



Passenger Focus response to Department for Transport proposals for the new Cross Country franchise

7 August 2006



Passenger Focus response to the Department for Transport proposals for the Cross Country franchise

Passenger Focus is the independent national rail consumer watchdog. It is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Transport.

Our mission is to get the best deal for Britain's rail passengers. We have two main aims: to influence both long and short term decisions and issues that affect passengers; and to help passengers through advice, advocacy and empowerment.

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 rail passengers and we work with the rail industry, other passenger groups and Government to secure journey improvements.

Our vision is to ensure that the rail industry and Government are always

‘putting rail passengers first’

, This will be achieved through our mission of

‘getting the best deal for passengers’

Contents

	Page
1. Executive summary	4
2. Introduction	6
3. Detailed response	7
3.1 Methodology	7
3.2 Findings	9
3.3 Conclusions	29
4. Passenger Focus' policy on franchises	30
 Appendices:	
A. Passenger Focus research on Cross Country – copy of questionnaire	32
B. List of stakeholders surveyed by Passenger Focus	40
C. PTUF research for Passenger Focus on Cross Country – summary findings	45
D. Stations currently served by Cross Country trains	50
E. Explanation of Gap Analysis techniques used in research	51
F. Passenger Focus' policy on franchises – detailed document	52

1. Executive summary

The numbers of people travelling by train are increasing. Performance on the railways is steadily improving, and passenger satisfaction is rising. We expect changes to franchises to build on this; to further improve performance, improve passenger satisfaction, and allow for continued growth.

Passenger Focus has a wealth of research material regarding what passengers want, and adds to this as franchises come up for re-letting. This evidence informs our input to specific franchise consultations at route level. Where passengers have clearly indicated their priorities for improvement to existing services, Passenger Focus expects new franchises to show how these will be addressed.

In general, passengers want a safe, reliable, affordable railway that meets their expectations of service quality for the price paid. Drivers of passenger satisfaction change over time but punctuality and reliability have been the main drivers of passenger satisfaction since the National Passenger Survey began in 1999. Issues such as the perceived cleanliness of the train have also been key factors, with a clear link between the introduction of new or refurbished trains and increases in overall satisfaction ratings. Passenger Focus expects franchises to address the link between passenger satisfaction and actionable improvement.

Our submission is based on comprehensive research with over 32,000 passengers, looking at the passenger viewpoint on fares, satisfaction and wider rail issues, as well as route-specific research on the existing franchise.

It is clear that the Cross Country network is a success story. The steady growth in passenger numbers, the good overall satisfaction ratings and the significant leap in punctuality demonstrate that this is a franchise which should be consolidated and developed, not cut back.

Issues

The priority issues for passengers on the current Cross Country franchise can be summarised as:

- **Getting a seat** – particularly important on the core of the network and on Friday and Sunday services where crowding is a significant problem
- **Direct journeys** – the research demonstrates clear passenger demand for long-distance journeys, avoiding the need to change and avoiding London
- **The 'Birmingham problem'** – New Street station in Birmingham is not designed for major interchange and the Gateway redevelopment of the station during the new franchise does not appear to have been factored in
- **Journey times** – where journeys will have more connections than before, there needs to be minimal increases in end-to-end journey times for passengers
- **Value for money** – through-ticketing is essential as passengers may need to use three train companies to get to or from Scotland to destinations south of Birmingham
- **Other problems:**
 - **Service patterns** – the current franchise proposals suffer from a lack of detail on the level of service that the new franchise will be expected to provide
 - **Stations** – as it stands, there is no commitment to contribute to enhancing station facilities

- **Trains** – the type of rolling stock needs to be fit for purpose for passengers' needs and should be consistent across the Cross Country network.

As part of the remapping of Central Trains, the Department for Transport (DfT) plans to add new routes to the Cross Country franchise. Passengers need to be assured that they will experience a high level of service and facilities, whichever franchise the routes belong to, and whichever bidder secures the franchise.

Passenger Focus is concerned at any proposals to significantly alter or diminish a network which is showing substantial growth and success. While there may be winners in the battle for faster journeys and improved capacity on the core of the network, these are counteracted by the significant losses – a reduction in direct journeys between Scotland or the North West and the South of England, and the loss of services east of Reading.

Recommendations

Our key recommendations for Cross Country are:

- i.** Our top priority is that passengers can get a seat. The DfT needs to define how many seats it needs to procure to alleviate the current crowding problems and to allow for continued high growth which is predicted across the lifetime of the franchise. The franchise should also include a commitment to introduce a robust monitoring regime
- ii.** Our second priority is to retain as much of the existing network as possible. Passengers will have concerns about the loss of so many direct long distance services, particularly those who travel to and from the “extremities” of the network. Passengers prefer direct services, and terminating so many trains at Birmingham New Street would be a retrograde step
- iii.** There should be no significant increase in journey times for passengers. Our research demonstrates the need to offer minimal increases in end-to-end journey times for currently available through journeys, which the DfT are proposing will have more connections than before
- iv.** Passengers deserve better value for money. A simple, easy to understand fares structure should be put in place, and there should be no reduction in the current availability of cost-effective through-ticketing. The franchise should include a commitment to improve passenger satisfaction with value for money.
- v.** The consultation document provides insufficient detail of future service patterns to make considered judgements on the impact for many passengers. Robust consultation is required on the detail of train services to be provided
- vi.** At present, 40% of passengers already interchange to connect with Cross Country services. More passengers will need to change trains to complete their long-distance journeys, according to DfT proposals. We want to see a clearly defined franchise commitment to develop station facilities and improve integration
- vii.** The Voyager trains are popular with passengers. Whichever trains are used for the new franchise, they must meet the specification of the existing Voyager fleet in terms of comfort and performance as a minimum. Cleanliness and upkeep/repair should be monitored. Passenger Focus should also be consulted on the design of any new or refurbished stock.

2. Introduction

Our approach to this consultation is underpinned by the principles we would like to see enshrined in all franchises, which are set out in section four. The response has been informed by liaison with stakeholders and user groups, our postbag, existing research and bespoke research commissioned by Passenger Focus.

We are wary of setting out a 'wish-list' of items that has little prospect of being provided - we understand there are practicalities around funding. However, we make no apologies for having an aspirational vision of the future. We see rail as essential to the delivery of Government objectives such as reducing congestion, improving economic regeneration and pushing towards a more socially inclusive society.

The Cross Country network currently extends over 1,550 route miles and links many major centres without the need to cross London or change at Birmingham. It provides journeys from Scotland via the North East and North West, through the Midlands, to the South and the South West using 184 daily trains. Cross Country operates the only direct trains between many towns and cities. The range of journeys available is second to none, as it is possible to connect with local rail and bus networks at over 50 stations on Cross Country routes. Many stakeholders around Great Britain see the Cross Country network as an economic lifeline, connecting businesses with customers and leisure passengers with tourist centres. There are increasing numbers of business users but long-distance services are well used by those making leisure journeys such as visiting friends or relatives. Useful Cross Country links also encourage large numbers of daily commuters and shoppers making shorter journeys.

Over the last few years, the franchise has been a real success story for passengers in terms of performance, patronage and passenger satisfaction:

- Punctuality has risen from just over 60% of trains on time in 2003, to well over 80% by spring 2006¹
- Passenger numbers are growing steadily, from around 17 million in 2003 to current levels at around 20 million per year²
- Passenger satisfaction has slightly increased, at 84% in spring 2006, compared with 83% in spring 2003, as measured by the National Passenger Survey (NPS).

This report outlines major concerns regarding the proposals for the Cross Country network. These concerns have been identified from extensive research with passengers and stakeholders, and provide substantial evidence which backs the Passenger Focus recommendations. Most of our concerns about the Cross Country proposals are generic in nature, revolving around the identified need to provide additional seats, and protect as much as possible of the existing long-distance routes.

¹ Figures from Public Performance Measure Data (Source: Network Rail)

² Source: Virgin Trains

3. Detailed response

3.1 Methodology

As an evidence-based organisation, Passenger Focus has based this report on research with over 32,000³ passengers, including findings obtained from new and comprehensive passenger research conducted on Cross Country trains. This evidence is supported by a variety of additional sources. The types of evidence used are summarised below:

New passenger research

Passenger Focus commissioned a large-scale project of new passenger research in spring 2006, in order to provide reliable, robust, comprehensive and up-to-date evidence on the perceptions, views and issues of concern for passengers travelling on the Cross Country network.

This research was carried out by Continental Research, the organisation which also conducts the National Passenger Survey on behalf of Passenger Focus. The fieldwork was carried out in June 2006, and comprised 25 double shifts⁴ on Virgin CrossCountry routes VT1⁵, VT2⁶ and VT3⁷, enabling data to be captured across the whole Cross Country network at various times of the day and week.

Passengers travelling on Cross Country trains across Great Britain were asked to complete a questionnaire comparing their expectations and the subsequent experience of their train journey. This data was weighted against how important passengers viewed the same aspects to provide a 'gap analysis', and where used in this report, this data is referred to as 'Passenger Priorities Research'⁸. Passengers were also asked specific questions on changing trains during a journey, and asked to prioritise various aspects of train travel on Cross Country routes. Where this data is referenced in the report, it is described as our 'new passenger research'.

In total, 3333 passenger questionnaires⁹ were returned, giving Passenger Focus a significant amount of data on which to base these report findings and recommendations.

Stakeholder engagement

Between April and July 2006, Passenger Focus gathered information from passengers and other stakeholders in order to inform our pre-specification response and final report to the DfT on the new Cross Country franchise. Passenger Focus asked how the franchise should be designed to meet future needs and expectations and welcomed views on what it should offer passengers. Responses were collated from a total of 75 stakeholders and stakeholder groups representing passengers¹⁰.

³ This figure is based on 25,000 from the National Passenger Survey (Passenger Focus, Spring 2006), 3000 from Passenger Priorities research on the Cross Country network (Passenger Focus, June 2006), 1000 from the 'Virgin Voyager' report, (RPC North West, September 2004), 1000 from 'Barriers to Interchange' report (RPC/North West Regional Assembly, February 2005) and 2000 from Passenger Requirements for Rail Fares (Passenger Focus, June 2006)

⁴ 50 x 3 hour shifts

⁵ Virgin Cross Country route VT1 runs from Scotland (Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central) to Penzance, via Birmingham New Street and Bristol

⁶ Virgin Cross Country route VT2 runs from Scotland (Aberdeen, Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central) and the North West to Bournemouth and Gatwick/Brighton, via Birmingham New Street.

⁷ Virgin Cross Country route VT3 runs from Aberdeen to Cardiff and Penzance/Paignton, via Birmingham New Street

⁸ See Appendix E for an explanation of how 'Gap Analysis' is calculated

⁹ A copy of the questionnaire template used in the Cross Country research can be found in Appendix A.

¹⁰ A full list of stakeholders surveyed is available in Appendix B

A similar exercise was undertaken on our behalf by the Public Transport Users' Forum (PTUF), coordinated by the North West PTUF (now TravelWatch North West), in order to collate and analyse further views from their membership outside the public sector and within their own regions.¹¹

All stakeholder communications were centred on the following questions:

- What contribution does the Cross Country network make to your organisation's agenda?
- What are your specific priorities for the new franchise?
- What evidence do you have to support your views?

During the DfT public consultation period in June and July 2006, Passenger Focus collected further submissions from stakeholders based on the new Cross Country franchise specification document.

Where stakeholders submitted views and evidence which supports or contradicts the findings from the passenger research, selected examples are included in our report. Appendix B lists all stakeholders Passenger Focus engaged with, and those who forwarded their response to us.

Desktop research

Desktop research carried out by Passenger Focus consisted of previous research and publications produced by the former Rail Passengers Council (RPC) and new desktop research from a wide variety of sources.

In March 2005, the Rail Passengers Committee for North Western England (RPC NW) published a report entitled "*Supporting the case for cross-country inter-city services*". Its purpose was to present evidence highlighting the benefits to passengers of the current Cross Country network. The report was well received, and raised several key issues which were supported with data from a range of sources. Most of the information contained within this report is still relevant for the new Cross Country franchise. Therefore this publication is being used as a key reference for Passenger Focus' input to the new franchise, and includes updates to charts and statistics where appropriate.

In 2004 the RPC NW interviewed over 1,000 passengers to determine their views on the new Voyager trains. Nine out of ten passengers gave a 'thumbs up' to the new trains, commenting positively on many aspects of the service. Findings from this research are referenced in the report.

In addition, Passenger Focus has researched and considered other available sources of data and information, including:

- The National Passenger Survey
- RPC report "*What passengers want from stations*" which coincided with National Audit Office report "*Maintaining and improving Britain's rail stations*"
- RPC NW report "*Barriers to Interchange*" (February 2005)
- Passenger Focus research on fares (Spring 2006)
- Virgin CrossCountry performance statistics
- Complaints data from both Virgin Trains and Passenger Focus' passenger contact team
- Virgin Trains – Fact File, Passenger Charter, Yield Management data
- Railway industry statistics such as LENNON and MOIRA data.

As with the stakeholder contributions, data and information from the desktop research is included in the report where it provides supporting evidence for issues and views raised by passengers as part of the new passenger research.

¹¹ Refer to Appendix C for the summary findings from the PTUF research

3.2 Findings

The objectives outlined by the DfT for the new Cross Country franchise focus on value for money and operational issues for the railway. Little mention is made of passengers and their needs and how the new franchise will address these. Extensive research with passengers by Passenger Focus has highlighted the issues that are of importance to them, and their priorities for the new franchise.

Issue one - getting a seat

Passengers and stakeholders tell us that getting a seat is a high priority for them and there is evidence to support this view from NPS Wave 14, Spring 2006:

	Virgin CrossCountry	Long Distance TOCs
Passengers satisfied with room for all passengers to sit/stand	69%	72%

This figure highlights that Cross Country falls below the average level of satisfaction for all long-distance train operators on this issue. Breaking this down further, the following table shows the satisfaction levels for different types of passenger on Cross Country trains, stating that business passengers and commuters are considerably less satisfied than leisure passengers:

	Total	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Passengers satisfied with room for all passengers to sit/stand ¹²	69%	61%	59%	74%
Passengers dissatisfied with room for all passengers to sit/stand ¹³	20%	24%	28%	17%

The DfT acknowledges that the current Cross Country franchise has been very successful and passenger numbers have grown to over 20 million per annum. This growth has led to high levels of crowding which tends to occur around the core of the Cross Country network but varies by time of day, day of the week and time of the year. According to the current operator, 20% of Virgin CrossCountry trains are overcrowded at some point in their journey and Virgin yield management data demonstrates that crowding is particularly evident on Fridays and Sundays. The DfT states that the challenge is to focus any additional capacity where it is most needed.

However, the DfT has not stated how many additional seats it needs to procure to alleviate the acknowledged crowding problems. There is also no evidence provided to show how the proposed changes to the Cross Country network will provide the necessary number of extra seats. The proposals mean that passengers travelling to the North West and Scotland from destinations south of Birmingham and vice versa will no longer be able to make a direct journey, and passengers travelling to/from east of Reading will not be able to travel by Cross Country trains, yet the DfT has failed to demonstrate that the trade-off between this and adding seats at the core of the network is worthwhile in terms of overall passenger benefit. Furthermore, there is no demonstration of how the DfT has predicted and accounted for future growth.

There is also concern from stakeholders, particularly in the South West, regarding the DfT announcement that some five-car train units will move across to the London to Holyhead route¹⁴. As

¹² Satisfaction – passengers who stated ‘satisfied’ or ‘good’ on a five-point rating scale

¹³ Dissatisfaction – passengers who stated ‘Dissatisfied’ or ‘poor’ on a five-point rating scale

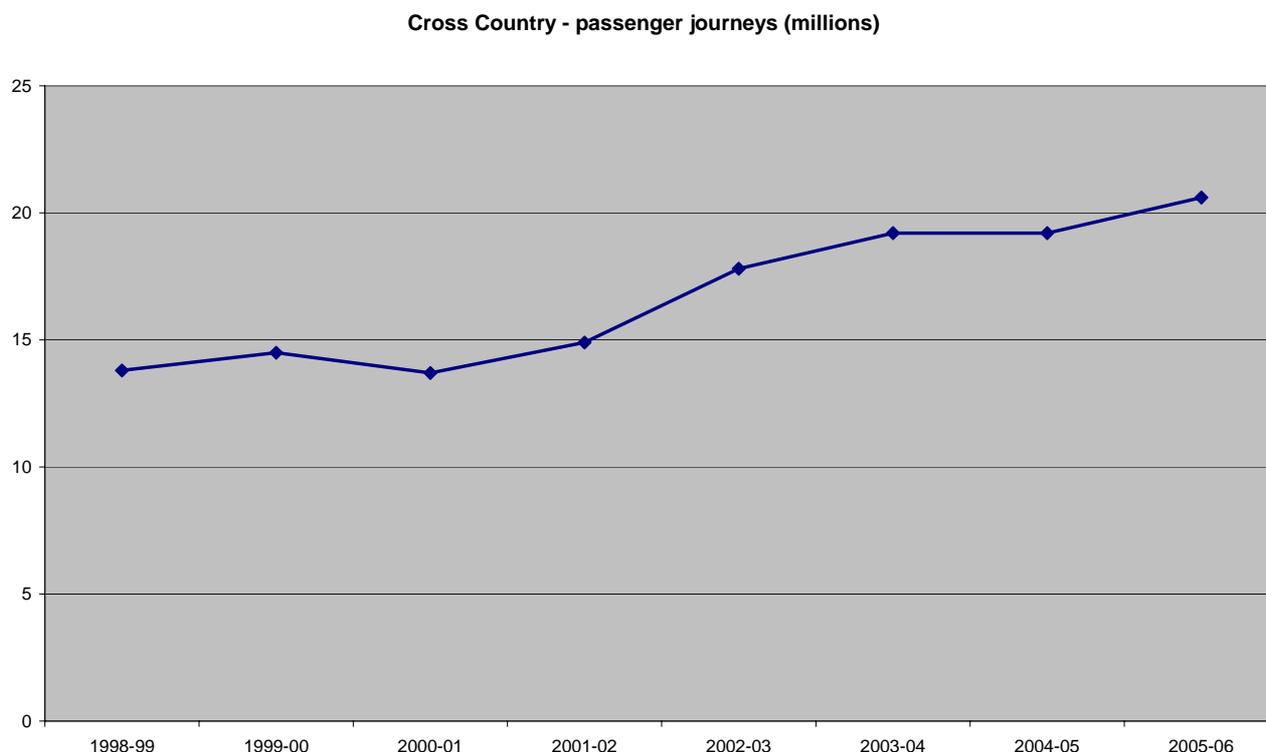
no indication has been made as to where this additional rolling stock will come from, stakeholders are concerned that they will be taken from the West Country, giving rise to a loss of capacity on routes to the region and resulting in increased overcrowding, especially on the Plymouth-Bristol and Bournemouth services. The DfT needs to provide further detail on this proposal, as well as what measures will be in place to ensure that current and future demand will be addressed.

