



Rail passengers' experiences and priorities during engineering works

September 2012

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Colin Foxall CBE

Foreword

Passenger Focus has carried out new qualitative and quantitative research into passengers' views and experiences of using the railway when engineering work is disrupting the timetable. This refreshes research undertaken in 2004, and at Reading over Christmas 2010. It also follows our involvement in 2009/10 discussions that led to the concept of 'Category A' routes which will be closed only if there is no practical alternative.

There are some clear messages from the new research:

First, wherever possible rail passengers want to travel by train, being prepared to accept a longer journey time by train to avoid using a replacement bus. This does not appear to be an anti bus and coach sentiment: indeed some passengers said they would opt for a scheduled coach over a combination of train and rail replacement bus. While Network Rail is expecting to meet its Control Period 4 (2009-2014) regulated target in this area, the strength of feeling against replacement buses suggests that even more effort is needed to deliver maintenance, renewal and enhancements while keeping passengers on trains. Is the industry yet at the point where, hand on heart, *every* 'all lines' closure has been agreed only after consideration of the full range of options? Is the industry still too often starting at the "what is easy for the railway" end of the spectrum? The fact that routine maintenance – as distinct from, for example, rebuilding a bridge – is still regarded as a 'legitimate' reason to block some Category A routes suggests there is a way to go.

Second, too little is being done to ensure passengers know they are buying a different 'product' than normal – one that involves travelling by bus or a diverted train that takes much longer

than normal. Failing to present the facts in an easily-digestible form and allowing passengers to make an informed choice is unacceptable. It also leads to angst on the day of travel as passengers discover the reality, which some will perceive as hidden from them.

Third, when buses do replace trains the help provided to passengers transferring from train to bus and vice versa is inadequate. Passengers report failures to provide wayfinding signage from the station to the buses; failure to make it clear which buses will serve which destinations; and failure to provide staff to help with luggage, answer queries, etc.

Finally, it is clear that passengers think it is inappropriate for the industry to charge the same for a bus journey as for a train journey.

Passenger Focus will work with the rail industry, its regulators and Government to ensure decision makers hear these messages from passengers about disruption caused by engineering work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Colin Foxall'.

Colin Foxall CBE
Chairman
Passenger Focus

Summary of findings

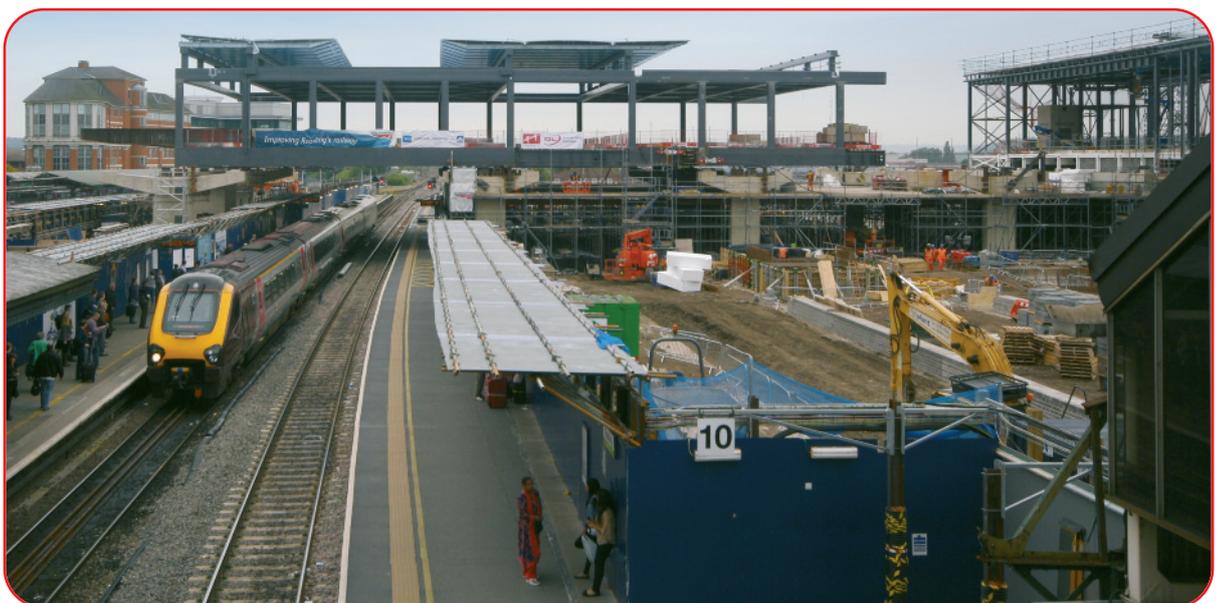
- Most passengers, including those travelling for business or leisure, feel that engineering works should be planned to have minimal impact on daily commuters, even if the alternative impacts on them.
- Rail passengers want to travel by train rather than bus (55% of passengers would not travel by train at all if part of the journey was to be by bus).
- Most rail passengers will tolerate an extended journey time of up to 30 minutes on a normally one hour journey if the train is diverted around engineering works (94% at 15 minutes extra; 75% at 30 minutes extra).
- Unless a replacement bus will be quicker by 40 minutes or more, most rail passengers will opt for a diverted train over

a faster replacement bus.

- When passengers buy tickets it is not made sufficiently clear when the journey will involve a bus or a diverted train with a significantly extended journey time (42% of passengers in our sample of those buying tickets online for a journey affected by engineering works did not see a warning to that effect).
- Passengers report poor customer service when transferring between train and replacement bus and vice versa, citing lack of signage to the buses, lack of clarity about which bus is going where and inadequate assistance with luggage.
- Passengers with disabilities have similar needs to other passengers when it comes to engineering work, but with an even stronger preference not to use a replacement bus and even greater need for practical assistance in transferring from train to train and bus to train when that is necessary.
- An overwhelming proportion of passengers (85%) felt that having to use a replacement bus warranted a discount on the normal train fare. Some passengers suggested that a complimentary tea or coffee would at least be an acknowledgement that the service is not what it normally is.
- While further research is needed to fully understand this, passengers appear dissatisfied with the current practice of major closures taking place at Christmas and Easter – and feel that scheduling works at other times of the year, notably during school holidays and in the summer, would be preferable.

55%

of passengers would not travel by train at all if part of the journey was to be by bus



Recommendations

- **That the rail industry should make further concerted efforts to use replacement buses only as a last resort.** Buses will deter 55% of passengers from travelling by train altogether, and introduce a 'weak link' in the journey for those who persevere. We acknowledge that progress has been made, but the impression we get is that, culturally, the starting point remains how it is easiest to do the job and not how to do the job with minimal inconvenience to passengers. The options involving less impact on passengers (e.g. overnight working, single line working, diverting around) must be considered in collaborative discussions between Network Rail and train companies and, where appropriate, eliminated for valid, transparent reasons. Only then should options involving buses be entertained.
- **That National Rail Enquiries, train companies and online retailers must do more to help passengers make an informed choice when a bus or diverted train is involved.** On many websites the fact that a journey involves a bus is not immediately apparent, requiring a further 'click'. No websites currently caution passengers that they are being offered a diverted train, despite the 'product' being materially different (e.g. in journey time or intermediate stopping pattern – information which many passengers will need to make an informed choice).

- **That train companies must deliver better customer service when passengers transfer from train to bus and vice versa.** Areas to consider include:
 - **On the train journey to the interchange station.** Better information; greater staff presence on the train to answer queries, and provide reassurance; more empathy from staff (train crew may not perceive the journey to be disrupted – they are doing what they have been rostered to do and they are on time – but passengers may have a different view).
 - **At the interchange station.** Greater staff presence to provide information/reassurance, to assist with luggage and guide passengers to the buses, and improved signage of the route from platform to bus.
 - **Boarding the buses.** Staff presence to answer questions, give reassurance and provide help loading luggage, labelling of buses with destination and calling points, and providing bus drivers with an overview of what is happening so they can provide basic information to passengers.
 - **The specific needs of passengers with disabilities, whether related to mobility or another impairment.** How well are APRS bookings delivered during engineering works? Are arrangements adequate for disabled passengers travelling without having booked?

The research also revealed two areas in which there may be an opportunity for the rail industry to improve passengers' perceptions of engineering-related disruption:

- There is appetite among some passengers for summary "what is being done?" "how do I benefit?" information to be available when engineering work takes place. The way Transport for London describes disruption caused by its Tube Upgrade Plan was cited as good practice in the research. We encourage the rail industry to consider how it can allow passengers to understand how they will benefit from the short-term pain.
- The qualitative phase of the research showed widespread awareness of scheduled Oxford to London express coach services, with some passengers indicating that if the railway from Oxford to London is closed a scheduled coach is preferable to a 'railway bus'. Part of this is about eliminating the risks and hassle around transferring from train to bus or vice versa. Part of it may be the rail industry's tendency to charter good quality coaches but refer to them as buses – with connotations of vehicles more suited to a short journey within a town or city. Of course some passengers may have experience of unsuitable vehicles, whether buses or coaches, replacing a train. We encourage the industry to reflect on whether the quality of vehicles used on planned replacements is good enough and, where appropriate, consider using the word coach in textual descriptions and online journey planning data.

Passenger Focus

Passenger Needs and Priorities for Planned Railway Engineering Works

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providing intelligence

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1. Management Summary

1.1 Background to the research

Passenger Focus wished to refresh and update its understanding of rail passengers' attitudes, experiences and needs relating to planned engineering work in order to help ensure it is delivered in the way that best meets passengers' needs.

First, qualitative research was conducted to explore the issues facing passengers when planned engineering work takes place. This involved passengers using services to, from and via Oxford where significant works will take place in coming years. This was followed by a quantitative survey of over 2,000 rail passengers in different parts of the country to quantify the importance of the issues raised in the qualitative stage.

1.2 Summary of the research findings

Passengers do recognise the need for engineering works on the railways. However, they have both negative perceptions, and negative experiences of the way that planned engineering works are handled by the rail industry.

Key areas of managing engineering work to the optimal benefit of passengers are:

- The provision of effective information, to empower passengers to plan their journeys to minimise the impact of engineering work
- The provision and management of alternative transport arrangements
- The timing of the work

In passengers' opinions, all of these aspects of planned engineering work should be managed from the point of view that passengers should be treated as people, and paying customers, rather than simply as part of a logistical process.

Other key points are summarised below.

1.2.1 Passengers' needs from and experiences of information about engineering work

Information about engineering work is not consistently meeting passengers' needs in terms of availability or quality

In particular, communication during the period of engineering work needs improvement, as well as the ability of staff to deal with passengers' individual questions about how disruption affects them personally, i.e. in addition to relaying the facts.

A range of communication channels is needed in order to reach as many passengers as possible with the right information

In particular, passengers need more proactive communication from the rail industry, i.e. more emails and texts alerting them to the disruption, rather than having to find information for themselves.

Communication channels should be tailored to the types of passengers who will be affected by disruption on a case by case basis. So, for instance, when engineering work will affect commuters and weekday travellers, as a priority passengers need heavy information presence at stations in advance (posters and leaflets, etc.), as well as emails from the train company in advance. When work will affect infrequent or weekend travellers, the priorities for these passengers are information on rail websites in advance, and particularly at the point of booking, through whichever channel they use. For all types of passengers, it is also crucial that knowledgeable, helpful staff are available at stations throughout the duration of the works.

As a minimum, passengers need to know:

- ***when the disruption will happen and when it will end***
- ***how much time it will add to their journeys***
- ***what they will need to do differently (e.g. take a bus replacement or travel from a different station)***

Essential information about when the disruption will take place and its duration should be available via channels which are 'immediate' to passengers, such as posters and staff at stations, and emails or text messages in advance, rather than only via channels where passengers have to access information for themselves, such as websites. For more detailed information about bus replacements, diverted trains, the need to travel from another station and so on, it is appropriate to communicate via channels on which passengers need to spend a little more time, such as websites or in more detailed leaflets.

Many passengers would also appreciate an apology or acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused, which should appear in 'immediate' channels where no effort is required from passengers to access this.

Many also feel that information about the reasons and benefits of the engineering work should be made available for passengers to look up and read if they wish (e.g. online).

Provide information to passengers from three months in advance of work taking place, and throughout the work itself

The majority of passengers want to be given up to three months' notice about forthcoming engineering work. A brief outline of work should be communicated initially, followed by more detail if necessary. In addition it is vital that passengers are kept up to date on the progress and impact of the works throughout its duration.

Consider the tone and apparent source of information

When information is seen to come directly from the train company's management (rather than being 'left' to staff on the ground to communicate) it is more credible, and this also helps to foster a better sense that the train company genuinely cares about its customers.

1.2.2 Provision and management of alternative transport arrangements

As far as possible, keep passengers on trains rather than buses

But if, for a journey that would normally take one hour, a diverted train would add 40 minutes or more to the journey time than a replacement bus would, a bus may be preferable to passengers.

When buses are used they should be:

- Managed in such a way as to minimise additional journey time
 - Co-ordinated well with train times
 - In sufficient numbers to minimise waiting to board
 - Ideally, co-ordinated to be as direct as possible and stop only where necessary
- Easy to find and get on and off

- Clean and comfortable
- Driven by a patient, friendly driver

1.2.3 Timing of planned engineering works

There is a very clear consensus among passengers that, ideally, engineering work should take place overnight

If it cannot be achieved overnight, conducting work over successive weekends and bank holidays is the next most preferable option (rather than ‘big bang’ closure for a short period). This is because all types of passengers prioritise commuters’ interests over those of weekend travellers.

The research has indicated interesting findings about what time of year passengers think work should ideally take place

School summer holidays and half terms appear to be preferable times of year for planned engineering works to take place, while it appears that Easter and Christmas should be avoided. Although this gives an indication of passengers’ preferences, further research may be required to fully test this before drawing firm conclusions.

1.2.4 Attitudes towards paying for engineering works

Rail users feel that disruption to passengers should be minimised as far as possible, but they do recognise the trade-off with cost

A majority of respondents felt that it was important to minimise disruption to passengers, even if this had an impact on the cost of the work. However only a small proportion (14%) felt that train companies should do everything in their power – regardless of cost – to minimise disruption.

Many passengers feel that having to catch a replacement bus merits a discount – or at least a goodwill gesture

Because buses are perceived to be an inferior, and cheaper, way to travel, many passengers feel that they should pay a lower fare if they are required to travel by bus instead of train. In particular, there is evidence that passengers think season ticket holders should be given a discount on their next renewal, having had no choice but to pay for an inferior service.

Alternatively, some feel that a goodwill gesture like a free hot drink would indicate that the train company acknowledges the impact on passengers.

