
# South Eastern rail franchise: Consultation response

**June 2017**

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# 1. Transport Focus

Transport Focus is the independent public body set up by the Government to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, England's bus and tram passengers outside London, and coach passengers in England on scheduled domestic services. Since March 2015 we have also represented the interests of users of the strategic road network. We are an independent body funded by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Our mission for rail 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. 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.

Transport Focus appreciates the open consultation on the future South Eastern franchise, particularly the efforts to engage directly with individual passengers as well as wider stakeholders.

# 2. Introduction

Transport Focus welcomes the opportunity to provide a rail passengers' perspective as the specification for the new South Eastern 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.

Passengers' top priorities for the franchise are:

- punctuality and reliability –at all stages of the train journey, not simply the timing of the train at its destination
- minimise and effectively manage disruptions – with planning and contingency arrangements placing passenger interests to the fore
- capacity – considering service frequencies and train layouts, optimising the availability of carriages and classification (as first or standard) appropriate to demand, as well as how fares incentives might make a contribution to alleviating pressures
- information – for all stages of the journey but especially during delays and disruption
- value for money – encompassing the important service elements which drive this as well as the ticket price

The next operator also needs to embed a genuinely customer-service focused culture at all levels and provide a personalised, rewarding passenger experience.

We are pleased to have engaged with the DfT from an early stage in the South Eastern franchise replacement process. We have used discussions to highlight key passenger issues and the findings of our research on a range of subjects.

This formal consultation response draws on three rich seams of franchise specific data. Firstly, it combines knowledge and understanding drawn from passenger reports of their current journeys on Southeastern services with information on 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.

In addition, we also reference the findings of qualitative research into the views of Southeastern passengers that we undertook in autumn 2016. More generally, we cite findings from our wider research into a range of issues that are important to passengers. We have also underpinned our qualitative findings by putting some of the ideas raised in the consultation document to our Transport User Panel to gauge their reaction. Results from the panel have been used to aid some of our responses to the questions.

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

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 franchise policy have made welcome commitments to a greater emphasis on the quality of the passenger experience and enhanced arrangements for engagement and communication with customers. 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 South Eastern franchise. We will continue to work closely with DfT and with potential bidders for the operation, to ensure that services address both current and evolving needs throughout the contract term.

### 2.1 Franchise consultation response

Our response to this consultation is based on our extensive evidence of passenger needs and aspirations. We published research into current Southeastern passengers' experiences and aspirations for the new franchise in April 2017 and have used these results extensively in our responses.

Transport Focus's approach to answering the consultation questions focuses largely on the 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 DfT and the franchise bidders 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. South Eastern rail franchise – 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 Southeastern 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.

A summary of our recent qualitative research with Southeastern passengers is also included[1]. Other research is cited as applicable within following sections.

## 3.2 Rail passengers' priorities for improvement - findings from 2014[2] [3]

This 2014 study of passenger priorities allows us to compare the priorities of Southeastern passengers against the national sample and compare the views of commuter, business and leisure passengers nationally.

The priorities are shown as an index averaged on 100 (Figure 1 and Figure 2). 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. This information can also be shown graphically to illustrate just how much the relative importance varies between the factors. (Figure 3).

We can see that there is a particularly striking factor for Southeastern passengers. The top priority of 'price of train tickets offers better value for money' is more than five times the average importance.

Following that, Southeastern passengers prioritise improving what can be regarded as 'core' elements of service. They are particularly concerned about having sufficient capacity. 'Passengers always able to get a seat on the train' is the second ranking priority, at three times the average importance, whilst 'trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel' is in third place just a few points behind.

[1] https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/south-eastern-rail-franchise-passengers-want/

[2] *Rail passengers' priorities for improvement*. Transport Focus. 2014

[3] A further investigation of rail passengers' priorities for improvement went into the field in March 2017 and will be reporting over the summer. We will share the findings with the DfT and prospective bidders as soon as possible.

Passengers also want to see improvements in punctuality and reliability, fewer disruptions or cancellations and good information about their services, particularly during disruption. 'Journey time is reduced' ranks tenth, with an index score of 100 making this of average importance.

Comparison by journey purpose highlights the differing priorities of passengers. The priorities of Southeastern passengers are broadly in line with commuters nationally. This perhaps isn't surprising, given the dominance of the commuter market for Southeastern.

Passengers travelling for purposes other than commuting tend to have different priorities. 'Free Wi-Fi available on the train' is fourth priority for business passengers, compared to 12th for commuters and 15th for Southeastern passengers. 'Accurate and timely information available at stations' is the sixth highest priority for leisure passengers while ranking ninth among business passengers. 'Journey time is reduced' is the eighth highest priority for business passengers whilst this ranks 14th for leisure passengers. It's 10th for Southeastern passengers and of average importance.

Summarising the findings, it is clear that the top priorities for improvement largely focus on the basic elements of the rail service – getting a seat, value for money, 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.

We would like to see significant improvements to the delivery of these 'core' elements of the service, so that passengers using the South Eastern network feel able to express more imagination and ambition when identifying the things that would improve their overall experience in the future.

The database contains a wealth of information which can be analysed in many ways to explore how priorities vary by demographic and journey purpose, amongst other things[4]. We recommend its use to DfT and potential bidders to enable a detailed understanding of the aspirations of passengers to apply to the specification and plans for the Southeastern network.

[4] Rail passengers' priorities simulator. Transport Focus. 2014

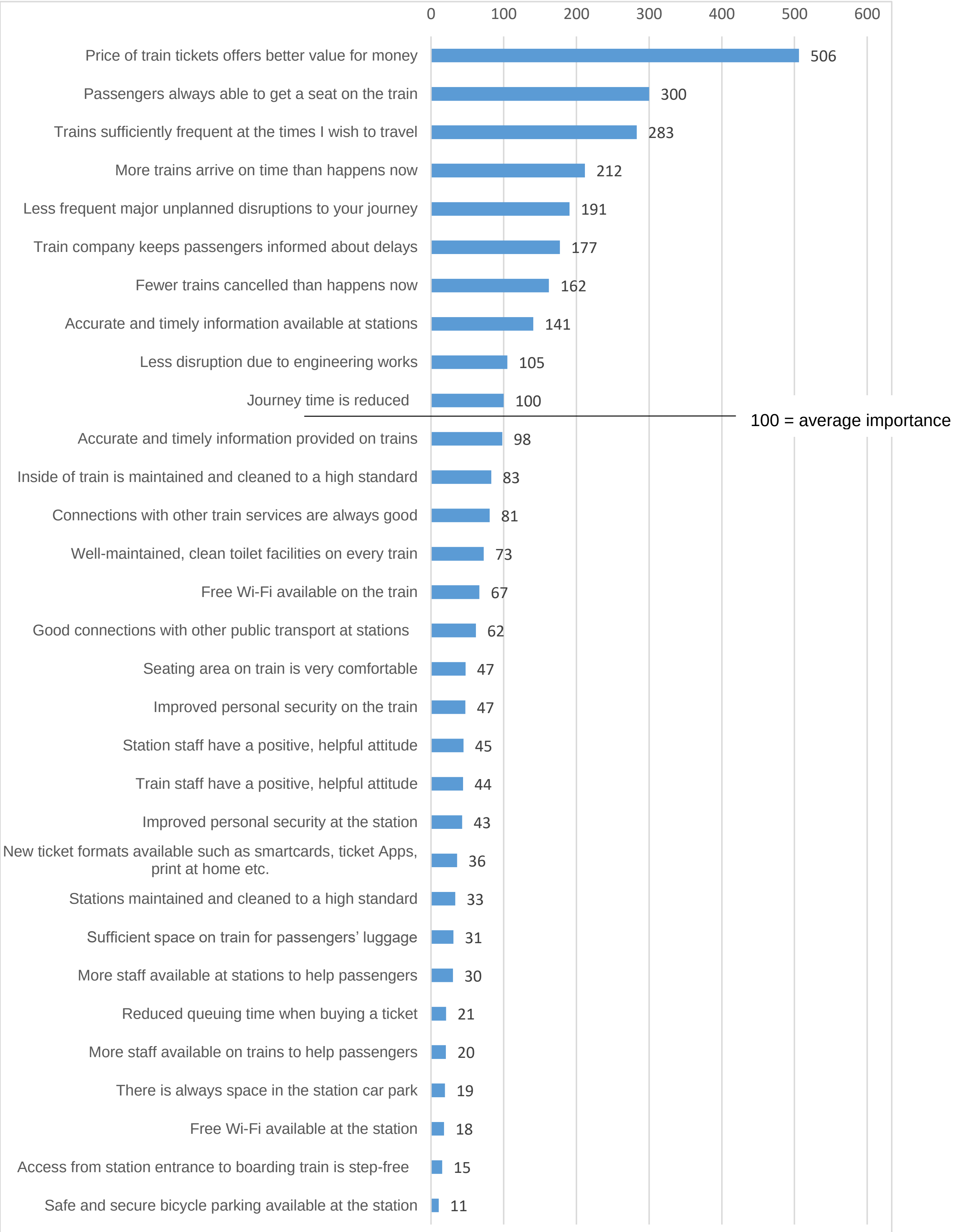
**Figure 1: Passenger priorities for improvement 2014: comparison of Southeastern, South East region and Great Britain**

| | Southeastern | | South East region | | Great Britain | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Price of train tickets offers better value for money | 506 | 1 | 504 | 1 | 494 | 1 |
| Passengers always able to get a seat on the train | 300 | 2 | 314 | 2 | 367 | 2 |
| Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel | 283 | 3 | 283 | 3 | 264 | 3 |
| More trains arrive on time than happens now | 212 | 4 | 182 | 4 | 178 | 4 |
| Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey | 191 | 5 | 166 | 5 | 161 | 6 |
| Train company keeps passengers informed about delays | 177 | 6 | 161 | 6 | 163 | 5 |
| Fewer trains cancelled than happens now | 162 | 7 | 140 | 7 | 136 | 7 |
| Accurate and timely information available at stations | 141 | 8 | 130 | 8 | 132 | 8 |
| Less disruption due to engineering works | 105 | 9 | 93 | 11 | 90 | 13 |
| Journey time is reduced | 100 | 10 | 126 | 9 | 105 | 9 |
| Accurate and timely information provided on trains | 98 | 11 | 92 | 12 | 92 | 12 |
| Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard | 83 | 12 | 81 | 13 | 93 | 11 |
| Connections with other train services are always good | 81 | 13 | 79 | 14 | 84 | 15 |
| Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train | 73 | 14 | 72 | 15 | 89 | 14 |
| Free Wi-Fi available on the train | 67 | 15 | 112 | 10 | 97 | 10 |
| Good connections with other public transport at stations | 62 | 16 | 59 | 16 | 62 | 16 |
| Seating area on train is very comfortable | 47 | 17 | 49 | 17 | 59 | 17 |
| Improved personal security on the train | 47 | 18 | 45 | 18 | 41 | 21 |
| Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude | 45 | 19 | 45 | 20 | 46 | 19 |
| Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude | 44 | 20 | 45 | 19 | 47 | 18 |
| Improved personal security at the station | 43 | 21 | 41 | 22 | 38 | 22 |
| New ticket formats available | 36 | 22 | 44 | 21 | 45 | 20 |
| Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard | 33 | 23 | 34 | 24 | 36 | 24 |
| Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage | 31 | 24 | 30 | 26 | 37 | 23 |
| More staff available at stations to help passengers | 30 | 25 | 31 | 25 | 29 | 25 |
| Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket | 21 | 26 | 22 | 28 | 20 | 29 |
| More staff available on trains to help passengers | 20 | 27 | 22 | 29 | 20 | 28 |
| There is always space in the station car park | 19 | 28 | 39 | 23 | 27 | 26 |
| Free Wi-Fi available at the station | 18 | 29 | 28 | 27 | 24 | 27 |
| Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free | 15 | 30 | 19 | 30 | 15 | 30 |
| Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station | 11 | 31 | 11 | 31 | 10 | 31 |
| *Sample size* | *219* | | *337* | | *3559* | |

**Figure 2: Passenger priorities for improvement: comparison of commuter, business and leisure passengers**

| | Commuter | | Business | | Leisure | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Price of train tickets offers better value for money | 537 | 1 | 513 | 1 | 440 | 1 |
| Passengers always able to get a seat on the train | 282 | 3 | 496 | 2 | 408 | 2 |
| Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel | 315 | 2 | 239 | 3 | 217 | 3 |
| More trains arrive on time than happens now | 218 | 4 | 137 | 5 | 150 | 5 |
| Train company keeps passengers informed about delays | 170 | 6 | 133 | 6 | 167 | 4 |
| Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey | 198 | 5 | 123 | 7 | 134 | 7 |
| Fewer trains cancelled than happens now | 166 | 7 | 105 | 10 | 116 | 8 |
| Accurate and timely information available at stations | 133 | 8 | 110 | 9 | 139 | 6 |
| Journey time is reduced | 125 | 9 | 111 | 8 | 81 | 14 |
| Free Wi-Fi available on the train | 90 | 12 | 143 | 4 | 87 | 13 |
| Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard | 71 | 14 | 103 | 11 | 113 | 10 |
| Accurate and timely information provided on trains | 95 | 11 | 76 | 13 | 96 | 11 |
| Less disruption due to engineering works | 106 | 10 | 72 | 16 | 78 | 15 |
| Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train | 61 | 15 | 100 | 12 | 116 | 9 |
| Connections with other train services are always good | 77 | 13 | 73 | 15 | 95 | 12 |
| Good connections with other public transport at stations | 56 | 16 | 52 | 18 | 72 | 16 |
| Seating area on train is very comfortable | 42 | 18 | 75 | 14 | 71 | 17 |
| Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude | 37 | 20 | 45 | 20 | 57 | 18 |
| Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude | 37 | 19 | 42 | 21 | 56 | 19 |
| New ticket formats available | 45 | 17 | 55 | 17 | 42 | 24 |
| Improved personal security on the train | 35 | 21 | 32 | 24 | 52 | 20 |
| Improved personal security at the station | 32 | 22 | 30 | 25 | 47 | 22 |
| Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage | 23 | 25 | 40 | 22 | 51 | 21 |
| Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard | 28 | 23 | 35 | 23 | 44 | 23 |
| More staff available at stations to help passengers | 23 | 26 | 23 | 27 | 37 | 25 |
| There is always space in the station car park | 18 | 28 | 52 | 19 | 26 | 26 |
| Free Wi-Fi available at the station | 24 | 24 | 30 | 26 | 23 | 28 |
| More staff available on trains to help passengers | 16 | 29 | 17 | 29 | 26 | 27 |
| Reduced queuing time when buying a ticket | 19 | 27 | 18 | 28 | 22 | 29 |
| Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free | 11 | 30 | 12 | 30 | 21 | 30 |
| Safe and secure bicycle parking available at the station | 9 | 31 | 8 | 31 | 13 | 31 |
| *Sample size* | *1754* | | *431* | | *1374* | |

**Figure 3: Southeastern passengers' priorities for improvement – relative importance**



## 3.3 NRPS and drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

The National Rail Passenger Survey (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 three 'building block' groupings of rail services on Southeastern[5].

Evidence from the NRPS reinforces the importance of punctuality and reliability and handling disruption, alongside capacity and value for money, as the highest priorities identified for the franchise. Punctuality and reliability is the number one driver of satisfaction, whilst how the train company dealt with delays is the number one driver of dissatisfaction. Satisfaction with the amount of space to sit or stand, and with the value for money of the price of the ticket, are both especially low for passengers travelling at peak times, at 37 per cent and 26 per cent respectively.

Tables detailing the NRPS headline factor scores for Southeastern and the three component building blocks are provided in Appendix 2. These include a comparison of scores with the sector or typology average and the typology best in class. We have also included a comparison between the satisfaction of passengers travelling in the peak and in the off-peak.

