

Inverness station passenger experience

December 2015



Transport Focus foreword

Having looked at passengers' views on Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Queen Street, we were delighted to work with the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) to focus on experiences of Inverness station.

Inverness station is unusual in the high proportion of tourists using it – almost a quarter of our sample were using the station for the first time. First time users who are new to an area have particular needs around the information at the station. The challenge for HITRANS is meeting these along with the regular requirements of locals and frequent rail users, who are typically less satisfied.

We look forward to working with HITRANS as the station is improved. Consulting passengers at an early stage is something that we always recommend. They are the experts on what they need and always offer clear direction on what will make a difference to their journeys. We would encourage other operators and authorities to follow HITRANS' example of getting feedback as soon as any improvements are being considered.

Anthony Smith
Chief Executive
Transport Focus

HITRANS foreword

HITRANS was keen to find out what passengers think about Inverness Station. This research is designed to inform a long-term plan for the development of the station, so that it can meet the demands for the future, including a substantial growth in services and passengers, and the potential for electrification. This has been boosted by a proposal from Abellio ScotRail to invest in the station, the decision of Serco Caledonian Sleepers to base their main office in the city and the planned introduction of the Virgin East Coast Inter City Express trains. We hope to improve the appearance of the three station entrances, making better use of available space, improving connectivity between Inverness bus and rail stations and in the longer term, increasing platform capacity. Passengers' views are central to this planning process, and I would like to thank them for helping us by completing the questionnaires.

Cllr James Stockan
Chair
HITRANS

Introduction

Transport Focus and HITRANS wanted to understand the experience of passengers using Inverness station. We wanted to know what types of passengers are using the station, how they rate various aspects of the station, and to identify possible areas of future improvement from their perspective.

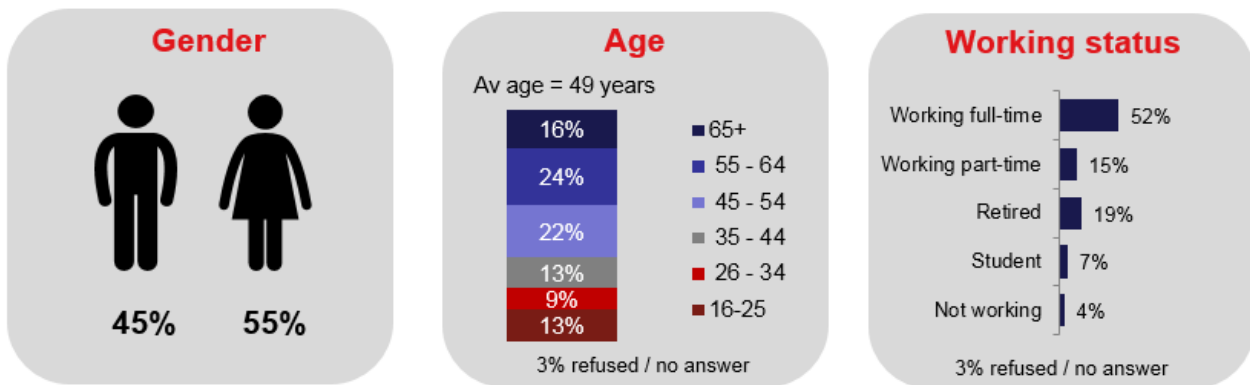
Methodology

We carried out a survey amongst 755 passengers using Inverness station, with responses collected via questionnaires handed out at the station and posted back. The fieldwork for this study was conducted between 21 and 31 July 2015.

Who is using Inverness Station?

The average age of passengers travelling through Inverness station was 49 years. Over two thirds were working (full or part-time) with 18 per cent being retired. Almost two thirds of station users were travelling for leisure purposes, although a core of 17 per cent were using the station for commuting. Almost a third of passengers were using the station on a regular basis, although a greater proportion were infrequent passengers with almost a quarter using Inverness for the first time.

