


Times are changing

20th May 2018

Customer information 

Changes to London timetables from May 2018

What impact will this have on me?

- > From May 2018, East Midlands Trains peak-time services to and from London will no longer call at Bedford
- > Thameslink will be introducing two fast trains an hour during peak periods calling at Bedford, Luton, St Albans and London St Pancras, with a journey time of around 45 minutes
- > East Midlands Trains Off-peak and weekend services will continue to call at Bedford

Where can I find out more information?

For more information on East Midlands Trains services visit eastmidlandstrains.co.uk/May2018, or for Thameslink services please go to thameslinkrailway.com/bedfordchanges. Alternatively, look out for station-specific journey information coming early in 2018 at stations across the route.

EAST MIDLANDS TRAINS ThamesLink / THAMESLINK PROGRAMME

Timetable change research

Key findings report

Key project objectives

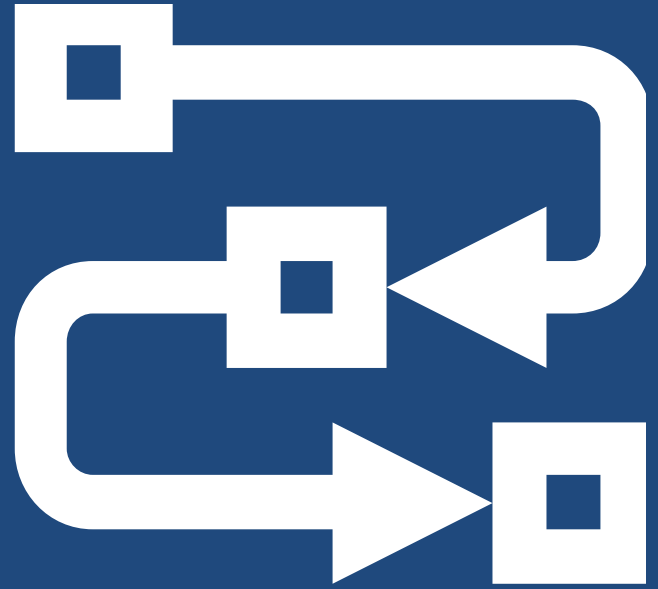
Measure awareness of the planned timetable changes

Understand passengers' awareness of the impact of the changes and their plans in response to the changes

Establish how passengers found out about the changes.
Understand the best methods for further communication

Assess the degree to which passengers understand why the changes are being made and what future benefits there might be

Methodology

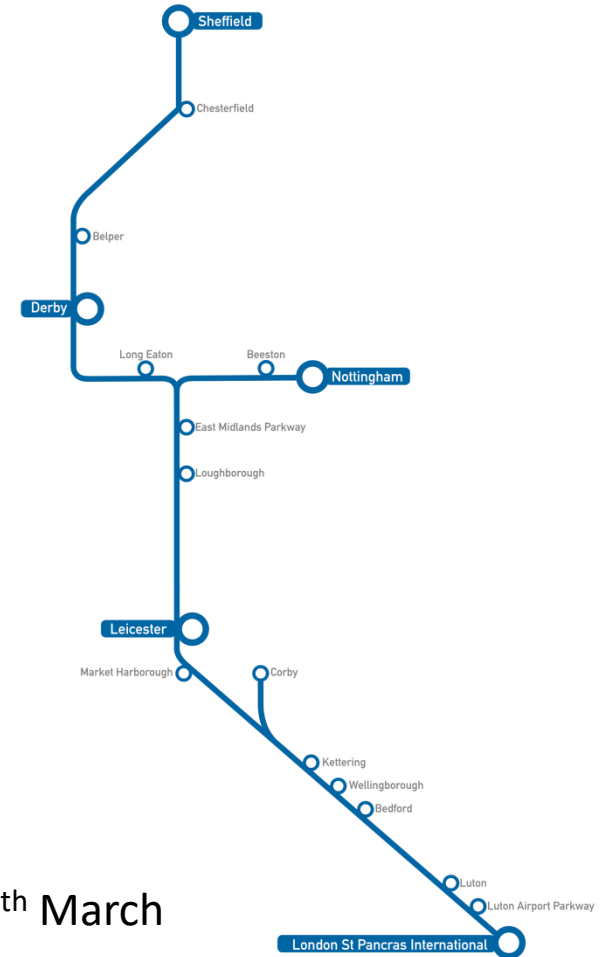


Quantitative approach



Recruitment of passengers to complete a paper questionnaire with the option of an online interview

- Passengers recruited **on-board** morning peak trains to London St Pancras
- Passengers recruited **on-board** evening peak trains leaving London St Pancras
- Passengers recruited at Wellingborough **station** during morning and evening peak time



Achieved a total of **707** interviews



632 paper questionnaires

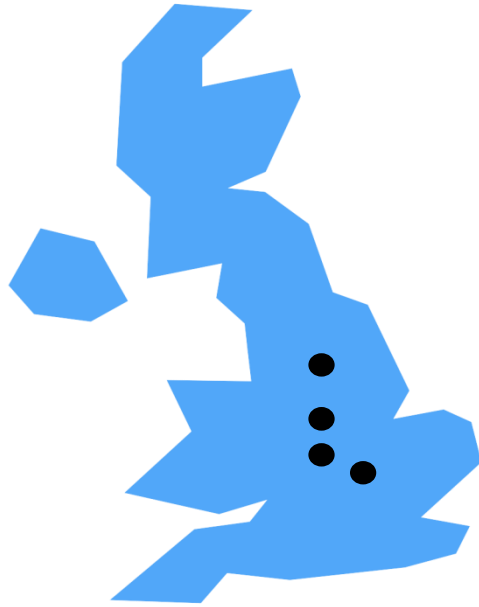


75 online responses



Fieldwork conducted between 21st – 29th March

Qualitative approach



- ❖ 4 focus groups
- ❖ 32 participants
- ❖ 4 key locations – Sheffield, Leicester, Wellingborough, Bedford
- ❖ Fieldwork conducted between 27-29th March

- Each group had **eight** participants and included an equal mix of gender, as well as a mix of age and social grade
- All participants had to be East Midlands Trains users and **make journeys at peak times**
- In Sheffield and Leicester, half of the participants were people **who travel to Bedford or Luton at least once every three months**
- Each group also included **some season ticket holders**, some of the participants in Wellingborough, Leicester and Sheffield **split their tickets** via Bedford

Throughout the groups discussions we explored awareness of the timetable changes, to measure the effectiveness of the communications to date

We used stimulus material to understand participants' views on different communication channels and messages

The stimulus material included:

- Leaflets
- Screen grabs – of banners, EMT website, EMT Facebook and Twitter pages and information screens

5 key findings

1. Overall knowledge and awareness about the timetable changes is fairly high, however the clarity and depth of knowledge is poor



Aware of the timetable changes

65%



59%

Of whom only know a little

"I had a leaflet one day when I just caught my normal train, somebody was handing them out. I also got one through my door"
(Wellingborough)



Awareness of specific elements of the changes is low amongst those aware of the timetable changes:

39%

know a lot about the changes

59%

know EMT services arriving into London St Pancras on weekdays between 7 and 10am will not stop at Bedford or Luton

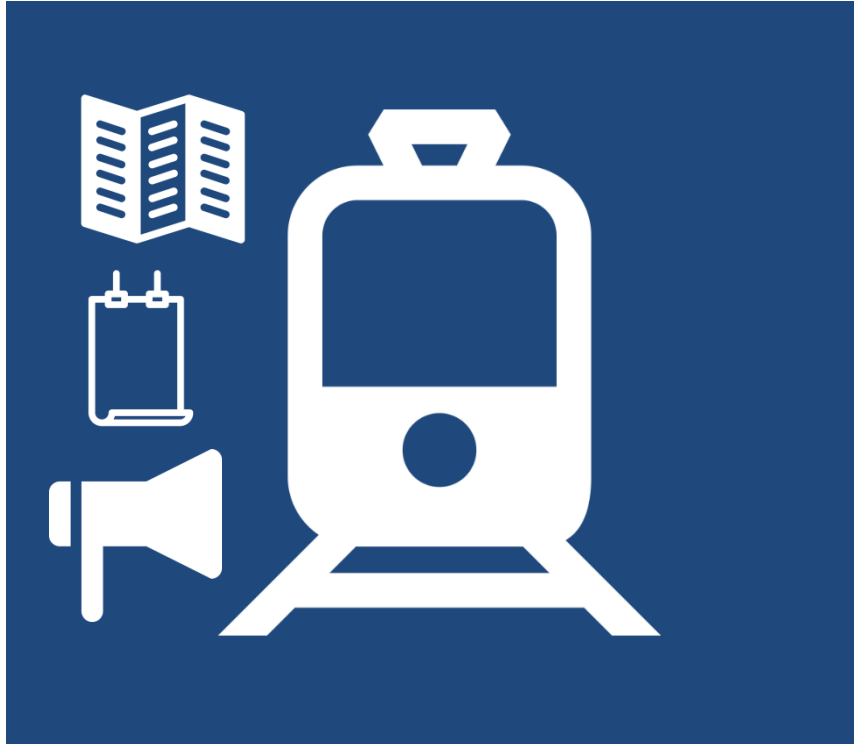
52%

know EMT services leaving London St Pancras on weekdays between 4 and 7pm will not stop at Luton or Bedford

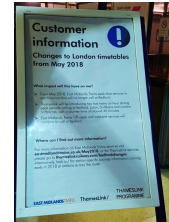
11%

know the changes will last until 2022

2. The range of communications used is felt to be good, however there were low levels of awareness of EMT communications



Most common ways people heard about the changes:



24%

saw a poster or notice around a station



19%

heard from friends, family or colleagues

*"(It would be great to have) leaflets on the trains, on the tables or just on the seats"
(Wellingborough)*

*"I think they need to give you them (leaflets) on the train"
(Sheffield)*

3. 'Times are changing' was not felt to clearly communicate timetable changes. Lack of transparency about why the changes are happening



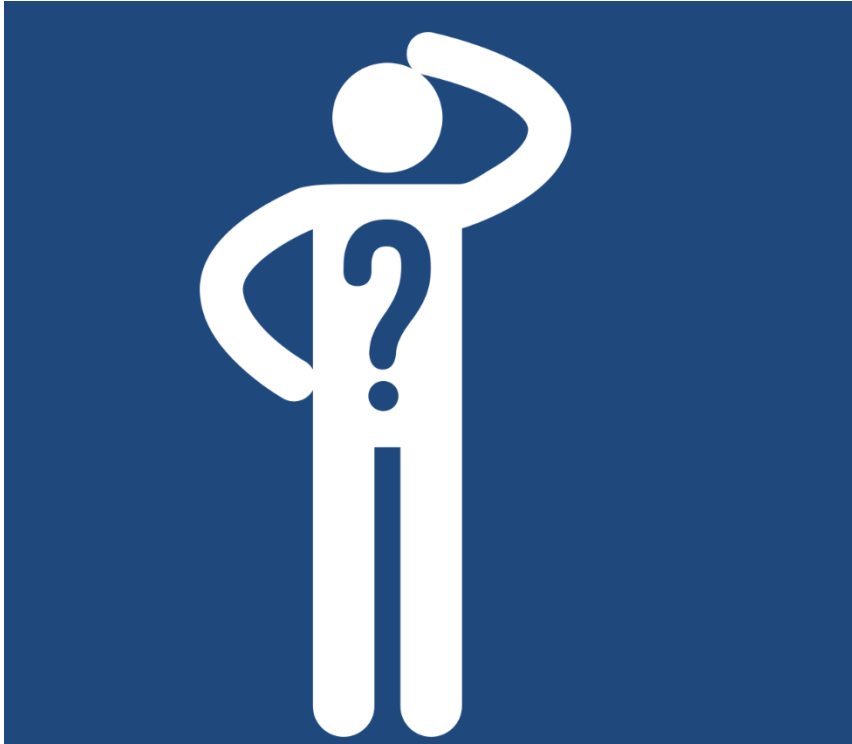
*"I would associate it with world affairs"
(Leicester)*

*"It should perhaps just say, 'East Midlands timetables are changing.' People aren't always that bright. I'm probably one of those people"
(Sheffield)*



*"I think the reality is that this style of communication has been bordering on deceitful if I am honest with you. It's a reduction in the quality of the service. There's no doubt and it tries to avoid saying that at all costs"
(Bedford)*

4. The low levels of understanding about the changes and lack of planning for them is likely to mean that passengers get 'caught out'



25% know a lot



32% don't know what impact the changes will have for them



31% don't plan to take any action



26% don't know what action they will take yet

5. There is likely to be a negative impact on the EMT brand, however there is a sense that EMT is being made a scapegoat



15%

support the changes



Only **27%** are satisfied with current communications.

