

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 1.1. A member of the public has written to the Committee about the information that is provided at tramstops to inform concessionary pass holders that they must validate their cards before travelling. Copies of all correspondence can be found at Appendix A.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. The views of the Committee are sought.

3. DETAILS OF CORRESPONDENCE

- 3.1. The correspondent initially wrote to the tram operator, Nottingham Trams, having travelled on the tram with his wife from Beeston on the first day of full service. He considers that there is insufficient signing at the tramstops to inform customers that they need to validate their concessionary pass before boarding the tram and that the locations of the validators are unclear. He also considers that it is not made clear that concessionary cards cannot be validated at the ticket machines. He is not satisfied with the response that he has received from Nottingham Trams.
- 3.2. The signage at the tramstops and on the trams meets the requirements set out in the Nottingham Express Transit Order 2009 and meets all other regulatory requirements. The tram operator has a robust appeals procedure for anyone who is found to be travelling without a valid ticket or who hasn't validated their smart card and the positioning and size of the signage has met the approval of the Independent Appeals Panel and has allowed prosecutions to be made at Magistrate's Court against persistent offenders.
- 3.3. As well as the signage that appears at the tramstops, notices that can be read from outside of the tram are affixed to the doors and also appear inside the vehicles. Regular announcements are made on the trams, reminding people that they need to buy before they board and, during the introduction of Phase Two services, Ambassadors were located around the system to assist new users with the ticketing arrangements. Leaflets were distributed to new concessionary card holders at the commencement of off-tram ticketing, providing information on how the cards are to be used, and it is intended that, with the assistance of the City and County Councils further efforts will be made to reinforce this message over the coming months.
- 3.4. Based on the number of people who have been found to have not validated their concessionary card correctly by the Travel Officers, and on the small number of complaints received regarding this matter, it is considered by Nottingham Trams that, overall, the introduction of off-tram ticketing for concessionary card holders has been successful and that the current level of signage and information available to customers is sufficient.

COMPLAINT

My wife and I travelled on the new tram line for the first time today from Beeston to Nottingham and we were horrified by the appallingly bad signage.

1. There is nothing to tell you that you cannot validate your card on the ticket machine. Later on one of your officials told us “there should be a sticker over the card reader, but that vandals have removed these”. There was certainly no sticker at Beeston bus station and this is hardly surprising when they are just stuck on and easily peel off.

Even if the notice had been present it only says something like “Renew your Mango”, but it does not say that you can **ONLY** renew your Mango at this terminal and that you have to go to another machine to validate your card.

2. There is nothing on the ticket machine to direct you to walk to the very end of the platform to find the validation machine.

3. There is no sign over the validation machine to tell you that this is where you have to validate your card.

4. The signage about validating your card and about paying before boarding the tram is all in tiny writing - I guess less than 1 cm high. Important information like this needs to be in at least 10 cm (4”) lettering. I could not read any of the signs without my glasses and, even with them, the signs were difficult to read.

5. We are elderly, but while we were waiting at the stop someone came up to us and asked if they could pay on the tram. They were hurrying to catch the tram which was waiting at the stop and could not see anything which told them they had to pay before getting on. The signs are so small they could not see them, even though they were clearly young and fit.

NET needs to immediately put into effect an update of its signage to increase its size to be easily readable by anyone approaching the tram stop saying “**You must purchase a ticket, or validate your pass BEFORE boarding the tram**”.

This information needs to be repeated on the outside of the doors of the tram

NET needs to put large, clear signs over the ticket machine with arrows directing customers to the validation machines at the end of the platforms.

NET needs to put a clear sign over the validating machine which is visible along the length of the platform i.e. when you are standing at the ticket machine you need to be able to see the sign over the validating machine. This sign should also be clearly visible as you approach the platform.

Unless NET agree to these upgrades and can indicate a clear timescale in which they will be implemented, then please advise whether the Traffic Commissioner is responsible for regulating NET, or to whom I should escalate this complaint.

28 August 2015

In your consideration, would you please also take into account the following:

- while you have to pay, or validate your ticket before boarding the tram, on all Nottingham buses you pay on entry

- you pay on the trams in other parts of the country, such as Sheffield

- the platforms are open, so a member of the public hurrying to catch a tram for the first time will not necessarily pass, or even see a notice telling them to buy a ticket before boarding, nor will they necessarily see a ticket machine or validating machine

- Nottingham is a University city with many migrants. Many members of this large, changing population will not be aware of the regulations governing payment for the tram.

