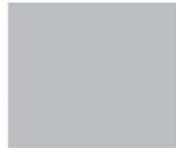
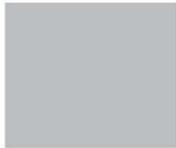
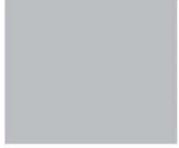


# East Anglia Rail Franchise Consultation Passenger Focus response

March 2015



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## 1. Passenger Focus

Passenger Focus is the independent public body set up by the Government to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, England's bus and tram passengers outside London, and coach passengers in England on scheduled domestic services. We are an independent body funded by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Our mission is to get the best deal for passengers. With a strong emphasis on evidence based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground. We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of passengers and we work with the industry, passenger groups and government to secure journey improvements.

Passenger Focus appreciates the open consultation on the future East Anglia franchise, particularly the efforts to engage directly with individual passengers as well as wider stakeholders.

## 2. Introduction

Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to provide a rail passengers' perspective as the specification for the new East Anglia franchise is developed. When the requirements of the franchise are established, it is vital that the needs of passengers using and paying for rail services are placed squarely at the heart of the contract.

We are pleased to have engaged with the Department for Transport's Rail Executive (RE) from an early stage in the East Anglia franchise replacement process. We have used discussions to highlight key passenger issues and the findings of our research on a range of subjects.

This formal consultation response draws on three rich seams of franchise specific data. Firstly, it combines knowledge and understanding drawn from passenger reports of their current journeys on Abellio Greater Anglia (AGA) services with recent information gathered on passenger priorities for improvement. Read together these two complementary studies provide a unique perspective on passenger needs from the franchise and provide hard evidence to inform the decisions to be made for the future.

In addition, we also reference the findings of qualitative research into the views of East Anglia passengers that we undertook at the end of 2014, specifically to enhance understanding about the issues they wish to see the new franchise address. More generally, we cite findings from our wider research into a range of issues that are important to passengers.

Our research, which will be detailed in further sections of this response, highlights the central importance to passengers of value for money, capacity and punctuality. These core needs must be the top requirements in the specification for the next franchise.

Another factor which the new franchise needs to address effectively is the issue with the quality, age and condition of much of the rolling stock. There are also well-articulated calls from passengers and stakeholders for improvements to infrastructure to enable faster journey times and more robust performance. The challenge will be to deliver this efficiently, while minimising inconvenience to passengers whilst the works are underway. Comprehensive, passenger-centric plans must be carefully developed and implemented to manage the significant change which is expected from this franchise.

A core principle should be that the specification must build on the opportunities presented by the existing framework of services and seek progressive improvements in all areas. It is important that the franchise ensures that existing demands are adequately addressed and that, at appropriate stages, franchise reviews can respond to any changes or inaccuracies in planning assumptions.

Our research into passenger understanding of, and desire for involvement in, the franchise process led to our emphasis on *Passenger Power!* and a call for more recognition of the passenger within the franchising system. Recent announcements of franchise policy have made welcome commitments to a greater emphasis on the quality of the passenger experience and enhanced arrangements for engagement and communication with customers. It is important these promises are brought to life in the specification for the next franchise and that passengers can see these ideals manifest in the services they receive. There is an important role for the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) in providing direct feedback from passengers using the services.

It is vital that, throughout its duration, the franchise remains responsive to changing passenger needs. This means not only that there must be a clear understanding of passenger requirements at the outset but that there is an ongoing emphasis on consultation and engagement with stakeholders and a set of output measures that reflect passenger satisfaction.

Passenger Focus is committed to the promotion of passenger interests in the future decisions on the East Anglia franchise. We will continue to work closely with RE, and with potential bidders for the operation, to ensure that services address both current and evolving needs throughout the contract term.

## **2.1 Franchise consultation response**

In this response we consider consultation questions for which we have relevant information and appropriate evidence of passenger needs and aspirations. We also provide a commentary on other significant issues which we believe should be addressed within the East Anglia franchise specification and final contract.

Passenger Focus is adopting a strategic approach to this response, which focuses largely on higher level issues. Passengers and stakeholders will all have their own experiences and specific aspirations which they will want considered in future plans. It is important that RE and the franchise bidders listen carefully to the views expressed by those whose lives are impacted by decisions about the future of the franchises and the day-to-day operations which result from this.

### **2.1.1 Terminology and data usage**

Throughout this document we refer to the East Anglia franchise, in line with the RE scope for the next operation. Where possible we also use data that relates to this specific territory. However, in some circumstances, our research has been conducted with passengers across the entire existing Abellio Greater Anglia (AGA) franchise. We use this terminology when this is the case.

## **3. Passenger research and implications for the franchise**

### **3.1 The Passenger Focus evidence base**

Passenger Focus is committed to evidence-based influencing and has a considerable body of research on matters that are important to passengers. Much of this is directly relevant to the specification for the next East Anglia franchise.

In this section we highlight the findings of our latest investigations into passengers' priorities for improvement and trust in the rail industry. We also draw on NRPS data for information about the current experience on the franchise. Read together these complementary studies provide a unique perspective on passenger needs from the franchise and provide hard evidence to inform the decisions to be made for the future.

We also highlight the key findings from our recent qualitative research among East Anglia passengers.

Other research is cited as applicable within following sections.

### **3.2 Rail passengers' priorities for improvement 2014<sup>1</sup>**

This 2014 study of passenger priorities shows that the top four requirements of passengers travelling on Abellio Greater Anglia's services directly reflect those of both the East of England and the national sample overall.

The priorities in table 1 below are shown as an index averaged on 100. An index of 300 is three times as important as the average and an index score of 50 is half as

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014>

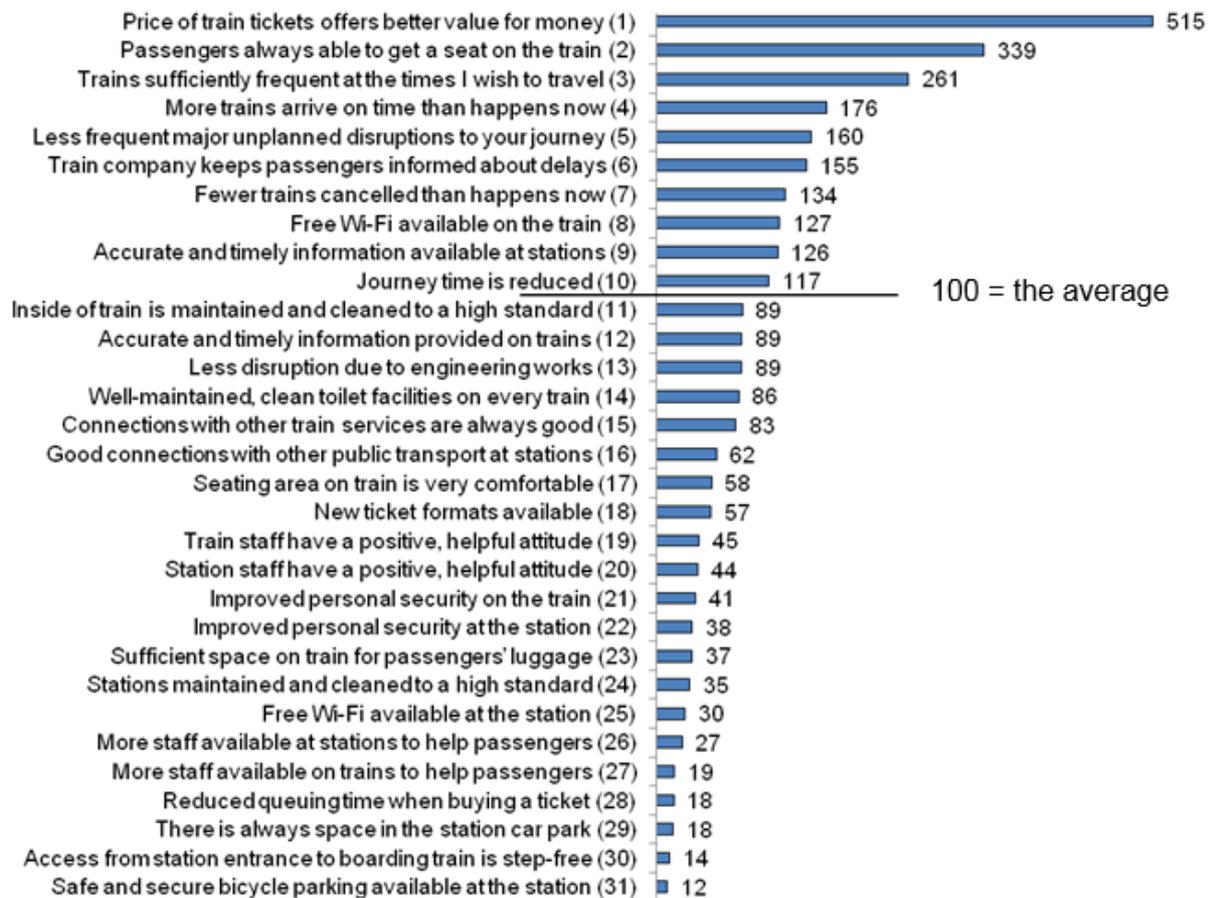
important as the average. So in table 1 we can see that, for Abellio Greater Anglia's passengers, the top priority of 'the price of train tickets offers better value for money' is more than five times as important as the average.

**Table 1 Passengers' priorities for improvement: Great Britain, East of England and Abellio Greater Anglia**

	<b>GB</b>		<b>East</b>		<b>AGA</b>	
Price of train tickets offers better value for money	<b>494</b>	1	<b>507</b>	1	<b>515</b>	1
Passengers always able to get a seat on the train	<b>367</b>	2	<b>343</b>	2	<b>339</b>	2
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel	<b>264</b>	3	<b>259</b>	3	<b>261</b>	3
More trains arrive on time than happens now	<b>178</b>	4	<b>173</b>	4	<b>176</b>	4
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays	<b>163</b>	5	<b>169</b>	5	<b>155</b>	6
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey	<b>161</b>	6	<b>158</b>	6	<b>160</b>	5
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now	<b>136</b>	7	<b>134</b>	8	<b>134</b>	7
Accurate and timely information available at stations	<b>132</b>	8	<b>138</b>	7	<b>126</b>	9
Journey time is reduced	<b>105</b>	9	<b>104</b>	9	<b>117</b>	10
Free Wi-Fi available on the train	<b>97</b>	10	<b>99</b>	10	<b>127</b>	8
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard	<b>93</b>	11	<b>89</b>	12	<b>89</b>	11
Accurate and timely information provided on trains	<b>92</b>	12	<b>97</b>	11	<b>89</b>	12
Less disruption due to engineering works	<b>90</b>	13	<b>88</b>	13	<b>89</b>	13
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train	<b>89</b>	14	<b>83</b>	15	<b>86</b>	14
Connections with other train services are always good	<b>84</b>	15	<b>86</b>	14	<b>83</b>	15
Good connections with other public transport at stations	<b>62</b>	16	<b>66</b>	16	<b>62</b>	16
Seating area on train is very comfortable	<b>59</b>	17	<b>56</b>	18	<b>58</b>	17
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude	<b>47</b>	18	<b>47</b>	19	<b>45</b>	19
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude	<b>46</b>	19	<b>47</b>	20	<b>44</b>	20
New ticket formats available	<b>45</b>	20	<b>60</b>	17	<b>57</b>	18
Improved personal security on the train	<b>41</b>	21	<b>37</b>	21	<b>41</b>	21
Improved personal security at the station	<b>38</b>	22	<b>35</b>	24	<b>38</b>	22
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage	<b>37</b>	23	<b>36</b>	22	<b>37</b>	23
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard	<b>36</b>	24	<b>35</b>	23	<b>35</b>	24
More staff available at stations to help passengers	<b>29</b>	25	<b>29</b>	25	<b>27</b>	26
There is always space in the station car park	<b>27</b>	26	<b>25</b>	27	<b>18</b>	29
Free Wi-Fi available at the station	<b>24</b>	27	<b>28</b>	26	<b>30</b>	25
More staff available on trains to help passengers	<b>20</b>	28	<b>20</b>	29	<b>19</b>	27
Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket	<b>20</b>	29	<b>23</b>	28	<b>18</b>	28
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free	<b>15</b>	30	<b>16</b>	30	<b>14</b>	30
Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station	<b>10</b>	31	<b>15</b>	31	<b>12</b>	31
Sample size	3559		221		148	

This information can also be shown graphically to illustrate just how much the relative importance varies between the factors.

**Figure 1 Abellio Greater Anglia passengers' priorities for improvement – relative importance**



‘Passengers always able to get a seat on the train’ is over three times more important than the average. ‘Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel’ is more than two and a half times more important than the average.

The next group of important priority factors also feature what can be regarded as core elements of service. Passengers want improvements in punctuality and reliability, fewer disruptions or cancellations and good information about their services.

Notable on AGA is the importance to passengers of ‘free wi-fi on the train’. This ranks 8th with an index of 127, compared with tenth ranking, at less than 100, for GB as a whole. The fact that this is ranked high on the list of priorities for improvement confirms increasing recognition that internet connectivity is now an important element of the rail offer and it is clearly significant for East Anglia. It has been referred to as likely to become a hygiene factor and this indicates that aspirations for this provision are increasing.

This research provides a very clear picture of passengers' priorities for improvement. The two top priorities, by some considerable margin, are ‘price of train tickets offers better value for money’ and ‘passengers always able to get a seat on the train’.

The strong third priority for improvement, indexed at 261, is ‘trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel’. And, if we consider the various factors related to punctuality, reducing cancellations and minimising disruption we can see that they also have a very high combined priority for improvement.

Summarising the findings, it is clear that the top priorities for improvement largely focus on the basic elements of the rail service – value for money, getting a seat, frequency, punctuality, managing delays and provision of information. This is not to say the remaining priorities are not important to the passenger experience, it is just that they are not as important to improve as the top ranking.

The research has sample sizes of 148 for AGA and 221 for East of England within an overall GB pool of 3559. The database<sup>2</sup> contains a wealth of information which can be analysed in many ways to explore how priorities vary by demographic and journey purpose, amongst other things. We commend its use to RE and potential bidders to enable a detailed understanding of the aspirations of passengers to apply to the East Anglia network.

### **3.3 National Rail Passenger Survey and drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction**

The NRPS, together with an analysis of the drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, is a comprehensive source of information about passenger perceptions of the current franchise. It can also be broken down to show variations across five ‘building block’ groupings of rail services in East Anglia.

Evidence from the NRPS reinforces the importance of punctuality and reliability as one of the highest priorities identified for the franchise.

Tables detailing the NRPS headline factor scores for AGA and the five component building blocks for the East Anglia franchise are provided in Appendix 2. These include a comparison of scores with the sector or typology average and the typology best in class.

#### **3.3.1 Drivers of satisfaction**

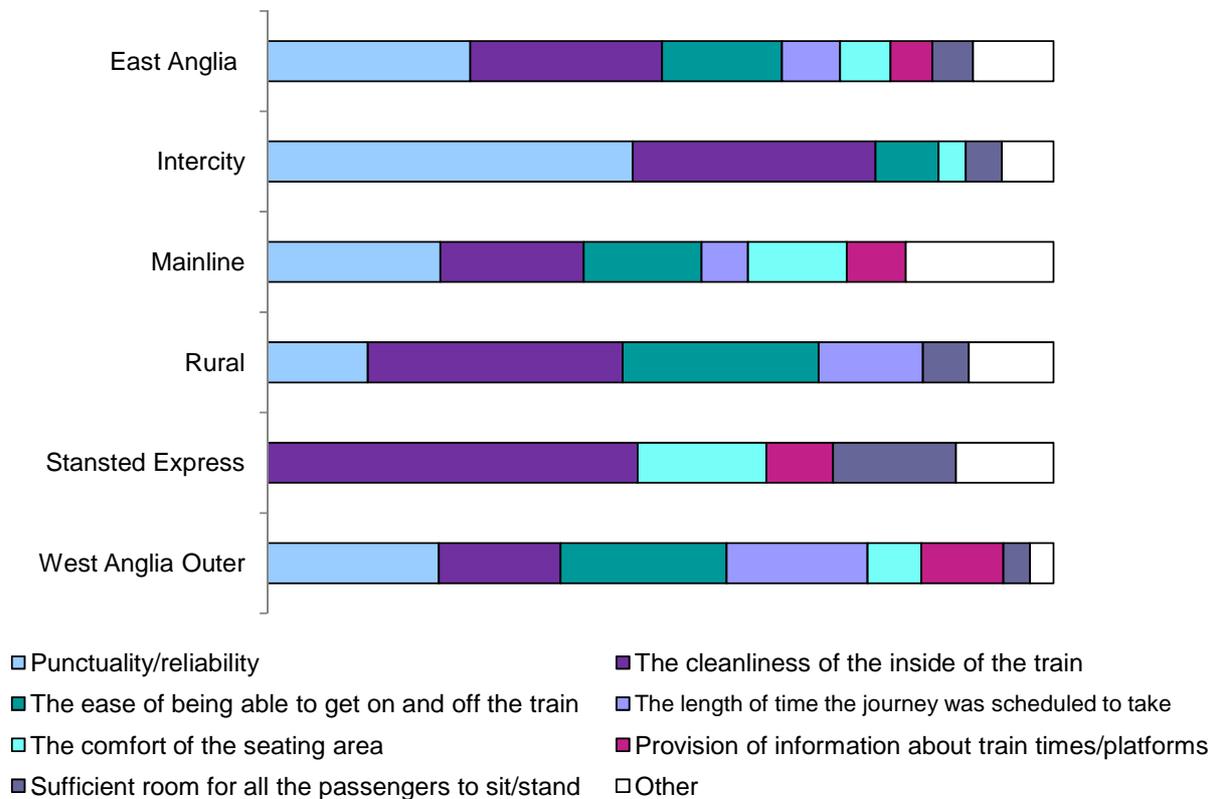
Figure 2 shows the dominance of punctuality and reliability as a driver of satisfaction for East Anglia passengers. It is a particularly strong factor for passengers on the Intercity route at 46 per cent and to a lesser extent for Mainline, West Anglia Outer and Rural passengers. Punctuality and reliability is not a driver of satisfaction for Stansted passengers where satisfaction with punctuality is already high at 91 per cent<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-simulator-2014>

<sup>3</sup> NRPS Autumn 2014

**Figure 2 - Drivers of satisfaction, NRPS Spring 2014/Autumn 2014: East Anglia and building blocks**



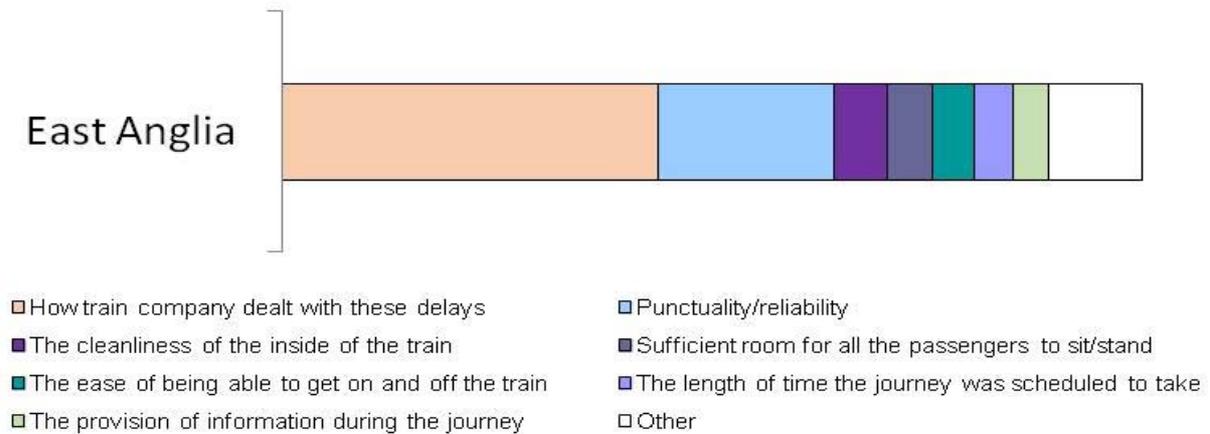
Another notable factor driving satisfaction is the cleanliness of the inside of the train which accounts for 24 per cent overall. For Stansted this is the main driver of satisfaction at 47 per cent.

The ease of being able to get on and off the train (which we would suggest is indicative of capacity pressures on these routes), journey length, comfort of the seating area, provision of information about train times/platforms, and sufficient room to sit and stand are all strong factors for passengers on some routes.

### 3.3.2 Drivers of dissatisfaction

An analysis of the factors that drive passenger dissatisfaction also echoes the importance of key factors to passengers (figure 3). Where delays are not dealt with well, passengers will be dissatisfied. Low satisfaction with punctuality and reliability is also notable in driving dissatisfaction.

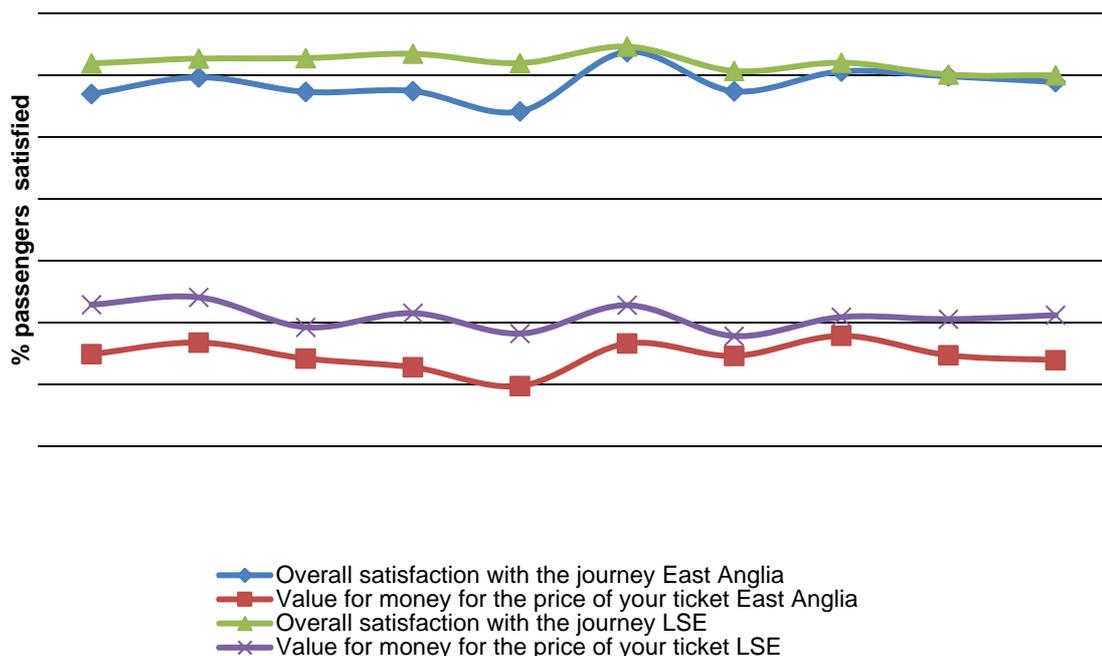
**Figure 3 - Drivers of dissatisfaction, NRPS Spring2014/Autumn 2014: East Anglia**



### 3.3.3 Satisfaction with value for money and the overall journey

A comparison between East Anglia and the London and South East sector for overall satisfaction with the journey shows that, after a number of years lagging behind the sector, East Anglia is now achieving levels that match those of the peer group (see figure 4 below). However, both the sector and East Anglia score on recent waves is lower than the level achieved in autumn 2012, indicating that more could be done to drive satisfaction levels upwards again.

**Figure 4 - East Anglia and London and South East sector trends for value for money and satisfaction with overall journey**



Scores for satisfaction with 'value for money for the price of your ticket' are low for both the sector and East Anglia. However, East Anglia consistently lags behind the sector scores. Further comment on value for money is made in section 4.1.

