Passenger perceptions of **personal security** on the railways

March 2009

Passengerfocus
putting rail passengers first

Contents

Passenger**focus**
putting rail passengers first

Chairman's introduction

Colin Foxall CBE

In July 2007 Passenger Focus asked passengers what they wanted to see improved on the railway. The research highlighted issues such as value for money, punctuality and getting a seat but it also revealed the continuing importance of personal security. Out of 30 separate station, and train-based categories, security on trains and on stations received the tenth and eleventh highest priorities respectively[1].

Although the general trend in recent years has been one of steady improvement in passengers' satisfaction with security, the latest (Autumn 2008) results from the National Passenger Survey reveal that there is still considerable room for improvement. Passengers have continued to express their concern at the anti-social behaviour of others and at the lack of visible staff across the rail network; particularly so when travelling after dark.

The current economic recession creates further challenges for the industry. Newspaper headlines continue to highlight actual and potential reductions in train company staffing, and there have been attempts to reduce booking office opening hours.

Passenger Focus has therefore explored the aspects of security in which the industry needs to focus on in order to ensure that the trend of improvement does not falter. If this is not done, passengers' perceptions of their security may decline and some passengers may choose not to travel by rail as a result. Passenger Focus is keen that the industry should revisit the issue of personal security and build further on the substantial gains that have already been made, rather than allowing the impetus to be lost.

Colin Foxall CBE
Chairman
Passenger Focus

[1] Passenger priorities for improvements in rail services, Passenger Focus (July 2007)

What passengers tell us

Over the past four years the general trend has been one of improvement in passengers' satisfaction with their personal security. The most recent wave of the National Passenger Survey (NPS Autumn 2008) demonstrates that whilst this trend continues, satisfaction with security[2] is still well below overall satisfaction levels.

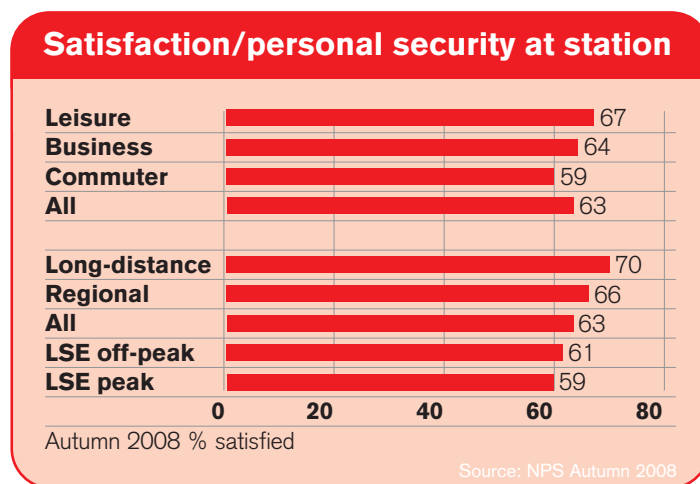## National Passenger Survey

– **Overall satisfaction with journey**
– **Train – your personal security whilst on board**
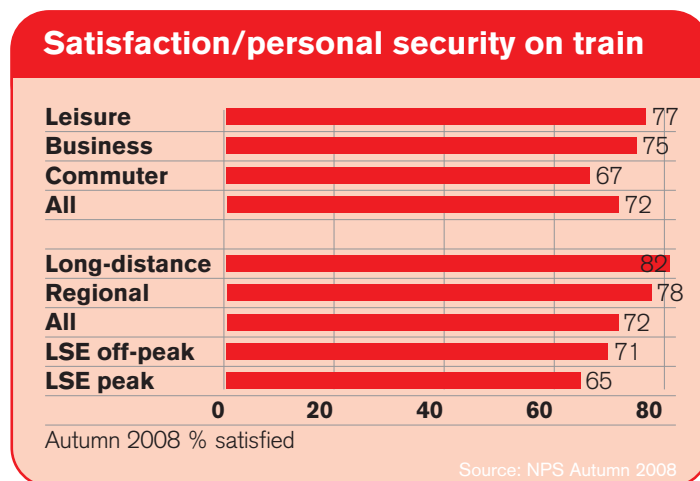– **Station – your personal security whilst using**
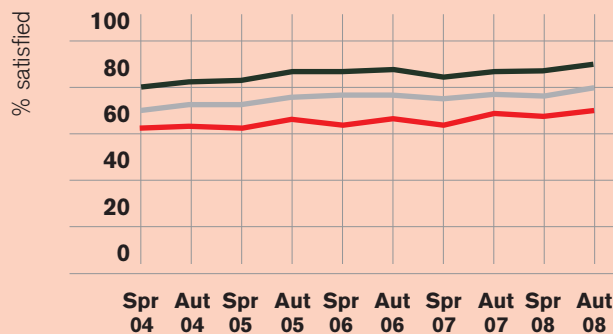
[2] National Passenger Survey results do not typically include late-evening journeys. Specific research looking at journeys after 20.00 is covered in section 5

When asked about security on stations only 63% of passengers said that they were satisfied, placing it a lowly ninth out of twelve station-related attributes.

