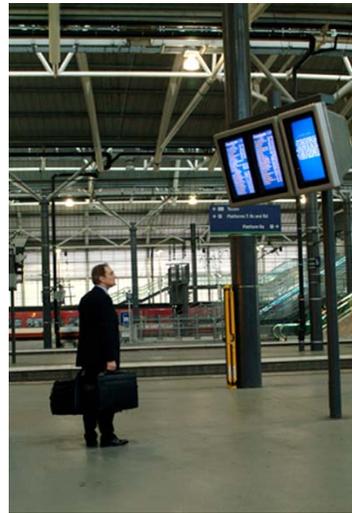


Passenger Information: what, when, where and how?

September 2004



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Introduction & methodology



The Rail Passengers Council (RPC) commissioned this study on behalf of the rail industry in order to identify some practical measures which could be used to improve passenger information provision. Specialist transport consultants Steer Davies Gleave undertook the research, working closely with a project steering group (Rail Passengers Council, the Association of Train Operating Companies, Network Rail, and the Strategic Rail Authority).

The research was designed to:

- identify passenger priorities
- measure passenger satisfaction, highlighting areas of weakness
- identify and explore ways of improving information provision

The emphasis of the study was on measures which could be implemented relatively quickly and easily, and which are not reliant on major new technology or systems.

The study made use of existing data sources including the National Passenger Survey¹ and Passenger Attitudes Towards Engineering Works study². These sources were used both in their own right and to help design the new research undertaken to take our understanding further forward.

At the same time, the RPC consulted the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) on priorities and to find out more about actions they already have in place to improve passenger information. This highlighted the point that the train companies place a high priority on improving information provision and are receptive to ideas for changing things for the better.

In fact, the context for the study is that considerable effort has been put into improving passenger information, including the National Rail Enquiries telephone service and websites, and that this is appreciated by most passengers. The emphasis in this study is therefore on targeting areas of relative weakness in order to maintain the process of continual improvement.

¹ The National Passenger Survey is a quarterly survey of rail passenger satisfaction across the network commissioned by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA)

² Report commissioned by the RPC, August 2003, supported by Network Rail, ATOC, Rail Safety & Standards Board (RSSB).

The research was conducted in two stages. Stage 1 involved desk research and quantitative research amongst a broad sample of passengers, while stage 2 focussed on some of the specific issues raised and explored the possible solutions.

Stage 1, the quantitative stage, had two elements:

- 834 at-station interviews
- 2162 on-train “hand out & return” questionnaires

Stage 2, the qualitative stage, comprised a mixture of focus groups and “mystery shopping visits”:

- 8 focus groups
- 100 telephone mystery shopping visits
- 100 internet/website mystery shopping visits
- 162 journey mystery shopping visits during engineering works
- 48 journey mystery shopping visits during unplanned disruption

The mystery shoppers were useful for obtaining some detailed snapshots of the information that is actually made available to passengers, particularly when there are problems on the network.

Stage 1 aimed to provide a benchmark of the current status of information provision, and the identification of the broad priorities of passengers for further improvements to information provision. This then fed into the design of Stage 2, in which key issues could be explored in more depth and, crucially, we could start to identify possible solutions. The research included 2 types of interview:

- passengers waiting at stations
- passengers on-trains (self completion)

The sample of stations was broadly representative of the whole network in terms of:

- region
- short vs. medium vs. long distance services

The total samples were:

- 834 at-station interviews
- 2162 on-train “hand out & return” questionnaires

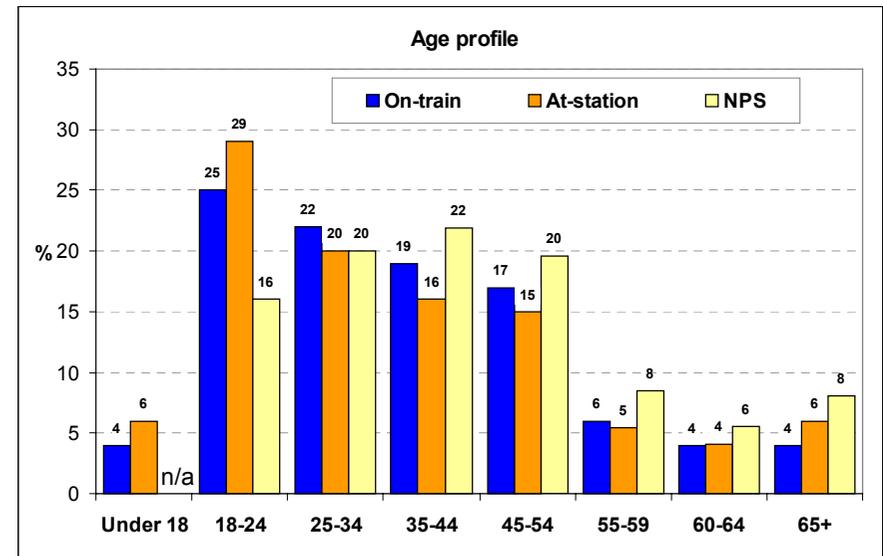
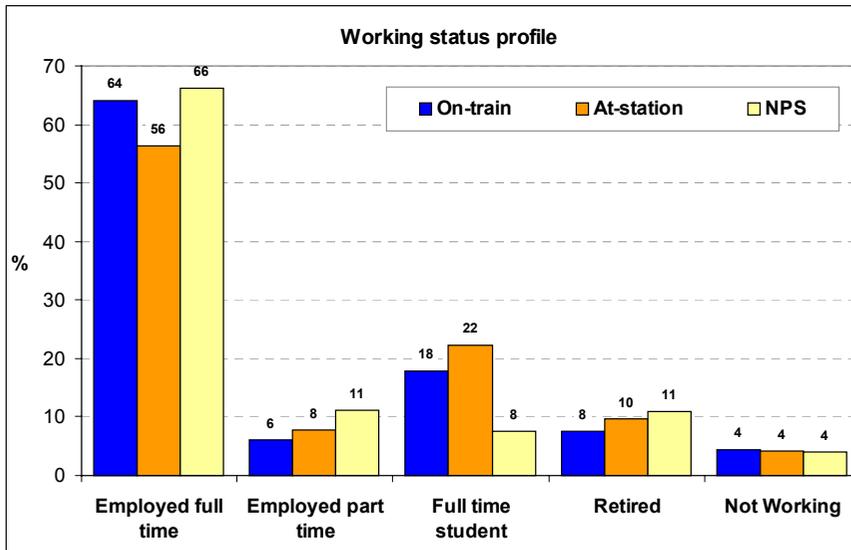
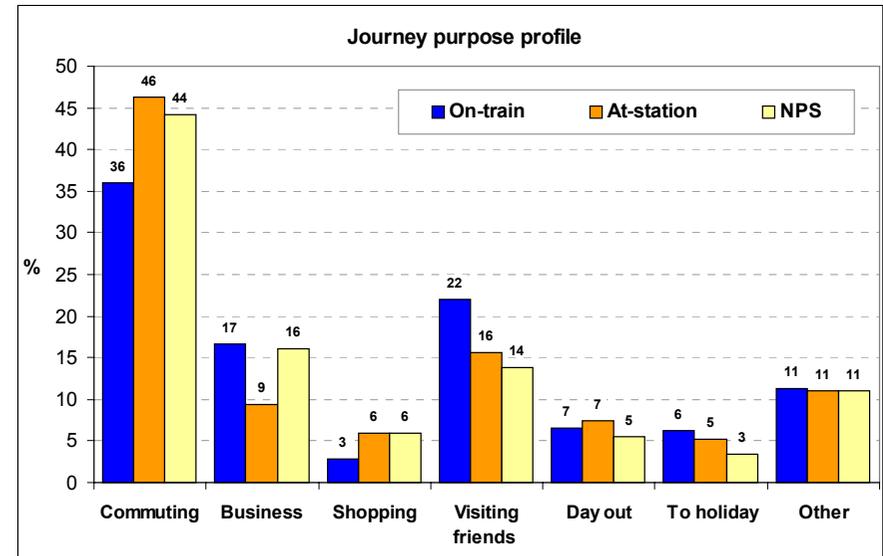
The questionnaires covered:

- basic details about the current journey (where they are travelling to and from, journey type, ticket type, who is travelling)
- journey planning information such as whether it was pre-planned, and the type of information sources used in planning
- information sources used during the journey
- opinions of information sources and satisfaction levels
- priorities for improving information
- some personal / demographic details

See questionnaire included in Annex A.

On-train and at-station survey profiles

- Profiles of the on-train and at-station surveys are shown here in terms of journey purpose, age and working status. For comparison, profiles from the National Passenger Survey (autumn 2003) are also shown.
- All passenger groups are represented and, compared with the National Passenger Survey, there is higher representation amongst young people and students.



* NB - NPS Data uses age groups 16-25 and 26-34 – these figures have been shown to aid comparison but are not identical to the age groups used during the study

Eight focus groups were undertaken, each with a specific theme based around key passenger segments and their needs (see below).

Each group comprised 6 to 9 people with discussions lasting around 1½ hours.

The discussions included use of visual and audio “stimulus material”, ie:

- photos of information displays etc.
- tape recordings of mock on-train announcements

	Location	Key attributes
Commuters - short distance	Esher	Commute to London at least 3 times a week
Commuters - long distance	Basingstoke	Commute to London at least 3 times a week
Leisure passengers: students	Edinburgh	Aged 18-25, travel by rail for leisure
Leisure passengers: senior citizens	Edinburgh	Aged 60+, travel by rail for leisure
Leisure passengers: families	Birmingham	Travel by rail for leisure with child under 16
Leisure passengers: no dependents	Birmingham	Travel by rail for leisure without children
Business passengers	Esher	Travel by rail for business for journey >25 miles
Meeters & greeters	Basingstoke	Met a passenger off a train in last 3 months

The mystery shopping visits involved interviewers trying out the rail services as a normal passenger would, but recording their experiences in detail.

In addition, 200 enquiries were made on the internet and by telephone, all of which related to journeys known to be affected by engineering works. One of the specific aims of this was to test whether passengers were informed of engineering works without having to request that information. A range of websites were used (14 in total), and in some cases the enquiry started from a search engine to reflect how many users work with the internet.

- The telephone shops included National Rail Enquiries and train operator enquiries.
- 162 train journeys were made on services affected by engineering works. They were spread across various parts of the country including, East Anglia, West of England, the South East and South West.
- 48 train journeys were also made on services affected by unplanned disruption. The work focused on services into and out of the major London termini.
- The output of the mystery shopping was primarily qualitative and diagnostic, and was particularly useful for examining the perceptual difference between what is actually provided and what passengers remember.
- At the same time the samples are only snap-shots of specific places and times and are not representative samples.

Current status of information provision



- There have been positive steps forward in the provision of passenger information, but at the same time demands and expectations are also rising.
- Nevertheless, satisfaction with information provision are at high levels for pre-planning information and at-station information.
- Things are less satisfactory when there is disruption to services. At those times, the provision of information can sometimes be poor.
- In terms of opinions of different sources, electronic real time visual displays have the widest acceptance and use, although during times of disruption, the sound of a human voice via a public address (P.A.) announcement can be reassuring.
- For planning journeys, the internet is regarded as more convenient and reliable than the phone, although this is often based on pre-conceptions about the phone service. It would appear that those without recent experience of the National Rail Enquiries number do not appreciate how much it has been improved.
- Similarly, awareness of the National Rail website, which gives both future and current running information (via station departure boards), seems low.

From the focus groups it is clear that having accurate information, on time, is an increasingly important aspect of rail travel. The underlying reasons for this include:

- the increased availability of real time information means it is now increasingly expected across all modes
- the value of time continues to increase
- there is now a greater ability to act on information primarily because of the widespread ownership of mobile phones which enable passengers to change plans...
 - **If information is good it makes a big difference because you have options, you can do something about it** (commuter)
 - **The thing is, we've all got mobile phones now so you can let work know you're going to be late** (commuter)

There is a general perception that information provision has improved. In particular, there is a perception that the infrastructure and technology are mostly in place BUT accuracy, co-ordination and style need to be refined.

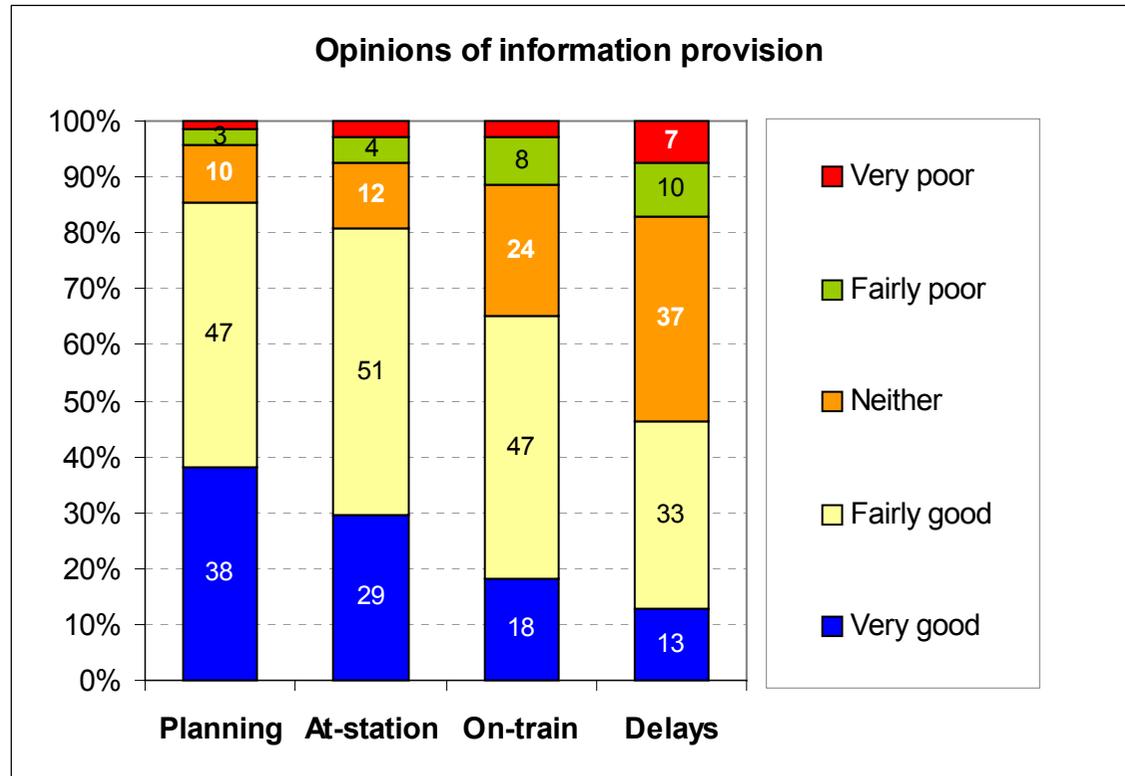
The quality and style of information is a key element in passengers' evaluation of the operators' service. The evidence for this can be seen by the fact that poor/misleading information anecdotes are frequently recalled and recounted, while on the positive side notable friendly or amusing messages or helpful information can "make my day" and may also be passed on anecdotally...

- **One of the best bits of communication was when they said there were no seats on this train, but plenty on the next one. I waited 7 minutes and got a seat - that really did make my day** (commuter)
- **The final straw was when I was left on a platform for about an hour and a half in the evening - the tannoy didn't work, and you asked the guards and they just say 'I don't know, don't ask me'** (leisure passenger)
- **It's telling me the train's 2 minutes late and it turns out to be 20 minutes, well it's wrong and, bear in mind, I've paid £2000 a year for this** (commuter)

“What is your opinion of the information provided when planning your journey / at the station / on the train / about the delay?”