"If I worked for East Midlands, I think I'd be a bit peeved to be honest because, on the face of it they're getting all this flak. They're putting out all these leaflets in their colour scheme and all the rest of it, suggesting that it's coming from them, but everybody else seems to be keeping completely schtum on it, and it seems to me that it's not solely down to East Midlands"
(Bedford)

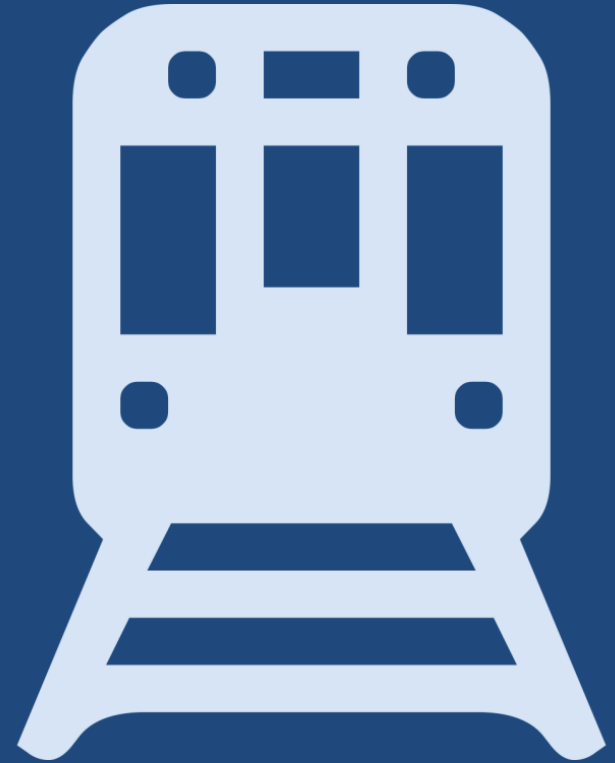
"I feel undervalued, don't give a toss and just thrown aside really"
(Bedford)



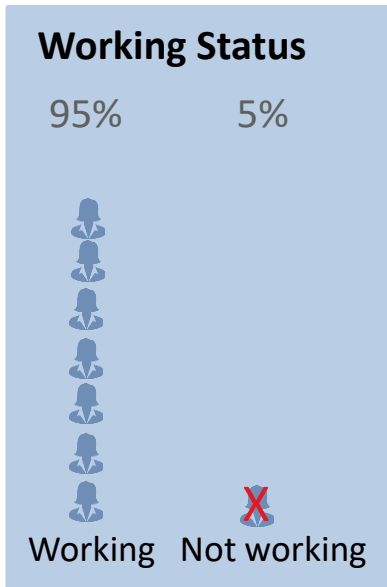
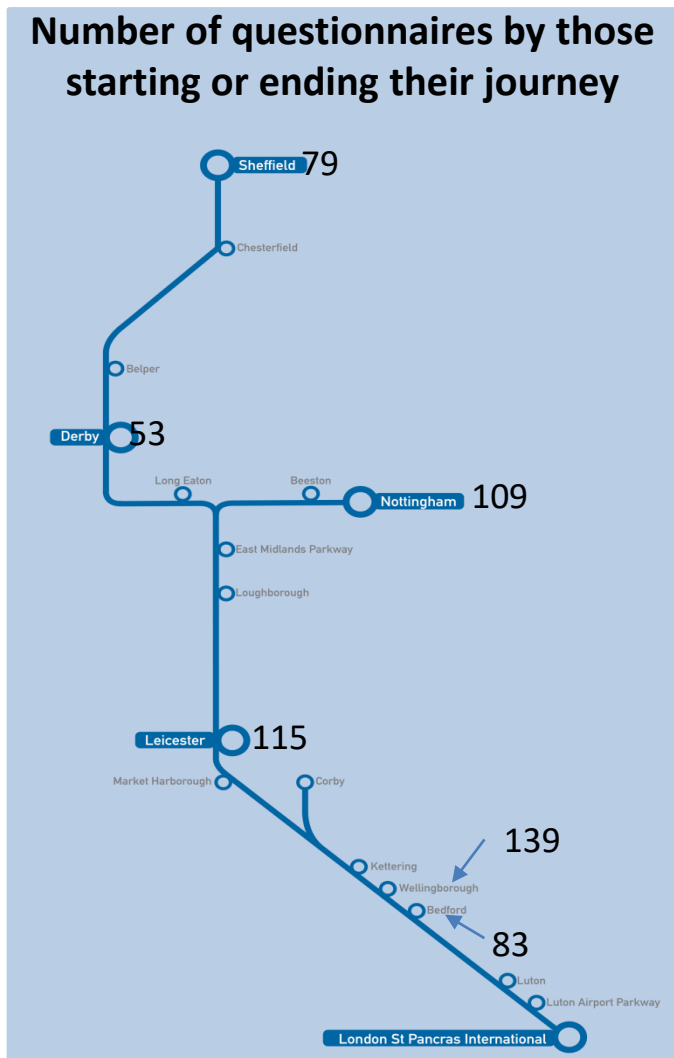
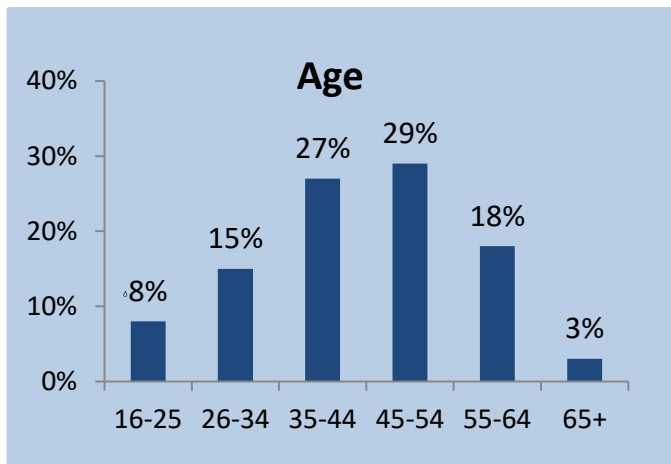
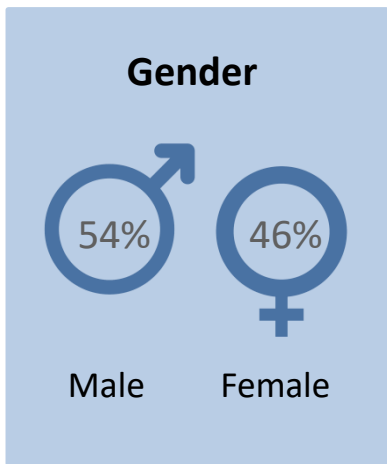
36% are dissatisfied with the communications so far

"Just from reading the leaflet and reading the other information I won't use East Midlands again"
(Sheffield)

Journey details



Users travelling during peak hours across the network took part, as expected, predominately those in work and commuting for work - a key passenger group

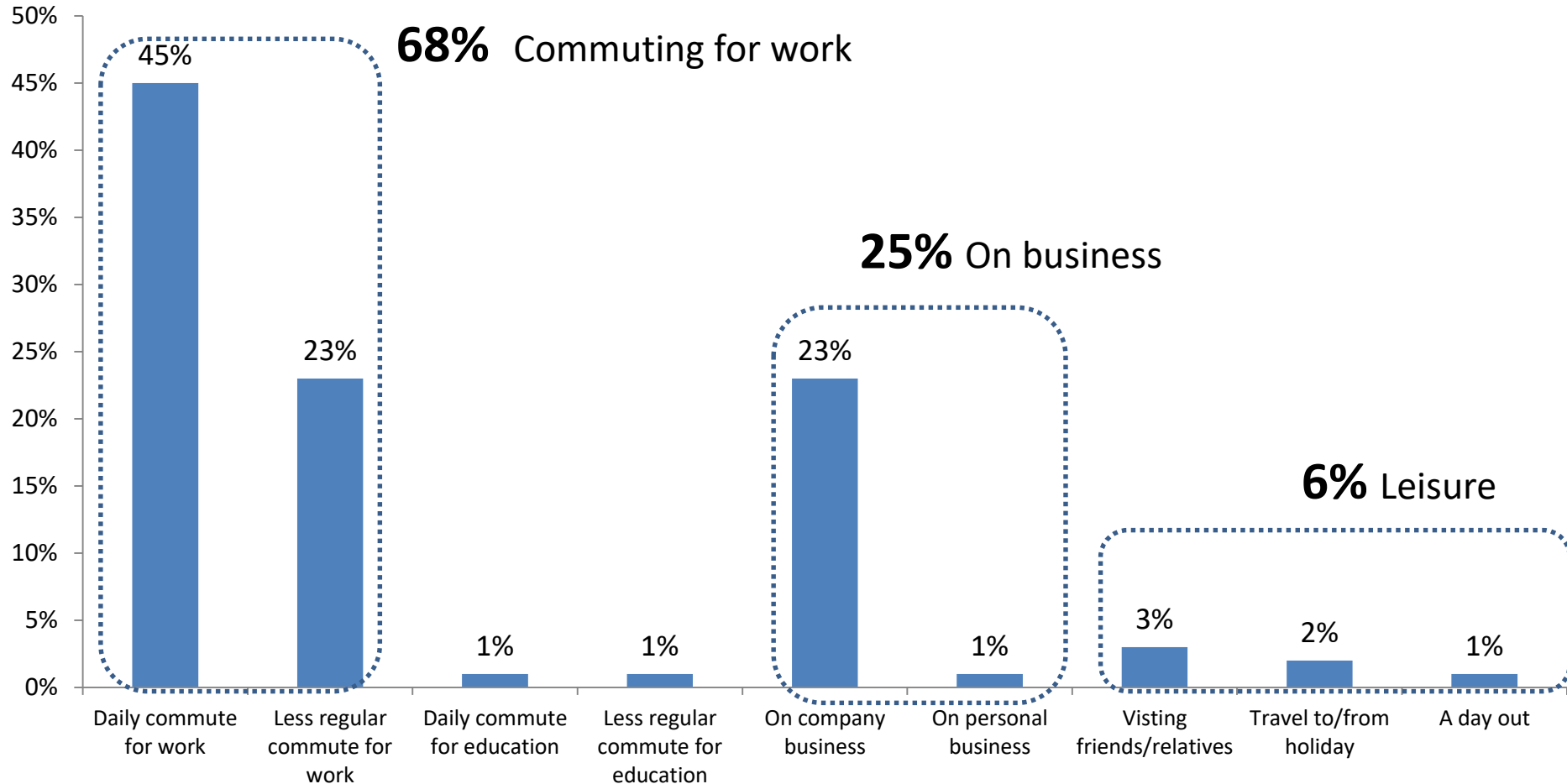


Q26: Are you...? Q27: Are you...? Q28: Are you...?
 Q4: What was the main purpose of the trip you were making when given this questionnaire? Base: All respondents (707)

Commuting for work was the most common reason for travelling



Main purpose of trip



Q4. What was the main purpose of the trip you were making when given this questionnaire?

Base: All respondents (707)

Most peak time travellers are regular users of the network, travelling in standard class



Frequency of making the journey



13%

Everyday



27%

4-5 time a week



30%

At least once a week but less than 4 times a week



18%

At least once a month but not once a week



12%

Less than once a month

Type of ticket



14%

Advance ticket



40%

Season ticket



42%

Return

How checked train times



61%

Didn't check



29%

Checked online

Class of travel



85%

Standard class



15%

First class

Q8: How frequently do you generally make this particular journey? Q5: What type of ticket did you use for your journey? Q7: How did you check the times of the trains for your journey today?

Q6: Is your ticket for your journey today?

Base: All respondents (707)

Current views about EMT



The overall view of EMT is positive; however, some negative aspects were mentioned, such as poor Wi-Fi and overcrowding of carriages



Positives

Service is reliable and there are few delays

Good frequency of trains at peak times

Quick peak-time trains

Seats are relatively comfortable

Clean - Bedford

Safe - staff are present on board (guard or ticket inspector) and this is felt to be reassuring (vs Thameslink)

Staff are friendly

Relatively cheap (vs Virgin) - Sheffield

Caring - e.g. receiving free food on-board when train is stuck because of adverse weather conditions

Inside of carriages - not claustrophobic (vs Virgin)



Negatives

Poor Wi-Fi: does not work well and/or is only available for limited amount of time

Carriages are often very busy and it's hard to find a seat

Overcrowding at St Pancras, while waiting for a train

Some of the trains feel dated, especially compared to other train companies

Price - (season) tickets are felt to be overpriced

Dirty, especially the seats – Sheffield

Slow (vs Virgin)



- Overall, participants have a positive view of EMT
- Their opinion of the company has not changed significantly over the past few months or years
- Poor Wi-Fi and overcrowding are felt to be the main issues with EMT trains

Most, in general, are satisfied with and trust East Midlands Trains

NRPS is a representative sample – this research focused on peak-time travellers who are generally less positive



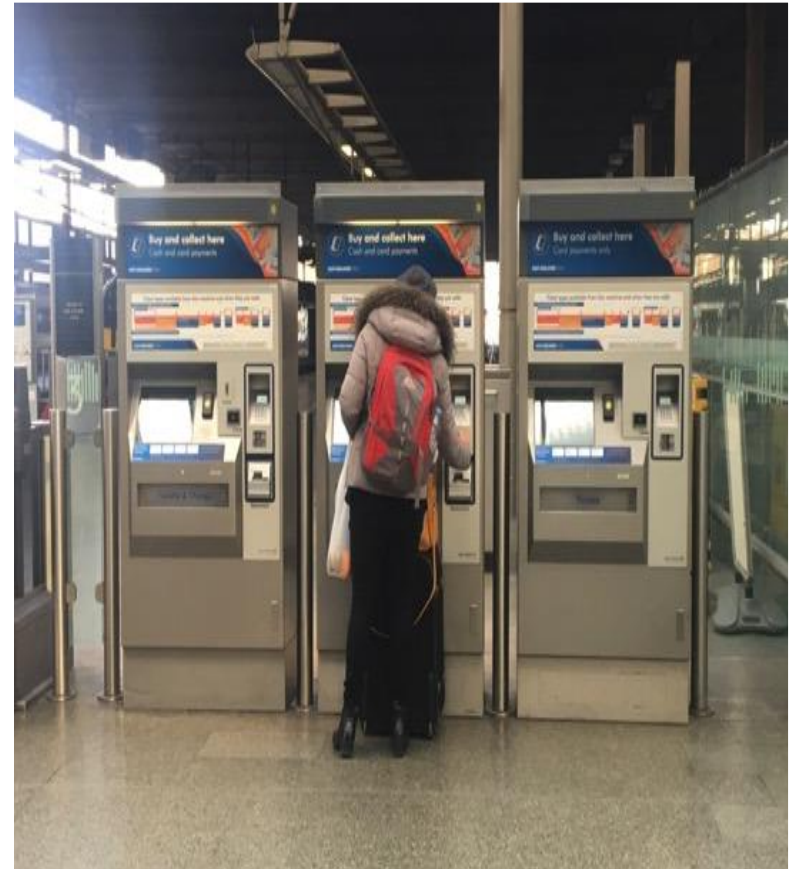
78% were satisfied with their journey

NRPS: 85% were satisfied with their journey



41% trust East Midlands Trains

NRPS: 59% trust East Midlands Trains



Q10: Taking into account the station where you boarded the train and the actual train you travelled on after being given this questionnaire, how satisfied were you with your journey today? Base: All excluding Don't Knows (697)

