RAIL DISRUPTION RESEARCH: FULL REPORT

quadrangle

May 2022

Contents

This work aimed to understand:

Passenger preferences

Ideal disruption experience
- Information desired, tone, channel, frequency
- Impact of secondary disruption

Planned vs unplanned
- Timing of planned works
- Preference for mitigations (e.g. diversions, rail replacement)

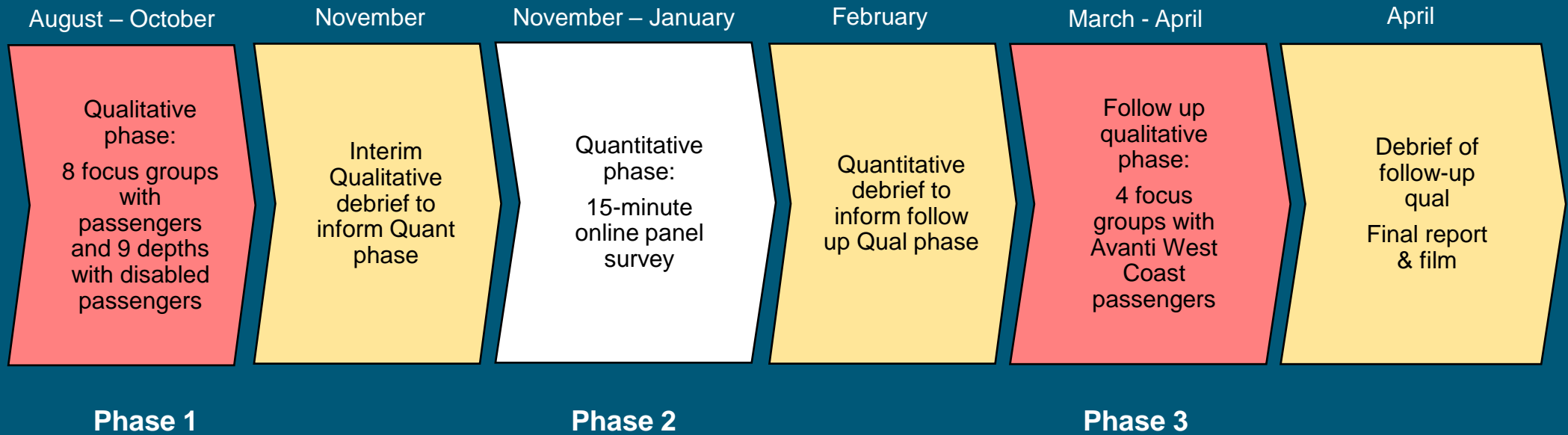Views of vulnerable customers

Passenger decision-making

- When decisions are made
- Options available to passengers
- Knowledge of railway geography

The future

- How the industry as a whole should work together
- Opportunities to innovate and learn from other sectors
- Options for measuring satisfaction with disruption in the future

THE RESEARCH OUTLINE

August – October	November	November – January	February	March - April	April
Qualitative phase: 8 focus groups with passengers and 9 depths with disabled passengers	Interim Qualitative debrief to inform Quant phase	Quantitative phase: 15-minute online panel survey	Quantitative debrief to inform follow up Qual phase	Follow up qualitative phase: 4 focus groups with Avanti West Coast passengers	Debrief of follow-up qual Final report & film

Phase 1 **Phase 2** **Phase 3**

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01

Room for improvement with satisfaction levels

Overall, most passengers really enjoy travelling by train, while around half are satisfied with how disruption they experience is handled – regardless of whether this is planned or unplanned.

02

Passenger attitudes to rail travel are different in a post-pandemic world

While there are some differences in attitudes between commuter, business and leisure passengers, they are not widespread. The most notable differences are the attitudes of commuters and business passengers, with their journeys less likely to be perceived as essential (e.g. with working from home more acceptable) making them more likely to abandon their journeys. In contrast, leisure passengers often don't want to cancel their plans, which might be months in the making and cost them money.

03

How passengers experience planned, and unplanned disruption are fundamentally different

Unplanned disruption needs to respond to, and service, a more emotionally driven experience. Good responses to planned disruption may rest on more rational factors.

Planned disruption can lead to better customer outcomes where they receive clear communication well in advance.

Unplanned disruption is more about maintaining strong lines of communication throughout, responding to in-the-moment issues.

04

Strong disruption communication and management relies on making customers feel more in control

Ultimately, passengers want to be equipped with the information to make decisions on what to do during disruption. Ideally, they are looking for three things:

Clarity – what is happening, and what are my options?

Transparency – be honest with me, help manage my expectations?

Empathy – understand the impact that this is having on my plans.

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05

Get the message out through as many communication channels as possible

Passengers rely on a range of communication channels depending on their personal preferences, More are using digital channels but be conscious that many passengers rely on physical staff – they want to be given messages face-to-face – this can be because they have a disability which means that they struggle with, or don't have access other comms channels.

06

Too much communication is better than too little

Passengers would much rather hear that the train operator is not sure how long the delay will take, but that is being worked on, than being left in the dark – it helps them take control and make decisions on what to do next.

07

Don't underestimate the value of a 'little extra'

Passengers really do appreciate a token gesture as recognition of the inconvenience caused by disruption. It is a tangible and more consistently recognised illustration of empathy than can be delivered through a message.

08

Passengers find it hard to visualise the future

When asked what they would like in the future, passengers tend to revert to what they know (e.g. comfortable seating and clear digital displays). While some are moving towards more app, social media and digital based channels, there is still a large proportion for whom this would not be appropriate. Consequently, train operators need to continue to deliver disruption communications across a broad range of channels.

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Goal	**Appreciation of the passenger as an individual**	
How?	**By empowering the passenger** (appreciation of the individual)	**By delivering empathy & openness** (appreciation of the individual)

Through what we say and do:

What?

Advance notice (planned)
Preference for at least one month before planned disruption

Multiple channels (planned)
• Email
• Operator website
• Texts
• Station announcements

Multiple channels (unplanned)
• Texts
• Station announcements
• Accurate digital displays

Provide/suggest alternatives
(Bus replacement, or different routes)

Regular updates
Ideally every 10 minutes

Message tone
Illustrate genuine concern and be open and transparent

Offer a 'little extra'
e.g. £5 voucher/discount off future travel

Comfortable waiting
Passenger preferences differ, but whatever the options make them comfortable

Compensation
Appropriate and swiftly delivered

Consistent service
A more consistent level of service for passengers
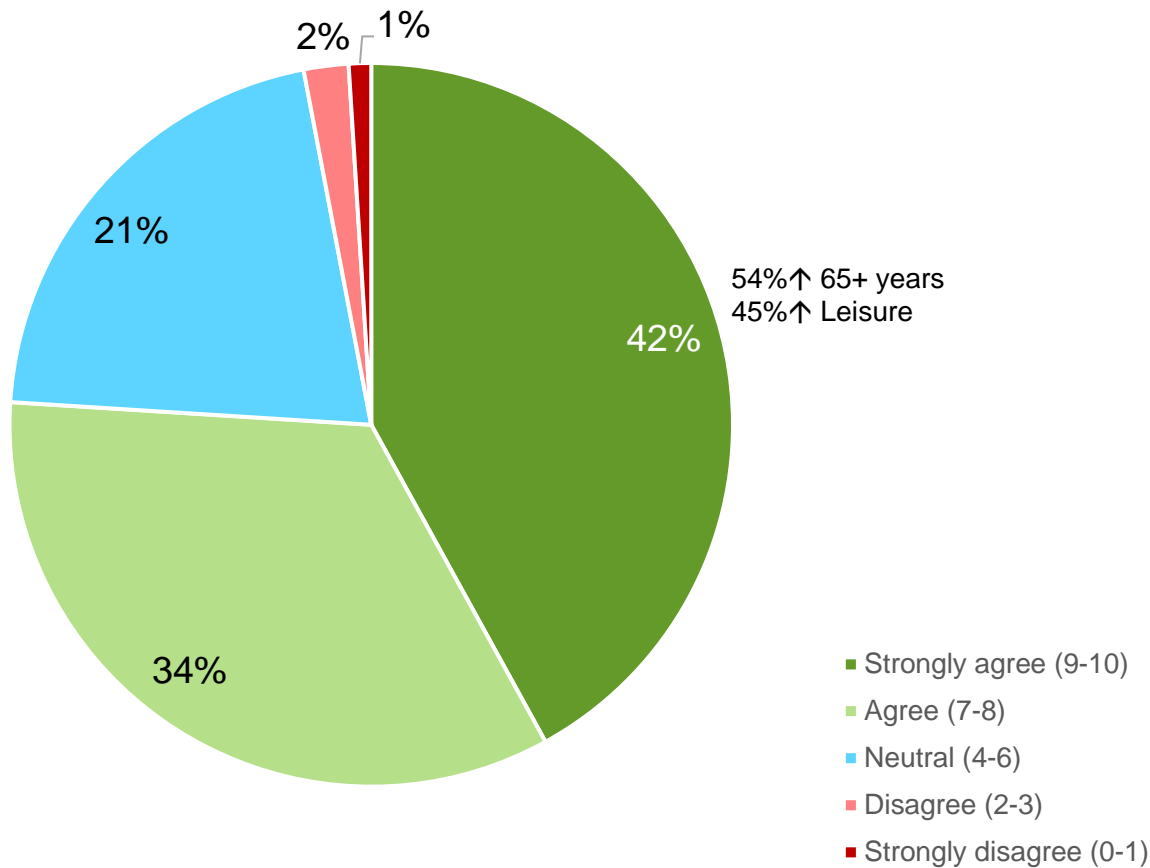
transportfocus

MORE THAN THREE-QUARTERS OF PASSENGERS USING THE WEST COAST MAIN LINE ENJOY TRAVELLING BY TRAIN

Leisure passengers and older people particularly enjoy travelling by train

I generally enjoy travelling by train
% agree/disagree

2% 1%

21%

54%↑ 65+ years
45%↑ Leisure

42%

34%

■ Strongly agree (9-10)

■ Agree (7-8)

■ Neutral (4-6)

■ Disagree (2-3)

■ Strongly disagree (0-1)

NB: A 10-point scale was used in the questionnaire and answers grouped as shown in chart.

