

Transport User Panel survey

Awareness of Southern Season Ticket Compensation

April 2017

Background

- In December 2016 Govia Thameslink Railway announced that a compensation scheme would be available for passengers who had held at least twelve weeks worth of season tickets to use on Southern trains between April and December 2016.
- Transport Focus has worked with Southern Rail to ensure that they are alerting passengers about their entitlement to the compensation through means other than via their website. We also asked Southern what they are doing to gauge if passengers are aware of the scheme.
- Alongside this Transport Focus decided to measure the level of awareness by asking passengers on its Transport User Panel. The panel is made up of passengers who have agreed to receive surveys from Transport Focus on a range of topics on a regular basis. A survey was sent specifically to those members of the panel who used Southern trains between April and December 2016 and who held season tickets over this time. More than 200 people responded to the survey.
- Members of the Transport User Panel are likely to be more engaged with the issues covered in the survey than the majority of passengers on Southern trains. Low levels of awareness among this group would therefore be concerning.

Headline findings

Awareness

- There is a high level of awareness of the compensation available amongst members of the Transport User Panel. Three quarters of those who used Southern trains between April and December 2016 and who held season tickets over this time know at least a little about the season ticket compensation which has been offered by the train operating company. More than half say that they know a lot about this compensation.

Source of knowledge

- The high level of awareness of the scheme is based upon passengers hearing about it through a range of sources. More than half heard about the scheme via the media, while four in ten found out about it through the Southern Rail website. More than a third either received an email from Southern directly or read about the compensation on a poster at the station.

Entitlement

- Seven in ten of those who know at least a little about the compensation think that they may be entitled to it and almost all of these have made or will be making a claim.

Ease of claiming

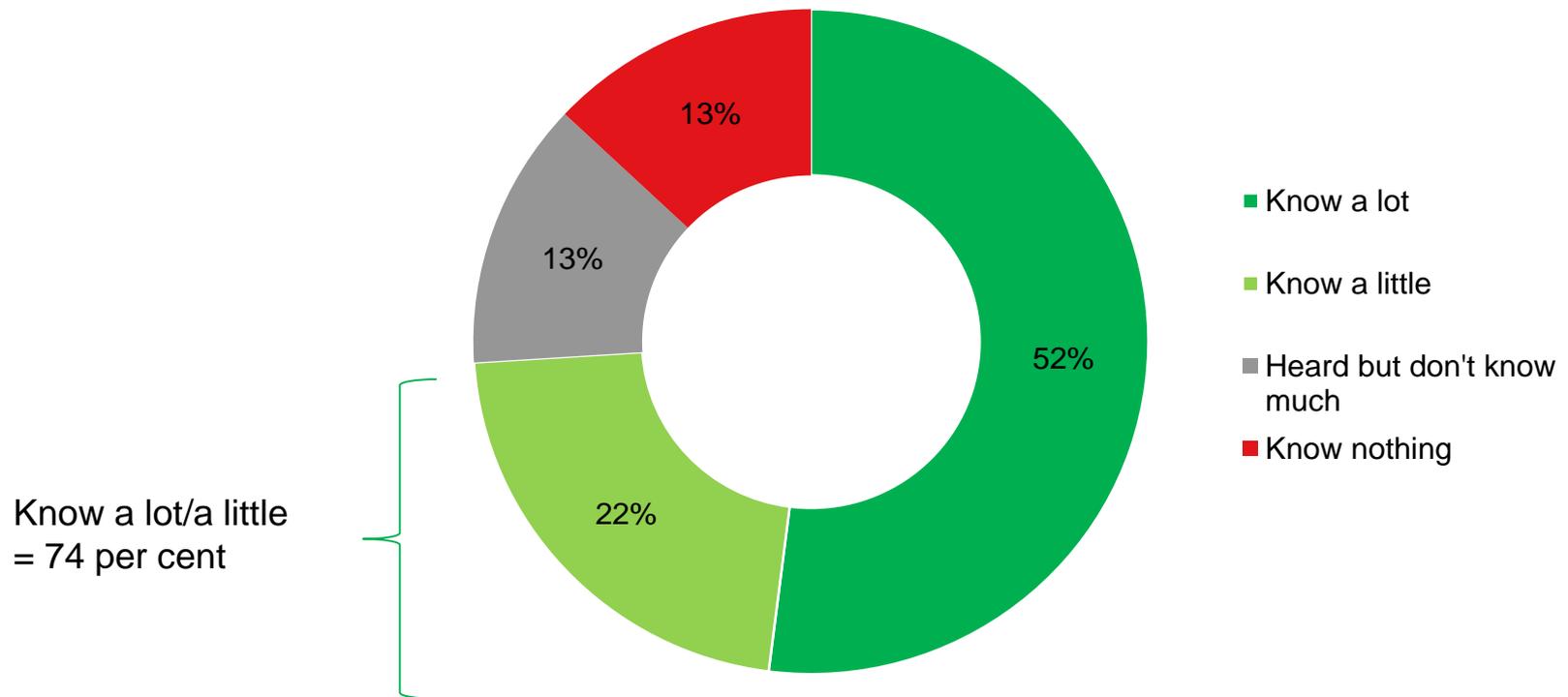
- Three quarters of those who have already made a claim for enhanced compensation say that they found the process of making this claim to be easy, while less than two in ten say that they found the process to be difficult.
- Where the process was found to be difficult this was largely related to weekly season ticket holders finding it difficult to show that they had held these tickets.

