



**Workplan 2019-20: Making a difference
for transport users**

V7: March 2019

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Introduction

Transport Focus exists to stand up for transport users across Great Britain, to champion their cause when things go wrong and to get things improved. Welcome to the 2019-20 Workplan which explains our key campaign and work objectives and the resources we have to achieve them.

This year, alongside other work detailed here, Transport Focus will drive three campaigns which, when successful, should drive broader improvement. These campaigns aim to:

- **Increase eligible rail Delay Repay claims** from the current level of 35 per cent. This will help focus attention on the key driver of passenger satisfaction – a reliable railway
- **Reduce the barriers to bus travel** in the West Midlands. Transport Focus intends to demonstrate this year that it can make a difference on behalf of passengers in one major area and will use this work to show what can be done more widely by other operators and local authorities.
- **Improve the usefulness and effectiveness of information on Highways England's roads** including messages on electronic signs. User satisfaction with this will be measured through the Strategic Roads User Survey – Transport Focus' tracker survey.

Transport Focus intends to devote considerable resource to these three campaigns, including more concerted and far reaching communications work.

Beyond these campaigns the majority of other work will deliver improvements for users under the following themes:

- **On time!** – focusing attention on the smooth running of transport networks, including during planned and unplanned disruption
- **Put it right!** – When things go wrong make sure they are put right quickly with a particular regard for the interests of disabled transport users
- **Boosting the user voice** – making sure users are heard in the debates about the planning and operation of transport services

Some of the work in this plan is a result of partnerships with third parties. All of our work is published and available to all. We will continue to hold transport providers and decision makers to account at our Board meetings and meetings in public. We plan at least six to be held around Great Britain.

We hold governments and transport operators to account by developing and publishing a more systematic tracking of our policy recommendations – together with updates on progress, barriers to implementation and successes.

The Department for Transport in its recent *Green Paper Aviation 2050 — the future of UK aviation* proposed extending Transport Focus's remit to air passenger issues. Transport Focus is very keen to take on this new role. There is currently no one body representing the needs of air passengers and so we think our tried business model could be applied effectively to this new area, subject to new funding arrangements.

This could lead to new work in this year over and above that detailed in this workplan.

Jeff Halliwell, chair

Anthony Smith, chief executive

1. Who or what is Transport Focus?

Transport Focus is an independent consumer organisation – a champion for the transport user. Our mission is to make a difference for transport users, to make transport services better. We gather evidence and use it to drive change and make a difference. We aim to be useful to those who make decisions about transport and to help them make better decisions for the user. Transport Focus strives to give all transport users a voice as powerful as those that provide transport services. We listen to those users in a variety of ways.

The Scottish Government, Welsh Government and London Assembly each appoint one Board member, with others appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport. Transport Focus has offices in London and Manchester along with peripatetic workers and non-executive Board members spread across Great Britain.

Increasingly, service provision is being specified, funded and monitored with the involvement of devolved bodies. We will deepen our engagement with Transport Scotland, Transport for Wales, Transport for the North, Transport for the West Midlands, Network Rail's Supervisory Boards and others.

In order to further strengthen our representation in Wales, we have established a wholly-owned subsidiary, Transport Focus (Wales) Ltd. We are actively considering a similar move in Scotland.

We use a mixture of insight, active advocacy, user group engagement, speaking at events, exhibitions, public meetings, the media, our newsletter and website to get our message across and secure change. We must ensure that transport users know that a watchdog exists who can stand up for them and help with advice.

As in the past year, we will hold the transport industry to account for its performance publicly. We questioned last year, in public, the managing directors of Northern Rail, Trans Pennine Express, Manchester Metrolink, Stagecoach Manchester and South Western Railway, as well as Network Rail and Highways England route and regional directors.

Our plan *Making a difference for transport users: 2018-21* sets out the longer-term themes for our work. In addition, we must make best use of our resources with excellent delivery, value for money and good governance.

