

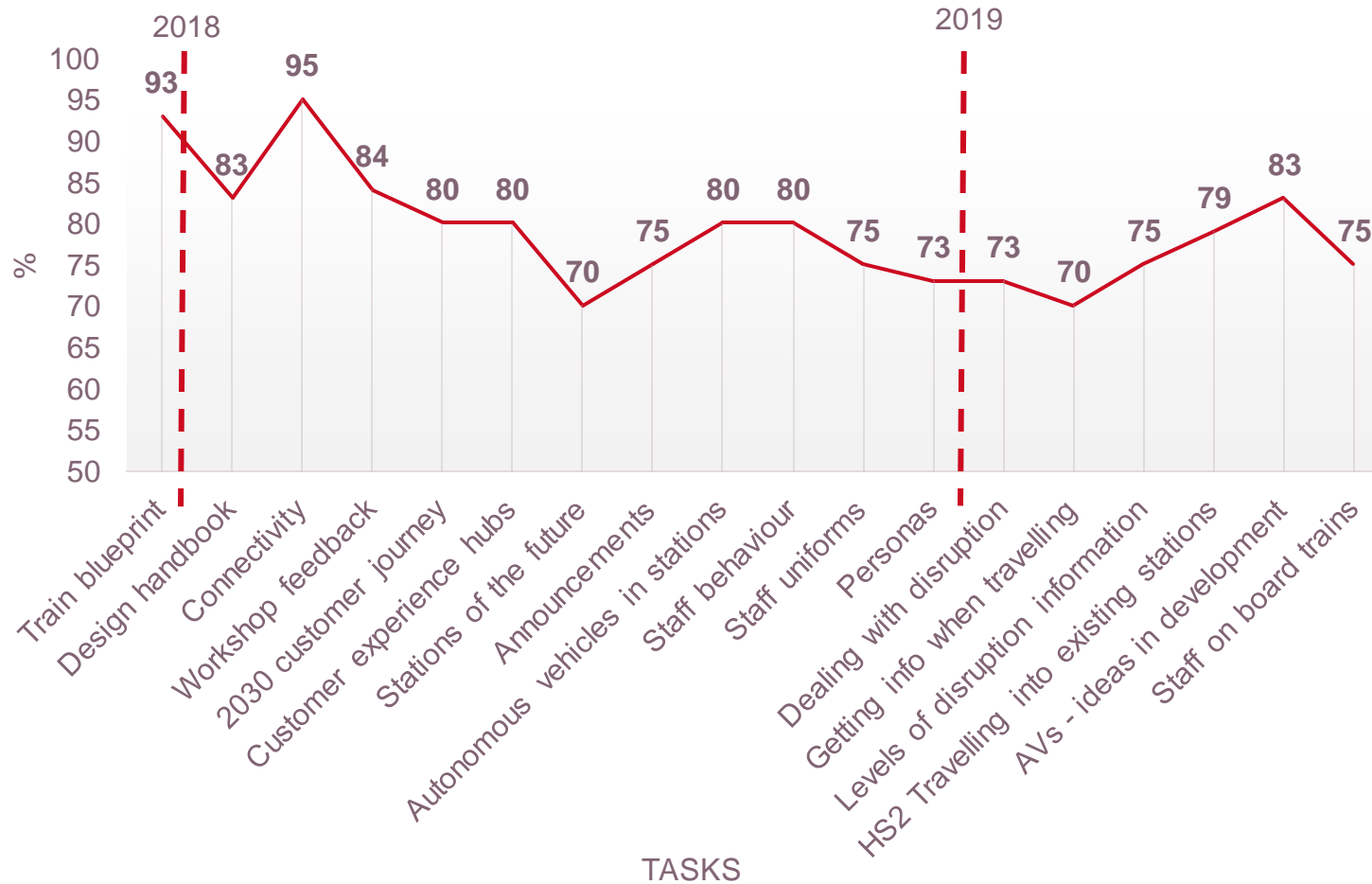


HS2 Customer Community
Staff on board trains - June 2019
Debrief: 17/07/19

Agenda

1. **Task debrief – Staff on board trains**
2. Next task
3. Community Workshop - September
4. AOB

