

# **Trial of a push to web approach for measuring journey satisfaction**

Summary of key findings  
September 2021

# Why we carried out the survey

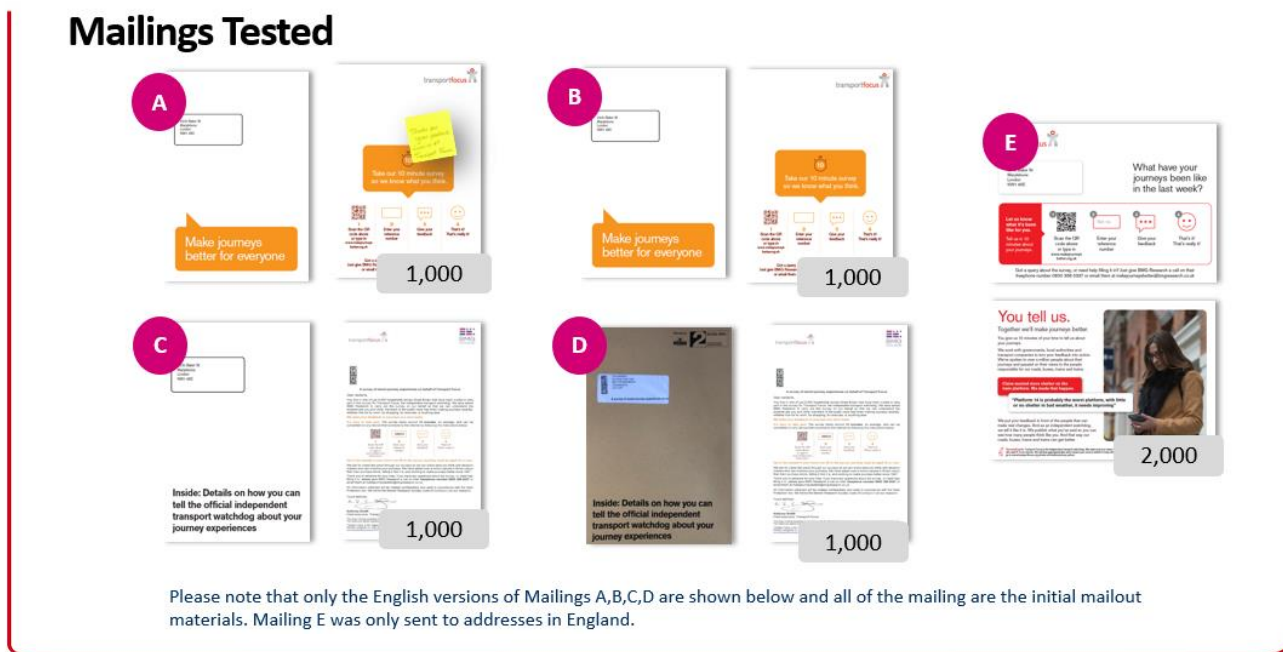


- The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that were placed upon the population of Great Britain from March 2020 meant that we had to suspend all of our regular transport user journey satisfaction surveys, because they involved face-to-face interactions between fieldworkers and the public.
- The uncertainty around if, or when, it might be possible to return to face-to-face interactions meant that we needed to investigate alternative ways to approach transport users to participate in our surveys.
- One approach that some Government surveys had already been moving towards prior to the pandemic was 'push to web'. This involves making initial contact by letter and encouraging people to take part in an online survey (although other ways of taking part are sometimes offered when reminders are sent).
- We decided to trial a push to web approach, as it was an option that was available to us that wasn't affected by any Covid-related restrictions and it would allow us to contact a representative sample of households across Great Britain.

# How we carried out the survey

We used letters and postcards posted to home addresses to approach people to take part in an online survey about any journeys they had made in the previous seven days.

Figure 1: images of mailings tested and numbers sent



# How we carried out the survey

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- random sample of 6000 addresses selected from across Great Britain
- each household sent a copy of one of five different mailing designs (see figure 1 for details)
- mailing addressed to 'the residents'
- mailings contained an introduction to the survey, including QR codes and website address details for people to use to get to the online survey
- a freephone telephone number for the research agency conducting the survey was supplied to handle any queries and to allow those without internet access to take part in a telephone interview
- mailings A to D were supplied in English and Welsh to addresses in Wales and the online survey was offered in both languages
- first mailings landed from 01 October 2020
- reminder mailings, that included a deadline date, landed from 12 October 2020
- the survey closed on 19 October 2020
- research took place at a time when some Covid-19 restrictions were in place related to the tiering and alert/levels systems and travel patterns for many were different to pre-March 2020
- the research was carried out for us by BMG Research.

