



Northern industrial action

Transport User Panel survey

July 2017

Background and aims

- This report presents the findings of a survey undertaken with 333 passengers who indicated that they used, or that they were originally planning to use Northern trains at the time of the RMT strike on 8, 9, or 10 July 2017. Fieldwork for the survey was undertaken between 5 and 16 July 2017.
- The survey was undertaken in order to get a sense of how passengers feel about the industrial action affecting Northern trains at this time and to explore in detail the impact of the strikes on passengers' daily lives. This included what alternative travel arrangements that they would need to make.
- Similarly the survey aims to measure the extent to which those who did not use services, but who held a valid ticket to use during the time of the strike, were aware of any refund or compensation which might be due to them.
- More detailed methodological information and the breakdown of responses by passenger demographics is included as an appendix to this document.

Executive summary

- **Journey planning:** Two thirds of passengers say they chose not to use Northern train services at the time of the RMT strike. In comparison a third planned to travel or travelled despite the impact of the strike on trains.
- A third of passengers simply allowed more time for their journey in order to deal with the impact of the strike. Three in ten used other forms of public transport, while more than a quarter had to cancel a trip out. The proportion of those who had to cancel a day out rises to four in ten if only those intending to travel at the weekend are taken into account.
- **Information:** passengers were generally well informed about the strike. Seven in ten say that they knew at least a little about the impact of the strike on Northern train services before the strike started, while a third said that they knew a lot. Those who planned to use, or who used trains were more likely to say that they knew a lot about the impact before the time of the strike than those who avoided using trains.
- Two thirds of passengers who intended to use, or used Northern services agree that the information that Northern provided meant that they knew how their train services would be impacted by the strike. In contrast 22 per cent disagree. Six in ten passengers expected or experienced a reduced train service on the route that they planned to use or used.
- **Impact of strikes:** more than eight in ten passengers using or originally planning to use Northern train services say they were impacted at least to some extent by the RMT strike. 38 per cent say that they were impacted a great deal. Those originally planning to use services on Monday 10 July are more likely than those travelling at the weekend to say that they were impacted.

Executive summary continued

- **Feeling about the strikes:** passengers originally intending to use, or using Northern train services at the time of the strike were presented with a series of images and asked which one best described the way in which they felt about the strike. Four in ten selected that image which we describe as 'bored', while around a quarter selected the image described as 'indifferent' and 17 per cent selected 'angry'.
- **Awareness of compensation:** amongst passengers who avoided using Northern train services at the time of the strike, despite holding a valid ticket to travel, levels of awareness of any refund or compensation to which they might be entitled is low. Similarly, these passengers are largely unaware of how to go about getting a refund or compensation assuming that it is available to them. More than a half of these passengers said that they were not aware of any refund or compensation which might be due to them. 49 per cent say that they know nothing about how they might get any refund or compensation.

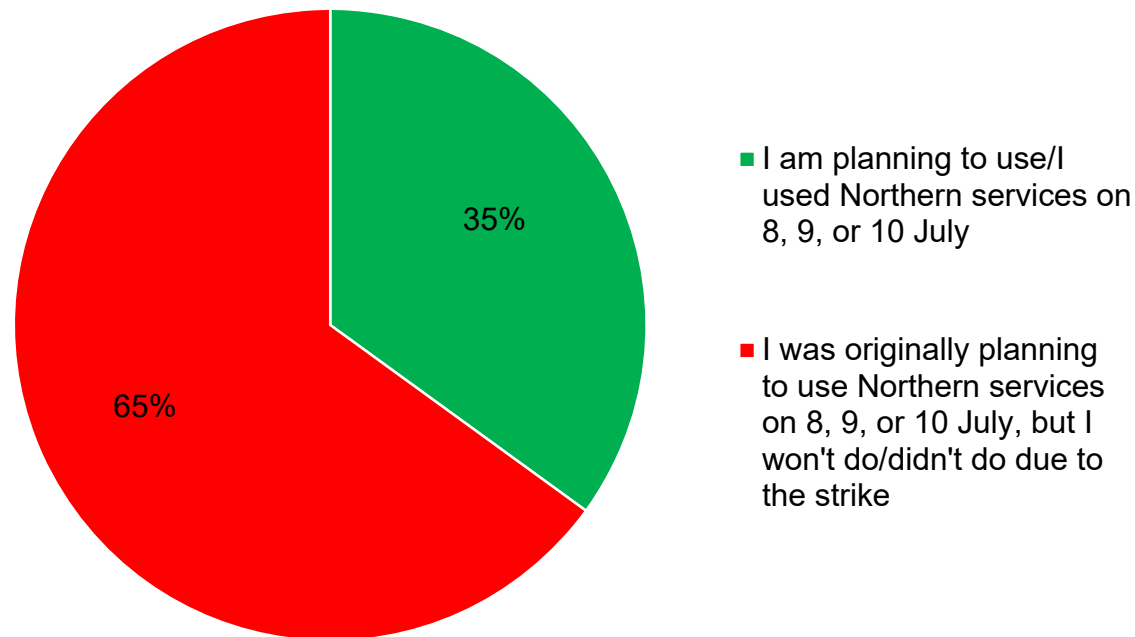


Detailed findings

Use of services at the time of the strike

Almost two thirds of panellists that we spoke to regarding the impact of the strike action actively avoided using Northern train services at the time of the industrial action. In contrast more than a third planned to use, or used, Northern despite the impact of the strike on train services.

