

Improving Euston Station

Independent national passenger watchdog

September 2011

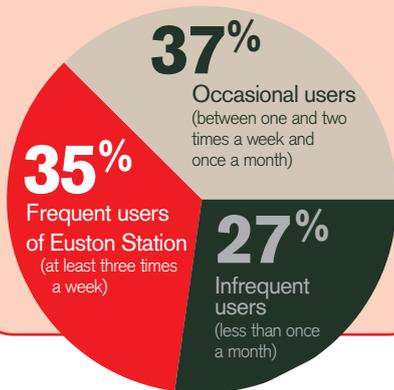


Passenger Focus, working in partnership with London Midland, London Overground, Network Rail, and Virgin Trains commissioned research which surveyed 726 passengers using train services at Euston Station. This was in order to assess the impact of recent improvements and understand passengers' priorities for future improvements at the station.

22%
of passengers surveyed were very dissatisfied with the handling of disruptions at Euston station

Chart 1

Typically, how often do you use Euston Station?
(%) 726 responses



Of the passengers surveyed, over half (55%) were arriving at Euston station to start their rail journey, 25% were changing between train and underground, 12% were leaving the station having completed a rail journey and 8% were changing between trains.

Satisfaction with station facilities and services

Overall, three quarters (75%) of passengers were very or fairly satisfied with the services and facilities at Euston station. Passengers who used the station less often (less than three times a week) were more satisfied

than those who used it frequently.

As can be seen in the chart 2, passengers at Euston are most satisfied with the provision of real-time information about train times/platforms, the cleanliness and maintenance of the main concourse, and ease of access from the main concourse to platforms. They are, however, least satisfied with information during disruption, cash points and toilet facilities.

Chart 2

Satisfaction with services/facilities at Euston station
(% very/fairly satisfied) 471 responses

Real time information about train times/platforms	82
Cleanliness and maintenance of the main concourse	79
Ease of access from the main concourse to platforms	78
Signage to help with finding your way around	76
Cleanliness and maintenance of platforms	75
Range of retail/catering facilities	73
Ticket buying facilities	66
Layout of main ticket office	56
Presence of station staff	54
Info about train times/platforms during times of disruption	49
Cash points	46
Toilet facilities	35



Table 1

Priorities for improvement
665 responses

Rank order

- 1st Information about train times/platforms during times of disruption**
- 2nd Real-time information about train times/platforms**
- 3rd Toilet facilities**

Top priorities for improvement at Euston station

We asked passengers to choose their top priorities for improvement at Euston station. The top three passenger priorities are shown in table 1 above.

Information about train times/platforms during disruption was the highest priority for improvement, and was rated as of much greater importance than other priorities, particularly for frequent users of Euston station. This information was also rated third lowest in terms of satisfaction scores.

Real-time information about train times/platforms is the second highest priority for improvement. Although it received a higher satisfaction score it remains a high priority to maintain going forward. This is possibly due to the critical role of information provision

during disruption. The third highest priority for improvement was toilet facilities, which also had the lowest satisfaction (35% very/fairly satisfied).

Handling of disruption

Passenger Focus research, including the National Passenger Survey, demonstrates that poor handling of disruption is a main driver of passenger dissatisfaction. Therefore it is important that stations are equipped to provide as much information as possible. Half (50%) of all passengers have experienced unplanned disruption at Euston in the last six months. Over half (57%) of these passengers are fairly or very dissatisfied with the handling of disruptions at Euston station

(See chart 3 below).

When passengers were asked whether handling of disruption had got better or worse, 43% of passengers felt that the handling of unplanned disruptions at Euston station had remained “at the same unsatisfactory level” for the last 6 months. However, more passengers felt that disruption handling had got a little or a lot better (32%), than those who felt it had got a little or a lot worse (15%).

When asked to rate the communications they received during unplanned disruption, it was clear that most passengers were not provided with sufficient information, in particular relating to likely additional journey times and alternative transport arrangements.

Chart 3

Overall satisfaction with handling of disruptions at Euston station (%) 471 responses

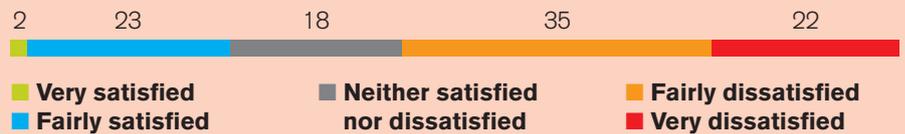


Chart 4

Satisfaction with information provided during unplanned disruption, in terms of explaining...

(% saying very/fairly satisfied) Those who had experienced disruption in the past six months – 313 responses

Routes that would be affected	39
Reasons for the disruption	36
Likely additional journey times	17
Alternative transport arrangements	12

Passenger comments about communication during disruption

“Better handling of and communication around unplanned disruptions. No-one ever seems to know what is going on. Staff can get a bit irate and nothing practical is advised for those affected.”

(Female, 25-34, Occasional user)

“When there is disruption it turns into chaos. There is little or no information about the problem, how long it will last or what the best alternative train would be.”

