Policy committee: 16.09.14
Agenda item: 11
PC039

LondonTravelWatch

National Rail Performance Report - Quarter 1 2014/15

September 2014



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

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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 during the first quarter (April to June) of 2014/15.

For definitions of the measures used, see Section 2.

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

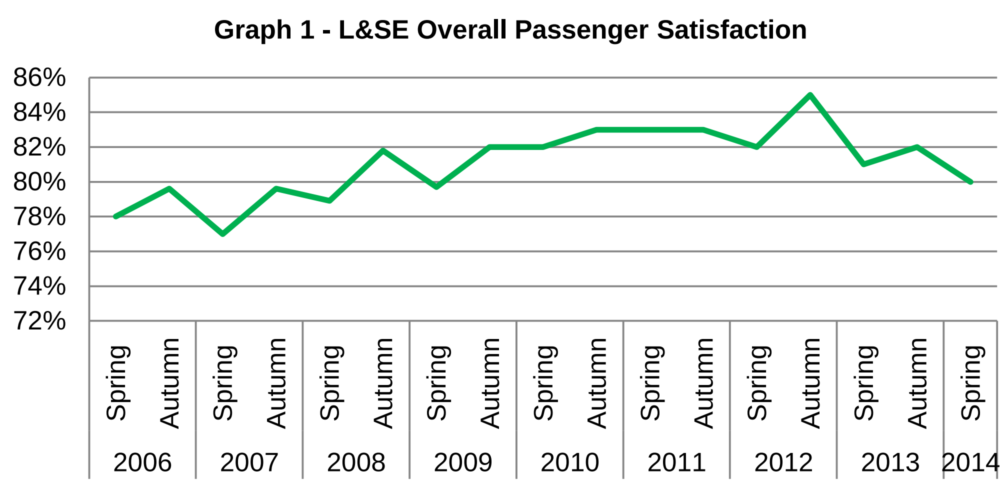
The L&SE east train operators' overall *public performance measure* (PPM) result was lower than in the same quarter last year, averaging 91.2% - which was 2.1 percentage points lower than a year ago.

The train company with the highest average PPM in the first quarter of 2014/15 was London Overground (with 96.7%), and the company with the lowest was Southern (with 87.2%).

The overall rate of *cancellations and significant lateness* was 2.5% in quarter 1 2014/15, which was 0.5 percentage points higher than in the same period a year ago. Heathrow Express recorded the lowest percentage (with 1.0%), and Southern the highest (with 3.7%).

The overall rate of '*right time' arrivals* was 68.0% in quarter 1 2014/15, which was 5.0 percentage points lower than last year. The company with the highest percentage of 'right time' arrivals was Chiltern (with 87.4%), and that with the lowest was Southern (with 55.6%).

London & South East (L&SE) passenger satisfaction



Overall passenger satisfaction has decreased since the last survey. The percentage of passengers satisfied was 80% compared with 81% in spring 2013 and 82% in autumn 2013. The highest rate of passenger satisfaction in spring 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 72% compared to 78% in spring 2013.

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.

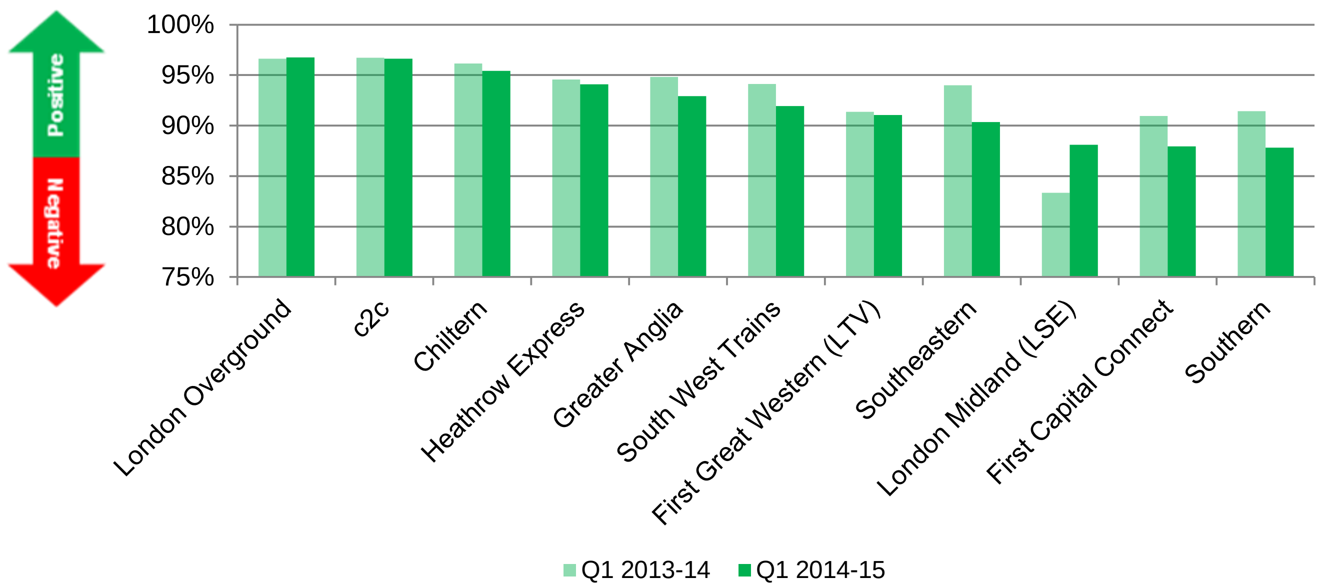
Most (nine out of eleven) operators' PPM scores fell in this quarter, when compared with the same period last year (Q1 2013/14). Weather related issues, as well as overrunning engineering works and signal failures, contributed to a poor performance.

With 96.7%, London Overground had the highest average PPM for the quarter. Southern suffered the worst punctuality across the L&SE network, with 87.8%. This was 3.6 percentage point lower than the same period last year and (after Southeastern) is the second largest percentage decrease. The decline can be attributed to the on-going Thameslink upgrade works at London Bridge and overrunning engineering works.

The reduction in Southeastern's' performance can be attributed to infrastructure issues, particularly around London Bridge, and a freight derailment near Charlton which affected the service for numerous days.

London Overground and London Midland were the only operators to achieve an improvement in their performance in this quarter when compared to quarter 1 2013/14. London Midland's 'Strong Foundations' improvement programme, in partnership with Network Rail, has paid dividends this quarter. But this improvement was from a low base, as London Midland had consistently had the poorest performance in previous quarters and was still the third worst performing operator.

Graph 2 – Public performance measure Q1 2013/14 & Q1 2014/15



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.

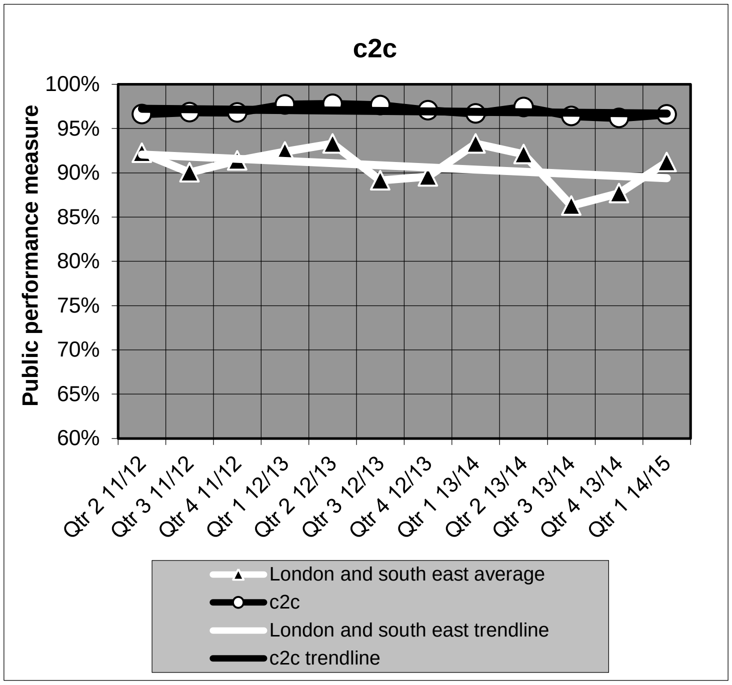
The performance of individual train companies is heavily dependent on the varying ability of Network Rail to deliver railway infrastructure on which their trains can operate reliably, as well as the inability of some operators adequately to manage the service elements (such as rolling stock and train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

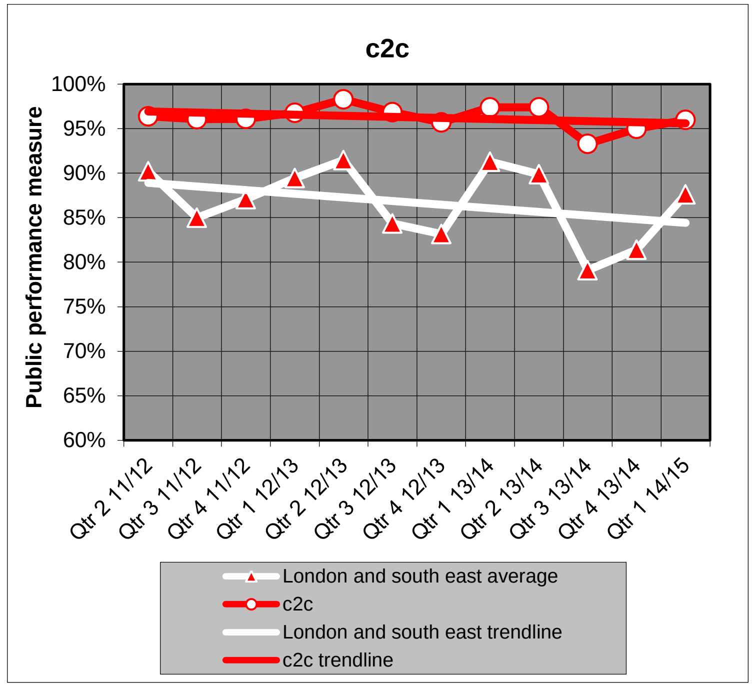
The performance of c2c, Chiltern, Greater Anglia and London Overground has been on a stable or upward trend over the three year period. Overall, there was an improvement in Greater Anglia's performance, which is attributed at least in part to increased investment in the infrastructure through a joint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

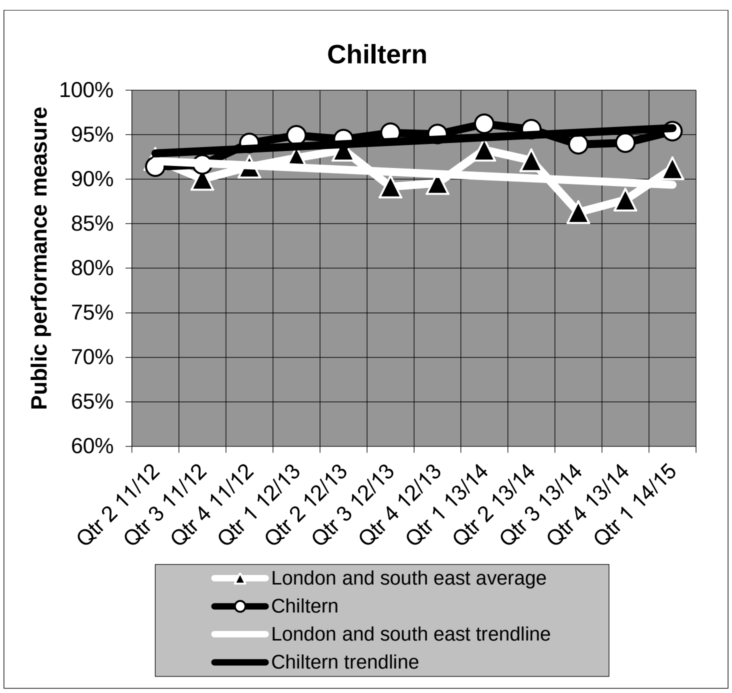
All train companies were affected by infrastructure failures, due either to overrunning engineering works or equipment failures. The performance of First Capital Connect, First Great Western, London Midland, Southeastern and Southern was below the average of the London & SE group as a whole.

