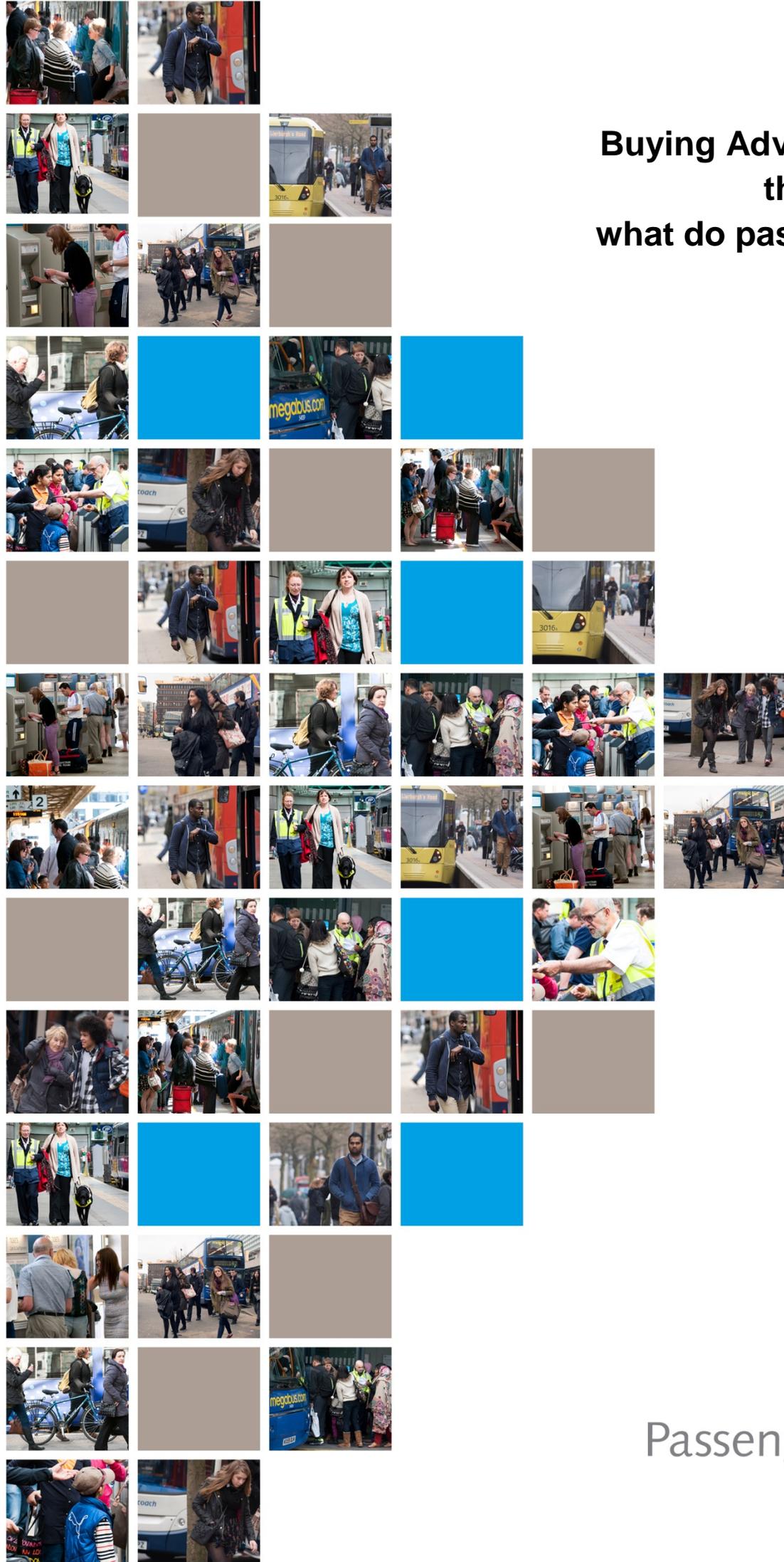


Buying Advance tickets on the day of travel: what do passengers think?

March 2015



Advance Purchase On the Day tickets

Findings from passenger
research around the pilot



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1. Executive summary

Background and research methodology

Rail passengers can purchase Advance tickets for train journeys. These are cheaper than other fares, and mean the passenger must travel on a specified train at a specified time. These tickets are usually available until the day before the journey itself, until they are sold out.

