

Board Meeting Paper	
Nov 12 BM 9.0	
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Restricted or confidential Information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If confidential, protective marking ¹	
Date of Meeting	14 November 2012
Agenda Item	9.0
Report Title	Review of Passenger and Industry facing work - Q2 2012-13
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1. Representing passenger interests
<p>Utilising the three core sources of what passengers tell us about their journey experiences – National Passenger Survey (NPS), Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) and our rail appeals work, we undertook work in quarter two with a range of industry stakeholders to make sure passenger interests are articulated and then acted upon.</p> <p>National Passenger Survey</p> <p>We targeted discussions with several train operators to make sure they understood what the Spring 2012 results meant to them and to start work on addressing areas of specific concern. We are not talking to all train operators about NPS results but focusing attention on those operators where we have concerns about a specific set of results or where a trend has been developing.</p> <p>Our work in quarter two included the following operators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Rail – ongoing dialogue with Northern who are deploying significant resource to achieve improvements across a range of NPS factors. • ScotRail – discussed overall results and presented more detailed analysis on NPS “building blocks” to ScotRail senior management team. • Greater Anglia – Overall satisfaction for spring 2012 was 73% which shows a decline from 78% in the autumn 2011 results. Presented results to senior management team at TOC including Managing Director. Actions now taken to improve factors such as providing a deep clean of all trains, provision of better information to passengers and greater availability of staff at stations. Also developing actions plans for the TOC’s ten busiest stations looking at station environment, passenger information and availability of staff. • Other presentations to TOC’s included South West Trains, First Capital Connect and Southern.

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

Bus Passenger Survey

This work was undertaken across the Passenger Team in three broad areas of activity:

- Individual meetings with bus operator and/or transport authority personnel to review results and agree action plans.
- Discussions with national bus industry stakeholders (major bus groups, industry representative bodies, passenger and special interest groups etc.) to review 2011-12 results and plan ahead for 2012-13 work.
- Centralised communication from the team to a range of local, regional and national stakeholders.

Evidence producing positive results

Following our 2011-12 work which included extensive research across the West Midlands highlighting passenger dissatisfaction with some key factors, Centro (West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive) funded through Passenger Focus a follow-up programme of BPS research work in spring 2012.

The results were presented to Centro and National Express, the major bus operator in the region. The headline results showed a 6% increase in overall passenger satisfaction and an 8% increase in satisfaction with vehicle cleanliness.

National Express confirmed that our BPS methodology helps them justify and then monitor the results of investment decisions, particularly in those areas with no obvious or easy to calculate return on investment. This includes factors such as new and improved vehicle fleet, passengers' sense of personal security, anti-vandalism efforts and customer service training for drivers.

Both parties were very satisfied with the results as they reflected the areas where they had both deployed effort and resources to improve passenger satisfaction.

Staying in the Midlands, the voluntary partnership In Coventry between Centro and bus operators has agreed to fund and boost our next wave of BPS work by a further 750 passenger responses. Our role on the partnership is valued by all parties and passengers are now starting to see the benefit of this approach to partnership working.

Planning for 2012-13 work

During the quarter the team have been working hard with colleagues in our research team to prepare for the next round of BPS work. This has included a variety of meetings and general communication with the major bus groups, transport authorities and trade association bodies about collaborative funding to help boost the geographic coverage and survey response rate.

As a result of this work through specific organisations such as ATCO (Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers), CPT (Confederation of Passenger Transport) and PTEG (Passenger Transport Executive Group), along with individual transport authorities and bus operators, agreements are in place to increase the anticipated passenger response of 12,400 (from our own funding) to over 25,000.

With the specific geographic areas and bus routes in place, the team has also written to transport authorities and bus operators to be covered by our survey work. This ensures that everyone that needs to be aware of our work is fully briefed and informs stakeholders of the key milestones of our work ahead of the planned publication of results in March 2013.

Rail appeals work

The Passenger Managers (Robert Samson and Linda McCord) pick up escalated rail appeals issues and trends to progress and resolve with train operators. In quarter two this work has included:

- Broad discussions with First Capital Connect about complaint handling issues and the use of discretion by staff when dealing with penalty fare issues.
- Escalation of cases with Cross Country involving the failure of the onboard seat reservation system and the steps that the TOC is taking to improve the situation for passengers.
- Escalation of a small number of cases with Southeastern involving passengers who lost their “high speed service” during the period of the Olympics and who were unhappy with the standard compensation offer made by the TOC.

