

Better South Eastern Charter

The Government is currently considering the shape of the new Southeastern franchise. This charter makes the case for people and communities across the South East to have a reliable, affordable and high-quality rail service, and sets out what that means in practice. Currently, Southeastern has some of the worst passenger satisfaction in the UK¹. We want the Minister to use the re-franchising as an opportunity to radically improve the experience we have as passengers.

1. A fairer deal for part-time commuters More and more of us work flexibly. Five-day a week commuters get a third off their travel with a season ticket, but part time commuters and others with flexible work patterns face much higher costs to travel. Time for a part-time ticketing option that gives a fair and equitable discount.

2. Value for money The franchise should include a commitment to always sell the cheapest ticket for a journey, with a promise to refund double the difference if a passenger discovers they have been overcharged². Multi-modal smartcards should be fully integrated and compatible with all TfL services and local buses in Kent, and include pay-as-you-go with capping, so that passengers are always charged the minimum fare for the end-to-end journey.

3. Better stations Many stations are not the attractive, accessible, well-lit places that they should be. The new franchise should include a package of investment including accessibility upgrades; improved integration with cycling, local buses and TfL services. Toilets should be cleaned regularly, and should be open throughout the hours of rail service.

4. Better train services Extra carriages should be introduced on shoulder peak services to reduce overcrowding. Services should run later in the day and on Boxing Day. Accurate, up to date and actionable information about current and future services should be provided consistently online, at the station and on the train.

5. Excellent customer service The new franchise should protect ticket office opening hours and the presence of trained, visible staff on trains and at stations to provide assistance and give passengers security. Where stations are staffed, disabled and older passengers should always be guaranteed 'turn-up-and-go' assistance, without booking ahead.

6. Monitoring and enforcement Franchise commitments mean nothing unless they are actively monitored and enforced. The Government must hold the train operator to account, with fines when necessary, if it fails to deliver on promises (for example, ticket office opening hours), and provide real incentives for providing reliable, on-time trains that don't skip stations. There must also be local accountability – the operator should be required to meet at least twice a year with each rail user group, and to include them on its timetables and website.

¹ Transport Focus Rail Passenger Satisfaction Survey, Autumn 2016 - Southeastern is third from bottom of the table for overall satisfaction; second from bottom for value for money

² This already happens on c2c services in Essex
<http://www.c2c-online.co.uk/about-us/our-policies/right-ticket-right-price-commitment>



Sevenoaks Rail
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