

Making a difference
2009-10 Business Plan

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Introduction

Passenger Focus is the independent consumer watchdog for Britain's rail passengers and England's bus and coach passengers outside of London. This business plan sets out how Passenger Focus plans to make a difference and get the best deal for passengers in 2009 and 2010.

This plan represents the first year of activity under the umbrella of Passenger Focus's new corporate plan (see www.passengerfocus.org.uk) which sets out our direction of travel from 2009 to 2012. Passenger Focus's approach of making a difference and getting the best deal for passengers, driven by research, will remain. This year we hope to seek the views of over 100,000 passengers.

Passenger Focus is taking on new and exciting roles. Starting to represent bus and coach passengers outside of London while continuing to deliver on rail passenger issues in England, Scotland and Wales, represents a considerable challenge. In addition, the Department for Transport (DfT) has just issued a consultation document on the future economic regulation of airports. This proposes that Passenger Focus's remit is extended to cover air passenger representation. We would welcome this new role.

Passenger Focus has three main priorities this year. These issues have been selected on the basis of where passengers tell us there are issues and where we feel we can make most difference:

- Rail fares and ticketing. This includes looking at retailing accuracy, queuing times and the timely release of advance purchase fares as well as looking to improve passenger confidence in the fares and ticketing system
- Passenger information during rail disruption. Passenger Focus research shows that the main driver of passenger satisfaction is punctuality. The main driver of dissatisfaction is how delays are dealt with. We intend to research the passenger experience and push the industry to improve the management of both planned and unplanned disruption management

- Building Passenger Focus's knowledge, experience and skills in bus and coach passenger issues and representation. Passenger Focus needs to trial and test how to combine research and on the ground advocacy.

Passenger Focus has the following main campaign objectives for the year:

- Campaign for changes to the rail fares regulation formula to, among other things, tie fare rises to performance improvements; securing the introduction of widely available direct debit schemes for annual season tickets; the widespread introduction of carnet style products to help part time travellers; posters at every station clearly displaying the main off peak walk up return prices available
- Getting national published train performance data (the Public Performance Measure) broken down by route as well as train company. This will allow a much more effective scrutiny of good and less good performance within individual train companies and Network Rail areas
- Seek a commitment from Network Rail and train companies to reduce the use of bus replacement services
- Pursue improved quality monitoring of assistance provision to disabled passengers
- Seek improved recording of overcrowding.



Anthony Smith - Chief Executive

About Passenger Focus

Vision

That operators, funders, and regulators of transport systems **put passengers first**

Mission

Getting the best deal for passengers

Values

In order to make a difference for passengers, we need to ensure that we are recognised as being forward-thinking, proactive, and enabling. This will be realised through our four core values, which we try to demonstrate throughout our work:

- independence – we will be impartial, objective and fair in all our activities
- credibility – our work will be evidence based
- inclusiveness – we seek to represent all the passengers covered by our remit
- influence – in order to deliver change, we will constructively and energetically engage with public bodies and private operators on behalf of passengers and other stakeholders.

Priorities

Passenger Focus is a relatively small organisation. We make work priority choices based on passengers' priorities and resources.

In developing our choices for work priorities we ask:

- Is the issue of direct concern to passengers?
- How many passengers will be affected and how serious is the actual or potential impact?
- Will addressing the issue improve the service and / or deliver significant improvements to the passenger experience?
- Do we have the resources to deal with the issue?
- Are we best placed to focus on the subject?
- Is the issue within our remit?

Our annual business plans permit us to alter priorities and our resources to meet changes in circumstances as they emerge.



Objectives and activities 2009-10

Priority 1

Making a difference for all rail passengers

Objectives and key rail activities

Increase our understanding of the needs, aspirations and experiences of passengers:

- Conduct two waves of the rail National Passenger Survey (NPS)
- Increase the extent to which the NPS is used to drive decision making within the industry
- Conduct research to identify priorities for improvement for English, Scottish and Welsh rail passengers
- Carry out research to identify rail passenger priorities at a Route Utilisation Strategy or franchise level.

Performance and safety

- Monitor punctuality across the rail network and respond where performance is poor
- Investigate the extent to which the Public Performance Measure reflects the actual passenger experience of delay
- Campaign for greater breakdown of performance data – i.e. to route rather than train operating company level
- Ensure that passengers' safety and security priorities are understood and heard.

