


Board Paper		
July 10 BM 11.0		
Report for	Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Restricted or confidential Information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If confidential, protective marking ¹		
Date of Meeting		Wednesday 14 July 2010
Agenda Item		11
Report Title		Rail Passenger Directors review of passenger and industry facing work for May and June 2010
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Campaigns

Performance

Following last year's research looking at the relationship between train performance and NPS satisfaction, similar studies are nearing completion with Northern and CrossCountry. These are testing the universality of the original findings that satisfaction declines significantly from the first minute of delay, and thereby the importance of campaigning for monitoring PPM at intermediate stops and/or a move towards a 'right time' railway.

We are also now getting access to more detailed performance data from TOCs that shows the percentage of 'right time' arrivals, and those within three, five and ten minutes of the scheduled arrival time. Analysis of this data is helping to better refine our understanding of the impact of the PPM 'allowance'.

Project findings will be used to shape our policy input into avenues such as HLOS2 and franchising.

Value for money

Work continues with TOCs to advocate changes that would improve passenger satisfaction with value for money and understanding of the ticketing system (e.g. spreading the cost of a season ticket, transparency about availability of cheaper tickets). The head of marketing at East Midlands Trains has agreed to present to the Board in the autumn about their initiatives to improve passenger satisfaction with value for money. The ATOC value for money work continues and they have, so far, not sought our input. Research into ticket office queuing

¹ ie RESTRICTED plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

time and the usability of Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) is complete, with reports being developed for publication. An internal meeting has been set up to consider whether our fares, ticketing and value for money campaign objectives remain fit for purpose and how Passenger Focus should respond to possible changes in fares regulation and likely price increases in January 2011 on the back of RPI figure expected to be relatively high in summer 2010. It is notable how value for money satisfaction in the National Passenger Survey has risen in Spring 2010 following the January 2010 price freeze.

Information and disruption

Passenger Focus has three specific objectives. First, that the project to feed information screens at stations with data from the national real time running database (Darwin) is rolled out. Phase 1 is expected in November 2010 at the 17 Virgin-managed stations and the industry has developed a programme for all other TOCs between 2011 and 2013. Second, that the ATOC Approved Code of Practice on Passenger Information During Disruption (“the PIDD ACOP”) is implemented across the industry. Third, that the industry’s Good Practice Guides on passenger information are adopted. With the latter two, Guy Dangerfield is currently briefing Passenger Link Managers and Executives about the key elements that we need to ensure TOCs are delivering. In relation to the PIDD ACOP the focus is on ensuring that the “core message” a. is issued promptly at the start of an incident and then refreshed every 20 minutes until the disruption is over and b. provides coherent, unambiguous and useful advice to passengers that allows them to make an informed decision about their travel plans. We continue to use feedback through the disruption panel to drive improvement within TOCs – a report and recommendations will be published in Autumn 2010.

Other campaigns

Accessibility

The second wave of APRS research and the APRS snap survey is now in the field. As yet we have no firm results but two of our mystery shoppers have had unfortunate experiences and poor service. We hope these are isolated incidents. ATOC should now have completed the tendering process for the changes to the APRS booking system. We are planning a meeting with ATOC to obtain the results of this process. We are also developing an influencing strategy that will ensure the results of our research are made widely available. This will create a platform for ensuring this important issue is not swept under the carpet or grinds to a halt through slow progress.

Complaint Handling

Initial work has been carried out to build up a library of complaints data from the rail industry in order to assess the impact of the TOC reviews on the number of complaints they handle. The project will also be looking at the number of appeals that have been received by the PAT team before and after the reviews.

Work is continuing on collating this data which will form the basis of the final report which will detail the projects findings.

PLM reports by service provider

Note: detailed reports provided for this meeting follow and are not included below

Arriva Trains Wales / Wales

In Wales, Passenger Focus gave oral evidence to the National Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee as part of its inquiry into the accessibility of railway stations.

We also responded to an inquiry into sporting events in Wales, with the final report picking up our recommendation for a review of public transport arrangements for events at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

We have also seen data from the National Passenger Survey used in an interim monitoring report on Wales' National Transport Plan. We have suggested other NPS data that might be used for this purpose in a current consultation into monitoring arrangements.

National Express East Anglia

Currently waiting to hear if National Express will continue to operate the franchise beyond 31 March 2011, while the coalition reviews franchising policy. NXEA remains one of the lower NPS performers and Passenger Focus continues to advocate a strong focus on punctuality as the key driver. Performance on the Great Eastern Main Line is improving – particularly the Norwich intercity service, but previously high-performing West Anglia route has suffered a number of recent infrastructure failures. Passenger Focus's principal area of work with NXEA at present seeks to improve passenger information during disruption (PIDD) and information during normal running. Paul Bentley is meeting key managers to understand their processes and see evidence that good practice is being applied. Based on clear passenger research, Passenger Focus has publicly-criticised NXEA's ending of its free text alert service to tell passengers about delays. On 6 July Passenger Focus will view the first of NXEA's 30 new four-coach trains under construction at Bombardier's Derby factory, with a particular focus on its accessibility features. NXEA is being impacted significantly by problems with Network Rail's new Integrated Train Planning System (ITPS), with resulting inaccuracies in publicly-available timetable information well within T-12. Ashwin Kumar has written to Robin Gisby expressing our concern.

