



Age and the Train Research

Interim Findings

Stage Two | Feb - March 2019

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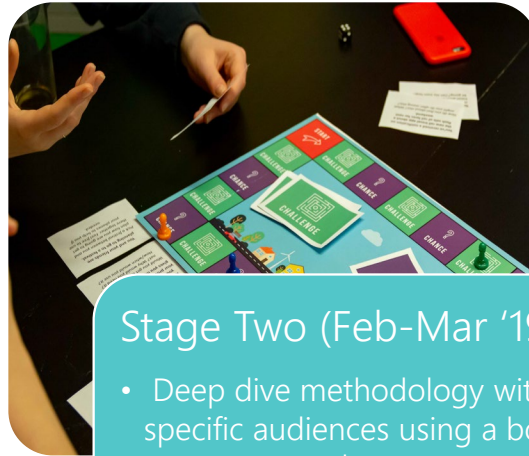
Intro

A recap of the research process...



Stage One (Nov '18)

- Discovery groups with pre-tasks
- 16-30 year olds and over 55 across Bristol, Worcester, Reading, London and Plymouth
- Stop and Think session with Transport Focus and GWR



Stage Two (Feb-Mar '19)

- Deep dive methodology with specific audiences using a board game approach
- Mini friendship groups with 15-17 year olds and paired depths with couples and friends over 70 in Bristol, Reading and Truro



Stage Three (TBC 19)

- 2CV | Momento methodology
- Behavioural Challenge online communities with core younger and older audiences
- Locations TBC

Background and key aim for stage two

- An additional stage of research was required to deep dive into two specific life 'moments' that have been identified in the first stage of this research:
 - Young people – (likely 15 to 17 year olds) who are at the point when they are becoming more independent and learning to drive
 - Their parents – who are likely to be financially responsible for some aspects of their children's lives
 - Older people (likely 70+) who have stopped or are thinking about stopping driving in the near future
- We wanted to understand their priorities, rail perceptions, challenges and needs in more detail to establish what is unique to their life 'moment' and identify opportunities for the train to play a role in their lives

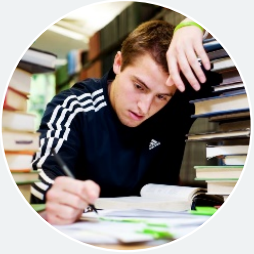


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15-17 year olds

What is life like for this youth audience (15-17)

- Lifestyles can change a lot in these few years as they...



Start studying and revising for GCSEs



Start their first job/ 'odd jobs' like babysitting



Their boundaries for where they can go without parents are continually expanding



Become more independent – in how they choose to spend their time, manage money, and travel

- Stress of school expectation (GCSEs in particular), revising for exams, doing extra-curricular activities
- Want their own space to do their own thing
- Want to feel like they aren't being judged or in an embarrassing situation
- Life outside of school revolves around spending time with friends

"We've got to make our choices for College...it's a **big decision**, it will affect what job you will go into, what you might earn in the **future** and where you might live"

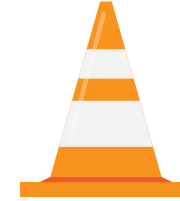
"School **takes away my independence** at the moment, it **takes up most of my time**"

15-17 year olds are keen for greater independence – getting lifts from parents constrains them

Motivators and drivers to independence

- Do what you want, when you want and with who you want
- Feeling of being 'grown up'
- Not having to rely on parents
- Able to work and start earning money

Barriers and constraints



- Lack of money
- Daylight hours outside of summer
- Limited by how far they can travel without their parents
- Constantly getting lifts from parents
- Parents also want their independence (back...)