Looking ahead to quarter three

- Planning for presentation of autumn 2012 NPS results to TOC’s.
- Ongoing communication with bus operators and transport authorities during BPS fieldwork.

2. Our work with stakeholders

Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs)

Throughout quarter two the team has met with all the PTE’s across the Midlands and northern England. The agenda for our discussions has broadly covered:

- Building our policy position on statutory bus partnership and quality contracts by understanding current PTE ambitions.
- Understanding PTE policy on emerging rail devolution agenda.
- Developing our work on the Bus Passenger Survey and how results are being used to influence improvements for passengers.
- General policy discussions on our general programme of bus and rail work.

Our ongoing programme of stakeholder work with the PTE’s will remain a priority for the team.

National stakeholder work

We continue to provide a mix of verbal and written updates to a cross-section of national stakeholders to help deliver key messages about our bus and rail research work as well as supporting our national themes work. These have included:

- Ongoing discussions with Transport Scotland on the “invitation to tender” for the next ScotRail franchise.
- Provided the various transport consortia and national transport user committees in both Wales and Scotland with written and verbal updates on our work for passengers.

- Presented NPS and BPS results and highlighted priorities for improvement to the senior management team of the Go-Ahead rail and bus group.
- Supported the Welsh National Assembly who are developing a transport inquiry by providing our research data and briefing officers on wider stakeholder involvement.
- Meetings with various senior bus industry personnel to highlight our BPS work and plans.

General stakeholder work

In quarter two we also led and/or supported work in the following areas:

- Chaired or presented train operator passenger/stakeholder fora involving ScotRail, Arriva Trains Wales, First Capital Connect, South West Trains and London Midland.
- Attended or provided appropriate support to user group events and transport authority fora.

Communications

Supported the communications work of Passenger Focus by delivering a variety of local, regional and national media interviews on issues such as rail fares and franchising.

Looking ahead to quarter three

- Progressing our ongoing work with user groups including development of our website based material and next round of regional workshop events

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

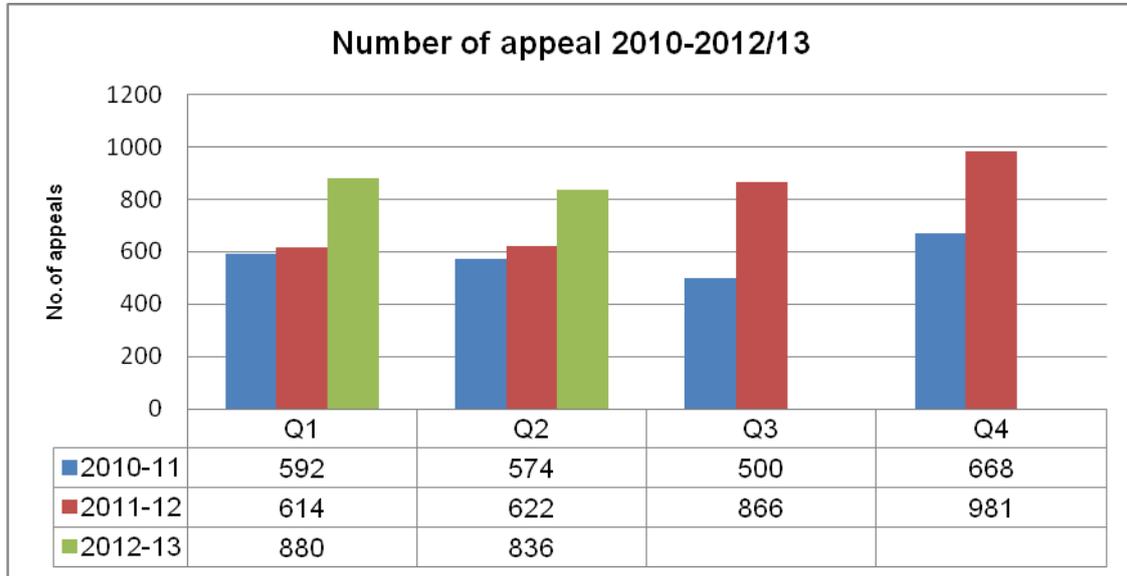
Overview of past quarter's complaints performance and figures.

