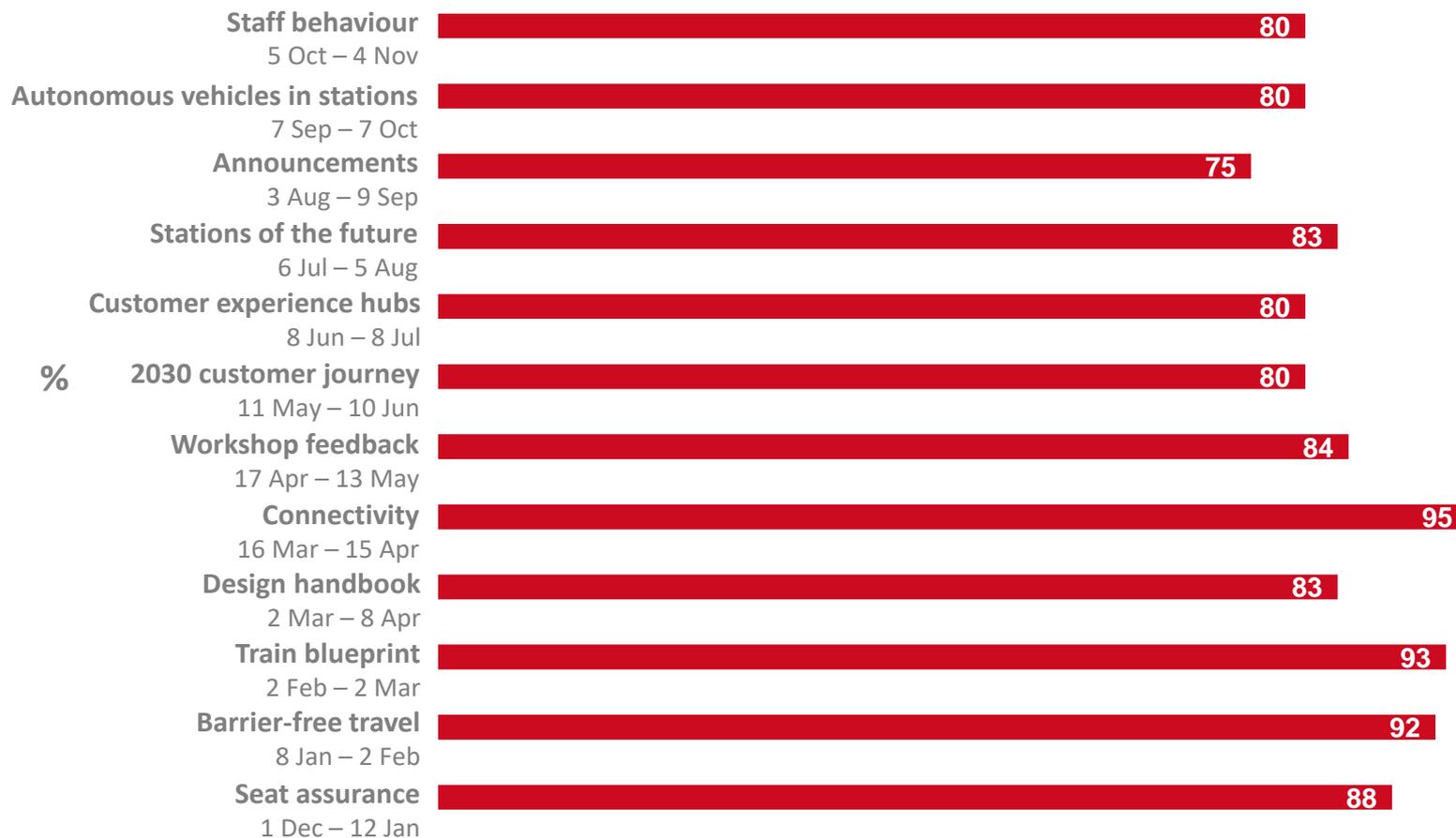




HS2 Customer Community
Staff Behaviour – October 2018
Debrief: 16/11/18

Panel participation



The task

Staff Behaviour

The team at HS2 are thinking about **staff in stations** and the behaviour that customers would like to see from them. Consider the following questions:

1. Thinking about your experiences today:

- a) What kind of skills are required of people who work in stations?
- b) When your journey has been disrupted, what are your experiences of customer service? Give examples of good and/or bad experiences.
- c) Can you think of any examples (in or outside transport) where you've experienced great or poor customer care? Why was this?

2. Now looking into the future:

- a) What does tomorrow's workforce look like? Is there anything staff can/should do differently?
- b) What are your expectations of customer service in the future? The same/different to today? Better/worse? Why?
- c) Imagine that a member of staff is faced with an irate customer. How could they act to best deal with the situation?

- 3. Do any of your answers differ when thinking about **staff on the trains**? Why/why not?