Those who travel most frequently, i.e. commuters, are the least satisfied with security on the train (67%) and at the station (59%), particularly those travelling in London and the South East.

Satisfaction/personal security at stations

	% satisfied
Request to staff	84
Information times/platforms	79
Connections public transport	73
Ticket buying facilities	71
Cleanliness	70
Attitude/helpfulness of staff	70
Overall environment	65
Upkeep of buildings/platforms	65
Personal security	63
Availability of staff	58
Facilities and services	50
Car parking	44

Autumn 2008 % satisfied
Source: NPS Autumn 2008

Satisfaction/personal security at station

	% satisfied
Leisure	67
Business	64
Commuter	59
All	63
Long-distance	70
Regional	66
All	63
LSE off-peak	61
LSE peak	59

Autumn 2008 % satisfied
Source: NPS Autumn 2008

Similarly, in the same survey, 72% of passengers expressed satisfaction with on-train security, placing it eighth out of 19 train-related attributes. This indicates that passengers' concern regarding their security at the station is greater, despite the fact that most of them spend more time on the train than at the station.

Satisfaction/personal security on train

	% satisfied
Leisure	77
Business	75
Commuter	67
All	72
Long-distance	82
Regional	78
All	72
LSE off-peak	71
LSE peak	65

Autumn 2008 % satisfied
Source: NPS Autumn 2008

Satisfaction/personal security on train

	% satisfied
Scheduled journey time (speed)	84
Punctuality/reliability	81
Ease of getting on/off	78
Frequency of trains	76
Upkeep and repair	73
Cleanliness of the train	73
Connections other train services	73
Personal security	72
Cleanliness of the inside	72
Cleanliness of the outside	70
Comfort of the seating area	69
Provision of imformation	67
Sufficient room to sit/stand	64
Helpfulness and attitude of staff	60
Space for luggage	50
Value for money	46
Availability of staff	40
How we deal with delays	37
Toilet facilities	36

Autumn 2008 % satisfied
Source: NPS Autumn 2008

Security is an important aspect of the service passengers receive. Their relatively low levels of satisfaction with it, both on trains and stations, suggest that the industry could do more to make passengers feel that their security is safeguarded. Although the railway does not operate in isolation, and tackling the issue of security is part of a wider societal challenge, there are a number of steps the industry could take to improve the passenger experience.

This paper therefore seeks to explore what passengers perceive the problem to be and where we believe the industry should concentrate its resources.

[3, 4] National Passenger Survey Autumn 2008, Passenger Focus (2009)

Cause for concern

With security clearly having an impact on the experience of passengers when travelling across the rail network, it is important to ascertain why they are concerned, what problems are being experienced, and by whom. Only through doing this is it possible to identify which areas the industry should be targeting, in order to have the most positive impact.

Of those passengers that actively voice concern about station security, most attribute this to having witnessed anti-social behaviour by other people at the station[5]:

Cause for concern with personal security

at the station

Lack of station staff		47
Lack of other passengers		22
Poor on-station lighting		19
Lack of information		13
Anti-social behaviour*		66
Saw vandalism/violence**		11
Fear of terrorism		7
Other		7

Autumn 2008 % concerned

*By other people on the station
**Witnessed this actually on the station

Source: NPS Autumn 2008

When comparing the reasons which passengers give for their concerns over security on trains and at stations, the similarities are overwhelming; anti-social behaviour and a lack of station staff are the main reasons for concern[6].

Cause for concern with personal security

on the train

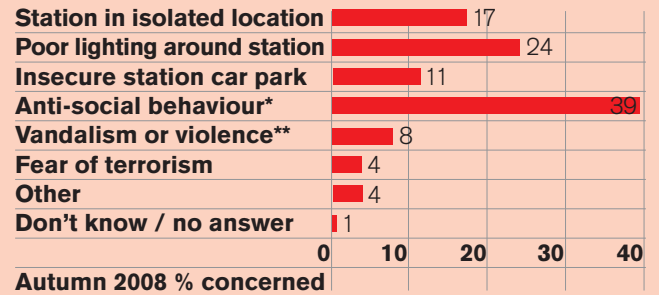|		
Lack of staff		47
Lack of other passengers		20
Poor on-train lighting		4
Lack of information		10
Anti-social behaviour*		76
Saw vandalism/violence**		11
Fear of terrorism		7
Other		6

