



# Customer service: delivering our promise

Our vision is to transform travel by delivering excellent customer satisfaction thus encouraging modal shift. Delivering our promise to customers is one of our core values: we must therefore ensure that our services are safe, punctual and reliable.

## Overview

- Our Group-wide bus collision rate and passenger injury rate have both reduced by 15%.
- Over 80% of our stations in England and Wales now have Secure Station Status.
- The performance of our trains is generally improving. All but one operator are achieving combined punctuality and reliability performance of above 90%.
- An increasing number of our buses have low-floor access.
- Average punctuality across our UK Bus division has improved to 90.3% but is still below target. We continue to work actively with local authorities to find ways to improve punctuality despite growing congestion in many of our cities.
- We continue to meet most of our service performance targets in North America.
- As part of station refurbishment we are improving the accessibility of our stations.

## Customer safety and security

Reducing the risk of injury to our customers and the general public is a key priority for us. The Executive Safety Committee tracks and reviews performance trends on an ongoing basis.

There were five bus passenger fatalities this year: three deaths occurred in the UK and two in North America. In addition, a small number of fatalities involving non-bus passengers occurred in circumstances beyond our control. All these incidents are thoroughly investigated and in most cases the investigations are continuing. The findings are carefully analysed to identify necessary follow-up actions to reduce risk. We deeply regret these instances and continue to work to prevent others. Sustained driver training is vital. Across our bus operations in the UK and North America we develop our driver training programmes around the Smith System Defensive Driving programme which focuses on safe driving techniques and anticipatory driving.

We are also currently trialling driver feedback systems. Through technology and training we want to ensure our drivers are able to drive to the highest safety standards.

Train simulators are used to improve driver standards in all our train companies. Our Signals Passed at Danger (SPAD) rate has reduced this year. However, no SPAD is acceptable to us and we will continue to work to achieve zero SPADs.

## Security

Public transport is a secure travelling environment. However, we must not be complacent and we continue to work to make our services even more secure. We work closely in partnership with local police forces and the British Transport Police. All customer-facing staff are trained in how to identify and manage potential security risks. Drivers are in radio communication with their depots and we also use cab security on some vehicles. In the UK we install CCTV on all new buses. CCTV deters crime and reassures our customers and staff.

In our UK Rail division we are working towards Secure Station Status across our networks in First TransPennine Express, First Great Western and First Capital Connect. First ScotRail is not part of the initiative because it has one of the most extensive CCTV systems in the UK: over the last 12 months this has helped reduce the crime rate across the network by 33% and the rate of assaults on staff by 54%.

In our school bus business our driver checking processes meet or exceed the highest standards required in the UK and North America. We are currently trialling additional training with a number of school bus drivers on how to engage with children and vulnerable passengers. If successful this will be rolled out to all relevant drivers. Following a serious incident in Greyhound Canada we now conduct security screening for all passengers and luggage and have introduced luggage restrictions on the buses. We are studying the potential to extend these arrangements to other parts of North America.

## Group-wide safety performance data

### Passenger injuries (per million miles)



### Bus collisions (per million miles)



### SPADs (per million miles)



### UK Bus fleet with CCTV (percentage)



### Stations with Secure Station Status (percentage)

#### First Great Western



#### First Capital Connect



#### First TransPennine Express



## Case Study

### Improving security at First Capital Connect

First Capital Connect's 'Keeping You Safe With Us' campaign has improved security across some of London's busiest rail routes. The campaign included customer awareness campaigns, increased staff visibility plus investment in 24 Police Community Support Officers and five uniformed police officers. A new state-of-the-art CCTV station has been installed and is manned by a British Transport Police officer 24 hours per day. Crime has reduced by 15.8% across the route. These achievements were recognised at the National Rail Awards where First Capital Connect won the London Team of the Year prize.





