



# Response to First ScotRail franchise extension consultation

November 2008

## Passenger Focus – who we are and what we do

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Passenger Focus is the independent national rail consumer watchdog. It is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Transport.

Our mission is to get the best deal for Britain's rail passengers. We have two main aims: to influence both long and short term decisions and issues that affect passengers and to help passengers through advice, advocacy and empowerment. 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 rail passengers and we work with the rail industry, other passenger groups and Government to secure journey improvements.

Our vision is to ensure that the rail industry and Government are always

**‘putting rail passengers first’**

This will be achieved through our mission of

**‘getting the best deal for passengers’**

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# 1. Introduction

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Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to respond to the ScotRail Franchise extension consultation document. Passenger Focus supports the broad objectives behind the franchise extension process, to:

- improve train performance
- improve the quality of train services (in terms of both capacity and quality of passenger environment)
- improve safety at stations and on trains
- improve integration with other rail services and other modes, and
- improve facilities on trains and at stations.

As an evidence-based organisation, the Passenger Focus response to the consultation incorporates research with 4,000<sup>1</sup> passengers, including findings obtained from additional comprehensive Passenger Focus research which shall be referred to in the Passenger Focus response.

The total number of passenger journeys on First ScotRail (FSR) services in the 2007-08 financial year was 81.3 million, an increase of 5% from the previous year, a 45% rise since 1997-98 and a rise of 63% since 1992-93 when records began<sup>2</sup>. Demand forecasts indicate passenger growth will continue until the end of the current franchise in 2014<sup>3</sup>.

Initiatives related to the ScotRail Franchise extension must address the predicted growth in passenger demand and should address passengers' priorities for rail services in Scotland. The top five priorities for passengers travelling in Scotland<sup>4</sup> are shown in the table below which highlights that the main priority is value for money followed by frequency, punctuality, seating capacity and queue times for purchasing tickets.

Rank	Attribute
1	Price of train tickets offer excellent value for money
2	Sufficient train services at times I use the train
3	At least 19 out of 20 trains arrive on time
4	Passengers are always able to get a seat on the train
5	Max queue time no more than two minutes to purchase tickets

Our following comments are made in direct response to and in the order in which issues are raised within the consultation document.

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is based on 1,060 from the National Passenger Survey, First ScotRail results (Passenger Focus, Spring 2008), 326 from Passenger Priorities for Improvements: Rail Services in Scotland (Passenger Focus, April 2007) and 2,614 from Passenger Priorities research on Scotland's rail network (Passenger Focus, October 2006)

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin (August 2008)

<sup>3</sup> Scotland Route Utilisation Strategy (March 2007)

<sup>4</sup> Passenger Priorities for Improvement – Rail Services in Scotland (April 2007)

## 2. Executive summary

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Passenger Focus has no objection to the extension of FSR's franchise period. We would have welcomed the consultation prior to the extension agreement rather than afterwards, however, our position reflects the broad consensus that FSR is meeting passengers' expectations.

FSR has a favourable reputation with passengers because it has continued to improve the reliability and punctuality of its train services to passengers. This is reflected in overall satisfaction ratings for FSR which have risen throughout the franchise.

The extension must ensure that FSR continues to deliver the current levels of service that passengers have come to expect, in addition to improvements to meet passengers' increasing aspirations and expectations.

Now that FSR performance is improving passengers' increasing expectation is for much better customer services generally but particularly during service disruption. We would strongly support targets for improving National Passenger Survey (NPS) results especially *'overall satisfaction'*, *'how well FSR deals with delays'*, *'facilities for car parking and 'the helpfulness and attitude of staff'*.

### 3. Response to ScotRail franchise extension consultation

#### Core services

#### Q1 which of the Priced Options do you think best support the delivery of Scotland's Railways?

The initiatives relevant to the core services all support the various objectives as detailed in Scotland's Railways<sup>5</sup>.

#### Q2 Is our schedule for new service introduction right?

Passenger Focus supports the schedule for new service introduction.

#### Q3 Which future Priced Options would you wish to see Transport Scotland develop?

Development of future priced options should consider passengers' priorities for improvements to rail services in Scotland<sup>6</sup>.

Scotland rank	Attribute	GB Rank
1	Price of train tickets offer excellent value for money	1
2	Sufficient train services at times I use the train	2
3	At least 19 out of 20 trains arrive on time	3
4	Passengers are always able to get a seat on the train	4
5	Max queue time no more than two minutes to purchase tickets	6
6	Company keeps passengers informed if train delays	5
7	Seating area on the train is very comfortable	9
8	Information on train times/platforms accurate and available	7
9	Trains are consistently well maintained/in excellent condition	8
10	Passengers experience a high level of security on the train	10
11	The inside of the train is cleaned to a high standard	14
12	Good easy connections with other forms of transport	12
13	Your journey time is reduced by five minutes	13
14	Personal security at stations is improved through CCTV/staff	11
15	Facilities at stations are plentiful and of good quality	18
16	Connections with other train services are always good	15
17	There is sufficient space for passengers' luggage	24
18	Station staff are available whenever required	17
19	All trains have staff to assist	20
20	There are good quality toilet facilities on every train	25
21	All train staff helpful and have a positive attitude	23

