



Transport User Panel survey

Southern Rail industrial action

December 2016

Executive summary

- Passengers were asked to indicate which of several images presented to them best captured how they felt about the industrial action. 39 per cent said that they were frustrated about the strike, while 32 per cent said that the strike made them feel angry. 10 per cent said that they felt stressed about the strikes, while 7 per cent said that they were bored by the issue.
- Passengers were generally very aware of the industrial action affecting Southern trains in the week of 12 December. 74 per cent said that they knew a lot about the strikes, while 22 per cent said that they knew a little.
- The clarity of the message about the impact of the strike, that Southern would not be running any trains on 13 and 14 December, seems to have helped passengers to understand what the impact on them would be. 71 per cent agreed that the information that Southern provided helped them to understand how the strike would affect them, while just 15 per cent disagreed.
- 81 per cent of passengers who regularly use Southern trains said that they would be affected by the strike at least to some extent; more than half said that they would be affected a great deal. 19 per cent said that they would not be greatly affected; 10 per cent said that the strike would not affect them at all.
- 32 per cent said that they would have to work from home during the strikes, while 29 per cent said that they would have to cancel an appointment. 18 per cent said that they would have to cancel a trip, 12 per cent that they would need to drive to work, while 10 per cent or fewer said that they would have to take leave, stay in a hotel or lose a day's pay.

Background and aims

- This report presents the findings of a survey undertaken with over 630 passengers who indicated that they regularly use Southern trains or that they intended to during the week of 12 December. Fieldwork for the survey was undertaken between 12 and 19 December 2016.
- The survey was undertaken in order to get a sense of how passengers feel about the industrial action affecting Southern trains at this time and to explore in detail the impact of the strikes on passengers' daily lives, including what alternative travel arrangements that they would need to make.
- Similarly the survey aims to generate indicative findings which measure the awareness of the industrial action affecting Southern train services during the week of 12 December. The survey also assesses whether passengers feel that the information they were given was effective in helping them to understand the impact of the strikes.
- More detailed information on how this survey was carried out and the breakdown of responses by passenger demographics is included as an appendix to this document.



Detailed findings

How passengers feel about the strike

Passengers were given a series of images and asked to choose that which best captured how they felt about the strike. 39 per cent said that they felt frustrated by the industrial action while 32 per cent said that they felt angry. One in ten said that they felt stressed, while fewer said that they were bored by the strike. Less than one in twenty passengers said that they felt worried, indifferent, relaxed, or happy about the industrial action.

Q. Which one of these images best captures the way in which you feel about the strike?



Frustrated



39%



Worried



4%



Angry



32%



Indifferent



3%



Stressed



10%



Relaxed



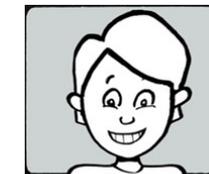
3%



Bored



7%



Happy



2%

Base: all passengers who regularly use / intended to use Southern trains (631). Fieldwork 12 – 19 December 2016.

"I don't care anymore who is in the wrong or right - commuters are the ones being punished. Its been months now since I've been able to catch my usual train to work and I can foresee this going on well into 2017. I have a friend who's a freelancer who lost a potential gig in London when they found out he was affected by the Southern strikes. It's rubbish."
Male, 45-54

"It impacts on my work, because I am continually late or unable to get in, and impacts on my home life because I arrive home late, tired and incredibly frustrated."
Female, 45-54



Frustrated

"It just goes on and on."
Male, 45-54

"Because rail travel is not cheap and this disruption to our daily commute is relentless. It is really having a very negative impact on my quality of life. On top of the usual delays, bad service and over crowding, strike action is just driving us to breaking point. I have zero sympathy with the employees of Southern or the management, they are holding us to ransom and it needs to be sorted out."
Male, 35-44

"I pay good money for a service which I am not receiving. In any other business the company would go bankrupt."
Female, 55-64

