

Workplan 2019-20:

Making a difference for transport users
April 2019

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Speaking up for rail passengers

Transport Focus played an active role in the 2018 summer timetable crisis. Keeping a close eye on information, we fed back to the train companies and secured many wins and changes as a result. Information improved and better compensation was secured and more widely publicised. A public meeting where train companies and Network Rail were quizzed by passengers all helped the passenger lot.

We also carried out a survey on the passenger experience of the Lakes Line when trains were replaced with buses for three weeks. This helped understanding of the impact on passengers and how to manage changes at short notice.

Official rail performance data will now be published by the Office of Rail and Road showing 'right time' performance – this follows years of campaigning by Transport Focus.

Who 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 and 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 through its supervisory boards and others.

In order to further strengthen our representation in Wales, we have established a wholly-owned subsidiary,

Transport Focus Wales Limited. 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.

Last year we questioned, in public, Keith Williams, the Government Rail Review chair, and the managing directors of Northern, TransPennine 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 user research and staff dedicated to specific transport user projects. In the last financial year, we were able to generate £1.8 million worth of valuable additional evidence to represent users through this means. We plan to achieve the same this year.

Introduction

Transport Focus exists to stand up for transport users across Great Britain, to champion their cause when things go wrong and to get services improved. Britain relies on its transport networks to help people and freight to move around smoothly. This underpins the productivity of the country. Reliable journeys remain the key requirement of all transport users.

Disruption, either unplanned or as a side effect of welcome investment, has to be handled well. Transport Focus's work helps ensure these reliable, smooth journeys are the norm. Transport Focus is already making a major difference – this year we will make even more of a difference as we are ambitious in securing change.

Making change happen

Transport Focus has a proud record in securing wins for transport users – here are a few examples and others are elsewhere in this plan:

- Getting the Bus Passenger Survey built into local authority and bus company alliances and plans as a key measure. This leads to the passenger voice being heard loud and clear and drives improvements.
- Securing the set up of the Rail Passenger Ombudsman and the Independent Appeal Panels for Penalty Fares on National Rail services. This has led to fairer treatment for passengers.
- Helping Highways England to focus on information and welfare following road incidents and accidents. This has led to better information and help, plus the development of a sense of 'duty of care' towards those stuck in tailbacks.
- Working with the rail industry on better information and communication during major engineering works at, among other places, Glasgow Queen Street, London Waterloo and Derby. This has directly led to better handling of major upgrades.
- Helping to inform the Government's funding of extra Changing Places accessible toilets with our ground-breaking research
- Extra security patrols, better staff training and more police presence on buses following Transport Focus research highlighting anti-social behaviour in the West Midlands – result? Passenger satisfaction up!

User focused road investment

The user voice is right at the heart of the Government's priorities for the 2020-25 road investment period – more safe, smooth, reliable journeys on the Strategic Road Network will flow from Transport Focus's research, campaigning and lobbying.

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

- 1 **Boosting rail reliability – making it easier to claim Delay Repay compensation – claims are currently at just 35 per cent of those eligible.** This will help focus attention on the key driver of passenger satisfaction – a reliable railway.
- 2 **Improve bus services.** 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.
- 3 **Increase the usefulness and effectiveness of information on Highways England's roads,** including messages on electronic signs. This will allow more road users to make informed decisions in plenty of time, improving safety and reducing stress.

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



Our suggestions for Facebook signs on the M5 Oldbury roadworks **boosted engagement** with drivers. New signs with Twitter addresses in the North East have flagged how to **get more information and why work is happening.**



Our work for Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) with Glasgow Subway passengers produced great results. Based on feedback SPT is looking at **improving the comfort of seats on old stock ahead of new trains coming in** and **better value for money season tickets.**

Rail fares reform

Transport Focus's extensive passenger research shows that the case for changing all of Britain's outdated and outmoded fares and ticketing system is overwhelming. Last year, following extensive work, Transport Focus joined with the rail industry in launching the 'Easier Fares' consultation – this also found an overwhelming desire for change.

The fares reform proposals contain a lot of things that are sensible and long overdue: the spread of single journey-based pricing will simplify and make the system easier to explain. New fares that match the way that people want to travel today will make rail more attractive. Changes are also needed to underpin the Department for Transport's recent, welcome, proposed extension of the successful London Pay-As-You-Go scheme to a much broader area across the South East.

