

<b>Board Meeting Paper</b>	
<b>Feb 13 BM 7.0</b>	
Report for	Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Restricted or confidential Information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If confidential, protective marking <sup>1</sup>	
Date of Meeting	13 February 2013
Agenda Item	7.0
Report Title	Review of Passenger and Industry Facing Work
Sponsor	David Sidebottom
Author(s)	David Sidebottom, Kyle Yeldon, Jon Clay



**1. Tackling Passenger Issues**

During the quarter the team large focused their work around the following core themes:

**Train and bus operator liaison**

The team met with many train operating companies (TOC) covering a range of **operational** issues. These included discussions with Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) about their new revenue protection plans and how they would meet the needs of our “Ticket to ride” report recommendations. Also Linda McCord (Passenger Manager) held discussions with London Midland (LM) regarding issues arising from announcements about reductions in ticket office opening hours and ongoing disruption to passengers caused by a shortage of drivers. This work with LM has positively influenced their attitude to offering compensation to passengers affected by the long-running disruption.

In addition the team worked with a number of TOCs and bus operators to **influence** their thinking based on our research and policy work. This included presentations of our research findings on passenger attitudes to devolved rail franchising to the senior management teams of First TransPennine Express (TPE) and Northern Rail (NR). Also met with one of the potential bidding groups for the future ScotRail franchise to ensure that passenger needs and priorities are foremost in their bidding work. In addition we started work with Virgin West Coast (VWC) on a review of their complaints handling standards. The aim of this work is to identify areas of their complaints handling work that may help improve aspects of their work for passengers and potentially reduce the number of appeal cases referred to Passenger Focus.

<sup>1</sup> ie RESTRICTED plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

From a bus passenger perspective we met with several operators from the Go-Ahead group of companies to present a detailed analysis of their most recent Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) results from the spring 2012 round of work. In addition a presentation of the overall group's set of results was presented to the Go-Ahead senior management team to help understand how the group is using the results of this work and to secure future BPS work in 2013.

Also during the quarter the team continued a programme of ongoing **engagement** with a number of TOCs and bus operators by supporting or leading work with various passenger panels, stakeholder fora and customer service initiatives. This work is valued by operators and helps Passenger Focus to maintain a regular presence with operators, stakeholders and identify and share best practices across operators.

### **National passenger representation**

In both **Scotland** Robert Samson (Passenger Manager) met with officials of Transport Scotland to discuss the future ScotRail franchising plans and to review current First ScotRail performance. In **Wales** David Beer (Passenger Executive) helped facilitate a session for Welsh Assembly executives and "Enterprise and Business Committee" members to hear evidence from local transport user groups about transport integration in Wales. The same committee also received verbal evidence from Stella Mair Thomas, David Beer and David Sidebottom in November 2012 as part of their "Integrated Transport in Wales" inquiry.

### **Transport user and consumer groups**

The team has maintained a focused prioritised level of work with local/regional transport user groups. Our main dialogue with groups has been provided through the organisation's website and development of the "Exchange" user group newsletter.

Where able, and appropriate, we have engaged with local groups to outline our national policy and research work and to tackle local/regional transport issues such as changes to rail services in south Cumbria and local bus networks in Tyne and Wear. In addition we maintained our ongoing liaison with groups and organisations such as Passenger View Scotland, the Public Transport Users' Committee for Wales and a useful work planning and policy discussion with the various Chairs of the regional TravelWatch organisations.

Throughout the quarter the team has been preparing our programme of 2013 user group workshops. These sessions will build on the sessions earlier in 2012 and will additionally focus on providing groups with briefing on how to potentially develop and enhance any local research or communications work they wish to undertake.

### **Regional transport consortia and local transport authorities**

Over the period the team have provided the various regional transport consortia in Wales and Scotland, along with several Passenger Transport Executive areas in England, with briefings on our policy and research work to help ensure passengers needs and priorities are being considered at this important level.