### 3.3.1 Drivers of satisfaction

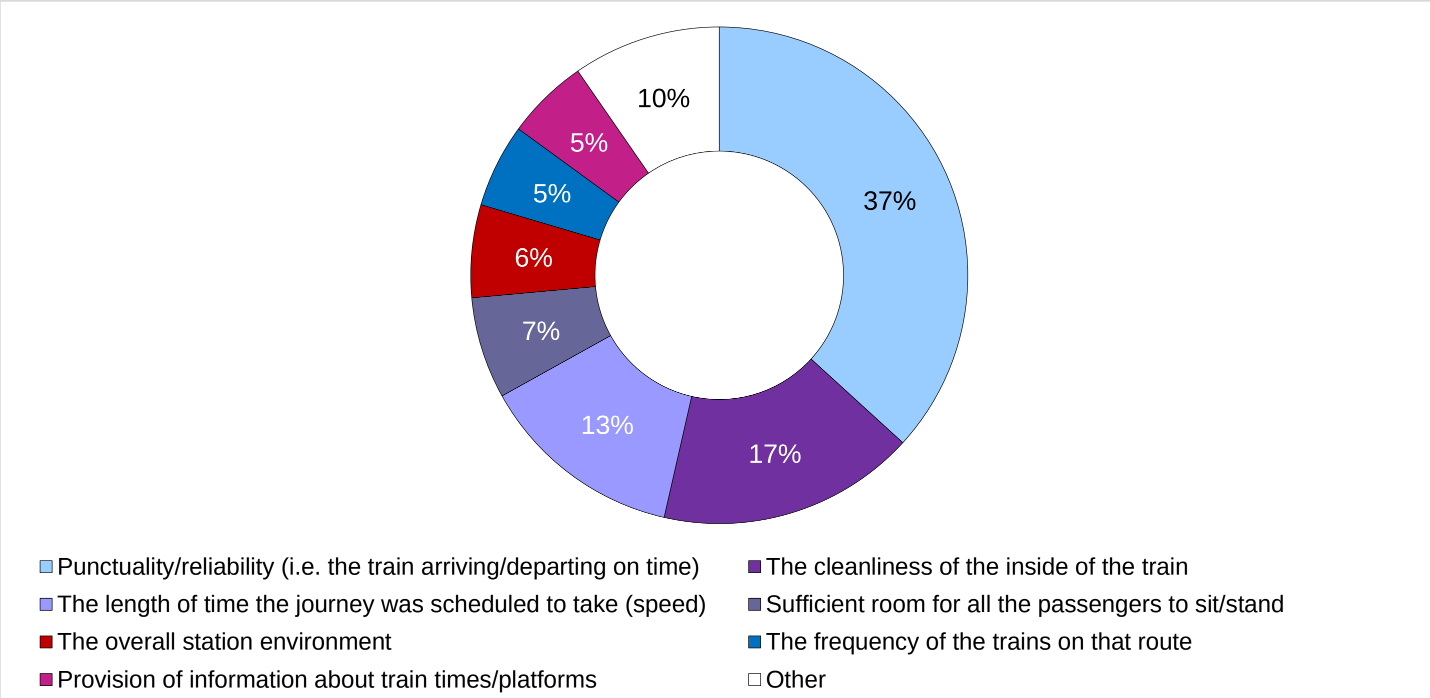
Figure 4 shows the importance of punctuality and reliability as a driver of satisfaction for Southeastern overall at 37 per cent. It has a similar importance on Mainline and Metro routes (34 and 32 per cent respectively), and although it is less important for High Speed services at 21 per cent, it is still the most important driver of satisfaction.

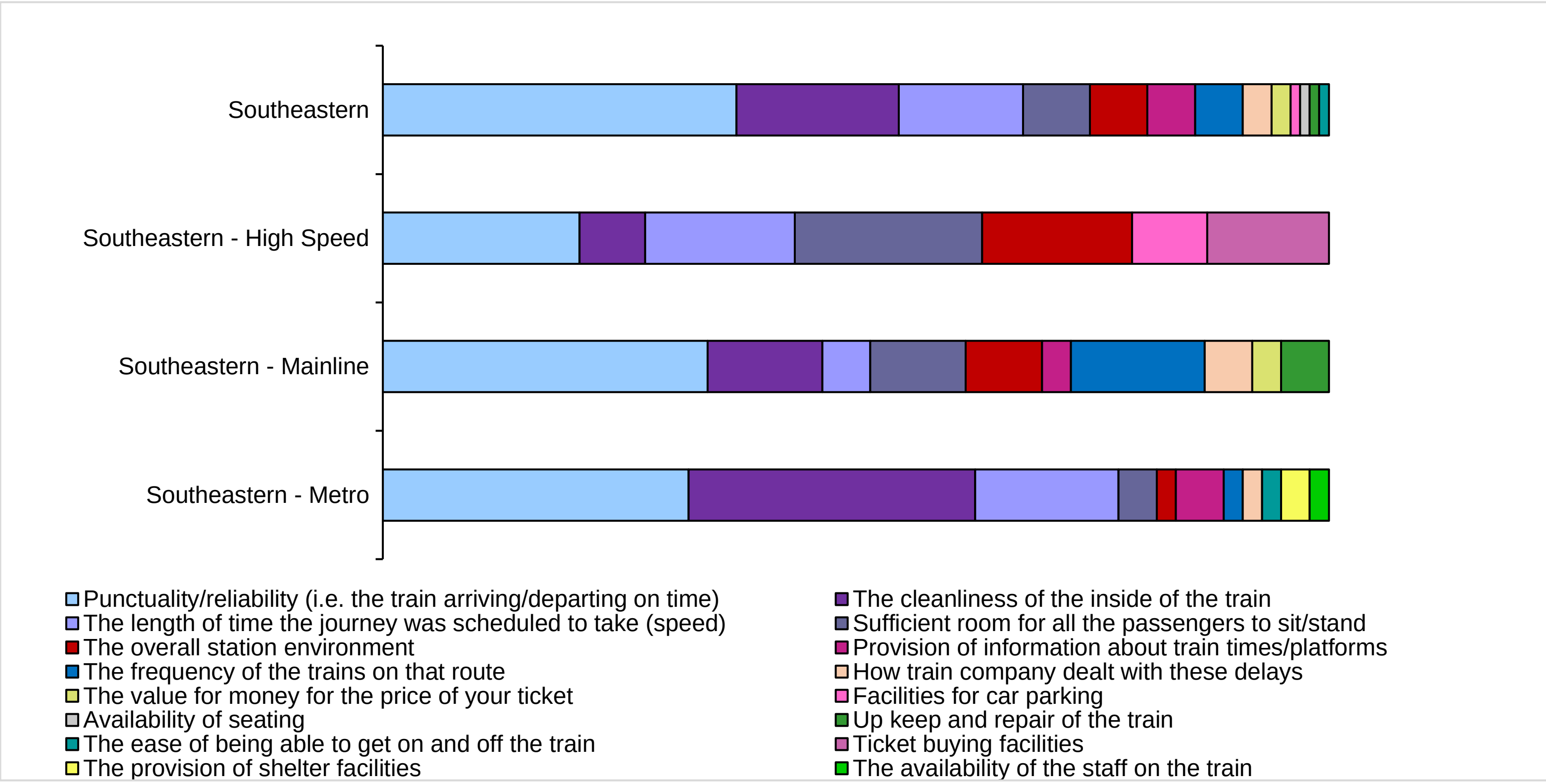
The cleanliness of the inside of the train is the second biggest driver of satisfaction overall on Southeastern, something mainly down to Metro services. Sufficient room to sit/stand is an important factor for High Speed passengers, and frequency is the second most important factor for Mainline services.

Other important drivers of satisfaction for Southeastern passengers are the length of the journey, overall station environment (which features particularly heavily on High Speed services), and the provision of information about train times/platforms especially on Mainline and Metro services. Information provision is a key part of how the train company deals with disruption, which is overwhelmingly the main driver of dissatisfaction.

[5] Appendix 1 provides definitions of the NRPS building blocks

**Figure 4: Drivers of satisfaction, NRPS Spring 2016/Autumn 2016: Southeastern and building blocks**

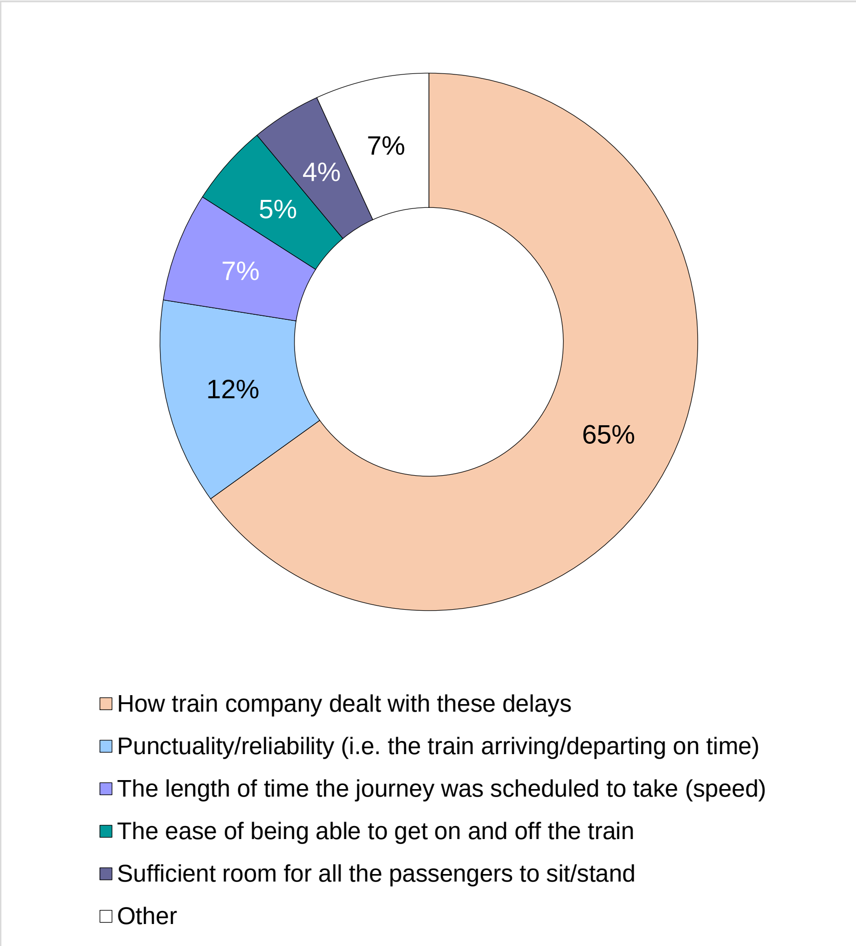



### 3.3.2 Drivers of dissatisfaction

An analysis of the factors that drive passenger dissatisfaction also echoes the importance of getting the core product right. (Figure 5). By far the most significant driver of dissatisfaction is how well the train company dealt with delays at 65 per cent. Whilst it is normal for this to be the main driver of dissatisfaction, it is particularly prominent for Southeastern passengers, dwarfing all other factors. Where delays are not dealt with well, passengers will be dissatisfied. Punctuality and reliability is the second highest driver of dissatisfaction at 12 per cent. This is followed by the length of time the journey was scheduled to take at 7 per cent.

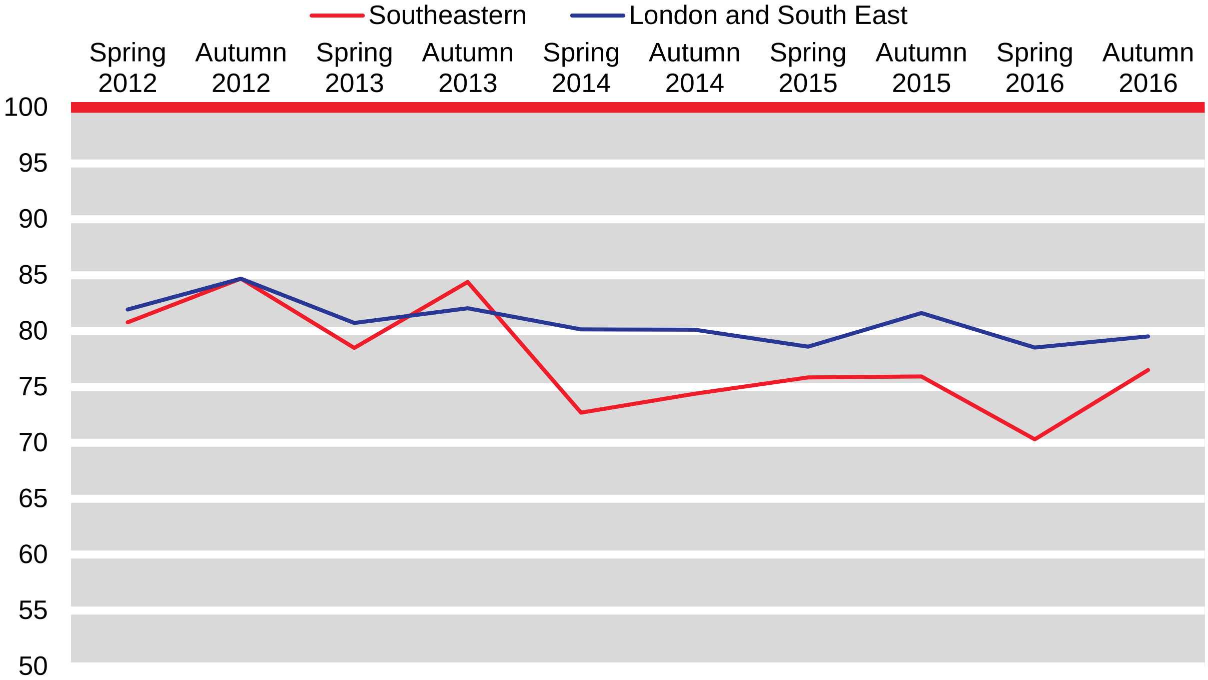
**Figure 5: Drivers of dissatisfaction, NRPS Spring 2016/Autumn 2016: Southeastern**




### 3.3.3 Satisfaction with value for money and the overall journey

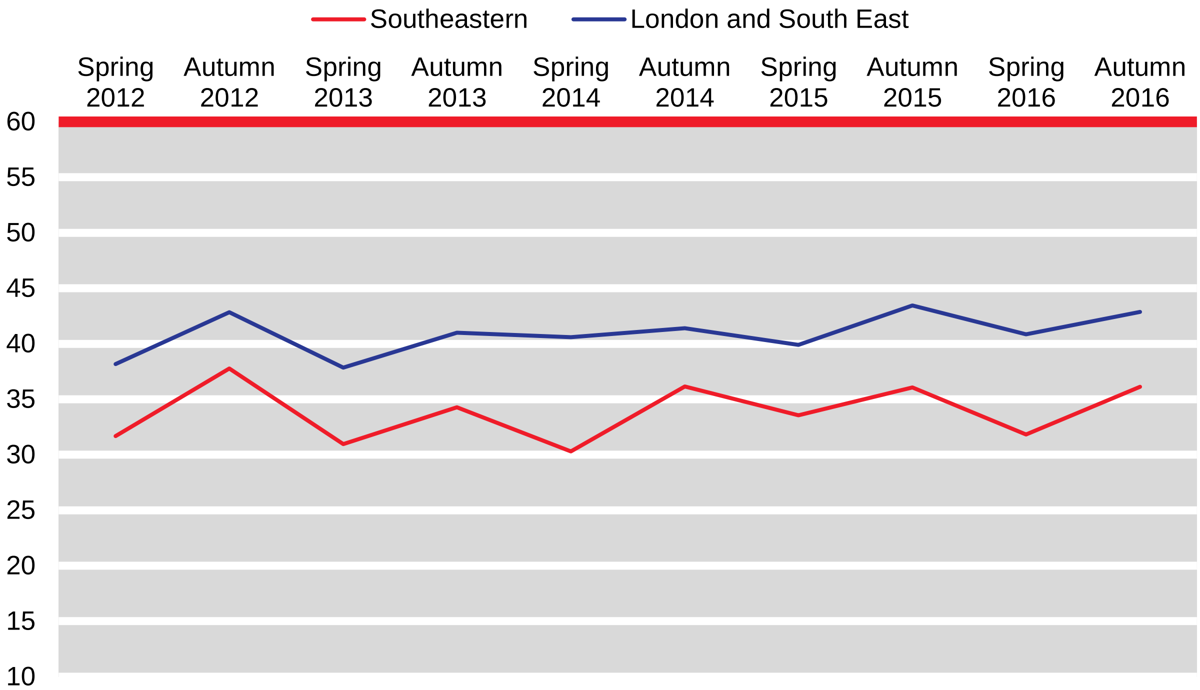
A comparison between Southeastern and the London and South East sector shows Southeastern to have had generally lower overall satisfaction over several years (Figure 6) and has only been above sector average once in past five years.  The most recent results from Autumn 2016 NRPS show Southeastern achieving 77 per cent compared to a sector average of 80 per cent.

**Figure 6: Southeastern and London and South East sector trends for satisfaction with overall journey, NRPS**




Scores for satisfaction with value for money are considerably lower for both Southeastern and the sector (Figure 7). However, Southeastern consistently scores well below the London and South East sector average, with Autumn 2016 NRPS scores of 36 and 43 per cent respectively.

**Figure 7: Southeastern and London and South East sector trends for value for money, NRPS**



## 3.4 Qualitative research into passengers' experiences and aspirations for the future

We carried out qualitative (focus group) research in November 2016, and found that passengers placed a strong emphasis on the need to focus on getting the basics right, before looking at more aspirational elements of service. These core needs may have tempered expectations among passengers, compared with a franchise where the essential requirements are already adequately being met. Also, the fieldwork was carried out against the backdrop of the extended disruption to Southern services, creating a feeling, explicitly expressed during focus groups, of "at least it's not us".

Whilst passengers are broadly satisfied with service parameters such as frequency and timings, they see delivering a punctual, reliable train service with sufficient capacity as a key priority for improvement, along with the way disruption is handled. These requirements are important for all types of passengers, but especially for Commuters (particularly on Metro and Mainline services) as they don't think their service currently meets these basic needs sufficiently.

Where passengers' basic needs are generally met, they start to focus on what would improve the quality of their journey. Passengers highly value staff presence and visibility, and they would like to see this enhanced. Helpful, informed staff on stations and on trains would help to improve satisfaction with handling disruption and perceptions of personal security, which are both seen as important areas for improvement.

