

Workplan 2016-17

V2



Introduction: Making a difference for all transport users

Transport Focus is the independent, statutory, consumer watchdog for Britain's rail passengers, bus, coach and tram passengers in England (outside of London) and, for the first time, users of England's Strategic Road Network (SRN). We aim to make a difference for transport users and be useful to those in government and the transport industry who make major decisions about services and infrastructure. We use evidence to drive change for the better. This year we will talk to over 140,000 transport users in the course of our insight and rail complaints handling work.

Much of our work this year will be focused on new, more digital ways of gathering insight into transport users' views – this will include 'emotional tracking' – how users feel about their journeys. This will, in time, allow more valuable research to be gathered and published more quickly. It should improve the value for money of taxpayer and industry spend on insight overall. This will affect our main 'tracker' surveys – the National Rail Passenger Survey, the Bus and Trams Passenger Surveys and the forthcoming Road User Satisfaction Survey [new title needed!].

Commented [MH1]: Are we being realistic in talking about emotional tracking on all 3 trackers when we can't even afford to do it for rail on its own at present?

The Road User Satisfaction Survey is innovative. Aiming to gather user views on the SRN as close as possible to their experience. We aim to build a panel of over 20,000 car, van and HGV drivers. Using online maps we will steer panel members towards the SRN part of their journey and provide regular feedback to Highways England and other key companies. The Survey will be extensively trialled this year prior to becoming a regulatory measure in 2017.

The passage of the Buses Bill represents the biggest potential change since the 1980s to how bus services are procured and organised outside of London. This year we will work to ensure that bus passengers' views and priorities for improvement are heard in this debate. Everyone wants to see more passengers choose bus but arguments over control can sometime mask passengers views.

Our rail passenger work this year will continue to focus on rail franchise replacement – a key moment to build in passenger benefits and better handling of disruption (both planned and unplanned). The welcome investment in the rail network needs to take account of passenger needs when building works are underway.

Transport Focus's (along with other public sector organisations) 'core' funding from the Department for Transport has, following the Spending Review 2015, been reduced by 25%. We have therefore had to focus on what we provide with that core funding.

In this Workplan all items covered by this funding are clearly marked so. Other Workplan items are marked 'additional'. They will only take place if further funding is available from the DfT or third parties – other national/local government or transport industry typically. Some items carry both markings – we can do some basic work in the area but real impact will only result if we can secure more funding. If priorities change in the course of the year we can shift Workplan items from core to additional and vice versa.

This year

Seven key objectives will feature largely in our work this year. They have been chosen because, building on previous years' work, they allow us to make a difference for the greatest number of transport users and those users whose needs are greatest.

Key objective One: enhance the usefulness and value for money of the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), and other surveys, through new, innovative insight methods, ensuring they continue to be fit for purpose for years to come **[core work]**

Key objective Two: using our recently published *Bus Passengers: trust, priorities and non-users* work to ensure bus passenger's (outside of London) views are heard in debates about new forms of procurement, funding and control **[core work]**

Key objective Three: promote the voice of road users, trialling and publishing the first wave of the new SRN Road User Satisfaction Survey **[core work]**

Key objective Four: continue to strengthen the passenger voice in rail franchise replacement and monitoring **[core plus additional work]**

Key objective Five: work with Highways England to improve user's experiences with road surfaces, information during planned and unplanned disruption and xx **[core plus additional work]**

Key objective Six: boost the voice of bus passengers, talking to over 50,000 passengers in the Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) **[additional work]**

Key objective Seven: handle cases where rail companies and passengers are deadlocked following a complaint, and gather evidence to inform other areas of our work. We will achieve over 70% passenger satisfaction with the way we handle complaints **[core work]**

Anthony Smith
Chief Executive

Workplan 2016-17

V2

1. Work to improve the transport user experience

Key objectives

- Using our recently published *Bus Passengers: trust, priorities and non-users* work to ensure bus passenger's (outside of London) views are heard in debates about new forms of procurement, funding and control. (Core)
- Identify road users' priorities. Work with Highways England to improve road user experiences based on priorities research material (published July 2015).

BUS

- Monitor the scale of reductions to Local Authority funded bus services and use our work on demand-responsive transport to identify alternatives to bus service cuts. (Core)
- Maximise opportunities for passengers through the recently launched Buses Bill and actively discuss what that may mean for passengers and local bus services. (Core)
- Encourage bus operators to value BPS results and see them as an important measure of their success and of their customers' feedback on areas to improve and work with operators with low scores to develop an action plan. (Core and additional)

ROAD

- Use the road users' priorities for improvement research to inform discussions with Highways England, Department for Transport, Office of Rail and Road and other stakeholders about focusing investment and activity on the issues that matter most to users.
- Complete and publish the research into SRN user needs and experiences during incidents and roadworks, including information provision.
- **Roads facilities research...?**