Following the Department for Transport's Fares and Ticketing review, a trial is taking place on CrossCountry services for the sale of Advance tickets until 10 minutes before a journey. The tickets are known as Advance Purchase On the Day (APOD).

Passenger Focus commissioned market research to gather feedback from passengers on the concept of APOD tickets. The findings will inform a potential roll out of APOD tickets to other rail services in the future.

The market research was carried out by the independent agency, BDRC Continental, in June-July 2014 and again in October-November 2014. The research comprised a quantitative survey with passengers on board CrossCountry services and qualitative in-depth interviews with some of these passengers.

Key findings from the research

- APOD has relevance: passengers' current behaviour and preferences show there will be a market for Advance fares to be sold up until 10 minutes before a journey.
- APOD may have a small effect in increasing numbers of rail journeys. The tickets may also encourage some passengers to spread their journeys through the day a little (e.g. waiting until just outside peak time), and so aid capacity management.
- APOD has the potential to bring 'softer' benefits, improving passenger perceptions of value for money and fairness around ticket prices.
- Rolling out APOD to other Train Operating Company (TOC) networks will be worthwhile.
- Letting passengers know that APOD tickets are or may be available will be beneficial – both to give them the information needed to make the most of the tickets and as an industry good news story.
- Passengers' expectations about the availability of APOD tickets will need to be managed carefully.
- There is significant confusion about different ticket types and ticket names, and APOD could add to this – for example by using the term 'Advance' when the tickets may not be bought 'in advance'. This complexity needs to be minimised and the roll out of APOD may provide an opportune moment for wider simplification of tickets, or at least for better education and information for passengers.

- From an operational perspective, TOCs will need to take note of:
 - Passengers' expectation that APOD tickets will be available through all retail channels, including offline.
 - Further expectation for ticket fulfilment methods to be more 'mobile', including greater appetite for M-tickets, and an assumption that booking confirmations via email (in electronic format rather than a printed e-ticket) will be valid as proof of ticket purchase.
 - Potential for isolated cases where seat reservations made with APOD tickets are misunderstood or cause problems between passengers. This is less of an issue than initially feared, and could be minimised by measures such as designated coaches with 'reservable' seats and clear training or guidance for on-board staff. TOCs could choose not to make seat reservations mandatory for APODs, and this would be acceptable to passengers.

2. Research background and methodology

Rail passengers can purchase Advance tickets for train journeys. These are cheaper than other fares and mean the passenger must travel on a specified train at a specified time. These tickets are usually available until the day before the journey itself, until they are sold out. Passengers who purchase tickets on the day have a choice between Off-peak or Anytime fares only.

Following the Department for Transport's (DfT) Fares and Ticketing review, a trial has been taking place on CrossCountry services for the sale of Advance tickets until up to 10 minutes before a journey. The tickets are known as Advance Purchase On the Day (APOD).

Alongside the trial, Passenger Focus commissioned market research to gather views from passengers on APOD tickets, including feedback from those buying them. The findings will be considered by the DfT in reviewing the trial, and its potential roll out to other TOCs. If APOD is taken forward and adopted by other TOCs, the passenger feedback will inform good practice and help to ensure that passenger needs are taken into account in its implementation.

The main objectives of the passenger research were to find out:

- What do passengers think of the idea; what are their queries or concerns?
- What was the experience of APOD users during the trial?
- What is the impact of APOD on other passengers? In particular, what are the implications for last-minute seat reservations, as another passenger could already be occupying that seat?

The independent market research agency, BDRC Continental, conducted the research in two phases.

June-July 2014

- Quantitative research: a short questionnaire was distributed to passengers on board a representative sample of participating CrossCountry services¹. This established awareness and interest in APOD tickets in the context of current ticket purchasing behaviour and among different passenger groups. 1,919 passengers responded to this questionnaire.
- Qualitative research: in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with 40 passengers who had made a recent journey on a CrossCountry train during the APOD trial period:
 - 13 were passengers who would have been interested in using APOD tickets but did not use them - to gather views on the concept.