"These strikes have been going on for over six months, and it's just frustrating that there has been no solution in all of that time. I don't understand how it has been allowed to continue on for this long at great disruption to the passengers."
Female, 35-44

"Nobody is interested in the suffering of ordinary working people."
Male, 35-44



Angry

"I'm losing a day off my leave without choosing to do so. I just have to in order to be paid."
Female, 55-64

"Getting to and from work is the most difficult part of my day. I live 13 miles from work, it should not be too difficult. It's impossible to plan anything. I have missed important appointments after work. I miss doing leisure activities in my free time. I miss spending time with friends and family. I miss spending valuable time with my boyfriend. It is so stressful and has a huge negative impact on my life. The majority of my free time in the week is taken up trying to travel to and from work. I'm exhausted."
Female, 25-34

"I can't get to work. I'm worried about losing my job."
Male, 55-64



Worried

"Concerned about being able to get home when trains are running, especially if they finish early or suffer no-notice cancellations. How long will it take to get home? Would Southern ensure I got home?"
Female, 45-54

"I've had to cancel two hospital appointments because of the industrial action, now worried about the consequences to my health."
Female, 55-64

"Because I rely on the trains to get me to university and I can't afford to keep missing classes."
Female, 25-34



Stressed

"It's having an effect on my ability to do my job, and causing stress at home as both myself and my partner rely on trains for work."
Female, 35-44

"I cannot fulfil my obligations and commitments. I cannot get all aspects of my job done, risking my continued employment. I get claustrophobic on crammed trains and overflowing platforms. Everyone is angry and there is a simmering threat of violence. I cannot get everything done I need to achieve domestically. I neglect family and friends through exhaustion. I am depressed by the flickering delayed boards every night telling me I cannot have what I have paid for."
Female, 45-54

"It's been going on for so long now, it is just boring. I commute every day, and every day is disrupted. I'm lucky in that I have an understanding employer and have the opportunity to work from home, otherwise I would be very angry and frustrated."
Female, 35-44

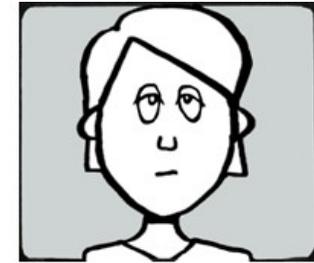


Bored

"Over the years I've lived in London and commuted by train or tube, I've endured a lot of strikes and usually found a way to get to work if it's necessary; there's no point getting stressed about it."
Male, 45-54

"Its just tedious and predicable."
Male, 45-54

"Not much different, service wise, between "on strike" and "not on strike" at Southern. At least, not at the extremities of the Southern service area."
Male, 55-64



Indifferent

"Even if there is no strike the service is bad and not reliable. I avoid to use train because I gave up."
Male, 45-54

"My planned trip to London isn't time-specific, so I will wait until the industrial action is over. And at the weekend I will drive to the Midlands instead of taking the train."
Male, 65+

"Because all this disruption has been going on for a long time, and it just effects commuters, not anyone who has any power to change the system."
Female, 35-44

