

Statistics Governance Group

Nov 14 BM 09.3

Date: Wednesday 18 June 2014
Location: Fleetbank House
Salisbury Square
London EC4
Time: 1300 hrs

Present

Colin Foxall CBE	CF	Chairman
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	Board Member
Bob Linnard	BL	Board Member
Stephen Locke	SL	Board Member
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Ian Wright	IW	Head of Research
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services
Jordan Sergeant	JS	Passenger Team Executive
Murray Leader	ML	Senior Research Advisor
David Greeno	DG	Senior Passenger Researcher

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular JS to his first meeting.

2. Minutes

The group **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2013, and **authorised** the Chairman to sign them.

3. Action Matrix

The action matrix was **noted** by the group as largely 'complete, delete' or otherwise covered on the agenda.

SGG60: JC reminded the group that process validation refers to extracting complaint data from CRM, which is sent to ORR to form part of an Official Statistic. It is still a work in progress, which was covered in detail at agenda item 18.

SGG61: JC stated that this now forms part of the year's internal audit plan.

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National Rail Passenger Survey

4 Fieldwork report – Spring 2014 wave

DG reported that the spring 2014 wave comprised 28 fieldwork checks (compared to 43 in autumn 2013 and 36 in spring 2013) and two checks were done outside London, South England and the North West (compared to nine in autumn 2013 and two in spring 2013). On only 17 spot checks was the fieldworker found and no issues were reported in terms of conduct. Meanwhile, on one spot check the fieldworker did not mention Passenger Focus in their introduction and their introduction was limited, on one the fieldworker did not know anything about Passenger Focus when prompted, and on seven spot checks the fieldworker could not be found (12 out of 43 in autumn 13 and 11 out of 36 in spring 2013). The reasons included illness, late changes to shifts and forgotten times.

Although there was no prima facie reason to believe there would be any distortion to the overall survey findings, the group was still concerned that around 40% of the sampled shifts were faulty in some way, even if many issues were minor. There was a need to ensure there was no ongoing problem. The ONS may well have a view on such a proportion. SL believed there was enough evidence to warrant follow-up. The group **asked** for further discussions to be held with BDR-C and proposed solutions going forward to come back to the group.

SGG 69	18/06/14	Fieldwork checks	Discuss with BRDC-C and report back	IW/DG	Oct 14	
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5 Online pilot – feedback

DG introduced the report from BDR-C. The pilot aimed to evaluate suitability of the mixed method approach for NRPS, testing for Impact on respondent profile, impact on survey results (passenger satisfaction with rail journeys) and implications for fieldwork efficiency. A sample of respondents surveyed using the mixed method was compared to a matched, control sample from within the main NRPS for Spring 2014.

Following set up of the main NRPS, 100 fieldworker shifts were chosen at random, from those scheduled to take place at category A-C station (A-C stations were chosen since they were likely to yield higher numbers than smaller stations, to facilitate analysis of the outcome). Each of these shifts was duplicated, with its double taking place up to 2 weeks after (occasionally before) the original: matching day of the week, time, station and fieldworker. During duplicate shifts, respondents were offered a choice of a paper questionnaire or to provide their email address for a subsequent survey invite by email. The main survey paired shifts yielded 1924 responses in total. The mixed method shifts yielded 1611, with 334 (21%) online and 1277 (79%) on paper. The online figure was much lower than expected.

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The group considered its approach. IW believed ‘chunking’ the survey might be an option to consider. RL and SL both suggested that the survey was probably too long and particularly too long for younger people to contemplate completing. PM added that whilst tablets were suitable for completing the survey online, smartphones were not. CF was clear that the survey was now too important to risk wholesale tinkering with sampling, but that a ‘chunking’ pilot might be run in tandem. This would probably cost more money and the DfT may be invited to provide some more. Further thinking was required by all.

SGG 70	18/06/14	Online pilot conclusions	Write up for DfT as business case	IW/DG	Oct 14	
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6 Questions – Autumn wave

The group was concerned about the additional questions making the survey even longer, but IW explained they would be replacement questions and not additional. There was also a goodwill element in including stakeholder questions and they should not be turned down without careful evaluation. The group **approved** the suggested questions with the following caveats:

Q1: de-jargonise wherever possible

Q7: signal strength as well as availability would provide more useful answers

7 Fieldwork issues – update

Already considered under item 4

8 NRPS review and retender

The group **noted** the proposed timetable for the ITT retender, and that the NRPS and BPS tendering had been untied. The group suggested the draft should come back to its next meeting and that equalities issues must be addressed within it.

SGG 71	18/06/14	ITT	Draft available for next meeting	IW/DG	Oct 14	
SGG 72	18/06/14	ITT	Must address equalities issues	IW/DG	Oct 14	

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9 Open data downloading tool

The group **welcomed** the progress made by JS in successfully implementing NRPS data in open format.

10 TOC comments / exceptional circumstances

DG explained that for the autumn 2013 NRPS a number of TOCs submitted comments to be considered for inclusion. Two TOCs that had comments initially rejected were 'unhappy' with the rejection (a comment was subsequently added for one of these 'on appeal'). Both TOCs asked for the criteria on which their comment was rejected.

