not for assault or abuse cases).

Customer Satisfaction

We continuously monitor customer satisfaction through our post-journey online survey, to ask customers what they think about the key aspects of their experience, their satisfaction with each stage of the customer journey as well as their experience of interacting with Northern staff.

From April 2023 to March 2024, below is a summary of the customer satisfaction results

- Punctuality of trains 73.0%
- Customer Information During Disruption 31.3%
- Provision of information about train times/platforms 78.4%
- Personal safety/security whilst using the station 68.2%
- Personal safety/security whilst on the train 76.4%
- Cleanliness of inside of the train 78.4%
- Provision of information during the journey 78.4%
- Cleanliness and graffiti stations 73.3%*
- Passenger Assistance Requests Complete* 77.3%
- Cleanliness and graffiti trains 86.2% *
- Train Toilet Operation (all toilets, including accessible toilets) 72.0*
- Accessibility of stations and trains 89%**

*Service Quality

**Assesment of the accessibility of our stations

We continue to review customer feedback is used across the business to direct long term strategy, and tactically by customer-facing teams to help improve customer service.

Cleanliness

Train cleaning

Our trains are cleaned daily to ensure they are of a high standard. We also undertake deep cleaning operations across our fleet at 5 TrainCare Centres. This has traditionally taken place every 62 days, however, we are now transferring to a new model to align with our maintenance requirements instead – meaning our deep cleaning will be derived from a mileage based tolerance. On some services we have cleaners that focus on maintaining the overall level of cleanliness

enroute, as well as a large community of cleaning staff at stations, ensuring coverage across the network. We conduct train quality audits each month across our fleet, to ensure we are maintaining our quality standards.

Stations

Our Stations are also deep cleaned regularly to keep the station environment as clean, safe and clear of litter as possible. Each month we conduct Quality audits of our stations to ensure we are maintaining our quality standards.

Air conditioning

Some of our trains are equipped with air conditioning. Should this fail our train conductors will do everything he or she can to move customers to an alternative coach.

Toilets

All of our trains have toilets available, including baby changing facilities for our customers use. Additionally some of our stations have toilet facilities. Customers can search for their station to confirm facilities available at

<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/stations>

Punctuality and cancellations

We set ourselves high standards of train punctuality and make every effort to get customers to their destination on time. In 2023/24, our target was to ensure 79.4% of trains arrived within 3 minutes of their planned arrival time – we achieved 79.1%. 97.6% of our services arrived within 15 minutes of their planned arrival time at each station.

Of trains which were delayed on arrival*

- Trains experiencing a delay of 30-59 minutes 0.42%
- Trains experiencing a delay of 60-119 minutes 0.05%
- Trains experiencing a delay of 120 minutes or more 0.01%

There are occasions, usually outside of our control, where trains may be delayed or disrupted. In 2023/24, 5.3%** of our train services were cancelled.

*This is arrival at destination as industry CP6 measures group them together at 30+.

** CP6 calculation using DFT NRC definition of full and part cancellations

Unplanned disruption

We try to do everything we can to avoid them, but sometimes delays or cancellations will happen. We promise that if you are delayed we will give you as much information as we can about what is happening.

We'll get you there

If you have a valid ticket and you are delayed, we will get you to the destination on your ticket (or a reasonable alternative station). We might not be able to do this by train, which is why we have contracts with bus companies and taxi firms. In the unlikely event that we cannot get you to your destination, we will provide overnight accommodation.

We'll compensate you fairly

You can claim Delay Repay if delays or cancellations result in you getting to your destination 15 or more minutes later than scheduled. For more information please see further details in our customer promise. To claim delay repay compensation, please go to <https://northernrailway.co.uk/Delay-Repay> or contact our customer experience centre on **0800 200 6060**.

Cancellation of trains

When trains are cancelled, we provide the same information and help we give to customers affected by delays, and the same compensation policy applies.

If a train is cancelled and as a result there will be a delay in arrival at the destination station of more than 60 minutes, customers will be entitled to either a full refund of their ticket or can postpone their journey to a later date.

Purchasing tickets

We make it easy for you to buy the right ticket for your journey through

- Station Staff
- Providing a website and app that are easy to use
- Installing ticket machines at nearly every station

If you think you have got the wrong ticket, please ask any of our staff, who will be happy to check your ticket, or call our customer experience centre on **0800 200 6060**.

