

# Improving the passenger experience

In addition to influencing the transport policies' of governments we also seek to bring about practical improvements for rail passengers. Our twelve passenger link managers based across Great Britain meet regularly with train operating companies and Network Rail to raise issues and opportunities to improve the experience of passengers travelling by train. Some of these improvements are small affecting just one station and others improve the experience of a whole journey.

It is often through 'passenger contacts' - a mixture of interested individuals and local rail user groups, that passenger link managers find out about local issues so thanks also goes to them.

Below is a list of 107 improvements we helped to gain for passengers during 2006-07:

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## Fares and tickets

|   | Issue   | Passenger benefit  |
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| 1 | <p>First Great Western wanted to introduce a new compensation arrangement from 1 April 2006 called 'delay repay', which would mean that passengers would receive compensation on every delay exceeding a set amount of time, regardless of the type of ticket purchased.</p> <p>Although not against such a scheme, Passenger Focus raised concerns that season ticket holders in particular would be disadvantaged, as passengers suffering regular delays up to one minute under the threshold would be excluded from compensation that they are entitled to now if the train company's performance fails to meet targets. Passenger Focus wanted to ensure safeguards were built into the passenger charter to protect them.</p> | <p>After Passenger Focus raised its concerns, First Great Western agreed to retain the existing arrangements to allow an internal working party to be set up, to review the passenger charter and make recommendations for a fairer policy to be produced.</p> <p>This meant that in the interim, passengers could continue to receive the compensation they are due, from a train company that is currently suffering from poor performance.</p>  |
| 2 | <p>The Passengers' Charter proposed by First Capital Connect for the start of its franchise on 1 April 2006 contained elements that Passenger Focus considered to be less favourable to passengers than that operated by the previous operators Thameslink and WAGN. One issue was that under the 'delay repay' scheme, the First Capital Connect Charter proposed to not compensate passengers for delays due to incidents deemed outside the rail industry's control.</p>   | <p>Passenger Focus raised strong objections with First Capital Connect, who agreed that 'delay repay' should apply to all instances of delay over 30 minutes, regardless of the cause. From 1 April 2006, passengers who apply for compensation in writing now receive 50% of their ticket price for delays over 30 minutes and 100% of their ticket price for delays over 60 minutes. In addition, First Capital Connect agreed that if passengers on a particular route suffer a sustained period of poor punctuality, it will consider compensation over and above the minimum required under the 'delay repay' scheme.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Passengers were unable to book 'value' (discounted advance purchase) fares to and from Dunbar, Morpeth or Dronfield using the Virgin Trains website, as these stations had not been added to the 'value fares' option on the website following changes in the timetable.</p>   | <p>Passenger Focus identified that passengers could still book 'value' tickets for these journeys if they selected the 'buy tickets for any UK train' link, rather than the 'value fares' option. Virgin agreed to add guidance on the website homepage to clarify which option to choose for these specific 'value' fares.</p>  |
| 4 | <p>For passengers travelling from Peterborough station, there was a range</p>   | <p>Passenger Focus raised the issue with First Capital Connect before the new</p>  |

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|   | of tickets previously marked 'WAGN Railway Only', which could not be used on GNER services. When First Capital Connect took over the franchise from WAGN, Passenger Focus was keen to ensure these ticket restrictions continued to be clearly shown on tickets, to avoid any confusion for passengers about which services they could use.  | franchise commenced operation. As a direct result, First Capital Connect reprogrammed their ticketing system, and the tickets were printed with 'FCC only' from day one of the new franchise (1 April 2006).  |
| 5 | Passenger Focus became aware that in the second week of May 2006, most 'advance purchase' tickets were not available on the First Great Western website, at the station or via telesales. First Great Western responded that it was due to a technical glitch in their changeover to a new fares structure and that it may not be fixed before all the fares had been entered onto the system on 4 June. | Passenger Focus strongly objected to this response, arguing that these tickets should still be available to passengers during the changeover. First Great Western worked to rectify the situation and in one week re-instated their advance purchase system. It also brought forward the new fares structure so that passengers could use it to book tickets beyond 11 June 2006, allowing passengers to save money. Without intervention from Passenger Focus, many passengers would have been unable to book advance tickets from the second week in May to 11 June 2006. |
| 6 | Central Trains, with other parties, subsidise a bus replacement service in place of the Stoke to Stafford local train service. When this service commenced, discounted railcard fares and season ticket fares were not available on the new bus ticket machines, meaning passengers could not buy or use these fares at Stoke or Stafford for the intermediate stations.                                 | Passenger Focus contacted Central Trains and the affected rail tickets were re-instated from June 2006 on this key bus replacement service. Central also promoted the service more and revised the pocket timetables, giving passengers more detailed information.  |
| 7 | Following the annual fare increases in January 2006, North Cheshire Rail Users' Group (NCRUG) identified local fare increases which were above average. They contacted Arriva Trains Wales but were unable to resolve the issue.   | In May 2006, North Cheshire Rail Users' Group raised their concerns at a Passenger Focus conference for Rail User Groups in the North West. Arriva Trains Wales agreed to follow it up in consultation with Passenger Focus, and fares were subsequently reduced on some routes.  |
| 8 | Passenger Focus received feedback from a travel agent who was having to sell passengers two single tickets for return journeys from Halesworth to Peterborough and Saxmundham to Peterborough, as there was no return ticket available for passengers not returning on the same day.   | As a result of discussions between Passenger Focus and the Pricing Manager at train operator 'one', a new 'Standard Open Return' fare was introduced on 11 June 2006.   |

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| 9  | <p>Between Bury St. Edmunds and London, passengers can go via Ipswich or via Cambridge. However, despite the fare being the same on both routes, passengers could buy a ticket valid on only one of these routes, forcing passengers to return by the same route, even if less convenient. The former Rail Passengers Committee for Eastern England successfully campaigned for the introduction of a new 'any permitted' route ticket, however the old tickets were not removed from the ticketing system, causing confusion for passengers and rail staff.</p> | <p>As a result of discussions between Passenger Focus and the Pricing Manager at 'one', the now redundant "route Cambridge" and "route Ipswich" tickets were abolished on 10 June 2006.</p>   |
| 10 | <p>In May 2006, First Great Western introduced a new 'advance' ticket system widening the range of available 'advance purchase' tickets on their website. Our local Passenger Link Manager, asked some of his passenger contacts to test the system to try to find the cheapest available tickets. The passenger feedback was that the website was confusing and, in some areas, the links to cheaper options were not clear.</p>  | <p>The areas of concern were highlighted to First Great Western along with suggestions of minor changes which could simplify the process. The comments were well received and on 20 June, First Great Western confirmed that more links had been added to the website as well as colour coding to help passengers identify the cheaper fares section.</p>   |
| 11 | <p>On 11 June 2006, First Great Western changed the time restrictions on 'Saver' tickets between Bath and Plymouth, meaning that they could only be purchased from 09.30 onwards rather than 09.00 as previously. This meant that a ticket bought at 09.00 which previously cost £44, now cost £109. There had been no prior consultation about the change, and passengers could no longer get to Plymouth before lunchtime using a 'Saver' ticket.</p>  | <p>Passenger Focus contacted First Great Western, asking for a review of the decision. As a result of our intervention, 'Saver' tickets can now be purchased from 09.00 again, meaning the fare has also dropped back to £44.</p>   |
| 12 | <p>In June 2006, First Capital Connect changed the restrictions on 'Cheap Day Return' tickets, meaning that passengers could no longer use these tickets during the Monday-Friday evening peak between 16.30 hrs and 19.01 at 37 stations on its network. This meant that passengers had to either travel outside the restricted hours, or purchase a more expensive ticket. First Capital Connect stated the change was to manage acute overcrowding at these times, however there was no proper consultation</p>   | <p>Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch strongly opposed the changes and the lack of consultation, stating that passengers should not be penalised for overcrowded trains with higher fares or reduced travel options. As a result of meetings with senior management at First Capital Connect, the restrictions were lifted from 12 stations out of the original 37, effective 10 July 2006.</p> |

