Passenger Focus response to Department for Transport proposals for the West Midlands franchise

7 August 2006

Passengerfocus

putting rail passengers first

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Passenger Focus is the independent national rail consumer watchdog. It is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Transport.

Our mission is to get the best deal for Britain's rail passengers. We have two main aims: to influence both long and short term decisions and issues that affect passengers; and to help passengers through advice, advocacy and empowerment.

With a strong emphasis on evidence-based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground.   We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of rail passengers and we work with the rail industry, other passenger groups and government to secure journey improvements.

Our vision is to ensure that the rail industry and Government are always

'putting rail passengers first'

This will be achieved through our mission of

'getting the best deal for passengers'

Contents

1. Executive summary

The numbers of people travelling by train are increasing. Performance on the railways is steadily improving, and passenger satisfaction is rising. We expect changes to franchises to build on this; to further improve performance, improve passenger satisfaction, and allow for continued growth.

Passenger Focus has a wealth of research material regarding what passengers want, and adds to this as franchises come up for re-letting. This evidence informs our input to specific franchise consultations at route level. Where passengers have clearly indicated their priorities for improvement to existing services, Passenger Focus expects new franchises to show how these will be addressed.

In general, passengers want a safe, reliable, affordable railway that meets their expectations of service quality for the price paid. Drivers of passenger satisfaction change over time but punctuality and reliability have been the main drivers of passenger satisfaction since the National Passenger Survey began in 1999. Issues such as the perceived cleanliness of the train have also been key factors, with a clear link between the introduction of new or refurbished trains and increases in overall satisfaction ratings. Passenger Focus expects franchises to address the link between passenger satisfaction and actionable improvement.

Our submission is based on comprehensive research with over 32,000 passengers, looking at the passenger viewpoint on fares, satisfaction and wider rail issues, as well as route-specific research on the existing franchise.

The use of railways in the West Midlands is growing. This is both on longer distance services, and also local commuter services. However, satisfaction levels for users of these services is, in some aspects, falling. The new franchise for the West Midlands should present the opportunity for services to be developed, leading to increased numbers travelling, and increased satisfaction.

Issues
The priorities for passengers in the West Midlands can be summarised as:

- **Stations** - passengers tell us they expect better information, cleaner stations, improved security and improvements to the accessibility of stations. The franchise needs to include a clearly defined commitment to develop and improve stations and integration

- **Service patterns** - passengers tell us that frequencies on some routes are acceptable, but many passengers on other routes identify more trains as a high priority e.g. Stratford to Birmingham. The franchise needs to include a commitment that robust consultation processes are in place when levels of service are proposed

- **Information** - Passenger Focus would like the Department for Transport to require the franchisee to have a clear policy on passenger information, in line with industry best practice. Passenger Focus also suggests that the Department for Transport requires the franchisee to properly promote rail services to ensure that products and services are constantly developed to meet customer needs.

- **Value for money** - often passengers perceive value for money as poor. Research suggests the current fare structure is complex and confusing. Bidders should set out their proposals for fares, and be required to demonstrate how these will improve value for money

- **Getting a seat** - one third of passengers are not satisfied that they can always get a seat. Local overcrowding occurs on sections of routes. The DfT needs to ensure it is procuring enough seats for passengers now, and for the future

- **Responding to local issues** - stakeholders and passengers have identified issues for consideration as part of the base case specification. Passenger Focus expects the Department for Transport to fully evaluate the measures advocated and include those viable options in the franchise.

Recommendations

Our key recommendations for the West Midlands routes are:

i. The franchise should include a clearly defined commitment to develop and improve stations and integration, with targets for improvement in passenger satisfaction scores
ii. The franchise should address local service needs. Passengers and stakeholders cite the need for more evening and Sunday services. The lack of timetable detail concerns Passenger Focus, and DfT should agree to robust consultation as the level of detail is developed
iii. The DfT should require bidders to clearly set out their proposals for fares, and include targets for improving passenger perception of value for money
iv. The franchise should examine localised overcrowding problems, and ensure that enough seats are purchased for passengers today, and for the life of the franchise.

2. Introduction

Our approach to this consultation is underpinned by the principles we would like to see enshrined in all franchises, which are set out in section four. The response has been informed by liaison with stakeholders and user groups, our postbag, existing research and bespoke research commissioned by Passenger Focus.

We are wary of setting out a 'wish-list' of items that has little prospect of being provided - we understand there are practicalities around funding. However, we make no apologies for having an aspirational vision of the future. We see rail as essential to the delivery of Government objectives such as reducing congestion, improving economic regeneration and pushing towards a more socially inclusive society.

The West Midlands franchise will serve the West Midlands conurbation together with Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and the North Staffordshire area centred on Stoke-on-Trent, as well as providing services from the West Midlands to Liverpool and Manchester. Services included will be those between London, Milton Keynes and Northampton, between Crewe and London via the Trent Valley, between Bedford and Bletchley and between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey. Centro (the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority (WMPTA)), as a co-signatory to the existing Central Trains franchise, currently specifies services within the West Midlands conurbation.

Both the Central Trains and the Silverlink County routes that will be included in the franchise have experienced recent growth in demand. From 2001-2 to 2004-5, journeys in the WMPTA/Centro area have increased by an average of 4% per annum, as highlighted in the West Midlands route utilisation strategy (RUS), and the rate of growth forecast may rise to 5.5% according to the West Midlands Local Authorities Local Transport Plan (LTP) submission.

Current passenger satisfaction with Central Trains, as measured by the National Passenger Survey (NPS) in Spring 2006 is 82%, slightly below sector average but the highest ever achieved by Central Trains and considerably up from the 70% achieved in 2002. It is not possible to disaggregate Silverlink County from Silverlink Metro but the spring 2006 NPS shows overall satisfaction at 78%.

There is much evidence that passenger satisfaction levels, and train performance, are improving. Passenger Focus expects the West Midlands franchise to be developed, building on these successes. Our response to the West Midlands franchise consultation includes concerns identified around specific routes as well as generic issues affecting passengers and Passenger Focus' views on general franchise issues.

3. Detailed response

3.1 Methodology

As an evidence-based organisation, Passenger Focus has based this report on the findings obtained from new and comprehensive passenger research conducted on Central Trains: this evidence is supported by a variety of additional sources. The types of evidence used are summarised below.

New passenger research

Passengers travelling on Central Trains routes across the West Midlands were asked to prioritise service improvements by taking into account expectations and experience with attributes of the service provided, coupled with the importance they placed on those attributes[1]. Passengers were also asked to consider various aspects of rail travel specific to individual routes within the existing Central Trains network.

Passenger Focus conducted detailed surveys on the following routes:
- Stafford to Stoke-on-Trent
- Kidderminster/Worcester/Stourbridge Junction to Dorridge/Shirley
- Stratford-upon-Avon to Stourbridge Junction
- Birmingham to Hereford/Great Malvern.

This information has been shared with WMPTA/Centro, who also carried out research with a similar methodology on other West Midlands routes but the results of these surveys are not available at present.

This research was carried out by Accent, who undertook fieldwork between 3 and 26 April. Most of the day was covered, with shifts worked between 7.00 and 22.00; 80% of the shifts were worked on weekdays, the remainder at the weekend.

In total, 1,101 passenger questionnaires[2] were returned, giving Passenger Focus a significant amount of data on which to base these report findings and recommendations.

Stakeholder engagement

As a precursor to this report a survey of stakeholders was carried out between November 2005 and December 2005, followed by written submissions and discussions with individual stakeholder bodies. Working in partnership with *TravelWatch East Midlands* and *TravelWatch Midlands West*, nearly 600 organisations and individuals were contacted across the East and West Midlands to identify initial thoughts on priority areas for improvement. Flowing from this work, in March 2006 Passenger Focus gathered information from passengers and other stakeholders in order to inform our response to the DfT's consultation on the East and West Midlands franchises. Passenger Focus asked for detailed comments on specific issues – aspects of the existing Central Trains franchise that are considered to be in need of improvement, and 'measures', suggestions as to how to achieve the improvements needed.

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[1] See appendix E for an explanation of the gap analysis techniques used in the research
[2] A copy of the questionnaire template used in the research can be found in Appendix D.

Responses were made by a third of those we contacted – see appendix A. During the DfT public consultation period in June and July 2006, Passenger Focus has received further submissions from stakeholders based on the West Midlands franchise consultation document (FCD). All contributions received by Passenger Focus have been summarised in appendix C.

Desktop research

Desktop research carried out by Passenger Focus consisted of previous research and publications produced by the former Rail Passengers Council (RPC) and from a wide variety of additional sources.

Relevant previous RPC publications include "*Barriers to Interchange*[3]" (February 2005) and "*Passenger Priorities on 12 Central Trains' Routes*[4]" (July 2005)

In addition, Passenger Focus has researched and considered other available sources of data and information, including:
- The National Passenger Survey (NPS), Spring 2006 wave
- RPC report "*What passengers want from stations*" which coincided with the National Audit Office report "*Maintaining and improving Britain's rail stations*"
- Fares research undertaken by Passenger Focus in Spring 2006
- Central Trains' Performance statistics
- Complaints data from both Central Trains and the Passenger Focus passenger contact team
- Railway industry statistics such as LENNON and MOIRA data

As with the stakeholder contributions, data and information from the desktop research is included in the report where it provides supporting evidence for issues and views raised by passengers as part of the new passenger research. A full list of documents is available in Appendix B.

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[3] RPC North Western
[4] RPC Central Trains Joint Sub-committee

3.2 Findings

It was clear from the evidence provided by passengers and stakeholders that generic issues raised concerns and highlighted priorities, but there are issues specific to particular routes. A route specific breakdown identifying comments by line of route follows at the end of this section.

Issue one - stations

The franchise consultation document requires bidders to demonstrate how they will achieve a continuing improvement in service levels at stations, addressing issues of accessibility (both for disabled passengers and interchange with other modes of transport), safety and improvements to car and cycle parking. The passenger survey research covered a wide range of station issues, which are listed below in order of priority for improvement, and these have been examined alongside stakeholder comment.

The research below underpins the generic Passenger Focus policy on station issues[5] and the main findings are:
- passengers need to be able to find the station and find their way around the station
- they need to be able to get to the station and their platform
- they need to feel safe
- they need adequate light and shelter.

According to the "*Barriers to Interchange*" report published by the RPC[6], when passengers were asked, unprompted, what improvements they would most like to see at stations, the most important issues were better:
- toilets
- cleaning and maintenance
- lighting
- information screens/systems.

Field research on the Central Trains routes surveyed in the West Midlands shows that these passengers generally support the national findings, consistently ranking the availability of information, the cleanliness and the upkeep and repair of stations as amongst the most important aspects of the total journey experience, along with personal security. This adds to research carried out by TravelWatch Midlands West where connections with other modes of transport, facilities for car parking and the provision of information are all in the top ten areas of importance.

The table below summarises, by route surveyed, passengers' top three priorities for various categories: importance, experience, and most in need of improvement (i.e., after weighting).

importance at stations	information about times/platforms	ease of getting to/from stop/station	intermodal connections	range of facilities	availability of staff	cleanliness, upkeep, repair	personal security	ticket buying
Worcester-Shirley	1					3	2	
Stratford-Stour'ge	1					3	2	
Nott'm-Hereford	1						2	3
Stafford-Stoke	1	2	3					

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[5] 'What passengers want from stations', published by RPC (2005)
[6] Published February 2005

experience at stations bottom 3	information about times/platforms	ease of getting to/from stop/station	intermodal connections	range of facilities	availability of staff	cleanliness, upkeep, repair	personal security	ticket buying
Worcester-Shirley				1	3		2	
Stratford-Stour'ge			3=	1		3=	2	
Nott'm-Hereford				2		1	3	
Stafford-Stoke				1	2		3	
most in need of improvement at stations	information about times/platforms	ease of getting to/from stop/station	intermodal connections	range of facilities	availability of staff	cleanliness, upkeep, repair	personal security	ticket buying
Worcester-Shirley				3	2	1		
Stratford-Stour'ge						3	2	1
Nott'm-Hereford					3	1		2
Stafford-Stoke	1		2			3		
most in need of improvement on trains	value for money	upkeep and repair	frequency	journey time	availability of staff	personal security	ease of getting on/off train	punctuality/ reliability
Worcester-Shirley	2				1	3		
Stratford-Stour'ge	3	2	1					
Nott'm-Hereford			1			2	3	
Stafford-Stoke			3	2				1

Given that the Centro specified SQUIRE[7] regime may no longer be applicable if Centro is not a co-signatory to the franchise, whatever regime replaces it should provide similar statistical information based on frequent and regular inspections of stations carriages and trains to incentivise the franchisee to repair faults promptly and implement remedial measures where performance is below acceptable levels in a framework of continuous improvement. Passengers will see benefits if this scheme is enforced at stations beyond the current Centro boundaries.

Passenger Focus notes that WMPTA/Centro will be consulted on the content of the Service Quality Management System (SQMS) proposed by the Department for Transport for the West Midlands franchise, and has the option to propose reasonable changes to the specification, either paying for a higher specification or receiving savings from a lower specification. Given the importance afforded to these factors, as the passenger research has evidenced, Passenger Focus would expect a high service quality specification from the outset, building on the current regime, and with no option of a decrement to service levels.

Stakeholders perceive that investment in stations in the shire counties outside the WMPTA/Centro boundary has lagged behind those stations within it, although in many cases passengers from both areas are travelling on the same trains. Stakeholders have pointed out that all but six stations in the WMPTA/Centro area – and every station with an annual footfall greater than 18,000 – is staffed whereas in the shire counties only five stations with an annual footfall of less than 180,000 have a staff presence.

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[7] Service Quality Incentive Regime: a financial incentive regime, comprising rewards and penalties, designed to ensure that Central Trains delivers certain quality standards, included in the franchise agreement in respect of services operated by Central Trains on behalf of WMPTA/Centro.

Two particular aspects of passengers experience of stations stand out as worthy of separate comment: the rebuilding of Birmingham New Street (the Birmingham Gateway project) and station car parking.