The current process is broken and its faults are well known. The time for piecemeal changes has gone – we need root and branch reform to maximise the benefits and boost value for money ratings. Let's get on with it!

Transport Focus will also trial new ways of getting user feedback on a near continuous basis. Everyone wants quicker but more representative feedback than some communications channels, such as Twitter, can provide. Transport Focus will lead debate on how this can be done. This will sit alongside driving more value from our existing surveys.

Beyond these campaigns, the majority of our core 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
- **Get it right!** – when things go wrong, make sure they are put right quickly with a particular regard for the interests of disabled transport users
- **Boost the user voice** – making sure users are heard in the debates about the planning and operation of transport services.



Improvements to communications

around the compensation scheme for rail passengers in the north of England, following the summer timetable problems. Our passenger research provided an **understanding of passenger awareness** that informed promotional efforts and, ultimately, **helped boost claim rates**.

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 plan at least three public Board meetings, plus a number of public meetings to be held around Great Britain.

We will 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 business model could be applied effectively to this new area, subject to new funding arrangements. This could lead to new work this year, over and above that detailed in this workplan.



Jeff Halliwell
Chair



Anthony Smith
Chief Executive

1 On time!

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

The handling of unplanned disruption is a key driver in rail and road dissatisfaction. There will always be incidents and accidents to be dealt with, but the information and welfare provided is a key litmus test of how well users feel cared for. Transport Focus's work will lead to better handled disruption.

Planned disruption – engineering and roadworks

Building on successful partnerships with the industry, Transport Focus will work with rail companies on major

engineering schemes such as those happening or scheduled for Glasgow Queen Street, the Trans Pennine Route upgrade, London King's 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 its 'roadworks exemplar' project.

This work will ensure that welcome investment is carried out in a way that least inconveniences current transport users. This will help boost productivity.



CAMPAIGN 1: Boosting rail reliability making it easier to claim Delay Repay compensation

A reliable railway remains the key driver of passenger satisfaction. While there has been a welcome spread of entitlement to Delay Repay compensation, claim rates remain low. As claim rates rise, so will the pressure on train companies and Network Rail to get services on time.

Transport Focus will:

- work with the industry trade body, the Rail Delivery Group, train companies, the Department for Transport and the regulator, the Office of Rail and Road, to boost awareness of Delay Repay, make it easier to claim and introduce
- more automated claims
- publicise entitlement awareness and ease of claiming
- work to help the industry drive up the levels of Delay Repay claims to at least 50 per cent – currently just 35 per cent of those eligible to claim do so.

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 the 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 better facilities 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.

Road safety matters. Having ample, decent places to stop is key to safety. This work should lead to better facilities and keep up the pressure to expand existing facilities or build new ones.



Highways England, following our advocacy, is introducing improved signs to help **stop drivers going the wrong way down slip roads** – already in place on the A47 at Castor, near Peterborough.



Introduction of Delay Repay 15 for Northern passengers – one of the key objectives in the compensation campaign run to **secure relief and long-term improvements** for passengers affected by the timetable chaos last summer.

2 Get it right!

Sustained investment is the key to long term improvement in transport services. Transport Focus will work to ensure the user voice is at the heart of investment and planning decision

making. Transport Focus will also work to help reduce the barriers to passengers choosing public transport with a trial focus on bus services in the West Midlands.



CAMPAIGN 2: Improve bus services

Bus passengers want to see more reliable services, easier and more understandable fares and ticketing, more useful information and better value for money. Reducing the barriers to bus travel will help more people choose bus and make services more viable.

Transport Focus has chosen to work in-depth in the West

Midlands to make this change. This area was chosen as it has a large population, engaged local authorities, Transport Focus chairs the Bus Alliance and there are significant challenges and opportunities for change – the 2022 Commonwealth Games and High Speed Two construction in particular.