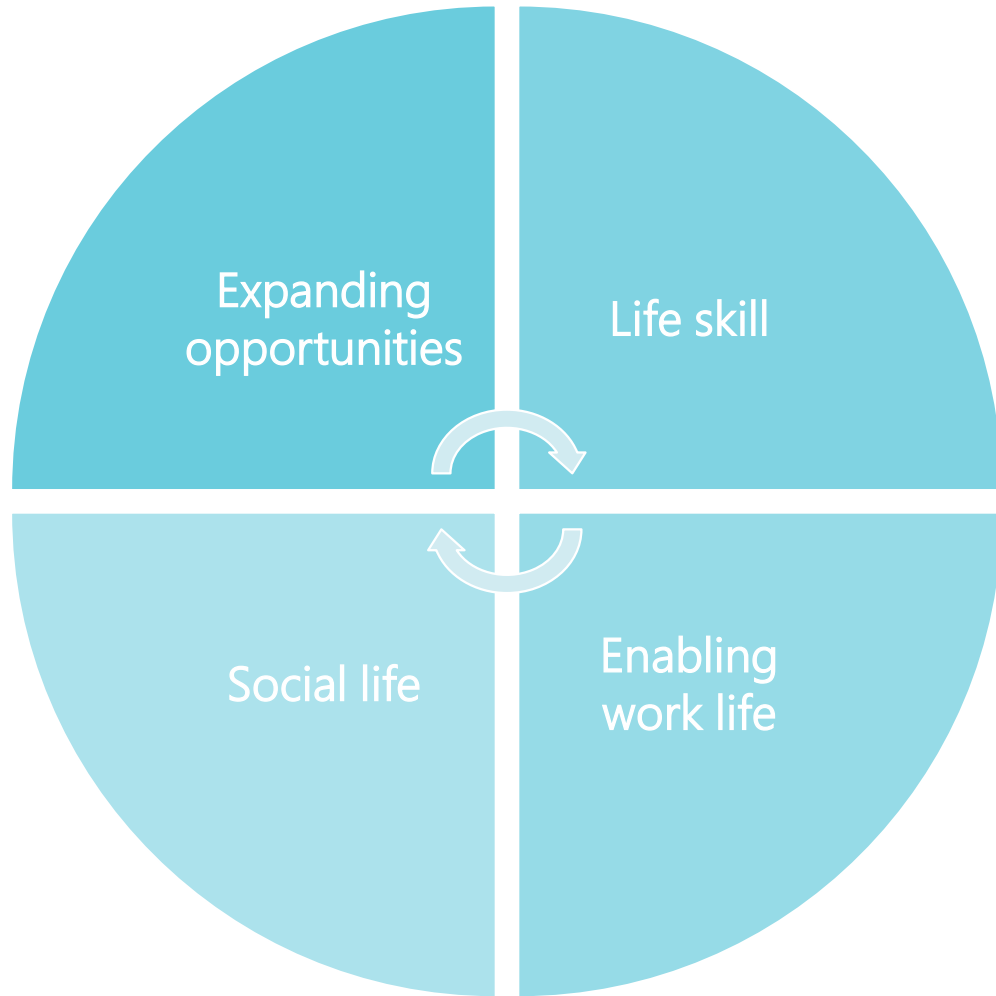
"Me and my mum have a lot of arguments about lifts, because I do still need her to get places"
Female, 15, Bristol

"It's when she asks me for a lift at the last minute, and it's to go shopping with friends or something that isn't essential, it's frustrating, but it's important for her to have these experiences on her own"
Mother, Bristol

"Not having a job is limiting my independence, and I'm struggling to get a job because I can't drive yet and there isn't much going near me!"
Male, 17, Bristol

"It's awkward because our parents are giving us freedom, like drinking beers but they are still looking over us and we don't want that"
Male, 16, Bristol

Most expect to learn to drive and would be disappointed if they couldn't



"It gives you freedom – you can go where you want, when you want, and get right there, you don't have to go out of your way like you would if you take a bus or train"

"In a car it's like 15-20 minutes to Truro...if I go by bus it's an hour"

