



National Station Improvement Programme

Chester Station - Final report

January 2010

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Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Passenger Focus, Network Rail and the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) appointed Faber Maunsell to investigate passenger perceptions and satisfaction with the station environment and facilities at 25 stations across England and Wales. This study aims to provide evidence to establish the impact of the National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP) by measuring and benchmarking the level of passenger satisfaction with the station environment prior to any improvement work taking place. NSIP is a government-sponsored programme providing £150 million of funding to support improvements at 150 category A-E¹ rail stations across England and Wales. A similar study will be repeated in 2009/2010 at the same stations after improvement works have been completed, thereby enabling the elements of the improvement works that had the greatest impact on passenger satisfaction to be determined.

Twenty seven reports have been produced for this survey; one overall report, twenty five individual station reports and one summary report for the five Anglesey stations. This report summarises the data for Chester station.

1.2 Report Layout

This report summarises the findings from the research undertaken at Chester station prior to the implementation of NSIP. Following this introduction, **Chapter 2** discusses the methodology used in undertaking the 'before' surveys, **Chapter 3** reports on the findings of the survey and **Chapter 4** summarises the findings.

¹ National rail stations are categorised in six bands, broadly corresponding to their level of use. Major termini are found in category A, whilst unstaffed halts are found in category F.

Methodology

2 Methodology

2.1 Questionnaire Design

Faber Maunsell designed the questionnaire in conjunction with Passenger Focus, Network Rail and ATOC. The questionnaire identified which station the respondent was handed the questionnaire, whether each respondent was arriving, leaving or changing trains and the mode of travel to or from the station. Respondents were asked whether there was an alternative mode of travel they would like to use to access the station, what it was and what improvements would be needed for them to use this mode. Respondents were then asked to rate a number of station facilities and their overall satisfaction with the station, where they were handed the questionnaire. It is important to note that where respondents have expressed dissatisfaction with a facility that does not currently exist at the station, it may be because they feel such a facility should be provided. Respondents were then asked to indicate which facilities are important to them and which single new facility currently not available they would like to see at the station. They were then asked to rank existing facilities in need of improvement and whether they had noticed any improvement in the past year. General respondent profile and ticket information was also collected. A copy of the questionnaire can be seen in **Appendix A**.

2.2 Fieldwork

Questionnaires were handed out to passengers at each station for self completion between 22nd November 2008 and 18th December 2008. Three six hour shifts were carried out at each station: one weekday morning shift 07:00-13:00; one weekday afternoon shift 13:00-19:00; and one Saturday shift 10:00-16:00.

Interviewers were provided with 210 questionnaires to hand out at each station over each six hour shift. This was possible at the busier stations but not so at those stations with lower footfalls. On average around 160 questionnaires were handed out per shift. The questionnaires were handed out by trained interviewers, with pens and reply-paid envelopes.

Where possible, passengers were encouraged to return the completed questionnaires to interviewers, before boarding the train. If this was not practicable respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire at another time during the day and return it by post using the reply-paid envelope.

2.3 Additional Shifts

After completing three interviewer shifts at each station, the number of returned questionnaires at some stations was low. In order to boost the sample size at these stations, extra shifts, were conducted between the 15th and 19th December 2008. The additional shifts were all carried out over the morning peak. Interviewers were asked to start at 07.00 and continue until at least

10.00. Interviewers were asked to distribute 100 questionnaires at each of the stations.

Table 1 below highlights the number of shifts undertaken at Chester station and the number of returned completed surveys.

Table 1 Number of shifts and returned questionnaires

Station	Initial shifts (230 surveys to be handed out per shift)	Number of completed surveys returned	Daily Patronage Figures ²	Approx. response rate
Chester	3	134	3353	4.0%

2.4

Data Entry and Processing

All questionnaires received by 7th January 2009 (2,117) were data entered by F1 Data Services. Each questionnaire was checked and allocated a unique serial number for identification purposes by Faber Maunsell before it was sent off for data entry. F1 Data Services coded questions where necessary and data entered the surveys into a fixed-column ASCII file. To ensure data quality, F1 Data Services entered the data twice (double entry) and compared the two files for verification. Questionnaires (97) received between 7th January and 16th January 2009 were data entered and coded in house and merged with the data set from F1 data services.

