

Standing room on new Thameslink trains is key for passengers

press release

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Passengers who can't get a seat on busy trains have asked that new carriages being designed for the Thameslink Programme have enough space to stand in comfort and safety.

The national rail watchdog has today revealed passenger priorities for the new trains and highlighted passenger opinions of the programme.

Anthony Smith, Passenger Focus chief executive, said consulting with passengers at this stage of the project was groundbreaking. *"This massive investment in new trains and services is extremely welcome,"* he said.

"Passengers are realistic about the future as new research shows more space to stand, let alone sit, is key to new Thameslink trains. Passengers' current experience and their expectations for the squash to come is clearly set out in the new Passenger Focus research."

The Thameslink Programme will see new trains designed and rolled out initially onto the First Capital Connect Bedford to Brighton line from 2015 before moving onto other services. Platforms will have to be lengthened and Blackfriars and London Bridge stations will be substantially rebuilt.

As part of this project, Passenger Focus along with London TravelWatch and the Department for Transport, have consulted with passengers on the proposals.



David Leibling, London TravelWatch chairman said: *“It was very important that passengers – those who will actually use the trains – had a chance to have their say. The earlier passengers’ voices are heard, the better.”*

Passengers who currently travel on the crowded services have welcomed news of the investment. However, they said they were concerned about who will be funding the billion pound project and implications on fares, disruption during works and the length of time the programme will take.

Although passengers would prefer to sit, they accept that trains are crowded – especially during the peak times, and therefore should be built to allow more room to stand comfortably and safely. Designing carriages with flexible seating arrangements was suggested.

Passengers also said improvements should be made in the provision of passenger information, enhancing personal security through CCTV and better staff presence and providing more luggage storage.

Guy Dangerfield, passenger manager commented: *“It is now fundamental that the Government takes passenger comment on board and makes certain it features as a priority in the design of these new trains”.*

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Notes to editors

1. The Passenger Focus report can be found at [Thameslink Rolling Stock Qualitative Research](#)
2. Passenger Focus’ latest National Passenger Survey results are available from [Spring 2008 NPS](#)
3. Passenger Focus is the official, independent consumer organisation representing the interests of rail users nationally. Created by the Railways Act 2005, Passenger Focus is the operating name of the Rail Passengers Council. It is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Transport. We want to make a difference for rail passengers. We do this by:
 - providing authoritative advice for the industry based on sound research
 - securing improvements to rail services – both big and small-scale improvements



- helping passengers with advice and information
- campaigning for change and acting on passenger complaints

4. Media enquiries regarding this release should be addressed to:

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