QD2_7. Still on the subject of rail disruption, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - I generally enjoy travelling by train
Base: All = 1,409

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

transportfocus 🏃

RAIL TRAVEL DROPPED ACROSS ALL THREE JOURNEY PURPOSES SINCE THE PANDEMIC

Numbers of rail passengers are below those pre-pandemic

■ Pre-pandemic in 2019   ■ 2021/2022

Leisure
- 78% ← 93%↑ 65+ yrs
- 64%

Commuter
- 35% ← 42%↑ ABs
- 26%

Business
- 30% ← 36%↑ Male
- 23%
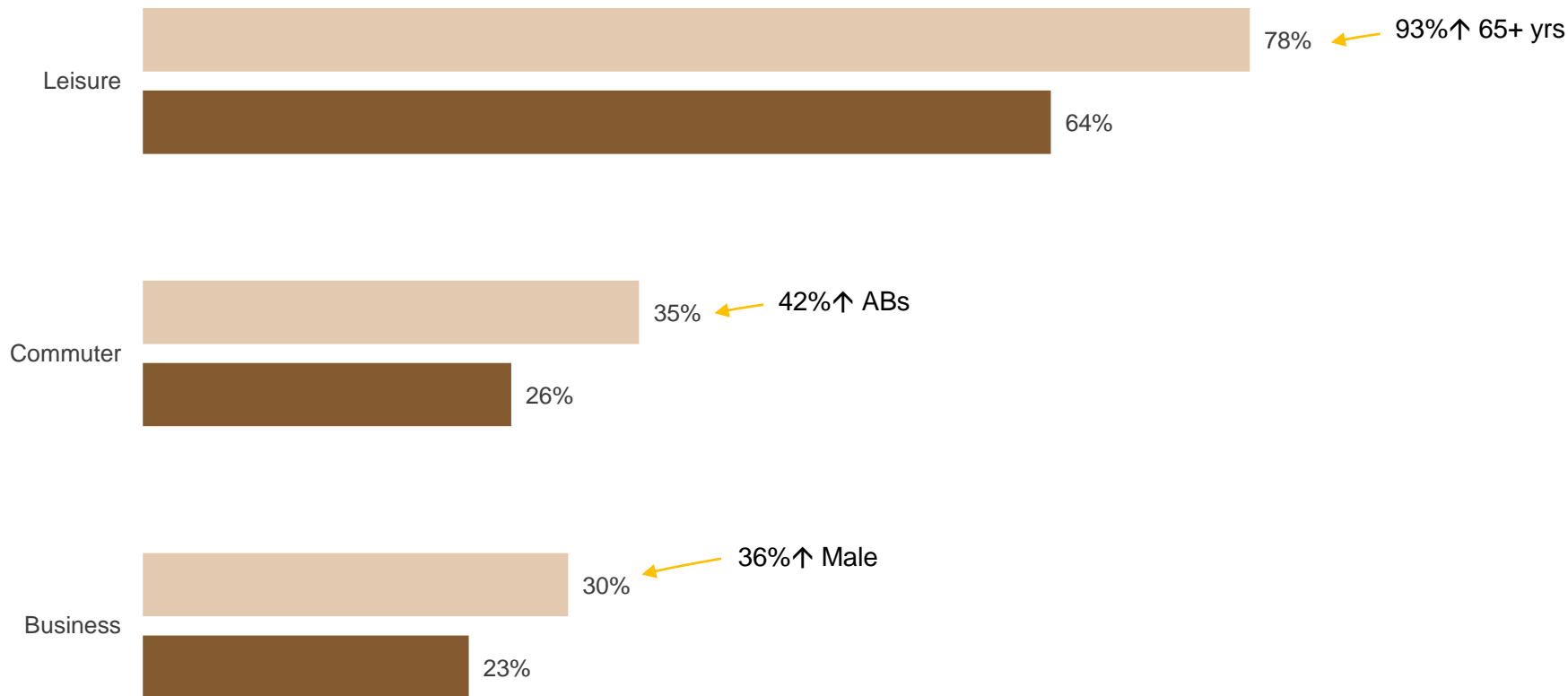
All participants in the survey had to have travelled by train pre-pandemic, and/or in 2021/22.
This question was only asked of those who travelled during each of these periods. To provide directly comparable results, the data has been re-based to the total sample.

QS5 Thinking specifically about your rail travel, which of the following did you do:
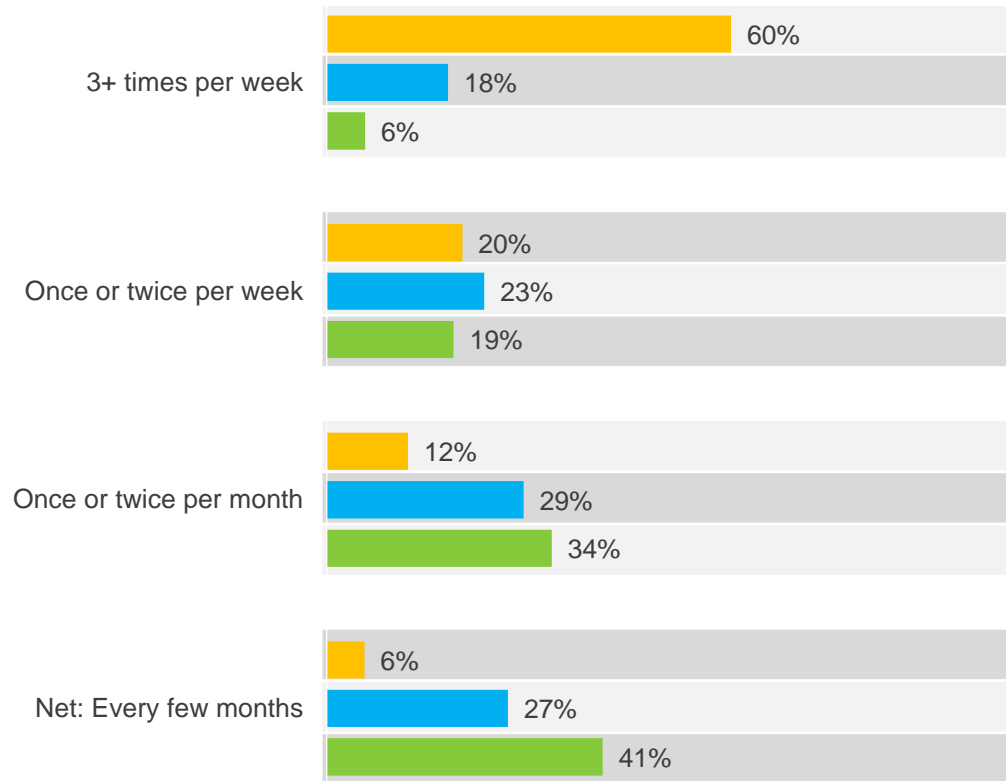Base: Pre-pandemic in 2019 = 1,329, 2021/2022 = 1,141

↓↑ Significant diff
vs the total sample
95% confidence

FREQUENT COMMUTING HAS DROPPED FROM PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS
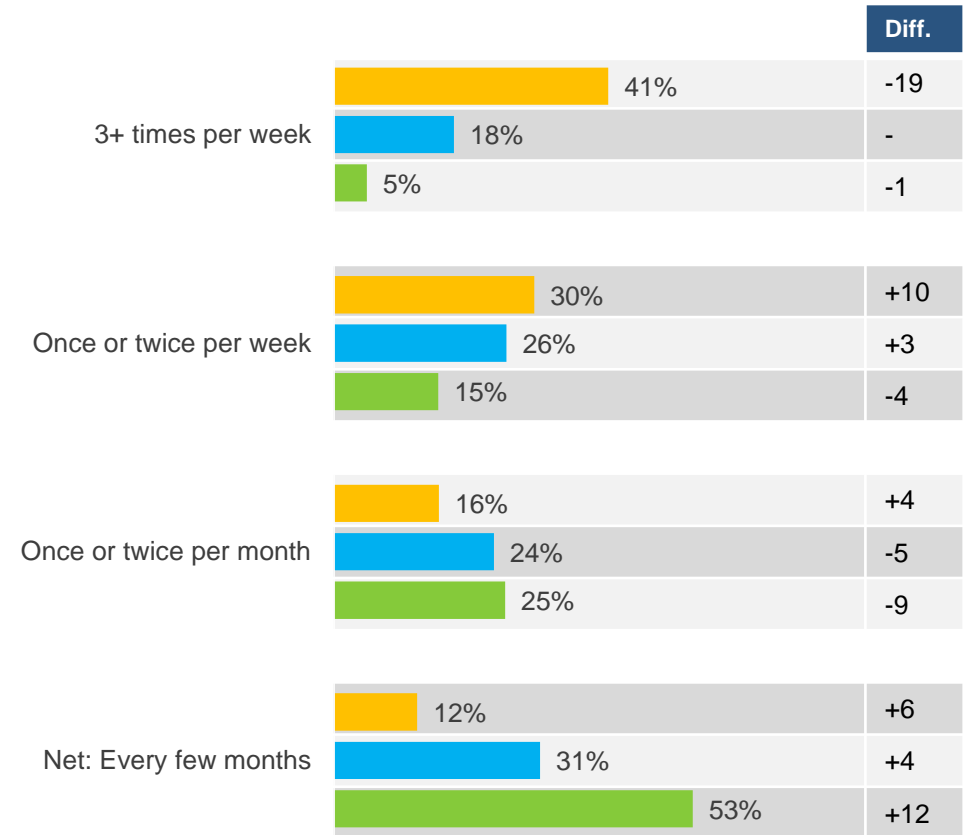
Frequency of business and leisure travel also dips

