Wales and Borders
Rail Franchise Consultation

Transport Focus response

April 2016

Contents

1. Transport Focus

Transport Focus is the statutory watchdog for rail passengers in Great Britain; bus, tram and coach passengers in England (outside London) and for users of the Strategic Road Network in England.

Our mission is to get the best deal for passengers. With a strong emphasis on evidence based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground. As the statutory body representing the interests of rail passengers in Wales, we use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of passengers and we work with the industry, passenger groups and government to secure journey improvements based on passengers' priorities.

Transport Focus appreciates the open consultation on the future Wales and Borders franchise.

2. Introduction

Transport Focus welcomes the opportunity to provide the rail passengers' perspective as the specification for the new Wales and Borders franchise is developed. When the requirements of the franchise are established, it is vital that the needs of passengers using and paying for rail services are placed squarely at the heart of the contract.

This formal consultation response draws on two rich seams of franchise specific data, combining knowledge and understanding drawn from passenger reports of their current journeys on Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) services with research into passenger priorities for improvement. Read together these two complementary studies provide a unique perspective on passenger needs from the franchise and provide hard evidence to inform the decisions to be made for the future. More generally, we cite findings from our wider research into a range of issues that are important to passengers.

Our research, which will be detailed in further sections of this response, highlights the central importance to passengers of value for money, capacity and punctuality. These core needs must be the top requirements in the specification for the next franchise.

Other factors which the new franchise needs to address effectively are the provision of accurate information, especially during disruption, the handling of major events, the length of the journey and the condition and cleanliness of the trains. All groups of passengers desire a smoother, easier and more convenient ticketing process, with innovations in purchasing, ticket types and the provision of relevant after-sales updates. In the 21st century passengers also expect access to consistent coverage for mobile signals and Wi-Fi provision that is reliable and free, as in day-to-day life.

A core principle for the specification must be to build upon the opportunities presented by the existing framework of services and seek progressive improvements in all areas. It is important that the franchise responds effectively to existing and anticipated demands and that, where necessary, franchise reviews can react to any changes or inaccuracies in planning assumptions, being mindful particularly of the likelihood of increased further demands for travel on the network.

Our research into passenger understanding of, and desire for involvement in, the franchise process led to our emphasis on *Passenger Power!* and a call for more recognition of the passenger within the franchising system. Recent announcements of policies for the forthcoming Wales and Borders franchise have made welcome commitments:
- that the quality of the service being delivered to passengers must be at the heart of decision making for rail services in Wales
- that public involvement is essential for on-going management of the next rail franchise
- to engaging with the public to ensure that the service is meeting the needs of the communities being served.

It is important these promises are brought to life in the specification for the next franchise and that passengers can see these ideals manifest in the services they receive.

It is vital that, throughout its duration, the franchise remains responsive to changing passenger needs. This means not only that there must be a clear understanding of passenger requirements at the outset but that there is an ongoing emphasis on consultation and engagement with stakeholders and a set of output measures that reflect passenger satisfaction. There is an important role for the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) in providing direct feedback from passengers using the services.

Transport Focus is committed to the promotion of passenger interests in the future decisions on the Wales and Borders franchise. We will continue to work closely with Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and with potential operators of the franchise, to ensure that services address both current and evolving needs throughout the contract term.

2.1 Franchise consultation response
In this response we consider consultation questions for which we have relevant information and appropriate evidence of passenger needs and aspirations. We also provide a commentary on other significant issues which we believe should be addressed within the Wales and Borders franchise specification and final contract.

Transport Focus is adopting a strategic approach to this response, which focuses largely on higher level issues. Passengers and stakeholders will all have their own experiences and specific aspirations which they will want considered in future plans.

It is important that Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and the potential franchise operators listen carefully to the views expressed by those whose lives are impacted by decisions about the future of the franchises and the day-to-day operations which result from this.

3. Passenger research and implications for the franchise

3.1 The Transport Focus evidence base

Transport Focus is committed to underpinning our work to get the best deal for passengers with a solid evidence base: we have a considerable body of research on matters that are important to passengers. Much of this is directly relevant to the specification for the next Wales and Borders franchise.

In this section we highlight the findings of our investigations into passengers' priorities for improvement and trust in the rail industry. We also draw on NRPS data for information about the current experience on the franchise. Read together these complementary studies provide a unique perspective on passenger needs from the franchise and provide hard evidence to inform the decisions to be made for the future.

Other research is cited as applicable within following sections.

3.2 Rail passengers' priorities for improvement 2014[1]

This 2014 study of passenger priorities shows that the top five requirements of passengers travelling on ATW services are very similar to the Great Britain sample overall.

The priorities in table 1 are shown as an index averaged on 100. An index of 300 is three times as important as the average and an index score of 50 is half as important as the average. So in table 1 we can see that, for ATW passengers, the top priority of 'passengers are always able to get a seat on the train' is almost five times more important than the average factor and notably higher than the index for GB as a whole.

This information can also be shown graphically to illustrate just how much the relative importance varies between the factors. (See figure 1 below).

The second highest priority, 'price of train tickets offers better value for money' is more than four and a half times as important as the average. 'Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel' is more than twice as important as the average.

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[1] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014

The next group of important priority factors also feature what can be regarded as core elements of service. Passengers want improvements in punctuality and reliability, fewer disruptions or cancellations and good information about their services.

Table 1 Passenger priorities for improvement: comparison of Arriva Trains Wales, Wales and Great Britain

	ATW		Wales		GB	
Passengers always able to get a seat on the train	482	1	402	2	367	2
Price of train tickets offers better value for money	473	2	458	1	494	1
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel	231	3	238	3	264	3
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays	161	4	168	4	163	5
More trains arrive on time than happens now	140	5	150	5	178	4
Accurate and timely information available at stations	135	6	140	6	132	8
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey	123	7	133	7	161	6
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now	108	8	116	8	136	7
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train	107	9	106	9	89	14
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard	106	10	106	10	93	11
Connections with other train services are always good	98	11	95	13	84	15
Accurate and timely information provided on trains	91	12	97	12	92	12
Free Wi-Fi available on the train	90	13	97	11	97	10
Journey time is reduced	77	14	84	14	105	9
Good connections with other public transport at stations	73	15	71	16	62	16
Less disruption due to engineering works	71	16	76	15	90	13
Seating area on train is very comfortable	69	17	67	17	59	17
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude	52	18	54	18	47	18
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude	50	19	53	19	46	19
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage	49	20	47	21	37	23
New ticket formats available	43	21	49	20	45	20
Improved personal security on the train	42	22	45	22	41	21
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard	40	23	41	24	36	24
Improved personal security at the station	39	24	42	23	38	22
More staff available at stations to help passengers	31	25	33	25	29	25
There is always space in the station car park	27	26	31	26	27	26
Free Wi-Fi available at the station	22	27	25	27	24	27
More staff available on trains to help passengers	22	28	23	28	20	28
Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket	20	29	21	29	20	29
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free	17	30	18	30	15	30
Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station	12	31	12	31	10	31
Sample size	697		750		3559	

Figure 1 Arriva Trains Wales passengers' priorities for improvement – relative importance

Priority	Index
Passengers always able to get a seat on the train (1)	482
Price of train tickets offers better value for money (2)	473
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel (3)	231
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays (4)	161
More trains arrive on time than happens now (5)	140
Accurate and timely information available at stations (6)	135
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey (7)	123
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now (8)	108
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train (9)	107
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard (10)	106
Connections with other train services are always good (11)	98
Accurate and timely information provided on trains (12)	91
Free Wi-Fi available on the train (13)	90
Journey time is reduced (14)	77
Good connections with other public transport at stations (15)	73
Less disruption due to engineering works (16)	71
Seating area on train is very comfortable (17)	69
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude (18)	52
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude (19)	50
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage (20)	49
New ticket formats available such as smartcards, ticket Apps etc. (21)	43
Improved personal security on the train (22)	42
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard (23)	40
Improved personal security at the station (24)	39
More staff available at stations to help passengers (25)	31
There is always space in the station car park (26)	27
Free Wi-Fi available at the station (27)	22
More staff available on trains to help passengers (28)	22
Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket (29)	20
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free (30)	17
Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station (31)	12

100 = the average

This research provides a very clear picture of passengers' priorities for improvement. The two top priorities, by some considerable margin, are 'passengers always able to get a seat on the train' and 'price of train tickets offers better value for money'. The strong third priority for improvement, indexed at 231, is 'trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel'. And, if we consider the various factors related to punctuality, reducing cancellations and minimising disruption we can see that they also have a very high combined priority for improvement.

Summarising the findings, it is clear that the top priorities for improvement largely focus on the basic elements of the rail service – value for money, getting a seat, frequency, punctuality, managing delays and provision of information. This is not to say the remaining priorities are not important to the passenger experience, it is just that they are not as important to improve as the top ranking.

The research has sample sizes of 699 for ATW and 750 for Wales, within an overall GB pool of 3559. The database[2] contains a wealth of information which can be

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[2] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-simulator-2014

analysed in many ways to explore how priorities vary by demographic and journey purpose, amongst other things. We commend its use to Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and potential operators to enable a detailed understanding of the aspirations of passengers to apply to the network.

3.3 NRPS and drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

The National Rail Passenger Survey[3] (NRPS), together with an analysis of the drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, is a comprehensive source of information about passenger perceptions of the current franchise. It can also be broken down to show variations across the five 'building block' groupings of rail services in the Wales and Borders operation.

Tables detailing the NRPS headline factor scores for ATW and the five component building blocks are provided in Appendix 2. These include a comparison of scores with the comparable sector or typology average and the typology best in class.

3.3.1 Drivers of satisfaction

Figure 2 shows the significance of 'the cleanliness of the inside of the train' as a key driver of satisfaction for ATW passengers at 45 per cent overall.

Two factors relating to capacity are also notable drivers of satisfaction. 'Comfort of the seating area' is at 12 per cent overall while 'sufficient room for all passengers to sit and stand' is at 5 per cent overall but is particularly important on North Wales and Borders routes (25 per cent) and on Mid Wales and Borders routes (24 per cent).

'Punctuality and reliability' and 'length of the journey' are significant factors for ATW overall at 9 per cent and 8 per cent respectively.

3.3.2 Drivers of dissatisfaction

Figure 3 shows the most significant driver of dissatisfaction is 'your personal security whilst on board the train' at 28 per cent. It is unusual for this factor to be such a strong driver of dissatisfaction and highlights the concerns of ATW passengers in relation to security. We have made detailed recommendations relating to safety and security in section 4.18.

The next most important factor is 'how well the train company dealt with delays' at 26 per cent. Where delays are not dealt with well, passengers will be dissatisfied.

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[3] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/national-passenger-survey-introduction

Figure 2 - Drivers of satisfaction, NRPS Spring 2015/Autumn 2015: Arriva Trains Wales and building blocks

- The cleanliness of the inside of the train
- The comfort of the seating area
- Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)
- The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)
- Sufficient room for all the passengers to sit/stand
- The ease of being able to get on and off the train
- Your personal security whilst on board the train
- The overall station environment
- The provision of shelter facilities
- The frequency of the trains on that route
- The value for money for the price of your ticket
- Up keep and repair of the train
- Provision of information about train times/platforms
- The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff
- The availability of staff at the station
- How request was handled
- The provision of information during the journey
- The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train
- The space for luggage

Figure 3 - Drivers of dissatisfaction, NRPS Spring 2015/Autumn 2015: Arriva Trains Wales

- Your personal security whilst on board the train
- How train company dealt with these delays
- The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)
- Sufficient room for all the passengers to sit/stand
- The ease of being able to get on and off the train
- The frequency of the trains on that route
- The availability of staff at the station
- The provision of information during the journey
- Cleanliness of the station
- The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff
- The overall station environment
- Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)
- Connections with other train services
- The cleanliness of the inside of the train
- Availability of seating

3.3.3 Satisfaction with value for money and the overall journey

A comparison between ATW and the Regional sector shows similar overall satisfaction over several years (figure 4 below). However, in the most recent wave ATW satisfaction dipped to its lowest score of 82 per cent while the Regional average rose to a high of 88 per cent.

Scores for satisfaction with value for money are considerably lower for both ATW and the sector. ATW satisfaction has tended to be slightly lower than the Regional average over the last few years.

Figure 4 – Arriva Trains Wales and Regional sector trends for value for money and satisfaction with overall journey, NRPS

- Overall satisfaction with the journey ATW
- Overall satisfaction with the journey Regional
- The value for money for the price of your ticket ATW
- The value for money for the price of your ticket Regional
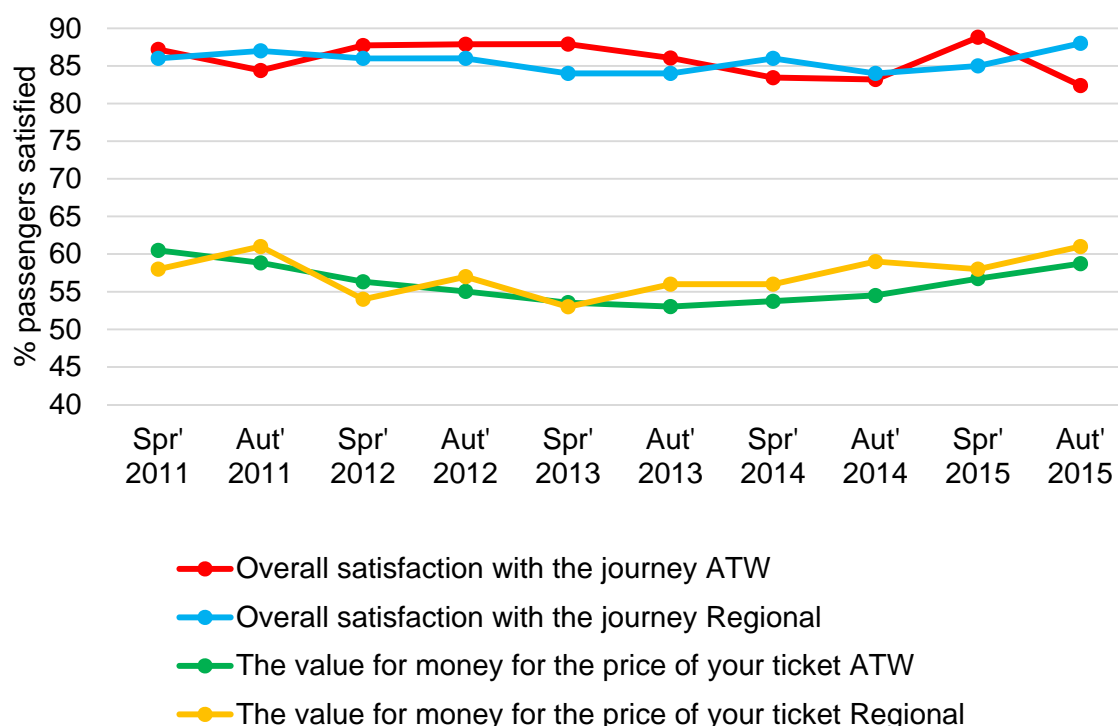
3.4 Passenger trust in the rail industry

In 2014 Transport Focus undertook a study to explore passengers' relationship with the rail industry[4]. The main finding is that to improve passengers' trust in the rail industry, train companies not only need to get the basic service right day-to-day, they need to put effort into building long-term relationships with their passengers.

Trust consists of three elements: service, relationship and judgement. Service elements affect day-to-day issues such as punctuality, reliability, helpfulness of staff and value for money. They are the foundations for building passengers' trust.

It is important to focus on relationship factors to build passenger trust once the service elements are in place. Some train companies have developed good relationships with their passengers. Communicating directly and proactively with passengers goes down well with them. Particular problem areas for communication identified by the research are confusion over ticketing options and when there are delays or cancellations. Communicating honestly, with integrity and transparency, can inspire trust.

Many train companies score well on the third trust element – judgement. They are seen to have high principles, a good reputation and show leadership. However, judgement does not contribute as much to trust as service and relationship.

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[4] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passengers-relationship-with-the-rail-industry

For the next Wales and Borders franchise to build greater trust with passengers it is important to get the basic service right ahead of everything else. Then, building on closer relationships with their passengers is important. One way is through high quality communication. Passengers should feel that train companies are 'on their side'.

3.5 Recommendation - top level priorities for the franchise

Analysis of the passenger priorities for improvement and drivers of satisfaction /dissatisfaction highlights a number of factors that should be top level priorities for the next Wales and Borders franchise to address. These are:

- capacity and frequency
- value for money
- punctuality and reliability
- effective disruption management.

Attention should also be given to personal security on board trains, cleanliness inside trains, provision of accurate and timely information and, to build trust further, clear and open communication.

4. Response to consultation questions

4.1 Outcomes

- **Question 1: Do you agree with the Welsh Government's high level outcomes for rail in the Wales and Borders area?**
- **Are there any others we should consider?**

Transport Focus regards the nine objectives set out for the Wales and Borders franchise as appropriate. However, we recommend the inclusion of the following further objectives:

- Operate in an open and transparent way, emphasising proactive communication and engagement, to build trust and confidence amongst passengers.
- Integrated ticketing that is convenient and simple to use, with flexible options that can be tailored to different needs and deliver value for money, facilitating door to door journeys.
- Station improvements to provide or enhance facilities, maintenance and weather protection, increasing passenger satisfaction with the waiting environment.

4.2 Passenger satisfaction

- **Question 2: Do you agree with the top 5 priorities improvements for rail passengers identified by Transport Focus?**

- **How would you rank these priorities? If you do not agree, are there others that should take precedence?**

Our 2014 research[5] gave a clear picture of passengers' priorities for improvement. These top five priorities are of great importance to passengers. However, other significant priorities must also be given consideration. The research findings indicate five more priorities are of above average importance to passengers in the Wales and Borders region:

- accurate and timely information available at the station
- less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey
- fewer trains cancelled than happens now
- well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train
- inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard.

NRPS analysis of drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction offers further insight into the factors that matter most to passengers. Cleanliness of the inside of the train has the biggest impact on satisfaction, followed by comfort of the seating area, punctuality and reliability, length of the journey, personal security on board and sufficient room for passengers to sit or stand. Key drivers of dissatisfaction are personal security on board, how well the train company deals with delays and the length of the journey.

However, many different features combine to create the overall journey experience for the passenger. These individual aspects cannot be managed in isolation but should be considered together to create an improved fundamental offer, focused on delivering increased passenger satisfaction across all aspects of the journey, also driving value for money – itself the second highest priority for improvement.

4.3 Range and frequency of future services
- **Question 3: Are there changes to the range and frequency of services currently operated, as set out at Annex A that you would consider necessary?**

The specification for the future franchise should provide a framework to ensure that train service provision is based on passenger needs and priorities and is linked to key measures of passenger satisfaction.

Figure 1 illustrates that capacity factors – in terms of the ability to get a seat and the frequency of trains – rank first and third as priorities for improvement, with more trains arriving on time ranking fifth.

Figure 2 shows that NRPS drivers of passenger satisfaction on ATW include the comfort of the seating area (which may, at least in part, reflect crowding pressures),

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[5] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014

along with punctuality and reliability, the length of time the journey is scheduled to take and sufficient room for passengers to sit/stand. Drivers of dissatisfaction also include the length of time of the journey as well. (See figure 3).

The evidence makes clear that an effective train service specification is of major significance to passengers.

4.3.1 Passenger growth

The forecast passenger demand listed in Table 1 of the Consultation Document shows figures taken from Network Rail's Welsh Route Study. Table 2 below makes a comparison of key commuter corridors into Cardiff or Swansea, with actual growth since 1998.

Table 2 Passenger growth on key commuter corridors into Cardiff or Swansea

Route	Estimated growth 2013-2023[6]	Actual growth 1998-2015[7]
Valley Lines	76%	87%
Vale of Glamorgan	80%	71%
Ebbw Vale	112%	277%
GWML	46%	117%
GWR stations Swansea to Newport		99%
The Marches	38%	103%
Heart of Wales	32%	76%
West of Swansea	24%	116%

These figures would suggest that the relationship between the projected and actual figures would benefit from further sense-checking. Transport Focus recommends:

- greater transparency and sharing of data and methodologies by DfT, Network Rail and train operators
- CRPs are commissioned to carry out and submit regular passenger counts, to ensure more accurate passenger data is available for forecasting, especially for capacity and rolling stock requirements.

The designers of the new franchise, and potential operators, should also focus attention to the factors causing irregular growth on most lines in Wales.

4.3.2 A passenger-focused specification

The new franchise should provide passengers with a clear, dependable timetable, with services provided at regular intervals, running seven days a week, throughout the network, with thought given to key connections.

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[6] Network Rail Welsh Route Study http://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/welsh-route-study/

[7] Office of Rail and Road station usage estimates http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates

Transport Focus supports a specification which is flexible enough to allow the operator to review usage and how station calls are allocated to train paths in order to improve overall capacity and efficient use of resources.

However, whilst acknowledging the need for some flexibility to adapt the train service to respond to current and changing demands, Transport Focus is clear that there must be sufficient detail in the specification to protect key journey opportunities. These must include journeys to/from school and work and, at key locations, retain or improve connection opportunities. There must also be proper consultation / publicity surrounding the changes such that people have a chance to comment on the impact it will have on them.