"It doesn't greatly affect me."
Male, 65+

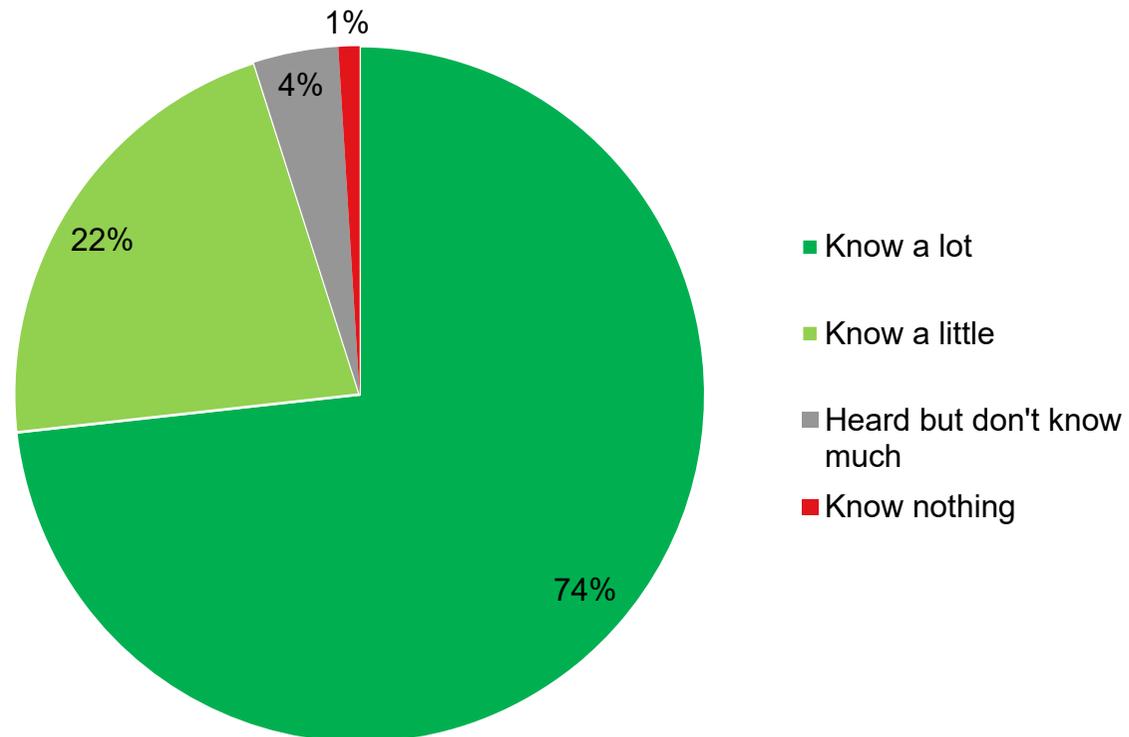


Relaxed

Awareness of the industrial action

The majority of passengers were very aware of the industrial action affecting Southern. Three quarters of passengers who said that they regularly use, or that they intended to use Southern trains in the week of the industrial action said that they knew a lot about the strikes while almost a quarter said that they knew a little. Less than five per cent said that they knew a little or nothing at all.