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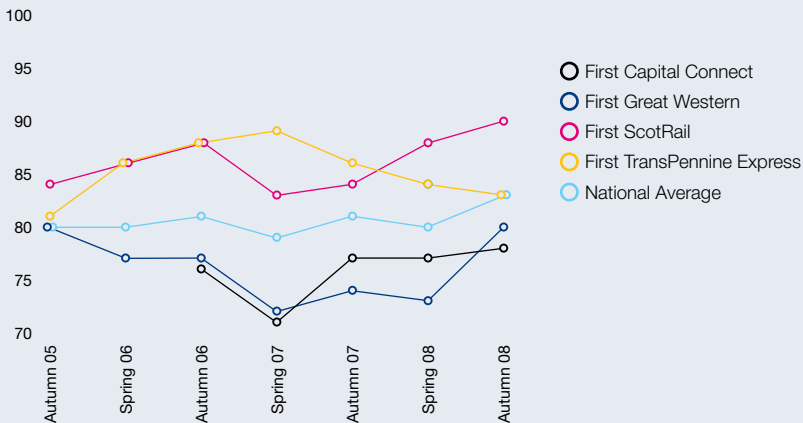
## Customer satisfaction

We monitor passenger satisfaction through a combination of national passenger surveys, local surveys and by actively monitoring customer feedback and complaints. Passenger Focus carries out national rail user surveys and the Department for Transport periodically conducts satisfaction surveys for bus passengers.

The most recent UK industry trends show rising overall levels of bus customer satisfaction. In our UK Rail division the results of the Passenger Focus surveys show customer satisfaction levels in First ScotRail to be amongst the highest in the country. There are indications that, after a difficult period, passenger satisfaction levels in First Great Western are rising to reflect improvements in service punctuality and reliability. In First TransPennine Express satisfaction levels remain 9% above the level at the start of the franchise in 2004 but have dipped in recent surveys. This change is due to train performance issues in the same period caused by temporary infrastructure and driver resource issues. The popularity of the services has also caused overcrowding which affects satisfaction levels. We are working closely with the Department for Transport to bring extra vehicles to the franchise to address this.

In First Capital Connect satisfaction levels have improved slightly but remain below the national average largely due to continued network capacity constraints and consequential overcrowding. The Thameslink project (in which we are major partners) will provide new trains, increase capacity and improve stations across the network. The project aims to deliver a train through London every two to three minutes by 2015.

'Overall opinion of journey' scores (percentage satisfaction) from the Passenger Focus National Passenger Survey



In North America this year we introduced a new customer survey methodology to link customer feedback more closely to customer engagement and loyalty. The data from the surveys identifies where we need to improve and informs our customer relations and retention strategy.

Overall customer satisfaction level\* (% of customers satisfied or very satisfied)

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
First Student (US)	83.6	83.8	84	84.8
First Student (Canada)	ND**	ND	ND	94.3
First Vehicle Services (results from customer critique cards)	90	87	91	91.1

\* Year-on-year performance is not directly comparable due to differences in methodology and questionnaires. Prior year results have been included for informational purposes only.

\*\*ND - no available data.

### Case Study



First ScotRail was named 2008 Passenger Operator of the Year at the National Rail Awards. The award recognised the huge performance improvements made since the start of the franchise. Delays caused by First ScotRail have fallen by 50% and passenger growth has reached 20%.



### Likelihood to recommend

	07	08
First Transit	ND**	93.2
Greyhound*	83.9	82.1

\* Represents % of customers that would recommend Greyhound to others for a trip of at least 100 miles.

\*\*ND - no available data.

## Service performance

Service performance has a major influence on customer satisfaction levels. We strive for continuous improvement by setting stringent punctuality and reliability targets across the business.

In many cases our ability to deliver services on time depends on factors beyond our control such as road congestion and the condition of rail infrastructure. Partnership working is therefore essential to achieve our aims. We have formed partnerships with local authorities across the UK and work closely with Network Rail with regard to rail infrastructure.

## UK Bus

We monitor the punctuality and reliability of our UK Bus division services. Punctuality is a measure of how often our buses arrive on time. Using real-time information systems and satellite tracking where available (and manual systems elsewhere) we continually monitor each operating company's performance. We make this information publicly available on our operating company websites. It is also used in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders to develop service performance improvements.