Alterations to service patterns will inevitably flow from the development of rail and other infrastructure. New journey opportunities may become available, or required, as markets change and grow. Input from passengers, local and regional bodies and other stakeholders may identify other circumstances which require recognition in the service specification and it is vital that Welsh Government and Transport for Wales take this on board as more detailed plans for the specification are drawn up.

The specification for the Wales and Borders franchise should require potential operators to plan and resource a deliverable passenger-focused, optimised service pattern. This should also include consideration of the appropriate capacity and frequencies required for earlier and later in the day as well as weekends and bank holidays. In respect of the latter, the invitation to tender should give strong encouragement for potential operators to explore the prospect of services running on 26 December and other holiday dates where there is identifiable demand.

The service specifications and service options developed by potential operators for the franchise must demonstrate full consideration to the capacity implications of all proposals.

Whatever the plans for the train service it is essential that the timetable proposals are subject to proper consultation, including the initial proposals for the specification. Within requirements protecting minimum service levels, the next operator should be given flexibility to develop the train service to meet the needs of existing and potential passengers. They should be tasked with creating the best timetable for the places they serve, balancing the range of factors important to passengers.

Engagement with passengers and local communities should be regarded as a starting point for service developments. There must be a requirement for timely, transparent and meaningful consultation that allows all stakeholders views to be listened to prior to changes being finalised. Feedback, irrespective of whether it has been possible to accommodate the recommendation or request, must be provided.

From the outset, and throughout the life of the franchise, there are some principles that should be embedded, to be followed whenever timetables are revised:

- early consultation with passengers must be a prerequisite, and followed by honest feedback about why the ultimate decisions were made
- existing basic features such as first/last trains, if satisfactory, should remain
- aspirations for improvements should be met if possible
- capacity and resources should be matched as closely as possible.

Transport Focus believes that the train services should be structured around the journeys that passengers wish to make. The key issue is whether passengers at each station have the required level of service to and from the places they want or need to travel at the times they wish to do so. The starting point should be to optimise rail services based on passenger demand and any new opportunities that become available. The provision of sufficient capacity must be addressed, particularly for times of peak demand.

Our view is that origin and destination data should be used as the basis for understanding existing travel requirements. This data is available to the industry, but not generally to stakeholders. Without access to this key data and other relevant information, particularly about network capacity, timetabling options and comprehensive assessments of stakeholder views, it is not possible for others to derive a properly balanced judgement about service options. It is therefore important that, when considering choices and bringing forward proposals, the decision makers, whether Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, Network Rail (NR) or the operator, should ensure that the rationale that underpins them is properly set out to all who have an interest.

The service specification should take a holistic view of the needs of all passengers: commuter, business and leisure, from all parts of the network. Timetable opportunities must be optimised with passenger interests placed at the heart of planning and ahead of operational convenience. The specification should also make best use of service connections; with other train services, with other forms of transport and develop an integrated network that is positive and attractive. This is discussed in more detail in section 5.6.

Within the acknowledged capacity constraints of the franchise the distribution of train services should be appropriate to passenger demand. Where possible there should be clearly differentiated services for different markets.

4.4 Range of destinations
- **Question 4: Are there destinations outside of Wales that should be considered for inclusion in the next Wales and Borders franchise?**

Transport Focus has not specifically researched passengers' views regarding any potential franchise remapping. However, we would make the following points:
- the size of all the cross-border flows should be a major factor in deciding what through services should operate – followed by potential for growth, with a

sense-check provided by practicalities such as capacity for any additional services, or possibility of linking existing ones. In addition, whether the station operator should change
- devolution should be implemented logically. Where demand for through journeys between places is sufficient for their justification, then these should be operated by whichever operator is best suited to do so.

In addition, we also highlight the importance of cross-border journeys to Welsh rail users in section 5.6.1.

4.4.1 Principles relating to potential franchise remapping
The significant issue to be assessed in any consideration of remapping must be the outcomes this would deliver for passengers. There may be benefits and drawbacks associated with transfers and the overall balance of these for the majority of passengers must be the key to any decision. There should also be a transparent evaluation of the costs of any re-organisation. Is it worth the cost? Who will end up paying? Passengers should not have to fund reorganisations out of which they will see little or no benefit.

A critical factor that must be assessed is which operator is best placed to manage and improve the services, maintain the trains, and provide the best response to passenger needs. Proposals should be subject to proper consultation.

Should any services transfer to/from another franchise then any existing arrangements for passenger access to discounted tickets for certain journeys should be maintained or comparable products provided. Passengers should not suffer as a result of reorganisation.

Should services to any destinations transfer, in whole or in part, there must be a requirement for effective liaison between operators, particularly in relation to information, service disruption, connections and the management of station facilities. There must also be a clear agreement over responsibilities for complaints handling and compensation claims during the transition period.

4.5 Capacity
- **Question 5: Can better use be made of existing train capacity? What is an acceptable limit for standing times on rail journeys?**

Passengers regard provision of capacity as a fundamental requirement of the rail service, both in terms of sufficient seating and standing room, and appropriate frequency of service.

For ATW passengers, 'passengers are always able to get a seat on the train' is the highest priority for improvement[8]. It has an importance of almost five times higher

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[8] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014

than an 'average' factor. The NRPS shows passengers are somewhat more concerned about overcrowding on ATW. 72 per cent of passengers are satisfied that there is sufficient room to sit and stand, compared to a Regional sector average of 74 per cent.

We know that 'trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel' is the third highest priority for ATW passengers. Clearly, the more services that run the more seats are available, hence greater capacity.

4.5.1 Variations across the network

Evidence from the NRPS shows that the experience of passengers across different routes on the network can vary.

Table 3 Sufficient room to sit and stand, NRPS Autumn 2015, percentage satisfied: ATW, commuter, leisure and building blocks

ATW	Business	Commuter	Leisure	Cardiff and Valleys	Inter Urban	Mid Wales and Borders	North Wales and Borders	South Wales and Borders/ West Wales
72	72[9]	62	78	72	78	79	71	68

Table 3 shows a comparison of satisfaction with room for passengers to sit and stand for ATW overall and across the five building blocks. Satisfaction is lowest for South Wales and Borders/West Wales passengers with higher satisfaction for Mid Wales and Borders and Inter Urban passengers. It also shows the comparison of satisfaction between passengers travelling for business, leisure and commuters. The significantly lower satisfaction amongst commuters suggests the scale of the capacity challenge during the busiest periods.

Table 4 Frequency of trains, NRPS Autumn 2015, percentage satisfied: ATW, commuter, leisure and building blocks

ATW	Business	Commuter	Leisure	Cardiff and Valleys	Inter Urban	Mid Wales and Borders	North Wales and Borders	South Wales and Borders/ West Wales
73	71[10]	67	77	79	78	69	63	66

Table 4 shows a comparison of satisfaction levels with frequency of the trains across ATW overall and each of the five building blocks. Satisfaction on North Wales and Borders routes at 63 per cent is the lowest and significantly lower than ATW overall. Commuters are again significantly less satisfied with frequency than leisure and business passengers.

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[9] Sample size of 94
[10] Sample size of 89

It is vital that Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and the industry continue to work with local communities to understand the challenges and requirements for individual services and areas.

4.5.2 Optimising capacity

Transport Focus believes that the franchise specification should require potential operators to take all reasonable steps to provide sufficient capacity across all services throughout the life of the franchise. It should operate in accordance with the established principle that 'it is reasonable for passengers to expect to get a seat for journeys of more than twenty minutes, and to have sufficient space even if they are standing for shorter journeys'. This should be the benchmark for capacity provision.

Targets should be for crowding levels to be lower than currently exist, with a requirement to plan to stay ahead of growth in demand. We recognise this will present some challenges. However, this issue is too important to passengers to be ignored.

To effectively manage crowding, a train company needs high quality loadings data with the ability to analyse individual trains, different days of the week and seasonal impacts. This more granular detail should be used to inform careful allocation of the available capacity to optimise the response to demand pressures across the network.

A thorough review of all timetables must be undertaken to explore how services can best be matched to passenger needs. There may well be opportunities to adapt frequencies and stopping patterns to provide a better match of capacity with demand, whilst still ensuring the needs of all passengers are balanced appropriately.

There should be a requirement for the next operator to utilise all available data and information to monitor and continually improve the ongoing situation. Potential operators should be required to demonstrate their plans to ensure sufficient resources within the franchise to enable a sophisticated and responsive approach to train service development, combined with a positive strategy of stakeholder engagement to explain the rationale for service proposals.

The future operator must be required to adopt and publish appropriate crowding measures that are more representative of individual passenger's experiences across the range of routes and services. Published data should make the crowding levels on different services easily comparable so that decisions about allocation of resources can be scrutinised. NRPS satisfaction measures for relevant factors, including overall satisfaction and room to sit and stand, should be published alongside capacity data to demonstrate the impact this has on passengers.

Other approaches to management of capacity should also be implemented.

Transparent information about the loadings of specific trains provides passengers with the knowledge that may enable them to make an informed decision. Research has found that over two thirds of passengers who had seen information about the levels of crowding on specific train services had found it useful and just over a fifth of these people had made a regular or occasional change to the trains they used as a result of the information[11].

A traffic-light system of information should be made available to passengers to help them understand the likelihood of getting a seat, or even getting onto, a particular train. This allows passengers who have more flexibility to make an informed choice about their travel options and, even where there are more defined patterns of travel, some passengers may appreciate the option of being able to make small adjustments or trade-offs to have a comfortable journey.

Similarly, fares incentives for passengers to sometimes swap peak journeys with travel in the shoulder or off-peak, or perhaps work closer to home on some days, may also make a contribution to capacity pressures. Cliff-face price differentials that lead to under-utilisation on some higher-priced services and a flood of passengers on the first cheaper trains should also be avoided.

Technological solutions should also be adopted. Crowding can now be monitored in real time and information systems and apps are becoming available to indicate where available seats on trains are located[12].

Additional efforts should be made to respond to passengers who have physical difficulties in standing for any length of time. Initiatives such as priority seating and cards[13] that the holder can show to identify a proven need should be part of the overall plan for improving accessibility within the franchise.

Over the lifetime of the franchise the operator must be required to work with Network Rail and within the wider industry processes to develop proposals to further increase capacity to meet the expected rise in demand and ensure this information is available to inform future High Level Output Specification (HLOS) plans and investment cycles.

4.5.3 Rolling stock availability, capacity and configuration

The future operator should be incentivised to ensure that available rolling stock is never sitting in sidings when there is evidence of need for additional capacity on services where it could be deployed. In addition, the franchise specifications should require that the particular needs for additional capacity for special events must also be planned for and managed within the overall framework of train availability.

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[11] The impact of publishing more information on seat availability: South West Trains case study, ORR July 2012

[12] For example, Dutch Railways - iNStApp: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc6R3qt6SXI

[13] For example, http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/accessibility/priority-seat-card/

Where further investment in additional rolling stock would provide the necessary capacity to meet identified requirements during the life of the franchise, the onus should be on the operator to build a business case to enable this to happen. If there is a commercial case then there should be prompt action to deliver the necessary vehicles. Where additional subsidy will or may be required, Transport Focus expects the operator, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government to work together with regional partners to seek an affordable solution. Where required, assessments should look beyond the immediate franchise into the longer term to create a viable mechanism to respond to identified demand.

Transport Focus has conducted several research projects on rolling stock design, and where capacity has proved to be a driving force for change there are two areas that passengers consistently point to in terms of need for improvement:
- the design of the aisle/gangway running the length of the carriage
- the vestibule area/entrance to the carriage.

A summary of the findings of the projects is set out below.

Ultimately, views on the internal configuration of trains will reflect the fact that different options will suit different people in different circumstances. Priorities will reflect where, when and for the purpose journeys are made. Any proposals to adapt trains to respond to capacity pressures should be required to be developed in consultation with passengers.

4.5.3.1 Thameslink rolling stock research[14]
Those passengers boarding trains nearer to London displayed a high degree of pragmatism, although it probably resulted from 'conditioning', accepting that even with 12 coach trains they were unlikely to get a seat in the morning peak. Flowing from that there was a clear view that the new trains should be designed to allow passengers to stand in complete safety and as comfortably as possible – though there were some who thought the new trains should be designed to provide a better chance of them getting a seat.

In order to facilitate this, participants in the Thameslink research were quick to point out the need for improved provision of grab rails/handles. Passengers identified this as a major area for improvement, as existing carriages in service were seen to be particularly uncomfortable to stand in because there was nothing suitable to aid their stability. This was particularly a problem for shorter passengers, and those travelling with children or more than one bag.

In the saloon area, passengers were often reluctant to move down the carriage away from the vestibule area if they perceived there to be nothing for them to hold on to.

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[14] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/thameslink-rolling-stock-qualitative-research

> *"I'm too short to reach the rails, and I won't move down the carriage because it's dangerous for me. People don't understand this and get irate."*
> (Bedford group, Commuter)

Passengers welcomed designs that showed wider gangways/aisles between each coach, as they were felt to greatly enhance freedom of movement along the train, and provided more standing space; but only if coupled with something to hold on to when doing so.

The vestibule area itself was also mentioned in this respect, making passengers feel unsafe if they have to stand. The results of the Thameslink research were echoed in later research conducted on Merseyrail trains by Transport Focus.

4.5.3.2 Merseyrail rolling stock research[15]
Research conducted in partnership with Merseytravel demonstrated that of those passengers who stood on-board existing trains, just 46 per cent were satisfied with the space available to them and only 41 per cent with the provision of grab rails. The research identified congestion in the vestibule as being a frequent problem when travelling on Merseyrail trains. This was not felt to be an issue that was unique to Merseyrail services, since some respondents claimed to have experienced this when travelling with other TOCs and on London Underground. However, in the context of existing passenger volumes and the fact that most were able to get a seat, even during peak times, this seemed to be a large problem on Merseyrail trains, in relative terms.

Much of the congestion seemed to be caused by passengers travelling with bikes and pushchairs standing in the vestibule areas – in part a consequence of not having dedicated areas or a flexible space (e.g. tip up seats near the doors) that could be used for such purposes. This was often assumed to be the easiest option due to the relatively large floor space and not having to navigate round other passengers and the partition on either side of the entrances. However the main reason for passengers being reluctant to stand in the gangways was the widespread perception of not being able to do so safely or comfortably.

This is primarily due to the lack of usable grab rails in this part of the carriage (even in comparison with the vestibule areas). The rail attached to the overhead luggage shelf was considered to be too high and/or too far away from the aisle for most passengers to reach comfortably and the discs on top of the seats were thought to be difficult to hold firmly enough to provide stability when standing on a moving train.

> *"When the train is full there's nothing to hold onto for security. There used to be straps hanging from the ceiling but there are other things that could be done." (Leisure user, West Kirby)*

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[15] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/future-merseyrail-rolling-stock-what-passengers-want

The narrowness of the space creates the perception that there is a risk of those who move down the aisle becoming trapped there. This creates concerns about being able to get off quickly enough and perhaps missing the intended stop, especially for those making relatively short journeys.

> *"I don't want to go right into the carriage if it's busy because I might not be able to get off at my stop if the train is full."*
> *(Leisure user, West Kirby)*

4.6 Performance standards

- **Question 6: What standards for performance should the Welsh Government consider setting when awarding a franchise for rail services?**

Targets, measurements, monitoring and their transparent reporting are fundamental to delivering improvements to service quality. Transport Focus strongly supports the principle of monitoring and improving service quality through a combination of NRPS results and periodic reviews of train operating company Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). See section 4.14 for our detailed recommendations on targets and monitoring, and see below for our specific recommendations regarding the particular importance of high standards of performance for punctuality and reliability.

4.6.1 Punctuality and reliability

ATW passengers' priorities for improvement[16] ranks more trains arriving on time (index 140), less frequent major unplanned disruptions (index 123) and fewer train cancellations (index 108) at fifth, seventh and eighth respectively.

Table 5 below shows considerable variations in satisfaction with punctuality and reliability between the best and worst performing building blocks within ATW.

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[16] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014

Table 5 Punctuality and reliability, NRPS Autumn 2015, percentage satisfied: ATW, commuter/business/leisure, building blocks

ATW	Regional sector	Commuter	Business	Leisure
80	85	67	89[17]	86
Cardiff and Valleys	**Inter Urban**	**Mid Wales and Borders**	**North Wales and Borders**	**South Wales and Borders/ West Wales**
78	76	91	84	79

Passengers on Inter Urban routes report the lowest satisfaction at 78 per cent. Mid Wales and Borders and North Wales and Borders have the highest satisfaction at 91 and 84 per cent respectively.

There are also marked differences dependent on journey purpose, with commuters the least satisfied at 67 per cent, compared to business at 89 per cent and leisure at 86 per cent.

Figure 5, below, shows the trend for punctuality of the component service groups and the ATW operation as a whole, as measured by the industry measure of punctuality.[18] It shows some improvements after a period of decline, but performance still remains below the higher levels achieved historically, particularly on regional and interurban services.

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[17] Sample size of 97
[18] This standard, the Public Performance Measure – or PPM - regards trains arriving at their final destination within five minutes of scheduled time (or ten minutes for longer distance services) as punctual

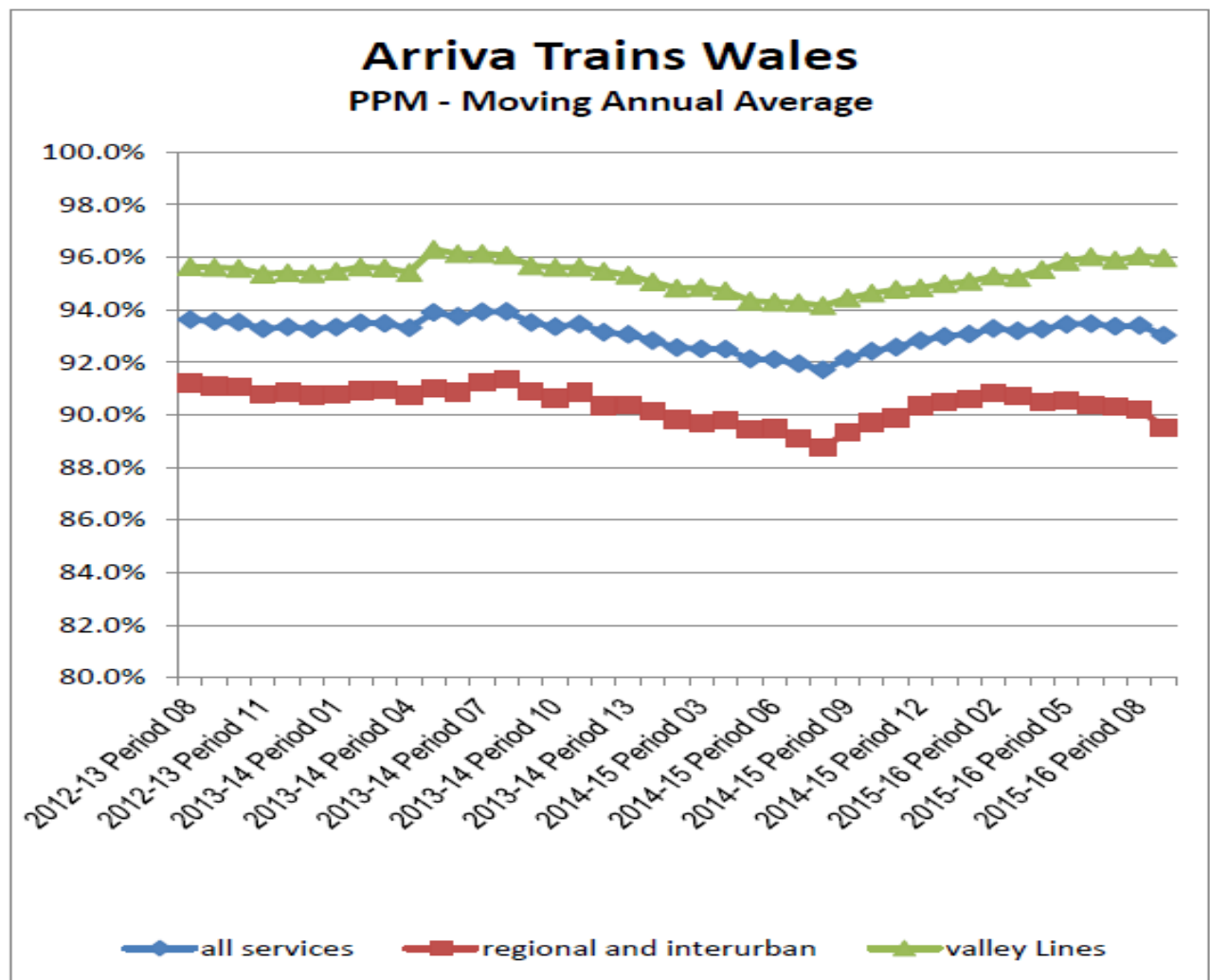**Figure 5 Arriva Trains Wales PPM for operator and service groups**

Figure 6, below, shows a slight downwards trend in the industry measure of cancellations and significant lateness (trains over 30 minutes beyond scheduled arrival time at final destination) after a peak in 2014.

