



National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)

Consultation feedback report

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Contents

Foreword

1. Background to the *National Rail Passenger Survey* (NRPS)
2. Consultation
3. The need for change
4. Proposals (including consultation feedback in **red**)

1 Questionnaire

- 1.1 Reduce the 'core' questionnaire length, by focussing on core metrics, and improve its presentation
- 1.2 Review and update the core questionnaire including station and train factors
- 1.3 Introduce a short supplementary questionnaire (or questionnaires)
- 1.4 Explore options for separate additional surveys to 'fill the gaps'.

2 Data collection

- 2.1 Pilot the offer of a refreshed online option for completion of the questionnaire
- 2.2 Increase the number of waves of fieldwork or move to continuous data collection and monthly reporting.

3 Immediate technical changes

- 3.1 Generally move to a standardised definition of routes ('building blocks') based on train origin and destination rather than groups of stations
- 3.2 Provide a more representative GB sample by moving to a more equitable sample distribution by TOC
- 3.3 Provide greater sensitivity in the data by highlighting 'very satisfied'/'very dissatisfied' ratings.

4 Medium-term technical changes

- 4.1 Two stage sampling
- 4.2 Sample and weight journeys by time of day and adjust distribution of fieldwork shifts across the day
- 4.3 Separate design and non-response weighting processes and weight by ticket type rather than journey purpose as currently.

5 Governance

- 5.1 Establish a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) for an initial period of two years
- 5.2 Review and reduce list of stakeholders with pre-release access to NRPS results.

Afterword and additional comments from consultees

5. Detailed analysis of feedback regarding the questionnaire
 - 1 Existing questions
 - 2 Potential additional question areas.
6. List of consultees.

Foreword

As we noted when initiating our consultation on potential changes to the *National Rail Passenger Survey* (NRPS), it is a well-established and well-respected tool used by the rail industry and governments to monitor passenger satisfaction and train companies' performance on this key dimension.

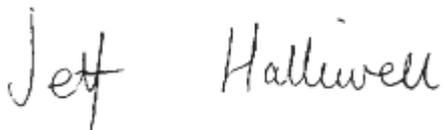
However, there is general agreement that the survey needs 'refreshing' and, in particular that the current questionnaire length and presentation is potentially off-putting to passengers who are asked to complete it – and on whose continuing co-operation we all rely. Accordingly we have consulted with industry stakeholders regarding the potential changes so as to inform our final decision. We are extremely grateful to all those bodies and individuals who input to the consultation.

This report summarises the feedback from the consultation which has been carefully considered. As a result we have reviewed a number of our original proposals and timings. This document sets out our updated proposals, amended where appropriate following the consultation.

In summary, we intend to pilot a shortened core questionnaire and some example supplementary questionnaires in Spring 2016 alongside the existing survey which will run 'as is' for both the Spring and Autumn waves in 2016.

Changes to the NRPS questionnaire will only be implemented in 2017 after evaluation of the pilot. We are setting up an 'Experts Group' and a 'Stakeholder Forum', in line with consultation feedback, to help guide us through the key changes and ensure that both best methodological practice and stakeholders' views continue to be taken into account.

Transport Focus looks forward to continuing its work with the industry to revitalise the *National Rail Passenger Survey* and ensure it continues to meet stakeholders' needs for the foreseeable future. In particular, we are discussing with the Department for Transport how NRPS should fit alongside other studies and how best to measure passengers' trust in and emotional engagement with the railways.



Jeff Halliwell
Chair
Transport Focus

1. Background to the *National Rail Passenger Survey* (NRPS)

- Established in 1999, originally as the *National Passenger Survey* (NPS)
- Managed by Transport Focus since 2005
- Fieldwork and analysis currently contracted to BDRC Continental (currently due for retendering in 2015 with a new contract set to begin in 2016)
- Designated as an Official Statistic
- Primarily funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) on behalf of passengers
- Key objectives as originally set:
 - To measure, on a consistent basis, passengers' satisfaction with their rail journeys so that the performance of individual, franchised Train Operating Companies (TOCs) can be compared over time
 - NRPS data for the individual TOCs can be amalgamated so as to be able to measure rail passengers' satisfaction over time for Great Britain overall.
- Methodology:
 - Self-completion questionnaires handed out at selected stations and on trains
 - Two waves per year historically designated 'Spring' and 'Autumn'.
- Snapshot of Wave 32 (Spring 2015):
 - 1574 fieldwork shifts (of which, 242 conducted on train)
 - 98714 questionnaires handed out (of which, 14376 on train)
 - 31332 valid questionnaires returned = 31.7 per cent response rate.

2. Consultation

Transport Focus has undertaken a public consultation exercise in summer 2015 among rail industry stakeholders regarding a number of changes it proposes to make to the *National Rail Passenger Survey* (NRPS).

The proposed changes result from:

- A periodic Technical Review of NRPS conducted by Roberts-Miller Associates (RMA) to ascertain whether NRPS remains fit for purpose and will remain so for the foreseeable future – see: <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/technical-review>
- A Stakeholder Review undertaken by Transport Focus to gather details of how NRPS is currently being used by stakeholders, its perceived limitations and any aspirations for the future – see: <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/nrps-stakeholder-review>
- Growing interest from governments, franchise holders and bidders in having more frequent monitoring of TOC and Network Rail performance on key metrics
- A background of evolving research methodologies, increasing use of digital technologies in society and changing consumer engagement in survey research.

This document restates the background and context for the recent consultation together with the original proposals. It then provides (in **red**, for ease of location) a summary of the consultation feedback received, Transport Focus's comments on this, and our current proposals updated where appropriate in the light of the feedback received. Finally we include a list of consultees.

It is inevitable that the proposed changes will impact different stakeholders to differing extents. We recognise that it is a challenge to achieve consensus and we have endeavoured to achieve an outcome that is of benefit to the majority of users of *NRPS* and which also recognises the importance of the passenger's survey experience.

Following the consultation exercise and publication of this report, *Transport Focus* intends to proceed with our plans to update the *NRPS*. Specifically we shall:

- Draft a new core questionnaire and example supplementary questionnaires
- Pilot these alongside a trial of the refreshed online version of the questionnaire in Spring 2016 (subject to funding)
- Present proposals to the DfT for a move to four waves of fieldwork and reporting
- Further discuss with the DfT the impact of changes to NRPS on franchise agreements and how to mitigate these (including obtaining ministerial approval)

- Develop and issue (probably in Summer 2016) the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the new NRPS contract
- Convene meetings of an NRPS 'Experts Group' and an NRPS 'Stakeholder Forum'
 - A first meeting of the 'Experts Group' (with representatives invited from the Department for Transport (DfT), Transport Scotland, BDRC Continental, Roberts-Miller Associates and Real Research) was held on 15 December
 - We are planning to hold the first Stakeholder Forum in February 2016.
- Contact stakeholders regarding nominated individuals for pre-release access for Spring 2016 results and obtain a signed undertaking from them to comply with Office for National Statistics (ONS) rules
- Initiate discussion with affected TOCs regarding changes to 'building blocks' and sample sizes
- Further explore the viability of using the *National Rail Travel Survey* (NRTS) or alternative sources of data for sampling/weighting journeys by time of day and how this impacts our plans for our planned medium term technical changes
- Continue to explore alternative/complementary sources of data for questions that have to be dropped from NRPS and for potential weighting measures such as journey purpose.

We are now working to the following timeline:

- Spring and Autumn 2016 waves of *NRPS* to run to the current design without any of the proposed questionnaire or data collection changes being implemented
- Spring 2016 – pilot core/supplementary questionnaires and mixed mode (paper and online) trial
- Pre-release access to Spring 2016 results to be restricted to two nominated individuals per TOC; signed agreements to comply with *ONS* rules required
- Spring 2016 Stakeholder Report to show 'very satisfied'/'dissatisfied' scores alongside combined totals
- Summer 2016 – pilot results reviewed with *NRPS* 'Experts Group' and communicated to *NRPS* 'Stakeholder Forum'; ITT finalised for new contract (existing contract to be extended until new specification can be adopted)
- Autumn 2016 – implement new definitions of 'building blocks' (Proposal 3.1) and revised sample distribution (Proposal 3.2) in parallel with planned two-yearly review of sampling/weighting
- Spring 2017 – new *NRPS* contract starts with all questionnaire, data collection and technical changes implemented.

All plans are, of course, subject to funding being available.

3. The need for change

Over its fifteen years' existence a number of changes have been made to the original design and objectives of the *National Rail Passenger Survey*. It is now used by more stakeholders and for more purposes than originally envisaged and NRPS metrics are included as targets in many recent rail franchise awards.

In particular, NRPS is used for sub-TOC level analysis and monitoring by, for example, route (commonly referred to as a 'building block') or major Network Rail station, in a way which stretches the original design methodology. Various solutions have been adopted over the years which have left NRPS with a sample design that has evolved somewhat from the original, theoretically 'pure' design. A fundamental Technical Review of the sampling approach has concluded it should be reviewed and potentially revised.

Since NRPS was first established there have been extensive societal and technological changes which impact on consumer behaviour and expectations and, indeed, their propensity to engage in survey research. These days the majority of rail passengers carry a mobile phone with many accessing the internet and engaging in social media dialogue while on their journey. At the same time, many would argue that people's attention spans are reducing and the survey research industry is suffering from falling response rates (that said, NRPS at 31.7 per cent in Spring 2015 is viewed as a good achievement although this has also been slowly decreasing over time).

The NRPS self-completion questionnaire looks increasingly incongruous and, at 12 sides of paper, potentially daunting to respondents used to 160-character text messages, 'Twitter speak' and emoticons tapped into a mobile device functioning in a virtual world. While the Technical Review endorses the continuing use of a paper, self-completion questionnaire to ensure coverage of a broad spectrum of passengers, it has also proposed a reduction in questionnaire length both to maintain response rates and facilitate a potential transition to online data collection.

Transport Focus has trialled a four-page version of the NRPS questionnaire in parallel with the Spring 2015 fieldwork wave. This has shown that a shorter questionnaire is appreciated by both fieldworkers and respondents and has retained or improved the quality of passengers' responses, although it resulted in only a small increase in response rates. Nevertheless we are minded to proceed to a shorter questionnaire in the interest of retaining respondent goodwill and for the potential of transitioning to an overtly mixed mode data collection approach (ie both paper and online). Our experience with the *Tram Passenger Survey* (TPS) has shown the viability and potential benefits of offering passengers a choice of data collection modes.

Additionally, stakeholders have commented on a number of current NRPS questions (or lack of questions) asking for potential alterations to meet current needs.

Transport Focus is also conscious that the survey examines key touch-points/transactional issues but does not consider what might be described as the 'emotional' aspects of passengers' journeys. Our research *Passengers' relationship with the rail industry*¹ shows how important this relationship is in generating trust in train operators. We should not need to point out that the temptation to add new questions is at odds with the desire to shorten the questionnaire length.

Finally, we are seeing a growing interest in more regular updating of NRPS data and potentially in greater sensitivity in the measures used. As government, both nationally and regionally, looks to monitor operators' franchise performance by reference to NRPS, the DfT and Transport Scotland as well as operators (and bidders for new franchises) have been asking how passenger satisfaction might be monitored on an a more frequent or even an ongoing basis. And with the best-performing TOCs delivering combined scores for fairly satisfied/very satisfied in excess of 90 per cent there is also concern as to whether the existing metrics provide sufficient granularity to monitor any further improvement in performance.

We have attempted to address these various issues with our proposed changes, documented below, which we believe will leave NRPS fit for many more years' valuable service to both passengers and the rail industry in Britain that serves them.

¹ <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passengers-relationship-with-the-rail-industry>
Page 8 of 79

4. Proposals (including consultation feedback)

Transport Focus proposes to make various changes to the *National Rail Passenger Survey* over the next two to three years. These changes can be considered under five broad headings:

- the questionnaire
- data collection
- immediate technical changes to sampling/weighting
- medium-term technical changes
- governance.

The specific proposals are as follows:

1. The questionnaire

- 1.1 Reduce the 'core' questionnaire length, by focussing on core metrics, and improve its presentation
- 1.2 Review and update the core questionnaire including station and train factors
- 1.3 Introduce a short supplementary questionnaire (or questionnaires) to be offered to selected participants to complete after the core questionnaire, if willing
- 1.4 Explore options for separate additional surveys to 'fill the gaps' where questions are displaced from the 'core' questionnaire.

2. Data collection

- 2.1 Pilot the offer of a refreshed online option for completion of the questionnaire (while retaining the paper option for those preferring that mode)
- 2.2 Increase the number of waves of fieldwork or move to continuous data collection and monthly reporting.

3. Immediate technical changes

- 3.1 Generally move to a standardised definition of routes ('building blocks') based on train origin and destination rather than groups of stations
- 3.2 Provide a more representative GB sample by moving to a more equitable sample distribution by TOC
- 3.3 Provide greater sensitivity in the data by highlighting 'very satisfied'/'very dissatisfied' ratings (rather than amalgamating 'very'/'fairly' as at present).

4. Medium-term technical changes

- 4.1 Two-stage sampling:
 - Random sample at stations to provide representative sample of GB passengers
 - Top-up (boost) samples at stations and on train to achieve TOC and route ('building block') targets.
- 4.2 Sample and weight journeys by time of day and adjust distribution of fieldwork shifts across the day
- 4.3 Separate design and non-response weighting processes and weight by ticket type rather than journey purpose as currently.

5. Governance

- 5.1 Establish a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) for an initial period of two years
- 5.2 Review and reduce the list of stakeholders with pre-release access to NRPS results.

The rationale, proposed implementation date, recognised implications and some comments as to how these might be mitigated are set out on the following pages followed by a summary, in **red**, of consultees' feedback, our observations/comments and any resulting updates to our proposals.

Some changes were proposed for implementation in Spring 2016. Others, it was noted, might need piloting or are dependent on external factors, notably the publication of an updated *National Rail Travel Survey* (NRTS) meaning they are unlikely to be implemented before 2017. We are now intending to consolidate all survey changes from the Spring 2017 fieldwork wave. Governance changes and 'top box' reporting will be implemented as soon as practicable. The survey changes will be specified when the Invitation to Tender for the next NRPS contract is issued in 2016.

