

Board Meeting Paper	
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Date of Meeting	14 July 2010
Agenda Item	8
Report Title	Bus Passenger Director's review of passenger and industry facing work
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1. Summary

This paper sets out how Passenger Focus will get a better deal for bus, coach and tram passengers through the recent activities and outputs of the passenger link team. In addition I will comment where necessary on work led or supported by colleagues from other teams such as development, policy and research.

2. Passenger Link influence and engagement work

Making a difference

Our aim is to get a better deal for bus, coach and tram passengers. We achieve this by understanding passengers' views through our comparable, benchmarked passenger research and the ability to influence others through effective working relationships with operators, transport authorities and a range of local and regional stakeholders.

Passenger Focus will, at the time of the July 2010 Board meeting, be publishing the first set of results from our Bus Passenger Survey which covers the views of almost 19,000 bus passengers across 14 areas of England. This is the single largest piece of published bus passenger satisfaction research in the country.

Where we have presented results of our passenger satisfaction research we are now involved in joint work with operators and authorities on those areas particular concern raised by passenger or where further specific passenger research is required to provide more detailed evidence. This is perhaps best evidenced with our work in the West Midlands. We are planning a joint research study with Wolverhampton Council, in consultation with Centro, into what anti-social behaviour means to bus passengers and how this impacts on differing age groups and passenger types.

While the results of this work will be beneficial in the Wolverhampton area I am confident that there are wider benefits of this work across other similar city and urban areas.

Across our passenger link work we have identified some immediate improvements for passengers. This has ranged from the improved display of timetables and relevant passenger information at bus stops and stations through to operators across Bristol more actively raising to passengers the profile of a multi-operator ticket in the city.

These journey improvements for passengers have been specifically identified by the passenger

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

link team as part of their own journeys or through discussions with other stakeholder and passenger groups.

Industry engagement

The team continues to meet with a range of operator, transport authority and other stakeholder groups such as Traffic Commissioners, Bus Users UK and TravelWatch. The priority for the team has been to ensure that the results of the Bus Passenger Survey research work are presented and understood by operators and authorities in those remaining areas prior to publication in mid-July 2010. The main focus of this work has concentrated across the north of England with presentations to the major bus operators and authorities in Greater Manchester, Cumbria, Merseyside and within South and West Yorkshire.

The ability to bring comparable, benchmarked independent research to operators and authorities is clearly becoming very powerful. In some instances our work brings new evidence even to parts of the industry where passenger satisfaction research has been undertaken for some time. This is evidenced in West Yorkshire where passengers identified poor levels of satisfaction with the amount of litter at bus stops. This area of performance is not captured by the Passenger Transport Executive's (PTE) own research work and they are now looking at our results in greater detail to provide the evidence to start discussions with street cleaning contractors and agencies to improve cleaning regimes.

Presentations to the PTEs in Manchester and South and West Yorkshire have been very well received. In addition we met with the new Chair and Deputy Chair of the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority (GMITA) who welcomed the results of our comprehensive work and actively supported our new work to their colleagues in the PTE. It is important that we back up our initial research presentations to the transport officers with similar discussions with elected members to gain passenger improvements through our policy and operational objectives.

3. National stakeholder influence and engagement work

Industry conferences

To help establish our credibility and influence through our new role within the industry we have made presentations on our aims, outputs and objectives at a variety of industry led conferences. These are valuable opportunities to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders at one time. The conferences are:

- Association of local bus managers (ALBUM) annual conference in Norwich
- Association of transport co-ordinating officers (ATCO) summer conference in Bradford
- Bus rapid transit world conference in London
- Passenger transport consortium (a special interest group of the Local Government Association involving the shire and unitary authorities)

Further speaking opportunities are booked for the autumn and winter.

National stakeholder and passenger work

One of our key objectives is to encourage the bus industry to adopt a common methodology for undertaking and publishing bus passenger satisfaction research. We are making significant progress in three areas of our activity:

- We are continuing our joint review with the Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG). The purpose of the review is to recommend a single process and methodology for undertaking passenger satisfaction research across the six PTE areas and Passenger Focus. This may lead to the sharing of resources to produce a more

comprehensive and published piece of research work. Initial review findings have been shared with Passenger Focus and PTEG and a final report is due shortly.

- One of the major national bus operators wishes to progress plans with Passenger Focus to share resources and methodology to undertake and publish annual passenger satisfaction research across the group's operations. We will progress this work and continue to share developments and exploit opportunities with other operating groups.
- We are pursuing the potential for all transport authorities to include a regular measure of bus passenger satisfaction as part of their various monitoring processes. Local transport authorities are variously invited or required to report on a range of indicators of bus performance. There may be an opportunity to move towards gathering and publishing a consistent set of national bus passenger satisfaction data through this regime. We are progressing this through the Passenger Transport Consortium which is a special interest group of the Local Government Association.

Coach and tram

In terms of coach operations we have recently met with the senior management team at National Express. These discussions will now help us plan where we feel we can usefully work for coach passengers. With a very different set of priorities and expectations to those of bus passengers it is important to understand where we can usefully represent coach passengers.

The passenger link team are now establishing contact with tram operators and promoters as part of their ongoing stakeholder liaison work in Newcastle, Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham and Blackpool. As with our work on behalf of coach passengers, these discussions will help us plan where we feel we can usefully establish a programme of work for tram passengers.

4. Background information

Industry complaints handling review

The Passenger Focus led work group has agreed to proceed over the summer and autumn with review work in two pilot areas of England. The pilot reviews will centre on South Yorkshire and Oxfordshire. This will enable us to undertake work within a major conurbation and a more rural area. The reviews will cover a number and variety of operators and transport authorities within each of the two areas. This will help us gain as much understanding as we can of the variations in approach by different operators and transport authorities.

The project work is currently led by our development and policy teams but will also be supported by the passenger link team when the pilot work commences later this summer.