

Date issued: 16 March 2022

Freedom of Information Request

We are writing in response to your Freedom of Information request. Your request has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and our Data and Information Management Policy.

You asked for the following information:

"Please can you supply information regarding the phone meeting of Rail Delivery Group's Customer Information Group telephone meeting on 17th February?"

To identify the group, I'm informed that RDG's organisation comprises an internal governance structure, headed by its Customer Board. The Customer Board sits above the Customer Information Strategy Group ("CISG"), which itself heads two sub-groups: the Customer Information Group ("CIG"), which deals with issues related to customer information, and the Accessibility & Inclusion Group ("A&IG"), which deals with issues regarding compliance with licence-linked accessibility requirements. Apparently, the CIG and the A&IG have delegated authority from the CISG in relation to a number of matters (including, in the case of the CIG, the power to adopt a "Do Not Travel" recommendation). Representatives from all TOCs sit in the CIG. I'm assuming that a Network Rail representative also sits in the CIG.

I'm informed that on Thursday 17 February 2022, shortly after the Met Office issued a Red Weather Warning for Storm Eunice, a meeting of the CIG took place, by way of a telephone call. During this call, the CIG apparently agreed a course of action which included the nationwide issue of "Do Not Travel" notices for train operators.

It is this meeting that I am specifically interested in.

*Please could you supply me with the notes and communications your representative made during and as a direct result of this meeting? I'm wanting anything that indicates what topics were discussed and what decisions were made. Contemporaneous notes, internal or external emails received or sent that reveal what was discussed at this meeting, and what decisions were made and actions agreed, would be great **[Q1]**.*

*Please can you also advise me about the power and responsibility of your representative on the group? I am not wanting any personal data, I am wanting to know what their role involves and what powers they have to bind your company / to agree to proposals agreed by the group **[Q2]**.*

In specific, I am instructed that the issue of pre-booked assistance bookings was raised during the call. Apparently the CIG discussed the actions to be taken in that regard, considering the risk that TOCs would not be able to deliver the pre-booked assistance during Storm Eunice. It was apparently agreed during the call that customers with pre-booked assistance bookings should be contacted by TOCs to cancel their assistance booking; and that no further pre-booked assistance bookings should be arranged for 18 and 19 February 2022.

I'm not sure I find it credible that this group, which is not the accessibility and inclusion group, has the authority to agree to cancel and refuse assistance bookings. What I'm wanting to know is whether the group did actually discuss such and reach that decision. If so, whether your rep on that group agreed

to such cancellations and refusals, whether they had authority to do so and if so, how they communicated this decision within your company [Q3]."

Having reviewed your questions, we are able to provide the following information:

Q1. Whilst your understanding of the governance structure leading to the RDG's Customer Board is correct, it appears there is a misunderstanding of the Customer Information Group (CIG)'s remit in terms of its function and its decision-making capacity. Strategic decisions are made by the Customer Board. The role of the CIG is to ensure these decisions, and any other significant industry updates, are communicated sufficiently with railway users.

In relation to the CIG meeting dated 17th February 2022: Transport for Wales (TfW) took the decision to adopt a 'Do Not Travel' recommendation and suspend services during Storm Eunice the previous day, on 16th February 2022. This course of action was not agreed during the CIG meeting held the following day, as TfW had already reached this decision.

TfW does not hold notes from this meeting, whilst emails received from the RDG in relation to this meeting are exempt from disclosure under Section 41 (confidentiality) of the Freedom of Information Act. We have consulted the RDG concerning the release of these emails, and they maintain that the information it provided to the CIG is confidential and was for the use of the recipient alone and can only be used or disclosed in accordance with the wishes of the confider. The RDG maintains that communications with members of the CIG are confidential and that it could not function as a member organisation if it did not respect the confidentiality of the discussions and decisions that they facilitate. We wish to acknowledge that we are currently in the process of reviewing our initial response to your request concerning the Accessibility and Inclusion email group, and our application of the S.41 exemption. As this review is not yet complete, we apply this exemption as our most recent position following the discussions with RDG referred to above.

Q2. The TfW representative who attends CIG has a role that is relevant to the communication of passenger/customer information. The responsibility of our representative relates only to decisions made pertaining to the communication of passenger/customer information, which are made in collaboration with CIG members.

Q3. The TfW representative who attends CIG, did not make the decision to suspend services during Storm Eunice. As outlined in Q1, TfW took the decision to adopt a 'Do Not Travel' recommendation and suspend services during Storm Eunice the day before the CIG meeting took place.

We hope this information is of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

Transport for Wales

Appeal Rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the Head of Freedom of Information at either Transport for Wales, 3 Llys Cdwyn, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH or freedomofinformation@tfw.wales. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner (ICO) can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or you can contact the ICO through the 'Make a Complaint' section of their website on this link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The relevant section to select will be "Official or Public Information".