<sup>5</sup> Scotland's Railways (December 2006)

<sup>6</sup> Passengers' Priorities For Improvements: Rail Services in Scotland (April 2007)

22	The train travels at a fast speed throughout the journey	16
23	All station staff are helpful and with a positive attitude	21
24	Always a quick response to information requests at stations	19
25	Useful information is provided throughout the journey	22
26	Station environment always pleasant and comfortable	26
27	Stations are cleaned to a high standard	27
28	High quality car parking available	29
29	All station building maintained to a high standard	28
30	The outside of the train is cleaned to a high standard	30

The top priority '*price of train tickets offer excellent value for money*' could lend itself towards a change in the pricing and validity of train tickets. Many rail journeys/routes have a return train ticket that is only valid for one day i.e. day return, consideration should be given to offering passengers period returns on some of these journeys/routes. The pricing of single tickets at around 90% of the return fare could also be changed to offer better value for money. One of the reasons for having high-priced single fares was to counter fare evasion. With the introduction of automatic ticket barriers at many stations perhaps it is time to revisit the pricing of single tickets.

The second top priority '*sufficient train services at times I use the train*' reflects the growing desire of passengers to have a twenty-four hour, seven day a week rail network. Passenger Focus welcomes the increase of late-night services in the Glasgow and Highlands areas but would welcome consideration to introducing late-night services in the Edinburgh area, perhaps towards Fife and East Lothian. Passengers would also welcome the introduction of early-morning services and consideration to introducing Sunday services on routes that do not currently enjoy a Sunday service i.e. New Craighall.

#### **Q4 Where should we concentrate our efforts on improving services, in particular journey times?**

Over 90% of passengers<sup>7</sup> are satisfied with the length of time the journey is scheduled to take on FSR services and that improving journey times ranks only 13<sup>th</sup><sup>8</sup> in passengers' priorities for improvements. However, the rail industry standard for forecasting demand is that a 1% reduction in journey time results in a 0.9% increase in passenger demand and is therefore a driver of modal shift.

The concentration of efforts should not be on **where** journey time improvements are made but on **how** journey time improvements are made. Improving journey times can be delivered by a mixture of investment in railway infrastructure, (which can also result in greater capacity and lead to improvements in frequency of service) rolling stock and revising stopping patterns. Careful consideration must be given when revising stopping patterns; particularly at intermediate stations as frequency of service is a higher priority than securing journey time reductions for existing passengers. The preferred option for journey time improvements which meets the needs of both existing passengers and achieves modal shift should be delivered through investment in infrastructure and rolling stock.

<sup>7</sup> National Passenger Survey, First ScotRail Results (Spring 2008)

<sup>8</sup> Passenger Priorities For Improvements: Rail Services in Scotland (April 2007)

The initiatives relevant to the core services which provide for additional train services, extension of trains services and Sunday local services are supported.

To inform the development of the initiatives relevant to the core services passenger research undertaken by Passenger Focus has shown:

Aberdeen – Edinburgh<sup>9</sup> route the top four priorities are:

- value for money for price of ticket
- frequency of the trains on the route
- provision of information about train times / platforms
- connections with other forms of transport.

Stranraer-Glasgow<sup>10</sup> route the top three priorities are:

- punctuality/reliability of the train
- provision of information about train times/platforms
- value for money for price of ticket.

Edinburgh-Glasgow route via Shotts<sup>11</sup> the top four priorities are:

- Ticket buying facilities
- Provision of information about train times/platforms
- value for money for price of ticket
- frequency of the trains on the route.

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<sup>9</sup> Passenger Priorities Specific Routes Aberdeen – Edinburgh (October 2006)

<sup>10</sup> Passenger Priorities Specific Routes Stranraer – Glasgow (October 2006)

<sup>11</sup> Passenger Priorities Specific Routes Edinburgh – Glasgow via Shotts (October 2006)



## Connecting to passengers and people

### Q5 How can buying a ticket be made easier?

- more over the counter services
- more ticket vending machines
- 'customer service' staff to offer assistance and advice when buying a ticket
- internet purchase facilities
- telesales
- through mobile phones
- smart cards.

Passenger Focus has held focus groups<sup>12</sup> which showed that there was high interest amongst passengers in using new ticketing technology to resolve some of the problems that they experience when purchasing rail tickets. The problems predominantly focus on the inability of passengers to purchase tickets in a quick and convenient manner in advance of undertaking a journey.