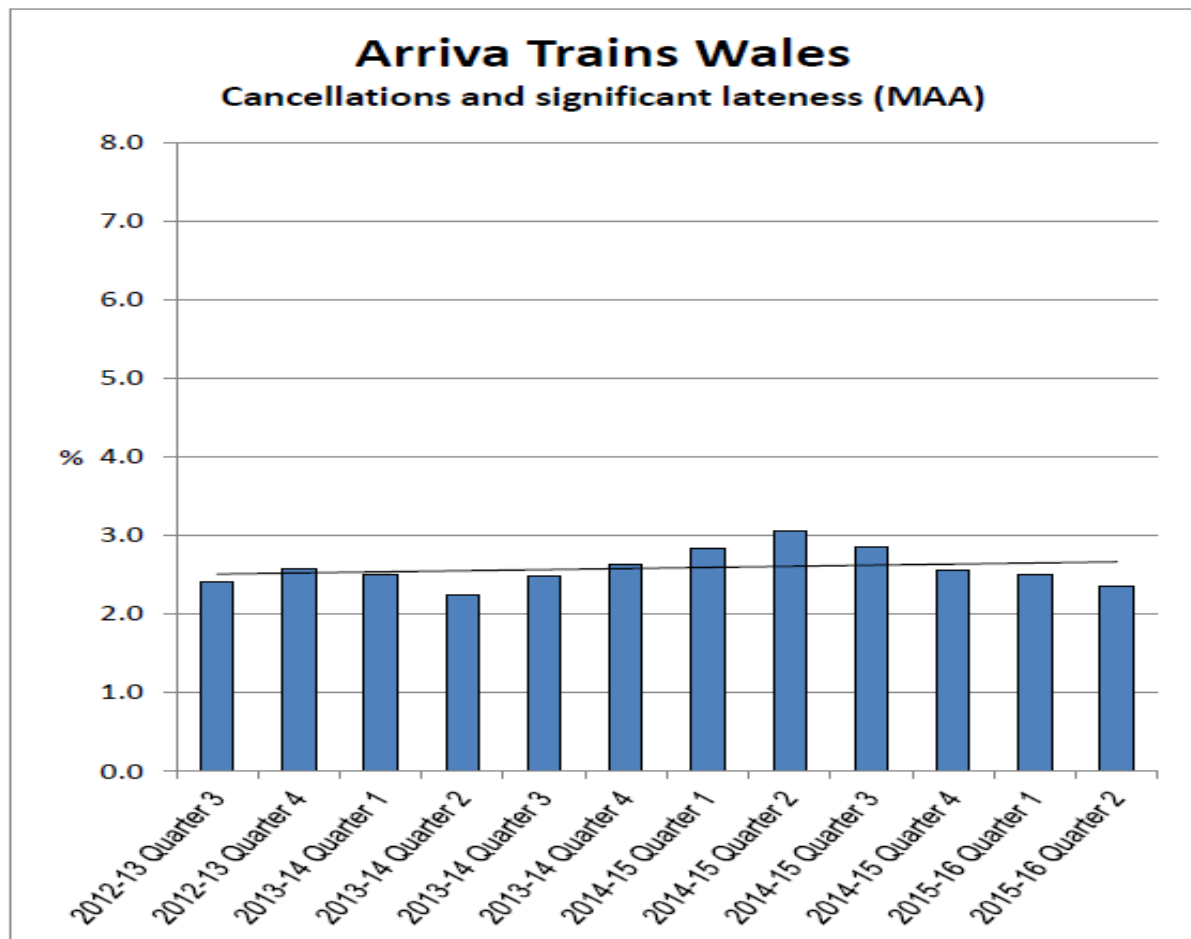**Figure 6 Arriva Trains Wales Cancellations and Significant Lateness**

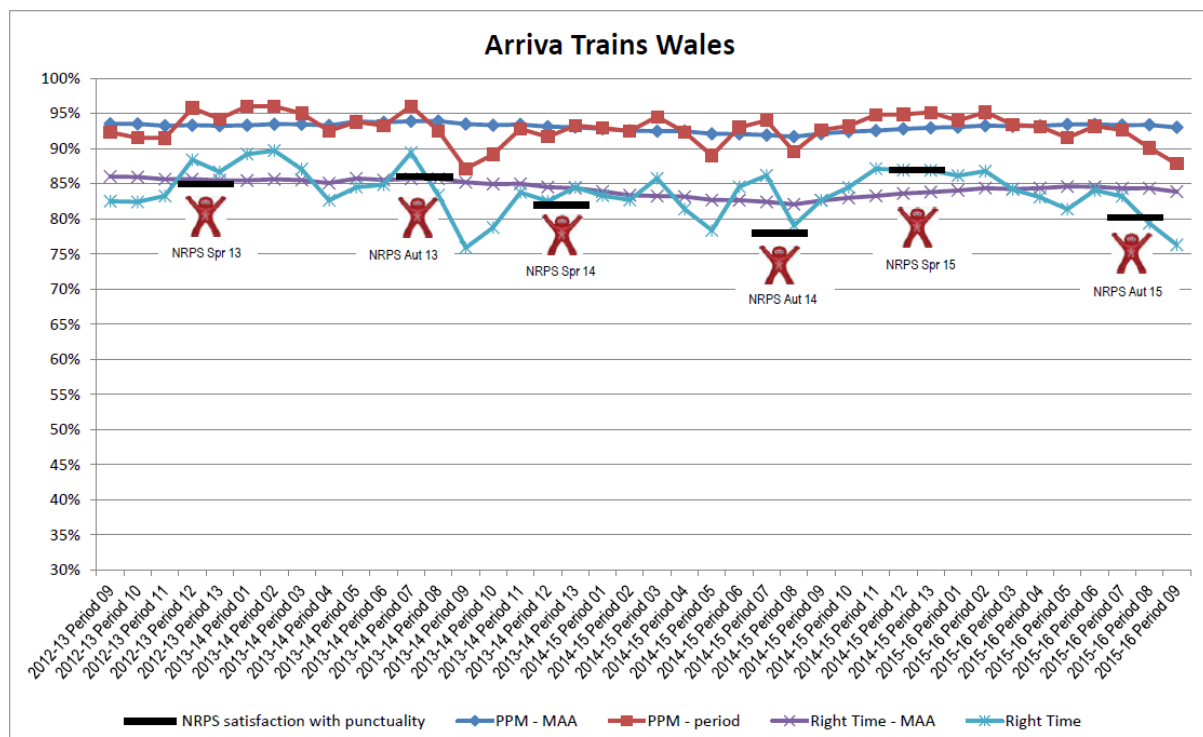**Figure 7 Arriva Trains Wales PPM and Right Time**

Figure 7 clearly shows that passenger satisfaction with punctuality on ATW services is in line with right-time performance (trains arriving at their terminating station early or within 59 seconds of schedule) rather than the official PPM measure. This demonstrates the wide gap between the industry measure and the reality of performance that passengers experience.

Our research clearly identifies the importance of punctuality and reliability to passengers. We therefore emphasise the absolute need for the next franchise specification to demand improvements in this crucial aspect of operations.

We recommend that the specification sets out a requirement for a strong focus on delivering excellent operational performance and ensuring a culture of genuine transparency about how well things are going. As well as helping engender trust among passengers and stakeholders, we believe transparency will of itself increase the incentive on the operator to drive up performance. It should be noted that 'on time'/'right time' punctuality is what matters to passengers and not whether a train is within PPM.

Specifically, we feel there should be:

1. Targets to improve PPM, 'on time'/'right time' and cancellations across all routes. Reliance on service group averages, let alone a whole TOC average, risks exposing passengers on individual routes to poor performance.

2. Targets for PPM and 'on time'/'right time' at key intermediate stations in addition to at the train destinations. Measuring performance at the destination station alone runs the risk that a large number of passengers are late even though the train does not show as such. This is a particular problem on longer distance routes with numerous sub-markets and relatively few end-to-end passengers. But even on shorter routes, including commuter routes, punctuality based on measurement at destination can be markedly at odds with the experience of passengers using intermediate stations. The impact of late running at intermediate stations can be dramatic when passengers are making connections with other trains or with buses.

3. A requirement to make historic train performance information easy to obtain and understand. Passengers should be able to view the performance of individual trains they catch (or a group of trains) between the stations they use. When journey planning, the performance record of individual trains should be one of the elements presented to assist passenger decision-making.

4. A requirement to report publicly the number of trains each period that appear in the public timetable, but are excluded from the 'plan of the day' and therefore do not count officially as cancellations. The fact that any cancellation – if declared by 22:00 the day before – does not appear in performance statistics fuels many passengers'

underlying suspicion and mistrust of the industry. Being open about what is going on would help.

To reinforce these points, our 2015 research[19] shows the high value that passengers place on performance and the provision of a service that they can rely on. We also know through our work on the NRPS that punctuality is the main driver of overall passenger satisfaction. In order to better understand the relationship we have taken a more in depth look at the correlation between satisfaction with punctuality and actual performance across a number of different train companies. Overall we found a clear picture of:

- Passenger satisfaction with punctuality reduces by between two and three percentage points with every minute of delay.
- Average lateness experienced by passengers being worse than that recorded for train services. This is because of the effect of cancellations and because many trains that are on time at their destination are late at intermediate stations. As PPM measures performance at the final station it is possible for passengers en-route to be late arriving at their station only for the 'empty' train to arrive on time – in other words the train is on time despite most of the passengers being late.
- Passengers' notice delay well before the technical threshold of delay. Commuters notice lateness after one minute rather than the five minutes allowed; while business and leisure users tend to change their level of satisfaction with punctuality after a delay of four to six minutes.

This shows that passengers do not view a train arriving up to 5 or 10 minutes after its scheduled time as being on-time And that a significant degree of passenger satisfaction is 'lost' when trains are officially 'on time' according to the industry measure of PPM, but late in passengers' eyes. As punctuality is the main driver of overall passenger satisfaction it follows that greater adherence to a right-time' railway could help drive up overall satisfaction.

The next operator should be required to commit to – and demonstrate – a 'right-time' culture and to working with Network Rail to drive sustained improvements in performance. We would like to see within the next franchise:

- A commitment to report the percentage of trains arriving punctually at key intermediate stations.
- A commitment to move towards a 'right-time' railway, including the publication of right-time performance.

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[19] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/train-punctuality-the-passenger-perspective

4.7 Service disruption

- **Question 7: How could arrangements for dealing with disruption be improved upon and how should these be prioritised?**

In NRPS, the most significant 'driver' of passenger dissatisfaction for Great Britain and one of the most significant for ATW, is how the train operator handles delays. The 2014 priorities research[20] identifies that four of the top ten priorities for ATW passengers relate to avoiding and managing disruption, including accurate and timely information at stations. A closer look at the NRPS shows that on key factors relating to disruption, ATW passengers' satisfaction is lower than the national average and significantly lower than the average for regional train companies – particularly for the usefulness of information during delays (table 6).

Table 6 Dealing with delays, NRPS Autumn 2015, percentage satisfied: National, Regional and ATW

Factor	National	Regional	ATW
How well train company deals with delays	39	46	37
Usefulness of information during delays	46	55	37

4.7.1 Managing service disruption – unplanned

In 2014 Transport Focus published new research looking at passengers' needs and experiences during unplanned disruption[21], including around the provision of information. We made a number of recommendations and encourage Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to ensure that potential operators have credible plans to address them. However there are two key points that must be tackled from day one of the new franchise:

- The cultural issue, across the industry, that deficiencies in passenger information at times of disruption persist in a way that would not be tolerated if they were operational or safety failures.
- That the operator must measure the quality of information provided during disruption on a robust and ongoing basis, in terms both of 'factory gate' quality and the ultimate test of passenger opinion.

4.7.2 Valleys lines disruption

In July 2014 passengers on the Valley Lines network experienced two days of significant disruption, caused by problems with Network Rail signalling equipment. ATW recognised that part of passengers' frustration stemmed from not having timely, accurate information to make an informed choice about what they should do. ATW

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[20] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014
[21] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-information-when-trains-are-disrupted

asked Transport Focus to carry out a review of the quality of information provided to passengers. We met key ATW personnel in September 2014 to discuss our initial findings, before finalising our conclusions and recommendations. We continue to work with ATW as they implement actions for improvement. Our recommendations are laid out in Appendix 5, together with the report from ATW on actions taken to implement measures for improvement.

In addition to the measures and actions from this review and recommendations within our research, we encourage Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to secure as part of the new franchises the following important prerequisite for providing effective passenger information during disruption.

- Train movement data sufficiently granular to deliver accurate live departure predictions for all stations. Fitting of GPS devices to all trains, allowing positional data to be fed to Darwin via the under-development "GPS gateway" would seem likely to be the best solution.

4.7.3 Resilience
Transport Focus recommends that the new franchise is let with a strong emphasis on service resilience, including in the face of severe weather. Specifically, we feel that potential operators:

- Should be required to set out the extent to which they will be reliant on overtime and rest day working to deliver the train service, including on Sundays.
- Should be required to consider how to improve the resilience of services over sections of route known to be vulnerable to severe weather disruption as set out in the Wales Route Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation Plans[22].
- Should be required to show they have reasonable rolling stock availability assumptions and that they are not so optimistic that passengers are at continual risk of experiencing short-formed and cancelled trains. Areas to ensure there are credible plans include:
    o Capacity to release rolling stock for periodic heavy maintenance, refurbishment, PRMTIS adaptations etc. without compromising service delivery.
    o That tyre-turning capability is sufficient to ensure fleet availability remains high throughout the autumn and winter.
    o Contingency arrangements if incidents result in lengthy repairs to rolling stock (for example striking road vehicles, collisions with livestock, etc.), including that key components are held in stock rather than manufactured to order.

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[22] http://www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/weather-and-climate-change-resilience/

Recent research[23] into passengers' views and expectations of rail services during extreme weather found three core principles that the rail industry must embrace:

- provide timely, accurate information so passengers can make informed decisions about their journeys
- be transparent – help passengers understand why timetable changes and service suspensions have been made
- demonstrate that train companies and Network Rail are doing their best on behalf of passengers, despite the weather.

4.7.4 Managing service disruption – engineering works
There is a significant programme of engineering work scheduled for the Wales and Borders network in the period ahead and it is vital that passengers' interests are protected.

Railway upgrade projects for Wales and Borders are set out in the following improvement plans:

- North-South Wales journey improvements[24]
- Investment in the Ebbw Vale area[25]
- Modernising the Cardiff and Valleys railway[26]
- South Wales resignalling[27]
- Modernising the Great Western Route.[28]

It is vital that passengers receive appropriate and timely information about the effect that engineering works will have on their particular journey and are given appropriate advice about alternatives. It will also be important that revised timetables are robust and achievable.

More generally, potential operators should be required to set out how they will work with Network Rail to minimise the use of 'all line' engineering blocks. Culturally, the default assumption must be that routes remain open while maintenance, renewal and enhancement takes place, with exceptions made where there is compelling need.

Potential operators should recognise that 55 per cent of passengers say they would not travel at all if a replacement bus is involved[29], and we encourage Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to secure a joint, public commitment from the future operator and Network Rail that wherever practically possible they will keep

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[23] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/reacting-to-extreme-weather-on-the-railways
[24] http://www.networkrail.co.uk/North-South-Wales-journey-improvements/
[25] http://www.networkrail.co.uk/Investment-in-the-Ebbw-Vale-area/
[26] http://www.networkrail.co.uk/south-wales/
[27] http://www.networkrail.co.uk/south-wales-resignalling/
[28] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/great-western-route-modernisation/
[29] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-experiences-and-priorities-during-engineering-works

passengers on trains and transfer them to buses only as a last resort. Use of diversionary routes is an important way to minimise the number of passengers needing to use replacement buses.

Where there are compelling arguments for the replacement of first/last trains with alternative transport, and/or diversionary services, then Transport Focus acknowledges that this may be an appropriate approach. However, there are some key elements that must be addressed when such strategies are implemented. These include:

- Making clear that this is an exceptional occurrence rather than a typical approach.
- Setting out the justification for each circumstance and the benefits that will flow from this.
- Providing advance notice across all channels and setting out the impact on specific journeys.
- Providing a mix of bus services to ensure that usual connections can be made between smaller stations whilst also delivering some faster point-to-point journeys between key locations.

In addition to emphasising the overarching cultural focus on ensuring rail journeys are the default provision wherever possible, Transport Focus encourages Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to ensure that potential operators have credible proposals in the following areas:

- For regularly submitting a high quality bid to Network Rail at T-18 so accurate amended timetables are in the public domain and reservations open at T-12. We recommend that the operator should be required to report, period by period, on the level of post T-12 change to the train plan.
- For working with Network Rail to minimise the risk of possession over-runs, and for communicating information about alternative arrangements to passengers in the event that it does happen.
- For ensuring, through liaison with GWR, that the routes into Wales via Bristol Parkway and Gloucester are not closed at the same time.
- For managing the transfer of passengers seamlessly from train to bus and vice versa (and from train to train where a normally-direct journey involves a change of trains), recognising the key role to be played by well-informed, people-orientated staff at interchanges.

Recent Transport Focus research[30] looks at passengers' experiences from two sets of planned works, at Reading and Bath Spa, in 2015. While the nature and impact of the two engineering projects were very different, the research findings provide useful insight into passengers' core information needs and offer valuable lessons for the rail industry as a whole.

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[30] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/planned-rail-engineering-work-passenger-perspective

The research indicates the need for a flexible approach to communications planning in the build up to planned disruption. The fact that every project and the associated disruption is different means that the onus is on train companies and Network Rail planners to know what their passengers want and understand how a specific project will affect different passenger types. The results of that assessment should then allow them to tailor communications to give the right level of detailed information when passengers want it, using the most effective communications channel. The research makes five key recommendations for planning and delivering engineering schemes:

- Consider how the various elements of the engineering work are likely to affect individual passengers' journeys: who does it affect and how?
- Build this insight into your planning approach so that you are able to deliver a tailored information campaign: tell passengers what they want to know about their journey, when they need to know it.
- Tailor your message.
- Timing of information: every project is different so be prepared to be flexible.
- Use full range of information channels to reach different types of passengers.

In addition to the information passengers need about how their journey will be affected and any impact on them they also need support when making a disrupted and potentially unfamiliar journey. Some practical examples of best practice include:

- Ensuring it is clear to passengers where they should wait for replacement buses and clear to bus drivers where they should stop, in particular where replacement buses do not drive up to the station itself.
- Ensuring that the needs of passengers with disabilities are met when travelling during engineering works, including but not limited to those who have booked through the Passenger Assist service. Arrangements for those with buggies/cycles/luggage etc. should also be made clear to passengers in advance.
- Ensuring that passengers making journeys involving a replacement bus, or a diverted train taking significantly longer than usual, are aware of that before they purchase a ticket – whether buying online, from a Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) or at a ticket office.
- Tracking the location of replacement buses in real time and feeding that information automatically to Darwin for onward distribution to passengers (and railway staff) via National Rail Enquiries channels and others using Darwin data, including station customer information systems (CIS).
- For giving passengers answers to the questions "what is being done?" and "how do I benefit?" Passengers tell us that knowing what is happening helps sugar the replacement bus pill, yet it is commonplace to see nothing more informative than "Engineering work is taking place over some parts of the Arriva Trains Wales network with the following trains amended:"

4.8 Fares

- **Question 8: How should the cost improvements in service provision be met? Will the Welsh Government's approach provide the best value for money for passengers?**

4.8.1 Value for money for passengers

Passengers are paying an increasingly high proportion of the costs of the railway and this makes the delivery of value for money a significant challenge. It is the second highest priority for improvement for ATW passengers.

Figure 4 shows the trend in satisfaction with value for money over time, with ATW showing lower satisfaction with value for money, compared to the regional sector. Table 7, below, shows a variation in performance across the building blocks, with the lowest performance on Cardiff and Valleys routes at 54 per cent, compared to the highest level of satisfaction on Mid Wales and Borders routes at 73 per cent.

Table 7 Value for money, NRPS Autumn 2015, percentage satisfied: ATW and building blocks

ATW	Cardiff and Valleys	Inter Urban	Mid Wales and Borders	North Wales and Borders	South Wales and Borders/ West Wales
59	54	57	73	61	62

The Transport Focus fares and ticketing study[31] investigated the influences on passenger perceptions of value for money. It found that whilst intrinsically linked to the price of the ticket, value for money is also influenced by several other significant factors. These link directly to the findings of priorities research and NRPS drivers and are:

- punctuality and reliability
- being able to get a seat
- passenger information during service disruption.

Improving passenger satisfaction with these core elements of the train service must be a high priority for the Wales and Borders franchise. Another important factor to assist in delivering value for money is to ensure that fares and ticketing processes are fair, impartial and clear, enabling passengers to purchase the cheapest appropriate ticket for their journey. Recommendations relating to fares and ticketing are addressed in section 4.8.2 below and also in our response to questions 9 and 10 in sections 4.9. and 4.10

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[31] http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/fares-and-ticketing-study

4.8.2 The rail efficiency agenda

Transport Focus recognises the importance of delivering value for money for taxpayers and passengers and the need to increase the efficiency of the rail industry. We made a detailed response to Sir Roy McNulty's rail value for money study, highlighting the important issues from a passenger perspective.[32]

We are supportive of those strategies which enhance efficiency and create closer collaboration, reduce duplication and overlap and generate further income by increasing the attractiveness of rail.

However, there are also some legitimate anxieties expressed by passengers surrounding cost-cutting. These are particularly around the availability of staff and ensuring that station facilities are available whilst trains are running. Reducing costs through genuine improvements to efficiency will be welcomed, but there will be negative impacts if this simply results in wholesale cutbacks that do not deliver on reasonable passenger expectations and a quality of experience that makes the railway a viable and safe environment in which to travel.