Transport Focus will:

- work with Transport for the West Midlands, National Express West Midlands and other partners to identify and prioritise improvements
- drive change in these areas
- measure change using the Transport Focus 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. This work should boost value for money scores among passengers.
- 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. This should lead to better, more passenger-focused 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 Partnerships, ensuring that BPS is embedded as a key success measure. This keeps the bus user voice at the top tables and leads to better services.
- Continue to represent passengers on Network Rail's supervisory boards the East Coast access oversight board and input to the TransPennine Upgrade Board. This work will ensure the rail industry collectively focuses more on passengers and makes better decisions.
- Continue to work with HS2, ensuring passenger priorities are at the forefront of new service design. This work will lead to better designed services more suited to passenger needs.
- 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 handling procedures and Penalty Fare schemes. These changes will help ensure the rail industry focuses on passenger needs and boosts satisfaction levels.
- 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 second road investment strategy. Long term planning and investment make the most difference to the user experience. Ensuring investment plans are based around user needs should lead to better services.

Feedback

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

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 workplan, 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.



Southeastern and South Western Railway both heeded our call for **minimum £100 compensation for passengers trapped** for long times during snow.



Damaged signs on the A27 in Sussex being **replaced earlier than planned** by Highways England after Transport Focus saw the poor state they were in.



Arrival times at intermediate stations are now on departure boards at Liverpool Lime Street and elsewhere, following our suggestion.



Network Rail have made all train station toilets free. Feedback from the National Rail Passenger Survey had **showed passengers' frustration with charges.**



Disabled parking bays at Strensham motorway services on the M5 were **moved closer to facilities** following suggestions made in research published earlier this year.



Following on from Bus Passenger Survey results, National Express West Midlands has **spread the use of contactless payment.** Result? **Better value for money scores.**



Roadworks: information about which roads are closed when has improved dramatically following Transport Focus's work with Highways England. **This has resulted in better information for road users,** including freight companies.

3 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 offered by only one operator – feedback from users in these situations is crucial to drive improvements and measure changes.



CAMPAIGN 3: More useful and effective information for road users

Target: increased satisfaction with the information on Highways England's roads

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. Reliable journey times are the key factor behind driver satisfaction and information helps contribute to that.

Highways England provides

information in several ways, including on fixed and electronic signs. In the new Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS) Transport Focus measures road user satisfaction with both.

Transport Focus will:

- using insight from newly-completed research, work with Highways England to agree a programme of practical improvements it can make to the information provided to road users
- work to help Highways England

increase overall satisfaction with information, as measured by SRUS, so each region improves towards the level of the best (satisfaction with permanent signage 93 per cent; satisfaction with electronic signage 90 per cent)

- continue work to help Highways England drive up the accuracy and timeliness of information it provides about roadworks, so each region improves towards the level of the best.

Transport users driving change: surveys, panels and help for users

This year Transport Focus will publish independent transport user research in the following areas:

- Bus Passenger Survey (BPS)
- Motorway Services User Survey (MSUS)
- National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)
- National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey (NRUSS)
- Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS)
- Tram Passenger Survey (TPS).

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.

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

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 that will allow Transport Focus to move more of its insight work towards a model that supplies continuous, faster feedback from transport users.



Andy Burnham, mayor of Greater Manchester, invited Transport Focus to share headline results from its bus and young people's research during a press briefing held to launch Manchester's 16-18 year-olds' free bus pass.

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.

The Transport User Voice newsletter will be published every month.



A new through-fare from Redhill to Eynsford in Kent via Edenbridge is now available – a direct result of Transport Focus taking up an issue on behalf of a passenger who can now get hold of **better value for money tickets** for his journey.

Boost the user voice tracker surveys	
Bus Passenger Survey	March 2020
Caledonian Sleeper Guest Satisfaction Survey	Quarterly
Motorway Services User Survey	July 2019
National Rail Passenger Survey	June 2019 and January 2020
National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey	June 2019
Northern, Greater Anglia and ScotRail monthly NRPS boosts	Annually
Strategic Roads User Survey 2018/19*	June 2019*

Get it right	
Three reports derived from in-depth analysis of tracker surveys	Summer/Autumn Winter 2019/20
Report of research among non-users of bus services	Autumn 2019
Bus user priorities for improvement in England	Autumn 2019
How Highways England can better serve the needs of bus operators and their passengers	Spring 2019
Road users and information - what do they want?	Autumn 2019
How is the Rail Passenger Ombudsman working for passengers?	Spring 2020
HS2 Customer Community reports	Spring 2019
Rail passengers and high frequency routes – do passengers view performance differently?	Autumn 2019
Passengers and the Rail Review	Summer 2019
Passengers and re-furbished trains: Porterbrook	Winter 2019
Improving information during disruption for TransPennine Express passengers	Autumn 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 bus and rail passengers' experiences	Spring 2019
Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians using the Strategic Road Network in the West Midlands, Hampshire and Dorset	Summer 2019
Transport User Panel reports	10 in year

On time!

