

Appointment of a new Chair for Transport Focus

Information Pack
for Applicants

July 2021



The Commissioner for
Public Appointments



Department
for Transport

transportfocus 



The Government is seeking to appoint a new Chair for Transport Focus as we reform its remit to become the passenger champion as part of the Williams-Shapps plan for Rail, and to amplify its role representing bus and road users.

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of Transport Focus.

Transport Focus, an arm's length body of the Department for Transport, is the independent statutory consumer watchdog for transport users. Its remit covers Britain's rail passengers, England's bus, coach and tram passengers (outside of London) and users of the Strategic Road Network in England.

This is an exciting time for Transport Focus with the recently published Williams-Shapps Rail Reform Plan for Rail¹ announcing that Transport Focus will be reformed to make it the rail passenger champion in the new structure, strongly representing the interests of passengers and advising the Secretary of State on passenger priorities. Transport Focus will conduct research and engage passengers on their experience of rail travel and take on new responsibilities to champion improvements for passengers, share best practice from across different transport services and work with Great British Railways and government to focus funding on improving the passenger experience. In doing so, it will bring a strong regional focus to its work.

Equally, as part of its broader remit, we are keen to support Transport Focus's commitment to amplifying the voice of the transport user more generally and working with those responsible for making decisions about transport – operators and governments – to identify what can be done to improve the user experience across the modes. In particular, we welcomed Transport Focus's positive support for the publication earlier this year of *Bus back better* – the National Bus Strategy for England – which promises a revolution in bus services with commitments to deliver more frequent, reliable, and better value services for passengers. The importance of integrating the different modes, such as rail and bus, to improve the overall end-to-end journey experience will be an important feature going forward.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-railways-williams-shapps-plan-for-rail>

The Government is now looking to appoint a new Chair to lead and drive forward the changes required to transform Transport Focus's role as the strong rail passenger champion in the new structure as we implement the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. Equally, it will be important that the new Chair has a robust vision for representing the interests of users of the other modes for which Transport Focus is responsible. An ability to see the bigger picture in terms of users whole journey experience will be important.

We are looking for an exceptional individual who will be able to enthuse and motivate the organisation through an exciting period of significant change. The ability to work collaboratively across a broad range of organisations, including Government, to achieve real change for transport users will be important.

We hope to receive applications from a diverse range of individuals, from a range of backgrounds across Great Britain and bringing a range of perspectives. We would particularly welcome candidates from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background and candidates with disabilities. Full details of the role and responsibilities are set out in this document and I very much hope you will decide to apply.

Further Information about Transport Focus, current board members and how it discharges its functions can be found on the Transport Focus website.

Chris Heaton-Harris
Minister of State
Department for Transport

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1. Making a difference for transport users

Introduction

Transport Focus exists to stand up for transport users across Great Britain, to champion their cause when things go wrong and to get services improved. Britain relies on its transport networks to help people and freight to move around smoothly. This underpins the productivity of the country. Reliable journeys remain the key requirement of all transport users.

Our ambition is to provide world class transport user representation. A reliable, good quality transport system supports sustainable growth, an excellent quality of life and improved opportunities for all. It is vital that the needs and priorities of transport users across Great Britain are heard in all major decisions about how transport is operated, and future investment targeted. After the Covid-19 pandemic, we must build back a better, fairer, safer and greener transport system.

We help improve the day-to-day travel experience of many transport users through our unique, innovative, independent transport user insight and advocacy. We can help shape strategic transport improvements for the user and hence ensure value for money, improve diversity and inclusion and contribute to the 'levelling up' agenda. We translate insight into action.

Our role is even more crucial as the country, the transport industry and users respond to the highs and lows of the Covid-19 pandemic and the eventual need to attract people back to public transport.

In addition to Covid-19, we anticipate some significant reform for rail and bus in parts of Britain to engage in for the passenger benefit. We also have a role as the country takes steps towards another challenge: decarbonising transport. To succeed, the user must be at the heart of meeting these challenges.



Transport users during Covid-19 – what does our insight show?

Helping passengers feel safe on bus and train – the role of ventilation

We asked our rail and bus communities about ventilation's importance in mitigating any lapses in social distancing or cleanliness:

- Rail users have a stronger focus on ventilation than bus users
- Open windows seen as superior to air conditioning and within users' control
- Advanced air conditioning may sound impressive, but there was some scepticism about the claims. We urge the industry to explain more.

Are rail passengers getting the information they need to travel safely?

