

TravelWatch NORTHWEST



**Report of a Survey by TravelWatch NorthWest
of 120 specimen services operated by
Northern Rail
in the North West of England
September – November 2013**

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Cover photo: A Morecambe bound Class 153 unit leaves Bare Lane station past the redundant signal box.

David Butterworth

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Between April and October 2012 TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) surveyed 100 specimen services across the North West of England. The purpose of the survey was to provide a broad assessment of service provision as it directly affected the passengers.
- 1.2 There were many aspects of on-train service provision which could generally be described as 'satisfactory' or 'good'. These included overall cleanliness of the train interior, cleanliness of the windows, seats and tables, a pleasant attitude of the conductor (when evident) and the overall ambience of the train interior (making allowance for the age of the train).
- 1.3 There were however a number of areas where standards varied between 'barely satisfactory' and 'poor'. These included the poor provision of information at smaller stations, non-working public address systems, the haphazard nature of revenue protection, instances of unclean or inoperative toilets and irregular standards regarding on-train announcements.
- 1.4 There was a relatively high number (26%) of instances where the conductor was not seen in the carriage in which the assessor was riding. In many cases passengers who joined trains at unstaffed stations were unable to purchase tickets and hence were often able to have a free ride.
- 1.5 The full report may be read on the TravelWatch NorthWest website at <http://www.travelwatch-northwest.org.uk/studies.htm>
- 1.6 As a follow-up to the 2012 report board members of TWNW decided to carry out a further survey which would concentrate particularly on those aspects identified in the 2012 report as being of particular concern.

2. TravelWatch NorthWest

- 2.1 The Mission Statement of TWNW is '*Facilitating an integrated and seamless quality public transport network for North West England*'. Its vision is to champion the interests of public transport users in the North West so that the network (not just rail) can become:
 - accessible to everyone;
 - affordable and socially inclusive;
 - available where and when it is needed;
 - acceptable to all;
 - attractive to users.Its key objectives are:
 - To give users a platform to express their concerns and needs;
 - To promote integrated and sustainable public transport strategies;
 - To produce influential best practice reports based on evidence.
- 2.2 The survey outlined in this report and the critical analysis of its findings falls within the remit of TWNW.

3. The Survey – Design and methodology

- 3.1 The survey team agreed that over the period between September and November 2013 members of TOWN would complete questionnaires whilst carrying out their normal journeys on Northern trains. Every effort would be made to cover the whole of the North West region but, given limitations on the spread of membership, this was not always achievable.

The survey questionnaire was designed to include the assessment of:

- the provision of ticket sales at stations at the commencement of journeys;
- the timely departure of the train;
- the punctuality of the train at the assessor's destination;
- the extent of the conductor's revenue protection and customer care duties;
- the extent of overcrowding of the train;
- conductor announcements regarding calling point, connections and safety;
- conductor apologies in cases of late running or other adverse events;
- revenue protection at the destination station.

- 3.2 Assessors were invited to provide additional narrative comments to amplify or explain an event when a 'Yes' or 'No' answer would not have been adequate.
- 3.3 In the style of the 'mystery shopper' the survey was carried out anonymously.
- 3.4 A copy of the questionnaire can be seen on Page 27

4. Data analysis and results reporting

- 4.1 The responses from each questionnaire were transcribed onto a spreadsheet which was then used to analyse the various assessable topics.
- 4.2 In common with previous surveys of this nature the complete set of data is reproduced on Pages 5 to 18. The results table has been subdivided into sets, each set representing a geographic area. The areas which relate to this survey are:
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| • East Manchester (EM) | (27 journeys) | |
| • Lancashire & Cumbria (LC) | (26 journeys) | |
| • North Manchester (NM) | (5 journeys) | |
| • South Manchester (SM) | (36 journeys) | |
| • West Manchester (WM) | (16 journeys) | |
| • Yorkshire (YK) | (10 journeys) | Total = 120 journeys |
- 4.3 Comment is made regarding each of the assessed items, with statistical analysis if appropriate.
- 4.4 Narrative comments made by assessors are listed, to inform a more thorough understanding of particular events.

5. Interpreting the Data Tables (Pages 5 – 18)

- 5.1 At the station the assessor looked at the availability of facilities to purchase travel tickets. Was there a ticket office and, if so, was it open? If there was a ticket machine was it in working order? Were tickets checked at barrier prior to joining the train (applicable only to larger stations)?
- 5.2 It was not always possible to assess the above features if an onward connecting train was due within a few minutes.
- 5.3 Stations managed by *Northern* are highlighted in purple.
- 5.4 A train which left the joining station (not necessarily the originating station) on time is shown in green, from one to five minutes in orange and excessive lateness beyond five minutes in red.
- 5.5 The extent of late (or sometimes early) arrival at the end point of the journey (not necessarily the end of the whole journey) is shown, again with traffic light shading to indicate the extent of lateness.
- 5.6 The train ends were checked (whenever possible) to determine if the destination was clearly visible.
- 5.7 The extent of ticket checking and fare collection, known as Revenue Protection (RP), was assessed. The opportunity and justification for the conductor to carry out RP duties varies from journey to journey but, at the data collection stage, the actual RP level regardless of circumstances was recorded. When the conductor was not seen in the carriage this is shown by 'NS'.
- 5.8 A judgement was made regarding the courtesy and helpfulness of the conductor, when present.
- 5.9 The trains which were judged to be overcrowded are shown in the results tables.
- 5.10 The extent to which the conductor chose to or was able to make announcements during the journey is shown, with a lack of specified announcements being shown by a bold 'N'.
- 5.11 If the train arrived at the assessor's destination more than three minutes late and the conductor did not apologise for its late arrival the entry is shown by a bold 'N'.
- 5.12 Whether there was a barrier check at the alighting station was noted. Where there was no barrier check and no tickets had been checked on the train the entry is highlighted in red.
- 5.13 Members of the survey team were invited to add comments to explain or amplify aspects of a journey, particularly where this is necessary to understand negative responses. Whenever such a comment has been made the results table shows this by the Survey Sheet Number being highlighted within a brown block. In such cases each comment is noted within the comments table from Page 21.

