

IN BRIEF

EXTRA SOUTHERN SERVICES ▶

Southern has started operating additional trains during RMT union strikes following the extension of driver controlled operation to three quarters of its services.

The company said 70% of services operated during the latest onboard supervisors' strike on January 23 over the imposition of DCO, up from 60% on previous RMT strike days.

The company has also restored a full service on 'normal' days after drivers' union ASLEF suspended strikes and an overtime ban for a new round of talks chaired by the Trade Union Congress and Abellio HR director Andy Meadows. The RMT complained that it was being excluded from the new negotiations.

CHILTERN TICKET-FREE TRAVEL

▶ Chiltern Railways has selected SilverRail Technologies as its partner to develop and pilot a ticket-free, account-based payment system.

The project will develop a mobile app which detects the start and end of customer's journeys using Bluetooth technology, and allows them to use their phone to open ticket gates. At ungated stations geolocation tools will track customers' phones and the trains travelled on. Customers will be charged the best value fare for their travel at the end of each day. Abellio has trialled similar technology last year.

The app will also offer personalised, real-time travel updates, commuter advice, multi-modal journey options, and a travel history including journeys, prices and details of how the best value fare has been calculated. The pilot will take place on the Oxford to London route.

Railway timetables condemned as 'fiction'

Transport Focus boss warns passengers can't rely on timetables

CUSTOMER SERVICE

▶ Transport Focus chief executive Anthony Smith has condemned railway timetables in parts of London and the south east as "a work of fiction which passengers cannot rely on", following the publication of its autumn 2016 National Rail Passenger Survey. The survey shows that in London and the south east overall passenger satisfaction has fallen further from 82% to 80% and satisfaction with punctuality has fallen from 75% to 69%. Nationally, the trend was similar with overall satisfaction falling from 83% to 81%.

On Govia Thameslink Railway's Southern routes overall satisfaction fell from 77% to a record low of 65%. The survey was carried out before train drivers joined guards in taking industrial action. On GTR's Thameslink routes satisfaction remained marooned at 73%.

130 MPS SUPPORT ANTI-STRIKE LAWS

Tory MPs support clamp down on striking laws

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

▶ Growing rank and file political unrest over train driver and onboard supervisor strikes at Southern has seen nearly 130 Conservative MPs support a private member's bill designed to toughen legislation on industrial action.

Croydon MP Chris Philp, who proposed the new law, said the

'As passenger numbers rise, parts of the rail network will remain brittle until welcome improvements are in place and working,' Smith added.

Elsewhere on the network, satisfaction with ScotRail services fell from 90% to 83% - its lowest level in 10 years as the company was affected by declining punctuality, partly due to infrastructure upgrade works.

Merseyrail remained the highest performing franchise or concession with satisfaction of 95%, while satisfaction on Virgin Trains East Coast increased from

89% to 91%.

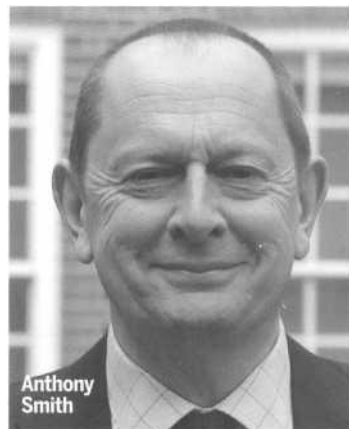
The Transport Focus survey was published a week after Which's 2016 survey measuring passengers' opinion of their service in general rather than their last journey. Southern scored just 21%. The results prompted Which? to launch a new campaign calling for operators to respect passengers' rights and the rail regulator to be given new powers to hold operators to account.

The Campaign for better Transport said the NRPS results made the case for the government to rethink its decision not to devolve further inner London services to Transport London.

"If London Overground managed to achieve quick improvements in service, despite taking on high passenger numbers and old infrastructure, then there's no reason this shouldn't be achieved on other lines," a spokesman said. "The government should take notice of this and support Transport for London's bid to run London's suburban rail network." ■ tests because jobs and wages are not under threat, and because the rail regulator has ruled that DCO is safe.

The legislation would also require a minimum service specified by the High Court judge to run on strike days. He said that in Spain, Canada and Italy the law ensures a 50% service runs during rail strikes, whereas at Southern drivers' strikes have brought the network to a halt.

Philp said he had brought the legislation because his constituents have a right to travel to work. ■



amount of MPs voting in favour was "a huge number for a private member's bill". He added that the bill had only been defeated because the Labour Party had ordered its MPs to vote against it and because members of the government cannot vote on private member's bills.

The draft legislation would have forced the RMT and ASLEF to demonstrate that their action over the extension of driver controlled operation is "proportionate and reasonable" in the High Court. Philp argued that it would not pass these