Autumn 2008 % concerned
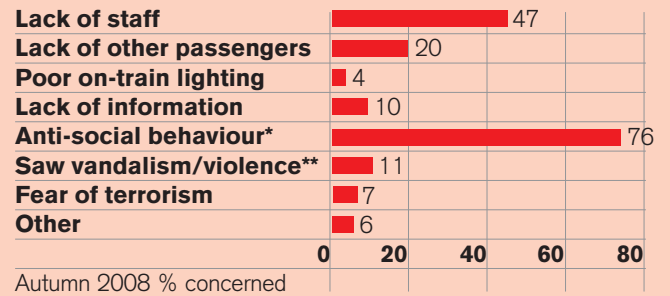
*By other people on the train
**Witnessed this actually on the train

Source: NPS Autumn 2008

Similarly, when asked about the area in the station vicinity, anti-social behaviour by others also came top of the list of sources of concern.

Cause for concern with personal security

within the station vicinity

Station in isolated location		17
Poor lighting around station		24
Insecure station car park		11
Anti-social behaviour*		39
Vandalism or violence**		8
Fear of terrorism		4
Other		4
Don't know / no answer		1

Autumn 2008 % concerned

*By people in the neighbourhood
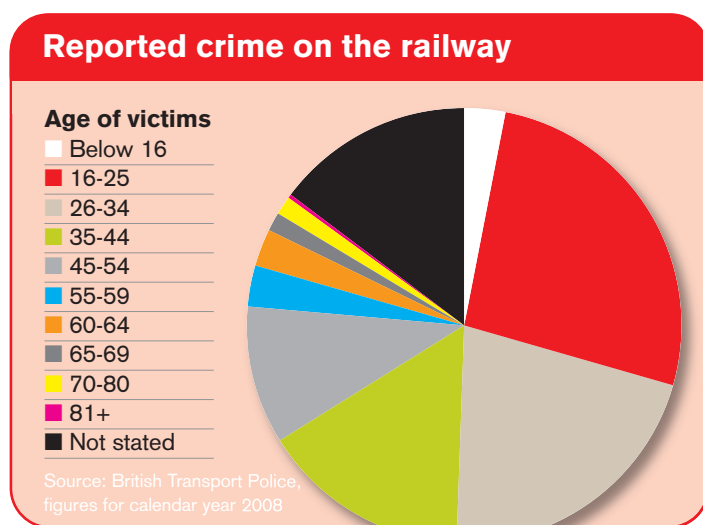**Witnessed this actually in the neighbourhood

Source: NPS Autumn 2008

[5] National Passenger Survey Autumn 2008, Passenger Focus (2009)
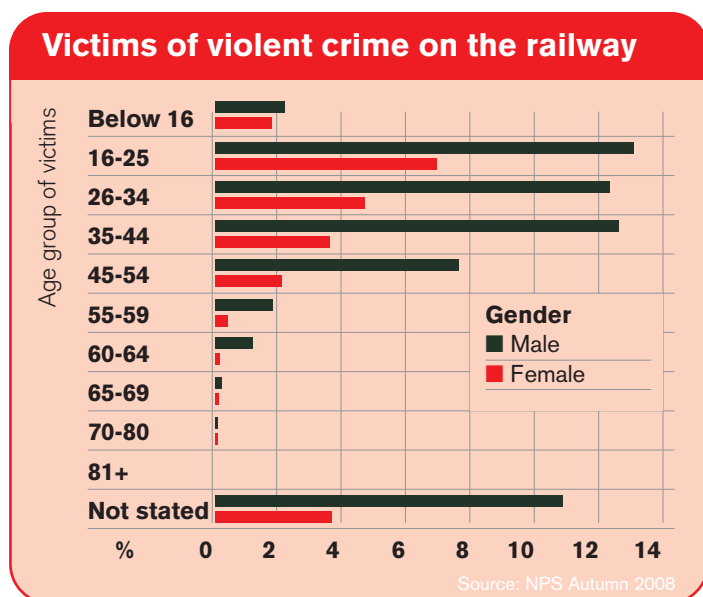[6] National Passenger Survey Autumn 2008, Passenger Focus (2009)

Research[7] by the Department for Transport asked rail passengers about their perceptions and experiences of crime and antisocial behaviour on public transport (NB not just on rail). Of more-frequent (i.e. at least monthly) rail users, 89% had witnessed some form of individual anti-social behaviour, such as noisy passengers (75%), drunks (61%), fare dodging (42%), begging (36%) or smoking (28%); 34% had seen people being insulted, 17% had seen them being harassed, and 4% being spat at. Attacks had been witnessed by 4% and theft without violence by 4%. In terms of passengers' actual experiences 29% had been the victim of some form of intimidating behaviour and 3% of theft, but only 1% had directly experienced violence or any form of sexual offence.

Analysis of the demographics of those reporting crimes on the railway shows that those who are most likely to be a victim are men and women under the age of 26[8].