6. DATA TABLES

Route – East Manchester

Table 1A

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	002	010	011	013	017	018	019	025	074	075
Date	29/10	19/11	21/09	19/09	12/11	12/11	12/09	20/11	08/10	09/09
Journey from	MCV	TOD	LTL	MCV	SMB	MCV	SMB	MCV	TOD	TOD
Journey to	GNF	MCV	BGH	RCD	MCV	SMB	MCV	WDN	MCV	MCV
Unit type	156	155	144	158	150	144	150	158	158	158
No of carriages	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Route code	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM
Reporter	CD	JM	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	GK	JM	JM
JOINING STATION										
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	N	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y	N
Ticket machine available	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y		Y	NA	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Barrier check	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
ON THETRAIN										
Actual departure time	12.27	08.47	16.31	19.02	10.48	13.00	10.48	12.21	08.04	09.04
Minutes late	0	9	4	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Actual arrival time	12.51	09.19	17.00	19.21	11.08	13.21	?	12.48	08.38	09.30
Minutes late	0	10	2	20	0	0	?	0	1	0
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
No of times conductor passed through carriage	0	1	<3	0	2	0	2	2	1	0
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	N	NA	NA	N	NA	N	NA	NA	NA	Y
Conductor courteous and helpful	NS	Y	Y	NS	Y	NS	Y	Y	Y	NS
Train overcrowded	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
If YES - between which stations		SMB							MIH	
Greatest no of standees in carriage		MCV							MCV	
		35							20	
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM										
Apology or explanation if late	NA	Y	N	N	N	N	N	NA	NA	NA
Announcement re calling points	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re approach to next station	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION										
Barrier check	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y

Route – East Manchester

Table 1B

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	077	078	079	080	082	083	085	088	097	098
Date	31/10	12/11	19/09	20/09	10/10	10/10	29/10	25/09	29/10	29/10
Journey from	MCV	MCV	MCV	MCV	MCV	WDN	MCV	MCV	GNF	MCV
Journey to	TOD	TOD	TOD	TOD	WDN	MCV	SYB	TOD	MCV	GNF
Unit type	158	144	158	144+142	155	142+142	150	144	156	156
No of carriages	3	2	3	4	2	4	2	3	2	2
Route code	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM
Reporter	JM	JM	JM	JM	GK	GK	GK	GK	CD	CD
JOINING STATION										
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	NA	Y
Barrier check	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
ON THETRAIN										
Actual departure time	17.43	16.48	16.24	17.01	17.19	07.48	20.42	13.00	13.51	12.27
Minutes late	0	0	0	1	1	1	15	0	0	0
Actual arrival time	18.18	17.17	16.54	17.37	17.58	08.22	20.48	13.35	14.23	12.51
Minutes late	3	3	0	3	6	0	14	1	3	0
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
No of times conductor passed through carriage	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	N	N	N	N	Y	NA	NA	NA	N
Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Y	Y	Y	NS
Train overcrowded	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations		MCV			MCV					
Greatest no of standees in carriage		TOD			RCD					
		40			<30					
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM										
Apology or explanation if late	N	N	NA	N	N	NA	Y	NA	N	NA
Announcement re calling points	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Announcements re safety	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION										
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N

Route – East Manchester

Table 1C

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
Date	04/11	04/11	31/10	31/10	24/10	24/10	19/11
Journey from	LTL	RCD	RCD	SLD	SLD	RCD	SYB
Journey to	RCD	LTL	SLD	RCD	RCD	SLD	MCV
Unit type	158	144	142	156	156	142	156
No of carriages	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
Route code	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM	EM
Reporter	TY	TY	TY	TY	TY	TY	DB
JOINING STATION							
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	
Barrier check	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
ON THETRAIN							
Actual departure time	22.52	19.37	12.04	15.15	15.15	12.04	15.22
Minutes late	9	18	0	0	0	0	0
Actual arrival time	23.01	19.47	12.39	15.50	15.49	12.38	15.35
Minutes late	9	20	0	-1	-2	-1	0
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
No of times conductor passed through carriage	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	N	N	N	N	N	NA	N
Conductor courteous and helpful	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Y	NS
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations							
Greatest no of standees in carriage							
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM							
Apology or explanation if late	N	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Announcement re calling points	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION							
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y

Route – Lancashire & Cumbria

Table 2A

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	022	023	024	026	027	059	061	063	064	065	
Date	25/11	25/11	25/11	18/11	18/11	30/10	04/11	15/10	30/09	30/09	
Journey from	MCM	SET	CAR	CAR	GSD	MRY	DNT	HEX	SET	CAR	
Journey to	LAN	CAR	SET	GSD	CAR	CAR	CAR	CAR	CAR	SET	
Unit type	156	158	158	158	158	156	158	156	158	158	
No of carriages	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	
Route code	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	
Reporter	RR	IW	IW	IW	IW	IW	IW	IW	IW	IW	
JOINING STATION	Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
	Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	NA	NA	N	Y	Y
	Ticket machine available	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y
	Ticket machine working	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y
	Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
ON THETRAIN	Actual departure time	13.58	10.44	08.53	08.53	14.23	14.16	12.20	21.57	11.48	08.53
	Minutes late	0	0	0	0	3	3	8	0	2	0
	Actual arrival time	14.09	12.17	10.42	10.07	15.35	14.56	13.33	22.51	13.30	10.36
	Minutes late	0	-6	10	5	3	0	4	-5	1	4
	Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	No of times conductor passed through carriage	1	3	9	6	5	4	7	6	2	ALL
	Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	Y	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Train overcrowded	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	If YES - between which stations			SET	SKI						
	Greatest no of standees in carriage			?							
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM	Apology or explanation if late	NA	NA	N	N	N	NA	N	NA	NA	N
	Announcement re calling points	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
	Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
	Announcements re safety	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
ALIGHTING STATION	Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Route – Lancashire & Cumbria