Panel participation



The task: Staff on board trains

The task this month is about staff **on board a train, with a focus on non-disrupted services**

A. *When on board a train on a non-disrupted service, do you like to have contact with a member of staff? Why? Why not?*

- Is there the opportunity to have contact with staff onboard on journeys you make? Do you see members of staff on the train? Do you look for them?
- What do you currently speak to staff on trains about?
- If you don't see a member of staff on board but do see them at a station you board on/ disembark on does it matter if they are not on the train?
- Can you give an example of any really positive contact with rail staff **on a train** and how it made a difference to you on a rail journey?

B. *And now thinking more specifically about HS2...On HS2 trains it might be that tickets will not need to be checked by a member of staff and will be validated in some other way so that you know you are on the right service e.g. a digital check in at your seat which confirms you are in the right seat on the right train. You may **also** able to access other services at your seat via your device (e.g. smartphone etc) such as food and drink purchases, travel information and travel booking.*

- With these **at seat** services, would you still want to be able to speak to staff **on board**? Why? Why not? Again, please assume in these instances that the service you are travelling on is not disrupted.



How does the
community feel
about staff on
trains
CURRENTLY?

Staff are very important to the experience of travel for some, but to others they are *almost* a nuisance

PERSONALLY NEED



I need to see staff on trains so I can get on and off the train

Without staff on the train they wouldn't be able to move around on board/disembark

REACTIVE & PROACTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING



Its important I know staff are on board so they can sort out any issues

Like the idea of staff having a presence and perhaps preventing issues and checking if everything is okay/monitoring things on board

REASSURANCE



I don't need any help but staff need to be about in case there are problems

Just good to know that staff are around if there are issues such as delays or if there is anti-social behaviour or any other problems on board

DON'T BOTHER ME



I don't need any help and I would rather not speak to anyone

Find things like ticket check a nuisance and get their information from other sources

Most don't personally need staff to be able to make journeys, but either like to know they are there in case they do **need advice** or feel reassured that they are there – even if they would be very unlikely to speak to them

A lot of **positive** references to staff in terms of making a **convivial atmosphere**

Examples of the different types of opinions

Yes, if there's something I need, i.e. help in getting to the toilet on a long journey (there's **very** rarely enough room to navigate my chair to current train toilets, so I need assistance), if I'd like something from the on-board buffet, or for any other problem that may arise.... **it matters very much to me that there are on-board staff**, for the reasons stated above. Otherwise, I'm stuck in my wheelchair space until I reach my destination

Female, 51-60, Leisure

I like to have staff available, it **makes me feel that help is at hand if needed** i.e. maybe a dispute over a booked seat and also in the scenario of disrupted service, it's great to discuss your ongoing options..

Female, 61-70, Leisure

I am not always that chatty when travelling so I would **probably prefer not to have contact unless there is an issue** so it would be good to have the option to do so if necessary

Male, 41-50, Business

On a normal running train I **never require unnecessary staff contact** as there is no need for me to staff a staff member I am familiar enough with the train and journey.

Female, 31-40, Business and Leisure

Current interactions for some are limited. Staff can mean guards but also restaurant staff – both are valued

Guards

- Current contact with staff is often focused around **ticket inspection or sales**
- They may see guards when they engaged in this activity walking through the train – *and think they appear busy*
- Others note that they may hear announcements (over the tannoy) and sometimes this involves being told how to contact a member of staff if needed
- They may never or rarely see staff – seems to be particularly the case on local journeys
- Some might think they are ‘difficult to find’
- A few – but not many, would actively look for staff in some circumstances



There is little opportunity to interact with staff on current trains apart from when they are checking tickets. Otherwise they keep a very low profile.

