

Customer Information during Disruption

Customer Experience



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1 Introduction

MTR Crossrail operates TfL Rail on behalf of Transport for London. The public branding of the service is "TfL Rail".

MTR Crossrail is committed to keeping customers fully informed during service disruption. This document details the way in which MTR Crossrail will provide customers with excellent customer service during times of service perturbation.

The plan is designed to be compliant with the current version of the RDG Approved Code of Practice for Passenger Information During Disruption (ACOP PIDD October 2016).

The aim of PIDD is to create a fully integrated procedure, which will ensure that we provide our customers with one version of the truth, delivered at consistent and timely intervals, during any period of significant disruption.

2 Review Process

MTR Crossrail recognises that in order to deliver world class customer service, this plan must be regularly reviewed and cross-referenced across the industry.

The plan will therefore be reviewed:

- Within the business annually
- With members of the Information Delivery Group to ensure best practice is learnt from other TOCs
- Whenever there is organisational change
- At each stage of the opening plan
- Whenever there is a change to the ACOP.

3 Role of Control

3.1 Service Status

The service status is used to inform our customers of the service they can expect before undertaking their journey. TfL Rail has adopted the line statuses used on the London Underground and Overground to communicate disruption information to customers. The service level thresholds have been agreed with Transport for London.

During each stage of service disruption, the Duty Control Manager (DCM) should use the matrix below to determine the state of the service. If possible, the DCM should also predict how the service is likely to deteriorate to enable a status to be advertised to provide customers with as much warning as possible. As the disruption evolves, the service status should be changed as appropriate.

The Customer Experience Controller is responsible for informing the London Underground Control Centre (LUCC) by telephone of the service status. This will then be displayed publicly on electronic service update boards (ESUB) at key stations and Underground stations as well as on the TfL website. Some stations have manual service update boards (MSUB) which should be updated by station staff.

3.2 Holding and Core Messages

The declaration of Severe Delays triggers the activation of Customer Service Level 2 (CSL2). CSL2 is an industry wide sign that a TOC is experiencing severe service disruption and customers may require access to alternative routes. It must be noted that CSL2 can be declared outside of severe delays if there is a benefit to the customer.

In the event of CSL2 being activated, the Customer Experience Controller is responsible for issuing the following communications using the Nexus Alpha Tyrell messaging system. These communications will be received by internal and external stakeholders including station staff, senior management, TfL, other TOCs and Network Rail. The Customer Experience Controller is responsible for ensuring all addresses and contact details are kept up to date. A check should be made at least twice a year at each timetable change. A checklist spreadsheet should be maintained with any changes to the address book recorded.

- **Disruption Warning:** This is an optional initial warning message, to communicate that disruption is possible.
- **Holding message:** An initial holding message should be sent within 10 minutes of receiving advice of an incident which is likely to breach the CSL2 threshold stating that Control is in the process of determining the impact to customers.
- **Core message:** Once the cause and the impact of the disruption has been established, a Core message should be created and disseminated.
 - The Core Message should be sent as soon as possible and reviewed at least every 20 minutes with a current situation update. Steady state can be used in exceptional circumstances when disruption lasts more than several hours or at the Customer Experience Controller's discretion.
 - The Core Message should convey the problem, the impact and the advice to customers which will allow them to make choices regarding their travel plans.
 - The Core Message will appear on a customer facing website (National Rail Enquiries) so the information must be concise and helpful.

- It is important that the title of the Core Message reflects the content. As the disruption evolves, all sections of the Core Message must be updated in order to provide as much information as possible as the current service.
- End message – A concluding message informing that CSL2 has been withdrawn and services are no longer affected.

3.2.1 Problem

- The reason within the Core Message should be a PIDD compliant reason and be consistent with all operators involved.
- The location of the problem and the route affected (Liverpool Street to Shenfield) should be stated.
- The message should make clear whether trains in both directions or in one direction only are affected.

