

# Reading engineering works: managing disruption to passengers

*Passenger feedback  
May 2015*

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# Background and research methodology



# Background

- In 2010 upgrade work began to increase capacity at Reading station (due to complete in 2016); other large scale engineering projects have also been taking place in the area during this time, including, for example, work related to Crossrail.
- During the work, it has been necessary to change some service provision for passengers, including complete closures of parts of the network or individual stations.
- The work during Christmas 2010 (between 24 and 30 December) and during Easter 2015 (between 3 and 6 April) involved the biggest planned closures on the First Great Western (FGW) network over the period of the upgrade.

## Christmas 2010 – affected routes:

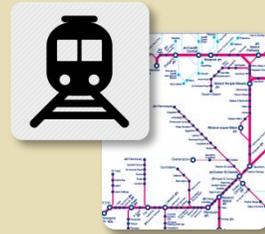


Long-distance trains to London, diverted via Banbury to Paddington, or diverted into Waterloo, both increasing journey time



Local services around Reading, which were replaced with buses

## Easter 2015 – affected routes:



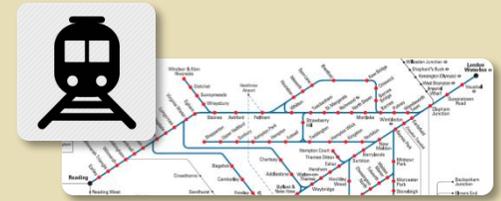
Long-distance trains to London, diverted via Banbury to Paddington, or diverted into Waterloo, both increasing journey time



Local services around Hayes & Harlington, which were replaced with buses



Local services around Reading, which were replaced with buses



The SWT service from Reading to Waterloo, which ran a temporarily more frequent service to help meet demand

# Research objectives

When the upgrade work began in 2010, during the Christmas and New Year period Transport Focus undertook market research to gather feedback from passengers who were affected by it.

Another wave of market research was commissioned in 2015 to understand the impact the Easter 2015 disruptions had on passengers.

The overarching objective of the research in both cases was to:

*Understand the impact that such disruption has on passengers, in order to learn from it and inform good management of such disruption in the future*

In 2015 there were additional **research objectives**:

Compare passenger feedback over time (e.g. in terms of satisfaction with the way disruption has been handled and with the way that implications have been communicated).

Evaluate the degree to which the lessons from the 2010 research have been implemented.

Help inform plans for managing planned disruption to services through Bath and elsewhere, later in the year.



# Methodology: Easter 2015

**Methodology:** Self-completion paper survey handed out on trains/at stations. All respondents were given a reply-paid envelope so that they could return the questionnaire by post. Completed surveys on board long distance trains could also have been collected by fieldworkers.

**Fieldwork dates:** 3 – 6 April 2015

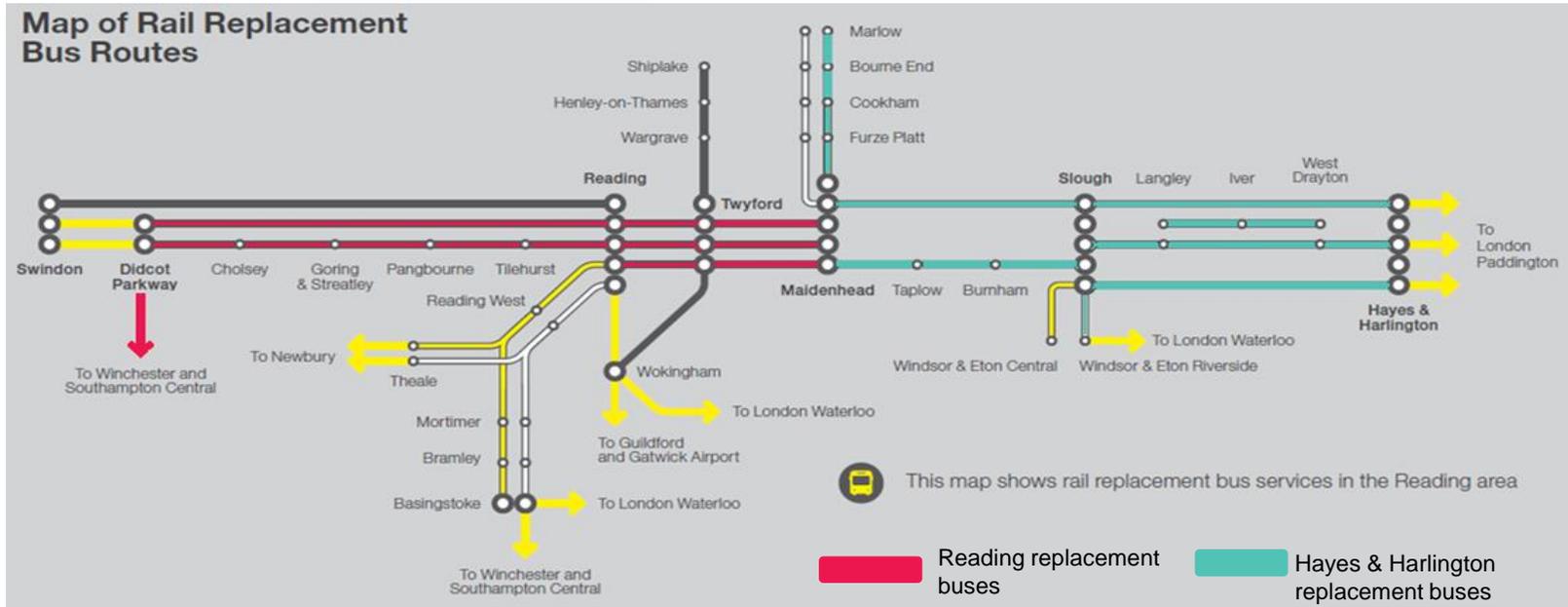
**Sample size:** 1002 responses split across four sample groups

Long distance trains  
n=561

Reading replacement  
buses  
n=156

Hayes & Harlington  
replacement buses  
n=158

South West Trains  
n=127



# Overview: headline findings



# Key findings from research conducted during Christmas 2010

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## Information provision around the disruption:

- **Three quarters (76 per-cent) of those travelling through affected areas were aware in advance.**
- As might be expected, awareness was higher among more frequent users of the routes.
- As such, those affected by rail replacement buses (RRBs), making shorter local journeys, were best informed.
- Despite relatively high awareness that disruption would take place, **41 per-cent reported that they did not know the reason for it**, and the intended long term benefits to passengers.

## Experience of the disruption

- **Two thirds (63 per-cent) of affected passengers were satisfied with the handling of the disruption in practice.**
- Linked to their better advance awareness, RRB users in particular were satisfied (81 per-cent).

## For similar disruptions caused by engineering works in the future:

- There was a **strong preference for maintaining train services where possible, even if diverted or requiring an interchange, rather than using RRBs** – despite the fact that, when experienced in practice, the RRB services were felt to be reasonably well managed.
- **Regular users said posters at stations would be the best way to inform them about disruption in future.**
- **Less frequent travellers would prefer to access information online, and by pro-active means** such as direct emails from TOCs.

# 2015 headline results – knowledge & expectations of the disruption



**Awareness of disruptions before the journey:**

**74%**



**Knew about disruptions up to around a week ago, but before the day of travel**

*(NB this was the most desirable notice period)*

**41%**



**Degree of disruption expected:**

**26%** Significantly disrupted

**56%** Somewhat disrupted

**15%** Not at all disrupted



**Average extra time expected to be added to journey**

**69 mins**

# 2015 headline results – experience of the disruption

## Experience vs. expectation:



**68%** Disruption was as expected or less

**68%** Additional journey time was as expected



## Overall satisfaction with the way the train company has handled disruption

**69%**



## Satisfaction with the value for money of the ticket for the journey

**46%**



## Satisfaction with the information provided:

**63%** Reasons for the disruption

**60%** When the disruption would take place

**58%** The routes that would be affected

**57%** Alternative transport arrangements

**61%** The amount of information provided about the disruption

**63%** The accuracy of the information given about the disruption



## Satisfaction with the bus replacement service:

**81%** Time allowed for the transfer between bus and train

**72%** Frequency of the bus service

**67%** Help provided with luggage

**86%** Directions given to/from the replacement bus service

# 2015\* vs. 2010 results – knowledge & expectations of the disruption



## Awareness of disruptions before the journey:

**75%** in 2015 and **76%** in 2010



## Knew about disruptions up to around a week ago, but before the day of travel

*(NB this was the most desirable notice period)*

**↑ 40%** in 2015 and **29%** in 2010



## Degree of disruption expected:

*Not asked in 2010*



## Average extra time expected to be added to journey

**74 mins** and **77 mins** in 2010

**↑** Significantly higher than 2010

\*Based on 2010 comparable data. In 2010, there were no Hayes & Harlington replacement buses, nor was there a South West Trains sample group. As a result, only the long distance trains and Reading replacement buses are compared across the two projects

# 2015\* vs. 2010 results – experience of the disruption

## Experience vs. expectation:



**69%** Disruption was as expected or less *Not asked in 2010*  
**72%** in 2015 and **70%** in 2010 - Additional journey time was as expected



**Overall satisfaction with the way the train company has handled disruption**  
↑ **69%** in 2015 and **63%** in 2010



**Satisfaction with the value for money of the ticket for the journey**  
**44%** in 2015 and **44%** in 2010



## Satisfaction with the information provided:

**62%** in 2015 and **59%** in 2010 - Reasons for the disruption  
**61%** in 2015 and **58%** in 2010 - When the disruption would take place  
**58%** in 2015 and **54%** in 2010 - The routes that would be affected  
**55%** in 2015 and **52%** in 2010 - Alternative transport arrangements  
↑ **61%** in 2015 and **55%** in 2010 - The amount of information provided about the disruption  
**63%** in 2015 and **59%** in 2010 - The accuracy of the information given about the disruption



## Satisfaction with the bus replacement service:

**83%** in 2015 and **82%** in 2010 - Time allowed for the transfer between bus and train  
**77%** in 2015 and **75%** in 2010 - Frequency of the bus service  
↑ **74%** in 2015 and **63%** in 2010 - Help provided with luggage  
**88%** in 2015 and **85%** in 2010 - Directions given to/from the replacement bus service

*\*Based on 2010 comparable data. In 2010, there were no Hayes & Harlington replacement buses, nor was there a South West Trains sample group. As a result, only the long distance trains and Reading replacement buses are compared across the two projects*

↑ Significantly higher than 2010

# A little context: notable characteristics of passengers travelling through affected areas during Easter 2015

## Key differences in passenger profile compared to typical weeks in the year\*

- **Little commuting** (9 per-cent) compared to 30 per-cent normal average\*).
- As such, **typical journeys being made are infrequent/uncommon.**
- Higher than average\* use of **Off-peak and Advance tickets.**
- Twice as many **booking in advance** than normal (51per-cent compared to 36 per-cent on average\*).
- A little **younger than average.\***
- Thus a little more likely to be **in work or education.**

# Note on comparing 2015 and 2010 findings

When work took place at Reading station in 2010, research was accordingly focussed on the service amendments to/from and around Reading only.

The 2010 research surveyed passengers using long distance trains diverted via Banbury or into Waterloo (rather than Paddington), and passengers using rail replacement buses to and from Reading.

As such, wherever the 2015 results are compared to 2010 in this report, only comparable elements of the sample are included (long-distance, diverted train users and Reading area rail replacement buses).

For all other findings reported in this document, the full 2015 is used (unless otherwise stated).

## Key differences in passenger profile in the total 2015 sample, and the Reading RRB / LD services only sample for 2010 comparisons

Users of RRBs in the Hayes & Harlington area and users of the SWT service were often making relatively frequent, local journey; neither of these groups were part of the 2010 survey.

As such:

- The comparable - 2010 sample contains journeys which are marginally less frequent than the main 2015 sample, and thus passengers who are slightly less familiar on average with their journey (although note these differences are not statistically significant).
- On average, passengers' reported additional journey time was 5 mins shorter in the 2010-comparable sample, than in the main 2015 sample.
- Passengers in the 2010-comparable sample were more likely to have bought their ticket (an Advance or Off-Peak) ahead of time, online.
- No other notable differences between the two versions of the 2015 sample.

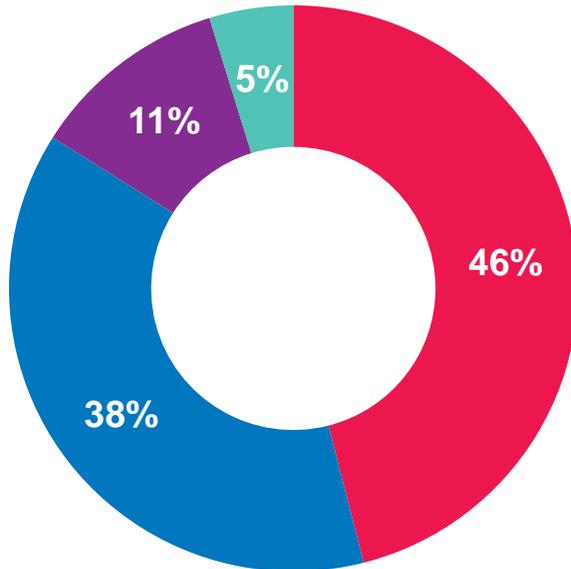
# What is important to passengers for effective management of disruption

## In this section:

- Aspects of on the day experience which influence satisfaction
- Attitudes towards the long term benefits of disruption
- When and where passengers learn about planned disruption

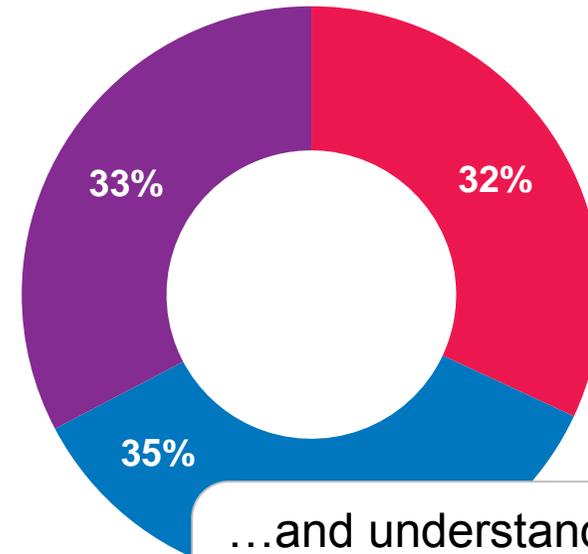
# For rail-only passengers, accurate and practical information was key to satisfactory handling of disruption

Information aspects which are key drivers of:  
Overall satisfaction with handling of disruption



- Accuracy of the info about the disruption
- Info about alternative transport arrangements
- Info about reasons for the disruption
- Info about when the disruption would take place

Information aspects which are key drivers of:  
Value for money for ticket used during disrupted journey

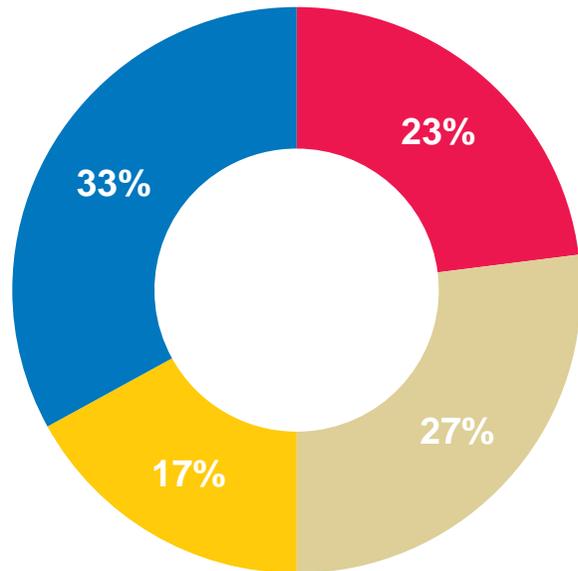


...and understanding the reasons for the works aided a sense of value for money

- Accuracy of the info about the disruption
- Info about alternative transport arrangements
- Info about reasons for the disruption

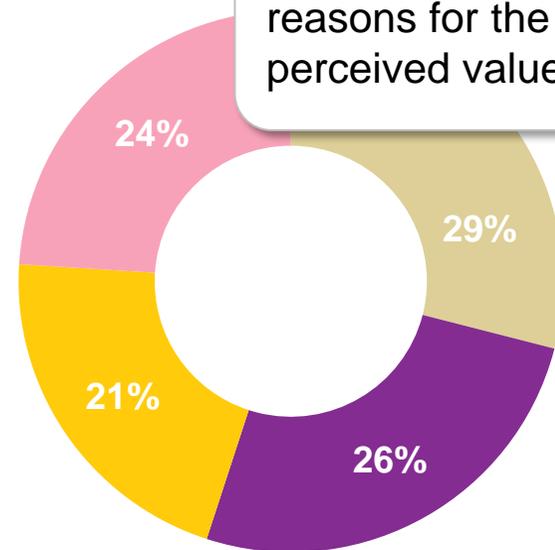
# Amongst bus replacement users practical provision of, and help with, the buses on the day was critical

Information and RRB aspects which are key drivers of: Overall satisfaction with handling of disruption



- Accuracy of info about the disruption
- Directions given to/from replacement bus service
- Frequency of the bus service
- Info about alternative transport arrangements

Information and RRB aspects which are key drivers of: Value for money for ticket used during disrupted journey



- Directions given to/from replacement bus service
- Info about reasons for the disruption
- Frequency of the bus service
- Amount of information given

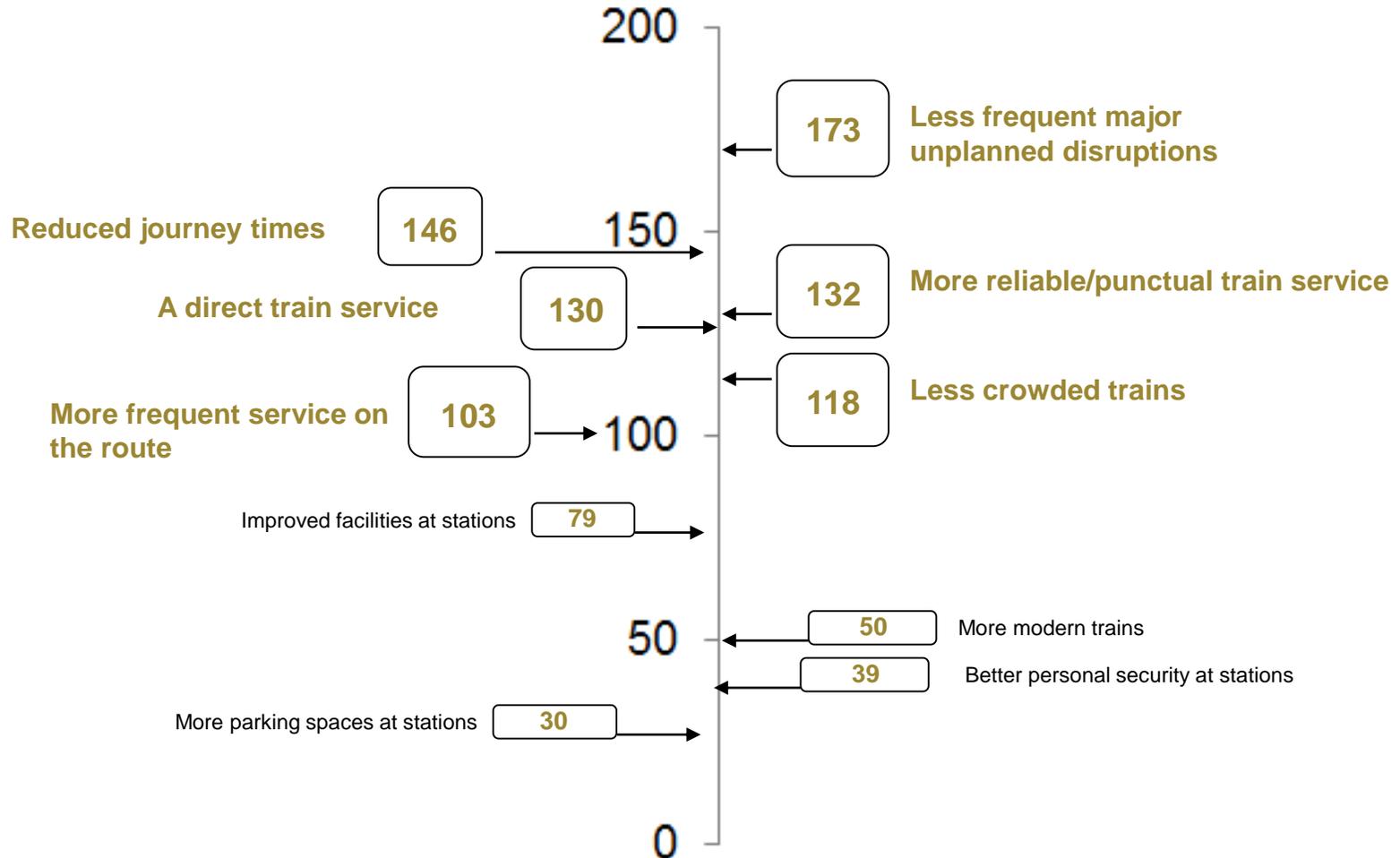
...and again knowing the reasons for the works aided perceived value for money

Regression analysis to determine strength of relationship between aspects of information provision (Q17/18), aspects of the replacement bus provision (Q21), and overall satisfaction with the handling of the disruption  
 Base: All respondents using bus replacements: 2015 total (314)

# Reducing the frequency of disruption is the most desirable outcome of engineering works, followed by improved journey timings

Relative preference for improvements  
Using stated preference analysis  
(see slide 20 for explanation)

