



June 2018

Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD)

Delivery Plan

grandcentralrail.com

INTRODUCTION

Grand Central recognises that the provision of information to passengers is important in order to ensure a smooth journey experience. The provision of accurate and timely information is of particular importance during service disruption, and the Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD) Programme is designed to ensure that all those responsible for passenger information provision focus on what is important to the passenger.

The PIDD Programme is agreed nationally between the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and a National Task Force of Train Operating Company (TOC) representatives. Built around this, an Agreed Code of Practice (published at raildeliverygroup.com) lays down the way in which information should be delivered. Grand Central, and other TOCs, are required to comply with the requirements of the Agreed Code of Practise as a minimum.

Grand Central has agreed processes in order to ensure that the industry standards are met, and is also seeking to continually improve the ways in which passenger information is delivered during disruption and normal service.

This Delivery Plan outlines the key ways Grand Central seeks to provide passenger information during disruption.

THE WIDER INDUSTRY

Grand Central works closely with other Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and Network Rail in order to understand any problem that may develop, and disseminate information to passengers.

Network Rail will often be responsible for initial information provision from the site of an incident, and in co-operation with the affected TOCs a concise and timely message will be formulated and distributed to passengers along the affected route(s).

As a whole the industry will look to provide:

- Information and estimates of delay duration from the site of an incident or disruptive event
- The cause of the delay, avoiding jargon that may be unclear to passengers
- The production of a prioritised plan in order to restore the planned train service

Grand Central does not operate any stations, and as a result Grand Central works closely with Station Facility Owners (SFOs) to ensure that information is provided to all passengers.

Grand Central has a dedicated station team at Kings Cross who will work alongside the rest of the station staff to support our passengers when the train service is disrupted. At other stations Grand Central's operations Control team will ensure train crew and station staff are provided with up-to-date information in order to advise passengers face-to-face, via information screens and through the use of announcements. During severe disruption Grand Central will also look to provide a management presence at key stations, where this is possible.

OUR STAFF

All Grand Central staff have different responsibilities for providing information to passengers during disruption. Our staff are all briefed in their responsibilities and trained to deliver each element of our detailed PIDD Policy, in order to ensure the most effective delivery of information to passengers.

- Operations Control staff are sent on national training courses for PIDD, primarily focussed around delivering the right information to passengers in a timely manner. Our Controllers receive regular refresher training and updates in any changes to national PIDD strategy.
- Traincrew carry smartphones and receive briefings on how to obtain information and communicate with passengers during disruption. A staff guide in PIDD is also provided to our Senior Conductors and Customer Service Assistants, giving them an overview of obtaining and providing information, from the time disruption begins, to providing Customer Relations contact details to those passengers who are affected.
- Contingency Arrangements and guidance notes on PIDD are provided to relevant Grand Central managers, who are likely to deal with disruption to the train service.
- The Performance & Planning Team has developed a detailed review service, used after each disruptive incident. This enables positives to be identified and repeated, and any issues be tackled in order to improve for the future.

DISRUPTION THRESHOLDS

To ensure that appropriate support is provided to passengers and staff, a number of thresholds have been established in order to identify at which point a disruptive event requires a certain level of response.

Once a certain threshold is reached an enhanced response, referred to as Customer Service Level 2 (CSL2), will be mobilised, in order to ensure passengers and staff are supported and informed throughout the disruption.

Green Status

The service is operating normally, or with minor, isolated delays or cancellations as a result of localised disruption.

Yellow Status

Service disruption is to an extent where passengers may notice moderate delays for a period of time, or limited cancellations as a result of the disruption. Passengers will be able to continue their journeys with some disruption, and at the discretion of the Control Team CSL2 may be declared in order to maximise the journey options for affected passengers.

Red Status

A significantly disruptive incident has been identified, and a significant number of passengers are likely to be affected for a period of time. A limited train service is likely to be in operation with the potential for diversions and delays. CSL2 will have been declared by the Control Team, and alternative transport or routings been agreed with other operators.

Black Status

At this level of disruption it is not possible for us to guarantee that passengers will be able to reach their destination. The train service may be suspended over all or part of the route, with no alternative transport options available. This severity of incident is uncommon, and typically occurs during periods of extreme weather, affecting all modes of transport.

When disruption thresholds are triggered, the Control Team are responsible for distributing this information to all Grand Central staff, via smartphones and internal email. The GC Control Team will work closely with the relevant Network Rail Control for the area concerned, from the time an incident is declared, through to resolution.

As an incident develops it may be upgraded or downgraded in terms of severity, and the level of response adapted to reflect the developing situation. Staff will be updated in order to keep passengers informed on stations and trains, providing the best current advice in terms of what it means for their journeys.