Reported crime on the railway

Age of victims

- Below 16
- 16-25
- 26-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65-69
- 70-80
- 81+
- Not stated

Source: British Transport Police, figures for calendar year 2008

Delving deeper into the statistics reveals that young men from the same age bracket are most likely to be victims of violent crime and robbery.

Victims of violent crime on the railway

Age group of victims: Below 16, 16-25, 26-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-80, 81+, Not stated

Gender
- Male
- Female

Source: NPS Autumn 2008

School children and male students, are particularly worried about the possibility of being assaulted, whilst the fear of being robbed and concern about sexual assault is felt disproportionately highly by women[9]. Across all groups, the greatest fear amongst passengers is of being robbed, which is felt by 23%[10].

Given that only a small number of passengers have witnessed vandalism or been victims of assault, in contrast with the high figures for witnessing anti-social behaviour, it seems that it is the sense of isolation and the absence of effective authority which play the greatest part in fuelling passengers' concern for their personal security.

Personal security initiatives

Passenger Focus welcomes and encourages the active participation of the rail industry in initiatives such as the local Community Safety Partnerships, and has supported the successful introduction of anti-social behaviour orders on the railway. We have also welcomed the work being done by the Rail Safety and Standard Board's Rail Personal Security Group with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to increase judicial awareness of the seriousness of assaults on staff. In order to dispel the sense of isolation and abandonment that some passengers feel, we are keen that in their plans for station regeneration, Network Rail and station operators should encourage the use of station precincts for a range of activities. These need not be directly rail-related, and can be used to encourage a continuous flow of people through the station and surrounding area.

Passenger Focus believes that there should be a clearly located source of authority within the industry partnerships charged with the responsibility of championing such activity in each region, and that promoting specific security initiatives (including station staffing) should become obligatory upon operators through the franchising process. We warmly welcome the priority given to this facet of passenger service in the franchising regime introduced by Transport for London on the London Overground (formerly Silverlink Metro) routes.

As those under the age of 26 are most likely to be a victim of crime on the railway it would be prudent for the Industry to consider what it can do to reassure these groups in particular. Advice, aimed at those under 26, on crime prevention and what to do when confronted with examples of anti-social behaviour might be beneficial.

[7] Experiences and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport, Nat Cen Omnibus for the Department for Transport (September 2008)
[8] Crime statistics supplied by British Transport Police for calendar year – 01/01/08-31/12/08
[9], [10] Fear and experience of passengers from assault, Rail Safety Standards Board (2004)

The role of staff

In the case of both of on-train and of at-station security, passengers cited the lack of staff as the second most significant reason for their feelings of concern over personal security. Passengers consistently identify a staff presence as important to providing reassurance to those travelling on the railway[11]. The industry therefore needs to give serious consideration to how it can best deploy staff across the rail network to meet this need.

It is notable that some operators have already started to address this issue by contracting security personnel or guards to complement the role of more traditional transport staff. The aim has been to enhance the security of both staff and passengers, and has been particularly evident on local services within Greater London and other cities. For example, in November 2002 South West Trains deployed travel safe officers (TSOs) (now renamed rail community officers) on its network with the aim of improving levels of customer service and of generating an improved sense of personal security for passengers on trains and at stations. The TSOs were trained to communicate with the public, enforce byelaws and offer support/reassurance to passengers in difficult situations[12].

Passengers are aware of the increased numbers of staff deployed on the railway, for reassurance and enforcement, but have suggested that they are often unsure 'who was who' and what remit and powers each member of staff have. Some staff have also expressed dismay with what they perceive to be a paucity of powers to carry out the job effectively[13]. Therefore, whilst most passengers generally feel that the level of staffing on the railway needs to be increased, sheer numbers alone will not provide the solution.

Opinions about the effectiveness and attitude of rail staff are often mixed. Passengers believe that all staff need the appropriate training to help them deal with the difficult

circumstances they have to work in and to ensure that they respond to passengers appropriately[14]. They recognise the difficulties which staff face, but want them to be proactive in their approach to the public – making visual and verbal contact with passengers to demonstrate that they are 'there for them'[15]. If staff fail to do this, and cannot easily be recognised (because they need to be clearly identified by their uniform) then their role in providing reassurance will be undermined. A limiting factor could be the experiences of staff and perceptions that they have of risks to their own safety, which can impact on their willingness to engage with the public at problematic times and take action to deter or defuse situations[16].

