



Dear Member

## Contents

FARES .....	1
LONDON BRIDGE BLOCKADE: REDUCTIONS IN SERVICE LEVELS .....	1
<i>Service frequency south of the river</i> .....	2
<i>Key points to make in your letter</i> .....	2
<i>MP Email addresses</i> .....	2
DELAY REPAY – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & TIME TO PROCESS .....	3
LAUNCH OF NEW CLASS 700 SIEMENS CITY DESIRO TRAINS .....	3
CHANNEL 4 PROGRAMME – SERVE THE NATION > LOOKING FOR COMPLAINT SUBMITTERS .....	4
FCC’S ETIQUETTE PROGRAMME.....	4
FCC SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR ‘NOMINATE A STAR’ LEADER BOARD.....	4
RECENT PERFORMANCE .....	5
PERFORMANCE BY TRAIN OPERATING COMPANY .....	6
OFFICE OF RAIL REGULATION: COMPLAINT RATES.....	7
RADLETT STRATEGIC RAILFREIGHT INTERCHANGE .....	8
LUTON AIRPORT .....	8
FCC PASSENGER NUMBERS .....	8
OTHER .....	8

## Fares

Regulated FCC fares increased by around 3.1% on 2 January, in line with the Government specification on fare rises.

FCC announced ([bit.ly/Ko5P6s](https://bit.ly/Ko5P6s)) that Super Off-Peak fares (weekends and bank holidays) had been frozen, and also said that off peak day return tickets were discounted by 10% when bought online between 6 and 31 January. The reduction **is only available** via [firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/jansale](https://firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/jansale) or via the image on the home page. ).

Note: Ticket prices for journeys wholly in Greater London do not increase until 19 January.

## London Bridge blockade: Reductions in service levels

The London Bridge blockade starts from Saturday 20 December this year and will last around 3 years. During that time no Thameslink services will call at London Bridge and all services will be diverted via Herne Hill. There are various closures and diversions that will impact Southern and Southeastern services at times during this period – see [thameslinkprogramme.co.uk/about#keydates](https://thameslinkprogramme.co.uk/about#keydates) for more information.

The key impacts for us will be as follows:

1. **If your journey normally finishes** at London Bridge, you will need to make alternate arrangements. We do not, as yet, have details, but understand that these will not cost you more – although they will almost certainly take longer and may be more unpleasant.
2. **If you change to another service** at London Bridge (Southeastern, Southern or London Underground) then there will be various alternatives advertised in due course.
3. **If you stay on the train to East Croydon or beyond** there will be a service reduction – and the journey will normally take slightly longer.

The diversion away from London Bridge is a ‘done deal’ and is something we simply need to live with. Once details of alternative routes are available, we will, of course, lobby for any reasonable additions.

## Service frequency south of the river

The current specification for the service south of the river envisages 2 trains to Elephant & Castle and 2 to Brighton. Both the BCA and APTU regard this as an excessively cautious view from parts of the rail industry. During the franchise bidding process we visited all 5 bidders (including FCC and Southern) and all indicated a preference for 4 trains per hour to Gatwick Airport (in practice we understand the logical termination point to be one stop further on at Three Bridges).

We will continue to campaign on this matter – it is definitely not too late yet as nothing gets finalised until the Spring and would like your help.

**Please write to your MP** and ask for them to lobby the Department for Transport to mandate/support the retention of 4 trains per hour to Gatwick Airport. When you write to/email your MP, it is essential that you include your postal address in order that they know you are one of their constituents – parliamentary convention is that they do not act for people who live in other MP's constituencies.

## Key points to make in your letter

We are not providing a 'boilerplate' letter as evidence suggests that MPs tend to give less weight to piles of 'identikit' letters. Key facts to mention are:

