

# Recruitment of a new Chair for Passenger Focus

## Information for applicants

May 2014



Department for Transport



The Commissioner for Public Appointments

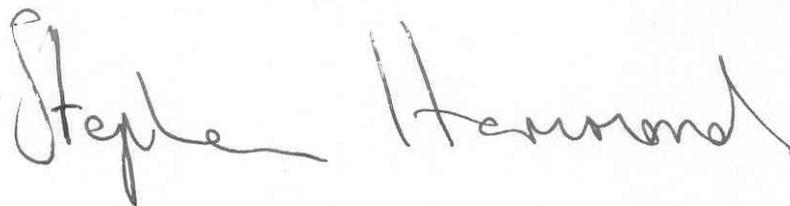
**Message from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Stephen Hammond MP**



I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of Passenger Focus, the statutory watchdog for Britain's rail passengers and England's bus, coach and tram passengers outside of London.

I am looking to appoint an individual with a real commitment to the interests of passengers – someone who will use the enviable evidence base that Passenger Focus has built up since it was created in 2005 to drive performance improvements, raise levels of satisfaction, and make sure the passenger perspective is heard in discussions about funding and specification. I also want an individual who can successfully steer the relatively newly-appointed board of Passenger Focus and its executive team through the challenges of the years ahead.

I hope you find the process of application stimulating as well as fair and reasonable and thank you again for your interest in applying.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Hammond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

**Stephen Hammond**

## **CONTENTS**

1. Making a difference for all passengers
2. Description of the Role
3. Person Specification
4. Equality and Diversity
5. Application process
6. OCPA complaints procedure

## **APPENDICES**

- I. The Nolan Principles - The Seven Principles of Public Life

*Provided separately for you to download*

- II. Terms and conditions of appointment
- III. The membership codes parts A and B
- IV. Form A - diversity monitoring
- V. Form B - political activity
- VI. Form C - conflict of interests
- VII. Form D - referees and declaration

## 1. Making a difference for passengers

Passenger Focus is an *evidence* based *consumer* body which seeks to influence industry and government to adopt policies and practices which reflect as closely as possible passenger priorities. It uses the passenger experience of travel to drive performance improvements from providers and planners to match stated passenger needs. Its power lies in its reputation for accuracy and straightforwardness and the balance which its board and staff bring to the reports and arguments it deploys.

Passenger Focus will address failings and bad practice as identified by the passenger surveys it carries out and by complaints brought to its attention, but it seeks to do so largely by persuasion and by powerful comparative bench marking across industries and sectors. It has achieved significant benefits for passengers and helped bring about greater industry focus on them. It is careful not to act as a lobby for the rail, bus or tram industries or their supporters, or to represent exclusively any group although it works with those who have a specialist interest when it is appropriate to do so. It does not campaign for greater or less expenditure but rather seeks to ensure that money to be spent is directed to where it best serves passengers. It seeks to have constructive relationships with the stakeholders in the sectors it covers and to be fair in its judgements and pronouncements praising where appropriate as well as criticising where necessary. It is very keen to maintain its reputation for independence and willing where necessary to hold to account those who are seen to be failing passengers. Passenger Focus seeks to make its research *useful* to both industry and national and local government as a means of getting those who take decisions about rail, bus and tram services to listen to what it is saying on behalf of passengers. Its work is currently focussed on the following key areas:

- ensuring that the passenger voice in rail franchising is radically boosted, making the organisation's aim of passenger power a reality
- dealing with some 3,000 rail 'appeal' complaints where train companies and passengers are deadlocked. It will achieve at least 70% passenger satisfaction with the way it handles passenger complaints
- increasing the size and usefulness of the Bus Passenger Survey
- using its bus punctuality project to refocus the bus industry, local government and the Traffic Commissioners on that key passenger need: improving bus punctuality
- making sure that rail passengers who have made an innocent mistake and do not have a 'valid' ticket will no longer be treated like criminals
- carrying out a Tram Passenger Survey
- publishing research on the experiences of younger passengers (drawn from its existing work).