Table 2B

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	066	067	068	069	072	086	091	092	093	094
Date	25/09	21/10	21/10	15/10	04/11	27/09	12/10	12/10	26/09	26/09
Journey from	SET	SET	CAR	CAR	CAR	BPN	CNF	KEI	BAR	LAN
Journey to	CAR	CAR	SET	HEX	GSD	HBD	KEI	CNF	LAN	BAR
Unit type	158	158	158	156	158	158	144	144	153+153	15
No of carriages	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
Route code	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC
Reporter	IW	IW	IW	IW	IW	GK	CK	CK	CK	CK
JOINING STATION										
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	?	N	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	?	NA	Y
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
ON THETRAIN										
Actual departure time	13.50	10.44	08.53	18.37	08.53	16.29	08.34	17.10	09.38	16.21
Minutes late	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
Actual arrival time	15.35	12.10	10.38	19.30	10.06	17.52	09.52	18.26	?	?
Minutes late	3	-7	6	0	4	2	0	0	?	?
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
No of times conductor passed through carriage	ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL	0	ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N	NA	NA	NA	NA
Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NS	Y	Y	Y	Y
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations										
Greatest no of standees in carriage										
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM										
Apology or explanation if late	N	NA	N	NA	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Announcement re calling points	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y		N
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Announcements re safety	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION										
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Route – Lancashire & Cumbria

Table 2C

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	107	108	110	111
Date	09/10	09.10	25/09	25/09
Journey from	CNF	LAN	PRE	PRE
Journey to	LAN	CNF	LAN	SAS
Unit type	153+153	153	156	142
No of carriages	2	1	2	2
Route code	LC	LC	LC	LC
Reporter	RR	RR	RR	RR
JOINING STATION				
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	N	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	N	Y	Y	Y
Barrier check	N	N	Y	N
ON THETRAIN				
Actual departure time	15.08	13.32	17.34	11.19
Minutes late	1	0	6	17
Actual arrival time	15.19	13.42	17.54	11.48
Minutes late	0	1	6	20
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	Y	N
No of times conductor passed through carriage	1	1	ALL	0
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	NA	N
Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	Y	N
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations				
Greatest no of standees in carriage				
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM				
Apology or explanation if late	NA	NA	N	N
Announcement re calling points	N	N	N	N
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION				
Barrier check	N	N	N	N

Route – North Manchester

Table 3

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	112	113	020	028	029	030	049
Date	07/11	07/11	22/10	19/11	13/11	13/11	22/10
Journey from	MCV	CLH	MCV	CLH	MCV	CLH	BON
Journey to	CLH	MCV	BON	MCV	CLH	MCV	MCV
Unit type	150	150	150	156	150	156	150
No of carriages	2	2	2	2	2	2	4
Route code	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM
Reporter	DB	DB	CD	DB	DB	DB	CD
JOINING STATION							
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y
Barrier check	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
ON THETRAIN							
Actual departure time	14.00	08.26	17.00	19.40	15.40	08.26	16.34
Minutes late	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Actual arrival time	15.15	09.50	17.22	10.52	16.55	09.52	16.51
Minutes late	-2	0	2	0	-2	0	4
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
No of times conductor passed through carriage	1	6	0	7	0	6	1
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	N	NA	N	NA	NA
Conductor courteous and helpful	N	Y	NS	Y	NS	Y	Y
Train overcrowded	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations	SFC BON						
Greatest no of standees in carriage							
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM							
Apology or explanation if late	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N
Announcement re calling points	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION							
Barrier check	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y

Route – South Manchester

Table 4A

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	001	004	005	008	009	012	014	015	016	021
Date	14/09	30/10	01/11	07/11	22/10	17/09	18/09	19/09	19/09	19/09
Journey from	MAC	RML	MAC	MAN	MAN	MAC	MAC	MAN	MAN	BUX
Journey to	MAN	MAN	MAN	HYC	MAC	MAN	MAN	BUX	WBR	SPT
Unit type	323	142	323	142	323	323	323	156	150	150
No of carriages	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
Route code	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM
Reporter	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	SP	CD	SP
JOINING STATION										
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
ON THETRAIN										
Actual departure time	09.20	14.43	06.58	14.35	21.48	16.20	15.20	10.52	15.52	13.26
Minutes late	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Actual arrival time	09.56	15.05	07.29	14.54	22.20	16.57	16.00	11.51	16.36	14.08
Minutes late	3	3	2	3	2	1	4	0	5	-1
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
No of times conductor passed through carriage	<1	3	<1	0	<1	<1	<1	<5	1	<5
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	NA	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
If YES - between which stations									STP	
									DSL	
Greatest no of standees in carriage									<60	
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM										
Apology or explanation if late	N	N	NA	N	NA	NA	N	NA		NA
Announcement re calling points	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y		N
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N		N
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y		N
ALIGHTING STATION										
Barrier check	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N

Route – South Manchester

Table 4B

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	031	034	035	037	039	040	041	042	043	044
Date	26/08	26/08	31/08	10/09	10/09	12/09	14/09	14/09	18/09	02/10
Journey from	MAN	MAN	MAC	MAC	MAN	MAC	MAC	MAN	MAN	MAC
Journey to	HTY	MAC	MAN	MAN	WML	MAN	MAN	MAC	MAC	MAN
Unit type	323	323	323	323	323	323	323	323	323	323
No of carriages	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Route code	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM
Reporter	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
JOINING STATION										
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
ON THETRAIN										
Actual departure time	13.18	16.48	07.19	10.20	15.38	08.06	19.20	16.48	21.48	16.20
Minutes late	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Actual arrival time	13.38	17.19	07.53	10.55	16.07	08.42	09.59	17.19	22.19	16.55
Minutes late	2	1	-3	-1	5	0	3	1	1	-1
Destination panel(s) correct	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
No of times conductor passed through carriage	0	<1	1	<1	0	<1	<1	<3	0	<1
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	N	NA	NA	NA	N	NA	NA	NA	N	NA
Conductor courteous and helpful	NS	Y	Y	Y	NS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations										
Greatest no of standees in carriage										
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM										
Apology or explanation if late	NA	NA	NA	NA	N	NA	N	NA	NA	NA
Announcement re calling points	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re safety	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION										
Barrier check	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N

