

Appendix A

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20th November 2019

Dear Sir / Madam

I have a complaint regarding a very humiliating, degrading, stressful experience using Nottingham Trams.

I am an infrequent user of this service, no more than a handful of times this year.

On the 30th October 2019 at approximately 9.15 am I bought an adult all day ticket to travel from Toton to Nottingham station. I paid by debit card and the ticket appeared to drop into a dispensing trough which had twenty plus other similar looking tickets already in there. I picked up the ticket on the top, it had the correct date and the amount I had paid printed on it so I put it in my pocket and boarded the tram.

The ticket inspector came along around five to ten minutes into my journey and after inspecting my ticket told me that I had given him a receipt, not a ticket. He asked how I had paid and because it was by card he asked to see the card. The card did not match the receipt. He showed me where the last digits of my card are printed on the receipt. He told me that this was a known problem that people did not pick up their receipts so it caused a build up of pieces of paper in the dispensing trough that might look like tickets and this was causing a problem to people like myself.

I thought as the problem was known he would give me the benefit of the doubt.

To my disbelief he asked me to leave the tram at the next stop but I refused as it would have made me late for a very important meeting, I was dressed in a black business suit and tie and I produced proof to confirm my appointment.

He then lead me to the other end of the tram to issue me with a penalty fine of fifty pounds which he said I could appeal against.

During all this we had the undivided attention of all the other passengers on the tram and in their eyes I was clearly a fare dodger and had been caught and was being dealt with.

I was so deeply humiliated and ashamed of being labelled in this manner through no fault of my own I could not look up, I did not want to make eye contact with anyone, I do not know if anyone there knew me professionally or socially. The wrong person witnessing this incident could definitely affect my career and life in general as I am a self employed professional and meet a lot of people.

The next day I contacted customer services and spoke to Luke Taylor who could see how distressed I was about this incident. He did all in his power to gather evidence by card records and CCTV that I had paid and helped me get a letter the next day from the appeals department to confirm that I was not liable for a penalty fare. Unfortunately instead of an apology they went on to give me a written lecture on travelling on their system without a valid ticket available for inspection.

This I will not accept, I bought a ticket but it was not presented to me in a reasonable manner. In fact on my return journey from Nottingham station I had to buy another single ticket which was also dispensed into a trough with around thirty other similar looking tickets. This time armed with the information the ticket inspector had given me earlier I searched through, reading all information on each piece of paper. My receipt was the seventh piece of paper I looked at in this jumbled mess and my ticket was tenth.

I have no idea where my original ticket was in the first trough but it is clear now that they do not fall on top of each other in order and other people looking for their tickets before me will guarantee that the discarded receipts are in quite a mess.

I understand that the ticket inspector acted according to procedure but I believe that the system should have given me the benefit of the doubt and his procedure should have been changed to allow for this problem that everyone knows about but have not put right.

In a conversation with Constantina Samara I explained that I should have been given the benefit of the doubt but she said that I would not believe how many people pick up a receipt from the trough and try to fare dodge using the same explanation.

She also told me that this fault lies with passengers not picking up their receipt and is not the company's fault. She also gives me the impression that I should be grateful for not having to pay the fine and has said an apology is out of the question. There seems to be an institutionalised disregard of the rights of passengers like myself and it appears to have been forgotten that our support of the tram system pays their salaries.

Since this incident I have become aware of other people who have been treated in this same disgraceful manner and some of them have become very distressed. Some of these people are shall we say far more vulnerable than myself. As I believe that a public transport system should be available and easy to use for all levels of ability / disability this is not acceptable. I sent an email to Constantina highlighting this point but she sent a return email saying she had discussed all of this in our telephone conversation (She had not). She then gave me your address, which she knew I already had as a further brush off /disregard to my complaint.

The appeals department that thought I needed a lecture should redirect their attention to the department within the company responsible for the ticket dispensing machines. I say that if the ticket machine did not issue a receipt for every transaction we would not have this problem. I also say that giving the benefit of the doubt to anyone presenting a mistake of this kind should be company policy and if this means that the odd fare dodger gets away with it then so be it.

Far better to let off one or more guilty fare dodger than to humiliate one law abiding fare paying customer, especially as this problem is as a result of the ridiculous way a ticket and receipt are issued with every transaction.

I have requested a public apology from a senior person from the company, maybe the person responsible for initiating this system if they have not already been dismissed. I also believe that everyone historically treated in this way deserves an apology.

I have told them how to put their system right, they say this is in hand, why the delay ? Surely this is not rocket science.

Interesting point though, if there is nothing wrong with the system according to Constantina why are they " fixing " it ?

I understand that Constantina will always defend the company and it's operating systems but I will remind her that so did all the senior management in the PPI banking scandal but they were proved wrong as recent events have shown.

Myself and many other customers have been wronged and we deserve a full, unreserved, public apology and as I have now spent four hours of my own time so far dealing with this incident I would suggest an offer of compensation would be in order.

Yours Sincerely

