



Making a difference for all passengers

February 2012

More than 120,000 passengers told Passenger Focus what they think of their services over the past year. This information has been used to benchmark the industry's performance and improve delivery. Passenger Focus has also published various research reports which have led to significant changes within the industry.

Anthony Smith, Passenger Focus chief executive, said: "As the independent passenger watchdog, Passenger Focus's job is to make a difference. We base our work on what passengers tell us about current services and their priorities for improvement. That research, including the National Passenger Survey and the Bus Passenger Survey, helps drive change for consumers."

- Ensured passengers have a 'seat' at the table when franchise replacement decisions are made. Previously decisions were made without any structured passenger input. Our passenger priorities research now helps bidders and government get better value for money for passengers and taxpayers.
- Strong arguments in favour of keeping rail lines open during disruption led to a commitment from Network Rail to consult Passenger Focus about planned major engineering works.
- Helping over 2,500 passengers every year with their complaints. Our mediation leads to thousands of pounds of refunds, improved industry procedures and over 70% passenger satisfaction with our service.



Some of Passenger Focus's recent successes:

- 65,000 passengers give their verdict every year on the journeys they have just done. The rail National Passenger Survey has become the key industry benchmark of satisfaction and drives numerous wins and improvements.
- Advised the then Secretary of State in 2006 about potential changes to off peak fare regulation. While being in favour generally of reducing regulation, our concerns on this particular proposal led to the postponement of any decision.

- Passenger Focus advocacy reduced the planned closure 2013 of Nottingham station from 26 weeks to a 10 week partial closure.
- Put disruption management on the agenda. Our passenger panel work last winter was, according to David Quarmby the Winter Review chair, "required reading for all management and supervisory staff in every Train Operating Company and in Network Rail".
- Pushed the EU for years to carry out comparative rail passenger satisfaction benchmarking. We advised the Commission on the methodology of the recent Barometre research – British passengers came out relatively satisfied, apart from on capacity.

- Helping bidders and government focus on passenger priorities in franchise replacement and long-term industry planning. As a result, for example, the recent Greater Anglia franchise had a strong emphasis on improving both ticket retailing and information during disruption.
- Our research on ticket vending machines, website retailing and ticket office queues has directly led to numerous improvements with more in the pipeline. This has made it easier for passengers to get the right ticket.
- Passenger Focus's ground breaking mystery shop of the industry's Assisted Passenger Reservation systems has led to improvements and a major upgrade – which is going live this year
- Our research revealed the depth of passenger dislike of bus replacement services. This has led to an industry commitment to avoid this and renewed regulatory interest in effective measurement of progress. The works at Reading last year reflected this – many more diverted trains.
- Asked by the Department of Transport to carry out passenger research on the use of 'released capacity' on the west coast post High-Speed Rail Two. Novel research method trialled and has yielded positive results.



- Pioneered a new bus passenger satisfaction research method. This has fast become the industry standard. So far 50,000 bus passengers have given their views about their last journeys leading to numerous improvements and wins. Secured significant match funding from industry and local government. Described by one industry commentator as "... the most important research done since privatisation."
- Boosted by 50% the number of bus passenger surgeries held with Bus Users UK – talked to over 2,000 passengers. These allow passengers direct access to senior local bus managers.

- Audited the handling of complaints by the bus industry. Positive findings generally but a number of recommendation for improvement now being made
- Carried out first ever published work on coach passenger satisfaction. Good results but improvements in luggage handling, personal security and complaints handling recommended
- Carried out the first ever country wide bus passenger satisfaction research on behalf of the Welsh Government. The results have led to direct improvements in information, bus stops and driver training.



- Pioneered research on understanding why buses are late. Brought together bus companies, regulators, independent transport authorities and local government to analyse and understand priority issues on a number of routes. Results out next year
- Transport Select Committee asked Passenger Focus and the LGA to produce a 'toolkit' on boosting the quality and depth of consultation with passengers and residents bus service changes. This flowed from earlier Passenger Focus work and our input to debate about reductions on the number of tendered services
- Carried out first ever passenger satisfaction work on demand responsive rural bus services. Report highlighted importance of these services to passengers
- Developed novel online passenger panel to help monitor information during weather and other disruption. Used this winter to drive improvements with Traveline and others.

Colin Foxall, Passenger Focus chairman, said: "Passenger Focus works in a simple, cost effective, responsive way. We ask passengers what they think of services and we publish the results. Our nationwide team of staff work with operators and government to make a difference. How do we know if it is working? We go back again to resurvey and check progress - so passengers really are driving change."

"Passenger Focus will continue making a difference for passengers over the next 12 months. We will focus on key passenger concerns: more buses and trains arriving on time, value for money, getting a seat and information during rail disruption."

Anthony Smith, chief executive, Passenger Focus