

Board Meeting Paper	
May 14 BM 7.0	
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 marking¹	
Date of Meeting	15 May 2014
Agenda Item	7
Report Title	Review of passenger and industry facing work
Sponsor	David Sidebottom
Author(s)	Linda McCord and Katie Armstrong



1. Using our research to make a difference for passengers

Bus Passenger Survey (BPS)

The results of our Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) were really well received out on the road. The Passenger Team visited or discussed the results with over 35 stakeholder organisations across England and Scotland including Passenger Transport Executives (PTE), Local Transport Authorities and bus operators.

This year there is a real sense that BPS is having a positive impact on both operators and transport authorities through better bus services for passengers and therefore generating higher levels of passenger satisfaction. Also, it is obvious that there is a growing level of respect for BPS amongst those organisations visited.

We are seeing a businesslike approach to the development and execution of action plans to address areas of passenger concern with stakeholders keen to get into the detail of evidence provided by BPS. We are also seeing some fresh ideas and innovations in addressing some of the lower passenger satisfaction scores.

For instance, First Bus confirmed that the results are eagerly awaited by their various operating businesses covered by our BPS work. The results will definitely be used to see where initiatives have worked in one operating area and can therefore be replicated elsewhere, or where there is a need, to focus future efforts across a local patch. There were also very positive meetings with Lothian Buses and First Glasgow as first time participants in BPS.

Looking ahead we will follow up agreed action plans with operators and/or transport authorities to track the impact that BPS results are having on local services and also discuss plans for the next round of BPS work.

Tram Passenger Survey (TPS)

Presented Tram Passenger Survey (TPS) results in this period with team members accompanying Keith Bailey, Senior Research Adviser, on visits to help foster new working relationships with tram operators and authorities. Again the results were eagerly awaited,

¹ ie RESTRICTED plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

receiving a positive response with PTE areas particularly favouring the added value of being able to compare bus, rail and tram results across their areas.

National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)

Autumn 2013 results were presented to a number of train operating companies (TOC) to identify and address areas of poor NRPS performance.

The meeting with Northern Rail was very constructive as they recognise the need to improve in a number of areas and agreed to use NRPS to develop a Customer Experience Strategy Group to help drive passenger improvements using greater interrogation of data at an area/building block level.

Robert Samson (Passenger Manager) discussed results with the Management Team at First TransPennine Express (FTPE) producing an action plan looking at ways to address capacity recognised as a key means to improve future NRPS results.

2. Working with transport operators and industry stakeholders to make a difference

Franchising

The team supported Sharon Hedges (Passenger Issues Manager) with the review of aspects of the Essex Thameslink bids. In Scotland initial meetings were held with Virgin Trains and Stagecoach group to explore passenger priorities for the East Coast franchise from a national perspective.

Meetings were also held with all bidders for the ScotRail franchise. They all indicated commitment to work with us.

In Wales during the period work was undertaken which included:

- engaging with Welsh Government – gaining boost funding for Rail Passenger Priorities work
- liaison and support for four regional transport consortia; presenting passenger research, attending meetings
- presenting research to additional groups: Consumer Protection Partnership and Community Safety Partnership Group
- liaison and update with Bus Users UK Cymru
- liaison with National Assembly for Wales – signposting Assembly debate on rail franchising and Petitions Committee inquiry/consultation on bus funding to user groups in Wales and supporting research team with background and data on bus industry in England

We have also been appointed to the Public Transport Users Advisory Panel, to advise the minister on transport policy; the panel will be meeting probably May/June, following appointment of a chair.

Other stakeholder work

The passenger team executives have continued to represent Passenger Focus at key meetings and events this quarter, including the Bus Passenger Survey briefing and other industry research presentations including - Centro's 'Putting Passengers First' conference and Merseyrail/Merseytravel's initial meeting to increase rail passenger numbers.

