



Heathrow Express

Passenger Information During Disruption

(PIDD)

Local Plan

Version 1 – May 2018

Introduction

Heathrow Express recognises that the provision of information to customers is important in order to ensure a smooth journey experience. The provision of accurate and timely information is of particular importance during service disruption, and the Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD) Policy is designed to ensure that all those responsible for customer information provision focus on what is important to our customers.

The PIDD Programme is agreed nationally between the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and a National Task Force of Train Operating Company (TOC) representatives. Built around this, an Agreed Code of Practice lays down the way in which information should be delivered. Heathrow Express, and other TOCs, are required to comply with the requirements of the Agreed Code of Practice as a minimum.

Heathrow Express has agreed processes in order to ensure that the industry standards are met and is also seeking to continually improve the ways in which customer information is delivered during disruption and normal service.

This Delivery Plan outlines the key ways Heathrow Express seeks to provide customer information during disruption and is based on the agreed 'Heathrow Customer Information During Disruption – Local Plan', which considers all Train Operating Companies that operate from Heathrow stations. This creates a fully integrated procedure which will ensure all customers are provided with one version of the truth.

The Wider Industry

Heathrow Express works closely with other Train Operating Companies (TOCs), Heathrow Airport Rail (HAL Rail) and Network Rail in order to understand any problem that may develop and disseminate information to customers.

HAL Rail and Network Rail will often be responsible for initial information provision from the site of an incident, and in co-operation with the affected TOCs a concise and timely message will be formulated and distributed to customers along the affected route(s).

As a whole the industry will look to provide:

- Information and estimates of delay duration from the site of an incident or disruptive event
- The cause of the delay, avoiding jargon that may be unclear to customers
- The production of a prioritised plan in order to restore the planned train service.

Heathrow Express does not operate any stations, and as a result we work closely with Station Facility Owners (SFOs) to ensure that information is provided to all customers.

Heathrow Express has a station sales team at Heathrow Airport and London Paddington who will work alongside the rest of the station staff to support our customers when the train service is disrupted. The Heathrow Express Control team will ensure train crew and station staff are provided with up-to-date information in order to advise customers face-to-face, via information screens and through the use of announcements. During severe disruption Heathrow Express will also look to provide a management presence at key stations, where this is possible.

Our Staff

All Heathrow Express colleagues have different responsibilities for providing information to customers during disruption. Our colleagues are all briefed in their responsibilities and trained to deliver each element of our detailed PIDD Policy, in order to ensure the most effective delivery of information to customers.

- Operations Control staff are sent on national training courses for PIDD, primarily focussed around delivering the right information to customers in a timely manner. Our Controllers receive regular refresher training and updates in any changes to national PIDD strategy.
- Colleagues on board trains carry smartphones and receive briefings on how to obtain information and communicate with customers during disruption.
- Contingency Arrangements and guidance notes on PIDD are provided to relevant Heathrow Express managers, who are likely to deal with disruption to the train service.
- The Control team has developed a detailed review service, used after each disruptive incident. This enables positives to be identified and repeated, and any issues be tackled in order to improve for the future.

Disruption Thresholds

To ensure that appropriate support is provided to customers and staff, a number of thresholds have been established in order to identify at which point a disruptive event requires a certain level of response. HAL Rail and the TOCs operating from Heathrow have agreed to adopt the line status used on the London Underground and Overground to communicate disruption information to customers.

Once a certain threshold is reached an enhanced response, referred to as Customer Service Level 2 (CSL2), will be mobilised, in order to ensure customers and staff are supported and informed throughout the disruption.

- **Good Service**
All services are running as expected.
- **Minor Delays**
The service is operating normally, or with minor, isolated delays or cancellations as a result of localised disruption.
- **Severe Delays**
Service disruption is to an extent where customers may notice moderate delays for a period of time, or limited cancellations as a result of the disruption. Customers will be able to continue their journeys with some disruption.
- **Part Suspension**
A significantly disruptive incident has been identified, and a significant number of customers are likely to be affected for a period of time. A limited train service is likely to be in operation with the potential for diversions and delays.
- **Suspended**
At this level of disruption, it is not possible for us to guarantee that customers will be able to reach their destination. The train service may be suspended over all or part of the route, with no alternative transport options available. This severity of incident is uncommon, and typically occurs during periods of extreme weather, affecting all modes of transport.

When disruption thresholds are triggered, the Control Team are responsible for distributing this information to all Heathrow Express staff, via smartphones and internal email using the iHEX messaging system. The Heathrow Express Control Team will work closely with the relevant HAL Rail and Network Rail Control for the area concerned, from the time an incident is declared, through to resolution.

