

M Rifkind
Request-68593-cbf02ee5@whatdotheyknow.com

18 May 2011

Dear M Rifkind,

I am writing in response to your Freedom of Information request, dated 14 April 2011, concerning the training and training materials provided to East Coast's ticket office staff.

All new entrants to East Coast go through a three-day Corporate Welcome programme that covers the company values and aspirations in addition to the regulatory and compliance requirements such as disability awareness, fire prevention and safety training. Frontline staff will also go through a two-day customer services training course and a one-day conflict avoidance course. However, as these programmes are not specific to ticket office staff, I have not included materials for these courses within the scope of this request although I have attached a copy of the East Coast Induction Policy that explains the training process new members of staff will follow to provide a clear overview.

Following these more generic courses station and ticket office staff attend a two-day course, the contents of which is detailed within the Travel Centre and Station Staff Work Book and the Travel Centre Trainer's notes days 1 and 2.

Following these courses, new employees will then receive on the job training at their new work locations. The Travel Centre Induction Log Book is used at this point as it acts as a guide covering all of the things a new member of ticket office staff should learn. As part of this on the job training new employees will learn how to use Tribute, the main computer system used within the Travel Centre. Tribute is mainly used to purchase tickets and/or make seat reservations. This process ensures that new employees will not start work by themselves until they are ready to do so.

The training materials provided to ticket office staff during their initial training, the training notes used for these sessions and the resources stored on 'Retail Net', that we can release, are attached to this document. Retail Net is a section of the East Coast intranet dedicated to retail staff, such as ticket office staff, and is a central pool of information that staff can access to assist them in their work. During the induction process ticket office staff are trained regarding how to locate Retail Net, what information is available and what that information can be used for.

The titles of the attached documents, their purpose, and details of any information that we are not able to disclose are listed below. Please note that where reference is made to a travel centre, this means the same thing as a ticket office within this documentation:

- Travel Centre Induction Log Book – the purpose of this log is to record progress of new entrants. We have removed the access password detail for the Tribute system from this document;
- Travel Centre and Station Staff Work Book – this work book forms part of the induction programme;
- Travel Centre Trainer's notes days 1 and 2 – these are the trainer notes from the induction programme. The passwords used to enter the Trust computer system for the first time have been removed from this document;
- Travel Centre Management Procedures Manual – these are the procedures that Station

- Managers and Duty Station Managers must follow in respect of East Coast travel centres;
- Acceptable Forms of Payment Manual – this manual details the payment types accepted by East Coast;
 - TRUST training form – this user guide is for TRUST, one of the computer systems in use within travel centres. TRUST is used mainly for monitoring train movements or for train connections information;
 - Ticket on Departure information – this was a one page brief detailing the process that staff have been instructed to follow should customers not have the relevant credit card available when collecting train tickets from a ticket office or fast ticket machine. However, this document has not been disclosed;
 - National Rail Conditions of Carriage – this document is listed on the 'Retail Net' section of East Coast's intranet for staff to access. However, this document is available to the general public;
 - STIMS user guide – this document is accessible to staff through Retail Net and is a user guide for the STIMS computer system (Season Ticket Information Management System). As the full name suggests, this computer system is used to manage season ticket holder's information. Please note that this document is dated and does need updating as some of the instructions to staff are now incorrect;
 - Travel Centre Procedures Manual – this document details the procedures and responsibilities of Travel Centre Consultants and Shift Leaders. We have removed the sections of this document concerning the process to follow for stranded passengers and the maximum insurance value we have for cash bags;
 - Tribute Handy Guide – this formed a brief user guide for the Tribute system. Please note that this document is no longer in use. More information on the Tribute system training is detailed below;
 - Cash Regulations Manual – this manual details the cash handling process that employees handling cash should follow. Sections 3.3 to 3.5, 3.7.4, 3.7.5 and 3.9 have been removed from this document. These sections concern various security related instructions to staff such as control of cash, access to safes and secure areas. Pages 8, 9 and 11 have been left intentionally blank and wholly contained information from these removed sections;
 - Impartial Retailing Brief – this brief was issued to all ticket office staff during the last 12 months and outlines our regulatory requirement for impartial retailing;
 - Pricing and Ticketing Updates (PTUs) – although these are briefings rather than training I have disclosed all updates issued from the start date of the East Coast franchise. These updates are issued to all retail staff (those who handle or sell train tickets). One paragraph from the December 2009 PTU concerning an instruction to Train Guards following Advance ticket issues has been removed from the document; and
 - Product and Retail briefs – these detail specific products or promotions and we have included the briefs issued over the last year. However, one of the product briefs detailing the process to follow when customers are not carrying the obligatory reservation coupon with their Advance ticket and two separate promotional offer briefs have not been disclosed.

In addition to the training directed at new employees, all ticket office staff receive a briefing/training day every 12 weeks to ensure they maintain their key competencies, remain fully abreast of relevant information and to provide an opportunity for further development. These training days can be used for any mandatory training, to go through the latest product briefs or even as an opportunity for staff to use training tools such as 'Just the Ticket' (detailed below).