Birmingham Gateway

In the West Midlands, key to the delivery of the anticipated growth over the long term will be the Birmingham Gateway project, designed to significantly enhance the passenger handling capability of Birmingham New Street station. Passenger Focus expects the franchisee to not only co-operate with, but also commit its support to, this project including having sufficient resources to cope with disrupted operations should rebuilding commence during the lifetime of the franchise. The passenger perception of changing trains at Birmingham New Street is more fully considered in the Passenger Focus' response to the Cross Country franchise consultation[8], however additional passenger flows resulting from any curtailment of current through journey opportunities will also impact on current commuter flows. Passenger Focus recommends that bidders should be required to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to provide adequate customer assistance.

Car parks

Evidence[9] from passengers shows only 56% of Central Trains passengers are satisfied with facilities for car parking and comments from stakeholders suggest that the availability of car parking at some stations remains an issue for the West Midlands and acts as a constraint on growth at some locations. The FCD states that bidders will be made aware of schemes to increase the size of car parks and encouraged to facilitate them. Previous studies by the Midlands RPC "*No Charge"[10]*, which surveyed over 500 users of 15 stations within and closely abutting Centro territory, found that nearly three quarters of car park users travelled no more than five miles to the stations and one sixth less than one mile. Given that four fifths of the users of car parks could have used a non car-based alternative the FCD should stress that bidders should seek to encourage use of public transport, together with walking and cycling, as initiatives for expanding car parks are developed. Currently Centro provides free parking at stations where it specifies facilities, but charges are imposed by station facility owners[11] in the West Midlands region - e.g. Virgin West Coast imposes charges at Wolverhampton and Birmingham International. Just over half of the car park users surveyed had used a station that was not their nearest station; the major reason given was the car parking, not the train service at that station. This is clear evidence that travel patterns are skewed by car parking availability.

Clearly, routes will differ. Of the 169 passengers surveyed on the Dorridge to Worcester route, just under half said they travelled to the station by car as a driver and one sixth as a car passenger. Of these 59% reported that they could always or mostly get a space and only 4% reported that they could hardly or never get a space. Passengers on the Hereford/Great Malvern to Birmingham route reported a higher percentage - 9% had difficulty in getting a space and a lower percentage, 33%, could always or mostly get a space. Just under a third of passengers travelling on the Birmingham to Stratford route arrived at their departure station by car (either driver or passenger) but fewer than one in ten reported difficulty in getting a space.

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[8] See Passenger Focus' response to Cross Country franchise consultation, submitted 7 August 2006
[9] NPS Spring 2006
[10] March 2004
[11] That is, the train company that operates the station.

Two conflicting objectives may be identified for the franchisee in managing its car parks – to maximise revenue from charges, or to encourage more people to travel by train. Given that Centro will no longer take the revenue risk it is important to passengers that growth is not constrained by inadequate or overpriced parking.

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Stakeholder comment includes:
- car parking is inadequate, especially at Tamworth and Lichfield TV
- access to Lichfield TV is inadequate
- car parking at Worcester Shrub Hill should be increased
- Centro or local authorities should manage station car parks
- the franchise should have a clear programme of investment in station facilities

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Recommendations

Passenger Focus expects the franchise to include a clear commitment to improve the accessibility and quality of stations, enhance integration options and for stations to be subject to an appropriate monitoring regime.

Passenger Focus expects the franchisee to include a commitment to ongoing improvements to customer service for passengers at Birmingham New Street. We also expect the franchise to include a requirement to support the redevelopment of New Street, and develop contingency plans that will minimise disruption to passengers.

Passenger Focus expects the franchisee to be required to audit the provision of car park spaces against local demand, and to work with local authorities to improve provision where possible, and to have charging regimes that discourage non-railway use.

Issue two – service patterns

The FCD proposals note that the Service Level Commitment (SLC) will form the base specification for the franchise, and that SLC1 will operate from the commencement of the franchise until December 2008 when the completion of the West Coast Main Line Route Modernisation will be reflected in major timetable changes. The consultation document provides insufficient detail of the SLC2 timetable so it is difficult to determine the benefits and/or disbenefits for passengers on the core West Midlands routes that call at Birmingham New Street. Passenger Focus cannot yet, therefore, make any detailed comments on service provision specified under SLC2.

Passenger research indicates that connectivity is an issue for some passengers, particularly the cumulative impact of changes proposed at Walsall. Detailed comments on the proposal to exclude the Walsall – Wolverhampton service and the curtailing of the Walsall – Stafford service at Rugeley Trent Valley follow[12], but, when allied to the likely impact of WCML 2008 timetable changes affecting the frequency of Walsall – Birmingham and the through-services to Birmingham International, a population centre of over a quarter of a million loses significant links with the national rail network. However, the benefits to the greater number of passengers using the enhanced Birmingham-London West Coast service must be calculated against the losers amongst the West Midlands' commuters.

Recent severe shortages of staff on Sundays have disrupted many passengers' journeys: we expect the incoming franchisee to have a robust action plan to ensure the provision of all contracted services.

Stakeholder comment includes:
- services to Worcester and Hereford should be on a standard pattern, hourly to Hereford
- later services in the evening for Rugeley
- Stourbridge and Kidderminster need a service to New Street for country-wide connections[13]
- best possible connections at Tamworth between W Midlands regional service and Cross Country
- provide an hourly semi-fast train for Stratford upon Avon

Recommendations

DfT will need to demonstrate that the benefits created for passengers by providing three trains an hour between London and Birmingham outweigh the potential disbenefits to West Midlands' commuters and local passengers.

Passenger research into the operation of SLC1 indicates that the frequency of trains is an issue for some. We had received many representations regarding the need for an hourly semi-fast train between Stratford and Birmingham. We tested passengers' views on frequency on the Stratford to Stourbridge route, specifically at peak times and to Stratford. Less than a third of passengers felt that frequencies were sufficient.

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[12] See WM12 section – Stafford-Rugeley-Walsall-Birmingham
[13] Local MPs support this – Source: the Stourbridge Line User Group.

Issue three – information

Passenger research into the availability of information at stations has already been commented on in issue one, above. The provision of information at stations shows a similar differentiation between Silverlink NPS scores that indicate a 71% satisfaction rate, an improvement over the previous spring wave, and what passengers feel on the surveyed routes, where the lack of information is felt to be an area requiring improvement. For Central Trains generally, the equivalent NPS score was 67%.

The Passenger Focus report "*Passenger Information: What Where When and How*" makes the following recommendations about information at stations:

- Use visual and audio displays as complementary sources
- Precede time sensitive audio messages with a distinctive 'beep'
- Conduct visibility audits for displays and define minimum standards
- More electronic A to Z displays at major/busy stations
- Earlier advertising of departure platform
- More TV style displays in waiting areas
- Raise awareness of Help Point as information sources
- Develop standards for equipment in relation to station types.

This issue also encompasses both the marketing of railway services to existing customers and reaching out to potential customers. Passenger Focus would like to see a requirement to properly and professionally promote rail services, including a financial commitment to set aside adequate funding to promote services to non-users and retaining existing users, and would also expect a commitment from bidders to undertake an ongoing programme of market research to ensure that products and services are constantly developed to meet customer needs.

Passenger Focus' response to the Community Rail Strategy has shown that where lines are actively marketed, patronage can grow. This is well demonstrated by the growth in patronage on the Chester – Shrewsbury line, where passenger numbers have grown by 300% over a seven year period.

Passenger research[14] also clearly identifies that passengers need timely and accurate information at times of disruption, and the franchisee should be required to include information within its planning for contingencies at such times. A pan-TOC approach must be a prime requirement.

Stakeholder comment includes:
- maintain the use of Central Trains' "customer information poster"
- the franchise should publish a full list of the access facilities at their stations
- integrated timetables showing all TOCs' services over a route
- engineering work is not fully advertised - joint posters for pan-TOC routes are essential.

Recommendations

Passenger Focus asks that the Department for Transport require the franchisee to have a clear policy on passenger information, in line with industry best practice.

Passenger Focus suggests that the Department for Transport require the franchisee to properly promote rail services and to ensure that products and services are constantly developed to meet customer needs.

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[14] *The impact of the Gerrards Cross tunnel collapse*, Passenger Focus/London TravelWatch June 2006.

Issue four – value for money

The franchise consultation document assumes that commuter fares and protected fares are capped at RPI+1% throughout the franchise term. A significant change is that commuter fare regulation should be adopted in the Birmingham area, as it is in London, which would represent a change in fares policy for WMPTA/Centro-sponsored services in the West Midlands.

During 2006, Passenger Focus undertook quantitative and qualitative research[15] into passengers' perceptions of fares. Over 2,000 passengers were interviewed, and a full outline of Passenger Focus's policy on fares can be found in appendix F but, in summary, passengers reported:

- Many rail fares do not represent value for money
- The fare structure is complex and confusing
- It is unfair for today's passengers to pay in advance for future investment
- The industry needs to exploit fares incentives to attract passengers to travel at times when there is greater capacity. However we oppose putting up fares to price off demand
- An affordable turn-up-and-go strategy must prevail, though pre-book low-cost fares should be available to those whose journeys are flexible
- The industry must control its costs so that more is not passed on to the passenger in higher fares
- The industry must ensure it collects the revenue that is due to it.

Given that the FCD identifies fares measures as one way to manage growth, passengers will be concerned that the loss of Centro's powers to control off-peak fares to RPI (it currently specifies peak to RPI+1% as with national policy), will result in the new franchisee seeking to increase fare box revenue over and above what Centro would have permitted. WMPTA/Centro's fares policy does create anomalies; across the region both peak and off-peak fares are higher on services into Birmingham which are not supported by WMPTA/Centro. This is particularly noticeable on lines where a high proportion of the route mileage is currently outside the WMPTA/Centro area. Thus the peak hour fares from Tamworth are typically 30% higher than from nearby Lichfield; and peak hour fares from Nuneaton are 27% higher than from Warwick. This discrepancy is even higher for off-peak travel.

The former West Midlands County forms the borders of WMPTA/Centro and this artificially restricts fare, as well as station and car park, policies. The Birmingham "travel to work" area is clearly much wider and passengers travelling from neighbouring shire counties will benefit if the franchise equalises provision, but at no disbenefit to existing passengers.

Specifically, the franchisee should exploit fares incentives to attract passengers to travel at times when there is greater capacity. Stakeholders and passenger groups have supported the requirement for the new franchisee to participate in the current multi-modal ticketing arrangements and concessionary fares scheme and indeed should explore innovative ways of simplifying ticketing whilst increasing the attractiveness of the product to the consumer. As well as simplifying the fares structure, consistent average prices for the same distances, and similar discounts for reduced rate fares such as cheap day returns, should be part of the new franchise's fares policy. Examples from the current fares regime show Standard Day Returns vary from 22p/mile to 34p/mile and off-peak discounts varying from 30% to less than 3% within a 30 mile radius of Birmingham.

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[15] *Fares and ticketing – what passengers think*' – published by Passenger Focus, July 2006

Passenger Focus notes the comments in the summary report of the Northern Review[16], which studied the effects of several different approaches to fares increases. (Fares in the Northern franchise, like the West Midlands franchise, include PTE multi-modal products.) All reduced overall demand for rail, and the report concluded that "Any franchise wide and/or targeted fare increase ought to be tied in with any improvements in quality of the overall product. Even then, there could still be significant (and potentially negative/unacceptable) outcomes in terms of mode shift and distributional impacts that run counter to the thrust of the government's transport policy."

Before any consideration is given to raising fares the industry needs to ensure that it collects all revenue due to it. Passenger groups have expressed support for gating schemes where they have been introduced (and are planned) and welcome the current Central Trains "name and shame" initiative despite evidence from "mystery shopper" exercises which shows that on-board revenue collection is inconsistent. The FCD should commit the franchisee to an active revenue collection strategy, with targets and enforcement.

The FCD expects fares measures to contribute towards encouraging commuters to travel outside the high peak period. Research from Passenger Focus into "Earlybird" schemes suggests that commuters do have a limited propensity to alter travel patterns if the financial incentives are correct. However, this is dependant to some extent on the characteristics of the local employment market, and local employer organisations have concerns that the significant inflows of retail and financial services workers using Birmingham New Street in the morning peak, have a limited ability to alter their travel patterns, regardless of the financial incentives on offer.

Data from the latest wave of the NPS shows that only half of Central Trains' passengers (53%) consider that current ticket prices offer value for money and this percentage has remained fairly consistent over the past five years. Only one third of Silverlink passengers considered their tickets to offer value for money, but this undoubtedly represents the higher percentage of commuters whose satisfaction rate is traditionally lower in this area. Passenger research on the Central Trains routes surveyed passengers on journeys inside and outside the WMPTA/Centro boundaries.

On the Stratford to Birmingham route value for money becomes the seventh highest priority for improvement; on the Hereford to Birmingham route it is twelfth, but on Kidderminster to Shirley – predominantly commuter – it comes third.

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Stakeholder comment includes:
- additional ticket issuers are needed on peak hour trains
- encourage modal shift by increasing the intermodal ticketing available
- co-operate with local authorities over local travel cards and similar schemes
- restrictions on tickets should be consistent between TOCs.

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Recommendations

Many passengers perceive value for money as poor. Research suggests the current fare structure is complex and confusing. Bidders should set out their proposals for fares, and be required to demonstrate how these will improve value for money ratings, as measured by the National Passenger Survey.

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[16] Specifically Case Study A: Fares Increases

Issue five – getting a seat

The franchise consultation document seeks to address current and anticipated future growth in passenger demand and identifies recent steady growth in demand on both the West Midlands routes and the Silverlink County routes. Passenger Focus welcomes the Department for Transport 's acknowledgement that the majority of rail services in the West Midlands are considered value for money and have been specified in the base case for the franchise.

Forecast growth is highlighted as the West Midlands economy continues to grow and change with much significant retail and office development in Birmingham compensating for the decline in heavy industry and contributing to crowding issues on the morning peak services into Birmingham New Street. Further growth on the Silverlink County route will driven by factors including growth in Central London employment and the Milton Keynes/South Midlands (MKSM) growth area contained within the Sustainable Communities Plan. The recent provision of twelve-car platforms at stations on the Silverlink County route will allow longer trains, when needed, to meet future growth in demand as will planned new platform capacity at Milton Keynes Central and Bletchley.

In the West Midlands, key to the delivery of this growth over the long term will be the Birmingham Gateway project, designed to significantly enhance the passenger handling capability of Birmingham New Street station. Passenger Focus expects the franchisee to not only co-operate with, but also commit its support to, this project including having sufficient resources to cope with disrupted operations should re-building commence during the lifetime of the franchise. The passenger perception of changing trains at Birmingham New Street is more fully considered in the Cross-Country section of this report, however passenger flows resulting from the curtailment of current through journey opportunities will also impact on current commuter flows and bidders should be required to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to provide adequate customer assistance.