Route – South Manchester

Table 4C

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	045	046	047	050	051	052	053	054	055	056	
Date	10/10	17/10	22/10	26/10	27/10	26/10	16/10	26/10	17/10	17/10	
Journey from	MAC	MAC	MAC	MAN	MPL	HSG	MAN	MPL	MAN	MPL	
Journey to	MAN	SPT	SPT	HTH	MAN	MPL	MPL	HSG	MPL	MAN	
Unit type	142	323	323	323	142	142	142	142	142	142	
No of carriages	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	
Route code	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	
Reporter	CD	CD	CD	RR	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	
JOINING STATION											
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	NA	N	Y	N	Y	
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
ON THETRAIN											
Actual departure time	07.15	10.20	15.20	15.38	18.22	15.39	23.24	12.09	22.45	17.52	
Minutes late	0	0	0	0	15	7	0	2	0	1	
Actual arrival time	07.56	10.41	15.41	15.58	18.48	16.18	?	12.44	?	?	
Minutes late	0	0	0	-1	17	11	?	5	?	?	
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	
No of times conductor passed through carriage	0	<1	<1	1	0	4	2	3	0	0	
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	N	NA	NA	NA	N	NA	NA	NA	N	N	
Conductor courteous and helpful	NS	Y	Y	Y	NS	Y	Y	Y	NS	NS	
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	
If YES - between which stations					MPL						
Greatest no of standees in carriage					MAN						
		20									
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM											
Apology or explanation if late	NA	NA	NA	NA	Y	N	NA	N	NA	NA	
Announcement re calling points	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	
Announcements re approach to next station	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
ALIGHTING STATION											
Barrier check	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	

Route – South Manchester

Table 4D

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	096	099	100	101	102	104
Date	31/08	29/10	29/10	26/08	26/08	26/08
Journey from	MAC	MAC	MAN	MAN	MAN	MAN
Journey to	MAN	MAN	MAC	HTY	MAC	WGW
Unit type	323	323	323	323	323	142+142
No of carriages	3	3	3	3	3	4
Route code	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM
Reporter	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
JOINING STATION						
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	Y
ON THETRAIN						
Actual departure time	07.19	10.20	14.48	13.18	16.48	14.20
Minutes late	0	0	0	0	0	-2
Actual arrival time	07.53	10.57	15.18	13.38	17.19	15.02
Minutes late	-3	1	0	2	2	0
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
No of times conductor passed through carriage	1	ALL	ALL	0	ALL	2
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	NA	N	NA	NA
Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	Y	NS	Y	Y
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations						
Greatest no of standees in carriage						
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM						
Apology or explanation if late	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Announcement re calling points	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	N	Y	N
ALIGHTING STATION						
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	Y

Route – West Manchester

Table 5A

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	003	006	007	032	033	036	038	048	060	062
Date	05/09	10/09	10/09	26/08	26/08	05/09/	10/09	22/10	01/11	02/11
Journey from	MAN	URM	WAC	MAN	WGW	MCV	MCO	SPT	PRE	LIV
Journey to	WHG	WAC	MCO	WGW	MCV	WHG	URM	BON	LIV	PRE
Unit type	150	150	156	142	156	150	156	142	150	156
No of carriages	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2
Route code	WM	WM	WM	WM	WM	WM	WM	WM	WM	WM
Reporter	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	IW	IW
JOINING STATION										
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Barrier check	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
ON THETRAIN										
Actual departure time	14.07	13.29	13.59	14.20	15.20	17.07	12.16	15.43	12.04	08.57
Minutes late	0	2	0	-2	0	0	0	2	0	0
Actual arrival time	14.36	13.48	14.33	15.02	16.08	14.36	12.25	16.19	13.09	09.57
Minutes late	5	3	-2	0	2	5	1	0	7	3
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
No of times conductor passed through carriage	1	4	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	3
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N	NA
Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
If YES - between which stations									WGN	
Greatest no of standees in carriage									LIV	
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM										
Apology or explanation if late	N	N	NA	NA	NA	N	NA	NA	N	N
Announcement re calling points	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re safety	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
ALIGHTING STATION										
Barrier check	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y

Route – West Manchester

Table 5B

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)		070	071	081	103	105	106
Date		11/10	10/10	10/10	26/08	10/10	10/10
Journey from		LIV	WGN	LIV	WGW	PRE	LIV
Journey to		MCO	LIV	DGT	MCV	LIV	PRE
Unit type		156	156	150	156	156	156
No of carriages		2	2	2	2	2	2
Route code		WM	WM	WM	WM	WM	WM
Reporter		IW	IW	GK	CD	RR	RR
JOINING STATION							
	Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Ticket machine available	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Ticket machine working	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Barrier check	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
ON THETRAIN							
	Actual departure time	09.14	08.28	15.55	15.20	09.04	15.57
	Minutes late	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Actual arrival time	10.01	09.18	17.00	16.08	10.04	16.54
	Minutes late	4	-2	0	2	2	0
	Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	No of times conductor passed through carriage	ALL	1	1	2	3	4
	Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Train overcrowded	N	N	N	N	N	Y
	If YES - between which stations						LIV SNH
	Greatest no of standees in carriage						14
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM							
	Apology or explanation if late	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Announcement re calling points	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Announcements re approach to next station	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
	Annouements re safety	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y
ALIGHTING STATION							
	Barrier check	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Route – Yorkshire