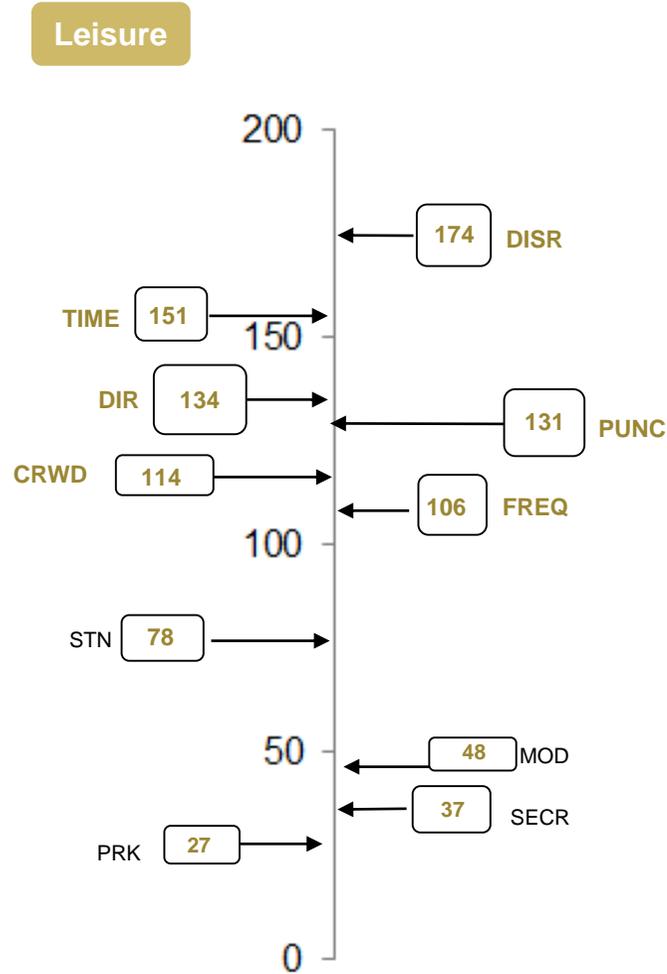
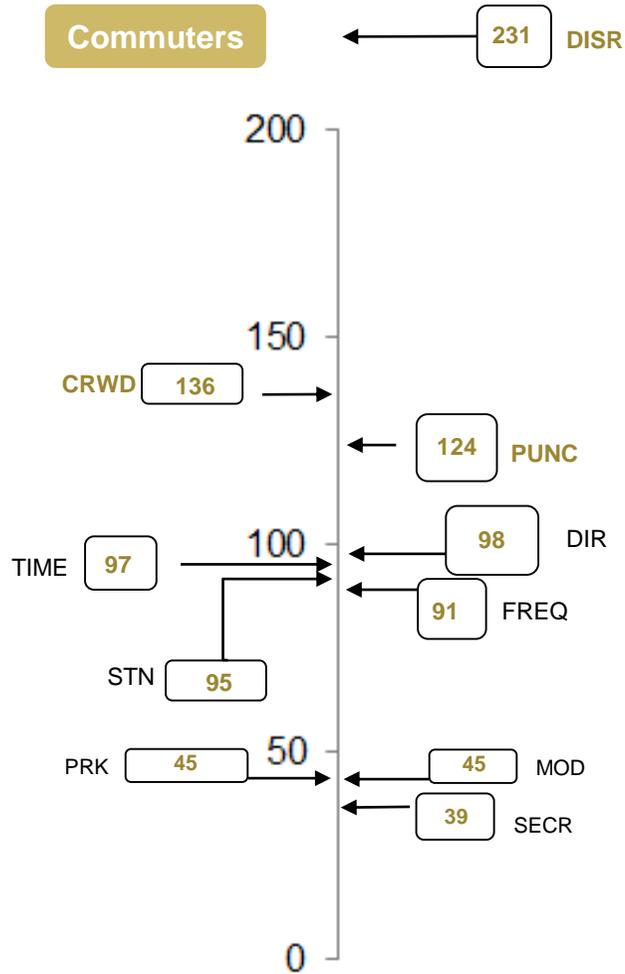
Preference score,  
where 100 indicates the improvement  
which is of average relative importance



Q26. Here are some benefits that could come from engineering work. There are a number of pairs shown below and for each please tick the improvement that you would most like to see.  
Base: All respondents (1002)

# Reduced crowding and punctuality resonate as benefits to commuters; reduced journey times and direct services for leisure travellers

Relative preference for improvements  
Using stated preference analysis



Key	Statement
STN	Improved facilities at stations
DISR	Less frequent major unplanned disruptions
FREQ	More frequent service on the route
DIR	A direct train service (no need to change trains)
CRWD	Less crowded trains
PUNC	More reliable/punctual train service
TIME	Reduced journey times
SECR	Better personal security at stations
MOD	More modern trains
PRK	More parking spaces at stations

Q26. Here are some benefits that could come from engineering work. There are a number of pairs shown below and for each please tick the improvement that you would most like to see.  
Base: All respondents (1002)

# Stated preference question: explanation

The research tested the importance of ten likely benefits that could come from engineering work, relative to each other:

- Improved facilities at stations
- Less frequent major unplanned disruptions
- More frequent service on the route
- A direct train service (no need to change trains)
- Less crowded trains
- More reliable/punctual train service
- Reduced journey times
- Better personal security at stations
- More modern trains
- More parking spaces at stations

In order to fully test the relative importance, in an easy and non-fatiguing way for passengers, several pairs of these features were presented to respondents. Respondents then chose their preferred benefit in each pair, for example:

*Here are some benefits that could come from engineering work. There are a number of pairs shown below, and for each please tick the improvement that you would most like to see*

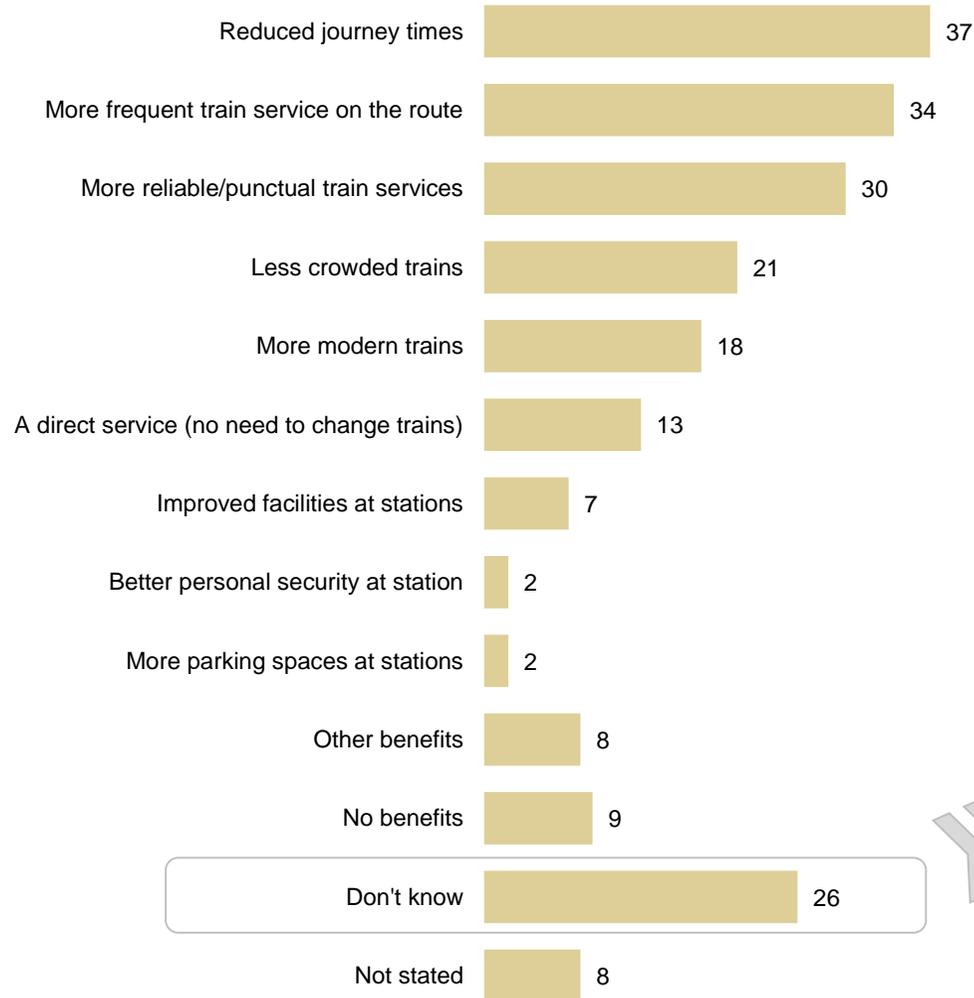
*Prefer the one on the left    No preference    Prefer the one on the right*

*Improved facilities at stations*                *Less frequent major unplanned disruptions*

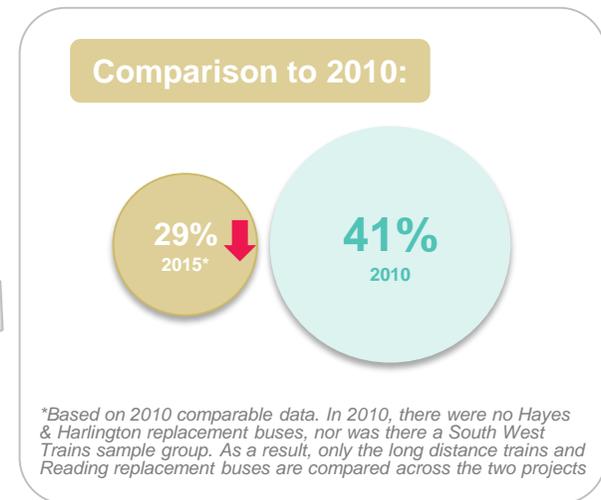
Statistical analysis then calculates a relative score for each feature. On the following slide we present the scores as relative points around an average of 100, which represents the average level of relative importance.

# Passengers also *expect* improved journey times to be the main result

## Expected benefits of redevelopment work (%)



...and these expectations are clearer than 5 years ago



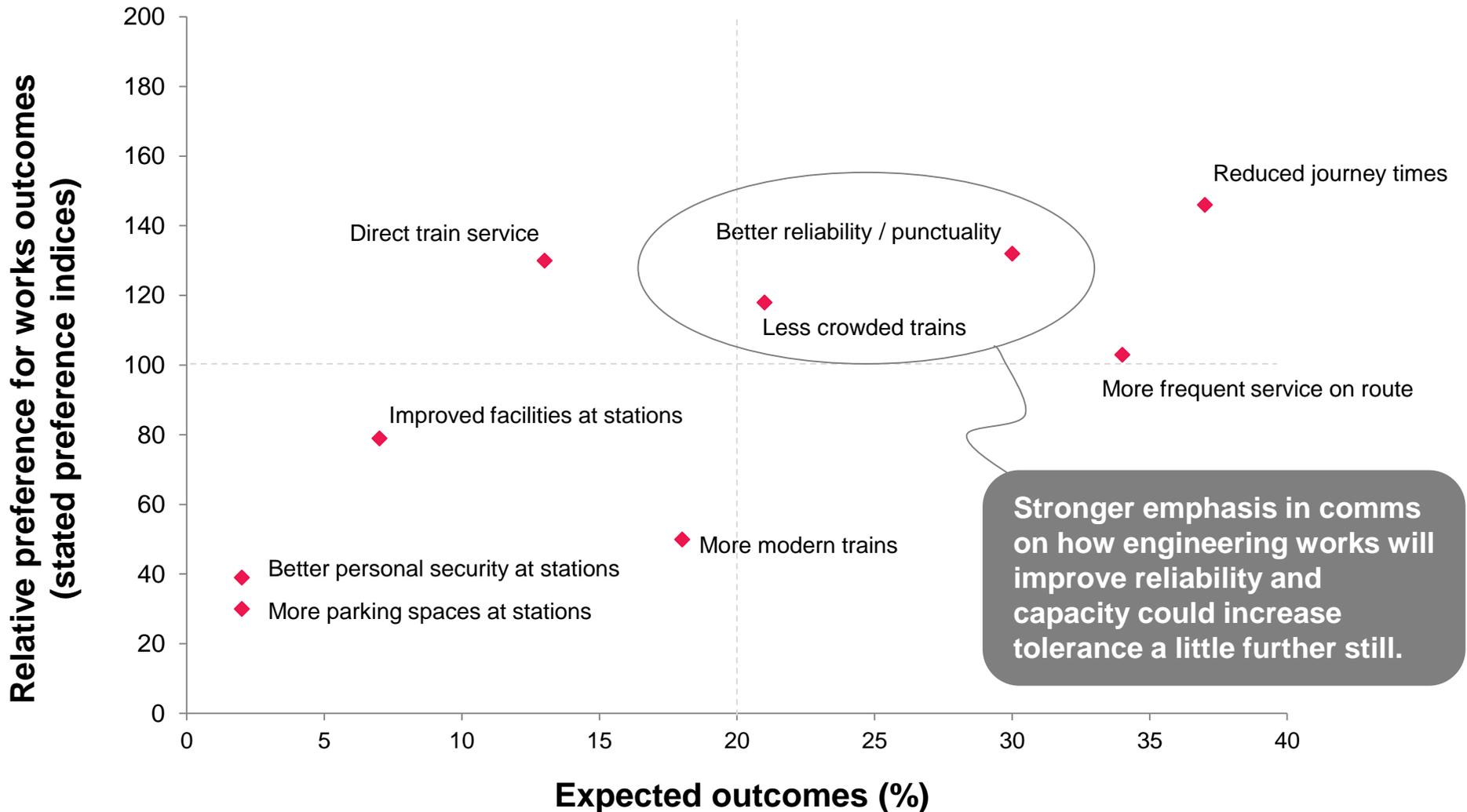
↓ Significantly lower than 2010

Q25. What do you think the benefits will be to you personally, as a result of the rail redevelopment work?  
Base: All respondents: 2015 total (1002)



# Expectations broadly match passengers' actual preferences

Relationship between expected and wished for outcomes from engineering work.



Y axis: Q26. Here are some benefits that could come from engineering work. There are a number of pairs shown below and for each please tick the improvement that you would most like to see.  
 X axis: Q25. What do you think the benefits will be to you personally, as a result of the rail redevelopment work?  
 Base: All respondents: 2015 total (1002)

# A quarter learned about the disruption on the day of travel; earlier warning would have been much preferred

## Notice given about the disruption (%)



When did you find out?

- Today
- 1-3 weeks ago
- Don't know / not stated



When would you have liked to find out?

- Less than a week ago but before today
- One month or more ago

## When found out

Advance ticket purchasers:

- 14 per-cent today
- 30 per-cent a month+ ago

Anytime purchasers:

- 38 per-cent today
- 30 per-cent less than a week ago

Off-peak purchasers:

- 22 per-cent today
- 31 per-cent less than a week ago

Season ticket holders

- 37 per-cent a month+ ago

## When prefer to find out

Advance:

- 43 per-cent one month ago or more

Anytime and Off-peak

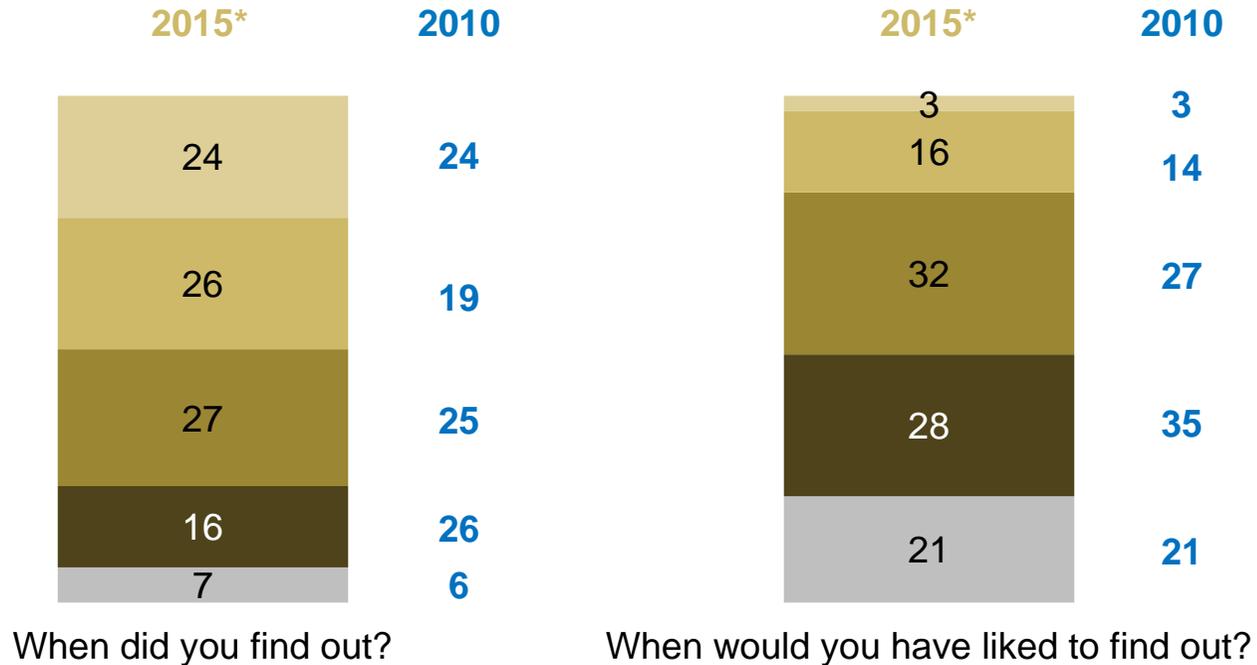
- 50 per-cent approx. 1 week ahead

Season ticket holders

- 48 per-cent a month+ ago
- 25 per-cent approx. 1 week ahead

# Similar proportions found out about the disruption on the day in 2010

Notice given about the disruption (%)



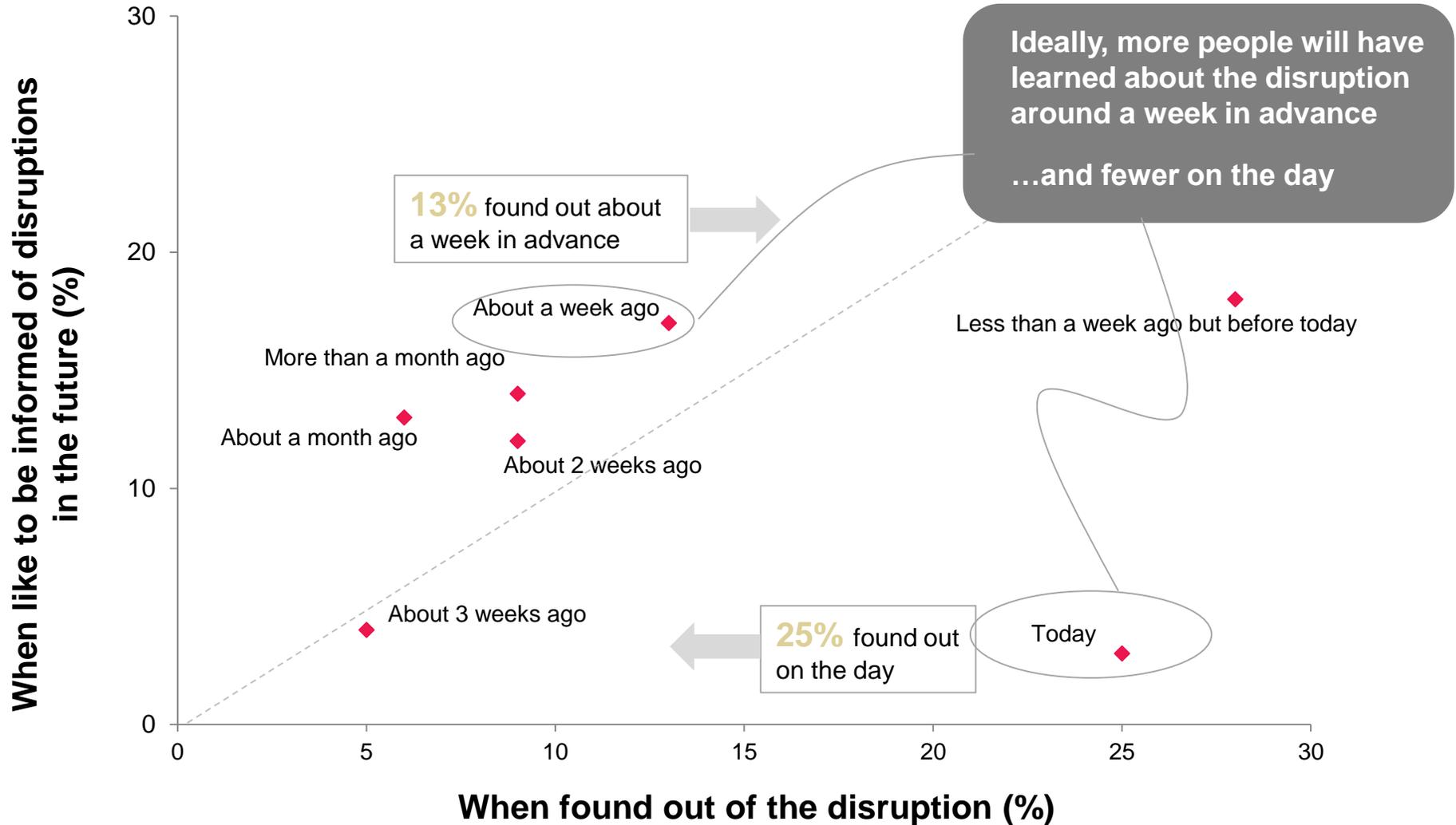
- Today
- 1-3 weeks ago
- Don't know / not stated

- Less than a week ago but before today
- One month or more ago

Q12. When did you find out about the disruption to today's journey? Q13. How far in advance would you like to have been informed about the disruption? Base: All respondents, 2015 data as comparable to 2010: (717), 2010 (1431)

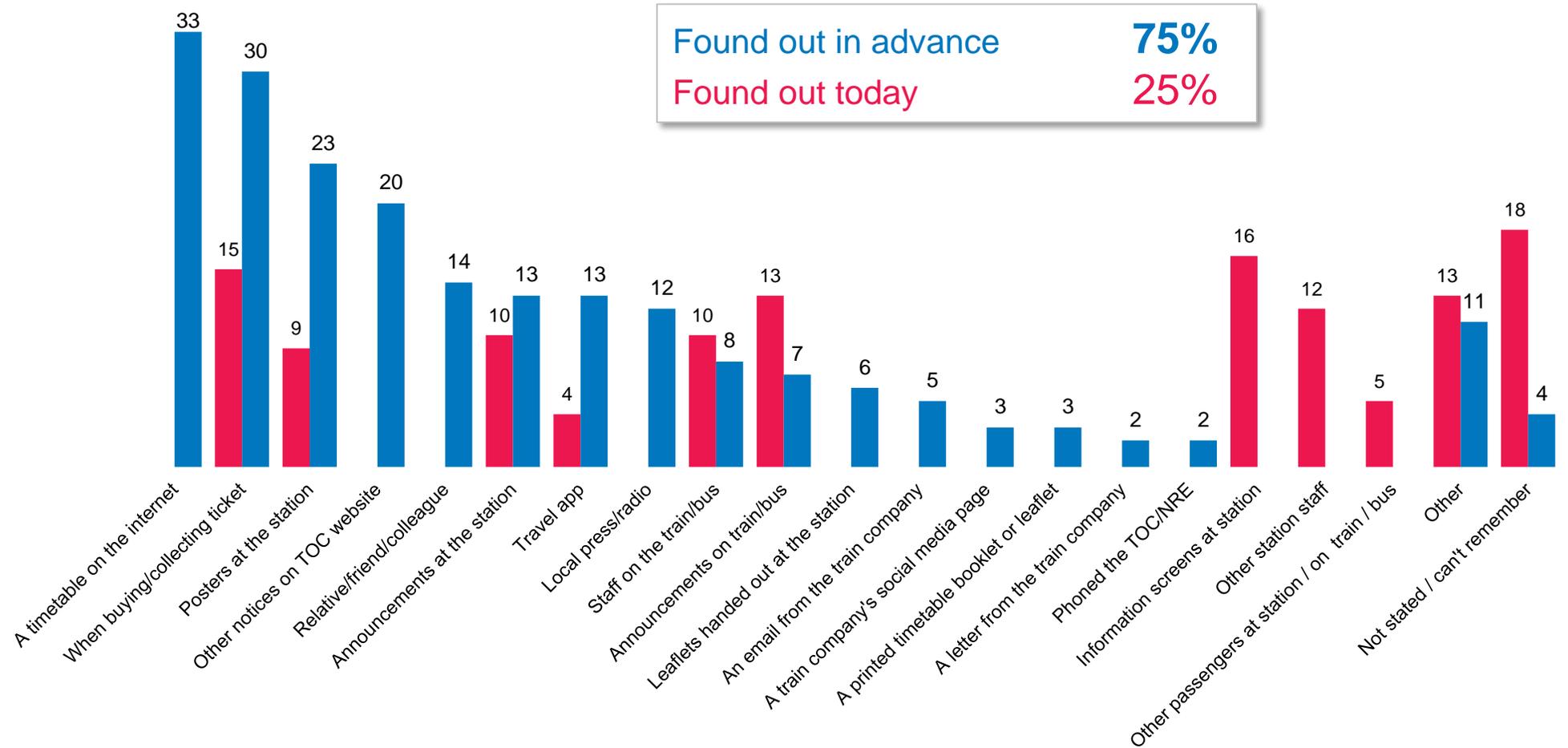
# The timing of communications could have been better for some of Easter travellers through the affected areas