1.2.5 Additional needs of passengers with disabilities

On the whole, passengers with disabilities have the same concerns and needs as others when engineering works take place

But in addition, train companies should consider the needs of disabled people in relation to:

- access to, from and around stations and getting onto/off alternative transport
- way-finding at stations
- using appropriate information channels

2. Background and Research Objectives

Network Rail, which manages Britain's railway infrastructure, must carry out regular maintenance, renewal and improvement work to tracks, signals and other structures.

Although engineering work is necessary, inevitably it can cause disruption for passengers, including longer journey times, temporary timetables, suspended services and the need to use alternative transport such as replacement buses.

Passenger Focus has previously conducted research to understand passengers' attitudes, experiences and needs relating to engineering work, including unplanned and planned works. This research has been to refresh Passenger Focus's understanding, with the following objectives:

- Understand passengers' general views about and experiences of travelling during planned engineering works
- Establish views about the quality of replacement bus/coach services during engineering works
- Refresh understanding of passengers' tolerance of replacement bus/coach services, including trade-offs around a longer journey time if it means staying on a train
- Understand how passengers want to be informed about forthcoming works, including the language used, and when
- Understand passengers' views of when engineering works should take place, including the trade-off against total duration of the work
- Understand how views and needs differ among different types of passengers, including commuters, business and leisure passengers, and passengers with disabilities

The market research agency BDRC Continental undertook this research on behalf of Passenger Focus. More details about the research methodology are given in the next section, followed by the findings from the research.

3. Research Methodology

Passengers' needs and experiences of planned engineering work were researched in two stages:

1. Qualitative research to

- explore the issues passengers face when engineering work takes place
- understand how best to manage engineering work from a passenger perspective, including the timing of work, keeping passengers informed, and managing alternative transport
- understand the language used by passengers in relation to engineering works
- inform the development of a questionnaire for the second, quantitative stage

2. Quantitative survey to

- quantify passengers' needs and priorities in relation to planned engineering works
- quantify any differences in the needs of different types of passengers
- ensure the views of a large and broad-ranging sample of Britain's rail passengers are taken into account

3.1 Qualitative stage

This stage of the project was focussed around specific work which is proposed to take place in the Oxford area from 2015¹. This provided a tangible context in which passengers could think about the specific ways their journeys might be affected and therefore how best the work could be managed.

This research involved:

- Focus groups, to generate debate around the issues and encourage passengers to work together to trade off their preferences against practicalities, such as the timescales and costs of engineering work
- Depth interviews with individuals and pairs of passengers, to allow additional discussion in greater detail, especially where passengers have very specific needs, such as those with disabilities. Depth interviews also enabled the sample to reach a broader range of passengers making different types of journeys into/out of and through Oxford, including journeys of varying distances, and with different train companies.

These focus groups and depth interviews were split into the following groupings, to cover the different types of journeys being made into/out of and through Oxford:

4 Focus groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short distance commuters• Into Oxford from all branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students (leisure journeys)• To/from Oxford
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer distance commuters• To London from or via Oxford	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mini-group of 2 business and 2 leisure travellers• Between London and stations beyond Oxford

5 Depth interviews with pairs of passengers

¹ Specifically, respondents were told about proposals for:

- Replacement of signalling in the Oxford area, to reduce delays resulting from signal problems
- Introduction of electric overhead wires between Oxford and London Paddington, to enable the running of longer, newer trains on this line
- Upgrades and extensions to the line between Oxford and Bicester, to open up routes between Oxford and Bletchley / Milton Keynes, and Oxford and London Marylebone
- Upgrades to Oxford station itself

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 business travellers • Long distance • Through Oxford on Birmingham-Southampton line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 leisure travellers • Long distance • Through Oxford on Birmingham-Southampton line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 business travellers • Longer distance • To/from Oxford (rather than through) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 leisure travellers • Shorter distance • To/from Oxford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 business + 1 leisure traveller • Long distance • Through Oxford on London-West line 	

6 Depth interviews with individual passengers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure • Short distance • Starting/ending in Oxford 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Short distance • Starting/ending in Oxford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure • Longer distance • Through Oxford on London-West line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Longer distance • Through Oxford on London-West line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure • Longer distance • Through Oxford on Birmingham-Southampton line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Longer distance • Through Oxford on Birmingham-Southampton line

5 Depth interviews with passengers with a range of disabilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure / business traveller • With hearing and speech impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuter / leisure traveller • With severe dyslexia and a condition which causes confusion and anxiety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business traveller • With hearing impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuter • With visual impairment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuter / business traveller • With limited mobility (using a walking frame and sometimes a wheelchair) 	

All respondents travelled at least once a month by train, with the exception of commuters who travelled at least 3 times per week by train.

3.2 Quantitative stage

3.2.1 Quantitative sample

For the quantitative stage, the scope of the research was widened so as to understand the views of passengers across different parts of Britain.

In total, 2,164 rail passengers took part in this stage of the research, and surveys were conducted among passenger groupings as shown in the table below.

Quantitative research sample	
• Passengers making long distance journeys using East Coast services	722 interviews
• Passengers travelling around London and the South East using Southern or Greater Anglia services	448 interviews
• Passengers travelling in Lancashire, Cumbria and West/North Yorkshire using Northern, First TransPennine Express or East Midlands Trains services	402 interviews
• Passengers travelling into or through Oxford using First Great Western or CrossCountry services	592 interviews

This sample was designed to cover different types of journeys in different areas of Britain, but it does not cover rail journeys in every part of the country. Therefore results have not been weighted to improve representativeness, since in its totality the sample does not represent a 'universe' of passenger journeys from which to derive an appropriate weighting regime. However, the large sample size allows for robust overall findings, as well as the ability to analyse by certain passenger groups where views may vary: for instance, it is possible to look separately at the views of commuters, business and leisure travellers.

3.2.2 Quantitative survey methodology and questionnaire

The quantitative stage of the research was conducted using paper self-completion questionnaires which were distributed to passengers making relevant journeys, at railway stations and on trains along the routes described in the table above.

Questionnaires were distributed on all days of the week and throughout the day between 6.30am and 9pm. This distribution was planned in order that more peak-time travellers were included than off-peak travellers, reflecting passenger volume flow, and for the same reason to provide an approximate 80/20 split between weekday and weekend travel. As described

above, the results were not weighted to ensure precise accuracy on these time and day patterns, but the sample design ensured that the research included passengers who travel at different times (and who may therefore have different experiences, views and needs) in reasonable proportions.

3.2.3 Determining passengers' priorities

A key objective for this research was to establish passengers' priorities for the way engineering work is carried out, and to ask them to trade off the various advantages and disadvantages of carrying out work in certain ways.

For instance, conducting a piece of engineering work overnight will disrupt the fewest passengers, but is likely to take much longer than conducting the same work over a series of long weekends, which would disrupt weekend travellers. To understand which option would be preferable to the majority, the quantitative survey included 'stated preference' questions, in which passengers were required to trade off pairs of scenarios about planned engineering work (see Q15a-h in the accompanying questionnaire). These scenarios included information about when the engineering work would take place and for how long, and passengers were asked to pick their preferred scenario from each pair. This allowed us to establish, at the analysis stage, the relative appeal of each scenario versus the others.

A second stated preference question was also asked, to determine passenger preferences for undertaking engineering work over a bank holiday, versus an ordinary weekend (Q16 in the questionnaire), an issue raised in the qualitative phase.

Finally a third stated preference question (Q30) was asked to determine priorities between disrupting weekend travellers versus commuters, avoiding bus replacements and providing details about the reasons for engineering works.

3.2.4 Other topics covered in the quantitative survey

The quantitative questionnaire also covered the following topics:

- Journey behaviours
- Experience of planned engineering work
- Preferences for time of year that engineering work is conducted
- Preferences for alternative transport arrangements

- Tolerance levels for additional journey time as a result of rail diversions
- Tolerance levels for additional journey time on a train rather than a replacement bus
- Attitudes towards cost of engineering work, and trade-off between minimising cost vs. minimising disruption
- Information provided about planned engineering work: content and detail, timing and preferred channels
- Demographic information

4. Findings from the research

The qualitative and quantitative stages together provide a robust understanding of passengers' needs and experiences of planned engineering works. The findings from both stages are presented together in this section.

4.1 Overview: Passengers' experiences and attitudes towards engineering work

Passengers reluctantly recognise the need for engineering works on the railways, but it is seen negatively

In the qualitative research, passengers explained that the impact of engineering works can range from being a minor inconvenience, to seriously disruptive. The main ways in which planned engineering work affects passengers are:

- Lost time (in terms of literal, journey time)
- Wasted time (in business, through inability to work during journey)
- Stress & anxiety
- Financial (via lost time and lost business)
- Lost value (poorer service for same price)
- And for a small minority, sustained periods of disruption can go as far as making lifestyle unsustainable

Many have a perception that nobody is really accountable for the smooth-running of engineering works, and some even see it as an excuse for poor performance, cynically putting 'engineering work' in the same category as 'leaves on the line' or 'the wrong kind of snow'.

"Sometimes to be honest I don't believe there is always engineering work... I do think a lot of times it's an excuse... I never see anyone doing this work!"
(Business, Oxford-Paddington)

All of this indicated that there is a great deal of scope for the rail industry to manage perceptions via more positive communication around engineering work, for instance by explaining the benefits that will come from it (see more on this in section 4.2).

The quantitative survey also highlighted similar negative opinion of engineering work, based on experience. Passengers who had experienced planned engineering work in the last twelve months were asked how satisfied they were with the way it was handled (Q14 in the questionnaire provided in the appendix). Only 37% said that they were either very or fairly satisfied, and more than a third were dissatisfied. Therefore, while there could be merit in communicating more positive messages about rail engineering work, there is also a clear need to improve the way it is actually managed, to improve passengers' experiences.

The experiences passengers recounted in the research indicated that the key factors which make a difference between good and bad experiences of engineering works are:

- Providing quality information
- Being treated like a person/customer
- Adding minimum (wasted) time to the journey
- Minimising confusion/anxiety/hassle – the rail industry needs to make it as easy as possible for passengers to negotiate disruption resulting from planned engineering work.

These factors should be brought to bear through the key elements of managing engineering works which are:

- Information provision about the work
- Provision and management of alternative transport arrangements
- Timing of the work

Sections 4.2 – 4.4 detail passengers' needs in relation to these three main areas.

4.2 Passengers' needs from and experiences of information about engineering work

"It's all about communication, communication, communication"

(Business traveller, Pershore - Paddington)

Information about engineering works is not consistently up to standard

Although they find it disruptive, passengers do recognise the need for engineering work to take place on the railways. They do, however, demand information about the work so that they can plan around it to minimise the disruption that they experience.

In the focus groups and depth interviews, passengers repeatedly spoke about the need for information from train companies and the rail industry. However, while there were occasional good examples, many people expressed great frustration that information was not always provided, and passengers find this inexcusable.

Communication isn't always clear... it can be really poor. Nothing at all coming through can make people really frustrated

(Business & leisure, Oxford - Paddington)

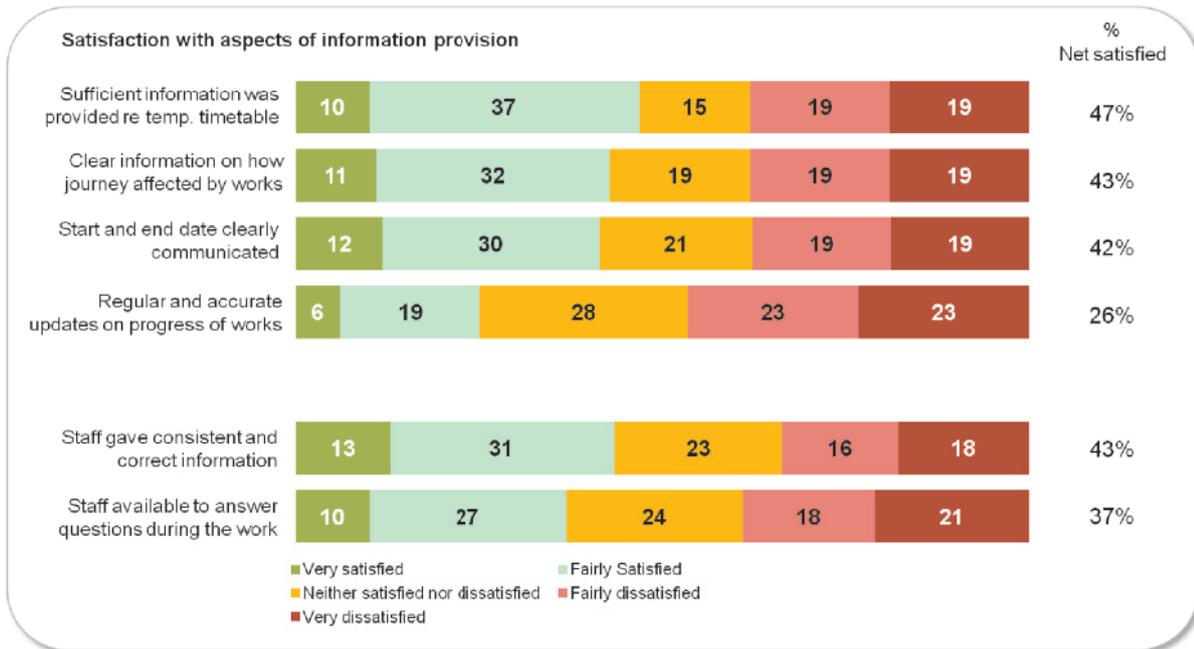
I... bought my ticket and then discovered that there was a bus. Well, if I'd known that before I could have ... just got the Oxford Tube. But by that point we had paid for our tickets

(Commuter, Oxford - Paddington)

Many also gave examples of information being incorrect, or where different information was given in one place to another. For instance, some passengers talked about seeing one message on a website such as National Rail Enquires, but then found that the train company was reporting something a little different, or that the situation was different when they came to make the journey. Others complained that information was sometimes available on a website, but members of staff at stations were not properly informed about the consequences of engineering works. Passengers cannot understand why these mis-matches in information exist.

These issues were also confirmed in the quantitative survey, where only 22% of people who had experienced planned engineering works in the last twelve months said that they received any information about such works. Satisfaction with the provision of information about engineering works was also shown to be rather low, as is shown in the graph below.

Figure 1



Q13. Thinking about your last experience of travelling during engineering works, how satisfied were you that...
 Base: all giving an opinion, sufficient information provided about temporary timetable (738), clear information provided about how your journey will be affected (715), start and end dates clearly communicated (692), regular and accurate updates provided on the progress of the works (650)

Less than half of those who have experienced engineering works feel that any of these aspects of information provision were satisfactory. Although in the context of disruption we might not expect to see high scores in response to these questions, the proportion of dissatisfied passengers (the red and pink bars above) seems high compared with the proportion of ‘neutral’ passengers (the yellow bars).

