



Ferry Passenger Survey

Results of a pilot survey conducted on behalf of

Caledonian MacBrayne

May 2015

About Transport Focus



- Transport Focus is the independent watchdog for rail passengers in Great Britain, bus, coach and tram users in England (outside London), and users of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England. Our multi-modal expertise allows us to look at people's overall door-to-door journey experience
- Transport Focus runs the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) a bi-annual measure of passenger satisfaction with their rail journey. NRPS collects data on almost 60,000 journeys and is the industry benchmark of satisfaction used in many train operators' franchise agreements with data going back to 1999
- The expertise developed on NRPS was put to good use in setting up a national Bus Passenger Survey (BPS), now covering nearly 50,000 journeys, and the Tram Passenger Survey (TPS – 5,000 journeys). We are currently working with Highways England to develop a similar measure of road users satisfaction with the SRN

Background to the Ferry Passenger Survey

- Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) was interested in developing a robust measure of Ferry Passenger Satisfaction to support its operation of the Hebridean & Clyde Ferries franchise
- To assist in this, CalMac approached Transport Focus to benefit from our expertise in journey satisfaction research across other modes
- Transport Focus developed a survey design appropriate for the demands of a diverse passenger and vehicle ferry network
- An independent research agency, Future Thinking (www.futurethinking.com), was commissioned to undertake a pilot of the Ferry Passenger Survey in Spring 2015
- Future Thinking's report on the pilot findings follows this introduction

Key principles of the Ferry Passenger Survey

- In line with NRPS, BPS and TPS, the Ferry Passenger Survey (FPS) was designed to sample individual journeys; as such, passengers making frequent journeys will have a greater likelihood of participating in the research reflecting their importance as frequent customers
- Passengers were approached while queuing to board, or when on board the ferry, and invited to complete the questionnaire 'in the moment'
- This ensures a focus on the specific journey passengers were undertaking rather than risk confusion and aggregation of their experiences across several journeys (when 'bad' journeys can easily dominate their recall)
- This aim is to deliver a representative picture of journeys rather than passengers' accumulated experience

Objectives/Conclusions of the FPS pilot

- The pilot survey was undertaken to demonstrate whether the principles and metrics Transport Focus uses in our other passenger satisfaction monitors can be applied to ferry use
- The pilot covered a variety of ferry routes to test the viability of distributing questionnaires at the port/on board the ferry and to ascertain the response rate that can be expected
- We regard the pilot as having met these objectives and shown that it is entirely viable and potentially valuable to roll out the survey to the full Hebridean and Clyde network
- With CalMac having now been awarded the new franchise, the Ferry Passenger Survey can ensure that passengers' views and experiences are at the heart of a continuous monitor of the operator's performance

Transport Focus' observations on the findings

- Satisfaction with the journey was high (90 per cent) and comparable with similar surveys on other modes in Scotland at the time (NRPS – 87%; BPS – 92%; TPS – 95%)
- There was an understandable degree of variation by route and passenger type – with local island residents generally the least satisfied (81 per cent)
- Perceptions of value for money varied the most – routes where Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) had yet to be applied at the time of the research reported the lowest scores
- Value for money for CalMac at 66 per cent compared at the time with Scotrail – 60%, Scottish Buses – 71%, and Edinburgh Tram – 83%
- Trust in Calmac at 52 per cent was higher than for Scotrail (43%) and in line with the top train operator in Britain (Merseyrail – 52%)

Contact Transport Focus

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