


Board Meeting Paper		
Sep 11 BM 8.0		
Report for	Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Restricted or confidential Information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If confidential, protective marking ¹		
Date of Meeting		Thursday 12 September 2013
Agenda Item		8
Report Title		Review of passenger and industry facing work Q1
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1. Using our research to make a difference for passengers

Bus Passenger Survey

The team followed up the publication of the 2013 Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) results with many meetings across England involving Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) and bus operators. Our conversations with industry focused on making sure the results of the research were being developed into action plans to address specific findings from BPS. This activity included positive work with authorities and/or bus operators including:

- Cambridge, Essex, Thurrock, Suffolk, Milton Keynes, South Yorkshire, Worcestershire, Nottingham, Tees-Valley, Northumberland and Merseyside

In addition the discussions enable the team to identify some useful operational industry best practice from around the country that has been usefully shared back across the bus industry.

As part of the ongoing liaison with the bus industry the team also started discussions about potential involvement and funding for the 2013-14 round of BPS work.

Throughout the quarter there were also several opportunities to promote the findings from BPS more generally at regional and national transport conferences including:

European Bus Operators Conference, Better Bus Area Conference, Department for Transport Bus and Taxi Division briefing and various regional transport fora including presentations and meetings in Norfolk, Thurrock and Milton Keynes.

Rail National Passenger Survey

There have been conversations and presentations with several train operators resulting in the creation of action plans to address areas of concern from the results of the spring 2013 National Passenger Survey (NPS). While this work will be tracked with those operators throughout the year there has been a lot of further analysis work done with Northern Rail on the back of their disappointing spring 2013 NPS results.

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

We have provided more detailed evidence of where and how we believe Northern Rail could focus resources to improve passenger satisfaction across specific service factors. We will continue to work closely with the operator to support their ambition to improve passenger satisfaction.

2. Working with transport operators and industry stakeholders to make a difference

Our work for passengers with bus and rail operators

The team continue to promote and represent passenger concerns and priorities with bus and train operators on key policy and operational issues including:

- Influencing Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) with its introduction of a new revenue protection strategy
- Meetings and consultation responses to Northern Rail and First TransPennine Express on timetable changes to commence in December 2013, following infrastructure improvements and introduction of new rolling stock
- Meetings with Virgin Trains and Network Rail to discuss poor train performance on West Coast Mainline
- Successfully challenged First Capital Connect to reverse a decision to remove seat-trays on its refurbished fleet of class 365 trains
- Meetings with potential bidders for the ScotRail franchise to highlight passenger priorities in Scotland
- Undertook a review of complaint handling standards with First Great Western. Results presented back to the operator and actions agreed

Influencing other industry stakeholders

Away from direct work with bus and rail operators the team continue to work for passengers by highlighting areas of concern or priorities for improvement with a wide variety of key stakeholder organisations including:

- Input to rolling stock strategy in the north of England at the All-party Parliamentary rail in the north group
- Presenting Passenger Focus research at a national Network Rail conference for local transport authority staff
- Presenting paper on our “Smart Ticketing” research to Transport Solutions conference in Wales
- Meeting with Minister for Transport in Scotland to discuss potential for joint working and update on Passenger Focus activities
- Work with Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with Greater Anglia and Stagecoach East buses to identify and implement improvements to bus interchange information at Cambridge Station
- Attend and present Passenger Focus work at regional transport consortia across both Scotland and Wales
- Meeting with Assembly Member in Wales, Christine Chapman, about rail passenger issues in Cynon Valley
- Meetings with Association of Community Rail Partnerships to discuss proposals to establish Community Rail Partnerships in Scotland

A good example of our involvement on behalf of bus passengers locally is perhaps best highlighted by some good work with Peterborough City Council.

Peterborough City Council (PCC) contacted Passenger Focus asking for assistance in respect to an upcoming bus service review in Peterborough. This was in light of our work to promote better practices when transport authorities came to consult and communicate with bus passengers when making decisions about the funding of local bus services.

Our work on a “consultation best practice toolkit” can be found via this link: <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-service-reviews-consulting-on-changes-to-local-services-a-best-practice-toolkit#>

PCC presented a number of options of continued subsidised services that could be retained within the constraints of their new budget of £600,000. Following recommendation from Passenger Focus, PCC carried out passenger surveys and impact assessment on evening services. Impact assessments had already been carried out on all other subsidised services in the city.

A Cross Party Advisory Group, made up of local councillors and PCC staff, was facilitated by Linda McCord, Passenger Manager. The group met five times in May/June and considered various options and impact assessments. Presentations were given by local bus operators that included some proposals that could mitigate the impact of bus cuts, including Stagecoach East, who put forward an option that could retain much of the daytime and evening subsidised services. PCC were obliged to put any potential contracts for subsidised services out to tender.

Passenger Focus continues to be involved in the process and is awaiting the final decision by the Council, at which point they are keen for us to assist with communication of affected services to passengers.

This kind of work with local transport authorities is vital in developing our “consultation best practice toolkit” as we look to update the document later this year for distribution again to authorities and operators.

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

Overview of past quarter's performance and figures.