On receipt of the data file, Faber Maunsell created a syntax file which read the data into SPSS and checked the range, routing and logic of answers given by respondents. Checks included running frequency tables to ensure all responses were valid and all routing was correctly observed. In instances where data from linked questions was missing but could be deduced from subsequent questions syntax was written to cater for this. For example, if Q2 was blank but Q3 was answered, code 1 would be inserted at Q2. However, if it was not clear what the response should be, the data was cleared. For example if Q2 was blank but both Q3 and Q4 were answered the data for Q3 and Q4 would be cleared from the data set. For Q14 only comments accompanying a ranking have been reported. Any rankings numerically higher than three have been removed.

Once the checks on the data had been made, frequencies, cross tabulations and mean scores were run. As well as a data set for all responses, individual data sets were produced for each station. Due to the low sample size, a combined data set for the five Anglesey stations was also produced.

2.5

Response Rate and Respondents Profile

In total, 134 questionnaires were received from respondents at Chester station. 38.9% of respondents were male and 61.1% female³. The highest proportions

² Figures taken from Office of Rail Regulation website 2007 figures (data collated by Delta Rail)

³ N=90

of respondents were aged 45-54 and 16-25 with 24.8%⁴ and 22.4% of respondents respectively. The majority of respondents (105⁵) did not have a disability. Ten respondents had mobility impairments, two were wheelchair users, five had hearing impairments, three had visual impairments, two had a speech impediment and three had learning disabilities.

Just 36.1%⁶ of respondents used Chester station at least once a week. The most common reason for using Chester station was as part of a shopping trip and was chosen by 21.7%⁷ of respondents. This was followed by a trip for company business and visiting friends/relatives, chosen by 19.4% and 15.5% of respondents respectively. The majority (86⁸) of respondents who responded to the questionnaire at Chester were not travelling with any other adults, 34 were travelling with another adult, three with two other adults and two with three other adults. 38 respondents were travelling with one child and two with three children each.

2.6

Travel Habits

Table 2 Type of tickets used for journey at Chester station

What type of ticket did you use for your journey?	Number of responses
First class or standard	8
Anytime single or return	42
Off-peak single or return	42
Standard season ticket	7
Super off-peak saver return	2
Advance purchase	10
First advance purchase	4
One day travel-card	5
Rail staff/privilege ticket/police concession	3
Other	9

It can be seen from **Table 2** that out of the 132 respondents that answered the question 'What type of ticket did you use for your journey?' the majority used either an anytime single/return or an off peak single/return (31.8% of respondents each).

