InterCity West Coast Rail Franchise

A consultation response from Transport Focus

August 2016

transportfocus

Contents

1. Transport Focus

Transport Focus is the independent public body set up by the Government to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, England's bus and tram passengers outside London, and coach passengers in England on scheduled domestic services. Since April 2015 we have also represented the interests of users of the strategic road network. We are an independent body funded by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Our mission is to get the best deal for passengers. With a strong emphasis on evidence based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground. We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of passengers and we work with the industry, passenger groups and government to secure journey improvements.

2. Introduction

When the requirements of the next InterCity West Coast (ICWC) franchise are established, it is vital that the needs of passengers using and paying for rail services are placed squarely at the heart of the contract.

Transport Focus therefore welcomes the opportunity to provide a rail passengers' perspective as the specification for the new franchise is developed. We also appreciate the open consultation on the future specification, particularly the efforts to engage directly with individual passengers as well as stakeholders more widely.

We are pleased to have engaged with the DfT from an early stage in the ICWC franchise replacement process. We have used discussions to highlight key passenger issues and the findings of our research on a range of subjects.

This formal consultation response draws on three rich seams of franchise specific data. Firstly, it combines knowledge and understanding drawn from passenger reports of their current journeys on Virgin Trains services with information on passenger priorities for improvement. Read together these two complementary studies provide a unique perspective on passenger needs from the franchise and provide hard evidence to inform the decisions to be made for the future.

In addition, we also reference the findings of qualitative research into the views of Virgin Trains passengers that we undertook in autumn 2015. More generally, we cite findings from our wider research into a range of issues that are important to passengers.

Our research, which will be detailed in further sections of this response, highlights the central importance to passengers of value for money, capacity and punctuality. These core needs must be the top requirements in the specification for the next franchise.

Our research into passenger understanding of, and desire for involvement in, the franchise process led to our emphasis on *Passenger Power!* and a call for more recognition of the passenger within the franchising system. Recent announcements of franchise policy have made welcome commitments to a greater emphasis on the quality of the passenger experience and enhanced arrangements for engagement and communication with customers. It is important these promises are brought to life in the specification for the next franchise and that passengers can see these ideals manifest in the services they receive.

It is vital that, throughout its duration, the franchise remains responsive to changing passenger needs. This means not only that there must be a clear understanding of passenger requirements at the outset but that there is an ongoing emphasis on consultation and engagement with passengers and stakeholders and a set of output measures that reflect passenger satisfaction.

There is an important role for the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) in providing direct feedback from passengers using the services.

Transport Focus is committed to the promotion of passenger interests in the future decisions on the ICWC franchise. We will continue to work closely with DfT and with potential bidders for the operation, to ensure that the specification and service proposals address both current and evolving needs throughout the contract term.

2.1 Franchise consultation response approach

In this document we consider consultation questions for which we have relevant information and appropriate evidence of ICWC passenger needs and aspirations. We have also produced an accompanying franchise aspiration compendium which provides substantial additional detail on topics relating to the consultation questions and the overall passenger journey.

Transport Focus is adopting a strategic approach to this franchise consultation. This submission, and the compendium which also forms an integral part of our response, focus largely on higher level issues.

Passengers and stakeholders will all have their own experiences and specific aspirations which they will want considered in future plans. It is important that DfT and the franchise bidders listen carefully to the views expressed by those whose lives are impacted by decisions about the future of the franchise and the day-to-day operations which result from this.

3. Passenger research and implications for the franchise

3.1 Rail passengers' priorities for improvement 2014[1]

This 2014 study of passenger priorities allows us to compare the priorities of Virgin Trains passengers against the national sample and also those of both business and leisure long distance passengers.

The priorities are shown as an index averaged on 100 (Table 1). An index of 300 is three times as important as the average and an index score of 50 is half as important as the average. This information can also be shown graphically to illustrate just how much the relative importance varies between the factors. (Figure 1).

We can see that there are two striking factors for Virgin Trains passengers, with the top priorities of 'passengers always able to get a seat on the train' and 'price of train tickets offers better value for money' more than five and a half times and over four and a half times more important than the average factor, respectively.

The next group of important priority factors also feature what can be regarded as core elements of service. Passengers want frequent trains, improvements in punctuality and reliability, fewer disruptions and good information about their services. Other important features include free Wi-Fi available on the train and well-maintained and clean train interiors and toilets.

Comparison by journey purpose highlights the differing priorities of passengers. 'Free Wi-Fi available on the train' is fourth priority for business long distance passengers compared to twelfth for leisure long distance passengers. 'Accurate and timely information available at stations' is the fifth highest priority for leisure passengers while ranking 11th among business passengers. 'Journey time is reduced' is the seventh highest priority for business passengers whilst this ranks 14th for leisure passengers.

Summarising the findings, it is clear that the top priorities for improvement largely focus on the basic elements of the rail service – getting a seat, value for money, frequency, punctuality, managing delays and provision of information, along with the comfort factors on the train. This is not to say the remaining priorities are not important to the passenger experience, it is just that they are not as important to improve as the top ranking.

The database contains a wealth of information which can be analysed in many ways to explore how priorities vary by demographic and journey purpose, amongst other things[2]. We recommend its use to DfT and potential bidders to enable a detailed understanding of the aspirations of passengers to apply to the specification and plans for the ICWC network.

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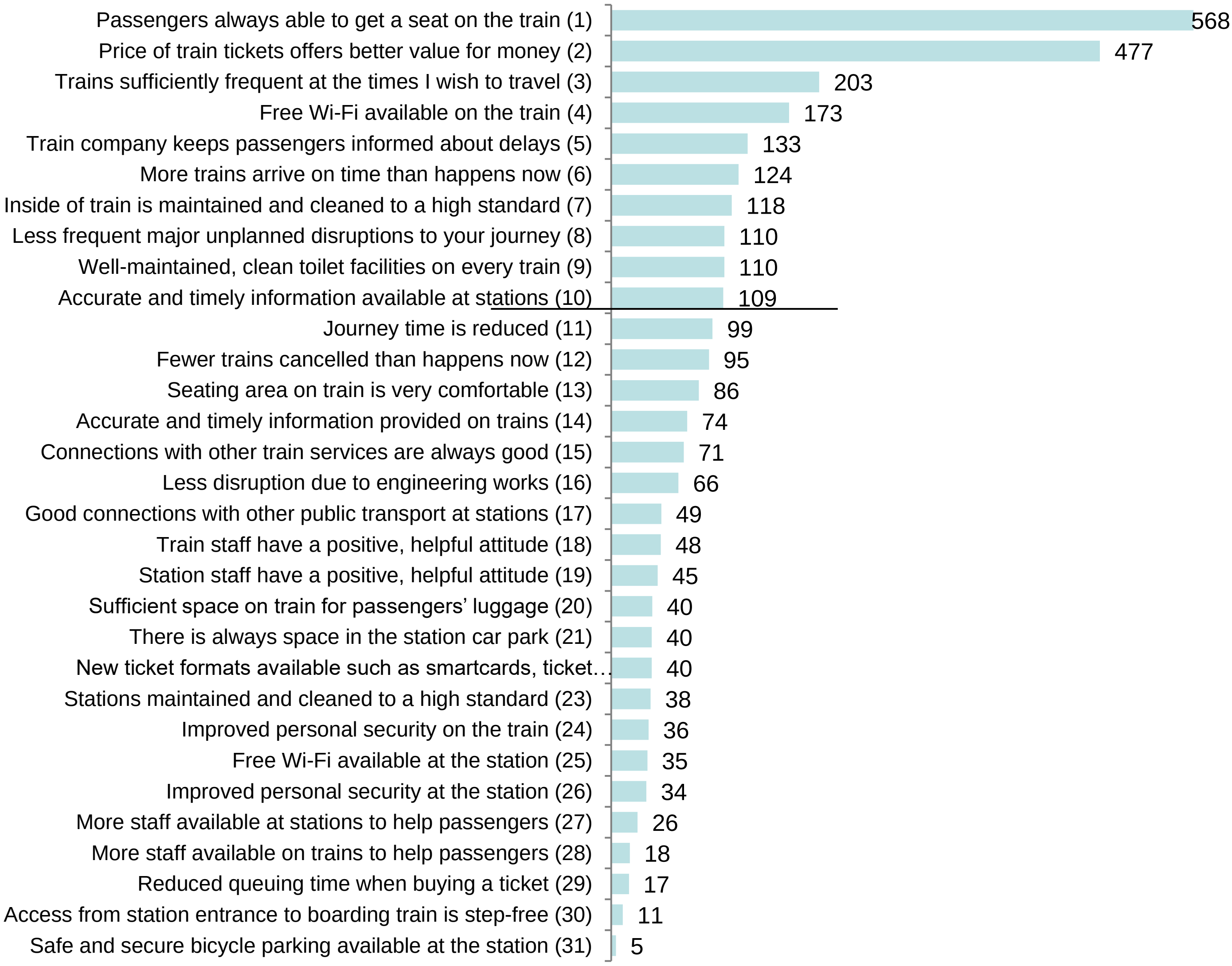
[1] Rail passengers' priorities for improvement. Transport Focus. 2014
[2] Rail passengers' priorities simulator. Transport Focus. 2014

Table 1 Passenger priorities for improvement: comparison of Virgin Trains, business long distance, leisure long distance and Great Britain