Disruption communication – current vs. future preference



# Online, at-station, point of sale and word of mouth helped provide advance knowledge; various at-station sources gave information on the day

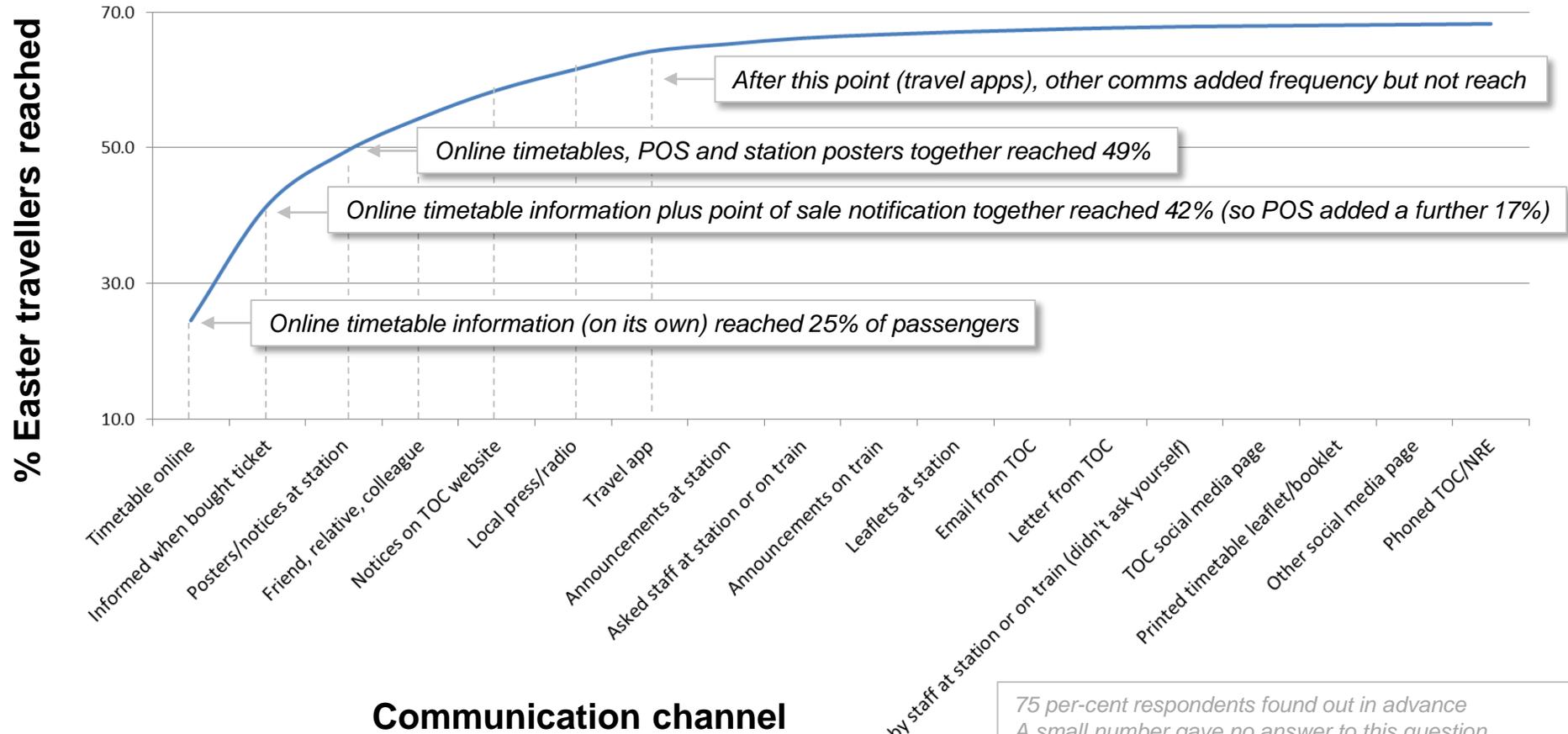
## Source of awareness about disruption



# Online timetables, POS information and posters at stations together reached half of those who were aware of the disruption advance

## TURF analysis: passengers aware of disruption in advance

(Total unduplicated reach and frequency: indicates incremental reach achieved by each communications source)



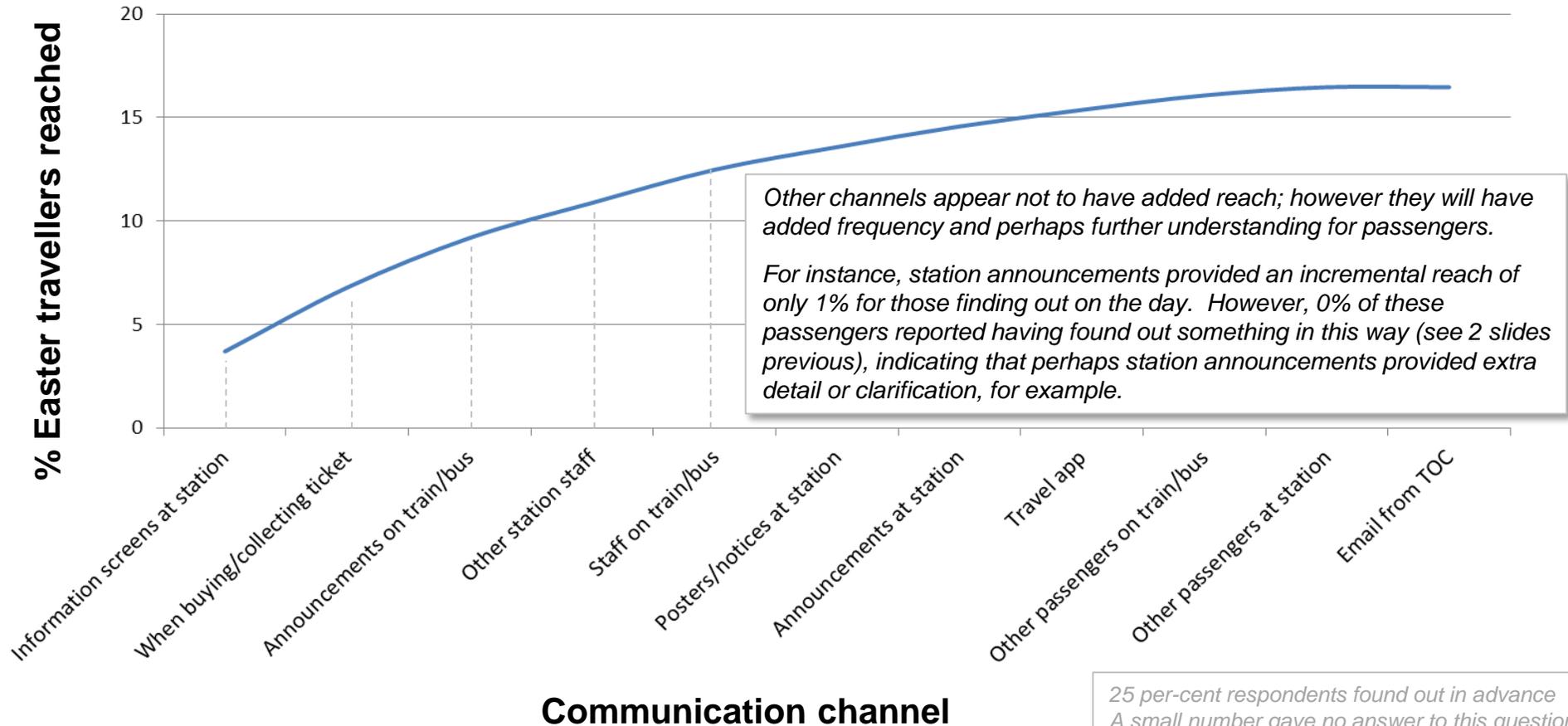
75 per-cent respondents found out in advance  
 A small number gave no answer to this question  
 Hence total reach across all channels is a little under 70 per-cent

Q15. How did you find out about the disruption to your journey today?  
 Base: All respondents (1002)

# Information screens and staff had most extensive reach on the day

## TURF analysis: passengers learning of the disruption on the day

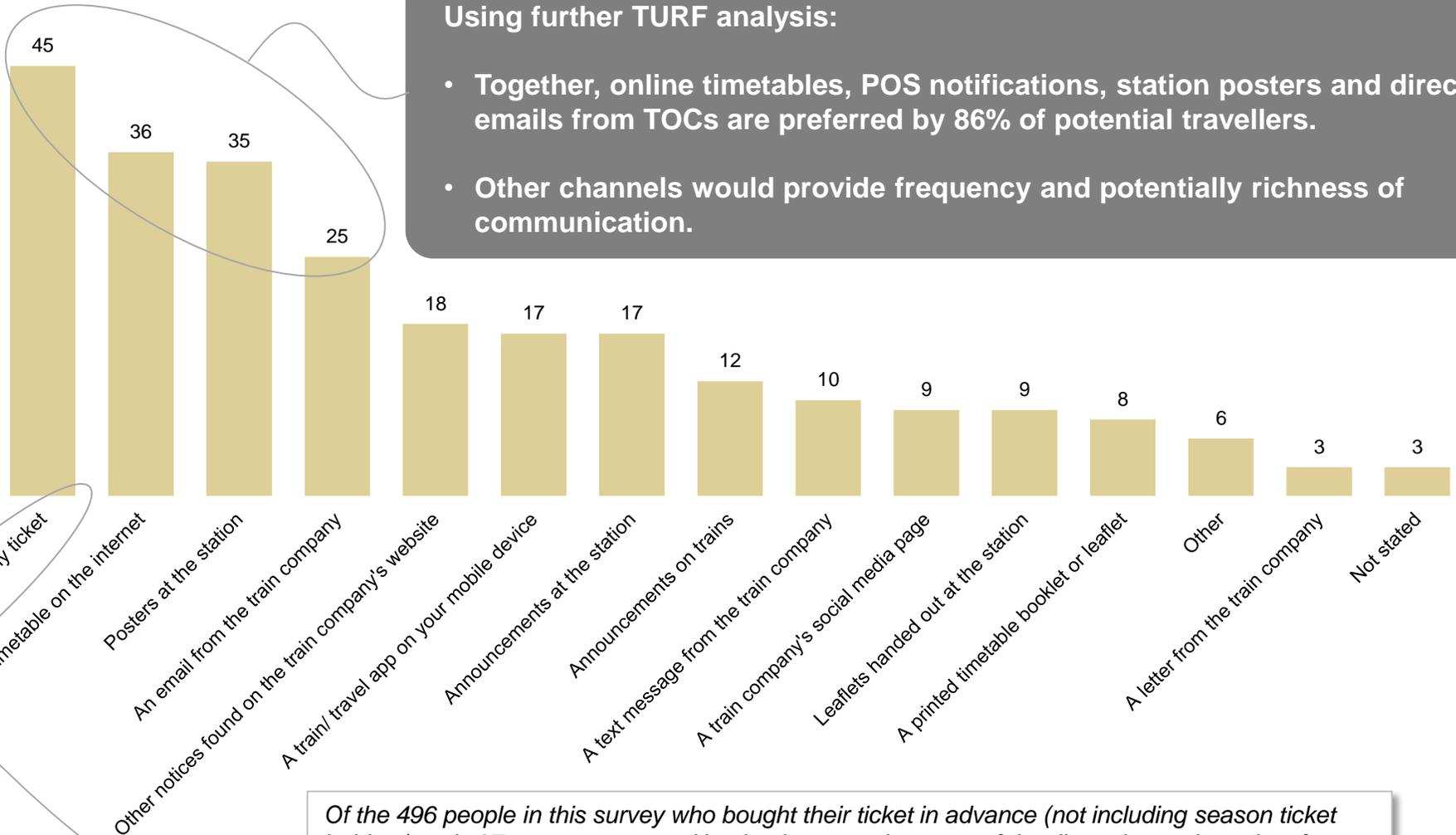
(Total unduplicated reach and frequency: indicates incremental reach achieved by each communications source)



25 per-cent respondents found out in advance  
A small number gave no answer to this question  
↓  
Hence total reach across all channels is 17 per-cent

# Online and 'pro-active' communication methods would be most preferred in future

## Preferred methods of communication



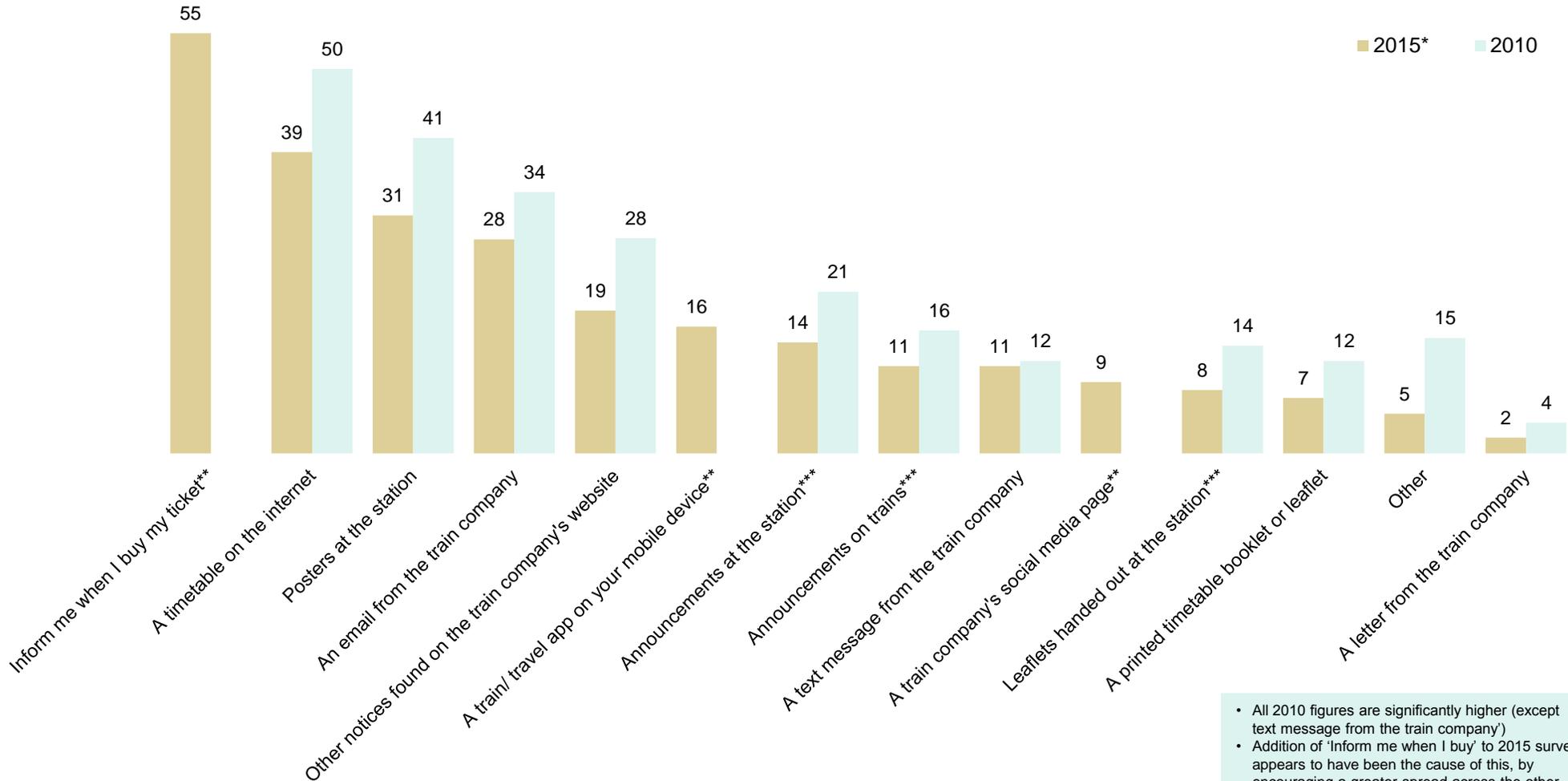
### Using further TURF analysis:

- Together, online timetables, POS notifications, station posters and direct emails from TOCs are preferred by 86% of potential travellers.
- Other channels would provide frequency and potentially richness of communication.

*Of the 496 people in this survey who bought their ticket in advance (not including season ticket holders), only 37 per-cent reported having been made aware of the disruption at the point of purchase*

# A similar pattern was seen in 2010

## Preferred methods of communication 2015 (comparable sample)\* vs. 2010



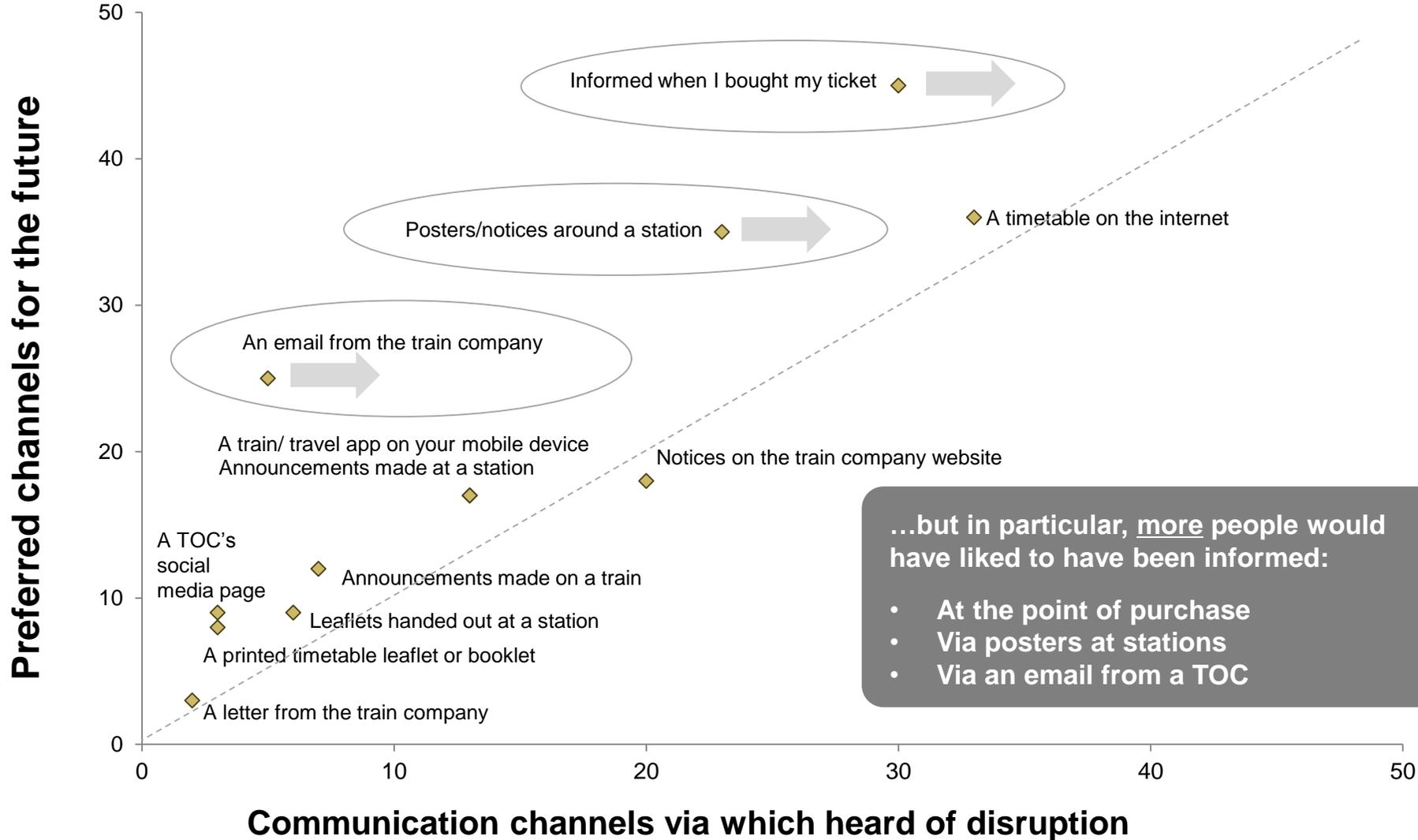
- All 2010 figures are significantly higher (except 'A text message from the train company')
- Addition of 'Inform me when I buy' to 2015 survey appears to have been the cause of this, by encouraging a greater spread across the other possible responses

\*Based on 2010 comparable data. In 2010, there were no Hayes & Harlington replacement buses, nor was there a South West Trains sample group. As a result, only the long distance trains and Reading replacement buses are compared across the two projects

\*\*NB option not available in 2010 questionnaire  
\*\*\* In the weeks leading up to disruption