Q11. All things considered and on balance, how much do you trust East Midlands Trains, the company running the train you travelled on today? Base: All respondents (707)

NRPS data from Autumn 2017

Views on their current journey were mainly positive or bored



13%



1%



2%



1%



13%



1%



37%



32%



Q12: And which one of these images best captures how you feel about your journey today?
Base: All respondents (707)

Images ©Transport Focus

Timetable Changes



Awareness



Prior awareness is highest amongst the most frequent travellers but low amongst less frequent travellers

Prior awareness of the timetable changes



Aware of the changes



By frequency of making the journey



90%

Everyday



29%

At least once a month but not once a week



92%

4-5 times a week



25%

Less than once a month



63%

At least once a week but less than 4 times a week

By reason for travelling



76%

Work commute



41%

On business



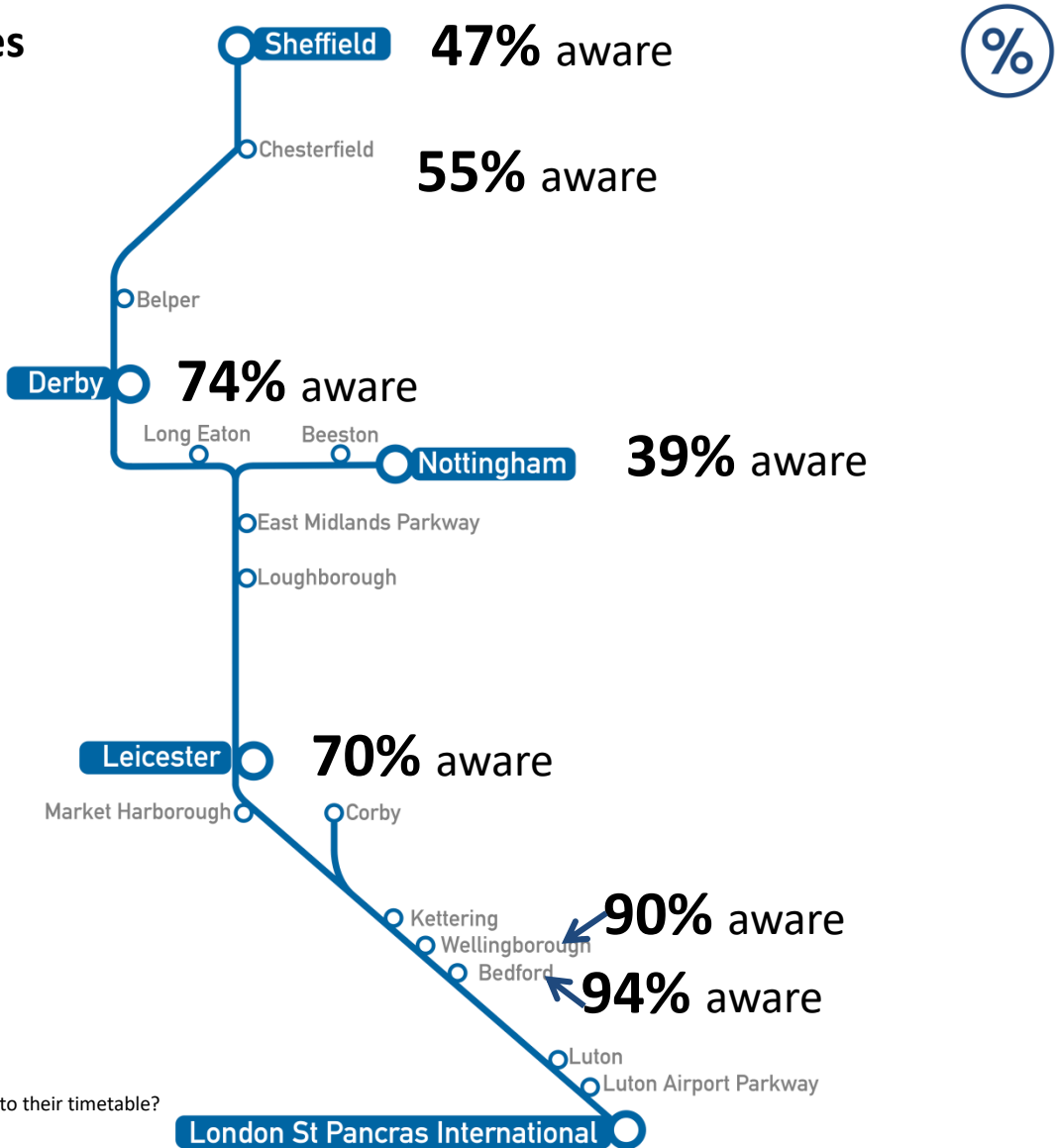
50%

Leisure

Q13: Before today, were you aware of the changes East Midlands Trains would be making to their timetable?
Base: All respondents (707)

Prior awareness varies by stations used, with awareness higher amongst those using the stations most likely to be affected

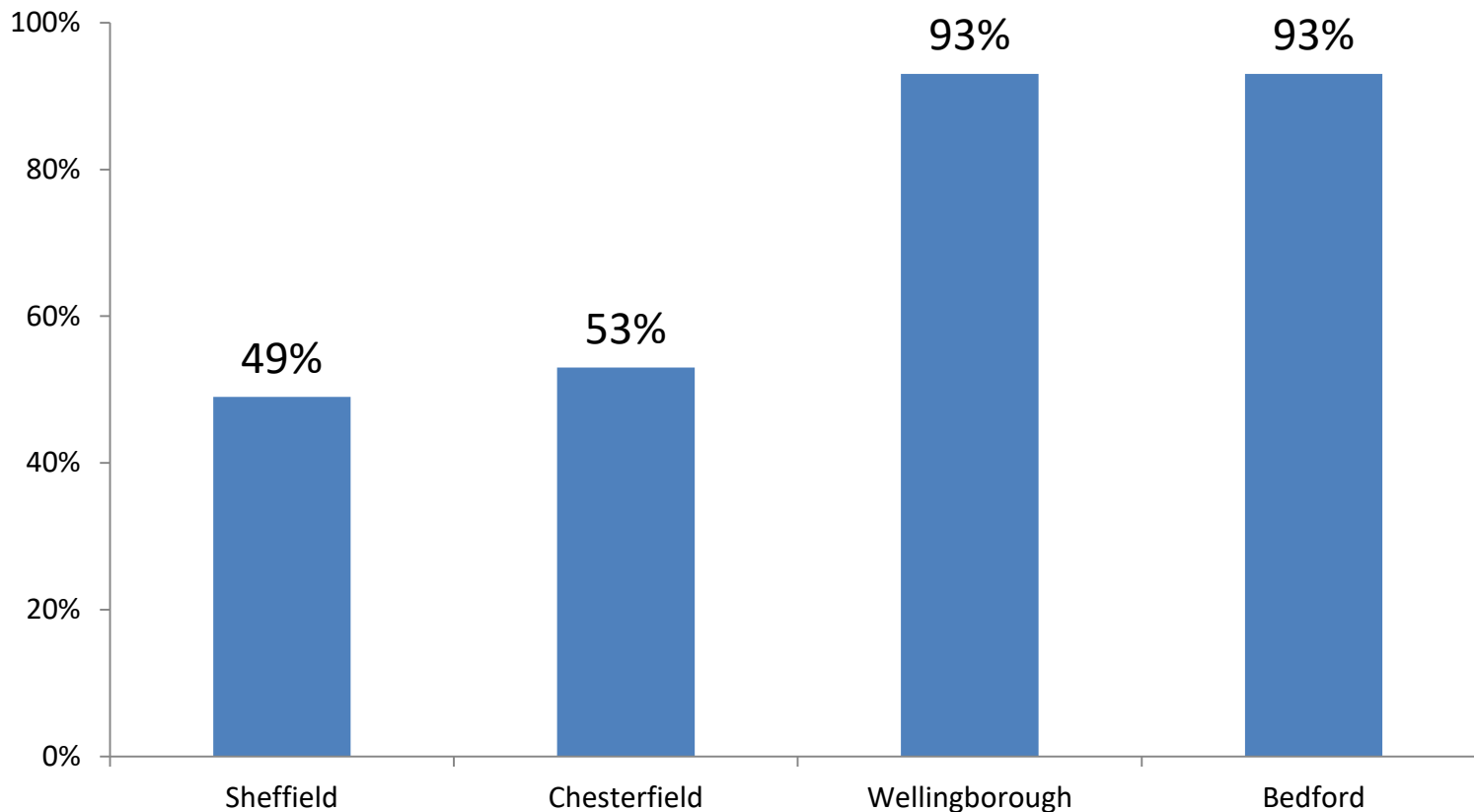
Prior awareness of the timetable changes



Q13. Before today, were you aware of the changes East Midlands Trains would be making to their timetable?
Base: All respondents (707)

Prior awareness is higher amongst peak travellers who started their journey at Wellingborough and Bedford

Prior awareness of the timetable changes



Q13. Before today, were you aware of the changes East Midlands Trains would be making to their timetable?

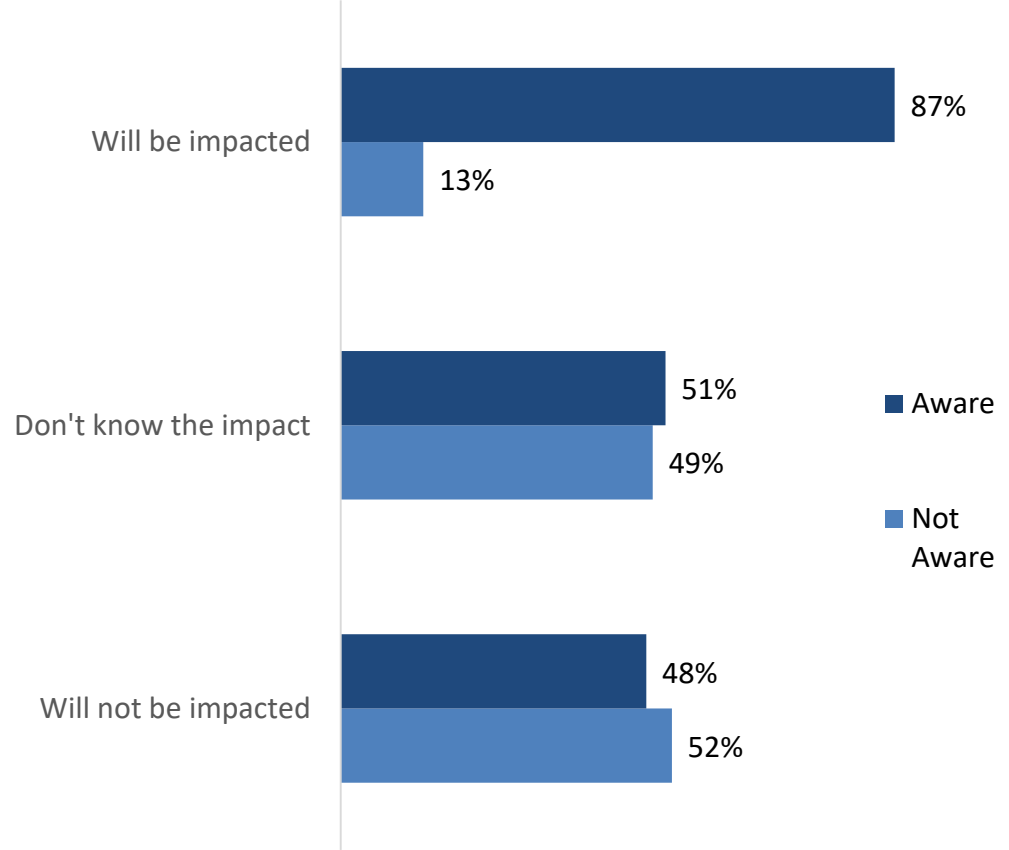
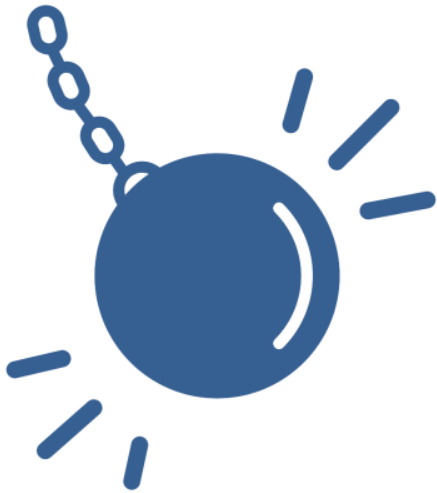
Base: All respondents (707)

Prior awareness is higher amongst those who report they will be impacted by the changes

Prior awareness of the timetable changes



Aware: **65%**
Not aware: **35%**



Q13: Before today, were you aware of the changes East Midlands Trains would be making to their timetable?