Partnership working between Network Rail (NR) and the new operator should form part of the arrangements for the franchise. It will be particularly relevant given the potential scale and complexity involved in delivering the infrastructure and capacity improvements planned and sought for the Wales and Borders network, including development and incorporation of the South Wales Metro system. These challenges will require all parties to work cohesively and constructively together.

Application of whole-life costing would significantly improve the chances that resilience projects secure a positive business case. Potential operators should set out details of how they will start planning with all the relevant partners, firstly deciding where and what needs doing, then ranking in order of costs and time to implement, quickest benefits and greatest benefits.

Beyond the demands of new developments there are further operational challenges associated with such a large scale franchise stretching across a wide geographical territory and abutting a number of other important rail operations. This will require an over-arching approach to partnership and service delivery, with formal structures providing a joint mechanism at senior level for strategic planning and co-ordination.

Aligning incentives and working more closely together can certainly help improve efficiency. We know from our research that passengers want a sense of someone being in charge when it comes to the delivery of services, especially during times of disruption. But it cannot just be a case of aligning NR and train company processes to achieve cost savings; such processes must also be aligned with passengers' priorities.

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[32] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/the-rail-value-for-money-study-a-passenger-perspective-comments-by-passenger-focus

If the end-game is better services for passengers then internal processes and systems must work towards this, rather than vice versa. Two particular areas stand out: increasing punctuality and reducing service disruption. Any approach must be mindful of the consequences for passengers when considering how to manage restoration of services following disruption.

Closer working may provide the opportunity to revisit previously successful practice and have the operator's staff, especially those on stations, trained as first responders to minor local operational incidents (e.g. signal and point failures or road vehicles hitting bridges) to get trains moving without having to wait for the arrival of a Network Rail staff member who may be some distance away.

A further opportunity presented by closer partnership is the achievement of a step-change in transparency. The open data agenda is driving the industry towards higher levels of information being in the public domain. We know from our research[33],[34] that passengers want access to more tailored information (i.e. data that is relevant to their route/journey). A new, more responsive, alliance could make a very public commitment towards accountability by promising greater transparency from the outset.

4.9 Ticketing types

- **Question 9: Would you prefer to not use a paper-based ticket and, if so, what ticket type would you like to have available?**

Passengers need access to a range of ticket buying opportunities to suit their individual needs and to visible and proactive staff who can provide information and assistance where necessary. We know that staff provide many vital functions. They help passengers buy the right ticket, provide essential journey information and provide a visible, reassuring presence.

4.9.1 Making buying a ticket easier

The next Wales and Borders franchise must make ticket purchase easier for passengers, many of whom are confused by the complexity of the fares system.

Clear information about the validity of tickets and any applicable restrictions must be readily available. Passengers should be able to buy the most appropriate ticket for their intended journey, regardless of the whether this is purchased at a ticket office, on-line, at a ticket machine or through any other method.

Transport Focus's research has identified a number of issues with both ticket vending machines (TVMs) and websites – much of which was reflected in the UK Government's Fares and Ticketing Review consultation and in the industry's own retail information code of practice.

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[33] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/putting-rail-information-in-the-public-domain
[34] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/presenting-righttime-performance-information-to-rail-passengers

Key issues to focus on include:
- printing any restrictions on passengers' tickets to remove confusion over validity
- displaying outward and return ticket restrictions on TVMs prior to a passenger committing to purchase
- making it impossible to buy an Advance ticket on the internet at a higher price than the 'walk up' fare available on the same train.

More details of the problems passengers experience are set out, with recommendations about how to improve retailing through these channels, in our research into ticket vending machine usability[35] and ticket retailing website usability.[36]

The new franchise should provide a wider range of tickets for passengers. Developments in ticketing such as smart-cards or contactless bank cards and mobile telephone products should be incorporated into the franchise. The franchise should also require the introduction of innovative new products such as carnet style tickets that will enable passengers who cannot benefit from season ticket discounts to achieve some economies from repeat travel. Schemes to spread the cost of annual season tickets should also be available.

The key is to ensure that passengers have all the necessary information on which to make an 'informed purchase'.

4.10 Ticketing systems
- **Question 10: How important to you is the availability of a combined ticket for public transport in Wales? Do you have examples of good practice?**

We know from our research programme smarter travel[37], that passengers across modes and throughout the country see real benefits in smart ticketing.

In a project we undertook at the start of the programme and which has been reinforced in subsequent work, we identified that when thinking about the introduction of smart ticketing, and preferences for how this will work, it is clear that there are seven key attributes that drive attitudes and views:

- **Value for money**
  Value for money is a key driver for ticket choice at the moment, and remains an important factor when considering smart ticketing. Participants expect that smart ticketing will involve some kind of cost saving either via cheaper fares or new cost effective tickets and products.

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[35] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-vending-machine-usability-qualitative-research
[36] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-retailing-website-usability
[37] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/smarter-travel

- **Convenient**

  Smart ticketing needs to be a convenient option that is easy to use. Participants look for a ticketing system that made life easier, rather than complicating their commute. When thinking about convenience, participants want a system where it is easy to purchase tickets, to manage their smart ticket account and use their ticket.

- **Simple**

  Simplicity is important, especially for those unfamiliar with smart technology or smart ticketing. These people are most likely to need education regarding how smart ticketing will work, and a simple system is likely to support them in moving to smart ticketing.

- **Secure**

  Participants raise some concerns about the security of smart ticketing. When thinking about smart cards, people expect their personal data will be kept safe– especially any details that will be printed and visible on the card. When thinking about mobile ticketing and contactless, many express concerns around the safety and security of their mobile phone or credit card, and the potential for theft when using these. However a benefit of smart ticketing is that the ticket details are thought to be safer – for instance if a card is lost or stolen then it will be easier to get the product cancelled and reissued.

- **Flexible**

  Alongside a convenient and easy to use system, participants want smart ticketing to be flexible. They want the ability to choose and purchase new products and tickets that offer flexible travel options. They also want flexibility with regards to managing their smart ticketing account to include being able to make ticket purchases at the last minute and being able to upload tickets at a range of stations.

- **Tailored management**

  In addition to new products that would enable participants to tailor their smart ticket products to their needs, tailoring is also desired with regards to managing their smart ticketing account. It is clear that many seek the ability to manage online, and via an App. Participants want the ability to choose how they prefer to manage their account (online, App, text message), and reassurances that this will be tailored to be compatible with the technology they own (e.g. Apple and android compliant).

- **Leading edge**

  Participants are clear that the introduction of smart ticketing is a shift into a more technology-focused way of ticketing. With this in mind they are keen that the technology used is forward-thinking. This is particularly noted by those who are familiar with smart technology and smart ticketing, and who see this

as an opportunity for TOCs to lead the way in ticketing technology rather than replicate existing systems.

Those whose commute involved travelling within central London are familiar with, and often use, the Oyster card system. These participants have a better understanding of how smart ticketing works and find it easier to generate a range of benefits and drawbacks of a smart ticketing system. And indeed, for frequent users of the Underground or London Buses an integrated system was considered 'ideal and essential.' These passengers are keen to avoid holding a plethora of smartcards all covering different modes and routes of travel; one solution for all was sought.

Whilst participants are keen that train operating companies (TOCs) introduce smart ticketing, there are some reservations about whether TOCs currently have the capabilities and capacity to do so. Negative commuter experiences of delays and congestion means that some lacked trust in TOCs to deliver smart ticketing.

Across the research, experience and use of smart technology such as smart mobile phones and tablets clearly affected views on smart ticketing. Those who are familiar with, and confident in the capabilities and functions of smart technology, typically express greater comfort with and expectations for a smart ticketing system.

We would urge any operator to design their smart ticketing systems with this in mind. It is difficult to get passengers to break existing habits of ticket purchase, and they are relatively unforgiving when things do not deliver as promised. Implementing a poorly designed or confusing system will not result in high levels of uptake or satisfaction. In all our smart ticketing work, we reinforce the importance of:

- designing good systems, where passengers are consulted from the outset and their views are fully incorporated
- making sure that communications to both customers and staff are clear, easily-accessible, consistent and comprehensive
- ensuring that staff are fully trained when systems are introduced, so that they can sympathetically deal with any issues, problems or queries that their passengers may have.

Smartcards are certainly one of many potential enablers of making the experience of using public transport better for passengers, but in their own right they are not a solution to the difficulties passengers experience in terms of capacity and information. As noted in section 5.6.1, passengers also value the concept of a network and a seamless delivery of service.

Well-designed smart schemes could potentially enable passengers to choose quieter or slower (stopping) train services, incentivised to do so by a lower fare. The gates would be able to identify which train was used and charge a fare accordingly – whether deducting from a Pay As You Go balance or by giving a partial credit back for a pre-paid 'standard' fare.

Integrated information, through apps, personalised updates and other online sources, could be used in many ways to assist passengers, for instance:

- information on which trains are busier or less busy
- live running information, alerting passengers to delays and issues
- onward journey planning
- push notifications, e.g. information that the passenger's usual train (known via their smart travel record) is cancelled and suggesting alternatives
- offering last minute special tickets, if there is excess capacity on particular services or advising passengers that they would be better to purchase another ticket type
- advising in advance of engineering work likely to affect that passenger, based on their travel patterns.

4.11 Rolling stock

- **Question 11: Are there other quality characteristics you would wish to see? How would you prioritise the quality characteristics for the Wales and Borders Franchise?**
- **What additional quality improvements to rolling stock should the Welsh Government prioritise for**
  - **Commuter routes?**
  - **Rural routes?**
  - **Long distance routes?**

4.11.1 Rolling stock and the on-board experience

Transport Focus has not conducted specific research, either with Wales and Borders passengers or on these individual on-board facilities, to rate them in order of importance. It is also likely that the relative importance of various facilities will vary according to the personal needs and purpose of travel of different passengers.

Nevertheless, we can draw on NRPS and passengers priorities for improvement data to draw some relevant conclusions about important elements of the on-board experience that the next specification should address.

Analysis of the drivers of passenger satisfaction on ATW provides some striking findings. Notably, the biggest driver of satisfaction for ATW as a whole is the cleanliness of the inside of the train. At 45 per cent this is considerably higher than the 31 per cent average for the regional sector. The second biggest factor for ATW is comfort of the seating area, which scores 12 per cent, against the regional sector average of 10 percent.

Nationally, cleanliness of the inside of the train scores 21 per cent, second to the 36 per cent score for punctuality and reliability which is the biggest driver of satisfaction. This factor is also the second most significant for the regional sector overall, at 20 percent, although for ATW passengers it rates third at just 9 per cent.

There is a similar picture on the ATW building blocks where, for the majority of these service groupings, cleanliness of the inside of the train (scoring between 33-53 per cent) is the most important driver of satisfaction, followed by the comfort of the seating area. The only exception is the North Wales and Borders block where, sufficient room to sit and stand (at 25 per cent) is the most important driver whilst, at 12 per cent, the cleanliness of the inside of the train is fourth most important driver of satisfaction.

Examining the priorities for improvement of ATW passengers shows that 'well maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train' is the highest ranking of the on-board experience factors we explored. With an index score of 107 this ranks as the ninth priority for improvement, whereas for GB passengers the score is 89 and the rank fourteenth.

The ranking of the 'inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard' is tenth, compared to eleventh for GB. However, the index score is 106 compared to 93 so, again, this has a higher level of importance on ATW.

Given the evident significance of cleanliness of the inside of the train for passengers on ATW the specification should require potential operators to demonstrate how high standards will be established and maintained, including the arrangements for maintenance and cleaning of toilets.

The provision of information during the journey should also be addressed; becoming especially important during disruption (discussed in more detail in section 4.7). With a score of 91 'accurate and timely information provided on trains' is the twelfth priority for improvement for ATW passengers, as it is for GB as a whole. However, NRPS shows that the ATW score of 63 per cent satisfaction with 'the provision of information during the journey' lags some way behind the regional sector average of 74 per cent.

Similarly, scores for provision of information during the journey on the Interurban, Cardiff and Valleys and South Wales and Borders/West Wales building blocks are all notably below the average for comparable services, although Mid Wales and Borders is ahead of the rural typology average.

ATW passengers rank free Wi-Fi available on the train as the thirteenth priority for improvement, with and index score of 90. This is lower than the GB tenth priority ranking. However, given the ever-increasing uses for, and reliance on, mobile telephones and connectivity on the move, as well as provision of this facility 'as standard' in many other environments, this element of the journey experience is too important to overlook when the provisions for the next franchise are set out.
We also know from research on other franchises (e.g. South Western and East Anglia) that passengers see the value in other facilities such as power-sockets for charging equipment whilst travelling.

The specification should ask how these aspirations will be addressed.

Priority scores for 'seating area on train is very comfortable' and 'sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage' are 69 and 49, ranking seventeenth and twentieth respectively. Both scores are ten or more points higher than for the GB sample.

4.11.2 Variations by journey purpose and service type
Whilst the top level priorities for a journey are likely to be broadly consistent (see section 3.2) some factors are likely to have more or less importance for different people. Journey purpose may be one of the factors that drives this, as will individual requirements for quality improvements and the rolling stock environment and their expectations of these features.

Priorities for improvement show that 'free Wi-Fi available on the train' is the fourth most important factor for GB business passengers, and nearly one and a half times more important than the 'average' factor. However, this is only twelfth and thirteenth priority respectively for commuters and leisure passengers.

On the other hand, 'inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard' is tenth and eleventh priority for leisure and business passengers. However, for commuters this is the fourteenth priority for improvement and, with an index score on only 71, quite a lot lower than 'average' importance.

Of the ATW building blocks, Cardiff and Valleys stands out as the service group which has the lowest scores for many of the on-board factors. For example, upkeep and repair of the train scores only 59 per cent, against the ATW overall score of 69 and the high of 79 for North Wales and Borders.

Appendices A2.1 – A2.4 provide NRPS scores for train factors for each building block, together with a comparison against relevant typologies and these give an indication of the relative satisfaction with various on board train facilities.
A further, detailed breakdown of NRPS scores for ATW and constituent building blocks examines satisfaction by journey purpose and time of the week. This can provide additional insight and will be provided to the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales for further analysis.

Given the potential investment into new or improved rolling stock for the next franchise, further bespoke passenger research into this and other aspects of service may be worthwhile to build a clear picture of the needs of passengers.

4.12 Catering

- **Question 12: Do you think the catering provision available in the current franchise is adequate for longer journeys? If not, how should the Welsh Government consider influencing changes to catering services available at stations and on trains?**

Passengers' views about catering from NRPS spring 2015 show that 29 per cent of ATW passengers said catering was available on board, however a further 27 per cent said they would have used a catering facility, if it had been available. Where passengers used the catering, 86 per cent were satisfied.

Our work on passengers' priorities for station facilities and improvements (see Appendix 3), shows ATW passengers identified 'a shop selling small convenience items' and 'an outlet selling tea, coffee, sandwiches and snacks' as fifth and sixth priorities respectively, for facilities they wanted to be provided. Where these are already provided, the catering outlet and convenience shop were passengers' ninth and eleventh priorities respectively for improvement, as shown in appendices A3.1.2 and A3.2.2. In addition, passengers with a disability identified better access to food and drink on trains as one of their priorities for improvement. When seeking to provide these services, the value of including Community Rail Partnerships should be recognised. This is discussed in more detail in section 4.16.

Catering may not a high priority issue in its own right - most passengers use the train in order to get from A to B rather than to eat and drink. Nevertheless, our research with East Coast passengers in 2009[38] suggested that business travellers and those making longer journeys in particular are those who are more reliant on on-board catering. However, the research also gave a sense that even non or light users of the current facilities still want it there for those 'emergency' occasions when they have missed breakfast, or as a bit of a treat on a leisure trip. The research also recommended:

- Giving passengers clarity of what is available at stations and on trains
- Ensuring that the service is available is advertised, especially on trains
- The quality of provision matches passengers' expectations, including providing healthy, fresh, low fat or vegetarian options
- That provision offers passengers value for money.

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[38] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/what-passengers-want-from-the-east-coast-rail-franchise-an-initial-submission-from-passenger-focus-may-2012

4.13 Station facilities and investment

- **Question 13: Which station facilities do you consider to be most in need of improvement and where?**
- **Question 14: Where would you like to see investment in station buildings and how might the Welsh Government encourage this?**

Appendix 3 provides details of passenger priorities for provision of, and improvements to, station facilities both for Great Britain by different groupings of station footfall and for the ATW sample.

Table 8, below, shows NRPS satisfaction scores for station attributes for ATW and building blocks. This shows how satisfaction with a range of factors varies across the network.

Cardiff and Valleys have lower satisfaction than ATW overall on almost all factors indicating a particular challenge at stations along these routes. Inter Urban routes tend to have significantly higher levels of satisfaction across a range of factors. However, it should not be assumed that passengers at all stations along those routes will have the same requirements or levels of satisfaction.

Within these routes satisfaction scores for passengers at individual stations may fall well below the average. Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and potential operators are recommended to look in detail at the NRPS database for ATW to explore areas where attention should be directed.[39] Appendix 2 shows a comparison of ATW against the sector, and of each building block against the typology.

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[39] Individual station data is available on request where there is sufficient sample size.

Table 8 Station attributes – ATW and building blocks
NRPS Spring 2015/Autumn 2015 combined, percentage satisfied

Factor	ATW	Cardiff and Valleys	Inter Urban	Mid Wales and Borders	North Wales and Borders	South Wales and Borders / West Wales
Overall satisfaction with the station	78	75	83	79	80	78
Ticket buying facilities	78	74	90	79	76	84
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	71	69	78	72	72	72
Cleanliness of the station	71	64	79	74	76	72
The facilities and services at the station	49	38	64	55	56	54
The overall station environment	67	61	75	71	74	69
The provision of shelter facilities	69	64	74	73	73	72
Availability of seating	57	53	68	57	60	54
Connections with other forms of public transport	66	63	71	68	69	64
Facilities for car parking at the station	67	67	64	56	75	66
Your personal security whilst using the station	69	61	78	77	76	72
Facilities for bicycle parking at the station	60	54	65	64	71	62
The availability of staff at the station	64	59	72	60	69	69
The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff	80	76	83	80	80	86
Provision of information about train times/platforms	84	82	86	85	85	83
How request to station staff was handled	90	*	93	*	*	*
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	39	28	50	42	46	48
Five or more percentage points below the ATW average						
Five or more percentage points above the ATW average						
No data shown due to sample size below 100						

4.13.1 Better railway stations

The specification for the next franchise should require potential operators to commit to ensuring that minimum standards - appropriate for the size, footfall, location and reflecting local passenger aspiration - are delivered and maintained at all stations.

The Better Rail Station standards[40] could provide a starting point for the assessment of requirements which can then be adjusted for local circumstances.

Further cycles of investment should also be committed to maintain and progressively improve upon the station environment and facilities.

We suggest consideration is given to specifying a rolling programme of steady improvement to stations on a line of route basis, to concentrate benefits in a way that should create a bigger impact than spreading improvements around randomly. This should also create greater synergies in the works.

In addition to utilising all available industry funding schemes, the operator should also look beyond these and work with stakeholders and other partners to seek opportunities to bring in funding for allied improvements where these address wider objectives such as promoting economic development, improving transport integration, increasing safe access or enhancing the public realm. Holistic improvements to investments in and around stations are likely to deliver better results and increase efficiency and value.

4.13.2 Station investment should focus on passenger needs

Whilst Transport Focus is supportive of the principle of funding streams allocated to specific purposes, it is important passenger needs are central to the investments made and that resources are directed to the factors valued by the users of stations and the rail services from them. To this end, proposals should be required to reference how they address the findings of research into passenger requirements and perceptions of stations, including NRPS satisfaction scores.

Transport Focus research conducted at Clapham Junction, Barking and Luton stations following the Better Rail Stations report[41] shows that at individual stations there are often specific areas of improvements that passengers want to see and that priorities can vary according to location and circumstance. Potential operators should seek station feedback from local passengers and community rail partnerships to identify aspirations for specific locations and gather information about relevant accessibility issues.

In addition to those three stations Transport Focus conducted a detailed piece of research, in partnership with Network Rail, looking at what areas of the station passengers wanted to see improved as part of the National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP). Twenty six NSIP stations were surveyed in 2008/09, which were due to benefit from NSIP investment – most, but not all, of the stations were in London and the South East. Detailed passenger surveys were conducted at each of the stations asking passengers to rate different aspects of the service (environment,

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[40] http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf
[41] The Better Stations Report identified 10 of the worst category B stations in the country. Clapham Junction, Barking and Luton, all featured in that list.

parking, information, waiting shelters etc.) and what areas of the station they would like to see improved (also what they would prioritise).

Transport Focus produced 26 individual stations reports and a summary document[42]. A fuller report[43] is also available. Once the works were complete the surveys were repeated at some of the 26 stations in order to see how the satisfaction scores had changed[44]. The results for the seven stations Transport Focus went back to, combined, showed an overall improvement of satisfaction by 30 percentage points. The positive impact of doing work at each of the stations was clear to see, with the most instrumental factors in driving up overall passenger satisfaction being: improvements to the appearance of the booking office, the condition of platform shelters, the footbridges, ticket sales points, the main entrances/exits, and the waiting rooms.

4.13.3 The importance of staffing and information
Transport Focus research on stations consistently demonstrates that, in addition to station facilities, there are two key factors that operators need to consider when thinking about how to improve passenger satisfaction with stations: information and staff.

