



Merseyrail industrial action

Transport User Panel survey

July 2017

Background and aims

- This report presents the findings of a survey undertaken with 120 passengers who indicated that they used, or that they were originally planning to use Merseyrail trains at the time of the RMT union strike on 8 or 10 July 2017. Fieldwork for the survey was undertaken between 5 and 16 July 2017.
- The survey was undertaken in order to get a sense of how passengers feel about the industrial action effecting Merseyrail trains at this time and to explore in detail the impact of the strikes on passengers' daily lives. This included what alternative travel arrangements that they would need to make.
- Similarly the survey aimed to measure the extent to which those who did not use services, but who held a valid ticket to use during the time of the strike, we are aware of any refund or compensation which might be due to them.
- More detailed information on how we carried out the survey and the breakdown of responses by passenger demographics is included as an appendix to this document.

Executive summary

- **Journey planning:** More than seven in ten passengers chose not to use Merseyrail train services at the time of the RMT strike. This compared with around three in ten who planned to travel or travelled despite the impact of the strike on trains.
- Almost four in ten passengers simply allowed more time for their journey in order to deal with the impact of the strike. More than a third used other forms of public transport, while almost a quarter had to cancel a trip out. The proportion of those who had to cancel a day out rises to more than four in ten if only those intending to travel on Saturday 8 July are taken into account.
- **Information:** passengers were generally well informed about the strike. More than three quarters said that they knew at least a little about the impact of the strike on Merseyrail train services before strike started, while four in ten say that they knew a lot.
- Almost three quarters of passengers who intended to use or used Merseyrail services agree that the information that Merseyrail provided meant that they knew how trains services would be impacted by the strike. In contrast two in ten disagree. More than six in ten passengers expected or experienced a reduced train service on the route that they planned to use or used.
- **Impact of strike:** More than eight in ten passengers using or originally planning to use Merseyrail train services say they were impacted at least to some extent by the RMT strike. More than four in ten say that they were impacted a great deal. Those originally planning to use or using services on Monday 10 July were more likely than those travelling at the weekend to say that they were impacted.

Executive summary continued

- **Feelings about the strike:** Passengers originally intending to use, or using, Merseyrail train services at the time of the strike were presented with a series of images and asked which one best described the way in which they felt about the strike. Almost four in ten selected the image which we describe as 'bored', while 17 per cent selected the image described as 'indifferent' and 15 per cent selected 'angry'.
- **Awareness of compensation:** Amongst passengers who, despite holding a valid ticket to travel, avoided using Merseyrail train services at the time of the strike there were mixed levels of awareness of any refund or compensation to which they may be entitled. 37 per cent say that they were aware that they may have been entitled to a refund or compensation compared with a similar proportion who say that they were not aware of this.
- Similarly, some passengers say that assuming it is available to them they were aware of how to go about getting this refund or compensation, while some say that they were not. Four in ten say that they knew at least a little about how to get a refund or any compensation compared with three in ten who say that they know nothing about this.

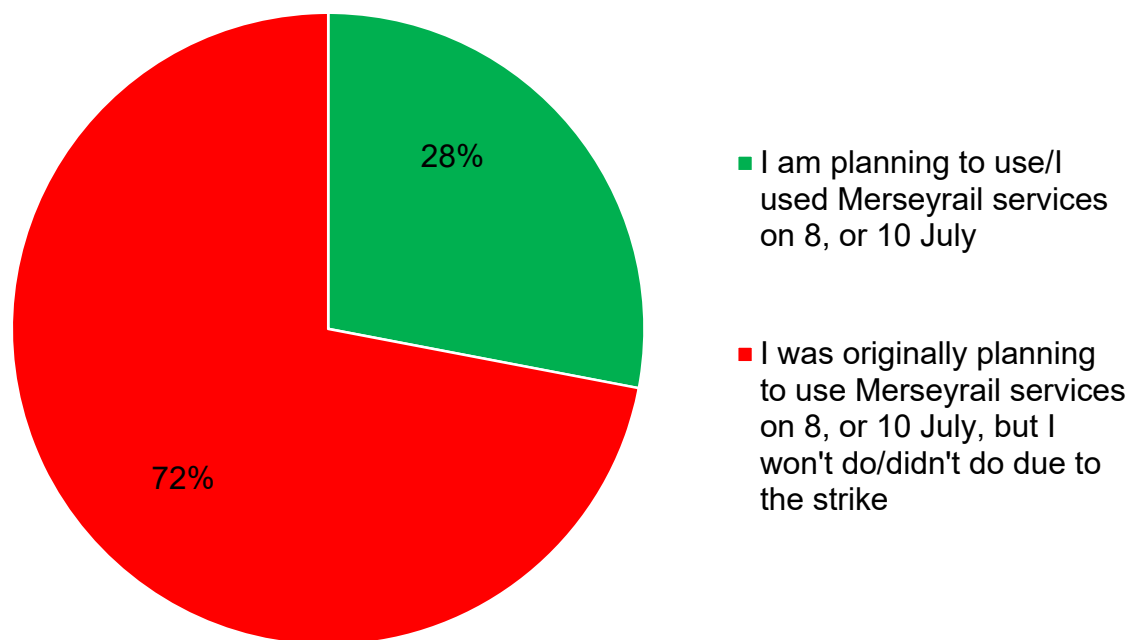


Detailed findings

Use of services at the time of the strike

Almost three quarters of panellists that we spoke to about the impact of the strike action actively avoided using Merseyrail train services at the time of the industrial action. In contrast around a quarter planned to use, or used Merseyrail despite the impact of the strike on train services.