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|    | in advance of implementation.   |   |
| 13 | Northern Rail installed a new ticket issuing system at Blackpool North station in April 2006. However due to a technical error, Disabled Person's Railcards were not recognised, and when Northern Rail staff booked priority seats for passengers travelling on a Virgin train, the reservation did not go through properly and only ordinary seats were reserved. | One of our Passenger Link Managers picked up the issue following passenger complaints at the Northern and Virgin 'Passenger Panels' and escalated the issue with Northern. After a thorough investigation, Northern corrected the ticket machine software. Passengers using stations managed by Northern are now able to use their Disabled Person's Railcard, and pre-book priority seats for Virgin train services.   |
| 14 | As a result of 'Cheap Day Return' ticket restrictions brought in by First Capital Connect on evening peak trains, Passenger Focus was asked by the Managing Director of Silverlink Trains to provide information on passenger benefits of the introduction of a non-restricted ticket to compete with First Capital Connect.  | Discussions between Passenger Focus and Silverlink led to the introduction and promotion of a new ticket from St. Albans Abbey, changing at Watford, to London. There are no evening peak restrictions on this fare, offering more choice to passengers travelling to and from London.<br><br>In addition, this new fare puts pressure on other train companies in the area to look at similar fares and helps Passenger Focus in its campaign for First Capital Connect to remove its evening peak restrictions. |
| 15 | Following the introduction by First Capital Connect of evening peak travel restrictions for passengers using the 'Cheap Day Return' ticket, Passenger Focus pressed for alternative ticket options to be introduced as soon as possible for passengers wishing to travel in the evening peak.   | Due to pressure by Passenger Focus, First Capital Connect brought forward the introduction of a 'carnet' ticket, from December 2006 to September 2006, giving passengers a cheaper alternative to the standard day ticket between St Albans and London, and travel off-peak into London with return during the evening peak.  |
| 16 | In June 2006, First ScotRail introduced a new fares structure on selected routes. From Pitlochry to Perth, this meant the cheapest return ticket with no restrictions was increased to £12.90 (saver/standard   | Passenger Focus raised the issue with senior management at First ScotRail, who subsequently made changes to the 'Saver' ticket in September 2006, re-pricing it at £9.90.   |

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|    | ticket), from the previously available 'Cheap Day Return' costing £5.70.   |   |
| 17 | <p>A passenger informed our Passenger Link Manager that a notice had appeared at Bath railway station announcing the introduction of a new penalty fares scheme in the area from 1 October 2006.</p> <p>Passenger Focus is a statutory consultee when Penalty Fare schemes are being proposed. No such consultation had taken place on this occasion and on being presented with the detail of the scheme, Passenger Focus had a number of concerns.</p> | <p>Passenger Focus had discussions with senior management from First Great Western and representatives from the Department for Transport, resulting in this scheme (and two others) being postponed while the correct consultation process was applied. Several issues were also clarified in the schemes, including the provision of sufficient ticket machines at stations within the scheme area, and the policy for onboard ticket purchasing where tickets cannot be bought before boarding the train.</p> |
| 18 | <p>Passenger Focus' predecessor, RPC, was informed by a disability association in September 2005 that the sign directing passengers to the lift at Worcester Foregate Station was difficult to read and badly located for those with sight impairments.</p>  | <p>Passenger Focus followed this up with Network Rail and Central Trains who agreed to include new signage in a scheme to renew the lifts. The improvements were completed within the financial year and Passenger Focus received confirmation from the disability association that they had no complaints.</p>   |
| 19 | <p>A passenger bought a ticket using the internet for future travel and, for convenience, chose to collect it from the station he would be travelling from. When collecting his ticket, the passenger experienced difficulties resulting in several trips to the ticket office, in part due to lack of staff dealing with 'tickets on departure'.</p>  | <p>Passenger Focus raised the issue with Arriva Trains Wales, who subsequently briefed the individual staff member, and circulated instructions to all its ticket offices on how to deal with such queries. This should give greater confidence to passengers in using the option to collect tickets on departure.</p>  |
| 20 | <p>Soon after taking over the franchise, South Eastern Railways announced a review of car parking charges to bring them in line with market rates by September 2006. Our local Passenger Link Manager was concerned about substantial cost increases for passengers and formally asked for them to be deferred until the expected fare increases had taken place in 2007.</p>  | <p>South Eastern Railways agreed to defer the increases in car parking charges until after March 2007, giving car park users the benefit of the current rates for a further six months. It also agreed to share their proposals with Passenger Focus before making any changes.</p>   |

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| 21 | <p>Passenger Focus met with Chiltern Trains and the Department for Transport to obtain commitment to a costed action plan to raise performance in certain aspects, based on Chiltern's results from the Spring 2006 National Passenger Survey.</p>  | <p>Chiltern agreed to several initiatives which have since been implemented and approved by the Chiltern Passenger Board on 26 January 2007. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- season tickets can be purchased on the Chiltern website</li> <li>- ticket machines are available at every Chiltern station</li> <li>- the range of fares has been simplified</li> </ul> <p>Chiltern also committed to station improvements at Gerrards Cross and High Wycombe.</p> |
| 22 | <p>Although 'standard open tickets' on Virgin Trains services are often very expensive for passengers, there are good value fares available if passengers book in advance. Passenger Focus wanted to increase awareness of these fares and make it easier for passengers to find the best deal.</p>             | <p>Passenger Focus produced 10,000 leaflets called '7 Ways to Save on Virgin Trains' which were distributed at stations and made available on Passenger Focus' website. We have quotes on our website from passengers who have used our tips to save money, such as the one below:</p> <p><i>"By booking online in advance and using my Disabled Persons Railcard, I was able to travel with my family from Glasgow to Bath Spa for a total price of £42.55".</i></p>                   |
| 23 | <p>A passenger using Virgin Trains' online journey planner to find fares from Bromsgrove to London via Birmingham, noticed a big price increase for the 'Saver' ticket from £36.30 to £51.40. He asked Passenger Focus to look into it as it appeared out of proportion with other fare increases.</p>          | <p>Our Passenger Link Manager contacted Virgin Trains' Franchise Director who confirmed that the wrong fare had been entered into the fares system. This was rectified and the correct fare made available for passengers.</p>  |
| 24 | <p>Through working with the Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership, one of our Passenger Link Managers identified that the 'Duo' and 'Cheshire Day Ranger' promotional rail tickets that were available on many routes, could not be purchased on the Crewe to Manchester line.</p>                        | <p>After negotiation with Greater Manchester Public Transport Executive (GMPTE) and Northern Rail, both organisations agreed to extend the 'Cheshire Day Ranger' and 'Duo' tickets to the Crewe-Manchester line, making a better range of tickets available for passengers.</p>   |
| 25 | <p>Northern Rail introduced new ticket machines at some stations across its network, however, the local Passenger Link Manager and a Rail User Group noticed shortly afterwards that the ticket machines were charging passengers for a full price 'peak' fare when they were travelling in the 'off-peak'.</p> | <p>The issue was referred to Northern Rail and the machines were re-programmed as a result. Passengers are now able to buy tickets at the correct fare.</p>   |