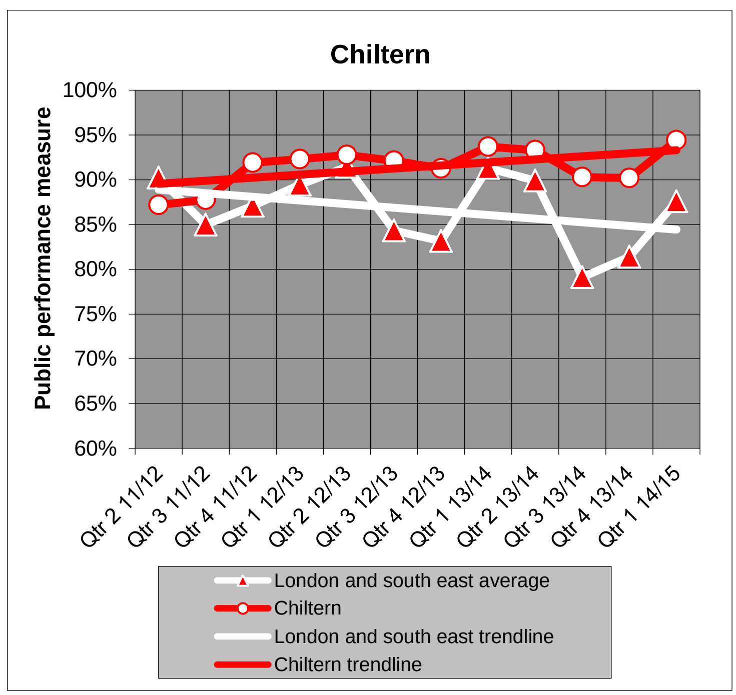
All trains performance

Peak trains performance









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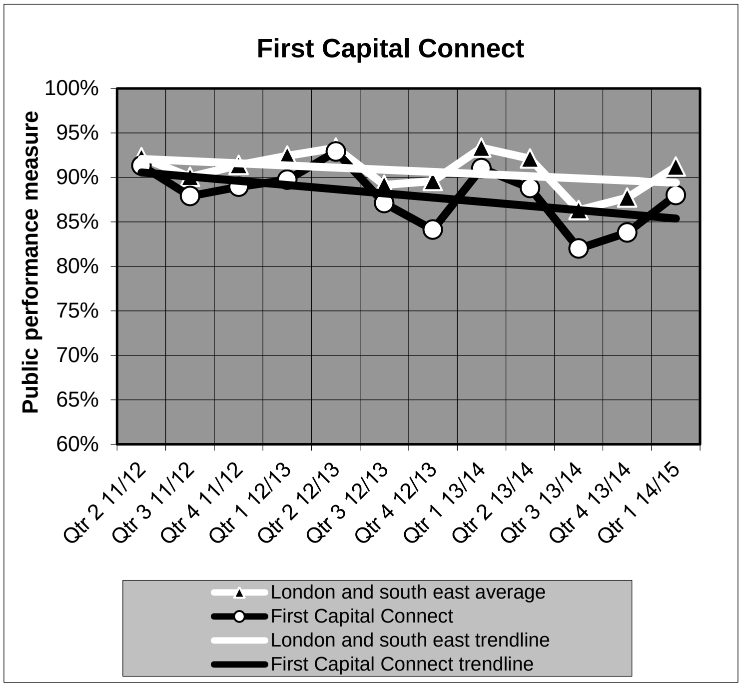

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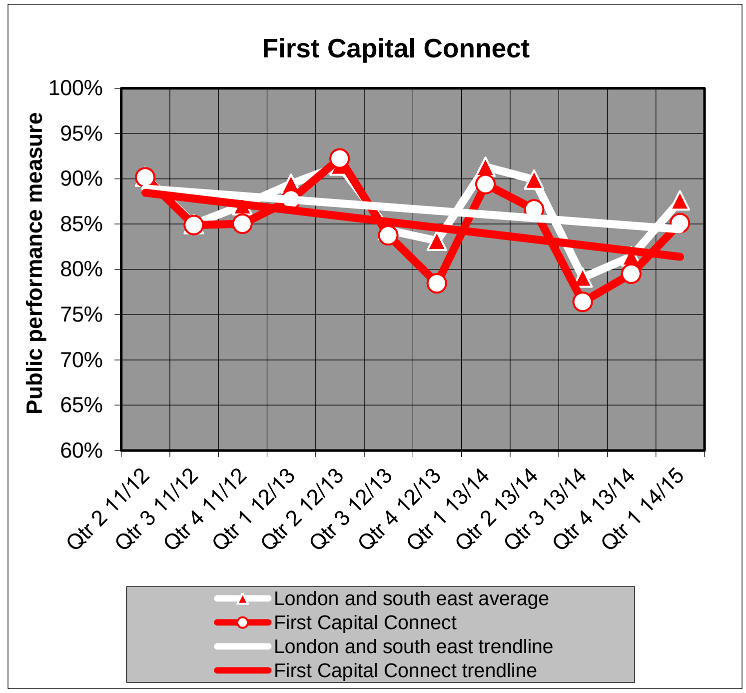

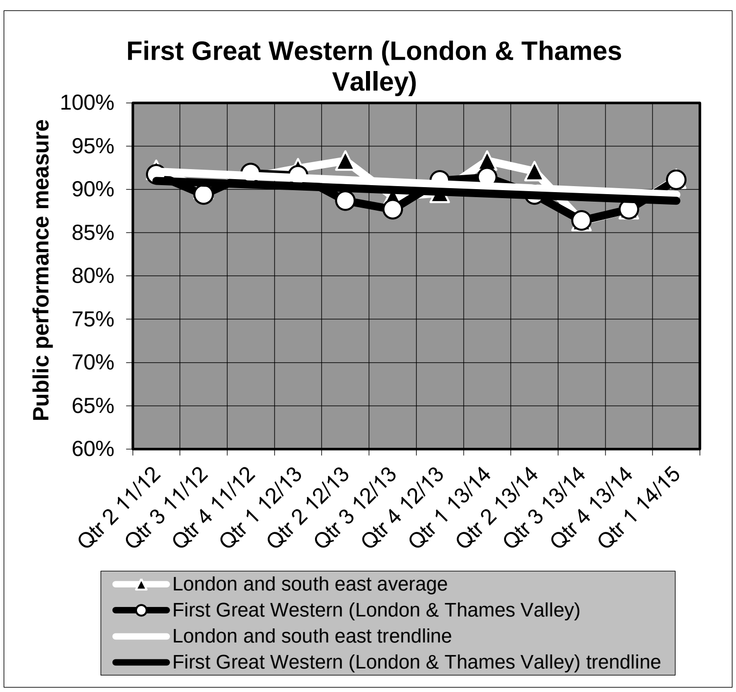

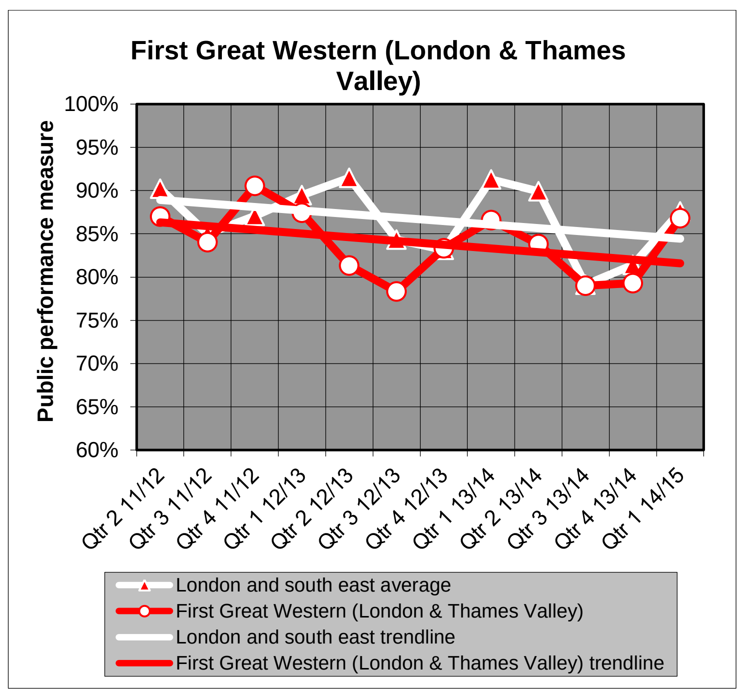

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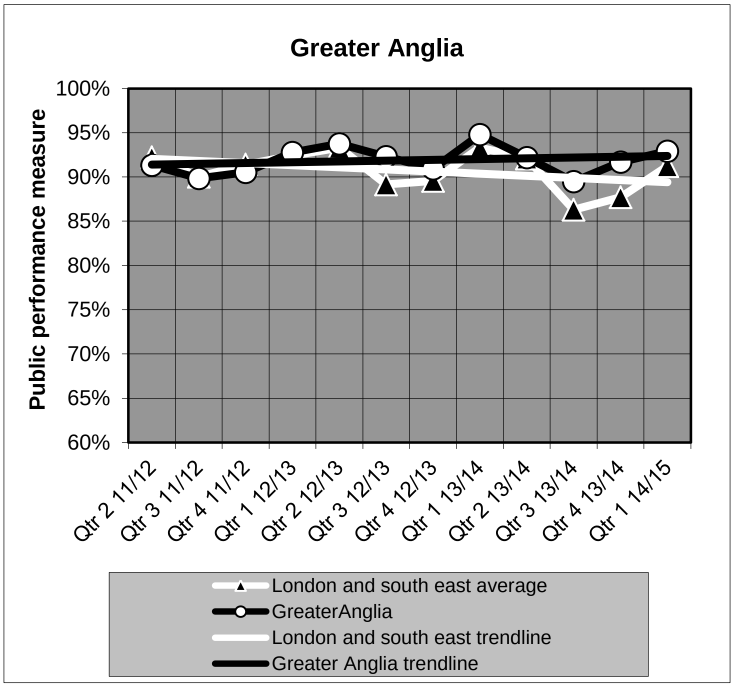