Case Workload	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3
	(Jul-Sep)	(Apr-June)	(Jan-Mar)	(Oct-Dec)
Total appeals opened	836	880	981	866
Total appeals closed	777	778	742	761
Bus enquiries logged	1	3	2	7
Coach enquiries logged	0	0	1	0
Tram enquiries logged	1	0	0	0
Rail enquiries opened	123	86	133	93
Rail enquiries closed	134	80	125	89
Complaint cases opened	5	4	4	4
Complaint cases closed	2	1	2	2
Praise cases logged	20	39	42	41
Re-direct cases logged (LTW)	115	100	140	137
Passenger Satisfaction (target 70%)	82%	86%	85%	83%
Total passenger contacts <i>(email, fax, web form, letter and calls via First Call)</i>	3770	3732	3818	3674

In quarter two we had a 5% decrease in the number of appeals compared to the previous quarter. However compared to the same quarter in 2011-12 we have an increase in appeals of 34%.

Throughout this quarter we maintained a high level of passenger satisfaction with our appeals service. The number of passengers praising aspects of our work also remains high, with the number of complaints about our work just 0.6% of the total number of cases opened.

Overview of appeal complaints opened Q1 2010-11 to Q2 2012-13:



TOCs generating most comments this quarter:

	No. comments	Top comment categories
East Coast Trains	330	Complaints handling (102); penalty fares/UFNs (71); quality on Train (49)
Virgin Trains	108	Complaint handling (29); penalty fares/UFNs (23); staff conduct (15)
First Great Western	97	Complaints handling (26); fares, retailing and refunds (16); penalty fares/UFNs (14)/(34)

The two operators this quarter generating the most comments remains the same, however First Great Western is once again the third operator generating most comments. Comments about the TOC’s complaints handling standards remains high, which is understandable given the nature of our appeals work. Consistent with previous quarters, comments about penalty fares/UFNs are still within the top three topics of complaint.

The team continues to flag up recurring themes and issues with the passenger issues team, who are then able to provide guidance on the current policy situation as well as escalate issues within the industry to drive improvements for passengers.

Further analysis of the four TOCs who generate the most comments can be found in **appendix a**. This chart compares the TOCs against all top level comment categories from the previous two quarters.

Contacts review programme

- **Workload**

The team continue to work with the “fair allocation” model, meaning that advisors now work with all TOC’s on any passenger contact. This has benefited the team in identifying and sharing best practice across the industry and also improved their working knowledge of other TOC’s. However, for the next six months, one advisor will be working solely with East Coast to dedicate the necessary focus to the help reduce the high number of appeal cases.

- **Quality monitoring**

This has been completed for the months of May and June and issues arising, good and poor practices have been identified and fed back to the team via individual coaching sessions. Some interesting issues arose, many due to delays caused by the large caseload, but some process and service quality improvements are now being addressed across the team.

- **Train company performance reports**

These reports, highlighting TOC appeal volume and trend analysis, have been provided to bidding groups relating to all the TOCs that are subject to a re-franchising process. These include: Virgin, East Coast, First Great Western, First Capital Connect, Southern, Southeastern, Greater Anglia, Northern and First TransPennine Express. An example of one of these reports is included in **appendix b**.

- **CRM & Website Integration**

Work has been completed to integrate the complaint web forms on our external web site into our CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system. When a passenger completes the web form on the Passenger Focus website, this will automatically create a contact and complaint case in CRM, thereby removing the need for the team to log details of the case again.

- **Staffing**

We have recruited for a permanent senior advisor to replace a vacant post left by a promotion. The team now has a fixed term Passenger Assistant again replacing a post left by a promotion.

4. Other projects report

User groups

- We developed a user group newsletter which we distributed by email to around 500 contacts. This was very well received by groups and we hope to produce a second edition in November 2012.
- We have analysed the feedback received from the workshops we delivered for groups. We have begun planning what work we will deliver during the remainder of the year to address their needs.