The average start time punctuality across our bus operating companies for 2008/09 lies at 90.3%, a 0.3% improvement on last year but below our 95% target. We have achieved this despite increased traffic congestion in many UK towns and cities. Operating companies throughout UK Bus will continue to prioritise punctuality. They will strive to exceed the 95% target by working with local authorities and ensuring that timetables realistically reflect traffic conditions.

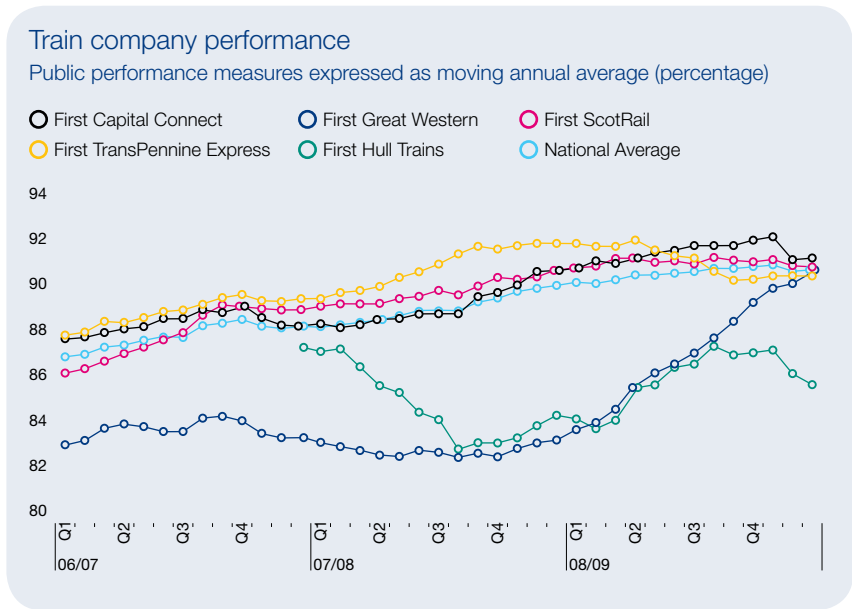
Reliability is a measure of the number of scheduled services we run. Our average reliability is 98.8%, the same as last year and lies just below our 99% target.

Average reliability of the UK Bus fleet (percentage)			
05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
98.6	98.9	98.8	98.8

We remain the only UK bus company to publish this data and we work hard to improve its usefulness to the travelling public.

## UK Rail

Train company performance is monitored through Public Performance Measures (PPM) by the Department for Transport. These measures combine punctuality and reliability into a single performance figure and indicate performance of individual trains against timetable. Most of our operating companies are showing strong performance improvements operating above 90%. We have had some problems with performance in First Hull Trains associated with the reliability of new fleet and infrastructure issues. Performance is now improving. First Great Western and First Capital Connect exceeded their performance targets for the year. First TransPennine Express and First ScotRail fell slightly short of their end of year targets due to a combination of infrastructure issues and (in the case of First TransPennine Express) driver resource issues.



## North America

In North America we write performance targets into all our contracts. Targets vary from contract to contract. We monitor our overall progress in relation to a number of measures included in all contracts against annual targets.

First Transit			
	07/08	08/09	Target
On time performance	95.3%	95.3%	95%
Service cancellations (% of scheduled service)	0.57%	0.20%	0%

First Vehicle Services			
	07/08	08/09	Target
Availability of fleet	97.1%	97.4%	95%
Vehicles requiring rework	0.7%	0.02%	Less than 2%

Greyhound			
	07/08	08/09	Target
On time performance (US)	70.7%	79.5%	90%
On time performance (Canada)	88.7%	87.5%	90%

More service performance data can be found at [www.firstgroup.com/corporate/csr/our\\_customers](http://www.firstgroup.com/corporate/csr/our_customers).