Detailed findings

Three quarters know something about the compensation

Awareness of the compensation scheme amongst this engaged audience is high. Three quarters of those who used a season ticket to travel on Southern trains between April and December 2016 say that they know at least a little about the season ticket compensation scheme. More than a half say that they know a lot about it, while a small number (13 per cent) are totally unaware.

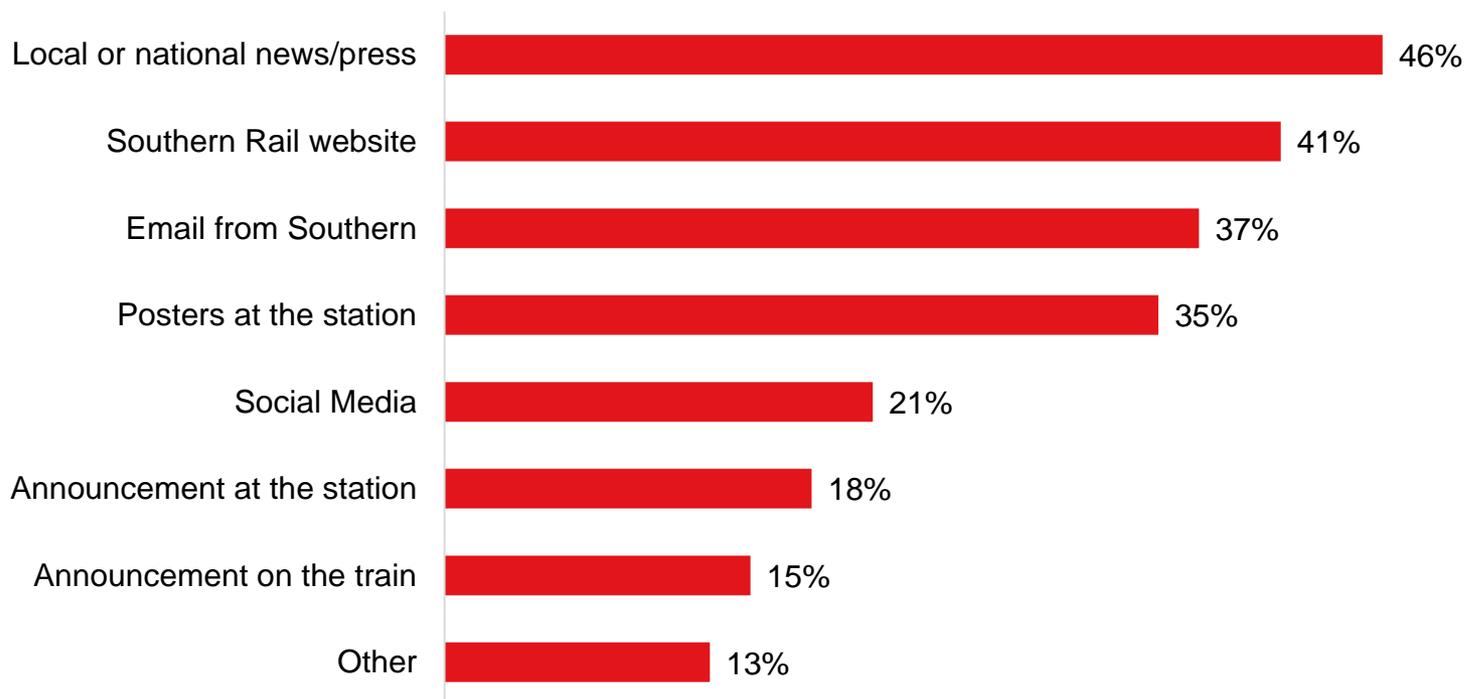
Q. To what extent are you aware or unaware of the availability of this compensation?



Use of a variety of sources accounts for high levels of awareness

Those who say that they know at least a little about the compensation scheme heard about it through several sources of information. Almost a half say that they heard about it through news or press, while four in ten heard via the Southern Rail website. More than a third have received an email directly from Southern or have seen posters at stations.

