

# A multi-channel helpline for Network Rail, available day and night



As the public face of Network Rail, the 24-hour helpline’s mission is to make a difference to people travelling on or living by the railway. The helpline receives 360,000 contacts a year, all of which are answered by a dedicated Civica OnDemand team.

More than 4.8 million train journeys are made throughout the UK every day using infrastructure — track, bridges, tunnels, viaducts, signals, level crossings and stations — owned and managed by Network Rail.

Safety, reliability and customer service are top priorities for Network Rail. At any time of the day or night, anyone can contact the company’s helpline to report an incident or safety threat, submit a request or complaint, or make an enquiry.

The helpline can be reached by phone, social media and live chat, as well as by email and post. Network Rail aims to ensure that people can get in touch in the way that’s best for them, and that they have the same brand experience in every channel.

The company outsources provision of the helpline to Civica OnDemand, based on Civica’s track record on customer service and its ability to deliver a multi-channel contact strategy.

## Close, successful collaboration

Civica also had to be able to deploy the helpline service very quickly: instead of the usual nine months, Civica had just nine weeks to be up and running.

“The tight timeframe was extremely challenging: both Network Rail and Civica understood the risks and opportunities involved,” says Gary Bell, Executive Director – Managed Services at Civica. “We took a joint decision to make it work and get it right first time — and between us, we did it.”

## Outcomes

- ▶ 9 weeks to deploy the Network Rail helpline service
- ▶ 360,000 contacts received annually across multiple channels
- ▶ 95% of calls answered, 80% within 30 seconds
- ▶ 90% of live chats answered within 30 seconds
- ▶ Helpline awarded Best in Public Sector by the ‘Top 50 Companies for Customer Service’ independent benchmarking programme

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A jointly delivered induction programme and rapid immersion in Network Rail's brand values were key to preparing the Civica team, ensuring a flawless implementation process, and laying the foundations for a close working relationship.

### Safety first, always

The Civica team is trained to ensure efficient handling of reports about incidents, emergencies and other safety threats. These range from reports of people, animals and objects on or near tracks to problems with level crossings.

GI mapping tools allow the helpline agents to swiftly pinpoint a caller's location. A direct line to Network Rail's control centre enables the right teams to be notified to take rapid action to resolve the situation. The helpline can also quickly alert the emergency services if, for example, a caller is threatening to take their own life.

"As the first point of contact, the helpline team has to be able to get the trains to stop. People can die if mistakes are made," says Bell. "The Civica OnDemand team has proved it can handle the responsibility and save lives."

### Rapid response, prompt resolution

Beyond safety-related matters, the helpline hears from customers and members of the public on subjects ranging from delayed trains to lost property. It's also a vital contact point for Network Rail's 'lineside neighbours' — the millions of people whose homes and workplaces back on to or face the railway.

Lineside neighbours may get in touch to complain about noise from maintenance work, to report damaged fencing, or to ask for vegetation to be cut back. Whatever the issue being reported, the Civica team can quickly notify the Network Rail teams responsible for resolving it.

"We understand that every contact the helpline receives is important. The Civica team isn't just answering the phones: they're the public face of Network Rail, and they care about the people who call."

**Paul Mason**, Divisional Operations Director – Managed Services at Civica.



### Best for customer service in the public sector

Just a few weeks after Civica started delivering the helpline service, mystery shopping research took place on behalf of the 'Top 50 Companies for Customer Service' independent benchmarking programme.

With Civica responsible for the service, however, the helpline was ranked best for customer service in the public sector, and as one of the top ten overall — clear confirmation of the dramatic service improvement achieved by Civica in a very short space of time on behalf of Network Rail.

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