Developing stakeholder engagement

We have developed the CommuniGator email system. This is an email system which is powered by our CRM system. Quarter two has focussed on testing the system through the distribution of a selected array of publications. We have had many successes distributing work this way including:

- Increased reach and distribution of research
- A heightened presence in social media
- Positive feedback from both stakeholders and passengers

In total 22,946 emails were sent this quarter. Work publicised included:

- Passenger Focus Annual Report
- BPS analysis tool
- East Coast franchise consultation events
- Exchange (user group newsletter)
- Reduction to Bus Services research

Passenger Panels

Passenger Focus is being increasingly asked to inform current aspirations within the transport industry to create “new” passenger panels. Rail franchising work and the development of various bus partnerships are creating a demand for enhanced local passenger/stakeholder involvement.

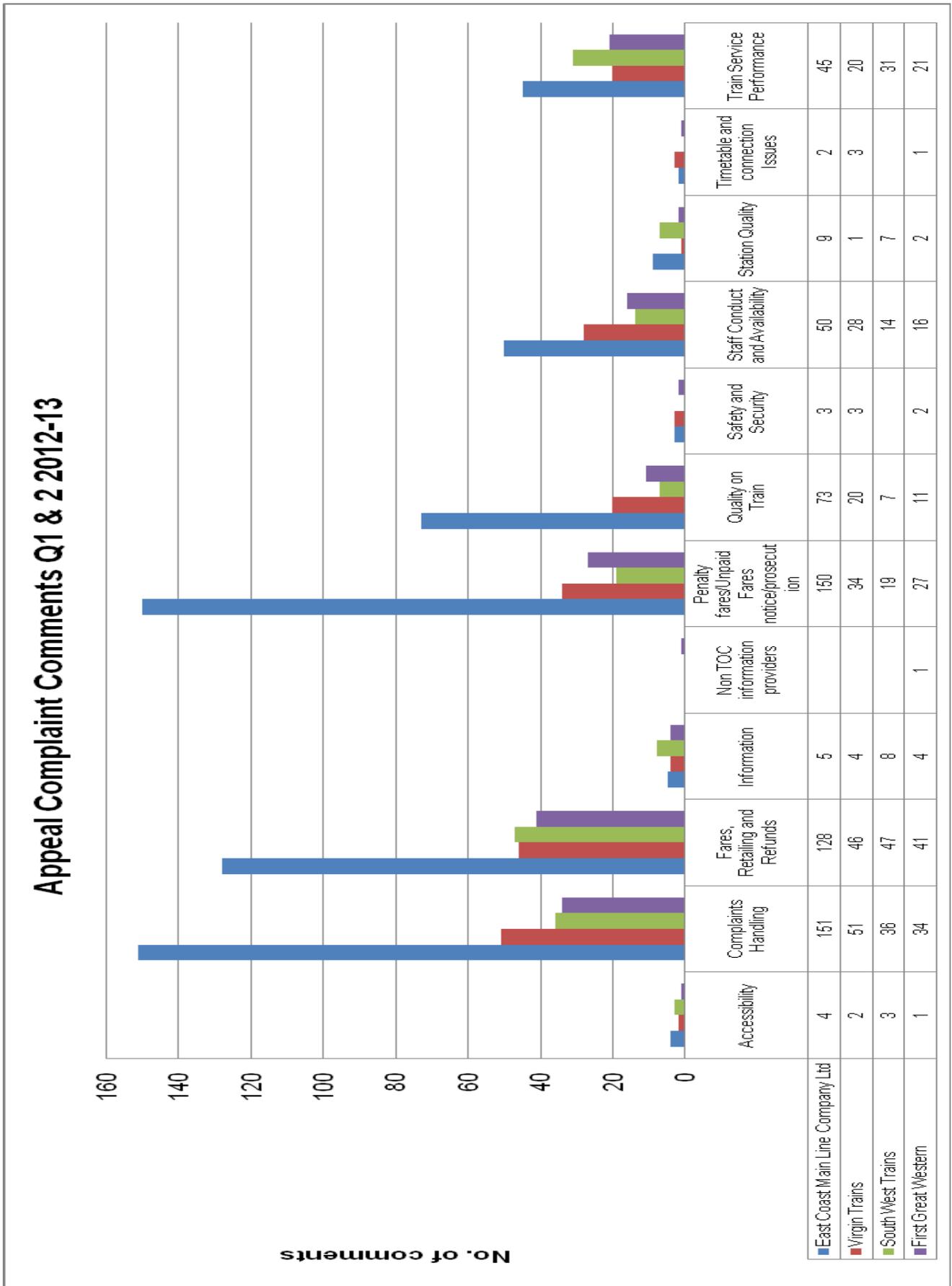
Initial work has begun to scope this project and an information gathering exercise is underway. This includes collating information on existing panels operated in both bus and rail industries, looking at what form they take, how transparent they are and what they achieve. In addition there is plenty of experience of passenger panels from staff across Passenger Focus.