Asked by DfT, we carried our third assessment of train company websites during the pandemic. We are working with the companies to rectify them. They include:

- Information on refunds lacking clarity and being out of date
- Insufficient detailed information on how busy services are to enable social distancing
- Information on the availability of passenger assist and its difference to normal.

Are Covid-safe accreditation schemes reassuring for public transport users?

Passengers told us they found such accreditation schemes reassuring and useful, particularly Visit Britain's 'Good to Go' scheme. But some were sceptical about reliability and the checking and maintenance of standards on an ongoing basis. Such schemes, if trusted, could play a valuable role in inspiring confidence to travel.

- Help rebuild passenger confidence in using public transport post pandemic guided by their needs, experiences and new ways of living
- Advocate for the user in reforms to rail and bus
- Continue to identify barriers to transport for those with disabilities to help improve their access to it
- Improve the organisation's inclusivity and diversity
- Ensure that the user view is at the heart of decarbonising transport
- Rebuild our insight and adapt it to the new circumstances
- Rebuild our campaigns as and when appropriate.

Rail Reform

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail is a once in a generation opportunity to deliver reform across one of the nation's most loved industries. The creation of Great British Railways will bring track and train closer together and will simplify an industry which had grown to be too fragmented to provide passengers with what they require. Putting Passengers First is the underpinning theme of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, therefore, an effective, capable and articulate Transport Focus is absolutely integral to the success of the reforms.

As Passenger Champion in the new structure, Transport Focus will be expected to;

- work closely with Ministers and industry to focus funding on improving the passenger experience;
- monitor complaint volumes and themes;
- conduct research and engage passengers on their experience;
- investigate and escalate to Ministers if a contract/commitment breach is found;
- share best practice from across different transport services;
- work with London Travel Watch and at an increasingly regional level; and
- take on new responsibilities to champion improvements for passengers.

As chair, you will be responsible for overseeing, inspiring and delivering the change required for Transport Focus to undertake its role in the new system. You will need to forge close working relationships with Ministers and industry leaders to be able to successfully effect positive change for passengers and you will also be required to lead a smooth cultural transition to ensure that Transport Focus successfully adapts to its new position within the rail industry. This is an exciting opportunity to lead and shape an organisation that will be central to securing rail passenger improvements over the coming years.

Latest transport survey shows gradual return to public transport

According to our Omnibus survey, the proportion of people making public transport journeys in the two weeks to the end of March 2021 is gradually increasing:

- 15 per cent have used public transport - up two per cent
- 22 per cent have made a journey to visit friends and family - up four per cent
- 35 per cent made a journey to or from work - also up four per cent
- Among those not using public transport there has been a decrease in those who say they don't feel safe 25 per cent down three per cent

Bus strategy

The Government's new National Bus Strategy is welcome for bus passengers across Great Britain. For many, buses are a lifeline to employment, education, and leisure, as well as being essential to the economy. The Strategy proposes investment on what we know are current bus passengers' priorities that is more services running more reliably and providing better value.

We will work with Government, bus operators and transport authorities to make sure passengers' needs are at the heart of new arrangements. This includes developing:

- A new bus passenger charter and improved passenger representation
- A new measurement of bus user satisfaction to assess the impact of new investment and activities.

Delivering this has never been more important as we emerge out of the Covid-19 pandemic and encourage people back onto our buses. Indeed the key aim of the strategy is to increase patronage, in the short term to get people who used to use them back onto buses and, in the longer term, convince those who do not normally use buses to do so.

It is pleasing to see that the key bus improvements that passengers want align with the ambition set out in the strategy: more frequent, more reliable, more evening services and less complex and cheaper ticketing. All factors we know from our extensive and trusted programme of bus passenger research and advocacy.

Transport Focus wants the strategy's ambition to succeed and passengers' experiences to improve. We will continue to share our research and work with the bus industry to ensure that their views are at the heart of the new system.

Making a difference for road users

England's motorways and major 'A' roads, the strategic road network, are crucial to the country. Lorry traffic remained high during the formal lockdowns and, while commuting and business travel patterns may change post-Covid-19, it is likely that traffic levels overall will rebound quickly as the economy and society reopens. We will continue our work representing the interests of all who use Highways England's roads, whether in a car, coach, lorry or van, riding a motorbike, bicycle or horse, or on foot.

We will look ahead to what road users need from the Government's third road investment strategy (2025-30), including to make journeys in a fully electric vehicle. We will also continue to provide constructive challenge to Highways England to help it better meet the needs of today's road users.

