

Welcome to the very first stakeholder update from Passenger Focus, the new body representing Great Britain's rail passengers. In this edition:

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Putting rail passengers first

Wednesday 25 January sees the official launch of **Passenger Focus**, the new name and brand for the Rail Passengers Council, the national body which represents rail passengers.

Passenger Focus' mission is **to get the best deal for Britain's rail passengers**. To deliver on this mission, the organisation will:

- Translate knowledge and information about passenger issues into clear messages to influence decisions about the future of the railways to the benefit of rail passengers
- Help passengers and passenger groups to help themselves – this will include publishing consumer advice, working with passenger groups to improve their capacity to help passengers and mediating complaints that have not been satisfactorily resolved by rail companies

Understanding passengers' concerns and the journeys they take is vital. That's why the National Passenger Survey (*page 2*) forms the bedrock of our research – it is the largest piece of published passenger research in Great Britain and gives us a solid platform for discussions with rail companies to secure positive changes for passengers.

In its three-year draft corporate plan (*page 3*), Passenger Focus proposes to concentrate on the following five objectives:

1. Understanding the needs and experiences of rail passengers
2. Securing tangible and measurable improvements for rail passengers
3. Empowering rail passengers with information, advice and advocacy
4. Influencing major long-term decisions that affect rail passengers
5. Being visible, accessible and understood by rail passengers and stakeholders

Passenger Focus will be promoting its activities widely around the country with a range of station events. To find out when Passenger Focus will be in your area, contact Caroline Jones, communications director, on 0870 336 6020 or email her at caroline.jones@passengerfocus.org.uk.





Passengers vote for trains on time....but give a thumbs down for value for money

The first wave of National Passenger Survey (NPS) results published by Passenger Focus have shown record levels of satisfaction with train services. The Autumn 2005 wave of results puts passenger satisfaction with the overall journey at 80%, the highest level since the survey began in 2000.

And there's more good news as passengers award best ever scores for satisfaction with trains arriving on time (77%), cleanliness of trains (72%) and comfort (68%). Even the perennially low rated areas like toilet facilities seemed to have improved, up from a low 32% to an all-time high of 39%!

Commenting on the results, Passenger Focus chairman, Colin Foxall, said: "Passengers have given a thumbs up to some major aspects of rail travel, like the state of their trains and the number of trains arriving on time. These have long been the cause of great passenger woe so the sustained turnaround in satisfaction is to be welcomed.

However, this survey clearly highlights the issues rising on the passenger horizon – things like value for money, car parking and availability of staff – which are next in line to need action. The low marks across the board for value for money is one we'll be concentrating on in the coming year. Passengers need a fair fares system – one which is easy to understand, where tickets are easy to find and buy, and which they feel represents real value for money."

Autumn wave 2005 – national headline results

| Overall satisfaction | 80% | ↑ 4% |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Top ten performing areas | | |
| • Speed of journey | 82% | ↑ 3% |
| • Handling of requests by station staff | 82% | → n/c |
| • Trains arriving on time | 77% | ↑ 6% |
| • Frequency of trains | 77% | ↑ 4% |
| • Provision of information at stations | 77% | ↑ 3% |
| • Ease of getting on and off trains | 77% | ↑ 3% |
| • Connections with other forms of transport | 73% | ↑ 2% |
| • Upkeep and repair of train | 71% | ↑ 12% |
| • Cleanliness of inside of train | 71% | ↑ 10% |
| • Connections with other train services | 70% | ↑ 3% |
| Top five areas for action | | |
| • Facilities for car parking | 46% | ↑ 1% |
| • Value for money | 45% | ↑ 1% |
| • Toilet facilities | 39% | ↑ 7% |
| • Availability of onboard staff | 37% | ↑ 3% |
| • How well train company deals with delays | 34% | ↑ 3% |

* change compared to results from Autumn 2004 survey

The full NPS results are now available on the Passenger Focus at www.passengerfocus.org.uk and provide a breakdown of the survey's findings by train company for 29 different aspects of rail travel. To find out more, contact passenger research manager, Pete Thompson, on 0870 336 6033 or email him at pete.thompson@passengerfocus.org.uk.



Perfect planning

The launch of Passenger Focus also coincided with the publication of the organisation's draft corporate plan for the period 2006-9 and the start of a six-week consultation on the plan to ensure it's focused on the right issues.

The first such plan for the rail passenger body, it sets out the things we will concentrate on over the next three years, including big issues like fares, franchises and investment in the railways.

Chairman Colin Foxall explained: *"We have to prioritise our work in those areas where we can have a real impact, and which also have the biggest impact on passengers. The major topic for the year ahead will be fares and we want to start this debate to get passengers' views across. But we will also be concentrating on securing improvements to passengers' journeys and want to work closely with the industry to get the best deal for passengers."*

The corporate plan also outlines some of the targets and measures the new body will commit to. As part of the consultation process, comments are invited on whether these are the right performance measurements.

To contribute to the consultation, you can download a copy of the corporate plan and submit comments online at the Passenger Focus website (www.passengerfocus.org.uk). Written submissions should be sent to Kafil Badar, business planning manager, at Whittles House, 14 Pentonville Road, London N1 9HF. For more information, contact Kafil on 0870 336 6005 or email him at kafil.badar@passengerfocus.org.uk.

The final corporate plan will be published, together with an annual business plan, on 1 April 2006.

World wide wonders

How do I get the cheapest rail ticket? What are my rights if trains are delayed? Can I take my dog on the train? Questions like these are just some that you will now be able to look up the answers for at the click of a mouse button as Passenger Focus launches its new website at www.passengerfocus.org.uk.

In addition to your frequently asked questions, the new site is a useful resource for passengers, the public and journalists to find out more about rail travel. The aim of the site is to signpost people to the right information and provide helpful advice on how to get the best deal. There's also a host of interactive features like online polling and discussions forums for you to share your rail experiences. Coming soon will be a full image library, an events calendar and experiments with 'blogging', online passenger diaries. To see all of this and much more, and to meet our virtual assistant, 'Ali', log on to www.passengerfocus.org.uk and have a look round.

For more information, contact Pete Biggs, communications officer, on 0870 336 6022 or email him at pete.biggs@passengerfocus.org.uk.



Who's who

This bulletin contains your at-a-glance guide to who's who in Passenger Focus. On the back page is a chart showing the structure of the organisation. The chart is also available for download on our website: www.passengerfocus.org.uk. On the website are biographies and photos of board members and senior staff.



Chairman: Colin Foxall

Chief Executive: Anthony Smith →



We also have a network of passenger link managers who will work to influence service improvements with train companies and Network Rail. Our twelve passenger link managers are:

Manchester

- David Sidebottom – responsibility for liaison with Northern, Merseyrail and Hull Trains
- Julie Warburton – Virgin West Coast
- Susan Tibbett – Virgin Cross Country and Transpennine Express
- Simon Pickering – Arriva Trains Wales and Welsh issues
- Robert Samson – First ScotRail and Scottish issues
- Paul Fullwood – Central, Chiltern and Midland Mainline

London

- Sharon Hedges – responsible for liaison with Southern Trains
- Jocelyn Pearson – South West Trains and Island Line
- Kerry Williamson – WAGN, Thameslink and Silverlink
- Mike Greedy – First Great Western, FGW Link and Wessex Trains
- Tunde Olatunji – c2c, South Eastern Trains and Eurostar
- Guy Dangerfield – ONE and GNER



Contact us

We're keen to be as accessible as possible so you can reach us in any of the following ways:

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@: info@passengerfocus.org.uk.

The two office bases for Passenger Focus are London and Manchester. The contact details for these offices are:

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