Passengers would like to see cleaner, more comfortable trains that allow them to use their time productively. To this end Wi-Fi and plug sockets on trains are seen as being nice to have – but there is still a clear emphasis on getting the basic service right first. Station facilities were identified as being in need of improvement, even at the most basic level such as provision of shelter.

Perceptions of the High Speed service are markedly different. Passengers view it as a premium product, being cleaner and smarter, with better reliability and comfort, as well as shorter journey times. Given that the basic needs of passengers using High Speed seem to be broadly met, expectations shift. For example Wi-Fi provision is increasingly seen as a core requirement.

Most passengers find fares too expensive, with commuters often describing them as extortionate, but because they don't believe that they can change much about the cost of travel, their expectations for improvement shift towards getting a better service for their money.

## 3.5 Recommendations - top level priorities for the franchise

Analysis of the passenger priorities for improvement, drivers of satisfaction/ dissatisfaction and the feedback from the passenger focus groups highlights a number of factors that should be top level priorities for the next South Eastern franchise.

The primary requirements are for an absolute focus on the fundamentals to deliver improvements to:

- punctuality and reliability –at all stages of the train journey, not simply the timing of the train at its destination
- minimise and effectively manage disruptions – with planning and contingency arrangements placing passenger interests to the fore
- capacity – considering service frequencies and train layouts, optimising the availability of carriages and classification (as first or standard) appropriate to demand, as well as how fares incentives might make a contribution to alleviating pressures
- information – for all stages of the journey but especially during delays and disruption
- value for money – encompassing the important service elements which drive this as well as the ticket price

Alongside this, there must also be improvements to other elements of the journey experience including:

- improvements on-board – with particular emphasis on the cleanliness and maintenance of the inside of the train and on-board toilets, layouts that facilitate luggage storage and passenger comfort and with high quality connectivity to facilitate access to information and enable a range of activities during the journey
- enhanced station environments – that create easily navigable spaces providing the facilities and comfort that passengers expect and value
- proactive, helpful and empowered staff available to provide information, reassurance and assistance to passengers
- seamless ticketing – which allows passengers to select and easily obtain the best and most appropriate fare for their journey delivered through the medium of their choice

The next franchise operator also needs to embed a genuinely customer-service focused culture at all levels and provide a personalised, rewarding passenger experience. This will require a genuinely engaged and empowered workforce for effective delivery of high standards to passengers.

These points, and other elements that require consideration in the specification and bidders’ proposals, are developed in the remainder of this document. Where relevant, we provide enhanced details of key topics and our policy perspective on wider issues related to rail franchising.

# 4. Response to consultation questions

## Question 1: Do our priorities correctly reflect your views?

Based on what we have heard so far, our priorities are:

- Making trains run on time.
- Providing more space for passengers – to cater for an increasing demand for rail travel, with more and more people wanting to use trains within Greater
- London and on High Speed routes in particular.
- Improving passenger satisfaction on Mainline and Metro services.
- Limiting the number of late-running or cancelled trains.
- Improving communication for passengers, particularly when things go wrong.
- Optimising current and planned infrastructure to add services, lengthen trains and reduce journey times where possible.
- Taking full advantage of the new Elizabeth Line and Thameslink routes to provide more capacity, and revise service patterns.

### 4.1.1 Priorities

In 2014 we carried out research into rail passengers' priorities for improvement[6]. The research showed that the number one priority for improvement for Southeastern passengers was the value for money of the price of the ticket, at over five times the importance of the average factor. The most recent wave of the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)[7] revealed that Southeastern passengers are less satisfied with value for money than those of any other operator. Ensuring that the new operator delivers better value for money to passengers has to be a key priority for the next franchise.

Having said that, value for money is about more than just the price of the ticket. Passengers consider the whole journey experience against the money they have paid when considering whether their ticket price represents value for money. As such, the priorities set out in the consultation document do address passengers' core needs. Other priorities for improvement centre around improving capacity, punctuality and reliability and improving information provision, especially during disruption. NRPS shows that punctuality and reliability is the number one driver of overall satisfaction for Southeastern passengers, whereas how Southeastern deals with delays is the clear number one driver of dissatisfaction. Reduced journey times is of secondary importance to passengers to improving these core elements of the service.

In April we published new insight into the views of passengers who use Southeastern services[8]. We carried out qualitative (focus group) research and found that, in general, passengers placed a strong emphasis on the need to focus on getting the basics right. This may have tempered expectations among passengers

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[6] *Rail Passengers' priorities for improvement,* October 2014
[7] *National Rail Passenger Survey*
[8] *South Eastern rail franchise – what passengers want*, April 2017

compared with a franchise where the basic needs are already adequately being met. Also, the fieldwork was carried out during the extended disruption to Southern services, creating a feeling explicitly expressed during focus groups of “at least it’s not us”.

Whilst passengers are broadly satisfied with service parameters such as frequency, they see delivering a punctual, reliable train service with sufficient capacity as a key priority for improvement, along with the way disruption is handled. These are important for different types of passengers, but especially for Commuters (particularly on Metro and Mainline services) as they don’t think their service currently meets these basic needs sufficiently.

Where passengers’ basic needs are met, they start to focus on what would improve the quality of their journey. Passengers highly value staff presence and visibility, and they would like to see this enhanced on both trains and at stations. Helpful, informed staff on stations and on trains would help to improve satisfaction with handling disruption and perceptions of personal security, which are both seen as important areas for improvement.

They would like to see cleaner, more comfortable trains that allow them to use their time productively. Station facilities were identified as being in need of improvement, even at the most basic level such as provision of shelter. Wi-Fi and plug sockets on trains are seen as being nice to have, but that it is more important to get the basic service right first.

Perceptions of the Highspeed service are markedly different, with passengers viewing it as a premium product, being cleaner and smarter, with better reliability and comfort, as well as shorter journey times. Given that the basic needs of passengers using Highspeed seem to be broadly met, expectations shift. For example Wi-Fi provision is increasingly seen as a requirement. Providing sufficient capacity remains a concern for Highspeed passengers, though, and given the premium price people using Highspeed expect to be able to get a seat.

Most passengers find fares too expensive, with commuters often finding them extortionate, but because they don’t believe that they can change much about the cost of travel, their priorities for improvement shift towards getting a better service for their money.

Passengers identified several key areas for improvement:

- punctuality and reliability
- dealing with disruption
- capacity and crowding
- station environment
- ticketing and value for money.

Notwithstanding the point about value for money, these are broadly consistent with the priorities identified in the consultation document. But there are a few areas not covered: we would like to see more emphasis on improving the station environment – providing sufficient shelter and a range of facilities appropriate to the footfall and profile of passengers, as well as ensuring passengers feel safe and secure. We would also like the new operator to ensure that more visible, proactive and empowered staff are available at stations and on trains. We discuss these further in our responses to questions five and six.

**4.1.2 Getting the basics right: punctuality and reliability**

Punctuality, reliability and how disruption is dealt with are highly important across all passenger types, but particularly key priorities for commuters, most of whom feel their basic needs aren't met, in these areas.

Although High Speed services are seen as more punctual, Metro and Mainline services are seen as being frequently delayed. Commuters in particular say that delays are too frequent and too long. The NRPS reflects this discrepancy: currently, 68 per cent of Southeastern passengers are satisfied with punctuality and reliability, in line with the London and South East sector average of 69 per cent. However, the Southeastern overall score includes passengers using High Speed, of whom 75 per cent are satisfied with punctuality and reliability.

Punctuality and reliability is of critical importance to passengers, and particularly to commuters. Our research, *Train punctuality: the passenger perspective*[9], demonstrates a clear link between punctuality and overall satisfaction, which declines one and a half percentage points for every minute of lateness for all passengers and three percentage points for commuters. In our recent focus group research, Southeastern passengers told us:

- they could tolerate an occasional delay of up to five minutes but where this occurs more frequently it becomes annoying
- delays of five to 10 minutes can be frustrating, especially when they cause missed connections
- delays of more than 10 or 15 minutes are likely to have a major impact
- disruption also increases other problems, such as overcrowding.

Concerns with performance are felt more acutely by commuters than by leisure or business travellers. Many leisure and business users find delays less frequent in off-peak hours and these also tend not to cause such significant overcrowding. In addition, leisure passengers often feel less time sensitive so are not as frustrated by minor delays. The NRPS shows that 72 per cent of Southeastern passengers travelling off-peak are satisfied with punctuality and reliability, compared with just 62 per cent of passengers travelling in the peak.

[9] *Train punctuality: the passenger perspective*, November 2015

Our 2014 research, *Rail passengers' priorities for improvements*[10], found that 'more trains arrive on time than happens now' is the fourth highest improvement priority for Southeastern passengers. This is closely followed by 'less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey' and 'fewer trains cancelled than happens now'. These factors come in at around twice the importance of the average. 'Journey time is reduced' is the tenth highest priority and is of average importance to Southeastern passengers.

## Question 2: Do you agree that more space is needed for passengers at the busiest times of the day?

In our research among Southeastern passengers, capacity was a key concern for people on all parts of the network, especially during peak times. For journeys longer than half an hour, and for those who have paid to travel on High Speed, passengers expect to be able to get a seat. Even on shorter journeys, most passengers would prefer to have a seat, but for journeys of up to 15 minutes passengers want to at least be able to stand in a degree of comfort and safety, with sufficient grab handles for support. All too frequently, Southeastern Metro passengers just want to be able to get on the train, as severe overcrowding combined with a train layout that is perceived to be unsuitable regularly limits this.

**Figure 8: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with capacity**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand** | 62 | 77 | 63 | 60 | 37 | 76 |
| **The ease of being able to get on and off** | 77 | 94 | 82 | 73 | 69 | 82 |

'Passengers always able to get a seat on the train' is the second highest priority for improvement for Southeastern passengers, according to our 2014 research, at three times the importance of the average factor. NRPS shows that there is a stark difference in the satisfaction levels between passengers using Southeastern services in the peak and the off-peak for 'sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand' and 'the ease of being able to get on and off'. Metro passengers are markedly less satisfied with 'the ease of being able to get on and off' than Mainline passengers.

Highspeed passengers are generally more satisfied. But, although 77 per cent satisfaction with 'Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand' is higher than on other parts of the network, there is still room for improvement.

With numbers of people using the network expected to grow, especially for High Speed services, addressing passengers' concerns about capacity is important. This

[10] *Rail passengers' priorities for improvements*, October 2014

means not only allowing passengers making short journeys to use the train easily and stand safely in a degree of comfort, but also provide sufficient capacity for passengers making longer journeys to sit in comfort.

Extending Metro services to 12 carriages, and providing more seats on High Speed services, will be welcome. There are times when this is needed already on parts of the network, and we would urge DfT and bidders for the franchise to look at future-proofing routes in terms of capacity, to allow for future growth.

The consultation document doesn't identify possible solutions to capacity issues on the rest of the mainline network. We would also like to see solutions identified for improving capacity to allow for continued growth across the network.

**Question 3: What comments, if any, do you have on options for providing more space through:**

- Longer trains
- Metro-style carriages with larger entrances and more standing room and handholds

Priorities for improvement clearly indicate the value passengers place on being able to get a seat and our qualitative research reinforces the demand for sufficient space in general.

NRPS shows that more High Speed and Off-Peak passengers are satisfied with the room to sit or stand, whilst there is lower satisfaction on the Mainline and Metro. Amongst commuters on these latter two routes, satisfaction levels are 52 and 45 per cent and dissatisfaction levels are 32 and 40 per cent, respectively. Amongst peak passengers on Southeastern overall, just 37 per cent are satisfied with the space available.

Providing longer trains wherever this is possible will deliver improved capacity without the potential negative impact that some other approaches are likely to create. It was the principal suggestion from focus group participants who saw this as the obvious solution to capacity needs. They also suggested increasing the frequency of trains if passenger volumes were above the capacity of available services.

They also felt there was a need for improved layout to maximise seating and standing space, as well as providing designated space for wheelchairs, prams and bicycles. Clearly, on a capacity-challenged railway, not all aspirations can be met and appropriate compromise between different perspectives will need to be achieved. There were also clear differences between service-users. Metro passengers prioritised room for standing to allow more passengers onto trains and for a greater degree of comfort and improved safety in very crowded carriages. Mainline passengers prioritised seating.

Amongst our transport user panel there was support for three of the four options for creating capacity they were asked to consider. More frequent trains was selected as the best way to create capacity by 33 per cent of Metro passengers, making trains longer was cited by 41 per cent of High Speed passengers and removing first class by 41 per cent of Mainline passengers.

The option of metro-style carriages was unpopular with the panel with only five per cent of Mainline passengers and 10 per cent of Metro passengers selecting this as the best option. As noted, views from the qualitative research were directly linked to the type of journey passengers were making. Where reduced seating is to be provided consideration will need to be given towards the needs of people with disabilities. We support the idea of the 'priority seat' card in use by some other train companies (including Southern) which helps passengers who are less able to stand to demonstrate to other passengers their need for a seat.

Metro-style carriages which reduce the number of available seats will clearly have unwelcome implications for passengers travelling on longer journeys, those with physical needs for a seat and the many who rely on the ability to work during the journey. Significant reductions in seating should be regarded as a second-stage solution, utilised only where options of lengthening and increasing frequency have been fully exploited. However, the possibility of optimising layouts to improve embarking/disembarking, flow throughout carriages, as well as increasing handholds and comfort should be carefully explored, along with options to make some space more flexible, for example through the use of tip-up seats.

Where any remodelling of carriage layouts is taken forward it should be a fundamental requirement to ensure that passenger opinions are taken on board from the outset. Their views should be sought on the development of potential layouts and as designs emerge these should be tested on passengers who will be using them.

**Question 4: Would you support removing First Class seating on the busiest routes to provide more space?**

The prospect of the removal of first class seating provision will clearly be unpopular with those passengers who elect to travel in this way.

Interestingly, NRPS shows that first class passenger satisfaction levels on many factors are not much different to standard class passengers[11]. Overall satisfaction with the journey scores 75 per cent compared with 74 per cent, whilst 61 per cent of first class passengers were satisfied with room to sit or stand compared to 59 per cent in standard class. However, comfort of the seating area rates 70 per cent compared with 64 per cent and satisfaction with value for money is 44 per cent compared with 34 per cent.

Within our focus groups we heard a number of comments about space being available in first class whilst the rest of the train is full. It is also clear that, at points, there is insufficient room for passengers to actually board some trains, especially

[11] Based on a sample of 114 first class passengers and 9608 standard class passengers over six waves to Autumn 2016

during the peak and closer to London. 34 per cent of panel respondents selected removal of first class seating as the best way of creating more capacity.

For those passengers who value, and are prepared to pay for first class, the removal of this facility will be regrettable. Along with metro-style remodelling, consideration of the removal of first class should be regarded as an option to be explored after other approaches such as lengthening trains and increasing frequency have been fully exploited. There must also be demonstrable adherence to running trains at the full length diagrammed, ensuring no short-formations and avoiding cancellations.

Nevertheless, when the passenger volumes are so great that there are no further options available to generate the required capacity, then the need to provide sufficient space to carry all those who need to travel must be paramount. At such times it does not seem right that some passengers may not physically be able to board while seats remain empty in first class

However, transitions might be incremental and consideration should be given to reducing the first class provision before removing it altogether, or considering how declassification policies can improve available space for the most crowded times and places. Consideration will also need to be given to how passengers who have bought first class annual season tickets in good faith will be handled. There will also be financial implications to consider; if first class is reduced or removed, how will the reduction in revenue be met? With value for money the top priority for improvement for Southeastern, passengers will not welcome further fare increases, especially as the increased likelihood of obtaining a seat for each individual is marginal.

It is notable that on Greater Anglia, another franchise which is seeking to manage capacity pressures more effectively, first class will not be provided on the new trains ordered to operate services on this network.

**Question 5: What comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve customer experience and the overall passenger experience?**

- Journey planning.
- Ticket purchase.
- On-board experience.
- Provision of information before, during and after the journey.
- Communication during disruption.
- Dealing with complaints.
- Providing compensation when things go wrong.

Our research among Southeastern passengers demonstrated that, once the basic needs of a punctual, reliable service with sufficient space to sit or stand are met, passengers turn their attention to things that will improve the quality of their journey. They would like the train to be clean and well-maintained. They would like a comfortable seat. And they want visible, proactive and empowered customer-facing staff at stations and on trains.

This is backed up by the findings from our research into passengers' relationship with the industry[12], which showed that operators need to initially deliver the basics before looking at providing the things that make people more satisfied. Only once these foundations are delivered can the operator seek greater acknowledgement through introducing measures that will really delight passengers, delivering excellent customer service and building a relationship with its customers.

### 4.5.1 Journey planning

Most passengers who use the South Eastern network travel regularly, often on the same route each day to and from work. As such, their journey planning needs are quite straight-forward, and they know how to find the information they need about times and journey updates. But they still face the same challenges as passengers elsewhere on the rail network when making unfamiliar journeys, or when faced with disruption.

There are two key aspects to journey planning: building an original journey, checking routes, fares, options and so on, and checking to see if a planned or regular journey is running as it should.

Passengers planning their journey will have different requirements depending on their individual situation and preferences. Pre-journey information should therefore be available through a variety of channels.