The passenger surveys asked for opinions on current information provision. The results are summarised opposite. Two messages come across clearly:

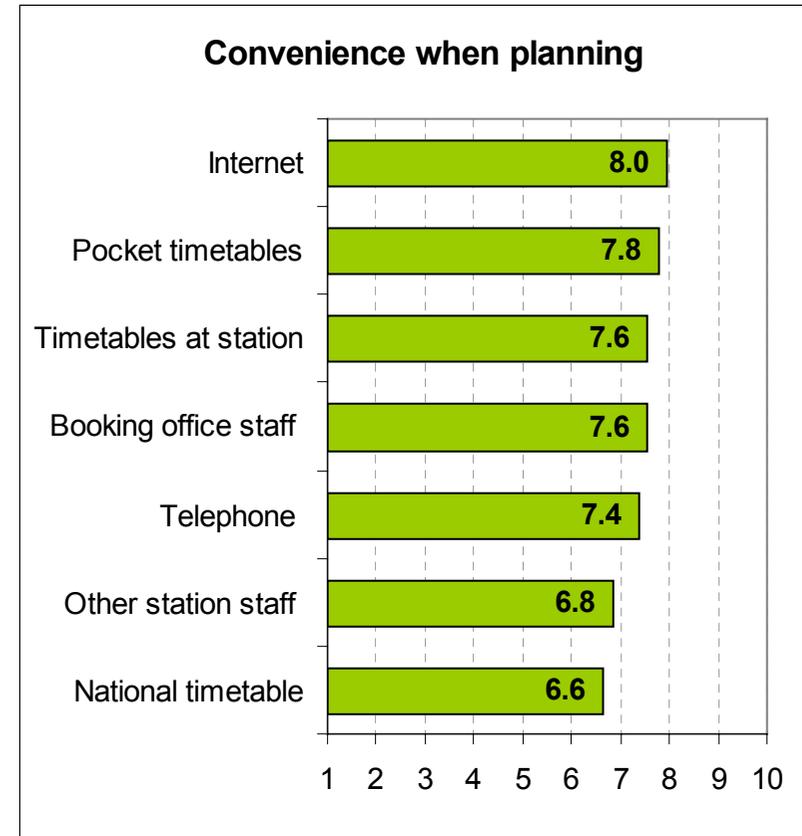
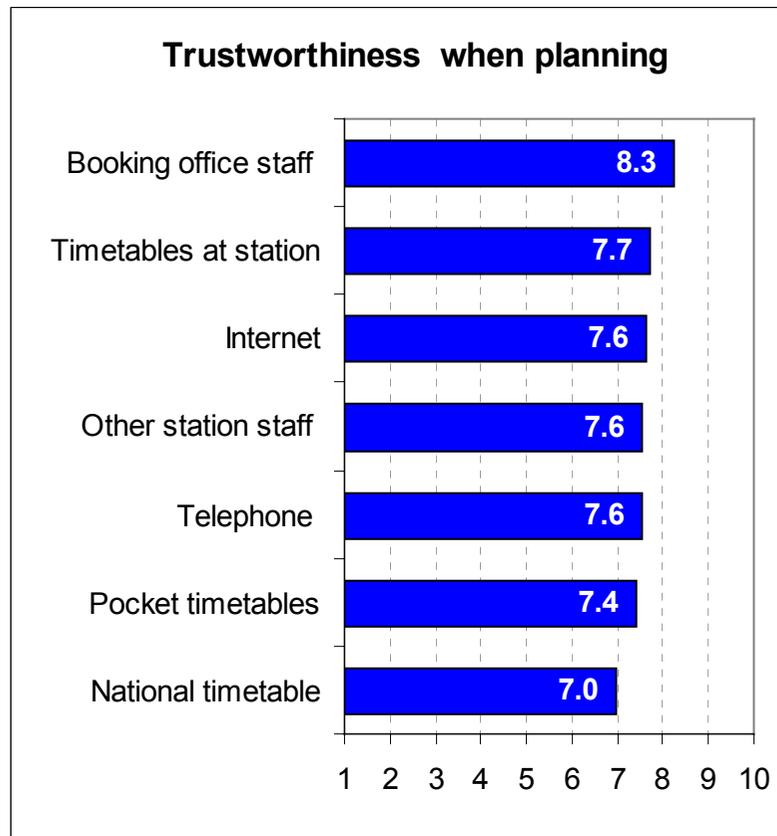
- information provision is generally good, particularly at the planning stage and at the station
- information is poorest at the time of greatest need; during delays



Source: on-train & at-station surveys

“Thinking about different information sources for planning your journey, how many marks out of 10 would you give each of these for convenience and trustworthiness”

- Booking office staff are considered the most trustworthy source for journey planning.
- Internet rated above telephone for convenience and trustworthiness.



Source: on-train & at-station surveys

The focus groups provided some extra insights into how the phone and the internet are perceived. For those with less experience, the internet is perceived as preferable to the phone because it is seen to be:

- cheaper
- less time consuming (no pressing buttons for options)
- more reliable / up to date

In fact, our mystery shopping experiment indicated that the phone was generally quicker than the internet, and better at making passengers aware of engineering works (see page 62).

There was limited recall of specific websites (including the National Rail website, www.nationalrail.co.uk – see also page 58 in connection with real time information) although:

- one or two per commuter/business group aware of specific site
- most access via search engine
- some booking air travel on-line do not think of booking rail via the internet

Perceptions of the National Rail Enquires Service (NRES) were much more positive among those who regularly used it.

The following quotes from the focus groups help to illustrate some of the key points...

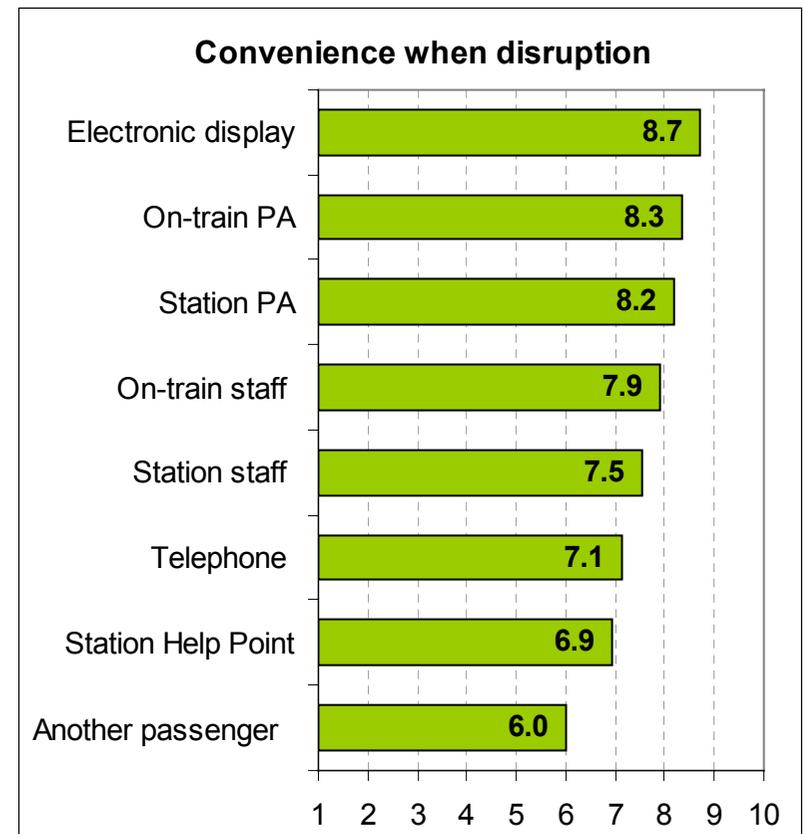
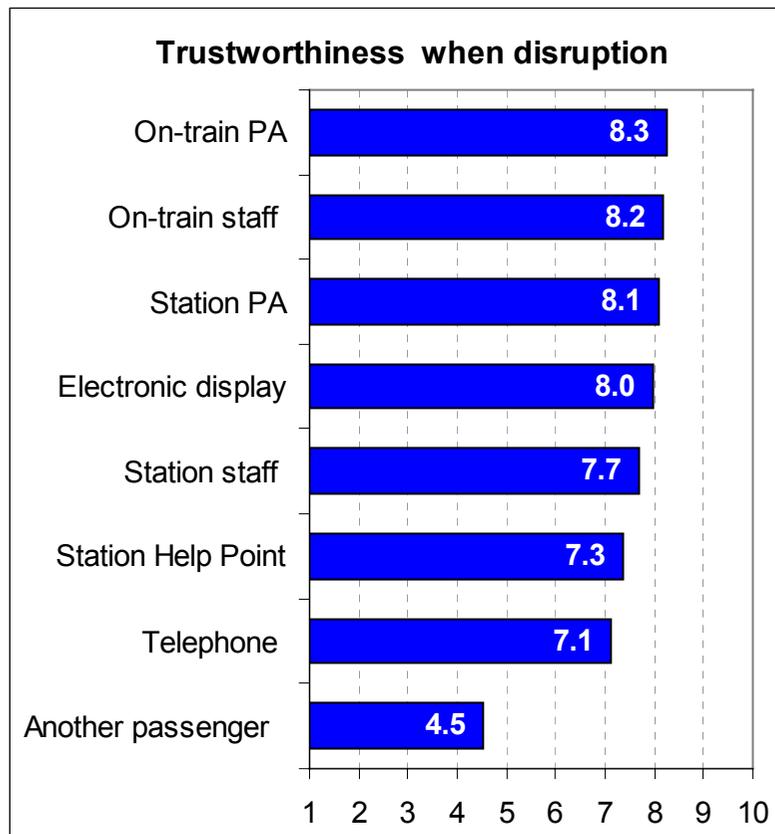
- **I have to say that when I've rung I've found it very, very good** (leisure passenger)
- **I'd use the internet because like everything else when you get through you have to go press six for this, then press two for that, then press one then it takes five minutes to speak to someone** (leisure passenger)
- **I find the internet much easier and a bit more discreet, and I don't trust the people on the end of the phone anymore because they always give me conflicting answers** (commuter)
- **The internet is more up to date - it's real time whereas the guys at the end of the phone are just sitting looking at umpteen timetables** (commuter)
- **To be fair, National Rail Enquiries is quite quick, they're not too bad** (leisure passenger)

Opinions – sources for information on disruption

2

“Thinking about different information sources when services are disrupted, how many marks out of 10 would you give each of these for convenience and trustworthiness?”

- Electronic displays are considered the most convenient source when there is disruption to services.
- PA announcements and on-train staff are regarded as the most trustworthy.
- Telephone and station help point are trusted the least.

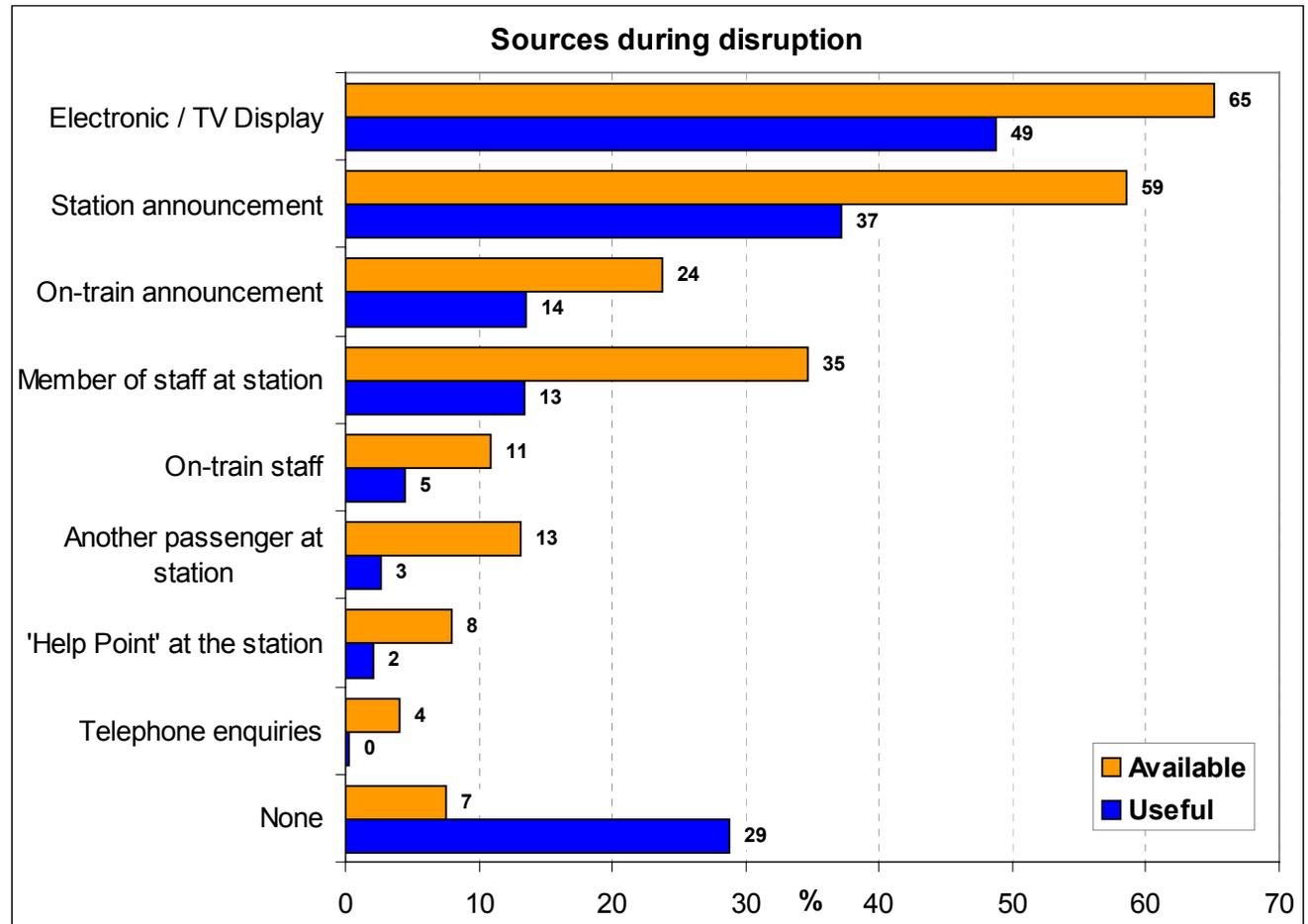


Source: on-train & at-station surveys

Sources of information during times of disruption

“Which sources of information about the delay were available to you, and which did you find useful?” (If delayed by more than 5 minutes).