Q18: What impact do you think the planned changes will have on your journey?

Base: All respondents (707)

Knowledge of
the changes



Although prior awareness appears high, knowledge of the changes is low amongst all peak time passengers

Prior awareness and knowledge of the timetable changes amongst peak time travellers



65% are aware of the changes



25% know a lot



22% know just a little



17% have heard about them
but know nothing more



1% know nothing at all

Q14: How much, if anything, would you say you know about the timetable changes being implemented by East Midlands Trains?

Base: Those already aware of timetable changes (463)

Knowledge of the changes is greater where the likely impact is higher



Amongst passengers starting or ending their journey between Market Harborough and Luton Airport Parkway



88% were aware of the changes



of which 51% know a lot



34% know a little



Amongst passengers starting or ending their journey between Sheffield and Leicester



52% were aware of the changes

of which



26% know a lot



33% know a little

Q14. How much, if anything, would you say you know about the timetable changes being implemented by East Midlands Trains?

Base: Those already aware of timetable changes (463)

Passengers aware of the changes, knowledge focused on the impact on Bedford and Luton

Prior awareness of individual aspects of the timetable changes



Impact (1 of 3)	All aware	Bedford passengers	Wellingborough passengers
East Midlands Trains services arriving into London St Pancras on weekdays between 7 and 10am will not stop at Bedford or Luton	59%	90%	81%
East Midlands Trains services leaving London St Pancras on weekdays between 4 and 7pm will not stop at Luton or Bedford	52%	86%	74%
East Midlands Trains passengers for Luton will need to change trains at Luton Airport Parkway and catch a Thameslink train	16%	26%	15%
From 20 May there will be more Thameslink trains between Bedford/Luton and London St. Pancras International than there are now	29%	60%	30%

Q17: Which of the following were you aware of before today?

Base: Those already aware of timetable changes. (463) Bedford (78) Wellingborough (125)

Awareness of the reasons behind the changes and the impact on season ticket holders is low, even amongst those using Bedford station

Awareness of individual aspects of the timetable changes



Impact (2 of 3)	All aware	Bedford passengers	Wellingborough passengers
A replacement coach will run between Wellingborough and Bedford at peak times	35%	53%	63%
The changes are being introduced because the tracks between Bedford and London will be used by more trains than before	25%	24%	33%
Season ticket holders who use the replacement bus between Wellingborough and Bedford can get up to 50% off the cost of their season ticket	15%	17%	30%

Q17: Which of the following were you aware of before today?

Base: Those already aware of timetable changes. (463)

Knowledge of the length of the changes is extremely low

Prior awareness of individual aspects of the timetable changes



Impact (3 of 3)

All aware

Train departure times on weekday services between Sheffield/Nottingham and London St Pancras International (and vice versa) are changing 49%

Some East Midlands Trains services between Sheffield/Nottingham and London St Pancras may take a few minutes longer 32%

The changes will last until 2022* 11%

The changes will also affect connecting services to Crewe and Lincoln 3%

None of these 14%

*The questionnaire mistakenly gave the date as 2022 rather than 2020

Q17: Which of the following were you aware of before today?
Base: Those already aware of timetable changes. (463)

The impact of the changes



There is still a high level of uncertainty around the impact these changes will have on passengers own journeys

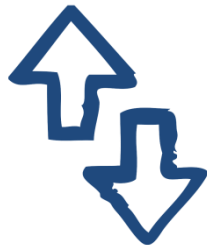
Impact the timetable changes will have



34% my journey time will increase



32% don't know what impact the changes will have for them



27% the changes will have no impact on me


Q18: What impact do you think the planned changes will have on your journey?
Base: All respondents (707)


Almost all who started their journey in Bedford believe that the changes will result in increased journey times


Impact the timetable changes will have




Sheffield


 **33%** my journey time will increase


 **31%** don't know what impact the changes will have for them

 **31%** the changes will have no impact on me


Chesterfield


 **27%** my journey time will increase


 **49%** don't know what impact the changes will have for them

 **20%** the changes will have no impact on me


Wellingborough


 **37%** my journey time will increase


 **23%** don't know what impact the changes will have for them

 **27%** the changes will have no impact on me

Bedford

 **93%** my journey time will increase

 **2%** don't know what impact the changes will have for them

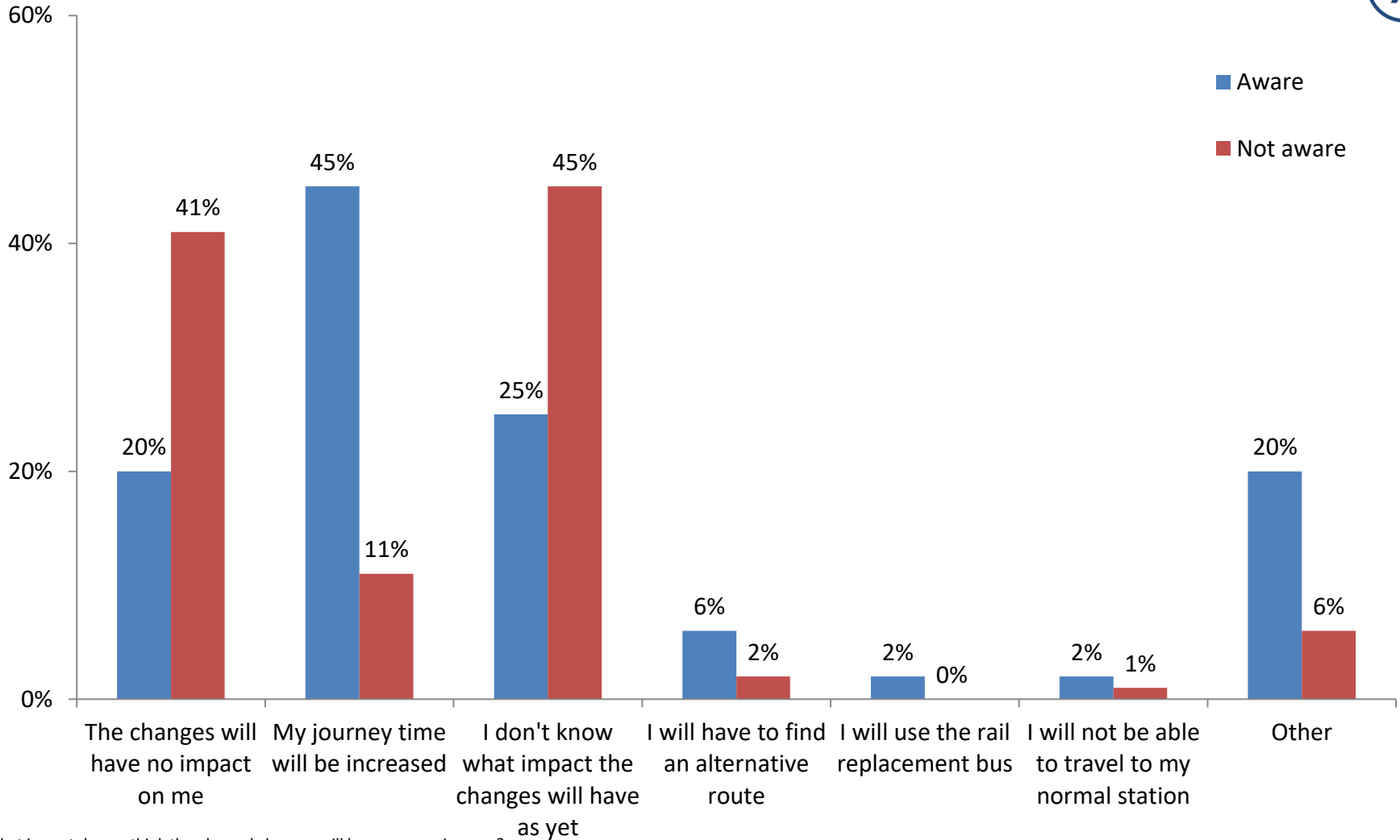
 **13%** will have to find an alternative route

Q18: What impact do you think the planned changes will have on your journey?
Base: Respondents who started their journey at: Sheffield (70), Chesterfield (51), Wellingborough (90), Bedford (60)

Those previously aware were more likely to report increased journey times but are still unsure on the exact impact on their own journey



Impact the timetable changes will have

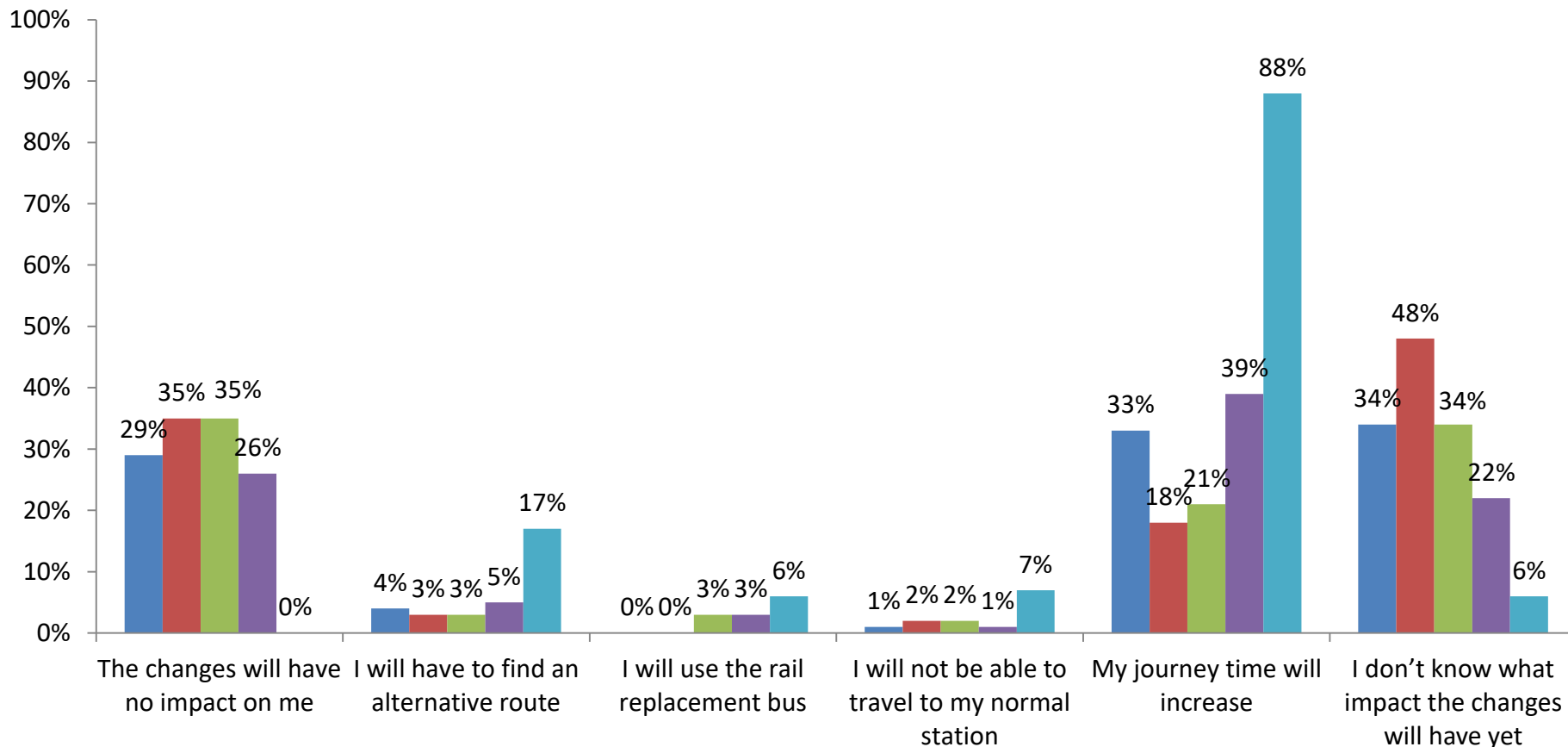


Q18: What impact do you think the planned changes will have on your journey?
Base: All respondents (707): Aware (463); Unaware (244).

Peak time passengers starting or ending their journey at Bedford are most likely to think they will see increased journey times



■ Sheffield
 ■ Nottingham
 ■ Leicester
 ■ Wellingborough
 ■ Bedford



Q18: What impact do you think the planned changes will have on your journey?

