South Western rail franchise consultation

Transport Focus response

January 2016

Contents

1. Transport Focus

Transport Focus is the independent public body set up by the Government to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, England's bus and tram passengers outside London, and coach passengers in England on scheduled domestic services. Since March 2015 we have also represented the interests of users of the strategic road network. We are an independent body funded by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Our mission is to get the best deal for passengers. With a strong emphasis on evidence based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground. We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of passengers and we work with the industry, passenger groups and government to secure journey improvements.

Transport Focus appreciates the open consultation on the future South Western franchise.

2. Introduction

Transport Focus welcomes the opportunity to provide a rail passengers' perspective as the specification for the new South Western franchise is developed. When the requirements of the franchise are established, it is vital that the needs of passengers using and paying for rail services are placed squarely at the heart of the contract.

We are pleased to have engaged with the Department for Transport's Rail Executive (RE) from an early stage in the South Western franchise replacement process. We have used discussions to highlight key passenger issues and the findings of our research on a range of subjects.

This formal consultation response draws on three rich seams of franchise specific data. Firstly, it combines knowledge and understanding drawn from passenger reports of their current journeys on South West Trains (SWT) services with research into passenger priorities for improvement. Read together these two complementary studies provide a unique perspective on passenger needs from the franchise and provide hard evidence to inform the decisions to be made for the future.

In addition, we also reference the findings of qualitative research into the views of SWT passengers that we undertook in autumn 2015, specifically to enhance understanding about the issues they wish to see the new franchise address. More generally, we cite findings from our wider research into a range of issues that are important to passengers.

Our research, which will be detailed in further sections of this response, highlights the central importance to passengers of value for money, capacity and punctuality. These core needs must be the top requirements in the specification for the next franchise.

Other factors which the new franchise needs to address effectively are the processes for buying tickets, which are currently a source of frustration for many, and delivering reliable mobile communications links. All groups of passengers desire a smoother, easier and more convenient ticketing process, with innovations in purchasing, ticket types and the provision of relevant after-sales updates. In the 21st century passengers also expect access to consistent coverage for mobile signals and Wi-Fi provision that is reliable and free, as in day-to-day life.

A core principle for the specification must be to build upon the opportunities presented by the existing framework of services and seek progressive improvements in all areas. It is important that the franchise responds effectively to existing and anticipated demands and that, where necessary, franchise reviews can react to any changes or inaccuracies in planning assumptions, being mindful particularly of the likelihood of increased further demands for travel on the network.

Our research into passenger understanding of, and desire for involvement in, the franchise process led to our emphasis on *Passenger Power!* and a call for more recognition of the passenger within the franchising system. Recent announcements of franchise policy have made welcome commitments to a greater emphasis on the quality of the passenger experience and enhanced arrangements for engagement and communication with customers. It is important these promises are brought to life in the specification for the next franchise and that passengers can see these ideals manifest in the services they receive. There is an important role for the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) in providing direct feedback from passengers using the services.

It is vital that, throughout its duration, the franchise remains responsive to changing passenger needs. This means not only that there must be a clear understanding of passenger requirements at the outset but that there is an ongoing emphasis on consultation and engagement with stakeholders and a set of output measures that reflect passenger satisfaction.

Transport Focus is committed to the promotion of passenger interests in the future decisions on the South Western franchise. We will continue to work closely with RE, and with potential bidders for the operation, to ensure that services address both current and evolving needs throughout the contract term.

2.1 Franchise consultation response
In this response we consider consultation questions for which we have relevant information and appropriate evidence of passenger needs and aspirations. We also provide a commentary on other significant issues which we believe should be addressed within the South Western franchise specification and final contract.

Transport Focus is adopting a strategic approach to this response, which focuses largely on higher level issues. Passengers and stakeholders will all have their own experiences and specific aspirations which they will want considered in future plans. It is important that RE and the franchise bidders listen carefully to the views expressed by those whose lives are impacted by decisions about the future of the franchises and the day-to-day operations which result from this.

3. Passenger research and implications for the franchise

3.1 The Transport Focus evidence base
Transport Focus is committed to underpinning our work to get the best deal for passengers with a solid evidence base: we have a considerable body of research on matters that are important to passengers. Much of this is directly relevant to the specification for the next South Western franchise.

In this section we highlight the findings of our latest investigations into passengers' priorities for improvement and of trust in the rail industry. We also draw on NRPS data for information about the current experience on the franchise. Read together these complementary studies provide a unique perspective on passenger needs from the franchise and provide hard evidence to inform the decisions to be made for the future.

We also highlight the key findings from our recent qualitative research among SWT passengers.

Other research is cited as applicable within following sections.

3.2 Rail passengers' priorities for improvement 2014[1]
This study of passenger priorities shows that the top three priorities for SWT passengers are very similar to both South West and South East regions, and to Great Britain as a whole.

The priorities in table 1 are shown as an index averaged on 100. An index of 300 is three times as important as the average and an index score of 50 is half as important as the average. So in table 1 we can see that, for SWT passengers, the top priority of 'the price of train tickets offers better value for money' is almost five and a half times as important as the average.

'Trains sufficiently frequent at times I wish to travel' is more than three times as important as the average. 'Passengers always able to get a seat on the train' is over two and a half times more important than the average.

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[1] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014

The next group of important priority factors also feature what can be regarded as core elements of service. Passengers want improvements in punctuality and reliability, fewer disruptions or cancellations and good information about their services.

This research provides a very clear picture of passengers' priorities for improvement. The top priority, by some considerable margin, is 'price of train tickets offers better value for money', indexed at 543. The second priority, indexed at 317, is 'trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel'. The strong third priority for improvement, indexed at 266, is 'passengers always able to get a seat on the train'. And, if we consider the various factors related to punctuality, reducing cancellations and minimising disruption we can see that they also have a very high combined priority for improvement.

Summarising the findings, it is clear that the top priorities for improvement largely focus on the basic elements of the rail service – value for money, frequency, getting a seat, punctuality, managing delays and provision of information. This is not to say the remaining priorities are not important to the passenger experience, it is just that they are not as important to improve as the top ranking.

The research has sample sizes of 167 for SWT, 192 for the South West region and 337 for the South East region, within an overall GB pool of 3559. The database[2] contains a wealth of information which can be analysed in many ways to explore how priorities vary by demographic and journey purpose, amongst other things. We commend its use to RE and potential bidders to enable a detailed understanding of the aspirations of passengers to apply to the South Western network.

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[2] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-simulator-2014

Table 1 Passenger priorities for improvement: comparison of SWT, South West region, South East region and Great Britain

	SWT		South West		South East		GB	
Price of train tickets offers better value for money	543	1	455	1	504	1	494	1
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel	317	2	251	3	283	3	264	3
Passengers always able to get a seat on the train	266	3	370	2	314	2	367	2
More trains arrive on time than happens now	210	4	158	5	182	4	178	4
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey	189	5	141	6	166	5	161	6
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now	158	6	121	9	140	7	136	7
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays	154	7	164	4	161	6	163	5
Journey time is reduced	131	8	100	10	126	9	105	9
Accurate and timely information available at stations	123	9	134	7	130	8	132	8
Free Wi-Fi available on the train	123	10	127	8	112	10	97	10
Less disruption due to engineering works	107	11	80	15	93	11	90	13
Accurate and timely information provided on trains	87	12	94	13	92	12	92	12
Connections with other train services are always good	72	13	87	14	79	14	84	15
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to high standard	72	14	98	11	81	13	93	11
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train	64	15	97	12	72	15	89	14
Good connections with other public transport at stations	56	16	66	16	59	16	62	16
Seating area on train is very comfortable	44	17	64	17	49	17	59	17
Improved personal security on the train	40	18	39	23	45	18	41	21
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude	38	19	52	19	45	19	47	18
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude	38	20	52	20	45	20	46	19
Improved personal security at the station	36	21	37	24	41	22	38	22
New ticket formats available such as smartcards etc.	34	22	62	18	44	21	45	20
Free Wi-Fi available at the station	33	23	31	26	28	27	24	27
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard	29	24	39	22	34	24	36	24
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage	25	25	47	21	30	26	37	23
More staff available at stations to help passengers	25	26	33	25	31	25	29	25
There is always space in the station car park	23	27	25	27	39	23	27	26
Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket	21	28	23	28	22	28	20	29
More staff available on trains to help passengers	17	29	23	29	22	29	20	28
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free	14	30	19	30	19	30	15	30
Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station	11	31	11	31	11	31	10	31
Sample size (unweighted base)	167		192		337		3559	

This information can also be shown graphically to illustrate just how much the relative importance varies between the factors.

Figure 1 SWT passengers' priorities for improvement – relative importance

Priority	Value
Price of train tickets offers better value for money (1)	543
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel (2)	317
Passengers always able to get a seat on the train (3)	266
More trains arrive on time than happens now (4)	210
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey (5)	189
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now (6)	158
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays (7)	154
Journey time is reduced (8)	131
Accurate and timely information available at stations (9)	123
Free Wi-Fi available on the train (10)	123
Less disruption due to engineering works (11)	107
Accurate and timely information provided on trains (12)	87
Connections with other train services are always good (13)	72
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard (14)	72
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train (15)	64
Good connections with other public transport at stations (16)	56
Seating area on train is very comfortable (17)	44
Improved personal security on the train (18)	40
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude (19)	38
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude (20)	38
Improved personal security at the station (21)	36
New ticket formats available such as smartcards, ticket Apps etc. (22)	34
Free Wi-Fi available at the station (23)	33
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard (24)	29
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage (25)	25
More staff available at stations to help passengers (26)	25
There is always space in the station car park (27)	23
Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket (28)	21
More staff available on trains to help passengers (29)	17
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free (30)	14
Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station (31)	11

100=the average (marked at value 107 / line between items 11 and 12)

3.3 National Rail Passenger Survey and drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction[3]

The NRPS, together with an analysis of the drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, is a comprehensive source of information about passenger perceptions of the current franchise. It can also be broken down to show variations across the four 'building block' groupings of rail services for SWT. Details of the building blocks can be found in appendix 1.

Evidence from the NRPS reinforces the importance of punctuality and reliability as one of the highest priorities identified for the franchise.

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[3] Most recent data at date of production of this document is Spring 2015. Autumn 2015 data is published 27 January 2016. See website for further details:
http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/national-passenger-survey-introduction

Tables detailing the NRPS headline factor scores for SWT and the four component building blocks are provided in appendix 2. These include a comparison of scores with the sector or typology average and the typology best in class.

3.3.1 Drivers of satisfaction

Figure 2 shows the dominance of punctuality and reliability as a driver of satisfaction for SWT passengers. It is a particularly strong factor for passengers on the Longer Distance and Metro routes at 33 per cent each. It is also a factor to a lesser extent for Outer Suburban and Local passengers at 19 per cent and Island Line at 12 per cent.

Other notable drivers of satisfaction are the cleanliness of the inside of the train, comfort of the seating area, length of time the journey was scheduled to take and frequency of trains.

Figure 2 - Drivers of satisfaction, NRPS Autumn 2014/Spring 2015: SWT and building blocks

□ Punctuality/reliability
■ The cleanliness of the inside of the train
□ The comfort of the seating area
□ The length of time the journey was scheduled to take
■ The frequency of the trains on that route
■ The ease of being able to get on and off the train
■ The overall station environment
■ Up keep and repair of the train
■ Your personal security whilst on board the train
□ Availability of seating at the station
■ The availability of the staff on the train
□ Others

3.3.2 Drivers of dissatisfaction

An analysis of the factors that drive passenger dissatisfaction also echoes the importance of key factors to passengers (figure 3). Where delays are not dealt with well, passengers will be dissatisfied. Low satisfaction with punctuality and reliability is also notable in driving dissatisfaction.

Figure 3 - Drivers of dissatisfaction, NRPS Autumn 2014/Spring 2015: SWT

☐ How train company dealt with delays
☐ Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)
☐ The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)
■ Overall station environment
■ Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand
☐ Other
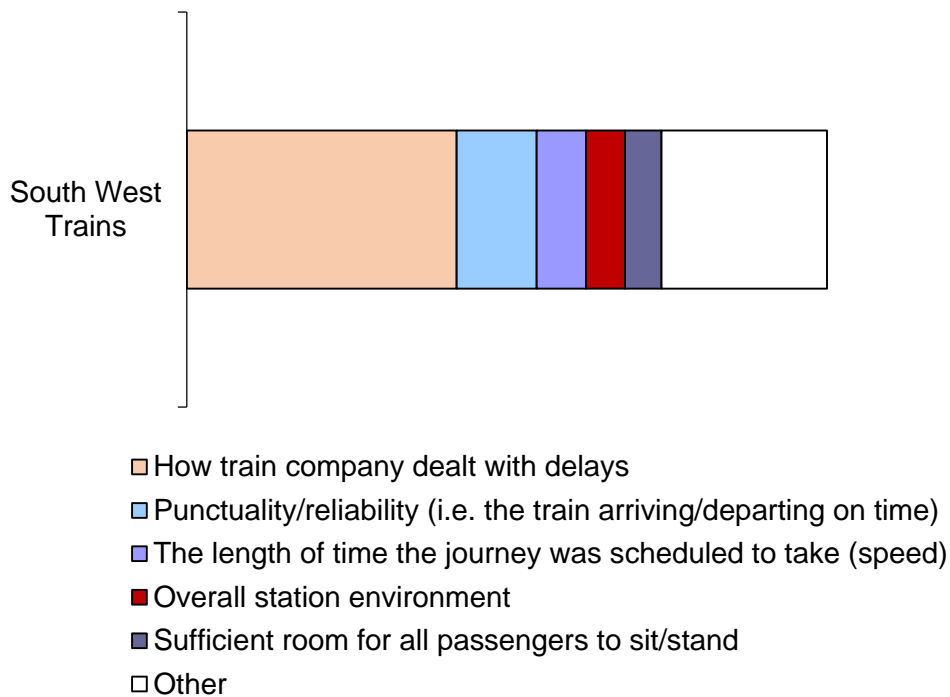
3.3.3 Satisfaction with value for money and the overall journey

A comparison between SWT and the London and South East (LSE) sector for overall satisfaction with the journey shows that SWT has similar levels of satisfaction to those of the peer group. (See figure 4 below). However, both the sector and SWT score on recent waves is lower than the level achieved in autumn 2012, indicating that more could be done to drive satisfaction levels upwards again.

Scores for satisfaction with 'value for money for the price of your ticket' are low for both the sector and SWT. However, SWT consistently lags behind the sector scores.

Figure 4 – SWT and London and South East sector trends for value for money and satisfaction with overall journey, NRPS

Overall satisfaction with the journey SWT
The value for money for the price of your ticket SWT
Overall satisfaction with the journey LSE
The value for money for the price of your ticket LSE
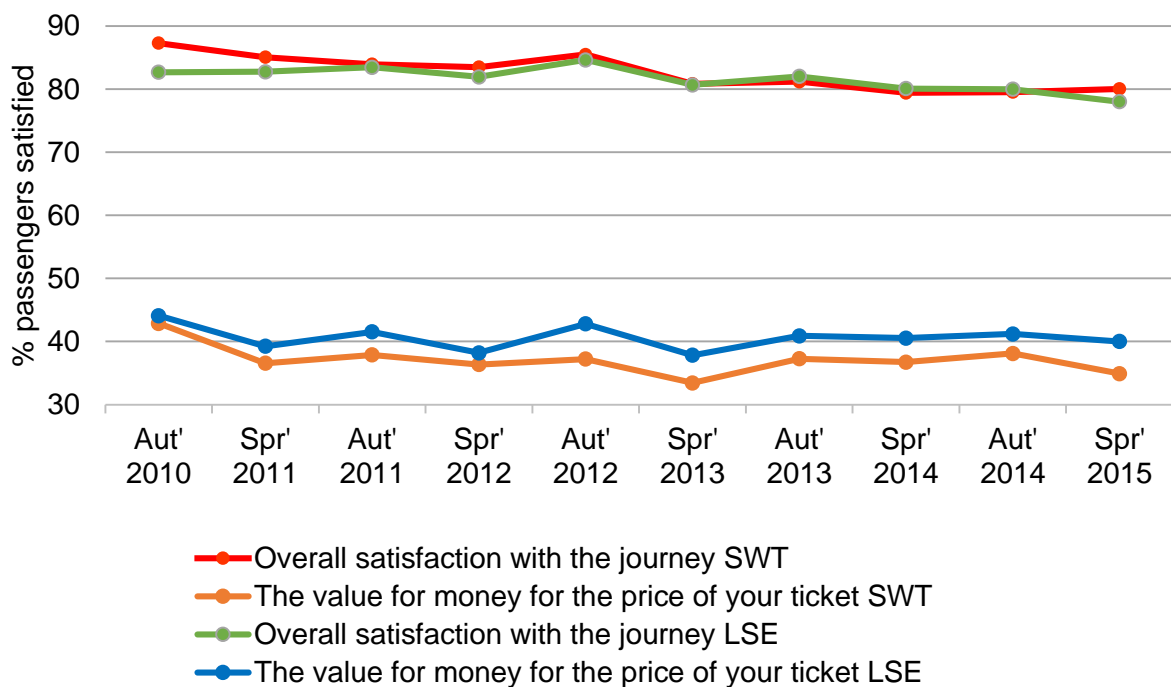
3.4 Passengers' current experiences and aspirations for the future[4]

As part of the consultation process on the new franchise the Department for Transport asked Transport Focus to carry out research to understand passengers' current experiences and explore their needs and aspirations for future South Western services. We undertook qualitative (focus group) research and found that passengers reported a somewhat mixed experience, with some positive aspects and a number of areas requiring further development.

The key areas identified for improvement are detailed below and amplified further in other sections of this submission:

- **Capacity**

Overcrowding is identified as an issue, not just during the peak or only affecting commuters, but across the route. Passengers are frustrated about the inability to get a seat and want to see more carriages and increased frequency to address this.