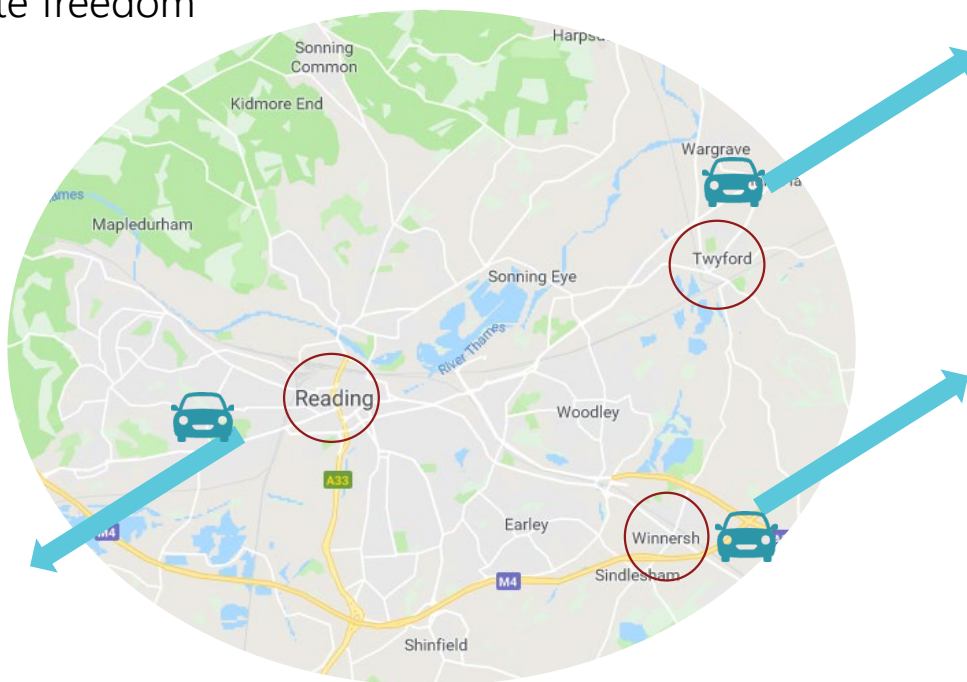
"The aim is to get away from public transport and into the car, it's ultimate freedom"



Driving their own car provides the freedom and independence they crave

Train offers one of the first ways to travel independently

- Frees teenagers from having to get lifts from parents
- Enables longer journeys to new places
- Preferred to bus as it is quicker and has less stops
- Not seen as expensive - parents pay for journeys
- Can rely on parents to drop/pick them up from station
- While the train can connect them to a handful of locations, driving can offer them complete freedom



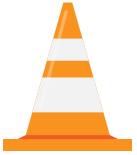
LOVE/BREAK-UP LETTERS TO THE TRAIN:

"Over the years you have given me independence and my parents no longer have to sit in traffic for me to go to my local town... I'm looking forward to travelling the country with you"

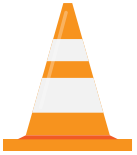
"It felt really cool when I first travelled on the train by myself and didn't have to rely on my parents"

"When I first met you I loved you. I was amazed at how quick I could get around, free of my mum and dad. But I soon realised that I couldn't do all I wanted as you were too expensive and unreliable. I don't like your scent and sometimes you can be sooo untidy"

They can feel low in confidence and lack resilience in using train – staff could help to make a difference



Nervousness about being on the train



Impression they get from staff



Feeling like they don't belong

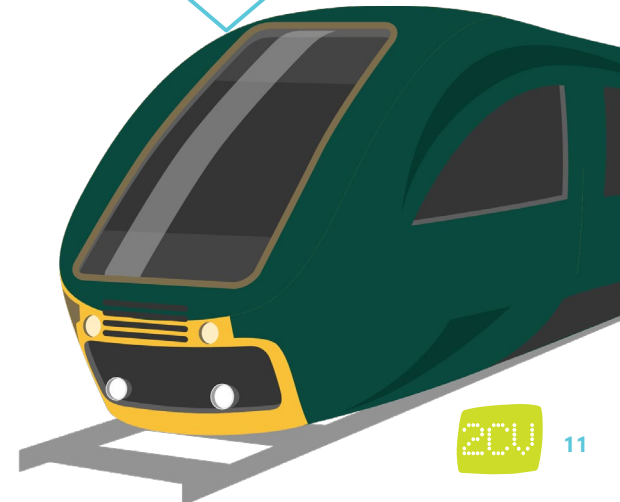


"I'm still quite oblivious to things so I worry that I'd make a lot of mistakes if I had to take the train for a longer or connecting journey. I'm not sure I have the common sense of people in their 20's and 30's" Female, 15, Bristol

