



Making a difference
2009-12 Corporate Plan

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Chairman's introduction

This plan sets out the main direction of travel for Passenger Focus, the independent passenger watchdog, from 2009 to 2012. Our approach of making a difference and getting the best deal for passengers, driven by research, will remain.

However, we are taking on new and exciting roles. We will start to represent bus, coach and, (subject to consultation and final approval) tram passengers in England outside of London. Starting to work in this new field, while continuing to deliver on rail passenger issues in England, Scotland and Wales, represents a considerable challenge. We will gradually build up our capacity and capability on bus issues. This work will be ring-fenced in 2009, but we will work towards a fully integrated organisation, with all staff working on rail and bus issues by 2011.

In addition, the Department for Transport has just issued a consultation document on the future economic regulation of airports. This proposes that Passenger Focus's remit is also extended to cover air passenger issues. We would welcome this new role and we look forward to understanding more how we could contribute to making a difference for air passengers.

Our rail work is based on a solid base of passenger research into what passengers think about current services and their priorities for improvement. The keystone to this is the National Passenger Survey. Every year over 54,000 passengers participate and the survey has become the standard benchmark of industry performance. We will continue to ensure that fares and ticketing issues, and in particular value for money, are at the centre of debate. We have used research to secure a better position for passengers in the franchise specification process. Passenger Focus has been heavily involved in helping the Department for Transport (DfT) set out the specification for the South Central franchise. Passenger priorities have become pivotal to Network Rail's important Route Utilisation Strategies. We hope

these and other activities will continue. Change has been secured on the ground by our team of nationwide passenger link managers and effective national lobbying.

Building a research base for our bus work will be a priority. We are taking on the national bus passenger satisfaction and mystery traveller survey, currently published by the DfT. We are developing a method of pairing similar areas and carrying out in depth bus user satisfaction surveys. We are starting to carry out bespoke research on areas such as concessionary fares and complaints handling. Over time we will build a better picture of bus passenger needs. We are going to trial how we can make sure we remain a national organisation but with effective regional reach – building on our existing passenger link team and effective partnerships will allow us to do this. This increase in knowledge will inform future business plans and allow us to become more precise about what we are trying to achieve.

This plan seeks to be concise and to the point. It springs from our experience over the last three years which has shown the value of concentrating our efforts and being as clear as we can be in setting out what we are about. The plan will cover a period of considerable challenge and while our main focus will be on representing passengers and being useful to both them and the industries in which we work we recognise we will have to keep our eye on the ball to ensure that we deliver our plans as the organisation and its remit changes.



Colin Foxall CBE
Chairman



About Passenger Focus

Vision

That operators, funders, and regulators of transport systems **put passengers first**

Mission

Getting the best deal for passengers

Values

In order to make a difference for passengers, we need to ensure that we are recognised as being forward-thinking, proactive, and enabling. This will be realised through our four core values, which we try to demonstrate throughout our work:

- independence – we will be impartial, objective and fair in all our activities
- credibility – our work will be evidence based
- inclusiveness – we seek to represent all the passengers covered by our remit
- influence – in order to deliver change, we will constructively and energetically engage with public bodies and private operators on behalf of passengers and other stakeholders.

Priorities

Passenger Focus is a relatively small organisation. We make work priority choices based on passengers' priorities and resources.

In developing our choices for work priorities we ask:

- Is the issue of direct concern to passengers?
- How many passengers will be affected and how serious is the actual or potential impact?
- Will addressing the issue improve the service and / or deliver significant improvements to the passenger experience?
- Do we have the resources to deal with the issue?
- Are we best placed to focus on the subject?
- Is the issue within our remit?

Our annual business plans permit us to alter priorities and our resources to meet changes in circumstances as they emerge.



Priorities for 2009-12

Priority 1 Make a difference for all passengers

Who benefits from making this a priority?

- All passengers using trains, buses and coaches

What are the key issues?

Rail

1.1 Performance and safety

Punctuality and reliability continue to improve across an increasingly safe network.

1.2 Fares and value for money

The fares and ticketing system is

- easier to understand
- easier to use and
- all increases in fare levels are fully justified.

1.3 Capacity

Final proposals for Route Utilisation Strategies, franchise replacements and other schemes:

- have clearly identified capacity constraints
- create sufficient capacity to address the identified need, or
- clearly acknowledge and explain if funding limitations preclude ideal solutions.

1.4 Delays and planned disruption

The rail industry has improved:

- the way information is communicated to passengers
- the way it manages disruption to passengers including compensation paid, and

- the planning of major projects to take account of passenger needs.

Bus and coach

1.1 Bus and coach

The needs and aspirations of current and future bus and coach passengers are thoroughly understood and prioritised for action

1.2 End-to-end journeys

The passenger transport industry provides simpler end-to-end journeys and clearly understands passenger issues in respect of each part of the journey for all types of passenger.

What does success look like for Passenger Focus?