### **Looking ahead to quarter four**

- Busy programme of BPS results presentations with bus companies and transport authorities across England throughout February 2013 to make sure that everybody is aware of their respective results ahead of publication in March 2013
- Undertaking a small number of user group workshops to maintain the good engagement work started in 2012 to brief groups on our policy and research work/plans as well as provide guidance on how to develop local research and communication output
- Undertake several National Passenger Survey (NPS) presentations to TOCs and agree action plans to tackle areas of specific performance identified by passengers through the research

## **2. Making a difference locally using bus research and plicy evidence**

I thought it would be useful to update the Board on two major pieces of bus policy and research development work that have been in progress throughout quarter three.

### **Forthcoming Bus Passenger Survey publication and launch**

The BPS fieldwork was completed in early December 2012 and results became available in January 2013.

Throughput February 2013 the Passenger Team and Murray Leader (Senior Research Adviser) will undertake several presentations to bus operators and transport authorities covered across the 23 geographic areas of England. This work will bring us into contact with nearly 45 different organisations:

## Meeting details

Authorities	Bus Companies
Suffolk, Centro, Milton Keynes	Ipswich Buses, National Express, Stagecoach Warwickshire, Travel deCoursey
Metro, SYPTE, Darlington, Tees Valley, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Stockton, Redcar-Cleveland, Northumberland, Worcestershire, Nexus	First Yorkshire, Stagecoach North East, Go Northeast, Arriva North East, First Worcestershire, Rotala
Hampshire, West of England Partnership, Cambridgeshire, Essex	First Hampshire, First West, Stagecoach East
Warrington, Merseytravel, Thurrock, Nottingham City, Devon, Kent	Network Warrington, First East, Nottingham City Transport, Reading Bus, Stagecoach East Kent, Arriva South East

The main results will be published and briefed to the industry on 11 March 2013 at an event supported on the day by Norman Baker MP who will make the keynote speech. We anticipate that we will focus the session on the key themes that emerge from the BPS results which may include presentations and debate on factors such as value for money and the experiences of younger bus passengers.

## Bus punctuality project

This project commenced work in September 2011. The project steering group is chaired by David Sidebottom and brings together senior representatives from the bus industry including the PTEs, bus operators, local transport authorities and the Senior Traffic Commissioner. The projects aims are:

- To gain and disseminate a greater understanding of what causes delays to buses and the most effective ways of tackling these delays
- To understand the issues around collecting and wider sharing of punctuality data
- To achieve punctuality improvements in case study areas

The case study areas include:

- Derby, Devon, Merseyside, Tyne & Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire
- Ten routes operated by Arriva, Go Ahead, National Express, Stagecoach, Trent Barton and Countrybus
- Most services commercial

- Both urban and rural
- Frequency from 13 an hour to 11 a day
- Journey time from 20 minutes to 1 hour 45

Throughout 2012, Mike Bartram (Policy Adviser) has been collecting, reviewing and making sense of various sets of bus punctuality data to carry out in-depth investigations into the causes of delay with the various parties involved.

As a result of our investigations we have so far achieved some tangible benefits:

- Changes to routes and timetables in Derby, Devon and Merseyside
- Detailed action plans in Tyne & Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire

On a broader theme the work is delivering some key achievements:

- Project is enhancing understanding of when, where and why buses are delayed
- Project is tackling causes of delays, leading to improvements in case study areas
- Project is demonstrating value of listening to passengers and drivers
- Influence on Senior Traffic Commissioner's forthcoming Guidance

In late January Mike Bartram and Anthony Smith presented an update on the project to the Bus Partnership Forum which is chaired by Norman Baker MP and brings together several senior executives from areas of the bus industry. The draft report presented to the group focused on the following conclusions:

- Lack of consistent commitment and monitoring, BUT transparency applauded – dialogue will lead to improvements
- Need to make better use of data
- BPIPs need a refresh
- Will report future progress on delivering action plans and on case studies in Cambs, Herts., Southampton, Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire

In terms of “next steps” Mike Bartram will focus on producing the following material and events in the coming year:

- Individual local reports
- Action plans for each route
- Progress reports on actions
- National project report and briefing on best practice
- National and regional seminars to discuss findings

### 3. Passenger contact (please see section 5. Below for glossary of terms)

Overview of past quarter’s complaints performance and figures.