Fares and value for money

- Campaign for the introduction of a direct debit scheme for annual season tickets and carnets

- Campaign for changes to the fares regulation formula
- Hold the rail industry to account and promote transparency and accountability through research into:
 - Accuracy of retailing
 - Ticket purchase queuing times
 - Availability of advance purchase fares
- Work to ensure that the industry improves passenger confidence in the fares and ticketing system.

Capacity

- Maximise the extent to which the future development of rail infrastructure meets the needs of passengers
- Maximise the extent to which major rail projects address passenger needs
- Maximise the extent to which the needs of passengers are taken into account in Route Utilisation Strategies:
 - Yorkshire and Humberside
 - Great Western
 - Kent
 - Sussex
 - West Midlands and Chilterns
 - East Midlands
 - West Coast Main Line.



- Maximise the extent to which the specification of franchises addresses the needs of passengers
- Monitor train companies' legal and contractual obligations to passengers
- Investigate through research if seat reservation systems meet passenger needs
- Ensure through research that the design of new trains meets passengers' needs and aspirations. This research will cover Super Express and ScotRail trains.

Delays and planned disruption

- Improve the way that the rail industry manages service disruption and the provision of information to passengers – including carrying out research into bus replacement services and unplanned disruption
- Minimise disruption to passengers caused by major rail projects such as Thameslink and Reading
- Carry out research into the re-development of London King's Cross and Birmingham New Street stations.

End to end journeys

- Identify the lessons learnt from the Passenger Focus integrated transport research (currently underway)
- Investigate through research passenger needs for car and cycle parking and access to stations.

Priority 2

Tackle examples of poor rail passenger service



Objectives and key activities

- Use the National Passenger Survey and other research to identify good and poor service to passengers
- Communicate concerns from passenger groups and other stakeholders about poor service to the industry and ensure issues of high priority are acted on.
- Carry out research into passenger experience of unstaffed stations in Wales.

Priority 3

Improve access to services for rail passengers with particular needs



Objectives and key activities

- Work with the industry to improve the monitoring and delivery of assisted passenger reservations service for passengers
- Improve journey planning information for passengers with disabilities
- Build a contact database of passengers with disabilities who would be willing to help with research
- Increase the rail industry's understanding of those groups of passengers who face greatest barriers to using rail services.

Priority 4

Promote good practice in rail complaint handling and provide advice and advocacy to complainants

Objectives and key activities

- To deliver efficient, effective complaints handling mediation and advice service, ensuring 65% of complainants are satisfied with the way Passenger Focus handled their complaint
- Improve the handling of complaints by the rail industry
- Enhance our understanding of the potential effect of consumer protection regulations and identify how these can best be used to improve customer service for passengers.



Priority 5

Build and deliver effective passenger representation for bus and coach passengers

Objectives and key activities

- Carry out research that underpins our campaigning and lobbying and also informs our thinking on behalf of bus and coach passengers
 - Take, from April 2009, responsibility for the Department for Transport's (DfT) Bus Mystery Traveller Survey
 - Prepare to take responsibility, from April 2010, for the DfT's Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey
 - Carry out research to identify bus and coach passengers priorities for improvement
 - Publish research into the consumer experience of concessionary fares
 - Carry out research into bus passenger complaint handling, including making recommendations for change if necessary
 - Developing, piloting and publishing the results of Passenger Focus's own bus passenger satisfaction survey in Southampton, Bristol, Dorset, Lincolnshire, Tyne and Wear and the West Midlands. Carry out further research in up to fourteen other areas.
- Explore opportunities for joint work with transport providers and planners
- Enhance Passenger Focus's understanding of the policy and regulatory framework surrounding bus and coach operations and identify opportunities to improve services for passengers
- Test different methods of passenger link team working



- Influence decisions that affect bus and coach passengers and secure improvements to services at a national, regional and local level
- Engage major stakeholders and the bus and coach industry to both inform them of our work
- Gain knowledge of the bus and coach sector that will inform and develop Passenger Focus policy in addition to facilitating training and then work within pilot areas.