When we look at satisfaction among different passenger groups, the average across the six aspects of information provision is 36% very/fairly satisfied for commuters, 38% for business travellers and 45% for leisure travellers. Arguably, commuters (more frequent users) may be harder to please than other passengers; however, the majority of passengers (including those who do not commute) feel that commuters should be prioritised over other groups of rail users (see section 4.3).

In particular, communication during the period of engineering work itself appears to be a problem, along with the ability of staff to deal with passengers’ questions. In the qualitative phase, respondents indicated that when staff were unable to help with ‘tailored’ information, it was sometimes due to lack of knowledge and sometimes due to lack of time (or inclination).

Passengers in focus groups and depth interviews gave some specific examples of 'best practice' in providing information about engineering works and areas where improvements are needed:

- **Posters at stations** work best when they are
 - obvious (high up / eye-level), and repeated in several locations throughout station
 - clear and easy to read; colour coding of key pieces of information can help

- **Information online**
 - Needs to be prominent on train company websites, or as part of the journey details when booking via a website such as National Rail Enquiries or thetrainline.com
 - Some passengers mention problems with accuracy of information on websites

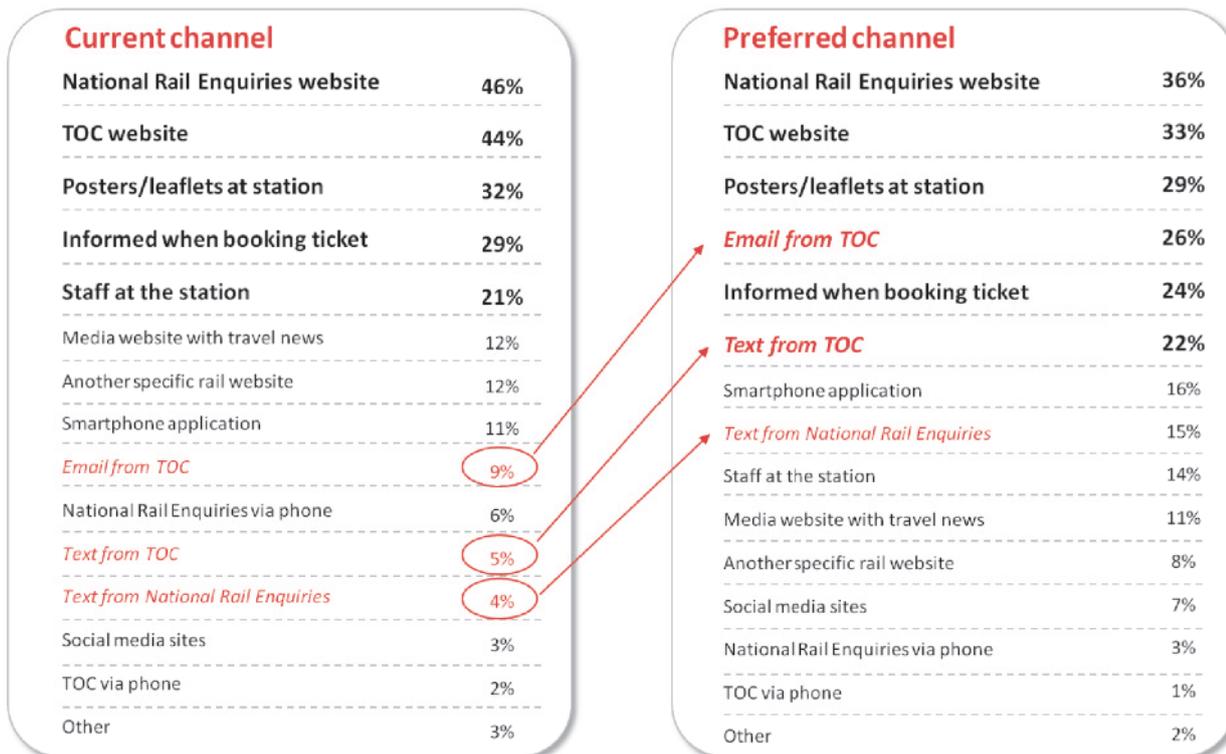
- **Staff at stations** (and on trains) are not always a reliable source of information; in order to be more effective they should be:
 - available (physically and in terms of attitude)
 - knowledgeable about the *whole* situation, not just the situation as it affects the train company they work for
 - sensitive to passengers' plight

- **Telephone call centres**, e.g. the National Rail Enquiries phone line
 - are important for a minority who do not have access to the internet (either at all or due to being mid-journey)
 - but several passengers commented that call centres seem to be based abroad, and that the telephone operators sometimes have difficulty with station names. The same problem arose for automated telephone services which use voice recognition

A range of communication channels is needed, in order to reach as many passengers as possible with the right information

The tables below show the channels that passengers currently use to find out about planned engineering works, and the channels that they would prefer to use.

Figure 2



Q25. How do you normally find out about changes to train times because engineering work is taking place? Base: all responding (2026)

Q26. What would be the best way(s) to let you know about engineering work that might affect your journey in the future? Base: all responding (1761)

Rail websites are an important source of information, as are posters or leaflets provided at stations (note that the above data do not take account of the *quality* of information, only that the channels are useful to passengers).

However, in future passengers would like to see more proactive communication from train companies and the rail industry, i.e. they would like to receive more emails and texts to alert them to the disruption, rather than having to find out information for themselves. The importance of proactive communication from train companies is confirmed by the finding that around half of passengers are likely to check for disruptions before they travel on some journeys, but half are very unlikely ever to do so (Q27 in the quantitative survey). Furthermore, the qualitative research showed that, even among those who feel that passengers should take some responsibility for checking their journey, many still feel that they need to be alerted or reminded to check in the first place, and to be given some guidance about where to look.

There are some key variations in channel preferences among different groups of passengers:

- **Rail websites** are one of the most favoured channels for all and are relevant to all age groups, but are particularly important for business travellers
 - However, accessing online information via Smartphone applications (apps) is currently much more niche: 25% of 16-34s like this source, but few do so in older age groups
- **Information at stations** is the most preferred communication method for commuters, but is less likely to be seen by (less regular) business and leisure travellers
- **Emails and/or texts from the train company/other rail organisation** are useful to many, but again are particularly useful to regular travellers like commuters
 - More specifically, emails are more universal than texts, and in particular texts are less likely to be seen by older (65+) passengers
- **Provision of information at the point of booking** is very important for leisure passengers, particularly older passengers
 - This means, for example, that information about planned engineering works should be prominent when booking online. However, it is also crucial that ticket office staff relay information clearly: data from the National Passenger Survey show that 45% of over-65s purchase tickets at the station, mostly on the day of travel, compared with a national average of 33%²
- **The ability to speak to staff at the station** is equally relevant to all types of passengers
 - Staff are important because even if information is given in advance, some passengers will always need confirmation and reassurance, or will have specific questions about how disruption affects them individually

These findings indicate that communication channels should be tailored with consideration for the types of passengers who will be affected by disruption on a case by case basis.

Specifically, when engineering work will affect commuters and weekday travellers, passengers need:

- Heavy information presence at stations in advance (posters and leaflets etc.)
- Emails/texts from the train company in advance
- Consistent information on the train company and other rail websites in advance

² *National Passenger Survey, Spring & Autumn 2011*

- Available, knowledgeable staff throughout the period of the works

And when work will affect infrequent or weekend travellers, these passengers need:

- Consistent information on the train company and other rail websites in advance
- Clear and prominent information at point of booking (all channels)
- Available, knowledgeable staff throughout the period of the works
- Information at stations in advance, e.g. posters, although the other information channels listed here are priorities

Passengers have specific needs for information content, and different communication channels are appropriate for different content

In the qualitative research, passengers described what they needed to know when engineering works are planned. The information passengers require falls into two categories, and different communication channels should be considered for different pieces of information:

- **Essential information**
 - When the disruption will happen (dates, and times of day)
 - When it will end
 - How much time it will add to passengers' journeys
 - How the journey will be affected, e.g. whether passengers will need to change trains, take a bus replacement, or return earlier than normal, etc., and what alternatives are available in order to make an informed choice (this is particularly important for disabled passengers)
 - An acknowledgement for the inconvenience caused to passengers

As essentials, these pieces of information should be readily available via the channels where passengers need to make little effort to encounter the information, such as via posters and staff at stations, and emails or text messages in advance. The exception is the more variable information which is dependent on an individual's journey – i.e. what the alternatives are, or needing to travel by bus or from a different station. This is essential information but can be delivered via channels where passengers consciously access information for themselves such as online, or by reading more detailed leaflets. If more detailed information can be accessed, passengers need to be informed that it is available, and where to find it.

- **‘Nice to have’**
 - The benefit that the engineering work will bring to passengers in the long term:

In the qualitative research, knowing the *reasons* for engineering works rarely emerged spontaneously as important (perhaps because passengers are not often given reasons for work currently and so rarely think in this way). However when prompted with this idea, most qualitative respondents felt that information about the reasons and benefits of engineering work should be made available for passengers to look up and read if they wished (e.g. online). This is for a number of reasons:

- Knowing the reasons for disruption could deflect cynicism that ‘engineering work’ is sometimes an excuse for poor service – explaining the intended benefits of the work could make the train company / rail industry seem more credible
- It could help improve perceptions of value for money – many passengers feel that rail fares are too high, and seeing where the money is being invested could make some people feel more comfortable about prices
- It could enable train companies to put across a positive, rather than a negative message, when engineering work needs to take place. A number of passengers in the research cited Transport for London’s “Tube Upgrade Plan” as a way of describing works in more positive – you will benefit from it – terms.

If they made it sound more positive: ‘we’re doing this engineering work because we’re trying to speed up your journey’ – if they make it [sound like] a good thing...it would diffuse the situation
(Business, Oxford – Paddington)

However most passengers are not interested in vast detail about *what* work is happening, but its benefit to them can be of interest (e.g. that safety is being improved). This is the case for all types of travellers, although a small number of commuters – the most frequent travellers – expressed some interest in slightly more detail about the work itself.

Provide information to passengers from three months in advance of work taking place, and throughout the work itself

Most rail passengers (76%) feel that between one and three months’ notice of engineering works is appropriate. In order to reach as many passengers as possible, we suggest that as a general guideline, all work should be announced three months in advance. Giving the full three

months' notice is particularly important for work that will take place at weekends or over holiday periods, as this will affect infrequent travellers who need a longer window of opportunity to encounter the information and may need it sooner in order to buy tickets. (Giving more than three months notice is interesting to a minority, but most feel that this is too soon: information will be forgotten, and the rail industry risks having too many negative messages in circulation at once.)

In addition, it is important that information about the impact of the work, and about its progress, is continually provided throughout the duration of the work.

Consider the tone and apparent source of information

A key area of complaint about engineering works is that passengers do not always feel that they are treated like people, and that train companies sometimes appear to forget that they are paying customers. A similar sentiment was apparent in other research undertaken by Passenger Focus among passengers affected by unplanned disruption³, where passengers expressed frustration at being treated as a 'logistical problem' rather than as people.

Passengers therefore wish to receive jargon-free information, which acknowledges the inconvenience caused. Similarly, it is important that staff who interact with passengers are sensitive to the inconvenience and problems that they face, and act and speak accordingly.

Some respondents in the qualitative research also commented that staff working 'on the ground' are not always given all of the information and training that they need, or that they are under-resourced to help passengers effectively. This is frustrating to passengers (and, they suspect, to staff themselves), and can also mean that the train company's management come across as uncaring, towards both their staff and their customers:

Staff... take a great deal of abuse from passengers...who are disrupted. [train companies are] this faceless entity... and they sit there in their ivory tower, disrupt everyone's lives and let someone else take the flack for it...
(Business traveller, Pershore – Paddington)

³ *Passenger Focus' report, Delays and disruption: Rail passengers have their say (December 2010), is available at <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/default.asp?go=1&keywords=disruption&x=34&y=18>*

When information is seen to come directly from those ‘in control’ it is more credible, but also helps to foster a better sense that the train company or the rail industry cares about and wants to understand its customers. A very positive example of this, as cited by a number of passengers, was the work undertaken at Reading station over the 2011 Christmas period. Passengers explained that managers had been prominent at Reading and Oxford stations, giving out information and explaining the impact of the upcoming works to passengers on an individual basis. This led to comments such as:

Very well advertised... I'm not sure how much better it could have been communicated really
(Business & leisure traveller, Oxford – Paddington)

4.3 Provision and management of alternative transport arrangements

Engineering work causes problems for passengers because it results in wasted time and a lot of hassle, confusion and inconvenience. When train services cannot run as normal, the alternatives provided can be managed in such a way as to keep these problems to a minimum, or if handled poorly can exacerbate them. The priorities for managing alternative transport, from a passenger point of view, are described in this section.