⁴ N=125

⁵ N=134

⁶ N=133

⁷ N=129

⁸ N=125

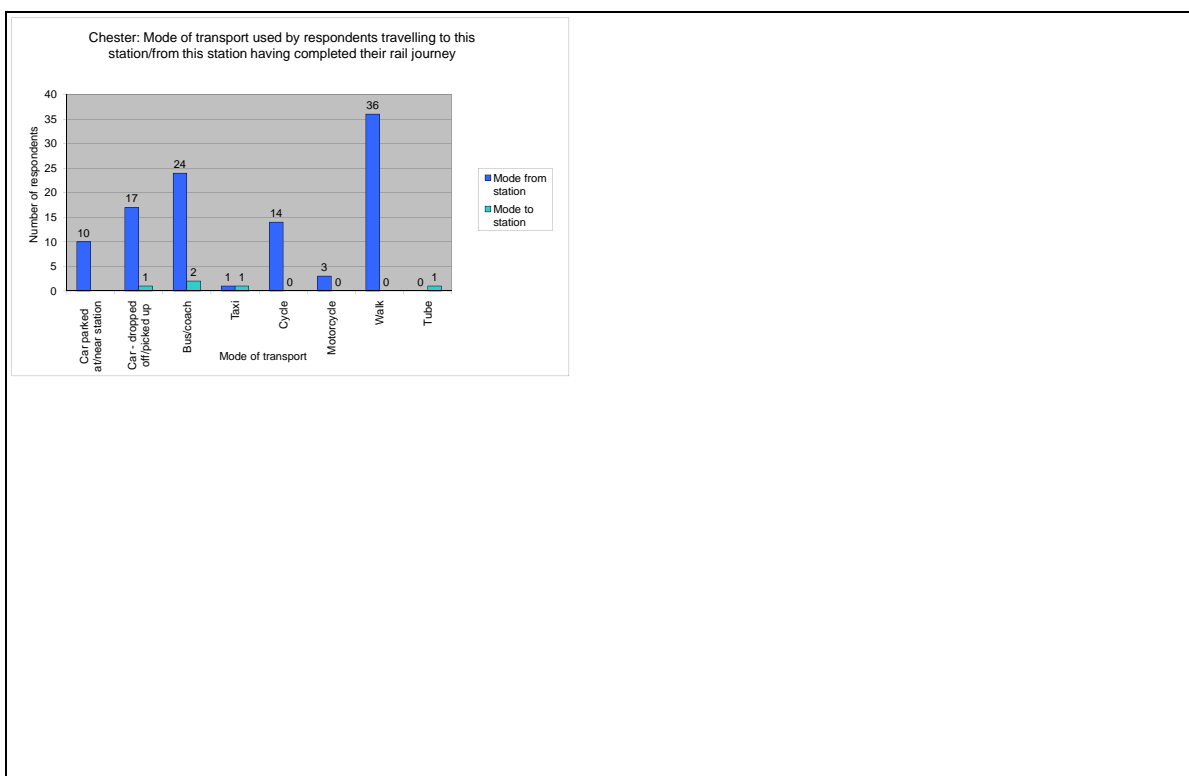
Analysis

3 Analysis

3.1 Journey to/from the Station

Most respondents (79.1%⁹) that completed the questionnaire at Chester were arriving at the station whilst 17.2% were changing between trains and only 3.7% were leaving.

Figure 1 Mode of transport to and from station



It can be seen from **Figure 1** that over one third (34.3%¹⁰) of respondents questioned walked to the station whilst 22.9% used a bus or coach. Amongst those who were leaving the station¹¹, it can be seen 40.0% intended to use a bus or coach.

The majority of respondents, 64.1%¹²(travelling to the station) and 65.5%¹³(travelling from the station) did not feel that there was an alternative method of transport they would like to use to get to and from the station if circumstances were different. Amongst those that listed alternative methods of transport, the most popular method for both arriving at and leaving Chester

⁹ N=134

¹⁰ N=105

¹¹ N=5

¹² N=103

¹³ N=87

station was bus/coach, chosen by 37.1%¹⁴ and 39.3%¹⁵ of respondents respectively, and car (parking at or near the station), chosen by 32.3% and 26.9% of respondents respectively. The most popular additional facilities/services to enable the use of alternative methods of transport were found to be more parking, chosen by 11 respondents (out of a total of 100 multiple responses) followed by cheaper parking and better connection timings between bus and train, each chosen by nine respondents.

3.2 Station Satisfaction

When asked, 'How satisfied are you with facilities at the station from a scale of 1-5, when 1 is very unsatisfied and 5 is very satisfied?' the mean scores in **Table 3** show respondents at Chester station were generally satisfied with:

- The availability of public transport and taxis
- The ease of access on foot to the station entrance
- The passenger information services (except the information on different types of fares and information on what to do if the ticket office is closed/ticket machines not working which received "indifferent" scores)

Respondents were generally neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with:

- Station areas
- Safety and security facilities
- Car and bicycle parking facilities
- Ease of drop off by car
- Passenger facilities (with the exception of the passenger facilities 'appearance of booking office', retail outlets, refreshment facilities and clocks, which received 'satisfied' scores).

Looking at the percentage scores, slightly more than half of respondents in Chester were dissatisfied with:

- The number of car parking spaces
- Availability of waiting rooms

Information from the client showed there to be two car parks at the station, cycle storage and a taxi rank but no bus available.