### **3.4 Passengers' current experiences and aspirations for the future**

Towards the end of 2014 we conducted qualitative research<sup>4</sup> to understand passengers' current experiences of Abellio Greater Anglia, and their aspirations for the new East Anglia franchise. The findings from this research indicate that there is clear room for improvement on certain 'acid test' elements of the franchise.

The priorities in terms of future improvement areas are key aspects of service delivery and investment. Three key themes have been identified:

1. Service reliability and punctuality issues for frequent users:

- this is a particularly critical area for commuters, many of whom have poor perceptions of reliability based on their experiences.

*"We can't trust them because they can't trust themselves with the age of the rolling stock"*

(Norwich group, Rural passenger)

2. Much of the rolling stock is a cause for concern:

- the age, condition and quality of many of the trains on the franchise is a source of concern to passengers
- this has potential to be (come) a strong driver of dissatisfaction.

*"If you go to other places they're getting more modern trains – the Abellio ones all seem pretty ancient to me. It would be good to see something a bit more upmarket"*

(Cambridge, Vision impaired passenger)

*"They're the oldest trains aren't they? They are the cast-offs from the other regions"*

(Ipswich, Main Line passenger)

*"Until I moved to Suffolk, I'd never seen a train where you open the door yourself before"*

(Ipswich group, Rural service user)

3. Certain station facilities need improving and upgrading:

- passengers expressed fairly pragmatic expectations but identified a range of needs relating to different station types.

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<sup>4</sup> To be published summer 2015. The findings are available on request to prospective bidders for the franchise.

*“All you want is for stations to be comfortable to wait at and have basic facilities such as a drink and snack kiosk and toilets”*  
(London group, Main Line service user)

*“There’s more to do at Norwich station but I don’t think that the facilities that are available are open long enough to match the train times”*  
(Norwich group, Intercity passenger)

*“Sometimes you are at a station and need to go to the toilet and the staff don’t even know where the keys are”*  
(London group, Main Line passenger)

### **3.5 Passenger trust in the rail industry**

Passenger Focus recently undertook a study to explore passengers’ relationship with the rail industry<sup>5</sup>. The main finding is that to improve passengers’ trust in the rail industry, train companies not only need to get the basic service right day-to-day, they need to put effort into building long-term relationships with their passengers.

Trust consists of three elements: service, relationship and judgement. Service elements affect day-to-day issues such as punctuality, reliability, helpfulness of staff and value for money. They are the foundations for building passengers’ trust.

It is important to focus on relationship factors to build passenger trust once the service elements are in place. Some train companies have developed good relationships with their passengers. Communicating directly and proactively with passengers goes down well with them. Particular problem areas for communication identified by the research are confusion over ticketing options and when there are delays or cancellations. Communicating honestly, with integrity and transparency, can inspire trust.

Many train companies score well on the third trust element – judgement. They are seen to have high principles, a good reputation and show leadership. However, judgement does not contribute as much to trust as service and relationship.

For the next East Anglia franchise to build greater trust with passengers it is important to get the basic service right ahead of everything else. Then, building on closer relationships with their passengers is important. One way is through high quality communication. Passengers should feel that train companies are ‘on their side’.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passengers-relationship-with-the-rail-industry>

### **3.6 Recommendation - top level priorities for the franchise**

Analysis of the passenger priorities for improvement, drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction and the feedback from the passenger focus groups highlights a number of factors that should be top level priorities for the next East Anglia franchise to address. These are:

- value for money
- capacity and frequency
- punctuality and reliability
- minimising and improving the handling of disruption
- replacing or significantly upgrading the trains on many parts of the network

Attention should also be given to provision of accurate and timely information, cleanliness inside trains, appropriate station facilities and, to build trust further, clear and open communication.

## 4. Question 1 - Addressing key passenger requirements

The three areas we highlight within this section flow from the research into passenger priorities for improvement, as well as being significant issues within other research. These points form our response to Question 1.

### 4.1 Value for money for passengers

Passengers are paying an increasingly high proportion of the costs of the railway and this makes the delivery of value for money a significant challenge. It is the top priority for improvement for Abellio Greater Anglia passengers, as well as nationally.

The Passenger Focus fares and ticketing study<sup>6</sup> investigated the influences on passenger perceptions of value for money. It found that whilst intrinsically linked to the price of the ticket, value for money is also influenced by several other significant factors. These link directly to the findings of priorities research and NRPS drivers and are:

- punctuality and reliability
- being able to get a seat
- passenger information during service disruption.

Improving passenger satisfaction with these core elements of the train service must be a high priority for the East Anglia franchise. Another important factor to assist in delivering value for money is to ensure that fares and ticketing processes are fair, impartial and clear, enabling passengers to purchase the cheapest appropriate ticket for their journey. Recommendations relating to fares and ticketing are addressed in our response to Question 19.

#### 4.1.1 The rail efficiency agenda

Passenger Focus recognises the importance of delivering value for money for taxpayers and passengers and the need to increase the efficiency of the rail industry. We made a detailed response<sup>7</sup> to Sir Roy McNulty's rail value for money study, highlighting the important issues from a passenger perspective.

We are supportive of those strategies which enhance efficiency and create closer collaboration, reduce duplication and overlap and generate further income by increasing the attractiveness of rail.

However, there are also some legitimate anxieties expressed by passengers surrounding cost-cutting. These are particularly around the availability of staff and ensuring that station facilities are available whilst trains are running. Reducing costs

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/fares-and-ticketing-study>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/the-rail-value-for-money-study-a-passenger-perspective-comments-by-passenger-focus>

through genuine improvements to efficiency will be welcomed, but there will be negative impacts if this simply results in wholesale cutbacks that do not deliver on reasonable passenger expectations and a quality of experience that makes the railway a viable and safe environment in which to travel.

Partnership working between Network Rail (NR) and the new operator should form part of the arrangements for the franchise. It will be particularly relevant given the potential scale and complexity involved in delivering the infrastructure, train and timetable improvements planned and sought for the East Anglia network. These challenges will require all parties to work cohesively and constructively together.

Application of whole-life costing would significantly improve the chances that resilience projects secure a positive business case. The bidders should set out details of how they will start planning with all the relevant partners, firstly deciding where and what needs doing, then ranking in order of costs and time to implement, quickest benefits and greatest benefits.

Beyond the demands of new developments there are further operational challenges associated with such a large scale franchise stretching across a wide geographical territory and abutting a number of other important rail operations. This will require an over-arching approach to partnership and service delivery, with formal structures providing a joint mechanism at senior level for strategic planning and co-ordination.

Aligning incentives and working more closely together can certainly help improve efficiency. We know from our research that passengers want a sense of someone being in charge when it comes to the delivery of services, especially during times of disruption. But it cannot just be a case of aligning NR and train company processes to achieve cost savings; such processes must also be aligned with passengers' priorities.

If the end-game is better services for passengers then internal processes and systems must work towards this, rather than vice versa. Two particular areas stand out: increasing punctuality and reducing service disruption. Any approach must be mindful of the consequences for passengers when considering how to manage restoration of services following disruption.

Closer working may provide the opportunity to revisit previously successful practice and have the operator's staff, especially those on stations, trained as first responders to minor local operational incidents (e.g. signal and point failures or road vehicles hitting bridges) to get trains moving without having to wait for the arrival of a Network Rail staff member who may be some distance away.

A further opportunity presented by closer partnership is the achievement of a step-change in transparency. The open data agenda is driving the industry towards higher

levels of information being in the public domain. We know from our research<sup>8,9</sup> that passengers want access to more tailored information (i.e. data that is relevant to their route/journey). A new, more responsive, alliance could make a very public commitment towards accountability by promising greater transparency from the outset.

## 4.2 Capacity and frequency

Further points in relation to capacity are also made in our response to Questions 9 and 10.

Passengers regard provision of capacity as a fundamental requirement of the rail service. As the draft Anglia route study notes<sup>10</sup> high levels of passenger growth are expected to continue, with a particular need to provide sufficient capacity in the peak periods to and from London as well as to improve the frequency of services to and from key centres.

It is vital that the next franchise makes adequate provision for ongoing capacity increases to accommodate the anticipated growth in passenger demand.

After value for money, the ability to get a seat is the second, and highly significant, priority for improvement on Abellio Greater Anglia. Availability of seating is also influenced by frequency of trains (thus increasing the overall total of seats available by running more services), the third highest priority for improvement on the franchise. Importantly, capacity also has a strong influence on passenger perceptions of value for money so has a further role in passenger satisfaction<sup>11</sup>.

Quotes from our qualitative research with East Anglia passengers reflect their feelings:

*“I’m having to go to the extra expense of going first class, just to make sure I can get a seat on the 7.05 and to be able to work”*  
(Colchester group, Mainline passenger - Branches)

*“I think if I don’t get a seat I’d be thinking, ‘I’ve paid extra for this, I want a seat’. Yes, there’s an expectation there definitely”*  
(London group, Stansted Express passenger)

*“If you’re going from Ipswich to Colchester, it’s a short journey so you don’t mind standing but you don’t want to stand from Ipswich to London”*  
(Ipswich group, Mainline passenger)

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/putting-rail-information-in-the-public-domain>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/presenting-righttime-performance-information-to-rail-passengers>

<sup>10</sup> [www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/anglia-route-study](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/anglia-route-study)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-focus-response-to-the-governments-rail-fares-and-ticketing-review>

The severe crowding on certain London commuter services is well-documented and, even with the planned interventions on infrastructure and enhancements to the train fleet, provision of sufficient capacity will remain an ongoing challenge.

Table 2 shows a comparison of satisfaction with room for passengers to sit and stand across the five East Anglia building blocks, with Mainline services scoring worst. It also shows the comparison of satisfaction amongst peak and off-peak passengers. The low level of peak passenger satisfaction illustrates the scale of the capacity challenge.

**Table 2 Sufficient room to sit and stand, NRPS Autumn 2014, percentage satisfied: East Anglia, Building Blocks and Peak/Off-Peak**

East Anglia	Intercity	Mainline	Rural	Stansted	West Anglia Outer	Peak	Off-Peak
65	71	62	72	70	67	47	72

Table 3 shows a comparison of satisfaction levels with frequency of the trains across each of the five building blocks. The wide variation in satisfaction across different routes is highlighted by the comparison of Rural and Stansted (55 per cent versus 96 per cent).

**Table 3 – Frequency of trains, NRPS Autumn 2014, percentage satisfied: East Anglia and Building Blocks**

East Anglia	Intercity	Mainline	Rural	Stansted	West Anglia Outer
74	84	73	55	96	73

The specification for the future franchise should provide a framework to ensure that service provision is based on passenger needs and priorities and is linked to key measures of passenger satisfaction. This should require the operator to plan, resource and deliver a passenger-focused, optimised service pattern. This should also include consider the appropriate capacity and frequencies required for earlier and later in the day as well as weekends and bank holidays.

Whilst acknowledging the need for some flexibility to adapt the train service to changing demands, Passenger Focus is clear that there must be sufficient detail in the specification to protect key journey opportunities. These must include journeys to/from school and work and, at key locations, retain or improve connection opportunities.

## **Recommendations**

It is imperative that provision of an effective response to capacity needs throughout the term of the contract is made a core requirement of the new franchise.

As a minimum Passenger Focus would expect the specification to give a broad outline of the core service to be provided: frequency, first and last trains, basic service patterns, and key journey times. The specification should require at least a Saturday service on all routes on bank holidays other than Christmas Day and Boxing Day. In respect of the latter, the invitation to tender should give strong encouragement for bidders to explore the potential for services to run on 26 December.

The franchise should also consider passenger aspirations in planning future service provision. There must be a requirement to consult fully and meaningfully with the full range of stakeholders and demonstrate that the needs of differing groups of passengers have been considered when timetable proposals are brought forward.

### **4.2.1 Making better use of capacity**

Passenger Focus believes that the franchise specification should require the bidders to take all reasonable steps to provide sufficient capacity across all services throughout the life of the franchise. Targets should be for crowding levels to be lower than currently exist, with a requirement to plan to stay ahead of growth in demand. We recognise this will present some challenges. However, this issue is too important to passengers to be ignored.

To effectively manage crowding, a train company needs high quality loadings data with the ability to analyse individual trains, different days of the week and seasonal impacts. The available capacity must then be carefully allocated to optimise the response to demand pressures across the network.

We welcome the Government's procurement of a rail passenger counts database which is intended to provide accurate data on train loadings and crowding levels. The future operator must be required to adopt and publish appropriate crowding measures that are more representative of individual passenger's experiences across the range of routes and services. This more granular detail should be used to inform decisions about improving capacity where it is inadequate. Published data should make the crowding levels on different services easily comparable so that decisions about allocation of resources can be scrutinised.

NRPS satisfaction measures for relevant factors, including overall satisfaction and room to sit and stand, should be published alongside capacity data to demonstrate the impact this has on passengers.

A careful review of all timetables must be undertaken to explore how services can best be matched to passenger needs. There may well be opportunities to adapt frequencies and stopping patterns to provide a better match of capacity with demand, whilst still ensuring the needs of all passengers are balanced appropriately. Where this is the case, Passenger Focus would expect clear evidence to be produced and comprehensive consultation to be carried out with passengers prior to any changes being made. Bidders should be required to demonstrate their plans to ensure sufficient resources within the franchise to enable a sophisticated and responsive approach to train service development, combined with a positive strategy of stakeholder engagement to explain the rationale for service proposals.

The service specifications and service options developed for the franchise must give full consideration to the capacity implications of all proposals. Monitoring and publishing the extent and frequency of short-formations should also be a requirement. There should be increasingly punitive penalties (to be reinvested in measures that will strengthen capabilities) where there are regular failures to provide the programmed diagrams to operate timetables.

Passenger Focus believes that the East Anglia franchise should operate in accordance with the established principle that ‘it is reasonable for passengers to expect to get a seat for journeys of more than twenty minutes, and to have sufficient space even if they are standing for shorter journeys’. This should be the benchmark for capacity provision.

The future operator should be incentivised to ensure that available rolling stock is never sitting in sidings when there is evidence of need for additional capacity on services where it could be deployed. In addition, the franchise specifications should require that the particular needs for additional capacity for special events must also be planned for and managed within the overall framework of train availability.

Other approaches to management of capacity should also be implemented. Transparent information about the loadings of specific trains provides passengers with the knowledge that may enable them to make an informed decision. Research has found that over two thirds of passengers who had seen information about the levels of crowding on specific train services had found it useful and just over a fifth of these people had made a regular or occasional change to the trains they used as a result of the information<sup>12</sup>.

A traffic-light system of information should be made available to passengers to help them understand the likelihood of getting a seat, or even getting onto, a particular train. This allows passengers who have more flexibility to make an informed choice about their travel options and, even where there are more defined patterns of travel,

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<sup>12</sup> The impact of publishing more information on seat availability: South West Trains case study, ORR July 2012

some passengers may appreciate the option of being able to make small adjustments or trade-offs to have a comfortable journey.

Similarly, fares incentives for passengers to sometimes swap peak journeys with travel in the shoulder or off-peak, or perhaps work closer to home on some days, may also make a contribution to capacity pressures. Cliff-face price differentials that lead to under-utilisation on some higher-priced services and a flood of passengers on the first cheaper trains should also be avoided.

Technological solutions should also be adopted. Crowding can now be monitored in real time and information systems and apps are becoming available to indicate where available seats on trains are located<sup>13</sup>.

Where further investment in additional rolling stock would provide the necessary capacity to meet identified requirements during the life of the franchise, the onus should be on the operator to build a business case to enable this to happen. If there is a commercial case then there should be prompt action to deliver the necessary vehicles. Where additional subsidy will or may be required, Passenger Focus expects the operator and the RE to work together with regional partners to seek an affordable solution. Where required, assessments should look beyond the immediate franchise into the longer term to create a viable mechanism to respond to identified demand.

Over the lifetime of the franchise the operator must be required to work with Network Rail and within the wider industry processes to develop proposals to further increase capacity to meet the expected rise in demand and ensure this information is available to inform future High Level Output Specification (HLOS) plans and investment cycles.

Additional efforts should be made to respond to passengers who have physical difficulties in standing for any length of time. Initiatives such as priority seating and cards<sup>14</sup> that the holder can show to identify a proven need should be part of the overall plan for improving accessibility within the franchise.

#### **4.2.2 Off-peak capacity**

There are two distinct issues relating to making better use of capacity in the off-peak. On certain routes at various times of day there is insufficient capacity for the off-peak demand meaning that passengers experience crowding. Bidders should be required to show plans for adapting service provision and train availability to meet off-peak capacity shortfalls where these are identified.

Secondly, to improve the financial performance of the franchises and maximise use of the rolling stock, the bidders should have clear proposals for promoting usage in

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<sup>13</sup>For example, Dutch Railways - iNStApp: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc6R3qt6SXI>

<sup>14</sup>For example, <http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/accessibility/priority-seat-card/>

the off-peak. Marketing strategies and ticket offers will have a role to play here, as will the delivery of high quality services that passengers will find an attractive travel option, especially if their journey or modal choice is discretionary. As noted below, there are parts of the franchise where joint initiatives with Community Rail Partnerships should be further developed, or established, to extend the reach into wider communities and promote off-peak travel.

### 4.3 Reliability and performance

Further points in relation to reliability and punctuality are also made in our response to Question 11.

The AGA passengers' priorities for improvement ranks more trains arriving on time (index 176), less frequent major unplanned disruptions (index 160) and fewer train cancellations (index 134) at fourth, fifth and seventh respectively. In NRPS, the most significant 'driver' of passenger satisfaction on East Anglia, as it is nationally, is punctuality and reliability of the train.

Table 4 below shows considerable variations in satisfaction with punctuality and reliability between the best and worst performing building blocks within East Anglia.

**Table 4 Punctuality and reliability, NRPS Autumn 2014, percentage satisfied: East Anglia, Building Blocks, London and South East, Peak/Off-Peak, Commuter/Business/Leisure**

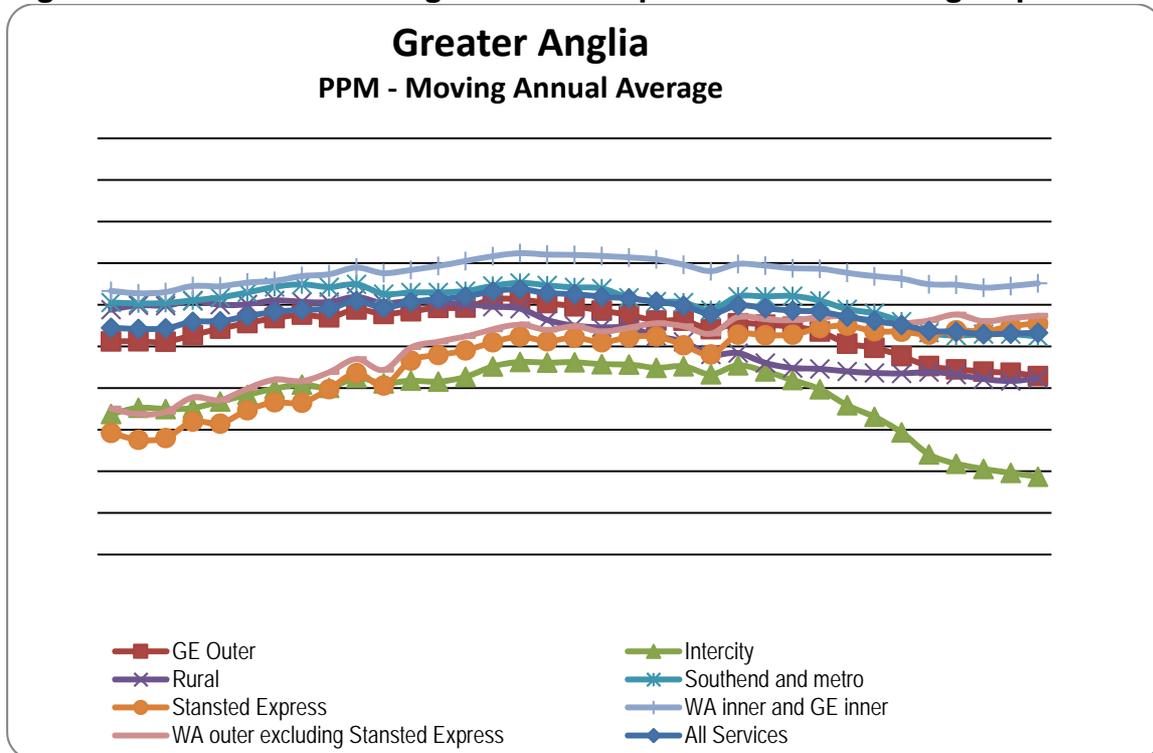
<b>East Anglia</b>	<b>Intercity</b>	<b>Mainline</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Stansted</b>	<b>West Anglia Outer</b>
77	76	76	70	91	79
<b>London and South East sector</b>	<b>Peak</b>	<b>Off-Peak</b>	<b>Commuter</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Leisure</b>
75	70	80	69	83	89

Satisfaction on Rural services is significantly below that of the London and South East sector average. Only the Stansted service achieves more than 90 per cent passenger satisfaction. There is also considerable variation amongst the satisfaction scores of different groups of passengers, with Commuters at 69 per cent, compared with Business at 83 per cent and Leisure at 89 per cent. Peak passengers are also significantly less satisfied than off-peak passengers.

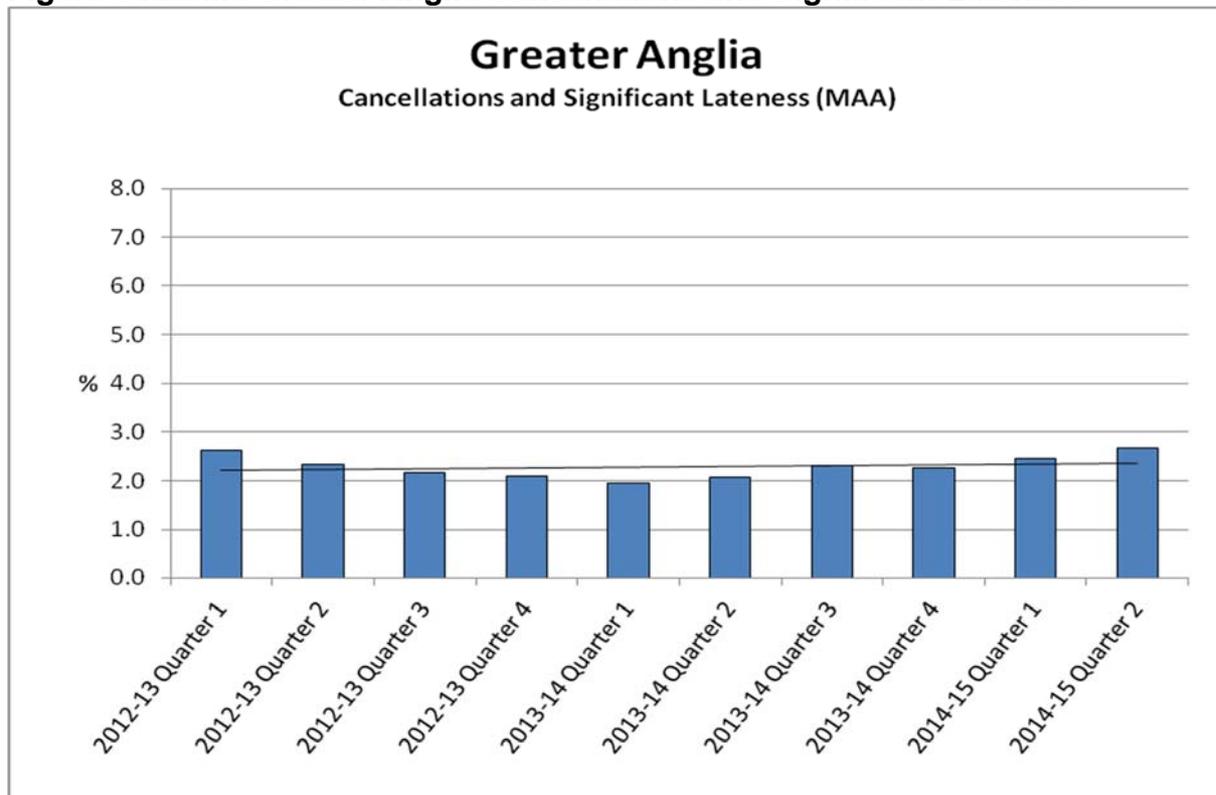
Figure 5 below shows a generally declining trend for punctuality of the AGA operation as a whole and the different service groups as measured by the industry measure of punctuality. This standard, the Public Performance Measure – or PPM - regards trains arriving at their final destination within five minutes of scheduled time (or ten minutes for longer distance services such as Intercity) as punctual.

