



HS2 Customer Community

January 2018

Barrier-free Travel

Debrief 23/02/18

Panel Participation

Average participation in 16/17
88%

Task	Date	Participation
Workshop Feedback	11 th Oct – 3 rd Nov	88%
Design of Station Interiors	23 rd Oct – 1 st Dec	100%
Toilet Facilities in Stations	23 rd Oct – 1 st Dec	85%
Seat Assurance	1 st Dec – 12 th Jan	88%
Barrier-free Travel	8 th Jan – 2 nd Feb	92%



Barrier-free Travel

Barrier-free Travel

This task looks at the concept of barrier-free travel. This is the idea that there would be no ticket barriers at train stations. HS2 has developed a short video and would like to know what you think.

For this task, watch the video below and share your thoughts on the ideas it covers. Make sure to turn the sound on!

Some things to consider:

- What do you think about what you see? Do you like/dislike it?
- Is there anything missing?

You have until Friday 2nd February to complete this task.



Barrier-free Travel Video

- The video took the Community through 3 different scenarios:



1 SCENARIO 1
**Moving through
a barrier-free
station**



2 SCENARIO 2
**Revenue
protection**



3 SCENARIO 3
**Staff communication
and crowd control**

How might we improve the experience
of customers and staff at stations by
removing physical gatelines?



SCENARIO 1

Moving through a barrier-free station

Overall, the video received positive feedback from Community members, however there were various aspects that they felt needed further thought

“I really like the concept of it all. Barriers are one thing I absolutely hate, but completely understand why they're in place. If there's a way we can combat the ease of going through, whilst also protecting the train company's revenue I'm all for it.”
– Male, 24-30, Commuter

“The thought of this being the future of train travel is making me very excited. It will do great things for all those users wherever they may be.”
– Female, 41-50, Commuter

“No barriers = a better experience all round... It looks like an efficient and improved way of mitigating the current congestion and confusion involved in train travel, and I'm reasonably sure it would benefit travellers and staff alike, as long as the system performs flawlessly.”
– Wheelchair user

“I like the idea in principal of a barrier free station, however I do believe there are a lot of people it will encourage to not pay fares.”
– Female, 51-60, Business

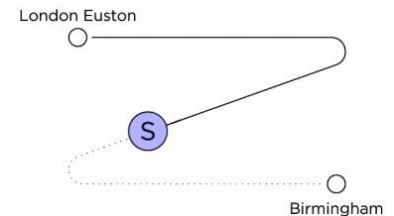
“I'm sorry if I sound negative to these scenarios, I am not – honest. I love the idea, however there will always be someone who will manipulate this 'freedom of movement'. For myself, however, I'd love it.”
– Female, 61-70, Leisure

“I do not approve of having a barrier-less system because security is jeopardised at the first instance of entering the station forecourt. I am a frequent train traveller and have never felt delayed by the barriers because the system does work if passengers use the station as it is designed.”
– Female, 41-50, Leisure



The Community thought that being able to 'follow' a journey via the app was a great feature

- Although there was an acknowledgment that apps currently exist that allow you to track a train, the Community liked the option to follow a specific passenger's journey
- They thought it was great to receive a notification about when to leave based on real-time data i.e. adjusted if there is a delay
 - They suggested that it would be even more useful if it could link to their personal devices e.g. Amazon Echo



"I like the idea of being able to track a loved one's journey (assuming you can share your journey with a code or something similar) so I know when exactly to arrive at the station. If I could link it to my Amazon echo or my personal assistant on my phone then it would be even more helpful."

– Female, 18-23, Business



"I like the communication between the travellers and who they're going to meet. **It's a very nice touch.**"

– Male, 18-23, Leisure

"I can see the benefit of having my travel and ETA tracked by assistance staff (so they know where I am throughout my journey and when to meet me off the train), or for a taxi (as with airports) to amend their arrival time. But I should be able to choose who has access to this information."