A number of presentations were undertaken including:

- TravelWatch NW conference, presenting rail and bus research to user group

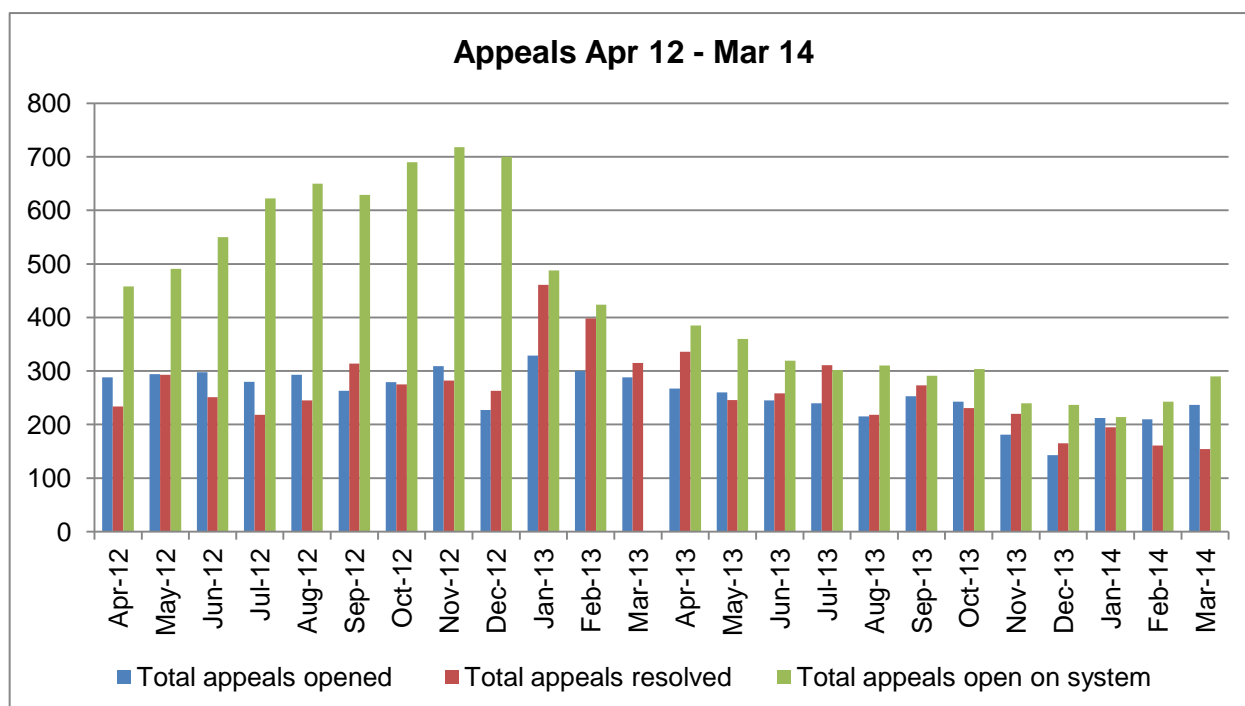
- delegates
- Rail Future East of England AGM

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

Please also see additional chart at the back of this report summarising total passenger contacts over the year.

Overview of past quarter's performance and figures

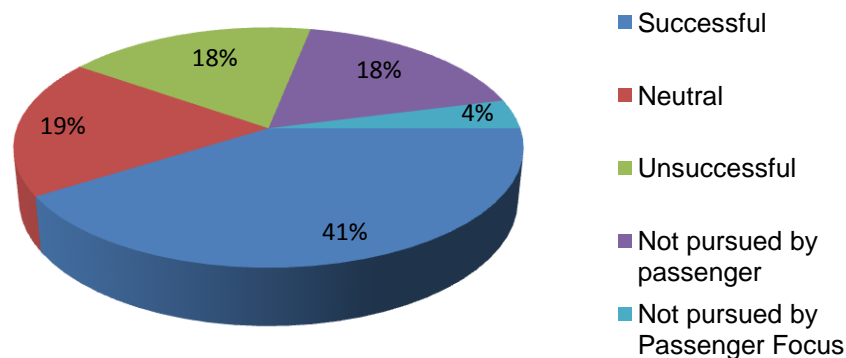
	2013-14	
	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)
Total complaint appeals resolved	510	607
Rail enquiries resolved	178	144
Bus enquiries resolved	1	0
Coach enquiries resolved	0	0
Tram enquiries resolved	1	0
Praise received	35	48
Complaint cases resolved	2	5
Cases redirected (London TravelWatch or Bus Users UK)	225	213
Passenger Satisfaction (target 70%)	82%	82%
Total passenger contacts² (email, webform, calls, letter and fax)	4447	4021



NB. "Total appeals resolved" excludes cases that were not pursued by the passenger or by Passenger Focus

² Received by our contact centre, Ventrica.

Outcomes of Appeals Jan-Mar 2014



During quarter four of 2013-14, passenger satisfaction was maintained at 82%. The number of complaint appeals resolved decreased and our average handling time reduced again to 25 days. Alongside more consistent workload levels, this reflects efforts by the team to acknowledge and escalate cases to operators quickly, therefore maximising the time available to work on the case and resolve in a timely manner.