	Virgin		B/ness LD		Leisure LD		GB	
Passengers always able to get a seat on the train	568	1	530	1	468	1	367	2
Price of train tickets offers better value for money	477	2	505	2	458	2	494	1
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel	203	3	230	3	211	3	264	3
Free Wi-Fi available on the train	173	4	175	4	93	12	97	10
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays	133	5	121	6	158	4	163	5
More trains arrive on time than happens now	124	6	127	5	129	6	178	4
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to high standard	118	7	107	9	118	8	93	11
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey	110	8	115	8	113	9	161	6
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train	110	9	107	10	127	7	89	14
Accurate and timely information available at stations	109	10	99	11	133	5	132	8
Journey time is reduced	99	11	120	7	88	14	105	9
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now	95	12	97	12	99	11	136	7
Seating area on train is very comfortable	86	13	83	13	79	15	59	17
Accurate and timely information provided on trains	74	14	69	15	91	13	92	12
Connections with other train services are always good	71	15	70	14	101	10	84	15
Less disruption due to engineering works	66	16	68	16	67	17	90	13
Good connections with other public transport at stations	49	17	49	18	75	16	62	16
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude	48	18	44	20	56	19	47	18
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude	45	19	41	22	55	20	46	19
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage	40	20	43	21	57	18	37	23
There is always space in the station car park	40	21	48	19	20	28	27	26
New ticket formats available	40	22	59	17	47	21	45	20
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard	38	23	35	23	44	22	36	24
Improved personal security on the train	36	24	26	25	41	23	41	21
Free Wi-Fi available at the station	35	25	35	24	25	26	24	27
Improved personal security at the station	34	26	26	26	39	24	38	22
More staff available at stations to help passengers	26	27	22	27	33	25	29	25
More staff available on trains to help passengers	18	28	16	29	23	27	20	28
Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket	17	29	17	28	19	29	20	29
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free	11	30	12	30	19	30	15	30
Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station	5	31	6	31	13	31	10	31
Sample size	107		257		588		3559	

Figure 1 Virgin Trains passengers' priorities for improvement – relative importance



3.2 NRPS and drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

The National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), together with an analysis of the drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, is a comprehensive source of information about passenger perceptions of the current franchise. It can also be broken down to show variations across the six 'building block' groupings of rail services on the ICWC[3].

Evidence from the NRPS reinforces the importance of punctuality and reliability as one of the highest priorities identified for the franchise.

[3] Appendix 1 provides definitions of the NRPS building blocks and the abbreviations used in tables throughout this document

Tables detailing the NRPS headline factor scores for Virgin Trains and the six component building blocks are provided in Appendix 2. These include a comparison of scores with the sector or typology average and the typology best in class.

3.2.1 Drivers of satisfaction

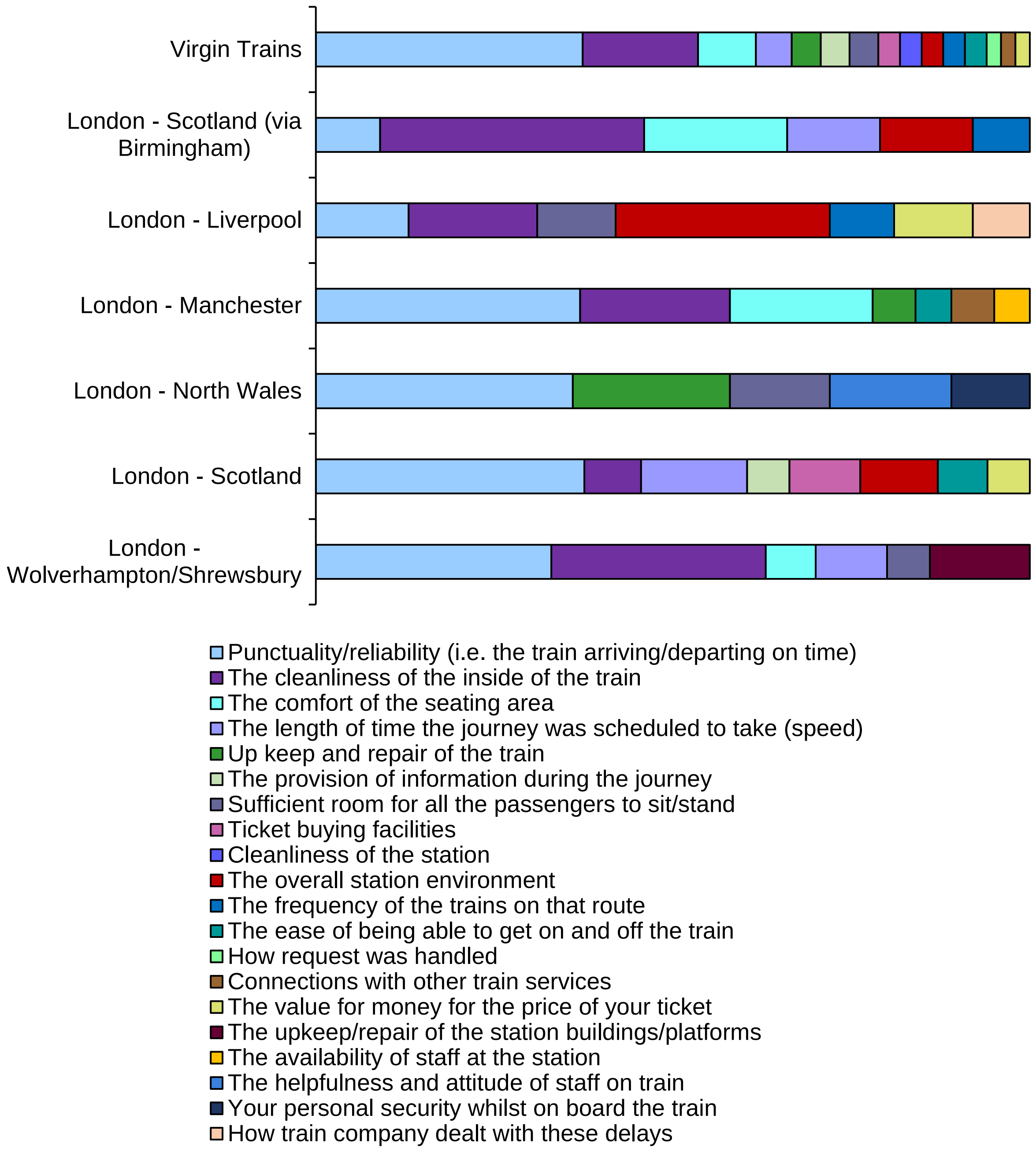
Figure 2 shows the importance of punctuality and reliability as a driver of satisfaction for Virgin Trains overall at 37 per cent. It has a similar importance on four of the six routes – Manchester, North Wales, Scotland and Wolverhampton/Shrewsbury. It features to a lesser extent on the Scotland via Birmingham route and the Liverpool route at 9 and 13 per cent respectively.

The most significant driver on the Scotland via Birmingham route is the cleanliness of the inside of the train at 37 per cent. This is also an important factor on several other routes and is second highest for Virgin Trains overall.

The overall station environment is particularly significant on the Liverpool route at 30 per cent. For North Wales, upkeep and repair of the train is important at 22 per cent.

Other important factors for the operator overall are the comfort of the seating area, which features strongly on the Scotland via Birmingham and Manchester routes and the speed of the journey, which is notable on Wolverhampton/Shrewsbury and both Scotland routes. Sufficient room for the passengers to sit/stand features on both the Liverpool and North Wales routes.

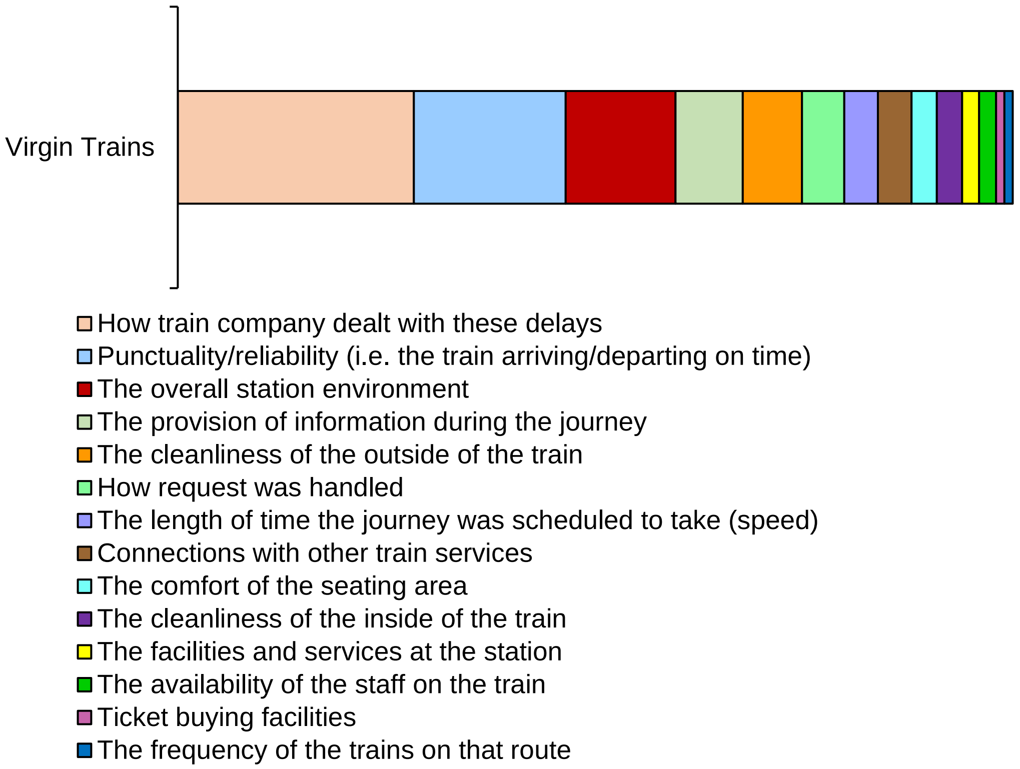
Figure 2 - Drivers of satisfaction, NRPS Autumn 2015/Spring 2016: Virgin Trains and building blocks



3.2.2 Drivers of dissatisfaction

An analysis of the factors that drive passenger dissatisfaction also echoes the importance of key factors to passengers (Figure 3). The most significant driver of dissatisfaction is how well the train company dealt with delays at 28 per cent. Where delays are not dealt with well, passengers will be dissatisfied. Punctuality and reliability is the second highest driver of dissatisfaction at 18 per cent. This is followed by the overall station environment at 13 per cent.