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26 Fares between Ipswich and Cambrian Coast stations in Wales could be purchased for travel only via London, meaning that there was no discount for taking the non-London route, as is normally the case.

Our Passenger Link Manager contacted Central Trains, who are responsible for setting these fares, and they agreed to introduce a new 'not London' ticket from 2 January 2007. For passengers that now choose to travel on this route, they have an increased journey time by 45 minutes, but avoid changing trains in London and are able to save money on the fare with a 'Saver Return' costing £66.30 instead of £81.80, and a 'Standard Open Return' at £83.70 rather than £237.00.

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## Accessibility

|    | Issue  | Passenger benefit   |
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| 27 | After an audit carried out by Passenger Focus assessing the needs of passengers with disabilities, it emerged that only 30% of disabled passengers using First Capital Connect's assisted travel services received a follow-up call requesting feedback. Passenger Focus was concerned that First Capital Connect were missing out on valuable passenger feedback.   | As a result of discussions with Passenger Focus, First Capital Connect agreed to follow up 100% of assisted travel requests. This means all passenger feedback is captured, helping First Capital Connect improve the service they offer.   |
| 28 | A 16 year old blind passenger contacted Passenger Focus after encountering difficulties with First Great Western's disabled assistance services. He had made a complaint to the train company but was not satisfied with the response as problems continued to occur, an example being that he was left on the train after assistance had been booked. An initial enquiry by our Passenger Link Manager uncovered issues requiring short to medium term action, including high telephone charges incurred by the passenger in both booking assistance and trying to resolve his complaint. | Passenger Focus raised the matter directly with First Great Western's Customer Service Director, who agreed to personally investigate the shortcomings. As an immediate action, and while the new Passenger Charter was being finalised, a new freephone number was provided for passengers booking disabled assistance by phone or text, which was incorporated into the interim Passenger Charter. This initiative has since been promoted and accepted by some other train companies as best practice. |
| 29 | Passenger Focus' predecessor, the Rail Passengers Committee for Eastern England, was consulted by train operator 'one' as part of a consultation on minor improvements to station accessibility. The Rail Passengers Committee lobbied for level access to be provided to the waiting room on the 'island' platform at Ely Station, where there was a step.  | Ramp access to the waiting room was installed on the platform. As this platform is the main departure platform for London bound trains and is used for interchange for trains to/from Norwich, many passengers will benefit from the improved access.   |

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| 30 | A Passenger Link Manager noticed a poster from train operator c2c at Leigh-on-Sea Station stating that the lifts would only be available during peak hours Monday to Friday. No explanation was given as to why this was happening or whether it was a temporary measure. | Passenger Focus raised concerns with c2c, who acknowledged that because of a system fault, passengers were unable to contact staff in the event that they needed to call for assistance whilst in the lift. c2c corrected the fault allowing passengers to use the lift at all times and making the station fully accessible.   |
| 31 | Passenger Focus was concerned that TransPennine Express did not monitor the quality of service provided to passengers who requested assistance.   | As part of a project on accessibility, Passenger Focus had developed a questionnaire for train operators, which our Passenger Link Manager shared with TransPennine Express (TPE), also pointing out areas of best practice where the operator could improve. As a result, the Customer Services Manager launched an initiative to call back passengers after they have used the assistance services and developed a questionnaire for staff to follow during the call. The service commenced on 16 October 2006, with approximately 35 passengers using assistance services per month. |
| 32 | In Scotland, passengers requiring assistance with rail travel had to phone in advance and were charged for the call.  | Following on from a successful initiative with First Great Western to introduce freephone numbers for passenger assistance, our Passenger Link Manager for Scotland raised the issue with First ScotRail when their Passenger Charter was being reviewed. A freephone number for passenger assistance was introduced for First ScotRail passengers from 9 November 2006.  |
| 33 | Passenger Focus was aware of 'access for all' funding available for improvements to stations and was keen to encourage train operators to apply. In discussions with Silverlink, we continued to promote the fact that this funding was available.                        | After providing information to the train operator about the available funding, timescales and ways to apply, Silverlink made an application and successfully bid for funding to improve Highbury and Islington station under round two of the 'access for all' funds – securing improvements to the access of the station.  |

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## Access to the network

|    | Issue   | Passenger benefit   |
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| 34 | A Passenger Link Manager was made aware by Shrewsbury-Chester Rail Users Association that Network Rail had scheduled engineering works on the train line between Wrexham and Bidston for Sunday 23 July. This would potentially have disrupted the journeys of hundreds of spectators travelling to the Royal Liverpool Golf Course for the British Open.   | The Passenger Link Manager contacted Network Rail to ask for the work to be postponed, which Network Rail agreed to do.   |
| 35 | To help inform the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill which was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in September 2003, Passenger Focus and the Waverley Route Trust funded a study called 'Delivering an Innovative Borders Railway' to analyse the potential for the railway to be extended cost-effectively to communities without a rail service. The study recommended a new station at Stow, which the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill had not included. Written and oral evidence was given by Passenger Focus highlighting the need for a station at Stow, with support also given from Waverley Route Trust and Stow Station Supporters Group. | The Committee considering the Bill amended the Bill to allow for a new station at Stow, which was then passed by the Scottish Parliament. Construction for the new station is planned to commence in 2007 with the work to be completed in 2011.  |
| 36 | Services between Norwich and Lowestoft/Yarmouth were suspended for two weeks in Oct/Nov 2006 due to track renewal work. Passenger Focus was concerned to learn that during the suspension, train operator 'one' did not intend to provide alternative transport for passengers at Buckenham, as it is classed as a 'low usage' station.   | Recognising that Buckenham was a low usage station, our Passenger Link Manager proposed that 'one' provided a taxi for passengers travelling to/from Buckenham on an 'as required' basis. 'one' agreed to implement this during the suspension of services, and at no additional charge to passengers, thereby safeguarding the interests of affected passengers and maintaining the principle that replacement transport should be provided when the train service is suspended. |

