

East Midlands rail franchise: Consultation response

October 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 East Midlands 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 East Midlands 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.

Our research clearly shows that delivering a punctual, reliable service is rail passengers' fundamental requirement of the operator, but it also identifies other key areas for improvement in the next East Midlands franchise:

- capacity, crowding and service frequency – providing a comprehensive, seven-day service right across the network, with timetables suited to the needs of passengers and sufficient seats and space to accommodate demand
- replacing rolling stock and improving stations
- onboard experience – transforming a functional but basic service into one that delivers an exceptional quality of service for passengers, with things like live information about the journey (such as onward connections and especially disruption updates), power sockets and free Wi-Fi provided as standard

- ticketing, retail and value for money – encompassing easy ways to purchase the most appropriate ticket for the journey, and the elements of service quality which drive value for money as well as the ticket price itself.

The next operator also needs to build on the solid, dependable, basic service currently offered on the East Midlands network, developing 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 East Midlands 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 East Midlands Trains 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 East Midlands Trains passengers that we undertook in spring 2017. More generally, we cite findings from our wider research into a range of issues that are important to passengers.

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

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 East Midlands franchise. We will continue to work closely with DfT and with 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 wide-ranging evidence of passenger needs and aspirations. We published research into current East Midlands Trains passengers' experiences and aspirations for the new franchise in September 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. Many of the ideas put forward in the consultation document don't yet have sufficient detail for passengers and stakeholders to fully assess the potential benefits and downsides. We would urge DfT to consult those affected again once specific options are fleshed out, before reaching a final decision.

3. East Midlands rail franchise – passenger research and implications for the next specification and contract

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 East Midlands 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 East Midlands Trains passengers is also included¹. Other research is cited as applicable within following sections.

3.2 Rail passengers' priorities for improvement – findings from 2017²

This 2017 study of passenger priorities allows us to compare the priorities of East Midlands Trains passengers against the national sample. It also allows us to examine the operator's results in more detail, such as by route, journey purpose or age.

The priorities are shown as an index averaged on 100 (Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3). 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 4). Further detail is given as graphical comparisons between route, journey purpose and age group in Appendix 3 Passenger priorities for improvement.

We can see that there are two stand-out factors for East Midlands Trains passengers. The top priority of 'price of train tickets offers better value for money' is more than five times the average importance, and 'passengers able to get a seat on the train' is the second highest priority, at over three and a half times the average

¹ *East Midlands rail franchise: passengers' experiences and aspirations*, September 2017, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/east-midlands-rail-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-aspirations/>

² *Rail passengers' priorities for improvement*, 2017. This research hasn't yet been published, but results from East Midlands Trains passengers have been included within this consultation response. Full results will be published shortly, including a simulator which will allow breaking down the results by route, journey purpose and various demographics.

importance. Both of these are higher than their respective national averages (477 for value for money and 318 for getting a seat), but correspondingly factors around performance are a lower priority for improvement for East Midlands Trains passengers, which correlates with performance being relatively good.

Following that, East Midlands Trains passengers prioritise improving the onboard experience, with things like free Wi-Fi, well-maintained train interiors and clean toilets, as well as what can be regarded as 'core' elements of service in punctuality, reliability and service frequency.

'Train company keeps passengers informed about delays' ranks tenth for East Midlands Trains passengers, with an index score of just over 100, making this of roughly average importance in terms of priorities for improvement.

Comparison by journey purpose highlights the differing priorities of passengers. For example, 'Free Wi-Fi available on the train' is third priority for commuters and business travellers on East Midlands Trains, but only 10th for leisure passengers.

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, along with the comfort factors on the train. 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 improvements to the delivery of these 'core' elements of the service, but also now a real focus on improving the quality of experience overall. The new franchise should regard things formerly seen as aspirations, like power sockets and free Wi-Fi, as things passengers now *expect* as standard.

The database contains a wealth of information which can be analysed in many ways to explore how priorities vary by NRPS building block, demographic and journey purpose, amongst other things. 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 East Midlands rail network.

Figure 1: Passenger priorities for improvement 2017: comparison of East Midlands Trains and Great Britain

	East Midlands Trains		Great Britain	
Price of train tickets offers better value for money	534	1	477	1
Passengers able to get a seat on the train	365	2	318	2
More trains arrive on time than happens now	133	4	178	3
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey	115	7	166	4
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now	111	9	161	5
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel	131	5	156	6
Less disruption due to engineering works	83	12	116	7
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays	106	10	115	8
Free Wi-Fi available on the train	135	3	108	9
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard	123	6	99	10
Journey time is reduced	82	14	98	11
Accurate and timely information available at stations	90	11	95	12
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train	112	8	85	13
Accurate and timely information provided on trains	78	15	83	14
Improved personal security on the train	71	18	78	15
Connections with other train services are always good	71	17	72	16
Good connections with other public transport at stations	68	19	69	17
Easier to buy the right ticket	82	13	65	18
Improved personal security at the station	59	20	64	19
Seating area on train is more comfortable	76	16	62	20
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard	53	22	46	21
More room to stand comfortably on busy trains	47	26	46	22
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude	49	24	45	23
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude	47	25	44	24
Free Wi-Fi available at the station	49	23	42	25
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage	53	21	42	26
More staff available at stations to help passengers	42	27	41	27
More staff available on trains to help passengers	41	28	41	28
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free	36	29	34	29
Easier to claim compensation when delayed	28	31	28	30
Better mobile phone signal on trains	31	30	26	31
<i>Sample size:</i>		622	12803	

Figure 2: Passenger priorities for improvement: comparison of East Midlands Trains commuter, business and leisure passengers

	Commuter		Business		Leisure	
Price of train tickets offers better value for money	521	1	458	1	593	1
Passengers able to get a seat on the train	330	2	306	2	433	2
More trains arrive on time than happens now	138	4	135	4	127	5
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey	116	7	115	7	113	7
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now	117	6	113	9	106	8
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel	138	5	128	5	128	4
Less disruption due to engineering works	87	13	85	13	78	14
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays	105	9	109	10	106	9
Free Wi-Fi available on the train	143	3	181	3	98	10
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard	110	8	121	6	136	3
Journey time is reduced	89	12	90	12	70	16
Accurate and timely information available at stations	91	11	92	11	87	12
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train	102	10	113	8	121	6
Accurate and timely information provided on trains	80	14	82	14	75	15
Improved personal security on the train	72	19	76	16	67	18
Connections with other train services are always good	74	16	69	19	70	17
Good connections with other public transport at stations	73	17	68	20	64	19
Easier to buy the right ticket	79	15	80	15	87	11
Improved personal security at the station	62	20	63	21	53	21
Seating area on train is more comfortable	73	18	73	17	80	13
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard	52	23	56	22	51	22
More room to stand comfortably on busy trains	55	22	51	26	36	27
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude	49	25	53	24	47	23
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude	47	26	51	25	45	24
Free Wi-Fi available at the station	57	21	70	18	30	29
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage	51	24	55	23	54	20
More staff available at stations to help passengers	44	27	45	27	37	26
More staff available on trains to help passengers	43	28	44	28	38	25
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free	35	30	41	30	33	28
Easier to claim compensation when delayed	34	31	35	31	18	31
Better mobile phone signal on trains	37	29	41	29	19	30

Sample size: 120

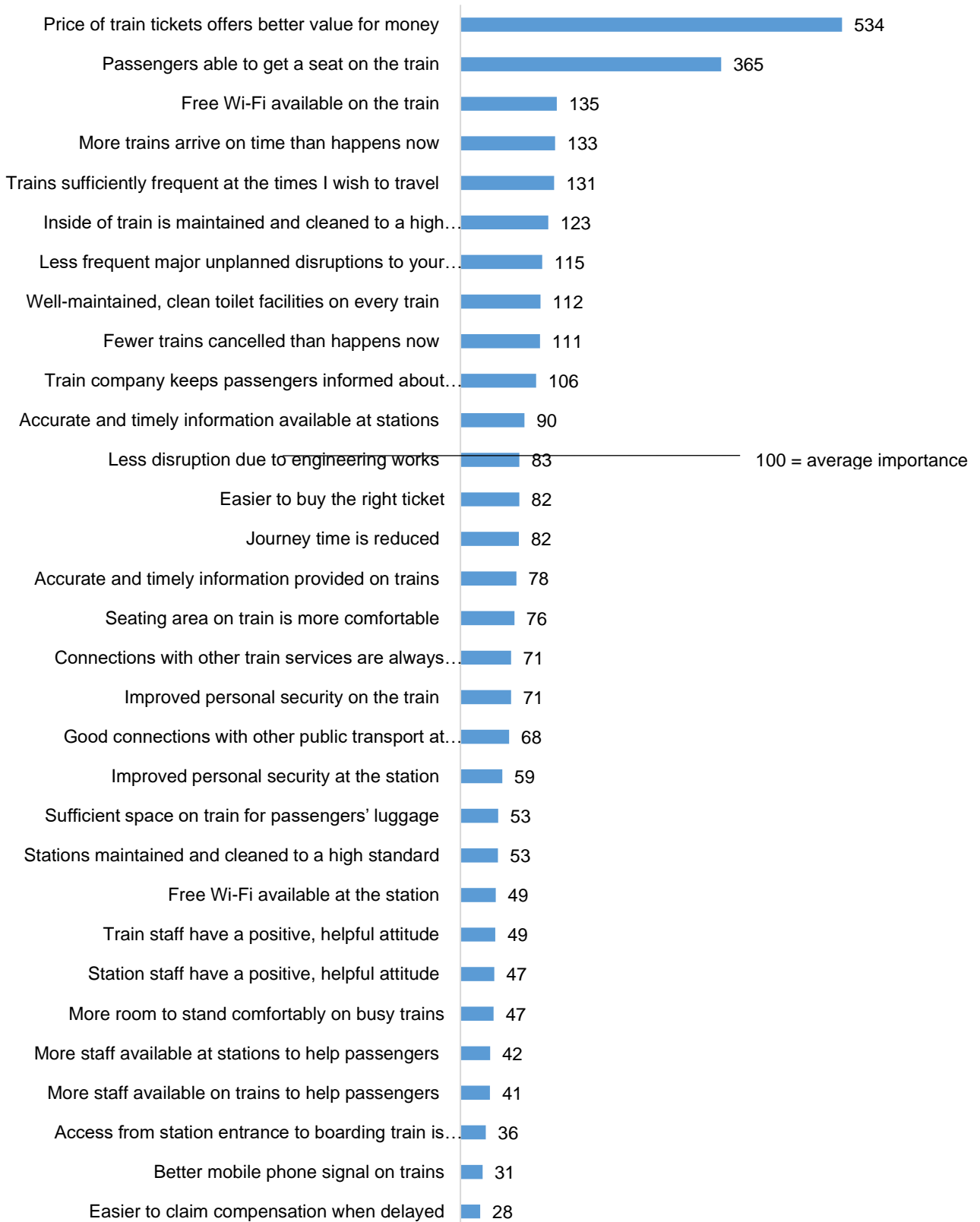
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Figure 3: Passenger priorities for improvement: comparison of East Midlands Trains passengers by route

	Liverpool - Norwich		Local		London	
Price of train tickets offers better value for money	552	1	474	1	568	1
Passengers able to get a seat on the train	415	2	375	2	402	2
More trains arrive on time than happens now	141	3	149	3	135	4
Less frequent major unplanned disruptions to your journey	125	6	129	5	116	7
Fewer trains cancelled than happens now	118	7	127	6	112	8
Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel	132	4	142	4	134	5
Less disruption due to engineering works	82	12	90	13	81	14
Train company keeps passengers informed about delays	113	10	119	8	104	10
Free Wi-Fi available on the train	117	8	101	10	146	3
Inside of train is maintained and cleaned to a high standard	126	5	120	7	123	6
Journey time is reduced	68	17	71	18	81	13
Accurate and timely information available at stations	94	11	101	11	87	11
Well-maintained, clean toilet facilities on every train	114	9	104	9	110	9
Accurate and timely information provided on trains	80	13	86	14	75	15
Improved personal security on the train	76	14	96	12	68	17
Connections with other train services are always good	61	19	74	17	65	18
Good connections with other public transport at stations	54	20	68	19	59	19
Easier to buy the right ticket	73	15	77	15	82	12
Improved personal security at the station	61	18	74	16	54	20
Seating area on train is more comfortable	72	16	66	20	73	16
Stations maintained and cleaned to a high standard	50	22	53	21	49	22
More room to stand comfortably on busy trains	41	25	48	26	43	25
Train staff have a positive, helpful attitude	46	23	52	22	44	24
Station staff have a positive, helpful attitude	44	24	50	24	42	26
Free Wi-Fi available at the station	37	28	34	28	46	23
Sufficient space on train for passengers' luggage	51	21	51	23	51	21
More staff available at stations to help passengers	39	27	47	27	36	28
More staff available on trains to help passengers	40	26	49	25	36	27
Access from station entrance to boarding train is step-free	35	29	28	29	29	29
Easier to claim compensation when delayed	20	31	23	30	23	31
Better mobile phone signal on trains	25	30	23	31	27	30
Sample size:	113		176		297	

Figure 4: East Midlands Trains 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 East Midlands Trains³.

Evidence from the NRPS reinforces the message from our focus group research among East Midlands Trains passengers that the franchise is currently delivering a solid, dependable service. Overall satisfaction is consistently higher than other regional operators, meaning that this franchise is competing with other long-distance operators in terms of the levels of passenger satisfaction it achieves. The Spring 2017 NRPS results show that overall satisfaction with East Midlands Trains is at 89 per cent, which is the same as the average for long-distance operators.

Drilling down into the detail in the NRPS scores does throw up plenty of room for improvement across the network. The top two priorities for improvement of value for money and getting a seat are reflected in low satisfaction scores, at least on certain parts of the network and at certain times. Satisfaction with value for money among commuters on the London route, at 23 per cent, is among the lowest in the country. Over half of commuters on this route (53 per cent) are actively dissatisfied with value for money. It's an issue that warrants further attention.

Tables detailing the NRPS headline factor scores for East Midlands Trains 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.

3.3.1 Drivers of satisfaction

Figure 5 shows the importance of punctuality and reliability as a driver of satisfaction for East Midlands Trains passengers overall at 26 per cent. The cleanliness of the inside of the train is the second biggest driver of satisfaction overall on East Midlands Trains, at 20 per cent. We know from the satisfaction scores and focus group research that this doesn't mean that trains are always clean and tidy- indeed, there is plenty of room for improvement here. What it does show is that people notice and appreciate it when the train they catch is clean and tidy.

