London TravelWatch

National Rail Performance Report - Quarter 3 2014-15 (Oct-Dec 2014)

March 2015

London **TravelWatch** is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working in or visiting London and its surrounding region.

Financial periods	Issue dates for London TravelWatch report for the corresponding Quarter
Quarter 3 2012/13 – Oct to Dec	March 2013
Quarter 4 2012/13 – Jan to Mar	July 2013
Quarter 1 2013-14 – Apr to Jun	Oct 2013
Quarter 2 2013-14 – Jul to Sept	Dec 2013
Quarter 3 2013-14 – Oct to Dec	Feb 2014
Quarter 4 2013-14 – Jan to Mar	July 2014
Quarter 1 2014-15 – Apr to Jun	Sept 2014
Quarter 2 2014-15 – Jul to Sept	Dec 2014
Quarter 3 2014-15 – Oct to Dec	March 2015

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Contents

1 Overview

This report focuses on the experience of passengers of the performance of the rail network in London and the South East (L&SE) during the third quarter (October to December) of 2014-15. However, section 4 relates to Q2 (July-Sept).

For definitions of the measures used, see Section 2.

London & South East train service performance

The L&SE train operators' overall *public performance measure* (PPM) result was lower than in the same quarter last year, averaging 86.2% - which was 0.1 percentage points lower than a year ago.

Operating on routes with minimal interaction with other TOC's, c2c had the highest average PPM in the third quarter of 2014-15 (with 97.2%), a 0.8 percentage point increase compared with the same quarter last year. Southern with a PPM of 79.3%, had the lowest score, a 2.1 percentage point reduction compared to the same quarter last year.

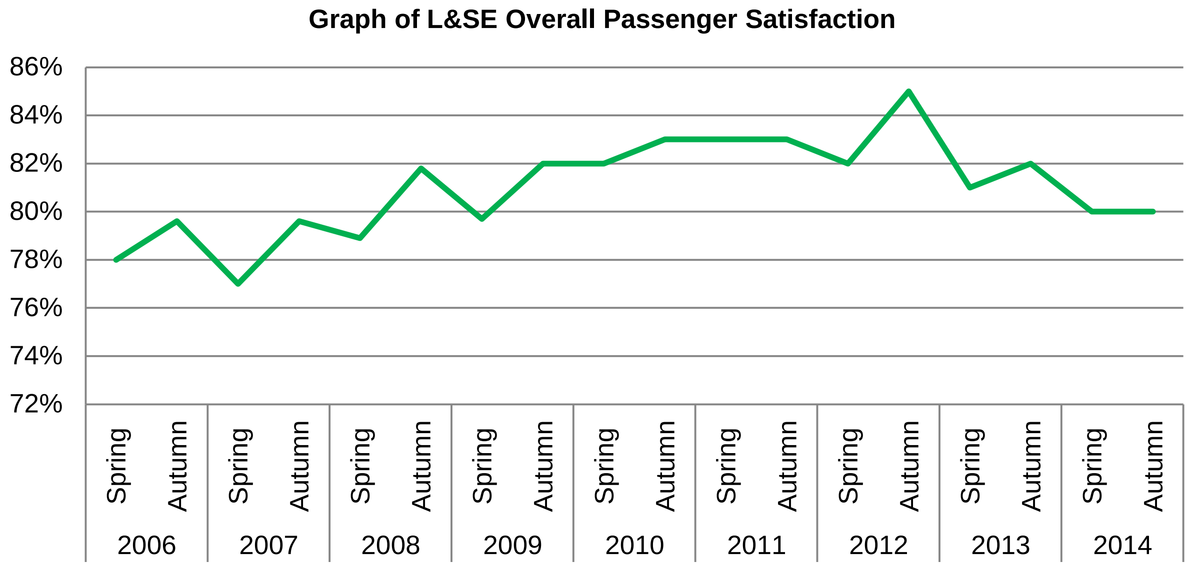
In the last year, with the exception of Q2 2013-14, Southern have had the worst PPM score compared to other L&SE operators. A significant proportion of this poor performance can be attributed to on-going works at London Bridge, driver shortages, the need to train drivers on the new infrastruture layouts at London Bridge, as well as a fire alarm incident at Victoria station.

The overall rate of *cancellations and significant lateness* was 3.4% in quarter 3 2014-15, which was 0.6 percentage points lower than in the same period a year ago. c2c recorded the lowest percentage (with 1.0%), a 0.2 percentage point reduction. Chiltern Railways, the best performer in the previous quarter, had the second best score at 1.7%. Govia Thameslink Railway (formerly First Capital Connect), and Southern had the highest levels (with 5.3%, and 5.28% respectively). On-going works at London Bridge, and the driver training required, contributed to an increase for both TOCs.

The overall rate of '*right time' arrivals* was 59.1% in Q3 2014-15, 1.4 percentage points lower than last year. In the last year, Chiltern Railways have had the best RTA score compared to other L&SE operators, with 85.1%. In contrast, Southern had the lowest score for the same period, with a score of 43.9% in Q3 2014-15. First Great Western had the largest decrease in right time arrivals relative to the previous year, with 61.0%, a 4.0 percentage point decrease.

In September 2014, Govia Thameslink Railway became fully operational (previously First Capital Connect), and in December 2014, a small number of Southeastern services transferred to Govia Thameslink Railway, therefore the 2014-15 Q3 statistics for these two franchises are not wholly comparable with data from previous quarters.

London & South East (L&SE) passenger satisfaction



Overall passenger satisfaction in autumn 2014 was the same since spring 2014 but is a notable reduction when compared to autumn 2013 results. The percentage of passengers satisfied was 80% compared with 80% in spring 2014 and 82% in autumn 2013. The highest rate of passenger satisfaction in autumn 2014 in London and South East was with Heathrow Express, at 94%. Southeastern had the lowest score and the highest reduction in satisfied passengers, with 74% compared to 84% in autumn 2014.

The performance of this franchise is closely linked to, but not exclusively dependent on the rebuilding programme of London Bridge station and associated track works as a result of the Thameslink programme. This only partially explains the poor performance. The causes of poor performance are largely attributable to factors within the control of the industry, such as fleet and driver availability.

2 London & South East train service performance

This report presents a set of measures of the performance of train operating companies in London and the south east which are particularly relevant to passengers. With two exceptions, the data refers to the whole of each company's services, not simply to those to, from or within London, although in every case these account for a large majority of trains run. In the case of First Great Western, they refer only to its London and Thames Valley (LTV) operations. In the case of London Midland, they refer only to its London and South East (L&SE) services.

2.1 Public performance measure

The public performance measure (PPM) tracks the performance of individual trains against their planned timetable.

Trains which complete their whole route calling at all timetabled stations are measured for punctuality at their final destination. Each train is recorded by the automated monitoring system which logs performance – usually using the signalling equipment. Late trains are banded according to the length of delay in reaching their final destination. In the case of London and south east services, a train is defined as being "on time" if it arrives within five minutes of the planned arrival time. The PPM is the percentage of planned trains which are run and which complete their journeys "on time".

The timetable against which the trains are judged is known as the "plan of the day". This generally reflects the published timetable as amended for planned engineering works or as a result of major incidents.

For L&SE operators, a large proportion of users are commuters, this information is also provided separately for weekday peak trains in the with-flow direction (towards London in the morning and away from London in the evening). Only trains running to/from or across central London are included in this statistic (so in the case of London Overground, it applies only to the Euston-Watford route). Because train frequencies are generally greater in the peak, the repercussive impact of delays and disruptions is greater, so peak performance is generally less reliable than that for the entire day.

It is worth noting that PPM is a measure across the whole operating day. It does not reflect the proportion of passengers experiencing good or poor performance.

Most (six out of 11) operators' PPM scores fell in this quarter, when compared with the same period last year (Q3 2013-14). However, it should be remembered that in 2013-14, the equivalent period had severe weather, which resulted in fallen trees, flooding and landslips whereas in Q3 2014-15 (October to December 2014) has had no such major external factors reducing performance.

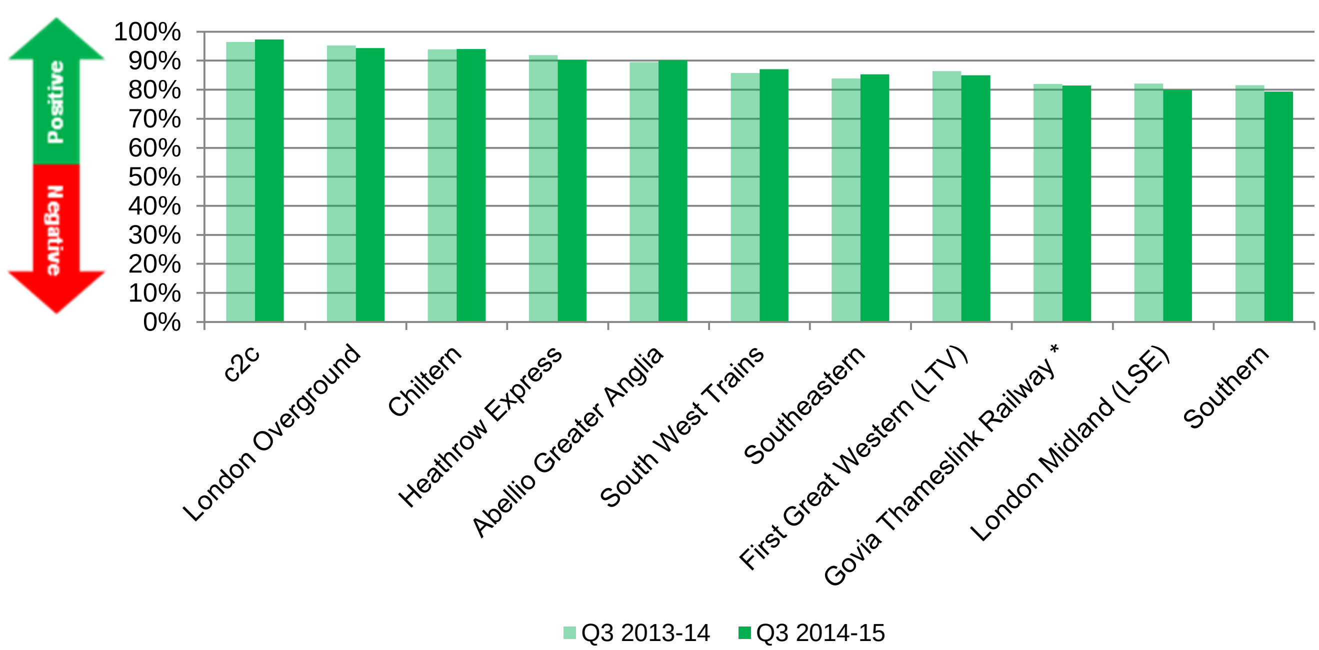
Operating on routes with minimal interaction with other TOC's, c2c had the highest average PPM in the third quarter of 2014-15 (with 97.2%), a 0.8 percentage point increase compared with the same quarter last year. Southern with a PPM of 79.3%, had the lowest score, a 2.1 percentage point reduction compared to the same quarter in 2013-14.

In the last year, with the exception of Q2 2013-14, Southern have had the worst PPM score compared to other L&SE operators. Significant proportion of this poor performance, as well as the poor performance of Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), can be attributed to, but not exclusively dependant on-going works at London Bridge (It is important to note that Southeastern's performance has improved compared to the same quarter a year ago).

Service reliability of the new GTR franchise (both Thameslink and Great Northern routes), Southern and also Southeastern continued to be poor for a number of reasons, particularly poor performance by Network Rail, which has led to less infrastructure causing a lack of resilience in timetable, but also because of things within the control of the operators, such as shortage of trained and available drivers, poor condition and maintenance of mid to later life rolling stock, and exceptional numbers of 'one off' incidents such as suicides, and a fire alarm incident at Victoria station also affected Southern's performance.

London Midland saw a dip in their performance when compared to the same period a year before. London Midland's 'Strong Foundations' improvement programme, in partnership with Network Rail, has previously paid dividends to their performance. But this improvement was from a low base, as London Midland had consistently been one of the poorest performers in previous quarters and was still the second worst performing operator throughout the quarter.

Graph 2 – Public performance measure Q3 2013-14 & Q3 2014-15



[1] *Govia Thameslink Railway from 14 September 2014 (previously First Capital Connect)

2.2 Performance trends

In the charts in this section, each train company's quarterly all-trains PPM results for the past three years are shown graphically, together with the results for with-flow peak period trains. In each case, the individual company's performance is shown alongside the combined result for the entire L&SE network. Trend lines are plotted to eliminate the impact of cyclical fluctuations.