Q. Which of the following describes your use of Merseyrail services?

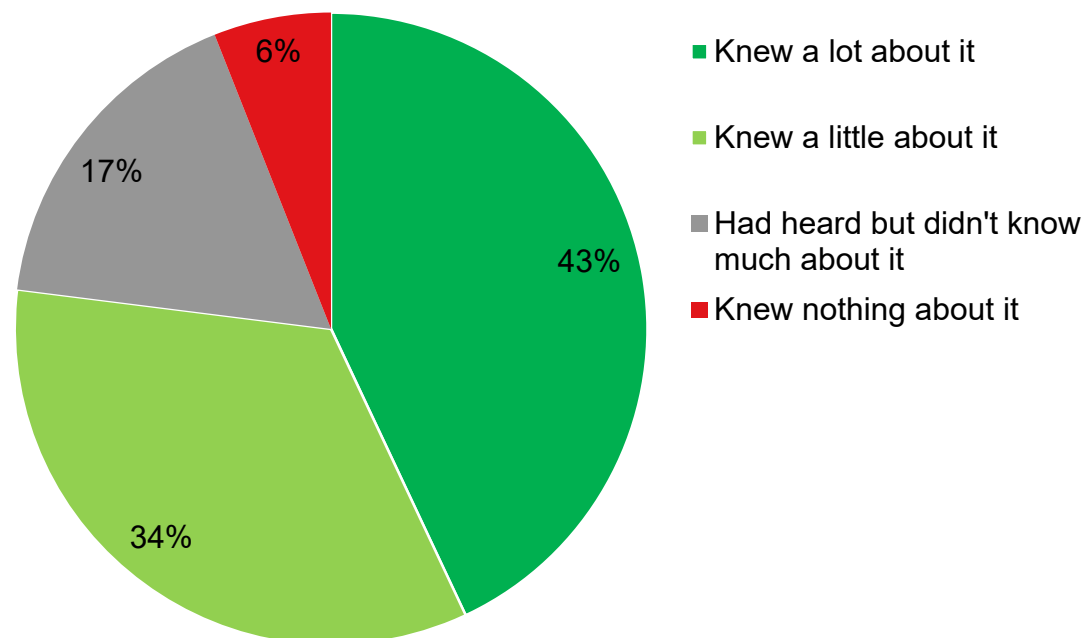


Base: All passengers using / originally intending to use Merseyrail trains on 8 or 10 July 2017 (120). Fieldwork 5 – 16 July 2017

Awareness of the industrial action

More than three quarters of those who used or intended to use Merseyrail services at the time of the strike say that they knew at least a little about how services would be affected beforehand. Around one in twenty say that they knew nothing.

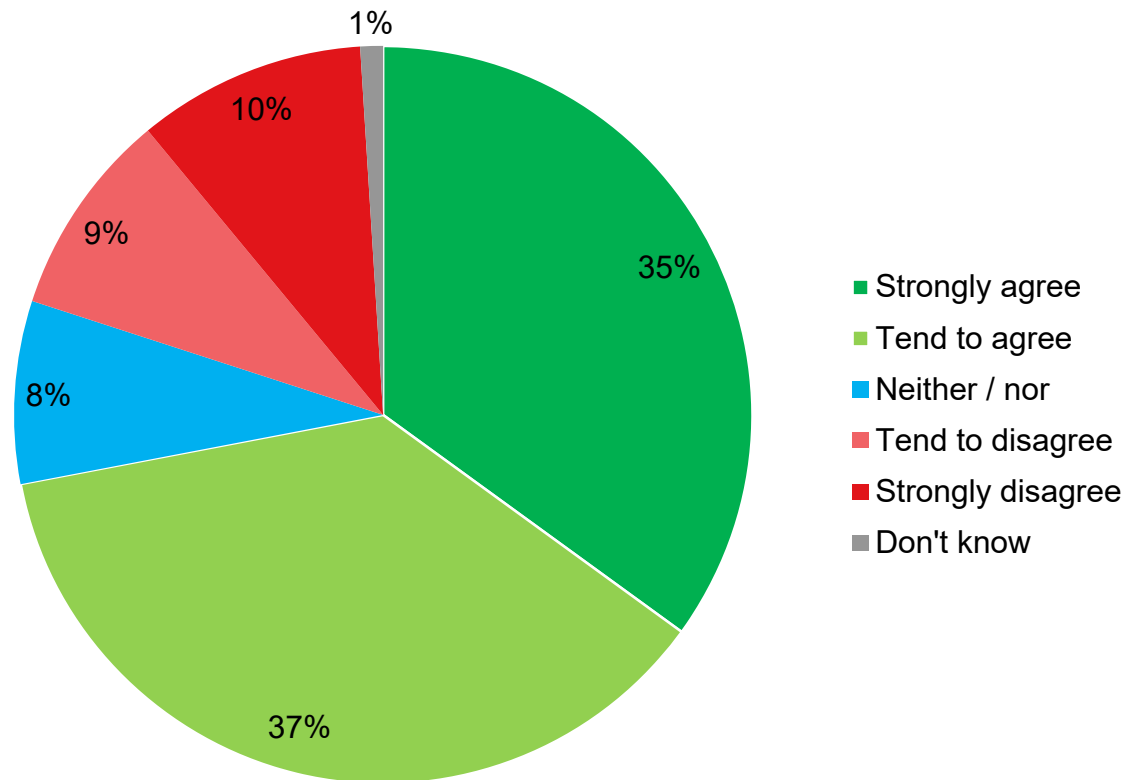
Q. Before today, or before the time of the strike, how aware were you of how Merseyrail train services would be affected?