Q. Which of the following describes your use of Northern services?

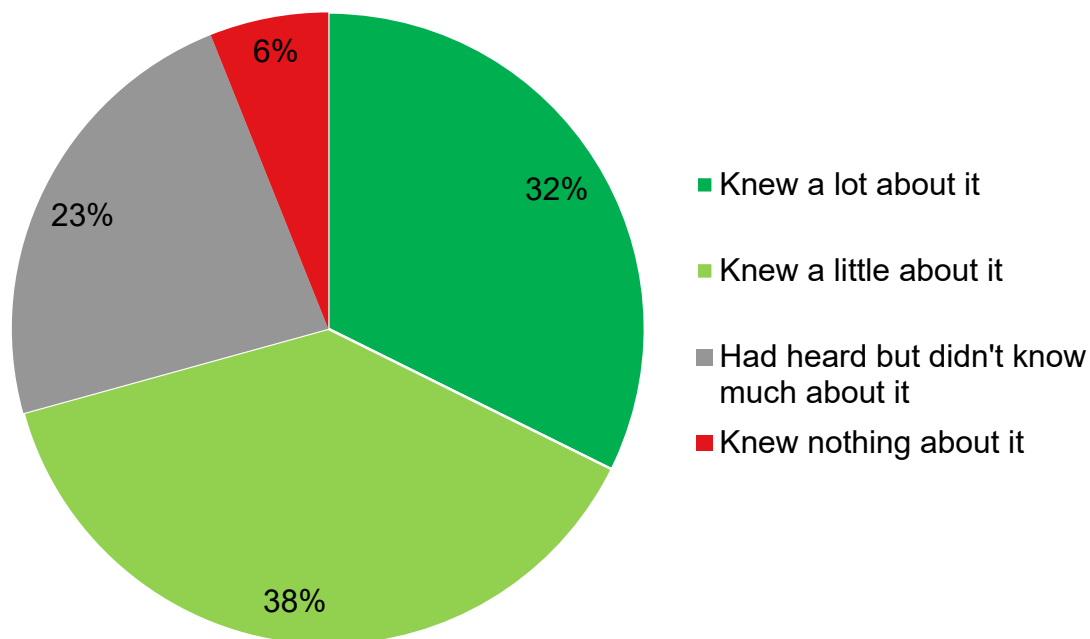


Base: All passengers using/originally intending to use Northern trains on 8, 9 or 10 July 2017 (333). Fieldwork 5–16 July 2017

Awareness of the industrial action

Seven in ten of those who used or intended to use Northern services at the time of the strike say that they knew at least a little about how services would be affected beforehand. Less than one in ten say that they knew nothing. Those who planned to use or used Northern services despite the impact of the strike are more likely than those who avoided services at this time to say that they knew a lot about how the trains would be affected by the industrial action.

Q. Before today, or before the time of the strike, how aware were you of how Northern train services would be affected?



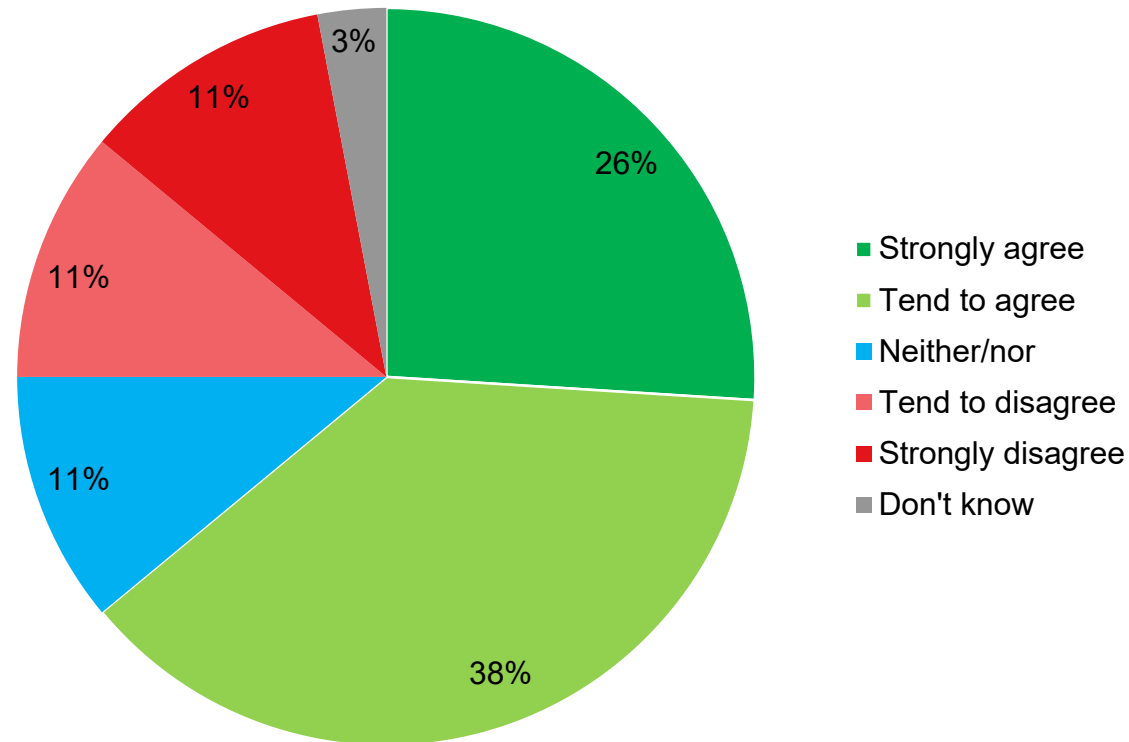
	% knew a lot
Planned to use/used	37
Avoided Northern services	30