Traveline and bus passenger information	Summer 2019
M4 smart motorway roadworks and drivers	Summer 2019
Brighton Main Line engineering works and passengers	Summer 2019
London King's Cross station engineering works and passengers	Winter 2019
Glasgow Queen Street station re-building	Autumn 2019



Higher speed limits in roadworks

were set on the M6 at Christmas – a win that follows directly from Transport Focus's incidents and roadworks research.



Stagecoach South Yorkshire used evidence from the Bus Passenger Survey to **work with their drivers** to deliver an even better service to passengers.



New seats at London Victoria and London Bridge station followed

when National Rail Passenger Survey results flagged this up as key passenger issue.



Focusing on better, more helpful communications around the A66 upgrade in Cumbria. Result? **Much improved and clearer communication with drivers and haulage companies**.

Annex: Resources

Transport Focus – Budget summary for 2019-20

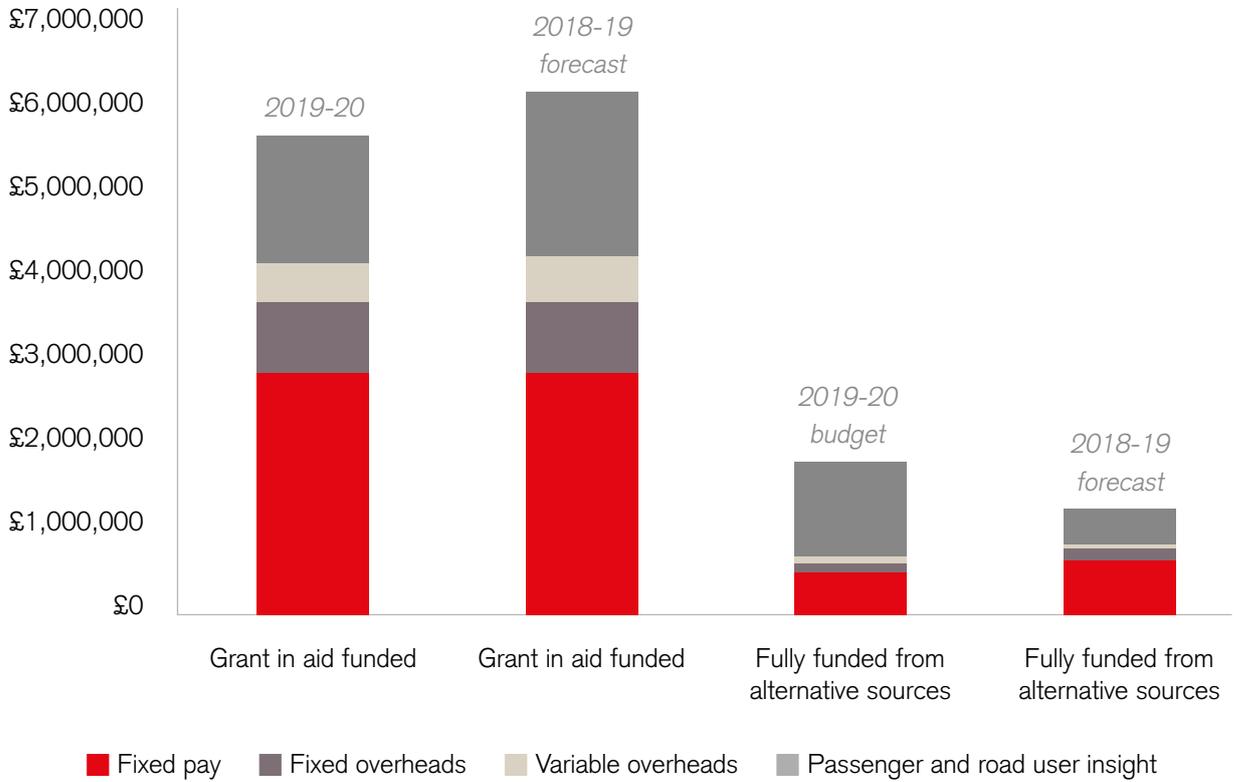
Transport Focus's grant in aid funding from the Department for Transport will be £4.30 million (2018-19: £ 4.40 million) for passenger representation and £1.42 million (2018-19: £1.74 million) for Strategic Road Network user representation.