Pre-pandemic

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

	Commuter	Business	Leisure
3+ times per week	60%	18%	6%
Once or twice per week	20%	23%	19%
Once or twice per month	12%	29%	34%
Net: Every few months	6%	27%	41%

2021/2022

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

	Commuter	Business	Leisure	Diff.
3+ times per week	41%	18%	5%	-19 / - / -1
Once or twice per week	30%	26%	15%	+10 / +3 / -4
Once or twice per month	16%	24%	25%	+4 / -5 / -9
Net: Every few months	12%	31%	53%	+6 / +4 / +12

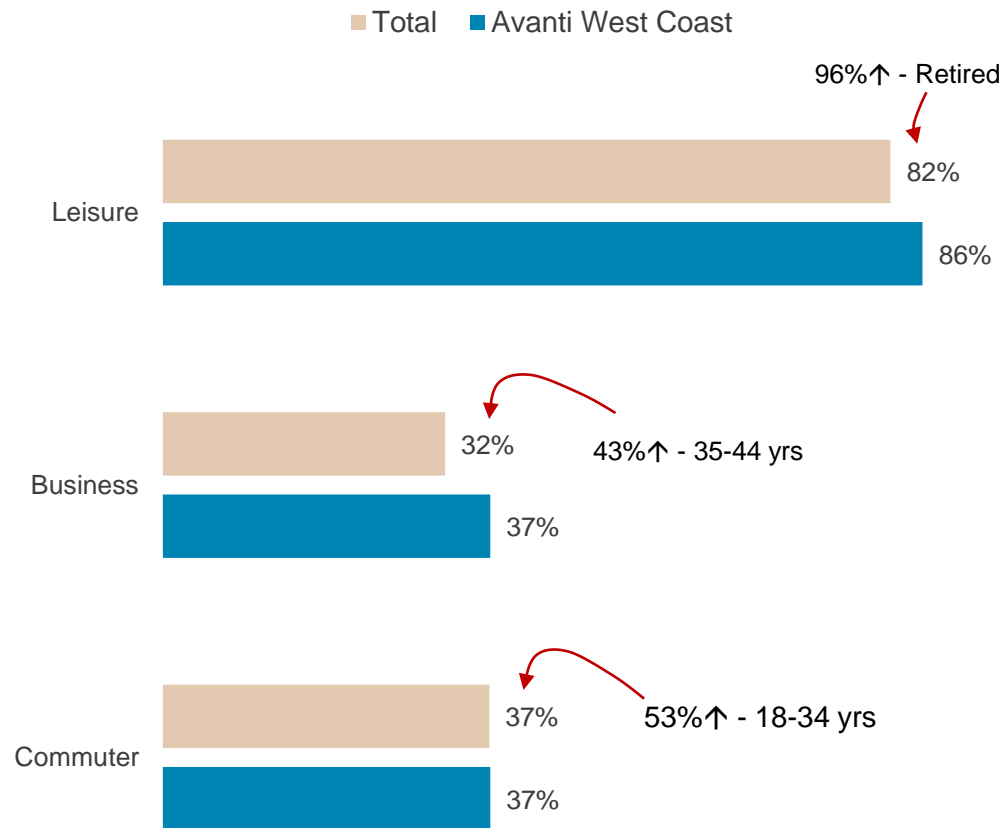QS6a_SUM. How often were you travelling by train back in 2019 (pre-pandemic) for?
QS6b_SUM. And how often did you travel by train in 2021/2022? If the amount you travel fluctuated across the year, please state how frequent it was on average
Pre-pandemic Base: Commuting = 495, Business = 426, Leisure = 1,095
Last 6 months Base: Commuting = 373, Business = 320, Leisure = 905

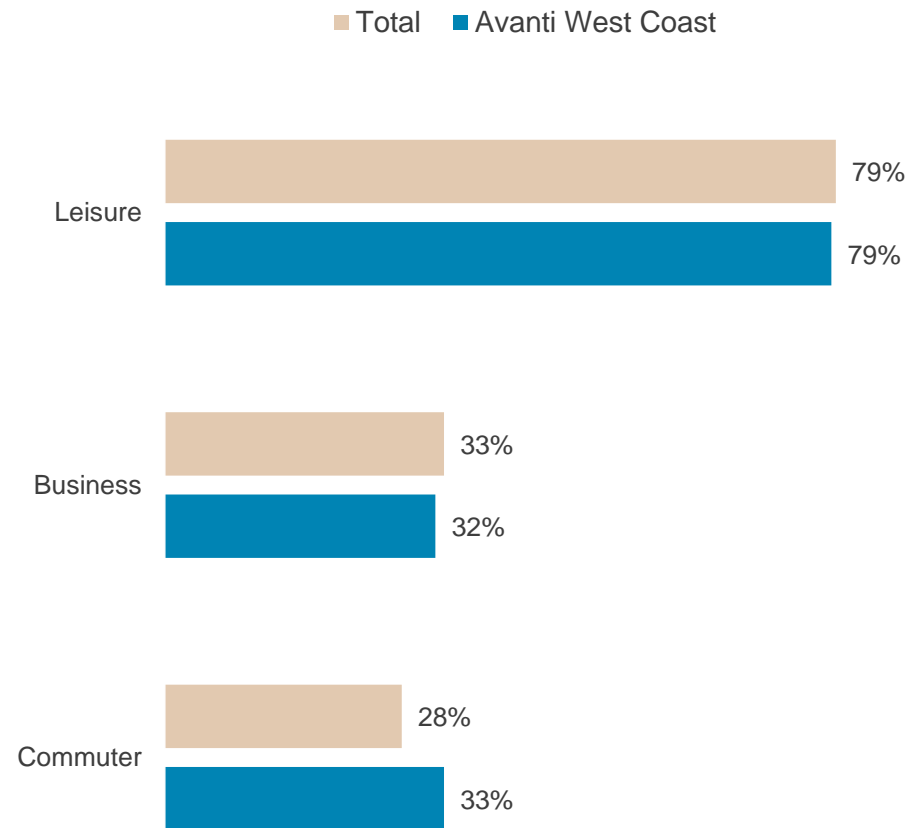↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

THE MAJORITY OF PRE-PANDEMIC PASSENGERS WERE USING THE WEST COAST MAIN LINE FOR LEISURE

The pattern of travel remains consistent in 2021/2022 albeit below pre-pandemic levels for commuting

Pre-pandemic

■ Total ■ Avanti West Coast

Leisure
96%↑ - Retired
Total: 82%
Avanti West Coast: 86%

Business
Total: 32%
43%↑ - 35-44 yrs
Avanti West Coast: 37%

Commuter
Total: 37%
53%↑ - 18-34 yrs
Avanti West Coast: 37%

2021/2022

■ Total ■ Avanti West Coast

Leisure
Total: 79%
Avanti West Coast: 79%

Business
Total: 33%
Avanti West Coast: 32%

Commuter
Total: 28%
Avanti West Coast: 33%

QS5a. Thinking specifically about your rail travel, which of the following did you do pre-pandemic in 2019?
Base: pre-pandemic total = 1,329, Avanti West Coast = 485
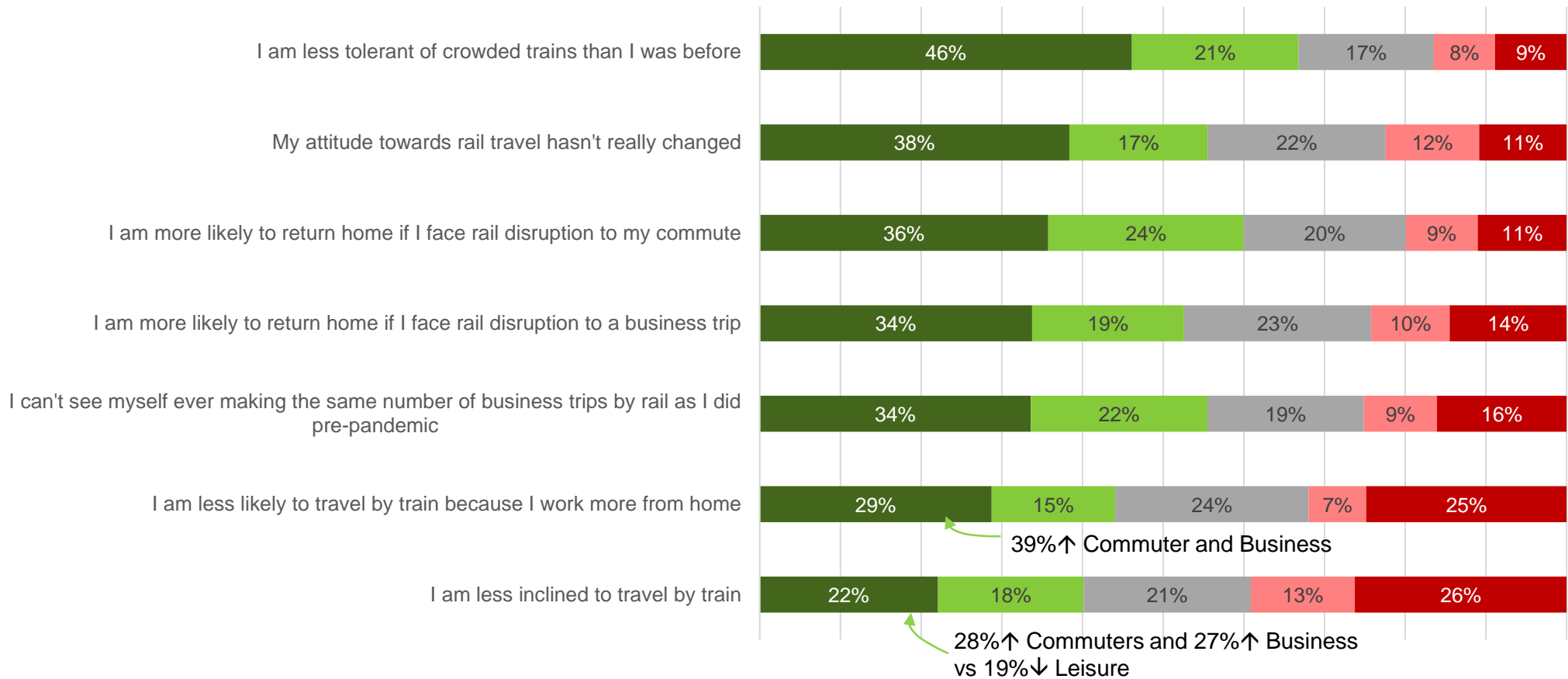QS5b. Thinking specifically about your rail travel, which of the following did you do in 2021/2022?
Base: 2021/2022 total = 1,141, Avanti West Coast = 448