Similarly, figure 6, also below, shows how some improvements in the industry measure of cancellations and significant lateness (trains over 30 minutes beyond scheduled arrival time at final destination) appear to have been reversed and the trend is now upwards again.

**Figure 5 Abellio Greater Anglia PPM for operator and service groups**



**Figure 6 Abellio Greater Anglia Cancellations and Significant Lateness**



We can clearly identify the importance of punctuality and reliability to passengers across the three streams of research detailed in section 3. We therefore emphasise the absolute need for the next franchise specification to demand improvements in this crucial aspect of operations.

### **Recommendations**

We recommend that the specification sets out a requirement for a strong focus on delivering excellent operational performance and ensuring a culture of genuine transparency about how well things are going. As well as helping engender trust among passengers and stakeholders, we believe transparency will of itself increase the incentive on the operator to drive up performance. It should be noted that 'on time'/'right time' punctuality is what matters to passengers and not whether a train is within PPM.

Specifically, we feel there should be:

1. Targets to improve PPM, 'on time'/'right time' and cancellations across all routes. Reliance on service group averages, let alone a whole TOC average, risks exposing passengers on individual routes to poor performance.
2. Targets for PPM and 'on time'/'right time' at key intermediate stations in addition to at the train destinations. Measuring performance at the destination station alone runs the risk that a large number of passengers are late even though the train does not show as such. This is a particular problem on longer distance routes with numerous sub-markets and relatively few end-to-end passengers. But even on shorter routes, including commuter routes, punctuality based on measurement at destination can be markedly at odds with the experience of passengers using intermediate stations. The impact of late running at intermediate stations can be dramatic when passengers are making connections with other trains or with buses.

On the Great Eastern line, for example, consider Colchester arrivals from London Liverpool Street<sup>15</sup> in the evening peak, an example of the situation at numerous intermediate stations – and by no means only on the East Anglia network. In the 12 weeks to 13/03/15 Network Rail data shows 18 trains leaving London for Colchester Mondays to Fridays. Of those just three trains achieved an 'on time'/'right time' score of 50 per cent or more and seven trains were 'on time'/'right time' on fewer than 30 per cent of occasions. One train has just a 9 per cent 'on time'/'right time' score. For this level of punctuality getting home at the end of the day passengers pay £4,796 per year.

While on the West Anglia line, looking at Audley End arrivals from London Liverpool Street<sup>16</sup> in the evening peak, in the four weeks to 13/03/15 Network Rail data shows 8 trains leaving London for Audley End Mondays to Fridays\*. Of those not one train

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<sup>15</sup> the majority of these trains will continue to Norwich, Ipswich or Clacton

<sup>16</sup> these trains will terminate at either Cambridge or Kings Lynn

achieved an ‘on time’/‘right time’ score of 50 per cent or more. Four arrived on time ‘on time’/‘right time’ on 40-49 per cent of occasions, while one did so on only five per cent of occasions. For this, passengers pay £4,260 per year.

3. A requirement to make historic train performance information easy to obtain and understand. Passengers should be able to view the performance of individual trains they catch (or a group of trains) between the stations they use. When journey planning, the performance record of individual trains should be one of the elements presented to assist passenger decision-making.

4. A requirement to report publicly the number of trains each period that appear in the public timetable, but are excluded from the ‘plan of the day’ and therefore do not count officially as cancellations. The fact that any cancellation – if declared by 22:00 the day before – does not appear in performance statistics fuels many passengers’ underlying suspicion and mistrust of the industry. Being open about what is going on would help.

To reinforce these points, Passenger Focus has previously examined the relationship between a passenger’s satisfaction with punctuality and the actual level of punctuality experienced<sup>17</sup>. We looked at several different franchises and found a clear relationship between the two:

- Passenger satisfaction with punctuality declines on average by between two and three percentage points with every minute of delay
- Commuter satisfaction with punctuality declines on average by around five percentage points per minute of delay
- Business and leisure users’ satisfaction with punctuality tends to decline after a delay of four to six minutes
- Average lateness experienced by passengers was worse than that recorded for trains. This is because of the effect of cancellations and because many trains that are on time at destination are late at intermediate stations. As the Public Performance Measure records punctuality only at the train’s final stop it is possible for passengers to be late at an intermediate station only for the, by then largely empty, train to arrive on time at its destination.

These findings show that delivering higher levels of PPM, which must be a clear objective for the next franchise, is a necessary but not sufficient condition to drive improvements in satisfaction with punctuality. For passengers it is ‘right-time’ punctuality that matters; and it follows that relentless focus on delivering it would have a positive impact on passenger satisfaction.

The next operator should be required to commit to – and demonstrate – a ‘right-time’ culture and to working with Network Rail to reverse the recent downwards trends and then achieve improvements. That culture should also explicitly recognise that ‘right-

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/improving-punctuality-for-passengers>

time' arrival matters as much for passengers getting off at intermediate stations as it does for those alighting at a train's destination.

## 5. Response to consultation questions 2 - 19

### 5.1 Question 2

Are there any examples of outstanding customer service experiences, related or unrelated to passenger rail services, which you believe the new East Anglia franchise should aspire to? If so, please provide supporting details or evidence in your answer.

We have examined the NRPS scores for key customer service related factors for East Anglia as a whole, as well as the different building blocks, and in each case we compare them to the best in class (BiC) for the appropriate sector or typology.

**Table 5 Customer service scores, NRPS Autumn 2014, percentage satisfied**

	The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff at station	The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train
East Anglia	74	51
LSE average	71	54
LSE best in class	84 (Chiltern Railways)	68 (First Great Western)
Stansted	73	51
Airport average	76	70
Airport best in class	85 (Heathrow Express)	88 (Heathrow Express)
Intercity	80	73
Interurban average	80	76
Interurban best in class	90 (Cross Country: Birmingham - Manchester)	87 (First TransPennine Express: North West)
Mainline	73	39
West Anglia Outer	70	34
Long commute average	73	58
Long commute best in class	85 (Chiltern Railways: South)	79 (East Midlands Trains: London)
Rural	86	80
Rural average	80	76
Rural best in class	92 (South West Trains: not managed by SWT)	96 (ScotRail: Rural)

Table 5 illustrates how East Anglia and the building block scores compare on NRPS customer service related factors. In all instances, it is apparent that there is quite a gulf between the satisfaction scores achieved by East Anglia and the BiC for comparators. We recommend that efforts are made to identify what and how the class leaders are delivering in these areas and the specification encourages adoption of similar practices.

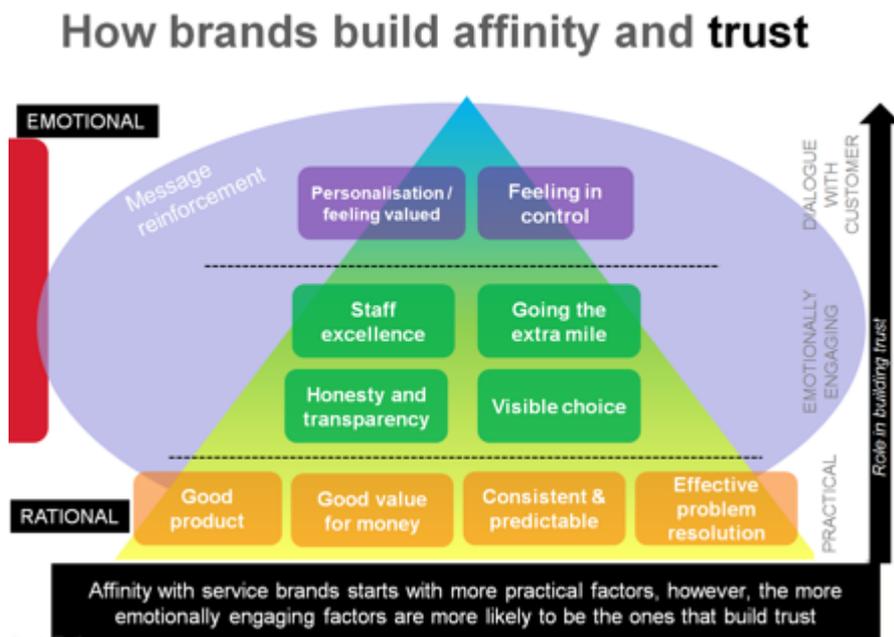
We believe that empowering frontline staff to proactively address passenger needs and giving them the authority and tools to respond to issues where and when they arise will do much to improve perceptions of customer service.

Passengers' experiences on rail are clearly also influenced by the services they experience in the wider aspects of their lives. Our work on trust (as outlined in section 3.5) identified a hierarchy of need which is shown in Figure 7 below. The base level relates to delivery of the core service and is fundamental for building any degree of trust. Beyond this, the middle tier emphasises communication and customer service, whilst the higher levels rely on a more individualised experience and a sense of being valued.

**Recommendation**

The specification should encourage the next operator to demonstrate how they will rise to the challenge of delivering improved customer service and build strong and positive relationships with passengers.

**Figure 7 - How brands build affinity and trust**



### 5.2 Question 3

**Are there any changes to the current passenger rail service (i.e. number or (sic) trains per hour/day), as set out in paragraph 5.8, which you feel should be considered? If so, please explain your rationale. For example, please identify specific local factors which might influence the future level of passenger demand which you consider should be reflected in the specification.**

We support the need for a thorough review of the East Anglia train service specification in view of the fact that this has been substantially unchanged for some years, despite demand growth and the evolving needs of passengers. It is also important that the franchise is positioned to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by the various infrastructure developments planned or anticipated for the network.

Alterations to service patterns will inevitably flow from the development of the rail infrastructure and changes to the train fleet. New journey opportunities may become available and markets are likely to change and grow. Input from passengers, local and regional bodies and other stakeholders may also identify other circumstances which require recognition in the service specification and it is vital that RE takes this on board as more detailed plans for the specification are drawn up.

Whatever the developing plans it is essential that the timetable proposals are subject to proper consultation, including the initial proposals for the specification. Within requirements protecting minimum service levels, the next operator should be given flexibility to develop the train service to meet the needs of existing and potential passengers. They should be tasked with creating the best timetable for the places they serve, balancing the range of factors important to passengers.

Engagement with passengers and local communities should be regarded as a starting point for service developments. There must be a requirement for timely, transparent and meaningful consultation that allows all stakeholders views to be listened to prior to changes being finalised. Feedback, irrespective of whether it has been possible to accommodate the recommendation or request must be provided.

From the outset and throughout the life of the franchise, there are some principles that should be embedded, to be followed whenever timetables are revised:

- early consultation with passengers must be a prerequisite, and followed by honest feedback about why the ultimate decisions were made
- existing basic features such as first/last trains and frequency/connectivity, if satisfactory, should remain
- aspirations for improvements should be met if possible
- capacity and resources should be matched as closely as possible.

Passenger Focus believes that the train services should be structured around the journeys that passengers wish to make. The key issue is whether passengers at each station have the required level of service to and from the places they want or need to travel at the times they wish to do so. The starting point should be to optimise rail services based on passenger demand and the new opportunities that

become available. The provision of sufficient capacity must be addressed, particularly for times of peak demand.

Our view is that origin and destination data should be used as the basis for understanding existing travel requirements. This data is available to the industry, but not generally to stakeholders. Without access to this key data and other relevant information, particularly about network capacity, timetabling options and comprehensive assessments of stakeholder views, it is not possible for others to derive a properly balanced judgement about service options. It is therefore important that, when considering choices and bringing forward proposals, the decision makers, whether RE, Network Rail (NR) or the operator, should ensure that the rationale that underpins them is properly set out to all who have an interest.

The service specification should take a holistic view of the needs of all passengers: commuter, business and leisure, from all parts of the network. Timetable opportunities must be optimised with passenger interests placed at the heart of planning and ahead of operational convenience. Within the acknowledged capacity constraints of the franchise the distribution of train services should be appropriate to passenger demand. Where possible there should be clearly differentiated services for different markets.

Recent qualitative research amongst rail passengers in East Anglia<sup>18</sup> identified a concern raised by a small minority who expressed surprise that there is only one service per hour from Braintree to London, even at peak times.

Services on Sundays were widely felt to be very infrequent on certain routes although there was some understanding of this.

One area in which improvement was felt to be required was the need for trains to run later from London. Respondents in Norwich mentioned that they would make use of this facility in order to be able to see a show in London without the need to stay overnight. Later trains were also considered to be necessary to other key destinations on the network, with Colchester and Stansted Airport being cited as examples by respondents. Many were aware of the plans for some of the London Underground to move to a 24 hour operation and this was expected to strengthen the demand for later last trains from London.

### **Recommendation:**

Passenger Focus recommends that RE seeks to improve current timetables in various ways. Input from local authorities, passengers and other stakeholders should inform the next stage of analysis. However, as a contribution to the debate, although neither exhaustively nor exclusively, we suggest:

- An hourly service (currently 2-hourly) should be provided between Ipswich and Peterborough to give improved connectivity between Suffolk, the Midlands and the north of England and Scotland via the East Coast Main

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<sup>18</sup> Due for publication in summer of 2015

Line. This is currently the only East Anglia route with less than one train per hour, Mondays-Saturdays. Making this a Colchester to Peterborough service should also be examined, restoring direct access from north Essex to the East Coast Main Line that was lost in December 2010 timetable changes.

- A half-hourly service (currently hourly) between Norwich and Cambridge to provide additional capacity on the route, but also to enhance rail's convenience and therefore attractiveness against the competing A11.
- A half-hourly service (currently hourly) between Norwich and North Walsham, a long-standing aspiration of local stakeholders on a corridor suffering road congestion and unpredictable journey times.
- Increased frequency of trains to and from Braintree, particularly in the peaks.
- A range of improvements to Sunday timetables should be considered. As well as seeking opportunities generally to start Sunday services earlier and run later in the evening, we highlight the following:
  - The Norwich-Lowestoft hourly service on summer Sundays (to be introduced in May 2015) should be extended all year round
  - The Ipswich to Cambridge Sunday service should be increased to hourly (currently 2-hourly)
  - The Ipswich-Lowestoft Sunday service should be increased to hourly (currently 2-hourly)
  - There should be an earlier start to Sunday services between Ipswich and Peterborough (currently, the first train is 11:50 from Peterborough)
  - There should be an earlier start to Sunday services between Ipswich and Felixstowe (currently, the first train is 11:25 from Felixstowe)
  - A Sunday service to Colchester Town should be provided replicating the weekday service pattern of a Colchester to Walton-on-the-Naze stopping train via Colchester Town. It is difficult to believe that, despite the revolution in Sunday retailing in recent years, the station serving Colchester's main shopping area is closed on Sundays.
- Restore the Westerfield stops in Ipswich-Lowestoft trains which were withdrawn in December 2012 without effective consultation with passengers or stakeholders.
- Great Yarmouth summer Saturday services. To provide through trains for passengers with luggage going on holiday, and to provide much-needed extra capacity to the coast, RE should retain the existing through trains to and from London. As well as retaining the trains, RE should specifically ensure that bidders have credible plans to operate these particular trains reliably throughout the franchise period. In recent years there have been too many locomotive failures resulting in passengers being forced to change trains at Norwich and cram (or not) onto a replacement two-coach diesel train. Summer 2014 was an improvement on 2013, but nevertheless of the 35 trains scheduled to run only 25 (71%) completed their full journey from Great Yarmouth to London or vice versa. RE should also require the franchisee to

specifically report on its performance in operating these trains at the end of each season.

- Consideration of the needs of the growing market at London Southend Airport, both in terms of early and late services and whether the currently experimental designation of the service should now become a formal part of the franchise provision.

### 5.3 Question 4

**Results indicate that rail is not the preferred mode of transport when travelling to Stansted Airport. What improvements do you believe should be made to the rail service in order to make this your first choice of travel?**

The findings from a number of existing studies into the views of infrequent or non-users of trains identify the generic issues that influence decisions regarding rail travel.

The DfT recently published an update to its door-to-door Strategy<sup>19</sup> and identified four core areas for improvement that would make it easier and more convenient for people to make their whole journey by sustainable transport modes:

- improving the quality and availability of information
- making smart and integrated ticketing the norm
- improving connections at every stage of the journey
- enhancing transport facilities.

A Passenger Focus review<sup>20</sup> of various research studies identifies the key barriers to use of the train:

- perceived cost of the ticket
- perceived hassle of going by train
- assumption that the door to door journey (except for long distance journeys) would be longer
- concerns about punctuality and reliability, particularly if the journey involves a change of train.

Our recent qualitative research included views of non or lapsed users of rail in East Anglia and supports these findings. When asked to consider the factors that influence their chosen mode of travel, ease and length of the journey were consistently identified as the most important factors and the major considerations that tend to make using a car the default choice on most occasions. Illustrative quotes include:

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<sup>19</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/391159/dft-door-to-door-action-plan-3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/391159/dft-door-to-door-action-plan-3.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Unpublished but available on request

*“I get in the car outside the house and drive to where I want to drive when I want to drive”*

(Norwich group, Non/Lapsed user)

*“If you go by train you’re dictated by the time the train goes but if you go by car you can go when you like”*

(Cambridge group, Non/Lapsed User)

Those who are not in the habit of using trains frequently tend to regard the need to plan journeys as a major disincentive and the fact that this is not a feature of many car journeys tends to remove much of the stress from travelling by this mode.

When put to the test most of the above perceptions can be challenged, as evidenced in the Passenger Focus research report *Integrated Transport, perception and reality*, published in 2010<sup>21</sup>. Passengers who were encouraged to give rail a try as part of the research found that the train was more reliable than envisaged, more comfortable and that, in some instances, their perceptions of high cost could be challenged.

The East Anglia qualitative research also identified various features that may help to encourage consideration of rail among non and lapsed users, but concluded that the main challenge is likely to be entrenched mind-sets rather than network specific issues.

The features identified to encourage consideration of rail are:

- promote website planning tools
- ‘try it for a day’ free rail ticket
- ongoing walk-up deals
- integrated end-to-end journey packages
- staff presence – reassurance that there will be a visible/helpful staff presence at all times
- promotion of generic rail benefits.

*“It wouldn’t be just about staff presence it would be about knowing that their role is to intervene and keep you safe”*

(Cambridge group, Non/Lapsed User)

Evidence from the NRPS highlights the performance of Stansted on a number of the key factors influencing non-users and compares its performance to the airport sector average and the best in class (See Appendix 2, Table A2).

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<sup>21</sup>[http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/media/ea905d338a6be810eedb952d3295787f8780f78a/integrated\\_transport\\_perreality\\_\\_feb2010.pdf](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/media/ea905d338a6be810eedb952d3295787f8780f78a/integrated_transport_perreality__feb2010.pdf)

Stansted performs well on two of the factors important to non-users, as the best in class for connections with other forms of transport and frequency of trains. It also performs reasonably well on punctuality and reliability; at 91 per cent it is equal to the sector average and slightly lower than the best in class (94 per cent).

However, it scores significantly below the sector average on several other key factors including the length of the journey, value for money and provision of information about the journey.

*“It doesn’t give me a lot of confidence when I hear on the news the Eastern Region needs to spend four billion pounds to get up to standard. You think ‘bloody hell it must be bad’”*

(Norwich group, Non/Lapsed User)

If non-users are to be encouraged to make the shift from their current choice of car or coach then focus must be given to the performance of the Stansted route on these key factors. This is also vital for existing users in order that they continue to make rail their mode of choice.

In our qualitative research on East Anglia we found that Stansted Express users tended to assume that value for money available elsewhere on the network did not apply to this route. There was a perception of there being few, if any, special offers and there was uncertainty about whether Advance fares would apply. It should be noted however that these issues are in reality based on perceptions and a lack of knowledge rather than experience. These respondents also expressed a desire to use their Oyster card to Stansted Airport in order to avoid the need to queue to buy a ticket for this journey.

More generally, we suggest that it is important that the high quality, 15 minute frequency to central London is maintained and that the recently introduced additional service between Cambridge and Stansted Airport is retained and developed over time.

#### **5.4 Question 5**

**If you have a view on or would be affected by the proposal set out in paragraph 5.10, please answer the following:**

**Which direct service would you most value? Where possible please explain your rationale when responding to this question.**

- a direct service between Norwich and Liverpool
- a direct service between Norwich and Peterborough providing connections to Liverpool
- a direct service between Norwich and Peterborough providing connections to the East Coast Main Line
- a direct service between Ipswich and Peterborough

- a direct service between Ipswich and Ely providing connections to Peterborough
- a direct service between Ipswich and Ely providing improved connections to the East Coast Main Line via Peterborough.

Passenger Focus has not specifically researched passengers' views regarding the proposals relating to connectivity and potential service changes. However, we believe that it is important that RE considers connectivity between the main towns of East Anglia and the Midlands, the north of England and Scotland as a whole: the needs of passengers travelling to and from Cambridge, Colchester, Ipswich and Norwich via Peterborough all matter. The proposal to split the Norwich to Liverpool service at Nottingham, set out in the Northern and TransPennine Express consultation last year, aroused considerable opposition among stakeholders in East Anglia and the prevailing view is that this service should be enhanced rather than discontinued.

At the same time, providing a through service to Cambridge from the Midlands and North West of England is desirable. Passenger Focus strongly encourages the RE not to make this a choice between connectivity to Norwich or connectivity to Cambridge and not to worsen connectivity with Suffolk and North Essex by introducing an additional change of trains at Ely. While what is currently mooted would undoubtedly improve connectivity with Cambridge, it appears to do the precisely the opposite for Colchester, Ipswich and Norwich.

Passenger Focus encourages RE to make a clear commitment to retain the Liverpool to Norwich and Ipswich to Peterborough routes as through services, the latter with the introduction of an hourly frequency and potential extension to and from Colchester. To provide through trains between Cambridge, the Midlands and North West England we recommend that RE considers the option for Liverpool to Norwich trains to run with four coaches between Liverpool and Ely (currently four coaches are provided between Liverpool and Nottingham), with the train dividing at Ely into portions for Norwich and Cambridge (or potentially Stansted Airport).

Where any service changes are considered for further development, please note our comments regarding passenger and stakeholder engagement and consultation set out in 5.2 above in response to Question 3.

## **5.5 Question 6**

**Do you have any proposals to improve Community Rail Partnerships so as to deliver more of the beneficial outcomes for passengers achieved so far? Please provide any evidence in support of your proposal.**

### **5.5.1 East Anglia partnerships**

The following Community Rail Partnerships operate within the East Anglia region:

- **Bittern Line** - Norwich to Sherringham via North Walsham to Sherringham
- **Gainsborough Line** - Sudbury to Marks Tey
- **Wherry Lines** - Norwich to Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth
- **East Suffolk Lines** - Ipswich to Lowestoft and Felixstowe
- **Flitch Line** - from Braintree to Witham
- **Hereward Line** - from Ely to Peterborough
- **Mayflower Line** - from Manningtree to Harwich
- **Crouch Valley Line** - from Wickford to Southminster
- **Sunshine Coast Line** - from Colchester to Clacton and Walton.