> *"It would be nice to get a seat, especially when you've paid in advance. It's a lot of money to pay to stand but I've just given up."* [Commuter, Salisbury]

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[4] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

"Going west, sometimes from Salisbury there are six carriages going to Exeter but sometimes there are only three on a potentially very busy route and they don't tell you how many are going to be on it and you can be stood up the whole way." [Commuter, Salisbury]

- **Information provision**

There is a clear requirement for improved information provision, particularly during disruption. Passengers want the train operator to be proactive in offering information and advice. Frontline staff are not always thought to have the most up-to-date information, or often to know any more than the passengers, and this is seen as unacceptable.

"They should give you as much information as possible so at least you know what's going on and how long you're going to be delayed. More information is better than less."
[Leisure, Bournemouth]

"Their Twitter is quite good and it tells you what the delays are. They know before the staff do at the train station so I don't know how that works."
[Commuter, inside M25 U40]

- **Ticketing innovation**

The process of buying tickets is a source of frustration for many. Less frequent travellers may lack confidence in their ability to buy the best ticket for their journey from a machine, even if they are aware that this is an option for them. Across all groups of passengers there is a desire to make the ticketing process smoother, easier and more convenient. People want to see innovation that will deliver improvements to each stage; purchasing a ticket, ticket types (such as smart and e-tickets) and in providing relevant updates after the purchase has been made.

"It's far too difficult to renew my weekly ticket. The train company seems to have been slow to embrace the technology to make it work. They are good at taking the money but not good at making it straightforward for me."
[Commuter, Guildford]

"My annual season ticket is a paper card which is massively antiquated because you have to get it changed if it goes in the washing machine or if it is next to your debit card for too long and I've lost my card twice and it's a real pain to get it replaced" [Commuter, off-peak]

- **On-board experience**

Views on trains are generally positive. However, there are a number of areas relating to the on-board experience which passengers want to see improved, including mobile signal and Wi-Fi. These are covered in more detail in section 5.1.

- **Station enhancement and modernisation**

Views of stations are understandably mixed dependent on station size, past experiences and individuals' varying requirements. However, there is still a consistent theme of quality information provision and good levels of personal security as being fundamental requirements. Passengers' views on station improvements are covered in more detail in section 4.12.

3.5 Passenger trust in the rail industry

Transport Focus conducted a study exploring passengers' relationship with the rail industry[5]. The main finding is that to improve passengers' trust in the rail industry, train companies not only need to get the basic service right day-to-day, they need to put effort into building long-term relationships with their passengers.

Trust consists of three elements: service, relationship and judgement. Service elements affect day-to-day issues such as punctuality, reliability, helpfulness of staff and value for money. They are the foundations for building passengers' trust.

Once the service elements are in place, it is important to focus on relationship factors to build passenger trust. Some train companies have developed good relationships with their passengers. Communicating directly and proactively with passengers goes down well with them. Particular problem areas for communication identified by the research are confusion over ticketing options and when there are delays or cancellations. Communicating honestly, with integrity and transparency, can inspire trust.

Many train companies score well on the third trust element – judgement. They are seen to have high principles, a good reputation and show leadership. However, judgement does not contribute as much to trust as service and relationship.

For the next South Western franchise to build greater trust with passengers it is important to get the basic service right ahead of everything else. Then, building on closer relationships with passengers is important. One way is through high quality communication. Passengers should feel that train companies are 'on their side'.

3.6 Recommendation - top level priorities for the franchise

Analysis of the passenger priorities for improvement, drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction and the feedback from the passenger focus groups highlights a number of factors that should be top level priorities for the next South Western franchise to address. These are:

- value for money
- capacity and frequency

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[5] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passengers-relationship-with-the-rail-industry

- punctuality and reliability
- minimising and improving the handling of disruption.

 Attention should also be given to provision of accurate and timely information, ticketing innovation, mobile communications, cleanliness inside trains, appropriate station facilities and, to build trust further, clear and open communication.

4. Response to consultation questions

4.1 Passenger satisfaction
- **Do you support the key priorities that have been identified through the Transport Focus research?**
- **Are there other priorities you believe should be included to inform the new franchise specification?**

Our 2014 research[6] gave a clear picture of passengers' priorities for improvement. These top six priorities are of great importance to passengers. However, other significant priorities must also be given consideration. The research findings indicate four more priorities are of above average importance to passengers in the South West region:

- accurate and timely information available at the station
- free Wi-Fi available on the train
- fewer trains cancelled than happens now
- journey time is reduced.

NRPS analysis of drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction offers further insight into the factors that matter most to passengers. Punctuality and reliability, how the train company deals with delays, cleanliness of the inside of the train, comfort of the seating area, length of the journey and frequency of trains are all notable drivers.

Qualitative research undertaken in 2015[7] found that passengers want extra capacity, station enhancement, an enhanced on-board experience and ticketing innovation, amongst other things.

As the research implies many different features combine to create the overall journey experience for the passenger. These individual aspects cannot be managed in isolation but should be considered together to create an improved fundamental offer, focused on delivering increased passenger satisfaction across all aspects of the journey.

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[6] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014
[7] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

4.2 Franchise objectives
- **Do you feel that these are appropriate objectives for the South Western franchise?**
- **Are there any further objectives you believe should be included?**

Transport Focus regards the eight objectives set out for the South Western franchise as appropriate. However, we recommend the inclusion of the following further objective:

Operate in an open and transparent way, emphasising proactive communication and engagement, to build trust and confidence amongst passengers.

4.3 Capacity
- **Considering the planned schemes to deliver additional capacity, what are your views on additional opportunities to deliver more capacity elsewhere within the franchise area?**
- **Are there particular services or routes where you believe there is a need to introduce additional capacity to address overcrowding?**
- **It may be possible to increase overall passenger carrying capacity by introducing different rolling stock that has more standing space and/or modifying the internal configuration of trains, including rebalancing first and standard class seating. Do you have views on these potential rolling stock changes?**

Passengers regard provision of capacity as a fundamental requirement of the rail service, both in terms of sufficient seating and standing room, and appropriate frequency of service.

For SWT passengers, 'passengers are always able to get a seat on the train' is the third highest priority for improvement. It has an importance of more than two and a half times higher than an 'average' factor. The NRPS reinforces overcrowding as a particular area of concern on SWT. Only 61 per cent of passengers are satisfied that there is sufficient room to sit and stand, compared to a London and South East sector average of 63 per cent and a national score of 65 per cent.

We know that 'trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel' is the second highest priority for SWT passengers. Clearly, the more services that run the more seats are available, hence greater capacity.

Recent qualitative research[8] found that overcrowding is an issue, not just during the peak or only affecting commuters, but for all types of passenger journeys. All passengers want to get a seat and many believe that buying a ticket should guarantee them a seat. Not being able to get a seat is found to have a negative

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[8] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

impact on passengers' perceptions of the operator, the overall journey experience and value for money.

Quotes from our qualitative research with South Western passengers reflect their feelings:

"I can get the train from Worcester Park or the tube from Morden. I prefer to get the train because it's quicker but very often in the morning I get the tube because I just want to sit down" [Commuter, inside M25 U40]

"All I want to do is read my book but if I'm standing there's no way I can read a book. Sometimes you're so cramped you can't even hold a phone to your face" [Business, London]

"The price is the wrong way round because some people pay less to get a seat and I pay more for a worse service" [Commuter, inside M25 U40]

4.3.1 Variations across the network
Evidence from the NRPS shows that the experience of passengers across different routes on the network can vary.

Table 2 Sufficient room to sit and stand, NRPS Spring 2015, percentage satisfied: SWT, peak/off-peak and building blocks

SWT	Peak	Off-peak	Metro	Outer Suburban & Local	Longer distance	Island line
61	37	68	65	55	62	91

Table 2 shows a comparison of satisfaction with room for passengers to sit and stand for SWT overall and across the four building blocks. Satisfaction is lowest for Outer Suburban and Local passengers, but also relatively poor on Metro and Longer Distance routes. It also shows the comparison of satisfaction amongst peak and off-peak passengers. The low level of peak passenger satisfaction illustrates the scale of the capacity challenge.

Table 3 Frequency of trains, NRPS Spring 2015, percentage satisfied: SWT and building blocks

SWT	Peak	Off-peak	Metro	Outer Suburban & Local	Longer distance	Island line
74	74	74	63	78	79	91

Table 3 shows a comparison of satisfaction levels with frequency of the trains across SWT overall and each of the four building blocks. Satisfaction on Metro routes at 63 per cent is the lowest by a considerable margin. Satisfaction with frequency is the same for peak and off-peak passengers, at 74 per cent.

It is vital that both RE and the bidders continue to work with local communities to understand the challenges and requirements for individual services and areas.

4.3.2 Optimising capacity

Transport Focus believes that the South Western franchise should operate in accordance with the established principle that 'it is reasonable for passengers to expect to get a seat for journeys of more than twenty minutes, and to have sufficient space even if they are standing for shorter journeys'. This should be the benchmark for capacity provision.

It is vital that the next franchise makes adequate provision for ongoing capacity increases to accommodate the anticipated growth in passenger demand. The franchise specification should require the bidders to take all reasonable steps to provide sufficient capacity across all services throughout the life of the franchise.

Targets should be for crowding levels to be lower than currently exist, with a requirement to plan to stay ahead of growth in demand. In the longer-term this means working with Network Rail in developing the infrastructure options identified in the Wessex Route Study. In the shorter-term it means targets for reducing short-formations (i.e. providing fewer carriages than planned) and cancellations, as well as enhanced monitoring of crowding at intermediate points.

To effectively manage crowding, a train company needs high quality loadings data with the ability to analyse individual trains, different days of the week and seasonal impacts. This more granular detail should be used to inform careful allocation of the available capacity to optimise the response to demand pressures across the network.

A thorough review of all timetables must be undertaken to explore how services can best be matched to passenger needs. There may well be opportunities to adapt frequencies and stopping patterns to provide a better match of capacity with demand, whilst still ensuring the needs of all passengers are balanced appropriately.

There should be a requirement for the next operator to utilise all available data and information to monitor and continually improve the ongoing situation. Bidders should be required to demonstrate their plans to ensure sufficient resources within the franchise to enable a sophisticated and responsive approach to train service development, combined with a positive strategy of stakeholder engagement to explain the rationale for service proposals.

The future operator must be required to adopt and publish appropriate crowding measures that are more representative of individual passenger's experiences across

the range of routes and services. Published data should make the crowding levels on different services easily comparable so that decisions about allocation of resources can be scrutinised. NRPS satisfaction measures for relevant factors, including overall satisfaction and room to sit and stand, should be published alongside capacity data to demonstrate the impact this has on passengers.

Other approaches to management of capacity should also be implemented.

Transparent information about the loadings of specific trains provides passengers with the knowledge that may enable them to make an informed decision. Research has found that over two thirds of passengers who had seen information about the levels of crowding on specific train services had found it useful and just over a fifth of these people had made a regular or occasional change to the trains they used as a result of the information[9].

A traffic-light system of information should be made available to passengers to help them understand the likelihood of getting a seat, or even getting onto, a particular train. This allows passengers who have more flexibility to make an informed choice about their travel options and, even where there are more defined patterns of travel, some passengers may appreciate the option of being able to make small adjustments or trade-offs to have a comfortable journey.

Similarly, fares incentives for passengers to sometimes swap peak journeys with travel in the shoulder or off-peak, or perhaps work closer to home on some days, may also make a contribution to capacity pressures. Cliff-face price differentials that lead to under-utilisation on some higher-priced services and a flood of passengers on the first cheaper trains should also be avoided.

Technological solutions should also be adopted. Crowding can now be monitored in real time and information systems and apps are becoming available to indicate where available seats on trains are located[10].

Additional efforts should be made to respond to passengers who have physical difficulties in standing for any length of time. Initiatives such as priority seating and cards[11] that the holder can show to identify a proven need should be part of the overall plan for improving accessibility within the franchise.

Over the lifetime of the franchise the operator must be required to work with Network Rail and within the wider industry processes to develop proposals to further increase capacity to meet the expected rise in demand and ensure this information is available to inform future High Level Output Specification (HLOS) plans and investment cycles.

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[9] The impact of publishing more information on seat availability: South West Trains case study, ORR July 2012

[10] For example, Dutch Railways - iNStApp: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc6R3qt6SXI

[11]For example, http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/accessibility/priority-seat-card/

4.3.3 Rolling stock availability, capacity and configuration

The future operator should be incentivised to ensure that available rolling stock is never sitting in sidings when there is evidence of need for additional capacity on services where it could be deployed. In addition, the franchise specifications should require that the particular needs for additional capacity for special events must also be planned for and managed within the overall framework of train availability.

Where further investment in additional rolling stock would provide the necessary capacity to meet identified requirements during the life of the franchise, the onus should be on the operator to build a business case to enable this to happen. If there is a commercial case then there should be prompt action to deliver the necessary vehicles. Where additional subsidy will or may be required, Transport Focus expects the operator and the RE to work together with regional partners to seek an affordable solution. Where required, assessments should look beyond the immediate franchise into the longer term to create a viable mechanism to respond to identified demand.

Transport Focus has conducted several research projects on rolling stock design, and where capacity has proved to be a driving force for change there are two areas that passengers consistently point to in terms of need for improvement:
- the design of the aisle/gangway running the length of the carriage
- the vestibule area/entrance to the carriage.

A summary of the findings of the projects is set out below.

In the South Western qualitative research[12] passengers were generally positive about the configuration on existing trains. There were positive comments about the removal of the 3+2 format on some trains; welcomed for the creation of extra space amongst those who had to stand and for the additional room and comfort for those able to get a seat.

Ultimately, views on the internal configuration of trains will reflect the fact that different options will suit different people in different circumstances. Priorities will reflect where, when and for the purpose journeys are made. Any proposals to adapt trains to respond to capacity pressures should be required to be developed in consultation with passengers.

4.3.3.1 Thameslink rolling stock research[13]

Those passengers boarding trains nearer to London displayed a high degree of pragmatism, although it probably resulted from 'conditioning', accepting that even with 12 coach trains they were unlikely to get a seat in the morning peak. Flowing from that there was a clear view that the new trains should be designed to allow

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[12] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services
[13] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/thameslink-rolling-stock-qualitative-research

passengers to stand in complete safety and as comfortably as possible – though there were some who thought the new trains should be designed to provide a better chance of them getting a seat.

In order to facilitate this, participants in the Thameslink research were quick to point out the need for improved provision of grab rails/handles. Passengers identified this as a major area for improvement, as existing carriages in service were seen to be particularly uncomfortable to stand in because there was nothing suitable to aid their stability. This was particularly a problem for shorter passengers, and those travelling with children or more than one bag.

In the saloon area, passengers were often reluctant to move down the carriage away from the vestibule area if they perceived there to be nothing for them to hold on to.

> *"I'm too short to reach the rails, and I won't move down the carriage because it's dangerous for me. People don't understand this and get irate."*
> (Bedford group, Commuter)

Passengers welcomed designs that showed wider gangways/aisles between each coach, as they were felt to greatly enhance freedom of movement along the train, and provided more standing space; but only if coupled with something to hold on to when doing so.

The vestibule area itself was also mentioned in this respect, making passengers feel unsafe if they have to stand. The results of the Thameslink research were echoed in later research conducted on Merseyrail trains by Transport Focus.

4.3.3.2 Merseyrail rolling stock research[14]
Research conducted in partnership with Merseytravel demonstrated that of those passengers who stood on-board existing trains, just 46 per cent were satisfied with the space available to them and only 41 per cent with the provision of grab rails. The research identified congestion in the vestibule as being a frequent problem when travelling on Merseyrail trains. This was not felt to be an issue that was unique to Merseyrail services, since some respondents claimed to have experienced this when travelling with other TOCs and on London Underground. However, in the context of existing passenger volumes and the fact that most were able to get a seat, even during peak times, this seemed to be a large problem on Merseyrail trains, in relative terms.

Much of the congestion seemed to be caused by passengers travelling with bikes and pushchairs standing in the vestibule areas – in part a consequence of not having dedicated areas or a flexible space (e.g. tip up seats near the doors) that could be used for such purposes. This was often assumed to be the easiest option due to the

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[14] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/future-merseyrail-rolling-stock-what-passengers-want

relatively large floor space and not having to navigate round other passengers and the partition on either side of the entrances. However the main reason for passengers being reluctant to stand in the gangways was the widespread perception of not being able to do so safely or comfortably.

This is primarily due to the lack of usable grab rails in this part of the carriage (even in comparison with the vestibule areas). The rail attached to the overhead luggage shelf was considered to be too high and/or too far away from the aisle for most passengers to reach comfortably and the discs on top of the seats were thought to be difficult to hold firmly enough to provide stability when standing on a moving train.

> *"When the train is full there's nothing to hold onto for security. There used to be straps hanging from the ceiling but there are other things that could be done." (Leisure user, West Kirby)*

The narrowness of the space creates the perception that there is a risk of those who move down the aisle becoming trapped there. This creates concerns about being able to get off quickly enough and perhaps missing the intended stop, especially for those making relatively short journeys.

> *"I don't want to go right into the carriage if it's busy because I might not be able to get off at my stop if the train is full."*
> *(Leisure user, West Kirby)*

4.3.4 Rebalancing first and standard class seating

This is not a question we have researched with passengers and we can predict that responses to this will reflect individual preferences and usage of the different types of provision.

First class provides fewer seats than standard for the same amount of space and can often be under-utilised, with implications for effective usage of the train space. Passengers crowded in standard could legitimately feel indignant that they are uncomfortable when other space is not fully used.

In the qualitative research amongst SWT passengers, many who were travelling on standard class tickets found empty first class areas on crowded trains to be a source of frustration.