"The ticket inspectors keep charging me too much – one tried to charge me an adult fare – I was in my school hoodie! It makes me feel stressed when they come up to you" Female, 15, Falmouth

"I get nervous when ticket inspectors come because I have messed up before by putting the wrong station or missing my stop and getting charged, it's also not a good feeling if you're the only person they are asking" Male, 16, Bristol

"I actually feel out of place on the train, especially if I am sat opposite someone else, I feel uncomfortable" Female, 15, Bristol



Price dominates young people's perceptions and needs for train travel

- Experience does not justify price - younger groups (17-23) are very price sensitive and prefer coach
 - Strongest price sensitivity among students
 - National express has upped it's game in onboard experience and kept fares low
 - More tolerant of longer travel times if price is low
 - Fear of missing train and not having enough money to rebook fare
 - 16-25 railcard is valued – and missed when it expires
- Lots of group travel – but train is not seen as competitive
 - Low awareness and use of Groupsave option and 26-30 railcard

"They really hike up the prices on the train – I can't be booking six months in advance"
Reading

"I used to use my young persons railcard a lot but now I feel the loss of it - was like a bereavement" 28, London

"The coach has improved – more comfortable seats – more legroom, more cushions, you've got a guaranteed seat, plug sockets, wifi, storage space." London

national express



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But there are other opportunities in 'onboarding' new users

- Younger people are more likely to need handholding – especially on longer and unfamiliar journeys and when arriving at their destination
 - Where is the platform?
 - Not clear what the role of staff is
- Lack of awareness and understanding around the offers/ discounts that are available to them
 - It feels like a lot of work to look into getting the cheapest price
 - They are looking for something smarter to tell them what they are entitled to
- The train could do more to help young people feel independent
 - Disconnect between train and Uber to home or cheaper taxis

"It's embarrassing if people are in your seat. I would sit somewhere else and avoid confrontation."
London

"I feel safer flying on my own than I do taking the train for an unfamiliar journey"
23, Plymouth

"If you take the train, you arrive at the destination, but you haven't really arrived, so you have less time at the place you really want to be."
22, Worcester

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Key opportunity areas for the train to improve on

Make young people feel more welcome on a system that they feel nervous travelling on

- Less pre-judgement from staff
- Staff to offer help/check-in
- Approachable staff who do not intimidate/appear superior

Encourage better access

- Improved linkages for bus and cycling to local train stations

Consider ways to help them become more aware of how to use the system and be more confident

- 'Life hacks' for buying tickets and understanding fares
- Optimise the GWR app to advise and reassure them when things go wrong with their journey (e.g. missed interchanges)

Let them know you are there for the times they feel free

- Summer holidays
- After exams
- Before starting school/college terms
- Give them offers during these times

OPPORTUNITIES

"The prices seem to change all the time – I want clear pricing and updates if its changed and why"

"It's like they see you're young and immediately think you're trouble, I feel embarrassed"

"There aren't many trains so there can be big implications if you miss one/they cancel one"

"I feel like they ask us for our tickets more than the adults, we should be treated the same"

"I'd love a Black Friday for trains, like all the cheap fares I can get when I have more free time in the summer"

"Pleeeeeease get the bus service to match up so I can get the bus to the station. This would be a GAME CHANGER!"