4.13.3.1 Passenger information requirements
The way the industry manages delays is the biggest single driver of rail passenger dissatisfaction; the key to improving this is through the provision of accurate, timely and consistent information about delays. Despite the increasing use of technology many passengers still only tend to find out about disruption once they have arrived at the station. It is therefore crucial that operators look at how they can best pass on accurate information to the passenger once it is known to the industry. This is particularly important at unstaffed stations where the passengers' only source of information might be a Customer Information Screen (CIS). Real time information provision at all stations should be a core requirement of the franchise.

Other types of information are also important to passengers. It is important that the franchise specification requires high standards of information provision for all stages of the journey. This should include requirements to meet passenger needs for initial planning, at the station of departure, during the journey, at the arrival station and, particularly, when there is disruption. The operator should be required to adopt strategies that maximise the effective use of evolving technology. (See Appendix 4 for details of information used by passengers at different stages of the journey).

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[42] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-summary-report
[43] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-final-report
[44] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-station-improvement-programme-phase-two-report

It is also important that, at all times when trains are running, passengers can have access to someone with sufficient practical knowledge of the local network who can provide information and, if disruption means that journeys are curtailed, is also empowered to help stranded passengers by arranging/authorising alternative transport, accommodation or other appropriate responses.

4.13.3.2 Staffing

The pressure on the industry to reduce costs inevitably places a focus on the overheads associated with staff. However, Transport Focus is concerned that the next franchise operator does not overlook the very significant roles staff play and the value passengers attach to a visible staff presence, especially at stations[45].

Passengers with assistance needs are particularly dependent on staff to deliver the help they require and to fulfil requests made through Passenger Assist.
Many station facilities and services are available only whilst staff are present. Feedback indicates significant concern about the lack of access to toilets and waiting rooms if staff are withdrawn from stations or hours are significantly reduced.

Passengers cite the lack of staff as a major reason for their feelings of concern over personal security and consistently identify a visible staff presence as being important to providing reassurance to those travelling on the railway. It is vital that those staff receive the appropriate training both in terms of managing the station environment and personal security within it, and customer service. The industry needs to give serious consideration to how it can best deploy staff and make best use of the different types of complimentary policing available to it. Our publication, *Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railways[46],* sets out passengers' concerns in more detail. The specification should include a requirement to set out how these issues will be addressed across the franchise.

It is important that staff are trained, managed and supported to deliver the highest possible levels of customer service. Expectations of customer service continue to rise as standards do across the range of passenger experience, both within and beyond the rail industry. The organisational culture must recognise that passengers are the very reason the organisation exists, ensuring that passengers are valued and appreciated at every level of the operation. This approach needs to be driven from the top to achieve exemplary staff behaviours amongst a workforce that is genuinely empowered. The ethos must be that passenger interests are central to the decisions and actions of the business, making a genuine and consistent demonstration of care for whether a passenger returns to travel again.

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[45] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-attitudes-towards-rail-staff
[46] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-perceptions-of-personal-security-on-the-railways

4.14 Passenger information

- **Question 15: What information should the Welsh Government consider requiring an operator to publish as a priority, and in what format(s)?**

The provision of good quality, clear and accurate information is crucial to passengers and fundamentally linked to the quality of experience at every stage of the journey. This importance is evidenced by our research which shows various information-related factors appearing as high priorities for improvement.

We recommend adoption of an increasingly open approach to making data and information about all aspects of the franchise available in the public domain. A commitment to disaggregation and personalisation of data will also make it easier for passengers to find information that is more relevant to the journeys they make and meaningful to them.

Information should be made available in a wide range of formats, and presented appropriately for each channel, to allow passengers to access this in the way that is most suitable for their needs.

Increasing use is being made of online sources and information should be made readily available in formats suited to the equipment or devices that may be used (pc, mobile device etc.). Websites should provide a search facility and comply with recommended standards for clear language and accessibility. The franchise specification should also require the next operator to make provision to respond to new opportunities presented by emerging technologies during the life of the franchise.

Printed documents, whether posters, leaflets or booklets, should be on display where possible, or accessible on request from stations or via customer services helpline. The possibility of providing hard copy information via other outlets in local communities should also be considered where appropriate.

Other sections of this response address:

- the need for engagement and consultation in relation to timetable development and changes (section 4.3.2)
- the importance of transparent information in journey planning and managing capacity (section 4.5.2)
- giving rail passengers access to performance figures relevant to their services (section 4.6)
- the particular needs for information during planned and unplanned disruption (section 4.7 and Appendices 4 and 5)
- the need for comprehensive information and clarity about options and restrictions when purchasing tickets (sections 4.9 and 4.10)
- information needs at stations and when starting/ending journeys (section 4.13.3).

Given the coverage detailed above, the remainder of our response to this question is largely focused on the broader issues of passenger engagement and monitoring and reporting of service quality and performance measures.

4.14.1 Passenger and stakeholder communication and engagement

Central to improving the passenger experience of rail services are effective mechanisms for passenger and stakeholder engagement, particularly for gathering intelligence on local aspirations and developments, and for consulting on future proposals. In section 3.4 we also identified the need for train operators to improve passenger perceptions of the relationship elements of their interactions in order to build greater trust in the rail industry.

In 2013 Transport Focus published the findings of research into passenger understanding of the franchise process and their appetite for engagement with it[47].

It is clear from this work that passengers have unanswered desires to contribute their thoughts, both about priorities for franchise specifications and the performance of incumbents. There is also a desire for greater two-way communication about what each franchise promises – and what is actually achieved.

Transport Focus hopes that Welsh Government and Transport for Wales will take the opportunity to undertake specific research with Wales and Borders passengers, to build understanding of their experiences and aspirations for the future. The findings can then inform the franchise specification, bidder proposals and agreement about what is to be delivered in response to passenger requirements for information, as well as other aspects of the rail operation.

When negotiations with the successful bidder are concluded we recommend that there is a clear public statement about key elements of the franchise, particularly how they address passenger requirements. It is important that the contract announcement does not simply cover the 'good news' and high profile initiatives but also covers any aspects of the new franchise which may have the potential to be detrimental. This would demonstrate an appropriate level of transparency and avoid the negative impact and distrust that can follow when less good news emerges further down the line.

We also recommend that Welsh Government and Transport for Wales should look to publish the redacted version of the Franchise Agreement and associated documents as soon as possible after the winning bidder is announced, and certainly by the time the new franchise commences.

Our research, exploring reactions to the Customer Reports required as part of new franchises, found that passengers welcomed this additional channel of

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[47] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/giving-passengers-a-voice-in-rail-services

engagement.[48] The Customer Report provides a clear statement of promises and addresses passengers' desire to understand what a new franchise will deliver and what they can expect over the months and years to come. This is a positive step towards a train operator building a relationship with passengers and generating trust.

The new franchisee should be required to demonstrate clear plans for an engagement strategy that accommodates the needs of different passengers. Transport Focus advocates that a wide range of means should be employed to communicate with passengers and wider communities to allow people to access information and provide input in the ways that are most suited to each individual or group. This should not overlook the various needs of passengers with disabilities.

In common with other recent franchises, Transport Focus recommends the specification requires the establishment of a Customer and Communities Investment Fund to deliver projects that will benefit communities in areas of need, the production of an initial customer report and a commitment to regular updates, or revisions, at key stages of the franchise. These reports should include information about performance on the factors important to passengers and, particularly where targets are missed or results fall, plans for improvement.

The contract should also require the next incumbent to establish mechanisms that, at the appropriate time, will be used to alert passengers to the prospect of changes as a result of the forthcoming competition when the next franchise approaches its end.

4.14.2 Monitoring and reporting to improve the service quality for passengers
The ultimate measure of whether a train company is performing well is whether passengers are happy with the quality of service provided. This is good from a commercial perspective as well as a customer service one, as evidenced by the conclusions on passenger demand forecasting[49] which suggest that service quality does have an impact on levels of demand.

The specification for the new franchise must stretch the successful bidder to take Wales and Borders passenger satisfaction to higher levels. As we can see illustrated in Figure 5, and from the NRPS scores and comparisons in Appendix 2, this should apply both for the franchise as a whole and at a building block level. There is a need to achieve greater consistency of performance across the component parts of the franchise and also to drive satisfaction on all aspects of service delivery upwards, to bring the whole operation up to the achievements of the best comparators.

Targets, measurements, monitoring and their transparent reporting are fundamental to delivering improvements to service quality. Transport Focus strongly supports the principle of monitoring and improving service quality through a combination of NRPS

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[48] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/what-passengers-want-from-customer-reports
[49] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revisiting-the-elasticity-based-framework-rail-trends-report

results and periodic reviews of train operating company Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

4.14.3 National Rail Passenger Survey

We have long advocated more use of quality-focused targets within a franchise. Our strong preference is for targets based on what passengers think, the best judge of quality being those who have used the services in question.

The NRPS is ideally suited to capture information that directly reflects the customer perspective. NRPS has a large sample size, currently covering around 2,500 Wales and Borders passengers in two waves each year, providing for a fair assessment of measures across the identified franchise building blocks. The sampling plan ensures that it is representative of day of travel, journey purpose (commuter, business and leisure), and, of course, by a range of demographic attributes (age, sex, ethnicity etc).

Transport Focus will seek discussions with the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales about the potential application of NRPS targets in the new franchise. We recommend that, in line with existing DfT policy for franchises elsewhere, potential operators for the new franchise should be asked to submit bids that include plans on how they will improve NRPS scores.

We recommend, as with practice on other recent franchises, bespoke NRPS targets should be established on a number of building block service groupings to measure passenger satisfaction with station, train and customer service attributes. Doing so simply at a global TOC level risks masking the poorer performing areas.

Existing levels of satisfaction should be the starting point for establishing targets which should generally become more stretching as the franchise progresses and also increase to reflect the outcomes delivered by investment (e.g. in capacity improvements). An annual assessment of the combined spring and autumn results would provide a fair measure of the overall passenger satisfaction within each given year.

A financial penalty regime should apply, with resources ring-fenced for additional investment into service quality measures that are most likely to improve passenger satisfaction

4.14.4 Key Performance Indicators

The specification should require the operator to conduct KPI assessments across the entire franchise and include all stations and representative samples of the major train service groups. Standards of satisfaction with the customer services function, complaints handling, and the level of appeals to Transport Focus should also be measured. All assessments should be conducted regularly to provide ongoing management information as well as a basis for regular reviews based on collated information.

4.14.5 Performance targets

Given the very high significance of these factors to passengers, the specification must include traditional 'hard' performance targets covering punctuality, reliability and crowding. However, we believe that there is a need for much more transparency surrounding these targets.

Transparency will promote greater accountability by making clear to rail passengers, staff, management and other parties how key aspects of the rail service are performing at different places and at different times. The provision of detailed information will enable rail passengers and others hold the train company to account and to ask what is being done to improve services in return for the fares paid. Good management should not feel threatened by this. Indeed the availability of accurate data may actually help them as a particularly bad journey can linger in the memory and distort passengers' perceptions. Accurate, relevant data can help challenge these negative perceptions and is also a vital management tool.

Punctuality data provided only at the overall operator level can easily mask significant differences between routes and times of day. Transport Focus supports the provision of performance data (PPM, 'on time'/'right time' and cancellations) in a fully granular way, allowing data to be aggregated as required. This would allow those who use only the '07:19' and '17:20' to see the performance of those trains – because that is all that matters to them.

Equally, there is currently next to nothing in the public domain about crowding. This is another fundamental aspect of a passenger's journey and an area where greater transparency can generate improvements for passengers.

Further detail about monitoring and reporting punctuality, capacity and timetabling performance is set out in the relevant sections above.

In the medium term we also see value in looking more closely at the choice of performance measurement used. The existing measure (PPM) allows a five or ten minute leeway on late arrival; a train is not late until it exceeds this allowance. However, we know from our research exploring passenger perspectives on train punctuality outlined in section 4.6 that a delay can have an effect on passengers well before that. This might mean addressing the suitability of the current thresholds or even introducing a secondary measure based on right-time arrival. Recent steps by the industry towards publication of right-time data on particular trains make this increasingly feasible and more likely to be the measure on which performance is publicly judged.

Network Rail's performance clearly has a huge bearing on an operator's punctuality and yet a franchise agreement typically creates an obligation only in relation to factors within the train company's direct control. Clearly there are limits to how far one organisation is willing to be held accountable for another's performance but,

from a passenger's perspective, it is overall punctuality that matters - not just how well the train company did.

There are obvious benefits in aligning operator and Network Rail incentives and there is much work going on to address this, not least in terms of joint improvement performance plans and potential alliances. We would like to see the franchise specification encourage and cement appropriate joint working approaches. To this end we would ask the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to consider the scope for introducing joint targets for this franchise.

Transport Focus has worked with the Office of Rail and Road and National Rail Enquiries, on behalf of all train operators, to explore passenger views on performance and other data and to understand how this may best be made available to them. This qualitative research[50] should inform the approach to data publication in the new franchise.

4.14.6 Input versus output measures
The balance between input and output measures is a fine one. For instance, the franchise could specify that the bidder purchases 50 new ticket vending machines (an input target) or that it increase passenger satisfaction with retailing (an output target). The latter follows the pattern set in the 2009 South Central franchise with the potential operators setting targets for passenger satisfaction and these becoming contractual targets with fines for non-compliance.

Transport Focus recognises the value of both input and output measures provided that they are based on passengers' priorities and needs. Some input targets will clearly remain important to passengers e.g. to cover 'hard' targets for things like punctuality, cancellations and crowding; while output targets (based on passenger satisfaction) may be better placed to address some of the 'softer' qualitative elements of a journey. Passenger responses to the consultation should be used to further inform the targets and measures that go into the franchise specification.

We recommend that disaggregated targets for all measures be set and performance against them published widely. A financial penalty regime should apply with resources ring-fenced for additional investment into service quality measures that are most likely to improve passenger satisfaction.

There should be a requirement for the franchise operator to commit to high levels of transparency about all aspects of the franchise, including operational performance and service quality.

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[50] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/presenting-righttime-performance-information-to-rail-passengers

4.15 Welsh language

- **Question 16: Are there any additional requirements in respect of the Welsh language that the Welsh Government should consider in relation to train operating companies and the services they provide?**

It is important that train companies communicate and engage with passengers and that they make every effort to do so in a way that best meets the needs of passengers. For services in Wales this will include passengers who wish to do so in Welsh rather than English. The consultation document seems to have provided a comprehensive list of areas that would need to be addressed.

4.16 Community rail

- **Question 17: What should the Welsh Government consider doing to strengthen community rail activity?**

4.16.1 The value of Community Rail Partnerships
Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) bring distinctive attributes to local rail compared with other parts of the national rail network, including:

- creating a sense of involvement
- information and marketing activities
- implementing local schemes
- providing a focus for investment.

The 2015 report on the Value of Community Rail Partnerships[51] shows that they can be extremely successful. Focusing on the regional and local level, results can be seen in increased footfall at stations along CRP lines.

The report goes on to show that the costs of running CRPs are less than the value of additional revenues earned by their lines and they therefore present a commercial case.

4.16.2 Passenger growth
The Value of Community Rail Partnerships report also shows high level sustained year on year growth in passengers travelling on community rail lines and local rail services in recent years with community rail routes growing by 2.8 per cent each year more than regional lines.

Recent modelling of rail passenger journeys, though, has underestimated the growth of trips on community rail services, as compared with the trends of the last ten years:

- The National Transport Model (published 2011) predicted growth on Regional rail services through to 2030 of only 1 per cent per year.

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[51]http://www.acorp.uk.com/Assets/Values2015/140916_Value%20of%20CRPs%20and%20volunteering_final%20draft%20v3.17.pdf

- The Network Rail Strategic Business Plan and the Rolling Stock Strategy Report (issued 2013) uses growth rates of 3-4 per cent per annum.
- The Network Rail LTPP draft Regional Urban Market Study (2013) predicts growth no higher than 3 per cent per year for the next 10 years and through to 2043.

The Value of Community Rail partnerships report found evidence of ticketless travel, with volunteer passenger counts recording substantially higher numbers than the LENNON data. This indicates that work to increase rail use is offset by lack of revenue protection and means that on some lines growth is underestimated which could have a detrimental effect on future investment decisions.

The report also found that train capacity can be a constraint on continuing growth of rail use, currently limiting more than 50 per cent of the Community Rail Partnerships involved in the study.

Transport Focus recommends:

- greater transparency and sharing of data and methodologies by DfT, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, Network Rail and train operators with CRPs
- CRPs are commissioned to carry out and submit regular passenger counts, to ensure more accurate passenger data is available for forecasting, especially for capacity and rolling stock requirements.

4.16.3 Local community and business involvement

Key opportunities to enhance service provision can be realised through funding channels and sponsorship that may not otherwise be available to train operators – from PTEs, county councils, LEPs, local businesses and match funding.

Educational schemes which link with local schools through art projects using local artists, organising visits to the station and links with older volunteers can successfully raise awareness of the railway, familiarity with local services and by linking curriculum-based learning into rail projects, promote future local rail use with the children. Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership (CRP)[52] has some excellent examples of working with schools and colleges.

Event sponsorship is a useful tool in encouraging infrequent or new users. Local tourism is enhanced through promotion of walks which start and finish at local train stations, publicised through leaflets and websites. These initiatives can also support service enhancements. Again, Abbey Line Community Rail CRP has developed a programme of walks[53] that start and finish at stations to attract people to use the railway.

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[52] http://www.abbeyline.org.uk/schools.htm
[53] http://www.abbeyline.org.uk/walks.htm

Involvement of local businesses is achieved in a variety of ways. The strongest way of getting firms involved (particularly larger ones) is where there is commercial benefit through joint promotions, sponsoring projects or environmental initiatives such as green travel plans which show the company in a positive light.

More ambitious business models are also developing in other parts of the rail network to create commercial conditions in a way that enables them to prosper and to deliver benefits to the regional economy.

4.16.4 Development and expansion opportunities

Passengers expect the stations they use to be welcoming and attractive. Local involvement, typically by 'friends of' groups and supported by the railway industry and local government, can achieve significant improvements in the attractiveness of stations, in stimulating community engagement with the railway and the use of redundant station buildings by local businesses and organisations, including those involved in local tourism.

Passengers expect transport to be integrated – which should, of course, mean that it is more effective in attracting users as well as being more useful. Increasing 'localism' should help this task, which will improve accessibility to local areas and help with the development of 'gateway' stations to access areas of natural beauty along rural lines.

Innovative marketing schemes have become the hallmark for community rail. Local enthusiasm is a powerful tool in generating links with visitor attractions that can be accessed from local stations.

The Value of Community Partnerships report found that some key aspects of how CRPs boost rail use are:

- using local knowledge, often lacking as train operating companies become more centralised
- adopting and improving stations so they are attractive rather than "no go" places, thereby unlocking demand
- providing a focus for, and enabling, improvement schemes
- overcoming low levels of knowledge about rail journey opportunities and, for people unfamiliar with rail, generating confidence and interest in how to use the network
- engaging with young people, essential for growing the market
- being innovative and making a little money go a long way, in which Partnerships and volunteer groups are highly skilled.

The report also suggests that security of funding, the employment of a CRP Officer, good communications and marketing, and creating productive partnerships are key to the success of a CRP.

Prof Paul Salveson's paper on The Sustainable Branch Line[54] goes further in saying that CRPs have an excellent record of winning back passengers to rural lines through innovative marketing and community involvement. Adding that it is possible to develop a scenario whereby such partnerships take on more and more 'peripheral' commercial activities and build up commercial expertise which – at a future stage – enables them to take on actual train operation. A model could be developed in consultation with local communities to establish a steady progression of input, moving towards greater autonomy in relation to developing activities.

Volunteers can provide important back-up through 'additionality' – looking after station gardens, acting as conductors on the bus services, and assisting with catering services.

Transport Focus recommends:

- Funding a community rail post at senior level, with appropriate support, to work towards these goals, promote and co-ordinate activities across community rail lines and services in the Wales and Borders area, and provide liaison with county councils/LEPs/LTBs.
- A formalised group to meet periodically for policy/investment discussion, to include the operator, Network Rail, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, CRPs, local authority/LEP representatives, Transport Focus and other partners as appropriate.
- Supporting wider community involvement through station adoption and user group schemes, particularly to boost the local stations environment and improve passenger satisfaction, and the re-establishment of community ambassador initiatives to widen the reach of the railway beyond traditional boundaries.

4.17 Co-operation with others
- **Question 18: Which organisations should the Welsh Government consider requiring the Wales and Borders franchise operator to co-operate with, and in what ways?**

Partnership working and collaboration can only serve to benefit the efficient operation of the Wales and Borders railway.

As part of a GB-wide rail network it is vital that the next operator is required to work effectively with other rail industry organisations and, particularly, Network Rail which is a highly significant partner. Further comments on rail industry co-operation and efficiency are made in the response to question eight.

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[54] http://www.paulsalveson.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/The-Sustainable-Branch-Line1.doc

Beyond the rail sector, however, there will be a range of other organisations with which productive working relationships can and should be developed. Some of these are touched on in sections 4.16, 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20.

Where it is possible to achieve greater co-operation with other public sector transport operators this can only help improve the overall door-to-door experience. Work with demand–responsive transport organisations may also have a role to play.

Liaison and co-operation with local authorities and community groups will help build ongoing understanding of the needs of stakeholders in the communities served. Opportunities for joint-working or wider involvement in the railway may also be identified and support the achievement of broader objectives.

