

**Meeting the needs of passengers when trains become stranded:  
how well is the rail industry doing?**

**Project Brief – April 2023**

**Official/Sensitive – Commercial**

**1. Background**

Stranded train incidents pose potential health, safety and welfare risks to passengers, in particular if they decide to climb out of a train unsupervised, but also if air conditioning or toilets fail when there is no electricity supply to a train. Other potential impacts of stranded trains include inconvenience, frustration and discomfort to passengers, along with reputational damage to the industry if incidents are not perceived to be managed well.

Transport Focus and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), through its consumer policy team, have agreed to work together to consider the issue of passengers on trains which become stranded. This includes whether the rail industry is sufficiently focused on meeting passengers' needs when this occurs and how good practice can be promulgated within the industry.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and Network Rail have jointly produced a [Guidance Note](#) (hereafter "Guidance") on Meeting the Needs of Passengers Stranded on Trains. Its stated purpose is to "provide guidance to enable Network Rail (as the infrastructure manager) and train operating companies (TOCs) to plan for and implement appropriate arrangements for responding to events in which passengers are stranded on trains." The Guidance is advisory, and compliance with it is at an organisation's discretion.

Transport Focus is the consumer watchdog representing the interests of passengers using Britain's railway and has carried out considerable research into the passenger experience when trains are disrupted, including about information, and has produced recommendations on how to improve it. Our reports include [Delays and disruption - Rail passengers have their say](#); [Passenger information when trains are disrupted](#); [Reacting to extreme weather on the railways](#); [Information: Rail passengers' needs](#)

[during unplanned disruption; Passenger information during the ‘Beast from the East’ and Storm Emma in March 2018; Extreme heat July 2022: the passenger experience.](#)

ORR has a strategic objective to improve the passenger experience in the consumer areas for which it has regulatory responsibility. ORR’s consumer policy team is responsible for monitoring train and station operators’ compliance with their passenger facing licence obligations, and commitments set out in operator Accessible Travel Policies. This includes in the area of passenger information where operators have a duty to provide appropriate, accurate and timely information to enable passengers to plan and make their journeys with a reasonable degree of assurance, including when there is disruption. It also includes the provision of assistance to disabled people on trains when there is disruption.

In 2013-14 ORR carried out an inspection to assess Network Rail’s management of incidents involving stranded trains during periods of disruption. ORR has also published reports on specific incidents where trains have become stranded, such as following [railway power disruption in August 2019](#).

However, this is the first piece of work either Transport Focus or ORR has undertaken that focuses specifically on passenger experience relating to stranded trains.

The purpose of this project is to improve the passenger experience in future by understanding how well the rail industry is meeting passengers’ needs when trains become stranded. The project is about the people caught up in these incidents, rather than about trains or railway infrastructure. Our requirements are set out in section 3 and fall broadly into two categories: those about establishing how well the Guidance is embedded within the industry, and those about establishing the passenger experience during a small number of specific incidents.

## **2. Tender process**

Proposals should be e-mailed to [tenders@transportfocus.org.uk](mailto:tenders@transportfocus.org.uk) by **1700 hrs on 10<sup>th</sup> July** in accordance with the process specified below. However, you should notify us by **1700 hrs on 3<sup>rd</sup> July** that you intend to bid.

Our tender process aims to follow good practice and be fair to all bidders. It is subject to audit by the Government Internal Audit Agency. The process requires that tenders be sent as .pdf files to the indicated address, and that address alone. Tenders should be sent in good time so as to be received by the specified deadline. As tenders are not opened until after the deadline, automated read receipts will be generated only at that time. Tenders are read and scored independently by two members of staff using the criteria specified in this brief. All bidders will be notified of the outcome of the tender process in due course and feedback can be provided subsequently if desired.

**Please take careful note that in line with the tender requirements we cannot accept tenders which are not sent to the correct mailbox or are sent, or copied, to any e-mail address other than that specified, are not in .pdf format, or are received after the time specified.**

As stated above, we cannot acknowledge receipt of tenders before the deadline; subject to the capabilities of your e-mail system you might therefore wish to request an automated 'delivery receipt' when e-mailing your document.

We are pleased to engage in any reasonable dialogue regarding the planned project while you consider whether and how to bid (on the understanding that any material facts relating to the research which may emerge during such discussions will need to be communicated to other potential bidders in the interest of fairness to all) – please note contact details at the end of this brief.

### **3. Requirements**

For avoidance of doubt, analysing the causes of trains becoming stranded in the first place is outside the scope of the project.

We require the successful bidder to:

- i. Ensure that they understand the context in which stranded train incidents are managed by establishing the relevant industry rules, systems and procedures.
- ii. Assess the extent to which the arrangements in section 2.2. of the Guidance (Organisations responsibilities) have been implemented within the industry through engagement with a sample of Network Rail Routes and individual train operating companies. The sample, to be agreed with Transport Focus, must reflect different types of operation (for example, commuter/intercity/rural); different operator owning groups; and different parts of Great Britain.
- iii. Using the sample in ii, establish whether a "Protocol for Passengers stranded on trains" (recommended by the Guidance) is in place. And if not establish whether equivalent arrangements exist that appear to meet the intent of the Guidance.
- iv. Lead engagement with the industry over the course of the project, with support and guidance from Transport Focus or ORR as appropriate. Bidders should note that Transport Focus and ORR will brief key industry contacts on the project in advance of a supplier being appointed and will seek to share appropriate contacts with the successful bidder.
- v. Identify examples of good practice in adoption of the Guidance from which others may learn, both in terms of documented policy and/or delivery in practice.