Sustainable transport

There are several user issues to be considered in encouraging sustainable transport beyond making sure that public transport is an attractive and convenient way to get around. Also, while electric car take up is slowly spreading, the price of purchasing or leasing vehicles and access to charging continue to be issues. We are looking at the consumer experience of using electric vehicle charging on England's Strategic Road Network. So we will:

- Carry out and publish new research to understand the steps road users want taken so they can switch to a fully electric vehicle for journeys on Highways England's roads
- Look more at 'nudge' techniques, widely used in Government messaging, to see if simple changes can help more people choose greener transport.

Transport Focus's work for consumers in Wales

The Wales Transport Strategy sets out ambitious plans for the next 20 years and priorities for the next five years. We will be a collaborative partner with Transport for Wales on the implementation of the strategy and development of the Transport Delivery Plan and position Transport Focus Wales as having a key role in representing transport users across Wales, including measuring outcomes and commissioning user insight.

Fflecsi – the passenger experience of integrated responsive transport

We are jointly funding work with Transport for Wales to understand passengers' experience of fflecsi, potential improvements to the service, and ways of attracting new users. We will also seek to understand barriers to adoption amongst non-users and fflecsi's role within the overall transport mix. This qualitative research will seek views from users and non-users, authorities and operators, assessing all journey aspects from end to end. Schemes in North Wales, Pembrokeshire and Newport will be compared and also benchmarked against other schemes in England.

What will influence passengers to use bus again in the future?

We have undertaken an exploratory study to gain a deeper understanding of bus passenger (current and lapsed) experiences, perceptions, and expectations of travelling during and after the Covid pandemic. This in-depth insight is now published and has been run across Britain – including a small amount of boost funding from Welsh Government. Results have highlighted managing infection risk as a dominant concern and passengers' mixed knowledge of operator efforts to deal with that risk. People in rural areas also differ from more urban and suburban in terms of how they feel about their services and the alternatives they may have for travel. This qualitative insight will guide the next quantitative stage, to identify different types of passengers and what they need in order to travel again. Initial findings have been shared with Welsh Government officials.

Transport Focus's work for consumers in Scotland

Bus Partnership Fund

We welcomed the launch of the Bus Partnership Fund by providing supportive messages. We also participated in the recent virtual conference for local authorities and bus operators who are considering bids to the fund and spoke about the power of partnerships based on our experience of working with Bus Alliances. We also spoke about the value of passenger insight to inform the ongoing work of the Partnerships.

As Transport Scotland are preparing to consult on proposals to implement Part III of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 which involves developing the toolkit of options available to local transport authorities to support bus service improvements. We attended a virtual workshop on 17 March 2021. We have developed a series of actions to benefit bus passengers that should form the toolkit of options to support bus service improvements.

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Caledonian Sleeper – Guest Satisfaction Survey

Transport Focus set up a Guest Satisfaction Survey for Serco Caledonian Sleeper which has been used to set the benchmarks against which customer satisfaction with the service will be measured. We have been able to restart the survey during the pandemic, as it is an online survey. The latest results show that passengers are appreciative of the efforts being made to provide a service for those making essential journeys during this time.

History

Transport Focus has existed in some form since 1947 when the Central Transport Consultative Committee (CTCC) and a network of Transport Users Consultative Committees were established as the passenger representative bodies. It was given extended powers in 1962 and again in 1968. When the rail network in the UK was privatised in 1993 the committees were replaced with the Rail Users Consultative Committee (RUCC) Network, including the Central Rail Users Consultative Committee (CRUCC) as the national co-ordinating body. In 2000 they became the Rail Passengers Council and Committees (RPC).

Transport Focus is a single GB-wide organisation which replaced the previous Rail Passengers Council and regional Rail Passengers Committees. Transport Focus is the operating name of what is now The Passengers' Council.

The Local Transport Act 2008 enabled the Secretary of State to extend Passenger Focus's remit through secondary legislation so that it now represents bus and tram passengers in England (outside of London) and on scheduled domestic coach journeys. Transport Focus also works extensively on non-rail issues in Scotland and Wales where asked to do so by the respective governments or their transport agencies. The Infrastructure Act 2015 provided Transport Focus with a remit for users of the strategic road network in England.

Transport Focus now

Transport Focus is structured as an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Transport. The Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the London Assembly each appoint a member to the Board. The remaining appointments, including the Chair, are made by the Secretary of State for Transport through an appointments process regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Current board member and management profiles can be found on our [website](#). The Board meets approximately three times per year in public, and monthly informally. The Board meets in London, Manchester and other places across Great Britain. For more information about Transport Focus please visit our website where you can see the current year workplan and links to many activities in which it is involved.