Profile of rail passengers at Inverness station: all respondents

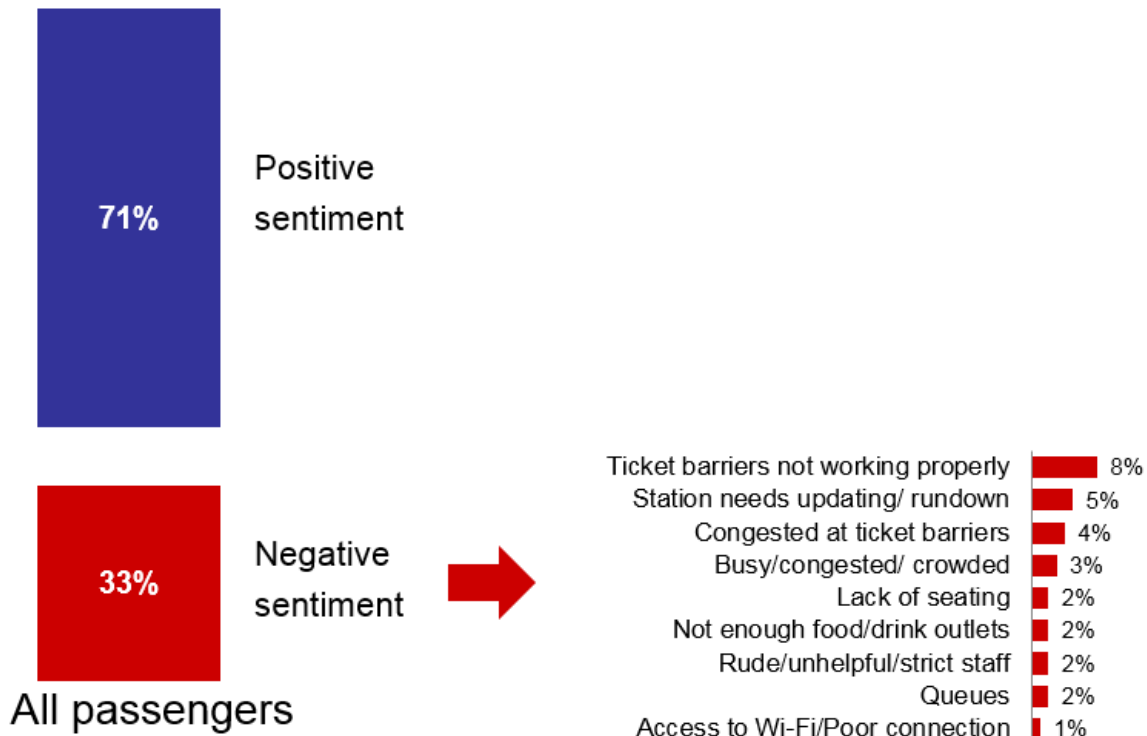


Q24 Gender, Q25 Age, Q26 Working Status, Q28
Base: total (n=755)

Overall experience and satisfaction

The overall top-of-mind reactions to Inverness are largely positive, with the passengers' experience considered broadly good. They find the station clean and tidy with friendly, helpful staff.