– Visually impaired community member

- It was also seen to be beneficial to those with accessibility requirements, e.g. staff addressing Passenger Assist bookings could be equipped with live data to help them to deliver an improved, more reliable service



The concept of having no ticket barriers at stations generated thoughtful discussion amongst the Community, where they identified several advantages and disadvantages

Those in favour of barrier-free travel could see various benefits:

- Improved congestion management would result in a smoother transition from the concourse to the platform and onto the train



They liked the idea of being able to walk freely onto the train without the usual scramble to find your ticket

One Community member compared the seamlessness to Amazon's cashier-free supermarkets

- Access to facilities on the platform that are currently only available to ticket holders, therefore greater choice e.g. toilets, shops and restaurants
- Improved travel experience for those with accessibility requirements by removing the need to navigate physical barriers

"I really like the idea of barrier free travel. I always disliked the barrier system on the underground which is reminiscent of horse racing gates in my view."

– Male, 41-50, Business

"It's one of my biggest issues with New Street that you have no access to the toilet unless you buy a ticket."

– Female, 31-40, Commuter

"Anything that does away with barriers is a plus for me, as I often have to wait quite some time for someone to open the barrier to allow myself and my wheelchair through."

– Wheelchair user

"I think anyone with access requirements, or anyone vulnerable, might benefit from meeting on the platform rather than behind ticket barriers."

– Male, 41-50, Business

"I think that it is a very good idea as at Leeds when I meet people at the train you have to pay for a platform ticket to get through the barrier."

– Male, 51-60, Commuter

- Some members were impressed by the possibility of being able to meet/be met by someone on the platform was great



The concept of having no ticket barriers at stations generated thoughtful discussion amongst the Community, where they identified several advantages and disadvantages

- However, many were worried that the current travel experience would deteriorate, stating that ticket barriers perform important functions that would be difficult to replicate without a physical structure (e.g. ticket checking, crowd control)
- Additionally, many felt that platforms at busy stations would already be full, therefore encouraging more people to 'hang around' there to meet other travellers would make congestion worse
 - To navigate this issue, some suggested having designated areas on each platform where people could wait whilst the train arrived, rather than allowing people to crowd at the doors as passengers tried to alight

"I would rather see open barriers that could identify the 'passengers' who have tickets, permission to travel, maybe a scan at the gate, something on the ticket which identifies the traveller as belonging to that train. This would still be smoother than the current insert your ticket system, and avoid big bottlenecks."
– Female, 61-70, Leisure

"I am not in favour of open access platforms. While it would be nice for granny to meet her family at the train door armed with cups of coffee, the image of 200+ people emerging from the train plus waiting passengers is a bit of a nightmare. Keep people waiting for train passengers well away from the platform and meet where there is space. The historic system of meeting by the barrier, under the clock or outside W H Smith has worked well for 150 years so why change it!
– Male, 61-70, Leisure

"I can imagine pandemonium! It would be nice to think people could use their common sense where this is concerned, but that doesn't really happen... I do like the idea of being able to meet someone straight off the train though, and this includes seeing friends/family off as well. Seems to **return to the more romantic old-fashioned notion of train travel.**"
– Female, 18-23, Commuter

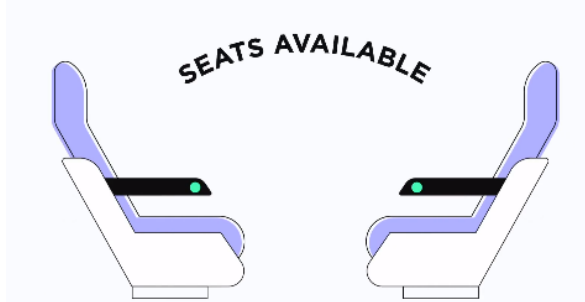
- Some liked the idea but expressed concerns around the ability of other passengers to behave appropriately in response to the change

The notification to passengers when close to arriving at their station to gather luggage and being able to check out of a seat were thought to be great features

“The notification for the passenger to say they will be at the station soon is very good. I have been on many journeys in the past where I didn’t notice we were at my station and I would have to rush quickly to get my luggage and get off the train before it set off again.”

