

# Passenger Voice Rail

## EAST OF ENGLAND

Independent national passenger watchdog



### FCC needs to improve

FCC has assured passengers that it is recruiting drivers, improving train reliability and upgrading information systems after three months of dreadful service on the Thameslink route

Passenger Focus has raised passengers' concerns about poor service on the Thameslink route with Government and First Capital Connect (FCC) management.

Passengers travelling on FCC Thameslink route have faced disruption since early November due to industrial action and severe weather conditions.

FCC has assured passengers that trains affected by snow damage are now repaired; modifications are currently being made to trains to ensure future disruption as a consequence of snow is minimised; and more drivers are being recruited.



Passenger Focus still has concerns about the level of compensation offered to passengers where journeys were disrupted over recent months. The watchdog is also worried that, once again, information to passengers during disruption was poor.

Passenger Focus will be monitoring how FCC performs in coming months. Meanwhile, less than a third of First Capital Connect's (FCC) passengers are happy with the way the company handles delays, according to Passenger Focus's Autumn 2009 National Passenger Survey (NPS). This result of just 32% satisfaction was



before the impact of this winter's snow, short-formation trains and criticism of the company for what was considered an inadequate offer of compensation. Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager, commented that "the recent snow and industrial action, as well as the NPS results, tell us that FCC has a lot to do to restore its passengers' faith".

Overall, satisfaction with FCC sits at 75%, well below the London and South East operator sector average of 82%.

### c2c scores highly in National Passenger Survey

One of the country's best-performing Train Operating Companies (TOC), c2c, has achieved an overall satisfaction figure of 90% in Passenger Focus's Autumn 2009 National Passenger Survey (NPS) and an exceptional 94% for punctuality/reliability. Figures that give some cause for concern surround personal security at stations and on the train, but satisfaction with the way the company deals with delays is above the sector average. Meanwhile, Passenger Focus has asked 1000 c2c passengers what they want from the new franchise, which is expected to start on 30 May 2011 and run for at least 10 years. c2c has a relatively new fleet of trains which is very well looked after and very high levels of punctuality. Passengers want more of the same and priorities for the future are more weekend and later-evening trains, being able to get a seat during their journey, as well as improved security at the station and on the train.

Tunde Olatunji, Passenger Focus

manager, said: "c2c has transformed the service from being the 'miserable line' to one of the highest-performing rail companies in the country, with top scores for passenger

satisfaction. Top of the Government and bidders' list should be punctual trains, reliable and frequent services, value-for-money fares and better security."

#### East of England

Train Operating Company (TOC)	Overall % satisfied	Passengers' satisfaction up	Passengers' satisfaction down
c2c	90	Train toilet facilities	How request to station staff was handled
CrossCountry	85	Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	Facilities for car parking
East Midlands Trains	84	Punctuality/reliability	-
First Capital Connect	75	The ease of being able to get on and off the train	-
National Express East Coast	89	Upkeep and repair of the train	-
National Express East Anglia	79	Personal security whilst using the station	Upkeep and repair of the train

# Expectations for East Coast franchise

Passenger Focus has asked over 6000 East Coast passengers for their views and priorities

On 21 January Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis launched the consultation phase of the InterCity East Coast franchise. A new franchise is expected to begin in Autumn 2011. After speaking to more than 6000 passengers the watchdog has made recommendations to government based on their feedback. The research will also be shared with potential bidders to highlight passenger requirements from the new operator.

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager, said: "Passengers tell us that their

top priority for improvement on this franchise is punctual and reliable trains. Let's see more challenging targets set in the new deal, including a focus on 'right time' – not the 10-minute leeway which is currently in place. This is also a prime opportunity for government to solve passengers' top issue with the railway – concerns about fares and getting a good deal for their money."

Passenger Focus is calling for an easily understood fares structure that will be regarded by passengers as logical and transparent and offers a fair price for their journey.



Passengers give their view

Passenger Focus also stressed the importance of a deal which avoids passengers paying more to use the railway and service quality slipping as the train operator struggles to meet its premium payments to government.

## East Coast shake-up

Big changes to the timetable on the East Coast Main Line, which runs from London to Peterborough, Doncaster, Leeds, York, Newcastle and Edinburgh, are planned for May 2011. Passenger Focus encourages passengers to feed in their views about the new timetables by visiting [www.eastcoast.co.uk/Eureka](http://www.eastcoast.co.uk/Eureka)

Passenger manager Guy Dangerfield said: "This will be the biggest change to the East Coast timetable for many years and, as with most timetable changes, there are winners and losers. As well as East Coast's trains to and from London, train times for some

CrossCountry, East Midlands Trains, First Capital Connect, First TransPennine Express, Grand Central, Hull Trains, Northern and ScotRail services may also change. If you use trains on the East Coast Main Line, whichever company you travel with, don't miss the opportunity to have your say at [www.eastcoast.co.uk/Eureka](http://www.eastcoast.co.uk/Eureka)"

## NXEA passengers priorities explored

Passenger Focus is making sure that passengers' views are prioritised as government considers the future of the Greater Anglia franchise, currently run by National

Express East Anglia.

The new franchise is expected to begin 1 April 2011. Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager, said: "We have talked to 3000 passengers on

National Express East Anglia

routes to determine their priorities for improvement and identify gaps in services. The results from the National Passenger Survey show that despite recent punctuality improvements there needs to be significant investment made in this part of the railway to bring passenger satisfaction up to the standard of many other parts of Britain's railway network. We will be making recommendations to government and the bidders to make certain they're aware of passengers' needs from the railway and where investment needs to be directed. It is important that whoever wins this contract, signs a deal that puts passengers' needs first."



## Improvement plan 2010

National Express East Anglia (NXEA) launched its new Service Improvement Plan in January 2010. Its centre-piece is a major deal agreed with the Department for Transport in April 2009 to boost rail capacity on Liverpool Street train services. In 2011 Stansted Airport and some Cambridge to Liverpool Street services will be operated by 120 new carriages and 68 refurbished carriages will also be added to East Anglia services. The 120 new carriages will be introduced in 2011, and the 68 refurbished carriages are being introduced on the Great Eastern Main Line route in two phases, December 2009 and December 2010.

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Focus manager, said: "These 188 extra carriages are crucial to reducing overcrowding on NXEA services".