### 5.5.2 The value of Community Rail Partnerships

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) bring distinctive attributes to local rail compared with other parts of the national rail network, including:

- creating a sense of involvement
- information and marketing activities
- implementing local schemes
- providing a focus for investment.

The recent report on the Value of Community Rail Partnerships<sup>22</sup> shows that they can be extremely successful. Focussing on the regional and local level, results can be seen in increased footfall at stations along CRP lines.

Referring to service enhancements on the East Suffolk line, Jonathan Denby, Head of Corporate Affairs for Abellio Greater Anglia said:

“Now the CRP may only be one factor in this outcome, but there is no doubt it has played a key contributory role in both enabling a major service enhancement and maximising its positive impact. The result is a route which has seen passenger journeys rise from a previous high of 359,000 in 2008/09 to 662,000 in 2013/14 (despite the line being affected by flooding in December 2013) - an increase of almost 92%.”

The report goes on to show that the costs of running CRPs are less than the value of additional revenues earned by their lines and they therefore present a commercial case.

### 5.5.3 Passenger growth

The Value of Community Rail Partnerships report also shows high level sustained year on year growth in passengers travelling on community rail lines and local rail services in recent years with community rail routes growing by 2.8 per cent each year more than regional lines.

Recent modelling of rail passenger journeys, though, has underestimated the growth of trips on community rail services, as compared with the trends of the last ten years:

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<sup>22</sup>[http://www.acorp.uk.com/Assets/Values2015/140916\\_Value%20of%20CRPs%20and%20volunteering\\_final%20draft%20v3.17.pdf](http://www.acorp.uk.com/Assets/Values2015/140916_Value%20of%20CRPs%20and%20volunteering_final%20draft%20v3.17.pdf)

- The National Transport Model (published 2011) predicted growth on regional rail services through to 2030 of only one per cent per year.
- The Network Rail Strategic Business Plan and the Rolling Stock Strategy Report (issued 2013) uses growth rates of three-four per cent per annum.
- The Network Rail LTPP draft Regional Urban Market Study (2013) predicts growth no higher than three per cent per year for the next 10 years and through to 2043.

The East Suffolk Lines CRP progress report<sup>23</sup> shows a combination of service and station improvements have seen passenger numbers on the East Suffolk Lines increase. In 2013 more than 653,000 journeys were made on the line between Ipswich and Lowestoft, an increase of 11.5 per cent from 2012. Compared with 2009/2010 passenger numbers are up by 60 per cent.

*The Value of Community Rail Partnerships* report found evidence of ticketless travel, with volunteer passenger counts recording substantially higher numbers than the LENNON data. This indicates that work to increase rail use is offset by lack of revenue protection and means that on some lines growth is underestimated which could have a detrimental effect on future investment decisions.

The report also found that train capacity can be a constraint on continuing growth of rail use, currently limiting more than 50 per cent of the Community Rail Partnerships involved in the study.

### **Recommendations on data and passenger counts**

Passenger Focus recommends:

- greater transparency and sharing of data and methodologies by DfT, Network Rail and train operators with CRPs
- CRPs are commissioned to carry out and submit regular passenger counts, to ensure more accurate passenger data is available for forecasting, especially for capacity and rolling stock requirements.

#### **5.5.4 Development and expansion opportunities**

Passengers expect the stations they use to be welcoming and attractive. Local involvement, typically by ‘friends of’ groups and supported by the railway industry and local government, can achieve significant improvements in the attractiveness of stations, in stimulating community engagement with the railway and the use of redundant station buildings by local businesses and organisations, including those involved in local tourism.

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<sup>23</sup>[http://www.acorp.uk.com/Assets/CRP%20Ann%20Reports/The%20ESL%20Annual%20Report%20\(rev8\).pdf](http://www.acorp.uk.com/Assets/CRP%20Ann%20Reports/The%20ESL%20Annual%20Report%20(rev8).pdf)

Passengers expect transport to be integrated – which should, of course, mean that it is more effective in attracting users as well as being more useful. Increasing ‘localism’ should help this task, which will improve accessibility to local areas and help with the development of ‘gateway’ stations to access areas of natural beauty along rural lines.

Innovative marketing schemes have become the hallmark for community rail. Local enthusiasm is a powerful tool in generating links with visitor attractions that can be accessed from local stations.

The Value of Community Partnerships report found that some key aspects of how CRPs boost rail use are:

- using local knowledge, often lacking as train operating companies become more centralised
- adopting and improving stations so they are attractive rather than “no go” places, thereby unlocking demand
- providing a focus for and enabling improvement schemes
- overcoming low levels of knowledge about rail journey opportunities and, for people unfamiliar with rail, generating confidence and interest in how to use the network
- engaging with young people, essential for growing the market
- being innovative and making a little money go a long way, in which Partnerships and volunteer groups are highly skilled.

The report also suggests that security of funding, the employment of a CRP Officer, good communications and marketing, and creating productive partnerships are key to the success of a CRP.

Professor Paul Salveson’s paper on *The Sustainable Branch Line*<sup>24</sup> goes further in saying that CRPs have an excellent record of winning back passengers to rural lines through innovative marketing and community involvement. Adding that it is possible to develop a scenario whereby such partnerships take on more and more peripheral commercial activities and build up commercial expertise which – at a future stage – enables them to take on actual train operation. A model could be developed in consultation with local communities to establish a steady progression of input, moving towards greater autonomy in relation to developing activities.

Volunteers can provide important back-up through ‘additionality’ – looking after station gardens, acting as conductors on the bus services, and assisting with catering services.

### **Recommendation – Community Rail Partnership development**

Passenger Focus recommends:

- Funding a community rail post at senior level, with appropriate support, to work towards these goals; promote and co-ordinate activities across

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.paulsalveson.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/The-Sustainable-Branch-Line1.doc>

community rail lines and services in East Anglia, and provide liaison with county councils/LEPs/LTBs.

- A formalised group to meet periodically for policy/investment discussion, to include the operator, Network Rail, DfT, CRPs, county council/LEP/LTB representatives, Passenger Focus and other partners as appropriate.
- Supporting wider community involvement through station adoption and user group schemes, particularly to boost the local stations environment and improve passenger satisfaction, and the re-establishment of community ambassador initiatives to widen the reach of the railway beyond traditional boundaries.

### **5.6 Question 7**

**Do you wish to submit a proposal for a future third party promoted scheme that would involve a change to the current rail service in the franchise? If so, please include any supporting business case or value for money analysis together with your proposal.**

Local Authorities and other stakeholders from across the region are best placed to identify other schemes and potential options for funding them.

Regarding the potential for decrements, experience shows that those who lose services can encounter a number of difficulties unless there are well planned and effective mitigations, including clear passenger information about the changes and alternative travel options, put in place from the outset. This must be a requirement should any proposed decrements be given consideration.

### **5.7 Question 8**

**How can the franchise operator help you better during a) planned disruption, such as engineering works and forecasted bad weather, and b) unplanned on-the-day disruption? Please provide separate answers for both cases.**

#### **5.7.1 Resilience**

Passengers Focus recommends that the new franchise is let with a strong emphasis on service resilience, including in the face of severe weather. Specifically, we feel the bidders:

- Should be required to consider how to improve the resilience of services over sections of route known to be vulnerable to severe weather disruption (for example the Haddiscoe area of the Norwich to Lowestoft route).
- Should be required to set out the extent to which they will be reliant on overtime and rest day working to deliver the train service, including on Sundays.
- Should be required to show they have reasonable rolling stock availability assumptions and that they are not so optimistic that passengers are at continual

risk of experiencing short-formed and cancelled trains. Plans should be required for all classes of train, but with particular focus on the diesel fleet availability assumptions given that the fleet size is small and the consequences for passengers of cancellations on routes with a low frequency are highly damaging. Areas to ensure there are credible plans include:

- Capacity to release rolling stock for periodic heavy maintenance, refurbishment, PRMTIS adaptations etc. without compromising service delivery.
- That tyre-turning capability is sufficient to ensure fleet availability remains high throughout the autumn and winter, and in particular whether Intercity and Rural routes performance would improve if a wheel lathe was installed at Norwich depot (rolling stock is regularly hauled from Norwich to Ilford for tyre-turning and we have seen reports of trains travelling as far as Derby).
- Contingency arrangements if incidents result in lengthy repairs to rolling stock (for example striking road vehicles, collisions with livestock, etc.), including that key components are held in stock rather than manufactured to order.

### **5.7.2 Managing service disruption – engineering works**

There is a significant programme of engineering work scheduled for the East Anglia network in the period ahead and it is vital that passengers' interests are protected. Bidders should be required to set out how they will work with Network Rail to minimise the use of 'all line' engineering blocks. Culturally, the default assumption must be that routes remain open while maintenance, renewal and enhancement takes place, with exceptions made where there is compelling need. Bidders should recognise that 55 per cent of passengers say they would not travel at all if a replacement bus is involved<sup>25</sup>, and we encourage RE to secure a joint, public commitment from the future operator and Network Rail that wherever practically possible they will keep passengers on trains and transfer them to buses only as a last resort.

Use of diversionary routes is an important way to minimise the number of passengers needing to use replacement buses. Few diversionary routes exist in East Anglia, but a key opportunity continues to be missed to maintain through journeys between Norwich and London Liverpool Street when there is engineering work on the Great Eastern Main Line. Bidders should be encouraged to set out how they will continue to provide either a through service between Norwich and London via Cambridge or, if that cannot be achieved, provide a fast, high-quality service with a cross-platform interchange at Ely.

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<sup>25</sup> Rail passengers experiences and priorities during engineering works - [http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/media/f20ebdf252a73e3f61c63c3b76d335f84c155829/Rail passengers experiences and priorities during engineering works - September 2012 %28normal res%29.pdf](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/media/f20ebdf252a73e3f61c63c3b76d335f84c155829/Rail%20passengers%20experiences%20and%20priorities%20during%20engineering%20works%20-%20September%202012%20normal%20res%29.pdf)

Notwithstanding our general observation above, Passenger Focus is strongly critical of the current practice that to facilitate mid-week night maintenance the 23:30 London to Norwich train is periodically terminated at Ipswich with onward bus replacement. Assuming that bidders cannot agree alternative arrangements with Network Rail, on these occasions the new franchise should provide a replacement through train via Cambridge. Requiring passengers to change to a replacement bus at quarter to one in the morning when a viable alternative rail route is available is unacceptably poor customer service.

In addition to the overarching cultural point, Passenger Focus encourages RE to ensure that the bidders have credible proposals in the following areas:

- For regularly submitting a high quality bid to Network Rail at T-18 so accurate amended timetables are in the public domain and reservations open at T-12. We recommend that the operator should be required to report, period by period, on the level of post T-12 change to the train plan.
- For working with Network Rail to minimise the risk of possession over-runs, and for communicating information about alternative arrangements to passengers in the event that it does happen.
- For ensuring, through liaison with c2c and Great Northern respectively, that a route is available at all times between London and Southend and London and Cambridge.
- For managing the transfer of passengers seamlessly from train to bus and vice-versa (and from train to train where a normally-direct journey involves a change of trains), recognising the key role to be played by well-informed, people-orientated staff at interchanges.

An excellent reputation in this area was achieved by First Great Western and East Midlands Trains with blockades at Reading and Nottingham and we recommend that this good practice is examined and similar approaches adopted by other operators.

- For ensuring it is clear to passengers where they should wait for replacement buses and clear to bus drivers where they should stop, in particular where replacement buses do not drive up to the station itself. In terms of physical infrastructure, we regard Southern's use of permanent, high quality signage as best practice (see picture in Appendix 3). The operator must also ensure that passengers making online enquiries or ticket purchases are specifically told the replacement bus will, for example, "depart from outside the White Swan P.H. in the centre of the village" and not from the station.
- For ensuring that the needs of passengers with disabilities are met when travelling during engineering works, including but not limited to those who have booked through the Passenger Assist service. Arrangements for those

encumbered with buggies/cycles/luggage etc should also be made clear to passengers in advance.

- For ensuring that passengers making journeys involving a replacement bus, or a diverted train taking significantly longer than usual, are aware of that before they purchase a ticket – whether buying online, from a Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) or at a ticket office.
- For tracking the location of replacement buses in real time and feeding that information automatically to Darwin for onward distribution to passengers (and railway staff) via National Rail Enquiries channels and others using Darwin data, including station customer information systems (CIS).
- For recognising that passengers travelling by replacement bus expect a discount on the rail fare they would normally have paid.
- For giving passengers answers to the questions “what is being done?” and “how do I benefit?” passengers tell us that knowing what is happening helps sugar the replacement bus pill, yet it is commonplace to see nothing more informative than “Engineering work is taking place over some parts of the Abellio Greater Anglia network with the following trains amended:”

### **5.7.3 Managing service disruption – unplanned**

In NRPS, the most significant ‘driver’ of passenger dissatisfaction in East Anglia, as it is nationally, is how the train operator handles delays.

In 2014 Passenger Focus published new research looking at passengers’ needs and experiences during unplanned disruption<sup>26</sup>, including around the provision of information. We made a number of recommendations, included as Appendix 4, and encourage RE to ensure that bidders have credible plans to address them. However there are two key points that must be tackled from day one of the new franchise:

- The cultural issue, across the industry, that deficiencies in passenger information at times of disruption persist in a way that would not be tolerated if they were operational or safety failures.
- That the operator must measure the quality of information provided during disruption on a robust and ongoing basis, in terms both of ‘factory gate’ quality and the ultimate test of passenger opinion.

In addition to the recommendations in Appendix 4, we encourage RE to secure as part of the new franchises two important prerequisites for providing effective passenger information during disruption.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-information-when-trains-are-disrupted>

- Visual and audible information at all stations to be served by the East Anglia franchise.
- Train movement data sufficiently granular to deliver accurate live departure predictions for all stations. Fitment of GPS devices to all trains, allowing positional data to be fed to Darwin via the under-development “GPS gateway” would seem likely to be the best solution.

### 5.8 Question 9

**To improve the railway's ability to match growth in demand with appropriate levels of capacity, we recognise that an increase of carriages per train, or in the number of services per hour, would help. However, we are confined by limited timetabling and infrastructure constraints and are therefore looking for other innovative ways to resolve the issue. When travelling on a service where capacity is stretched, what opportunities do you see which would improve your on board experience?**

We set out in section 4.2 the significance of capacity to passengers and our view is that all possible efforts to effectively provide and manage this important element of service must be made. A number of suggestions for making better use of capacity were covered in section 4.2.1.

Passenger Focus sees limited opportunity for the East Anglia franchise to ease crowding other than either by providing additional capacity on existing trains or running extra trains. Therefore, as additional diesel multiple units come onto the market as a result of electrification elsewhere in the country, the East Anglia franchisee should be incentivised to make the case to increase the size of the local service fleet.

One further option that might be explored is the potential for electrification of the line to Sudbury to increase capacity by operating the line with a 4-car train and to release a 2-car diesel unit to be better employed elsewhere in East Anglia.

#### 5.8.1 Rolling stock capacity and configuration

Passenger Focus has conducted several research projects on rolling stock design, and where capacity has proved to be a driving force for change there are two areas that passengers consistently point to in terms of need for improvement:

- the design of the aisle/gangway running the length of the carriage
- the vestibule area/entrance to the carriage.

### **5.8.1.1 East Anglia franchise research**

Passengers had strong objections to standing; there was a common expectation that having a valid ticket should provide entitlement to a seat. The objection to standing was strongest amongst commuters, who felt standing exacerbated the negative experiences of travelling on the franchise. In some circumstances a small minority of participants were prepared to risk travelling in First Class compartment with a standard class ticket.

A minority said that they were prepared to tolerate occasional standing, under certain conditions and only for short distances (around or less than 20 minutes). In addition to the obvious issues around comfort, there was also a concern amongst passengers that standing on a train travelling at high speed compromised their safety.

### **5.8.1.2 Thameslink rolling stock research**

Those passengers boarding trains nearer to London displayed a high degree of pragmatism, although it probably resulted from 'conditioning', accepting that even with 12 coach trains they were unlikely to get a seat in the morning peak. Flowing from that there was a clear view that the new trains should be designed to allow passengers to stand in complete safety and as comfortably as possible – though there were some who thought the new trains should be designed to provide a better chance of them getting a seat.

In order to facilitate this, participants in the Thameslink research were quick to point out the need for improved provision of grab rails/handles. Passengers identified this as a major area for improvement, as existing carriages in service were seen to be particularly uncomfortable to stand in because there was nothing suitable to aid their stability. This was particularly a problem for shorter passengers, and those travelling with children or more than one bag.

In the saloon area, passengers were often reluctant to move down the carriage away from the vestibule area if they perceived there to be nothing for them to hold on to.

*"I'm too short to reach the rails, and I won't move down the carriage because it's dangerous for me. People don't understand this and get irate."*

(Bedford group, Commuter)

Passengers welcomed designs that showed wider gangways/aisles between each coach, as they were felt to greatly enhance freedom of movement along the train, and provided more standing space; but only if coupled with something to hold on to when doing so.

The vestibule area itself was also mentioned in this respect, making passengers feel unsafe if they have to stand. The results of the Thameslink research were later echoed in later research conducted on Merseyrail trains by Passenger Focus.

### **5.8.1.3 Merseytravel rolling stock research research**

Research conducted in partnership with Merseytravel demonstrated that of those passengers who stood on-board existing trains, just 46 per cent were satisfied with the space available to them and only 41 per cent with the provision of grab rails. The research identified congestion in the vestibule as being a frequent problem when travelling on Merseyrail trains. This was not felt to be an issue that was unique to Merseyrail services, since some respondents claimed to have experienced this when travelling with other TOCs and on London Underground. However, in the context of existing passenger volumes and the fact that most were able to get a seat, even during peak times, this seemed to be a large problem on Merseyrail trains, in relative terms.

Much of the congestion seemed to be caused by passengers travelling with bikes and pushchairs standing in the vestibule areas – in part a consequence of not having dedicated areas or a flexible space (for example tip up seats near the doors) that could be used for such purposes. This was often assumed to be the easiest option due to the relatively large floor space and not having to navigate round other passengers and the partition on either side of the entrances. However the main reason for passengers being reluctant to stand in the gangways was the widespread perception of not being able to do so safely or comfortably.

This is primarily due to the lack of usable grab poles in this part of the carriage (even in comparison with the vestibule areas). The rail attached to the overhead luggage shelf was considered to be too high and/or too far away from the aisle for most passengers to reach comfortably and the discs on top of the seats were thought to be difficult to hold firmly enough to provide stability when standing on a moving train.

*“When the train is full there’s nothing to hold onto for security. There used to be straps hanging from the ceiling but there are other things that could be done.”*  
(Leisure user, West Kirby)

The narrowness of the space creates the perception that there is a risk of those who move down the aisle becoming trapped there. This creates concerns about being able to get off quickly enough and perhaps missing the intended stop, especially for those making relatively short journeys.

*“I don’t want to go right into the carriage if it’s busy because I might not be able to get off at my stop if the train is full.”*  
(Leisure user, West Kirby)

### **5.8.1.4 Potential options to explore on East Anglia**

If it is not possible to provide new trains, specifically designed to the market that they will serve on the East Anglia franchise, then efforts should be made to look at how

the existing rolling stock can be refurbished to better meet the demands of passengers.

Much of the outer-suburban fleet used by Abellio Greater Anglia is 'two plus three seating' (that is, two seats on one side of the centre aisle and three the other) a configuration which research shows that passengers dislike for reasons of comfort, practicality and 'personal space'. With the very important caveat that bidders must conduct research specifically among the passengers concerned, there may be scope to improve passenger satisfaction by moving to 'two plus two seating' with more space in which slightly more passengers would have to stand.

If capacity on metro routes is the significant driver of change in this instance, and depending on the market that the trains are designed to serve and testing proposals with the passengers affected, Passenger Focus would suggest that the example of the 455 units refurbished by South West Trains would provide a good starting point on which to build. The doors on these trains were modified to improve access and egress times, and the change in design to the vestibule area has helped improve the circulation of passengers within the carriage during peak times.

### **5.9 Question 10**

#### **What are your views on removing first class seating in order to provide more overall seating and reduce standing?**

This is not a question we have researched with passengers and we can predict that responses to this will reflect individual preferences and usage of the different types of provision.

'Passengers always able to get a seat on the train' is the second highest priority for improvement on AGA, with an index of 339, so the issue of available space is clearly relevant. This is also reflected in an NRPS score of just 47 for 'sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand' for peak-time respondents in autumn 2014.

First class provides fewer seats than standard for same amount of space and can often be under-utilised, with implications for effective usage of the train space. Passengers crowded in standard could legitimately feel indignant that they are uncomfortable when other space is not fully used.

However, EA journeys can be long, and the value of first class facilities for business and other passengers prepared and able to pay extra to sit/work in increased comfort cannot be underestimated.

First class also generates additional revenue, which if substantially reduced would presumably have at least some impact on standard class fares.

We suggest that there should be a service by service assessment of needs and a carefully balanced approach to optimising capacity, whilst retaining some first class provision where this is well-used and can be justified.

### **5.10 Question 11**

**Are there any specific stations or services that you feel could improve on reliability or punctuality? Where possible, please explain your reasoning when responding to this question.**

We set out in section 4.3 the significance of punctuality and reliability to passengers and commented on a range of measures that should be adopted to ensure a core focus and improvements to this important element of service.

As noted in section 3.3.1 punctuality and reliability is the most significant driver of satisfaction for East Anglia overall at 26 per cent. It is a particularly strong factor for passengers on the Intercity route at 46 per cent and to a lesser extent for Mainline, West Anglia Outer and Rural passengers. It is also a significant driver of dissatisfaction, at 21 per cent second only to the related factor of how well the train company dealt with delays.

Analysis of NRPS scores for punctuality and reliability allows us to make a comparison across each of the five East Anglia building blocks, and also against both the typology average and the best in class. Table 6 shows that Stansted performs well within the Airport sector, equalling the average of 91 per cent and slightly below the best in class (94 per cent). This helps explain why punctuality and reliability is not a driver of satisfaction for passengers on this route. AGA's Long Commute routes perform slightly above the typology average of 75 per cent (Mainline, 76 per cent and West Anglia Outer, 79 per cent), however they perform significantly less well than the best in class (90 per cent). At 76 and 70 per cent respectively, Intercity and Rural routes both score significantly lower than their respective typology average (82 per cent, Interurban and 78 per cent Rural) and best in class (91 per cent, Interurban and 95 per cent, Rural).

It is also worth noting that within these routes satisfaction scores for passengers at individual stations may fall well below the average. An example is Chelmsford at 66 per cent. Services here are predominantly within the Main Line route, although there are also services by some Intercity trains. RE and bidders are recommended to look in detail at the NRPS database for East Anglia to explore areas where attention should be directed.

**Table 6 Punctuality and reliability, NRPS Autumn 2014, percentage satisfied**

Stansted	Airport Average	Airport Best in Class		Intercity	Interurban Average	Interurban Best in Class
91	91	94		76	82	91
Mainline	West Anglia Outer	Long Commute Average	Long Commute Best in Class	Rural	Rural Average	Rural Best in Class
76	79	75	90	70	78	95

Clearly, passengers on all routes have a right to expect a high level of punctuality and few cancellations. Therefore we would expect RE to require in the new franchise a strong commitment to drive up the level of punctuality and reliability on all routes. However, two stand out as requiring particular focus:

#### **5.10.1 London to Norwich Intercity service**

Looking at ‘right time’ arrivals in Norwich, the passenger measure of punctuality, in the 12 weeks to 16 February 2015, data from Network Rail’s ‘open data’ feeds shows that punctuality ranged from three per cent for the 20:00 from Liverpool Street to 59 per cent for the 17:02. Just six trains out of 36 arrived in Norwich on time on more than 40 per cent of occasions, while 14 out of 36 trains (38 per cent) had a punctuality record below 20 per cent. Running a punctual operation on the flagship intercity service must be an absolute priority for the new franchise. While the figures quoted here are for the train’s destination, arriving on time at intermediate stations is equally important – not least because some passengers will have connecting trains.

