

Board Meeting Paper	
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Restricted or confidential Information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If confidential, protective marking ¹	
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Agenda Item	7.0
Report Title	Review of passenger and industry facing work - fourth quarter of 2011-12 (January - March)
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1. Tackling passenger issues

This report is for the fourth quarter of 2011-12 (January - March)

Rail

During the reporting period we met with a number of train operating companies (TOCs) to present our analysis of their respective performance from the autumn wave of our National Passenger Survey (NPS). The presentations led to more detailed discussions with TOCs to make sure they picked areas of poor performance to work up actions plans to address the issues that passengers had raised through our research. In some cases we were also joined by officials from the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of their franchise monitoring work where NPS is a key indicator within some franchises.

Some of the TOCs where we carried out presentations included:

- Cross Country
- East Midlands Trains
- East Coast
- First Capital Connect
- Greater Anglia
- London Overground
- Southern
- Southeastern

In addition we presented detailed analysis of the passenger experience of transport integration from the autumn wave of NPS for the various transport consortia in Wales. This supports their work with Welsh Government's study of the barriers to transport integration.

The team also met with senior personnel from the rail industry to discuss other specific performance and operational issues that impact on passenger journeys. These include:

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

- Meeting with the **Route Managing Director for Network Rail in Wales** to learn about their strategic development in Wales
- Discussions with **ScotRail, Network Rail and Transport Scotland** to discuss the outputs from our “High Winds” research report
- Gave a presentation to the **Office of Rail Regulator (ORR)** and a group of Scottish stakeholders on passenger priorities concentrating on the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) and the publication of more meaningful performance data for passengers
- Supported and attended meetings of the respective **Passenger Transport User Committee’s in both Wales and Scotland**

Away from our work with specific parts of the rail industry, the team also promoted passenger interests and the general work of Passenger Focus at a variety of stakeholder fora. These fora provide great opportunities to meet a broad cross-section of local/regional stakeholders. The events included:

- **Southern Rail** where over 100 delegates received a presentation on a general update of our key work themes, passenger research and future work on franchises
- **Kent Community Rail Partnership** where delegates from the county and Medway councils, Network Rail, local user groups and Parish Councils heard about our key work themes
- **Mid-Wales cross-boundary strategy group** where senior personnel from Arriva Trains Wales and county officers from both sides of the border were updated on our NPS work
- **South West Trains** stakeholder event where we were able to liaise with local user groups, transport authority officers and other stakeholder groups
- Met with two **MPs, Simon Wright and Norman Lamb**, to discuss the new Greater Anglia franchise and their concerns and aspirations for the longer term franchise

In addition the team have responded to TOCs on proposed changes and updates to their passenger charters including:

- Arriva Trains Wales
- Northern Rail
- Merseyrail

Bus

The main focus of the team’s attention has been on three significant areas of the organisation’s work for bus passengers in England, outside of London.

Bus Passenger Survey

Distribution and presentation of all bus operators and transport authorities research results ahead of the publication in early March. This covered detailed briefings conversations with the larger bus operating groups and Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) including:

- Manchester - Transport for Greater Manchester, Stagecoach, First and Arriva
- Merseyside – Merseytravel and Arriva

- West Yorkshire – METRO and First
- South Yorkshire – South Yorkshire PTE and First
- West Midlands – Centro and National Express
- Tyne and Wear – Nexus
- Tees Valley Partnership
- Norfolk County Council
- Essex County Council

This work ensured that all relevant organisations were fully briefed ahead of publication and that plans could start in the new business year to understand how operators and authorities were using the research results to improve their service to passengers.

Bus partnerships

We continue to work usefully with Centro (West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive) as a member of the Quality Partnership Board that exists between the PTE and National Express (Travel West Midlands) in Birmingham. Our involvement covers the provision of an annual bus passenger satisfaction survey (supported with additional joint-funding from both the PTE and operator) and input into the development of a passenger charter and complaint handling standards.