Overcrowding was a key issue for stakeholders and was reported widely across the regions. It is clear that the network is popular but the train units have not met demand, with crowding reported in both standard and first class¹⁵. There was general agreement from stakeholders that current overcrowding must be addressed by the new franchise agreement, as well as clear proposals for tackling future growth. Most stakeholders suggested that longer trains were the answer.

The new Passenger Focus research on Cross Country routes showed that passengers on the whole rated 'getting a seat' as the second most important aspect of their journey, beaten only by 'arriving on time at your destination'. For leisure passengers, getting a seat was their highest priority.

Growth

Growth in passenger numbers on Cross Country services has been higher than the national average. As has been widely reported, Cross Country carried 20 million passengers in 2005 compared to 10.4 million in 1994. The graph below shows Cross Country growth in passenger journeys from 1998 onwards¹⁶:



Network Rail's Initial Strategic Business Plan Control Period 4 estimates growth for long-distance services as close to 50%. ATOC are predicting growth of over 40% specifically for the Cross Country network over the next 10 years and ATOC figures show that the Plymouth-Bristol route is one of the

¹⁴ For example the South West Regional Assembly and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry

¹⁵ As stated in page 15 of the consultation document

¹⁶ Source: SRA Annual reports 1998/99 to 2002/03 and ORR 2003/04 to 2005/06

fastest growing services in the UK. The DfT has stated that it sees growth occurring for intermediate travel but appears less convinced of growth in longer distance journeys. No evidence has been provided by the DfT to support this view and underpin the rationale behind the franchise proposals.

Regional bodies stress that transport policy must be seen as part of regional regeneration delivery and any strategy must work with the regional strategic economic framework which is supported by EU and UK public funding streams. There is therefore a recognised need to ensure there is provision in the new franchise for future growth:

“I am [...] concerned that there appears to be no correlation between the proposed New Cross Country Franchise Document and the North East Regional Planning Assessment for the Railway”
[Coastliners Rail User Group]

“[Cross Country] supports a number of the Regional Transport Strategy objectives in the submitted draft Regional Spatial Strategy for North West England and will be key in delivering Policy RT1, the Regional Public Transport Framework.” [North West Regional Assembly]

“Aberdeen City Council's Local Transport Strategy 2000 and draft Local Transport Strategy 2007 recognise the need for high quality, rapid train services linking Aberdeen with the major Cities and hubs around Britain, the cross country franchise operated by Virgin Trains works substantially towards delivering this.” [Aberdeen City Council]

“Although the Cross Country franchise does not serve Blackpool directly, connections to Blackpool services at Preston and Manchester are vital to the resort's continued economic well-being and regeneration.” [Blackpool Council]

Some stakeholders provided Passenger Focus with local information regarding growth of residential areas and employment sites and stressed the need for rail services to meet the current and predicted demand for rail travel. Other figures were provided showing growth in passenger journeys for sections of Cross Country routes.

Summary

- No new stock type is proposed but longer or additional stock will be needed
- Emphasis is placed on the bidder to come up with a solution in their bids.
- Train interior design is mentioned as an option – including the mix of first and standard class provision – but no detailed requirements are stated

Recommendation

Passenger Focus seeks assurance that the DfT will satisfactorily address the well documented capacity problems within the Cross Country franchise and include a commitment to introduce a robust monitoring regime. The DfT needs to clearly define how many additional seats it needs to procure to alleviate the acknowledged crowding problems that passengers currently experience and are predicted to be necessary across the lifetime of the franchise.

Issue two – loss of through services

Long-distance direct journeys and impact of interchanges

The DfT suggests crowding across the core of the network can be reduced by transferring some services to Virgin West Coast and TransPennine Express, and cutting services east of Reading. The proposals outline various losses of through-journeys. The new Cross Country franchise specification mentions that 40% of passengers already change at least once before they join a Cross Country train and passengers tell us that a further change will affect their decision to use rail. The specification also recognises the value of through-journeys and states that it is a ‘key characteristic’ of the Cross Country network.

Our new passenger research found that 14% of all passengers surveyed would be ‘fairly unlikely’ or ‘very unlikely’ to complete the same stretch of journey again by train, if they were required to make a change. Scaling up this 14% based on 20 million passenger journeys, the Cross Country network could suffer a loss of 2.8 million passengers per year.

Passengers and passenger groups tell us that long distance journeys without changing trains are vitally important to them and should be maintained at all costs. For example, South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (Swwitch) comments:

“For visitors and tourists travelling by rail for overnight stays, direct rail links are important. These travellers are encumbered by luggage and often travel with small children and a change of trains presents a formidable obstacle to them.” (Swwitch)

An increased number of changes on a journey can cause difficulties for passengers with disabilities or those travelling with children or luggage. Our new passenger research asked all passengers what their main concerns would be if they had to change trains during a journey. Although disabled passengers shared the top priorities as all passengers surveyed as a whole, of making a connection on time and journey information at the station, they placed more importance on the availability of facilities at interchanges and mobility assistance/moving luggage.

Passenger Focus has analysed the current and proposed Cross Country franchise map for comparison and a selection of the possible losses are highlighted in the table below:¹⁷

From:	DBY		SHF		LDS		YRK		NCL		EDB		MAN		PRE		GLC	
PLY	+4	+44%	+4	+44%	+6	+86%	+4	+50%	+4	+57%	+5	+100%	-	-	-6	-100%	-5	-100%
EXD	+2	+18%	+2	+18%	+7	+117%	+3	+33%	+3	+38%	+6	+150%	-1	-100%	-8	-100%	-6	-100%
BRI	-4	-21%	-4	-21%	+7	+88%	-4	-22%	-4	-24%	+7	+140%	+11	+550%	-8	-100%	-6	-100%
BMH	-7	-100%	-7	-100%	-7	-100%	-6	-100%	-6	-100%	-8	-100%	+8	+133%	-3	-100%	-1	-100%
RDG	+5	+71%	+5	+71%	-7	-100%	+6	+100%	+6	+100%	-8	-100%	-4	-21%	-3	-100%	-1	-100%
COV	-7	-100%	-7	-100%	-7	-100%	-6	-100%	-6	-100%	-5	-100%	-5	-25%	-3	-100%	-3	-100%

¹⁷ The first column under each place name shows the estimated net gain or loss in the number of services, as a result of the proposed changes:

- Current number of services - northbound trains per day, Monday to Friday as at 12/06/06
- Estimated future number of services - estimated northbound trains per day, Monday to Friday, SLC2

The second column under each place name gives the % gain or loss in the number of services, as above

The proposals make stark reading. Both Glasgow and Preston have Cross Country through services to places south of Birmingham, but as can be seen in the table, in the proposed structure, these services would all be removed, a reduction of 100%. Bournemouth and Coventry could lose all their through services to the North East. Based on the current timetable, Bristol could face a 30% reduction in the number of through services, and in the South, Reading could lose 41% of its through services.

The frequency and variety of destination points across the whole Cross Country network needs to be retained as this coverage provides leisure and business travel that adds to the economic and business wellbeing of many areas. As the table in appendix D of this report shows, many stations on the Cross Country network are not directly linked by the services of another train operator.

In our new research, passengers were asked what their biggest concerns would be if they had to change trains in future. The top three priorities given were:

1. Being able to make a connection on time
2. Journey information at the station
3. Having to wait and adding extra time to the journey

In fact, 92% of passengers overall answered that they would be very or fairly concerned at being able to make a connection on time. This figure was even higher for business travellers, where time delays are of increased importance. The Spring 2006 National Passenger Survey found that passenger satisfaction regarding connections with other train services achieved 73% for Cross Country. These examples clearly demonstrate that this issue needs to be taken seriously by the DfT.

Our passenger priorities research found that 'not having to change trains' did not rank highly as a priority for improvement. Passenger Focus believes this is due to passengers being able to make many through journeys at present without the need to change trains. Most passengers did, however, rate this issue as very important/important. Therefore, if the proposals in the new franchise go ahead we would expect to see 'not having to change trains' becoming a higher priority for passengers and for it to move quickly up the list of priorities for improvement.

North West and Scotland

Direct journeys from south of Birmingham to the North-West/Scotland and vice versa would be lost under this new proposal. Our passenger research found that 15% of passengers from Scotland travelling to destinations south of Birmingham would be quite unlikely or very unlikely to travel by train if they were required to make a change during their journey.

The proposed changes would also disadvantage North-West leisure resorts such as the Lake District and Blackpool from access by rail from south of Birmingham as passengers would face additional interchanges during their overall journey:

“Cutting the through trains from the South and South West will reduce the number of, particularly overseas, visitors who will travel from there to the Lake District as part of a longer tour.”

[Lakes Line Rail User Group]

North East and Scotland

There are no changes proposed to the services from Edinburgh and Newcastle to Birmingham via the East Coast Main Line (ECML), but trains from Edinburgh will go to the South-West and trains from

Newcastle will go to Reading. The effect felt by passengers will be a loss of through journeys now available. In future, journeys from Edinburgh on Cross Country to destinations south of Birmingham via the ECML will be significantly slower than the journey currently available via the WCML¹⁸.

Results from NPS (Spring 2006) tell us that the percentage of passengers satisfied with the length of time their journey is scheduled to take is 86% for Cross Country, on a par with other Long Distance TOCs and an increase in satisfaction since Spring 2005. The proposed increased journey time will reduce consumer choice and will act as a disincentive to use rail over other modes of transport such as air travel. For example, direct air links exist between Aberdeen and Birmingham (1hr 25mins), Edinburgh and Newquay (1hr 35mins)¹⁹, and Edinburgh and Leeds Bradford (55mins)²⁰.

More work should be done to boost rail travel, rather than discourage it, and as the Scottish Association for Public Transport comments, "Despite recent improvements, rail has low market share on Anglo-Scottish routes [...] Airlines carry the majority of traffic, even on routes which should be contestable by rail" (Scottish Association for Public Transport)

City of Edinburgh Council remarks further, "The Scottish Executive 'Competitive Scottish Cities Report' (2005) identified that the lack of frequent direct trains to leading cities in England, and the length of journey times was said to contribute to reliance on air travel from Scottish cities. This illustrates the importance of a high-quality, frequent service to other parts of the UK, not just to London."

The huge changes to the pattern of services between Plymouth and Edinburgh via Leeds (with some trains to/from Penzance & Aberdeen) could shift large numbers of passengers onto trains run by other train operating companies that still cover the route, resulting in crowding issues which reduce journey quality for all passengers using these services.

The DfT proposals sever the link between Glasgow and Edinburgh with ECML services starting from Edinburgh. The stakeholder view is that the current ECML services that start and end at Glasgow should continue²¹.

The proposed service between Reading and Newcastle via Doncaster will result in more terminating trains and possibly more trains reversing at Birmingham New Street. Passenger Focus has concerns that this initiative could hinder, rather than help, performance, and that passengers could suffer a detrimental effect in the form of longer, or delayed, journeys. We would like to seek reassurance from the DfT of the benefits of this proposal.

South

Stakeholders in the South see Cross Country providing an orbital service which is valued for the opportunity it offers passengers to travel to the Midlands and North without needing to enter/cross London. The Passenger Focus response to the Brighton Main Line RUS stated that in the restructuring of Cross Country "the present skeleton service between Birmingham and Brighton via Oxford should be developed to run hourly with trains running alternately via Guildford and

¹⁸ Example: via ECML - dep EDB 1305 arr BHM 1758 (journey time 4h 53m). Via WCML – dep EDB 0852 arr BHM 1259 (journey time 4h 07m) (Source: National Rail Timetable 11 June-9 Dec 06, table 51)

¹⁹ Found on FlyBE website timetables (21/07/06)

²⁰ Found on BMI website timetable (21/07/06)

²¹ For example, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and Glasgow City Council

Olympia/East Croydon.” The DfT proposals mean passengers travelling from Brighton and destinations south of Gatwick airport will need to change trains twice to complete some journeys. Neither Gatwick nor Reading is a passenger-friendly station and the difficulties of changing platforms and coping with luggage will create additional problems for passengers. Even with proposed enhancements, the service may still be slower and on less comfortable trains. Passengers who do still travel by rail will be using existing services, at least as far as Gatwick, thus increasing pressures on the BML route. Some may decide to travel into and out of London, increasing pressure on the capital.

Our new passenger research recorded a low number of passengers on the Birmingham – Gatwick/Brighton route so there is a lack of statistically significant data available. This could suggest that the number of passengers who would need to change trains at Reading to complete what is now a direct through journey, is relatively low. However, the DfT has failed to prove the overall passenger benefit of cutting the service east of Reading.

Stakeholders in the South concerned about the loss of the Manchester/Birmingham – Gatwick/Brighton service reason that improved frequency of services and improved marketing of what is a relatively little known service would lead to increased uptake²².

South West

Given the importance of tourism in the South West, with towns such as Weston-Super-Mare reporting sustained growth, along with the widening of the tourism market and season, it is essential that this region retains direct through services. There is also a need to retain additional direct summer services to Cornwall and South Devon particularly to Torquay, Newquay and, by connection, to Looe and St Ives where the road infrastructure is inadequate.

Newquay is not mentioned on the new franchise map or in the franchise consultation document itself. Cross Country currently provides crucial summer services which support the local economy and tourism industry. The DfT has informed Passenger Focus that Cross Country services to Newquay are currently operated on a commercial basis and proposes to continue this arrangement in the new franchise. It is important that the seasonal nature of the South West economy and the demand for services to Newquay and Torbay are recognised by the new franchise and that they are included as a costed option.

Devon and Cornwall Community Rail Partnership has been working closely with Virgin Trains and has recorded passenger counts of all services travelling to and from Par and Newquay at weekends during the summer season. The following table details the passenger counts taken on Saturdays during summer 2005²³:

Saturdays	Total passengers	% of total passengers
Total number of passengers travelling on FGW and Virgin Trains	16992	100.0%
Total number of passengers travelling on Virgin Trains	7374	43.4%
Total number of passengers travelling to Newquay on Virgin Trains	3434	20.2%
Total number of passengers travelling from Newquay on Virgin Trains	3940	23.2%

²² For example, Arun Valley Rail Users Association

²³ Source: Devon and Cornwall Community Rail Partnership

The table shows that 43.4% of total passenger journeys to and from Par/Newquay are made on Virgin Trains. This demonstrates that the existing service is highly utilised and that there is a strong case for the future Cross Country franchise to continue running the services during the summer season.

The Cross Country franchise provides part of the strategic rail network serving the region, giving direct links to many of the major conurbations in the Midlands, Northern England and Scotland. It is imperative that it is not seen as duplicating or overlapping with the Greater Western Franchise.

Loss of rail passengers

As demonstrated by our research findings, adding changes into journeys will have a detrimental effect on the number of people who choose to travel by train. As previously mentioned in this section, passengers will be forced to choose alternative modes of transport, or not to travel at all, if the consequence of reduction in choice is higher cost or inconvenient travel options. Passengers have already informed Passenger Focus that one operator providing direct flights between Glasgow and the South West is advertising the fact that from 2007 there will be no direct train services.

Transport for London made the statement in 2001, that: "interchanging, either within a transport mode or between modes, potentially prevents a 'seamless' journey; consequently interchange constitutes the weak link in an integrated public transport system. Passengers will perceive the private car as more convenient than public transport if interchanging is complex and disjointed".

The RPC NW report on '*Supporting the case for cross-country inter-city services*' commented further that: "The attractiveness of direct trains to passengers is demonstrated by volume changes at Liverpool following withdrawal of Cross Country trains to Oxford and Reading in September 2003. Prior to that date, growth in passenger journeys between those places since 1999 had been 15%; in the next six months there was a decrease of 12%".

