

First Capital Connect voted worst train operator

First Capital Connect has been voted the worst train operator by commuters, according to a survey conducted by Which?



Passengers complained to Which? that some trains were delayed, overcrowded and dirty. Photo: MARTIN POPE

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Only four out of ten commuters were happy with the service from the Bedford-to-Brighton train operator which is part of the First Group, according to Which?

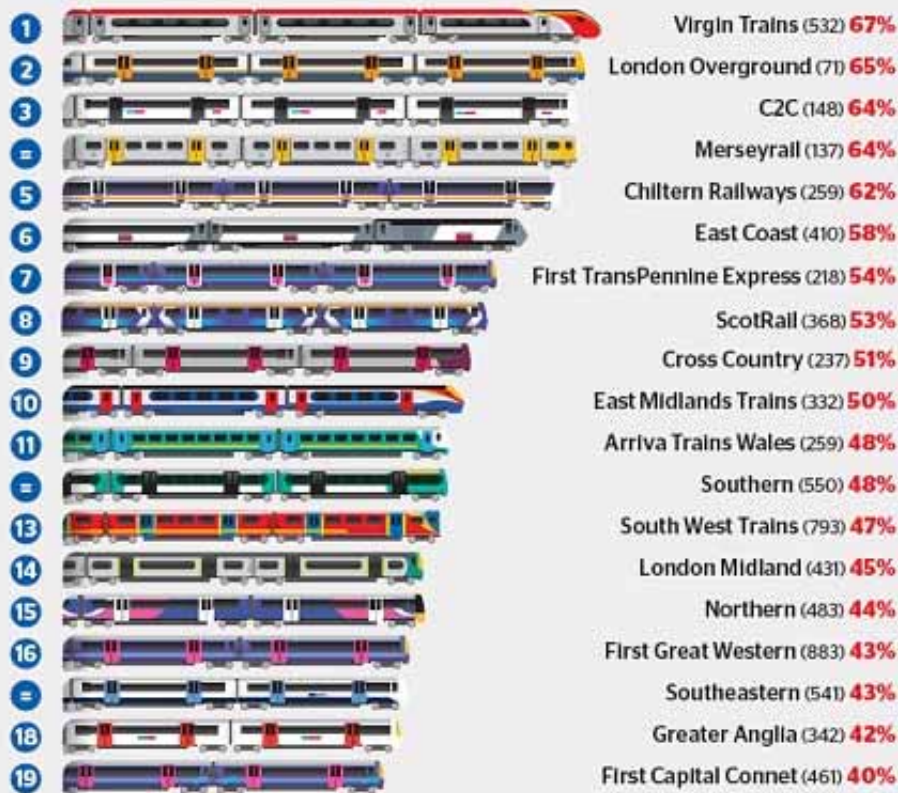
The survey of all the major train operating companies showed that Virgin Trains topped the satisfaction chart for the second year running, after 67pc of customers gave the train operator a thumbs-up.

More than half of the train operators scored 50pc or lower, while only 22pc felt the service was improving, despite the above-inflation fare hikes seen at the turn of the year.

Season tickets have increased on average by 4.2pc, the survey said, with price increases one of the reasons why 40pc of train users are likely to reduce the number of journeys they make.

However, a third of commuters also said they have no alternative way of getting to work.

Train satisfaction in GB



Sample size in brackets. Overall sample: 7,519. Overall customer score for GB train companies is 52%. Not enough data for scores for First Hull Trains and Grand Central. Customer scores relate to commuter and leisure journeys, and are based on overall satisfaction and likelihood of recommending them to a friend.

The second annual train satisfaction survey of 7,500 regular train users is based on passengers' overall satisfaction with a company and whether they would be likely to recommend it.

Second place in the survey was London Overground with a score of 65pc, the London-to-Southend c2c line on 64pc, and MerseyRail with 64pc.

The worst train operating companies for customer satisfaction were also commuter services, with Greater Anglia scoring 42pc, followed by Southeastern and First Great Western - also owned by First Group - on 43pc each.

Which? executive director, Richard Lloyd, said: "With 1.5 billion train journeys made every year and eight of the 17 UK rail franchises up for grabs in the next two years, customer service should be top of the agenda for every train operating company.

"It is good to see some are performing well on service, but customers clearly feel others need to do better.

"Passengers tell us they are fed up with trains that are delayed, overcrowded and dirty.

"This is especially disappointing as many commuters can't shop around or change the company they travel with. Train companies need to play fair with their customers, especially when they are being asked to pay more for their journeys."

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