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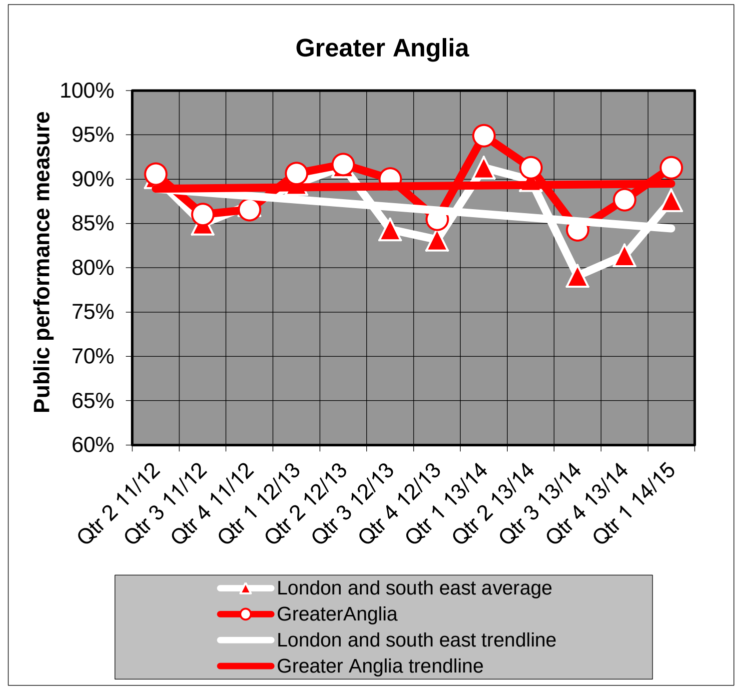
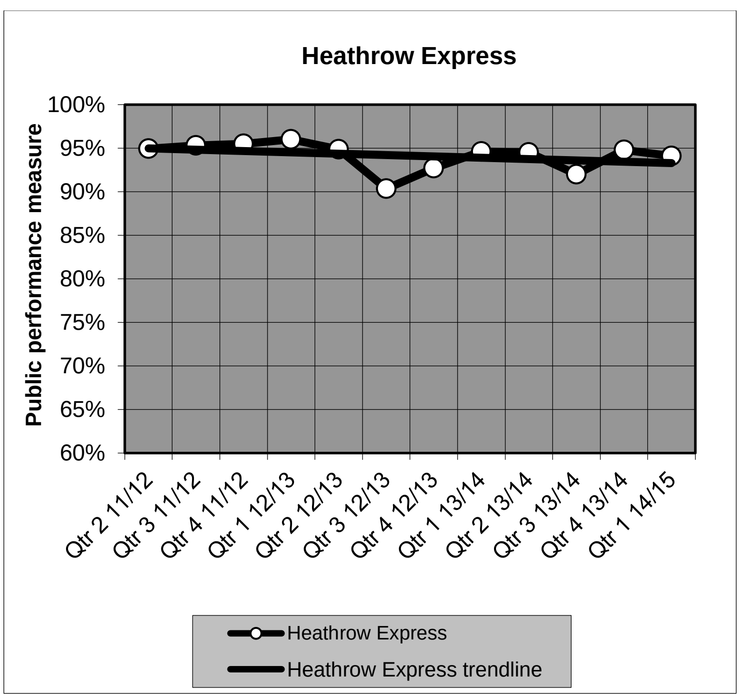
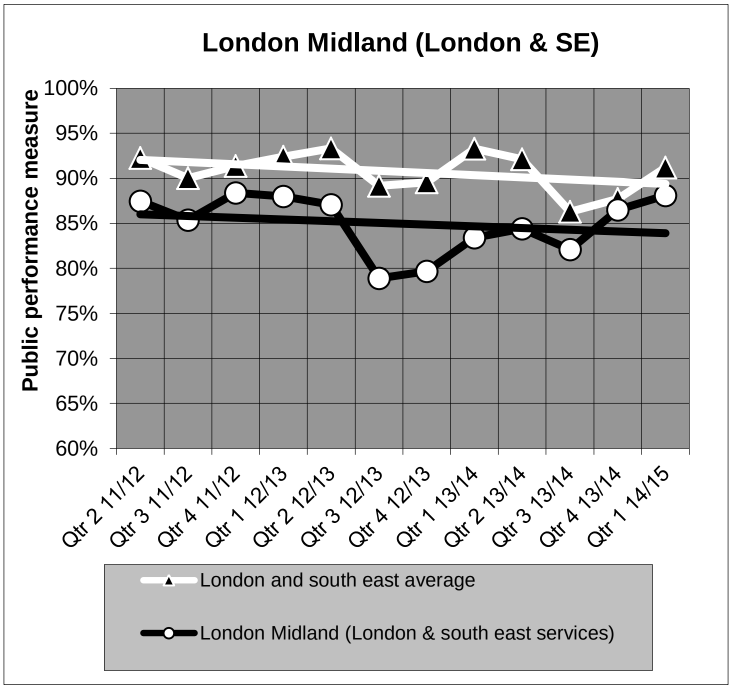
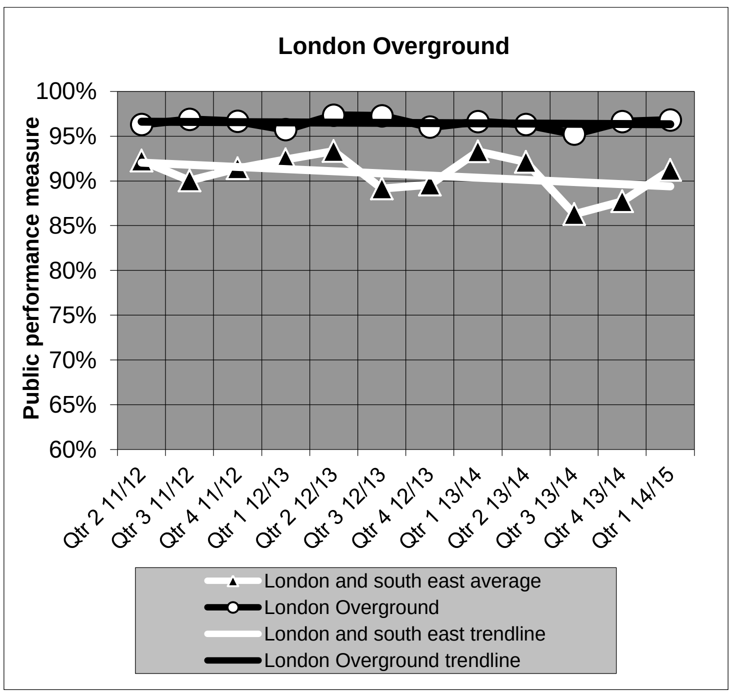




Note: As it is an unfranchised operator, Heathrow Express services are not included in the overall average for London and the South East shown on other charts, and peak trains on this route are not monitored separately

All trains performance





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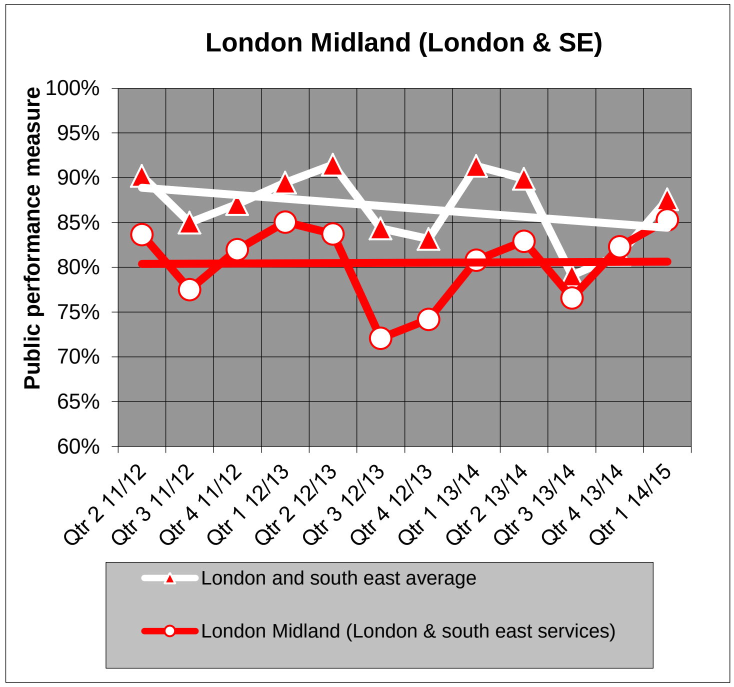
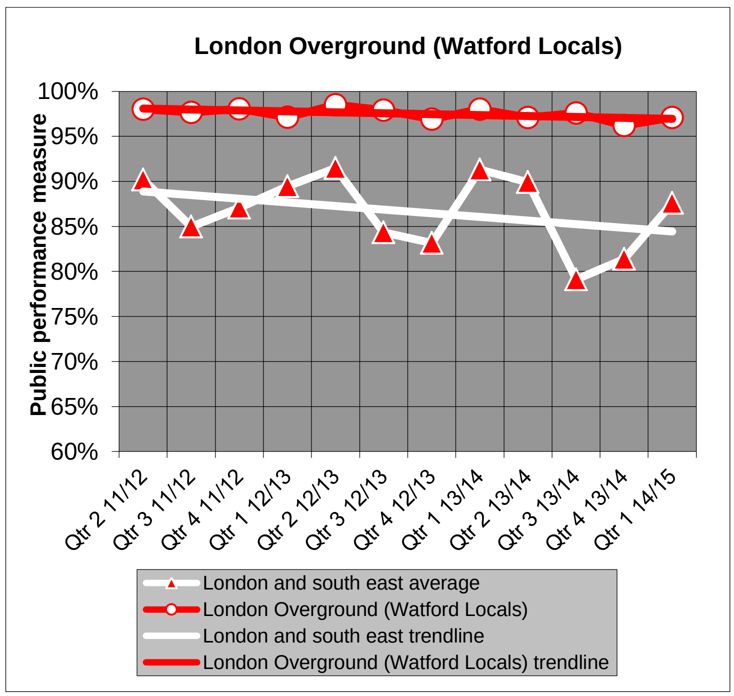
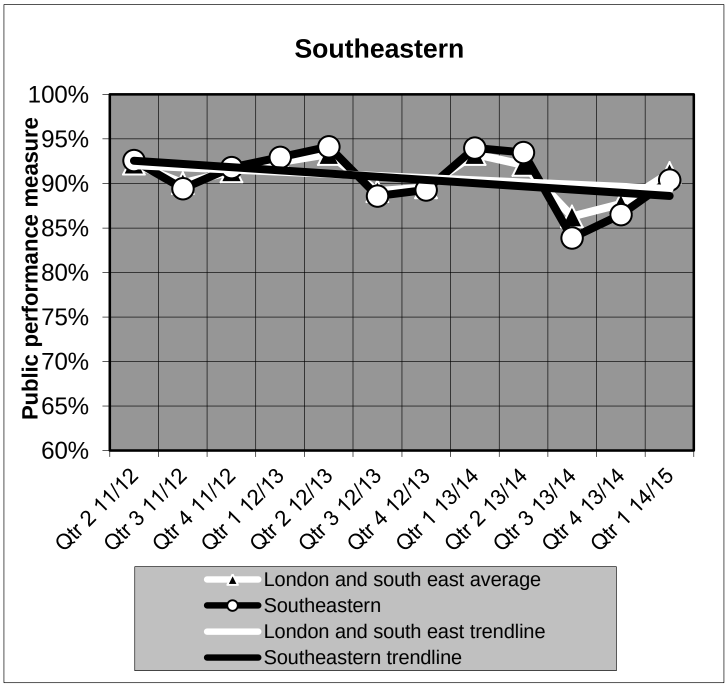
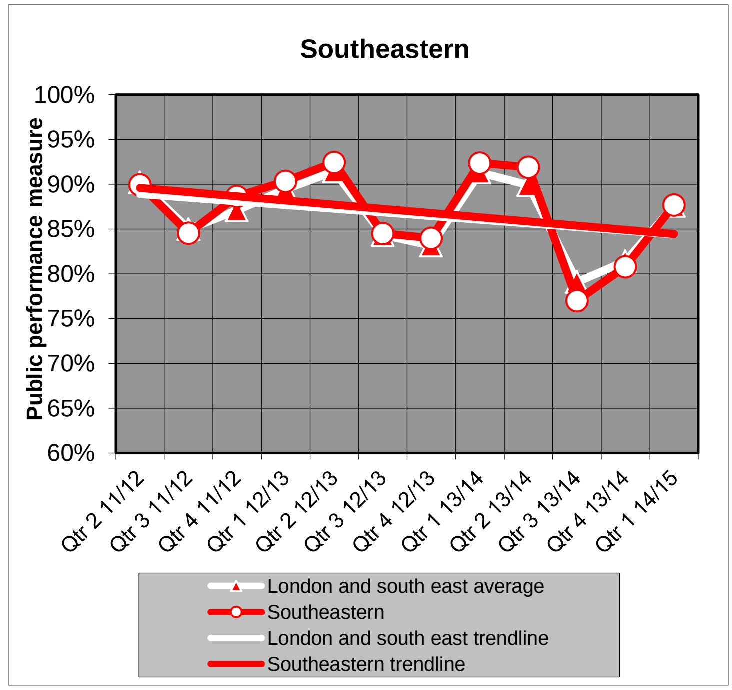