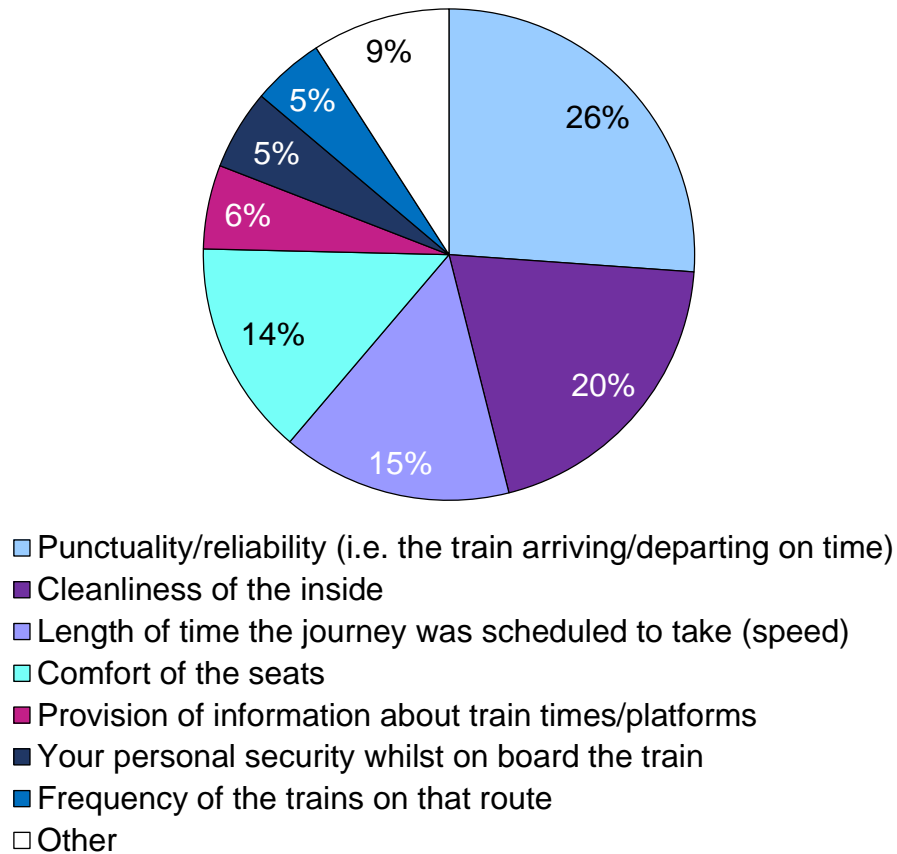
Other important drivers of satisfaction for East Midlands Trains passengers are the length of the journey (especially for passengers on local services), and the comfort of the seats, which features more heavily as a driver of satisfaction for passengers on the longer Liverpool-Norwich and London routes.

³ Appendix 1 provides definitions of the NRPS building blocks

3.3.2 Drivers of dissatisfaction

How the train company deals with disruption, is overwhelmingly the main driver of dissatisfaction (36 per cent). We call on the new franchise to provide comprehensive, live information at stations and on trains, with helpful staff who are informed and empowered to help passengers. Any new trains, and upgrades to existing trains, must be able to receive the live Darwin feed to supply information screens. Concerns about personal security on board also form a significant driver of dissatisfaction (26 per cent). All passengers should feel safe and secure at stations and on trains, and we have outlined the things passengers would expect to be done to improve this in our answer to question 28.

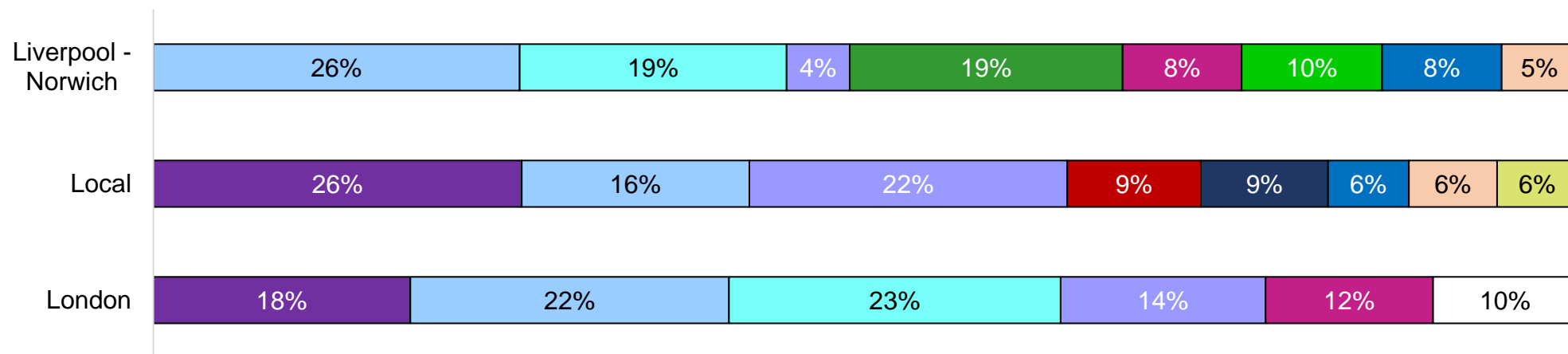
Figure 5: Drivers of satisfaction, NRPS Autumn 2016/Spring 2017: East Midlands Trains overall and by building block



Note: In Figure 5 and Figure 6 a number of factors have been omitted from the analysis, as these are new or have changed between Autumn 2016 and Spring 2017. These are:

- toilet facilities at the station
- comfort of the seats (on the train)
- step or gap between the train and the platform
- level of crowding on the train
- availability of Wi-Fi on the train
- availability of power sockets on the train.

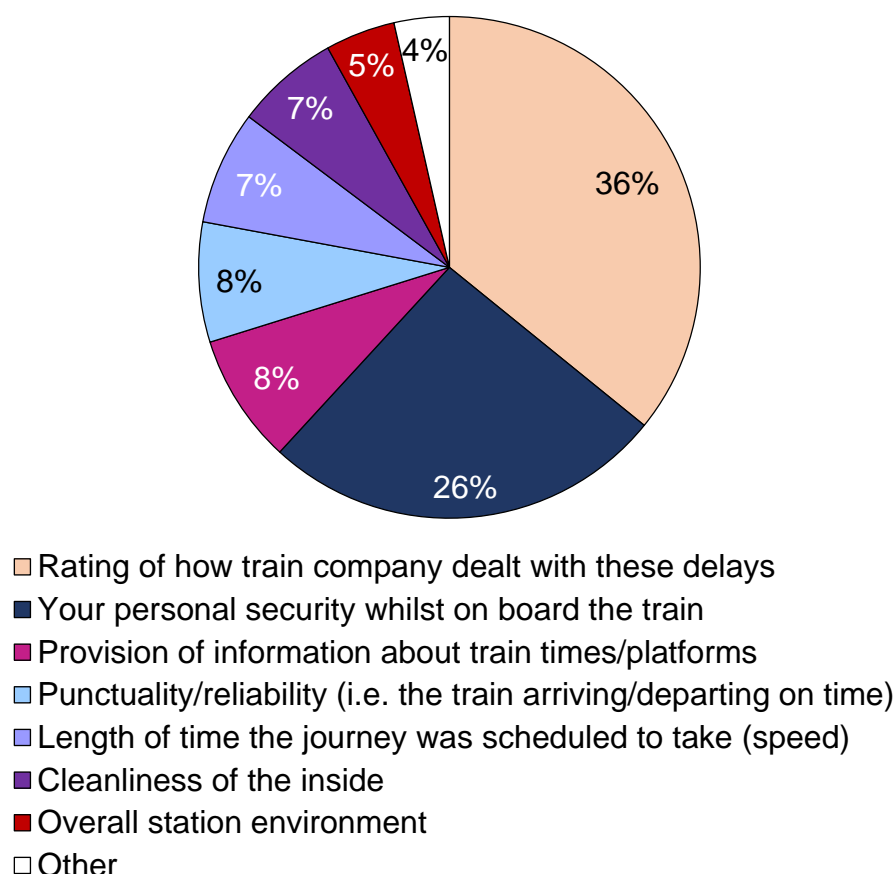
East Midlands Trains drivers of satisfaction by building block, Autumn 2016/Spring 2017 NRPS



- Cleanliness of the inside
- Comfort of the seats
- Up keep and repair of the train
- Availability of staff on the train
- Your personal security whilst on board the train
- Rating of how train company dealt with these delays
- Other

- Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)
- Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)
- Provision of information about train times/platforms
- Overall station environment
- Frequency of the trains on that route
- Value for money for the price of your ticket

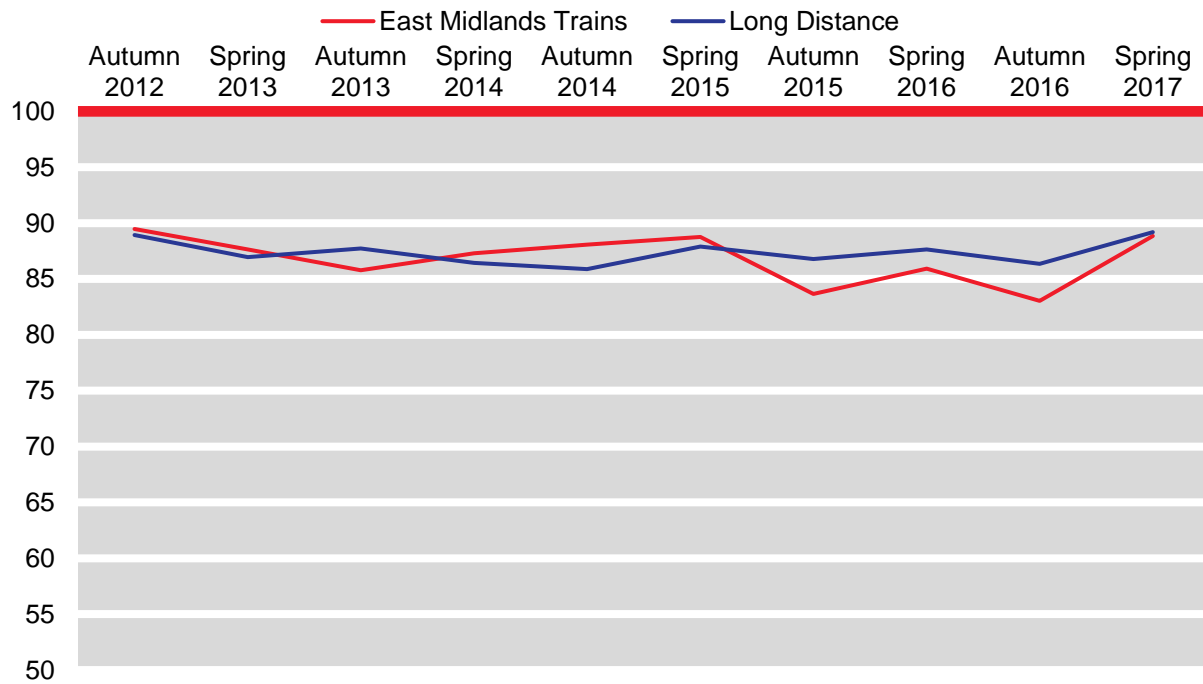
**Figure 6: Drivers of dissatisfaction, NRPS Autumn 2016/Spring 2017:
East Midlands Trains**



3.3.3 Satisfaction with value for money and the overall journey

A comparison between East Midlands Trains and long-distance operators nationally shows East Midlands Trains to have had very similar levels of overall journey satisfaction over several years (Figure 7), tending in recent years to be two or three points behind. The most recent results from the Spring 2017 NRPS show East Midlands Trains achieving 89 per cent, the same as the long-distance average.

Figure 7: East Midlands Trains and long-distance sector trends for satisfaction with overall journey, NRPS



Scores for satisfaction with value for money are considerably lower for both East Midlands Trains and the sector (Figure 8). However, East Midlands Trains consistently scores well below the average for long-distance operators, with Spring 2017 NRPS scores of 51 and 58 per cent respectively.

Figure 8: East Midlands Trains and long-distance sector trends for value for money, NRPS



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

We carried out focus group research in May 2017, which revealed that passengers appreciate a franchise that is largely delivering on their basic needs. They find East Midlands Trains' services to be generally punctual and reliable, with local journeys offering decent value for money. But they consider the trains themselves to be dated and below the quality standard they see elsewhere on many of the franchises that connect with East Midlands Trains network. For longer journeys, especially to and from London, opinions of the value for money are much more varied, with some people finding good value fares whilst others find tickets to be 'eye-wateringly' expensive.

Passengers' experiences of travelling on other train and bus operators' services help shape their opinions and expectations. The cleanliness of the train is an area of concern for East Midlands Trains passengers, and they increasingly see amenities such as plug sockets and free Wi-Fi as lacking, whereas many other operators provide them as standard.

In general, passengers praise staff at stations and on trains, finding them friendly and helpful. Where passengers have problems, these are generally resolved proactively on-the-spot, or dealt with successfully by East Midlands Trains' customer relations team.

Crowding is an issue on some services, especially at certain times and in particular places. This is compounded by short trains, which are often just one carriage on some routes. Sometimes these issues are a daily occurrence, for example at peak commuting times or Sunday afternoons, whereas other instances of crowding can be linked to special events. Passengers would like the new operator to provide sufficient seats, and be better prepared in planning extra capacity for things like football matches in Derby or race days at Uttoxeter.

Passengers have some affinity, even affection, for the name and brand. They regard it as 'local' and part of their community, with people noting similarities with local buses. They choose to travel by train because it's convenient and easy, calculating that it's quicker, more reliable and often cheaper than taking the car or the bus. A pleasant journey experience on the daily commute means that passengers then also choose to use the train for leisure journeys at other times.

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 East Midlands franchise.

Overall, East Midlands Trains is delivering the basics well, providing a solid foundation on which the new franchise can build. Passengers will expect to see this continuing, alongside providing more quality-focused elements of the journey experience such as power sockets and free Wi-Fi. But this franchise is an opportunity to deliver well beyond passengers' expectations. We would like to see the new operator embrace this challenge and become a market-leader in providing an outstanding whole-journey experience.

Our research clearly shows that delivering a punctual, reliable service is rail passengers' fundamental requirement of the operator, but it also identifies other key areas for improvement in the next East Midlands franchise.

- Capacity, crowding and service frequency – 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. Services should be sufficiently frequent to allow passengers to use the train at the times they wish to travel, including improvements to peak, evening and Sunday services across the network.

- Replacing rolling stock and improving stations – trains and stations should be clean, smart and in good repair. Trains should feel modern, and all passengers should feel safe and secure when using the network.
- Onboard experience – train layouts that facilitate luggage storage and passenger comfort. All seats should have fixed or fold-down tables so people can use their travel time productively. Passengers today expect power sockets and free Wi-Fi as standard, with high-quality connectivity to facilitate access to information and enable a range of activities during the journey.
- Ticketing, retail and value for money – encompassing the important service elements which drive this as well as the ticket price. Passengers should be able to select and easily obtain the best and most appropriate fare for their journey delivered through the medium of their choice.

The next franchise must 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, and reference our comprehensive report on what passengers want from the franchising process⁴.

⁴ *Franchising: what passengers want*, November 2016 (last updated August 2017), <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/franchising-passengers-want/>

4. Response to consultation questions

Note on our response to questions relating to timetable/ train service options

The consultation document provides an outline of the intentions for the timetable but is very light on the detail and thus the full implications for passengers who are likely to be impacted by the proposals. In general, we would encourage the Government to share and consult again on detailed proposals, clearly setting out the benefits and any negative consequences. It should identify who will gain and who may lose out, as well as proposing mitigations to reduce any impact on those people who would be adversely affected.