It will also be important for the future operator to work co-operatively and collaboratively with Transport Focus and other representative groups.

The Welsh Government and Transport for Wales should require potential operators for the franchise to explore, then implement, bespoke and appropriate arrangements with the full range of potential partner organisations. The hallmark of success will be identifying what each agency can bring to the relationship and how synergies and efficiencies can be delivered.

4.18 Safety and security

- **Question 19: What can the operator of the Wales and Borders franchise do to order improve safety and security, and the perception of safety and security?**

Analysis of the factors that drive both satisfaction and dissatisfaction highlight the importance of personal security to passengers on ATW. 'Your personal security whilst on board the train' is the most significant driver of dissatisfaction on ATW at 28 per cent compared to only 1 per cent nationally. It is also a driver of satisfaction at 5 per cent (again compared to 1 per cent nationally); this is mainly due to the Inter Urban routes where it is a 28 per cent driver of satisfaction and to a lesser extent on Cardiff and Valleys routes at 4 per cent. This is a clear indicator of the scale of the challenge on this network and demonstrates that particular focus will be required to drive improvements in passenger perceptions of personal security.

In autumn 2015 the NRPS asked passengers whether they had cause to worry about personal security in the last six months whilst making a train journey. For ATW, and nationally, the number of passengers saying yes stood at nine per cent.

Passengers were asked to identify the reason for that worry, at the station as well as on the train. At the station the highest cause for concern for ATW passengers in autumn 2015 was anti-social behaviour by other people at 55 per cent, followed by lack of station staff at 49 per cent. Findings were similar on the train, with the highest cause for concern again being anti-social behaviour by other people at 68 per cent,

followed by lack of on-train staff at 42 per cent. These findings emphasise the importance of a visible staff presence to reassure passengers.

In spring 2015 the NRPS asked passengers a slightly different question about whether the behaviour of other passengers' had given them cause to worry or feel uncomfortable during their journey. For ATW the number of passengers saying yes stood at nine per cent, the same as the national average.

NRPS then went on to ask those passengers what caused them to worry or feel uncomfortable. ATW passengers expressing concern in spring 2015 largely attributed it to anti-social behaviour, but more specifically: passengers drinking/under the influence of alcohol (60 per cent), rowdy behaviour (43 per cent), feet on seats (27 per cent) and music being played loudly (22 per cent).

In addition to the above, passengers were asked in autumn 2013[55] whether concerns about personal security have prevented them from making trips by train. Nationally and regionally, four per cent said that they either travelled by another mode or did not make the journey they wanted to, due to concerns over personal security. On ATW the figure was higher at seven per cent.

Security can be a particular concern for passengers travelling at the time of major events. Section 5.7 discusses this issue in more detail.

Whilst passengers tell us that technology is no substitute for a visible, trained and engaged staff, Transport Focus would recommend that where a staff presence cannot be provided, potential operators should confirm they will provide and maintain CCTV and linked help-points at all stations. These should meet the current British Transport Police 'Output Requirement Specification' for CCTV and be linked into BTP's CCTV hub. Where possible, CCTV should also be linked into local authority systems, which would allow suspects to be tracked beyond the station footprint.

Stations that are unstaffed when trains are scheduled to call at them should be prioritised for such investment. Ideally the CCTV would be 'live' monitored but where this is not possible CCTV footage should be retained for at least 31 days to allow 'after the event' enquiries to be made. We believe that every station should have appropriate technology to enhance personal security, although we acknowledge that it may be necessary to exempt very low footfall stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources. Though, it is often at those stations with fewer passengers present that perceptions of personal security are lowest.

Transport Focus supports the Secure Stations Scheme and would urge the winning bidder to ensure that all of the stations on their network are accredited – not just those with the highest footfall. Where station car parking is provided, car parks should also be accredited under the Safer Parking Scheme administered by the

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[55] This was the last wave in which this question was asked, so there is no data for Autumn 2014 and beyond.

British Parking Association. Research undertaken by the Rail Safety and Standards Board suggests that where Secure Station and Safer Parking Accreditation are provided in tandem, the number of crimes committed is significantly lower. Transport Focus would recommend that potential franchise operators be instructed to make use of the best practice guides on managing the different aspects of personal security, produced by the Rail Safety and Standards Board[56].

4.19 Sustainability

- **Question 20: Are there other matters in respect of sustainable development which it will be important for the Wales and Borders franchise operator to be required or encouraged to focus on?**

4.19.1 Door to door journeys

When passengers decide what mode of transport to take they are swayed by three overwhelming factors: how convenient will the journey be, how much will it cost and how long will it take[57]. This applies to the whole door-to-door journey. The way passengers access the station can affect both overall journey cost and time. If getting to the rail station becomes too inconvenient passengers will often choose to make their whole journey by car; adding congestion to the roads and to transport's carbon footprint.

The passenger growth anticipated for Wales and Borders means increased attention will need to be given to how passengers are going to access and pass through stations throughout the life of the franchise.

NRPS scores for Wales and Borders building blocks indicate a variation in satisfaction with different station access factors across the network[58]. This suggests there is scope for potential operators to propose a range of different solutions and improvements to the door-to-door journey.

At some locations the solution to station access needs will be to improve public transport links and parking provision; but at others the solution will be more complex and could be more creative. With limited space for car parking at some stations, and the industry's desire to look at more sustainable options, Transport Focus is supportive of the use of Station Travel Plans. Local groups and Community Rail Partnerships should be involved in developing proposals to improve station access.

The specification should encourage commitment to station travel plan schemes, with rollout dispersed across the network and throughout the life of the franchise. The stations selected should not just be those with the highest footfall, as the 2011

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[56] For example: A Good Practice Guide for Managing Personal Security on Board Trains

[57] Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009 http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf

[58] Appendix 2 shows scores for 'connections with other forms of public transport' and 'car parking'. Data for satisfaction with cycle parking is also available but needs to be treated with more caution as the sample sizes for these factors are smaller.

Network RUS (Stations) demonstrated that congestion does not just occur at those stations with the highest number of passengers starting or ending their journeys.

Potential operators should be able to demonstrate how they will work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies to improve accessibility to stations by all modes, including cycling and walking. Where identifiably beneficial schemes for passengers can be delivered by other partners, they should be encouraged and their future assured. The franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

Potential operators might also be asked to explore the potential to develop 'virtual branch lines' using existing scheduled bus services, with bus times and through fares available through railway journey planning and retail systems to/from towns with no railway station or limitations in service provision.

Potential operators may also need to address the absence, or potential loss, of access via public transport in places, particularly rural areas, where there is little or no funding for bus services. Potential operators should be encouraged to explore how they can contribute to potential initiatives for demand-led schemes.

Improving access to stations should drive rail usage and provide some additional revenue. Potential operators will also need to work with local authorities and other agencies to explore other funding opportunities. There may be scope for local authorities to use planning gain mechanisms for schemes linked to new developments. The opportunities for development around stations to accommodate improved access facilities, including interchange, should also be considered within potential operators' proposals.

4.20 Equality
- **Question 21: What steps should the Welsh Government consider taking as part of the next rail franchise to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on our railways?**

4.20.1 Effective data gathering and policy development
Collecting sufficient and relevant evidence is crucial to understanding the composition and experiences of passengers and staff alike. This evidence can also be used to identify the impact of policies and practices. It is important to ensure that sound evidence is gathered for analysis so that policy is developed according to fact and not based on assumptions.

Disabled people may find it harder to report harassment but there may be reasons why other people also find it hard to report. So, whether it is a matter of a disabled passenger, a young or older passenger being bullied or subject to racist, religious, sexist or homophobic harassment, systems must be simplified to ensure that reporting such activity is easy and victims are treated with respect.

The general equality duty requires analysis. Therefore the company's functions on all protected groups, will not be met unless it has sufficient usable data.

A culture of trust and support must be created, whereby employees and service users feel empowered to be asked about and give honest personal details – whether sexual orientation, gender identity, religious persuasion or otherwise – or this information cannot be collected. Where sensitive information such as this is collected, it is vital that the purpose for doing so is made clear and that it will remain in confidence.

The Welsh Government and Transport for Wales may wish to identify whether there are benefits from the introduction of new ways of reporting, especially where physical disability or background restricts the ability to report harassment under the current system.
The rapidly increasing use of social media might offer a possible route and certainly allows for immediacy. Victim support is also important, perhaps asking the passenger if information could be shared with a parent, partner or social worker. A simple, standard procedure and policy would simplify the process and might be developed across the transport industry as a whole – not merely rail. Also develop reciprocal reporting arrangements between transport providers so that people can report harassment experienced at stops, stations and on transport to whichever operator they encounter. They should also develop systems to allow repeat perpetrators to be refused entry to each other's services.

The rail industry needs to develop a better understanding of the motivations and circumstances of incidents and design interventions towards more effective prevention. The increasing deployment of prosecution-quality CCTV should prove a significant benefit in identifying and successfully tracing offenders, both at stations and on newer builds of train. Data on high risk areas and subsequent actions to reduce risk should be collated and intelligence used to provide adequate protection where known high risks exist, in the same way as other provision is made, for example, around football matches. Collected data should enable closer tailoring of resources to those places and occasions of greatest demand. This will be beneficial to passengers, operators and the police, supported by speedy and timely recording of evidence.

It is vital that all members of front-line staff in such key areas are properly trained to recognise these incidents when they are reported so that suitable action is taken and the relevant data recorded. Great emphasis has been rightly been placed on the availability of data. Prompt recording in turn also enables prompt follow-up action to be taken. The need to focus on staff training and visibility is vital.

People from all backgrounds should be involved in public transport policy development and transport providers should work in partnership with British Transport Police and criminal justice agencies to reduce risk on and around transport provision. The Community Safety Partnership Group that exists in Wales has been

very successful in understanding and addressing issues that impact on passengers' safety and working with community groups to promote awareness and responsibility around the railway. This should be built on to expand the effectiveness of this work in the future.

Transport Focus always recommends ensuring that individual disabled people's views are considered, for instance through users' forums and focus groups and that regular liaison is also undertaken frequently with the organisations representing disabled people at local, regional and national level.

4.20.2 Accessibility, the Equality Act 2010 and minor works fund
We expect the specification to include requirements to comply with equalities and discrimination legislation and to produce a Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP). Transport Focus also recommends a minor works fund and advocates that consultation with relevant groups should include inviting suggestions about how this money might best be spent to meet identified needs.

In addition to the provisions set out in DPPP guidance, Transport Focus believes the franchise specification should also require the following provisions:

- Scooter policy – ensure that a suitable scooter acceptance scheme is in place for smaller, lighter and more manoeuvrable machines – e.g. Scootercards. Blanket bans are no longer acceptable – always understanding that some models will be too wide/heavy ever to be accepted on to trains.

- Provide a priority seat card scheme (as initiated by Southern and now adopted as good practice by a number of operators) to help passengers demonstrate a specific need for a seat, backed up by publicity on stations and greater prominence made of which seats are priority seats so that they are easily located and recognised. This is especially important in the case of trains where no reservation facility is available.

- Clarify the priority of use of priority seating and the groups considered eligible for it.

- Clearly clarify priority of usage in 'shared' spaces – i.e. wheelchairs have absolute priority over prams.

- Provide assistance cards which disabled passengers can show to staff to explain their disability – e.g. hearing-impaired, speech-impaired, learning difficulties, so that staff can react and provide the necessary additional assistance.

- Comprehensive Passenger Assist monitoring – proper management, for example, perhaps the number of assistance requests delivered, rather than

satisfaction, which can be deceptive. This could be included in the Passenger's Charter and the DPPP.

- Best use should be made of the management information gained from Passenger Assist – e.g. enabling TOCs to plan assistance provision better.

- Training of staff – especially front-line staff in immediate customer contact, whether face-to face or by telephone.

- Examine all possibilities to improve station accessibility: e.g. induction loops; help points; adjustable-height counters; automatic doors etc.

5. Delivering improvements for passengers

Transport Focus would like to highlight a number of other issues that are important to passengers and that we should like to see addressed in the franchise specifications.

5.1 Passenger compensation

Transport Focus believes that the new franchise should be let on the basis of the introduction of Delay Repay style compensation introduced from day one, but with the following additional safeguards:

- Not more than 464 journeys are used to calculate annual season ticket holders' fare per journey for Delay Repay purposes, i.e. two trips per day, five days a week for 52 weeks, less 5.6 weeks (leave and bank holidays – see https://www.gov.uk/holiday-entitlement-rights). Our key concerns are:
  o the failure to take into account that most annual season ticket holders take annual leave and do not work on bank holidays
  o the inclusion by some TOCs of weekend use in the calculation (while some annual season ticket holders may travel at the weekend, many will use their ticket only Mondays to Fridays).

- Additional safeguards for commuters who experience regular delays below the current 30-minute threshold. This 'safety net' could take several forms:
  o a 1 per cent refund for season ticket holders for every 4-week period in which PPM in either peak falls below a threshold (to be set based on performance on individual routes).
  o Lowering the 'trigger' from 30 minutes to 15 in line with that announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Autumn spending review statement.

These safeguards should be established and available at the outset, ready to address any persistent shortcomings in performance that may arise from planned or unplanned disruption on the franchise. We have seen elsewhere, most recently at London Bridge, that ongoing service problems have the potential to evoke major discontent and it is important that mechanisms to respond to potential problems are

available to provide equitable recompense and demonstrate that the industry will put its money where its mouth is in the event of persistent failure.

In addition, our research[59] shows that passengers find traditional paper National Rail Travel Vouchers an inconvenience – they cannot be used at TVMs and they cannot be used online where some train companies offer the best prices. Therefore we believe that the default offer should be a refund to the customer's debit/credit card with options for electronic credit against future ticket purchases online or conventional paper vouchers being available on request.

The so-called enhanced compensation arrangements within some recently-let franchises, which focus on repeated delays above the Delay Repay threshold of 30 minutes, fail to protect passengers experiencing a large number of delays of less than 30 minutes. However, if similar initiatives are included in potential operators' proposals for West Midlands it should be clear on what basis this additional compensation will be provided and what passengers will receive.

Our report into passengers' experience of delays and compensation[60] found that 88 per cent of those apparently eligible for compensation for their delay did not make a claim. More needs to be done to increase passengers' awareness of their rights to claim compensation. This right should be promoted through a range of channels, including on trains that are delayed and at stations where delayed services are calling, as well as prominently within the Passenger's Charter, on websites and via Twitter etc. Where trains have a member of staff on board in addition to the driver, claim forms should be distributed at the time wherever practicable. Mechanisms to identify passengers who have been delayed and provide automatic recompense should also be developed and introduced.

We are currently working on a new piece of research to provide updated information about passengers' awareness and experiences of claiming delay compensation. We encourage Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and industry to stay mindful of any emerging findings in the development of proposals in this area.

5.2 Fares regulation
Passengers have experienced years of above inflation fare increases. The UK Government's Fares and Ticketing Review consultation in 2012[61] talked of an end to such increases but only once the impact of cost saving measures and improvement in the wider economic situation permits. Transport Focus supports the concept of fares regulation as it provides some degree of protection to passengers, many of whom are captive consumers.

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[59] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/train-operator-compensation-schemes-report-of-findings-june-2011

[60] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/understanding-rail-passengers-delays-and-compensation

[61] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/rail-fares-and-ticketing-review

We recommend that the next Wales and Borders franchise incorporates these recommendations on ticket retailing within the requirements:

- Increases to unregulated fares should be capped at the same level applied to regulated fares.
- The journey opportunities of off-peak passengers should be protected and there should be no further dilution of periods of validity of off-peak tickets.

5.3 Ticketless travel

Research[62] has shown that passengers find the issue of fare evasion very frustrating. There is a strong sense of injustice amongst those who have paid for a ticket when some passengers are known to be travelling for free. They also felt that this reduced the amount of money available for investment.

Passengers believed that the main solution to fare evasion would be to make better provision for the purchase of tickets at stations and on board, and to implement better checking procedures and enforcement. This must include:

- Clarity and consistency over when it was permissible to buy a ticket on board a train – the current system is felt to be too arbitrary.
- Managing ticket queues effectively (at TVMs and offices).
- Providing ticket restrictions in an easy to access form and in plain English.
- Providing the passenger with verification of permission to travel without a ticket.
- Providing the passenger with verification of attempt to purchase a ticket if a card is declined due to bank security measures or signal issues.

Transport Focus believes ticketless travel is an important issue and one that needs addressing. Passengers who avoid paying for their ticket are in effect being subsidised by the vast majority of fare-paying passengers. However, the revenue protection strategy must provide safeguards for those who make an innocent mistake and whose intention was never to defraud the system. We believe this requires:

- Clear consistent guidelines explaining when staff should show discretion in the enforcement of penalties. For example, when passengers do not have their railcard with them.
- Commitment not to go straight to any form of criminal prosecution unless they suspect (or have proof) that there was intent to defraud.
- Penalties that are proportionate to the actual loss suffered by the operator.
- Operators that work with others in the industry to create a national system that is transparent and supports the honest passenger who makes a mistake.

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[62] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passenger-views-of-northern-and-transpennine-rail-franchises

We recommend that the operator develops and publicly consults on its revenue protection strategy. In doing so it should be mindful of the recommendations within our *Ticket to Ride[63]* publications.

5.4 Complaints handling

In our role as the statutory appeals body[64] Transport Focus has extensive experience of working with passengers and rail operators to seek resolution of unresolved complaints. We have found a number of recurring issues with either the operators' complaints processes or response quality. We have been working with the industry in an effort to improve customer service, reduce complaint handling times and focus on operators providing quality complaints handling. This should, in turn, decrease the number of passenger appeals to train companies.

It is important that the specification for the franchise requires detailed information about policies and procedures for dealing with complaints. These should demonstrate a clear commitment to best practice and should encompass the points set out in the two sections below.

5.4.1 Process issues

- Empower front line staff to deal with complaints on the spot, with processes in place to obtain approval for goodwill there and then.
- Ensure any complaints that can't be resolved by front line staff can be fed into customer relations on the passenger's behalf.
- Make it easy for passengers to get in contact by providing a variety of contact methods and by being pro-active when things go wrong.
- Empower customer service advisors to apply 'natural justice' when dealing with poor passenger experiences and allow redress to go beyond the minimum levels of the Passenger Charter or National Rail Conditions of Carriage.
- Ensure mechanisms to monitor and manage response times and to acknowledge complaints if they cannot be resolved within the target time, which should be published.
- Implement a process whereby appropriate issues are proactively investigated by the customer service advisor, and other relevant staff members, and feed back the findings to the passenger.
- Establish mechanisms to feed complaints into service improvements, where possible, and feed information about this back to the passenger.
- Ensure a clear and well communicated escalation process is in place for complaints handling, including referral to, and cooperation with, Transport Focus or London TravelWatch.

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[63] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-to-ride-full-report-may-2012
http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/ticket-to-ride-an-update
[64] For British rail passengers outside of London

5.4.2 Response quality

- Train and empower customer service advisors to identify and address all the points in the complaint and give heavy weighting to 'addressing all issues raised by the passenger in internal quality monitoring processes. A focus on first time resolution reduces 'comebacks' and the need for a subsequent response by the operator.
- Provide clear explanations about why the passenger is/ is not receiving compensation and/or gesture of goodwill.
- Make careful use of appropriately worded standard paragraphs, supplemented as necessary by bespoke responses.
- Ensure customer service advisors use clear, jargon-free English with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation when writing responses.
- Use complaints handling as an opportunity to restore a customer's faith in the train operator.
- Seek feedback from passengers on the quality of responses and use this to contribute to ongoing quality monitoring and implementing a culture of continuous improvement.

5.4.3 Legacy complaints

A clear process for handling legacy complaints should be established. Transport Focus recommends that all complaints should be dealt with by the new operators from the first day onwards, with appropriate recompense mechanisms from the outgoing operator established to enable this. This should extend to honouring any complimentary journeys or vouchers which remain within their expiry date after the new franchise operation starts.

Making the incumbent responsible for handling complaints reduces confusion and complexity for the passenger. It also ensures that complaints are handled by the operator with an ongoing interest in retaining the passenger, and who is best placed to resolve any issues and implement any changes as a result of the complaint.

5.5 Lost property

Every year passengers lose a huge number of items on the rail network. Many of those passengers never manage to locate the items, even if they have been handed in. From our preliminary investigation into this subject we have concluded that some operators systems are not efficient or consistently effective in managing lost property. It is therefore important that operators develop systems that will:

- Register and track an item of lost property from the point it comes into their possession and allow it to be open to enquiry within 24 hours.
- Provide secure storage from the point an item is handed in at the station until its arrival at the location where it will be held.
- Register the item with an accurate description including any distinguishing marks, brands or serial numbers.

- Make it simple for the passenger to try and locate items. A minimum of a phone number and an online service should be provided, and a reasonable response time advertised and adhered to.
- Include rechecking of the register on a regular basis and inform the passenger promptly by their preferred method of contact if their item is located.

Transport Focus also recommends that operators:

- Ensure any charges to reunite the passenger with their item are capped at a reasonable level.
- Actively seek to increase the number of items repatriated to their owner.
- Define a process for dealing with 'live incidents' in which a passenger reports that they have left an item on a train that is about to depart.
- Demonstrate how the system can facilitate work with British Transport Police to identify any items held by the operator that have been reported as stolen.
- Demonstrate how the system will be monitored and measured within their business to ensure it is effective in meeting the above objectives.
- Actively work towards the establishment of a national lost property system, and if established should participate in the scheme.