# On the whole, actual comms channels performed in the right proportions compared to passengers' preferences...

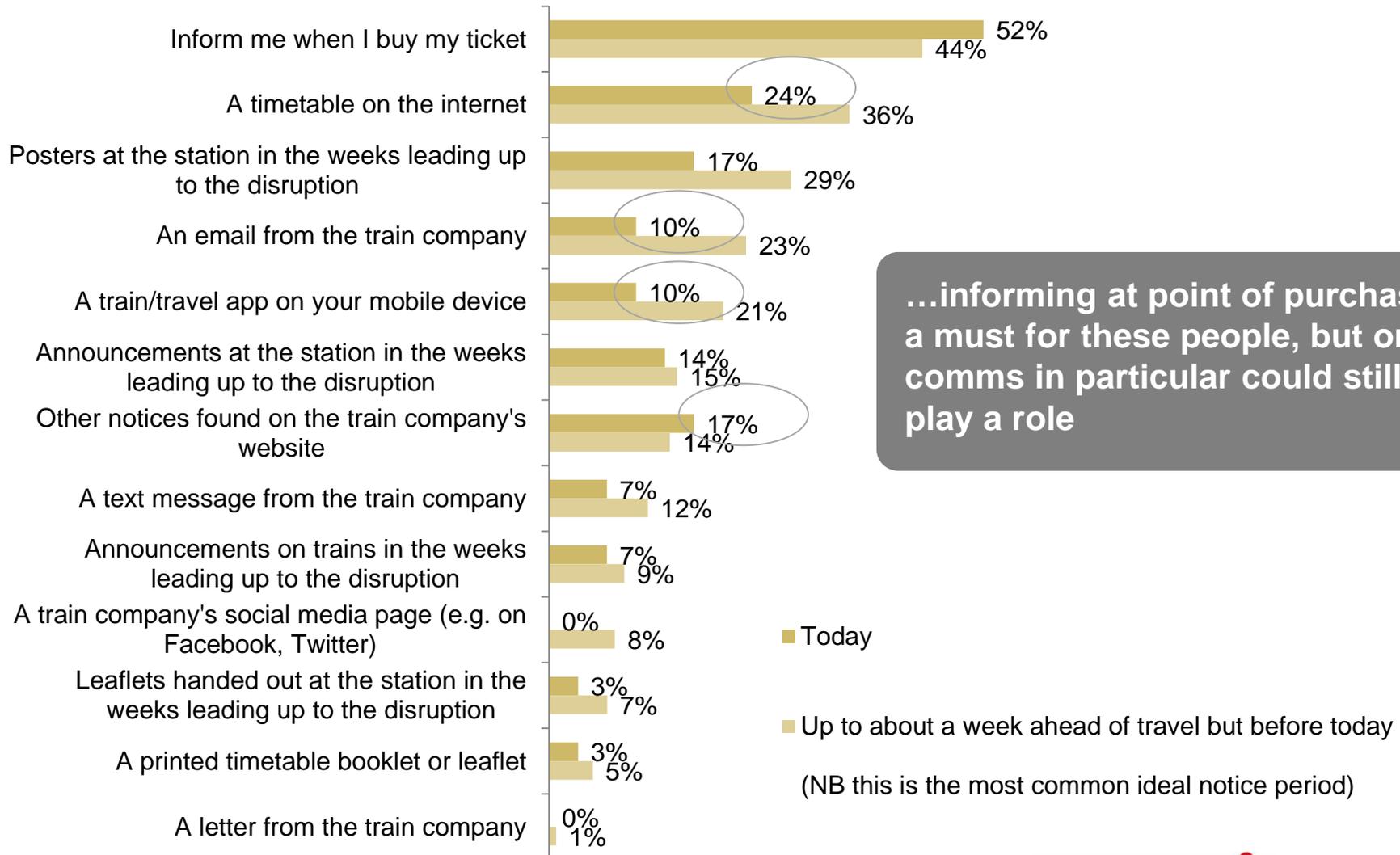
## Communication channels – current vs. future preference



# Inevitably, some will always learn of disruption on the day...

## Communication channels

Among those finding out today vs. with ideal notice



Q16. What would be the best way(s) to let you know about similar disruption to your journey in the future?  
 Base: Those finding out today (250), those finding out up to a week ahead (403)

# Fare preferences

## Fare preferences (%)

Fares should be reduced when engineering work results in a degraded level of service

75

It is acceptable for fares to stay the same during engineering work

20

Fares should be increased during engineering work to recognise the investment being made in the rail network

1

# Summary of factors influencing impressions of disruption handling

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**Knowing in advance (usually up to about a week ahead**, but varies for different passenger groups / route types).



**Being informed at point of purchase, or via pro-active comms from TOCs**



**Accurate and practical information**



**Practical help on the day**



**Knowing the reasons why** the work is taking place – with emphasis on how it will improve reliability, frequency or journey lengths (where these are genuine potential benefits).



In particular an understanding of the reasons for disruption can aid passengers' tolerance, with resulting impact on other perceptions such as value for money.

So how do the findings compare across the sample groups?



# Notable passenger characteristics for the four sample groups 1

## Key differences in passenger profile compared to typical weeks in the year\*

- Little commuting (9% compared to 30% normal average)
- As such, typical journeys being made are infrequent/uncommon
- Higher than average use of Off-peak and Advance tickets
- Twice as many booking in advance than normal (51% compared to 36% on average)
- A little younger than average\*
- Thus a little more likely to be in work or education

\* Comparisons made between the sample for this survey and that for First Great Western (total TOC level), in the Autumn 2014 wave of the NRPS

\*\* Frequency refers to the type of journey being made during the Easter period. Individual respondents may also travel by train for different reasons and with different frequency, at other times

# Notable passenger characteristics for the four sample groups 2

## Long distance service users

- Very infrequent rail travellers\*\*
- Making leisure (holiday) trips
- Booking in advance online
- Notable student presence

## Reading RRB users

- More mixed passenger profile than for other groups:
- Strong leisure bias but some commuting
- Typically more frequent journeys than other groups
- Purchasing ticket on the day

## South West Trains users

- Average frequency of journeys
- Making leisure day trips
- Typically purchasing ticket on the day
- Marginally older than other groups

## Hayes RRB users

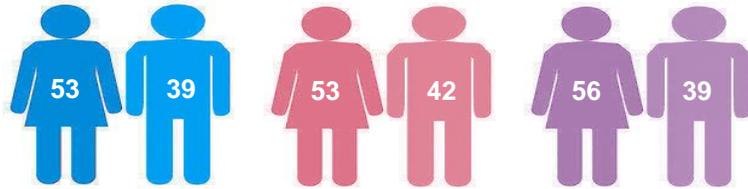
- Most frequent journeys of all groups
- Making local journeys: days out or going to work
- Purchasing ticket on the day

\* Comparisons made between the sample for this survey and that for First Great Western (total TOC level), in the Autumn 2014 wave of the NRPS

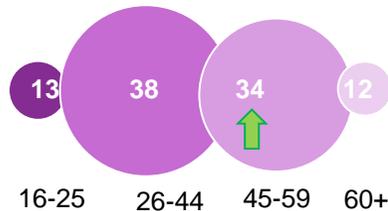
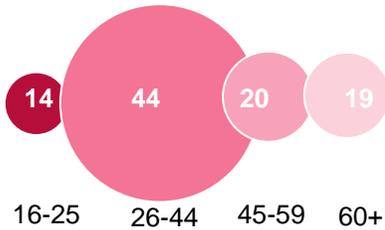
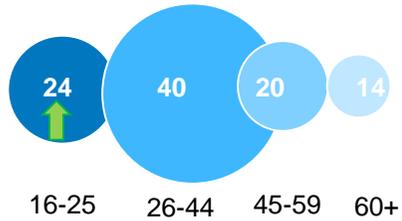
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# Passenger profile – demographics 1

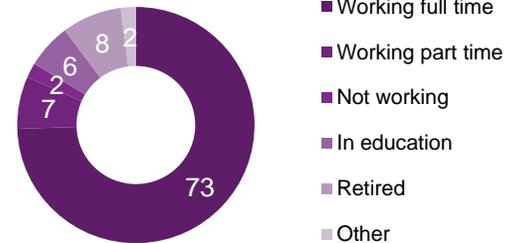
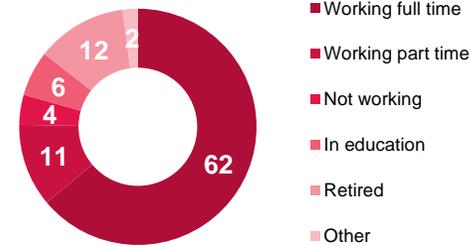
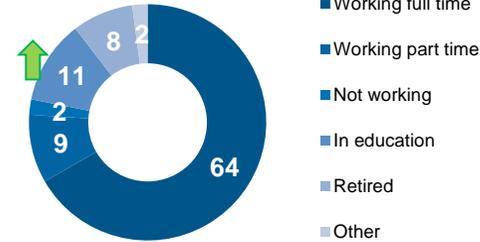
Gender (%)



Age (%)



Working status (%)



Full time workers - significantly higher number amongst the Hayes and Harlington replacement bus passengers

Significantly higher than other sample groups  
 Significantly lower than other sample groups  
 Q30, Q32, Q33

■ Long distance trains    
 ■ Replacement buses (Reading/Hayes combined)    
 ■ South West Trains

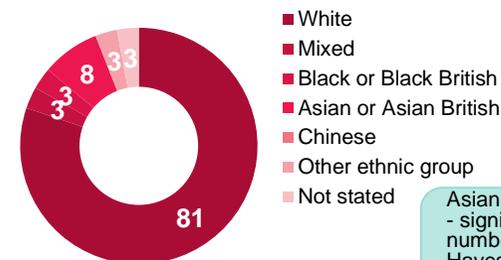
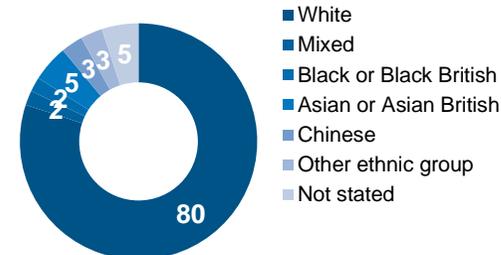
Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, replacement buses n=314, south west trains n=127

# Passenger profile – demographics 2

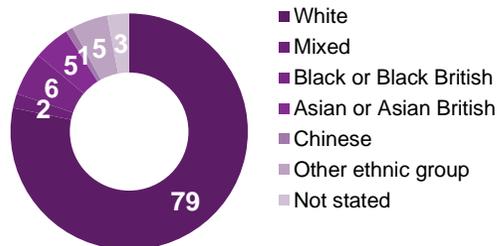
## Health conditions (%)

%	Long distance trains	Reading buses	Hayes & Harlington buses	South West Trains
Have disability	8	10	10	7
Condition/illness have an adverse affect on ability to make journeys by train (based on those who have disability)	56	44	25	33
Vision	1	2	2	2
Hearing	1	-	-	-
Mobility	3	4	3	1
Dexterity	1	1	-	-
Learning or understanding or concentrating	1	1	-	-
Memory	0	1	-	-
Mental health	1	1	1	2
Stamina or breathing or fatigue	2	1	3	-
Socially or behaviourally	-	1	-	-
Other	2	2	3	3

## Ethnicity (%)



Asian or Asian British - significantly higher number amongst the Hayes and Harlington replacement bus passengers



- Long distance trains
- Replacement buses
- South West Trains

Q34 Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?  
 Q31a Are you affected by any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? Q31b Does your condition/illness have an adverse affect on your ability to make journeys by train?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, replacement buses n=314, south west trains n=127

# Passenger profile – journey purpose

## Main purpose of the journey (%)

	%	Long distance trains	Replacement buses total	South West Trains	%	Reading replacement buses	Hayes & Harlington replacement buses
 Daily commuting to/from work		2 ↓	10	6		8	12
 Less regular commuting to/from work		4	4	1		3	5
 Daily commuting for education		0	-	-		-	-
 Less regular commuting for education		2	1	1		1	1
 On company business		2	2	1		2	1
 Shopping trip		1	6	6		7	4
 Visiting friends or relatives		43	41	34 ↓		47 ↑	35
 Sport/entertainment		2	4	10		4	4
 A day out		10	15	23 ↑		7	22 ↑
 Travel to/from holiday		28 ↑	12	8		13	10
On personal business		2	1	2		1	-

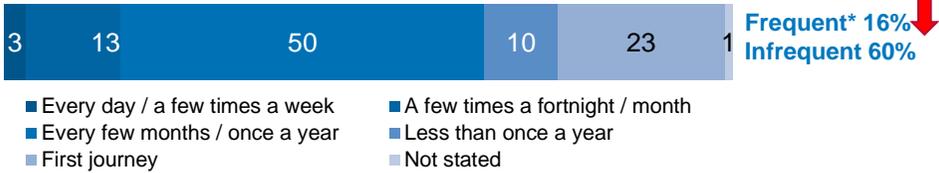


↑ ↓ Significantly higher/ lower than other sample groups

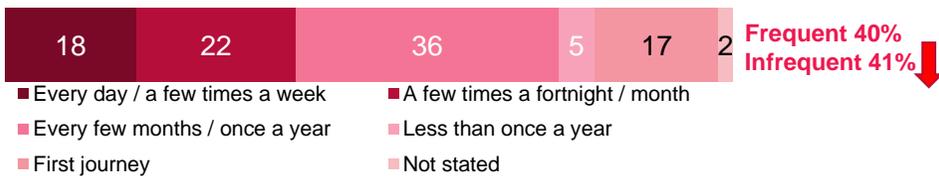
# Passenger profile – frequency of using affected routes

## Frequency of making this journey (%)

### Long distance trains



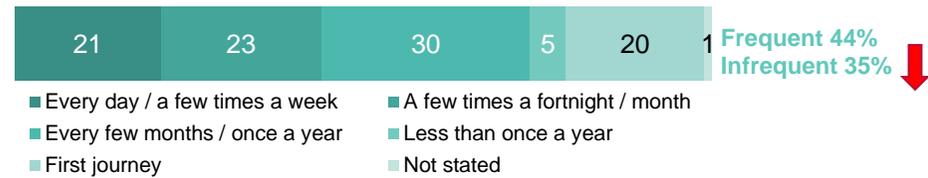
### Replacement buses



### Reading replacement buses



### Hayes & Harlington buses



### South West Trains



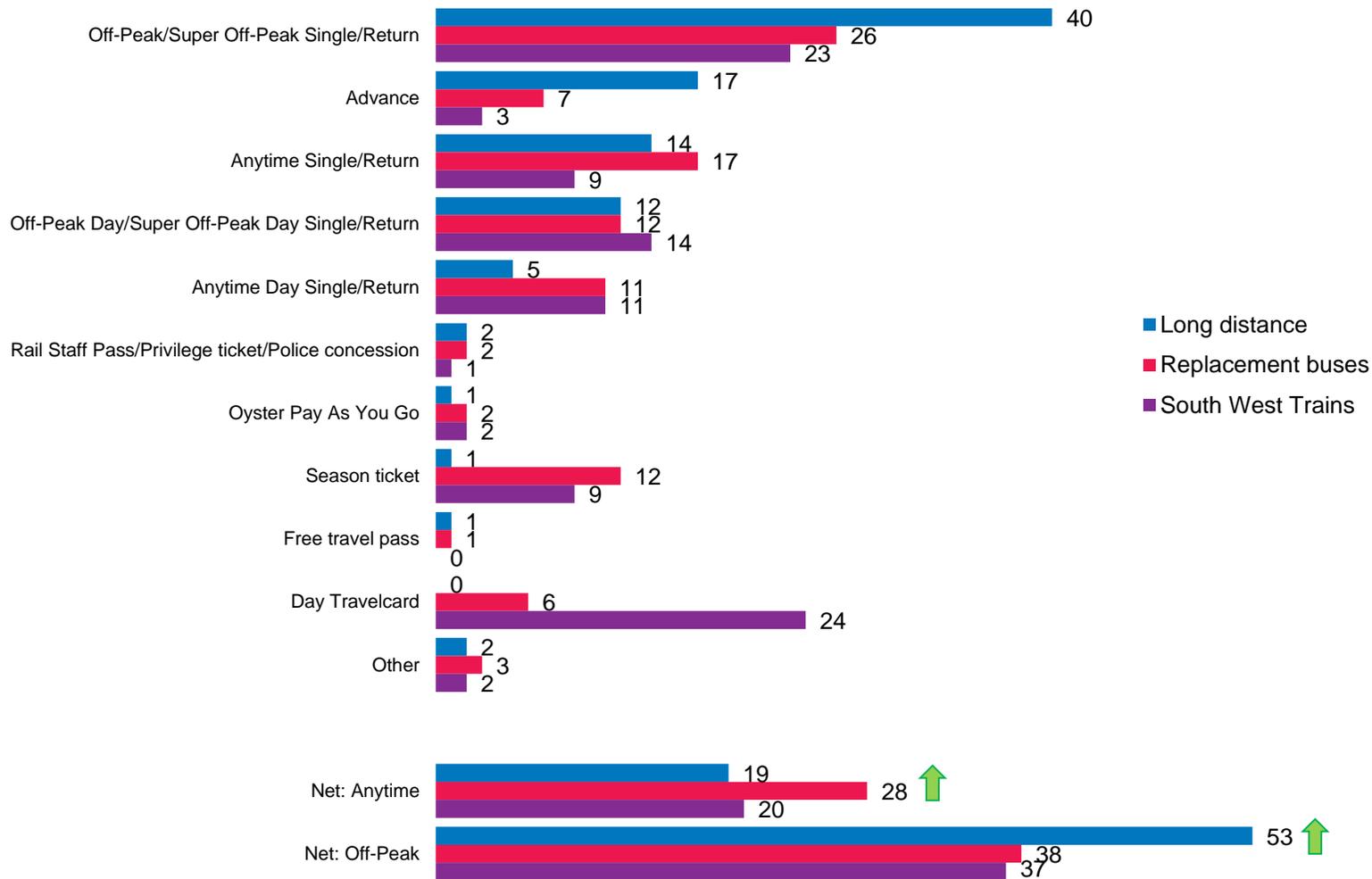
Significantly lower than other sample groups

\* "Frequent" = make this journey once a month or more; "Infrequent" = make this journey less often; this is the same definition as is used as standard in reporting of NRPS results

Q6. How frequently do you usually make this particular journey?  
Base: All respondents: Long distance train n=561, Reading replacement buses n=156, Hayes & Harlington replacement buses n=158; South West Trains n=127

# Passenger profile – ticket usage

## Type of ticket used (%)

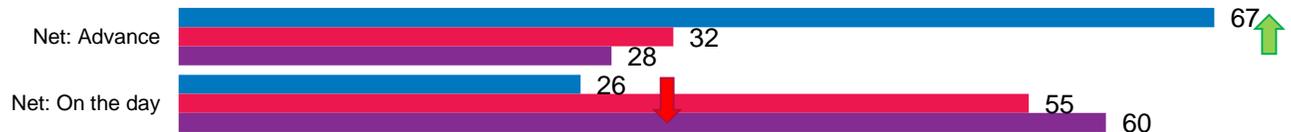
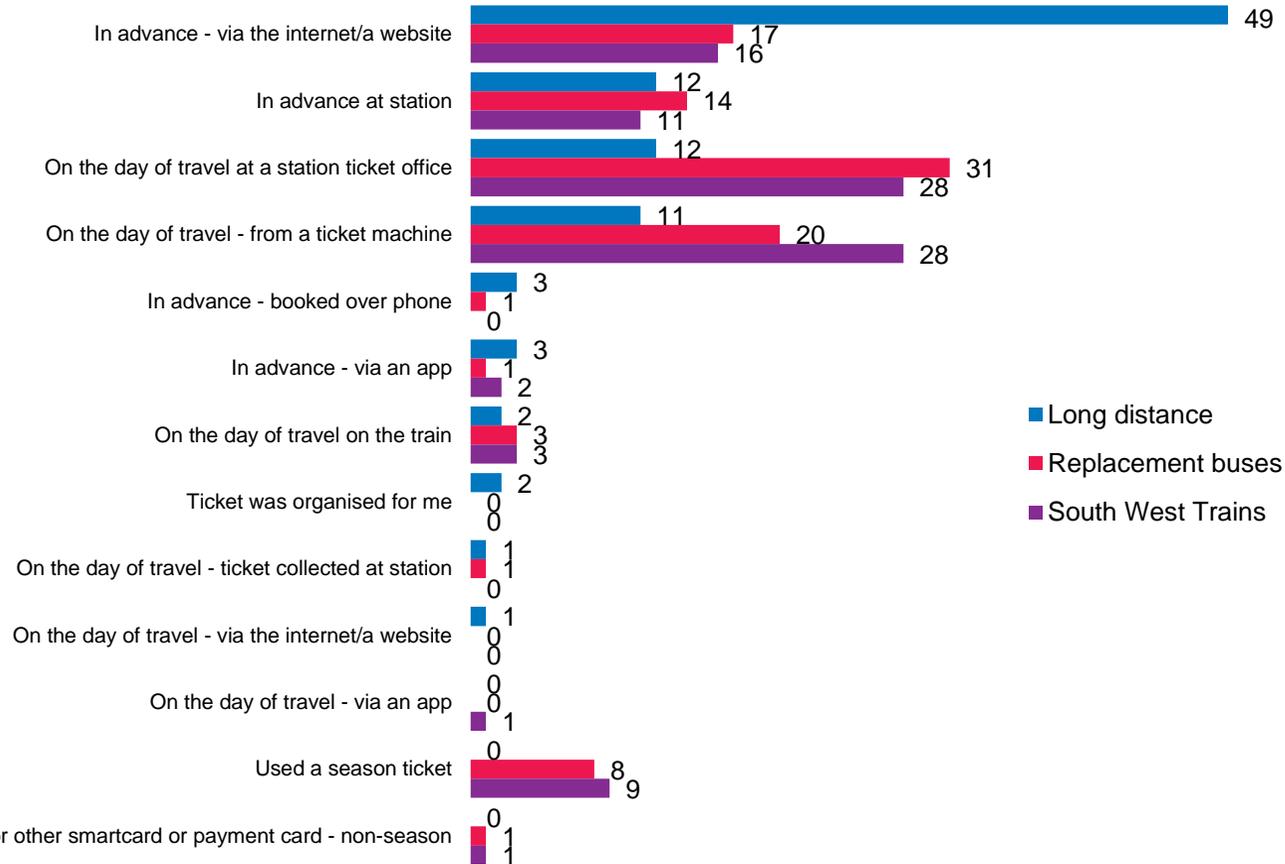


↑ Significantly higher than other sample groups

Q35. What type of ticket did you use for your journey today?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): Long distance train n=561, Replacement buses n = 314; South West Trains n=127

# Passenger profile – ticket purchase method

## Purchase method (%)



Significantly higher/ lower than other sample groups

Q36. How did you buy your ticket for your journey today?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, Replacement buses n = 314; South West Trains n=127

# The story of each of our sample groups

*(Pen portraits)*



# Maria – a long distance train passenger



Maria's train has been diverted today, making her journey **longer by about an hour and 20 minutes**.

She did expect her journey to be somehow disrupted today, as **she saw a notice about it when she booked her ticket on the Internet some time ago**.

However, **the information she was given was fairly basic**. It was about enough to get an idea of what was happening and why. Retrospectively, perhaps a little more information could have been provided then and there when she booked, on how much longer it would take, and perhaps on the fact that this engineering work will mean shorter journeys to London in the future.

