

Statistics Governance Group

Date: Wednesday 5 December 2012
Location: St Brides Foundation
St Brides Passage
Salisbury Square
London EC4
Time: 1310hrs – 1530hrs

Present

Colin Foxall CBE	CF	Chairman
Nigel Walmsley	NW	Board Member
David Leibling	DL	Board Member
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Ian Wright	IW	Head of Research
David Sidebottom	DS	Passenger Team Director
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services
David Greeno	DG	Senior Passenger Researcher
Murray Leader	ML	Senior Research Advisor

Guests

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted no apologies

2. Minutes

The Group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2012 and authorised the Chairman to sign them.

3. Action matrix

The action matrix was noted as 'complete delete' except for those items covered on the agenda

National Rail Passenger Survey

4. Gender and age issues

DG reminded the Group that in June 2012 there was some discussion on the split of passengers by age, following the findings of the NPS non-participation survey in spring 2012 which indicated that 45% of passengers were aged between 17 and 34, compared to an NPS participation rate of 31%. David Leibling had mentioned two other sources of data on passenger demographics: the National Travel Survey (NTS) and the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA)

From a subsequent analysis it appeared that, set against these two surveys, the non-participation in the NPS may slightly over-estimate the number of younger passengers, in which case any adjustment for weighting might be too great and the differences from the unweighted results correspondingly smaller. DG had shared his analysis of this data with the research team and with BDRC-Continental.

It was **agreed** that any current misestimation was tolerable but that analysis of BSA and NTS data should be repeated at regular intervals to check any bias from NPS respondents is not widening. This would be at either low or nil cost via our agency and could probably be done at no cost to Passenger Focus.

5. Fieldwork checks – Autumn wave

DG reported that there were 160 different fieldworkers used by BDRC-Continental for the NPS in autumn 2012 (155 in spring 2012). By the end of the fieldwork 28 spot checks had been attempted (compared to 20 in spring 2012). 22 different fieldworkers were covered on these checks (17 in spring 2012). Special trips involving paying for tickets to observe fieldworkers were not permitted (apart from very short trips).

The Group **noted** the broad similarity between waves but considered the level of checks remained low and that we should continue to think of ways to increase them. DL wondered what the ratio of supervisors to field workers was; IW suggested that the MRS would have guidelines in this respect but they would check and report back.

SGG 54	05/12/12	Ratio of supervisors to fieldworkers	Check and report back	DG / IW	June 2013	
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6. Fieldwork checks – further ideas

DG reported that in autumn 2012 (as in spring 2012), following the extensive reorganisation of 2011, we did not have a specific target in terms of the number of spot checks on fieldworkers and, given the low level, at the last meeting he was asked to explore options for improving the number and spread of fieldwork checks. With the small number of staff now working peripatetically this was difficult, but it would be easier if there was less restrictions on travel expenses as set out in option 2. The Group **agreed** and also asked AS to make all reasonable efforts to encourage staff to participate. DL suggested that Board members may be asked to participate too; the Group felt that whilst the idea had its merits this was pushing the balance between staff and non-executive board responsibilities a bit off course, and that the matter was best left in the hands of the management team.

SGG 55	05/12/12	Expenses policy on fieldwork checks	Discuss and resolve	AS / IW	June 2013	
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7. Spring 2013 wave – update

DG reported that arrangements for the Spring wave were progressing given the early Easter. He was hoping to achieve at least the 2012 response rate of 32.5%. DL wondered about the previously proposed London stations boost; DG confirmed that no such request had yet been received from LTW.

8. Passenger Focus Accessibility Forum

IW briefed the Group on the accessibility forum held on 31 October 2012 for organisations that have an interest in this area. ATOC, Age UK, DPTAC, RNIB and other similar stakeholders attended. There was also a presentation from TfL on how they catered for disabled passengers during the Olympic and Paralympic games. The main purpose of the forum was to share the results of our research; in particular analysis of disabled passengers views and experiences from the National Passenger Survey (NPS) and the Bus Passenger Survey (BPS). It was useful to explore how NPS ‘cuts’ could be tailor-made for Passenger Focus and other organisations to tackle some of the issues of particular interest to disabled passengers. The Group **noted** that IW was also exploring how some of the current questions could be made more helpful, although he had not yet made any commitment to change anything. CF wondered if it was possible for passengers to score their disability on a scale of, say, 1 through 10, to get a better feel for the level of challenge they faced in negotiating the transport system.

SGG 56	05/12/12	Accessibility questions	Think further and report back	DG / IW	June 2013	
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9. Spring 2013 wave – questions

The Group considered and determined the following requests for questions in the Spring wave:

From Network Rail

For all stations, as codes for Q15 (“How would you rate x station for”)

The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available?
Prices in the shops/eating/drinking facilities
Cash machine availability

Determination: agreed as one-off

New section of questionnaire. Asked of all stations

What would make you use the shops/eating/drinking facilities more? (open for first wave then develop code frame)
I have never used the shops/eating/drinking facilities at my station
Agree / Disagree

Determination: not agreed

For Waterloo and Kings X only (two waves)

Thinking of the recent changes to the retail offer at x station, how satisfied are you that they meet your needs?

Determination: not agreed

From Norwich Council

Suggested question: "Please rate the information provided for onward travel when you finished your train journey?" Possible answers: "Poor, fair, good, excellent?"

