

Policy committee
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PC026

National Rail Performance Report - Quarter 3 2013/14

February 2013



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 2 2012/13 – Jul to Sept	Dec 2012
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

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1 Overview

This report focuses on the experience of passengers of the performance of the rail network in London and the south east during the third quarter (Oct to Dec) of 2013/14.

For definitions of the measures used, see Section 2.

London & South East (L&SE) train service performance

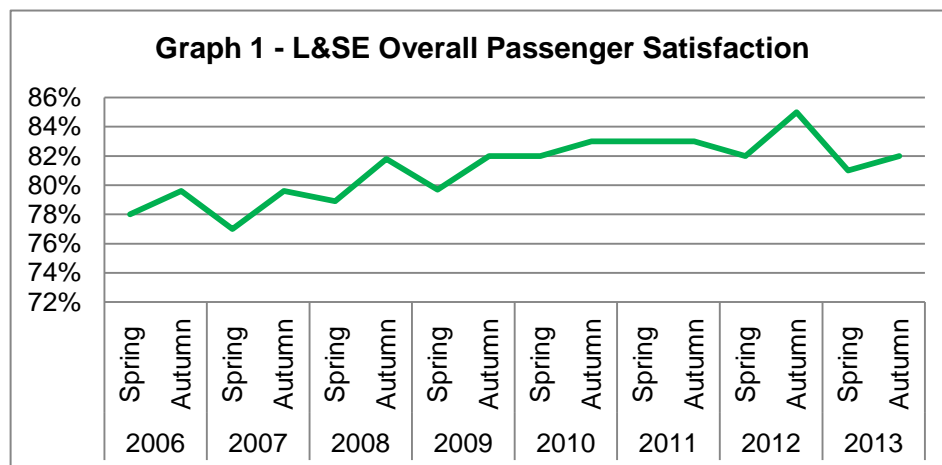
The L&SE east train operators' overall *public performance measure* (PPM) result was lower than in the same quarter last year, averaging 86.3% - which was 2.8% lower than a year ago.

The train company with the highest average PPM in the third quarter of 2013/14 was c2c (with 96.4%), and the company with the lowest was Southern (with 81.5%).

The overall rate of *cancellations and significant lateness* was 4.1% in quarter 3 2013/14, which was 1.3% higher than in the same period a year ago. c2c recorded the lowest percentage (with 1.2%), and Southern the highest (with 6.4%).

The overall rate of '*right time*' arrivals was 60.6% in quarter 3 2013/14, which was 3.1% lower than last year. The company with the highest percentage of 'right time' arrivals was Chiltern (with 83.7%), and that with the lowest was Southern (with 47.9%).

London & South East (L&SE) passenger satisfaction



Overall, passenger satisfaction has decreased since the last autumn survey. The percentage of passengers satisfied was 82% compared with 85% in autumn 2012, and 81% in spring 2013. The train operating company (TOC) with the highest rate of passenger satisfaction in autumn 2013 in London & South East was Heathrow Express, with 96%. Southern had the lowest score with 76%, as well as the highest reduction in satisfied passengers compared with autumn 2012. This decline in passenger satisfaction mirrors the quarter 3 2013/14 punctuality results.

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 refer 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 (LSE) 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”.

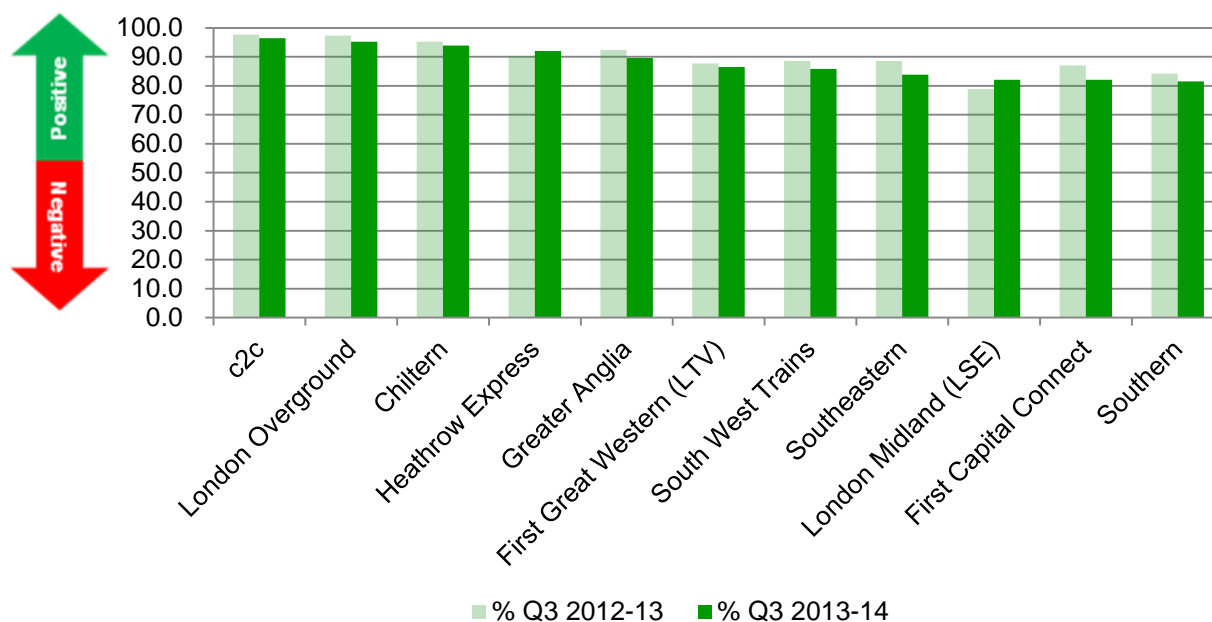
The timetable against which the trains are judged is known as the “plan of the day”. This generally reflects the published timetable as amended for planned engineering works or as a result of major incidents.

For L&SE operators, a large proportion of whose 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.

Most (nine out of eleven) operators' PPM scores fell in this quarter, when compared with the same period last year (Q3 2012/13). Operating on routes with minimal interaction with other TOCs, c2c again had the highest average PPM for the quarter with 96.4%, despite a decrease of 1.2%. Southern had the lowest PPM, with 81.5%. This was 2.7% lower than the same period last year, with its performance badly affected by storms which resulted in fallen trees, flooding and landslips on the Brighton main line. First Capital Connect, which also operates services on the Brighton main line, recorded the highest drop in PPM in its performance this quarter (5.06%). Infrastructure failures, as well as infrastructure upgrade works, affected both operators' performance.

London Midland and Heathrow Express were the only operators to experience an improvement in their performance in this quarter compared to quarter 3 2012/13. The former's 'Strong Foundations' improvement programme, in partnership with Network Rail, seems to have paid dividends this quarter. But London Midland had consistently had the poorest performance in previous quarters and was the third worst performing TOC for quarter 3 2013/14. Track and signalling problems, poor wheel/rail adhesion and line blockages all had a knock-on effect and contributed to this TOC having one of the lowest PPM scores despite the improvement in this quarter.

Graph 2 – Public performance measure Q3 2012/13 & Q3 2013/14



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.

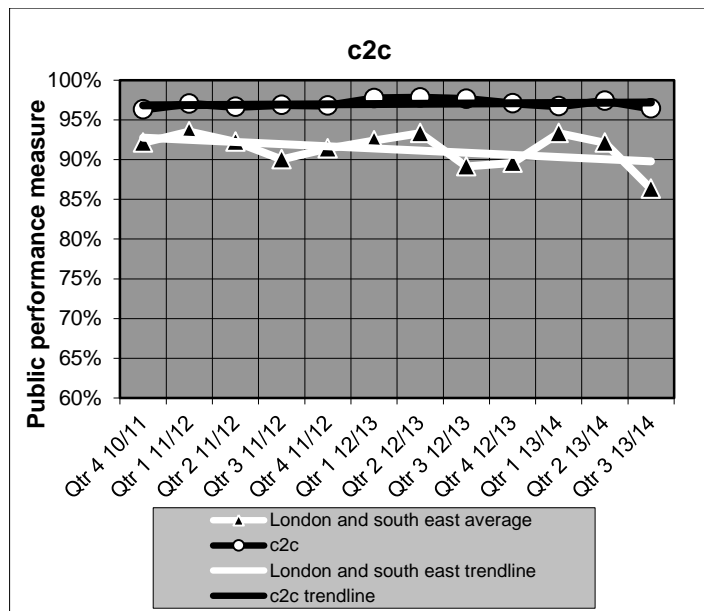
The performance of individual train companies is heavily dependent on the varying ability of Network Rail to deliver railway infrastructure on which their trains can operate reliably, as well as the inability of some operators adequately to manage the service elements (such as rolling stock and train crews) for which they are wholly responsible.