Base: All respondents who use Sheffield (79), Nottingham (109), Leicester (115), Wellingborough (139), Bedford (83)

Responses to the changes



Planning to take no action, or a lack of knowledge about what action they plan to take is common

What action plan to take in response to the changes



31% don't plan to take any action



26% don't know what action they will take yet



29% travelling at a different time



10% consider travelling with a different TOC

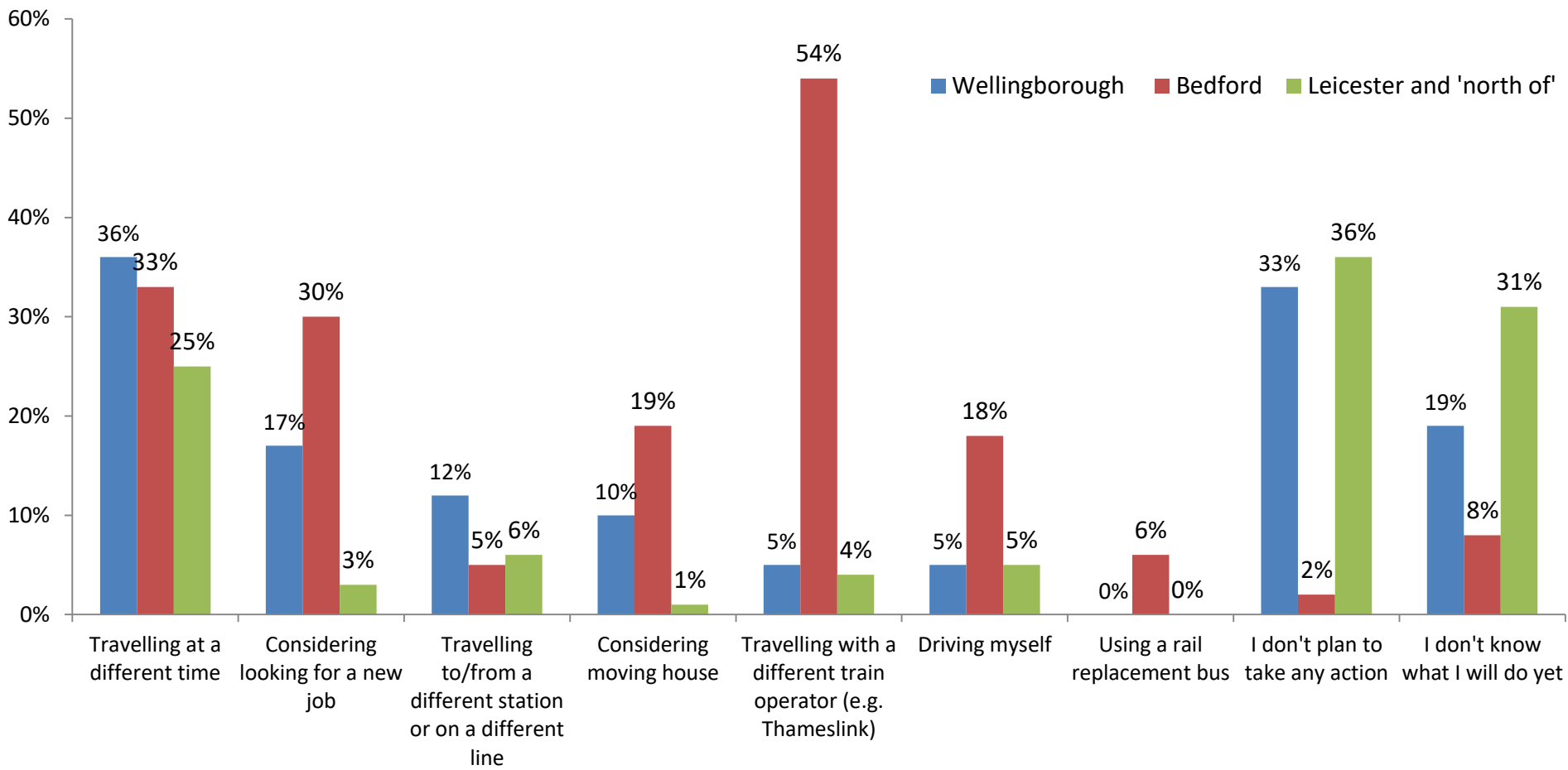


9% consider looking for a new job

Q19: In response to the changes which of the following actions do you plan to take?
Base: All respondents (707)

Plans vary by stations used, those using Bedford are most likely to say they will travel with a different TOC

In response to the changes which do you plan to do?



Q19. In response to the changes which of the following actions do you plan to take?
 Base: All respondents who use Wellingborough station (139), Bedford station (83), Leicester and 'north of' (442)

Response to the bus replacement service

The replacement bus service is felt to be a poor substitute for the train



Participants felt that the bus service was not a suitable replacement. Commonly held views are ...

- It is too time-consuming and not practical
- Season ticket holders will lose out – up to 50% discount is not felt to be sufficient compensation
- Journeys will become too expensive where split ticketing is no longer possible

“I suppose it doesn’t read very well for someone that might have bought a season ticket, it might’ve been, what, £400, £500 and they’re only getting a 50% discount? I’m not in that position but, actually, moving that all the way to end of the message and actually what you’re saying is someone’s agreed to pay for a service but they’re not actually going to get that service anymore with a very short window of time to prep for it”
(Sheffield)

These feelings are stronger among commuters, who will feel the consequences of the changes more. There is a feeling that information was not communicated early enough and that the information is ‘hidden away’ (back of the leaflet, small font, etc.) – especially for those who have recently purchased a season ticket

“To be fair, that is absolutely shocking, putting the bus to Bedford on the back page”
(Wellingborough)

Reaction to the features of the bus

- *Free Wi-Fi and air conditioning* – These are very much felt to be hygiene factors, not benefits
- *Town centre stops* – Participants are worried that stops in town will only extend the length of the bus journey and result in over-crowding of the service. Having more bus stops to choose from was not commonly perceived as a benefit

“[Air conditioning, Wi-Fi] is a default. It should just be there. It’s not a benefit. It’s like an expectation isn’t it? [...] [East Midlands Trains] are trying to make it [look] like it’s a benefit”
(Leicester)

Communication
about the changes

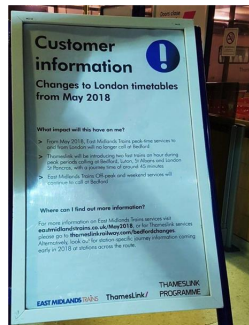


Posters and word of mouth are the most common methods passengers first heard about the changes

How first heard about the timetable changes



Poster/notices around the station



24%

A friend, relative or colleague



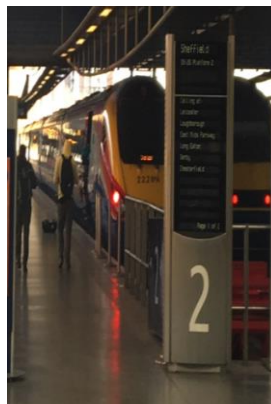
19%

A printed leaflet or booklet



10%

Announcements made at a station



10%

News in the local press



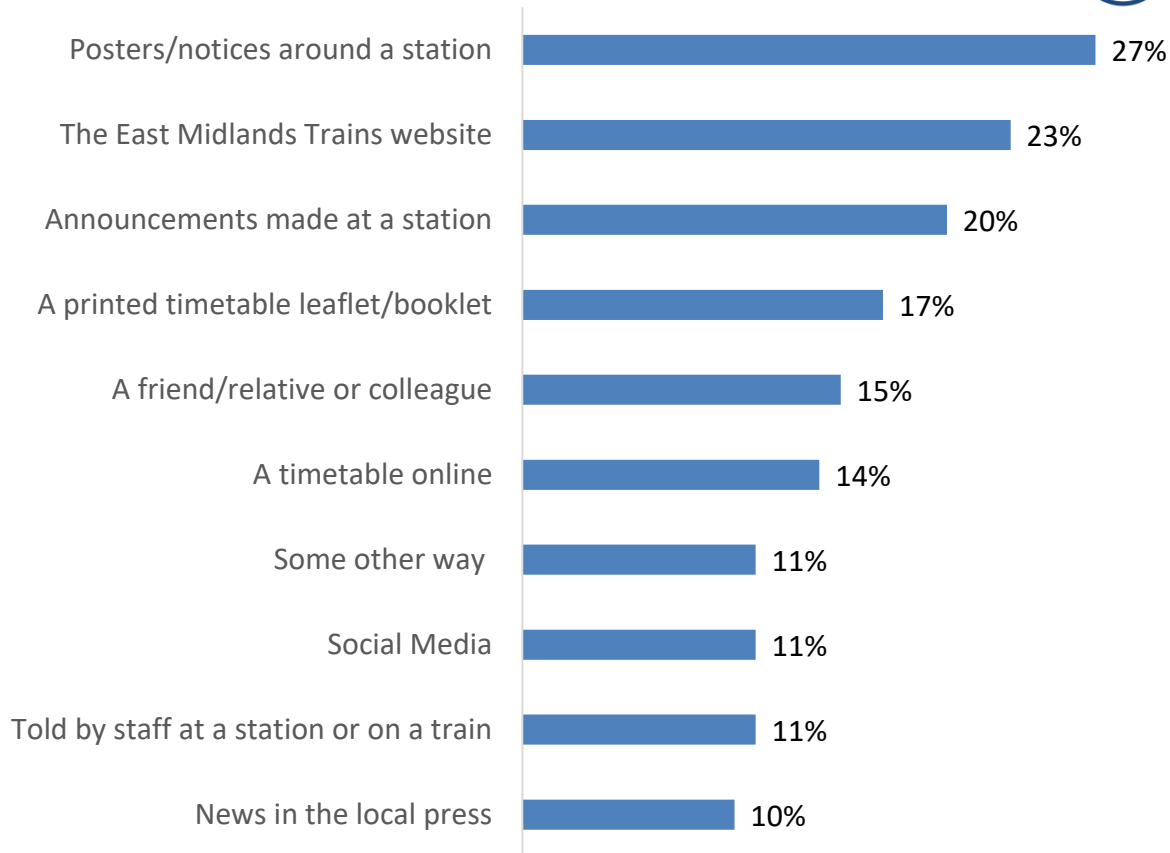
8%

Q15: In which of the following ways did you first find out about the timetable changes?

Base: Those already aware of timetable changes (463)

Announcements at the station and the EMT website are more common other methods of hearing about the changes

How else heard about the timetable changes?



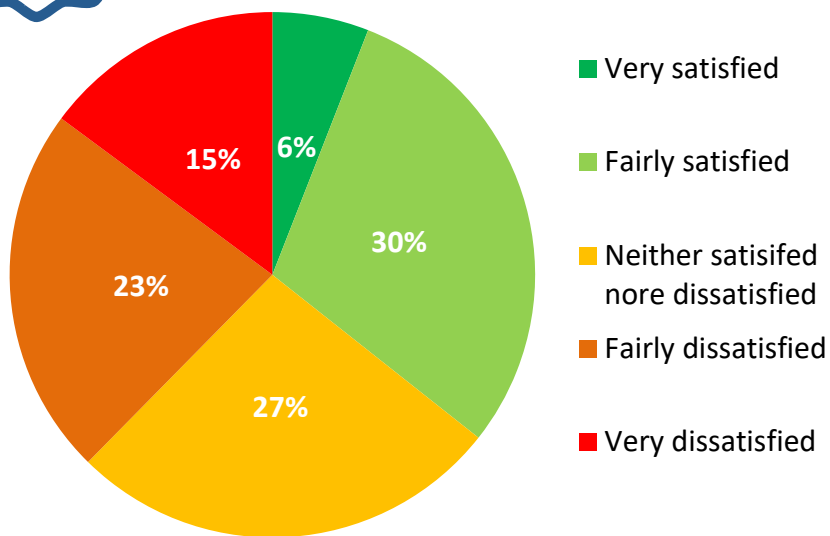
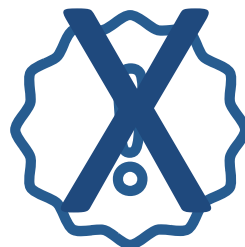
Most people heard about the changes in three ways

Q16: And other than that first occasion, in which of the following ways have you also heard about the changes?

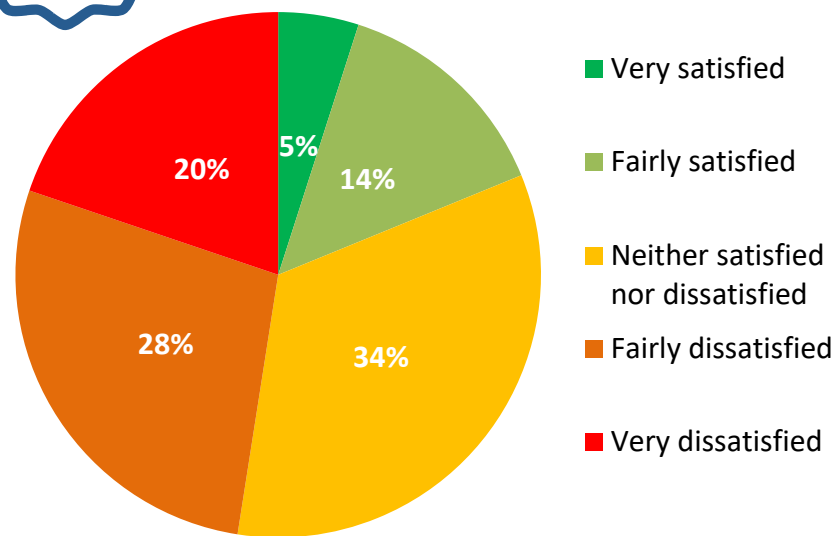
Base: Those already aware of timetable changes (463)

A third of those previously aware of the changes are satisfied with the information provided

Levels of satisfaction with current communications



36% of those aware are satisfied with information provided



18% of those not aware are satisfied with the information provided

Q21. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the information currently being provided about the timetable changes?

Base: Those aware of changes (440) Those unaware of changes (185)

Response to
communications
about the
timetable changes



There is a desire for the communication to be clearer and more transparent, especially among those who will be impacted the most



There is a feeling that East Midland Trains could have been more honest and upfront about the changes; this causes participants to feel less trusting of the company

Participants would like to see EMT...

- **Provide clear communication materials:** use clear language, highlight important changes, etc.
- **Be more transparent:** spell out the negative aspects of the changes and don't bury them on the back page of the leaflet
- **Ensure early communication, to give people enough time to prepare:** at least six months in advance for commuters; for less frequent travellers, communications can be shared at a later stage (e.g. 1 to 3 months before changes come into effect)
- **Ensure that communications reach those who will be affected by the changes:** e.g. leave communication material inside the trains (leaflets on the seats, posters on the back of the seats, etc.)

