

Research report

Independent national passenger watchdog

Kent routes

Passengerfocus
putting passengers first

In March 2009 Passenger Focus surveyed over 3413 passengers on four routes serving Kent; 913 on the East Kent via Faversham route, 802 in the Medway Towns, 776 on the East Kent via Ashford and Tonbridge route, and 922 on the Ashford International via Maidstone East route.

The survey was undertaken to understand passengers' views on current services on the routes and on potential changes and improvements. The findings have been used to inform Passenger Focus's submission to Network Rail's Kent Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) consultation.

The research

- Questionnaires were distributed to passengers aboard trains.
- Passengers could either complete the survey on the train and return it to the interviewer, or return it in a prepaid envelope.
- The survey was carried out from 12 to 29 March 2009.
- To ensure a representative sample, shifts were carried out at weekday peak and off-peak times as well as weekends.
- The data from the four routes have been combined to present the overall findings.
- The survey was undertaken by Continental Research on behalf of Passenger Focus.



How passengers currently use the routes

- 48% of passengers used the route to commute to or from work/education. 45% were travelling for leisure and 7% for business purposes.
- A majority of passengers (92%) use their local station, however a small minority don't (7%). Mainly that's because the alternative station serve direct trains to their destination and has more frequent

trains. Only a sixth mentioned car parking as the reason for not using their local station.

- The most common modes used to travel to the station were:
 - Walking 43%
 - Tube 17%*
 - Car – dropped off 13%
 - Car – parked at or near station 12%
- If the train was not available for their

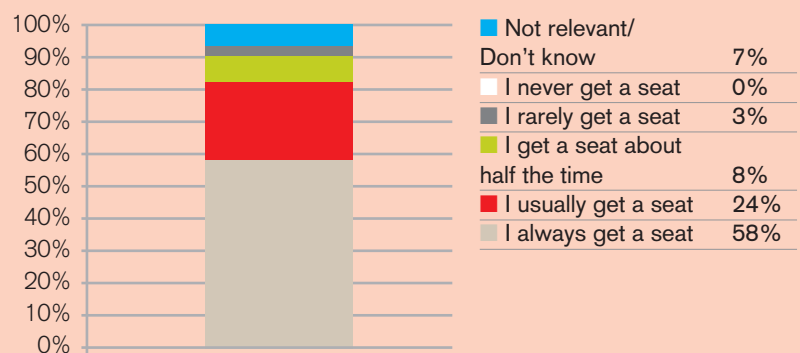
journey, over a third of passengers (35%) would have driven to their destination and a quarter (25%) would have used the bus or coach. However, for a third of passengers rail was the only mode of transport they could use for making the journey.

**Note: this includes journeys which started from London stations.*

Getting a seat

The research showed that eight out of 10 passengers (82%) can generally get a seat on the train.

How often passengers were able to get a seat on the train



What passengers want

- Around half of all passengers wanted trains to run later in the evening during the week (53%) and weekend (especially on Saturday – 54%).
- 37% of all passengers would consider making fewer journeys if trains were less frequent than at present.
- On the other hand, if trains were more frequent then a third of passengers (33%) would consider making more journeys.

Car parking

Nearly a quarter (23%) of all passengers travelling in the morning peak park their car at the station on at least one or two days a week. The majority of

those using the station car park have no issues finding a space (64%). However, one in eight passengers do find it difficult to get a space.

High speed services

- Two out of five passengers were not aware of the high speed train services which will be starting from December 2009.
- When asked whether they would consider using the service, 45% said they would. A third (34%) said they would not, mainly because the route served by the high speed service is not convenient and St. Pancras

station is not the London station they need to get to.

- 36% of all passengers said that St. Pancras station was going to be less convenient than their current London station.
- 58% of all passengers would still be likely to use the high speed services even if their fare went up by 10%, however this reduced to 28% if fares rose by 20%.



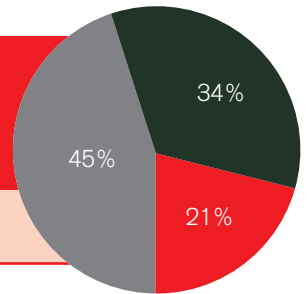
What improvements passengers would like to see

The top five priorities for improvement were:

- 1 punctuality / reliability of the train
- 2 value for money for the price of ticket
- 3 frequency of trains on the route
- 4 being able to get a seat on the train
- 5 length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed).

Percentage of passengers who would consider using the high speed services:

■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

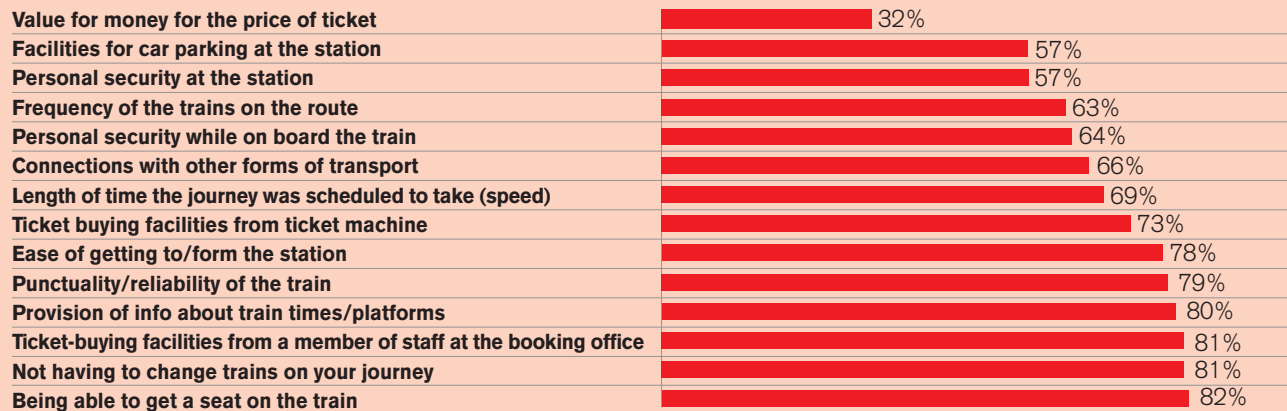


When it came to buying tickets, 61% were interested in buying a single ticket which would be valid on both high speed

and existing train services and 53% were interested in buying carnet-type tickets (e.g. buy 10 tickets for the price of eight).

What passengers think of services

Percentage of passengers fairly or very satisfied with different aspects of the service



As shown in the chart, only 32% were satisfied with the value for money for the price of ticket, and just over half (57%) were satisfied with the facilities for car parking and security at the station.