In our report on what passengers want from the franchising process, we detail some important generic points about train service specification, interchange and timetable consultation that should also be considered alongside the answers to the consultation questions⁵.

Question 1: How do you think closer co-operation between staff in Network Rail and the operator of the next East Midlands franchise can be achieved?

Closer working between Network Rail and the operator is an area where 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 ongoing maintenance and the new developments planned, there are further operational challenges where the East Midlands 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, and also ensuring the passenger voice is placed centrally in these discussions.

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.

⁵ *Franchising: what passengers want* (section 3.5), November 2016 (last updated August 2017), <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/franchising-passengers-want/>

If the aim is better services for passengers, then internal processes and systems must work towards this, rather than vice versa. With numerous infrastructure improvement works scheduled to take place in the years ahead, it is essential that the objectives of closer integration are aligned with the things that are important to passengers – that is, maintaining a punctual and reliable service, providing more capacity and offering a more frequent service (especially at peak times, later in the evening and on Sundays). Other concerns from our passenger research related to infrastructure include improving stations and their surroundings, increasing the ride quality on local routes and offering faster journeys between urban centres in the East Midlands (for example between Derby and Lincoln).

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.

4.1.1 Incentivising 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 and ensure a common focus on the end outcomes, especially where these impact on passengers. To this end we would ask DfT to consider the scope for introducing joint targets in new franchises.

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 any partnership must be to improve the overall experience for passengers, and we know from our previous focus group research among passengers using Southeastern services, that this starts with getting the basic service right before then looking at improving the overall quality⁶. That means improving punctuality and capacity first and foremost.

Question 2: How can the operator of the next East Midlands franchise engage with community rail partnerships or heritage railways to support the local economy to stimulate demand for rail services in the region?

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) can 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 successful⁷. 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 CRPs, and development of new CRPs, across the East Midlands network. The DfT should require bidders to make appropriate provision in their proposals.

Passengers expect the stations they use to be welcoming and attractive. Local involvement, typically by 'friends of' groups and supported by CRPs, 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.

⁶ *South Eastern rail franchise: what passengers want*, April 2017, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/south-eastern-rail-franchise-passengers-want/>

⁷ *Value of Community Rail Partnerships*, Association of Community Rail Partnerships, January 2015

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. Partnerships with local tourist attractions, such as heritage railways, offer an additional opportunity to promote rail travel. 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 and stimulate demand 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.

Question 3: Do you think that the operator of the train service, stations and support services should take the following into consideration when they run the franchise:

- the environment
- equality
- communities in the areas they operate?

If so, how should they do this?

Passengers' primary concern is that they receive a safe, punctual and reliable service at the times they wish to travel, and that they are able to get a seat on the train. They would like clear, accurate and live information at all stages of their journey, a pleasant environment at stations and clean, comfortable trains, all of which contribute to a sense of value for money.

Beyond these core requirements though, there is scope for the operator to develop its image, its relationship with its customers and with the communities it serves. Passengers on local routes like to feel that the operator is part of the community. We know from our research that they appreciate familiar faces in their local members of staff.

Being recognised as a positive presence in the community, for taking action to promote equality and for improving the environment are all things that could improve people's trust in the operator. If passengers' basic requirements are met, and the train company is well-regarded locally, the rail service will seem like a more attractive option when people are choosing which transport mode to use.

In our 2014 research into passengers' relationship with rail operators⁸, 39 per cent of passengers said that they trusted East Midlands Trains a great deal, compared with

⁸ *Rail Passenger Trust Survey*, August 2014, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/rail-passenger-trust-survey-quantitative-research-august-2014/>

nine per cent who said that they barely trusted the operator at all. Despite these relatively high levels of trust, only 19 per cent of people said that they would recommend East Midlands Trains to a friend, whereas 44 per cent of people said they wouldn't.

Question 4: Do you agree with our proposed approach, which could reduce journey times on long-distance services and increase the likelihood of getting a seat?

In principle, addressing the different needs of the distinct markets on the Midland Main Line appears sound. Providing increased opportunities of getting a seat will address the second ranked East Midlands Trains passenger priority for improvement, which has an index score of 365 in our 2017 survey. This means it is over three and a half times the 'average' importance people place on a factor (which would have an index of 100). However, frequency of trains at the time passengers wish to travel is also a high priority, in fifth place with an index score of 131. Yet, on pages 28/9, in the section about 'stopping patterns on the Midland Mainline', there is an acknowledgment that for some passengers the peak-time service would be less frequent. This will not be a welcome change at the time when many people wish to travel.

The proposals to improve journey time for long-distance travellers, ahead of provision of peak-time frequency for commuters, emphasises a factor that, for existing passengers, is a significantly lower priority for improvement than either getting a seat or frequency of service. Improving journey time, ranked 14th in 2017, and indexed at 80, is actually *below* the importance of the 'average' factor. It's important to bear in mind that this is asking about the level of priority of *improving* the journey time – it doesn't consider the level of priority people might place on avoiding seeing their journey times *increased*.

The document alludes to negative consequences for some passengers as a result of the removal of direct services from Luton, Bedford and Wellingborough to Leicester and beyond. But it doesn't set out what this will mean in terms of an increase in stops or longer journeys for the services that may need to accommodate displaced connecting passengers.

It is also unclear which services will benefit from the over 1000 additional seats an hour in the peak, or what will determine how and when the dedicated commuter services will be 'up to 12 carriages long'.

Getting a seat is a major concern for many commuters, especially from stations on the southern part of the Midland Main Line. Having dedicated services between Corby and London will ensure that passengers from places like Kettering, Wellingborough and Bedford are able to board a train nearer the start of its journey,

giving them a better chance of getting a seat. Currently, passengers from these locations board trains that are already full of people travelling from the main cities in the East Midlands.

Figure 9: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with journey times and service frequency

East Midlands Trains London route - journey purpose:	Commuters	Business	Leisure
Level of crowding	61	76	79
The frequency of trains on that route	78	88	89
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	83	88	93

Our research reflects this concern. Passengers in our focus group research from these locations expressed their desire to have more capacity from their stations, and the NRPS shows similar results. On the East Midlands Trains London route, only 61 per cent of commuters are satisfied with the level of crowding, compared with 76 per cent of business passengers and 79 per cent of leisure passengers.

Passengers from places such as Nottingham, Derby and Leicester travelling towards London can be expected to welcome faster journey times at peak periods. Although 83 per cent of commuters are satisfied with journey times on the Midland Main Line, this rises to 88 per cent of business passengers and 93 per cent of leisure travellers. This is reflective of the fact that peak-time journeys tend to be slower.

However, there are a number of consequences of taking stops out of the timetable. There is a risk of losing a significant amount of connectivity between the places on the southern end of the route and the main cities of the region at the northern end, as well as to the rest of the country. Passengers may be required to change trains – sometimes even more than once – in order to make journeys they can currently do directly. We know from our research that many passengers are deterred by having to change trains.

There is significant local concern about the loss of this connectivity, as demonstrated at the consultation events in Kettering, Wellingborough and Bedford. This is especially true for those people who have chosen to live in the area specifically because of the ease of travelling north, as well as the proximity to London. A significant number of people commute north (as well as towards London), as well travelling to Leicester and beyond for facilities like hospitals and universities.

We share these concerns. As an absolute minimum by way of mitigation, it will be important for intercity services to stop at Kettering in order to connect with services between Corby and stations to London. It will also be important to demonstrate that connections won't be reduced and journey times increased significantly for these passengers. Kettering should be enhanced, as appropriate for a 'hub' station, to ensure that there are high-quality interchange facilities.

Careful management of services to provide timely and reliable arrivals, adequate but not excessive transfer times, with smooth and easy access between trains (ideally on the same or just cross-platform) will also be required. Plans should carefully consider passengers with disabilities, and there must be sufficient helpful and informed staff to provide assistance.

But the reality is that the proposals as set out in the consultation document do not contain sufficient detail to really assess the benefits and who will lose out. We would urge the Government to present detailed options, including outline timetables and proposed journey times, before returning to consult with those passengers who will be affected. The options should clearly set out who will benefit and how, and who may might be affected by any adverse consequences.

In terms of the trains themselves, we recognise that some passengers may have particular preferences regarding layout and design. Some will appreciate the facilities currently offered by the intercity-style trains currently used, but for many commuters travelling from stations south of Corby towards London, their primary concern is getting a seat. Being able to board and sit down on a commuter-style train will be preferable to standing in the vestibule of a packed intercity train.

These journeys are not short. Corby to London is over an hour, so passengers will still expect a degree of comfort. Space to work on fixed or fold-down tables, free Wi-Fi and plug sockets should be provided as standard, as well as high-quality audio and visual journey information including about onward connections.

Question 5: What are your suggestions about how to mitigate the potential loss of some direct services between Oakham, Melton Mowbray and London?

Passengers from Oakham and Melton Mowbray will be disappointed to lose their direct services to London. There should be a full exposition of the proposals and the anticipated advantages these will deliver, including the scale of the wider benefits, as well as the plans for mitigating their loss of service. This may, at least, help disadvantaged passengers understand the context for the changes.

As with other parts of this consultation, it will be important to present detailed plans for what will happen if the service is cut, and what the alternative arrangements are for connections to London from these stations.

To mitigate the loss of their direct service to London, passengers will be looking for similar or improved overall journey times with convenient connections – ideally on the same or an adjacent platform.

Once these detailed options are in place, passengers from the affected stations should be consulted again to ensure the best possible outcome.

Question 6: What are the particular services, routes and times of day when you think additional seats for passengers are most needed?

In 2016 we carried out research into how passengers feel during their journey⁹. This showed that crowding is a significant contributing factor to negative emotions, second only to delays. Within that, we can see that passengers become increasingly angry and frustrated when they are not able to do what they want, for example, if they are unable to use their smartphones because of crowding.

Getting a seat on the train is one of East Midlands Trains passengers' top priorities for improvements, second only to value for money¹⁰. It's over three and a half times the importance of the average factor in our research. The NRPS shows that passengers' satisfaction with the level of crowding on the train is at 76 per cent, just above the average of 75 per cent for long-distance operators.

We can break these figures down further, including by route and by journey purpose. In general, passengers on local services place a lower priority on improving their ability to get a seat than passengers on London services, whereas passengers using the Liverpool-Norwich service place a slightly higher priority. Looking at the NRPS scores, satisfaction with the level of crowding on local routes is higher than on Liverpool-Norwich and London services.

Figure 10: Priority for improvement 2017 and Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction scores with capacity

	London	Local	Liverpool -Norwich	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Priority for improvement index for getting a seat on the train (100 is average priority)	402	375	415	330	306	433

⁹ *How rail passengers really feel*, June 2016, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/rail-passengers-really-feel>

¹⁰ *Rail passengers' priorities for improvement*, 2017. See Footnote 2.

Percentage of passengers satisfied with the level of crowding (Spring 2017 NRPS)	74	81	76	65	79	80
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Although satisfaction with crowding is lower among commuters than business and leisure passengers, getting a seat appears to be a lower priority for improvement, compared to other factors, for commuters and business passengers than it is for leisure passengers. This may be because commuters and business passengers place a higher priority than leisure passengers on a wider range of factors, including free Wi-Fi, service frequency and punctuality, but also expectations about the feasibility of improving this are lower.

Our focus group research among East Midlands Trains passengers reveals certain places and times on the network where capacity is strained. Commuters travelling into Lincoln and using the Derby-Crewe line all suffer from crowded trains, not helped by an insufficiently frequent service with trains often formed of just one coach. London services are regularly extremely busy at traditional ‘peak’ times, but also at other times of the week, such as Sunday afternoons.

East Midlands Trains passengers also call for a greater ability to adapt capacity provision to meet predictable spikes in demand, such as for sports matches in Nottingham and Derby, Lincoln Christmas markets, races at Uttoxeter or summer weekends in Skegness.

Some passengers also have concerns with the amount of luggage space on busy services. Just 57 per cent of passengers using the Liverpool – Norwich service are satisfied with the space for luggage on the train and 59 per cent for London services. Passengers find that local services tend to have a little more luggage space; 71 per cent of passengers are satisfied.

When considering changes to rolling stock to meet these demands for more capacity, the new franchise should reflect passengers’ aspirations for an onboard environment that is smarter, more comfortable and enables them to make better use of their time on board. Our research shows that passengers expect tables (fixed or fold-down), plug sockets and free Wi-Fi as a minimum. We doubt that passengers would be happy with a move towards traditional commuter-style trains with high-density seating.

Question 7: Which onboard facilities, in order of preference, are most important to you:

- on short distance journeys (up to 60 minutes)
- on long-distance journeys (over 60 minutes)?

Baby changing facilities, catering, CCTV, cycle storage, first class areas, free Wi-Fi, luggage space, power sockets, pushchair space, seat-back tables, table seating, USB sockets, wheelchair space.

The passenger experience on board the train is one area where the operator of the new franchise can really make a difference. Passengers find the current offering rather basic and functional right across the network, including on London services where they make comparisons with other operators' offerings.

Passengers are pragmatic, and the specific outcomes of our research focus on a few, tangible changes, which would bring the service quality in line with their expectations. But given that this is a franchise that is, for the most part, delivering on passengers' core requirements, herein lies an opportunity to really do something innovative. Bidders should consider how they can provide a quality of service and hospitality that really exceeds expectations.

When considering the design and onboard features of rolling stock, we would urge caution against treating the responses to this consultation as representative, quantitative research. Instead, we would urge those looking to implement changes to conduct thorough research with passengers. We have recently been engaged with similar research projects elsewhere – for example our work understanding passengers' requirements¹¹ of the new Merseyrail trains is helping to shape their design.

We would also advise caution with treating any journeys of up to an hour as 'short-distance journeys'. Passengers may display a degree of pragmatism over what facilities they need for a very short journey, such as up to 10 minutes, yet regard those facilities as essential when travelling for 30 minutes.

At the most basic level, the cleanliness of the train and the state of the toilets is an area that currently falls behind. Looking at the NRPS, satisfaction with the cleanliness of the inside of the train is 74 per cent on local routes, compared with 86 per cent on London services and 85 per cent for long-distance services in general. It's also the biggest driver of satisfaction on East Midlands Trains' local routes. Satisfaction with toilet facilities on the train ranges from 50 per cent on local routes to 55 per cent on Liverpool-Norwich services.

But passengers today expect more. Many benefit from free Wi-Fi and plug sockets on local bus services and train services elsewhere, and would like to see the same on their local trains. These things aren't seen as 'added extras', but are what is required to bring the service up to date. Free Wi-Fi on the train is the third-highest priority for improvement for East Midlands Trains passengers, behind value for

¹¹ *Future Merseyrail rolling stock – what passengers want*, April 2014, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/future-merseyrail-rolling-stock-what-passengers-want/>

money and getting a seat. It comes ahead of several factors related to punctuality and frequency. It's far more important to younger passengers. For those under the age of 45 it's a third stand-out priority for improvement, along with value for money and getting a seat, at nearly twice the importance of the average factor. For those over 45 it's way down in 13th place on the priority list.