Transport Focus has been successful over the years in attracting additional or joint funding from public and private sector partner organisations – mainly to fund additional insight reports or posts dedicated to specific tasks. In the last financial year we raised £1.8M this way. We plan to achieve the same this year.

2. On time!

Reliable journeys are the key factor driving all transport user satisfaction. Planned and unplanned disruption is inconvenient but can be managed well.

Campaign: Increasing eligible rail Delay Repay claim levels

Target: by end March 2020 to have boosted eligible Delay Repay claim levels from 35 per cent of those entitled at present

There has been a welcome spread of entitlement to Delay Repay, and the lowering of the time threshold for compensation with various train companies. Delay Repay is now available on many routes for delays of 15 minutes or more. However, this has not been matched by a rapid increase in claims rates.

A reliable railway remains the key driver of passenger satisfaction and a key factor in priorities for improvement. As compensation claims rise, so the pressure will increase on rail operators to get their services to run on time.

Transport Focus will:

- Work with the industry trade association, the Rail Delivery Group, train companies and the Office of Rail and Road to make it easier to claim Delay Repay and to promote awareness of it when trains are delayed
- Measure and publish passenger awareness of entitlement to compensation and the ease of claiming
- Continue to lobby for the extension of Delay Repay 15.

Planned disruption – engineering and roadworks

Building on successful partnerships with industry, Transport Focus will work with rail companies on major engineering schemes such as those happening or scheduled for Glasgow Queen Street, London Kings Cross and London Euston. Likewise, it will work with Highways England to ensure road users have a voice during major roadworks, such as the M4 smart motorway construction in the Thames Valley. Transport Focus will also explore with Highways England how it can measure improvement in the road user experience as a result of their ‘roadworks exemplar’ project.

Unplanned disruption and congestion

Transport focus will continue this year to work with local authorities, train and bus companies, Network Rail and Highways England to improve user satisfaction with information, the handling of unplanned disruption and any consequences of congestion. This work will include an assessment of ‘core’ messages issued by train companies during disruption.

Roadside facilities

All road users need decent, safe places to stop, rest and refuel. Research projects completed in 2018 confirmed that lorry drivers and disabled motorists need more provision of services and greater certainty around where they can stop. Transport Focus will continue to work with Highways England, the Department for Transport and the 'services' sector to drive improvements in this area.

3. Get it right!

Campaign: Reduce the barriers to bus travel

Target: Identify and change three issues currently presenting a barrier to bus use

How to attract more people to choose bus travel is important. However, barriers remain: fares and other ticket information, congestion and other factors.

Reducing or eliminating these barriers will help more people choose public transport and improve the experiences of existing passengers. This will in turn help Transport Focus and others understand what can be done and how to spread the learning to other areas.

Transport Focus has chosen to work in depth in the West Midlands on this issue for a variety of reasons: a large population, active and engaged local authorities and significant opportunities for change.

We will:

- Work with Transport for West Midlands, National Express West Midlands and other partners to identify barriers to bus travel
- Prioritise and target key issues – help drive change
- Measure change using the Bus Passenger Survey (BPS).

Longer term change – driving better policy

Transport Focus will:

- Provide detailed input and support to the Williams Rail Review, the Rail Delivery Group/Transport Focus fares review project and the Department for Transport consultation on the extension of Pay as You Go across South East England
- Continue to hold two Accessibility Forums that give disability groups access to decision makers, building on - among other things - ground breaking work last year on the experiences of disabled motorists
- Continue to work with the Department for Transport and bidders for rail franchises to ensure passenger priorities are clearly embedded in future specifications, proposals and contracts
- Continue to chair the West Midlands Bus Alliance, co-chair the Bristol City Transport Board and represent bus passengers on the Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance and the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance, ensuring that BPS is embedded as a key success measure
- Continue to represent passengers on Network Rail's Route Supervisory Boards (or their successors following re-organisation) and the Trans Pennine Upgrade Board
- Continue to work with HS2, ensuring passenger priorities are at the forefront of new service design

- Input to a number of statutory or licence condition roles we have relating to, among other things, potential changes to rail Disabled People's Protection Policies, National Rail Conditions of travel, licence conditions, ticket office opening hours, complaints handing procedures and Penalty Fare schemes
- Continue to work with the Department for Transport, Highways England and the Office of Rail and Road to ensure road users interests are at the heart of the Government's road investment strategy.