↓↑ Significant diff
vs the total sample
95% confidence

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14

COVID HAS MADE NEARLY HALF OF PASSENGERS MUCH LESS TOLERANT OF CROWDED TRAINS AND A THIRD ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO RETURN HOME IF THEY FACE DISRUPTION TO THEIR JOURNEY

Commuters and business travellers are less inclined to use the train in the future, largely because many of them can work from home

Legend: ■ Strongly agree (8-10) ■ (6-7) ■ Neutral (5) ■ (3-4) ■ Strongly disagree (0-2)

Statement	Strongly agree (8-10)	(6-7)	Neutral (5)	(3-4)	Strongly disagree (0-2)
I am less tolerant of crowded trains than I was before	46%	21%	17%	8%	9%
My attitude towards rail travel hasn't really changed	38%	17%	22%	12%	11%
I am more likely to return home if I face rail disruption to my commute	36%	24%	20%	9%	11%
I am more likely to return home if I face rail disruption to a business trip	34%	19%	23%	10%	14%
I can't see myself ever making the same number of business trips by rail as I did pre-pandemic	34%	22%	19%	9%	16%
I am less likely to travel by train because I work more from home	29%	15%	24%	7%	25%
I am less inclined to travel by train	22%	18%	21%	13%	26%

39%↑ Commuter and Business

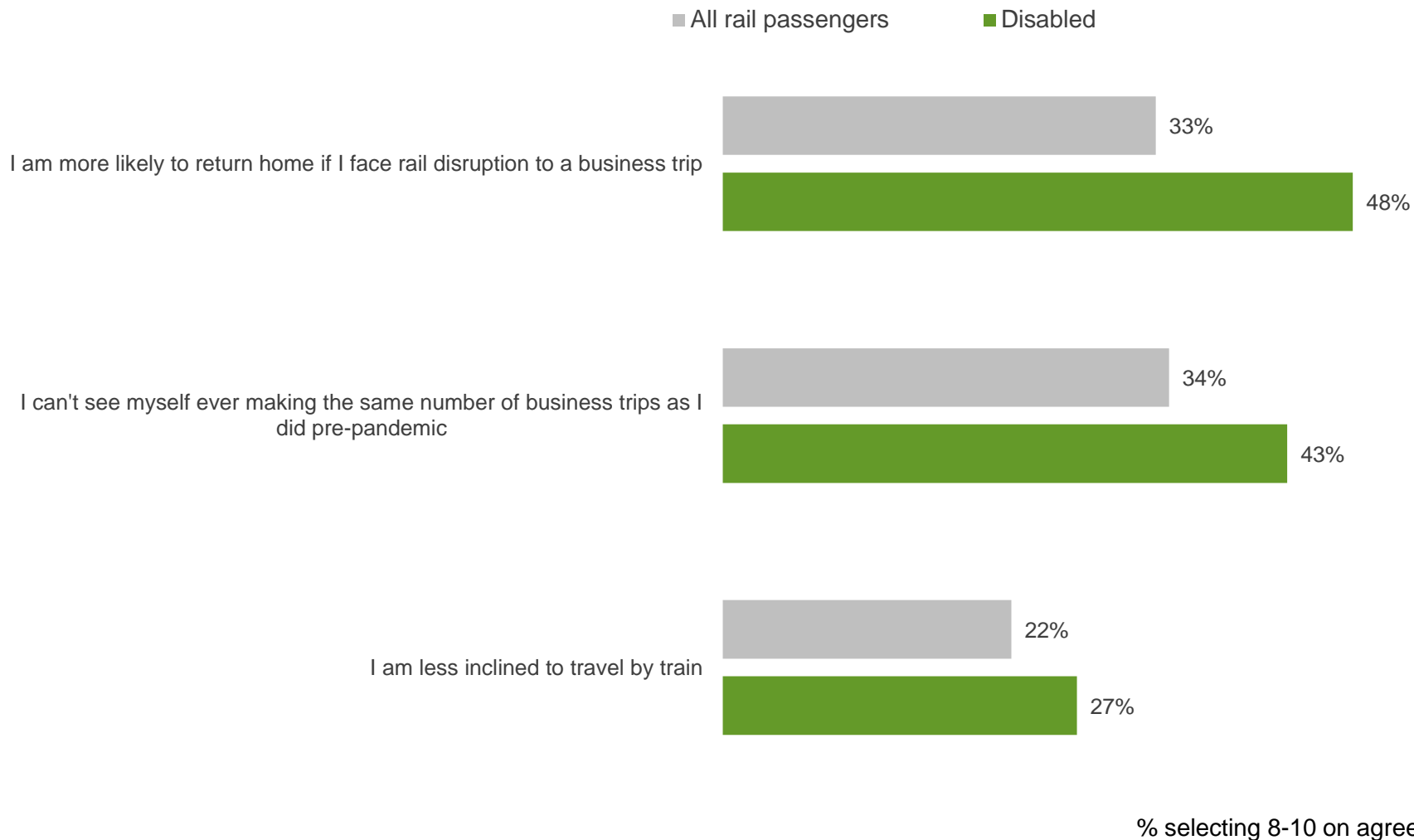28%↑ Commuters and 27%↑ Business vs 19%↓ Leisure

Not applicable responses excluded.

QA11_SUM. Now thinking more broadly about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your attitudes and behaviours around train travel. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements with regards travelling by rail?
Base: All = 1,409

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

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PASSENGERS WITH A DISABILITY ARE LESS INCLINED TO TRAVEL BY TRAIN SINCE COVID

Passengers with a disability are particularly likely to say that the pandemic has impacted their view of business travel

■ All rail passengers   ■ Disabled

I am more likely to return home if I face rail disruption to a business trip
- All rail passengers: 33%
- Disabled: 48%

I can't see myself ever making the same number of business trips as I did pre-pandemic
- All rail passengers: 34%
- Disabled: 43%

I am less inclined to travel by train
- All rail passengers: 22%
- Disabled: 27%

% selecting 8-10 on agreement scale

QA11_SUM. Now thinking more broadly about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your attitudes and behaviours around train travel. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements with regards travelling by rail? Bases: I am less inclined to travel by train disabled = 225, All rail passengers = 1,398; I can't see myself ever making the same number of business trips by rail as I did pre-pandemic – disabled = 74; All rail passengers = 485; I am more likely to return home if I face rail disruption to a business trip – disabled = 75, total = 483

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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INDICATED THAT PASSENGERS HAVE AN AIR OF RESIGNATION AND HELPLESSNESS ABOUT THE NOTION OF RAIL 'DISRUPTION': THERE IS APPETITE FOR MORE CONTROL AMONG THOSE WE SPOKE TO

Disruption and its impact is very much normalised and, to a point, accepted by passengers. They have low expectations

- There is an air of 'resigned acceptance' that disruption is a part of rail travel

- But alongside this, there is a perception that disruption on the trains is not well managed, especially unplanned disruption

- Part of the challenge the industry has is in comparison to other aspects of people's lives where the customer experience is improving (especially through continued improvements in digital services)

- **Consequently, there is an appetite for rail operators (and their partners) to help passengers feel more in control when it comes to disruption – they are sure there is a 'better way'**

- **In discussing possible interventions to help passengers cope with disruption, it is also clear that the sector needs to start with the fundamentals of strong communication and 'getting the basics' right consistently**

"Friday evening, on the 6.30 train out of Euston, my meeting went on a bit but I have an open return. The last train is the 10 past 7, but that's cancelled. So, at that point there is nothing you can do about it, there is no point getting upset, I managed to get a room in the same hotel, then back up the next day"
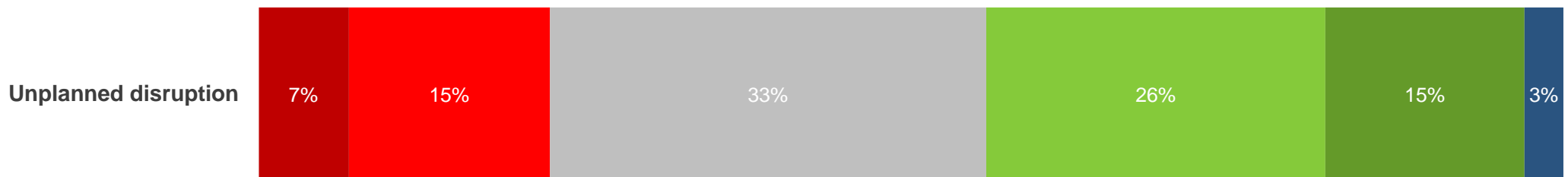
Older, Business