We know that websites are the first place many passengers go when planning a journey.

Websites need to be easy to navigate and kept up to date. Passengers want a site that gives them clear information on which they can make an informed decision, uses language that they understand and instils confidence (primarily that they have bought the right ticket)[13]. As Southeastern passengers use a range of different websites when planning their journeys, for example National Rail, The Trainline and TfL, as well as Southeastern's own website, it is important that information is consistent across different sites.

Information on planned disruption is a key requirement during the journey planning stage. Passengers need to know if there is engineering work causing extended journey times, additional changes or bus replacements. Ensuring that passengers know in advance of buying a ticket, or are informed far enough out that they can plan around the disruption, is key to managing expectations on the day. It is also an important component of trust and building a relationship with passengers.

Information is also essential during unplanned disruption. Accurate, timely information can help to empower passengers during such times[14]. Passengers want

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[12] *Passengers' relationship with the rail industry*, August 2014
[13] *Ticket retailing website usability*, July 2011
[14] *Passenger information when trains are disrupted*, September 2014

this information to be personalised (in other words ‘what does the delay mean to me’) so that they can rearrange meetings, alert family members and so on. Some passengers will welcome the option to sign up for journey alerts.

Our research looking at how train companies use social media found that Twitter was seen as a useful channel for pushing information out to people[15]. However, it was essential that this information could be filtered to suit individual requirements; passengers want a tailored solution rather than an overwhelming amount of detail that is not directly relevant to their journey.

Some passengers may prefer to speak to a member of staff at their local station for information. This option offers reassurance, about both journey details and fares, especially to a passenger who is not a regular rail user or who is making an unfamiliar journey. Contact centre service staff should have good local area and network knowledge to deal constructively with enquiries made by phone and email.

There are also specific journey planning implications for passengers with disabilities, not only in terms of accessing the information above but also in arranging assistance on the day of travel. The latter requires up-to-date, trusted details about facilities at stations and en-route. This will become even more relevant with an increasingly ageing population.

Journeys rarely begin and end at rail stations. Passengers will welcome a joined-up approach to offering information about other train operators, other public transport services, cycling or walking options, taxis and parking and drop-off facilities.

#### 4.5.2 Ticket purchase

This is dealt with in our answers to questions 7 and 8.

#### 4.5.3 On the train

Southeastern passengers’ primary concern is in receiving a train service that they can rely on. They are calling for a relentless focus on delivering a train service that is punctual, reliable and on which they can get a seat – or at least (for shorter journeys) be able to stand safely with a degree of comfort.

They deserve to be kept informed with clear, helpful and consistent information, especially when things go wrong.

Only when these basic, core needs are met do passengers using the South Eastern network even start to consider what might improve their overall experience on-board the train.

Figure 9 shows the drivers of overall satisfaction with the train among Southeastern passengers, based on the Spring and Autumn 2016 NRPS. In common with other operators, cleanliness is the clear number one driver of satisfaction with the train.

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[15] *Short and Tweet. How passengers want social media during disruption*, June 2012

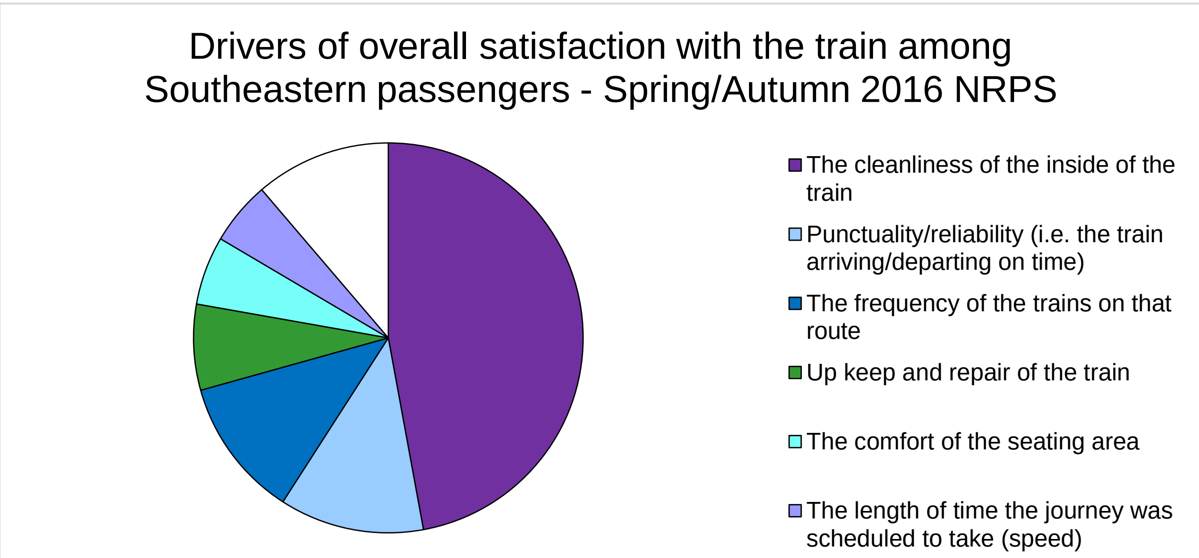
But the comfort of the seating area is the second most important driver of satisfaction with the train nationally; it features much less strongly for Southeastern passengers, underlining the message that their primary interest is in improving the most basic aspects of the service.

Our research among Southeastern passengers confirms this. Aside from on High Speed services, cleanliness is often seen as not good enough, and toilets are often unclean or out of action. Satisfaction (Figure 10) with toilet facilities on trains is just 28 per cent, against a sector average of 35 per cent. Only once these more basic factors are addressed do passengers then emphasise a desire for additional useful features such as more comfortable seats, plug sockets and Wi-Fi. Passengers want to see more staff on the train in a customer service role. Staff are not only important in providing information and assistance, they also offer reassurance and help passengers to feel safe and secure.

Satisfaction with the availability of staff on board trains is low, at just 28 per cent, compared with a sector average of 35 per cent. Satisfaction with the train overall is 76 per cent for Southeastern and 79 per cent for the sector as a whole.

Looking at the NRPS satisfaction scores for various aspects of the train, there are clear differences across the network. Passengers using the Metro services are significantly less satisfied with various aspects of the train, whereas High Speed passengers express high satisfaction levels with their relatively new, purpose-built Javelin trains. As with other factors, there is a stark contrast in satisfaction between passengers travelling in the peak and in the off-peak, with off-peak passengers much more satisfied.

**Figure 9: Spring and Autumn 2016 NRPS - drivers of overall satisfaction with the train among Southeastern passengers**



Our research shows that, in general, connectivity is important to passengers. 'Free Wi-Fi available on the train' is the tenth priority for improvement nationally[16]. This can be even higher for passengers with a particular journey purpose. For example, for business long-distance passengers it is the fourth highest priority for improvement.

**Figure 10: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with the train**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall satisfaction with the train** | 76 | 92 | 77 | 74 | 68 | 80 |
| **The cleanliness of the inside of the train** | 72 | 95 | 76 | 67 | 66 | 75 |
| **Upkeep and repair of the train** | 71 | 92 | 78 | 65 | 61 | 76 |
| **Comfort of the seating area** | 65 | 89 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 73 |
| **The toilet facilities** | 28 | 70 | 39 | 16 | 19 | 34 |
| **The space for luggage** | 48 | 71 | 50 | 44 | 38 | 53 |

Many passengers now want a free and reliable connection to the internet to be available as standard on trains. The provision of Wi-Fi, mobile reception and power sockets play an important role in allowing passengers to use their travel time productively.

Given the ongoing advance of technology and expectations, bidders should be asked to produce flexible plans to provide future connectivity through the most appropriate channels available.

Other areas of the on-board experience such as luggage storage, provision of power sockets and charging points, tables and catering are also important. We recommend that passengers are involved at an early stage in discussions about rolling stock design.

### 4.5.4 Train design

Ultimately, passenger views on the suitability of particular 'rolling stock' set-ups are likely to be driven by personal circumstances related to the type of journey being made and the likelihood of a seat, or even standing room, being available when they get on.

[16] *Rail passengers' priorities for improvement*, October 2014

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 and gangway running the length of the carriage
- the vestibule area and entrance to the carriage.

Research among Thameslink passengers indicated that on busy peak trains the design should allow passengers who have to stand to do so in complete safety and as comfortably as possible[17]. This could include improved provision of grab handles and rails. Passengers welcomed designs that showed wider gangways and 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.

These findings were echoed in Merseyrail rolling stock research[18]. Congestion in the vestibule area was identified as an issue. Passengers are reluctant to stand in the aisles, primarily due to a lack of usable grab poles in this part of the carriage. The narrowness of the space also 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.

Aspirations for the type and layout of trains will differ according to passenger characteristics across various routes. The best way of capturing these is with bespoke research.

### 4.5.5 Information, communication and dealing with disruption

Our work on passenger priorities shows that keeping passengers informed when there is disruption is the sixth highest priority for improvement for Southeastern passengers. The impact of not doing so can be seen in our work on passenger satisfaction where ‘how well the operator dealt with delays’ is the highest driver of overall dissatisfaction with the journey. This is true nationally, but particularly overwhelmingly for Southeastern passengers where 65 per cent of dissatisfaction is driven by the operator’s ability to deal with delays.

[17] *Thameslink rolling stock qualitative research*, September 2008
[18] *Future Merseyrail rolling stock – what passengers want*, April 2014

**Figure 11: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with information and dealing with disruption.**

* Indicates building block scores where the sample size is below 50.

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Provision of information about train times/platforms** | 81 | 84 | 79 | 81 | 78 | 82 |
| **Provision of information during the journey** | 65 | 89 | 67 | 61 | 57 | 70 |
| **How well train company deals with delays** | 29 | * | 30 | 27 | 20 | 35 |
| **Usefulness of information during delays** | 40 | * | 38 | 38 | 32 | 45 |

The provision of high-quality and effective passenger information during disruption is vitally important. However, it is intrinsically linked to the broader topic of managing or, better still, minimising the disruption that blights far too many passenger experiences.

Our Southeastern passenger research demonstrates that information provided during disruption, and measures taken to reduce the frequency and impact of delays, are seen as major areas for improvement for the South Eastern franchise,

Southeastern passengers told us, in our recent qualitative research, that staff are often unable to provide vital information at times of disruption. Even when information is available, passengers distrust its accuracy, both in the expected times of train arrivals and in the reasons given for disruption. They don't feel that Southeastern takes sufficient responsibility for disruption, or adequate steps to avoid it in the first place.

The way Southeastern acts to reduce the impact of disruption is also an important area to improve. Our research revealed a perceived lack of measures that would help reduce the frequency and impact of delays. For example, passengers would welcome being able to use High Speed services when there is disruption elsewhere on the network. They would like to see more investment in the network to allow it to better deal with causes of delay outside its immediate control, such as weather.

The new operator must be seen to take action to eliminate causes of delays within its control, such as staff shortages. Running trains with the maximum number of carriages during periods of disruption would also help alleviate overcrowding issues arising as a knock on effect of delays and cancellations.

Passengers are frustrated with a lack of quality, accurate information during disruption. They want to know how long the delay will last, when the next trains will run and details about alternative routes with the likely impact on travel connections. They want to see accurate, real-time, GPS-based trackers presented on apps and screens to show the progress of trains. They want regular announcements, and they would like to see staff taking ownership of disruption situations, apologising for the inconvenience and being honest about how they are able to help.

Southeastern's NRPS satisfaction score for 'usefulness of information during delays' is 40 per cent, close to the 41 per cent for the London and South East sector – in itself a low score. Satisfaction with how the train company dealt with delays is 29 per cent, lower than the sector average at 33 per cent. It is noteworthy that for this factor, unusually, dissatisfaction on Southeastern is higher than satisfaction, at 34 per cent. Satisfaction with how Southeastern dealt with delays at peak times is even lower, at 20 per cent.

Previous research looking at passengers' relationship with the rail industry[19] demonstrates the need for operators to get the basic service right to start with, before they can focus on building a trusting relationship with passengers. It shows that net trust in the service provided by Southeastern stands at -23 per cent, against an industry average of -14 per cent[20]. Net trust in the relationship passengers have with Southeastern is also low, at -19 per cent, compared to an industry average of minus six per cent. It is important that the new franchisee works to address this lack of faith in the ability to run an effective service, and to build a positive relationship with passengers.

#### 4.5.6 Unplanned service disruption

In 2014 Transport Focus published research looking at passengers' needs and experiences during unplanned disruption, including around the provision of information[21].

We made a number of recommendations we would encourage bidders to make credible plans to address. 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
- operators must measure the quality of information provided during disruption on a robust and ongoing basis.

[19] *Passengers' relationship with the rail industry*, August 2014

[20] Passengers were asked to rate their perception of the operator on five factors relating to service delivery. The net score is the difference between those who had positive attitudes and those who had negative opinions.

[21] *Passenger information when trains are disrupted*, September 2014

In addition to the recommendations within that research, we encourage Government to secure, as part of the new franchise, two important factors in providing effective passenger information during disruption:

- reliable, accurate and consistent visual and audible information at all stations
- train movement data sufficiently detailed to deliver accurate live departure predictions for all stations – this could mean fitting GPS devices to all trains. Allowing positional data to be fed to Darwin via the 'GPS gateway' currently under development would seem likely to be the best solution.

**4.5.6 Resilience**

Transport Focus recommends that new franchises have a strong emphasis on service resilience, including in the face of severe weather.

Specifically, we feel bidders should be required to:

- set out the extent to which they will rely on overtime and rest-day working to deliver the service, including on Sundays and at Christmas
- show they have effective maintenance and repair facilities balanced with reasonable rolling stock availability assumptions that are not so optimistic that passengers are at continual risk of experiencing short-formed and cancelled trains.

Recent research into passengers' views and expectations of rail services during extreme weather found three core principles that the rail industry must embrace[22]:

- 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.

**4.5.8 Engineering works**

Engineering works are inevitable in maintaining the infrastructure that supports rail operations and allowing future improvements. As such, the planning, scheduling and management of this disruption is part and parcel of regular business. There should be structured procedures for managing this activity that are regularly reviewed, then adapted and refined in the light of experience.

Regardless of scale, and as a core principle, 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 is important that revised timetables are robust and achievable.

[22]*Reacting to extreme weather on the railways*, July 2015

More generally, bidders 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.

Bidders should recognise that 55 per cent of passengers say they would not travel at all if a replacement bus is involved[23]. We encourage a joint, public commitment from future operators and Network Rail that, wherever practically possible, they will keep passengers on trains and transfer them to buses only as a last resort. Decisions should not be based solely on operational convenience.

Use of diversionary routes and/or using shuttles to move passengers as far along the route as possible is an important way to minimise the number of passengers needing to use replacement buses or the length of this element of the journey.

Transport Focus encourages bidders to have credible proposals for regularly submitting a high-quality bid to Network Rail 18 weeks out from work starting, so accurate amended timetables are in the public domain and reservations open 12 weeks before. We recommend that operators should be required to report, period by period, on the level of changes to the train plan after this 12-week point.

Recent Transport Focus research looks at passengers’ experiences from two sets of planned works, at Reading and Bath Spa, in 2015[24]. 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.

The research indicates the need for a flexible approach to communications planning in the build up to scheduled 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.

[23] *Rail passengers’ experiences and priorities during engineering works*, September 2012
[24] *Planned rail engineering work – the passenger perspective*, December 2015

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.

#### 4.5.9 Passenger compensation

Transport Focus believes that the new franchise should have Delay Repay style compensation 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 – that is, 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). To be fair to passengers, calculations must reflect that people do not work and travel every day of the year.
- The implementation of a 15 minute threshold/trigger for compensation (DR15)

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. 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.

Our 2016 report into passengers' experience of delays and compensation found that two thirds of those eligible for compensation for their delay did not make a claim[25]. While this shows a welcome improvement since earlier research in 2013 there remains a great deal to be done to increase passengers' awareness of their rights to claim compensation.

Train operators should take further steps to raise general awareness that compensation schemes exist and to familiarise passengers with the eligibility requirements. Posters on trains and at stations are a key part of achieving this, supported by information on the train company's website.

It is also vital to inform passengers each time they experience a qualifying delay. Announcements should be made on trains and at stations, claim forms handed out and electronic notifications issued to let passengers know about their individual eligibility and provide the information they need to make a claim.

[25] *Rail delays and compensation - what passengers want*, November 2016

Some passengers are put off claiming because they think the process will be complicated or take too long. Where a delay has already inconvenienced passengers the process of claiming compensation should not create additional frustration. Franchise bidders should offer solutions that will make the process swift and simple.

There should be a range of options both for making the claim and receiving the payment. Many passengers say they would value a refund to their card or bank account. There is also a clear desire for compensation to be paid automatically, using technology to make the compensation process easier for passengers.

The research found that passengers are increasingly unsatisfied with the length of time it takes to process compensation claims. Bidders should look to speed up this process to meet passengers' expectations.

Transport Focus recommends that the franchise specification should contain an explicit requirement for the introduction of an automatic compensation scheme.