Section 1	Questionnaire
Proposal 1.1:	<p>Reduce the ‘core’ questionnaire length, by focussing on core metrics, and improve its presentation.</p> <p>Current questionnaire (please see the latest (Spring 2015) version here: http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/spring-2015-nrps-questionnaire) runs to 12 pages (12 sides of paper).</p>
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to concerns raised in the Technical and Stakeholder Reviews that questionnaire is too long • Makes online questionnaire completion easier • Reduces perceived burden on respondents and has the potential to draw in passengers previously deterred by the length and appearance of the current questionnaire • Less daunting and quicker to complete • Reduced fatigue may improve completeness/accuracy of answers • Potential to increase take-up rate resulting in larger sample/lower cost • Maintains time series data for core questions.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention is to focus on core questions relating to overall satisfaction, value for money and station/train factors plus demographics and journey data for analysis • Secondary questions including those asked in alternate waves or on an occasional basis cannot be accommodated (but see proposals 1.3 and 1.4 below) • Time series data on secondary questions will potentially be lost.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim will be to reduce questionnaire length (ie number of questions) by a half to two thirds • Please see note following proposal 1.4 below for details of and link to an example questionnaire • At the same time we shall look at an alternative, more attractive layout and design potentially including greater use of visual elements • Transport Focus will also look to explore alternative ways of obtaining answers for the questions dropped from the core questionnaire (see proposals 1.3 and 1.4 below) • Our Spring 2015 four-page questionnaire trial indicates that in fact this has had minimal effect on achieved response rates, although data quality appears to have benefitted slightly through more questions being answered more completely.

<p>Question 1.1 (1):</p>	<p>What are your views on the proposal to reduce the ‘core’ questionnaire length focusing on overall satisfaction, value for money, and station and train factors? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation’s use of NRPS.</p>
<p>Question 1.1 (2):</p>	<p>What is the impact to you of dropping the non-core questions from NRPS?</p>
<p>Question 1.1 (3):</p>	<p>In what way(s) do you see that loss being mitigated through measures proposed in this consultation, or otherwise?</p>
<p>Stakeholder feedback</p>	<p>There is overwhelming support for a review of the questionnaire and a reduction in its length; this, it is hoped, will variously improve the respondent experience, arrest declining response rates and improve the quality of the data collected. It is also noted that the questionnaire should be made more visually attractive.</p> <p>That said, the majority of consultees had concerns about how this is done and at the potential loss of data they regard as valuable.</p> <p>One open access operator (which funds its participation in the survey) opposes the change noting that there is no evidence for current survey length preventing a decent sample size being achieved.</p> <p>Several consultees (both operators and authorities) claim to make use of all/the majority of the data collected; they and many others worry at how the loss of questions/data can be mitigated.</p> <p>The majority of consultees have concerns at loss of time series data; this covers both the removal of questions and also how a wholesale revision of the questionnaire may impact on how passengers interpret and respond to the remaining questions as well as whether data from supplementary questionnaires or alternative surveys will be capable of maintaining the time series without a step change in the data.</p> <p>Many franchised train operators are concerned at how the changes (whether the omission/alteration of questions or changes in the time series data) will affect the DfT’s/Transport Scotland’s/Passenger Transport Executives’ (PTEs’) monitoring of franchise commitments and at the risk of financial penalties being ‘unfairly’ imposed as a result of changes to the survey.</p> <p>There are understandable concerns at how the core and any supplementary questionnaires (or alternative data sources) will be</p>

	<p>linked and whether cross analysis of questions from different elements will still be possible.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>It is evident that reducing the length of the core questionnaire is inherently linked to other proposals to review the questions asked and how and to increase the share of online responses.</p> <p>We have always recognised that shortening the core questionnaire will be challenging and that some stakeholders will be adversely affected by the removal of questions or changes in the way the data is collected. We do not see this as a reason to ‘do nothing’; although response rates remain fairly constant it would be dangerous to assume that this will continue indefinitely. If NRPS is to continue to serve its purpose we believe fundamental changes to the questionnaire are necessary and while mitigation may be able to reduce and/or explain changes in time series data, stakeholders have to accept a potential step change in the data for the longer term benefits that should accrue.</p> <p>We note that an experimental pilot of a shorter questionnaire failed to generate a worthwhile increase in the achieved sample size although the proportion of questions answered did improve.</p> <p>We note that the DfT both has the power and has undertaken to review franchise commitments where there are changes in the NRPS data collected.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We intend to proceed with the development of a core questionnaire focussing on overall satisfaction, value for money, and station/train factors given consultees’ broad support for the principle.</p> <p>We shall also now run a pilot of the core and some example supplementary questionnaires in Spring 2016 to provide further understanding (beyond that gained from the previous shortened questionnaire pilot) of the impact of such wholesale changes.</p> <p>It is now proposed that the Spring and Autumn 2016 waves are run ‘as is’ (ie no substantive changes), and that the move to a shorter core questionnaire be deferred until Spring 2017.</p> <p>We note the many concerns as to how changes to the core questionnaire will affect time series data. The planned pilot and other work including modelling will explore means to mitigate this impact which will be discussed with the ‘Experts Group’ and ONS and presented to the ‘Stakeholder Forum’ (see below for explanation as to</p>

	<p>how these two bodies are now planned in place of the originally proposed Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG)).</p> <p>However, we note that we must achieve the key goal of a substantially shorter questionnaire which is far easier for passengers to complete and this may require acceptance of a step change in the data. The effect of any step change(s) will now also be reduced by consolidating all changes at one point in time (see below).</p>
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Section 1	Questionnaire
Proposal 1.2:	Review and update the core questionnaire including station and train factors. Questionnaire has grown over time and is now seen as too long.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some questions are of questionable value and/or are not used (to the best of our knowledge). For example, whether ‘the ease of being able to get on and off the train’ relates to crowding or passenger mobility issues • Several requests for additional question areas, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ physical ticket type (paper [industry issued/print-at-home], smartcard, mobile, etc) and where/how acquired ○ availability and use of Wi-Fi ○ door-to-door journey/overall journey time. • Current questionnaire focuses on rational factors and omits the emotional element such as trust in the train operator.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of data for any questions that are dropped • Any additional questions may require the omission of other questions to provide the required space on the questionnaire.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see note following proposal 1.4 below for details of and link to an example questionnaire • Consideration to be given to including a number of ‘hook’ questions that could be the cue to offering a supplementary questionnaire (such as experience of delay, claiming compensation, interaction with British Transport Police (BTP)) • Potential to ask omitted questions/desired additional questions in optional, short, supplementary questionnaire or on other complementary surveys (see proposals 1.3 and 1.4 below).
Question 1.2 (1):	What are your views on the proposal to review and update the core questionnaire? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation’s use of NRPS.
Question 1.2 (2):	Please indicate any questions you feel might be dropped from the proposed core questionnaire.
Question 1.2 (3):	Please detail any questions/topics you would be particularly keen to have reinstated/added to the core questionnaire and why.

Stakeholder feedback

There is general support for a review of the core questionnaire and many suggestions that its appearance needs a redesign. Together with a reduction in its length, it is hoped this will improve the respondent experience and encourage participation in the survey.

That said, almost every consultee has a different opinion on what constitutes a core question... Rather than overwhelm this summary, a question-by-question analysis of consultees' comments on each current question is included separately in section 6.

The DfT asks what thought has been given to splitting the sample and/or rotating questions rather than cutting many of the questions.

Some comment on the desirability of routing respondents past irrelevant questions and note that this is easier to achieve in an online questionnaire; in particular many consultees question why passengers are able to give ratings for facilities that were not available or they did not use (eg car parks, toilets, staff at unmanned stations or on driver-only trains, retail facilities, mobility assistance). One TOC states that all metrics should relate only to factors the TOC can affect.

Disability groups, the DfT, ORR and others stress the need to retain disability/accessibility questions within NRPS and that accessibility can be an issue for many who would not consider themselves disabled, including passengers travelling with buggies or heavy luggage, the elderly or those temporarily incapacitated by a short-term injury.

A few consultees suggest a review of how some or all questions are cognitively processed and understood by passengers; this might help refine questions which are currently perceived as ambiguous or capable of misunderstanding. Nevertheless a number of TOCs argue against changes to ambiguous questions where these are seen as key metrics for their businesses.

A number of the larger, primarily longer-distance TOCs and the DfT support the idea of measuring the emotional reaction to the rail journey/'trust' in the operator; others, including a number of Govia operations, oppose this. Several TOCs (notably both Virgin operations) argue for the inclusion of a 'Net Promoter Score' (NPS) question.

There are comments that the questionnaire should be 'future-proofed' to allow for changes in technology; amongst the issues mentioned

	<p>here are changes in ticket types/formats and purchase channels, the use of Wi-Fi and the collection of postcode data.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>Our opinion as to which questions should be retained in the core questionnaire and how the non-core questions should be treated are given in section 6.</p> <p>We agree with the DfT that split samples and rotating the questions different passengers answer is a valuable technique – particularly where the question does not need to be asked of the total sample. It is our intention to manage such splits and introduce rotation of the questions through the proposed supplementary questionnaires. The importance of the core questions requires them to be asked of the full sample so that accurate benchmarking across TOCs (and ‘building blocks’) can be maintained.</p> <p>We support the view that there should be as few changes to the questionnaire as possible so as to maintain time series data comparability. That said, we believe it is foolish to continue with questions that can be shown to be ambiguous; even where they are viewed as key metrics, we do not see how stakeholders can expect their actions to impact that metric if it is unclear what is being measured. We also note that cognitive testing has previously been conducted on most questions as they currently stand.</p> <p>We agree that an online questionnaire allows for more subtle and seamless routing than is possible with a paper questionnaire; however while paper retains a dominant share, the online questionnaire will need to match the paper version and the scope for more sophisticated routing within the core questionnaire is limited. If supplementary questionnaires or alternative surveys are offered solely online then clearly more can be made of the available technology for routing, filtering and rotating questions.</p> <p>We agree on the importance of accessibility as a topic and note that the current questions provide very limited information; it will be beneficial to cover accessibility issues in a supplementary questionnaire or as a separate exercise. A supplementary/-additional questionnaire could allow for the section to be expanded slightly/made more relevant and/or targeted at affected passengers to the benefit of all concerned.</p> <p>We question the value of a Net Promoter Score question for commuter railways; the concept of recommending a service where the passenger has no choice renders the question almost worthless.</p>

	<p>Other Transport Focus research has shown NPS produces almost identical rankings to what NRPS satisfaction shows.</p> <p>We are still considering the inclusion of one or more ‘trust’ questions that assess passengers’ emotional reaction to a journey and which will allow TOCs to monitor changes in attitudes towards them over time.</p> <p>We note that the existing questionnaire was subject to a qualitative review in 2011.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>As noted above (against proposal 1.1), it is now proposed that the Spring and Autumn 2016 waves are run ‘as is’ (ie no substantive changes), and the move to an updated questionnaire be deferred until Spring 2017.</p> <p>We have implemented work to generate a draft of a new core questionnaire and an initial selection of potential supplementary questionnaires as originally proposed. This work will take into account consultees’ detailed feedback on all of the current questions (as reported in section 6).</p> <p>We intend to retain a question that records passengers’ disabilities such that their experiences can be analysed; we would also see this question being used for a possible follow-up survey(s) on accessibility issues and shall explore further what appetite and funding options might exist for a specific survey on accessibility.</p> <p>We shall also now run a pilot of the core and some example supplementary questionnaires in Spring 2016 to provide further understanding of the impact of these changes.</p> <p>Subject to funding being available we hope to conduct cognitive testing of the shortened core and a number of supplementary questionnaires in conjunction with this pilot.</p> <p>The outcomes of the pilot will be reported to the ‘Experts Group’, ‘Stakeholder Forum’ and ONS, and will be published on our website. The opportunity presented by the review of the core NRPS questionnaire will be used to explore a better-designed, more attractive presentation of the questionnaire with potentially more visual elements – both on paper and online.</p>

Section 1	Questionnaire
Proposal 1.3:	Introduce a short supplementary questionnaire (or questionnaires) to be handed to selected participants to complete after the core questionnaire, if willing.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One potential way of ‘filling the gaps’ created by moving to a shorter questionnaire • Can be positioned as optional, focussing attention on the core questionnaire which should be completed as a priority • Can potentially utilise a split sample such that if offered to half the sample, two or more versions of the short questionnaire could cover different topics • May not need to be offered to every respondent depending on sample size required • Questions could vary between waves, be asked on alternate waves or be asked as a one-off to meet a specific information need.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a possible means of collecting data dropped from the core questionnaire but with a risk that sample sizes will be smaller.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary questionnaire(s) should probably be no more than a single sheet (or could be optional final page(s) in a booklet with core questions) • Please see note following proposal 1.4 below for details of and link to an example questionnaire • Technical Review has identified several question areas that may not need to be asked of the full representative sample to generate a sufficiently robust base for analysis.
Question 1.3 (1):	What are your views on the proposal to introduce a short supplementary questionnaire(s)? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation’s use of NRPS.
Question 1.3 (2):	Please indicate the questions/topics you would be keen to have included in any supplementary questionnaire. Please indicate whether they would relate to the specific journey on which the passenger is approached or to passengers’ general experiences of any recent journeys.

<p>Stakeholder feedback</p>	<p>There is a broad level of support for the proposal to introduce supplementary questionnaires although many consultees want a better understanding of how these would work in practice and what sample sizes the supplementary questionnaires deliver.</p> <p>There is a degree of opposition to the proposal ranging from the assertion that ‘if a question is worth asking then it should be on the core questionnaire’, to several mentions of concern that the supplementary questionnaires will negate any attempt to improve participation by shortening the core questionnaire.</p> <p>There is also concern at how the supplementary questionnaires would be linked to respondent profiles from the core questionnaire, how supplementary questionnaire data would be reported, how frequently questions on supplementary questionnaires would be asked and how the supplementary questionnaires would be funded.</p> <p>Various question areas were suggested for moving to a supplementary questionnaire, notably fares and ticketing (although some believe this should be kept as part of the core questionnaire), disability/accessibility, personal safety, delays, and compensation.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>The alternative to not introducing supplementary questionnaires is probably to lose the questions for which there is no space on the core questionnaire. We recognise the value of the ‘at risk’ questions and are therefore keen to evaluate whether supplementary questionnaires are a viable option to retain some of these questions.</p> <p>There is a clear need to trial the use of supplementary questionnaires to evaluate their effectiveness in supplementing data from the new core questionnaire and in maintaining time series data comparability.</p> <p>Our intention has always been that supplementary questionnaires should be linked to respondent profile/journey information from the core questionnaire so that the ability for cross analysis is retained. Similarly we would hope that where topics are covered through follow-up surveys (for example about compensation), this can be linked back to respondents’ original questionnaire/journey experience data.</p> <p>We note that suggestions for topics for supplementary questionnaires generally relate to the journey experience rather than passengers’ more general relationship with, or attitudes towards, the railways; this reinforces our belief that NRPS should remain a journey-based survey.</p>

Updated proposal

We have implemented work to generate an initial selection of potential supplementary questionnaires alongside work to draft a new core questionnaire and as originally proposed. This work will take into account consultees' detailed feedback on all of the current questions (as reported in section 6).