Information provided by Merseyrail

Almost three quarters of those who used or intended to use Merseyrail train services at the time of the strike agree that the information that Merseyrail provided means that they knew how the industrial action would affect them. Around one in five disagree.

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

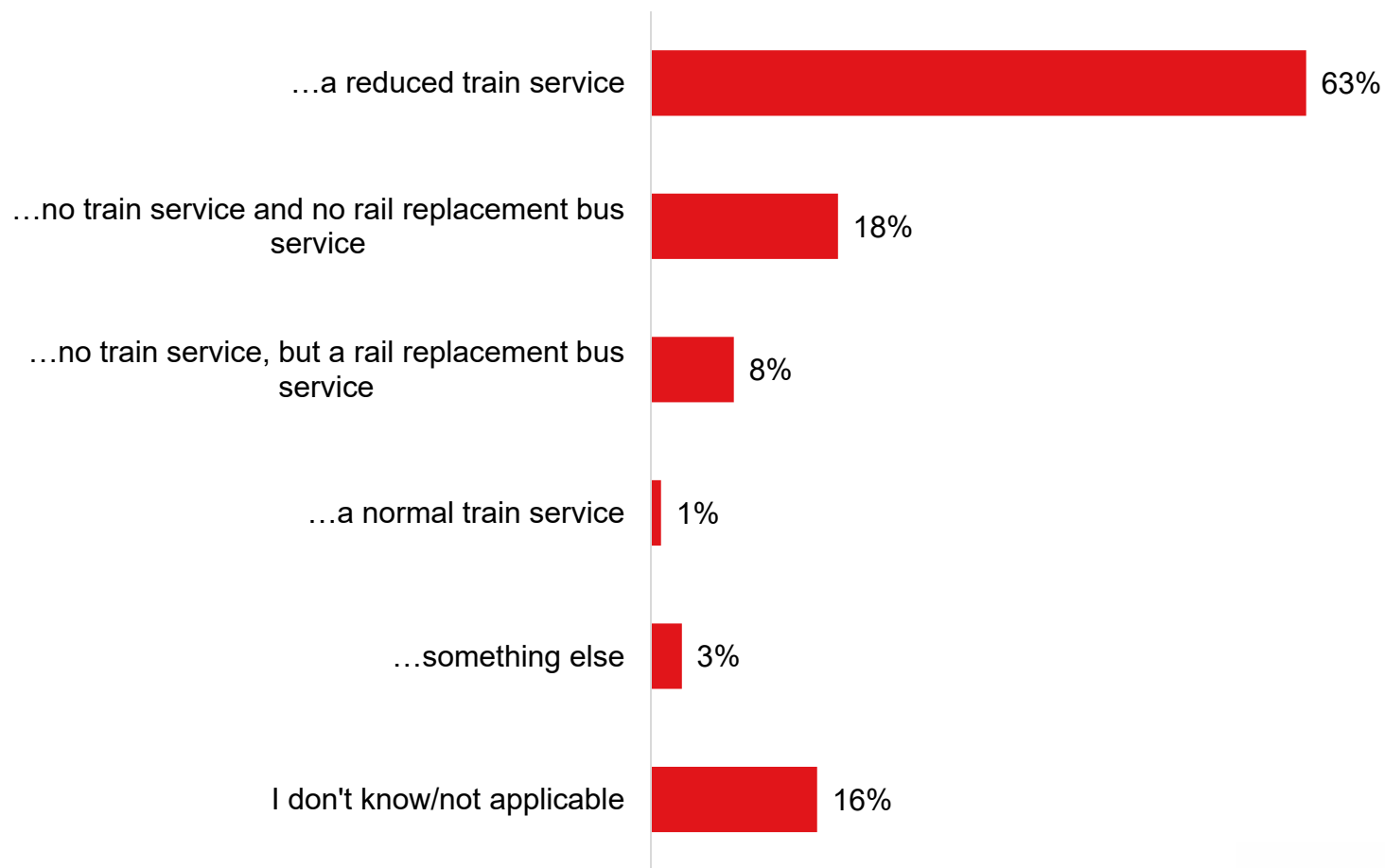


Base: All passengers using / originally intending to use Merseyrail trains on 8 or 10 July 2017 (120). Fieldwork 5 – 16 July 2017

Awareness of Merseyrail plans for services

More than six in ten passengers using or intending to use Merseyrail trains at the time of the strike expected or experienced a reduced train service, while almost two in ten expected or experienced the complete cancellation of their service.