¹ During the trial, APOD tickets have been available until they are sold out on all CrossCountry routes except for Birmingham to Stansted Airport and Nottingham to Cardiff

- 13 were passengers who did not have a seat reservation and so could hypothetically be affected by APOD - to gather views from this particular perspective as well on the concept in general.
- 14 were passengers who had bought an APOD ticket - to gain early feedback on the experience and learn about any issues or ideas for improvement.
- Most of the respondents for the in-depth interviews were invited to participate after they completed the on board questionnaire and agreed to be contacted for further research. The exception was the APOD users, most of whose details were supplied by CrossCountry after they bought their tickets and agreed to be contacted for market research purposes. All of these people were confirmed as being APOD users, even if they hadn't previously been aware that they had bought this particular type of ticket.

October-November 2014

- Quantitative research: the same short questionnaire was distributed on board participating CrossCountry services in order to measure any differences in awareness or interest over this short period of time. 1,200 people responded in this autumn phase.
- Qualitative research: 24 more in-depth interviews were conducted, this time all were with APOD users to gather further detailed feedback on experiences so far. All of these participants were supplied directly by CrossCountry.

This report sets out the findings and key conclusions from this research, to be taken forward by Passenger Focus and the DfT. Quantitative results in this report combine the data from June-July and October-November unless otherwise stated.

All research conducted by BDRC Continental is carried out in accordance with the ISO 20252 quality standard for market research. The questionnaire used in the quantitative on-board survey is given in the Appendix to this report, and further details of the methodology are available on request.

3. The relevance of APOD

Participants in the research were asked why they bought the tickets they did. Passengers filling in questionnaires in the on board survey were asked about the ticket they purchased for that journey; respondents in the qualitative interviews were asked about their most recent journey on a CrossCountry train.

For most people, value for money was the key factor in their choice of ticket: in the quantitative survey 31 per cent said their ticket was the best value for money option and 23 per cent said it was the cheapest option. The next most important factor was flexibility: a fifth (20 per cent) of passengers stated this as a key criterion.

Value for money was important to all types of passengers, but most of all for people travelling for leisure (34 per cent) compared to commuters (30 per cent) and business travellers (27 per cent). Flexibility was least important to commuters (18 per cent); those travelling for business and leisure valued flexibility slightly more (21 per cent for both passenger groups).

Value for money was almost always a factor in choosing tickets, even when other influences were taken into account. This is illustrated by some comments from the interviews:

“I go for the cheaper option just to save money. Even if it means staying in Newcastle or Edinburgh a few hours more than I want to, if it means I can save money then I will do so.”

Mid-frequency leisure traveller (autumn 2014)

“[It’s company policy to find a good value fare], and some of the train prices are just extortionate. You can travel to Newcastle for £29 but it can cost £97...If I am arranging a meeting in Newcastle I will make it for later in the day. I have adapted the way I buy tickets to get the best prices.”

Frequent business traveller, APOD user (summer 2014)

“Not everyone can afford quite expensive tickets, I am still at school, not in a full time job so difficult for me to afford the ‘proper price’. It’s great to have the option to get a cheaper ticket.”

Infrequent leisure traveller (summer 2014)

Other reasons influencing ticket choice included habit (12 per cent) and no real consideration for the different possible options (5 per cent).

Passengers look for value and appreciate flexibility. APOD therefore fits well with existing passenger needs, providing more opportunity for last-minute or more spontaneous travel, at the best possible price.

A relatively large pool of passengers could take advantage of APOD. A quarter of respondents (26 per cent) bought their ticket on the day of travel and a further 11 per cent the day before. The qualitative interviews found some passengers wish to take advantage of cheaper fares by purchasing in advance but are not able to commit to travelling on a specific train until they are sure of their plans. These people will often book on the day or, if possible, the day before. In total, at least a third of passengers could potentially benefit from APOD.

APOD could mean that better value fares become an option for a wider variety of passengers. Currently, older leisure travellers are taking the best advantage of Advance fares:

- a quarter (24 per cent) of all Advance tickets were purchased by people aged 60 or over
- almost two thirds (63 per cent) were bought by people over 35
- 51 per cent were bought by people on a leisure trip.

In contrast, 52 per cent of all tickets purchased on the day were bought by people under 35 and, more often than not, for commuting or business reasons.