1. The Thameslink Programme involves the closure of London Bridge for 37 months and during this period trains from *your location* to East Croydon & Gatwick Airport will need to travel via Herne Hill
2. The Department for Transport has specified a 50% service reduction from 4 to 2 trains per hour (the other 2 will terminate at Elephant & Castle) in the service to East Croydon & Gatwick Airport.
3. You believe that 4 trains an hour remain important because *Something relevant to yourself* - and that the service reduction is likely to result in revenue loss and therefore cost to the Government, as under rail industry funding the operators will be recompensed.
  - You may find some useful thoughts: at [www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/50pctreduction.pdf](http://www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/50pctreduction.pdf).
4. I am a member of APTU ([www.aptu.org.uk](http://www.aptu.org.uk) & [aptu@aptu.org.uk](mailto:aptu@aptu.org.uk)) and their informal enquiries suggestion there are both sufficient paths in the network between Blackfriars and Three Bridges [it being more practical to terminate services at this station, which is south of the Airport and sufficient carriages.
5. *Optional*: you do recognise that capacity on the Brighton Main line south of Gatwick means that a service reduction to Brighton is understandable.

The MP should be asked to ask the DfT to review their decision and to work with Network Rail and Train Operating Companies to determine if there is sufficient capacity. Ask the MP to provide you with an update in due course (apparently some MPs use the omission of this request as a reason not to provide updates).

It would be good enough to copy in [aptu@aptu.org.uk](mailto:aptu@aptu.org.uk) to your correspondence, that would be great.

## MP Email addresses

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>MP</b>	<b>Address as</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Finchley and Golders Green	Mike Freer	Mike Freer	<a href="mailto:mike.freer.mp@parliament.uk">mike.freer.mp@parliament.uk</a>
Hampstead and Kilburn	Glenda Jackson	Glenda Jackson	<a href="mailto:jacksong@parliament.uk">jacksong@parliament.uk</a>
Hendon	Matthew Offord	Dr Offord	<a href="mailto:matthew.offord.mp@parliament.uk">matthew.offord.mp@parliament.uk</a>
Hertsmere	James Clappison	Mr Clappison	<a href="mailto:tilleye@parliament.uk">tilleye@parliament.uk</a>
Hitchin & Harpenden	Peter Lilley	Mr Lilley	<a href="mailto:lilleyp@parliament.uk">lilleyp@parliament.uk</a>

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>MP</b>	<b>Address as</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Luton North	Kelvin Hopkins	Kelvin Hopkins	<a href="mailto:hopkinsk@parliament.uk">hopkinsk@parliament.uk</a>
Luton South	Gavin Shuker	Gavin Shuker	<a href="mailto:gavin.shuker.mp@parliament.uk">gavin.shuker.mp@parliament.uk</a>
Mid Bedfordshire	Nadine Dorries	Nadine Dorries	<a href="mailto:dorriesn@parliament.uk">dorriesn@parliament.uk</a>
St Albans	Anne Main	Mrs Main	<a href="mailto:maina@parliament.uk">maina@parliament.uk</a>

This information is taken from [findyourmp.parliament.uk](http://findyourmp.parliament.uk), and lists constituencies that the Thameslink route passes through between West Hampstead Thameslink and Harlington (inclusive).

## **Delay Repay – Acknowledgements & time to process**

Following comments from a member, we followed up with FCC what the situation is regarding (a) acknowledgements; and (b) speed of processing. FCC had this to say:

Our Customer Relations Manager said that where a Season Ticket holder has a Delay Repay account and submits their claim via the web, they always receive an automatic acknowledgement which includes a reference number. The same message applies to any contact which is received by email. The current acknowledgement reads:

“Thank you for getting in touch with First Capital Connect. We've received your message and while we'll always aim to get back to you within 5 working days, we currently have an outstanding backlog of correspondence. We have a lot of people to respond to, so we may not be able to reply as quickly as we'd like. Sorry in advance if that's the case. But we promise to read your message carefully and to respond fully to the points you've made. This is just an automated message, so you won't be able to reply to it and there is no need to chase your contact as we will get in touch as soon as we can.”

Any correspondence received by post does not receive an acknowledgement, Delay Repay claims are processed before any other correspondence and the introduction of an additional action of sending an email acknowledgement would inevitably reduce the number of claims that could be processed.

In common with most other train operating companies the number of Delay Repay claims has been exceptionally high as a result of the numerous delays resulting from storm damaged infrastructure. I am advised that an additional seven staff in Mumbai have been trained and are now processing Delay Repay claims in an effort to reduce the backlog. Currently it is taking around 10 working days to respond.

**However ....** I submitted an on-line on Friday following the problems at Hendon that morning, and did not receive an acknowledgement. I have told FCC and await a response in due course.