3.2.2 Impact

- An estimate of the likely delay should always be included, even if this is a preliminary estimate. All estimates should be reviewed for accuracy each time the message is updated. When an estimate cannot be given, it should be made clear that an estimate will be provided as soon as possible.
- If a reduced service is running, the message should state what is running.
- If trains are not stopping at a station(s), this should be stated.

3.2.3 Advice

- The Advice should include details of alternative routes where these are available.
- If the advice to passengers is to use a different operator's trains and / or a different station then the advice needs to be explicit as to whether or not tickets will be valid on the route.

3.3 Delay Reason

It is imperative to choose a delay reason that most accurately explains the cause of the service disruption and is consistent across all methods of communication with customers.

The delay reason should be agreed with Network Rail and Greater Anglia to ensure there is consistency.

Tyrell is populated with 400 industry agreed delay reasons of which one should be chosen for the Holding and Core Message. This delay reason will then be received by all customer facing MTR Crossrail

employees and should continue to be used in dialogue with customers. It is important to ensure there is consistency in the delay reason across all methods of communication.

3.4 Customer Information System (CIS) Screens

The CIS screens are the first tool that customers will use on arrival at the station to find information on their train. The information contained on the CIS is also used to feed multiple downstream systems including National Rail Enquiries and other websites and apps. The CIS is therefore the single most important system to ensure is accurate. Any change to a service must be advertised to customers.

It is the responsibility of the Customer Experience Controller (CEC) to receive the decisions made by the Duty Control Manager (DCM) on individual train services and alter the CIS to reflect it. Alterations include adjusting the departure time, amending service patterns, cancelling services and inputting additional services. The Customer Information Coordinator (CIC) should regularly check the CIS to ensure it is accurate and either flag inconsistencies to the CEC or make the alteration themselves.

Decisions made by the DCM on the train service should be timely and enable customers to have as much warning as possible about an amendment to the service pattern or departure time.

Alterations to the CIS should be made using the Tyrell system, the Worldline LICC GUI and the Darwin workstation.

3.5 Ticket Acceptance

There is an industry agreement that the declaration of CSL2 enables automatic ticket acceptance with other TOCs. This will enable customers with paper tickets to travel on alternative routes without incurring a charge.

3.5.1 Replacement Bus Services

In most instances customers will be encouraged to use the extensive network of local London bus routes for alternative travel arrangements. In the event of severe or prolonged disruption, rail replacement buses should be requested by the Customer Experience Controller. During office hours, buses should be requested through TfL's Phil Thornton or Felicity Smith. Out of office hours, buses should be requested via Centre Comm.

3.6 Long Line Public Announcements

It is the responsibility of the Customer Information Coordinator to make Long Line PAs to stations to inform customers of the problem, the impact and the advice during disruption. LLPAs should also be made to inform customers waiting on platforms of the arrival time of their next train and its stopping pattern.

Announcements are generated automatically through the CIS when alterations and cancellations are made to individual train services. When a delay reason has been inputted into the CIS system, the automated announcement will also include the delay reason.

In order of priority, manual PAs from either Control or station staff on the ground should be first, followed by recorded PAs from Control and finally the automated announcements. If PAs are recorded during an incident and set to play, they should be kept updated as the disruption evolves. PAs should be clear, concise and not too long. Live and recorded PAs should ensure they are consistent with all the other communication that is going out to customers.

3.7 Additional customer service platforms

3.7.1 Website

TfL Rail does not have its own website and therefore does not display any customer information on the MTR Crossrail website. Information is however provided to the TfL website and National Rail Enquiries. Both these websites will be updated during disruption to warn customers of delays.

3.7.2 Social Media

TfL Rail does not operate any alerts via email or social media as these are all managed by Transport for London. The Customer Experience Controller is responsible for ensuring the Twitter team at TfL have the correct information to upload.

3.7.3 Telephone and Help Point

Information is available to customers via the TfL Customer Contact Centre, National Rail Enquiries, or via the Customer Help Points on stations. The telephone numbers for the TfL Customer Contact Centre and National Rail Enquiries are clearly advertised at stations and on trains. Signs are next to the Help Points to explain how to use the "information" button and the "emergency button" and the difference between the buttons. Information calls are answered by National Rail Enquiries on our behalf. Emergency

calls will be answered by the MTR Crossrail Control Centre.

