



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
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Dear Colleague,

I am pleased that the rail industry has today announced the launch of the new rail ombudsman service.

This is a significant and welcome step forward for passengers' rights and fulfils an important Government commitment. It is vital that rail passengers can get redress for poor service when it occurs and that they are treated with respect when they do so.

In too many instances how complaints have been handled has fallen short of what people rightly expect and deserve. Following discussions led by the Government, the rail industry, working with consumer groups, set up a task force to establish a new independent Ombudsman for rail passengers. The Government has been actively working with the Task Force to achieve this.

The Ombudsman will be delivered by a specialist provider with a strong track record. It has binding powers, giving passengers a stronger voice and ensuring that they get a fair deal when disputes with train operators cannot otherwise be resolved.

The Ombudsman will focus on issues which are of real importance to passengers including customer service, complaints handling, station issues, availability of information and train service issues. From an accessibility perspective, the scheme will also cover disputes around the provision of assistance and advertised services and facilities for disabled people.

I hope you will join me in supporting this important initiative for passengers. I know that the Rail Delivery Group will be writing to you directly with details of the service. I will be looking to rail companies to use this opportunity to uphold the highest standards in their complaints process and to increase customer satisfaction.

I intend also to facilitate a session for MPs, involving the Chief Ombudsman, to ensure that you and your colleagues fully understand the role and this opportunity to further improve the passenger experience. Please let me know if you would be interested in participating.

The Ombudsman can be contacted by email at info@railombudsman.org , by phone on 0330 094 0362, or by textphone on 0330 094 0363, and by post at FREEPOST – RAIL OMBUDSMAN. The Ombudsman's website, which includes online chat is www.railombudsman.org.

Yours,

Andrew

ANDREW JONES