

## Performance and punctuality

### ATOC's view

- ATOC, train operators and Network Rail are all committed to improving punctuality performance because they recognise that a reliable train service is a prime requirement for passengers. They demand that the railway delivers on its timetable commitments and it must therefore continue improve punctuality by investing in the new and better equipment and processes which will achieve that.
- The train operators have been major players in achieving the improved punctuality that has been achieved. Latest figures available by period show that the delay minutes attributed to the train operators (TOC Self Period 05 MAA 2009/10) were 275,000, 2.6% less than the previous year and 16% better over two years.

### Background and key issues

- Recent research by Passenger Focus<sup>1</sup> has shown that 82% of rail passengers consider that the punctuality and reliability of their train service are either "very important" or "important" to them. It was the highest ranked element of the rail travel experience for passengers. In separate research<sup>2</sup> passengers said that achieving 19 out of 20 trains arriving on time was their third highest priority for improvement.
- Increasing numbers of trains and passengers have an effect on punctuality performance, and further significant improvements will need to be linked to increased infrastructure capacity. New lines which are purpose built with adequate capacity would produce very high levels of performance. Eurostar's performance for the first half of 2008, for example, has already reached 92.6%.
- Train punctuality is recorded much more frequently and thoroughly than has ever been the case and data on punctuality performance is published quarterly by the Office of Rail Regulation in its National Rail Trends.
- The present measure of punctuality is the Public Performance Measure (PPM), which was introduced by the Strategic Rail Authority in June 2000. The PPM combines figures for punctuality and reliability into a single performance measure, covers all scheduled services and measures the performance of individual trains against the planned timetable.
- Until 1985/6 the measure of punctuality was five minutes of delay for all trains; since then it has been ten minutes for longer distance services and five minutes for the rest.
- The lowest point for punctuality in recent years followed the Hatfield train crash in October 2000, which led to Railtrack imposing huge numbers of speed restrictions and, as a consequence, punctuality performance plummeted. In the two quarters following Hatfield only 63.1% and 76.3% of trains arrived at their destinations on time.
- Since then train operators and Railtrack and then Network Rail have made great efforts to improve punctuality performance and in the 12 months to August 2009 a total of 91.1% of trains arrived at their destination on time - an improvement of 0.8 PPM points over the previous 12 months and 2.6 PPM points over two years.

- ATOC and its members are committed to meeting the targets set by Government in the 2007 White Paper of reaching a PPM of 92.6% by 2014 and reducing the number of delays of more than 30 minutes by 25%.
- The industry employs a range of measures to improve punctuality performance including:
  - The National Task Force (the most senior cross-industry representative group) ensures that a challenging industry-wide Passenger Performance Measure trajectory is set each year. The activities contributing to this are collated and reported through the Joint Rail Performance Plan (JRPP) to which the train operators, ATOC, Network Rail, the rolling stock leasing companies, Office of Rail Regulation and the Department for Transport are signatories, with different parties leading different activities. These activities are agreed each year and for 2009 / 2010 include:
    - Building timetables that deliver performance and performance resilience
    - Joint NR and TOC performance management process good practice review
    - Developing long term performance plans and agreeing one year joint trajectories
    - Improving Infrastructure and Rolling Stock reliability
    - Mitigating the impact of weather
    - Each TOC and Network Rail agrees, *locally*, its Joint Performance Improvement Plans (JPIPs). These plans identify relevant local projects and activities to improve punctuality. They may include better hardware (eg. modifications, depot facilities, track component upgrades); better processes (eg. to minimise the impact of incidents); and/or people changes (eg. more planners, new training packages, integrated controls, support for frontline staff).
    - ATOC leads the activity to improve rolling stock reliability.

#### **Relevant ATOC activity**

- ATOC is working with all its industry partners to deliver improved punctuality performance through the various initiatives overseen by the National Task Force.
- ATOC leads the National Fleet Reliability Improvement Programme (NFRIP) to improve the overall reliability of the rolling stock fleet. NFRIP is a group of rolling stock engineers from the train operators, leasing companies, Network Rail, Department for Transport and the Railway Industry Association.

#### **Key documents/links**

National Rail Trends – Office of Rail Regulation  
<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.1863>

<sup>1</sup> *A passenger focused franchise? What passengers want from South Central – Passenger Focus April 2008*

<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=1693>

<sup>2</sup> *Passengers' priorities for improvements in rail services – Passenger Focus July 2007*

<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/default.asp?keywords=passengers+priorities+&topic=&year=&type=&sdocsearch.x=55&sdocsearch.y=22>

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