By making Advance fares available on the day of travel, younger people travelling for work stand to benefit - particularly those who commute regularly but perhaps not every day, or who travel to different locations. These commuters may not be able to take advantage of season tickets and currently either pay walk-up fares or have to plan every commute in advance. For passengers who think this system is unfair, APOD has the potential to improve perception.

Many people are able, and prefer, to plan rail journeys well in advance. Of the passengers in this survey who bought Advance tickets, almost half (55 per cent) bought their ticket more than a week before travel, and 27 per cent more than a month in advance. These passengers are usually driven very strongly by price and are unwilling or unable to compromise, or by a need for organisation and the reassurance of knowing exactly when and where they will be travelling:

“You never know if there will be a queue, or you haven’t got access to a ticket machine... [I book in advance so that] I have the tickets, the peace of mind.”

Mid-frequency leisure traveller (summer 2014)

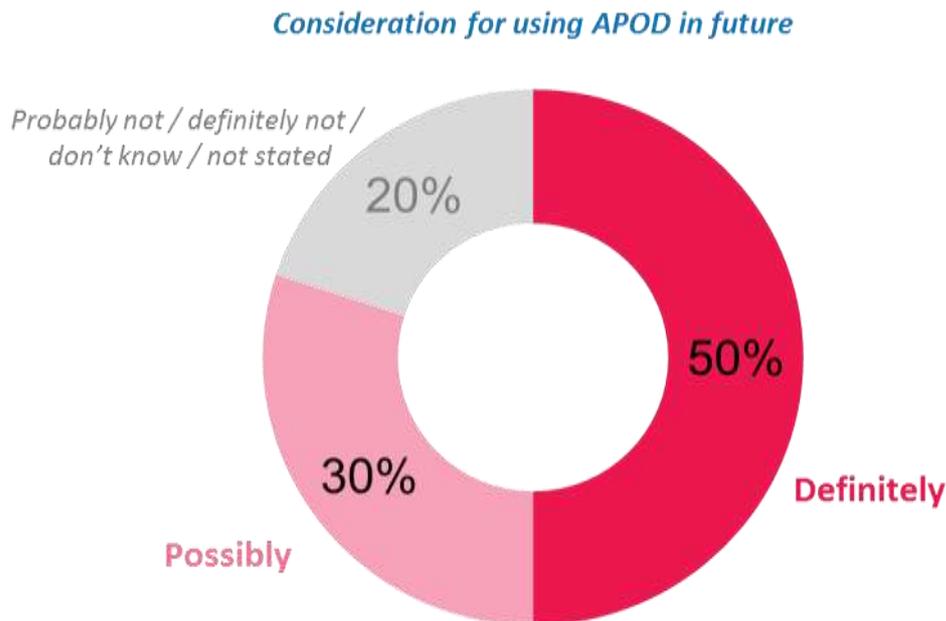
“I wouldn’t really [change the way I buy tickets]... If I knew now I had to travel on Wednesday I would book it now so that I have a cheap fare for Wednesday, because otherwise it’s a gamble.”

Frequent business traveller (summer 2014)

For passengers able to commit to a specific train well in advance of their journey it makes sense to book early. Naturally for these passengers, on these journey occasions, APOD makes very little difference.

4. Passenger reactions to the APOD concept

Passengers welcome the idea of making Advance tickets available on the day of travel. The majority of those taking part in the quantitative survey could see themselves using such a ticket at some point in the future.



Passengers saw a variety of potential benefits for themselves:

- Making rail travel cheaper on occasions – this could reduce some of the resentment around perceived high fares, and potentially reduce the difference in prices paid by passengers travelling on the same train.
- Allowing more people to travel more spontaneously – those with less disposable income may not have to plan so far ahead. In some cases rail would become an option for people making last-minute journeys, instead of using their car as the default or perhaps travelling by coach - often seen as less desirable because it takes longer.
- It seems a logical development, especially given the increasing use of mobile devices and apps, and more 'on the go' lifestyles – APOD is seen to fit well with the way that many people prefer to live.

Passengers also drew attention to wider potential benefits for the rail industry:

- APOD could encourage people to travel by train rather than defaulting to other transport for spontaneous journeys, and so increase the overall number of journeys. Note that this research was not intended to robustly test the extent to which APOD increases or decreases rail travel, but qualitative feedback

suggests that it would help many people to make more journeys by rail than they currently do.