Q. How aware are you of the strike action which will affect Southern trains during this week?

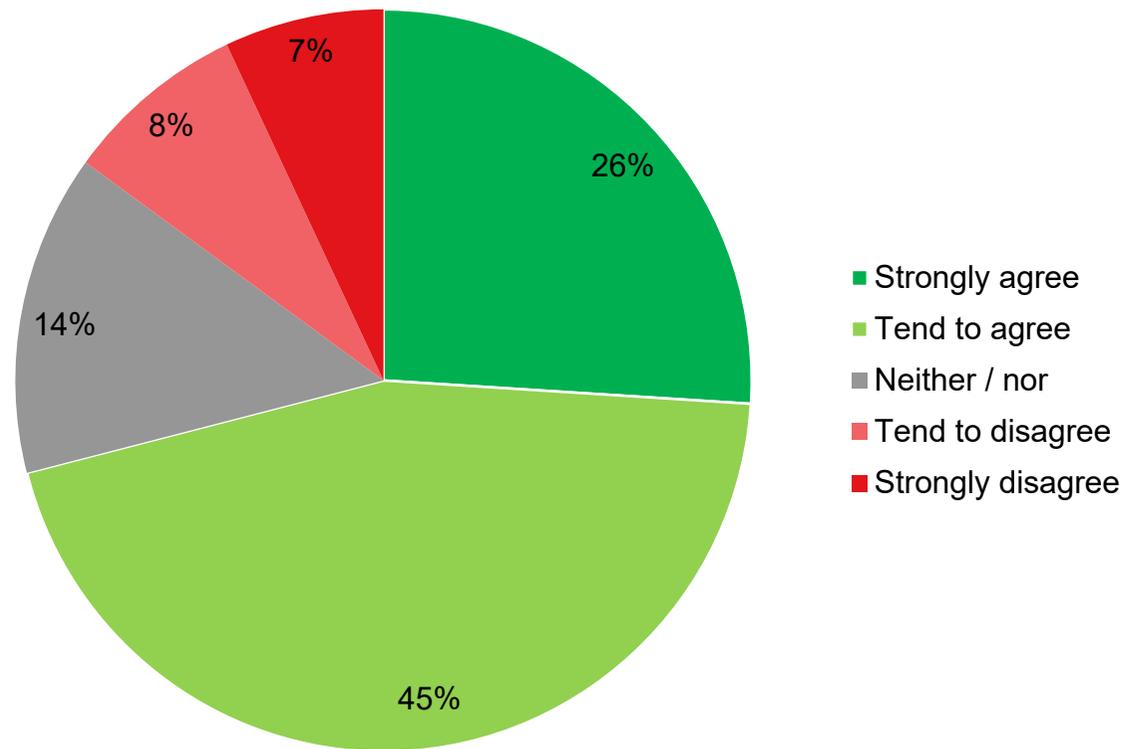


Base: all passengers who regularly use / intended to use Southern trains (631). Fieldwork 12 – 19 December 2016.

Information provided by Southern

71 per cent of passengers agree that the information Southern provided meant that they knew how the strike would affect them while just 15 per cent disagree. The clarity of the message, that no trains would be running, appears to have helped passengers to understand what the impact of the strike would be.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the information Southern have provided means that I know how the industrial action will affect me?



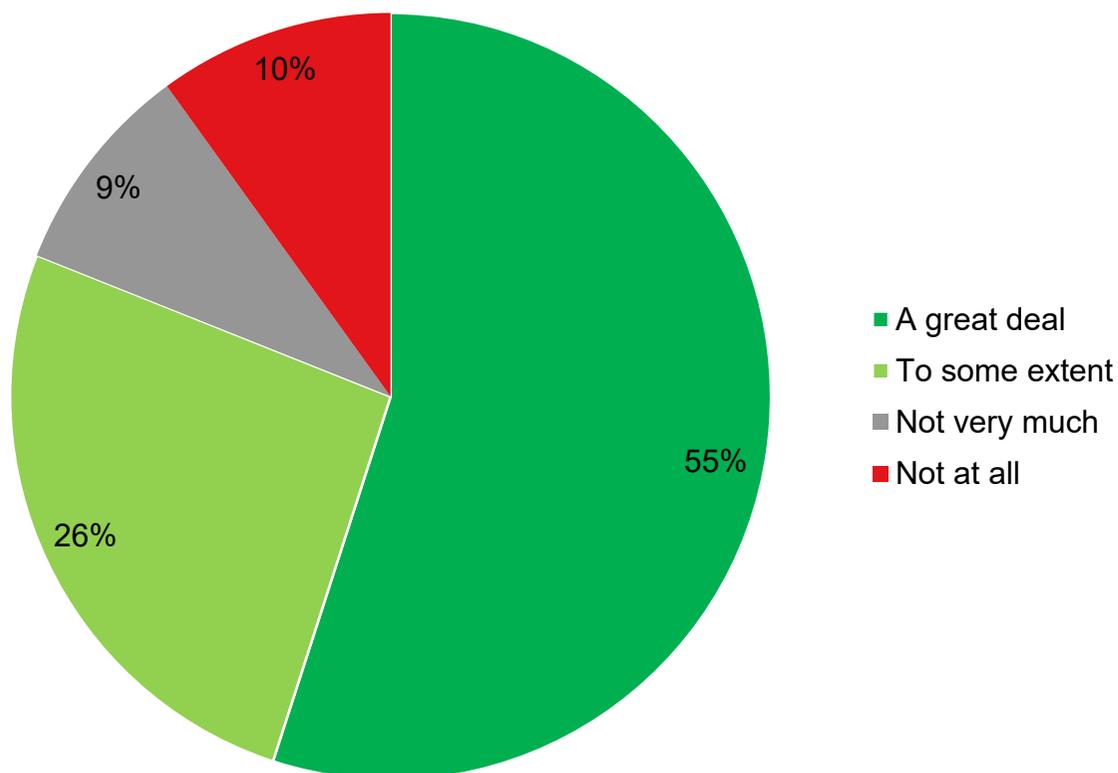
"Southern has given excellent information about the strikes by telling us there will be no trains - the point is, there will be no trains."
Male, 45-54

Base: all passengers who regularly use / intended to use Southern trains (631). Fieldwork 12 – 19 December 2016.