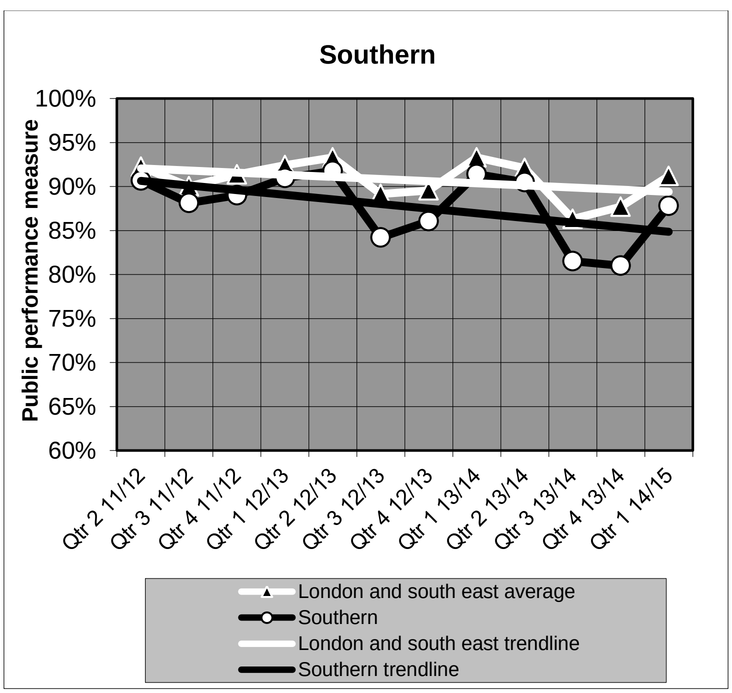


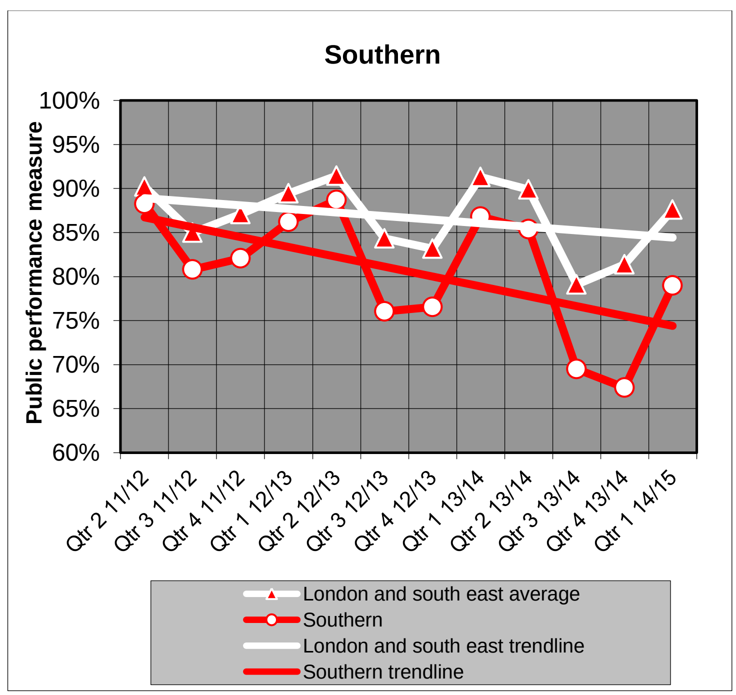
All trains performance

Peak trains performance









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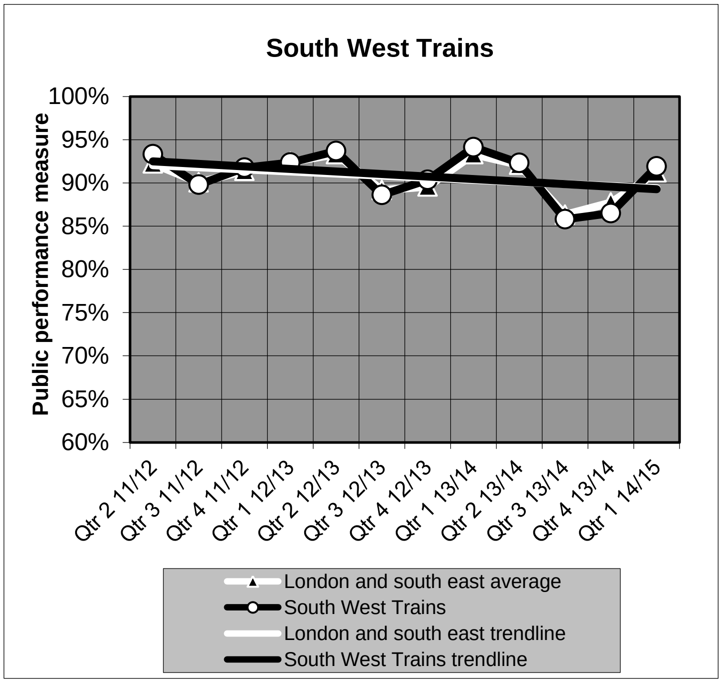
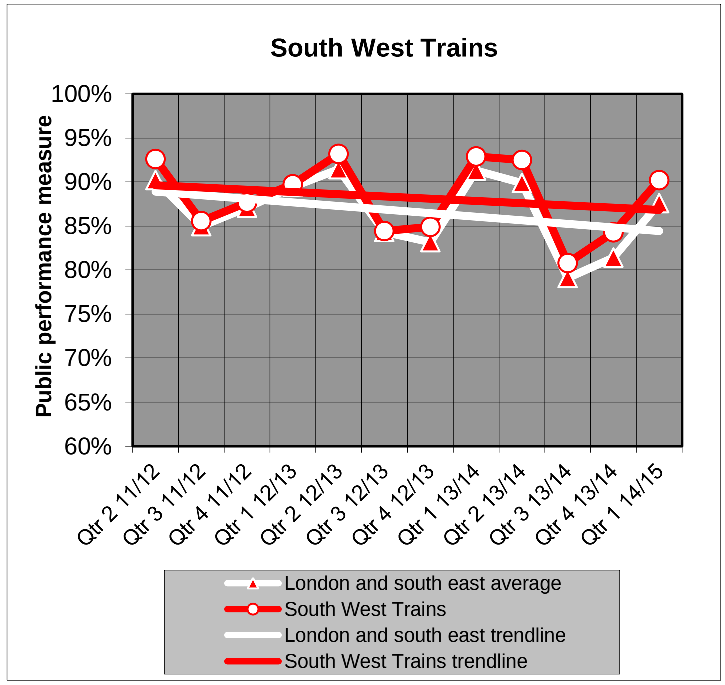


Peak trains performance

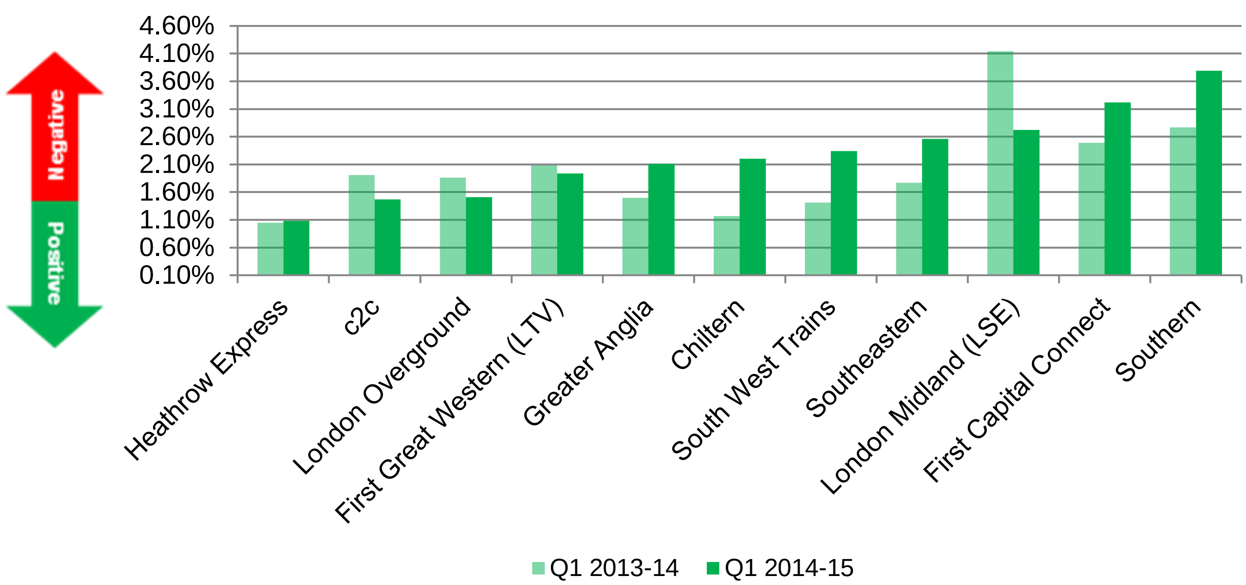


2.3 Cancellations and significant lateness

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.

Heathrow Express had the lowest rate of cancellations and significant lateness, at 1.0%. London Midland (LSE) showed the biggest improvement, with 2.7% - a 1.4 percentage point decrease when compared with quarter 1 2013/14. Southern had the highest (poorest) performance with a score of 3.7%.

Graph 3 – Cancellations and significant lateness Q1 2013/14 & Q1 2014/15

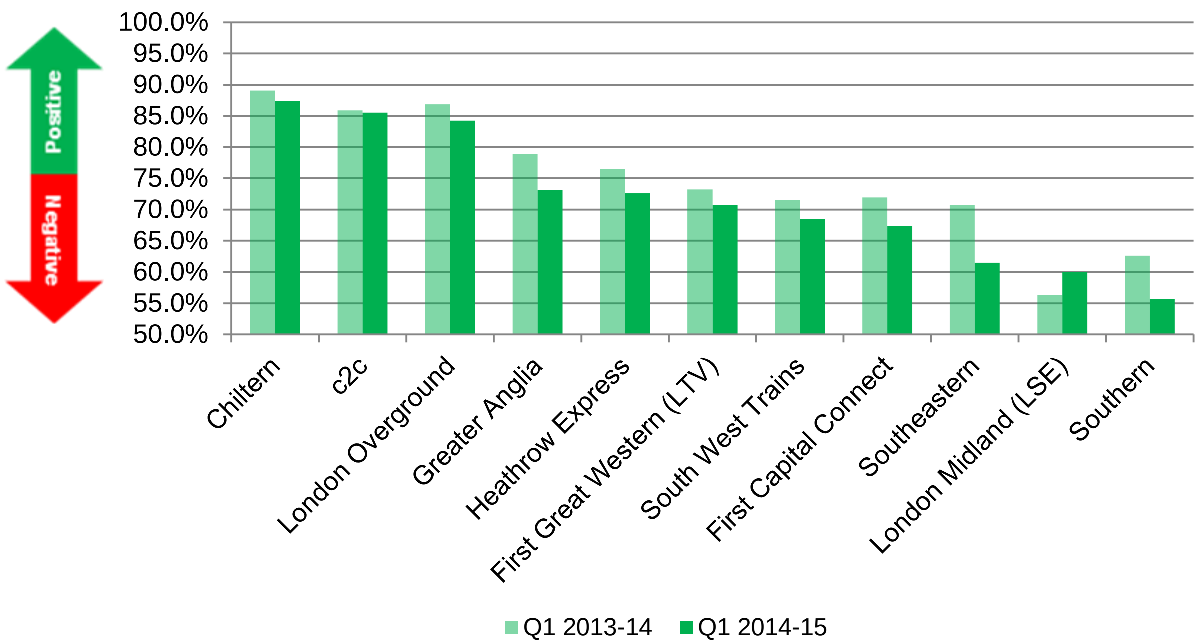


2.4 Right time arrivals

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).

Most operators experienced a decrease this quarter, when compared to the equivalent quarter in 2013/14. Chiltern performed best with 87.4% of trains arriving at the right time, but still experienced a 1.6% decrease. Southern had the lowest percentage of right time arrivals in this quarter, with 55.6% of trains arriving on time, a 6.9% decrease. But Southeastern had the largest decrease relative to the previous year.