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

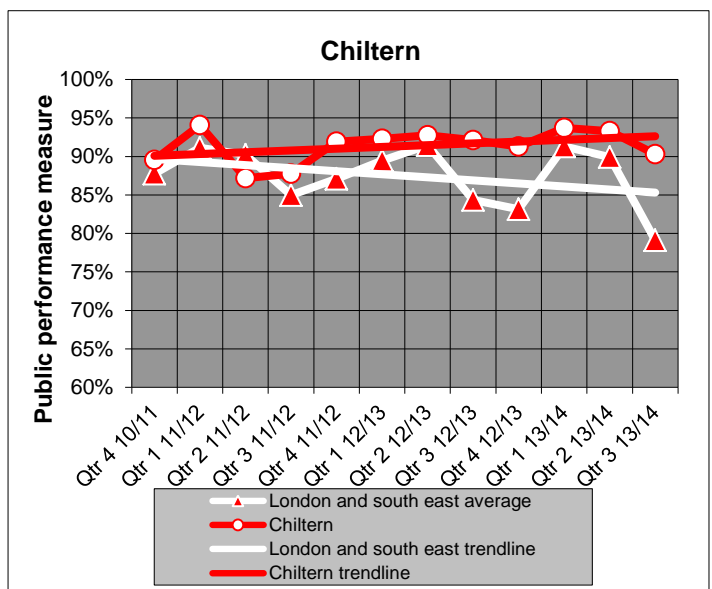
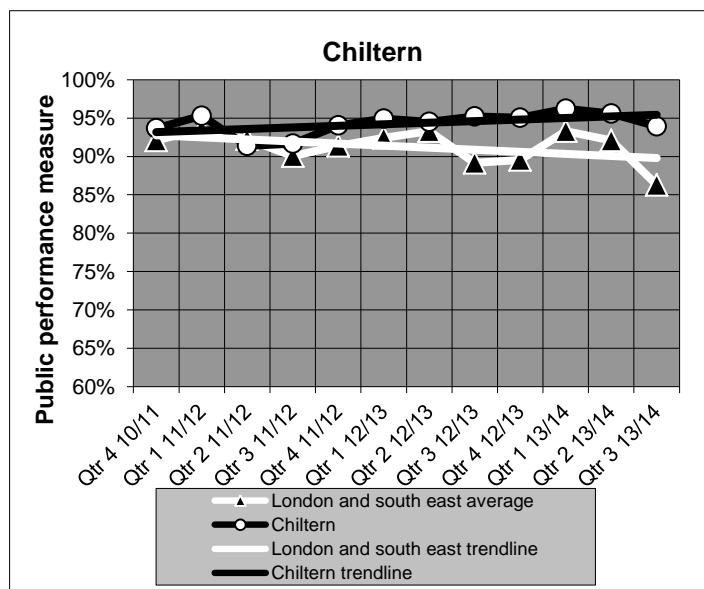
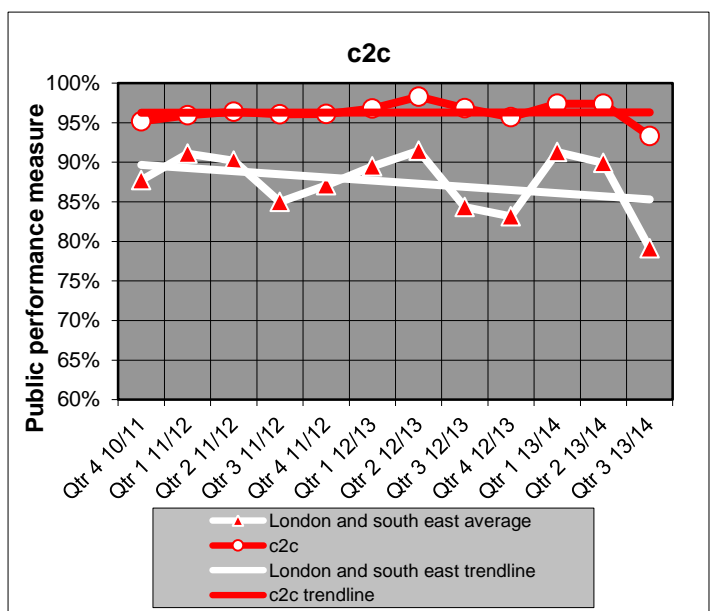
Extreme weather conditions experienced in quarter 3 2013/14 affected most TOCs' performance. Strong winds brought down trees onto railway lines, with some operators also experiencing flooding and landslips blocking major routes. Temporary speed restrictions were imposed to enable Network Rail to conduct safety checks and carry out emergency repairs.

The performance of First Capital Connect, First Great Western, London Midland, Southeastern and Southern was below the average of the London & SE TOCs.

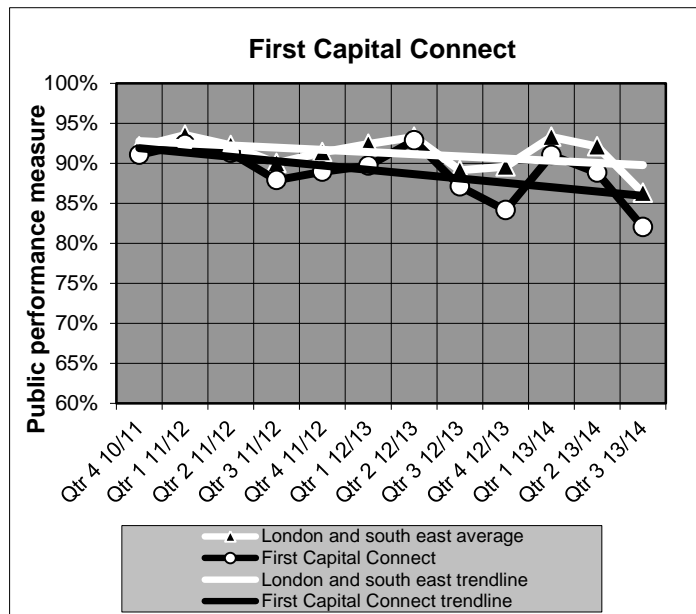
All trains performance



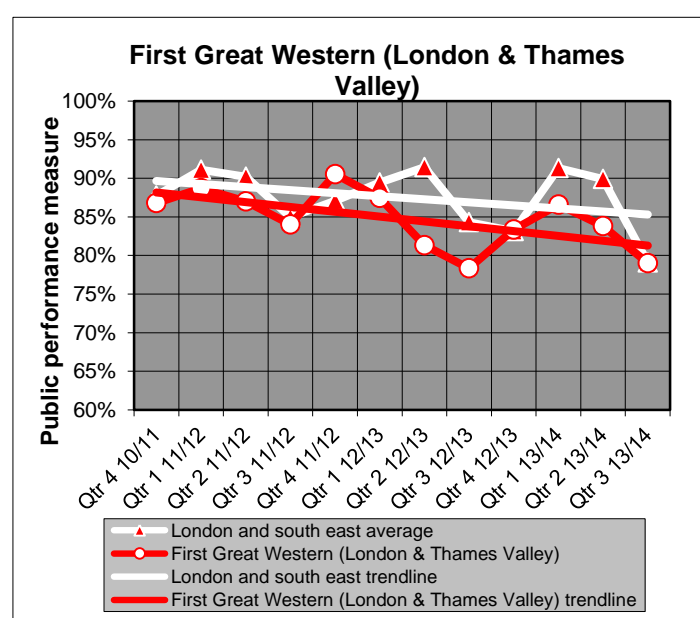
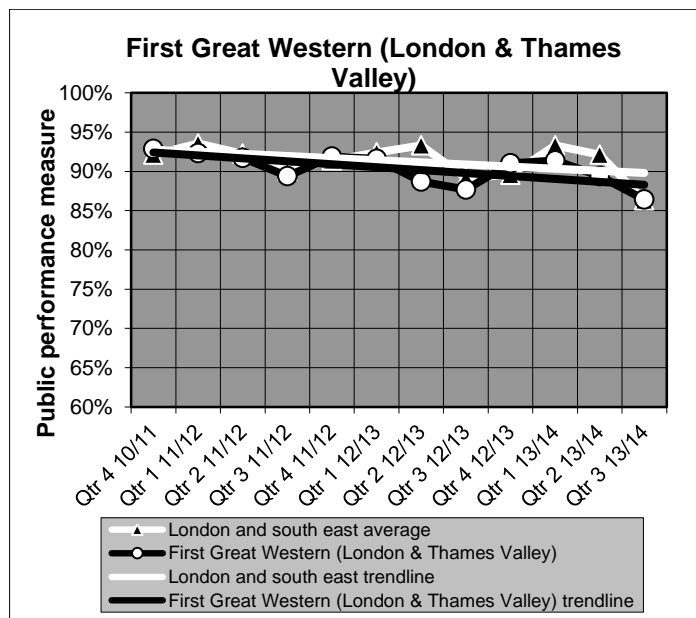
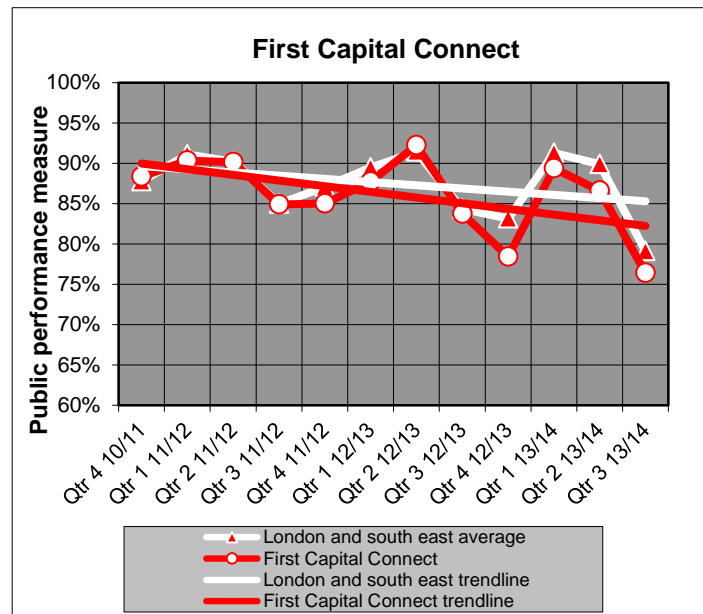
Peak trains performance