MESSAGING

Once information is received from the site of an incident, Network Rail and train operator Control teams will liaise with one another to build a picture of the incident, how it will affect the train service, and what options exist for passengers to reach their destinations.

Holding & Core Messages

Grand Central Control will issue holding and core messages to frontline staff, managers, stations and other responsible for communicating with our passengers (e.g. social media and Customer Relations).

A holding message will be issued within 10 minutes of a problem being known, and will summarise the area affected and that disruption is likely to occur. This ensures that all parties are aware to remain alert for more detailed updates. Core messages will then follow at regular intervals, focussing on the information that is most important to passengers:

- Problem: What is the problem, and where has it occurred?
- Impact: What does this mean for passengers?
- Advice: What options exist for passengers to reach their destinations?

One Version of the Truth

An underlying principle of PIDD is that passenger should receive a consistent message from all staff and via rail industry systems. This generally involves the use of a generic bank of phrases, identified by RDG through passenger research. The use of these phrases ensures the problem is conveyed in a clear and concise fashion, without the use of unclear industry jargon.

Control is responsible for liaising with Network Rail Control, and other TOCs, to agree the message that will be used, and then pass this to Grand Central staff and stations via internal messaging systems.

One barrier to this is that older information systems do not always support the current messages used for certain incidents. These systems are gradually being phased out, and Grand Central supports SFOs to upgrade station information systems.

ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Grand Central recognises that it isn't always possible for passengers to complete their journey as intended, when an incident disrupts all or part of our routes. We have a range of arrangements that can be employed during service disruption, in order to ensure passengers reach their intended destinations.

Ticketing & Ticket Acceptance

Once CSL2 has been declared the Control team will liaise with other operators to agree for Grand Central passengers to be conveyed on alternative routes, in line with pre-arranged ticket acceptance policies. Subject to capacity this arrangement will be reciprocated; during disruption all TOCs will co-operate in moving passengers to their destinations.

Ticket acceptance will be advised via internal and external messaging systems, advising both staff and stations, within 20 minutes of CSL2 being declared. Passenger information, on websites and social media will also be updated once ticket acceptance has been agreed.

In the event that passengers, who have not yet purchased a ticket, are directed via an alternative route, which was more than expensive than their original, then the cheapest fare will either be accepted or retailed.

Passengers are permitted to make a return journey on the same route as their outward journey after the disruption has cleared – they will not be required to purchase a new ticket, upgrade their ticket, or pay an excess fare. Customers must travel with their booked TOC or train service, unless they are travelling off their normal route.

Following a major incident, ticket restrictions may be relaxed for a longer period. A specific message will be distributed should this be the case, and this would normally be a decision led by the Grand Central Senior Management Team and communicated via websites and social media.

Alterations to Train Services

Control will lead the process to cancel or amend services, should they then not be able to run as advertised. Relevant managers may support this process, with advice and specific local knowledge, in order to minimise the impact to our passengers.

As passengers now rely on a multitude of automated systems to provide them with service information; Controllers recognise the importance of updating the upstream systems which feed information to the various interfaces with passengers.

Contingency Plans

Each Network Rail Route and TOC has their own pre-determined contingency plans that act as an initial point of reference when an incident occurs. Grand Central, along with other TOCs along the route, gives input to Network Rail contingency plans, which are updated periodically.

Grand Central specific contingencies are documented alongside our Control Manual, and are available to all parties concerned. Template messages are also available to our Control team for given circumstances, enabling rapid information provision once the circumstances of an incident have been established, and a response mobilised.

Alternative Road Transport

If necessary, Grand Central will provide road transport in order for passengers to complete their journey. This decision is led by the Control team, supported by contingency plans.

Given the isolated nature of many stations served by Grand Central, road transport may provide the only practical means to convey passengers, without causing undue delay or inconvenience.

Grand Central has contracts with a number of taxi suppliers local to our stations, specifically for when a small number of passengers are affected.

When a large number of customers are affected rail replacement buses will be sourced by our Control team.

When road transport is being provided the relevant station team(s) will be updated in order to pass the pick-up arrangements to affected passengers.

AT STATIONS

As Grand Central does not operate any stations we are reliant on Station Facility Owners (Network Rail and other TOCs) to deliver information to our passengers. Grand Central Control uses a number of information systems in order to feed information to stations, which is also picked up on information screens and systems used to drive automated announcements. Manual announcements are often used during times of disruption, as these are capable of conveying more meaningful information than automated systems.

Grand Central has a small station team at Kings Cross, who provide a dedicated point of contact for passengers on the station during service disruption. This team will also work alongside the rest of the station team to ensure information is provided to passengers in the most effective fashion.

Volunteer Station Ambassadors are also part of our interaction with passengers at stations, particularly on weekends (primarily Sundays). Station Ambassadors may also attend stations outside these times at the request of Control, during significant disruption. These teams are in direct contact with the Control team, and are kept up to date with the latest service information.