Impact of the industrial action on passengers

81 per cent of passengers regularly using Southern trains said that they would be affected by the strike at least to some extent, more than a half said that they would be affected a great deal. Around 20 per cent, or one fifth of passengers, said that the industrial action would not affect them very much or at all.

Q. On the 13 and 14 December industrial action means that Southern will not be running any trains. How much will this affect you?

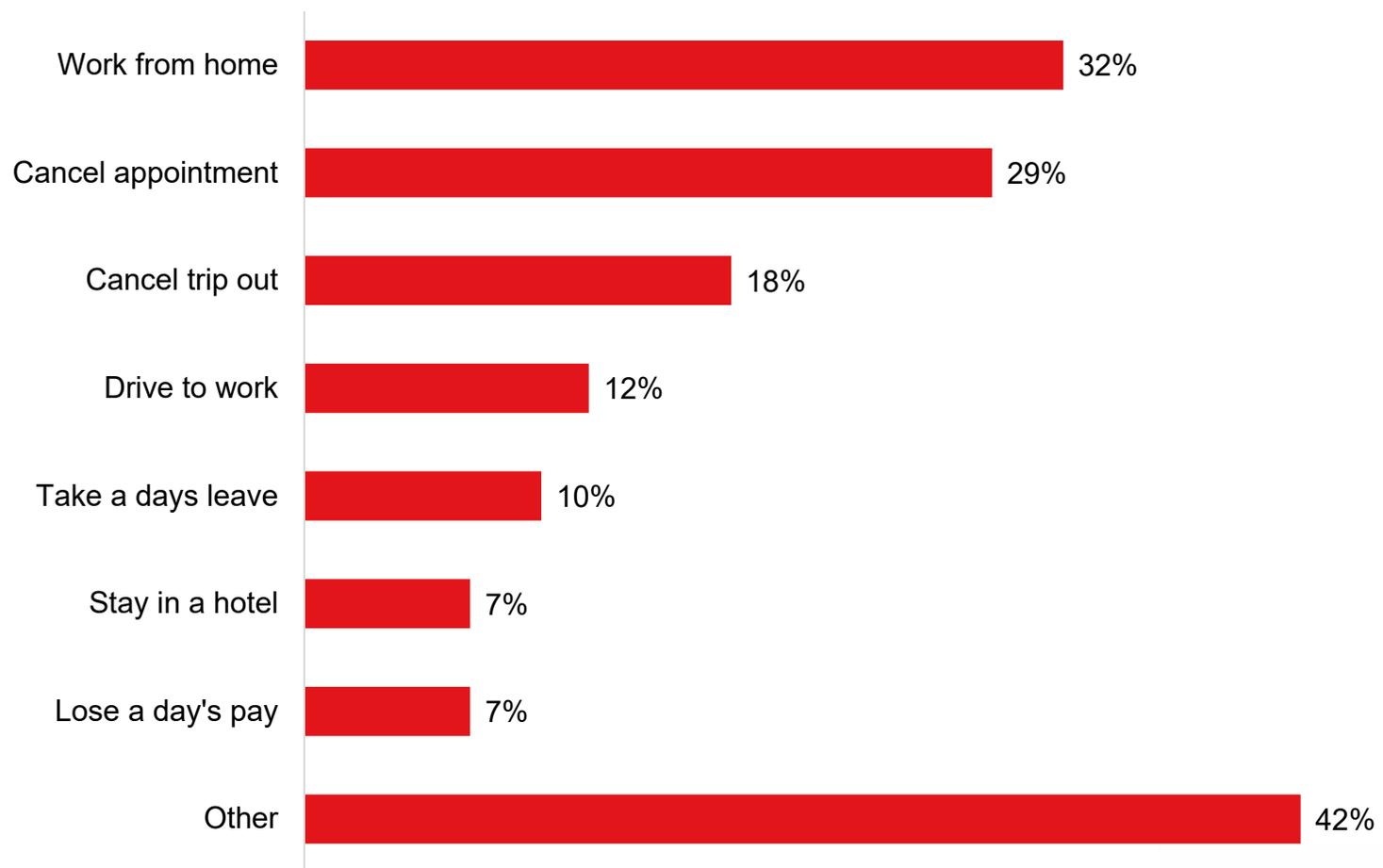


Base: all passengers who regularly use / intended to use Southern trains (631). Fieldwork 12 – 19 December 2016.

A third of those who said that they would be affected by the industrial action said that they would have to work from home, while 29 per cent said that they would have to cancel an appointment. Fewer said that they would have to cancel a trip out, drive to work, take a days leave, or stay in a hotel. Less than one in ten said that they would lose a day's pay. Passengers said that they were affected in many different ways; 42 per cent give other ways in which the industrial action impacted on them.

Q. Which of these, if any, describes how the industrial action will affect you?

I will have to...



Base: all passengers who said that they would be affected by the strike (565). Fieldwork 12 – 19 December 2016.

Many passengers who indicated that the industrial action would impact upon them in other ways mentioned that they would need to take alternative transport options on the strike days in order to reach their intended destination. These passengers indicated that this, in itself, would have a variety of impacts.

"[I'll have to] waste time sitting in a traffic jam!"
Female, 25-34

"Leave very early in the morning and come back very late at night (technically the next day...) in order to use alternative travel routes. As self-employed losing the income by not going to work is not an option."
Female, 25-34

"The whole company is trying to lift share."
Female, 35-44

"I have to use alternative transport which take 1.5 hours more to reach my workplace."