	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q2 (Jul-Sept)	Q1 (April-June)	Q4 (Jan-March)
Total appeals opened	815	836	880	981
Total appeals closed	820	777	778	742
Bus enquiries logged	4	1	3	2
Coach enquiries logged	0	0	0	1
Tram enquiries logged	0	1	0	0
Rail enquiries opened	144	123	86	133
Rail enquiries closed	171	134	80	125
Complaint cases opened	2	5	4	4
Complaint cases closed	6	2	1	2
Praise cases logged	38	20	39	42
Re-direct cases logged (LTW)	107	115	100	140

Passenger Satisfaction (target 70%)	75%	82%	86%	85%
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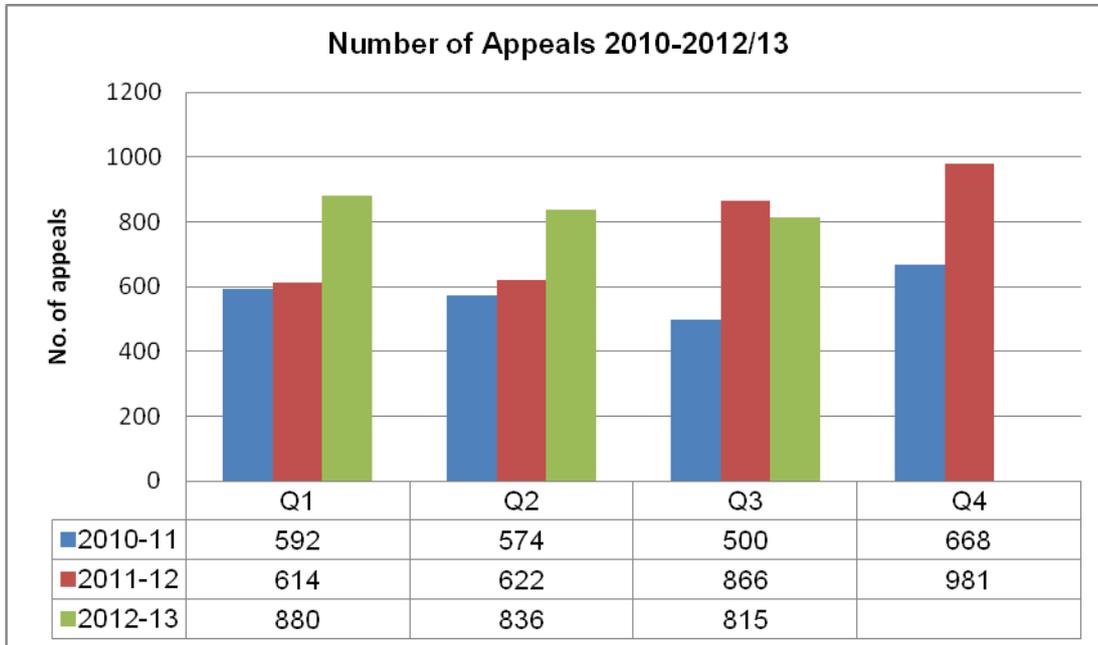
Total passenger contacts (email, fax, web form, letter and calls via First Call)	3473	3770	3732	3818
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In quarter three, we saw a slight decrease of **3%** in the number of appeals compared to the previous quarter. During quarter three passenger satisfaction results in October and November dipped to 74% increasing in the last month of the quarter to **78%**.

Having reviewed the passenger comments from the survey it was clear that time taken to resolve the appeal was the significant factor affecting the overall score. Although we were unable to ensure a speedier resolution a conscious effort was made to ensure that the passenger was kept up to date at each stage of the process of their complaint. This is something that needed improvement and during December it seemed to have positive impact.

Again, the number of complaints about our service remains low with only two complaint cases opened in the quarter.

**Overview of appeal complaints opened Q1 2010-11 to Q1 2012-13:**



**TOCs generating most comments this quarter:**

	No. comments	Top comment categories
East Coast Trains	170	Complaints handling (55); penalty fares/UFNs (40); Quality on Train (22)
Southern	128	Complaint handling (39); Fares, retailing and refunds (34); Penalty fares (19)
Virgin Trains	121	Complaints handling (46) Fares, retailing and refunds (21); Train service performance (14)

East Coast remains the operator generating the most comments. Comments about the TOCs complaints handling remains high, which is understandable given the nature of the appeals work. Consistent with previous quarters, comments about Penalty fares/UFNs are still within the top three topics of complaint.