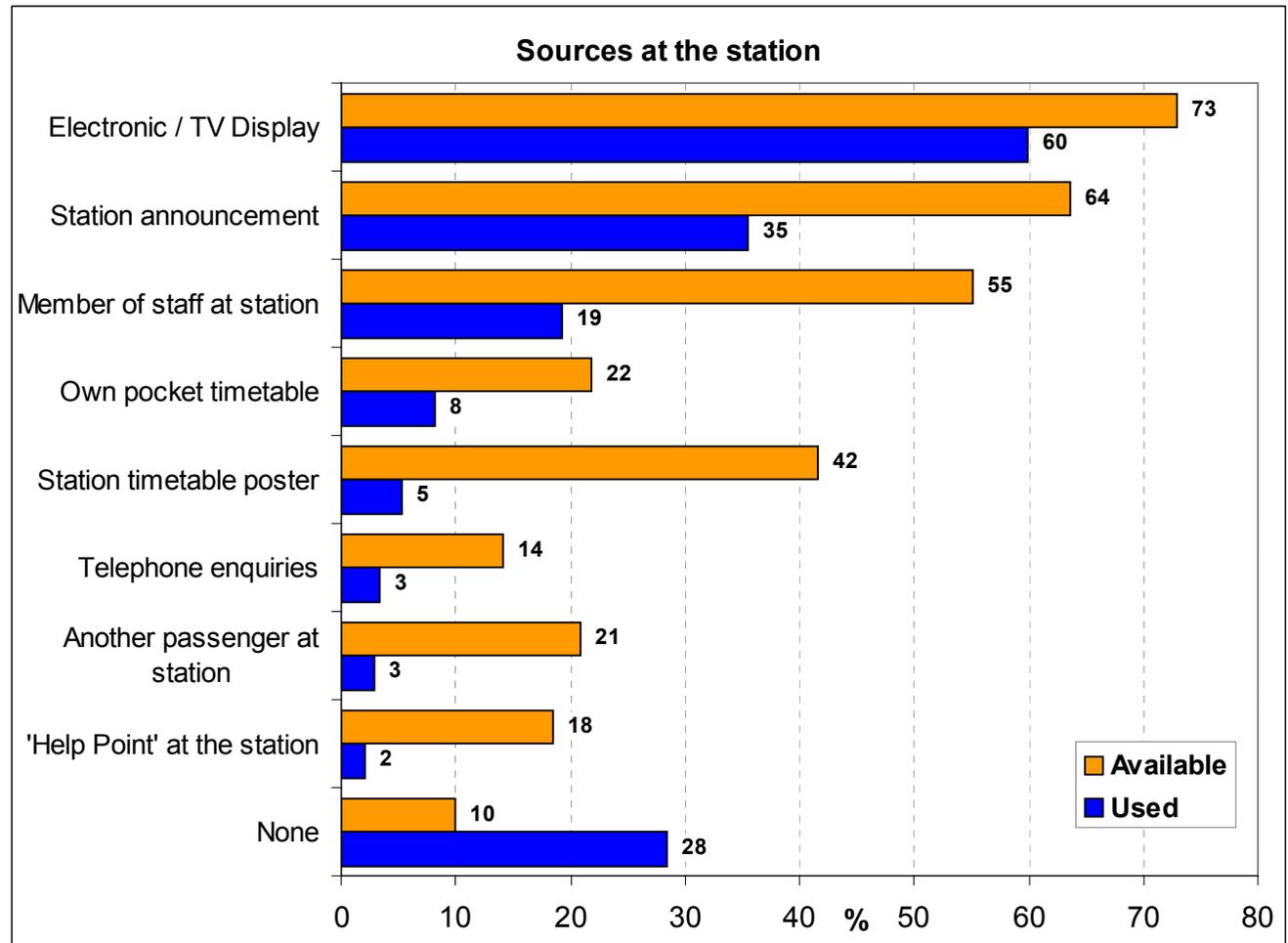
- Nearly 60% said there were announcements on the station. Only one-quarter (24%) claimed on-train announcements were useful.
- Most passengers had at least one source of information available (93%).
- However few, regarded these as useful, and 29% said they received no useful information at all.



Source: on-train survey, those suffering a delay of over 5 minutes

“What information sources were available / have you used at this station?”

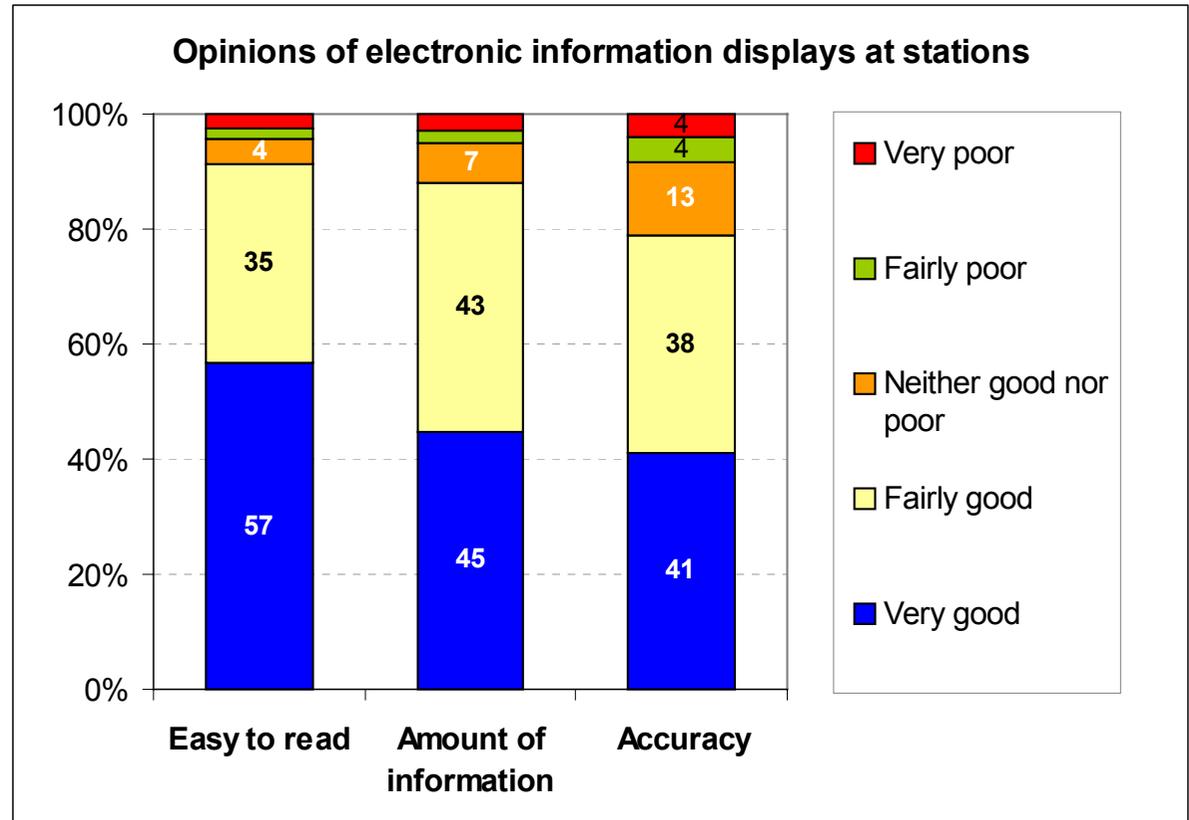
- Electronic information displays are the source used most - 60% compared with 35% using station announcements.
- Station staff were used by around one-fifth (19%).
- Overall, three-quarters of passengers used at least one information source.
- 90% had at least one source available to them but only 42% thought there were timetable posters available.
- Despite widescale ownership of mobile phones, only 14% considered they had telephone enquiries available as an on-station source.



Source: on-train survey

“Which of these aspects of information provided at the station would you say were most in need of improvement?”

- Electronic information displays at stations were generally well-regarded
- They were most highly regarded in terms of being easy to read and providing the right amount of information
- Their accuracy was still rated well (80% fairly or very good), but on this aspect there is more room for improvement



Source: at-station survey

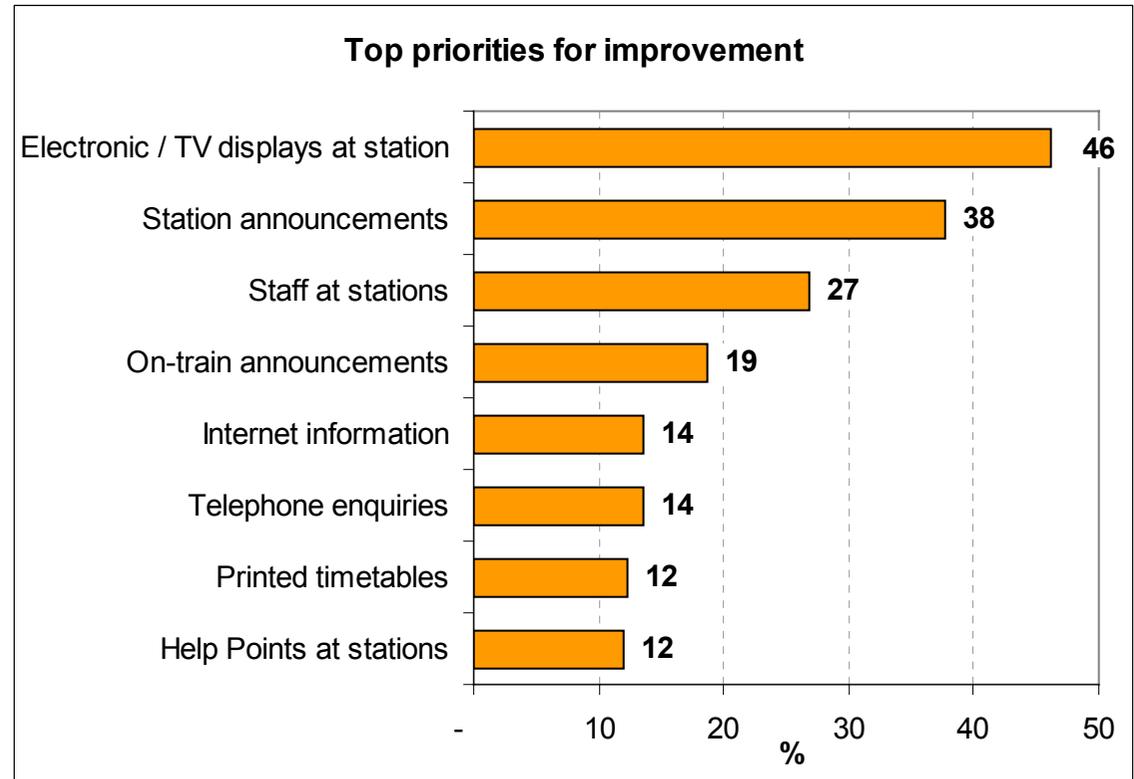
Passenger priorities for improvements to information



- Passengers have provided us with some clear indications of where the priorities lie in terms of improving information
- Where information is provided, the priorities are:
 - at-station (see chapter 4)
 - on-train (see chapter 5)
 - pre-planning - telephone & internet (see chapters 2 and 8)
- The priorities for sources / media are:
 - electronic displays
 - P.A. announcements
 - staff
- The overall passenger priority is for improved information when there are delays to services (chapters 6 and 7).

“I would like to find out what you think the priorities should be for improving rail travel information. Which of these would you say were a top priority (maximum of 2)?”

- The top priorities for improving sources identified by passengers closely related to the sources used most often, so the top three are electronic information displays, station announcements and staff at stations. All of these three are at-station sources, although the fourth is on-train announcements.
- Planning sources (internet and telephone are joint fifth in the list) are less of a priority for further improvement, partly because not all passengers use them, and partly because they are already seen fairly positively.
- Printed timetables were at the bottom of the list of improvement priorities, alongside station help points.



Source: on-train & at-station surveys

Priorities for improvements to information sources - variations

The priorities given to different sources across passengers groups have been explored and in general terms there is considerable common ground. Where there are some noticeable variations in views these are highlighted below.

For example, frequent passengers place a greater priority than passengers in general on improving station announcements, while older passengers like the re-assurance of on-train announcements.

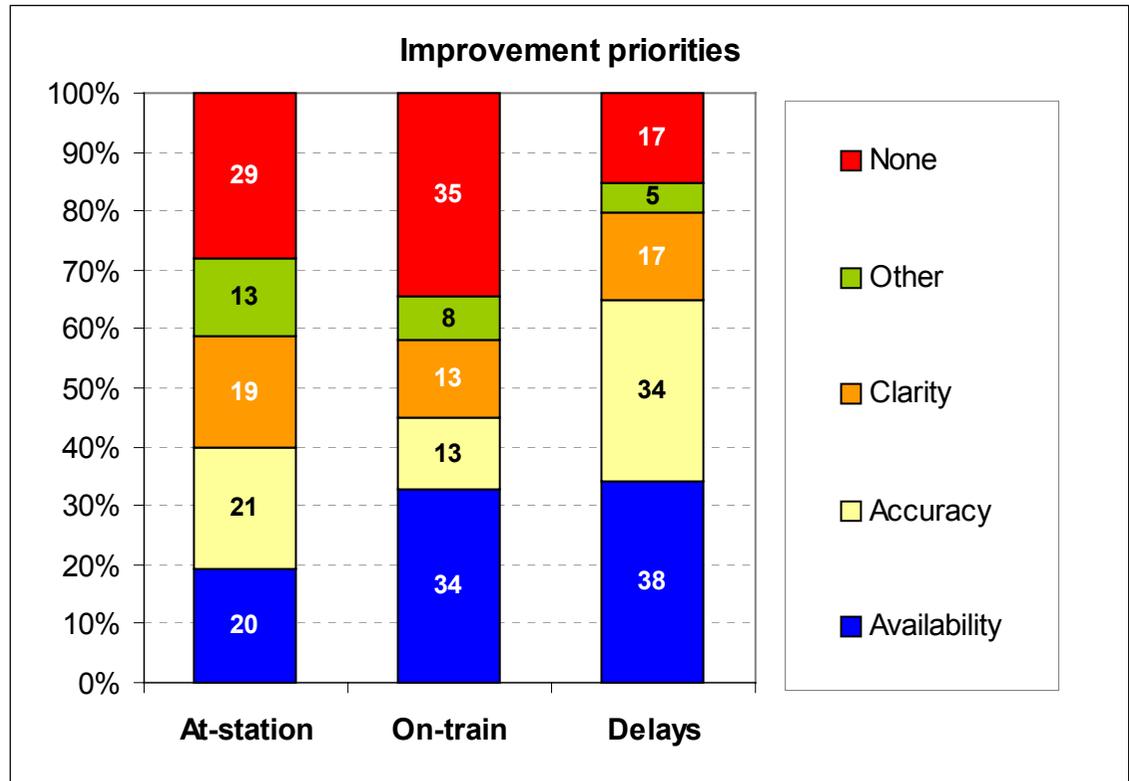
The priority given to at-station electronic information displays and station staff was consistent across different categories of passenger.

	Greater than average priority	Lower than average priority
Electronic / TV Displays at station		
Station Announcements	Frequent passengers	Business passengers
Staff at stations		
On-train announcements	Aged 65+	
Internet information	Business passengers Aged 25-45	Aged over 60 Frequent passengers
Telephone enquiries		Frequent passengers
Printed timetables		Business passengers
Help Points at stations	Females	Business passengers

Source: on-train & at-station surveys

“Which of these aspects of information provided would you say were most in need of improvement?”

- The priority on-train is the basic provision of information, particularly during delays.
- At stations, accuracy and clarity are just as much a priority, suggesting that the basic threshold of availability has been achieved.
- Providing accurate information during times of disruption is a clear priority.