Overall

Community members shared positive and negative experiences of customer service, and gave their thoughts on behaviours they felt future HS2 staff could adopt in order to deliver a superior journey experience

“They will have to be **prepared to deal with more people** from a wide range of backgrounds ”

Female, 24-30, Business

“Have constant, **up to date information with alternative solutions** rather than just parroting cold excuses”

Male, 24-30, Leisure

“I believe that they should be **given the correct tools** to provide a good service”

Male, 41-50, Business

“Staff members have to be **intuitive - you can't have a one size fits all approach** as some will want little input whereas some will need lots of help and it may not be immediately obvious”

Male, 51-60, Business

“Staff can **be more pro-active in their approach** to check with customers that they are receiving a good experience as opposed to waiting for customers to go to them with any complaints”

Male, 18-23, Commuter

“If staff could be trained more in communication and taking the time out to treat all customers as humans rather than numbers, I think that would have a positive effect... **'you don't always remember what someone said, but you do remember how they said it'**”

Female, 24-30, Leisure

“I believe that there's always **room for improvement** and that will continue in the years to come”

Female, 24-30, Business

“I expect customer service to be improved in all areas with the amount invested into the network, with better trained staff who know exactly what to do and **not the normal 'pass the buck' scenario**”

Female, 41-50, Commuter

“**Simple basics** like a smile and clean uniform go a long way”

Male, 31-40, Business

What skills are required of today's station staff?

Community members identified a diverse set of skills and behaviours that they felt were necessary to demonstrate when working in a station staff role



“Skills - more a mixture of skills/ability (including able to learn)/qualities and probably, most importantly, attitude. Staff should ideally be recruited for attitude and then specifically trained to deliver the required service.”

Male, 61-70, Commuter

“The diversity of society means that constant updating of skills is essential and training should be compulsory across all areas”

Female, 41-50, Leisure

What skills are required of today's station staff?

Community members identified a diverse set of skills and behaviours that they felt were necessary to demonstrate when working in a station staff role

Communication

"Good communication skills- some staff to be sign language trained and multi lingual- are helpful"

Female, 24-30, Business

"They need positive, open body language, a calm, controlled manner and to be able to use emotionally intelligent language and communication skills"

Female, 61-70, Business

- Community members highlighted the importance of a range of verbal and non-verbal skills to facilitate communication with both customers and other members of staff
 - Listening, body language, multi-lingual, British sign language

Interpersonal: empathy and compassion

"Empathy is key for service staff - being able to put self in customers shoes"

Male, 61-70, Commuter

"They need to be compassionate and kind if they were to see anyone struggling they would lend a hand if able to"

Female, 41-50, Commuter

- Many listed empathy as being central to delivering great customer service, stating that understanding an individual's needs would help staff to choose the best course of action
 - A level of autonomy and discretion would be required so that staff on the ground are equipped with adequate power to resolve issues.

What skills are required of today's station staff?

Community members identified a diverse set of skills and behaviours that they felt were necessary to demonstrate when working in a station staff role

Knowledgeable and confident

"Knowledge would be ideal- when things go wrong it would be great if they have the right answer"

Male, 31-40, Commuter

"A good knowledge of the station and transport links, appear to want questions and give support... not be afraid to say that they do not know the answer but will try to find out"

Male, 61-70, Leisure

- The Community stated that staff today aren't always equipped with the most relevant information therefore can't adequately address queries
 - Thorough knowledge of station and live, up-to-date travel info

Keep calm under pressure

"They must have the ability to keep calm when things go wrong and the ability to manage emergency situations"

Male, 24-30, Leisure

"I actually judge how good a company is by how they behave when things go wrong; what happens during a crisis determines how good customer service really is."

Female, 61-70, Business

- They recognised that currently travelling can present stressful environments, made worse by disruption, so staff can be critical to the smooth running of the station. They need to be dynamic and able to cope with change.

What skills are required of today's station staff?

Community members identified a diverse set of skills and behaviours that they felt were necessary to demonstrate when working in a station staff role

Patience and resilience

"Self-explanatory but especially useful when dealing with difficult customers or doing more monotonous tasks"

Female, 18-23, Commuter

"Resilience - to put up with sometimes drunk or rude members of the public"

Female, 61-70, Business

- They recognised the more challenging parts of the job and felt that important characteristics included being patient and resilient

Vigilant

"Vigilance to be mindful of suspicious behaviour"

Female, 24-30, Business

"Be more proactive in helping customers who appear confused but have not asked for help"

Male, 61-70, Leisure

"Staff need to be vigilant and aware of how they can help support passengers at all times"

Female, 41-50, Leisure

- The Community also thought staff should be proactive and vigilant to help customers feel safe and looked after. They should be:
 - Alert to suspicious behaviour
 - Aware of being available and attentive to all passengers.