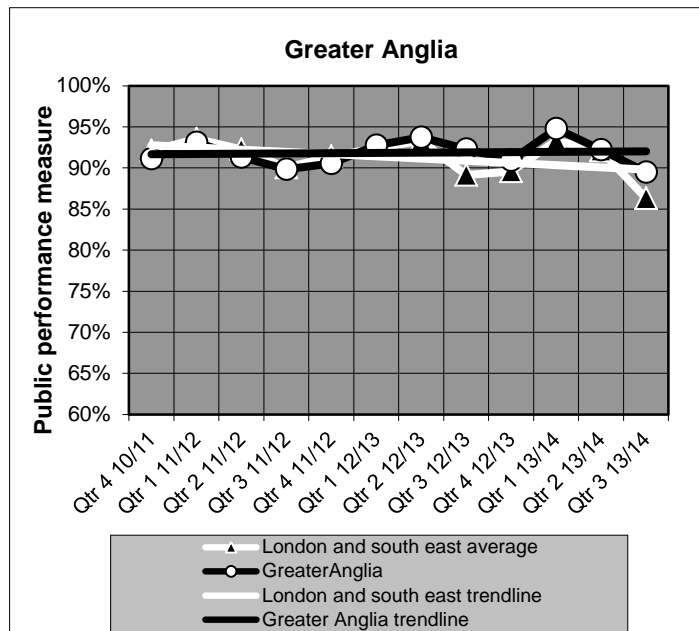
All trains performance



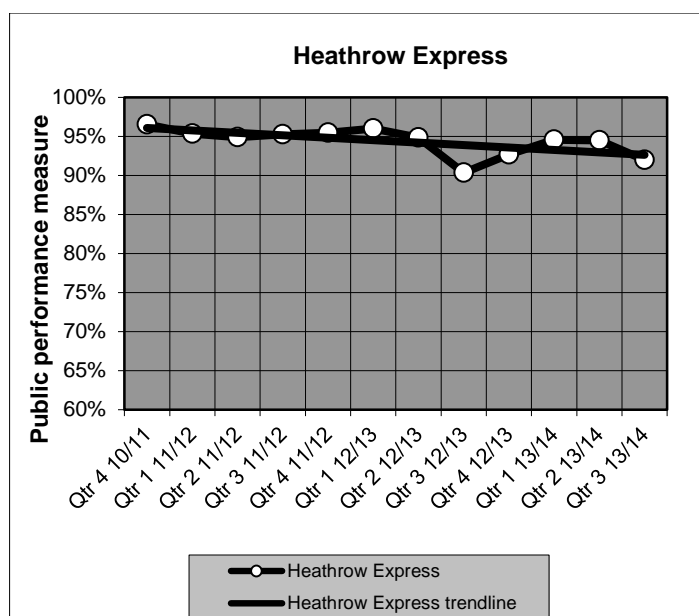
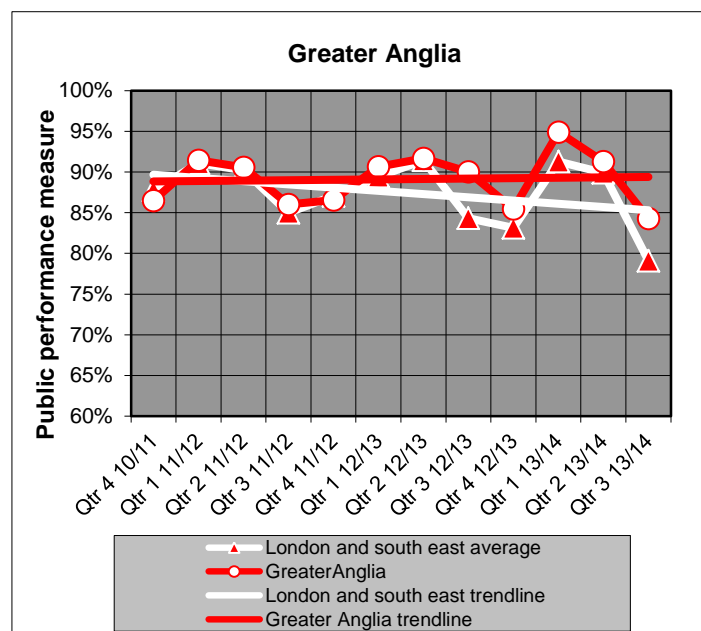
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All trains performance

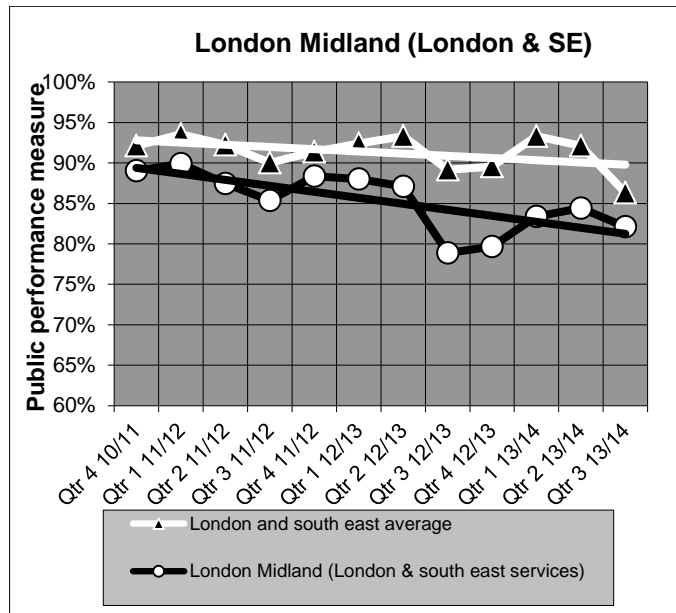


Peak trains performance

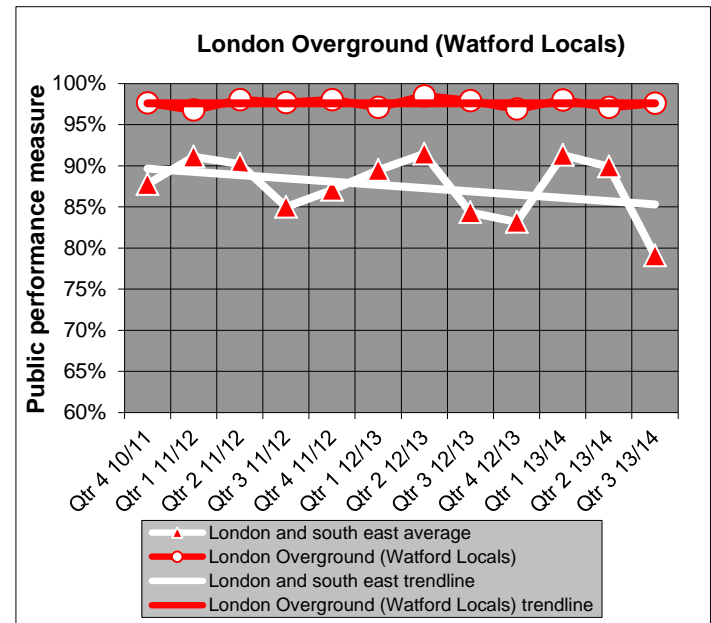
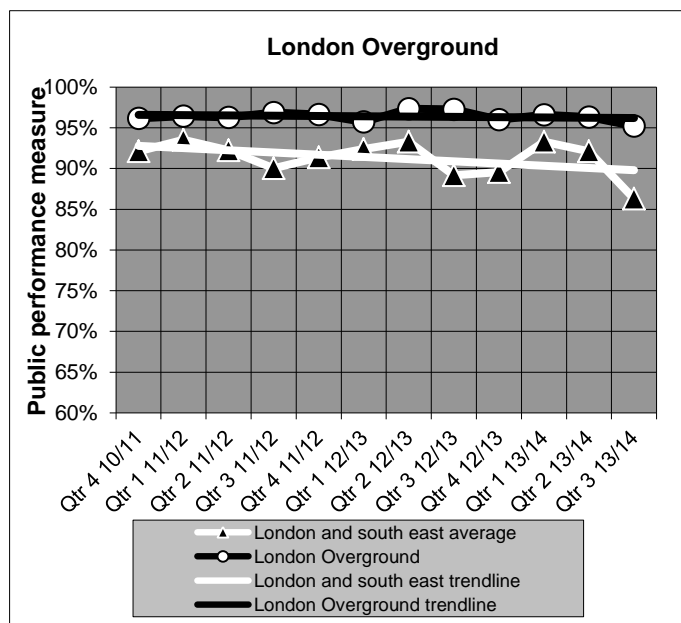
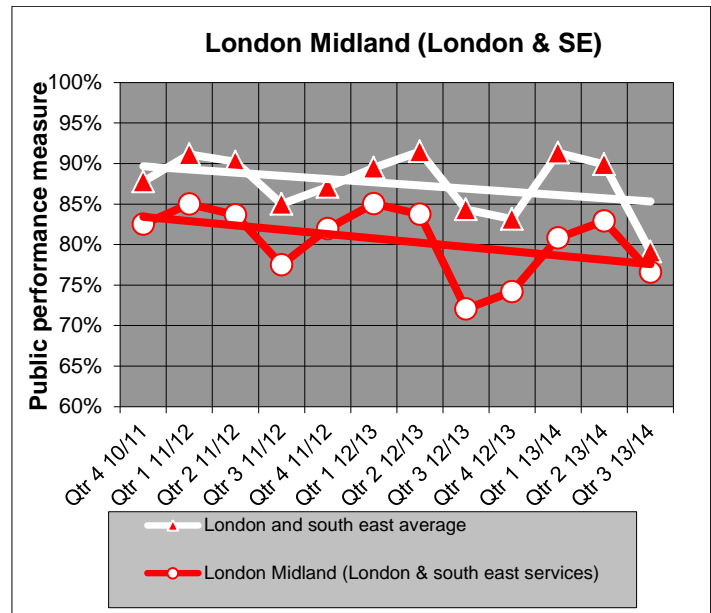


Note: As it is an unfranchised operator, Heathrow Express services are not included in the overall average for London and the South East shown on other charts, and peak trains on this route are not monitored separately