Passengers believed that the solutions need not be radical in their use of technology and that it should be possible to introduce new methods of ticket purchase that are usable by all groups and will be practicable for the industry to implement. However, they did identify a number of barriers that would have to be overcome to make such a transition successful:

- **Smart-card**
  - What happens if passengers cross the boundary into an area not covered by smartcard?
  - How would a smartcard work with advance purchases?
  - How to accommodate rail card discounts: Passengers expressed concern that the new ticketing system may not be able to recognise and incorporate present rail card discounts, especially on long distance.
  - Not willing to store great amounts of money on a card on a just in case basis.
  - How would you reserve a seat?
- **Mobile phone**
  - Concern at having to 'wave phone around' at the station (i.e. to open ticket gates)
  - Concern over deleting text/confirmation
- **Purchase / print at home**
  - Transfers cost to passenger
  - Concern over 'messaging it up'

Notwithstanding the willingness to consider alternative means of purchase it remains a fact<sup>13</sup> that the most likely source is the ticket office. Rail passengers were asked<sup>13</sup> to indicate the extent to which they would trust ticket sources to provide them with the best value for money tickets for train journeys. As the following table shows, levels of trust in ticket sources vary quite considerably.

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<sup>12</sup> Ticketing for the future? Research into ticketing technology (January 2008)

<sup>13</sup> Passenger Requirements of Rail Fares: Quantitative Research Report (July 2006)

<b>Trust in ticket sources</b>			
	<b>Commuters</b>	<b>Leisure</b>	<b>Business</b>
<b>Ticket office at train station</b>	%	%	%
Trust entirely	34	42	34
Tend to trust	53	46	48
Neither	8	7	10
Tend to distrust	4	4	7
Distrust entirely	1	1	2
<b>Ticket machine at train station</b>			
Trust entirely	12	8	7
Tend to trust	36	28	27
Neither	28	35	33
Tend to distrust	21	24	27
Distrust entirely	3	6	6
<b>Internet</b>			
Trust entirely	12	13	17
Tend to trust	45	42	51
Neither	27	26	20
Tend to distrust	14	14	9
Distrust entirely	2	5	3
<b>Telephone</b>			
Trust entirely	6	10	10
Tend to trust	39	36	44
Neither	34	29	28
Tend to distrust	18	20	15
Distrust entirely	3	5	3
<b>Staff on train</b>			
Trust entirely	20	24	21
Tend to trust	46	44	37
Neither	20	21	24
Tend to distrust	11	8	12
Distrust entirely	2	3	6
<b>Travel agent</b>			
Trust entirely	6	9	7
Tend to trust	26	33	31
Neither	46	37	39
Tend to distrust	17	16	19
Distrust entirely	4	5	4
<b>Base (all responding)</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>625</b>

Clearly, though, face to face contact is trusted and valued. Views are fairly consistent across the three passenger segments. All segments display a fairly high level of trust in ticket office at train stations and this emerges as the most trusted source of value for money tickets.

Staff on trains and the internet are similarly rated sources although the former is more trusted by commuters and leisure travellers and the latter, more by business travellers.

The telephone is the next most trusted source overall and is slightly more positively viewed by the business segment than it is by others.

Ticket machines at train stations tend to polarise opinions amongst leisure and business travellers but are generally trusted by commuters.

The key criteria on making ticket buying easier is to ensure that passengers have trust and confidence in whatever mechanisms used.

Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) have a part to play but they cannot completely replace staff. Our research<sup>14</sup> found that many passengers could have bought their ticket from a TVM but chose to do so from the ticket office instead, because of:

- lack of confidence in using the machine
- lack of confidence in ability to select the right ticket
- sense of mistrust/apprehension (which can potentially be alleviated by having staff to assist).

All these issues can help to address the need to decrease queuing times. The level of importance attached to this in the national priorities work shows the need for queuing time standards to have a higher profile. Therefore, there ought to be more emphasis on monitoring queuing times.

**Q6 To make the best use of available space at stations, how should we balance the use between commercial outlets and other facilities that offer further passenger benefits? Please consider:**

- **the size of station based on passenger numbers and demand**
- **type of facilities (e.g. food outlets, news-stands, pharmacies etc.)**
- **community based initiatives supported by the Stations Community Regenerations Fund.**

Stations are the gateway to the rail network for all passengers. Rail passengers today have a much wider experience of transport infrastructure. They have seen what motorway services and airports can offer in the way of fixtures, fittings and facilities and, not unreasonably want to enjoy many of the same when they travel by rail. Needs and expectations must be ranged to suit each particular type of station. Clearly it is not possible to provide every creature comfort at every wayside halt, but it is vital to examine the minimum facilities which each type of station should have and ensure that they are provided and maintained.

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<sup>14</sup> Response to South West Trains proposals to reduce ticket office opening hours (August 2008)

Research<sup>15</sup> undertaken by Passenger Focus has identified the facilities and features that passengers want to see at stations overall and by the different types of stations. The National Rail stations were allocated according to the following five categories:

- B** – Regional hub
- C** – Important feeder
- D** – Medium-sized staff
- E** – Small staffed
- F** – Small unstaffed

The facilities with asterix\* are more relevant for less regular leisure or business passengers than daily commuters.

