

# Ticket gates at the station

## What passengers want

Independent national passenger watchdog

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Passengerfocus  
putting passengers first

Passenger Focus works to make a difference for Great Britain's rail passengers and bus, coach and tram passengers in England (outside London). Using its research-based approach, Passenger Focus has been talking to passengers to ask their views on ticket gates at rail stations around the country.

For the first time Passenger Focus has asked passengers in the National Passenger Survey (NPS) whether ticket gates at the station are easy to use. The Spring 2010 results show that overall, at those stations where there was a robust enough sample<sup>1</sup>, 80% of passengers said they found the ticket barriers easy to use. Despite this high score, the reduction in ticketless travel that results from ticket gates and the associated benefit of having a visible staff presence on the gate line<sup>2</sup>, ticket barriers are not always seen by passengers to be appropriate at every station.

In an ideal world there would be no need for ticket gates at stations, but there is a strong business case to be made for them when trying to address the problem of ticketless travel. Passenger Focus is generally supportive of the principle behind ticket gates. However, we favour an approach of looking at their installation on a case by case basis. The introduction of barriers has to be to the benefit of passengers as well as the train companies. This approach is endorsed by passengers, as demonstrated in the variation in scores given for ease of use at some stations across Great Britain. While the score, given for ease of use, is as high as 93% at St Albans it falls to as low as 43% at Norwich

1. Where more than 50 respondents had actually used the ticket barriers  
2. Barriers are required to be staffed when in operation



The installation of ticket gates should be considered on a case by case basis

station. This would suggest that there are a number of local factors that need to be taken into consideration when introducing gates.

A report<sup>3</sup> by the Transport Committee highlighted some of the problems/flaws that can arise from the installation of ticket gates. These included:

- Not all tickets are accepted by the gates
- Passengers with bulky items of luggage, parents with buggies, or passengers in wheelchairs cannot easily navigate through gate barriers
- 'Meeters and greeters' are effectively barred from platforms
- 'Gating' can sometimes result in station side-entrances being closed and passengers being forced to make lengthy detours to the main entrance

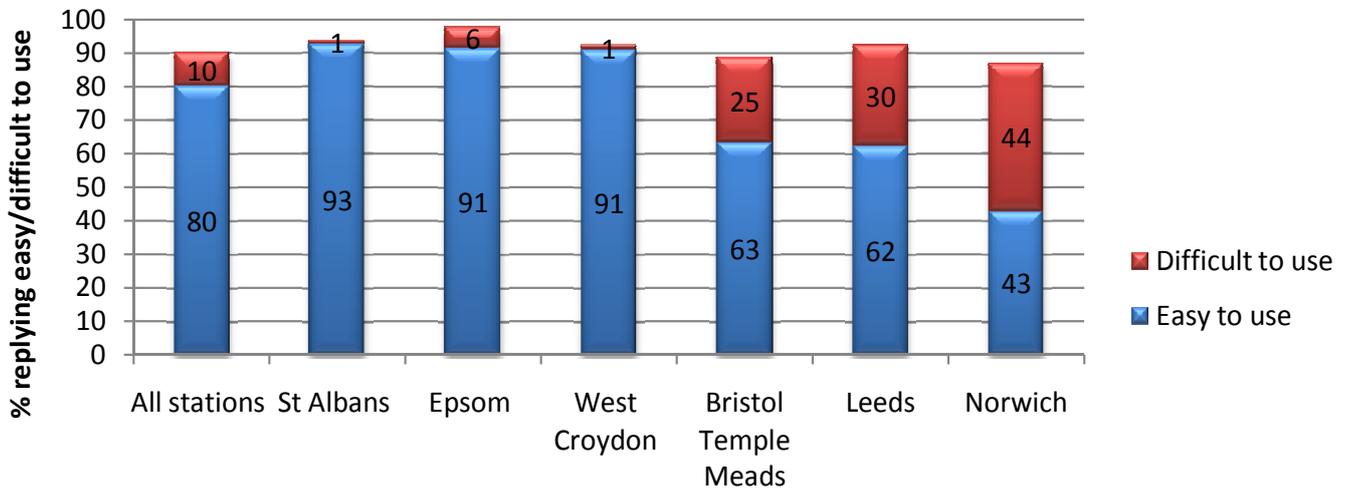
3. Ticketing and Concessionary travel on Public Transport



"The introduction of barriers has to be to the benefit of passengers as well as the train companies,"

Anthony Smith,  
Passenger Focus chief executive.

## How easy ticket barriers are to use - highest and lowest scores (NPS Spring 2010)



**N.B Based on scores given at those stations with a sample size greater than 50**

- When no staff are available to supervise gates, they must be left open.

The Transport Committee's findings are confirmed by the NPS results. Those passengers that suggested the ticket gates were difficult to use in the Spring 2010 NPS were asked to offer comments on why they found this to be the case. Common comments centred on:

- Bottlenecks occurring during peak times – passengers said there were either too few gates or not enough gates operating for use
- The gates are too narrow when carrying luggage
- Gates are too slow to open (particularly compared to the London Underground)
- Gates not accepting all types of tickets
- The rejection of magnetic striped tickets when they become corrupted – this was particularly a problem for season ticket holders
- Unhelpful staff when tickets don't work.



### Contact us

If you want to know more about the work we are doing on your behalf to ensure you get a better deal when you travel by rail, bus or coach contact us:

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