When asked, 'Thinking overall, how satisfied are you with this station from a scale of 1-10, when 1 is very unsatisfied and 10 is very satisfied?', the mean level of satisfaction with Chester station was found to be 6.07¹⁶ i.e. slightly satisfied.

¹⁴ N=35

¹⁵ N=28

¹⁶ N=129

Most (81.6%¹⁷) respondents questioned felt that over the past year Chester station had got better 11.7% felt the station had stayed the same and just 6.7% felt it had got worse. The main reasons given for these changes were:

- The refurbishment of the station (noticed by 16 respondents)
- The opening of a new café (noticed by 11 respondents)
- A general smartening up of the station (noticed by 10 respondents)

Most (80.7%¹⁸) respondents felt that there had been noticeable improvements to Chester station over the past year. Improvements mentioned included:

- A new ticket office (noticed by 16 respondents)
- A café/refreshments (noticed by 19 respondents)
- The refurbishment of the outside entrance (noticed by 13 respondents)
- The station looks cleaner/tidier (noticed by nine respondents)
- A general modernisation/refurbishment/smartening of the station (noticed by 21 respondents)

¹⁷ N=120

¹⁸ N=114

Table 3 Station satisfaction

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
1. Car parking at the station						
The number of spaces	7.8	11.8	25.5	41.2	13.7	2.59
Car park security	2.2	26.1	47.8	19.6	4.3	3.02
2. Bicycle parking facilities						
The number of cycle parking facilities	9.1	18.2	51.5	18.2	3.0	3.12
The security of the cycle parking facilities	8.8	17.6	58.8	8.8	5.9	3.15
Cycle routes to and from the station	8.3	16.7	44.4	22.2	8.3	2.94
Protection from the weather	9.8	31.7	39.0	9.8	9.8	3.22
3. Ease of drop off by car:						
Secure and well-lit waiting area	11.0	53.4	15.1	13.7	6.8	3.48
Protection from the weather	5.7	35.7	24.3	22.9	11.4	3.01
Waiting area for cars picking up/drop off	5.3	38.2	21.1	25.0	10.5	3.03
4. Public transport availability						
Frequency of local buses serving the station	32.6	34.9	10.5	10.5	11.6	3.66
Information on the services available	21.0	28.4	22.2	21.0	7.4	3.35

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
Ease of getting to the bus stop	35.0	41.3	11.3	6.3	6.3	3.93
Overall	29.6	35.8	13.6	14.8	6.2	3.68
5. Availability of taxis						
Signage	20.8	58.4	14.3	5.2	1.3	3.92
Queuing arrangements	18.4	59.2	14.5	3.9	3.9	3.84
Overall	16.9	62.3	11.7	6.5	2.6	3.84
6. Ease of access on foot to station entrance:						
Lighting	26.8	55.4	13.4	3.6	.9	4.04
Signage	23.4	54.1	15.3	7.2	0.0	3.94
Safe walking route	21.9	47.4	16.7	8.8	5.3	3.72
Overall	23.4	53.2	16.2	5.4	1.8	3.91
7. Passenger information services:						
Direction signs to the station	17.0	51.9	19.8	8.5	2.8	3.72
Direction signs to find your way around the station	11.0	63.0	15.7	7.9	2.4	3.72
Electronic departure boards	27.3	54.7	7.8	9.4	.8	3.98
Visibility of electronic departure boards	24.2	52.3	13.3	9.4	.8	3.90
Up to date timetable posters	10.9	58.0	25.2	5.9	0.0	3.74