The base case specification shows the available capacity as measured both by Centro's standards and the Department for Transport PIXC (Passengers In eXcess Of Capacity) measure. The Centro measure defines overcrowding at a lower, more passenger-friendly, level than the DfT's measure. Therefore, Passenger Focus has concerns that the proposed change from the Centro to the Department for Transport measure is not appropriate, and notes stakeholders who state that the characteristics and expectations of the London commuter market differ from the West Midlands and changes to comfort factors may result in a modal shift to car travel.

Stakeholders provided Passenger Focus with local information regarding growth of residential areas and employment sites.

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Stakeholder comment includes:

- Birmingham to Leicester trains often lack adequate capacity
- "hot spare" trains at strategic locations to deal with service problems
- provide three car trains on longer distance routes
- accurate counts of passengers to inform capacity provided.

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Passenger Focus surveyed passengers to ask how highly they rated the importance of getting a seat. The fact that this aspect of the journey experience is only rated in the top third of importance factors suggest that, currently, this factor would only be of high importance to those travelling into Birmingham New Street in the morning peak where it is acknowledged that overcrowding exists.

However, levels of growth anticipated in the FCD means that more passengers will complain of overcrowding unless more capacity – seats for passengers – is provided through the new franchise.

Overcrowding can be reduced by providing more carriages to lengthen trains, by altering the internal configuration, by better timetabling enabling redeployment of rolling stock and by the fares strategy. The recommendations contained in the West Midlands RUS regarding infrastructure works to enable lengthened trains have broad stakeholder and passenger group support and should be delivered urgently. Given the expected reduced role for Centro, the franchisee should be expected to champion local improvements to the infrastructure.

Providing extra carriages means, in essence, ordering new trains. Passenger Focus has audited a number of new build of trains and detailed comments on how this process should reflect passenger input are detailed in Appendix F. Equally, when considering internal refurbishment of existing stock to carry more passengers, the consideration of increasing overall capacity by removing seating to provide more standing capacity must only be undertaken after detailed passenger research.

Recommendations

Passenger Focus seeks assurance that the Department for Transport will satisfactorily address capacity problems within the West Midlands franchise. The DfT needs to clearly define how many additional seats it needs to procure to alleviate the acknowledged crowding problems that passengers currently experience and how many are predicted to be necessary across the lifetime of the franchise.

3.3 Route-by-route comments

Passenger Focus has received comments from many stakeholders and individual passengers. We asked for detailed comments on specific issues – aspects of the existing Central Trains franchise that are considered to be in need of improvement, and 'measures', suggestions as to how to achieve the improvements needed. We have compared those comments with the results of passenger surveys - both NPS and specially commissioned research – and list below valid responses.

We note that for many of the services listed, the franchise consultation document proposes no change in the overall number of trains operated, or number of calls at stations, although the timings of individual trains may change in SLC2.

Route WM1 Euston – Northampton

The base case proposes no change to the pattern or number of services as it is suggested future growth will be accommodated by lengthening trains. Stakeholder groups would like trains to once more run through to Birmingham. We note that one train per hour will be extended to Crewe via the Trent Valley. That meets aspirations for a regular service between those stations and Milton Keynes and Northampton. See also route WM14, below.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM1.1	population growth	• plan to cater adequately for the expansion of Milton Keynes and Northampton
WM1.2	markets	• understand and develop all potential markets
WM1.3	services to Birmingham	• re-link trains on this route with route WM5

Route WM2 Bedford – Bletchley (Marston Vale Line)

The base case proposes no change to pattern or number of services as it accommodates current volumes of passengers. Passenger Focus would support the line's designation as a community rail service during the lifetime of the franchise and welcomes the extension to Milton Keynes Central, subject to third party funding being made available. Stakeholders have asked that later trains and a Sunday service should be considered as a priced option. There is strong stakeholder and passenger group support for the East-West rail link utilising this line.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM2.1	informed management	• include in East Midlands franchise
WM2.2	extension to Milton Keynes Central	• develop and implement
WM2.3	East – West Rail	• assist with developing and implementation
WM2.4	Community Rail Partnership	• form a partnership for the line
WM2.5	Public holiday/Sunday service	• respond to demand and operate on public holidays • trial Sunday service to test demand
WM2.6	current timetable	• maintain current timetable • trial a later evening train

Route WM3 *Watford Junction – St. Albans Abbey*

The base case proposes no change to pattern or number of services as it accommodates current numbers of passengers. Passenger Focus would support its designation as a community rail service during the lifetime the franchise. There is stakeholder support for half-hourly even-interval service options, subject to third party funding for infrastructure enhancements.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM3.1	more informed development	• transfer to Transport for London (TfL)

Route WM4 *Birmingham – Liverpool/Preston*

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as it is appropriate to current demand and represents value for money. Stakeholder comment supported the previous plan for a regional service to Preston, with more calls at Hartford to develop its potential as a railhead.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM4.1	the service at Hartford	• more calls on Preston service • develop Hartford's railhead potential
WM4.2	the Preston service	• progress the regional level service concept to provide relief to cross-country/West Coast services

Route WM5 *Birmingham - Coventry - Northampton*

The base case specification is for two trains per hour service throughout the day. The document identifies the option that this service may be linked to provide through journeys to Liverpool and Manchester, subject to Network Rail's timetable development work and this has stakeholder support, subject to concerns that the pattern of stops is not yet identified. There is considerable concern amongst users that a West Coast service of three trains an hour will make timetabling regional and local trains very difficult.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM5.1	regional service to Northampton, Milton Keynes, Watford, Euston	• re-link trains on this route with WM1
WM5.2	Coventry – Birmingham	• more capacity • earlier through trains to/from Walsall
WM5.3	New Street Station	• more capacity for existing passengers and for future growth in passenger numbers and train services.
WM5.4	line speed Northampton to Rugby	• increase the line speed to increase capacity and improve journey times
WM5.5	platform extensions	• as a priority, extend platforms between Coventry and New Street to accommodate 8 car trains
WM5.6	plans for 3 West Coast trains per hour Rugby - Birmingham	• adequate consultation and time to progress plans for satisfactory local and regional as well as inter-city train services

Route WM6 *Birmingham – Leicester*

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as it is appropriate to current demand and represents value for money. The timetable should aim to provide a standard pattern, with half-hourly departures from Birmingham and Leicester, in conjunction with the hourly New Cross Country Stansted Airport service. Stakeholder comment stresses the need to take into account the impact of Coleshill Parkway station now being constructed and the need to maximise opportunities for connections at Leicester. Passenger groups suggest extending to Norwich or forming a Nottingham - Leicester service. DfT should explain their reasons for splitting the provision of services on this route between two operators, given the problems experienced on other such routes with a mix of fast and slow trains – Shrewsbury to Birmingham is an example, also in this franchise.

The proposed new station at Blaby, noted on page 42 of the East Midlands FCD, is on this route and would be served by the West Midlands franchise.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM6.1	the seating capacity provided	• cater for existing demand and for growth, especially for Coleshill Parkway
WM6.2	connectivity	• relink with the Leicester to Nottingham/Lincoln service • extend to East Anglia to meet demands for more capacity/through Norwich service • maximise connectional possibilities at Leicester

Route WM7 *Birmingham – Wolverhampton*

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as it is appropriate to current demand and represents value for money. There is stakeholder support for station improvements at both Birmingham and Wolverhampton and a possible station at Brinsford. Stakeholders and passenger groups have stressed the need to maximise opportunities for connections at Smethwick Galton Bridge. There are strong stakeholder reservations that the Department for Transport cannot state that the pattern of services between Birmingham and Wolverhampton will not be worsened by the impact of the December 2008 WCML timetable.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM7.1	reliability	• work with other parties to improve the performance of the stopping trains
WM7.2	Brinsford	• extend WC Euston trains and local Birmingham trains to serve Brinsford
WM7.3	Smethwick Galton Bridge	• maximise use as an interchange

Route WM8 *Birmingham – Shrewsbury*

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as it is appropriate to current demand and represents value for money. Passengers are vociferous in their comments on the unreliability of the route. Route WM6, see above, is a route where it is proposed two operators will provide the service. Users are unconvinced of the benefits of operating a line in that way.

	Issue	Measure Advocated
WM8.1	the TOCs operating the route	• ATW to provide all services • sensible integration of routes
WM8.2	proposed open-access Wrexham-Shrewsbury-Marylebone Railway	• stops need thorough evaluation

Route WM9 *Coventry – Nuneaton*

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as a single-car rail shuttle is adequate for current demand. Passenger Focus would support the designation of a community rail service during the lifetime of the franchise. Stakeholder studies note the need for a better service, including intermediate stations at Coventry Arena and Bermuda, but recognise that Coventry Arena station would need much longer trains than a single-car rail shuttle for sporting events and there is a limited market to justify either the investment necessary or the increased running costs.

Passenger groups support the use of this line as an important linkage between the West and East Midlands, avoiding the need to interchange at Birmingham New Street for some journey opportunities. The original plan for a Nottingham to Oxford regional service would fulfil that function.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM9.1	low usage: what is the line for?	• maximise productivity • good connections • timed to meet demand • market service • relink to Leicester to Nottingham service
WM9.2	proposed station at Coventry Stadium	• build new station
WM9.3	original plan for Nottingham to Oxford service; Kenilworth station	• investigate its potential
WM9.4	Warwickshire CC canvassing support for Kenilworth	• serve Kenilworth and extend Nuneaton to Coventry service to Leamington Spa
WM9.5	frequency	• increase to half-hourly

Route WM10 *Walsall – Wolverhampton*

This route is deleted from the base case specification. Stakeholder comment notes the reduction in through-journey opportunities from Walsall, although acknowledging the current low level of use. It is clear that any service would have to drastically improve on the value for money provided by the present service.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM10.1	existing service	• maintain and develop • half-hourly frequency

Route WM11 *Lichfield – Redditch (Cross City Line)*

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as it is appropriate to current demand and represents value for money, assuming that this represents the enhanced existing service.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM11.1	existing 6 trains/hour service	• maintain
WM11.2	Lichfield Trent Valley CIS car parking DDA compliance access to high-level platforms	• improve • create new access to station from Burton Old Rd.
WM11.3	Cross-City North evening timetable	• more trains to Four Oaks as a minimum
WM11.4	express services from Lichfield	• investigate timetabling possibilities
WM11.5	growth	• plan to accommodate growth before franchise end • e.g., install passing loop at Alvechurch to permit higher frequency to Redditch

Route WM12 *Stafford - Rugeley - Walsall – Birmingham*

The base case calls for the hourly service to be retained but curtailed at Rugeley Trent Valley, principally to keep lower-speed diesel units off a two-track section of the Trent Valley. Stakeholders have noted the reduction in through-journey opportunities from Walsall[17] and without sight of the timetable for the hourly semi-fast London-Crewe service, it is impossible to comment on connections. In this context it should be noted that Stafford faces a reduction in calls in the proposed Cross Country specification.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM12.1	the reliability of the service	• improve
WM12.2	Sutton Park line	• undertake viability research to reopen line
WM12.3	timetable	• later evening services should run to Rugeley TV • maintain link to Stafford
WM12.4	capacity	• increase paths available for at least three trains (two passenger) per hour

Route 13 *Stafford – Stoke on Trent/Birmingham –Manchester*

An hourly semi–fast service to Manchester, with local calls at Stone, is proposed in the SLC2. Norton Bridge, Barlaston and Wedgewood remain unserved and the very low usage of these intermediate stations in the past is acknowledged but their status is due for review. Currently a bus operation, this is likely to continue for the first year of the new franchise. Passenger research tells us that use of the bus replacement service is low, but users are satisfied for local journeys. It is clear that there is considerable demand for rail services, particularly for commuting.

The FCD specification for the Birmingham to Manchester regional service includes all the stops between Macclesfield and Stockport. Experience informs us that late-running trains often have stops cancelled in an effort to restore the service, with obvious implications for passengers at the stations between Macclesfield and Stockport.

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[17] With the withdrawal of Walsall to Wolverhampton trains.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM13.1	Services in the Stoke conurbation	• restore rail services as part of a longer distance inter-regional service, e.g., a Euston to Crewe service running via the Trent Valley, Stafford and Stoke; Stafford to Manchester Airport; Stoke to Birmingham International • develop a strategy to maximise usage • identify and serve markets
WM13.2	evening services	• later services
WM13.3	rail replacement bus services	• make a final decision regarding bus or train • operate service as a mix of rail at peak times, bus at off-peak
WM13.4	calls at Stone	• cross-country TOC to call

Route WM14 *London Euston/Northampton – Nuneaton/Crewe/Liverpool*

An hourly semi–fast service to Crewe, with possible extensions to Liverpool, is proposed in the SLC2, principally to make best use of investment in TV4 tracking and investment in Desiro trains. However the mix of calls at Atherstone/Polesworth needs further evaluation when the proposed timetable is available.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM14.1	the existing service level	• improve - regional level of service should be provided
WM14.2	Polesworth, and rail replacement services	• make a final decision; implement best possible arrangements for passengers
WM14.3	access to Lichfield TV	• improve • create new access to station from Burton Old Road
WM14.4	interchange at Tamworth	• investigate potential and develop if proven
WM14.5	links with Northampton	• run Euston to Trent Valley trains via Northampton
WM14.6	car parking	• longer-distance commuters fill car parks early; need for spaces for rail-heading from surrounding areas

Route WM15 *Birmingham Snow Hill cluster of routes*

(These routes combine with WM17 Birmingham to Hereford, between Droitwich and Hereford)

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as it is appropriate to current demand and may represent value for money, subject to a competitive bid from Chiltern Railways. There is strong stakeholder emphasis on the value of Smethwick Galton Bridge as an interchange, especially since the decision was taken not to route some of these trains away from Birmingham New Street.

Passenger survey data shows punctuality and reliability to be the most important service attribute and frequency third most important, reflecting the high use of the routes by commuters. The weighted gap analysis shows the top three issues for improvement to be; availability of staff on

trains (mystery shopper data available), the cleanliness and upkeep of stations (NPS data available), and ticket value for money (NPS data available).

