



Summary of passenger views from
Passenger Focus snapshot survey at
Brighton station

March 2006

1. Introduction

This snapshot survey was conducted by Passenger Focus as part of activities to profile the newly launched organisation with passengers at key locations across the country.

The activities took place at Brighton station from 8am – 11 am on Wednesday 8th March and thus engaged passengers travelling on both peak and off-peak services. Passenger Focus staff randomly distributed postcards to passengers across the concourse and platforms and also handed out branded promotional materials including leaflets, pens, mascots and sticks of 'Brighton rock'. This created opportunities to talk directly to passengers about their journey experiences and the work Passenger Focus would be undertaking.

The survey postcard featured the Passenger Focus mascot in a seaside scene and invited passengers to complete an open question by identifying the three things that they felt would improve their journey. They were asked to return it to the organisation via a freepost address.

2. Snapshot survey results

Around 1400 postcards were handed out and a response rate of 12% was achieved. This is a moderately high rate considering the cards were unsolicited and required passengers to voluntarily return them.

The responses were collated and then analysed by grouping the suggestions into themes. The percentage figures in the analysis below represent the proportion of passengers mentioning a particular point out of the total number of responses received.

[Please note – All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The survey respondents were users of various train services into and out of Brighton station. Comments have only been attributed to specific services where these were identifiable.]

2.1 Train Interior Requirements

Enhancements to train interiors and facilities were the most commonly requested improvements, with 50% of respondents highlighting these issues. Over 13% specifically mentioned cleaner trains on the Thameslink route. The other principal comments were:

- having power sockets and wi-fi access inside trains
- more space required for luggage, seats and tables
- improved heating/cooling systems on board
- introduction of quiet coaches
- more facilities such as baby changing facilities and bins on trains.

2.2 Fares

Fares were the second highest concern for respondents, with over 33% mentioning this. Just over 25% wanted to see cheaper fares, especially during commuter hours. Suggestions included:

- cheaper travel for season ticket holders and students
- incentive scheme for frequent travellers
- simpler fare structure.

2.3 Availability of seats/overcrowding

26% of passengers surveyed wanted more seating and/or more trains during peak times. Passengers also highlighted the fact that first class carriages are not always filled, whilst standard carriages often have standing room only.

2.4 Train times

29 % of passenger respondents suggested changes to current train timetables. The most frequent request (18%) was for more frequent and/or faster trains to/from London, especially during peak times. Other suggestions included:

- better [more frequent] weekend services
- reducing need for changing trains on routes
- fewer stops on routes
- replacing the Gatwick Express with more frequent trains on Brighton/coastal routes.

2.5 Ease of purchasing tickets

21% of respondents made specific comments about problems in purchasing tickets. Comments mentioned long queues at ticket office and the availability, speed and reliability of ticket machines. An increase in the number of mobile ticket sellers and the facility to collect pre-booked tickets at Brighton station were suggested.

2.6 Toilet facilities

Overall, 17% mentioned improved toilet facilities at stations and on trains as one of the areas which would improve journeys.

2.7 Refreshments

17% passengers would like to see more refreshments (drinks/snacks) being served on board trains but at a reasonable price.

2.8 Station facilities

In addition to the specific comments about ticket purchase, a further 16% of passengers wanted to see improvements made to stations and there were particular recommendations aimed at Brighton station. These suggestions included:

- state number of carriages on information display boards
- better facilities at Brighton station (shops / café)
- smaller gaps between train and platform

- non-slip areas at station when wet – entrance to Brighton station dangerous when its raining
- need to reintroduce stand at the taxi rank so people know where to wait
- site a Departure board on other side for those changing trains
- more seating in the area where wait for trains at station / add fold down seats
- brighten up the station / make it more colourful.

Other, more general comments suggested more bins at stations, providing customer suggestion boxes as an ongoing facility, warm waiting rooms and better lit stations “Out of hours.”

2.9 Punctuality, Reliability & Information

13% of respondents complained about train delays and cancellations which occur due to engineering works. Passengers would like to see more trains running on time.

A further 7% of passengers mentioned that they would like to be given more accurate information and kept more up-to-date at stations and on trains during disruptions.

2.10 Staff issues

9% of passengers made comments about improved availability and attitude of staff.

2.11 Other comments

Other suggestions highlighted the need to address anti-social behaviour such as playing loud music, talking loudly on mobile phones and putting feet on seats.

In addition to the suggestions for improvements there were also several comments that recognised recent improvements in Southern services.

3. Conclusion

Whilst only relatively small in scale, the results from this snapshot survey have provided a useful snapshot of the views on services and facilities of passengers using Brighton station. We now intend to use the information gained to supplement other evidence from passengers (including findings from the National Passenger Survey) in our dialogue with the Train Operating Companies about the issues passengers identify as important and the areas where they seek improvements.

We will be urging the Train Operating Companies to take note of the issues identified and suggestions made and take forward actions on these recommendations to improve their services.

4. Further information

Further information about this snapshot survey is available from:

- Sultana Idris, Project Co-ordinator: 0870 336 6113 / sultana.idris@passengerfocus.org.uk
- The following people work on issues relating to specific Train Operating Companies:
 - Sharon Hedges, Passenger Link Manager - responsible for issues relating to Southern services: 07918 626126 / sharon.hedges@passengerfocus.org.uk
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- To find out more about the work of Passenger Focus or to obtain information and advice contact: www.passengerfocus.org.uk or 08453 022 022



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