11, 12 Experiences and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport, Nat Cen Omnibus for the Department for Transport (September 2008)
13 Evaluation of different staffing options for personal security over the whole journey using public transport, Stafford and Peterson (2005)

14 Fear and experience of passengers from assault, RSSB (2004)
15, 16, 17, 18 Evaluation of different staffing options for personal security over the whole journey using public transport, Stafford and Peterson (2005)

Train operators have a difficult balance to strike between providing deterrence to one (unwanted) section of the public and reassurance to another. Whilst passengers want to be able to rely on staff being present to provide reassurance, patrols or the presence of staff are more effective deterrents when their time and routes are not regular or predictable to troublemakers[17]. When deploying staff, train operators therefore need to decide on which function the emphasis should be placed. Train companies also need to give consideration to how they monitor the actual performance of staff e.g. are on board staff checking tickets and making themselves visible, as they are supposed to be doing, throughout the journey.

In terms of improving on-train security, 75% of passengers believed that staff walking through the train would be effective; followed by 61% who called for a no-drunks policy and 50% who believed CCTV would make a positive difference.

Research has shown that those who travel without a ticket are often associated by some passengers with misuse of public transport, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Deployment of staff on trains is therefore identified as having the dual role of increasing revenue and preventing misuse[18]. The revised South West Trains Passengers' Charter contains a commitment to retain guards on all trains throughout the life of the franchise. This is significant for three reasons:

1 the operator has accepted that there is a continuing role for on-board staff even if some of their historic functions (notably checking and signalling that it is safe to depart) can now be performed in other ways.

2 they are described as "guards" – a term which clearly denotes their protective role.

3 this policy is one which the operator sees benefit in actively communicating.

It is difficult to believe that there are not lessons in this for other operators.

Train operators and security

Passenger Focus is a strong supporter of staffing at stations. This is not only to provide tickets and information, and to protect revenue, but equally to offer a reassuring human presence which enhances passengers' perception of security and acts as a deterrent to crime and disorder. However to achieve this staff must be visible and approachable. A balance needs to be struck between undertaking frequent patrols, which provide reassurance to passengers, and being wholly predictable, which lessens their effectiveness as a deterrent. Staff must be trained in the skills necessary to demonstrate through their presence, appearance and demeanour that they are fully in command of the premises. They should be invested with the legal powers (e.g. under the police accreditation scheme) necessary to allow them to discharge this role effectively.

We are aware of and welcome the initiatives taken by various operators to provide a dedicated staffing resource directed specifically at enhancing security. These include rail community officers on South West Trains (SWT), police community support officers on Southern, rail enforcement officers on Southeastern, and commercial security guards on Merseyrail. We acknowledge that the deployment of such personnel at critical times and in critical locations can bring real benefits. But the need to provide reassurance and clear evidence that the railway is a managed environment arises everywhere and at all times. Providing surveillance and a sense of security to passengers should be part of the "day job" for all station staff, not left to specialist teams whose members are necessarily restricted in their number.

Security after dark

Travelling after dark also has an impact on passengers' journey experience. When asked to compare journeys that they had made before and after 20:00, passengers told Passenger Focus that they were far less satisfied with personal security and the availability of staff when travelling after this time.

Satisfaction with personal security dropped 12% points, from 61% to 49%, whilst satisfaction with the availability of staff fell from 48% to 37%[19]. Reassuringly, when asked directly whether they would feel safe travelling by train during the day, 98% of people said that they would. But this figure dropped dramatically to 64% when thinking about train travel after dark[20]. Passengers who felt unsafe after dark were more likely to do so while waiting at a station than when travelling on a train[21].

This provides a clear indication that those passengers who choose to travel after 20:00 feel that their personal safety is less secure. What is less clear is the extent to which these fears actually deter or prevent people from travelling.

When comparing the levels of concern over security between users and non-users, it is evident that non-users are more likely to be deterred from travelling after dark. Of existing rail passengers, who have a low level of concern about travelling during the day, a moderate 18% would not travel, or travel alone, after dark. In contrast, when asked the same question, more than a third (38%) of non-users reported that they would not travel at this time of day[22].

In identifying why many passengers are more concerned about security after dark, a clear picture is available from the research conducted by Passenger Focus and other industry bodies. Of greatest concern to passengers travelling after dark is the time spent waiting at the station for their train. When asked why this is, commuter and business passengers often cite their experiences at smaller stations, which they consider to be "lonely places" and "dangerous" to leave at night[23]. More generally the main concerns over station security after dark relate to the following factors[24].

- No staff or supervision at the station when returning home late
- Ticket office closed
- Gangs of youths hanging around the station or in the waiting rooms drinking
- Lack of people
- Lack of adequate lighting in stations and in car parks
- Bushes and foliage along walkways/exits

Passengers believe that staff are the most effective way of improving security at night, and that stations should be staffed whenever trains call at them[25]. They also believe that the presence of open retail facilities can lead to a higher perception of security, retailers being seen as a source of help, should it be required.