Q. If applicable, what as far as you know will be/were the arrangements for the Merseyrail route(s) which you had originally planned to use or that you used during the time of the strike?



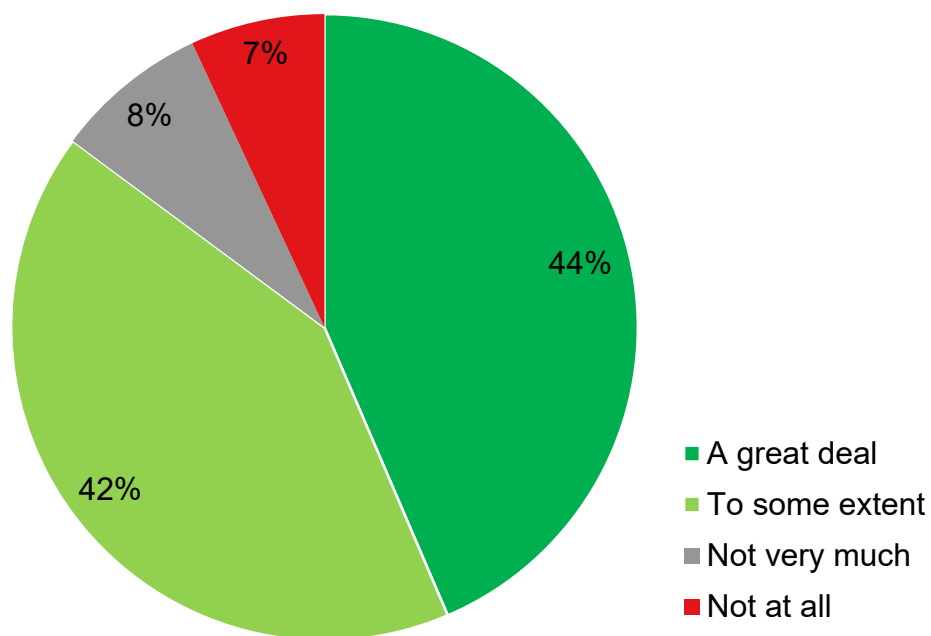
Impact of the industrial action on passengers

Almost nine in ten of those saying that they used, or intended to use Merseyrail train services at the time of the strike say that they were impacted in some way. More than four in ten say that they were impacted a great deal. Those travelling or intending to travel only on Monday 10 July are more likely than those travelling or intending to travel only on Saturday 8 July to say that they were impacted a by the strike.

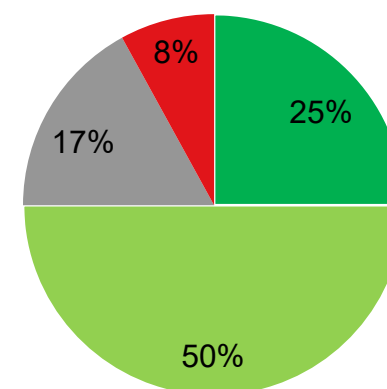
Q. As you may already know, a RMT Union strike on 8 and 10 July means that Merseyrail rail services may be, or were affected in the following ways:

- A limited train service;
- Trains replaced by bus services
- Trains not running; or
- The usual timetable changing

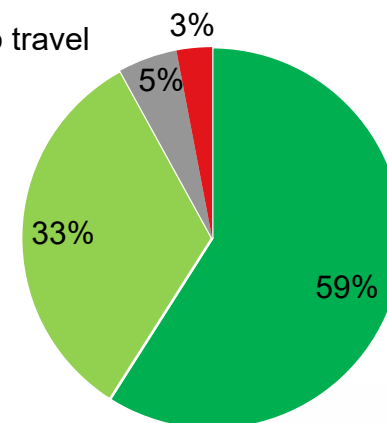
How much will this, or did this, affect you?



Travelling/intending to travel Saturday 8 July:



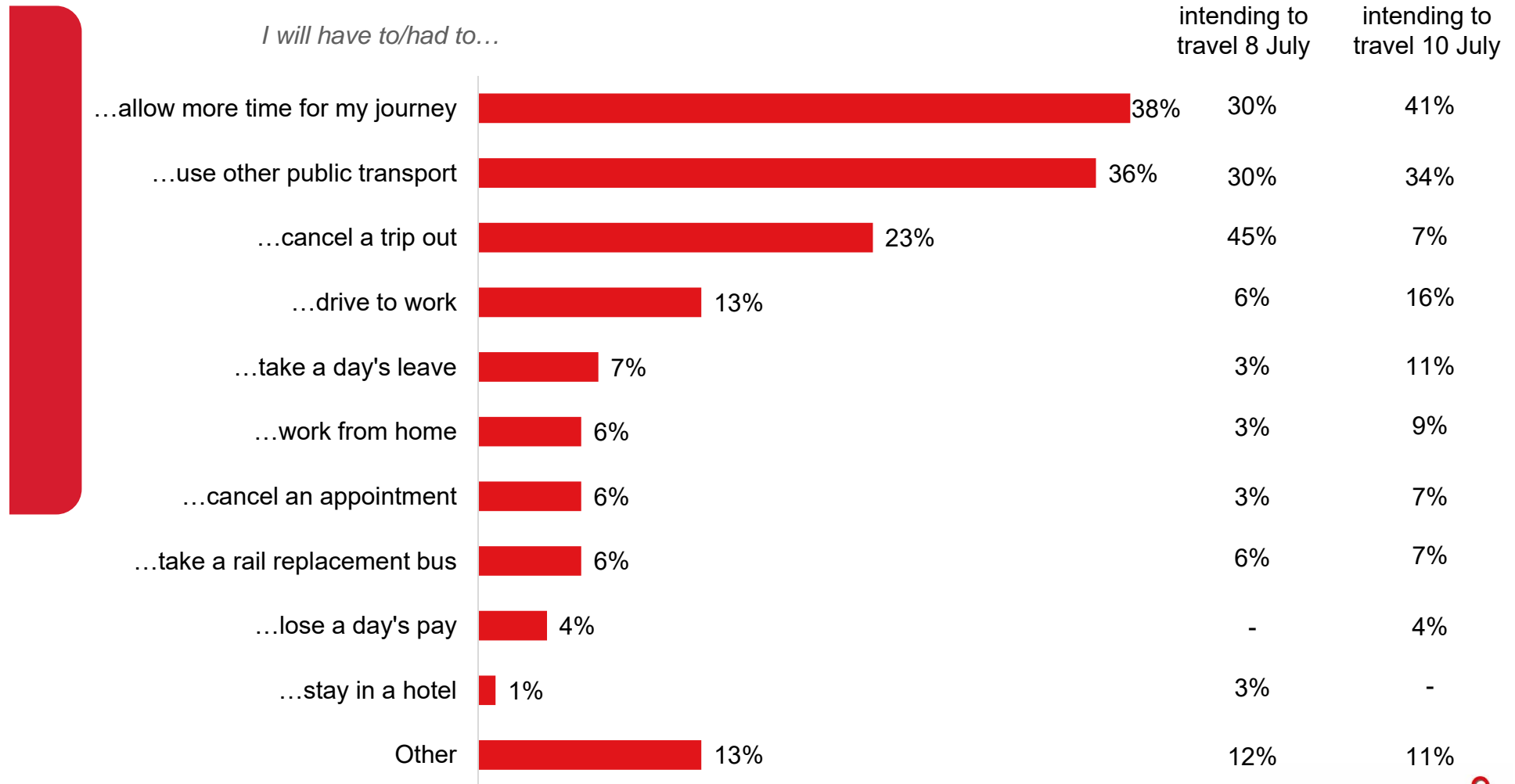
Travelling/intending to travel Monday 10 July:



- A great deal
- To some extent
- Not very much
- Not at all

Almost four in ten of passengers who said that they will be affected by the industrial action say that they had to allow more time for their journey, while more than a third say that they will use other forms of public transport. Around a quarter say that they had to cancel a trip out. This compares with more than four in ten of those travelling or intending to travel on Saturday 8 July who say they had to cancel a trip out.