Table 6

Survey sheet number (in bold if a comment is included)	057	058	073	076	084	087	089	090	095	109
Date	07/11	07/11	03/10	26/09	21/09	25.10	21/09	25/10	21/09	08/10
Journey from	HBD	YRK	LDS	LDS	HBD	HBD	KNA	DEW	LDS	BDI
Journey to	YRK	HBD	TOD	TOD	YRK	BTL	LDS	TOD	HBD	PRE
Unit type	150	158	158	150+153	158	142	150	144+144	142+142	158
No of carriages	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	6	4	2
Route code	YK	YK	YK	YK	YK	YK	YK	YK	YK	YK
Reporter	GK	GK	JM	JM	GK	GK	GK	GK	GK	RR
JOINING STATION										
Ticket office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Ticket office open	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket machine working	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Barrier check	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
ON THETRAIN										
Actual departure time	08.50	14.13	16.37	17.07	09.51	14.42	15.05	16.35	16.20	14.14
Minutes late	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	7	0
Actual arrival time	10.20	15.38	17.37	18.10	11.15	15.16	15.50	17.18	17.24	15.31
Minutes late	-1	0	1	6	-3	1	-2	3	16	-1
Destination panel(s) correct	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
No of times conductor passed through carriage	6	2	0	0	2	3	2	2	0	ALL
Announcements made if no ticket inspection	NA	NA	N	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	N	NA
Conductor courteous and helpful	Y	Y	NS	NS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Train overcrowded	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
If YES - between which stations			LDS				BUY			
Greatest no of standees in carriage			SOW				LDS			
			40				20			
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYTEM										
Apology or explanation if late	NA	NA	NA	Y	NA	NA	NA	NA	Y	NA
Announcement re calling points	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re approach to next station	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Announcements re safety	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
ALIGHTING STATION										
Barrier check	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y

7. Analysis of the Results

7.1 The sample size for this survey constitutes only a small fraction of the overall number of trains operated by Northern, even over the North West area, but the resultant data relates to an essentially random selection of journeys made during autumn 2013. The majority of surveyed journeys were made by assessors in the course of their normal train journeys.

7.2 Facilities at the joining station

7.2.1 **TICKET AVAILABILITY** – Tickets were available at all the stations which have either a staffed ticket office or a machine, except in two instances: the office at Todmorden was closed at 09.04 on 9th September (Journey 075) and at Urmston at 13.29 on 10th September (Journey 006). Two ticket machines were judged to be faulty: at Smithy Bridge at 10.48 on 12th September (Journey 019) and at Salford Crescent at 15.15 on 31st October (Journey 117).

7.2.2 **BARRIER CHECK** – Passengers will normally have their tickets checked prior to reaching the platform at most of the larger stations, but this is not always the case.

7.3 On the train

7.3.1 **DEPARTURE TIME – 70% of all departures were on time.** In two cases departures from Manchester Piccadilly were judged to be two minutes early (Journeys 032 and 104). **9% of trains departed more than five minutes late** from the station at which the assessor joined the train.

7.3.2 **ARRIVAL TIME** – 26% of trains arrived at the alighting station on time. **18% of trains arrived more than five minutes late.**

7.3.3 **DESTINATION PANELS** – The panels (at least at the front of the train) were found to be correct in all but six instances (5%). These were on Class 323 (3), Class 142 (2) and Class 150 (1).

7.3.4 **TICKET INSPECTION AND/OR FARE COLLECTION** – The rail network operated by *Northern* is characterised by the large number of unstaffed stations in both outer-urban and rural locations. Some now feature ticket machines but at the majority the joining passengers are required to buy their ticket from the train conductor (except in the case of advance purchase tickets). **On 32 journeys (27%) the conductor did not enter the carriage in which the assessor was travelling.** In only two instances did the conductor apologise for the non-collection of fares. In each case this was due to a faulty ticket machine (Journeys 075 and 083).

7.3.5 **CONDUCTOR CONDUCT** – **On 118 of the journeys (98%) the conductor was judged to be courteous and helpful.** On one of the remaining two journeys the conductor announced at Kirkham that the train to Blackpool South was being terminated at St Annes but gave no assistance to passengers who had booked to stations beyond (Journey 111 – see note on Page 21).

7.3.6 **OVERCROWDING** – **On 10% (12) of the journeys the sector covered by the assessor experienced overcrowding** to the extent that large numbers of passengers had to stand in the aisles or vestibules. It must be noted that this survey did not set out specifically to assess overcrowding across the *Northern* network, so the quoted percentage is unlikely to be typical for peak-time travel.

7.4 On-train public address system

7.4.1 **APOLOGY OR EXPLANATION IF LATE** – On the 21 trains which arrived at the alighting station more than five minutes late, the conductor apologised for the late arrival on only five occasions.

7.4.2 **ANNOUNCEMENT OF CALLING POINTS AND NEXT STATION** – Because of the need to operate train doors and sell tickets the conductor may not have the time to include announcements after each station. Calling points are generally announced when the train leaves the originating station, i.e. once the train has left the station, and then only at the larger and/or interchange stations en-route. Many conductors made a valiant attempt to

announce the approaching station, again usually only at larger ones, but again many could not do so because of other duties. **The conductor announced the calling points, not necessarily after each station, on 53% of the journeys. The approach to the next station was announced on 79% of the journeys.**

7.4.3 **SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Conductors are instructed to draw passengers’ attention to the safety instructions displayed in the carriage and to remind passengers to take their personal belongings with them when leaving the train. **This was done on only 20% of the journeys assessed.**

7.5 **Barrier check at alighting station** – Only major stations normally have barrier checks for passengers leaving the platform. The notable exception is Manchester Piccadilly where it is possible for a passenger to leave the station without having his/her ticket checked, as those platforms used by long distance trains permit open access/exit. **On 69% (83) of the assessed journeys the passengers leaving the train at the assessor’s alighting station did not have their ticket checked by platform staff. On 22% (26) of the journeys there was no barrier check for passengers leaving trains where the conductor had not checked or sold tickets.**