> *"First class really winds me up because there is never anybody in there so they should maybe get rid of the first class carriages" [Commuter, outside M25 U40]*

> *"The trains have a first class section which is absurd because I can't believe anybody actually buys a first class ticket" [Business, London]*

However, South Western journeys can be long, and the value of first class facilities for business and other passengers prepared and able to pay extra to sit/work in increased comfort cannot be underestimated.

First class also generates additional revenue, which if substantially reduced would presumably have at least some impact on standard class fares.

We suggest that there should be a service by service assessment of needs and a carefully balanced approach to optimising capacity, whilst retaining some first class provision where this is well-used and can be justified.

4.4 Future impacts on demand

- **What factors may impact on demand for travel on the new South Western franchise, drawing on local impacts in particular? Please provide any evidence you may have.**

The Wessex Route Study[15], which draws on the Market Studies also undertaken as part of the Network Rail Long Term Planning Process, sets out a comprehensive analysis of the expected future demands in the majority of the geographic area relevant to the South Western franchise. Elements of the Western Route Study[16] are also relevant.

Other stakeholders, particularly Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships, will have additional details of other initiatives such as house-building and employment developments that may also impact on demand patterns in, and between, specific locations.

Pricing decisions can also be expected to influence demand for travel on the franchise. Price increases may deter usage. Off-peak and advance ticket deals, as well as greater marketing or other community-based initiatives may encourage people to make journeys by train. Fares incentives to encourage travel in the shoulder-peak or off-peak may influence demand for those passengers who can be flexible in their scheduling.

4.5 Train service specification

- **Where, if anywhere, would you like to see any changes to first and last trains on the South Western network and why? Do you have any evidence to support this?**
- **Where, if anywhere, would you like to see any changes to weekend trains on the South Western network and why? Do you have any evidence to support this?**

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[15] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/wessex-route-study/
[16] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/western-route-study/

- **Would you support a specification which is flexible enough to allow the operator to review how station calls are allocated to train paths in order to improve overall line capacity? What impact might this have on passengers?**
- **Respondents are invited to propose any changes to the current service pattern which they feel should be considered and to explain their rationale, for example by identifying specific local factors which might influence the future level of passenger demand which should be reflected in a revised specification.**
- **Respondents who wish to promote service changes should clearly identify these in their response to this consultation, as well as any supporting business case or value for money (VfM) analysis.**

The specification for the future franchise should provide a framework to ensure that train service provision is based on passenger needs and priorities and is linked to key measures of passenger satisfaction.

Figure 1 illustrates that capacity factors – in terms of the frequency of trains and the ability to get a seat – rank second and third as priorities for improvement, only behind better value for money. More trains arriving on time ranks fourth.

Along with punctuality and reliability, figure 2 shows that NRPS drivers of passenger satisfaction on SWT include the comfort of the seating area (which may, at least in part, reflect crowding pressures), the length of time the journey is scheduled to take and the frequency of trains on the route. Drivers of dissatisfaction also include the length of time of the journey as well as sufficient room for passengers to sit/stand. (See figure 3).

The evidence makes clear that an effective train service specification is of major significance to passengers.

NRPS for the SWT Metro building block shows just 63 per cent of passengers are satisfied with the frequency of trains on their route. This compares with 73 per cent for the short commute typology, where the best in class scores 96 per cent. This suggests that more might be done to improve frequencies to address the needs of passengers travelling in and around London.

Our qualitative research[17] identified the following particular areas of passenger concern with the frequency of the services they use:

- Shepperton, Worcester Park and Brookwood were all cited as examples of stations/routes where service frequency did not match expectations.
- Some shift workers or passengers with complex commutes felt earlier trains were required.

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[17] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

- There was a common feeling that later last trains were required, especially departing from London but also on other parts of the network.

Other work, exploring the needs of commuters, has also established a case for looking at the adequacy of timetabling for first, last and weekend trains.[18] An analysis of NRPS found the proportion of passengers using the existing first and last trains on their route to make commuting journeys is considerable, and is even higher at weekends.

First trains in particular are regularly used, especially at the weekend. First trains are used on an occasional or regular basis by more than one in five commuters during the week, by 31 per cent of those commuting on Saturday and 62 per cent on Sunday (of which 39 per cent use the first train on Sunday regularly).

Of those using the first train, 75 per cent of commuters consider it to be early enough for their needs. However, satisfaction with the timing of the first train drops to only 59 per cent amongst those who commute at weekends.

Last trains are also used in a similar pattern across the week, although to a lesser extent overall. Whilst 64 per cent of those that use the last train consider it to be late enough for their needs, less than half – only 44 per cent – of those using the last train at weekends are satisfied with its timing.

This demonstrates that there is a significant appetite for earlier and later services seven days a week, and particularly at weekends where demand for services for commuting journeys does not appear to be fully met by current timetables. Earlier and later services at weekends might therefore better accommodate weekend commuting.

We have not explored specific South Western locations in detail but would note the importance of considering the timetable needs of passengers travelling to leisure and tourist destinations such as Twickenham and the South Coast resorts, and access to Southampton Airport.

4.5.1 A passenger-focused specification
Transport Focus supports a specification which is flexible enough to allow the operator to review how station calls are allocated to train paths in order to improve overall capacity. However, whilst acknowledging the need for some flexibility to adapt the train service to respond to current and changing demands, Transport Focus is clear that there must be sufficient detail in the specification to protect key journey opportunities. These must include journeys to/from school and work and, at key locations, retain or improve connection opportunities.

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[18] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/understanding-rail-passengers-the-average-commuter

Alterations to service patterns will inevitably flow from the development of rail and other infrastructure. New journey opportunities may become available, or required, as markets change and grow. Input from passengers, local and regional bodies and other stakeholders may identify other circumstances which require recognition in the service specification and it is vital that RE takes this on board as more detailed plans for the specification are drawn up.

We also recommend careful consideration is given to the balance between scheduling that enables the operator to regularly deliver punctual services and the impact arising from timetables with lengthened journey times. Excessive, unproductive use of space must be avoided on a network where every additional journey opportunity can make a valuable contribution to the provision of much-needed capacity.

The specification for the South Western franchise should require bidders to plan and resource a deliverable passenger-focused, optimised service pattern. This should also include consideration of the appropriate capacity and frequencies required for earlier and later in the day as well as weekends and bank holidays. In respect of the latter, the invitation to tender should give strong encouragement for bidders to explore the potential for services to run on 26 December and other dates where there is identifiable demand.

The service specifications and service options developed by bidders for the franchise must demonstrate full consideration to the capacity implications of all proposals.

Whatever the plans for the train service it is essential that the timetable proposals are subject to proper consultation, including the initial proposals for the specification. Within requirements protecting minimum service levels, the next operator should be given flexibility to develop the train service to meet the needs of existing and potential passengers. They should be tasked with creating the best timetable for the places they serve, balancing the range of factors important to passengers.

Engagement with passengers and local communities should be regarded as a starting point for service developments. There must be a requirement for timely, transparent and meaningful consultation that allows all stakeholders views to be listened to prior to changes being finalised. Feedback, irrespective of whether it has been possible to accommodate the recommendation or request, must be provided.

From the outset, and throughout the life of the franchise, there are some principles that should be embedded, to be followed whenever timetables are revised:

- early consultation with passengers must be a prerequisite, and followed by honest feedback about why the ultimate decisions were made
- existing basic features such as first/last trains, if satisfactory, should remain
- aspirations for improvements should be met if possible

- capacity and resources should be matched as closely as possible.

Transport Focus believes that the train services should be structured around the journeys that passengers wish to make. The key issue is whether passengers at each station have the required level of service to and from the places they want or need to travel at the times they wish to do so. The starting point should be to optimise rail services based on passenger demand and any new opportunities that become available. The provision of sufficient capacity must be addressed, particularly for times of peak demand.

Our view is that origin and destination data should be used as the basis for understanding existing travel requirements. This data is available to the industry, but not generally to stakeholders. Without access to this key data and other relevant information, particularly about network capacity, timetabling options and comprehensive assessments of stakeholder views, it is not possible for others to derive a properly balanced judgement about service options. It is therefore important that, when considering choices and bringing forward proposals, the decision makers, whether RE, Network Rail (NR) or the operator, should ensure that the rationale that underpins them is properly set out to all who have an interest.

The service specification should take a holistic view of the needs of all passengers: commuter, business and leisure, from all parts of the network. Timetable opportunities must be optimised with passenger interests placed at the heart of planning and ahead of operational convenience. Within the acknowledged capacity constraints of the franchise the distribution of train services should be appropriate to passenger demand. Where possible there should be clearly differentiated services for different markets.

4.6 Performance and reliability

- **Are there any specific stations or services where you believe reliability or punctuality should be improved? Where possible, please explain your reasoning when responding to this question.**

SWT passengers' priorities for improvement[19] ranks more trains arriving on time (index 210), less frequent major unplanned disruptions (index 189) and fewer train cancellations (index 158) at fourth, fifth and sixth respectively.

Table 4 below shows considerable variations in satisfaction with punctuality and reliability between the best and worst performing building blocks within SWT.

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[19] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014

Table 4 Punctuality and reliability, NRPS Spring 2015, percentage satisfied: SWT, peak/off-peak, commuter/business/leisure, building blocks

SWT	Metro	Outer Suburban & Local	Longer Distance	Island Line
76	67	79	80	97
Peak	**Off-peak**	**Commuter**	**Business**	**Leisure**
72	77	66	88	87

Passengers on the Metro routes report the lowest satisfaction at 67 per cent, Outer Suburban and Local and Longer Distance routes are similar at 79 and 80 per cent respectively. The Island Line has high levels of satisfaction at 97 per cent.

There are also differences dependent on journey purpose, with commuters the least satisfied at 66 per cent, compared to business at 88 per cent and leisure at 87 per cent. Peak passengers are also less satisfied than off-peak passengers.

Figure 5 below shows the trend for punctuality of the component service groups and the SWT operation as a whole, as measured by the industry measure of punctuality.[20] It shows some improvements after a period of decline, but performance still remains below the higher levels achieved historically

Figure 5 South West Trains PPM for operator and service groups

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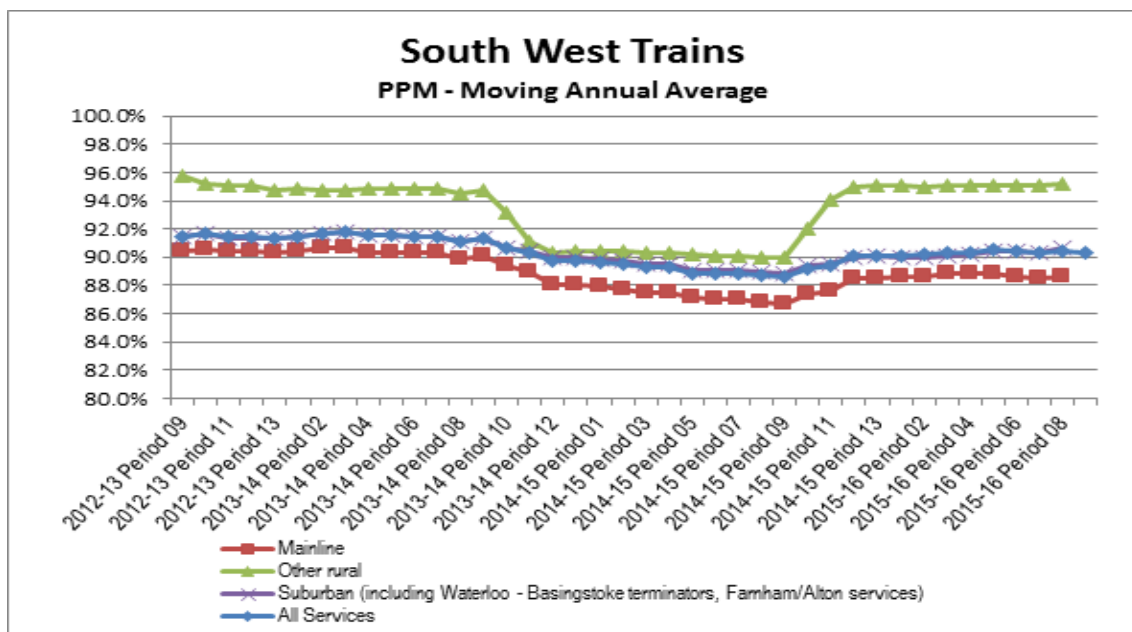
[20] This standard, the Public Performance Measure – or PPM - regards trains arriving at their final destination within five minutes of scheduled time (or ten minutes for longer distance services) as punctual

Figure 6 South West Trains Cancellations and Significant Lateness
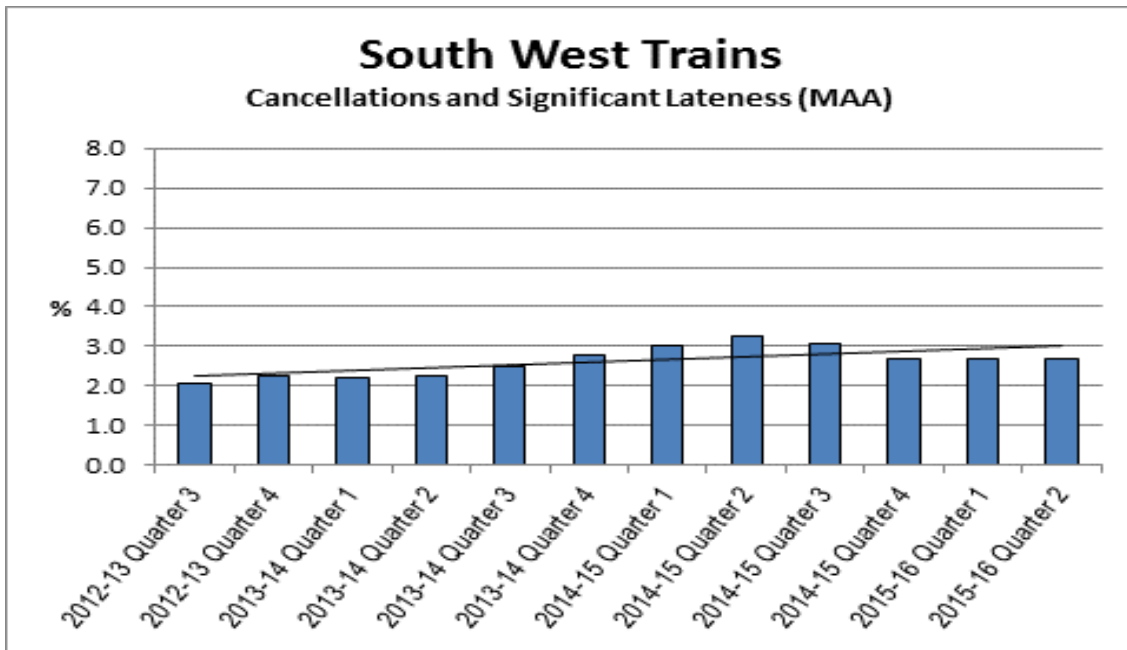
Figure 6, above, shows an upwards trend in the industry measure of cancellations and significant lateness (trains over 30 minutes beyond scheduled arrival time at final destination).

Figure 7, below, shows a comparison between PPM and Right Time (trains arriving at their terminating station early or within 59 seconds of schedule). It demonstrates the wide gap between the industry measure and the reality of the performance that passengers experience.

Figure 7 South West Trains PPM and Right Time
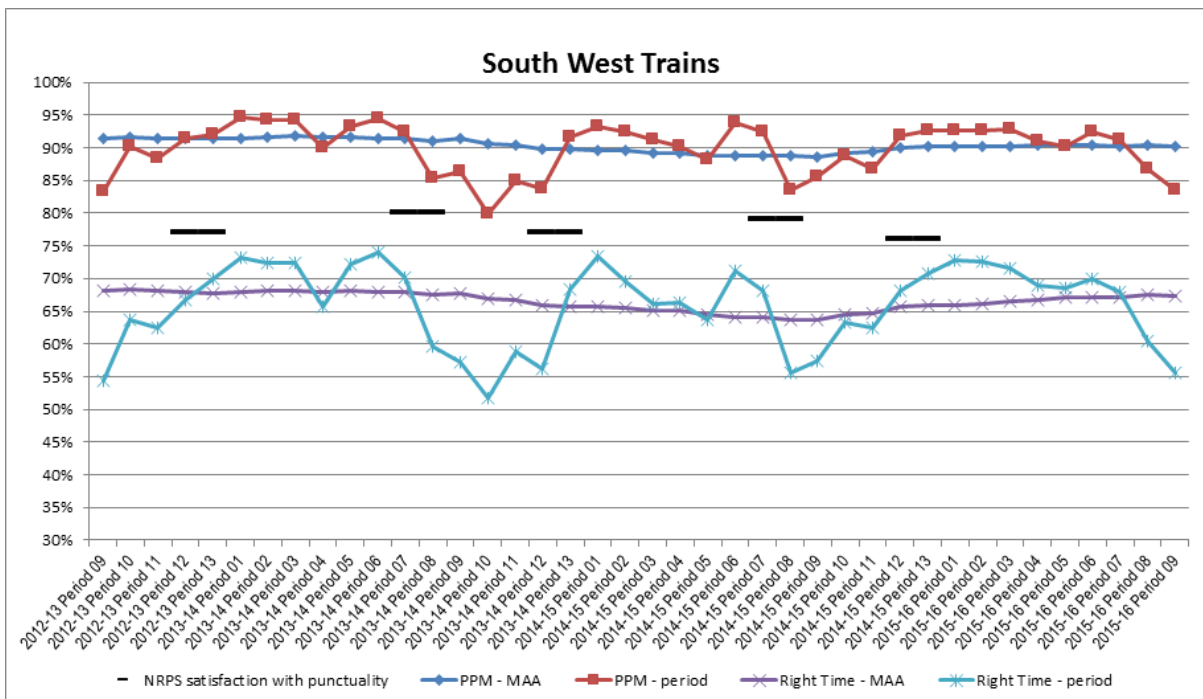
Our research clearly identifies the importance of punctuality and reliability to passengers. We therefore emphasise the absolute need for the next franchise specification to demand improvements in this crucial aspect of operations.