Both passengers and staff recognise that the emphasis on the role of station staff to provide customer care shifts to one of security/assurance after dark. Despite this, there is little evidence of these priorities being reflected in the job descriptions or in the induction training of those staff who work both during daytime hours and after dark[26].

There is a difference of opinion about how the desired security and assurance should be provided. Some passengers believe staff are neither visible enough nor in sufficient numbers when they are most needed; such passengers favour a uniformed presence that actively denies access to – or moves on – troublesome people. Staff, on the other hand, give this particular role low priority[27]. There is recognition amongst passengers that whilst they want staff to take preventative measures and be deployed in areas/on services where they feel most at risk, taking action against troublesome individuals or groups is difficult, particularly when staff are working alone[28].

Security satisfaction

The level of satisfaction with security on the railway is affected by whether a journey is made before or after dark, and by the presence or absence of staff though the strength of these relationships is variable. Passenger Focus believes that the deployment of staff at critical times and locations can bring real benefits to the perception of security amongst passengers. The need to provide reassurance and clear evidence that the railway is a managed environment arises everywhere and at all times. We are therefore supportive of passenger calls for stations to be staffed throughout the day.

[19] Evening Rail Travel, Passenger Focus (April 2008)
[20, 21] Experiences and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport, Nat Cen Omnibus for the Department for Transport (September 2008)
[22] Fear and experiences of passengers from assault, Rail Safety and Standards Board (2004)
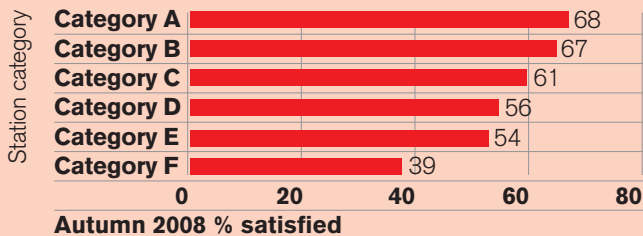[23, 24, 25] What passengers want from stations, Passenger Focus (2005)
[26, 27, 28] Research findings on evaluating the different staffing options for improving personal security on the whole journey – overview of evidence, Stafford and Peterson for the Department for Transport (Jan 2005)

Types of station

Within the rail industry there are six categories of station, which broadly correspond to their level of use. Major termini, for example, are found in band A, while unstaffed halts are found in band F. When passengers' views were analysed by reference to the band of station they started their journey in, a steady reduction in satisfaction with on-station security from the highest to lowest was revealed. Band A stations scored 68%, while those in band F only scored 39%[29].

Satisfaction with personal security
at stations

Station category	Autumn 2008 % satisfied
Category A	68
Category B	67
Category C	61
Category D	56
Category E	54
Category F	39

Source: NPS Autumn 2008

When asked about their experiences passengers often speak about smaller, unstaffed stations being particularly unpleasant and in some cases passengers have described how they will take significant detours to avoid these stations, which inadvertently contributes to the problem[30].

Minimum station standards are currently ill-defined and there is no consistent level of provision applied system-wide, so passengers do not know what they are likely to find at a particular category of station unless they make enquiries before they travel. The government has acknowledged that at lightly-used stations there are low cost measures that could be taken to reduce crime and the fear of crime. These include:

- Good lighting
- Clear signage
- A well-maintained environment
- Up–to-date information
- Clear sightlines

It has been suggested that standards at stations are unlikely to be driven up in the absence of an enforcement regime and that the absence of a single organisation co-ordinating the development of stations and the facilities at them has not helped[31]. The service quality incentive regime (SQUIRE) used in Scotland and the English Passenger Transport Executive areas, i.e. the major conurbations outside London, has indicated a need for effective monitoring of station standards[32].

[29] National Passenger Survey, Passenger Focus (Autumn 2008)
[30] Fear and experiences of passengers from assault, Rail and Safety Standards Board (2004)

[31, 32] Maintaining and improving Britain's railway stations, National Audit Office (2005)

At present, Network Rail and most train operating companies participate in the Secure Stations scheme, designed to improve security standards at rail stations. The government has asked a number of franchise bidders to achieve Secure Stations scheme accreditation. In doing so bidders are asked to present a scheme that covers 80% of passenger usage, and to have a priced option to achieve a higher level of coverage, if it provides value for money and is affordable. Passenger Focus supports this.

The industry's support for the scheme had previously been patchy, as the procedural costs of securing accreditation were widely regarded as disproportionate to any reputational benefit that might accrue from it. However, since overhauling the administration costs, the Department for Transport has lessened the expense train operators incur when applying for accreditation.

Unfortunately passenger awareness of the Secure Stations Scheme is low and, as a result, its effectiveness in changing passenger perceptions of crime at stations is limited[33]. One of the difficulties faced by the industry is that although the recorded levels of crime are highest at the busiest stations, passengers' concern for their security is greatest at relatively quiet stations[34].