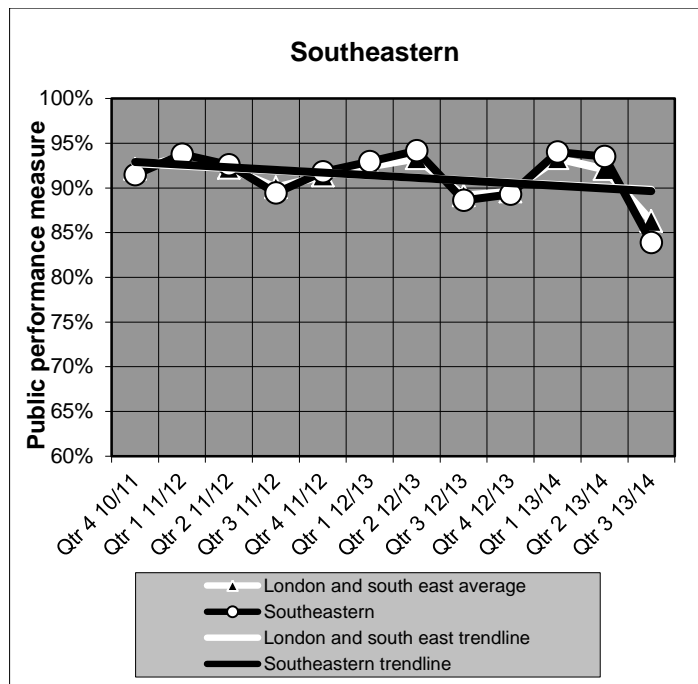
All trains performance



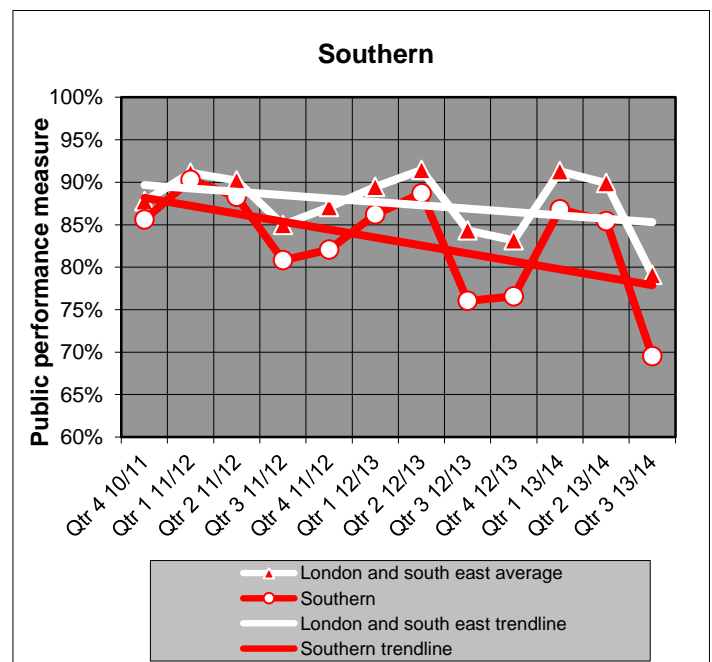
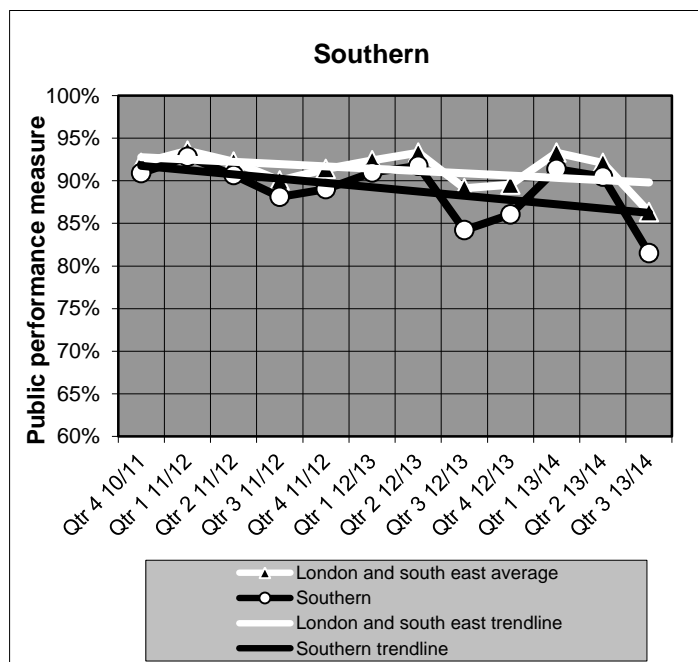
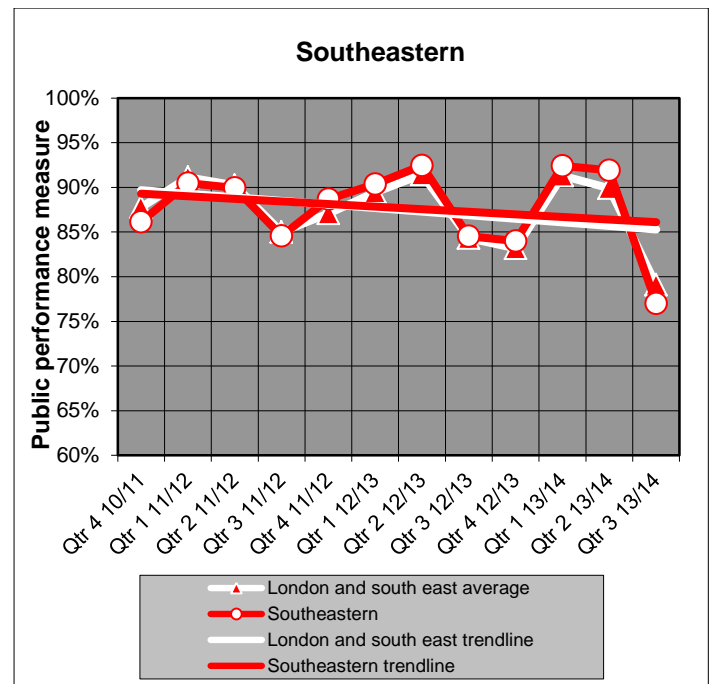
Peak trains performance



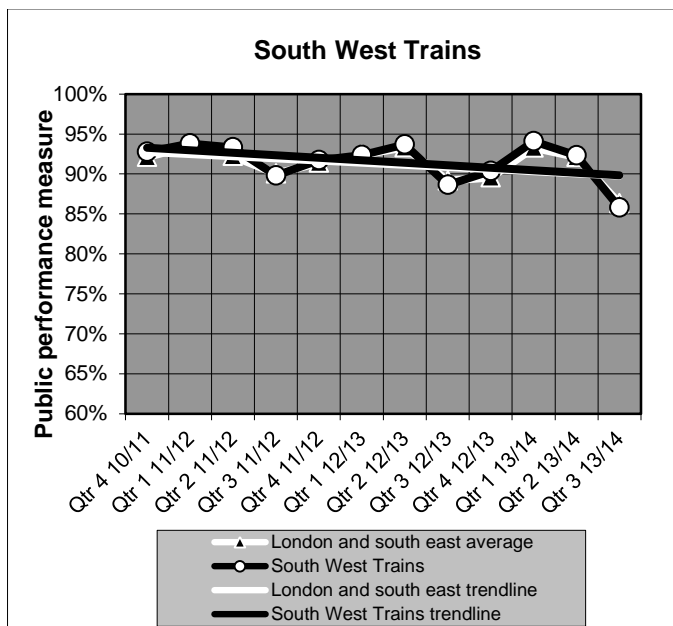
All trains performance



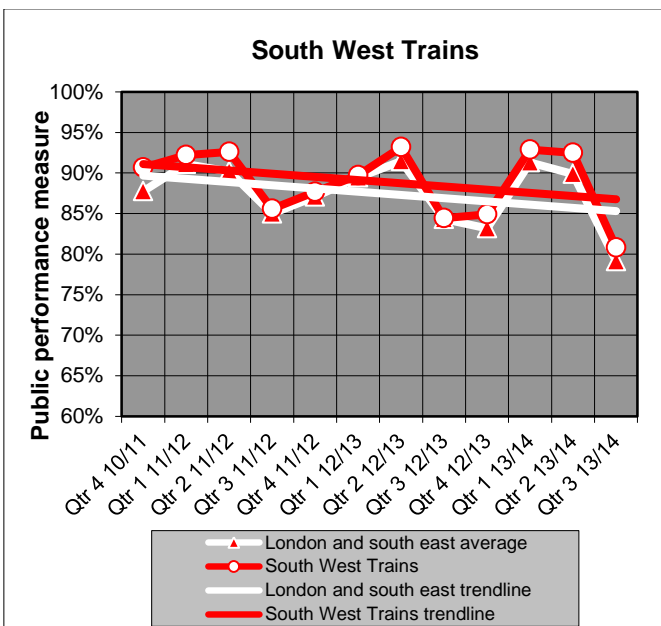
Peak trains performance



All trains performance



Peak trains performance

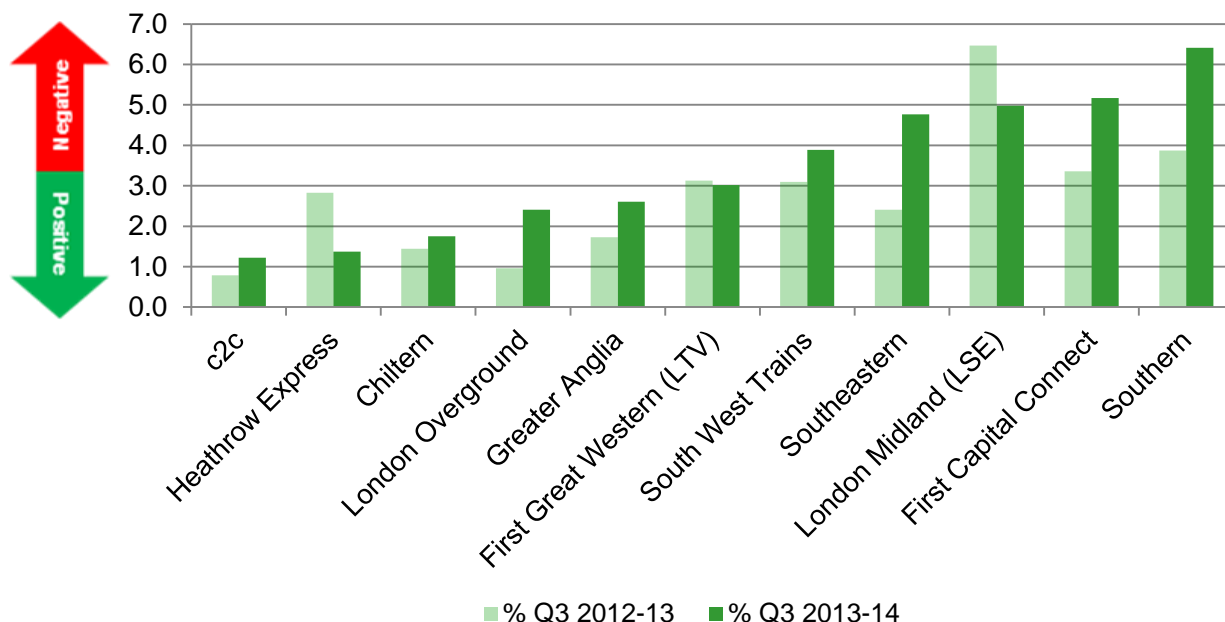


2.3 Cancellations and significant lateness

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.

c2c had the lowest rate of cancellations and significant lateness with 1.2%. London Midland (LSE) had the biggest improvement compared with quarter 3 2012/13. Southern had the highest (poorest) performance with a score of 6.4%.