Determination: not agreed

Minutes

From Passenger Focus Research Team

Q. Did other passengers' behaviour give you cause to worry or make you feel uncomfortable during your journey? Yes/No

If yes: which of the following were the reasons (s) for this? (please tick all that apply)

Passengers drinking/under influence of alcohol	Music being played loudly
Passengers taking/under the influence of drugs	Smoking
Abusive or threatening behaviour	Graffiti or vandalism
Rowdy behaviour	Other
Feet on seats	

Determination: agreed

From the Mental Health Action Group

Questions on disability to be amended to include 'mental health condition'.

Determination: not agreed for this wave; further thinking required (see SGG 56 above)

Bus Passenger Survey

10. BPS update

ML reported that BPS fieldwork had started on 23rd September as planned, although the scheduling was a little behind the expected run rate because (a) early on in fieldwork there was some significant bad weather experienced, and (b) the agency had a number of shifts that did not proceed (interviewer sickness etc). Furthermore returns from fieldwork are in aggregate a little less than expected (around 90% of target returns).

Passenger Focus had also agreed with GfK that the second half of field work would utilise the interviewers who had performed best during the first half of field work, albeit this meant using a smaller number of interviewers. For both these GfK required a few weeks more field time. Passenger Focus granted an extension to field work up to 12th December (from 21st November), although shifts will be undertaken as much as possible in the earlier part of this extension period. The increased fieldwork period could be accommodated within the programme timetable.

ML also set out the proposed arrangements for 2013 including the launch event in March, which the Group **agreed**.

CF wondered if any feedback had been received on the use of Dapresy online tool. IW replied that all the feedback he had received was positive.

11. Funding principles

ML introduced his paper on funding principles, which the Group had previously asked him to work up. The two most important points to be clear about were that Passenger Focus using its own resources cannot survey all remit area journeys with sufficient depth, due to the need to deliver locally actionable results with robustness; and that it is axiomatic that any bus journey in our remit area is made on an operator's bus running within an LTA area which means that where either is willing to fund, it would assist our representation remit. Given the first point, it could also assist in broadening survey reach.

NW was concerned that buying in to the survey might *appear* to convey certain rights or privileges (such as being a 'priority' area) to the third party, which could leave Passenger Focus in a difficult position. IW took the point but was clear that whilst all offers are gratefully received, there is no automatic acceptance and sometimes it was necessary to say no to achieve the year to year geographical balance so necessary to the success of the BPS.

Subject to taking full account of:

- Proportionality
- The annual work plan
- Weighting if and where necessary (for example to deal with annually repeated areas or regions)
- The need for transparency – in principle there should be no confidential questions and all results should be published or be subject to online interrogation

the Group **approved** the funding principles and thanked ML for his very useful work.

Other

12. Transparency project update

IW updated the Group on this project which would henceforth be known as Open Data. A board was being established on which Philip Mendelsohn would serve. IW would represent research interests on it. The Group **noted** that an Open Data Strategy would be discussed at the Board meeting in February 2013.

13. Data sharing audit: terms of reference

IW updated the Group on the data sharing audit. The terms of reference had been updated to reflect the Board's concerns in respect of providing NPS data to franchise bidders. The fieldwork had been recently completed and no significant concerns had been raised. The Group **welcomed** the update and **noted** the terms of reference; the report would be considered at Audit Committee in January 2013.

14. Use of NPS data by third parties

As previously requested, DG reported that from the publication of the Spring 2012 wave to November 2012, 142 NPS data requests have been recorded on our system. 45 of these requests are regular (i.e. every wave or every other wave).

In terms of regular requests this includes franchise target analysis for DfT, route analysis for Network Rail, analysis by station for a few different TOCs, detailed analysis of the delays questions for internal purposes, detailed analysis by TOC for the Welsh Assembly Government, detailed route analysis on SWT for SWT itself and for BTP, and multivariate analysis for Network Rail and for internal purposes. 'One-off requests' have been equally assorted. For example in spring 2012 there were several requests for data from bidders for various franchises, a number of requests from ATOC (e.g. presenting analysis by journey purpose), assorted internal requests for data, and some requests for a full or partial database of NPS records (e.g. from students or academics).

In the NPS contract with BDRC-Continental 50 hours of work is included. It is usually the case that this number of hours is reached and sometimes it is exceeded. We have not however been charged for the additional hours that BDRC-Continental have spent on requests.

As at 14th November there were 250 registered users of the Reportal system. 40 new users have registered since 20th August 2012 (this has been the greatest rate of increase since Reportal was launched in 2008). There are a wide variety of users of the system. These include staff within Passenger Focus, various train companies (a few of which have group logins), TOC owning groups, consultancies, DfT, BTP, Network Rail and academics. There are also a few members of the media who have access. The recent increase in the number of users has mainly been Network Rail and TOC users. Approximately 100 users have used the system since the publication of the spring 2012 NPS wave.

The Group considered this report to be encouraging and the service offered highly useful, and wondered if we sometimes undersell ourselves. It was certainly a good example of cross industry collaboration and quite consistent with our research mission. The Group **thanked** DG for preparing the report.

15. Any other business

CF thanked DL for his contribution to the work of the Group and wished him well as he retired from the Passenger Focus Board at the end of the month. Going forward, new members would need to be appointed, but he considered that the current six month meeting frequency was working well and he did not propose to change it.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1530 hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Colin Foxall CBE
Chairman

Date: _____