- Extending better value fares to more people is fairer, and means that some people will see the rail industry in a more positive light. This is important because passengers often have a negative impression of the industry, especially around fares.
- There is some potential to spread journeys out a little across the day. A passenger purchasing on the day of travel may be able to wait a short time in order to take advantage of an APOD, and travel just outside peak time rather than during the peak; this could help capacity management across services.
- The natural fit of APOD with apps and M-tickets could increase their use, which in turn may help to boost the image of rail travel as innovative and relevant to contemporary lifestyles. Interestingly, several passengers said that they would appreciate APOD even more if they could buy and/or fulfil their ticket on their smartphone: this shows a lack of awareness of apps and M-tickets, even among people already using apps for other aspects of rail travel such as journey planning and live service information:

“It would improve the image. A lot of people feel as if they are being ripped off.”
Mid-frequency leisure traveller (summer 2014)

“Very good, I hope all the train companies go the same route.”
Frequent business traveller, APOD user (summer 2014)

“I rely a lot on public transport and I have had family emergencies where I have had to pay a lot of money and it makes the stress a lot worse and I get even more upset as I am paying an awful lot of money I haven’t got.”
Frequent traveller: own business & leisure (summer 2014)

“If I can go and save money 10 minutes before then that’s ideal, but if not I can revert back to my normal open ticket. So really I’m not losing anything [because my company pays]...but if I do get it then that’s a bonus.”
Infrequent commuter, APOD user (autumn 2014)

“I would be happy if they just got a mobile app, that would be more easy for me rather than the procedure at the moment where you either have to have a print out...or collect the ticket, or pay for it to be delivered by post. If they had a mobile app you can quickly access a screenshot or whatever and show your ticket on your phone. But right now XC doesn’t have this.”
Regular commuter and infrequent leisure traveller, APOD user

Feedback from passengers indicates that it would definitely be worthwhile rolling out APOD to other TOC networks.

5. Pointers for consideration when rolling out APOD

Ensuring the right people can take advantage

This research gathered views from passengers who used an APOD ticket and from those who did not, but potentially could have done. A key finding is that while the concept was universally welcomed, people who have not yet used an APOD ticket were generally more enthusiastic than those who have:

“It doesn’t really make a massive amount of difference. But yeah, if it gives people a better chance to get a cheaper ticket then why not.”

Frequent commuter/business traveller, APOD user (autumn 2014)

“Once I decide I’m going to Stoke by train then I’ll just pay whatever it costs and if it’s a bit cheaper because it’s an Advance [on the day] then all well and good, but if not then whatever.”

Infrequent leisure traveller, APOD user (autumn 2014)

“It’s brilliant; we would use that all the time!”

Frequent business traveller, non-APOD user (summer 2014)

APOD has not been widely publicised during the trial period, meaning that awareness is limited. 17 per cent of passengers on CrossCountry services claimed to have heard of the idea in October-November 2014 and many of the APOD users had not registered that they had actually purchased an Advance ticket on the day of travel. This means that during the trial period, APOD has been used mainly by people who have come across it unintentionally; it has not been a deliberate choice:

“I just went online to buy a ticket and that’s what I happened to buy. I didn’t know that I was buying anything in particular that was different.”

Infrequent leisure traveller, APOD user (autumn 2014)

“The only reason I knew was because of... taking part in this research.”

Mid-frequency leisure traveller (summer 2014)

“When I was in the pub booking to come home for a funeral I was surprised I got it so cheap. Now that you have mentioned it, I have realised [what it was].”

Mid-frequency commuter and leisure traveller, APOD user (autumn 2014)

So far most people taking advantage of APOD would have travelled anyway, and would have anyway bought their ticket on the day. These people, on these particular journeys, typically shared certain characteristics:

- they were a little less price sensitive – they were already willing, at least to some degree, to pay a walk-up fare
- they tended to be relatively familiar with travelling by train, meaning there was less novelty in making the journey than there might be for people who plan further in advance

- linked to both of the above, on-the-day purchasers are more likely to be travelling for work reasons, meaning the journey itself is arguably less enjoyable than people travelling for leisure, and often meaning that an employer is paying the fare.