Graph 3 – Cancellations and significant lateness Q3 2012/13 & Q3 2013/14

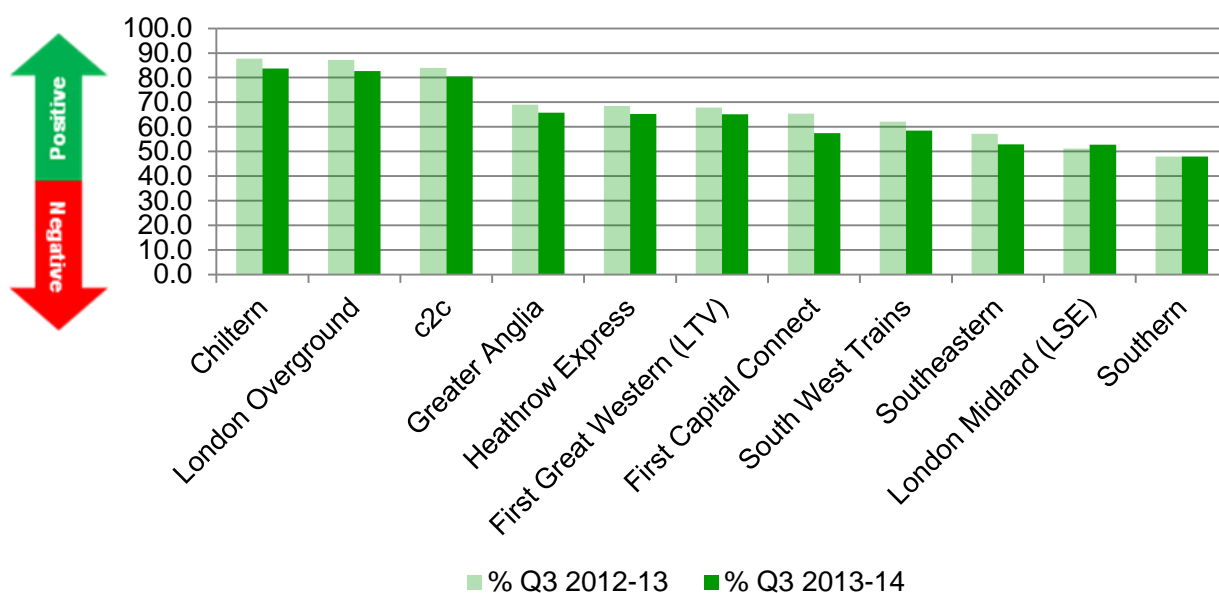


2.4 Right time arrivals

Right time arrival 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).

Chiltern performed best in terms of the percentage of trains arriving at the right time. Southern had the lowest percentage of right time arrivals in this quarter, and First Capital Connect had the largest decrease relative to the previous year.

Graph 4 – Right time arrivals Q3 2012/13 & Q3 2013/14



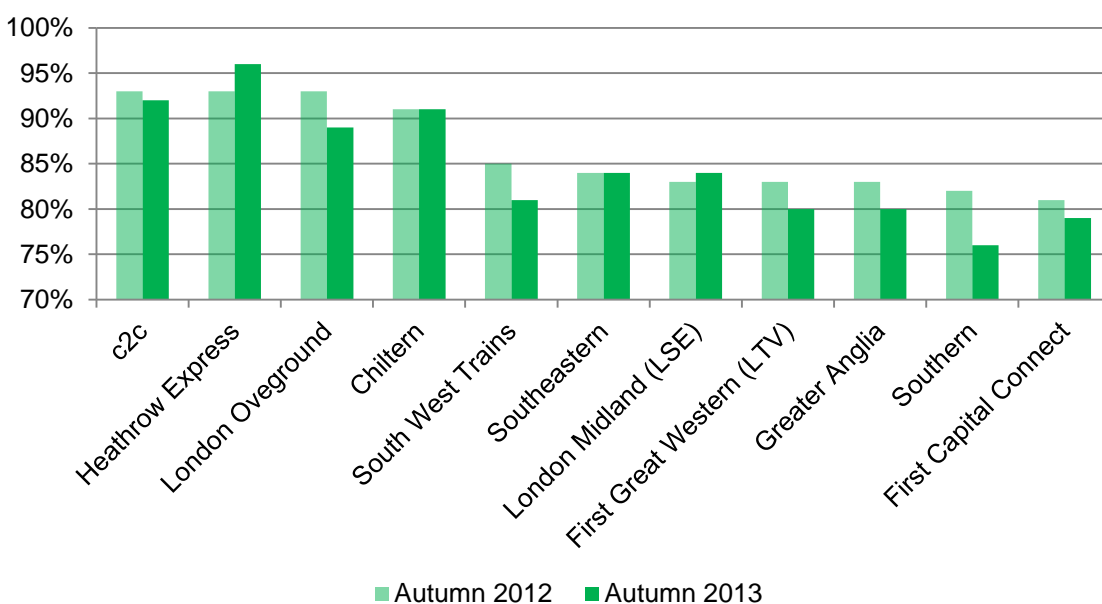
3 London & South East passenger satisfaction

The national passenger watchdog Passenger Focus conducts a survey of National Rail passengers in the autumn and spring of each year. The National Passenger Survey (NPS) 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 2013, the percentage of satisfied passengers, taking all London and south east operators together, had decreased since they were surveyed in autumn 2012. The operator with the highest satisfaction was Heathrow Express, which had 96% of users rating the service as satisfactory or good. Southeastern also experienced a significant increase in its passengers' satisfaction. The lowest level of satisfaction was with Southern, whose declining passenger satisfaction mirrored the latest punctuality scores.

Most London & South East operators experienced a significant decrease in their passenger satisfaction ratings. Prolonged bad weather and infrastructure issues that affected punctuality influenced passengers' perception of their services.