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| 37 | <p>Passenger Focus convened a meeting with industry stakeholders to discuss ways to improve rail services to and from Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.</p>  | <p>As a result of the meeting, Network Rail and the Stadium agreed to share dates in advance to help schedule engineering works better in relation to major stadium events. In addition, First Great Western and Network Rail will participate in a Stadium Liaison Group. Passenger benefits should include a reduced chance of disruption and better co-ordination of information.</p> |
| 38 | <p>In a timetable revision in December 2006, First Great Western proposed the removal of stops at Severn Tunnel Junction on some of its Cardiff to Bristol Temple Meads services, including key morning and evening peak commuter services.</p> | <p>Passenger Focus negotiated with the train operator to have the stops reinstated, and brought the issue to public attention through media interviews, lobbying MPs/AMs and speaking at public meetings. As a result, the four key peak commuter services (two morning, two evening) were reinstated before the new timetable commenced.</p>  |

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## Station improvements

|    | Issue  | Passenger benefit  |
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| 39 | At Ipswich station, the waiting room on platform 2 was in need of repair. Glass slats were missing from the ventilation panel, resulting in draughts and discomfort for passengers.  | Passenger Focus raised the issue with the management team at 'one', who manages Ipswich station, and the repairs were subsequently carried out.  |
| 40 | A locomotive at Ipswich station was emitting excessive diesel fumes for 10-15 minutes over passengers waiting on the platform. The Passenger Link Manager also waiting at the station suspected the reason was that the train was faulty.  | Passenger Focus contacted Freightliner, who operated the particular locomotive, and received the following response from the Director of Safety and Personnel: " <i>[The locomotive] has been taken out of service and is being investigated for several defects which may have led to the excessive exhaust emissions that you witnessed.</i> " |
| 41 | A local initiative to provide extra car parking spaces at Ely Station resulted in the closure of the widely used step-free route between the station and the adjacent supermarket.   | After Passenger Focus raised the issue with the Business Director, Rural at 'one' requesting that the pedestrian access be re-opened, 'one' responded promptly and re-opened the popular access route.   |
| 42 | A leaking roof on platform four at Peterborough station made two benches and various standing areas unusable during wet weather.   | Our Passenger Link Manager contacted Network Rail's Route Director (London North Eastern). The repair work subsequently took place to the benefit of many passengers.  |
| 43 | Passenger Focus contacted a Group Station Manager at 'one' in October 2005 about a vandalised passenger help point at Harwich Town station, which is unstaffed. A subsequent visit to the station in April 2006 showed that the broken help point had been removed but not replaced. | Passenger Focus contacted 'one' again stressing that such a long delay in reinstalling the help point was unacceptable. Our Passenger Link Manager received confirmation on 26 June 2006 that the help point had been replaced and was in working order.   |
| 44 | In November 2005, a Passenger Link Manager and passenger contact at Hockley station in Essex noticed that some of the bike storage area roof had been vandalised and some perspex panels were missing from it.   | Our Passenger Link Manager raised the issue with train operator 'one', who replaced the entire corrugated perspex roof.  |

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| 45 | A passenger contact advised our Passenger Link Manager that at Tain station in Scotland, a notice stated that all trains to Inverness departed from platform 1, which was inaccurate as trains also departed for Inverness from platform 2. This led to passengers waiting at the wrong platform for some services.  | Passenger Focus raised the issue with First ScotRail who ordered new platform signs displaying the correct information. These are now in place.   |
| 46 | Due to building work at Leamington station, the cycle lockers were relocated but not moved back after the work was completed. A passenger complained unsuccessfully to Chiltern Trains and so wrote to Passenger Focus asking us to pursue the matter.   | Our Passenger Link Manager contacted the station manager on several occasions and eventually succeeded in obtaining improved cycle facilities for passengers in terms of security and weather proofing.   |
| 47 | The toilets at Preston and Lancaster stations were not being kept clean and hygienic, with overflowing sanitary bins and a lack of bins and hand drying facilities.  | Our Passenger Link Manager raised this with Virgin Trains who renegotiated the contract with their outsourced cleaning service provider. Sanitary bins are now emptied and cleaned weekly, instead of fortnightly, and the cleaning regime at these stations has been increased from hourly to half hourly.   |
| 48 | During a visit organised by one of our Passenger Link Managers to London Euston station with four passengers from her informal network, the group identified that the platforms for Virgin train services were not being announced until 10 minutes before the departure time. This was causing a rush of passengers to the platform and less mobile passengers were losing out in the race for a seat on the train. | Our Passenger Link Manager, along with members of her e-network of passengers and Virgin's Customer Panel raised the issue with Virgin management, who agreed it was a problem for many passengers. Virgin has since changed its policy and platforms are now announced as soon as the train has been prepared. This gives all passengers more time to board and particularly benefits passengers who are less mobile or who have children / luggage. |
| 49 | Passenger Focus met with rail passenger group representatives at Boston station, following regular concerns raised about its condition and as a result, sent a detailed report to Central Trains. Although the track was cleaned up shortly afterwards, a future visit revealed little other progress.   | After further pressure from Passenger Focus and others, Central Trains implemented a £50,000 facelift of the station, addressing the recommendations raised in our report. These included repainting the station, refurbishment of the toilets and a baby changing room. Our key recommendation of a dedicated staff member for cleaning and general maintenance was also carried out.  |
| 50 | In April 2007, First Great Western promoted 'First Minute Fares' for passengers buying 'advance purchase' tickets. Passengers who purchased these tickets via Fast Ticket machines found their tickets were not accepted at the automatic ticket barriers at London Paddington, meaning they had to seek staff assistance to enter or exit through the   | Passenger Focus brought the matter to the attention of senior management at First Great Western, who identified a software issue. As an interim measure, extra staff were placed at the ticket barriers during the peak travel periods and the fault was fixed on 11 August 2006.   |