**4.5.10 Complaints handling**

In our role as the statutory appeals body (outside London) Transport Focus has extensive experience of working with passengers and rail operators to seek resolution of unresolved complaints[26].

We have found a number of recurring issues with either the operators' complaints processes or response quality. We work 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 franchise specification asks for 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.

Any potential change of contact centre and complaints handling supplier should be well managed, with clear plans in place to ensure a smooth transition. Consideration should be given to the possibility that a new team, unfamiliar with the network and nature of cases they will be handling, might be initially slower at resolving complaints. Contingency plans should be in place to mitigate this and avoid any build-up or back-log of cases as a result of the transition.

Transport Focus has previously conducted audits of train operators' complaints-handling functions. These have enabled us to provide feedback on specific issues identified and recommendations for improvements to be adopted more generally. It may be appropriate to require future operators to commit to commissioning similar

[26]For rail passengers in Britain outside of London.

reviews at appropriate stages within the life of the franchise.

**4.5.11 Complaints handling process issues**
We recommend that the operator should:

- 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 Travel
- monitor and manage response times, and acknowledge complaints if they cannot be resolved within the target time; this information should be published
- have a process for customer service advisors, and other relevant staff members, to proactively investigate issues and share findings with passengers
- 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. This should comply with ORR guidance on Complaints Handling Procedures that sets out requirements for reference to the passenger body and establishment of a protocol with these organisations for the entire appeal handling process[27].

**4.5.12 Complaints handling response quality**
We recommend that the operator should:

- 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 – this 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

[27]*Guidance on complaints handling procedures for licence holders*, Office of Rail and Road, 2015

- 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.

**4.5.13 Dealing with legacy complaints**

In advance of the new franchise, a clear process for handling legacy complaints should be established. Transport Focus recommends that all complaints should be dealt with by the new operator 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 new operator 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.

**Question 6: Do you have any other ideas or priorities for improving customer service?**

**4.6.1 Staff**

Staff play a key role in delivering customer service at all stages of the journey. Passengers rely on staff for information and advice, assistance using stations and trains and for help when things go wrong. They make passengers feel safe and secure at stations and on trains, and for some passengers that can make the difference between whether or not they choose to travel by train. This was highlighted in our Southeastern passenger research.

**Figure 12: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with staff availability**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The availability of staff at the station** | 69 | 73 | 67 | 69 | 71 | 68 |
| **The availability of staff on the train** | 28 | 68 | 41 | 14 | 21 | 32 |

Figure **12** shows that the satisfaction with the availability of staff at stations is 69 per cent, higher than the London and South East average of 65 per cent. Passengers notice an increased station staff presence at peak times, where satisfaction increases to 71 per cent. But satisfaction with the availability of staff on trains is low, at just 28 per cent, largely due to the particularly low satisfaction with the availability of staff on metro services, at 14 per cent. This is the lowest scoring factor across any factor for any Southeastern building block.

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 very significant roles staff play and the value passengers attach to a visible staff presence, especially at stations, is not overlooked[28]. We urge that the franchise specification is mindful of the many benefits derived from staffing and that bid evaluation ensures sufficient credit for initiatives to make proposals viable.

**Figure 13: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with staff attitudes and helpfulness**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff** | 77 | 78 | 76 | 78 | 72 | 80 |
| **How request to station staff was handled** | 88 | * | 83 | 89 | 77 | 92 |
| **The helpfulness and attitudes of staff on the train** | 50 | 85 | 61 | 31 | 42 | 55 |

atives **to** make proposals viable.

**Figure 13** shows that passengers are relatively satisfied with the helpfulness and attitudes of staff at the station, but that there is room for improvement. The difference between satisfaction with the attitudes/helpfulness and with how requests to station staff were handled show that, once staff are approached, passengers find them to be generally very helpful, but that overall they could be more proactive in identifying people who might need assistance.

Southeastern have been running a pilot 'station ambassador' scheme at Charing Cross. Having witnessed this in action, and met the team behind the initiative, we found it to be impressive. Staff were recruited to the roles on the strength of their customer service skills, and they were specifically trained to be proactive in looking out for people who might need assistance. Initial feedback looks impressive. We will be interested to see whether there is a noticeable difference in NRPS scores at Charing Cross when Spring 2017 is released, and, if so, would advocate the further roll-out of this, or a similar, scheme.

Satisfaction with the helpfulness and attitudes of staff on the train is much lower for Mainline services and especially for Metro. There needs to be more of a focus on customer service as opposed to just revenue protection and operational duties.

Changes to retailing practices have seen a trend towards moving staff out from behind the glass of the ticket office and into sometimes multi-functional roles on the station concourse. Transport Focus has no intrinsic objection to this evolving role,

[28]*Passenger attitudes towards rail staff*, February 2016

provided that passengers still have access to the full range of tickets, it does not take any longer to buy a ticket and that the current regulatory safeguards (in other words assuring the hours that staff are present) are retained. It must not become a back-door means to cutting staff.

Passengers with assistance needs are particularly dependent on staff to deliver the help they require and to fulfil requests made through Passenger Assist. Disability awareness training should be considered for all staff and regarded as essential for anyone in a passenger-facing role.

Many station facilities and services are available only while staff are present. Our Southeastern passenger research indicates significant concern about the lack of access to toilets and waiting rooms where facilities are only open when the station staff are present. There are additional worries about the availability of facilities if staff hours were to be significantly reduced or station staff were to be withdrawn altogether.

Passengers also 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 new operator needs to give serious consideration to how it can best use staff and make best use of the different types of complementary policing available to it. Our research sets out passengers' concerns in more detail[29]. 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.

**4.6.2 Staffing on board trains**

The impact on passengers of recent high-profile disputes about the role and responsibilities of a second staff member of staff on the train cannot be overlooked. Safety is of paramount importance. The safety regulator ORR has said that, as long as suitable equipment, proper procedures and competent staff are in place then Driver Only Operation is safe; rail unions disagree.

The precise duties of staff on board will clearly require negotiation and agreement on a franchise by franchise basis; but what should not be at stake is the presence of that member of staff. Passengers value the information and assistance they provide, especially in times of disruption, and their presence also enhances feelings of

[29] *Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railways*, May 2016

personal security.

### 4.6.3 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 important that bidders 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 – at minimum, operators should provide a phone number and an online service with a reasonable response time advertised and stuck to
- re-check 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 bidders:

- cap any charges to reunite the passenger with their item 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
- ensure the system can work with British Transport Police to identify any items held by the operator that have been reported as stolen monitor and measure the system to ensure it is effective in meeting the above objectives
- actively work towards the establishment of a national lost property system and, if established, participate in the scheme. This could be either a national system or the ability to ensure that local schemes can 'talk' to other lost property systems.

**Question 7: What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?**

The new franchise operator must make ticket purchase easier for passengers, who can be 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 offered the most appropriate ticket for their intended journey, regardless of whether this is at a ticket office, online, at a ticket machine or through any other method.

Bidders should also look at how they would simplify the fare structure. We believe a single-leg fare structure is easy to understand, removes the confusion of a return being only 10p or £1 more than a single and allows passengers to mix and match different tickets (for example an Advance ticket for the outward leg and a semi-flexible ticket for the return).

We also advocate bringing in systems that allow for sales of Advance tickets closer to the time of travel, as has been successfully introduced on the Cross Country franchise (subject to adequate protections for people occupying 'empty' seats that can be booked). Information about the availability of Advance tickets and the number remaining for specific journeys should also be readily available. This helps give passengers confidence that such tickets exist.

The cost of rail travel is a big concern for many Southeastern passengers. While they are resigned to believing that prices won't come down, they want to see the amount of money they pay reflected in the quality of service they get. Value for money is the stand-out, number one priority for improvement.

In particular, our Southeastern passenger research showed that season ticket holders feel that they should get something back, such as loyalty discounts, and should be able to see how the money they pay is being invested in improving the service. Taking note of this could be a good opportunity for the new franchise holder to build a relationship and level of trust with its core customers.

Being a network that is chiefly geared toward people commuting into and out of London, Southeastern passengers are broadly satisfied with the range of tickets on offer. Certain types of passengers, however, would like to see tickets more tailored to their needs.

Part-time commuters feel they should get some benefit as regular passengers, albeit not at the same level of discount as a full season ticket. We advocate the introduction of innovative new products such as carnet-style tickets that will enable passengers who cannot benefit from season ticket discounts (for example part-time workers) to achieve some economies from repeat travel. Schemes to spread the cost of annual season tickets should also be available.

Young people aged 16 and over, but still in education, feel penalised by having to pay adult fares. With education now being compulsory until 18, it is important to find ways of making 'school' travel affordable. Some passengers would like to see an incentive for travelling on early morning trains, to reduce the strain on the busiest periods.

Overall, there is a sense that passengers (particularly commuters) should be getting a fairer deal for the quality of service they get for their money. Overall satisfaction with value for money on Southeastern is at 36 per cent, with higher dissatisfaction at 40 per cent. This is even starker for commuters, at 25 per cent satisfied and 51 per cent dissatisfied. The sector averages for all passengers are 43 and 34 per cent respectively.

**Figure 14: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with ticketing**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The value for money for the price of your ticket** | 36 | 35 | 34 | 37 | 26 | 42 |
| **Ticket buying facilities** | 77 | 75 | 75 | 79 | 70 | 81 |

**Question 8: What else could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?**

Amongst Southeastern passengers, there is a significant amount of interest in a 'smarter' alternative to current paper ticketing. Many passengers outside the Oyster zone would like to see a similar mechanism for paying available to them. This chimes with other research we have carried out which indicates that passengers find the ticket purchasing experience complex and uncertain[30]. Across all groups of passengers there is a desire to make the ticketing process smoother, easier and more convenient. People want to see innovation that will deliver improvements to each stage: purchasing a ticket, ticket types (such as smart and e-tickets) and in providing relevant journey updates after the purchase has been made.

The new operator should provide a wider range of tickets for passengers so they can choose the method which is simplest and most convenient for them. This includes using the ticket office, ticket vending machines (TVMs), website and taking advantage of developments in ticketing such as smartcards or contactless bank cards and mobile phone products.

Many passengers prefer to buy from a ticket office because it offers the full range of tickets and staff can provide advice and reassurance on the best ticket to buy. Any proposals by bidders to significantly change ticket office opening hours must involve proper consultation and demonstrate that passengers will not suffer (for example no reduction in the range of tickets sold or the time it takes to buy them).

The value of Permit to Travel (PERTIS) machines, which we acknowledge are increasingly a thing of the past, lies in providing passengers with evidence of an attempt to pay and reassurance against allegations of ticketless travel. If there is to be greater reliance on TVMs, or other methods, then some fundamental safeguards must be put in place. These include:

- ease of use and clear details of about the validity of, and any restrictions applicable to, tickets offered

[30] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/smarter-travel

- offer of a comprehensive range of tickets and/or ability to tell passengers what to do should the ticket they want not be available
- capability of remote monitoring so that any faults are identified and can be rectified.

In addition revenue protection strategies must set out:

- procedures for alerting revenue protection staff if there is a fault with the machine
- systems for monitoring queue length – passengers should not be penalised for queue lengths in excess of the three/five minutes targets set out in the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA).

Transport Focus's research has identified a number of issues with both TVMs and websites – much of which was reflected in Government's own Fares and Ticketing Review consultation in 2012, and subsequently in the industry's own retail information code of practice[31]. We are taking an active role in a task force, set up by the Government, to tackle these issues. The task force published its *Action plan for information on rail fares and ticketing*[32] in December 2016, and is reviewing progress on a monthly basis. A final report will be published in December 2017.

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
- making TVMs capable of accepting cash as well as card payments.

More details of the problems that passengers experience, and recommendations about how to improve retailing through these channels, can be found in our research into ticket vending machine usability and ticket retailing website usability[33].

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

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[31] *A Code of Practice on retail information for rail tickets and services,* March 2015
[32] *Action plan for information on rail fares and ticketing*, December 2016
[33] *Ticket vending machine usability*, July 2010 and *Ticket retailing website usability*, July 2011

#### 4.8.1 Smart ticketing

We know, from our research programme on smarter travel[34], that passengers across modes and throughout the country do see real benefits in smart ticketing.

When thinking about the introduction of smart ticketing, and preferences for how this will work, 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. Passengers expect that smart ticketing will involve some kind of cost saving either via cheaper fares or new cost-effective tickets and products.

- **Convenient**
  Smart ticketing needs to be a convenient option that is easy to use. The research participants told us they look for a ticketing system that makes life easier, rather than complicating their commute. When thinking about convenience, they want a system where it is easy to buy 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**
  Our research participants had some concerns about the security of smart ticketing. When thinking about smart cards, people expect that 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 were concerned about 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, people 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, including being able to make ticket purchases at the last minute and being able to upload tickets at a range of stations.

[34] http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/research/smarter-travel/

- **Tailored management**
  In addition to new products that would enable people to tailor their smart ticket products to their needs, people also want tailored smart ticketing accounts. Many want to manage them online and via an app. They 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 (for example, Apple or Android-compliant).

**Leading edge**
People feel 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 train operating companies to lead the way in ticketing technology rather than replicate existing systems.

Some key principles have emerged from our smart ticketing work:

- 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.

### 4.8.2 Ticketless travel

Research has shown that passengers find the issue of fare evasion very frustrating[35]. There is a strong sense of injustice amongst those who have paid for a ticket when some passengers are known to be travelling without a ticket. They also felt that this reduced the amount of money available for investment.

Passengers believe 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 is 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.

[35] *Passenger views on Northern and TransPennine rail franchises,* December 2012

Further roll-out of ticket barriers and ensuring that ticket barriers, where provided, are in use consistently can be helpful in ensuring that all travellers pay for the journey they are making. It is important that there are sufficient numbers of staff available to ensure that barriers in place are used effectively and not left open. Gate-line staff also provide the visible staff presence that passengers value.

There need to be sufficient barriers to cope with the number of passengers passing through them, particularly at peak times. Where problems arise staff should be empowered to take appropriate action to ease congestion at the gates.

Where remote staffing for barriers is a consideration, there will need to be proper consultation to look at demand, the suitability of this approach for each location and any implications for disabled passengers.

Transport Focus believes ticketless travel is an important issue and one that needs to be addressed. 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
- commitment not to go straight to any form of criminal prosecution unless operators suspect (or have proof) that there was intent to defraud
- penalties that are proportionate to the actual loss suffered by the operator
- operators to work with others in the industry to create a national system that is transparent and supports the honest passenger who makes a mistake
- giving passengers charged a penalty or a fine a genuine opportunity to appeal against that decision, via an independent, binding appeals mechanism, before any action is taken (including the addition of administration fees).

We recommend that bidders develop and publicly consult on a revenue protection strategy. In doing so they should be mindful of the recommendations within our *Ticket to Ride* publications[36].

The Government has announced plans to ensure that passengers who have received a penalty fare are treated fairly, with an independent appeals process in place. The plans include:

- simpler rules on deadlines for payments and appeals
- creation of a third-stage independent appeals panel

[36] *Ticket to ride?*, May 2012 and *Ticket to ride – an update*, February 2015

- existing appeals bodies must be independent of train operators
- better government oversight of appeals process through an annual audit of penalty fares data.

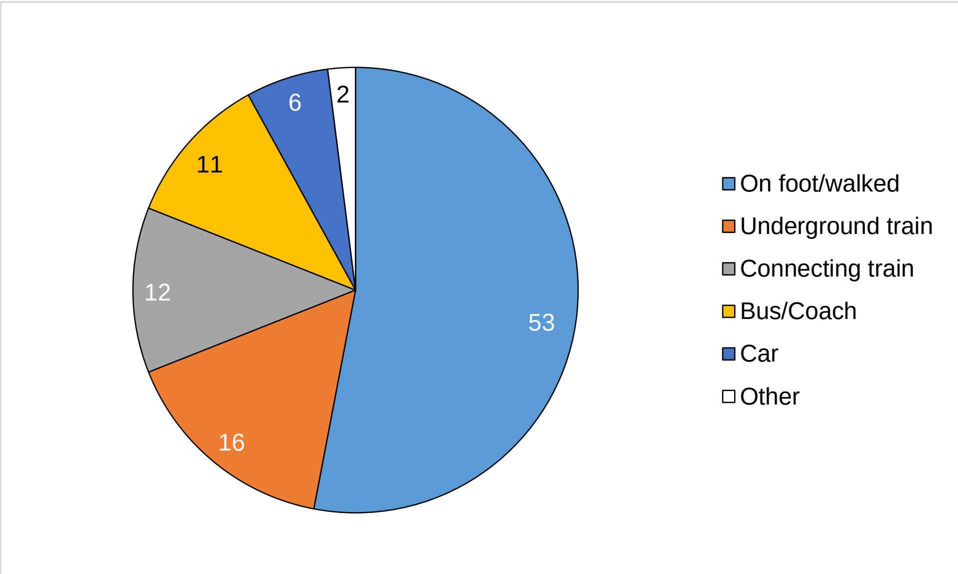
**Question 9: What further comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve access and facilities at stations?**

### 4.9.1 Getting to the station

Figure 15 shows that the majority of Southeastern passengers walk to the station where they catch the train, based on the Spring 2016 NRPS. The majority of the remaining passengers use public transport – be it bus, tube or a connecting train. 14 per cent of people using Southeastern said that an alternative method of travelling to the station was available to them. Of people who would like to have used another means of getting to the station had that option been available, 30 per cent would choose to take a bus, 12 per cent would walk and 10 per cent would take the tube.