The contacts team continue to flag up recurring themes and issues with the Passenger Issues Team, who are then able to provide guidance on the current situation as well as escalate issues within the industry to drive improvements for passengers.

**Contacts Team- Understanding the backlog**

Data as of the **31 January 2013 - 611 appeal cases**

Just over a quarter of the workload is currently ‘Allocated’ awaiting a referral to the train company (**26%**). The majority of cases are awaiting the final response from the train company to our representation (**40%**). This is not unusual as some cases do require a lengthy investigation before the complaint is finally resolved.

Of the remaining cases:

- **No acknowledgement sent** - are cases which have recently been received, with the Senior Advisor still to send a personalised acknowledgment.
- **Researching**- This accounts for outstanding case work where the advisor is
  - Investigating the complaint internally (i.e. with Passenger Issues Team colleagues)
  - Researching the complaint- reviewing industry documentation
- A further **11%** of the case work is awaiting confirmation from the passenger that they are happy with the outcome of the case or further documentation to support their appeal (Stage 5 in the table below).

	<b>Total Number of Appeals open: 611</b>	<b>Oldest Case</b>	<b>0 – 20 days</b>	<b>21- 60 days</b>	<b>60 days +</b>
Stage 1. No acknowledgment sent to the passenger	0 (0.0%)		0	0	0
Stage 2. Case allocated - under review	162 (26%)	02/01/2013	161	0	0
Stage 3. Further research into the is under way (i.e. with Passenger Issues Team to agree approach)	127 (21%)	28/05/2012	69	37	21
Stage4. Case escalated to train company awaiting their final response (This includes on going negotiation)	251 (41%)	29/02/2012	60	117	74
Stage 5. Agreed outcome with train company, awaiting passenger’s agreement to offer or awaiting further documentation from passenger to support appeal	71 (12%)	27/06/2012	31	28	12

- On average it is taking us four working days to log a case during Quarter 3
  - In December 2012 **49%** of cases were logged onto the system within 1-2 days, as of the 31 January 2013 this had increased to **75%**. The target is for cases to be logged within one day but this does not account for weekends etc.
- In quarter three it took an average of **56** working days to close an appeal complaint
- For the first time in 12 months, in quarter 3, we closed more appeal cases than were received.

### **East Coast- Update 31/01/2013**

As of the 31 January there were 184 East Coast cases active with Passenger Focus. Following a meeting with East Coast and their Customer service team in mid-January several actions were agreed.

#### **Existing Cases:**

These are made up of

- New cases, not escalated to East Coast
- Escalated and awaiting a final response from East Coast
- Final response received from East Coast pending a final review

It was agreed that a senior member of East Coast's customer relations team would work in the Manchester office over the period of a week to clear the outstanding cases. This meeting has taken place leaving the total amount of outstanding East Coast cases at **114**. The entire outstanding amount is currently in hand with resolutions due.

#### **New Appeal Cases**

East Coast's board have very recently approved a set of new complaint resolution guidelines for their frontline staff that should eliminate a number of appeal cases escalating to Passenger Focus. The improved authority levels are targeted at eliminating a range of complaint types but specifically focus on a number of appeal types that have consistently found their way to Passenger Focus. East Coast will be briefing staff this week so I anticipate that we will see a reduction in appeal cases in about 2-3 months as existing complaints pass through the system.

It has been agreed to “fast-track” those cases to East Coast that fit the categories identified above by East Coast. We will manage this process carefully with passengers and leave the option open with them to raise an appeal with us in case East Coast do not achieve a satisfactory outcome. This will help East Coast over the next 2-3 months to monitor how the revised guidelines are being used within their business.

#### **Case data**

Improved reporting of complaints data. A set of period reports had been agreed with East Coast’s data analysis needs. This will ensure that they receive regular performance reports on their closed and outstanding cases, helping to identify issues with their complaints handling. We hope that this improved reporting template is something we can roll out to all TOCs.