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|    | barriers. This caused serious disruption and congestion particularly during 'peak' periods.  |   |
| 51 | At Morley station near Leeds, some lights on the footpath approach had been broken for some time, making the footpath less safe during winter and when it was dark. Northern Rail, Network Rail and the Council had been in dispute over who was responsible since Northern took the franchise in 2004 as ownership of the lights had been excluded from the station lease negotiations.   | Unresolved complaints from a local authority councillor were referred to Passenger Focus. One of our Passenger Link Managers facilitated a discussion between Northern Rail and Network Rail, during which Passenger Focus was able to persuade Network Rail to take on responsibility for the lights and carry out the repairs.        |
| 52 | The baby changing unit in Preston Station ladies toilet was ingrained with dirt and unfit for purpose. The plastic construction had minute indentations that trapped the dirt making it difficult to keep clean.   | After several meetings with the Virgin Business Manager, the baby changing unit was replaced with one which is easier to clean, benefiting mothers and babies.  |
| 53 | Perimeter hedges at the car parking facility of a rural station in the south west of England had become overgrown, providing a screen for thieves to steal from cars and increasing the fear of crime for passengers using the station at night. The local Rail Partnership had approached the local authority to cut back the foliage but was told that funding was not available. As a consequence, the issue was referred to Passenger Focus. | Passenger Focus discussed the problem as a potential community safety issue with the local Police Commander, who agreed to follow it up with his community safety panel. As a result, funding was released to substantially cut back the perimeter hedges, providing a safer environment for passengers using the car park and station. |
| 54 | At Atherstone, the train service was replaced with a bus service for some time, whilst the station was closed for improvements to the West Coast Main Line, and a shelter for passengers which was in disrepair was taken down to prevent further vandalism. In June 2006 the rail service was restored, but the shelter was not replaced.   | After raising the issue on several occasions with Central Trains, Passenger Focus was informed that the shelter has now been replaced.  |
| 55 | At Christchurch station, passengers complained about rubbish under a staircase which was unsightly and a potential fire risk. On reporting it to the South West Trains area manager, our Passenger Link Manager was informed that the area was very difficult to keep clean due to limited access and that due to problems blocking the gaps between stair treads, rubbish regularly fell through the gaps.                                      | The Passenger Link Manager successfully pursued the matter with South West Trains' Director and Area Manager, with the result that the rubbish was removed and a cleaning programme put in place. Our Passenger Link Manager is also now working with the local station manager to look at permanent options to adapt the stairs.       |

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| 56 | Over the past few years and particularly following the last winter frost, the pedestrian footpath between Peterborough City Centre and the station had become badly potholed, resulting in trip hazards.  | Our Passenger Link Manager sought urgent action from Network Rail as 'landlord' of the footpath, providing photographs as evidence. As a result, the whole path was resurfaced.  |
| 57 | An area of land belonging to Network Rail at Shenfield station had become heavily littered, creating a poor environment for passengers.   | Passenger Focus negotiated with Network Rail to clear the area, if station operator 'one' installed a litter bin. A new bin has now been provided on platform 5 at Shenfield station and the littered area has now been cleared.   |
| 58 | Southern had been asked by Passenger Focus to address health and safety issues at Seaford station, relating to trailing overhead wires and bird excrement on the platform.  | At a meeting with the station manager, Southern confirmed to Passenger Focus that action had been taken to remedy both problems, creating a safer and more pleasant environment for passengers and staff using the station.  |
| 59 | Although new 'passenger operated' lifts had been installed at Hove station, the lack of signage and their 'hidden' location behind the stairs meant that many passengers remained unaware and continued to struggle down the steps. In addition, notices relating to the old 'staff operated' lift telling passengers to call for assistance were not removed, despite being no longer necessary. | After several interventions by the Passenger Link Manager, a new hanging sign locating the lift was installed and obsolete signage was removed.  |
| 60 | Broken light bulbs on the footbridge at Collington station were not replaced as a result of a dispute about responsibility between Network Rail, Southern and the local authority.  | A passenger link manager highlighted the health and safety implications of the poorly lit bridge, with the result that Southern replaced the lights rather than continue the dispute.  |
| 61 | Residents' association 'Friends of New Milton' had been working with the local station manager to secure funding for decoration of their station. However, they had failed to make progress and did not receive a response to emails with other managers in South West Trains offering to provide workers to undertake the work if South West Trains provided £300 for materials.                 | A meeting was set up at the station with Passenger Focus, Hampshire County Council, South West Trains and the Friends of New Milton, and several enhancements were agreed. The work was joint funded by South West Trains and Hampshire County Council. Friends of New Milton made arrangements for Community Service workers to undertake additional work to enhance the station appearance. Work completed to date comprises remarking of the car park and painting the station. |

# Improving the passenger experience

## Train service improvements

|    | Issue  | Passenger benefit  |
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| 62 | A restrictive specification for the new rail franchise in the south west of England meant that the proposed timetable changes for December 2006 were met with negative passenger reactions.  | As part of a consultation process by First Group with passengers and stakeholders, Passenger Focus raised concerns, which were also shared with the Department for Transport and the Secretary of State. As a result, a new timetable proposal was announced on 3 April 2006 addressing many of the concerns raised, including re-introduction of the semi-fast services between Exeter and London, re-introduction of more three hour services between London and Plymouth and the retention of the half-hourly Cardiff services. |
| 63 | Network Rail's ten year strategy for the Brighton Main Line (Brighton Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy) proposed that Hastings and Bexhill to London Victoria services would be cut short at Eastbourne, disadvantaging passengers at the eastern end of the route. Hastings and Bexhill had also been designated as regeneration areas, which would be adversely affected by the proposal.            | Passenger Focus objected to the proposal in its response to the consultation and worked with the local rail user groups to lobby for services to be improved. On 23 May 2006, Derek Twigg MP, Minister for Rail, announced that following considerable improvement in rail performance and the introduction of over 700 new trains on the Southern network, the Hastings and Bexhill services to London Victoria would not be stopped short at Eastbourne.   |
| 64 | Restricted hygiene tank facilities at Carlisle station meant that for Leeds-Settle-Carlisle trains, passengers were often left with no toilet facilities for journeys of approximately 2.5 hours. The Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line group were concerned about the potential negative impact on the popular service in the summer months and brought the matter to the attention of Passenger Focus. | Passenger Focus facilitated discussions with Northern Rail, the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line group and the Station Manager at Carlisle. As a result, the tanking facility for Northern trains at Carlisle station have been improved, improving the availability of toilets on this service.  |
| 65 | In April 2006, one of our Passenger Link Managers noticed a number of faulty 'at seat' power points on GNER trains. After raising the issue with GNER's Chief Operating Officer, a comprehensive one week check of all services arriving at London Kings Cross revealed 9% of trains had some defective power sockets.   | As a result, GNER produced an internal report reviewing its maintenance arrangements for 'at seat' power sockets, attributing Passenger Focus as having first highlighted the problem. GNER passengers now experience more reliable power point facilities in both standard and first class seating areas.   |