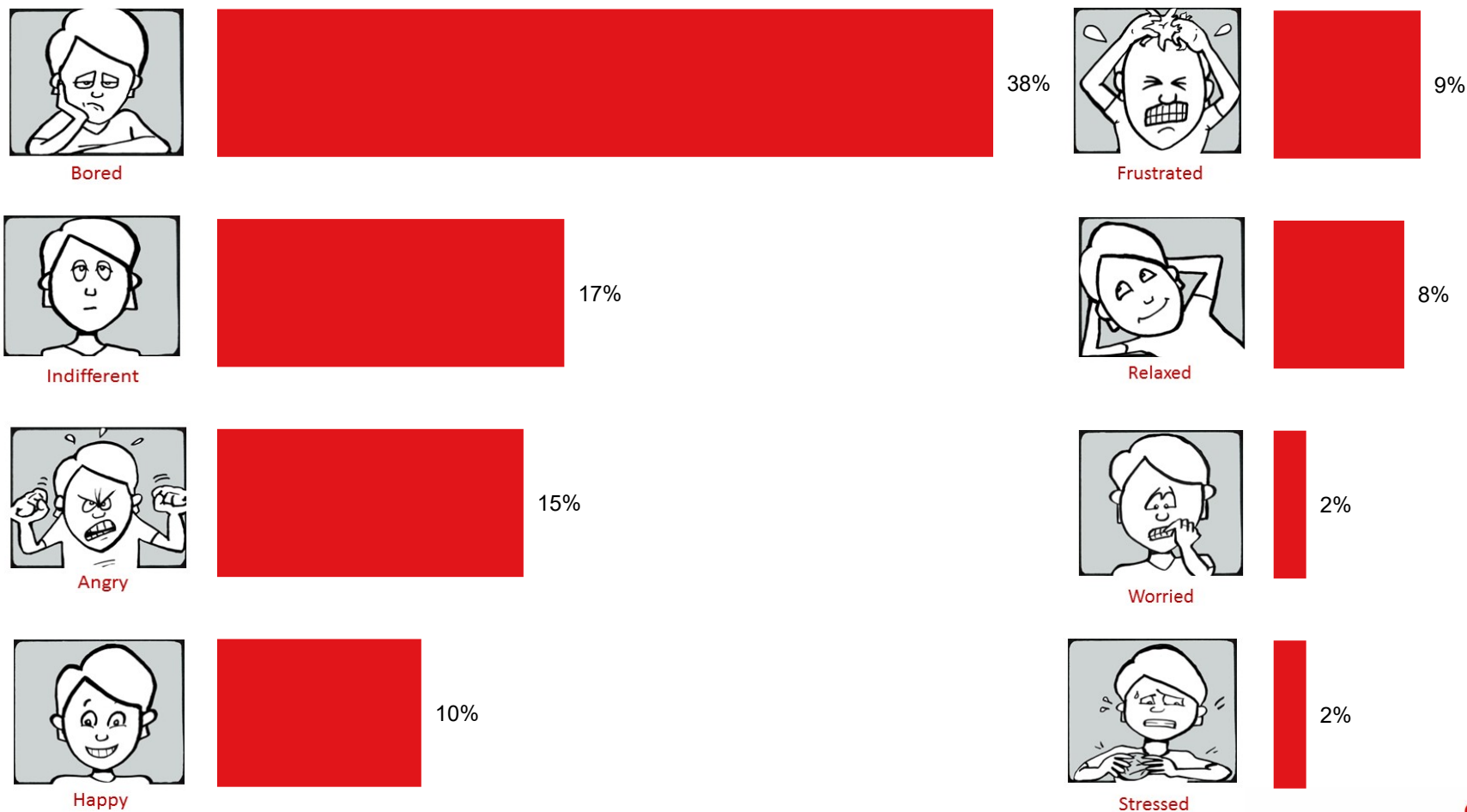
Q. Which of these, if any, describes how the industrial action will affect or affected you?



How passengers feel about the strike

Passengers were shown a series of images (without the descriptions) and asked which one best captures how they feel about the strike. Almost four in ten selected the image which we have described as 'bored', while 17 per cent selected 'indifferent' and 15 per cent 'angry'.

Q. Which one of these images best captures how you feel about the strike?



'The strikes mean I will lose a day's pay and have to postpone important meetings with my clients. If there is a rail replacement bus, I will have to leave my house much earlier than planned and take twice as long on the bus as the train.'

'A nuisance but you have to get on with it.'

'I just had to get a different train than usual and work slight different hours which is ok for my employer.'



Indifferent



Bored

'[I'm] not sure what services will be available, and what extra time maybe needed for travelling.'

'[Its] inconvenient for me but can make alternative arrangements.'

'Because I needed to get two trains and didn't know whether the second train would be affected or even running.'

'I feel sad and angry about the whole strike situation. Sad that it means that my plans have had to be cancelled - no idea when friends will all be together again in the same city, annoyed that some of them have had the inconvenience of having to rearrange travel and hotels, especially for the ones who were planning on spending a few days in Liverpool before graduation.'

'My grandchildren are visiting from Lincolnshire and I had planned to take them to Liverpool by train but won't be able to now.'

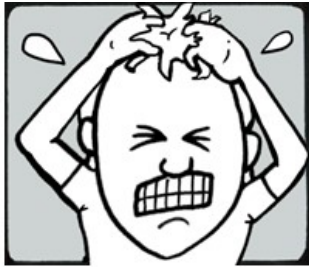
'Because I pay a lot of money for a season ticket that I now can't use.'

'Another day of inconvenience with total disregard for the public who use the railway day in day out having paid for expensive season tickets. No doubt I will have to apply for compensation but that process is slow and cumbersome and NEVER provides adequate compensation for the inconvenience, loss and additional expense suffered as a result of the strike action.'



Angry

'I use two trains to commute to Manchester so having both affected makes my day very complicated.'



Frustrated

'I have to use Merseyrail to get to work, and Hunts Cross station will be closed, so I will have to pay to get the bus which takes over an hour to get to work, which is unfair as I have already paid for a monthly season ticket.'

'Using the train service is my fastest means of transport from East Leeds area to Bradford. On this day I am due to have an exam at university and this strike will mean I am having to set off much earlier to catch different means of transport.'

'Travelling to work is stressful enough - even when the trains run on time. Now, I will need to drive to work. I expect a lot of other people will do the same so the roads will be congested. This means that I will have to leave earlier so that I get to work on time. Also, I have already paid for my to and from journey because I have a season ticket. It is not likely that Merseyrail will be giving me a refund.'

'The strikes don't affect me.'



Happy

'Looked at options and came up with a solution as I had to get connecting services not subject to strike action.'