These factors are reflected in the more muted enthusiasm that APOD users so far have had for the concept.

These findings suggest that there is plenty of scope for making more people aware of APOD, and so allowing more people to benefit in future. The types of passengers who stand to gain include those who have booked a few days in advance but would prefer to leave it a little longer, or have not considered rail for a last-minute journey and have gone by car instead.

The research shows that more passenger types will be able to benefit from APOD than have been able to use it during the trial. And because these un-reached passengers are likely to appreciate the benefits more fully, there is greater potential for goodwill than has been seen to date.

There is therefore an argument both for wider implementation of APOD, and for proactively making passengers aware of this option.

Generating awareness of APOD

On the whole, passengers agreed that it was important to let the public know about the move to make cheaper Advance tickets available for longer. They would welcome a 'good news story' about rail travel, and felt that people have a right to know:

"It's a public transport system. You have to let the public know."
Mid-frequency leisure traveller, non-APOD user (summer 2014)

Passengers' discussions about ticket purchasing highlighted some pointers for getting information about APOD across:

- The intuitive time to make passengers aware of cheaper APOD fares is when they are planning their journey. This might be online through journey planner tools on TOCs', National Rail Enquiries' and third party retailers' websites, some of which already use a 'limited availability' flag as Advance fares come close to selling out.
Some passengers spontaneously endorsed having a similar alert specifically for APOD tickets. A similar alert could be used in ticket vending machines (TVMs), and ticket clerks in station ticket offices could proactively offer APOD options to passengers who purchase at stations. See below for more on the availability of APOD through offline retail channels.
- Some passengers said email alerts would work well for them. For example, an email alert about the availability of cheaper Advance fares for the following day could prompt some to have a spontaneous day out. Some passengers went

further, suggesting that email alerts could be linked to two-for-one offers, similar to those already promoted by some operators and used as part of National Rail's marketing for Railcards. There are obvious links here that could enhance the use of both APOD and Railcards, potentially generating more journeys. These types of proactive alerts could also be sent via Twitter or other social media - communication channels already adopted by many TOCs.

This research indicates that both passengers and the industry could benefit from building awareness of APOD. But this must inform rather than confuse passengers, and not over-promise on the availability of cheaper fares.

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that the existing rail ticketing system is quite confusing for passengers. This is confirmed by this study. For instance, Advance tickets are usually cheaper than other fares, but they must be used on a specific train at a specific time; a passenger travelling with an Advance ticket on the wrong train is likely to be charged the full fare for a new ticket. Some of the comments made by participants in interviews show passengers' different understanding of this key restriction:

"I travel all over the place by train.... Yes I bought an Advance for that journey.... I could travel on any train as long as it was after nine in the morning."

Frequent leisure traveller (summer 2014)

Other comments illustrate misunderstanding around tickets and the way they are sold:

"I am sorry it just confuses me...Just recently for example, people said you should do this, you should do that, and I thought I will [just] go to the ticket office and buy a ticket there."

Infrequent leisure traveller (elderly), (summer 2014)

"I always imagine it would cost more from the ticket office; online you put your journey in and it gives you a number of options and you can select the price."

Mid-frequency leisure traveller (summer 2014)

The introduction of a 'new' type of ticket, or a new way of selling an existing ticket, could fuel this confusion - especially given the name. Indeed, the researchers frequently had to explain the concept of APOD during the interviews, and several people struggled with the idea of an Advance ticket which is not bought 'in advance'.

This suggests there is a case for not publicising the availability of APOD tickets, but allowing passengers to benefit from them without complicating their purchase process. However, given the wider benefits of raising awareness of APOD, we suggest generating publicity in the news, on money-saving tips websites, or in newsletters to registered customers.

This would allow the facts to be given, including the rationale for introducing the 'new ticket', the benefits to passengers explained, and importantly, will ensure that

passengers understand that there is limited availability and that cheaper fares will not always be available right up until the day of travel.

We also suggest that awareness is generated quite swiftly. The concept of APOD is likely to be a positive message for the rail industry in the short term, but its launch may be a temporary novelty; talking about it when it is topical will help capitalise on this potential good news story.

Potential concerns about APOD

Although the general reaction to APOD was positive, passenger interviews raised some concerns. These fell into two main categories – communication and technical issues.