<b>Basic features - essential features of all stations</b>	<b>Universal features - facilities which are expected by customers at all stations</b>	<b>Comfort features - facilities which make the station easier or more comfortable and should ideally be at all stations</b>	<b>Attractor features - facilities which help to attract people to busier stations</b>	<b>Special features - facilities appropriate only to particular stations which help to make them special</b>
Reasonably safe and secure	Ramps	Bus stop	Travel info in the waiting area*	Airport lounge style waiting room
Well lit	Car parking	Taxi ranks	Range of shops*	TV with news
Basic shelter and seating	Signs to the trains	Cycle ranks	Cash point	Office facilities
Basic signage	Real-time information screens	Signs to facilities (visual)*	Baby changing facilities*	Luggage trolleys*
	Real-time PA announcements	Station maps (tactile)*	Escalators and travelators*	
	Timetables	Newsagent	Lift*	
	Departure boards	kiosk		
	Clocks	Cafe*		
	CCTV	Vending machine		
	Staff	Help point		
	Pay Phone	Booking office		
	Ticket machines	Heated waiting room		
		Disabled access toilets*		
		Automatic doors*		

<sup>15</sup> What Passenger Want From Stations (June 2005)

Station access	B	C	D	E	F
Signs to the station	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ramps	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible
Disabled access to platforms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible
Car parking	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible	If possible
Bus stop	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible	If possible
Taxi ranks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cycle racks	Yes	If possible	If possible	If possible	If possible
Automatic doors	Yes	Yes	If possible	No	No
Escalators and travelators	Yes	Yes	If possible	No	No
Lift	Yes	If possible	No	No	No
Non-slip flooring	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible

Information	B	C	D	E	F
Signs to the trains	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Real-time information screens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If Possible
Real time PA announcements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Timetables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible
Departure boards	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible
Signs to facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Clocks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station maps (visual)	Yes	If possible	No	No	No
Station maps (tactile)	Yes	If possible	No	No	No
Travel information in the waiting room	Yes	If possible	No	No	No

Retail facilities	B	C	D	E	F
Newsagent	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible	If possible
Cafe	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Kiosk	Yes	Yes	If possible	No	No
Vending machine	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible	No
Range of shops	Yes	Yes	If possible	If possible	No
Cash point	Yes	Yes	If possible	If possible	No

Security features	B	C	D	E	F
Adequate lighting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CCTV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station staffed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible
Pay phone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Help point	If possible	If possible	If possible	If possible	If possible

Ticketing	B	C	D	E	F
Ticket machines	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Booking office	Yes	Yes	Yes	If possible	No

Waiting facilities	B	C	D	E	F
Sheltered waiting/seating	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Waiting room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Heated waiting room	Yes	Yes	If possible	If possible	No
Toilets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Disabled access toilets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Baby changing facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Comfortable (airport lounge style) waiting area	Yes	No	No	No	No
TV with news	Yes	No	No	No	No
Office facilities	Yes	No	No	No	No
Luggage trolleys	Yes	If possible	No	No	No

**Q7 How could the station environment be improved? Please consider:**

- lighting
- availability of seating / furniture
- safety (e.g. through technology such as CCTV, 'Help-Points')
- a visible staff presence.

Over 70%<sup>16</sup> of passengers are satisfied with the overall station environment and their personal security whilst using a station. However, the environment both inside and outside the station is a high priority for passengers and in particular to alleviate the perception of being unsafe. The main concerns include:

- no staff or supervision at the station
- ticket office is closed
- youths hanging around the station environment
- adequate lighting at station and in the station car park

<sup>16</sup> National Passenger Survey, First ScotRail Results (Spring 2008)

- walking route to the station i.e. bushes and foliage along walking route
- provision of CCTV and help points.

The recent British Transport Police Authority report regarding fear of crime and concerns about personal security should be considered further as addressing such fears and concerns would improve the station and travelling environment.

**Q8 How could signage be improved at stations?**

- **directions within stations to ticket office, platforms, toilets etc.**
- **directions to facilities nearby, e.g. hospitals.**

Station signage should at a minimum comply with relevant guidelines in Codes of Practice regarding station signage. A clear and consistent approach is required at all stations which Passenger Focus expects to be delivered as part of the re-branding option.

At all stations a street map should be provided which details the local facilities and detailed information on onward travel i.e. bus timetable, walking route and local taxi telephone numbers.

**Q9 How can we improve assisted travel at stations? In particular, please consider:**

- **station access (such as wheelchair ramps, facilities for light scooters, facilities for passengers with assistance dogs)**
- **assistance for people with hearing or learning difficulties**
- **increased training for existing staff**
- **the availability of dedicated staff.**

Our mystery shop exercise into the Assisted Passenger Reservation Service<sup>17</sup> found that overall the service is doing well but there are some areas in which the service can be improved. Passenger Focus has developed a set of best practice guidelines for this. The guidelines look at the four stages where passengers need assistance – booking the journey, arriving at the station and boarding the train, on the train and at the end of the journey. The best practice guidelines provide more information on this which can be found in Appendix A of our response.