Experience of customer service during disruption

Community members stated that many of their experiences of staff behaviour during disruption have been negative. They emphasised that this was a particularly crucial time where they needed trustworthy guidance or support, however did not always receive it.

- Many could recall instances where they had been inconvenienced by journey disruption
 - They felt that staff did not adequately assist them by providing information or helping plan an alternative journey
 - Additionally, a lack of sincere apologies further reinforced the negative experience
- Some shared examples from the wider transport sphere where staff behaviour during disruption conveyed a lack of care for the customer.

“When my journey has been disrupted it is usually the monotone tannoy that huffs they would like to apologise, then maybe a guard shouting at the top of the platform for any alteration information”

Male, 31-40, Business

“When my journey has been disrupted my experience of customer service is generally poor, for example when I recently got a train it was delayed by over 30 minutes for what is a 10 minute journey. The staff at the station were completely unapologetic and rather rude.”

Male, 18-23, Commuter

“I have experienced a couple of extensive airline delays of 3+ hours and the onus is always on the passenger to find out information and get what they are entitled to e.g. food vouchers”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

“I was once offered a stay at a lavish hotel by an airline following an unexpected delay of several hours. The room even came with a delicious meal. It certainly felt like an extension to my holiday rather than a miserable journey home.”

Male, 41-50, Business

Experience of customer service during disruption

Community members stated that many of their experiences of staff behaviour during disruption have been negative. They emphasised that this was a particularly crucial time where they needed trustworthy guidance or support, however did not always receive it.

- Examples of encounters with staff during travel disruption were varied and inconsistent
 - Negative experiences were felt even more harshly by those with additional accessibility requirements
- Many suggested that a workforce that could cope with disruption and deliver customer care in a more personalised manner would improve their experiences.

“Unfortunately I have had several poor experiences with staff who were surly and/or ineffectual, ranging from being stranded on a train well past my point of departure because my assistance simply didn't turn up, to **being made to feel like an absolute nuisance who didn't deserve any help**. Assistance personnel range from the type who would clearly rather be doing anything else than helping me, to those who go above and beyond in the assistance they provide. You can guess which kind I would prefer!”

Wheelchair user

“When returning from an HS2 workshop by train, due to extreme weather, the track was blocked in both directions. The train manager was very efficient, explaining exactly what alternative transport would be provided (in my case, a taxi to take myself and my powerchair home) in a friendly and even humorous manner and providing free coffee to keep me warm whilst I waited. **He made me feel safe and cared for, and more importantly, had a thorough understanding of my needs. This experience couldn't have been better.**”

Wheelchair user

Experience of customer service during disruption

Community members stated that many of their experiences of staff behaviour during disruption have been negative. They emphasised that this was a particularly crucial time where they needed trustworthy guidance or support, however did not always receive it.

- The Community shared examples where receiving a more personalised service had eased the burden of disruption
 - Some felt that this could only be possible if there are enough staff deployed to meet the needs of the number of passengers.

“I was travelling by train from Austria to London via Germany and Belgium and the train from Austria was delayed. This meant we would miss all subsequent connections. We went into the Deutsche Bahn ticket office in Munich and after confirming our train had been delayed from Austria (that took 30 secs) they rerouted our entire journey with seat reservations to catch our original Eurostar connection at no extra cost. The whole process took 5 mins. That’s how it should have happened but on the UK network I would have had the expectation it could not have happened that way.”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

“Good experiences have been with staff that keep customers informed regularly with what’s going on. They seem in control of the situation and are prompt and clear with directions. Staff who, despite the madness of cancellations or disruption, still make you feel your individual query is important and worth taking time over.”

Female, 18-23, Commuter

“The crush at Euston can be just awful, with a pushchair and a screaming kid and everyone is craning their necks looking at the screen, the last thing you need is a delay. This has happened twice and both times the staff (Virgin in red coats) were kind and helpful. They pointed out places to sit, asked if I needed help getting to the train (I had surgery not long before the 2nd trip) and were just lovely.”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

Examples of great customer care

Community members shared instances of times they had experienced great customer care, with many examples centring around staff tailoring their approach in order to meet the needs of the individual, thus delivering a personalised service

“My two best experiences have been **outside transport** and within Historic Scotland visitor attractions.

On visiting Edinburgh Castle, I was treated like a VIP: directed to the disabled parking area where I was met by a staff member who called for the wheelchair accessible vehicle to take me wherever I wanted to go within the site. **At all times I was treated with courtesy and respect by staff who were happy to help me. I left there feeling valued and ecstatic about the level and quality of assistance available.**

Similarly, at Urquhart Castle (Loch Ness), I was approached on arrival by a member of staff who directed me to the disabled parking area, arranged for an all-terrain buggy to enable me to explore and was informed about all the disabled facilities available in a friendly, caring and helpful manner. Again, **I left feeling like a valued patron, and very pleased with the assistance I received.**

If Historic Scotland can provide this level of care and assistance with the millions of visitors they cope with, and with primarily unpaid, volunteer staff, why can't every organisation/business?”