A report will be produced setting out the various approaches towards panels and the potential involvement of Passenger Focus in setting up or supporting panels, and potentially updating our existing ‘best practice’ guide.

5. Glossary of Passenger Contact Terms

Appeal complaint	A complaint the operator has been unable to resolve, the passenger is seeking our help to resolve the matter
Initial complaint	The passenger has a complaint about their operator and has approached us in the first instance without complaining to the operator. The passengers should allow the operator the opportunity to resolve the complaint before Passenger Focus can get involved.
Enquiry	Any enquiry about Passenger Focus and its work, passenger rights or a general enquiry about the rail, bus, coach or tram industry
Redirect	A contact or complaint outside of our remit, such as for London TravelWatch or Bus Users UK
Copied in	The passenger has copied us in to a correspondence that they have sent to another organisation.
Praise	Positive feedback about Passenger Focus, its work or its complaint handling.
Complaints about us	Any complaint about Passenger Focus or any aspect of its work. This includes the way Passenger Focus has handled an appeal.

Appendix A



Passenger Focus complaints handling Virgin Trains

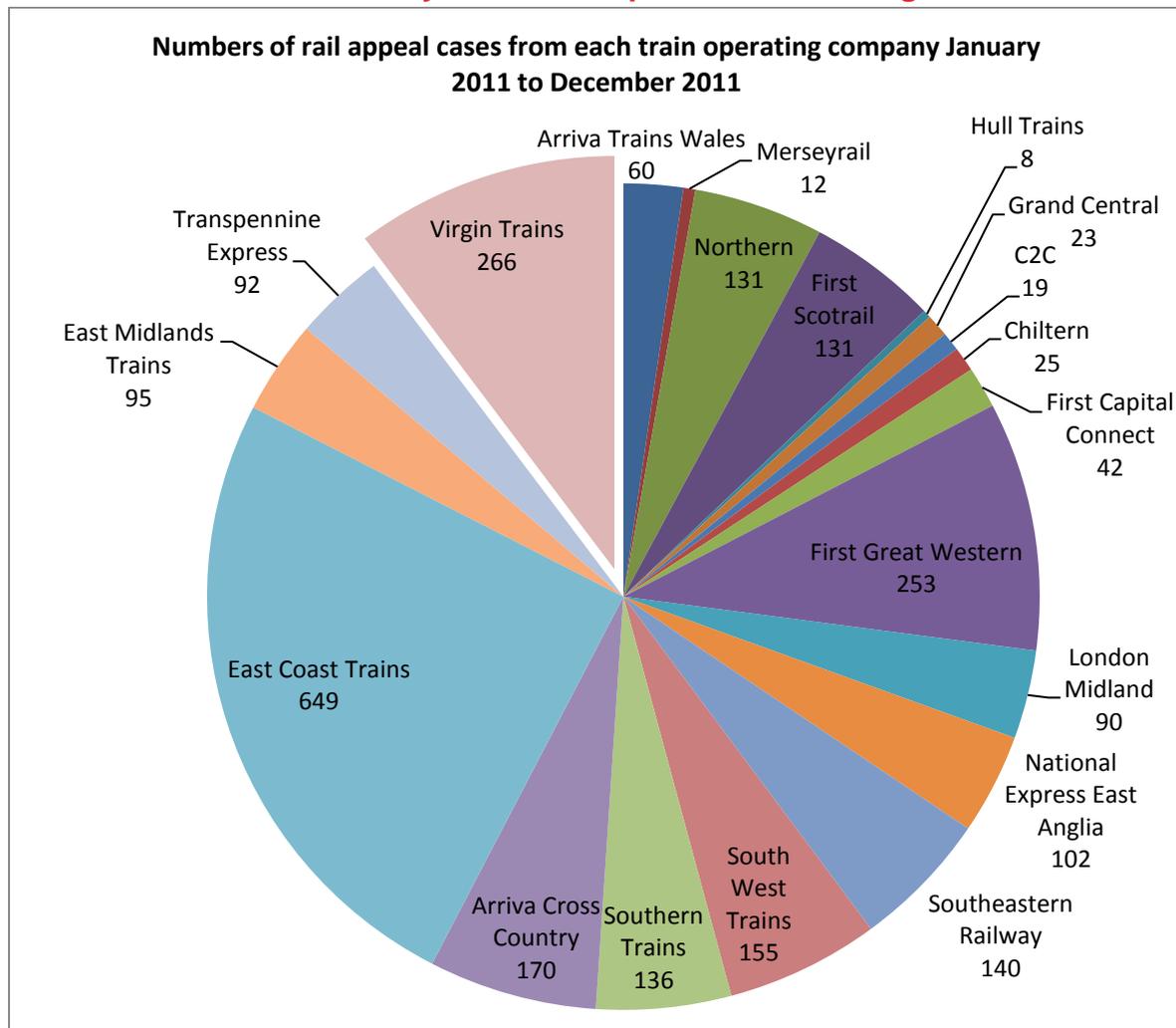
1 January 2011 – 31 December 2011

Level and type of contact

January 2011 to December 2011¹

	Appeal	Enquiry	Total
Virgin Trains	266	17	414
Average of all Train Operators	129.95	51.6	181.55

Number of cases referred by each train operator to Passenger Focus



¹ Please see explanation of terms in Appendix A

Between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2011, Passenger Focus handled 2,599 appeal cases in total for the train operating companies seen in the chart above. The chart shows that ten percent of these appeal cases referred to Passenger Focus were from Virgin Trains passengers, which was the second highest number referred across all operators. These appeals are complaint cases which the train operating company had not been able to resolve to the passenger's satisfaction.

Type of complaint referred to Passenger Focus by passengers from all train companies and from Virgin Trains

