

Customer Information during Disruption



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1 Introduction

MTR Elizabeth line operates Elizabeth line services on behalf of Transport for London.

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

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 Elizabeth line 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
- 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. The Elizabeth line uses the same 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 Customer Experience Controller should refer to the relevant matrix (of which there are five) to determine the state of the service. If possible, the Duty Control Manager (DCM), in association with the Customer Experience Delivery Manager (CEDM), (Customer Experience Controller when the Customer Experience Delivery Manager is not on shift) should 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 (CEC) 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 London Underground stations as well as on the TfL website. Some stations have manual service update boards (MSUB) which should be updated by station staff.

The service status should be reviewed on a periodic basis during service disruption to ensure the information remains relevant and correct.

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 Delivery Manager or 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 Delivery Managers are 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 (e.g. Whitechapel 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.
- The current service status of the Elizabeth line should be listed.

3.2.3 Advice

- The Advice should include details of alternative routes where these are available.
- If the advice is for passengers to 'circulate' or 'double back' this should be listed.
- 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 other operators 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 Elizabeth line 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.

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 WebUI and the Darwin workstation as appropriate.

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, purchased prior to the disruption, to travel on alternative routes without incurring a charge.

Customers using Oyster or Contactless payment cards will pay for the journey they make.

3.5.1 Replacement Bus Services

In most instances customers will be encouraged to use the extensive network of local London bus routes or London Underground services for alternative travel arrangements. In the event of severe or prolonged disruption, rail replacement buses should be requested by the Customer Experience Controller through the NMCC.

3.5.2 Long Line Public Announcements

It is the responsibility of the Customer Experience Controller to make Long Line PAs to stations to inform customers of the problem, the impact and the advice during disruption.

For stations outside of the Central Operating Section, 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 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 and concise. Live and recorded PAs should ensure they are consistent with all the other communication that is going out to customers.

3.6 Additional customer service platforms

3.6.1 Website

Service information is provided on the TfL website and National Rail Enquires. Both these websites will be updated during disruption to warn customers of delays. Information will be conveyed to the London Underground Control Centre (LUCC) via the CEC or CEDM.

3.6.2 Social Media

There is no Elizabeth line twitter feed for service disruption. TfL use Twitter for promotional activity only.

3.6.3 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 Elizabeth line 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 or phone 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.

3.7 Special timetables

3.7.1 Contingency plans

There are a set of pre-defined contingency timetables that have been agreed with the infrastructure managers, MTR Elizabeth line and other operators 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 Senior Train Service Manager (STSM) in conjunction with the infrastructure owner.

3.7.2 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 the infrastructure manager 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 Customer Experience 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 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.

3.7.3 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.

3.8 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.

3.9 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.

Pull up banners with station specific alternative route information are available in the disruption tool kit at every station and should be positioned in a prominent location.

4.3 Additional resources

MTR Elizabeth line maintains a pool of HQ volunteers who are deployed to assist during disruption. The declaration of CSL2 triggers the mobilisation of such volunteers. 2nd line Customer Experience on-call will decide in conjunction with the Customer Experience Controller if volunteers are required, and volunteers will be notified by an established MS Teams group.

4.4 Ticketing

Ticket offices and Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) are available at every Elizabeth line station.

5 Post Journey

5.1 Delay Repay

Transport for London 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 the Elizabeth line's control. The details and processes on how to claim the refund can be found on TfL's website. Delay repay information can be found on TfL's website.

5.2 Station Information

Every Elizabeth line station has clear and accessible service information. Information on upcoming engineering works will be clearly visible on the CIS screens and posters. Clear signage will direct customers to the platforms, the way out, key local landmarks and neighbouring rail stations and bus stops.

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 Experience Controller to liaise with National Rail Enquiries and LUCC to ensure this channel remains accurate. 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 several options to facilitate onward travel for customers whose rail journey has been terminated or severely

delayed by either planned or unplanned disruption. The Elizabeth line 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 Elizabeth line has a lost property procedure which is designed to ensure all efforts are made to reunite customers with lost property.

If it is not possible to reunite an item with its owner, the lost item is sent to the TfL Lost Property Office. 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 Elizabeth line journeys is dealt with by TfL. Our Customer Experience Manager is responsible for liaising with TfL on the complaints and feedback that are made about Elizabeth line.

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 Elizabeth line and therefore drivers are the sole source of information for customers on a train.

