



# what our customers are saying about us

bus passenger satisfaction  
survey results 2018/19

March 2019

**Reading**buses

# overall satisfaction

94%



6%  
from last year

Our overall satisfaction has risen to 94% - our joint highest score to date. Rising by 6% from 88% last year. Against the highest satisfaction score of 96% in England, this places us 6th in the country, out of 68 bus operators.

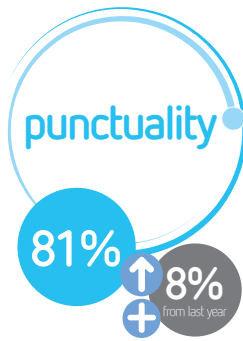
6<sup>th</sup>  
in England

1<sup>st</sup>  
compared  
to unitary  
authorities



## about the survey

814 customers were surveyed by Transport Focus, the Independent Transport User Watchdog, between September and December 2018. Known as the Bus Passenger Survey (BPS), it's an annual survey which asks bus customers their opinions on their journey. It's our seventh year of taking part, and, just like every year, we listen to what our customers say and use the results to help us make changes to make their journeys even better.



- Improvements in passenger boarding time, helped by speeding up boarding with contactless and app tickets.
- Congestion and traffic jams are still an issue for customers.



- Increase in value for money scores (particularly for 16-34 year olds).
- Reflecting that we have some of the lowest fares in the UK.
- Driver satisfaction scores reduced by 1-4% for six of the seven driver attitude and driving style questions.
- Possible correlation with the increased number of people travelling with contactless & app on the reduced scores for 'greeting & welcome' and 'helpfulness & attitude', where customers are having less personal contact with the driver.

we want to be better - the best, in fact!



# where we can focus our efforts



## congestion & traffic jams

Congestion and traffic jams are still noted as the top reason for what affected customer journey times. We work alongside utilities and local authorities to plan for known roadworks. We go the extra mile for customers by re-deploying resources when emergency roadworks or abnormal congestion occurs. Keeping customers up-to-date through social media and our app helps customers know where their bus is with live tracking.



## the bus driver

More customers are using contactless and the app to travel so there's less chance for interaction with them. We have to actively look to make those moments and delight customers with a greeting or a smile to transform a 'good' journey into a 'great' one. Our front-line employees play a vitally important role in delivering the best possible service to our customers, so any improvements we can make to these ratings will further improve our overall customer satisfaction.



## buses cleanliness & condition outside & inside

2% reduction in exterior cleanliness/condition and 1% reduction in interior cleanliness/condition. As one of the top six reasons customers rate a journey as 'great' rather than 'good', the cleanliness and condition of buses really makes a difference. We can (and will!) keep our buses clean working with our bus wash supplier and engineering team to improve our fleet. We'll also be looking at ways to reduce accident damage – a simple way to reduce our costs and improve customer perceptions.

# where investments & improvements are paying off

speeding  
up  
boarding

2018 saw a continued shift in the way that people pay for their tickets – fewer smartcard and cash payments combined with more contactless and app. Using technology we've speeded up boarding which has reduced customer dissatisfaction with boarding time.

app & contactless



smartcard



cash



knowing  
when  
buses will  
arrive

Our technology is helping customers to be more aware of when their bus will arrive. 5% more customers are only checking their timetable before leaving the house, reflecting the increase in online and app use.

value for  
money

**71%**



An increase for the second year in a row which recognises our work over the past year. We've improved the range of tickets on our app and listened to customers to extend Boost, our under 18 fares scheme, to more students. We've promoted our great value 7-day fares and have improved bus stop displays to make our fares clearer and easier to read.



## investment in buses

We continue to invest in new vehicles and mid-life refurbishments to provide a modern and pleasant travelling environment for our customers. We rate up to 31% better than the unitary authorities we are compared to for the availability of information inside the bus, including free WiFi, USB charging, audio announcements and digital next stop display. All this helps drive customer satisfaction which in turn helps customers return regularly. Reading remains one of the few areas across the UK to continue to see customer growth when most other regions are seeing decline.

# keeping our customers happy

Road space is at a premium in our continually growing town. Congestion is exaggerated by roadworks, particularly with unpredictable and unforeseen disruption from ageing utilities. We have to keep the bus dependable and attractive and we're doing everything within our control to make this possible.

Keeping customers satisfied and getting more on-board will help because buses make the most efficient use of the road. We're working tirelessly with local authorities to improve service reliability, including:



Despite seeing an increase in customer satisfaction, customers still note congestion and traffic jams as the top reason for what affected their journey times. We'll be working hard in 2019 to maintain our customers happiness and keep satisfaction at chart topping levels.

# what we do well

## more convenient than cars

People in Reading are making a conscious choice to use the bus where they have an option to use the car. When asked their reason for choosing to use the bus one of the top results was "more convenient than the car/other transport".

## smoothness & freedom from jolting

We've improved to the top 10 of unitary authorities for smoothness and freedom from jolting. Drivers can help make the journey smoother for customers, particularly paying attention our 'DriveWell' RIBAS telematics system. Numbers of drivers consistently achieving a low score has improved by over 10% in the past year.

## better bus stops

3% increase in satisfaction of the bus stop overall, going from 84% to 87%. This represents our improvements to bus stop displays, upgraded bus stop flag vinyls and our collaboration with the local councils to keep stops in a good condition and free from graffiti and vandalism.

## achieving our mission

People are 2-3% happier with the bigger picture of bus travel - frequency, reliability, ease of getting to local amenities and connections to other forms of public transport. Proving that we're fulfilling our mission "to connect people and places everyday with an amazing team".

# here's how we create more satisfied customers

Every year the survey looks at the difference between 'what makes a satisfactory journey' compared to 'what makes a great journey'. Last year the top difference was 'bus driver' and we scored really well here. This year the top five elements to customers rating a journey as 'great' were:

1. on bus environment and comfort
2. bus driver
3. journey time
4. timeliness
5. bus cleanliness and information on-board



## You make the difference

A big thank you to all our employees and stakeholders for the important role they play in helping make bus journeys even better. For our region to be successful we must fully support and embrace good quality local public transport which is reliable, dependable, helps ease congestion and improves air quality.

We remain committed to doing this and working hard with all partners to improve upon the results in this survey. Listening and acting on feedback from our customers is essential. Much work is already underway. It's clear that even more needs to be done by all parties to tackle congestion and prioritise the largest number of vehicles and passenger movements on our roads – buses!

Robert

CEO, Reading Buses