

TravelWatch- *ISLE OF MAN*

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Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

www.travelwatch-isleofman.org

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Passengers: Consulted or Ignored?

Since 2007 TravelWatch has campaigned for passengers to have an effective voice on improving transport services. Yet passengers frequently tell us about unresolved issues being repeated time and time again. Passengers complain that nothing changes and many believe they are being largely ignored.

As the Island's General Election approaches in 2021 and with the Steam Packet now in public ownership, politicians should focus on tackling passengers' concerns. How?

TravelWatch considers the Island requires an effective system of open communication and consultation between transport providers and passengers to expedite improvements. Improvements should include:-

- **Independent customer satisfaction surveys**
- **Publication** of satisfaction surveys and of annual complaints and compliments figures
- **Providers** to consult with passenger representatives and to discuss passenger issues.

“Consultative Committees “ - involving users as full members- are a long established permanent feature of many UK Airports; of the GB Rail Industry and of at least one GB ferry company. In Northern Ireland, their “Consumer Council” addresses transport related issues.

The first step in improving services is identifying what passengers regard as the important problems. Change and improvement should be evidence led. Independent Satisfaction Surveys will provide the evidence. Existing surveys are flawed. The 2018 Consultation on the future of Sea Services never published passenger comments only the summary of “tick box” answers. Carrier surveys

lack independence so at present we have no proper evidence about passenger satisfaction.

TravelWatch experience is that many passenger issues do not require expensive solutions. An example of an inexpensive improvement already delivered is the provision of airport bus information inside the airport – as oppose to on unlit bus stops. Many complaints are about a lack of information and the approach and attitude of service providers. Improved training in customer service may be part of what is required – a cost effective solution.

Setting up consultative machinery would bring the Island into line with best practice elsewhere. Our Island Government seeks to promote a competitive economy – which depends heavily on an effective transport system for local people, business and visitors.

TravelWatch Action

TravelWatch intend to demonstrate ways of making real improvements to our passengers' experience of the Island's vital transport service. We shall shortly be announcing plans for a public meeting with a distinguished speaker to enable the public to hear about ways of engaging with passengers and addressing vital issues.

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