PLANNED OR UNPLANNED DISRUPTION IS EXPERIENCED AT LEAST OCCASIONALLY BY HALF OF PASSENGERS WE SPOKE TO

Frequency of disruption experienced

■ Very frequently   ■ Frequently   ■ Occasionally   ■ Rarely   ■ Never   ■ Don't know/Don't remember

Planned disruption

| 9% | 14% | 31% | 23% | 18% | 5% |
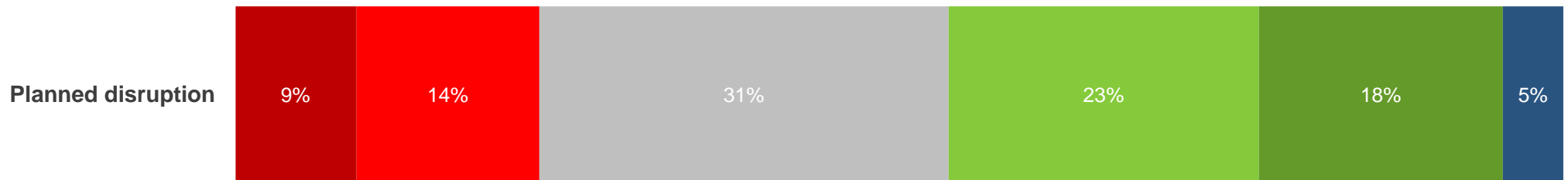
12%↑ - London/West Mids
23% ↑ - Chester/North Wales

Unplanned disruption

| 7% | 15% | 33% | 26% | 15% | 3% |

9%↑ - London/West Mids
11% ↑ - Chester/North Wales

QS10_SUM. In the last 2 years – how often, if at all, have you experienced planned or unplanned disruption to your journey when travelling by train? Base: All = 1,409

↓↑ Significant diff
vs the total sample
95% confidence

THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN SATISFACTION LEVELS BETWEEN PLANNED AND UNPLANNED DISRUPTION

Around half of customers are satisfied with how their most recent experience of disruption was handled, with those with **higher incomes**, **First Class and Annual Season ticket holders** generally the most satisfied – alongside those who book directly through Avanti

■ Unplanned ■ Planned

Very satisfied
- Unplanned: 14% → 20% Disabled / 13% Not disabled
- Planned: 12% → 19%↑ Disabled / 11%↓ Not disabled

Fairly satisfied
- Unplanned: 34%
- Planned: 35%

Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
- Unplanned: 25%
- Planned: 27%

Fairly dissatisfied
- Unplanned: 16%
- Planned: 17%

Very dissatisfied
- Unplanned: 11%
- Planned: 9%
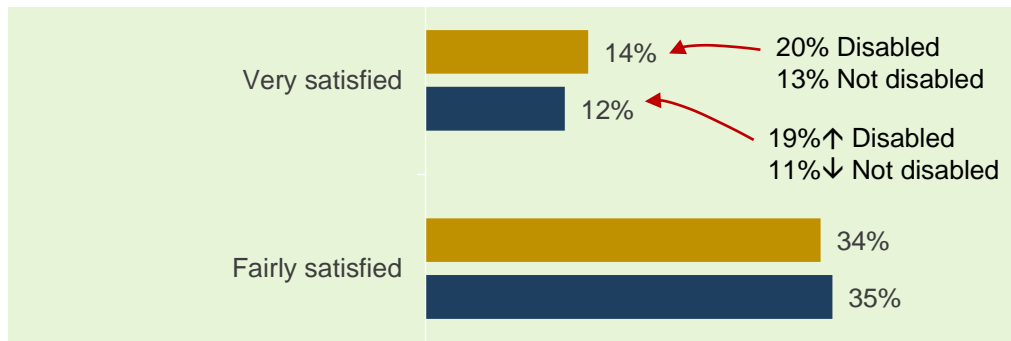
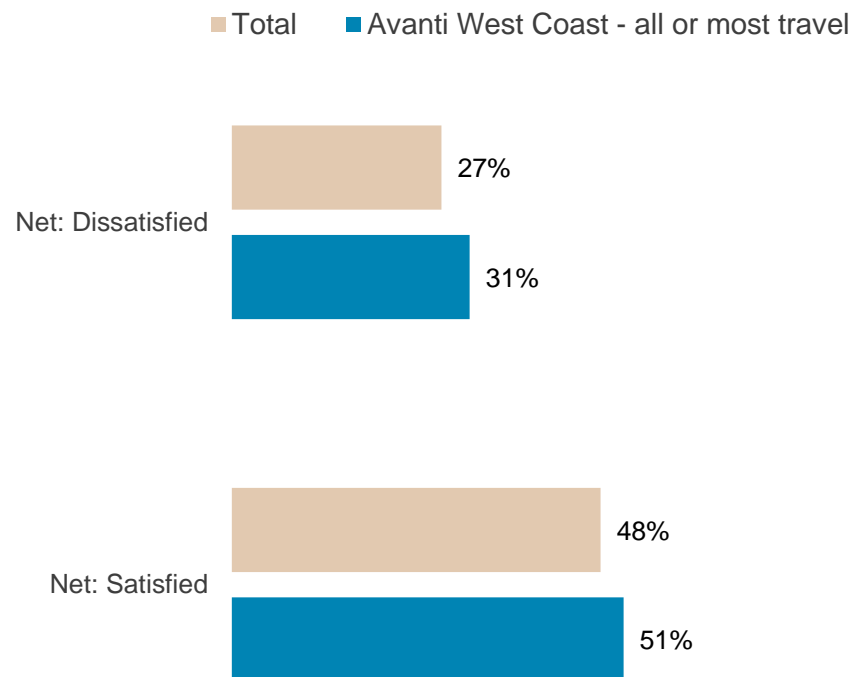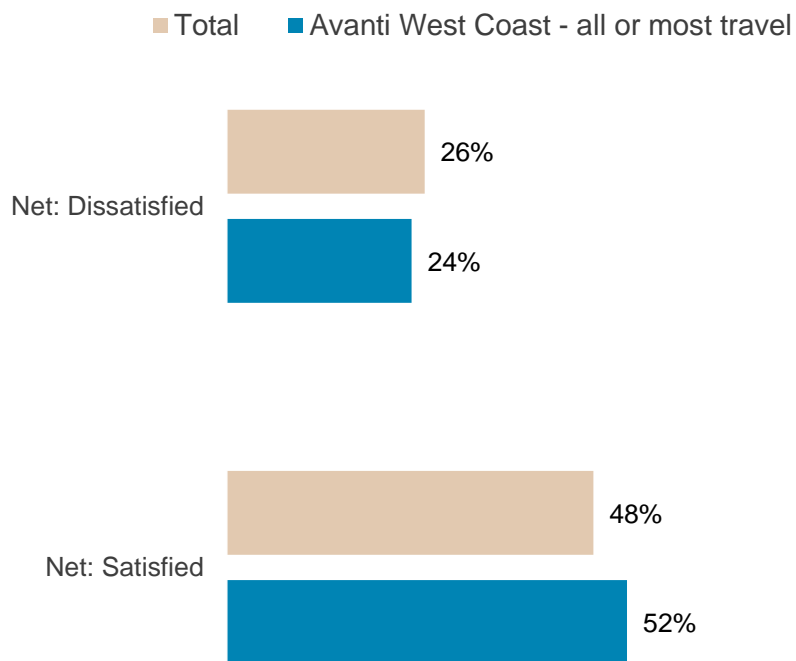|	**Unplanned**	**Planned**
	Very satisfied	Very satisfied
£100k+ income	27%↑	30%↑
First Class commuters	32%↑	35%↑
Commuters with annual season tickets	27%↑	39%↑
Commuters that booked direct through Avanti	22%↑	26%↑
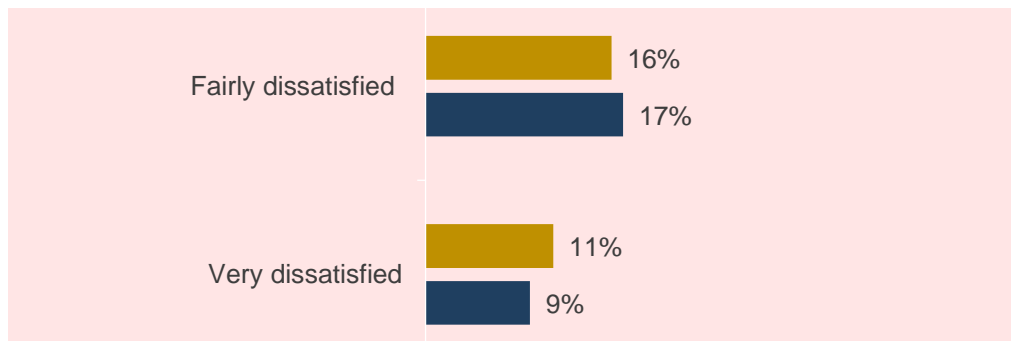
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QA2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the planned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved? QA7. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the unplanned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved?
Base: Planned disruption = 1,086; Base: Unplanned disruption = 1,152

↓↑ Significant diff
vs the total sample
95% confidence

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Planned disruption

■ Total   ■ Avanti West Coast - all or most travel

Net: Dissatisfied
- Total: 26%
- Avanti West Coast: 24%

Net: Satisfied
- Total: 48%
- Avanti West Coast: 52%

Unplanned disruption

■ Total   ■ Avanti West Coast - all or most travel

Net: Dissatisfied
- Total: 27%
- Avanti West Coast: 31%

Net: Satisfied
- Total: 48%
- Avanti West Coast: 51%

QA2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the planned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved? QA7. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the unplanned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved?
Base: Planned disruption = 205, Avanti West Coast = 3; Unplanned disruption =1,152, Avanti West Coast = 216

Unplanned Disruption

Planned disruption

Higher perceived stress, less customer control

Perceived impact/ stress level

Perceived level of customer control

Lower stress, more customer control

- **In many ways 'unplanned disruption' is the most 'salient' form of disruption:** it is associated with the greatest impact on passengers, and the one that usually comes to mind when asked to give examples of disruption

- Passengers associate unplanned disruption with low levels of control, there is often very little that they can do to respond to the issue in the immediate aftermath

- **Secondary disruption is also a salient concern that augments the stress and emotional impact of it** e.g.