Emergency calls will come through to the Customer Experience Controller's desk phone. If the call is not answered within 30 seconds, the call will be diverted to National Rail Enquiries.

The Customer Experience Controller will first determine the nature of the emergency. If deemed necessary, the CEC will radio the members of staff at the station and ask them to assist the customer. The CEC will also call emergency services if required. The CEC will stay on the phone to the customer whilst additional help is being sought and is on its way.

3.8 Special timetables

3.8.1 Contingency plans

There are a set of pre-defined contingency timetables that have been agreed with Network Rail, Greater Anglia and MTR Crossrail which are to be used when there is a partial or full line blockage that disrupts the normal train service. The decision to implement a contingency plan is made by the Duty Control Manager in conjunction with Network Rail.

3.8.2 Day A for Day B timetables

In extreme circumstances, the entire day's timetable may be changed at very short notice. This is called implementing a Day A for Day B timetable. Extreme circumstances could include heavy snow or emergency engineering work. It must be an event that will stop the normal running of the timetable with at least 36 hours' notice. The decision to implement an amended timetable is made by the Duty Control Manager in conjunction with Network Rail Operations who will advise the controllers of the required process and timescales.

The timetable change must be communicated to customers and stakeholders as soon as the decision is made. The Duty Performance Reporting Manager is responsible for informing stakeholders through the Tyrell messaging system that a timetable change will occur.

Station staff should use the whiteboards and PAs to inform customers. The Customer Experience Controller should inform the TfL Twitter team and TfL Journey Planner.

The timetable is not likely to appear in National Rail Enquiries until the morning it is implemented. Spot checks should be made to ensure the timetable has been disseminated correctly.

3.8.3 Longer disruption

Should extreme circumstances last several days and the timetable is altered, this will be fed into downstream CIS systems as early as possible for the duration of the disruption to ensure customers are fully informed.

3.9 On-call staff

When CSL2 has been declared, the Customer Experience Controller should notify the on-call Customer Experience team of the disruption by telephone. There are two levels to the on-call structure. The 1st line on-call manager acts as a tactical role and will assist on the ground. The 2nd line on-call manager is a strategic role that will assist remotely. The Customer Experience Controller should contact the 1st line on-call manager who will in turn contact the 2nd line on-call manager if required.

3.10 Prioritised Plan

During severe disruption where Network Rail are responsible for dealing with and rectifying the incident, they will keep in close contact with the Duty Control Manager. Network Rail has a prioritised plan with milestones that allow incidents to be tracked consistently and allow for good estimates of how long the service is likely to be disrupted for.

4 Role of station staff

4.1 Behaviours

Our station staff will exhibit the following key attributes for delivering excellent customer service during disruption:

- Meet and greet – provide customers with a warm welcome
- Be highly visible and available – approach the customer first
- Treat all customers fairly – offer the same level of customer service regardless of the operator the customer is travelling with
- Listen to customers – show interest in the customer
- Show empathy towards customers – understand the inconvenience caused by the disruption
- Positioning – visible in appropriate locations within / outside of the station to provide customers with up to date information as early as possible

4.2 Methods of communication

4.2.1 Radio

The main method of communication for station staff between stations and Control is the radio. The radio will be used by Control to inform station staff of service disruption. Radio protocol should be followed at all times. Messages should be repeated back to confirm understanding. If a message can't be heard or understood, the receiver should ask the sender to repeat the message.

4.2.2 CIS screens

Station staff should use the CIS screens to inform customers of the arrival of the next train. If errors are spotted on the CIS screen or if it is not being kept up to date in a timely manner, station staff should notify the Customer Experience Controller.

4.2.3 Holding and Core Messages

Radio messages will be supported by the Holding and Core Messages which station staff will receive on their mobile devices. This information should then be passed on to customers either face to face, via the PA or via the loudhailer.