This example clearly highlights the significant loss in passenger numbers which results when a major city is cut from the Cross Country network. There is no evidence in the specification that the DfT has considered this impact in drafting the proposals, or balanced this loss against gains to resolve capacity issues elsewhere.

There are environmental considerations which should also be taken into account as a result of a loss in rail patronage. The RPC NW report found that: "Although average annual rail mileage travelled per person has increased by 20% nationwide since the mid-1970s, car mileage travelled has increased by 64%, and radically improved rail services such as Cross Country are needed to counter adverse congestion and environmental trends."

Birmingham New Street station

The DfT proposals result in the loss of a large number of long distance direct routes, meaning that passengers face additional interchanges to complete their journeys. Most of the additional interchange would be at Birmingham New Street station.

This significant reduction of long-distance through-journey opportunities goes totally against strong evidence that passengers will resort to other modes of transport if they have to change trains, especially at Birmingham. The new Cross Country franchise specification does not mention the impact that the remodelling of Birmingham New Street station will have on the passengers using the

station and on the predicted additional passengers who will need to change trains there if the DfT proposals are implemented.

Passenger Focus is aware that Birmingham New Street station is already operating at well over capacity and a major overhaul is long overdue. There are issues with lack of platform space, adequate circulation and waiting areas for passengers. Passengers tell us that existing facilities are poor. The RPC NW report '*Supporting the case for cross-country inter-city services*'²⁴ supports this view, commenting: "A major benefit of the present cross-country network is that a high percentage of passengers are able to make through journeys to their destinations. If passengers had to change trains at Birmingham, it would place an impossible burden on New Street."

The Maindee Loop closure report²⁵ produced by Passenger Focus highlighted that passengers did not like to change trains. Of the 587 passengers completing the survey, 39% of passengers stated that they used the service because it did not require a change of train, and just over a fifth of passengers (21%) stated that they would not have travelled at all or would have used a different mode of transport had this service not existed. Alternative services are available, though they would involve a change at either Newport or Birmingham New Street. When asked, passengers were clearly concerned about the prospect of having to change trains, and were particularly concerned about the accessibility and congestion at Birmingham New Street.

A major overhaul is planned for Birmingham New Street station, although this is not referred to in the franchise consultation document. Network Rail's Gateway Project will create severe disruption for passengers during the entire lifetime of the new franchise. Therefore Passenger Focus is concerned that the impact on passengers has not been taken into account by the DfT when proposing changes which will require large numbers of additional passengers to change trains at this already overcrowded station. Passenger Focus is aware that Birmingham New Street station is often closed to passengers at times for crowd control.

Network Rail was scheduled to produce a capacity review of Birmingham New Street which would address some of the issues of concern from Passenger Focus. However, to date, the DfT has not released this report.

Summary

- Loss of direct through journeys erodes the successful Cross Country network when the new franchise should be building on and developing the current success
- Longer journeys with more changes of train en-route for passengers for whom through journeys are no longer possible, make those journeys less attractive by rail
- Demand, revenue and crowding mentions that 40% passengers currently change trains at least once – passengers tell us that a further change will affect their decision to travel
- Passengers using rail may be lost to other modes of transport such as the private car and air travel
- Emphasis is being placed on Birmingham New Street as the hub of the network, however typically two-thirds of passengers currently stay on board across Birmingham²⁶. The loss of through

²⁴ Published in March 2005

²⁵ Submitted to DfT August 2005

²⁶ Virgin Fact File (Feb 2006)

journeys and additional changes at Birmingham will have a direct impact on passengers as it will exacerbate capacity issues on the station, on the trains and on the network

- The remodelling of Birmingham New Street will impact on existing and additional passengers facing changes here if the proposals go ahead.

Recommendations

The DfT needs to consider the impact that passengers displaced from Cross Country trains which currently provide a direct journey onto alternative services will have on crowding issues elsewhere across the network.

The DfT must clearly demonstrate, and back with supporting evidence, the justification for terminating large numbers of existing services at Birmingham and others at Reading. The benefits to passengers must be demonstrated to outweigh the detriment of losing long distance direct journeys.

The DfT needs to consider the impact on passengers at stations such as Wolverhampton or Crewe. Wolverhampton was not designed as a major interchange station but will have larger numbers of passengers making connections if the proposals are implemented. It is essential that the proposals for renewing Crewe station are progressed as soon as possible.

Serious consideration needs to be given to the impact of changing trains for all passengers, in particular regarding the importance of sufficient connection times, which is stated as the top priority for passengers in the most recent Passenger Focus research.

There should be no significant increase in journey times for passengers. Our research demonstrates the need to offer minimal increases in end-to-end journey times for currently available through journeys, which the DfT are proposing will have more connections than before

Clear links between the franchise proposal and Network Rail's Gateway Project for Birmingham New Street should be evidenced.

Issue three – value for money

The DfT expects bidders for the new Cross Country franchise to consider a series of measures regarding fares and ticketing including the introduction of SmartCard technology and the implementation of flexible ticketing arrangements. The specification is consistent with Government fares policy and assumes that commuter fares and protected fares are capped at RPI+1% throughout the life of the franchise.

In our new passenger research, passengers were given an option to comment unprompted on important aspects of their rail journey not covered by our suggested list of topics. The issue most frequently raised across the whole Cross Country route was value for money. For passengers travelling specifically on routes VT1 and VT2, value for money featured in the top three priorities and on the proposed new Cross Country route Birmingham–Stansted, the passenger priorities survey results found that the biggest gap recorded between passengers' expectations and experience was for value for money.

The new research also showed that when asked to state a preference between a slightly more expensive ticket where a seat is guaranteed, and a cheaper fare with no guaranteed seat, only business passengers were prepared to pay a more expensive fare if it meant having a guaranteed seat:

- Passengers making journeys over one hour do not have a clear view on which of the options would be preferable
- Those passengers travelling between Manchester and Birmingham would rather pay less to travel and not be guaranteed a seat
- Disabled passengers would rather pay for a slightly more expensive ticket with the guarantee of getting a seat than having a cheaper ticket and no guaranteed seat.

The issue of fares on Cross Country routes and the availability of particular tickets were raised by some stakeholders as an issue of concern²⁷:

- A simplified fare structure would be better and longer trains would allow the modification of 'turn up and go' fares
- A good range of advance purchase cheap fares must be maintained
- Passengers find it difficult to get cheap book in advance fares for weekends
- Rail fares are excessive and lower price 'walk on' fares are needed.

In the most recent wave of the National Passenger Survey (Spring 2006), national passenger satisfaction with 'value for money for the price of your ticket' was low at 41% . Whilst the equivalent for Virgin Cross Country was higher at 58%, this is still an unsatisfactory level.

Clearly there is more work to be done on improving value for money. In Spring 2006, Passenger Focus interviewed over 2000 passengers specifically on this issue²⁸. The research identified that passengers find the present fare structure extremely confusing. The current debate surrounding fares regulation means that there is speculation as to what will happen to turn-up-and-go fares in the future. There needs to be recognition of this in the consultation and a strong emphasis as to what the future will hold for fares valid on new Cross Country and routes previously part of Cross Country. Advance

²⁷ Summary of some of the stakeholder views collated by PTUF. See Appendix C for high-level overview of this research

²⁸ Refer to [Appendix F, Section 4](#) for more details on Fares

purchase discount tickets must remain valid across a complete passenger journey regardless of the number of changes of train or train company.

The consultation document does not explicitly mention ticket restrictions, but some recently awarded franchises have come under criticism for imposing additional restrictions on ticket availability very soon after the start of the franchise. The DfT policy on new restrictions on ticket availability should be transparent and clearly stated. Overcrowding and increased demand should not be solved by increasing the ticket restrictions.

Summary

- The consultation lacks detailed proposals for future fares
- Will passengers travelling between South/South West England and Scotland be disadvantaged, with possibly three TOCs providing the service (Virgin West Coast, TransPennine Express and new Cross Country franchisee)? Will there be a loss of cheap book ahead through tickets? Will value fares still be available via the three train companies?
- How will the fares structure work for passengers travelling from Glasgow to the South and South West?
- How will the fares structure work for the proposed new Cross Country routes?

Recommendations

Passenger Focus stresses the need for an integrated fares structure between all TOCs that will be operating on existing Cross Country routes in the future. There must be no reduction in availability of cost-effective through-tickets and no threat to walk-up traffic.

The franchise should include a commitment to improve passenger satisfaction with value for money.

Issue four – service patterns

Frequency

The DfT proposes improving the frequency of some services in order to improve capacity across currently crowded areas of the network. However, the proposals provide insufficient detail of the intended timetables so it is difficult to determine benefits and/or disbenefits for passengers.

For example, although the current pattern south of Bristol is generally hourly, a number of these trains provide a half-hourly service west of Bristol at the peak and sometimes in the middle of the day, which are essential for handling commuter, business and holiday flows. The DfT proposals do not state whether these additional trains will still operate. The loss of these trains would mean at least a 25% reduction of Cross Country services on the Bristol-Taunton-Exeter corridor which would be totally unacceptable to passengers.

This lack of information means Passenger Focus cannot therefore make any detailed comments on service provision and its potential impact on passengers. This omission can only lead to negative speculation on what may ensue once the franchise is awarded to a bidder.

The DfT proposals also seek to improve journey times on some routes, making the most of the West Coast Main Line modernisation. As part of our new passenger research on Cross Country routes, Passenger Focus asked passengers to state their preference on whether they would prefer faster links between major cities with few intermediate stops, or the ability to directly access other destinations with slightly increased overall journey times. The results showed that the majority of passengers would prefer to have faster links between major cities with fewer intermediate stops. This was especially important to commuters (64%), who make more regular journeys than other passenger groups. However, at the same time, passengers also value the connectivity Cross Country provides between towns and cities across the regions.

The DfT proposals specifically mention a need to improve journey times on the Manchester – Birmingham route, making it a more realistic alternative to using the motorway. When passengers on this route were asked for their preference, 60% of all passengers surveyed stated that their priority was for faster links. However, it is important to note therefore that a significant proportion of the passengers did not give a faster journey time as their preference.

Recent Passenger Priorities Research from the Birmingham-Standed route, a new route for the Cross Country franchise, showed that passengers consider frequency of services as an important issue.

The NPS (Spring 2006) tells us that passenger satisfaction with frequency of trains across the Cross Country route is high, and has shown an increase in satisfaction since Spring 2005:

	Virgin Cross Country	Long-distance TOCs
Passengers satisfied with the frequency of trains	83%	84%

In addition, many stakeholder groups have commented that at the very minimum, the new Cross Country franchise should offer no less than the current service levels, and in many cases, an improved service is seen as a key issue for the new franchise:

“My colleagues and I [...] re-affirm the importance of there being no retrenchment whatsoever upon the XC Franchise’s tremendous progress over the recent years of “Operation Princess”. The present status should duly form the minimum baseline for taking the franchise forward – rather than backward.” [Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry]

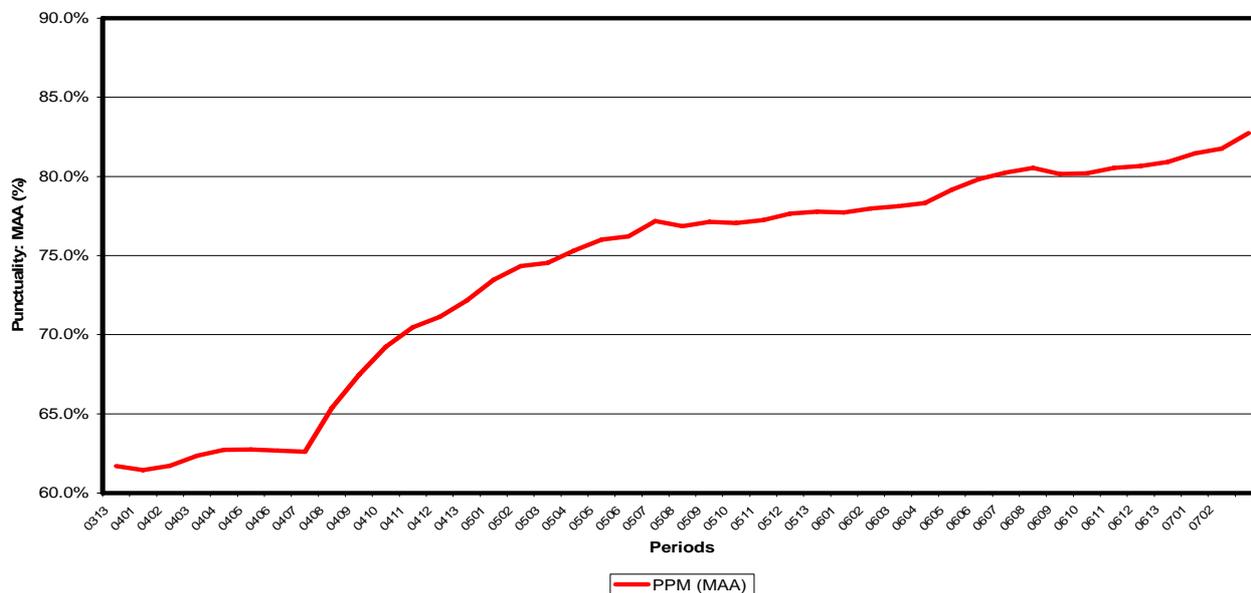
“The current Cross Country franchise has been characterised by significant change and significant achievement, particularly in respect of improved frequencies, journey times and punctuality. The next franchise period should focus on consolidating and improving these achievements. It should provide for further growth in use, and retain the current basic timetable structure.” [City of Edinburgh Council]

Reliability

Punctuality and reliability have always been important issues for passengers and the new Cross Country franchise objectives reflect this concern: “The simple structure, with a regular interval timetable, should result in better performance on the approaches to Birmingham New Street in the longer term, this structure would allow the best use of the limited capacity at Birmingham New Street.”

Over the duration of the current franchise, Cross Country performance levels have been continually improving as can be seen in the table below²⁹:

Virgin Cross Country Punctuality (March '03-June '06)



However, the passenger priorities research shows that for passengers specifically on VT1 journeys their perception is that punctuality and reliability is the issue in most need of improvement and passengers making journeys to and from destinations in Wales ranked arriving on time at their destination as their most important issue in our new passenger research.

²⁹ Data source: PPM data from Network Rail

The December 2005 timetable has seen reliability improve and should form the base timetable for the new franchise. In proposing any revision to the timetable it is vitally important that effective technical consultation takes place so that the complexity of markets is fully understood and the specification reflects all needs. Passenger Focus would also like to seek assurance from the DfT that any changes to service levels are justified and that performance will not suffer as a result. Our passenger research shows that arriving on time at their destination was the top priority for passengers.

There is concern amongst stakeholders that the current Cross Country service remains vulnerable to delays and that reliability needs to be improved even if this means infrastructure improvements:

“Virgin reports and personal experience have shown that the service is vulnerable to delays, either through infrastructure problems, other franchisee trains being delayed, Virgin Voyager reliability, or track capacity problems in the Birmingham area. It is accepted that many delays are caused by factors outside the control of the current franchisee, but infrastructure improvements particularly in the Birmingham area would be strongly supported if they can improve reliability” [Winchester City Council]

Some stakeholders stressed the need for a robust connection policy in cooperation with other TOCs and pointed out that as more passengers connect from Cross Country than any other service, reliability of connections is of paramount importance.

Summary

- The consultation has not included details on timetabling, just the proposed service levels
- There are no specific details on the stopping patterns
- There is no clear indication of journey choices for passengers
- What consultation will take place to ensure passengers' needs are considered?
- West Coast major timetable recast due Jan 2009 - this coincides with the changing of the Cross Country timetable. This is when a number of present services will no longer cross Birmingham and also when Cross Country services move to West Coast Trains
- No details of seasonal/summer service level provision
- No indication of the increased time it will take to make what are now through journeys when these are abolished, or connection intervals between trains at interchanges
- The consultation does not demonstrate whether the new timetable will improve punctuality and reliability on the network
- The proposals do not detail how the changes will offer value for money to the passenger and the tax payer.

Recommendation

Passenger Focus seeks further clarification on the level of service that is to be provided and seeks assurances that robust consultation processes will be in place as levels of service are proposed.

Issue five – station facilities and integration of modes

Stations

In the new Cross Country franchise document there is no mention of station facilities, station access, car parking or provision for cycles, backed by a commitment on the part of the franchisee to contribute towards the stations used by Cross Country passengers. The specification merely states that the franchisee must work with the station operator.

According to the “*Barriers to Interchange*” report published by RPC NW³⁰, when passengers were asked unprompted what improvements they would most like to see at stations, the feedback was adequate seating and shelter, better information, better toilet facilities and more visible staff. The NPS shows that 32% of Cross Country passengers are not satisfied with facilities and services at stations.

The passenger priorities research demonstrates similar concerns regarding stations. On all Cross Country routes, provision of information about train times/platforms at stations features in the top three priorities for improvement. Practical measures which could be taken to improve passenger information can be found in the RPC report ‘Passenger Information: what, when, where and how?’³¹, and additional detail on Passenger Focus’ policy on stations can be found in Appendix F.

On VT3 routes the top three priorities for improvement all relate to stations: cleanliness and upkeep of stations; personal security at stations; and provision of information about train times/platforms. Passengers on VT2 routes also state ticket buying facilities as one of their top three priorities.