  - Crowds rushing between platforms/stations to catch alternative trains, alternative trains being very busy

- There are also high expectations that 'unplanned' disruption should be 'planned' to a degree, and that effective response strategies should be in place for specific scenarios, and better communicated *"It's not like it has never happened before!"*

- Planned disruption is generally associated with lower level of impact on passengers, owing to the advance warning which is usually provided

- With more time, passengers are able to do more to manage the issue themselves and come up with alternatives e.g plan a different route, postpone their plans, go by different transport routes

- However is still an expectation that the train operator should provide alternative routes or other solutions/suggestions

- And there can still be a high level of cynicism and scepticism about it: passengers will question the timing of the disruption and question whether the engineering works could have taken place during quieter period (e.g. during the pandemic lockdowns)

- And post lockdown there is less consensus on the best time for planned works – weekends or midweek

PLANNED AND UNPLANNED DISRUPTION NEEDS TO ADDRESS FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT PASSENGER NEEDS

DEALING WITH UNPLANNED DISRUPTION

Managing passenger emotions and stress levels is key

- Unplanned disruption is a **highly emotional** situation - it can leave passengers feeling alone, stressed and frustrated. Passengers like to feel in <u>control</u> of their travel

- A useful lens through which to understand the challenge is to focus on minimizing the stress and the emotional response that customers have

- This provides a more holistic benchmark by which to judge our response to disruption and can encompass the quality of:

  - Communication

  - Alternative Options

  - Effective delivery of communication

  - The environment in which passengers experience the disruption

DEALING WITH PLANNED DISRUPTION

Planned disruption needs to respond to a more 'rational' complaint

- Planned disruption encompasses a more rational debate for passengers

- First and foremost, the length of advance warning is crucial, given some passengers purchase their tickets well in advance

- They have more time to make alternative arrangements, but equally, they have more time to scrutinise the rationale for disruption. This puts an extra onus on the justification for the reason for disruption (and details – or transparency – around this), but also the timing of the disruption

- It also puts extra scrutiny on the quality of alternative travel options that are offered

"When they say, line closed for planned maintenance for three weeks. You think, what the hell are they doing for three weeks? But if it was more like, plan for three weeks, because it involves this work, and this is the scope of the work and this is what we're doing, etc.. Then at least you feel like, you know, there's a reason for your delay"
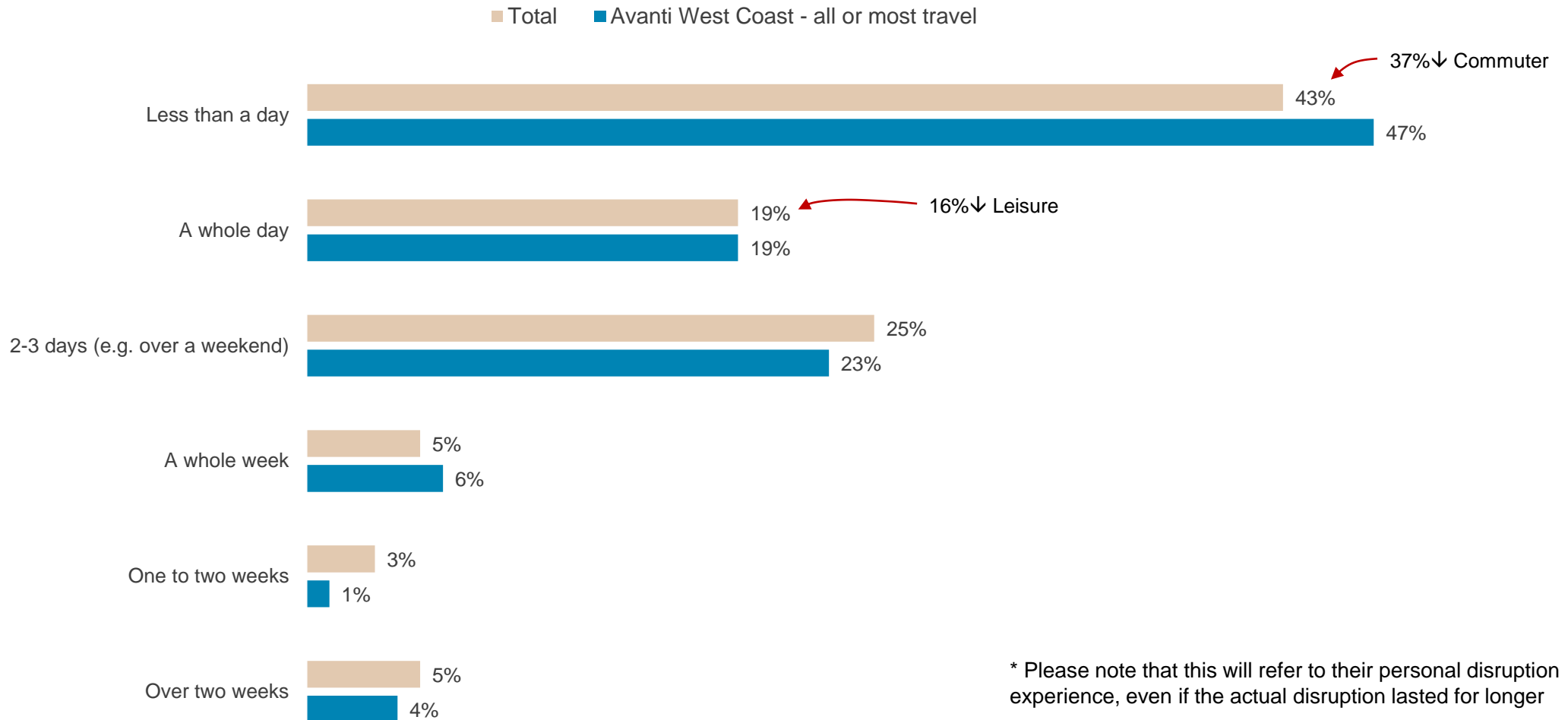
Older, Leisure

PASSENGERS MOST COMMONLY EXPERIENCE PLANNED DISRUPTION FOR LESS THAN A DAY*

Planned disruption

Even though some disruption, especially planned, will last for some time, it is important to reflect that most passengers are not impacted for prolonged periods

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■ Total   ■ Avanti West Coast - all or most travel

Less than a day
- Total: 43% → 37%↓ Commuter
- Avanti West Coast: 47%

A whole day
- Total: 19% → 16%↓ Leisure
- Avanti West Coast: 19%

2-3 days (e.g. over a weekend)
- Total: 25%
- Avanti West Coast: 23%

A whole week
- Total: 5%
- Avanti West Coast: 6%

One to two weeks
- Total: 3%
- Avanti West Coast: 1%

Over two weeks
- Total: 5%
- Avanti West Coast: 4%

* Please note that this will refer to their personal disruption experience, even if the actual disruption lasted for longer
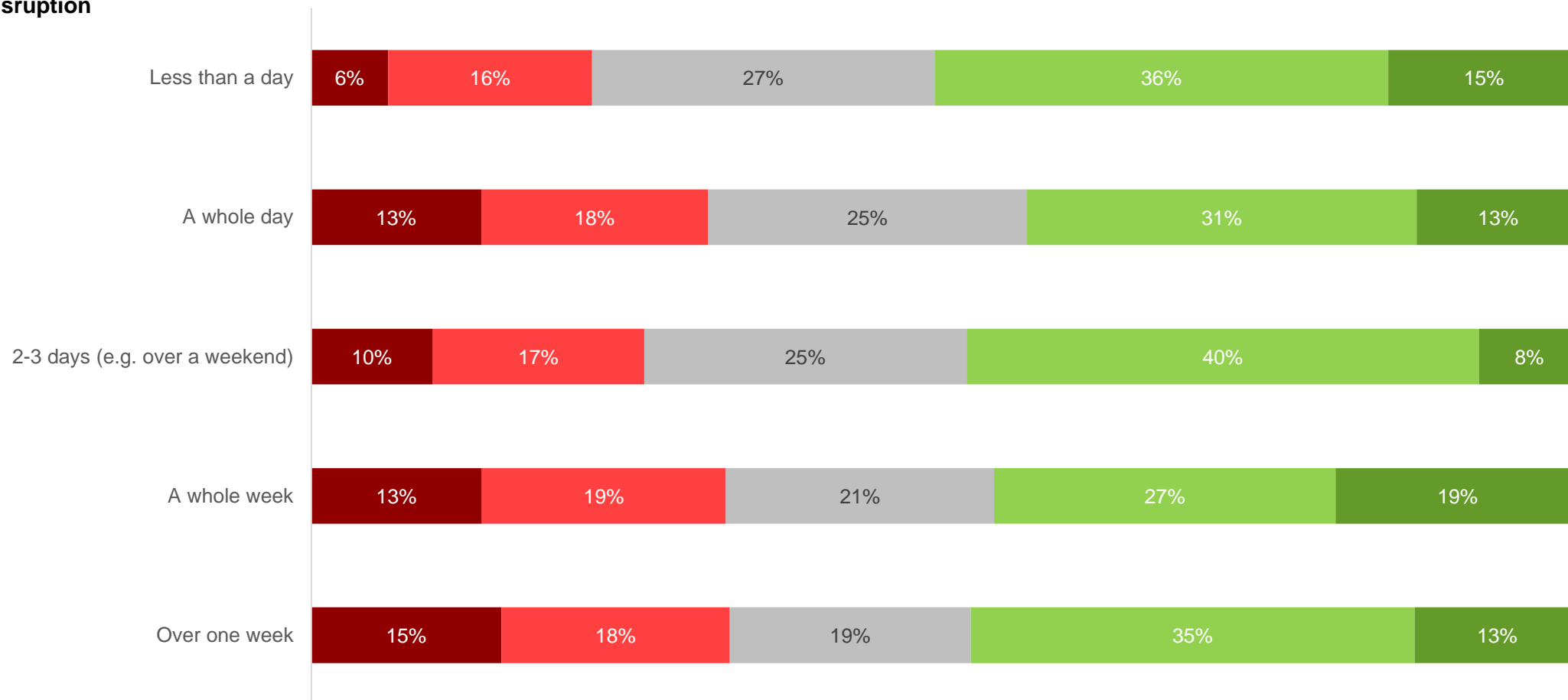
QA1. Starting with the most recent planned disruption that you can recall, for how long did the disruption take place?
Base: Total = 954, Avanti West Coast = 182