Source: on-train & at-station surveys

Good practice for providing information at stations



The recommended actions are listed below, then explained further in turn:

- Use visual and audio displays as complementary sources
- Precede time sensitive audio messages with a distinctive “beep”
- Conduct visibility audits for displays and define minimum standards
- More electronic A to Z displays at major / busy stations
- Earlier advertising of departure platform
- More TV style displays in waiting areas
- More TV style displays outside the station
- Raise awareness of help points as information sources
- Develop standards for equipment in relation to station types

Use visual and audio displays as complementary sources

Examining how passengers use information at stations shows that visual and audio sources play a complementary role with many passengers making use of both sources. The assumption therefore should be that both sources should be provided and kept up to date as far as possible. However, where a priority has to be set it should go to the visual displays as these are perceived as being slightly better at getting messages across to the largest number of passengers.

Precede time sensitive audio messages with a distinctive “beep”

Passengers prefer to have too much rather than too little information available, but this does create the potential for information overload. One way of overcoming this, and of applying the principle of using audio and visual sources together, is to use a specific warning sound for time sensitive messages to alert passengers who have mentally switched off.

The type of messages which this could apply to include:

- when news first comes in of a train delay or cancellation
- when a platform change is announced
- to update an earlier announcement

Ideally, the sound used would be consistent across the whole network, and implemented consistently so passengers will quickly learn what it means.

Conduct visibility audits for displays & define minimum standards

Satisfaction ratings with visual displays are high, reflecting the fact that in most cases they work well and are appreciated by passengers. Nevertheless there are many instances where some additional attention to detail could further improve their value. One of the key aspects which this applies to is the positioning of displays so that their visibility is maximised.

To address this issue we suggest that the visibility of displays are audited by station staff, inspectors or mystery shoppers, ideally in a mix of conditions (bright sunlight being the most challenging). Along with this, a set of minimum standards could be developed so it is possible to compare stations and identify those which are most in need of attention.

The nature of the audit could be to measure the distance from each display at which it is easily read by a person with average sight, and / or could involve estimating the proportion of the platform area and other areas of the station where there is a display or from which it is easy to read a message on a display. An agreed set of guidelines could be developed, and staff, inspectors, auditors or mystery shoppers provided with instructions or training to help maintain objectivity and consistency.

More electronic A to Z displays at major / busy stations

Passengers found the latest electronic displays showing the next departure to all the stations served in alphabetical order to be very helpful and while it would not make sense to have these at every station, it would be worth introducing them at major stations.

Earlier advertising of departure platform

One of the most common complaints concerning information provision during normal running is that platforms are not announced as quickly as they should be. This was particularly an issue for passengers with luggage, with children or a walking difficulty, or those who are just a little nervous about missing their train. A recommendation is therefore to examine:

- whether information is sent to the relevant members of staff as quickly as it can be
- whether this information is passed onto passengers as quickly as it can be.

If there is uncertainty over the platform number an announcement explaining that this is the case and that the platform will be announced as soon as it is known would be the appropriate course of action.

More TV style displays in waiting areas

The availability of electronic information in station waiting rooms and cafes is quite limited yet providing this facility would make waiting less stressful.

More TV style displays outside the station

While not a major priority, providing a listing of trains and their expected departure times outside the station itself is helpful for people meeting passengers and would be worth considering at selected stations.

Raise awareness of help points as information sources

Station help points received low overall priority from passengers, but they still have an important role at less busy stations which are not staffed at all times. One of the reasons why they were not considered a priority is a lack of understanding of how they can be used. A recommendation is therefore to have posters at help points advising people of the facility. This poster should highlight the fact that passengers can speak directly to a member of staff and not a recorded message.

Develop standards for equipment in relation to station types

The facilities that are provided at a station need to reflect how the station is used so it is proposed that a set of minimum and ideal standards are defined for different station types. This would avoid focussing just on passenger volumes as a way of prioritising investment and would take into account factors such as the use of the station by tourists, people needing to change trains, commuters, and other groups with specific needs.

Specific examples of the types of facility which would depend on the station type include electronic A to Z station listings, and electronic departure displays in cafes and outside the station.

Within the focus groups there was a broad consensus that a combination of visual and audio announcements is what is needed. This is because, for example:

- Passengers are not always looking at a screen because they might be working or reading.
- They may not be able to hear announcements, even if their hearing is unimpaired, because of:
 - poor acoustics
 - accent difficult to understand
 - talking to a fellow passenger, on the telephone, etc.
- Some passengers need confirmation – one medium is insufficient particularly when there is major disruption.
- Although there is the danger of information overload, having too much information was seen as preferable to not having enough.

This is what some passengers said in the focus groups...

- **The big stations are fine but when you go to any small stations outside you can't hear a thing** (student)
- **9 times out of 10 the announcements go over my head, so I think ideally you need a combination of both** (leisure passenger)
- **I like the boards because sometimes I think 'Oh God, what did they say?** (business passenger)
- **No, I'm not bothered by an overload of information, as long as it's clear and you're not thinking 'what was that? was that important?'** (senior citizen)

Within the focus groups the following prioritised list of at-station information, in addition to that which is usually already provided, was identified:

1. Platform numbers of arriving trains as soon as they are available is a priority for all types of passenger, but especially those with luggage or small children...
 - **You can be waiting on one platform and they tell you the train's on another platform and you've no time to get there. That happens a lot** (meeter greeter)
 - **I don't know why the platform of departure is a dark secret until ten minutes before the off** (senior citizen)
2. The expected time of arrival (real time) and scheduled time :
 - air travel has set standard
 - allows for planning onward journey/meetings
 - gives information needed for warning colleagues and meeters/greeters.
 - **The only thing I'd quite like is the estimated arrival time because you sort of lose track** (commuter)
3. Identification of fare restrictions would be useful if around threshold time (that is, identifying whether off-peak reduced fares and Railcards are valid)
 - enables passengers to choose to wait for a later train when a cheaper fare is available
 - helps to avoid the embarrassment of travelling on a ticket which is not valid!
4. On frequent services it is useful to know whether there are seats available on the train and, if not, whether there are seats on the next train.

For electronic displays the priority is clear: passengers want visual displays showing stopping patterns and destinations.

An ideal mix would be:

- A-Z at major stations (see example opposite)
- Visual display units (VDUs) at platform entrance and waiting areas
- Dot matrix screens on platform.



- I think the advantage of having the TV screens is that they do have all the stations. When you're not quite sure it's good to know you're actually getting the right train (student)
- At the moment you can't see the screens from where people are waiting, you've actually got to get out onto the platform to find out what the story is (business passenger)
- I get a lot of people asking 'does this train stop at so and so' when I'm on the train so it's clear it's not working (leisure passenger)

Comments from mystery shoppers – TV style displays

Location

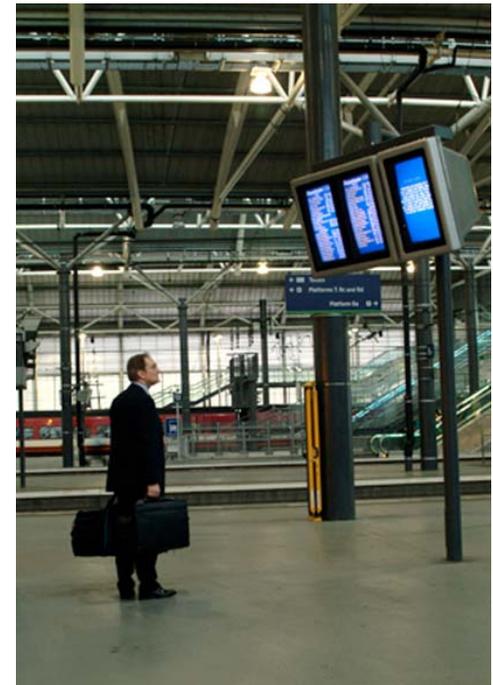
- Some displays are located poorly:
 - too high for the degree of resolution
 - inappropriate angle in relation to platform
 - angled in direct sunlight
 - variable legibility, depending on time of day/degree of light
 - need to guard against obscuring by other signs

Size

- Size of text renders information difficult to read:
 - need to be very close
 - length of platforms should be taken into account

Maintenance

- Some screens not working
- Quality/age of screens needs to be monitored



Help Points are still not widely used for information, the focus groups identified some of the reasons for this:

- They are strongly associated with problems/emergencies rather than providing information
- They are seen as too remote to deliver real time information.
- Participants in the groups doubted that they would have information on specific trains
- Only one person can use at a time

Overall, they would need a concerted effort to be seen as credible conveyors of real time information, but they are useful as a backup for when other systems are not working or not available.

- **I'd always think of the help point as something if I needed help - I'd never thought of it before as somewhere to get information** (business passenger)
- **If it's a busy time you're going to have a whole queue of people waiting to use a help point. It's far easier just to announce** (leisure passenger)
- **If it was a number we could actively call it would be good. I'd need encouragement to call the number though** (commuter)
- **I have tried them for information but mostly there are people around to ask** (commuter)



One of the topics discussed in the focus groups was the needs of those taking or picking up people from a station. This produced much anecdotal evidence of a failure to access accurate arrival times (e.g. by trying to ring the station, asking at ticket office, etc.).

- a key problem was that while people are accustomed to ringing a central number for flight arrivals, they are unsure where to go for similar rail data

However, in practice most now rely on mobile phones:

- the passenger rings ahead when details of delay available
- ability to be in close touch throughout the journey if necessary

Actual requirement limited to those travelling some distance to a station to pick up/drop off:

- details may change between time of leaving home and arrival
- cannot use phone while driving
- need to avoid parking in pay car park if train not due for a while

Main need is for the precise arrival time (also the platform number if meeting elderly or children or someone needing help with luggage):

- could be achieved via website or phone number if aware, though it may be difficult to persuade people that it is going to be precise enough

There would ideally be a central number/website and a large screen outside the stations and/or at entrance to car park...

- **Information in the car parks would be useful because a lot of people wait in the station a little bored rather than in the car** (student)
- **It would be better if you could ring up and ask. A lot of them are computerised and press this button and that button and then they're not up to date.** (commuter)

Good practice for providing information on trains



The priority list of suggested actions relating to provision of on-train information is:

- Destination station on front of train
- List of stopping points on the sides of train (longer distance)
- PA announcement of station stops before departure from station
- PA announcement of next station 2 minutes before arrival

While these measures have already been implemented in many cases, the provision of on-train information is still too patchy and the consistent application of these is necessary.

Destination station on front of train

Passengers find a good deal of reassurance from seeing a destination on the train itself. This confirms that they are getting on the train advertised.

In the few cases where the train only has a headcode and not a destination, it would be useful to provide information at the station of the meaning of the headcodes.

List of stopping points on sides of train

As with the destination on the front of the train, passengers find reassurance by seeing the destinations on the train itself confirming that they are getting on the right train.

In practice this is only possible for longer distance limited stopping services. This information is a priority for longer distance services, whether provided via an electronic display on the side of the train (as with new rolling stock) or via a paper notice on the inside of the door or carriage windows.

PA announcement of station stops before departure from station

Even with information on the platform and on the outside of the train there is still merit in using on-train announcements to inform passengers of which train they are on. This is even more important where there is limited (or no) information on the train itself, or when there is service disruption and passengers are dubious about the reliability of platform based information.

Some newer trains have dot matrix type displays inside the train and these provide useful reassurance as well, though are not as comforting as hearing the voice of the conductor or driver.

It is key to make the announcement before it is too late for passengers to get off the train. The aim should therefore be to make the announcement of the final destination of the train, if not all the stops, before the doors are closed. This can be challenging on suburban commuter services, and it is perhaps in particular these types of service where in-vehicle dot matrix displays and / or recorded announcements could play a more significant role.

PA announcement of next station 2 minutes before arrival

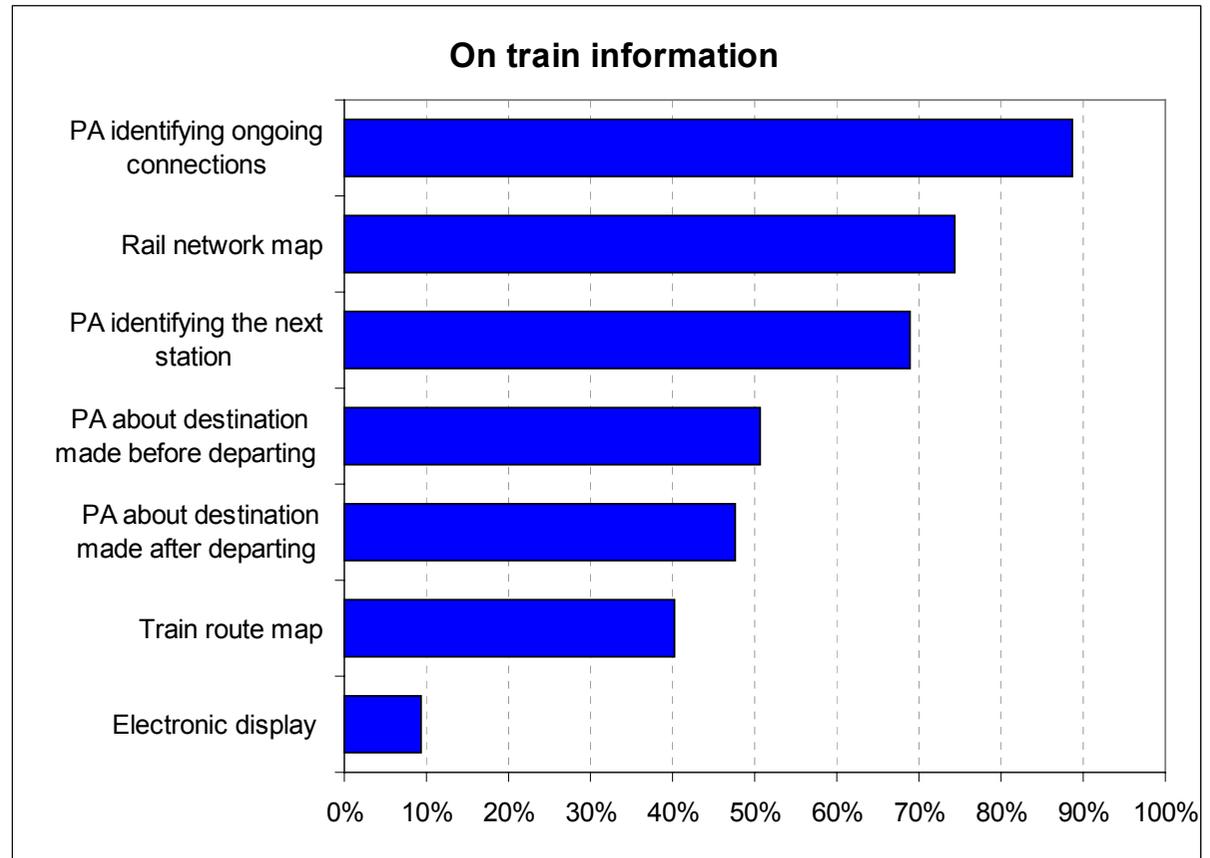
An announcement regarding the imminent approach of the next station serves the very practical purpose of giving passengers time to gather their belongings, power down their laptops, and on trains with doors only at the end of the carriage, to make their way to the vestibule area.

Along the lines of the warning “beep” recommended for time sensitive on-station announcements, the same principle might be applied to on-train announcements with this type of announcement falling into the time sensitive category.

Although a two minute standard is suggested, there may be a case for reducing this for suburban commuter services where passengers will be tending to make short trips and stations are only a few minutes apart.



- We tested the actual information provided on train by conducting mystery shopping research and the results are summarised opposite.
- An announcement about the destination of the service was made before departure in only about half of cases.
- Announcements providing warning of the next station were somewhat more common, and occurred in around two-thirds of our sample of journeys.



