



Department
for Transport

Cross Country rail franchise

There is an online version of this questionnaire that allows you save or print a copy of your response:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/government/consultations/cross-country-rail-franchise>

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read the consultation document and to respond to the questions. Your views will contribute to the formulation of specification for the next Cross Country rail franchise.

Confidentiality and data protection

We are not asking for any personal data as part of this consultation. If we receive any it will be securely deleted.

Our [privacy policy is on GOV.UK](#).

Responding

1. Are you responding:

on behalf of an organisation? (Go to question 2)



as an individual? (Go to question 3)

Organisation details

2. Name of organisation

Stourbridge Line User Group

The Stourbridge Line User Group represents passengers on the line between Birmingham Snow Hill and Worcester via Stourbridge Junction and Kidderminster.

Although this line is not directly served by Cross Country services, Stourbridge line passengers access Cross Country services in one of the following ways:

Passengers travelling towards Manchester need to change at Smethwick Galton Bridge and again at Wolverhampton.

All other passengers need to change at Smethwick Galton Bridge and again at Birmingham New Street, or travel to Birmingham Moor Street and walk to Birmingham New Street. This also applies to Stourbridge line passengers travelling towards Bristol and the South West as inadequate connections at Worcester and the lack of a much-needed regular through service between the Stourbridge line and Cheltenham Spa make it imperative for Stourbridge line passengers to have to travel up to 15 miles northbound to connect with a southbound Cross Country train.

Because it does not directly represent Cross Country passengers, the Stourbridge Line User Group is only qualified to answer questions in this consultation document that affect services in its locality, and these answers are highlighted in yellow. All other questions have been left unanswered. However, the Stourbridge Line User Group has informed its members of this consultation and has asked those members who regularly use Cross Country services to respond individually if they wish.

Your journey

3. Do you mostly travel on the Cross Country network as:

a leisure passenger?	<input type="text"/>
commuting to and from work?	<input type="text"/>
a business passenger?	<input type="text"/>

4. What is your most frequent journey (station to station) on the Cross Country network?

5. How regularly do you travel by Cross Country?

Every day	<input type="text"/>
4 to 6 times a week	<input type="text"/>
2 to 3 times a week	<input type="text"/>
Once a week	<input type="text"/>
Once a fortnight	<input type="text"/>
Once a month	<input type="text"/>
Less than once a month	<input type="text"/>
Once or twice a year	<input type="text"/>
Never	<input type="text"/>

6. What type of ticket do you usually buy?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Season ticket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Full fare
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced ticket
<input type="checkbox"/>	First class ticket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Standard ticket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

7. How do you buy your ticket?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Online (Cross Country website)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online (alternative operator)
<input type="checkbox"/>	At station
<input type="checkbox"/>	On train
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Awareness

8. How did you hear about this consultation?

	Poster
✓	Internet
	Station e-board
	On train consultation
	Other:

Passenger survey

Information on these questions is included in the 'Cross Country passenger rail franchise' consultation document.

9. What are the particular services, routes and times of day where you think crowding on Cross Country services needs to be addressed most urgently?

10. Rank the following in order of priority for improvement for your future Cross Country services. Rank 1 for most important to 6 for least important.

- more additional summer only services
- later times of last trains
- more frequent weekend services
- earlier Sunday morning services
- earlier times of first trains
- more frequent weekday services

Which routes and stations and why?

11. What changes would you like to see to the way Cross Country currently sells and provides tickets?

12. What changes would you like to see to the Advanced Purchase on the day (APOD) system?

13. What additional information would be useful to you when planning your journeys or making connections onto other services?

14. How would you like the information (in question above) communicated to you?

15. How do you believe Cross Country staff could be more effective in providing service and assistance that passengers need on a modern railway network?

16. What comment do you have on improving the overall passenger experience before, during and after the journey?

17. How could the way in which Cross Country deals with your complaints and provides compensation to you be improved?

18. Rank your priorities for improvement to the carriage layout for long distance inter-city Cross Country trains? Rank 1 for most important to 7 for least important.

- More seats
- More table seats as opposed to 'airline' seats
- More comfortable room for short distance standing
- Cycle storage
- Seats that align with windows
- Greater leg-room
- Extra room for luggage

Where and when do you think these facilities are most required?

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19. Rank your priorities for improvement to the carriage layout for local trains on Cross Country? Rank 1 for most important to 7 for least important.

- More seats
- More table seats as opposed to 'airline' seats
- More comfortable room for short distance standing
- Cycle storage
- Seats that align with windows
- Greater leg-room
- Extra room for luggage

20. What other comments or suggestions do you have about the on-board experience?

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21. Do you have any other views on how the future Cross Country franchise could be improved that have not been captured in the questions above?

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Qualifying question

22. The rest of this survey is mainly designed to be completed by rail industry stakeholder representatives, however you can complete this if you wish.

Crowding issues and ideas to respond to

Use the consultation annex to help inform your response.

23. Which of the following potential measures do you think could overcome crowding caused by short distance commuters using long distance Cross Country trains, assuming that suitable alternative services are available?