On the Birmingham – Stansted route, the top three priorities for improvement are also issues at stations: ticket buying facilities; provision of information about train times/platforms; and connections with other forms of transport. Similarly, the Nottingham – Birmingham – Hereford/Great Malvern route has the top three priorities relating to stations: cleanliness, upkeep and repair of stations; ticket buying facilities; and availability of staff at stations. The range of ticket buying facilities passengers expect will include an on-train service, appropriate ticket office opening hours, ticket machines as well as on-line methods. The DfT should specify that the franchisee is expected to deploy resources to improve passenger satisfaction ratings and demonstrate how they will measure and monitor this.

Our new passenger research data shows that the top three issues for concern for disabled passengers, when confronted with the possibility of changing trains, are the same as those of other passengers. However, disabled passengers place more importance on the availability of facilities at interchanges and mobility assistance/moving luggage.

There were some stakeholder views that the Cross Country franchisee should take ownership of certain stations as the majority operator. For example:

“Despite being a Northern station, 22 of the 29 trains serving Congleton each weekday are provided by Virgin Cross Country. Can the re-drawing of the franchise please review ownership of the station by Northern who are presently the minority operator?” [East Cheshire Line RUG]

³⁰ Published February 2005

³¹ RPC report ‘Passenger Information: what, when, where and how?’ Published September 2004

A priority for many stakeholders was the need to upgrade Birmingham New Street urgently as it is clearly unable to cope with current traffic and is poorly designed for interchange.³²

At present, the Cross Country network does not manage any stations along its route. Passenger Focus recommends that the new franchisee works closely with the TOCs that manage the stations they will serve to ensure a high standard of information provision.

Taking into account the proposals in the franchise specification to cut direct services and subsequently increase the amount of changes necessary to complete a journey, information provision is likely to become an issue of even greater significance in the future. If passengers are expected to make more connecting journeys, it is important that information provision is of a high standard and provides guidance for passengers on how to continue their journey.

As the proposed hub of the Cross Country network, it is important that the current level of information provision at Birmingham New Street is enhanced and improved to cater for the greater number of passengers that may be using the station.

The DfT needs to consider how the provision of information at stations could be improved within the new franchise. Consideration should be given to how TOCs can work together to gain these improvements at stations and this factor should be included for bidders to be judged upon in their responses to the Invitation to Tender.

Integration

The DfT specification states that “around 40% of passengers using Cross Country services begin or end their journey on another operator’s train”. There is a responsibility for the new franchise to manage connections with other services across the network.

Our new passenger research tells us that all types of passengers are concerned about making connections on time with 92% of passengers very or fairly concerned, and as we have already stated in this report, passengers can find interchanges difficult. The “*Barriers to Interchange*” published by the former RPC cited 21% of respondents found it difficult to interchange between rail and other modes. Passenger Focus’ recent passenger research on Cross Country routes supports this view. It found that when required to change trains, the second highest concern for passengers is journey information at stations.

Local Transport Plan guidance from the DfT places a strong emphasis on making the railway accessible to all. This includes integration of modes, disabled accessibility and reducing social exclusion. A stated objective for the new franchise is to improve accessibility for all, but the specification leaves it up to the bidders to outline their plans.

‘*Strategy to Reality*’, published by the RPC³³, addressed the need to improve integration between the railway and alternative transport modes. The report highlights areas of good practice and sources of further information for train operating companies and local authorities to consider when planning development of a station or any transport service. Passenger Focus’ policy on Integration is detailed in Appendix F.

³² Refer also to the [Birmingham New Street](#) section of this report

³³ Published February 2005

Summary

- No mention of station facilities in the franchise – at present Cross Country do not manage any stations and early indications are that the DfT do not intend to change this. The Cross Country franchisee has no direct responsibility for the maintenance of high quality station facilities such as passenger information systems
- Integration of modes – cycling, buses, car (including car parking), walking, taxis, trams and motorcycles. Passengers need to be assured that the TOC is concerned with the whole journey experience rather than just the train journey.

Recommendation

The DfT needs to ensure there is commitment on the part of the franchisee to contribute to the development of stations and integration with other modes of transport, including connections with other train operator's services.

Issue six - trains

The DfT does not propose any new stock type for the new Cross Country franchise but states that longer or additional rolling stock will be needed. It is acknowledged in the consultation document that crowding occurs in both standard and first class yet the DfT does not define the number of seats it needs to procure for each type of travel.³⁴

There does not appear to be a consensus of views between the passenger view and that of some stakeholder groups regarding the Virgin Voyager trains currently in use on the Cross Country network. The stakeholder view is generally less favourable towards the trains used on Cross Country, with some stakeholders suggesting the Voyagers are unsuitable whilst others focus on the need to add more carriages to reduce overcrowding and improve the luggage space available.

RPC NW carried out research on the new Virgin Voyagers in February 2004 in order to investigate further the negative perceptions by stakeholders and establish an evidence-based passenger view. This research found that³⁵:

- The overall verdict on their travel experience on a Virgin Voyager train was 73% satisfaction (good or very good), and a further 16% reported 'excellent' (standard class). Club Class verdicts were even higher
- 81% of passengers were satisfied with the interior décor
- The most frequently mentioned suggestion for improvement was additional carriages
- Lowest satisfaction was found (on average) for luggage space and space at the end of carriages, with one third of passengers dissatisfied.

Passengers on Cross Country trains often have large and bulky luggage as many are travelling for leisure purposes such as holidays. Overall, the Virgin Voyager research found that 43% of passengers had suitcases, but 72% of passengers had bags of some sort. This means that once trains are over half filled with passengers, much of the luggage space is likely to be fully used. Overall, luggage provision was rated 6.7 out of 10, the lowest score in the facilities surveyed.

The new Cross Country franchise specification makes no mention of solving the lack of sufficient luggage space on trains, or the problems travelling with luggage can cause. The NPS (Spring 2006) found that only 55% of Cross Country passengers were satisfied with the luggage space available. Of 1293 passengers surveyed, 892 (69%) of Virgin Cross Country passengers were satisfied with the amount of room for sitting or standing on board the train. Both sitting and standing room and luggage space are areas which require improvement within the new Cross Country franchise.

Another important aspect recorded by our new Cross Country research was the temperature on board. When asked to prioritise important aspects of their rail journey, many passengers stated air conditioning or temperature as an additional free text answer.

There is no mention of the quality/availability of catering to be provided on long-distance journeys in the new franchise proposal. Stakeholders have asked for better catering facilities especially on the fringes of the network when catering is often not available. This is a necessity when travelling long distance:

³⁴ Refer also to [Issue one - Getting a Seat](#) in this report

³⁵ 'The Virgin Voyager Experience – What do passengers think?' (published in September 2004). 1030 passengers were surveyed using a self-completion questionnaire over a 10 day study in Feb 04.

“There are some disincentives for long-distance travel on Cross Country, noticeably very limited catering facilities[...” (South Hampshire Rail Users Group)

Upkeep and repair of trains is currently a relatively low priority for improvement on the current Cross Country network (ranked 9th out of 18 attributes in our passenger priorities research). The NPS figures for Spring 2006 showed that 92% of Virgin Cross Country passengers are satisfied with the upkeep and repair of trains, which is 6% higher than the average for the long-distance TOCs (84%) and 22% more than the national average for all TOCs (70%). This shows that Cross Country passengers are satisfied with the current standard of their trains.

The new franchise proposes the transfer of a number of services to alternative train operating companies. The consultation suggests that moving west coast services to TransPennine Express (TPE) would not be to the detriment of passengers in terms of service levels and journey times. However, concerns have been raised by stakeholders in the west of Scotland and the North West concerning passengers having to use different types of train in the future. Passenger Focus is aware that TPE is introducing new rolling stock and therefore this may not be a factor in the new franchise. However, whilst we recommend that the new franchise must offer passengers no less a standard of comfort, ambience and facilities to those already existing, this must not be at the cost of passengers on existing TPE routes losing out on the planned introduction of new trains.

At present it is clear that passengers are more satisfied with the trains on the current Cross Country network compared with passengers using TPE (68% satisfaction with upkeep and repair). For comparison, the following table lists some attributes covered by the NPS regarding train environment:

Passenger satisfaction with the following attributes	Cross Country	TransPennine Express	Difference
Upkeep and repair of train	92%	68%	-24%
Space for luggage	55%	58%	+3%
The comfort of seating	81%	72%	-9%

Summary

- No new stock type is proposed but longer or additional stock will be needed
- Emphasis is placed on the bidder to come up with a solution in their bids
- Train interior design is mentioned as an option – including the mix of first and standard class provision – but no detailed requirements are stated
- No mention of catering provision
- No mention of luggage space or acknowledgement that lack of capacity on current trains is a recognised passenger issue
- Future services between Manchester and Glasgow/Edinburgh should be operated with trains which at least meet the current Cross Country specification.

Recommendation

Passenger Focus seeks assurance that the DfT will ensure fit for purpose rolling stock is provided for long distance Cross Country journeys with satisfactory on-board facilities for passengers. Cleanliness and upkeep/repair should be monitored. Passenger Focus should also be consulted on the design of any new or refurbished stock.

3.3 Conclusions

Based on the extensive evidence presented in this report, Passenger Focus would make the following recommendations to the DfT concerning the new Cross Country franchise.

The franchise must consolidate and build on the success of the existing network, ensuring it provides the best possible passenger connectivity between the regions of England, Scotland and Wales, with enough seats to meet passenger demand. The franchise should seek to balance passenger expectations with actual experience, delivering a reliable service where passengers feel valued. As the recent Transport Committee report states³⁶, meeting passenger needs should be the primary objective of a public service railway.

Passenger Focus has concerns that the franchise objectives are based on operational issues for the railway, at the expense of passenger needs. We agree with the Transport Committee report that a system for managing capacity which puts financial outcomes for train companies or Government before the needs of the passengers is a retrograde step. Measures to reverse Cross Country's increased need for subsidy are necessary, but it is essential for wider transport and environmental policy reasons that costs are contained and reduced without impacting upon services³⁷. The franchise objectives must also be coherent with the delivery of economic development, spatial planning, tourism and transport strategies of the regions.

Passenger Focus is disappointed at the lack of evidence provided by the DfT to justify the franchise proposals relating to the reduction of overcrowding, the management of connecting services reducing the need to change at Birmingham and the improvement of journey times. The franchise specification suggests that current levels of service will be maintained but the proposal to withdraw the direct rail connectivity between major cities including Glasgow, Carlisle, Lancaster, Preston, Manchester, Wolverhampton, Gloucester, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, Truro and Brighton, plus removing Gatwick, Britain's second largest airport, from the Cross Country network is alarming. The current Cross Country franchise has regular clockface train timings, associated with hourly and half-hourly services, and this has been a major contributor to improving Cross Country passenger satisfaction and regional connectivity. The present timetable should therefore form the baseline for the timetable specification of the new Cross Country franchise.

Due to lack of evidence from the DfT, Passenger Focus remains unconvinced that capacity issues will be solved especially at the cost of losing some services. Indeed, the loss of existing Cross Country links may force the number of passengers up on alternative services creating new capacity issues elsewhere. The DfT proposals which place additional pressure on Birmingham New Street station with further interchanges do not appear to have been satisfactorily considered in terms of passenger impact, especially as the station may be undergoing major redevelopment during the whole lifetime of the new franchise.

The DfT also plans to add new routes to the Cross Country franchise. Passengers need to be assured that they will experience a high level of service and facilities, whichever franchise the routes belong to, and whichever bidder secures the franchise.

³⁶ House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry: 'How fair are the fares? Train fares and ticketing' published 19 May 2006. Details here: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmtran/700/70002.htm>

³⁷ Taken from 'Supporting the case for cross-country inter-city services' (March 2005)

4. Passenger Focus' policy on franchises

Below is a summary of specific areas we would like to see addressed in all franchises. The list is not exhaustive and we aim to improve and revise our policy positions as evidence comes to our attention. Detailed explanation of our current position on the issues below is found at Appendix F.

Safety

- The primacy of operational safety should be a given
- Perceptions of personal security affect whether people choose to travel by rail
- A visible presence of staff at stations and on trains is the best way to reassure passengers of their personal security
- Stations should ideally be staffed at all times that trains call at them

Reliability

- The ultimate target for punctuality and reliability should be 100%
- Operators should be incentivised to continuously improve performance and penalised for declining performance
- There should be a swift escalatory procedure for consistently poor performance, with removal of the franchise being the ultimate penalty
- Performance figures should be published by line of route to better represent the passenger experience on parts of the network
- Delay should be thought of in terms of delay to passengers, not delay to trains. Timetables should be robust, and connections held where appropriate in order not to exacerbate delay to passengers
- Short-forming of trains (i.e. providing fewer seats than specified under the train plan) should be considered as partial cancellation of a service.

Redress

- There should be a common, simple to understand, compensation regime across all train companies at an agreed standard threshold
- Passengers should have the choice of taking compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers
- There should be no exclusions, i.e. entitlement applies irrespective of the cause of delay
- There should be a proactive approach to increasing passenger awareness of their entitlement
- Monthly and longer-validity season ticket holders should additionally be entitled to compensation if they have experienced frequent delays over 10 minutes.

Fares

Passenger Focus has the following broad policies concerning fares:

- Many rail fares do not represent good value for money
- The fare structure is complex and confusing
- It is unfair for today's passengers to pay in advance for future investment
- The industry needs to exploit fares incentives to attract passengers to travel at times when there is greater capacity. However, we oppose putting up fares to price off demand
- An affordable turn-up-and-go strategy must prevail, though pre-book low cost fares should be available to those whose journeys are flexible
- The industry must control its costs so that more is not passed onto the passenger in fares
- The industry must ensure it collects the revenue that is due to it.

Station standards

The primary needs of passengers should inform minimum standards at stations. These are:

- Passengers need to be able to find the station and find their way around the station
- They need to be able to get to the station and their platform
- They need to feel safe
- They need adequate light and shelter.

Integrated transport

- Integration should be within the rail network as well as between modes
- Rail travel must be seen as part of a door-to-door journey
- Rail should provide easy access, timetable information and wayfinding to other public transport modes
- Through-ticketing schemes should be encouraged
- Car parking availability and charges must be seen as part of the whole journey experience.

Accessibility

- A facility is “accessible” if everyone is able to use it with ease
- All passengers at some time find themselves encumbered: for instance because of a permanent physical or mental impairment, a temporary impairment (e.g. broken leg), by being accompanied by young children, or simply through carrying luggage
- Improving access and facilities for disabled people will benefit not only those with disabilities but also families with young children and elderly people with mobility issues or restrictions.

Service patterns

- Services should be planned to meet passenger needs. Operational expediency, revenue maximisation, historic timetables and historic engineering work patterns should not be the prime factors in determining public service provision
- Rail passengers pay rail fares - bus substitution should be kept to a minimum and passengers compensated for increased journey time
- Connections policies should be robust
- Connections should be guaranteed for the last train of the day.

Possessions policy

- Information is key: tell people what the engineering work is going to deliver; how to plan alternative journeys; and, afterwards, explain what has been achieved
- Possessions should be co-ordinated across regions so that adequate diversionary routes are available – passengers would generally rather stay on the train for longer than change to buses.

Staff relations

- Poor staff relationships can have a direct impact upon the travelling public
- Dispute resolutions agreements should be implemented by the incoming TOCs, in co-operation with the unions, to avoid strike action
- Significant investment in staff training should be a condition of the new franchise agreement
- A new franchise is an opportunity to place emphasis on improving overall passenger satisfaction as well as performance.

Appendix A

shift	station	serial
-------	---------	--------



				0	6
D	D	M	M	Y	Y

Passenger Priorities

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in this short survey being conducted by Continental research on behalf of Passenger Focus. Passenger Focus is the official independent consumer organisation representing the interests of rail users nationally. We would like to hear your views on the service provided on this route. It should take no more than five minutes to complete. Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

The interviewer will collect this questionnaire from you when you have completed it or please use the post paid envelope provided to send it back to us. If you have any queries the interviewer will be pleased to help. As a thank you for your help we are offering you the opportunity of taking part in a prize draw with a prize of £500. If you wish to take part please tell us your name and address where we can contact you in the space provided on the last page.

- PLEASE FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR TRAIN JOURNEY.
- TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS PLEASE TICK THE BOX NEXT TO THE ANSWER(S) THAT APPLY OR WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. UNLESS THE QUESTION ALLOWS YOU TO TICK SEVERAL ANSWERS PLEASE JUST TICK ONE BOX PER QUESTION.

Your Journey Today

Q1 Please fill in the scheduled departure time of the train from the station where you boarded.
Use the 24 hr clock e.g. 17 : 25

		:		
--	--	---	--	--

Q2 Please write in the name of the station where you boarded **this** train :

Q3 Please write in the name of the station where you are travelling to on **this** train :

Q4 How long is the journey from the station where you boarded this train to the station where you will leave the train?

Up to 30 minutes..... <input type="checkbox"/>	2 to 3 hours..... <input type="checkbox"/>
30 minutes to 1 hour..... <input type="checkbox"/>	3 to 4 hours..... <input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 1.5 hours..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Over 4 hours..... <input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 to 2 hours..... <input type="checkbox"/>	

Q5 Before catching **this** train where did you start your journey?