5.6 Connections

'Connections with other train services are always good' ranks eleventh of 31 priority factors for improvement for ATW passengers, compared with fifteenth in the Great Britain sample overall. NRPS shows a variation with satisfaction across the network with Mid Wales and Borders passengers the most satisfied at 82 per cent compared to 65 per cent satisfaction on the North Wales and Borders route (table 9).

Table 9 Connections with other train services, NRPS Autumn 2015, percentage satisfied: ATW and Building Blocks

ATW	Cardiff and Valleys	Inter Urban	Mid Wales and Borders	North Wales and Borders	South Wales and Borders/ West Wales
73	73	69	82	65	77

During disruption connections become more challenging as passengers may have to make a journey they are unfamiliar with or travel through a station they are unused to. Good quality information is key to ensuring passengers can make these connections as easily as possible.

For passengers to confidently make journeys that are reliant on connections the operator must provide punctual and reliable services and good quality information for all circumstances relating to the journey. Well-timed connections with sufficient, but not excessive, time between arriving and departing trains and ease of transfer

between the platforms are also important. Where possible this should be a level transfer, with minimal distance between arrival and departure points.

5.6.1 Cross-border journeys

The latest figures from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) highlight the importance of cross-border journeys to Welsh rail users[65]. In 2013-14 nearly 29 million annual rail journeys started and/or finished in Wales. Just under one-third of these crossed the Wales-England border – just over nine million journeys. Figure 8 below shows the majority cross the border to or from the South West and London, with a significant proportion then going to or from the North West and West Midlands; making these important areas of focus for the Welsh railway.

Figure 8 Journeys to/from English regions 2013-14
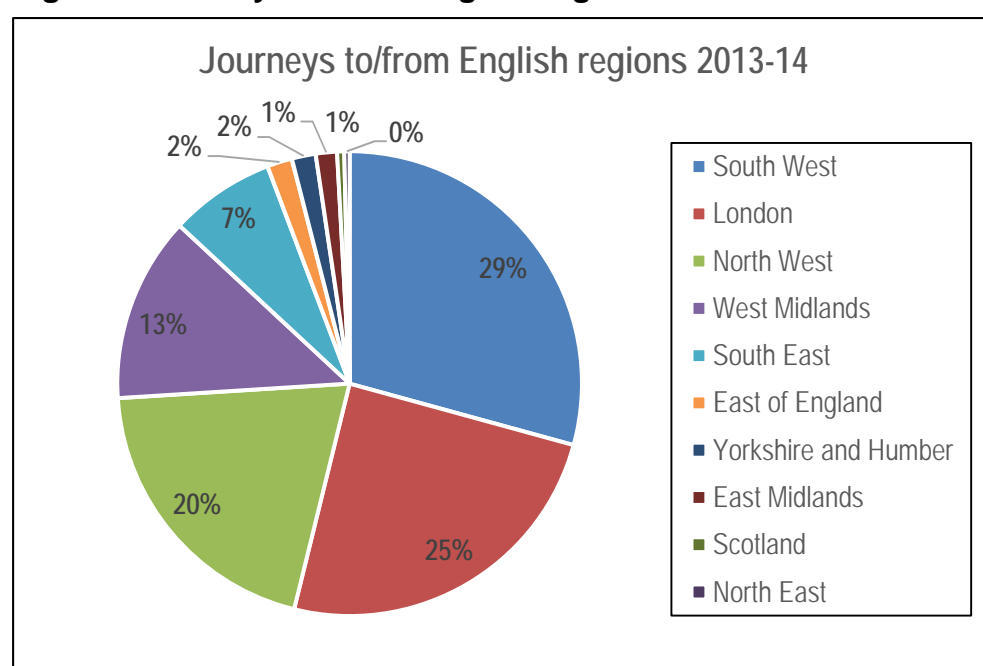
Comparison of satisfaction with transport connections both within Wales and for Wales-England shows that whilst connections between train services are broadly similar, when looking at connections with other forms of public transport, this difference for journeys within Wales is significant. As shown in table 10 below, in the autumn 2015 wave despite marked deterioration on both sides of the border, satisfaction for journeys within Wales was only 59 per cent compared with 66 per cent for Wales-England journeys.

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[65] https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/displayreport/report/html/0d429d07-ac22-4199-92fd-21982088c25b

Table 10 National Rail Passenger Survey – transport connections

Attribute % saying satisfied/good	Autumn '10	Spring '11	Autumn '11	Spring '12	Autumn '12	Spring '13	Autumn '13	Spring '14	Autumn '14	Spring '15	Autumn '15
Within Wales Journeys											
Connections with other forms of public transport	61	58	54	64	67	61	63	58	61	68	59
Connections with other train services	82	82	76	79	81	85	87	73	78	77	74
Wales-England Journeys											
Connections with other forms of public transport	75	72	76	73	72	76	78	72	70	78	66
Connections with other train services	78	73	81	78	81	78	73	74	73	75	73

5.6.2 Network integration

Passengers value the concept of a network and a seamless delivery of service. They want interaction and connectivity, with good standards of information to 'hold their hand' and give them confidence in the ability to make joined-up journeys; together with a well-designed and enabling ticketing system , as discussed in section 4.10.

Transport Focus conducted joint research with the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) into the perception and reality of integrated transport[66]. This study aimed to gain a better understanding of the role played by integrated transport in attracting new or infrequent passengers to rail; the problems making end-to-end journeys and priorities for improvement. The main barriers we found were:

- the perceived cost of the ticket
- the perceived hassle of going by train
- an assumption that the door-to-door journey (except long-distance) would be longer
- concerns about punctuality and reliability; particularly when changing trains.

The South East Wales Metro proposes linking a core network with feeder services across a multi-modal network. This will need to demonstrate good transport integration, built on recognising the issues passengers face and improving their experience to create a positive and attractive service, that can be rolled out across Wales. To influence the decisions made by passengers on whether to use public transport, it will need to provide integrated, reliable and frequent services, allowing easy movement across regions and borders, supported by readily-accessible information and simple ticketing, travelling comfort, security and assurance that all stages of the journey will link up[67].

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[66] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/integrated-transport-perception-and-reality
[67] Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009

5.7 Major events

In 2015 fans travelling to the Rugby World Cup matches in Cardiff experienced severe difficulties with transport. As a result the National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Business Committee launched an inquiry to investigate the planning and delivery of transport provision to see what lessons could be learned for future events. The findings of that inquiry contain many useful recommendations which should be considered by the industry when planning travel for major events[68].

During major events significant numbers of passengers may be travelling on trains that are already crowded and through stations not designed to cope with these increased numbers. In addition, passengers may well be making journeys for the first time and therefore not be familiar with stations, routes and timetables. Provision of sufficient capacity, sensible demand management strategies, joint working with other organisations and good quality, timely information are all key to managing and delivering successful transport plans for major events.

It is essential that agencies work together to develop a strategy that is tailored to each event. This could include liaison with other train operators, other public transport providers and British Transport Police, as well as discussions with Network Rail about the scheduling of engineering works and with local councils about planned roadworks.

Provision of sufficient capacity for major events presents a challenge where services are already busy. Travel demand forecasting will allow organisers to understand which times and routes are likely to be busiest and to target any available capacity where it is most needed.

Letting passengers know which services are likely to be more or less crowded will help them make informed travel choices. Many may be happy to travel slightly earlier or later to benefit from a more comfortable journey, especially if they are told of the options for passing any extra time before or after an event. Relaxing ticket restrictions can be a useful tool to manage capacity for major events, letting passengers travel earlier than planned or with another operator.

Where demand is forecast to exceed capacity alternative transport options such as coaches must be considered.

Passengers need good quality, useful information that they can rely on when planning their journey and to help them when they are travelling to and from the event. Information should be available as early as possible and kept up to date. The train operator must work with other agencies to push information out to people who are known to be, or even those who are likely to be, attending events.

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[68] http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld10463/cr-ld10463-e.pdf

It is sensible to try and manage the expectations of passengers in advance of travel. If they must get an early train to guarantee arriving in time then let them know; if they may have to queue for a long time to leave the event then advise them of this and confirm the later trains that will get them home. On event days, a strong and well-informed staff presence is essential at both stations and on trains to provide passengers with the information and reassurance they desire.

5.8 Customer service

We believe that empowering frontline staff to proactively address passenger needs and giving them the authority and tools to respond to issues where and when they arise will do much to improve perceptions of customer service.

Table 11, below, shows NRPS scores for ATW and its building blocks on two key customer service factors. It also shows how this compares to the typology average and best in class. Although there are some gaps between the level of satisfaction with ATW and the level of satisfaction with the best in class and some are significant, ATW are also above average on a number of scores and also achieve best in class for 'helpfulness and attitude of staff on train' on inter urban services. We recommend that efforts are made to identify what and how the class leaders are delivering in these other areas and the specification encourages adoption of similar practices.

The focus for good customer service should not solely be on staff at stations and on trains. Customer service is about every aspect of interaction the passenger has with the operator. Provision of adequate journey planning tools, a useful, easy to use website and a helpful, knowledgeable contact centre are all vital to the overall experience. If a customer has cause to make a complaint then how it is handled can have a substantial impact on overall impressions of customer service (see section 5.4 for our detailed recommendations on complaints handling).

Table 11 Customer service factors, NRPS Autumn 2015, percentage satisfied

	The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff at station	The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train
ATW	77	84
Regional average	83	82
Regional best in class	90 (Merseyrail)	86 (Heathrow Express)
ATW Inter Urban	81	86
Inter Urban average	79	79
Inter Urban best in class	89 (First TransPennine Express - North West)	86 (Arriva Trains Wales - Inter Urban)
ATW Cardiff and Valleys	74	79
ATW South Wales and Borders/West Wales	86	86
Short commute average	74	56
Short commute best in class	93 (Merseyrail – Northern)	96 (Northern Rail - Tyne Tees & Wear)
ATW Mid Wales and Borders	78	87
ATW North Wales and Borders	72	89
Rural average	79	83
Rural best in class	91 (ScotRail – Urban)	94 (South West Trains – Island Line)

Passengers' experiences on rail are clearly also influenced by the services they experience in the wider aspects of their lives. Our work on trust (as outlined in section 3.4) identifies a hierarchy of need. The base level relates to delivery of the core service and is fundamental for building any degree of trust. Beyond this, the middle tier emphasises communication and customer service, whilst the higher levels rely on a more individualised experience and a sense of being valued.

The specification should encourage the next operator to demonstrate how they will rise to the challenge of delivering improved customer service and build strong and positive relationships with passengers.

6. Further information

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Further details of all our publications exploring passenger perspectives on a range of issues can be found on the Transport Focus website (www.transportfocus.org.uk).
For specific information about franchising please see:
http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/franchising

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 NRPS building block definitions

Arriva Trains Wales: Cardiff & Valleys
Journeys on the Valley lines around Cardiff

Arriva Trains Wales: Inter urban
Journeys on the route Cardiff – Manchester Piccadilly
(via Hereford and Shrewsbury)

Arriva Trains Wales: Mid Wales & Borders
Journeys on the route Birmingham – Aberystwyth/Pwllheli

Arriva Trains Wales: North Wales & Borders
Journeys on the routes Llandudno – Manchester Piccadilly and Holyhead – Crewe/
Shrewsbury, also includes Llandudno-Blaenau Ffestiniog and Wrexham Central –
Bidston

Arriva Trains Wales: South Wales & Borders/West Wales
Journeys on South Wales mainline routes (Cheltenham – Maesteg, Ebbw Vale –
Cardiff and Newport – Llanelli). Also includes routes west of Swansea and the Heart
of Wales line (Llanelli – Craven Arms).

Appendix 2 NRPS satisfaction scores[69]
A2.1 NRPS Autumn 2015: percentage satisfied, ATW compared to Regional sector

Factor	TOC	Sector	TOC Index[70]
Overall satisfaction with your journey	82	88	93%
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	77	85	91%
Ticket buying facilities	79	82	96%
Provision of information about train times/platforms	82	87	94%
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	70	80	88%
Cleanliness	70	83	84%
The facilities and services	48	58	83%
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	77	83	93%
Connections with other forms of public transport	61	73	84%
Facilities for car parking	65	54	120%
Overall environment	68	78	87%
Your personal security whilst using the station	69	76	91%
The availability of staff	61	72	85%
The provision of shelter facilities	72	79	91%
Availability of seating	57	61	93%
How request to station staff was handled	88	90	98%
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	39	49	80%
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	80	83	96%
The frequency of the trains on that route	73	79	92%
Punctuality/reliability	80	85	94%
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	82	88	93%
Connections with other train services	73	78	94%
The value for money of the price of your ticket	59	61	97%
Cleanliness of the train	72	76	95%
Upkeep and repair of the train	69	73	95%
The provision of information during the journey	63	74	85%
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	84	82	102%
The space for luggage	61	64	95%
The toilet facilities	49	47	104%
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	72	74	97%
The comfort of the seating area	72	75	96%
The ease of being able to get on and off	82	83	99%
Your personal security on board	81	84	96%
The cleanliness of the inside	72	77	94%
The cleanliness of the outside	69	76	91%
The availability of staff	71	67	106%
How well train company dealt with delays	37	46	80%
TOC average is 5% or more lower than sector average			
TOC average is 5% or more higher than sector average			

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[69] In Appendix 2; * indicates building block scores where the sample size is less than 100 but greater than 50. † indicates building block scores where the sample size is 50 or less.
[70] TOC Index shows performance of TOC against the sector as a percentage (e.g. if TOC score is equal to sector score the TOC Index would be 100%. If it is 102% the performance is better)

A2.2 NRPS Autumn 2015: percentage satisfied, ATW Interurban compared to Interurban average and best in class

Factor	ATW Interurban	Interurban average	Interurban best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	86	84	92
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	81	84	89
Ticket buying facilities	87	80	98
Provision of information about train times/platforms	83	87	90
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	78	77	91
Cleanliness	76	79	90
The facilities and services	63	64	76
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	81	79	89
Connections with other forms of public transport	63	79	91
Facilities for car parking	60	59	73
Overall environment	73	76	87
Your personal security whilst using	76	79	88
The availability of staff	65	68	85
The provision of shelter facilities	73	75	83
Availability of seating	64	47	69
How request to station staff was handled	*92**	90	100
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	43	56	66
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	82	82	91
The frequency of the trains on that route	78	82	93
Punctuality/reliability	76	81	93
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	76	81	90
Connections with other train services	69	76	91
The value for money of the price of your ticket	57	52	67
Cleanliness of the train	78	76	87
Upkeep and repair of the train	70	74	87
The provision of information during the journey	70	75	83
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	86	79	86
The space for luggage	58	55	69
The toilet facilities	52	42	59
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	78	65	83
The comfort of the seating area	73	71	86
The ease of being able to get on and off	82	82	88
Your personal security on board	84	84	88
The cleanliness of the inside	79	77	88
The cleanliness of the outside	77	76	84
The availability of staff	75	62	76
How well train company dealt with delays	*55**	56	82
TOC average is 5% or more lower than sector average			
TOC average is 5% or more higher than sector average			

A2.3 NRPS Autumn 2015: percentage satisfied, Cardiff and Valleys, and South Wales and Borders/West Wales compared to Short Commute typology average and best in class

Factor	Cardiff and Valleys	South Wales and Borders/West Wales	Short commute average	Short commute best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	78	82	83	95
Station factors				
Overall satisfaction with the station	74	76	80	91
Ticket buying facilities	75	84	75	95
Provision of information about train times/platforms	79	86	81	93
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	67	71	74	88
Cleanliness	62	71	78	91
The facilities and services	37	50	51	67
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	74	86	74	93
Connections with other forms of public transport	59	58*	76	83
Facilities for car parking	62	70*	42	82
Overall environment	61	70	72	86
Your personal security whilst using	61	70	71	81
The availability of staff	56	68	65	87
The provision of shelter facilities	68	76	69	86
Availability of seating	56	51	49	73
How request to station staff was handled	†	†	87	96
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	31	51	45	62
Train factors				
Overall satisfaction with the train	72	86	81	95
The frequency of the trains on that route	79	66	75	96
Punctuality/reliability	78	79	77	95
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	84	83	83	96
Connections with other train services	73	77	77	87
The value for money of the price of your ticket	54	62	48	72
Cleanliness of the train	63	76	76	91
Upkeep and repair of the train	59	74	76	94
The provision of information during the journey	56	64	73	91
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	79	86	56	96
The space for luggage	62	58	53	73
The toilet facilities	45	65*	29	65
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	72	68	64	83
The comfort of the seating area	68	71	73	86
The ease of being able to get on and off	81	78	77	92
Your personal security on board	76	81	75	87
The cleanliness of the inside	61	78	77	92
The cleanliness of the outside	62	78	77	95
The availability of staff	63	74	36	83
How well train company dealt with delays	†	†	34	66
TOC average is 5% or more lower than sector average				
TOC average is 5% or more higher than sector average				

A2.4 NRPS Autumn 2015: percentage satisfied, Mid Wales and Borders and North Wales and Borders compared to Rural typology average and best in class

Factor	Mid Wales and Borders	North Wales and Borders	Rural average	Rural best in class
Overall satisfaction with your journey	92	86	84	97
Station factors				
Overall satisfaction with the station	79	78	81	85
Ticket buying facilities	*80**	*76**	78	91
Provision of information about train times/platforms	86	85	86	93
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	78	67	77	91
Cleanliness	80	77	80	92
The facilities and services	59	54	56	78
The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff	78	*72**	79	91
Connections with other forms of public transport	*62**	*66**	64	91
Facilities for car parking	*66**	*70**	62	82
Overall environment	78	71	75	91
Your personal security whilst using	86	78	73	86
The availability of staff	56	67	66	84
The provision of shelter facilities	76	74	77	90
Availability of seating	57	58	59	69
How request to station staff was handled	†	†	91	100
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	44	40	47	72
Train factors				
Overall satisfaction with the train	88	87	78	88
The frequency of the trains on that route	69	63	70	86
Punctuality/reliability	91	84	82	98
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	85	80	84	97
Connections with other train services	82	*65**	73	91
The value for money of the price of your ticket	73	61	63	84
Cleanliness of the train	80	82	72	87
Upkeep and repair of the train	78	79	67	79
The provision of information during the journey	74	67	68	85
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	87	89	83	94
The space for luggage	63	64	63	80
The toilet facilities	41	*47**	47	61
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	79	71	73	88
The comfort of the seating area	81	79	70	82
The ease of being able to get on and off	83	85	81	93
Your personal security on board	89	87	83	91
The cleanliness of the inside	83	78	72	83
The cleanliness of the outside	77	68	68	77
The availability of staff	78	82	69	87
How well train company dealt with delays	†	†	43	54
TOC average is 5% or more lower than sector average				
TOC average is 5% or more higher than sector average				

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Appendix 3 Passenger priorities for station requirements and improvements

A3.1 Facilities need providing
A3.1.1 According to station footfall – GB stations

Free Wi-Fi at stations consistently required by station type

Station improvements [prompted] – needs providing: All GB rail passengers

		Station footfall		
		High	Medium	Low
Free WiFi at the station	27%	25%	31%	28%
Toilets	21%	9%	40%	41%
Litter bins	18%	22%	10%	17%
Cash point	18%	12%	30%	21%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	17%	11%	24%	29%
Seating on platforms	12%	16%	5%	9%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	11%	6%	18%	24%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	11%	6%	18%	18%
Left Luggage facility	10%	10%	10%	8%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	9%	8%	12%	10%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	9%	6%	14%	14%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	9%	5%	14%	19%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	8%	7%	10%	10%
Automatic ticket gates	6%	5%	9%	9%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	6%	5%	7%	7%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	6%	5%	8%	9%
Departure information screens	5%	2%	8%	13%
Public address system	4%	3%	4%	10%
Other	5%	5%	5%	10%
Nothing extra needs to be Improved	15%	17%	9%	11%
Don't know	17%	20%	11%	8%

29   Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? providing; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

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A3.1.2 Arriva Trains Wales passengers - all stations – needs providing

Arriva Trains Wales - all stations - provided

Facility	Arriva Trains Wales	Regional
Cash point	27%	21%
Toilets	26%	32%
Free WiFi at the station	23%	23%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	18%	18%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	17%	13%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	16%	15%
Litter bins	14%	15%
Left Luggage facility	13%	13%
Seating on platforms	13%	8%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	12%	11%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	11%	15%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	10%	7%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	10%	14%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	9%	10%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	9%	10%
Public address system	7%	7%
Automatic ticket gates	5%	9%
Other	3%	2%
Departure information screens	3%	14%
Nothing extra needs to be Provided	9%	17%
Don't know	16%	14%

A3.2 Facilities need improving
A3.2.1 According to station footfall – GB stations

Improvements to seating consistently important. Improving toilets important at high footfall stations, and shelter important at lower footfall

