

Complaints Handling Procedure

June 2021



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1. Introduction

Nexus operates Metro and is responsible for trains and stations (excluding Sunderland Station which is managed by Northern Trains. Please see their website for more information at northernrailway.co.uk).

We are committed to providing a high quality and value for money service, making sure customers are at the heart of everything we do. Sometimes however we don't get things right, therefore it's important that we encourage customer feedback to help us identify what we need to do better.

This document details the policies and processes we have in place to help us take the corrective action required to make improvements to our services.

2. Promoting awareness

Here at Metro we believe in actively encouraging our customers to provide feedback when things go wrong, to help us make the changes necessary to improve service delivery. We will ensure that details about how to make a complaint are detailed in the following areas:

- Metro Customer's Charter booklet
- Conditions of Carriage
- The Nexus website
- Metro social media pages

Freepost Metro Customer Feedback Forms are also available from:

- Customer Service Advisors, deployed at stations and when they are travelling on trains
- Customer Relations

3. Ownership of complaints

If we receive a complaint or claim referring to another operator's service such as Network Rail, Nexus or other agencies, Metro will acknowledge receipt of the correspondence and forward details to the appropriate party (with the customer's permission), within five full working days of receipt. In the acknowledgement we will confirm who the correct party is and their contact details. Should the complaint involve us as well as another operator(s) then we will make best endeavours to co-ordinate the responses.

Where the complaint concerns one of our third party suppliers (for example cleaning, replacement bus, car park providers), we will request the supplier to investigate the complaint and on receipt of their feedback Metro will provide a response.

4. Easily accessible to all

To make sure customers understand how to make a complaint, we have created a customer version of the Complaints Handling Procedure. The 'Customer Complaint Procedure' clearly details who to contact and the information we require to manage complaint feedback effectively.

To assist in the effective management of customer complaints, Metro provides various access routes to receive and to encourage customer feedback:

- Customer Service Advisors deployed at stations and on trains who will receive training to receive and pass on complaints that require a response from Customer Relations.
- Nexus website: nexus.org.uk/ContactUs. To make it easier for customers to contact Customer Relations via the website, we have introduced 'two click' navigation from the Metro home page. A link to service standards can be found at nexus.org.uk/metro/looking-after-our-customers/customers-charter.
- Direct email address for Customer Relations customerrelations@nexus.org.uk.
- Direct telephone number for Customer Relations 0191 20 20 747.
- Freepost address: Freepost RTXR-HSYK-XCZZ
 Nexus
 South Gosforth Station
 Station Road
 NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
 NE3 1YT.
- Trained Customer Relations team.
- Pre-printed, freepost Customer Feedback Forms

Third party intermediaries for complaints handling

If a customer has chosen to use a service provided by a third party in order for them to raise their complaint with Metro, we will adhere to the same complaint handling procedures set out in this policy. We will offer a full and fair response back to the third party service provider. If a customer is entitled to a refund, their personal details will be requested from the third party service provider to help process their claim.

The current Nexus website aims to comply with all of the Guidelines for UK government websites, as well as all the priority 1 and 2 checkpoints to achieve compliance with the Worldwide Web Consortiums (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0, Level AA, and to maintain this standard as a minimum. Further information can be found at nexus.org.uk/website-policies/accessibility-policy.

5. Social Media

We will monitor Twitter seven days a week and endeavour to reply to all questions and comments requiring a response. Social media channels are used to provide customers with service updates and should not be used to make formal complaints. All complaints should be submitted to Customer Relations to ensure comments are recorded formally. For more information refer to our social media policy at nexus.org.uk/metro or contact Customer Relations.

6. Respecting equality and diversity

All frontline employees are provided with disability awareness training which covers how they can support customers with visual and/or hearing impairments, learning difficulty and/or physical impairments while they are travelling on Metro. Our customer service teams training includes recognising those temporarily disabled through illness, injury or surgery.

We also consider unseen disabilities and how this affects customer's interaction with frontline employees while travelling.