Figure 3 - Drivers of dissatisfaction, NRPS Autumn 2015/Spring 2016: Virgin Trains

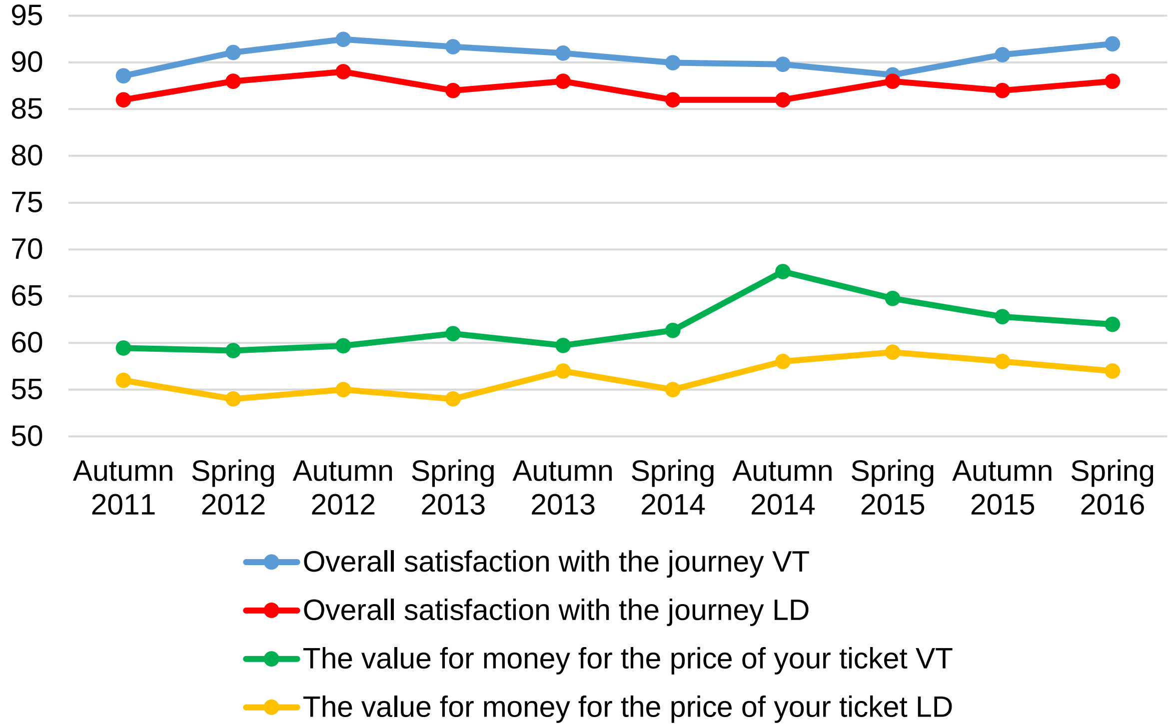


3.2.3 Satisfaction with value for money and the overall journey

A comparison between Virgin Trains and the Long Distance sector shows Virgin to have had generally higher overall satisfaction over several years (Figure 4). The most recent results from Spring 2016 NRPS show Virgin achieving 92 per cent compared to a sector average of 88 per cent.

Scores for satisfaction with value for money are considerably lower for both Virgin Trains and the sector. However, Virgin consistently scores above the Long Distance sector average, with Spring 2016 NRPS scores of 62 and 57 per cent respectively.

Figure 4 – Virgin Trains and Long Distance sector trends for value for money and satisfaction with overall journey, NRPS



3.3 Qualitative research into passengers' experiences and aspirations for the future

In September 2015, as part of the preparatory work for this franchise competition, Transport Focus undertook qualitative research, on behalf of the DfT, to understand passengers' current experiences and their aspirations for the future of the franchise[4].

The findings indicate that the current experience is largely a positive one for the majority of passengers. ICWC holds up well in comparison to both other modes of transport and other rail journeys. It is seen as generally performing well against alternatives in a range of areas including value for money, journey experience, and reliability and punctuality.

Passengers want to see these good points maintained at the least, if not improved. Nonetheless, there are some key areas identified as requiring improvement and worthy of a particular focus within the next franchise:

- a fare structure that is transparent and easy to understand
- a simple, seamless ticketing process
- on-board enhancements to luggage storage, Wi-Fi and toilets
- increased staff visibility and a proactive approach to customer service
- overcrowding of concourse and train boarding issues at Euston Station

[4] InterCity West Coast Rail – what passengers want. Transport Focus. 2016

- customer recognition and reward.

The findings in a number of important areas are detailed below.

Fares and ticketing
Passengers who can be flexible about when they travel are often able to find a low-cost fare which they feel offers value for money. Where there is a choice between different modes of travel ICWC is thought to compare well against those alternatives. Passengers who have no choice, either over the time or mode of travel, are the least satisfied with value for money.

Many passengers struggle to fully understand the fare structure and pricing. Significant differences in cost between similar journeys seem illogical. This means that passengers aren't always confident that they're managing to find the best ticket available for their journey.

While people appreciate and take advantage of the ease of booking online this can still be undermined by the ticket issuing and checking processes, which are viewed as slow and 'clunky'. Passengers want a seamless ticketing experience from planning their journey right through to arriving at their destination.

Stations
Although ICWC manages a relatively small number of stations, passengers are still influenced by their experience at these entry, interchange and exit points of the rail network, regardless of which operator manages them. Investment and resulting improvements at larger stations are acknowledged and appreciated. However, some of the smaller stations are considered to feel neglected and in need of considerable improvement.

Euston is considered to have particular problems with crowd management. The 'scrum' on the concourse as everyone watches the departure boards, the short time between platform announcement and departure, and the time-consuming pre-boarding ticket checks are all felt to contribute. Passengers describe the experience as stressful and unpleasant. Smarter ticketing, better station design and more intelligent scheduling are considered priorities to improve the situation at Euston.

On-board experience
Three areas of the on-board experience were consistently raised as requiring particular attention: luggage, toilets and Wi-Fi.

Space for luggage is considered to be limited, with overhead racks often too small. The necessity to store larger bags in the racks at the end or middle of the carriage is often a significant cause for concern. Passengers do not want to be parted from their personal belongings and this creates anxiety.

The majority of passengers have a basic expectation that good-quality, free Wi-Fi should be provided. The current quality of the Wi-Fi service is seen as variable and unreliable, by both standard class passengers who pay for Wi-Fi and those receiving the complimentary service in first class. Negative comparisons are made against retail, hospitality and other transport environments where even a small, inexpensive purchase often entitles you to free Wi-Fi.

Toilets, and in particular their cleanliness, are a concern for passengers. People feel that toilets start off clean but deteriorate during the journey and a lack of on-board cleaning means they can be in a poor state later on. Unpleasant smells in toilets and corridors are a source of complaint. Although some passengers like the spacious toilets with electronically closing doors, the mechanism to open and close these can be confusing and is a source of anxiety for some.

Customer service and staff

Passengers feel that staff play a key role in delivering a truly enhanced service. This underpins all aspects of the ICWC experience and is an area that could be further improved. They believe that staff need to embody and personify a wider brand commitment to the customer through taking ownership, being proactive and being empowered.

Station staff are considered to be helpful when approached. However, they are not sufficiently visible and proactive. There can be confusion over which staff do what. There is a need for staff at stations to be more obviously ready to help and for it to be clear that they are there to provide customer service.

Staff on trains are viewed as friendly, helpful and approachable. They are generally thought to be better than station staff. However, increased visibility, especially on later/quieter services is desired and would provide reassurance. There is a concern among some passengers that it would be difficult to summon staff to help if it was required.

Loyalty

In retail, and in other travel environments such as airlines, customer reward programmes are now the norm. Passengers feel that rail is lagging behind and want to see their loyalty rewarded. The key priorities are to have an inclusive, individually tailored offer with something for everyone, and which delivers something of genuine benefit to people. There is low awareness of any existing schemes.

This chimes with findings of our 2014 research exploring passengers' relationship with the rail industry[5]. This found that most passengers had low 'trust in relationship' with their train operator (although Virgin Trains was second from top). It also found that once a reliable service is established as a foundation, it is possible to create higher levels of trust through building closer relationships with customers. Loyalty

[5] Passengers' relationship with the rail industry. Transport Focus. 2014

schemes present an opportunity for the operator to get to know their customer better and offer them the personalised service they desire.

3.4 Recommendation - top level priorities for the franchise

Analysis of the passenger priorities for improvement, drivers of satisfaction/ dissatisfaction and the feedback from the passenger focus groups highlights a number of factors that should be top level priorities for the next ICWC.

The primary requirements are for an absolute focus on the fundamentals to deliver improvements to:

- value for money – encompassing the important service elements which drive this as well as the ticket price
- punctuality and reliability – specifically as this affects passengers at all stages of the train journey, not simply the timing of the train at its destination
- capacity – considering service frequencies and train layouts, optimising the availability of carriages and classification (as first or standard) appropriate to demand, as well as how fares incentives might make a contribution to alleviating pressures
- minimise and effectively manage disruptions – with planning and contingency arrangements placing passenger interests to the fore
- information – for all stages of the journey but especially during delays and disruption.

Alongside this, there must also be improvements to other elements of the journey experience including:

- seamless ticketing – which allows passengers to select and easily obtain the best and most appropriate fare for their journey delivered through the medium of their choice
- improvements on-board – with particular emphasis on the cleanliness and maintenance of the inside of the train and on-board toilets, layouts that facilitate luggage storage and passenger comfort and with high quality connectivity to facilitate access to information and enable a range of activities during the journey
- enhanced station environments – that create easily navigable spaces providing the facilities and comfort that passengers value
- proactive and helpful staff available to provide information, reassurance and assistance to passengers.

The next franchise operator also needs to embed a genuinely customer-service focused culture at all levels and provide a personalised, rewarding passenger experience.

These points, and other elements that require consideration in the specification and bidders' proposals, are developed in the remainder of this document and the accompanying compendium which provides enhanced details of key topics and our policy perspective on wider issues related to franchising.

4. Response to consultation questions

Question 1 – Improvements for passengers
Q1: We have listed below examples of areas identified that customers would most like improved on their ICWC journey and would ask you to rank your top five. It would help us analyse this information if you could explain why you think this area warrants/needs improvement, if it relates to a particular station or train service, and what you think the new train operator could do to help.