#### **Other initiatives**

There are two other important initiatives to report. East Coast’s Board are looking very shortly at a revised and improved set of revenue protection guidelines which have been heavily influenced by our “ticket to ride” report and follow-up work. The details are “confidential” at this stage but will be shared with us as soon as their Board have reviewed the new guidelines.

Finally, we have convinced East Coast that we will undertake a complaints handling review to look at the quality standards and overall effectiveness of their complaint handling function. This will provide us with further evidence to help identify where longer-term improvements can be made.

#### **Ongoing management**

Regular meetings are scheduled between East Coast and Passenger Focus over the course of this year to monitor progress and address issues of concern.

### **4. Other projects report**

#### **Developing Stakeholder Engagement**

We have reviewed and updated the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy so it is fit for purpose for the organisation. This was approved by Management Team in September 2012. The strategy has been adjusted so it ties closely with the new Communications Strategy. A programme of projects has been identified for delivery which will ensure our level of engagement remains suitable for our various stakeholders.

We have increased the use of our email system and have successfully sent 32,695 emails publicising work including:

- Passenger Voice
- Passenger priorities during engineering works
- Reductions to bus services
- Response to the Brown review
- Northern/TPE research
- Exchange (user group newsletter)

### **Open data programme**

A significant new piece of work has been initiated to ensure the organisation embraces the Government's open data agenda. An Open Data Board has been established to oversee the work delivered during the next 10 months. All work will be managed by Jon Clay (Passenger Team Executive Team Leader). The first project which has been initiated will publish the underpinning data for NPS, BPS and our complaints work in an easy to use accessible format. This will include developing interactive analysis tools in partnership with mySociety. An open data strategy has been produced which sets the high level ambitions for the organisation; this will direct the work of the organisation in 2013.

### **User group workshops**

A further round of workshops with rail and bus user groups has been arranged for delivery in the quarter four. These events will focus on the themes of research and media guidance. Venues in London, Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle and Scotland were booked and invitations sent out to all user group stakeholders.

### **Passenger Panels**

Work was undertaken to gather information regarding Passenger Panels, following increasing requests from the transport industry to inform their aspirations to create or revitalise panels. This work included collating information on existing panels operated in both bus and rail industries, looking at what form they take, how transparent they are and what they achieve.

The information has now been gathered and a report produced setting out the various approaches towards panels and the potential involvement of Passenger Focus in setting up or supporting panels. The decision has been taken to update our existing 'best practice' guide so that we are able to support those within the transport industry wishing to set up new panels or reform existing panels. We do not envisage our role in this area being one of very active involvement but rather to offer support, advice and occasional attendance at panel meetings.

### **TOC complaints review**

We carried out the first train operator complaints review with Virgin Trains, which involved reviewing and assessing the handling of a sample of closed cases against a pre-agreed set of case resolution criterion. Work has begun to analyse these results and produce a report to provide feedback and recommendations to Virgin's management team. Visits to carry out audits for First Great Western, Northern Rail and East Coast have been arranged for the next quarter.

### **Accessibility conference**

We arranged an event in London and invited all the main groups with an interest in accessibility. The event was a great success and another is planned for late in quarter four.

## **5. Background information**

<b>Appeal Complaint</b>	A complaint the operator has been unable to resolve, the passenger is seeking our help to resolve the matter
<b>Initial complaint</b>	The passenger has a complaint about their operator and has approached us in the first instance without complaining to the operator. The passengers should allow the operator the opportunity to resolve the complaint before Passenger Focus can get involved.
<b>Enquiry</b>	Any enquiry about Passenger Focus and its work, passenger rights or a general enquiry about the rail, bus, coach or tram industry
<b>Redirect</b>	A contact or complaint outside of our remit, such as for London TravelWatch or Bus Users UK
<b>Copied in</b>	The passenger has copied us in to a correspondence that they have sent to another organisation.
<b>Praise</b>	Positive feedback about Passenger Focus, its work or its complaint handling.
<b>Complaints about us</b>	Any complaint about Passenger Focus or any aspect of its work. This includes the way Passenger Focus has handled an appeal.