Our initial thinking is that the following topics might form the basis for supplementary questionnaires:

- Disability/accessibility
- Fares and ticketing
- Personal safety/policing
- Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDDD)
- Delays and compensation
- Travel to and from origin/destination stations.

We shall now pilot the use of supplementary questionnaires alongside the pilot of the new core questionnaire in Spring 2016 to determine what effect their use has on responses to the survey overall.

The outcomes of the pilot will be reported to the 'Experts Group' and 'Stakeholder Forum' and published on our website.

Section 1	Questionnaire
Proposal 1.4:	Explore options for separate additional surveys to ‘fill the gaps’ where questions are displaced from the ‘core’ questionnaire.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet growing requests for additional questions on NRPS, more frequent data collection and speedier data reporting • To replace data lost by reducing questionnaire length through alternative surveys/from alternative sources • To expand measures of the emotional experience of a journey to complement the rational measures in NRPS.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As and when alternative surveys/methodologies are identified and funding sources assured.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential step change in dataset for any questions transferred from main NRPS survey • Raises issues of data comparability, need for journey or passenger based sampling and optimum sample sizes • Funding to be secured.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see note following this proposal below for details of and link to an example questionnaire • Might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ recontacting previous NRPS respondents to take part in further surveys ○ social media analysis/sentiment tracking ○ optional, additional questionnaire pages on occasional basis/with reduced sample sizes (see proposal 1.3 above) ○ ‘continuous’ satisfaction/sentiment monitor. • Open to other suggestions.
Question 1.4 (1):	What are your views on the proposal to explore options for separate, additional surveys to ‘fill the gaps’ where questions are displaced from the ‘core’ questionnaire’? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation’s use of NRPS.
Question 1.4 (2):	What suggestions, if any, do you have for the format of any additional survey? Do you undertake/are you aware of any existing surveys that might be useful to the industry at large if potentially offered on a syndicated basis through Transport Focus?

<p>Question 1.4 (3):</p>	<p>Would you be in a position to provide customer contact data to facilitate a good quality sample while reducing costs (assuming confidentiality of shared details can be assured)?</p>
<p>Stakeholder feedback</p>	<p>The majority of the consultees were open to the idea of additional/complementary surveys to ‘fill the gaps’ left by a shortened core and the proposed supplementary questionnaires; many noted that this would be dependent on the questions, survey methodology, sample size, ability to link to NRPS data, funding, and so on.</p> <p>Those opposing the proposal generally did so for similar reasons; there were also concerns over passenger survey fatigue.</p> <p>A number noted the value of NRPS questionnaires being distributed during passengers’ journeys and capturing ‘in the moment’ experiences; it was noted that alternative surveys would probably not offer this benefit and as such might be better suited to non-journey-specific matters.</p> <p>Other existing related surveys that stakeholders were aware of included proprietary surveys/mystery shopping exercises conducted by TOCs and TfL, and an Institute of Customer Service (ICS) survey that a number of consultees subscribe to.</p> <p>ATOC is reported to be undertaking/trialling surveys on assisted travel and, jointly with ORR, Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD); ORR is reported to be trialling research into complaint handling.</p> <p>A few representations have been made to us by specific TOCs to explore whether any efficiencies can be created through co-operation where they conduct additional waves of research/similar surveys to NRPS. These discussions are ongoing and regarded as commercially sensitive.</p> <p>There is an encouraging level of willingness amongst TOCs towards providing customer contact details for sampling purposes – although many rightfully note the need to check data protection issues regarding such collaboration. Several note that their databases are specific to complaints, season ticket holders, online ticket purchasers, assisted travel and so on.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>Additional surveys may be the only way to provide continuing coverage of some current NRPS question areas. While this is not an</p>

	<p>immediate priority, we are keen to understand what options exist and may be worthy of exploring further.</p> <p>There are a number of useful suggestions from consultees which we shall look to explore over time. Funding of any additional surveys is clearly a significant concern.</p>
Updated proposal	<p>We intend to explore various suggestions/opportunities once it becomes clear which questions cannot be accommodated within the revised NRPS framework or data sourced elsewhere.</p>

Note regarding all proposed questionnaire changes above

We acknowledge that this group of questionnaire changes (1.1 to 1.4) will likely need detailed consideration of the individual questions. For the present we have categorised the questions from the Spring 2015 and Autumn 2014 NRPS questionnaires into four colour-coded groups as follows:

Green – questions to remain in the 'core' questionnaire

Yellow – questions to be asked in the proposed supplementary questionnaires

Orange – proposed deletions from NRPS but for which we plan to seek alternative sources for the information

Red – proposed deletions.

The questionnaire may be downloaded from:

<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/nrps-proposed-questionnaire-changes>.

The following detailed changes (indicated in the questionnaire with a blue highlight) are proposed. Question numbers below refer to the Spring questionnaire. Example questionnaire is from East Croydon but changes will be applied nationally.

- Survey introduction and closing wording to be reviewed
- Q1c – please note this question is used to reject ineligible returns, not for analysis
- Q8a – we propose moving this towards the end of the questionnaire
- Q15 – addition of 'Gold Card' as a code
- Q16 – the code 'The facilities and services at the station (e.g toilets, shops, cafes, etc.)' is too amorphous to be of value. A separate code has been added in recent years for 'The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available'. We propose to change the present code to be more focussed and actionable: 'The toilet facilities at the station'
- Q23a – (i) drop the current code 'Cleanliness' and replace it with the two variables currently asked separately at Q24 and which duplicate it: 'The cleanliness of the inside of the train' and 'The cleanliness of the outside of the train'
- Q23a – (ii) drop the ambiguous code 'The ease of being able to get on and off the train' as it is unclear whether this refers to crowding levels on the train or a passenger's mobility issues
- Q24 – we see no reason for these two codes to stand alone and propose including them in the battery in Q23a (where they will replace the duplicated 'Cleanliness' code)
- Q25 – replace the current single 'Yes' code with two options that provide more detail: 'Yes, and I used the facility' and 'Yes, but I did not use the facility'
- Q30 – replace the respondent-defined assessment of 'minor' and 'major delay' with pre-coded delay durations of up to 5 minutes, 6-10 mins, 11-20 mins, 21-30 mins, 31-60 mins and over 60 minutes

- Q32 – replace this question with the pre-coded delay durations proposed for Q30
- Q35 – renumber as part a) and insert a new question as part b) to measure passengers' emotional experience of the journey (potentially using 'smiley' faces or some other non-verbal measure)
- Q67 – condense the answer codes to just the four categories (as shown in bold) plus 'Other'
- Recontact details – drop telephone number.

Section 2	Data collection
Proposal 2.1:	<p>Pilot the offer of a refreshed online option for completion of the questionnaire (while retaining the paper option for those preferring that mode).</p> <p>Minimal take-up of existing online offer. Refresh should modernise the way the survey is offered and update the 'feel' of the survey which may improve representativeness of responses.</p>
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost overall sample size • Boost representation of younger cohorts, in particular males (and potentially ethnic minorities) • Improve weighting efficiency (for example, by reducing the weights required for young males) • Shorter questionnaire may be a more viable option for online implementation • To be designed for completion on smartphone, tablet or PC • Provides passengers with choice and should improve take-up • Gives the survey a more modern 'feel' • Potential saving on print and data entry but balanced against programming/hosting costs.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot in Spring 2016 with a view to adopting in Spring 2017 along with other major changes.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online completion may result in some passengers giving different responses to what is seen with the paper questionnaire • Online completions may take place some time after the journey although steps can be taken to encourage a quick return and to focus attention on the journey when the passenger was approached (as with our Tram Passenger Survey (TPS) – see below) • Some risk that passengers provide spurious email addresses or do not (fully) complete the subsequent online questionnaire (but not seen as an issue with TPS).
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A previous pilot of an online option for NRPS resulted in only minimal take-up but this used the full twelve-page questionnaire • The Tram Passenger Survey trialled a number of approaches and now successfully offers passengers the choice of paper or online questionnaires. Its methodology (passengers providing their e-mail address to fieldworkers on the station so that they can subsequently be emailed a one-time survey link) would be the basis for a new NRPS pilot.

<p>Question 2.1 (1):</p>	<p>What are your views on the proposal to pilot a refreshed online option for completion of the questionnaire? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS.</p>
<p>Question 2.1 (2):</p>	<p>Do you have any specific experience of transitioning from paper to online, including benefits achievable and pitfalls to be avoided, that we might benefit from?</p>
<p>Stakeholder feedback</p>	<p>The vast majority support the idea of expanding the online option for NRPS; many consultees gave details of their successful adoption of online. Just two TOCs oppose the proposal.</p> <p>The main benefit is seen as matching data collection to passengers' present behaviours and expectations. Consultees' expectations include an increase in the number of respondents and their representativeness (especially younger people), speeding up of reporting and possibly a reduction in costs.</p> <p>The majority of concerns relate to an online methodology <i>per se</i> and to how it would affect NRPS in terms of participation, matching paper and online, time series data comparability and quality control.</p> <p>Mention is made of the need to ensure the online survey works on all platforms – smartphones, tablets and PCs; also that completion should not be reliant on maintaining an Internet connection.</p> <p>Several TOCs suggest they might be able to assist by promoting the online survey to their passengers, although concern is also voiced about respondent selection in general and potential bias in sample sources such as TOC customer data in particular. There is also concern about multiple respondents completing the online survey from the one invitation.</p> <p>Several consultees reiterate the importance of maintaining a paper option for those unable/unwilling to use online. A number point to the possible requirement for assistive technologies for disabled respondents.</p> <p>A good number point to the need for the paper and online versions to match and for the data to be combined, while a couple comment on the need for online version to be simple and quick to complete to meet the expectations of those used to a digital environment. The point that a shorter core questionnaire will be needed for online to work is repeated.</p>

	<p>There is a particular concern that the online version will lose the ‘immediacy’ of data recorded on the paper questionnaire on the assumption it will be filled in some time after the journey occurred.</p> <p>HS1 notes that an online version would make it easier to offer alternative language versions of the questionnaire.</p> <p>A couple of consultees seem to assume that the online version would be completed contemporaneously on a handheld device provided by the fieldworker sparking concerns about fieldworkers introducing bias in the way responses are recorded.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>The proposal is to <u>pilot</u> an online option and that passengers would be offered a <u>choice</u> between paper and online. One goal of the pilot would be a comparison of the profiles of paper and online respondents, being alert for any differences in responses, and providing a basis for any measures to mitigate these and any potential effect on time series data.</p> <p>We agree that, at the present time, the survey must be offered both on paper and electronically to ensure maximum participation and representation. We agree that the online questionnaire should be ‘mobile friendly’ (including tablets) and that, ideally, the process should not risk losing survey data if the Internet connection is lost.</p> <p>We note stakeholders’ concerns at any delay in passengers completing the online survey. This is an issue for examination in the pilot but we note that our experience with the Tram Passenger Survey (TPS) has been that repeatedly inserting in the online questionnaire the date/day part of the journey when the passenger was approached appears to be successful in focussing their attention on that journey.</p> <p>We anticipate that fieldworkers’ use of handheld devices to record passengers’ responses would be an inefficient use of their time and lead to an increase in the cost of the survey. On the other hand, recording email contact details on handhelds would enable invitations to participate in the online survey to be sent within as short a timeframe as possible.</p> <p>We believe it is critical that passengers are sampled and approached according to a defined plan so as to be representative of passengers at large. Accordingly we reject the use of external databases (TOC customer databases, survey panel companies, etc), or the provision of links (URLs, QR codes, etc) to the online survey. We are open to consideration of a co-ordinated PR campaign to encourage</p>

	<p>passengers to complete a questionnaire <u>if approached by a fieldworker</u> and to promote the benefits of NRPS, but feel this would need to be implemented in a consistent manner nationally.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We intend to pilot the online option alongside the planned core/supplementary questionnaire trial in Spring 2016.</p> <p>The outcomes of the pilot will be reported to the ‘Experts Group’, ‘Stakeholder Forum’ and ONS. The change would then be implemented in Spring 2017 alongside all other proposed changes.</p> <p>We also note the ongoing importance of data protection and security measures given the increased use of online data collection (particularly in the light of recent high profile media coverage of data breaches).</p>

Section 2	Data collection
Proposal 2.2:	Increase the number of waves of fieldwork or move to continuous data collection and monthly reporting. To allow more frequent reporting and monitoring of performance than with the current two unevenly-spaced waves.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRPS currently offers two waves of fieldwork designated ‘Spring’ and ‘Autumn’ (although the Spring wave might more accurately be called ‘Winter’) • The waves are not evenly spaced across the year and while fieldworks date vary (particularly according to the timing of Easter) the two waves may be less than ten weeks apart • Two waves fail to provide sufficient opportunities to react to and take remedial action where improvements are shown to be desirable • Several TOCs already undertake supplementary surveys/waves to provide more frequent data.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on stakeholder interest and funding.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs • We have to either work within the constraint of the current ‘unbalanced’ timing of the existing waves, or risk impacting data continuity by moving away from the current timings • Continuous data collection.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options could be for four waves per year each with similar sample sizes at present or for continuous data collection with monthly reporting of a moving annual total (eg previous 12 months).
Question 2.2 (1):	What interest, if any, do you have in moving to four waves of fieldwork per year? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation’s use of NRPS (where appropriate).
Question 2.2 (2):	If interested in additional waves of fieldwork, how many waves in total each year would you consider appropriate?
Question 2.2 (3):	In what circumstances, if at all, would you be prepared to consider transitioning the timing of the current two waves of fieldwork to a more even spacing across the year?
Question 2.2 (4):	What interest, if any, do you have in moving to continuous data collection with monthly reporting? Please provide your rationale

	having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).
Question 2.2 (5):	In what circumstances would your organisation be prepared to consider contributing to the funding of additional waves or continuous data collection?
Stakeholder feedback	<p>There is considerable support and little opposition for additional waves or continuous fieldwork, although a number of consultees were perfectly satisfied with the current two waves.</p> <p>The DfT fully supports additional fieldwork and has asked Transport Focus to formulate detailed proposals; Transport Scotland notes that the Scotrail franchise is now based on four waves of NRPS (ie two additional bespoke waves); TfL generally undertakes its surveys quarterly.</p> <p>Benefits are seen to be, amongst other things, better seasonal coverage, increased representation of infrequent/leisure travellers in the summer months and at Christmas/New Year, smoother transitions in the data across the year, isolation of anomalies during fieldwork, and less temptation for TOCs to target improvements during fieldwork.</p> <p>More frequent reporting is expected to provide more actionable feedback and to improve TOC accountability. Some say it will enable the impact of initiatives to be monitored more swiftly, while others express concern that initiatives take time to have an effect and that too frequent fieldwork may allow insufficient time for changes to take effect.</p> <p>Many TOCs note that they undertake additional research alongside or in between NRPS waves. Some suggest additional NRPS waves might replace their own proprietary research, others see additional waves as unnecessary duplication and a couple raise the issue of passenger 'survey overload'.</p> <p>A majority suggest a move to four waves of fieldwork per year; a smaller number support continuous data collection (or 13 railway period waves) and a couple suggest three waves. Many say that reporting would need to be speeded up if more frequent fieldwork is to be of any value.</p> <p>Where there is support for continuous fieldwork, stakeholders are split on whether reporting should also be continuous or based on quarterly (or half-yearly) periods. There appears to be some concern that</p>