As an incident develops it may be upgraded or downgraded in terms of severity, and the level of response adapted to react to the developing situation. Staff will be updated in order to keep customers informed on stations and trains, providing the best current advice in terms of what it means for their journeys.

Messaging

Once information is received from the site of an incident, HAL Rail, Network Rail and Heathrow Express Control teams will liaise with other TOC Control teams to build a picture of the incident, how it will affect the train service, and what options exist for customers to reach their destinations.

Holding & Core Messages

Heathrow Express Control will issue holding and core messages to frontline staff, managers, stations and other responsible for communicating with our customers (e.g. social media and Customer Relations).

A holding message will be issued within 10 minutes of a problem being known and will summarise the area affected, and that disruption is likely to occur. This ensures that all parties are aware to remain alert for more detailed updates.

Core messages will then follow every 20 minutes, focussing on the information that is most important to customers:

- Problem: What is the problem, and where has it occurred?
- Impact: What does this mean for customers?
- Advice: What options exist for customers to reach their destinations?

One Version of the Truth

An underlying principle of PIDD is that a customer should receive a consistent message from all staff and via rail industry systems. This generally involves the use of a generic bank of phrases, identified by RDG through customer research. The use of these phrases ensures the problem is conveyed in a clear and concise fashion, without the use of unclear industry jargon.

Control is responsible for liaising with Heathrow Rail, Network Rail Control, and other TOCs, to agree the message that will be used, and then pass this to Heathrow Express staff and stations via iHEX.

Alternative Travel Arrangements

Heathrow Express recognises that it isn't always possible for customers to complete their journey as intended, when an incident disrupts all or part of our route. We have a range of alternative transport arrangements that can be deployed during service disruption, in order to ensure customers reach their intended destinations.

Ticketing & Ticket Acceptance

Once Suspended has been declared the Control team will liaise with other operators to agree for Heathrow Express customers to be conveyed on alternative routes. Subject to capacity this arrangement will be reciprocated; during disruption all TOCs will co-operate in moving customers to their destinations.

Ticket acceptance will be advised via internal and external messaging systems, advising both staff and stations, within 20 minutes of CSL2 being declared. Customer information, on websites and social media will also be updated once ticket acceptance has been agreed.

In the event that customers, who have not yet purchased a ticket, are directed via an alternative route, which was more than expensive than their original, then the cheapest fare will either be accepted or retailed. Customers are permitted to make a return journey on the same route as their outward journey after the disruption has cleared – they will not be required to purchase a new ticket, upgrade their ticket, or pay an excess fare. Customers must travel with their booked TOC or train service, unless they are travelling off their normal route.

Following a major incident, ticket restrictions may be relaxed for a longer period. A specific message will be distributed should this be the case, and this would normally be a decision led by the Heathrow Express Senior Management Team and communicated via websites and social media.

Alterations to Train Services

Heathrow Express Control Team will lead the process to cancel or amend services, should they then not be able to run as advertised. Relevant managers may support this process, with advice and specific local knowledge, in order to minimise the impact to our customers. As customers now rely on a multitude of automated systems to provide them with service information, Controllers recognise the importance of updating the upstream systems which feed information to the various interfaces with passengers.

Contingency Plans

HAL Rail, Network Rail and TOCs have their own pre-determined contingency plans that act as an initial point of reference when an incident occurs. Heathrow Express, along with other TOCs on our route, input to the HAL Rail and Network Rail contingency plans, which are updated periodically.

Heathrow Express specific contingencies are documented alongside our Control Manual and are available to all parties concerned. Template messages are also available to our Control team for given circumstances, enabling rapid information provision once the circumstances of an incident have been established, and a response mobilised.

Alternative Road Transport

If necessary, Heathrow Express may provide road transport in order for customers to complete their journey, however a full replacement bus service from Heathrow Airport is impracticable in most instances. The existing Transport for London 140 bus from Hayes to Heathrow Airport provides an existing alternative for customers if a journey by rail cannot be completed.

The decision to provide alternative transport is led by the Heathrow Express Control team, supported by contingency plans. When road transport is being provided the relevant station team(s) will be updated in order to pass the pick-up arrangements to affected customers.

At Stations

As Heathrow Express does not operate any stations we are reliant on Station Facility Owners (HAL Rail, Network Rail and other TOCs) to deliver information to our customers. Heathrow Express uses a number of information systems in order to feed information to stations, which is also picked up on information screens and systems used to drive automated announcements. Manual announcements are often used during times of disruption, as these are capable of conveying more meaningful information than automated systems.