Removing calls from towns closest the conurbation centre either completely or just at peak times.

Yes or No?

Retaining calls at such stations but restricting them to pickup/set down only?

Yes or No?

Removing the validity of multi-modal tickets on long distance trains?

Yes or No?

Other:

Provide specific instances where these may be applicable.

24. If it were possible would you agree with transferring these local routes to the West Midlands franchise:

	Yes	No
Birmingham to Nottingham	✓	
Birmingham to Leicester	✓	

Why?

Both West Midlands Rail Executive and Midlands Connect have strongly promoted the need for better connections from the East Midlands, through West Midlands county to the western extremities of the Midlands. Transferring these services to West Midlands Railway would create new cross-Birmingham diesel services – for example, Nottingham to Hereford and Leicester to Shrewsbury – which would provide this connectivity while also freeing up platform space at Birmingham New Street in the same way as the proposed cross-Birmingham long distance electric services will do when introduced in May 2019.

To improve the service pattern and network to offer journeys that better meet your needs

Use the consultation annex to help inform your response.

25. Would you like to see any other routes or stations transferred to or from the Cross Country franchise?

Yes	
No	

Routes to transfer

26. Which routes and stations and why?

Changes

The East Coast service north of York aspirations are listed in the consultation document.

27. If the network was unable to cope with all the service enhancement aspirations north of Northallerton on the East Coast mainline, would a:

curtailment of one of the existing Cross Country services be acceptable (with the resources redeployed to enhance other existing or new routes)?

diversion of one of the existing Cross Country services be acceptable (with the resources redeployed to enhance other existing or new routes)?

Yes	No

Why / why not?

28. Do you think the department's minimum specification should preserve exactly the existing pattern of services and station calls rather than offer an opportunity to change?

Yes
No

Comments:

Bidder station stop flexibility

32. Should bidders have some flexibility to make fewer calls at some stations, for example if that enabled them to accelerate services?

	Yes
	No

33. On what routes could this be introduced?

Minimum specification

34. Should the minimum specification have the number of trains from each station to Birmingham but give bidders the flexibility to decide where the trains go after Birmingham?

	Yes
	No

35. Are there stations within the geography of the Cross Country network that should receive calls that they currently do not receive (include examples and supporting evidence)?

Apart from the Cross Country services to and from Manchester Piccadilly, all services on the Birmingham New Street to Wolverhampton line make one intermediate stop, thus reducing the need to interchange at Birmingham New Street as explicitly stated in the consultation/prospectus documents. The Stourbridge Line User Group proposes that the hourly Manchester Piccadilly to Bournemouth service makes an additional stop at Smethwick Galton Bridge, to provide a single connection to the Cross Country service from Snow Hill line services both east of Birmingham and from stations along the Stourbridge line.

In addition, from 2022, Dudley Port station will be served by West Midlands Metro services from Brierley Hill and Dudley to Wednesbury, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. The Stourbridge Line User Group proposes that the hourly Manchester Piccadilly to the South West service makes an additional stop at Dudley Port to improve connectivity from stops on the Metro line.

Finally, the Stourbridge Line User Group is a member of Worcestershire Rail User Group Association (WRUGA), an umbrella organisation representing all Rail User Groups in the county. The Stourbridge Line User Group supports this organisation's proposal that one Cross Country train per hour in each direction serves Bromsgrove station. Stourbridge line users travelling to Bristol and the South West are forced to travel to Birmingham to change onto a Cross Country train towards the West Country because of very poor connections at Worcester and the lack of a regular through service between the Stourbridge line and Cheltenham Spa. This cannot be resolved in this consultation but needs to be recognised by either the West Midlands or Great Western franchise. Bromsgrove users suffer from the same anomaly in that they are forced to travel 13¾ miles northbound to Birmingham New Street before retracing their footsteps and passing through Bromsgrove about 1 hour later, having travelled 27½ miles.

36. Are there stations beyond the geography of the Cross Country network that should receive calls that they currently do not receive (include examples and supporting evidence)?

To improve and simplify fares and ticketing

The current Cross Country fare structure is mentioned on page 26 and 27 of the consultation document.

37. What changes would you like to see to the current Cross Country current fares structure?

To improve access, information and making connections

38. What more could be done to improve access and provide facilities for those with disabilities or additional needs?

To improve the on-board experience

39. Which initiatives would you suggest to try to reduce the disturbance caused by the 'churn' of passengers alighting and boarding at frequent station calls?

Engagement improvement

Stakeholders are explained on page 30 of the consultation document.

40. Are there any improvements to the level stakeholder engagement by Cross Country that you would like to see and how could stakeholder engagement be improved?

41. Does Cross Country provide a sufficient level of support to relevant Community Rail partnerships in your experience?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Community Rail partnerships engagement

42. Has their support improved in the last year to 18 months?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

43. Provide ideas on what more you feel the franchise could do to help the relevant Community Rail partnerships?

Final comments

44. Any other comments?

Return your completed questionnaire

Save this file and email it to crosscountry@dft.gov.uk

Or post it to:

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