- vi. Identify four\* stranded train incidents (ideally, occurring during the course of the project) and establish how well the needs of passengers were met during these incidents, with reference to the Guidance as a benchmark for good practice. The incidents selected should involve one or more trains coming to a halt for two hours or more between stations. At least two of the four incidents should involve loss of electricity supply to the train. Each of the four should be different from the others: in terms of type of operation and/or operator owning group and/or part of Great Britain  
 \* bidders are asked to indicate, as a priced option, costs for examining additional incidents as part of the project
- vii. Establish the experience – good and bad – of passengers directly involved in the same of incidents in vi, including those with additional needs or who are in vulnerable groups (for example disabled passengers (physical, sensory and cognitive), elderly, pregnant women, minors and passengers with small children). Bidders should set out in their proposal how they will gather the required evidence.
- viii. Identify if there are particular gaps or challenges surrounding implementation of the Guidance or otherwise meeting the needs of passengers in these situations and, if so, how these could be addressed. Also consider whether the Guidance should be strengthened to make it more passenger centric, including by not limited to whether “*Agree a plan within 60 minutes*” is sufficiently speedy. Develop appropriate conclusions about how the passenger experience in these situations could be improved, and sense check them in draft form with the industry, Transport Focus and ORR prior to finalising.
- ix. In addition to reference in viii to conclusions in draft form in viii, report its findings and conclusions via a draft report on which Transport Focus and ORR may comment, and then produce a final report which will be published and should adhere to the Transport Focus style guide (which will be provided to the successful bidder). Bidders should note that any image used in the report must be copyright free or accompanied by written permission for its use in a published document.
- x. Engage proactively throughout the project with Network Rail, train operators and other industry bodies.
- xi. Engage proactively with Transport Focus and ORR throughout the project, and including but not limited to:
  - a. Producing a project plan setting out key milestones and deliverables
  - b. Attending a project kick off meeting and other reasonably necessary project meetings
  - c. Communicating with the project manager as reasonably required throughout the project
  - d. Updating not less than fortnightly via email or MS Teams on progress

- xii. Present your findings to a combined meeting of managers at Transport Focus and ORR\*

\* bidders are asked to indicate, as a priced option, costs for providing additional presentations of the findings

#### **4. How will it be used?**

The final report produced by the successful bidder will be published. Its findings will be used to drive improvement in passenger experience through spreading good practice and highlighting areas requiring improvement.

#### **5. Timings**

A tentative timeline for key project milestones is outlined below. We would expect to agree required progress/review meetings as part of the kick off meeting.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Project brief issued via Contracts Finder	13 June 2023
Deadline for proposals	10 July 2023 at 1700 hrs
Successful agency appointed	w/c 17 July 2023
Set up meeting	w/c 31 July 2023
Draft report	December 2023 latest
Final report	End of December 2023 latest

#### **6. Summary of outputs and reporting**

- Draft conclusions regarding challenges/solutions (requirement viii)
- Draft report on which Transport Focus and ORR may comment (requirement iv)
- Final report (requirement ix)
- Presentation of findings (requirement xii)

#### **7. Budget and breakdown of costs within your proposal**

The available budget for this work is **c. £40,000** including value added tax.

In order that we can compare proposals, bidders should provide costs for each element of the work, as follows:

- Project management
- Assessment of extent to which Guidance is embedded
- Assessment of passenger experience in four incidents

- Analysis
- Presentation
- Reporting

Bidders should also provide a priced option for:

- Adding two additional recent stranded train incidents in requirement vi
- Adding one additional presentation in requirement xii

## **8. Tender evaluation**

The project will be subject to the accompanying terms and conditions.

The decision to commission an agency to carry out the research will be made on the basis of quality and cost-effectiveness. Bids should be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided earlier in this document. Unsuccessful bidders will be notified as soon as practicable, and reasons given for the decision.

Project proposals will be evaluated by how well they meet the following criteria:

- price (30%)
- quality (70%).

Quality will be assessed based on:

- relevant experience of the bidder and key team members, in relation to their proposed roles in the study (20%)
- understanding and approach to delivering the brief (40%)
- a clear and detailed schedule of work and inputs/outputs including the ability to adapt to the changing needs of the project (10%).

As part of your response please include a one-page summary of what you envisage to be the potential risks to the success of the project and the steps you would take in the eventuality that they occur.

## **9. Contact**

Catherine Folca  
 Stakeholder Manager, Transport Focus  
[catherine.folca@transportfocus.org.uk](mailto:catherine.folca@transportfocus.org.uk)  
 07718 570009