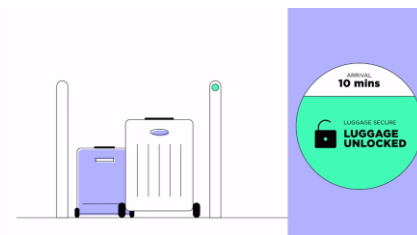
– Female, 41-50, Leisure

- The Community highlighted that a common cause of anxiety when travelling was knowing when to gather one’s belongings in time to get off the train
- There was a suggestion that the ‘releasing’ of luggage should be a manual process done by the passenger



“I like the secure luggage storage, especially as I've often travelled alone, but don't like the fact it unlocks itself without you being anywhere near, I feel like that should still be a manual process.”

– Male, 31-40, Leisure



“Seat availability on board is useful... Could there also be a summary of spaces/seats available at carriage door/boarding point?”

– Male, 61-70, Commuter

“I also like the flexibility this implies of being able to just jump on the train at the last moment / on a whim and pay on board rather than having to book. This would be great for spontaneous plans or an emergency trip.”

– Male, 24-30, Leisure

- Some stated that they liked the option to ‘check in’ to an available seat on a train as it provided greater flexibility than today

- It could be made easier to find an available seat by displaying seat availability upon boarding a carriage

“If you’re able to buy a seat on the train by scanning your seat and paying for it then and there (given that it’s not reserved) then that might be a slight improvement.”

– Female, 18-23, Business

Many thought that the adjusting the size of lanes between the train and the platform based on volume of travellers was innovative and useful

- The Community felt that this approach addressed the needs of different types of passengers by taking into account that some require more assistance and space, whilst others wish to continue with their onward journey as quickly as possible

“The constantly monitored foot traffic and the flexibility to change station internal routes and signage/information should provide a seamless and, hopefully, trouble free, less anxious and less rushed experience for both staff and travellers. **I particularly appreciate the less rushed and anxious aspect.**”

– Wheelchair user

“I think the idea of barrier free travel is great. The smooth flow of people disembarking and the automatic adjusting of aisles when the flow is greater looked like **an elegant solution to a frustrating problem** - one that is particularly prevalent when in a rush... which I would assume most who take the HS2 would be. If you're spending extra to get somewhere quicker, waiting around at the gates is the last thing you'd want.”

– Male, 31-40, Commuter

- They thought that the potential for the lanes to adjust based on volume was intelligent and would provide more stress-free and seamless journeys

“Please make fast/slow lanes - as a London commuter slow moving people are one's worst nightmare. If this could be adjusted depending on the time of the trains (wider fast lanes for commuter times) that would be really helpful.”

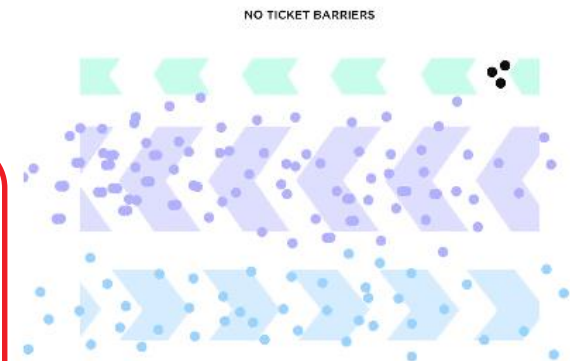
– Female, 18-23, Commuter

“I believe the signage adjusting to the volume of passengers is particularly effective and reminds me of **variable speed limits on motorways where the speed is adjusted** at particularly busy time to ensure traffic is free flowing.”

– Male, 18-23, Commuter

“A lane system at the station instead of ticket barriers is an excellent idea as that would avoid the frequent scrum at ticket barriers.”

– Male, 31-40, Business





SCENARIO 2

Revenue protection

The way that the video presented dealing with fare evaders generated strong opinions amongst the Community

- Some felt that there was merit to this concept in that it dealt with potentially vulnerable passengers in a non-confrontational way, producing a better experience for both staff and travellers

“Think the passenger report system is a great improvement on what's currently in place, especially for more vulnerable people. It prevents the issuing of a ticket and is a lot less confrontational. How might this get followed up down the line? And how do the train staff know that there is anyone in that seat if they haven't checked in?”

