

Independent national passenger watchdog

Passenger Voice Rail



Summer 2010

East Midlands

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East Midlands passengers talk disruption

The way train operating companies (TOCs) handle disruption consistently falls short of passengers' expectations.

In the Spring 2010 National Passenger Survey only 35% of Great Britain's passengers said they were happy with this aspect of train services. To provide constructive feedback from passengers to TOCs, Passenger Focus has set up a nationwide disruption

panel to collate responses with around 1000 passengers acting as reporters.

East Midlands Trains has used the feedback to overhaul its disruption and communications plans, which include improvements to public announcement equipment, help points and customer information screens. Detailed comments on East Coast delays have been fed

into the Guards' Standards training, delivery of new software for the screens at Durham should improve their poor performance, and East Coast and Network Rail have created a joint disruption booklet to clarify responsibilities.

Passenger Focus plans to re-release its research report from the disruption panel later this year.



Passengers more satisfied with East Midlands rail services

Passengers travelling in the East Midlands have rated the region's railways as part of the independent watchdog's National Passenger Survey (NPS).

Passenger Focus's NPS, in which over 56,000 passengers participate each year, gives a clear indication of how satisfied passengers are with East Midlands Trains (86%), East Coast (88%), CrossCountry (85%), Northern (82%) and Virgin Trains' (90%) services.

East Midlands Trains' overall satisfaction increased five points, the highest result achieved since the start of the franchise in November 2007. Several aspects of its services were also rated higher by its passengers.

As more trains arrive on time, Britain's rail passengers are becoming more satisfied. Many of the region's train companies scored better on value for money, following many fares staying the same or even falling

in January 2010 as a consequence of the lower inflation rate in mid-2009. Particularly good news is passengers say East Midlands Trains has delivered on their priority of improving value for money (up seven points to 52%) and how well the company handles delays – up an impressive 14% points to 51%.

These results show a pretty good picture of the region's railway. The NPS is one of the most cost effective ways of driving improvements for passengers. The results allow valuable comparisons between routes and train companies.

Passenger Focus is now working with train companies to improve those areas passengers have identified as being problematic.

Passenger Focus's Spring 2010 National Passenger Survey can be downloaded from www.passengerfocus.org.uk or contact 0300 123 2350 or email info@passengerfocus.org.uk for a printed version.

Spring 2010

Train Company	Overall satisfaction	Improvement in % satisfied or good since Spring 2009	Decline in % satisfied since Spring 2009
Great Britain result	83% up 2%	Value for money (8%)	Cleanliness of the outside of the train (2%)
East Coast	88%	Connections with other forms of public transport (5%) The availability of staff on the train (5%)	No significant decline
East Midlands Trains	86% (up 5%)	How well the train company handles delays (14%)	No significant decline
CrossCountry	85%	Value for money (6%)	Train toilet facilities (7%)
London Midland	86% (up 8%)	Train frequency (11%) Punctuality/reliability (11%) Value for money (11%)	No significant decline
Northern Rail	82%	Value for money (6%)	Connections with other forms of public transport (5%)
Virgin Trains	90% (up 4%)	Punctuality/reliability (10%)	No significant decline

News roundup

New depot promises passengers reliability

Passenger Focus is looking for improved services for East Midlands Trains' (EMT) passengers following the opening of a new £22 million depot at Etches Park, Derby. The new maintenance facility for EMT's Meridian fleet should increase reliability, partly because EMT will no longer have to rely on other train operating companies for some maintenance.

Ticket machine research

Passenger Focus's research on the benefits and shortcomings of ticket vending machines (TVMs) and queuing times at stations is being finalised.

The research looks at the link between queuing times at booking offices and asks why passengers queue to speak to a member of staff when there is no queue for a TVM. What is it about some TVM programs that passengers find off-putting and drives them to wait longer to buy their ticket from the booking office? The need for reassurance is compounded by the complexity of tickets and fares. If you would like a copy of the research, contact info@passengerfocus.org.uk or see www.passengerfocus.org.uk

East Midlands car parks under review

Passenger Focus has been exploring passenger satisfaction and usage of station car parks in the East Midlands to inform its input to Network Rail's East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy.

The strategy is intended to help the industry plan rail services into the future and car parking has been identified in the strategy as needing investment. Passenger Focus therefore looked at passenger views of car parks at 15 stations in the East Midlands Government Office area and along the Midland Main Line route to London St Pancras. Working with TravelWatch East Midlands, Passenger Focus has also audited use of 42 stations.

Passenger Focus's report will be launched this summer and will cover passenger views on pricing and paying for parking, capacity and security.

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager, said: "The Spring 2010 National Passenger Survey found that across Great Britain only 48% of pas-

sengers said they were satisfied with car parking at the station. This research will be invaluable in helping the industry plan into the future and address some of its passengers' concerns."



Photo courtesy of First Capital Connect

Lincoln plans scrapped

Passenger Focus has raised concerns about East Coast's decision to drop a proposed two-hourly direct Lincoln to London service.

The new service had been expected to start in May 2011.

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager said: "Passengers in Lincoln will be deeply disappointed that the introduction of the two-hourly service will not now happen, although there will be one East Coast train each way between Lin-

coln and London from May 2011. Sadly, Lincoln passengers will continue to get a raw deal for much of the day – if the franchise operator won't run Lincoln to London, perhaps another operator should take up the mantle? In addition to Lincoln itself, the implications for the level of service at Newark, Grantham, Peterborough and Stevenage – where the Lincoln trains would have formed an integral part of the overall service – will have to be considered carefully."

East Coast rail deal review

Passenger Focus is calling for the new East Coast rail franchise to tackle passengers' top priorities – punctuality and value for money – when the Government looks for a new operator.

The independent passenger watchdog has responded to Government consultation on what should be included in the franchise. Passengers also highlighted the importance of getting a seat, with it being their third priority for improvement.

Based on research with over 6000 passengers, the independent passenger watchdog has recommended that the new train company report on the number of trains actually arriving on time – not just those arriving within 10 minutes. Punctual-

ity should also be measured at intermediate stations along the route as well as at the end destination.

Passenger Focus has also called for measures to improve passenger satisfaction with value for money, including introducing a logical, transparent and fair ticketing system which allows passengers more flexibility at an affordable price.

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager, said: "Passengers using East Coast trains have told us that they're generally happy with rail services but there are areas that they want to see improved, specifically punctuality and value for money. The next franchise must build on the relatively high levels of passenger satisfaction achieved to

date to score even higher levels of passenger satisfaction – passengers certainly won't want quality and standards to slip."

Passenger Focus is also calling for timetable changes which

include more evening and weekend trains; capped car-parking charges; and a commitment that replacement buses during engineering works are used only as a last resort.