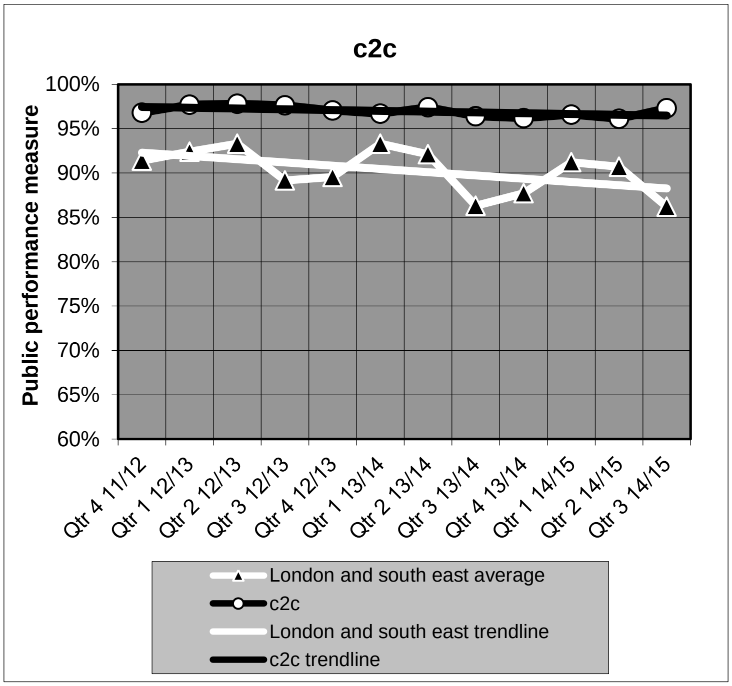
The performance of individual train companies is partially dependent on the varying ability of Network Rail to deliver railway infrastructure on which their trains can operate reliably; but a second factor has also been the inability of some operators adequately to manage the service elements (such as rolling stock and train crews) for which they are wholly responsible.

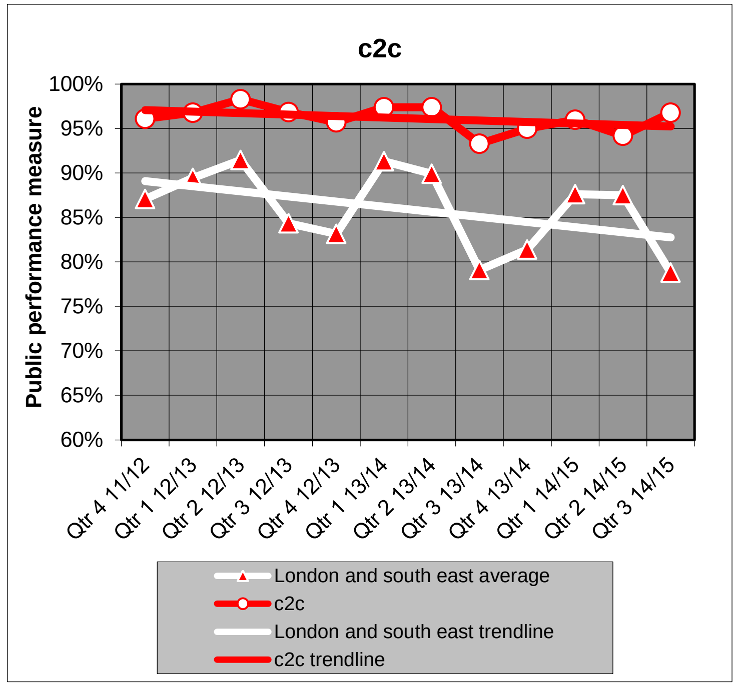
The performance of c2c, Chiltern, Abellio Greater Anglia and London Overground has been on a stable or upward trend over the three year period. Overall, there was an improvement in Abellio Greater Anglia's performance, which is attributed at least in part to increased investment in the infrastructure through a joint initiative with Network Rail. London Overground however has seen a deterioration of performance attributed to the knock on effects of the works at London Bridge and the poor performance of other TOCs.

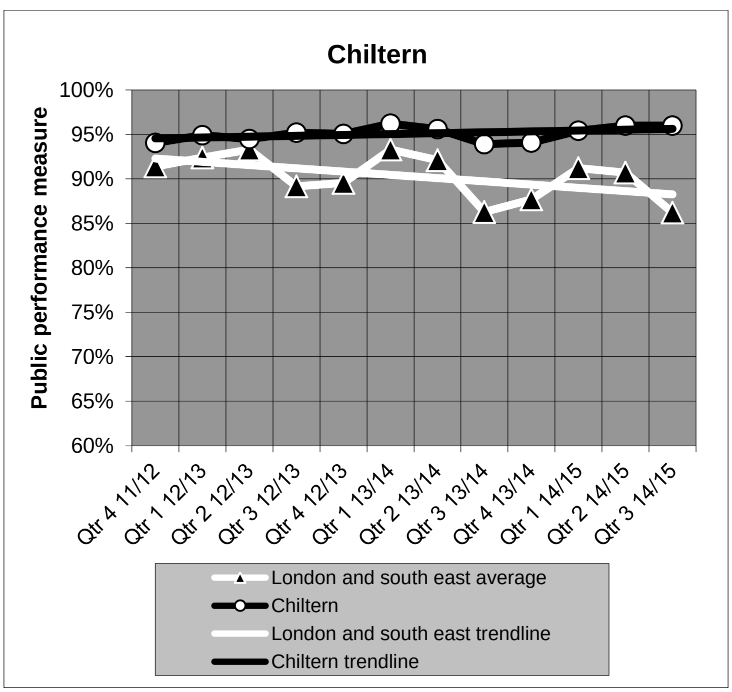
The performance of Govia Thameslink Railway, First Great Western, London Midland, Southeastern and Southern was below the average of the London & SE group as a whole.

