

Passenger Focus Job description

Title: Senior Researcher

Grade / Band: D+

Line Manager: Head of Research

Salary: £41,000

Purpose of the job

To help Passenger Focus get the best deal for Britain's rail and bus passengers through the gathering of high quality, in-depth passenger research to provide evidence for our campaigns intended to drive service improvements.

Outline

The post holder will directly support the Head of Research in the commissioning and delivery of high-quality passenger research to ensure Passenger Focus's policy development campaigns are based on an in-depth analysis of issues affecting passengers. They will specify, manage, interpret and present research projects so as to support Passenger Focus evidence based policy-making and influencing activities. They will use their professional skills and knowledge to ensure that the use of research and statistics is technically robust and will develop and manage Passenger Focus's external research relationships. They will use their knowledge of passenger research to contribute to in-house project work in order to support the strategic priorities of the organisation and to undertake in-house analysis to enhance the evidence base as required. There will be a lot of cross-team working to ensure maximum use of Passenger Focus resources. Communication of the organisation's research work to internal and external audiences will be crucial.

Tasks and responsibilities

Research

- planning, commissioning and delivery of Passenger Focus's annual research programme
- to provide direct support to the Head of Research in the identification of research opportunities
- to lead the collection and distribution of data about passengers including the identification and implementation of potential projects and themes, and progressing the recommendations of research
- to provide advice and support on research techniques to the policy team and passenger link managers, liaising with them to identify potential areas of research and policy development
- to establish high-quality influential relationships with industry research partners such as the Department for Transport, Network Rail, train operating companies, bus operating groups, the Office of Rail Regulation, the Association of Train Operating Companies,

Transport for London, local government, Public Transport Executives, Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly Government, and academics to build research capacity and inform the development of future work

- to use analytical skills and statistical software to draw out key evidence from a range of sources to provide insight that helps inform Passenger Focus policies and strategic direction
- drafting and collating comments on drafts and finalising responses to relevant consultations
- to write the specification for research tenders, including the selection and management of the tendering process including contracts, to ensure that the focus and quality of research continues to meet passenger needs
- to work with research contractors and consultants to develop, edit and compile final written outputs for presentation to publication standards, both internally and externally
- to liaise with the communications team to ensure accurate media reporting of Passenger Focus research evidence
- to give sensible, practical, high-quality advice to the Chief Executive and Board on passenger research issues. This will often be at short notice and under pressure from the media
- to represent Passenger Focus in meetings and discussions with high level representatives from external organisations such as the Department for Transport, the Office of Rail Regulation, the Association of Train Operating Companies, train operating companies, bus operating groups, Public Transport Executives, local government and the European Commission
- to quality assure and take responsibility for the integrity of our research
- to keep up-to-date with the latest research in relevant areas and contribute to internal dissemination of this through appropriate channels.

Budget management

- to be conversant with all aspects of budget control to ensure the research budget of £1.8 million per annum is apportioned effectively. This will include utilisation of the nationally accredited Bus Satisfaction Statistics, National Passenger Survey, ensuring value for money and financial probity
- to manage a variety of externally commissioned research projects simultaneously and ensuring effective monitoring of budgets and timelines, while liaising on progress and changes to contracts as required
- managing funding secured through partnership working
- ensure budget bids and project plans are prepared in line with organisation guidelines
- relevant experience in a similar role, including experience of managing a team and commissioning and managing suppliers
- experience of managing large scale, ongoing research projects
- wide knowledge and practical application of market research techniques and their application including managing large amounts of data
- proven experience of writing documents (to be assessed at screening stage) that interpret research findings clearly for use of policy developments or communications.

Leading the team

- to assist in the future development of the research team, enabling the successful delivery of Passenger Focus's strategic objectives and purpose
- identify personal development needs
- identify personal, team and organisation successes and ensure these are recognised and communicated.

Passenger Focus Person specification

Education / professional knowledge and relevant experience:

Essential

- degree or equivalent educational attainment (with a minimum of 25% statistical content, which should be proven at screening stage)
- relevant experience in a similar role, including some experience of team leadership and commissioning and managing suppliers
- in-depth knowledge and experience of market research techniques / statistical practises and their application including effective management and analysis of large amounts of data
- a proven ability of successful contract management techniques and implementation of procurement procedures including demonstrated experience in managing research agencies and competitive tendering processes
- experience of using Microsoft Office (particularly Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook) to an advanced level with a good understanding of statistical analysis packages (to be checked at screening stage).

Desirable

- knowledge of, or interest in, the transport industry.

Skills and competencies:

Influencing skills

- the ability to deputise for the Head of Research when required and to do so effectively in all areas of responsibility
- the ability to gather information and interpret it effectively
- able to give reasoned arguments, orally or in writing, in order to influence others
- the ability to win and keep the trust of the Board and key industry decision-makers.

Excellent presentation skills

- the ability to present information with clarity and in an inspirational manner
- is able to adapt personal style to the audience appropriately.

Inspirational leadership

- proven ability in leading and developing a team

- ability to set clear objectives and high standards for everyone, including self
- able to achieve objectives through an inclusive leadership style
- openly supportive of staff and able to work with minimum supervision.

Strategic vision and innovation

- the ability to think strategically around issues both for the organisation and the team
- proactively identify innovative approaches and solutions as part of the research process
- is able to maintain a flexible approach and responds quickly to change.

Analytical / critical thinking

- is able to dissect issues effectively and recognise both relevant and irrelevant information
- has an ability to apply analytical skills in order to incorporate the wider contextual implications of the industry when manipulating and analysing large data sets
- consistently maintains focus on the objective detail and is not drawn into voicing emotional opinions.

Flexible organisation and prioritisation

- has the ability to organise and prioritise effectively
- employs excellent time-management skills to reach deadlines and manage work within agreed timescales
- driven to consistently achieve objectives for self and team.

Important working relationships

- Chairman, Board and Chief Executive
- National, Regional, online and specialist media contacts
- Passenger link teams
- Policy and research team
- Agency suppliers
- Key industry stakeholders, including colleagues at the Department for Transport, Network Rail, train operating companies and bus operating groups.