- **Availability of seating at train stations**
- **Getting a seat on trains**
- **Car parking facilities at train stations**
- **Customer recognition and reward (e.g. loyalty schemes)**
- **Increased staff visibility (at train stations or on trains)**
- **A more proactive approach to customer service at train stations**
- **Luggage space on trains**
- **Overall satisfaction with the station and their cleanliness**
- **Getting between the train and station concourse**
- **Toilet facilities on train**
- **Being kept informed about delays**
- **Access to catering and refreshments on board**

If there are other areas for improvement not included in the above table, please explain what these areas are and why you think this area could be improved?

Priorities for improvement

Our 2014 research gave a clear picture of passengers' priorities for improvement which we explore in detail in section 3.1 of this response[6]. Getting a seat on the train is the top priority for improvement for Virgin Trains passengers, while the closely related issue of sufficiently frequent trains is third highest. Value for money is the second highest priority and we know that this can be influenced by improvements to the quality of a range of factors across the journey. Free Wi-Fi available on the train is the fourth highest priority for improvement. Accurate information especially during disruption, a punctual and reliable service and cleanliness are other significant priorities.

The focus group research described in section 3.3 highlights key areas that passengers think require particular focus in the next franchise:

- a fare structure that is transparent and easy to understand
- a simple, seamless ticketing process
- on-board enhancements to luggage storage, Wi-Fi and toilets
- increased staff visibility and a proactive approach to customer service
- overcrowding of concourse and train boarding issues at Euston Station

[6] Rail passengers' priorities for improvement. Transport Focus. 2014

- customer recognition and reward.

Analysis of NRPS drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction offers further insight into the factors that matter most to passengers. Punctuality and reliability, how the train company deals with delays, cleanliness of the inside of the train, comfort of the seating area and length of the journey are all notable drivers.

As the research implies many different features combine to create the overall journey experience for the passenger. These individual aspects cannot be managed in isolation but should be considered together to create an improved fundamental offer, focused on delivering increased passenger satisfaction across all aspects of the journey.

Question 2 – Information
Q2: What type/method of communication do you find most effective to:
a. Enable you to plan your end to end train journey?
b. Be informed in advance about known disruptions such as planned engineering works?
c. Be informed during unplanned disruptions both before you travel and during the journey?

This could include, but is not limited to, talking to customer services, notices at stations, leaflets, voice announcements, information on websites or social media.
Where possible please provide reasons for your answers.

Journey planning information

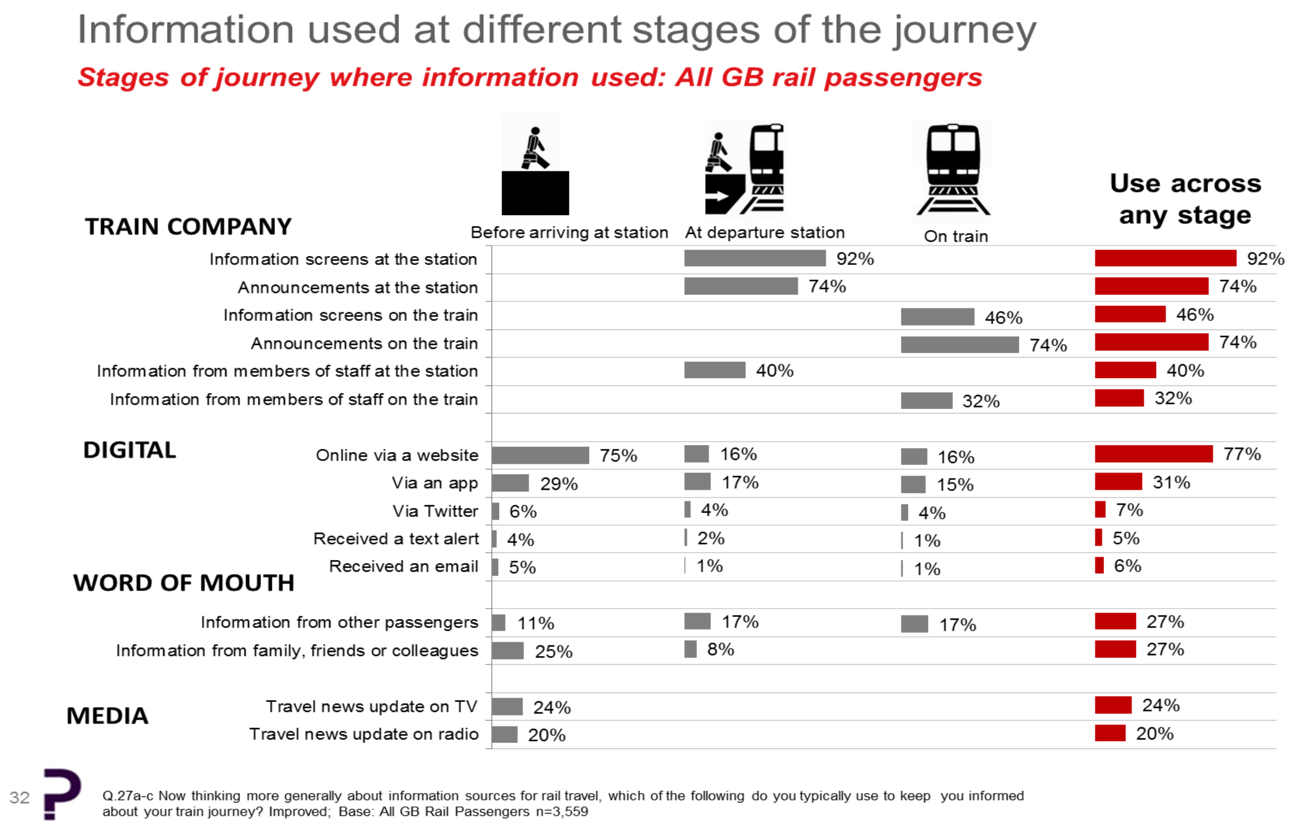
Passengers planning their journey will have different requirements depending on their individual situation and preferences. Pre-journey information should therefore be available through a variety of channels. We asked passengers which sources of information they typically use to keep informed about their journey[7]. Figure 5 shows the different sources of information used at different stages of the journey. It is clear that websites are the first place many passengers visit when planning a journey or before they set off for the station.

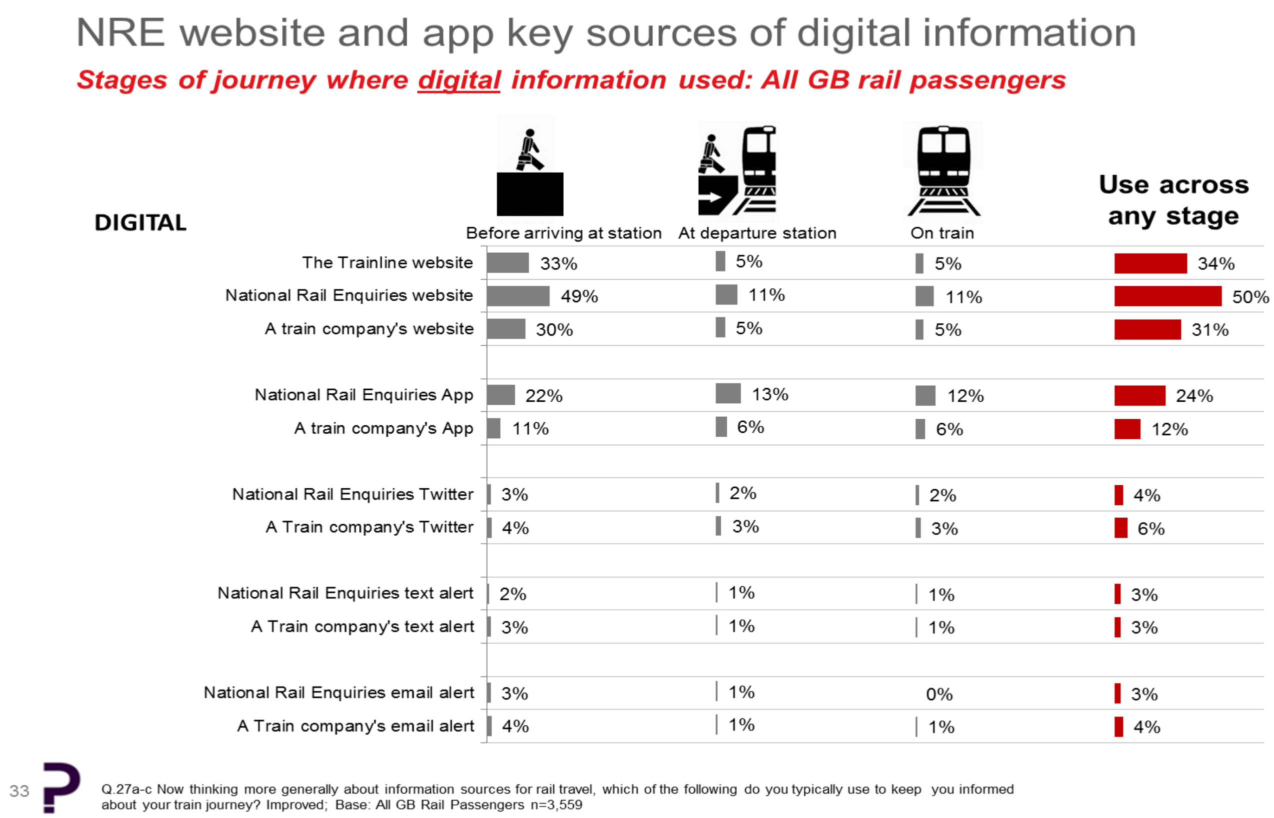
At both the station and on the train, information screens, announcements and speaking to staff are the most commonly used channels. Websites, apps and information from other passengers are also important sources of information at the station and on the train.

We cover issues related to journey planning in more detail in section 3.1 of the accompanying franchise compendium.