Graph 4 – Right time arrivals Q1 2013/14 & Q1 2014/15

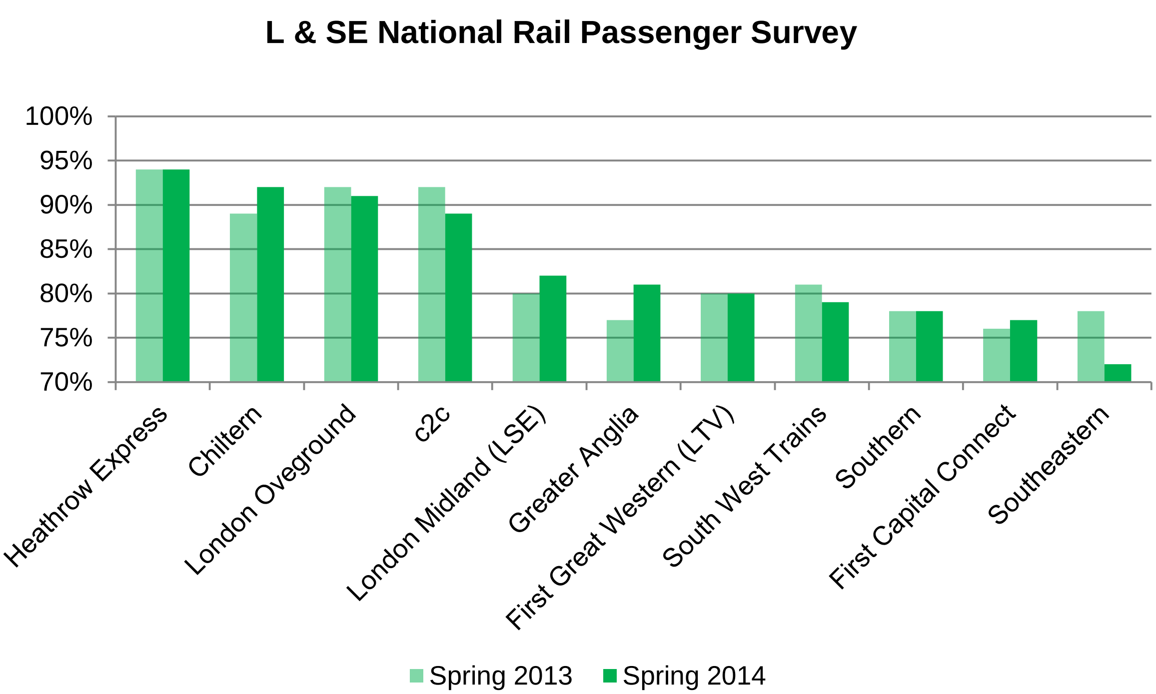


3 London & South East passenger satisfaction

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

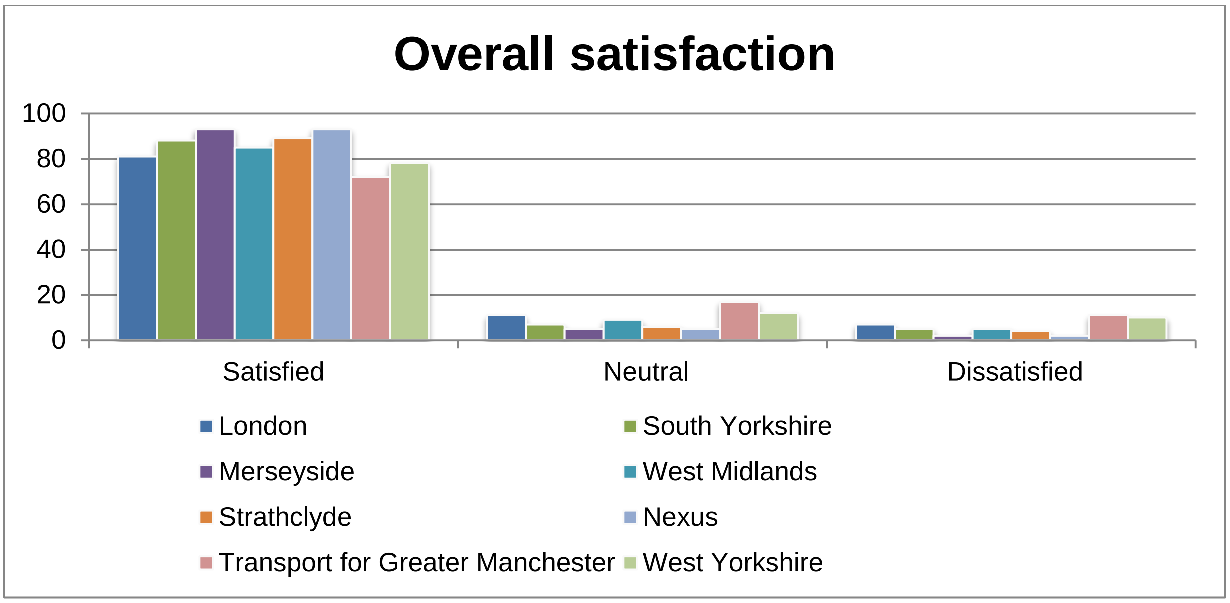
Southeastern had the lowest level of passenger satisfaction and saw the largest decline, with only 72% of its passengers satisfied, compared to 78% in spring 2013. This decline in passenger satisfaction mirrored the decline in its latest punctuality scores.



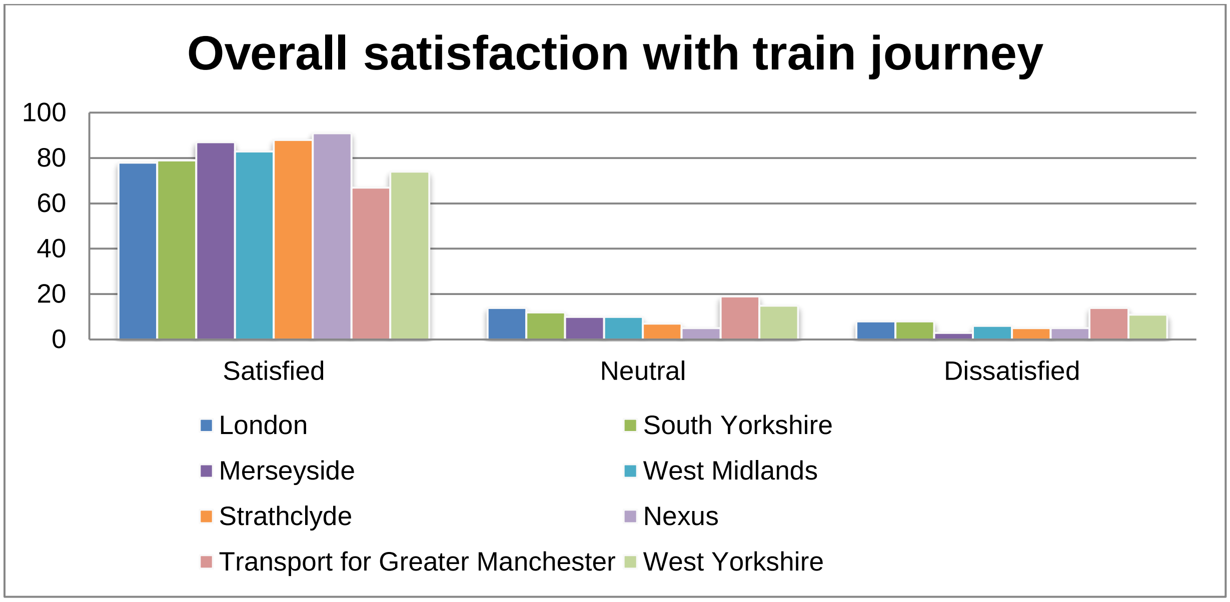
3.1 NRPS London

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.

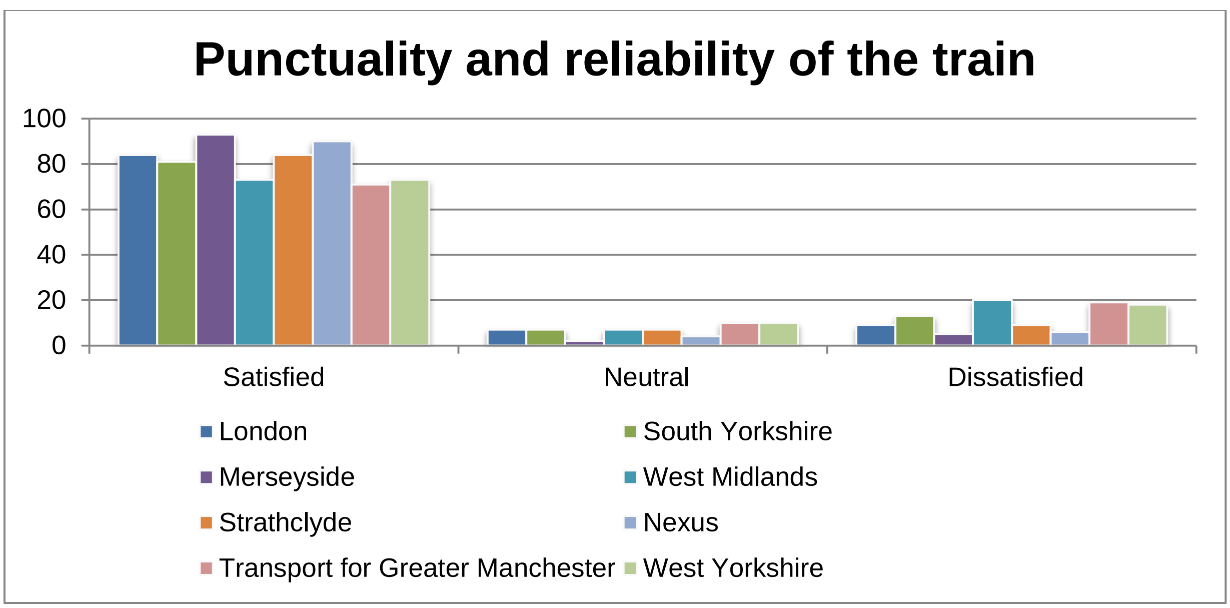
The overall satisfaction table shows that passengers in Merseyside and those in the Nexus area (i.e. Tyne & Wear) were the most satisfied with their travel and those in Greater Manchester the least. London passengers' overall satisfaction is mid range when compared to the other regions.



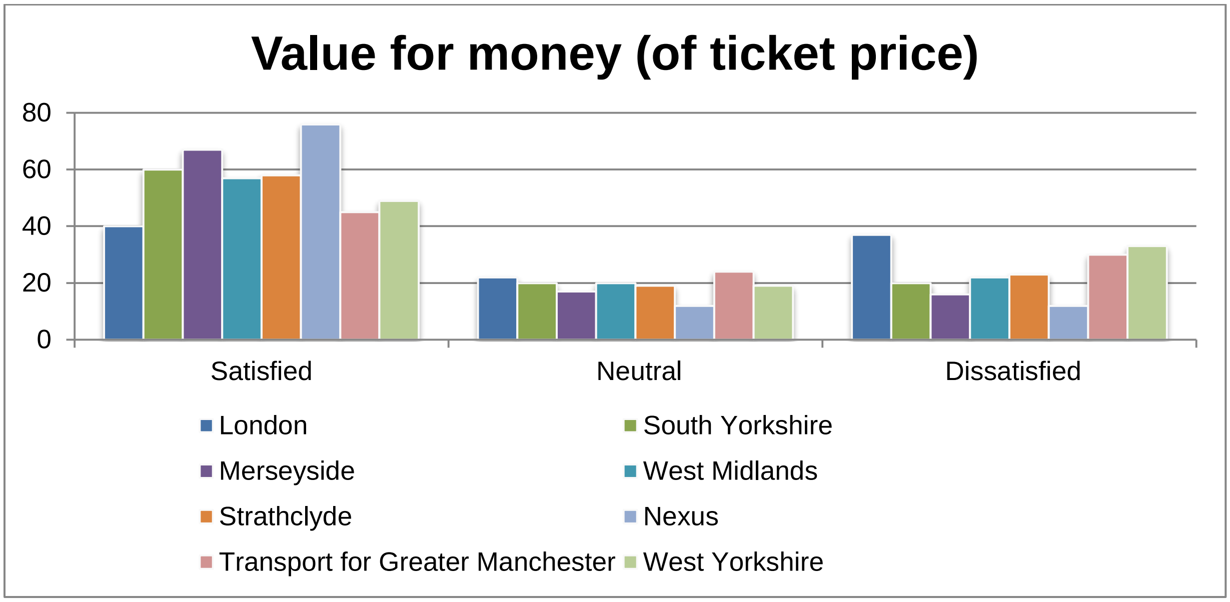
There was a dip in satisfaction when passengers were asked about their train journey "overall". Greater Manchester passengers were again the least satisfied, with West Yorkshire and London passengers not far behind.



