

Dear Member



APTU has received this announcement from FCC on increased compensation, investment and customer benefits:

First Capital Connect announces package of investment and customer benefits

First Capital Connect, which operates services on the Thameslink and Great Northern rail routes, is informing customers of plans for a programme of investment and customer benefits which, in total, are worth over £10 million.

The investment will be spread between:

- Improvements to the Customer Information Systems (CIS). This will include a new website, a new information system across the whole network to feed accurate information to customer display screens and to staff who will be provided with PDAs/smart phones to access service updates quickly.
- Modification and renewal package for Class 319 trains on the Thameslink route to resolve reliability issues, particularly with door mechanisms.
- Introduction of ticket barriers at stations on the FCC network including Finsbury Park, West Hampstead, Harpenden and Legrave - to improve customer and station security and reduce fare evasion.

FCC will also enhance the discount scheme for Thameslink customers that was introduced following the disruption to services earlier in the winter. Annual ticket holders will be entitled to a 7% discount (increased from 5%) or 15 free tickets (increased from 10) while monthly ticket holders will be entitled to a further two free tickets (in addition to the 10 offered previously).

The total cost of the refund and discount scheme and the improvements to customer information is around £4 million pounds. An additional £3 million will be invested in the gating schemes and a further £3 million pounds on a modification project for Class 319 trains, benefiting passengers across the network.

The investment package is based on feedback from customers at a number of Meet the Manager sessions at FCC stations. Improving customer information has become a priority and FCC is working on implementing a new software system that can be controlled and easily operated directly by FCC staff during disruption. This will provide a step change improvement in the system and provide a significant reduction in late notice alterations, better information updates during disruption and support FCC station staff who will be equipped with new PDAs.

The Class 319 trains used on the Thameslink route are over 20 years old. The planned modification and renewal package will focus on the door mechanisms which fail too frequently, causing delays or cancellations.

Commenting on the plans, Neal Lawson, MD, FCC said: "Since services returned to normal in January, we've been talking with many of our customers and stakeholders to identify the issues that concern them and then work out how we can address them. As a result of these discussions we'll be investing in an improved Customer Information System which will be able to provide more accurate information when there are problems and a modification and renewal package on the Class 319 trains to improve their reliability. We have also improved the discounts and free tickets for season ticket holders who were affected during the winter."

"In addition, we have reached agreement with the Department for Transport to introduce gating at a number of stations on our network to improve safety and security for our customers."

FCC have previously told us that any increase in compensation will be retrospective, so if you have already received your compensation, more will be on the way. The logistics etc are still to be advised; hopefully more will become clear at the Stakeholder Forum tomorrow.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton

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