"As I said, we've been here since 1985, and on the whole they're pretty reliable, they're proper trains. Then, all of a sudden, you feel that they're having to play the game, and that means that you don't trust them as much, and yes, this information is very clear, but the whole picture is very murky, and that makes you [lose] trust in them, which I think is a shame for them as well"

(Sheffield)

"It's not clear"

(Bedford)

"Just ensure it's in a timely manner so people can start making preparation for change"

(Sheffield)

The range of communications modes available was felt to be broad, however on-train communications were felt to be needed



- Good range of modes
- Professionally produced
- EMT colours recognisable

“You know that people use your Wi-Fi so you have their email address. Have they emailed everyone who has done it?”
(Wellingborough)



- No on-board communications
- Expected online communications (to those signing up for free Wi-Fi)
- With the exception of Wellingborough, very little experience of pro-active communications
- ‘Times are changing’ felt to be ambiguous and misleading



The leaflet format was appreciated, however it was felt to lack some key information

- ✓ Short leaflet with some key information
- ✓ Easy to read
- ✓ Some participants had been given these or picked them up
- ✓ Separate leaflets for individual stations
- ✓ Table with the main changes to peak travel
- ✓ Considered more effective than posters/social media
- × Some wanted more information about why the changes were happening
- × Changes to services not highlighted in table
- × No timetable for non-peak travel
- × Arrival times of key journeys not mentioned (could be added to the table)
- × Lack of transparency – good news prioritised and bad news buried (e.g. bus service info on back page, Thameslink train times?)
- × Bedford and Luton not separate leaflets
- × No information about how long the changes will be in effect for
- × No information on any changes to the cost of travel
- × No details about the bus timetable and journey length



"It annoys me. I think they are trying to hide the fact that they are making timetable changes by being deliberately vague"
(Sheffield)

"Some people use Luton, others Luton Airport and some of us Bedford. Maybe do three separate ones for individual stations"
(Bedford)

Station posters and screens were not felt to be effective media for communicating about the timetable changes



- ✓ Good colour contrast
- × Would not notice in stations as they do not loiter or pay attention to peripheral elements in stations
- × Title does not convey timetable changes
- × Text does not convey the scale of the changes to services



“If I am being very honest, unless someone played some loud music or is dressed in a clown suit or something I am oblivious to what is around me.”
(Leicester)

“Generally speaking, trains only change by a couple of minutes, so either they’re a couple of minutes earlier or a couple of minutes later so, I tend to walk past them. I don’t tend to study them that much, because you just assume that there’s going to be no major, kind of, change.”
(Bedford)

Facebook and Twitter were felt to be useful communication routes for those who follow EMT



- ✓ Good way of reaching Facebook followers
- ✓ Exceptionally, some had been sent a link to the Facebook
- × None of the participants followed EMT on Facebook or would consider doing this

“It’s alright if you are on their Facebook page but you are not going to get them unless you’ve liked their page.”
(Bedford)



- ✓ Good way of reaching EMT Twitter followers
- × Participants rarely followed EMT

“I actually do follow them on Twitter because of checking on delays but I still haven’t seen anything (about timetable changes).” (Sheffield)

The information on the website was felt to be detailed and informative, however, it was felt to positively frame the changes and play down the negatives



- ✓ Some appreciated the detailed information about the reasons for the changes to the service
- ✓ Participants appreciated the station specific information which was felt to be similar to that in the leaflets
- ✓ Link to bus timetable
- ✗ Some wanted to only know how the changes affected them and were less interested in the wider context
- ✗ Participants had typically not visited the website to find out about the details
- ✗ A lack of clarity about why the changes are being made and how long this will be in place for (is it a permanent change?)
- ✗ All the details page very text heavy
- ✗ Those who did look on the website found it difficult to find the information about the timetable changes
- ✗ Some felt that the bad news was de-prioritised e.g. being at the bottom of the page and was not highlighted e.g. 'No peak time trains Bedford or Luton', 'Replacement bus between Wellingborough and Bedford'
- ✗ Alternative Thameslink service positioned as a like for like service when it takes approximately twice the time



“It wasn’t very clear (how to find the new timetable) I thought if I put in ‘revised timetable’ I’ll get the PDF or something.”
(Wellingborough)

“I think it is good that it is available (explanation about the reasons for the changes). Personally I wouldn’t read it.”
(Sheffield)

Going forward specific details on train times and impact on specific journeys are key for passengers to understand

Further information about the changes passengers would like



Train times

13%

Knowing the exact train times is the most important information passengers require

“Need to know about the changes in the times, if any, to train timetable from Nottingham to London.” *Satisfied with the information*

“Exact timings of departures and arrivals. Look on EMT website a few weeks ago and no info regarding timings were available.” *Dissatisfied with the information*

“Arrival as well as departure times - I have not been able to find these yet.” *Dissatisfied with the information*



Timetable

12%

Passengers want to see the exact timetables, which they often struggle to find

“I'd like to see a copy of the proposed new timetable.” *Dissatisfied with the information*

“Access to printed copies of the timetable. Not all people have access to computers!” *Dissatisfied with the information*

“Firstly timetables should be easily accessible, I had to visit a few different pages on the East Midlands website before I could find the timetable. The timetable should be posted on the relevant trains.” *Neither satisfied/dissatisfied with the information*



Impact on my/a specific journey

12%

Finding out the impact on their specific journey is key

“How they might affect journeys between Sheffield/Chesterfield and London, as this is the route I would usually take, albeit rarely.” *Dissatisfied with the information*

“I would expect EMT to email me as a regular season-ticket holder with specific details of changes to my route (Harborough to St Pancras and return).” *Satisfied with the information*

Q23. What further information about the timetable changes would you like to know? (359)

Satisfied with the information (selected Very/Fairly satisfied at Q20); Dissatisfied with information (selected Very/Fairly dissatisfied at Q20)

Understanding the impact on journey speed, reasons for the change and clear accessible information are also passenger information requirements

In addition, passengers want to know more about...



Journey time/
speed

11%

“Am I likely to have increased journey times as a result of the changes or decreased?”



Reasons for
changes

9%

“Why they are being made and what improvements we will see overall. Are more lower priced fares going to become available?”



Clear, accessible
information

8%

“A lot of information is on East Midland Trains website BUT you really have to look for it. Publication of key information has been very poor”



Price/Tickets

6%

“As a season ticket holder (...) I would like to know what options I have regarding my ticket”



What the
changes are

5%

“What the changes actually are. I've just checked the website under 'train times', 'travelling with us' and 'information' and can see no information readily available about timetables changes”



Frequency of
trains

5%

“If there are more trains between London, Luton and Bedford”

Q23. What further information about the timetable changes would you like to know? (359)

Satisfied with the information (selected Very/Fairly satisfied at Q20); Dissatisfied with information (selected Very/Fairly dissatisfied at Q20)

Followed by information on alternatives, improved signposting and wider information

Further information about the changes that passengers want



Alternatives (e.g. coach, Thameslink services)

4%



Online information/better signposting on website

4%



Capacity of trains

4%

“Alternative routes available where there are changes.”

“I looked online and couldn't find the new timetable. Website doesn't make it clear.”

“Will the trains themselves have sufficient length/number of cars to ensure that enough seating is available?”

“Precise details of the Thameslink alternative / extra peak hour services in lieu of us losing the EMT ones.”

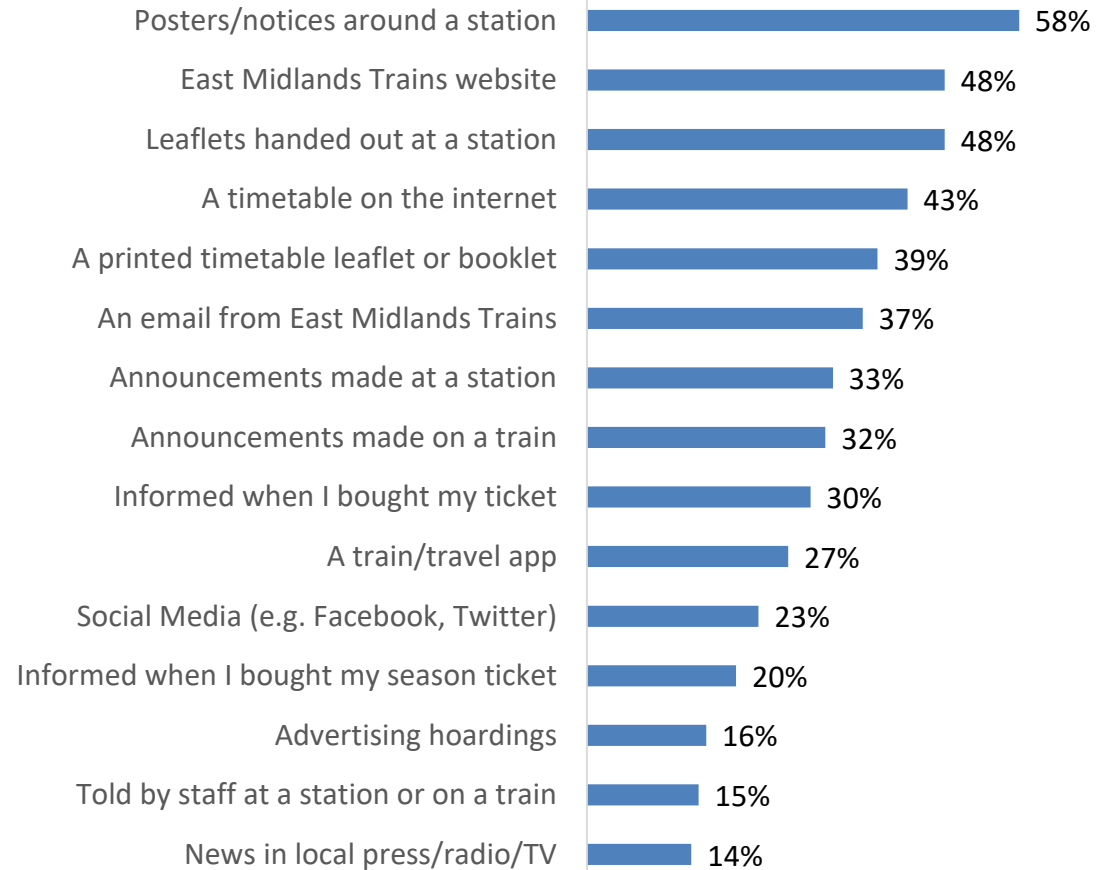
Similar themes are important to those who are currently satisfied and those unsatisfied with the information provided about timetable changes

Q23. What further information about the timetable changes would you like to know? (359)

Satisfied with the information (selected Very/Fairly satisfied at Q20);
Dissatisfied with information (selected Very/Fairly dissatisfied at Q20)

Moving forward the best methods for communicating changes are posters, leaflets at stations and information on the EMT website

Best methods for communicating about changes in the future

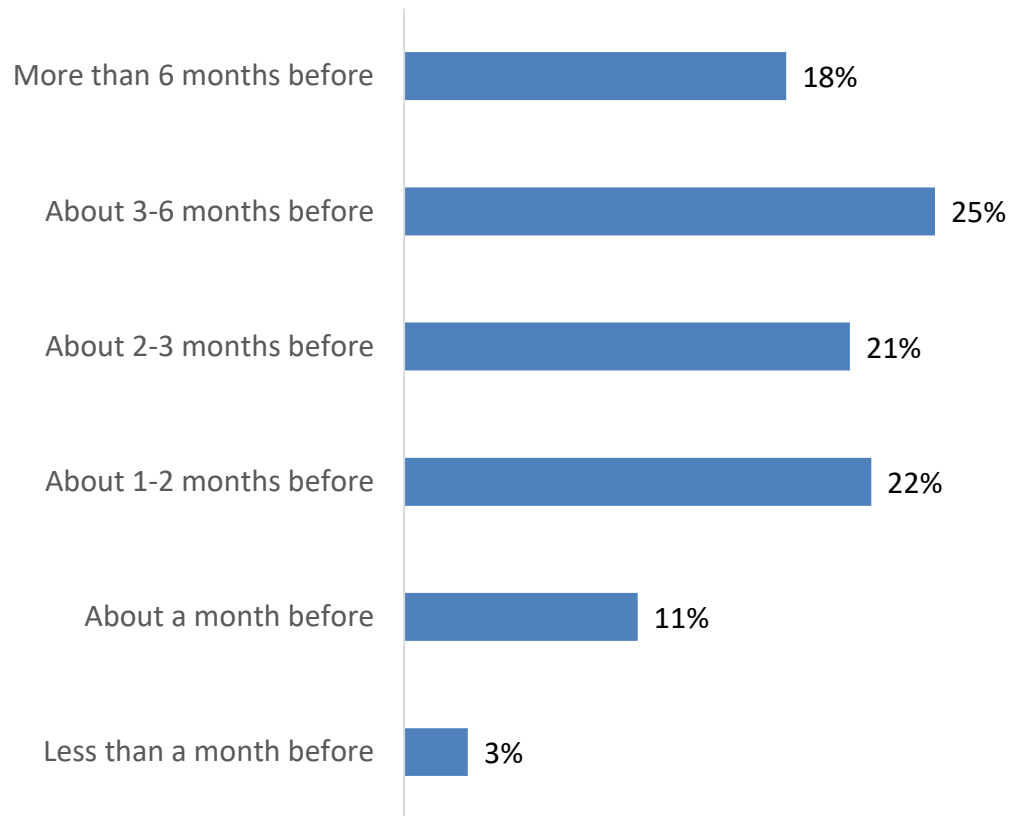


Q24: What would be the best way(s) to let you know about changes like this in the future?