We recommend that the specification sets out a requirement for a strong focus on delivering excellent operational performance and ensuring a culture of genuine transparency about how well things are going. As well as helping engender trust among passengers and stakeholders, we believe transparency will of itself increase the incentive on the operator to drive up performance. It should be noted that 'on time'/'right time' punctuality is what matters to passengers and not whether a train is within PPM.

Specifically, we feel there should be:

1. Targets to improve PPM, 'on time'/'right time' and cancellations across all routes. Reliance on service group averages, let alone a whole TOC average, risks exposing passengers on individual routes to poor performance.

2. Targets for PPM and 'on time'/'right time' at key intermediate stations in addition to at the train destinations. Measuring performance at the destination station alone runs the risk that a large number of passengers are late even though the train does not show as such. This is a particular problem on longer distance routes with numerous sub-markets and relatively few end-to-end passengers. But even on shorter routes, including commuter routes, punctuality based on measurement at destination can be markedly at odds with the experience of passengers using intermediate stations. The impact of late running at intermediate stations can be dramatic when passengers are making connections with other trains or with buses.

3. A requirement to make historic train performance information easy to obtain and understand. Passengers should be able to view the performance of individual trains they catch (or a group of trains) between the stations they use. When journey planning, the performance record of individual trains should be one of the elements presented to assist passenger decision-making.

4. A requirement to report publicly the number of trains each period that appear in the public timetable, but are excluded from the 'plan of the day' and therefore do not count officially as cancellations. The fact that any cancellation – if declared by 22:00 the day before – does not appear in performance statistics fuels many passengers' underlying suspicion and mistrust of the industry. Being open about what is going on would help.

To reinforce these points, our 2015 research[21] shows the high value that passengers place on performance and the provision of a service that they can rely on. We also know through our work on the NRPS that punctuality is the main driver of overall

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[21] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/train-punctuality-the-passenger-perspective

passenger satisfaction. In order to better understand the relationship we have taken a more in depth look at the correlation between satisfaction with punctuality and actual performance across a number of different train companies. Overall we found a clear picture of:

- Passenger satisfaction with punctuality reduces by between two and three percentage points with every minute of delay.

- Average lateness experienced by passengers being worse than that recorded for train services. This is because of the effect of cancellations and because many trains that are on time at their destination are late at intermediate stations. As PPM measures performance at the final station it is possible for passengers en-route to be late arriving at their station only for the 'empty' train to arrive on time – in other words the train is on time despite most of the passengers being late.

- Passengers' notice delay well before the technical threshold of delay. Commuters notice lateness after one minute rather than the five minutes allowed; while business and leisure users tend to change their level of satisfaction with punctuality after a delay of four to six minutes.

This shows that passengers do not view a train arriving up to 5 or 10 minutes after its scheduled time as being on-time And that a significant degree of passenger satisfaction is 'lost' when trains are officially 'on time' according to the industry measure of PPM, but late in passengers' eyes. As punctuality is the main driver of overall passenger satisfaction it follows that greater adherence to a right-time' railway could help drive up overall satisfaction.

The next operator should be required to commit to – and demonstrate – a 'right-time' culture and to working with Network Rail to drive sustained improvements in performance. We would like to see within the next franchise:

- A commitment to report the percentage of trains arriving punctually at key intermediate stations.
- A commitment to move towards a 'right-time' railway, including the publication of right-time performance.

4.7 Managing disruption
- **Respondents are asked to suggest what mitigating actions and steps the South Western operator should be expected to take to meet the needs of its passengers both during the planned disruption to the franchise as a result of enhancement works and when 'force majeure' events, such as extreme weather or unplanned events that impact the smooth operation of the network.**

- **Respondents are asked to consider whether they would support replacing first/last train services with alternative transport where it can be demonstrated that a longer period of engineering access for Network Rail would improve the infrastructure reliability and reduce disruption overall.**

In NRPS, the most significant 'driver' of passenger dissatisfaction for SWT, as it is nationally, is how the train operator handles delays. The 2014 priorities research[22] identifies that four of the top ten priorities for SWT passengers relate to avoiding and managing disruption. A closer look at the NRPS shows that on key factors relating to disruption SWT passengers satisfaction is very low across all the building blocks but particularly on Metro and Outer Suburban and Local routes (table 5).

Table 5 Dealing with delays, NRPS Autumn 2014/Spring 2015, percentage satisfied: SWT and building blocks (data not available for Island Line due to small sample size)

Factor	SWT	Metro	Outer Suburban & Local	Longer Distance
How well train company deals with delays	38	36	34	45
Usefulness of information during delays	43	39	40	52

4.7.1 Managing service disruption – unplanned

In 2014 Transport Focus published new research looking at passengers' needs and experiences during unplanned disruption[23], including around the provision of information. We made a number of recommendations and encourage RE to ensure that bidders have credible plans to address them. However there are two key points that must be tackled from day one of the new franchise:

- The cultural issue, across the industry, that deficiencies in passenger information at times of disruption persist in a way that would not be tolerated if they were operational or safety failures.

- That the operator must measure the quality of information provided during disruption on a robust and ongoing basis, in terms both of 'factory gate' quality and the ultimate test of passenger opinion.

In addition to the recommendations within that research we encourage RE to secure as part of the new franchises two important prerequisites for providing effective passenger information during disruption.

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[22] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014
[23] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-information-when-trains-are-disrupted

- Visual and audible information at all stations to be served by the South Western franchise.

- Train movement data sufficiently granular to deliver accurate live departure predictions for all stations. Fitment of GPS devices to all trains, allowing positional data to be fed to Darwin via the under-development "GPS gateway" would seem likely to be the best solution.

4.7.2 Resilience

Transport Focus recommends that the new franchise is let with a strong emphasis on service resilience, including in the face of severe weather. Specifically, we feel the bidders:

- Should be required to set out the extent to which they will be reliant on overtime and rest day working to deliver the train service, including on Sundays.
- Should be required to consider how to improve the resilience of services over sections of route known to be vulnerable to severe weather disruption as set out in the Wessex Route Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation Plans[24].
- Should be required to show they have reasonable rolling stock availability assumptions and that they are not so optimistic that passengers are at continual risk of experiencing short-formed and cancelled trains. Areas to ensure there are credible plans include:
  - o Capacity to release rolling stock for periodic heavy maintenance, refurbishment, PRMTIS adaptations etc. without compromising service delivery.
  - o That tyre-turning capability is sufficient to ensure fleet availability remains high throughout the autumn and winter.
  - o Contingency arrangements if incidents result in lengthy repairs to rolling stock (for example striking road vehicles, collisions with livestock, etc.), including that key components are held in stock rather than manufactured to order.

Recent research[25] into passengers' views and expectations of rail services during extreme weather found three core principles that the rail industry must embrace:

- provide timely, accurate information so passengers can make informed decisions about their journeys
- be transparent – help passengers understand why timetable changes and service suspensions have been made
- demonstrate that train companies and Network Rail are doing their best on behalf of passengers, despite the weather.

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[24] http://www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/weather-and-climate-change-resilience/
[25] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/reacting-to-extreme-weather-on-the-railways

4.7.3 Managing service disruption – engineering works

There is a significant programme of engineering work scheduled for the South Western network in the period ahead and it is vital that passengers' interests are protected.

The Wessex Capacity Improvement Programme[26] sets out the following improvement plan:

- Converting the former Waterloo International Terminal to allow domestic train services to use the platforms and changes to the station concourse to improve passenger access and circulation.
- Extending platforms 1-4 at London Waterloo to enable longer 10-car trains to be run on the suburban network.
- Potential station improvements at Surbiton, Wimbledon, Vauxhall and Clapham Junction.

Lengthening platforms 1-4 will inevitably cause a great deal of disruption, even allowing for the use of the 'international' platforms. Passengers in the recent South Western qualitative research[27] had low awareness of the planned works at Waterloo. Bearing in mind the likely extent and impact of any disruption, this is cause for concern. It will be important that lessons are learnt from the London Bridge station development and applied to planned engineering works across the network.

It is vital that passengers receive appropriate and timely information about the effect that engineering works will have on their particular journey and are given appropriate advice about alternatives. It will also be important that revised timetables are robust and achievable.

More generally, bidders should be required to set out how they will work with Network Rail to minimise the use of 'all line' engineering blocks. Culturally, the default assumption must be that routes remain open while maintenance, renewal and enhancement takes place, with exceptions made where there is compelling need.

Bidders should recognise that 55 per cent of passengers say they would not travel at all if a replacement bus is involved[28], and we encourage RE to secure a joint, public commitment from the future operator and Network Rail that wherever practically possible they will keep passengers on trains and transfer them to buses only as a last resort. Use of diversionary routes is an important way to minimise the number of passengers needing to use replacement buses.

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[26] http://www.networkrail.co.uk/wcip/
[27] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services
[28] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-experiences-and-priorities-during-engineering-works

Where there are compelling arguments for the replacement of first/last trains with alternative transport, and/or diversionary services, then Transport Focus acknowledges that this may be an appropriate approach. However, there are some key elements that must be addressed when such strategies are implemented. These include:

- Making clear that this is an exceptional occurrence rather than a typical approach.
- Setting out the justification for each circumstance and the benefits that will flow from this.
- Providing advance notice across all channels and setting out the impact on specific journeys.
- Providing a mix of bus services to ensure that usual connections can be made between smaller stations whilst also delivering some faster point-to-point journeys between key locations.

In addition to emphasising the overarching cultural focus on ensuring rail journeys are the default provision wherever possible, Transport Focus encourages RE to ensure that the bidders have credible proposals in the following areas:

- For regularly submitting a high quality bid to Network Rail at T-18 so accurate amended timetables are in the public domain and reservations open at T-12. We recommend that the operator should be required to report, period by period, on the level of post T-12 change to the train plan.

- For working with Network Rail to minimise the risk of possession over-runs, and for communicating information about alternative arrangements to passengers in the event that it does happen.

- For ensuring, through liaison with GWR, that the Waterloo-Reading and Paddington-Reading routes are not closed at the same time.

- For managing the transfer of passengers seamlessly from train to bus and vice versa (and from train to train where a normally-direct journey involves a change of trains), recognising the key role to be played by well-informed, people-orientated staff at interchanges.

Recent Transport Focus research[29] looks at passengers' experiences from two sets of planned works, at Reading and Bath Spa, in 2015. While the nature and impact of the two engineering projects were very different, the research findings provide useful insight into passengers' core information needs and offer valuable lessons for the rail industry as a whole.

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[29] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/planned-rail-engineering-work-passenger-perspective

The research indicates the need for a flexible approach to communications planning in the build up to planned disruption. The fact that every project and the associated disruption is different means that the onus is on train companies and Network Rail planners to know what their passengers want and understand how a specific project will affect different passenger types. The results of that assessment should then allow them to tailor communications to give the right level of detailed information when passengers want it, using the most effective communications channel. The research makes five key recommendations for planning and delivering engineering schemes:

- Consider how the various elements of the engineering work are likely to affect individual passengers' journeys: who does it affect and how?
- Build this insight into your planning approach so that you are able to deliver a tailored information campaign: tell passengers what they want to know about their journey, when they need to know it.
- Tailor your message.
- Timing of information: every project is different so be prepared to be flexible.
- Use full range of information channels to reach different types of passengers.

In addition to the information passengers need about how their journey will be affected and any impact on them they also need support when making a disrupted and potentially unfamiliar journey. Some practical examples of best practice include:

- Ensuring it is clear to passengers where they should wait for replacement buses and clear to bus drivers where they should stop, in particular where replacement buses do not drive up to the station itself.

- Ensuring that the needs of passengers with disabilities are met when travelling during engineering works, including but not limited to those who have booked through the Passenger Assist service. Arrangements for those with buggies/cycles/luggage etc. should also be made clear to passengers in advance.

- Ensuring that passengers making journeys involving a replacement bus, or a diverted train taking significantly longer than usual, are aware of that before they purchase a ticket – whether buying online, from a Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) or at a ticket office.

- Tracking the location of replacement buses in real time and feeding that information automatically to Darwin for onward distribution to passengers (and railway staff) via National Rail Enquiries channels and others using Darwin data, including station customer information systems (CIS).

- For giving passengers answers to the questions "what is being done?" and "how do I benefit?" Passengers tell us that knowing what is happening helps sugar the replacement bus pill, yet it is commonplace to see nothing more

informative than "Engineering work is taking place over some parts of the South West Trains network with the following trains amended:"

4.8 Partnership working and collaboration

- **We are interested in your view on the best way to achieve efficient operation of this railway through partnership and collaboration. Please describe how such working arrangements might support this objective.**

Partnership working and collaboration can only serve to benefit the efficient operation of the South Western railway and will help extend linkages with stakeholders in the communities it serves. The successful bidder will need to explore, then implement, bespoke and appropriate arrangements with the full range of potential partner organisations.

Network Rail and Transport for London are clearly highly significant partners. However, there will be a range of other organisations with which productive working relationships can and should be developed. The hallmark of success will be identifying what each agency can bring to the relationship and how synergies and efficiencies can be delivered.

Transport Focus recognises the importance of delivering value for money for taxpayers and passengers and the need to increase the efficiency of the rail industry. We made a detailed response to Sir Roy McNulty's rail value for money study, highlighting the important issues from a passenger perspective.[30]

We are supportive of those strategies which enhance efficiency and create closer collaboration, reduce duplication and overlap and generate further income by increasing the attractiveness of rail.

However, there are also some legitimate anxieties expressed by passengers surrounding cost-cutting. These are particularly around the availability of staff and ensuring that station facilities are available whilst trains are running. Reducing costs through genuine improvements to efficiency will be welcomed, but there will be negative impacts if this simply results in wholesale cutbacks that do not deliver on reasonable passenger expectations and a quality of experience that makes the railway a viable and safe environment in which to travel.

Partnership working between Network Rail (NR) and the new operator should form part of the arrangements for the franchise. It will be particularly relevant given the potential scale and complexity involved in delivering the infrastructure and capacity improvements planned and sought for the South Western network. These challenges will require all parties to work cohesively and constructively together.

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[30] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/the-rail-value-for-money-study-a-passenger-perspective-comments-by-passenger-focus

Application of whole-life costing would significantly improve the chances that resilience projects secure a positive business case. The bidders should set out details of how they will start planning with all the relevant partners, firstly deciding where and what needs doing, then ranking in order of costs and time to implement, quickest benefits and greatest benefits.

Beyond the demands of new developments there are further operational challenges associated with such a large scale franchise stretching across a wide geographical territory and abutting a number of other important rail operations. This will require an over-arching approach to partnership and service delivery, with formal structures providing a joint mechanism at senior level for strategic planning and co-ordination.

Aligning incentives and working more closely together can certainly help improve efficiency. We know from our research that passengers want a sense of someone being in charge when it comes to the delivery of services, especially during times of disruption. But it cannot just be a case of aligning NR and train company processes to achieve cost savings; such processes must also be aligned with passengers' priorities.

If the end-game is better services for passengers then internal processes and systems must work towards this, rather than vice versa. Two particular areas stand out: increasing punctuality and reducing service disruption. Any approach must be mindful of the consequences for passengers when considering how to manage restoration of services following disruption.

Closer working may provide the opportunity to revisit previously successful practice and have the operator's staff, especially those on stations, trained as first responders to minor local operational incidents (e.g. signal and point failures or road vehicles hitting bridges) to get trains moving without having to wait for the arrival of a Network Rail staff member who may be some distance away.

A further opportunity presented by closer partnership is the achievement of a step-change in transparency. The open data agenda is driving the industry towards higher levels of information being in the public domain. We know from our research[31],[32] that passengers want access to more tailored information (i.e. data that is relevant to their route/journey). A new, more responsive, alliance could make a very public commitment towards accountability by promising greater transparency from the outset.

[31] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/putting-rail-information-in-the-public-domain
[32] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/presenting-righttime-performance-information-to-rail-passengers

4.9 Community rail and other local partnerships

- **What opportunities are there for Community Rail Partnerships and other local partnerships to expand their role and range of activities to support local communities, businesses and other organisations?**

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) bring distinctive attributes to local rail compared with other parts of the national rail network, including:

- creating a sense of involvement
- information and marketing activities
- implementing local schemes
- providing a focus for investment.

The 2015 report on the Value of Community Rail Partnerships[33] shows that they can be extremely successful. Focusing on the regional and local level, results can be seen in increased footfall at stations along CRP lines.

The report goes on to show that the costs of running CRPs are less than the value of additional revenues earned by their lines and they therefore present a commercial case.

4.9.1 Passenger growth

The Value of Community Rail Partnerships report also shows high level sustained year on year growth in passengers travelling on community rail lines and local rail services in recent years with community rail routes growing by 2.8 per cent each year more than regional lines.

Recent modelling of rail passenger journeys, though, has underestimated the growth of trips on community rail services, as compared with the trends of the last ten years:

- The National Transport Model (published 2011) predicted growth on Regional rail services through to 2030 of only 1 per cent per year.

- The Network Rail Strategic Business Plan and the Rolling Stock Strategy Report (issued 2013) uses growth rates of 3-4 per cent per annum.

- The Network Rail LTPP draft Regional Urban Market Study (2013) predicts growth no higher than 3 per cent per year for the next 10 years and through to 2043.

The Value of Community Rail partnerships report found evidence of ticketless travel, with volunteer passenger counts recording substantially higher numbers than the LENNON data. This indicates that work to increase rail use is offset by lack of

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[33]http://www.acorp.uk.com/Assets/Values2015/140916_Value%20of%20CRPs%20and%20volunteering_final%20draft%20v3.17.pdf

revenue protection and means that on some lines growth is underestimated which could have a detrimental effect on future investment decisions.

The report also found that train capacity can be a constraint on continuing growth of rail use, currently limiting more than 50 per cent of the Community Rail Partnerships involved in the study.