East Coast

Passenger Focus presented East Coast's first NPS results to directors on 29 June, showing that satisfaction was largely unchanged from Spring 2009 under National Express. However Virgin is now ahead among long-distance franchised TOCs. A key area of work with East Coast at present is to improve passenger information during disruption (PIDD) and information more generally. Kelly Betchley continues to challenge East Coast to demonstrate how various Passengers' Charter commitments around disruption are being delivered (e.g. refreshments during severe delays and distribution of delay repay claim

forms). Passenger Focus has criticised East Coast's announcement that, apart from one return trip each day, it will not be introducing a Lincoln to London service in May 2011 as planned. A draft of the May 2011 Saturday and Sunday timetable has now been produced and we continue to demand that they and the latest version of the weekday timetable are made public, as well as keeping up pressure about connectivity between the East Midlands/East of England and northern England and Scotland. We are currently pressing East Coast to make its Unpaid Fare Notice appeal process more customer-friendly (this is where, in effect, an invoice is issued on the train when somebody cannot/will not pay the fare).

First Capital Connect

Initial meetings have been held to build relationships with key members of the senior executive team following take-up of responsibilities for this TOC.

Passenger panel reports have formed the basis for dialogue around Passenger Information During Disruption. Progress with the additional investment into information systems is being monitored and discussions about the processes and approach to information have been held.

NPS results have been reviewed with Customer Services Director, together with the action plans for improvement.

A meeting with the recently appointed Operations Director is pending and will be the starting point for an increased focus on performance improvements.

C2C

The suspension of the Essex Thameside re-franchise came as a surprise. The decision has caused frustration amongst bidders who have incurred bidding costs. We have met with c2c's MD Julian Drury to consider the likely scenarios in which National Express will continue running c2c bearing in mind the failed efforts for a 2 year extension in 2008 and the cross default arising from National Express East Coast.

We will also be meeting the DfT to get their proposals on how the current franchise might be extended beyond the current end date in May 2011. As c2c is in its last 12 months we are already seeing cuts, such as the removal of free disruption text messages which we opposed. Despite these distractions performance and passenger satisfaction remains at a high level.

Southern

Work has focused on the core objectives set for the year. Reports from the passenger disruption panel are the basis for dialogue around Passenger Information During Disruption. A useful meeting identified various local actions and also thresholds for information triggers across the industry as an issue for the national steering group.

Smartcard developments are continuing to be monitored and the PLM attended the first project team meeting at Southern, contributing to discussion about the principles and scope of the ITSO scheme.

Timetable issues, especially tensions on Uckfield and Brighton Mainline have been discussed with Southern and DfT.

Preparations are underway for a detailed NPS presentation, focusing particularly on the composite targets within the franchise.

Chiltern

Discussions are ongoing regarding Chiltern's Schedule 17 proposals to reduce coverage of ticket office hours at certain stations. We have objected to the proposed changes at a number of stations based on the guidance issued by the DfT following the previous work on South West Trains. However, it appears that the original data supplied by Chiltern included Wembley event days that significantly boost sales levels (n.b. Chiltern has confirmed that ticket offices will remain open on these occasions). We await revised data.

We have also completed joint research with Chiltern on passenger attitudes to train toilets and are in the process of discussing an action plan to address the findings.

London Midland

LM has 8 areas of franchise commitments that are monitored by NPS scores. While overall satisfaction rose from 78% to 86% they missed meeting some of the franchise targets although they have worked hard to achieve them. They are developing a further improvement plan which will be required by DfT and we are looking at ways we can be involved in this planning as all 8 of the targets focus on customer service and crucial to the passenger's experience. We will be meeting with LM on 8 July to take this work forward. We are also undertaking route trip with DfT on 5 July.

East Midlands Trains

EMT has recorded its best ever NPS results, up five percentage points – probably driven by sustained high punctuality, even through the worst of the snow disruption immediately prior to surveying. A key area of work for Passenger Focus at present is to ensure that good practice around passenger information during disruption (PIDD), and information generally, is properly embedded – Kelly Betchley is working closely with key managers. Regarding disruption, we are currently highlighting the impact in North West England if EMT curtails its Norwich to Liverpool service – as happened on 20 May 2010 when the line was closed north of Chesterfield. Kelly Betchley has been judging EMT's internal station of the year awards, providing a valuable opportunity to visit smaller stations and observe the service passengers receive. EMT has recently completed major refurbishment of its Class 158 diesel fleet, giving a substantially improved passenger environment in these near-20 year old trains.

Passenger Focus has made a small financial contribution to East Midlands TravelWatch to enable their 2010 annual conference to go ahead, Guy Dangerfield and Kelly Betchley attended for part of the day. The East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy car park research report will be published in July 2010.

South West Trains

SWT scored well in NPS in this wave (overall satisfaction 85%) with the notable exceptions of:

- The overall environment of the stations and availability of staff at stations
- Cleanliness of train and upkeep and repair of the train

They are starting to deliver franchise commitments to paint and improve the upkeep of stations. After deep cuts into the cleaning regimes they are now increasing spending in this area.