Luckily **she actually checked the timetable herself on the internet** ahead of her travel as well. **That gave her a good idea of how much longer the journey was likely to take**, so she could make sure her parents, who were picking her up from the station, knew of the delay.

**Despite feeling that she received lesser service than she paid for, Maria thinks the train company handled the disruption OK**. It was quite annoying as **she won't really benefit from this engineering work** much in the future herself, but she understands that it needs to happen at some point.

For the future: Maria hates using replacement bus services, so **it's really important to her that she is informed of any disruptions to train services when she buys her ticket**. **She also would like to receive an e-mail with any other details** she should know ahead of her travel, preferably a about a week ahead.



25

AGE



Employed full time

WORK STATUS



Off-Peak bought in advance online

TRAIN TICKET



Cardiff to London Paddington

Return from holiday

JOURNEY



Made for the first time

FREQUENCY OF THE JOURNEY

Satisfied:  
**66%**

Priority for the future:  
**Reduced journey times**

# Tony – a Reading bus replacement passenger



When Tony arrived at the station this morning he was expecting some disruption to his travel. **He saw posters and notices around the station when he was making another train journey recently**, which then prompted him to check a timetable on the Internet and pay a little bit more attention to any other information he saw about engineering work at Easter. **Today the ticket office staff also made sure he knew about the changes, when he bought his ticket.**

There definitely was enough information ahead of the disruption and judging by what he saw today and what he experienced, **the information he received was pretty accurate.**

**His experience of the replacement bus service today was actually quite good.**

The directions given to/from the replacement bus service were clear, there was enough time to transfer between bus and train, and the bus service appeared to be relatively frequent. Tony had a small suitcase as he was taking various presents and food gifts to a friend's for an Easter meal, and could have done with a bit more help to get it into the luggage hold – he hadn't been sure whether it should go in there or on board with him.

All in all **he wouldn't be too worried about using replacement bus services in the future**, although he'd always want to travel by train for at least part of a journey if possible.

**Like with this journey, the best way to tell him about potential disruption in the future would be posters at the station** in the weeks leading up to the disruption, at the point of buying his ticket and by highlighting any changes in a timetable on the Internet.

Satisfied:  
**82%**

Priority for the future:  
**More reliable trains**



63

AGE



Employed part-time

WORK STATUS



Off-Peak bought on the day from the ticket office at the station

TRAIN TICKET



Reading to Didcot  
To visit friends

JOURNEY



Every few months

FREQUENCY OF  
THE JOURNEY

# Jane – a Hayes & Harlington bus replacement passenger



Jane woke up this morning and decided to treat herself to a day out. Not thinking much about it she got dressed and headed for the station, she was **totally caught off guard when she was told when buying her ticket, that a bus service was in operation today**. She decided to still go ahead with her plans for the day and travel on the replacement bus service

When waiting for the bus she noticed posters warning of the disruption and the station staff explaining briefly what was happening and why, and what the alternative arrangements were. But **she wished she knew about it before she made her plans this morning**, she would have gone somewhere else for the day.

Overall, the journey was more disrupted than she had thought it would be when she headed out this morning. **It took her an extra hour than normal to get to Slough. She did not expect it to be that long! But actually, the service delivered by the replacement buses was OK**, and in particular she felt the station staff had done well with directing people to and from the buses. Having said that, the buses could have been more frequent, and it would have been nice to have seen more help for passengers with luggage, which looked a bit more difficult than it would have been if the normal train service had been running.

**Although it's not ideal, on the basis of what she experienced today she will not be completely put off from using replacement buses on this route in the future** – if it's absolutely necessary!

In the future, the **best way to tell Jane about potential disruptions to her train travel would be posters at the station in the weeks leading up to the disruption** and to highlight any changes in a timetable on the Internet. (Her friend also mentioned that an email in advance would have been really helpful). They wouldn't need to hear about it until a week in advance.



38

AGE



Employed full time

WORK STATUS



Anytime bought on the day from the ticket office at the station

TRAIN TICKET



Hayes & Harlington to Slough

A day out

JOURNEY



A few times a month

FREQUENCY OF THE JOURNEY

Satisfied:  
71%

Priority for the future:  
Direct services; improved  
station facilities

# Rose – a South West Trains passenger



Three months ago Rose bought a ticket for a play at the theatre in London. She has wanted to see this play for a while now and the day has finally arrived.

**A month or so ago she heard from a friend that the train services during Easter were to be disrupted** due to engineering work happening – something to do with improvements at Reading station. **She spoke at first to station staff at Twyford (her local station) then checked a timetable on the train company website to confirm it.**

Based on the information she found, she decided the best thing would be to drive to Reading station, park the car there and then catch the South West Trains to London Waterloo. She knew this would take a lot longer than normal, but the other option would be to use a bus for part of the journey and catch a train to London further down the line – Rose would rather not go near one of those slow replacement buses!

Considering all the factors (the amount of information available, the accuracy of the information, and how it all worked on the day), **she thinks her experience was acceptable, if a bit inconvenient.**

**The best way of communicating any planned engineering work and likely disruption to her travel in the future would be via posters or announcements at the station** in the weeks leading up to the disruption, as well as timetables on the Internet, which she always checks before train travel.

Satisfied:  
**66%**

Priority for the future:  
**More reliable, less crowded  
trains**



47

AGE



Employed full time

WORK STATUS



Off-Peak bought on the day from the ticket machine at the station

TRAIN TICKET



Reading to London Waterloo

To an entertainment event

JOURNEY



Every few months

FREQUENCY OF THE JOURNEY

# Variations in the experience of journeys during the Easter disruption



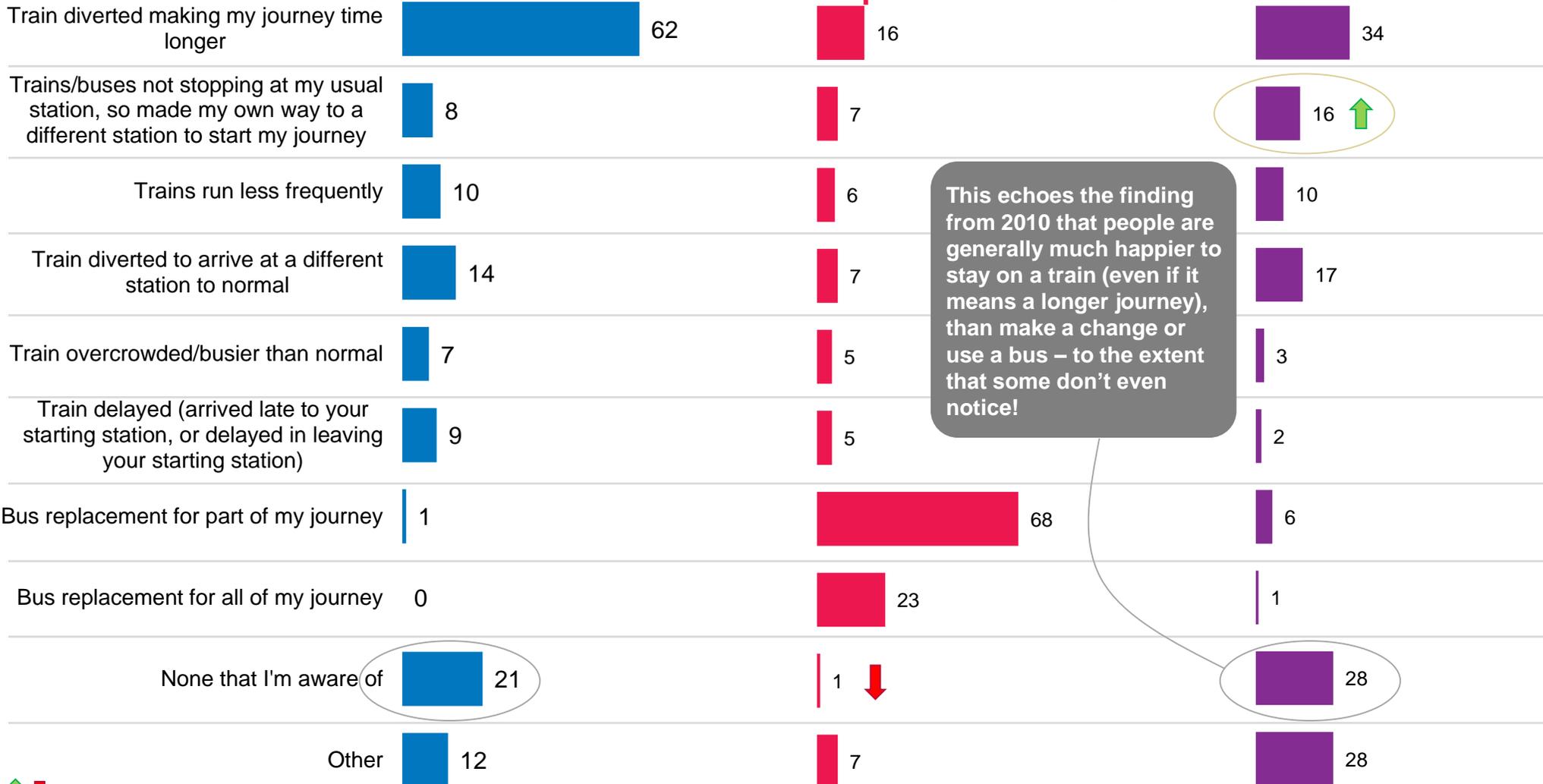
# Some rail-only users were oblivious to any disruption; some SWT users felt they needed to go a little more out of their way

## Type of disruption experienced (%)

### Long distance trains

### Replacement buses

### South West Trains



↑ ↓ Significantly higher/ lower than other sample groups

Q7. What kind of disruption have you experienced personally on your journey today?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, replacement buses n=314, south west trains n=127

# Around a quarter were unprepared for how long their journey took in practice

Knowledge of how long this journey usually takes (%)

Length of delays (%)

Journey length expectations (%)

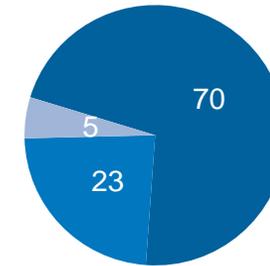
On average (minutes)

## Long distance trains

76% know how long this particular journey usually takes by train



81



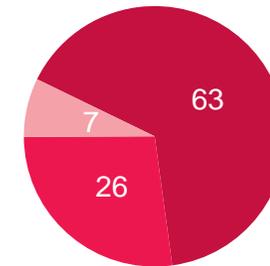
- Yes, I expected my journey to be so long
- No, I did not expect my journey to be so long
- Don't know

## Replacement buses

78% know how long this particular journey usually takes by train



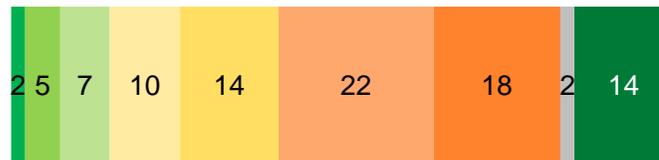
54



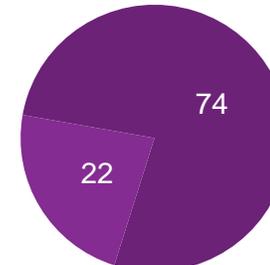
- Yes, I expect my journey to be so long
- No, I did not expect my journey to be so long
- Don't know

## South West Trains

79% know how long this particular journey usually takes by train



57



- Yes, I expected my journey to be so long
- No, I did not expect my journey to be so long
- Don't know

- 1-10mins
- 11-20mins
- 21-30mins
- 31-40mins
- 41-50mins
- 51-60mins
- 61+ minutes
- Don't know how much longer
- No additional time

Q9. How much additional time will you be spending on the train/bus due to engineering works? Q10. Were you expecting today's journey to be this long?

Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, replacement buses n=314, south west trains n=127; all those who knew how much longer the journey was long distance train n=429, replacement buses n=245, south west trains n=100; all who knew how much longer their journey will be than normal: long distance train n=357, replacement buses n=224, south west trains n=78

# Unpreparedness was particularly high amongst users of Hayes RRBs

Knowledge of how long this journey usually takes (%)

Length of delays (%)

Journey length expectations (%)

On average (minutes)

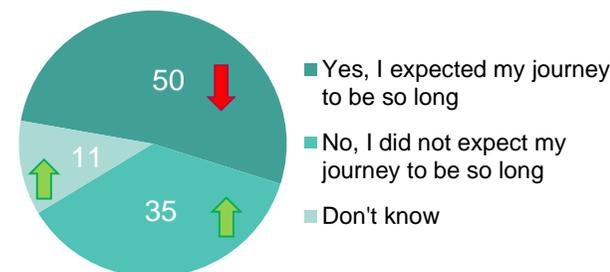
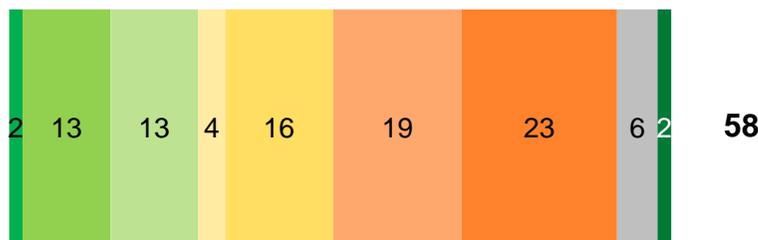
## Reading replacement buses

75% know how long this particular journey usually takes by train



## Hayes & Harlington replacement buses

81% know how long this particular journey usually takes by train



- 1-10mins
- 11-20mins
- 21-30mins
- 31-40mins
- 41-50mins
- 51-60mins
- 61+ minutes
- Don't know how much longer
- No additional time

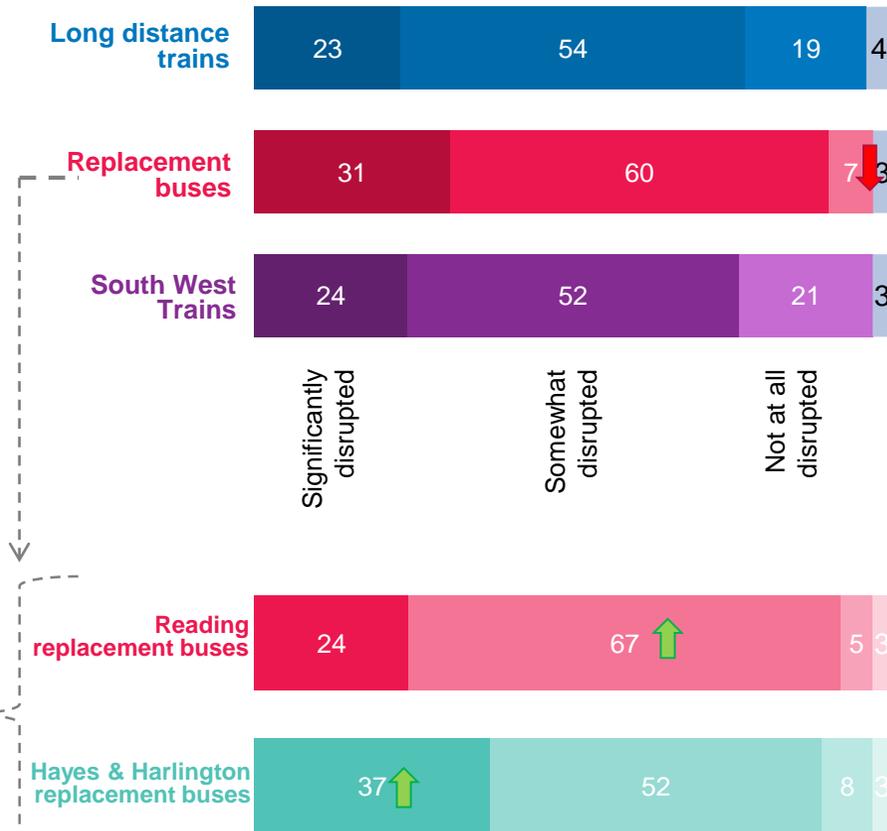
↑ ↓ Significantly higher/ lower than other sample groups

Q9. How much additional time will you be spending on the train/bus due to engineering works? Q10. Were you expecting today's journey to be this long?

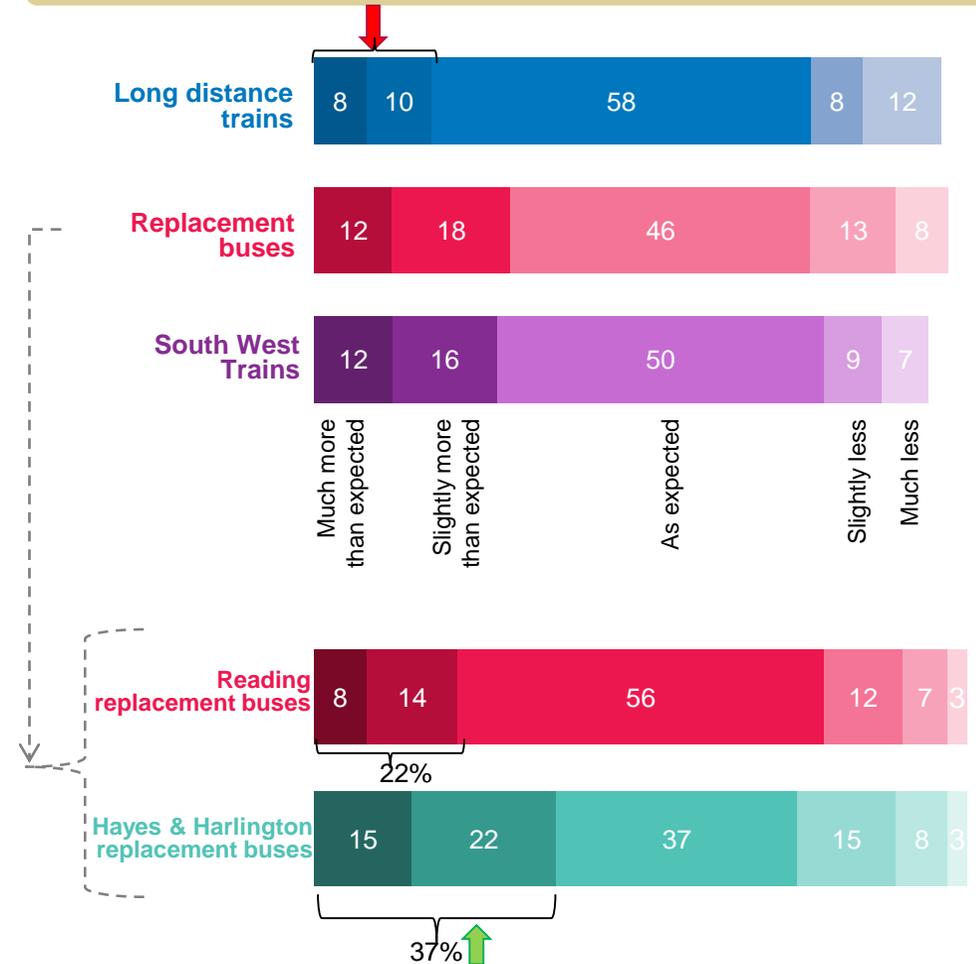
Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): using replacement buses Reading n=156, Hayes & Harlington n=158; all those who knew how much longer the journey was Reading n=117, Hayes & Harlington n=128; all who knew how much longer their journey will be than normal: Reading n=111, Hayes & Harlington n=113

# On average a quarter found the journey more disrupted than expected; however this varies, with particular surprise for level of disruption on Hayes RRB routes

## Expectations of disruption (%)



## Experience of disruption relative to expectation (%)

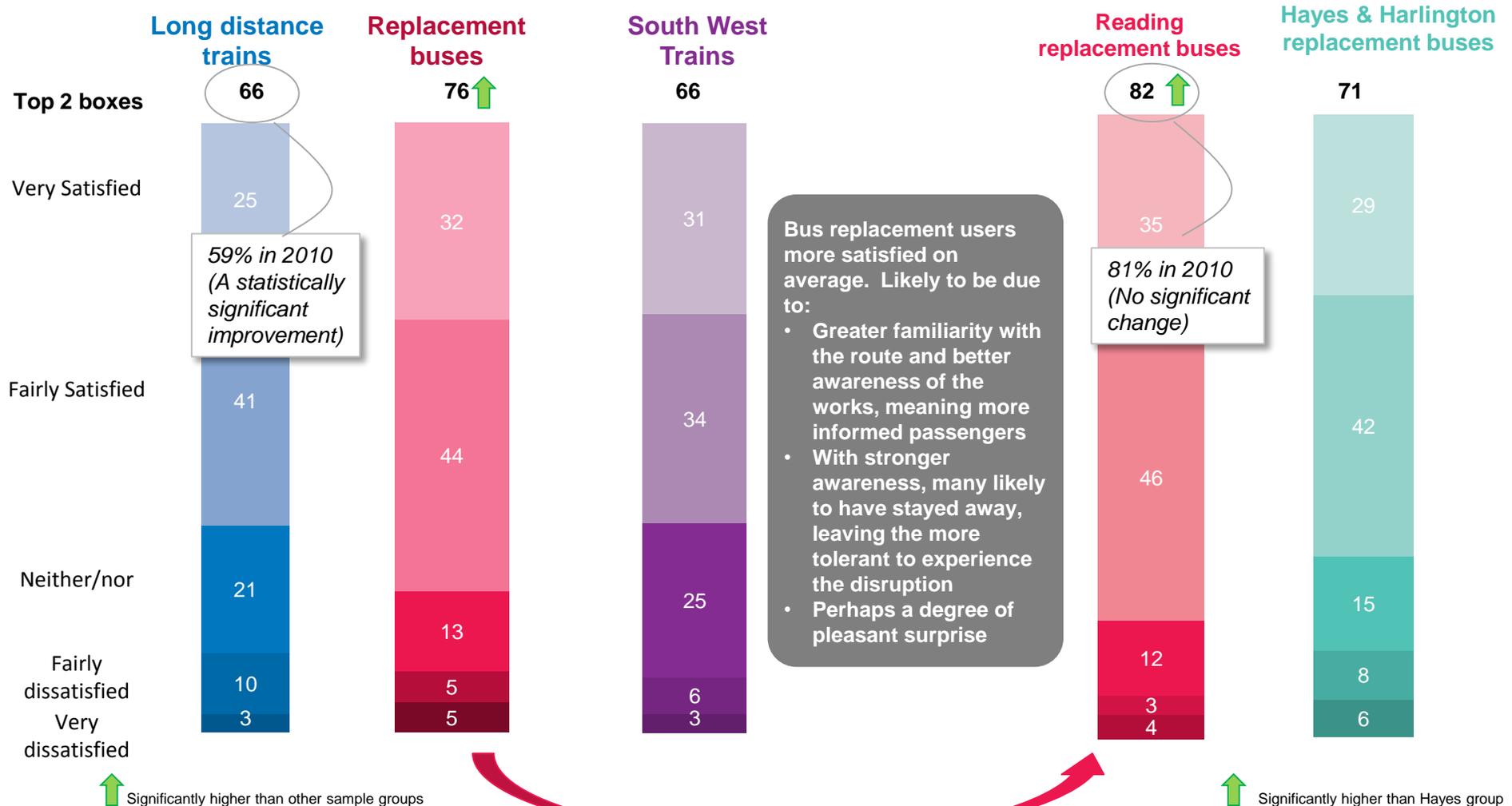


Significantly higher than other sample groups  
 Significantly lower than other sample groups