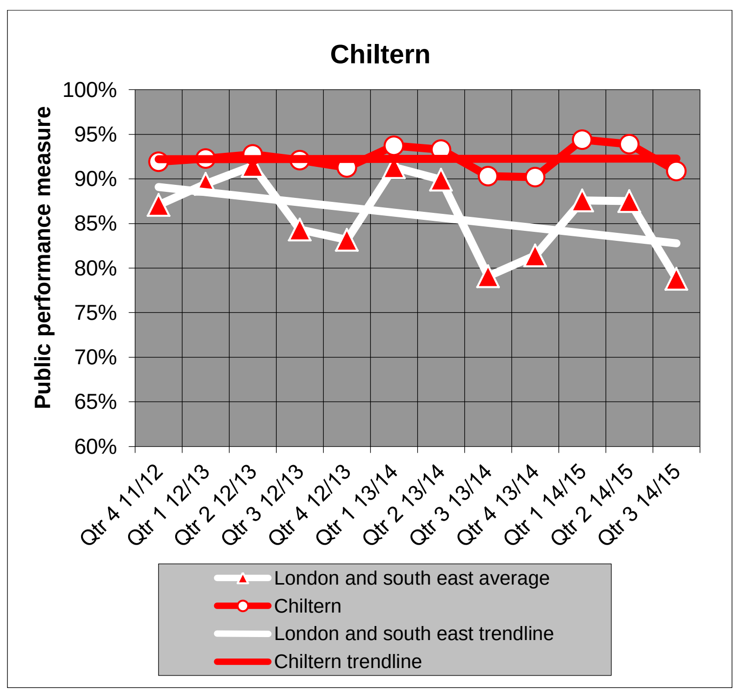
All trains performance

Peak trains performance



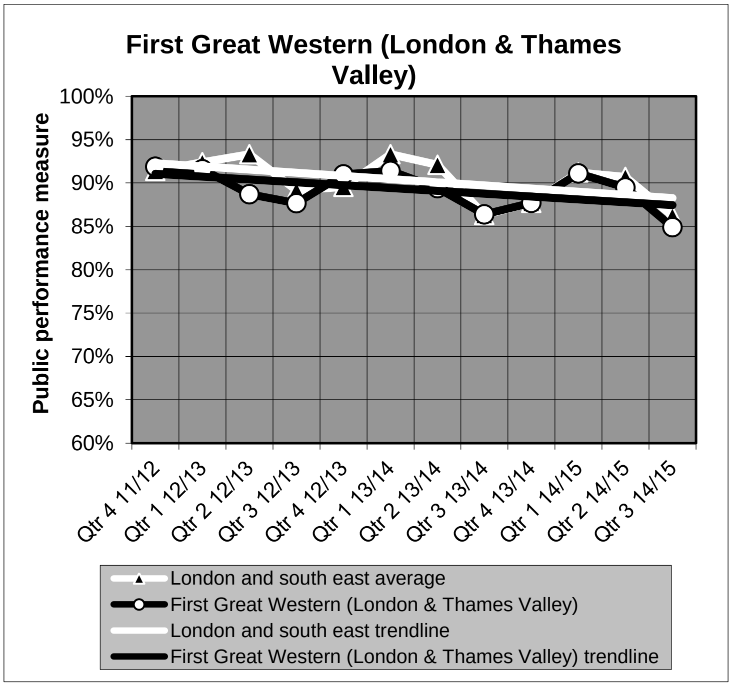


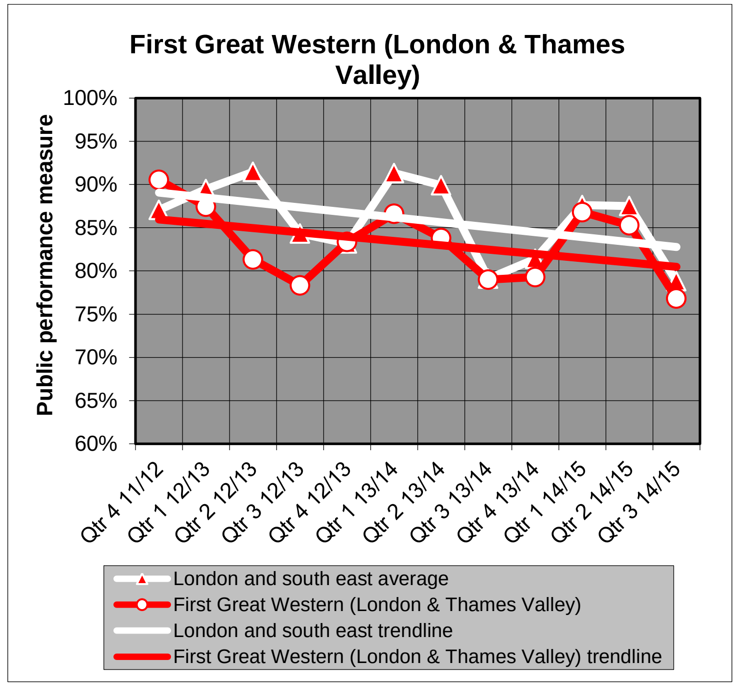


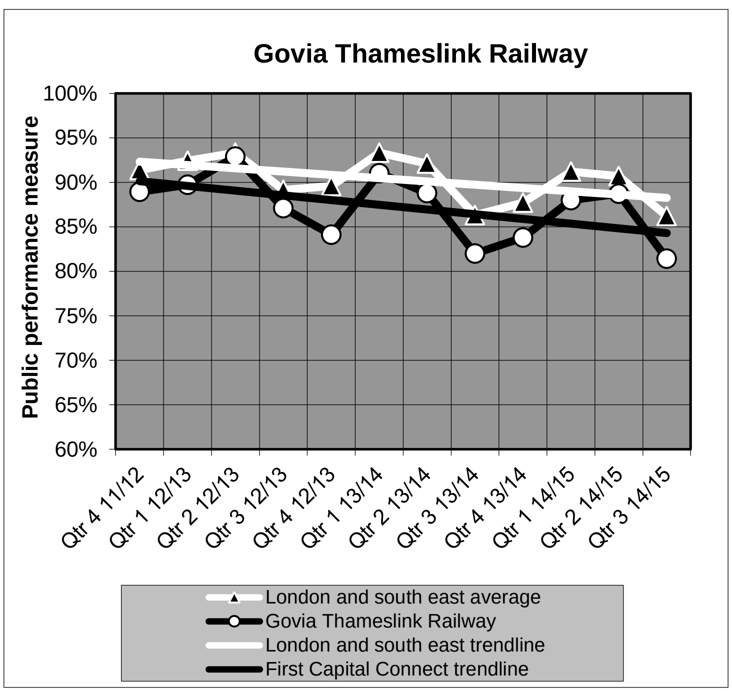


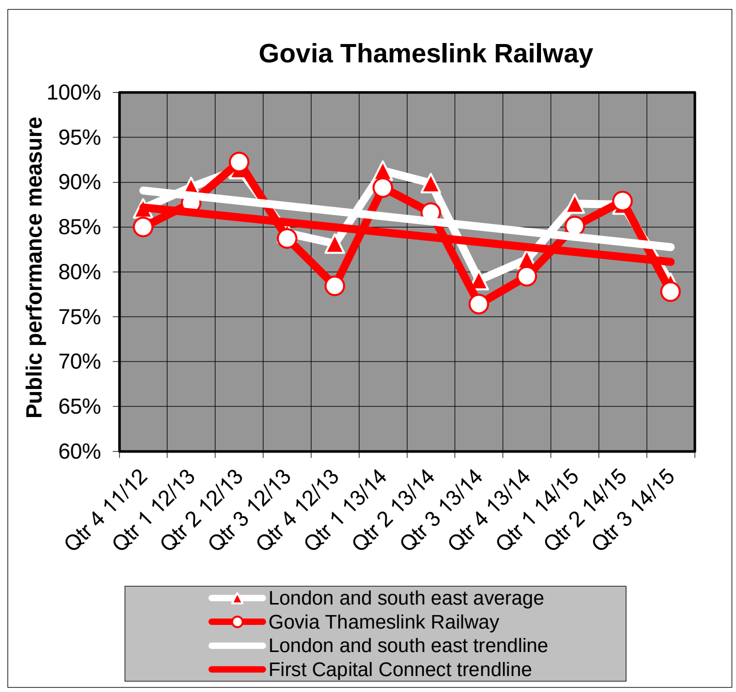
All trains performance

Peak trains performance









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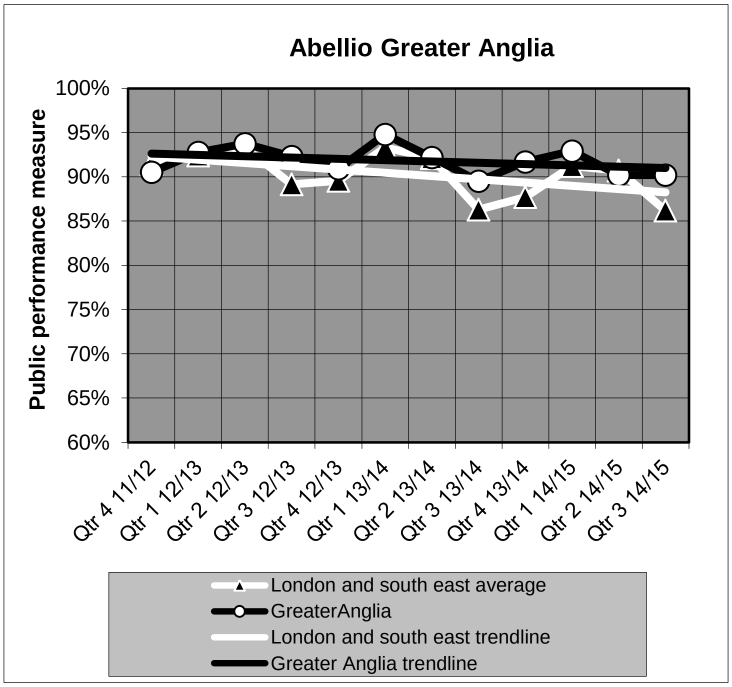

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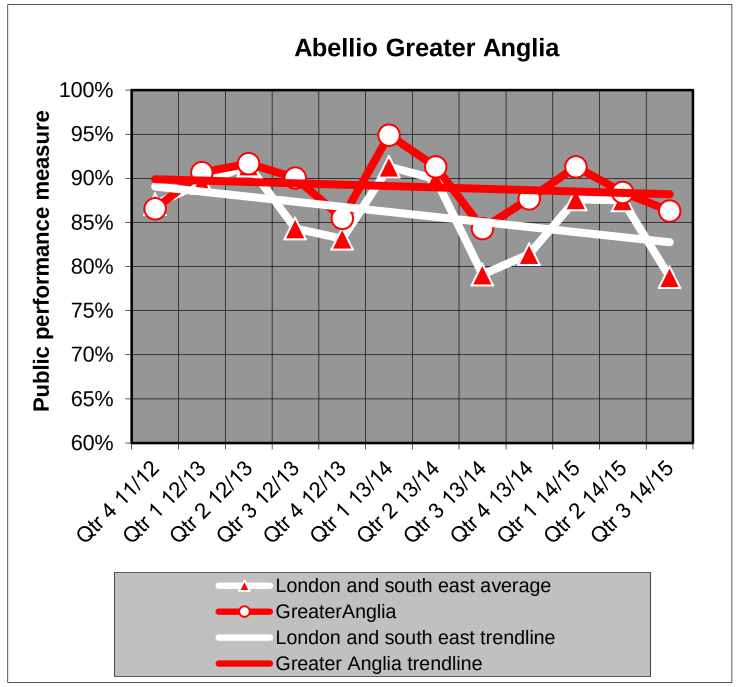
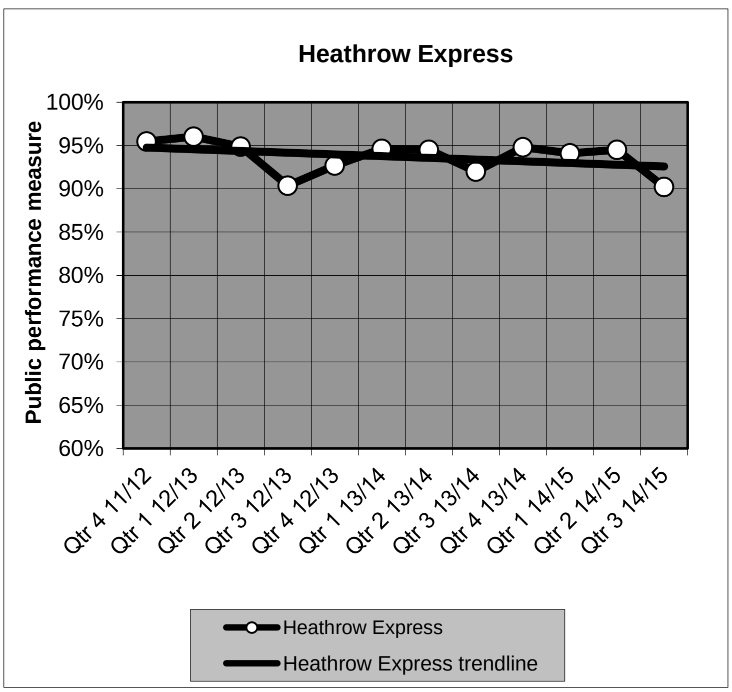
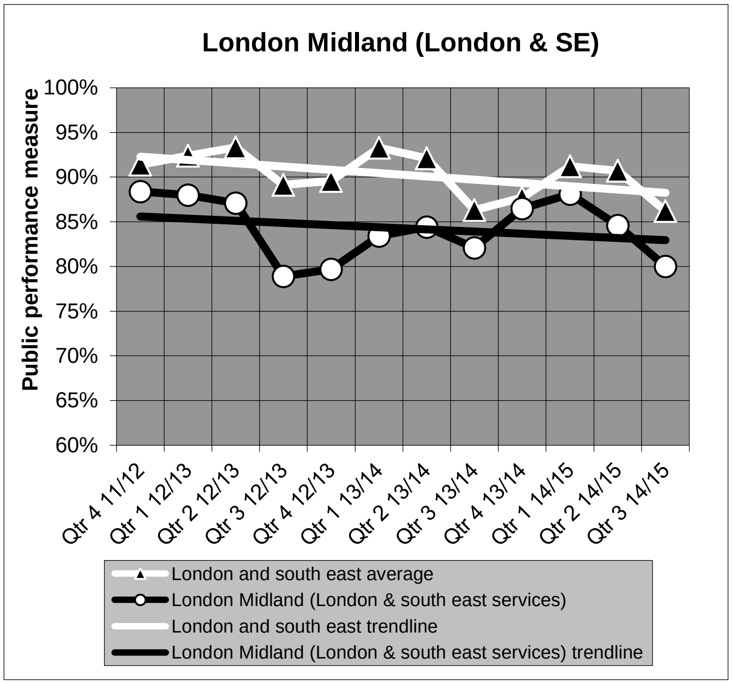
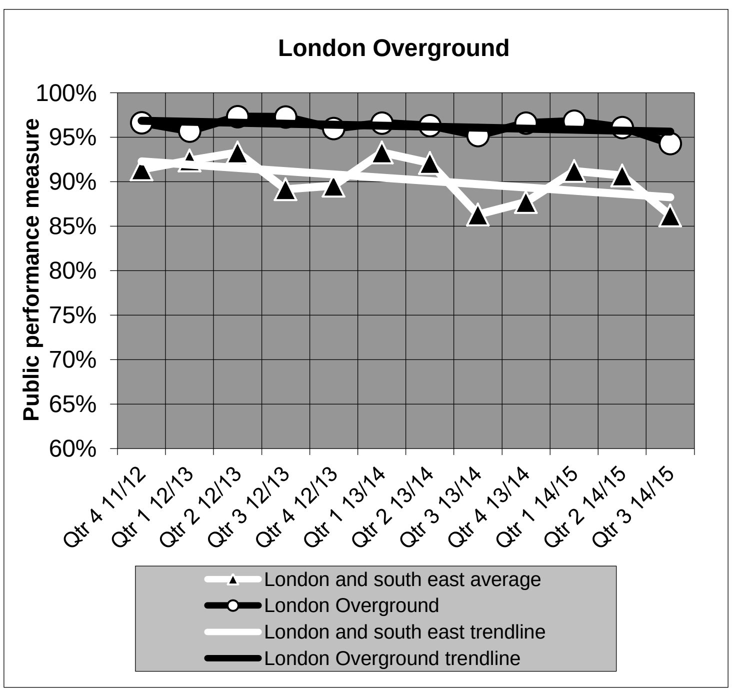




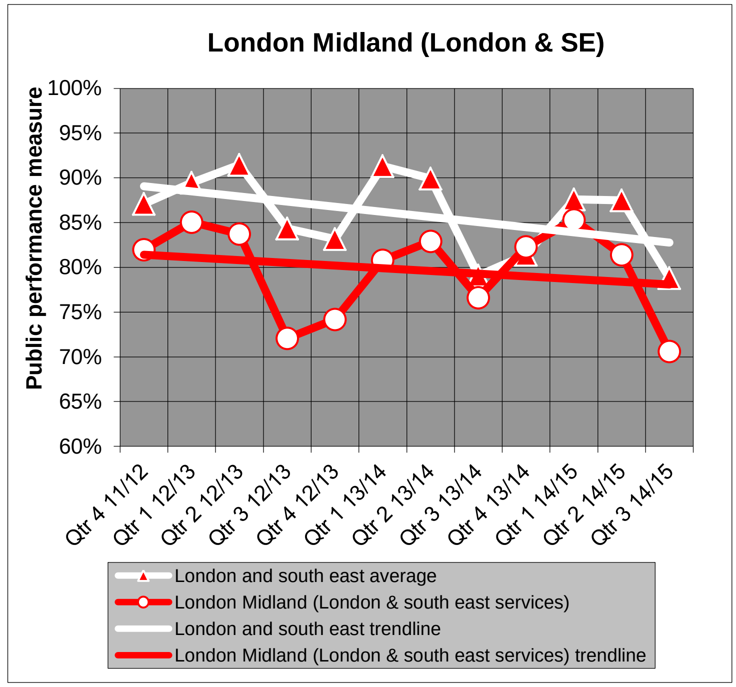
Note: As it is an unfranchised operator, Heathrow Express services are not included in the overall average for London and the South East shown on other charts, and peak trains on this route are not monitored separately