[7] Rail passengers' priorities for improvement. Transport Focus. 2014

Figure 5 Information used at different journey stages





Information during disruption

The provision of high quality and effective passenger information during disruption is vitally important, whether this relates to either planned or unplanned situations. However, it is intrinsically linked to the broader topic of managing or, better still, minimising the disruption that blights far too many passenger experiences.

Our work on passenger priorities shows that keeping passengers informed when there is disruption is one of the top five priorities for improvement. The impact of not doing so can be seen in our work on passenger satisfaction where 'how well the operator dealt with delays' is the highest driver of overall dissatisfaction with the journey amongst Virgin Trains passengers. Although Virgin performs better than the Long Distance sector average on this factor (60 per cent satisfaction compared to 54 per cent) there is still considerable room for improvement. Table 2 also shows the difference in levels of satisfaction between West Coast building blocks, with Scotland via Birmingham performing best at 65 per cent and Liverpool the worst at 54 per cent.

Table 2 How well train company dealt with delays, NRPS Autumn2015/Spring 2016 combined, percentage satisfied: Long Distance sector, Virgin Trains and building blocks

LD	VT	Scot via B'ham	Liv	Man	North Wales	Scot	Wolv
54	60	65	54	56	59	61	57

Redevelopment of Euston Station

Engineering works are an inevitable requirement of the need to maintain the infrastructure that supports rail operations and allow for improvements for the future. As such, the planning, scheduling and management of this disruption is part and parcel of regular business. There should be structured procedures for managing this activity that are regularly reviewed, then adapted and refined in the light of experience.

In the case of the West Coast franchise, however, the scheduled redevelopment of Euston station which lies ahead is of such a major scale that specific detailed plans will be required to address the challenges which these works will present. The specification for the franchise should look particularly at bidders' competencies and preparation for this work.

Sections 3.5.6, 3.5.7, 3.5.8 and 3.5.9 in the accompanying compendium discuss in some detail the management of disruption, passenger needs and how these challenges should be addressed within the specification and bidders proposals.

Question 3 and 4 – Ensuring train services meet needs
Q3: Are there are any direct journeys currently provided by ICWC that you would want to see protected at a minimum level (e.g. 1 train every 2 hours)?

Please say where would this be and your reasons why where possible.

Q4: Please rank the options below to indicate your priority for potential changes you would like to see to ICWC train services. Please say where would this be and your reasons why where possible

- **Speed up service for long-distance passengers for example by changing stops at low-use stations.**
- **Introduce new stops to provide services to destinations not currently directly served by the ICWC franchise.**
- **Swap an existing stop for another to increase destinations not currently directly served by the ICWC franchise.**
- **Adjust the level of service (e.g. evening, weekend) to better match demand.**
- **Better support the economic development of the towns and cities served by the franchise for example by increasing/reducing services for seasonal travel (e.g. tourism, holidays) or for a major event (e.g. concert or sporting event).**
- **Improve/connections with other trains services as part of longer–distance journeys.**
- **Holding trains at stations for connecting trains**

Train service specification

Individual passengers and other stakeholders are best placed to give their views on current direct journeys where they would want to see minimum levels of service protected and on their priorities for changes to, or introduction of, West Coast services. Inevitably, as with all timetable considerations this will depend on individual needs. However, we are able to draw on evidence to comment on some overarching themes relevant to the network as a whole.

'Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel' is the third highest priority for improvement for West Coast passengers. 'Journey time is reduced' and 'connections with other train services are always good' rank 11th and 15th respectively, both below the importance assigned to a notional 'average' factor (although only by one point in the case of journey time).

NRPS shows some variation with satisfaction across the network for frequency, journey length and connections with other train services (Table 3). It is notable that the two building blocks for services to and from Scotland score lower than others for journey time. This factor is also a higher driver of satisfaction for these routes, ranking second at 15 per cent for Scotland and third at 13 per cent for Scotland via Birmingham. For Wolverhampton this is the fourth highest driver of satisfaction at 10 per cent. The Scottish routes also score lower for connections with other train services.

Table 3 NRPS Spring 2016, percentage satisfied: Long Distance, Virgin Trains and building blocks

Factor	LD	VT	Scot via B'ham	Liv	Man	North Wales	Scot	Wolv
The frequency of trains on that route	85	90	86	84	97	92	84	92
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	88	90	83	96	95	94	85	89
Connections with other train services	80	85	79	82	90	92	74	90

Given the profile of West Coast passengers, which includes around two thirds leisure travellers, the issue of evening and weekend provision to match demand will also be important.

Whatever the plans for the train service it is essential that the timetable proposals are subject to proper consultation. We address these subjects in more detail in the sections on train service specification (3.5.3), capacity (3.5.4) and arrival and interchange (3.6) in the accompanying franchise compendium.

Question 5 – Balancing long distance capacity with short distance choice
Q5: Based on your journey, please could you state whether you consider any priority should be placed on either:
• Protecting long distance capacity on trains; or
• Providing maximum choice of operator over short distance journeys.

Where possible, please provide reasons for your answer.

Capacity

Passengers regard provision of capacity as a fundamental requirement of the rail service, both in terms of sufficient seating and standing room, and appropriate frequency of service. It is vital that the next franchise makes adequate provision for ongoing capacity increases to accommodate the anticipated growth in passenger demand.

Our research among Virgin Trains passengers highlighted congestion as an issue[8].

[8] InterCity West Coast Rail – what passengers want. Transport Focus. 2016

While most passengers in this study (many of whom were travelling on advance tickets with associated seat reservations) reported only a few instances of themselves not having a seat for their journey, most had experienced congested trains with other people having to stand. This was noted as being a problem for passengers joining at stations on route e.g. Birmingham or south of Glasgow and also when particular events, such as football matches, were taking place. In addition, some London commuters reported more regular occurrences of congestion and of themselves having to stand for some or all of their journey.

Insufficient seating is seen as largely unacceptable, with concerns expressed over safety as well as comfort and a feeling that such overcrowding illustrates a lack of care on the part of the train company.

> *"I've seen someone stand from Manchester to Edinburgh all the way and she sat on her bag in the toilet and she's paid the same price as we had, but just wasn't quick enough to get a seat." (Manchester, Business)*

> *"Tickets are not cheap no matter how you look at them and you're paying for the service. If you're paying for the service to travel two and a half hours you've got to have a seat." (Manchester, Leisure)*

For Virgin Trains 'passengers always able to get a seat on the train' is the top priority for improvement. It is over five and a half times more important than the average factor, highlighting the significance of providing adequate capacity on the ICWC.

Satisfaction with 'sufficient room to sit and stand' is higher for Virgin Trains overall than the Long Distance sector average, at 81 per cent compared to 73 per cent. However, there are significant variations across the building blocks with satisfaction at its lowest on the Scotland via Birmingham route at 72 per cent (Table 4). There are also variations dependent on day of travel and journey purpose. Satisfaction is higher on a Saturday than during the week, and at its lowest on Sunday. Commuters are notably less satisfied than business or leisure travellers.

Table 4 Sufficient room to sit/stand, NRPS Spring 2016, percentage satisfied: Virgin Trains, building blocks and commuter/business/leisure

VT	Scot via B'ham	Liv	Man	North Wales
81	72	82	86	77
Scot	**Wolv**	**Commuter**	**Business**	**Leisure**
85	79	72	81	82

Our data provides a relatively high-level picture of passenger experience and aspirations. Views on the relative priority between long distance capacity and short distance choice can be expected to reflect individual needs and there are obviously pros and cons to each option. Service users are best placed to respond to the consultation with views on their preferences.

Nevertheless, there are some fundamental points to be considered. ICWC services form part of the overall provision on the railway. Should long distance capacity be prioritised then there will be implications for other operators and the passengers using their services. It would be important to establish whether, and what, capacity may be available to accommodate displaced demand. The impact on the short-distance passenger in terms of services available at required times, the length of the journey, comfort factors etc. must also be borne in mind.

On the other hand, the needs of long distance passengers who may have few, if any, alternative journey options must also be considered.

The service specifications and service options developed by bidders for the franchise must demonstrate full consideration of the capacity implications of all proposals. One particular challenge for ICWC, as with other operators using Euston, will be the impact of the reduction of approach paths to Euston during the lengthy station redevelopment programme. The expected reduction to Sunday operations, a day on which travel is popular with many passengers, will also require comprehensive mitigations to be put in place.

Ultimately, the timetable must be constructed to provide optimal provision for the range of passenger needs, with due consideration to the opportunities within the overall network. Should changes be deemed appropriate then, as with all potential timetable changes, wide-spread and well-publicised consultation must take place on specific proposals.

We address making better use of capacity and the related issues of train service specification and rolling stock configuration in sections 3.5.4, 3.5.3 and 3.5.2 of the accompanying franchise compendium.

Question 6 - Encouraging travel and catering for growth
Q6: What methods do you think could enable more people to travel and improve the railway's ability to cater for passenger growth?

Where possible, please provide reasons for your answer.

Cost and convenience

The findings from a number of studies into the views of infrequent or non-users of trains identify the generic issues that influence decisions regarding rail travel.

The DfT published an update to its Door to Door Strategy and identified four core areas for improvement that would make it easier and more convenient for people to make their whole journey by sustainable transport modes[9]:

[9] Door to door action plan. Department for Transport. 2014

- improving the quality and availability of information
- making smart and integrated ticketing the norm
- improving connections at every stage of the journey
- enhancing transport facilities.

A Transport Focus review of various research studies identifies the key barriers to use of the train[10]:

- perceived cost of the ticket
- perceived hassle of going by train
- assumption that the door to door journey (except for long distance journeys) would be longer
- concerns about punctuality and reliability, particularly if the journey involves a change of train.

Those who are not in the habit of using trains frequently tend to regard the need to plan journeys as a major disincentive and the fact that this is not a feature of many car journeys tends to remove much of the stress from travelling by this mode.

When put to the test most of the above perceptions can be challenged, as evidenced by Transport Focus research looking at how more people could be attracted to use the railway[11]. Passengers who were encouraged to give rail a try as part of the research found that the train was more reliable than envisaged, more comfortable and that, in some instances, their perceptions of high cost could be challenged.