Base: All passengers using/originally intending to use Northern trains on 8, 9 or 10 July 2017 (333). Those planning to use/using services (116), those avoiding Northern services (217). Fieldwork 5– 6 July 2017

Information provided by Northern

Two thirds of passengers who used, or intended to use, Northern train services at the time of the strike agree that the information that Northern provided means that they knew how the industrial action would affect them. 22 per cent disagree.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the information Northern have provided means that I know/knew how the industrial action will/would affect me?

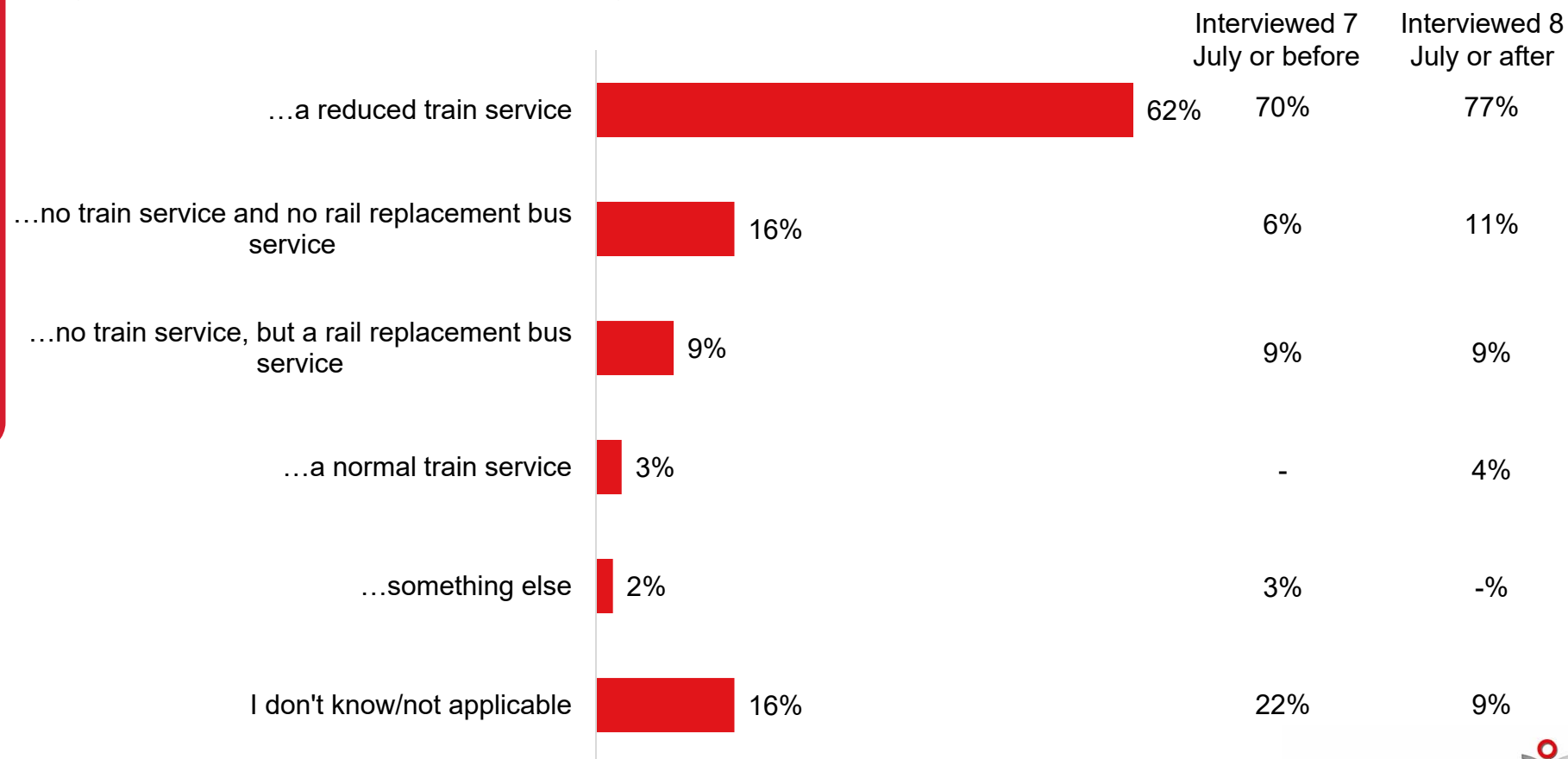


Base: All passengers using/originally intending to use Northern trains on 8, 9 or 10 July 2017 (333). Fieldwork 5–6 July 2017

Awareness of Northern's plans for services

For more than six in ten passengers using or intending to use Northern trains at the time of the strike a reduced train service was expected or experienced. 16 per cent expected or experienced their service to be completely cancelled. Those planning to use or using trains who responded to the survey during or after the strike are more likely than those who responded before the strike to say that they expected or experienced a reduced train service.