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.

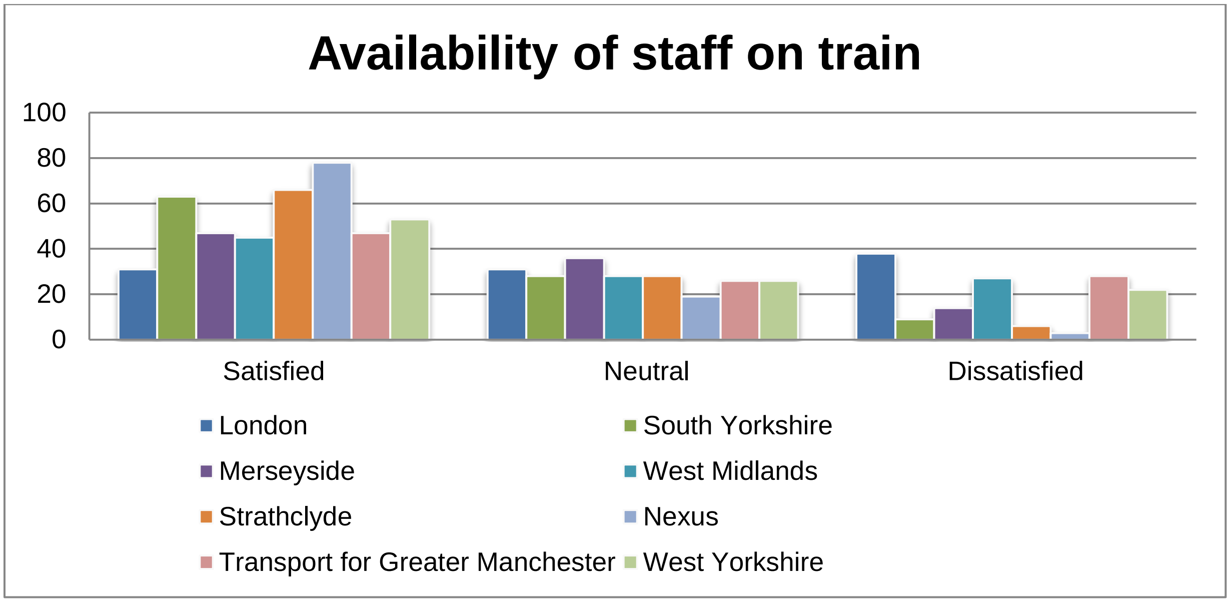


It is striking that London passengers are the least satisfied with the value for money of their ticket price, compared to those in other metropolitan areas. This can be attributed to the higher level of fares paid by Londoners than those in other cities, a higher dependency on public transport, greater 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[1].

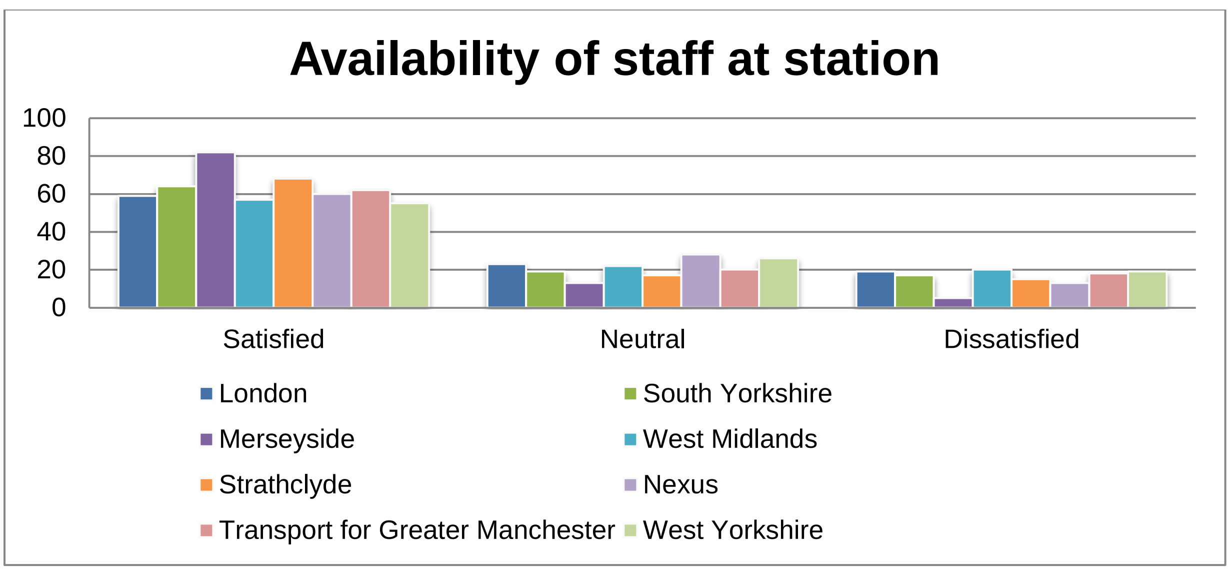


[1] Value for Money on London's transport services: what consumers think

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.

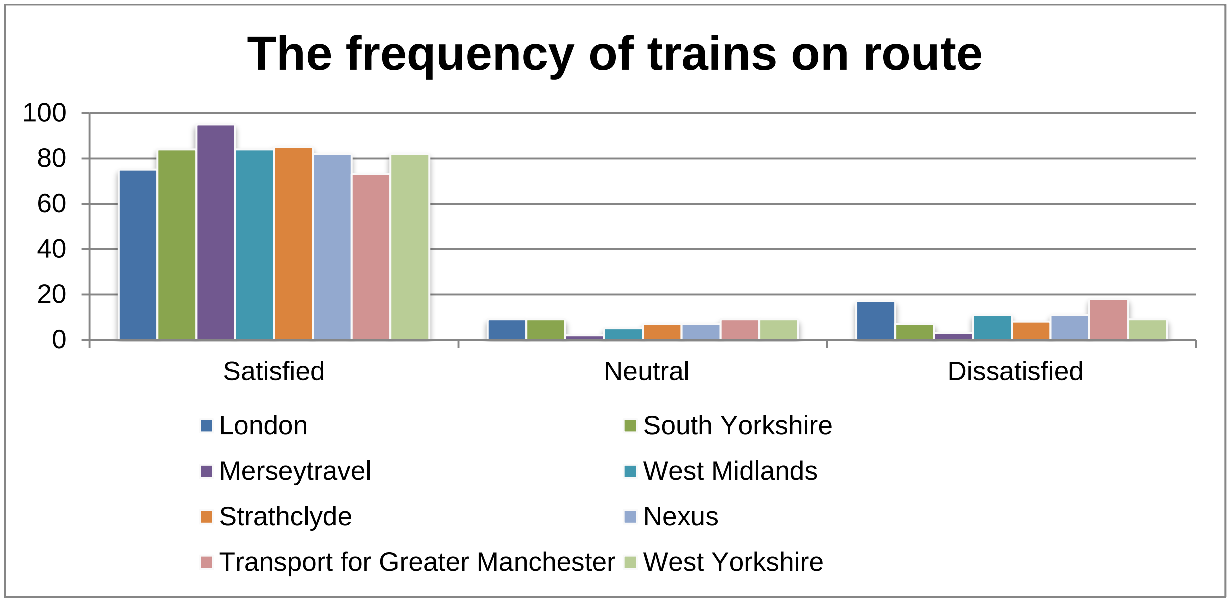


London passengers' satisfaction level with station staff availability is in stark contrast with the satisfaction levels for staff on trains. This may be attributed to the fact that the ticket offices are usually staffed, with set operating hours, and staff can usually be found at ticket gates and on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

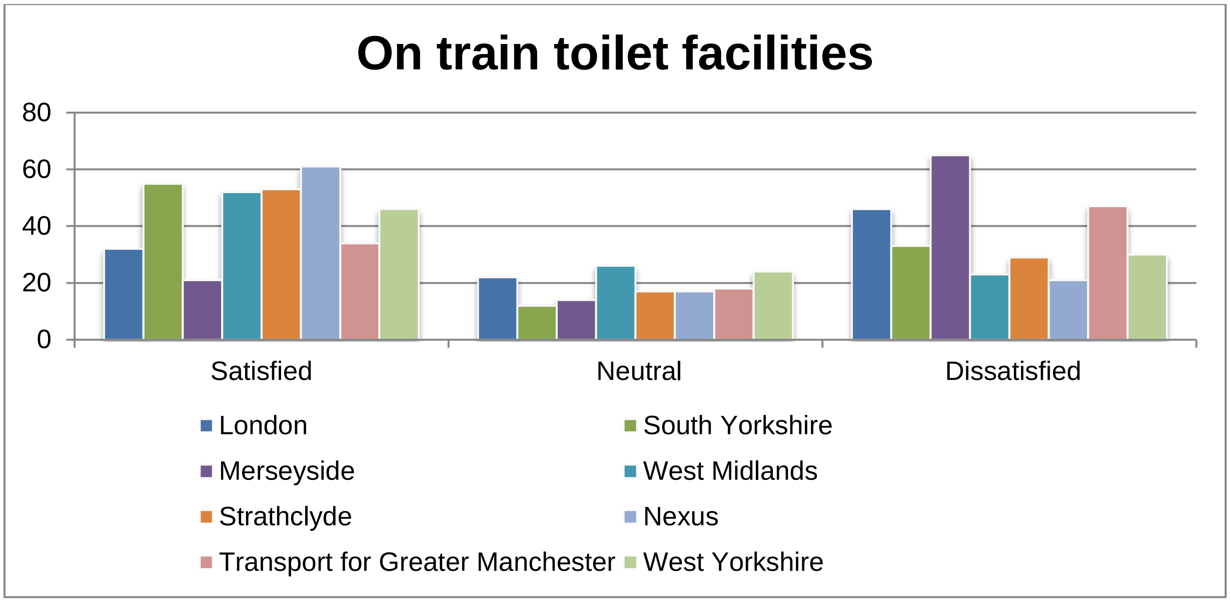


London passengers are at the lower end of reported satisfaction levels with service frequency, when compared with other metropolitan areas, because many suburban routes have services that run only every 30 minutes or less. In Merseyside and some other metropolitan areas most services run at least once 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).



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 Merseyside and Greater Manchester 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 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. These data are 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. 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, 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 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.