We work with stakeholders such as Eye Wish, a Community Interest Company, which delivers training to support visually impaired customers.

Basic sign language is delivered to frontline teams and supplemented with the British Sign Language leaflet that is available to Metro employees on mobile phones.

If a customer is unable to make a complaint, a friend, relative or support worker can act as advocate as long as they have been given permission to do so by the customer. We will reply back to the person who is acting on the customer's behalf.

If a customer requires service or complaint process information in another format such as audio, large print, braille or a specific language, this can be organised upon request.

7. Respecting complaint confidentiality

We will adhere to the Data Protection Act 1988 to ensure that customer confidentiality is protected and will not divulge confidential information to third parties unless we have the customer's consent.

To assist in our continual drive to improve customer service, a Nexus representative may contact customers to carry out a short questionnaire relating to the quality of our response to their communication. If a customer would prefer not to be contacted for the survey they can opt out through the online form, Customer Feedback Form or by telephoning Customer Relations on 0191 20 20 747.

Our Privacy Policy is published on the Nexus website at nexus.org.uk/metro and is available from the Customer Relations team. This policy details what information we hold

and how it is collected. It also details our commitment to the security of data held and how it is used.

8. Organisational structure and people

All complaints are managed locally in-house by the Customer Relations team based in Newcastle upon Tyne. The Customer Relations team is long established, with a wealth of knowledge in the transport industry and local area.

During the recruitment process, we look for candidates who are naturally engaging with proven customer service experience. The interview is competency based and requires candidates to give a number of examples in relation to communication and incidents of providing good customer service.

For our front line teams, we also hold assessment days which test candidate's responses when faced with a difficult situation or scenario, for example an irate passenger.

9. Training and development

Training is provided in-house and details a range of customer, IT performance management systems and written processes. After completing induction training, new members of Customer Relations are assigned supportive buddies who possess the appropriate experience, knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the delivery of outstanding complaint handling. If the Customer Relations Manager identifies specific training needs, refresher training will be fulfilled by our dedicated Learning and Development team.

10. Processes and protocols

If a customer expresses any form of dissatisfaction in their communication, we will recognise this as a complaint and not general feedback.

We like to 'own' complaints. This means one member of Customer Relations will be responsible for receipt, investigating and responding to the customer. The staff member's name and contact details will be included in their response to ensure customers always have a point of contact if there is a requirement to discuss the outcome of your complaint further. In times of absence, it may be necessary to assign a customer's case to another team member to ensure a timely response.

We manage customer contact effectively using a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) to record and process correspondence. Each customer has a designated profile which details the personal information a customer has previously offered. When a complaint is made, a case is created from the personal profile and a unique reference number is assigned. If a customer wishes to discuss a particular case, they can obtain

this unique reference from the top right hand side of our letter starting with the prefix DBR or from the subject box if we replied by email.

If a customer's complaint raises a number of issues, CRM enables us to capture and categorise each point. This enables robust analysis to assist in the identification of service improvements.

We will always tailor our response to the points a customer has raised in their complaint and we will never send a standard reply in these instances. We will however generate standard responses to customers who have submitted a claim in line with the Metro Customer's Charter but have not raised other complaints.

If a customer contacts Metro by email or in writing, we will attach their original correspondence to the case. If a customer contacts us in person or by telephone, we will manually enter the details of their complaint onto the case. Electronic information is kept for a minimum of three years.. Hard copies are disposed of confidentially after one year.

11. Complaint handling quality controls

We have a number of quality controls in place to ensure effective complaints handling. These are:

Daily	Customer Relations Manager: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• copied into Customer Relations email replies to check 70% quality of response,• monitors telephone calls by listening in, and• monitors response timescales and outstanding complaints.
Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Relations Manager quality samples 10 written replies.
Four weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nexus carries out customer surveys to measure complaint handling satisfaction (50% of contacts). Results provided to Customer Relations Manager who carries out analysis to identify failures and appropriate action.