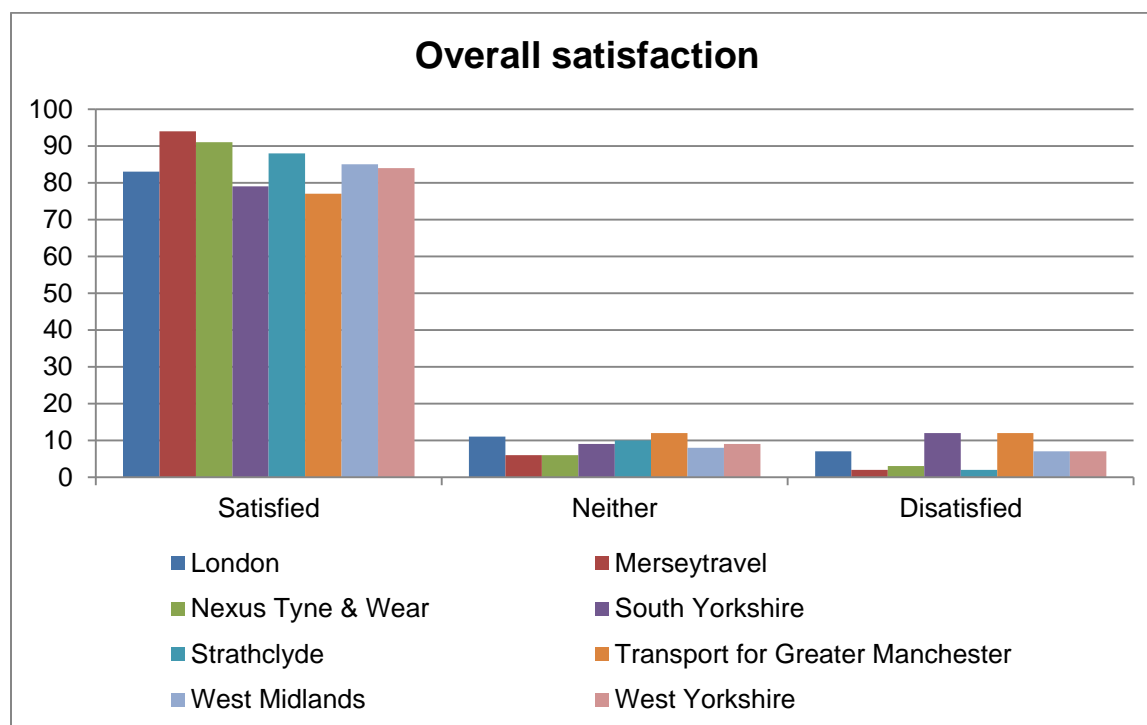
L & SE National Passenger Survey



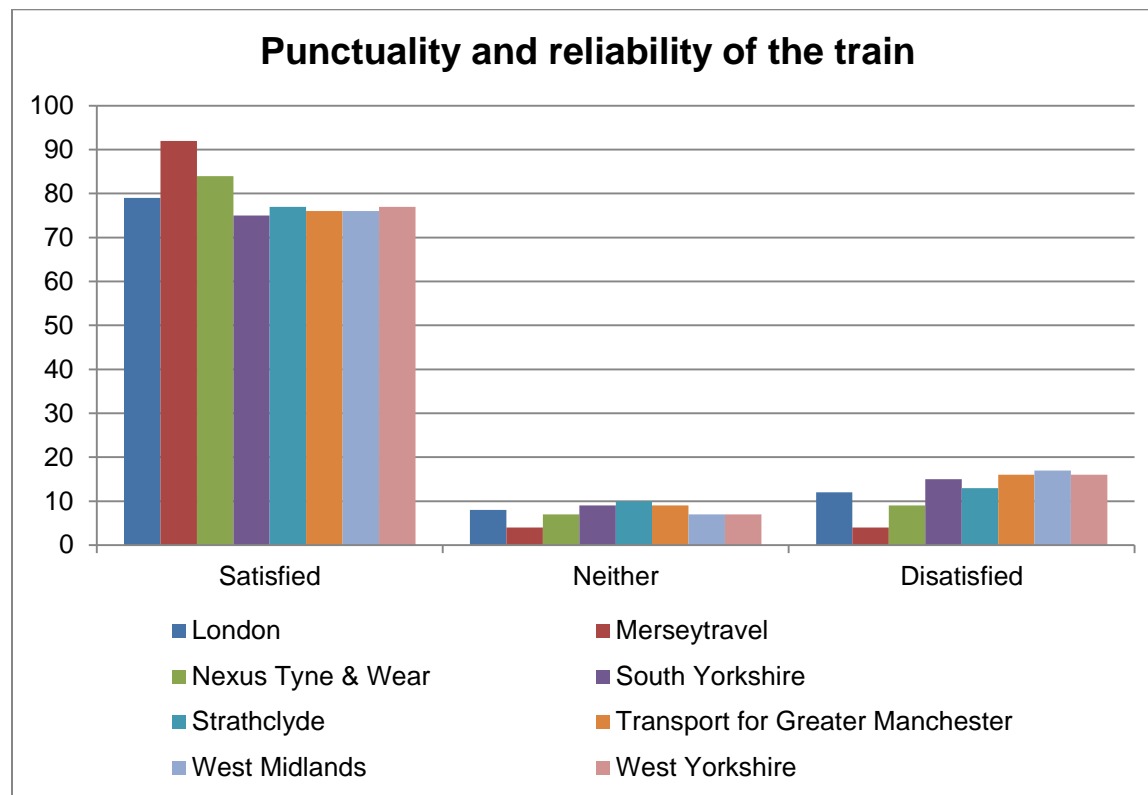
3.1 NPS London

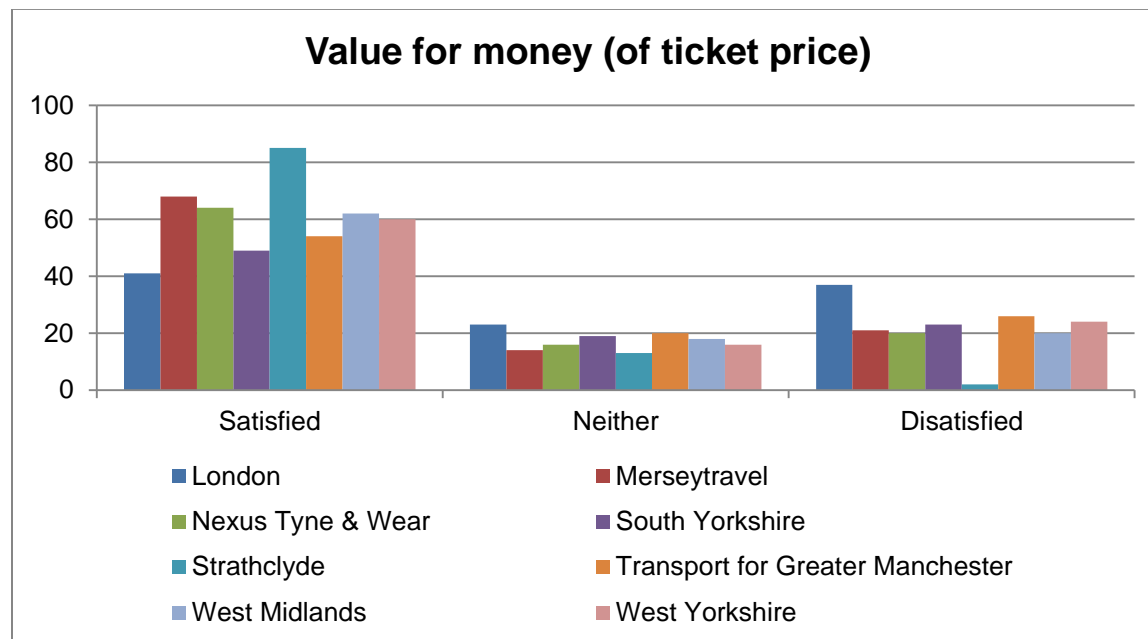
This section is focused on comparing passengers in London with other conurbations covered by the survey. Sections looked at include levels of passenger satisfaction with punctuality and reliability, value for money, staff availability, frequency of trains and toilet facilities on trains.

The overall satisfaction table shows that passengers in Merseyside were the most satisfied with their travel and those in Greater Manchester the least.



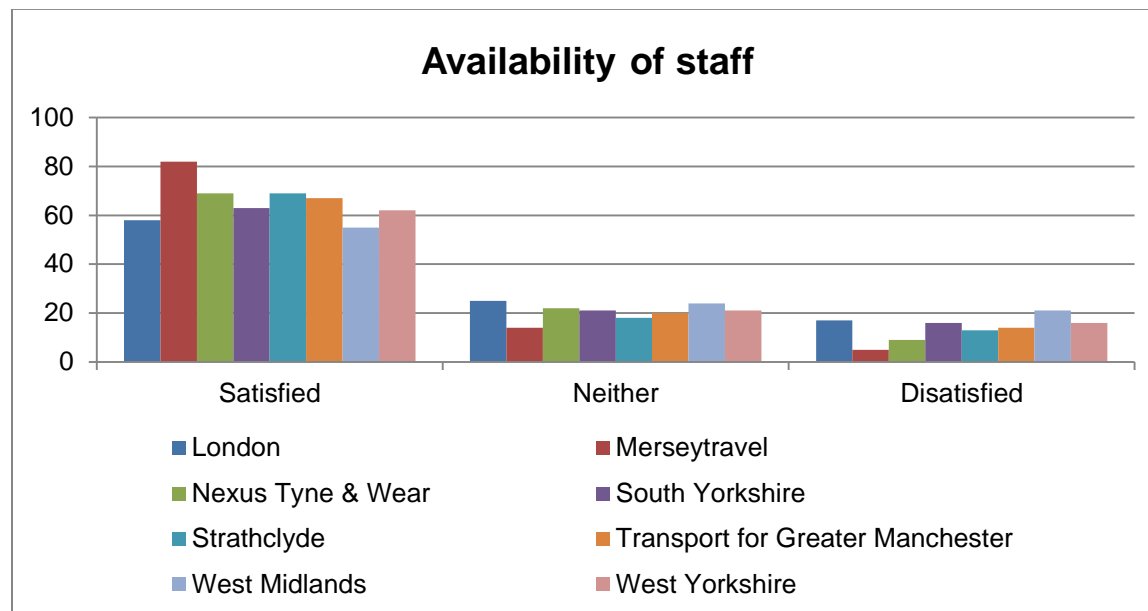
Compared with those in other metropolitan areas, London passengers are in the mid range for general satisfaction and for the punctuality and reliability of their train service.



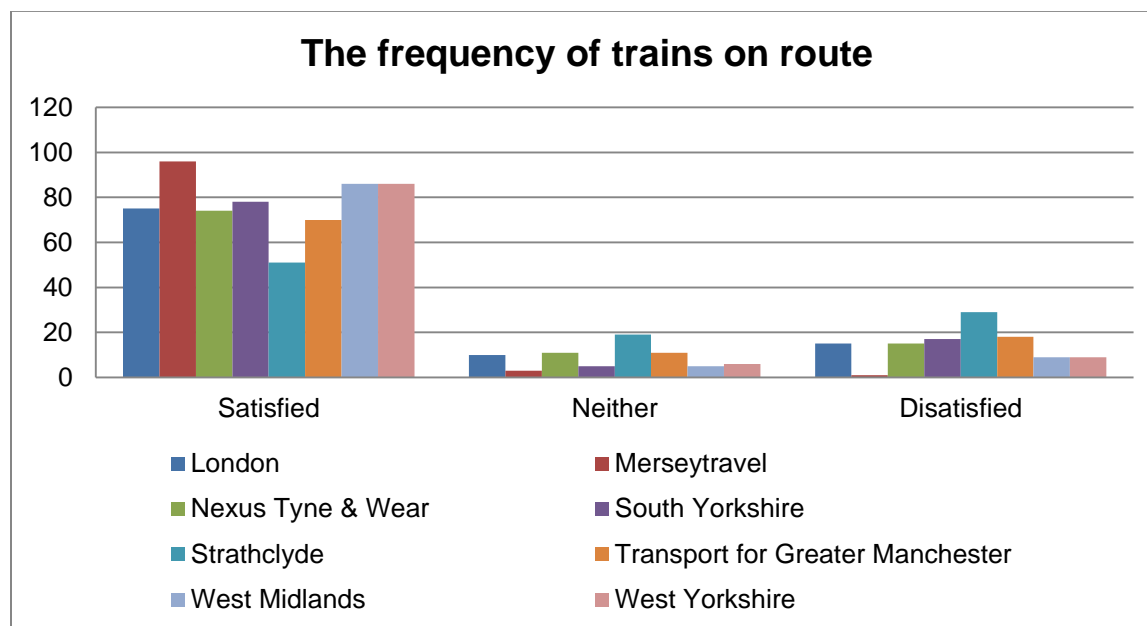


It is striking that London passengers are the least satisfied compared to passengers in other metropolitan areas. This can be attributed to the higher level of fares that Londoners pay than those in other cities, a higher dependency on public transport, greater levels of crowding, and other environmental factors that affect passengers' perception of this measure. For further details please see London TravelWatch's *Value for Money* report¹.

¹ [Value for Money on London's transport services: what consumers think](#)

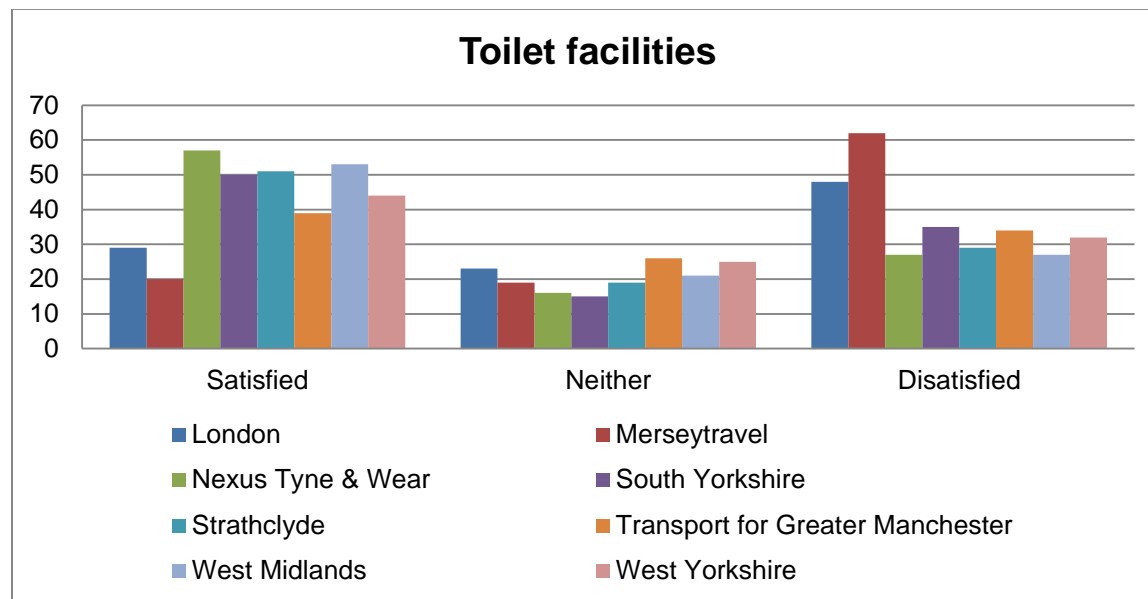


London passengers are fairly neutral about the availability of staff compared with passengers in other areas. This may be attributable to the fact that most metropolitan regions' trains are generally operated on 'pay train' principles, with a conductor passing through the train. This gives much greater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



London passengers are in the mid range satisfaction level when compared with most other metropolitan areas, because many suburban routes have services that run only every 30 minutes or less, and passengers are used to this level of service. However, in Merseyside and some other metropolitan areas, most services run at least 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).



The poor level of satisfaction with on train toilet facilities in London is a reflection of the level of crowding on many London trains, and the short length of most journeys, which means that space is generally not used to provide toilets. Only Merseytravel's users were less satisfied.

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 the way train operating companies (TOC) 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. These data are provisional and subject to adjustments by the operator.