Key points to note when considering whether you should apply

The successful candidate will be paid £35k² per annum based on an expected average of two days commitment a week, and will be paid monthly. Pay is subject to statutory deductions and is paid via payroll. The appointment is not pensionable.

You must be a regular transport user and a UK taxpayer, to be eligible for this appointment. References will be taken up, and other enquiries into your suitability for this role may be made.

You may **not** be a Member of Parliament, a Member of the Scottish Parliament or the Welsh Senedd, or a Member of the London Assembly.

² As at 1 April 2021 and subject to the public sector pay freeze for at least until the end of 2021-22

You may be a member of the House of Lords but, if you are, you will be guided in your conduct in that House by the Statement made by Lord Addison in the House on 21 March 1951 (as amended by the Second Report from the Select Committee on Procedures of the House, 3 February 1971).

You should carefully read the provisions of the Transport Focus Membership Codes to ensure that you will be able to satisfy, in particular, the requirements of provisions in respect of financial and business interests.

The appointment is likely to be offered for four years, which may be renewed, subject to satisfactory performance, although there is no presumption of reappointment.

2. Description of the Role

As Chair, you will be expected to work in partnership with staff and key stakeholders across the country. You will ensure that the user voice is not only heard but understood and acted upon by those in positions of influence. This is a role for a true leader, a proactive person with the capacity and passion to identify the need for, and promote, change, and communicate superbly.

You will chair monthly meetings of the Transport Focus board. Good boards are created and sustained by good Chairs. The Chair creates the conditions for overall board and individual effectiveness. The Chair, with the help of the executive directors and head of board and governance, sets the agenda for the board's deliberations. Among your key responsibilities will be:

- setting a forward board agenda which is focused on the transport user, current performance and future strategy;
- keeping Ministers informed of activities and outcomes, issues and concerns, through regular dialogue ensuring Transport Focus's Board has access to high-quality financial and management information, enabling it to carry out its core responsibilities of good governance;
- making certain that the board determines the nature and extent of the significant risks the organisation is willing to embrace in the implementation of its strategy and work plans;
- making certain that the board has effective decision-making processes in place and applies sufficient challenge to major proposals by encouraging all board members to draw on their skills, experience, knowledge and, where appropriate, independence;
- developing productive, open, working relationships with the management team - and the Chief Executive in particular - by providing support and advice while respecting executive responsibility.
- Becoming a Director of, and Chairing, our subsidiary companies Transport Focus Wales Limited and Transport Focus Scotland Limited

3. Person Specification

We would like to hear from candidates who are regular users of a variety of transport modes, and who can **demonstrate** in their application, and at interview, the following **essential criteria**:

- An insight into the dynamics and issues surrounding the transport user, as well as customer facing businesses and consumer affairs more generally.
- An ability to drive forward change and improve performance, particularly through constructively challenging decision making, resourcing structures and processes across Transport Focus and its subsidiaries, particularly in the context of the reforms to its role following the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail.
- Strong and visible leadership skills (including experience of being on a board) which, combined with an ability to harness the skills of others, results in the delivery of clear outcomes.
- Proven ability to negotiate and persuade partners to come up with positive results for consumers.
- A strong communicator who, as well as being able to engage with the public, is able to establish personal credibility with a complex range of stakeholders, including those operating in Government across Great Britain, and in broader political and commercial environments.
- A demonstrable commitment to an equal opportunities and diversity agenda.

Desirable skills, knowledge and experience

In addition to the above, candidates should ideally be able to demonstrate further experience covering:

- Transport industry structure
- Regulatory, central or local government affairs
- Influencing in a political environment

4. Equality and Diversity

Her Majesty's Government is committed to the principle of public appointments based on merit, independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.

Transport Focus is committed to equality and diversity and very much welcomes applicants from all sections of the community regardless of their race, ethnic or national origin, sex, disability, marital status, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or working pattern.

5. Application process

Transport Focus is managing the recruitment process on behalf of the Department for Transport but the final decisions on all steps up to, and including, appointment rest with the Secretary of State. The appointments are being managed under the Cabinet Office [Governance Code for Public Appointments](#).

The Governance Code requires the formation of an advisory assessment panel to advise the Secretary of State in making this appointment. In undertaking their assessment of candidates, the role of the panel is to decide, on the basis of *the Principles for Public Appointments* as set out in the Code, who meets the published selection criteria for the role. In other words, who is appointable to the role.