	<p>stakeholders may not have the resource to handle more frequent reporting.</p> <p>Understandably there are concerns at time series data consistency (particularly where <i>NRPS</i> is part of a franchise agreement) especially if the timing of the current two waves is altered. Some prefer two additional waves to be ‘fitted in’ around the existing timings to maintain comparability on those two waves. A few want to maintain the practice of avoiding holiday periods.</p> <p>Several TOCs are concerned at the cost implications of more frequent data collection including a number of boost funders such as ATOC. Some suggest the money would be better spent on increasing sample sizes; others suggest spreading fieldwork evenly across the year while maintaining bi-annual reporting.</p> <p>Some express concern that NRPS data tends to be ‘flat’ and that more frequent reporting may show little difference wave on wave. One consultee questions how this will be seen by the media.</p> <p>In terms of contributing to the funding of additional waves of NRPS, a substantial number of stakeholders are prepared to discuss this further with Transport Focus (and/or the DfT as part of a new franchise award); few rule this out completely. Some note that additional NRPS waves might substitute their own proprietary surveys while others say that funding their own surveys would mean that could not afford to contribute to NRPS.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>We are encouraged by stakeholders’ openness and preparedness to discuss means of maximising the value of our joint spend in this area.</p> <p>This will clearly be a commercial arrangement and subject to individual negotiation between the TOC, Transport Focus and the DfT/Transport Scotland.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>Transport Focus will undertake further work to explore the possibilities for additional waves or continuous fieldwork. We will formulate proposals for discussion with the DfT, and subsequently the ‘Experts Group’ and ONS, and presentation to the ‘Stakeholder Forum’. Ideally any change would be implemented alongside all others from Spring 2017.</p>

Section 3	Immediate technical change
Proposal 3.1:	<p>Generally move to a standardised definition of routes ('building blocks') based on train origin and destination rather than groups of stations.</p> <p>('Building blocks' are routes, or series of routes, regarded as an entity for management purposes by a TOC).</p>
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistency in sampling across the survey/all TOCs • Improve comparability of results across TOCs.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of time series data consistency for those TOCs not using origin/destination (but see comment below).
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stansted Express</i> may need to remain as currently defined • It should still be possible to provide comparable reporting for TOCs using station groupings.
Question 3.1 (1):	<p>What are your views on the proposal to generally move to a standardised definition of routes ('building blocks') based on train origin and destination? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).</p>
Stakeholder feedback	<p>The majority of stakeholders were supportive or unconcerned by this proposal. There was general support for a consistent approach to defining 'building blocks'. A couple of TOCs where existing practice does not follow the standard pattern objected.</p> <p>The main concern expressed was over the potential loss of valuable time series data. A few consultees want to understand how this would affect weighting of the data.</p> <p>There was limited concern that franchise performance is measured on the basis of the existing 'building block' definitions.</p> <p>Several consultees expressed a desire to see more granular (eg route level or service group) data and/or the use of Network Rail route designations.</p>
Transport Focus comments	<p>'Building blocks' are primarily a reporting artefact; while weighting by station size is carried out at 'building block' level we believe any change to the 'building blocks' should have no impact on this.</p>

	<p>Standardising the 'building blocks' for reporting purposes ensures that any comparison across TOCs is on an identical basis as far as 'building blocks' are concerned.</p> <p>It will still be possible to analyse and produce custom reports by other groupings – including specific stations and/or routes (assuming that sufficient passengers were interviewed on these stations/routes). The proposed change does not impact the likelihood or otherwise of individual stations/routes being covered.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We have concluded that this cannot reasonably be implemented in Spring 2016 and will be better left until Autumn 2016 and implemented in parallel with our two-yearly review of sampling and weighting.</p> <p>We shall engage with individual TOCs to agree revised 'building blocks' where these are currently non-standard. At this time we can discuss alternative parallel reporting formats using the old 'building block' definitions or other station groups as desired.</p>

Section 3	Immediate technical change
Proposal 3.2:	Provide a more representative GB sample by moving to a more equitable sample distribution by TOC.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current TOC samples are based on historical rationale that no longer reflect current TOC territories and results in an inequitable distribution by current TOC (eg FGW based on old GW main line, Thames Valley commuter and Wessex franchise territories) • Will provide a more representative sample at GB level in line with best practice • Sampling error would be more consistent across TOCs • Will provide a more equitable distribution of resource by TOC • See table below for suggested new sample distribution by TOC.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Spring 2016.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced sample sizes for some territories; more equitable samples for others without the need to boost the sample.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see suggested sample distribution below • The option would remain to commission additional interviews to generate more robust samples across the board and in particular where the core sample is reduced.
Question 3.2 (1):	What are your views on the proposal to provide a more representative GB sample by moving to a more equitable sample distribution by TOC? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).
Question 3.2 (2):	Would you expect to fund (or continue to fund) a boost sample to generate a more robust sample for any territory you have an interest in?

Suggested new NRPS sample distribution by TOC					
TOC	% share of passenger volumes	No of 'building blocks'	Current sample	Suggested sample	% of total sample
Abellio Greater Anglia	4.8	5	1600	1300	5
Arriva Trains Wales	1.9	5	1000	1000	4
c2c	2.3	2	1000	1000	4
Chiltern Railways	1.4	2	1000	1000	4
CrossCountry Trains	2.9	6	1000	1200	5
East Midlands Trains	1.5	3	1000	1000	4
Great Western Railway (First Great Western)	6.2	3	2750	1500	6
First Transpennine Express	1.8	3	1000	1000	4
Govia Thameslink Railway	18.7	7	3500	3300	13
Grand Central	0.1	2	500	500	2
Heathrow Connect	0.2	1	500	500	2
Heathrow Express	0.4	1	500	500	2
Hull Trains	0	1	500	500	2
London Midland	4	3	1000	1000	4
London Overground	9.9	5	1200	1600	6
Merseyrail	2.7	2	500	700	3
Northern	5.9	5	1000	1400	5
Scotrail	5.4	4	1000	1300	5
Southeastern	10.5	3	1500	1500	6
South West Trains	13.9	4	1750	2000	8
TfL Rail	2.3	1	200	200	1
Virgin East Coast	1.2	4	1000	1000	4
Virgin Trains	2.0	6	1000	1000	4
TOTAL	100	78	26000	26000	100

Colours indicate increase, decrease or no change.

Stakeholder feedback

There is almost universal support for a consistent approach to sample size according to passenger volumes.

A number of consultees commented on the need for sample sizes to reflect the detail of any new franchise awards and to be monitored over time; also that this change should not disadvantage franchise holders as regard franchise monitoring.

Unsurprisingly, TOCs seeing an increase in their proposed sample size welcome this; there is some concern that sample sizes at 'building block' level are too small and a desire to see these increased.

Great Western Railway (which sample has become disproportionate over time) has concerns that this will lead to overall scores being driven by a smaller number of stations and thus not fully representative of the variety of stations on the network.

There is some concern that with the smaller samples and the tendency for certain larger stations in particular to be sampled each wave, it may be possible for a TOC to focus efforts (eg cleaning) on those stations in an attempt to improve their overall scores.

One consultee questioned why smaller TOCs have a minimum sample size of 500 (and TfL Rail 200) which is disproportionate to their passenger volumes.

Another questioned why sample size is not more directly related to passenger volumes – and specifically why Govia Thameslink Railway, Southeastern and South West Trains do not make up more of the total NRPS sample.

One TOC would like to see separate samples of station and train experiences for each TOC rather than the current combined sample.

This TOC would like this to represent 'their' trains and 'their' stations in each case, thus excluding passengers on other operators' trains over 'their' 'building block' route and 'their' passenger's views of other operators' stations thus delivering what might be seen as more actionable results for it.

There was a single suggestion for the sample to be structured by Government Office region.

	<p>There is some concern at the potential impact on time series data and how this might be handled.</p> <p>There was limited appetite for funding boost samples; this is seen as a commercial arrangement and subject to individual negotiation between the TOC and Transport Focus.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>We believe that a base sample of 500 should remain as the minimum to ensure continued statistical robustness (subject to NRPS funding remaining at current levels).</p> <p>The TfL Rail sample maintains the sample size of the Greater Anglia 'building block' which it replaces and will be kept under review and revised in line with the introduction of Crossrail services of which it will become a part.</p> <p>While passenger volumes should form the basis for sampling, and TOC sample sizes need to be sufficient to cover the number of 'building blocks' for that TOC, there would be a disproportionate increase in costs if sample sizes were to be increased beyond this level.</p> <p>We note that results are already reported by Government Office region.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We accept that sample sizes should be reviewed in line with any future franchise awards and have concluded that this change will be best implemented in Autumn 2016 in parallel with our two-yearly review of sampling and weighting. As with changes to the 'building blocks', we shall be happy to discuss the impact of sample size changes with the individual TOCs affected.</p> <p>We remain open to discussion with any stakeholder regarding boost samples for whatever purpose.</p>

Section 3	Immediate technical change
Proposal 3.3:	<p>Provide greater sensitivity in the data by highlighting ‘very satisfied’/‘very dissatisfied’ ratings (rather than amalgamating ‘very’/‘fairly’ as at present).</p> <p>Potential to provide increased sensitivity where scores are close to the maximum.</p>
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will provide greater sensitivity to changes in passenger satisfaction and associated target-setting • Current amalgam of ‘very satisfied’ and ‘fairly satisfied’ provides insufficient sensitivity for TOCs/metrics with scores approaching 100 per cent; same can be expected to apply to ‘bottom box’ • Is more readily understood than adopting a mean score • Is less disruptive than potentially moving to a 10-point scale (in place of the current five-point) with its associated challenge of labelling those points/using a numeric scale and loss of time series data.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Autumn 2015 data as a first step.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step change in dataset, but can still be reported at amalgamated level as well.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back data can be re-analysed to provide updated time series • Key driver analysis to be run on top box scores for comparison.
Question 3.3 (1):	<p>What are your views on the proposal to provide greater sensitivity in the data by highlighting ‘very satisfied’/‘very dissatisfied’ ratings? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation’s use of NRPS (where appropriate).</p>
Stakeholder feedback	<p>Opinion is divided with regard to this proposal. Those supporting it see it as providing more granularity in the data and more sensitivity in measuring performance.</p> <p>Many consultees say that they would want to see both ‘top/bottom box’ and ‘top/bottom <u>two</u> boxes’ reported (in part to ensure time series data are retained).</p> <p>The greatest area of concern is how the use of ‘top box’ data will be seen by the media and other commentators and how it might be used to continue to denigrate rail’s performance. ATOC is particularly clear in its opposition to this proposal.</p>

	<p>There is some concern that franchise agreements and historical trends are based on combined very/fairly scores.</p> <p>There are calls (including from TfL) to switch to a ten/eleven-point scale and/or use mean scores which some feel are better for monitoring change over time.</p> <p>One consultee points to differences in eg the age and condition of stock/stations potentially being reflected more directly if using top box scores and questions whether results might need to be weighted to account for this.</p> <p>Another calls for the removal of 'neutral' ratings in an attempt to force respondents 'off the fence' and into giving a more meaningful response.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>We have always seen 'top box' reporting as additional to the current aggregated scores.</p> <p>We cannot support a change to ten-point scales as we can see no viable means of maintaining data comparability across time. We also believe that ten-point scales provide respondents with a more onerous task.</p> <p>We note that the full breakdown of scores across the five-point scales is already included in our TOC reports.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We see no reason not to trial 'top box' reporting as a means of providing greater sensitivity in the data.</p> <p>In the first instance such data would be added to the Stakeholder Report and not the full report. We shall look to introduce this from Spring 2016.</p> <p>We acknowledge the potential risks in publicly reporting 'top box' scores and suggest that whether and how these are made more widely available is a matter for discussion by the 'Experts Group'.</p> <p>We are happy to discuss further with interested parties whether providing mean score data in bespoke reports is worth the effort involved in generating these.</p>

Note regarding all proposed medium-term technical changes below

We acknowledge that this group of technical changes (4.1 to 4.3) has the potential for substantial impact on time series data comparability. While this is a consideration, we nevertheless believe that it is time to restore some of the principles of the sample as originally conceived and that it may be necessary to accept a small ‘step change’ and move to a refreshed design.

Our updated proposal to consolidate all changes at one point in time (Spring 2017) means that this can be done in one step rather than making gradual changes over time.

It was intended that many of these changes would make use of updated data from specific questions to be asked by the DfT on the *National Rail Travel Survey* (NRTS)². It has since become apparent that updated NRTS data is not going to be available within an appropriate timeframe for NRPS purposes. Much of the current NRTS data-set is at least 10 years old.

We plan to discuss with the NRPS ‘Experts Group’ whether the existing NRTS data can be validated for our purposes or whether an alternative source of sampling/weighting data can be identified.

We shall look to explore various means to mitigate the impact of any changes and the scale of loss in terms of comparability. As an example of the potential impact of changes like these, it has previously been estimated that moving to weighting by ticket type rather than journey purpose could result in a one percentage point drop in overall satisfaction.