Postcode : e.g.

N	G	1	4
---	---	---	---

3	P	N
---	---	---

Q6 How did you travel to the station? (Tick all that apply)

On foot / walking..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Underground train..... <input type="checkbox"/>
Bicycle (parked at or near station)..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxi..... <input type="checkbox"/>
Bicycle (taken onto train)..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Car parked at or near station..... <input type="checkbox"/>
Motorbike..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Car - dropped off..... <input type="checkbox"/>
Bus / Coach..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Air / Sea..... <input type="checkbox"/>
Tram / Light Rail..... <input type="checkbox"/>	

Overground (National Rail) train: Please specify station

Q7 What is your destination when you leave this train?

Postcode :

Q8 How will you travel to your destination from the station? (Tick all that apply)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| On foot / walking..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Underground train..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle (parked at or near station)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Taxi..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle (taken onto train)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car parked at or near station..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motorbike..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car - dropped off..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bus / Coach..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Air / Sea..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tram / Light Rail..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Overground (National Rail) train: Please specify station

Q9 What is the main purpose of your rail journey?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Daily commuting to/from work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less regular commuting to/from work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Daily commuting for education (to/from college/school/university) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less regular commuting for education (to/from college/school/university) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| On company business (or own if self employed) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Shopping trip | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Visiting friends or relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sport/ entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A day out | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Travel to/from holiday | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| On personal business (job interview, dentist etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q10 If you had not made this journey by train today, what other modes could you have used? (Tick all that apply)

- | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| On foot / walking..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Underground train..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Taxi..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motorbike..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car as a driver..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bus / Coach..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car as a passenger..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tram / Light Rail..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Air / Sea..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | No alternative..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other : Please specify

Q11 Why did you choose to travel by train for this journey? (Tick all that apply)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Train is more reliable..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Speed/ faster than alternatives..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Train is the most direct/ sensible route..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | No reasonable route by other public | |
| Comfort..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | transport..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Availability/ cost of parking..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | No access to car..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cost..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rail station near home/ destination..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other : Please specify

Q12 How many times have you made this journey in the last two weeks?
(Please note that if you make a return journey that would count as two journeys)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| This is my first journey..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11-20..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2-5..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21+..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6-10..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Your Expectations

Q13 Before you started your journey by train today, what level of service did you **EXPECT YOU SHOULD REASONABLY GET?** Please rate your expectation for each of the following aspects of the station and train given what you know about this line and train travel on similar routes.

THE STATION	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Did not use/no opinion
Ticket buying facilities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Range of facilities at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Cleanliness, upkeep and repair of the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Personal security at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Provision of information about train times/ platforms.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Connections with other forms of transport.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Ease of getting to/ from the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Availability of staff at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

THE TRAIN	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Did not use/no opinion
Frequency of the trains on the route.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Punctuality / reliability of the train (i.e. the train arriving / departing on time).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Up keep and repair of the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Value for money for price of ticket.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Being able to get a seat on the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Personal security while on board the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Availability of staff on trains.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Not having to change trains on your journey.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The ease of being able to get on and off the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

OVERALL EXPECTATION OF SERVICE ON ROUTE.....	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion
	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Your Experience

Q14 Thinking now about the level of service you **actually experienced** on your train journey on this route today, please rate what you experienced at the station and on the train?

THE STATION	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Did not use/no opinion
Ticket buying facilities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Range of facilities at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Cleanliness, upkeep and repair of the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Personal security at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Provision of information about train times/ platforms.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Connections with other forms of transport.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Ease of getting to/ from the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Availability of staff at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
THE TRAIN	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Did not use/no opinion
Frequency of the trains on the route.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Punctuality / reliability of the train (i.e. the train arriving / departing on time).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Up keep and repair of the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Value for money for price of ticket.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Being able to get a seat on the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Personal security while on board the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Availability of staff on trains.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Not having to change trains on your journey.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The ease of being able to get on and off the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE ON ROUTE.....	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion
	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Importance of Aspects of Rail Travel

Q15 Thinking now about each of the different aspects of travel by train, please rate how **important** each of the following is to you.

THE STATION	Very Important	Important	Neither	Not very important	Not at all important	No opinion
Ticket buying facilities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Range of facilities at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Cleanliness, upkeep and repair of the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Personal security at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Provision of information about train times/ platforms....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Connections with other forms of transport.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Ease of getting to/ from the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Availability of staff at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

THE TRAIN	Very Important	Important	Neither	Not very important	Not at all important	No opinion
Frequency of the trains on the route.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Punctuality / reliability of the train (i.e. the train arriving / departing on time).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Up keep and repair of the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Value for money for price of ticket.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Being able to get a seat on the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Personal security while on board the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Availability of staff on trains.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Not having to change trains on your journey.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The ease of being able to get on and off the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

On this Route

Q16 If you travel to the station by car, or would like to, which of the following best describes parking in the station car park where you started your journey today?

- I can always get a space..... I can never get a space.....
 I can get a space most of the time..... Not applicable/ do not park at the station..
 I can hardly ever get a space.....

Q17 Regarding your journey on this train today, please prioritise your views on the importance of the following:

	Most important	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Least important
Getting a seat.....	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Arriving on time at your destination.....	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Completing whole journey without changing trains.....	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Sufficient luggage space.....	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Interior cleanliness of the train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>							
On-train service (shop, at-seat entertainment, laptop power points).....	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Safety on-board (availability of staff/ access to assistance points).....	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Other : Please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>							

Q18 Would you prefer:

- Faster links between major cities with fewer intermediate stops..... OR Ability to directly access other destinations, with slightly increased overall journey times.....
 A slightly more expensive ticket where a seat is guaranteed..... OR A cheaper fare, with no guaranteed seat

Changing Trains

Q19 If there was no direct service and you had to change trains in order to complete this stretch of your journey today, how likely is it that you would still choose to travel by train?

- Very likely Fairly likely Neither likely nor unlikely Fairly unlikely Very unlikely Don't know

Q20 Again if you had to change trains during this journey, how concerned would you be with each of the following issues?

	Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Neither	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
Being able to make a connection on time.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Having to wait and adding too much time to my journey....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Availability of station facilities at the interchange i.e. refreshments, waiting areas etc.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Journey information at the station i.e. screens, notice boards.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Mobility assistance / moving luggage.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q20b What, if any, other issues would concern you about changing trains during a journey?

About You

Finally, would you please answer some questions about yourself? The personal information you provide during this survey will be kept confidential by Continental Research and will not be disclosed to third parties. It will be used by Continental Research only for this study, which is being undertaken for Passenger Focus.

Q21 What is your employment status?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Work full time (30+ hours)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Retired..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work part time (9-29 hours)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Student..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not employed - seeking work..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not employed - not seeking work..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Q22 Which age group do you fall into?

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Under 16..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45-54..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16-24..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 55-59..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25-34..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 60-64..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35-44..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 65+..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q23 Are you.....

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Male..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|

Q24 Which of the following best describes the occupation of the Chief Wage Earner in your household?

- Professional / Senior Managerial.....
- Middle Managerial.....
- Junior Managerial / Clerical / Supervisory.....
- Skilled Manual (With professional qualifications / served an apprenticeship).....
- Unskilled Manual (No qualifications / not served an apprenticeship).....
- Full time student.....
- Retired.....
- Unemployed / Between jobs.....
- Housewife / Househusband.....

If none apply please write in your own description below...

Q25 Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| White | | Black or Black British | |
| British..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Caribbean..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Irish..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | African..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Any other white background..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other Black background..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mixed | | Chinese or other ethnic group | |
| White and Black Caribbean..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| White and Black African..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other ethnic background..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| White and Asian..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Any other Mixed background..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asian or Asian British | | | |
| Indian..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Pakistani..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Bangladeshi..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Any other Asian background..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Q26 Do you have a disability or long term illness related to the following: (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mobility..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Speech impairment..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wheelchair user..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Learning difficulties..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hearing..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | No: None..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Eyesight..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Q27 What type of ticket did you use for your journey?

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| First Class Single / Return..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Apex / Super Apex..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Standard Single / Return..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | One Day Travelcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| First Class Season ticket (weekly / monthly /
Travelcard seasons)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | A special promotion ticket..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Standard Season ticket (weekly / monthly /
annual / Travelcard seasons)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Holiday package / tour ticket..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cheap Day Single / Return..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rail Staff Pass / Privilege ticket / Police
concession..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Saver / SuperSaver..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Group Save ticket..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Awaybreak / Stayaway..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other : Please specify | |

Q28 Did you use a railcard to buy your ticket? If so, which one?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Did not use a railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disabled Persons Railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Young Persons Railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Network Railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Senior Railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Forces Railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family Railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other Railcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If other : Please write in...

Thank you for your help in completing this research.

Please hand it back to the interviewer or use the post paid envelope to return the questionnaire to us.

This survey was conducted under the terms of the MRS Code of Conduct. All answers you provide are entirely confidential and will be combined with those of all other passengers who take part in the research. If you would like to confirm our credentials, please call the MRS freephone on 0500 396999.

The information collected will be used to represent the best interests of passengers along this route. The information will be used purely for research and planning future services.

As a thank you for your help we are offering you the opportunity of taking part in a prize draw with a prize of £500. If you wish to take part, please tell us your name and address where we can contact you. These details will only be used for the prize draw and will not be passed to a third party.

First Name

Last Name

Postcode House Number

Address

Email Address

Appendix B

This list contains the names of all organisations Passenger Focus has directly contacted as part of the Cross-Country franchise specification, and which ones have submitted their response to us.

Organisation	Region	Responded?
Aberdeen City Council	Scotland	yes
Aberdeenshire Council	Scotland	
ACORP	North East	
Aire Valley Rail Users Group	North East	
Alnmouth Rail User Group (ARUG)	North East	yes
Association of Passenger Transport Users (APTU)	Midlands	
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	South West	
Bath and North East Somerset Council	South West	
Belford Rail User Group (BRUG)	North East	
Berwick upon Tweed Station Partnership	North East	yes
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	North West	
Blackpool Borough Council	North West	yes
Bournemouth Borough Council	South West	
Bracknell Forest Council	South West	
Bradford Rail Users Group	North East	yes
Brighton & Hove City Council	South West	
Bristol City Council	South West	
British Transport Police	North East	
British Transport Police	North West	
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Wales	yes
Cannock Chase Rail Promotion Group	Midlands	
Capital Rail Action Group	Scotland	yes
CBI Scotland	Scotland	
Cherwell Rail Users' Group (CRUG)	Midlands	yes
Cheshire County Council	North West	
Christchurch Borough Council	South West	
CILT(UK) North West Region	North West	yes
City of Edinburgh Council	Scotland	yes
Clydesdale Rail Action Group	Scotland	yes
Coastliners Rail Users' Group	North East	yes
Copeland Rail Users' Group	North West	yes
Cornwall County Council	South West	
Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG)	Midlands	yes
Cumbria County Council	North West	yes
Darlington Borough Council	North East	
Department for Transport - Rail	London	
Derbyshire County Council	North West	
Derwent Valley Rural Transport Partnership	Midlands	
Devon County Council	South West	yes
Doncaster Rail Users Group	North East	
Dorset County Council	South West	yes
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Scotland	yes
Dundee City Council	Scotland	
Dunstable Area Passenger Trains (Association of) (ADAPT)	Midlands	
Durham County Council	North East	
East Cheshire Line RUG	North West	yes

East Devon District Council	South West	
East Dorset District Council	South West	
East Hampshire District Council	South West	
East Lothian Council	Scotland	yes
East Midlands Rail Forum	Midlands	yes
East Norfolk Travellers' Association (ENTA)	Midlands	
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	North East	yes
East Surrey Transport Committee	South	yes
Eastleigh Borough Council	South West	
Edenbridge and District Rail Travellers' Association	South	yes
Elmbridge Borough Council	South West	
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	South West	
Esk Valley Railway Development Company	North East	
Exeter City Council	South West	
Fareham Borough Council	South West	
Fen Line Users' Association (FLUA)	Midlands	yes
Fife Council	Scotland	
Follaton House	South West	
Frank Scott (Mr)	North West	yes
Glasgow City Council	Scotland	
Gloucestershire County Council	South West	
GMPTE	North West	
Gosport Borough Council	South West	
Government Office for the East Midlands	Midlands	
Government Office for the North East	North East	
Government Office for the North West	North West	
Government Office for the South West	South West	
Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber	North East	
Guildford Borough Council	South West	
Halton Borough Council	North West	
Hampshire County Council	South West	
Harrogate Line Rail Users Group.	North East	yes
Hart District Council	South West	
Hartlepool Borough Council	North East	
Havant Borough Council	South West	
Heritage Line Community Rail Partnership	North East	
Highways, Transportation & Waste Management	Midlands	
Huddersfield Line Rail Users Group.	North East	
Huddersfield-Penistone-Sheffield Rail Users Association	North East	
Hull and East Riding Rail Users Association	North East	
Joint Strategic Planning Unit	South West	
Keith Flinders	Midlands	yes
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	North East	yes
Lakes Lines Rail User Group	North West	yes
Lancashire County Council	North West	
Lancaster Morecambe & District Rail User Group	North West	yes
Leicestershire Rural Transport Partnership	Midlands	
Liverpool Chamber of Commerce	North West	
Lockerbie Rail Liaison Group	Scotland	
London Travel Watch	London	yes
MEP for Devon	South West	
MEP for Somerset	South West	
Merseytravel	North West	yes

Metro	North East	
Mole Valley District Council	South West	
MP for Bournemouth East	South West	
MP for Bridgewater	South West	
MP for Bristol	South West	
MP for Bristol East	South West	
MP for Bristol North West	South West	
MP for Bristol South	South West	
MP for Bristol West	South West	
MP for Bromsgrove	South West	
MP for Devon East	South West	
MP for Devon South West	South West	
MP for Devon West & Torridge	South West	
MP for Exeter	South West	
MP for Falmouth and Cambourne	South West	
MP for Hereford	South West	
MP for Mid Worcestershire	South West	
MP for North Cornwall	South West	
MP for North Devon	South West	
MP for Northavon	South West	
MP for Plymouth Devonport	South West	yes
MP for Plymouth Sutton	South West	
MP for S.E. Cornwall	South West	
MP for St. Ives	South West	
MP for Taunton	South West	yes
MP for Teignbridge	South West	
MP for Tiverton & Honiton	South West	
MP for Torbay	South West	
MP for Totnes	South West	
MP for Truro & St. Austell	South West	
MP for Wansdyke	South West	
MP for West Worcestershire	South West	
MP for Weston-Super-Mare	South West	
MP for Woodspring	South West	
New Forest District Council	South West	
Nexus	North East	
Noam Bleicher (Mr)	South	yes
North Dorset District Council	South West	yes
North East Assembly	North East	
North East Lincolnshire County Council	North East	
North East Scotland Transport Partnership	Scotland	
North Lanarkshire Council	Scotland	
North Lincolnshire County Council	North East	
North Somerset Council	South West	yes
North Staffs/West Derbyshire Rural Transport Partnership	Midlands	
North West Rail Investment Campaign	North West	yes
North West Regional Assembly	North West	yes
North West Regional Development Agency	North West	
North Yorkshire County Council	North East	yes
Northallerton Rail User Group	North East	yes
Northamptonshire County Council	Midlands	
Northumberland County Council	North East	yes
Norwich & Norfolk Transport Action Group (NNTAG)	Midlands	

Nottinghamshire County Council	Midlands	
One NorthEast	North East	
Penistone Line Partnership	North East	
Peterborough-Norwich Rail Users'	Midlands	yes
Planning & Transportation	Midlands	
Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry	South West	yes
Plymouth City Council	South West	
Pontefract and District Rail Action Group	North East	yes
Poole Borough Council	South West	
Portsmouth City Council	South West	
Purbeck District Council	South West	
Rail Action Group East of Scotland	Scotland	
Railfuture (East Anglia branch)	Midlands	
Railfuture (Lincolnshire Branch)	Midlands	
Railfuture Northeast	North East	yes
Railfuture Scotland	Scotland	
Railfuture Thames Valley	London	yes
Railfuture Wales (South)	Wales	
Railfuture West Midlands Branch	Midlands	yes
Railfuture Yorkshire	North East	yes
Reading Borough Council	South West	
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	North East	
Ripon Railway Reinstatement Association	North East	
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	South West	
Runnymede Borough Council	South West	
Rural Transport Partnership Project	Midlands	
Rutland County Council	Midlands	
Saltburn Line User Group (SLUG)	North East	
Scottish Association for Public Transport	Scotland	yes
Scottish Consumer Council	Scotland	
Scottish Council for Development and Industry	Scotland	
Scottish Enterprise	Scotland	
Selby and District Rail Users Group.	North East	yes
Sevenside Community Rail Partnership	West	yes
Shakespeare Line Promotion Group (SLPG)	Midlands	
Shrewsbury-Wolverhampton Rail Users' Association (SWRUA)	Midlands	
Shropshire & Mid Wales Rail First	Midlands	
SMART (Slaithwaite & Marsden Action on Rail Transport)	North East	
Solihull and Leamington Rail Users' Association (SALRUA)	Midlands	
Somerset County Council	South West	
South East Northumberland Rail User Group (SENUG)	North East	
South East Scotland Transport Partnership	Scotland	
South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA)	Wales	
South Gloucestershire Council	South West	
South Hampshire Rail Users' Group	South	yes
South Somerset District Council	South West	
South West Focus Group	South West	
South West Regional Assembly	South West	yes
South West Regional Development Agency	South West	
South West Scotland Transport Partnership	Scotland	
South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (Swwitch)	South West	yes
South Yorkshire PTE	North East	yes
Southampton City Council	South West	

Spelthorne Borough Council	South West	
Stourbridge Line User Group (SLUG)	Midlands	yes
Strathclyde Partnerships for Transport	Scotland	yes
Surrey County Council	South West	
Surrey Heath Borough Council	South West	
Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership	Scotland	
Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit	North East	yes
Teignbridge District Council	South West	yes
Test Valley Borough Council	South West	
The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	South West	
Torbay Council	South West	yes
Torbay Development Agency	South West	yes
TRANSform Scotland	Scotland	
Transport 2000 Derbyshire and Peak District	North West	yes
Transport 2000 Herefordshire & Worcestershire	Midlands	yes
Transport 2000 Lancashire	North West	yes
Transport 2000 Northumbria	North East	
Transport 2000 Tees Valley	North East	
Transport 2000, West Yorkshire	North East	yes
Transport Scotland, Rail Delivery Division	Scotland	
TravelWatch North West (formerly NW PTUF)	North West	yes
TravelWatch East Midlands	Midlands	yes
Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership	North East	
Tynedale Council	North East	
Visit Scotland	Scotland	
Warrington Borough Council	North West	
Waverley Borough Council	South West	yes
Welsh Assembly Government	Wales	
West Dorset District Council	South West	
West of England Partnership	West	yes
West Sussex County Council	South West	
Weymouth & Portland	South West	
Wharfedale Rail Users Group.	North East	yes
Whittlesey Public Transport Group (WPTG)	Midlands	
Winchester City Council	South West	yes
Wokingham District Council	South West	yes
Worcestershire City Council	South West	
Worcestershire County Council	Midlands	yes
Yorkshire & Humber Regional Assembly	North East	
Yorkshire Forward	North East	

Appendix C

The following is the overall summary of findings from the PTUF stakeholder research. The full report is available on request.