The most prominent additional facilities/services which would have enabled respondents to use alternative methods of transport to the station were more frequent services with better connections, discounted fares and combined tickets with the train. Many passengers also cited 'cheaper parking' as a change that would influence their journey choices.

**Figure 15: How Southeastern passengers travel to the station (Spring 2016 NRPS)**




Southeastern passengers are comparatively satisfied overall with connections with other forms of public transport, on par with the London and South East sector average at 77 per cent satisfied. Satisfaction with facilities for car parking is above the sector average of 48 per cent, but at 53 per cent it is still low. Satisfaction with connections with other train services (69 per cent) and with facilities for bicycle parking at the station (54 per cent) are both lower than the London and South East averages (74 per cent and 57 per cent respectively).

**Figure 16: Autumn 2016 NRPS Satisfaction with getting to the station**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Connections with other train services** | 69 | 87 | 64 | 68 | 54 | 75 |
| **Connections with other forms of public transport** | 77 | 78 | 72 | 79 | 75 | 78 |
| **Facilities for car parking** | 53 | 69 | 53 | 51 | 43 | 57 |
| **Facilities for bicycle parking** | 54 | 68 | 59 | 49 | 43 | 59 |

In general, 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[37]. This applies to the whole door-to-door journey. Improving access to stations should therefore drive rail usage and provide some additional revenue.

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. Similarly, car parking charges can add sometimes substantial sums to the price of a journey and can create disincentives to choosing rail. There should be restrictions within each franchise that limit the level of increase in those costs that fall within the operator's own control. There should also be an independent appeal mechanism that allows passengers to contest car parking enforcement tickets issued by the train company or their agents.

On the South Eastern network, a high proportion of passengers use the train to commute into and out of London – a journey for which using the car is often so unattractive it ceases to be a viable option. But the new operator shouldn't simply take for granted that these core customers will use the train. A commuter during the week may be a potential leisure or business user at other times when there may be more options available: making using the train as convenient and attractive as possible will help to make it the mode of choice.

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 supports the use of Station Travel Plans. Local groups and Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) should be involved in

[37] *Integrated transport – perception and reality*, January 2010

developing proposals to improve station access.

The franchise 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; we know that congestion does not just occur at those stations with the highest number of passengers starting or ending their journeys.

Franchise bidders 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 and from towns with no railway station or limitations in service provision.

Bidders 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. Bidders should be encouraged to explore how they can contribute to potential initiatives for demand-led schemes.

The bidders 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 new franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

#### 4.9.2 At the station

The NRPS reveals the things that are important in driving passengers’ satisfaction with the station (Figure 17). It shows the importance of the basic requirements of Southeastern passengers – they want clear information and a station that is clean, well-kept and one that they feel safe and secure using.

Looking at the satisfaction scores for these measures shows that, on the face of it, Southeastern performs on a similar level to the London and South East sector generally, and that it is fairly consistent across the network, as shown in Figure 18.

There is room for improvement across all areas, though, as revealed in our research among Southeastern passengers, who find many stations to be unsatisfactory in meeting their basic needs. This is felt more acutely by leisure passengers than commuters, as they tend to spend more time at stations. Facilities such as toilets, waiting rooms and shelters are often seen as not being good enough. Provision of retail and refreshments is seen as variable at stations across the network, but the research showed that its importance is secondary to the more pressing issues.

**Figure 17: Spring and Autumn 2016 NRPS - drivers of overall satisfaction with the station among Southeastern passengers**

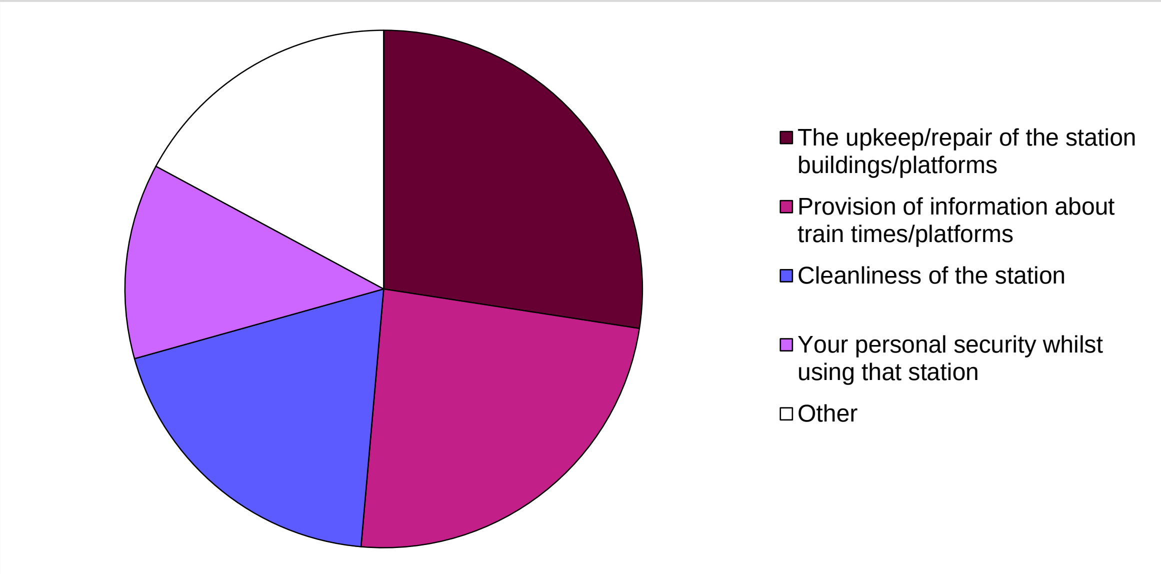



**Figure 18: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with key drivers of station satisfaction**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall satisfaction with the station** | 78 | 78 | 76 | 79 | 77 | 78 |
| **The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms** | 73 | 72 | 71 | 73 | 72 | 73 |
| **Provision of information about train times/platforms** | 81 | 84 | 79 | 81 | 78 | 82 |
| **Cleanliness of the station** | 77 | 75 | 72 | 79 | 77 | 76 |
| **Personal security whilst using the station** | 69 | 75 | 67 | 70 | 66 | 71 |

Many find that the shelter provided does not offer protection from wind, rain or cold, and in any case is insufficient at busy times. Even at Rochester, a brand new station, passengers like the station building itself but find the platforms ‘spartan’ and exposed to the elements. This is reflected in NRPS satisfaction scores with ‘the provision of shelter facilities’, which is low, at 68 per cent.

Toilets are often seen as being unclean, shut at the times people want to use them or absent altogether. Passengers think that stations should have clean toilet facilities available.

We know that passengers welcome face-to-face contact with members of staff. Our research tells us that passengers would like to see at least one member of staff at each station whenever a train service is running. In general, passengers’ experiences of staff is mixed, with a feeling that additional customer service training would be helpful, and that staff can be ‘short’ when dealing with ‘difficult’ passengers. Training should help staff in being more proactive in helping people with disabilities.

It is important that staff have access to the most up-to-the-minute information, especially during times of disruption, and that they are suitably empowered to be able to make decisions in the interests of passengers. Satisfaction with staff availability at stations is 69 per cent for Southeastern and 65 per cent for the sector.

Some passengers express concern about their personal security when using stations and trains, especially in the evenings or after dark. This is seen to be caused by a lack of lighting in underpasses, stations and station car parks, as well as the absence of visible staff at stations and on trains. Using smaller, more remote stations can feel particularly daunting for some passengers after dark, where there is no obvious means of getting help and there are few other passengers around for support. This issue is also reflected in the NRPS. The London and South East average for ‘satisfaction with your personal security whilst using the station’ is 72 per cent, whereas Southeastern scores 69 per cent. Passengers want a visible member of staff present, better lighting, help buttons and CCTV to address their safety concerns.

Overall satisfaction with the station environment stands at 69 per cent, against a sector average of 72 per cent.

**Question 10: What more could be done to improve access and provide facilities for those with disabilities or additional needs?**
We expect franchise specifications 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 that 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 such as Scootercards. Blanket bans are no longer acceptable – always understanding that some models will be too wide/heavy ever to be accepted on to trains.

- **Priority seat cards**
  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 priorities**
  Clarify the priority of use of priority seating and the groups considered eligible for it. Clearly clarify priority of usage in 'shared' spaces, in other words wheelchairs have absolute priority over prams.

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

- **Monitor service**
  Carry out 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.

  Make best use of the management information gained from Passenger Assist – for example enabling TOCs to plan assistance provision better.

- **Training**
  Carry out training with staff – especially front-line staff in immediate customer contact, whether face-to face or by telephone.

- **Physical changes**
  Examine all possibilities to improve station accessibility: for example induction loops, help points, adjustable-height counters, automatic doors.

- **For longer journeys**
  Ensure that on-train staff have booking details of passengers using Passenger Assist on that service and that staff make themselves known to such passengers during the journey

**Question 11: How far do you support, or oppose, the extension of High Speed services from London St Pancras to Hastings, Bexhill and Rye, where this would represent value for money for the taxpayer?**
In general, we welcome changes that enhance the range of journey options for passengers, especially where this would provide a new, faster, easier route.

However, before making a judgement on this particular suggestion, we would need to see a detailed set of proposals setting out the desired benefits and potential consequences. Affected passengers should be properly consulted on the final proposal.

For example, we would need to understand how passengers might be affected by changes to existing services – would there be reductions to existing through routes, would certain stations see their service cut to accommodate High Speed services and would the timetable be sufficiently robust to cope with such changes without a loss of reliability and punctuality. We would also like to see clarity about any implications for fares; passengers should not be forced onto more expensive services as a result of any changes.

Amongst the panel there was 40 per cent support against 23 per cent opposition, a net support of 17 per cent, for extension of High Speed services to other towns such as Hastings, Rye and Bexhill.

**Question 12: How far do you support, or oppose, reducing journey times to key destinations in Kent and East Sussex, by reducing stops at less well-used intermediate stations, to create hourly fast services?**

**Question 13: If you support this proposal, which services do you think would benefit most from this approach?**
There doesn't seem to be a high level of demand amongst existing passengers for improved journey times. Even in the peak 66 per cent of passengers are satisfied and on Southeastern overall just 12 per cent are dissatisfied. Clearly this may assume higher importance among non-users.

**Figure 19: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with journey times and service frequency**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The length of time the journey was scheduled to take** | 76 | 93 | 69 | 77 | 66 | 81 |
| **The frequency of trains on that route** | 68 | 79 | 72 | 65 | 61 | 73 |

Priorities for improvement show that frequency is a significantly higher-ranking requirement, at third in the rankings this indexes at nearly three times the importance of the 'average' factor. Journey time reductions are only tenth in importance, and with an index of 100, are no more or less important than average.

Our qualitative research found that passengers generally regarded service parameters of frequency and timetable as satisfactory, though less so for Mainline services.

In NRPS, satisfaction with the length of time the journey is scheduled to take is lower than satisfaction with frequency of trains on Mainline services, whilst the opposite applies on all other service groups and amongst peak and off-peak passengers. At 14 per cent, frequency of trains is the second biggest driver of satisfaction for Southeastern Mainline passengers, behind punctuality and reliability at 34 per cent and just above cleanliness of the inside of the train at 12 per cent. The length of time also drives satisfaction, but at 5 per cent this is a lower level driver.

However, looking at drivers of dissatisfaction for Southeastern as a whole we see that length of journey, at 7 per cent, is a greater driver of dissatisfaction than frequency, at less than 4 per cent. (There is insufficient sample to examine this at the building block level).

Amongst the panel there were 38 per cent in favour of and 37 per cent opposed to, a net support of one per cent, to the proposal to reduce journey times to key destinations in Kent and East Sussex by limiting the number of less well used and intermediate stations at which some trains stop.

Inevitably, this proposal will have a substantially negative effect on those passengers whose stations receive a reduced service. There may be considerable difficulties for those who have to balance work, life and travel needs and who have based such decisions on the expectation of a direct service. Some may opt to drive or find other means to travel to stations retaining the level of service they are accustomed to.

In the first instance, there should be a detailed examination of the way in which the infrastructure can be adapted/enhanced to deliver improvements in journey time or facilitate additional trains. It would be preferable, if possible, to provide additional services, nominated as fast from the outset, rather than reducing stops in the existing timetable.

Should this proposal be taken forward, there must be a clear demonstration of the demands which this is anticipated to address and full information and consultation to which passengers can provide comment. We acknowledge that timetables should not be set in stone and that difficult decisions are sometimes needed. However, it is difficult to form a detailed opinion on such changes without access to supporting information on the passengers affected. For instance, how many people will benefit from the change versus those who will suffer; what is the scale of the impact (i.e. small gains for some versus hardship for others); what is the projected demand for the future; and what other alternatives have been considered? Without this information it is very difficult to reach a balanced answer and we are not in the position to make any comment about which services may benefit from consideration of these issues.

**Question 14: Which journeys do you make today which are difficult**

a. by rail?
b. by road, which would be easier by rail?

Meaningful answers to this question will largely be driven by the individual circumstances of respondents and the travel options they use or perceive to be available to them. The perspectives of non-rail users will also be relevant. However, we do know that services are, for the most part, radial into London, and so connections to other parts of the rail network and other parts of the country are difficult without first going into London.

**Question 15: Which additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?**

The specification for the next South Eastern franchise should ensure that train service provision is based on passenger needs and priorities and is linked to measures of passenger satisfaction.

The key issues are whether passengers at each station, and people who might use the train if there was a service to suit their needs, 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.

First and foremost, the provision of sufficient capacity must be addressed, particularly for times of peak demand.

**Figure 20: Autumn 2016 NRPS satisfaction with frequency and capacity**

| | South eastern | Highspeed | Mainline | Metro | Peak | Off-peak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The frequency of trains on that route** | 68 | 79 | 72 | 65 | 61 | 73 |
| **Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand** | 62 | 77 | 63 | 60 | 37 | 76 |

The NRPS satisfaction scores in

**Figure 20** underline the view expressed by Southeastern passengers in our focus group research that, whilst passengers feel that the basic timetable broadly corresponds with their needs in theory, the reality is that at peak times there is simply not enough capacity. This needs to be addressed through more seats and space on trains and, where possible, a more frequent service.

More generally, 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 Government, Network Rail or the operator, should ensure that the rationale that underpins them is properly set out to all who have an interest.

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, while 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, to retain or improve connection opportunities.

Southeastern passengers would like to see later services back from London to destinations across the network to enable them to enjoy an evening out and still get home by train. They also point out that we have a seven-day economy now, with people needing to travel for a range of purposes at weekends and on bank holidays as well as during the week. The franchise specification 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 bidders to explore the potential for services to run on 26 December.

The service specifications and service options developed by bidders for the franchise must demonstrate full consideration of 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.

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

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.

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.

**Question 16: How far do you support, or oppose, options to simplify the timetable?**

**Question 17: How far do you support, or oppose, options to reduce the choice of central London destinations from individual stations with the aim of providing a more regular, evenly spaced timetable, and a more reliable service?**

In principle, simplification of the timetable sounds sensible. The benefits described on page 22 of the consultation document sound appreciable: more reliable and punctual services, more regular intervals between them, which will make it easier for passengers to become familiar with the timetable and reduce waits at some points of day, more passengers carried and no knock-in impacts on services outside of London. It is not clear from the consultation question what the downsides might be, although it is implicit in Question 17 that this is expected to be linked to decisions about limiting the choice of central London terminals from certain stations, a point we cover below.

Taking simplification at face value, if there is sufficient frequency then, presumably, a potential additional wait for a Metro service will not be too long. However, where passengers are extremely time-sensitive there may be unanticipated shifts to other services that will increase congestion elsewhere, so it will be important to consider the knock-on implications and avoid transporting problems to adjoining parts of the network or other interlinked systems.

Punctuality and reliability, dealing with delays and increased capacity were all top priorities from our focus group research so improvements generated are likely to be of benefit, although we did not explore the issue of timetables in great detail.

However, the transport user panel was largely negative. When asked about support or opposition to a potential change to simplify timetables so that trains run at more regular intervals, though this may mean the reduction in the number of trains at certain times or fewer destinations served from certain stations there was 24 per cent support but 47 per cent opposition, a net minus 23 overall.

**4.17.1 Reducing the choice of central London destinations**

The proposal to reduce the choice of central London destinations from individual stations is undoubtedly highly contentious. Many passengers make a range of life decisions based on the accessibility of specific locations and the ease of the journey between them. Introducing the requirement to change or make additional legs of the journey will be regarded by many as extremely inconvenient and, where this adds to travel time and the complexity of the journey, as in many cases it undoubtedly will, this will be resented. There is also the important issue of cost, discussed below.

There is a further question about the capacity of other systems and services to cope. Peak travel into central London is typified by the pressure on all transportation. Assessment of the options must include exploring the viability of off-loading high numbers of people at nodal points and the ability to provide effective dispersal through onward transport. This adds a further dimension of inconvenience to people who may have been seated on the service they may now be displaced from, who then have to struggle to board alternative transport on which there is a strong likelihood they will have to stand.