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

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THE LENGTH OF THE PLANNED DISRUPTION HAS LITTLE INFLUENCE OVER SATISFACTION WITH HOW IT IS HANDLED

Planned disruption

Frequency of experiencing planned disruption

Legend: ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Frequency	Very dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
Less than a day	6%	16%	27%	36%	15%
A whole day	13%	18%	25%	31%	13%
2-3 days (e.g. over a weekend)	10%	17%	25%	40%	8%
A whole week	13%	19%	21%	27%	19%
Over one week	15%	18%	19%	35%	13%

QA2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the planned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved?
Base: All faced planned disruption = 1,086

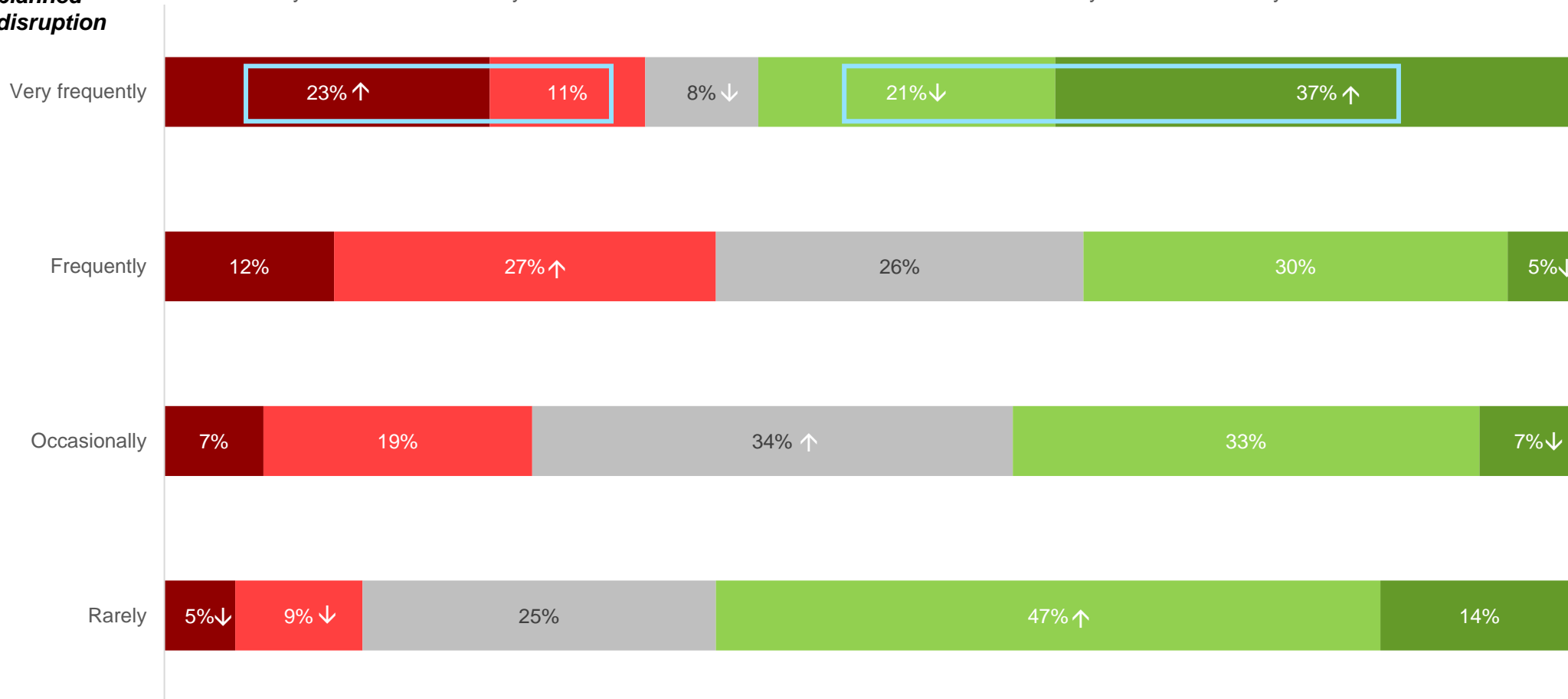# THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE FREQUENT PLANNED DISRUPTION ARE OFTEN SATISFIED BY THE WAY IN WHICH IT IS HANDLED

At the same time they are most likely to be very dissatisfied, but this illustrates that those who experience frequent disruption can still be left with a positive experience

Satisfaction with planned disruption

Frequency of planned disruption

Legend: ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Frequency	Very dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
Very frequently	23% ↑	11%	8% ↓	21% ↓	37% ↑
Frequently	12%	27% ↑	26%	30%	5% ↓
Occasionally	7%	19%	34% ↑	33%	7% ↓
Rarely	5% ↓	9% ↓	25%	47% ↑	14%

QA2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the planned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved?
Base: Very frequently = 129, frequently = 194, Occasionally = 434, Rarely = 329

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

PLANNED DISRUPTION SATISFACTION LEVELS ARE STRONGLY LINKED TO PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES – HOW MUCH DID IT INCONVENIENCE THE TRAVELLER, AND WERE THEY TREATED 'FAIRLY' IN THEIR EYES?

Satisfaction – key themes

- ✓ Advanced warning – good/clear communications / advertised
- ✓ Alternative routes suggested
- ✓ Bus service
- ✓ Compensation – promptly provided
- ✓ Kept informed
- ✓ "Did their best" – generally good service
- ✓ Only limited impact/short delay

*"It was **advertised** in advance, and I knew exactly what the alternatives were."*
Male, 64, pre-pandemic commuter

*"The operator made it **clear** what the **alternatives** were and those ran to time, so I don't have any issues."*
Female, 34, commuter

*"It was well **publicised** in advance so that I could plan my journey accordingly. Staff at the station were very **helpful** and replacement **buses** were provided."*
Male, 44, leisure

*"Staff were **polite** and **informative**. Most people expected delays to be longer."*
Female, 21, pre-pandemic leisure

*"The problem was identified, **apology** given and out of pocket expenses **promptly paid**."*
Male, 37, leisure

*"I have been updated by my **app** and also by **email** so I could plan accordingly."*
Male, 65, commuter

Dissatisfaction – key themes

- • Delay was too long – making me late, costing me money
- • The delays went on for too many days/weeks
- • Bus/coach replacement services were too slow
- • No compensation was paid – and if it was it was not sufficient

*"It **cost me £700 in wages per day for a 2-week contract** because they gave it someone else as I couldn't arrive on time."*
Male, 33, commuter

*"Could not travel until hours after my booked journey which was a direct train to Liverpool. **Stood all the way** to Crewe then had to **wait** for the **slow train** to Lime Street, arriving **5 hours late**, then **not compensated** by Avanti, online forms only NO phone numbers available, very poor customer service."*
Male, 68, leisure

*"The **bus replacement service was dreadful** - stopped at stations that were not on the trainline, driver did not know highway code - took 5 hours to get back - outrageous."*
Female, 57, leisure

*"It was **chaotic,** and I had lost my business work bag that day so very **stressful**."*
Male, 33, commuter

*"Sometimes you make plans to travel by rail to get to your destination quicker, however this is not possible if the train is delayed as you will **miss important meetings** and have **to go out of your way** to plan again despite paying for a monthly rail card."*
Male, 50, commuter

QA3. Why do you say you were <<INSERT RESPONSE AT QX>> with the way in which the disruption was handled?

PLANNED DISRUPTION – WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE?

"Yes - they could have not accepted bookings on trains that they knew were never going to run."

Female, 65, business

"Post on all social media and publicise better on Trainline as this often just says there will be disruption but not exactly how this will affect trains."

Female, 21, leisure

"Better communication on app. App is not updated enough to know when there is a delay or when cancelled."

Female, 27, leisure

"Better communication. Staff taking responsibility for the passengers. Its the most expensive but poorest method of transport."

Male, 42, commuter

"Get more people in the station on the ground, one woman dealing with hundreds of passengers she was really good, Avanti very poor, never like this with Virgin."

Male, 68, leisure

"Provided alternative transport - still waiting for a refund for a £50 taxi nearly two months on."