Government has also announced its intention to give Passenger Focus a further role representing users of the strategic road network. This will draw on many of the existing strengths of Passenger Focus, but will also involve the organisation moving into new areas with which it is not yet familiar. Passenger Focus will need to uphold its existing standards, develop new skills and establish itself as a credible, independent representative of road users if it is to deliver this role successfully.

**The Department for Transport and Passenger Focus are seeking an outstanding individual to join the board as Chair.** The Chair will guide the board and the executive, being substantially responsible for Passenger Focus's results. One of the Chair's prime responsibilities will be to maintain Passenger Focus's effectiveness and to ensure that its campaigning style remains rooted in evidence, benchmarking and constructive criticism. In particular, the Chair will be responsible for setting its forward strategy and positioning, and for maintaining its hard won reputation. The Chair may also need to oversee Passenger Focus as it adopts new areas of work, and adapts its skills to new tasks.

### *History*

Passenger Focus has existed in some form since 1947 when the Central Transport Consultative Committee (CTCC) and a network of Transport Users Consultative Committees were established as the passenger representative bodies. It was given extended powers in 1962 and again in 1968. When the rail network in the UK was privatised in 1993 the committees were replaced with the Rail Users Consultative Committee (RUCC) Network, including the Central Rail Users Consultative Committee (CRUCC) as the national co-ordinating body. In 2000 it became the Rail Passengers Council and Committees (RPC).

Passenger Focus is a single GB-wide organisation which replaced the previous Rail Passengers Council and regional Rail Passengers Committees. Passenger Focus is the operating name of what is now The Passengers' Council.

The Local Transport Act 2008 enabled the Secretary of State to extend Passenger Focus's remit through secondary legislation so that it now represents bus passengers in England (outside of London) and on scheduled domestic coach journeys.

### *Passenger Focus now*

The organisation is structured as an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Transport. The Scottish Government, National Assembly for Wales and the London Assembly each appoint a member to the Board. The remaining appointments, including the Chair, are made by the Secretary of State for Transport through an appointments process regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Current board member profiles can be found at [www.passengerfocus.org.uk/about/management](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/about/management) along with a full organisational structure chart. The Board meets approximately four times per year in public, and monthly in private. The Board meets in London, Manchester and other places across Great Britain. For more information about Passenger Focus please visit [www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk) where you can read a copy of the current year workplan and links to many activities in which it is involved.

### *Future*

As mentioned above, the Department for Transport has recently announced its intention to give Passenger Focus a remit in respect of users of the strategic road network ([see Government Response to consultation on transforming the Highways Agency into a government-owned company](#), April 2014). This will mean a substantial change in the range of Passenger Focus's activities, expanding its work to cover new areas, and a requirement to use existing skills in new ways. It will also entail a significant increase in the size of the organisation. The Chair would need to ensure that Passenger Focus is able to make this transition smoothly, and while continuing to deliver its current functions.

### *Key points to note when considering whether to apply*

The Chair will be paid £35,000 per annum based on an expected average of two days commitment a week, and will be paid monthly. Pay is subject to statutory deductions and is paid via payroll. The appointment is not pensionable.

You must be a regular user of public transport in the UK and a UK taxpayer to be eligible for this appointment. References will be taken up, and other enquiries into your suitability for this role may be made.

You may not be a Member of Parliament, a Member of the Scottish Parliament or the Welsh Assembly, a Member of the London Assembly or of the European Parliament. You may be a member of the House of Lords but if you are you will be guided in your conduct in that House by the Statement made by Lord Addison in the House on 21 March 1951 as amended by the Second Report from the Select Committee on Procedures of the House, 3 February 1971.

You should carefully read the provisions of the Passenger Focus Membership Codes to ensure that you will be able to satisfy, in particular, the requirements of provisions in respect of financial and related interests. These Codes are to be updated to reflect the recent announcement in respect of road users referred to above.