As far as possible, keep passengers on trains rather than buses

As part of the quantitative survey, rail passengers were asked to pick their preference from pairs of the following four aspects of managing planned engineering works (see Q30 in the questionnaire, in the appendix):

- Keep passengers on trains, not buses
- Do not disrupt commuters
- Do not disrupt weekend travellers
- Inform passengers of the benefits of works

Analysis of passengers’ responses provided a preference score for each of the areas, with the most preferred receiving a score of 100, and the others receiving a score relative to this. The preference scores for each of these four areas are given in the table below:

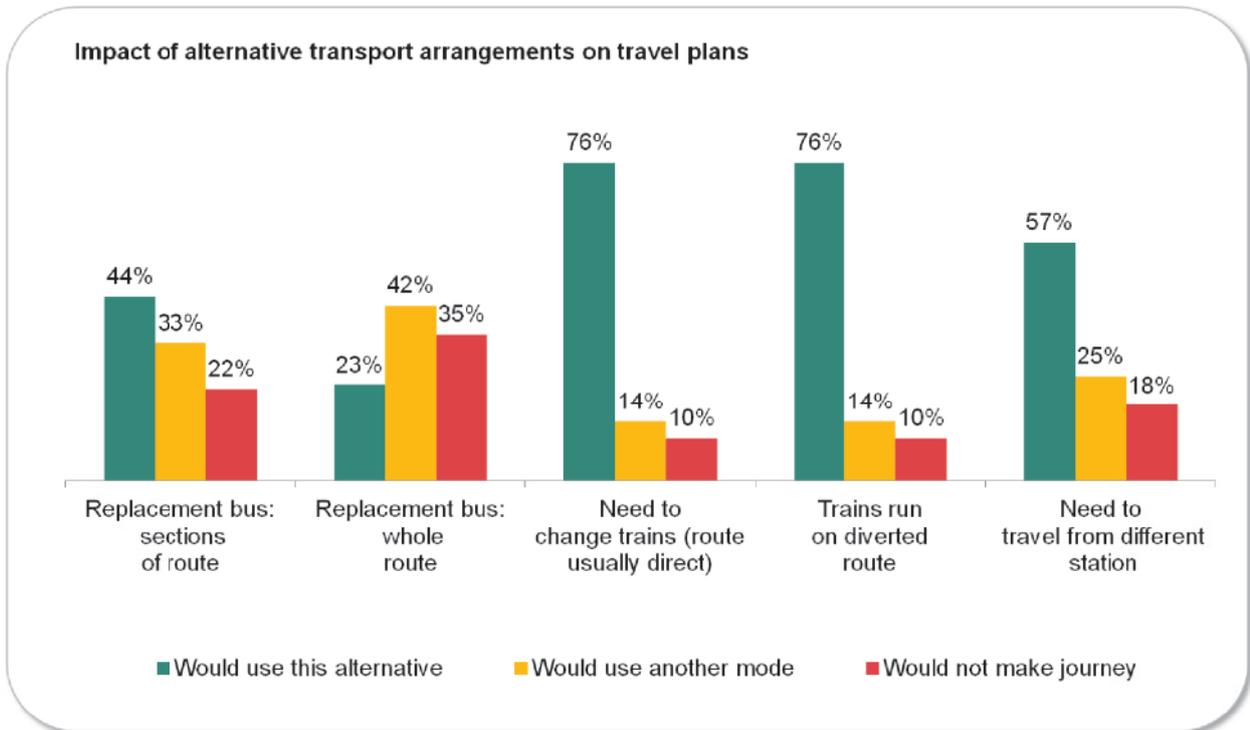
Figure 3: Priorities for aspects of handling engineering works: Stated Preference scores

	Total	Commuters	Business	Leisure
Keep passengers on trains, not buses	100	65	100	100
Do not disrupt commuters	89	100	94	60
Inform passengers of the benefits of works	35	25	30	34
Do not disrupt weekend travellers	31	15	23	39

These results indicate that avoiding replacement bus services is the most important of these four aspects of managing planned engineering works. And although we have seen that many people are interested in being informed about the reasons and benefits of the work, avoiding replacement buses is three times as important as this. Further, although commuters would rather see any measures implemented to minimise disruption to themselves, avoiding bus travel is the second most important thing to them, and they would rather that weekend travellers were disrupted, than them having to use bus replacement services.

Taking this further, the graph below (Figure 4) shows how passengers would act, according to different alternative transport scenarios: from accepting the alternative on offer, finding their own way, or avoiding the journey altogether. Echoing the Stated Preference results above, these data also clearly indicate that keeping passengers on trains is felt to be the least disruptive of the options. When a bus replacement is offered, the immediate reaction of most passengers is to avoid it (especially business travellers, many of whom would find an alternative mode), and many would not make the journey at all.

Figure 4



Q20. If there were engineering works in the future, how would each of the following affect your travel plans?
 Base: all (1918 / 1863 / 1862 / 1878 / 1855)

Needing to travel from a different station is favoured less than diverted or interchange rail journeys from the normal station, but just over half do find this acceptable. This does vary for different passenger groups, however. Business travellers are least likely to find travelling from a different station problematic, with 66% saying they will use this option; but in contrast 30% of travellers aged 65+ will find this very disruptive and are likely to avoid making the journey altogether. Where possible, these variations should be taken into account when planning alternatives, in relation to the times of day and days of week on which engineering work will take place.

The need to make additional changes between trains is more of a concern for older (65+) and disabled passengers, who are more likely than others to cancel or postpone their journeys altogether in this scenario. Perhaps linked to this, leisure passengers are a little less likely than others to make the journey if interchange is necessary (12% will avoid it). Interchanges between trains still remain preferable to bus replacements for these groups, however.

Those travelling with children are much more likely to avoid journeys affected by any of the options in Figure 4, than people travelling alone or with other adults.

Additionally, while many would use the alternatives on offer, they may only do so reluctantly – this is particularly the case for commuters who may have little choice.

The reasons that replacement bus services are generally perceived negatively by rail passengers are because they:

- Add time to the journey:
 - travelling to individual stations by road often involves an indirect route; buses are unable to travel far on a motorway without turning off to stop at a station, for example
 - buses generally travel more slowly than trains
 - because buses can encounter traffic congestion, timings are unpredictable
 - because buses do not have the capacity of trains, not all passengers may fit onto the first bus and some may need to wait for subsequent services
 - for business travellers in particular, bus travel can mean an inability to work during the journey, thereby losing productive time

- Create a weak point in the journey, with the potential for:
 - missing the replacement bus service or taking the wrong bus
 - lost luggage
 - personal security fears, for example when waiting for a bus in an isolated station car park, especially when travelling late in the evening

- Cause general hassle and inconvenience:
 - buses are not perceived to be as comfortable as trains
 - passengers worry about or have experienced difficulty in finding the right bus, especially if it is not immediately outside the station
 - some find it difficult to get onto/off the bus itself, or make their way from the train to the bus – especially those with heavy luggage, children, or some forms of disability
 - some passengers complain about a lack of integration between trains and replacement buses: buses were reported to not always meet passengers immediately from a train, adding extra time to the journey and discomfort if passengers need to wait, especially in poor weather

Of those who had experienced planned rail engineering works in the last twelve months, 55% had used a replacement bus, and this was the most common alternative provided.

Despite some very negative perceptions, passengers who have experienced rail replacement bus/coach services tend to be more positive about the vehicles themselves. The buses and coaches are described as generally clean and well-kept, and drivers are often polite and understanding. This suggests that the rail industry should consider how it communicates to passengers that they will need to use a bus for all or part of their journey, in order to manage perceptions and minimise the number who might avoid the journey completely.

Because the qualitative research was focussed around proposed engineering work in the Oxford area, many respondents were aware of the coach services which operate between Oxford and London (Oxford Tube and Oxford Express), as potential alternatives to the train. It is worth noting that rail passengers had very different perceptions of rail replacement buses, and the type of coach provided for these Oxford-London services: rail replacement buses have a poor reputation, while the Oxford Tube and Oxford Express services are generally viewed very positively. Key reasons for this are that the Oxford-London coach services are known or perceived to be frequent, relatively direct, and modern and 'professional-looking'.

This research also yielded some key factors which can make the difference between a good and a poor replacement bus service. Some of this is based on the differences between rail passengers' perceptions of 'railway buses' and more positive examples including the Oxford Tube/Oxford Express, and some is based on passengers' direct comments and requests:

- Manage replacement buses in such a way as to minimise the impact on journey time:
 - Time buses better to work with trains, with frequent departures from stations
 - Ideally, passengers should be grouped onto buses/coaches going to specific destinations along the route so that road journeys can be more direct with fewer stops at individual stations
 - When bus/coach journeys will be very long, alternatives should be offered, e.g. taxi shares to the farthest destinations

- Replacement buses/coaches should be easy to access and easy to find, with:
 - Close proximity to the station exit
 - Clear and comprehensive information to find the right bus quickly
 - Approachable and knowledgeable staff on hand to help

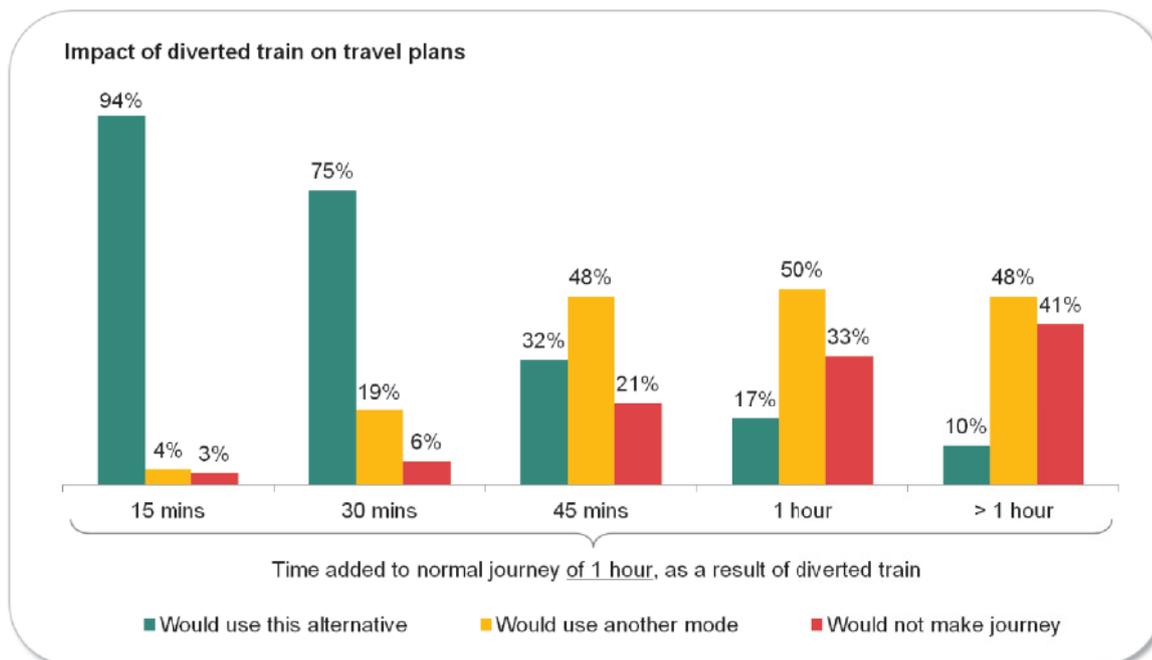
- The vehicles themselves should be clean and comfortable

- Note that rail passengers often feel more positive about coaches than buses: coaches are perceived to be better-maintained, more robust, and seem more 'official' and therefore more reassuring
- Drivers should be friendly, helpful, and understanding towards passengers' situations
- Ideally, passengers would appreciate a rebate or discount (see section 4.5 for more detail on discounted travel during engineering work), or at least a goodwill gesture such as a free hot drink.
- Some passengers also suggest that rail companies should work more closely with local bus networks so that information about rail disruption is also available through bus companies, and so that bus companies can provide additional services where relevant

While passengers would generally prefer to stay on trains rather than buses, there are tipping points at which diverted trains themselves become less acceptable

We have seen above that most passengers would prefer to stay on a diverted train, than be moved onto a replacement bus/coach service. However, the quantitative survey also looked at passengers' tolerance levels for journeys involving a diverted train. The graph on the next page shows how passengers would act when a diverted train adds different lengths of time to a journey that normally takes one hour.

Figure 5



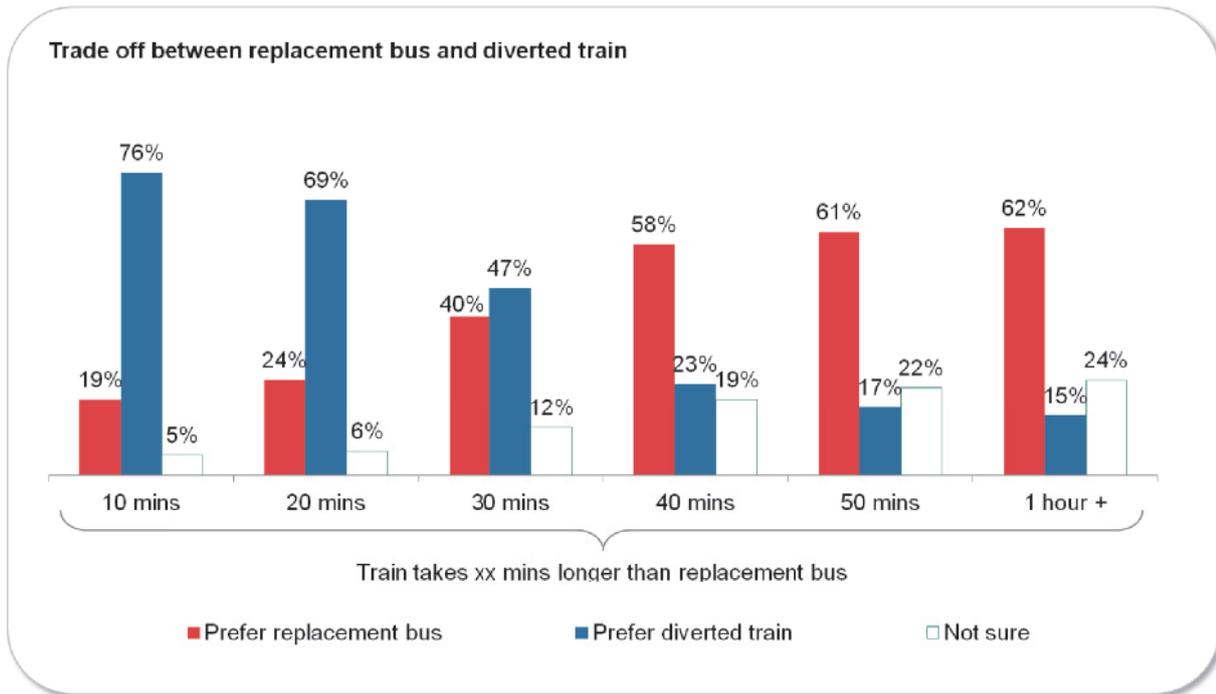
Q21. Assume you make a train journey which normally takes 1 hour. Today engineering works mean you have to take a diverted train. Please indicate which actions you would take for each of... Base: all (2013 / 1933 / 1929 / 1935 / 1935)

Up to a 30 minute extension to a one hour journey is reasonably acceptable as a result of a diverted train, but beyond this more passengers would seek alternatives or avoid the journey, than would use the diverted train provided.

Interestingly, passengers for all journey purposes are equally resistant to extensions over 30 minutes on a one hour journey. While business travellers are most likely to make the journey by other means, others may choose not to travel. Disabled passengers and those with bulky luggage are most likely to use the diverted train even as journey time increases, and weekend travellers are marginally more tolerant of an extended journey on a diverted train.

The next graph takes this a step further again, and looks at the tipping points at which a bus replacement becomes more appealing than a diverted train.

Figure 6



Q22. Assume you make a train journey which normally takes 1 hour. Today engineering works mean you can take a diverted train or a replacement bus. Please indicate for each option, whether you would prefer...

Base: all (2009 / 1933 / 1927 / 1912 / 1911 / 1897)

Again, most passengers prefer to remain on a train, unless a bus is over 30 minutes faster. If a bus is 30 minutes faster than the train, leisure and particularly business passengers would still prefer the train, but at this point commuters start to prefer a bus. Replacement buses become decisively more attractive to all once they are 40 minutes or more faster than a train – particularly so among commuters.

