

# Customer Information Delivery Plan 2019/20



# An overview of how we deliver information to our customers and the ongoing changes being made throughout 2019 as part of Northern's transformation.

## **Document Change**

20/4/17

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23/4/18

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Control Communication Team

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Control Communications Manager

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Trains Limited

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# Introduction

Our customers tell us the provision of information is of paramount importance particularly when services are disrupted. Northern takes its commitment to improving how it delivers the information and the quality of that information very seriously.

The industry as a whole decided that a common approach was needed and developed a national Code of Practice which can be found here on this link: [\*\*https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/legal\*\*](https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/legal).

The process became known as PIDD which stands for Passenger Information during Disruption.

This Local Plan provides an overview of how we deliver information to our customers. We also committed to following this our “Local Plan” in order to further improve going forward. The Local Plan will also be used as a direct measuring tool of compliance against recommendations made through working together with the ORR (Office of Rail Regulation) and Transport Focus.

# Our actions to date

Planned improvement works or engineering works can be a nuisance, we know, but they are essential in order to deliver a safe and efficient railway we need to keep the infrastructure working and therefore avoid further delays.

We want to minimise the impact of these works by giving you lots of notice and clear information.

We appreciate that you need to understand what the benefits of the work is, therefore our posters and online information sections will tell you what we are doing, why and also details any rail replacement bus services.

Our station announcements alerting you of forthcoming work have been improved to include further information such as longer journey times and other useful information.

When major projects are taking place, we will also communicate the details through our Social Media pages, the press and sometimes TV campaigns.

Northern categorise levels of disruption into four areas all defined by a colour as described below:

**GREEN** – this is for when services are running normally

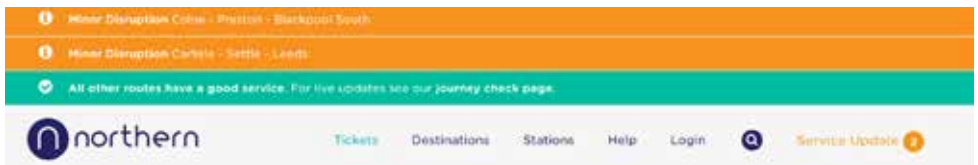
**AMBER** - this is for moderate delays and is likely to be seen where one or two services on a line of route are running under 15 minutes late or there are a small number of cancellations

**RED** - this is for multiple delays over 15 minutes and a significant amount of cancellations can be expected. Internally we also refer to this level as CSL2 which stands for Customer Service Level 2, meaning we are moving into a heightened state of customer information. CSL 2

will normally mean that replacement transport might be needed, trains will be diverted, ticket acceptance with other operators is arranged and additional staffing resources are brought in at key station to assist our customers.

**BLACK** - also referred to as CSL2 Black. This is when the service disruption is going to affect very large numbers of our customers on principle routes or may continue for a number of days or weeks. It triggers a high level management response both at Northern and Network Rail in order to generate robust jointly responsible plans as quickly as possible.

Below is an example of the “rainbow board” which is positioned at the top of the Northern website and represents the level of disruption that Northern are facing in real time. Just as above, Green for a good service, orange for moderate delay and red and black for major disruption.



## Core Message Detail

When an incident occurs that is anticipated to trigger the implementation of CSL2, an Initial Message should be issued by Control within 10 minutes. Initial Messages are designed to give early advice that disruption is occurring and that delays may occur. This will encourage customers and employees to be alert for further information.

When CSL2 has been triggered the core message will be updated every 20 minutes.

Where available, control will provide additional information regarding the details of what is happening, how the story has changed from the last report, alternative journey options, ticket acceptance, and delay repay information etc.

The core message will be checked at every update and out of date information must be removed.

The Duty Control Manager will issue additional internal email messages to all Northern Managers / Directors throughout disruptive incidents and will request the additional support for the Area Silver on call Manager.

# Customer Information Screens

Many of our stations are equipped with Customer Information Screens, which normally fall in to two types, a summary of departures at larger stations and next train indicators located on the platform.

On the bottom of summary screens there is a scrolling message which is where we place details of any major disruption happening across the network.

On the platform next train indicator displays we will display information regarding disruption on that line of route.

On all our displays, we have introduced software so that disruption information and train running information sits side by side. We will never remove the vital next train to call at this platform information as we know if you arrive at a platform in the last minute, how important that last glance to check "this is your train" can be.

# Public address systems

When a station has full PA (public address) system we will enhance the automated announcements with the voice of a member of our team during disruption. We will provide additional information regarding the disruption that is consistent with the information displayed on our customer information screens, website and social media.

We will also use the PA to inform you of forthcoming improvement works and how that may affect your journey.

## Help Points

245 Northern stations have help points answered by one of our teams at our two control centres, based right here in the North of England at York or Manchester. Our people know the problems we are currently having, how best to assist you and have a wealth of local knowledge.

We know that when disruption is happening it can be stressful for our customers and that you need timely and accurate information. However, we ask that you remember that our teams answering the help points are people who want to help and they have the right to be able to do their work without receiving threats or abuse. Any threats or abuse of our teams through the help points will be reported to the police.

# On-train announcements

Our conductors are equipped with mobile phones and apps that will give them the most accurate information to date.

They are trained to use the PA and should make an announcement to assure our customers within 2 minutes of a train coming to an unplanned stop.

After the initial announcements subsequent information may be delivered face to face as the conductors walk through the train to provide customers with specific information to meet their needs.

## Website

Our website at [northernrailway.co.uk](http://northernrailway.co.uk) is designed to keep you right up to date with the latest train running information. You can get information on delays, improvements works, and trains with fewer carriages than normal and a lot more within just one click from our home page.