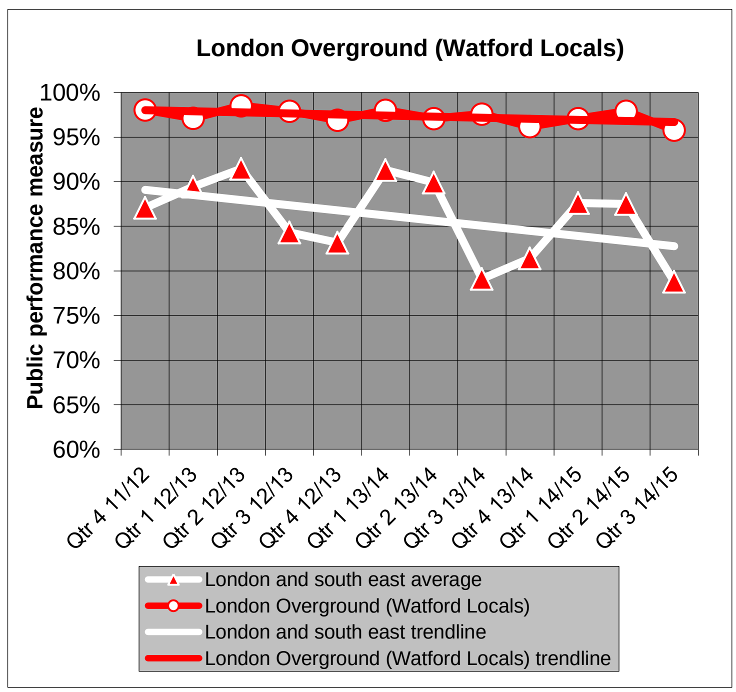
All trains performance





Peak trains performance

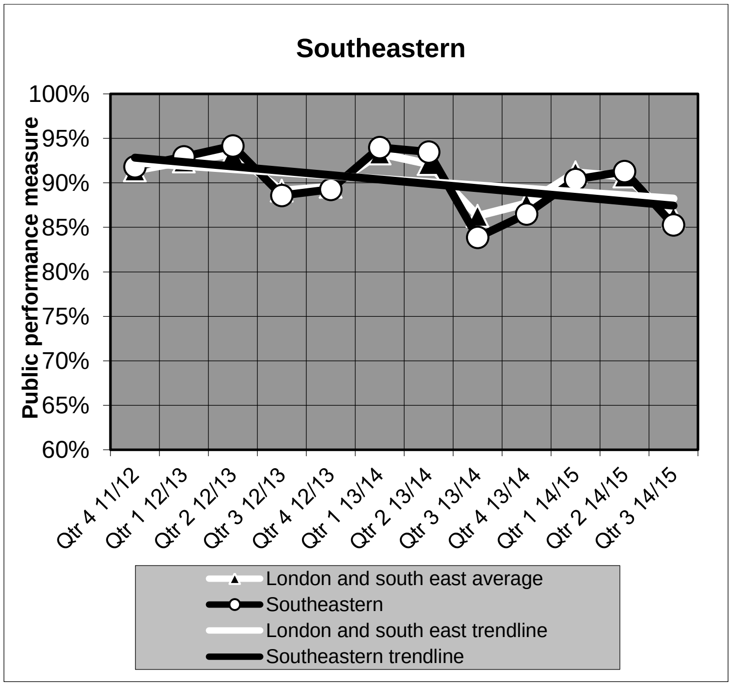


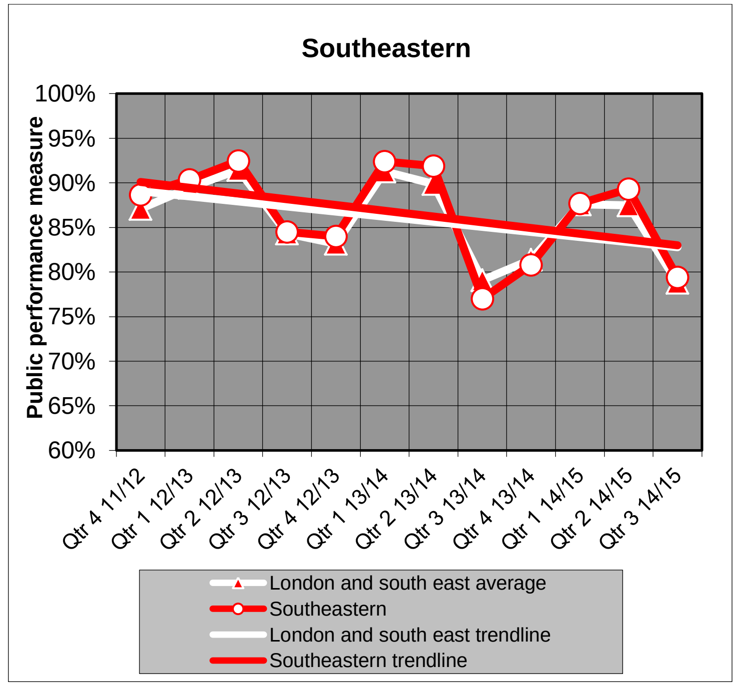


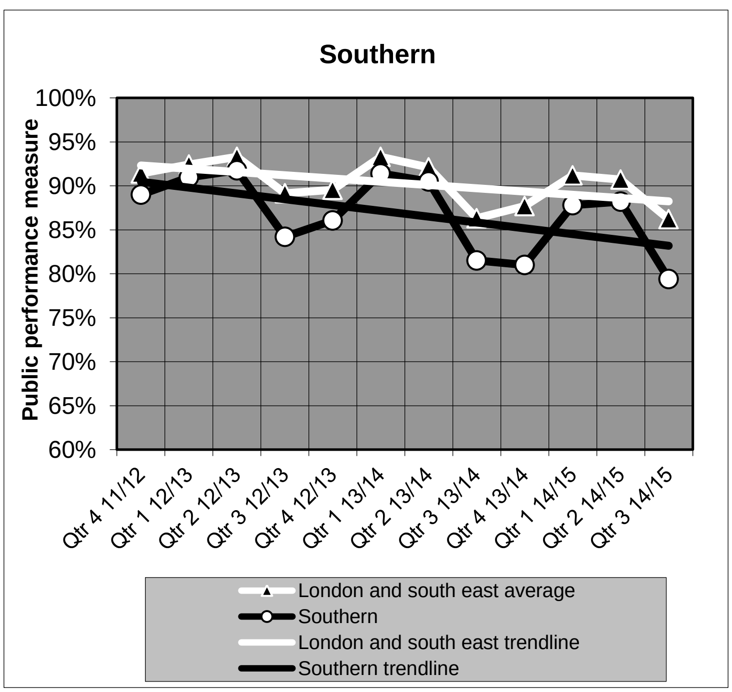
London TravelWatch

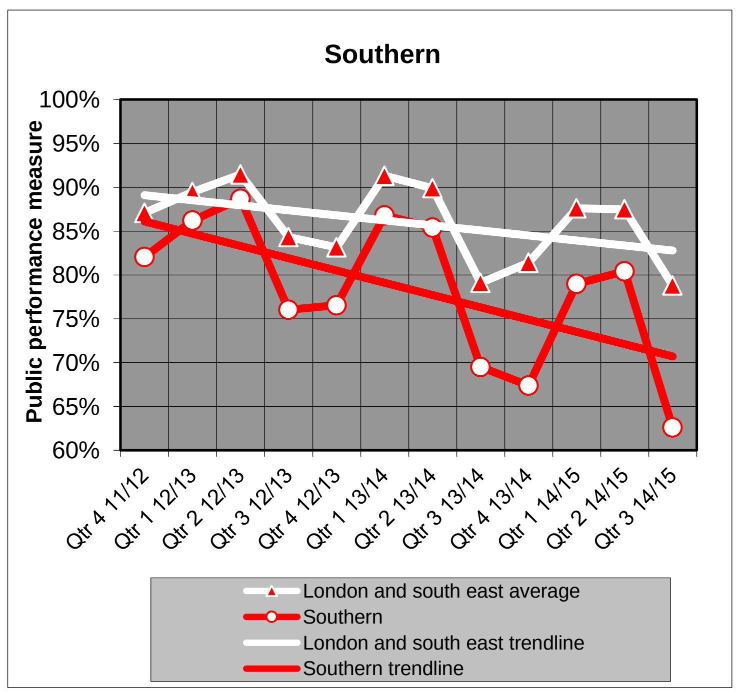
All trains performance

Peak trains performance

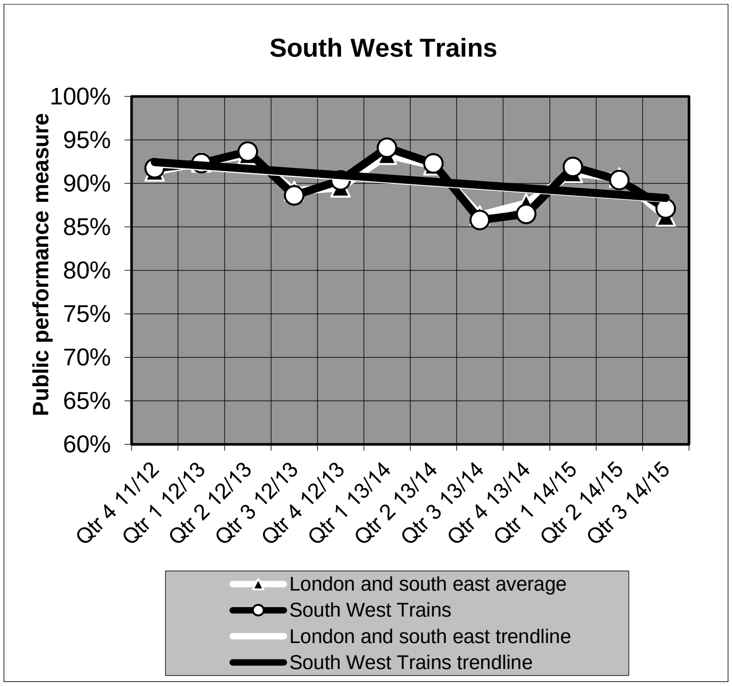




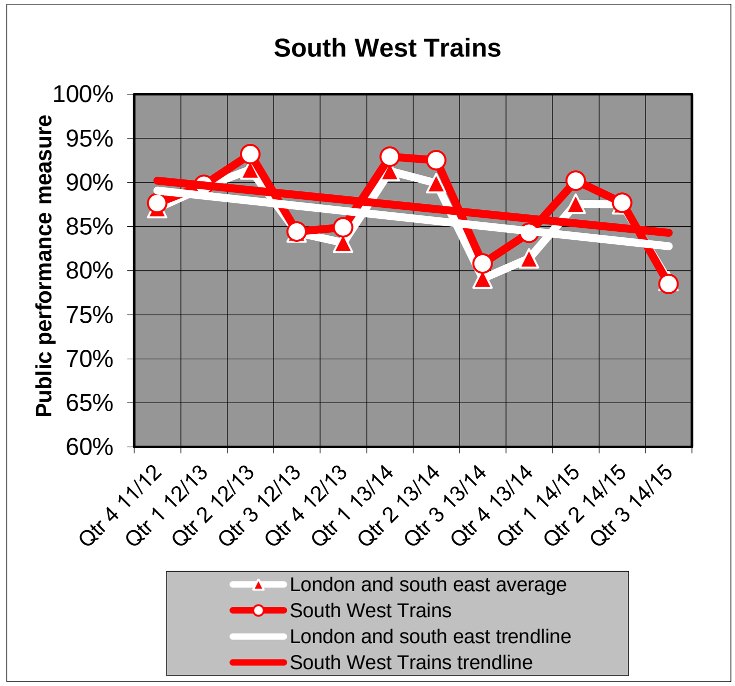




All trains performance



Peak trains performance



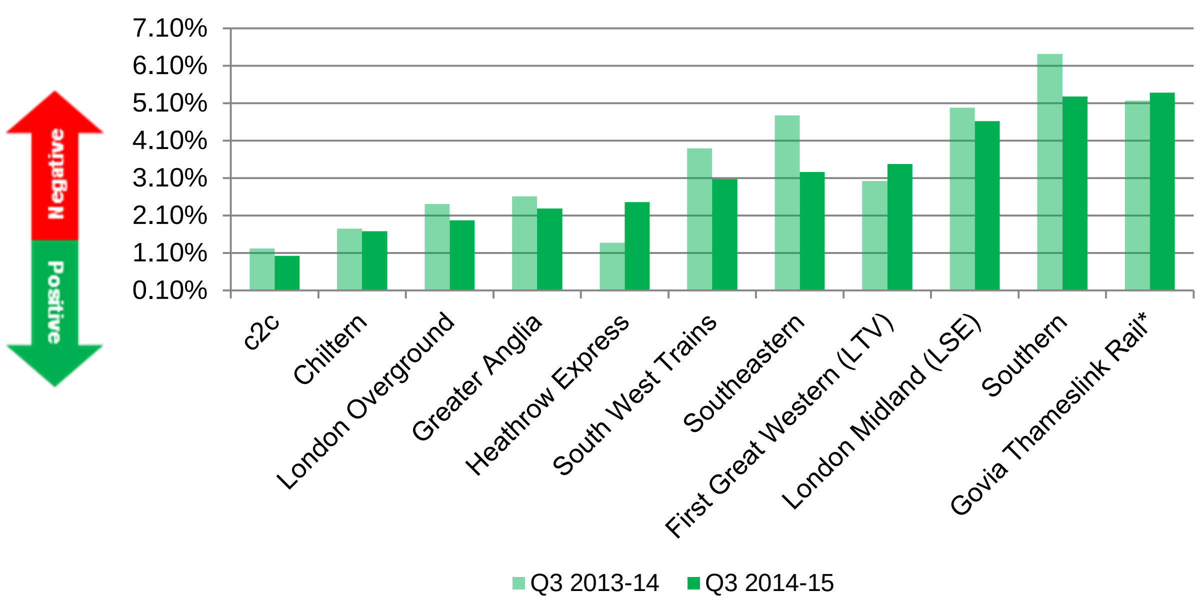
2.3 Cancellations and significant lateness

Cancellations and significant lateness is a measure of the percentage of trains which arrive 'significantly' late or do not run, expressed as a percentage of the total number of trains planned. A train is defined as significantly late if it arrives 30 or more minutes late at its planned destination or fails to complete its entire planned route, including calling at all timetabled stations. This measure reflects the level of serious disruption to passenger journeys.

The overall rate of cancellations and significant lateness was 3.4% in quarter 3 2014-15, which was 0.6 percentage points lower than in the same period a year before. c2c recorded the lowest percentage (with 1.0%), a 0.2 percentage point reduction. Chiltern Railways, the best performer in the previous quarter, had the second best score at 1.7%. Govia Thameslink Rail (formerly First Capital Connect), and Southern had the worst levels (with 5.3%, and 5.28% respectively).

Service reliability of the new GTR franchise (both Thameslink and Great Northern routes), Southern and also Southeastern continued to be poor for a number of reasons, particularly poor performance by Network Rail, which has led to less infrastructure causing a lack of resilience in timetable, but also because of things within the control of the operators, such as driver numbers, and fleet availability.