#### **5.10.2 Ipswich to Felixstowe service**

This service suffers in three ways. Even minor late running of freight trains impacts on punctuality of the passenger service; the road network makes it relatively straightforward to substitute with a replacement bus if the train company has a shortage of diesel trains; and when several freight trains arrive very late at Ipswich (perhaps because of a problem hundreds of miles away earlier in their journey) the passenger trains are sacrificed to clear the backlog. The new franchise must ensure absolute focus within Network Rail on delivering a punctual service on the Felixstowe branch: it is not the passengers’ fault that their trains share the track to and from a major container port.

We noted in section 4.3 that other research demonstrates that commuters’ satisfaction with punctuality falls from the very first minute a train is late, not just after the five minutes on commuter services allowed by Public Performance Measure (PPM). It was also found that the average passenger lateness in the evening peak

was worse than the average train lateness. This was because of the effect of cancellations and because many trains were late arriving at intermediate stations even if on time at their destination.

## **Recommendations**

Passenger Focus's principal conclusion from the research is that Britain's railway must in future ensure operational focus on 'right-time' arrival at all stops. We recommend that this is made a core requirement of the new franchise, together with publication of detailed performance information which will inevitably act as a catalyst to improvement.

Bidders should demonstrate an ability to take an organisation-wide approach to delivering improved performance. There should be plans to ensure that every department, team and individual involved in train operations knows, and does, precisely what is required to achieve right-time and how to respond to any challenges that threaten this delivery.

Comprehensive reporting on all elements of performance across the entire franchise should be a matter of course and management should ensure sufficient focus and attention to detail to be confident that nothing is overlooked. A powerful strategy to engage and motivate all staff to understand and play their role should also be evidenced.

### **5.11 Question 12**

**What sort of improvements would you like to see prioritised at the station(s) you use? Please provide details and reasoning for these as well as the name of the station(s).**

Appendix 5 provides details of passenger priorities for both provision of, and improvements to, station facilities both for Great Britain by different groupings of station footfall and for the AGA sample.

Whilst there will inevitably be many local responses about improvements sought at individual stations for RE and bidders to consider, we also wish to highlight the following:

- Whittlesea station. A long-standing issue that the new franchise should address is the lack of lighting on the approach road to the Ely-bound platform. The public highway is lit, the platform is lit, but passengers are in the dark for 400 yards on the station approach road.
- Ely station. The new franchise should provide for renewal of toilets on both platforms to provide modern fit-for-purpose passenger facilities.
- Derby Road station, in the suburbs of Ipswich. The new franchise should seek to work in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council and the Police to address vandalism and anti-social behaviour problems and allow reinstatement of passenger waiting facilities on both platforms.

### **5.11.1 Better railway stations**

The specification for the next franchise should require bidders to commit to ensuring that minimum standards - appropriate for the size, footfall, location and reflecting local passenger aspiration - are delivered and maintained at all stations. The Better Rail Station Standards<sup>27</sup> could provide a starting point for the assessment of requirements which can then be adjusted for local circumstances.

Further cycles of investment should also be committed to maintain and progressively improve upon the station environment and facilities.

We suggest consideration is given to specifying a rolling programme of steady improvement to stations on a line of route basis, to concentrate benefits in a way that should create a bigger impact than spreading improvements around randomly. This should also create greater synergies in the works.

In addition to utilising all available industry funding schemes, the operator should also look beyond these and work with stakeholders and other partners to seek opportunities to bring in funding for allied improvements where these address wider objectives such as promoting economic development, improving transport integration, increasing safe access or enhancing the public realm. Holistic improvements to investments in and around stations are likely to deliver better results and increase efficiency and value.

### **5.11.2 Station investment should focus on passenger needs**

Whilst Passenger Focus is supportive of the principle of funding streams allocated to specific purposes, it is important passenger needs are central to the investments made and that resources are directed to the factors valued by the users of stations and the rail services from them. To this end, proposals should be required to reference how they address the findings of research into passenger requirements and perceptions of stations, including NRPS satisfaction scores.

Table 7 below, shows NRPS satisfaction scores for station attributes for East Anglia building blocks. These show some variations within the network and some notably lower scores for a number of factors on the West Anglia Outer and Rural routes. Whilst passengers are fairly pragmatic about what facilities should be provided at different category stations, low scores for these factors would suggest that in many instances stations fail to meet even basic expectations.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf>

**Table 7 Station attributes - East Anglia and building blocks  
NRPS Spring and Autumn 2014 combined, percentage satisfied**

Factor	East Anglia	Intercity	Mainline	Rural	Stansted	West Anglia Outer
Overall satisfaction with the station	78	82	81	69	84	73
Ticket buying facilities	71	71	71	65	86	70
Provision of information about train times/platforms	79	80	78	75	77	80
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	67	71	71	61	70	60
Cleanliness	74	77	78	67	74	66
The facilities and services	56	60	59	52	62	50
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	73	77	71	83	73	72
Connections with other forms of public transport	76	85	80	60	82	66
Facilities for car parking	56	54	50	65	41	63
Overall environment	67	71	71	63	75	59
Your personal security whilst using the station	68	71	70	71	70	62
The availability of staff	61	63	61	59	71	60
The provision of shelter facilities	60	60	60	63	77	55
Availability of seating	38	34	39	51	47	34
How request to station staff was handled	88	90	90	89	92	84
Facilities for bicycle parking	61	47	63	67	58	60
<i>Five or more percentage points below the East Anglia average</i>						
<i>Five or more percentage points above the East Anglia average</i>						

Passenger Focus research on the Greater Anglia franchise demonstrated that, whilst other facilities were welcome, most passengers were concerned with the basic needs: toilets, shelter, information and refreshment. Whilst Liverpool Street was seen as the flagship station for the network, passengers felt that there was a need for investment at a number of other major stations on the network.

- Norwich - was felt to have good facilities, but there was disappointment that these often closed before the last train and that the toilets were on the track side of the barriers.
- Ipswich - was felt to offer poor facilities given the number of people using the station. Passengers said that it felt tired and inhospitable, although we are aware that there are plans for some improvements.
- Stratford – despite the regeneration in the local area the platforms were felt to be exposed to the elements, lacking shelter and also retail/catering inside the station.

At smaller stations passenger expectations were broadly in line with the station size; and more concentrated on functionality. That said some were thought to be in need of 'love and attention'.

Passenger Focus research conducted at Clapham Junction, Barking and Luton stations following the Better Rail Stations report<sup>28</sup> shows that at individual stations there are often specific areas of improvements that passengers want to see and that priorities can vary according to location and circumstance. Bidders should seek station feedback from local passengers and Community Rail Partnerships to identify aspirations for specific locations and gather information about relevant accessibility issues.

In addition to those three stations Passenger Focus conducted a detailed piece of research, in partnership with Network Rail, looking at what areas of the station passengers wanted to see improved as part of the National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP). Twenty-six NSIP stations were surveyed in 2008/09, which were due to benefit from NSIP investment – most, but not all, of the stations were in London and the South East. Detailed passenger surveys were conducted at each of the stations asking passengers to rate different aspects of the service (environment, parking, information, waiting shelters etc) and what areas of the station they would like to see improved (also what they would prioritise).

Passenger Focus produced 26 individual stations reports and a summary document<sup>29</sup>. A fuller report<sup>30</sup> is also available. Once the works were complete the surveys were repeated at some of the 26 stations in order to see how the satisfaction scores had changed<sup>31</sup>. The results for the seven stations Passenger Focus went

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<sup>28</sup> The Better Stations Report identified 10 of the worst category B stations in the country. Clapham Junction, Barking and Luton, all featured in that list.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-summary-report>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-final-report>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-phase-two-report>

back to, combined, showed an overall improvement of satisfaction by 30 percentage points. The positive impact of doing work at each of the stations was clear to see, with the most instrumental factors in driving up overall passenger satisfaction being: improvements to the appearance of the booking office, the condition of platform shelters, the footbridges, ticket sales points, the main entrances/exits, and the waiting rooms.

### **5.11.3 The importance of staffing and information**

Passenger Focus research on stations consistently demonstrates that, in addition to station facilities, there are two key factors that operators need to consider when thinking about how to improve passenger satisfaction with stations: information and staff.

#### **5.11.3.1 Passenger information**

The way the industry manages delays is the biggest single driver of rail passenger dissatisfaction; the key to improving this is through the provision of accurate, timely and consistent information about delays. Despite the increasing use of technology many passengers still only tend to find out about disruption once they have arrived at the station. It is therefore crucial that operators look at how they can best pass on accurate information to the passenger once it is known to the industry. This is particularly important at unstaffed stations where the passengers' only source of information might be a Customer Information Screen (CIS). Real time information provision at all stations should be a core requirement of the franchise.

Other types of information are also important to passengers. It is important that the franchise specification requires high standards of information provision for all stages of the journey. This should include requirements to meet passenger needs for initial planning, at the station of departure, during the journey, at the arrival station and, particularly, when there is disruption. The operator should be required to adopt strategies that maximise the effective use of evolving technology (see Appendix 6 for details of information used by passengers at different stages of the journey).

It is also important that, at all times when trains are running, passengers can have access to someone who can provide information and, if disruption means that journeys are curtailed, is also empowered to help stranded passengers by arranging/authorising alternative transport, accommodation or other appropriate responses. The new franchise should review current practice whereby calls from help-points at unstaffed AGA stations are answered by National Rail Enquiries. Passengers tell us that lack of local knowledge within an overseas call centre can be a barrier to provision of the useful information.

### 5.11.3.2 Staffing

The pressure on the industry to reduce costs inevitably places a focus on the overheads associated with staff. However, Passenger Focus is concerned that the next franchise operator does not overlook the very significant roles staff play and the value passengers attach to a visible staff presence, especially at stations.

One of the notable findings from our Greater Anglia qualitative research in 2014 was the significance passengers placed on staffing. There were frequent references to the value of staff presence and the varied assistance staff could provide. In particular, passengers felt staff could help enhance feelings of security (partly through deterring anti-social behaviour) and provide information and assistance during times of disruption for example helping with queries about alternative routes of travel.

Staff are seen as an important and trusted source of information for passengers. This role can encompass information about journey planning, cover wider issues relating to ticket retailing, where there remains considerable complexity about terms and conditions applicable to tickets and, of course, sale of tickets that are unavailable from TVMs.

Passengers with assistance needs are particularly dependent on staff to deliver the help they require and to fulfil requests made through Passenger Assist. Many station facilities and services are available only whilst staff are present. Feedback indicates significant concern about the lack of access to toilets and waiting rooms if staff are withdrawn from stations or hours are significantly reduced.

Passengers cite the lack of staff as a major reason for their feelings of concern over personal security and consistently identify a visible staff presence as being important to providing reassurance to those travelling on the railway. It is vital that those staff receive the appropriate training both in terms of managing the station environment and personal security within it, and customer service. The industry needs to give serious consideration to how it can best deploy staff and make best use of the different types of complimentary policing available to it. Our publication, *Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railways*, sets out passengers' concerns in more detail. The specification should include a requirement to set out how these issues will be addressed across the franchise.

It is important that staff are trained, managed and supported to deliver the highest possible levels of customer service. Expectations of customer service continue to rise as standards do across the range of passenger experience, both within and beyond the rail industry. The organisational culture must recognise that passengers are the very reason the organisation exists, ensuring that passengers are valued and appreciated at every level of the operation. This approach needs to be driven from the top to achieve exemplary staff behaviours amongst a workforce that is genuinely empowered. The ethos must be that passenger interests are central to the decisions and actions of the business, making a genuine and consistent demonstration of care for whether a passenger returns to travel again.

### 5.12 Question 13

**Do you have any proposals to improve security and safety at stations or on trains that you would like us to consider? Please provide any supporting evidence and details of any specific stations which you feel merit consideration for future improvement under these schemes.**

In autumn 2014 NRPS asked passengers whether they had had cause to worry about personal security in the last six months whilst making a train journey. Nationally the number of passengers saying yes stood at 10 per cent, the number on Abellio Greater Anglia was slightly higher at 13 per cent.

NRPS then went on to ask those passengers who said that they had been concerned why that was, both in term of their experiences at the station and on train. On Abellio Greater Anglia the main causes for that concern, both on the train and at the station, were attributed to the anti-social behaviour of others and a lack of staff. (See Appendix 7 and 8). Participants in the qualitative East Anglia franchise research drew particular reference to the low numbers of staff available on the network late at night; when anti-social behaviour and rowdy behaviour is often more problematic for passengers.

In spring 2014 passengers were asked a slightly different question relating to the specific journey being undertaken, 'whether the behaviour of other passengers' had given them cause to worry or feel uncomfortable'. Thirteen per cent of passengers on Abellio Greater Anglia reported concern/discomfort (the national total was 12 per cent).

Abellio Greater Anglia passengers expressing concern in spring 2014 largely attributed it to anti-social behaviour, but more specifically: rowdy behaviour (45 per cent); passengers drinking/under the influence (46 per cent); feet on seats (51 per cent) and music being played loudly (47 per cent).

In addition to the above, passengers were asked in autumn 2013<sup>32</sup> whether concerns about personal security have prevented them from making trips by train. Nationally and regionally, four per cent said that they either travelled by another mode or did not make the journey they wanted to, due to concerns over personal security. On Abellio Greater Anglia the figure was also four per cent.

Whilst passengers tell us that technology is no substitute for a visible, trained and engaged staff, Passenger Focus would recommend that where a staff presence cannot be provided, bidders should confirm they will provide CCTV and linked help-points at all stations. These should meet the current British Transport Police 'Output Requirement Specification' for CCTV and be linked into BTP's CCTV hub. Where

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<sup>32</sup> This was the last wave in which this question was asked, so there is no data for autumn 2014 and beyond.

possible, CCTV should also be linked into local authority systems, which would allow suspects to be tracked beyond the station footprint.

Stations that are unstaffed when trains are scheduled to call at them should be prioritised for such investment. Ideally the CCTV would be 'live' monitored but where this is not possible CCTV footage should be retained for at least 31 days to allow 'after the event' enquiries to be made. We believe that every station should have appropriate technology to enhance personal security, although we acknowledge that it may be necessary to exempt very low footfall stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources. Though, it is often at those stations with fewer passengers present that perceptions of personal security are lowest.

Passenger Focus supports the Secure Stations Scheme and would urge the winning bidder to ensure that all of the stations on their network are accredited – not just those with the highest footfall. Where station car parking is provided, car parks should also be accredited under the Safer Parking Scheme administered by the British Parking Association. Research undertaken by the Rail Safety and Standards Board suggests that where Secure Station and Safer Parking Accreditation are provided in tandem, the number of crimes committed is significantly lower. Passenger Focus would recommend that franchise bidders be instructed to make use of the best practice guides on managing the different aspects of personal security, produced by the Rail Safety and Standards Board<sup>33</sup>.

### **5.13 Question 14**

**Are there areas of improvement in customer information and engagement you would like to see before, during and after your journey?**

The provision of good quality, clear and accurate information is crucial to passengers and fundamentally linked to the quality of experience at every stage of the journey. The importance of this is evidenced by our research which shows various information-related factors appearing as high priorities for improvement (3.2, Table 1 and Figure 1) and within drivers of passenger satisfaction and dissatisfaction (3.3, Figures 2 and 3).

Other sections of this response address:

- the importance of transparent information in journey planning (4.2.1)
- the need for engagement and consultation in relation to timetable development and changes (5.2)
- the particular needs for information during planned and unplanned disruption (5.7.2, 5.7.3 and Appendix 4)
- information needs at stations and when starting/ending journeys (5.11.3.1)

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<sup>33</sup> For example: A Good Practice Guide for Managing Personal Security on Board Trains

- the need for comprehensive information and clarity about options and restrictions when purchasing tickets (5.18.3.2).

Given the coverage detailed above, the remainder of our response to this question is largely focused on the broader issue of passenger engagement.

### **5.13.1 Passenger and stakeholder communication and engagement**

Central to improving the passenger experience of rail services are effective mechanisms for passenger and stakeholder engagement, particularly for gathering intelligence on local aspirations and developments, and for consulting on future proposals. In section 3.5 we also identified the need for train operators to improve passenger perceptions of the relationship elements of their interactions in order to build greater trust in the rail industry.

In 2013 Passenger Focus published the findings of research into passenger understanding of the franchise process and their appetite for engagement with it<sup>34</sup>.

It is clear from this work that passengers have unanswered desires to contribute their thoughts, both about priorities for franchise specifications and the performance of incumbents. There is also a desire for greater two-way communication about what each franchise promises and what is actually achieved.

The recent qualitative research amongst passengers in East Anglia provides useful insight into their experiences and aspirations. We hope that the findings will inform the franchise specification, bidder proposals and agreement about what is to be delivered.

### **Recommendations**

When negotiations with the successful bidder are concluded we recommend that there is a clear public statement about key elements of the franchise, particularly how they address passenger requirements.

We also recommend RE should look to publish the redacted version of the Franchise Agreement and associated documents as soon as possible after the winning bidder is announced, and certainly by the time the new franchise commences.

The new franchisee should be required to demonstrate clear plans for an engagement strategy that accommodates the needs of different passengers. Passenger Focus advocates that a wide range of means should be employed to communicate with passengers and wider communities to allow people to access information and provide input in the ways that are most suited to each individual or group.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/giving-passengers-a-voice-in-rail-services>

In common with other recent franchises, Passenger Focus recommends the specification requires the establishment of a Customer and Communities Investment Fund, the production of an initial customer report and a commitment to regular updates, or revisions, at key stages of the franchise. These reports should include information about performance on the factors important to passengers and, particularly where targets are missed or results fall, plans for improvement.

There should also be agreed mechanisms to alert passengers to prospective changes when the franchise approaches its end.

#### **5.14 Question 15**

**On a scale of 1 to 9, how would you rate the following on board passenger facilities (1 = not important; 9 = very important):**

**Luggage holds**  
**Cycle storage**  
**Audio Passenger Information**  
**Visual Passenger Information**  
**Provision of different classes of service**  
**Catering**  
**Tables**  
**Staff presence**  
**Baby changing facilities**  
**Plug sockets**

**Where possible, please explain your reasoning when responding to this question. Please also identify any other on board passenger facilities not listed above that you deem very important.**

Passenger Focus has not conducted sufficiently detailed research on these individual on board facilities to rate them in order of importance. However, it is also likely that the relative importance of various facilities will vary according to the personal needs and purpose of travel of different passengers.

We note that toilet facilities which can be important to passengers, particularly those travelling for longer distances or with specific needs, is missing from the list above and we suggest that this issue should also be given consideration within the on board environment.

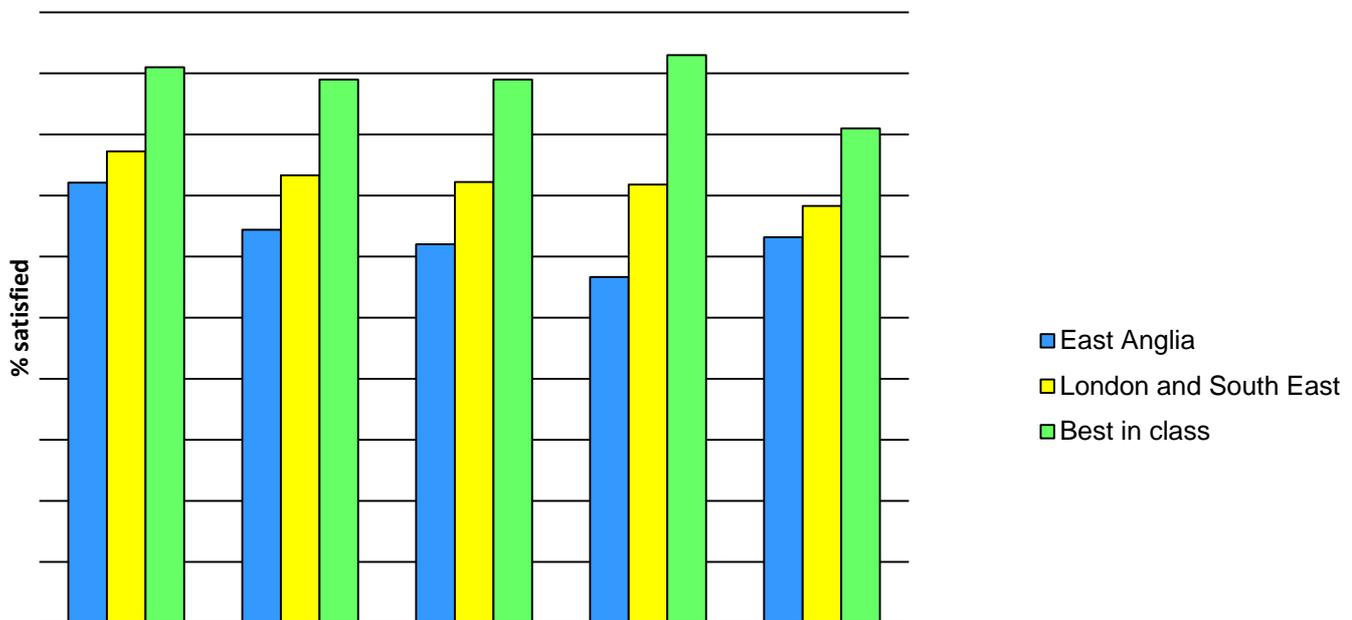
As noted in section 3.2, AGA passengers placed a higher emphasis on 'provision of free Wi-Fi on the train' than GB overall. We suggest that this facility should also be emphasised in the on-board elements of the franchise specification.

### 5.14.1 Quality of East Anglia rolling stock

There are clear indications that many passengers find the on board environment on East Anglia trains far from satisfactory.

Figure 9 compares scores on a number of important train factors for the East Anglia network overall with the LSE sector and the best in class within this peer group. It can be seen that, in all cases, passenger satisfaction on East Anglia lags behind the sector and is well below the best in class. We would also emphasise that the overall score will be lifted by the generally high scores of the Stansted building block and that some routes will score significantly worse on some or all factors.

**Figure 9. Satisfaction with train factors, NRPS Autumn 2014: East Anglia, London and South East sector average and best in class**



Passenger priorities research tells us that for Abellio Greater Anglia passengers 'sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage' ranks twenty third in their list of priorities for improvement, mirroring the national sample. The NRPS shows that satisfaction scores for 'the space for luggage' are low; at 48 per cent East Anglia is equal to the LSE sector score.

Appendices A2.2 – A2.5 provide NRPS scores for train factors for each building block, together with a comparison against relevant typologies and these give an indication of the relative satisfaction with various on board train facilities.

Recent focus group research on East Anglia identified rolling stock as a particular cause of dissatisfaction amongst passengers. There was a general negative attitude towards the age and quality and a perception that they are getting a bad deal compared with other franchises with more modern rolling stock.

Passengers expressed views that much of the rolling stock seems to be old and tired. This is felt to be particularly true on secondary routes where trains lack what many regard as basic facilities, such as power sockets, Wi-Fi, air conditioning, adequate space for buggies and a catering trolley.