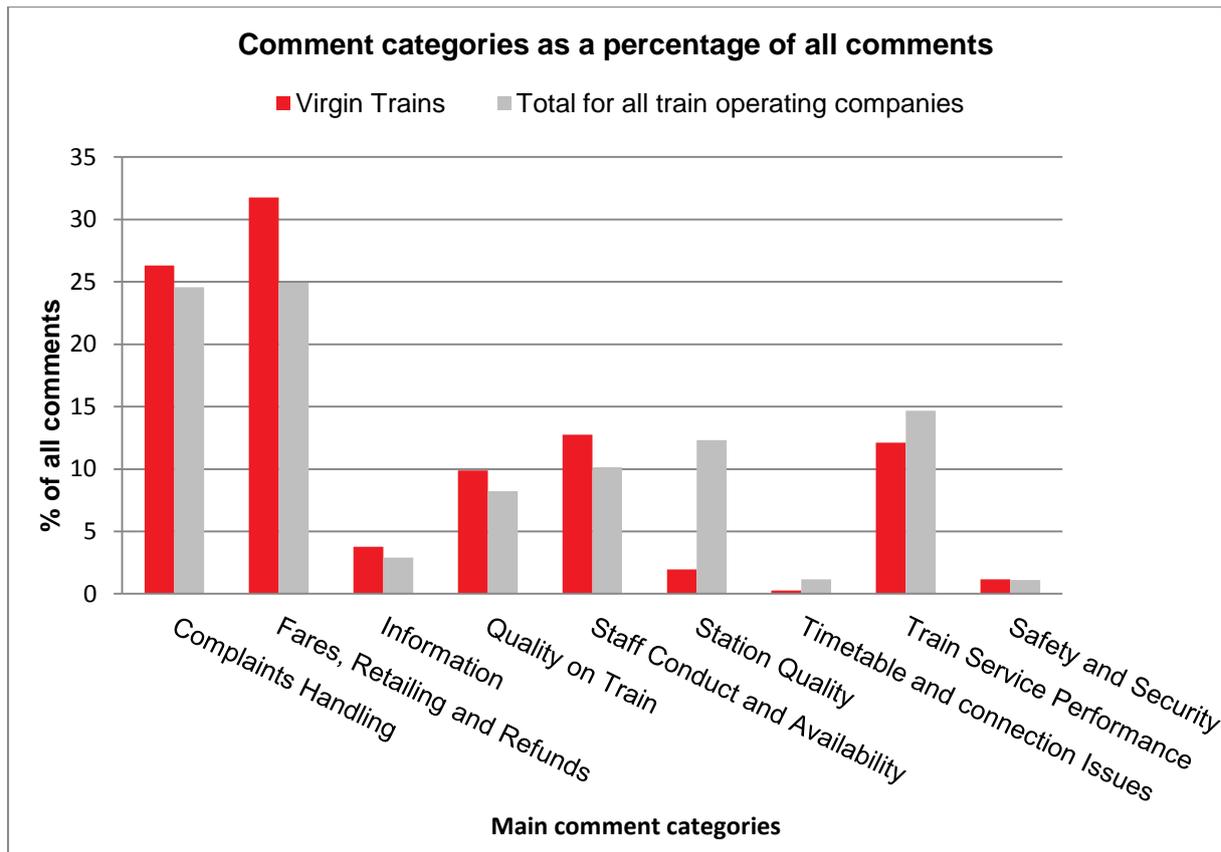
For each complaint that is raised as an appeal through Passenger Focus, we capture the comments that the passenger makes. The comments define the issues arising and a passenger can raise more than one comment as part of their complaint. We group these into overarching and subcategories to record the types and pattern of issues being raised.

The most prevalent issues raised by passengers, as seen in overarching comment categories and in further subcategories, were in relation to:

- **Fares and retailing** – These are mainly in relation to pricing structure and policy, refund conditions and administration and ticket inspection issues. This category formed almost quarter of overall comments.
- **Complaint handling by the operating company** - This category formed a quarter of all comments and the third biggest issue overall was in this category as passengers felt unhappy with the level of compensation offered. They also considered the operator had been impolite or unhelpful or had not addressed all of the issues raised.
- **Train service performance** – The second largest issue over all operating companies was in this section in relation to delay.
- **Staff conduct and availability** – Staff being rude or discourteous or giving wrong information were the most prevalent comments in this category.

Please note: the largest category of comment over all operating companies was about station quality and in particular about booking office /retailing facilities. This is attributable to one train company specifically where there were a number of responses to a consultation about proposed changes to ticket office opening hours.

The chart below shows the number of comments in each category for Virgin Trains passengers as a percentage of all their comments. This is compared to similar data showing the percentage of comments in each category for all train operating companies.



The most frequent comments raised by Virgin Trains passengers are in the same categories as for all operating companies.

A further breakdown of comments in the table below shows the main subcategories in more detail compared with the average number of comments for the operating companies also classed as long distance operators² in the National Passenger Survey (NPS) along with Virgin Trains.

The same most prevalent issues are seen for all long distance operating companies as for all types of train operators. However, for Virgin Trains, staff conduct is a greater issue than train service performance and this is due to more passenger comments being made about discourteous staff and about being misinformed or misdirected by staff.

² The other operating companies included in the long distance operators category of the NPS are: CrossCountry, East Coast, East Midlands Trains, and First TransPennine Express.