Graph 3 – Cancellations and significant lateness Q3 2013-14 & Q3 2014-15

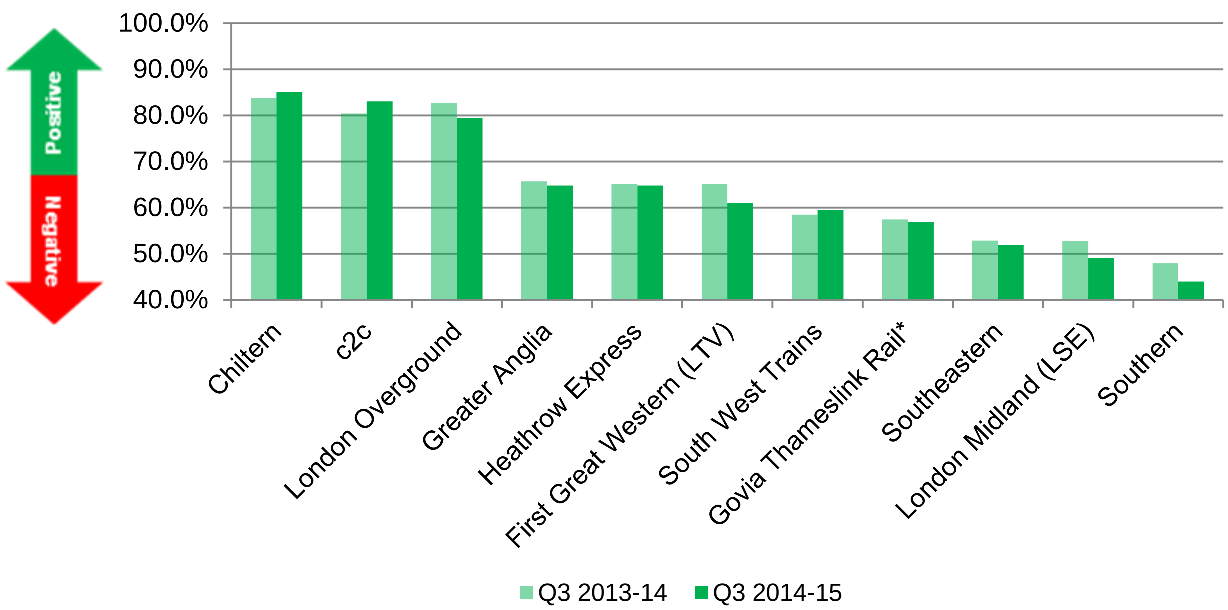


2.4 Right time arrivals

Right time arrival (RTA) is a measure of the percentage of trains that arrive at their final destination either on time or early. Right time is defined as less than one minute late (and should not be confused with "on time", as defined for PPM purposes).

Most operators experienced a decrease this quarter, when compared to the equivalent quarter in Q3 2013-14. The overall rate of '*right time' arrivals* was 59.1% in Q3 2014-15, 1.4 percentage points lower than last year. In the last year, Chiltern Railways have had the best RTA score compared to other L&SE operators, with 85.1%. In contrast, Southern had the lowest score for the same period, with a score of 43.9% in Q3 2014-15. First Great Western had the largest decrease in right time arrivals relative to the previous year, with 61.0%, a 4.0 percentage point decrease.

Graph 4 – Right time arrivals Q3 2013-14 & Q3 2014-15



3 London & South East passenger satisfaction

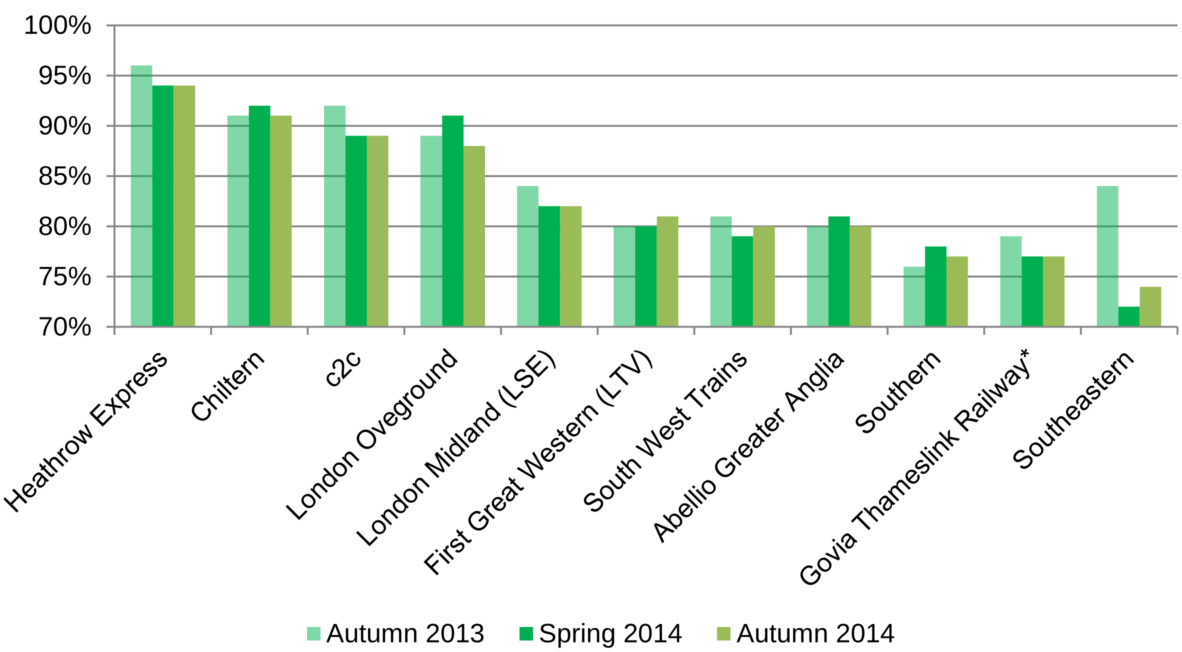
The national passenger watchdog, Passenger Focus conducts a survey of National Rail passengers in the autumn and spring of each year. The National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) provides a network-wide picture of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel, and this report focuses on a snapshot of the London and South East passengers' overall levels of satisfaction.

In autumn 2014 the percentage of satisfied passengers, taking all London and South East operators together, had notably decreased since they were surveyed in autumn 2013. The operator with the highest satisfaction rate was Heathrow Express, 94% of whose users rated the service as satisfactory or good. This is 2 percentage points lower than in autumn 2013. Abellio Greater Anglia achieved the highest increase of any London & South East operator.

Southeastern had the lowest level of passenger satisfaction and saw the largest decline, with only 74% of its passengers satisfied, compared to 84% in autumn 2013, a 10 percentage point decrease.

L&SE train operating companies customer satisfaction figures for the last two surveys, along with the survey results from one year ago, are shown in graph 5

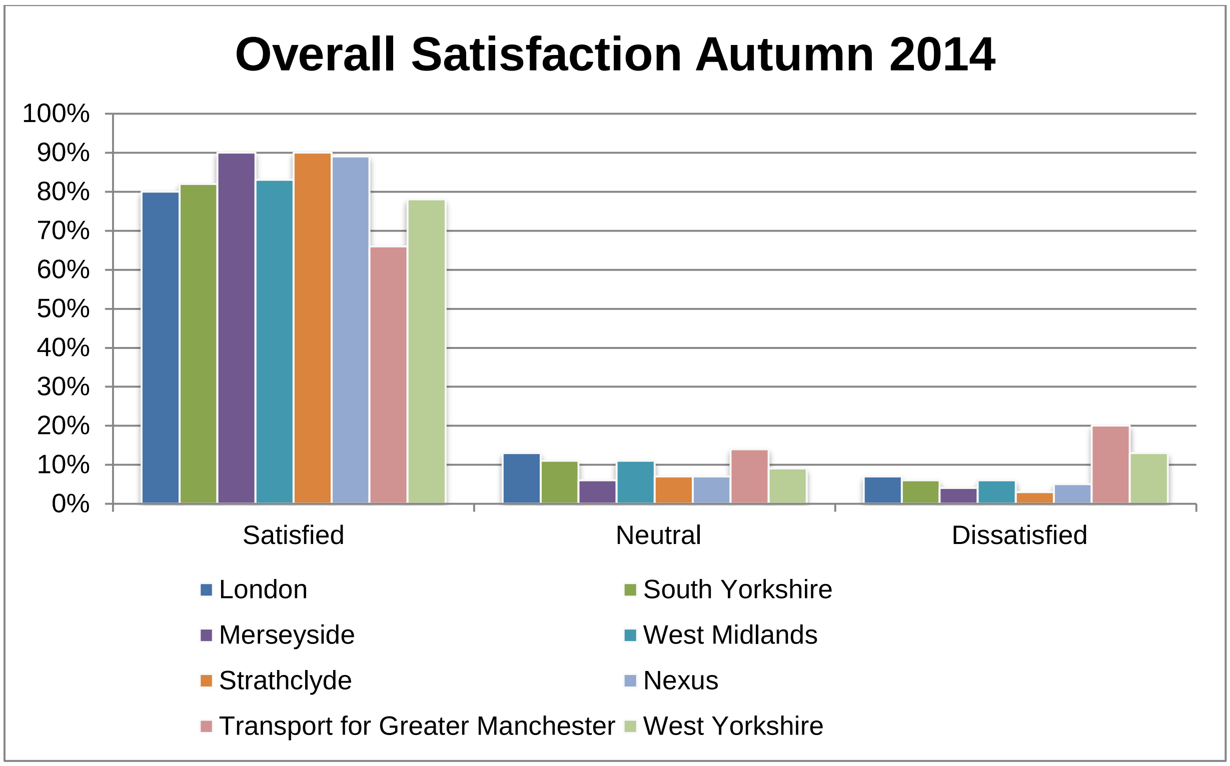
Graph 5 - L & SE National Rail Passenger Survey



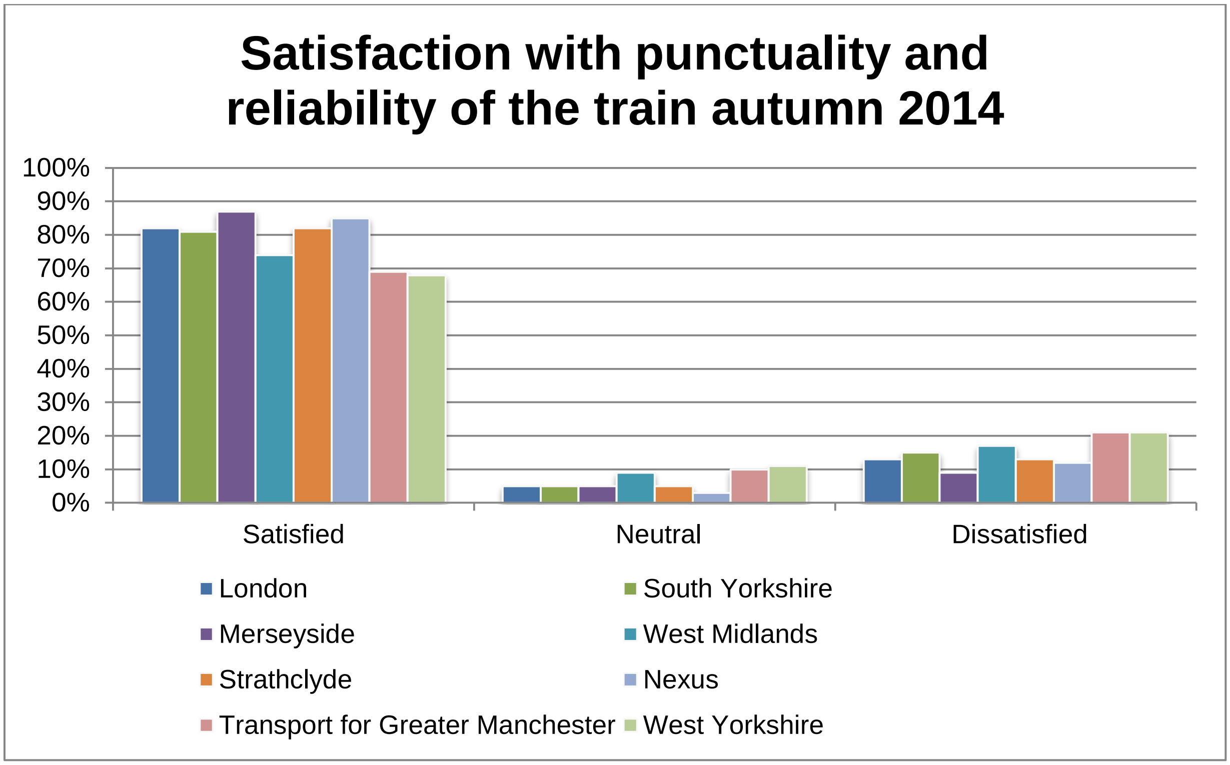
3.1 NRPS London

This section compares the satisfaction of London passengers with those in other conurbations covered by the survey. Topics covered include punctuality and reliability, value for money, staff availability, frequency of trains and toilet facilities on trains.