Male, 31-40, Business and Leisure

Catering staff

- Task was not specific to any type of staff and many commented around staff with food and drink trolleys and the staff in the buffet car
- This was sometimes the main form of staff contact
- Often asked for the same types of information as guards
- Play an important role in terms of the ‘softer’ benefits of staff on board

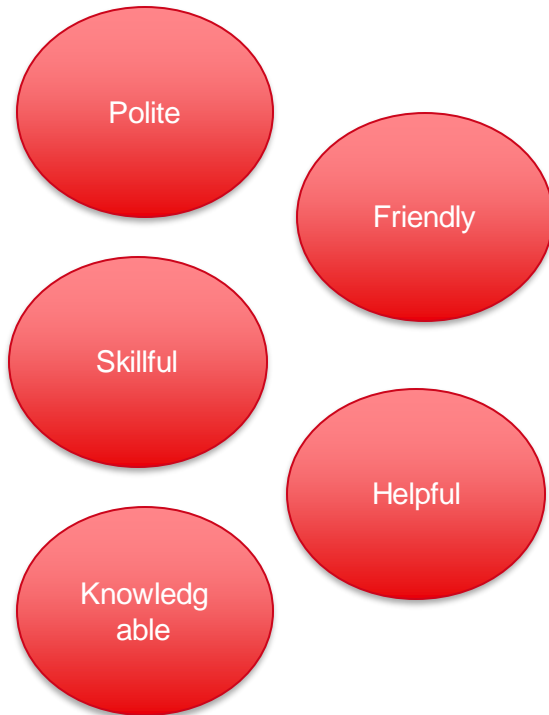


Sometimes if a member of staff was walking with a food trolley I may ask how long until the next stop, but mostly it would be transactional conversations e.g. if I was purchasing a particular food / drink item.

Female, 24-30, Business

When staff make an effort to be warm and helpful it has a big impact

Lots of **praise** for staff....



Not everyone had a positive 'story' about staff on board but there were many specific examples as well as more general comments...

- Being generally friendly and happy
- Adding a sense of reassurance/ safety and security
- Taking time to have a conversation/ chat
- Everyone enjoying a 'jolly' conductor/ conveying personality during announcements/ 'cheering everyone up'
- **Providing very good advice/ knowledge**
- Being proactive and helpful
- Helping when things go wrong (ie getting people home when there were issues/ lost tickets etc.)



Both types of staff were praised for advice and knowledge

Examples of the experiences

I have had so many great interactions with rail staff. The ticket inspector on the Birmingham service **sings and makes fun of everything to lighten the mood in the carriage**. He gave out his card because he is in a band! Even when he makes an announcement, he laughs and jokes. Passengers like it.

Female, 41-50, Leisure

I got on a train once and **a lovely smiley man was giving everyone high fives!** I thought is made a massive difference and cheered everyone up.