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM15.1	late evening peak service Snow Hill to Leamington	• maintain frequency
WM15.2	Birmingham to Stratford	• increased frequency – additional hourly semi-fast south of Shirley • more car parking at Wythall
WM15.3	the operator of these routes	• Chiltern Railways to operate these routes • should be the one that offers the best benefits to passengers
WM15.4	fleet	• effects on resourcing dmu fleets if split from other diesel worked West Midlands routes
WM15.5	service pattern and connections Worcester to Hereford	• standard pattern timetable • improved connections with GW • hourly off-peak Great Malvern to New Street via Kidderminster service
WM15.6	capacity at Worcester Shrub Hill	• increase car parking by using disused railway land • create an extra through platform, using no. 3 bay
WM15.7	signalling changes in the Worcester area	• additional section between Tunnel Junction and Droitwich Spa
WM15.8	links to West of England	• study linking this route to the regional services to Bristol and west thereof
WM15.9	Kidderminster to London trains	• run hourly throughout the day

Route WM16 Stourbridge Junction. – Stourbridge Town

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as a single-car rail shuttle is adequate for current patronage and represents value for money. Passenger Focus would support its designation as a community rail service during the lifetime of the franchise. The innovative use of the Parry People Mover on the Sunday service may offer a solution but is unlikely to offer adequate capacity on weekdays.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM16.1	the operator of this line	• Chiltern Railways to operate this line
WM16.2	rolling stock	• use light railcar to release a set for use on Coventry to Nuneaton route

Route WM17 Birmingham – Hereford

The base case proposes no change to service levels and patterns as it is appropriate to current demand and represents value for money. The local population at Bromsgrove is growing strongly,

matched by passenger use of the station. The considerable passenger group support for works at Bromsgrove to enhance capacity and passenger facilities is backed by stakeholder support for this important commuter station.

Passenger research shows that the top three attributes ranked in importance are punctuality and reliability, provision of information at stations and the value for money of tickets (frequency fourth). Gap analysis priorities for improvement top three are: the cleanliness and upkeep of stations (NPS data available), ticket buying facilities, and availability of staff at stations (frequency seventh out of 18).

Given that the route was split at Birmingham with the Nottingham leg separated to improve performance, it is worth considering whether any increase in performance compensates for the loss of through-journey opportunities.

	Issue	Measure advocated
WM17.1	Bromsgrove	• additional capacity • extend northbound platform

3.4 Conclusions

Based on the extensive evidence presented in this report, Passenger Focus makes the following recommendations to the Department for Transport concerning the new West Midlands franchise.

Evidence from passengers clearly shows the importance they place on the provision, maintenance and upkeep of station facilities. Therefore the Department for Transport needs to ensure there is a commitment from the franchisee to contribute to the development of stations. The franchisee should also commit to a regime based on frequent and regular inspections of stations and trains, where the company is incentivised to repair faults promptly and to implement remedial measures where performance is below acceptable levels. The regime should be included in a framework of continuous improvement.

Given that the timetable proposed for December 2008 is not yet sufficiently developed to be consulted on, Passenger Focus cannot comment on the benefits or disbenefits of that change, except to note that a major change is needed to accommodate a fifty percent increase in West Midlands to London inter-city services. Whilst acknowledging the considerable economic benefits to the regional economy, and the railway itself, from this improvement, Passenger Focus has concerns that journey opportunities within the region may suffer. It therefore recommends that the Department for Transport starts the consultation process for the December 2008 timetable as soon as is practicable – it should be detailed; inclusive, and responsive to identified passenger needs. However, the opportunity to accommodate timetable aspirations in the December 2007 timetable should not be lost, where identified aspirations can be accommodated.

With the use of rail services in the West Midlands growing and forecast to continue to grow, the Department for Transport must demonstrate that the franchise will be sufficiently resourced to deal with localised overcrowding without pricing off demand and reassure passengers that they can get a seat.

Passengers attach a high priority to clear information regarding train running times and plat forming. Passenger Focus presses the Department for Transport to require the franchisee to have a clear policy on passenger information, in line with ATOC guidelines.

Passenger Focus also suggests that the franchisee is required to properly promote rail services to ensure that products and services are constantly developed to meet customer needs.

4. Passenger Focus' policy on franchises

Below is a summary of specific areas we would like to see addressed in all franchises. The list is not exhaustive and we aim to improve and revise our policy positions as evidence comes to our attention. Detailed explanation of our current position on the issues below is found at Appendix F.

Safety
- The primacy of operational safety should be a given
- Perceptions of personal security affect whether people choose to travel by rail
- A visible presence of staff at stations and on trains is the best way to reassure passengers of their personal security
- Stations should ideally be staffed at all times that trains call at them

Reliability
- The ultimate target for punctuality and reliability should be 100%
- Operators should be incentivised to continuously improve performance and penalised for declining performance
- There should be a swift escalatory procedure for consistently poor performance, with removal of the franchise being the ultimate penalty
- Performance figures should be published by line of route to better represent the passenger experience on parts of the network
- Delay should be thought of in terms of delay to passengers, not delay to trains. Timetables should be robust, and connections held where appropriate in order not to exacerbate delay to passengers
- Short-forming of trains (i.e. providing fewer seats than specified under the train plan) should be considered as partial cancellation of a service.

Redress
- There should be a common, simple to understand, compensation regime across all train companies at an agreed standard threshold
- Passengers should have the choice of taking compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers
- There should be no exclusions, i.e. entitlement applies irrespective of the cause of delay
- There should be a proactive approach to increasing passenger awareness of their entitlement
- Monthly and longer-validity season ticket holders should additionally be entitled to compensation if they have experienced frequent delays over 10 minutes.

Fares
Passenger Focus has the following broad policies concerning fares:
- Many rail fares do not represent good value for money
- The fare structure is complex and confusing
- It is unfair for today's passengers to pay in advance for future investment
- The industry needs to exploit fares incentives to attract passengers to travel at times when there is greater capacity. However, we oppose putting up fares to price off demand
- An affordable turn-up-and-go strategy must prevail, though pre-book low cost fares should be available to those whose journeys are flexible
- The industry must control its costs so that more is not passed onto the passenger in fares
- The industry must ensure it collects the revenue that is due to it.

Station standards

The primary needs of passengers should inform minimum standards at stations. These are:

- Passengers need to be able to find the station and find their way around the station
- They need to be able to get to the station and their platform
- They need to feel safe
- They need adequate light and shelter.

Integrated transport

- Integration should be within the rail network as well as between modes
- Rail travel must be seen as part of a door-to-door journey
- Rail should provide easy access, timetable information and wayfinding to other public transport modes
- Through-ticketing schemes should be encouraged
- Car parking availability and charges must be seen as part of the whole journey experience.

Accessibility

- A facility is "accessible" if everyone is able to use it with ease
- All passengers at some time find themselves encumbered: for instance because of a permanent physical or mental impairment, a temporary impairment (e.g. broken leg), by being accompanied by young children, or simply through carrying luggage
- Improving access and facilities for disabled people will benefit not only those with disabilities but also families with young children and elderly people with mobility issues or restrictions.

Service patterns

- Services should be planned to meet passenger needs. Operational expediency, revenue maximisation, historic timetables and historic engineering work patterns should not be the prime factors in determining public service provision
- Rail passengers pay rail fares - bus substitution should be kept to a minimum and passengers compensated for increased journey time
- Connections policies should be robust
- Connections should be guaranteed for the last train of the day.

Possessions policy

- Information is key: tell people what the engineering work is going to deliver; how to plan alternative journeys; and, afterwards, explain what has been achieved
- Possessions should be co-ordinated across regions so that adequate diversionary routes are available – passengers would generally rather stay on the train for longer than change to buses.

Staff relations

- Poor staff relationships can have a direct impact upon the travelling public
- Dispute resolutions agreements should be implemented by the incoming TOCs, in co-operation with the unions, to avoid strike action
- Significant investment in staff training should be a condition of the new franchise agreement
- A new franchise is an opportunity to place emphasis on improving overall passenger satisfaction as well as performance.

Appendix A

List of respondents to our invitation to comment on the East and West Midlands franchises

- Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association (BBRUA)
- Cannock Chase Rail Promotion Group
- Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG)
- Lichfield Rail Promotion Group (LRPG)
- North Staffs Rail Promotion Group (NSRPG)
- Northampton Rail Users' Group (NRUG)
- Norwich & Norfolk Transport Action Group (NNTAG)
- Railfuture (East Anglia branch)
- Railfuture (East Midlands branch)
- Railfuture (Lincolnshire branch)
- Railfuture (Midlands branch)
- Shakespeare Line Promotion Group (SLPG)
- Shrewsbury-Wolverhampton Rail Users' Association (SWRUA)
- South East Lincolnshire Travellers' Association (SELTA)
- Stourbridge Line User Group (SLUG)
- Nottinghamshire Chamber of commerce
- Derbyshire Chamber & Business Link
- Nottingham Trent University, Integrated Transport Management Project
- EMPTUF Steering Group/RCIG
- Bedford Commuters Association
- Transport 2000 Derbyshire & Peak District
- Transport 2000 West Midlands
- Transport Strategy, Nottingham City Council
- Transportation, Leicestershire County Council
- Public Transport, Northamptonshire County Council
- Transport Development Officer, East Lindsey District Council
- Director - Sustainable Communities, East Midlands Development Agency
- Railfuture (West Midlands branch)
- Town Clerk, Skegness Council
- Richard West
- Lichfield & District Cycle Forum
- National passenger committee, Railfuture
- Barlaston Residents Association.

Appendix B

Bibliography and contacts used in compiling the East and West Midlands responses

Planning agencies

- Regional planning assessments
- Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Transport Strategy
- Local Transport Plans
- Leicestershire 2006 – 2011
- Shropshire (provisional) 2006/7 – 2010/11
- Existing franchises of: Central Trains
- *West Midlands RUS*: SRA, July 2005.
- *Midland Main Line/East Midlands RUS*: SRA, March 2004.
- *Community Rail Development Strategy:* SRA, November 2004
- SWML RUS draft for consultation: NR 2005.
- SW Franchise consultation document: DfT, Nov. 2005.
- *East Coast Main Line Review*: ("working note"), SRA, June 2005.
- *New Stations: A Guide for Promoters*: SRA, September 2004.
- *Eastern Regional Planning Assessment for the railway:* DfT, February 2006.
- *Secure Stations Scheme*: commissioned by DfT, October 2005.
- *South Nottinghamshire Rail Network Review*: Summary Report[18], August 2003
- *West Midlands Regional Transport Prioritisation Framework*: Final Report, Nov. 2005
- *The West Midlands Advice to Government on the RFAs*: January, 2006
- *Maintaining and improving Britain's railway stations:* NAO, July, 2005
- *West Coast Main Line Progress Report,* May, 2006
- *Business Plan 2006* Network Rail
- *State of the Countryside 2006 Report* Commission for Rural Communities, July 2006
- *Concessionary Fares for Young People in Rural Areas* Commission for Rural Communities, August 2005
- *Review of the Rural Content of Provisional LTP2s* unpublished report[19]

Passenger Focus publications

- *National Passenger Survey* (Spring 2006)
- *Passenger Priorities on 12 Central Trains Routes* RPC, July 2005
- *What next for the Norwich to Ely train services?* RPC Eastern England, May, 2005
- *Strategy to Reality: using Local transport Plans to deliver on rail* RPC, Feb. 2005
- *Barriers to Interchange* RPC/NWRA February, 2005
- *Franchise Strategy* Passenger Focus
- *Passenger Information: what, when, where, how?* RPC, September 2004
- *Project Hope* RPC Midlands, (2003)

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[18] Notts CC, Nottm City Council, Derbys CC
[19] TRL Limited, November 2005

- *Driving up Station Standards* RPC Midlands (2003)
- *A Further Review of Virgin trains Interchange Plans* RPC, April 2004
- *What does the passenger want?* RPC, June 2000
- *No Charge* (car parking in W. Midlands) RPC Midlands, 2004
- earlier work by the RPC, e.g., *supporting the case for cross-country*, interchange at Birmingham (Midlands)

Other organisations

- *Derwent Valley Rail Users' Strategy* Friends of the Derwent Valley Line, August 2005
- *Making rail travel accessible for all* ACoRP
- *A52 Clifton Bridge to Bingham Multi-Modal Study* Atkins, March 2004
- *Getting There* Inter-regional Public Transport Links Study, Jacobs June 2006
- *Rural Railways* House of Commons Transport Committee, March 2005

Other work relevant to Central Trains remapping

- EMPTUF/WMPTUF Regional Links project. Phase 1.
- EMPTUF and WMPTUF member surveys.

Incidental papers

- East Midlands Regional Assembly Transport Group *An Update on Transport Issues* 8/2/06
- *Connections* Northern's stakeholder magazine, summer 2006

Appendix C

A summary listing of all the "issues and measures" considered to be pertinent to the specification of the East and West Midlands franchises

This appendix lists issues that have been identified to Passenger Focus as requiring particular attention from the new West Midlands
franchise operator, and the measures that have been proposed as ways of achieving the necessary improvements for passengers.
It includes the responses from those listed in appendix one.

