

## Potential for disruption into Paddington 2010 - 2017

Major projects are happening on the Paddington route 2010 - 2017

These include moving the main line signal-box from Reading to a new facility at Didcot, infrastructure and station remodelling at Reading, and building of the Crossrail network between Maidenhead and London Paddington and beyond. The last will also involve major changes to the Paddington station environment which will entail extensive excavation and changes to facilities in and around the station.

It is essential that the needs of passengers are at the forefront of all decisions about the work, and to this

end Passenger Focus has started to build formal relationships with all the project companies involved to make certain that it is consulted at every stage of the process where disruption to services is envisaged.

Recent research with passengers affected by the Thameslink Programme has provided feedback about the needs and expectations of passengers who are likely to be affected by major projects, and this information will be used to inform future discussions with project leaders to ensure that those needs are met.



Photo: Keeping Track

First Great Western passengers will be affected by works

There is no gain without pain, but it is Passenger Focus's intention to ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum and, where unavoidable, that the best mitigation measures are put in place.

## SWT improving information during disruption

Passenger Focus's recent fares research shows that in assessing value for money, information during disruption is very important to passengers.

South West Trains has (SWT) identified a range of actions to help improve this aspect of its service. Its plans have been shared with Passenger Focus, and we welcome the initiative that will shortly move some customer-service staff right next to the operations team at Waterloo. This will allow the service recovery team reorganising trains to pass over accurate and timely information to the people responsible for making sure passengers are kept up to date.

This is only one part of an extensive and ongoing programme of improvements, and Passenger Focus manager Jocelyn Pearson will be monitoring to see how passengers benefit from these gradual improvements.

## c2c fares simplification

### Getting rid of anomalies

Buy a single ticket from c2c for the journey from Laindon to King's Cross and you will pay £11.50; purchase a ticket from London Underground for the exact same journey back and you will pay £8.80.

Challenging anomalies wherever possible is part of Passenger Focus's campaign to ensure passengers are offered simple and best value fares at all times.

Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch have taken this matter up with c2c and the Department for Transport. The issue appears to be that other train companies connecting with London Underground

stations calculate the fare to the first interchange point on the Underground and then add the cost of an appropriate zone(s) ticket to create the single fare. This is the cheapest way of calculating the fares under the ticketing rules.

In contrast, c2c calculates the fare to Fenchurch Street and then includes the add-on fare to the destination in Zone One, in this instance to King's Cross. The issue has now been referred to the Department for Transport to resolve. We hope it will result in full support for our position, which is that c2c should calculate the fares in a way that gives passengers the cheapest possible fares under the rules.

## David Leibling on board

The Transport Committee of the London Assembly has appointed London TravelWatch (LTW) member David Leibling to the Passenger Focus Board. David chairs the LTW Fares and Ticketing Committee and is its lead

member for Barnet, Harrow and Hillingdon Borough liaison. David is also a member of Public Policy Committee, RAC Foundation for Motoring and editor of its Motoring towards 2050 series of reports.



## News roundup

- **Chiltern plans new Oxford service**  
Passenger Focus has welcomed proposals put forward by Chiltern Railways to create a new Oxford–Marylebone via Bicester service, with new stations at Water Eaton Parkway and Islip.

- **Give us your feedback**  
Want to have your say about something you've read in Passenger Voice?  
It's your Voice, so contact:  
[krista.hamblin@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:krista.hamblin@passengerfocus.org.uk)

# Thameslink Programme

The project to build much-needed extra capacity on the busy Thameslink route got firmly underway on Sunday 22 March with the introduction of a new timetable. The changes saw the Farringdon-Barbican-Moorgate part of the route closed permanently to allow 12 coach platforms to be built at Farringdon station. First Capital Connect's high profile communications plan, following passenger research undertaken alongside Passenger Focus and Southeastern, aimed to make sure passengers knew about the closure and had the opportunity to replan their journeys. The honest, up-front messages used have been key – there is no point in pretending that



closing a busy route serving two City of London stations is good news. Part of First Capital Connect's strategy is to encourage more passengers to use City Thameslink station through an "I love City" campaign. The timetable change gives more eight-coach trains on the Thameslink route than ever. However, the frustrating late delivery of the new trains means some passengers will still be waiting for relief from current levels of crowding. Passenger Focus will be monitoring how passengers react to the new timetable, in particular how those who used to travel to Barbican and Moorgate get on.

## Ticket office hours watched

Passenger Focus has welcomed the Department for Transport's (DfT) decision not to allow South West Trains (SWT) to reduce ticket office hours, unless fewer than 12 tickets an hour were being sold. However, other train operating companies are now making similar applications and there is nothing to stop SWT making further applications at a later date. Furthermore, there is no control over the number of ticket windows open; any reduction is likely to lengthen queues at busy stations. The DfT has assured Passenger Focus that ticket office opening hours are being monitored.

# Tackling passenger dissatisfaction

Passenger Focus manager Sharon Hedges has been working with Southern to identify and resolve the problems that have caused passenger dissatisfaction with services on the Brighton main line and associated routes

Extensive changes to the timetable introduced in December have led to the reworking of many established service patterns and have also coincided with a period of poor performance caused by a range of issues. These include difficulties with the refurbished Class 442 trains, infrastructure problems, suicides and passengers taken ill on trains. Passengers have been frustrated by a significant number of delays and cancellations and many people are unhappy about fewer opportunities to travel to and from East Croydon, Clapham Junction and London Bridge at peak times.

The timetable change was driven by the Department for Transport decision to extend

six non-stop Gatwick Express services to Brighton during the morning and evening peaks. The intention was to provide additional capacity for crowded commuter services whilst retaining a non-stop service from the airport to London.

Discussions between Passenger Focus and Southern have focused on the action plan to restore the punctual and reliable service passengers expect. This includes working with Network Rail on improved infrastructure resilience, modifying the '442' trains and improving communications with passengers.

Southern has committed to keep passenger feedback on the timetable under



Passengers have been frustrated by delays and cancellations

review, making adjustments to improve performance and address concerns where this is possible.