

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Rail Ombudsman?

The Rail Ombudsman is an independent, impartial, free and approved service that investigates unresolved complaints raised by customers about rail service providers.

If the Rail Ombudsman takes on a complaint, it will work independently to encourage a fair outcome that is agreed by both parties or if an agreement can't be reached, it will make a decision based on the evidence they've received, that will be binding on the rail service provider.

What does the Rail Ombudsman do?

The Rail Ombudsman impartially investigates unresolved complaints from customers about rail service providers ensuring a fair and balanced outcome based on the evidence and information given by both parties.

The Rail Ombudsman also provides information that the rail industry can use to improve its services for customers.

When should I contact the Rail Ombudsman?

You should always try to resolve your complaint with the rail service provider first. You can appeal to the Rail Ombudsman if:

- you're unhappy with the final response you received from the rail service provider which was contained in a letter or email (sometimes called a "deadlock letter"); or
- the rail service provider hasn't resolved your complaint within 40 days of receiving it; and
- no more than 12 months have passed since the service provider sent you its final response.

Do I have to pay to use the Rail Ombudsman?

No. The service is free to customers.

What can't the Ombudsman help me with?

The Ombudsman can't be your first call for complaints, your complaint must first be raised with the rail service provider itself and you must give them a chance to reply and put things right.

The Ombudsman can't help with any complaint until you have either:

- received a final or "deadlock" letter meaning that the service provider can't take your complaint any further, or more that 40 working days have passed since the service provider first received your complaint.

How long do I have to raise my complaint with the Rail Ombudsman?

You must contact the Rail Ombudsman within 12 months of the rail service provider's final response to your complaint.

What types of rail service complaints does the Ombudsman deal with?

The Rail Ombudsman can deal with complaints raised about the standard of service provided by a rail service provider. These include:

- Train service performance such as delays and cancellations
- The quality of staff interaction, which may include, their attitude and the manner and quality of information provided
- The way that the rail service provider has handled your complaint
- Retailing and refunds of tickets including the way that the ticket was sold to you and the information that you were given (excluding tickets purchased from third party ticketing retailers)
- The information given regarding timetabled journeys and/or engineering works
- On train and station issues such as toilet availability and passenger assistance.
- Provision of and access to advertised services and or/facilities to customers with disabilities
- Discrimination or issues arising under the Equality Act 2010

For a full list see here: www.railombudsman.org/making-a-complaint/complaints-we-can-investigate/

Which rail service providers are members of the Rail Ombudsman?

You can find a full list here www.railombudsman.org/about-us/participating-service-providers/

When won't the Ombudsman investigate a complaint?

The Rail Ombudsman cannot investigate your complaint if:

- Your complaint relates to issues that are not within your individual consumer rights, such as policy or industry-related matters
- Your complaint is with a train company that is not a member of the Rail Ombudsman. To check whether your rail service provider is a member of the Rail Ombudsman, please [click here](#)
- Your complaint is undergoing court proceedings or being investigated by another body
- You have already accepted a remedy from the rail service provider or received an award in relation to the same issue from another body
- If you are claiming business losses
- If you are claiming for an award higher of more than £2500

How can I contact the Rail Ombudsman?

The fastest and easiest way to make a complaint is to apply online by completing a webform on the Rail Ombudsman's website by visiting www.railombudsman.org

Alternatively, you can apply using a paper form which can be downloaded or posted to you here: <https://static.railombudsman.org/roweb/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/21141209/Rail-Ombudsman-Application-Form.pdf>

How long will it take for the Rail Ombudsman to come to a decision?

The length of the process depends on how complex your complaint is. However, most complaints should be resolved within 40 working days, although most shouldn't take that long.

Is the Rail Ombudsman's decision binding on the rail service provider?

If you agree with the Rail Ombudsman's decision, you have 20 working days to accept it. If you accept the decision, it becomes a full and final settlement which is binding on the rail service provider

What language(s) is the Rail Ombudsman service available in?

The Rail Ombudsman service is available in English and Welsh.

Does the Rail Ombudsman make its service accessible?

The Rail Ombudsman wants to make its service simple and easy to use, whatever you need. Information about the service is available in any of the formats below. You can also ask them how to complain if you need translation service of British Sign Language. [Just ask here](#)

- ✓ Large print
- ✓ Braille
- ✓ Easy Read versions
- ✓ Audio Recording

You can also ask how to complain if you

Can someone else handle the complaint on my behalf?

Yes. Should you wish to, you can ask a family member, friend or other representative to assist you through the process. For other options visit the [Ombudsman website](#)