Heathrow Express has a sales team at London Paddington and Heathrow Airport, who will provide a dedicated point of contact for customers on the station during service disruption. This team will also work alongside the rest of the station team to ensure information is provided to customers by the most effective fashion.

Heathrow Express will look to provide a management presence at stations during a Part Suspension or Suspended event.

On Trains

Our on-train teams, both Drivers and on-board colleagues, receive training in providing information to customers, both face-to-face and using announcements, when they join Heathrow Express. This is supported by refresher training as part of planned briefing sessions.

Staff are also provided with mobile devices, enabling them to receive real time information on service running and any service disruptions. Our on-train teams have a number of useful contacts within the Control Team in order to obtain additional support and information, should they require it. All team members have direct access to the iHEX messaging system.

Further to this a summary of contingency arrangements, tips on concise and helpful announcements as well as Customer Relations Contact Slips are provided for use when services are subject to disruption.

Our staff are encouraged to make regular announcements, with an appropriate level of detail, and also walk through the train when disruption is likely to last for an extended period. This allows customers to obtain onward travel information particular to their journey, and for our staff to hand out information on eligibility for compensation, and how this may be obtained.

Internet & Social Media

Heathrow Express recognises the value of the internet in providing an immediate means to communicate with customers, and this also makes it especially important that all information flows are kept up to date. Information made available via the website and social media reflects the holding and core messages from the Control team.

Our Twitter account (@HeathrowExpress) is monitored seven days a week, between 0700 and 2100 Monday to Friday (0900 and 1800 on weekends), giving passengers a channel for immediate interaction with the Social Media Team – who work closely with the Control team.

Whilst the team try and interact with as many customers as possible, direct responses are not always possible during large-scale disruption. Regardless of the level of disruption, the team will distribute generic travel information and updates for all followers, including ticket acceptance and alternative transport arrangements. If the Social Media Team cannot resolve an issue, they are equipped to provide suitable contacts in order to enable passengers to get the information they need.

Further to this, direct feeds from the iHEX messaging system to our website (heathrowexpress.com) provides direct information on the Service Updates page and also updates the disruption indicator on the website homepage. Homepage alerts are always issued for long-lasting or significant incidents which are likely to affect a significant proportion of our customers.

The Heathrow Express Facebook page (facebook.com/heathrowexpress) can also be used to provide service updates, and answer customer queries. This provides another means for customers to contact us.

Incident Reviews & Continuous Improvement

It is recognised that reviewing past events is the best way to learn for the future and continuously improve. Reviews of significant service disruption look at the incident itself, the impact on the train service and customers – and then how this was communicated to both staff and customers.

These reviews are conducted by the relevant Duty Operations Manager, in the days immediately after a significantly disruptive event. In the case of a Suspended status incident, a teleconference may be convened between managers from each team within the business, chaired by the Duty Operations Manager, or a nominated deputy. All outputs from the Control and Social Media teams are also reviewed, to ensure that the relevant information was delivered in a timely fashion.

Actions are identified and tracked by the Business Resilience Manager and Commercial Customer Service Manager, in order to ensure that Heathrow Express can continuously improve the way we manage a disrupted train service and deliver information to our customers. If any actions are identified to be outside of the immediate control of Heathrow Express, they will be raised with the relevant party – whether this is HAL Rail, Network Rail or another Train Operating Company.

Useful Contacts

Customer Relations

Our Customer Relations team can be contacted should you have any further queries regarding our PIDD Policy or would like more information on how we deliver information to customers during times of disruption. The team also handle any other comments, complaints or refund requests. Feedback will be provided to other areas of the business about where we can improve for the future.

Tel: 0345 600 1515 (0900 – 1700, Monday to Friday)
Webform: www.heathrowexpress.com
Post: Heathrow Express Customer Relations Department
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The Compass Centre
Nelson Road
London Heathrow Airport
HOUNSLOW
TW6 2GW

Social Media

If you require a real time response from us or want to keep track of the latest updates on Heathrow Express services, news or special offers you can follow us on Twitter @HeathrowExpress or like us on Facebook at facebook.com/HeathrowExpress.

Our Social Media team are up to date with the very latest information. The team are available 0700 – 2100 Mon–Fri (0900-1800 on weekends).

Heathrow Express Website

www.heathrowexpress.com

National Rail Enquiries

www.nationalrail.co.uk
03457 484950 (24 hours)

Rail Delivery Group (RDG)

www.raildeliverygroup.com
info@raildeliverygroup.com
020 7841 8000

London Travel Watch

www.londontravelwatch.org.uk
020 3176 2999

Network Rail

www.networkrail.co.uk
0345 711 4141 (24 hours)