We know passengers like to use their time on the train productively, and that often necessitates having a (fixed or fold-down) table. This is particularly important for business passengers and commuters. We know that overall satisfaction with the journey on local services (which don't have plug sockets, Wi-Fi and sometimes even fold-down tables) is rather lower for commuters, at 79 per cent, than leisure passengers, at 94 per cent.

London services are generally seen as being smarter, cleaner and with more up-to-date facilities, although even these services are thought to be a step behind comparable services on other routes, such as on Virgin Trains East Coast. Passengers would like the catering offer to be improved beyond what they currently see as a rather basic refreshments trolley. First Class is important to those passengers who use it, and they would like to see their offer brought in line with other long-distance operators.

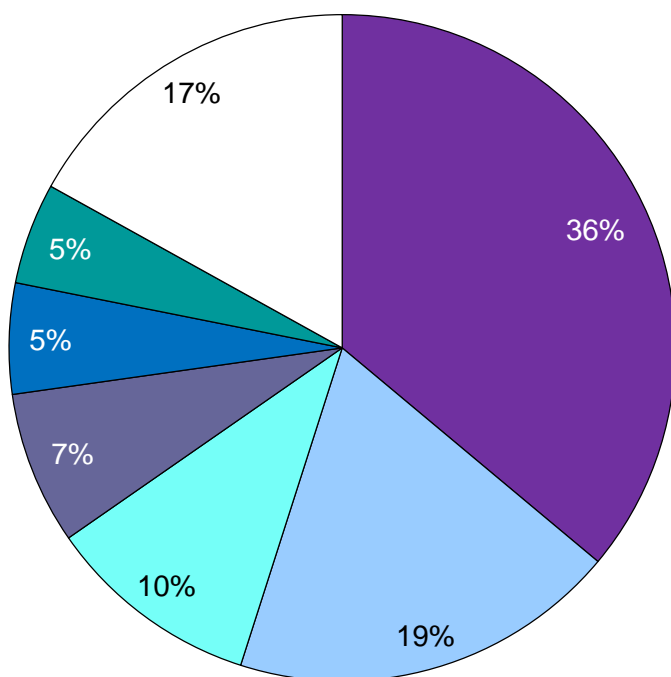
In our focus groups, a few participants remembered (unprompted) the complimentary tea and coffee offered to all passengers on London services by the previous operator, Midland Mainline. The fact that they still have a positive impression of the brand, ten years since its demise, shows that small things can make a big difference.

In terms of what might be 'nice to have', some commuters on local services would also value some basic refreshment facility on board, such as a vending machine for hot drinks.

Passengers value having customer-facing staff on board for information, assistance and safety, but they would like them to be more visible. In general, they find them friendly and helpful. The NRPS backs up the need for staff to be more visible, especially on the Liverpool – Norwich route. Satisfaction with the availability of staff is 77 per cent on local routes, 67 per cent on London services and just 58 per cent on Liverpool – Norwich trains. The long-distance average is 69 per cent. In terms of the satisfaction with the helpfulness and attitude of staff, the East Midlands Trains average is 81 per cent, rising to 85 per cent on local routes.

Wheelchair spaces, provision for buggies and baby-changing facilities are all important requirements for those passengers who use them – the latter especially on longer journeys. Bicycle spaces are also useful for some passengers, and can form part of an attractive journey option for leisure passengers – for example if a family from Nottingham wants a day out going for a bike ride in the Peak district.

Figure 11: Spring and Autumn 2016 NRPS - drivers of overall satisfaction with the train among East Midlands Trains passengers



- The cleanliness of the inside of the train
- Punctuality/reliability
- The comfort of the seating area
- Sufficient room for all the passengers to sit/stand
- The frequency of the trains on that route
- The ease of being able to get on and off the train
- Other

Figure 12: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with the train

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Overall satisfaction with the train	86	85	84	87
The cleanliness of the inside of the train	83	83	74	86
Upkeep and repair of the train	81	88	75	82
Comfort of the seats	76	81	71	77
The toilet facilities	52	55	50	52

The space for luggage	62	57	71	59
Availability of Wi-Fi	29	15	23	36
Availability of power sockets	43	15	15	62

4.7.1 Train design in general

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.

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 possible¹². 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 our Merseyrail rolling stock research¹³. 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.

¹² *Thameslink rolling stock qualitative research*, September 2008, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/thameslink-rolling-stock-qualitative-research/>

¹³ *Future Merseyrail rolling stock – what passengers want*, April 2014, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/future-merseyrail-rolling-stock-what-passengers-want/>

Question 8: What other onboard facilities should be introduced or improved?

Our analysis of the National Rail Passenger Survey reveals that there are two stand-out factors that cause East Midlands Trains passengers to be dissatisfied: how the train company deals with delays and their personal security on board the train.

Satisfaction with how East Midlands Trains deals with delays is at 52 per cent – lower than average for long-distance operators, which is already rather modest at 58 per cent.

Figure 13: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with information, staff and personal security on the train

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Your personal security whilst on board	82	80	78	84
Availability of staff	68	58	77	67
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on the train	81	81	85	79
The provision of information during the journey	75	72	76	77
How well train company dealt with delays	52	52	*	54
The usefulness of information during delays	52	55	*	53

*Sample size is below 50

Handling disruption effectively is an issue common to all train operators, whereas Figure 6 shows that concerns about personal security on board account for an unusually high proportion of passenger dissatisfaction among East Midlands Trains passengers (26 per cent), compared to its proportion of dissatisfaction nationally (3 per cent). Overall satisfaction with personal security on board isn't bad (82 per cent). This demonstrates that, whilst it's not a major concern for the majority of passengers, some do have a bad experience on board in relation to personal security, and for these passengers it is a significant cause for concern, and one that needs to be addressed.

Both of these factors (dealing with delays and personal security on board) underline the importance of visible, helpful staff on board the train. Satisfaction with staff availability on the train is at 68 per cent. It's rather higher on local services, at 77 per cent, but lower for services on the Liverpool-Norwich route, at 58 per cent. Satisfaction with the helpfulness and attitude of staff on the train is good overall, at

81 per cent. It's a little lower on the London route (79 per cent) and higher on local services (85 per cent).

Good, accurate and timely information provision is also essential in dealing with delays. Many trains on the East Midlands Trains network don't have information screens on board and announcements are not always easy to understand. These are key features to improve. 75 per cent of East Midlands Trains passengers are satisfied with the information provision during the journey. 52 per cent are satisfied with the usefulness of information during delays – rather below the 58 per cent average for long-distance operators.

In terms of ensuring that all passengers feel safe and secure on their journey, both at stations and on trains, there are a few key things to improve. Aside from the need for a visible, friendly and proactive staff presence (which has already been covered), passengers will feel reassured by a clean, well-lit and well-maintained environment. This will help them feel welcome and more at ease in the first instance. They also want a clear presence of good-quality, monitored CCTV.

Question 9: How could your local train services be changed to better meet your current and future needs?

Question 10. What additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?

4.10.1 Capacity

For East Midlands Trains passengers, getting a seat is the second-highest priority for improvement. It comes behind value for money, which we know from our research encompasses all aspects of service quality, as well as the price of the ticket.

Capacity isn't a concern for everyone we spoke to in our focus group research, but at certain routes and at certain times it is a pressing issue that requires attention. The issues at peak times on the southern end of the London route are dealt with in our responses to Question 4, but getting a seat is a concern for passengers across the whole of the London route, and not just at traditional peak times.

The NRPS shows that there is room for improvement when it comes to the level of crowding on London services, on weekends as well as on weekdays. Satisfaction with crowding on Sundays overall is a little higher than on other days, but we know that Sunday afternoons and early evenings can be one of the busiest times of the week to travel. The issues on Sundays on the East Midlands Trains London route are compounded by comparatively low levels of satisfaction with service frequency and journey times, compared to weekdays and especially Saturdays.

It is particularly striking that there is a lower level of satisfaction with crowding on Saturdays (73 per cent) than on weekdays (75 per cent). This is a route that has

issues with capacity every day of the week – and not just south of Kettering. The new franchise must deliver improvements that address these issues and allow for the predicted growth in usage.

Figure 14: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with timetable on London services

	East Midlands Trains - London	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays
The frequency of trains on that route	87	86	93	74
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	89	89	96	78
Level of crowding	74	75	73	79

Capacity is also a key issue for commuters on local routes right across the East Midlands network, especially where services are operated by a single-coach train. There are certain times when passengers are not just having to stand, but are struggling to board the train at all. It's unacceptable for passengers to be left behind, especially when the next train isn't for another hour and they're trying to get to work.

The new franchise should provide sufficient capacity for everyone, taking into account the predicted growth in demand. It should also look at other options for providing additional capacity at peak times, such as additional trains that may only cover part of the route, focussing on those places and times where people struggle to board.

The NRPS shows that satisfaction with service frequency is lower, at 68 per cent, than on other parts of the East Midlands Trains network with an average of 81 per cent. There isn't sufficient sample size to compare days of the week, except to compare weekdays with the average for local routes. Equally, the sample size for business passengers isn't enough to compare their satisfaction scores on local routes.

It reveals a big contrast between the experiences of commuters (67 per cent satisfied) and leisure passengers (90 per cent satisfied) in terms of the level of crowding they experience on local routes. The same is true for service frequency, where 60 per cent of commuters on local services are satisfied and 79 per cent of leisure passengers.

Journey times are less of a concern for *current* passengers on local services. 91 per cent of passengers are satisfied with journey times on local routes overall. But it's important to stress that this is a measure of people who have chosen to take the

train – the length of the journey will have been a factor in their decision. Our own experiences of using local East Midlands Trains services are that it takes a comparatively long time to travel between the main cities, such as Derby to Lincoln, and this could be putting some people off. Further research would be required to understand how important this factor might be to such people.

Figure 15: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with timetable on local services

	East Midlands Trains - Local	Commuters	Leisure passengers	Weekdays
The frequency of trains on that route	68	60	79	67
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	91	93	91	93
Level of crowding	81	67	90	81

For the Liverpool-Norwich route, there is a similar story. Journey times are long, and there is concern about getting a seat, particularly for commuters. However, the difference in satisfaction scores with crowding between commuters and leisure travellers is smaller, suggesting there are issues with capacity outside the peak commuting times.

Figure 16: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with timetable on Liverpool-Norwich services

	East Midlands Trains – Liverpool -Norwich	Commuters	Leisure passengers	Weekdays
The frequency of trains on that route	80	79	82	79
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take	83	87	85	83
Level of crowding	76	68	73	78

Our focus group research among East Midlands Trains passengers also reveals concerns about the current operator's ability to plan for and adapt to cater for spikes in demand around special events, such as sports matches and Christmas markets, as well as seasonal tourist travel such as to Skegness. Although we recognise that some efforts have been made in the current franchise, the next franchise should demonstrate its ability to provide additional capacity in these circumstances.

4.10.2 Frequency

We live in a seven-day economy, where many people travel for work and leisure purposes on Saturdays and Sundays as well as on weekdays. Many parts of the East Midlands Trains network have a much-reduced service on Sundays. Some routes don't have any Sunday service at all, and some don't have any trains until the afternoon.

Even on the London route, the service frequency is much reduced compared with provision on weekdays and Saturdays, and journey times are significantly longer. This is reflected in the NRPS scores shown in Figure 14, where satisfaction with service frequency is 19 points lower on Sundays than on Saturdays, and satisfaction with journey times is 18 points lower.

The new franchise must reflect this need to improve Sunday timetables, and provide a seven-day service right across the network. We recognise that this needs to be balanced with the need to allow track access for maintenance and engineering work. Such requirements should be carefully planned and clearly communicated to affected passengers, in a timely manner.

Some parts of the network, especially in Lincolnshire, are poorly served by rail services, with only a handful of services each day. Specific examples of this are the Lincoln-Doncaster and Lincoln-Grimsby/Cleethorpes routes. Passengers would like to see a regular service, ideally hourly, provided throughout the day, and local campaigners are making the case for connecting bus services to be established to towns not currently on the rail network such as Louth.

In the case of Lincoln-Doncaster, there is also scope for developing this route into something that adds additional connectivity to Lincoln, for example by providing through services to places such as Leeds and Manchester.

Many routes would benefit from additional peak-time services. This would help with the capacity issues previously mentioned, but would also help rail remain a competitive option for commuters deciding how to travel to work.

Our research flagged Lincoln in particular as somewhere that would benefit from more peak-time arrivals from the surrounding area. For example, there is no service from the Leicester and Nottingham direction that is scheduled to arrive in Lincoln between 8am and 9am. This means that some people who would like to use the train to commute to work, and who use it at other times for leisure purposes, cannot currently do so as there isn't a train at the appropriate time. Where there is no train at a suitable time, people will generally choose to drive.

Passengers right across the network are also calling for later-evening services. At the extreme end of this, on the Peterborough-Sleaford route there are no services at

all after 5pm due to historic working practices of signallers. This makes it unusable for people trying to get home from work. But in general people would like to be able to use the train to get home in the evening after social events – whether it is after a show in London or after a visit to the pub with friends in Nottingham after work. Services on most routes finish too early for people to take full advantage of this.

Question 11: Do you support the proposal to reopen the line between Shirebrook and Ollerton to passenger trains? If so, what sources of investment could be identified to fund this proposal?

Passengers and local residents will welcome proposals to introduce passenger train services between Shirebrook and Ollerton, enabling them to benefit from a direct link to Mansfield and Nottingham. We would like to see reassurance that this will not have a negative knock-on effect on frequency and journey times for existing services between Nottingham, Mansfield and Worksop.

In terms of investment, we think it is healthy for the train operator and network rail to be working in partnership with local stakeholders. The more engagement from the community there is in delivering improvements to services, the more potential benefits there could be for local passengers.

Question 12. Do you think that the current number of services on the Midland Main Line to and from Luton Airport Parkway is adequate?

Question 13. Would you like additional fast trains from London each hour to call at Luton Airport Parkway if this meant that, as a trade-off:

- some services are withdrawn from other stations, such as Luton
- journey times to other stations may increase
- freight capacity and/or frequency is reduced?

Luton Airport Parkway is currently reasonably well-served from London with a frequent Thameslink service, interspersed with a regular East Midlands Trains service that, although faster, only reduces the overall journey by a few minutes in the context of an air journey.

From the north, a regular, intercity East Midlands Trains service from Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham serves Luton Airport Parkway, providing an important link to this regional gateway. With the new Thameslink timetable and if the proposed, dedicated Corby to London service is introduced, this provision is going to improve.

If additional stops are made at Luton Airport Parkway, this would suggest removing stops elsewhere or increasing overall journey times. On balance, the downsides of doing this would seem to outweigh the benefits.

Having said that, additional connectivity is always welcome, especially to places away from London, and further links to the region's airports will be valuable to passengers in the East Midlands. Luton Airport's own analysis suggests that additional stops at Luton Airport Parkway would in fact be possible without additional changes elsewhere in the timetable. This suggests that more consideration of these options could be worthwhile.

Question 14: How could the train service be better at meeting the needs of passengers travelling to and from the airports within the East Midlands franchise?