12. Driving service improvements

Handling complaints effectively is an important part of our business. We don't believe that complaints are the sole responsibility of Customer Relations and will ensure that everyone at Metro contributes. This will ensure:

1. We listen to what customers have to say
2. Learn from our mistakes
3. Improve the services we offer to customers

To help us make service improvements it is important that we identify the root cause of complaints and take action before issues escalate into something more serious. We do this in a number of ways:

Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Relations forward all complaints to the relevant department for monitoring and investigation.
Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Relations Manager will report number of complaints and dissatisfaction trends to the Customer Services Director for discussion with the Senior Management team.
Four weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaint root cause analysis conducted and cascaded to Senior Management team for investigation and action.• Key Performance Leadership group discussions to address root cause.

13. Response times

In line with Office of Rail and Road (ORR) Complaints Handling Procedure requirements, Metro is obligated to respond to 95% of complaints within 20 working days. To help drive service improvements and customer satisfaction, Metro has set the following internal targets: emails we aim to respond to 95% within five working days of receipt, whether it is sent directly to us, or via our website.

Written and telephone: We aim to respond to 95% within ten working days of receipt, whether it is a written letter or a pre-printed Customer Feedback Form.

We will try our best to reply to customers within our response time targets. If we are unable to because the complaint requires a more detailed investigation, we will let the customer know.

There may be times when we receive large volumes of customer contact due to unforeseen problems and are unable to meet our response time targets. In this case we will inform the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). We will also put a message on the Nexus website explaining the reason why we have been unable to respond to complaints within advertised standards and what plans we have in place to ensure the time it takes us to reply is kept to an absolute minimum.

If we receive a complaint or claim referring to another operator's service such as Network Rail, Nexus or other agencies, Metro will acknowledge receipt of the correspondence and forward details to the appropriate party (with the customer's permission), within five full working days of receipt. In the acknowledgement we will confirm who the correct party is and their contact details. Should the complaint involve us as well as another operator(s) then we will make best endeavours to co-ordinate the responses.

All frontline staff are equipped to recognise a potential complaint and where possible, will endeavour to resolve at source. If the member of staff is unable to resolve a complaint immediately or a customer wishes to submit a complaint formally for response, they will direct the customer to Customer Relations.

More information on complaint standards can be found on the Nexus website at nexus.org.uk/metro/looking-after-our-customers/customers-charter. We will publish how we have performed against response target at the end of each four week period. This will detail a breakdown of the type of complaints we received and how we performed in terms of response time targets.

14. A full and fair response

If a complaint cannot be resolved immediately, we will follow the ORR's six step investigation process:

Step	Action
Analysis of complaint	We will make sure we identify all points raised and any facts that we need to check with the customer before we proceed with investigations.
Evidence gathering	We will check the relevant policies and procedures and operating systems used to record train service performance.
Corroboration and analysis	Our aim is to determine facts. We will always interview staff when applicable to assist in our investigations.
Application to complaint	We will identify any gaps and determine what did happen with what should have happened.
The reasons	We will always identify the root cause of the failure to ensure corrective steps can be taken to make improvements to the service we provide to customers.
The response	From our investigation, we will respond to each point of the complaint. Our response will be free of industry jargon and be offered in plain English.

If a customer is unhappy with our initial reply, they are requested to contact us again. A

manager will review the complaint and undertake a secondary investigation. We will reply with our findings which will include the name and position of the manager involved in the investigation. If a customer remains unhappy with the outcome of their complaint they can contact the The Rail Ombudsman. Contact details can be found on page 12.

15. Compensation

This section sets out our general policy regarding compensation where your Metro train is delayed or cancelled. Nothing in this section, or anywhere else in our complaints handling procedure limits or excludes any legal rights you may have as a consumer under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, or otherwise.

We aim to treat all refund claims with fairness. However, if you are not satisfied with the refund arrangements outlined you can appeal. We will consider individual claims on their merits.

If the train a customer is waiting for is delayed more than 15 minutes longer than advertised or the Metro train they are on is delayed by more than 15 minutes, we will refund the cost of the single journey Metro ticket. This applies to customers purchasing a Single ticket, DaySaver, Day Rover, Transfare or MetroSaver and to Network One customers and excludes Gold Card holders and when we advertise that the journey will take longer e.g. when using the Metro replacement bus service during planned modernisation work.