Female, 62-70, Business

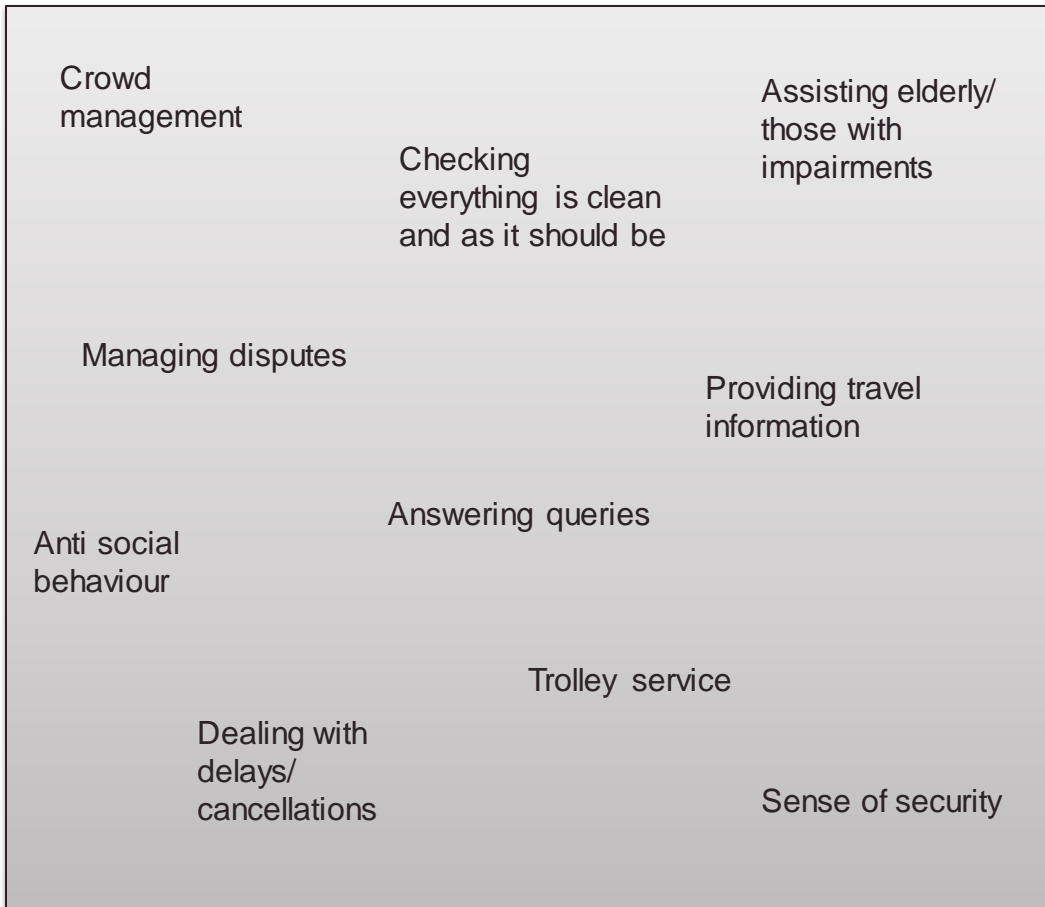
I accidentally got off a stop early when travelling to London Heathrow and exited the station by accident. The **kind member of staff** after approaching them showed me where I had to go and allowed me to continue on the rest of my journey without dispute or penalty.

Female, 41-50, Commuting

The most positive staff contact I've had was when...when blocked lines ahead and behind at Carlisle meant that the train could not proceed at all. The chief steward (is that the correct term?) personally explained the situation, assured me that a taxi would be provided to take me home, and **even brought me free coffee** to keep warm with whilst I waited. It wasn't so much what he did, but the **patient and constantly reassuring manner** with which he did it that I appreciated, not talking down to me (as so many people do when you're in a wheelchair), but happy to answer my concerns, constantly cheerful, and keeping me up to date with information. Staff attitude can make a huge difference to a difficult situation ;-)

Female, 51-60, Leisure

Role of staff identified to be many things... information and reassurance seem to be key



Key is a general sense of *reassurance* and source of information (if needed)

I do not make much of an effort for interaction, however I would look for staff members, more for **safety and reassurance** that they are there if I needed them.

Female, 24-30, Business & Leisure

Often interactions are concerned with aspects of the journey – changes, times and destinations

Common reasons for talking to staff...

But some may never talk to staff or ask them anything

How long until the next stop?

When does the train detach?

Is there a café?

Where are the toilets?

Is there a delay?

What time are we due in?

Am I on the right train?

Where do I need to change?

How do I get to ...?