## Improving customer service

We constantly strive to improve customer service by upgrading our depots and stations and, where we own the fleet, by investing in new vehicles. We have installed new technology to make it easier for customers to use our services. The advances include new ticket machines and payment services and real-time information to track the progress of our trains and buses. We have supported industry-leading initiatives such as **YourNextBus** in Yorkshire where customers can access bus times via their mobile phones. All our train operating companies offer integrated train information services. These developments enable customers to receive free automatic text and/or e-mail alerts to advise of disruptions or view up-to-date train information online.



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## Integration

Transport integration is an essential part of improving transport services and attracting more people to use public transport. Integration managers in all our rail franchises are responsible for developing multimodal travel options. Across our UK businesses we offer a comprehensive range of integrated tickets and easy-to-understand information that helps customers to make through journeys.

We work with industry partners to develop the industry standard PlusBus integrated ticketing products. Sales of these products continue to rise. We are developing more partnerships with local authorities and Passenger Transport Executives across the UK so that people can travel by train and bus on one ticket, even when services are run by different operators. We operate high quality Park and Ride services in many areas providing an alternative to car use in city centres. Our train companies actively encourage cyclists to use our services and new cycle facilities are being installed at many of our stations. First Great Western has introduced an innovative cycle hire facility at key stations. First ScotRail provides free cycle rescue for cyclists travelling by train.

We are also trialling new partnerships to offer more integrated travel solutions. In the North West we are working with the car club operator Whizzgo, promoting car clubs to train passengers around the First TransPennine Express network.



## Accessibility

We need to ensure that our services are accessible to those with special needs. In our UK Bus division, a Diversity Action Group is tasked with checking that we meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, including employee training. It reviews vehicle access and customer information to ensure availability in appropriate formats. 57% of our buses now have low-floor access and wheelchair-accessible routes are indicated on our operating company web sites.

All our rail companies have access and inclusion managers who are responsible for ensuring the availability of appropriate facilities and assistance for those with special needs. Our train company websites provide information on disabled assistance and numbers to call. Customer-facing staff receive appropriate training and our station upgrade programme continues to improve the accessibility of our stations.

In North America we own school buses with specialist equipment such as ramps and passenger lifts and these are used on school routes as required. The buses in our transit operations are owned by our customers: most have low-floor access and wheelchair lifts. It is our responsibility to make certain that our drivers are appropriately trained to handle passengers with special needs and to use the equipment as necessary.

## Affordability

Affordable transport is important in promoting social inclusion and retaining and developing our customer base. Greyhound apart, our North America ticket prices are determined by the organisations contracting our services. In the UK the situation varies greatly. In some bus and rail areas we have greater flexibility over our fare structure than in others. In London and other conurbations, local authorities decide. In rail, nearly two-thirds of fares are covered by regulations.

Perception of cost tends to lead certain demographic groups to choose bus over rail. However, rail costs more accurately reflect the additional environmental and social costs of travel than other transport modes.

We are continually developing a wide range of fare structures and discounted ticket schemes that provide appropriate price options for different customers' needs. In our UK Bus division this includes FirstDay tickets, allowing people to undertake multiple journeys throughout the day. Both our UK Rail and Bus divisions offer a range of season tickets, family tickets and discounted travel for students and the elderly giving significant cost reductions. In selected locations we have also started to offer 'carnet' multi-journey tickets for both rail and bus users. These recognise that many users have variable travel patterns. In our UK Rail division we offer heavily discounted off-peak tickets, allowing customers to select a specific journey and train. These tickets can be purchased up to 12 weeks in advance of travel and customers booking early normally secure the best prices.

We have developed a national cashless voucher scheme that allows groups such as the unemployed, asylum seekers and youth offenders supported by government organisations to travel more cheaply by bus.

To support organisations developing green travel initiatives we have created a range of products. A particular success has been our salary sacrifice scheme, through which employees can purchase significantly discounted season tickets (up to 30 or 40%) via pay deductions.

We focus our marketing to reach out to relevant social groups and raise awareness of the discounts we offer. Our demographic mapping packages help us to achieve this.