# Improving the passenger experience

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| 66 | Due to a timetable change in December 2005, passengers travelling to Lancaster on the Leeds to Morecambe train had to change trains at Carnforth. The connection times however were short and passengers often missed their connection in the peak as the train from Leeds frequently departed late. Passenger Focus became aware of the problem via individual complaints and the local rail user group, with many feeling that Northern Rail could have done more to hold services at Carnforth, allowing passengers to make the connection. | Northern agreed to issue instructions to train conductors to contact their control room if passengers on the train wanted to connect at Carnforth, enabling the train to be held at the station where possible. In addition, Northern gave the train leaving Leeds greater priority to ensure more trains depart on time. These changes allow more passengers to make the connection at Carnforth.  |
| 67 | Our Passenger Link Manager was advised by a passenger contact of a connection between a train and ferry at Oban, where on summer Saturdays the ferry service left only 9 minutes after the train arrived, causing many passengers to miss the connection.  | Following discussions between Passenger Focus, First ScotRail and Caledonian MacBrayne, Caledonian MacBrayne agreed to change the departure time of the ferry from summer 2006, giving passengers 24 minutes to make their connection.  |
| 68 | Passenger Focus was informed of train operator c2c's plans to make major changes to its timetable from December 2006 and persuaded c2c to consult with passengers and rail user groups to get feedback. Passengers wanted more trains to stop at West Ham and Limehouse, and passengers at Laindon were particularly unhappy that they would lose all the trains that started at Laindon.  | Passenger Focus championed the views of the passengers and local passenger group (Laindon Passengers Action Group) and ensured that c2c responded to their feedback. We also submitted a 3000 signature petition and persuaded the train operator to meet with the local group. As a result, several improvements were made, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one morning peak train starting at Laindon was re-instated, providing 560 additional seats,</li> <li>• more stops provided at West Ham and Limehouse</li> <li>• improved connections at Pitsea and Upminster</li> <li>• more carriages on the 07.48 Southend Central to Fenchurch Street train.</li> </ul> |
| 69 | The South West franchise consultation document proposed the removal of the service between Bristol and Salisbury, causing considerable passenger concern and objection.  | In our response to the consultation, Passenger Focus lobbied for the retention of the service, contributing to the outcome that the service was included in the final franchise specification as a 'priced option'. We also provided all bidders with a report produced by the former Rail Passengers Council in 2005 highlighting the importance of this service, called " <i>West Country-Waterloo The Real Alternative</i> " and pushed for their bid submissions to include a robust priced option. When the franchise winner was announced in September 2006, Passenger Focus' and other stakeholders' representations resulted in the   |

# Improving the passenger experience

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|    |   | Bristol-Salisbury service being retained.  |
| 70 | A passenger complained that timetable changes by Southern and South Eastern Trains meant that a connection at Warrior Square was removed and a journey to work that had been made for 19 years was no longer possible.  | Our Passenger Link Manager raised the issue with Southern, and from December 2006, the timetable was altered so that the train arrived 2 minutes earlier, restoring the connection. Southern also committed to future consideration of the impact of planned changes to timetables on passengers who make journeys involving more than one train company.  |
| 71 | Passengers travelling on Virgin Cross Country trains raised concerns that when problems occurred with seat reservations, on-board staff did not provide sufficient help to passengers.  | Our Passenger Link Manager raised the issue with Virgin which the 'Virgin Passenger Panel' reinforced in discussions on improvements to on-board customer service. Virgin confirmed it would give more staff training on the issue of helping passengers with seat reservations when problems occur. Feedback from the 'passenger panel' also helped staff focus on passenger perceptions of the helpfulness of staff. |
| 72 | c2c introduced a major timetable change on 11 December 2006. Due to reservations about how well it would work, Passenger Focus secured the commitment that c2c would monitor it closely. Despite a number of tweaks proposed by c2c, passengers continued to suffer severe disruption in both the morning and evening peaks. Following widespread passenger opposition and feedback, our passenger link manager contacted c2c's managing director to recommend the old timetable be reinstated. | c2c reintroduced the old timetable on 7 January 2007 and also agreed to explore ways to implement some of the other benefits it had envisaged from the new timetable.  |
| 73 | The Marshlink and Uckfield lines had suffered from longstanding crowding issues exacerbated by trains breaking down within a small fleet.   | Passenger Focus lobbied Southern and fed back instances of passenger dissatisfaction, which contributed to Southern producing a business case for the lease of an additional two-carriage train to enhance fleet reliability and strengthen specific services on the Marshlink line.   |
| 74 | Virgin Cross Country passengers raised concerns with our Passenger Link Manager that it was often difficult to locate on-board train staff to assist with a range of issues, with some passengers reporting having not seen the train manager for two hours during a journey.   | Our Passenger Link Manager took up the issue with Virgin, who agreed to follow the matter up through staff training. The training has now taken place and staff are more visible on the trains.  |

# Improving the passenger experience

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| 75 | Passengers raised issues with the designated 'quiet coach' on Virgin 'Pendolino' trains (coach B) as passengers from coach A were walking through the quiet coach to access refreshment facilities or find their seat, which was causing a disturbance. | The Virgin West Coast Passenger Panel discussed the issue with Virgin managers, and Virgin agreed to relocate the quiet coach to carriage A at the end of the train. This was implemented from November 2006 and meant that there is no longer disturbance from through traffic in the quiet coach. |
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# Improving the passenger experience

## Information standards

|    | Issue  | Passenger benefit  |
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| 76 | At London Liverpool Street station, Network Rail proposed the closure of the staffed customer information point, to be replaced, on an unspecified date, with a new facility at a better location. This would mean a period where no such facility was available for passengers.   | Passenger Focus (and London TravelWatch) issued a formal objection to Network Rail, stating that the new facility must be available before the old information point was closed. As a result, Network Rail agreed to move the existing customer information point to a new location until the new facility was available to replace it.  |
| 77 | A Passenger Link Manager noticed that travel information posters for journeys to the English Marches and South Wales displayed at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Oxford Road stations were incorrect due to overrunning engineering works on the West Coast Main Line.   | The Passenger Link Manager alerted the relevant train operators and Network Rail, resulting in the posters being updated. In addition, other information posters such as engineering work notices were checked and station staff were given updates to enable them to better inform passengers.  |
| 78 | Following a change of train operator from Northern Rail to TransPennine Express on the Manchester Airport to Blackpool service, a passenger reported a lack of new timetables available at Blackpool North station.  | Although TransPennine Express Customer Services confirmed 35 boxes of timetables had been delivered to the station, the passenger reported there were still none on display. Following a communication to the station manager to rectify this, the passenger confirmed that they have been available.  |
| 79 | <p>A passenger contacted our Passenger Link Manager for Scotland about a complicated journey made from North Berwick to Singer, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• depart North Berwick 06.49, arrive Haymarket 07.28</li> <li>• depart Haymarket 07.34, arrive Glasgow Queen Street 08.23</li> <li>• walk to Glasgow Central, depart Glasgow Central 08.46, arrive Partick 08.53</li> <li>• depart Partick 09.00, arrive Singer 09.15.</li> </ul> <p>On explaining to the passenger that direct trains to Singer actually departed from Glasgow Queen Street, the Passenger Link Manager discovered National Rail Enquiries had produced this journey plan.</p> | <p>After contacting National Rail Enquiries, the Journey Planner has been amended to show the correct journey information, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• depart North Berwick 06.49, arrive Edinburgh 07.22</li> <li>• depart Edinburgh 07.45 , arrive Glasgow Queen Street 08.36</li> <li>• depart Glasgow Queen Street 08.53, arrive Singer 09.15.</li> </ul> |