Someone is sitting in my seat

The toilet needs cleaning

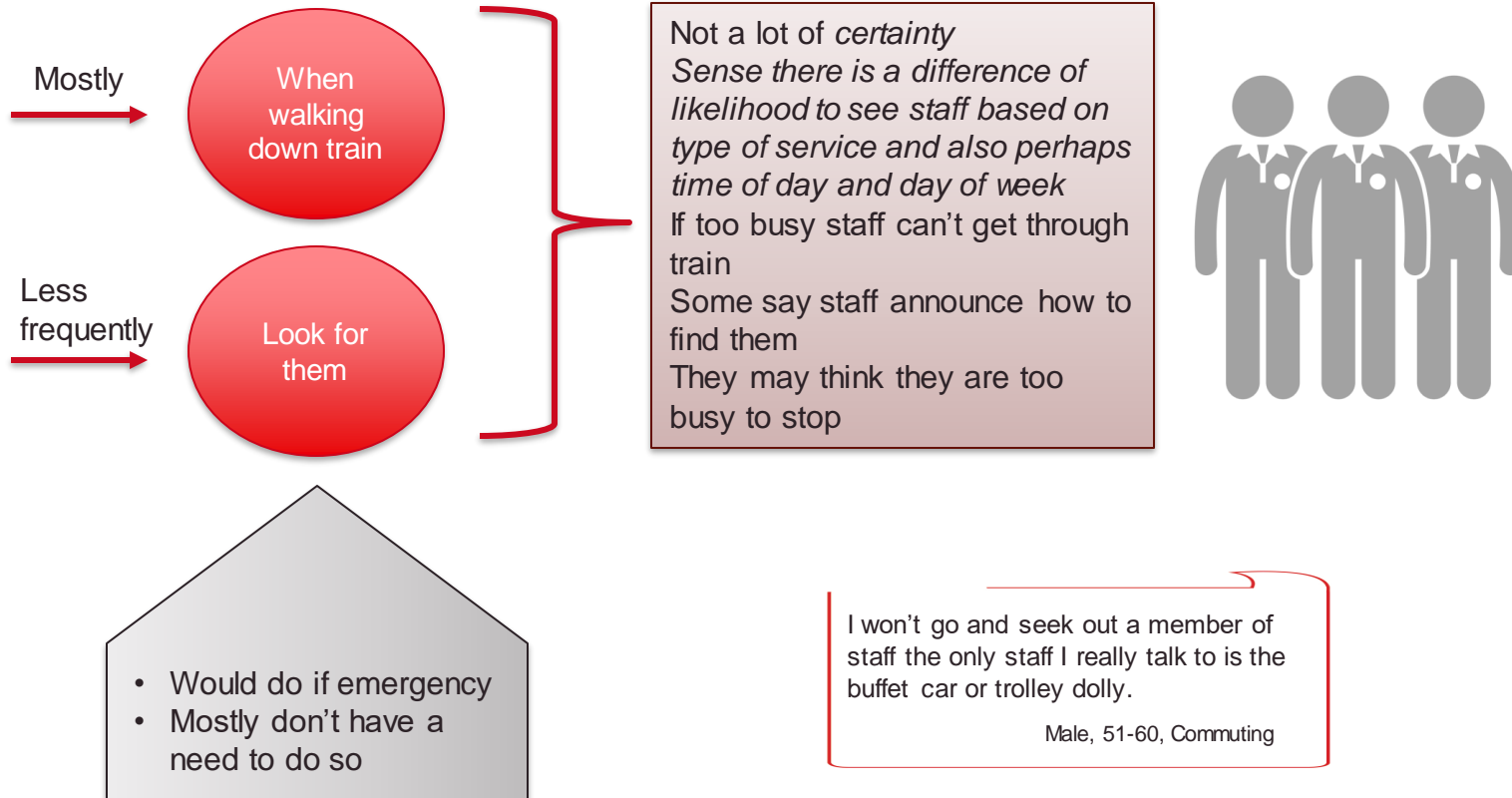
There is something wrong with my seat

How is it going today?

What's worth visiting in Bath?

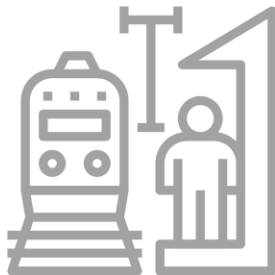
Sometimes people just want to have a chat!

Typically people seize opportunities to talk to staff rather than specifically seeking them out



Balance of consensus is that staff on trains matter, even if there are staff at stations

- Some felt that staff weren't that visible on platforms
- Or that they were just too busy (themselves) to have any interactions prior to boarding
- But for others they were a good 'check' prior to getting on a service



- Not everyone thought it was vital to have staff on board trains – if there were staff at stations
- But many thought it mattered – for particular types of passengers and for needs in relation to safety and security



(Staff on trains) does matter as usually the queries I ask don't arrive until the journey has begun. Often people are rushing before catching a train or preoccupied so I don't often ask questions at this time.