Wheelchair user

Examples of great customer care

Community members shared instances of times they had experienced great customer care, with many examples centring around staff tailoring their approach in order to meet the needs of the individual, thus delivering a personalised service

“It's very rare to hear a happy guard speaking. They just speak fast and low and I usually can't hear them properly. There is a guard on the Putney to Waterloo train and **he speaks loud, clear and happily**. Most of the others I can't understand.”

Female, 51-60, Commuter

“I agree - it can make such a difference to hear a happy voice. On my last journey to the workshop the announcer on the train was so enthusiastic just saying “welcome to Lancaster...” that you could have thought he was working for the local tourist office! **It made such a pleasant change to hear a cheery voice.**”

Male, 51-60, Business

- There were some positive examples within the transport sector
- A few community members felt that good communication from staff had improved their journey experience
- Low expectations mean passengers are pleasantly surprised when the basic hygiene factors are delivered well
- Many positive examples of customer care were from the tourism industry; they felt that staff had ‘gone the extra mile’.

“Great customer service from staff in a small agriturismo in Italy who couldn't speak any English but **went out of their way** to explain (in sign language and pictures) what they had on offer”

Female, 61-70, Leisure



Examples of great customer care

Community members shared instances of times they had experienced great customer care, with many examples centring around staff tailoring their approach in order to meet the needs of the individual, thus delivering a personalised service

- They shared examples outside the transport industry where they felt the standard everyday service was excellent:

“Although it’s changed somewhat over the years I think John Lewis and Waitrose used to be known for their customer service. You always felt they **went above and beyond** to source an item from you, track down something in store, were always well informed, and did so without coming across false. There was a sense of a genuine desire to help.”

Female, 18-23, Commuter

“Ritz Carlton hotels - staff **treated as special and important** by employer, customers then treated in same way”

Male, 61-70, Commuter

“An example of great customer service was a local independent restaurant with a pop up on a food festival. I eat low carb so when I ordered a burger from a food festival I needed to know what it was made with and also asked if I could have it without the bun. I had a tupperware with me so asked if they could put it in that. Not only did they go through the ingredients with me with a good nature, they picked some big lettuce leaves for me so that I could use those as a bun replacement. I then took to social media to thank them and they let me know that they had decided to stock some boxes so that they could offer a bunless burger to all their customers and thanked me for the idea. I love this as an example of great customer service as **not only did they exceed my expectations, they put themselves in my shoes and then chose to take it as an opportunity to learn and improve for other customers.**”

Female, 41-50, Business

Examples of poor customer care

Community members gave examples of times they had experienced poor customer service, stating that the more frequently they are let down, the more frustrated and less trusting they feel

- Examples of poor customer service came from the transport industry:

"I booked an Enterprise car rental for a birthday weekend away. As I waited in the queue, the staff were discussing what lie they were going to tell me as to why there was no car available. When my turn came and they realised their error, they came clean (an admin error) but made no effort to rectify the issue. I walked over to Europcar and told them what had happened. They didn't have a car but the customer service agent started phoning around other companies trying to find a car for me. By chance a customer returned a car early and they cleaned and turned the car around straight away. The Europcar agent didn't have to help but they took ownership of the problem and in the end were able to solve it. Enterprise should have been the ones to ring around competitors."

Male, 41-50, Commuter

"The worst example is unfortunately the most common. Being left to wait at the station without any information about the issues or when they might be resolved."

Female, 18-23, Business

"Most of the guards at the stations just look at the boards when I ask them for information. I could actually do this myself."

Female, 51-60, Commuter

"An example of bad customer service on a train was a few years ago I was on a train late in the evening where the lighting and heating wasn't working. The guard brought a torch round to check our tickets. No apology could fix that action."

Female, 41-50, Business

What can tomorrow's workforce do differently?

Adoption of technology was a key point raised by many community members regarding how the workforce of tomorrow can respond and what they should do differently in the future

"I think the staff that are already well trained and committed to the jobs are already perfect for the roles; it is just a case of making sure that all employees are working at that standard as those who are not let the side down."

Male, 18-23, Leisure

"If the staff don't feel valued in any way then what is the point in them doing a good job?"

Male, 18-23, Leisure

"Practically, I would expect future staff to be able to utilise real-time technology, where appropriate, to assist in solving customers' queries, to meet every query with courtesy, kindness and an appropriate solution, and to treat every traveller as a valued individual"

Wheelchair user

"I think staff need to be more informed of the breadth of assistance required by customers. Understanding of how differently abled people want to be approached and helped, how to provide assistance to those with mental health issues, and different anxieties and phobias people have. More education is needed, and not just at the beginning of staff's career but throughout. Being able to identify these, anticipate customers' needs as aforementioned, and adapt their style of approach and customer service to each individual is what will make their assistance stand out. This ability is what will make people stand out against an automated workforce: a human approach.