Disabled passengers are more reluctant than others to take a bus, having a higher tolerance for the time added by a diverted train. Passengers over 65 are most reluctant to take a bus, even when trains take longer – but rather than favouring the train, they appear less sure about travelling at all as journey time increases.

4.4 Timing of engineering works

We have already seen that all types of passenger prioritise commuters over weekend travellers (Figure 3, section 4.3), and this sentiment bears through to passengers' preferences for when planned engineering works should take place.

First and foremost passengers wish to avoid disruption to all rail users, and so there is a very clear consensus that, ideally, engineering work should take place overnight. This is illustrated in the table below which shows the stated preference scores for five different timings scenarios.

Figure 7: Passengers' priorities for timing of engineering works: Stated Preference scores

		Total	Commuters	Business	Leisure
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work overnight only • Trains run normally 5.30am – 10pm • Duration = 4 months 	100	100	100	100
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work overnight only • Trains run normally 5.30am – midnight • Duration = 5 months 	75	74	76	77
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work at weekends only • Trains run normally Mon-Fri • Duration = 1 year 	22	23	23	19
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Railway closed entirely for 6 weeks • Duration = 6 weeks 	21	14	16	30
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Railway closed entirely for 3 x blocks of 3 weeks • Duration = 3.5 months 	18	13	15	24

Passengers in the qualitative research felt that, even though some people do travel by train late at night, most people who do so have a choice, and could travel earlier in the evening for a period of time. As such there is a slight preference for overnight work to be completed sooner (scenario B above), even if it impacts on users of very late night trains. Similarly, when qualitative respondents were given the option of losing the first train of the day versus losing the last train of the day in order to create more time for overnight work, most preferred to lose the last train of the day (assuming trains usually run fairly late into the evening), because it is easier to plan around.

It should be noted that some passengers expressed concern that overnight works would overrun, and that if this happens, overnight work would become the least preferable option because it can seriously and unexpectedly disrupt early morning commuters. It is therefore crucial that services resume as advertised. If there *is* any chance of overrunning, commuters should be warned before they leave home.

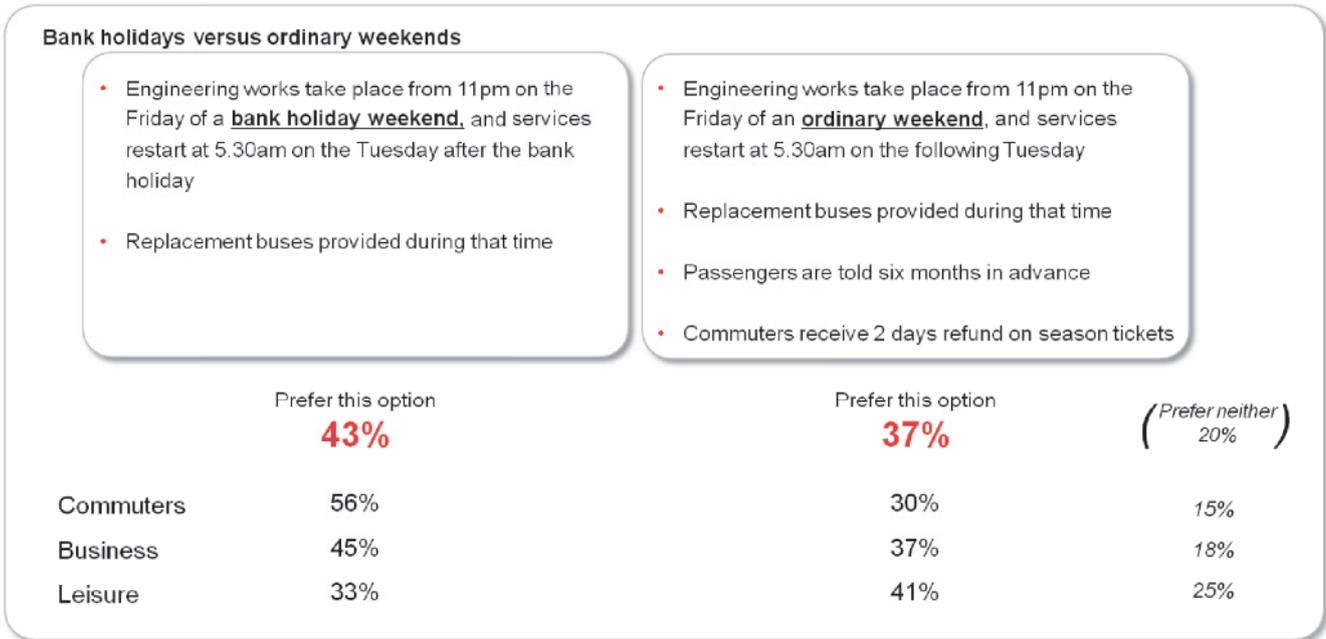
If planned engineering work cannot be achieved overnight (for instance due to cost or logistics), conducting work over successive weekends is the next most preferable option for commuters and business travellers rather than complete, if shorter term, closure.

While weekend work over an extended period is the least popular of the five options in Figure 7 for leisure passengers, there is further evidence that this group is willing to compromise to benefit more frequent users. Passengers do understand that what may be convenient for them would not be convenient for others:

*Commuters are the most important... they make more money out of them and they should be given more reverence than someone like me who goes once or twice a month on my £8 ticket
(Leisure, Oxford – Paddington)*

Passengers were also asked whether they would prefer engineering work to take place on bank holiday weekends, or over the same period of time during an ordinary weekend, i.e. including a normal working day. This was asked as part of the quantitative survey because the qualitative research showed that many leisure travellers find it frustrating when rail services are unavailable at holiday times, and we wanted to quantify the importance of this. The quantitative research established that, for the majority of passengers, there is still a preference for works to take place over holiday weekends rather than disrupt those who use the railway to get to work (see Figure 8 below). Commuters and business travellers prefer the bank holiday option, and although there is a slight preference among leisure passengers for the ordinary weekend option, a large proportion of this group (33%) would prefer works to happen over a bank holiday, and tellingly, a quarter are undecided.

Figure 8



Q16. Engineering works is often carried out at Christmas, Easter and over other bank holiday periods. This minimises impact on daily commuters and business passengers, but disrupts services for leisure passengers over key holiday periods. In terms of your travel needs, which of the following options do you prefer?

Base: all (2005)

Because rail passengers (particularly less frequent travellers) do have sympathy for others, there may be merit in explaining the rationale for conducting work at weekends / bank holidays when this is the best option, so that those affected can see that the train company is trying to take care of as many of its customers as possible.

Interesting findings about what time of year passengers think work should ideally take place

School summer holidays and half terms appear to be preferable times for planned engineering works, although 43% were unsure what is best. Out of all the seasons, summer was preferred (31% compared with less than 20% for any other season).

Summer is preferred for two key reasons:

- Better weather conditions and longer daylight hours;
 - disruption is more bearable, particularly if there is a need to change between modes and wait for a bus or connecting train
 - likely greater productivity at the works site itself

- More passengers have atypical travel behaviour:
 - Many commuters will take leave at some point during the summer, therefore reducing travel demand
 - There is more leisure travel meaning that more people making such journeys could be affected, but these journeys tend to be discretionary and passengers will have greater flexibility to plan around the works
 - There is not perceived to be a 'mass exodus' in the summer, as there is before Christmas or Easter

Although these findings give us some indication of passenger preferences, further research is required to fully understand the reasons behind this, e.g. whether there are certain days during the Christmas holiday period when it would be acceptable to undertake engineering work, whether concentrating work in the summer be acceptable to passengers with children, and to check whether it is true that there is no 'mass exodus' in the summer, as many perceive.

4.5 Attitudes towards paying for engineering works

Passengers are rational about the cost of rail engineering works

Rail users feel that disruption to passengers should be minimised as far as possible, but they do not have complete disregard for cost. The table below shows the degree to which passengers trade off disruption versus the cost of work:

Figure 9: Preference for scenarios which trade off cost of works against passenger disruption

	% preferring this option
Cost should be kept to minimum, even if there is considerable disruption to passengers	7%
Minimising cost is important, even if it results in some disruption to passengers	20%
Minimising disruption is important, even if cost increases a little	51%
Disruption should be kept to minimum, even if cost increases considerably	14%

Many passengers feel that having to catch a replacement bus merits a discount – or at least a goodwill gesture

In the qualitative research, many passengers spontaneously expressed a desire for a discounted rail fare when engineering work requires them to use a replacement bus service. This feeling was confirmed by the quantitative survey, in which 85% of passengers felt that it is appropriate to give a discount for a journey that involves a replacement bus. Apart from the inconvenience in itself, passengers' arguments for this are:

- A bus is perceived to be an inferior way to travel – rail users begrudge paying the same for a lower level of service
- This is compounded by the fact that bus fares are often cheaper than rail fares – some respondents commented that if required to use a bus replacement, they would rather travel on a scheduled bus service (if there was one for their journey) and benefit from a cheaper ticket

You're paying the price for a train but you're travelling by bus; you ought to get charged bus prices

(Student, Oxford – various)

- A small number of people felt that a discounted fare would provide an incentive for train companies to carry out engineering work in the least disruptive way

Some passengers suggested that a goodwill gesture, such as a free hot drink would be acceptable and would indicate that the train company / rail industry acknowledges the impact on passengers.

There is also evidence that passengers think season ticket holders should be given a rebate or discount on their next renewal, having had no choice but to pay for an inferior service.

4.6 Additional needs of passengers with disabilities

On the whole, passengers with disabilities have the same concerns and needs as others when engineering works take place

But in addition, train companies should consider the needs of disabled people in relation to:

- ***access to, from and around stations and getting onto/off alternative transport***
- ***way-finding at stations***
- ***information channels***

Any change of train or mode can be difficult for people who have problems with mobility, although a change to another train is preferable to taking a replacement bus. In addition to the potential that the route from train to bus will not be accessible, people with mobility problems also fear that they will not be given the necessary time to make the transfer. Some fear that even if they get there before the bus leaves, all the seats will be taken by the time they get there. It is crucial that staff are available to help disabled passengers through these situations, whether they booked in advance or not.

For people with other disabilities including visual, hearing, or learning difficulties, finding your way around stations at times of disruption can be problematic, even frightening if the atmosphere is more 'chaotic' than usual. This is either because they need to use unfamiliar stations, because passenger flows and/or signage are altered at their usual station, or because they need to find platforms or bus stands that they do not usually use. Those managing the disruption should ensure that, wherever possible, both audio and visual information is provided, and that it is clear and easy to see/hear. Again, staff are a crucial element and they need to proactively look out for passengers needing help.

Earlier we highlighted that information about engineering works should be provided to passengers via a range of channels, and this is particularly true in catering for the needs of people with disabilities. Both audio and visual information is needed, and it is important that the essential information is clear and concise, with passengers directed to other sources for further details if necessary.

5. Appendix: Questionnaire used in quantitative survey

2101 002



DDMMYY
March 2012

Passenger Priorities Survey

Passenger Focus is undertaking a survey to understand passenger priorities for planned engineering work

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this short survey which is being carried out by BDRC Continental on behalf of Passenger Focus. Passenger Focus is the independent watchdog protecting the interests of passengers.

We are interested in your views on planned engineering work on the railways. All the information you provide will be anonymous and combined with those of other passengers taking part in this research. The research findings will be used to help Passenger Focus ensure that the views of passengers are heard by the rail companies.

The findings of this research will be published in due course on the Passenger Focus website at www.passengerfocus.org.uk

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Any answer you give will be treated in confidence, in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society (MRS).

The interviewer will collect this questionnaire from you when you have completed it, or you can use the post-paid envelope provided to send it back to us. If you have any queries the interviewer will be pleased to help.

TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS PLEASE TICK THE BOX NEXT TO THE ANSWER(S) THAT APPLY OR WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. UNLESS THE QUESTION ALLOWS YOU TO TICK SEVERAL ANSWERS, PLEASE JUST TICK ONE BOX PER QUESTION.

1 YOUR JOURNEY TODAY

1 Please fill in the scheduled departure time of the train you caught after being given this questionnaire.

Use the 24 hr. clock e.g. 17:25

 :

2 Please write in the name of the station where you boarded **this** train :

3 Please write in the name of the station you are travelling to on **this** train :

4 Does any part of your journey you are making today require you to change train?
(Please write the number of changes you are making, if no changes please write zero)

5 If you need to change trains please write in the name of your final destination station :



Ref: London Victoria

1

- 6** What is the main purpose of your journey today?
- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Daily commuting to/from work..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Shopping trip..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less regular commuting to/from work..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Visiting friends or relatives..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Daily commuting for education
(to/from college/school/university)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sport/entertainment..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less regular commuting for education
(to/from college/school/university)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | A day out..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| On company business
(or own business if self-employed)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Travel to/from holiday..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | On personal business
(job interview, dentist etc.)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Other..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 7** What type of ticket did you use for your journey today?
(Please note the type of ticket is often shown at the top left of your ticket)
- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Anytime (Single/Return)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Weekly or monthly Season Ticket
(including Travelcard/Travelcard on Oyster)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Anytime Day (Single/Return)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Annual season ticket..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Off-Peak/Super Off-Peak (Single/Return)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Holiday package/ tour ticket..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Off-Peak Day/Super Off-Peak Day
(Single/Return)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Special promotion ticket..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Advance..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rail Staff Pass/Privilege Ticket/
Police Concession..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day Travelcard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Freedom pass..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Oyster Pay As You Go..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 8** Today are you travelling: **(Please tick all that apply)**
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Alone..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | With heavy luggage..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| With children aged 0-4..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | With a bicycle..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| With children aged 5-15..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | With a pushchair..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| With other adults 16+..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | None of these..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 9** If you were not using the train to make this journey today, how else would you make the journey?
- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| By bus..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | On foot..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By car..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | By coach..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By motorcycle..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | On other public transport
(e.g. tram, light railway)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By taxi..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| I would only make this journey by train..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

- 10** How many times have you made this journey in the last two weeks? **(Please note that if you make a return journey that would count as two journeys)**
- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| This is my first journey..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11-20..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2-5..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21+..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6-10..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

2 PLANNED ENGINEERING WORKS

- 11** In the last 12 months, have you made a train journey which was affected by planned engineering works?
- Yes..... **Go to Q12** No..... **Go to Q15**
 Don't know..... **Go to Q15**

IF YOU HAVE MADE A TRAIN JOURNEY WHICH WAS AFFECTED BY PLANNED ENGINEERING WORKS

- 12** How was your journey affected? **(Please tick all that apply)**
- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| I had to use a bus replacement service for part of the journey..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I had to use a bus replacement service for all of the journey..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The train was diverted making my journey time longer..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I had to change trains on a journey where it is not normally needed..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Train/buses were not stopping at my usual station, so I had to make my own way to a
different station to start my journey..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I travelled by train, but the timetable was different from normal..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please write in) :

13 Thinking about your last experience of travelling during engineering works, how satisfied were you that...	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither /nor	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/no opinion
Sufficient information was provided about the temporary timetable in place.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The start and end date of the engineering works were clearly communicated.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Clear information was provided on how your journey will be affected by the works.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The alternative transport arrangements were adequate (e.g. bus replacement service/taxis etc.).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Station and train staff gave consistent and correct information to passengers about the work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Regular and accurate updates were provided to passengers on the progress of the work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Staff were available to answer questions from passengers during the work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

14 Overall, how satisfied were you with the way this engineering work was handled?

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"/>

Tracks, signalling and stations are continuously being maintained, and work also takes place to upgrade and renew parts of the rail network. This may involve engineering works on part of the line you are travelling on today, which could mean it is not possible to run the normal timetable at all times.