Source: mystery shopping on services with planned and unplanned disruption

Within the focus groups we found widespread support for having destination and interim stops on carriage doors/windows or front of train...

- **It's just reassuring if you can see your station on the actual train** (leisure passenger)

While some passengers clearly wanted to have on-train announcements regarding which stations the train is stopping at views do depend on the type of journey being made and in particular the frequency of travel, familiarity with the service and general level of confidence:

- Irregular/nervous passengers in particular welcome the reassurance of announcements...
 - **The first thing they should do is tell you where you are going, where you're stopping in-between - everyone loves that wee bit of reassurance** (senior citizen)
- Commuters on the other hand do not need so much reassurance (except perhaps when services are disrupted) but nevertheless can 'switch off' and as a consequence are prepared to accept announcements for the benefit of others
- Those who are visually impaired do need the audio announcements for peace of mind.

Although commuters are not so much in need of reassurance that they are on the right train, some find a warning that their station is approaching useful...

- **I often work on the train and don't look up to see where I am - I want to have announcements, especially a minute or two's warning that you're about to arrive so you can pick up your coat etc.** (commuter)

Other announcements that provide useful information relate to the buffet car (whether open or not and location), and the location of the train manager.

Good practice for providing information during times of disruption



Improving information during times of disruption is the top passenger priority and the actions on which to focus for improving information during these times are:

- Make PA announcement within 2 minutes of an unscheduled stop or a train being delayed
- Ensure PA announcements are made using an appropriate style
- Do not use pre-recorded announcements during major disruption
- Promote the National Rail website

These actions complement those already identified for at-station and on-train information provision which are also an important part of minimising the impact of disruption.

Make PA announcement within 2 minutes of an unscheduled stop or a train being delayed

- A 2 minute standard is probably the key target improvement. The research clearly demonstrated that passengers desire an early response, even where there is little information to pass on. This applies both on-station and on-train.
- The aim should therefore be to make an announcement within two minutes of a train coming to an unscheduled stop, or within two minutes of a train being passed its scheduled departure time. Ideally the same standard would also be applied to passing on information on a delay within two minutes of the delay being registered.
- This will often mean that the initial announcement is a holding one which simply acknowledges the disruption and reassures passengers that they will be provided with more information as soon as possible.

Ensure PA announcements are made using an appropriate style

- Making a good announcement when there is disruption is not easy and requires skill and training. This is perhaps particularly so when there is little or no information for the member of staff making the announcement and they are having to make a holding announcement.
- The key attributes which should be aimed for in the delivery of an announcement are:
 - professional
 - honest
 - empathetic
 - succinct
- Here is an example of a suitable holding message, in this case in an on-train situation:
 - *Can I have your attention please. We are being held here because of a points failure at Westbridge. At the moment I don't know how long we are likely to be delayed but I'm doing my best to find out and will let you know when I have any further information. Thank you for your patience.*

Ensure PA announcements are made using an appropriate style contd.

In training, we suggest staff are encouraged to develop their own wording for announcements so that communication sounds natural and individual rather than scripted and prescribed. They should, though, be given guidance on what the message should convey and on some definite 'don'ts'.

Amongst the 'don'ts' would be:

- don't try to lay the blame on someone else
- don't make promises that cannot be kept

Don't use pre-recorded announcements during major disruption

Pre-recorded announcements are acceptable in normal circumstances but when there is major disruption and particularly at a station when there are multiple delays, it is important that people hear a live announcement.

Promote the National Rail website

Awareness of the live train running information available on the National Rail website appears to be relatively low, especially compared with the telephone enquiries service. Although the internet is not a prime source of information, when there is disruption it is useful for commuters and business passengers, for example for checking their train is on time before setting out. It is therefore well worth looking into raising awareness of the National Rail website both for planning and real time information.

No excuse for lack of communication!

6

One of the messages from the focus groups is that while passengers accept there will be delays, breakdowns and accidents, they cannot accept lack of communication.

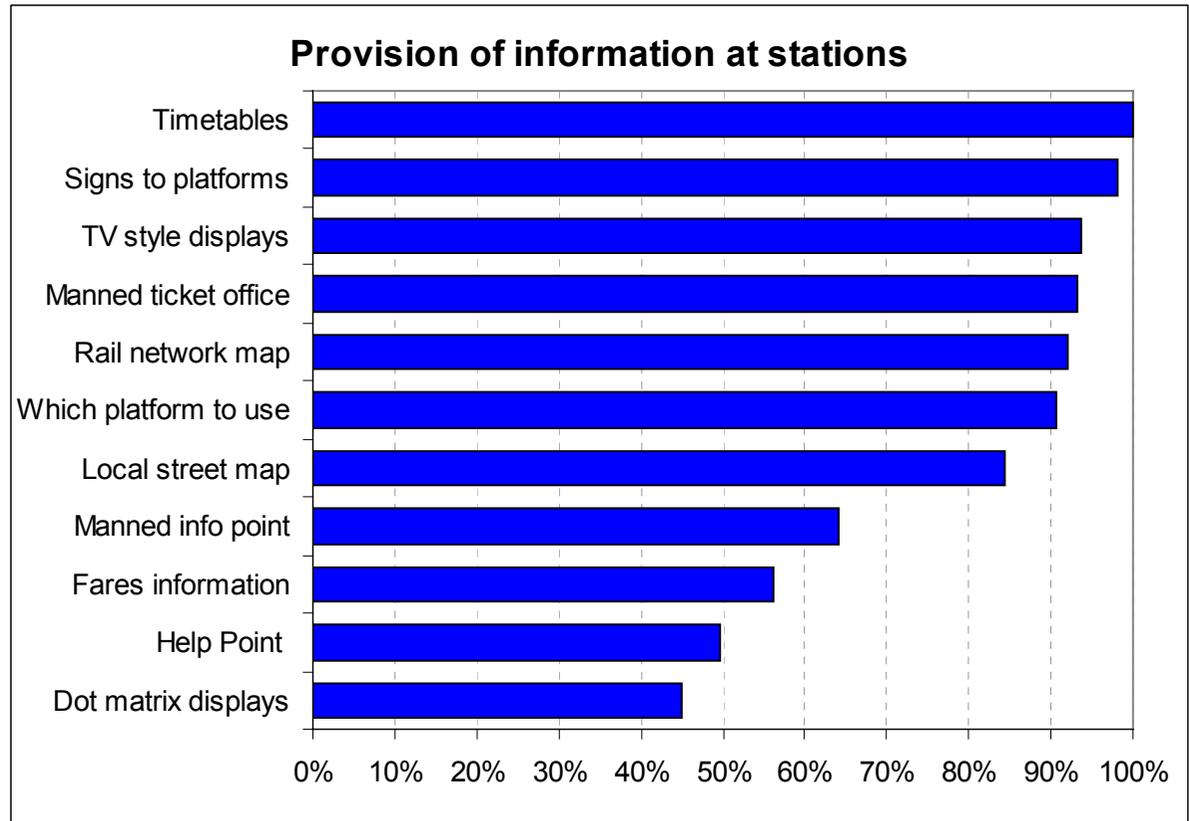
Up to a point, delays are seen as inevitable and “an occupational hazard of travel on crowded railway system”. They are also not generally regarded as the fault of the staff.

On the other hand, passengers perceive that the technology is there to provide information, so there is no excuse for not doing so. They believe staff should be informed and trained to disseminate information appropriately.

- **If a train has come to a stop it's bearable if somebody tells you what's going on, but if you're sitting there it's so frustrating.** (senior citizen)



- The mystery shopping confirmed that the majority of stations have some kind of electronic display capable of showing real time information.
- Information can take the form of a TV style display showing a number of services at once, or a dot matrix display showing the next two or three services, including the stations at which the service calls.
- In fact, most stations in the sample were well equipped with information, that on fares probably being the weakest area.

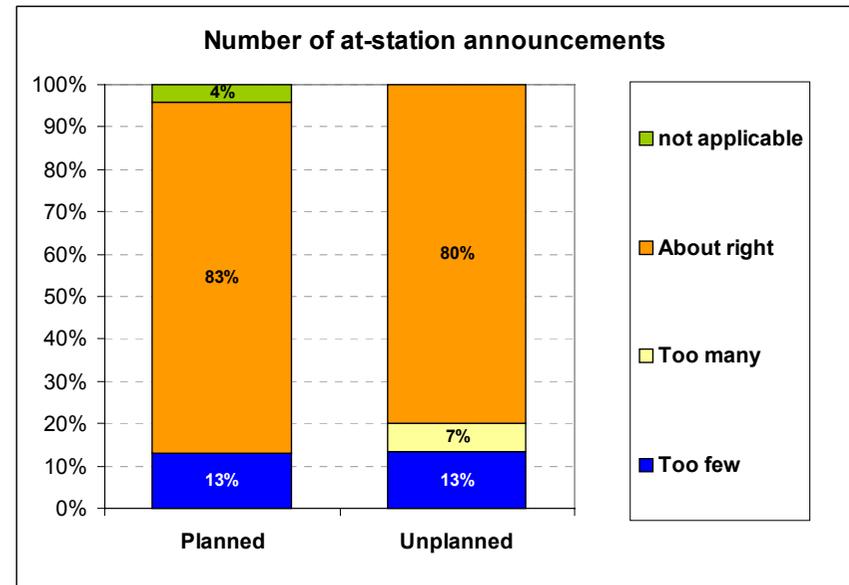
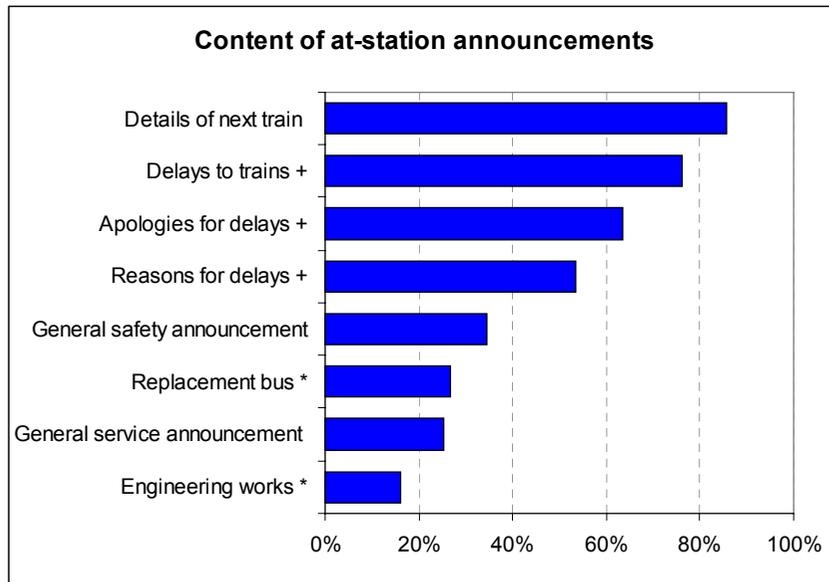


Source: mystery shopping on services with planned and unplanned disruption

Information provided at stations during disruption

The charts below give an insight into different types of announcements at stations during times of disruption or during engineering works. The results show whether the mystery shoppers considered there were enough announcements during these times.

For example, for journeys where there was some disruption, in just under 80% of cases there was at least announcement of the delay, and in a little over 60% of cases an apology also. Generally speaking (in 80% of cases during unplanned disruption) it was felt that the number of announcements was appropriate.



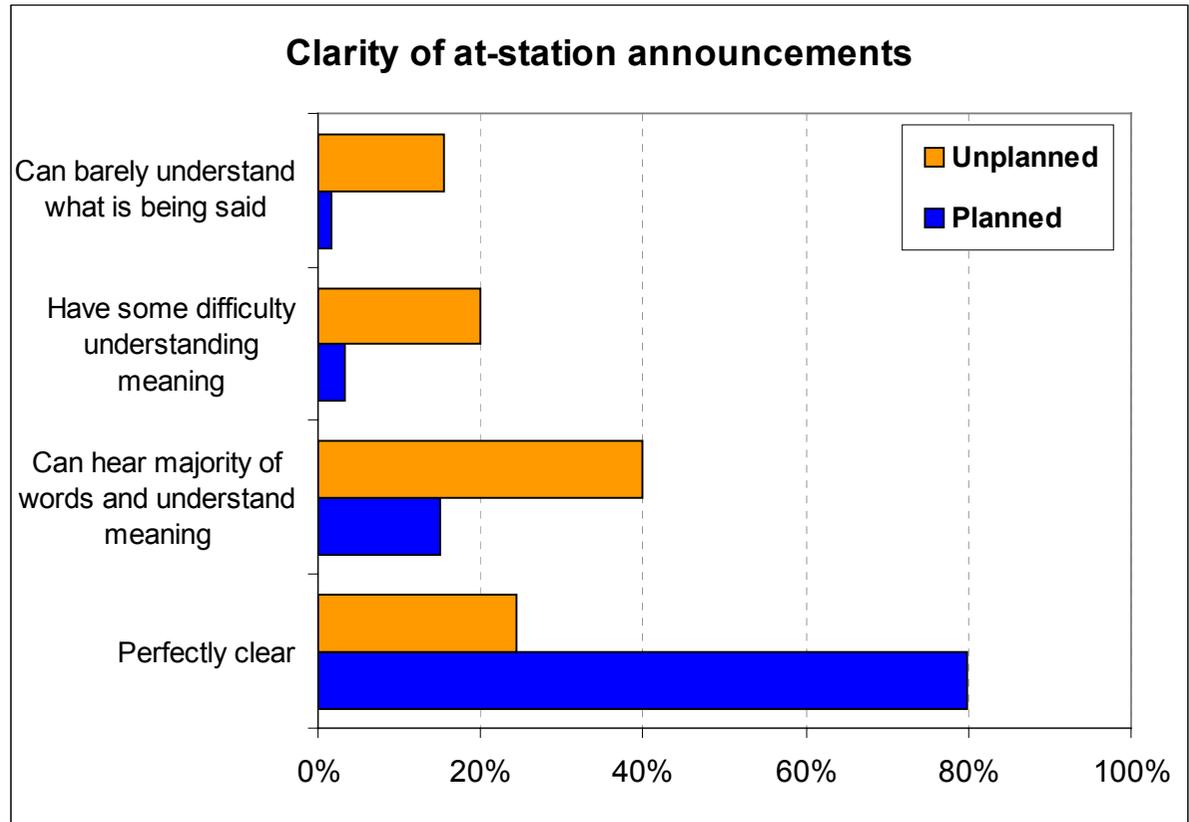
Source: mystery shopping on services with planned and unplanned disruption

* base=services subject to engineering works (planned disruption)