This model was also formally launched in Coventry in February between Centro and a number of locally based bus operators including Stagecoach and National Express. As in Birmingham, Passenger Focus is a co-signatory to the partnership providing a clear commitment to undertake our Bus Passenger Survey jointly financially supported by the PTE and local operators.

Bus stakeholders

We have been meeting with the DfT's Local Engagement Teams who are regionally based in Leeds (northern England), Birmingham (Midlands and the South West) and London (East and Southern England). The teams provide a regional presence for the DfT and their work with key stakeholders and regional transport fora. We have briefed the teams on our core research work and work themes.

In addition we attended a North Yorkshire Transport Forum which brought together about 30 delegates from local bus operators, transport authorities and other stakeholder groups. We were able to talk to delegates about our work themes and Bus Passenger Survey work.

Coach

Through Linda McCord (Passenger Team Manager) we continue to work with National Express. We have discussed the coach operator's ambitions to jointly develop a coach passenger satisfaction survey with Passenger Focus. The operator has expressed some interest in this idea and we will pursue this in 2012-13.

Looking ahead to quarter one 2012-13

Rail

Engaging with selected TOCs on the back of results of our NPS work and the specific action plans we developed with them.

Bus

We will work closely with specific operators and authorities where follow-up action has been agreed to address poor performance or the need for further analysis of the Bus Passenger Survey.

In addition the team will support opportunities with transport authorities to use our bus service changes “consultation toolkit” following its distribution to all transport authorities and relevant stakeholders.

Tram

We will develop previous discussions with Centro to run a pilot “tram passenger satisfaction” study. This may develop across one or more of the PTE areas in 2012-13.

2. Making a difference locally

This report is for the fourth quarter of 2011-12 (January – March 2012)

Passenger groups

We have completed the majority of the programme of user group (bus and rail) events that I referred to me in my previous quarterly report.

This programme of events so far has helped clearly define our working relationship with rail and bus user groups, plus “umbrella” organisations such as Railfuture, TravelWatch and Bus Users UK across Great Britain.

Through a pilot event carried out in Ely, Cambridgeshire and a further series of five events across England covering London (south east England), Bristol (south west England) Birmingham (the Midlands) and York (Yorkshire and North East England) and Preston (North West England) we have met members from over 80 different bus and rail user groups. Further events are planned in Wales and Scotland in June 2012.

We have presented information to user groups so they can learn more about the Passenger Focus structure and our work plan themes. Our role has also been clarified in terms of the level and type of support which we can offer to user groups on issues ranging from reporting of day-to-day issues through to involvement in our national themes e.g. rail franchising.

Information has been presented and gathered through the sessions to create a range of ideas to help develop a “toolkit”, which user groups can use to become even more effective and self-reliant, with an emphasis on communication and learning from the work of other user groups.

The toolkit will also include tips and information on: how to access relevant Passenger Focus research; key industry contacts; action templates (e.g. passenger counts, petitions, campaigns, new franchise engagement etc); Passenger Focus policy/media lines; examples of best practice from other groups.

The toolkit will be made available as a dynamic, branded and monitored resource on a secure area of our new website, accessed by user group logons.

Feedback from groups attending the initial six events has been extremely positive as has the level and quality of engagement and contribution at the events from groups.

Looking ahead to quarter one 2012-13

- Completing the programme of user group events
- Building the content for the user group “toolkit”