Feedback

Any transport user who takes the trouble to comment or complain is providing the transport industry with valuable data.

Transport Focus will work with train companies, bus operators and Highways England to make it easier for users to give feedback and for more use to be made of complaints data. This will build on a partnership developed in 2018 with the online complaints platform Resolver.

The new Rail Passenger Ombudsman is up and running following years of campaigning by Transport Focus and three years of intensive work to help set up the new scheme.

Transport Focus will continue to work to ensure:

- rail passengers are informed as soon as possible in the complaints process about the existence of the Ombudsman
- that the new Scheme produces high quality data that can be used to help improve services
- mystery shop the Rail Passenger Ombudsman to evaluate ease of use and information.

During the period of this work plan Transport Focus expects to support over 800 transport users who contact it seeking help, advice or information on issues relating to their train service. This will include re-directing some passengers where their cases may be eligible for the Rail Passenger Ombudsman Scheme.

4. Boost the user voice

Transport Focus has a key role to make sure the user voice is heard loud and clear in both the planning and day to day operations of the transport systems we all use. This is even more important where those services are often only offered by one operator – feedback from users in these situations is crucial to drive improvements and measure changes.

Campaign: More useful and effective roads information

Target: more drivers are satisfied with the information Highways England provides

Timely, accurate and useful information is important to keep traffic flowing safely and smoothly, and to give road users some sense of being in control on stress-free journeys. Highways England provides information in several ways, including on fixed and electronic signs. In the new Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS) Transport Focus ask questions about the efficacy of both these channels.

Transport Focus will:

- Help Highways England use Transport Focus research to make practical improvements in the information it provides to road users
- Test out alternative formats and messages to gauge road user reaction
- Measure improvements through the new SRUS
- Continue to press Highways England to drive up the accuracy and timeliness of information it provides about roadworks

This year Transport Focus plans further work in the following areas:

Transport users driving change: surveys, panels and helping users

Carry out and publish the representative

- National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) across Great Britain
- Bus Passenger Survey (BPS),
- Tram Passenger Survey (TPS)
- Motorway Services User Survey (MSUS)

It will also sustain continuous reporting from the new Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS).

Together these surveys will involve over 180,000 transport users and capture their views about their last journey. Transport Focus will use the comparative, benchmarked results from these surveys to drive change for users.

These surveys add up to a powerful, long term view of user satisfaction and industry performance that is used in a variety of ways: in contracts, business cases, remuneration packages and improvement plans. Some train companies fund additional consumer representation on behalf of their passengers. Through this

Transport Focus will carry out extra work on behalf of those using Govia Thameslink Railway, Great Western Railway, Greater Anglia, Northern, South Western Railway, Transpennine Express and West Midlands Trains.

In addition, Transport Focus will employ its 12,000 strong online Transport User Panel to probe issues in more depth.

It will also analyse results from the NRPS, BPS and SRUS to produce three bespoke, in-depth reports into key areas such as information, ticketing and other factors which influence overall satisfaction.

Making more use of survey data

During the period of this workplan Transport Focus will seek to boost the use and usefulness of the verbatim comments supplied by transport users in the course of the surveys, recruit survey respondents to help with longer term monitoring and conduct more in-depth work on particular issues such as disruption management. In addition, the insight team will pilot a shorter, App-based questionnaire which will allow Transport Focus to move more of its insight work towards a model that supplies continuous, faster feedback from transport users.