8. Narrative comments relating to individual journeys

Table No.	Journey No.	Comment
1A	025	The toilet was in working order even though there was an 'Out of Order' sign on the door.
	075	The conductor announced to passengers when approaching Manchester Victoria that his ticket machine was faulty.
1B	077	There was a long queue at the single ticket office window in use at Manchester Victoria. The toilet in the first carriage was blocked and without water. The conductor did not pass through the train until after Littleborough.
	080	The conductor remained in the rear set throughout the journey.
	082	The train seemed to lack power whilst climbing away from Manchester Victoria, perhaps due to the high number of passengers. Toilet out of use.
	083	The train did not go through to Wigan as advertised. The double unit split at Manchester Victoria with a separate train going on to Wigan.
	088	The conductor did not commence revenue protection duties until after Littleborough.
2A	023	The tickets of boarding passengers were checked but no tickets were sold as the machine was out of order.
	024	The train was heavily loaded when it left Settle. Dales Railcard offer. Very defensive driving caused progressive late arrival at stations en-route.
	063	In comparison with the ScotRail 156 on the outward journey this unit had dirty carpets and much rubbish on seats (free newspapers, empty bottles, etc).
	065	Defensive driving after slippery rails at Armathwaite caused some late running. Toilet clean with running water, but scruffy interior with chipped wall panels.
	069	Train was ScotRail 156 with automatic announcements and display.
2B	072	The non-disabled toilet was very smelly, with the smell permeating into the rest of the carriage where passengers were sitting.
	093	The recently installed visual displays at Bare Lane were not working. The displays are vital as a change of platform is not possible once the barriers are down. There is no alternative indication of the platform being used by the oncoming train when the displays are not working. The use of Platform 1 or 2 at Lancaster requires a long walk over the bridge to reach a connecting southbound train.
	094	Since the date of this journey the 16.19 train to Morecambe now leaves at 16.20 from Platform 1, providing a level connection off the TPE train from Manchester Airport.
2C	111	As the train approached Kirkham the conductor informed passengers that the train would terminate at St Annes (not Blackpool South). Passengers were instructed to catch a train to Blackpool North. No advice was given to assist a party of young people who were travelling to Pleasure Beach. They left the train at St Annes with no idea how to reach their destination.

3	028	The train interior was thoroughly cleaned by a <i>Northern</i> employee at Blackburn. The conductor asked passengers to consult the security notices but none was visible.
	029	No ticket check throughout the journey. When questioned at Clitheroe the conductor reported that his machine would not print.
	030	There was no heating in the rear carriage throughout the journey.
	112	The conductor checked tickets only once, after Salford Crescent. Many passengers joined the train at Darwen and left it at Blackburn without anyone being sold a ticket. There was no barrier check at Blackburn.
4A	008	Barrier staff were present at Manchester Piccadilly but did not check tickets. The conductor was only seen when helping a wheelchair passenger on and off the train.
	009	Two trains were at Platform 3 of Manchester Piccadilly, the assessor's (Stoke) train first then a TPE service. Many TPE passengers boarded the Stoke train by mistake. The conductor sensibly went through the train to advise them to join the train in front. The PA was not used.
	016	Several PA announcements were made but these were inaudible.
4B	043	There was an excessive amount of litter on the floor, seats and racks when leaving Manchester Piccadilly. The toilet was also littered.
4C	045	No announcements or ticket inspection/sales causing a long queue at the barrier on arrival at Manchester Piccadilly.
	056	The conductor did not move into the front unit (2 X Class 142). Distorted sound through loudspeakers so announcements difficult to understand.
5A	060	No ticket check or sales after Wigan North Western (towards Liverpool).
	062	The train was described as 'scruffy' with fabric covering of lower walls peeling away in many places. Ex ATN unit. Cursory revenue protection; some ticket sales but no checks on validity of those already bought.
	070	The conductor gave useful advice to two passengers travelling together about the advantage of purchasing duo tickets.
	071	The conductor sold tickets after Garswood but did not check existing ones.
	081	The toilet was blocked and did not flush.

9. Analysis and comments

- 9.1 This survey of just 120 journeys on *Northern* trains represents a mere fraction of all the trains which ran during the survey period, but it still gives a realistic snapshot of the good and the bad which the travelling public experience.
- 9.2 **THE FLEET** The 2012 survey pointed out the wide variation in service provision by *Northern* across the North West. The electric services provided by the Class 323 units, recently refurbished, and, to a lesser degree, the services provided by Class 158 units, offer a good level of comfort appropriate to the nature of the route and journey length. Sadly many *Northern* passengers in the North West (and elsewhere across the patch) have to endure Class 150 '*Sprinter*' trains and, even more of a hardship, the Class 142 type 4-wheel '*Pacer*' units. Despite *Northern's* best efforts to improve their train stock the average age of the fleet is now around 25 years.
- 9.3 In contrast to the fortunes of other train operators both north and south of the North West the *Northern* fleet has seen no significant improvement since the franchise contract was signed, on a no-growth basis, in 2004. The inter-urban operator TransPennine Express has operated new Class 185 units and will receive a fleet of new electric Class 350 units during 2014. These units obviously help many local passengers in the North West but in the meantime the 'rank and file' users of the local rail network must put up with ageing and increasingly unsuitable trains.
- 9.4 It is obvious that real efforts have been made, and continue to be made, to improve the appearance and performance of the existing *Northern* fleet. The presence of on-train cleaners is appreciated by passengers, as is the general improvement in interior cleaning standards. However, a visitor from the south of England or Scotland is not pleased when transferring at Preston from a sleek *Pendolino* or a Class 185 *Desiro* onto a noisy, rattling, draughty, time-worn *Pacer* to continue the journey to East Lancashire.
- 9.5 It would be quite wrong to blame *Northern* for this shortcoming as the company is beholden to central government, which remains dismissive of the genuine claims that improvements to rolling stock must be made. A real opportunity will come when much of the network in the North West is progressively electrified. It will not make sense to continue to operate diesel units 'under the wires' so electric units will be procured. If this were the south of England, or Scotland for that matter, they would be new (and already on order) but 'ere up north' it is assumed we will have to make do with the south's cast-offs, in the shape of cascaded old, but hopefully refurbished, Thameslink stock.
- 9.6 In the meantime *Northern's* passenger numbers continue to grow, with significant numbers of trains especially at peak times, but not only, being full to bursting. By enduring an imposed limit on train capacity there is a clear suppressed demand which is not being satisfied in the medium term.
- 9.7 **DUTIES OF THE CONDUCTOR** The 2012 survey made reference to the role of the conductor and the multitude of conflicting duties placed upon the train manager. A typical conductor carries out the following tasks throughout the journey:
- ensuring the safety of the train at all times;
 - opening and closing the train doors, having first checked it is safe to do so;
 - ensuring the train is safe to depart, e.g. green signal;
 - ensuring the train does not depart early;
 - selling tickets whenever the train has called at an unstaffed station;
 - checking the validity of tickets, even when bought at staffed stations;
 - giving advice to passengers, especially those new to the area;
 - making public address announcements of calling points, next station and connectional information;
 - making announcements regarding personal safety.
- 9.8 In all except the more modern Class 323 units the conductor will normally have to walk to the rear of the train to operate the doors and make announcements. This obviously interrupts the flow of ticket sales and checking which can only resume when the train leaves the calling station.