RAIL

- Work with operators to improve passengers' experiences during planned disruption, specifically at Waterloo and London Euston (core and additional)
- Continue the South East Quadrant Weekly Taskforce meetings and use research from the Emotional Monitoring project, to ensure the passenger's voice is heard. (Core and additional)
- Continue looking into the suitability of compensation regimes for season ticket holders who endure persistent delays. (core)
- Encourage Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to value NRPS results and see them as an important measure of their success and of their customers' feedback on areas to improve and work with TOCs with low scores to develop action plan to improve. (Core)

Commented [MH2]: This work strand is more about the major planned programmes of work

- Highlight passenger 'value for money' perceptions, and respond to Government policy regarding fares and ticketing. (Core)
- Identify and develop ways of boosting engagement with new franchises and protecting passenger interests in the transition of new franchise agreements. (Core and additional)
- Improve ticket retailing, including smartcards. (Core and additional)
- Ensure the passenger voice is heard in policy consultations while being aware of the risk of resource availability. (Core)
- Capture and report the outcomes and successes from our more recent work with TOCs. (Core)

2. Make a difference for transport users through long-term planning

Key objective

- Continue to strengthen the passenger voice in rail franchise replacement and monitoring, finding further resources and expertise to manage a diverse range of franchise activity. (Core and additional)
- Work with Highways England to improve user's experiences with road surfaces, information during planned and unplanned disruption.

BUS

- Work to ensure any revised regulation of bus services focuses on improving the things that matter most to passengers. (Core)
- Use research from "Bus Reform" workshops and "bus passenger trust" work etc. to prepare for long term activity as bus devolution takes hold. (Core)

ROAD

- Continue to engage with DfT, ORR and Highways England over Transport Focus's involvement in the development of RIS2, including whether additional research will be required.
- Use the priorities for improvement research and analysis of the last four years of National Road User Satisfaction Survey data to determine road user priorities for the second Road Period (2020-2025).
- Work with Highways England to identify opportunities to involve road users in the development of the 18 Route strategy.

RAIL

- Continue the HS2 Passenger Panel, developing bi-monthly reports and producing a one-page infographic style report (additional funding)
- Increase the passenger voice in the next High-Level Output Strategy (HLOS) 2019-24 – in particular punctuality targets (Core)
- Attend industry working groups and contribute to reviews. (Core and additional)

- Ensure the passenger voice is heard in any changes arising from the Shaw/Hendy/Bowe reviews of Network Rail. (Core)
- Ensure that the passenger voice is heard in the design of new rolling stock (additional funding)
- Managing diverse requests for analysis of NRPS and other research, ensuring that an appropriate balance is struck between public data and information which should remain confidential (Core)

Commented [MC3]: Refer to Anthony

CROSS-MODAL

- Ensure any devolution in administering and delivering transport services focuses on improving the things that matter to users, including Transport for the North. (core and additional)
- Discuss and provide written and possibly oral evidence to committee evidence sessions in regards to the National Assembly for Wales Rail Infrastructure inquiry (postponed until spring 2016, to allow for results of Network Rail Wales Route consultation). (Core)

3. Understand the needs of transport users

Key objectives

- Enhance the usefulness and value for money of the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), and other surveys, through new, innovative insight methods, ensuring they continue to be fit for purpose for years to come. (Core)
- Boost the voice of bus passengers, through bus passenger priorities research and through reaching 50,000 passengers via the Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) (Core and additional)
- Promote the voice of road users, trialling new research methods.
- Work alongside DVLA and other key departments to develop the new NRUSS and continue informal consultations on the draft pilot questionnaire.
- Promote the voice of road users, trialling and publishing the first wave of the new SRN Road User Satisfaction Survey.

BUS

- Use 'personal security' and 'disability' research results to enable us to better understand passengers issues in the bus industry, in particular issues arising from the 'priorities' work. (Core and additional)
- Explore new ways in which to work with industry and Welsh Government to promote and propose the development of the commissioning of a bus passenger survey in Wales. (Additional)
- Consider re-developing a BPS proposal for Welsh Assembly Government and Operators for further consideration. (Additional)

ROAD

- Maintain capability to conduct research into HGV drivers experiences of Operation Stack (when next invoked).
- Continue to trial new research methods with a view to launching a new satisfaction survey for the future.
- Run existing National Road User Satisfaction Survey from April 2016, in parallel with its replacement.

RAIL

- Publish autumn 2015 and spring 2016 National Rail Passenger Survey (Core)
- Maximise opportunities for research to inform franchise specifications (Additional)

TRAM

- Use the results from the Tram Passenger Survey to drive improvements for passengers
- Continue expansion of networks taking part in TPS, repeat the TPS and secure a longer-term funding model

Commented [MH4]: Do we class TPS as core or is it a mix?