[33, 34] Maintaining and improving Britain's railway stations, National Audit Office (2005)

Secure stations and
secure car park schemes

Passenger Focus would like to see franchise specifications made more prescriptive in respect of station standards and more use made of Service Quality Management Systems to drive up the quality of service offered. Station operators need to be incentivised through the terms of their franchises to deliver enhanced levels of security, as measured through the systematic tracking of users' perceptions.

We support both the secure stations and secure car parks schemes but believe their effectiveness (and entitlement to accreditation) should be intrinsically linked to the measured impact that they have on passengers' perceptions of security. We are therefore reassured that the criteria for accreditation include:
• The design of the station, which must conform to standards judged by the local British Transport Police Crime Reduction Officer to prevent and reduce crime and improve passenger's perception of station security
• The management of the station must also enable the train operator to take steps to prevent crimes, respond to incidents and communicate effectively with passengers
• Crime statistics for the station over the twelve months prior to the inspection must show that the station operator is managing crime
• A survey of users must show that, on the whole, passengers feel secure when using the station

It is pleasing that a question in the National Passenger Survey (NPS) that asks passengers to rate the station they are using in terms of personal security is used to gauge passengers' perceptions of security at stations, and that operators are encouraged to reflect NPS methodology in any passenger surveys that they conduct[35]. However, where value for money allows, Passenger Focus would encourage train operators to delve deeper into passengers' perceptions and experiences of personal security at 'problem' stations. We would also urge the industry to consider how it could raise passengers' awareness of the scheme, so that they know of the efforts being made to improve security.

Passenger Focus endorses the recommendation made by the Rail Safety Standards Board in 2004[36] that the Home Office's fear of crime matrix (in a suitably modified form) could be a useful tool to help rail companies develop strategies and priorities for action.

[35] http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/sss/securestationsscheme?page=6#a1032
[36] Fear and experiences of passenger from assault, Rail and Safety Standards Board (2004)

CCTV and remedial action

Given the importance attached to the presence of staff it would be easy to forget the impact that closed circuit television (CCTV) and other options, such as improved lighting, can have on improving perceptions of security amongst rail passengers. Whilst opinion is mixed about the effectiveness of CCTV and panic buttons in improving personal security most passengers believe that stations should have CCTV installed as standard, even if they are staffed[37].

The belief is that while CCTV may not deter crime, it can be used to identify the perpetrators and, if introduced, its presence should be clearly signposted so that people know that it is there. There is awareness amongst passengers of help points at medium sized stations, but they are often underused because passengers often seem to be unsure of their purpose or of what would happen if they used one.

Looking at passenger perceptions reveals that although a visible staff presence is believed to be the most effective means of improving personal security, there are other measures that the travelling public look to operators to introduce[38]:

- CCTV – to help create a sense of security
- Lighting, good design and visibility – to provide reassurance
- Real time information – to provide confidence in the system
- Publicity and posters about security measures – again to provide reassurance
- A quarter of passengers also think that clean and well-maintained premises help improve perceptions of security[39].

[37] What passengers want from stations, Passenger Focus (2005)
[38] Passenger perceptions of personal security, Independent Social Research for the Department for Transport (2008)
[39] Experiences and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport, NatCen Omnibus (2008)
[40] Evaluation of different staffing options for personal security over the whole journey using public transport, Stafford and Pettersson (2005)

Whilst CCTV is regarded as a significant factor in helping reduce passenger concerns over security, it is only seen as effective when accompanied by live monitoring. Without it CCTV is merely a source of evidence after the event; with it passengers describe it as "staff a step away"[40]. The lack of integration between the CCTV systems on the railway and those operated by local authorities is also a point of concern, as people suspected of criminal acts cannot be tracked when they leave the station.

Technology

Passenger Focus believes that the role of staff should be complemented – not replaced – by technology and design (such as clear sightlines and good lighting). Help points (designed both as a means of summoning assistance in emergencies and of obtaining information at other times) should be conspicuously and conveniently sited at stations and be maintained in good order. We support the system used in Scotland and parts of London in which the help point and CCTV system are linked. CCTV should be actively monitored as well as recorded, and be of the evidential quality necessary for use in the prosecution of offenders. Passenger Focus would also like to see CCTV systems at stations linked with those outside so that offenders can be tracked once they leave the station. Train running information in ticket halls can reduce the need for passengers to wait longer than is necessary on unfrequented platforms at less busy times.

On trains, Passenger Focus welcomes the introduction of CCTV, and other innovations such as the more accessible placing and more prominent labelling of security alarms; but again these should be seen as adjuncts to proper staffing cover, not as substitutes for it.