Female, 18-23, Commuting

HS2 ideas

Generally a positive reaction to the proposed at seat services – but often with a caveat



- ✓ Clever and easy
- ✓ Don't always want to talk to people
- ✓ Futuristic
- ✓ Makes life 'easier'
- ✓ Streamlined and efficient
- ✓ A perfect scenario



- ✓ Not everyone can do tech, some may be put off
- ✓ Internet sometimes unreliable
- ✓ Don't want food at seat

Assumption from description that staff are not available or easy to reach

- ✓ Prefer people to interact with/ human touch
- ✓ May be anti-social behaviour

Not everyone feels that staff need to be involved in this scenario but many do...

- Food orders may be incorrect
- Staff need to be available to help some passengers
- Would like to be able to speak to people in person and get immediate response
- Need to see staff in case of emergency or tech issue
- Staff will be needed to bring food to seat
- Need a balance between those who would like to see staff and those less concerned

Suggestions for how they would interact with staff in this scenario/ solve issues

Community members had suggestions about how staff could be involved in the new model – these tended to be voiced by those who thought OTHERS would need support using the system or that they saw the role of staff as beyond that the interactive at seat service seemed to be providing



Live chat



Tannoy system



Call button



Text/ phone number



As currently – walking through train



Interactive screen

Examples of the different types of opinions

That all sounds excellent, and would work well for me. I'm assuming that the service would also include power charging points, as all the tech in the world could be thwarted by running out of power on the phone. Although I'm assuming that if people are placing electronic catering orders, someone will deliver them to seat. This means that there are going to be staff walking the corridors of the train, and they could be asked to assist if needed.

However, I do think that there are some customers who would struggle with this...there may be the need to make special arrangements for customers who don't have this level of technological awareness.

Female, Commuting, Business and Leisure

No this would be the perfect scenario in my eyes, being able to control what I do and don't need at my leisure is the way forward for public transport & amenities. I don't see a need for someone to be on there for someone like me, though of course there is a need for others who don't like the autonomy. There has to be a balance to cater for all of society not one particular section.

Male, 18-23, Leisure

I guess I may be old fashioned but yes, (having staff on board with at seat services), it makes a difference to me and I would prefer to have someone there so interact with. It's part of the journey and the experience and I feel it would be quite sterile without human interaction. Yes, the efficiency side of the proposals are awesome and I love the thought of being able to do this quickly and without hassle, but I don't want to be on a journey or in a world where we get by without having to interact with others. There's enough of that going on today (mobile phone / screen time ignorance) and I'd rather not see it here too.

Male, 31-40, Commuting



Summary – staff on board trains

Even if they don't speak to staff – most like to know they are available if needed. It will need to be clear to passengers how to contact staff on board if they have a problem or if they 'can't do' the tech

- Most community members felt that they would at least like the OPTION to be able to speak to staff with the 'at seat services' being provided as described
- They don't necessarily expect to speak to staff on trains at present and even if they are around do not do so, however...
 - There is some reassurance around having staff on board
 - There are times when they have needed to ask questions/ do ask questions/ think staff play an important role
 - They can imagine other people needing help or support
- As well as providing information, reassurance and problem solving there was also a sense that staff added to the quality of the journey in terms of conviviality
- It is not always the norm to see staff – patterns varied depending on TOCs, routes and times of day
- The at seat service was thought to have benefits and there were some community members who relished the fact they could have an uninterrupted journey
- But staff are still expected on trains and the sheer variety of the types of roles that staff seem to have means that any system needs to be carefully thought through
- There were suggestions of how interactions could be married with the 'at seat service' and examples of where even with such a system in place they would envisage staff having to intervene/ be called upon. Not least due to the technology itself

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