Mitigation might include ‘parallel running’ (using both old and new methodologies in parallel) to compare and calibrate the old and new approaches, and retrospective re-analysis (where possible) of existing data using any new approach.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-rail-travel-survey-overview-report>

Section 4	Medium-term technical change
Proposal 4.1:	<p>Two-stage sampling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random sample at stations to provide representative sample of GB passengers • Top-up (boost) samples at stations and on train to achieve TOC and route ('building block') targets. <p>Current practice attempts to generate increased sample sizes by adding to the original design with potential for conflict between design considerations and practicality.</p>
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a core survey that is fully representative of the railway • Overcomes current challenge of balancing sample sizes required to give desired representation of TOCs and 'building blocks' at certain stations • Facilitates boost sampling (including on train) without compromising quality of core survey • Simplifies fieldwork/shift allocation process • Both samples can be rolled up to provide a comparable sample to that currently provided.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2017 once data from an updated <i>National Rail Travel Survey</i> (NRTS) are available (current dataset is over 10 years old) • Current sample of around 30,000 completed questionnaires likely to be split - two thirds from core sample and one third through boosts.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential loss of time series data consistency, although the authors of the Technical Report regard this as inconsequential.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see note, above, regarding all proposed medium-term technical changes.
Question 4.1 (1):	<p>What are your views on the proposal for two stage sampling? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).</p>
Stakeholder feedback	<p>The overall view is that this is a positive move or, in some instances, is seen as having no impact on any specific TOC stakeholder.</p> <p>Many consultees support the desire for a sample that is fully representative at GB level. A few TOCs are more concerned that the TOC-level sample is representative.</p>

	<p>A single TOC opposes the change because of data consistency concerns.</p> <p>ATOC and a number of other stakeholders chose to demur to Transport Focus' recommendation based on our understanding of the underlying statistical principles.</p> <p>A number of consultees support the idea of the boost sample being undertaken on train such that more stations are included in the coverage.</p> <p>First Hull Trains notes that it does not operate any stations and feels that on-train questionnaire distribution is better able to target their passengers.</p> <p>A number of consultees request more information as to how this would affect their results and what it means for time series data consistency.</p> <p>There is limited support at this time for bespoke boost samples to cover specific stations/routes and a view that this would be subject to further discussion over funding.</p> <p>As with all changes affecting franchise monitoring, there is a concern that this change should not disadvantage the franchise holder.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>The proposal stems from the detailed Technical Review of NRPS undertaken by RMA; as such we believe it is in the best interests of all stakeholders.</p> <p>The proportion of boost sample questionnaires to be handed out at stations and on trains is clearly a matter for further consideration and discussion given the circumstances of each TOC's operation.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We intend to proceed with our proposal which received broad support and note that the change will result in statistically more representative data. However we have concluded that this will be better left until all changes can be consolidated in Spring 2017.</p> <p>We shall engage with individual TOCs regarding the nature of the boost sample within their operation.</p> <p>We shall examine ways to mitigate any effect on time series data and present these to the 'Experts Group' and 'Stakeholder Forum'.</p>

Section 4	Medium-term technical change
Proposal 4.2:	Sample and weight journeys by time of day and adjust distribution of fieldwork shifts across the day. Current allocation of shifts is based on historical data and experience.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will update the current methodology to provide a better spread of shifts and interviews across the day • It should improve weighting efficiency • It might further improve balance of outbound and return journeys.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2017 once data from an updated <i>National Rail Travel Survey</i> (NRTS) are available (current dataset is over 10 years old).
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential loss of time series data consistency.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see note preceding 4.1, above, regarding all proposed medium-term technical changes • It should be possible to model the effects of this change on historical data to understand the likely impact, otherwise it may be necessary to run a pilot exercise to ascertain this.
Question 4.2 (1):	What are your views on the proposal to sample and weight journeys by time of day and to adjust distribution of fieldwork shifts across the day? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).
Stakeholder feedback	<p>There is broad support for a sampling approach that more accurately reflects travel patterns and passenger volumes including passengers opting to travel off peak for cheaper fares and commuters working more flexible hours. A number of TOCs note that this is how they sample their own surveys.</p> <p>As with many of the changes, there is concern at the impact on time series data and a desire for this to be understood/mitigated through piloting/modelling.</p> <p>Two TOCs oppose the change; one because of data consistency concerns, the other is concerned about 24/7 coverage and how to allow for this in weighting.</p> <p>There is a request for reporting by time of day as well as for reporting to take account of which station facilities are open at the time in question and whether staff are present.</p>

	<p>There is a suggestion that on-train questionnaire distribution may be more efficient/representative at less busy times.</p> <p>One consultee notes that there is a risk in relying on the DfT to update the NRTS.</p> <p>One consultee notes that sampling and weighting details should be made available along with the results of the survey.</p> <p>There is a suggestion that the fieldworker shifts during which questionnaires are distributed to be extended given increasing passenger numbers travelling very early or very late.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>The proposal stems from the detailed Technical Review of NRPS undertaken by RMA; as such we believe it is in the best interests of all stakeholders.</p> <p>As currently proposed, we do not envisage any lengthening of the hours during which questionnaires are distributed. This is a health and safety/cost issue; fieldworkers working more unsocial hours would need to work in pairs which has obvious cost implications.</p> <p>Additional bespoke analysis, such as by time of day, is always a possibility (if sample sizes are large enough) which we are happy to discuss with individual stakeholders.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We intend to proceed with our proposal and believe that the change will result in statistically more representative data.</p> <p>We have confirmed that the DfT will not be in a position to update NRTS within the given timescale. We shall discuss the viability of using existing NRTS data or adopting an alternative strategy with the 'Experts Group'.</p> <p>We shall look to model the potential impact of this change and examine ways to mitigate any effect on time series data and present these to the 'Experts Group' and 'Stakeholder Forum'.</p>

Section 4	Medium-term technical change
Proposal 4.3:	<p>Separate design and non-response weighting processes and weight by ticket type rather than journey purpose as currently.</p> <p>Current practice does not differentiate design weighting (which corrects for systematic differences in the probability of being sampled) and non-response weighting (eg correcting for differential response rates by age and sex).</p>
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current process does not follow best practice • Weighting for non-response would aim to correct for different response rates by age and gender (assumes a source of reliable demographic data such as NRTS) • Separating the weighting processes should improve weighting efficiency and accuracy • While nominally weighting by journey purpose, purpose is inferred from ticket type; it will be more accurate to calculate the weighting by ticket type.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2017.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential loss of time series data consistency.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see note preceding 4.1, above, regarding all proposed medium-term technical changes • It should be possible to model the effects of this change on historical data to understand the likely impact, otherwise it may be necessary to run a pilot exercise to ascertain this.
Question 4.3 (1):	What are your views on the proposal to separate the design and non-response weighting processes? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).
Question 4.3 (2):	What are your views on the proposal to weight for non-response? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).
Question 4.3 (3):	What are your views on the proposal to weight by ticket type rather than journey purpose? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).

<p>Stakeholder feedback - split weighting</p>	<p>The majority of consultees either support the proposal to split design and non-response weighting or say they have no opinion; a number observe that they do not feel they have the statistical expertise to comment.</p>
<p>- non-response weighting</p>	<p>While a majority of consultees either support the proposal to weight for non-response or say they have no opinion, there is a level of concern.</p>
<p>- weighting by ticket type rather than journey purpose</p>	<p>ORR points out that with the NRPS response rate of 32 per cent there is a clear need to understand the nature of those who do respond and to correct for any differences against passengers in general. Others point to the need to know who is under or over-represented.</p> <p>Others comment on the need for accurate data on which to base any weighting and question whether NRTS is appropriate/fit for purpose particularly as it is itself a sample survey.</p> <p>One TOC does not see any benefit in non-response weighting and opposes the change.</p>
<p>- weighting by ticket type rather than journey purpose</p>	<p>The proposal to weight by ticket type rather than journey purpose is more controversial. Supporters generally see ticket type as something on which comprehensive industry/internal data is held and against which survey data could be compared.</p> <p>Opponents tend to value the ability to analyse by journey purpose and one feels that it is an easier question for passengers to respond to.</p> <p>Others want to see the data analysed both ways with a number arguing that both might be used in the weighting process.</p> <p>There is concern that ticket types are already very varied and in a state of flux. Use of smart ticketing, and in particular Oyster in the London area, presents a challenge in correctly identifying the type of ticket/product used (eg season ticket or pay-as-you-go).</p> <p>A number of TOCs rearticulate Transport Focus' concern that it is difficult/impossible to infer journey purpose from ticket type (as generally happens at present) with, for example, many business travellers compelled by company policy to use Saver tickets. However, one TOC uses this as an argument for opposing the proposal to switch to ticket type as a weighting mechanism.</p>

<p>- in general</p>	<p>TfL calls for the retention of weighting by journey purpose arguing that this is a key determinant of passenger opinion. TfL suggests consulting stakeholders to determine a reliable source of journey purpose data to be used as a basis for weighting. ORR asks whether NRTS or NTS might provide a suitable source.</p> <p>Looking at the weighting proposals in general, Network Rail asks whether there is a risk that in designing ‘the perfect survey’ comparability is lost ‘with what’s gone before’.</p> <p>One TOC maintains its opposition to all the proposed technical changes because of data consistency concerns.</p> <p>One TOC comments that weighting should not become ‘a dominant adjustment factor’.</p> <p>One consultee repeats the suggestion that efforts should be made to reduce neutral response options so as the data gives more direction as to passengers’ experiences.</p> <p>The DfT, ATOC and other consultees ask for modelling or piloting to be undertaken to understand the effect of weighting changes (and in particular the possible change to weighting by ticket type rather than journey purpose) on the data. ORR suggests a period of parallel running; others express concern at how any change to the data is communicated and at how the media may report any change in the data arising because of the updated weighting process.</p> <p>ORR suggests seeking advice from the DfT’s Surveys Group regarding its experience when changing weighting procedures.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>The proposal stems from the detailed Technical Review of NRPS; as such we believe it warrants serious consideration.</p> <p>There should be no concern that analysis by journey purpose would no longer be possible if weighting was changed to ticket type; cross analysis by stated journey purpose (current Q4) would continue to be available.</p> <p>Some consultees may not have fully comprehended that currently while NRPS is generally, nominally weighted by journey purpose, the journey purpose is inferred from the stated ticket type and not from stated journey purpose. This is because, historically, we have found no authoritative source of journey purpose data to use for weighting.</p>

	<p>Industry ticket sales data (Lennon) generally provides the current basis for weighting with different ticket types being used as proxies for journey purpose (so, season ticket = commuting). We contend that it is more truthful/transparent to weight by ticket type (using Lennon data without inferred journey purpose) and to be clear that this is the basis for weighting.</p> <p>We acknowledge stakeholders' concerns to understand the impact of these proposed changes on the data and in particular comparability of time series data. We agree that, as intended, work should be undertaken to model the effect of these changes and to mitigate any loss of direct comparability.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We intend to proceed with our proposal to separate design and non-response weighting, and to implement a specific non-response weighting process. We wish to review and consult further with regard to weighting by ticket type rather than by journey purpose.</p> <p>We are keen to identify any potential authoritative source of journey purpose data that might be used for weighting purposes and shall explore this further. If a suitable source of journey purpose data is identified we shall take further technical advice as to whether and how to use this (either in place of or in conjunction with ticket type data) to deliver a statistically robust approach that is aligned with current best practice.</p> <p>If no suitable source of journey purpose data is found, we remain of the view that we should consider overt weighting by ticket type rather than inferred journey purpose in the interests of honesty and transparency. In so doing we shall bear in mind likely changes to ticketing in coming years.</p> <p>Subject to funding being available, we shall commission work to model the impact of all proposed weighting changes on historical data. This will inform the final decision as to how to proceed and potentially provide a store of revised time series data for future comparisons.</p> <p>The issue of weighting by ticket type and/or journey purpose and the outcome of the modelling work will be presented to the 'Experts Group', 'Stakeholder Forum' and ONS for further discussion prior to any final decision being made.</p>

Section 5	Governance
Proposal 5.1:	Establish a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) for an initial period of two years.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first instance, to advise us when implementing the proposed changes and in considering issues raised during the consultation process. • To monitor and discuss the impact of the currently proposed changes and others that may arise during this time. • Potentially to provide a forum for ongoing discussion of NRPS matters amongst the survey's user base.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial input as part of the consultation process • Group to meet around February 2016 (following publication of Autumn 2015 results), then as required but potentially twice-yearly for around two years while the changes are implemented.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SAG is an advisory body and final decisions rest with Transport Focus.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Focus will invite around 20 key stakeholders to provide a representative on the SAG • Potential SAG members might be drawn from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Department for Transport (DfT) ○ Office of National Statistics (ONS) ○ Office of Rail and Road (ORR) ○ Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) (as representative of all TOCs) – or potentially the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) as representative of all TOCs and NR ○ Network Rail (unless represented by RDG) ○ British Transport Police (BTP) ○ Transport Scotland ○ Welsh Government ○ Transport for London (TfL) ○ London Assembly ○ Rail North ○ Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG), now to become the Urban Transport Group (UTG) ○ London TravelWatch ○ Which? ○ Railfuture ○ Potentially, key professors/universities (eg University of the West of England (UWE), Imperial College, University College London (UCL), University of Leeds – Institute for Transport Studies (ITS)).

<p>Question 5.1 (1):</p>	<p>What are your views on the proposal to establish a Stakeholder Advisory Group? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation’s use of NRPS (where appropriate).</p>
<p>Question 5.1 (2):</p>	<p>What are your views on the proposed composition of the SAG?</p>
<p>Stakeholder feedback</p>	<p>There is overwhelming support for the proposed Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) as originally proposed. ATOC describes it as ‘vital’ and both the DfT and Transport Scotland are fully supportive.</p> <p>A few consultees’ (primarily TOCs’) support is caveated on their inclusion in the group.</p> <p>There are some concerns, primarily that the group should have a well-defined remit and does not become a mere ‘talking shop’.</p> <p>One consultee warns against ‘mission creep’ and another is concerned that the group advises on the technical aspects of NRPS rather than interpretation of the outputs.</p> <p>There is substantial concern at the size of the proposed group and whether this may inhibit its viability/efficacy.</p> <p>However, a number of TOCs argue that they need direct representation rather than through ATOC/RDG. One TOC suggests that owning groups should have representation.</p> <p>There is some concern at ATOC’s ability to represent the varied expectations of all TOCs and, similarly, of open access operators and HS1.</p> <p>One TOC notes that the contractual franchise arrangements between the DfT and individual TOCs requires the TOCs to have representation on the group. Another notes that a number of the proposed constituents have an active role to challenge TOCs’ performance against NRPS necessitating balanced representation. A number appear to assume group members having ‘voting rights’ with regard to decision-making.</p> <p>One TOC suggests a parallel TOC user group; another proposes that separate working groups should look at eg train and station factors before reporting in to the main group. One TOC, while accepting representation through ATOC, is concerned about how</p>