# Improving the passenger experience

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| 80 | One of the customer information help points at Bedworth station had been vandalised, which a passenger raised with Central Trains and Passenger Focus. A bus replacement service was in operation at that station however, so Central responded that the help point would be replaced as part of general renovation work once the station was back up and running. After train services had resumed at Bedworth, Passenger Focus discovered the help point had still not been replaced. | After following up with Central Trains on numerous occasions, Passenger Focus was informed that Thalys had completed the work on the customer help point, making information more readily available for passengers.   |
| 81 | Our Passenger Link Manager for Wales noticed a post on a disability blog on the BBC website, highlighting out-of-date information regarding wheelchair access at some of Arriva Trains Wales' stations in West Wales.   | Passenger Focus brought the matter to the attention of Arriva Trains Wales' accessibility officer who found out that station information was not being systematically updated when improvement work had taken place. Details on the specific stations have now been updated, and processes for recording station improvements have been improved.   |
| 82 | Passenger Focus has been asking train operators to provide safety information on long-distance journeys in more ways than just in writing.  | First Great Western has issued on-train passenger safety information leaflets in Braille form, and will be highlighting it with ATOC as best practice for other train operators to introduce.   |
| 83 | Passenger Focus reported to Arriva Trains Wales on several occasions that the automated help points at some unstaffed stations were giving out the wrong time (an hour out).  | Arriva Trains Wales reset the help points to the correct time. It also confirmed that it was a repeat fault and is seeking a permanent solution.  |
| 84 | In North Cheshire, the automated help points at Helsby and Frodsham stations, which are operated by Arriva Trains Wales, were giving out information in Welsh, and then English. The local rail user group highlighted that, while appropriate in Wales, it was unnecessary in Cheshire.  | Passenger Focus raised the matter with Arriva Trains Wales, who removed the Welsh language announcements from these station help points.  |
| 85 | In April 2004, the former Rail Passengers Committee for Eastern England secured agreement with Central Trains to use specific wording to advise passengers travelling to Stansted Airport about how long to allow between arrival and flight. In September 2006, one of our Passenger Link Managers noticed that the old, less clear wording was still on the National Rail Enquiries website.  | Within 24 hours of contacting Central Trains, the agreed wording was in place on the Journey Planner, telling passengers " <i>Central Trains advise passengers that 1 hour 45 minutes should be allowed between the scheduled arrival time of the train at Stansted Airport and the latest check-in time for the flight, as specified by the airline. This means, for example, that if the latest check-in time for the flight is 14:00 hours, Central Trains advise that a train is taken that is scheduled to arrive at Stansted Airport at or before</i> |

# Improving the passenger experience

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|    |   | 12:15 hours".   |
| 86 | First Capital Connect reviewed its passenger information standards for trains with only a driver as on-board personnel (driver only operated), and was looking to introduce a 'three minute rule' meaning that the driver would give an announcement to passengers within three minutes of a delay occurring. | Passenger Focus pushed First Capital Connect to introduce a 'two minute rule' following recommendations in a report by the former Rail Passengers Council, and although initially reluctant, the operator has now updated all driver training manuals and included it in driver training. This gives passengers information from the driver, within two minutes, that there is a delay, what the cause is (if known) and when more information will be given. |
| 87 | An annual review of First ScotRail's 'Passenger Charter' led to Passenger Focus making suggestions for improvement.   | A number of improvements put forward by Passenger Focus were incorporated, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details of reservable routes (not previously included)</li> <li>• making a complaint</li> <li>• additional contact details added where previously only postal address given (i.e. text phone, telephone, email)</li> <li>• more information for passengers with cycles on non-reservable services.</li> </ul>                  |
| 88 | As part of redevelopment work at Edinburgh Waverley station, some services from Fife, Stirling and Carnoustie will depart from and terminate at Edinburgh Haymarket, meaning passengers have to change at Haymarket for connections to Waverley, Fife, Stirling and Carnoustie.                               | After discussions with Passenger Focus, Network Rail agreed to publish four connections guides for passengers during the disruption, covering the period of 27 December 2006 to 18 November 2007 and available on trains, at stations and online. See <a href="http://www.networkrail.co.uk/edinburgh">www.networkrail.co.uk/edinburgh</a> for the Haymarket connection guide.  |
| 89 | Our passenger advice team received a complaint from a passenger that all the screens at Stirling station displayed security messages regarding luggage at the same time, meaning passengers could miss their scheduled service due to a delay in departure information being displayed.                       | Passenger Focus raised the matter with First ScotRail, who has now installed a technical solution so that the security message is only shown on one screen at a time, making train service information available to passengers on the other screens.  |

# Improving the passenger experience

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| 90 | <p>Passenger Focus carried out a review of Silverlink's information provision during times of disruption and found it did not have any standards in place.</p>   | <p>Passenger Focus pushed for Silverlink to adopt the 'two minute rule' recommended in the former Rail Passengers Council publication "<i>Passenger Information: what, when, where and how</i>", where passengers are given information by the driver within two minutes of disruption occurring. Silverlink has now implemented this standard, benefiting passengers with improved information.</p>  |
| 91 | <p>BBC Breakfast regional television news bulletins display rail travel information at the bottom of the screen. Our Passenger Link Manager noticed that in the Yorkshire area, information was being given for GNER, Northern and Virgin services, but TransPennine Express services were not being shown, despite the large number of services operated in the region.</p>           | <p>Passenger Focus raised the matter with the BBC Regional Advisory Group and TransPennine Express, and since 18 September 2006, travel information regarding all rail operators is shown. The BBC has also added the National Rail Enquiries phone number at the end of the rail information, which is additionally helpful for passengers.</p>  |
| 92 | <p>A Passenger Link Manager noticed a First Great Western poster at Reading station giving incorrect information to passengers, stating that compensation is not given for delays of less than one hour. However, for journeys on the old First Great Western Link, compensation can be claimed for delays of more than 30 minutes if the journey length is greater than one hour.</p> | <p>The error was reported to First Great Western, and the poster was removed, along with other similar posters, therefore avoiding confusion for passengers as to whether or not they are entitled to compensation. First Great Western also confirmed that they are working on a new combined compensation package for passengers which will be passed to Passenger Focus for our comments.</p>  |
| 93 | <p>Passengers raised concerns to Passenger Focus that electronic seat reservations were not always working on Virgin Cross Country trains.</p>   | <p>The matter was raised with Virgin by the Passenger Link Manager and reinforced at a Passenger Panel meeting with Virgin. On 24 November 2006, Virgin confirmed that the error was due to a failure in the telephone link between the on train system and the central computer, as the system rechecked reservations during a journey. Improvements were made to the reliability of the reservation system, preventing the system from losing reservations.</p> |
| 94 | <p>Passengers on Virgin Cross Country services complained that other passengers continued to use mobile phones and electronic equipment while sitting in the quiet coach.</p>  | <p>After highlighting the issue with Virgin, it confirmed on 24 November 2006 that customer service staff briefings now include an announcement heard only in the quiet coach asking passengers to comply. Previously announcements were inconsistent or to the whole train, so passengers were not always aware they were in the quiet zone.</p>   |