Overall experience of using Inverness station: all respondents



<p>Ticket barriers not working properly</p> <p><i>"I now dread using inverness since the barrier refurbishment. I use a weekly season ticket and more often than not it does not operate the barrier and I have to wait for help. Very frustrating as it adds on an extra 5-10 minutes per journey."</i> Male, 45-54, Commuter</p> <p><i>"The barriers are a nuisance, all the tickets were inspected on departure. The 'circulating' area is reduced by them."</i> Male, 65-69, Leisure</p> <p><i>"Ticket barriers are frustrating and slow down those in a rush."</i> – Female, 19-25, Leisure</p> <p><i>"Queuing to get on train is nightmare if there are hold ups of any kind. Mornings going to work are busy and there is usually something going wrong or people have passes and that can hold things up going through the barriers."</i> Female, 55-59, Commuter</p>	<p>Needs updating/rundown</p> <p><i>"The station had a tatty appearance and is long due a good coat of paint as a minimum with preferably a full refurbishment to bring it up to date."</i> Male, 45-54, Business</p> <p><i>"Inverness station could do with some freshness. A general clean of roof space and smarten up. Café express and bar in need of some TLC. Flooring could be more modern."</i> Male, 26-34, Leisure</p> <p>Congested/crowded/busy</p> <p><i>"It is always congested trying to get through barriers."</i> Female, 35-44, Commuter</p> <p><i>"The station was very busy, we were early but there were no seats available. Extra seating would be welcomed."</i> Female, 55-59, Leisure</p>
--	--

Almost a third of spontaneous comments were negative, with passengers describing the station as run down and mentioning congested or faulty ticket barriers making it difficult for them to get to or from the trains.

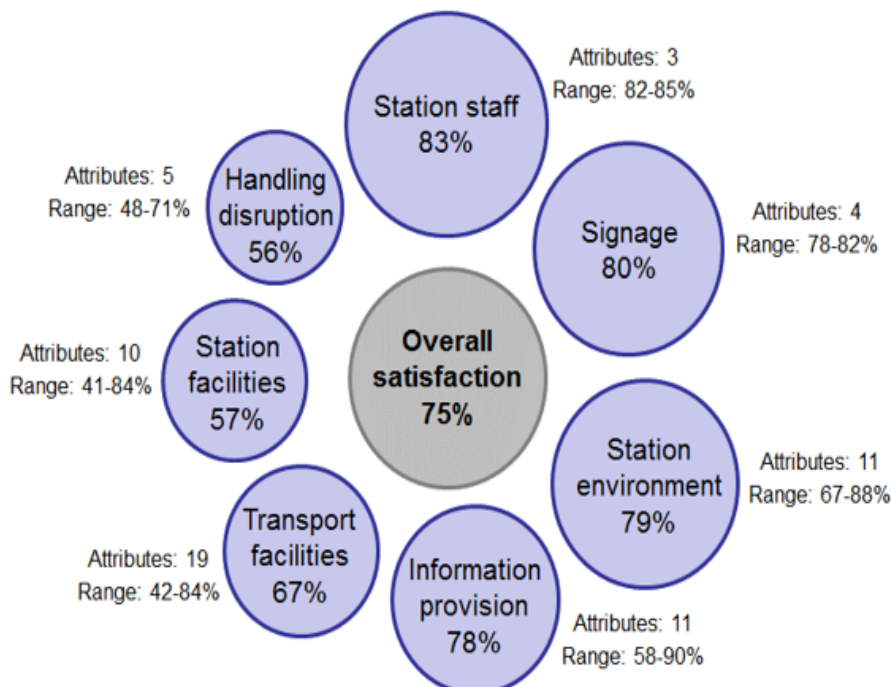
Three quarters of passengers using Inverness station are satisfied with the station overall, with relatively few dissatisfied (six per cent). Satisfaction is higher for leisure passengers, lower for business passengers, and lowest for commuters who are most familiar with the station and its facilities.

Station performance ratings

In the survey we asked passengers to rate several key station areas, including staff, signage, information provision, transport facilities, disruption handling, and the general station environment. Each area had a number of attributes that passengers could evaluate.

The highest-rated aspect of Inverness station was the station staff, followed by signage, station environment and information provision. Significantly lower scores were given for station facilities and the handling of disruption. Passengers identified key areas for improvement as well as areas which needed to be maintained.