COACH

- Carry out a Coach Passenger Satisfaction Survey, re-approach dominant operators such as National Express
- Present CPSS to the industry and discuss any issues of concern highlighted in the survey results

Commented [MH5]: Presume this would be additional?

CROSS-MODAL

- Continue regional, cross-modal satisfaction reports as part of the Tram Passenger Survey ensuring common questionnaire wording across modes where possible.
- Continue to develop the Smarter Ticketing programme.
- Discuss new projects for this year in relation to: carnets, contactless, Northern Powerhouse, use of mobiles for ticketing and how paper tickets are currently used.
- Publish research looking at passenger issues surrounding ticket innovation.
- Promote the views of passengers in the South East Flexible Ticketing scheme.
- Prioritise the interests of passengers in the Smart Ticketing for Wales scheme.
- Continue Transport for the North project.

Commented [MC6]: Refer to Louise Coward

4. Promote good practice in complaints handling and providing advice and advocacy

Key objective

- Handle cases where companies and passengers are deadlocked following a complaint, and gather intelligence to inform other areas of our work. We will achieve over 70% satisfaction with the way we deal with cases

RAIL PASSENGERS

- Explore more effective methods of handling passenger contact/appeals
- Work with the ORR on the development and implementation of the passenger satisfaction survey that will assess how TOCs have handled individual complaint cases.
- Work alongside London Travel Watch, and subsequently with ORR, ATOC and license holders to establish consistency and to agree and implement protocol.
- Handle enquiries from passengers, and intervene in issues raised from complaints
- Engage proactively with TOCs to help improve first-time complaint resolution
- Release complaints handling data onto our online data explorer

5. Improving access to services for transport users

COMMUNICATE

- Hold two meetings of our accessibility forum each year

TRACK

- Ensure that the views of those with disabilities are captured in our research programme
- Investigate the experiences of bus passengers with disabilities
- Investigate the experiences of younger bus passengers including under 16s.

REPORT

- Analyse NRPS, TPS and BPS to assess the views of those with disabilities

CHANGE

- Comment on and seek to improve operators' proposed Disabled People's Protection Policies and their application

ORGANISATION

- Consider using tighter age bands for more specific data.

DEVELOP

- Publish research looking into disabled passengers' views of Smart Ticketing
- Present research among young people more effectively, including analysis of Bus Value for Money research, NRPS, BPS

6. Increasing the influence of Transport Focus through building trust in our work

Key objectives

- Ensure the successful conclusion of the change process from Passenger Focus to Transport Focus.

COMMUNICATE

- Continue to provide a 24-hour press office.
- Publish monthly newsletters for passengers and road users and Increase awareness of our publications.
- Expand social media usage, and use technology to our advantage – for example webinars, interactive websites and instant messaging.
- Increase access to and usefulness of our research data and explore new digital/media channels.
- Implement new publications process and improve ways in which to gain information on forthcoming work before it is past the point at which Communications could have significant positive influence.

TRACK

- Number of transport users we engage with through consultation, research and our contact team.
- Stakeholders we have influenced.
- Staff attitudes through an annual survey, such as the Changeometer.
- Stakeholder views through a survey.

REPORT

- Three times a year in public at Board Meetings, held in different locations around the country and also engage in five Board member conference calls throughout the year.
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Statistics Governance Group report to the board.
- Monthly performance and financial reports.
- Annual published report on performance, activity and expenditure.
- Examine other ways to gather and report our effectiveness.
- Work alongside software companies to create of a more suitable and supported. Project Records document using SharePoint.
- Update our online data tool each quarter.

CHANGE

- Reaffirm commitment to all stakeholders as we take on our expanded remit.
- Conclude the change process with a clear picture of roles and structure across the organisation.
- Commence Staff Attitude Survey in the first quarter of 2016.

ORGANISATION

- Run organisation efficiently, with proportionate governance that allows us to operate with transparency and accountability.
- Strengthen internal and external communication.
- Ensure both office accommodation is fit for purpose.

DEVELOP

- The Funding Delivery Group is to meet monthly, focusing on developing an alternative funding model to ensure Transport Focus is able to continue to campaign on behalf of transport users whilst improving the value for money of its products.
- Take into consideration anticipated cuts to budget as a result of SR15.
- Discuss future funding options with DfT.

7. Raise awareness and impact of our work regionally

Key objective

- Ensure Transport Focus has a notable presence across the whole of the UK, is recognised and is accessible to all.
- Ensure that the passenger interest is represented in all regionals and continue to build upon new stakeholder relationships, such as those created at Board events etc.
- Use evidence in our research to develop our influence on behalf of passengers throughout the UK.
- Have an active role in the Government's Transport Advisory Panel.
- Engagement in key schemes developing new and improved services.
- Drive changes for passengers on cross-regional services through the National Rail Passenger Survey, such as passenger information during disruption.