– Female, 18-23, Commuter

- However, the over-riding concern occurred when the Community noticed that the fare-evading passenger was a repeat offender

- What revenue protection measures would be taken?
- Would a repeat offender be permitted to travel again and again?
- Would a lack of punishment drive up costs for fare-paying passengers?

“What happens to repeat offenders? Your video showed that the lady had done this a couple of times previously.”

– Female, 51-60, Business

“If the fare evasion passenger has already been flagged on three previous occasions, why is she able to try to repeat the experience? Has there been no legal action initiated against her? It's good that the employee can access the relevant history, but it seems a tad ineffective if the fare-dodger is able to continue to do this. Would this person be asked to leave the train, or be allowed to take the journey and be met at her destination by railway police?”

– Female, 51-60, Leisure

NOTES	
General:	3 incidents this year
Emergency Contact:	None
Social Services:	None

“If the attendant is busy dealing with a non-paying passenger, then they are not able to look after the needs of the paying passenger.”

– Female, 51-60, Commuter

The point was also made that staff spending time dealing with fare-evaders might detract from the experience of other passengers

The Community expressed mixed feelings about passengers needing to share personal information in order to travel on HS2

- There were differing opinions regarding passenger information being stored and on board staff having access to it
 - Many thought that this could be of great benefit to those requiring additional assistance
 - However, they agreed that the amount and type of information shared should be each individual passengers' choice
- There was some confusion regarding how a member of staff would be able to identify a fare evader if they refused to provide their real name/personal information

"I very much appreciate the indication for staff to identify passengers who may require assistance, as well as the possible fare evasion alert."
– Female, 18-23, Business

"Staff being able to see passengers with special needs really useful to ensure cared for."
– Male, 61-70, Commuter

"How are you tracking people? Is it through their phone? A ticket they've printed which will interact with the technology you've placed? I feel this is an important part of the process."
– Male, 18-23, Leisure

"The only thing I'm not a fan about is the passenger history stuff. Seems very big brother like. Also what if a passenger has no ID with them, and gives someone else's details?"
– Male, 24-30, Commuter

- Identifying an unknown fare evader by CCTV was suggested as a potential way to overcome the scenario when a passenger refuses to cooperate with on board staff
 - They suggested that CCTV may even already be in place in the carriages in order to constantly assess passenger mood/automatic mood detection

Passenger report

PASSENGER NAME: Suzanne Moore

ICST0006: N7 9GH

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION:

Passenger travelling without authority. Refuses to purchase when offered. Angry behaviour.

Send Report

"I do find it a little alarming that comments about passengers past history are stored with easy access to staff. Comments like "Angry" are very subjective and could present a lot of issues to HS2 as that data would have to be available to passengers."
– Male, 61-70, Leisure

Offering toys and pillows to passengers was considered to be a nice extra to improve customer experience... but certainly not an essential

- Some liked this concept and compared it to air travel – not just a journey, but a customer travel experience
 - They wondered how staff would distribute these items and whether there would be a mechanism to request them – perhaps via the app?

“With regards to the toy/pillows example, will there be options to request these sorts of things, and will it be done electronically? If so that is a massive benefit, akin to air travel, but better. Perhaps these could be themed based on the kind of journey most likely to be taken on that route (longer train journeys may require pillows for example) in order to keep the stock on the train manageable.”

– Female, 18-23, Commuter

“I also like the idea of being able to offer pillows and toys - it seems much more like an aeroplane journey - which seems much more 'ahead' of rail travel currently.”

– Female, 24-30, Business

“Pillows / teddy bears etc.... not sure of the hygiene with this idea, unless passengers take them away. Would the cost of ensuring pillows etc. are totally cleaned & recycled, make it prohibitive?”