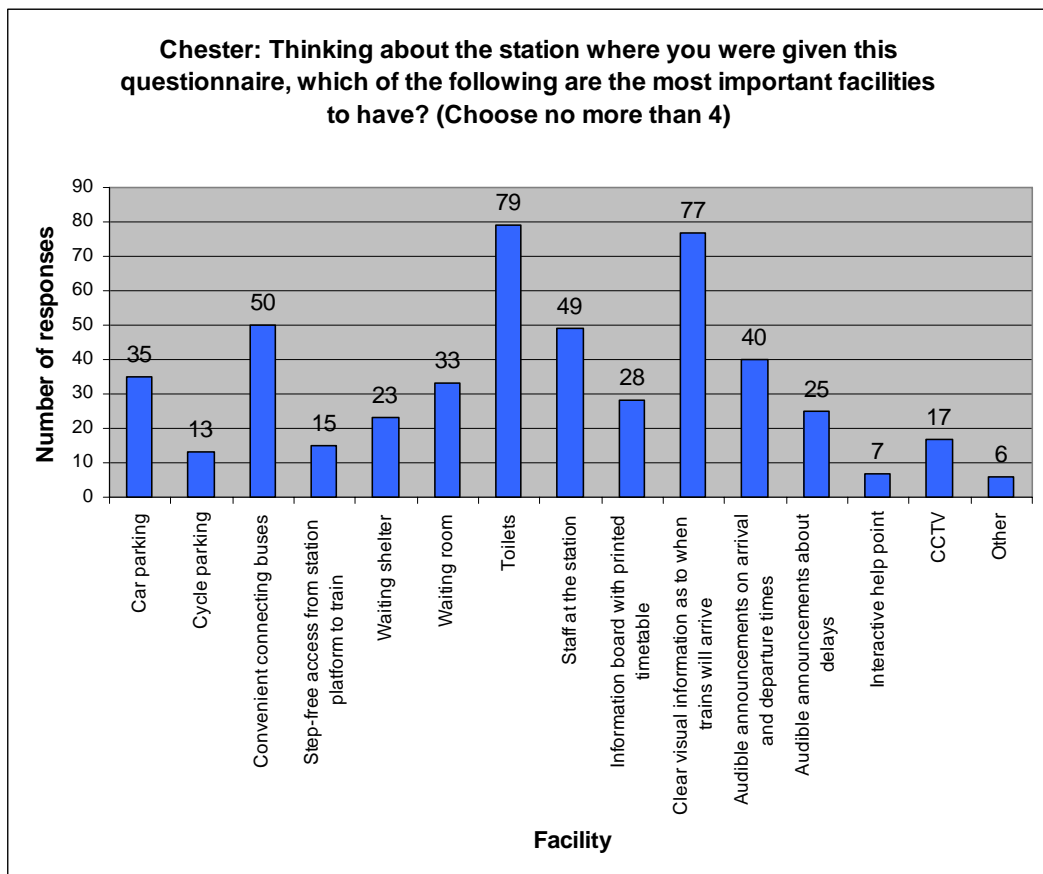
Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
Provision of real time information screen displays	16.9	58.9	17.7	5.6	.8	3.85
Visibility of real time information screen displays	14.9	57.9	19.8	6.6	.8	3.79
Local area information e.g. places of interest, maps, direction to buses	10.9	36.4	43.6	6.4	2.7	3.46
Audibility of public-address announcements	9.3	51.2	20.2	17.1	2.3	3.48
Information on where to buy your ticket(s)	14.3	63.9	16.8	3.4	1.7	3.86
Information on the different types of fares	5.3	28.1	35.1	20.2	11.4	2.96
Information on what to do if the ticket office is closed/ticket machines not working	4.9	21.4	45.6	17.5	10.7	2.92
8. Passenger facilities:						
Appearance of booking office	23.0	55.8	15.0	5.3	.9	3.95
Availability of seating on platforms	5.5	27.3	19.5	38.3	9.4	2.81
Availability of shelter on platforms e.g. a canopy	10.4	47.2	20.8	14.4	7.2	3.39
Condition of shelter on platforms	8.2	41.0	25.4	18.9	6.6	3.25