- We will ask service providers, Network Rail and those other organisations Passenger Focus seeks to influence every other year:

“How influential has Passenger Focus been in helping you to understand, prioritise and act on passenger experiences and needs?”

“How much impact has Passenger Focus had in making a difference for passengers?”

- Annual business plans will set out a range of specific objectives and activities linked to the broad themes of this plan.
- We will identify, praise and promote the transfer of good practice by service providers.

Priority 2

Tackle examples of poor passenger service

Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Passengers – particularly those who experience poor levels of service either in a particular area or from a specific operator.

What are the key issues?

- Ensuring examples of poor consumer service are identified and prioritised for action. Decision-makers are aware of these issues and are addressing these particular areas of poor passenger service.

What does success for Passenger Focus look like?

- The poor service driving satisfaction ratings is being addressed.



Priority 3

Improve access to services for passengers with particular needs



Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Those groups of passengers for whom access to services is inadequate.

What are the key issues?

- Understanding which groups of passengers face systematic barriers to access to services
- Access to services for disabled persons.

What does success for Passenger Focus look like?

- Barriers to access are identified and prioritised.

Priority 4

Promote good practice in complaint handling and provide advice and advocacy to complainants

Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Passengers with complaints.

What are the key issues?

- Driving up transport industry complaint handling performance so that appeal complaints reduce over time
- Providing advice and advocacy to those whose complaints have not been satisfactorily resolved by rail service providers.

What does success for Passenger Focus look like?

- Levels of satisfaction with the way in which Passenger Focus handled rail-related complaints rises to 70% (2008-9 65%).



Priority 5

Increase awareness of Passenger Focus and our influence with stakeholders



Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Passengers benefit from Passenger Focus being visible, accessible and understood.

What are the key issues?

- Passenger Focus's role is to improve service provision throughout the industry. To achieve this, it must first of all be visible, accessible and understood as the voice of the passenger.

What does success look like?

- Those passengers who need to contact Passenger Focus find it easy to do so
- Passenger Focus is recognised by the media as **the** authoritative passenger champion.

Priority 6

Build and deliver effective passenger representation for bus and coach passengers

Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Current and future bus and coach passengers in England (outside London).

What are the key issues?

- Development of our role as a bus passenger champion in England while we continue to deliver in all aspects of our rail role and work
- Research to measure passenger satisfaction and priorities for change is trialled and established. This will include understanding the key reasons underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Research on key individual issues, such as information, will be carried out.

What does success look like?

- We will ask service providers and those other organisations Passenger Focus seeks to influence every other year:

“How influential has Passenger Focus been in helping you to understand, prioritise and act on passenger experiences and needs?”

“How much impact has Passenger Focus had in making a difference for passengers?”



- Research programme established and accepted by stakeholders
- Passenger Focus has influenced national policy debates
- Effective regional representation of bus passengers has commenced.

Priority 7

Boost Passenger Focus's capacity and capability to get the best deal for passengers

Who benefits from making this a priority?

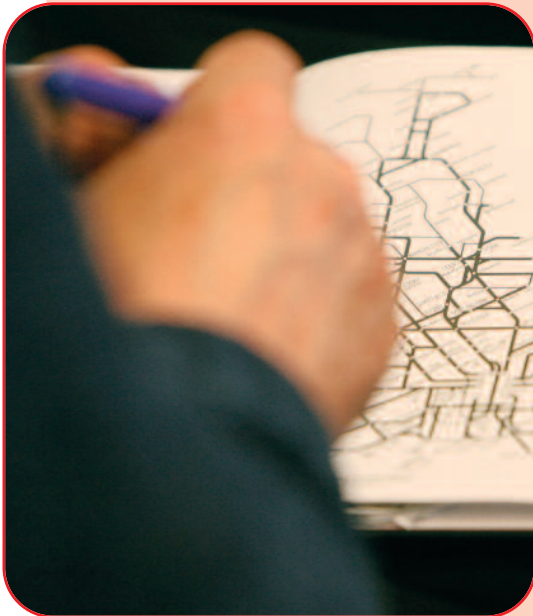
- Ultimately all passengers benefit as a result of us delivering an effective organisation.

What are the key issues?

- Ensure that we have people with the right skills, knowledge and attitude, as well as budget, facilities and resources in place to deliver for passengers, including flexibility to respond to emerging issues for passengers
- Ensure we deliver value for money and a high standard of performance in our work
- Provide a range of methods and opportunities to maintain regular communication between all staff – based across two sites, and away from the office and with our Board
- With a large number of staff working outside the office it is essential that those staff have the support and opportunities to share knowledge and best practice.

What does success look like?

- We maintain an organisation of motivated and supported staff that achieves our goals
- We deliver our plans within the agreed budget allocations
- Our corporate governance enables effective scrutiny and accountability for expenditure and performance
- All staff feel they are kept up-to-date with events in the industry and each other's work and know how to contribute to internal communication
- Home-based workers feel part of the team, with effective support that pulls their knowledge and expertise together and makes it available for everyone to access and use.