Having previously reviewed a version of this paper, the group was clear that Passenger Focus must be seen to be fair and transparent and there must be a consistent approach when comparing comments, especially now that the NRPS is being used for performance monitoring of new franchises. Up to now different waves may have been assessed differently.

DG suggested a possible set of broad principles as an opener for discussion:

- (1) No guarantee should ever be made that a comment can be included, but each comment proposed would be subject to an 'exceptional' test;
- (2) It should be clear that any comments passing this test are made by the TOC and not by Passenger Focus; and
- (3) Comments should be invited before TOCs have seen their results.

The 'exceptional' test

TOCs would be asked if there any 'exceptional incidents; incidents outside of their control, that may have affected the satisfaction of their passengers during NRPS fieldwork. Any TOCs saying yes would also be asked to submit a proposed comment for insertion in our main report, and the dates (and locations) of these incidents.

For those TOCs who submitted comments NRPS analysis would be carried out as follows:

- The percentage of passengers satisfied would be calculated for overall journey satisfaction including and excluding the days of disruption (and satisfaction with punctuality/reliability to check that punctuality was poorer during the times of disruption. If it is possible to assume only one particular part of the TOCs network was affected by disruption then we would run the 'excluding disruption days analysis' for that part.
- Compare the percentage of passengers satisfied between one year previous and the latest wave - including disruption days
- Compare the percentage of passengers satisfied between one year previous and the latest wave - excluding disruption days

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If there was not a (statistically) significant decline in overall satisfaction when excluding disruption days, but there was a significant fall in satisfaction when including disruption days then we would allow the TOC to provide a word-limited comment.

However, after detailed consideration of possible compromises, the group concluded that all seemed unsatisfactory in some way. The fairest and most practical solution would be to introduce a rule that such comments **would no longer be allowed**. It is of course open to Passenger Focus to draft its own qualifications or comments based on knowledge of the circumstances, if need be; but it is our survey and independent report. It is open to individual TOCs to comment in their own press releases or communications.

The group further considered that it may be helpful for AS to discuss the group's decision with Michael Roberts prior to any formal communication with the industry.

SGG 73	18/06/14	TOC comments	Discussion with Michael Roberts	AS	Oct 14	
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Bus Passenger Survey

11 Online pilot – feedback and recommendations

Deferred to next meeting

12 Questionnaire changes

The group **approved** the proposed questionnaire changes

13 BPS retendering schedule

The group **noted** the provisional BPS retendering schedule

14 BPS methodological review

Deferred to next meeting

15 BPS open data project overview

The group **noted** the briefing paper from JS on the BPS online tool scoping project and the proposal to seek industry sponsorship for its full implementation.

Tram passenger survey

16 Retender briefing

Following the successful launch of the inaugural wave of TPS in April 2014, KB

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explained that we are now preparing for Wave 2 to be undertaken in Autumn 2014. Until long-term funding can be agreed, the contract has to be awarded on an annual basis. In any event, the project is still evolving and it remains to be seen which stakeholders will come on board for Wave 2. The group **approved** the retender proposal and **agreed** that it should go to the board for full approval out of meeting.

17 Questionnaire changes

KB explained that the TPS questionnaire is based heavily on the BPS model with a limited number of questions/variables being more appropriately aligned with NRPS. He would expect to mirror any proposed changes in BPS (and NRPS) in TPS assuming the rationale for making those changes holds good for the tram environment. Discussions would be held with the relevant team members to ensure continued alignment. At this stage we are conscious of the need to update the disability categories asked about (QD) to reflect those now in use on NRPS and other surveys. For the sake of consistency and comparability over time, the group **approved** the minimal changes to the questionnaire

SGG 74	18/06/14	TPS retender	Circulate for OOM approval	KB/JC	Jul 14	Complete. Delete.
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Complaints handling

18 ORR data transfer update

JS reminded the group that in April 2013 it was asked to note the historic problems with the complaint appeal data which we had provided to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) to be published as an Official Statistic. SGG also endorsed an outline plan for resolving issues found with the complaint appeal data provided to ORR.

ORR has not made their final intentions clear in regard to the publication of Passenger Focus's complaint appeals data. As requested, we have provided ORR with resolved case data for the periods October – December 2013 and January – March 2014 on a trial basis. This data has been collated by following a clear, documented process with a system of checks to ensure the data provided is accurate. We are now anticipating ORR's decision in the near future about how they wish to proceed, at which point this process can be finalised and then routinely followed on a quarterly basis.

As was proposed to SGG in April 2013, an external audit of our complaint appeal data processes is intended to be undertaken during the 2014/15 financial year. This should also include an audit of the processes by which the data we provide to ORR is collated once ORR finalise their publication plans.

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The group **welcomed** the briefing note and **endorsed** the cautious approach set out.

Roads

19 Principles and approach – emerging thoughts

The group noted that Passenger Focus was working collaboratively with the Highways Agency and DfT to develop research proposals. It was expected that these would be extensively discussed at members events until in near final form, when SGG would formally include roads research within its remit.

20 Any other business

There being no further business the meeting ended at 14:40.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Stephen Locke
Chair

Date: _____