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
Availability of waiting rooms	1.8	23.0	22.1	35.4	17.7	2.56
Security of waiting rooms	1.1	25.0	43.5	20.7	9.8	2.87
Lighting in waiting rooms	3.4	28.1	41.6	16.9	10.1	2.98
Heating in waiting rooms	3.5	24.4	37.2	20.9	14.0	2.83
Availability of toilets	5.8	45.5	21.5	16.5	10.7	3.19
Condition of toilets	9.2	37.6	23.9	16.5	12.8	3.14
Availability of platform seating	5.6	30.6	16.9	33.1	13.7	2.81
Condition of platform seating	6.4	30.4	22.4	28.0	12.8	2.90
Refreshment facilities	16.8	57.6	14.4	9.6	1.6	3.78
Retail outlets (newsagents etc.)	15.1	65.1	9.5	7.9	2.4	3.83
Public telephones	12.0	39.0	38.0	9.0	2.0	3.50
Availability of rubbish bins	3.5	21.9	24.6	23.7	26.3	2.53
Clocks	11.3	54.8	17.7	10.5	5.6	3.56
9. Station areas						
Main station entrance/exits	19.4	63.7	9.7	7.3	0.0	3.95
Other entrance points/walking routes to platforms	8.5	57.6	24.6	6.8	2.5	3.63
Ticket office/sales points	14.7	65.5	10.3	6.0	3.4	3.82

Facility	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Mean Score (1 to 5)
Platforms	8.6	55.5	21.1	12.5	2.3	3.55
Subways	9.1	45.5	30.9	14.5	0.0	3.49
Footbridges	7.1	54.0	22.1	15.0	1.8	3.50
Lifts	10.2	42.9	29.6	12.2	5.1	3.41
Escalators	14.6	26.8	41.5	7.3	9.8	3.29
Track bed free from litter and vegetation	4.9	20.3	38.2	22.8	13.8	2.80
Areas around platforms free from litter/unwanted vegetation	6.5	37.9	29.8	14.5	11.3	3.14
Flower beds/vegetation	5.8	24.0	34.6	23.1	12.5	2.88
10. Safety and security						
Number of visible staff in the daytime	6.4	49.6	23.2	16.8	4.0	3.38
Number of visible staff after dark	4.9	25.6	39.0	25.6	4.9	3.00
Level of CCTV provision	2.0	23.5	59.8	9.8	4.9	3.08
Station lighting	5.3	57.0	21.1	16.7	0.0	3.51
Provision of Help Points	3.6	27.3	42.7	21.8	4.5	3.04
Location of Help Points	3.6	27.0	41.4	22.5	5.4	3.01