Getting help

Staff will be available at many stations, particularly busy ones. Where there are no staff there may be a help point, or you can call our customer experience centre. There are also staff on trains who are there to help you.

Ticket refunds

If you decide not to use a ticket you have bought, you can apply for a refund within 28 days of the expiry date on the ticket. We usually charge a £5 administration fee, unless it was our fault that you decided not to travel.

If you chose not to travel because the train you intended to use was delayed or cancelled, or there was not room for your bicycle, you can return the

ticket to us for a full refund (you will not have to pay an administration fee). This also applies to tickets where the customer abandons the journey due to disruption and returns to the starting point. This applies to all ticket types, including Advance, which are otherwise not refundable.

To apply for a refund, this must be completed through the provider you purchased the ticket through. If you've purchased directly with Northern, you can request a refund through our website or by contacting our customer experience centre on **0800 200 6060**.

Travel information and ticket sales

Before travel

National Rail Conditions of Travel sets out the legal agreement that you enter into with us when you buy a rail ticket. Where there are facilities available to buy a ticket you must have a ticket, or other authority to travel, which is valid for the train (or trains) you use.

If you would like to see the National Rail Conditions of Travel you can download the details from National Rail Enquiries at **www.nationalrail.co.uk**

Our website and mobile app will help you find journey information and buy tickets online. You can find details on train services, station facilities and ticket office opening times. As well as being able to download timetables, route maps, check train times and buy tickets.

Customers requiring extra help

We are making travel as easy as we can for everyone. Our Accessible Travel Policy (ATP), is available on our website at

<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/accessibility-hub> or by calling the dedicated 24hr customer assist line, **0800 138 5560**. This sets out the arrangements

for customers requiring assistance. If you have particular needs, we'll do what we can to meet them. We provide a customer assist service and we recommend you give 24hrs notice for us to arrange the assistance you need. However, we understand that this is not always possible and we promise that we will do all we can to help you travel.

You can book customer assist through our website, the passenger assist app, by filling in a form at stations or by calling the customer assist team on **0800 138 5560**.

All of our trains carry wheelchair ramps and our staff are trained to use them.

Taking your bicycle

We welcome you and your bicycle to our services. You can take your bicycle free of charge on any of our services, but space is limited. Most trains have enough room for a maximum of two bicycles.

Bicycle spaces cannot be reserved and space is allocated on a first come, first served basis. We only allow one bicycle per person. Trains cannot carry motorised cycles, motorised scooters, tandems, tricycles or trailers. Cycle racks are available at many of our stations. For more information, please see our 'Cycling Promise'.

Provision of information during your journey

We have a number of ways you can keep up to date with travel information during your journey, including

1. Northern App – provides real time train information, including live arrival and departure times
2. Northern Web site - providing up to date timetables
<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/tickets>

3. Northern WhatsApp – this year, we introduced a new way to access information on the go with a live chat function on WhatsApp. Customers can get real time train information and onward connections, like local taxis. The Northern WhatsApp number is **07870 606060**

4. Information about incidents which cause significant disruption (i.e. delays of more than 60 minutes to more than one service) is available from our contact centres and our web site. Please visit <https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/service-updates>

Service update provides:

- Live travel information
 - A summary of any train service problems
 - Detailed messages about any service disruption
 - Station departure boards.
 - You can also personalise information and save your 'preferred routes'
4. Our staff on board our train or on our stations are there to help with travel information to support your journey
5. At our stations, in addition to our staff at some locations, we provide customer information screens, displaying the latest travel information, including arrivals and departures
6. On our trains, we provide passenger information screens, which include route information, and arrival / departure times

Lost property

If you lose something on-board or at one of our stations, we will do our best to return it to you. Please let a member of staff or our customer experience centre know as soon as possible.

We will

- try to contact the owner if they can be identified

- give a receipt to the person who handed the item in, if they ask for it, or
- keep the item for three months, unless it is perishable (for example, food)

To find out more about reclaiming lost property, please click [here](#) or contact our customer experience centre (**0800 602020**).

During the journey

All our trains have clear signage above the internal doors at the end of each coach, giving information about the location and availability of onboard facilities. You can also ask any member of our staff for this information.

Information regarding the next station will be announced onboard by our train conductor or our automated announcements.

In the case of delays the conductor will announce information at appropriate intervals.

The train conductor and automated system will also make announcements about main connecting services.

Safety guideline leaflets can be found onboard, and the train conductor will also make announcements shortly before departure. Further announcements are made shortly after departure.