Issues needing good communication when APOD is implemented

Some people anticipated passengers could be disappointed if they left their ticket purchase until the last minute expecting to find APOD ticket available, and then discovered that all of the cheaper tickets had sold out. Only one person in this research had actually experienced this, but as more people become aware of the APOD option this could become more common.

Similarly, if some TOCs adopt the use of APOD and others do not, false expectations could be raised if passengers assume there is consistency. Explanation of what APOD means could help to avoid disappointment; warning flags against ticket options in online journey planning tools could also help.

The potential added complexity in the ticket retail system was a concern for some people, and again requires careful handling of the way the tickets are sold and the way information about APOD is provided.

Reflecting a broader cynicism about the rail industry, a small number of people were unconvinced that APOD fares would genuinely be cheaper than normal walk-up fares (i.e. that tickets would be advertised as cheaper when they were not really). Some people showed a general suspicion, questioning why the industry was taking this step.

These sentiments are inevitable when APOD is rolled out, and TOCs and other industry bodies will need to act transparently, explain the facts in a straightforward way, and ensure that the roll out works smoothly and that cheaper prices are genuinely (and perhaps demonstrably) delivered to passengers.

A few passengers worried that the sale of more APOD tickets would lead to more overcrowding on trains, as more people make last-minute journeys. In reality this is unlikely, since APOD tickets will only be available on services which are not busy enough to have sold out of Advance fares before the day, but some passengers may need reassurance (perhaps through emphasis on their entitlement to a reserved seat).

Issues requiring more technical development or practical steps to be taken by TOCS

Some passengers assumed that APOD tickets would be available via all retail channels, including at stations, whereas during the trial period APODs have only been available for purchase online or via the CrossCountry app. Many passengers accepted this, but some felt strongly that it is unfair to restrict cheaper fares to those with internet access and inevitably, to give advantage to those with mobile internet access. The restriction to online-only purchase could potentially undermine the sense of fairness that is fostered by APOD, and so we recommend passengers should be able to buy the tickets online or at stations.

Some APOD users in the first wave of research described problems experienced with ticketing. One or two had a time lag between booking and receiving a confirmation email with their reference number for collecting the tickets from a TVM; a small number of others were concerned about the potential for more queues at TVMs if lots of people book tickets at the last minute and collect them immediately before boarding.

We think this concern about queues is unlikely to materialise, as there is little difference between last-minute collections of pre-booked tickets and last-minute purchases of tickets. However, operators should be on the alert and monitor ticket machine use for any issues resulting from APOD.

In terms of the email time lag, we did not come across any delays in the autumn wave of the research. We understand that any small technical issues in fulfilment were resolved quickly when they happened early on in the trial. However, the potential for passengers to have no time to collect APOD tickets needs to be thought through, and passenger feedback raises two observations:

- more could be made of the obvious fit between APOD and M-tickets – many passengers are not aware that M-tickets exist, so this fulfilment option should be given more prominence
- many passengers expected to be able to show an email on their smartphone or tablet to ticket inspectors on the train, rather than needing to print off an e-ticket or collect tickets from a TVM (indeed some passengers reported having done this on occasion). This point also highlights a more general need for full ticket details, including how to obtain and carry them, to be clearly communicated.

The majority of passengers were not concerned about the implications of APOD on seat reservations, and this appears to be less of an issue than Passenger Focus had initially anticipated.

Most of the people interviewed were reasonably or very familiar with the way that seat reservations currently work, and with a very small number of exceptions, had never experienced or witnessed any big problems. Generally, they felt that people were comfortable asking fellow passengers to move if they were mistakenly occupying a seat that they had reserved (and wanted). They also felt that most people are happy to move when asked.

If this extends to APOD, most passengers expected the same conventions and attitudes to apply. On the whole, they recognised that it might not be ideal that a 'new' passenger could reserve a seat which someone else was already sitting in, but that there wasn't a great deal that could be done about it; it was a relatively small issue which most reasonable passengers could work out sensibly between themselves. It is also worth noting that this already happens sometimes where seats can be reserved on the day (ROD).

Additionally, APOD tickets will rarely apply to over-subscribed services meaning that difficulties between passengers will be infrequent. Where there are other seats available, most passengers said they would simply sit in a different empty seat if someone was occupying 'theirs'.