The East Midlands has good links to a range of regional airports, including East Midlands, Luton, Birmingham and Stansted to name but a few. The consultation introduces proposals to have more direct links to Stansted from cities in the East Midlands, and changes to the Liverpool-Norwich route could create opportunities for a direct service to Manchester Airport.

Passengers would welcome improved, direct links to airports, and also additional options of reaching airports in just one change of trains. Given that passengers travelling to airports are likely to have luggage, it is especially useful to them to focus efforts on ensuring changing trains on those routes is as easy it can be – ideally with the connecting train departing from the same or an adjacent platform.

When travelling to catch a flight, one of passengers' main worries is about having sufficient time, and what to do if there's disruption getting to the airport. The train operator should provide clear guidance for passengers with information about what to do in times of disruption. Passengers would appreciate a scheme whereby the operator offers a guarantee of getting them to the airport in time for their flight, which may include an alternative means of transport, such as a taxi, for part of the journey. As things stand, these issues present a barrier for some people to taking the train to the airport, and so they may choose to drive instead.

Equally, passengers will have concerns about catching their train if their flight is delayed, especially if they hold an Advance ticket. We call on the next franchise operator to introduce a system that recognises if a passenger is delayed on an incoming flight, and allows travel on the next suitable train at no additional cost.

In general, the franchise should look at the times of the first and last flights operating to and from the region's airports and ensure that train services run early and late enough in the day to allow people to use the train to connect with these flights.

There is room for improvement in last-mile connectivity to several of the region's airports, though. It should be clear and easy to get from the station to the airport check-in desk, with clear directions by foot or integrated timetables and ticketing with

connecting transit links. This is particularly the case at East Midlands Airport, where there is no direct, public transport link from the closest station, East Midlands Parkway.

Question 15: What ideas do you have for improving the current service on the Liverpool-Norwich route?

Capacity has improved on the Liverpool-Norwich route since trains north and west of Nottingham have been formed of four coaches rather than two. However, getting a seat is still a higher priority for improvement for passengers using Liverpool-Norwich services, with an index score of 415, than it is for passengers on East Midlands Trains local routes, with a score of 375. Satisfaction with crowding is slightly higher than on London services but it's significantly lower than on local routes.

Our focus group research shows that East Midlands Trains passengers expect power sockets and free Wi-Fi to be provided as standard. This is more important for commuters than leisure passengers, and there are big differences with age – for passengers aged 26-44, it's a third stand-out priority for improvement, ahead of core requirements such as performance. It's nearly two and a half times the average importance for these passengers. For people aged 45-64 years, it's only the 22nd-highest priority.

Information provision on board is particularly important, especially in helping the operator to deal with disruption effectively. The trains used on this route generally have no information screens on board (although East Midlands Trains is installing these). Satisfaction with information during the journey is at 72 per cent; this is lower than on other East Midlands Trains routes.

Journey times on the Liverpool-Norwich services are quite long. Faster journey times is not a priority for current passengers, but faster journey times with a quality of experience more akin to an intercity service may attract more passengers.

Satisfaction with performance is a little lower than on other East Midlands Trains routes, and higher priority for improvement for passengers using Liverpool-Norwich services.

Value for money is the top priority for improvement, as with other East Midlands Trains routes. Satisfaction with value for money is lower than for local routes, although it's higher than London services.

Considering the ideas suggested for changes to the service pattern on this route, there are a number of things that should be considered. As mentioned, people who might consider using the service could be encouraged to do so if journey times were improved, and the suggestion to remove peak-time stops at smaller stations could

help that. However, such peak-time services from these stations to and from the region's cities are valuable to those people who use them. In some cases these stops offer a welcome enhancement to an otherwise infrequent local service (for example at Chinley). Improvements should be made to local services, with good connections to other regional services, to mitigate this loss and actually enhance the provision at these stations overall.

With regards to the suggestions of wholly or partially discontinuing the Liverpool to Norwich, we would like to understand to what extent the existing service pattern drives demand. It is clear from research, recognised within the rail industry's own demand modelling assumptions that passengers prefer through trains. In our response to the TransPennine Express consultation response¹⁴, we highlighted that similar proposals had been received by stakeholders as a step backwards and contrary to DfT's desire to improve connectivity between regions. East Midlands Trains has shown that 350,000 passengers per year travel 'across' Nottingham and would in future have to change trains, with the stresses that entails.

This is an established route, and as things currently stand we don't have enough information to see a case of the benefits of changing. It is one of the few true East-West links, and the only such link into East Anglia. We encourage DfT to listen carefully to those stakeholders, particularly in East Anglia, who believe strongly that the route should be developed and improved, not discontinued.

There is also a potential issue with loss of competition on the Sheffield-Manchester-Liverpool route if this change goes ahead. We know that competition can deliver better quality services to passengers as well as lower prices.

However, if there is a case to be made, DfT should set out, and consult on, firm proposals that setting out clear reasons behind the thinking, the benefits the proposals seek to achieve and proposals to mitigate consequences for those who might lose out.

Question 16: Would you support changing the destinations served by the existing Birmingham-Stansted Airport service, such as serving Norwich instead of Stansted Airport?

We can see merit in transferring the local services between Birmingham and Leicester (and perhaps Peterborough) from the Cross Country franchise to the East Midlands franchise. This would allow the East Midlands franchise to serve the local stations it operates on the route, and for Cross Country to focus on delivering a dedicated inter-urban service.

¹⁴ <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/transpennine-express-and-northern-rail-franchise-consultations-passenger-focus-response/>

Increasing connectivity by offering a greater range of destinations would be welcomed by passengers. However, we know that passengers like predictability, and a regular, dependable service pattern is helpful in driving demand. If the hourly Birmingham to Stansted service were to be reduced (albeit to allow for some services to go to Norwich instead), passengers in the West Midlands may well feel that they are losing a valuable link to an important airport.

If changes are made, easy, conveniently-timed connections should be available with the suggested additional services to Stansted from Nottingham.

Question 17. Are you in favour of these route changes:

4.17.1 Liverpool – Norwich

This is answered under Question 15.

4.17.2 Birmingham – Nottingham

Between Birmingham and Nottingham, there are currently two services every hour run by CrossCountry. One of these originates in Cardiff, and calls at fewer stations than the other, which just operates between Birmingham to Nottingham. It would make sense to transfer the local Birmingham to Nottingham services from the Cross Country franchise to East Midlands the East Midlands franchise, not least for the franchise to call at the stations that are currently run by East Midlands Trains but only served by CrossCountry.

Along with the local Birmingham to Leicester (and Peterborough) services, such a transfer would allow better integration with other local services across the East Midlands. It may be possible to extend the local services to places such as Lincoln, and to provide a more regular service to some of the smaller stations on the route such as Willington and Spondon.

It would also allow the Cross Country franchise to focus its efforts on providing a faster, inter-urban service.

However, we would like to seek assurance that the direct, hourly through Cardiff – Nottingham service remain intact, and that it would make sense for this to remain as an inter-urban service as part of the Cross Country franchise.

4.17.3 Birmingham – Leicester/Stansted

This is answered under Question 16

Question 18: Would you like to see any other routes transferred to or from the East Midlands franchise? If so, which routes?

We know from our research with East Midlands Trains passengers that service frequency, along with connections on certain routes, is a significant concern for some people. This applies particularly to the routes east of Nottingham and those serving Lincoln, and especially at peak times, evenings and on Sundays.

In our response to the TransPennine Express consultation¹⁵ we identified a few options for services that would boost connectivity, as well as increasing the frequency on some routes that are currently underserved.

We identified the Lincoln to Doncaster route as one that currently only has a limited service frequency. One way to address this could be to introduce a new regional express service between Lincoln and Manchester (or beyond, for example Manchester Airport) via Doncaster and Sheffield, if the previously mooted additional path on the South TransPennine route were still planned. This would provide the means to deliver several positive outcomes: as well as faster services from Lincoln to Sheffield and Manchester, Lincoln would gain a regular direct service to the East Coast Main Line (ECML) at Doncaster. The line from Lincoln to Doncaster has the advantage of not crossing the ECML to get to/from Doncaster, and would not therefore add to the congestion there. Such a service could also provide direct links from Lincoln to Meadowhall.

We also suggested that it might make sense for the Barton-on-Humber route to become part of the East Midlands franchise, which we're pleased to see is included in the plans. We also raised the possibility of transferring the Manchester International Airport to Cleethorpes service from TransPennine Express to the East Midlands franchise.

Question 19: Do you support increasing the frequency of train services in Lincolnshire despite the impact this may have on level crossing users?

In our role representing the interests of passengers, we know that improving the frequency of services is an important priority for improvement for people who currently use East Midlands Trains' services, as outlined in our response to questions 9 and 10. However, our research shows that level crossings can cause additional stress for people trying to catch a train, if they are worried that they might get stuck on one side of the barriers.

Passengers welcome schemes to enable them to get across the railway line when the barriers are down, such as the additional footbridge in Lincoln. There is particular

¹⁵ *TransPennine Express and Northern rail franchise consultation response*, August 2014, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/transpennine-express-and-northern-rail-franchise-consultations-passenger-focus-response/>

concern where ticket retail facilities are on one side of the station only, and passengers are warned that they must buy a ticket before they travel. A queue in the ticket office or at the machine, or if a train is passing in the opposite direction, could mean that the barriers come down preventing passengers from reaching their train. Appropriate consideration should be given to these issues, and mitigations sought to alleviate passengers' concerns.

Of course, in an ideal world level crossings would be replaced by bridges and underpasses to enhance safety and remove this issue altogether.

Question 20: How can we improve all aspects of your door-to-door journey experience?

East Midlands Trains passengers have remarkably consistent experiences across the network in terms of satisfaction with car parking, connecting train services and connections with other public transport. At 80 per cent it's similar to the average of 81 per cent for long-distance operators nationally for satisfaction with connections with other train services. It's above average for satisfaction with car parking by 67 per cent to 62 per cent.

For connections to other forms of public transport, at 78 per cent it's a little below the average for long-distance operators of 81 per cent. Satisfaction with this factor falls further behind on local routes, where only 71 per cent of passengers are satisfied. Satisfaction with cycle parking at the station is at 72 per cent, which is similar to the average for long-distance operators.

People use a variety of methods of getting to and from the station. Walking tends to be the most popular choice, though many drive some cycling or use connecting public transport services.

Our focus group research suggests that more people would like to walk, cycle or use public transport if it were easier or more convenient. It is important to ensure that the end-to-end journey is as easy as possible for all those who want to take the train as part of their journey.

Figure 17: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with connecting journeys

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Connections with other train services	80	80	80	79
Connections with other forms of public transport	78	78	71	80
Facilities for car parking	67	66	67	67
Facilities for bicycle parking	72	*	67	74

*Sample size is below 50

4.20.1 Travelling to the station

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 take¹⁶. 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.

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 developing proposals to improve station access.

¹⁶ *Integrated transport – perception and reality*, January 2010, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/integrated-transport-perception-and-reality/>

Franchise specifications 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. Franchises should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

4.20.2 Arrival and interchange

To some extent the issues with leaving a station mirror those of getting to the station in the first place: cost and convenience again feature strongly. Passengers need information on local buses (including prices and real-time departures), clear signposting of where to catch buses or taxis, safe walking routes and so on. This can be particularly important when passengers are unfamiliar with the destination station and for passengers with disabilities.

It is also important to identify key passenger flows within the station and then to ensure good physical access and good signage on the main thoroughfares and exits.

Connecting onto other trains is another stress-point for passengers. In this country passengers very much favour direct services. This is again an issue of perceived convenience – one of the main barriers to using public transport¹⁷. Direct trains avoid the scenario of having to know which platform you need, manoeuvring heavy suitcases or young children up and down staircases, only to discover that the train is late or that you have missed it altogether.

¹⁷ *Integrated transport – perception and reality*, January 2010, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/integrated-transport-perception-and-reality/>

Where passenger journeys are reliant on connections, whether planned or in response to disruption, the operator must provide good-quality information for all circumstances relating to the journey. Well-timed connections with sufficient, but not excessive, time between arriving and departing trains and ease of transfer between the platforms are also important. Where possible this should be a level transfer, with minimal distance between arrival and departure points.

If there are delays to trains approaching common interchange stations then consideration should be given to the practicalities of holding connecting services and passengers should be informed about this in advance of arrival.

Question 21: What more could be done to improve access to, and provide facilities at stations, including for those with disabilities or additional needs?

Our focus group research shows that passengers' experience of stations across the East Midlands Trains network is a mixed bag.

Of the larger stations, Nottingham station is highly regarded by most passengers, following its improvement works. Passengers consider the station well-connected, smart and having good facilities. On the other hand, Leicester station is felt to need some attention with people wanting better access, integration with local buses, parking and station facilities.

Sheffield passengers would like a station that better represents the grandeur of their city in terms of design, citing St Pancras as an example. At a more practical level, it can become overcrowded and cramped at peak times.

There are many small, unstaffed stations across the network. These can vary significantly in quality. Some stations have been adopted by local groups, who make a feature of their picturesque, historic nature. Others feel completely run down, with passengers actively avoiding using them over concerns about personal security, or even being unaware that trains still stop there. These need more signage, better lighting, CCTV, as well as investment programmes to rejuvenate the stations and their immediate surroundings.

Passengers' basic needs at stations are to feel safe and secure, to have sufficient seating with shelter from the elements and to have access to accurate, live information. They also value the provision of toilet facilities, though they accept that this isn't always realistic at the smallest stations. Satisfaction among East Midlands Trains passengers with personal security at the station is 82 per cent, seating is 64 per cent and shelter is 79 per cent. The provision of information about train times and platforms is scored at 92 per cent. Satisfaction with toilet facilities at the station is at 61 per cent.

Figure 18: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with station environment

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Overall environment	87	90	84	87
Cleanliness	89	89	88	89
Upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	86	87	82	88
Your personal security whilst using the station	82	82	74	85

These are all on a par with other similar operators, although the NRPS scores show that stations on local routes would benefit from additional shelter facilities, as satisfaction here is over 12 points lower than on the Liverpool-Norwich and London routes.

Satisfaction with personal security at the station is also markedly lower for local routes, at 74 per cent. This underlines the need for good lighting, monitored CCTV and a clean, well-kept environment.

Passengers' feeling of personal security will also be helped by a visible staff presence at the station. Where this isn't an option, there may be scope to use redundant buildings for local businesses or community groups, helping them to feel used, cared-for and to increase the likelihood of other people being around the station for added reassurance.