	<p>information/decisions are disseminated to all TOCs and suggests a biannual newsletter.</p> <p>The DfT argues for a smaller group composed of active participants selected for their statistical/technical knowledge rather than it attempting to be a fully representative body. A larger, periodic stakeholder forum might be valuable in disseminating news about NRPS developments.</p> <p>There is some concern that there is insufficient representation of passenger-facing bodies although some TOCs argue that this is their role. One TOC argues for the inclusion of passenger representatives on the group while another points out that they already interact with their own user/stakeholder groups. DPTAC argues for representation for disabled passengers.</p> <p>Network Rail (NR) argues that its financial contribution to NRPS (through boost sampling) justifies a seat on the group independently of RDG - ATOC supports a separate seat for NR.</p> <p>TfL considers that it can represent the Greater London Authority.</p> <p>There are suggestions that PTEG/UTG should be represented and possibly also RSSB. One TOC suggests the research agency managing NRPS should participate as well as the Market Research Society (MRS).</p> <p>CBT requests participation in the group; one TOC suggests ACORP should be included; one consultee expresses surprise at the inclusion of Which? given its conflicting stance on measuring passenger satisfaction.</p> <p>ORR suggests that the Rail Statistics Management Group (RSMG), which it co-ordinates, might provide a complementary forum for discussion of issues relating to NRPS.</p> <p>Both London Travelwatch and a non-industry consultee advocate the use of university academic support. Several consultees note the need for expert statistical support.</p>
<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>The composition of the group was always going to be a challenge but we are pleased that there is general support for its role.</p> <p>We are in agreement that the group's terms of reference will be critical in ensuring it adds value.</p>

	<p>We acknowledge the value of independent statistical/academic support and of having the research agency and the authors of the Technical Report (Roberts-Miller Associates (RMA)) involved.</p> <p>We believe that the views of passengers are well represented from our own work and understanding of their needs and that the pilot of the new questionnaire and proposed cognitive testing will present an opportunity to see that the questionnaire addresses passengers' key concerns. We also note that there is potential for user groups to participate in the 'Stakeholder Forum'.</p> <p>We restate the comment from our original proposal that the group would be an advisory body and final decisions will rest with Transport Focus.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We now plan to establish two separate groups. One will be an 'Experts Group' at which key issues relating to NRPS sampling, weighting and questionnaire design will be discussed in detail. Membership will be by invitation based on individuals' ability to contribute to the discussion.</p> <p>This group is not intended to be representative of NRPS users. In the first instance we have invited the DfT, Transport Scotland, the research agency (BDRC Continental), Roberts-Miller Associates (RMA) and Adam Phillips (Real Research) to advise us.</p> <p>The second will be a 'Stakeholder Forum' at which matters relating to NRPS will be communicated to any interested users of the survey.</p> <p>The NRPS 'Experts Group' held its first meeting on 15 December and reviewed our plans for the proposed shortened questionnaire and online pilot in Spring 2016. We shall probably look to convene NRPS 'Stakeholder Forum' meetings in conjunction with the release of NRPS data – potentially starting in February 2016.</p>

Section 5	Governance
Proposal 5.2:	Review and reduce list of stakeholders with pre-release access to NRPS results.
Rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The list of stakeholders with pre-release access to NRPS results three weeks in advance of publication has grown over time and is now viewed as excessive for an Official Statistic • We propose that there should be no more than two nominated recipients per TOC who must have a genuine need to see the data for quality assurance and operational planning purposes • We do not propose any change to the list of stakeholders with 24 hour pre-release access for media purposes.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2016 results.
Implication(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders may feel this limits their ability to digest the results and prepare comments for when the report is published.
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List is longer than for many comparable organisations/official statistics • Unless we make this change it is felt likely to be imposed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
Question 5.2 (1):	What are your views on the proposal to review and reduce the list of stakeholders with pre-release access to NRPS results? Please provide your rationale having regard to potential impacts on your/your organisation's use of NRPS (where appropriate).
Question 5.2 (2):	If your organisation currently has staff on the pre-release access list, who (if anyone) should remain on the list? (Do not include anyone with 24 hour pre-release access for media purposes).
Stakeholder feedback	<p>The majority of TOCs (and ATOC) oppose the proposal. While some are prepared to review and reduce the number of nominated recipients, two is frequently thought to be too few.</p> <p>Responses from a number of TOCs provide a strong suggestion that while they might accept having one or two nominated recipients, these individuals would in fact facilitate onward distribution within their organisation.</p> <p>Opponents argue that they need time to digest the results and prepare to communicate these internally as well as to prepare a response to media enquiries.</p>

A number of consultees suggest retaining the current list of recipients but shortening the pre-release access period to 10 days (from the current 21).

The DfT strongly supports the proposal and questions whether the data is currently handled in accordance with the pre-release principles of the Official Statistics Code of Conduct.

The DfT further questions why so many individuals require access for Quality Assurance (QA) purposes, what value is derived from the supposed QA activity and specifically whether data is shared and used for purposes other than QA. The DfT advocates that Transport Focus should be far stricter in its guidance and supervision of pre-release access.

The DfT also suggests that a reduced nominated recipient list could lead to a quicker QA process and earlier publication of NRPS data. Several TOCs also observe that the pre-release access period might be shortened.

ATOC argues for an expanded pre-release access list saying that this would make users self-sufficient and less of a burden on Transport Focus/the research agency for additional bespoke analyses.

There is widespread agreement that there should be a 'level playing field' for all recipients with pre-release access. That said, some larger TOCs argue for a greater number of nominated representatives relative to the size of their business.

A number of consultees ask whether pre-release access to SAG members would replace pre-release access to other stakeholders. There is also some confusion as to whether pre-release access applies to ITAs and other bodies with no direct control over services the data reports on.

Several consultees question how pre-release access would work if NRPS were to move to a more frequent survey/reporting basis.

Stakeholders have generally provided the requested lists of named individuals for pre-release access and/or have confirmed their existing recipients should be retained; many have however nominated in excess of two (sometimes considerably more).

<p>Transport Focus comments</p>	<p>Many of those benefiting from pre-release access appear to be unaware that this is intended to be for QA purposes, or are interpreting 'operational planning purposes' in a very broad sense in terms of preparing detailed staff briefings or media comments.</p> <p>There is evidence that the rules for pre-release access are either already being flaunted or that recipients would be prepared to do so if the number of nominated recipients were to be reduced.</p> <p>Transport Focus does not see either the 'Experts Group' or the 'Stakeholder Forum' as replacing the current pre-release access arrangements for TOCs.</p> <p>We note that 21 day pre-release access applies only to TOCs and Network Rail. The DfT, Transport Scotland and PTEs only see the reports 24 hours in advance (for media purposes).</p> <p>Transport Focus acknowledges that pre-release access arrangements would need to be reviewed were NRPS to move to more frequent/continuous reporting.</p> <p>Overall, while we are reassured that there is general consensus that there should be 'equality' of access, we are seriously concerned that it appears stakeholders are prepared to abuse pre-release access and ignore ONS rules.</p> <p>We reiterate that we are not proposing any changes to 24 hour pre-release access for media purposes; such access is designed to enable stakeholders to prepare internal and external communications that can be released to coincide with publication of NRPS data.</p>
<p>Updated proposal</p>	<p>We noted in our Consultation Document that unless pre-release access is better controlled, change may be imposed by ONS. Nothing in the consultation feedback has provided any justification for challenging the ONS' view that NRPS pre-release access is too widespread.</p> <p>We therefore intend to restrict each entity benefitting from pre-release access for quality assurance purposes to a maximum of two nominated recipients.</p> <p>With the release of Spring 2016 NRPS data we shall also require signed undertakings from these individuals and/or senior management within their organisation to abide by the rules for pre-release access, in particular the prohibition of wider dissemination of the data. Action</p>

	<p>will be taken against individuals/organisations failing in their obligations.</p> <p>We shall liaise with stakeholders as to who the nominated recipients should be where we currently have more than two individuals recorded.</p> <p>We plan to explore whether there is any possibility of shortening the 21 day quality assurance pre-release access period (to enable earlier publication of NRPS data) and/or of lengthening the 24 hour media pre-release access period.</p>
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Afterword

Consultees were asked for any additional comments **regarding the future of NRPS**.

There were a number of comments that the reporting process should be speeded up and that a better online reporting tool should be developed.

Some concern was expressed regarding passenger survey fatigue and a couple of consultees asked whether passengers had been involved in the consultation process. We confirm that passengers were not part of the consultation process but previous work has examined their experiences in completing the NRPS questionnaire and we plan for the proposed changes to the questionnaire to be piloted and subject to cognitive testing.

One TOC asked for better coverage of smaller stations; we believe that the revised boost sampling proposal will facilitate this sample.

Another suggested station dashboard reports might be provided to publicise that station's results. We are always happy to work with TOCs to ensure they have the data to produce such material.

One consultee asked for more cross-modal comparisons between Transport Focus' rail, bus and tram surveys; this is something we hope to do on an occasional basis where the questions are comparable. Local TPS reports include a comparison where the data exists.

Centro has reservations over the sample sizes achieved in the West Midlands and whether/how these might be improved.

One TOC speculated on whether the purpose of the survey is to monitor and benchmark TOCs or to provide TOCs with actionable data to improve the passenger's experience and how these might lead to a degree of conflict. We believe it can assist with both aims.

Another TOC asked for greater visibility of the quality control processes employed by the research agency to ensure that the work is of the highest quality. This information is provided in the NRPS Technical Guide³.

This TOC also suggested a PR campaign to encourage passenger participation and offered to work with Transport Focus to promote the survey. We note that this would require a national initiative to ensure that all TOCs implement it in a similar fashion.

East Midlands Trains questioned whether its categorisation as a long-distance operator is appropriate given the diversity of its services and rolling stock.

³ <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/nrps-technical-guide-spring-2015>

One consultee suggested that results should be weighted to allow for factors outside their control such as the age of their rolling stock.

One consultee stated they were unsure why changes are being proposed other than to reduce costs.

Consultees were also asked for their **feedback on the consultation process**.

Several expressed appreciation for being invited to comment.

A number complained at an error in the numbering of the questions on the Survey Monkey feedback form making this difficult to complete. We apologise for this.

Several stated that they would have liked to have seen the proposals in advance of the consultation event so as to have had an informed discussion regarding the proposals at that time.

A number asked whether and how feedback and any updates to our proposals would be reported to stakeholders; this process was set out in the Consultation Document and this report fulfils the commitment we made to publish the outcome of the process.

5. Detailed analysis of feedback regarding the questionnaire

1 Existing questions

Below we summarise consultees' feedback on individual questions from the current NRPS questionnaire. We list the current question wording in **black**. Our intention regarding each question as given in the consultation document is given in **red** and in *italics*. We then summarise consultee's feedback (standard typeface in **red**) and finally state our post-consultation intention for these questions underlined.

Spring wave questions

- Q1a** Please fill in the scheduled departure time of the train you caught after being given this questionnaire.
- Q1b** You were given this questionnaire before boarding a train at [station]. At which station did you get off this train?
- Q1c** Did this journey involve you travelling on a rail replacement bus or coach service today?

No changes were proposed to these questions. No feedback was received regarding these questions. We intend to retain these questions in the core questionnaire.

- Q2a** Did you continue your journey by train after getting off at this station? *(Please remember not to include underground travel).*
- Q2b** Please write in the name of your final destination station.
- Q2c** Please write in the names of any other stations at which you changed trains before reaching your final destination.

These questions were proposed for deletion. One consultee stated that they use the question to compare against ticket sales data. Another said the data is used for modelling work with regard to new services and timetables and another finds it valuable to know the ultimate destination of passengers travelling beyond their London terminus. London Travelwatch points to the value of the data in understanding interconnections. We consider the use made of the questions does not merit their continued inclusion in the core questionnaire given the agreed aim of shortening this. We shall consider whether the questions might be placed in a supplementary questionnaire in some form.

- Q3** Which train company was operating the train which you boarded at [station]?

No changes were proposed to this question. No feedback was received regarding this question. We intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire.

- Q4** What was the main purpose of the trip you were making when given this questionnaire?

No changes were proposed to this question. No feedback was received regarding this question. We intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire.

Q5 Were you on your outward or return journey when you were given a questionnaire?

This question was proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire. One consultee noted that the question allows them to determine which end of a journey is a generator or attractor but made no comment about moving it to a supplementary questionnaire. Network Rail has concerns saying this information is used in weighting boost samples at NR stations. We intend to seek to place this question in a supplementary questionnaire as originally proposed.

Q6 Were you travelling [alone/with children/other adults]?

Q7 Were you travelling with [various encumbrances]?

These questions were proposed for deletion. Several consultees responded positively to the proposal. One suggested the questions should be considered for a supplementary questionnaire.

Individual consultees commented that the questions help in understanding travel patterns and tailoring group travel offers/railcards; also in assessing accessibility and interchange concerns and in understanding the needs of passengers travelling with heavy luggage.

We propose that a revised question regarding children and encumbrances (such as buggies/heavy luggage) be retained in the core questionnaire to facilitate a potential follow-on survey regarding accessibility issues.

Q8a Are you affected by any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

This question was marked for retention in the core questionnaire but also for relocation towards the end of the questionnaire so as to be less off-putting to those to whom it does not apply. Several consultees commented in general about the disability questions as a whole (Q8/Q9) – see below – but no comments were made regarding the proposed relocation of this particular question.

One TOC commented that the sample size achieved currently is insufficient for it to take any specific actions regarding accessibility.

We believe it to be important to retain a simple question about disability in the core questionnaire. Not only does this enable us to look at the high-level experience of disabled passengers but it also provides us with the opportunity to target disabled passengers for further specific research on accessibility matters if we wish.

That further research would likely include existing NRPS questions which we are proposing to remove from the core questionnaire. We intend to move the question to sit with other classification questions towards the end of the questionnaire.

- Q8b Does your condition or illness have an adverse effect on your ability to make journeys by rail?**
- Q8c How satisfied are you that [station] met your needs as a passenger with a long term illness or disability?**
- Q8d How satisfied are you that the trains themselves met your needs as a passenger with a long term illness or disability?**
- Q8e Did you book assistance with your train company to get on/off the train?**
- Q9 If so, how satisfied were you with ... these arrangements?**

These questions were proposed for deletion. This proposal is clearly contentious, with disability groups in particular concerned about the implications. The rail industry has also pointed out that government is concerned to ensure that protected characteristic groups have a voice regarding the challenges of rail travel, and that the elderly and disabled population is on the increase. The DfT wants to see the questions retained.

Several TOCs have pointed to the need to assess the performance of the railway's Passenger Assist service (something which Transport Focus fully endorses) and that Q8e/Q9 are inadequate in this respect. There were a number of calls for a dedicated Passenger Assist survey. At least one TOC does independently monitor users of Passenger Assist and noted that Q8 provides complementary data on passengers who do not book assistance.

While a number of TOCs argued for retention of the questions, a couple voiced support for removal of the questions saying that all passengers should be treated equally regardless of any disability. A number of comments were also made about the importance of the current questions for supporting/evaluating investment decisions around accessibility improvements.

We feel that the current questions provide little more than a token evaluation of an important passenger group. Other than at a GB or larger TOC level, the sample size in any one wave is too small for robust analysis or to point to specific areas for improvement. Much of the information that stakeholders (and ourselves) would like to gather from disabled passengers goes beyond a specific journey (as measured in NRPS) and is therefore not appropriate for the NRPS methodology with its focus on a single journey.