– Male, 51-60, Commuter



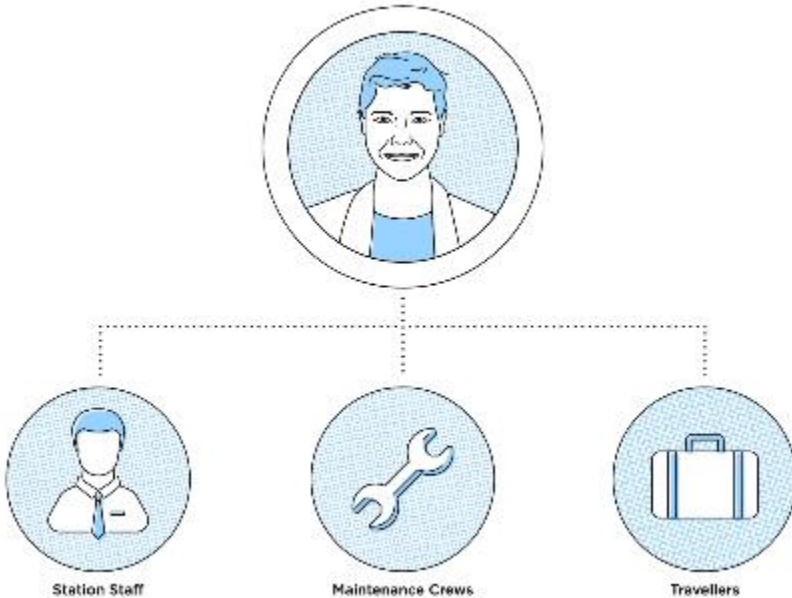
- However, others had concerns pertaining to practical factors:
 - How would they be kept hygienic? What would the associated cost of cleaning be? Or could they have disposable covers and be reused?
 - Some would inevitably go missing



SCENARIO 3

Staff communication and crowd control

The Community were impressed by the new communication channels and thought that this would benefit both passengers and staff



- Many expressed enthusiasm for the proposed communication cascade, particularly when faced with disruption
 - Give relevant information to the appropriate party in a timely fashion

“An incident alert would be useful if your train is delayed and it would be ideal to get a reason as to why the service is delayed as this would give some context.”

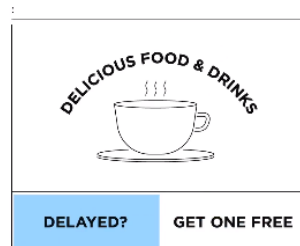
– Male, 31-40, Business

“Really love the ways they try to ease the annoyance of the delay with incentives from cafes/shops and easy rebooking options. Thumbs up!”

– Female, 18-23, Commuter

“The fact the station staff, outlets and trains are all connected in some way is a great idea. I can definitely see that working very well.”

– Male, 18-23, Leisure



- They liked the measures that were put in place to address the disruption and felt that it would help passengers to feel more valued

- 1. Alternative routes to ease congestion
- 2. Making it easy for passengers to be compensated
- 3. Notifying station vendors to expect increased footfall and to provide complimentary items

“The compensation options seem transparent, which is only a good thing.”

– Female, 24-30, Business

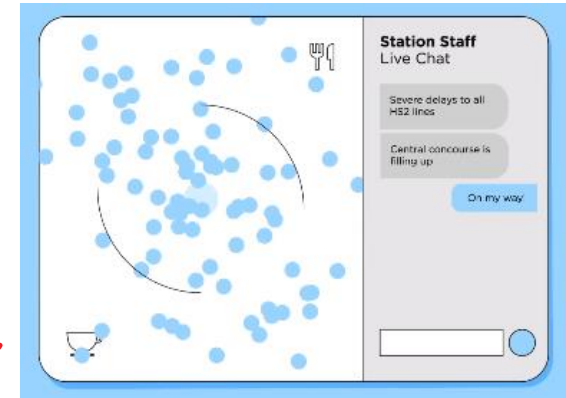
The communication system between staff was perceived to be a very positive aspect, enabling them to be better prepared to cope with congestion and differing passenger requirements

- They thought that the live feed was a great way to quickly transmit the most up-to-date messages between staff

“Information sharing seems a good proactive approach. Everyone who needs to know a) what has happened? b) what they need to do as a result? and c) what options, if appropriate, to take - this approach taken consistently would help the 'bad news' that inevitably happens, be accepted in a positive way.”