(Female, 25-34, Frequent user)

Real-time information about train times/platforms

When accessing real-time information about train times or platforms at Euston, passengers were most satisfied with real-time information screens on the main concourse. However, around a third of passengers were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the information desk on the main concourse, timetable leaflets and timetable posters. As chart 5 shows below, where passengers gave a rating against these methods it was more likely to be positive.

Staff

When passengers were asked to rank what they would like to see improved most in relation to staffing at Euston

station, the majority wanted staff to improve their knowledge at times of disruption (51% rated this as a priority). They also wanted staff to have a more visible presence at the station (23% rated this as a priority).

In order to understand the perceived usefulness of the new information desk at Euston, we asked those who had used the desk how satisfied they were. 28% of those spoken to had used the information desk at Euston. The majority of passengers who had used the information desk were satisfied, in particular with the helpfulness of the desk staff (73% were fairly or very satisfied).

Getting around Euston station

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of passengers agreed with the statement “There is sufficient space for me to move around Euston station with ease”. However, frequent passengers were more likely to experience difficulty moving around the station. Given that the majority of these passengers are likely to travel during peak times for commuting reasons, they will have more exposure to overcrowding on the platforms and main concourse area. Comments from passengers also show particular concerns around peak periods:

Chart 5

Satisfaction with information services at Euston station

(% saying very/fairly satisfied) 438 responses

Real-time information screens on the main concourse	24	54	13	8	2
Real-time information screens on platforms	19	49	18	11	3
Public address announcements	14	45	23	15	4
Information desk on main concourse	15	42	30	11	2
Timetable leaflets	15	34	39	9	2
Up-to-date timetable posters	10	37	39	10	3

■ Very satisfied
 ■ Fairly satisfied
 ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 ■ Fairly dissatisfied
 ■ Very dissatisfied

“When busy concourse can become very crowded - have walkways to platforms where people cannot stand.”

(Female, 25-34, Frequent user)

Passengers’ satisfaction with, and desires for improvement to facilities at the station

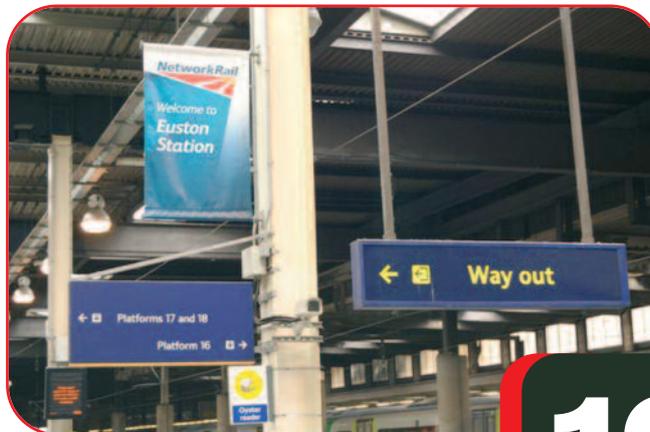
Although only 7% of passengers found it difficult using signage to find their way around the station these passengers provided the following suggestions for improvements:

- Bigger signs/bigger writing
- More visible/brighter signs
- More, clearer signs to platforms

When asked to rate their priorities for improvements to cash machines at the station, passengers top priority was having more of them (44%). However just under a third (30%) said that improving the visibility of cash machines was a priority, suggesting passengers may not be aware of their locations.

Passengers showed significant concerns regarding the quantity and visibility of available seating at the station, 71% of passengers were fairly or very dissatisfied with the availability of seating and 63% with the ease of finding seating.

Just under a third of passengers



(32%) said that they were dissatisfied with the ease of finding toilets, as well as the cleanliness (17% dissatisfied) and the opening hours (12% dissatisfied).

Passenger comments highlighted the need to have better signage to help locate each of the facilities shown above easily (i.e. seating, cash machines, and toilets):

“Remove unnecessary signage- problem is too many messages and therefore can’t immediately see simple signs for toilets for example.”

(Female, 45-54, Frequent user)

Ticket gates/barriers

- 12% of passengers found it fairly or very difficult to use the ticket gates/barriers at Euston station. This particularly applies to frequent users (18% found it fairly or very difficult). Passenger comments demonstrated that passengers travelling at peak times found it particularly difficult to navigate the ticket barriers.

19%

of passengers surveyed were dissatisfied with the time allowed to get from the main concourse to trains when platform numbers were announced

“Access at peak times between 8-11 and main concourse is still woeful. If you can’t provide manned barriers leave them open at peak times.”

(Male, 45-54, Frequent user)

- 26% of passengers felt that there was not enough warning about gates/barriers closing prior to departure.
- 19% of passengers were dissatisfied with the time allowed to get from the main concourse to trains when platform numbers are announced.

Next Steps

Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch, London Midland, London Overground, Network Rail and Virgin Trains will continue to work together to monitor and improve passenger satisfaction at Euston station. In particular efforts will continue to be made to improve information during disruption.

