

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, NET

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 1.1. Two letters have been received from members of the public since the last meeting of the Committee. The first correspondent has written to complain that Easy Rider card holders were not eligible for the ticket discount that was offered in March. The second correspondent has complained about the withdrawal of his daughter's Easy Rider card by the tram conductor when she was travelling to school.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee considers the contents of the report and advises on actions to be taken.

3. CORRESPONDENT A (see Appendix A)

- 3.1. During the recent marking of the sixth anniversary of the tram, a special ticket offer was advertised which allowed a £2.00 reduction on the cost of an "all week" ticket bought on the tram. Correspondent A has written to the Committee, wishing the system a happy birthday, but complaining that a similar offer was not available for holders of Easy Rider cards and she has suggested that these customers are allowed additional days travel when renewing their cards.

- 3.2. A copy of the letter has been forwarded to the Tram Operator, Nottingham Tram Consortium (NTC), and they have responded direct to the correspondent. NTC have pointed out that, whilst it is not possible for the price of all tickets to be reduced at the same time, they do occasionally promote offers for their other various ticket categories. The Easy Rider card is not however issued by NTC and they are therefore unable to make a decision with regard to offering a promotion on this pass.

4. CORRESPONDENT B (see Appendix B)

- 4.1. Correspondent B who, whilst congratulating NET on providing a great and outstanding service, has written to the Committee with regard to an incident in which his 13 year daughter had her Easy Rider card confiscated by the tram conductor because it would not scan correctly on the ticket machine. The girl was on her way to school and needed to continue her journey by bus, but was unable to do so because she no longer had her card and did not carry cash.
- 4.2. NTC informed the correspondent that the reason the card was confiscated was that, according to the ticket machine, it was "hot listed", meaning that it was recorded as lost or stolen. After checking the card on another machine, NTC established that the fault lay with the ticket machine rather than the card and they have therefore apologised to the correspondent, returned the card and offered two free all-day tram tickets. NTC have given assurance that such a fault is an extremely rare occurrence.

4.3. The General Manager of NTC has confirmed that the conductor acted correctly by withdrawing a card that is shown as "hot listed"; an adult would usually be asked to leave the tram but, in the case of minors, the passenger is allowed to continue the journey to their destination. It is thought that the conductor may not have been aware that the girl was continuing her journey by bus. A similar policy is operated by Nottingham City Transport.

5. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

5.1. None

6. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

6.1. None

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Letter from Correspondent A

12 March 2010

Dear Sir

First of all I would like to wish you a Happy 6th Birthday and then hope you are the correct office to answer/solve my query.

As I am always in receipt of a three monthly Easyrider having to travel to work by both tram and bus, it is most annoying and disappointing that only people who purchase weekly tickets for the tram are benefiting by being able to travel cheaper during March. It seems people who use an Easyrider lose out so we do not have any reason to celebrate your Birthday.

Could you not perhaps allow people who have Easyrider's an extra say 3 days travel when next renewing their passes, this would be a much fairer way, otherwise we are being penalised.

Yours faithfully

Response from NTC

17 March 2010

Dear _____

Thank you for your letter, which was forwarded to us by the GNLRT Advisory Committee

We are grateful for your Birthday wishes, and also sorry that you are upset by our March promotion on the on-board purchased weekly ticket. It is not possible to reduce the price of all of our tickets at the same time.

In January we reduced the price of the 30 day PayPoint ticket and our next promotion over the Easter period is a reduced Group TramRider ticket

As we do not issue the EasyRider pass, we cannot make a decision on any promotion connected to that pass. Should a decision be made to offer a promotion on the EasyRider pass, it would be made by Nottingham City Transport.

Yours sincerely

NET Customer Services

Letter from Correspondent B21st March 2010

Dear Sir / Madam

First of all I'd like to congratulate you on providing a great and outstanding tram service. I am a parent of two young children aged 15 and 13 years old who use the tram and bus to go to school. I always pay for 3 month Easy Rider 18 cards which cost me £140 every 90 days. This is the best option for us because they don't have to carry cash all the time and the card has a Photo ID which is proof they are the owner of the card. Usually the 3 months lasts from school term to school term. I like to keep a track of the days used so I can renew automatically and in advance. They currently have 21 days remaining credit up to 7th April 2010.

The reason I am writing this letter is to bring to your attention an unfortunate incident that occurred on your tram with one of your members of staff. I find it hard to believe and have to question the reason why this happened at all. I still find it very difficult to comprehend.

Imagine my shock and distress when my daughter [REDACTED] aged 13 told me what happened to her on the 7.30 am tram on Wednesday 17th March 2010. Apparently the female conductor told Hana the Easy Rider card is not working and questioned her about having any credit on the card. The conductor then warned her that she will "let it go this one time" but she will be taking her card off her and then gave her this 'NET customer comment card' instead. My daughter pleaded with the conductor that there was sufficient credit on the card and she needed her card to get the bus to school on the next leg of her journey and also to get back home from school later that day. She does not carry extra cash for transport with her because there is no need. This was obviously ignored and the card confiscated. The card has a clear photo ID of Hana, so what could be the problem?

Nevertheless, my 13 year old daughter was left terribly embarrassed on a packed tram, made to feel like a 'fare dodger' and then left totally stranded in the city centre with not enough cash to get to school, let alone try to get home. What on earth is going on here? She then had to ring her mum at home, who was just about to leave to go to work and ask her to come and rescue her in the city centre. I was at work and not available which was probably a good thing as I would have been most unhappy, very much as I am now.

I found this experience quite disturbing and distressing and wrote an email to Wilkinson Street to retrieve her card because Hana needs the card to get to school and I know there is credit remaining. Your Customer Service said the reason the card was confiscated is because it was 'hot listed'. This I believe means lost or stolen, but surely the photo ID clearly shows it is my daughter and the owner of the card. The scanner was apparently at fault was the outcome of our communication.

The next day I collected the card and accepted the 2 complimentary tickets because I did not want to make a fuss. However, I would question your practice and policy where you can leave a vulnerable 13 year old girl, 7.40 am, stranded in the city centre without means of getting anywhere and placed in a predicament that she totally unprepared for? What if it was a younger schoolgirl and she had no means of contacting anyone because her parents were on their way to work? Surely this would be any parent's worst nightmare and that is why I felt the need to write to you.

I honestly hope that this incident can be avoided in the future and maybe you could prevent this from ever happening again.

Response from NTC

From: info
Sent: 18 March 2010 08:59
To: _____
Subject: RE: Easy Rider under 18

Dear _____

Thank you for your email.

We asked the Duty Manager to look into this matter and now have the reason that your daughter's pass was taken off her. The conductor yesterday morning scanned your daughter's pass and it showed on her ticket machine as 'hot listed'. When a pass is hot listed, it means that it has been lost or stolen and we are required to remove the pass from the passenger presenting it.

Following your email, the Duty Manager scanned the pass on another ticket machine this morning and it was absolutely fine. This means that there must be a problem with the ticket machine used yesterday, which is now being dealt with. The conductor did not know that it was a problem with her machine at the time, so could only act on what her ticket machine said.

We are so sorry that this happened and sincerely apologise for your daughter's and wife's inconvenience and for your daughter's embarrassment. We have your daughter's pass here and would like to offer you two vouchers for free all-day tram tickets as a token of our apology.

Would someone be able to call in to collect the pass from the Depot at Wilkinson Street today? If so, could you please inform us who will be coming and at approximately what time?

Kind regards

NET Customer Services

Nottingham Tram Consortium, NET Depot, Wilkinson Street, Nottingham, NG7 7NW

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