Q. If applicable, what as far as you know will be/were the arrangements for the Northern route(s) which you had originally planned to use or that you used during the time of the strike?



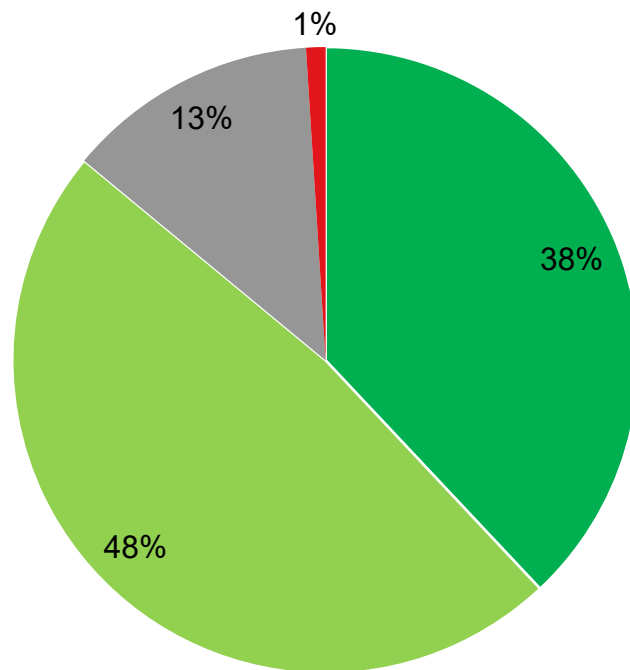
Impact of the industrial action on passengers

Almost all of those saying that they used, or intended to use, Northern train services at the time of the strike say that they were impacted in some way. Around four in ten say that they were impacted a great deal. Those travelling or intending to travel only on Monday 10 July are more likely than those travelling or intending to travel only on Saturday 8 or Sunday 9 July to say that they were impacted by the strike.

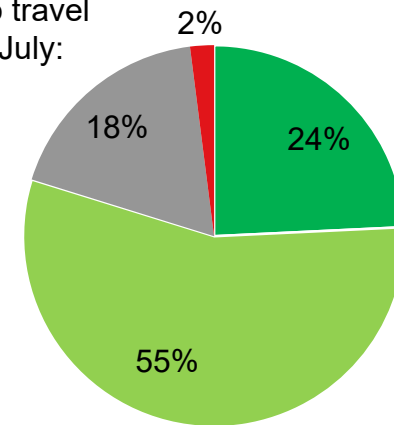
Q. As you may already know, a RMT Union strike on 8 and 10 July means that Northern rail services may be, or were affected in the following ways:

- A limited train service;
- Trains replaced by bus services
- Trains not running; or
- The usual timetable changing

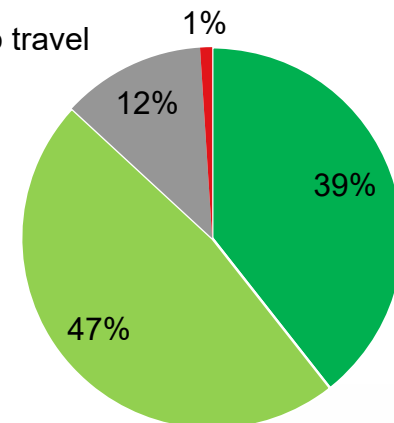
How much will this, or did this, affect you?



Travelling/intending to travel Saturday 8/Sunday 9 July:



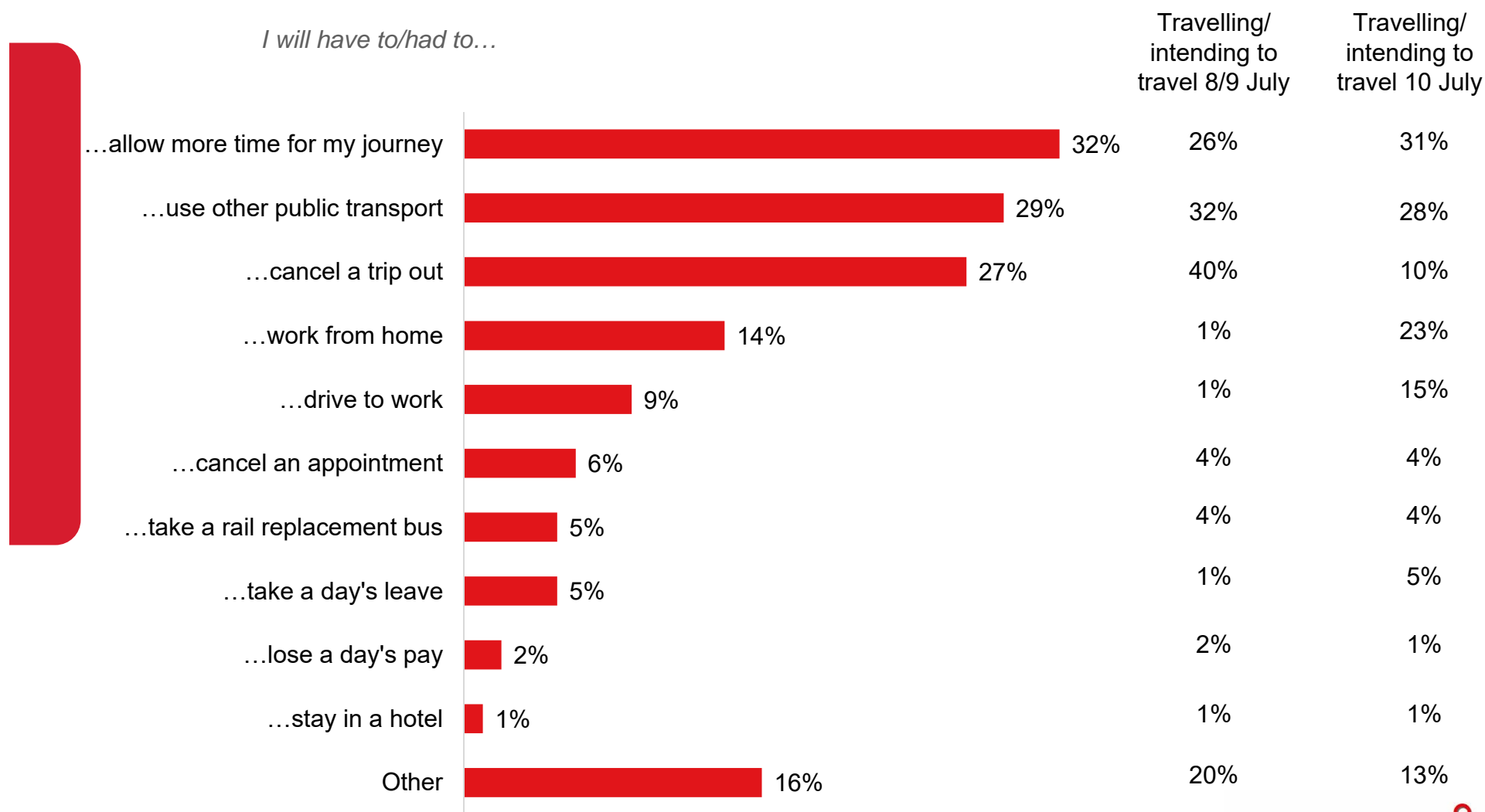
Travelling/intending to travel Monday 10 July:



- A great deal
- To some extent
- Not very much
- Not at all

A third of passengers who said that they will be affected by the industrial action say that they had to allow more time for their journey, while three in ten say that they will use other forms of public transport. More than a quarter say that they had to cancel a trip out. This compares with four in ten of those travelling or intending to travel on Saturday 8 or Sunday 9 July who say they had to cancel a trip out.