Base: All respondents (707)

Ideally, notice and information months prior to these changes are best

How far in advance would expect to hear about changes like this



Q22. How far in advance would you expect to be informed about changes to the timetable of this nature?

Base: All respondents excluding Don't Knows (691)

Participants, especially commuters, typically wanted more advance notice that the timetable was changing

Participants would prefer to have information in 2 waves if the detailed information is not available until closer to the timetable changes

- Wave 1 - informing them of the main changes
- Wave 2 - informing them of the detailed changes



Commuters wanted sufficient time to be able to make decisions about their season ticket



Leisure travellers and less frequent users wanted to be told 2-3 months before the changes with detailed information a few weeks before the changes

“They should let passengers know just as soon as they can, because obviously it seems as though there’s been a lot of prep to get to this point so, actually, why hadn’t they started communicating without printing something really early on because you can do that.”
(Sheffield)



Support for the changes



Support for the changes is low amongst both those previously aware and those not aware prior to the research



Extent to which the changes are supported

Aware of the changes

Support
17%

Neutral
33%

Don't support
50%



Not aware of the changes

Support
9%

Neutral
70%

Don't support
21%

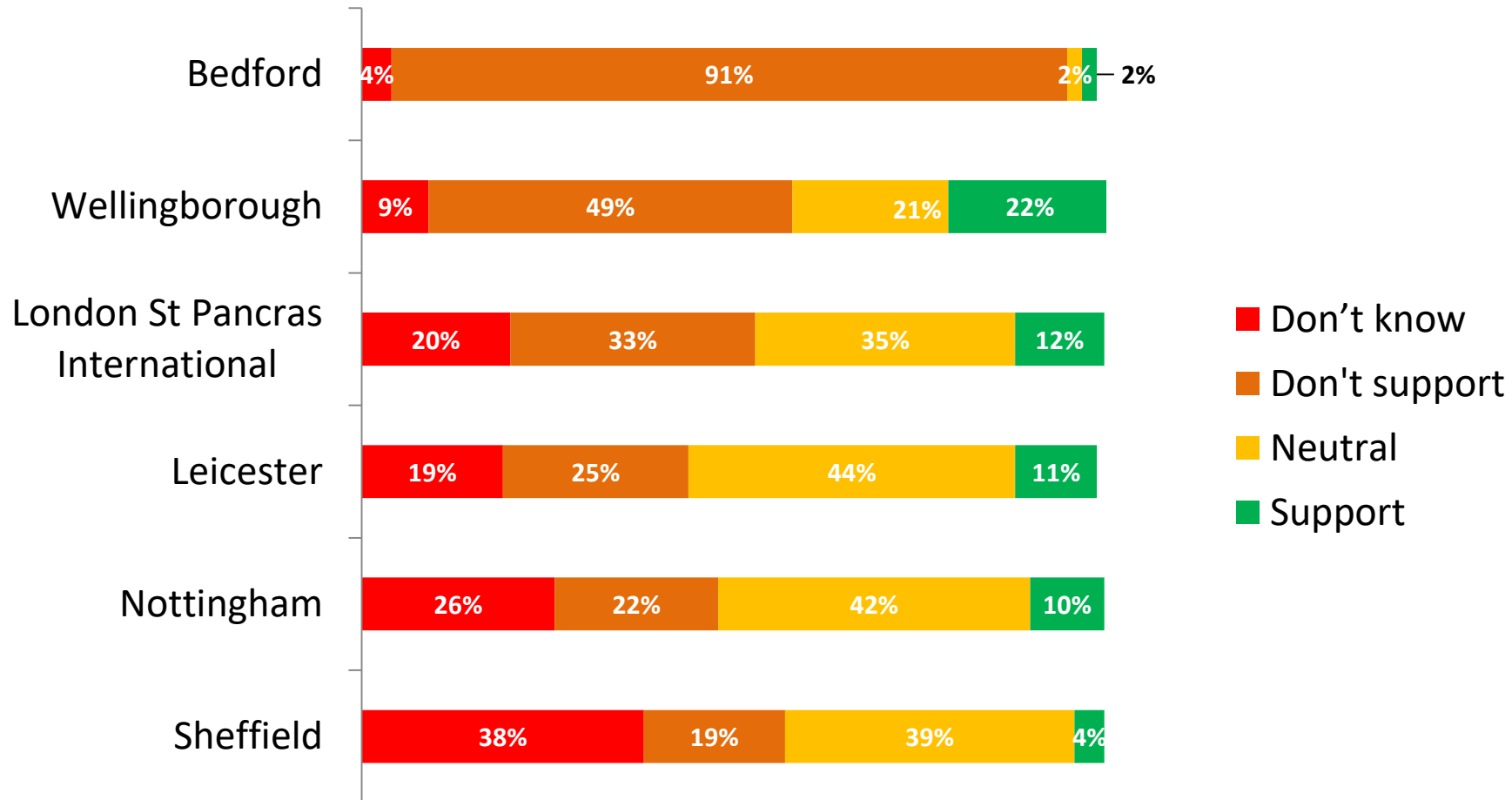


Q20: To what extent do you support the changes being made, or do you have no feelings either way?

Base: All respondents aware of the changes excluding Don't Knows (403) All respondents not aware of the changes excluding don't know (160)

Support for the changes is lowest amongst users of stations which are most heavily impacted

Extent to which the changes are supported



Q20: To what extent do you support the changes being made, or do you have no feelings either way?

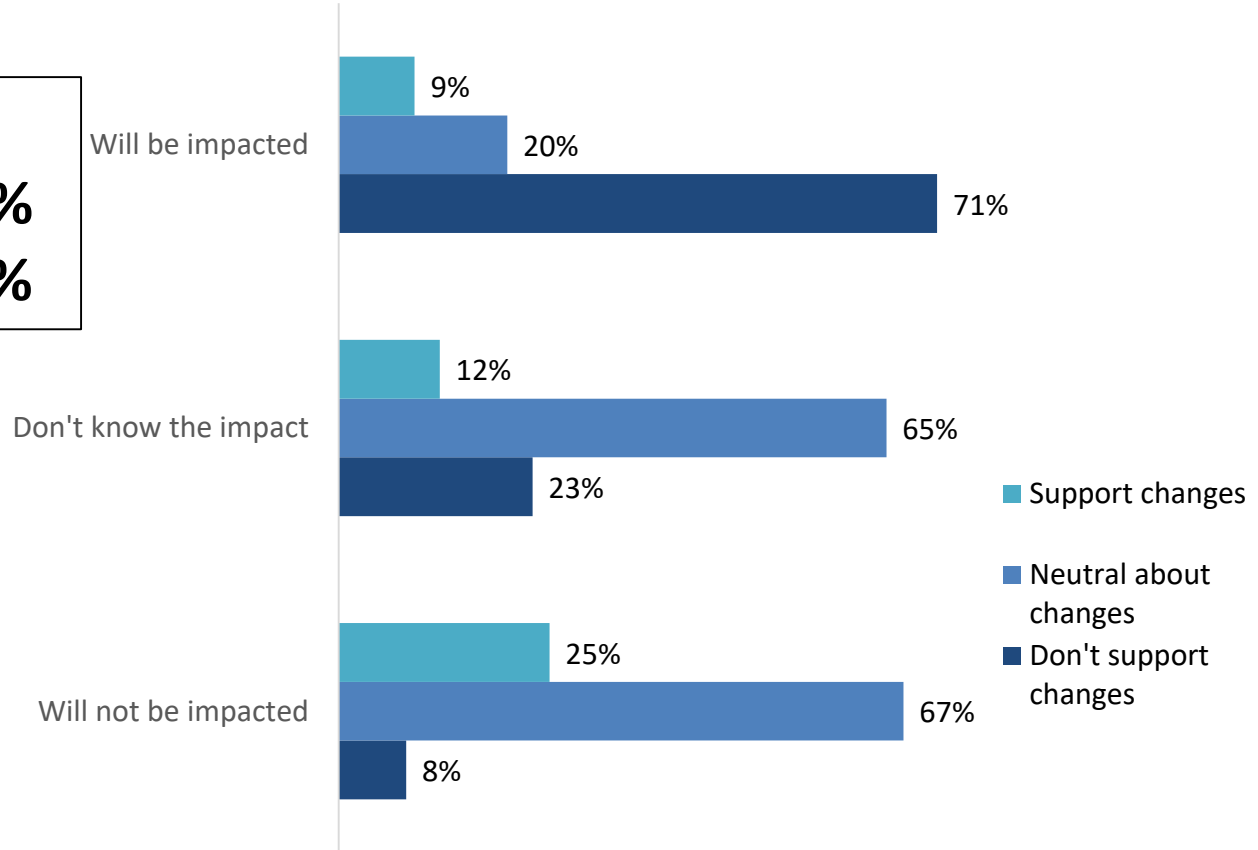
Base: All respondents; Sheffield (79), Nottingham (109); Leicester (115); Wellingborough (136); Bedford (82); London St Pancras International (585)

Support for the changes is lowest amongst those who believe they will be impacted by the changes

Extent to which the changes are supported



Support changes: **15%**
Neutral about changes: **44%**
Don't support changes: **45%**



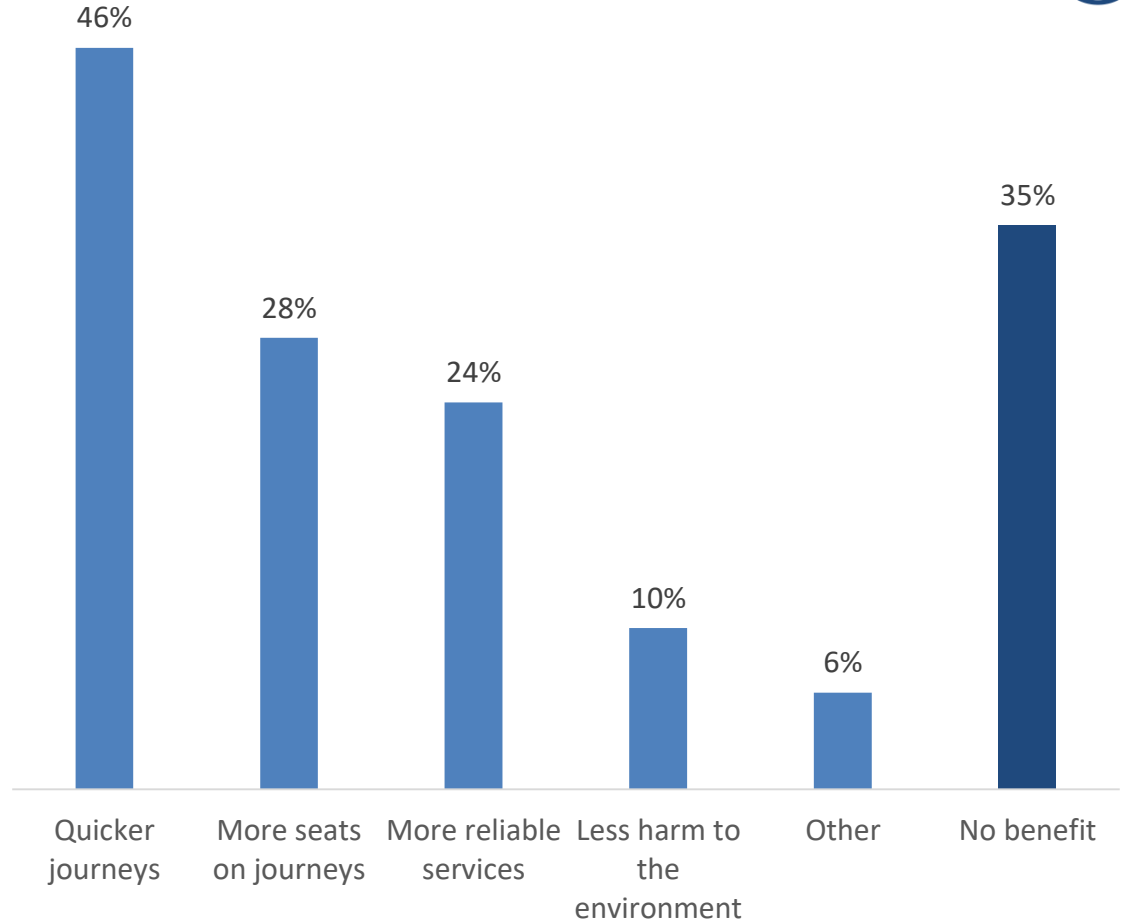
Q13: Before today, were you aware of the changes East Midlands Trains would be making to their timetable?

Q18: What impact do you think the planned changes will have on your journey?

Base: All respondents (707)

Quicker journeys are the most common benefit of the upgrade works, but a third see no benefits

Benefits in the longer term of the Midland Main Line upgrade work



Q25: Which of the following, if any, do you think will be benefits to you personally in the longer term as a result of the Midland Main Line Upgrade?