Passengers said:

*“I’ve never seen a socket next to my seat for charging your phone, that wouldn’t be a bad idea”*

*(Norwich group, Intercity passenger)*

*“You can go to McDonalds and buy a 99p hamburger and get free Wi-Fi and it costs you nothing. You pay a hell of a lot of money to go on the train so I want free, dependable Wi-Fi”*

*(Norwich group, Rural passenger)*

*“The seats were obviously designed a million years ago when people were a lot smaller. If you are small and sit next to someone large they take up half your seat which gets on your nerves when you pay a lot of money for a ticket”*

*(London group, Intercity passenger)*

*“They’re the oldest trains aren’t they? They are the cast-offs from the other regions”*

*(Ipswich group, Mainline passenger)*

*“Until I moved to Suffolk I’d never seen a train where you open the door yourself before”*

*(Ipswich group, Rural passenger)*

#### **5.14.2 The importance of cleanliness inside the train**

Beyond the core journey requirements relating to the timetable, service delivery and information, the key influencer of passenger satisfaction on trains is the cleanliness of the inside of the train. The specification should require bidders to demonstrate how high standards for this important aspect of experience will be established and maintained, including the arrangements for maintenance and cleaning of toilets.

#### **Recommendation**

The specification for the East Anglia franchise should place a significant emphasis on delivery of improvements to the quality of the rolling stock, either through replacement, or major upgrades where this might be appropriate. This is particularly important on those routes where passenger satisfaction can be seen to be below those of comparable operators.

### **5.15 Question 16**

**What areas of customer service within your end-to-end journey would you expect to see monitored and reported on in the new franchise, in order to improve the service quality for passengers?**

The ultimate measure of whether a train company is performing well is whether passengers are happy with the quality of service provided. This is good from a commercial perspective as well as a customer service one, as evidenced by the conclusions on passenger demand forecasting<sup>35</sup> which suggest that service quality does have an impact on levels of demand.

The RE's specification for the new franchise must stretch the successful bidder to take East Anglia passenger satisfaction to higher levels. As we can see illustrated in Figure 5 above, and from the NRPS scores and comparisons in Appendix 2, this should apply both for the franchise as a whole and at a building block level. There is a need to achieve greater consistency of performance across the component parts of the franchise and also to drive satisfaction on all aspects of service delivery upwards, to bring the whole operation up to the achievements of the best comparators.

Targets, measurements, monitoring and transparent reporting are fundamental to delivering improvements to service quality. Passenger Focus strongly supports the principle of monitoring and improving service quality through a combination of NRPS results and periodic reviews of TOC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

#### **5.15.1 National Rail Passenger Survey**

We have long advocated for greater use of quality-focused targets within a franchise. Our strong preference is for targets based on what passengers think, the best judge of quality being those who have used the services in question.

The National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) is ideally suited to capture information that directly reflects the customer perspective. NRPS has a large sample size, covering over 3600 East Anglia passengers in two waves each year, providing for a fair assessment of measures across the identified franchise building blocks. The sampling plan ensures that it is representative of day of travel, journey purpose (commuter, business and leisure), and, of course, by a range of demographic attributes (age, sex, ethnicity etc).

Passenger Focus will continue to discuss the application of NRPS targets for the franchise with the DfT and the bidders as required. In line with existing DfT policy, bidders for the new franchise should be asked to submit bids that include plans on how they will improve NRPS scores.

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<sup>35</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revisiting-the-elasticity-based-framework-rail-trends-report>

## **Recommendation**

We recommend, in line with practice on other recent franchises, bespoke NRPS targets should be established on each of the building blocks to measure passenger satisfaction with station, train and customer service attributes. Doing so simply at a global level risks masking the poorer performing areas.

Existing levels of satisfaction should be the starting point for establishing targets which should generally become more stretching as the franchise progresses and also increase to reflect the outcomes delivered by investment (for example in new trains). An annual assessment of the combined spring and autumn results would provide a fair measure of the overall passenger satisfaction within each given year.

A financial penalty regime should apply, with resources ring-fenced for additional investment into service quality measures that are most likely to improve passenger satisfaction

### **5.15.2 Key Performance Indicators**

The specification should require operators to conduct KPI assessments across the entire franchise and include all stations and representative samples of the major train service groups. Standards of satisfaction with the customer services function, complaints handling, and the level of appeals to Passenger Focus should also be measured. All assessments should be conducted regularly to provide ongoing management information as well as a basis for regular reviews based on collated information.

#### **5.15.2.1 Performance targets**

Given the very high significance of these factors to passengers, the specification must include traditional 'hard' performance targets covering punctuality, reliability and crowding. However, we believe that there is a need for much more transparency surrounding these targets.

Transparency will promote greater accountability by making clear to rail passengers, staff, management and other parties how key aspects of the rail service are performing at different places and at different times. The provision of detailed information will enable rail passengers and others hold the train company to account and to ask what is being done to improve services in return for the fares paid. Good management should not feel threatened by this. Indeed the availability of accurate data may actually help them as a particularly bad journey can linger in the memory and distort passengers' perceptions. Accurate, relevant data can help challenge these negative perceptions and is also a vital management tool.

Punctuality data provided only at the overall operator level can easily mask significant differences between routes and times of day. Passenger Focus supports the provision of performance data (PPM, 'on time'/'right time' and cancellations) in a

fully granular way, allowing data to be aggregated as required. This would allow those who use only the '07:19' and '17:20' to see the performance of those trains – because that is all that matters to them.

Equally, there is currently next to nothing in the public domain about crowding. This is another fundamental aspect of a passenger's journey and an area where greater transparency can generate improvements for passengers.

In the medium term we also see value in looking more closely at the choice of performance measurement used. The existing measure (PPM) allows a five or ten minute leeway on late arrival; a train is not late until it exceeds this allowance. However, we know from our research<sup>36</sup> mapping passenger satisfaction against train performance that a delay begins to have an effect on passengers well before that. This might mean addressing the suitability of the current thresholds or even introducing a secondary measure based on right-time arrival. Recent steps by the industry towards publication of right-time data on particular trains make this increasingly feasible and more likely to be the measure on which performance is publicly judged.

Network Rail's performance clearly has a huge bearing on an operator's punctuality and yet a franchise agreement typically creates an obligation only in relation to factors within the train company's direct control. Clearly there are limits to how far one organisation is willing to be held accountable for another's performance but, from a passenger's perspective, it is overall punctuality that matters - not just how well the train company did. There are obvious benefits in aligning operator and Network Rail incentives and there is much work going on to address this, not least in terms of joint improvement performance plans and potential alliances. We would like to see the franchise specifications encourage and cement this joint working approach. To this end we would ask RE to consider the scope for introducing joint targets for this franchise.

Passenger Focus has worked with the Office of Rail Regulation and National Rail Enquiries, on behalf of all train operators, to explore passenger views on performance and other data and to understand how this may best be made available to them. This qualitative research<sup>37</sup> should inform the approach to data publication in the new franchise.

#### **5.15.2.2 Input versus output measures**

The balance between input and output measures is a fine one. For instance, the franchise could specify that the bidder purchases 50 new Ticket Vending Machines

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/relationship-between-customer-satisfaction-and-performance-northern-rail>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/presenting-righttime-performance-information-to-rail-passengers>

(an input target) or that it increase passenger satisfaction with retailing (an output target). The latter follows the pattern set in the 2009 South Central franchise with the bidders setting targets for passenger satisfaction and these becoming contractual targets with fines for non-compliance.

Passenger Focus recognises the value of both input and output measures provided that they are based on passengers' priorities and needs. Some input targets will clearly remain important to passengers for example to cover 'hard' targets for things like punctuality, cancellations and crowding; while output targets (based on passenger satisfaction) may be better placed to address some of the 'softer' qualitative elements of a journey. Passenger responses to the consultation should be used to further inform the targets and measures that go into the franchise specification.

**Recommendation:**

Disaggregated targets for all measures should be set and performance against them published widely. A financial penalty regime should apply with resources ring-fenced for additional investment into service quality measures that are most likely to improve passenger satisfaction.

There should be a requirement for the franchise operator to commit to high levels of transparency about all aspects of the franchise, including operational performance and service quality.

**5.16 Question 17**

**Based on your experience or knowledge of rail passenger services, do you have any observations that may assist us in our commitment to have due regard to the Environment, Equality, Social Value and the Family (as set out in paragraphs 6.16 to 6.20) in the development of the specification of passenger services for East Anglia?**

**5.16.1 Accessibility, the Equality Act 2010 and minor works fund**

We expect the specification to include requirements to comply with equalities and discrimination legislation and to produce a Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP). Passenger Focus also recommends a minor works fund and advocates that consultation with relevant groups should include inviting suggestions about how this money might best be spent to meet identified needs.

In addition to the provisions set out in DPPP guidance, Passenger Focus believes the franchise specification should also require the following provisions:

- Scooter policy – ensure that a suitable scooter acceptance scheme is in place for smaller, lighter and more manoeuvrable machines – for example

Scootercards. Blanket bans are no longer acceptable – always understanding that some models will be too wide/heavy ever to be accepted on to trains.

- Provide a priority seat card scheme (as initiated by Southern and now adopted as good practice by a number of operators) to help passengers demonstrate a specific need for a seat, backed up by publicity on stations and greater prominence made of which seats are priority seats so that they are easily located and recognised. This is especially important in the case of trains where no reservation facility is available.
- Clarify the priority of use of priority seating and the groups considered eligible for it.
- Clearly clarify priority of usage in ‘shared’ spaces – in other words wheelchairs have absolute priority over prams.
- Provide assistance cards which disabled passengers can show to staff to explain their disability – hearing-impaired, speech-impaired, learning difficulties, so that staff can react and provide the necessary additional assistance.
- Comprehensive Passenger Assist monitoring – proper management, for example, perhaps the number of assistance requests delivered, rather than satisfaction, which can be deceptive. This could be included in the Passenger’s Charter and the DPPP.
- Best use should be made of the management information gained from Passenger Assist – for example enabling TOCs to plan assistance provision better.
- Training of staff – especially front-line staff in immediate customer contact, whether face-to face or by telephone.
- Examine all possibilities to improve station accessibility: e.g. induction loops; help points; adjustable-height counters; automatic doors etc.

### **5.16.2 Consideration of the further implications of the Family Test**

#### **Train accommodation**

On some busy services there can be particular difficulties related to space. It is important that train operators consider the potential for conflicting demands for space, and that they can demonstrate that they can manage these situations effectively. Operators should as a minimum address the following issues:

- Identify which services are most likely to experience space conflict and plan to maximise space utilisation.
- Writing a policy for managing space conflict.
- Communicating all relevant policies to passengers.
- Assess measures to alleviate conflict and take appropriate action. This may relate to advice to passengers, for example, assessing whether it would be helpful to advise passengers of space issues on busy services, reminding passengers about luggage regulations, reminding passengers if it is possible to reserve a wheelchair space or reserve a seat, where appropriate and possible.
- How more vulnerable passengers (for example expectant mothers, disabled or older people) can be found suitable seats aboard non-reservable services, especially in the case of trains without on-board staff.
- Some actions will relate to staff, e.g. ensuring Passenger Assist passengers are seated/positioned before the train departs and, where necessary, ensuring luggage is removed to make this possible.
- Considering the way National Rail Conditions of Carriage (NRCoC) should be implemented and the implications of such regulations, for example that pushchairs or carry cots must be capable of folding.
- Training for staff that addresses both policy/practicalities but also ensure they can deal with the emotional aspects of this topic (that includes understanding their own behaviour and natural response to conflict situations).
- Support for staff facing challenging situations.
- Complaints analysis and possibly monitoring how space is being utilised on full capacity services (managers/directors get out there and see how it is).

Busy services can also present challenges for adults travelling with children and families, where adjacent seating is not available. Operators should consider how this issue might be addressed, especially on those services which have no on-board staff.

### **Accessibility**

Some passengers, when travelling with young children, especially if pushchairs etc are involved, and if travelling with luggage, may need help using some trains or stations, or need assistance boarding/alighting. The lack of step-free access at many stations causes difficulties for the family having to negotiate stairs with young children and perhaps also pushchairs.

Lifts and/or ramps at stations (or lack of them) have a significant impact on whether families with younger children travel by train. Every effort should be made to ensure that steps/stairs can be eliminated where possible to improve the journey for all passengers. A commitment from operators to review all the stations which it manages, with a view to improving step-free access where feasible, should be made.

Train companies must make clear the level of assistance which they can offer in such circumstances at each of their stations and how to obtain it. A staff presence is often necessary to ensure a station's accessibility. Operators should state how this can be achieved and whether alternative transport can be provided if stations are not staffed fully or at all.

### **Station facilities**

Suitable weather-proof waiting facilities, with seats and wheelchair spaces, should be provided at all stations.

Toilets at stations are a major requirement for many passengers, especially if no toilets are provided aboard the trains calling there. Universal toilets on stations should be unisex to enable a companion of the opposite sex to be able to assist if necessary. Suitable baby-changing facilities should also be provided.

### **Tickets**

Many family groups could benefit from the use of Group Save or Rover-type products which are rarely, if ever, available from Ticket Vending Machines. It would assist many passengers if the process for obtaining these products when travelling from stations without booking-office facilities were made clear. Wider publicity of such advantageous fares should also be made.

Operators should also consider ensuring that passengers have easy access to information about child ticket validities and the ages at which children may travel free of charge.

### **5.17 Question 18**

**In summary, what three aspects of your current East Anglia rail journey would you like to see improved to enhance your overall travel experience?**

Based on NRPS, the priorities for improvement research and the findings of the qualitative research, we can readily identify the core factors that matter to passengers. There should be a strong focus on these in the new franchise to enhance passengers' travel experiences.

Passengers want a franchise that will deliver:

- a punctual and reliable service

- provision of sufficient capacity, both in terms of frequency of service and sufficient seating on the train
- effective management of any disruption, especially through information to passengers.

An emphasis on improving performance and satisfaction in these three key areas will help to deliver the better value for money that passengers' say is their number one priority for improvement.

### 5.18 Question 19

**Please indicate if there are any additional areas that you think it is important for us to consider and that have not already been addressed in this consultation.**

Passenger Focus would like to highlight a number of other issues that are important to passengers and that we should like to see addressed in the franchise specifications.

#### 5.18.1 Compensation policies

Greater Anglia, back in 2004, was the first franchise with a 'Delay Repay' compensation scheme. It should be retained in the new East Anglia franchise, but with two important deficiencies addressed:

- That not more than 464 journeys are used to calculate annual season ticket holders' fare per journey for Delay Repay purposes, i.e. two trips per day, five days a week for 52 weeks, less 5.6 weeks (leave and bank holidays – see <https://www.gov.uk/holiday-entitlement-rights>). Failure to take into account that annual season ticket holders will take annual leave and do not work on bank holidays leaves passengers feeling that 'the system' is stacked unreasonably in a train company's favour.
- Additional compensation – a 'safety net' – for season ticket holders who experience regular delays of less than 30 minutes. Our preference, until an automatic arrangement is possible similar to that planned by c2c, would be for a 1 per cent refund for season ticket holders for every four-week period in which PPM in either peak falls below a threshold (to be set based on performance on individual routes).

In addition, our research<sup>38</sup> shows that passengers find traditional paper National Rail Travel Vouchers an inconvenience; they cannot be used at TVMs and they cannot be used online where some train companies offer the best prices. Therefore we believe that bidders should offer a choice of a cash refund to the customer's bank,

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/train-operator-compensation-schemes-report-of-findings-june-2011>

electronic credit against future ticket purchases online or conventional paper vouchers.

The so-called enhanced compensation arrangements within some recently-let franchises fail to protect passengers experiencing a large number of delays of less than 30 minutes. However, if they are included in proposals it should be clear on what basis this additional compensation will be provided and what passengers will receive.

Our report into passengers' experience of delays and compensation<sup>39</sup> found that 88 per cent of those apparently eligible for compensation for their delay did not make a claim. More needs to be done to increase passengers' awareness of their rights to claim compensation. This right should be promoted through a range of channels, including on trains that are delayed and at stations where delayed services are calling, as well as within the Passenger's Charter, on websites and via Twitter etc. Where trains have a member of staff on board in addition to the driver, claim forms should be distributed at the time wherever practicable. Mechanisms to identify passengers who have been delayed and provide automatic recompense should also be developed and introduced.

### **5.18.2 Complaints handling**

In our role as the statutory appeals body<sup>40</sup> Passenger Focus has extensive experience of working with passengers and rail operators to seek resolution of unresolved complaints. We have found a number of recurring issues with either the operators' complaints processes or response quality. We have been working with the industry in an effort to improve customer service, reduce complaint handling times and focus on operators providing quality complaints handling. This should, in turn, decrease the number of passenger appeals to train companies.

It is important that the specification for the franchise requires detailed information about policies and procedures for dealing with complaints. These should demonstrate a clear commitment to best practice and should encompass the points set out in the two sections below.

#### **Process issues**

- Empower front line staff to deal with complaints on the spot, with processes in place to obtain approval for goodwill there and then.
- Ensure any complaints that can't be resolved by front line staff can be fed into customer relations on the passenger's behalf.

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/understanding-rail-passengers-delays-and-compensation>

<sup>40</sup> For British rail passengers outside of London

- Make it easy for passengers to get in contact by providing a variety of contact methods and by being pro-active when things go wrong.
- Empower customer service advisors to apply 'natural justice' when dealing with poor passenger experiences and allow redress to go beyond the minimum levels of the Passenger Charter or National Rail Conditions of Carriage.
- Ensure mechanisms to monitor and manage response times and to acknowledge complaints if they cannot be resolved within the target time, which should be published.
- Implement a process whereby appropriate issues are proactively investigated by the customer service advisor, and other relevant staff members, and feedback the findings to the passenger.
- Establish mechanisms to feed complaints into service improvements, where possible, and feed information about this back to the passenger.
- Ensure a clear and well communicated escalation process is in place for complaints handling, including referral to, and cooperation with, Passenger Focus or London TravelWatch.

### **Response quality**

- Train and empower customer service advisors to identify and address all the points in the complaint and give heavy weighting to addressing all issues raised by the passenger in internal quality monitoring processes. A focus on first time resolution reduces 'comebacks' and the need for a subsequent response by the operator.
- Provide clear explanations about why the passenger is/is not receiving compensation and/or gesture of goodwill.
- Make careful use of appropriately worded standard paragraphs, supplemented as necessary by bespoke responses.
- Ensure customer service advisors use clear, jargon-free English with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation when writing responses.
- Use complaints handling as an opportunity to restore a customer's faith in the train operator.

- Seek feedback from passengers on the quality of responses and use this to contribute to ongoing quality monitoring and implementing a culture of continuous improvement.

### **5.18.2.3 Legacy complaints**

A clear process for handling legacy complaints should be established. Passenger Focus recommends that all complaints should be dealt with by the new operators from the first day onwards, with appropriate recompense mechanisms from the outgoing operator established to enable this. This should extend to honouring any complimentary journeys or vouchers which remain within their expiry date after the new franchise operation starts.

Making the incumbent responsible for handling complaints reduces confusion and complexity for the passenger. It also ensures that complaints are handled by the operator with an ongoing interest in retaining the passenger, and who is best placed to resolve any issues and implement any changes as a result of the complaint.

## **5.18.3 Fares and ticketing**

### **5.18.3.1 Fares regulation**

Passengers have experienced years of above inflation fare increases. The Government's own Fares and Ticketing Review consultation in 2012<sup>41</sup> talked of an end to such increases but only once the impact of cost saving measures and improvement in the wider economic situation permits. Passenger Focus supports the concept of fares regulation as it provides some degree of protection to passengers, many of whom are captive consumers.

We recommend that the next East Anglia franchise incorporates these recommendations on ticket retailing within the requirements:

- The level of flexibility that can be applied to increases in individual fares should be restricted to a maximum of plus or minus two per cent which will allow the train operator to correct any anomalies between fares and address market issues where appropriate but will limit the ability to drive large differences between fares relating to specific routes/stations.
- Increases to unregulated fares should be capped at the same level applied to regulated fares.
- The journey opportunities of off-peak passengers should be protected and there should be no further dilution of periods of validity of off-peak tickets.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/rail-fares-and-ticketing-review>

### **5.18.3.2 Making buying a ticket easier**

The next East Anglia franchise must make ticket purchase easier for passengers, many of whom are confused by the complexity of the fares system.

Clear information about the validity of tickets and any applicable restrictions must be readily available. Passengers should be able to buy the most appropriate ticket for their intended journey, regardless of whether this is purchased at a ticket office, online, at a ticket machine or through any other method.

Passenger Focus's research has identified a number of issues with both TVMs and websites – much of which was reflected in the Fares and Ticketing Review. Key issues to focus on include:

- printing any restrictions on passengers' tickets to remove confusion over validity
- displaying outward and return ticket restrictions on TVMs prior to a passenger committing to purchase
- making it impossible to buy an Advance ticket on the internet at a higher price than the 'walk up' fare available on the same train.

More details of the problems passengers experience are set out, with recommendations about how to improve retailing through these channels, in our research, detailed below:

*Ticket vending machine usability*, Passenger Focus, June 2010

*Ticket retailing: website usability*, Passenger Focus, June 2011

The new franchise should provide a wider range of tickets for passengers. Developments in ticketing such as smart-cards and mobile telephone products should be incorporated into the franchise. The franchise should also require the introduction of innovative new products such as carnet style tickets that will enable passengers who cannot benefit from season ticket discounts to achieve some economies from repeat travel. Schemes to spread the cost of annual season tickets should also be available.

### **5.18.3.3 Ticketless travel**

Research<sup>42</sup> has shown that passengers find the issue of fare evasion very frustrating. There is a strong sense of injustice amongst those who have paid for a ticket when some passengers are known to be travelling for free. They also felt that this reduced the amount of money available for investment.

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<sup>42</sup><http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-views-of-northern-and-transpennine-rail-franchises>

Passengers believed that the main solution to fare evasion would be to make better provision for the purchase of tickets at stations and on-board, and to implement better checking procedures and enforcement. This must include:

- clarity and consistency over when it was permissible to buy a ticket on-board a train – the current system is felt to be too arbitrary
- managing ticket queues effectively (at TVMs and offices)
- providing ticket restrictions in an easy to access form and in plain English
- providing the passenger with verification of permission to travel without a ticket
- providing the passenger with verification of attempt to purchase a ticket if a card is declined due to bank security measures or signal issues.

Passenger Focus believes ticketless travel is an important issue and one that needs addressing. Passengers who avoid paying for their ticket are in effect being subsidised by the vast majority of fare-paying passengers. However, the revenue protection strategy must provide safeguards for those who make an innocent mistake and whose intention was never to defraud the system. We believe this requires:

- Clear consistent guidelines explaining when staff should show discretion in the enforcement of penalties. For example, when passengers do not have their railcard with them.
- Commitment not to go straight to any form of criminal prosecution unless they suspect (or have proof) that there was intent to defraud.
- Penalties that are proportionate to the actual loss suffered by the operator.
- Operators that work with others in the industry to create a national system that is transparent and supports the honest passenger who makes a mistake.

The industry is currently developing a code of practice for passengers who board without a valid ticket. We should like the new franchise to require a commitment to this.

#### **5.18.4 Door-to-door journeys**

##### **5.18.1 Improving station access**

When passengers decide what mode of transport to take they are swayed by three overwhelming factors: how convenient will the journey be, how much will it cost and how long will it take<sup>43</sup>. This applies to the whole door-to-door journey. The way passengers access the station can affect both overall journey cost and time. If getting to the rail station becomes too inconvenient passengers will often choose to make their whole journey by car; adding congestion to the roads and to transport's carbon footprint.

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<sup>43</sup> Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009 [http://www.cpt-uk.org/\\_uploads/attachment/690.pdf](http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf)

The passenger growth anticipated for East Anglia means increased attention will need to be given to how passengers are going to access and pass through stations throughout the life of the franchise.

NRPS scores for East Anglia building blocks indicate a wide variation in satisfaction with different station access factors across the network<sup>44</sup>. This suggests there is scope for bidders to propose a range of different solutions and improvements to the door-to-door journey.

At some locations the solution to station access needs will be to improve public transport links and parking provision; but at others the solution will be more complex and could be more creative. With limited space for car parking at some stations, and the industry's desire to look at more sustainable options, Passenger Focus is supportive of the use of Station Travel Plans. Local groups and Community Rail Partnerships should be involved in developing proposals to improve station access.