I don't think that AI should be used to replace a human workforce, but side by side they are most efficient. Using technology to aid the staff in place, not replace them, is very important."

Female, 18-23, Commuter

Expectations of customer service in the future

The Community strongly felt that staff behaviour needed to become more customer-focussed in the future, offering a personalised service that could address the needs of a wide range of passengers

- They expressed a desire for staff to be able to deal with individual needs and that it should be easier to do this in the future with the help of technology

“Tomorrow’s work force (if human) would need to speak a second language or be able to work a Google Translate bot, they need to be fresh and energetic, not just there for the wage. My expectations are higher due mainly to the fact that when I see prices of things go up I want to see better value for money; a higher level of customer service is key to this in order to feel like I got value for my money.”

Male, 31-40, Business

“We have more choice these days and customer service is a huge part of that. We don’t have to put up with second rate customer service, so why should we? I think this will create a better environment across the board.”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

“Staff are more aware of individual needs. Staff should be able to help with technology problems or find out those that can. More personal service.”

Female, 18-23, Business

- They recognised that staff roles may evolve over the coming years as technology develops, and that staff should be able to work in tandem with it and not resent it
- There was also focus on ensuring that staff actively deliver against a customer experience vision to ensure they provide a consistent and reliable level of service.

Expectations of customer service in the future

The Community strongly felt that staff behaviour needed to become more customer-focussed in the future, offering a personalised service that could address the needs of a wide range of passengers

- Some also stated that frequent disappointing customer service from the rail industry resulted in a lack of patience and tolerance when it comes to customer service

“The older I get and the more experience of using trains I have, the less patience I have with errors and mistakes. I think that the expectation is dependant on the amount you pay and the urgency of the journey.”

Male, 51-60, Business

“I agree with your comment regarding having less patience with errors and mistakes as we get older. It seems to me that businesses keep making the same mistakes when there are already ample ways of solving nearly all of the problems that arise, but simply don't have the will to do so, and it annoys the hell out of me!”

Wheelchair user

- They wished to see more effective contingency plans in place to ensure that staff are well equipped to deal with delays efficiently.

“Better operational and process management to minimise customer conflict e.g. if delays do occur, have ‘F1 tyre change’ style plans in place where every staff member knows the plan, their place in it and is well practiced in implementing it.”

Male, 41-50, commuter

Expectations of customer service in the future

The Community strongly felt that staff behaviour needed to become more customer-focussed in the future, offering a personalised service that could address the needs of a wide range of passengers

“Tomorrow's workforce will be tech-savvy and understanding of the plights of various types of people. Staff should be more friendly and understanding. If they see individuals in their respective stations walking around looking lost and confused, they should be able to approach them and offer their assistance. This is something that they don't do at the moment. They don't make themselves visible enough to commuters. I would expect customer service to become much better in the future. Better customer care is another way firms can use to make themselves the better choice in comparison to their competitors!”

Female, 18-23, Business

“We all remember exceptionally poor or exceptionally good customer service. However, I also believe that people take more notice of poor reviews than of good ones - I know I certainly do - and this is something that *all* businesses should keep in mind when approaching how staff are trained, as a bad review can do much more damage to that business.”

Female, 51-60, Leisure

- Community members highlighted the positive impact good customer service can have on reputation, and inversely the detrimental effect of negative reviews
- They expected the future to offer consistent and reliable journeys on HS2, supported by staff.

“I would expect a uniform level of service across all parts of my travel experience, which certainly isn't the situation today, and I would hope that there would be NO poor traveller experiences for anyone. Appropriate training and selection of the right people for the right job would ideally be the starting point.”

Wheelchair user

Dealing with difficult customers

Community members recognised that a more challenging part of some people-facing roles within stations would be dealing with difficult customers, and suggested that a calm and solution-focussed approach would be most productive

“Usually, people only become irate when they feel that they're not being treated fairly, not being listened to, or not having their problem solved in an acceptable manner. The important thing is to **identify why this person has become angry and remove the problem**, or at least assure them that the customer has no reason to remain angry.”

Female, 51-60, Leisure

“The staff member should be **courteous and patient** (however I understand this is incredibly difficult for the employee) and call security if the passenger does not eventually settle down”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

“The best way to deal with an irate customer is to first let them have their say, **listen to them and then present options** to the customer”

Male, 51-60, Commuter

“This is an unavoidable situation and I believe staff can help any distressed passenger with a reasonable request or listen if the passenger is just communicating his frustration over a problem. **Perhaps some ways to reduce anxiety would be helpful**. I am certainly not an expert in the subject but it seem to me people are much calmer if you offer them a cup of tea ;)”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

- Many agreed that this was an inevitable situation and that the most appropriate approach was to listen to the customer and try to diffuse via verbal and non-verbal communication.