The Secretary of State has agreed the membership of the selection panel as follows:

- Olivia Grant as the Senior Independent Panel Member to chair the panel;
- Dan Moore, Director of Rail Strategy and Analysis, Department for Transport; and
- Keith Williams who led the Rail Reform Review resulting in the Williams-Shapps Rail Reform White Paper published on 20 May 2021.

To apply for this post you must provide:

- A supporting statement of no more than 2 sides of A4 paper (no smaller than 10-point font) which clearly sets out how you meet both the essential and desirable criteria for the role. Decisions about shortlisting will be based on this information.
- Full curriculum vitae of no more than 3 sides of A4 paper (no smaller than 10-point font) with your educational and professional qualifications and full employment history.
- A completed Supporting Information Form. Part A of this form - regarding diversity - is not part of the selection process and will be treated in confidence and used only for statistical purposes. It will be kept separate from the application and will not be seen by the selection panel until after a shortlist has been generated. Part B - political activity - will be provided to the Panel only for those applicants selected for interview; it will enable the Panel to explore such activity with the candidates in the context of their ability to perform their role. Referees nominated may be contacted prior to interview for shortlisted candidates.

You should send all of the above by email to Jon Carter, Head of Board and Governance at Transport Focus, to: boardrecruitment@transportfocus.org.uk

Please note that the closing date for all applications is 17 September 2021. Late applications may not be accepted.

If you have problems e-mailing your application, please send a hard copy to:

Transport Focus - Board recruitment centre
Freepost RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ
PO Box 5594
Southend-on-Sea
SS1 9PZ

If you experience any difficulties completing your application form, please contact the Transport Focus recruitment centre on 0300 123 2350 for assistance before the closing date. If the recruitment centre cannot help with a particular query, it may collect your details and pass these on to someone who can help for a reply.

Assessment

After the closing date for applications:

- Your application will be first **checked for completeness** and eligibility. If necessary, you may be contacted at this stage to clarify any points that are unclear.
- Applications will be **assessed and shortlisted** by the panel against the essential criteria outlined in the *person specification* above. Candidates will be scored objectively against each essential criteria on a scale of 1-10.
- The highest scored candidates will, subject to ministerial approval, be shortlisted for interview, but to be considered suitable for shortlisting, candidates must score 6 or above against **all** essential criteria. Desirable skills, knowledge and experience will be taken into account as necessary. It is anticipated that shortlisting will be completed during September / October 2021. Shortlisted candidates will be informed as soon as possible if they have been selected for final interview.
- A **telephone assessment** will be arranged with shortlisted candidates. This will explore any areas which are unclear from the information provided, as well as your motivation for applying and for related purposes. This assessment will be made available to the selection panel at interview.
- **References** may be taken up prior to interview, and made available to the selection panel.

- Formal **interviews** with the Selection Panel are expected to be held during October 2021.

At the formal interviews, candidates should come prepared to make a short presentation (the topic will be provided to those shortlisted) and for an **informed discussion** on matters of interest and/or concern to transport users and broader challenges facing Transport Focus.

Reasonable expenses to attend interview(s) will be paid, based on the cheapest and / or most reasonable method of travel.

6. Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint about the recruitment and selection procedure, you should write in the first instance to Mike Biskup, Sponsorship Manager, Department for Transport, by email to: mike.biskup@dft.gov.uk

If, after receiving a comprehensive response, you are still concerned, you can send an e-mail to the Commissioner for Public Appointments (publicappointments@csc.gov.uk). Details about the basis on which the Commissioner will investigate a complaint concerning an appointment service is available at:

<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/regulating-appointments/investigating-complaints/>

7. Data protection

Transport Focus is a registered data controller and takes data protection seriously. You are supplying information in connection with your application voluntarily and it will be kept safe and secure and used strictly for the purposes for which you supply it. The **primary** lawful basis for processing your data under the General Data Protection Regulations / Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) is therefore **consent** (Article 6 (1) (a)) although please note that Articles 6(1) (c) and (e) also apply. Statistical abstracts from the data you supply will be anonymous. A copy of our privacy policy may be found on our website [here](#).

Appendix (a)

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

You should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. You should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family or your friends.

Integrity

You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might, or might be perceived to, influence you in the performance of your official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including awarding contracts and recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, you should make choices on merit.

Accountability

You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public and must submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate for your office.

Openness

You should be as open as possible about the decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

You have a duty to declare any private interests relating to your public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

You should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

These principles should inform your actions and decisions as a board member.