Male, 35-44

"Force husband to act as taxi service to drive children to school. This will then make him late for work."
Female, 45-54

"Will be forced to take buses which in turn will make the journey to work longer by at least 60 minutes which will result in my pay on that day be reduced (I work by an hour)."
Female, 35-44

"Walk a mile and a half, catch a bus and then another half mile to work tomorrow."
Male, 45-54

"Had to book coach tickets, despite having a rail pass!"
Male, 35-44



Technical appendix

How we carried out this survey

- On 12 December 2016 the online survey was sent to passengers on the Transport Focus Transport Users' Panel who had previously been in contact with Transport Focus and had indicated that they had used Southern train services in the last 12 months.
- These passengers were further screened so that only those who indicated that they use Southern trains regularly, or those who indicated that they intended to use Southern trains in the week commencing 12 December, were asked to complete the survey. 631 passengers completed the survey.
- Fieldwork for the survey was undertaken between 12 and 19 December 2016, with a reminder email sent to non-responders on 16 December 2016.
- **Note on interpretation of the data:** data is representative of members of Transport Focus's Transport Users' Panel and therefore should be seen as indicative, rather than statistically representative, of the view of passengers generally. Data is unweighted.
- Where findings do not sum to 100 per cent this is because respondents were asked to code more than one option, or because of data rounding.

Numbers of respondents by age and gender

Male (n / %)		Female (n / %)		Prefer not to say (n / %)	
359	57%	268	43%	4	-

16-24 (n / %)		25-34 (n / %)		35-44 (n / %)		45-54 (n / %)		55-64 (n / %)		65+* (n / %)		Prefer not to say (n / %)	
11	2%	54	9%	109	17%	178	28%	198	31%	71	11%	9	1%

*The age profile of respondents is skewed towards younger passengers as older members of the panel (those aged 60+) were being held for an alternative survey and were therefore not invited to respond to this survey.