We believe that the needs of the disabled and other vulnerable passengers would be better served by a dedicated accessibility module. Such a module might be best implemented as a follow-on survey sent to passengers who have indicated they have a disability on the core NRPS questionnaire. We also support the value of a separate, independent assessment of Passenger Assist (while noting this should cover both users and non-users).

Therefore we propose to continue with our proposal to remove these questions from the core NRPS questionnaire. We shall also seek to engage with the industry, government and disability groups regarding the possible establishment and funding of

a dedicated accessibility survey that should not only replace the existing questions but also provide more robust evidence of the needs of and journey satisfaction among those with accessibility issues.

Q10 How did you buy your ticket for your journey today?

Q11 When did you buy your ticket for your journey today?

Q12 [What] was the [format of the] ticket for your journey?

Q13 How would you rate the following [ticket purchase factors]?

Questions 10 and 12 were proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire. Questions 11 and 13 were proposed for deletion. Several TOCs (including open access operators) noted the value of the ticketing questions to their retail strategy. The industry as a whole noted how fares and ticketing are high profile issues receiving much media scrutiny and that there is likely to be much change in ticket retailing over the next few years – including growing use of ‘smart’ and other ‘e-ticketing’ solutions. As such, they pointed to the importance of time series data to monitor change in passenger use and attitudes.

While some data might be available from industry or operator sources, it was argued that some NRPS questions fill valuable gaps, such as how far in advance of travel tickets are purchased. There was no overt support for deleting Q11 and Q13.

Our proposal was to move two of the questions to a possible supplementary questionnaire and we maintain this is the best means to meet our goal of reducing the length of the core questionnaire. We note the industry’s interest in retaining the other two questions (marked for deletion) and we shall consider the merits of these (or similar questions) when designing a potential supplementary questionnaire.

We can see value in a specific ticketing module which might enable us to address issues beyond those currently asked in NRPS; we would seek to work with the industry to discuss the content and funding of such a module.

Q14a What type of ticket did you use for your journey from [station]?

No changes were proposed to this question. A Transport Focus staff member questioned whether all current and likely future ticket types are covered and observed that there are currently no questions regarding advance purchase collection arrangements (Ticket on Departure (TOD)). We intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire but shall review the answer categories for currency/completeness.

Q14b [What class] is your ticket for your journey today?

This question was proposed for deletion with a hope that an alternative source might be found for the data. A small number of stakeholders, including the DfT, observed that views do differ between First and Standard class ticket holders, that the data is valuable, and that the question should be retained. The sample of First Class ticket holders (an average of 2.4 per cent nationally) is too small for robust analysis at TOC

level on a single wave – although it can be possible to aggregate responses across a number of waves.

We can see arguments for a dedicated First Class ticket holder survey on TOCs/routes where this is offered, maybe as a boost sample to NRPS (possibly with on-train distribution and subject to funding) or potentially for an occasional First Class supplementary questionnaire. In framing a potential supplementary fares and ticketing questionnaire we shall evaluate whether there is space to include a question on class of ticket held.

Q15 Was your fare reduced because you have any of the following [railcards]? If so, which one?

This question was proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire and for 'Gold Card' to be added to the list of railcards. Few comments were received regarding this proposal although a PTE and Transport Scotland noted that they are keen to use the data. We intend to seek to place this question in a supplementary questionnaire as originally proposed.

Q16 How would you rate [station] for [various station factors]:

This question was marked for retention in the core questionnaire but with the answer code 'The facilities and services at the station (e.g. toilets, shops, cafes etc.)' being amended to refer specifically to toilets, given that an additional code was added in recent years: 'The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available'.

One PTE opposes the change to this statement on the basis that it values the time series data. Another requests a follow-up question asking for the reasons for any 'fairly'/'very poor' scores. One consultee notes that selected metrics may be specified in TOC franchise agreements. Another asks that factors not offered at a station (eg car parking) should be removed. Another points to possible ambiguity in terms of ticket-buying facilities and whether this refers to the booking office or TVMs. While acknowledging the loss of time series data, we see no reason to continue with the duplication regarding shops etc and every reason to focus on station toilets given the level of criticism these receive.

Q17 And how familiar are you with [station]?

This question was proposed for deletion. ATOC and ORR argue for its retention given its importance to disabled users. Network Rail observes that it is valuable to compare the views of frequent and infrequent users. In the interest of shortening the core questionnaire, we intend to remove this question but shall review whether it fits with, and there is space for it, in the potential accessibility supplementary questionnaire.

Q18 While at [station], did you ask staff for help or information?

Q19 Overall, how satisfied were you with the way your request was handled?

These questions were marked for retention in the core questionnaire. Two PTEs suggested they might be deleted as they are covered by measures of staff availability

and helpfulness at Q16. Our current intention is to retain these in the core questionnaire; we believe they are used as metrics in some franchise agreements. However, we note that if space in the core questionnaire remains a serious concern, we might need to reconsider whether Q16 might serve as a substitute.

Q20a If you used ticket gates at [station], how easy did you find it to use them?

Q20b If you found the gates difficult to use, why was that?

These questions were proposed for deletion. Two consultees observed that barriers are being mandated in a number of franchise agreements and that measuring ease of use and any difficulties encountered is valuable. We suspect that barrier usability concerns can be gathered from other sources and that the continued inclusion of these questions has little merit given the agreed aim of shortening the questionnaire. We intend to remove these questions.

Q21 Overall how satisfied are you with [station]?

No changes were proposed to this question. One PTE requests a follow-up question asking for the reasons for any 'fairly'/'very dissatisfied' scores. We intend to retain this question as it now stands in the core questionnaire.

Q22 [Now think just about the train you were about to catch when handed this questionnaire at [station].] Based on your experience on that journey, how satisfied were you with [various journey factors]?

No changes were being proposed to this question. A couple of TOCs say several factors (and in particular 'value for money') are outside their control and result in contentious outputs. Nevertheless we intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire.

Q23a How would you rate the train you boarded for that journey in terms of [various train factors]?

Q24 Specifically thinking about the cleanliness of the train you boarded for that journey, how would you rate it for [its inside/outside]?

*Q23a was marked for retention in the core questionnaire with the single answer code for 'cleanliness' being replaced by the separate internal and external cleanliness measures from Q24. We also proposed the removal of the measure: 'The ease of being able to get on and off the train' *on the grounds that it is ambiguous and unclear whether it refers to crowding or accessibility.**

Several consultees stress the importance of a cleanliness measure and the fact that this may be monitored in franchise agreements. Several consultees (including London Travelwatch) stress the importance of understanding accessibility and issues with the step/gap between train and platform. A couple suggest this might fit better with a supplementary accessibility questionnaire. One consultee suggests that 'space for bicycles' might be moved to a dedicated cyclist supplementary questionnaire.

A couple of consultees argue for the availability of Wi-Fi and/or power sockets to be added to the list. One notes that it would be valuable to know whether a passenger had a seat or not in evaluating their response with regard to crowding.

We maintain that the single cleanliness code in Q23a is redundant and users will be better served by the integration of separate internal and external cleanliness measures from Q24. To facilitate this transition we are happy to examine how the two separate measures correlate with the single combined measure which may assist in transitioning to the new codes in any franchise metrics.

We maintain that 'The ease of being able to get on and off the train' is ambiguous and cannot understand what steps stakeholders would take to improve scores on this metric since they do not know if it refers to accessibility or crowding. However we acknowledge the importance of accessibility and, in particular of the train/platform interface, for certain groups of passengers. Accordingly, we now propose modifying this code to ask specifically about 'the step or gap between the train and the platform'.

Other, as yet unpublished, work recently undertaken by Transport Focus has shown how getting a seat directly impacts commuters' reaction to a journey. We shall give consideration to recording this simple fact in developing the detailed core and supplementary questionnaires.

Q23b Please describe the nature of the problem and whether the problem was with a specific toilet (e.g. a disabled persons' toilet or all the toilets).

This question was proposed for deletion with a hope that an alternative source might be found for the data. A number of TOCs commented in general that it is important that NRPS outputs provide them with data they can take action on; however none specifically objected to this deletion. We intend to remove Q23b.

Q25 Was there any catering (food/drinks) available on the train you travelled on?

This question was proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire and with the current single 'Yes' code being replaced by two: 'Yes, and I used the facility' and 'Yes but I did not use the facility', to provide more granularity. One consultee raises a concern over time series data comparability if the catering questions are changed. We intend to seek to place this question in a supplementary questionnaire subject to space being available.

Q26 If catering had been available, do you think you would have used it?

Q27 What type of catering did you use?

These questions were proposed for deletion. One TOC argued for their retention. We may seek to place these questions in a supplementary questionnaire subject to space being available.

Q28 Overall, how satisfied were you with the catering service on that train?

This question was proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire. No significant comments were made regarding this proposal. We intend to seek to place this question in a supplementary questionnaire subject to space being available.

Q29 Overall, how satisfied are you with the train you boarded for your journey?

No changes were proposed to this question. No feedback was received regarding this question. We intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire.

Q30 Did you experience any delay either on this train or because the train you had planned to catch ... was cancelled?

This question was marked for retention in the core questionnaire with the current answer codes for 'minor'/'major delay' being replaced by pre-coded delay durations of up to 5 minutes, 6-10 mins, 11-20 mins, 21-30 mins, 31-60 mins and over 60 minutes.

One TOC suggested that the first two delay intervals should be combined to read 'up to 10 minutes'. No further comments were made regarding this question. We intend to make the proposed amendment to this question and retain it in the core questionnaire.

Q31 What sort of delay did you experience?

This question was proposed for deletion. LTW argued for its retention given the high proportion of journeys involving London and the reasons for passengers' delays being an important consideration when evaluating their satisfaction.

On the other hand a TOC observed that this information is already provided by TOCs to ORR. ORR itself argues for its retention or for a dedicated survey module on delays. A few consultees request additional questions on information provision during disruption.

Q30 will still enable delayed passengers to be identified in the data for cross-analysis purposes or follow-up surveys and, as there is published data on causes of delays available, we intend to remove this question.

Q32 (Spring) How long was your delay?

This question was marked for retention in the core questionnaire but with the current request for the delay to be recorded as hours and minutes to be replaced by pre-coded delay durations of up to 5 minutes, 6-10 mins, 11-20 mins, 21-30 mins, 31-60 mins and over 60 minutes, as at Q30.

No comments were made regarding this proposal. We intend to make the proposed amendment to this question and retain it in the core questionnaire.

Q33 (Spring) How well do you think the train company dealt with this delay?

Q34 (Spring) How well do you rate the train company for each of the following, in relation to the delay that occurred?

These questions were marked for retention in the core questionnaire. One TOC suggested asking more detailed questions around the quality of information provided during a delay.

London Overground commented that it believed the statement ‘The availability of alternative transport if the train service could not continue’ is misunderstood in a London context. It contends that passengers interpret this specifically as rail replacement bus services whereas in London there are often alternative scheduled buses or Underground services that allow Overground passengers to complete their journey. We intend to retain this question as it now stands in the core questionnaire.

Q35 (Spring) Taking into account just [station] where you boarded the train and the actual train travelled on after being given this questionnaire, how satisfied were you with your journey today?

This question was marked for retention in the core questionnaire but with the current verbal satisfaction scale being designated part a) and a new part b) added to measure passengers’ emotional experience of the journey (potentially using ‘smiley’ faces or some other non-verbal measure).

Several TOCs commented that this is a key question, used in franchise performance monitoring, and that as such it must remain unchanged. One regional TOC suggested the question be dropped and replaced by a weighted figure for overall satisfaction derived from a number of key factors (potentially based on statistical driver analysis).

While a single TOC advocated a measure of the journey ‘experience’ (or how passengers felt about their journey), several objected to the idea of an emotional measure. A couple commented that the survey should focus on objective, factual measures and questioned the value of an emotional measure in terms of how that should be interpreted.

There were individual concerns that an emotional measure would pick up cumulative experiences rather than the journey in question, that emotional measures are subject to different potential interpretations and that the measure might devalue the survey as a whole. On the other hand, the DfT is strongly supportive of the concept.

Transport Focus is currently undertaking a study that has as one of its aims the evaluation of a possible emotional journey measure. Initial results are positive and suggest that this adds to our understanding of what makes for a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ journey from the passengers’ perspective. The research will be published in due

course and it is too soon to be sure that this measure would be appropriate for NRPS.

We remain of the view that the emotional experience of the journey is important and has a substantial impact on passengers' trust in train companies. As such, we intend to continue to develop an emotional/experiential question(s) for inclusion in NRPS. This will be further discussed with the 'Experts Group' and communicated to the 'Stakeholder Forum'.

Q36 (Spring) How long were you on the train that you got on at [station]?

This question was proposed for deletion. One Transport Focus staff member argues for its retention saying it is useful when examining length of delays. Nevertheless we intend to remove this question.

Q37 (Spring) How often do you make the train journey that you were on today when handed this questionnaire?

This question was proposed for removal as we believe the data should be available from other sources. A number of TOCs and TfGM have observed that it provides a useful basis for segmentation and/or cross-analysis by journey frequency; in this respect it sits alongside data on type of ticket held.

We note the question is not focussed on 'today's journey'. In the interests of shortening the core questionnaire, we intend to remove this question but shall review whether it fits with, and there is space for it, in the potential ticketing/fares supplementary questionnaire.

Q38 (Spring) How long have you been using this route on a regular basis?

Q39 How would you describe a typical trip over the past month?

These questions were proposed for removal. A limited number of TOCs and London Travelwatch argue for their retention, potentially in a supplementary questionnaire, as they are a useful basis for cross-analysis by familiarity with the journey and issues such as getting a seat. Merseytravel observes that knowing whether a journey is atypical could help in understanding the impact of serious network disruption.

We note that these questions are not focussed on 'today's journey' and also contend that in terms of journey familiarity, frequency of travel (Q37) is probably more valuable than length of time using the route. we have undertaken to consider retaining Q37 in a supplementary questionnaire.

We accept that getting a seat **on the journey in question** has a clear effect on journey satisfaction; however we see little value in Q39 in that it relates to recall of 'typical' journeys. As noted above (Q23a/Q24), we shall give consideration to recording whether the passenger had a seat in developing the detailed core and supplementary questionnaires. We intend to remove the two current questions.

Q40 How satisfied are you with the times when the ticket office is open on this route?

Q41 How often is your ticket checked?

These questions were proposed for removal. London Travelwatch argues for their retention in that they provide useful data on London passengers. We note that these questions are not focussed on ‘today’s journey’ and in the interests of meeting our objective of shortening the questionnaire, we intend to remove the questions.