Claims must be submitted within 28 days from the incident date to Customer Relations. We've made it easy to claim a refund, you can do this at nexus.org.uk or by visiting nexus.org.uk/metro/delay-and-repay. We usually issue refunds by BACS payment but if you would like a cash refund this can be obtained in person at South Gosforth Control Centre. If a customer has a season ticket, we will refund the value of a single ticket for the Metro journey made. For more information please visit nexus.org.uk/metro/lookingafter-our-customers/how-make-complaint or nexus.org.uk/metro/looking-after-our-customers/conditions-carriage-and-byelaws or contact Customer Relations on 0191 20 20 747 (lines open Monday-Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm).

We will endeavour to inform customers when services are disrupted by more than 15 minutes than advertised. This information will be displayed on our Twitter page, within the 'Live updates' section at nexus.org.uk/metro, through station announcements and by email travel alerts (for those customers who have signed up).

If a customer purchases a ticket in error and can demonstrate it was not used, loses money in a ticket machine because it fails to issue a ticket (and purchases a second ticket), or if a machine fails to give the correct change they can claim a refund. Refund requests should be submitted to nexus.org.uk/metro/delay-and-repay.

The Metro Customer's Charter details more information; available at nexus.org.uk/

metro/ looking-after-our-customers/passengers-charter or upon request from Customer Relations.

The above does not affect your statutory rights including any rights you may have under the Consumer Rights Act 2015

16. The Rail Ombudsman

We will do our best to resolve any problem, but if you are unhappy with our first response and you contact us again your situation will be escalated and responded to by a manager. If you remain unhappy with our response you can contact the Rail Ombudsman. The Rail Ombudsman are there to help resolve on-going complaints It's free to use their services and they are independent of the rail industry.



The Rail Ombudsman can be contacted through their website railombudsman.org or in any of the following ways:

Write to: FREEPOST - RAIL OMBUDSMAN

Telephone: 0330 094 0362 (Monday to Friday 9:00am – 5.00pm)

Textphone: 0330 094 0363

Email: info@railombudsman.org

Twitter: @RailOmbudsman

17. Termination of correspondence

Metro reserve the right to terminate contact or correspondence with a customer in relation to any particular complaint(s) if it is established that the complaint is construed as abusive, bullying in nature or which specifically diverts resources and affects the Customer Relations operation.

We expect customers to maintain a level of courtesy and politeness whilst we are given the opportunity to resolve their complaint. We do not expect our staff to tolerate verbal abuse, threats or any manner of intimidating behaviour from customers. We reserve the right to terminate any correspondence or communication that we believe to be unreasonable, aggressive, abusive, threatening, frivolous or vexatious or which specifically diverts resources.

Should instances of this nature occur, a senior manager will review the case and consult with the ORR and Nexus before terminating contact.

If in the unlikely event that this escalates to a situation where we are receiving abusive or threatening calls and letters from a specific person we will take appropriate action and notify the Police and if appropriate our solicitors. We have a duty to ensure the welfare of all our employees, and are grateful for our customers' cooperation with this policy.

18. Claims for personal injury or property damage

If a customer wishes to make a claim for losses, property damage or personal injury this should be made in writing or email Customer Relations who will ensure it is forwarded to our Claims Handler.

For the section of line between South Hylton and Pelaw the rail industry has an arrangement called the Claims Allocation and Handling Agreement (CAHA). Under this agreement, compensation should be dealt with by the company whose customer has made the complaint. If some or all responsibility is allocated to another party, the insurers will pay an agreed proportion of the claim. Claims on this section of line will be dealt with in accordance with this agreement.

For claims outside this section of line the matter will be dealt with by Nexus and Metro.

For small claims of a personal nature not related to personal injury e.g. damage to clothing, out of pocket expenses, and staff conduct, a senior manager will review the case and ensure that the correct party manages it. Should this involve a third party then the case will be forwarded as appropriate with a written acknowledgment giving relevant contact details.

