

Research Report

Independent national passenger watchdog

Reading route



In February 2009 Passenger Focus surveyed over 900 passengers on the Reading route, which covers the local services between London Paddington and Reading operated by First Great Western.

The survey was undertaken to understand passengers' views on current services on the route and on potential changes and improvements. The findings will be used to inform Passenger Focus's submission to Network Rail's Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) consultation.



London Paddington station

The research

- The survey was undertaken by Continental Research on behalf of Passenger Focus.
- Questionnaires were distributed to passengers on board 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 23 February to 5 March 2009.
- To ensure a representative sample, shifts were carried out at weekday peak and off-peak times as well as weekends.
- 992 passengers were surveyed in total.

How passengers currently use the route

• 77% of passengers used the route to commute to or from work/education. 15% were travelling for leisure and 6% for business purposes.

• Most common modes used to travel to the station were:

- walking 45%
- tube 22%
- car 18%

• bus 11%.

• A third of passengers did not use the bus because they lived within walking distance (34%) of the station. However, others

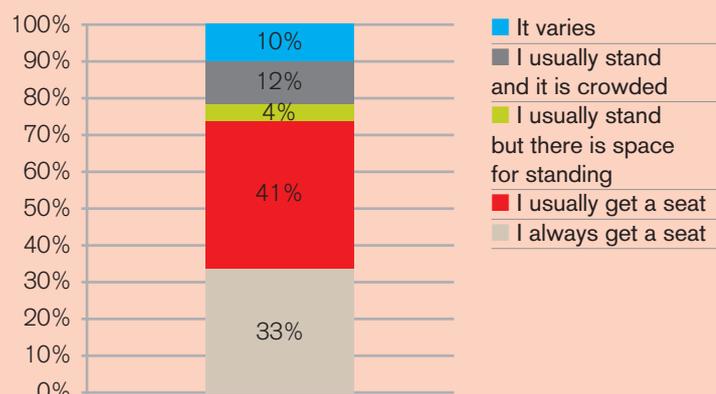
mentioned slow speed (21%), unreliability (11%) and the convenience of the car (13%) as reasons for not using the bus.

Getting a seat

Three quarters (74%) of passengers can generally get a seat.

However, 16% usually stand due to unavailability of seats.

How passengers would describe a typical trip on this route:



What passengers want

Three out of five passengers did not use the car-parking facilities at the station. However, passengers would use the station car park if it was cheaper (38%), there were more parking spaces (13%) and if it was more secure (11%).

When it came to ticketing, nearly half (48%) were interested in buying a combined bus/rail ticket to their destination and two thirds (66%) were interested in buying carnet-type

tickets (e.g. buy 10 tickets for the price of eight).

There was also interest in receiving tickets in different formats:

- 66% were interested in printing their ticket from a PC
- 54% in receiving their tickets to their mobile phone and
- 53% in buying the ticket from local shops.

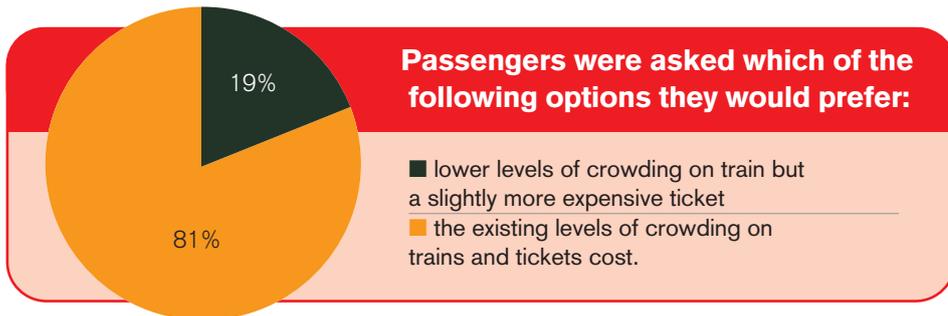
What passengers think about proposed changes to services

The majority of passengers would prefer the existing levels of crowding on trains and ticket prices rather than a less crowded train with a slightly more expensive ticket (up 10%).

- 40% of passengers would consider making

fewer journeys if trains were less frequent on the route.

- On the other hand, if trains were more frequent then one in five passengers would consider making more journeys.



What improvements passengers would like to see

The top five priorities for improvement were:

- 1 value for money on price of ticket
- 2 frequency of trains on the route
- 3 punctuality/reliability of trains
- 4 length of scheduled journey time
- 5 not having to change trains to complete journey.

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What passengers think of services

Percentage of passengers fairly or very satisfied

with different aspects of the service:



As shown in the chart, value for money on the price of ticket was given the lowest satisfaction score (30%). Passengers did not consider their journey to be good value for money (53% rated it as very/fairly poor). Main reasons given for this rating were:

- too expensive (52%)

- too full/overcrowded/too few carriage (24%)
- train was late (10%)
- trains infrequent/poorly scheduled (9%).

Crossrail

- 56% were not familiar with the service that Crossrail will provide and 43% were not even

sure whether they will use it.

- Most passengers (89%) did not feel they were informed of the implications that Crossrail will have on their journey and 50% felt that this information should be provided no later than 12 months of any proposed changes taking effect.