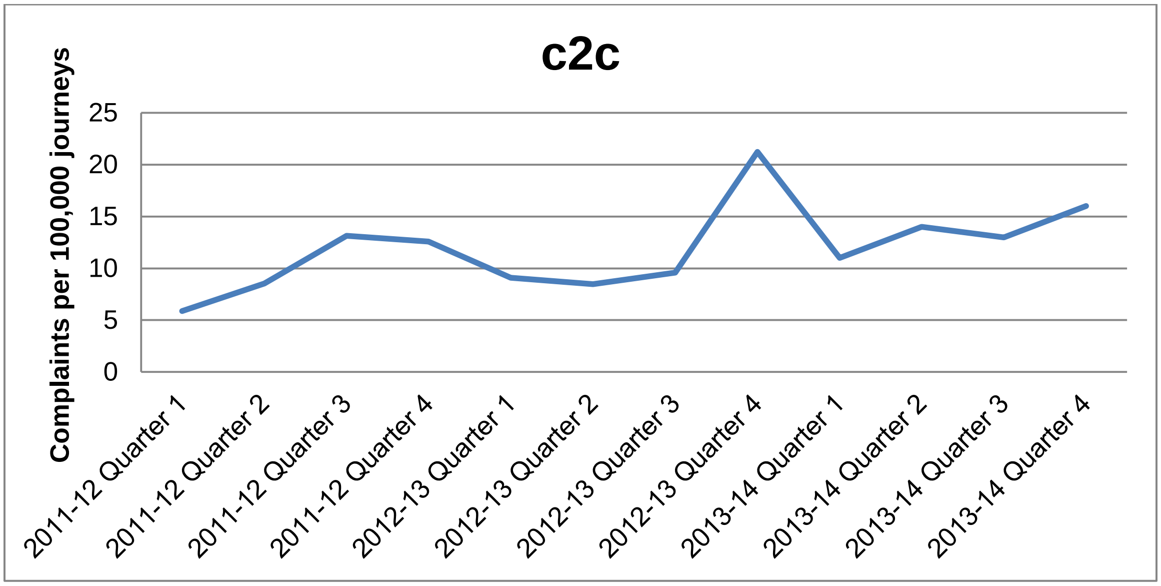
London Overground is conspicuous for its comparatively low rate of complaints. A number of factors probably contribute to this, including high service frequencies, short journeys, a simple ticketing system, fully staffed stations, and a generally high level of reliability. It is noteworthy that Chiltern has a high (and recently rising) complaints rate despite its consistently good passenger satisfaction scores. This probably reflects the longer distance character of most of its services, 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	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	Q3 13-14	Q4 13-14	Average
London Midland	97	66	85	74	64	77	149	96	57	35	40	40	**73.3**
First Great Western	71	83	82	73	50	59	81	89	44	48	56	68	**67.0**
Chiltern Railways	38	51	58	50	63	36	37	39	31	76	84	127	**57.5**
Greater Anglia	18	30	42	35	28	26	30	36	24	26	42	29	**30.5**
First Capital Connect	24	25	28	27	24	18	18	30	21	16	20	33	**23.7**
Southern	95	21	9	5	6	5	3	6	5	6	9	9	**14.9**
Southeastern	13	13	13	13	12	12	13	15	9	9	14	20	**13.0**
South West Trains	14	9	10	10	9	9	17	18	9	11	15	17	**12.3**
c2c	6	9	13	13	9	8	10	21	11	14	13	16	**11.9**
London Overground	4	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	**3.0**

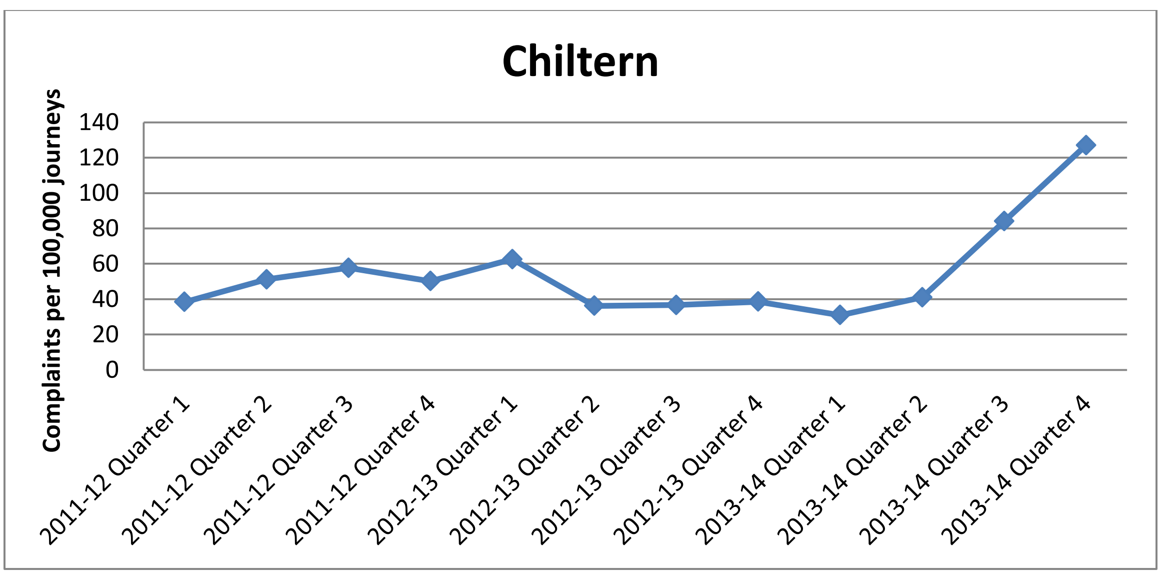
c2c

On average, there were 11.9 complaints to c2c per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Service performance, staff conduct and ticketing were the most frequent categories.



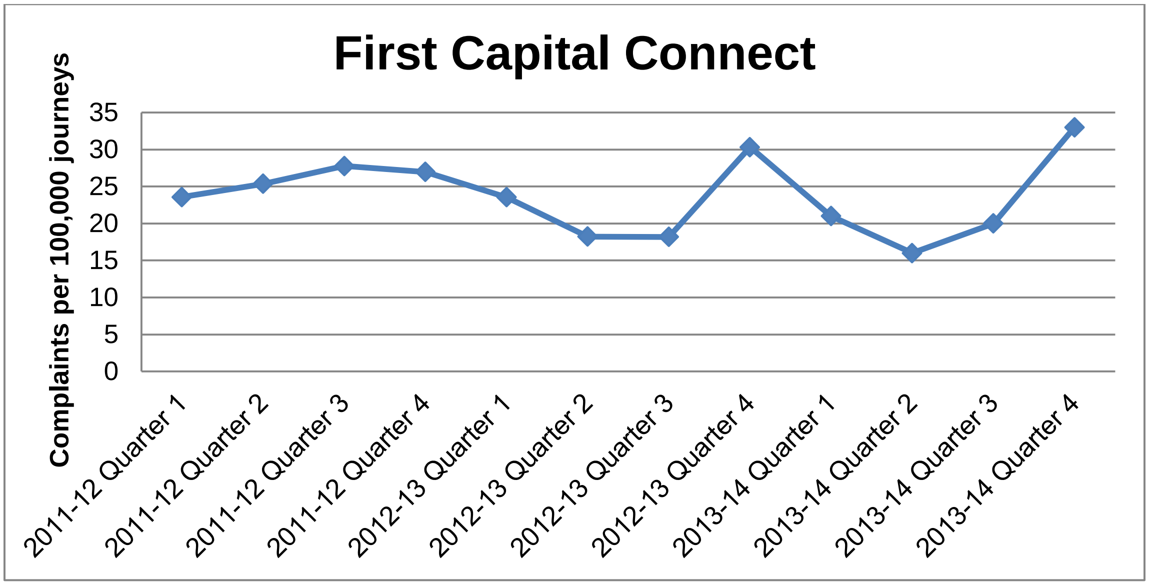
Chiltern

On average, there were 57.5 complaints to Chiltern per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most frequent categories.



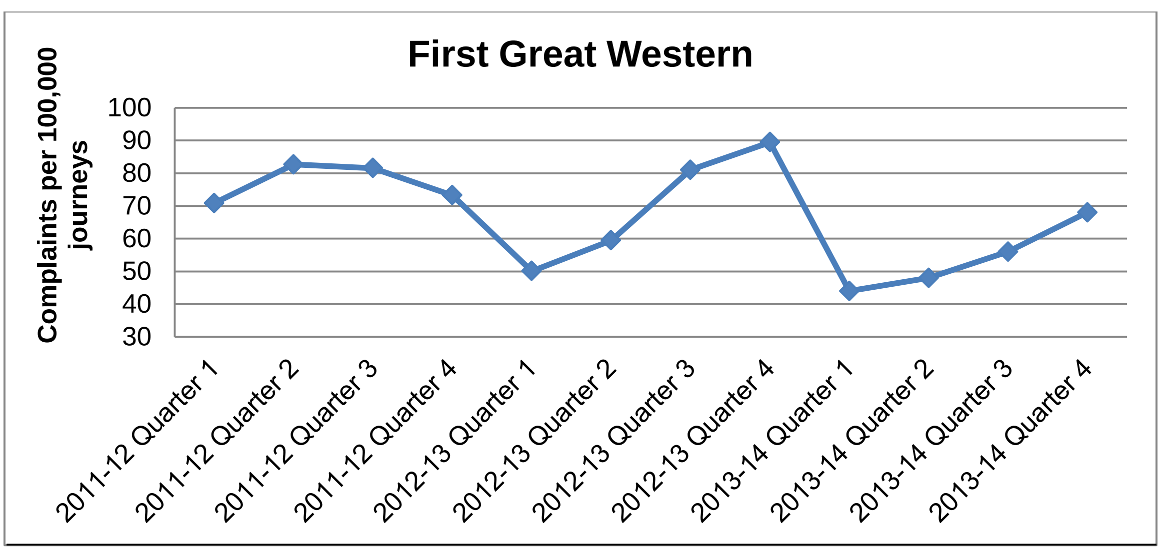
First Capital Connect

On average, there were 23.7 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.



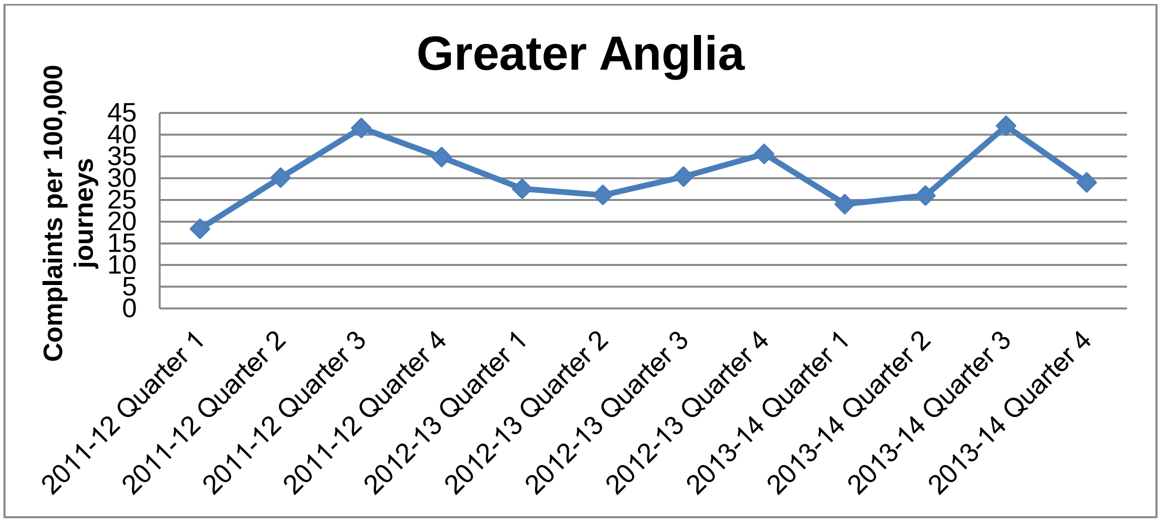
First Great Western

On average, there were 67 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.



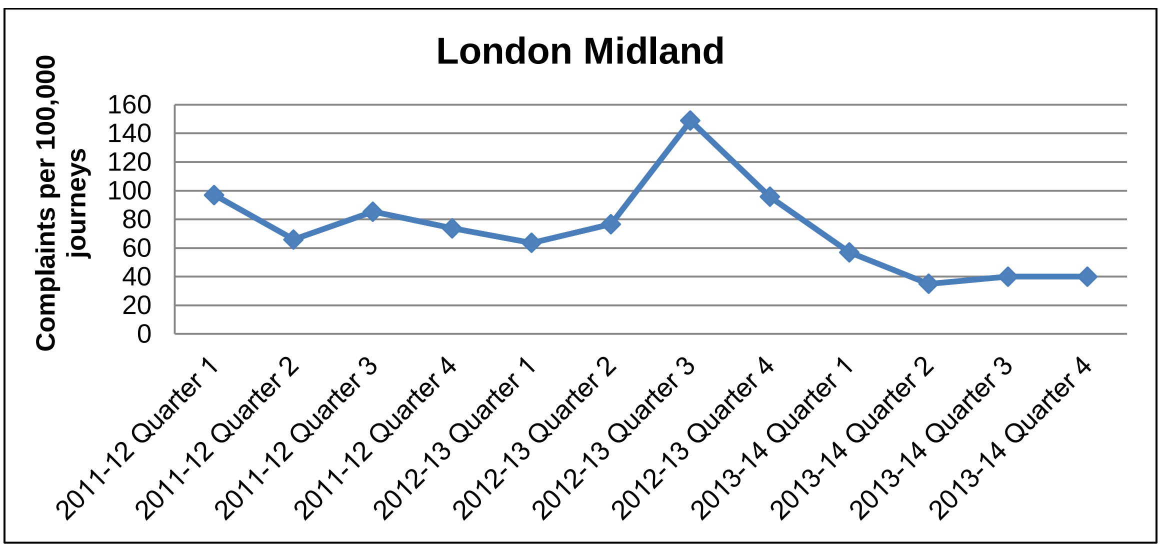
Greater Anglia

On average, there were 30.5 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.



