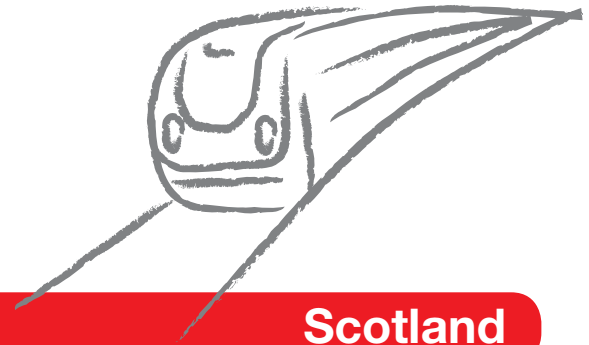


Independent national passenger watchdog

Passenger Voice Rail



Summer 2010

Scotland

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Passengers in Scotland talk about disruption



The way train operating companies (TOCs) handle disruption consistently falls short of passengers' expectations.

Passenger manager Robert Samson has met ScotRail's communications and contingency manager and Virgin Trains' communications director to discuss the good and the bad in the reports, which will be used in training sessions for staff.

ards training and East Coast and Network Rail have created a joint disruption booklet to clarify responsibilities.

In the Spring 2010 National Passenger Survey only 40% of passengers on ScotRail services said they were happy with this aspect of train services. To provide constructive feedback from passengers to TOCs, Passenger Focus has set up a disruption panel with around 1000 passengers acting as reporters.

On CrossCountry, shortcomings have been identified at Birmingham New Street, particularly late platform changes – a problem that must be addressed with the rebuilding work likely to cause frequent platform alterations.

Meanwhile, detailed comments on East Coast delays have been fed into the Guards' Stand-



2010 fare freeze and punctual trains

The January 2010 fare freeze and punctual trains have led to an improved report card for Scotland's railway. The largest survey of Britain's rail passengers has revealed three out of five (61%) ScotRail passengers are satisfied with value for money. This follows January fares not increasing due to the low inflation figures in mid-2009.

Passenger Focus's National Passenger Survey (NPS) found nine out of 10 (90%) ScotRail passengers were satisfied overall with their last train journey. Train companies running cross-border services also received good overall passenger satisfaction scores – Virgin Trains 90%, East Coast 88%, First TransPennine Express 87% and CrossCountry 85%.

Robert Samson, Passenger Focus Scotland manager, said:

"Trains are becoming more punctual and passengers' satisfaction with value for money is improving. On top of this, ongoing investment in the railway has led to more frequent, punctual services, new trains and car-parking facilities – all of which means happier passengers.

"ScotRail continues to score well against the Great Britain average of 83% overall satisfaction. However, focus must continue on passengers' bug-bear – how the industry handles disruption, a priority for passengers with only 40% satisfied."

Passenger Focus will be using the NPS results, in which over 56,000 passengers take part each year, to work with industry in the review and planning of improvements to their services. This research builds into a powerful picture of how services vary around Britain.

Spring 2010

Train Company	Overall satisfaction	Improvement in % satisfied or good since Spring 2009	Decline in % satisfied since Spring 2009
Great Britain result	83% up 2%	Value for money (8%)	Cleanliness of the outside of the train (2%)
CrossCountry	85%	Value for money (6%)	Train toilet facilities (7%)
East Coast	88%	Connections with other forms of public transport (5%) The availability of staff on the train (5%)	No significant decline
First Trans Pennine Express	87%	Value for money (9%)	No significant decline
ScotRail	90%	Value for money (6%)	No significant decline
Virgin Trains	90% (up 4%)	Punctuality/reliability (10%)	No significant decline

News roundup

New stop at Cambuslang

Cambuslang will be served by one extra train from Edinburgh following complaints from both passengers and Passenger Focus about the reduction in the number of trains stopping there. ScotRail announced that, from the start of May, the 16:26 Edinburgh to Glasgow Central would have an additional stop at Cambuslang.

Highland satisfaction

Passenger Focus will be enhancing its National Passenger Survey on some routes in Scotland.

The watchdog has joined forces with HITRANS (Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership) to undertake an enhanced National Passenger Survey on Highland routes, including the West Highland Line, Far North Line and the Inverness to Aberdeen and Inverness to Perth lines. This will provide a better understanding of passengers' satisfaction with current train and station facilities and help to inform future rail policy development.

New bus arrangement

ScotRail has agreed to provide a bus replacement service if the 07:47 Perth to Dundee commuter service is ever cancelled following pressure from passengers and Passenger Focus. Passengers complained that if the peak-time commuter service was cancelled, they were arriving late for work because the next service was about 50 minutes later, arriving in Dundee after 9am.

Making a difference 2009-10

Passenger Focus's annual report and accounts has been laid before the Westminster and Scottish Parliaments. The report can be viewed at www.passengerfocus.org.uk

Integrated transport is key

Passenger Focus has been working to promote integrated transport to the Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee.

The Spring 2010 National Passenger Survey found 71% of ScotRail passengers were satisfied with connections with other forms of public transport.

The watchdog has proposed a number of practical steps to help improve the connectivity between Scotland's public transport during development planning.

These include:

- Removing the barriers that discourage people from walking to the station. This requires train operators and local authorities to work closely together to provide

direct and well-maintained routes and pathways to stations and put crossings on major roads. In addition, and working with the British Transport Police, the station and surrounding areas should be made to feel safe for passengers.

- Improving coordination between bus and rail timetables and creating good interchange facilities at bus and train stations
- Providing adequate and affordable car parking at train stations, and expanding existing facilities
- Improving station cycle storage facilities
- Expanding schemes that allow unlimited travel on all modes and with all operators within the area.

Robert Samson, Passenger Focus Scotland manager, said: "Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the debate and make recommendations for the delivery of integrated sustainable transport, which our research shows passengers currently perceive as being poor."



North East action plan

Passenger Focus has called for minimum station standards, adequate and affordable station car parking, and fairer and simpler pricing at Scotland north east stations.

The watchdog has made the recommendations in its response to NESTRANS (North East Transport Consultative Forum) Draft Rail Action Plan 2010-2021.

Passenger Focus's suggestions cover three key areas:

Station facilities

There is a need to establish minimum levels of facilities

for different types of stations, from major to remote country stations. Research has shown that passengers are fairly pragmatic, requiring a simple shelter and seats, adequate lighting and real-time information at small stations, while expecting more comfortable waiting areas and retail facilities at busier stations. Passenger Focus has created a "hierarchy" of passenger needs to help identify different station facility requirements.

Car parking

National Passenger Survey Spring 2010 results show that only 47% of ScotRail passengers were satisfied with station car-parking facilities. Passenger Focus's research also shows that a shortage of car-parking spaces is likely to deter people from travelling by train. Passenger Focus suggests that rather than apply a generic solution, each station car park close to, or at

capacity, should be looked at individually. As with the issue of car parking, it recommends further analysis of car-park pricing. Its findings have demonstrated that most passengers are unwilling to pay much, if anything, for their car-park space, and any charge introduced on car parking that is currently free could result in considerable numbers of passengers deserting rail.

Ticketing

Recommendations include limiting the range of regulated fare increases, asking train companies to clearly state the validity of off-peak tickets, simplifying the fares system and making ticketing easier and quicker.

Robert Samson, Passenger Focus Scotland manager, said: "We welcome the opportunity to share our findings on passenger satisfaction with stations, car parking and ticketing and hope it will make a positive contribution to rail service development".