5. Insight and policy reports

The following is a list of the insight and policy reports Transport Focus expects to publish (some in partnership with other organisations) during the period of this workplan with the approximate publication dates. –. More will be added as additional funding is secured or as joint projects are agreed.

Boost the user voice - tracker surveys

National Rail Passenger Survey	June 2019 and January 2020
Bus Passenger Survey	March 2020
National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey	June 2019
Strategic Roads User Survey 18/19 * in addition to monthly results published on our Data Hub	June 2019*
Motorway Services User Survey	July 2020
Northern Rail, Greater Anglia and Scotrail continuous NRPS boosts	Monthly
Caledonian Sleeper guest satisfaction survey	Quarterly

Boost the user voice – Get it right

<i>Transport User Voice</i> newsletter	Monthly
Three reports derived from in-depth analysis of tracker surveys	Summer/Autumn Winter 2019/20
Non bus users	Autumn 2019
English bus user priorities for improvement	Autumn 2019
How Highways England can better serve the needs of bus operators and their passengers	Spring 2019
Drivers and road information. What do they want?	Autumn 2019
How is the Rail Passenger Ombudsman working for passengers?	Summer 2020
Passengers and the trans Pennine rail upgrade	Winter 2019
HS2 Customer Community reports	Spring 2019 and Autumn 2020

Rail passengers and high frequency routes – do passengers view performance differently?	Autumn 2019
Passengers and the Rail Review – commuters needs plus focus on local issues	Summer 2019
Passengers and re-furbished trains: Porterbrook plc	Winter 2019
Passengers and new Trans Pennine Express trains	Winter 2019
Passengers and new MerseyRail trains	Autumn 2019
Rail passengers, wi-fi and mobile connections	Autumn 2019
Buying rail tickets in the future	Autumn 2019
The experiences of younger and older rail passengers	Summer 2019
Disabled rail and bus passengers' experiences	Spring 2019
Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians using the SRN in the West Midlands, Hampshire and Dorset	Summer 2019
Transport User Panel reports. For example, road users and the Dartford Crossings, bus passengers and contactless payments and rail compensation	10 in year

On time!

Traveline and bus passenger information	Summer 2019
M4 smart motorway roadworks and drivers	Summer 2019
Derby engineering works and passengers	Summer 2019
Brighton Main Line engineering works and passengers	Summer 2019
Kings Cross engineering works and passengers	Winter 2019
Passengers and Glasgow Queen Street re-building and other improvement works	Autumn 2019
Improving unplanned disruption information for rail passengers	Winter 2019

Annex: Resources

BUDGET SUMMARY FOR 2019-20

Transport Focus's grant in aid funding from the Department for Transport will be £4.30 million (2018-19: £ 4.40 million) for passenger representation and £1.42 million (2018-19: £1.74 million) for road user representation.

In addition, Transport Focus will generate other external funding of £1.80 million from partners to extend our user insight and representation work. This will contribute £93,000 to our overheads to reduce the grant in aid funding required in 2018-19.

£000's	2019-20 Budget	
	Costs fully funded by grant in aid	Costs fully funded from alternative sources
Funding		
Grant in aid funding	5,720	-
Other external funding	-	1,800
Total funding	5,720	1,800
Expenditure		
Fixed pay	2,869	521
Fixed overheads	869	
Variable overheads	524	66
Total running costs	4,262	587
Contribution to overheads from externally funded activities	(93)	93
Net running costs	4,169	680
Research and other projects (net cost)		
National rail passenger survey	770	297
Bus passenger survey (net cost)	180	
Strategic roads user survey	470	
National roads user survey		272
Bespoke road user insight	89	
Bespoke passenger insight	42	
Bespoke transport user insight		551
Total passenger and road user insight	1,551	1,120
Total operating costs	5,720	1,800
Net surplus / deficit	-	-

Grant in aid funded costs for 2019-20