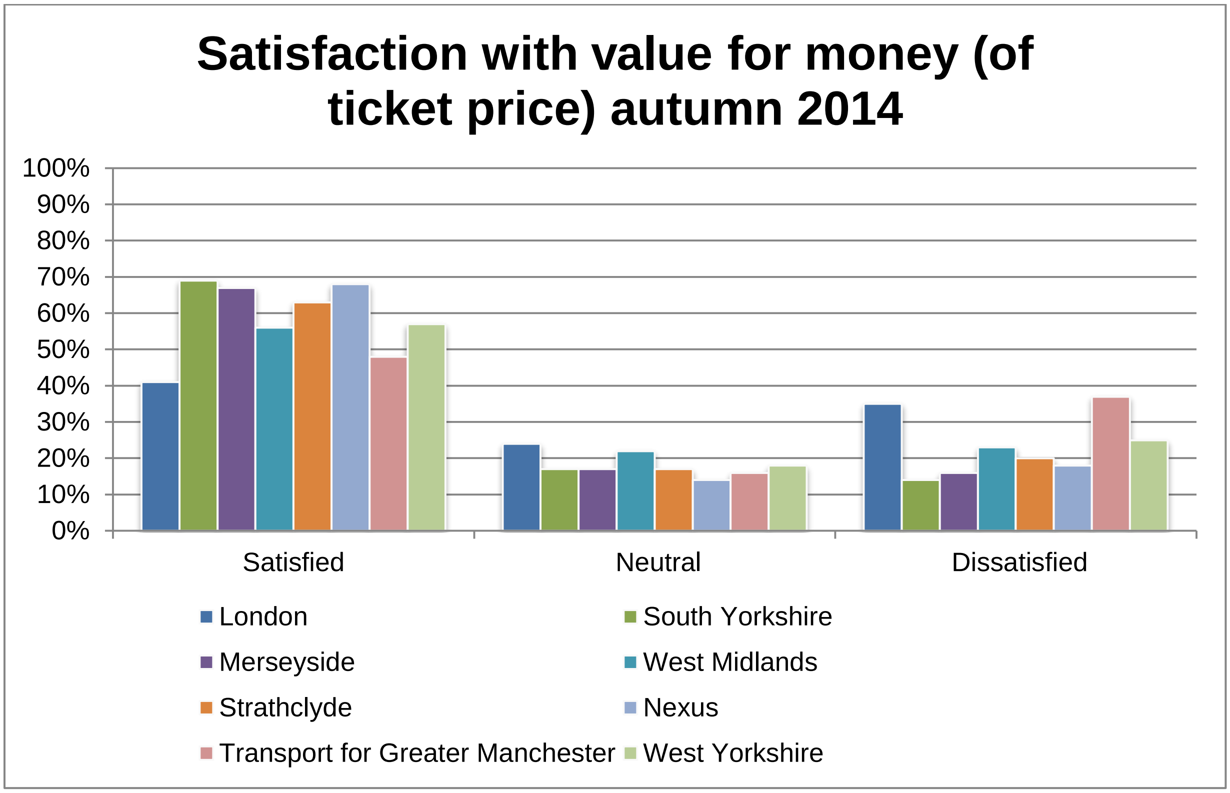
The overall satisfaction table shows that passengers in Merseyside and those in the Strathclyde were the most satisfied with their travel and those in Greater Manchester the least. London passengers' overall satisfaction is mid range when compared to the other regions.



Compared with those in other metropolitan areas, London passengers are in the mid range for satisfaction with the punctuality and reliability of their train service. Merseyside passengers are the most satisfied.

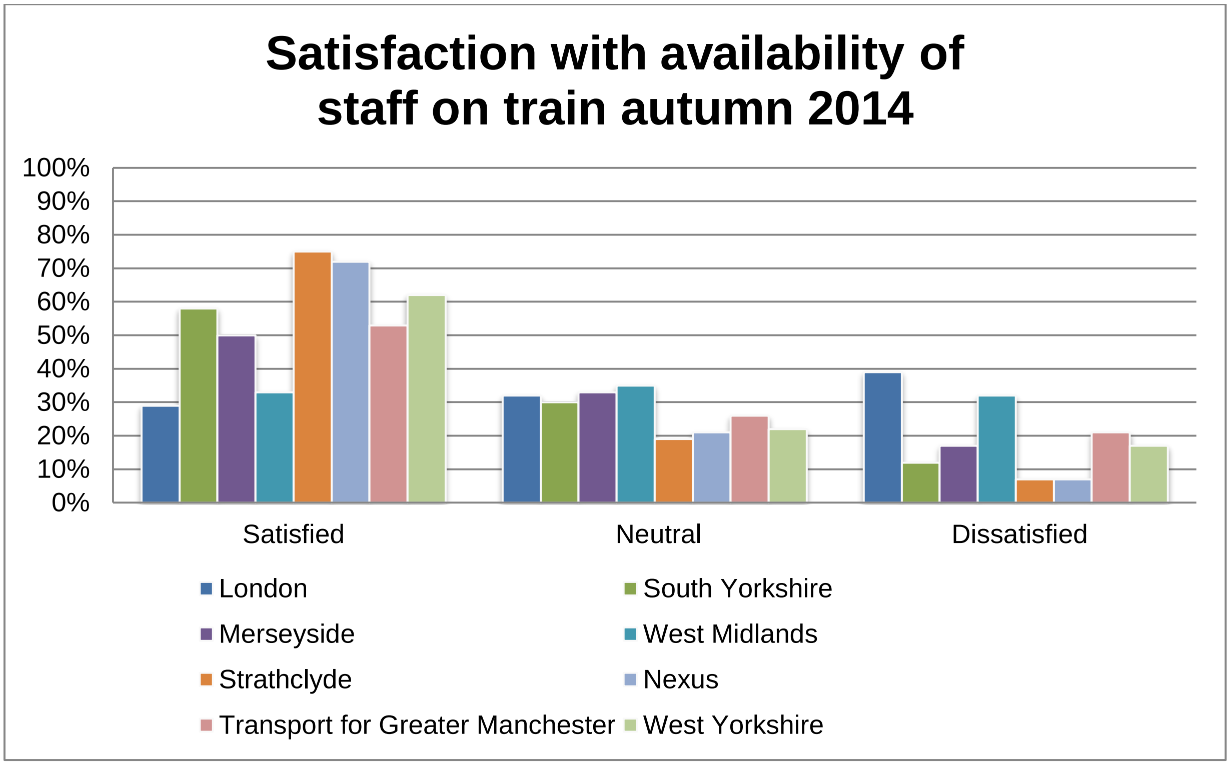


It is striking that London passengers are the least satisfied with the value for money of their ticket price, compared to those in other metropolitan areas. This can be attributed to the higher level of fares paid by Londoners than those in other cities, a higher dependency on public transport, greater levels of crowding, and other environmental factors that affect passengers' perception of this measure. For further details please see London TravelWatch's *Value for Money* report[2].

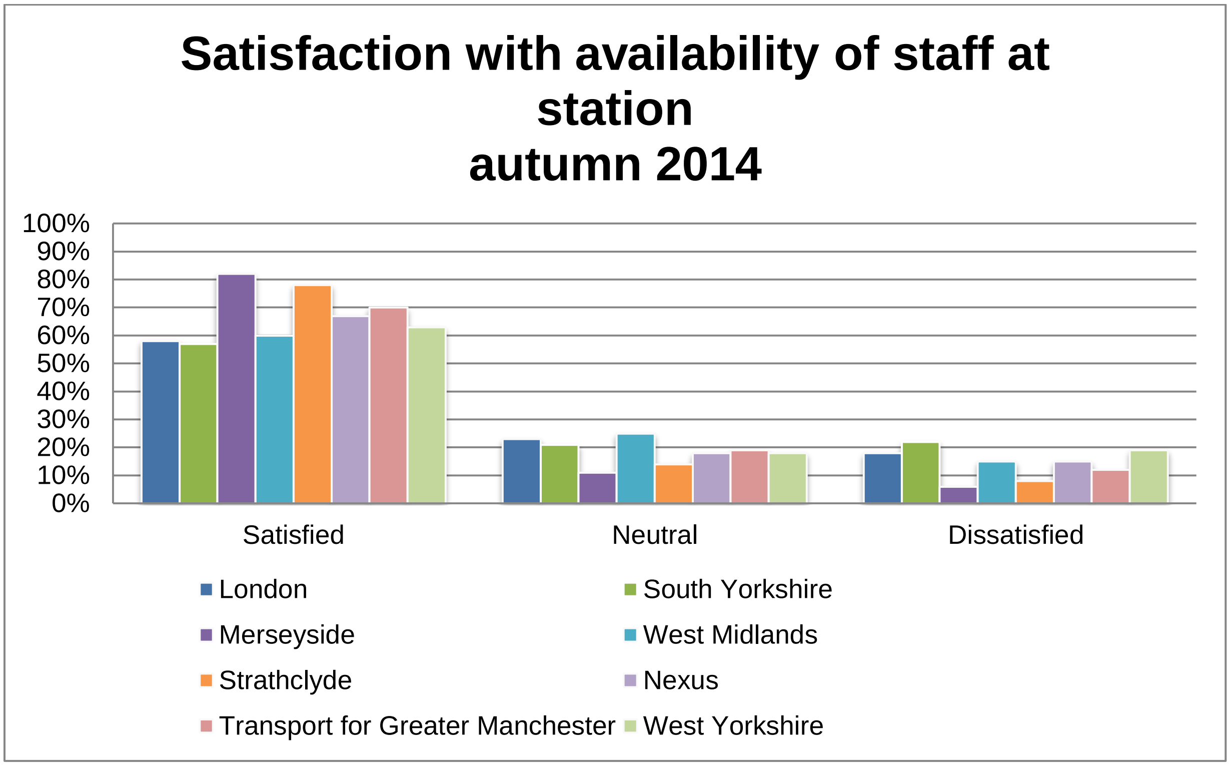


[2] Value for Money on London's transport services: what consumers think: August 2013

London passengers are more dissatisfied about the availability of staff on trains than passengers in other areas. This may be attributable to the fact that most metropolitan regions' trains are generally operated on 'pay train' principles, with a conductor passing through the train. This gives much greater staff visibility than London's method of operation, in which many trains have only a driver on board plus an occasional ticket inspector.

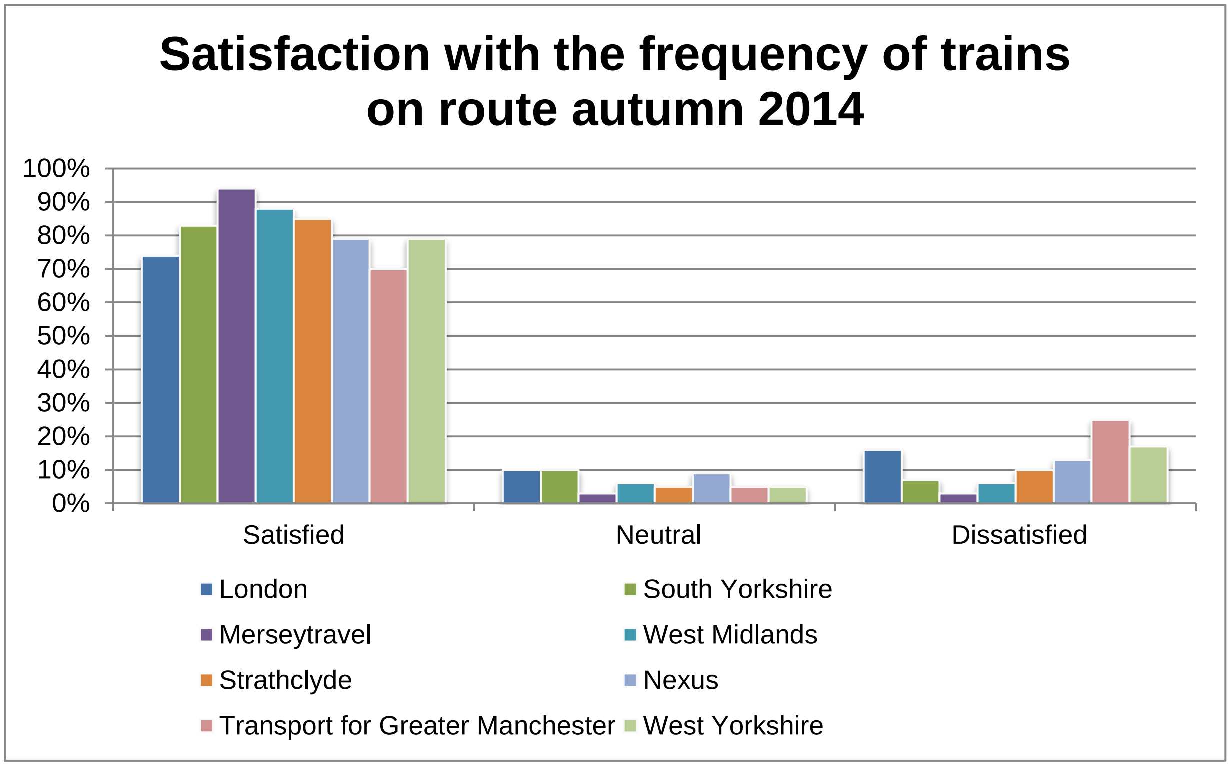


London passengers' satisfaction level with station staff availability is in stark contrast with the satisfaction levels for staff on trains. This may be attributed to the fact that the ticket offices are usually staffed, with set operating hours, and staff can usually be found at ticket gates and on station platforms.