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. Complainants who have had a good experience when dealing with a train company may be encouraged by this to do so again. In addition, there is no fully effective industry-wide protocol relating to the definition and recording of complaints. Inter-operator comparisons are generally less revealing than trends over time in individual companies’ data.

4.1 Complaints by operator

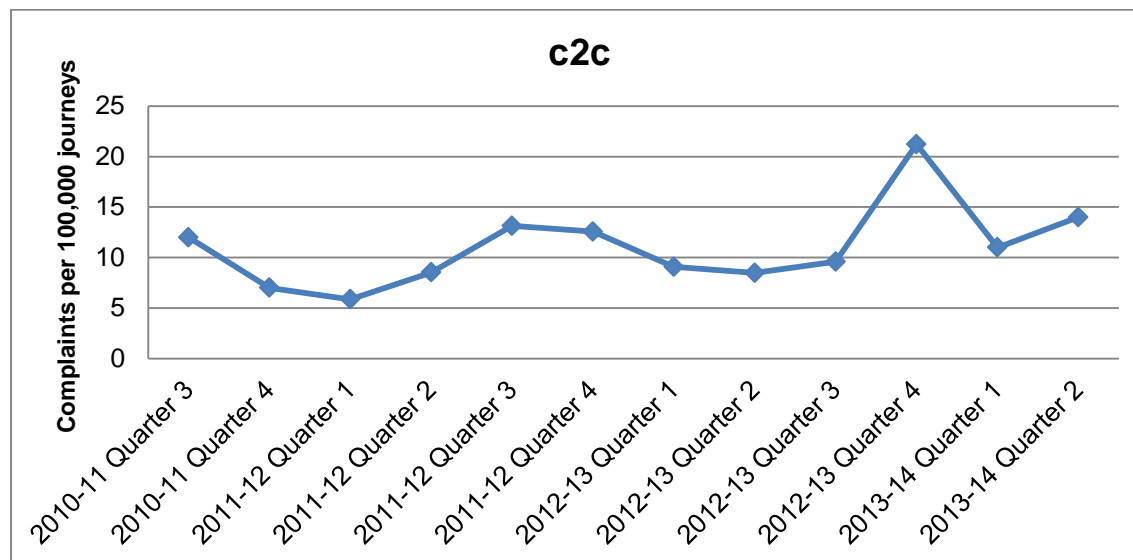
The complaints data below are the latest available from the Office of Rail Regulation. The table shows the number of complaints passengers made about their journeys each quarter, over a three year period, to each train operating company. The shaded column shows the overall average complaints rate per 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, staffed stations and trains, and a generally high level of reliability. The reduction in Southern's complaints rate in the past eight quarters is also striking. It is noteworthy that Chiltern has a high complaints rate despite its consistently good passenger satisfaction scores, which probably reflects the longer distance character of most of its services.

TOC	Q3 10-11	Q4 10-11	Q1 11-12	Q2 11-12	Q3 11-12	Q4 11-12	Q1 12-13	Q2 12-13	Q3 12-13	Q4 12-13	Q1 13-14	Q2 13-14	Average
c2c	12	7	6	9	13	13	9	8	10	21	11	14	11.1
Chiltern Railways	49	77	38	51	58	50	63	36	37	39	31	41	47.5
First Capital Connect	27	41	24	25	28	27	24	18	18	30	21	16	24.9
First Great Western	96	92	71	83	82	73	50	59	81	89	44	48	72.3
Greater Anglia	32	22	18	30	42	35	28	26	30	36	24	26	29.1
London Midland	70	73	97	66	85	74	64	77	149	96	57	35	78.6
London Overground	10	8	4	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	4.0
South West Trains	8	7	14	9	10	10	9	9	17	18	9	11	10.9
Southeastern	24	28	13	13	13	13	12	12	13	15	9	9	14.5
Southern	43	107	95	21	9	5	6	5	3	6	5	6	25.9

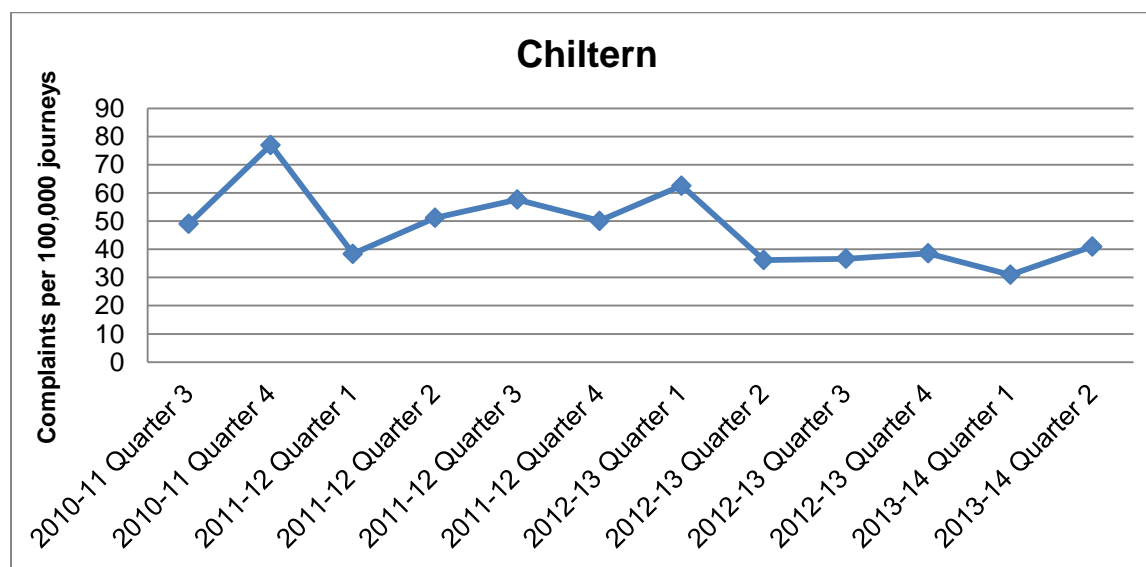
c2c

On average, there were 11.1 complaints to c2c per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Service performance, staff conduct and ticketing were the most frequent categories.



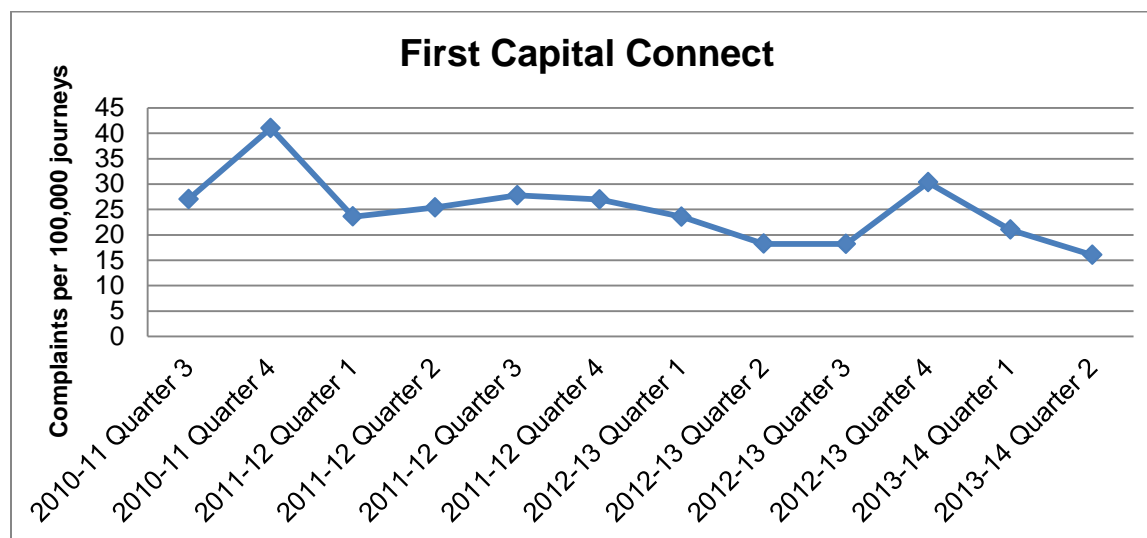
Chiltern

On average, there were 47.5 complaints to Chiltern per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most frequent categories.



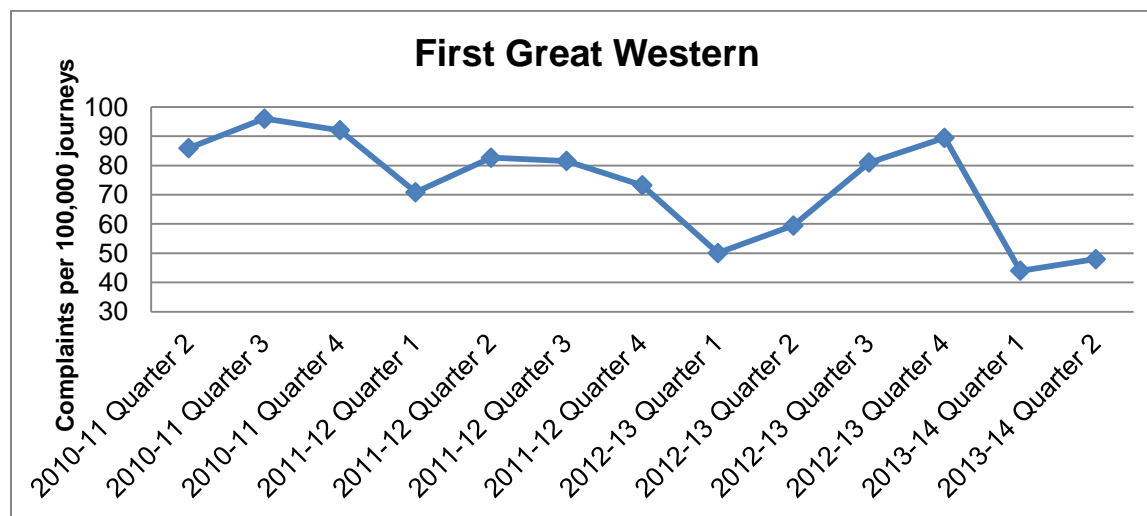
First Capital Connect

On average, there were 24.9 complaints to First Capital Connect per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance, ticketing and complaints handling were the most common.