# Improving the passenger experience

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| 95 | <p>In meetings with the Route Director for Silverlink Metro and also London TravelWatch, problems were identified with passengers using Oyster cards on Silverlink Metro services, when they were not valid. Passengers were being given penalty fares and ticket inspectors were finding it difficult to explain the rules regarding Oyster cards.</p>  | <p>Passenger Focus raised the issue during a meeting with London TravelWatch, who advised us that ATOC (The Association of Train Operating Companies) was producing an Oyster specific leaflet and poster to help. This had not been signed off by Transport for London however, and was not widely known. After pushing ATOC to follow up sign-off with Transport for London, Passenger Focus was sent a finalised version of the leaflet, which was then distributed to Silverlink. This is now used routinely by ticket inspectors and at stations and Silverlink's Route Director has confirmed a subsequent reduction in Oyster related penalty fares.</p> |
| 96 | <p>At Stafford station, rail replacement bus service 490 was not being appropriately advertised, with no information at the bus stop it departed from, and a lack of information within Stafford station about which bus stop to go to. In addition, a passenger informed Passenger Focus at the end of December 2006 that the information screens at Stafford station were displaying timetable information for a weekday service for the bus, when it should have shown 'Saturday service' information between Christmas and New Year.</p> | <p>Passenger Focus pushed Central Trains to chase Staffordshire County Council and the bus company (D&amp;G) to provide the correct timetable information at the bus stop, and Central Trains also updated their pocket timetable to show the bus replacement service, including where passengers should go at Stafford to take the bus service.</p> <p>Passenger Focus also followed up an apparent breakdown in communication between the bus company, Central Trains and Network Rail to address the incorrect timetables being shown on the screens.</p>  |
| 97 | <p>At a meeting with ATOC (The Association of Train Operating Companies) in October 2006, Passenger Focus commented that information provided on trains was an issue that required consideration and industry-wide agreed guidelines. Passenger Focus also suggested that South West Trains presented to other train companies after their efforts recently were recognised as industry best practice.</p>   | <p>Co-ordination between Passenger Focus and ATOC resulted in wider discussion on information provided on trains, including a presentation by South West Trains. A number of aspects were agreed to ensure passengers are provided with clearer information on trains by either the guard or driver. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the 'two minute rule' during times of unplanned disruption where appropriate information about a delay will be given to passengers within two minutes</li> <li>• an additional announcement every three-four minutes with any new information.</li> </ul>                                      |
| 98 | <p>Southern Railway offers a personalised timetable function on its website, called MyTimes, which showed services between stations, but</p>   | <p>Following a request by our Passenger Link Manager, Southern amended its website function, and the timetables created now show the train company</p>  |

# Improving the passenger experience

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|     | <p>unfortunately did not show which train company was the operator. This put passengers at risk of penalty fares for train company specific tickets, or enforced unplanned waits for alternative services.</p>   | <p>that operates each leg of the journey. This makes the service much clearer for passengers.</p>  |
| 99  | <p>Virgin Cross Country passengers raised concerns that on-train announcements about the next station were made too close to actually arriving there, causing problems for passengers who, for example, have difficulty reading the interior electronic display screens.</p>   | <p>Our Passenger Link Manager and Virgin Cross Country's panel of passengers re-inforced to Virgin the need to address this issue to give all passengers sufficient notice of arrival at a station. Virgin confirmed that staff training would cover this aspect, which has now taken place. This is an important part of Virgin's commitment to compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.</p>              |
| 100 | <p>Eurostar decided that at the end of December 2006 it would withdraw all loyalty points from passengers who had not redeemed them after three years, stating it was simply applying the terms and conditions of the scheme. Passenger Focus pursued this following on from a successful appeal by a passenger who objected to losing his loyalty points.</p> | <p>Passenger Focus persuaded Eurostar to give all passengers a year to redeem their loyalty points. Eurostar also agreed to improve communication with its passengers, including individual letters to all passengers who complained, as well as implementation of clearer information to its members (e.g. in members' guides, online Eurostar Frequent Traveller pages, newsletters and quarterly statements).</p> |
| 101 | <p>At Peterborough station, the departure screens had a column to show which train company ran each service displayed, however this was not being used.</p>  | <p>After a long campaign by Passenger Focus, logos for services run by GNER, First Capital Connect, Central Trains and 'one' are now displayed on the screen. This is of particular benefit to passengers travelling to London, as First Capital Connect offers tickets that are valid only on its trains, and cannot be used on GNER services.</p>  |

# Improving the passenger experience

## Miscellaneous

|     | Issue   | Passenger Benefit   |
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| 102 | Passenger Focus has conducted various pieces of research into passengers' priorities on a range of issues. Research undertaken in the West Midlands was used to provide passenger evidence and to influence the specification for the new West Midlands rail franchise. | Through relationship-building by our Passenger Link Manager, Centro decided to use our survey template as best practice to carry out complimentary research, ensuring greater coverage of routes and passenger numbers. This added strength to the final submission to the Department for Transport on the proposed new franchise.  |
| 103 | Virgin Cross Country had no effective mechanism to receive quality independent feedback from its passengers.  | Passenger Focus worked with Virgin to create a panel of passengers for the 'Cross Country' network. Leaflets were distributed on trains during week commencing 20 March 2006 resulting in over 200 applications. A representative panel of passengers was set up in June 2006.  |
| 104 | Passenger Focus had been pushing for a long period of time for recommendations to be taken on board for improvements to the National Conditions of Carriage.  | Specific changes have now been incorporated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children under five years can travel free of charge irrespective of the train company</li> <li>• carnet tickets can be purchased on behalf of another individual</li> <li>• accompanied animals and articles – this has now been incorporated into the main document rather than being a separate pamphlet.</li> </ul>                          |
| 105 | Passenger Focus was keen to raise its profile with passengers, by finding low cost ways to provide passengers with information about the organisation's website and phone number.   | Passenger Focus worked with the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) to persuade it to print basic information about Passenger Focus on the back of 10 million credit card sized tickets. This was achieved with only a nominal fee for type-setting. This raised awareness of our organisation and provided passengers with our contact details, increasing the number of contacts we received by 30% as a direct result. |

# Improving the passenger experience



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| 106 | <p>During a consultation on major changes to the timetable operated by c2c, Passenger Focus became aware that areas without a local rail user group, had no mechanism to champion their interests or concerns.</p> | <p>c2c agreed to work with Passenger Focus to set up a 'passenger panel' with representatives from all routes and groups of stations. The panel would act as an honest broker in overseeing changes and would ensure a better spread of views.</p>   |
| 107 | <p>Harborough Rail Users approached Passenger Focus to ask for assistance as they had concerns over the proposed timetable for Market Harborough in the new East Midlands franchise.</p>                           | <p>Passenger Focus funded a public meeting to raise the profile of the group, raise funds and to campaign for train service improvements. The meeting was well attended, achieved significant local media interest and raised a fighting fund.</p> <p>Our Passenger Link Manager also suggested the group carried out a survey of passengers and provided passenger counts data to the Department for Transport. This gave the group a better understanding of the station and passengers, helping them to represent their interests better to Midland Mainline and the Department for Transport.</p> <p>Harborough Rail Users (HRU) has expanded membership, greater knowledge of its constituents and therefore greater credibility when engaging with Midland Mainline.</p> |