'It doesn't adversely affect me. In fact I get home earlier because it doesn't stop at as many stations!'

'Having travel options for a trip into the city centre for a hospital appointment severely curtailed for my husband who has PTSD and a host of physical difficulties which make train travel preferable over bus.'



Worried

'I can't change it, so why worry about it.'

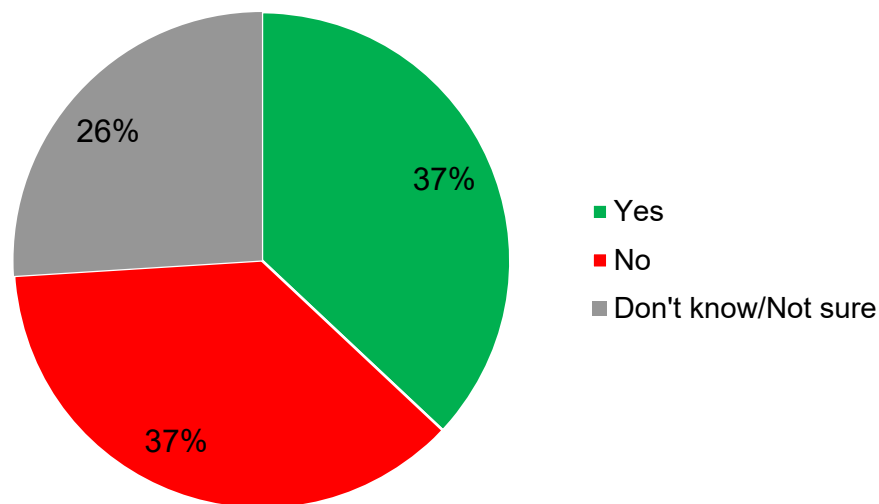


Relaxed

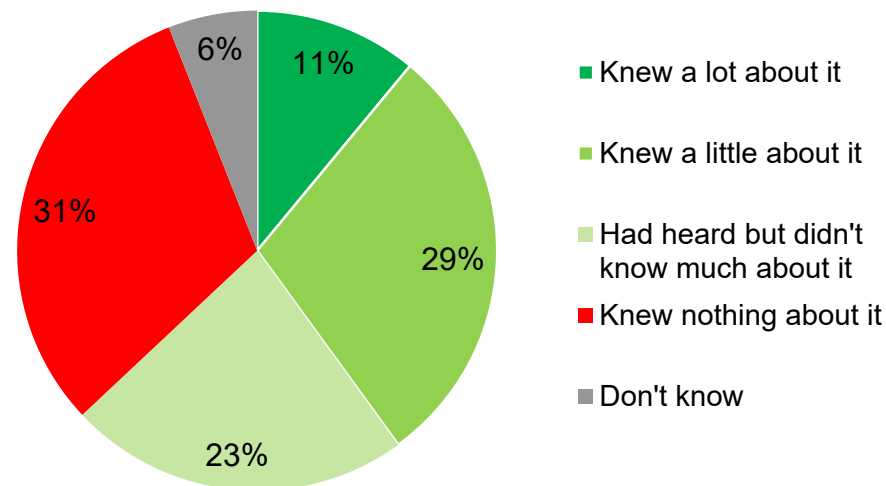
Compensation for ticket holders

Four in ten passengers who say that they originally intended to use Merseyrail train services but didn't do because of the strike, say that they held a valid ticket such as a season ticket or other ticket bought in advance to use at this time. Of these, almost four in ten say that they are aware as say that they may be entitled to a refund or to compensation. A similar proportion say that they are not aware of any refund or compensation. Similarly, four in ten of these passengers say that they know at least a little about how to get any refund assuming that they are entitled to it, compared with three in ten who say that they know nothing about this.

Q. If you do not intend to, or did not use this ticket, are you aware that you may be entitled to a refund or compensation from Merseyrail?



Q. And assuming that you are entitled, to what extent are you aware of how you might get a refund or compensation from Merseyrail?



Base: All passengers avoiding Merseyrail services at the time of the strike who held a valid ticket (35). Fieldwork 5 – 16 July 2017

Alongside making comments explaining why the particular image had been selected, many passengers also expressed a desire for the dispute be resolved as soon as possible. Some passengers indicated that they are generally supportive of the reasons for the strike, while others indicated they weren't supportive of the strikes. Other passengers expressed frustration around lack of information around the impact of the strike and how passengers might claim a refund or compensation.

'The strike is necessary as Merseyrail, who I think normally operate a first class service, need to take on board union and passenger concerns. Passengers feel more secure with a guard on the train rather than ad hoc customer service operatives. It is safer to travel with a guard.'

'It should be sorted around a table asap.'

'Strikes should take place on a weekend when less people are likely to be needing trains to attend work etc. It is very inconvenient.'

'It needs to be sorted out'

'Both sides must now make every effort to sort it.'

'I didn't know in advance about whether my trains would be delayed or even running.'

'[The] RMT should be ashamed of themselves.'

'[There should be] more help and information on how to claim a refund for the additional cost I have incurred.'

