

Passenger Voice Rail

SCOTLAND

Independent national passenger watchdog



Passengers give Scotland's rail positive score card

The majority of passengers has said they are satisfied with services received north of the border

Passenger Focus's Autumn 2009 National Passenger Survey (NPS) shows 90% of passengers are satisfied overall with ScotRail services and punctuality scores on other train operators running services in the country improved across the board.

Commenting on the NPS, Passenger Focus said that across Scotland overall satisfaction with rail services was generally higher than the Great Britain (GB) average of 83%. National Express East Coast, First TransPennine Express and Virgin Trains received an 89% approval rating and CrossCountry an 85% satisfaction score.

Robert Samson, Passenger Focus manager in Scotland, commented: "Passengers travelling on ScotRail services tend to rank how well the company manages disruption (47%) better than the GB average score of 36%. However, passengers told us that during the recent snow disruption the level and quality of information received were variable and we have been talking to

ScotRail about how the industry needs to improve this area of its business.

"We would welcome the opportunity to run workshops with the industry to get feedback from passengers on what needs to happen to improve this vital area of business."

James King, Passenger Focus board member in Scotland, commented: "A closer look at the results reveals work still needs to happen to improve passengers' top priority –



better value for money. Additionally, more effort needs to be put into improving station facilities, car parks and toilets."

Scotland

Train Operating Company (TOC)	Overall % satisfied	Passengers' satisfaction up	Passengers' satisfaction down
CrossCountry	85	Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	Facilities for car parking
First TransPennine Express	89	Value for money	–
National Express East Coast	89	Upkeep and repair of the train	–
ScotRail	90	The helpfulness and attitude of the staff on train	–
Virgin Trains	89	Facilities for car parking	–

NPS finds good performance from Virgin Trains

Virgin Trains' overall passenger satisfaction rose five points to 89% in Passenger Focus's Autumn 2009 National Passenger Survey. Major investment in additional car-parking facilities was rewarded with a 13-point improvement to 56%, three ahead of the long-distance sector average. But the most dramatic increases observed were in passenger

satisfaction with train facilities. Improvements in satisfaction follow the introduction of the Very High Frequency timetable, which substantially increased capacity and service frequency. The largest rises were for journey time (11 points to 93%), connections with other train services (nine points to 84%) and sufficient room to sit/stand (nine points to 77%).



Investment pays off



New franchise

Expectations for new franchise

Passenger Focus has asked over 6000 passengers for their views and priorities for services running on the East Coast

Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis has launched the consultation phase of the InterCity East Coast franchise. After speaking to more than 6000 passengers, the watchdog has made recommendations to government based on its feedback. The research will 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 more 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 to solve passengers' top issue with the railway – concerns about fares and getting a good deal for their journey."

Service disruption must be handled better

Following the severe disruption to rail services caused by the extreme winter weather, Passenger Focus is working closely with ScotRail and Network Rail to improve the way the industry handles disruption to services.

Heavy snow has caused many delays and cancellations across Scotland. While train passengers accepted journeys might be severely affected, Passenger Focus found that disruption information was poorly

communicated to passengers. Passengers Focus is currently monitoring the quality and effectiveness of announcements at stations and on trains in Scotland. The findings will be shared with the industry.

Plans for East Coast London-Glasgow route

Passenger Focus is seeking passengers' views on plans to terminate the majority of East Coast through-trains between London King's Cross and Glasgow at Edinburgh

The proposal is part of a major timetable overhaul of the East Coast Main Line (ECML), expected to come into effect in May 2011 following consultation.

One option currently under consideration is to transfer East Coast services between Yorkshire and Glasgow to CrossCountry. Meanwhile, East Coast would continue to operate one return service per day from Glasgow to London King's Cross, via Motherwell and Edinburgh.

East Coast says that very few people travel between Glasgow and London using the ECML with most people

choosing to use the West Coast to and from London Euston, which is more than an hour quicker and offers more frequent services.

However, Passenger Focus has highlighted that passengers travelling from the north east of England to Glasgow through Edinburgh would be affected by the proposed change, as would Motherwell to Edinburgh commuters. Robert Samson, Passenger Focus manager in Scotland, said: "Passenger Focus is carrying out research to understand how passengers feel about the proposed change. We are also trying to gauge the number of passengers that

Passengers to give their views

Passenger Focus in partnership with Transport Scotland is undertaking research to understand passengers' preferences on the design of trains.

Passengers will be asked about what they need and want from trains and the facilities that should be provided on them.

The feedback will help inform ScotRail on the interior design of its next generation of trains and the refurbishment of existing carriages. Research findings will be included in the next Passenger Voice.



will be affected. We want to make sure that evidence from passengers informs this decision."

Passenger Focus encourages passengers to feed in their views about the new timetables by visiting www.eastcoast.co.uk/Eureka