3.3 Important Station Facilities

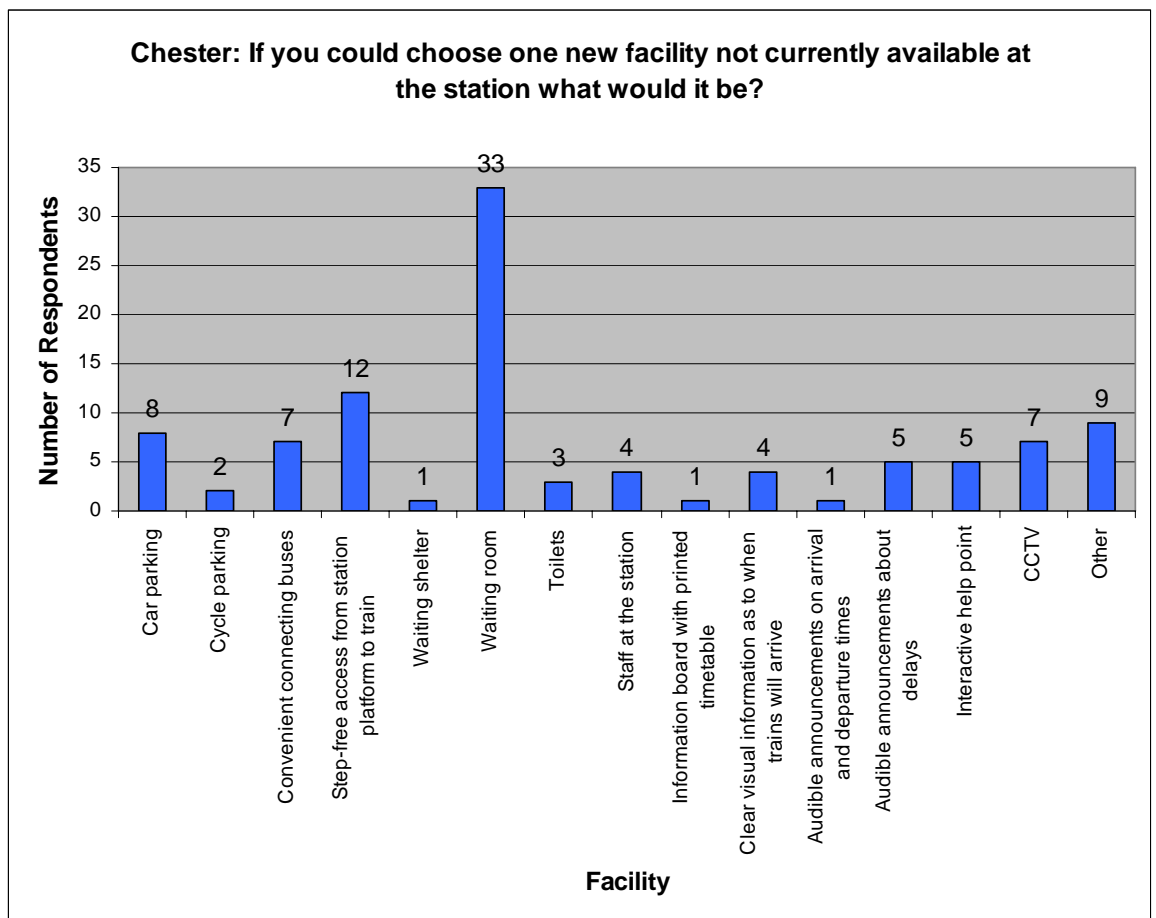
Figure 2 Facilities deemed important



Respondents were asked to select from a list up to four facilities they feel it is important to have at their station. Out of the 497 responses to the question ‘Thinking about where you were given this questionnaire, which of the following are the most important facilities to have?’ **Figure 2** shows the four most important facilities were:

- Toilets (chosen by 79 respondents);
- ‘Clear visual information as to when trains will arrive (chosen by 77 respondents)
- Convenient connecting buses (49 responses)
- ‘Audible announcements on arrival and departure times’ (40)