The information withheld from disclosure that is referenced in the above list is exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This exemption applies because there is a risk that disclosure of this information, with the exception of the two promotional offer briefs, could be used by someone to evade or compromise the revenue protection policies or practices of East Coast. In the case of these two promotional briefs, although the same exemption applies, the reason is that disclosure may negatively impact revenue received by East Coast.

The commercial interests are the ability of East Coast to provide commercial services in a competitive environment and to receive revenue from the provision of these services. These interests would be likely to be affected by disclosure of the requested information.

The prejudice that would be likely is that the ability of East Coast to maximise and protect the revenue which it should receive for the provision of services will be compromised if it discloses this information. Disclosure would be likely to lead to reduced revenue for East Coast, which would have a detrimental effect on the commercial operation of East Coast. There is a significant risk that such

prejudice would occur and this could have a significant effect on East Coast and consequently on the Department for Transport and the public.

East Coast has applied the public interest test. It has recognised that there is a public interest in general in public authorities being as transparent as possible about their policies and procedures and the management of their finance. However, it has also considered the need for public authorities to safeguard the interests of taxpayers by ensuring that they maintain effective systems to protect their revenue. East Coast has therefore decided that the public interest test in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. This is because East Coast believes that the commercial damage which could be caused could have a detrimental effect on the prices and services it offers and so the public in general would be likely to suffer as a result. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances, East Coast believes that the public interest is served by applying the exemption in section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the withheld information.

In addition to the above list of training documents, we also have a section entitled 'Useful Links' within Retail Net that staff are trained to access. These are links to websites that ticket office staff may find useful including links to websites hosting guides for some of the computer systems used within our Ticket Offices. Although we are unable to disclose the contents of documents from these third party sites we can confirm what these links are and their purpose:

- Booking horizon – this is a link to a National Rail Enquiries (NRE) site that details, by individual train operator, how far in advance tickets can be purchased;
- Live Train Times – this is a link to the front page of our website www.eastcoast.co.uk where there is a further link to obtain live train running information by individual station;
- NLC Finder – this is a link to the section of the ATOC 'Manual' used to access detailed fares and ticketing information;
- NRE Live Departure Boards – this is a link to the section of the NRE website where real-time train running information is displayed;
- Rail Information Online – this link will shortly be removed as it details the same information as NRE Knowledgebase (detailed below);
- The Manual – this is a link to the section of the ATOC website where the ATOC fares manual is stored. We no longer obtain this document as a hard copy;
- Transport Direct – this is a link to the Transport Direct website. This website provides a journey planning facility that can identify available routes, by transport type, between destinations;
- Tribute Support – this is a link to the Tribute website containing useful information and user guides. The Tribute computer system is used for selling tickets or making reservations and is used on the terminals in ticket offices as well as the ticket machines used by Train Guards on-board our trains;
- Walk it – this is a link to the 'Walk-it' website. Walk-it is an urban route planner used to identify walking routes;
- West Yorkshire Metro – this is a link to the West Yorkshire Metro website;
- East Coast – this is a link to our website www.eastcoast.co.uk;
- Fast ticket status – this is a link to a password protected computer system used to identify the current performance of fast ticket machines;
- National Rail – this is a link to the NRE website;
- NRE Knowledgebase – this is a link to the industry database providing station facilities information. This database is displayed on the NRE website;
- NRS – this is a password protected computer system used to make train seat reservations;
- South Yorkshire PTE – this is a link to the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive website;
- Traintaxi – this is a link to a national website that acts as a guide to which taxis serve each train, tram, metro and underground stations;
- Transport for London – this is a link to the Transport for London website;
- Tyne and Wear Metro – this is a link to the Tyne and Wear Metro website; and
- 'Just the ticket' – this is a link to an area of the ATOC website where the training resource 'Just the Ticket' is stored. This resource is available to all members of ATOC and can be used to improve the knowledge and understanding of all staff who sell train tickets. Although this resource is not within the 'Useful Links' section, it is accessed through Retail Net.

Unfortunately we do not hold any training materials for the use of Fast Ticket Machines.

The Travel Centre Induction Log Book, Travel Centre Workbook and Trainer's Notes have all been re-branded by East Coast. The Travel Centre Procedures Manual, the Travel Centre Management Procedures Manual and the Cash Regulations Manual are all new documents that were implemented during the East Coast franchise. The Pricing and Ticketing Updates, Product Briefs and the Impartial Retailing brief were all created and issued by East Coast.

If you are not satisfied with the response to this request, you have the right to ask for a review of this response. If you wish to do so, you should contact me and request this. If you exercise that right and are not satisfied with the outcome of the review, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner by contacting:

The Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.
Telephone: 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. S. [unclear]', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

For and on behalf of East Coast Main Line Company Limited