+ base=services subject to unplanned disruption

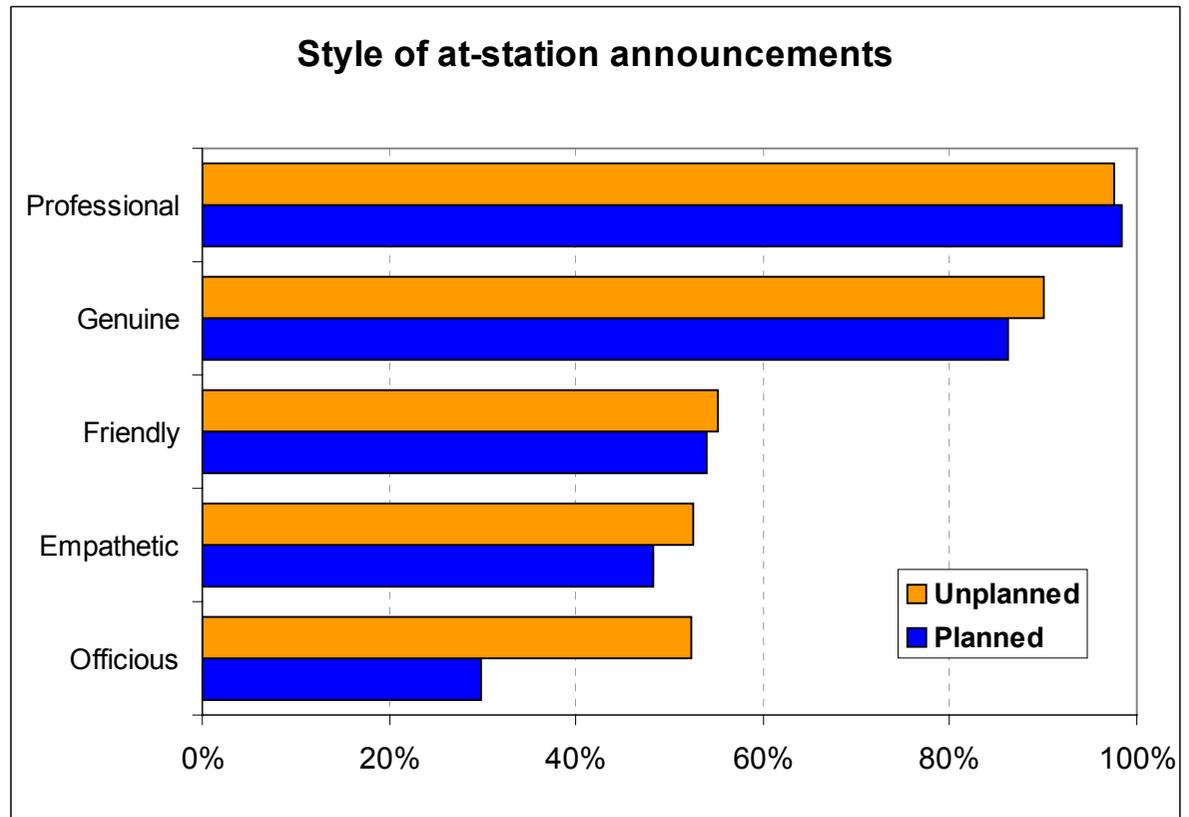
Source: mystery shopping on services with planned and unplanned disruption

- Mystery shoppers found that announcements at stations were easier to understand when they related to engineering work than to unplanned disruption
- The table opposite indicates that in over a third of cases, when there was unplanned disruption, passengers had some difficulty in understanding the announcements or could barely comprehend them at all.



Source: mystery shopping on services with planned and unplanned disruption

- This shows a rather mixed picture with less than half saying they were given sufficient information.
- In the case of unplanned disruption, less than a third thought there were sufficient announcements made, indicating distinct room for improvement.
- The clarity of announcements was somewhat better, but in the engineering work examples dipped to below 40% being regarded as clear and understandable.



Source: mystery shopping on services with planned and unplanned disruption

In general, there was a strong preference amongst passengers for a speedy acknowledgement that there is a problem (with a promise of regular updates) over waiting for full details before receiving any information.

This reflects the fact that knowing that staff identify and empathise with passengers' frustrations is more important than having an instant answer, and it is considered acceptable to say 'I don't know' providing the speaker sounds confident and concerned and does what they says they will do...

- **That's why I like that one, he said 'this is the problem and we'll update you as soon as we can'** (commuter, in response to a number of alternative recorded announcements)

The key thing passengers are looking for initially is an undertaking to find out the likely length of the delay. The cause is also useful in that it can provide an indication of the seriousness and likely impact of the incident.

Within the focus groups we tested alternative approaches to dealing with a lack of information and there was a strong preference for reliable information rather than guesswork, even if it means waiting longer for it.

We also tested tolerance to waiting for an announcement and found that even 2 minutes can seem like a long time...

- **1 or 2 minutes seems endless if the train stops and you're going to work** (commuter)

Passengers would like to be able to obtain information or confirmation from staff at stations but experience has taught them that station staff often dispense information which is out of date...

- **The guy there told me the time of the train as 6.05. I said it's normally 7.05 but arrived at 6.05 and then found out it was 7.05 and had to wait in the cold for an hour** (meeter/greeter)

The feeling is that booking office staff are often out of touch with delays and engineering works, while the knowledge of platform staff is somewhat 'hit and miss'. This means that passengers often seek confirmation from another source, either visual or verbal.

It is particularly the less frequent passengers and some older passengers who like to have personal contact for reassurance, but even regular passengers like to have access to someone they can talk to when there is disruption in order to get advice...

- **Immediately there should be an announcement but then I would like a member of staff to be available so they can advise on alternative routes or whatever** (commuter)

It is felt that booking office staff should have access to real time information, while other station staff should make it their business to know what is happening.

Electronic real time display screens at stations are quite well trusted but the perception is that when there is disruption they can often be rather slow to be updated.

When there is a delay and an important message to get across it was regarded as vital that both audio and visual media were used, and preferably also some way of drawing particular attention to it...

- **You can't have just one thing or the other, it has to be both** (business passenger)
- **The tannoy and the monitors certainly help, but possibly you need something bigger for emergency use so you know it's a real issue, because you want to know quickly if there's a problem** (business passenger)
- **They give lots of regular announcements so with all that's going on you do switch off, so if it's a message that is important to everyone they should precede it with a siren or something** (business passenger)

Recorded messages are accepted for routine announcements of train arrivals, platforms etc, but spontaneous verbal messages preferred for when there are serious delays...

- **I don't mind if it's computer generated as long as you can hear it and understand it** (business passenger)

The dot matrix style "ticker tape" displays are the most credible for real time information because:

- they are legible for most people
- they allow for destination information and delays to be shown together
- many people, particularly in the South East, are used to seeing them on the Underground and at bus stops.

The main difficulty with the TV style VDU screens is that the text is too small for distance viewing. However, they still have a role to play at platform entrance and at major terminals in order to show all forthcoming departures together.

The preference is for verbal announcements:

- Assumption it will be more quickly available (ie driver/guard will not be able to update visual display instantly)
- Seems more personal, reassuring (potentially).

However, visual (dot matrix) messages are useful for those that are hard of hearing.

Some felt that a message is more credible if it comes from the driver (rather than guard):

- **If they say 'this is the driver speaking' then you're assuming that he's being informed - it's a bit like on a plane when they say it's the pilot speaking rather than the cabin crew when you don't listen as much** (business passenger)

The first announcement is expected within a few minutes of an unscheduled stop:

- Time seems longer when sitting waiting
- The earlier announcement made, the less fuel for irritation
- On-train environment can be claustrophobic because of inability to adapt.
 - **Five minutes is a long time to just sit... they can just say we are expected to leave shortly or whatever, but something, just something, rather than nothing** (business passenger)
 - **I do feel if you're on the train you are trapped whereas if you're on the station you do have a choice** (business passenger)

Regular updates are required, even when there is no additional information:

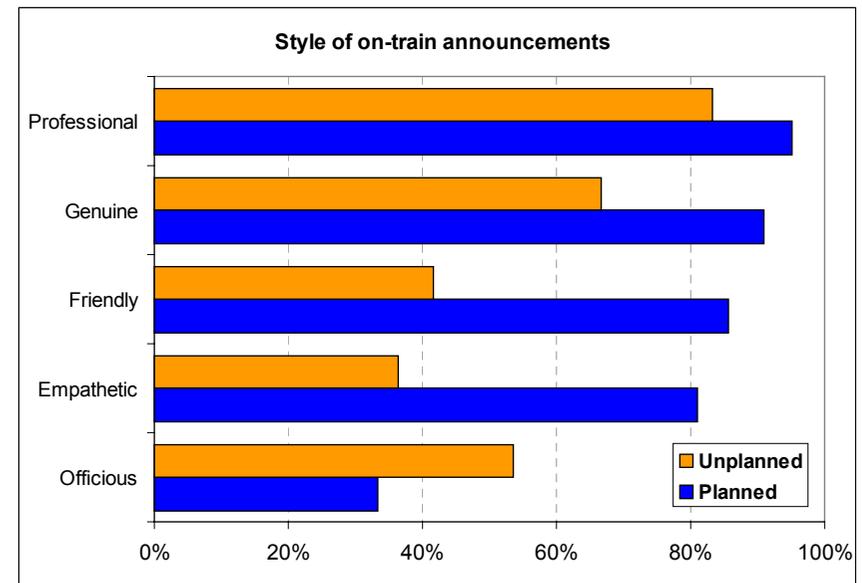
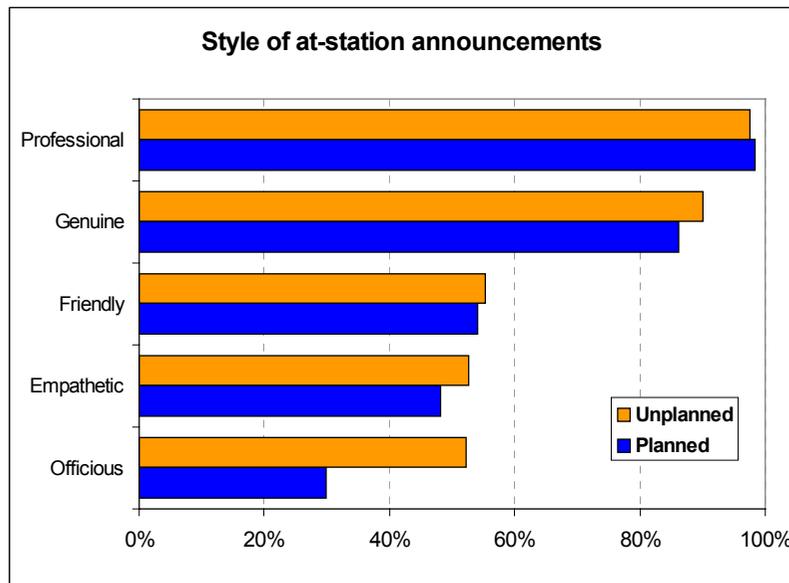
- Ideally every 5 minutes, or sooner if there is information
- Critical that promises of speaker to 'keep you informed' are kept.

Style of announcements

The tone and style of the announcement is as important as its content:

- Must sound professional, pleasant and knowledgeable (well trained)
- Must get immediate attention (eg by a warning signal)
- Should include an apology – but must not grovel
- Should not sound scripted, it is more credible if spontaneous
- Humour can be useful, but should not be at the expense of professionalism
- Must promise to update at regular intervals eg every 5 minutes (and stick to it).
 - **I think it needs to sound professional and not that there is this man who sounds like he hasn't got a clue what's going on** (student)

Our mystery shopping survey showed that most announcements are made in a professional and genuine way, as shown below:



Source: mystery shopping on services with planned and unplanned disruption

Explanations

Passengers like to know the reasons as well as likely period of delay:

- provides a 'story' to tell people while they are waiting
- understanding the problem helps reduce the frustration
- provides some notion of the seriousness and likely impact of the incident

But how it is expressed needs careful handling since it can back-fire...

- **Sometimes it just sounds like they're making up excuses** (business passenger)
- **I hate it when they say it's 'beyond they're control' - that's great isn't it?** (business passenger)

Train managers

The presence of a train manager or guard, walking through the train, was seen as a bonus:

- it is reassuring if there is a major problem
- it demonstrates a willingness to 'face the passengers'
- it provides a means of giving information on connections / alternatives...
 - **People like the personal contact, but I wouldn't envy his job!** (leisure passenger)

In the mystery shopping during unplanned disruption approx ¼ of passengers saw a guard or a train manager on the train.

Recognising the passenger view

Relatively minor gestures and the attitudes of staff can help to reduce or heighten the impacts of disruption...

- **I'll tell you one thing which really, really annoys me, their poor comprehension. I get to Waterloo and they've made my train late and then they delay me further to look at my ticket again** (commuter)
- **One of the nicest things that's ever happened to be is I got on the station at Wool and the train was delayed by 15 minutes. We got on the train and they came around with the drinks wagon and they said it's free because of the delay. That made all the difference to my journey and I told the whole world how great it was** (commuter)

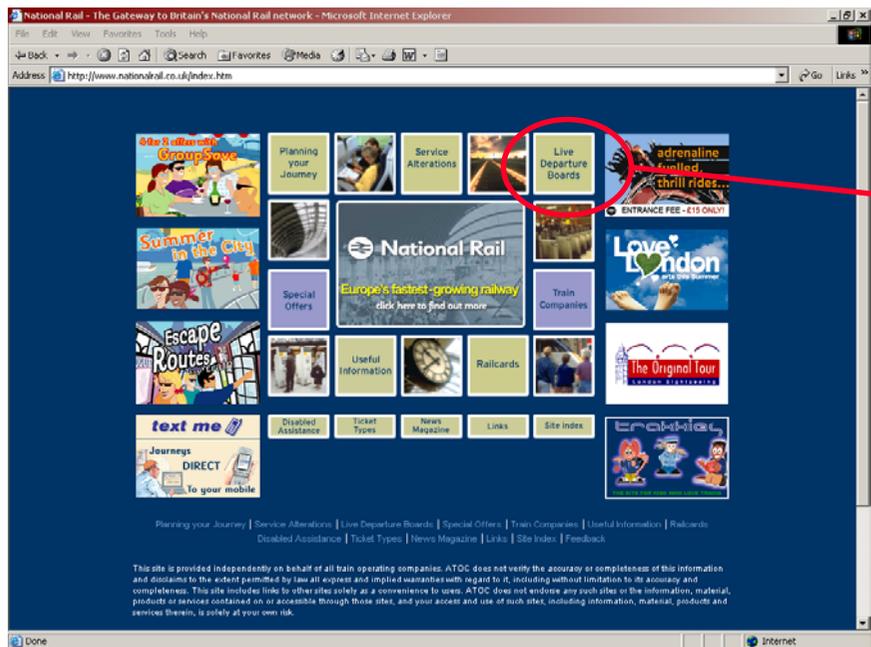
Within the focus groups there was some awareness of the real time information available via the internet among business passengers and commuters, but this was fairly limited and few of the focus group participants were specifically aware of the National Rail website (illustrated below), even though there was a call for a central site which can act as a one stop shop.

- **If you were trying to see if the train was on time then you'd go to one site, but if you wanted to get your ticket you'd go to another one** (leisure passenger)

This is in contrast to the National Rail Enquiries service which is well known, but recognised mostly for timetable and fares information, though it is seen to an extent as providing information on engineering works and general disruption, but not for how a particular train is running.

- **It is a good service (NRES) except when a train is delayed they don't seem to know about it** (student)

www.nationalrail.co.uk website home page and a live departure board



The screenshot shows the 'Train Times for Guildford' page in Microsoft Internet Explorer. The address bar shows 'http://www.livedepartureboards.co.uk/rlb/summary.aspx?T=GLD'. The page displays a table of train times for Guildford. A red arrow from the left screenshot points to the top of this table.