Figure 19: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with station facilities

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Overall satisfaction with the station	89	93	84	90
Provision of information about train times/platforms	92	95	89	93
Ticket-buying facilities	85	88	85	84
Toilet facilities at the station	61	63	60	61
Shelter facilities	79	85	70	82

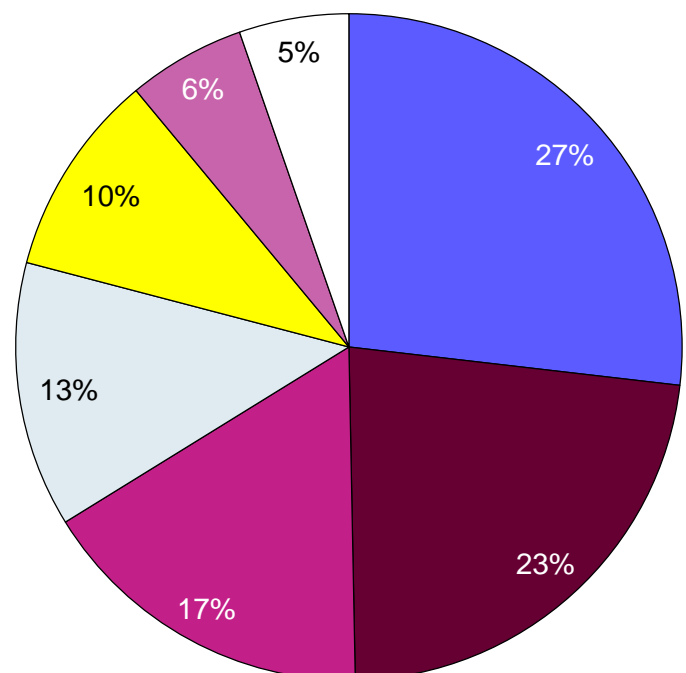
Availability of seating	64	62	69	63
Choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	63	67	49	67

Several stations on the network still use a level crossing to get from one side of the station to the other. As well as the safety implications, this can be stressful for passengers if the barriers are down, preventing them from getting to the platform to catch their train in time.

The NRPS shows that 89 per cent of East Midlands Trains passengers are satisfied with the station overall, against 88 per cent of passengers using long-distance services on average. It's a little lower for local services (84 per cent), but higher for London services (90 per cent) and Liverpool – Norwich services (93 per cent).

For the most part, where staff are present passengers find them friendly, helpful and valuable. 75 per cent of East Midlands Trains passengers are satisfied with the availability of staff, 84 per cent with the attitudes and helpfulness of station staff and 91 per cent with the way requests to station staff were handled. These are similar to other long-distance operators.

Figure 20: East Midlands Trains drivers of overall satisfaction with the station, Spring/Autumn 2016 NRPS



- Cleanliness of the station
- The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms
- Provision of information about train times/platforms
- Your personal security whilst using that station
- The facilities and services at the station
- Ticket buying facilities
- Other

Looking at the things that drive passengers' satisfaction with the station at East Midlands Trains stations, we can see that cleanliness and repair/upkeep make up the biggest chunk. Information and station facilities are also important, but 13 per cent of what drives passenger satisfaction with the station is feeling safe and secure.

At a minimum, the new franchise should ensure that all stations, and their immediate surroundings, feel safe and secure. They should have good lighting, CCTV, real-time information and the ability to speak to a member of staff at all times trains are in service. They should be clean and in a good state of repair. Passengers also expect sufficient seating and shelter. Where additional facilities are present, such as toilets and waiting rooms, the operator should ensure that these are available for passengers to use when trains are running. We ask that the new franchise builds on this and creates an inviting environment at stations, to enhance passengers' experience as they enter and leave the rail network.

Further information about station improvements is available in our general publication about what passengers want from the franchising process should be considered alongside this response¹⁸.

The new franchise should examine all possibilities to improve station accessibility. Examples of this include induction loops, help points, adjustable-height counters and automatic doors as well as ramps, lifts and handrails. There are some stations on the East Midlands rail network where one or more of the platforms is not currently accessible at all for those unable to use stairs.

A programme of works should be undertaken to ensure that everyone who wants to travel by train from their local station is able to do so. Where this is not possible, the provision of alternative transport by the operator to the nearest accessible station should be widely promoted along with the Passenger Assist scheme.

Question 22: How could the next franchise operator make better use of stations for community and commercial purposes?

In our response to Question 2 we highlighted some of the benefits greater community involvement in the railway can bring. Our focus group research with East Midlands Trains passengers shows that passengers have mixed experiences at stations across the network. Some are clean, smart and have good facilities, whereas others are in need of some care and attention. Ensuring that the station and surrounding area are well-lit, that buildings are well-kept and ideally in use will help passengers to feel safe and secure, and if there are staff or other people around that will help further.

At smaller stations in particular, passengers notice a big difference where there has been involvement from the local community in looking after the station. Some stations have been adopted by local groups, who make a feature of their picturesque, historic nature. Passengers notice this and appreciate the welcoming environment this creates.

Others feel completely run down, with passengers actively avoiding using them over concerns about personal security, or even being unaware that trains still stop there. These need more signage, better lighting, CCTV, as well as investment programmes to rejuvenate the stations and their immediate surroundings.

¹⁸ *Franchising: what passengers want* (section 3.4), November 2016 (last updated August 2017), <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/franchising-passengers-want/>

“Whoever runs them or maintains them are trying to outdo each other because you get baskets of flowers and all sorts of things.”
Sheffield, infrequent leisure traveller

“Longport is derelict, in the middle of nowhere. I didn’t even think trains were still running from there.”
Stoke, frequent commuter

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 – from Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs), local authorities, 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 successful¹⁹. 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.

¹⁹ *Value of Community Rail Partnerships*, Association of Community Rail Partnerships, January 2015

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

Question 23: What could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?

Passengers in our focus group research use a range of channels for purchasing their tickets, and buy a variety of different types of ticket. They tend to use the ticket office, ticket machine or buy on the train for local journeys, but many people use the East Midlands Trains website for booking tickets for longer journeys.

Although most people in our research find buying and retrieving their tickets straightforward, there are a number of minor issues that have emerged. The NRPS shows a similar result: 85 per cent of East Midlands Trains passengers are satisfied with the facilities for buying tickets at the station overall, although the score is rather lower for business travellers, of whom only 79 per cent are satisfied. The average for long-distance operators nationally is 87 per cent.

Figure 21: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with ticket-buying facilities

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool -Norwich	Local	London	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Ticket-buying facilities (at the station)	85	88	85	84	84	79	89

The franchise operator must be clear about the range of products available and how to buy them. Ideally, all channels should be capable of retailing all products in a way that's easy for people to understand and use. Some passengers report buying weekly season tickets because they're not aware they can buy monthly or annual passes. Some are aware of season tickets but buy daily tickets as that is all that is available from the ticket machine on their station.

Some stations only have a ticket office or a ticket machine on one platform, despite being able to enter the station from either side, and for some people and in some places it can be a long walk round to the other side. In a similar vein, some stations have platforms that are only accessible via a level crossing. If the ticket office or ticket machine is only on one side, this can add additional worry for passengers if the barriers come down while they're trying to buy a ticket, potentially preventing them from reaching their platform to catch their train in time.

It must be made easy for every passenger to buy the ticket they need before they travel if the operator is to require passengers to buy before they board. If there is such a requirement, the operator must make it clear to passengers, and be consistent in the way it enforces the rules. Our research shows that some passengers are told it's no problem to buy from the conductor on board on one day, only for them to get into trouble with revenue protection officers the next.

The research also reveals that ticket machines can often be broken at stations across the network. This can be particular worry for passengers if they also see signs saying they must buy before they board the train, or if they need to collect pre-booked tickets. The operator must ensure machines are reliable in the first instance, but also offer reassurance and guidance to passengers in what to do if the machine isn't working as it should.

Our focus group research shows that many passengers find that buying a physical piece of card for their ticket is rather archaic, and they would prefer to have it on their phone. Some would prefer an Oyster-style smart card.

We make further, more general points about making buying a ticket easier in our publication outlining what passengers want from franchising generally²⁰.

Question 24: What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?

Our fares and ticketing study investigated what influences passenger perceptions of value for money²¹. We found that, while intrinsically linked to the price of the ticket, value for money is also influenced by several other significant factors. These link directly to the findings of priorities research and NRPS drivers of passenger satisfaction:

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

Passengers who use East Midlands Trains today have very mixed experiences and opinions of whether the prices they pay for their tickets represent value for money. It's the top priority for improvement overall and for each part of the network.

Our focus group research shows that passengers who use local services for relatively short-distance journeys in the East Midlands find that, on the whole, they think the train offers reasonable value for money. In reaching this conclusion, they consider that the train is punctual and reliable, so they can depend on it to get them

²⁰ *Franchising: what passengers want* (section 3.2), November 2016 (last updated August 2017), <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/franchising-passengers-want/>

²¹ *Fares and ticketing study*, February 2009, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/fares-and-ticketing-study/>

to where they need to be on time. They find it cheaper than the cost of driving and parking, and quicker and more comfortable than using the bus. Some of this will depend on their ability to get a seat – if they are forced to stand regularly, or even struggle to board the train due to crowding, they will form a very different view about whether their ticket offers value for money.

For longer journeys, experiences are far more mixed. Some passengers are savvy about booking in advance and searching for the best fares, and they report that there are good-value fares available at certain times. But our research also reports that many passengers travelling longer distances, especially on the London route and those who need to travel at particular times, can find fares “eye-wateringly expensive”. For some people, this can prohibit them from travelling by train.

The NRPS backs these differences up. 66 per cent of passengers using local services are satisfied with value for money, compared with an average of 49 per cent for short commute routes across the country as a whole. For London services, 42 per cent of passengers are satisfied with value for money, and only 23 per cent of commuters.

This result of 23 per cent is among the lowest score for value for money satisfaction among commuters in the country. Over half of commuters on this route (53 per cent) are actively dissatisfied with value for money. Given that they recognise that many elements of the East Midlands Trains service are quite good, this really emphasises the significant cost of travelling on peak-time services on the route into London. The new franchise must consider how to improve satisfaction with value for money on this route.

Figure 22: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with value for money

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Value for money	51	58	66	42
Value for money (commuters)	34	38	45	23
Value for money (business passengers)	47	*	*	36
Value for money (leisure passengers)	62	62	77	55

*Sample size is below 50

People’s working patterns are increasingly varied, and moving away from the traditional nine to five, Monday to Friday. Our research shows that people would increasingly value having a part-time season ticket offer, to allow them to get some

of the benefits of a season ticket as regular passengers, without having to pay for days that they don't use.

The new franchise should require the introduction of innovative new products to cater for this 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.

In general, 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.

The franchise should also consider how it can simplify the fare structure. We believe a single-leg fare structure is easy to understand, removes the confusion of a return being £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).

The operator should bring 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.

Question 25: What additional information would be useful to you when planning or making your journey, such as seat availability, journey times and connections? How would you like it to be communicated to you?

Our focus group research shows that many East Midlands Trains passengers use the operator's own website to find out information and plan their journeys. The website mirrors their opinions of the franchise as a whole, they find it functional straight-forward and useful, but rather basic and has a 'dated' feel.

In general, our research suggests that 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)²².

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 times²³. Passengers want 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, as well as our East Midlands Trains passenger research, found that Twitter is seen as a useful channel for pushing information out to people²⁴. However, it is essential that this information can 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. Our East Midlands Trains passenger research shows that people find staff to be friendly and helpful, and that they are usually empowered to resolve any queries passengers may have.

The option of speaking to staff in person 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 services should have good local area and network knowledge to deal with enquiries made by phone and email. Data and information from Transport

²² *Ticket retailing website usability*, July 2011, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/ticket-retailing-website-usability/>

²³ *Passenger information when trains are disrupted*, September 2014, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/passenger-information-when-trains-are-disrupted/>

²⁴ *Short and Tweet. How passengers want social media during disruption*, June 2012, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/short-and-tweet-how-passengers-want-social-media-during-disruption/>

Focus's own appeals team suggests that the current East Midlands Trains contact centre, which is run in-house, ticks these boxes. Again, staff are empowered to resolve situations as they arise.

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.

Given that getting a seat is a high priority for improvement for East Midlands Trains passengers, any scheme that will allow people to understand how busy a train is, and to clearly understand where vacant seats are available as they board trains, will be welcome.

Passengers would also welcome tailored information about the punctuality and reliability of their journey. For example, when booking a ticket, passengers could be able to see historic punctuality and reliability information for each train in their journey itinerary.

Question 26: How could staff be more effective in providing the service and assistance that passengers need on a modern railway network?

We know that staff at stations and on trains are important: passengers tell us that they provide reassurance in helping to resolve problems, as well as helping people to feel safe and secure.

Passengers find them a useful source of information, especially during times of disruption or when they are making an unfamiliar journey. Staff are essential for providing assistance to those passengers who need help making their journey.

East Midlands Trains staff at stations and on trains are friendly and helpful, according to our focus group research. Passengers find them personable and they are empowered to resolve problems first-hand, allowing for a swift resolution and to avoid the issue escalating.

Figure 23: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with staff

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Availability of staff on the train	68	58	77	67
Helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	81	81	85	79
Availability of staff at the station	75	82	70	74
Attitudes and helpfulness of staff at station	84	88	79	86
How request to station staff was handled	91	*	*	91

*Sample size is below 50

The NRPS mirrors this sentiment that, in general, East Midlands Trains staff are well thought-of. Passengers would like to see more of the staff on board London services and especially Liverpool-Norwich services, but where they do see staff they are satisfied (81 per cent overall) with the helpfulness and attitude of staff on the train. There is still room for improvement here though; it's slightly below the average satisfaction among long-distance operators of 83 per cent.

Predictably (given the higher proportion of unstaffed stations), passengers on local routes are less satisfied with the availability of staff at the station. It is important to ensure that all passengers are able to contact a member of staff, even if none are physically present on the station.

Where passengers do have access to staff, 84 per cent are satisfied with the attitudes and helpfulness of those station staff, which is on a par with other long-distance operators.

However, satisfaction with how passengers' requests to station staff are handled is particularly high, at 91 per cent. This demonstrates that where passengers go up to staff and actively ask a question, they are very satisfied with the result, but that perhaps staff could do more in proactively approaching passengers who may require assistance, but don't want to bother staff who might appear to be otherwise occupied.

The current franchisee is delivering well in this area, and these strengths should continue to be built on. Efforts to ensure the ongoing engagement, training and empowerment of staff should be demonstrated in next franchise. Passengers' expectations of quality, front-line customer service continue to rise.

Further information about passengers' requirements to staffing in general can be found in our report on what passengers want from the franchising process²⁵.

Question 27: How would you prefer the next operator to engage with you as an individual, and your organisation (if applicable)?

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 it²⁶. 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 engagement²⁷. 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 that the DfT should publish a version of the franchise agreement and associated documents (with as few redactions as possible to make these meaningful) as soon as possible after the winning bidder is announced, and certainly by the time the new franchise begins.

²⁵ *Franchising: what passengers want* (sections 3.4.3 and 3.5.10), November 2016 (last updated August 2017), <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/franchising-passengers-want/>

²⁶ *Giving passengers a voice in rail services*, June 2013, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/giving-passengers-a-voice-in-rail-services/>

²⁷ *What passengers want from Customer Reports*, March 2015, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/what-passengers-want-from-customer-reports/>

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

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 28: What would make you feel safer and more secure on your journey?

There can often be a gap between someone's general perception of an issue and their actual experience. Crime might be relatively low on the railway, but the perceptions of passengers can be very different.

We know from the NRPS that around 10 per cent of passengers nationally felt they had cause to worry about personal security while making a train journey. The main reasons for concern at both stations and on trains is antisocial behaviour by other

people and also a lack of staff. Our research sets out passengers concerns about personal security in more detail²⁸.