How we work

• Passengers



• Research

Commissions research, manages research projects and the National Passenger Survey, analyses data and advises on research methods.

• Passenger Link

Work with stakeholders, the media, and passengers to influence service improvements.

• Passenger Advice

Responsible for incoming contacts, dealing with complaints and providing advice to passengers.

• Policy

Deal with policy issues, provide policy advice and respond to consultations.

• Development

Support the passenger link team on specific projects and develop the passenger link and passenger advice services.

• Communications

Responsible for all communications, public affairs, publications, the press office and our website.

• Chair

Responsible for the overall strategic direction of the organisation.

• Chief Executive's Team

Responsible for the running of the organisation and delivery of workplans. Ensures corporate governance and business planning arrangements are in place and supports the Board and committees.

• Board

Provide overall strategic direction and governance for the organisation.

• Resources

Provide support for issues such as staff, money, premises, communications and technology.

www.passengerfocus.org.uk

Passengerfocus 
putting passengers first

Measuring and tracking our performance

Passenger Focus will:

- Publish annual reports on performance, activities and expenditure
- Every other year ask service providers, Network Rail and those other organisations Passenger Focus seeks to influence every other year:

“How influential has Passenger Focus been in helping you to understand, prioritise and act on passenger experiences and needs?”

“How much impact has Passenger Focus had in making a difference for passengers?”

This stakeholder survey will probe how Passenger Focus's values of independence, credibility, inclusiveness and influence are being demonstrated in practice by carrying out a number of in-depth interviews with key government and industry figures. All those asked can reply anonymously ensuring a high degree of objectivity in the responses.

- Draw up annual business plans detailing the work we will do to address the seven strategic priorities identified in this plan and the five key areas of performance, fares and value for money, capacity, end to end journeys and delays and disruption
- Report four times a year at public Board meetings on progress towards meeting targets, including reports on our work with individual train companies
- Levels of passenger satisfaction with Passenger Focus's handling of their complaints rises to 70% from current annual average of 65%
- Passengers rate Passenger Focus as easy to find and contact.

Internal success measures

Budget and audit

Aim to ensure all internal audit assignments (as approved by the audit committee) return no less than a 'substantial assurance' opinion

Ensure annual audit opinion of Comptroller & Auditor General is unqualified

Aim to manage budget allocations in total to within 5% in the first three quarters of the year and 1% in the final quarter

Unplanned absence

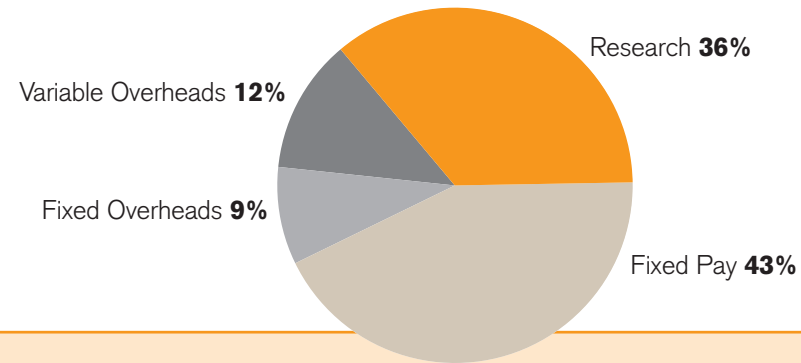
Maintain unplanned absence levels across the organisation below national average (2008 private sector baseline: 4.3%; Passenger Focus 3.0%)

Diversity

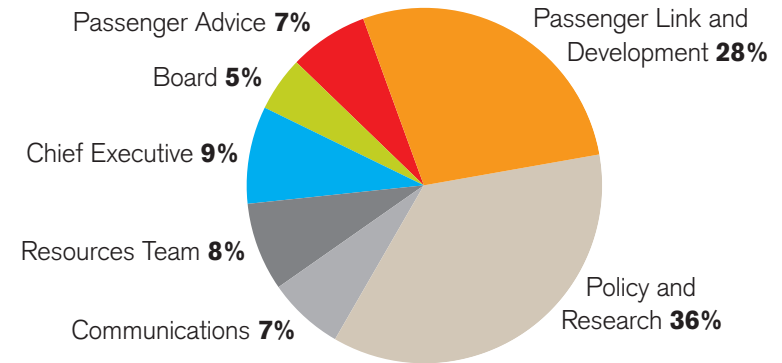
Promote workplace diversity through an annual review of our statutory equality scheme(s)

Budget 2009-12

Budget allocation by cost type



Budget allocation by team



Budget (£000's)

	Rail	Bus	Total
2009-10	5700	1600	7300
2010-11	6100	2250	8350
2011-12	6100	2300	8400

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Contact us

If you want to know more about the work we are doing on your behalf to ensure you get a better deal when you travel by rail, contact us:

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