Transport Focus recommends:

- Greater transparency and sharing of data and methodologies by DfT, Network Rail and train operators with CRPs.
- CRPs are commissioned to carry out and submit regular passenger counts, to ensure more accurate passenger data is available for forecasting, especially for capacity and rolling stock requirements.

4.9.2 Development and expansion opportunities

Passengers expect the stations they use to be welcoming and attractive. Local involvement, typically by 'friends of' groups and supported by the railway industry and local government, can achieve significant improvements in the attractiveness of stations, in stimulating community engagement with the railway and the use of redundant station buildings by local businesses and organisations, including those involved in local tourism.

Passengers expect transport to be integrated – which should, of course, mean that it is more effective in attracting users as well as being more useful. Increasing 'localism' should help this task, which will improve accessibility to local areas and help with the development of 'gateway' stations to access areas of natural beauty along rural lines.

Innovative marketing schemes have become the hallmark for community rail. Local enthusiasm is a powerful tool in generating links with visitor attractions that can be accessed from local stations.

The Value of Community Partnerships report found that some key aspects of how CRPs boost rail use are:

- Using local knowledge, often lacking as train operating companies become more centralised.
- Adopting and improving stations so they are attractive rather than "no go" places, thereby unlocking demand.
- Providing a focus for, and enabling, improvement schemes.
- Overcoming low levels of knowledge about rail journey opportunities and, for people unfamiliar with rail, generating confidence and interest in how to use the network.
- Engaging with young people, essential for growing the market.

- Being innovative and making a little money go a long way, in which Partnerships and volunteer groups are highly skilled.

The report also suggests that security of funding, the employment of a CRP Officer, good communications and marketing, and creating productive partnerships are key to the success of a CRP.

Prof Paul Salveson's paper on The Sustainable Branch Line[34] goes further in saying that CRPs have an excellent record of winning back passengers to rural lines through innovative marketing and community involvement. Adding that it is possible to develop a scenario whereby such partnerships take on more and more 'peripheral' commercial activities and build up commercial expertise which – at a future stage – enables them to take on actual train operation. A model could be developed in consultation with local communities to establish a steady progression of input, moving towards greater autonomy in relation to developing activities.

Volunteers can provide important back-up through 'additionality' – looking after station gardens, acting as conductors on the bus services, and assisting with catering services.

Transport Focus recommends:

- Funding a community rail post at senior level, with appropriate support, to work towards these goals; promote and co-ordinate activities across community rail lines and services in the South West, and provide liaison with county councils/LEPs/LTBs.

- A formalised group to meet periodically for policy/investment discussion, to include the operator, Network Rail, DfT, CRPs, county council/LEP/LTB representatives, Transport Focus and other partners as appropriate.

- Supporting wider community involvement through station adoption and user group schemes, particularly to boost the local stations environment and improve passenger satisfaction, and the re-establishment of community ambassador initiatives to widen the reach of the railway beyond traditional boundaries.

4.10 Island Line
- **What factors do you consider should be taken into account in assessment of options for the Island Line?**
- **Do you have any innovative proposals for how the Island Line might operate on a more self-sustaining basis?**

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[34] http://www.paulsalveson.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/The-Sustainable-Branch-Line1.doc

Transport Focus research amongst SWT passengers included the opinions of a group of Island Line users.

The service is widely recognised to have a number of limitations. Nevertheless, it is considered to be punctual and reliable and users are, in general, happy with it. The trains are clean and tidy, and comfortable enough for the length of journey. There are concerns about the age of the rolling stock which is assumed to be near the end of its life. Stations facilities are basic, with shelter, seating and lighting regarded as inadequate. The coordination of trains with crossings to the mainland is an area of dissatisfaction and particularly problematic for those who make that journey as part of a regular commute.

Despite these issues and limitations the consensus was that the Island Line does a good job under difficult circumstances. This is supported by the NRPS which finds high levels of satisfaction on the Island Line route.[35]

The key finding from the qualitative research[36] was the high level of anxiety amongst Island Line users regarding the future of their service.

> *"It doesn't matter if it makes a loss, it provides a vital service on the island and the new franchise holder should have to take the rough with the smooth"*

> *"I've got a horrible feeling they will try to turn the Island Line into a steam railway for tourists"*

> *"Because it's the Government, the cynic in me would probably suggest that Stagecoach or somebody has gone to the Government and said 'actually, we will bid for this if you get rid of the Island Line in your specification'"*

These quotes highlight the concerns of passengers on the Isle of Wight, many of whom rely on this vital service for both work and leisure. The new franchise must seek to secure the positive future of these services, reassure the passengers who rely on them, and strive to improve key areas such as integration.

4.11 Third party funded changes
- **Are you aware of any proposals for third party funded changes?**
- **Please provide details in line with the requirements set out above, or provide sufficient detail for further dialogue to take place to understand the proposals.**

Local Authorities and other stakeholders from across the region are best placed to identify other schemes and potential options for funding them.

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[35] Additional data about the Island Line is available within unpublished NRPS research on 12 crp lines
[36] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

Regarding the potential for decrements, experience shows that those who lose services can encounter a number of difficulties unless there are well planned and effective mitigations, including clear passenger information about the changes and alternative travel options, put in place from the outset. This must be a requirement should any proposed decrements be given consideration.

4.12 Stations
- **What improvements would you like to see at the station(s) you use to enhance your journey experience?**
- **Please indicate the name of the station(s) and the rationale for your specific comments.**

Appendix 3 provides details of passenger priorities for provision of, and improvements to, station facilities both for Great Britain by different groupings of station footfall and for the SWT sample.

Table 6, below, shows NRPS satisfaction scores for station attributes for SWT and building blocks. This shows how satisfaction with a range of factors varies across the network.

Metro routes tend to have lower satisfaction, particularly on key areas like car and cycle parking, but also on other important factors such as facilities and services and provision of information. Island Line and Longer Distance routes tend to have higher levels of satisfaction. However, it should not be assumed that passengers at all stations along those routes will have the same requirements or levels of satisfaction.

Within these routes satisfaction scores for passengers at individual stations may fall well below the average. RE and bidders are recommended to look in detail at the NRPS database for SWT to explore areas where attention should be directed.[37] Appendix 2 shows a comparison of SWT against the sector, and of each building block against the typology.

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[37] Individual station data is available on request where there is sufficient sample size.

Table 6 Station attributes – SWT and building blocks
NRPS Autumn 2014/Spring 20145 combined, percentage satisfied

Factor	SWT	Metro	Outer Suburban & Local	Longer Distance	Island Line
Overall satisfaction with the station	77	76	76	80	75
Ticket buying facilities	75	71	78	76	78
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	67	62	67	71	63
Cleanliness of the station	71	68	68	76	76
The facilities and services at the station	57	52	54	64	55
The overall station environment	67	63	67	70	67
The provision of shelter facilities	63	61	62	67	72
Availability of seating	37	36	36	39	62
Connections with other forms of public transport	76	76	71	80	72
Facilities for car parking at the station	46	35	45	57	74
Your personal security whilst using the station	71	68	71	72	72
Facilities for bicycle parking at the station	59	49	62	65	*
The availability of staff at the station	56	54	55	58	55
The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff	69	66	69	72	87
Provision of information about train times/platforms	83	78	83	88	85
How request to station staff was handled	84	*	84	88	*
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	55	52	50	61	43
Five or more percentage points below the SWT average					
Five or more percentage points above the SWT average					
No data available due to sample size below 100					

4.12.1 Better railway stations

The specification for the next franchise should require bidders to commit to ensuring that minimum standards - appropriate for the size, footfall, location and reflecting local passenger aspiration - are delivered and maintained at all stations. The Better

Rail Station standards[38] could provide a starting point for the assessment of requirements which can then be adjusted for local circumstances.

Further cycles of investment should also be committed to maintain and progressively improve upon the station environment and facilities.

We suggest consideration is given to specifying a rolling programme of steady improvement to stations on a line of route basis, to concentrate benefits in a way that should create a bigger impact than spreading improvements around randomly. This should also create greater synergies in the works.

In addition to utilising all available industry funding schemes, the operator should also look beyond these and work with stakeholders and other partners to seek opportunities to bring in funding for allied improvements where these address wider objectives such as promoting economic development, improving transport integration, increasing safe access or enhancing the public realm. Holistic improvements to investments in and around stations are likely to deliver better results and increase efficiency and value.

4.12.2 Station investment should focus on passenger needs

Whilst Transport Focus is supportive of the principle of funding streams allocated to specific purposes, it is important passenger needs are central to the investments made and that resources are directed to the factors valued by the users of stations and the rail services from them. To this end, proposals should be required to reference how they address the findings of research into passenger requirements and perceptions of stations, including NRPS satisfaction scores.

Transport Focus's recent research amongst passengers on SWT indicated that quality information provision and good levels of personal security are fundamental requirements.

Waterloo was considered to perform fairly well in many respects but long queues to buy tickets and lack of seating were issues for some passengers.

Overall passengers feel that some stations could benefit from enhancement and modernisation. Shelter, seating, facilities and security were highlighted as particular areas that could be improved in the next franchise.

Transport Focus research conducted at Clapham Junction, Barking and Luton stations following the Better Rail Stations report[39] shows that at individual stations there are often specific areas of improvements that passengers want to see and that priorities can vary according to location and circumstance. Bidders should seek station feedback from local passengers and community rail partnerships to identify

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[38] http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf
[39] The Better Stations Report identified 10 of the worst category B stations in the country. Clapham Junction, Barking and Luton, all featured in that list.

aspirations for specific locations and gather information about relevant accessibility issues.

In addition to those three stations Transport Focus conducted a detailed piece of research, in partnership with Network Rail, looking at what areas of the station passengers wanted to see improved as part of the National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP). Twenty six NSIP stations were surveyed in 2008/09, which were due to benefit from NSIP investment – most, but not all, of the stations were in London and the South East. Detailed passenger surveys were conducted at each of the stations asking passengers to rate different aspects of the service (environment, parking, information, waiting shelters etc.) and what areas of the station they would like to see improved (also what they would prioritise).

Transport Focus produced 26 individual stations reports and a summary document[40]. A fuller report[41] is also available. Once the works were complete the surveys were repeated at some of the 26 stations in order to see how the satisfaction scores had changed[42]. The results for the seven stations Transport Focus went back to, combined, showed an overall improvement of satisfaction by 30 percentage points. The positive impact of doing work at each of the stations was clear to see, with the most instrumental factors in driving up overall passenger satisfaction being: improvements to the appearance of the booking office, the condition of platform shelters, the footbridges, ticket sales points, the main entrances/exits, and the waiting rooms.

4.12.3 The importance of staffing and information
Transport Focus research on stations consistently demonstrates that, in addition to station facilities, there are two key factors that operators need to consider when thinking about how to improve passenger satisfaction with stations: information and staff.

4.12.3.1 Passenger information requirements
The way the industry manages delays is the biggest single driver of rail passenger dissatisfaction; the key to improving this is through the provision of accurate, timely and consistent information about delays. Despite the increasing use of technology many passengers still only tend to find out about disruption once they have arrived at the station. It is therefore crucial that operators look at how they can best pass on accurate information to the passenger once it is known to the industry. This is particularly important at unstaffed stations where the passengers' only source of information might be a Customer Information Screen (CIS). Real time information provision at all stations should be a core requirement of the franchise.

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[40] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-summary-report
[41] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-final-report
[42] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-phase-two-report

Other types of information are also important to passengers. It is important that the franchise specification requires high standards of information provision for all stages of the journey. This should include requirements to meet passenger needs for initial planning, at the station of departure, during the journey, at the arrival station and, particularly, when there is disruption. The operator should be required to adopt strategies that maximise the effective use of evolving technology. (See Appendix 4 for details of information used by passengers at different stages of the journey).

It is also important that, at all times when trains are running, passengers can have access to someone with sufficient practical knowledge of the local network who can provide information and, if disruption means that journeys are curtailed, is also empowered to help stranded passengers by arranging/authorising alternative transport, accommodation or other appropriate responses.

4.12.3.2 Staffing

The pressure on the industry to reduce costs inevitably places a focus on the overheads associated with staff. However, Transport Focus is concerned that the next franchise operator does not overlook the very significant roles staff play and the value passengers attach to a visible staff presence, especially at stations.
One of the notable findings from our South Western qualitative research[43] was that staff are widely appreciated, with most passengers agreeing that the thing they value most is a visible staff presence. At stations, staff were also considered to fulfil a vital customer service function, providing advice and assistance on a range of journey and ticketing matters.

Staff are seen as an important and trusted source of information for passengers. This role can encompass information about journey planning, cover wider issues relating to ticket retailing, where there remains considerable complexity about terms and conditions applicable to tickets, and, of course, sale of tickets that are unavailable from TVMs.

Passengers with assistance needs are particularly dependent on staff to deliver the help they require and to fulfil requests made through Passenger Assist.
Many station facilities and services are available only whilst staff are present. Feedback indicates significant concern about the lack of access to toilets and waiting rooms if staff are withdrawn from stations or hours are significantly reduced.

Passengers cite the lack of staff as a major reason for their feelings of concern over personal security and consistently identify a visible staff presence as being important to providing reassurance to those travelling on the railway. It is vital that those staff receive the appropriate training both in terms of managing the station environment and personal security within it, and customer service. The industry needs to give serious consideration to how it can best deploy staff and make best use of the

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[43] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

different types of complimentary policing available to it. Our publication, *Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railways[44],* sets out passengers' concerns in more detail. The specification should include a requirement to set out how these issues will be addressed across the franchise.

It is important that staff are trained, managed and supported to deliver the highest possible levels of customer service. Expectations of customer service continue to rise as standards do across the range of passenger experience, both within and beyond the rail industry. The organisational culture must recognise that passengers are the very reason the organisation exists, ensuring that passengers are valued and appreciated at every level of the operation. This approach needs to be driven from the top to achieve exemplary staff behaviours amongst a workforce that is genuinely empowered. The ethos must be that passenger interests are central to the decisions and actions of the business, making a genuine and consistent demonstration of care for whether a passenger returns to travel again.

4.13 Door-to-door journeys
- **What are your proposals for providing passengers better and safer access to different modes of transport at stations (including bus, car, cycling and walking)?**
- **What opportunities exist for improved integration between modes, citing relevant examples to support your comments?**

When passengers decide what mode of transport to take they are swayed by three overwhelming factors: how convenient will the journey be, how much will it cost and how long will it take[45]. This applies to the whole door-to-door journey. The way passengers access the station can affect both overall journey cost and time. If getting to the rail station becomes too inconvenient passengers will often choose to make their whole journey by car; adding congestion to the roads and to transport's carbon footprint.

The passenger growth anticipated for South Western means increased attention will need to be given to how passengers are going to access and pass through stations throughout the life of the franchise. The Wessex Route Study has also considered the growing challenge of accommodating peak passenger volumes at stations.

NRPS scores for South Western building blocks indicate a variation in satisfaction with different station access factors across the network[46]. This suggests there is

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[44] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-perceptions-of-personal-security-on-the-railways
[45] Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009 http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf
[46] Appendix 2 shows scores for 'connections with other forms of public transport' and 'car parking'. Data for satisfaction with cycle parking is also available but needs to be treated with more caution as the sample sizes for these factors are smaller.

scope for bidders to propose a range of different solutions and improvements to the door-to-door journey.

At some locations the solution to station access needs will be to improve public transport links and parking provision; but at others the solution will be more complex and could be more creative. With limited space for car parking at some stations, and the industry's desire to look at more sustainable options, Transport Focus is supportive of the use of Station Travel Plans. Local groups and Community Rail Partnerships should be involved in developing proposals to improve station access.

The specification should encourage commitment to station travel plan schemes, with rollout dispersed across the network and throughout the life of the franchise. The stations selected should not just be those with the highest footfall, as the 2011 Network RUS (Stations) demonstrated that congestion does not just occur at those stations with the highest number of passengers starting or ending their journeys.

The bidders should be able to demonstrate how they will work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies to improve accessibility to stations by all modes, including cycling and walking. Where identifiably beneficial schemes for passengers can be delivered by other partners, they should be encouraged and their future assured. The franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

Bidders might also be asked to explore the potential to develop 'virtual branch lines' using existing scheduled bus services, with bus times and through fares available through railway journey planning and retail systems to/from towns with no railway station or limitations in service provision.

Bidders may also need to address the absence, or potential loss, of access via public transport in places, particularly rural areas, where there is little or no funding for bus services. Bidders should be encouraged to explore how they can contribute to potential initiatives for demand-led schemes.

Improving access to stations should drive rail usage and provide some additional revenue. Bidders will also need to work with local authorities and other agencies to explore other funding opportunities. There may be scope for local authorities to use planning gain mechanisms for schemes linked to new developments. The opportunities for development around stations to accommodate improved access facilities, including interchange, should also be considered within bidders' proposals.

4.14 Fares and ticketing
- **What are your views on the availability of retail staff and the ability for passengers to have widespread access to ticket buying opportunities (e.g. through new and improved approaches such as smart ticketing, increased advance purchase ticketing or via mobile phones), adequate**

measures to ensure vulnerable passengers are not disadvantaged, and more effective customer service by both station and on-train staff?

- **Do you have any evidence to support your views?**

As detailed in section 4.12.3.2 we know that staff provide many vital functions. They help passengers buy the right ticket, provide essential journey information and provide a visible, reassuring presence. Passengers need access to a range of ticket buying opportunities to suit their individual needs and to visible and proactive staff who can provide information and assistance where necessary.

4.14.1 Making buying a ticket easier
The next South Western franchise must make ticket purchase easier for passengers, many of whom are confused by the complexity of the fares system.

Clear information about the validity of tickets and any applicable restrictions must be readily available. Passengers should be able to buy the most appropriate ticket for their intended journey, regardless of the whether this is purchased at a ticket office, on-line, at a ticket machine or through any other method.