Station Ambassadors are currently provided at Hartlepool, Eaglescliffe and Brighthouse, although there are plans to roll the scheme out to other stations in the near future.

At other stations the primary route of communication is direct from Control to the SFO, although Grand Central will look to provide a management presence at key stations during a Red or Black Status event.

ON TRAINS

Our on-train teams, both Senior Conductors and Customer Service Assistants, receive training in providing information to passengers, both face-to-face and using announcements, when they join Grand Central. This is supported by refresher training as part of planned briefing sessions.

Staff are also provided with smartphones, enabling them to receive real time information on service running and any service disruptions. Our on-train teams are also provided with a number of useful contacts within the Control Team in order to obtain additional support and information, should they require it.

Further to this a PIDD Guide, summary of contingency arrangements, tips on concise and helpful announcements as well as Customer Relations Information Leaflets are provided for use when services are subject to disruption.

Our staff are encouraged to make regular announcements, with an appropriate level of detail, and also walk through the train when disruption is likely to last for an extended period. This allows passengers to obtain onward travel information particular to their journey, and for our staff to hand out information on eligibility for compensation, and how this may be obtained.

INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA

Grand Central recognises the value of the internet in providing an immediate means to communicate with passengers, and this also makes it especially important that all information flows are kept up to date. Information made available via the website and social media reflects that delivered by holding and core messages from the Control team.

Our Twitter account (@GC_Rail) is monitored seven days a week, between 0600 and 2200 (0800 and 2200 on Sundays), giving passengers a channel for immediate interaction with the Social Media Team – who work directly alongside the Control team.

Whilst the team try and interact with as many customers as possible, direct responses are not always possible during large-scale disruption. Regardless of the level of disruption, the team will distribute generic travel information and updates for all followers, including ticket acceptance and alternative transport arrangements.

If the Social Media Team cannot resolve an issue, they are equipped to provide suitable contacts in order to enable passengers to get the information they need.

Further to this, direct feeds from the National Rail to Grand Central website (**grandcentralrail.com**) provides direct information, which can be supplemented by information alerts on the website homepage. Homepage alerts are normally issued for long-lasting or significant incidents which are likely to affect a significant proportion of our passengers.

The Grand Central Facebook page (**facebook.com/grandcentralrail**) can also be used to provide service updates, and answer customer queries. This provides another means for passengers to contact us.

INCIDENT REVIEWS & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMNETS

It is recognised that reviewing past events is the best way to learn for the future and continuously improve. Reviews of significant service disruption look at the incident itself, the impact on the train service and passengers – and then how this was communicated to both staff and passengers.

These reviews are conducted by the relevant Area Customer Service Manager, in the days immediately after a significantly disruptive event. In the case of a black status incident, a teleconference may be convened between managers from each team within the business, chaired by the Performance & Planning Manager, or a nominated deputy.

All outputs from the Control and Social Media teams are also reviewed, to ensure that the relevant information was delivered in a timely fashion.

Actions are identified and tracked by the Planning and Performance Manager and Area Customer Service Managers, in order to ensure that Grand Central can continuously improve the way we manage a disrupted train service, and deliver information to our passengers.

If any actions are identified to be outside of the immediate control of Grand Central, they will be raised with the relevant party – whether this is Network Rail or another Train Operating Company.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Our Customer Relations team can be contacted should you have any further queries regarding our PIDD Policy, or would like more information on how we deliver information to passengers during times of disruption.

The team also handle any other comments, complaints or refund requests.

Feedback will be provided to other areas of the business about where we can improve for the future.

The Customer Relations Team can be contacted as follows on the details below.

Telephone: **0345 603 4852** (0800 - 1800, Monday to Friday)

Email: **customer.services@grandcentralrail.com**

Post: **Customer Relations Manager**

Grand Central Rail

PO Box 5871

Sheffield

S1 9GP

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you require a real time response from us, or want to keep track of the latest updates on Grand Central services, news or special offers you can follow us on Twitter **@GC_Rail** or like us on Facebook at **facebook.com/grandcentralrail**.

Our Social Media team are up to date with the very latest information. The team are on duty 0600 – 2200 (0800-2200 on Sundays), 7 days per week, to answer your queries.

MORE INFORMATION

Grand Central Website

www.grandcentralrail.com

National Rail Enquiries

www.nationalrail.co.uk

03457 484950 (24 hours)

Rail Delivery Group (RDG)

www.raildeliverygroup.com

info@raildeliverygroup.com

02078 418 000

Transport Focus

www.transportfocus.org.uk

0300 123 2350

Network Rail

www.networkrail.co.uk

0345 711 4141 (24 hours)



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