What both age groups have in common



At present, rail travel is seen as more of a barrier than an enabler to independence



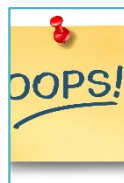
Young people have a lack of experience and older people have faded experience



Young people are still building their resilience when things go wrong, while older people are losing some of their resilience



Want staff to be trained to deal with their age group more effectively



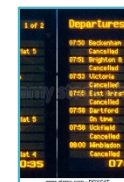
Feel they are prone to making mistakes on a system that is full of rules, they find it harder to recover from these, for example buying the wrong ticket or getting off at the wrong stop



Train isn't in their routine, so level of effort is much higher and so more likely to consider it for discretionary trips



They are unfamiliar with rail travel, this can be addressed through education and the role of staff



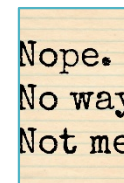
One bad experience can last a long time and is harder to bounce back from



Fearful of ASB, especially in the evenings and they want staff to be able to assert their authority



Want Buses and Trains to 'talk to each other' and align schedules



Train is not 'age-friendly' for both groups



All really want flash sales/black Friday of rail travel

"We've gone from seize the day to seize the hour!"

Over 70s

"I don't even buy green bananas"

A big part of getting older is self-preservation

Good health and financial stability are essential to this, they fuel independence and motivate an active life.



Looking after their physical health is a top priority so they can be there for the people and other commitments in their life.



Managing and maintaining health is their fuel for independence, without good health, their worlds become smaller and limited.



Financial stability through careful budgeting allows them to live within their means with some room to go beyond them when necessary.

"We eat incredibly healthily to increase our chances of seeing our grandchildren finish school, or if we're lucky, graduate University"
Married couple, 76 & 78, Bristol

"I'm lucky that I have reasons to keep going, my family are my motivation to look after myself because I want to be around for them as long as I can stretch this life out"
Female, 72, Bristol

"Keeping healthy is the most important thing. I've not been able to do so much since my knee, but once I have the operation I'm hoping to be up and about again."
Female, 83, Truro

"We have to choose carefully what we spend our money on. We aren't rich!"
Married couple, 78, Reading

They experience health highs and lows, and their social and physical mobility goes up and down with it

They want to get the most out of life and have more time than ever to travel for leisure

They treasure time with their family, from fleeting moments to quality time...

"My one year old granddaughter is the centre of my universe. I see her most days"
Female, 72, Bristol

"I love seeing my family and especially my grand-children. I've got lots of family and friends all over the world so I speak to them on a video-call using my tablet – one click and I can be in Australia"
Female, 83, Truro

They have a lot of interests and hobbies...and love to be spontaneous

"We love to go to museums and art shows in London and Cardiff, we are keen walkers and both write as a hobby"
Married couple, 76 & 78, Bristol

"Independence is about being able to do whatever we like, at the spur of the moment/change plans"
Married couple, 70s, Truro

"I have lots of appointments I need to juggle – I'm involved with a charity, the church and I still do bits of work every now and again"
Male, 77, Truro

They have friends and family across the country...

"My son lives in Devon, I have a sister in Edinburgh and a friend in Eastbourne so I do get about the UK quite a bit in a year just to see them, I drive most places, but I fly to Edinburgh"
Female, 73, Bristol

"On spare weekends we try and visit friends locally and across the South West"
Married couple, 70s, Reading

"If I have a long journey, say an appointment in Birmingham, I'll try to see who I can visit whilst I'm over there and call in to people on the way"
Male, 77, Truro



However old age can make maintaining health and independence hard

Many have a limited 'energy pot'

"If we are invited to an evening meal at a friends, we will take it easy in the day"

"I'd never do a return journey in one day if it was long, it doesn't matter whether it's the car, bus or train - I'd be able to get there, but would have little left in me to get back home"

Comorbidities and health decline

"You never know what you might wake up with next! Or what new medication you might need to take to suppress a side effect of another pill you are taking – it's a juggle, it's scary, but I am grateful for every day"

Small pensions = less independence and freedom

Many feel constrained by a reduced income

Limits their options, including how they get around

A world that doesn't feel designed for them

Feel invisible

Public transport **infrastructure** and **availability** not all 'age friendly'

"As I get dodderier, getting the train gets more complicated"

Reduced confidence in self

"I wouldn't like to have to change trains at a big station, how would I know where to go, and it can be a real struggle if you have luggage"

Many hope that the world will become more 'age-friendly' by the time their children and grandchildren reach old age

At the moment, the thought of rail travel is full of uncertainties they would rather avoid

KEY BARRIERS TO RAIL TRAVEL



Physical accessibility



Watching the pennies



The first and last mile



Fear and distress



Lack of comfort



Too many uncertainties

"Will I be able to get on and off, if the gap is too big I won't be able to get on to the train by myself"

"What if there's someone in my seat I've booked and it causes an argument?"