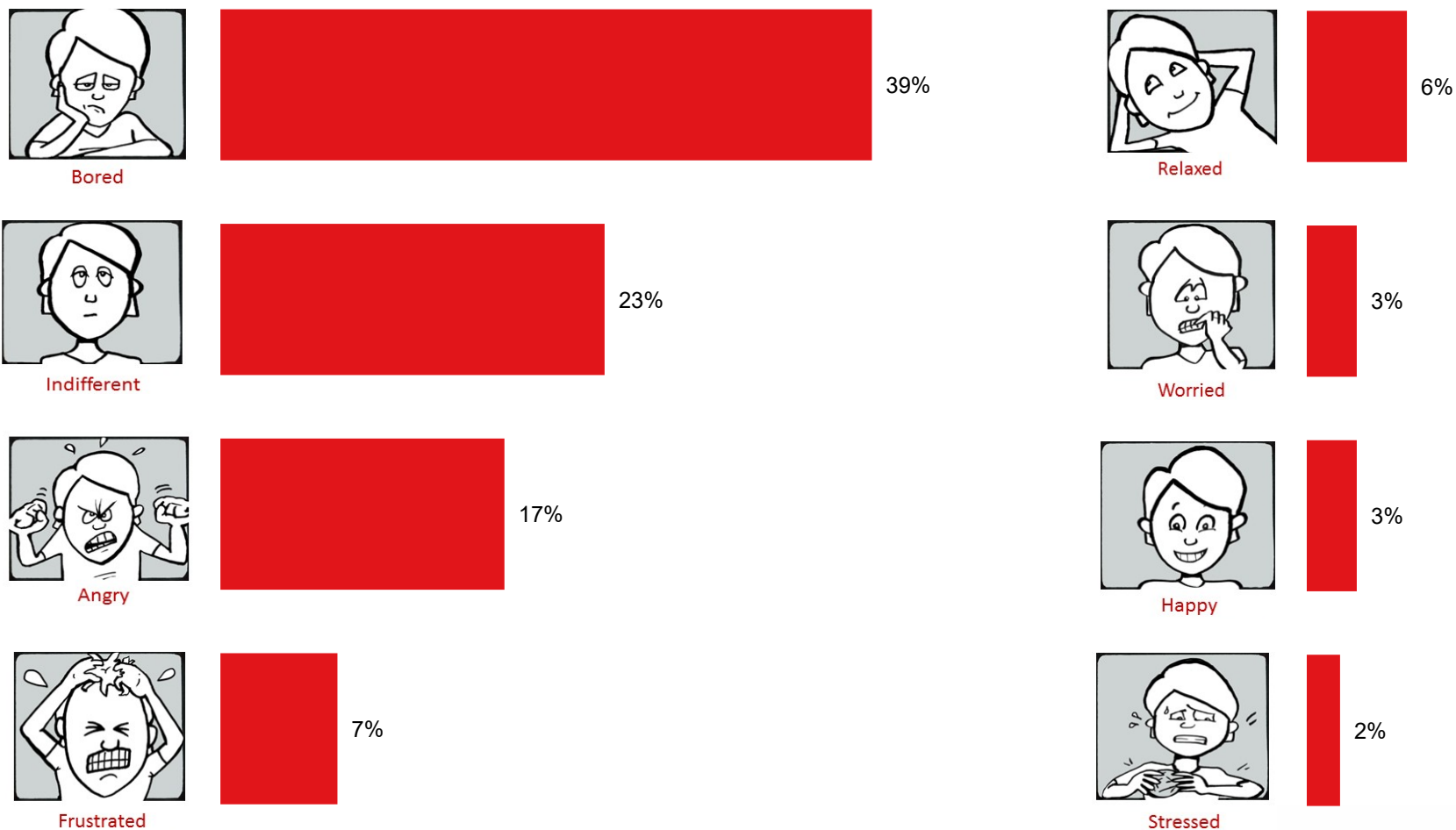
Q. Which of these, if any, describes how the industrial action will affect or affected you?



How passengers feel about the strike

Passengers were shown a series of images (without the descriptions) and asked which one best captures how they feel about the strike. Around four in ten selected that image which we have described as 'bored', while a quarter selected 'indifferent' and 17 per cent selected 'angry'.

Q. Which one of these images best captures how you feel about the strike?



'I am fed up about having to change my plans to accommodate the strike. I will need to work longer hours to cover the longer journey time to work and I have childcare to consider.'



Bored

'I've become used to dealing with a disrupted service, whether it's because of a strike or because of issues that mean cancellations and reduced numbers of carriages.'

'The strike is happening so I have to get on with it.'

'Usually my journey on the train only takes 15 minutes, but with having to get the bus it took me an hour to get where I had to get to.'

'It's very annoying but I feel like it's out of my control and there's nothing I can do about it.'

'Getting to work will take considerably longer and cost more. I have already paid for my train ticket monthly.'

'Having to re-plan my transport route is a pain in the backside, there's no direct trains so my journey will take longer.'



Indifferent

'We travelled on Saturday without noticing that there was a strike! The service was the same as usual.'

'I am a regular customer and was due to visit elderly unwell relatives. The visit had been planned but has had to be cancelled meaning hotel bookings have been lost and this has cost money as well as a great deal of inconvenience.'



Angry

'There was practically no useful information given - we asked at the train station and they knew nothing, we looked on Northern's website and there was no clear information that the train we had booked was cancelled. We spent a deal of time trying to find out this information. In the end we took an alternative route to avoid the Northern Rail leg of our journey and had to get an expensive taxi. My 86 year old mother was travelling and the hassle and big crowds were distressing.'

'Getting fed up of the strikes, not being able to get to work due to very limited rail service, the trains that are running do not connect with each other.'



Frustrated

'It's hugely inconvenient.'

'Angry and frustrated that the unions and management can't come to a reasonable solution.'

'Very little information available at Hull paragon station and zero advice on alternative means of transport.'

'I can adapt my working to fit around the disruption and it saves me a days rail fare!'

'The Tyne & Wear Metro provides a slower alternative journey to work, so I won't be too badly affected.'



Relaxed

'I used the CITY ZAP bus from Leeds to York for the first time. It was very comfortable.'

'Things happen, you just have to make the best of it and make alternative arrangements.'



Happy

'Although the strike means I will choose to work from home instead of commuting, this is not a negative thing for me on this occasion.'

'Uncertainty as to whether trains would run to the revised timetable were found to be correct as one train was cancelled on the Saturday leaving people stranded with no information as the line has no information screens or tannoy system and most stations are unmanned.'



Worried

'I have a long planned appointment to get to and I don't know how I am going to get there. Still trying to figure it out. Northern web site says nothing about getting from Halifax to anywhere else.'

'The journey home from my sons, although only from St Annes to Cheadle Hulme ,frequently involves 3 trains!! As a pensioner to then be unsure of how accurate any of the times /connections would be was an extra worry.'