	Q1 (Apr-Jun)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q2 (Jul-Sep)
Total complaint appeals resolved	825	1143	799	745
Rail enquiries resolved	180	253	171	133
Bus enquiries resolved	2	2	3	1
Coach enquiries resolved	0	0	0	0
Tram enquiries resolved	0	1	1	1
Praise received	28	42	73	20
Complaint cases resolved	6	3	5	3
Cases redirected (London TravelWatch or Bus Users UK)	139	137	129	114
Passenger Satisfaction (target 70%)	78%	75%	75%	82%
Total passenger contacts (email, webform, calls, letter and fax)	2862	3406	3473	3770

The format of the data above has been calculated using our new "open data tool", where available. From now on, we will report on complaint appeal cases we have resolved each quarter, rather than complaint appeal cases opened and closed, giving us more robust data. Historical data for quarters 2, 3 and 4 2012-13 has been re-run to align it with the new reporting. This may mean there are some small differences in numbers from those previously reported.

During the first quarter of 2013-14, we saw the number of complaint appeals resolved return to a more manageable number for the team. Recent efforts to reduce case handling times have also proven to be successful, with cases handled in 30.5 days on average over the quarter. We hope this will continue to improve over the course of the year.

Passenger satisfaction remains above target, with an improvement on the previous two quarters. The number of complaints about our work has remained low, which is positive bearing in mind the workload pressures experienced in previous quarters.

Overview of complaint appeals

The top reasons for complaint appeals we resolved this quarter were around the way the complaint was handled, fares, retailing and refund issues, and train service performance. Looking in more detail, passengers' main issues were around the level of compensation, refund conditions/administration and delays.

East Coast, Virgin Trains and First Great Western generated the most complaint appeals during this period with 201, 75 and 61 complaint appeals resolved by the contacts team respectively.

The contacts team continue to flag up recurring themes and issues from our complaint appeals work with the Passenger Issues Team, who are then able to provide guidance on the current situation as well as escalate issues within the industry to drive improvements for passengers.

4. Other projects report

Ventrica call centre transition

The transition to our new call centre operation has continued very successfully. We have spent a lot of time training and inducting Ventrica staff into our culture and operations. This is proving worthwhile as they are responding very well to a variety of contacts from passengers, providing a high quality service and maintaining our credibility. We have agreed a suite of challenging performance measures with Ventrica and they are already pushing performance levels to a higher level sooner than we expected. We will continue to monitor and manage the contract closely throughout quarter two to ensure the excellent momentum built to date does not falter.

Stakeholder details update 2013

This annual project to update the stakeholder and passenger details held on our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database was started in June. This will further improve the quality of our contact database by checking and updating details of both stakeholder and passenger contacts. The first stage was to email stakeholders a link to a secure web page where they can check and update their details and subscription preferences. This has been completed successfully and the project will be finished in quarter two.

Performance measures project

Working in partnership with the Chief Executive's Team we have initiated a new project to review the organisation's performance measures. This work will continue for the remainder of this year and it should deliver a new robust framework of measures to support the organisation operations.

Stakeholder engagement

We have produced a new 'Contact Strategy' that will support our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. This has been agreed by Management Team and it helps to refine our ambition and use of using email and printed documents to engage stakeholders and passengers in our work. The strategy also helps to refine internal processes and maximises efficiency.

This quarter we have used email to publicise our work more than ever, successfully sending 47,145 emails. This increase is largely due to our new monthly format of our Passenger Voice newsletter that is sent to around 10,000 contacts each month. In addition to this we have also promoted:

- Bus passenger disruption research
- Bus Passenger Survey results
- Exchange – our transport user group newsletter

Open data programme

- **Governance structures** – the remit of the Statistics Governance Group has been extended to encompass all future data published as a result of this programme which will ensure accuracy of published information. At present this includes National Passenger Survey (NPS) results, Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) results, complaint appeal data and complaints about how Passenger Focus has handled complaint appeals. This is a permanent structure that will remain after the programme ends
- **Passenger contact quality monitoring review** – we have initiated a review of our quality monitoring processes that monitor the quality of responses and data entry made by the Senior Passenger Team Advisors when resolving passenger appeals. We want to ensure that the processes we have in place provide advisors with the level of service they require, and maximise the quality of the data we record
- **Analysis tools** – working with mySociety, we have made good progress on developing a new digital analysis tool to show National Passenger Survey results and our complaint appeal data. We have undertaken significant testing internally with staff to maximise engagement and to ensure the final tool is as effective as possible. If development continues to plan we expect to launch to train operators in quarter two and then to the public in quarter three

5. Glossary of Passenger Contact Terms

Complaint appeal	If a passenger is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint they have made to a train company, or believe the train company handled their complaint inappropriately; they can ask us to pursue it further on their behalf. We call this a complaint appeal.
Initial complaint	The passenger has a complaint about their operator and has approached us in the first instance without complaining to the operator. The passenger should allow the operator the opportunity to resolve the complaint before Passenger Focus can get involved.
Enquiry	Any enquiry about Passenger Focus and its work, passenger rights or a general enquiry about the rail, bus, coach or tram industry
Redirect	A contact or complaint outside of our remit, such as for London TravelWatch or Bus Users UK
Copied in	The passenger has copied us in to a correspondence that they have sent to another organisation.
Praise	Positive feedback about Passenger Focus, its work or its complaint handling.
Complaints about us	Any complaint about Passenger Focus or any aspect of its work. This includes the way Passenger Focus has handled a complaint appeal.