Transport Focus's research has identified a number of issues with both ticket vending machines (TVMs) and websites – much of which was reflected in Government's own Fares and Ticketing Review consultation and in the industry's own retail information code of practice. Key issues to focus on include:

- printing any restrictions on passengers' tickets to remove confusion over validity
- displaying outward and return ticket restrictions on TVMs prior to a passenger committing to purchase
- making it impossible to buy an Advance ticket on the internet at a higher price than the 'walk up' fare available on the same train.

More details of the problems passengers experience are set out, with recommendations about how to improve retailing through these channels, in our research into ticket vending machine usability[47] and ticket retailing website usability.[48]

The new franchise should provide a wider range of tickets for passengers. Developments in ticketing such as smart-cards or contactless bank cards and mobile telephone products should be incorporated into the franchise. The franchise should also require the introduction of innovative new products such as carnet style tickets that will enable passengers who cannot benefit from season ticket discounts to achieve some economies from repeat travel. Schemes to spread the cost of annual season tickets should also be available.

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[47] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-vending-machine-usability-qualitative-research
[48] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-retailing-website-usability

The key is to ensure that passengers have all the necessary information on which to make an 'informed purchase'.

4.15 Smart ticketing

- **What are your experiences of using smartcard technology within the franchise area to date?**
- **To what extent do you believe that smartcard technology could be used to manage passenger demand and to create an integrated journey experience for passengers?**

We know from our research programme smarter travel[49], that passengers across modes and throughout the country do see real benefits in smart ticketing.

In a project we undertook at the start of the programme, which included passengers travelling on SWT, and which has been reinforced in subsequent work, we identified that when thinking about the introduction of smart ticketing, and preferences for how this will work, it is clear that there are seven key attributes that drive attitudes and views:

- **Value for money**
  Value for money is a key driver for ticket choice at the moment, and remains an important factor when considering smart ticketing. Participants expect that smart ticketing will involve some kind of cost saving either via cheaper fares or new cost effective tickets and products.

- **Convenient**
  Smart ticketing needs to be a convenient option that is easy to use. Participants look for a ticketing system that made life easier, rather than complicating their commute. When thinking about convenience, participants want a system where it is easy to purchase tickets, to manage their smart ticket account and use their ticket.

- **Simple**
  Simplicity is important, especially for those unfamiliar with smart technology or smart ticketing. These people are most likely to need education regarding how smart ticketing will work, and a simple system is likely to support them in moving to smart ticketing.

- **Secure**
  Participants raise some concerns about the security of smart ticketing. When thinking about smart cards, people expect their personal data will be kept safe– especially any details that will be printed and visible on the card. When

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[49] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/smarter-travel

thinking about mobile ticketing and contactless, many express concerns around the safety and security of their mobile phone or credit card, and the potential for theft when using these. However a benefit of smart ticketing is that the ticket details are thought to be safer – for instance if a card is lost or stolen then it will be easier to get the product cancelled and reissued.

- **Flexible**
  Alongside a convenient and easy to use system, participants want smart ticketing to be flexible. They want the ability to choose and purchase new products and tickets that offer flexible travel options. They also want flexibility with regards to managing their smart ticketing account to include being able to make ticket purchases at the last minute and being able to upload tickets at a range of stations.

- **Tailored management**
  In addition to new products that would enable participants to tailor their smart ticket products to their needs, tailoring is also desired with regards to managing their smart ticketing account. It is clear that many seek the ability to manage online, and via an App. Participants want the ability to choose how they prefer to manage their account (online, App, text message), and reassurances that this will be tailored to be compatible with the technology they own (e.g. Apple and android compliant).

- **Leading edge**
  Participants are clear that the introduction of smart ticketing is a shift into a more technology-focused way of ticketing. With this in mind they are keen that the technology used is forward-thinking. This is particularly noted by those who are familiar with smart technology and smart ticketing, and who see this as an opportunity for TOCs to lead the way in ticketing technology rather than replicate existing systems.

Those whose commute involved travelling within central London are familiar with, and often use, the Oyster card system. These participants have a better understanding of how smart ticketing works and find it easier to generate a range of benefits and drawbacks of a smart ticketing system. And indeed, for frequent users of the Underground or London Buses an integrated system was considered 'ideal and essential.' These passengers are keen to avoid holding a plethora of smartcards all covering different modes and routes of travel; one solution for all was sought.

Whilst participants are keen that train operating companies (TOCs) introduce smart ticketing, there are some reservations about whether TOCs currently have the capabilities and capacity to do so. Negative commuter experiences of delays and congestion means that some lacked trust in TOCs to deliver smart ticketing.

Across the research, experience and use of smart technology such as smart mobile phones and tablets clearly affected views on smart ticketing. Those who are familiar

with, and confident in the capabilities and functions of smart technology, typically express greater comfort with and expectations for a smart ticketing system.

We would urge any operator to design their smart ticketing systems with this in mind. It is difficult to get passengers to break existing habits of ticket purchase, and they are relatively unforgiving when things do not deliver as promised. Implementing a poorly designed or confusing system will not result in high levels of uptake or satisfaction. In all our smart ticketing work, we reinforce the importance of:

- designing good systems, where passengers are consulted from the outset and their views are fully incorporated
- making sure that communications to both customers and staff are clear, easily-accessible, consistent and comprehensive
- ensuring that staff are fully trained when systems are introduced, so that they can sympathetically deal with any issues, problems or queries that their passengers may have.

Smartcards are certainly one of many potential enablers of making the experience of using public transport better for passengers, but in their own right they are not a solution to the difficulties passengers experience in terms of capacity and information.

Well-designed smart schemes could potentially enable passengers to choose quieter or slower (stopping) train services, incentivised to do so by a lower fare. The gates would be able to identify which train was used and charge a fare accordingly – whether deducting from a Pay As You Go balance or by giving a partial credit back for a pre-paid 'standard' fare.

Integrated information, through apps, personalised updates and other online sources, could be used in many ways to assist passengers, for instance:

- information on which trains are busier or less busy
- live running information, alerting passengers to delays and issues
- onward journey planning
- push notifications, e.g. information that the passenger's usual train (known via their smart travel record) is cancelled and suggesting alternatives
- offering last minute special tickets, if there is excess capacity on particular services or advising passengers that they would be better to purchase another ticket type
- advising in advance of engineering work likely to affect that passenger, based on their travel patterns.

4.16 Passenger information

- **Are there areas of improvement in customer information and engagement you would like to see before, during and after your journey?**

The provision of good quality, clear and accurate information is crucial to passengers and fundamentally linked to the quality of experience at every stage of the journey. This importance is evidenced by our research which shows various information-related factors appearing as high priorities for improvement.

We recommend adoption of an increasingly open approach to making data and information about all aspects of the franchise available in the public domain. A commitment to disaggregation of data will also make it easier for passengers to find information that is more relevant to the journeys they make and meaningful to them.

Other sections of this response address:

- the importance of transparent information in journey planning and managing capacity (4.3.2)
- the need for engagement and consultation in relation to timetable development and changes (4.5)
- giving rail passengers access to performance figures relevant to their services (4.6)
- the particular needs for information during planned and unplanned disruption (4.7 and Appendix 4)
- information needs at stations and when starting/ending journeys (4.12.3.1)
- the need for comprehensive information and clarity about options and restrictions when purchasing tickets (4.14.1)
- monitoring and reporting on a range of service quality and performance measures (4.17).

Given the coverage detailed above, the remainder of our response to this question is largely focused on the broader issue of passenger engagement.

4.16.1 Passenger and stakeholder communication and engagement

Central to improving the passenger experience of rail services are effective mechanisms for passenger and stakeholder engagement, particularly for gathering intelligence on local aspirations and developments, and for consulting on future proposals. In section 3.5 we also identified the need for train operators to improve passenger perceptions of the relationship elements of their interactions in order to build greater trust in the rail industry.

In 2013 Transport Focus published the findings of research into passenger understanding of the franchise process and their appetite for engagement with it[50].

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[50] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/giving-passengers-a-voice-in-rail-services

It is clear from this work that passengers have unanswered desires to contribute their thoughts, both about priorities for franchise specifications and the performance of incumbents. There is also a desire for greater two-way communication about what each franchise promises – and what is actually achieved.

Our research[51], exploring reactions to the Customer Reports required as part of new franchises, found that passengers welcomed this additional channel of engagement. The Customer Report provides a clear statement of promises and addresses passengers' desire to understand what a new franchise will deliver and what they can expect over the months and years to come. This is a positive step towards a train operator building a relationship with passengers and generating trust.

The recent qualitative research[52] amongst passengers of SWT provides useful insight into their experiences and aspirations. We hope that the findings will inform the franchise specification, bidder proposals and agreement about what is to be delivered.

When negotiations with the successful bidder are concluded we recommend that there is a clear public statement about key elements of the franchise, particularly how they address passenger requirements. It is important that the contract announcement does not simply cover the 'good news' and high profile initiatives but also covers any aspects of the new franchise which may have the potential to be detrimental. This would demonstrate an appropriate level of transparency and avoid the negative impact and distrust that can follow when less good news emerges further down the line.

We also recommend RE should look to publish the redacted version of the Franchise Agreement and associated documents as soon as possible after the winning bidder is announced, and certainly by the time the new franchise commences.

The new franchisee should be required to demonstrate clear plans for an engagement strategy that accommodates the needs of different passengers. Transport Focus advocates that a wide range of means should be employed to communicate with passengers and wider communities to allow people to access information and provide input in the ways that are most suited to each individual or group. This should not overlook the various needs of passengers with disabilities.

In common with other recent franchises, Transport Focus recommends the specification requires the establishment of a Customer and Communities Investment Fund, the production of an initial customer report and a commitment to regular updates, or revisions, at key stages of the franchise. These reports should include

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[51] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/what-passengers-want-from-customer-reports
[52] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

information about performance on the factors important to passengers and, particularly where targets are missed or results fall, plans for improvement.

The contract should also require the next incumbent to establish mechanisms that, at the appropriate time, will be used to alert passengers to the prospect of changes as a result of the forthcoming competition when the franchise approaches its end.

4.17 Service quality

- **What areas of customer service within your end-to-end journey would you expect to see monitored and reported on to improve the service quality for passengers?**

The ultimate measure of whether a train company is performing well is whether passengers are happy with the quality of service provided. This is good from a commercial perspective as well as a customer service one, as evidenced by the conclusions on passenger demand forecasting[53] which suggest that service quality does have an impact on levels of demand.

The RE's specification for the new franchise must stretch the successful bidder to take South Western passenger satisfaction to higher levels. As we can see illustrated in Figure 5, and from the NRPS scores and comparisons in Appendix 2, this should apply both for the franchise as a whole and at a building block level. There is a need to achieve greater consistency of performance across the component parts of the franchise and also to drive satisfaction on all aspects of service delivery upwards, to bring the whole operation up to the achievements of the best comparators.

Targets, measurements, monitoring and transparent reporting are fundamental to delivering improvements to service quality. Transport Focus strongly supports the principle of monitoring and improving service quality through a combination of NRPS results and periodic reviews of train operating company Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

4.17.1 National Rail Passenger Survey

We have long advocated more use of quality-focused targets within a franchise. Our strong preference is for targets based on what passengers think, the best judge of quality being those who have used the services in question.

The NRPS is ideally suited to capture information that directly reflects the customer perspective. NRPS has a large sample size, currently covering over 4,200 South Western passengers in two waves each year, providing for a fair assessment of measures across the identified franchise building blocks. The sampling plan ensures that it is representative of day of travel, journey purpose (commuter, business and

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[53]https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revisiting-the-elasticity-based-framework-rail-trends-report

leisure), and, of course, by a range of demographic attributes (age, sex, ethnicity etc).

Transport Focus will continue to discuss the application of NRPS targets for the franchise with the Department and the bidders as required. In line with existing DfT policy, bidders for the new franchise should be asked to submit bids that include plans on how they will improve NRPS scores.

We recommend, in line with practice on other recent franchises, bespoke NRPS targets should be established on each of the building blocks to measure passenger satisfaction with station, train and customer service attributes. Doing so simply at a global level risks masking the poorer performing areas.

Existing levels of satisfaction should be the starting point for establishing targets which should generally become more stretching as the franchise progresses and also increase to reflect the outcomes delivered by investment (e.g. in capacity improvements). An annual assessment of the combined spring and autumn results would provide a fair measure of the overall passenger satisfaction within each given year.

A financial penalty regime should apply, with resources ring-fenced for additional investment into service quality measures that are most likely to improve passenger satisfaction

4.17.2 Key Performance Indicators
The specification should require the operator to conduct KPI assessments across the entire franchise and include all stations and representative samples of the major train service groups. Standards of satisfaction with the customer services function, complaints handling, and the level of appeals to Transport Focus should also be measured. All assessments should be conducted regularly to provide ongoing management information as well as a basis for regular reviews based on collated information.

4.17.3 Performance targets
Given the very high significance of these factors to passengers, the specification must include traditional 'hard' performance targets covering punctuality, reliability and crowding. However, we believe that there is a need for much more transparency surrounding these targets.

Transparency will promote greater accountability by making clear to rail passengers, staff, management and other parties how key aspects of the rail service are performing at different places and at different times. The provision of detailed information will enable rail passengers and others hold the train company to account and to ask what is being done to improve services in return for the fares paid. Good management should not feel threatened by this. Indeed the availability of accurate data may actually help them as a particularly bad journey can linger in the memory

and distort passengers' perceptions. Accurate, relevant data can help challenge these negative perceptions and is also a vital management tool.

Punctuality data provided only at the overall operator level can easily mask significant differences between routes and times of day. Transport Focus supports the provision of performance data (PPM, 'on time'/'right time' and cancellations) in a fully granular way, allowing data to be aggregated as required. This would allow those who use only the '07:19' and '17:20' to see the performance of those trains – because that is all that matters to them.

Equally, there is currently next to nothing in the public domain about crowding. This is another fundamental aspect of a passenger's journey and an area where greater transparency can generate improvements for passengers.

Further detail about monitoring and reporting punctuality, capacity and timetabling performance is set out in the relevant sections above.

In the medium term we also see value in looking more closely at the choice of performance measurement used. The existing measure (PPM) allows a five or ten minute leeway on late arrival; a train is not late until it exceeds this allowance. However, we know from our research exploring passenger perspectives on train punctuality outlined in section 4.6 that a delay can have an effect on passengers well before that. This might mean addressing the suitability of the current thresholds or even introducing a secondary measure based on right-time arrival. Recent steps by the industry towards publication of right-time data on particular trains make this increasingly feasible and more likely to be the measure on which performance is publicly judged.

Network Rail's performance clearly has a huge bearing on an operator's punctuality and yet a franchise agreement typically creates an obligation only in relation to factors within the train company's direct control. Clearly there are limits to how far one organisation is willing to be held accountable for another's performance but, from a passenger's perspective, it is overall punctuality that matters - not just how well the train company did. There are obvious benefits in aligning operator and Network Rail incentives and there is much work going on to address this, not least in terms of joint improvement performance plans and potential alliances, as seen in the Wessex 'Deep Alliance' between 2012 and 2015 and the lighter touch framework that is now in place. We would like to see the franchise specification encourage and cement appropriate joint working approaches. To this end we would ask RE to consider the scope for introducing joint targets for this franchise.

Transport Focus has worked with the Office of Rail and Road and National Rail Enquiries, on behalf of all train operators, to explore passenger views on performance and other data and to understand how this may best be made available

to them. This qualitative research[54] should inform the approach to data publication in the new franchise.

4.17.4 Input versus output measures

The balance between input and output measures is a fine one. For instance, the franchise could specify that the bidder purchases 50 new ticket vending machines (an input target) or that it increase passenger satisfaction with retailing (an output target). The latter follows the pattern set in the 2009 South Central franchise with the bidders setting targets for passenger satisfaction and these becoming contractual targets with fines for non-compliance.

Transport Focus recognises the value of both input and output measures provided that they are based on passengers' priorities and needs. Some input targets will clearly remain important to passengers e.g. to cover 'hard' targets for things like punctuality, cancellations and crowding; while output targets (based on passenger satisfaction) may be better placed to address some of the 'softer' qualitative elements of a journey. Passenger responses to the consultation should be used to further inform the targets and measures that go into the franchise specification.

We recommend that disaggregated targets for all measures be set and performance against them published widely. A financial penalty regime should apply with resources ring-fenced for additional investment into service quality measures that are most likely to improve passenger satisfaction.

There should be a requirement for the franchise operator to commit to high levels of transparency about all aspects of the franchise, including operational performance and service quality.

4.18 Passenger compensation
- **Please provide details of your experience with the current delay repay passenger compensation arrangements, and suggestions for how this might be modified in the new franchise to make compensation more transparent and convenient for passengers.**

In keeping with recent practice, Transport Focus believes that the new franchise should be let on the basis of the introduction of Delay Repay style compensation introduced from day one but with the following additional safeguards:

- Not more than 464 journeys are used to calculate annual season ticket holders' fare per journey for Delay Repay purposes, i.e. two trips per day, five days a week for 52 weeks, less 5.6 weeks (leave and bank holidays – see https://www.gov.uk/holiday-entitlement-rights). Our key concerns are:

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[54] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/presenting-righttime-performance-information-to-rail-passengers

- o the failure to take into account that most annual season ticket holders take annual leave and do not work on bank holidays
- o the inclusion by some TOCs of weekend use in the calculation (while some annual season ticket holders may travel at the weekend, many will use their ticket only Mondays to Fridays).

- Additional safeguards for commuters who experience regular delays below the current 30-minute threshold. This 'safety net' could take several forms:
  - o a 1 per cent refund for season ticket holders for every 4-week period in which PPM in either peak falls below a threshold (to be set based on performance on individual routes).
  - o lowering the 'trigger' from 30 minutes to 15 in line with that announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Autumn spending review statement.

