

RAIL ADR SERVICE BOARD - MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors of Dispute Resolution Ombudsman (Company Number 0894516) (the “company”) held on 17 June 2024

Present:

Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman: Kevin Grix (KG)

Executive Directors: Judith Turner (JT) Billy Quinn (BQ)

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

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

Matt Thomas (MT)

Apologies for Absence: Richard Puckey (RP)

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 board meeting 7 March 2024 were approved by the board and signed by the Chair on behalf of the board.

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4. CONTRACT NOVATION & UK CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CODE

We have confirmed to the ORR that the question of novation is on hold for the moment, but we may revisit this in the future. We are also awaiting clarification as to the composition of the Rail ADR service board as opposed to the DRO main board in terms of the commitments to the principles of the Corporate Governance Code.

5. COMPLAINTS & QUALITY

Complaints:

In the quarter March-May, the Rail Ombudsman has received 22 complaints and closed 23 complaints. Two complainants have been deemed vexatious.

Quality Monitoring:

Results and actions arising out of quality monitoring were shared with the board.

6. FINANCIAL SUMMARY AGAINST CONTRACT

A financial summary was provided. [Redacted – commercially confidential]

7. OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Case volumes

At the last board meeting it was noted that case volumes were relatively stable, but consistently over the 350 raised mark in the final quarter to the end of March. From 1st April, volumes have been below 300 each period.

Case volumes are closely related to performance against the service level regime.

Performance

MT presented an update on performance against the SLA, noting the respective targets set by the Rail ADR Service Rules and Eligibility Criteria and SLA.

Scheme Member engagement

NF stepping in to the Account Manager role has had a positive impact - particularly industry forum Redress Support Group.

Noted some issues with responsiveness of two operators lately – this slows down casework and brings KPI discussion into sharp focus. There is an exemption mechanism whereby if a TOC causes a delay a case can be excluded from the calculation. But it's not entirely straightforward to apply – there's nothing in RO agreement with the TOCs that commits them to responding to each communication within a set number of days – nor is the RO measured on that.

Escalation of these matters was imminent, but the blockages were cleared through our normal channels.

Member survey is currently live – will update more fully on results at the next board meeting

Key activity

Ipsos consumer experience survey report has been delivered. It coincides with several pieces of testing and research work led by ORR.

ORR will write to the RO setting out a summary of findings and proposed action areas.

Comprised of:

- Accessibility testing by Research Institute for Disabled Consumers

- Savanta report - Passenger awareness, understanding and perceptions of the RO
- Trajectory report – passengers with access needs and disabilities, their experiences of complaints.
- Ipsos – consumer experience survey
- Deep Dive Report by RO

There has been close contact with ORR throughout.

RO understands the letter is scheduled to arrive (and be published) along with the research projects on 9th July, for a response by 5th August.

Based on collaborative discussions throughout the testing and review period, RO understands that the outputs and actions to consider span matters from clear contractual obligations and implications associated to wholly new ideas. They also span some straightforward actions – some of which have already been completed or are in flight – to quite major undertakings with potentially far-reaching impacts.

Internally, initial discussions regarding our response have been held and the next step is a workshop to discuss our proposed solutions. We're also continuing to cost for those solutions where necessary.

Passenger Advisory Panel and Scheme Member Panel

Former to meet on 9th July. Latter TBA.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & Safety meeting held on 14th June 2024. Minutes of this meeting will be shared with the board.

9. A.O.B.

GR advised the board that he will be starting a new job at Norman Rouke Pryme who are construction consultants, highways & infrastructure, traffic and transportation. The board agreed that this would be a fit for the Rail board.

JT advised that she requires speakers for The Ombuds Group webinars and would welcome any support from the board members.

Next board meeting to be arranged.

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