Priority 6

Increase awareness of Passenger Focus and our influence with stakeholders



Objectives and key activities

- Increase the access of passenger groups and stakeholders to decision-making processes within the rail industry
- Identify opportunities to promote passengers' interests at a European level
- To build and maintain awareness of Passenger Focus with key stakeholders
- Maintain and improve the website to ensure it accurately reflects our work
- Maintain a proactive 24-hour press office
- Publish national and regional Passenger Voice stakeholder bulletins quarterly
- Hold an annual conference to bring together industry and passenger representatives to discuss common themes and issues
- Hold fringe events at the three main Great Britain party political conferences
- Implement the Passenger Focus Welsh language scheme.

Priority 7

Boosting Passenger Focus's capacity and capability to get the best deal for passengers

Objectives and key activities

Board and Governance

Ensure that Passenger Focus's board sets the organisation's overall strategic direction, monitors financial and other performance and takes major policy decisions in a transparent and evidence based way. This will be partly achieved through:

- Regular public board and other committee meetings, which will decide and review policy, performance and finance issues
- Publish an Annual Report and Accounts
- Manage the annual budgets and ensure value for money in purchasing
- Manage organisational risk.

Staff and reward

- Retain and recruit high quality individuals who are supported in their roles through appropriate development and training opportunities
- Review the reward package within Passenger Focus
- Undertake a training needs analysis to formulate a training schedule that provides the essential knowledge and skills required to fulfil the requirements of roles delivering bus and coach passenger representation

- Involve staff through the Passenger Focus staff forum and hold regular staff meetings.

Change

- Manage the change process within Passenger Focus to ensure that the move to our new bus and coach remit is successful. Ensuring that the delivery and quality of our rail passenger work is not compromised, while maintaining communications with internal and external stakeholders. Our goal is to be an organisation that is fit for purpose but agile enough to exploit opportunities when they arise
- Design and deliver a programme of work to develop the expertise, systems and internal organisation of the passenger link team
- Improve the way the passenger link team works and communicates with other teams within Passenger Focus as well as external stakeholders.

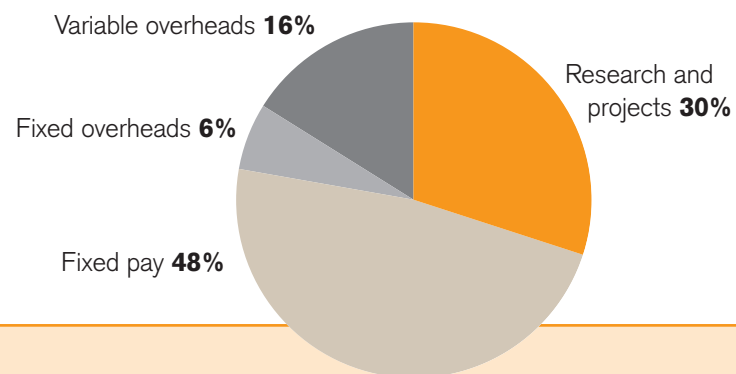
Infrastructure

Maintain and develop our information technology and telecoms infrastructure to include:

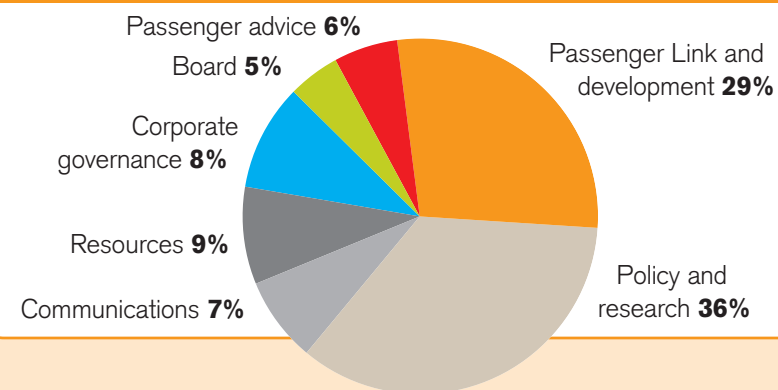
- Development of online collaboration tools
- Trial of video conferencing technology
- Enhancement of the intranet.