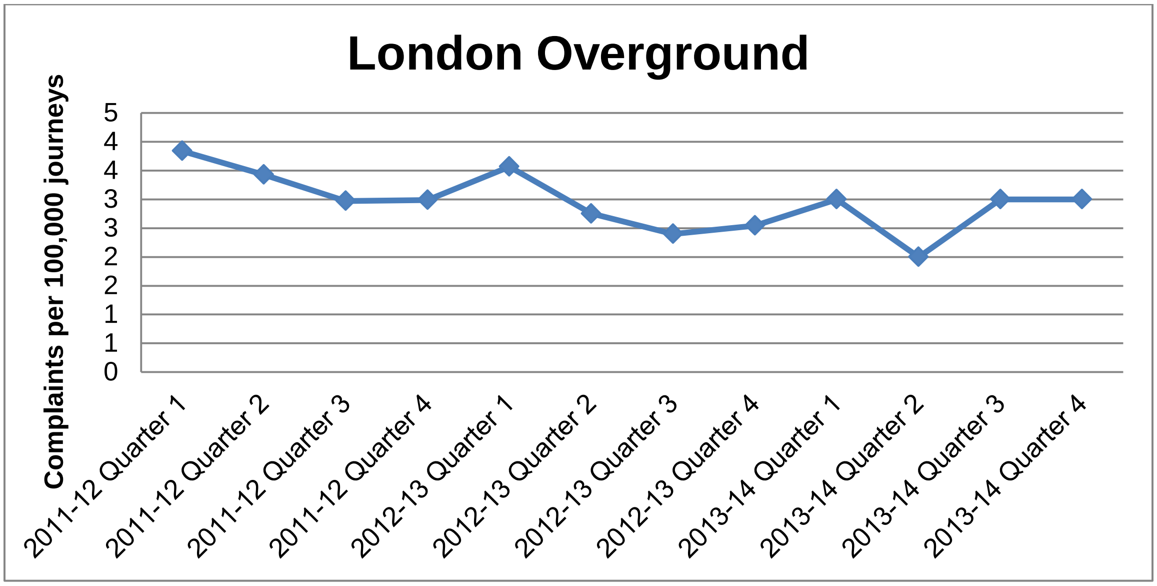
London Midland

On average, there were 73.3 complaints to London Midland per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. The number of complaints received in quarter 4 2013-14 (40) was the same as the previous quarter (q3 2013-14). Complaints about service performance were the most common.



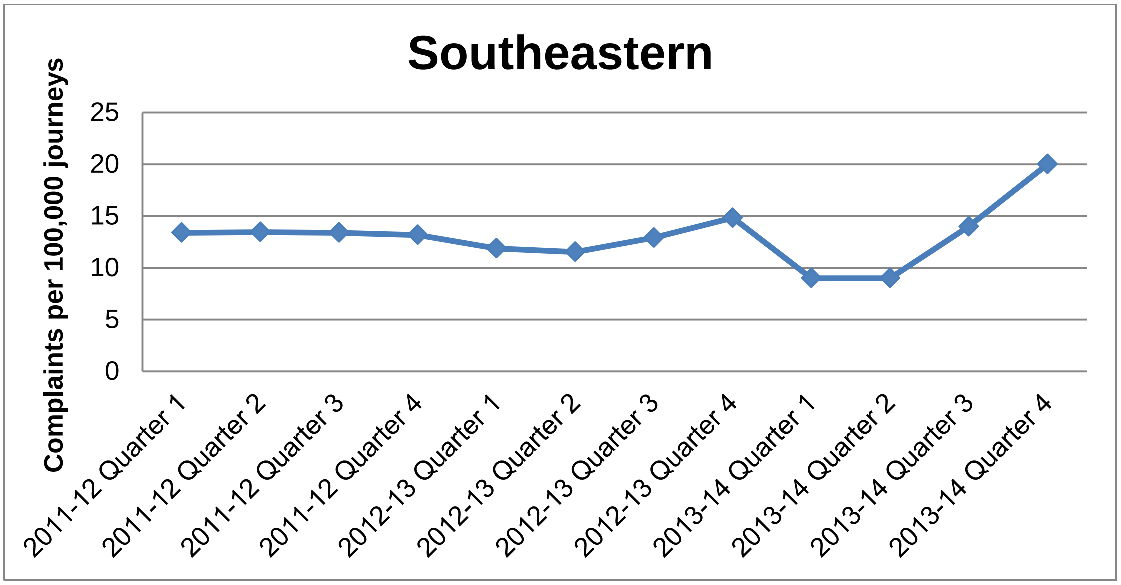
London Overground

On average, there were 3 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 so that it now has the highest punctuality and reliability of any TOC in Britain. Train performance and ticketing are the two most common categories of complaint.



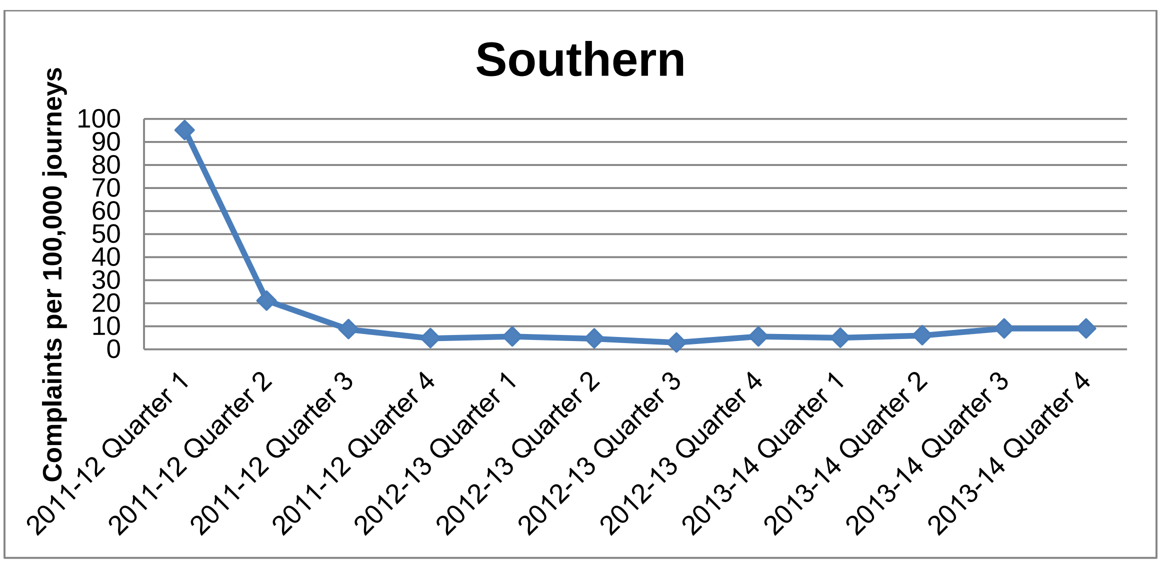
Southeastern

On average, there were 13 complaints to Southeastern per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most common.



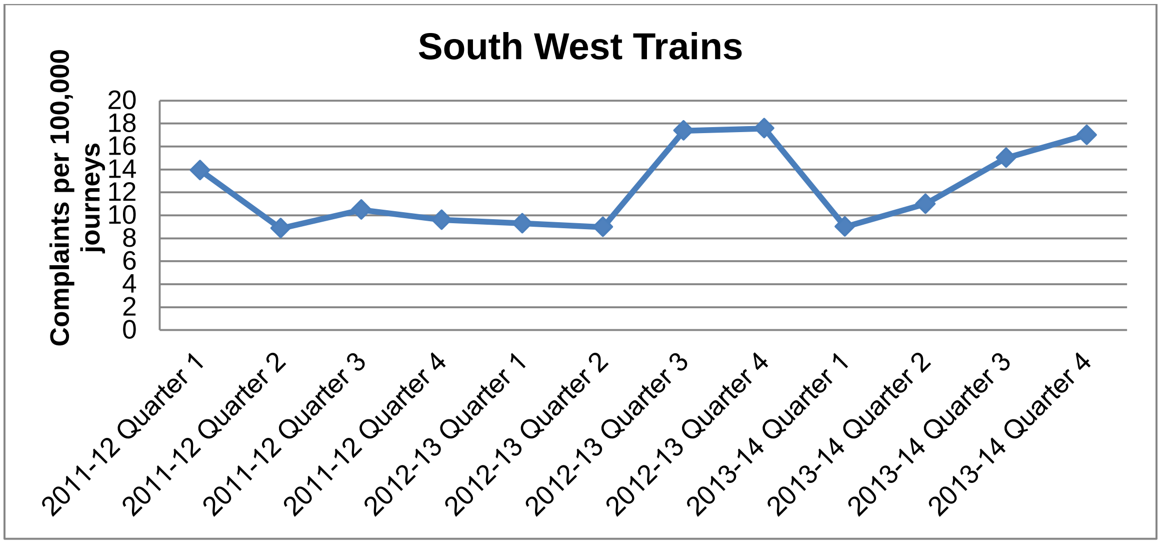
Southern

On average, there were 14.9 complaints to Southern per 100,000 journeys over the previous 12 quarters. The complaint rate in quarter 4 2013-14 was the same as the previous quarter (quarter 3 2013-14). Complaints about service performance and ticketing were the most common.



South West Trains

On average, there were 12.3 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.



5 Passengers in excess of capacity (PiXC)

(not reported this quarter)

The Department for Transport has in the past, conducted an annual survey of peak train loadings on the London and South East commuter network. New measures are in place to monitor crowding on trains and this is no longer done solely via the PIXC system. [2]

When crowding figures are available, they will be published in this section.

Definition of passengers in excess of capacity

Passengers in excess of capacity (PiXC) is the difference between the planned capacity of each National Rail service arriving in central London and the actual number of passengers (excluding first class) on the service at its most crowded point on the journey.

PiXC applies to all L&SE operators' weekday train services arriving at a London terminus during the 3-hour AM peak (07:00 to 09:59), and those departing during the 3-hour PM peak (16:00 to 18:59). The overall PiXC result is derived by combining both peaks.

The PiXC measure compares the planned standard class capacity of each service arriving at or departing from London with the actual number of standard class passengers on the service at the point where the passenger load is highest. PiXC is the total number of standard class passengers in excess of the planned standard class capacity for the service, expressed as a percentage of the total standard class load. No allowance is made for "undercrowding" on trains where the number of standing passengers is less than the planned capacity.

The standard class capacity is based on the booked formation of the service. It includes the number of standard class seats on the train and may include an allowance for standing room. No allowance for standing is made when a service has no stops for more than 20 minutes before (AM) or after (PM) the point where the passenger load is highest, but it is allowed when there is a stop within 20 minutes.

[2] Rail passenger numbers and crowding statistics

For most train operators the standing allowance is based on of $0.45m^2$ of floor space per passenger. However, for South West Trains a figure of $0.25m^2$ is used and for Southeastern's class 376 'metro' style stock and for London Overground a figure of $0.35m^2$ is used. In some cases train operators do not have standing capacities calculated for their rolling stock based on the available floor area. In these cases the standing capacities have been estimated as 20 per cent of the number of standard class seats for long distance rolling stock, and 35 per cent of the number of standard class seats for commuter rolling stock.

Under the historic PiXC system, the DfT set limits on the acceptable level of PiXC at 4.5 per cent in one peak (morning or afternoon) and 3.0 per cent across both peaks. The DfT now sets specific performance targets for individual franchise holders.