"I'm not sure how I would get home from the station if it's late in the day"

"What if other passengers are awful and no staff can help me"

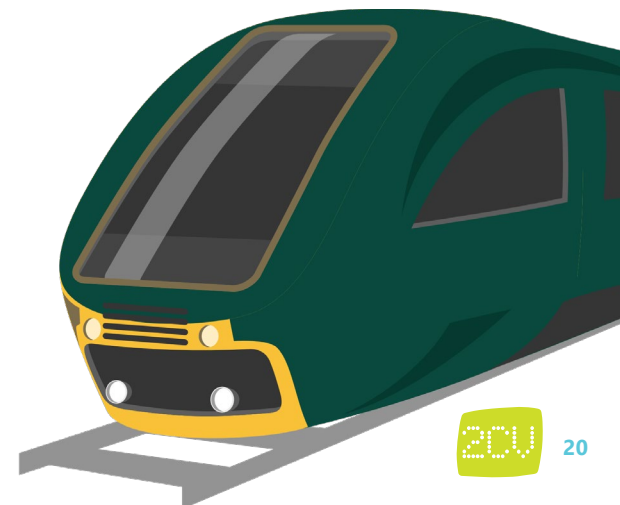
"What if my first train is delayed so I miss my connecting train, what DO I do?"

"If the lifts are broken and there are no ramps, I will struggle to get my luggage around"

"Will there be a parking space? I don't actually know how the parking works there"

"What if I can't get a seat and no one offers me one, I'd hate to ask"

"The toilet could be out of order and there is no way I would get on that train, I simply couldn't"



They are most motivated to travel by train when they feel completely prepared for the entire journey

KEY ENABLERS TO TAKING THE TRAIN:

- ✓ Getting a lift to the station
- ✓ Knowing there is someone to pick them up at the other end
- ✓ Simple, 'single train' journeys
- ✓ Advanced journeys (cheaper)
- ✓ Day time journeys
- ✓ Knowing the journey well and feeling prepared
- ✓ Person they are going to see knows their journey too
- ✓ Ability to arrange assistance with staff
- ✓ Creature comforts, like reserving a seat
- ✓ Online information (e.g. journey planners, timetables)
- ✓ Children planning the journey for them – 'hand holding'

"We save all the webpages as **bookmarks** on our phones so that if **anything goes wrong** we can look it up"

"If they made **more announcements** – that you could understand – that would help – you'd feel reassured"

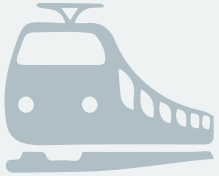
"There is more opportunity now than ever to feel prepared for a train journey, you can **research online**, speak to **staff**, speak to your **kids** for reassurance"

"The **biggest reassurance** when taking the train is **knowing there is someone at the other end to collect you**. In fact I only take the train if this is certain"

"For us, travel on the **train is a day time activity**, I'm too worried about how we would get home at night, there are no buses and we can't afford to splash out on a taxi"

The more they feel prepared, the less tolerant they are when things go wrong, and less willing to try again

How the train and other modes fit into their lives



Train

- Connects them to friends and family that are further afield
- Hard to budget for as they don't understand the fare system
- Actively avoided when their health is compromised
- Can take a lot of effort, reducing the energy they have when they get to their destination



Car

- Tied into independence
- Great for spontaneous trips
- More situations where they would rather not drive, especially at night, long distance or in bad weather
- Journeys tend to be very familiar, in day light and seen as 'low stress'
- Feel very fearful of life without a licence



Coach

- A cheap alternative
- But more likely to be uncomfortable as the journey is longer than taking the train or car
- Health conditions can make this extended travel without the ability to stand up and move around an issue
- Lack of toilets an issue