In the next few questions we have shown different ways in which this work could be carried out. These are shown in pairs and, whilst neither may be desirable, we would like you to tick which one of each pair you prefer. In total there are 8 pairs, some of them differ only slightly from each other. This is intentional, and we really value your help in taking time to choose between each pair of options.

15a In terms of your travel needs which of the following options do you prefer? *(Please tick one option only)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering work takes place at weekends only and trains would be replaced with buses for part of the journey • But, there is no disruption to train services Mondays to Fridays • Doing it this way, the work would take 1 year to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The railway is closed entirely on part of the route for six weeks for engineering work, with trains replaced with buses for that period • Doing it this way, the work would take 6 weeks to complete 	<input type="checkbox"/> No preference
Preferred option <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15b And which of these would you prefer? *(Please tick one option only)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering work takes place at weekends only and trains would be replaced with buses for part of the journey • But, there is no disruption to train services Mondays to Fridays • Doing it this way, the work would take 1 year to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering work takes place overnight between 10pm and 5.30am every day, with late night trains replaced with buses for part of the journey • But, trains run as normal between 5.30am and 10pm every day • Doing it this way, the work would take 4 months to complete 	<input type="checkbox"/> No preference
Preferred option <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15c And which of these would you prefer? (Please tick one option only)

- The railway is closed entirely on part of the route for three weeks for engineering work. It then opens for two months, followed by another closure of three weeks. Buses would replace trains in the closure periods.
- Doing it this way, the work would take **3½ months** to complete.

- The railway is closed entirely on part of the route for six weeks for engineering work, with trains replaced with buses for that period
- Doing it this way, the work would take **6 weeks** to complete

No preference

Preferred option

15d And which of these would you prefer? (Please tick one option only)

- The railway is closed entirely on part of the route for six weeks for engineering work, with trains replaced with buses for that period
- Doing it this way, the work would take **6 weeks** to complete

- Engineering work takes place overnight between midnight and 5.30am every day, with very late night/early hours of the morning trains replaced with buses for part of the journey
- But, trains run as normal between 5.30am and midnight every day
- Doing it this way, the work would take **5 months** to complete

No preference

Preferred option

15e And which of these would you prefer? (Please tick one option only)

- Engineering work takes place overnight between midnight and 5.30am every day, with very late night/early hours of the morning trains replaced with buses for part of the journey
- But, trains run as normal between 5.30am and midnight every day
- Doing it this way, the work would take **5 months** to complete

- Engineering work takes place overnight between 10pm and 5.30am every day, with late night trains replaced with buses for part of the journey
- But, trains run as normal between 5.30am and 10pm every day
- Doing it this way, the work would take **4 months** to complete

No preference

Preferred option

15f And which of these would you prefer? (Please tick one option only)

- Engineering work takes place overnight between 10pm and 5.30am every day, with late night trains replaced with buses for part of the journey
- But, trains run as normal between 5.30am and 10pm every day
- Doing it this way, the work would take **4 months** to complete

- The railway is closed entirely on part of the route for three weeks for engineering work. It then opens for two months, followed by another closure of three weeks. Buses would replace trains in the closure periods.
- Doing it this way, the work would take **3½ months** to complete.

No preference

Preferred option

15g And which of these would you prefer? *(Please tick one option only)*

- Engineering work takes place overnight between midnight and 5.30am every day, with very late night/early hours of the morning trains replaced with buses for part of the journey
- But, trains run as normal between 5.30am and midnight every day
- Doing it this way, the work would take **5 months** to complete

- The railway is closed entirely on part of the route for three weeks for engineering work. It then opens for two months, followed by another closure of three weeks. Buses would replace trains in the closure periods.
- Doing it this way, the work would take **3½ months** to complete.

No preference

Preferred option

15h And which of these would you prefer? *(Please tick one option only)*

- The railway is closed entirely on part of the route for three weeks for engineering work. It then opens for two months, followed by another closure of three weeks. Buses would replace trains in the closure periods.
- Doing it this way, the work would take **3½ months** to complete.

- Engineering work takes place at weekends only and trains would be replaced with buses for part of the journey
- But, there is no disruption to train services Mondays to Fridays
- Doing it this way, the work would take **1 year** to complete

No preference

Preferred option

16 Engineering works is often carried out at Christmas, Easter and over other bank holiday periods. This minimises impact on daily commuters and business passengers, but disrupts services for leisure passengers over key holiday periods. In terms of your travel needs, which of the following options do you prefer? *(Please tick one option only)*

- Engineering works take place from 11pm on the Friday of a **bank holiday weekend** and services restart at 5.30am on the Tuesday after the bank holiday
- Replacement buses are provided during that time

- Engineering works take place from 11pm on the Friday of an **ordinary weekend**, and services restart at 5.30am on the following Tuesday
- Replacement buses are provided during that time
- As this affects a normal working Monday, passengers are told six months in advance of this engineering work
- Commuters are also given two days refund on their season ticket

No preference

Preferred option

17 What time of the year would it be most appropriate for planned engineering works to take place? *(tick all that apply)*

- Winter.....
- Spring.....
- Summer.....
- Autumn.....
- Not sure.....

18 And which of these holiday periods would be most appropriate for planned engineering works to take place.
(Please tick all that apply)

19 Are there any holiday periods when planned engineering work should **not** be carried out?
(Please tick all that apply)

	Q18 Engineering work should take place during...	Q19 Engineering work should NOT take place during...
Easter.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School half term holiday in February.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School half term holiday in May.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School half term holiday in October.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School summer holidays.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christmas week.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bank holidays.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please write in) :	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Not sure.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20 If there were engineering works in the future, how would each of the following affect your travel plans? For each option, please tick what action you would take?

	I would use this alternative	I would use another mode of transport	I would not make this journey at all
Buses replacing trains for sections of the route.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buses replacing trains for the whole route.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trains running on a diverted route.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needing to change trains on a route that is usually direct.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needing to travel from a different station nearby.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21 Please assume that you had to make a train journey which normally takes **one** hour. However today it is affected by engineering works and you have to take a diverted train. Please indicate which action you would take for each of the following statements (a) to (e) below.

	I would take the diverted train	I would use another mode of transport	I would not make this journey at all
a) Diverted train adds 15 minutes to normal journey time.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Diverted train adds 30 minutes to normal journey time.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Diverted train adds 45 minutes to normal journey time.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Diverted train adds 1 hour to normal journey time.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Diverted train adds over 1 hour to normal journey time.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22 Please assume you had to make a train journey which normally takes **one** hour. However today it is affected by engineering works and you can take either a diverted train or a replacement bus. Please indicate for each option below, whether you would prefer a diverted train or a replacement bus. Please give an answer for each of the statements (a) to (f) below.

	Prefer to take replacement bus	Prefer to take diverted train	Not sure
a) The diverted train takes 10 minutes longer than the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The diverted train takes 20 minutes longer than the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The diverted train takes 30 minutes longer than the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) The diverted train takes 40 minutes longer than the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) The diverted train takes 50 minutes longer than the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) The diverted train takes 1 hour or longer than the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23 Do you think passengers should pay the normal rail fare for a journey which involves travelling on a replacement bus, or pay a discounted fare?

Pay the normal fare.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay a discounted fare.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not sure.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 INFORMATION

24 Do you currently receive information from your train company about engineering work that may affect your journey by any of these means?

- | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Yes - via text..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes - via Facebook/other social media..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes - via email..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes - other..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes - via Twitter..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | No..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

25 How do you normally find out about changes to train times because engineering work is taking place?

26 What would be the best way(s) to let you know about engineering work that might affect your journey in the future? **(Please tick up to three options)**

	Q25 Ways I find out changes to train times because of engineering works	Q26 Best ways to let me know about future engineering work (Please tick up to <u>three</u> options)
Look on the train company website.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look on the National Rail Enquiries website.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look on another specific rail website.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look on a media website which has travel news (e.g. BBC/local news).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receive a text alert from the train company.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receive a text alert from National Rail Enquiries.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receive an email from the train company.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look on a social media website (e.g. Facebook/Twitter).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a smartphone application.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone National Rail Enquiries.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone the train company.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Posters/leaflets at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff at the station.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I rely on being informed about it when I book the ticket.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please write in) :	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Not sure.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27 And do you personally check to see if there are changes to train times because of engineering work for

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Most journeys..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hardly ever..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Some journeys..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Never..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Just a few journeys..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

28 When should information about planned engineering work be available to passengers?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 month before they start..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 months before they start..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 months before they start..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | More than 6 months before they start..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 months before they start..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not sure..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 to 5 months before they start..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

29 The railway in Britain is paid for partly by passengers who buy tickets and partly by government out of taxation. It may be possible for the rail industry to carry out engineering works more cost effectively, but with the downside of more disruption to the timetable on this route. Bearing this in mind which one of the following best describes your view? **(Please tick one only)**

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| The cost of work should be kept to an absolute minimum, even if there is considerable disruption caused to passengers as a result..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Minimising the cost of doing the work is more important, even if there is some disruption to passengers as a result..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Minimising disruption for passengers is more important, even if the cost of doing the work increases a little as a result..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disruption to passengers should be kept to an absolute minimum, even if the cost of the work increases considerably as a result..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

30 Here are some things passengers have requested from the rail industry about engineering works. There are a number of pairs below, and for each please tick the statement in the pair that you would most like to see happen.

	Prefer the one on the left	No Preference	Prefer the one on the right	
The engineering work does not disrupt weekend travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As far as is practical, passengers should be kept on trains and not put on buses
Passengers are informed of the benefits the engineering work will bring to their future journeys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The engineering work does not disrupt commuters
The engineering work does not disrupt weekend travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The engineering work does not disrupt commuters
As far as is practical, passengers should be kept on trains and not put on buses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Passengers are informed of the benefits the engineering work will bring to their future journeys
The engineering work does not disrupt commuters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As far as is practical, passengers should be kept on trains and not put on buses
Passengers are informed of the benefits the engineering work will bring to their future journeys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The engineering work does not disrupt weekend travellers

4 ABOUT YOU

31 Are you?

Working full time (30+ hours).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working part time (9-29 hours).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time student.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not working - seeking work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not working and not seeking work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		

32 Which age group do you fall into?

16-25.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	55-59.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-34.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	60-64.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-44.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	65-74.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-54.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	75+.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

33 Are you...?

Male.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----------	--------------------------	-------------	--------------------------

34 Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

White.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black or Black British.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other ethnic group.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

35 Do you have a disability or long-term illness related to the following? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Mobility.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speech impairment.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wheelchair user.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning difficulties.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearing.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eyesight.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	No/none of these.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

36 Would you be happy to participate in future research projects about the rail industry?

Yes.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	No.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------	--------------------------	---------	--------------------------

IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE CONTACT DETAILS HERE

Name:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Thank you for your help in completing this research.

Please hand it back to the interviewer or use the post-paid envelope to return the questionnaire to us. This survey was conducted under the terms of the MRS Code of Conduct by BDRC Continental on behalf of Passenger Focus. All answers you provide are entirely confidential and will be combined with those of all other passengers who take part in the research. If you would like to confirm BDRC Continental's credentials, please call the MRS freephone on 0500 396999.

The information collected will be used to represent the best interests of passengers along this route.



Analysis of additional Passenger Focus research among passengers who used trains affected by planned engineering works

1. Management summary

1.1 Background to the research

To supplement the research Passenger Focus commissioned from BDRC Continental looking at passenger priorities and needs during planned engineering work, we also carried out research specifically among passengers who had made recent journeys affected by engineering work. We commissioned a major online train ticket retailer to email a short survey to passengers who their records showed would have made a recent trip using a replacement bus or a diverted train. This research gives additional insight to passengers' experiences during engineering works.

1.2 Key findings

Passengers want to see more proactive information and communication – at booking stage and at stations/on trains

Information provision and communication is key throughout all stages of a passenger's journey, from booking their train tickets, arriving at the station and once on the bus or train itself. This research shows that 42% of passengers did not see a warning on the website when they booked their train ticket cautioning that their journey would be affected by engineering work. Although it is likely that information about the buses was showing when the tickets were booked, this clearly needs to be more prominent. However, in the case of diverted trains there is currently nothing to warn passengers that their journey will take longer and will not stop at the usual stations. This needs to be addressed. There is also a need for improved information and communication on the day, both at stations and on trains.

Replacement buses fall short of some passengers' expectations

Having signs at the station showing where passengers need to catch the bus, as well as having buses clearly displaying where they are going to, would greatly improve passengers' experiences of replacement bus services. Staff also need to be available to direct passengers to the appropriate bus stop.

Passengers would also benefit from greater staff presence, helping with luggage, particularly for older passengers or those with mobility problems. The bus driver has an important role here too, and needs to provide help or assistance if passengers require it.

Many passengers feel that a discount should apply when a replacement bus service is used

A substantial majority (89%) of passengers want to see a discount if they have to use a bus during planned engineering work. The accompanying BDRC Continental research also shows this, as well as previous Passenger Focus research at Reading station. Passengers are paying for a journey that in normal circumstances would be taken by train. Making a journey by bus is generally cheaper than train, and passengers want to see this reflected in their train fare.

Passengers have some preference for a diverted train or changing between trains over using a replacement bus

Passengers showed some preference for taking a train during planned engineering work, whether a diverted train or more than one train when a change is not normally necessary, rather than take a bus. However, they are more likely to use an alternative mode of transport or not make the trip at all if a bus is involved. This reluctance to use a replacement bus could be related to issues identified in this research, such as poor bus timings, the lack of help with luggage, and difficulties finding the correct bus to board.

2. Background and research objectives

Passenger Focus commissioned a major online train ticket retailer to contact passengers who had booked tickets via their website for a journey that involved a replacement bus or a diverted train. Passenger Focus identified various instances of planned engineering works occurring between 25 February to 26 March 2012 which involved replacement buses or train diversions, and the ticket retailer selected customers from their database who had booked tickets for affected journeys.