The website banner at the top of the homepage uses our colour coded system to give you an instant visual check of our disruption.



# Social Media

Our social media team are on hand to provide a rapid response and keep you informed of disruption, major events and much more.

Our Twitter team are based in our control centre so are based in a great place to be able to get you information rapidly.

The team are part of our media department and are the first link in the plan for multiple forms of communication.

# The disruption plan

We want to get services back running on time as quickly as possible and this may lead to us turning trains around before completing the full journey or even cancelling some trains.

We never make these decisions lightly and every service we run has its own recovery plan keeping in mind the average number of customers who normally travel on each train.

The first priority after a blockage of a line is to get the first customers home and then recover the service before the next travelling peak time of day.

# Alternative travel

Northern has documented agreements with all other train operators in our area that at times of severe disruption to our services they will accept customers with tickets that are usually only valid on Northern services. We will also do the same for other train operators when their services are severely disrupted. These arrangements will be communicated to customers and our front line teams through the various communication channels outlined earlier in this document.

We also have the ability to put similar arrangements in place with other transport operators like Sheffield SuperTram and Metrolink trams in Manchester. This arrangement is not guaranteed and for each disruptive incident we will confirm if these operators will accept rail tickets in our messaging.

The geography of our network and limited availability of coaches and buses means that it is not always possible to provide alternative transport. Where we can, we will endeavour to provide you with details of the operator, an approximate time of arrival and the length of delay you are likely to incur when travelling by road transport.

# Ticket Acceptance

During disruption, Northern will agree to accept other Train Operating Companies tickets to allow passengers to travel for up to 90 minutes after the declaration of CSL2 without a formal request and we will extend this time subject to a formal request and any other incidents affecting train running. If a customer indicates that they intended to travel on the disrupted route where a cheaper fare applies, then the cheaper fare will still apply. This will ensure that customers do not have to pay a higher ticket price for their ticket on the day of travel because of disruption to the service they would have originally caught.

On-train teams will be reminded in messages from control, that customers may have been forced onto alternative routes and parked at alternative stations and they should not enforce higher fares if a customer has explained they are on their return journey following earlier disruption.

When ticket acceptance is agreed between Train Operating Companies, (TOC's) information will be sent out by Northern Control to advise which lines of routes other TOC's tickets will be accepted and an estimate regarding the cut-off point.

For Northern services, which have been delayed by 15 minutes or more, or where multiple cancellations on a line of route are likely to delay a customer's overall journey by 15 minutes or more, customers should be made aware both through station CIS and on train announcements of their right to compensation and referred to the online claim form on the Northern webpage.

## **The Delay Repay scheme states on the Northern webpage:**

### **We'll compensate you fairly:**

If you are delayed for 15 or more minutes, we will compensate you for some or all of the cost of your ticket. This is called Delay Repay. You can claim Delay Repay if one of our trains is late or cancelled and as a result you get to your station 15 or more minutes later than scheduled. Compensation will be paid in money, or we can provide a free ticket across our network, to use when you choose, or

we can provide National Rail Vouchers which you can use to buy any rail ticket. You can choose the method of payment you prefer on the Delay Repay form. If you have booked through our web page or app we will automatically provide you with a delay repay refund. Remember to keep hold of your ticket as evidence of your journey for



your claim. If you get off at a station with automatic ticket gates, please just show your ticket to the staff.

If we have published an alternative timetable for the journey you made, we will compensate you based on that. An alternative timetable means a new timetable which we upload to industry systems before 10pm on the day before you travel.

A specific message has been created for broadcast by conductors and a message is also added to all train messages that are likely to be delayed 15 minutes or more.

It is recognised that at times of severe disruption it will be necessary to give customers and intending traveller's clear warnings about the level of disruption they may experience. In extreme circumstances this may require customers to be advised not to travel.

This decision will be taken by the On- Call Director in consultation with Duty Control Manager.

Where extensive disruption is currently occurring on the network the emphasis will be to provide intending travellers with clear information about the nature, extent and duration of the disruption.

**In the event of a ‘Do Not Travel’ message being issued:**

Northern Control will advise customers via the National Rail Communications Centre, control messages and on station information systems, where available.

They will also will advise all Northern employees via the appropriate Twitter, Tyrell Check messages and duty control manager messages.

The on-call communications team will update the Northern website, social media team and arrange for a press update. They will also advise relevant stakeholders sharing information via their own customer channels. The on-Call Communications Manager will also be responsible for internal briefings that are not directly related to incident management or operational requirements. Depending on the timing and duration of the incident they will also prepare and distribute travel advice posters to stations.

Above is an example of guidance advising customers to only travel if necessary.

When our services are diverted via a cheaper (or more expensive) route because of disruption, the cheapest ticket will be sold. Customers will be allowed to travel on any reasonable route during severe disruption. If we lift peak travel time restrictions, then we will sell the lower priced off-peak tickets.

# How is the quality of our customer information assessed?

## **Customer Experience Steering Group**

The success of this document, the overall delivery of PIDD and the impact will be managed through the Northern Delighting Customers Squad, which has been formed to drive improvements to the Customer Experience.

## **Regular monitoring**

A report is produced every 4 weeks and reviewed within the Control Management Team meeting. The report contains:

Summary of message delivery performance data for timeliness

Review of two CSL2 incidents with an emphasis on the quality of the messaging

Reliability summary of Customer Information Systems

## **PIDD Focused Incident Reviews**

CSL2 Core Information message quality is reviewed each period by the Control Communications Manager and Compliance Controller and is targeted towards Control Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The review covers the four key aspects required for an effective core message (Timeliness,

Problem, Impact and Advice). This information feeds into individual Controller competence assessments to drive continuous improvement. The template for scoring CSL2 message quality is available from the managers mentioned above.



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