Conclusions

The issue of passengers' personal security on the railway has been researched extensively by a range of organisations and a number of consistent conclusions have emerged. Despite this, and a general increase in satisfaction with personal security, passengers continue to remain concerned whilst travelling on the railway. With this in mind, and the fact that some groups perceive themselves to be more at risk than others, it is time for the rail industry to regroup and consider what additional action it can take to reassure passengers that it takes their personal security seriously.

The issues that the industry needs to address in attempting to do this include:

• Although passengers generally spend more time on trains, than waiting at stations, it is the latter which attracts the lower satisfaction scores for from passengers.

• Those who travel most often, and passengers in London and the Southeast are the least satisfied with personal security, as are those who use smaller stations.

• A majority of passengers attribute their concern over personal security to witnessing anti-social behaviour by others and a lack of staff, be that on trains or at stations. Such concerns are heightened after 20:00.

• Whilst violent crime is not the most prevalent problem on the railway, it is most commonly reported by young men under the age of 26, who unsurprisingly are most concerned about being assaulted.

• The biggest fear amongst passengers overall is of being robbed.

• Passengers consistently identify a staff presence as being important to provide reassurance to those travelling on the railway. Staff must be trained to cope with the difficult circumstances in which they are likely to find themselves working and be proactive when dealing with everyday passengers and troublemakers alike.

• CCTV is primarily seen as a source of evidence after the event, but passengers believe it should be standard equipment at all stations, whether they are staffed or not.

• Looking beyond staff and CCTV, there is much that can be done to improve passenger perceptions of security on the railway through good design and clever use of the areas within and around stations.

Recommendations

Passenger Focus believes that the following would help increase passenger confidence in their personal security whilst travelling on the rail network.

The role of staff

• Regardless of their job title, all customer-facing staff must be trained in the skills necessary to demonstrate through their presence that the railway is a managed environment at all times. Providing reassurance to passengers would then become 'part of the day job' for train and station staff alike. Passengers are not unrealistic about the world we live in and accept that there are some situations where staff cannot be expected to risk their own safety, particularly when they are working alone. However a proactive approach, not just to dealing with anti-social behaviour but to everyday passenger needs, would have a beneficial impact on passengers' perceptions.

• In the past twelve months (i.e. 2008-09) several train operators have published proposals to scale down ticket office opening hours at selected stations. This has, in part, been attributed to low frequencies of sales and to other methods of ticket retailing becoming increasingly widespread. In such circumstances, Passenger Focus would argue that staff should be re-deployed onto stations so that they can provide help and assistance to passengers, and offer a reassuring presence. This is particularly relevant to smaller stations where there are fewer passengers around and where satisfaction with security is generally lower.

Technology, design and the station environment

• At those stations which cannot be staffed throughout the day, when services are running, Passenger Focus would urge operators and Network Rail to look at the ways design can be used to create a more reassuring environment. It is common sense that the provision of good lighting and clear sight lines will help stations seem less threatening places for passengers to wait.

• Also important is the general upkeep of the station. Through high quality service contracts, which should ideally be written into the terms of future franchises, operators can be incentivised to set higher standards of maintenance and cleanliness at stations. The manner in which TfL has set more stringent targets for London Overground stations and its efforts to refurbish run-down stations could serve as a valuable test case for assessing the impact of improving the station environment on passengers' perceptions of security.

• CCTV on its own is far from being the ideal solution. Where it exists on stations Passenger Focus recommends that operators look at the possibility of linking it to local CCTV networks so that perpetrators of crime can be tracked once they have left railway property. Operators should also consider the possibility of live monitoring, so that CCTV can be used in conjunction with public address to intervene in real time, rather than simply as a means of gathering evidence for later use.

• Passenger awareness of the Secure Stations scheme is relatively low, which undoubtedly lessens the impact that it has on improving passenger perceptions of personal security on the rail network. The industry therefore needs to make every effort to publicise the action taken at stations in order to achieve accreditation and any additional initiatives that are being undertaken. At stations with high levels of crime, and/or low levels of passenger satisfaction with security, we would encourage the industry to talk both to passengers and non-users to establish which security issues make them concerned about using their local station/train service. This allows any remedial action to be tailored to the needs of those that actually use (or would) use the station.

• The sense of isolation which passengers feel at less busy stations has a significant impact on their perceptions of security. Where possible, particularly in the case of redevelopments, Passenger Focus would encourage the use of station premises for a range of other activities. Retail outlets and other uses or redundant railway buildings/property could be used to encourage a flow of people through the area.

Groups who fear crime the most

• The evidence that young men under the age of 26 are most at risk of violent crime and robbery is clear. Given this, it would seem prudent for the industry to consider what it can do to advise passengers who fall within this category on how to minimise the risk of becoming a victim of crime. For example, there have been efforts to discourage passengers from using mobile phones as soon as they arrive at their destination station (and this is advertising that they are carrying these).