There are underlying trends showing that in many customer service areas SWT are being caught up and overtaken by other companies. In some cases trends are starting to dip. This is of great concern to SWT but as spending will be tightly controlled for the rest of the franchise it is hard to envisage how they can halt the trend.

SWT's Schedule 17 to reduce ticket office hours request has gone to DfT for arbitration. We do not have a date for a final decision. It is possible that the new minister will reconsider the 12 issues an hour guideline.

First TransPennine Express

We have been working closely with senior TPE managers on developing action plans for improving dealing with delays and we have guided this work using NPS to target specific stations where passenger satisfaction is particularly low. The main work is preparing our pre-specification response for the new franchise based on our Passenger Priorities research and be-spoke TPE research we commissioned earlier this year. This research will also inform the need to address overcrowding in the Northern RUS.

Northern

The main work has been to meet and build effective relationships with senior staff including the MD, Chief Operations Officer, Area directors, stakeholder relations managers, area station managers and Customer Service team and forge better relationships between Northern and our Passenger Advice Team. This is no mean feat as Northern is the largest TOC in the UK and staff are spread across 3 large business areas. In July the PLM is judging their Customer Service Awards and there is an NPS presentation with the research team. Our objectives focus on improving the way Northern deals with delays and addressing overcrowding which will be a key concern in our work on the Northern RUS this year.

Cross Country

The main priority has been in establishing a working relationship with the senior management team and meetings have been held with the MD, Customer Services Director and stakeholder manager. Spring 2010 NPS results generally positive. New route-specific detail highlights issues with staff attitude and availability on stations, none operated by Cross Country. The TOC will be following up with those stations. Recent discussions on September fares round and December timetable changes. TOC also working closely with us on the CDL Passenger disruption project and a meeting scheduled for the 8th July to discuss research findings with senior management team.

Virgin West Coast

We have had meetings with Haydon Walker, Franchise Manager, Virgin West Coast, DfT to discuss various initiatives, including the Phase 1 roll-out of the project to drive CIS at all stations from the national real time running data. At each of the seventeen Virgin West Coast managed stations the CIS is currently driven by a stand-alone system that requires information to be put in manually by a member of staff at that particular station. The new system will come into being at Virgin West Coast stations during September 2010. An initial meeting has been held with DfT to discuss the Franchise renewal process of the West Coast Franchise.

Scotrail

Consultation with ScotRail and stakeholders on timetable changes from December 2010 affecting rural routes in South-West Scotland. Liaising with BTP on their plans to survey passengers at various locations in Scotland. Written to all MSPs and Scottish MPs regarding the Spring 2010 NPS. Meetings taking place with Transport Scotland and Network Rail regarding CP5, proposed East Coast timetable, RUS (2) Scotland and rolling stock replacement programme. Taking forward concerns of passengers on various routes in Scotland regarding capacity at peak times, including examining with Scot Rail the best use of rolling stock.

Merseyrail

Julie, Ashwin and Anthony met with Bart Schmeink (MD of Merseyrail) to discuss benchmarking satisfaction ratings outside of the rail industry.

Open Access and other Operators

Hull Trains

Guy Dangerfield, who has recently taken over responsibility for Passenger Focus's work with Hull Trains, is meeting General Manager James Adeshiyan on 2 July to discuss the results of their first ever NPS survey (Hull Trains was included in the Spring 2010 NPS on the basis of a free trial). Discussions will include whether Hull Trains will become a regular member of

the NPS 'family', passenger information during disruption, the May 2011 East Coast Main Line timetable and the company's future aspirations. The board will be aware that FirstGroup is reported to have put its shareholding (around 80%) up for sale.

Grand Central

Grand Central has now commenced services between Bradford and London to add to the services between Sunderland and London. My objective for working with Grand Central is to ensure they target, drive and deliver improvements for passengers highlighted by the NPS. Overall satisfaction is the same as in Autumn at 94%. Lowest ratings are for satisfaction with stations which are run by other operators. We are meeting at the end of June to discuss how to utilise Reportal which will allow better use of NPS data and targeting where improvements need to be made.

Wrexham and Shropshire

Wrexham & Shropshire again posted some impressive National Passenger Survey results, underlined by a survey record for overall satisfaction of 99%. It is interesting to note that the company also scores highly in areas where the industry traditionally struggles – for example, satisfaction with train toilets is 93% compared to a National figure of 38%, while dealing with delay is 79% compared with an all-TOC average of 35%. We will be talking to Wrexham & Shropshire to determine the extent to which these successes can be replicated elsewhere.

London Overground

London Overground had an interesting set of National Passenger Survey results for the Spring 2010 wave that we are currently working with them to more fully understand. Overall satisfaction was the lowest for all TOCs at 72%, although this was not significantly down on a year earlier and was impacted by a three-month engineering block on part of the network. In contrast, the positive impact of investment was clearly illustrated by its satisfaction scores for train factors where the introduction of a new train fleet saw statistically significant improvements for 11 factors by up to 20%.