Euston - Northampton	Issue	Measure advocated
WM1.1	population growth	• plan to cater adequately for the expansion of Milton Keynes and Northampton
WM1.2	markets	• understand and develop all potential markets
WM1.3	services to Birmingham	• re-link trains on this route with route WM5

Bedford - Bletchley	Issue	Measure advocated
WM2.1	informed management	• include in East Midlands franchise
WM2.2	extension to Milton Keynes Central	• develop and implement
WM2.3	East – West Rail	• assist with developing and implementation
WM2.4	Community Rail Partnership	• form a partnership for the line
WM2.5	Public holiday/ Sunday service	• respond to demand and operate on public holidays • trial Sunday service to test demand
WM2.6	current timetable	• maintain current timetable • trial a later evening train

Watford – St Albans Abbey	Issue	Measure advocated
WM3.1	more informed development	• transfer to Transport for London (TfL)
WM3.2	link to the Midland Main Line	• link to MML and operate as part of First Capital Connect (Thameslink)

Birmingham – Liverpool/Preston	Issue	Measure advocated
WM4.1	the service at Hartford	• more calls on Preston service • develop Hartford's railhead potential
WM4.2	the Preston service	• progress the regional level service concept to provide relief to cross-country/West Coast services

Birmingham-Coventry-Northampton	Issue	Measure advocated
WM5.1	regional service to Northampton, Milton Keynes, Watford, Euston	• re-link trains on this route with WM1
WM5.2	Coventry – Birmingham	• more capacity • earlier through trains to/from Walsall
WM5.3	New Street Station	• more capacity for existing passengers and for future growth in passenger numbers and train services.
WM5.4	line speed Northampton to Rugby	• increase the line speed to increase capacity and improve journey times
WM5.5	platform extensions	• as a priority, extend platforms between Coventry and New Street to accommodate 8 car trains
WM5.6	plans for 3 West Coast trains per hour Rugby - Birmingham	• adequate consultation and time to progress plans for satisfactory local and regional as well as inter-city train services

Birmingham - Leicester	Issue	Measure advocated
WM6.1	the seating capacity provided	• cater for existing demand and for growth, especially for Coleshill Parkway
WM6.2	connectivity	• relink with the Leicester to Nottingham/Lincoln service • extend to East Anglia to meet demands for more capacity/through Norwich service • maximise connectional possibilities at Leicester

Birmingham – Wolverhampton	Issue	Measure advocated
WM7.1	reliability	• work with other parties to improve the performance of the stopping trains
WM7.2	Brinsford	• extend WC Euston trains and local Birmingham trains to serve Brinsford
WM7.3	Smethwick Galton Bridge	• maximise use as an interchange

Birmingham - Shrewsbury	Issue	Measure Advocated
WM8.1	the TOCs operating the route Wrexham-Shrewsbury-Marylebone Railway	• ATW to provide all services • sensible integration of routes • stops need thorough evaluation

Coventry - Nuneaton	Issue	Measure advocated
WM9.1	low usage: what is the line for?	• maximise productivity • good connections • timed to meet demand • market service • relink to Leicester to Nottingham service
WM9.2	proposed station at Coventry Stadium	• build new station
WM9.3	original plan for Nottingham to Oxford service; Kenilworth station	• investigate its potential
WM9.4	Warwickshire CC canvassing support for Kenilworth	• serve Kenilworth and extend Nuneaton to Coventry service to Leamington Spa
WM9.5	frequency	• increase to half-hourly

Walsall - Wolverhampton	Issue	Measure advocated
WM10.1	existing service	• maintain and develop • half-hourly frequency

Lichfield – Redditch (Cross-City line)	Issue	Measure advocated
WM11.1	existing 6 trains/hour service	• maintain
WM11.2	Lichfield Trent Valley CIS car parking DDA compliance access to high-level platforms	• improve • create new access to station from Burton Old Rd.
WM11.3 WM11.4	Cross-City North evening timetable express services from Lichfield	• more trains to Four Oaks as a minimum • investigate timetabling possibilities
WM11.5 WM11.5	growth	• plan to accommodate growth before franchise end • e.g., install passing loop at Alvechurch to permit higher frequency to Redditch

Stafford-Rugeley-Walsall-Birmingham	Issue	Measure advocated
WM12.1	the reliability of the service	• improve
WM12.2	Sutton Park line	• reopen to passengers
WM12.3	timetable	• later evening services should run to Rugeley TV • maintain link to Stafford
WM12.4	capacity	• increase paths available for at least three trains (two passenger) per hour

Stafford – Stoke/B'ham – Manchester	Issue	Measure advocated
WM13.1	Services in the Stoke conurbation	• restore rail services as part of a longer distance inter-regional service, e.g., a Euston to Crewe service running via the Trent Valley, Stafford and Stoke; Stafford to Manchester Airport; Stoke to Birmingham International • develop a strategy to maximise usage • identify and serve markets
WM13.2	evening services	• later services
WM13.3	rail replacement bus services	• make a final decision regarding bus or train • operate service as a mix of rail at peak times, bus at off-peak
WM13.4	calls at Stone	• cross-country TOC to call

Euston/Northampton-Nuneaton-Crewe-Liverpool	Issue	Measure advocated
WM14.1	the existing service level	• improve - regional level of service should be provided
WM14.2	Polesworth, and rail replacement services	• make a final decision; implement best possible arrangements for passengers
WM14.3	access to Lichfield TV	• improve and create new access to station from Burton Old Rd
WM14.4	interchange at Tamworth	• investigate potential and develop if proven
WM14.5	links with Northampton	• run Euston to Trent Valley trains via Northampton
WM14.6	car parking	• longer-distance commuters fill car parks early; need for spaces for rail-heading from surrounding areas

Birmingham Snow Hill clusters	Issue	Measure advocated
WM15.1	late evening peak service Snow Hill to Leamington	• maintain frequency
WM15.4	Birmingham to Stratford	• increased frequency – additional hourly semi-fast south of Shirley • more car parking at Wythall

WM15.5	the operator of these routes	• Chiltern Railways to operate these routes • effects on resourcing dmu fleets if split from other diesel worked West Midlands routes • should be the one that offers the best benefits to passengers
WM15.6	service pattern and connections Worcester to Hereford	• standard pattern timetable • improved connections with GW • hourly off-peak Great Malvern to New Street via Kidderminster service
WM15.7	capacity at Worcester Shrub Hill	• increase car parking by using disused railway land • create an extra through platform, using no. 3 bay
WM15.8	signalling changes in the Worcester area	• additional section between Tunnel Junction and Droitwich Spa
WM15.9	links to West of England	• study linking this route to the regional services to Bristol and west thereof
WM15.10	Kidderminster to London trains	• run hourly throughout the day

Stourbridge Junction - Stourbridge Town	Issue	Measure advocated
WM16.1	the operator of this line	• Chiltern Railways to operate this line
WM16.2	rolling stock	• use light railcar to release a set for use on Coventry to Nuneaton route

Birmingham - Hereford	Issue	Measure advocated
WM17.1	Bromsgrove	• additional capacity • extend northbound platform

Appendix D sample passenger questionnaire

Accent   **Passengerfocus** putting rail passengers first

Interviewer name _____

On train: ☐ Station: ☐ First: ☐ Standard: ☐   Run number ☐☐☐☐

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this short survey being conducted by Accent on behalf of Passenger Focus. Passenger Focus is the official, independent consumer organisation representing the interests of rail users nationally. We would like to hear your views on the service provided on this route. It should take no more than five minutes to complete. Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

The interviewer will collect this questionnaire from you when you have completed it or please use the post paid envelope provided to send it back to us. If you have any queries the interviewer will be pleased to help. As a thank you for your help we are offering you the opportunity of taking part in a prize draw with a prize of £500. If you wish to take part please tell us your name and address where we can contact you in the space provided on the last page.

Your Journey Today

Q1. Please fill in the scheduled departure time of this train from the station where you boarded. If you were handed the questionnaire at a station please put the time of the train you caught after being given this questionnaire.

USE 24 HOUR CLOCK EG 13:25   ☐☐ : ☐☐

Q2. Which station are you travelling from on **this** train

Alsager ☐	Derby ☐	Longton ☐	Tutbury and Hatton ☐
Blythe Bridge ☐	Kidsgrove ☐	Peartree ☐	Uttoxeter ☐
Crewe ☐	Longport ☐	Stoke-on-Trent ☐	Other ☐

Q3. Which station are you travelling to on **this** train

Alsager ☐	Derby ☐	Longton ☐	Tutbury and Hatton ☐
Blythe Bridge ☐	Kidsgrove ☐	Peartree ☐	Uttoxeter ☐
Crewe ☐	Longport ☐	Stoke-on-Trent ☐	Other ☐

Q4. How long is the journey from the station where you boarded **this** train to the station where you will leave the train? **PLEASE PUT 'X' IN ONE BOX ONLY**

1. Up to 30 minutes ☐   3. 1 to 1.5 hours ☐   5. 2 to 3 hours ☐   7. Over 4 hours ☐
2. 30 minutes to 1 hour ☐   4. 1.5 to 2 hours ☐   6. 3 to 4 hours ☐

Q5. Before catching **this train** where did you start your journey?

Town _____   Postcode: ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

EXAMPLE POSTCODE | N | G | 1 | 4 | 3 | P | N |

Q6. How did you travel to the station?

1. Car as driver ☐		2. Car as passenger ☐		3. Motorcycle ☐	
4. Bus ☐		5. Underground/metro ☐		6. Tram ☐	
7. Bicycle ☐		8. Taxi/minicab ☐		9. Walk all the way ☐	
10. Another train (please specify station) ☐					

Q7. What is your destination when you leave **this** train?

Town ☐

Postcode: ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

Q8. How will you travel to your destination from the station?

1. Car as driver ☐		2. Car as passenger ☐		3. Motorcycle ☐	
4. Bus ☐		5. Underground/metro ☐		6. Tram ☐	
7. Bicycle ☐		8. Taxi/minicab ☐		9. Walk all the way ☐	
10. Another train (please specify station) ☐					

Q9. What is the **main** purpose of your rail journey? **PLEASE ENTER 'X' IN ONE BOX ONLY**

01 Daily commute to/from work ☐	07 Visiting friends/relatives ☐	
02 Less frequent commuting to/from work ☐	08 Sport/entertainment ☐	
03 Daily commuting to/from education ☐	09 Day out ☐	
04 Less frequent commuting to/from education ☐	10 Holiday ☐	
05 On company business (or own if self employed) ☐	11 On personal business (eg going to doctor, job interview etc) ☐	
06 Shopping ☐	12 Other ☐	

Q10. If you had not made this journey by train today, what other modes could you have used?
PLEASE ENTER 'X' IN EACH BOX THAT APPLIES

1. Car as driver ☐	5. Underground/metro ☐	9. Walk all the way ☐
2. Car as passenger ☐	6. Tram ☐	10. Other (please specify) ☐
3. Motorcycle ☐	7. Bicycle ☐	11. No alternative ☐
4. Bus ☐	8. Taxi/minicab ☐	

Q11. Why did you choose to travel by train for this journey? **PLEASE ENTER 'X' IN EACH BOX THAT APPLIES**

01. Train is more reliable ☐	06. Speed/faster than alternatives ☐
02. Train is the most direct/sensible route ☐	07. No reasonable route by other public transport ☐
03. Comfort ☐	08. No access to car ☐
04. Availability/cost of parking ☐	09. Rail station near home/destination ☐
05. Cost ☐	10. Other (**please specify**) ☐

Q12. How many times have you made this journey in the last two weeks? (Please note that if you make a return journey that would count as two journeys).

1. This is my first journey ☐	3. 6-10 ☐	5. 21+ ☐
2. 2-5 ☐	4. 11-20 ☐	

Your Expectations

Q13. Before you started your journey by train today what level of service did you **EXPECT YOU SHOULD REASONABLY GET**. Please rate your **expectation** for each of the following aspects of the station and train given what you know about this line and train travel on similar routes.
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX IN EACH ROW

THE STATION

	very poor	poor	neither	good	very good	don't know
Ticket buying facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Range of facilities at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cleanliness, upkeep and repair of the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal security at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of information about train times/platforms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connections with other forms of transport	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of getting to/from the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of staff at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

THE TRAIN

	very poor	poor	neither	good	very good	don't know
Frequency of trains on the route	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Punctuality/reliability(ie train arriving/departing on time)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Upkeep and repair of the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Length of time journey scheduled to take (speed)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Value for money for price of ticket	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being able to get a seat on the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal security while on board the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of staff on trains	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not having to change trains on your journey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of being able to get on and off the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

OVERALL EXPECTATION OF SERVICE ON ROUTE	very poor	poor	neither	good	very good	don't know
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Your Experience

Q14. Thinking now about the level of service you **actually experienced** on your train journey on this route **today** please rate what you experienced at the station and on the train?
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX IN EACH ROW

THE STATION

	very poor	poor	neither	good	very good	don't know
Ticket buying facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Range of facilities at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cleanliness, upkeep and repair of the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal security at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of information about train times/platforms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connections with other forms of transport	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of getting to/from the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of staff at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

THE TRAIN	very poor	poor	neither	good	very good	don't know
Frequency of trains on the route	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Punctuality/reliability (ie train arriving/departing on time)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Upkeep and repair of the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Length of time journey scheduled to take (speed)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Value for money for price of ticket	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being able to get a seat on the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal security while on board the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of staff on trains	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not having to change trains on your journey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of being able to get on and off the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	very poor	poor	neither	good	very good	don't know
OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE ON ROUTE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Importance of Aspects of Rail Travel

Q15. Thinking now about each of the different aspects of travel by train, please rate how **important** each of the following is to you. **PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY IN EACH ROW**

THE STATION	not at all important	not very important	neither	important	very important	don't know
Ticket buying facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Range of facilities at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cleanliness, upkeep and repair of the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal security at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of information about train times/platforms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connections with other forms of transport	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of getting to/from the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of staff at the station	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

THE TRAIN	not at all important	not very important	neither	important	very important	don't know
Frequency of trains on the route	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Punctuality/reliability (ie train arriving/departing on time)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Upkeep and repair of the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Length of time journey scheduled to take (speed)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Value for money for price of ticket	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being able to get a seat on the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal security while on board the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of staff on trains	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not having to change trains on your journey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of being able to get on and off the train	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Q16. If you travel to the station by car, or would like to, which of the following best describes parking in the station car park where you started your journey today?

1. I can always get a space ☐
2. I can get a space most of the time ☐
3. I can hardly ever get a space ☐
4. I can never get a space ☐
5. Not applicable/do not park at the station ☐

Q17. Thinking about the time your journey takes on this route, would you still make the journey by train if your journey took between **10 and 15** minutes longer because the train stopped at more stations?

1. Yes ☐ **GO TO Q19**
2. No I would no longer make the journey by train ☐ **GO TO Q18**
3. Don't know ☐ **GO TO Q18**

Q18. Would you still make the journey by train if your journey took between **5 and 10** minutes longer because the train stopped at more stations?

1. Yes ☐
2. No I would no longer make the journey by train ☐
3. Don't know ☐

Q19 To what extent do you agree with the following? **PLEASE MARK ONE BOX IN EACH LINE**

	strongly agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know
The service between Crewe and Derby should be extended to Nottingham	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trains should run earlier in the morning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trains should run later in the evening	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

About you

Finally, would you please answer some questions about yourself? The personal information you provide during this survey will be kept confidential by Accent and will not be disclosed to third parties. It will be used by Accent only for this study, which is being undertaken for Passenger Focus.

Q21. What is your employment status?

1. Work full time (30+ hours) ☐
2. Work part time (9-29 hours) ☐
3. Not employed - seeking work ☐
4. Not employed - not seeking work ☐
5. Retired ☐
6. Student ☐
7. Other ☐

Q22. Which age group are you in?