'Merseyrail's information about the strike changed. At the time of booking my onward travel tickets it was not clear if any trains would have been available on 8th to cross from Birkenhead to Liverpool; nearer the time the information suggested a train at 8am; on the day I caught a train at 7:24am after getting off the ferry from Belfast. This was better than expected, but some clear indication of when train services would be running between Birkenhead and Liverpool would have been very helpful.'



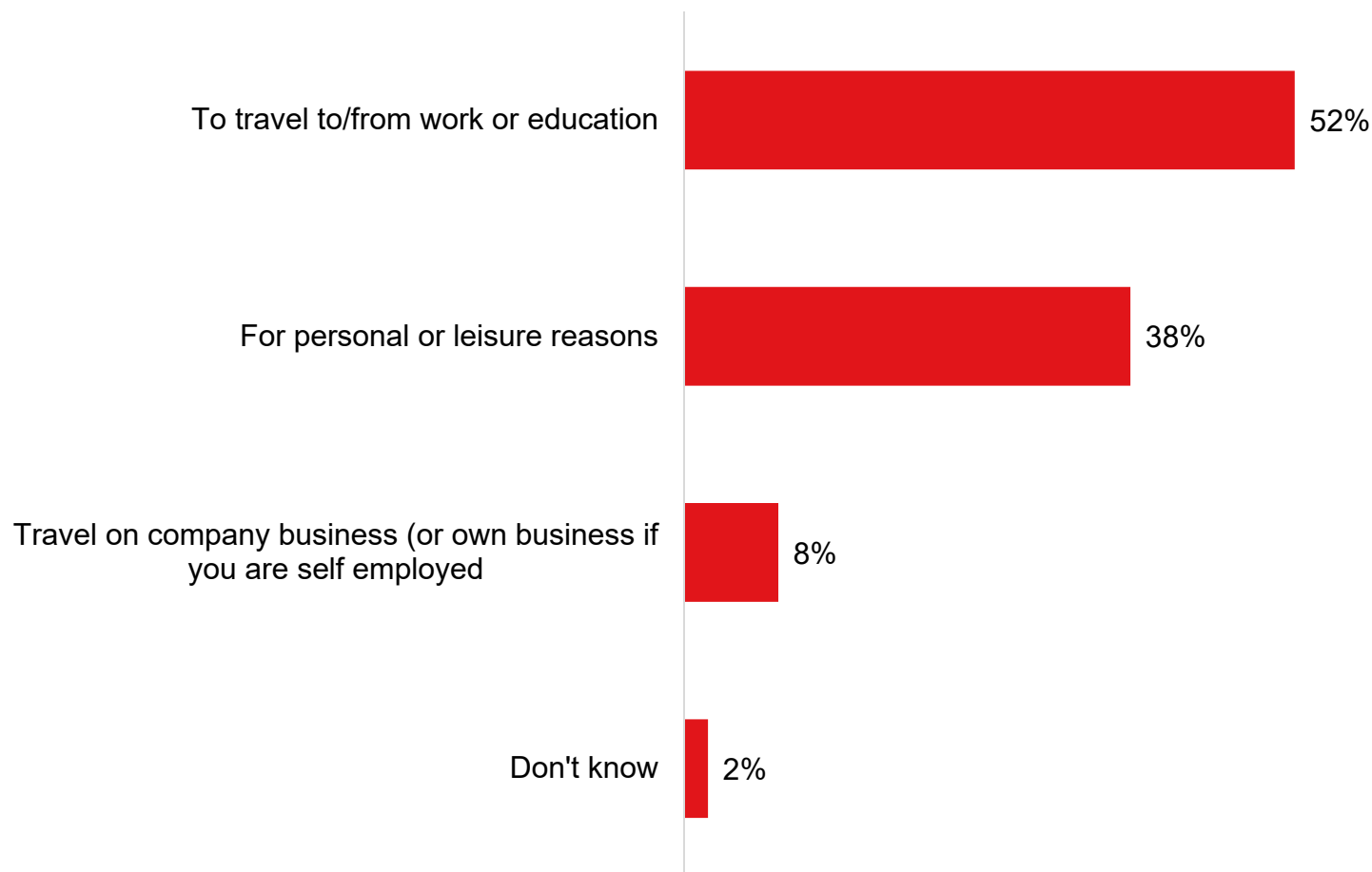
Technical appendix

How we carried out the survey

- On 5 July 2017 the online survey was sent to passengers on the Transport Focus Transport User Panel who had previously been in contact with Transport Focus and had indicated that they had used Merseyrail train services in the last 12 months.
- These passengers were further screened so that only those who indicated that they had used, or originally intended to use Merseyrail trains at the time of the strike, were asked to complete the survey. 120 passengers completed the survey.
- Fieldwork for the survey was undertaken between 5 and 16 July 2017, with a reminder email sent to non-responders on 10 July 2017.
- Note on interpretation of the data: data is representative of members of Transport Focus's Transport User 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.

Passengers by journey purpose

Q. Which of the following describes your usual reason for using Merseyrail trains?



Base: All passengers using/originally intending to use Merseyrail trains on 8 or 10 July 2017 (120). Fieldwork 5– 6 July 2017