

Independent national passenger watchdog

Passenger Voice Rail



Spring 2011

East Midlands

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Autumn 2010

Train company	Overall satisfaction	Most significant improvement in satisfaction since Autumn 2009	Decline in % satisfied since Autumn 2009
Great Britain result	84%	Value for money (4%)	No significant decline
CrossCountry	84%	No significant improvement	The upkeep/repair of station buildings/platforms (5%)
East Coast	89%	Connections with other forms of public transport (7%)	Punctuality/reliability (7%)
East Midlands Trains	88%	Connections with other train services (13%)	No significant decline
London Midland	86%	The attitude and helpfulness of station staff; value for money (7%)	Upkeep and repair of the train, cleanliness of the inside of the train (5%)
Virgin Trains	90%	The frequency of trains (4%)	No significant decline

Liverpool - Norwich satisfaction at 94%

Passenger Focus has welcomed the impressive improvement in passenger satisfaction scores on the East Midlands Trains' (EMT) Liverpool-Norwich service, which links Merseyside with Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Peterborough and Norwich.

The latest National Passenger Survey shows that passengers travelling on the route are among the most satisfied in the country with a 94% overall score. This has increased from 73.7% recorded in the Autumn 2008 survey.

EMT welcomed news from passengers saying: "This is extremely pleasing and reflects the improvements we have made to the train fleet, capacity and timetable on this route".

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager, said: "This is a good example of a train company addressing its passengers' concerns, as well as

Punctuality drops

The Autumn 2010 National Passenger Survey shows that passenger satisfaction with punctuality on East Coast dropped seven percentage points to 83%. On journeys between London and the East Midlands/East of England satisfaction with punctuality was 76%. Scores were better for London to Scotland/North East journeys (87%) and London to Yorkshire journeys (85%).

Industry performance statistics showed that for the period between 9 January and 5 February 2011 punctuality dropped from 89.7% to 80.9%.

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager (pictured), called on Network Rail and East Coast to re-double efforts to run a punctual service.

He commented: "Delivering trains on time is key to keeping passengers

happy. There are days when East Coast punctuality is high, but there are too many days of significant disruption. The challenge for East Coast is to be consistently punctual.

"However, these figures only show part of the story. No information is available about trains running behind schedule at stations along the route. And anyway, most passengers don't think of 10 minutes late as 'on time'. Passenger Focus's research shows that satisfaction on longer-distance journeys starts to drop after only four to six minutes of delay."



Photo courtesy of East Midlands Trains

May 2011 timetable

Big changes to the East Coast train timetable, which covers London to Peterborough, Doncaster, Leeds, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow are planned from 22 May 2011. Passenger Focus encourages passengers to check what it means for them – the new timetables can be viewed at www.eastcoast.co.uk/22May.

The timetable introduces new off-peak trains meaning more seats; it reduces the journey time for some passengers; it starts a new route between Lincoln and London King's Cross; and it provides an additional train from London to Harrogate.

Passenger manager Guy Dangerfield said: "This will be the biggest change to the East Coast timetable for many years and there are winners and losers. If you use East Coast, I recommend that you see what the 22 May timetable means for you. Please let Passenger Focus know what you think at www.passengerfocus.org.uk/contact-us.

"Many passengers will welcome these improvements, but there are downsides and the original proposals promised more.

"It is also very frustrating that the rail industry has failed to consult passengers effectively over these changes. For instance, the Saturday and Sunday timetables have been subject to no consultation at all."

The downsides include:

- Many journeys from intermediate stations will be slower, and some will now involve a change of trains
- Although designed to repeat every hour, the timetable has trains missing, resulting in gaps in service of up to three hours for some passengers
- There will be a knock-on impact on passengers making local journeys.

Original promises not being delivered:

- The original standard journey time was to be two hours and 10 minutes from London King's Cross to Leeds and vice versa – from 22 May it will be two hours and 15 minutes, faster than some current trains, but slower than others
- The original proposal was to run a train from Lincoln to London every two hours – there will be only one each day in each direction.

Mr Dangerfield concluded: "On many parts of the East Coast route the timetable is made up of trains run by more than one company. The rail industry's inability to consult on the totality of the new timetable is deeply disappointing."



Helping passengers with complaints

Passenger Focus's advice team (PAT) has now secured more than £59,800 in compensation for passengers this financial year.

Where a passenger and a train company cannot resolve a complaint, the watchdog's passenger advice team will mediate, where appropriate, in an effort to get a better outcome for the individual. While passengers were offered just £9250 originally, after Passenger Focus stepped in and negotiated with the train company, it was able to get an extra £50,600 for passengers between April 2010 and January 31 2011.

The passenger advice team meets each train company on a

regular basis in a bid to resolve passengers' issues, secure 'goodwill gestures' and feedback to customer service teams on how they can better respond to passenger complaints.

Passenger Focus also asks passengers how satisfied they were with the service they receive from the watchdog itself. During the first quarter of 2010-2011, 84% said they were happy with Passenger Focus's handling of their appeal. 86% said they were satisfied during the summer and 95% at the end of last year.

Passengers can get help from the passenger advice team by emailing info@passengerfocus.org.uk or calling 0300 123 2350.

London and South East plans on the table

Passenger Focus has provided feedback on the industry's long-term plans for the London and South East rail network.

Rail User Groups (RUGs) from across the region took the opportunity to hear latest plans and feedback on proposals for the region's railway network at a meeting joint-hosted by Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and Network Rail.

Network Rail published a draft of the 'second generation' Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for London and the South East and Passenger Focus has now responded

to the consultation. Passenger research demonstrates a number of factors that the RUS must seek to address. These include:

- punctuality and reliability of the trains
- delivery of sufficient capacity, particularly sufficient seats and minimising overcrowding
- adequate frequency of trains to meet passenger needs.

Provision of information, particularly during disruption, and the way delays are handled are also highly significant issues for passengers.