On the East Midlands franchise, personal security on board the train is the second-largest driver of passenger dissatisfaction at 26 per cent, behind how the train company deals with delays at 36 per cent. This is higher than for other operators – it accounts for less than 3 per cent of dissatisfaction nationally. But satisfaction with personal security on the train fairly high, at 82 per cent. This demonstrates that for most passengers it's not an issue, but where it starts to become a concern it has a detrimental effect on the level of satisfaction people have with their journey on East Midlands Trains.

Figure 24: Spring 2017 NRPS satisfaction with personal security

	East Midlands Trains	Liverpool-Norwich	Local	London
Personal security whilst using the station	82	82	74	85
Personal security on board	82	80	78	84

Our focus group research shows similar concerns with some stations on the network, especially those that need some care and attention, including better lighting, new paintwork, improved CCTV and so on. Some passengers avoid some stations where they have these concerns altogether, especially at night. They would prefer to drive to a station they feel safer using and travel from there, or just make their whole journey by car. Those stations where community groups are involved in their upkeep and presentation are seen as safer and more secure.

The NRPS shows that satisfaction with personal security at stations is lower for passengers on local services, where many of the stations served are unstaffed. It's 74 per cent for local services compared with 82 per cent overall.

A visible staff presence is a key part of allaying passenger concerns about personal security²⁹. The industry needs to consider how it can best use staff across the rail network to meet this need. Cutting the number of staff, either at stations or on the train, runs counter to what passengers say they want and could jeopardise their confidence in their ability to get to their destination safely. Where and how staff are

²⁸ *Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railways*, May 2016, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/passenger-perceptions-personal-security-railway/>

²⁹ *Passenger attitudes towards rail staff*, February 2016, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/passenger-attitudes-towards-rail-staff/>

deployed should be assessed on the basis of what will provide the optimal service to passengers.

Passengers tell us that technology is no substitute for a visible, trained and engaged member of staff. However, where this cannot be provided, franchise bidders should confirm they will provide CCTV and linked help points at all stations. These should meet the current British Transport Police (BTP) 'Output Requirement Specification' for CCTV and be linked into BTP's CCTV hub. Where possible, CCTV should also be linked into local authority systems, which would allow suspects to be tracked beyond the station.

Stations that are unstaffed when trains are scheduled to call at them should be prioritised for such investment. Ideally the CCTV would be 'live' monitored but where this is not possible CCTV footage should be retained for at least 31 days to allow 'after the event' enquiries to be made.

We believe that every station should have appropriate technology to enhance personal security, although we acknowledge that it may be necessary to exempt very low footfall stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources. However, it is often at those stations with fewer passengers present that perceptions of personal security are lowest.

Transport Focus supports the Secure Stations Scheme and would urge the future franchise operators to ensure that all of the stations on their network are accredited – not just those with the highest footfall.

Where station car parking is provided, car parks should also be accredited under the Safer Parking Scheme administered by the British Parking Association. Research undertaken by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) suggests that where Secure Station and Safer Parking Accreditation are provided in tandem, the number of crimes committed is significantly lower.

Transport Focus recommends that franchise bidders make use of the RSSB's best practice guides on managing different aspects of personal security³⁰.

Question 29: How do you think more investment might be put into the railways to match money already coming from government through Network Rail?

Investment in the railway should focus on the things that matter most to passengers. In the case of the East Midlands network, passengers fundamentally need a punctual, reliable service with sufficient capacity, but also one that delivers greater frequency throughout the week and later into the evening. They would benefit from

³⁰ A Good Practice Guide for Managing Personal Security on Board Trains, RSSB, 2014

faster journey times between the main urban centres in the East Midlands, and local people would benefit from the added connectivity of new services to places not currently on the rail network.

A priority for East Midlands rail passengers is to see wholesale modernisation of trains and stations across the network, with a much higher level of quality in terms of passenger experience on board. Things like power sockets and free Wi-Fi are a must.

Passengers also 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.

Bidders, Network Rail and DfT will recognise the opportunities for joint working on shared agendas with agencies such as Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, commercial developers, Airports and other businesses and should facilitate engagement in a manner that makes investment by other partners as straightforward and inviting as possible.

However, whatever the funding mechanisms it is important that the significant issues for passengers are those that are prioritised for 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 30: Are there any other areas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been discussed in this consultation?

Overall, the current East Midlands franchise is delivering the basics well, providing a solid foundation on which the new franchise can build. Passengers will expect to see this continuing, alongside providing more quality-focused elements of the journey experience such as power sockets and free Wi-Fi. But this franchise competition is an opportunity to deliver well beyond passengers' expectations. We would like to see the new operation embrace this challenge and become a market-leader in providing an outstanding whole-journey experience.

Our research clearly shows that delivering a punctual, reliable service is rail passengers' fundamental requirement of the operator, but it also identifies other key areas for improvement in the next East Midlands franchise:

- capacity, crowding and service frequency
- replacing rolling stock and improving stations
- onboard experience

- ticketing, retail and value for money.

These key themes have been covered in depth in our response to the consultation questions. Further information about what passengers want and how they can benefit from the franchising process can be found in our comprehensive report³¹. We would encourage the Department for Transport and those bidding for the East Midlands franchise to consider this report alongside our consultation response, as well as our report into the experiences and aspirations of East Midlands Trains passengers based on our focus group research³².

³¹ *Franchising: what passengers want* (section 3.5), November 2016 (last updated August 2017), <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/franchising-passengers-want/>

³² *East Midlands rail franchise: passengers' experiences and aspirations*, September 2017, <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/east-midlands-rail-franchise-passengers-experiences-and-aspirations/>

5. Further information

For further information about this response to the East Midlands franchise consultation please contact:

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

For specific information about franchising please see:

<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/franchising>

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 NRPS building block definitions

A1.1 East Midlands Trains NRPS building blocks

East Midlands Trains: Liverpool – Norwich

Journeys on the Liverpool – Norwich route

East Midlands Trains: Local

Journeys on local rail lines around Nottingham, Derby and Lincoln (excluding Liverpool – Norwich, London – Sheffield and London – Nottingham services)

East Midlands Trains: London

Journeys on the London – Sheffield and London – Nottingham routes. Also includes London – Corby services.

A1.2 NRPS typology groups and comparator services

Long commute:

East Midlands Trains - London

Chiltern Railways - Commuter
Chiltern Railways - Oxford
Chiltern Railways - West Midlands
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

Long-distance:

East Midlands Trains - Liverpool - Norwich

First Hull Trains
First TransPennine Express - North
Virgin Trains - London - Birmingham - Scotland
Grand Central - London - Bradford
Grand Central - London - Sunderland
CrossCountry - North - South Manchester
CrossCountry - North - South Scotland & North East
Virgin Trains East Coast - London – Scotland

Short commute:**East Midlands Trains - Local**

Arriva Trains Wales - Cardiff and Valleys

Arriva Trains Wales - South Wales and Borders/West Wales

c2c - Southend Line

c2c - Tilbury Line

Chiltern Railways - Metro

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 scores³³

A2.1 NRPS Spring 2017: percentage satisfied, East Midlands Trains compared to long-distance sector

	East Midlands Trains	Long-distance	TOC index
Overall			
Overall satisfaction with the journey	89	89	100
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	86	87	98
The frequency of the trains on that route	81	86	94
Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)	88	86	102
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)	89	90	98
Connections with other train services	80	81	98
The value for money for the price of your ticket	51	58	88
Upkeep and repair of the train	81	85	96
The provision of information during the journey	75	81	93
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	81	83	98
The space for luggage	62	65	96
The toilet facilities	52	58	90
Comfort of seats	76	78	99
Step or gap between the train and the platform	70	69	102
Your personal security whilst on board	82	84	97
The cleanliness of the inside	83	85	97
The cleanliness of the outside	74	80	92
The availability of staff on the train	68	69	98
Space for bicycles	49	51	97
How well train company dealt with delays	52	58	90
The usefulness of the information during delays	52	58	91
Level of crowding	76	75	101
Availability of Wi-Fi	29	40	71
Availability of power socket	43	63	68
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	89	88	101
Ticket-buying facilities	85	87	98
Provision of information about train times/platforms	92	91	101
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	86	83	104
Cleanliness of the station	89	86	103
Toilet facilities at the station	61	62	99
The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff	84	84	100
Connections with other forms of public transport	78	81	95
Facilities for car parking at the station	67	62	109
The overall station environment	87	84	104

³³ In Appendix 2 * indicates building block scores where the sample size is below 50

Your personal security whilst using the station	82	82	99
The availability of staff at the station	75	77	98
The provision of shelter facilities	79	80	99
Availability of seating	64	61	105
How request to station staff was handled	91	91	99
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	63	66	95
Availability of Wi-fi	47	48	98
Facilities for bicycle parking at the station	72	71	101

Sample size

1084

5634

Building block score is five per cent or more below typology average

Building block score is five per cent or more above typology average

A2.2 NRPS Autumn 2016: percentage satisfied, East Midlands Trains Liverpool - Norwich route, compared to long-distance typology average and best in class

	East Midlands Trains: Liverpool - Norwich	Long-distance	Best in class
Overall			
Overall satisfaction with the journey	90	89	97
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	85	87	96
The frequency of the trains on that route	80	86	91
Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)	86	85	97
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)	83	89	95
Connections with other train services	80	81	92
The value for money for the price of your ticket	58	59	87
Upkeep and repair of the train	88	85	93
The provision of information during the journey	72	81	94
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	81	84	96
The space for luggage	57	64	82
The toilet facilities	55	56	71
Comfort of seats	81	76	87
Step or gap between the train and the platform	69	67	82
Your personal security whilst on board	80	84	92
The cleanliness of the inside	83	85	93
The cleanliness of the outside	84	82	91
The availability of staff on the train	58	70	90
Space for bicycles	*	42	78
How well train company dealt with delays	52	53	68
The usefulness of the information during delays	55	59	97
Level of crowding	76	59	73
Availability of Wi-Fi	15	74	91
Availability of power socket	15	42	78
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	93	89	93
Ticket-buying facilities	88	87	93
Provision of information about train times/platforms	95	91	95
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	87	84	91
Cleanliness of the station	89	86	91
Toilet facilities at the station	63	63	74
The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff	88	85	88
Connections with other forms of public transport	78	81	90
Facilities for car parking at the station	66	59	71
The overall station environment	90	84	90

Your personal security whilst using the station	82	84	87
The availability of staff at the station	82	78	82
The provision of shelter facilities	85	81	87
Availability of seating	62	64	68
How request to station staff was handled	*	92	99
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	67	67	71
Availability of Wi-fi	41	44	55
Facilities for bicycle parking at the station	*	69	82

Sample size

237

4214

Building block score is five points or more below typology average

Building block score is five points or more above typology average

A2.3 NRPS Autumn 2016: percentage satisfied, East Midlands Trains local services, compared to short commute typology average and best in class

	East Midlands Trains: Local	Short commute	Best in class
Overall			
Overall satisfaction with the journey	87	84	97
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	84	79	90
The frequency of the trains on that route	68	75	95
Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)	88	76	94
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)	91	84	98
Connections with other train services	80	77	86
The value for money for the price of your ticket	66	49	73
Upkeep and repair of the train	75	73	92
The provision of information during the journey	76	73	87
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	85	58	86
The space for luggage	71	56	71
The toilet facilities	50	31	58
Comfort of seats	71	66	79
Step or gap between the train and the platform	69	61	79
Your personal security whilst on board	78	72	85
The cleanliness of the inside	74	76	91
The cleanliness of the outside	61	73	89
The availability of staff on the train	77	36	84
Space for bicycles	65	45	67
How well train company dealt with delays	*	35	76
The usefulness of the information during delays	*	43	81
Level of crowding	81	72	91
Availability of Wi-Fi	23	24	63
Availability of power socket	15	17	38
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	84	80	91
Ticket-buying facilities	85	78	95
Provision of information about train times/platforms	89	84	92
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	82	74	84
Cleanliness of the station	88	79	88
Toilet facilities at the station	60	46	66
The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff	79	78	93
Connections with other forms of public transport	71	78	90
Facilities for car parking at the station	67	45	76
The overall station environment	84	74	85
Your personal security whilst using the station	74	73	82
The availability of staff at the station	70	69	85

The provision of shelter facilities	70	72	91
Availability of seating	69	56	78
How request to station staff was handled	*	87	98
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	49	47	60
Availability of Wi-fi	43	34	60
Facilities for bicycle parking at the station	67	60	88

Sample size

233

8440

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, East Midlands Trains London building block, compared to short commute typology average and best in class

	East Midlands Trains: London	Long commute	Best in class
Overall			
Overall satisfaction with the journey	89	79	96
Train factors			
Overall satisfaction with the train	87	75	95
The frequency of the trains on that route	87	74	88
Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)	88	73	92
The length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)	89	79	95
Connections with other train services	79	72	85
The value for money for the price of your ticket	42	39	54
Upkeep and repair of the train	82	73	90
The provision of information during the journey	77	70	85
The helpfulness and attitude of staff on train	79	62	82
The space for luggage	59	55	70
The toilet facilities	52	42	70
Comfort of seats	77	62	85
Step or gap between the train and the platform	71	62	77
Your personal security whilst on board	84	73	85
The cleanliness of the inside	86	75	94
The cleanliness of the outside	76	71	90
The availability of staff on the train	67	39	67
Space for bicycles	32	38	60
How well train company dealt with delays	54	37	55
The usefulness of the information during delays	53	42	67
Level of crowding	74	69	83
Availability of Wi-Fi	36	27	75
Availability of power socket	62	22	86
Station factors			
Overall satisfaction with the station	90	79	90
Ticket-buying facilities	84	77	90

Provision of information about train times/platforms	93	84	93
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	88	73	88
Cleanliness of the station	89	76	89
Toilet facilities at the station	61	46	61
The attitudes and helpfulness of station staff	86	77	86
Connections with other forms of public transport	80	78	86
Facilities for car parking at the station	67	51	78
The overall station environment	87	74	87
Your personal security whilst using the station	85	75	85
The availability of staff at the station	74	66	78
The provision of shelter facilities	82	71	82
Availability of seating	63	49	65
How request to station staff was handled	91	88	97
The choice of shops/eating/drinking facilities available	67	55	67
Availability of Wi-fi	50	33	59
Facilities for bicycle parking at the station	74	68	79