4.2.4 Further communication with customers

Whiteboards are available at each station and should be updated with information relating to the problem, the impact and the advice. These should be kept updated as the disruption evolves. The whiteboards should be placed in prominent locations that will be clearly visible to customers when entering the station.

Ready-made posters with station specific alternative route information are available in the disruption tool kit at every station and should be also be rolled out and pinned up in a prominent location.

4.3 Additional resources

MTR Crossrail maintains a pool of HQ volunteers who form the Customer Action Team (CAT). The declaration of CSL2 triggers the mobilisation of this enhanced support team at stations. 2nd line Customer Experience on-call will decide in conjunction with the Customer Experience Controller if the CAT is required. The CAT will then be notified by Tyrell SMS and email. If a member of the CAT is able to assist, they will contact the 2nd line Customer Experience on-call manager who will coordinate the deployment.

4.4 Ticketing

Ticket offices and Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) are available at every TfL Rail station.

5 Post Journey

5.1 Delay Repay

TfL Rail will refund the cost of a customer's journey if service disruption has caused the journey to be delayed by more than 30 minutes due to a reason within TfL Rail's control. The details and processes on how to claim the refund can be found on TfL's website. TfL Rail's timetable advertises the availability of delay and repay and directs customers to TfL's website.

5.2 Station Information

Every TfL Rail station has clear and accessible information. Information on upcoming engineering works will be displayed on the CIS screens and posters and be clearly visible. Clear signage will direct customers to the platforms, the way out, key local landmarks and neighbouring rail stations and bus stops. Static timetables will also be available at every station. When timetables are due to be changed, a poster will be placed in a clearly visible location warning customers of the upcoming timetable change. The key changes that will have the most impact on customers will be highlighted.

Station facilities information will be kept up to date on the National Rail Enquiries website. It is the responsibility of the Customer Information Coordinator to edit and add information on the National Rail Enquiries website as the TfL Rail network expands. Checks will be made by members of the Customer Experience team to ensure the amendments have been made.

Each station also has "Continuing Your Journey" posters which allow customers to refer to maps showing local landmarks and bus routes from the station.

5.3 Onward travel info

During periods of disruption it is crucial that we offer a number of options to facilitate onward travel for customers whose rail journey has been terminated or severely delayed by either planned or unplanned disruption. TfL Rail has a comprehensive alternative route plan which provides staff with detailed information on alternative routes. The plan is designed to easily inform customers of the available alternative rail and bus routes where possible.

5.4 Lost Property

MTR Crossrail has a lost property procedure which is designed to ensure all efforts are made to reunite customers with lost property.

All lost property is logged using a form. Photos of the lost items are also posted in the "Lost Property Group" on MTR Crossrail Yammer website so that station staff can check if their colleague has picked up an item that a customer then comes looking to retrieve. If the lost item has contact details, station staff should attempt to contact the customer. In particular, items such as passports and flight tickets are given priority.

If it is not possible to reunite an item with its owner, the lost item is sent to the TfL Lost Property Office at Baker Street. A collection is made at stations for items to go to the TfL Lost Property Office on a weekly basis. The TfL Lost Property procedure is then followed as explained on their website.

5.5 Feedback

Customer feedback regarding TfL Rail is dealt with by TfL on our behalf. Our Customer Relations Advisor is responsible for liaising with TfL on the complaints and feedback that are made about TfL Rail.

There is prominent signage directing customers to all TfL's Customer Contact channels (website, email, telephone) to leave their feedback.

TfL also deal with any compensation or refund requests following service disruption.

6 Announcements

Staff should make localised supplementary announcements over and above the automated broadcast.

The announcements should include the problem, the impact and the advice that is included in the Tyrell Core Message. Additional information should be also included on the progress of the incident to give customers an idea of how long the disruption will last.

6.1 On trains

There are no guards on TfL Rail and therefore drivers are the sole source of information for customers on a train.

The Passenger Information System (PIS) on board the train will be updated at the start of the journey to ensure the correct destination and stopping pattern is advertised. During disruption, if the stopping pattern and destination changes en route, the driver must make manual announcements to inform customers and change the PIS if possible.