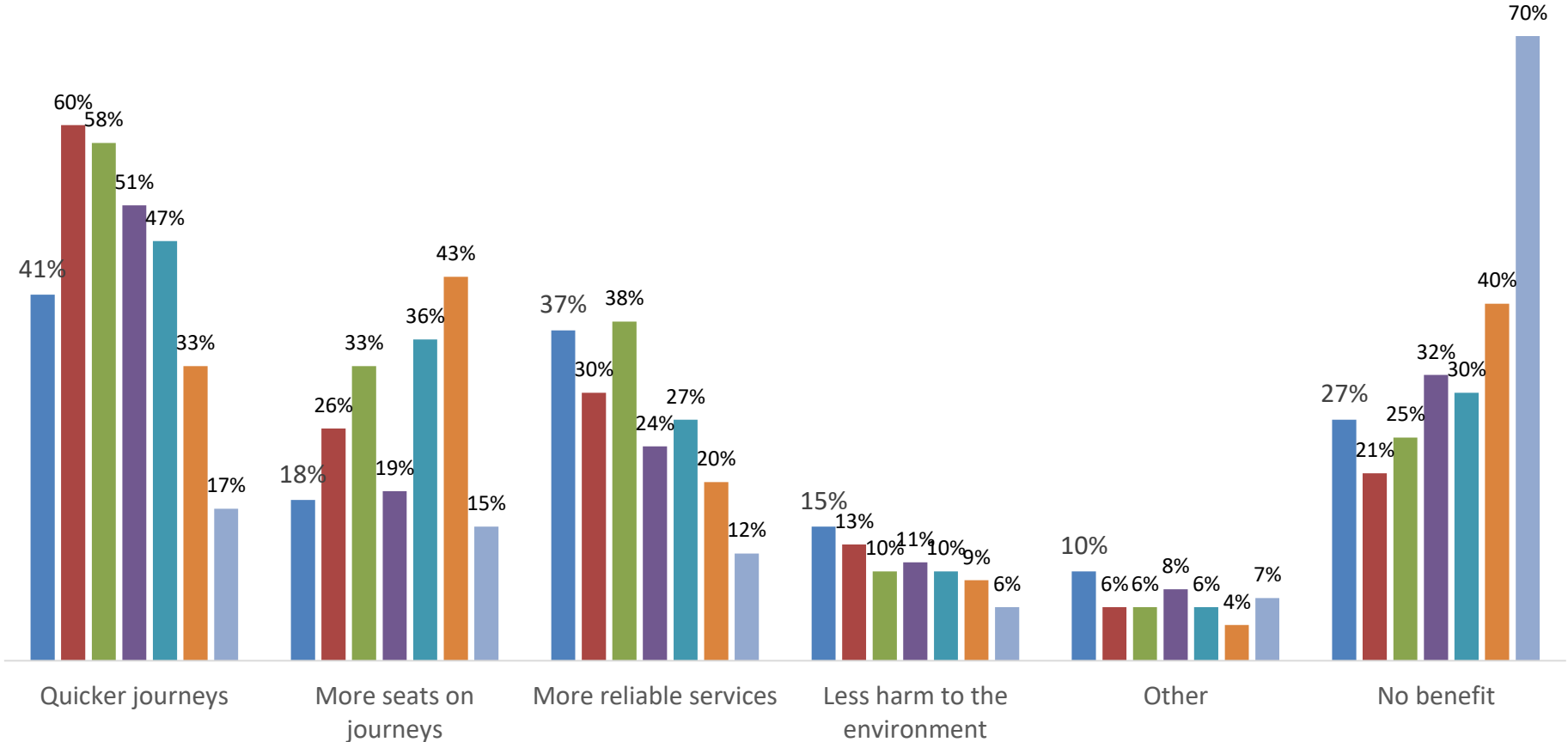
Base: All respondents (707)

Quicker journeys are the most common benefit of the upgrade works across stations, but seeing no benefits is particularly marked at Bedford

Benefits in the longer term of the Midland Main Line upgrade work



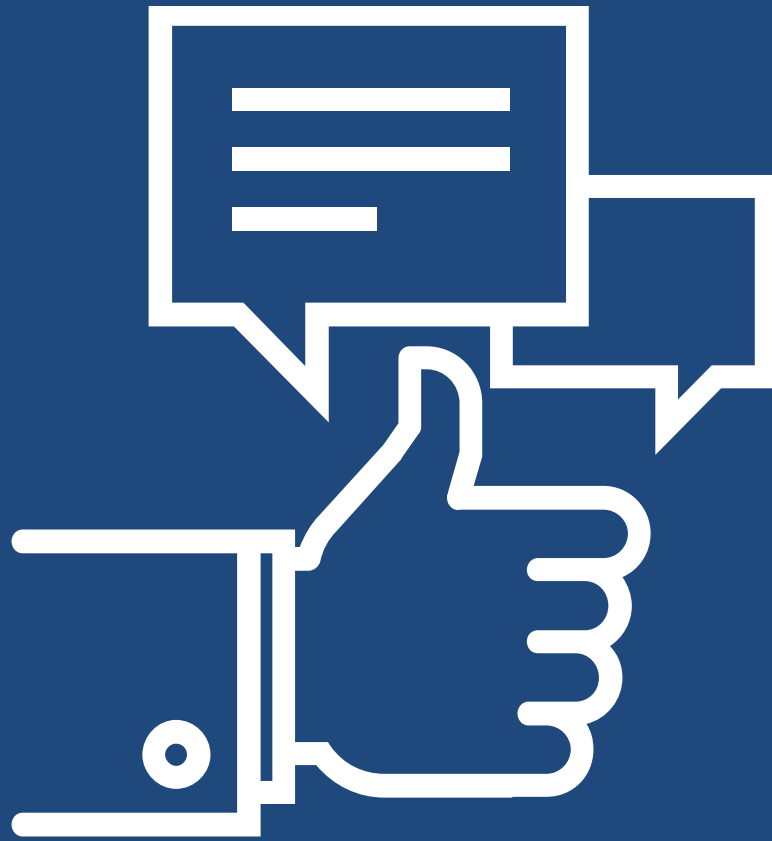
Sheffield Chesterfield Derby Nottingham Leicester Wellingborough Bedford



Q25: Which of the following, if any, do you think will be benefits to you personally in the longer term as a result of the Midland Main Line Upgrade?

Base: All respondents starting or ending their journey at Sheffield (79), Chesterfield (53), Derby (52), Nottingham (107), Leicester (113), Wellingborough (139), Bedford (81)

Considerations for the future





Awareness and knowledge about the changes

- It is essential that future communications are clear and transparent, explaining what is happening, why it is happening, how it affects passengers and the alternative arrangements
- The level of understanding about the changes is low (17% have heard about the changes but know nothing else)

Support for the changes

- There are very low levels of support for the changes with only 15% supporting the changes
- EMT is in a difficult position regarding the changes to the timetable as many of these are forced changes due to other rail improvement programmes

Impact of the changes

- There is a low level of preparedness for the changes with 57% either not knowing what changes to their journeys they will make or will make no changes
- The changes and the way that the changes have been communicated could have a negative impact on the EMT brand



Communications - current

- The current communications were felt to be opaque at best and misleading at worst. EMT should revise and distribute the materials quickly to minimise any further erosion in the brand
- Word of mouth is the second most important channel after EMT communications
- Where communications had been proactively provided, for example Wellingborough, participants were positive about EMT's efforts to keep them informed about the changes

Communications – future

- Timetable changes are an annual occurrence with historically minimal changes to services and some passengers have become complacent about them. It is therefore important that the communications about more major changes stand out
- The 'Times are changing' strapline should not be used in future communications about timetable changes as it is not felt to clearly relate to the timetable. EMT should consider more straightforward terms such as 'Timetable Changes' or 'Major Timetable and service changes' depending on the nature of the changes
- EMT could work with the other TOCs and Network Rail to issue a joint communication about future major enforced changes to reduce the negative impact on the EMT brand
- Consider broadening the reach and increasing the impact of the communications by a greater on-train presence (e.g. leaflets on seat backs, announcements, posters in vestibules). Consider emailing those who sign up to Wi-Fi (permissions permitting)



Passenger requirements

- Passengers want to have clarity about how long the changes will be in place and whether or not this is a permanent change, which some fear, as well as specific details on the changes on the impact on their journey
- Passengers are looking for information of changes on this scale months prior to the implementation of the changes
- Pro-active communications such as station announcements, on-train announcements, leaflet drops and handing these out at stations should be more consistent across the network stations affected
- A long term replacement bus service is not felt to be a suitable alternative to a rail connection and therefore should be avoided if at all possible
- Incentives which reward loyalty at this difficult time should be considered to keep existing customers on the routes most affected.



Suggested improvements to the communications materials (continued)

Leaflets

- Include separate leaflets for Bedford and Luton
- More explanation about why the changes are happening
- Include a timetable for off-peak trains
- Highlight on the peak train table the journeys that have changed
- Lead with the most important changes not the most positive (e.g. do not put information about the bus on the back)
- Include arrival times as this is as or more important than departure times since journey times are changing
- Include information about costs
- Include some details about the bus timetable and journey length

Banners/screens

- Include the key changes to the service on these (e.g. trains not stopping at Luton and Bedford at peak times).



Suggested improvements to the communications materials (continued)

Social media/Facebook

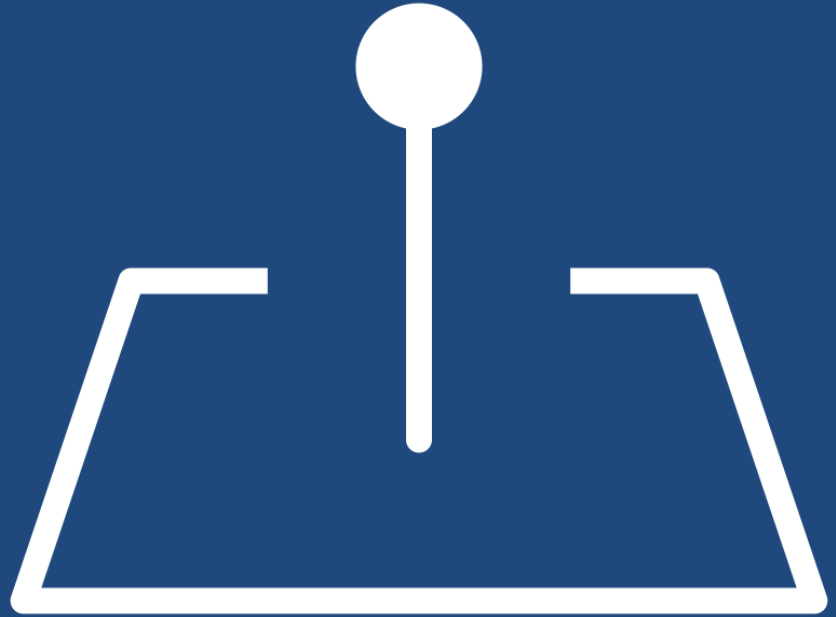
- No changes

Website

- Make it easier to find the timetable changes on the website (conduct some usability research to determine the search terms passengers would use)
- Prioritise the most important changes rather than the most positive (e.g. replacement bus to Wellingborough, no peak time service to Bedford or Luton)
- Be transparent about alternative services (e.g. the bus will take x time, the Thameslink trains will take x time).

Appendix

Area
summaries



Timetable change communications material seen



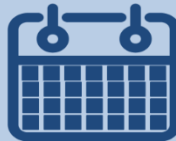
- Typically aware of timetable changes
- Leaflets given out at station
- Door drops of leaflets
- Some recall of posters at the station
- Announcements at the station

Impact of the changes on their journeys



- Changes of peak time trains will result in some inconvenience for commuters
- Not being able to split tickets will result in some off-peak travellers travelling from other stations
- Longer waiting time if miss a train

Overall responses to the timetable changes



- Limited impact on their travel plans
- Feeling that the communications should have been more transparent and more advance warning given about the changes

Impact of the changes on their views of EMT



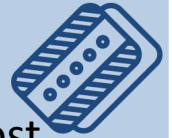
- Some erosion of trust in EMT due to a belief that the communications about the changes have not been transparent

Timetable change communications material seen



- Very little communications received from EMT
- Participants were aware of the main changes to services via other sources – word of mouth, press, Facebook, TV and radio

Impact of the changes on their journeys



- Commuters' journeys will almost double, impacting on their working day and leisure time
- More crowded trains?
- Leisure travellers expect to travel later on off-peak services

Overall responses to the timetable changes



- Feel like the changes are much larger than timetable changes and are a significant reduction in service which they are angry about
- Some expect compensation for using a slower service if a season ticket holder

Impact of the changes on their views of EMT



- Some felt betrayed and undervalued by EMT because of the removal of fast peak time services to London
- Some felt that the railway was not very joined up in its response to the changes

Timetable change communications material seen



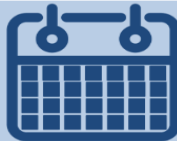
- Awareness of communication material is extremely low
- Disappointment that they had not been communicated with. However, receiving this information only a few weeks before the changes come into effect would be sufficient

Impact of the changes on their journeys



- Participants don't expect the changes to have any negative impact on them
- One participant realised that his commute would shorten by 16 minutes, which he welcomed as positive news

Overall responses to the timetable changes



- Overall, participants felt that these changes were positive, as they indicated improvements to the railway in the long run – this is felt to be both necessary and a good thing

Impact of the changes on their views of EMT



- Knowing about the changes did not have a negative impact on participants' trust in the railway and EMT as a brand
- If anything, the changes are seen in a positive light, because they indicate improvements made to the service to compete with other TOCs

Timetable change communications material seen



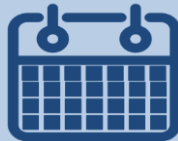
- One participant had seen a Facebook post but had not read it
- One participant had seen the poster but did not think it related to timetable changes

Impact of the changes on their journeys



- The removal of the 5pm return service from London may result in some participants using a different TOC
- Travel to Luton via another TOC or coach service

Overall responses to the timetable changes



- Typically unaware of timetable changes
- Leaflets given out at station
- Door drops of leaflets
- Some recall of posters at the station

Impact of the changes on their views of EMT



- Widespread erosion of trust in EMT due to a belief that the communications about the changes have not been transparent