NWPTUF 28/04/2006

Section 2 – XC Report

CROSS COUNTRY FRANCHISE RESPECIFICATION REPORT

Introduction

As part of the above report being compiled by Passenger Focus to inform the Department for Transport's respecification of the Cross Country Trains Franchise, the Public Transport Users Forums (PTUFs) were invited to collect and analyse input from their membership outside the public sector and within their own regions.

The PTUFs participating were:

- North West
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- South West.

Methodology

A questionnaire (see Section 13) was devised consistently with Passenger Focus and despatched to targeted members of the four PTUFs, excluding those targeted by Passenger Focus. In addition a number were sent to contacts outside membership such as development and tourism agencies.

Questionnaires were sent to a total of 544 recipients with a return of 69 completed suitable for analysis. This averaged a 13% overall response. The returns were as follows:

	Sent	Returned	Percentage
North West	117	18	15%
West Midlands	82	10	12%
East Midlands	130	13	10%
South West	215	28	14%

The whole exercise was coordinated and managed by the North West Public Transport Users Forum with input from all the regions.

The final report was compiled by North West Public Transport Users Forum.

NWPTUF 28/04/2006

Section 3 – XC Report

Cross Country franchise – summary points

The following list reflects the major issues raised across the whole spectrum of the four regions surveyed as part of the exercise. It will be seen that a number of common themes emerged, some of which crossed regions.

- **Long-distance travel avoiding London** – considered to be a very important feature for seamless travel opportunities
- **Direct point to point travel avoiding changes** – passengers want to travel with as few changes as possible
- **Overcrowding a common feature throughout the network** – this comment emerged from all regions. It is clear that the network is popular but the train units have not met demand
- **Present Voyager units are not fit for purpose and need additional coaches** – the usage of Cross Country services merits better train accommodation, particularly for long-distance passengers
- **HST 2 option for future growth** – if growth continues in long distance train travel, a new generation of long-distance trains will be required during the life of the franchise and consideration must be given now to HST 2
- **Include major towns and cities in the Cross Country network** - Liverpool, especially, and Blackpool to be reinstated. Business opportunities identified at Nottingham and Hull
- **Consideration of routes into/out of East Midlands and East Anglia** – direct services via Nottingham from NW and S. Wales. Services to Stansted airport
- **Better consistency of services and stopping patterns** – attempt consistent frequencies in both directions at secondary stations
- **Upgrade Birmingham New Street urgently** - currently unable to cope with traffic and poorly designed for interchange. Comments from all regions
- **Align more seats with windows** – better train accommodation layout required for both passenger and luggage accommodation
- **Better fare incentives to encourage migration from car travel** – rail prices often unattractive to leisure travel for clients ages 30/40/50
- **Better catering provision and availability on network fringes** – catering very limited and often unavailable in north and south west/south
- **Better accommodation for cyclists** – growth sector often has to endure limited accommodation and poor facilities
- **Reliability and convenience to attract business travellers to migrate from car** – often unattractive compared to flights and car timings as well as convenience and price
- **Robust connection policy in cooperation with other TOCs** – more passengers connect from Cross Country than any other, therefore reliability of connections of paramount importance

- **More stops at stations on fringes of major towns and cities** – avoid need to travel to city centre to connect with direct service
- **Link to Ashford International for Eurostar connection** – inter-European connections to compete with flight market – particularly for skiing travellers with equipment
- **Consistent 7-day week services** – Sunday now the busiest day for travel. Leisure boom also significant for increased weekend demand
- **Intermodal connections – bus, ferry, plane** - access to airports, ferry terminals (Southampton and Aberdeen) as well as bus interchange to remote settlements
- **Increasing student and academic travel** – Inter university business. Student travel to/from home at weekends/holidays
- **Service new residential development** - as new housing and communities are built in new areas direct train services will be required
- **Consistent and attractive promotional off-peak ticketing** – to attract migration from car travel for leisure visits
- **Better information at stations and on board** – real-time running and consistent and reliable equipment throughout network
- **Improve reservation system** – online and seat selection. Also better visual display on board
- **Better punctuality with connection guarantees** – need this for confidence of passengers in services. Requires cooperation between TOCs

Evidence

It is accepted that much of the evidence collected during the survey is anecdotal. However it has to be equally accepted that it comes from groups who are seasoned and experienced regular travellers on XC services and know them well. Collection of controlled data in this arena would be an expensive exercise and beyond the means of most public sector bodies, let alone the many voluntary bodies that represent passenger interests. The train companies may possess data but could claim this to be sensitive thus retaining it as confidential. It will be noted, however, that regional marketing agencies and development agencies are willing to offer their own data for interpretation to assist the intelligence gathering process that may be required in any longer term project. To gain more evidence we recommend that Passenger Focus and the DfT engage the services of suppliers of data collection and interpretation, such as the Henley Centre to underpin the decisions that may need to be taken in awarding this and other franchises.

Continued overleaf:

List of all organisations who responded to this piece of research:

Respondent	Region
Action for a better Charnwood	East Mids
Cyclists Touring Club	East Mids
Harborough Rail Users member	East Mids
Malvern	East Mids
Matlock Rail Users Group	East Mids
Paul Clark (TWEM SG Member)	East Mids
Railfuture East	East Mids
South East Lincs Travellers Assoc	East Mids
Transport 2000 Derbys & Pk District	East Mids
Transport 2000 Leics & EMTAR member	East Mids
Alan Hurst, TPC Preston/Blackpool	North West
Copeland RUG	North West
Crewe & Shrewsbury Passengers Assoc	North West
Cycling Project NW	North West
Institute of Logistics & Transport	North West
Lakes Line RUG	North West
Lancaster & Skipton RUG	North West
Liverpool Chamber of Commerce	North West
Mid Cheshire RUG	North West
North Cheshire RUG	North West
Paul Fawcett, Transport Consultant	North West
Railfuture North West	North West
Sustrans NW	North West
Transport 2000 Lancashire	North West
University of Bolton	North West
Wigan RUG	North West
Wirral Transport Users Association	North West
Wrexham - Birkenhead RUA	North West
Bristol Cycling Campaign	South West
Business West	South West
CoJAC: rail-users Cam & Dursley	South West
Co-operative Group	South West
Cornwall Assoc Parish Councils: Caradon	South West
Cornwall Trades Union Council	South West
CPRE Dorset and SWRA	South West
CTC: national cyclists' organisation	South West
Dorset Cyclists' Network	South West
Friends of the Earth SW	South West
Gloucs Parish and Town Councils	South West
Melksham Railway Development Group	South West
Melksham Retention Campaign	South West
North Devon Rail Users Group	South West
Parish Councils Airport Association	South West
RailFuture SW	South West
RNID Southwest	South West
RSPB SouthWest	South West
Saltash RUG	South West
Sherborne Transport Action Group	South West
South West Churches Regional Forum	South West
St Germans RUG	South West

Torbay Council	South West
Transport 2000 Thames Valley Central	South West
Transport 2000 Wiltshire	South West
University College Falmouth	South West
VisitCornwall (RDA)	South West
Yetminster Station Action Group	South West
Bredon Parish Council (Nr Tewkesbury)	West Mids
Colwall Parish Council	West Mids
John Balmforth, TPC West Midlands	West Mids
Lichfield Rail Promotion GP	West Mids
Marketing Birmingham Ltd	West Mids
Nigel Cripps	West Mids
Railfuture West Midlands	West Mids
Shrewsbury - Chester RUA	West Mids
Shrewsbury - Wolverhampton RUA	West Mids
Shropshire Rail Agency	West Mids
Sustrans West Midlands	West Mids

Appendix D

Information compiled from Virgin CrossCountry Fact File (Feb 06):

Principal station	No of trains	No of stations directly served	Fastest time to/from Birmingham
West Midlands:			
Birmingham New Street	164	97 (76)*	n/a
Birmingham International	32	43 (76)*	n/a
Coventry	32	43 (36)*	n/a
Leamington Spa	60	50 (43)*	n/a
Wolverhampton	88	51 (32)*	n/a
Stafford	46	37 (23)*	n/a
Scotland:			
Aberdeen	4	22 (11)*	6hr 53
Dundee	7	63 (46)*	5hr 39
Edinburgh	47	72 (53)*	4hr 07
Glasgow	23	66 (45)*	3hr 56
North West:			
Carlisle	39	64 (49)*	2hr 44
Lancaster	38	64 (49)*	1hr 49
Preston	43	64 (49)*	1hr 30
Manchester	73	55 (49)*	1hr 35
Stockport	58	55 (49)*	1hr 17
Wigan North Western	27	64 (49)*	1hr 20
Warrington Bank Quay	25	64 (49)*	1hr 09
Stoke-on-Trent	59	55 (49)*	0hr 48
North East:			
Newcastle	58	68 (48)*	3hr 01
Durham	57	68 (48)*	2hr 48
Darlington	56	68 (48)*	2hr 31
Yorkshire and the East Midlands:			
York	60	68 (48)*	2hr 02
Leeds / Wakefield	32	59 (39)*	1hr 48
Doncaster	38	40 (35)*	1hr 38
Sheffield	63	68 (48)*	1hr 05
Derby	65	71 (51)*	0h 34
Southern England:			
Bournemouth	28	39 (34)*	2hr 59
Southampton	32	39 (34)*	2hr30
Reading, Oxford	60	47 (39)*	1hr 40
Guildford	5	13 (10)*	2hr 09
Brighton	4	15 (11)*	3hr 42
South West:			
Penzance, Truro	8	48 (31)*	5hr 26
Plymouth	34	48 (31)*	3hr 31
Exeter	36	59 (39)*	2hr 25
Taunton	37	59 (39)*	2hr 00
Bristol, Cheltenham Spa	60	64 (39)*	1hr 25
* Number of stations not directly linked by the services of another train operator			

Appendix E

Gap analysis

Gap analysis is a technique that prioritises passenger service improvements by taking into account both expectation and satisfaction or experience with attributes of the service provided, coupled with the importance of these same attributes to passengers.

In this technique each experience question is mirrored with an equivalent importance and expectation question, measured on a five-point scale. This identifies the importance of attributes, which are then used to weight the performance gap (i.e. the gap between expectations of a factor compared to experience of it). By using the importance scores to weight the performance 'gap' we can see at a glance where they are meeting, exceeding or failing to meet passengers' requirements on key parameters.

It is not sufficient to simply measure the gap between expectations and experience because some things will be more important to passengers than others and the most important requirements will influence their judgement of their overall satisfaction with the experience to a greater extent than things they view as less important.

Passengers surveyed on the routes were asked to rate their expectation and experience of aspects of the stations and service on their route and then asked for the importance they attribute to them. Scores for experience were subtracted from the expectation scores to give a numerical value to the 'gap' while the importance scores showed how important it would be to correct for any negative imbalance that occurs. The greater the negative expectation/performance gap the greater the need for action, particularly where importance scores are high.

This approach highlights priorities for improvement, which also helps to target where changes can be most effective. In other words, this helps Passenger Focus to concentrate on the issues that matter most to passengers. The research also indicates where franchisees could afford to 'relax' further improvements if there are attributes for which the performance outstrips expectation whilst at the same time the importance for that attribute is low.

Appendix F

Passenger Focus' policy on franchises – a detailed view

1. PERSONAL SECURITY

Passenger Focus accepts that the railway does not operate in a vacuum and suffers from the same problems of crime and disorder as the rest of society. Tackling issues of security on trains and at stations is, therefore, a wider social issue and not just a problem for the railway. Passenger Focus supports initiatives like the Secure Car Parks and Secure Stations Scheme and those which seek to set up local partnerships to tackle local problems. Schemes such as these should be specified in franchise agreements to ensure that they are taken forward.

Research by Crime Concern and Transport & Travel Research (1997)³⁸ suggests that the introduction of additional safety measures can lead to a significant increase in patronage. In their study, researchers asked respondents to estimate the number of additional trips they would make if further safety measures were introduced on their public transport systems. Using the estimates provided by those reporting a potential increased use of public transport, the researchers calculated a possible maximum increase in trips of 10.5%. The researchers also noted that a significant proportion of these additional trips would be taken in off-peak hours.

1.1 Passenger security on trains

Passenger Focus wants to see train companies carrying out security audits on trains and putting resources into reducing crime or the fear of crime. DfT researched what made people feel safer when travelling³⁹. Staff presence when waiting for a train was the first choice of passengers with 35% stating this would make them feel safer. On-train staff presence was also rated as important (27%) as passengers felt reassured by members of staff walking through carriages and checking tickets. Passenger Focus would like DfT to action their own research within their franchises.

1.2 Passenger security at stations

The safety and security of passengers at stations is of paramount importance. If passengers feel unsafe at a station then they will seek alternative modes of transport to make their journey or not make the journey at all. The National Passenger Survey revealed that 57% of passengers were satisfied with security at stations⁴⁰. This shows significant room for improvement to ensure that more passengers feel at ease when using stations.

1.2.1 Staff at stations

Passenger Focus presses for stations to be staffed wherever possible. This is not only to provide ticket sales and direct revenue protection but also to provide a reassuring staff presence for both personal security and information and to act as a deterrent to crime. To achieve this, staff must be visible and conduct frequent patrols. They must be trained in the skills necessary to exercise authority when required and to provide reassurance through their presence, appearance and demeanour. They should be invested with the legal powers (e.g. under the police accreditation

³⁸ Source www.crimereduction.gov.uk

³⁹ DfT's research 'People's perceptions of personal security and their concerns about public transport' was published in May 2004 www.dft.gov.uk

⁴⁰ National Passenger Survey - Spring 2006

scheme) necessary to allow them to discharge this role effectively. Passenger Focus' definition of full staffing covers all times when trains call at the station; the industry's definition is less rigid and obvious: "fully staffed" can refer to a situation where two shifts are covered but where early-morning and late-evening trains, and often all day at weekends, are uncovered.

1.2.2 Safer Station schemes

Since 1992, a number of schemes has been undertaken within Great Britain with the aim of reducing crime and the fear of crime at railway stations. These schemes are driven forward through partnership working between the train operating companies, local authorities and the police force.

Lambeth Safer Station scheme⁴¹ emerged after a crime audit was completed in 1995 which identified stations and their surroundings as hot-spots for crime. Partnership working between a number of organisations within the rail industry and the local authority came together and produced a work plan of measures to be introduced to improve security at stations in Lambeth. These measures included installation of CCTV, improved lighting and signage at stations, removal of graffiti, refurbishment and redecoration of facilities.

A review of the scheme a year into the project showed that there was a reported reduction in robbery and car crime around the station (from 36% to 23%) and at the stations themselves (from 58% to 53%). Surveys revealed that the initiative reduced the number of passengers being 'put off' using the station significantly (12% fewer men and 22% fewer women).

1.2.3 Help Points

Help Points, capable of both summoning assistance in emergencies and obtaining information at other times, should be prominently available, conveniently sited at stations and maintained in good order.

Passenger Focus' research into passenger perceptions of security⁴² revealed that passengers did not understand what Help Points are actually for. Passengers cited the following reasons for the under use of Help Points:

- They are associated with problems/emergencies rather than providing information
- Participants in the groups doubted that they would have information on specific trains
- They are considered as too remote to deliver real time information
- Only one person can use them at a time.