A further question arises about off-peak services, where there is potentially less pressure on the timetable overall. Will the central London destination restriction apply then and, if so, will passengers making discretionary journeys change their travel patterns or decline to travel altogether, thus making the ‘peaky’ South Eastern even more heavily biased to commuter travel and with consequent implications for revenue? If not, what choices will other passengers make to potentially avail themselves of services that reflect current options?

Notwithstanding the issues above, if the pressures on the absolute capacity of the South Eastern network around London and the attendant problems with punctuality and reliability, which in turn further impact on the capacity provided, are so great and there are few, if any, other options left to be explored, then this may be the only, if unpalatable, solution. If this is the case then there are a number of fundamental points that will need to be addressed.

Firstly, there must be a clear and transparent exposition of the issues and all the solutions that are being implemented before more radical steps are taken. The consultation document has made a positive start, and setting out the challenges and seeking feedback on the outline proposals is appropriate. However, when it comes to consideration of the next steps, then there must be full consultation on the proposed detail of the timetable changes and information provided about the alternative onward transport options.

The anticipated benefits should be clearly quantified; how much improvement in punctuality will be delivered, how much improvement will there be in restoration of services after disruption, how many more services could be run and how many more passengers carried? The case for imposing what will undoubtedly be unpopular must be convincing. Then passengers must be allowed to set out their views and have responses carefully considered. There must be a meaningful assessment of the scope to adapt proposals to mitigate impacts to the greatest degree possible. (We discuss the principles of timetable change and consultation in more detail in our response to question 15).

Any changes subsequently implemented must be cost-neutral to passengers. It would be completely inappropriate to deliver a double-whammy of an extended, more inconvenient journey and ask them to pay for the privilege! We consider a period of five years to be the minimum acceptable term for assurance that no additional costs would be incurred. There is a previous precedent relating to ticketing during the Thameslink programme, where passengers who were unable to travel to their customary London destination were able to travel on TfL services at no additional cost.

We asked our Transport User Panel whether they agree that “the choice of central London destinations served by individual stations could be reduced in order to provide a more regular and more reliable train service overall”. 29 per cent of respondents 29 per cent were in favour and 44 per cent opposed, a net score of 15 per cent of people disagreeing with the suggestion.

**Question 18: How far do you support, or oppose, plans for the train operator and Network Rail to form a close alliance with the aim of reducing delays and improving performance?**

Closer working between Network Rail and the operator is an area where such opportunities are ripe to exploit and we support proposals to include such plans as part of the arrangements for the new franchise. It will be particularly relevant when addressing the complexities of delivering future infrastructure and timetable improvements on the network. These challenges will require all parties to work cohesively and constructively together.

Beyond the demands of new developments, there are further operational challenges where the South Eastern network intersects other rail operations. These circumstances 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 Network Rail and train company processes to achieve cost savings; such processes must also be aligned with passengers' priorities.

If the aim is better services for passengers, then internal processes and systems must work towards this, rather than vice versa.

We agree with the proposal that two particular areas stand out when it comes to the objective of closer integration: 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.

Application of whole-life costing would significantly improve the chances that resilience projects secure a positive business case. Bidders 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.

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, for example signal and point failures or road vehicles hitting bridges. This could help to get trains moving without having to wait for the arrival of a Network Rail staff member who may be some distance away.

**Question 19: What are your views on how this alliance should be incentivised and held to account for its performance?**

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.

We would like to see the franchise specification encourage and cement appropriate joint working mechanisms. To this end we would ask DfT to consider the scope for introducing joint targets in new franchises, an approach that has the support of the Chief Executive of Network Rail.

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. A new, more responsive, alliance could make a very public commitment towards accountability by promising greater transparency from the outset.

The objectives of the alliance must be to improve the overall experience for passengers, and we know from our research among Southeastern passengers that this starts with getting the basic service right before then looking at improving the overall quality. That means improving punctuality and capacity first and foremost.

### 4.19.1 Performance targets

Given the very high significance of these factors to Southeastern passengers, the specification must prioritise traditional, 'hard' performance targets covering punctuality, reliability and crowding.

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, for example, only the 07:19 and 17:20 service to see the performance of those trains – because that is all that matters to them.

The existing measure (PPM) for Southeastern allows a five-minute leeway on late arrival and is only measured at the train's destination station; a train is not late until it exceeds this allowance. However, we know from our research exploring passenger perspectives on train punctuality[38] that a delay can have an effect on passengers before that. We advocate introducing new measure based on right-time arrival, measured ideally at every station along the route, but at least at key points. 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.

Within the new franchise contract we think there should be:

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

[38] *Train punctuality – the passenger perspective*, November 2015

- Targets for PPM and 'on time'/'right time' at key intermediate stations in addition to at the train destinations and a commitment to report these regularly.
- 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.
- 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 10pm 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.

**4.19.2 Crowding**
There is generally very little data 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. It is a key priority for improvement for Southeastern passengers, and satisfaction with the amount of space to sit or stand is particularly low, at just 37 per cent, for passengers travelling at peak times.

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.

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[39].

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. 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 more comfortable journey.

Monitoring and publishing the extent and frequency of short-formations and

[39]For example, Dutch Railways - iNStApp

cancellations should also be a requirement.

### 4.19.3 National Rail Passenger Survey

We have long advocated more use of quality-focused targets within the 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 over 60,000 rail passengers nationally in two waves each year, providing for a fair assessment of measures across 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 and so on).

We may also explore the scope for boosting sample sizes in particular areas, in line with practice in some other PTE areas. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to consider increasing the frequency of surveys. We recommend bespoke NRPS targets should be established on each of the franchise building blocks to measure passenger satisfaction with station, train and customer service attributes. Doing so simply at a global level risks masking the poorer performing areas.

Given the stark differences in usage, journey type and in satisfaction across the South Eastern franchise between peak and off-peak, we also recommend consideration of separate targets for each period reflecting the different requirements.

Existing levels of satisfaction should be the starting point for establishing NRPS targets which should generally become more stretching as the franchise progresses and also increase to reflect the outcomes delivered by investment (for example 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. We would encourage DfT to consider targeting improvements to satisfaction over the life of the franchise, rather than allowing bidders to focus solely on the early years. In line with existing DfT policy, bidders for new franchises should be asked to submit bids that include plans on how they will improve NRPS scores.

### 4.19.4 Key Performance Indicators

The franchise specification should require operators 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, Passenger Assist, complaints handling, and the level of appeals to Transport Focus should also be measured and reported, as should the level of adherence to Schedule 17 ticket office opening times. All assessments should be conducted regularly to provide ongoing management information as well as a basis for regular reviews based on collated information.

### 4.19.5 Transparency and monitoring service quality

We recommend a transparent approach to making information about all aspects of the franchise available in the public domain.

Specifications should set out clear expectations for publication of franchise performance in all areas of interest to passengers, particularly those relating to service quality. This should include commitments to disaggregation of data which will also make it easier for passengers to find information that is more relevant to the journeys they make and meaningful to them. Bidders should be encouraged to demonstrate how they will take steps to personalise information to make it most relevant to passengers

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 to 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.

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 which suggest that service quality does have an impact on levels of demand[40].

Specifications for new franchises must stretch the successful bidder to take passenger satisfaction to higher levels. This should apply both for the franchise as a whole and at a building-block level. The goal should be to achieve greater consistency of performance across the component parts of each franchise and to drive satisfaction on all aspects of service delivery upwards, to bring the whole operation up to the achievements of the best comparators and to meet the reasonable expectations of passengers.

Targets, measurements, monitoring and transparent reporting are fundamental to delivering improvements to service quality. The balance between input and output measures is a fine one and Transport Focus recognises the value of both provided that they are based on passengers' priorities and needs. We strongly support the

[40] *Revisiting the elasticity based framework: rail trends report*, Department for Transport, April 2012

principle of monitoring and improving service quality through a combination of NRPS results and periodic reviews of train operating company Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Passenger responses to the consultation should be used to further inform the targets and measures that go into the franchise specification. Financial penalty regimes should apply, with resources ring-fenced for additional investment into service quality measures that are most likely to improve passenger satisfaction.

**Question 20: How would you prefer the next South Eastern operator to engage with you:**

- as an individual?
- as an organisation (if appropriate)?

Effective passenger and stakeholder engagement is central to improving the passenger experience - particularly for gathering intelligence on local aspirations and developments, and for consulting on future proposals.

We carried out research on passenger understanding of the franchise process and their appetite for engagement with it[41]. 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 the train operator. There is also a desire for greater two-way communication about what each franchise promises – and what is actually achieved.

Our research exploring reactions to the Customer Reports required as part of new franchises found that passengers welcomed this additional channel of engagement[42]. 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.

When negotiations with a 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 the DfT should publish a 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 begins.

The new franchisee should demonstrate a clear engagement strategy that

[41] *Giving passengers a voice in rail services*, June 2013
[42] *What passengers want from Customer Reports*, March 2015

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.
Transport Focus recommends that the franchise specification requires the establishment of a Customer and Communities Investment Fund, 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 operator 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 franchise approaches its end.

As the independent passenger watchdog, Transport Focus will naturally expect a constructive and meaningful relationship with the next operator, from mobilisation and throughout the term of the contract. We will structure engagement to be as effective as possible within the resources we have available.

We require a co-operative, responsive and collaborative approach to working with us in our role as the statutory appeals body.

We also expect a commitment to engage with us around NRPS performance, service delivery and any major disruption events, whether planned or unplanned, as well as responding swiftly to feedback on issues arising across the network. Opportunities to collaborate on research projects would also be welcomed, as would sharing of relevant data.

**Question 21: What approaches to customer service in other companies could be adopted by the next South Eastern train operator?**

### 4.21.1 Passenger trust in the rail industry

In 2014 Transport Focus carried out a study exploring passengers' relationship with the rail industry[43]. 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 include 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. Communicating directly and proactively with passengers goes down well with them. The research identified particular problem areas for communication, including confusion over ticketing options and when there

[43] *Passengers' relationship with the rail industry*, August 2014

are delays or cancellations. Communicating and acting honestly, with integrity and transparency, and seeking to build long-term relationships with passengers 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.

Our research into passengers' relationship with the rail industry correlates completely with the message from our Southeastern passenger research: 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 passengers is important.

One way is through high quality communication. Passengers should feel that train companies are 'on their side'.

We asked our Transport User Panel about customer service on Southeastern. Amazon, Waitrose and Marks and Spencer were cited as three examples of organisations that offer good customer service. One comment from a business traveller using Southeastern Mainline services described what good customer service meant to them based on their experience at Waitrose: "Individual staff asking good questions and listening to customers before answering."

**4.21.2 Culture, customer service, reward and recognition**
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 is especially true with a franchise like South Eastern, where a high proportion of customers are people who use the service day in day out to get to and from work. These passengers are the core customers to the business, and should be valued as such.

This approach needs to be driven from the top to achieve exemplary staff behaviour among a workforce that is genuinely engaged and empowered. The ethos must be that passenger interests are central to the decisions and actions of the business. There should be a genuine and consistent demonstration of care for whether a passenger returns to travel again.

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.

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.

Passengers' experiences on rail are clearly also influenced by the services they experience in the wider aspects of their lives. Our work on trust identified 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, while the higher levels rely on a more individualised experience and a sense of being valued.

The theme of recognition and reward has become increasingly evident in our work with passengers. There is a real sense that they wish to be known as individuals, with information and contact personalised to their own requirements and relevant to the interactions they have with the operator. In a world where loyalty schemes and benefits linked to base purchases are common currency, passengers expect similar from their experience on rail.

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

**Question 22: Where do you think private sector investment would be of most benefit to the railway?**

Investment in the railway should focus on the things that matter most to passengers. In the case of the South Eastern network, passengers fundamentally need a more punctual, reliable service with sufficient capacity. They want clear, consistent information and helpful, empowered members of staff. They would like stations and trains that are clean, smart and comfortable, with the facilities they need to be able to complete their journey in comfort whilst feeling safe and secure. Overall they want better value for money from their ticket price.

Specifically how improvements are funded isn't a question for Transport Focus, but it is important that these are the areas that require attention. Passengers who are directly affected should be consulted thoroughly on any specific proposals, and ultimately success should be measured through improved performance and increased passenger satisfaction.

Question 23: Should we consider using the more lightly used sections of the railway in a different way? If so, how should this be done?

We know that passengers value their local rail service, and that being on the rail network can be a factor in people's broader life decisions such as where to live and work. As such, any proposed changes to the way local services are run should be subject to thorough consultation with the people who use them.

That said, we know that there is merit in giving local communities a greater role in decision making and promotion of their local services.

### 4.23.1 Local communities and the railway

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. It can also stimulate community engagement with the railway and promote the use of redundant station buildings by local businesses and organisations, including those involved in local tourism.

Educational schemes, event sponsorship and engagement with local businesses are examples of ways in which the railway can be brought closer to local communities and potentially drive patronage. 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.

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

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) can also play an effective role in building links and increasing passenger numbers, particularly where there is funding to support dedicated officers to pursue a range of activities. They can 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 shows that they can be extremely successful[44]. 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.

The franchise specification should consider what scope there might be for support of existing, or development of new, CRPs across the South Eastern network. The DfT should require bidders to make appropriate provision in their proposals.

**Question 24: Looking to the future, beyond this franchise, what, if any, benefits do you consider there would be for passengers from a franchise with a different geographic boundary?**

We know from our research that, in general, passengers don’t have much of an opinion on who runs their train service, only that there is a punctual, reliable service at the times they wish to travel, and that they would ideally like a seat.

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[44] *Value of Community Rail Partnerships*, Association of Community Rail Partnerships, January 2015

But the current South Eastern franchise is very much focussed on a hub-and-spoke style network of services into and out of London. A different geographic boundary could present opportunities for better connectivity with elsewhere on the network, and with other transport hubs such as Gatwick Airport, without the need to first go into London. An attractive and well-promoted proposition could offer a significant opportunity for passenger growth on the South Eastern network outside of the core, London commuter market.

## 5. Further information

For further information about this response to the South Eastern franchise consultation please contact:

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Further details of all our publications exploring users perspectives on a range of issues can be found on the Transport Focus website, www.transportfocus.org.uk.

For specific information about rail franchising please see:
http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/franchising

# 6. Appendices

## Appendix 1 NRPS building block definitions

### A1.1 Southeastern NRPS building blocks

**Southeastern – Highspeed**

Southeastern services between St Pancras International and destinations in Kent, using the High Speed 1 route

**Southeastern – Mainline**

Southeastern services serving destinations across Kent and East Sussex, excluding Highspeed and London Suburban services

**Southeastern – Metro**

London suburban services operated by Southeastern

### A1.2 NRPS typology groups and comparator services

**Highspeed typology:**

**Southeastern – Highspeed**

Great Western Railway - Long Distance
Southeastern - High Speed
Virgin Trains - London - Liverpool
Virgin Trains - London - Manchester
Virgin Trains - London - North Wales
Virgin Trains - London - Scotland
Virgin Trains - London - Wolverhampton/Shrewsbury
Virgin Trains East Coast - London - Leeds and West Yorkshire
Virgin Trains East Coast - London - Newcastle/Sunderland and East Yorkshire

**Long Commute:**

**Southeastern – Mainline**

Chiltern Railways - Commuter
Chiltern Railways - Oxford
Chiltern Railways - West Midlands
East Midlands Trains - London
Greater Anglia - Mainline
Greater Anglia - West Anglia
Great Northern
Great Western Railway - London Thames Valley
London Midland - London Commuter
ScotRail - Urban
South West Trains - Outer Suburban & Local
Southeastern - Mainline
Southern - Sussex Coast
Thameslink - North/South

**Short Commute:**

**Southeastern – Metro**
Arriva Trains Wales - Cardiff and Valleys
Arriva Trains Wales - South Wales and Borders/West Wales
c2c - Southend Line
c2c - Tilbury Line
Chiltern Railways - Metro
East Midlands Trains - Local
London Midland - West Midlands
London Overground - Highbury & Islington - Croydon/Clapham
London Overground - Richmond/Clapham - Stratford
London Overground - Watford - Euston
London Overground - West Anglia
Merseyrail - Northern
Merseyrail - Wirral
Northern - Central
Northern - North East
Northern - West
ScotRail - Strathclyde
South West Trains - Metro
Southeastern - Metro
Southern - Metro
TfL Rail
Thameslink - Loop
Thameslink - Kent