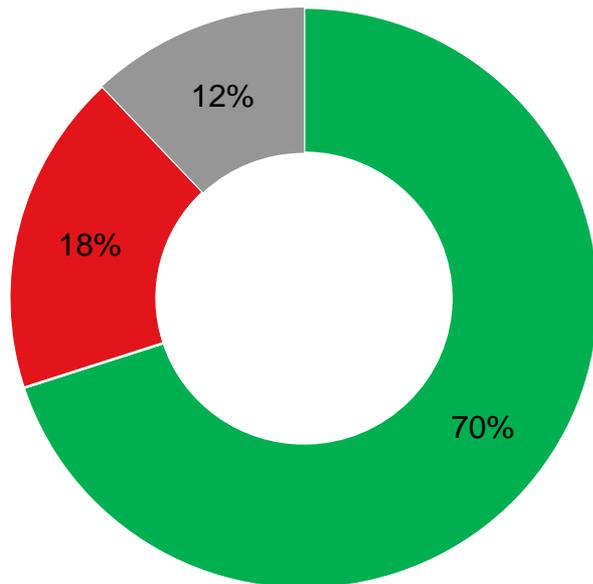
Q. How have you heard about this compensation scheme? (Passengers could select more than one answer.)



Almost all of those who believe they are entitled to compensation have made or will make a claim

Seven in ten of those who know at least a little about the compensation believe that they are entitled to it and of these 98 per cent have made or will be making a claim. Two in ten of those who know at least a little about the compensation believe that they are not entitled, and around one in ten don't know.

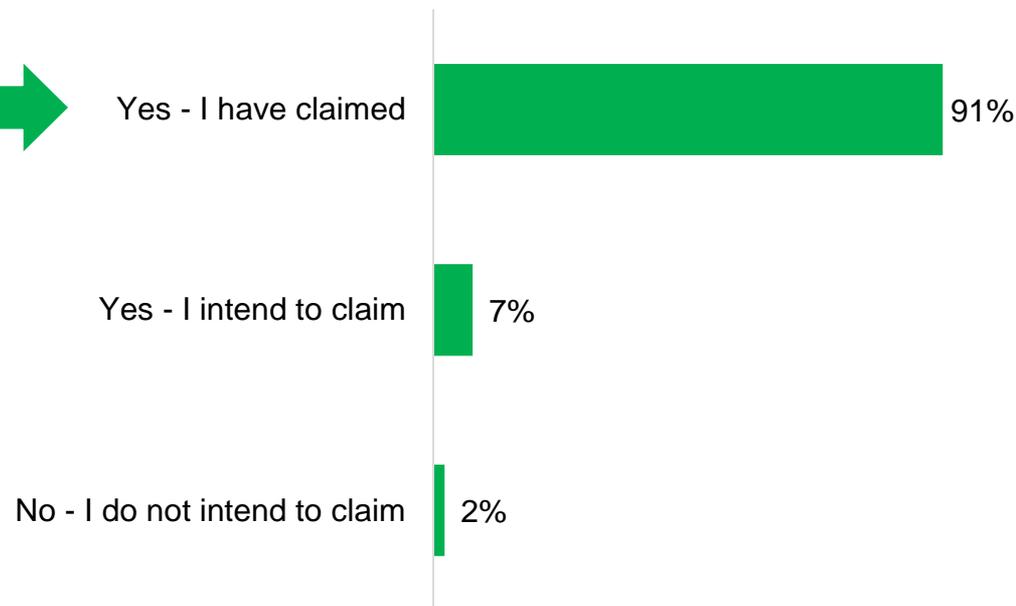
Q. Do you believe that you may be entitled to [this] compensation?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Base: Transport User Panel members who know at least a little about the enhanced compensation (175).
Fieldwork 23 March - 3 April 2017