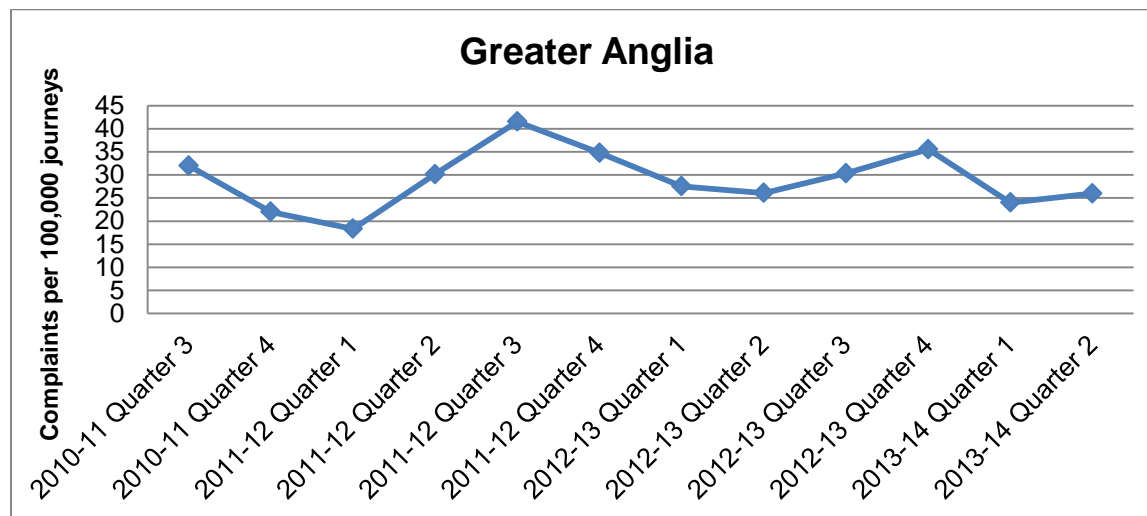
First Great Western

On average, there were 72.3 complaints to First Great Western 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 common.



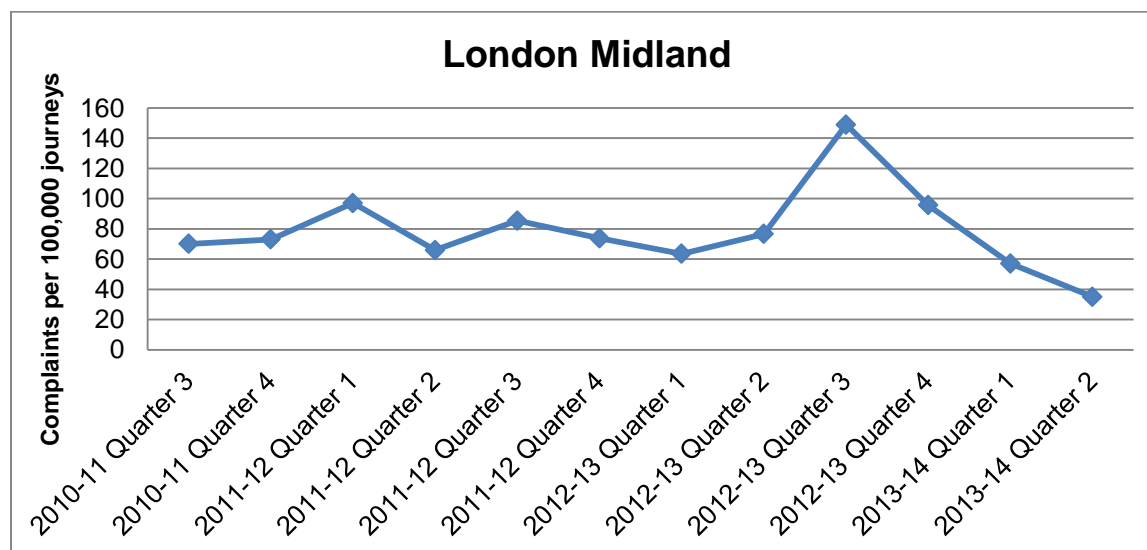
Greater Anglia

On average, there were 29.1 complaints to Greater Anglia per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance, staff conduct and ticketing were the most common. Greater Anglia took over the franchise from National Express East Anglia in February 2012.



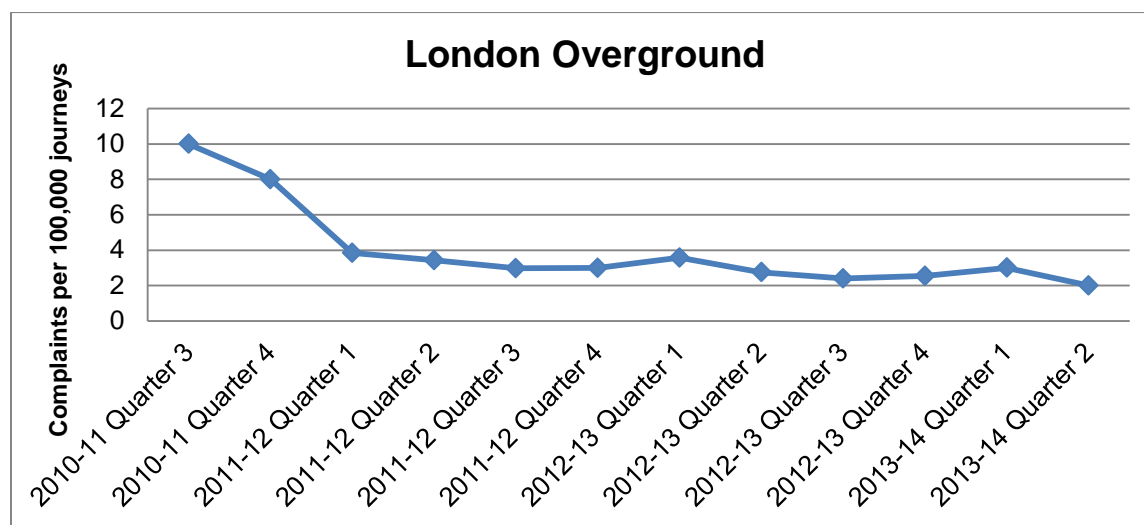
London Midland

On average, there were 78.6 complaints to London Midland per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Quarter 2 again saw a reduction in complaints (to a rate of 35 in Q2 2013-14), compared to the previous quarters. Complaints about service performance were the most common.



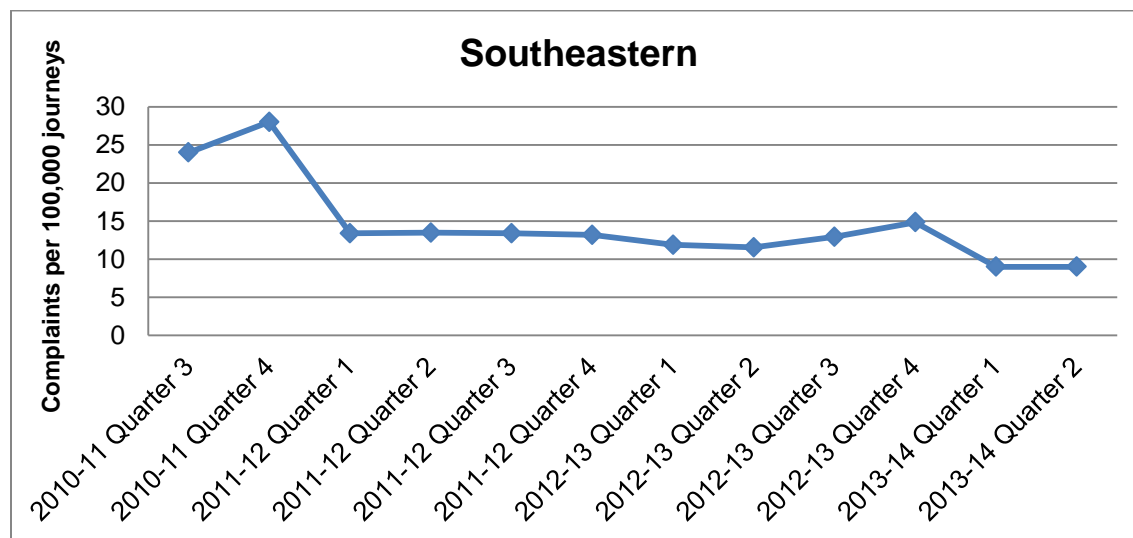
London Overground

On average, there were 4 complaints to London Overground per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. TfL inherited a poorly performing route, and through significant investment in the service has turned it around to have the highest punctuality and reliability of any TOC in Britain. Train performance and ticketing are the two most common categories of complaint.



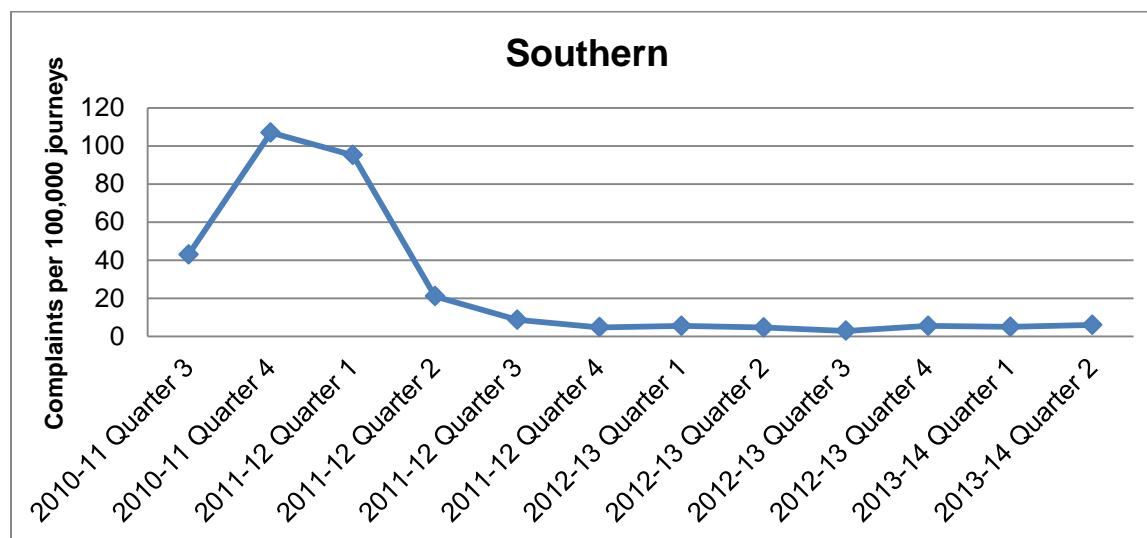
Southeastern

On average, there were 14.5 complaints to Southeastern per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most common.



Southern

On average, there were 25.9 complaints to Southern per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. The rate fell to 6 in quarter 2 2013-14. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most common.



South West Trains

On average, there were 10.9 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.