If the usefulness of Help Points was better understood by passengers, then they could be more effective information system, especially at times of emergency.

1.2.4 CCTV

CCTV systems should be monitored rather than just recorded and be of a standard capable of allowing the successful prosecution of offenders. We would also like to see CCTV systems at stations linked with systems in place outside the station so that any offenders can be tracked once they leave the station. Passenger Focus wants to see an industry-wide standardisation of CCTV systems.

⁴¹ Lambeth Safer Station Scheme <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/pt030302.htm>

⁴² Passenger Information: what, when, where and how? Published September 2004

While technology such as CCTV can be effective, Passenger Focus believes the best deterrent is the presence of a member of staff. We are of the view that staff need to be visible and to regularly patrol trains and stations.

1.2.5 New technology

Passenger Focus is aware of the trial of new screening techniques on the National Rail and London Underground network – including the first use on the UK railway of body scanners using millimetre wave technology which enables security staff to check for objects concealed under clothing. Passenger Focus believes that the development of such equipment must be balanced against the need to ensure the smooth operation of the rail network. Airport style security screening - involving tight management of access and security screening – is simple not viable on the rail network. We welcome and await the outcome of this trial with interest.

2. PUNCTUALITY AND RELIABILITY

Punctuality and reliability is considered the highest priority for passengers⁴³ and has been the main driver for passenger satisfaction in the National Passenger Survey since its inception.⁴⁴ This is the case regardless of journey type (long-distance, London and Southeast and regional) and passenger type (commuter, business and leisure).

Major efforts have been made by the industry to improve punctuality and reliability in recent years and this is reflected in the results of the National Passenger Survey⁴⁵. Even though improvement has been significant, the industry must focus on maintaining at least the current standard with an aim to achieving an even higher satisfaction level over time. We are concerned to ensure that:

- Operators should be incentivised to continuously improve performance and penalised for declining performance
- There should be a swift escalatory procedure for consistently poor performance, with removal of the franchise being the ultimate penalty
- Performance figures should be published by line of route to better represent the passenger experience on parts of the network. Passengers should have an indication of the likelihood that they will arrive at their destination on time. This information should be displayed at stations
- Delay should be thought of in terms of delay to passengers, not delay to trains. Timetables should be robust, and connections held where appropriate in order not to exacerbate delay to passengers
- Short-forming of trains (i.e. providing fewer seats than specified under the train plan) should be considered as partial cancellation of a service.

3. PASSENGER'S CHARTER

Passenger Focus has long been critical of the Passenger's Charter, both in its nationalised and privatised form. The concept of a Charter is good; it is proper that passengers are informed of their rights and of the obligations and aspirations of the train company. However, the central core of the Charter – the establishment of performance targets and compensation arrangements - is flawed.

⁴³ Passenger expectation and priorities for improvement – March 2005, Strategic Rail Authority

⁴⁴ National Passenger Survey, 1999 - 2006

⁴⁵ 79% of passengers were satisfied with punctuality and reliability – National Passenger Survey Spring 2006

3.1 A common compensation regime

Passenger Focus believes that DfT should seek to achieve common compensation arrangements across all train companies over time.

3.1.1 Features of a common compensation regime

Passenger Focus believes that all new compensation regimes should include the following:

- i.** 50%* refund after 30 minutes' delay (the point at which research conducted for the 2002 compensation working group suggested that non-commuter passengers expect to receive compensation)
- ii.** 100%* refund after 60 minutes' delay
- iii.** Passengers should have the choice of taking compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers
- iv.** Applicable to holders of any valid ticket, irrespective of type (i.e. including season ticket holders and irrespective of where the ticket was bought)
- v.** No exclusions, i.e. entitlement applies irrespective of the cause of delay
- vi.** Postage-free claim cards should be made available to passengers
- vii.** There should be a proactive approach to increasing passenger awareness of their entitlement.

** i.e. 50%/100% of the cost of a single ticket, or 50%/100% of the cost of either portion of a return ticket, or 50%/100% of the 'price per day' of a season ticket*

3.2 Season ticket holders

Passenger Focus believes that, in addition to arrangements set out in section 3.1, holders of monthly and longer-validity season tickets should be entitled to compensation if they have experienced frequent delays over ten minutes' duration. This "safety net" is needed because with a 30-minute trigger, season ticket holders are exposed to the risk that 29-minute delays in each direction every day attract no compensation at all. We believe ten minutes is the appropriate length of delay on which to base arrangements for season ticket holders: research undertaken for the 2002 compensation working group suggested that only 9% of commuters expect to receive compensation for delays of less than ten minutes. Passengers should have the choice of accepting compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers and irrespective of whether they are renewing their season ticket.

We wish to work with DfT and the industry on details to ensure that there is a fit for purpose mechanism to compensate holders of monthly and longer-validity season tickets for cumulative delays under 30 minutes. For example, a means needs to be devised so a season ticket holder who uses a National Rail route suffering poor performance, but who has bought their ticket from another operator (e.g. London Underground Limited), is not disadvantaged.

We do not want further franchises to be awarded on the basis of a Passenger's Charter which is unacceptable to passengers. We hope therefore that DfT will be able to incorporate the Passenger Focus policy set out above into its guidance to bidders for future franchises.

4. FARES

Passenger Focus has maintained the following broad policies concerning fares over a number of years:

- Many rail fares do not represent good value for money
- The fare structure is complex and confusing

- It is unfair for today's passengers to pay in advance for future investment
- The industry needs to exploit fares incentives to attract passengers to travel at times when there is greater capacity. However we oppose putting up fares to price off demand
- An affordable turn-up-and-go strategy must prevail, though pre-book low cost fares should be available to those whose journeys are flexible
- The industry must control its costs so that more is not passed on to the passenger in fares
- The industry must ensure it collects the revenue that is due to it.

In 2006 we undertook a programme of qualitative and quantitative research to explore passengers' attitudes to, and understanding of, the current fares structure. The results have reaffirmed our main position. However, the research highlighted other areas that warrant rail industry attention.

- Cost has deterred the majority of passengers from travelling by train at some point. The majority of these people travelled by car instead. Passenger Focus recommends that incentives such as Group Save and family Railcards should be better advertised to show rail as a viable alternative to the car
- Season ticket holders and non-season ticket holders are not aware of the level of discount this ticket type brings. Many without Railcards found the upfront cost prohibitive and could therefore not access the significant discounts of an annual season ticket. Passenger Focus recommends that operators should better advertise the 12-week discount of an annual season ticket, and consider introducing direct debit payment schemes
- The majority of passengers knew in advance that they would be making their current journey, yet more than half bought the ticket on the day. Nearly half of these might have booked in advance if they knew the ticket would be cheaper
- The majority of passengers prefer to buy tickets face-to-face. Ticket machines are not trusted to provide the best ticket for the intended journey
- Few are aware of how far in advance it is possible to book tickets, though the majority want a four to six week booking period.

4.1 Fare increases

We are not against using fares to help redistribute train travel – for instance, we support offering lower fares to passengers prepared to travel outside the main peaks. However, we are opposed to raising fares to price off demand in the peaks or to exploit a captive market. Hence we support continued regulation of the commuter market.

Passenger Focus' research shows approximately 40% of people felt they had some flexibility to change their travel patterns⁴⁶. However, they were unlikely to change without a significant financial incentive to do so, and most would not do so regularly.⁴⁷ The converse is also likely to be true. If incentives to travel off-peak are removed, for example by putting in unreasonable restrictions on existing discounted tickets, more people are likely to travel in the peak leading to greater crowding.

Passenger Focus is against raising fares in advance to pay for improvements that some of today's passengers may never see; and once those improvements are made, we believe that any fare rises should be modest and spread over several years. However, where there are exceptional

⁴⁶ Passenger requirements from rail fares – quantitative findings (Passenger Focus July 2006)

⁴⁷ Edge of Peak qualitative research (Passenger focus July 2006)

improvements, such as the provision of new high-speed routes, there may be a case for higher fares, as long as passengers retain the choice of lower fares on other routes.

Our research clearly shows that the cost of train tickets has acted as a barrier to train travel for leisure journeys. 70% of leisure respondents said they had decided not to travel by train because of the cost of the ticket at least once – 41% had made this choice a number of times. While the vast majority of business and leisure passengers in our research knew in advance that they would be making the journey we were asking them about, over half still waited until the day of travel to purchase their tickets⁴⁸. While we support the availability of discounted advance purchase fares for those who have the flexibility to plan their journeys in advance, we are committed to an affordable turn-up-and-go railway for those who do not.

4.2 Costs and revenue

Passenger Focus wishes to see the industry continue to work on keeping its costs under control, to continue to grow the off-peak market through marketing initiatives, and to collect revenue owed to it through adequate retailing facilities and checking of tickets. Significant revenue is lost to the industry through ticketless travel. It is important that the train companies acknowledge the level of loss and make adequate provision for staffing and/or automatic ticket gates.

4.3 Other fare and retailing issues

Passenger Focus would also like the DfT and train companies to consider the following:

- There are many people who work part-time and travel three days a week. It does not pay generally to buy a weekly season and so three daily tickets must be bought. This, in turn, helps to clog up ticket queues. Passenger Focus' research shows that 29% of regular commuters travelled using daily tickets. Of these, almost 60% cite irregular travel patterns as the reason. There was strong support for a carnet-style product. A carnet-style ticket system would allow advance purchase of batches of reduced price tickets, reducing queuing times
- Smart ticketing technology would allow flexibility and innovation in the fares structure. It would reduce queuing times for passengers and transaction time for train companies, which, as with carnets, should allow the companies to pass reduced ticketing costs on to passengers in the form of discounted fares. Smart technology raises the possibility of integration with London's fares and ticketing system
- Discount fares for students aged 16-18 in full-time education. Currently sixth form and sixth form college students find themselves suddenly having to pay full fare rather than the half-fare child rate available up to this point, yet they are not considered self-supporting and eligible for student loans
- Better marketing of Rail Rover tickets
- Cut-price ticket experiments on certain routes to attract people onto rail
- The introduction of a national Railcard offering a reduction on off-peak travel across the rail network
- Consistent application of restrictions on all ticket types.

⁴⁸ Passenger requirements from rail fares quantitative findings (Passenger Focus 2006)

5. STATION STANDARDS

Stations are the gateway to the rail network for all passengers – and many passengers are dissatisfied with the current state of stations. Despite some of the high-profile major station makeovers in recent years and the modernisation of some other more humble locations, stations still have much catching up to do after decades of under-investment when almost all available funding went into keeping the trains running.

Passenger Focus expects stations to be welcoming and convenient, providing a suitable and pleasant gateway to the railway and to the town/place of destination. They have for too long been the Cinderella of the network, with vital refurbishment funding held back during lean years. There is a considerable backlog of neglect to rectify to bring stations' fabric and facilities up to passengers' expectations and to make them more accessible.

5.1 What passengers want from stations

In June 2005, Passenger Focus commissioned some qualitative research to find out what passengers want from stations⁴⁹. The research highlighted some what passengers see as priorities at stations and this differed depending on the type of station. However, the basic needs of passengers highlighted in the report were as follows:

- Passengers need to be able to find the station and find their way around the station
- They need to be able to get to the station and their platform
- They need to feel safe
- They need adequate light and shelter.

Not all stations are meeting these basic needs; poor signage is a major failing.

Differences between passengers' preferences emerge once the basic needs have been addressed. Needs are conditioned by factors such as the time of day when the station is used, the length of time the passenger waits and how familiar passengers are with the journey.

Clear distinctions are also made between smaller and larger stations. There is a good deal of pragmatism about the facilities at small stations; providing real-time information, ticket machines and improved waiting accommodation were the major preferences for medium-sized stations. At the larger stations, there is a good deal more concern about comfort and the availability of catering, amongst other extended facilities.

The table shows station facilities and features based on passengers' overall needs and expectations. Columns 1 and 2 apply to all passenger types and all stations. An asterisk [*] indicates features which are more relevant to regular leisure or business travellers than to daily commuters.

Basic features	Universal features	Comfort features	Attractor features	Special features
<i>Essential for all stations</i>	<i>Expected by passengers at all stations</i>	<i>Desired at all stations</i>	<i>Attracting passengers to busier stations</i>	<i>Appropriate to specific locations</i>
Reasonably safe and secure	Ramps	Bus stop	Travel info in the waiting area*	Airport-type waiting area

⁴⁹ What passengers want from stations – Rail Passengers Council, June 2005

Well lit	Car parking	Taxi rank	Range of shops*	TV with news
Basic shelter and seating	Signs to the trains	Cycle racks	Cash point	Office facilities
Basic signage	Real-time info screens	Signs to facilities*	Nappy-changing facilities*	Luggage trolleys*
	Real-time PA	Station maps*, visual and tactile	Lifts*	
	Timetables	Newsagent*		
	Clocks	Kiosk		
	CCTV	Café*		
	Staff	Vending machine		
	Public telephone	Help point		
	Ticket machines	Booking office		
		Heated waiting room		
		Disabled-access Toilets*		
		Automatic doors*		

Passengers with disabilities expressed additional needs to make them more confident in using stations alone or in using stations unknown to them if staff will be on hand to assist. Concern was recorded about the failure of staff to turn up, even when assistance had been booked.

People with visual impairments and non-wheelchair users found that minor changes, such as the highlighting of the edges of steps, better handrails on staircases and automatic doors could greatly improve their mobility. The same applies to some elderly passengers, those with luggage or with prams and children.

Information provision at smaller stations was found to be poor, regardless of the passenger's abilities or disabilities. Real-time information – both aural and visual - benefits everyone.

5.2 Further requirements at stations

Further to the requirements outlined in 5.1, Passenger Focus would also like to see the following commitments within a franchise:

- Commitments to make stations as accessible as possible for all users
- Commitment to an audit of staffing requirements for all stations with a view to increasing staff numbers, or longer staffing periods, at a number of stations, even if only on an experimental basis
- Commitment to improve integration of other services at the station (see section on integrated transport for more details)
- Commitment to the Secure Station and Secure Car Park award schemes
- Easy-to-use ticket machines capable of accepting credit/debit cards as this will help to reduce ticket queues.

5.3 Information at stations

Passenger Focus places great importance on the provision of accurate, impartial and timely information, especially in times of disruption. In June 2005 Passenger Focus commissioned a major

piece of research into information provision. The report, *'Passenger information: What, When, Where and How'*, set out passenger preferences and perceptions before and during their journey. The following summary suggests actions from passengers to help improve station information:

- Use visual and audio displays as complementary sources
- Precede time-sensitive audio messages with a distinctive 'beep'
- Conduct visibility audits for displays and define minimum standards
- More electronic A to Z displays at major/busy stations
- Earlier advertising of departure platform
- More TV displays in waiting areas
- Raise awareness of Help Point as information sources
- Develop standards for equipment in relation to station types.

As a result of the report, ATOC set up a passenger information working group to consider how the recommendations might be implemented.

5.4 Upkeep of stations

Cleanliness is not just governed by contractual agreements but also by legislation. The 1991 Environmental Protection Act places certain obligations on the industry. Further details can be found in *'Good Riddance to Bad Rubbish'* - produced by London TravelWatch on behalf of the former RPC network, which provides guidance on how get reluctant operators to clear rubbish from stations (and linesides) within the terms of the Act.

5.5 Retailing at stations

Retailers offering catering and other sundry goods on stations offer a double or even treble advantage: they provide facilities for passengers, and additional revenue accrues from the rents for their premises. Such retail units often provide the only staffed presence on some stations after booking offices close. In some minor station locations, retail premises are taking on the role of booking offices.

5.6 Step free access at stations

Where more than one platform is in public use, a safe means of crossing the lines is required. This usually involves a footbridge or subway. In the absence of step-free access, lifts to/from ground level or negotiable ramps should be provided. At smaller stations, passengers may be required to cross the railway lines at ground level. Such crossings may be accessible to wheelchair users only at times when the station is staffed.

5.7 Staffing at stations

Passenger Focus presses for stations to be staffed wherever possible. This is to provide ticket sales and direct revenue protection, to provide a reassuring staff presence for both personal security and information provision and as a deterrent to crime.

Passenger Focus's definition of full staffing covers all times when trains call at the station; the industry's definition is less rigid and obvious; "fully staffed" can refer to a station where two shifts are covered but where early-morning and late-evening trains, and often all day at weekends, are uncovered.

6. INTEGRATED TRANSPORT

Passenger Focus is committed to promoting the development of an integrated transport system. Physical integration is just a part of the broader integration issue, which should include ensuring that transport policy is better linked with wider Government objectives for economic prosperity, environmental protection, health and social inclusion.

6.1 Integration of existing rail companies

Existing services should operate as a network. Co-ordination and co-operation should extend to timetables and connections. For example, Passenger Focus believes that there should be some incentive to hold connecting services in many circumstances - as opposed to what would appear at present to be disincentives via the performance regime.

6.2 Integration of modes of transport

Passengers' journeys do not usually start and end at a railway station. Passengers arrive at the station and leave from it to their final destination in a number of ways. Railway stations are de facto modal hubs and the rail industry has a part to play in ensuring ease of interchange between modes through physical environment, information, timetabling and through ticketing.