Bus

- Free, but can be very uncomfortable, irregular and take too long
- Never line up with train times
- Health conditions (e.g. arthritis) reduce comfort of journeys, especially for services with poor leg room between seats
- School children are a nuisance



Taxi

- A last (expensive) resort when all else fails
- Great for occasions when you can share with friends or family as the cost comes down

"Getting the train requires **getting up much earlier**, it's a lot **more effort** for me and **don't have enough energy in my pot!**"

"My daughter lives too far away to take the coach, **train is the only option** for us as the drive is too long"

"Not being able to drive has meant a **huge loss in independence**. Luckily my wife can drive otherwise there would be an even bigger loss"

"I couldn't bear to take the coach – you're really **crammed in** and you can't get up to stretch your legs"

"For domestic holidays the **car or coach are best**. We wanted to take the **train** to Weymouth but it's **too expensive**"

"We regularly use our local **taxi** service, it's the **only way** to get to our local **station**"

Older non-users are looking for a more premium experience

- Their current perception and limited experience of rail does not justify the perceived high price for them – they have higher expectations for experience (closer to Eurostar and airlines)
- Very family focussed audience – almost all their personal values included family and many of the switchable trips involved seeing family
- Looking for a premium leisure experience
 - Holiday should start on the train
 - Want to feel comfortable be looked after
 - Not found in either first or standard at the moment
 - Current experience not delivering on the romantic promise



Opportunities to bring rail travel back into view for these older people

- Avoid the train becoming a symptom of getting older, need to get people using it before they have to use it
- The train needs to become the better option for old age

Local station accessibility

- Bus services, ride sharing, buddy schemes

Education on how it works

- Parking, buying tickets, arranging assistance, interchanges
- How tech can help them and how to use

Staff

- To be their champions, support and enable them to use the system
- Clear announcements
- Training on the needs of older passengers

Creature comforts

- Seating, warm waiting rooms, clean and working toilets, food and drink trolley

Off peak

- Enabling them to take emptier trains

Cost

- Helping them to work rail travel into their budget
- Making the first and last mile more affordable

"I need a 'dummies guide' on how to use the parking"

"Staff assistance is crucial"

"You need to be able to **understand the announcements** – I want good communications so I know what's going on"

"If someone came and **said hello** and asked you **how you are** and if you want something from the **trolley** so you **aren't just treated like a number**"

"We live by a budget, but I **don't know how we budget for train**, the car is simple, we know what to expect financially"

"If I was **CEO of GWR** I would be telling my team to **assess empty carriages**, like when and where they are and how we can **fill them with old people like me**"

"Tell me about good value **routes** that are **pleasant**, that will have **food and good seating** and not too many people"



Thank you

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Recipe for independence (older woman, 72)

List of ingredients:

- Good health and mobility
- Family and friends support/back-up
- Active brain
- Internet access
- Own car
- Financial security
- Interests/hobbies
- Access to social activities
- Spend time outdoors

Recipe method:

- Ensure a reliable and suitable back-up system is in place
- Look after health with healthy eating and exercise to keep as fit as possible
- Learn new things wherever and whenever possible to keep brain active
- Keep up to date with technology
- Check out what accessible public transport is available using internet access
- Budget carefully to keep from overspending and getting into debt
- Find things of interest to you and that lead you to other like-minded people
- Learn to appreciate the positive things in life
- Practice relaxation and refrain from worrying about the small stuff
- Be content with own company
- Take one day at a time

Recipe for independence (older woman, 76)

List of ingredients:

- Allow yourself to have dreams, ideals and aspirations - but use caution
- Decide that you are the main driving force in your life - expand your mind
- Be prepared to have to overcome negative circumstances, and accept some failures
- Be resourceful financially - manage on a little
- Stay focussed as a means to an end - accept responsibility

Recipe method:

- Live independently, read widely, work and study
- Decide which qualities you admire and respect - and emulate them
- Develop resilience by putting aside negative experiences - make a new effort when you fail
- Live within your means but aim beyond them
- Love what you do and seek to improve yourself