# How we carried out the survey

The level of response to the survey varied considerably by the mailing that people received, with the more formal letters being most successful

Figure 2: images of mailings tested and response rates

**Response rates varied greatly by cell type, with cells C and D the best performing and cell E the poorest performing by some distance.**



# How we carried out the survey

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- 464 people went to the survey start screen (7.7 per cent)
- 363 people completed the survey (6.1 per cent)
- response rates varied considerably by mailing type (see figure 2 for details) with the best achieving 9.8 per cent and the worst 1.9 per cent
- the addition of the sticky note to one of the letters increased the level of response by 77 per cent
- around half of the responses received followed the initial mailing and half followed the reminder
- just under two out of five people (38 per cent) said they used the QR code to access the survey
- there was an even split between people completing the survey on a laptop or desktop computer and those using a tablet, smartphone or other 'touch' device
- the freephone telephone helpline received ten calls, of which three were requests to take part in the survey over the phone.

# Who responded to the survey?

The profile of participants followed a typical pattern seen across other push to web studies, with older and more affluent respondents more likely than average to respond

Figure 3 Respondent profiles compared to population figures

Age	16 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+				
PTW Trial	3%	6%	10%	17%	27%	24%	13%				
Population of GB	11%	17%	16%	18%	15%	13%	11%				
Gender	Male		Female		Prefer another term/ to self describe		Prefer not to say				
PTW Trial	48%		51%		0%		1%				
Population of GB	49%		51%		-		-				
Number of people living in home	1		2		3		4	5+			
PTW Trial	21%		59%		12%		6%		2%		
GB	31%		34%		16%		13%		7%		
Region	East Midlands	East of England	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and The Humber	Scotland	Wales
PTW Trial	6%	9%	9%	3%	8%	17%	14%	7%	9%	9%	8%
GB	7%	10%	14%	4%	11%	14%	9%	9%	8%	9%	5%

# Who responded to the survey?

The profile of participants followed a typical pattern seen across other push to web studies, with older and more affluent respondents more likely than average to respond

- those responding to the survey tended to be older, more affluent and from two person households
- however, overall, the gender balance of those responding was in line with population figures
- those under-represented in the sample tended to be younger, those in flats, single person or larger households and those in urban or more deprived areas
- the survey data was subsequently weighted by age, gender and region
- 21 per cent of those responding to the survey had a disability
- 82 per cent had access to a car (but this dropped to 59 per cent for 16-34 year olds).

# What journeys people had made in late September to mid-October 2020



- 94 per cent of those responding to the survey had made a journey in the past seven days (including walking or running for five minutes or more) – **they were then asked about their most recent journey**
- the most common types of transport used were car or van (84 per cent) and walking or running (72 per cent), with bus (20 per cent) and bicycle (16 per cent) some way behind and train (10 per cent) the only other to be used by at least one in ten of those who had made journeys
- almost half (45 per cent) of people used two types of transport for their journey, with most others using either one (25 per cent) or three (22 per cent)
- the most common destinations for people's journeys were a place of work (23 per cent) and the supermarket or convenience store (20 per cent)
- the vast majority of people (86 per cent) said that their journey started from home – indicating that they were thinking of the journey as a 'round trip' rather than each separate 'leg' (our experience surveys are based upon the latter)

# What journeys people had made in late September to mid-October 2020



- the most common reasons for making the journey were shopping (27 per cent), commuting for work or education (28 per cent) and for exercise (10 per cent)
- three quarters of journeys were made on a weekday
- a third of journeys started before 9am, another third by 1pm and the final third after that
- a third of journeys ended by 11am, another third by 4pm and the final third after that
- the calculated journey lengths (an average of 168 minutes and almost one in five being four hours or longer) again suggests some confusion on the part of participants in separating out the journey into its parts
- six out of ten travelled alone, while one in ten travelled with children.