Research carried out in the East Anglia area also identified various features that may help to encourage consideration of rail among non- and lapsed users, but concluded that the main challenge is likely to be entrenched mind-sets rather than network specific issues[12].

The features identified to encourage consideration of rail are:

- promote website planning tools
- 'try it for a day' free rail ticket
- ongoing walk-up deals
- integrated end-to-end journey packages
- staff presence – reassurance that there will be a visible/helpful staff presence at all times
- promotion of generic rail benefits.

> *"It wouldn't be just about staff presence it would be about knowing that their role is to intervene and keep you safe"* (Cambridge group, Non/Lapsed User)

[10] Unpublished but available on request
[11] Integrated Transport – perception and reality. Transport Focus. 2010
[12] Rail passengers' experiences and expectations of the East Anglia franchise. Transport Focus. 2015

Performance and capacity

The performance and reliability of the railway, and its comparison to other modes, also plays an influential role. If non-users are to be encouraged to make the shift from their current choice then focus must be given to performance on key factors. This is also vital for existing users in order that they continue to make rail their mode of choice.

The capacity to accommodate passengers on West Coast trains may also influence peoples' willingness to travel. Many potential customers may have seen the periodic media stories about crowding on trains and decided that such situations are best avoided. It is also likely that there could be considerable supressed demand for travel at certain popular times. Difficulties in booking a seat or locating space for a group to sit together may be the final deterrent.

Over the lifetime of the franchise the operator must be required to work with Network Rail and within wider industry processes to develop proposals to further increase capacity to meet the expected rise in demand and ensure this information is available to inform future High Level Output Specification (HLOS) plans and investment cycles. This must also include development of proposals for effective use of the capacity that will be released on the West Coast Main Line once HS2 commences operations.

The accompanying franchise aspiration compendium addresses the topics of performance and capacity in more detail in sections 3.5.4 and 3.5.5.

Question 7 – Supporting the community

Q7: Based on your knowledge of your local area/station, how could the new ICWC train operator:

a. Improve rail services (including all the support functions it needs) in a way that respects and helps to maintain the environment?

b. Better support the economic growth of the areas it serves?

c. Improve its support and development of its workforce?

d. Play a greater role in supporting and improving the community it serves, the heritage of the railway and help develop their stations into hubs for the community?

e. Improve the services offered to reduce discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for people from protected groups?

Individual passengers and other stakeholders are best placed to provide specific input on supporting local areas and communities based on their experiences and knowledge of given locations.

More generally, it is important that the railway is accessible and available to all groups and is committed to supporting and developing the workforce.

Further relevant detail is available in the accompanying franchise compendium in sections on staffing, accessibility and equality, and local communities. The section on culture and customer service is also pertinent.

Question 8 – Station improvements
Q8: Please list, in priority order, the top five facilities you would like to see either improved or introduced at the station(s) served by the ICWC Franchise
a) you use; or
b) as a non-user would encourage you to use the rail network.
Please provide the name of the station(s) and why you think these improvements are needed.

Station facilities

Our research into passenger priorities asked passengers about their priorities for both provision of, and improvements to, station facilities[13]. Figures 6 and 7 below show the findings for Virgin Trains passengers. The findings for Great Britain at high, medium and low footfall stations are detailed in Appendix 3.

The highest priority for provision of station facilities for Virgin Trains passengers is free Wi-Fi at 26 per cent. This is followed by litter bins at 20 per cent and seating on platforms at 15 per cent. It is worth noting that priorities vary dependent on station size; in the Great Britain sample although free Wi-Fi is the highest priority overall, the provision of toilets is more important at low and medium footfall stations.

The highest priority for improvement of station facilities for Virgin Trains passengers is toilets at 40 per cent. This is followed by seating on platforms at 25 per cent, litter bins at 24 per cent and waiting rooms at 23 per cent. Again the national sample shows that priorities vary dependent on station size; seating on platforms is top priority for improvement across all station sizes with toilets the next highest priority for improvement at high footfall stations while shelter on platforms is the next highest priority at low and medium footfall stations.

These findings emphasise the importance of stations meeting passengers' basic needs for toilets and shelter. Being able to buy refreshments or convenience items also features prominently in the priorities for provision of facilities while an improvement in information is desired by many.

[13] Rail passengers' priorities for improvement. Transport Focus. 2014

Figure 6 Virgin Trains passengers - all stations – needs providing

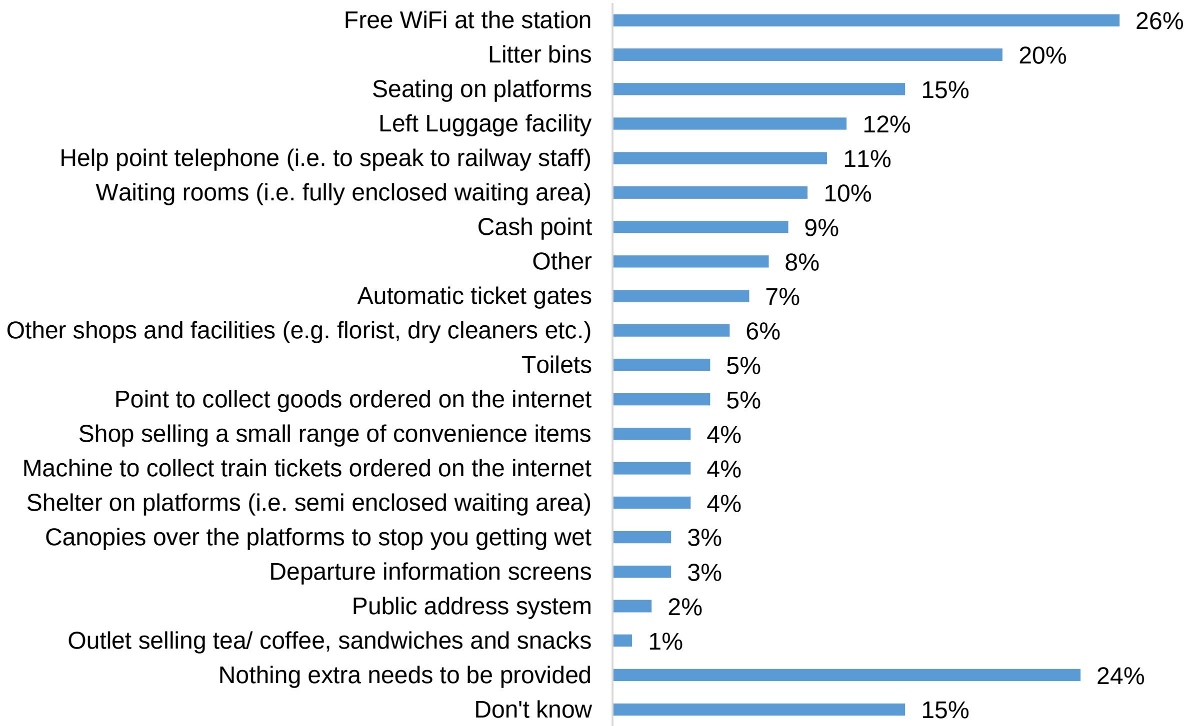
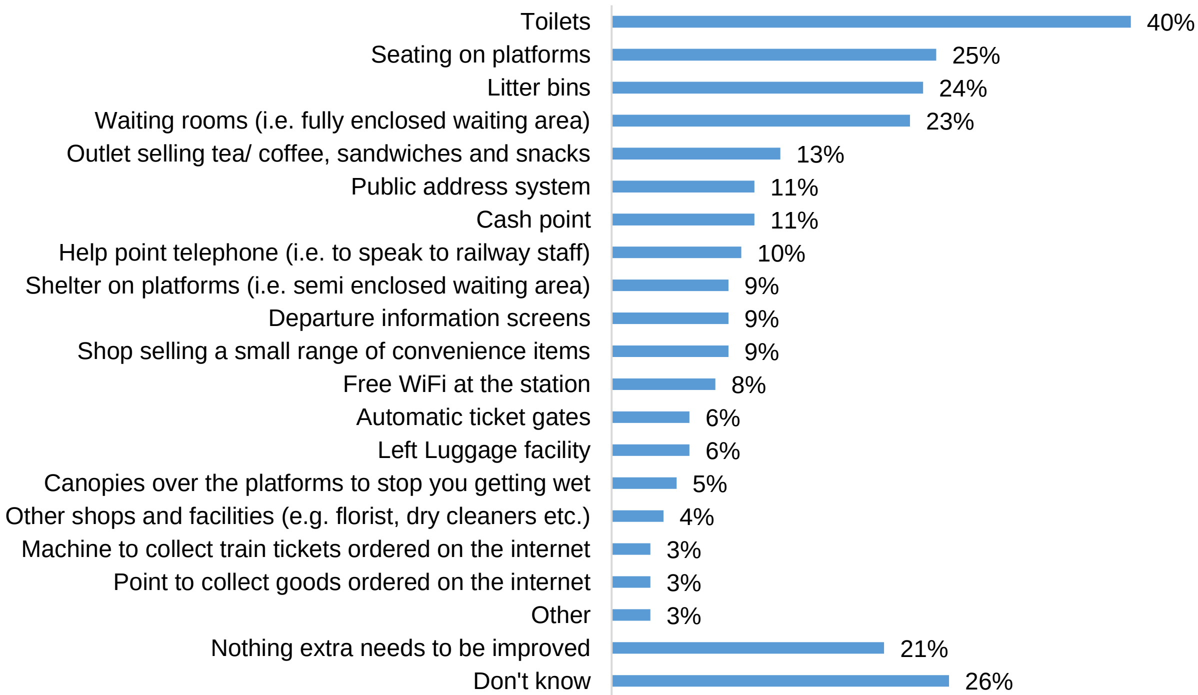


Figure 7 Virgin Trains passengers – all stations – needs improving



The importance of staffing and information

Transport Focus research on stations consistently demonstrates that, in addition to station facilities, there are two key factors that operators need to consider when thinking about how to improve passenger satisfaction at stations: information and staff.