1. under 16 ☐
2. 16-24 ☐
3. 25-34 ☐
4. 35-44 ☐
5. 45-54 ☐
6. 55-59 ☐
7. 60-64 ☐
8. 65+ ☐

Q23. Are you .....

1. Male ☐
2. Female ☐

Q24. Which of the following best describes the occupation of the chief wage earner in your household?

01. Professional/senior management ☐
02. Middle management ☐
03. Junior management/clerical/supervisory ☐
04. Skilled manual (with professional qualifications/ served an apprenticeship) ☐
05. Unskilled manual (no qualifications/ not served an apprenticeship) ☐
06. Full time student ☐
07. Retired ☐
08. Not employed/between jobs ☐
09. Housewife/househusband ☐
10. Other **PLEASE WRITE IN YOUR DESCRIPTION** ☐

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Q25. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

WHITE
British ☐
Irish ☐
Any other white background ☐

MIXED
White and Black Caribbean ☐
White and Black African ☐
White and Asian ☐
Any other Mixed background ☐

ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH
Indian ☐
Pakistani ☐
Bangladeshi ☐
Any other Asian background ☐

BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH
Caribbean ☐
African ☐
Any other Black background ☐

CHINESE OR OTHER ETHNIC BACKGROUND
Chinese ☐
Any other ethnic background ☐
Prefer not to say ☐

Q26. Do you have a disability or long-term illness related to the following? **PLEASE PUT AN 'X' IN THE BOX FOR ALL THAT APPLY**

1. Mobility ☐
2. Wheelchair user ☐
3. Hearing ☐
4. Eyesight ☐
5. Speech impairment ☐
6. Learning difficulties ☐
7. No, none ☐

Q27. What type of ticket are you using for your journey today?

01 First Class Single/Return ☐
02 Standard Single/Return ☐
03 First Class Season ticket (weekly/monthly/annual/Travelcard seasons) ☐
04 Standard Class Season ticket (weekly/montly/annual/Travelcard seasons) ☐
05 Cheap Day Single/Return ☐
06 Saver/Supersaver ☐
07 Awaybreak/Stayaway ☐

08 One Day Travelcard ☐
09 A special promotion ticket ☐
10 Holiday package/tour ticket ☐
11 Rail Staff Pass/Privilege ticket/Police concession ☐
12 Group Save ticket ☐
13 Other **PLEASE SPECIFY** ☐

Q28. Did you use a Railcard to buy your ticket? If so, which one?

1 Did **not use** a Railcard ☐
2 Young Persons Railcard ☐
3 Senior Railcard ☐
4 Family Railcard ☐
5 Disabled Persons Railcard ☐
6 Network Railcard ☐
7 Forces Railcard ☐
8 Other Railcard **PLEASE SPECIFY** ☐

Thank you for your help in this research
PLEASE HAND BACK TO INTERVIEWER OR USE THE POST PAID ENVELOPE TO RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO US

This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS Code of Conduct. All answers you provide are entirely confidential and will be combined with those of all the other passengers who take part in the research. If you would like to confirm our credentials, please call the MRS freephone on 0500 396999.

The information collected will be used to represent the best interests of passengers along this route. The information will be used purely for research and planning of future services.

As a thank you for your help we are offering you the opportunity of taking part in a prize draw with a prize of £500. If you wish to take part, please tell us your name and address where we can contact you. These details will only be used for the prize draw and will not be passed to a third party.

Name
Address
email

Appendix E

Gap analysis

Gap analysis is a technique that prioritises passenger service improvements by taking into account both expectation and satisfaction or experience with attributes of the service provided, coupled with the importance of these same attributes to passengers.

In this technique each experience question is mirrored with an equivalent importance and expectation question, measured on a five-point scale. This identifies the importance of attributes, which are then used to weight the performance gap (i.e. the gap between expectations of a factor compared to experience of it). By using the importance scores to weight the performance 'gap' we can see at a glance where they are meeting, exceeding or failing to meet passengers' requirements on key parameters.

It is not sufficient to simply measure the gap between expectations and experience because some things will be more important to passengers than others and the most important requirements will influence their judgement of their overall satisfaction with the experience to a greater extent than things they view as less important.

Passengers surveyed on the routes were asked to rate their expectation and experience of aspects of the stations and service on their route and then asked for the importance they attribute to them. Scores for experience were subtracted from the expectation scores to give a numerical value to the 'gap' while the importance scores showed how important it would be to correct for any negative imbalance that occurs. The greater the negative expectation/performance gap the greater the need for action, particularly where importance scores are high.

This approach highlights priorities for improvement, which also helps to target where changes can be most effective. In other words, this helps Passenger Focus to concentrate on the issues that matter most to passengers. The research also indicates where franchisees could afford to 'relax' further improvements if there are attributes for which the performance outstrips expectation whilst at the same time the importance for that attribute is low.

Appendix F

Passenger Focus' policy on franchises – a detailed view

1. PERSONAL SECURITY

Passenger Focus accepts that the railway does not operate in a vacuum and suffers from the same problems of crime and disorder as the rest of society. Tackling issues of security on trains and at stations is, therefore, a wider social issue and not just a problem for the railway. Passenger Focus supports initiatives like the Secure Car Parks and Secure Stations Scheme and those which seek to set up local partnerships to tackle local problems. Schemes such as these should be specified in franchise agreements to ensure that they are taken forward.

Research by Crime Concern and Transport & Travel Research (1997)[20] suggests that the introduction of additional safety measures can lead to a significant increase in patronage. In their study, researchers asked respondents to estimate the number of additional trips they would make if further safety measures were introduced on their public transport systems. Using the estimates provided by those reporting a potential increased use of public transport, the researchers calculated a possible maximum increase in trips of 10.5%. The researchers also noted that a significant proportion of these additional trips would be taken in off-peak hours.

1.1 Passenger security on trains

Passenger Focus wants to see train companies carrying out security audits on trains and putting resources into reducing crime or the fear of crime. DfT researched what made people feel safer when travelling[21]. Staff presence when waiting for a train was the first choice of passengers with 35% stating this would make them feel safer. On-train staff presence was also rated as important (27%) as passengers felt reassured by members of staff walking through carriages and checking tickets. Passenger Focus would like DfT to action their own research within their franchises.

1.2 Passenger security at stations

The safety and security of passengers at stations is of paramount importance. If passengers feel unsafe at a station then they will seek alternative modes of transport to make their journey or not make the journey at all. The National Passenger Survey revealed that 57% of passengers were satisfied with security at stations[22]. This shows significant room for improvement to ensure that more passengers feel at ease when using stations.

1.2.1 Staff at stations

Passenger Focus presses for stations to be staffed wherever possible. This is not only to provide ticket sales and direct revenue protection but also to provide a reassuring staff presence for both personal security and information and to act as a deterrent to crime. To achieve this, staff must be visible and conduct frequent patrols. They must be trained in the skills necessary to exercise

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[20] Source www.crimereduction.gov.uk
[21] DfT's research 'People's perceptions of personal security and their concerns about public transport' was published in May 2004 www.dft.gov.uk
[22] National Passenger Survey - Spring 2006

authority when required and to provide reassurance through their presence, appearance and demeanour. They should be invested with the legal powers (e.g. under the police accreditation scheme) necessary to allow them to discharge this role effectively. Passenger Focus' definition of full staffing covers all times when trains call at the station; the industry's definition is less rigid and obvious: "fully staffed" can refer to a situation where two shifts are covered but where early-morning and late-evening trains, and often all day at weekends, are uncovered.

1.2.2 Safer Station schemes
Since 1992, a number of schemes has been undertaken within Great Britain with the aim of reducing crime and the fear of crime at railway stations. These schemes are driven forward through partnership working between the train operating companies, local authorities and the police force.

Lambeth Safer Station scheme[23] emerged after a crime audit was completed in 1995 which identified stations and their surroundings as hot-spots for crime. Partnership working between a number of organisations within the rail industry and the local authority came together a produced a work plan of measures to be introduced to improve security at stations in Lambeth. These measures included installation of CCTV, improved lighting and signage at stations, removal of graffiti, refurbishment and redecoration of facilities.

A review of the scheme a year into the project showed that there was a reported reduction in robbery and car crime around the station (from 36% to 23%) and at the stations themselves (from 58% to 53%). Surveys revealed that the initiative reduced the number of passengers being 'put off' using the station significantly (12% fewer men and 22% fewer women).

1.2.3 Help Points
Help Points, capable of both summoning assistance in emergencies and obtaining information at other times, should be prominently available, conveniently sited at stations and maintained in good order.

Passenger Focus' research into passenger perceptions of security[24] revealed that passengers did not understand what Help Points are actually for. Passengers cited the following reasons for the under use of Help Points:
* They are associated with problems/emergencies rather than providing information
* Participants in the groups doubted that they would have information on specific trains
* They are considered as too remote to deliver real time information
* Only one person can use them at a time.

If the usefulness of Help Points was better understood by passengers, then they could be more effective information system, especially at times of emergency.

1.2.4 CCTV
CCTV systems should be monitored rather than just recorded and be of a standard capable of allowing the successful prosecution of offenders. We would also like to see CCTV systems at stations

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[23] Lambeth Safer Station Scheme http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/pt030302.htm
[24] Passenger Information: what, when, where and how? Published September 2004

linked with systems in place outside the station so that any offenders can be tracked once they leave the station. Passenger Focus wants to see an industry-wide standardisation of CCTV systems.

While technology such as CCTV can be effective, Passenger Focus believes the best deterrent is the presence of a member of staff. We are of the view that staff need to be visible and to regularly patrol trains and stations.

1.2.5 New technology
Passenger Focus is aware of the trial of new screening techniques on the National Rail and London Underground network – including the first use on the UK railway of body scanners using millimetre wave technology which enables security staff to check for objects concealed under clothing. Passenger Focus believes that the development of such equipment must be balanced against the need to ensure the smooth operation of the rail network. Airport style security screening - involving tight management of access and security screening – is simple not viable on the rail network. We welcome and await the outcome of this trial with interest.

2. PUNCTUALITY AND RELIABILITY
Punctuality and reliability is considered the highest priority for passengers[25] and has been the main driver for passenger satisfaction in the National Passenger Survey since its inception.[26] This is the case regardless of journey type (long-distance, London and Southeast and regional) and passenger type (commuter, business and leisure).

Major efforts have been made by the industry to improve punctuality and reliability in recent years and this is reflected in the results of the National Passenger Survey[27]. Even though improvement has been significant, the industry must focus on maintaining at least the current standard with an aim to achieving an even higher satisfaction level over time. We are concerned to ensure that:

- Operators should be incentivised to continuously improve performance and penalised for declining performance
- There should be a swift escalatory procedure for consistently poor performance, with removal of the franchise being the ultimate penalty
- Performance figures should be published by line of route to better represent the passenger experience on parts of the network. Passengers should have an indication of the likelihood that they will arrive at their destination on time. This information should be displayed at stations
- Delay should be thought of in terms of delay to passengers, not delay to trains. Timetables should be robust, and connections held where appropriate in order not to exacerbate delay to passengers
- Short-forming of trains (i.e. providing fewer seats than specified under the train plan) should be considered as partial cancellation of a service.

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[25] Passenger expectation and priorities for improvement – March 2005, Strategic Rail Authority
[26] National Passenger Survey, 1999 - 2006
[27] 79% of passengers were satisfied with punctuality and reliability – National Passenger Survey Spring 2006

3. PASSENGER'S CHARTER

Passenger Focus has long been critical of the Passenger's Charter, both in its nationalised and privatised form. The concept of a Charter is good; it is proper that passengers are informed of their rights and of the obligations and aspirations of the train company. However, the central core of the Charter – the establishment of performance targets and compensation arrangements - is flawed.

3.1 A common compensation regime

Passenger Focus believes that DfT should seek to achieve common compensation arrangements across all train companies over time.

3.1.1 Features of a common compensation regime

Passenger Focus believes that all new compensation regimes should include the following:

i. 50%* refund after 30 minutes' delay (the point at which research conducted for the 2002 compensation working group suggested that non-commuter passengers expect to receive compensation)
ii. 100%* refund after 60 minutes' delay
iii. Passengers should have the choice of taking compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers
iv. Applicable to holders of any valid ticket, irrespective of type (i.e. including season ticket holders and irrespective of where the ticket was bought)
v. No exclusions, i.e. entitlement applies irrespective of the cause of delay
vi. Postage-free claim cards should be made available to passengers
vii. There should be a proactive approach to increasing passenger awareness of their entitlement.

i.e. 50%/100% of the cost of a single ticket, or 50%/100% of the cost of either portion of a return ticket, or 50%/100% of the 'price per day' of a season ticket

3.2 Season ticket holders

Passenger Focus believes that, in addition to arrangements set out in section 3.1, holders of monthly and longer-validity season tickets should be entitled to compensation if they have experienced frequent delays over ten minutes' duration. This "safety net" is needed because with a 30-minute trigger, season ticket holders are exposed to the risk that 29-minute delays in each direction every day attract no compensation at all. We believe ten minutes is the appropriate length of delay on which to base arrangements for season ticket holders: research undertaken for the 2002 compensation working group suggested that only 9% of commuters expect to receive compensation for delays of less than ten minutes. Passengers should have the choice of accepting compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers and irrespective of whether they are renewing their season ticket.

We wish to work with DfT and the industry on details to ensure that there is a fit for purpose mechanism to compensate holders of monthly and longer-validity season tickets for cumulative delays less than 30 minutes. For example, a means needs to be devised so a season ticket holder who uses a National Rail route suffering poor performance, but who has bought their ticket from another operator (e.g. London Underground Limited), is not disadvantaged.

We do not want further franchises to be awarded on the basis of a Passenger's Charter which is unacceptable to passengers. We hope therefore that DfT will be able to incorporate the Passenger Focus policy set out above into its guidance to bidders for future franchises.

4. FARES

Passenger Focus has maintained the following broad policies concerning fares over a number of years:

- Many rail fares do not represent good value for money
- The fare structure is complex and confusing
- It is unfair for today's passengers to pay in advance for future investment
- The industry needs to exploit fares incentives to attract passengers to travel at times when there is greater capacity. However we oppose putting up fares to price off demand
- An affordable turn-up-and-go strategy must prevail, though pre-book low cost fares should be available to those whose journeys are flexible
- The industry must control its costs so that more is not passed on to the passenger in fares
- The industry must ensure it collects the revenue that is due to it.