Budget 2009-10

2009-10 Budget allocation by cost type



2009-10 Budget allocation by team



Budget allocation by cost type

	Total	Rail	Bus
Fixed pay	3,534	2,820	714
Fixed overheads	458	376	82
Variable overheads	1,206	890	316
Research and projects	2,202	1,714	488
Total	7,400	5,800	1,600

How we work

• Passengers



• Research

Commission research, manage research projects and the National Passenger Survey, analyse data and advise on research methods.

• Passenger Link

Work with stakeholders, the media, and passengers to influence service improvements.

• Passenger Advice

Responsible for incoming contacts, dealing with complaints and providing advice to passengers.

• Policy

Deal with policy issues, provide policy advice and respond to consultations.

• Development

Support the passenger link team on specific projects and develop the passenger link and passenger advice services.

• Communications

Responsible for all communications, public affairs, publications, the press office and our website.

• Chairman

Responsible for the overall strategic direction of the organisation.

• Chief Executive's Team

Responsible for the running of the organisation and delivery of workplans. Ensures corporate governance and business planning arrangements are in place and supports the Board and committees.

• Board

Provide overall strategic direction and governance for the organisation.

• Resources

Provide support for issues such as staff, money, premises, communications and technology.

www.passengerfocus.org.uk

Passengerfocus 
putting passengers first

Measuring and tracking our performance

Passenger Focus will:

- Publish an annual report on performance, activities and expenditure
- Every other year ask service providers, Network Rail and those other organisations Passenger Focus seeks to influence:

"How influential has Passenger Focus been in helping you to understand, prioritise and act on passenger experiences and needs?"

"How much impact has Passenger Focus had in making a difference for passengers?"

This stakeholder survey will probe how Passenger Focus's values of independence, credibility, inclusiveness and influence are being demonstrated in practice by carrying out a number of in-depth interviews with key government and industry figures. All those asked can reply anonymously ensuring a high degree of objectivity in the responses.

- Draw up annual business plans detailing the work we will do to address our priorities
- Report four times a year in public at Board meetings on progress towards meeting targets, including reports on our work with individual train companies
- Ensure that levels of passenger satisfaction with Passenger Focus's handling of complaints remains at the current annual average of 65%
- Ensure that passengers rate Passenger Focus as easy to find and contact
- Track and report on the number of passengers that we engage with through research and consultation
- Track and report on the major policy decisions within the rail, bus and coach industries that we have influenced
- Track and report on the number of wins for passengers secured by Passenger Focus.

Internal success measures

Budget and audit

Aim to ensure all internal audit assignments (as approved by the audit committee) return no less than a 'substantial assurance' opinion

Ensure annual audit opinion of Comptroller & Auditor General is unqualified

Aim to manage budget allocations in total to within 5% in the first three quarters of the year and 1% in the final quarter

Unplanned absence

Maintain unplanned absence levels across the organisation below national average (2008 private sector baseline: 4.3%; Passenger Focus 3.0%)

Diversity

Promote workplace diversity using an annual review of our statutory equality scheme(s)

Key performance indicators

Description	Target
A Passenger advice	
A1 Calls answered in 20 seconds	85%
A2 Calls answered	95%
A3 Rail appeals acknowledged in five working days	95%
A4 Enquiries closed in five working days	95%
A5 Rail appeals closed in 35 working days	75%
A6 Average response time to rail appeals	35%
A7 Complaints about Passenger Focus closed in 20 working days	60%
A8 Percentage of cases that result in complaints about Passenger Focus	below 5%
A9 Cases to be logged on database on day of receipt	95%
A10 Passengers satisfied with the service they have received	65%
B Finance and resources	
B1 Budgeted expenditure (April-December)	within 5%
B2 Invoices paid within 30 days	98%
B3 Expenses paid within 10 working days	100%

BP reference	Description	Target
B Finance and resources continued		
B4	Unplanned absence levels maintained below national average	below 3.5%
C Corporate governance and information risk		
C1	Send out agendas and minutes before meetings (working days)	five
C2	Produce agendas and first draft minutes (working days)	five
C3	Quarterly information risk assessment	100%
C4	'Personal protect' data security incidents	Nil
C5	Same day expense claim turnaround	90%

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Contact us

If you want to know more about the work we are doing on your behalf to ensure you get a better deal when you travel by rail, bus or coach contact us:

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