Overview of complaint appeals

The top reasons for complaint appeals we resolved this quarter continued to focus on the way the complaint was handled; train service performance; and fares, retailing and refund issues. Looking in more detail, passengers' main issues were around the level of compensation, delays and tickets in relation to penalty fares/unpaid fares notices or prosecution.

As was the same situation in Q3, East Coast passengers generated the most appeal complaints this quarter, with Northern Rail and Southern in second and third place respectively.

During this quarter, the contacts team met customer service teams within Arriva Trains Wales, Virgin, Tyne and Wear Metro and East Coast. National Rail Enquiries also visited us with their top performers from their call centre based in India, to understand more about the important role we have for passengers. We discussed and resolved active cases, talked through trends and themes coming through complaints, received updates on initiatives at the train companies and also introduced the customer relations teams to our open data tool.

The passenger contact team also met the chair of London TravelWatch, Janet Cooke, to discuss common issues and to increase our understanding of each other's organisations. In addition, we continued our close working with the Passenger Issues Team to feed information through from complaints handling into wider policy work.

4. Other projects report

East Coast passenger feedback

East Coast passenger aspirations data was provided to the Department for Transport (DfT) on time. The Department provided specific funding for the work we did, which was not part of our original work plan. The project review has been completed to assess what

we wish to do differently if we are asked to undertake more of this work.

Franchising

Working on a series of web pages that will give bidders and other interested groups access to our latest information on each franchise - our published research data, submissions and consultation responses.

Engagement with stakeholders

Five newsletters have been sent in this quarter, primarily to promote and organise the upcoming user group workshops. We've also made user groups aware of useful data for their "toolkit" including Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR) datasets on station usage and a Network Rail feed that provides accurate punctuality data. We invited user groups to comment on booking office changes as part of the Schedule 17 process. We also asked for feedback for the DfT's "Door to door" study, which looked at bus/train integration for journeys. This was collated and shared with colleagues in the Passenger Issues Team. The audience for our user group newsletter is now up to 967 and still increasing.

Open data programme - Online data tool

We published the Autumn 2013 NRPS results in the online data tool on the day of publication in January. It was also made available to a selection of industry contacts before launch as part of our pre-release. Passenger Managers demonstrated and promoted the tool when they met with stakeholders and received positive feedback at all their meetings. This was the biggest promotion we have made of the tool and it was very successful. We saw an increase in usage, with 387 visits to the online data tool within the four days following NRPS publication. Since our 'soft' launch of the tool in October we have received a total of 4,881 visits from over 3000 different people.

This is significantly helping to increase the reach of NRPS and our complaint appeal data. October – December 2013 complaint appeal data was also added in January, both to download and to explore in the online data tool.

Train operator complaints review project

This quarter we continued with the second wave of complaint handling reviews. Following the review we carried out at First Capital Connect (FCC) in Q3, we produced a report with our findings and recommendations. We met with FCC to deliver this feedback and discuss ways it could tackle the issues that arose. We are awaiting FCC's written response to that report.

We originally carried out a review at Virgin trains in December 2012; at that time we agreed with Virgin to carry out a follow up review in approximately nine months to allow us the opportunity to review its delivery of the agreed recommendations. This quarter we have carried out that follow up review, the first of its kind, and will deliver the findings in the next quarter.

Ventrica contact centre transition

During Q4, the contact centre transition was handed over from a project to ongoing management within the passenger team. Quality monitoring is now well established and providing opportunities for continuous development. Close contact continues to be maintained through daily communication and monthly business review meetings where we discuss quality, performance, budget and ongoing improvement.