**Q10 Do you have any ideas for further ‘Rail Links’? Please consider the accessibility of:**

- **hospitals**
- **bus station interchange**
- **car parking**
- **park and ride**
- **traveline**
- **walking routes.**

Rail links which have been identified via Local Transport Plans and Regional Transport Strategies should be considered further.

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<sup>17</sup> Assisted Passenger Reservation Service: Mystery Shop. September 2008

**Q11 Which pilot scheme changes to fares should we make to encourage modal shift? Please consider:**

- **reduced fares (for disabled passenger, families, students, low-income groups, ex-servicemen)**
- **reduced fares at targeted time of day/year**
- **annual season tickets**
- **geographical tickets, i.e. tickets for a particular region**
- **other rail cards.**

Research undertaken by Passenger Focus identified that a significant proportion of commuters remain unaware of the benefits of annual season tickets. For example, two in five commuters don't know how many weeks of 'free' travel are offered and 19% of commuters without a season ticket cite 'not value for money' as their reason for not having one.

Several companies, both long and short distance operators, already offer annual season ticket purchasers the valuable benefit of paying by interest-free instalments. Our research shows 14% of commuters who do not have an annual season ticket cite that they 'haven't got the money to pay in advance' for one, whilst 11% cite they 'cannot afford one' as their reason for not purchasing one.

We would welcome a commitment to making a direct debit facility available to all passengers who wish to buy an annual season ticket. We believe that all passengers should have access to the advantages that an annual season ticket can bring and are currently denied this opportunity due to the large advance payment required.

Passenger Focus research<sup>18</sup> carried out with passengers at Waterloo station explored:

- what would motivate passengers to change travel patterns to arrive before 08.00 or after 09.00
- what the key barriers are to changing travel patterns.

The main findings from the research were:

- Some passengers felt that they could be incentivised to change their travel times.
- The control that passengers had over their journeys depended on several factors, the most important of which were work commitments and the distance they travelled to get to Waterloo. It was felt to be harder to persuade those with longer journeys to change their behaviour than those with shorter journeys.
- Passengers were more prepared to be flexible in the Spring and Summer months rather than in the Autumn and Winter.
- Passengers will not change their journey times if they feel that an off-peak service is going to be unreliable. This is critical. A minority expressed the view that this was likely to be the case and because there were fewer trains at off-peak times the unreliability was more of a problem especially if travelling with the intention of arriving after 09.00.

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<sup>18</sup> Encouraging Edge of Morning Peak Travel Research Finding and Policy Implications (August 2006)



- Security at railway stations was not a top of mind issue despite extensive media coverage. However it gained in importance as a deterrent to travelling at off-peak times as soon as it was discussed.
- Financial reward was also not top of mind amongst passengers in terms of the incentive they felt would be most likely to change their travel behaviour but once it was mentioned by an individual in a group it became the dominant incentive. Discounts in the region of 25%-30% were sought by passengers.
- Passengers wanted to feel that they were being rewarded for 'good behaviour' rather than penalised for 'bad behaviour'. They resented pricing strategies that penalised peak travel and ticketing strategies that forced them into travelling at certain times. They liked the idea that the reward for off-peak travel might accrue in some way and that tickets could be flexible enough to reward them when they travelled at off-peak times and not penalise them when they did not.
- Incentive scheme should be linked to a form of smart-card ticketing.

Passenger Focus's wider quantitative research on fares<sup>19</sup> asked commuters across Great Britain (GB) the likelihood that they would be able to shift their travel times in order to avoid the busiest periods of the day (morning and evening peaks). They were then asked their likelihood of doing so if, as an incentive, the cost of their travel was reduced by a) 10% and b) 20%.

A minority of commuters who currently travel in the peak hours indicated that they were very or fairly likely to be able to travel earlier or later to avoid busy periods. Although a minority; this represents nearly one in five commuters. Those expressing the highest likelihood of shifting travel times in order to receive the 20% fares discount include 16-25 year olds, those with household incomes of under £30k and those with commutes lasting in excess of an hour (presumably those with more expensive journeys).

The research found that early bird ticketing went hand-in-hand with smart-card ticketing. The findings clearly point to the need for any system to be flexible. Existing early bird schemes have tended to specify an arrival time (e.g. you must arrive before 07.30) with season ticket-holders travelling outside this time penalised with an excess fare. The research indicates that commuters do not want to be tied down – they want to be rewarded for those days they travel outside the peak rather than be penalised when they travel within. The idea being that passengers accrue a benefit by avoiding the peak – the more often they do so, the higher the overall benefit. This would require a relatively sophisticated ticketing system capable of recording actual journey details.

The research indicates that there is support for the concept of 'early/late bird' incentive schemes as a short-term means of reducing congestion/crowding. While neither piece of research was detailed enough to draw any conclusions as to by exactly how much congestion could be alleviated, there is enough evidence to suggest that incentives should be actively considered.