Calendar year January 2011 to December 2011 <i>(lesser categories are removed from the table but are included in main category totals)</i>	Virgin Trains	Average for all NPS Long Distance operators
Fares, Retailing and Refunds (Total for comment category)	244	190.8
Pricing structure/policy	60	48.6
Ticket inspections	58	41
Refund conditions/administration	38	42.4
Ticket restrictions	34	17.8
Complaints Handling (Total for comment category)	202	170.8
Unhappy at level of compensation	71	64.4
TOC was impolite/unhelpful	46	39
No reply received from TOC	40	21
TOCs reply did not fully address complaint/all the issues	32	32.4
Staff Conduct and Availability (Total for comment category)	98	67.2
Rude/Discourteous	33	19
Misdirected/informed passenger	22	16.2
Poor management of problem/incident	20	12.8
Failed to provide expected service	16	13.6
Unavailable when required/insufficient staff	4	3.8
Train Service Performance (Total for comment category)	93	84.4
Delay	73	62.8
Train Cancelled	16	15
Quality on Train (Total for comment category)	76	70.2
Train crowded	22	19.4
1st class not provided/standard passengers in 1st class	12	9
On train services/catering/dedicated carriage	11	13.2
Information (Total for comment category)	29	19.4
Lack of announcements/indicators/info on indicators	12	9.2
Incorrect announcements/info on indicators	11	5
Station Quality (Total for comment category)	15	16.4
Ticket machine--availability / damaged/unsuitable/error/difficult to use	13	10.4
Safety and Security (Total for comment category)	9	6.2
Damage to property/clothing	2	1
Hazard reported by passenger (note and forward to TOC)	2	2.4
Injury	2	0.6
Accessibility (Total for comment category)	4	7
Lack of disabled facilities at station	1	0.6
Lack of disabled facilities on train	1	0.8
Poor/no disabled access at station	1	0.8
Pre-booked assistance not provided	1	4.2
Information Providers (Total for comment category)	3	2.2
Independent information provider	3	2
Timetable and connection Issues (Total for comment category)	2	4.4
Rail connections too tight/missed/not held	1	0.6
Stopping pattern	1	0.4
Total (includes lesser categories removed from table)	775	639.2

Level of compensation achieved

Passenger Focus was able to increase the compensation offered to passengers on the appeal cases considerably where it was sought from Virgin Trains.



The amount of compensation reflects the length and the cost of the journeys on this route in addition to the number of appeals where compensation was sought. Other operating companies may have claims for shorter and therefore cheaper journey tickets and the amounts will not appear as great. However this data also shows that the increase in compensation obtained with the help of Passenger Focus (£13,365.13) could have been available without the case being referred to us. The previous table shows that complaints handling was the second most important issue for Virgin Train passengers who asked Passenger Focus for assistance and compensation levels was the second highest comment subcategory overall.

In 2011, nearly **40%** of the comments we received about the train operating companies' complaints handling were dissatisfaction with the level of compensation or goodwill. In that same year we achieved **£78,536.34** in compensation for passengers through our intervention. This was mainly made up of gestures of good will, which indicates the effect that focusing the operator on looking at a case from the passenger's perspective can have. There is no reason for operators not to consider this before the appeals' stage but this is a cultural issue throughout the industry.

Passenger Focus does not expect train operators to provide refunds and gestures of goodwill without good cause. By adjusting the delivery and type of compensation offered, they can improve the passengers' perception of the customer service they have received.

Feedback on customer relations and complaint handling

Between 2008 and 2010, Passenger Focus undertook a national programme to review complaints handling by train operating companies and the rail industry. With regard to the case handling process, we found that operators constantly refer to the National Rail Conditions of Carriage in order to explain the outcome of a passenger's complaint.

Particularly in our appeal complaint handling, it is often felt that operators could use more discretion when dealing with compensation claims, empowering their advisors to do so. If the operators based their responses on the merits of the case rather than simply the rules, many passenger complaints would not need to get to an appeal stage.

Feedback from Passenger Focus staff dealing with appeals for Virgin Trains passengers suggests that the Virgin Trains customer service team cover all passenger issues in correspondence and make extra effort to demonstrate customer relations. They also commented that staff give assurances that they will follow-up issues and forward to relevant managers.

However, our comment subcategories show that when Virgin Trains passengers made their initial complaint to customer services there were a number of passengers who did not receive any response or who felt that staff were impolite or unhelpful and did not address all issues raised.

Date: 24 February 2012

Appendix A Contact Type

Appeal complaint – A complaint the operator has been unable to resolve, the passenger is seeking our help in resolving the matter.

Enquiry – Any enquiry about either: Passenger Focus and its work, an enquiry about the passenger's rights, or a general enquiry about the rail industry