In 2006 we undertook a programme of qualitative and quantitative research to explore passengers' attitudes to, and understanding of, the current fares structure. The results have reaffirmed our main position. However, the research highlighted other areas that warrant rail industry attention.

- Cost has deterred the majority of passengers from travelling by train at some point. The majority of these people travelled by car instead. Passenger Focus recommends that incentives such as Group Save and family Railcards should be better advertised to show rail as a viable alternative to the car
- Season ticket holders and non-season ticket holders are not aware of the level of discount this ticket type brings. Many without Railcards found the upfront cost prohibitive and could therefore not access the significant discounts of an annual season ticket. Passenger Focus recommends that operators should better advertise the 12-week discount of an annual season ticket, and consider introducing direct debit payment schemes
- The majority of passengers knew in advance that they would be making their current journey, yet more than half bought the ticket on the day. Nearly half of these might have booked in advance if they knew the ticket would be cheaper
- The majority of passengers prefer to buy tickets face-to-face. Ticket machines are not trusted to provide the best ticket for the intended journey
- Few are aware of how far in advance it is possible to book tickets, thought the majority want a four to six week booking period.

4.1 Fare increases

We are not against using fares to help redistribute train travel – for instance, we support offering lower fares to passengers prepared to travel outside the main peaks. However, we are opposed to raising fares to price off demand in the peaks or to exploit a captive market. Hence we support continued regulation of the commuter market.

Passenger Focus' research shows approximately 40% of people felt they had some flexibility to change their travel patterns[28]. However, they were unlikely to change without a significant financial incentive to do so, and most would not do so regularly.[29] The converse is also likely to be true. If

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[28] Passenger requirements from rail fares – quantitative findings (Passenger Focus July 2006)
[29] Edge of Peak qualitative research (Passenger focus July 2006)

incentives to travel off-peak are removed, for example by putting in unreasonable restrictions on existing discounted tickets, more people are likely to travel in the peak leading to greater crowding.

Passenger Focus is against raising fares in advance to pay for improvements that some of today's passengers may never see; and once those improvements are made, we believe that any fare rises should be modest and spread over several years. However, where there are exceptional improvements, such as the provision of new high-speed routes, there may be a case for higher fares, as long as passengers retain the choice of lower fares on other routes.

Our research clearly shows that the cost of train tickets has acted as a barrier to train travel for leisure journeys. 70% of leisure respondents said they had decided not to travel by train because of the cost of the ticket at least once – 41% had made this choice a number of times. While the vast majority of business and leisure passengers in our research knew in advance that they would be making the journey we were asking them about, over half still waited until the day of travel to purchase their tickets[30]. While we support the availability of discounted advance purchase fares for those who have the flexibility to plan their journeys in advance, we are committed to an affordable turn-up-and-go railway for those who do not.

4.2 Costs and revenue
Passenger Focus wishes to see the industry continue to work on keeping its costs under control, to continue to grow the off-peak market through marketing initiatives, and to collect revenue owed to it through adequate retailing facilities and checking of tickets. Significant revenue is lost to the industry through ticketless travel. It is important that the train companies acknowledge the level of loss and make adequate provision for staffing and/or automatic ticket gates.

4.3 Other fare and retailing issues
Passenger Focus would also like the DfT and train companies to consider the following:

- There are many people who work part-time and travel three days a week. It does not pay generally to buy a weekly season and so three daily tickets must be bought. This, in turn, helps to clog up ticket queues. Passenger Focus' research shows that 29% of regular commuters travelled using daily tickets. Of these, almost 60% cite irregular travel patterns as the reason. There was strong support for a carnet-style product. A carnet-style ticket system would allow advance purchase of batches of reduced price tickets, reducing queuing times
- Smart ticketing technology would allow flexibility and innovation in the fares structure. It would reduce queuing times for passengers and transaction time for train companies, which, as with carnets, should allow the companies to pass reduced ticketing costs on to passengers in the form of discounted fares. Smart technology raises the possibility of integration with London's fares and ticketing system
- Discount fares for students aged 16-18 in full-time education. Currently sixth form and sixth form college students find themselves suddenly having to pay full fare rather than the half-fare child rate available up to this point, yet they are not considered self-supporting and eligible for student loans
- Better marketing of Rail Rover tickets

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[30] Passenger requirements from rail fares quantitative findings (Passenger Focus 2006)

- Cut-price ticket experiments on certain routes to attract people onto rail
- The introduction of a national Railcard offering a reduction on off-peak travel across the rail network
- Consistent application of restrictions on all ticket types.

5. STATION STANDARDS

Stations are the gateway to the rail network for all passengers – and many passengers are dissatisfied with the current state of stations. Despite some of the high-profile major station makeovers in recent years and the modernisation of some other more humble locations, stations still have much catching up to do after decades of under-investment when almost all available funding went into keeping the trains running.

Passenger Focus expects stations to be welcoming and convenient, providing a suitable and pleasant gateway to the railway and to the town/place of destination. They have for too long been the Cinderella of the network, with vital refurbishment funding held back during lean years. There is a considerable backlog of neglect to rectify to bring stations' fabric and facilities up to passengers' expectations and to make them more accessible.

5.1 What passengers want from stations

In June 2005, Passenger Focus commissioned some qualitative research to find out what passengers want from stations[31].   The research highlighted some what passengers see as priorities at stations and this differed depending on the type of station. However, the basic needs of passengers highlighted in the report were as follows:

- Passengers need to be able to find the station and find their way around the station
- They need to be able to get to the station and their platform
- They need to feel safe
- They need adequate light and shelter.

Not all stations are meeting these basic needs; poor signage is a major failing.

Differences between passengers' preferences emerge once the basic needs have been addressed. Needs are conditioned by factors such as the time of day when the station is used, the length of time the passenger waits and how familiar passengers are with the journey.

Clear distinctions are also made between smaller and larger stations. There is a good deal of pragmatism about the facilities at small stations; providing real-time information, ticket machines and improved waiting accommodation were the major preferences for medium-sized stations. At the larger stations, there is a good deal more concern about comfort and the availability of catering, amongst other extended facilities.

The table shows station facilities and features based on passengers' overall needs and expectations. Columns 1 and 2 apply to all passenger types and all stations. An asterisk [*] indicates features which are more relevant to regular leisure or business travellers than to daily commuters.

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[31] What passengers want from stations – Rail Passengers Council, June 2005

Basic features	Universal features	Comfort features	Attractor features	Special features
Essential for all stations	*Expected by passengers at all stations*	*Desired at all stations*	*Attracting passengers to busier stations*	*Appropriate to specific locations*
Reasonably safe and secure	Ramps	Bus stop	Travel info in the waiting area*	Airport-type waiting area
Well lit	Car parking	Taxi rank	Range of shops*	TV with news
Basic shelter and seating	Signs to the trains	Cycle racks	Cash point	Office facilities
Basic signage	Real-time info screens	Signs to facilities*	Nappy-changing facilities*	Luggage trolleys*
	Real-time PA	Station maps*, visual and tactile	Lifts*	
	Timetables	Newsagent*		
	Clocks	Kiosk		
	CCTV	Café*		
	Staff	Vending machine		
	Public telephone	Help point		
	Ticket machines	Booking office		
		Heated waiting room		
		Disabled-access Toilets*		
		Automatic doors*		

Passengers with disabilities expressed additional needs to make them more confident in using stations alone or in using stations unknown to them if staff will be on hand to assist. Concern was recorded about the failure of staff to turn up, even when assistance had been booked.

People with visual impairments and non-wheelchair users found that minor changes, such as the highlighting of the edges of steps, better handrails on staircases and automatic doors could greatly improve their mobility. The same applies to some elderly passengers, those with luggage or with prams and children.

Information provision at smaller stations was found to be poor, regardless of the passenger's abilities or disabilities. Real-time information – both aural and visual - benefits everyone.

5.2 Further requirements at stations

Further to the requirements outlined in 5.1, Passenger Focus would also like to see the following commitments within a franchise:

- Commitments to make stations as accessible as possible for all users
- Commitment to an audit of staffing requirements for all stations with a view to increasing staff numbers, or longer staffing periods, at a number of stations, even if only on an experimental basis

- Commitment to improve integration of other services at the station (see section on integrated transport for more details
- Commitment to the Secure Station and Secure Car Park award schemes
- Easy-to-use ticket machines capable of accepting credit/debit cards as this will help to reduce ticket queues.

5.3 Information at stations

Passenger Focus places great importance on the provision of accurate, impartial and timely information, especially in times of disruption. In June 2005 Passenger Focus commissioned a major piece of research into information provision. The report, *'Passenger information: What, When, Where and How'*, set out passenger preferences and perceptions before and during their journey. The following summary suggests actions from passengers to help improve station information:

- Use visual and audio displays as complementary sources
- Precede time-sensitive audio messages with a distinctive 'beep'
- Conduct visibility audits for displays and define minimum standards
- More electronic A to Z displays at major/busy stations
- Earlier advertising of departure platform
- More TV displays in waiting areas
- Raise awareness of Help Point as information sources
- Develop standards for equipment in relation to station types.

As a result of the report, ATOC set up a passenger information working group to consider how the recommendations might be implemented.

5.4 Upkeep of stations

Cleanliness is not just governed by contractual agreements but also by legislation. The 1991 Environmental Protection Act places certain obligations on the industry. Further details can be found in '*Good Riddance to Bad Rubbish*' - produced by London TravelWatch on behalf of the former RPC network, which provides guidance on how get reluctant operators to clear rubbish from stations (and linesides) within the terms of the Act.

5.5 Retailing at stations

Retailers offering catering and other sundry goods on stations offer a double or treble advantage: they provide facilities for passengers, and additional revenue accrues from the rents for their premises. Such retail units often provide the only staffed presence on some stations after booking offices close. In some minor station locations, retail premises are taking on the role of booking offices.

6.6 Step free access at stations

Where more than one platform is in public use, a safe means of crossing the lines is required. This usually involves a footbridge or subway. In the absence of step-free access, lifts to/from ground level or negotiable ramps should be provided. At smaller stations, passengers may be required to cross the railway lines at ground level. Such crossings may be accessible to wheelchair users only at times when the station is staffed.

5.7 Staffing at stations

Passenger Focus presses for stations to be staffed wherever possible. This is to provide ticket sales and direct revenue protection, to provide a reassuring staff presence for both personal security and information provision and as a deterrent to crime.

Passenger Focus's definition of full staffing covers all times when trains call at the station; the industry's definition is less rigid and obvious; "fully staffed" can refer to a station where two shifts are covered but where early-morning and late-evening trains, and often all day at weekends, are uncovered.

6. INTEGRATED TRANSPORT

Passenger Focus is committed to promoting the development of an integrated transport system. Physical integration is just a part of the broader integration issue, which should include ensuring that transport policy is better linked with wider Government objectives for economic prosperity, environmental protection, health and social inclusion.

6.1 Integration of existing rail companies

Existing services should operate as a network. Co-ordination and co-operation should extend to timetables and connections. For example, Passenger Focus believes that there should be some incentive to hold connecting services in many circumstances - as opposed to what would appear at present to be disincentives via the performance regime.

6.2 Integration of modes of transport

Passengers' journeys do not usually start and end at a railway station. Passengers arrive at the station and leave from it to their final destination in a number of ways. Railway stations are de facto modal hubs and the rail industry has a part to play in ensuring ease of interchange between modes through physical environment, information, timetabling and through ticketing.

6.3 Buses

Bus travel offers perhaps the greatest opportunity for interchange improvement. There is great scope for tying rail and bus timetables into a tighter, mutually supportive arrangement, especially given the extension Plus+Bus scheme. Train companies should encourage as far as possible improved co-ordination of bus and rail timetables. Where the provider of rail and bus services is the same it is inexcusable if this does not happen. However, joined up thinking should be encouraged between all operators using a station.

There also needs to be a focus on the interchange facilities at stations. For instance, are bus stops provided and are they situated in the optimum position, are the walking routes from the bus stop to the railway station clearly signed, and is the link secure and well lit?

Other possible bus/rail integration improvements include:
- Working with bus companies or local authorities to create an extra stop where a bus passes a train station, or to alter routes slightly to ensure buses pass railway stations
- Working with bus companies or local authorities to alter existing schedules to help buses meet certain morning and evening peak hour trains (including some guaranteed connections)

- Displaying bus information at rail stations and train information at certain bus stops/stations
- Combined rail/bus tickets or preferably, travelcard schemes
- Examining the potential of park and ride schemes
- Creation of bus links between rail-heads to complement the network
- Improved facilities for connection between train and bus (e.g. better signing, provision of waiting rooms).

6.4 Cars/motorbikes

It is a fact that for many rail passengers, driving to the station remains the most viable and practical means of travel. The increasing length of a working day and the shift towards a '24-7' week means that it is hard to provide a comprehensive rail-bus service that meets the needs of commuters and/or weekend travellers. Fears over personal security also inhibit the use of alternative transport or walking. For these reasons, car parking facilities at stations remain important.

Passenger Focus has long maintained that the provision of car parking at railway stations should be seen as a separate issue in its own right and not part of wider discussions on car parking in general. In many ways a railway station car park is the original 'park and ride' scheme and it is important that it is acknowledged as such.

6.4.1   Access and signage

It is important that car parks are well signed and easily accessible. The road entrance to every station to ensure signing and access is clear. Improved signage is a low-cost response to a common problem.

6.4.2   Security

Car crime is at the forefront of a driver's mind when parking a car and the risk of theft or break-in deters some people from currently using station car parks. A station car-park should be organised in a way that generates a feeling of security and confidence in the traveller. Parking areas must be well lit and should have highly-visible CCTV systems. A dialogue between train company, local authorities, police and community safety partnerships should be established in order to reassure passengers.

6.4.3   Increasing parking spaces

Scope for enlarging existing car parks should be investigated. There is a need to encourage off-peak travel when there is often ample train capacity, but when many car parks are full by 08.00. Passenger Focus would like train companies to carry out an audit of car park spaces and demand (to be repeated periodically to capture changes in demand throughout the life of the franchise) and then provide additional spaces where required and where practicable.

