

Dear Member



The contents :

Compensation offer
FCC Stakeholder forum
Thameslink Programme
Finally

Compensation offer

In the last newsletter, I suggested that anyone who met the criteria and wanted the compensation in one of the forms offered applied for compensation - and that, if you did not meet the criteria or wanted compensation in other forms hold off applying - I noted that FCC said “watch this space” as regards possible improvements. Unfortunately, I have no new news to report - although I do know that FCC continue to work on this issue.

I think it is now time to for everyone to apply for compensation. My recommended route for application is as follows:

If you meet the criteria, but have problems with “mechanics” of the compensation
(eg your employer purchases your season ticket)

FCC have told me that you will not be disadvantaged by applying now and that if/when there are new compensation options then it will be possible to “trade up” (provided that you have not “spent” any of it).

Therefore, please apply now - I will send another newsletter when I have more news.

If you do not meet the criteria (eg you use daily tickets)

In this case, APTU will batch these claims up and submit them on your behalf - they need to be fed into the “system” at the right point. I would like to receive your information as a row in a table that will ease our assembly of a combined document. As regards evidence, I would like to know what types of evidence you can provide - but I do not want to be sent the evidence itself. Assuming FCC accept the claim, they will contact you to ask for it to be submitted. The three ways to describe your situation are:

1. **Preferred** - Use this Excel template:
http://www.btinternet.com/~nlks/aptu/memberversions/compensation_data.xls
2. **Preferred** - Use this Word template:
http://www.btinternet.com/~nlks/aptu/memberversions/compensation_data.doc
3. **If no other option:** in the body of an email. The information needed is:

Your name	
Your email address	
Your postal address	FCC will need this to check for existing Delay Repay claims etc
Your phone number	(FCC ask for this on the normal application)
Your FCC journey	eg Harpenden to Farringdon return
Type of ticket purchased & how purchased	Eg Off peak travel card from Harpenden, from machine / ticket office
Number of days travelled 27 October 2009 > 15 January 2010 inclusive	
Number of days for which you have evidence	
Types of evidence available Do not send the evidence itself	eg tickets, credit card slips, bank / credit card statements (you can blank out card numbers, other transactions etc)

Comments on your situation, including aspects where you do not need FCC's specified criteria.

I will aim to send off the first batch on the evening of Tuesday 9 March and a second approximately one week later.

Please refer to <http://www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/content/doc/cms/discount-refund-form.pdf> which provides more details of eligibility criteria and also details the declaration you will need to provide in due course.

Data Protection: We will only use this information to support your claim for compensation with FCC. Other than FCC, we will not provide it to third parties (unless we are required to by law). FCC will handle your data in accordance with their standards.

FCC Stakeholder forum

FCC are holding their next forum on 24 March. APTU has been invited and we are promised:

- Thameslink route service update following disruption over winter and Great Northern route performance and capacity
- Projects update - including the latest on the King's Cross development and improvements at our stations
- Thameslink Programme progress to date
- A look ahead to the fifth year of the First Capital Connect franchise which starts on the 1st April 2010.

If we have not already heard, we will also press for the latest information on compensation mechanics. The Kings Cross development referred to has a big impact on Great Northern services and little or no impact on Thameslink.

We will detail relevant updates in a future newsletter.

Thameslink Programme

I thought it worthwhile setting out what I understand to be the latest situation on various aspects of the Thameslink programme:

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>The official line</i>	<i>The rumour mill / politics</i>
Pre Olympics infrastructure	12 car platforms, Blackfriars Station, Central core works	12 car trains♦ on target for December 2011, some Blackfriars station work due May 2012	Committed, expected to happen, broadly on time, expected to finish pre Olympics
New trains	Up to 1,270 carriages in 8 & 12 car formation	Still expected to happen, currently 2 suppliers short listed (Bombardier & Siemens). Preferred supplier selected in the summer, contract signed late this year; delivered 2013 through 2016	Take your choice - anything goes. Fleet size reductions; a switch to 4 car units - you name it.
24 trains per hour in the central core	(includes services from Great Northern)	Still expected to happen	Take your choice - anything goes
London Bridge rebuild (post Olympics)		Now delayed by one year to 2016, with acknowledged cost over runs in original plan	Take your choice - anything goes, including total cancellation

♦ - I understand that there will be 4 trains in the morning and evening peak (including Brighton starters). These will be 3 * 377 units

You will note that, as regards the rumour mill, I am certain to be right, except for the pre Olympics infrastructure. My personal thoughts are:

1. Irrespective of who forms the next government, all public expenditure will be subject to significant cuts and re-challenge. The Thameslink programme will not be immune.

2. Against that, election promises will undoubtedly be made about “investing for the future” and “discouraging car use” etc. A London that is high tax and has low quality infrastructure will be very unappealing for international business, who will just relocate elsewhere.
3. Politics will also have other specific influences - eg:
 - Bombardier getting the contract is good for Derby;
 - If nothing happens, then all the money currently being spent to allow 12 car trains is “wasted”; and
 - The trains currently on the line are earmarked for use on other routes due for electrification.
4. If the original vision for the Thameslink Programme (trains from current Thameslink + additional Great Northern destinations) is to be delivered, then much of what is currently in the plan is needed - reduce any aspect significantly, then full investment elsewhere is wasted.

Therefore I think the real question is what portion of the Thameslink Programme post 2012 happens - 100%? 75% 50%? 25%? 0%? - eg reduce London Bridge a lot > nowhere for 24 trains per hour to go south of the river > don't need Automatic Train operation > not enough capacity for all GN originated services > need less stock.

Finally

A number of you have recently passed on useful “nuggets” of information - I promise that I haven't forgotten about these and will write about these shortly.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
4 March 2010