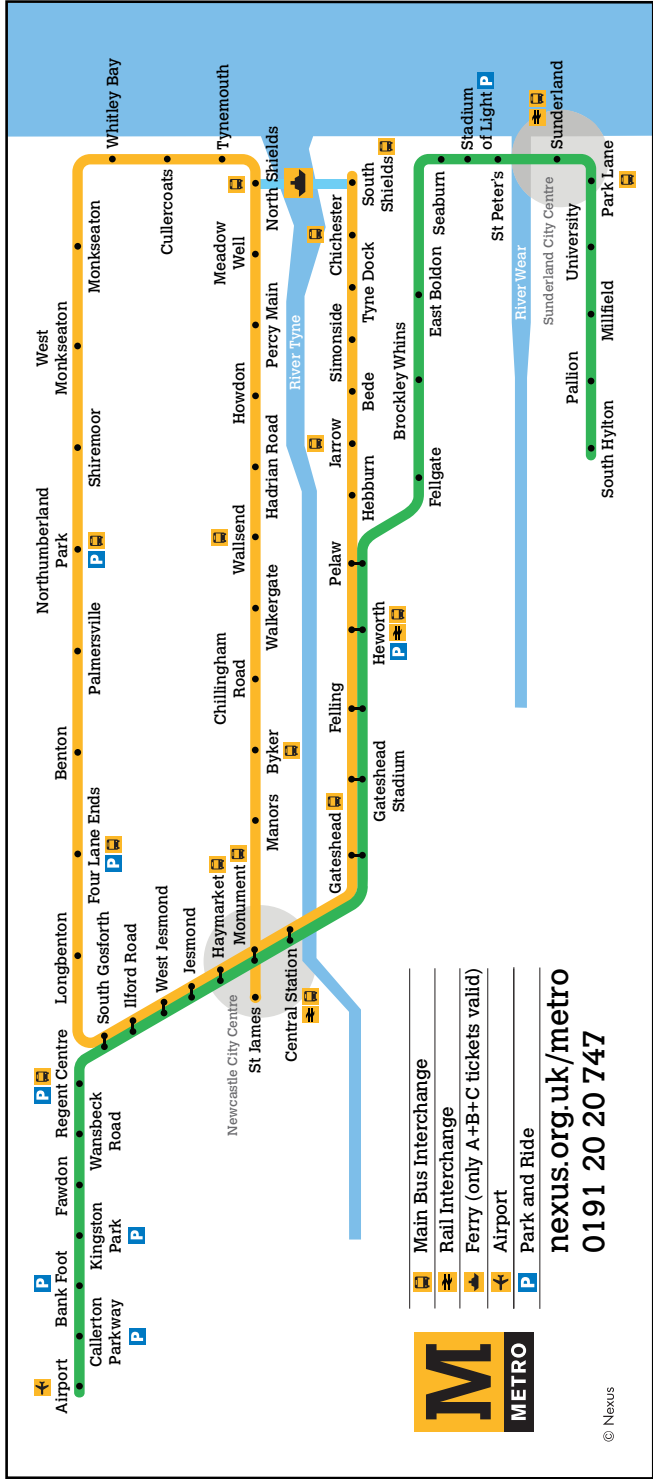
19. Reviewing our Complaints Procedure






Each year the Customer Relations Manager will review Metro's Complaints Handling Procedure. Any changes will be carried out in consultation with the ORR and Nexus.

20. Contact details

Customer Relations

- Letter: Tyne and Wear Metro
Metro Control Centre
South Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 1YT
- Phone - 0191 20 20 747 available: 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday (except bank holidays.)
- Email – customerrelations@nexus.org.uk
- Online – nexus.org.uk/metro



-  Main Bus Interchange
-  Rail Interchange
-  Ferry (only A+B+C tickets valid)
-  Airport
-  Park and Ride

nexus.org.uk/metro
 0191 20 20 747