# What people told us about their journeys in late September to mid-October 2020



- Overall, three quarters of journeys (77 per cent) were rated as good from start to finish, while fewer than one in ten ( seven per cent) were rated as poor.
- Satisfaction with the experience of each form of transport used during the journey varied. It was nine out of 10 for journeys involving cars or vans, eight out of 10 for those involving trains, seven out of 10 for walking or running and around six out of ten for journeys involving buses or the Underground/metro. **However, sample sizes for each of these forms of transport (other than car or van) were small, making the scores indicative rather than statistically robust and hence the differences in scores between them will not be statistically significant.**

# What people told us about their journeys in late September to mid-October 2020



- When asked to give a reason for this overall journey (from start to finish) rating, the answers that people provided in their own words covered a range of topics, many relating to traffic and driving conditions

Keyword	Sentiment	Total Mentions
> traffic	<div><div></div></div>	21
> road	<div><div></div></div>	9
> bus	<div><div></div></div>	7
> light	<div><div></div></div>	6
> condition	<div><div></div></div>	6
> work	<div><div></div></div>	5
> time	<div><div></div></div>	5
> heavy	<div><div></div></div>	5
> little	<div><div></div></div>	4
> hold	<div><div></div></div>	4
> up	<div><div></div></div>	4
> poor	<div><div></div></div>	4

# What people told us about their journeys in late September to mid-October 2020



- Good traffic flow was driving satisfaction on road journeys

People Liked:



traffic  
wasn't

2



flow of  
traffic

2



hold ups

2



***"Traffic wasn't** too bad I didn't have a problem finding a parking space and I didn't have to que for long to get into the supermarket."*

***"Flow of traffic** was good even though it was relatively busy."*

***"Got where I needed to be without any problems or **hold ups.**"***

# What people told us about their journeys in late September to mid-October 2020



- Poor driving/road conditions caused frustration on road journeys

People Didn't Like:

 social distancing 2	 poor road conditions 3	 busy junctions 2	 pot holes 2
<  journey started 2	 heavy rain 2	 bus didnt 2	 wait ... driver 2 >
 motorway ... works 2	 driving ... conditions 2	 bus didnt arrive 2	 bus stop 2

*"Because of the traffic and **poor road conditions**. There are so many pot holes every half a meter and too many vehicles on the road at this time adding to the new road layout!"*

*"Lighting was poor on the A3, making **driving in rainy conditions** difficult."*

*"Long term roadworks on local minor roads and the **stupid motorway hard shoulder removal works**."*

# What people told us about their journeys in late September to mid-October 2020



- Some frustration with bus journey times due to Covid rules

✓ bus

7

## People Didn't Like:



bus didnt

2



bus driver

3



bus stop

2



bus ... wait

2



buses ... times

3



bus didnt arrive

2

*"I had to wait for a later bus as the **driver wouldn't** let anybody else on due to Covid rules. I understand why for safety but there aren't extra buses to account for peak times of travel and making buses less full."*

*"I stated my journey started at 8am...**at least 3 buses went past** with the sign at the front stating it was full. We eventually got on a bus at 8.50.am."*

# Why some people hadn't made journeys in late September to mid-October 2020

- 6% of those responding to the survey had not made a journey of any sort in the past seven days (just 25 people – making the following findings indicative rather than statistically robust)
- In two thirds of cases, this was simply because there was no reason to make a journey
- Three quarters said that they would be making a journey within the next two weeks
- Prior to the pandemic, those who hadn't made a journey in the past seven days were most likely to have used cars, buses, or walking/running to make their journeys
- For those planning to make their next journey within two weeks, they were still most likely to use a car, buses, or to walk or run

# What we learnt

- With the right design of letter and a second reminder, an overall response rate in the region of 15% could be achieved for the push to web approach on a topic that is relevant all members of the public, which is similar to some government surveys using the same approach
- However, there are clear limitations to this approach in terms of getting a good representation of the population by age and, partly linked to this, by size of household, housing type, urban vs rural areas and by levels of deprivation. Combining push to web with other approaches, where possible, could help in this respect
- Our first survey asking people about multiple means of transport worked well for those who took part (the survey experience was given 4.2 out of 5 stars)

# What we learnt

- People struggle to understand that a journey has an outbound and return element (in most cases) and tend to think of it as one, which affects the responses they give. Further work will be required on question design to help clarify this
- For those making journeys by public transport and walking, their sense of feeling safe is lower when asked specifically in relation to COVID-19 rather than more generally, while for those making journeys by car and cycling it is higher. We believe that this relates to the perceived likelihood of coming into close proximity with other people from outside of the household for the different ways of travelling