Q. Have you, or do you intend to claim this compensation?

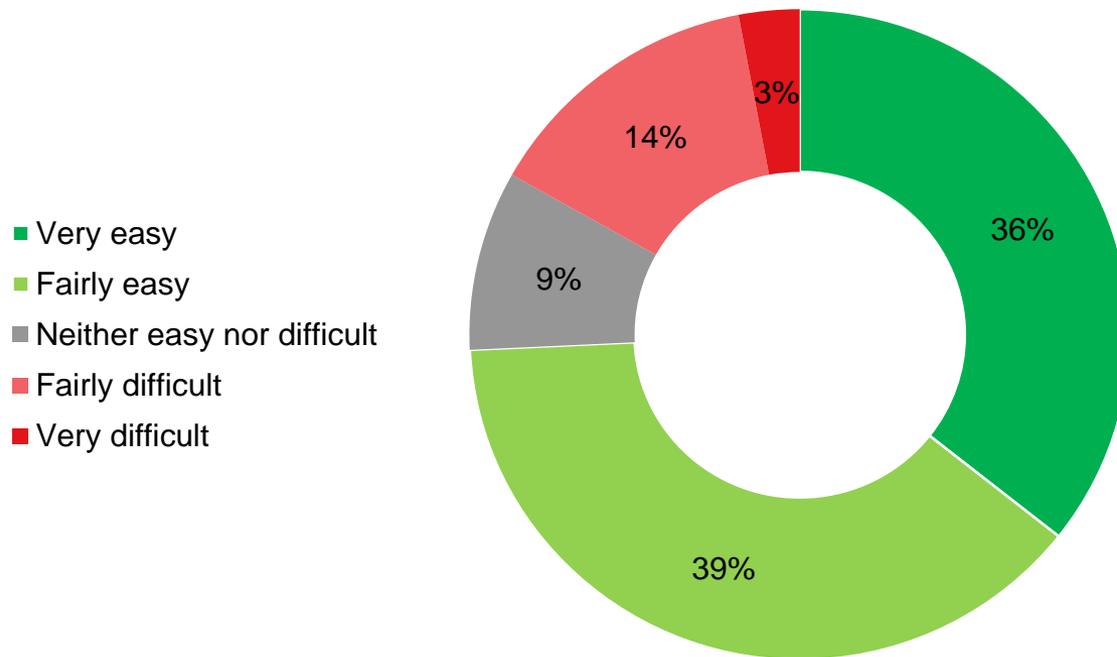


Base: Transport User Panel members who believe that they may be entitled to compensation (122).
Fieldwork 23 March - 3 April 2017

Three quarters of claimants found it easy to make a claim

Three quarters of those who have made a claim for compensation say that they have found the process of making a claim to be easy, while less than two in ten disagree.

Q. How easy or difficult did you find the process of claiming this compensation?



'I had the email, clicked on a link and got the compensation. It was very easy.'
Female, 25-34

Easy = 75 per cent

Most have found the process of claiming compensation to be easy

The majority of panellists who have claimed the compensation say that the process was easy. Specifically, those who say this, report that they received compensation automatically or simply by following a few simple steps.

'I responded to an email from southern and answered a few questions. It was quick and simple and I got confirmation of my compensation within a few days.'

Female, 45-54, monthly season ticket holder

'Straightforward once the application form appeared for those not previously contacted by Southern.'

Male, 45-54, annual season ticket holder

'Simple process - effectively the same as claiming delay repay. Refund deposited in my account very quickly - I was impressed (for once!).'

Female, 25-34, annual season ticket holder

'I received an email, agreed the account, provided my bank details and received the payment. Very easy.'

Female, 25-34, mixture of season tickets

'I didn't need to apply. I was notified in an email that I was eligible and would be receiving compensation.'

The compensation was then paid a week or so later.'

Male, 35-44, monthly season ticket holder

But some, and particularly weekly season ticket holders, have had issues

While the majority have found claiming compensation to be easy, a small proportion have encountered issues. In a few cases this is because the details of those with season tickets were not available on the Southern database. In more cases however, the issues relate to passengers finding it difficult to provide the proof of purchasing several weekly season tickets.

'Not easy if you use weekly season tickets. I was not contacted by Southern automatically, had to apply online. As I did not have my original tickets it was a very laborious process. In the end I had to scan and send them copies of my credit card statements. Finally, after about 10 emails over a four-week period, I received the correct amount of compensation.'

Male, 35-44, weekly season ticket holder

'I waited to be contacted by them as I believed that as an annual season ticket holder I was automatically eligible. When I heard nothing I had to apply through their website and I now await their response. As I purchased my season ticket through another operator this may explain why I was not contacted by them directly but I would have expected Southern to have a system in place to automatically capture season ticket holders like me.'

Male, 45-54, annual season ticket holder

'Having gone through my bank statements to obtain dates I purchased tickets my initial claim was unsuccessful as although I completed every section of the time consuming on line form I have learned that they don't keep a record of weekly tickets on data base and could not ratify my claim without proof of purchase. I then had to take downloads from my bank statement and resubmit proof of payment via email.'

Female, 35-44, weekly season ticket holder

How we carried out this survey

- An online survey was sent to passengers on the Transport Focus Transport User Panel who had previously been in contact with Transport Focus and had indicated that they had used Southern train services in the last 12 months.
- These passengers were further screened so that only those who indicated that they had used Southern trains between April and December 2016 and who held season tickets over this time, were asked to complete the survey. 202 passengers completed the survey.
- Fieldwork for the survey was undertaken between 23 March and 3 April 2017, with a reminder email sent to non-responders on 28 March 2017.
- **Note on interpretation of the data:** data is representative of members of Transport Focus's Transport Users' Panel and therefore should be seen as indicative, rather than statistically representative, of the view of passengers generally. Data is unweighted.
- Where findings do not sum to 100 per cent this is because respondents were asked to enter more than one option, or because of data rounding.