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

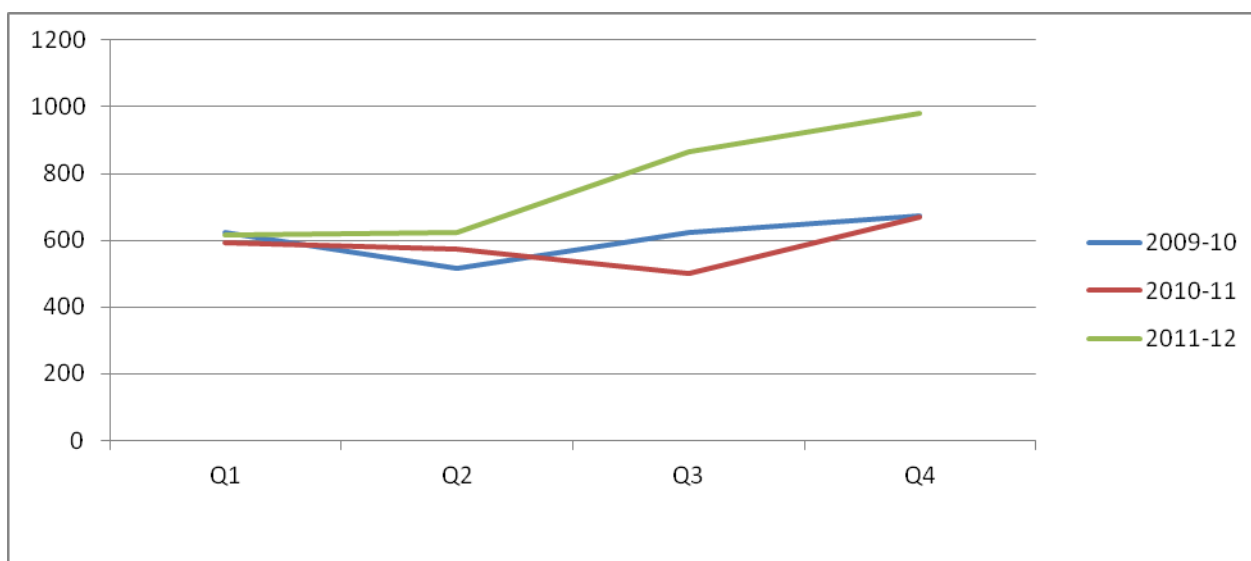
Overview of quarter four 2011-12 complaints performance and figures.

Case Workload	Q4 (Jan-Dec)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q2 (Jul-Sep)	Q1 (Apr-Jun)
Total appeals opened	981	866	622	614
Total appeals closed	742	761	690	586
Bus enquiries logged	2	7	4	5
Coach enquiries logged	1	0	2	0
Tram enquiries logged	0	0	0	0
Rail enquiries opened	133	93	103	370
Rail enquiries closed	125	89	101	382
Complaint cases opened	4	4	3	8
Complaint cases closed	2	2	0	10
Praise cases logged	42	41	14	11
Re-direct cases logged (LTW)	140	137	85	76
Passenger Satisfaction (target 70%)	85%	83%	77%	77%
Total passenger contacts <i>(email, fax, web form, letter and calls via First Call)</i>	3818	3674	3456	3739

In quarter four, we continued to receive a large increase in appeal cases based on previous quarters, and a 47% increase in the number of appeals opened in Q4 2010-11.

Throughout this quarter, we have continued to maintain high levels of passenger satisfaction. The number of passengers praising our work also remains high, with the number of complaints about our work just 0.4% of the total number of cases opened.

Overview of appeal complaints opened Q1 2009-10 to Q4 2011-12:



TOCs generating most comments this quarter:

	No. comments	Top comment categories
East Coast Trains	726	Fares, retailing and refunds (302); complaints handling (169)
Virgin Trains	379	Complaints handling (120); fares, retailing and refunds (106)
First Great Western	179	Fares, retailing and refunds (69); complaints handling (46)

The top three operators generating comments from passengers remain the same as for Q3, with the issues consistently relating to fares and the way the complaints have been handled.

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 review programme

- **Workload:** A trial of the new work allocation system has taken place this quarter. Instead of assigning cases to specific advisors dependant on the train company, all cases are rotated around the team. This trial was meant to be for three months initially but as case volumes have increased it has been extended till mid May.
- **Passenger Perspective:** Following the conclusion of the workshops, advisors are now taking our new approach forward to the train companies. An additional step has been to agree response times for train companies to get back to us. A review of the Passenger Perspective work will be undertaken in 6 months (August 2012) to ensure that progress is maintained.

