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National Passenger Survey: Rail satisfaction at record high

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The number of passengers satisfied with their rail journey is at a record high but fewer than half of people think ticket prices are worth the money, a Passenger Focus survey says.

The 85% satisfaction levels in autumn 2012 are a record since the survey began in 1999.

But only 47% were satisfied with their ticket's value for money, compared with 46% the year before.

The National Passenger Survey surveyed 31,626 travellers.

The research was conducted between 1 September and 12 November 2012, with "top-up" interviews carried out within the last three weeks. People were asked for their opinion on the journey they were taking on that day.

The satisfaction levels stood at 84% in autumn 2011.

Anthony Smith, chief executive officer for Passenger Focus, said that while "things are moving in the right direction" more needed to be done to improve rail services.

"There are some trains that are very crowded, there are some routes that are very crowded that are desperately crying out for more investment in terms of more trains and longer trains.

"Quite a bit of that is in the pipeline and it will come at some point in the future.

"This is an average picture, it doesn't reflect every single passenger's experience but I think it does show the industry is starting to broadly move in the right direction."

Fare pricing

With regard to the low number of passengers satisfied with their ticket's value for money, Mr Smith said: "We've had years now of above-inflation fare rises.

"We've now got a government promise to row these fare rises back so that they're pegged at inflation only. The sooner that promise becomes a reality the better."

The number of those satisfied with the amount of room for all passengers to sit or stand went up 1% to 69% compared with autumn 2011.

The report also says passenger satisfaction with punctuality and reliability has risen 2% to 83%, a level only achieved once before, in autumn 2009.

For the long distance operators the proportion of passengers who were very or fairly satisfied overall was 89% - this figure was 86% in autumn 2011.

For regional operators, 86% of passengers were very or fairly satisfied with their journey overall, a drop of 1% from last year when 87% were satisfied.

The lowest ratings for overall satisfaction were given to Northern Rail (80%), First Capital Connect (81%) and Southern (82%) while

Greater Anglia, First Great Western and London Midland all had 83% of passengers satisfied.

The highest ratings for overall satisfaction were achieved by Grand Central (96%), First Hull Trains (95%), and Heathrow Connect (94%) while Heathrow Express, c2c, and London Overground all had 93% of passengers satisfied.

Railway 'success'

Bruce Williamson, of campaign group Railfuture, said he was not surprised that rail satisfaction levels were high.

"Since privatisation, train companies have slowly got their act together. Punctuality, for example, seems to be improving.

"But the two main bug bears remain congestion and fare levels. We know there's huge dissatisfaction with fares because we have the highest fares in Europe."

Mr Williamson said fares needed to come down in "real terms" because "Having fare rises at the rate of inflation just maintains the status quo."

Michael Roberts, chief executive of the Association of Train Operating Companies, said the report was "further evidence of the success of today's railway".

"The report's strong results include significantly improved scores in satisfaction with services, stations and dealing with delays. These are a testament to the industry's hard work and major government investment in rail.

"We recognise there is still much to be done. Train companies are working with Network Rail on a long-term programme to continue improving services and to deliver better value for passengers and taxpayers alike."

[Your comments \(145\)](#)

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134. davidbowler

29TH JANUARY 2013 - 14:44

+1

How do you measure satisfaction? If the "pass level" is low enough then people are satisfied! Britain's railways are overpriced, the infrastructure is old-fashioned and the trains run to make company's a profit and not to provide a passenger service. Travel by train in Switzerland: its a state railway and you'll be very satisfied. One national tariff structure for all buses, trains and ships too.

106. BadlyPackedKebab

29TH JANUARY 2013 - 13:26

+6

I had to get the train into London during rush hour a couple of months ago - 'satisfied' is the last word I would use for the experience.....and here's hoping I never have to do it again!

94. Little Welsh Dragon

29TH JANUARY 2013 - 13:07

+6

i'd love to know who they asked, last week out of 10 journeys only 2 ran on time. I have not had a seat on approx. 60% of my trains despite my ticket costing £315 and my journey takes 1 hour.

48. etiam si omnes ego non

29TH JANUARY 2013 - 12:16

+1

The trains are not that bad, but the fares are eye-watering compared to Europe. When tourists from Europe visit they are stunned how expensive the trains are.

41. Killer Boots Man

29TH JANUARY 2013 - 12:03

0

I don't believe these findings for a single second and I very rarely travel by train. I can only imagine how daily commuters feel about it.

I've travelled by train a few times in Spain and on Barcelona's metro system. It was faster, cleaner, more comfortable, regular, punctual and

most importantly of all, much cheaper than any train I've seen here.

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