6.3 Buses

Bus travel offers perhaps the greatest opportunity for interchange improvement. There is great scope for tying rail and bus timetables into a tighter, mutually supportive arrangement, especially given the extension Plus+Bus scheme. Train companies should encourage as far as possible improved co-ordination of bus and rail timetables. Where the provider of rail and bus services is the same it is inexcusable if this does not happen. However, joined up thinking should be encouraged between all operators using a station.

There also needs to be a focus on the interchange facilities at stations. For instance, are bus stops provided and are they situated in the optimum position, are the walking routes from the bus stop to the railway station clearly signed, and is the link secure and well lit?

Other possible bus/rail integration improvements include:

- Working with bus companies or local authorities to create an extra stop where a bus passes a train station, or to alter routes slightly to ensure buses pass railway stations
- Working with bus companies or local authorities to alter existing schedules to help buses meet certain morning and evening peak hour trains (including some guaranteed connections)
- Displaying bus information at rail stations and train information at certain bus stops/stations
- Combined rail/bus tickets or preferably, travelcard schemes
- Examining the potential of park and ride schemes
- Creation of bus links between rail-heads to complement the network
- Improved facilities for connection between train and bus (e.g. better signing, provision of waiting rooms).

6.4 Cars/motorbikes

It is a fact that for many rail passengers, driving to the station remains the most viable and practical means of travel. The increasing length of a working day and the shift towards a '24-7' week means that it is hard to provide a comprehensive rail-bus service that meets the needs of commuters and/or

weekend travellers. Fears over personal security also inhibit the use of alternative transport or walking. For these reasons, car parking facilities at stations remain important.

Passenger Focus has long maintained that the provision of car parking at railway stations should be seen as a separate issue in its own right and not part of wider discussions on car parking in general. In many ways a railway station car park is the original 'park and ride' scheme and it is important that it is acknowledged as such.

6.4.1 Access and signage

It is important that car parks are well signed and easily accessible. The road entrance to every station to ensure signing and access is clear. Improved signage is a low-cost response to a common problem.

6.4.2 Security

Car crime is at the forefront of a driver's mind when parking a car and the risk of theft or break-in deters some people from currently using station car parks. A station car-park should be organised in a way that generates a feeling of security and confidence in the traveller. Parking areas must be well lit and should have highly-visible CCTV systems. A dialogue between train company, local authorities, police and community safety partnerships should be established in order to reassure passengers.

6.4.3 Increasing parking spaces

Scope for enlarging existing car parks should be investigated. There is a need to encourage off-peak travel when there is often ample train capacity, but when many car parks are full by 08.00. Passenger Focus would like train companies to carry out an audit of car park spaces and demand (to be repeated periodically to capture changes in demand throughout the life of the franchise) and then provide additional spaces where required and where practicable.

Consideration ought also be given to multi-storey car-parking facilities at stations (even if on a pilot basis) for stations where the audit shows a need for additional spaces and where availability of land makes this practicable; and also for new 'parkway' stations whose primary aim is to absorb traffic from the road.

It is important to ensure that parking spaces at stations are solely for rail passengers rather than town centre visitors. This may become a particular issue if local authorities use road pricing and parking measures to reduce car use. We understand that car parking revenue is important to individual train operators. However, if spaces are being filled by non-rail passengers, then train companies are not addressing the revenue potential that could be made from rail passengers who pay for parking **and** a rail fare. In such cases Passenger Focus favours the type of scheme whereby higher car park prices can be redeemed against the cost of the rail ticket.

6.5 Taxis

Taxis provide important links to and from the railway station, and there should be co-ordination between train companies and taxi firms. This includes discussions with taxis firms when there are proposals for change at stations.

The following are essential for providing effective interchange between taxis and the rail network:

- Good signage to the taxi rank
- Well marked-out taxi rank
- Drop-down kerbs
- List of tariffs for regularly made journeys
- Contact details for local taxi firms (for when no taxis are readily available)
- Greater publicity for licensed taxi services at stations
- Accreditation scheme to give passengers a greater feeling of personal security
- Possible discount on production of a valid train ticket
- Wheelchair accessible taxis. When taxis are not available, procedures need to be put in place between the station and the taxi rank so that station staff can call for taxis
- Covered waiting areas.

6.6 Bicycles

Rail should be seen as the core of an integrated transport system and cycling has to play a part within this system. The SRA'S Cycling Policy consultation document stated that only 2% of passengers used bicycles to access stations. This low figure suggests that there is a significant potential for growth.

Cycling to the station helps to reduce road congestion, improves health and is a totally self reliant form of transport. However, to convince people to bicycle, adequate provisions need to be provided at stations and on the approached to stations.

6.6.1 Bicycles on trains

Passenger Focus acknowledges the specific issues of overcrowding associated with carrying bicycles on trains. There are some occasions when bicycles that are stowed by doors do have an impact on boarding and alighting. However, delays could be reduced by clearly marking carriages (where feasible) and training platform staff to identify and inform where bicycle spaces are located.

Overall, however, the Passenger Focus would agree that there should be no obligation on TOCs to carry bicycles at peak times. Bicycle carriage times determined according to local conditions and demand. However, the lack of such an obligation means that greater efforts must be made elsewhere to reduce the degree of inconvenience to the cycling commuter - for instance, making the provision of adequate bicycle parking compulsory in areas where a peak-time ban is applied.

We recognise the problems faced by the train companies with regards to rolling stock design/space at stations etc, but also the potential hardship for cyclists

To help alleviate these problems we advocate:

- Better bicycle parking and secure facilities at stations – possible inclusion of bicycle lockers
- Bicycle-friendly station – provision of ramps, lifts etc
- Information – when can bicycles be carried on trains
- Better access to stations – including bicycle paths etc
- Bicycle lockers
- Bicycle hire schemes so that cycling commuters are able to have a bicycle at both the originating and destination stations
- Support and encouragement for the use of folding bikes. These can be carried as hand luggage free of charge

- The provision of a flexible space area that has tip-up seats which can be used as either a storage area or a seating area. While this won't remove the conflict in the peak from people wanting to use seats with those wanting to store bikes, it would at least provide more space for bikes in the off-peak and at weekends
- The possibility of introducing free insurance deals for bikes left at stations.

6.7 Walking

Train operating companies should work closely with local authorities to ensure that the best possible provisions are in place for pedestrians. Possible barriers to walking to the station include the following:

- The way-marked route to the station may be indirect and therefore unnecessarily long
- Walking routes may be poorly maintained
- There could be no pathways to the station
- No crossing provisions on major roads
- The routes could be seen as insecure – poor lighting, secluded etc.
- Poor or misleading sign posting
- Physical barriers including roadside railings, hedges, etc.

However, the major hurdle in encouraging people to walk to the station is the perception of security as illustrated by the following statement:

“After dark, 51% of women and 20% of men feel unsafe walking from home to the station, and 61% of women and 26% of men feel unsafe walking from the station to home.”

Department for Transport, 2003⁵⁰

Train companies should work with local authorities, the British Transport Police and the local police force to make the station and the surrounding areas secure for passengers.

7. ACCESSIBILITY

Passenger Focus's definition of 'accessibility' covers everyone's ability to use the network with ease. All passengers at some time find themselves encumbered: for instance because of a permanent physical or mental impairment, a temporary impairment (e.g. broken leg), by being accompanied by young children, or simply through carrying luggage. All these factors are an impediment to an easy journey. It is the natural aspiration of all disabled people to travel without assistance.

Improving access and facilities for disabled people will benefit not only those with disabilities but also families with young children and older people with mobility problems. Much of the problem lies in stations that were simply not built with the disabled people in mind and the scale of the problem is such that it may take years to improve access radically and therefore requires long-term commitment.

The EU Technical Specification for Interoperability (TSI) (Subsystem Conventional Rail infrastructure and rolling stock) will probably become law in 2007. This considerably widens the definition of 'passengers with reduced mobility' and we encourage train companies to make suitable provisions to encompass their new legal requirements under this new legislation.

⁵⁰ DfT's research 'People's perceptions of personal security and their concerns about public transport' was published in May 2004 www.dft.gov.uk

The minimum aim must be compliance with the statutory obligations laid down in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) with any new works taking place being done in accordance with the Train and Station Services for Disabled Passengers Code of Practice due for update by the DfT.

7.1 Accessible stations

Attention must be focused on enhancing principal stations, reflecting usage levels, by providing ramps and lifts. A significant proportion, however, must be used to ensure a reasonable geographic spread of accessible stations, especially interchanges and those serving hospitals or special schools etc. It may be sensible to give priority to stations served by accessible buses and which have good parking for passengers with disabilities.

This, however, is merely the starting point. In the longer term, as the number of passengers with disabilities using the railways increases, the number of locations and range of facilities available to enhance accessibility must grow likewise. Passenger Focus recognises the inheritance of a Victorian station infrastructure and welcomes the advances in making stations more accessible, especially the provision of step-free access, which eases the going for everyone.

In the meantime Passenger Focus supports the 'hub and spoke' approach: step-free access to be provided at major and regionally important stations with taxi connections, provided at the train company's expense, to and from such places.

7.2 Other general accessibility aspirations

Other passenger benefits that should be included in renegotiated franchises include:

- i.** *Assisted Passenger Reservation System upgrade*
 - Decentralise the process within owning groups
 - Accelerate the speed of booking
 - Reduce or abolish the requirement to give notice in the case of turn-up-and-go traffic. The facility should be retained for those passengers who can and wish to book in advance
 - Ensure that the passenger's name is included in all communications involving assistance
 - Allow online bookings
 - Ensure that the details are passed on to-train staff (particularly where staffed stations are concerned)
 - Freephone bookings or at least 0845 lo-call numbers given the length of calls make bookings
 - Ensure that all operators call passengers after the journey has been made to verify that booked assistance was provided
 - Establish a database of passenger details to reduce likelihood of errors made in booking; especially useful for regular journeys.
- ii.** Ensure that where no dedicated wheelchair spaces are provided, that train companies designate a regular location to convey wheelchairs, ensuring ease of location at detraining point and proximity of the passenger to on-train staff and alarm
- iii.** Spread best practice concerning safety notices and other important literature - Braille, large-print formats etc
- iv.** Ensure that each train company has a suitable handbook for its staff
- v.** Investigate staff training - level, amount, frequency, suitability etc
- vi.** Extension of Describe Online and tactile diagramming to larger stations and major interchanges, at least

- vii. Ensure that each train company's database of station details is correct and kept up-to-date - compare with Step-free Map
- viii. Ensure that train companies are aware of the need to make changes to certain aspects of rolling stock to enhance accessibility and/or improve general usability at refurbishment stage
- ix. Persuade train companies that multi-lingual staff, happy to converse in other languages with passengers, should wear badges to that effect
- x. Ensure that Priority Seating areas are much more visibly labelled and that the purpose of such seats is much more clearly displayed. Better policing of occupancy would be of benefit on staffed trains
- xi. A 'Regular Disabled Traveller' scheme whereby detailed records are kept of regular travellers so that details do not have to be repeated each time assistance is required
- xii. Where wheelchair-accessible toilets are provided these are to include baby-changing facilities as well at a height suitable for wheelchair-users
- xiii. Portable ramps for wheelchairs to be carried on all trains giving physical access to more unmanned stations
- xiv. Bus replacement services to be capable of carrying wheelchair using and mobility impaired passengers or special alternative arrangements to be made for such passengers
- xv. Commitment to good quality staff disability awareness training covering the full range of disabilities
- xvi. Consultation with groups representing disabled people on other needs.

7.3 Disabled Persons' Protection Policies

When drafting its DPPP each operator must consider the DfT's DPPP Guidance, which sets out the framework within which train/station operators are encouraged to comply.

Each DPPP typically features subjects such as:

- Train companies must provide a Statement of Policy setting out exactly what they are going to do and how
- Station list, specifying the features and facilities of each station and its ease of access to passengers with disabilities
- Train types and the routes on which they operate
- Using trains and stations
- How to arrange assistance
- Features and facilities in place on trains and at stations for customers with disabilities
- Arrangements for planned and non-planned service disruption.

Franchisees are obliged under the terms of licence to consult with Passenger Focus on their DPPP. Passenger Focus would expect the new DPPP to be no less robust than the previous policy. The new DPPP should incorporate best practice from other train companies' policies and include enhancements in terms of new technologies. Where passengers are transferring from one service to another, train companies must work together to ensure that disabled passengers can move between companies seamlessly.

8. SERVICE PATTERNS

8.1 General service patterns

- Ensure current stations continue to be served adequately; especially stops serving educational

establishments (including colleges/universities), hospitals, and tourist destinations and to aid social inclusion where no alternative public transport exists

- Where possible there should be late evening services from major towns and cities on each main route
- Sundays: train companies to review service levels with Passenger Focus and other stakeholders, to ensure changing work/shopping demand patterns are met
- Bank Holidays: train companies to co-ordinate timetables and ensure cross-operator connections are maintained. Ideally, each train company to adopt the same timetable principles, including those days between Christmas and New Year, to ensure passenger confusion is avoided
- The need to work with local authorities, police and other transport operators to cater for festivals/special events
- Where possible, any services going to and from airports meet the first and last flights scheduled.

8.1 Journey times

- Journey times not to be significantly extended without Passenger Focus consultation and demonstrable and identifiable overall benefit to passengers from doing so
- The number of services disrupted by engineering possessions should be reduced; where passengers do suffer disruption and longer journey times they should be automatically compensated
- The railway industry should always seek a rail alternative/diversionary route in preference to bus substitution, at times of disruption/line closure for maintenance
- Incident recovery management procedures need to be refined to minimise passenger delay, without compromising safety; a target of <1 hour should be adopted.

8.2 Connections policy

- Train companies should protect advertised/recognised connections between their own services and competitors', using greater discretion locally as necessary. This may require reasonable adjustment to the 'performance regime'
- The decision to hold a connection, or otherwise, MUST take into account the service frequency, e.g. on a Sunday with an hourly frequency it is important to hold connections for longer
- Connections should be guaranteed for the 'last train of the day' and on branch lines where the outgoing train's main purpose is to pick up passengers from the main line.

8.4 Timetable publications

- All timetables (both pocket sized and derivatives) should include services of all operators for any joint area covered
- Timetables should also indicate where disabled access is available by use of the wheelchair symbol
- The National Rail timetable (and derivative booklets) should also show details of local bus/coach links.

8.5 Bus replacement services

- Ensure that late-evening services run as trains rather than substitute buses as a priority, through Network Rail streamlining maintenance procedures
- Dedicated rail-bus services must be held for an agreed period, to meet late-running train connections or clearly advised/organised alternatives should be provided.

9. POSSESSIONS POLICY

On behalf of passengers we understand that engineering work is a necessity if the rail industry is to deliver its promise of a safe, reliable and efficient rail network. The consequence, though, is disruption to services and inconvenience for passengers. The crux of the issue therefore is achieving a balance between engineering efficiency and passenger requirements.

Decisions on a future possessions strategy cannot simply be based on cost and engineering convenience, important as they undoubtedly are, but must be linked back to the ultimate customer – the passenger. For instance, a policy of decimating evening services may make routine maintenance work more efficient and cheaper but would not be acceptable to passengers.

RPC was concerned that little research had been conducted to determine how engineering work could be planned and managed to cause minimal disruption to passengers. Hence, together with Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), we commissioned some research into passengers' views. The report discusses what the rail industry could do when planning, managing or executing engineering work, to lessen the effects of disruption to passengers. Key findings of the research were:

- Passengers were more tolerant of planned works that will deliver long-term improvements than unplanned 'patch-up jobs.' Following disruption to services, passengers expect to be shown the benefit of the improvements (e.g. in terms of new platforms or signals or details of how punctuality or reliability has improved). One respondent commented: "They do engineering works all the time but it makes no difference." In short, passengers are willing to accept periods of disruption if they can be sure they will reap the benefits of an improved rail network afterwards.
- Although 'major' disruptions are rated as inconvenient, there was evidence to suggest that passengers would prefer work to be over as quickly as possible. If notified enough in advance, many passengers can plan around longer blockades or weekend closures – although for commuters the absence of a viable alternative is a real issue
- Passengers want to make informed choices about their travel plans. Information about alternative arrangements, length of disruption and increased journey time must be available well in advance. The provision and enforcement of T-12 is essential if this is to be met.

The key to all three points is good information – it is essential to tell people: what the work is going to deliver; how to plan alternative journeys in advance and/or on the day; and then explain what has been achieved (e.g. "for this disruption you have now got x)."

There is also a need to ensure that possessions are co-ordinated across regions so that adequate diversionary routes are available – passengers would generally rather stay on the train for longer than change to buses.

10. MANAGEMENT AND STAFF RELATIONS

A good relationship between management and staff is the key to a successful service. Poor relationships can have a direct impact upon the travelling public. If communications break down, passengers face possible strike action causing severe disruption to their services. We therefore would

like to see a commitment to developing a partnership approach with unions. Dispute resolutions agreements need to be implemented by the incoming TOCs, in co-operation with the unions, to avoid strike action.

Significant investment in staff training should be a condition of the new franchise agreement. A new franchise is an opportunity to develop cultural change to a more passenger focussed organisation that places emphasis on improving overall passenger satisfaction services and improving performance.



© 2006 Passenger Focus

Freepost WA1521
Warrington
WA4 6GP

08453 022 022
www.passengerfocus.org.uk
info@passengerfocus.org.uk

Passenger Focus is the operating
name of the Rail Passengers Council