The appointment will be offered for four years, which may be renewed, subject to satisfactory performance.

## 2. Description of the Role

As Chair, you will be expected to work in partnership with staff and key stakeholders across the country. You will ensure that the passenger voice is not only heard but understood and acted upon by those in positions of influence. This is a role for a proactive person with the capacity and passion to identify the need for, and promote, change, and communicate superbly.

You will also chair monthly meetings of the Passenger Focus board. Good boards are created by good Chairs. The Chair creates the conditions for overall board and individual director effectiveness. A Chair should demonstrate the highest standards of integrity and probity, and set clear expectations concerning the organisation's culture, values and behaviours, and the style and tone of board discussions. The Chair, with the help of the executive directors and head of business services, sets the agenda for the board's deliberations. Among your key responsibilities will be:

- demonstrating ethical leadership;
- setting a board agenda which is primarily focused on strategy, performance, passenger value creation and accountability, and ensuring that issues relevant to these areas are reserved for board decision and within the policy and resources framework determined by the Secretary of State;
- being ready to preside over the adoption of new responsibilities in areas that are linked to existing areas of strength, but which require the development of new capabilities within the organisation;
- ensuring that the responsible Minister is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of Passenger Focus or on the attainability of its targets, and determining the steps needed to deal with such changes;
- ensuring Passenger Focus supplies a timely flow of high-quality supporting financial and management information, ensuring any concerns are brought to attention, providing assurance to the Department that appropriate action has been taken;
- making certain that the board determines the nature and extent of the significant risks the organisation is willing to embrace in the implementation of its strategy, and that there are no 'no go' areas which prevent directors from operating effective oversight in this area;
- regularly considering succession planning and the composition of the board;
- making certain that the board has effective decision-making processes and applies sufficient challenge to major proposals, so that it ensures any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with; ensuring that the Board operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with the sponsor Department and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds;
- ensuring the board's committees are properly structured with appropriate terms of reference;

- encouraging all board members to engage in board and committee meetings by drawing on their skills, experience, knowledge and, where appropriate, independence;
- fostering relationships founded on mutual respect and open communication both in and outside the boardroom and between the non-executive directors and the executive team;
- developing productive working relationships with all executive directors and the Chief Executive in particular by providing support and advice while respecting executive responsibility; consulting the committee chairs on board matters in accordance with the Code; and taking the lead on issues of director development, including through induction programmes for new directors and regular reviews with all directors;
- discussing and agreeing the objectives and performance of the Chief Executive.;
- ensuring the Board holds the Executive to account;
- acting on the results of board evaluation;
- being aware of, and responding to, his or her own development needs, including people and other skills, especially when taking on the role for the first time;
- ensuring effective communication with stakeholders;
- ensuring that all directors are made aware of the views of the sponsoring government department.

### 3. Person Specification

Passenger Focus would like to hear from candidates who can demonstrate the following abilities in their application:

#### 1. Improving performance through change and effective decision making

A Chair is expected to create and contribute to a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take managed risks. An effective Chair will harness the skills of the board and executive team in creating evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions.

#### 2. Leading

As Chair you will establish a strong direction, uphold the reputation of Passenger Focus's work and hold the Chief Executive to account.

#### 3. Communicating

An effective Chair will communicate with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm, supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and dedication to a diverse range of consumer needs.

#### 4. Collaborating and Partnering

You should be able to successfully create and maintain positive and professional working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the industry. The Chair should encourage collaboration, build effective partnerships and maintain the confidence of key stakeholders, including Ministers.

#### 5. Demonstrable understanding of transport issues

Transport users face many issues which go unresolved year on year, and many have no alternative to public transport. A grasp of these and other strategic issues facing the passenger transport sector is essential. The Chair must be a regular user of public transport in Great Britain, for business or leisure or as a commuter, so that passengers can be confident that those who represent them understand their concerns and share their experiences.