Performance rating with various aspects of Inverness station - all respondents



Highest performing attributes

- Information screen visibility, accuracy and clarity
- Personal security at the station
- Ease of getting in, out and around the station
- Cleanliness of the station
- Lighting at the station
- Knowledge, availability, helpfulness, and information available from staff

Lowest-performing attributes

- Quality and choice of shops and refreshments available
- Range of food and drinks available at the station
- Access to cash machines
- Information on announcements and on screens during disruption
- Ease of getting through the ticket barriers to/from the platforms

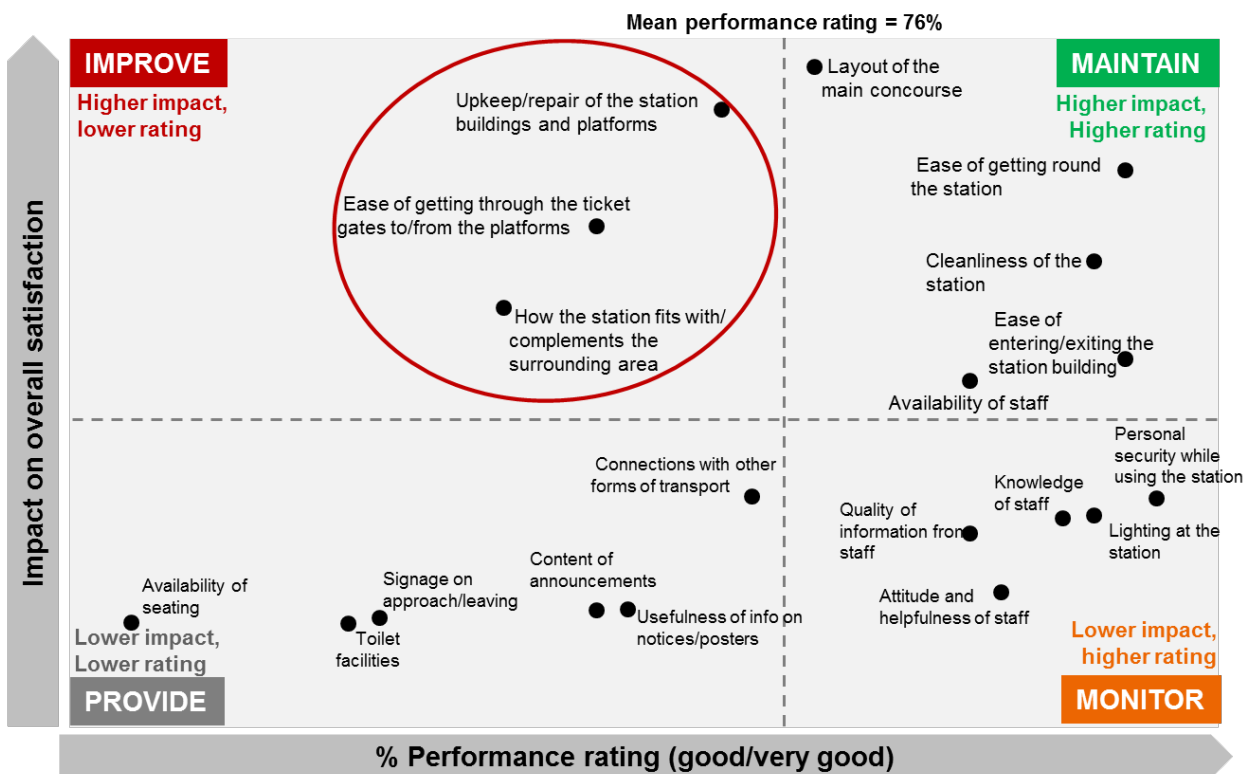
Key drivers of overall passenger satisfaction

Additional analysis were undertaken to understand the key drivers of passengers' overall satisfaction with Inverness station.