Train Times for Guildford

- For more information contact National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50.
- Guildford station is managed by South West Trains.
- These train times are produced by an automated system. Our disclaimer explains its limitations.
- This page updates every 2 minutes. [Click here for a version that does not automatically update.](#)
- [Click here for details of engineering works and service alterations.](#)

Last updated: 15/07/2004 13:41:04

From	Timetabled Arrival	Expected Arrival	To	Timetabled Departure	Expected Departure	Operator
London Waterloo	1341	On time	**Terminates**			South West Trains
London Waterloo	1341	1345	Portsmouth Harbour	1342	1346	South West Trains
Gatwick Airport	1341	On time	Reading	1342	On time	First Great Western Link
Ascot	1346	On time	**Terminates**			South West Trains
Portsmouth Harbour	1346	On time	London Waterloo	1347	On time	South West Trains
Guildford			London Waterloo	1350	No report	South West Trains
Reading	1350	On time	Shalford	1351	On time	First Great Western Link
Guildford			Ascot	1357	No report	South West Trains
London Waterloo	1359	On time	Haslemere	1359	On time	South West Trains
Haslemere	1401	No report	London Waterloo	1402	No report	South West Trains
London Waterloo	1404	1406	**Terminates**			South West Trains
Guildford			London Waterloo	1407	No report	South West Trains
Reading	1408	On time	Gatwick Airport	1409	On time	First Great Western Link

The use of radio and TV for train running information appears to be relatively limited. Within the focus groups the London commuters were the most likely to tune in to a radio station at regular times, but few other users currently even consider it.

The general perception is that radio/TV stations are dependent on operators supplying information voluntarily and therefore it is too hit and miss reliably to supply real time running information. However, these media are seen as ideal for warning of major disruption and forthcoming engineering works. There is also scope for using radio to publicise the National Rail website and telephone enquiries and is an ideal medium for advertising phone numbers and websites.

Good practice for providing information when there are engineering works



During this study we found that the information provided to passengers in advance of engineering was inconsistent and that many of the basic things that could be done were not being done often enough. The suggested actions for improving information regarding engineering works are:

- To define minimum standards for providing information at stations and on-train:
 - posters
 - use of electronic displays
 - PA announcements.

- To ensure that the National Rail website and other websites that sell rail tickets, along with telephone enquiries and telesales services automatically highlight when a service is affected by engineering works, also indicating if there is a replacement bus or coach or a recommended alternative route.

- Set out recommendations for use of radio and other off-system media during times of major engineering works.

One of the key points of interest for the mystery shopping was whether passengers were told about the engineering works when making their enquiry (all the journeys being tested were on routes affected by engineering works, and in many cases this included a replacement bus).

In 90% of our internet enquiries mystery passengers were NOT informed of engineering works. Some sites:

- indicated the replacement bus in the journey breakdown
- had a link for engineering works, but required user to check
- indicated nothing about changed services or replacement bus

Where information was available it often required the user to go to a different page.

In contrast, in 50% of telephone enquiries the passenger was informed of the engineering works without asking.

The time taken to make the enquiry was also recorded, and the speed of the National Rail Enquiries and indeed other telephone services was found to be remarkably quick. There were very few of the instances of being placed in a queue which many unfamiliar with the service expect. In fact the average transaction time was just 2.2 minutes and the longest was 6 minutes (from picking up the phone to putting it down).

The speed of the internet enquiry service was much more variable, lasting anything between 1 and 15 minutes with an average of just over 6 minutes. This includes the time taken to find and access a website (albeit using a fast internet connection). For regular users already logged onto the internet with a shortcut to the relevant website, this time is halved (though still making it a little slower than the phone).

Comments from mystery shoppers – internet and telephone enquiries

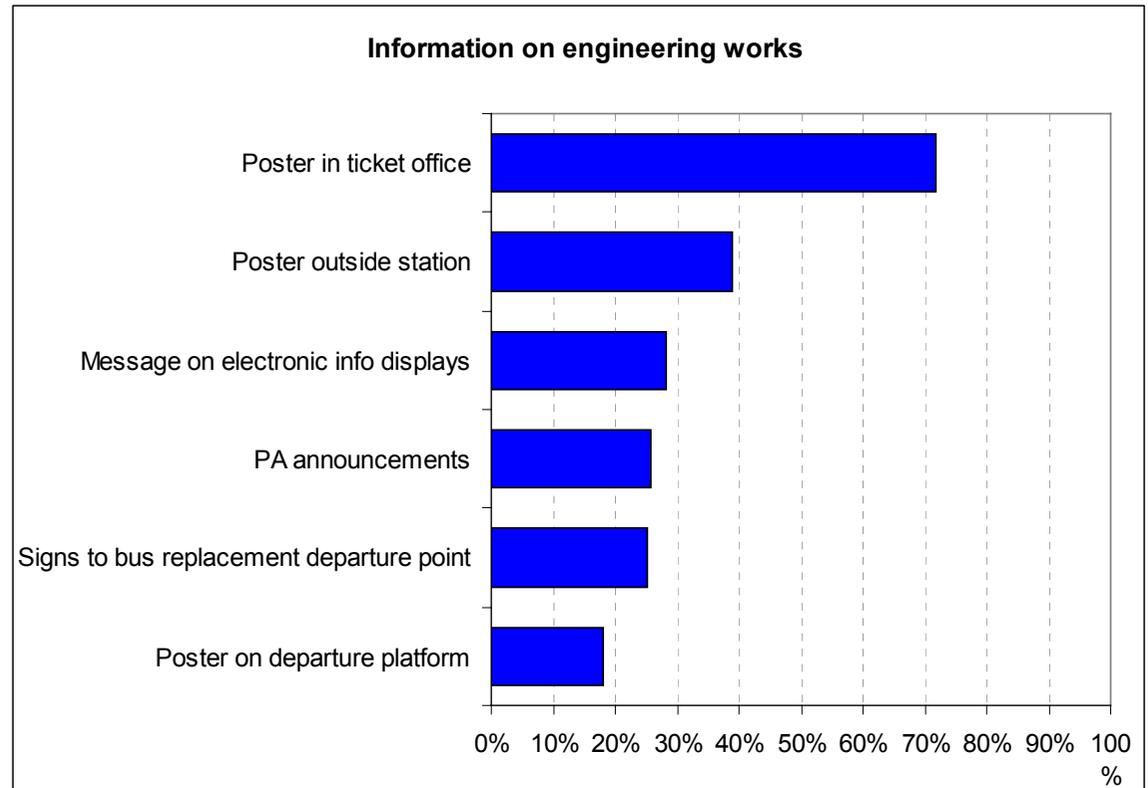
Internet

- Good websites:
 - engineering work information easily accessible
 - recent changes in pop-up window
- Engineering information could be improved:
 - detail of replacement buses
 - impact on overall journey time
- Live departure board link should include information about rail replacement buses.
- When purchasing tickets information needs to be provided about rail replacement buses.
- Need to inform passengers when a special timetable is applicable.

Telephone

- Detailed information on impact of engineering work should be available without asking.
- Reasons should be given for any change to the journey route (including rail replacement buses).
- Need for the operator to have updated the schedule in advance of date of travel.

- In the mystery shopping undertaken on services where there were engineering works the level of information about them was generally quite poor.
- Although in most cases there was a poster in the ticket office, there were fewer posters outside the station or on the platforms.
- The electronic information displays or PA systems were rarely used.
- Probably the aspect where information was at its worst was in the case of replacement bus services:
 - in only half (48%) were signs to the bus stop considered adequate
 - only 7% of stops had information about departure times
 - hardly any information was available on the bus



Source: mystery shopping on services with planned disruption

Suggestions from mystery shoppers – station information

Engineering works:

- posters on platforms with replacement transport information
- time difference between scheduled and replacement journey

Amount, formats and location of information on service disruption:

- provide more information about the reason for service disruption
- posters in addition to electronic displays
- blackboard at the platform barrier – including an apology for the disruption
- staff available to answer questions
- information at the station entrance about the disruption

Bus service information:

- bus service information available on every platform, including via P.A. system
- pocket bus timetables available on stations

Improve speed and legibility of updating visual displays:

- ensure information is updated before the train leaves the station!
- monitors too small unless standing very close

Suggestions from mystery shoppers – on-train information

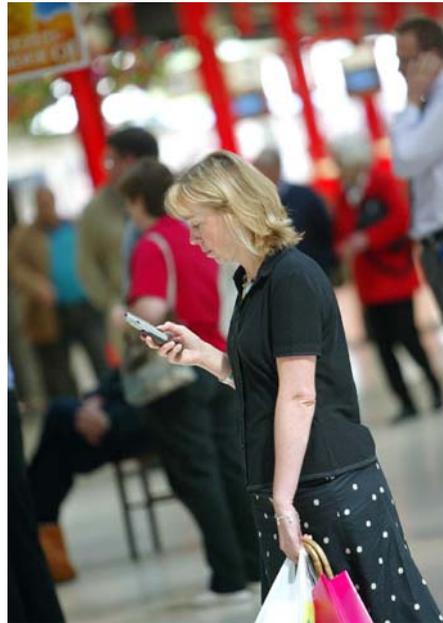
Standard service announcements by conductor/driver:

- need for brief announcement of each stop
- announcement of destination and intermediate stops on joining the train
- information about connecting bus and coach services
- need for training to ensure clarity and appropriate tone (eg loud enough to wake sleeping passengers!)
- need to standardise content and frequency of announcements
- important to check that electronic displays are working

Announcements during delays:

- clear announcements needed every 5 – 10 minutes
- expected length and reasons for delay should be given as standard
- information on rail replacements buses during engineering works
- apologise for any disruption

The future of passenger information

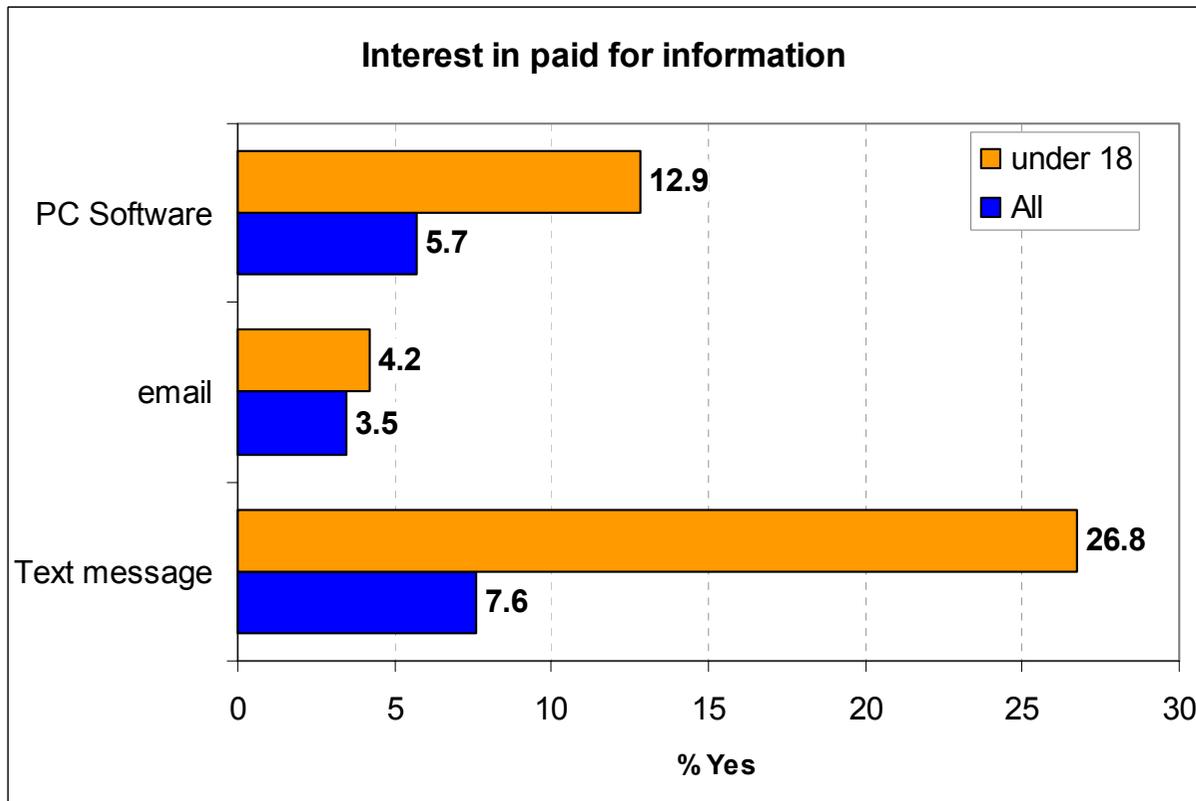


There is sometimes a temptation to get seduced by the prospect of exciting new technologies, but a clear message from passengers is that the development of new services shouldn't divert attention from getting the basics right!

The potential of providing up to date information via mobile phones is one of the most widely talked about, but the market for this at moment is probably fairly limited. The two services which could be most useful for passengers are:

- to provide a service which warns subscribers by text / SMS of major incidents in their area
- when making an advance booking on specific trains, to offer a service whereby the passenger is sent a text an hour before departure concerning whether their train is on time.

In our passenger survey, respondents were asked whether they would be prepared to pay an annual fee of £40 for each of the three potential services (outlined below).



Rail journey planner software for use on a PC or pocket PC, which searches the timetable for the best trains.

e-mail service which automatically notifies you of delays to your regular trains, sent to your PC, pocket PC or "3G" / e-mail enabled phone.

Text message service which automatically notifies you of delays to your regular trains, sent to your mobile phone.

Source: on-train survey

Within the focus groups there was very limited awareness of WAP phones:

- there was a good deal of confusion over how the system works and what it can offer
- some suggested that they may already have been superseded by GPRS
- there was a belief that calls are expensive
- but there is potential for growth if call costs come down.

There was some resistance among older passengers to the need to master yet another system:

- some are still not used to PCs
- use of mobile phones is still not universal
- SMS still not yet mastered by everyone.

But the concept of receiving real time updates by SMS does have appeal to commuters and regular text message users:

- TfL already sending texts – free of charge
- could be useful if regular morning train is delayed
- would allow more time in bed or with friends/relatives if knew train was delayed...
 - **When I'm leaving London it would be nice to have a text telling me the train is an hour late so that I could spend an extra hour with my family or whatever** (student)
- could suggest alternative service, route or allow for alternative mode to be used
- could be linked to a train reservation when making longer distance trip
- would be helpful when the network is affected by major disruption.

Nevertheless, even among those expressing some interest there is scepticism:

- cost likely to be prohibitive...
 - **Why would I want to pay for bad news?** (commuter)
- fear of being inundated by texts – 'I'd be worried about being inundated with stuff I didn't need to know about'
- would service be reliable?

Summary



Departures			
Due	Destination	Plat	Expected
1007	Scarborough	9B	1057
1008	Liverpool Lime St.	16A	1010
1010	Bradford F. Sq.	2B	On time
1011	Huddersfield	5C	On time
1018	Sunderland	11D	On time
1018	Blackpool North		1030
1019	Morecambe	2C	On time
1021	Doncaster	11B	On time
1022	Manchester Airport	16A	On time
Time now 10:11			

This study was undertaken for the rail industry in order to identify some practical measures which could be taken to improve passenger information as a matter of priority. It has been based on passenger research and industry consultation.

The clear priorities for improving information network wide are for better and more timely information when *services are disrupted* and when there are *engineering works*. This reflects the fact that there have been improvements in the provision of planning information through the National Rail Enquiries telephone and internet services, and in on-train and at-station information. In fact, one underlying theme is that there is work worth doing to make the general public aware of the efforts that have been made.

Nevertheless, there is always room for further improvement and in particular for spreading examples of good practice across the rail network. The following suggestions for improving passenger information have been identified – further details can be found in the main body of the report.

