

**Stephanie Toby**  
Interim Director, Economics, Markets and  
Strategy



To; ORR passenger and station licence  
holders and other interested stakeholders

**26 April 2022**

Dear Colleague

### **Changes to sponsorship of the Rail Ombudsman**

In accordance with the 2021 Williams-Shapps *Plan for Rail*<sup>1</sup>, we will be taking over responsibility from the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) for sponsoring the Rail Ombudsman. This letter provides a high-level overview of the steps required to deliver this change as smoothly and efficiently as possible, to minimise impact on passengers and industry.

The Rail Ombudsman was established in November 2018 via a contractual agreement between RDG on behalf of its members and the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman Ltd (DRO). We introduced a licence condition in July 2019 to make membership of the RDG sponsored Rail Ombudsman mandatory, which supported 38 licence holders joining the scheme.

The process for us to sponsor the Rail Ombudsman will involve the following key phases:

- Development of an Ombudsman Operating Model (OOM) led by a specialist consultancy firm to ensure the Rail Ombudsman is constituted, governed and operated in a way that best serves its members and users. We aim to consult stakeholders on this OOM in summer 2022.
- A licence modification, subject to consultation, to require licence holders which are members of the current RDG procured scheme to transition, at an agreed point, to the ORR procured scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> [Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/great-british-railways-williams-shapps-plan-for-rail)

- A competitive tender process to find an operator of the Rail Ombudsman scheme. Our aim is to conclude the tender process and appoint a provider in early 2023 (subject to concluding prior stages in the process in a timely way).
- There will be a transition phase between contracts which will require stakeholder engagement and planning to ensure minimal disruption to both passengers and scheme members.


### **Next steps**

We are taking an open and collaborative approach with the aim of securing broad stakeholder support for our proposals. There will be a series of stakeholder engagement points as the work progresses to ensure their views help shape and inform our plans.

We will provide updates and further detail on our proposals in due to course.

**For further information on ORR's ombudsman sponsorship plans, please contact [Scott.Hamilton@orr.gov.uk](mailto:Scott.Hamilton@orr.gov.uk) who is leading this project on our behalf.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Stephanie Tobyn', is positioned below the 'Yours sincerely' text.

**Stephanie Tobyn**