

Board Meeting Paper	
Mar 10 BM 6.4	
Report for	Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information <input type="checkbox"/>
Restricted or confidential Information?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If confidential, protective marking ¹	
Date of Meeting	17 th March 2010
Agenda Item	6.4
Report Title	APRS Research 2010
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1. Summary

The Assisted Passenger Reservation System (APRS) is a National Rail service enabling train companies to book assistance for passengers with disabilities; without this service many could not travel by train.

Mystery shop research was carried out in two phases by people with disabilities to assess the efficiency and quality of the APRS service:

- phase one covered the London and the South East (2007)
- phase two covered Scotland, Wales and the rest of England (2008).

Overall, 90 return journeys and 100 telephone mystery shops were completed and the findings from both phases were published in September 2008.

Some headline findings:

- less than half (45%) of all shoppers who called APRS to book assistance were given a reference number for their booking
- when making the actual journey, on a third of journeys staff were not prepared for shoppers and only 58% were actually met by staff at the appointed meeting place
- in 15% of all cases no assistance was provided to shoppers to alight from the train.

Following the publication of the research findings in 2008, Passenger Focus promised the industry that we would repeat the survey after two years. The main objective for repeating the national research is to monitor performance of the assistance provided to disabled passengers when they book via APRS and compare this against the 2008 findings. The results will be used to influence the industry to bring about tangible improvements, including the Department for Transport.

2. Recommendations

Board are requested to:

1. Approve the next wave of the APRS mystery shop research to be undertaken.

3. Further detail

We would like the research:

1. To broadly cover the same geographic areas as the last research (London and the South East, northern parts of England and Scotland).
2. To be done in one hit, rather than in two separate phases.
3. To be procured to an external agency to manage.

¹ ie RESTRICTED plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

4. Implications – Financial, Risk, Legal, Staffing, Equalities

Financial:

- A budget of £75K is required. This includes all agency costs, publishing and VAT.

Timescales:

- In order to hit the September 2010 publishing deadline, the research would need to be commissioned by **mid-April**. Due to the nature of the work we need to allow longer lead times for the planning and fieldwork stages.

Send brief to agency – Late March 2010
Commission agency – mid April 2010
Fieldwork commences – 1 June to mid July 2010
Draft report – End of August 2010
Final publication – End of September 2010

Staffing

- Research
 - 2 days per week for the duration of the project (between April - August).
 - 0.5 day per week post September to present research findings to various stakeholders.
- Policy
 - one day per week for the duration of the project (April – August)
- Jocelyn / Development co-ordinator
 - 2 weeks to plan and implement the communication strategy and engage with stakeholders
- Communications team
 - 1 week to deliver the media plan for the project

Risks

The biggest risk of not doing the research would be losing credibility amongst our key stakeholders and not delivering on what we committed to two years ago.

Other project risks

- Project timescales may slip if the agency is not able to recruit the mystery shoppers in the areas we want to cover. To mitigate this we will be sending out the previous sampling plan with the project specification and also where feasible contact mystery shoppers who took part in the last research.

Legal

None foreseen.

5. Background information

For further information please refer to the full report - "Assisted Passenger Reservation Service: Mystery Shop (September 2008)".