These safeguards should be established and available at the outset, ready to address any persistent shortcomings in performance that may arise from planned or unplanned disruption on the franchise, such as that which has the potential to arise during the programme of works at Waterloo. We have seen elsewhere, most recently at London Bridge, that ongoing service problems have the potential to evoke major discontent and it is important that mechanisms to respond to potential problems are available to provide equitable recompense and demonstrate that the industry will put its money where its mouth is in the event of persistent failure.

In addition, our research[55] shows that passengers find traditional paper National Rail Travel Vouchers an inconvenience – they cannot be used at TVMs and they cannot be used online where some train companies offer the best prices. Therefore we believe that the default offer should be a refund to the customer's debit/credit card with options for electronic credit against future ticket purchases online or conventional paper vouchers being available on request.

The so-called enhanced compensation arrangements within some recently-let franchises, which focus on repeated delays above the Delay Repay threshold of 30 minutes, fail to protect passengers experiencing a large number of delays of less than 30 minutes. However, if similar initiatives are included in bidders' proposals for South Western it should be clear on what basis this additional compensation will be provided and what passengers will receive.

Our report into passengers' experience of delays and compensation[56] found that 88 per cent of those apparently eligible for compensation for their delay did not make a claim. More needs to be done to increase passengers' awareness of their rights to claim compensation. This right should be promoted through a range of channels,

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[55] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/train-operator-compensation-schemes-report-of-findings-june-2011
[56] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/understanding-rail-passengers-delays-and-compensation

including on trains that are delayed and at stations where delayed services are calling, as well as prominently within the Passenger's Charter, on websites and via Twitter etc. Where trains have a member of staff on board in addition to the driver, claim forms should be distributed at the time wherever practicable. Mechanisms to identify passengers who have been delayed and provide automatic recompense should also be developed and introduced.

We are currently working on a new piece of research to provide updated information about passengers' awareness and experiences of claiming delay compensation. We encourage RE and industry to stay mindful of any emerging findings in the development of proposals in this area.

4.19 Security and safety
- **Do you have any proposals to improve security and safety at stations and on trains that you would like us to consider?**
- **Please provide details of the stations(s) and/or train(s) where appropriate that have informed your comments, and provide supporting information where available.**

In spring 2015 the NRPS asked passengers 'whether the behaviour of other passengers' had given them cause to worry or feel uncomfortable during their journey'. For SWT the number of passengers saying yes stood at eight per cent. Nationally the number was slightly higher at nine per cent.

NRPS then went on to ask those passengers what caused them to worry or feel uncomfortable. SWT passengers expressing concern in spring 2015 largely attributed it to anti-social behaviour, but more specifically: feet on seats (50 per cent); music being played loudly (37 per cent); passengers drinking/under the influence of alcohol (36 per cent) and rowdy behaviour (28 per cent).

In autumn 2014 passengers were asked a slightly different question about whether they had cause to worry about personal security in the last six months whilst making a train journey. For SWT, and nationally, the number of passengers saying yes stood at ten per cent.

Passengers were asked to identify the reason for that worry, at the station as well as on the train. At the station the highest cause for concern for SWT passengers in autumn 2014 was anti-social behaviour by other people at 56 per cent, followed by lack of station staff at 35 per cent. Findings were similar on the train, with the highest cause for concern again being anti-social behaviour by other people at 74 per cent, followed by lack of on-train staff at 48 per cent. These findings emphasise the importance of a visible staff presence to reassure passengers.

In addition to the above, passengers were asked in autumn 2013[57] whether concerns about personal security have prevented them from making trips by train. Nationally and regionally, four per cent said that they either travelled by another mode or did not make the journey they wanted to, due to concerns over personal security. On SWT the figure was slightly higher at five per cent.

Whilst passengers tell us that technology is no substitute for a visible, trained and engaged staff, Transport Focus would recommend that where a staff presence cannot be provided, bidders should confirm they will provide and maintain CCTV and linked help-points at all stations. These should meet the current British Transport Police 'Output Requirement Specification' for CCTV and be linked into BTP's CCTV hub. Where possible, CCTV should also be linked into local authority systems, which would allow suspects to be tracked beyond the station footprint.

Stations that are unstaffed when trains are scheduled to call at them should be prioritised for such investment. Ideally the CCTV would be 'live' monitored but where this is not possible CCTV footage should be retained for at least 31 days to allow 'after the event' enquiries to be made. We believe that every station should have appropriate technology to enhance personal security, although we acknowledge that it may be necessary to exempt very low footfall stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources. Though, it is often at those stations with fewer passengers present that perceptions of personal security are lowest.

Transport Focus supports the Secure Stations Scheme and would urge the winning bidder to ensure that all of the stations on their network are accredited – not just those with the highest footfall. Where station car parking is provided, car parks should also be accredited under the Safer Parking Scheme administered by the British Parking Association. Research undertaken by the Rail Safety and Standards Board suggests that where Secure Station and Safer Parking Accreditation are provided in tandem, the number of crimes committed is significantly lower. Transport Focus would recommend that franchise bidders be instructed to make use of the best practice guides on managing the different aspects of personal security, produced by the Rail Safety and Standards Board[58].

5. Delivering improvements for passengers
Transport Focus would like to highlight a number of other issues that are important to passengers and that we should like to see addressed in the franchise specifications.

5.1 On-board experience
Beyond the core journey requirements relating to the timetable, service delivery and information, the key influencer of passenger satisfaction on trains is the cleanliness of the inside of the train. The specification should require bidders to demonstrate

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[57] This was the last wave in which this question was asked, so there is no data for Autumn 2014 and beyond.
[58] For example: A Good Practice Guide for Managing Personal Security on Board Trains

how high standards for this important aspect of experience will be established and maintained, including the arrangements for maintenance and cleaning of toilets.

In the recent South Western qualitative research[59] views of rolling stock were generally positive. This is supported by the NRPS findings with scores for train factors being largely as good as, or better, than the sector average (see appendix 2 for detail). It is worth noting low levels of satisfaction with toilet facilities, at 32 per cent for SWT and 33 per cent for the sector.

Despite largely positive findings about trains, passengers still identified some key areas of the on-board experience as requiring improvement. On SWT the mobile signal is widely recognised to be poor and is a major source of dissatisfaction. Passengers also want to see free, reliable Wi-Fi as standard. Our 2014 research showed this to be SWT passengers' tenth highest priority for improvement. The qualitative research also indicated that power sockets or USB ports, especially on longer journeys, are viewed as potentially useful.

The specification should ask how these aspirations will be addressed.

5.2 Accessibility, the Equality Act 2010 and minor works fund

We expect the specification to include requirements to comply with equalities and discrimination legislation and to produce a Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP). Transport Focus also recommends a minor works fund and advocates that consultation with relevant groups should include inviting suggestions about how this money might best be spent to meet identified needs.

In addition to the provisions set out in DPPP guidance, Transport Focus believes the franchise specification should also require the following provisions:

- Scooter policy – ensure that a suitable scooter acceptance scheme is in place for smaller, lighter and more manoeuvrable machines – e.g. Scootercards. Blanket bans are no longer acceptable – always understanding that some models will be too wide/heavy ever to be accepted on to trains.

- Provide a priority seat card scheme (as initiated by Southern and now adopted as good practice by a number of operators) to help passengers demonstrate a specific need for a seat, backed up by publicity on stations and greater prominence made of which seats are priority seats so that they are easily located and recognised. This is especially important in the case of trains where no reservation facility is available.

- Clarify the priority of use of priority seating and the groups considered eligible for it.

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[59] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/south-western-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-hopes-for-future-services

- Clearly clarify priority of usage in 'shared' spaces – i.e. wheelchairs have absolute priority over prams.

- Provide assistance cards which disabled passengers can show to staff to explain their disability – hearing-impaired, speech-impaired, learning difficulties, so that staff can react and provide the necessary additional assistance.

- Comprehensive Passenger Assist monitoring – thorough follow-ups with the passengers of all assistance bookings, soon after the journey, to ascertain whether the assistance fully matched passengers' requests and expectations. This feedback must be used to improve assistance delivery, having accurately pinpointed areas of failure or where things could have been done better. Commitments to do this should be included in the Passenger's Charter and the DPPP.

- Best use should be made of the management information gained from Passenger Assist – e.g. enabling TOCs to plan assistance provision better.

- Training of staff – especially front-line staff in immediate customer contact, whether face-to face or by telephone.

- Examine all possibilities to improve station accessibility: e.g. induction loops; help points; adjustable-height counters; automatic doors etc.

5.3 Fares regulation

Passengers have experienced years of above inflation fare increases. The Government's own Fares and Ticketing Review consultation in 2012[60] talked of an end to such increases but only once the impact of cost saving measures and improvement in the wider economic situation permits. Transport Focus supports the concept of fares regulation as it provides some degree of protection to passengers, many of whom are captive consumers.

We recommend that the next South Western franchise incorporates these recommendations on ticket retailing within the requirements:

- Increases to unregulated fares should be capped at the same level applied to regulated fares.

- The journey opportunities of off-peak passengers should be protected and there should be no further dilution of periods of validity of off-peak tickets.

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[60] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/rail-fares-and-ticketing-review

5.4 Ticketless travel

Research[61] has shown that passengers find the issue of fare evasion very frustrating. There is a strong sense of injustice amongst those who have paid for a ticket when some passengers are known to be travelling for free. They also felt that this reduced the amount of money available for investment.

Passengers believed that the main solution to fare evasion would be to make better provision for the purchase of tickets at stations and on board, and to implement better checking procedures and enforcement. This must include:

- Clarity and consistency over when it was permissible to buy a ticket on board a train – the current system is felt to be too arbitrary.
- Managing ticket queues effectively (at TVMs and offices).
- Providing ticket restrictions in an easy to access form and in plain English.
- Providing the passenger with verification of permission to travel without a ticket.
- Providing the passenger with verification of attempt to purchase a ticket if a card is declined due to bank security measures or signal issues.

Transport Focus believes ticketless travel is an important issue and one that needs addressing. Passengers who avoid paying for their ticket are in effect being subsidised by the vast majority of fare-paying passengers. However, the revenue protection strategy must provide safeguards for those who make an innocent mistake and whose intention was never to defraud the system. We believe this requires:

- Clear consistent guidelines explaining when staff should show discretion in the enforcement of penalties. For example, when passengers do not have their railcard with them.
- Commitment not to go straight to any form of criminal prosecution unless they suspect (or have proof) that there was intent to defraud.
- Penalties that are proportionate to the actual loss suffered by the operator.
- Operators that work with others in the industry to create a national system that is transparent and supports the honest passenger who makes a mistake.

We recommend that the operator develops and publicly consults on its revenue protection strategy. In doing so it should be mindful of the recommendations within our *Ticket to Ride[62]* publications.

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[61] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-views-of-northern-and-transpennine-rail-franchises
[62] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-to-ride-full-report-may-2012
http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-to-ride-an-update

5.5 Complaints handling

In our role as the statutory appeals body[63] Transport Focus has extensive experience of working with passengers and rail operators to seek resolution of unresolved complaints. We have found a number of recurring issues with either the operators' complaints processes or response quality. We have been working with the industry in an effort to improve customer service, reduce complaint handling times and focus on operators providing quality complaints handling. This should, in turn, decrease the number of passenger appeals to train companies.

It is important that the specification for the franchise requires detailed information about policies and procedures for dealing with complaints. These should demonstrate a clear commitment to best practice and should encompass the points set out in the two sections below.

5.5.1 Process issues

- Empower front line staff to deal with complaints on the spot, with processes in place to obtain approval for goodwill there and then.

- Ensure any complaints that can't be resolved by front line staff can be fed into customer relations on the passenger's behalf.

- Make it easy for passengers to get in contact by providing a variety of contact methods and by being pro-active when things go wrong.

- Empower customer service advisors to apply 'natural justice' when dealing with poor passenger experiences and allow redress to go beyond the minimum levels of the Passenger Charter or National Rail Conditions of Carriage.

- Ensure mechanisms to monitor and manage response times and to acknowledge complaints if they cannot be resolved within the target time, which should be published.

- Implement a process whereby appropriate issues are proactively investigated by the customer service advisor, and other relevant staff members, and feed back the findings to the passenger.

- Establish mechanisms to feed complaints into service improvements, where possible, and feed information about this back to the passenger.

- Ensure a clear and well communicated escalation process is in place for complaints handling, including referral to, and cooperation with, Transport Focus or London TravelWatch.

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[63] For British rail passengers outside of London

5.5.2 Response quality

- Train and empower customer service advisors to identify and address all the points in the complaint and give heavy weighting to 'addressing all issues raised by the passenger in internal quality monitoring processes. A focus on first time resolution reduces 'comebacks' and the need for a subsequent response by the operator.

- Provide clear explanations about why the passenger is/ is not receiving compensation and/or gesture of goodwill.

- Make careful use of appropriately worded standard paragraphs, supplemented as necessary by bespoke responses.

- Ensure customer service advisors use clear, jargon-free English with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation when writing responses.

- Use complaints handling as an opportunity to restore a customer's faith in the train operator.

- Seek feedback from passengers on the quality of responses and use this to contribute to ongoing quality monitoring and implementing a culture of continuous improvement.

5.5.3 Legacy complaints

A clear process for handling legacy complaints should be established. Transport Focus recommends that all complaints should be dealt with by the new operators from the first day onwards, with appropriate recompense mechanisms from the outgoing operator established to enable this. This should extend to honouring any complimentary journeys or vouchers which remain within their expiry date after the new franchise operation starts.

Making the incumbent responsible for handling complaints reduces confusion and complexity for the passenger. It also ensures that complaints are handled by the operator with an ongoing interest in retaining the passenger, and who is best placed to resolve any issues and implement any changes as a result of the complaint.

5.6 Lost property

Every year passengers lose a huge number of items on the rail network. Many of those passengers never manage to locate the items, even if they have been handed in. From our preliminary investigation into this subject we have concluded that some operators systems are not efficient or consistently effective in managing lost property. It is therefore important that operators develop systems that will:

- Register and track an item of lost property from the point it comes into their possession and allow it to be open to enquiry within 24 hours.
- Provide secure storage from the point an item is handed in at the station until its arrival at the location where it will be held.
- Register the item with an accurate description including any distinguishing marks, brands or serial numbers.
- Make it simple for the passenger to try and locate items. A minimum of a phone number and an online service should be provided, and a reasonable response time advertised and adhered to.
- Include rechecking of the register on a regular basis and inform the passenger promptly by their preferred method of contact if their item is located.

Transport Focus also recommends that operators:

- Ensure any charges to reunite the passenger with their item are capped at a reasonable level.
- Actively seek to increase the number of items repatriated to their owner.
- Define a process for dealing with 'live incidents' in which a passenger reports that they have left an item on a train that is about to depart.
- Demonstrate how the system can facilitate work with British Transport Police to identify any items held by the operator that have been reported as stolen.
- Demonstrate how the system will be monitored and measured within their business to ensure it is effective in meeting the above objectives.
- Actively work towards the establishment of a national lost property system, and if established should participate in the scheme.

6. Further information

For further information about this response to the South Western franchise consultation please contact:
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7. Appendices

Appendix 1 NRPS data and building block definitions

The most recent NRPS data available during production of this consultation response is Spring 2015.

The Autumn 2015 NRPS results are published on 27 January 2016 and will be available at:
http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/national-passenger-survey-introduction

South West Trains (SWT) building blocks[64]

The building blocks and SWT NRPS data used in this response are in line with the revision implemented from Autumn 2015. New building blocks were introduced to better reflect passenger journeys within the service groupings.

Metro: Journeys on routes that are mainly or wholly within London.

Outer suburban and local routes: Journeys on routes that go outside London, but which are within commuter travelling distance of London. Also journeys on local routes that are generally not on main lines that are wholly outside London.

Longer distance: Journeys on longer distance routes that generally go to or from London, but where the vast majority of the journey is outside London.

Island Line: Journeys starting from stations on the Isle of Wight.

Technical note relating to typology averages shown in Appendices 2.2-2.5:

The average percentage satisfied for each typology is based on the building blocks that existed at the time of each survey. We do not revise typology averages produced for previous waves if TOC building blocks change, but the averages from previous waves should be a useful and good comparator for any new building blocks (and their typology types).

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[64] NB: NRPS scores for building blocks in Appendix 2 only include factors for which there is a sample size of at least 100.