The journeys were all medium to long-distance and made at weekends. This is because of the nature of journeys where passengers will buy in advance and because in that period there was little weekday engineering work involving buses and diversions.

A short online survey was designed by Passenger Focus, and passengers were emailed a link to it one or two days after they had made their journey. This ensured that the passenger's experience of their journey was still fresh in their mind. 164 online questionnaires were completed and the results were analysed by Passenger Focus.

Research objectives

Our key objectives for this research were to:

- Understand the experiences of passengers who had recently made a train journey affected by planned engineering work
- Explore passengers' views about the information provided when they booked their ticket
- Establish views about the quality of bus replacement services, if used
- Identify any improvements passengers wish to see in the future handling of planned engineering work

The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

3. Findings from the research

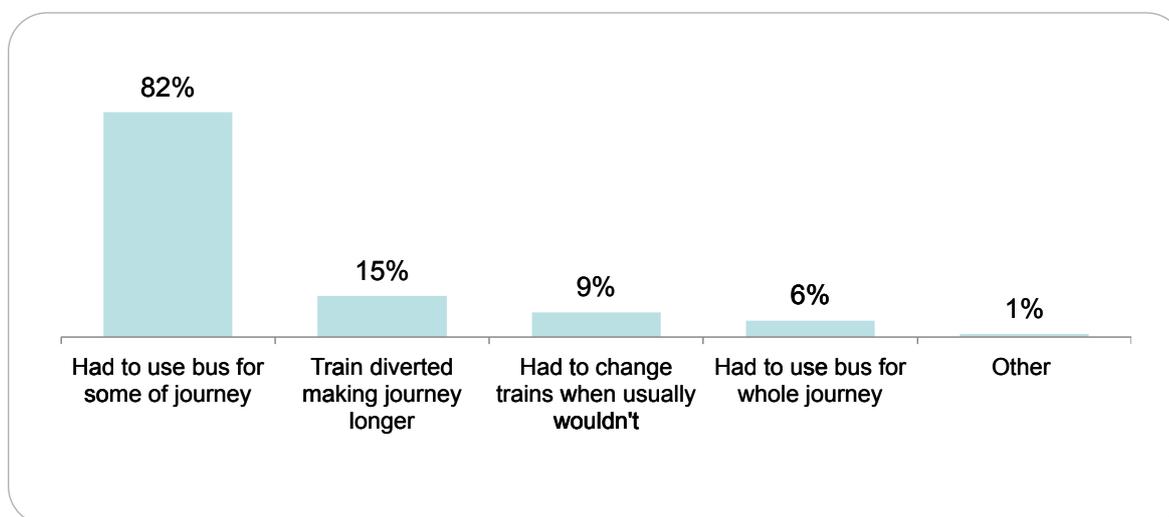
3.1 Passenger profile

As all passengers travelled at the weekend, it is not surprising that nearly all (87%) were travelling for leisure purposes and many were making the journey infrequently (82% were making that particular journey every few months or less often).

Just over two thirds of passengers were travelling alone (68%), and under a third with other adults (27%). A small proportion was travelling with heavy luggage (16%).

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of how passengers were affected by engineering work. Most had to use a replacement bus for a section of their journey, while some travelled on a diverted train. The split simply reflects the nature and location of engineering work taking place during the fieldwork period.

Figure 1 – How the journey was affected by planned engineering works



Q2. Was this train journey affected by engineering works? For example, that part or all of your train journey involved using a bus replacement service, or that your train took a different route than normal? (Please tick all that apply) Base: all respondents (164)

3.2 Booking the train ticket online

3.2.1 The availability of information about the engineering work

42% of passengers in our survey did not notice any kind of warning on the retailer's website, so booked their train tickets unaware that their journey would be affected.

"Announce the problem on the website and let the customer know what he or she is buying. Not doing this means I will not trust this form of ticket purchase again."

Around half of these passengers found out about the work before they arrived at the station e.g. via a timetable on the internet. The remainder found out only when at the station or on the bus or train.

When booking a train journey that involves a bus replacement service, a warning appears on the retailer's website which tells you that some or all of your journey will be taken by bus. There is

clearly a need to make this more prominent so passengers are making an informed decision when they purchase.

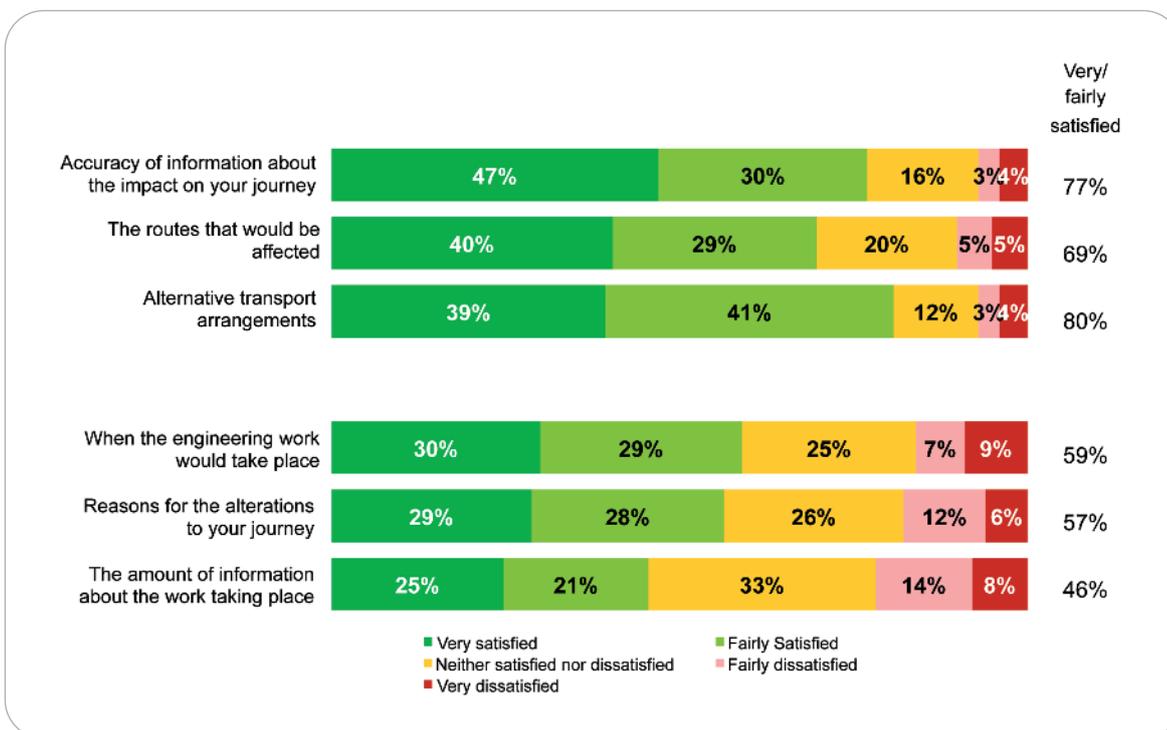
However, when booking a journey that requires taking a diverted train, the only indication a passenger has that it will be diverted is if they notice that the journey time is longer than usual. While it is important not to put passengers off using a diverted train, the industry must ensure that passengers know if they are buying a materially different product from the norm.

“...nothing was on the website at all, found this very annoying indeed, the first I was aware was sat on the train.”

3.2.2 Satisfaction with the information provided about the engineering work when booking online

For those passengers that did see engineering work information on the website when booking, we asked them how satisfied they were with certain aspects of that information. Figure 2 below shows that, although satisfaction with accuracy was relatively high at 77%, there is relatively high dissatisfaction around some of the additional detail provided (e.g. 18% were dissatisfied with information about why the alterations are taking place). The need for a succinct explanation of why it is a bus or diverted train was also a finding in the accompanying BDRC Continental research.

Figure 2 – Satisfaction with the information provided about engineering work when booking

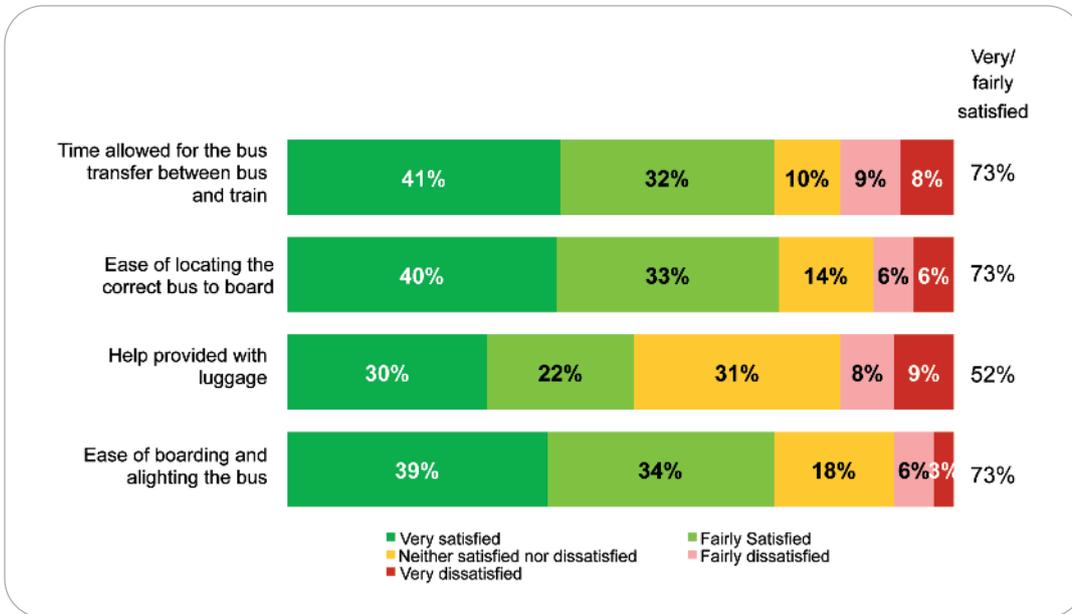


Q7. How satisfied were you with the information you saw on the website in terms of explaining the following?
 Base: all who noticed a warning on the website (95)

3.3 The replacement bus services themselves

Figures 3 and 4 shows that passengers were generally positive about their experience of using the bus itself, as distinct from transferring to and from it. This was also evident in comments from some passengers in the BDRC Continental research.

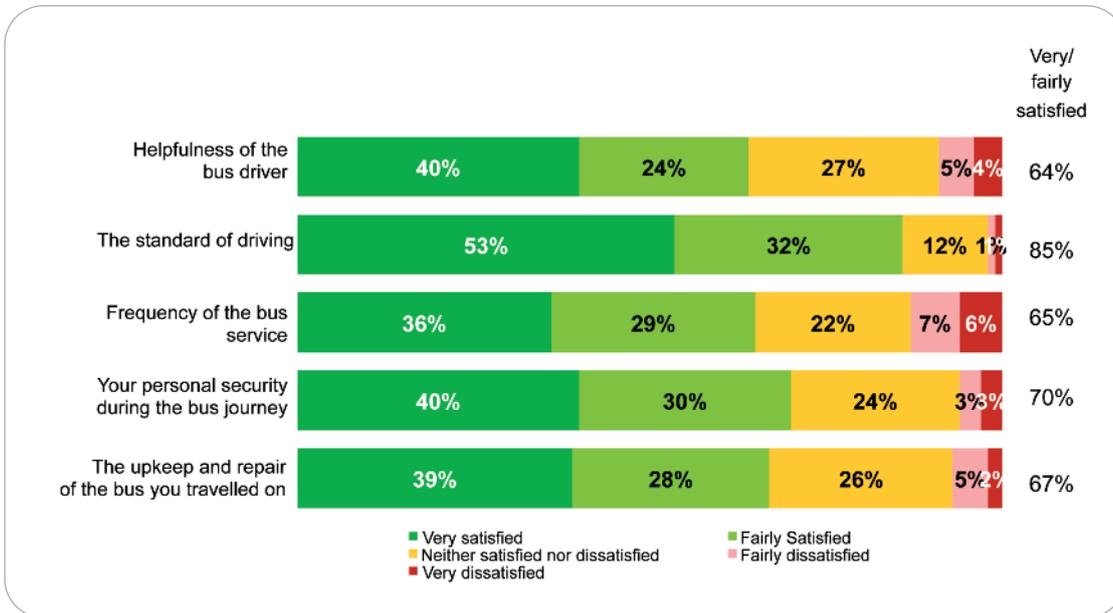
Figure 3 – Satisfaction with aspects of the bus replacement service (1)



Q14. Thinking about when you caught or changed to the replacement bus, how satisfied were you with the following?
 Base: all those taking a bus replacement for all or part of the journey (140)

Passenger satisfaction with the helpfulness of the bus driver is however relatively low (Figure 4), perhaps linked to them not providing help with luggage.

Figure 4 – Satisfaction with aspects of the bus replacement service (2)



Q14. Thinking about when you caught or changed to the replacement bus, how satisfied were you with the following? Base: all those taking a bus replacement for all or part of the journey (140)

3.4 Discounted travel during engineering work

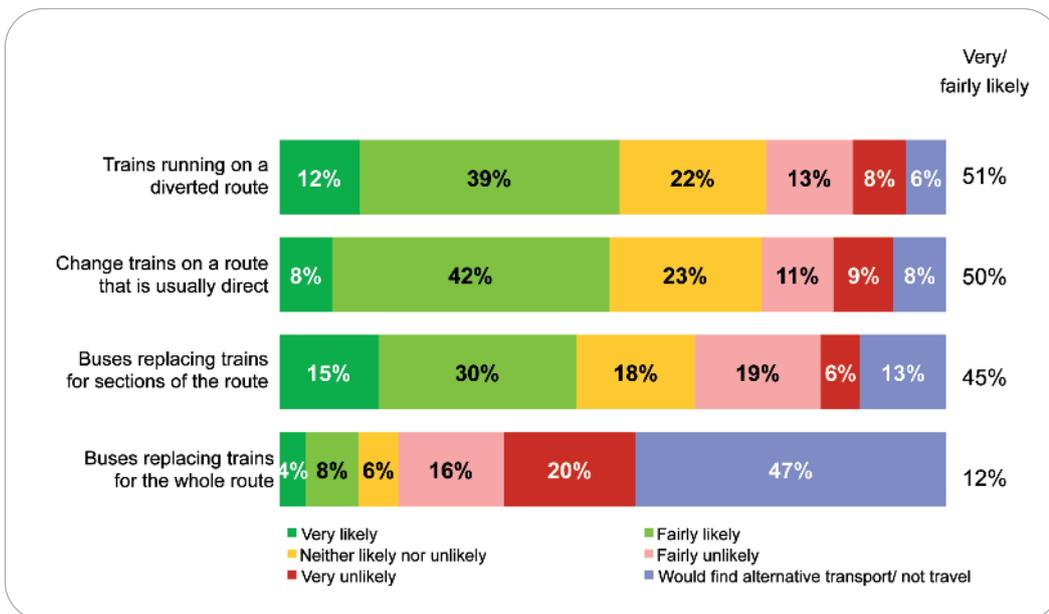
The overwhelming majority (89%) of passengers felt that a discount should apply when taking a bus replacement service during planned engineering works. Many passengers perceive that they are receiving an inferior level of service – a bus is not a train – and the journey generally takes longer.