– Female, 41-50, Leisure

- The hands-on crowd dispersal by staff was seen as a positive approach
 - During disruption, some liked the proactive human interaction to keep passengers updated
 - For those not wishing to be ‘dispersed’ (e.g. travellers with luggage, children, those with a disability), could there be a way to make the stations a more interesting/exciting experience? Suggestions included short films, crèche facilities and community art exhibitions.
- The choice of being rebooked on another service was seen as a great feature of the customer service offering



“I like the human approach of having a person directing you to different places if the concourse becomes congested.”

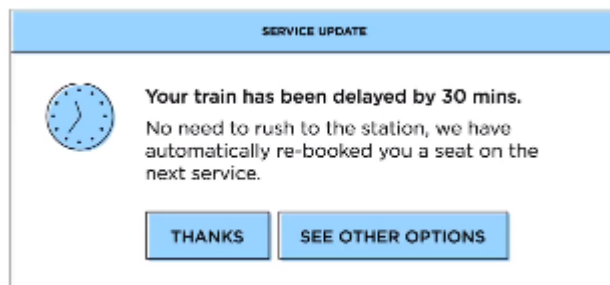
– Female, 41-50, Leisure

“If open access to platforms does go ahead there needs to be a better system of preventing platform overcrowding than relying on one or two staff trying to re-direct people.”

– Male, 61-70, Leisure

“I particularly like the flexibility in automatically booking a later train, where appropriate, for all affected passengers, and I'm sure the compensatory free drink would be appreciated by most.”

– Wheelchair user



What do Community members think has been missed? How could the video/concepts be improved?

- Some suggested additional notifications that the app could provide that they felt would enhance the 'barrier-free' experience

"Would adjusted signage/routes be conveyed to individual passengers via an app (as was discussed in a previous task) at busy periods?"
– Wheelchair user

"It might be beneficial to send a phone alert if one somehow managed to get on the wrong train, assuming barrier free travel could slightly increase the probability of such an occurrence."
– Male, 24-30, Leisure

- Some wanted to know what provision would be in place in the case of malfunctioning technology
 - Could the system incorrectly identify a passenger as a fare-evader?

"What would happen if for some reason the system malfunctioned? Supposing that the person actually had purchased a ticket but a bug in the system had not recorded this? The current ticket machines frequently fail to recognise my ticket, so I feel there definitely needs to be some plan B in case the technology doesn't work properly."
– Female, 61-70, Business

"Also, what happens when the computer system fails? As it does now? I have lost count of the times I've had a 'reserved seat' on a virgin train from London, only to get to my seat and find someone smiling at me with a vaguely blank look and then an embarrassing 'sorry this is my seat' conversation - all because the 'computers are down' or a train was cancelled."
– Male, 31-40, Commuter

- Those who were undecided about the idea of barrier-free travel wanted to know more information about how HS2 could address the areas that gatelines currently manage
- Some really appreciated the enhanced information sharing with the passenger and wondered whether other data could be made available

"Perhaps HS2 could do a trial run to have a barrier free station at any of the busy stations prior to deciding on whether the system would work or not."
– Female, 41-50, Leisure

"It would also be nice to see information boards that can give passenger the totals of footfall at their station etc. It would be interesting to know how many trains use the station a day and how many passengers. Or maybe that's just me."
– Female, 51-60, Business



Summary and Conclusions

- There were various concepts within the video that received positive feedback from the Customer Community, such as being able to ‘follow’ another passenger’s journey and receiving notifications to collect luggage when on the train
- However, the idea of having stations without ticket barriers generated mixed responses
 - Some felt that it presented a great improvement to today’s travel, providing a solution to congestion at gatelines and greater flexibility to meet others on the platform
 - Others were worried that open gatelines would have a negative effect by increasing footfall on platforms, worsening congestion
- There were significant concerns regarding the potential to abuse the system by travelling without a valid ticket, and disbelief that HS2 could ensure revenue protection
 - Many wanted to understand how fare-evaders would be identified and ‘punished’, and whether repeat offenders could be prevented from using the service
 - They were worried that this would drive up costs and have a knock on effect on fare-paying passengers
- The Community were particularly impressed by the improved communications system, whereby the relevant information was distributed at the right time to the right people
 - This was felt to be of great benefit to both passengers and staff