London passengers are at the lower end of reported satisfaction levels with service frequency, when compared with other metropolitan areas, because many suburban routes have services that run only every 30 minutes or less. In Merseyside and some other metropolitan areas most services run at least once every 15 minutes or more, and have consistent service patterns throughout the day (whereas in London these can vary considerably).

There is a correlation between this measure and that for value for money. It should be noted that operators with a higher frequency of service achieve much better satisfaction with value for money (e.g. London Overground, c2c, First Great Western).


Satisfaction with the frequency of trains on route autumn 2014
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Satisfied
Neutral
Dissatisfied
London
South Yorkshire
Merseytravel
West Midlands
Strathclyde
Nexus
Transport for Greater Manchester
West Yorkshire

4 Passenger complaints

The Office of Rail Regulation issues data relating to the number of complaints received by franchised operators. The complaints data are expressed as a proportion of each 100,000 journeys made, as this is how train operating companies (TOCs) are required to report them. This “normalisation” of the data compensates for the difference between companies in the number of passengers carried.

In the charts in this section, each train company’s quarterly complaints data for the past three years are shown graphically. The rate of complaints an operator receives can be a useful performance indicator as it reflects direct feedback from passengers. A complaint is defined as ‘any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer or potential customer about service delivery or about company or industry policy’. TOCs record and report complaints made by letter, fax, e-mail, pre-printed form or telephone. This data is provisional and subject to adjustment by the operators.

It should be noted that these are national statistics, applying to the whole of each company’s system. No distinction is made between local and longer-distance services, and it is not possible to isolate from them those which refer to journeys made to, from or within London TravelWatch’s geographical area.

It will be seen that these results range widely. The reasons for the differences between operators are complex. For example, L&SE operators have a high proportion of regular commuters, travelling on season tickets, who therefore make infrequent transactions, and are accustomed to the vagaries of their travel experiences. The longer distance train operators typically offer a wider range of fares and ticket types (and classes of travel), and additional facilities such as reservations and catering, which can give rise to more potential sources of difficulty. Their services are often less frequent, and passengers are more likely to be accompanied by luggage.

Not all operators control all or most (or even any) of the stations they serve. The social profile of an operators’ client base may materially affect its users’ propensity to complain. In addition, there is no fully effective industry-wide protocol relating to the definition and recording of complaints, particularly those which raise multiple issues. Inter-operator comparisons are generally less revealing than trends over time in individual companies’ data.

4.1 Complaints by operator

The complaints data below is the latest available from the Office of Rail Regulation. It relates to Q2 2014-15 (Jul-Sept 2014). The table shows the number of complaints passengers made about their journeys each quarter, over a three year period, to each train operating company. The shaded column shows the overall average complaints rate per operator per 100,000 journeys. For some operators (e.g. London Midland) this disguises sharp quarter-on-quarter fluctuations. The totals cover the whole of each company's services, including those which are outside London and the south east. Heathrow Express is an unfranchised (or "open access") operator, for which complaints data are not published, and is therefore omitted.

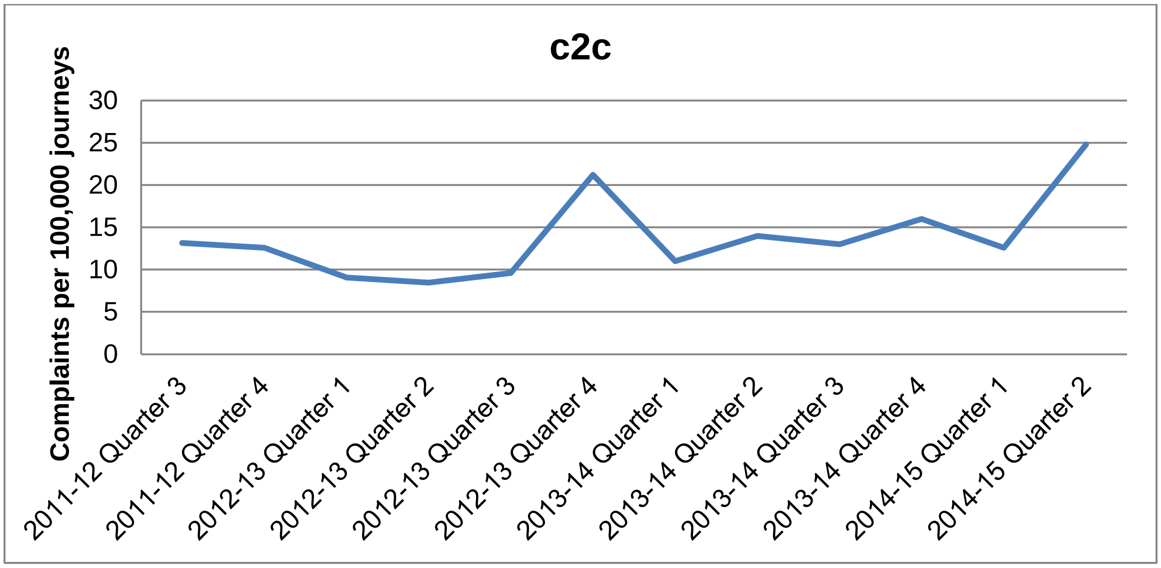
London Overground is conspicuous for its comparatively low rate of complaints. A number of factors probably contribute to this, including high service frequencies, short journeys, a simple ticketing system, fully staffed stations, and a generally high level of reliability. It is noteworthy that Chiltern has a high complaints rate despite its consistently good passenger satisfaction scores. This probably reflects the longer distance character of most of its services and solid make up of its community base, and the inclusion of "delay-repay" applications in its complaint totals, a practice which is not universal among other TOCs.

Quarterly passenger complaints per 100,000 journeys

TOC	Q3 11-12	Q4 11-12	Q1 12-13	Q2 12-13	Q3 12-13	Q4 12-13	Q1 13-14	Q2 13-14	Q3 13-14	Q4 13-14	Q1 14-15	Q2 14-15	Average
London Midland	85	74	64	77	149	96	57	35	40	40	28.6	27.6	**64.4**
Chiltern Railways	58	50	63	36	37	39	31	76	84	127	63	78.5	**61.9**
First Great Western	82	73	50	59	81	89	44	48	56	68	41.8	38.3	**60.8**
Abellio Greater Anglia	42	35	28	26	30	36	24	26	42	29	30.2		**31.7**
Govia Thameslink Railway*	28	27	24	18	18	30	21	16	20	33	14.8	10.5	**21.7**
c2c	13	13	9	8	10	21	11	14	13	16	12.6	24.8	**13.8**
South West Trains	10	10	9	9	17	18	9	11	15	17	13.2	15.2	**12.8**
Southeastern	13	13	12	12	13	15	9	9	14	20	8.1	9.2	**12.3**
Southern	9	5	6	5	3	6	5	6	9	9	9.5	8.9	**6.8**
London Overground	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2.8	2.8	**2.9**

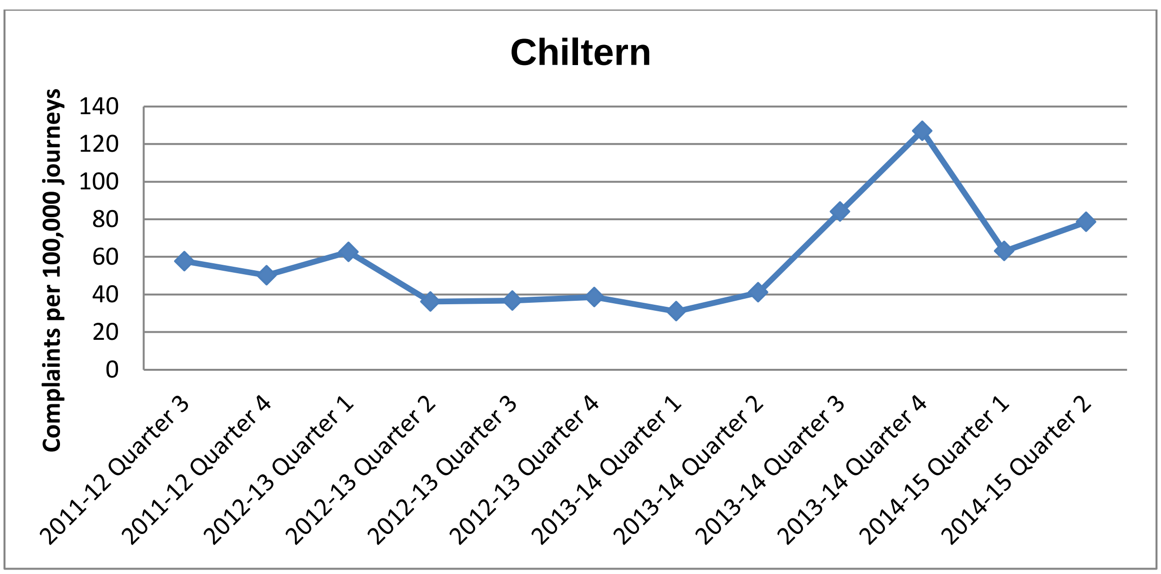
c2c

On average, there were 13.8 complaints to c2c per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Issues about service performance, staff conduct and ticketing were the most frequent categories.



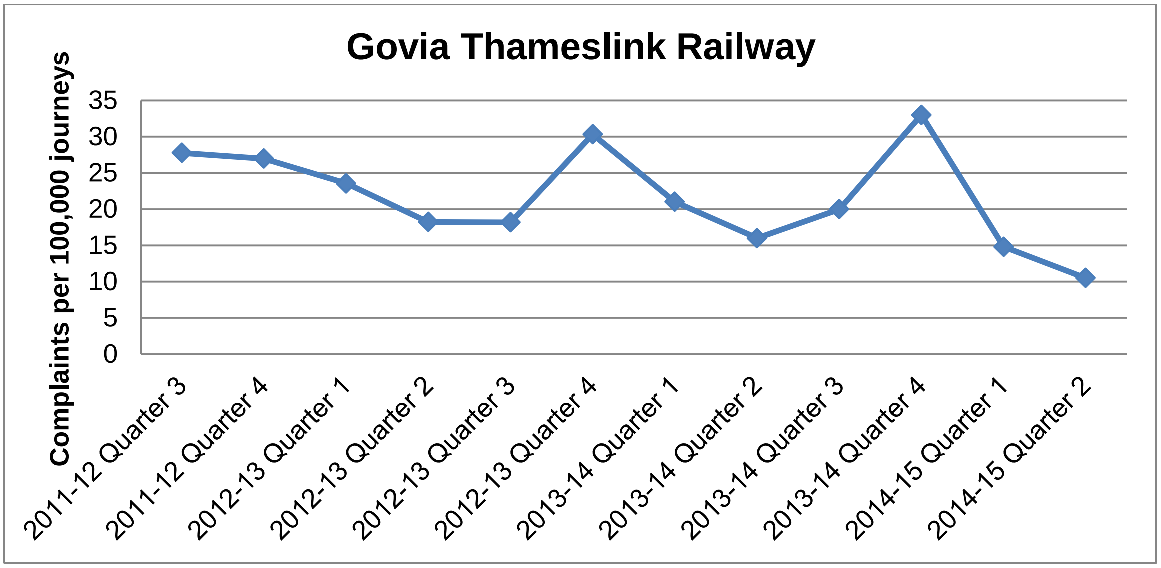
Chiltern

On average, there were 61.9 complaints to Chiltern per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. This is higher than all other operators except London Midland. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most frequent categories.



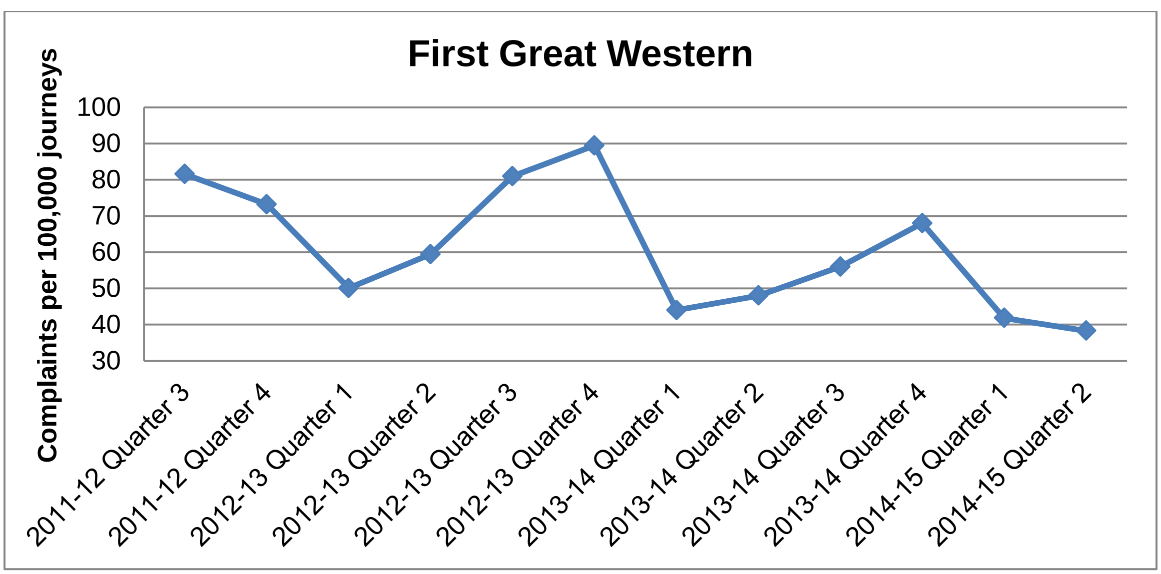
Govia Thameslink Railway

On average, there were 21.7 complaints to Govia Thameslink Railway per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance, ticketing and complaints handling were the most common. During Q2 2014-15, the First Capital Connect franchise was replaced by Govia Thameslink Railway. This came into effect on 14 September 2014.