Figure 3 Facilities desired

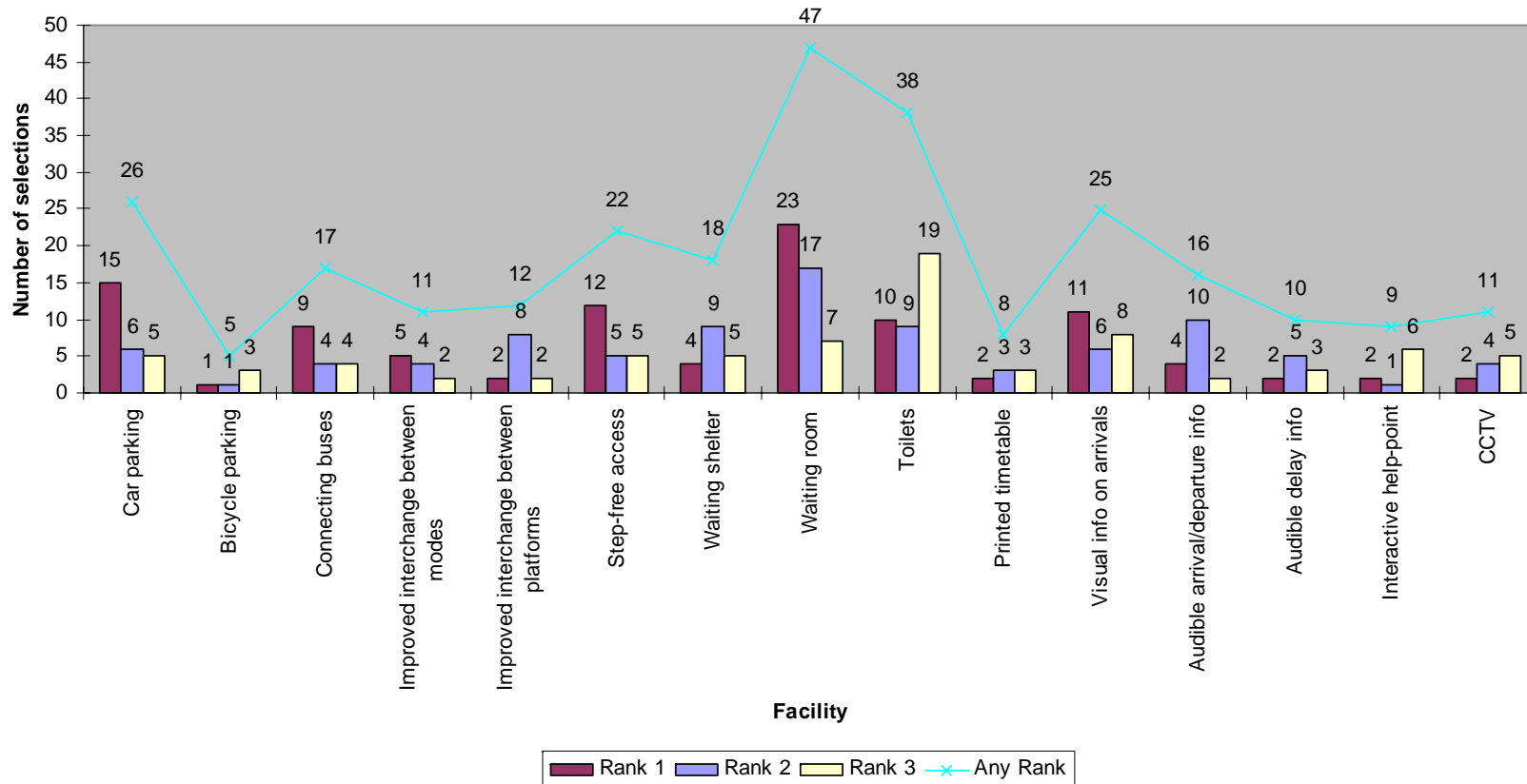


Respondents were asked to choose from a list which single facility not currently available at their station they would like to see added. It can be seen from **Figure 3** that a waiting room was by far the most wanted facility at Chester and was chosen by 32.4%¹⁹ of respondents.

¹⁹ N=102

Figure 4 Facilities in need of improvement

Chester: 'Of the existing facilities at the station you were given this questionnaire, please rank your top three facilities in need of improvement (with 1 being the most important, 2 being 2nd most important and 3 being third most important)?'



3.4 Facilities in Need of Improvement

Respondents were asked to rank the top three facilities in need of improvement at the station where they were given their questionnaire and to state why. It can be seen from **Figure 4** that overall the most ranked facilities in need of improvement at Chester was:

- The waiting room (ranked by 47 respondents)

The main comment made about a waiting room was that one is needed at the station.

This was followed in need of improvement by:

- Toilets (ranked by 38 respondents)
- Car parking (ranked by 26 respondents).

Comments made include toilets are unavailable, insufficient and unpleasant, and that car parking is insufficient and expensive.

Amongst respondents questioned, the facilities that were most likely to be ranked first in terms of need of improvement were:

- The waiting room (ranked first by 23 respondents)
- Car parking (ranked first by 15 respondents)
- Step-free access from the station platform to the train (ranked first by 12 respondents).

Amongst facilities deemed to be of second greatest importance, those ranked by the greatest number of respondents were:

- The waiting room (ranked second by 17 respondents)
- 'Audible announcements on arrival and departure times' (ranked second by ten respondents)
- The waiting shelter (ranked second by nine respondents)
- Toilets (ranked second by nine respondents).

Finally, the facilities most likely to be ranked of third greatest importance in terms of need of improvement included:

- Toilets (ranked third by 19 respondents)
- 'Visual information as to when trains will actually arrive' (chosen by eight respondents)
- The waiting room (chosen by seven respondents)



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