- 9.9 It has been observed that many conductors are past masters at multi-tasking. They seem able to carry out all their allotted duties in an effortless manner. However, even they are thwarted when the train becomes well loaded at which point selling tickets prior to the destination station for the passengers concerned becomes an impossible task. Because of the absolute requirements for safety and security revenue protection takes third place, often abandoned when the pressure becomes too great. It has been said that making announcements is also considered to be more important than revenue protection.
- 9.10 Sadly there is a significant number of conductors, particularly in specific parts of the North West area, who choose to do the least possible work. Yes, they carry out their safety related duties and some will make announcements but regular passengers know only too well that on many occasions the conductor is never seen, even though passengers have joined the train at unstaffed stations en-route. The lack of opportunity to purchase a ticket will be a joy to some, who can then take a free ride from, say, Castleton to Littleborough or Darwen to Blackburn. The fares may be relatively trivial but, taken in the round, they add up to significant lost income. An unacceptable side effect is that law abiding, fare paying passengers become resentful of those who are given the opportunity to travel for nothing.
- 9.11 The 2012 survey found that on 26% of the journeys assessed the conductor failed to collect fares or check tickets within the assessor's carriage. The result for this in the current survey is 27%.
- 9.12 In some parts of the North West the 'system' prevents the conductor doing his/her work properly. There have been many occasions (including some within this survey) when conductors have joined their train equipped with either no ticket machine at all or a machine which quickly proves to be faulty. Once on the train the conductor is powerless to remedy the problem and must cope with the implied criticism that he/she is just being lazy.
- 9.13 Because the conductor is unable (or sometimes simply unwilling) to carry out revenue protection duties he/she will normally remain in the back cab. This contradicts the recent *Northern* poster displayed within trains:



- 9.14 By remaining in the back cab the conductor is not able to carry out the functions listed on the poster, in particular with regard to providing help and information and keeping passengers safe. It is generally not possible for the passenger to contact the conductor for information if he/she is behind a locked door when in the rear cab, nor can the passenger be reassured about personal safety if the conductor is not readily to hand. There is a particular problem if the passenger wishes to leave at a forthcoming station which is a request stop.

- 9.15 Passengers who ride in the front unit when two units are connected together are particularly disadvantaged if there is no corridor connection between the units. For safety reasons the conductor is not permitted to leave the rear unit so those in the front cannot buy tickets nor receive other assistance from the conductor. In particular the conductor cannot easily be called in the event of an emergency.
- 9.16 It is known that conductors are reluctant to leave the back cab on late night journeys, even allegedly having been instructed by their union not to do so. It is at such times that passengers particularly appreciate the need for support and reassurance regarding their safety. In this matter there is clearly a disconnect between management intentions and the actual performance of some conductors.
- 9.17 **REVENUE PROTECTION** There is additionally a marked disparity between *Northern's* stated policy on fare evasion and the daily reality whereby passengers can evade payment for their journey(s) through no fault of their own. Members of TravelWatch NorthWest can recount many instances where they have joined a *Northern* train at an unstaffed station, not seen the conductor during the journey – sometimes quite a long journey – and then being able to leave the train without paying. In law a crime has been committed, but if the conductor did not make him/herself available to invite the passenger to offer the fare, it is unlikely a court case would be successful. The passenger should not be expected to knock on the locked door to 'encourage' the conductor to carry out his/her duties.
- 9.18 The matter of non-collection of fares for journeys between unstaffed stations is a big issue which will not go away without constructive, assertive action. Conductors must be provided with ticket machines which work from the outset and can be relied upon to work throughout the shift; the machines should be programmed to issue standard tickets in the fastest possible time; conductor performance must be regularly monitored (perhaps by mystery shoppers but certainly not by local managers) to ensure that all conductors carry out their contractual duties; serious consideration should be given to the installation of ticket machines at least at the more well used unstaffed stations, with the requirement that passengers purchase their tickets prior to travel (as is the case with Metrolink).
- 9.19 Every effort should be made to ensure that passengers who have to buy their tickets on the train, having boarded at an unstaffed station, are not required to queue to pay their fare when they reach the destination station. Passengers do not take kindly to having to join a queue when they have been willing to pay on the train and it is unreasonable for them to have to suffer loss of time due to weaknesses in the system.
- 9.20 **ANNOUNCEMENTS** The provision of information regarding the stations the train will call at and, as appropriate, information regarding connections into onward journeys is a necessary part of the conductor's role. Only on the more modern stock is this provided automatically. Therefore it is necessary for *Northern* conductors to have to return to the back cab of the train to make each announcement and hence interrupt the ticket selling process. The 'next station' announcement is quickly followed by the need to open the train doors and subsequently close them, so there is quite a time lag before the next stint of revenue protection can recommence.
- 9.21 When a train starts from its originating station, and normally after it leaves larger stations en-route, the conductor will announce which train it is and which stations it will call at. It seems somewhat illogical to make this announcement after the train has set off, as a passenger who has made the wrong choice of train no longer has the opportunity to leave it. Very few conductors act sensibly by making this announcement during the station dwell time.
- 9.22 There is no absolute consistency in the announcement of the approaching station (as there is with automatic systems) as this will depend on the conductor's eagerness to multi-task and his/her workload regarding revenue protection. For example the conductor is unlikely to interrupt a complex and perhaps valuable ticket sale to make a station call announcement at precisely the right time. In other words, such announcements tend to be made on a hit and miss basis, especially when the train is fairly well loaded.
- 9.23 There is a requirement for conductors to make announcements relating to passengers' safety. Many passengers feel that this aspect can, in reality, be over-stressed. It has been observed that a conductor will make a request that passengers take note of the safety posters 'within the carriage' yet on more than one occasion no such posters have been visible. Even if they are, to expect all

passengers to leave their seats (as the announcement literally implies) to search out and photographically remember all the details is a rather pointless expectation. Passengers simply do not do it. In any case, given the excellent safety record of the national rail system in the last decade (at least) it should hardly be necessary to make the safety poster announcement. There is actually a far greater risk of a trip or slip by the passenger searching out the poster than being involved in an incident after which the content of the poster will need to be recalled.