Q19. On the basis of the information you received (either before or after arriving at the station), how disrupted did you expect today's journey to be? Q20. Was your actual journey more or less disrupted than you expected?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): Long distance trains n=561, Reading buses n=156, Hayes & Harlington buses n=158, South West Trains n=127

# Reasonable but varied impression of the way disruption was handled

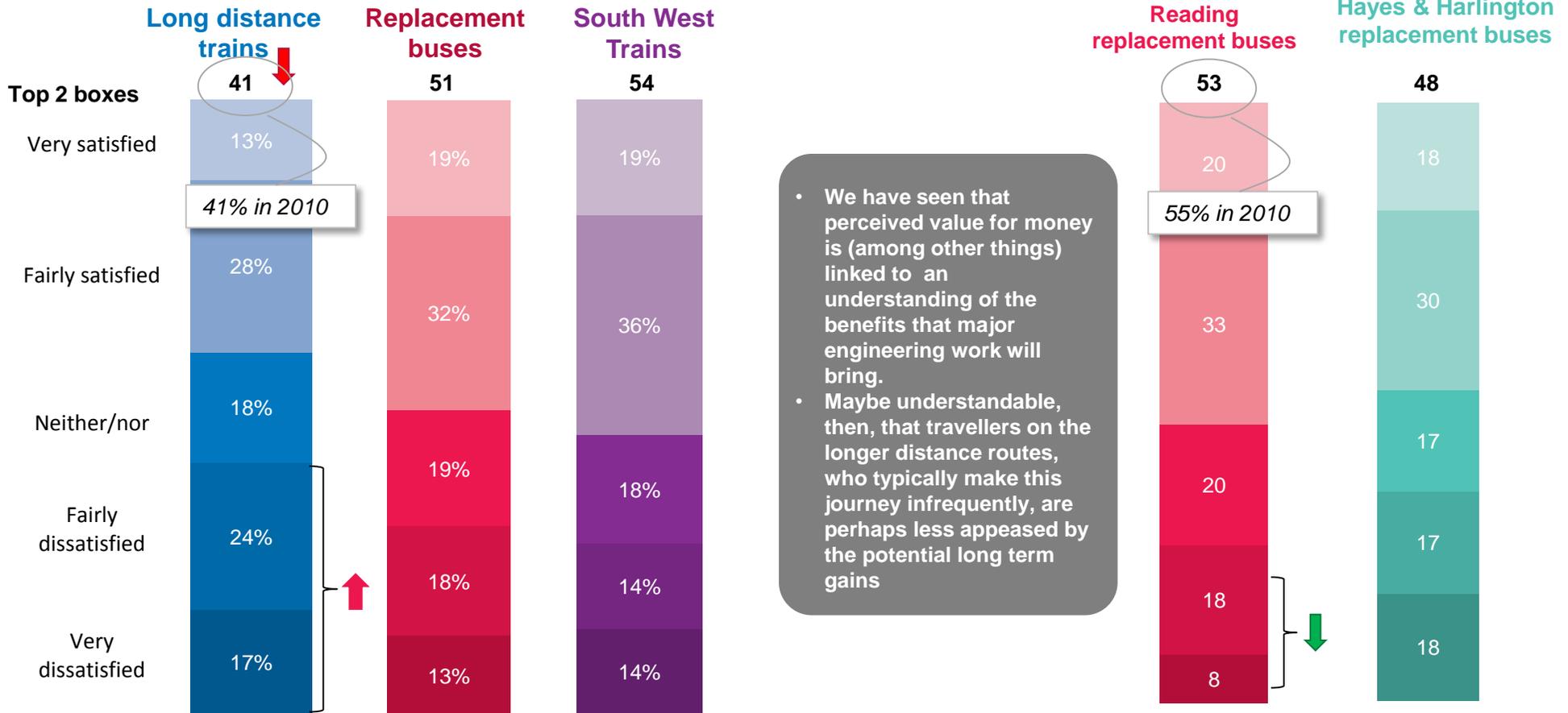
Overall satisfaction with the way the train company has handled disruptions to the journey (%)



Q23. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the train company have handled disruptions to your journey today?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): Long distance train n=561, Replacement buses n=314; South West Trains n=127

# On average, around half were satisfied with the value for money of their journey

## Satisfaction with value for money (%)



• We have seen that perceived value for money is (among other things) linked to an understanding of the benefits that major engineering work will bring.  
 • Maybe understandable, then, that travellers on the longer distance routes, who typically make this journey infrequently, are perhaps less appeased by the potential long term gains

↓ Significantly lower than Hayes group

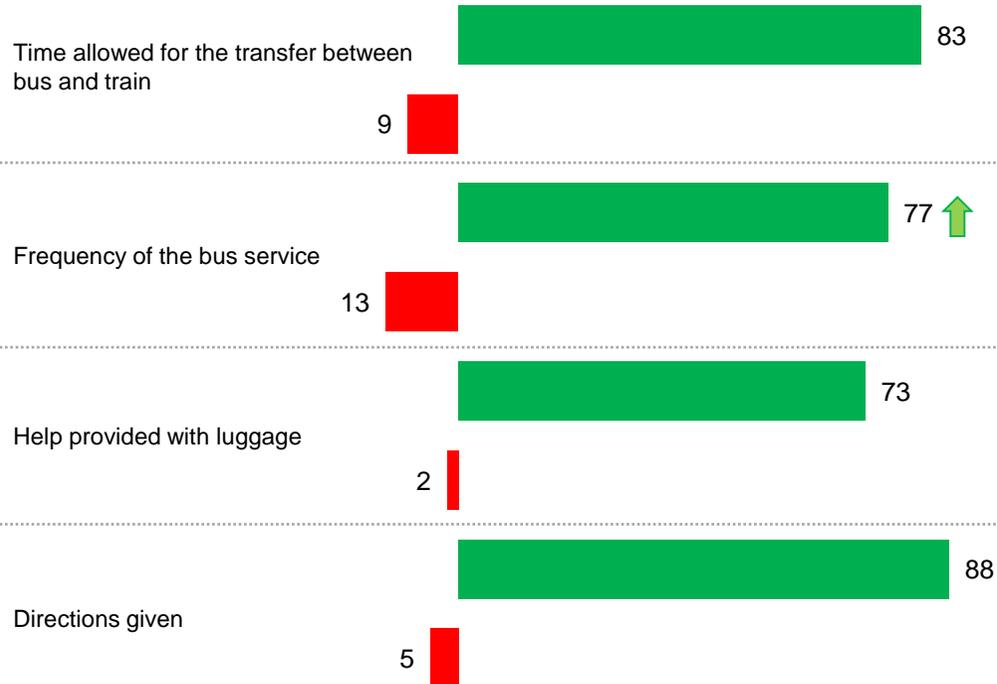
↑ ↓ Significantly higher/ lower than other samples

Q24. How satisfied are you with the value for money of your ticket for today's journey?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): Long distance trains n=561, Replacement buses n=314; South West Trains n=127

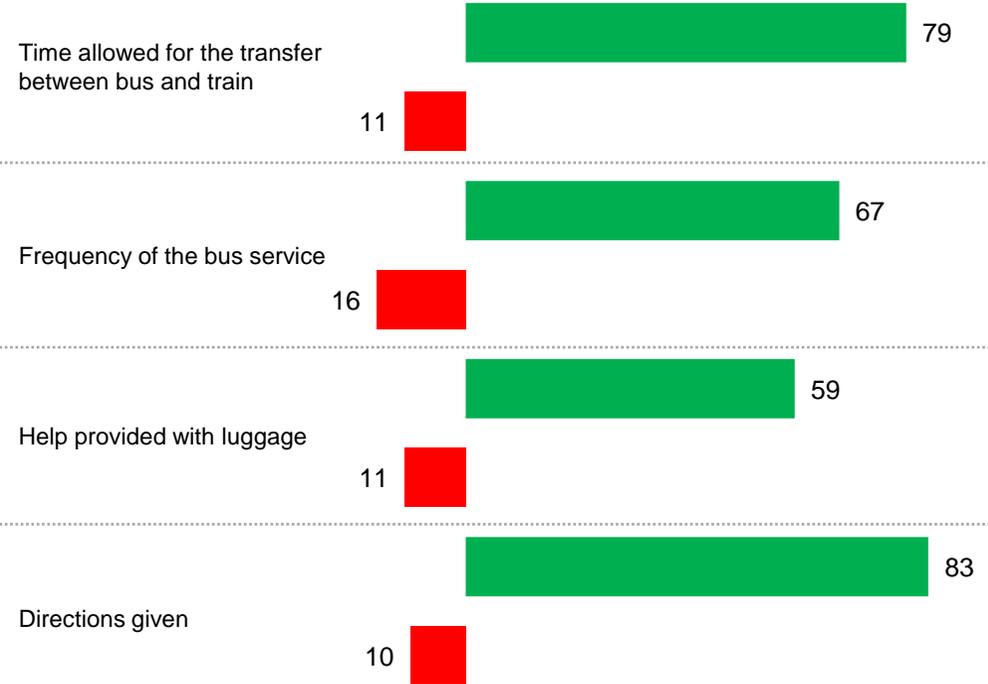
# Perhaps with the exception of luggage help, 'logistics' on the RRBs were managed well; frequency of the Reading buses also appreciated

## Satisfaction with Replacement Buses (%)

### Reading replacement buses



### Hayes & Harlington replacement buses



↑ Significantly higher than Hayes sample group

■ Dissatisfied ■ Satisfied

\*Excludes 'neither dissatisfied nor satisfied' and 'don't know'

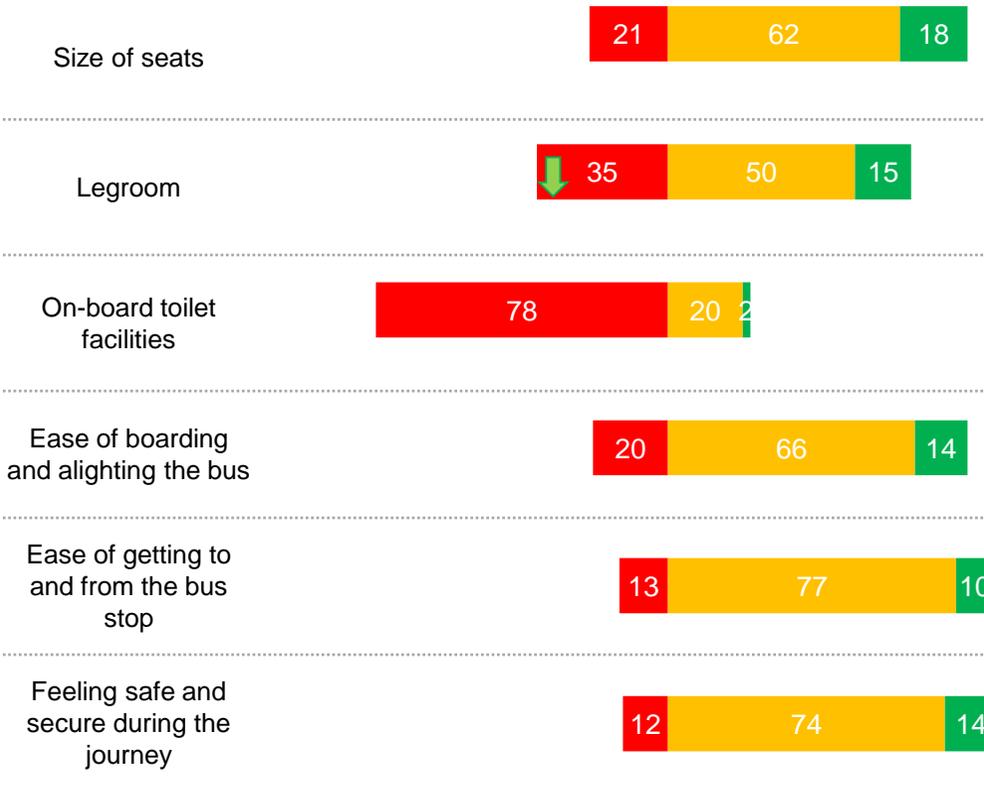
Q21. Thinking about when you caught or changed to the replacement bus, how satisfied were you with the following?  
Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): buses n=314; Reading buses n=156, Hayes & Harlington buses n=158

# It's difficult for rail users to see RRBs measuring up well compared to trains, but on the whole the experience appears to have been acceptable

## Bus service standards (%)

### Reading replacement buses

### Hayes & Harlington replacement buses



↑ Significantly lower than Hayes sample group

Worse Same Better

\*Excludes 'neither dissatisfied nor satisfied' and 'don't know'

Q22 How did the bus standards compare with the train on the following?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): Replacement buses n=314; Reading buses n=156, Hayes & Harlington buses n=158

# When engineering work is necessary, bus replacements remain unpopular compared to maintaining rail service in some form

## Likelihood to travel in these situations (%)

■ Would not travel / use other mode  
■ Unlikely  
■ Likely

Situation	Would not travel / use other mode (%)	Unlikely (%)	Likely (%)
Buses replacing trains on sections of route	15	38	34
Buses replacing trains on whole route	25	42	21
Trains running on a diverted route	2	14	66
Needing to change trains on a route that is usually direct	3	16	62

## Most acceptable timing of disruption

Long distance trains

No trains running after 9pm until next morning (36%)

Replacement buses

No trains running after 9pm until next morning (29%)

South West Trains

Weekend line diversions or amended timetables (32%)

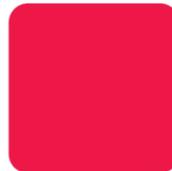
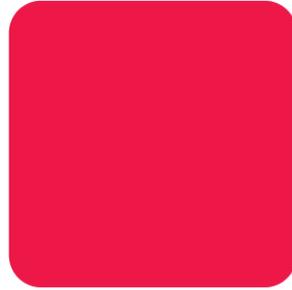
Only 5 per-cent of those experiencing RRBs would avoid travel, with two thirds likely to use again (and only marginally more positive among Reading rather than Hayes area groups).

Little difference in opinion amongst long-distance and SWT service users. Though both slightly more confident about these scenarios than RRB users.

Indications of an influence of the 'fear of the unknown' ... can future comms also address this with reassurance that the experience can be managed well?

Q27. If there are engineering works in future, how likely would you be to travel by rail under the following circumstances? Q28. If similar engineering work was to take place in the future, which of these options would you prefer?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated) (1002); Long distance trains n=561; Replacement buses n=xx; South West Trains n=127

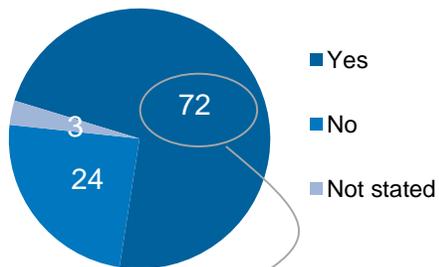
# Variations in the provision of information



# A majority were aware of the disruption in advance, particularly those taking advantage of the SWT service

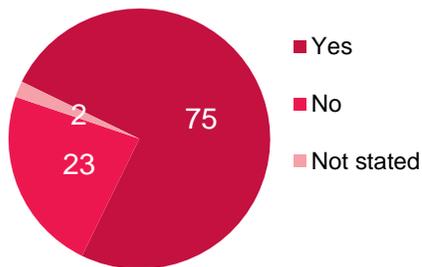
Aware of disruption in advance (%)

## Long distance trains

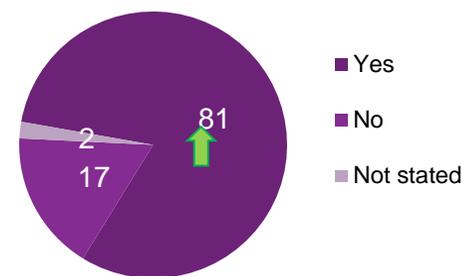


*73% among long-distance rail travellers in 2010*

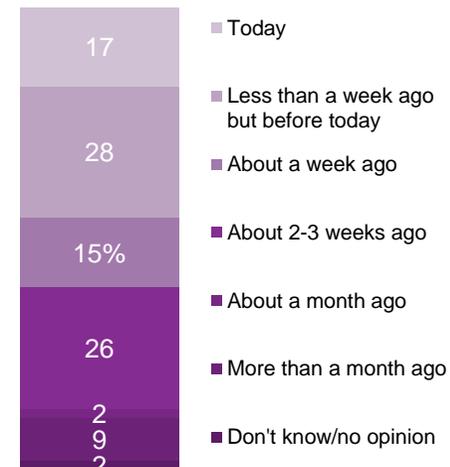
## Replacement buses



## South West Trains



When found out about the disruption to today's journey (%)

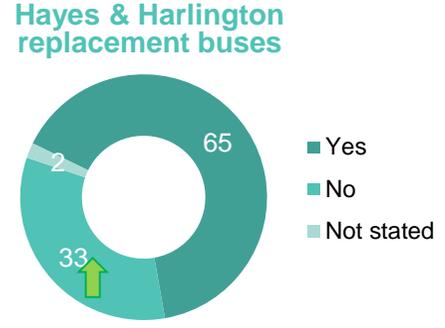
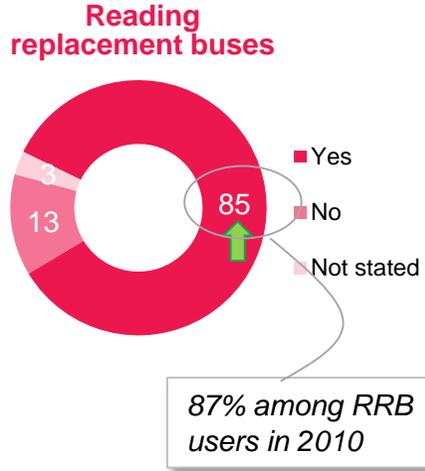


Significantly higher/ lower than other sample groups

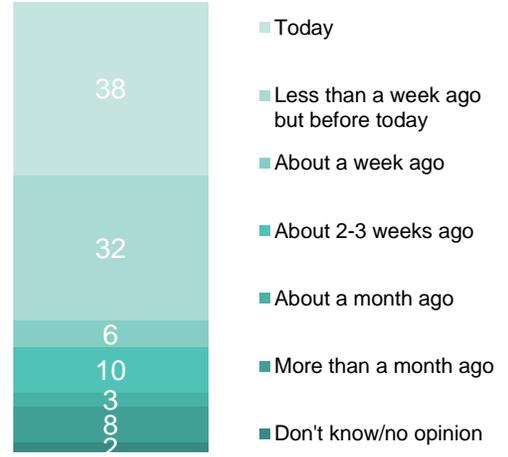
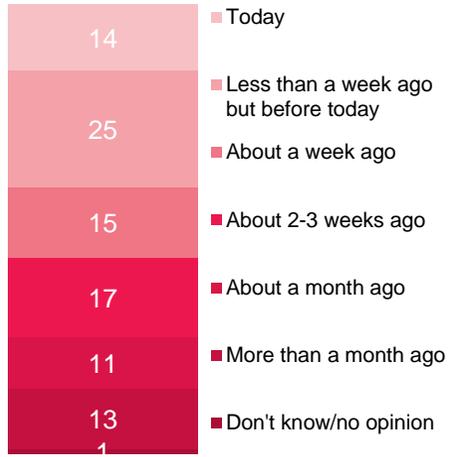
Q11. Did you know about this disruption BEFORE you arrived at the station today? Q12. When did you find out about the disruption to today's journey?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, replacement buses n=314, south west trains n=127

# A third of Hayes-area travellers were caught out on the day

Aware of disruption in advance (%)



When found out about the disruption to today's journey (%)



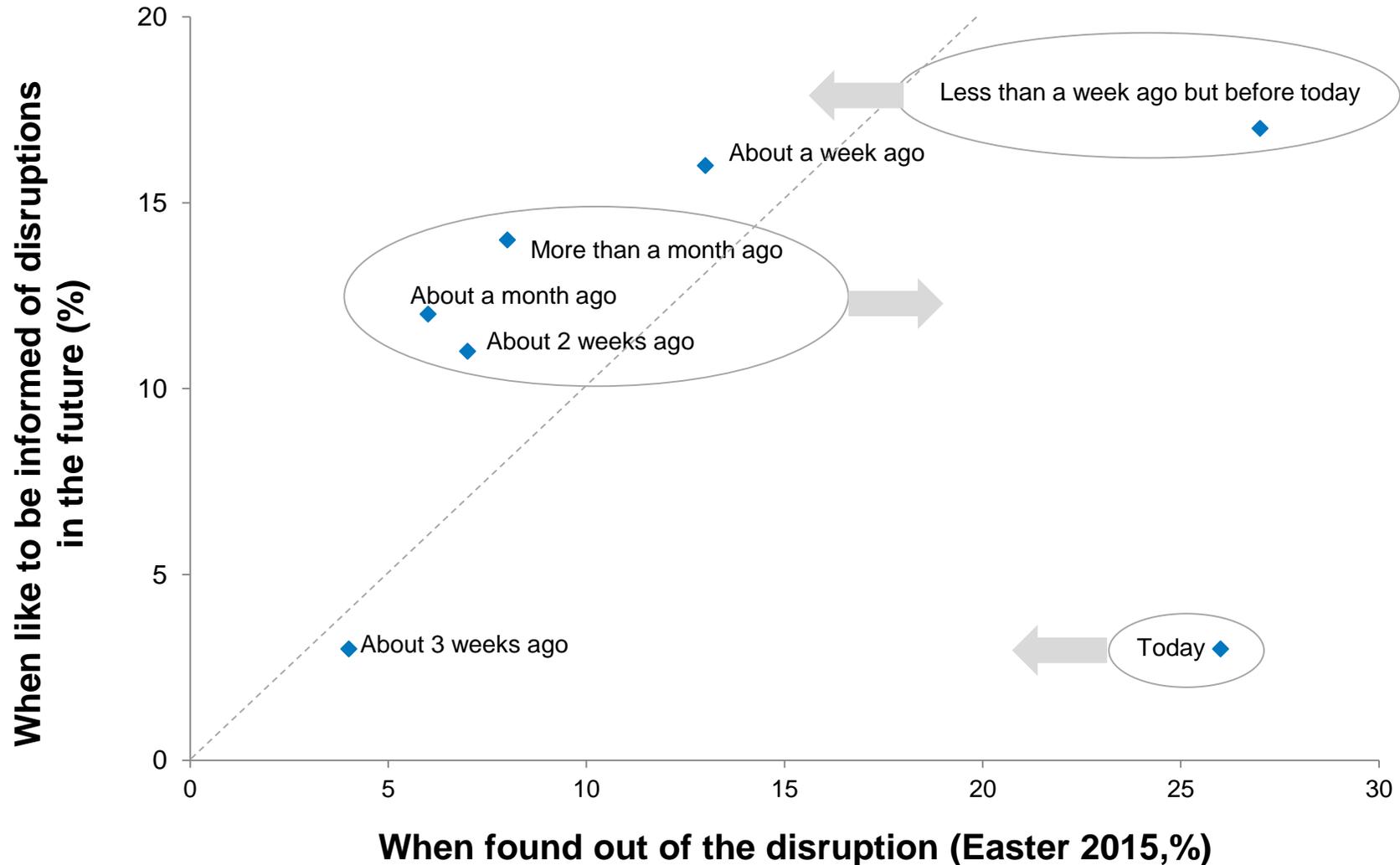
↑ ↓ Significantly higher/ lower than other sample groups