'Travelling for an interview and couldn't find specific information for the train I planned to catch on the morning of 10th July as to whether it was cancelled or not.'

'We had been planning the weekend for 20 Cub Scouts and 5 adult helpers for several months...we had to make alternative arrangements to get everyone to Edale by car. It would have cost £450 to hire a coach.'



Stressed

'Worried about being able to get to work and being late as my shop relies on me getting to work on time to be able to trade.'

'I work freelance and use the trains, therefore had to cancel some work as taxis cost too much and lost wages.'

Alongside making comments explaining why the particular image had been selected, many passengers also expressed a desire that the dispute be resolved as soon as possible. Similarly, some indicated that they support the Union's actions while others indicated that they did not. Other passengers expressed frustration about the lack of information regarding the reasons for the strike.

'The government should do more to prevent widespread action like this from taking place.'

'I'm not sure who to believe in this dispute, RMT or Northern, but I do feel that they should work something out.'

'I wish someone would bash the heads of the unions and employers together and force them to negotiate a reasonable settlement for both sides. Continued strikes does neither of them any favours.'

'There does not appear to be a way getting both sides to agree a way forward.'

'There does not seem to be much headway being made in this dispute. Someone needs to get the two parties together and get the job sorted.'

'This needs to be resolved before it turns into the Southern issue.'

'The union should be taken to court for this action since it serves no purpose whatsoever.'

'As a passenger who uses the trains quite frequently but doesn't read any newspapers I am still lacking any knowledge of the reasons for the strike action.'

'Please tell both sides to 'grow up!'

'Fed up of train management and unions not sitting down to resolve this.'

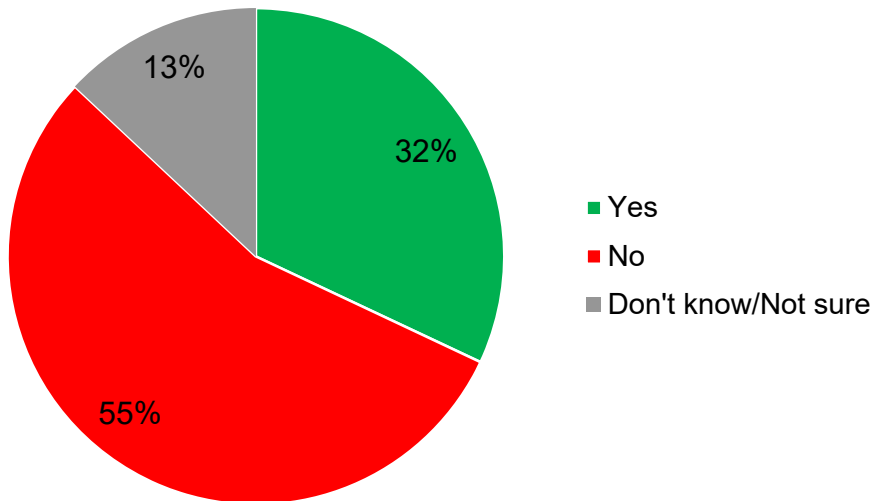
'I support strike action over driver only trains.'

'I support the RMT action as I am not happy about there not being a guard on the train. The driver can't expect to be called upon to attend to any issues be it travel queries, a passenger that is taken ill or anti-social behaviour.'

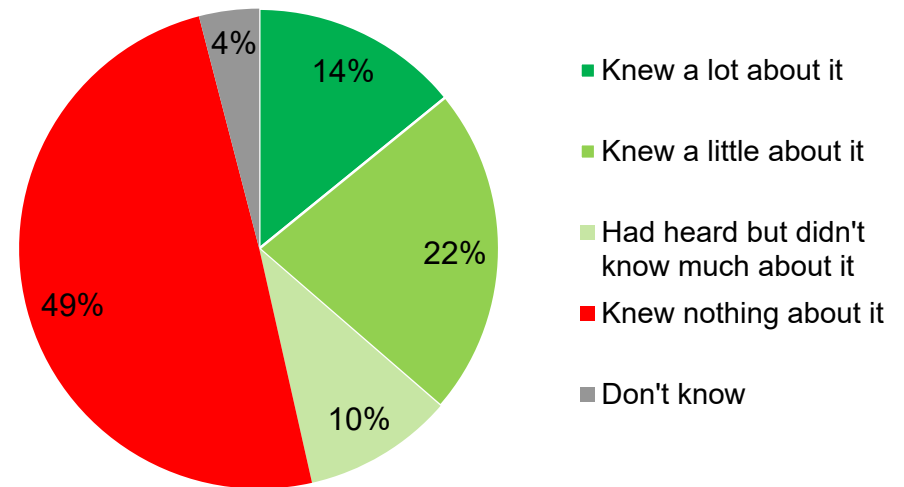
Compensation for ticket holders

A third (32%) of passengers who say that they originally intended to use Northern train services, but didn't because of the strike, say that they held a valid ticket such as a season ticket or other ticket bought in advance to use at this time. Of these, more than a half were not aware that they may be entitled to a refund or to compensation. A similar proportion were not aware of how to get any refund assuming they were entitled to it.