Station improvements [prompted] – needs improving: All GB rail passengers

		Station footfall		
		High	Medium	Low
Seating on platforms	30%	30%	32%	28%
Toilets	20%	26%	9%	7%
Litter bins	17%	19%	13%	14%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	15%	9%	23%	28%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	14%	14%	14%	14%
Public address system	13%	13%	12%	12%
Departure information screens	12%	11%	14%	14%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	11%	8%	19%	12%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	7%	8%	8%	3%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	7%	7%	6%	7%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	6%	6%	4%	10%
Automatic ticket gates	5%	8%	2%	3%
Cash point	5%	6%	4%	4%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	5%	5%	4%	3%
Free WiFi at the station	5%	6%	3%	2%
Left Luggage facility	3%	4%	1%	1%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	3%	3%	1%	1%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	2%	2%	1%	2%
Other	3%	3%	3%	5%
Nothing extra needs to be provided	13%	14%	10%	9%
Don't know	25%	23%	29%	27%

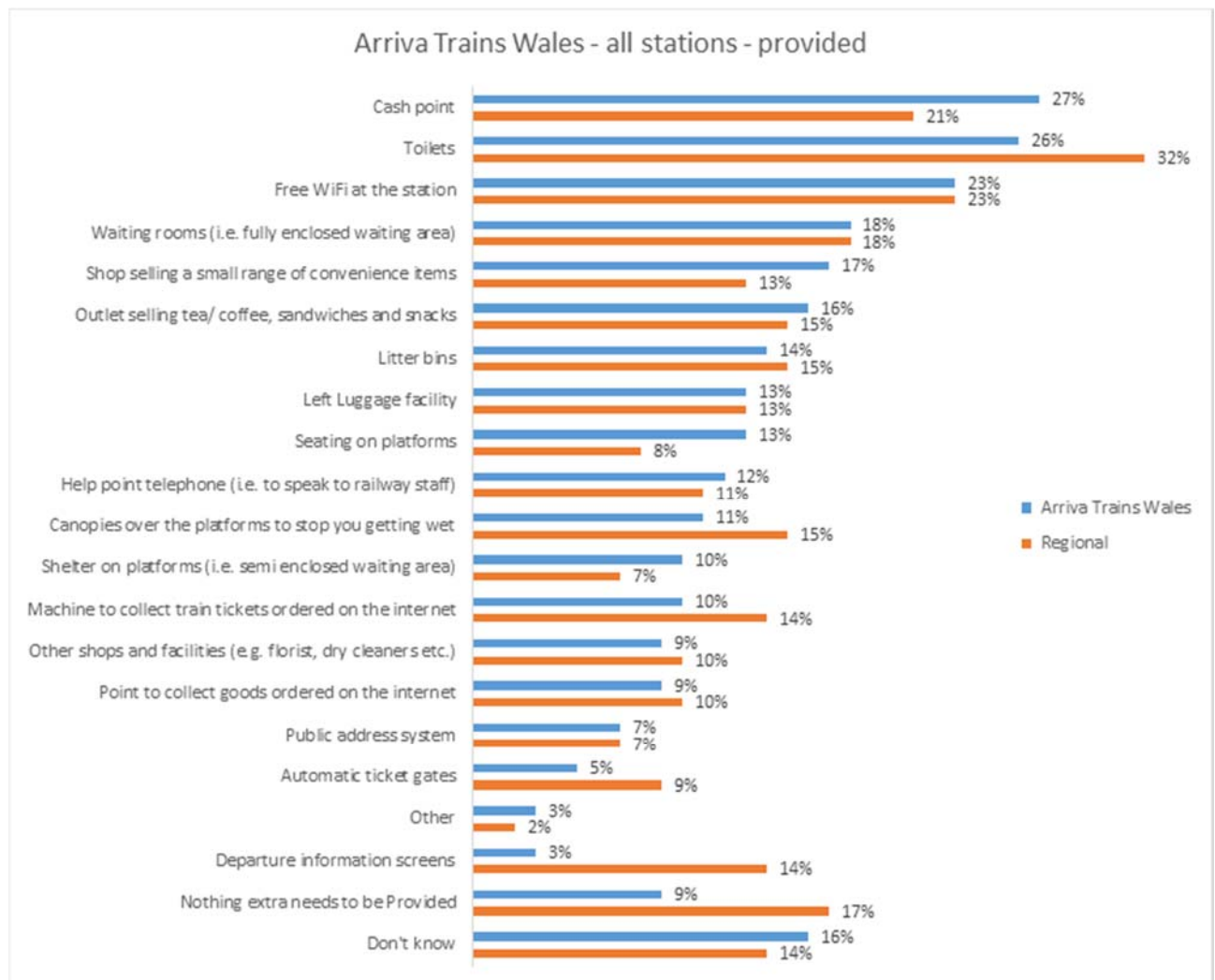Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? Improving; Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

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A3.2.2 Arriva Trains Wales passengers – all stations – needs improving

Arriva Trains Wales - all stations - need improving

Category	Arriva Trains Wales	Regional
Seating on platforms	39%	30%
Toilets	26%	18%
Waiting rooms (i.e. fully enclosed waiting area)	21%	16%
Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area)	21%	20%
Litter bins	15%	15%
Canopies over the platforms to stop you getting wet	14%	12%
Public address system	13%	12%
Departure information screens	12%	10%
Outlet selling tea/ coffee, sandwiches and snacks	11%	7%
Help point telephone (i.e. to speak to railway staff)	6%	5%
Shop selling a small range of convenience items	5%	4%
Machine to collect train tickets ordered on the internet	5%	5%
Cash point	4%	5%
Automatic ticket gates	4%	4%
Other	3%	4%
Point to collect goods ordered on the internet	3%	3%
Left Luggage facility	3%	2%
Free WiFi at the station	3%	4%
Other shops and facilities (e.g. florist, dry cleaners etc.)	2%	2%
Nothing extra needs to be improved	8%	14%
Don't know	21%	26%

Appendix 4 Information used at different stages of the journey

6A - Information used at different stages of the journey
Stages of journey where information used: All GB rail passengers

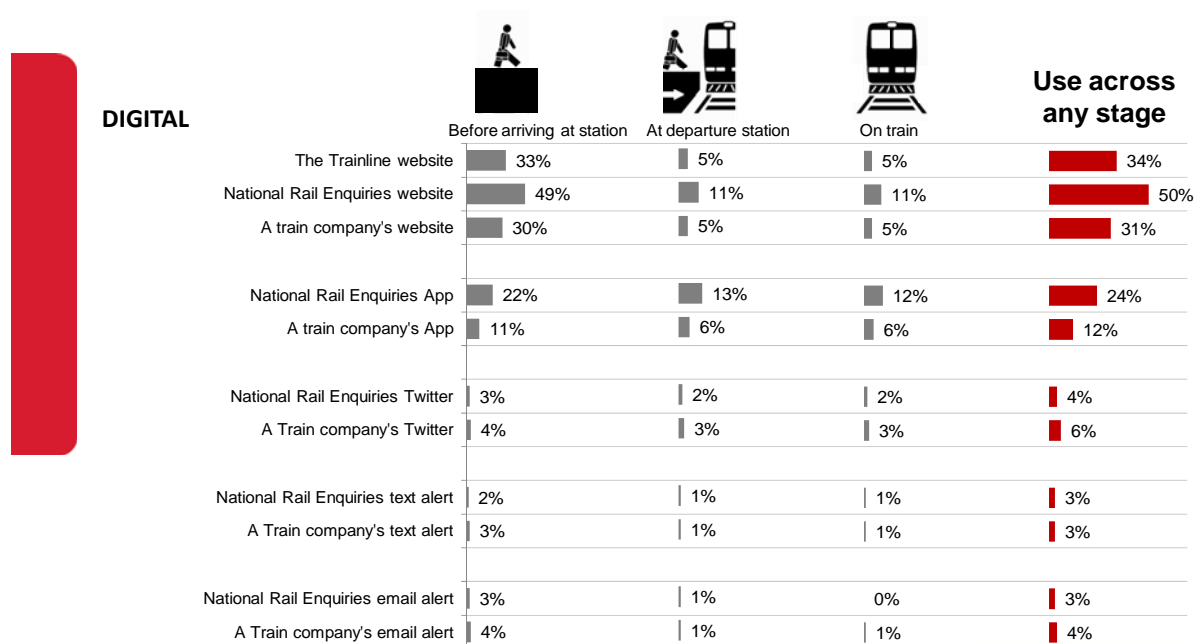|	Before arriving at station	At departure station	On train	Use across any stage
TRAIN COMPANY				
Information screens at the station		92%		92%
Announcements at the station		74%		74%
Information screens on the train			46%	46%
Announcements on the train			74%	74%
Information from members of staff at the station		40%		40%
Information from members of staff on the train			32%	32%
DIGITAL				
Online via a website	75%	16%	16%	77%
Via an app	29%	17%	15%	31%
Via Twitter	6%	4%	4%	7%
Received a text alert	4%	2%	1%	5%
Received an email	5%	1%	1%	6%
WORD OF MOUTH				
Information from other passengers	11%	17%	17%	27%
Information from family, friends or colleagues	25%	8%		27%
MEDIA				
Travel news update on TV	24%			24%
Travel news update on radio	20%			20%

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6B - NRE website and app - key sources of digital information
Stages of journey where digital information used: All GB rail passengers

	Before arriving at station	At departure station	On train	Use across any stage
DIGITAL				
The Trainline website	33%	5%	5%	34%
National Rail Enquiries website	49%	11%	11%	50%
A train company's website	30%	5%	5%	31%
National Rail Enquiries App	22%	13%	12%	24%
A train company's App	11%	6%	6%	12%
National Rail Enquiries Twitter	3%	2%	2%	4%
A Train company's Twitter	4%	3%	3%	6%
National Rail Enquiries text alert	2%	1%	1%	3%
A Train company's text alert	3%	1%	1%	3%
National Rail Enquiries email alert	3%	1%	0%	3%
A Train company's email alert	4%	1%	1%	4%

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A5.1 Transport Focus recommendations following our review of Valleys lines disruption

- **Recommendation 1: processing cancellations and alterations**
  That ATW examines:
  i. whether it attaches sufficient priority to keeping Darwin accurate, given the direct consequences for passengers (and staff) if it is not
  ii. if resourcing is adequate for this critical task
  iii. if best use is being made of the National Rail Communication Centre to help keep Darwin accurate during disruption

- **Recommendation 2: processing cancellations and alterations**
  That ATW examines:
  i. how decisions regarding cancellations and amendments during disruption can be made earlier, in order that passengers receive meaningful information about services in the hour ahead
  ii. if what on paper are efficient train crew diagrams import inherent fragility to running the train service at times of disruption, so outweighing that efficiency. Other train operators have concluded that accepting a higher driver/conductor establishment than would be necessary in a perfect world is justified to minimise disruption

- **Recommendation 3: Customer Service Level 2 (CSL2) messaging**
  i. That ATW takes steps to significantly improve the quality, timeliness and usefulness of its core messages, with a particular focus on providing what the recipient, staff or passenger, needs to know
  ii. That ATW devises a means of measuring the quality of core messages to aid learning and continuous improvement.

- **Recommendation 4: Customer Service Level 2 (CSL2) messaging**
  i. That ATW is explicit when it means "do not travel"
  ii. That you review the language and content of messages about using scheduled bus services as alternative transport. The review should look at, inter alia:
    o how to 'signpost' passengers to information about relevant bus services;
    o how to be clearer about what "ticket acceptance" means;
    o how to convey that if you have a valid train ticket but the bus driver makes you pay a fare there will be a no quibble refund; and
    o how to reassure passengers that you'll treat them fairly if the Cardiff Bus 'exact money only' system catches them out

- **Recommendation 5: Customer Service Level 2 (CSL2) messaging**
  i. That ATW reviews its guidance to Controllers about use of Steady State to ensure that it is consistent with the spirit of what CSL2 is seeking to achieve
  ii. That if Steady State is introduced, justification for it must be recorded at the time and decisions subject to periodic audit

- **Recommendation 6: Station customer information screens (CIS)**
  That ATW considers how CIS can convey a 'strategic overview' to passengers arriving at stations – including 'country end' stations – in addition to detail about individual trains

- **Recommendation 7: ATW website homepage**
  That ATW considers mandating use of a high impact message on the homepage in specific circumstances, with the need to tell passengers to travel by alternative means being one

- **Recommendation 8: National Rail Enquiries**
  That active liaison between ATW and the NRCC becomes a mandatory part of ATW's CSL2 process with the objective that:
    - The NRCC has full understanding of the incident
    - There is regular discussion throughout an incident about the most useful message for passengers at any given time

- **Recommendation 9: Unstaffed stations**
  i. That, in respect of the network in the Valleys and immediate vicinity of Cardiff, ATW looks at the practicality of deploying at least one member of staff – with suitable 'presence' – to each of the unstaffed stations affected by disruption of this severity
  ii. That ATW considers the Transport Focus recommendation from December 2010:
  "That train companies draw up a "how we will look after passengers stranded at ...." plan for every station they operate. At some stations this might cover little more than the provision of refreshments by a retail outlet on that station, but we would encourage train companies to think laterally. If you have no staff at a station but people stranded, how can you get staff there? Is there a pub/takeaway/shop nearby that could supply refreshments/toilet facilities – and if so, who has the phone number and contact name? If you have passengers stranded at an isolated location, could the Police, BTP or county force, be asked to 'look in'? Could volunteers (e.g. station adopters) help out? Could there be a dedicated telephone line for passengers to obtain advice specific to them?"

- **Recommendation 10: Buses into Darwin**
  As an integral part of keeping Darwin accurate, ATW should consider adopting a default position that buses chartered to replace trains will be input to Darwin, unless there is strong justification for them not being, such

justification to be recorded at the time

- **Recommendation 11: Who stands back, thinking and reviewing?**
  We reiterate a Passenger Focus recommendation from December 2010:
  "that during all CSL2 disruption train companies monitor in real time what their website(s), the National Rail Enquiries disruption pages, live departure boards, email and text alerts etc. are saying to ensure that information is "useful". This is probably best done by somebody not embroiled in the disruption, probably in a marketing, communications or customer service role. That is, somebody who can sit to one side and think "is this useful to our customers?" – and intervene if necessary."

- **Recommendation 12: CIS disruption mode**
  That CIS 'disruption mode' must be made fully fit for purpose for Cardiff Central as quickly as possible.

A5.2 Report from Arriva Trains Wales on actions taken to implement measures for improvement

Recommendation Update
- On 22nd and 23rd July 2014, multiple infrastructure failures occurred on the Valley Lines network, causing severe disruption to all Valley Lines services.
- Passenger Focus were invited to review our information provision on Valley Lines, 22nd and 23rd July 2014.
- Passenger Focus conducted extensive research and made 12 recommendations plus other observations.
- Within ATW, we have worked through the recommendations, and this report summarises our progress.

Recommendation 1: Darwin Updating
- We acknowledge the disappointingly high level of cancellations that we failed to message out on 22nd-23rd July, due to the exceptional level of multiple infrastructure failures.
- We have reviewed and subsequently internally reorganised work tasks and strengthened the existing team with an additional person (currently being recruited), to ensure better reporting of service alterations into all downstream systems (including Darwin) via the Tyrell IO messaging system.
- We are building stronger relationships with the NRCC through mutual visits. 50% of our Customer Support Controllers have now visited the NRCC to gain an appreciation of how we can help each other. Further visits are scheduled during March.

Recommendation 2: Decision Making
We recognise this is a complex and congested part of the network; decisions are made taking into account the unique circumstances of each situation. However we have:

- Set up a dedicated project with Network Rail to manage disruption planning on the Valley Lines, which sees ATW's Head of Performance Strategy seconded to lead it.
- ATW's Train Planning team have modelled the costs of train crew diagrams (Conductors and Drivers staying together), and this is currently under consideration, in addition to options modelling for the Valley Lines timetable.
- Three additional Resource Controllers (based at Cardiff Central) are currently being recruited with a specific remit of co-ordinating train crew displacement during disruption.
- The Duty Manager's office is also being remodelled to be more suitable during disruption.

Recommendation 3: CSL2 Messaging

- In order to improve the quality, timeliness and usefulness of our core messages, we have introduced a KPI used to score the CSL2 messages.
- We have provided our Customer Support Controllers with guidance on the use of "Steady State."
- We now review all CSL2 incidents with our Customer Support Controllers, reviewing our messages and NRE outputs to check for consistency. Where inconsistencies have been found, we address them straight away.
- We also survey our staff and customers following CSL2 incidents, to ensure we are continuing to improve our practice.

Recommendation 4: "Do Not Travel" / Replacement Road Transport

- We have developed a "Do Not Travel" communication policy, which we have used when needed.
- We now include on all messages where ticket acceptance is in place, service numbers, operators and the calling points of buses where known. This is also reflected in the recently issued ATW Disruption Packs and our "PA on Stations" and "PA on Trains" guides for stations staff and Conductors (in design stage).
- We are continuing to review how we communicate ticket acceptance with the local bus operators, and we will be engaging in developing a policy with operators who find it difficult to communicate with their drivers due to technology constraints. This is not an issue with Cardiff Bus.
- We are looking at ways of directing our customers to local operators' websites and utilising social media to direct our customers to other bus operators for further information.
- We will seek information from bus operators to identify how many customers use buses when ticket acceptance has been agreed.

Recommendation 5: Use of "Steady State"

- We have developed and implemented a set of new guidelines for Controllers on the use of "steady state."

- Use of "steady state" is reviewed after each incident during the CSL2 review and use of "steady state" is also recorded in the Control Log and communicated with prioritised plans.

Recommendation 6: Stations CIS
- Whilst every station has functioning CIS, we acknowledge the system is limited in the amount of information it can display.
- We are working with Network Rail to better understand the challenges presented by ARS and the configuration settings on routing of trains and berth steps.
- Where a route has its service suspended, we now override train information to ensure a more in-depth summary of the disruption is displayed (i.e. "All trains cancelled due to xxxxx, replacement buses operate from station forecourt").
- We now display station-specific messages on our CIS.

Recommendation 7: Yellow Banner on Website
- We have developed a plan to ensure the deployment of the yellow banner is robust.
- We are working with Nexus Alpha on a range of improvements to ensure the deployment is not complicated or time-consuming.
- Training of additional staff (our Duty Control Managers) on deployment and correct wording of messages is taking place.
- Its use will be reviewed with each CSL2 review.

Recommendation 8: National Rail Enquiries
- Mutual exchange visits are underway, to aid job role understanding.
- We have implemented a process that sees our Customer Support Controllers call the NRCC operators at intervals of no longer than 1 hour during CSL2 incidents, in addition to CSL2 messages sent.
- Discussions are underway with the NRCC to develop an SLA surrounding the frequency and timeliness of reporting, as their current reporting is based on delays of greater than 45 minutes.
- We regularly check the NRE website to ensure a consistent message is being broadcast.

Recommendation 9: Unstaffed Stations
- We operate approximately 200 unstaffed stations (including 50 on the Valley Lines), which makes resourcing this recommendation impossible.
- Having reviewed this recommendation, we are focusing on the other recommendations that we believe will add significantly more value. We will continue to keep it under review.
- We are focusing on alternative, technological support to assist our customers at unstaffed stations (e.g. AIMS, video-supported TVMs).

Recommendation 10: Buses in Darwin
- We have considered how to achieve this and have attempted to incorporate buses into Darwin during a derailment at Barry in October. It is too time-consuming and we have such a high number of unstaffed stations that we are unable to tell an exact time at which a bus will depart.
- Emergency transport is recruited on a "best endeavours" basis that makes this recommendation even more challenging to achieve. We will continue to investigate ways of inputting buses into Darwin, as technological solutions arise.

Recommendation 11: Who stands back and reviews?
- We continue to consider the best permanent home for this responsibility, and over recent events different options have been used, from Customer Relations to the Duty Control Manager.
- We have not found the best solution yet, so have tasked the Valleys Disruption project to recommend based on the work it delivers. We will be trialling this role being assumed by a member of the Customer Relations team.

Recommendation 12: Disruption Mode
- Disruption mode does not support being able to split Cardiff Central into two separate locations (i.e. Main Line and Valley Lines).
- ATOS is currently investigating options to make this functionality available.

Additional Observations: Honesty and Openness
- We have addressed the message quality in an attempt to paint a picture as outlined in recommendation 3.

Additional Observations: Broadcast Tweeting
- We have worked hard to get broadcast Twitter to have a friendlier and more apologetic feel.
- We will be extending our coverage on Twitter to start from 06:30.
- The Twitter broadcaster will now go to Control during disruption, in order to have a better understanding of the emerging situation.
- We continue to elicit feedback from our customers via Twitter.
- All managers now receive a twice-daily summary of Twitter themes, to highlight key customer themes raised.

Additional Observations: Stranded Trains Policy
- The example given has been raised with Network Rail at a senior level, for them to consider their internal processes.
- Within the Control team, there is a joint understanding of the importance of customer comfort in such situations. Joint workshops between ATW and Network Rail are also taking place.

- During 2015, there will be a joint development day between ATW and Network Rail Control teams to better align the way each acts during disruption.

Additional Observations: Compensation
- We are redesigning the Customer Comments Form and making it available to download online, along with a plan to enhance broadcasts to include compensation signposting.
- We are reviewing all Customer Relations online content on our website, to ensure our compensation policies are easy to find.

Additional Observations: Use of the word "blocked"
- We have briefed our Controllers on selecting the correct phrases from the template.

Other Measures We Have Taken
- We operate a Customer Information Working Group, which addresses related topics and our PIDD plan.
- We are currently deploying smartphones with a number of useful apps, including Genius Mobile, to all of our Conductors, platform and gateline staff.
- We have reviewed and are reissuing our Customer Service Guides, in line with our new Competency Management processes.

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