No doubt, there have been/will be a large number of Delay Repay claims arising from Friday's problems, which will further exacerbate the delays.

## **Launch of new Class 700 Siemens City Desiro trains**

The official launch of the new trains will take place on 28 January (APTU will be there). They are also on display to everyone on 29 January – we have received this via the Campaign for Better Transport:

### **New Thameslink train unveiled - see the carriages and walk on board on 29 January!**

A life-size mock-up of the Siemens Desiro City train for Greater Thameslink (T S & GN franchise) will be unveiled by Rail Minister Stephen Hammond at the ExCeL exhibition centre in London at the end of this month, with the general public invited to come on board. Siemens was awarded the significant Thameslink rolling stock contract last year and the 1140 carriages are currently being manufactured, with a number of components from the UK.

This event will give you the opportunity to be amongst the first to see and walk through the next generation of commuter train.

If you are interested in attending, the general public viewing will be from **14:00 – 20:00 on 29 January**. **No booking is required**. For more information, visit [www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk](http://www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk). We hope to see some of you there!

I understand that information about the day will be added to the Thameslink Programme website imminently.

## Channel 4 programme – Serve the Nation > Looking for Complaint submitters

We've been contacted by Dragon Fly TV who are making a TV programme in which they will "take a 360 degree look at the expanding culture of complaint handling and customer service in the UK". They comment:

I work for Dragonfly TV (makers of "One born every minute" and "The Family") and we are currently producing a new documentary series for Channel 4 in which we will take a 360 degree look at the expanding culture of complaint handling and customer service in the UK.

In the series, we will hear from those who are on the frontline of complaint handling, and from those who train and inspire this hidden but burgeoning workforce. We shall also film with a variety of complainers, where we follow their respective stories, and try to understand why they react as they do to service they are dissatisfied with.

We would really like to find a number of people who are currently perusing a transport complaint (whether it's with buses, trains, tubes or planes) and I thought you would be a great organisation to speak to with regard to the trains between Bedford and London. We currently have access with some large transport providers in the UK but we really want to ensure that we tell the other side of the story through the experience of customers.

I have attached a flyer ([aptu.org.uk/pdfs/dragonflytv\\_servingthenation.pdf](http://aptu.org.uk/pdfs/dragonflytv_servingthenation.pdf)) which you can use in the newsletter if you wish..... if they are interested in finding out more info they can just get in touch.

At this stage it is just an informal chat and gives me a chance to explain more about the programme to them. My details are [meg.barnard@dragonfly.tv](mailto:meg.barnard@dragonfly.tv) or 0207 033 2287.

## FCC's etiquette programme

We've received this update from FCC:

We have gathered some very positive results following the launch of 'The Modern Day Guide to Train Etiquette' campaign. These indicate that safety and considerate behaviours are now more highly thought of amongst passengers. This is very important to us, as we have led the campaign with the aim to modify behaviours so that customers are safe at all times.

Based on our sample of 450 completed interviews, the awareness and inclination of passengers to modify behaviours is much higher as a result of the campaign. Indeed 77% of respondents have said that they would modify their behaviours at stations (this compares with 29% previously). The new campaign also outperforms the previous ones on all areas, with particularly high scores out of 10 for appeal (from 6.4 to 7.9), relevance (from 6.2 to 7.9) and persuasiveness (from 6.1 to 7.8).

We are now progressing with new designs to address the following themes: cycle policy, being respectful and courteous towards employees, chewing gum and feet on seats, and offering a seat to those customers who need it most.

The campaign home page is here: [firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/safety/](http://firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/safety/).

## FCC seeking nominations for 'Nominate a Star' leader board

FCC are seeking nominations for their staff where good service is given – I encourage you to nominate FCC staff where relevant, as this will help encourage FCC's staff:

We have recently launched “Nominate a Star”, a new initiative to encourage better customer service and develop the passenger/front line relationship. This initiative is part of our wider objective to improve customer service and passenger satisfaction.

The initiative is in its second month running, and we have received a great response from passengers for all the work our front line teams are doing.