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<sup>19</sup> Passenger Requirements of Rail Fares (July 2006)

**Q12 When travelling on the train, how could passengers' experiences be improved? In particular please consider:**

- **the balance between the provision of seating (including tables) and the availability of storage space (for luggage, cycles etc)**
- **up-to-date information**
- **helpfulness of staff**
- **catering.**

There are many parts of the rail network in Scotland where passenger demand is expected to grow strongly; which will bring pressure on the travelling experiences of passengers. Recent research<sup>20</sup> undertaken by Passenger Focus has given the following indicators which are worthy of further consideration:

- greater use of face to back seating and the inclusion of more flexible formats to maximise the space available
- the inclusion of luggage racks
- onboard real time information synchronised with information at stations
- CCTV in every carriage and a visible staff presence on trains.

**Q13 Where should we concentrate our efforts in improving the Anglo-Scottish sleeper services? In particular please consider:**

- **the number of locations served**
- **facilities on trains or at stations**
- **arrival and departure times**
- **the provision of airline-style overnight seats**
- **catering**
- **staffing.**

Efforts should be concentrated on the findings of the regular surveys that First ScotRail conduct with passengers on the sleeper services. Consideration should also be given to improved noise reduction and customer service improvements.

**Q14 How could we improve the travel interchange at stations? Please consider this in terms of:**

- **ticketing**
- **service connections**
- **infrastructure (waiting rooms)**
- **facilities for cyclists (cycle racks, National Cycle Route interchange signage)**
- **car parking**
- **walking routes**
- **accessibility for disabled passengers.**

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<sup>20</sup> Thameslink Rolling Stock Qualitative Research (August 2008)

## **Station interchanges**

Passengers expect high quality interchange. Seamless interchange is crucial to encouraging modal shift.

## **Car parking at stations**

Passengers tell Passenger Focus that a lack of safe and secure parking discourages travel by rail. Passenger Focus has long maintained that the provision of car parking at railway stations should be seen as a separate issue in its own right and not part of wider discussions on car parking in general. In many ways a railway station car park is the original 'park and ride' scheme and it is important that it is acknowledged as such when discussing requests to increase parking provision. This could be improved through:

- **Access and signage**

It is important that car parks are well signed and easily accessible. Improved signing is a low cost response to a common problem.

- **Security**

Car crime is at the forefront of a driver's mind when parking a car. A station car park should be organised in a way that generates a feeling of security and confidence in the traveller. Parking areas must be well lit and should have highly visible CCTV systems. A dialogue between the local authorities, Police and community safety partnerships, could be established in order to reassure passengers.

- **Increasing parking spaces**

In certain cases there is a need to expand parking capacity at stations. This could be important in encouraging off-peak travel (when there is often ample train capacity) as many car parks are full by 8am. It is also important to ensure that parking spaces at stations are solely for rail passengers rather than town centre visitors.

- **Car sharing/car pooling/car clubs**

Many local authorities are developing car share clubs. Local authorities could help to market the potential for such clubs for motorists travelling to railway stations. This would help to reduce congestion and relieve pressure on car parking spaces.

- **Motorcycles and scooters**

The motorcyclist is sometimes neglected when it comes to designing station parking. Motorcyclists must have parking provisions equal in standard to car drivers.

## **Cycling to stations**

Practical measures identified include:

- cycle parking and security
- cycle-friendly stations (provision of ramps, lifts, automatic doors)
- information and marketing, including when cycles can be carried on trains
- cycle carriage on trains
- access and routes to stations
- cycle lockers
- cycle hire
- cycle centres
- cycle rescue (breakdown services).

## **Walking to stations**

Walking is the cheapest, most healthy and environmentally-friendly way to get to and from the station. The following sets out some of the areas that can be addressed:

- **Walking routes to the station**

The catchment area may encompass a large number of potential walkers but it is crucial to consider whether present routes to the station are suitable. Possible barriers to walking to the station include the following:

- the route to the station may be indirect and therefore unnecessarily long.
- the routes may be poorly maintained
- there could be no pathways to the station
- no crossing provisions on major roads
- the routes could be seen as insecure – for example poor lighting or secluded.
- poor or misleading sign posting
- physical barriers such as roadside railings or hedges

- **Walking information**

To encourage people to walk to the station it is essential to ensure that they have access to helpful information. This can highlight the benefits but it is also important to have a localised approach as to why and how to walk to stations. Maps of the area around a station are extremely useful for pedestrians. An integrated walking plan should ensure that maps are available at all public transport interchanges. Effective signage is also important for directing pedestrians to their destination. The signage needs to be clear, well positioned, unobstructed, and meets the required signage standards as outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act.

- **Safety and security – walking**

47% women and 21% men feel unsafe walking from the station' Crime Concern/Transport and Travel Research, 1997.

This figure shows the major hurdle in encouraging people to walk to the station – the perception of security. Local authorities should work with the rail industry, the British Transport Police and the local police force to make the station and the surrounding areas more secure for passengers.

## **Bus/rail co-ordination**

Many passengers travel to and from the railway station by bus. There are a number of ways in which the level of integration can be improved. Local authorities can, as far as possible, encourage improved co-ordination of timetables, especially bus timetables, though it is accepted that competition legislation can inhibit this. They can also look to improve interchange facilities at stations. For instance, are bus stops provided and are they situated in the optimum position, are the walking route from the bus stop to the rail station clearly signed, and is the link secure and well lit?