At-station information

- Use visual and audio displays as complementary sources
- Precede time sensitive audio messages with a distinctive “beep”
- Conduct visibility audits for displays and define minimum standards
- More electronic A to Z displays at major / busy stations
- Earlier advertising of departure platform
- More TV style displays in waiting areas
- More TV style displays outside the station
- Raise awareness of Help Points as information sources
- Develop standards for equipment in relation to station types

On-train information

- Show destination station on the front of the train
- Provide a list of stopping points on the sides of longer distance trains
- Ensure there is an announcement of station stops *before departure from station*
- Try and make an announcement of next station 2 minutes before arrival

When services are disrupted

- Make PA announcement within 2 minutes of an unscheduled stop or a train being delayed
- Ensure PA announcements are made using an appropriate style
- Do not use pre-recorded announcements during major disruption
- Promote the National Rail website

During engineering works

- Define minimum standards for providing information at stations and on-train.
- Ensure that the National Rail website and other websites that sell rail tickets, along with telephone enquiries and telesales services, automatically highlight when a service is affected by engineering works, also indicating if there is a rail replacement bus or a recommended alternative route.
- Set out recommendations for use of radio and other off-system media during times of major engineering works.

Newer technology & personal information

- Provide a service which warns subscribers by text / SMS of major incidents in their area
- To offer a service when making an advance booking on specific trains whereby the passenger is sent a text an hour before departure concerning whether their train is on time.

Annex A: Questionnaires

Passenger Information At-Station Questionnaire

Good morning / afternoon. Could you spare a few minutes to answer a few questions about rail travel information. Thank you. This survey is being conducted by Steer Davies Gleave for the Rail Passenger Council who wish to try and improve information for rail travellers.

Part A: Your journey today

Q1 What is the purpose of your journey? (SHOWCARD A)

- 1 To or from work
2 To or from college / university
3 Employer's business
4 Shopping
5 Leisure day trip
6 To or from a holiday or short break destination
7 Sport or entertainment
8 Visiting friends or relations
9 Other leisure
10 Medical, financial or other personal business
11 Other (please write in).....

Q2 How often do you make this journey?

- 1 5 or more days a week
2 3 or 4 days a week
3 Once or twice a week
4 Once every 2 to 4 weeks
5 Once every 1 to 2 months
6 Less often

Q3 And at which station will you get off the train you are waiting to catch ?

(please write in).....

Q4 How did you get to this station?

- 1 Car
2 Walk
3 Another train
4 Bus
5 Other (please write in).....

Q5 And how will you travel onward from your destination station?

- 1 Car
2 Walk
3 Another train
4 Bus
5 Other (please write in).....

Q6 How long do you expect this journey to take, door-to-door?

Q7a What type of ticket are you using? (SHOWCARD B)

- 1 Unrestricted single or return fare (including Standard Open Return)
2 Off peak single or return fare (including Cheap Day Return, Saver)
3 Advance purchase ticket (e.g. Apex, Super Advance)
4 Season Ticket or period TravelCard
5 One day TravelCard / Centrocard / or equivalent
6 First Class Single or Return
7 Other (please write in).....

Q7b Are you using a Railcard?

- 1 No
2 Yes, Senior
3 Yes, Young Persons
4 Yes, Family
5 Yes, HM Forces
6 Yes, Network / Gold Card
7 Other (please write in).....

Q8 When did you buy your ticket for today's journey?

- 1 Today
2 Yesterday
3 Up to 7 days before
4 More than 7 days before

Q9 Where did you buy your ticket?

- 1 At a station
2 On the train
3 By telephone
4 Via the Web / internet
5 At a travel agent
6 Bought for me
7 Other (please write in).....

Q10 To what extent did you plan the journey beforehand?

- 1 Not at all - it is a regular journey → jump to Q14
2 Not at all, someone else made the arrangements → jump to Q14
3 It was planned to some extent
4 It was planned carefully

Q11 What information sources did you use when planning this journey? (SHOWCARD C)

- 1 Station staff
2 Station timetable
3 Telephone enquiries
4 Web / internet
5 Own timetable
6 Friend / colleague
7 Other (please write in).....

Q12 What types of information did you obtain while you were planning this journey?

- 1 Train times
- 2 Fares
- 3 Engineering works
- 4 Other (please write in).....

Q13 What is your overall opinion of the information provided when you were planning the journey? (SHOWCARD D)

- Very good Fairly good Neither good nor poor Fairly poor Very poor
-

FOR ALL

Q14 What information sources have you used at this station? (SHOWCARD E)

- a. Station announcement
- b. Electronic / TV display at station
- c. Member of staff at station
- d. Station timetable poster
- e. Own pocket timetable
- f. Another passenger at station
- g. Telephone enquiries
- h. "Help point" at the station
- i. None
- j. Other (write in)

Q15 What types of information were you looking for? (SHOWCARD F)

- 1 Time-table / train times
- 2 Fares
- 3 Whether my train was on time
- 4 Where to catch my train
- 5 Other (please write in).....

Ask only if there are TV, plasma or dot matrix type screens available

Q16 How would you rate the electronic information displays at this station? (SHOWCARD D)

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor
a) How easy they are to read	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) How much information they provide	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) The accuracy of the information given	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q18 What is your overall opinion of the information provided at this station?

- Very good Fairly good Neither good nor poor Fairly poor Very poor
-

Q19 Which of these aspects of information provided at this station would you say were most in need of improvement?

- 1 The availability of information
- 2 The accuracy of the information provided
- 3 The clarity & ease of understanding of the information
- 4 Other (please write in).....

Part B: Views of information sources

Q29 Thinking about different information sources for planning your journey, how many marks out of 10 would you give each of these for convenience and trustworthiness

	Convenience (1-10)	Trustworthiness (1-10)
Booking office staff	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Other station staff	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Web	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Timetables	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Q30 Similarly, thinking about different information sources for keeping you up to date with current train running times and delays, how many marks out of 10 would you give each of these for convenience and trustworthiness

	Convenience (1-10)	Trustworthiness (1-10)
Station announcement	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Electronic / TV display at station	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Member of staff at station	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Telephone enquiries	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
"Help point" at the station	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Q33 I would like to find out what you think the priorities should be for improving rail travel information. Which of these would you say were a top priority (maximum of 2), which a secondary priority, and which are not a priority for improvement, either because you do not use them or they are reasonably good already. (SHOWCARD G)

	Top priority (2 max)	Secondary priority	Not a priority
Station announcements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic / TV displays at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff at stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Printed timetables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-train announcements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet / Web information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone enquiries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Help points" at stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q34 Is there anything else which should be a priority? *[write in]*.....

Part C: About you

Q35 Did you have a car available which you could have used for this journey?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Q36 Which age group are you in? (SHOWCARD H)

- 1 Under 18
- 2 18-24
- 3 25-34
- 4 35-44
- 5 45-54
- 6 55-59
- 7 60-64
- 8 65+
- 9 Refused

Q37 Are you ? (SHOWCARD J)

- 1 Employed full time
- 2 Employed part time
- 3 Full time student
- 4 Retired
- 5 Self employed
- 6 Full time looking after home
- 7 Looking for work

Q38 What is your home Postcode (if UK resident)

Thank you for your help.

Record:
 Date: ___/___/___ Station: _____ Time: _____
 Interviewer Name: _____

Passenger Information On-Train Questionnaire

Could you spare a few minutes to answer a few questions about rail travel information. Thank you. This survey is being conducted by Steer Davies Gleave for the Rail Passenger Council who wish to try and improve information for rail travellers.

When you've filled in the questionnaire please hand it back to the person who gave it to you, or leave it on your seat.

Part A: Your journey today

Q1 What is the purpose of your journey?

- 1 To or from work
- 2 To or from college / university
- 3 Employer's business
- 4 Shopping
- 5 Leisure day trip
- 6 To or from a holiday or short break destination
- 7 Sport or entertainment
- 8 Visiting friends or relations
- 9 Other leisure
- 10 Medical, financial or other personal business
- 11 Other (please write in).....

Q2 How often do you make this journey?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more days a week | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Once every 2 to 4 weeks |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or 4 days a week | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Once every 1 to 2 months |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a week | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Less often |

Q3 At which station will you get off this train? (please write in)

Q4 How did you get to your origin station?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Car | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Another train |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Walk | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Bus |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write in)..... | |

Q5 And how will you travel onward from your destination station?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Car | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Another train |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Walk | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Bus |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write in)..... | |

Q6 What type of ticket are you using?

- 1 Unrestricted single or return fare (including Standard Open Return)
- 2 Off peak single or return fare (including Cheap Day Return, Saver)
- 3 Advance purchase ticket (e.g. Apex, Super Advance)
- 4 Season Ticket or period TravelCard
- 5 One day TravelCard / Centrocard / or equivalent
- 6 First Class Single or Return
- 7 Other (please write in).....

Q7 Are you using a Railcard?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> No | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Family |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Senior | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, HM Forces |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Young Persons | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Network / Gold Card |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write in)..... | |

Q8 When did you buy your ticket for today's journey?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Today | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 7 days before |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Yesterday | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 7 days before |

Q9 Where did you buy your ticket?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> At a station | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Via the Web / internet |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> On the train | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> At a travel agent |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> By telephone | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Bought for me |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write in)..... | |

Q10 To what extent did you plan the journey beforehand?

- 1 Not at all - it is a regular journey → jump to Q14
- 2 Not at all, someone else made the arrangements → jump to Q14
- 3 It was planned to some extent
- 4 It was planned carefully

Q11 What information sources did you use when planning this journey?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Station staff | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Web / internet |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Station timetable | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Own timetable |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone enquiries | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Friend / colleague |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write in)..... | |

Q12 What types of information did you obtain while you were planning this journey?

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Train times | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering works |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Fares | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (write in)..... |

Q13 What is your overall opinion of the information provided when you were planning the journey?

Very good Fairly good Neither good nor poor Fairly poor Very poor

FOR ALL

Q14 What information sources were available and which did you use at the station where you caught this train?

	Available	Used
a. Station announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Electronic / TV display at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Member of staff at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Station timetable poster	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Own pocket timetable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Another passenger at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Telephone enquiries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. "Help point" at the station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

i. Other (write in)
.....

Q15 What types of information were you looking for?

- 1 Time-table / train times
- 2 Fares
- 3 Whether my train was on time
- 4 Where to catch my train
- 5 Other (please write in).....

Q18 What is your overall opinion of the information provided at the station?

Very good Fairly good Neither good nor poor Fairly poor Very poor

Q19 Which of these aspects of information provided at the station would you say were most in need of improvement?

- 1 The availability of information
- 2 The accuracy of the information provided
- 3 The clarity & ease of understanding of the information
- 4 Other (please write in).....

Q20 Did this train leave on time?

1 Yes → skip to Q26

2 No → ask Q21 to Q25

Questions for those suffering a delay

Q21 How late did it leave?

..... minutes

Q22 Which sources of information about the delay were available to you, and which did you find useful?

	Available	Useful
Station announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic / TV display at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another passenger at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-train announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-train staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone enquiries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Help point" at the station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (write in)
.....

Q23 Which of these aspects of information provided about the delays would you say were most in need of improvement?

- 1 The availability of information when you need it
- 2 The accuracy of the information provided
- 3 The clarity & ease of understanding of the information
- 4 Other (please write in).....

Q24 What is your overall opinion of the information provided about the delay? (Show Card 1)

Very good Fairly good Neither good nor poor Fairly poor Very poor

Q25 And what is your opinion of how well the railway staff dealt with the delay?

Very good Fairly good Neither good nor poor Fairly poor Very poor

Q26 Since you've been on the train, what information have you needed, and what has been provided?

	Needed	Provided
Where the train I'm on stops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What time it's due to arrive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whether it's running to time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Why it's running late	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will my connection wait if the train is late	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whether there is a buffet car or trolley	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where the buffet car is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What the next station is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warning that we're approaching the next station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (write in)
.....

Q27 Which of these aspects of information provided on the train would you say were most in need of improvement? [Please tick one answer]

- 1 The availability of information
- 2 The accuracy of the information provided
- 3 The clarity & ease of understanding of the information
- 4 Other (please write in).....

Q28 What is your overall opinion of the information provided on the train?

Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Part B: Views of information sources

Q29 Thinking about different information sources for planning your journey, how many marks out of 10 would you give each of these for convenience and trustworthiness. [Please enter a score of between 1 and ten in each box. If you have little experience to go on, we'd like to know what you think each aspect would be like]

	Convenience (1-10)	Trustworthiness (1-10)
Booking office staff	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other station staff	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Timetables at station	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Telephone	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Web	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pocket timetable	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
National timetable guide	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q30 Similarly, thinking about different information sources for keeping you up to date with current train running times and delays, how many marks out of 10 would you give each of these for convenience and trustworthiness. [Again, please enter a score of between 1 and ten in each box. If you have little experience to go on, we'd still like to know what you think each aspect would be like]

	Convenience (1-10)	Trustworthiness (1-10)
Station announcement	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Electronic / TV display at station	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Member of staff at station	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Another passenger at station	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
On-train announcement	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
On-train staff	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Telephone enquiries	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
"Help point" at the station	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Q31 I'd now like to ask you a few questions about some more sophisticated ways of obtaining rail travel information. Which of these have you heard of, which have you used and which sound like they might be useful to you?

	Heard of	Used	Useful
a. Text message service which automatically notifies you of delays to your regular trains, sent to your mobile phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. E-mail service which automatically notifies you of delays to your regular trains, sent to your PC, pocket PC or *3G* / e-mail enabled phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Rail journey planner software for use on a PC or pocket PC, which searches the timetable for the best trains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q32 Would you be prepared to pay an annual fee of £40 for these services?

	Yes	No	Not applicable
a. Text message service which automatically notifies you of delays to your regular trains, sent to your mobile phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. E-mail service which automatically notifies you of delays to your regular trains, sent to your PC, pocket PC or *3G* / e-mail enabled phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Rail journey planner software for use on a PC or pocket PC, which searches the timetable for the best trains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q33 We would like to find out what you think the priorities should be for improving rail travel information. Which of these would you say were a top priority (maximum of 2), which a secondary priority, and which are not a priority for improvement, either because you do not use them or they are reasonably good already:

	Top priority (2 max)	Secondary priority	Not a priority
a. Station announcements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Electronic / TV displays at station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Staff at stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Printed timetables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. On-train announcements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Internet / Web information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Telephone enquiries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. "Help points" at stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q34 Is there anything else which should be a priority? *{write}*

Part C: About you

Q35 Did you have a car available which you could have used for this journey?

- 1 Yes
2 No

Q36 Which age group are you in?

- 1 Under 18
2 18-24
3 25-34
4 35-44
5 45-54
6 55-59
7 60-64
8 65+

Q37 Are you ?

- 1 Employed full time
2 Employed part time
3 Full time student
4 Retired
5 Self employed
6 Full time looking after home
7 Looking for work

Q38 Are you ?

- 1 Male
2 Female

Q39 What is your home Postcode (if UK resident)

Thank you for your help.

Please use the space below to make any other comments.

Note: this survey is being undertaken according to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act. This means your comments will remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

For office use

Further details about “Passenger information: what, when, where and how?”

“Passenger Information: what, when, where and how?” has been written by Steer Davies Gleave in association with the Rail Passengers Council, the Association of Train Operating Companies, Network Rail, and the Strategic Rail Authority.

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www.railpassengers.org.uk

www.steerdaviesgleave.com