With over 150 nominations to date, the campaign is gaining momentum by the week. Some examples of the feedback accompanying the nominations, include:

- “best driver announcements ever”
- “is a shining example of how to care for customers”
- “helped out with future train times and the best ticket price”
- “always helpful and provides constant updates over the speakers to keep us all happy”

The winner of the first phase of the campaign will be selected and announced at the end of January, so watch this space!

The initiative offers our passengers the opportunity to nominate their star employee for a special award, to both raise money for children’s hospices and charities and encourage employees to provide better customer service.

When passengers receive excellent customer service, they can nominate their star from a desktop computer or mobile using this link: [firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/nominate](http://firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/nominate).

The nominated stars will become ambassadors of great customer service across the company. We encourage you to take part and let us have your feedback.

## Recent performance

In their latest Stakeholder news, FCC commented as follows:

### The storm on 23rd/24th December

The Christmas storm brought high winds with gusts of up to 80mph. Due to its severity and impact, Network Rail implemented speed restrictions and we ran a reduced timetable to reduce safety risks associated with trees and other debris being on the railway lines.

We had an early closure on the 23rd to ensure the railway was clear during the peak of the storm, and advised customers to travel as early as they could not to get caught out. The storm continued through the night, and Network Rail checked for any damage and blocks on the route early on Tuesday morning, before the routes were released. On Tuesday morning, Network Rail advised that across Anglia, Sussex, and London and the North East 28 trees had fell obstructing tracks and damaging OLE in places.

Once the lines reopened, we ran a near to normal service on Tuesday, however with short notice delays and cancellations.

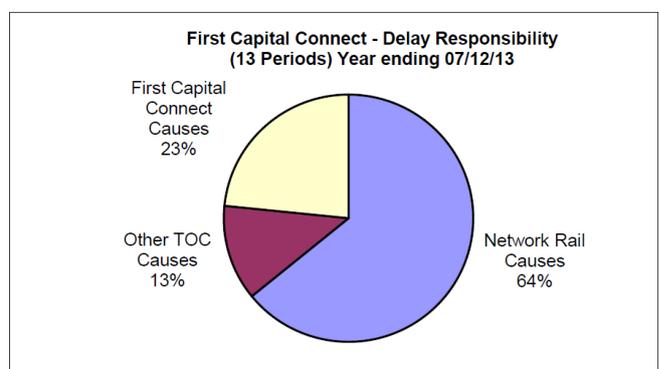
We monitored the weather forecast and updated our customers as the situation developed, using our usual channels. Despite all of our efforts, we fully recognise that this storm couldn’t possibly have happened at a worst time when we know a large number of passengers were travelling.

### How we did in Period 9

Between 10/11/2013 – 07/12/13 the performance was notably worse than expected due to a number of factors including low adhesion as a result of heavy leaf-fall. Our PPM result was much lower than normal at 80.50% (5.74% worse than our target) and we achieved 90%+ PPM on 4 of the 28 days in the period.

The key incidents that affected performance on the TL (81.38% PPM) were as follows:

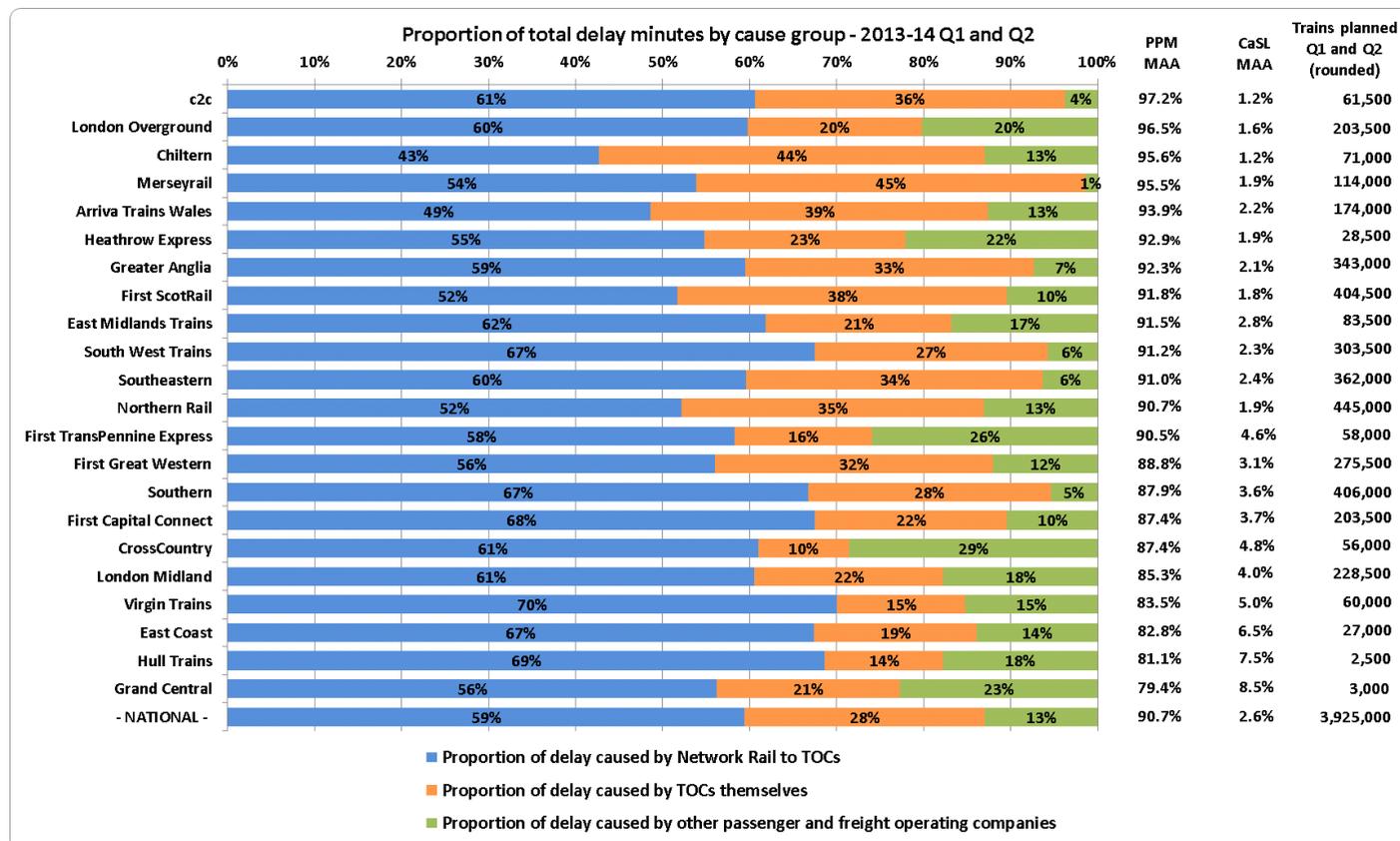
- 20<sup>th</sup> November: Overrunning engineering work at Hassocks led to 39 cancellations



- 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November: A problem with Belsize Tunnel meant the booked possession was not given up as planned

## Performance by Train Operating Company

The Office of Rail Regulation (“ORR”) has published statistics on performance by Train Operating Company (“TOC”). This graph provides a good overview:



CaSL: Cancellations and significant lateness

A couple of observations:

- FCC suffers third highest in terms of Network Rail impact at 68%, just behind Virgin Trains (70%) and Hull Trains (69%).
- FCC is 9<sup>th</sup> equal out of 22 as regards causing their own delays.
- The impact of other TOCs and freight operators at 5% is surprisingly low, given they share the Midland Main line with East Midlands Trains, the Brighton Mainline with Southern and the route to Peterborough with East Coast, Hull Trains and Grand Central.

The ORR had some interesting comments:

... By contrast performance on the London North Eastern route has deteriorated and Network Rail has delivered a less effective service to operators, including East Coast, on this route. Network Rail delay minutes affecting East Coast are 8.8% worse than target and 11.3% worse than at the same time last year. We will continue to give close attention to performance on this important route.

This is relevant to FCC’s services out of Kings Cross.

## London and South East passenger trains

Our investigation into the LSE sector in 2012-13 concluded that Network Rail had breached its licence by not doing everything reasonably practicable to meet its performance targets. However, there were positive signs of recovery and we therefore decided not to impose a financial penalty. Since then

punctuality has not improved as expected. In fact it has declined from 91.0% at the end of 2012-13 to 90.9% at the end of period 7 which is 2.0 pp behind the regulated target. The CaSL figure for this sector is 2.6% which is 0.6 pp behind target. Southern Railway in particular has experienced a high number of cancellations and significantly late trains due to Network Rail's performance.