Q11. Did you know about this disruption BEFORE you arrived at the station today? Q12. When did you find out about the disruption to today's journey?  
 Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, replacement buses n=314, south west trains n=127

# In an ideal world, more long distance travellers would like to have found out between a week and a month in advance

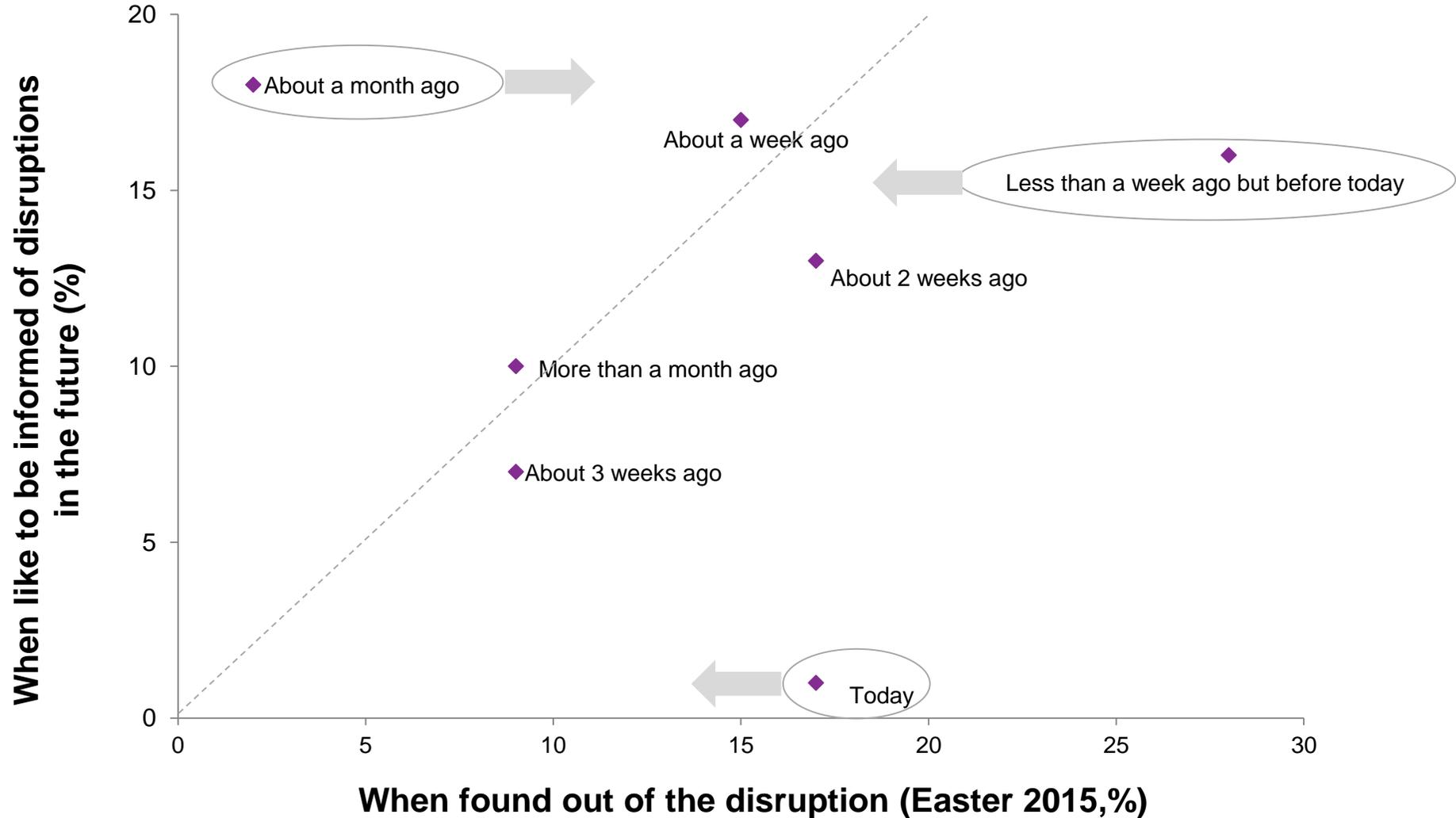
## Long distance trains

Disruption communication – current vs. future preference



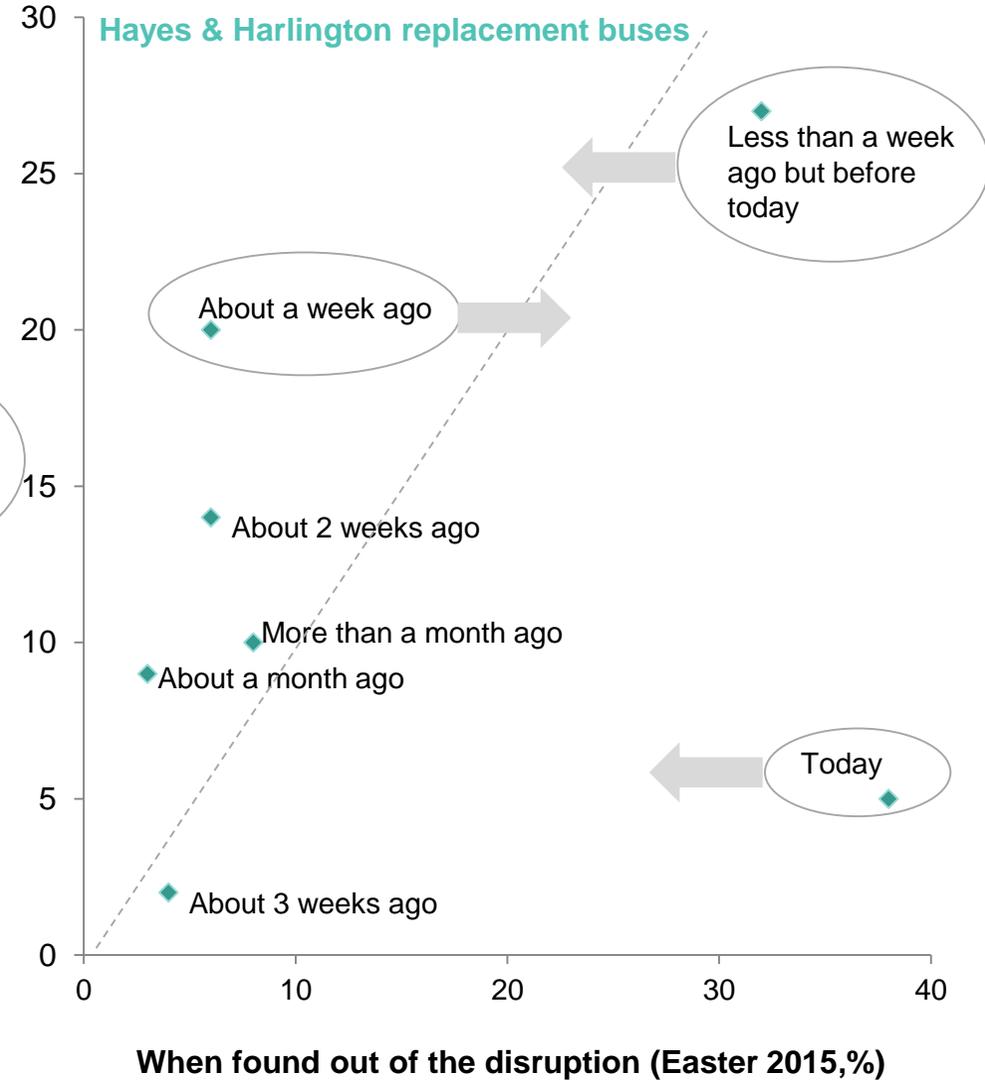
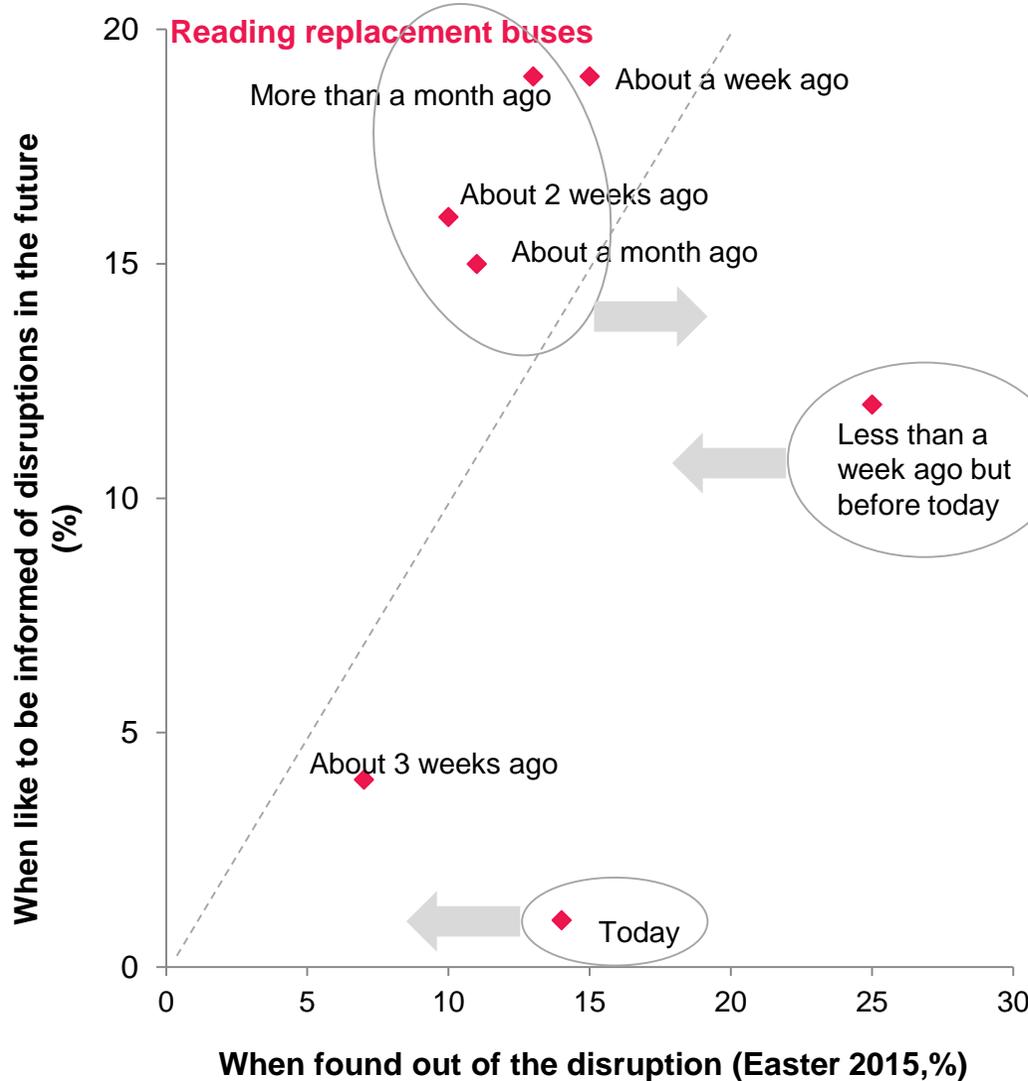
# Some SWT users would have been better served if they had received a month's notice

Disruption communication – current vs. future preference



# Some affected by bus replacements may have benefited from more emphasis on comms between a week and a month in advance

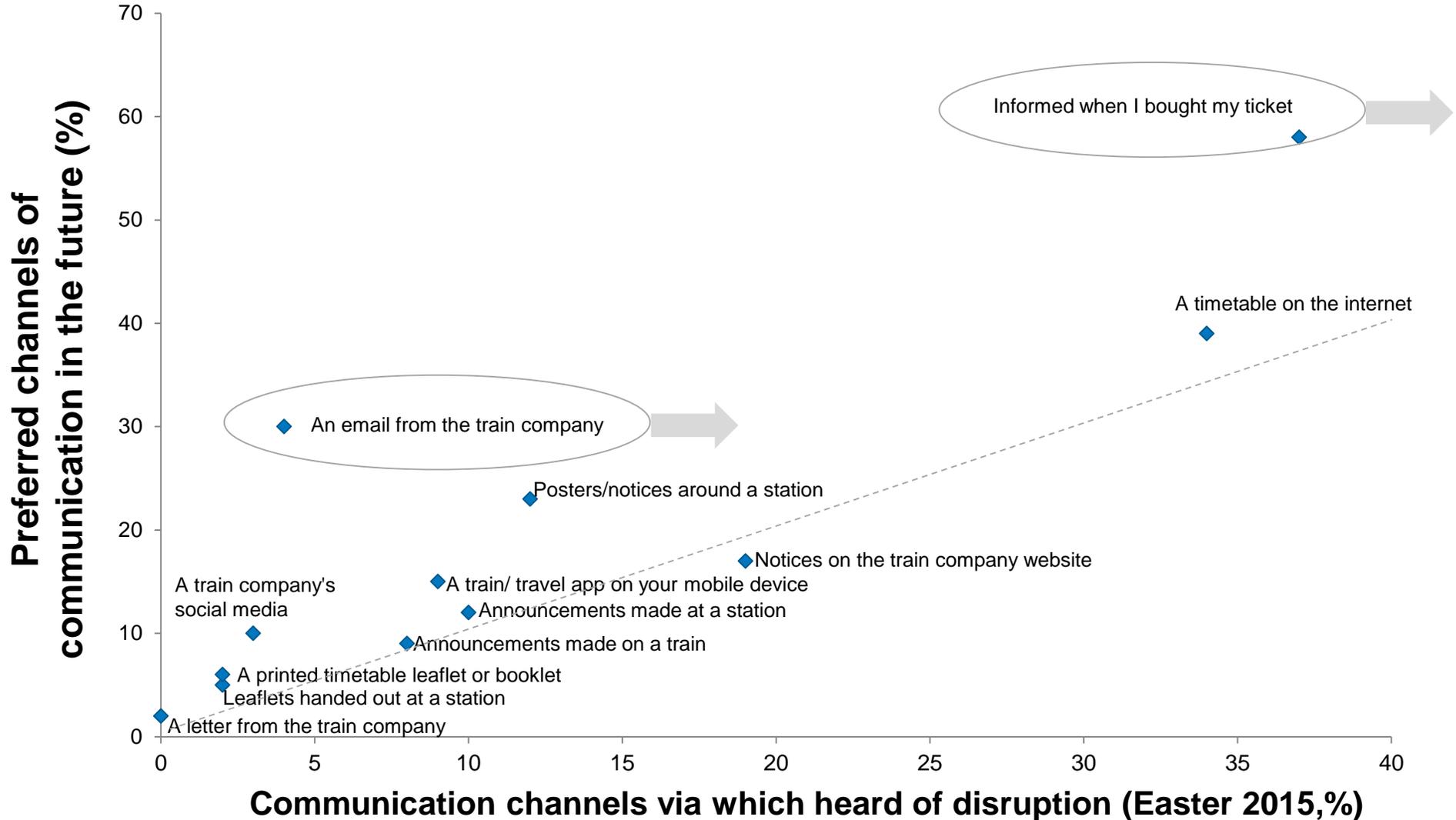
## Disruption communication – current vs. future preference



# More long-distance travellers would have liked pro-active comms or more prominent notification at point of purchase

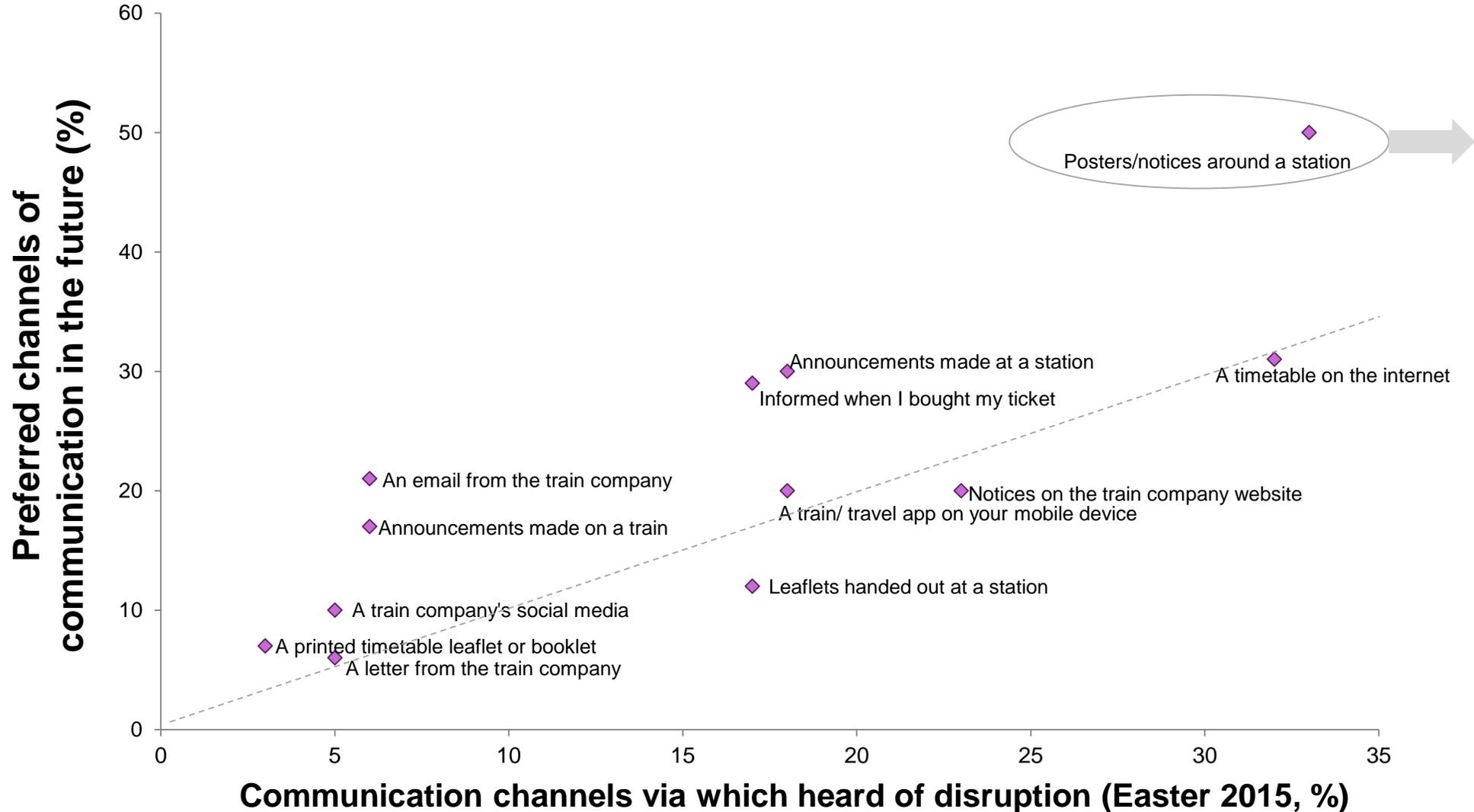
Communication channels – current vs. future preference