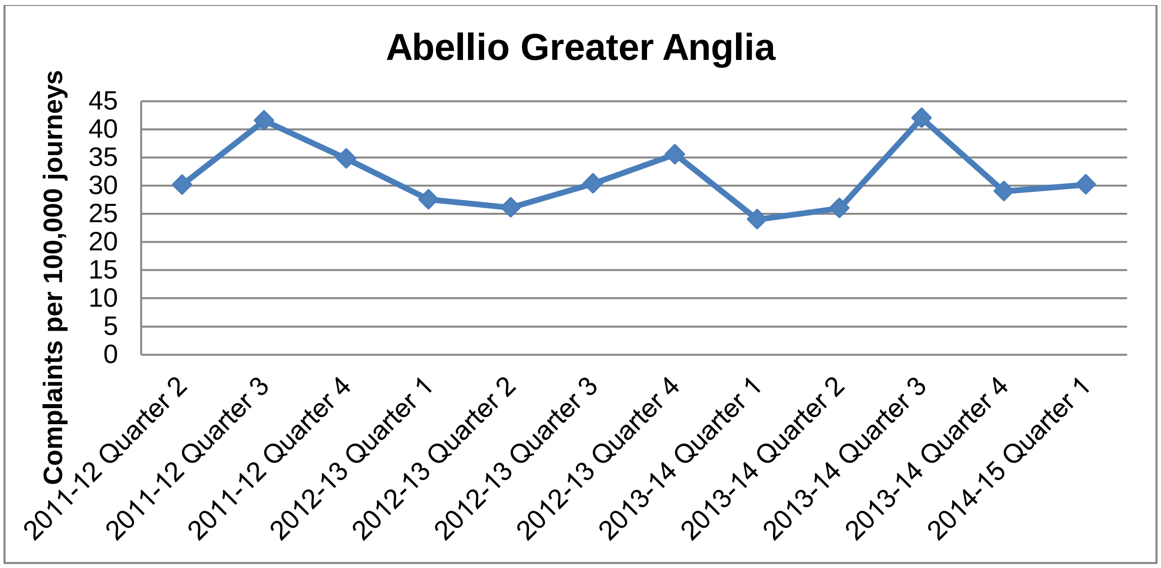
First Great Western

On average, there were 60.8 complaints to First Great Western per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most common.



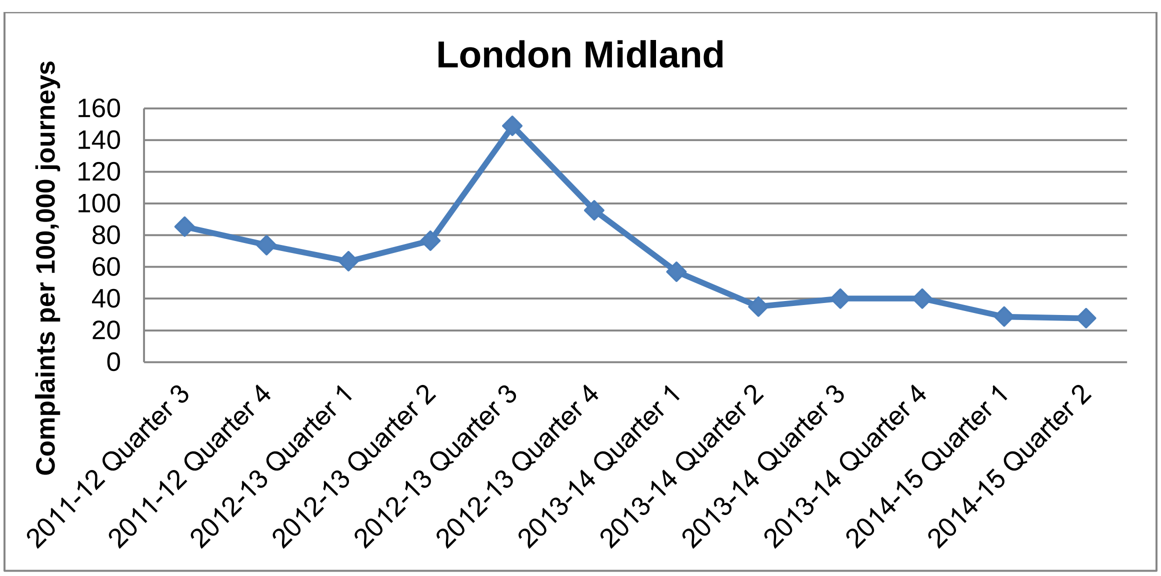
Abellio Greater Anglia

On average, there were 31.7 complaints to Abellio Greater Anglia per 100,000 journeys over the previous 11 quarters (quarter 2 14-15 figures not yet available). Complaints about service performance, staff conduct and ticketing were the most common. Abellio Greater Anglia took over the franchise from National Express East Anglia in February 2012.



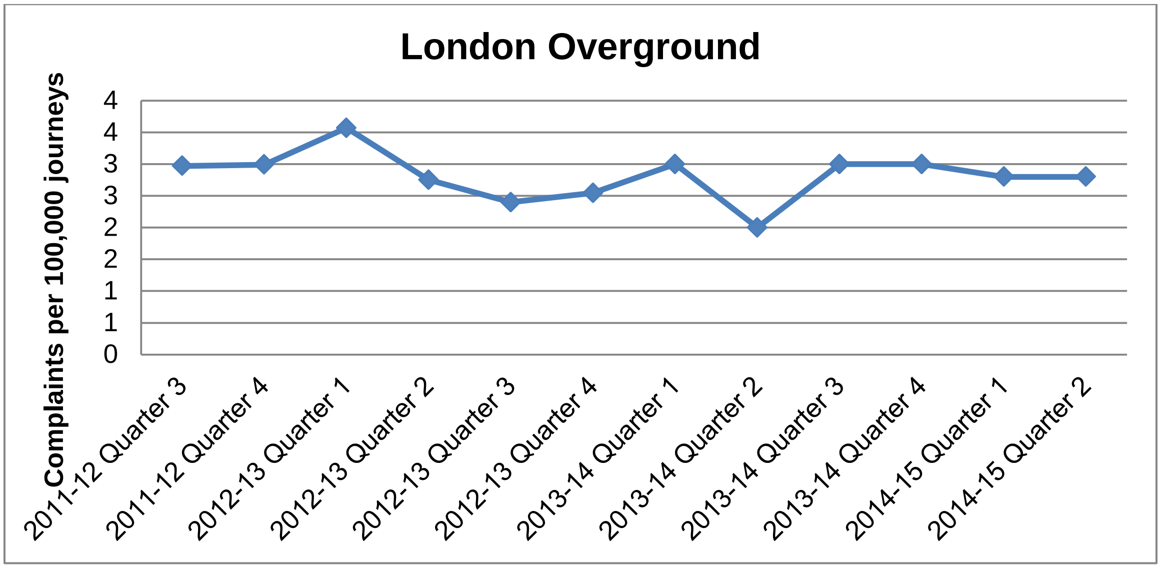
London Midland

On average, there were 64.4 complaints to London Midland per 100,000 journeys over the previous periods. Quarter 2 saw a reduction in complaints compared to the pervious quarters. Complaints about service performance were the most common.



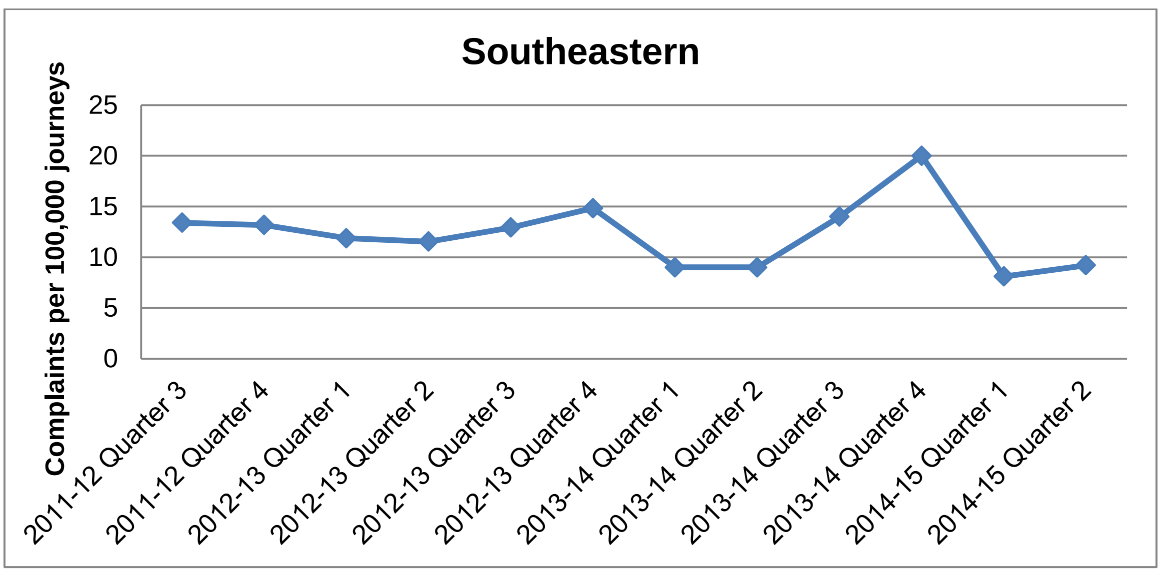
London Overground

On average, there were 2.8 complaints to London Overground per 100,000 journeys over the previous periods. Train performance and ticketing are the two most common categories of complaint.



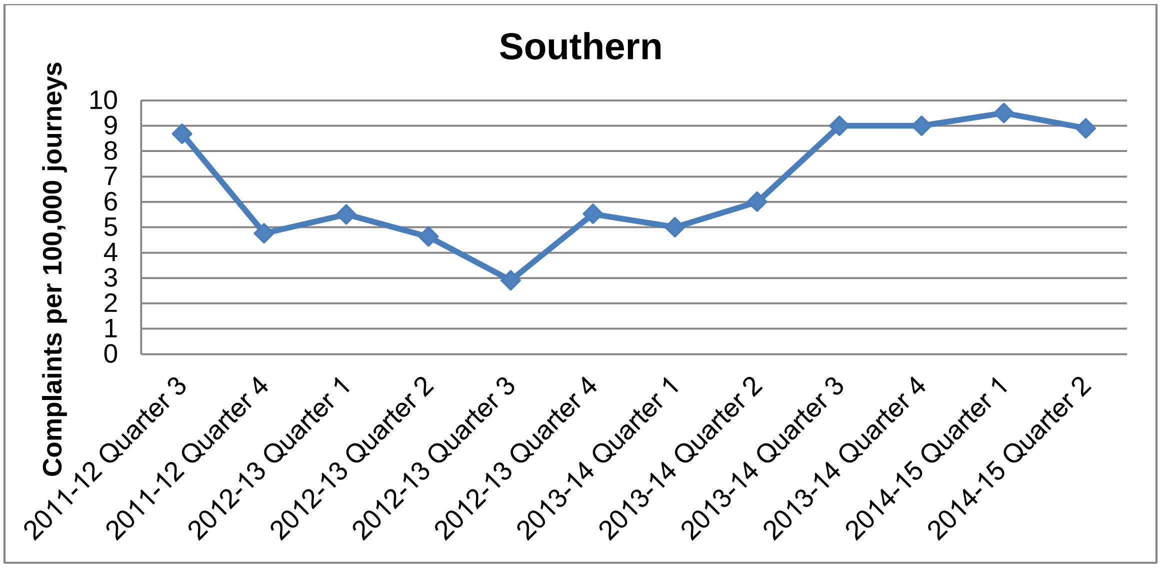
Southeastern

On average, there were 12.3 complaints to Southeastern per 100,000 journeys over the previous periods. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most common.



Southern

On average, there were 6.8 complaints to Southern per 100,000 journeys over the previous periods. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most common.



South West Trains

On average, there were 12.8 complaints to South West Trains per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance, staff conduct and ticketing were the most common.