"How are we doing?" – performance reporting

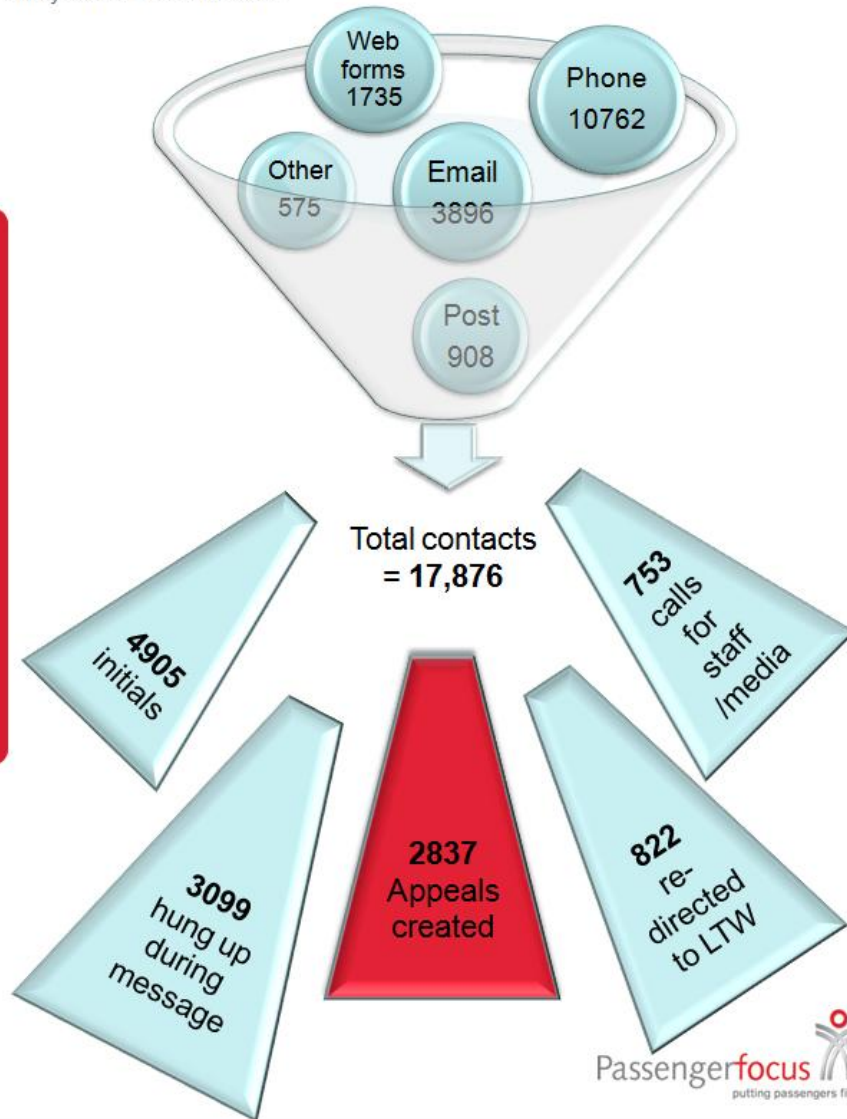
Following feedback from the Management team and the audit committee amendments have been made to the template used to report and it is now being used. The first report was completed for the March management team. The process will be reviewed after the first quarter to see how it is working and if any changes are needed.

5. Glossary of Passenger Contact Terms

Complaint appeal	If a passenger is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint they have made to a train company, or believe the train company handled their complaint inappropriately; they can ask us to pursue it further on their behalf. We call this a complaint appeal.
Initial complaint	The passenger has a complaint about their operator and has approached us in the first instance without complaining to the operator. The passenger should allow the operator the opportunity to resolve the complaint before Passenger Focus can get involved.
Enquiry	Any enquiry about Passenger Focus and its work, passenger rights or a general enquiry about the rail, bus, coach or tram industry
Redirect	A contact or complaint outside of our remit, such as for London TravelWatch or Bus Users UK
Copied in	The passenger has copied us in to a correspondence that they have sent to another organisation.
Praise	Positive feedback about Passenger Focus, its work or its complaint handling.
Complaints about us	Any complaint about Passenger Focus or any aspect of its work. This includes the way Passenger Focus has handled a complaint appeal.

Passenger Contacts

1 May 2013 – 31 Mar 2014



Incomplete data for April and May 2013 due to change in contact centre provider.

Passenger contacts are received by Passenger Focus in the following ways:

- Phone
- Email
- Web form
- Post
- 'other' captures fax and any blanks (missing information in the system)

Ventrica handles most of our incoming passenger contact. However, passengers are increasingly contacting us directly through the website, and some post is still handled by the Manchester office.

Passengers may be contacting us for a lot of reasons other than to log an 'appeal'. For example:

- An existing appeal (providing more info or asking for an update)
- An initial complaint (contacted us thinking we were a rail operator)
- An appeal or initial for London TravelWatch, or Bus Users UK
- General enquiries e.g. requesting contact details, opening hours etc

The chart on the previous page shows some of the main reasons passengers contact us.

Katie Armstrong 28 April 2014