The specification should encourage commitment to station travel plan schemes, with rollout dispersed across the network and throughout the life of the franchise. The stations selected should not just be those with the highest footfall, as the 2011 Network RUS (Stations) demonstrated that congestion does not just occur at those stations with the highest number of passengers starting or ending their journeys.

The bidders should be able to demonstrate how they will work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies to improve accessibility to stations by all modes, including cycling and walking. Where identifiably beneficial schemes for passengers can be delivered by other partners, they should be encouraged and their future assured. The franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

Bidders might also be asked to explore the potential to develop 'virtual branch lines' using existing scheduled bus services, with bus times and through fares available through railway journey planning and retail systems to/from towns with no railway station. Opportunities should be explored, in some instances building on existing facilities, in respect of:

- Aldeburgh and Leiston
- Haverhill
- Maldon
- Saffron Walden
- Southwold
- The Coasthopper service along the North Norfolk Coast from Sheringham.

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<sup>44</sup> Appendix 2 shows scores for 'connections with other forms of public transport'. Data for satisfaction with car and cycle parking is also available but needs to be treated with more caution as the sample sizes for these factors are smaller.

Bidders may also need to address the absence, or potential loss, of access via public transport in places, particularly rural areas, where there is little or no funding for bus services. Bidders should be encouraged to explore how they can contribute to potential initiatives for demand-led schemes.

Improving access to stations should drive rail usage and provide some additional revenue. Bidders will also need to work with local authorities and other agencies to explore other funding opportunities. There may be scope for local authorities to use planning gain mechanisms for schemes linked to new developments. The opportunities for development around stations to accommodate improved access facilities, including interchange, should also be considered within bidders' proposals.

### **5.18.5 Speed of journey**

NRPS scores for the East Anglia building blocks<sup>45</sup> show that passenger satisfaction with 'the length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)' is notably lower than the typology averages for Intercity, Rural and Stansted services. These are correspondingly all well below the performance of the best in class operators. Whilst Mainline and West Anglia Outer services score one or two points above the average for their typology comparator, they are also both 10 or more points below the best in class.

Amongst AGA passengers 'journey time is reduced' is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the priorities for improvement, and with an index of 117 is nearly 20 per cent more important than the 'average' factor.

This data supports other feedback, including that of the Great Eastern Mainline Taskforce, which is emphasising the need for the new franchise to improve the speed of a number of journeys, particularly those involving travel to and from major centres and to London.

### **5.18.6 Lost property**

Every year passengers lose a huge number of items on the rail network. Many of those passengers never manage to locate the items, even if they have been handed in. From our preliminary investigation into this subject we have concluded that some operators systems are not efficient or consistently effective in managing lost property. It is therefore important that operators develop systems that will:

- Register and track an item of lost property from the point it comes into their possession and allow it to be open to enquiry within 24 hours.
- Provide secure storage from the point an item is handed in at the station until its arrival at the location where it will be held.

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<sup>45</sup> See Appendix 2

- Register the item with an accurate description including any distinguishing marks, brands or serial numbers.
- Make it simple for the passenger to try and locate items. A minimum of a phone number and an online service should be provided, and a reasonable response time advertised and adhered to.
- Include rechecking of the register on a regular basis and inform the passenger promptly by their preferred method of contact if their item is located.

Passenger Focus also recommends that operators:

- ensure any charges to reunite the passenger with their item are capped at a reasonable level
- actively seek to increase the number of items repatriated to their owner
- define a process for dealing with 'live incidents' in which a passenger reports that they have left an item on a train that is about to depart
- demonstrate how the system can facilitate work with British Transport Police to identify any items held by the operator that have been reported as stolen
- demonstrate how the system will be monitored and measured within their business to ensure it is effective in meeting the above objectives
- actively work towards the establishment of a national lost property system, and if established should participate in the scheme.

## 6. Further information

For further information about this response to the East Anglia franchise consultation please contact:

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## **Appendix 1**

### **NRPS building block route definitions for Abellio Greater Anglia**

#### **East Anglia building blocks<sup>46</sup>:**

##### **Abellio Greater Anglia: Intercity**

London – Norwich journeys, plus a few shorter workings (like an early morning Colchester to Norwich service)

##### **Abellio Greater Anglia: Mainline**

Journeys on outer suburban Great Eastern services  
London – Ipswich, plus branches to Harwich, Clacton, Walton, Sudbury, Southminster and Braintree. Also includes journeys on London – Southend Victoria service

##### **Abellio Greater Anglia: Rural**

Journeys on Ipswich-Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Cambridge and Peterborough rail lines, plus Norwich to Lowestoft, Yarmouth, Sheringham and Cambridge

##### **Abellio Greater Anglia: Stansted**

Journeys on the Stansted Express on Abellio Greater Anglia trains which start or end at Stansted Airport where the passenger has an origin or destination of the airport

##### **Abellio Greater Anglia: West Anglia outer**

Journeys on London – Hertford East, London – Cambridge, London – King's Lynn and Cambridge – King's Lynn routes. Also passengers using Stansted Express for journeys that do not involve travelling to or from Stansted Airport

#### **Outside of East Anglia:**

##### **Abellio Greater Anglia: Metro – transferring to Crossrail in May 2015**

Journeys on London – Shenfield metro service

##### **Abellio Greater Anglia: West Anglia inner - transferring to London Overground (LOROL) in May 2015**

Journeys on routes London – Enfield Town, London – Chingford, London – Cheshunt and Romford – Upminster

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<sup>46</sup> NB: NRPS scores for building blocks in Appendix 2 only include factors for which there is a sufficient sample size

## Appendix 2 NRPS satisfaction scores for Abellio Greater Anglia/building blocks, with sector/typology comparisons

Table A2.1 NRPS Autumn 2014: percentage satisfied, Abellio Greater Anglia versus London and South East sector

Factor	TOC	Sector	TOC Index
Overall satisfaction with your journey	80	80	100%
<b>STATION FACTORS</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the station	75	78	96%
Ticket buying facilities	65	72	91%
Provision of information about train times/platforms	76	80	96%
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	65	70	93%
Cleanliness	70	74	95%
The facilities and services	51	55	92%
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	74	71	104%
Connections with other forms of public transport	77	76	101%
Facilities for car parking	47	47	102%
Overall environment	65	68	96%
Your personal security whilst using the station	64	69	92%
The availability of staff	60	60	100%
The provision of shelter facilities	61	67	92%
Availability of seating	38	43	89%
How request to station staff was handled	87	83	104%
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	45	48	93%
<b>TRAIN FACTORS</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the train	69	77	89%
The frequency of the trains on that route	75	75	101%
Punctuality/reliability	77	75	102%
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	81	81	100%
Connections with other train services	74	75	99%
The value for money of the price of your ticket	37	41	89%
Cleanliness of the train	59	73	82%
Upkeep and repair of the train	52	72	72%
The provision of information during the journey	59	67	88%
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	43	54	79%
The space for luggage	46	48	96%
The toilet facilities	28	32	88%
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	64	62	103%
The comfort of the seating area	60	68	88%
The ease of being able to get on and off	76	77	99%
Your personal security on board	69	75	92%
The cleanliness of the inside	60	73	82%
The cleanliness of the outside	58	72	81%
The availability of staff	24	34	69%
How well train company deals with delays	35	35	102%
TOC average is 5% or more lower than sector average			
TOC average is 5% or more higher than sector average			

**Table A2.2 NRPS Autumn 2014: percentage satisfied, Stansted versus Airport typology average and best in class**

	Stansted	Airport average	Airport Best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	93	90	94
<b>STATION FACILITIES</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the station	87	84	92
Ticket buying facilities	90	78	92
Provision of information about train times/platforms	77	80	87
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	71	73	89
Cleanliness	78	74	87
The facilities and services	68	66	72
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	73	76	85
Connections with other forms of public transport	85	83	85
Overall environment	79	72	84
Your personal security whilst using	66	73	85
The availability of staff	71	67	75
The provision of shelter facilities	77	71	79
Availability of seating	41	46	63
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities	48	63	71
<b>TRAIN FACILITIES</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the train	91	92	96
The frequency of the trains on that route	96	89	96
Punctuality/reliability	91	91	94
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	86	91	96
Connections with other train services	85	84	87
The value for money for the price of your ticket	32	37	50
Cleanliness of the train	81	87	95
Upkeep and repair of the train	90	87	98
The provision of information during the journey	78	77	86
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	51	70	88
The space for luggage	47	66	89
The toilet facilities	78	65	78
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	70	82	90
The comfort of the seating area	93	89	94
The ease of being able to get on and off	97	85	97
Your personal security whilst on board	91	87	94
The cleanliness of the inside	87	88	94
The cleanliness of the outside	89	86	95
The availability of staff	39	53	76
Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average			
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average			

**Table A2.3 NRPS Autumn 2014: percentage satisfied, Mainline and West Anglia Outer versus Long Commute typology average and best in class**

	Mainline	West Anglia Outer	Long Commute average	Long Commute best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	78	79	80	91
<b>STATION FACILITIES</b>				
Overall satisfaction with the station	82	72	78	90
Ticket buying facilities	69	69	74	85
Provision of information about train times/platforms	78	81	80	90
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	71	60	70	90
Cleanliness	78	67	75	91
The facilities and services	57	49	59	82
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	73	70	73	85
Connections with other forms of public transport	79	67	75	81
Overall environment	72	60	69	90
Your personal security whilst using	72	58	69	82
The availability of staff	61	57	61	76
The provision of shelter facilities	62	56	66	81
Availability of seating	40	35	43	63
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities	50	37	49	67
<b>TRAIN FACILITIES</b>				
Overall satisfaction with the train	70	73	76	92
The frequency of the trains on that route	73	73	76	95
Punctuality/reliability	76	79	75	90
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	81	82	80	93
Connections with other train services	71	72	74	80
The value for money for the price of your ticket	29	35	40	65
Cleanliness of the train	62	61	71	88
Upkeep and repair of the train	53	58	68	87
The provision of information during the journey	58	55	64	81
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	39	34	58	79
The space for luggage	44	50	48	69
The toilet facilities	27	42	36	60
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	62	67	62	79
The comfort of the seating area	57	67	67	84
The ease of being able to get on and off	77	82	78	87
Your personal security whilst on board	69	68	76	88
The cleanliness of the inside	61	63	72	89
The cleanliness of the outside	62	61	69	86
The availability of staff	20	19	38	66
Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average				
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average				

**Table A2.4 NRPS Autumn 2014: percentage satisfied, Intercity versus Interurban typology average and best in class**

	Intercity	Inter-urban average	Inter-urban best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	77	84	92
<b>STATION FACILITIES</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the station	82	80	89
Ticket buying facilities	74	83	93
Provision of information about train times/platforms	79	84	89
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	72	76	86
Cleanliness	77	80	91
The facilities and services	59	63	74
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	80	80	90
Connections with other forms of public transport	86	76	86
Overall environment	74	72	82
Your personal security whilst using	71	76	84
The availability of staff	65	66	75
The provision of shelter facilities	61	73	82
Availability of seating	32	52	69
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities	53	52	69
<b>TRAIN FACILITIES</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the train	72	82	93
The frequency of the trains on that route	84	81	90
Punctuality/reliability	76	82	91
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	78	85	92
Connections with other train services	71	77	84
The value for money for the price of your ticket	43	55	68
Cleanliness of the train	68	76	87
Upkeep and repair of the train	51	75	88
The provision of information during the journey	70	74	83
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	73	76	87
The space for luggage	54	53	60
The toilet facilities	36	44	63
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	71	68	81
The comfort of the seating area	67	73	88
The ease of being able to get on and off	69	80	91
Your personal security whilst on board	86	83	88
The cleanliness of the inside	69	77	89
The cleanliness of the outside	57	73	86
The availability of staff	51	63	72
Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average			
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average			

**Table A2.5 NRPS Autumn 2014: percentage satisfied, Rural versus Rural typology average and best in class**

	Rural	Rural average	Rural best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	78	81	96
<b>STATION FACILITIES</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the station	65	78	94
Ticket buying facilities	64	78	90
Provision of information about train times/platforms	80	86	91
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	59	77	91
Cleanliness	64	79	92
The facilities and services	55	59	73
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	86	80	92
Connections with other forms of public transport	55	65	81
Overall environment	61	75	90
Your personal security whilst using	69	74	87
The availability of staff	61	65	84
The provision of shelter facilities	65	74	84
Availability of seating	48	59	67
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities	41	46	67
<b>TRAIN FACILITIES</b>			
Overall satisfaction with the train	74	76	93
The frequency of the trains on that route	55	69	83
Punctuality/reliability	70	78	95
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	77	83	98
Connections with other train services	58	70	75
The value for money for the price of your ticket	44	56	79
Cleanliness of the train	68	70	83
Upkeep and repair of the train	64	68	88
The provision of information during the journey	72	66	84
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	80	76	96
The space for luggage	60	57	83
The toilet facilities	29	43	64
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	72	68	93
The comfort of the seating area	69	69	85
The ease of being able to get on and off	83	78	90
Your personal security whilst on board	76	81	95
The cleanliness of the inside	72	71	83
The cleanliness of the outside	60	67	82
The availability of staff	68	62	95
Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average			
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average			

## Appendix 3 Southern bus replacement sign – an example of good practice



## Appendix 4 Passenger Focus's PIDD recommendations

Passenger Focus's recommendations arising from this research, drawing also on National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) and our observations of passenger information quality during autumn and winter 2013, are set out below, broadly in order of priority.

### Measurement and continuous improvement

- Introduce ongoing quantitative research to measure improvement in passenger satisfaction with the handling of service disruption. There should be a common methodology and a sample size sufficient to give statistically robust results for each train company. It should be noted that the industry almost did this in 2011 under the auspices of the National Taskforce 'Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD) Workstream 4', but the plan was abandoned. We believe robust data at train company level is essential if managers are to be tasked with, and held to account for, achieving improvements in passenger experience. The research should be published.
- Develop a measure of 'core message'<sup>47</sup> quality to complement the quantitative measures in place. Only by measuring the quality and quantity of core message production can a meaningful picture of performance become part of a senior management Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 'dashboard'. Passenger Focus is aware that some advocate weakening the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) requirement to update a 'core message' at least every 20 minutes, arguing that it encourages a focus on quantity not quality. We believe measuring quality as well is the solution, not weakening the quantitative target. Research already shows frequency of update to be a weaker area of current provision.

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<sup>47</sup> 'core message' is the term used in the PIDD ACOP to describe the update message to be sent by 'control' every 20 minutes during disruption.

- Significantly boost arrangements to ‘sense check’ if online information is accurate, consistent and up-to-date. This should cover train companies’ own websites, National Rail Enquiries, third party retailers and other key information providers such as the BBC. The need is not for high-end forensic analysis: it is for basic ‘that can’t be right, what’s going on here’ skills that ensure inaccuracies and inconsistencies are spotted and put right. Two recent examples:
  - replacement buses and the trains they are replacing showing simultaneously in journey planning systems
  - two train companies running over the same track telling passengers to travel with the other, despite the line being closed entirely.

The industry should consider including a ‘what to look for’ checklist in the ACOP.

- Report the level of adherence within each Network Rail ‘control’ to the *Guidance Note for Control, Response and Station Staff: Information During Disruption*, which covers the production and dissemination of Prioritised Plans during disruption. This must be quantitative and qualitative, becoming a regularly reported KPI for each Network Rail Route Managing Director.
- To supplement regular post-incident analysis, carry out an independent in-depth review of at least one Customer Service Level 2 (CSL2)<sup>48</sup> disruption incident per train company each year. This should focus on the passenger impact, identifying what was handled well and what should have been better, including passenger information and other aspects of customer service. A transparent method of selecting incidents for review will be essential. Findings and recommendations should be published.

### **Trust and honesty**

- Give information controllers the tools to accurately describe the cause of disruption. Passengers want the truth, not generalised stock descriptions some believe are intended to hide the facts. A tree across the railway is just that: don’t call it ‘an obstruction’. If a car has driven into the level crossing barriers say so: don’t say ‘a problem at a level crossing’. The term ‘signalling problems’ is used to describe faults that are simply not signalling problems, fuelling some passengers’ suspicion that they are not being told the truth. It should be noted that in 2012 the industry agreed significant changes to address this, but they have never been implemented.
- In seeking to improve the quality of messages during disruption, consider how to more effectively ‘tell a story’, or ‘paint a picture’, of unfolding events. The

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<sup>48</sup> ‘CSL2’ is the term used in the PIDD ACOP to describe disruption that is significant enough to trigger an enhanced level of customer service

objective should be to give passengers a continually-evolving sense of the activity going on to restore the service. Understanding what is being done helps passengers practically and emotionally. If told that the rescue locomotive has set off but is 45 minutes away, or the website shows a photograph of a tree across the railway, passengers can relate to why they are stuck.

- To increase trust and believability the industry should make live announcements during disruption, whether at stations or on trains, in particular avoiding automated apologies. Can an organisation be truly sorry if it uses a computer rather than a human to say so?
- Reinvigorate efforts to ensure all passengers entitled to compensation know that they are and that it is simple to claim and receive what is due. Smart ticketing will give the potential for automation, but in the meantime when a train is delayed by more than the compensation trigger there should be, at least, an announcement encouraging passengers to submit a claim. On trains with a guard or other onboard staff freepost claim forms should be distributed wherever possible. Passengers who have booked online on a train that is delayed by more than the trigger should be sent an email inviting them to apply online.
- To increase transparency and accountability, each 'local plan' issued under the ACOP (as well as the ACOP itself) should be published on the relevant train company's website, accompanied by an annual progress report. The Network Rail National Guidance document should also be published and an annual progress report provided.

### **Help me avoid the problem in the first place**

- Address the low proportion (17 per cent) of passengers aware of disruption before they arrive at the station. Research is required to understand what is preventing a higher proportion of passengers signing up to receive some form of push alert, whether by text, email, in-app alert or Twitter. Is there an awareness problem? How well do current alerting services meet passengers' needs? What could be improved? Is the signup process off-putting? It is unlikely, but perhaps 83 per cent of passengers are just not interested in knowing in advance?
- Introduce (reintroduce, in some instances) and promote free text alerts as quickly as possible. Text was selected by more passengers than any other method as the best way to tell them about disruption before they arrive at the station.
- Provide free alerts to passengers who have bought tickets online for trains that are cancelled, significantly delayed or where the schedule is amended after purchase. The sentiment of passengers is 'they know I was booked on it, but they couldn't be bothered to tell me'.
- Ensure critical passenger messages, such as that there is a significantly reduced service operating tomorrow, are highly prominent on websites. Too many train

companies present such information in their 'house style', resulting in vital information blending in with the rest of the webpage or feeling like a 'will you accept our cookies?' message.

### **Accuracy and usefulness of information**

- Significantly improve capability to estimate the delay. This would include the delay a passenger will encounter if they set off now; how long passengers on particular trains will be stuck; how long it will take to fix the problem; and how long it will be until the train service is fully recovered. Messages like 'delays of up to 60 minutes' are backwards-looking, reporting what has happened (i.e. that some trains are running up to 60 minutes late), not forward-looking giving an estimate of what to expect if you set off now. Not knowing, if your train has stopped in the middle of nowhere, if it will be 20 minutes or two hours causes real frustration. Too many disruption incidents go from 'until further notice' to 'cleared' with no estimate ever given about likely duration. Although it has improved, there is still a tendency to sound the 'all clear' before understanding the knock-on consequences of congestion, trains and crews being in the wrong place etc.
- Deliver the capability, and then use it, for train company 'control' staff to speak directly to passengers in any train via the GSM-R system<sup>49</sup>. We believe this change will substantially improve the quality of information provided to passengers during disruption, particularly on driver only trains.
- Review CSL2 thresholds to ensure enhanced arrangements are triggered in line with passengers' expectations, not playing catch-up. We again suggest that CSL2 triggers should be consistent with the point at which 25 per cent of passengers regard a delay as 'serious'. Analysis of NRPS data between autumn 2008 and autumn 2013 shows the tipping point between minor and serious delay to be, in passengers' eyes, 16-20 minutes for London and South East train companies, and 21-25 minutes for long distance and regional train companies.
- Evaluate whether 'control' is sufficiently resourced, in terms of humans and systems, to ensure that Darwin is always accurate, even during major disruption. Arguably, staffing 'control' for the workload on a normal day will guarantee failure on a day of disruption. In an era when passengers are checking websites and apps before and during travel, making sure journey planners and live departure boards are accurate is vital. Yet too often trains continue to show as 'on time' right up until, and sometimes after, the time that they should have left.
- Develop the capability to implement a revised timetable, and revert to the normal schedule, significantly more quickly than current processes allow. Day A for Day

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<sup>49</sup> GSM-R refers to the Global System for Mobile Communications – Railway, an international wireless communications standard

B<sup>50</sup> is clearly an improvement on the underlying Day A for Day C arrangements, but its limitations are significant:

- Train companies currently have to decide by 1100 on Day A if a revised timetable is required on Day B. If it becomes clear at lunchtime that horrendous weather will affect the railway tomorrow it is already too late.
  - If a train company has decided to run a reduced timetable, but the severe weather warning is downgraded, it is difficult to revert to the normal timetable.
  - The process assumes that train companies have provided a fully worked up contingency timetable to Network Rail in advance, to be implemented in its entirety. This 'all or nothing' approach appears insufficiently flexible to respond to weather, or anything else, affecting routes – or sections of route – in different ways.
  - Day A for Day B is envisaged to be available only in the winter. For example, the St. Jude storm (28 October 2013) fell outside the coverage period, although Network Rail did its best to accommodate train companies seeking to amend timetables.
- Ensure those responsible for passenger information have the authority, and the means, at any time of day or night to refocus their website to provide information of immediate value to passengers, where necessary suppressing marketing material. Too often we hear of interdepartmental battles and 'out of hours' practicalities getting in the way of giving passengers the information they need.
  - When a section of infrastructure is unexpectedly out of use for many weeks the industry must stop showing trains running normally. The practice of bidding changes to the base timetable only a week or two ahead, and leaving the normal timetable in place beyond that, ignores T-12<sup>51</sup> information obligations and leaves tickets on sale on trains that cannot run (Dawlish and the Cambrian Coast being recent examples).
  - Work with online retailers and information providers to develop an automatic means to identify which trains are affected by a particular incident, allowing them to be 'flagged' and a contextual message shown to passengers making relevant journey enquiries and/or ticket purchases.

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<sup>50</sup> 'Day A for Day B' is the phrase used to describe an enhanced process by which a train company can advise on a particular day that it wishes to operate an amended timetable the next – the normal process (Day A for Day C) requires a further day before the amended timetable will appear in passenger-facing information systems

<sup>51</sup> T-12 is shorthand for the requirement that timetable information in passenger-facing systems must be correct 12 weeks in advance

- The ACOP currently envisages a ‘core message’ comprising “problem, impact, advice”, but the research suggests that ‘impact, problem, advice’ may be better-aligned with some passengers’ needs. In essence, those passengers are saying ‘give me the implications for my journey, then tell me what’s wrong with the railway’.

### **Staff**

- Ensure staff are at least as well informed as passengers with a smartphone. The fact staff sometimes know less than they do, baffles and frustrates passengers who cannot fathom why train companies do not equip staff with a tablet or smartphone and solve the problem. This should be a given, yet the ACOP has it only as ‘ideally’. Staff need appropriate equipment: the rail industry has tended to play catch-up, issuing staff with Blackberrys when passengers were buying smartphones and issuing smartphones when passengers were moving on to tablets. But it is also about training and the expectations that staff use the devices to passengers’ maximum benefit.
- Require drivers and guards to acknowledge a halt between stations within two minutes, and measure if it is happening in practice. Research continues to show that saying something quickly, even if it is simply “We’ve stopped at a red signal, I’m going to find out why” is powerful in demonstrating that the train company knows the train has stopped and cares enough to acknowledge it.