Appendix 2 NRPS satisfaction scores

A2.1 NRPS Spring 2015: percentage satisfied, SWT compared to London and South East sector

Factor	TOC	Sector	TOC Index[65]
Overall satisfaction with your journey	80	78	102%
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	78	77	101%
Ticket buying facilities	75	72	104%
Provision of information about train times/platforms	83	79	105%
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	66	68	97%
Cleanliness	70	73	96%
The facilities and services	59	56	105%
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	70	72	97%
Connections with other forms of public transport	76	75	102%
Facilities for car parking	47	46	103%
Overall environment	67	67	101%
Your personal security whilst using the station	69	69	101%
The availability of staff	55	61	91%
The provision of shelter facilities	62	63	99%
Availability of seating	38	44	86%
How request to station staff was handled	88	85	103%
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	54	47	115%
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	78	76	103%
The frequency of the trains on that route	74	73	101%
Punctuality/reliability	76	73	105%
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	79	80	98%
Connections with other train services	74	73	102%
The value for money of the price of your ticket	35	40	88%
Cleanliness of the train	72	73	99%
Upkeep and repair of the train	76	73	105%
The provision of information during the journey	71	69	104%
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	68	56	122%
The space for luggage	54	49	110%
The toilet facilities	32	33	98%
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	61	63	97%
The comfort of the seating area	71	69	103%
The ease of being able to get on and off	79	78	101%
Your personal security on board	80	75	106%
The cleanliness of the inside	73	73	99%
The cleanliness of the outside	75	71	104%
The availability of staff	50	36	140%
How well train company deals with delays	36	30	118%
TOC score is 5% or more lower than sector average			
TOC score is 5% or more higher than sector average			

[65] TOC Index shows performance of TOC against the sector as a percentage (e.g. if TOC score is equal to sector score the TOC Index would be 100%)

A2.2 NRPS Spring 2015: percentage satisfied, Metro compared to Short Commute typology average and best in class

	Metro	Short Commute average	Short Commute best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	77	80	95
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	75	77	90
Ticket buying facilities	69	74	90
Provision of information about train times/platforms	77	80	92
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	59	71	84
Cleanliness	66	74	86
The facilities and services	52	53	68
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	66	73	87
Connections with other forms of public transport	71	74	88
Facilities for car parking	32	42	73
Overall environment	60	68	84
Your personal security whilst using	64	68	79
The availability of staff	52	62	82
The provision of shelter facilities	60	65	83
Availability of seating	38	47	71
How request to station staff was handled	*	86	100
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	49	46	70
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	75	77	89
The frequency of the trains on that route	63	73	96
Punctuality/reliability	67	74	93
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take	73	82	97
Connections with other train services	69	74	88
The value for money for the price of your ticket	33	44	70
Upkeep and repair of the train	75	74	94
The provision of information during the journey	68	70	91
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	54	58	88
The space for luggage	56	51	73
The toilet facilities	19	31	62
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	65	64	85
The comfort of the seating area	74	70	89
The ease of being able to get on and off	75	78	87
Your personal security whilst on board	75	75	87
The cleanliness of the inside	71	73	92
The cleanliness of the outside	73	72	90
The availability of staff	41	39	80
How well train company dealt with delays	29	30	62

Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average

A2.3 NRPS Spring 2015: percentage satisfied, Outer Suburban and Local compared to Long Commute typology average and best in class

	Outer Suburban & Local	Long Commute average	Long Commute best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	81	78	93
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	77	77	91
Ticket buying facilities	77	72	85
Provision of information about train times/platforms	83	78	89
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	66	68	92
Cleanliness	66	74	94
The facilities and services	54	58	76
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	70	72	82
Connections with other forms of public transport	74	74	81
Facilities for car parking	47	51	74
Overall environment	66	68	85
Your personal security whilst using	69	71	83
The availability of staff	53	62	73
The provision of shelter facilities	59	62	80
Availability of seating	35	44	59
How request to station staff was handled	*	85	97
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	48	48	62
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	78	75	91
The frequency of the trains on that route	78	74	94
Punctuality/reliability	79	72	91
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take	81	80	95
Connections with other train services	78	71	87
The value for money for the price of your ticket	34	38	60
Upkeep and repair of the train	76	69	85
The provision of information during the journey	69	66	85
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	65	57	83
The space for luggage	51	47	65
The toilet facilities	31	36	57
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	55	61	75
The comfort of the seating area	68	67	83
The ease of being able to get on and off	75	78	90
Your personal security whilst on board	78	76	88
The cleanliness of the inside	72	71	90
The cleanliness of the outside	76	69	83
The availability of staff	44	37	70
How well train company dealt with delays	*	29	61

Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average

A2.4 NRPS Spring 2015: percentage satisfied, Longer Distance compared to Interurban typology average and best in class

	Longer distance	Interurban average	Interurban best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	81	85	96
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	82	84	94
Ticket buying facilities	78	84	93
Provision of information about train times/platforms	88	87	93
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	72	76	85
Cleanliness	78	82	92
The facilities and services	68	66	81
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	74	83	88
Connections with other forms of public transport	83	75	87
Facilities for car parking	60	62	88
Overall environment	74	76	86
Your personal security whilst using	75	76	84
The availability of staff	61	71	81
The provision of shelter facilities	68	72	86
Availability of seating	41	60	74
How request to station staff was handled	90	91	100
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	64	55	81
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	80	83	95
The frequency of the trains on that route	79	81	91
Punctuality/reliability	80	82	92
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take	81	85	93
Connections with other train services	75	77	92
The value for money for the price of your ticket	38	55	71
Upkeep and repair of the train	78	75	93
The provision of information during the journey	76	77	87
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	78	80	90
The space for luggage	55	62	72
The toilet facilities	39	49	72
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	62	73	87
The comfort of the seating area	71	76	88
The ease of being able to get on and off	84	85	91
Your personal security whilst on board	86	86	91
The cleanliness of the inside	75	80	91
The cleanliness of the outside	74	74	87
The availability of staff	61	69	79
How well train company dealt with delays	49	55	68

Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average

A2.5 NRPS Spring 2015: percentage satisfied, Island Line compared to Rural typology average and best in class

	Island Line	Rural average	Rural best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	90	83	94
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	77	81	94
Ticket buying facilities	*	81	90
Provision of information about train times/platforms	89	88	91
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	70	75	93
Cleanliness	82	81	94
The facilities and services	58	63	79
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	*	80	89
Connections with other forms of public transport	*	67	75
Facilities for car parking	*	65	82
Overall environment	67	74	91
Your personal security whilst using	74	76	89
The availability of staff	57	66	84
The provision of shelter facilities	73	73	86
Availability of seating	66	63	71
How request to station staff was handled	*	91	99
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	38	48	56
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	86	77	92
The frequency of the trains on that route	91	71	91
Punctuality/reliability	97	81	97
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take	95	83	95
Connections with other train services	*	76	83
The value for money for the price of your ticket	77	57	81
Upkeep and repair of the train	72	67	79
The provision of information during the journey	80	64	87
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	97	79	97
The space for luggage	54	62	86
The toilet facilities	*	43	65
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	91	71	95
The comfort of the seating area	65	71	84
The ease of being able to get on and off	97	80	97
Your personal security whilst on board	90	83	97
The cleanliness of the inside	84	73	89
The cleanliness of the outside	75	67	80
The availability of staff	85	65	89
How well train company dealt with delays	*	34	100

Building block score is 5% or more lower than typology average
Building block score is 5% or more higher than typology average

A3.1.1 According to station footfall – GB stations

Free Wi-Fi at stations consistently required by station type

Station improvements [prompted] – needs providing: All GB rail passengers

	All	Station footfall		
		High	Medium	Low
Free WiFi at the station	27%	25%	31%	28%
Toilets	21%	9%	40%	41%
Litter bins	18%	22%	10%	17%
Cash point	18%	12%	30%	21%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	17%	11%	24%	29%
Seating on platforms	12%	16%	5%	9%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	11%	6%	18%	24%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	11%	6%	18%	18%
Left Luggage facility	10%	10%	10%	8%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	9%	8%	12%	10%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	9%	6%	14%	14%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	9%	5%	14%	19%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	8%	7%	10%	10%
Automatic ticket gates	6%	5%	9%	9%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	6%	5%	7%	7%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	6%	5%	8%	9%
Departure information screens	5%	2%	8%	13%
Public address system	4%	3%	4%	10%
Other	5%	5%	5%	10%
Nothing extra needs to be Improved	15%	17%	9%	11%
Don't know	17%	20%	11%	8%

29   Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? providing; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

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A3.1.2 SWT passengers - all stations – needs providing

Facility	%
Free wi-fi at the station	29%
Toilets	24%
Waiting rooms (i.e. Fully enclosed waiting area)	21%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	20%
Cash point	18%
Point to collect goods ordered on this internet	15%
Outlet selling tea/coffee, sandwiches and snacks	13%
Litter bins	12%
Left luggage facility	10%
Seating on platforms	9%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	9%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. Semi enclosed waiting area)	9%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	7%
Automatic ticket gates	6%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. Florist, dry cleaners, etc)	6%
Public address system	4%
Other	4%
Help point telephone (i.e. To speak to railway staff)	3%
Departure information screens	3%
Nothing extra needs to be improved	13%
Don't know	13%

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[66] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014

A3.2 Facilities need improving
A3.2.1 According to station footfall – GB stations

Improvements to seating consistently important. Improving toilets important at high footfall stations, and shelter important at lower footfall

Station improvements [prompted] – needs <u>improving</u>: All GB rail passengers

	Overall	Station footfall High	Station footfall Medium	Station footfall Low
Seating on platforms	30%	30%	32%	28%
Toilets	20%	26%	9%	7%
Litter bins	17%	19%	13%	14%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	15%	9%	23%	28%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	14%	14%	14%	14%
Public address system	13%	13%	12%	12%
Departure information screens	12%	11%	14%	14%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	11%	8%	19%	12%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	7%	8%	8%	3%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	7%	7%	6%	7%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	6%	6%	4%	10%
Automatic ticket gates	5%	8%	2%	3%
Cash point	5%	6%	4%	4%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	5%	5%	4%	3%
Free WiFi at the station	5%	6%	3%	2%
Left Luggage facility	3%	4%	1%	1%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	3%	3%	1%	1%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	2%	2%	1%	2%
Other	3%	3%	3%	5%
Nothing extra needs to be provided	13%	14%	10%	9%
Don't know	25%	23%	29%	27%

30
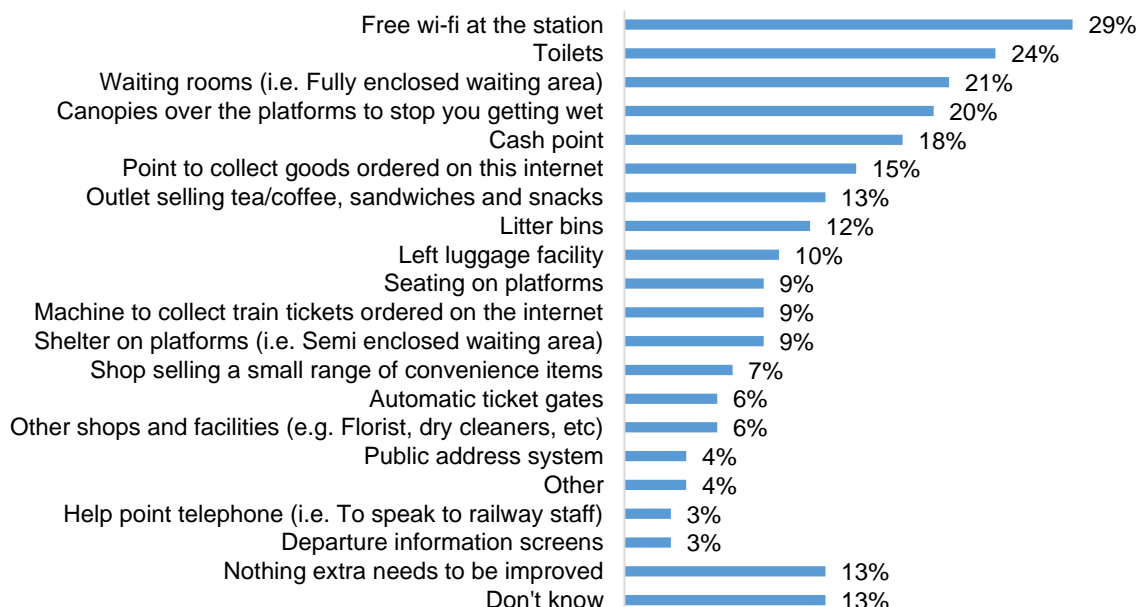
Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? Improving; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

A3.2.2 SWT passengers – all stations – needs improving

Seating on platforms	27%
Litter bins	21%
Public address system	18%
Toilets	14%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. Semi enclosed waiting area)	14%
Waiting rooms (i.e. Fully enclosed waiting area)	14%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	14%
Departure information screens	12%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	10%
Help point telephone (i.e. To speak to railway staff)	8%
Automatic ticket gates	5%
Outlet selling tea/coffee, sandwiches and snacks	4%
Other	4%
Cash point	3%
Free wi-fi at the station	3%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. Florist, dry cleaners,…	2%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	1%
Left luggage facility	1%
Point to collect goods ordered on this internet	1%
Nothing extra needs to be provided	16%
Don't know	16%

Appendix 4 Information used at different stages of the journey[67]

6A - Information used at different stages of the journey
Stages of journey where information used: All GB rail passengers

	Before arriving at station	At departure station	On train	Use across any stage
TRAIN COMPANY				
Information screens at the station		92%		92%
Announcements at the station		74%		74%
Information screens on the train			46%	46%
Announcements on the train			74%	74%
Information from members of staff at the station		40%		40%
Information from members of staff on the train			32%	32%
DIGITAL				
Online via a website	75%	16%	16%	77%
Via an app	29%	17%	15%	31%
Via Twitter	6%	4%	4%	7%
Received a text alert	4%	2%	1%	5%
Received an email	5%	1%	1%	6%
WORD OF MOUTH				
Information from other passengers	11%	17%	17%	27%
Information from family, friends or colleagues	25%	8%		27%
MEDIA				
Travel news update on TV	24%			24%
Travel news update on radio	20%			20%

32 Q.27a-c Now thinking more generally about information sources for rail travel, which of the following do you typically use to keep you informed about your train journey? Improved; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

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6B - NRE website and app - key sources of digital information
Stages of journey where __digital__ information used: All GB rail passengers

	Before arriving at station	At departure station	On train	Use across any stage
DIGITAL				
The Trainline website	33%	5%	5%	34%
National Rail Enquiries website	49%	11%	11%	50%
A train company's website	30%	5%	5%	31%
National Rail Enquiries App	22%	13%	12%	24%
A train company's App	11%	6%	6%	12%
National Rail Enquiries Twitter	3%	2%	2%	4%
A Train company's Twitter	4%	3%	3%	6%
National Rail Enquiries text alert	2%	1%	1%	3%
A Train company's text alert	3%	1%	1%	3%
National Rail Enquiries email alert	3%	1%	0%	3%
A Train company's email alert	4%	1%	1%	4%

33 Q.27a-c Now thinking more generally about information sources for rail travel, which of the following do you typically use to keep you informed about your train journey? Improved; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559
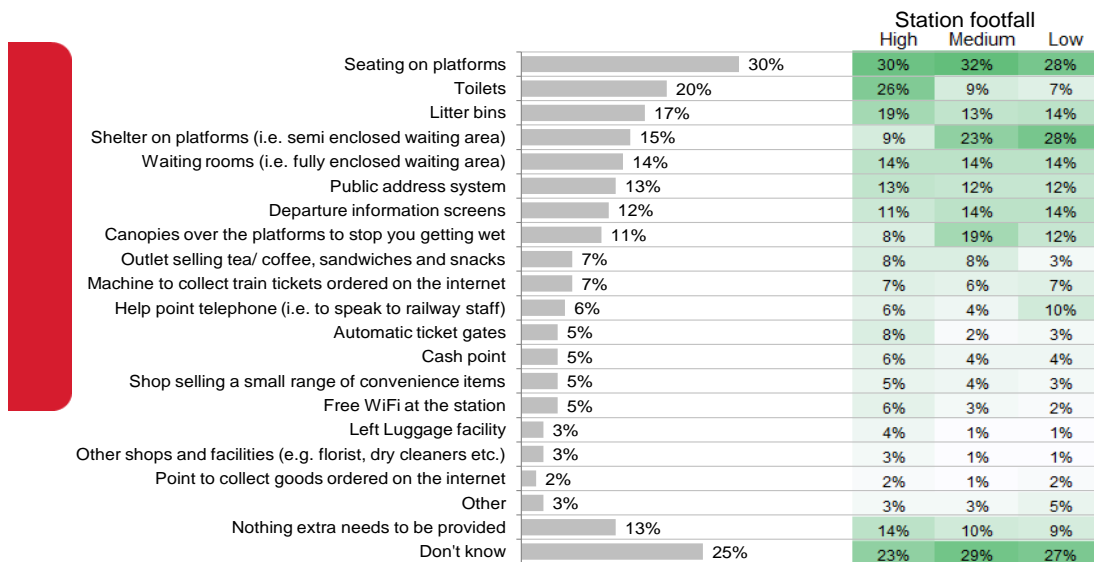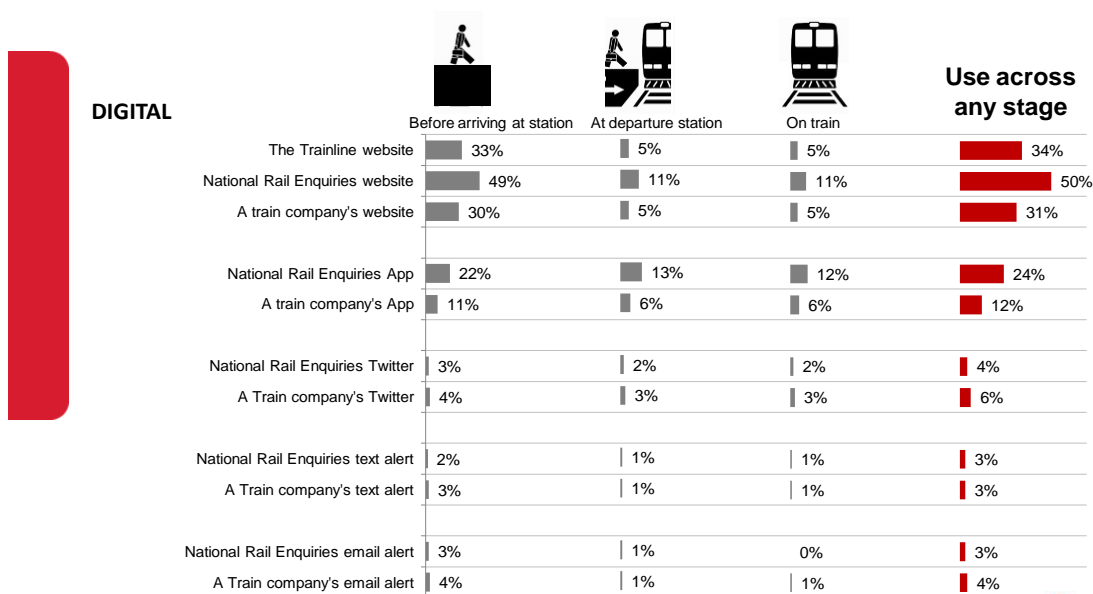
Passengerfocus *putting passengers first*

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[67] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014