In addition, Transport Focus will generate other external funding of £1.80 million from partners to extend its user insight and representation work. This will contribute some £93,000 to overheads in 2019-20.

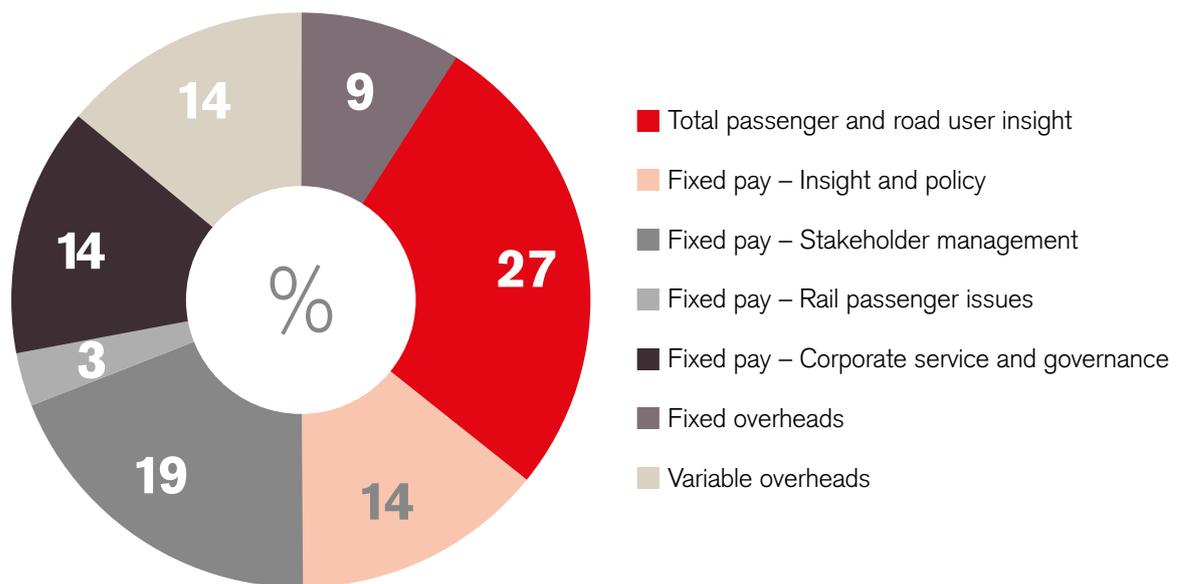
2019-20 Budget

£000's	Costs fully funded by grant in aid	Costs fully funded from alternative sources	Total Costs
Funding			
Grant in aid funding	5,720	-	5,720
Other external funding	-	1,800	1,800
Total funding	5,720	1,800	7,520
Expenditure			
Fixed pay	2,869	521	3,390
Fixed overheads	869		869
Variable overheads	524	66	590
Total running costs	4,262	587	4,849
Contribution to overheads from externally funded activities	(93)	93	-
Net running costs	4,169	680	4,849
Research and other projects (net cost)			
National rail passenger survey	770	297	1,067
Bus passenger survey (net cost)	180		180
Strategic roads user survey	470		470
National road users' satisfaction survey		272	272
Tram passenger survey	-	-	-
Bespoke road user insight	89		89
Bespoke passenger insight	42		42
Bespoke transport user insight		551	551
Total passenger and road user insight	1,551	1,120	2,671
Total operating costs	5,720	1,800	7,520
Net surplus / deficit	-	-	-

Budget summary



Grant in aid funded costs for 2019-20



Contact Transport Focus

Any enquiries about this workplan should be addressed to:

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

Transport Focus is the independent consumer organisation representing the interests of:

- rail passengers in Great Britain
- all users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads (the Strategic Road Network)
- bus, coach and tram users across England outside London.

We work to make a difference for all transport users