Q42 Were timetable changes introduced onto your route in mid December?

Q43 The result of timetable changes on my route [on crowding/journey time/train frequency].

These questions were proposed for removal. One Transport Focus staff member argues for their retention saying they have provided useful data in the past. Nevertheless, we note that these questions are not focussed on ‘today’s journey’ and we intend to remove them.

Q44 Which methods of transport did you use to get to [station] where you were handed the questionnaire?

Q48 Which methods of transport did you use to get from the station when you finished your train journey?

These questions were proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire. ATOC, Network Rail, London Travelwatch and several ITAs note that this data helps support investment decisions, provides valuable information regarding sustainable travel and supports government interest in end-to-end journey planning.

We acknowledge the importance of connectivity and the potential for these questions to be used to invite participation in additional surveys. Accordingly we intend to seek to place these questions in a supplementary questionnaire as originally proposed, subject to space being available.

Q45 (Spring) Is there an alternative method of transport you would like to have used to get to [station] if circumstances were different?

Q46 (Spring) Which alternative method of transport would you like to have used if it had been available?

Q47 (Spring) Which, if any, of these additional facilities/services would have enabled you to use this alternative method of transport to get to [station]?

These questions were proposed for removal. Few stakeholders commented on this proposal; one suggested asking about alternative travel options available to the passenger for the present journey. We intend to remove the questions.

Q49 Did you take a bicycle on the train during this journey?

This question was proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire. ATOC argues that the question fits with others on station access and is vital for planning purposes.

Rail North suggests that a supplementary question would be desirable regarding onboard cycle facilities. We note that Q23a (train factors) asks about space for bicycles and that both Q44 and Q48 (travel to/from the station) differentiate between using a cycle parked at the station or taken on board.

While we had marked Q49 for transfer to a supplementary questionnaire, we now intend to remove the question as we realise that Q7 allows passengers travelling with bicycles to be identified. We shall also consider cyclists as potential targets for a possible accessibility/cycling module.

Q50 Did you need to book to take the bicycle on this train?

Q51 How satisfied were you with these booking arrangements?

These questions were proposed for removal. Those who responded to these questions were wholly in agreement. We intend to remove the questions but could also consider them for a potential cycling/accessibility module.

Q52 Thinking about the whole journey you were making, of which the train journey was a part, how long did the whole journey take from the time you started out until the time you got to your final destination?

This question was proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire. One TOC questions whether the question adds value at all. For the moment we intend to seek to place this question in a supplementary questionnaire as originally proposed, subject to space being available.

Q53 If any part of your journey involved changing between trains, did you feel that all aspects of this connection (from planning through to actually changing trains) were handled adequately?

Q54 Which aspects of your connection do you feel were not adequately handled?

These questions were proposed for removal. A number of TOCs and regional bodies state that connections/interchanges are an important part of the journey experience and can be a deterrent to rail travel. CrossCountry observes that around half its passengers make a connection. ATOC suggests including the questions on a supplementary questionnaire.

We acknowledge the importance of both connections and interchanges and the value of good data on these matters. We have contemplated trying to prepare a supplementary questionnaire on this topic but are inclined to suggest that its importance and the range of possible questions to be answered merits a separate, dedicated survey.

To meet our goal of a shorter NRPS questionnaire and in the belief that a separate survey is warranted, we intend to remove the questions as originally proposed.

Q55 Which of these potential improvements do you think would be most likely to assist you when planning future rail journeys?

This question was proposed for removal as we believe the data should be available from other sources. Two operators note their agreement although one labels this a 'leading question' and says it should be asked in an open-ended format. We note the question is not focussed on 'today's journey'. We intend to remove the question.

Q56 Thinking back over the last six months, have you made a compensation claim following a delayed journey or complained to any of the train companies about their service?

Q57 How satisfied were you with the way your complaint/claim was handled?

Q58 Why were you dissatisfied?

These questions were proposed for removal as we believe the data should be available from other sources. Three operators note their agreement although again one labels this a 'leading question' and says it should be asked in an open-ended format. We note that ORR is reported to be trialling research into complaint handling. We intend to remove these questions.

Q59 Did other passengers' behaviour give you cause to worry or make you feel uncomfortable during your journey?

Q60 Which of the following were the reason(s) for this?

These questions were marked for retention in the core questionnaire. A number of stakeholders stressed the need to retain these questions, however some TOCs suggested they might be asked in a supplementary questionnaire noting that the data rarely changes.

A couple of consultees noted that BTP reports detailed statistics on such behaviour/offences. One PTE observes that Q46 (personal security) in the autumn questionnaire has a list of behaviours that separates at-station and on-train issues and would like to see this information available for anti-social behaviour.

BTP notes the value of both sets of questions but acknowledges that using the broader answer list from Q46 (autumn) for Q60 might compensate for the deletion of the latter question.

We intend to retain these questions in the core questionnaire but shall consider whether the questions can be modified to record both at-station and on-train behaviours.

Q61 Please use the space below for any further comments you would like to make about your trip today or the rail service generally.

No changes were proposed to this question. No feedback was received regarding this question. We intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire.

Q62 Your age?

No changes were proposed to this question. No feedback was received regarding this question. We intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire.

Q63 Are you [sex]?

No changes were being proposed to this question. One train operator questioned why gender was relevant. We intend to retain this question in the core questionnaire.

Q64 Are you [working status]?

Q65 Which of the following best describes the occupation of the Chief Wage Earner in your household?

These questions were proposed for removal as we believe the data should be available from other sources. One consultee asks how information from an alternative source would be linked to the NRPS dataset for cross-analysis purposes. TfGM and TfL say the information is used in analyses they undertake. The DfT asks for the question to be retained in some form as working status, in particular full/part-time, can impact on ticket type. Transport Scotland notes that the categories in Q65 seem a little hierarchical and traditional.

Noting stakeholders' concerns, we intend to try to find space for an employment status question in the core questionnaire; that question is likely to be an amalgamation/simplification of Q64 and Q65.

Q66 Do you regularly use the internet?

This question was proposed for deletion. TfL and London Travelwatch call for the question to be retained arguing that it is valuable for cross-analysis and that lack of internet access can lead to vulnerable groups not having access to travel information. Nevertheless, in the interest of shortening the questionnaire, we intend to remove this question.

Q67 To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?

This question was marked for retention in the core questionnaire but with the sub-categories being removed in place of the five broader categories currently used as headings. While a number of consultees positively support the shortening, ATOC and an operator suggest Transport Focus may be in breach of its Public Sector Equality Duty regarding protected characteristics. We are minded to simplify the categories recorded but shall take advice regarding our obligations.

Autumn wave questions (not asked in Spring wave)

- Q32 (Autumn)** How did you spend your time on the train you got on at [station]?
- Q33 (Autumn)** Thinking about the time you spent on the train from [station], which one of the following statements do you most agree with?
- Q34 (Autumn)** Which of the following did you have at hand on the train from [station], and which did you use?
- Q35 (Autumn)** To what extent had you planned in advance how would you spend the time on the train?
- Q36 (Autumn)** Which one of the following statements do you most agree with concerning today's journey? How I could use my time today when travelling was...
- Q37 (Autumn)** To what extent did any electronic devices (music player, games console, laptop, mobile phone, tablet computer etc) you had with you today make the time you spent on the train better?
- Q38 (Autumn)** Now thinking about mobile voice and data coverage whilst at [station] and/or travelling on the train. How satisfied are you with the reliability of the following [connectivity issues]?

These questions were proposed for transfer from the core questionnaire to a possible supplementary questionnaire. Few stakeholders commented on this proposal; one endorsed the idea. We intend to seek to place these questions in a supplementary questionnaire.

- Q45 (Autumn)** During the last six months, have you had cause to worry about your personal security whilst making a train journey?
- Q46 (Autumn)** If you have had cause to worry, what was the reason for your concern?
- Q47 (Autumn)** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements [about policing]?

These questions were proposed for removal as we believe the data should be available from other sources. A couple of stakeholders suggested these questions might be asked in a supplementary questionnaire. A couple of consultees noted that BTP reports detailed statistics on such behaviour/offences. One PTE values the fact that Q46 separates at-station and on-train issues and would like to see this information available for anti-social behaviour. BTP notes the value of both personal security questions and sets of questions but acknowledges that using the broader answer list from Q46 (autumn) for Q60 might compensate for the deletion of the latter question.

We intend to remove these questions from the core questionnaire although we shall consider whether Q59/Q60 can be amended to record at-station and on-train behaviours separately.

2 Potential additional question areas

While a key goal is to reduce the length of the core *NRPS* questionnaire, we did ask stakeholders to comment on any additional question areas they feel are missing from *NRPS* as it currently stands and which it would be beneficial to include. We note below consultees' suggestions.

Postcode

A number of TOCs and a PTE ask for passengers' home (and possibly destination) postcode to be recorded to allow for detailed geographical analysis. This is a request we have explored previously; address postcodes are collected for certain areas on our Bus and Tram Passenger Surveys (BPS and TPS). Providing postcodes to stakeholders requires careful consideration to ensure compliance with data privacy/protection regulations. Transport Focus will continue to explore this possibility.

WiFi

Several consultees, including the DfT, suggested Wi-Fi availability/quality, both at stations and on trains, should be monitored, possibly in a supplementary questionnaire. We note that the introduction of Wi-Fi has occurred since *NRPS* was established and this is now a notable omission from the questionnaire. We shall consider adding Wi-Fi to the station and train factors.

Bicycles

Three operators request more specific questions about travelling with bikes. While this might be a topic for a supplementary questionnaire, there is clearly a limit to the number of supplementary questions that can be fielded. We suggest the needs of cyclists might best be researched in a separate survey.

Journey typicality

A small number of consultees expressed a desire to understand if the journey surveyed was seen as 'typical' by regular passengers. This is a question we have tried in the Tram Passenger Survey (TPS) but have not found particularly helpful.

Getting a seat

Transport Focus has observed in recent, as yet unpublished, research that there is a strong correlation between commuters getting a seat and their mood on a journey. We believe it could be valuable to observe how getting a seat/having to stand impacts on journey satisfaction. We already have this question on the Bus and Tram Passenger Surveys (BPS and TPS). We shall try to incorporate this question into the core questionnaire.

Alternative means of transport available

A small number of consultees expressed a desire to understand what alternative means of transport were available to the passenger surveyed. While we can see value in the questions, its addition runs counter to our aim of shortening the

questionnaire. It might be worth considering for a supplementary questionnaire on station access issues.

Additional verbatim response options

Topics included general suggestions for improvements, specific issues around station and train factors, and improvements noticed in previous six months. While appreciating the desire for increased granularity/understanding of improvement areas, verbatim questions add to the length of the questionnaire and the time imposition on passengers. They are also costly to analyse and report.

We note that passengers with strong views are at liberty to include any additional comments at Q61; as there is no time series data of any consequence from this question, we suggest it might reasonably be re-worded to encourage passengers to comment on specific improvements they would like to see or to elaborate on any areas they were particularly dissatisfied with.

Harmonise NRPS questions/scales with BPS/TPS

A single request was made to facilitate cross-modal analysis. This is not something we have considered to date and we agree to look at the possibility/implications. While agreeing that more cross-modal analysis would be valuable, we fear that the benefit of any changes would be outweighed by the loss of internal time series data comparability within NRPS.

Analysable data by named station

A couple of PTEs would welcome more detailed information on stations within their areas. We note that analysis by station is already offered where the sample size for the station is large enough. Bespoke boost sampling may be undertaken to guarantee robust station bases sizes and this will be facilitated by the proposed move to two stage sampling (proposal 4.1 above).

Journey origin/split ticketing

Two consultees expressed an interest in knowing the actual origin station for passengers' journeys (as opposed to the starting station for the leg on which they were approached with a questionnaire) to facilitate an understanding of the use of split-ticketing. The addition of a question on journey origin runs counter to our aim of shortening the questionnaire. Split ticketing as an issue might be worth considering for a supplementary questionnaire on Fares and Ticketing.

The following suggestions were each offered by a single consultee:

Seat reservations – were the reservations displayed? Was the passenger able to occupy their reserved seat? This might potentially fit with a supplementary questionnaire on fares and ticketing.

Quality of Twitter updates – We note that ATOC/ORR are piloting research on this issue and suggest this issue might fit there.

Move to 10-point scales – We note this would have serious consequences for time series data comparability.

Confidence in policing – BTP would like to see additional questions on confidence in and satisfaction with BTP. We acknowledge the potential value to BTP but note that few passengers per wave would be likely to have had any interaction with BTP.

Passenger Information during Disruption (PIDD) – We note that ATOC/ORR are piloting research on this issue.

Value for money – one consultee suggests that value for money scores should be given a higher weighting than, for example, exterior cleanliness. We report answers to all questions as recorded with no attempt to weight for the importance of individual factors. We take the view that passengers have the opportunity to evaluate the overall journey experience in a discrete question (Q35) and this is the ‘headline’ measure of satisfaction with all other factors being rated independently. Our research on Passengers’ Priorities for Improvement⁴ gives an indication of the relative importance of key journey factors.

TOC representation – one TOC expressed an interest in a question on TOC representation at stations where that TOC is not the station operator. We regard this as too complex an issue to be covered in NRPS in a way that passengers can understand what is meant without significant additions to the questionnaire.

⁴ <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014>

6. List of consultees

The consultation document was made publicly available on the Transport Focus website from 16 July with feedback requested by 25 September. Meaningful, detailed feedback using the specified Survey Monkey form was received from representatives of the following organisations:

Abellio Greater Anglia	Heathrow Express
Arriva Trains UK	High Speed 1
Arriva Trains Wales	Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC)	London Overground Rail Operations Limited (LOROL)
British Transport Police (BTP)	London Midland
British Transport Police Authority (BTPA)	London Travelwatch (LTW)
c2c Rail	Merseyrail
Campaign for Better Transport (CBT)	Merseytravel
Centro	Network Rail
Chiltern Railways	Northern Rail
Cross Country Trains	Rail North
Department for Transport (DfT)	Southeastern
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)	South West Trains
East Midlands Trains	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYLTE)
First Hull Trains	Stagecoach Rail
First/Keolis TransPennine Express	Transport Focus staff members
Go Ahead Group/Govia	Transport for London (TfL)
Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)	Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)
Grand Central Trains	Transport Scotland
Great Western Trains (formerly First Great Western)	Virgin Trains (West Coast Mainline)
	Virgin Trains East Coast.

Written comments were also received from Abellio Scotrail and, regarding the needs of disabled passengers and their supporters, from Guide Dogs. A number of other organisations/individuals began the feedback form but left it blank/incomplete.