Q. If you do not intend to, or did not use this ticket, are you aware that you may be entitled to a refund or compensation from Northern?



Q. And assuming that you are entitled, to what extent are you aware of how you might get a refund or compensation from Northern?



'I was unaware that I could claim compensation under strike action so I threw my ticket away. Again, this was not explained by Northern Rail.'



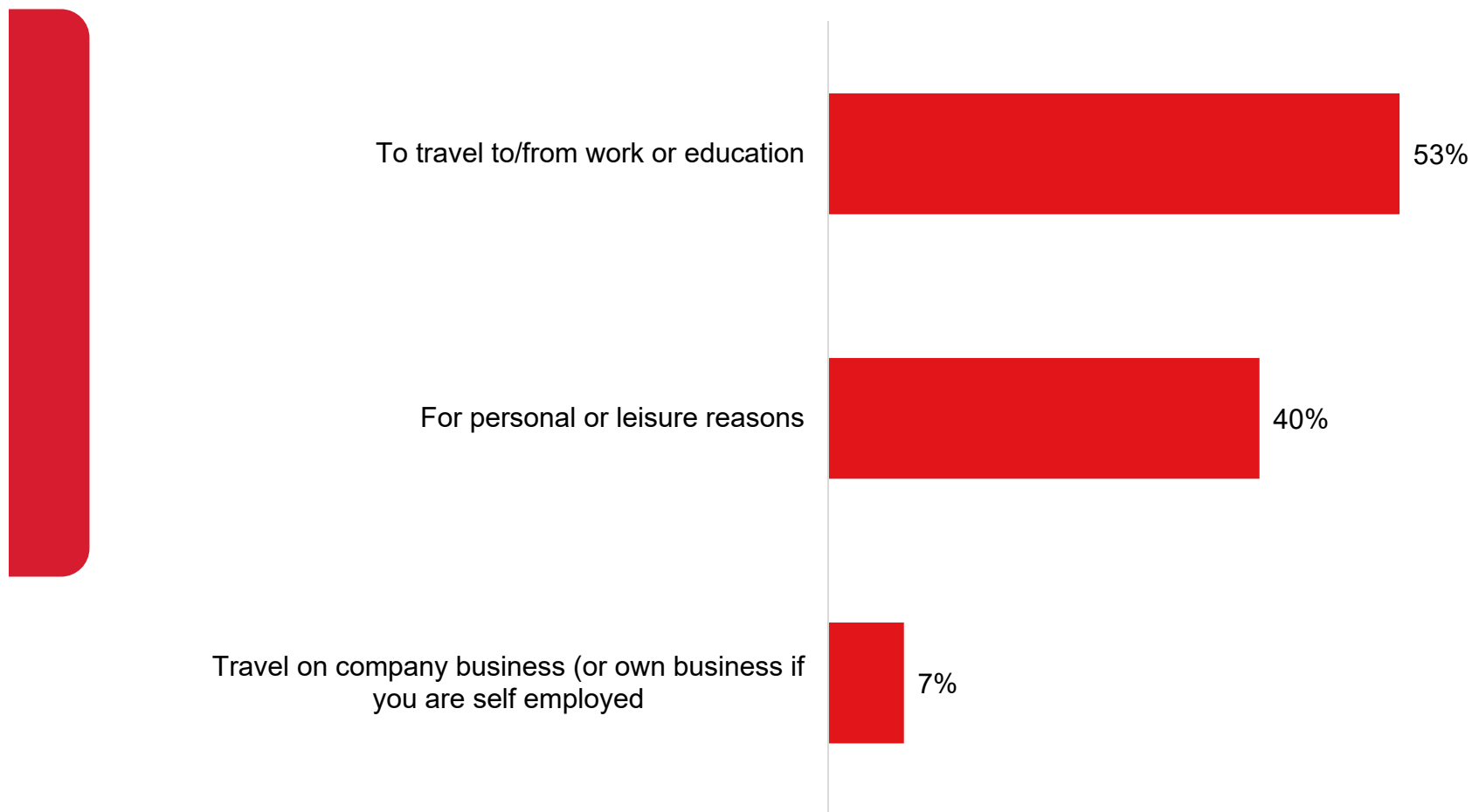
Technical appendix

How we carried out the survey

- On 5 July 2017 the online survey was sent to 2,416 passengers on the Transport Focus Transport User Panel who had previously been in contact with Transport Focus and had indicated that they had used Northern train services in the last 12 months.
- These passengers were further screened so that only those who indicated that they had used, or originally intended to use Northern trains at the time of the strike, were asked to complete the survey. Out of 700 passengers using Northern previously who responded to the initial email, 333 passengers completed the survey.
- Fieldwork for the survey was undertaken between 5 and 16 July 2017, with a reminder email sent to non-responders on 10 July 2017.
- Note on interpretation of the data: data is representative of members of Transport Focus's Transport User 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 code more than one option, or because of data rounding.

Passengers by journey purpose

Q. Which of the following describes your usual reason for using Northern trains?



Base: All passengers using / originally intending to use Northern trains on 8, 9 or 10 July 2017 (333). Fieldwork 5 – 16 July 2017