### **Fares and ticketing**

- Ensure passengers do not pay more as a result of service disruption. Closing seat reservations because of uncertainty about the timetable does not stop passengers being sold tickets, but it often increases fares significantly (because Advance tickets cannot be sold). The industry must ensure that during sustained disruption Advance tickets are immediately available where they would normally be, even if a replacement bus is now involved.
- Change aspects of the national ticketing rules to give passengers greater protection during disruption, specifically:
  - Passengers choosing not to travel because it is highly likely, even certain, that they will be delayed after leaving or their journey cannot be completed should have the same rights to a full refund (in other words with no administration fee) as a passenger intending to catch a train that is already delayed or cancelled.
  - Passengers holding out and back Advance single tickets who choose not to travel because of known or likely disruption should be refunded for both legs of the journey without an administration fee (if you couldn’t get there, you don’t need your ticket to come back).

- Passengers holding out and back Advance single tickets who are delayed on their outward journey should be permitted to return on a later train than they have booked. If you had been looking forward to four hours sightseeing somewhere, why should you cut short your day because disruption meant you arrived late?
- Ensure industry retailing systems can reflect any temporary fares policy that is proposed. During the Dawlish closure, systems proved incapable of reflecting CrossCountry's laudable policy that, given the replacement bus from Exeter to Plymouth, an Advance single to Exeter was good for travel to Penzance. As a consequence it is highly likely that some passengers paid more than the policy required.

### **Additional recommendations**

- Train companies should continuously review how they communicate with the National Rail Communications Centre (NRCC) and online retailers during disruption, especially in relation to supplementary contextual information. Do all relevant staff, including communications/press office staff, appreciate how vital it is to keep the NRCC and online retailers informed; understand what those organisations need to know; and have the right email addresses at their fingertips?
- The industry should revisit its 2012 decision that the PIDD ACOP would no longer be a joint ATOC/Network Rail document. Given that in many cases the raw material a train company uses to produce passenger information originates with Network Rail, together with the existence of many joint controls, would a single document be more effective?

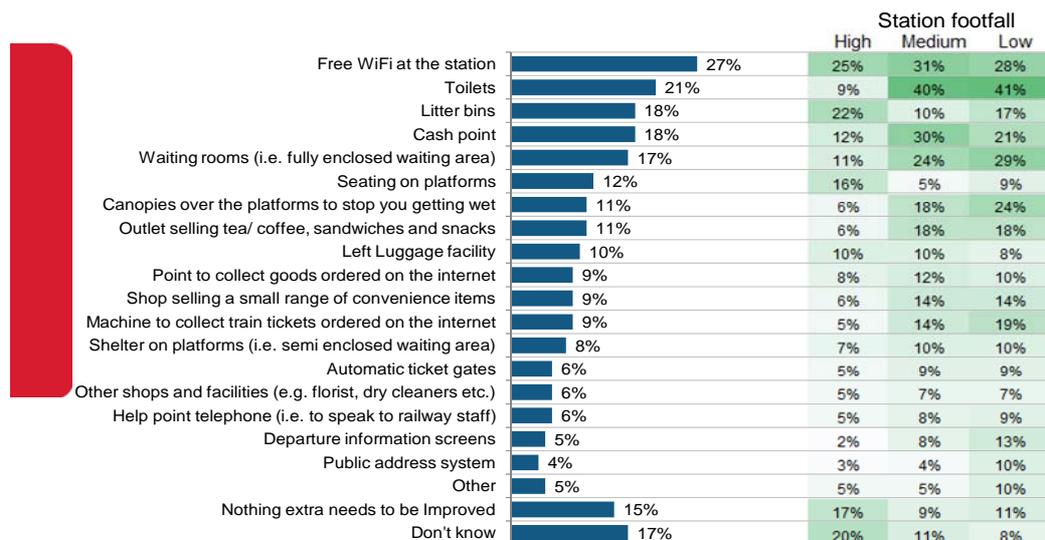
# Appendix 5 Passenger priorities for station requirements and improvements

## 5A – Facilities need providing

### 5A1 - According to station footfall – GB stations

Free Wi-Fi at stations consistently required by station type

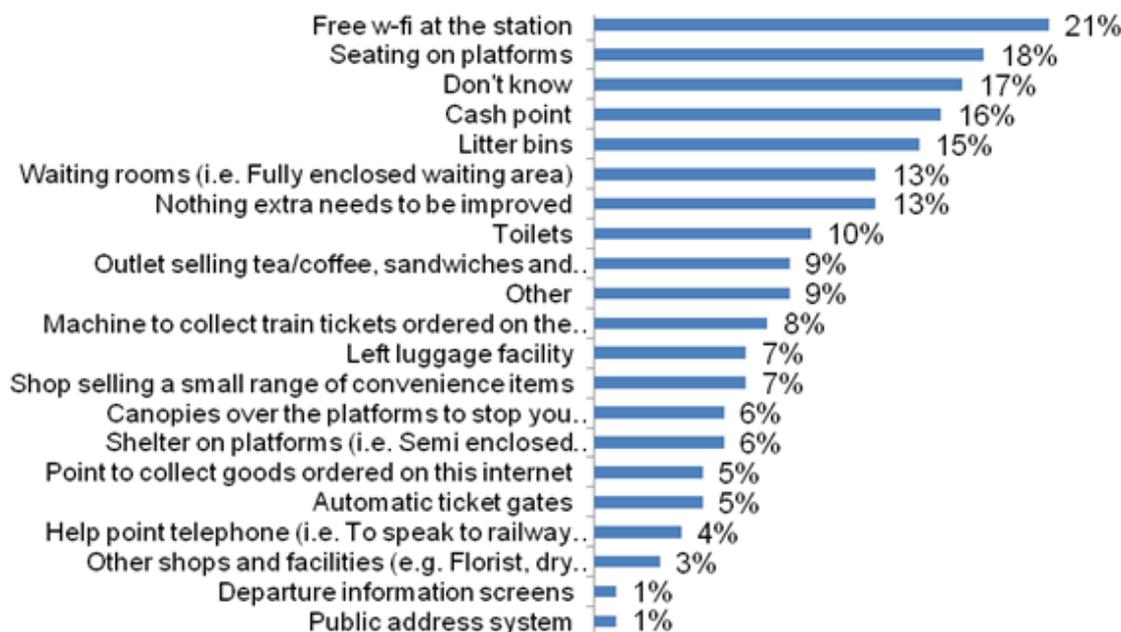
*Station improvements [prompted] – needs providing: All GB rail passengers*



Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? providing; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559



### 5A2 - AGA passenger sample – all stations

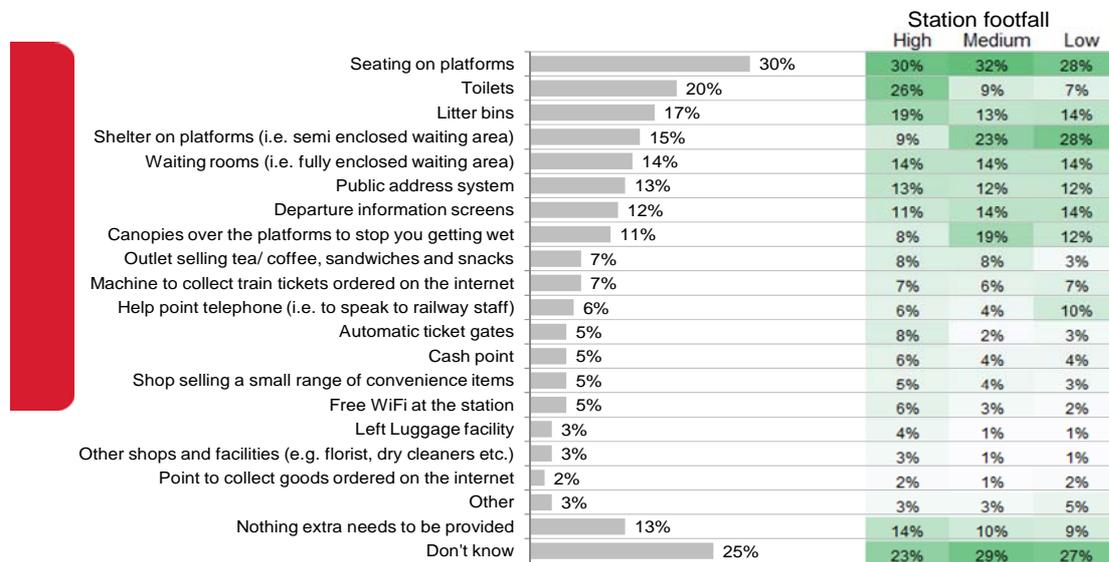


## 5B – Facilities need improving

### 5B1 - According to station footfall – GB stations

Improvements to seating consistently important. Improving toilets important at high footfall stations, and shelter important at lower footfall

**Station improvements [prompted] – needs improving: All GB rail passengers**



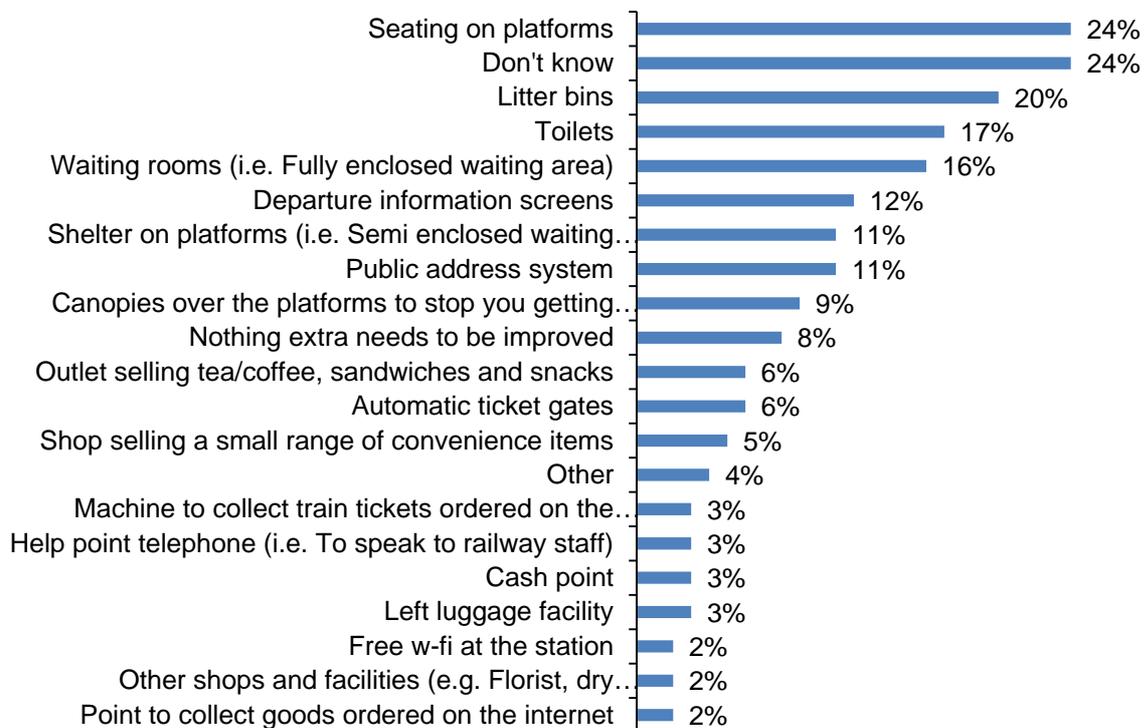
30



Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? Improving; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559



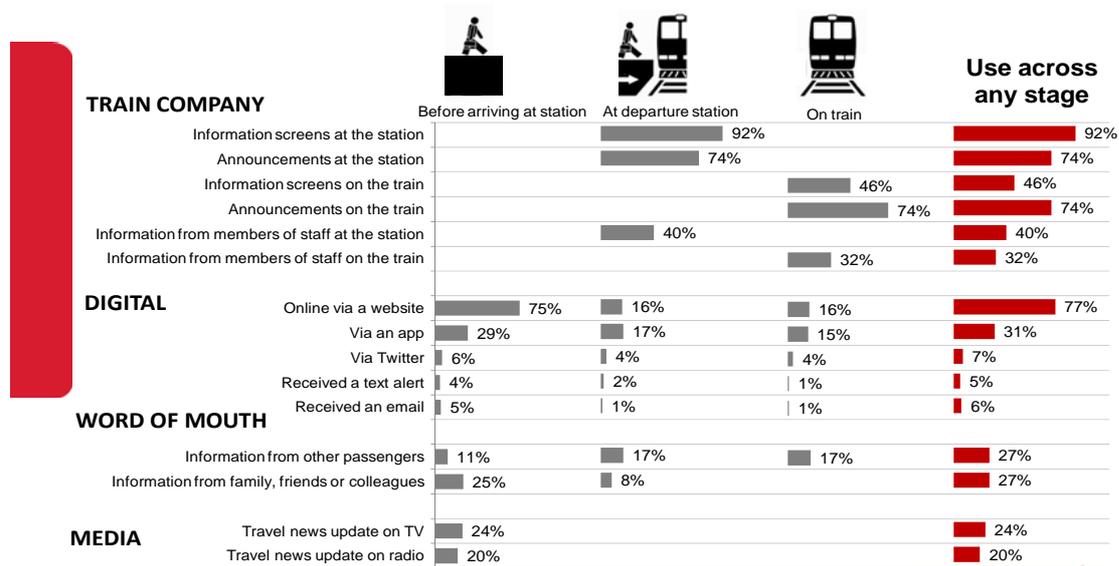
### 5B2 - AGA passengers – all stations



# Appendix 6 Information used at different stages of the journey

## 6A - Information used at different stages of the journey

Stages of journey where information used: All GB rail passengers

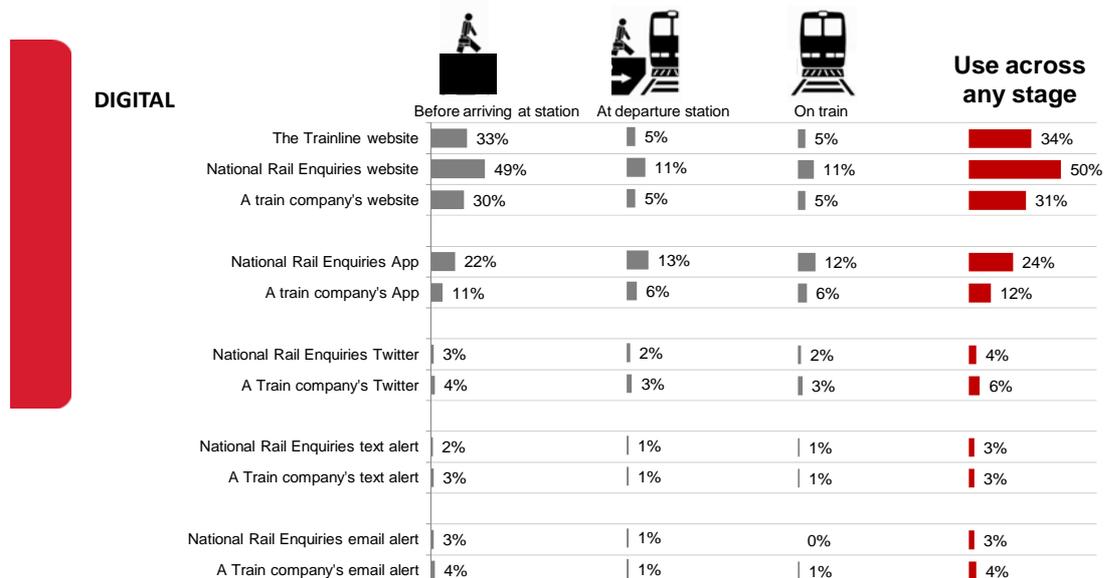


32 **P** Q.27a-c Now thinking more generally about information sources for rail travel, which of the following do you typically use to keep you informed about your train journey? Improved; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559



## 6B - NRE website and app - key sources of digital information

Stages of journey where digital information used: All GB rail passengers

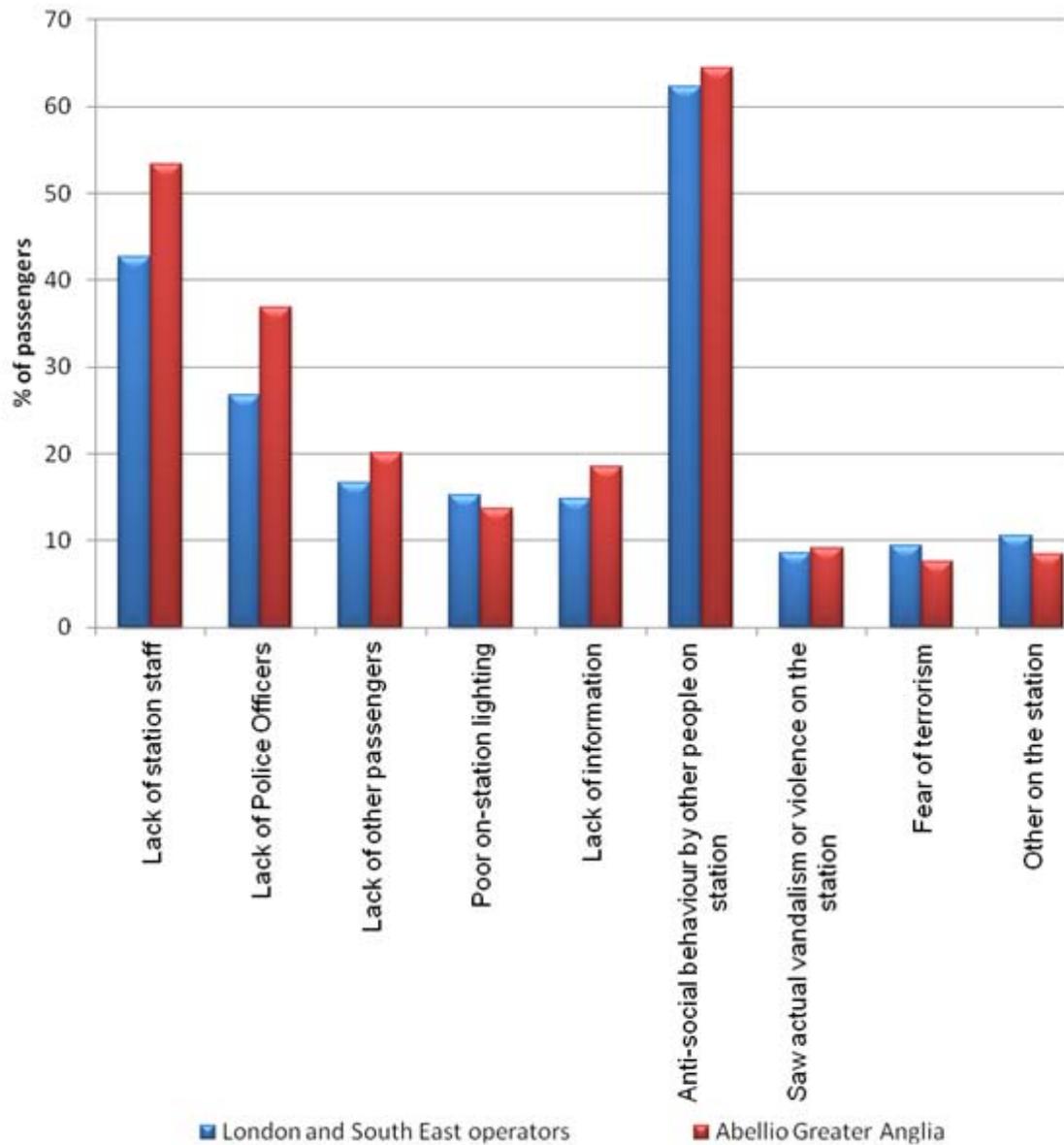


33 **P** Q.27a-c Now thinking more generally about information sources for rail travel, which of the following do you typically use to keep you informed about your train journey? Improved; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559



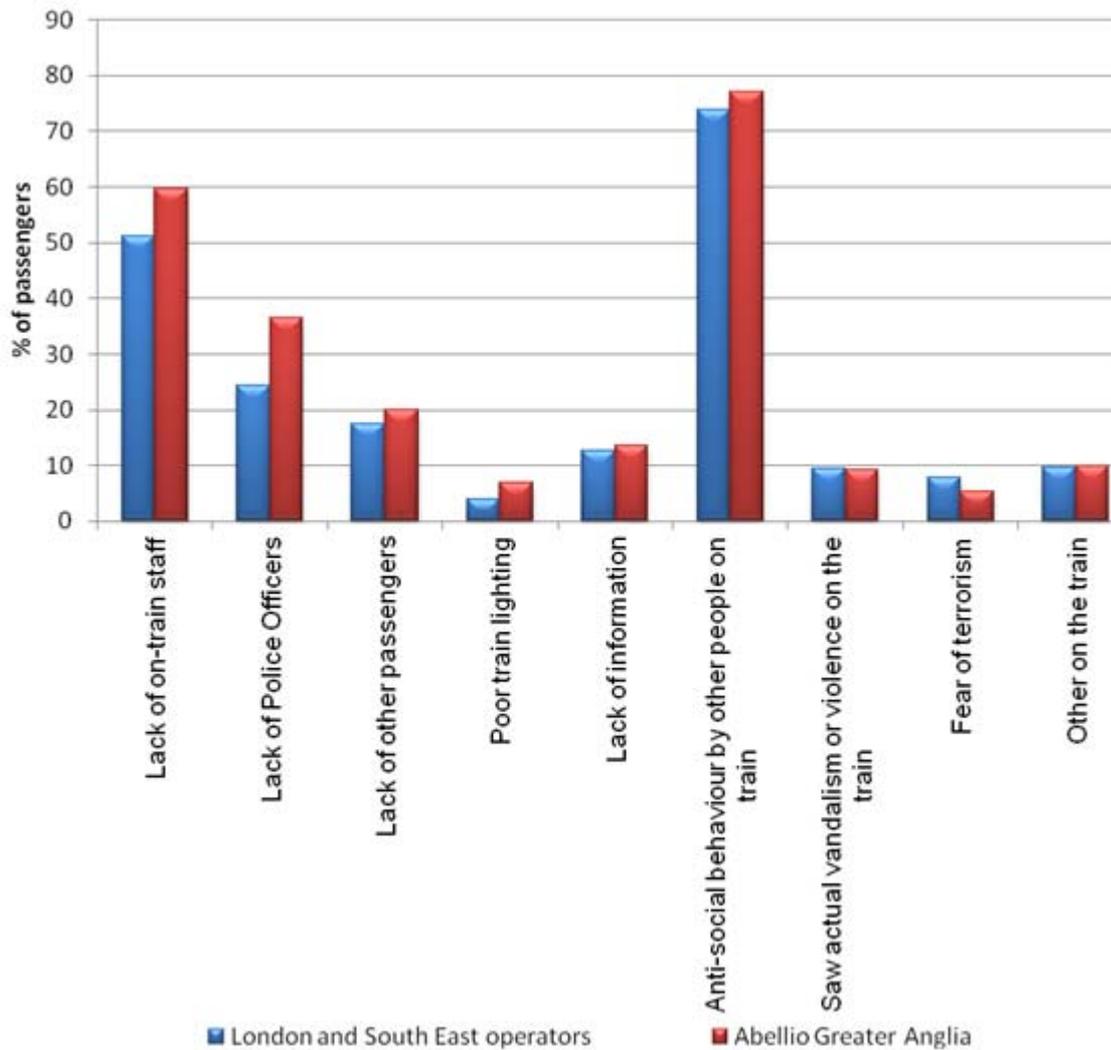
## Appendix 7 Personal security concerns on stations

Reasons for concern over personal security at the station  
(Abellio Greater Anglia NRPS Autumn 2014)



## Appendix 8 Personal security concerns on train

Reasons for concern over personal security on the train  
(Abellio Greater Anglia NRPS Autumn 2014)



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