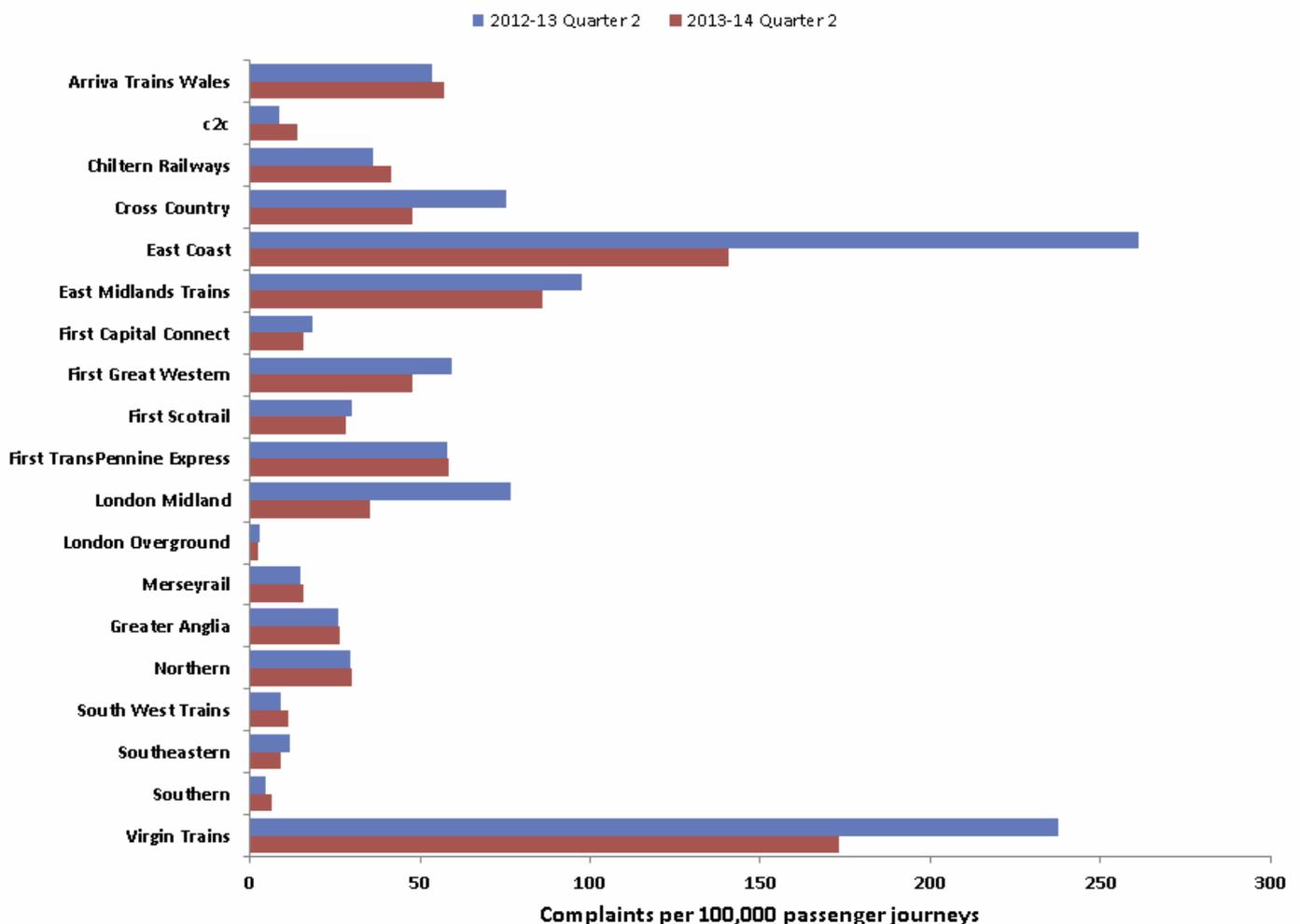
Network Rail caused delays affecting First Capital Connect have been well above target, especially on its Great Northern route. The operator has experienced track delays, network management issues including timetable planning errors and overrunning engineering works. We have asked Network Rail for a full explanation of the issues and its plans to address them.

