

# Delays and high prices leave rail passengers dissatisfied

Customer satisfaction hits the buffers as railway users complain about delayed journeys and poor-value tickets

---

Staff and agencies

The Guardian, Wednesday 19 June 2013

---



First Capital Connect was one of the lowest-scoring operators for overall satisfaction in the Passenger Focus survey. Photograph: Linda Ny Lind for the Guardian

Passenger satisfaction on the railways is dipping, with value for money and how companies deal with delays being the biggest cause for complaint, according to a survey of thousands of train customers.

Just one train company, Great Anglia, improved its overall satisfaction levels between spring 2012 and spring 2013, the poll by rail customer watchdog Passenger Focus found.

Nationally, the percentage of passengers satisfied with their journey overall was 82% compared with 83% in a similar survey in spring 2012, while the figure in an autumn 2012 survey was 85%.

The lowest-scoring operators for overall satisfaction in the latest survey were Northern

and First Capital Connect which both had figures of 76%.

Overall, the proportion of passengers satisfied with value for money for the price of their ticket was 42% – the same as in spring 2012.

Only 38% of passengers on London and south-east England services felt their ticket represented good or satisfactory value for money. Passengers on services run by the Southeastern train company were least happy with what they were paying for tickets, with 49% saying they represented poor or unsatisfactory value for money.

When it came to how train operators dealt with delays, in London and the south-east only 36% of customers were satisfied, while among passengers of regional companies the figure was just 35%.

Passenger Focus's chief executive, Anthony Smith, said: "Passengers are now the main overall funder of Great Britain's railway, so it is vital that their key needs are met.

"Given that performance is the key factor that underpins most passengers' general view of the railway, train companies and ~~Network Rail~~ must keep striving to get more trains on time."

David Mapp, commercial director at the Association of Train Operating Companies, said: "Train companies know that to be successful they must meet the needs of passengers and deliver high levels of satisfaction and value for money.

"While these results show that there is room for improvement, passengers are voting with their feet and taking more journeys than at any time since the 1920s on newer trains, with more services arriving punctually."