## **Airports**

The Future of Air Transport White Paper stresses the need for easy, reliable access to airports that minimises environmental, congestion and other local impacts. Any proposals put forward for new airport capacity need to include clear plans to increase surface access using public transport.

## **Taxis**

Taxis are important links to and from the railway station. The following features are essential for providing an effective interchange between taxis and the rail network:

- good signage to the taxi rank
- well marked-out taxi rank
- drop-down kerbs
- list of tariffs for regularly made journeys
- contact details for local taxi firms (for when no taxis are readily available)
- wheelchair accessible taxis. When taxis are not available, procedures need to be put in place between the station and the taxi rank so that station staff can call for taxis
- covered waiting area.

Local authorities can play a key role in ensuring that local taxi firms are included in any discussions and proposals for changes at stations.

## **Fares and ticketing**

Transport integration is not just a matter of physically linking together different forms of transport. There is also much that can be done in terms of integrating fares and tickets. The following gives examples of the type of schemes that can be addressed:

- **Through Bus/Rail ticketing**

The promotion of 'Rail Links' is key to a joined-up transport network and providing end-to-end journeys for passengers. There are already a large number of integrated rail/bus services available on the network, but are passengers aware of them? A National Fares RailLinks manual containing information on airport links, bus and tram links, leisure attractions and shipping links is produced three times a year. This provides an ideal starting point to ensure services are being promoted and that passengers are aware they exist. Examples include working with service providers to print the relevant information on timetables, advertising in stations and bus stops or even putting up posters on the bus or train itself.

There is also scope for working with tourist attractions and encouraging them to include such information on their publicity leaflets.

- **Travel cards/smart cards**

For a transport system to be fully integrated it is necessary to have an integrated, comprehensible ticketing system. Travel cards/Smartcards offer the following benefits:

- shorter time queuing for tickets
- less worry about which ticket to buy
- no need to have correct money or carry change around to pay for each journey
- passengers can board and leave services quickly and efficiently.

## **Integrated information**

The provision of accurate and accessible information is a key part of any integrated transport system. If public transport is to compete with the car it must focus on providing a complete, door-to-door information service. The following gives a few practical examples of where this can be achieved.

- **Rail information at bus stations/stops**

Bus stations should provide train time information and the connections between the bus services and the train services.

The promotion of bus/rail interchanges (including ticketing) is essential at all relevant stops and stations. Real-time information is becoming more popular – is there scope to provide this information in conjunction with real-time train service information?

- **Bus information at railway stations**

The same principles should be applied to bus information at railway stations as rail information at bus stations/stops – integrated, current, accurate information on bus and rail services.

- **Other information at stations/bus stops**

This could include:

- list of telephone enquiry number for all modes of transport – i.e. National Rail Enquiries, Traveline, transport operators, local authorities, etc.
- information on taxi services including local firms, tariffs, etc.
- information on independent modes of transport – walking maps, cycling information, etc
- different formats of information – large print, different languages (if appropriate), audio, braille, etc.

- **Connection maps**

An integrated public transport network must provide information if it is to succeed. Connection maps highlighting all modes of transport are essential at all stations, stops and information points. The maps need to clearly identify which services run where and how passengers can interchange between services. Accompanying the connection maps should be the timetables for services throughout the day.

## **Q15 What should our communications connectivity priorities be?**

Communications connectivity priorities should consider improved reception for mobile phones, power sockets for laptops and wireless internet availability on trains and at stations.

## **Q16 Would wireless internet technology significantly benefit passengers? Please comment on:**

- **for leisure use**
- **for business use**
- **short 'commuter' journeys**
- **longer distance journeys.**

It would benefit all passengers to a certain extent with long distance and business users gaining most.

**Q17 Would you pay for this service?**

As other Train Operating Companies providing train services in Scotland offer a free wireless internet service the justification for charging would need to be examined further.

**Q18 Where should the Edinburgh-Glasgow SmartCard pilot project take us? Please consider:**

- **the outcomes which would determine whether the pilot was successful.**

Please refer to our response to the recent Integrated Ticketing Consultation.

**Q19 How best can we focus the franchise on the options for delivering better sustainability?**

**Q20 How should the Environmental improvement Works budget be used to further improve our carbon footprint on the railways? Please consider:**

- **electrification**
- **waste recycling**
- **time switch lighting**
- **'eco' driving training**
- **LED light installation**
- **non-traction energy improvements**
- **other.**

Whilst the concept of greener railway travel is welcomed, it is not seen as a priority by passengers,<sup>21</sup> who have a range of other issues of more pressing concern, for example fares and being able to get a seat. In terms of what action passengers feel should be taken on the railways to make it greener, smaller measures (recycling bins, low energy bulbs, time switch lighting, more space for bicycles) are often seen as more realistic measures since they are more in keeping with what passengers are currently doing themselves in their home environment.