These are shown below in four main groups:

1. Factors which have a low impact on satisfaction with a low performance rating are categorised under: **PROVIDE**
2. Low impact on satisfaction with a high performance rating: **MONITOR**
3. High impact on satisfaction with a high performance rating: **MAINTAIN**
4. High impact on satisfaction with a low performance rating: **IMPROVE**

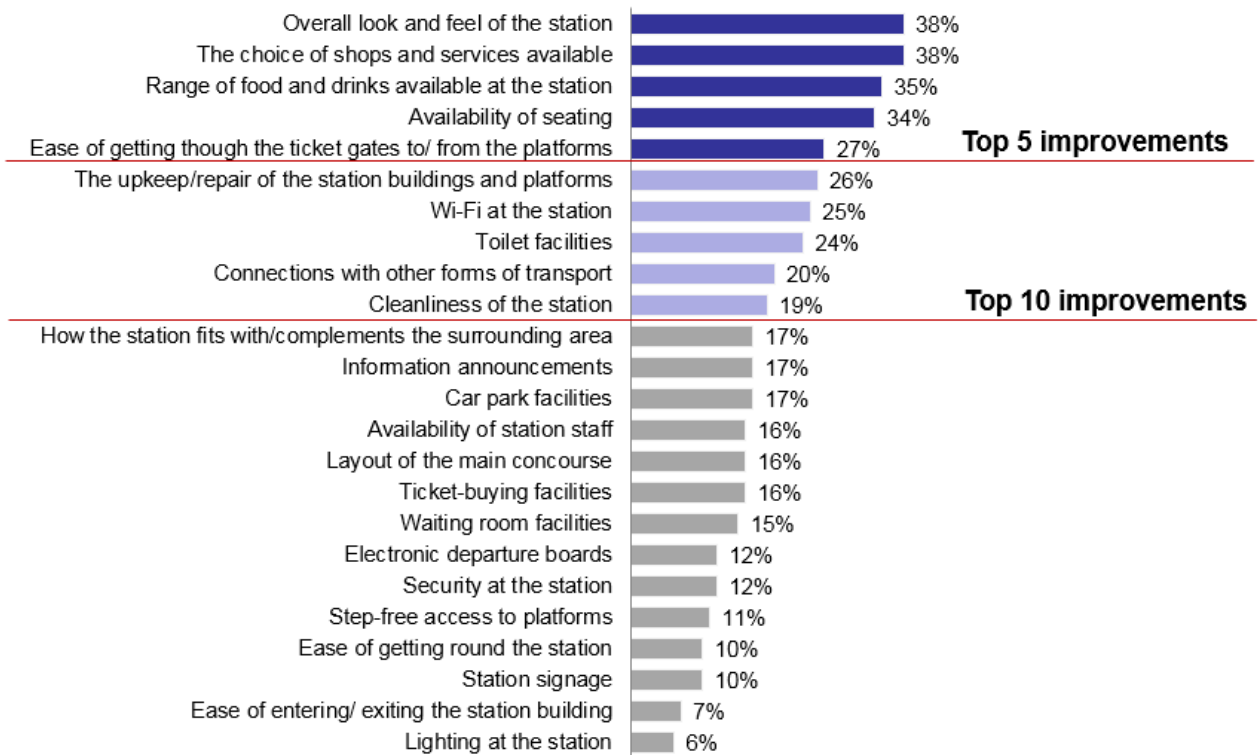
According to the research, the three main underperforming areas that need to be improved to boost passenger satisfaction are the ease of getting through the ticket barriers to and from the platforms, general upkeep or repair of the station, and better integration of the station with the surrounding area.



Areas for future station improvement

When passengers were asked which areas needed improvement for the future, beyond the overall look and feel of the station, they highlighted the choice of shops and services available and the range of food and drinks on offer. The availability of seating, ease of getting through ticket gates, Wi-Fi and toilet facilities also ranked highly as areas to improve.

Ranking of stated station improvements – all respondents



© 2015 Transport Focus



Transport Focus
Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
London
EC4Y 8JX

0300 123 2350
www.transportfocus.org.uk
info@transportfocus.org.uk

Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council.