Although it is unlikely to be a significant issue, it is worth taking steps to minimise the potential for problems around seat reservations if APOD is rolled out. It is vital that the reservation notifications are accurate and up to date, whether it is by an electronic system or paper tickets in the backs of seats.

Passengers generally favoured three main ways for managing APOD seat reservations:

- During the trial through late 2013 and 2014, there was a designated coach where seats could become reserved during the journey; passengers were in favour of this tactic – providing that the potential for seats to become taken is made clear. Some passengers suggested this spontaneously.
- There is an expectation that ticket inspectors or customer service staff will be able to help if there are any disputes between passengers, and so it will be important for on-board personnel to be prepared for this.
- A substantial proportion of APOD users felt that they would not necessarily have expected to get a reserved seat if they booked on the day of travel. Offering APOD without a designated seat, but with the ability to reserve one using the existing ROD system, would certainly be an option and would be acceptable to passengers.

6. Summary and conclusions

From a passenger perspective it makes sense to roll out APOD; the research indicates that there will be a market for Advance fares to be sold up until 10 minutes before a journey:

- In a quarter of journeys on CrossCountry services in this pilot, passengers bought their ticket on the day of travel. At least this proportion (and probably more) could potentially take advantage of APOD.
- Passengers' key criteria in choosing a ticket are value for money and/or the cheapest option, followed by flexibility; APOD fits well with these priorities.

The introduction of APOD is popular with passengers, with most saying they could see themselves using APOD in the future. They see a number of benefits:

- Rail travel will be cheaper on some occasions, meaning passengers are likely to feel happier about their overall journey.
- Some “walk-up” fares will be cheaper, allowing more people to be more spontaneous in their travel. They may also mean that passengers with less disposable income may not be forced to plan so far ahead, and that where unplanned trips have to be taken, rail may become an option to other, usually cheaper, modes of travel.
- APOD fits with other technological developments, especially apps and M-tickets, and more ‘on the go’ lifestyles.

There are also potential benefits for the rail industry:

- enabling passengers to include rail as an option for unplanned journeys could lead to an overall increase in rail journeys
- journeys on which APOD tickets are used will be seen as better value for money, and a fairer, better value approach to ticket retailing could improve overall perceptions of the rail industry
- potential for journeys to be spread out a little across the day could aid capacity management
- the natural fit between APOD, apps and M-tickets could help build momentum for all of these developments, which in turn could further boost positive perceptions of rail travel.

The research suggests that it is worth communicating the move to passengers. Many of the people who could benefit most from APOD have not been able to during the trial period, either because they do not currently leave their ticket purchase until the day of travel, or because they would not consider rail for last-minute, unplanned journeys.

Passengers feel they have a right to know, seeing rail as something of a public service. This is a good news story for the rail industry – an opportunity not to be missed.

We suggest communicating APOD through:

- drawing passengers' attention to cheaper APOD fares at point of purchase
- sending alerts to passengers about available APOD tickets the day before they can be used, for example via direct emails or social media or possibly linking with Railcards promotions
- coverage in the press, newsletters or consumer websites, spreading a good news story and explaining some of the detail and the rationale for APOD.

Although the concept of APOD is almost universally welcomed, there are some issues that will need to be addressed if it is rolled out more widely, and which will need good and clear communication:

- managing passengers' expectations about the availability of APOD tickets
- potential complexity in the ticket retail system and further confusion and misattribution around ticket types and their names
- cynicism about the rail industry, meaning that some passengers will need to see that cheaper tickets are now available.

Other issues will require further technical developments, or for TOCs to take some practical steps:

- Many passengers expect APOD tickets to be available through all retail channels, including offline.
- In line with the more 'on-the-go' approach to travel booking, there is some expectation that ticketing should be more mobile. This includes an appetite for more M-tickets and, in some cases, for use of email confirmation (in electronic format rather than a printed e-ticket) as proof of ticket purchase.
- Potential problems around seat reservations are less of an issue than initially feared, and steps can be taken to minimise them. These should include a designated coach with 'reservable' seats and clear training or guidance to on-board staff who may be required to assist if passengers misunderstand seat allocations. TOCs may also choose not to make seat reservations mandatory for APODs, and this would be acceptable to passengers.

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