The pressure on the industry to reduce costs inevitably places a focus on the overheads associated with staff. However, Transport Focus is concerned that the specification for ICWC and bidders do not overlook the very significant roles staff play and the value passengers attach to a visible staff presence, especially at stations[14].

Staff are seen as an important and trusted source of information for passengers. This role can encompass information about journey planning, cover wider issues relating to ticket retailing, where there remains considerable complexity about terms and conditions applicable to tickets, and, of course, sale of tickets that are unavailable from Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs)

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Passengers with assistance needs are particularly dependent on staff to deliver the help they require and to fulfil requests made through Passenger Assist.

Many station facilities and services are available only whilst staff are present. Feedback indicates significant concern about the lack of access to toilets and waiting rooms if staff are withdrawn from stations or hours are significantly reduced.

Passengers cite the lack of staff as a major reason for their feelings of concern over personal security and consistently identify a visible staff presence as being important to providing reassurance to those travelling on the railway. It is vital that those staff receive the appropriate training both in terms of managing the station environment and personal security within it, and customer service.

The industry needs to give serious consideration to how it can best deploy staff and make best use of the different types of complimentary policing available to it. Our publication, *Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railway,* sets out passengers' concerns in more detail[15]. The specification should include a requirement to set out how these issues will be addressed across the franchise.

It is important that staff are trained, managed and supported to deliver the highest possible levels of customer service. Expectations of customer service continue to rise as standards do across the range of passenger experience, both within and beyond the rail industry.

[14] Passenger attitudes towards rail staff. Transport Focus. 2016
[15] Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railway. Transport Focus. 2016

Station experience

Our research explored the current passenger experience at stations along the ICWC[16]. There was a positive response to recent investment at stations with passengers appreciating the better quality and wider choice of retail and food and drink outlets.

> *"It is nice that it's no longer just 'Pumpkin Café' and you can treat it a bit like a shopping centre, which can be quite pleasant if you have a bit of time on your hands." (London, Leisure)*

Passengers say that station toilets are not always clean and that they don't feel they should be charged to use them.

Staff at stations are generally considered to be helpful and knowledgeable. However, there is little sense of proactivity or of there being clearly identifiable customer service staff at stations who are 'primed and ready' to help. There is not a sense in stations that there are a sufficient number of staff – and staff with the right sort of customer service focussed attitude - to provide help and information to passengers when they need it.

> *"There's people just standing there just having a chat. I mean, there's literally no point in them being there. I've never had an absolutely terrible experience or a terrible encounter with one of them, but I don't really know why they're there."(Glasgow, Business)*

During disruption, it can sometimes seem that staff, while trying their best, are not always very much better informed than customers themselves.

> *"That's the most frustrating thing about it; I don't mind if I know why, but it was just an endless string of "We apologise for the delay. The train will start soon," or whatever it was, but I'd rather be given a reason; it, sort of, manages the expectation then of what's going on and how long it's going to take really." (Birmingham, Leisure)*

Euston Station is highlighted for having issues with overcrowding of the concourse and train boarding. Passengers want to see improvements to the way passenger boarding is managed to alleviate the unpleasant 'crush and rush' currently experienced.

> *"Always at Euston it's virtually the entire concourse all looking up waiting for the time to appear on the boards and then they flip, trains are ready, and it's a mass of people galloping downhill, gathering speed towards the barriers. It isn't very nice at all, especially for the ticket inspectors."(London, Leisure)*

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[16] InterCity West Coast Rail – what passengers want. Transport Focus. 2016

“I think one of the problems at London Euston is when they actually put the platform on the board and it is like a stampede, you've got five minutes to get on that train, and you've got to go down and you're forced down this little chute, and there's people there that are like ‘ticket, ticket’ and you're like ‘I've got five minutes and you're going to go without me.”(Manchester, Business)

The research also indicated that some stations are considered to feel neglected and in need of considerable improvement. Table 5 shows a comparison of NRPS satisfaction scores for station attributes for the long distance sector and Virgin Trains. Virgin Trains scores lower than the sector average across the majority of station factors, supporting the findings of the qualitative research.

Table 5 Station factors, NRPS Spring 2016, percentage satisfied: Long Distance and Virgin Trains

Factor	LD	VT
Overall satisfaction with the station	87	84
Ticket buying facilities	86	84
Provision of information about train times/platforms	88	89
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	80	73
Cleanliness of the station	84	78
The facilities and services at the station	72	69
The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff	84	83
Connections with other forms of public transport	78	81
Facilities for car parking at the station	57	61
The overall station environment	80	72
Your personal security whilst using the station	80	78
The availability of staff at the station	74	75
The provision of shelter facilities	76	74
Availability of seating	58	49
How request to station staff was handled	91	91
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	62	61
Facilities for bicycle parking at the station	68	65

Exploring below operator level to look at routes or stations shows that individual satisfaction scores may fall well below the average. DfT and bidders are recommended to look in detail at the NRPS database for Virgin Trains to explore areas where attention should be directed[17]. Appendix 2 shows a comparison of Virgin Trains against the sector, and of each building block against the comparable typology.

[17] Individual station data is available on request where there is sufficient sample size

Non-users

We know from our research that many of the key journey stress points can occur at the station. Buying or collecting tickets, obtaining information, navigating an unfamiliar station and making connections can all be a source of anxiety. It's important for all passengers that these stress points are reduced as much as possible. For non-users of rail convenience (along with cost) is main barrier to use. To encourage non-users of rail to use the rail network it is essential that the station experience is simple and convenient.

More detail on stations, including investment, information requirements and staffing is available in section 3.4 of the accompanying franchise compendium. We recommend that the specification requires bidders to develop proposals that ensure ICWC passengers can enjoy a high quality experience and environment at whichever stations they travel through, regardless of whether this is one of the few stations on the network that are operated by this specific franchisee.

Question 9 – Making the railway more accessible for all
Q9: Thinking of the journeys you make or have made on the ICWC, or a journey you could make by the ICWC but where you decide to use an alternative transport mode instead:
• what specific changes could be made to make the railway easier to access and therefore more attractive to use; and
• why do you think these changes would help?

Making the railway easier to access

When passengers decide what mode of transport to take they are swayed by three overwhelming factors: how convenient will the journey be, how much will it cost and how long will it take[18]. This applies to the whole door-to-door journey. Improving access to stations should therefore drive rail usage and provide some additional revenue.

Our research amongst Virgin Trains passengers highlighted getting to and from stations as an issue for some passengers[19]. Some felt that connections with other rail or public transport services are not always well-coordinated. Particular problems can be getting to the station for an early morning train (leaving some passengers with no option but to drive and pay for parking) or finding onward transport (other than an expensive taxi) from a late arriving train. In this context, the idea of some sort of 'ride sharing' scheme was suggested as a possible remedy if public transport services cannot be extended (e.g. minibuses that could serve key local destinations).

> *"One thing I find is quite annoying is, I live on the south side of Glasgow, but I can't get a local train, I can't go and get my local train in to Central to get the train down so you have to drive, park and sometimes that's just an added*

[18] Integrated transport – perception and reality. Transport Focus. 2010
[19] InterCity West Coast Rail – what passengers want. Transport Focus. 2016

hassle, whereas it would be easier if you could just get a train, but it's just because it's too early." (Glasgow, Business)

Table 6 shows satisfaction with a range of factors that impact how easy the railway is to access. Virgin Trains scores fairly well on 'connections with other train services'; the operator as a whole and each building block has satisfaction levels above the Long Distance sector average of 80 per cent.

However, other factors related to the door-to-door journey have lower levels of satisfaction. Scores for 'connections with other forms of public transport' range from 75 per cent (Scotland) to 84 per cent (Manchester). Satisfaction with 'facilities for car parking at the station' is much lower; the Long Distance sector average is 57 per cent while Virgin Trains overall is 59 per cent. Satisfaction with 'facilities for cycle parking at the station' is 69 per cent for the sector but only 61 per cent for Virgin Trains. This highlights both car and cycle parking as areas requiring some improvement in the next franchise.

Table 6 NRPS Autumn 2015/Spring 2016 combined, percentage satisfied: Long Distance, Virgin Trains and building blocks

Factor	LD	VT	Scot via B'ham	Liv	Man	North Wales	Scot	Wolv
Connections with other train services	80	84	81	85	87	87	81	87
Connections with other forms of public transport	78	80	77	82	84	80	75	80
Facilities for car parking at the station	57	59	56	54	59	63	55	64
Facilities for cycle parking at the station	69	61						

More detail on travelling to the station and arrival and interchange is available in sections 3.3 and 3.6 of the accompanying franchise compendium.

Question 10 - Ticketing
Q10: Considering the above, what do you think the future ICWC train operator could do to modernise and improve the ticketing experience for customers?

Please include your views on the elements or parts of service the train operator should consider when developing their ticketing and ticket retailing plans.

Ticketing

New franchises must make ticket purchase easier for passengers, many of whom are confused by the complexity of the fares system. There must be a wider range of ticket options, including smart tickets, and a range of methods for purchasing tickets.

Our research amongst Virgin Trains passengers found that ticketing is seen as needing significant improvement [20]. Key requirements in this area include:

- greater transparency on ticket pricing to help passengers understand how and why fares may differ so widely
- making the 'rules' simpler and clearer, such that passengers are able to make better informed choices about tickets and how to get the best fare for their journey.

In terms of the ticketing process, passengers want something that 'is much slicker' and many see the better use of technology as the way to deliver this. Ideally, passengers want a seamless online process, removing the time consuming and inconvenient practice of printing tickets at station machines and having them checked repeatedly. Ultimately, the desire is for ticketing that establishes the passenger's right to travel and contains all relevant information about the journey and the passenger and that can encompass purchase of other services (meals, onward travel etc.).