#### **Desirable skills, knowledge and experience**

In addition to the above, ideally, candidates should demonstrate knowledge of three or more areas of the following:

- Consumer affairs
- Customer facing business
- Transport industry structure
- Regulatory affairs
- Influencing in a Political environment
- Running a Board
- Evidence based campaigning
- Media and/or public relations issues and in particular new/social media
- Central or local government

#### **4. Equality and Diversity**

The Secretary of State is committed to the principle of public appointments based on merit, independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. Passenger Focus is committed to equality and diversity and positively welcomes applicants from all walks of life.

#### **5. Application process**

The recruitment process and appointment will be regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and will include an Independent Public Appointments Assessor as the Chair of the selection panel. The role of the Independent Public Appointments Assessor is to:

- assist the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Ministers, other appointing authorities and departments to make effective public appointments which command public confidence;
- provide an assurance that the appointments process has conformed to the principles and practices set out in the Code of Practice; and
- ensure that appointments are made in a fair and open way and are made on merit to high quality candidates drawn from a strong and diverse field.

To apply for this post you must:

- Provide an up- to-date and comprehensive curriculum vitae; (which includes your preferred salutation (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms etc.).
- Provide a covering letter setting out why you are interested in the role and **clearly** how you meet the criteria.
- Complete and attach the political activity form B – this information will be provided to the Panel only for those applicants selected for interview, to enable them to explore such activity with the candidates in the context of their ability to perform their role.
- Complete and attach the conflict of interests form C
- Complete and attach the referees and declaration form D

In addition, we would like you to:

- Complete and attach the diversity monitoring form A. This form is not part of the selection process and will be treated in confidence. This will be kept separate from your application and will not be seen by the selection panel.

Send all of the above by email to Jon Carter, Head of Business Services Passenger Focus at: [boardrecruitment@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:boardrecruitment@passengerfocus.org.uk)

**Please note that the closing date for all applications is 30 May 2014. Late applications will not be accepted.**

If you have problems e-mailing your application, please send a hard copy to:

Passenger Focus - Board recruitment centre  
Freepost RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ  
PO Box 5594  
Southend-on-Sea  
SS1 9PZ

If you experience any difficulties completing your application form, please contact the Passenger Focus recruitment centre on 0300 123 2350 for assistance before the closing date.

After the closing date for applications:

- Your application will be first checked for completeness and eligibility. If necessary, you may be contacted at this stage to clarify any points that are unclear.
- Applications will be assessed by the panel against the criteria outlined in this document.
- It is anticipated that shortlisting will be completed during June 2014. Shortlisted candidates will be informed as soon as possible if they have been selected for final interview and interview details will be confirmed by e-mail or letter. References will be taken up prior to interview. Formal interviews with the Selection Panel will be held in early July **in London**.

Reasonable expenses to attend interview(s) will be paid, based on the cheapest and most reasonable method of travel. At the formal interviews, candidates should come prepared for an **informed discussion** on matters of interest and/or concern to passengers and broader challenges facing Passenger Focus.

## 6. Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint about the recruitment and selection procedure, you should write in the first instance to Mike Biskup, Sponsorship Manager, Department for Transport, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR, or e-mail [mike.biskup@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mike.biskup@dft.gsi.gov.uk). If, after receiving a comprehensive response, you are still concerned, you can contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Details of his complaints procedure can be found at: <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/whatwedo/complaintsandinvestigations/index.html>

## 7. Data protection

Passenger Focus is a registered data controller and takes data protection seriously. The information you supply will be kept safe and used strictly for the purposes for which you supply it. Statistical abstracts from the data you supply will be anonymous. A copy of our privacy policy may be found on our website.

## Appendix I

### The Nolan Principles -The Seven Principles of Public Life

**Selflessness** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty** Holders of public office should be truthful.

**Leadership** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.