Sample size

614

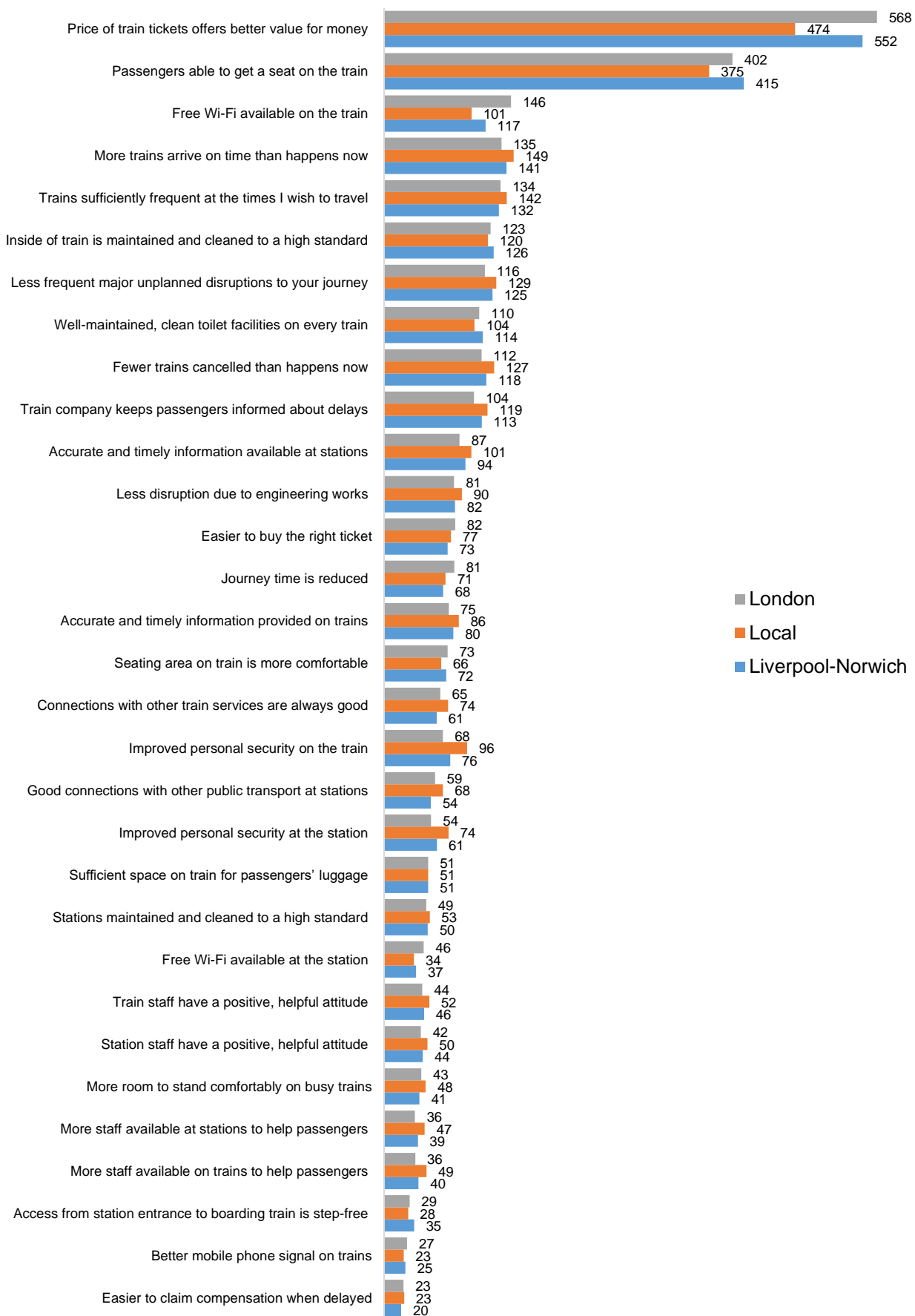
6009

Building block score is five points or more below typology average

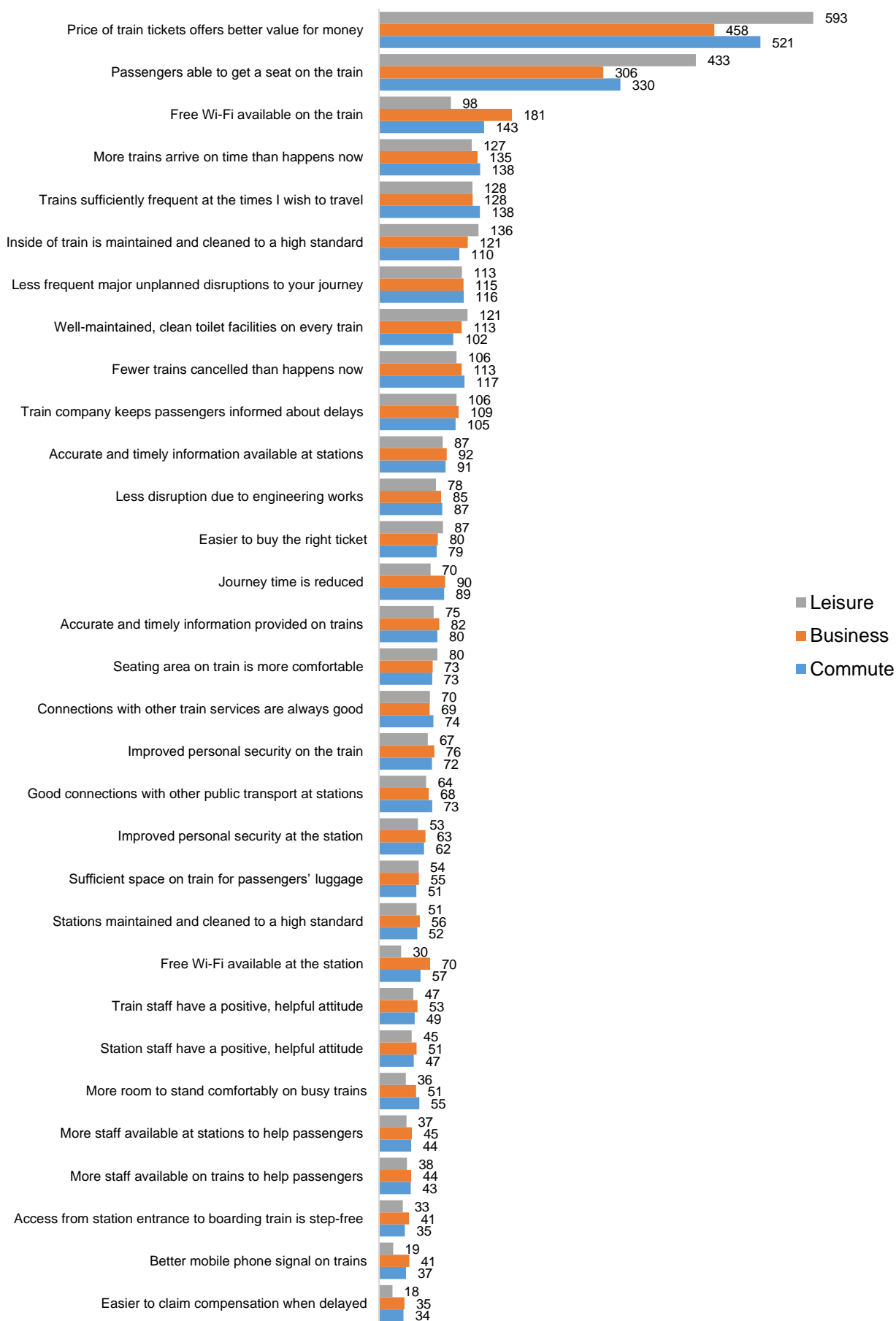
Building block score is five points or more above typology average

Appendix 3 Passenger priorities for improvement

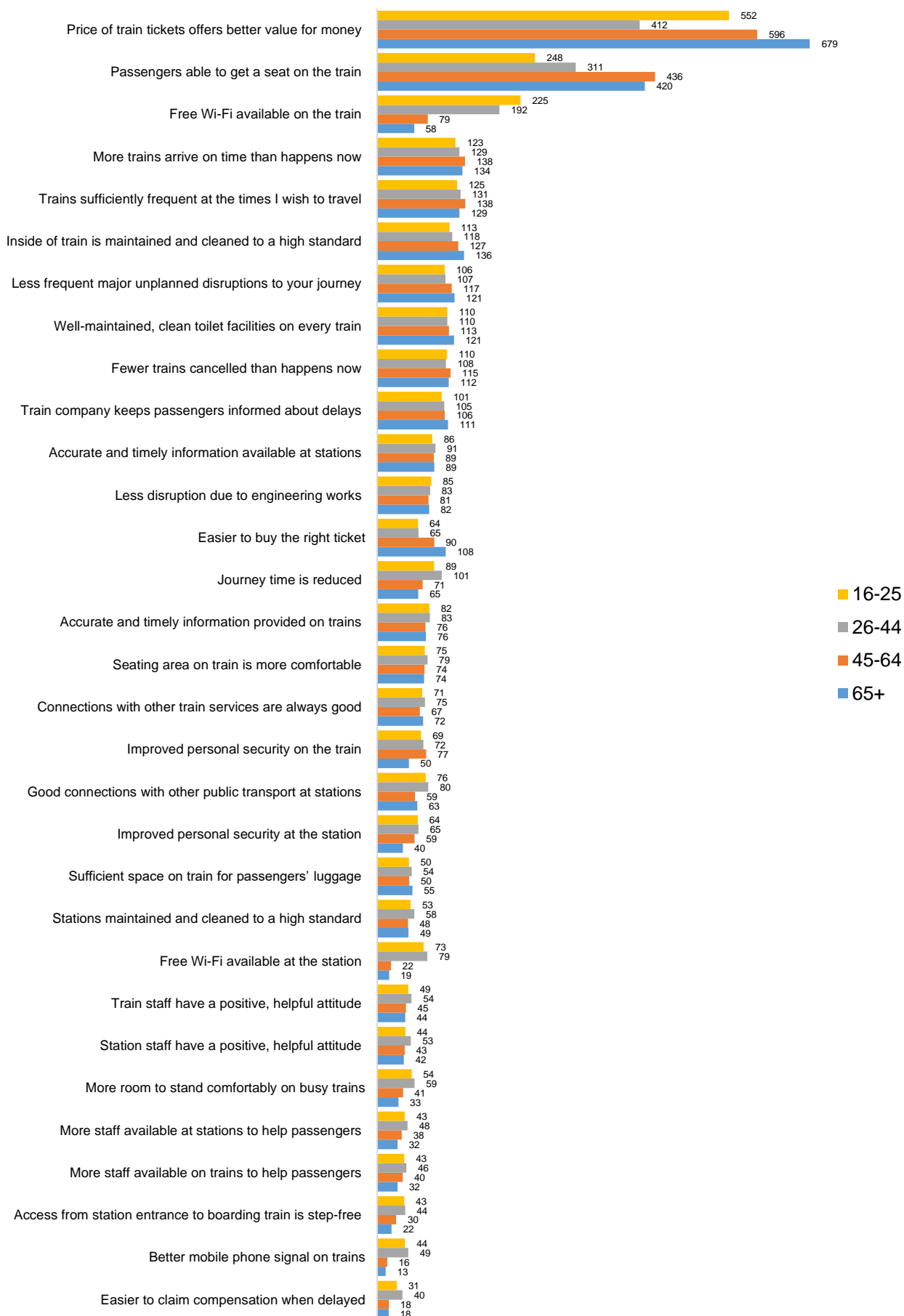
A3.1 Relative priority by route



A3.2 Relative priority by journey purpose



A3.3 Relative priority by age group



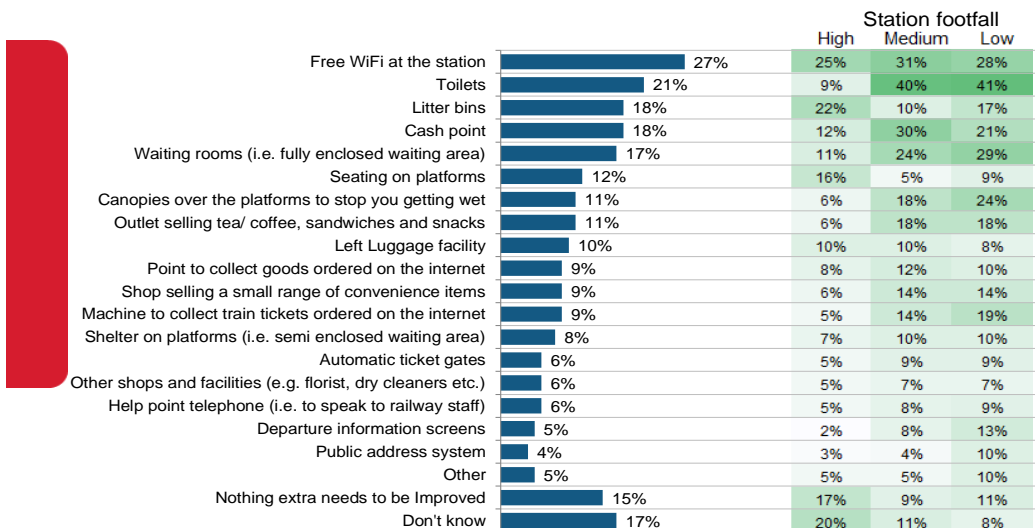
Appendix 4 Passenger priorities for station requirements and improvements – 2014 results (not asked in 2017 survey)

A4.1 Facilities need providing, according to station footfall, GB stations

A4.2

Free Wi-Fi at stations consistently required by station type

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



29 P

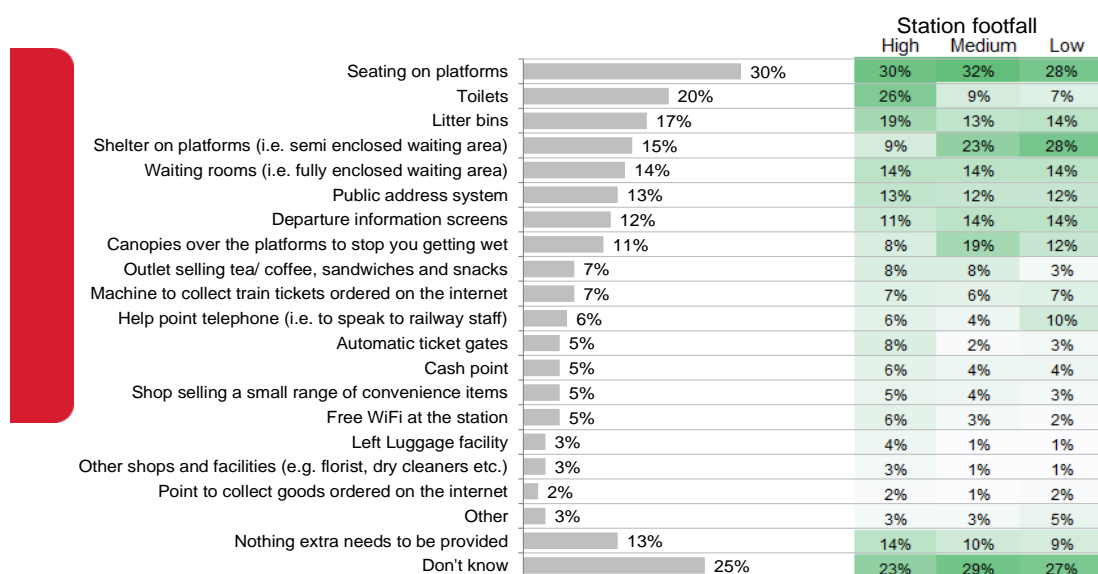
Q.26b Still thinking only about the station where you were handed this questionnaire, which of the following station facilities need to be improved or need to be provided at this station? providing: Base: All GB Rail Passengers n=3,559

Passengerfocus
putting passengers first

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 improving: All GB rail passengers



30 P

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
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