- 9.24 A similar argument can apply to the regular conductor's request that passengers must take all their belongings with them when they leave the train. It is generally accepted that if too many announcements are made the average passenger will simply ignore them – and will leave his/her belongings on the train in spite of the exhortation of the conductor. The writer has had personal experience of this very situation. If the conductor's announcement is to prevent persons leaving something dangerous, e.g. a bomb, on the train it is most unlikely the persons in question will take heed of the spoken instruction in any case.
- 9.25 *Northern Rail* announcements are characterised by their inconsistency, where each conductor has his/her own personal style, sometimes very effective but often lacking in communication skill:
- GOOD 'The next station is Whalley'
 - POOR 'Next station Whalley Whalley next station' (spoken without pause)
 - BAD 'Whalley'
- 9.26 Obviously it helps if the on-train public address systems are working correctly. During the period of this survey there were examples of quietness, fuzziness, overlaid interference or simply no messages at all in the assessor's carriage.
- 9.27 **STAFF APPEARANCE** Most on-train staff were reasonably well presented . However very few wore their name badge, despite the expectation of *Northern's* Passenger's Charter.

A PRE-CHRISTMAS TALE

Mary booked a flight from Manchester Airport so that she could spend Christmas with relatives in Ireland. Knowing that the roads are busy leading up to the Christmas holiday she decided to take the train. Her flight was at 12.00 so she originally planned to take the 08.32 train from Whalley but gave herself more time by catching the 07.45 (expecting to arrive at 09.17). The connecting train at Bolton was cancelled due to bad weather. She managed to squeeze onto a train some 45 minutes later (with kind help from a platform assistant) and stood all the way. She thought it was going through to the airport but it terminated at Piccadilly. She was advised to wait 15 minutes for a train which may go to the airport or chase over the bridge to catch one within 5 minutes. Having stood again she arrived at the airport at around 11.00, just in time to check in for the flight. Because she started from unstaffed Whalley she had planned to pay on the train but no conductor came to her on any train so she had a free ride all the way.

She plans to drive to the airport next time.

10. Station codes

STATION CODES

BAR	Bare Lane	MAN	Manchester Piccadilly
BDI	Bradford Interchange	MCM	Morecambe
BGH	Brighouse	MCO	Manchester Oxford Road
BON	Bolton	MCV	Manchester Victoria
BPN	Blackpool North	MIH	Mills Hill
BTL	Batley	MPL	Marple
BUY	Burley Park	MRY	Maryport
CAR	Carlisle	PRE	Preston
CNF	Carnforth	RCD	Rochdale
DEW	Desbury	RML	Romiley
DGT	Deansgate	SAS	St Annes-on-the-Sea *
DNT	Dent	SDL	Disley
GNF	Greenfield	SET	Settle
GSD	Garsdale	SFD	Salford Central
HBD	Hebden Bridge	SLD	Salford Crescent
HEX	Hexham	SMB	Smithy Bridge
HSG	Hathersage	SNH	St Helens Central
HTH	Handforth	SPT	Stockport
HTY	Hattersley	SYB	Stalybridge
HYC	Hyde Central	TOD	Todmorden
KEI	Keighley	URM	Urmston
KNA	Knaresborough	WAC	Warrington Central
LAN	Lancaster	WBR	Whaley Bridge
LDS	Leeds	WDN	Walsden
LIV	Liverpool Lime Street	WGW	Wigan Wallgate

* Northern Rail refers to this station as St Annes-on-the-Sea in all its literature and on the station totem (see Street View) yet National Rail Enquiries gives the station name as St Annes-on-Sea.

11. Survey questionnaire

TravelWatch NORTHWEST Northern Rail on-train survey 2013

Date		Reporter	
From		To	
Unit Number/ type		Number of carriages:	
Departure station			
Ticket office	Yes No	Open	Yes No N/A
Ticket machine	Yes No	Working	Yes No N/A
Barrier check	Yes No		
Train			
Departure/Arrival time - Scheduled:	/	Actual:	/
Each destination panel correct		Yes No	
Ticket inspection and/or fare collection		Yes No	
After which stations		
Announcement re lack of ticket inspection		Yes No N/A	
Conductor courteous and helpful		Yes No N/A	
Train overcrowded		Yes No	
If yes – between which stations:		
Greatest number of standing passengers in your carriage		
PA system:			
Apology/explanation if late		Yes No N/A	
Announcements re calling points (including connections if any)		Yes No	
Announcements re approaching next station		Yes No	
Announcements re safety		Yes No	
Alighting station			
Barrier check	Yes No		
Notes/ comments including comment on train toilets if used (continue on next page if required)			

12. The survey team and contact details

Questionnaire design	Chris Dale
Data analysis and report	David Butterworth
Assessors	Roger Barton David Butterworth Chris Dale Colin Kennington Geoff Kerr John Moorhouse Richard Rollins Steve Perryman Ian Watson Tony Young

For further details about the work of TravelWatch NorthWest please contact:

John Moorhouse, Company Secretary
TravelWatch NorthWest
11 Harvelin Park
Todmorden
OL14 6HX

Telephone: 07807 768 124
Email: admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk
Website: www.travelwatch-northwest.org.uk