- **Internal Escalation:** A new process has been agreed by the Passenger Issues and Passenger Team, which will help advisors escalate individual cases within a train company. The process has also defined a clear channel for the team to escalate wider policy and national “issues” that are identified through complaints handling.
- **Quality monitoring:** A new system has been devised ready for a pilot exercise to be carried out by the advisors in April on some of their cases finalised in March. This pilot is to provide a means by which the advisors have some input into the QM system and to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
- **Train company performance reports:** The content and template of the train company performance reports has been agreed. This will allow Passenger Focus to give feedback on the performance of individual operators in relation to complaint handling. The first tranche of this reporting will be carried out in quarter one 2012-13.

4. Other projects report

Passenger Team in quarter four 2011-12

- **Great Western Franchise:** Engaged with over 400 stakeholders via email communication and four presentations at stakeholder events. Met with a Member of Parliament to discuss the franchise and constituent concerns. Consultation response and passenger research is now complete and published on our website
- **Thameslink / Southeastern Franchises:** Work on this franchise is well underway. An initial update was sent to all stakeholders at the beginning of February and we received a good deal of feedback reflecting concerns about the feared loss/changes to services on certain routes. Met the Rt. Honourable Tom Brakes MP for Sutton and Carshalton to discuss the concerns of his constituents, our role and the independent research we were undertaking on passenger expectations. Also explained that we would provide further updates about research and the formal consultation process.
- **Essex Thameside Franchise:** A further submission has been made to Secretary of State, and subsequently circulated to stakeholders. We had the opportunity to present our research to the public and the DfT at their Consultation meetings.
- **Performance reports:** These have been provided to prospective bidders in relation to all current rebrand routes to encourage consideration of complaint handling performance/procedures as part of the franchise agreements.
- **User Groups:** We’ve continued to engage with User Groups region by region, with very positive feedback so far. Events in Ely, London, Bristol and Birmingham have now taken place. Four further events are planned in York, Preston, Perth and Cardiff. Initial steps have been taken to create a web-based “toolkit” of resources
- **Passenger information during disruption:** Passenger Focus’ assessment of online information provided to rail passengers during high winds was published in January 2012
- **Customer Relationship Manager (CRM):** Successfully managed the transition to our new CRM supplier and have been leading the development of our new system. A full data cleanse process has also been designed which will ensure that the contact details we hold are accurate. This cleanse will be delivered during May and June.
- **Website:** Assisted in the website tender process and helped to select the provider. Subsequently worked very closely with the Communications Team to ensure the website is

developed around passenger needs. We have particularly focussed on making it a lot easier for passengers to complain to us and have improved the advice we offer by developing new content. We have also rewritten the description of the service we offer. This makes it clearer to passengers about how we can help and what they can expect.

- **Ticket Office Consultations (Schedule 17s):** The process review is complete. Train companies have been informed of the changes to requirements for submitting proposals to Passenger Focus for consultation.
- **Retailing and Ticketing:** Participated in several high-profile rail ticketing and retailing conferences – including Transport Ticketing 2012 and the Smartex Smart Ticketing forum. Produced a Retailing Review document for internal staff use.

Looking ahead to quarter one 2012-13

In addition to progressing the new work plan, some franchise work has become a higher priority for Q1:

- **East Coast Franchise:** The East Coast franchise renewal project is now under way, with a response to be submitted in August 2012.
- **TPE/Northern Franchise replacement:** Initial work has started on the TPE and Northern Franchise replacement project. Research will be carried out in July, with a submission by Passenger Focus likely in December.

5. Glossary of Passenger Contact Terms

Appeal complaint	A complaint the operator has been unable to resolve, the passenger is seeking our help to resolve the matter
Initial complaint	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.
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 an appeal.