



National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)

Consultation on proposed changes July 2015

Summary of disability issues

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Background

This summary is to be read in conjunction with the main Consultation Document available on our web-site at: <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/national-passenger-survey-introduction/national-rail-passenger-survey-consultation>.

Responses to the consultation should be provided on line using the questionnaire available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NRPSconsultation>. **Responses should be received by midnight on Friday 25th September 2015** for them to be considered.

Transport Focus proposes to make various changes to the *National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)* over the next two to three years. Details on *NRPS*, the consultation and the reason for the changes can be found in the main Consultation Document. The changes can be considered under five broad headings:

- the questionnaire
- data collection
- immediate technical changes to sampling/weighting
- medium term technical changes
- governance.

We see nothing in the technical changes or governance proposals that impacts the way disability and/or mobility issues are addressed in *NRPS*. There is potential impact in the way data is collected and in the questions that we ask; these are summarised in this note.

Key points about questionnaire length and data collection

A key goal of the change is to reduce the questionnaire length. This is seen as very long (twelve pages at present) and potentially off-putting to respondents – particularly when presented as an on line survey. The intention is to focus on core questions relating to overall satisfaction, value for money and station/train factors plus demographics and journey data for analysis.

We wish to increase the uptake of the on line option for completing the questionnaire to increase representation of younger age groups and reduce the need for weighting of the data. A shorter questionnaire is seen as imperative to meet this goal. The on line option may also be appreciated by disabled users of assistive technologies. The paper option will remain for those who prefer it.

We recognise the value of the ‘displaced’ (ie: non core) questions to many stakeholders and are exploring ways in which this data might still be collected. These include:

- finding alternative surveys that provide similar information;
- asking supplementary questions to those who have completed the core questionnaire if they are happy to do so;
- conducting additional targeted surveys (subject to funding) on specific topics.

In terms of supplementary questionnaires, if for example a passenger opts to take the paper survey, they might be given both the core questionnaire and a second, probably single page,

optional questionnaire. If answering on line, having completed the core questionnaire, passengers would be offered the chance to complete a supplementary questionnaire if they have time and the inclination to do so. Depending on the subject matter, the supplementary questionnaire might not need to be asked to the full sample, so there might perhaps be two versions each asked of half the overall sample.

If they complete the on line option, passengers might immediately be offered a supplementary questionnaire that relates to a specific answer they have just given – for example, that they have a disability, or were travelling with a bicycle or on a particular type of ticket.

All passengers completing the core survey would be asked for their contact details and agreement to receiving further surveys from *Transport Focus* (as happens at present). We can therefore contact these passengers with an invitation to participate in additional surveys. For example, if they report that they drove to and parked at the station, we could send them a survey on station parking facilities or increasing public transport provision to the station. The same could be done for a specific survey on mobility issues and/or disabilities.

Questions of specific relevance to disabled passengers

There are currently six specific disability questions – Q8a to Q8e and Q9. (The example below is from a questionnaire used at East Croydon; the station name at Q8c is inserted for each station being surveyed.)

Q8a Are you affected by any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? (*tick all that apply*)

- No: None..... Go to Q10
- Yes: Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Mobility (e.g. only able to walk short distances or difficulty climbing stairs)..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Dexterity (e.g. difficulty lifting and carrying objects or using a keyboard)..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Learning or understanding or concentrating..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Memory..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Mental health..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Stamina or breathing or fatigue..... Go to Q8b
- Yes: Socially or behaviourally (for example associated with autism, attention deficit disorder or Asperger's syndrome)..... Go to Q8b

Other: Please write in	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to Q8b
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Q8b Does your condition or illness have an adverse effect on your ability to make journeys by rail?
 Yes, a lot..... Yes, a little..... Not at all.....

Q8c How satisfied are you that **East Croydon** station met your needs as a passenger with a long term illness or disability?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/No opinion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8d How satisfied are you that the trains themselves met your needs as a passenger with a long term illness or disability?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/No opinion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8e Did you book assistance with your train company to get on/off the train?
 Yes..... Go to Q9 No..... Go to Q10

Q9 If so, how satisfied were you with the way these arrangements:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dis-satisfied	Very dis-satisfied	Don't know/No opinion
Were dealt with when booking.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were carried out on the day.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The proposal is to remove all but Q8a from the core questionnaire. We also suggest that Q8a is moved towards the end of the questionnaire in Section 6 (along with other classification details such as age and sex) and after the key station and train factors have been answered. Its current position is seen as off-putting as it is of no relevance to the majority of passengers and it is not as engaging as the station and train satisfaction questions that follow.

We do not feel that Q8c or Q8d provide worthwhile information as the results tend just to mirror passengers' answers to the general satisfaction questions and the questions are superfluous. Q8e and Q9 are potential questions for a supplementary questionnaire or separate survey.

Q8a is thus seen as an important 'hook' question that will enable us to ask supplementary questions, either immediately in an on line scenario or as a follow up survey at a later point. The follow up survey need not be limited to the questions currently asked. Subject to funding being secured, an occasional, more detailed survey of the needs of disabled passengers could expand upon the issues surveyed.

That said, Q8a could potentially be amended to ask specifically about conditions that have an impact on ability to travel by train, or perhaps have a second column where we ask which if any of the conditions impact on ability to travel.