

Better information call

Research reveals delayed passengers feel 'powerless'

By Mel Holley

Bus passengers are calling for better information during delays and a more customer-focused approach from bus drivers.

These are the key findings of new research by Passenger Focus, the independent watchdog.

Passengers taking part in the research described being 'powerless' when buses are delayed, feeling there is no way to find out what is going on. In terms of solutions, passengers

have a clear preference for real-time information to be displayed at bus stops, with smartphone and tablet apps playing an important supporting role.

Passenger Focus CEO Anthony Smith says: "There are some important messages here for bus companies, local authorities and government. Real-time departures information helps passengers make an informed choice about what to do if buses are delayed. It's clear that passengers want this at the bus stop, so the challenge is how to achieve that in an affordable way. Smartphone apps also have an important part to play."

A strong message is that passengers want a more customer-focused attitude from bus drivers, particularly when services are delayed and

disrupted. The research shows a big gap between how passengers want bus drivers to behave towards them and the reality.

Mr Smith says: "We know that many bus companies are trying to improve the customer-service side of how their drivers work. This research, echoing findings in our Bus Passenger Survey, suggests that tackling this long-standing cultural issue should be a high priority for the bus industry."

Passenger Focus will now work with the bus companies, transport authorities and government to ensure that the issues highlighted in this research are addressed.

● **Download the report at www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/overview**



Anthony Smith: "Messages"