Punctuality on Southern, Southeastern and South West Trains services has been below target. These three companies make up 51% of the sector and all three have experienced high levels of delays associated with network management causes, especially engineering work overruns. South West Trains has also been affected by track faults, which are 86.5% worse year to date than at the same time last year.

The full report can be read on the ORR website at [bit.ly/1hMIWIA](http://bit.ly/1hMIWIA).

### Office of Rail Regulation: Complaint rates

The Office of Rail Regulation recently published complaint rates per Train operating company (see [bit.ly/1dfLds6](http://bit.ly/1dfLds6)):



Of note were:

- FCC rate higher than Southern, Southeastern and South West Trains, but lower than Greater Anglia, London Midland and Chiltern (All of whom operate some long distance trains)
  - All Long distance operators have a higher complaint rate, with the long distance only operators having the highest rate of all

- FCC rate declined slightly
- (not shown on the graph above) FCC are shown as receiving complaints by letter, email/web form and phone and responding to 100% of complaints within 20 working days.

## Radlett Strategic Railfreight interchange

This rumbles on; the most recent key events being:

- Villiers cleared (BBC): [bbc.in/1ap7bET](http://bbc.in/1ap7bET), the article also notes that Anne Main, MP for St Albans - is not satisfied with the answer.

Also of note is this extract from the Government's "Draft National Policy Statement for the National Road and Rail Networks" ([bit.ly/1cXTSwX](http://bit.ly/1cXTSwX)) on SFRIs:

Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges – support the transfer of freight from road to rail and facilitate sustainable rail freight growth. To this end, there is a need for an expanded network of SRFIs to serve regional, sub-regional and cross-regional markets providing good connectivity with both the road and rail network. These will be private sector, commercial developments that need to be located near the business markets they will serve – major urban centres, or groups of centres – and be linked to key supply chain routes. Given the need for effective connections for both rail and road, the number of locations suitable as SRFIs will be limited, which will restrict the scope for developers to identify viable alternative sites.

## Luton Airport

Luton Airport's expansion plans have moved one step closer with approval by Luton Borough Council, the next step is for central Government to decide whether it wants to review the decision – see the BBC: [bbc.in/1h5KPwp](http://bbc.in/1h5KPwp).

## FCC passenger numbers

I thought this table (calculated from Office of Rail Regulation data) might be of interest:

	2010-11	2011-12	Increase	2012-13	Increase
Passenger Journeys (millions)	95.9	99.7	4.0%	106.3	6.6%
Passenger kilometres (millions)	3,223.20	3,456.10	7.2%	3,637.60	5.3%
Timetabled Train Kilometres (millions)	24	24.5	2.1%	24.8	1.2%
Average passengers per Train Kilometre	134	141	5.0%	147	4.0%
Number of Employees	2,318	2,374	2.4%	2,459	3.6%

## Other

- **Elstree & Borehamwood: Footbridge with Lifts:** An article in a local Newspaper ([bit.ly/19qOTCF](http://bit.ly/19qOTCF)) gives April 2014 as the opening date for the new lifts.
- **Fast line Fencing:** At the BCA Meeting in November, Network Rail advised that this was in hand, for stations between Radlett and Cricklewood inclusive. It is an anti-suicide measure and has been introduced elsewhere in the South East – eg on parts of the West Coast Mainline, and is due to be installed by April. I expect that the fencing will have gates in it, so when a train does stop at a fast line platform, it will still be possible to use the platform. At St Albans and north thereof, there are scheduled uses of the fast line platforms (except at Harlington), so fencing is unlikely to occur.
- **Thameslink Programme – Engineering activity:** If you are interested, Rail Engineer has a comprehensive article on the rebuilds currently in progress: [bit.ly/1hI34LG](http://bit.ly/1hI34LG).

- **Larry Heyman is “Cycle Champion”**: You may be interested in this article that notes that FCC, and Larry Heyman (who many of us know) in particular, has picked up an award at the National Cycle awards – more at the Herts Ad ([bit.ly/1dtbfZb](http://bit.ly/1dtbfZb)).

Regards

*Neil*

Neil Middleton

19 January 2014