> *"I think with bookings stuff, the technology's set up for like e-tickets, every festival, everything's developing around you, just have your smartphone and you just scan it." (Manchester, Business)*

> *"Because on a flight you get a manifest so it tells you if there's anybody who's a vegetarian or suffers from allergies or anything like that. Maybe if the train staff had that then that would be a way for them to check the right person is in the right seat." (Birmingham, Commuter)*

> *"I think the app could do a lot more. It could tell you if you're running on time or not and maybe give an alarm if you're over a certain number of minutes delayed. It could tell you what the cab numbers are and restaurants and cafes nearest you when you arrive in your destination – useful stuff like that – just*

[20] InterCity West Coast Rail – what passengers want. Transport Focus. 2016

take it a bit further than looking up the times and buying a ticket." (Birmingham, Leisure)

There is considerable additional detail on the approach to, and development of, ticketing, ticketless travel, value for money and fares regulation available within sections 3.2 of the accompanying franchise compendium. In particular it will be important to develop a single-leg pricing structure and to ensure that TVMs provide clear details on ticket restrictions

Question 11 – Additional information in the franchise aspiration compendium
Q11: If there are any additional areas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been addressed in this consultation please explain them here.

Transport Focus has produced an accompanying franchise compendium which sets out research evidence and our derived policy positions on a range of topics relevant to the refranchise of ICWC. We have structured that document around the passenger journey, addressing topics in a sequential basis, together with some high-level, overarching themes. For each stage of the journey we set out major findings from our extensive research base and include references to key publications.

There is a wealth of detail within the compendium and the content is intended to be read alongside this submission and regarded as an integral element of our consultation response.

5. Further information

For further information about this response to the InterCity West Coast franchise consultation please contact:
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Issues Manager - Franchising
sharon.hedges@transportfocus.org.uk

Further details of all our publications exploring passenger perspectives on a range of issues can be found on the Transport Focus website (www.transportfocus.org.uk).
For specific information about franchising please see:
http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/key-issues/franchising/

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 NRPS building block definitions (abbreviation)

London – Birmingham – Scotland (Scot via B'ham)
Journeys on London - Birmingham – Scotland services

London – Liverpool (Liv)
Journeys on London – Liverpool services

London – Manchester (Man)
Journeys on London – Manchester services

London – North Wales (North Wales)
Journeys on London – Holyhead/North Wales services

London – Scotland (Scot)
Journeys on London – Glasgow/Scotland services

London – Wolverhampton (Wolv)
Journeys on London – Wolverhampton services

Note: throughout this report we principally reference the most recent NRPS data from Spring 2016. However, for factors with smaller sample sizes we reference combined data from Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016 to improve the robustness of the results.

Appendix 2 NRPS satisfaction scores[21]

A2.1 NRPS Spring 2016: percentage satisfied, Virgin Trains compared to Long Distance sector

Factor	TOC	Sector	TOC Index[22]
Overall satisfaction with your journey	92	88	105%
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	84	87	97%
Ticket buying facilities	84	86	98%
Provision of information about train times/platforms	89	88	101%
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	73	80	90%
Cleanliness	78	84	93%
The facilities and services	69	72	96%
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	83	84	99%
Connections with other forms of public transport	81	78	104%
Facilities for car parking	61	57	107%
Overall environment	72	80	91%
Your personal security whilst using the station	78	80	98%
The availability of staff	75	74	101%
The provision of shelter facilities	74	76	96%
Availability of seating	49	58	85%
How request to station staff was handled	91	91	100%
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	61	62	98%
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	90	85	106%
The frequency of the trains on that route	90	85	106%
Punctuality/reliability	87	84	104%
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	90	88	102%
Connections with other train services	85	80	106%
The value for money of the price of your ticket	62	57	109%
Cleanliness of the train	89	82	109%
Upkeep and repair of the train	88	80	110%
The provision of information during the journey	84	78	107%
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	81	81	99%
The space for luggage	63	60	105%
The toilet facilities	62	52	120%
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	81	73	110%
The comfort of the seating area	83	79	106%
The ease of being able to get on and off	89	84	106%
Your personal security on board	89	87	102%
The cleanliness of the inside	89	83	108%
The cleanliness of the outside	84	78	109%
The availability of staff	69	68	101%
How well train company deals with delays	58	54	107%

TOC score is 5% or more lower than sector average
TOC score is 5% or more higher than sector average

[21] In Appendix 2 * indicates building block scores where the sample size is below 50

[22] TOC Index shows performance of TOC against the sector as a percentage (e.g. if TOC score is equal to sector score the TOC Index would be 100%. If it is 102% the performance is better)

A2.2 NRPS Spring 2016: percentage satisfied, London-Liverpool, London-Manchester, London-North Wales, London-Wolverhampton/Shrewsbury, compared to Highspeed typology average and best in class

Factor	Liv	Man	N. Wales	Scot	Wolv /Shrews	HS average	HS best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	90	94	89	87	92	88	94
Station factors							
Overall satisfaction with the station	79	87	81	85	81	83	90
Ticket buying facilities	*	82	*	*	84	81	90
Provision of information about train times/platforms	86	90	94	91	88	88	94
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	71	67	74	81	72	75	92
Cleanliness	70	75	80	85	78	80	93
The facilities and services	66	65	58	75	70	67	83
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	79	88	86	84	79	81	88
Connections with other forms of public transport	82	85	82	75	82	80	89
Overall environment	71	72	58	76	74	74	87
Your personal security whilst using	83	76	74	79	80	78	83
The availability of staff	60	81	70	72	73	72	81
The provision of shelter facilities	74	80	65	77	70	69	80
Availability of seating	38	48	33	55	47	50	57
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	61	58	57	60	63	56	74
Train factors							
Overall satisfaction with the train	86	94	89	93	89	87	94
The frequency of the trains on that route	84	97	92	84	92	86	97
Punctuality/reliability	87	92	92	76	91	83	92
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	96	95	94	85	89	86	96
Connections with other train services	82	90	92	74	90	80	92
The value for money for the price of your ticket	61	60	63	60	66	49	66
Cleanliness of the train	88	92	86	85	87	87	92
Upkeep and repair of the train	84	92	88	89	87	87	93
The provision of information during the journey	81	85	79	86	84	78	86
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	85	86	82	81	73	78	87
The space for luggage	69	70	45	60	65	66	70
The toilet facilities	55	61	*	72	59	57	72
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	82	86	77	85	79	78	87
The comfort of the seating area	81	89	83	84	81	83	89
The ease of being able to get on and off	94	94	87	90	84	85	94
Your personal security whilst on board	93	90	90	91	86	87	93
The cleanliness of the inside	89	91	88	91	87	88	93
The cleanliness of the outside	84	85	75	90	84	81	90
The availability of staff	68	72	69	69	61	62	75

Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average

A2.3 NRPS Spring 2015: percentage satisfied, London-Scotland (via Birmingham), compared to Long Distance typology average and best in class

Factor	London - Scotland (via Birmingham)	Long Distance average	Long Distance best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	92	87	96
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	85	87	95
Ticket buying facilities	*	87	95
Provision of information about train times/platforms	86	88	94
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	77	82	91
Cleanliness	80	85	96
The facilities and services	73	72	84
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	82	85	90
Connections with other forms of public transport	76	77	87
Overall environment	74	81	91
Your personal security whilst using	78	80	85
The availability of staff	78	74	80
The provision of shelter facilities	70	76	83
Availability of seating	58	59	70
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	65	63	76
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	85	83	94
The frequency of the trains on that route	86	82	96
Punctuality/reliability	82	82	98
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	83	86	94
Connections with other train services	79	79	90
The value for money for the price of your ticket	59	55	81
Cleanliness of the train	90	79	95
Upkeep and repair of the train	85	78	91
The provision of information during the journey	81	77	90
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	79	80	96
The space for luggage	55	59	83
The toilet facilities	63	47	66
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	72	70	92
The comfort of the seating area	79	76	91
The ease of being able to get on and off	85	82	92
Your personal security whilst on board	89	87	92
The cleanliness of the inside	89	81	94
The cleanliness of the outside	84	77	90
The availability of staff	73	67	90

Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average

Appendix 3 Passenger priorities for station requirements and improvements

A3.1 Facilities need providing, according to station footfall, GB stations

Free Wi-Fi at stations consistently required by station type

Station improvements [prompted] – needs providing: All GB rail passengers

	All	Station footfall: High	Medium	Low
Free WiFi at the station	27%	25%	31%	28%
Toilets	21%	9%	40%	41%
Litter bins	18%	22%	10%	17%
Cash point	18%	12%	30%	21%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	17%	11%	24%	29%
Seating on platforms	12%	16%	5%	9%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	11%	6%	18%	24%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	11%	6%	18%	18%
Left Luggage facility	10%	10%	10%	8%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	9%	8%	12%	10%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	9%	6%	14%	14%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	9%	5%	14%	19%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	8%	7%	10%	10%
Automatic ticket gates	6%	5%	9%	9%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	6%	5%	7%	7%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	6%	5%	8%	9%
Departure information screens	5%	2%	8%	13%
Public address system	4%	3%	4%	10%
Other	5%	5%	5%	10%
Nothing extra needs to be Improved	15%	17%	9%	11%
Don't know	17%	20%	11%	8%

29 Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? providing; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

Passengerfocus putting passengers first

A3.2 Facilities need improving, according to station footfall, GB stations

Improvements to seating consistently important. Improving toilets important at high footfall stations, and shelter important at lower footfall

Station improvements [prompted] – needs improving: All GB rail passengers

	All	Station footfall: High	Medium	Low
Seating on platforms	30%	30%	32%	28%
Toilets	20%	26%	9%	7%
Litter bins	17%	19%	13%	14%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	15%	9%	23%	28%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	14%	14%	14%	14%
Public address system	13%	13%	12%	12%
Departure information screens	12%	11%	14%	14%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	11%	8%	19%	12%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	7%	8%	8%	3%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	7%	7%	6%	7%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	6%	6%	4%	10%
Automatic ticket gates	5%	8%	2%	3%
Cash point	5%	6%	4%	4%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	5%	5%	4%	3%
Free WiFi at the station	5%	6%	3%	2%
Left Luggage facility	3%	4%	1%	1%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	3%	3%	1%	1%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	2%	2%	1%	2%
Other	3%	3%	3%	5%
Nothing extra needs to be provided	13%	14%	10%	9%
Don't know	25%	23%	29%	27%

30 Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? Improving; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

Passengerfocus putting passengers first

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