Dealing with difficult customers

Community members recognised that a more challenging part of some people-facing roles within stations would be dealing with difficult customers, and suggested that a calm and solution-focussed approach would be most productive

- They acknowledged that staff faced a challenging task of diffusing situations that could have a negative impact on surrounding passengers, as well as the customer in question
 - They stated that staff should be equipped with skills to deal with such situations, and have the autonomy to make decisions about the best course of action.

“With calm professionalism and a smile. Then with the police. As a customer seeing an irate one just winds me up. It doesn’t get you anywhere and makes you look stupid.”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

“The best approach is to **minimise situations where customers feel powerless and become irate.** Staff have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect so HS2 should demonstrate that aggression from customers will not be tolerated - a culture that exists in the airline industry. Passengers who do not obey staff instructions or are disruptive should be denied the right to travel or removed from the train. I believe that would go some way to setting the tone for how customers and staff interact. That said, staff should be empowered to offer tangible solutions to customer service issues without having to refer to management.”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

Train staff

The Community stated that their expectations of train staff were broadly the same as station staff when it came to behaviour and the quality of customer service. They recognised that small tweaks would be necessary to tailor to the different environments.

- They highlighted that many of the skills required for great customer service applied to both staff at stations and on board trains
- They felt that consistently positive encounters with staff throughout the entire journey was essential to providing an elevated end-to-end travel experience.

“In essence, no. **All staff should be adequately trained to deal with any situation**, or if they personally can't, then to find someone who can, but they should, at all times, keep the customer informed of the progress of their query and assured that a solution can be found.”

Female, 51-60, Leisure

“The principle of taking ownership of a problem takes on a greater meaning with the on-board staff as there is no assistance until the next station, but essentially I would like **continuity of service through the entire passenger experience**”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

“**No, they have to deal with people.** The only difference is they deal in time- people's time and travel. It's more stressful than dealing with objects or foods. It's kind of abstract when you think about it. People place different values on their time, for some it's precious, for some less so.”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

Train staff

The Community stated that their expectations of train staff were broadly the same as station staff when it came to behaviour and the quality of customer service. They recognised that small tweaks would be necessary to tailor to the different environments.

- Some Community members focussed on additional considerations given the enclosed nature of the train environment
 - They suggested that they could face challenging scenarios that are similar to those experienced by station staff, however amplified due to the setting
 - They felt that training would be essential to ensure that staff were well equipped with skills to appropriately address any issues – achieving the best outcome for all involved, including surrounding passengers.

“I think because you are stuck with them on the train **they almost need to be more friendly and helpful** - also as I sit on the floor a lot on train journeys I get rather frustrated by trolley people who push through even when trains are busy so it is **reacting to the surroundings**”

Community member with autism

“It is no different on the train - the same skills are required but staff there need to understand that when **the customer is a captive audience** and has nowhere else to go, tempers may fray more easily”

Female, 31-40, Commuter

“Staff on board trains sometimes have to do things differently e.g. if there is a disruptive passenger, it is usually not appropriate to resort to physical restraint but **better to contain the situation until the next stop** and assist other passengers who may be affected in the meantime. Police and station staff could then be summoned.”

