

# Intercity East Coast franchise

Independent national passenger watchdog

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## What passengers want

Passengerfocus  
putting passengers first

This brochure summarises Passenger Focus's advice to Government about what passengers want from the new Intercity East Coast franchise – previously run by National Express and now operating as Government-owned "East Coast". The new franchise is expected to start operating from late 2011. These recommendations are based on research in September 2009 where 6000 passengers were surveyed to gather the views of passengers and findings from the National Passenger Survey. The table below shows what passengers regard as the priorities for improvement.

### Priorities for improvement

(1=highest priority and 12=lowest)

Punctuality and reliability of the train	1
Value for money for the price of the ticket	2
Being able to get a seat on the train	3
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)	4
Facilities and services on board the train	5
Frequency of trains for this journey	6
Provision of information about train times/platforms	7
Personal security while on board the train	8
Personal security at the station	9
Ticket-buying facilities	10
Ease of getting to and from the station	11
Facilities and services at the station	12

Passenger Focus Intercity East Coast research, September 2009

The Intercity East Coast franchise scores highly in Passenger Focus's National Passenger Survey (NPS), achieving the best overall satisfaction score among long distance train operators in seven of the last ten NPS surveys. That is despite a relatively poor, although improving punctuality record. Passengers have told us that their top priority for improvement in the new franchise is the punctuality and reliability of the service (78% of trains were on time, that is 'right time or early', at destination in the last 12 months), followed closely by improving value for money – which our research

has shown is about quality as well as price and ticketing. Being able to get a seat on the train and faster journey times are the third and fourth highest priorities for improvement.

Based on this research, Passenger Focus's recommendations to Government about the new Intercity East Coast franchise include:

- **Punctuality and reliability** challenging but achievable targets for increasing the number of trains

"Passengers have told us that their top priority for improvement in the new franchise is the punctuality and reliability of the service."

arriving on time (that is, actually on time and not just up to ten minutes late) and reducing the number of trains that are more than 20 minutes late

- **Value for money and ticketing** an easily-understood fares structure that will be regarded by passengers



as logical, transparent and a fair price for the journey being made. The walk up Off-Peak Single ticket, formerly the Saver Single, should be 50% of the Off-Peak return and not £1 less as at present. Passengers with Advance Single tickets who miss the train on which they have booked should be permitted to pay the difference, plus an administration fee, between what they have paid already and the appropriate new ticket they need to purchase. The facility to pay for an annual season ticket in 12 instalments should be provided and restrictions should

be printed on passengers' tickets to remove confusion over validity.

- **Frequency and getting a seat** the 'Service Level Commitment 2' timetable changes should be implemented subject to passenger feedback at consultation stage. Additionally, services should run more frequently at weekends, and trains should run later on Saturday evenings and start earlier on Sunday mornings.
- **Facilities and services on-board the train** all trains should have a buffet and trolley in Standard and First Class (we recognise that on a very small number of trains providing both may

not be cost-effective) and key business and other long-distance services running over meal times should offer hot meals to purchase. Wi-Fi should continue to be provided free of charge and problems with the reliability of the current system must be addressed. Targets should be introduced to improve passenger satisfaction with the cleanliness and up-keep of trains.

Further information about Passenger Focus's research and our full submission to Government about what passengers want from the Intercity East Coast franchise is available at [www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk)



"Wi-Fi should continue to be provided free of charge and major problems with the reliability of the current system must be addressed."

**Contact us**

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