Long distance trains



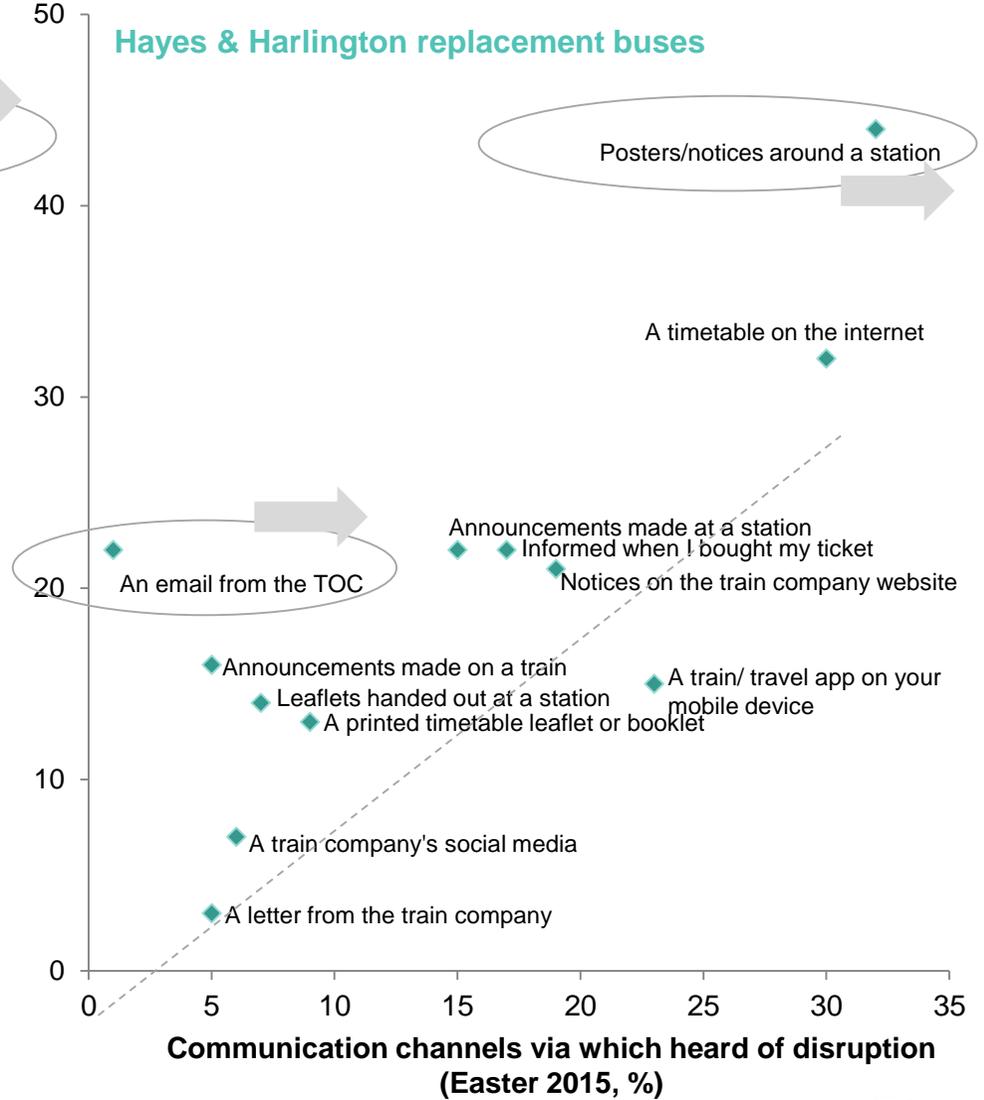
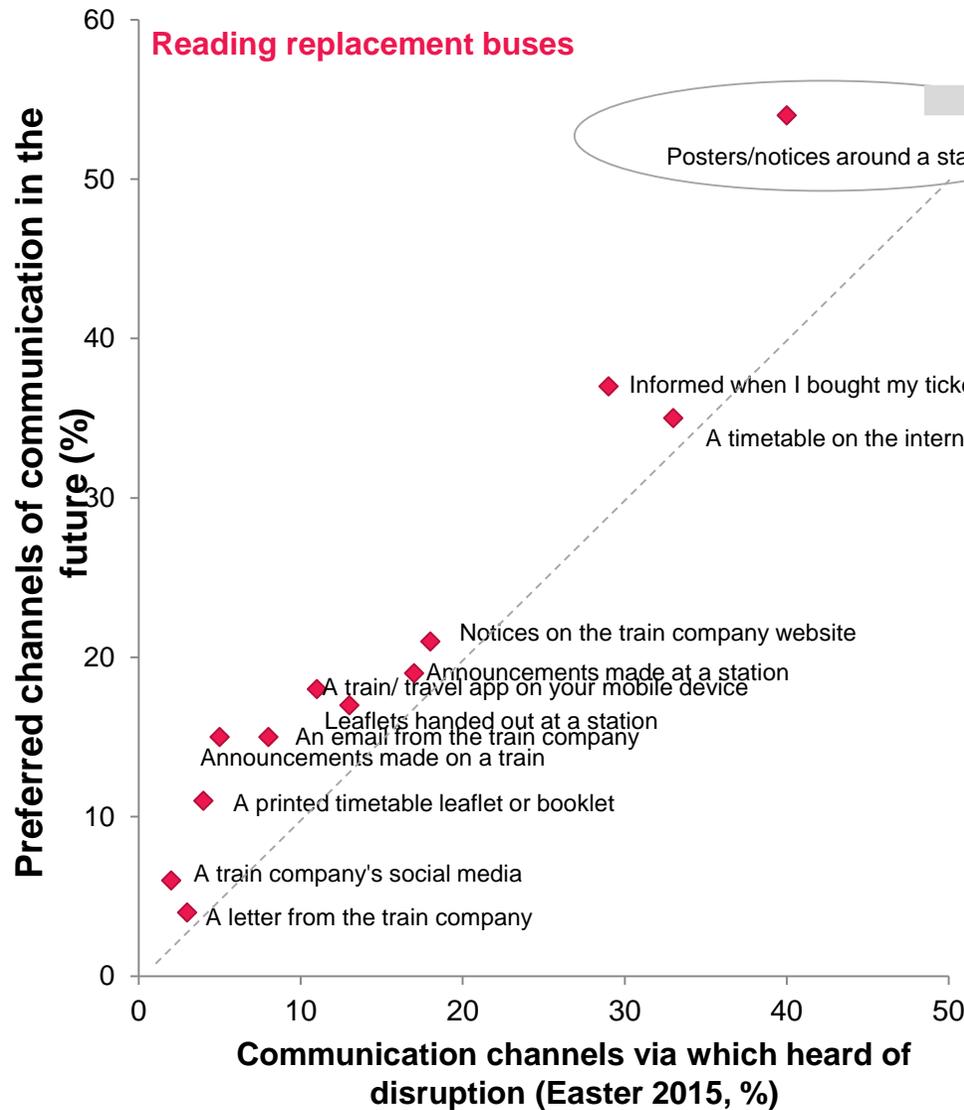
# Some SWT users (many of whom travel frequently) would have appreciated more prominent notifications at stations

Communication channels – current vs. future preference



# Comms to Reading RRB users appear to have been placed most successfully; of all groups, Hayes travellers needed more pro-active notification

Communication channels – current vs. future preference



# Information was fairly well provided for Reading RRB users, but room for improvements for other groups

## Satisfaction with amount of information

### Long distance



### Replacement buses



### South West Trains



Very dissatisfied Fairly dissatisfied Neither/Nor Fairly satisfied Very satisfied

Top 2 box

57%

66%

69%

## Reading replacement buses

75 ↑

Top 2 boxes



## Hayes & Harlington replacement buses

58



## Satisfaction with accuracy of information

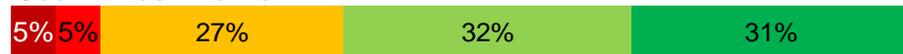
### Long distance



### Replacement buses



### South West Trains



Very dissatisfied Fairly dissatisfied Neither/Nor Fairly satisfied Very satisfied

59%

70%

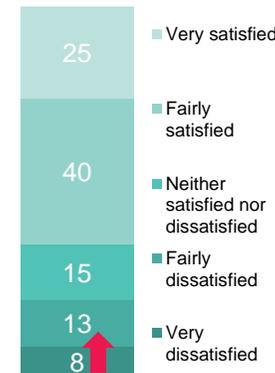
62%

Top 2 boxes



74

65



↑ ↓ Significantly higher/ lower than other sample groups

Q18. And how satisfied are you with...?  
Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): Long distance trains n=561, Replacement buses n=314; South West Trains n=127

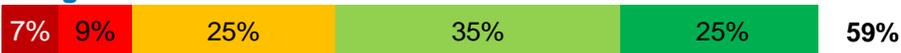
# Information about the *reasons for disruption* was the most appreciated on average; communications about the Reading RRBs was generally good

## Satisfaction with information provided, in terms of.... (%)

### Reasons for the disruption (%)

Top 2 boxes

#### Long distance



#### Replacement buses



#### South West Trains

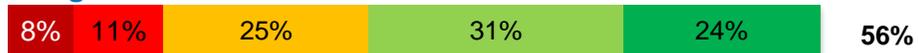


Very dissatisfied Fairly dissatisfied Neither/Nor Fairly satisfied Very satisfied

### When the disruption would take place (%)

Top 2 boxes

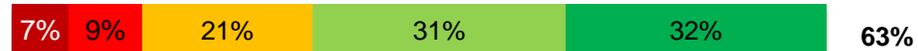
#### Long distance



#### Replacement buses



#### South West Trains



Very dissatisfied Fairly dissatisfied Neither/Nor Fairly satisfied Very satisfied

### Affected routes (%)

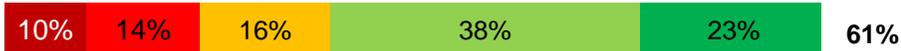
#### Long distance



#### Replacement buses



#### South West Trains



Very dissatisfied Fairly dissatisfied Neither/Nor Fairly satisfied Very satisfied

### Alternative transport arrangements (%)

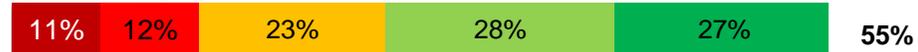
#### Long distance



#### Replacement buses



#### South West Trains



Very dissatisfied Fairly dissatisfied Neither/Nor Fairly satisfied Very satisfied

In all cases, there is significantly higher satisfaction levels amongst Reading replacement bus passengers than amongst Hayes and Harlington replacement bus passengers.

↑ Significantly higher than other sample groups

Q17. How satisfied are you with the information you saw/heard in terms of explaining the following?  
Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): Long distance trains n=561, Replacement buses n=314; South West Trains n=127

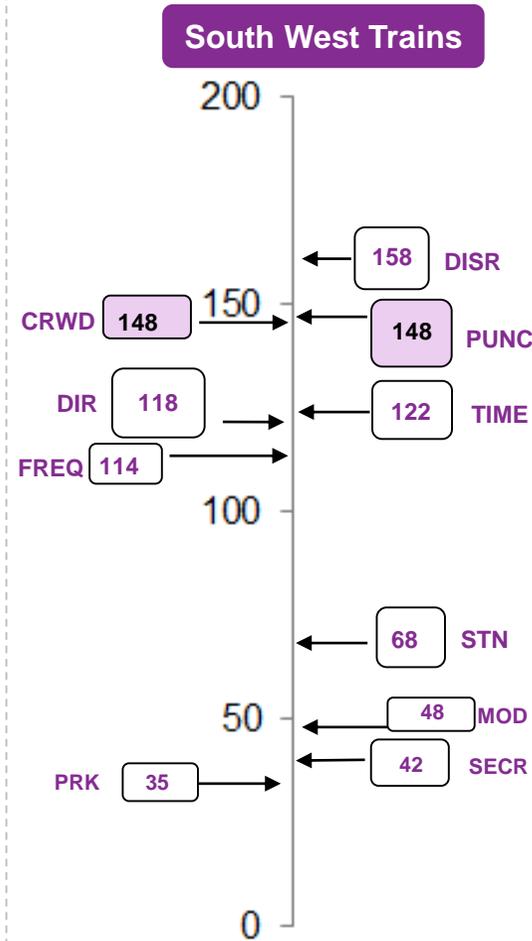
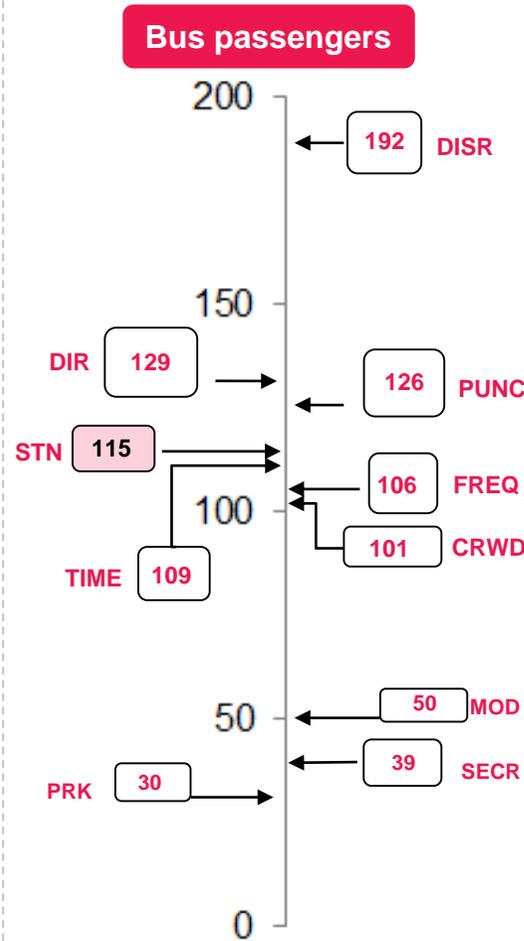
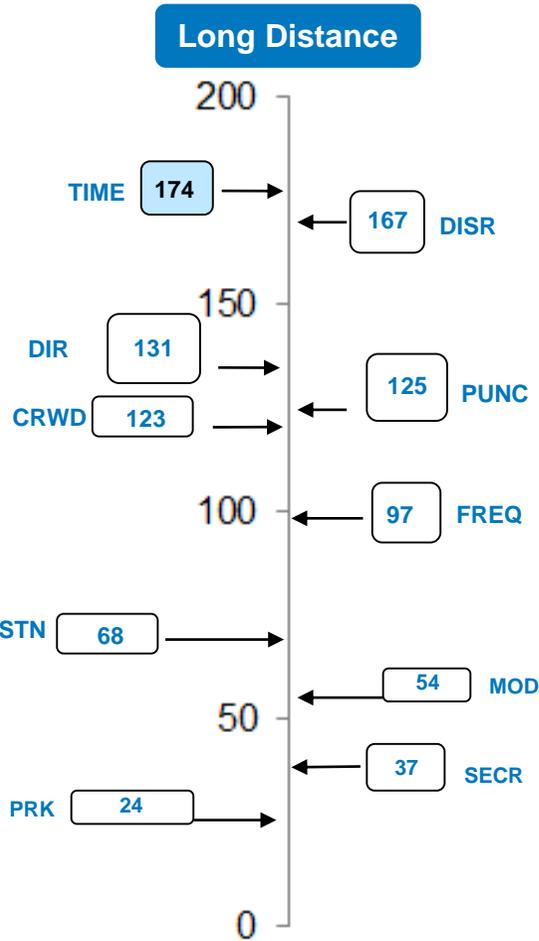
Communicating the  
benefits of engineering  
works – variations across  
the sample groups



# Beyond the wish for less frequent disruption in future: there are small variations in the most motivating benefits for large scale works

## Preference scores

where 100 indicates the improvement which is of average relative importance



Key	Statement
STN	Improved facilities at stations
DISR	Less frequent major unplanned disruptions
FREQ	More frequent service on the route
DIR	A direct train service (no need to change trains)
CRWD	Less crowded trains
PUNC	More reliable/punctual train service
TIME	Reduced journey times
SECR	Better personal security at stations
MOD	More modern trains
PRK	More parking spaces at stations

Q25. What do you think the benefits will be to you personally, as a result of the rail redevelopment work? Q26. Here are some benefits that could come from engineering work. There are a number of pairs shown below and for each please tick the improvement that you would most like to see.

Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): replacement buses n=314; Reading buses n=156, Hayes & Harlington buses n=158

# Interest in improved station facilities a stronger motivator for Hayes RRB users than Reading

## Relative preference for improvements – Reading vs Hayes & Harlington bus passengers

Using stated preference analysis

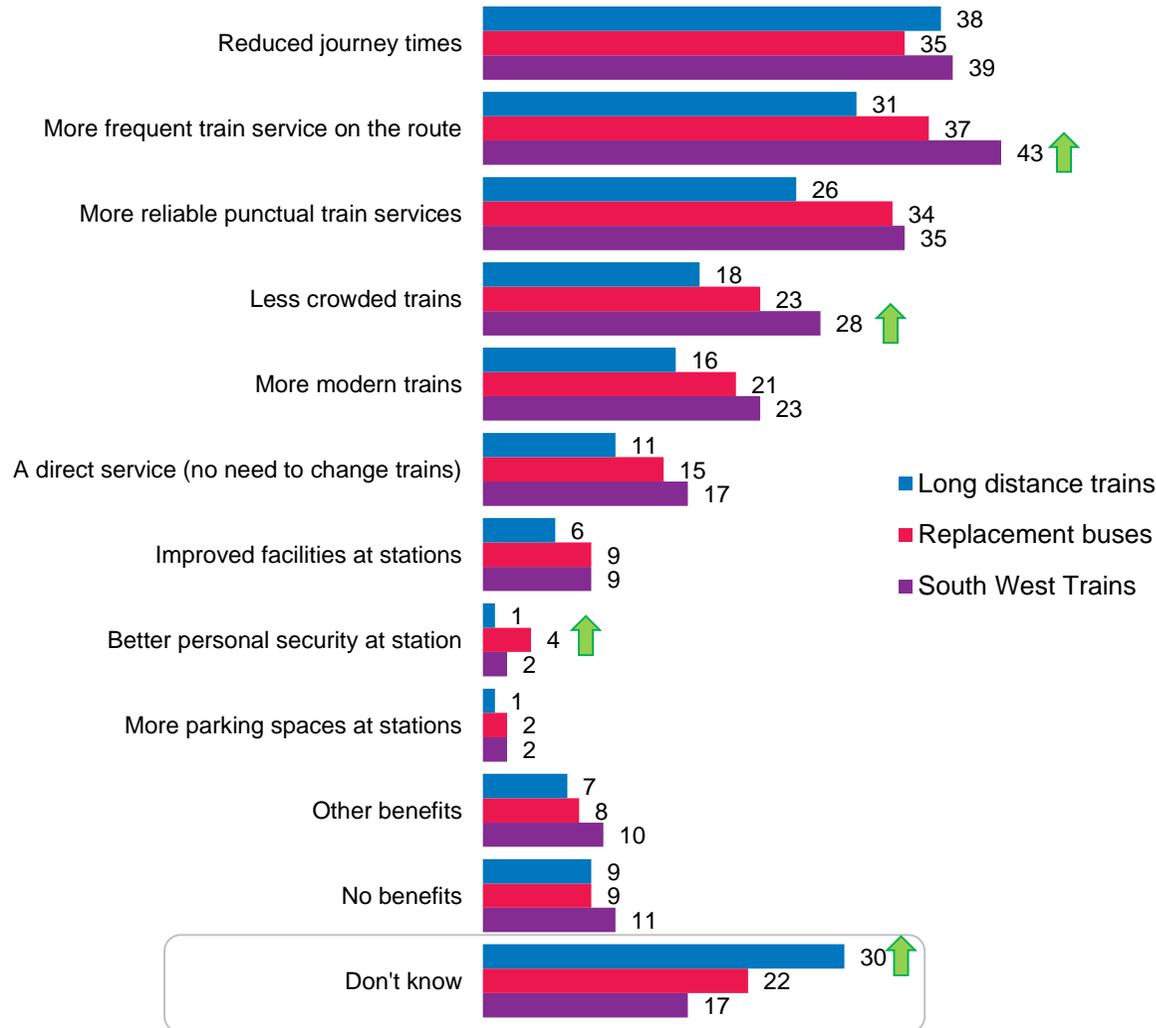
	Bus Passengers	Reading	Hayes & Harlington
<b>Less frequent major unplanned disruptions</b>	192	187	198
<b>A direct train service (no need to change trains)</b>	129	120	139
<b>More reliable/punctual train service</b>	126	145	107
Improved facilities at stations	115	93	134
Reduced journey times	109	111	104
More frequent service on the route	106	109	102
Less crowded trains	101	124	80
More modern trains	41	43	40
More parking spaces at stations	41	33	51
Better personal security at stations	40	34	45

Q25. What do you think the benefits will be to you personally, as a result of the rail redevelopment work? Q26. Here are some benefits that could come from engineering work. There are a number of pairs shown below and for each please tick the improvement that you would most like to see.

Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): replacement buses n=314; Reading buses n=156, Hayes & Harlington buses n=158

# SWT users clearest about the type of benefits they expect to see; long distance users (infrequent travellers) the least so

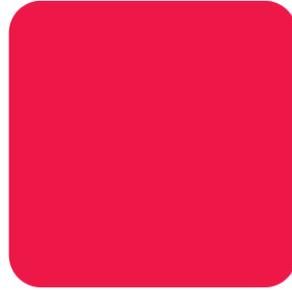
## Perceived benefits of redevelopment work (%)



↑ Significantly higher than other sample groups

Q25. What do you think the benefits will be to you personally, as a result of the rail redevelopment work?  
 Base: Base: All respondents (excluding not stated): long distance train n=561, replacement buses n=314, south west trains n=127

In summary...



# Summary: the bigger picture

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- **Two thirds of travellers were satisfied with how disruption was handled over Easter 2015.**
  - **A significant improvement** on the Christmas period in 2010.
  - In particular, the amount of information provided, and assistance with luggage for RRB users was perceived to be better than in 2010.
- **Factors which help create a satisfactory experience** in such situations are:
  - Knowing in advance (usually up to about a week ahead, but varies for different passenger groups/route types).
  - Being informed at point of purchase, or via pro-active comms from TOCs.
  - Accurate and practical information.
  - Practical help on the day (for RRB users) .
- **Understanding the intended long term benefits of engineering work** (especially when these include improved reliability, frequency or journey lengths) **can aid passengers' tolerance, and therefore value for money perceptions.**
- **Three quarters of those travelling knew about the disruption in advance.**
  - This is the same as in 2010 – but there was a significant increase in the number of people who learned about it a week in advance, which (on average, for the routes surveyed) was the ideal notice period.
  - (Anecdotal evidence and fieldwork conditions during the survey also suggests that more passengers were aware and stayed away, than in 2010).
- While advance awareness was quite high;
  - More people would have been happier if even **more could have been reached via station posters, via direct emails and at the point of purchase** (only a third of those who bought in advance remembered being made aware at this point)
  - On average, **fewer than two thirds were satisfied with information provision**, in particular: details of affected routes, timings and alternative transport options.
- **Practical help on the day for RRB users was reported to be fairly good.**
- **Nevertheless, passengers would much prefer to be kept on a train and avoid RRBs.**

# Summary: passengers using amended train services

## Long distance travellers

- Passengers were typically making ad hoc journeys for leisure / holidays.
- **Two thirds were satisfied with the overall experience** (indeed for some, the disruption was actually less than expected, or not registered).
- **However, two fifths were unhappy with the value for money of their ticket**; this is likely to have been driven by:
  - Relatively infrequent use of the routes and so **less personal benefit to be gained from the works**.
  - **Poorer perception of information provision**, than other passenger groups.
- Ideally **more publicity a month or more in advance**, and more detail, would have benefitted more of them.

## South West Trains service users

- Passengers were typically making day trips.
- Some appear to have made a **special journey to a different station than normal, in order to take advantage** of this direct rail service to London.
- **Two thirds were satisfied** with the handling of the disruption.
- **Awareness in advance was high: 81%** (although even more publicity from around one month in advance could have helped more people to have felt happier about it).
- These passengers were the most knowledgeable, and appear to have been the most interested in, the reasons for the works taking place.

# Summary: passengers using rail replacement bus (RRB) services

- The experience of RRB users was very different for those on services to/from Reading, compared to those on services to/from Hayes & Harlington.
- Both groups of passengers were typically quite frequent users of the routes, however:
  - **Almost all (85%) Reading RRB users were aware of the changes in advance.**
  - They were **largely satisfied with the information and assistance provided, and ultimately with the overall experience.**
  - **Over a third of Hayes RRB users only found out on the day** – in addition to station and online publicity, more email contact in advance would have been appreciated in particular where possible.
  - **These travellers felt the disruption to be more severe than all other groups**, and were less satisfied with all aspects of the experience than Reading RRB users.
  - **However, 71% were satisfied with the overall handling of the disruption**, which given the low advance awareness is still reasonably positive, and is higher than among those using amended train services.
- *Note that it is possible that:*
  - *With high awareness of the engineering works in the Reading area in particular (now in its fifth year), passengers who were strongly put off by the idea of RRBs may have stayed away, leaving only those who are more pre-disposed to be tolerant of RRBs to travel at Easter, and take part in this survey. This may help explain the apparent contradiction between the level of satisfaction with the bus service among those who experienced it, and the low appeal of using buses generally in these situations.*
  - *RRB users were making more local journeys, and were much more likely to know the journey and the local area – it is possible that they therefore felt more comfortable (less potential for being ‘stranded’) than the rail travellers, making longer distance journeys.*
  - *Bus users may also have expressed greater satisfaction with the handling of disruption than rail users, simply because they were inevitably more conscious of the practical changes (i.e. buses) being implemented. This is perhaps a learning in itself, and suggests that drawing (some) attention, during the disruption itself, to how you are still getting people from A to B, can aid their overall impressions.*

# Reading engineering works: managing disruption to passengers

*Passenger feedback  
May 2015*