Male, 51-60, Business

Summary

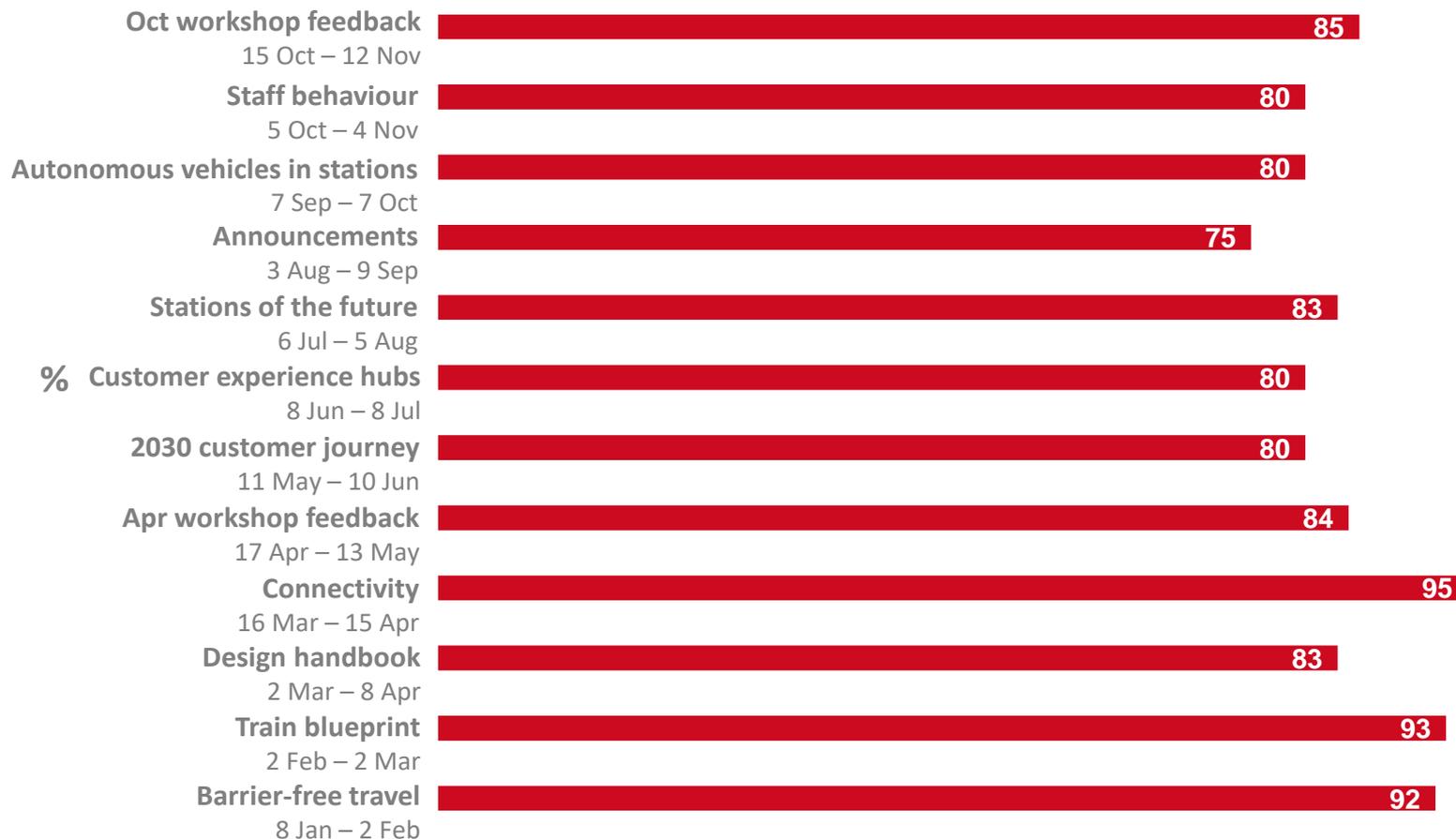
Community members shared positive and negative experiences of customer service, and gave their thoughts on behaviours they felt future HS2 staff could adopt in order to deliver a superior journey experience

- The Community highlighted the large impact that staff behaviour and customer service can have on the passenger experience
 - the ability to completely transform it – positively or negatively
 - the transport sector can lag behind other industries
- They stated that expectations for the future were higher than today due, in part, to the development of technology to assist staff in their roles
- They stressed how important appropriate training would be for HS2 staff to be equipped with the right tools to deal with challenges they may face
- Their expectations of train staff were similar to those working within stations, believing that there were fundamental behaviours and core skills that should be applied to both
 - They did, however, recognise that the different environments might affect the specifics of how staff deal with challenging situations.

Agenda

1. Task debrief – Staff Behaviour
2. **Workshop feedback**
3. Next task
4. AOB

Panel participation



Workshop agenda

- 10:30 - 10:35 Welcome and housekeeping
- 10:35 - 12:00 HS2 update and Q&A session
- 12:00 - 13:00 Activity 1
- 13:00 - 13:40 Lunch
- 13:40 - 14:40 Activity 2
- 14:40 - 14:50 Tea & coffee
- 14:50 - 15:50 Activity 3
- 15:50 - 16:00 Thank you



Overall

Community members gave positive feedback, expressing how valuable they find the workshops for keeping them up-to-date and engaged with the project. They enjoy seeing where their input has made a difference and appreciate the opportunity to contribute.

“Found the question and answer opportunities very useful and was made to **truly feel part of the process**”

Female, 41-50, Commuter

“I enjoyed the whole day it was great to get an **update of how things are moving forward**”

Female, 31-40, Commuter

“This workshop was the most beneficial so far, reason being some of **the ideas from the monthly tasks have come ‘to life’**”

Female, 31-40, Business

“I quite enjoyed **having people and ideas to discuss at lunch with the interchange station boards & representatives** as previous workshops I have found the lunches to be too long and it gives me the options to keep giving opinions/asking questions”

Community member with autism

“The best part of the day was **being selected to do a one-to-one video interview**, although I’ll need to brush up on my ability to speak without hesitation to camera if chosen again”

Male, 51-60, Business

Update and Q&A session

Generally, the project update and Q&A session was well received. The Community stated that they like hearing about how the project is progressing, and more importantly about how their input is making a difference.