Consideration ought also be given to multi-storey car-parking facilities at stations (even if on a pilot basis) for stations where the audit shows a need for additional spaces and where availability of land makes this practicable; and also for new 'parkway' stations whose primary aim is to absorb traffic from the road.

It is important to ensure that parking spaces at stations are solely for rail passengers rather than town centre visitors. This may become a particular issue if local authorities use road pricing and parking

measures to reduce car use. We understand that car parking revenue is important to individual train operators. However, if spaces are being filled by non-rail passengers, then train companies are not addressing the revenue potential that could be made from rail passengers who pay for parking **and** a rail fare. In such cases Passenger Focus favours the type of scheme whereby higher car park prices can be redeemed against the cost of the rail ticket.

6.5 Taxis

Taxis provide important links to and from the railway station, and there should be co-ordination between train companies and taxi firms.   This includes discussions with taxis firms when there are proposals for change at stations.

The following are essential for providing effective interchange between taxis and the rail network:
- Good signage to the taxi rank
- Well marked-out taxi rank
- Drop-down kerbs
- List of tariffs for regularly made journeys
- Contact details for local taxi firms (for when no taxis are readily available)
- Greater publicity for licensed taxi services at stations
- Accreditation scheme to give passengers a greater feeling of personal security
- Possible discount on production of a valid train ticket
- Wheelchair accessible taxis. When taxis are not available, procedures need to be put in place between the station and the taxi rank so that station staff can call for taxis
- Covered waiting areas.

6.6 Bicycles

Rail should be seen as the core of an integrated transport system and cycling has to play a part within this system. The SRA'S Cycling Policy consultation document stated that only 2% of passengers used bicycles to access stations. This low figure suggests that there is a significant potential for growth.

Cycling to the station helps to reduce road congestion, improves health and is a totally self reliant form of transport. However, to convince people to bicycle, adequate provisions need to be provided at stations and on the approached to stations.

6.6.1 Bicycles on trains

Passenger Focus acknowledges the specific issues of overcrowding associated with carrying bicycles on trains. There are some occasions when bicycles that are stowed by doors do have an impact on boarding and alighting. However, delays could be reduced by clearly marking carriages (where feasible) and training platform staff to identify and inform where bicycle spaces are located.

Overall, however, the Passenger Focus would agree that there should be no obligation on TOCs to carry bicycles at peak times. Bicycle carriage times determined according to local conditions and demand. However, the lack of such an obligation means that greater efforts must be made elsewhere to reduce the degree of inconvenience to the cycling commuter - for instance, making the provision of adequate bicycle parking compulsory in areas where a peak-time ban is applied.

We recognise the problems faced by the train companies with regards to rolling stock design/space at stations etc, but also the potential hardship for cyclists

To help alleviate these problems we advocate:
- Better bicycle parking and secure facilities at stations – possible inclusion of bicycle lockers
- Bicycle-friendly station – provision of ramps, lifts etc
- Information – when can bicycles be carried on trains
- Better access to stations – including bicycle paths etc
- Bicycle lockers
- Bicycle hire schemes so that cycling commuters are able to have a bicycle at both the originating and destination stations
- Support and encouragement for the use of folding bikes. These can be carried as hand luggage free of charge
- The provision of a flexible space area that has tip-up seats which can be used as either a storage area or a seating area. While this won't remove the conflict in the peak from people wanting to use seats with those wanting to store bikes, it would at least provide more space for bikes in the off-peak and at weekends
- The possibility of introducing free insurance deals for bikes left at stations.

6.7 Walking

Train operating companies should work closely with local authorities to ensure that the best possible provisions are in place for pedestrians. Possible barriers to walking to the station include the following:
- The way-marked route to the station may be indirect and therefore unnecessarily long
- Walking routes may be poorly maintained
- There could be no pathways to the station
- No crossing provisions on major roads
- The routes could be seen as insecure – poor lighting, secluded etc.
- Poor or misleading sign posting
- Physical barriers including roadside railings, hedges, etc.

However, the major hurdle in encouraging people to walk to the station is the perception of security as illustrated by the following statement:
"After dark, 51% of women and 20% of men feel unsafe walking from home to the station, and 61% of women and 26% of men feel unsafe walking from the station to home."
Department for Transport, 2003[32]

Train companies should work with local authorities, the British Transport Police and the local police force to make the station and the surrounding areas secure for passengers.

7. ACCESSIBILITY

Passenger Focus's definition of 'accessibility' covers everyone's ability to use the network with ease. All passengers at some time find themselves encumbered: for instance because of a permanent

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[32] DfT's research 'People's perceptions of personal security and their concerns about public transport' was published in May 2004 www.dft.gov.uk

physical or mental impairment, a temporary impairment (e.g. broken leg), by being accompanied by young children, or simply through carrying luggage. All these factors are an impediment to an easy journey. It is the natural aspiration of all disabled people to travel without assistance.

Improving access and facilities for disabled people will benefit not only those with disabilities but also families with young children and older people with mobility problems. Much of the problem lies in stations that were simply not built with the disabled people in mind and the scale of the problem is such that it may take years to improve access radically and therefore requires long-term commitment.

The EU Technical Specification for Interoperability (TSI) (Subsystem Conventional Rail infrastructure and rolling stock) will probably become law in 2007. This considerably widens the definition of 'passengers with reduced mobility' and we encourage train companies to make suitable provisions to encompass their new legal requirements under this new legislation.

The minimum aim must be compliance with the statutory obligations laid down in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) with any new works taking place being done in accordance with the Train and Station Services for Disabled Passengers Code of Practice due for update by the DfT.

7.1   Accessible stations

Attention must be focused on enhancing principal stations, reflecting usage levels, by providing ramps and lifts. A significant proportion, however, must be used to ensure a reasonable geographic spread of accessible stations, especially interchanges and those serving hospitals or special schools etc. It may be sensible to give priority to stations served by accessible buses and which have good parking for passengers with disabilities.

This, however, is merely the starting point. In the longer term, as the number of passengers with disabilities using the railways increases, the number of locations and range of facilities available to enhance accessibility must grow likewise. Passenger Focus recognises the inheritance of a Victorian station infrastructure and welcomes the advances in making stations more accessible, especially the provision of step-free access, which eases the going for everyone.

In the meantime Passenger Focus supports the 'hub and spoke' approach: step-free access to be provided at major and regionally important stations with taxi connections, provided at the train company's expense, to and from such places.

7.2   Other general accessibility aspirations

Other passenger benefits that should be included in renegotiated franchises include:
  i. *Assisted Passenger Reservation System upgrade*
  - Decentralise the process within owning groups
  - Accelerate the speed of booking
  - Reduce or abolish the requirement to give notice in the case of turn-up-and-go traffic. The facility should be retained for those passengers who can and wish to book in advance
  - Ensure that the passenger's name is included in all communications involving assistance
  - Allow online bookings
  - Ensure that the details are passed on to-train staff (particularly where staffed stations are concerned)

- Freephone bookings or at least 0845 lo-call numbers given the length of calls make bookings
- Ensure that all operators call passengers after the journey has been made to verify that booked assistance was provided
- Establish a database of passenger details to reduce likelihood of errors made in booking; especially useful for regular journeys

ii. Ensure that where no dedicated wheelchair spaces are provided, that train companies designate a regular location to convey wheelchairs, ensuring ease of location at detraining point and proximity of the passenger to on-train staff and alarm

iii. Spread best practice concerning safety notices and other important literature - Braille, large-print formats etc

iv. Ensure that each train company has a suitable handbook for its staff

v. Investigate staff training - level, amount, frequency, suitability etc

vi. Extension of Describe Online and tactile diagramming to larger stations and major interchanges, at least

vii. Ensure that each train company's database of station details is correct and kept up-to-date - compare with Step-free Map

viii. Ensure that train companies are aware of the need to make changes to certain aspects of rolling stock to enhance accessibility and/or improve general usability at refurbishment stage

ix. Persuade train companies that multi-lingual staff, happy to converse in other languages with passengers, should wear badges to that effect

x. Ensure that Priority Seating areas are much more visibly labelled and that the purpose of such seats is much make clearly displayed. Better policing of occupancy would be of benefit on staffed trains

xi. A 'Regular Disabled Traveller' scheme whereby detailed records are kept of regular travellers so that details do not have to be repeated each time assistance is required

xii. Where wheelchair-accessible toilets are provided these are to include baby-changing facilities as well at a height suitable for wheelchair-users

xiii. Portable ramps for wheelchairs to be carried on all trains giving physical access to more unmanned stations

xiv. Bus replacement services to be capable of carrying wheelchair using and mobility impaired passengers or special alternative arrangements to be made for such passengers

xv. Commitment to good quality staff disability awareness training covering the full range of disabilities

xvi. Consultation with groups representing disabled people on other needs.

7.3   Disabled Persons' Protection Policies

When drafting its DPPP each operator must consider the DfT's DPPP Guidance, which sets out the framework within which train/station operators are encouraged to comply.

Each DPPP typically features subjects such as:
- Train companies must provide a Statement of Policy setting out exactly what they are going to do and how
- Station list, specifying the features and facilities of each station and its ease of access to passengers with disabilities
- Train types and the routes on which they operate

- Using trains and stations
- How to arrange assistance
- Features and facilities in place on trains and at stations for customers with disabilities
- Arrangements for planned and non-planned service disruption.

Franchisees are obliged under the terms of licence to consult with Passenger Focus on their DPPP. Passenger Focus would expect the new DPPP to be no less robust than the previous policy. The new DPPP should incorporate best practice from other train companies' policies and include enhancements in terms of new technologies. Where passengers are transferring from one service to another, train companies must work together to ensure that disabled passengers can move between companies seamlessly.

8. SERVICE PATTERNS

8.1 General service patterns
- Ensure current stations continue to be served adequately; especially stops serving educational establishments (including colleges/universities), hospitals, and tourist destinations and to aid social inclusion where no alternative public transport exists
- Where possible there should be late evening services from major towns and cities on each main route
- Sundays: train companies to review service levels with Passenger Focus and other stakeholders, to ensure changing work/shopping demand patterns are met
- Bank Holidays: train companies to co-ordinate timetables and ensure cross-operator connections are maintained. Ideally, each train company to adopt the same timetable principles, including those days between Christmas and New Year, to ensure passenger confusion is avoided
- The need to work with local authorities, police and other transport operators to cater for festivals/special events
- Where possible, any services going to and from airports meet the first and last flights scheduled.

8.1 Journey times
- Journey times not to be significantly extended without Passenger Focus consultation and demonstrable and identifiable overall benefit to passengers from doing so
- The number of services disrupted by engineering possessions should be reduced; where passengers do suffer disruption and longer journey times they should be automatically compensated
- The railway industry should always seek a rail alternative/diversionary route in preference to bus substitution, at times of disruption/line closure for maintenance
- Incident recovery management procedures need to be refined to minimise passenger delay, without compromising safety; a target of <1 hour should be adopted.

8.2 Connections policy
- Train companies should protect advertised/recognised connections between own services and competitors', using greater discretion locally as necessary. This may require reasonable adjustment to the 'performance regime'
- The decision to hold a connection, or otherwise, MUST take into account the service frequency,

e.g. on a Sunday with an hourly frequency it is important to hold connections for longer

- Connections should be guaranteed for the 'last train of the day' and on branch lines where the outgoing train's main purpose is to pick up passengers from the main line.

8.4 Timetable publications

- All timetables (both pocket sized and derivatives) should include services of all operators for any joint area covered
- Timetables should also indicate where disabled access is available by use of the wheelchair symbol
- The National Rail timetable (and derivative booklets) should also show details of local bus/coach links.

8.5 Bus replacement services

- Ensure that late-evening services run as trains rather than substitute buses as a priority, through Network Rail streamlining maintenance procedures
- Dedicated rail-bus services must be held for an agreed period, to meet late-running train connections or clearly advised/organised alternatives should be provided.

9. POSSESSIONS POLICY

On behalf of passengers we understand that engineering work is a necessity if the rail industry is to deliver its promise of a safe, reliable and efficient rail network. The consequence, though, is disruption to services and inconvenience for passengers. The crux of the issue therefore is achieving a balance between engineering efficiency and passenger requirements.

Decisions on a future possessions strategy cannot simply be based on cost and engineering convenience, important as they undoubtedly are, but must be linked back to the ultimate customer – the passenger. For instance, a policy of decimating evening services may make routine maintenance work more efficient and cheaper but would not be acceptable to passengers.

RPC was concerned that little research had been conducted to determine how engineering work could be planned and managed to cause minimal disruption to passengers. Hence, together with Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), we commissioned some research into passengers' views. The report discusses what the rail industry could do when planning, managing or executing engineering work, to lessen the effects of disruption to passengers. Key findings of the research were:

- Passengers were more tolerant of planned works that will deliver long-term improvements than unplanned 'patch-up jobs.' Following disruption to services, passengers expect to be shown the benefit of the improvements (e.g. in terms of new platforms or signals or details of how punctuality or reliability has improved). One respondent commented: "They do engineering works all the time but it makes no difference." In short, passengers are willing to accept periods of disruption if they can be sure they will reap the benefits of an improved rail network afterwards.
- Although 'major' disruptions are rated as inconvenient, there was evidence to suggest that passengers would prefer work to be over as quickly as possible. If notified enough in advance,

many passengers can plan around longer blockades or weekend closures – although for commuters the absence of a viable alternative is a real issue

- Passengers want to make informed choices about their travel plans. Information about alternative arrangements, length of disruption and increased journey time must be available well in advance. The provision and enforcement of T-12 is essential if this is to be met.

The key to all three points is good information – it is essential to tell people: what the work is going to deliver; how to plan alternative journeys in advance and/or on the day; and then explain what has been achieved (e.g. "for this disruption you have now got x)."

There is also a need to ensure that possessions are co-ordinated across regions so that adequate diversionary routes are available – passengers would generally rather stay on the train for longer than change to buses.

10. MANAGEMENT AND STAFF RELATIONS

A good relationship between management and staff is the key to a successful service. Poor relationships can have a direct impact upon the travelling public. If communications break down, passengers face possible strike action causing severe disruption to their services. We therefore would like to see a commitment to developing a partnership approach with unions. Dispute resolutions agreements need to be implemented by the incoming TOCs, in co-operation with the unions, to avoid strike action.

Significant investment in staff training should be a condition of the new franchise agreement. A new franchise is an opportunity to develop cultural change to a more passenger focussed organisation that places emphasis on improving overall passenger satisfaction services and improving performance.