**Q21 What should we consider in station and community regeneration? Please think about:**

- **the size of the station**
- **facilities which reflect the needs of each community.**

**Q22 Where should we concentrate our efforts on the Station Community Regeneration Fund?**

Engagement with local authorities, local community councils and community groups should provide the starting point, as regeneration initiatives that are possible and viable may differ from station to station, depending on the station and the local community.

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<sup>21</sup> Environmental Issues Research Report (March 2007)

**Q23 What additional services or projects in furtherance of the Commonwealth Games Bid Commitments do you feel would most benefit the city during the Games period?**

The key criteria is for rail services to be part of an integrated transport system that meets the needs of visitors to the Games.

**Q24 What aspects of the Project Manager's role are priorities to ensure the successful delivery of the projects?**

Passenger Focus expects that the job specification and person specification identifying the skills and competencies required for the role have put in place mechanisms for setting deliverable objectives and priorities.

**Q25 Do you think that any of the improvements and enhancements proposed above will have either a positive or adverse impact on quality groups in terms of:**

- age
- disability
- gender
- LGBT
- race
- religion and belief?

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

Passenger Focus is of the view that the impact will be positive as the various options contained within the Franchise Extension are designed to improve the overall passenger experience and thus benefit on a generic basis all quality groups.



# Assisted Passenger Reservation Service

Best practice guidelines – a check list



Passenger Focus has created the Assisted Passenger Reservation Service best practice guidelines using the advice and experience of passengers who have travelled on the National Rail network using the Assisted Passenger Reservation Service (APRS).

Passenger Focus will be working with train operators across Great Britain to make certain they make every effort to deliver APRS based on the best practice identified by passengers with disabilities.

## 1 Booking the journey

### Passengers need:

- a freephone number to book assistance
- alternative online methods of booking their journeys
- National Rail Enquiries to give correct APRS contact details every time to book assistance
- staff who are fully trained and familiar with the National Rail network to take their APRS booking
- a person at the other end of the phone – passengers do not want to waste time waiting on an automated system
- to be asked what level of information they require. Experienced rail users don't want to hear the same explanation every time whereas new passengers will require comprehensive detail
- staff to take details of their

requirements and call them back if there are delays in making booking arrangements – passengers don't want to be held up on the phone while staff sort out system issues

- a central database to hold their details for future reference, including their name and contact details; type of disability and assistance required; details of any regular journeys made
- to be informed on the facilities, including staff assistance, available at the stations and on the trains they are using
- to be told if the station they want to use isn't accessible (temporarily or permanently) and whether this will mean they will be travelling by road
- a booking reference to simplify cancellations, changes of plan or complain, as well as for staff to check booking details quickly and simply

- written confirmation sent via their chosen delivery method (email, fax or post) subject to booking timings. This should include journey details, the APRS booking reference, specific details of the assistance and on-train accommodation booked, and an explanation of what to do on the day
- to be aware of what to do if the assistance is not delivered as expected.

## 2 Arriving at the station and boarding the train

### Passengers need:

- to know if there will be staff on hand for assistance
- to be informed of where they will meet the staff who will assist them. There should be a clearly marked reporting point at each staffed station
- to know before they arrive ➔



- ➔ at the station that staff are ready for their arrival and know their booking details
- to be told if there is a problem, its extent and be kept informed
  - their booked assistance to be delivered smoothly and problem free – they don't want staff (however kind and helpful) having to respond at the last minute and sort out problems because the booking has not been communicated
  - station and train staff to check with each individual what level of assistance they require
  - safety to be paramount. Ramps should be fit-for-purpose and installed correctly
  - help with luggage.

### **3 On the train**

#### **Passengers need:**

- to be escorted to their seat or where this is not possible, advised on how to find their seat

- to be seated with their travelling companions
- on-train staff to identify themselves and ask if they can offer any immediate help
- to be told what facilities are available on the train
- refreshments brought to them if they are unable to reach onboard facilities
- help with luggage.

### **4 The end of the journey**

#### **Passengers need:**

- assistance getting off the train as booked
- staff to escort them to a suitable exit at the station or to their connecting train
- advice on their onward journey

- such as details on taxi facilities, local bus stops or station meeting points
- contact from the company which booked the APRS to enable passengers to provide feedback
- to be reimbursed their fare if the APRS is not delivered in a satisfactory manner
- all aspects of the APRS to be regularly monitored and audited by the industry.

For further information on APRS and Passenger Focus's research findings visit [www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk)

## Appendix B: Respondent information form

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**Name:**

Passenger Focus

**Postal Address:**

5th Floor  
Wellington House  
39/41 Piccadilly  
Manchester  
M1 1LQ

1. Are you responding: (please tick one box)

(a) as an individual

(b) on behalf of a group/organisation ✓

**ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:**

3. The name and address of your organisation *will be* made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Transport Scotland website). Are you also content for your response to be made available?

Yes ✓

No

**SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT**

4. We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Government to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes ✓

No

## Appendix C: Contact details

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Any queries regarding the paper should be addressed to:

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Passenger Focus is the operating  
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