“Surely a bus replacement journey should be subsidised so the passenger does not pay for an inferior service.”

The BDRC Continental research also showed similar findings.

3.5 Future travel during planned engineering work

Figure 5 – Likelihood of travelling during future planned engineering work



Q16. If there are engineering works in the future, how likely would you be to travel by rail under the following circumstances? Base: all who gave an opinion (158)

Among this sample of passengers there is some preference for taking a train during engineering work, either a diverted train or having to change trains when it is not normally required, rather than taking a bus replacement service. When a bus is involved the proportion saying it is likely they would travel by rail in future falls below 50% (and if the whole journey is by bus just 12% would travel).

3.6 Future improvements

There were mixed views from passengers in terms of how well the train company handled the engineering work – 63% were satisfied, with 18% dissatisfied overall. Notably, 63% is markedly higher in this sample than the 37% in the BDRC Continental research. This is likely to be because the BDRC Continental sample included many more commuters and referred to engineering-affected journeys in the previous 12 months (whereas this research was largely among leisure passengers and was undertaken within days of their making the journey).

We collected feedback from passengers about how they felt engineering works should be improved to make their journey smoother. Four themes emerged:

Provide better transfers between train and bus

Some passengers had difficulties locating the correct bus to board.

“There were buses in more than one place and there were no signs telling you which way to go.”

This was caused by lack of signage, either at the station directing passengers to where the buses were departing from, or on the buses themselves telling passengers the destination and stopping

points. Where buses were leaving to several destinations at one time, being sure that you were boarding the right bus was a challenge for some passengers.

“I think there could have been more information, maybe in the form of an “A” board by the bus, to indicate which bus was going to the destination and at what time.”

“I think elderly or those with young children may have struggled boarding the bus and transferring luggage to and from the connecting services. There did not seem to be much assistance once people got off the bus.”

Better timekeeping and scheduling of buses is needed

Late-running buses and buses perceived to take too long to depart caused fears among passengers about missing their connecting train.

“Ensure the bus ran on time from Exeter. It was very stressful to think we might miss our connection at Newton Abbott to Paignton. My husband had a five bypass heart operation last year and we did not appreciate having to run up and down stairs at Newton Abbot with our suitcases because the coach left Exeter late.”

“The coaches were late at arriving. My case went on the first coach but I could only get on the fourth one. My case was dumped on the pavement. We had to run for our connecting train and caught it as the guard blew his whistle. Not very good at all.”

Staff need to provide more help

Passengers felt that station staff need to be on hand during engineering work to provide help and information, particularly if there are bus replacement services in operation. As we have seen earlier, passengers found it difficult to locate buses, struggled with luggage and many felt that staff did not provide help or assistance.

“Being thrown off a train in pouring rain carrying three heavy bags while five slobbs watch you chatting and smoking is a disgrace.”

Staff need to be available to help direct passengers to buses, or connecting trains, as well as helping with luggage.

“When stopping to get the transfer to a bus it seemed like a rush for everyone to get off to find a seat. No one helped to put heavy bags on the coach and no one at the start even knew what bus we were getting on. I must say that journey was hideous.”

Better information and communication

Passengers want to see better information about the engineering works when booking their ticket, so they can make an informed decision as to whether to travel or not – as well as knowing what to expect on the day (as we have seen earlier, 42% of passengers saw no warning that engineering work would affect their journey when they booked their ticket).

“Very disappointed, it would not have been a problem if as I was booking an alert came up so I can make alternate arrangements or even take this route, but at least I would have the option.”

The need for information and communication on the day, at stations and on the train, is also clear. Even if it is made clear to anyone booking online, some passengers will inevitably arrive at a station

expecting a train. Using information systems to best effect and having staff actively providing passengers with information is vital. The industry should consider giving bus drivers an overview of the situation – they may be the only member of staff a passenger encounters on the entire journey.

“Some info would have been nice! No announcements made at all on the train - we only knew what was happening because of talk amongst other passengers.”

Appendix A: Details of passengers' journeys affected by engineering work

Engineering work between:	Date(s):	Details of bus replacement/ train diversion	Train company/companies
Birmingham New Street and Water Orton	Sunday 11 March Sunday 18 March Sunday 25 March	Buses replace trains between Birmingham New Street and Coleshill Parkway	CrossCountry
Castle Cary / Bridgwater and Plymouth	Sunday 11 March	<p><i>CrossCountry</i> Buses replace trains between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exeter St Davids, Newton Abbot, Totnes and Plymouth • Tiverton Parkway and Plymouth (direct service) <p><i>First Great Western</i> The following alterations will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses will run between Tiverton Parkway and Plymouth • Buses will run between Exeter St Davids and Plymouth • Buses will run between Exeter St Davids and Newton Abbot 	First Great Western Cross Country
Exeter St Thomas and Plymouth	Sunday 25 March	<p><i>CrossCountry</i> Buses replace trains between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exeter St Davids, Newton Abbot, Totnes and Plymouth • Tiverton Parkway and Plymouth (direct service) <p><i>First Great Western</i> The following alterations will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses will run between Tiverton Parkway and Plymouth • Buses will run between Exeter St Davids and Plymouth • Buses will run between Exeter St Davids and Newton Abbot • Buses will run between Exmouth and Exeter St Davids 	First Great Western Cross Country

Engineering work between:	Date(s):	Details of bus replacement/ train diversion	Train company/companies
Exeter St Thomas and Plymouth	Sunday 4 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses replace trains between Exeter St Davids and Plymouth (<i>CrossCountry</i>) • Buses will run between Tiverton Parkway and Plymouth (<i>First Great Western</i>) • Buses will run between Exeter St Davids and Plymouth (<i>First Great Western</i>) • Buses will run between Exeter St Davids and Newton Abbot (<i>First Great Western</i>) 	First Great Western Cross Country
Gillingham and Honiton	Saturday 10 March	Bus replacement service between Gillingham and Honiton	South West Trains
Gillingham and Honiton	Sunday 11 March	Bus replacement service between Gillingham and Exeter St Davids	South West Trains
Hitchin and Biggleswade	Sunday 11 March Sunday 18 March	A reduced service will run to / from London Kings Cross with diversions via Cambridge and extended journey times of up to 70 minutes	East Coast
Ipswich and Stowmarket	Sunday 11 March Sunday 18 March Sunday 25 March	Buses replace trains between Ipswich and Stowmarket / Bury St Edmunds	Greater Anglia
Ipswich and Stowmarket	Sunday 26 February	Buses replace trains between Ipswich and Stowmarket / Bury St Edmunds - Alternative train route changing trains at Cambridge	Greater Anglia
Ramsgate and Canterbury West	Sunday 11 March	Buses replace trains between: • Canterbury West and Ramsgate	Southeastern
Retford and Doncaster	Saturday 25 February Sunday 26 February	Train services are diverted between Newark and Doncaster with extended journey times	East Coast Grand Central

Engineering work between:	Date(s):	Details of bus replacement/ train diversion	Train company/companies
Salisbury and Axminster	Saturday 25 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses replace trains between Salisbury and Yeovil Junction • Train services are amended and will run between London Waterloo and Salisbury or will be diverted between Salisbury and Yeovil Junction - Journeys may be delayed by up to 70 minutes 	South West Trains
Billericay and Witham	Sunday 4 March Sunday 18 March Sunday 25 March	Buses replace trains between Billericay and Witham	Greater Anglia
Templecombe and Honiton	Saturday 3 March	Buses replace trains between Templecombe and Honiton	South West Trains

Appendix B - Questionnaire

Passenger Focus is undertaking a survey to understand your experiences of train travel during planned engineering work.

Thank you for taking part in this research on the subject of train travel during planned engineering work. This research is being carried out on behalf of Passenger Focus, the independent watchdog protecting the interests of passengers. Their website is www.passengerfocus.org.uk.

We are contacting you today because you recently undertook a train journey which was affected by engineering works; we are interested in your experiences of this journey. All the information you provide will be anonymous and combined with those of other passengers taking part in this research. The research findings will be used to improve the way the rail industry handles planned engineering work and ensure that the views of passengers are heard by the rail companies.

This survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Screener questions

QA. Do you work in any of the following industries or professions?

Journalism

Market research

Advertising

Marketing

Public relations

Law (**Dummy profession - Go to Q1**)

Public transport organisations

Transport maintenance/ supplier company

None of these (**Continue to Q1, all others CLOSE**)

Introduction

For this survey we are interested in the train journey you booked online. Our records show that you booked a train journey from <origin station> to <destination station> on <date>.

Q1. First, can you confirm that you undertook this train journey?

Yes I did undertake this journey

No I did not undertake this journey (**CLOSE**)

Q2. Was this train journey affected by engineering works? For example, that part or all of your journey involved using a bus replacement service, or that your train took a different route than normal? (Please tick all that apply)

Yes - **some of my journey** involved taking a bus replacement service

Yes - **all of my journey** involved taking a bus replacement service

Yes - my journey involved taking a diverted train making my journey time longer

Yes - my journey involved changing trains when it normally wouldn't

Yes – it was affected in another way (please specify)

No, my journey was not affected by engineering works (**CLOSE**)

Don't know/ Not sure (**CLOSE**)

Q3. What is the purpose of your journey today?

Commuting to/from work or education

On company business (or own if self-employed)

On personal business (e.g. job interview, dentist etc)

Leisure trip (e.g. shopping, day out, visiting friends/ relatives)

Q4. How often do you usually make this particular journey?

Every day

A few times a week

A few times a fortnight

A few times a month

Every few months

Once or twice a year

Less than once a year

This is my first journey

Q5. And were you travelling... (tick all that apply)

Alone

With children aged 0-4

With children aged 5-15

With other adults 16+

With heavy luggage

With a bicycle

With a pushchair

None of these

Information on engineering works

Q6. When you booked this journey online, did you notice any kind of warning on the website that mentioned that your journey would be affected by engineering works?

Yes **(Go to Q7)**

No **(Go to Q9)**

Q7. IF YES AT Q6

How satisfied were you with the information you saw on the website in terms of explaining the following?

Reasons for the alterations to your journey
When the engineering work would take place
The routes that would be affected
Alternative transport arrangements

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know/ No opinion

Q8. IF YES AT Q6

And how satisfied were you with...

The amount of information provided about the work taking place
The accuracy of information about the impact on your journey

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know/ No opinion

Q9. IF NO AT Q6

When did you find out about the engineering work affecting your journey?

Before I arrived at the station **(Go to Q10)**

When I arrived at the station **(Go to Q11)**

When I got on the train/ bus replacement **(Go to Q11)**

Q10. IF BEFORE ARRIVED AT STATION AT Q9:

How did you find out about the disruption to your journey? (tick all that apply)

- Posters/ notices around a station
- Announcements made at a station
- Announcements made on a train
- Leaflets handed out at a station
- A printed timetable leaflet or booklet
- A timetable on the internet
- Information on the train company website
- Told by staff at a station or on a train (didn't need to ask)
- Asked staff at a station or on a train
- Phoned the train company/ National Rail Enquiries
- An email from the train company
- A letter from the train company
- A text message from the train company
- A friend, relative or colleague
- Local press/radio
- Can't remember/ Don't know

Q11. IF AT STATION OR ON TRAIN/BUS AT Q9:

How did you find out about the disruption to your journey? (tick all that apply)

- Information screens at the station
- Announcements made at the station
- Posters/ notices at the station
- Staff at the station
- Telephone help-point at the station
- Announcements made on the train/bus
- Staff on the train/bus
- Website
- Email
- Text message
- Other passengers at the station
- Other passengers on the train/replacement bus
- Other

Q12. ASK ALL NO AT Q6

How satisfied were you with the information you saw/heard in terms of explaining the following?

- Reasons for the alterations to your journey
- When the engineering work would take place
- The routes that would be affected
- Alternative transport arrangements

Q13. ASK ALL NO AT Q6

And how satisfied were you with...

The amount of information provided about the work taking place
The accuracy of information about the impact on your journey

Bus replacement service

Q14. ASK THOSE USING A BUS REPLACEMENT FOR ALL OR PART OF JOURNEY AT Q2

Thinking about when you caught or changed to the replacement bus, how satisfied were you with the following?

The time allowed for the bus transfer between bus and train
The frequency of the bus service
Help provided with luggage
Ease of locating the correct bus to board
The helpfulness of the bus driver
The ease of boarding and alighting the bus
Your personal security during the bus journey
The standard of driving
The upkeep and repair of the bus you travelled on

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know/No opinion

Q15. Do you think passengers should pay the normal rail fare for a journey which involves travelling on a replacement bus, or pay a discounted fare?

Yes - Pay the normal rail fare
No - Pay a discounted rail fare

Q16. If there are engineering works in the future, how likely would you be to travel by rail under the following circumstances?

- Buses replacing trains for sections of the route
- Buses replacing trains for the whole route
- Trains running on a diverted route
- Needing to change trains on a route that is usually direct

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Fairly unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Would not travel/ Would find alternative transport

Q17. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the train company handled alterations to your journey caused by engineering works?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q18. Based on your experience, and apart from not carrying out the engineering work in the first place, what could the rail industry have done to make your journey smoother?

OPEN ENDED

Classification

In order to ensure that the responses of all groups of passengers are included, please give us the following details about yourself

C1. Could you tell me which of the following age bands you fall into?

- 16 – 25
- 26 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 59
- 60 +

C2. Which of the following best describes the occupation of the chief wage earner in your household?

Professional/senior management

Middle management

Junior management/clerical/supervisory

Skilled manual (with qualifications/apprenticeship)

Unskilled manual (no qualifications/not served an apprenticeship)

Full time student

Retired

Unemployed/between jobs

Housewife/househusband

Other (please write in)

C3. Are you...?

Working full time

Working part time

Not working

Retired

Full time student

C4. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

No

Yes – Mobility

Yes – Wheelchair user

Yes – Hearing

Yes – Eyesight

Yes – Speech impairment

Yes – Learning difficulties

Other (please write in)

C5. Are you...?

Male

Female

A large rectangular area with rounded corners, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.



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