- NET is completely unforgiving to members of the public who board the tram without paying. Last year a woman boarded a tram and went straight to the ticket inspector to purchase a ticket. Despite the fact that she clearly intended to pay, she was still fined £50.

NET's policy seems to be deliberate confusion of the public with the intent to earn as much in fines as possible, instead of making sure that people have clear information, instead of trying to catch only those people who deliberately try to avoid paying.

date: 15 September 2015 at 19:55
subject: RE: COMPLAINT
mailed-by: thetram.net

Good evening _____

Thank you for contacting Nottingham Trams.

We are saddened to read that you were appalled by our signage. We can assure you that every attempt is made to advise and instruct our customers how to travel with us.

The validators are placed at either end of the platform for ease of use when entering the tram stop and do instruct you where to place your card. You have to pass them on your way.

There is some confusion with regard to the Mango card, you can top up your card and then it asks you if you wish to scan your card for travel.

The signage to advise that you are entering a compulsory ticket area meets the statutory requirements and instructions on how to use our system are in very shelter. We have also had tram ambassadors at the tram stops to help and assist when the new lines opened.

The move to off tram ticketing has been heavily publicised since it was introduced over a year ago and we are constantly reviewing and updating our information.

We do welcome all feedback and it is good to get this from the fresh perspective of a new customer and with this in mind we have forward your comments to our marketing team for their attention.

Any complaints can be escalated to the GNLRT.

Your comments have been logged and will be viewed by our senior management team.

Kind regards

Louise

NET Customer Services

T: 0115 942 7777

E: info@thetram.net

www.thetram.net

Nottingham Trams Limited, Armstrong Way, Wilkinson Street, Nottingham NG7 7NW

Reply email to NET:

Thank you for your email.

As there are no barriers along the length of the tram stop - you can enter the tram stop at any point and the first time I used a tram, I got off a bus at Beeston and accessed the middle of the stop near the ticket machine. I did not see the Nottingham City Card machine at all, as it is small, black and a long way from the centre of the tram stop with no signage over it.

Your signage is small and difficult (and for many impossible) to read.

It is stupid to say that you have widely publicised that you must pre-pay for tickets. I have not seen any publicity about the rules for paying for the tram.

I happened to read a Nottingham Evening Post (which I hardly ever read) about a year ago which highlighted the appalling case of a woman getting on a tram and going straight up to the inspector to ask to buy a ticket and being fined for travelling without a ticket. This was even though she clearly was intending to buy a ticket and did not realise that she had to buy the ticket in advance.

I therefore took care to look up the rules for tram travel with a retiree City Card, but if I had not gone out of my way to look up the rules on the web, then I would have assumed that I could swipe this on the tram, the same as I do on the buses!

Our city is full of visitors, students and foreigners whose first language is not English and the rules will not be clear to them.

It is especially confusing that you pay or swipe your card ON a bus, but BEFORE you board on a tram. Your response is not acceptable as you have no plan to rectify this situation.

Who are GNLRT and how do I contact them?

16 September 2015

Tram complaint photographs



As you approach Royal Centre tram stop from the rear, there is absolutely nothing to see of the Citycard validation machine. The validation machine should have a notice over it, with text the same size as the station name.

There is a tiny sign in black on green. It is positioned so that it is in the shadow of the station name. The text is too small to be readable and it is the wrong colour for a warning or prohibition notice. Green should only be used for information or direction signs.

There should be a clearly worded sign with text the same height as the station name, using UK standard colours for prohibition and warning signs - white on red, or black on white with a red border. The text should be clearly and easily read by anyone approaching the stop:

PENALTY NOTICE
You must purchase a ticket,
or validate your pass
BEFORE boarding the tram



Once again the penalty notice is far too small. It is at bottom right, so is the last sign anyone would read. All Europeans read from top left.

Text size for the whole penalty notice should be AT LEAST as large as the word VALIDATION.

The notice should use UK standard colours for prohibition and warning signs - white on red, or black on white with a red border.



Even when you are on the platform and with almost no other passengers, you cannot see the Citycard validation machine from the centre of the stop which most people would go to first, as all the other ticket machines are at this location.



Even when you are much closer to the stop, the penalty notice is hidden in shadows and is unreadable. The Citycard swipe machine is hidden by its mounting pole and would not be seen, unless you knew it was there. It is clear that these machines need a notice, such as "VALIDATE YOUR CITYCARD HERE". This should be white on green as it is an information notice and the text height needs to be similar to that used on the station name.