## Appendix 2 NRPS satisfaction scores[45]

### A2.1 NRPS Autumn 2016: percentage satisfied, South Eastern compared to London and South East sector

| | Southeastern | London and South East | TOC index[46] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall satisfaction with the journey** | **77** | **80** | **96** |
| **TRAIN FACTORS** | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the train | 76 | 79 | 96 |
| The frequency of the trains on that route | 68 | 73 | 94 |
| Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time) | 68 | 69 | 98 |
| The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed) | 76 | 80 | 95 |
| Connections with other train services | 69 | 74 | 93 |
| The value for money for the price of your ticket | 36 | 43 | 84 |
| Cleanliness of the train | 72 | 76 | 95 |
| Upkeep and repair of the train | 71 | 75 | 94 |
| The provision of information during the journey | 65 | 68 | 95 |
| The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train | 50 | 56 | 91 |
| The space for luggage | 48 | 51 | 93 |
| The toilet facilities | 28 | 35 | 81 |
| Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand | 62 | 65 | 96 |
| The comfort of the seating area | 65 | 70 | 92 |
| The ease of being able to get on and off | 77 | 78 | 99 |
| Your personal security whilst on board | 72 | 76 | 95 |
| The cleanliness of the inside | 72 | 77 | 94 |
| The cleanliness of the outside | 72 | 75 | 96 |
| The availability of staff on the train | 28 | 35 | 81 |
| How well train company dealt with delays | 29 | 33 | 90 |
| Usefulness of information during delays | 40 | 41 | 99 |
| **STATION FACTORS** | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the station | 78 | 81 | 96 |
| Ticket buying facilities | 77 | 75 | 102 |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms | 81 | 81 | 100 |
| The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms | 73 | 73 | 100 |
| Cleanliness of the station | 77 | 77 | 99 |
| The facilities and services at the station | 58 | 57 | 101 |
| The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff | 77 | 76 | 102 |
| Connections with other forms of public transport | 77 | 77 | 100 |
| Facilities for car parking at the station | 53 | 48 | 110 |
| The overall station environment | 69 | 72 | 95 |
| Your personal security whilst using the station | 69 | 72 | 96 |
| The availability of staff at the station | 69 | 65 | 106 |
| The provision of shelter facilities | 68 | 70 | 98 |
| Availability of seating | 45 | 47 | 96 |
| How request to station staff was handled | 88 | 83 | 106 |
| The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available | 38 | 45 | 84 |
| Facilities for bicycle parking at the station | 54 | 57 | 95 |
| *Sample sizes* | *1677* | *15,675* | |

[45] In Appendix 2 * indicates building block scores where the sample size is below 50
[46] 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 2016: percentage satisfied, South Eastern peak compared to off-peak

| | Peak | Off-peak | Difference (peak compared to off-peak) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall satisfaction with the journey** | 66 | 82 | -16 |
| **TRAIN FACTORS** | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the train | 68 | 80 | -12 |
| The frequency of the trains on that route | 61 | 73 | -12 |
| Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time) | 62 | 72 | -10 |
| The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed) | 66 | 81 | -15 |
| Connections with other train services | 54 | 75 | -21 |
| The value for money for the price of your ticket | 26 | 42 | -16 |
| Cleanliness of the train | 77 | 76 | 1 |
| Upkeep and repair of the train | 61 | 76 | -15 |
| The provision of information during the journey | 57 | 70 | -13 |
| The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train | 42 | 55 | -13 |
| The space for luggage | 38 | 53 | -15 |
| The toilet facilities | 19 | 34 | -15 |
| Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand | 37 | 76 | -39 |
| The comfort of the seating area | 50 | 73 | -23 |
| The ease of being able to get on and off | 69 | 82 | -13 |
| Your personal security whilst on board | 67 | 76 | -9 |
| The cleanliness of the inside | 66 | 75 | -9 |
| The cleanliness of the outside | 64 | 76 | -12 |
| The availability of staff on the train | 21 | 32 | -11 |
| How well train company dealt with delays | 20 | 35 | -15 |
| Usefulness of information during delays | 32 | 45 | -13 |
| **STATION FACTORS** | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the station | 77 | 78 | -1 |
| Ticket buying facilities | 70 | 81 | -11 |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms | 78 | 82 | -4 |
| The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms | 72 | 73 | -1 |
| Cleanliness of the station | 77 | 76 | 1 |
| The facilities and services at the station | 58 | 58 | 0 |
| The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff | 72 | 80 | -8 |
| Connections with other forms of public transport | 75 | 78 | -3 |
| Facilities for car parking at the station | 43 | 57 | -14 |
| The overall station environment | 66 | 70 | -4 |
| Your personal security whilst using the station | 66 | 71 | -5 |
| The availability of staff at the station | 71 | 68 | 3 |
| The provision of shelter facilities | 67 | 69 | -2 |
| Availability of seating | 32 | 52 | -20 |
| How request to station staff was handled | 77 | 92 | -15 |
| The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available | 40 | 36 | 4 |
| Facilities for bicycle parking at the station | 43 | 59 | -16 |
| *Sample sizes* | *625* | *1052* | |

**A2.3 NRPS Autumn 2016: percentage satisfied, South Eastern High Speed route, compared to Highspeed typology average and best in class**

| Factor | Southeastern: High Speed | Highspeed typology | Best in class |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall satisfaction with the journey** | **84** | **86** | **93** |
| **TRAIN FACTORS** | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the train | 92 | 88 | 92 |
| The frequency of the trains on that route | 79 | 85 | 94 |
| Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time) | 75 | 82 | 91 |
| The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed) | 93 | 88 | 96 |
| Connections with other train services | 87 | 81 | 89 |
| The value for money for the price of your ticket | 35 | 51 | 71 |
| Cleanliness of the train | 92 | 86 | 92 |
| Upkeep and repair of the train | 92 | 85 | 92 |
| The provision of information during the journey | 89 | 80 | 89 |
| The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train | 85 | 78 | 85 |
| The space for luggage | 71 | 64 | 71 |
| The toilet facilities | 70 | 58 | 71 |
| Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand | 77 | 77 | 88 |
| The comfort of the seating area | 89 | 82 | 89 |
| The ease of being able to get on and off | 94 | 83 | 94 |
| Your personal security whilst on board | 88 | 86 | 94 |
| The cleanliness of the inside | 95 | 86 | 95 |
| The cleanliness of the outside | 90 | 83 | 93 |
| The availability of staff on the train | 68 | 61 | 73 |
| How well train company dealt with delays | * | 54 | 76 |
| Usefulness of information during delays | * | 61 | 75 |
| **STATION FACTORS** | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the station | 78 | 85 | 89 |
| Ticket buying facilities | 75 | 83 | 94 |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms | 84 | 88 | 92 |
| The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms | 72 | 79 | 92 |
| Cleanliness of the station | 75 | 82 | 95 |
| The facilities and services at the station | 72 | 71 | 83 |
| The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff | 78 | 82 | 87 |
| Connections with other forms of public transport | 78 | 78 | 84 |
| Facilities for car parking at the station | 69 | 66 | 73 |
| The overall station environment | 73 | 78 | 87 |
| Your personal security whilst using the station | 75 | 78 | 80 |
| The availability of staff at the station | 73 | 73 | 77 |
| The provision of shelter facilities | 69 | 75 | 81 |
| Availability of seating | 46 | 50 | 59 |
| How request to station staff was handled | * | 89 | 99 |
| The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available | 47 | 56 | 71 |
| *Sample size* | *271* | *2629* | |

Building block score is five points or more below typology average

Building block score is five points or more above typology average

## A2.4 NRPS Autumn 2016: percentage satisfied, Southeastern: Mainline, compared to Long commute typology average and best in class

| Factor | Southeastern: Mainline | Long commute typology | BIC |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall satisfaction with the journey** | 78 | 77 | 92 |
| TRAIN FACTORS | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the train | 77 | 77 | 95 |
| The frequency of the trains on that route | 72 | 72 | 87 |
| Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time) | 67 | 66 | 88 |
| The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed) | 69 | 77 | 93 |
| Connections with other train services | 64 | 71 | 86 |
| The value for money for the price of your ticket | 34 | 40 | 64 |
| Cleanliness of the train | 78 | 75 | 94 |
| Upkeep and repair of the train | 78 | 73 | 92 |
| The provision of information during the journey | 67 | 66 | 83 |
| The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train | 61 | 57 | 80 |
| The space for luggage | 50 | 50 | 70 |
| The toilet facilities | 39 | 39 | 72 |
| Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand | 63 | 65 | 83 |
| The comfort of the seating area | 70 | 69 | 88 |
| The ease of being able to get on and off | 82 | 79 | 94 |
| Your personal security whilst on board | 76 | 77 | 89 |
| The cleanliness of the inside | 76 | 76 | 94 |
| The cleanliness of the outside | 74 | 74 | 87 |
| The availability of staff on the train | 41 | 36 | 64 |
| How well train company dealt with delays | 30 | 31 | 57 |
| Usefulness of information during delays | 38 | 37 | 67 |
| STATION FACTORS | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the station | 76 | 80 | 93 |
| Ticket buying facilities | 75 | 75 | 84 |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms | 79 | 80 | 88 |
| The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms | 71 | 73 | 87 |
| Cleanliness of the station | 72 | 76 | 89 |
| The facilities and services at the station | 56 | 60 | 80 |
| The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff | 76 | 74 | 86 |
| Connections with other forms of public transport | 72 | 74 | 84 |
| Facilities for car parking at the station | 53 | 52 | 77 |
| The overall station environment | 69 | 73 | 86 |
| Your personal security whilst using the station | 67 | 71 | 81 |
| The availability of staff at the station | 67 | 62 | 79 |
| The provision of shelter facilities | 67 | 69 | 82 |
| Availability of seating | 45 | 44 | 64 |
| How request to station staff was handled | 83 | 82 | 91 |
| The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available | 40 | 47 | 62 |
| *Sample size* | *583* | *6640* | |

Building block score is five points or more below typology average

Building block score is five points or more above typology average

## A2.5 NRPS Autumn 2016: percentage satisfied, Southeastern - Metro building block, compared to short commute typology average and best in class

| Factor | Southeastern - Metro | Short commute typology | Short commute best in class |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall satisfaction with the journey** | 75 | 81 | 95 |
| TRAIN FACTORS | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the train | 74 | 79 | 92 |
| The frequency of the trains on that route | 65 | 73 | 97 |
| Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time) | 68 | 72 | 93 |
| The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed) | 77 | 82 | 97 |
| Connections with other train services | 68 | 76 | 90 |
| The value for money for the price of your ticket | 37 | 48 | 75 |
| Cleanliness of the train | 67 | 75 | 91 |
| Upkeep and repair of the train | 65 | 74 | 95 |
| The provision of information during the journey | 61 | 69 | 88 |
| The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train | 31 | 56 | 92 |
| The space for luggage | 44 | 53 | 71 |
| The toilet facilities | 16 | 29 | 58 |
| Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand | 60 | 65 | 81 |
| The comfort of the seating area | 60 | 71 | 84 |
| The ease of being able to get on and off | 73 | 78 | 91 |
| Your personal security whilst on board | 69 | 74 | 86 |
| The cleanliness of the inside | 67 | 76 | 90 |
| The cleanliness of the outside | 69 | 74 | 89 |
| The availability of staff on the train | 14 | 35 | 83 |
| How well train company dealt with delays | 27 | 32 | 64 |
| Usefulness of information during delays | 38 | 44 | 79 |
| STATION FACTORS | | | |
| Overall satisfaction with the station | 79 | 81 | 92 |
| Ticket buying facilities | 79 | 76 | 88 |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms | 81 | 81 | 91 |
| The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms | 73 | 74 | 90 |
| Cleanliness of the station | 79 | 78 | 89 |
| The facilities and services at the station | 57 | 53 | 66 |
| The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff | 78 | 77 | 92 |
| Connections with other forms of public transport | 79 | 77 | 86 |
| Facilities for car parking at the station | 51 | 46 | 77 |
| The overall station environment | 68 | 72 | 86 |
| Your personal security whilst using the station | 70 | 73 | 83 |
| The availability of staff at the station | 69 | 67 | 88 |
| The provision of shelter facilities | 69 | 71 | 89 |
| Availability of seating | 45 | 52 | 75 |
| How request to station staff was handled | 89 | 83 | 100 |
| The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available | 36 | 42 | 58 |
| *Sample size* | *823* | *9314* | |

Building block score is five points or more below typology average

Building block score is five points or more above typology average

# Appendix 3 Passenger priorities for station requirements and improvements

## A3.1 Facilities need providing, 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***

| | All | 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

Passengerfocus putting passengers first

## A3.2 Facilities need improving, 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 <u>improving</u>: All GB rail passengers***

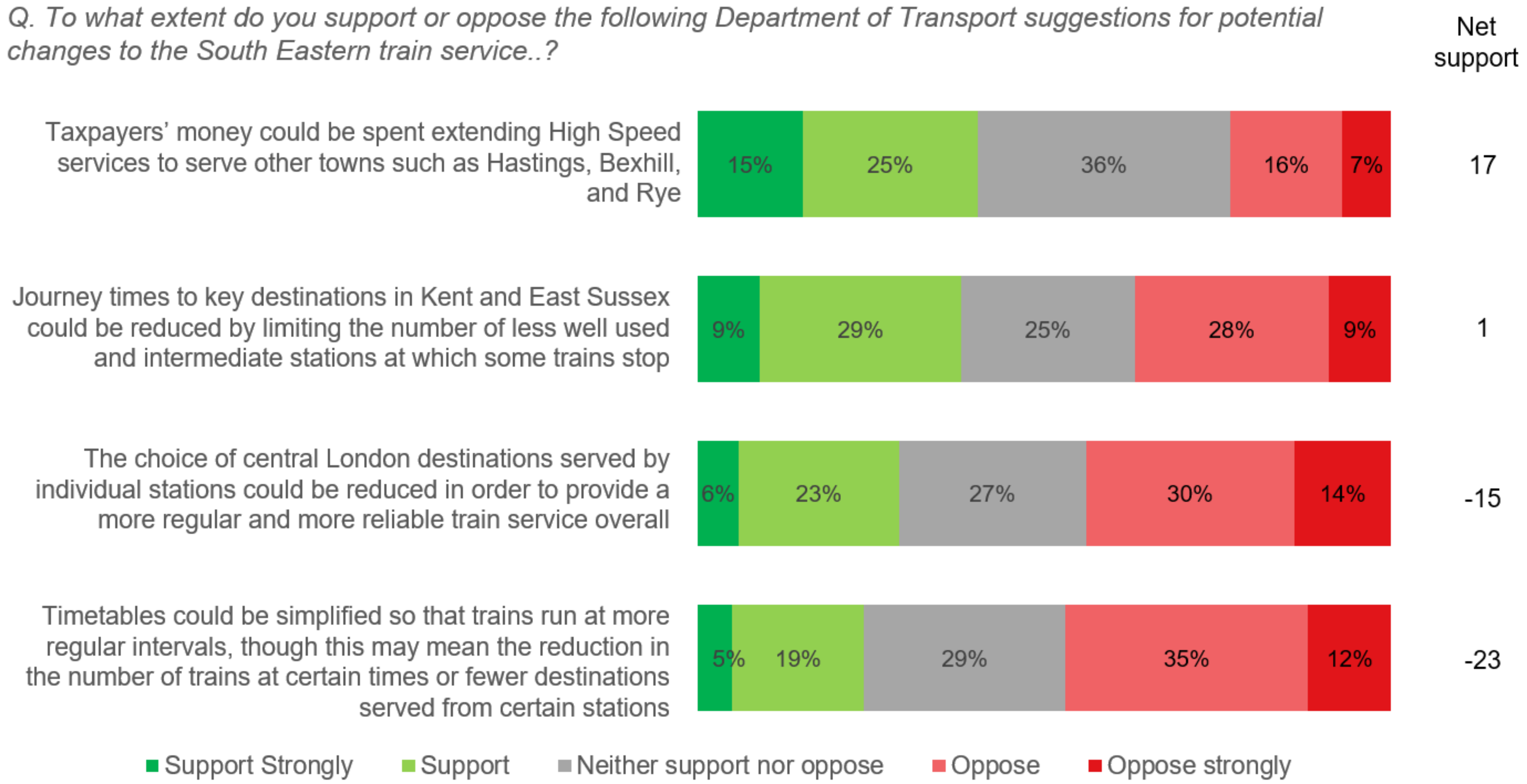
| | All | Station footfall: High | Medium | Low |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Seating on platforms | 30% | 30% | 32% | 28% |
| Toilets | 20% | 26% | 9% | 7% |
| Litter bins | 17% | 19% | 13% | 14% |
| Shelter on platforms (i.e. semi enclosed waiting area) | 15% | 9% | 23% | 28% |
| Waiting rooms (i.e. fully 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% |

30 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

Passengerfocus putting passengers first

## Appendix 4 Transport User Panel – Southeastern consultation questions

### A4.1 Service changes




Base: Transport User Panellists using Southeastern train services at least once a year (498). Fieldwork 28 April – 9 May 2017

### A4.2 Creating capacity

*Q. Which of the following options in your opinion represents the best way of creating capacity on Southeastern trains?*

| | Total | High Speed | Mainline | Metro |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Remove first class on trains | 34% | 27% | 41% | 27% |
| Make trains longer | 30% | 41% | 27% | 29% |
| Provide more frequent services | 29% | 25% | 27% | 33% |
| Provide 'Metro-style' carriages with larger entrances, more standing room and hand-holds | 7% | 6% | 5% | 10% |

Base: Transport User Panellists using Southeastern train services at least once a year (498).
Users of High Speed services (95), Mainline services (224), Metro services (165). Fieldwork 28 April – 9 May 2017

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