- They appreciated the opportunity to submit questions in advance and were satisfied that all were addressed
- Some also wanted a chance to ask questions arising from the project update
 - However, they stated that there were many opportunities for informal conversations throughout the day for their questions to be answered e.g. lunch and tea breaks.

“I really liked the HS2 project status update and the Q&A at the beginning of the day. The graphic showing the route map and how the trains will flow through the network over time was very enlightening. I also found the bidding process for the Shadow operator interesting. The Q&A was also very well managed and informative.”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

“With the questions being read out rather than ourselves stating them meant that there was little opportunity for a follow up question on the answer given so in some ways he ‘got away with it’”

Male, 51-60, Business

“The beginning of the day could be a little more high-activity as it started quite slowly”

Female, 18-23, Commuter

- Time allocation for on-the-spot questions
- More interactive presentation session

Personas session

The majority of Community members were fascinated by the personas task and said that it demonstrated to them the detail to which HS2 is considering the individual needs of the future. They stated that they wished to see the whole set of personas.

“Most interesting I would say was the session on future personas. It looked like a lot of work and thought had gone into thinking about human usage in the future. Sessions like these really show how much the hs2 team are committed to all walks of life.”

Male, 41-50, Business

“I also liked the futuristic yet realistic personas, trying to anticipate future users. It's good to see we're looking further into the future as much as we can”

Male, 31-40, Leisure

“As each group just did two (as we did), maybe an online task could open out all personas to all?”

Male, 61-70, Commuter

“I really liked looking at the personas of potential future passengers - to be honest, I could have looked at them all day!”

Male, 24-30, Business

“As I live in the North West I may never get to see this all in action but my children will and I loved how personas were being looked into and seeing how all types of passengers needs could be met”

Female, 51-60, Business

“I wasn't so keen on the personas session, partly because the room was small, but also I found the concept a bit woolly”

Male, 51-60, Business

- Bigger room/two rooms - one for each persona
- Follow up task showing all personas to the Community

Bytetoken session

The session exploring the gateless gatelines concept was a favourite amongst many members of the Community, stating that it brought a concept that they had talked about to life and enabled them to see how it might practically work

- They felt that this format – a live demonstration – was a great way to allow them to explore concepts
- They also found it more interactive and engaging, preferring it to sessions involving presentations



“I was quite interested with the idea of barrierless travel and the bluetooth ticket that could be a way to provide it. I was also quite excited to hear about the way HS2 plan to achieve the various targets they discussed in previous workshops which makes them appear much more realistic than I thought

possible.”
Male, 40-50, Business

“The ticketless workshop was enjoyable because I didn’t really understand the concept of ticketless system but now I understand how this will work”

Female, 31-40, Business

“I loved the session on the barrier free access, it was very clever but simple. I was surprised at how easy the lack of barriers actually works.”

Female, 61-70, Leisure

- Similar format at future workshops where concepts are demo-ed and Community members have an opportunity to ‘experience’ them

Curzon Street station design session

Community members in the three groups responded differently to the Curzon Street station design plans, with some expressing genuine excitement and others stating that they felt more could be done to make it outstanding

“It was really interesting seeing better images of what the train stations will look like, I thought they were both futuristic but sensitive to the landscapes of the local areas”

Male, 18-23, Commuter

“I liked the ideas behind the station design and showing how a physical space in Birmingham I know quite well will be shaped by HS2”

Male, 24-30, Commuter

“I was disappointed with the design of the Curzon Street station and I think the group agreed that the design lacked the “wow” factor”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

“The Curzon Station update was brilliant, especially how the outer structure has been designed. The eye-catching stream of light that would make the station more airy is a thought-provoking idea.”

Female, 41-50, Leisure

“The plans for the stations were fantastic, as was the knowledge of what’s happening on the ground and how it will affect the city I grew up in. I’m so excited by it all.”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

“I was not taken by the design of Curzon Street, it looks very dated and reminds me off the Corn Exchange at Leeds and by the time it is built it will look even more dated”

Male, 51-60, Leisure

- More interactive session where participants felt they were contributing to a process in development rather than a finished product

Summary of feedback and improvements

Community members gave positive feedback, expressing how valuable they find the workshops for keeping them up-to-date and engaged in the project. They enjoy seeing where their input has made a difference and appreciate the opportunity to contribute.

- There were several suggestions from Community members that they would like to be sent some material/homework in advance of the day
 - They felt that this would ensure they are primed to respond to the relevant topics having already given them some thought
- Many stated that the format of the Bytoken task was preferred as it felt more interactive
 - Although they found the Curzon Street station design session informative and interesting, they wanted to feel like they had an opportunity to input and suggest improvements
- Practical and logistical suggestions for improvement included spreading tasks out more:
 - to ensure there was plenty of space, particularly for those with accessibility requirements
 - to make it easier for all community members to provide their feedback.