Female, 23, commuter

"Don't use social media - not everyone uses it, even on public pages Facebook makes it impossible to see replies or numerous posts without a login ID. Also, for rural areas many people do not have mobile signal or fast broadband. Add all this together and for some, the updates are useless. There has to be an understanding of all customers."
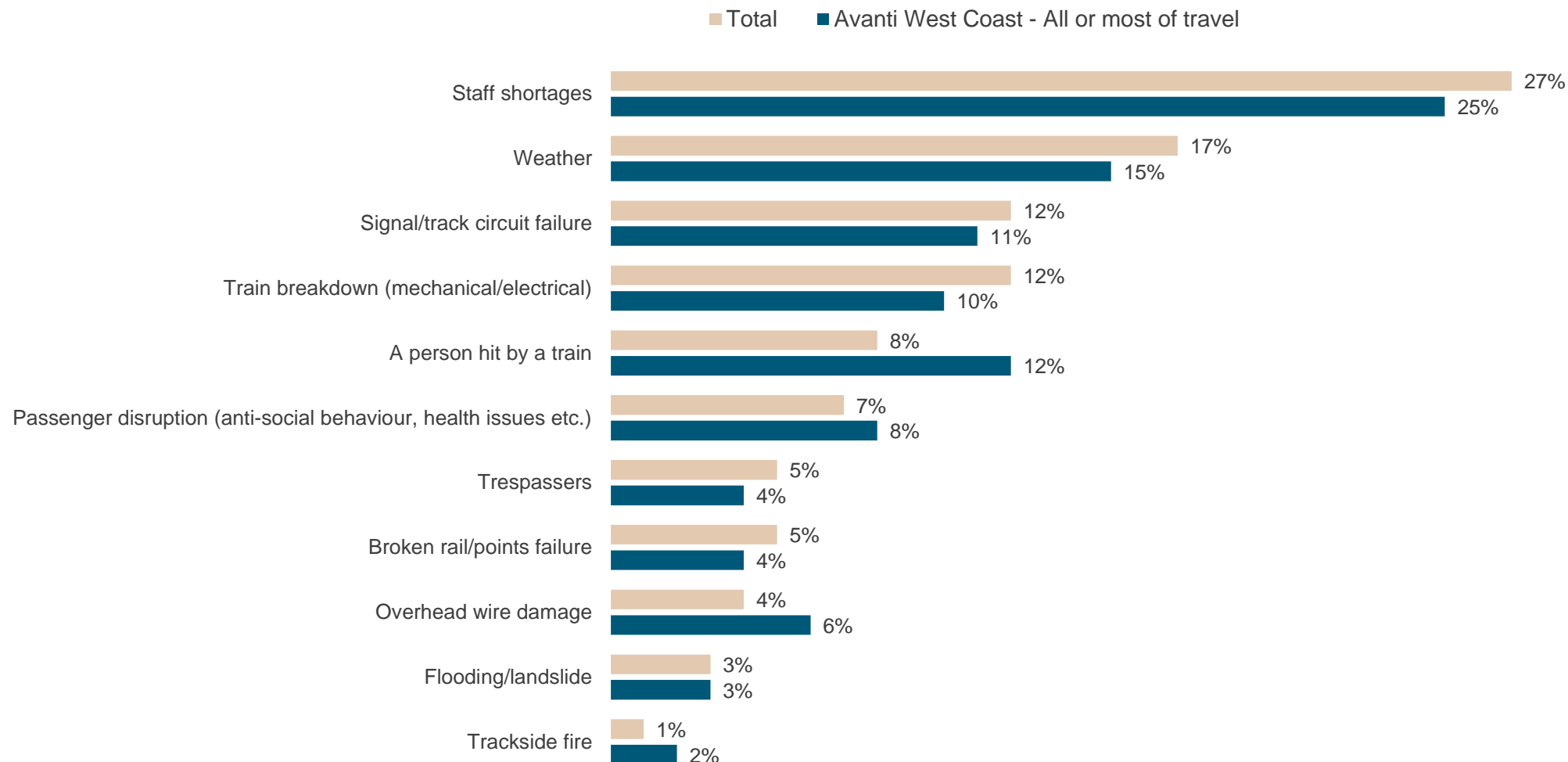
Female, 55, business

THE REASONS FOR UNPLANNED DISRUPTIONS TEND TO BE BROADLY SIMILAR REGARDLESS OF WHETHER PASSENGERS TEND TO TRAVEL ON AVANTI WEST COAST OR WITH OTHER OPERATORS

Staff shortages is the most common reason for unplanned disruption, with someone being hit by a train more likely to have been referenced by Avanti West Coast passengers

Reasons for recent unplanned disruption

Legend:
- ☐ Total
- ■ Avanti West Coast - All or most of travel

Reason	Total	Avanti West Coast
Staff shortages	27%	25%
Weather	17%	15%
Signal/track circuit failure	12%	11%
Train breakdown (mechanical/electrical)	12%	10%
A person hit by a train	8%	12%
Passenger disruption (anti-social behaviour, health issues etc.)	7%	8%
Trespassers	5%	4%
Broken rail/points failure	5%	4%
Overhead wire damage	4%	6%
Flooding/landslide	3%	3%
Trackside fire	1%	2%

QA5. Now thinking about the most recent unplanned rail disruption that you can recall impacting your journey(s). Can you recall the reason for the disruption?
Base: Faced unplanned disruption Total = 952, Avanti West Coast = 194
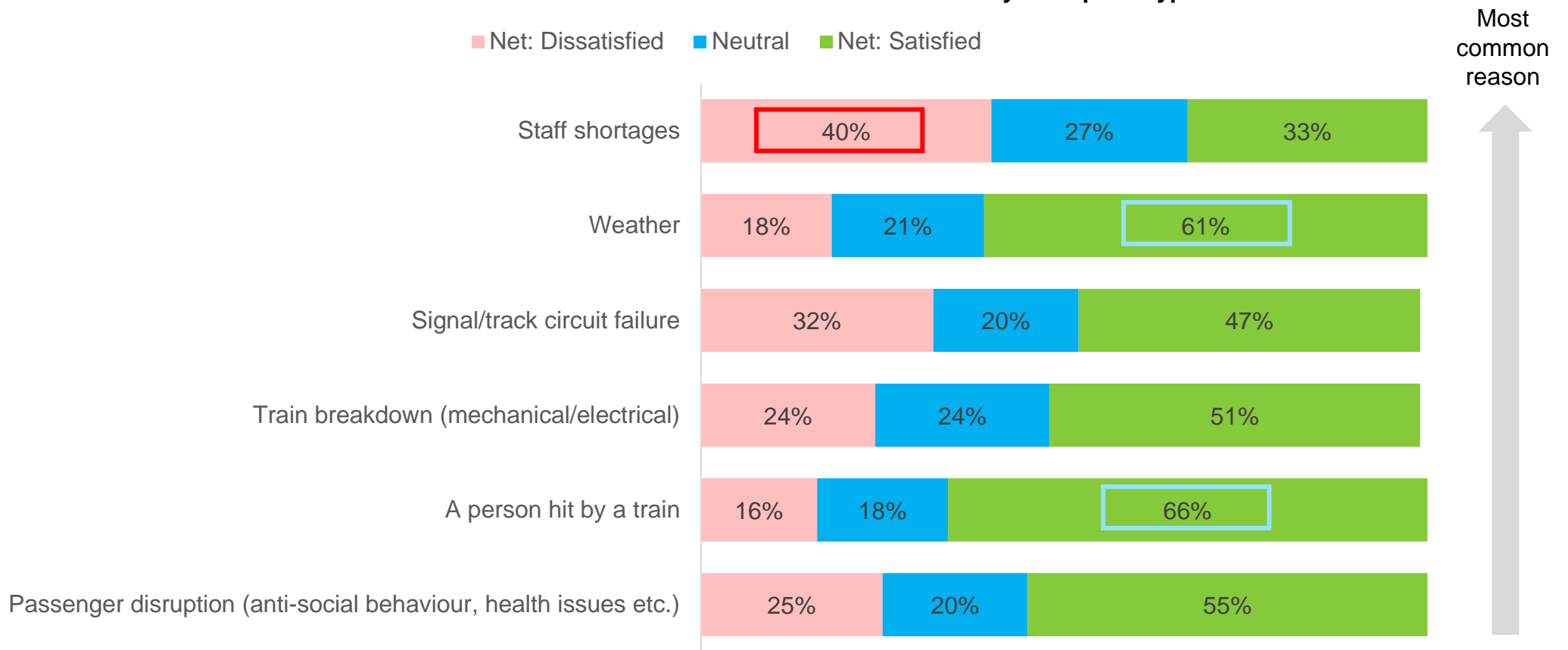
STAFF SHORTAGES IS BOTH THE MOST COMMON REASON FOR UNPLANNED DISRUPTION AND THE ONE WHICH PASSENGERS ARE LEAST SATISFIED WITH HOW IT IS HANDLED

It appears easiest to satisfy people when disruption is linked to the weather or if someone has been hit by a train.

Satisfaction with handling of unplanned disruption by disruption type

Most common reason

■ Net: Dissatisfied   ■ Neutral   ■ Net: Satisfied

Disruption type	Net: Dissatisfied	Neutral	Net: Satisfied
Staff shortages	40%	27%	33%
Weather	18%	21%	61%
Signal/track circuit failure	32%	20%	47%
Train breakdown (mechanical/electrical)	24%	24%	51%
A person hit by a train	16%	18%	66%
Passenger disruption (anti-social behaviour, health issues etc.)	25%	20%	55%

Other explanations excluded as bases size <50

QA5. Now thinking about the most recent unplanned rail disruption that you can recall impacting your journey(s). Can you recall the reason for the disruption? QA7. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the unplanned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved? Base: staff shortages = 257, Weather = 160, Signal/track circuit failure = 114, Train breakdown =111, Person hit by train n = 76, Passenger disruption = 65

THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE FREQUENT UNPLANNED DISRUPTION ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE DISSATISFIED BY THEIR EXPERIENCE
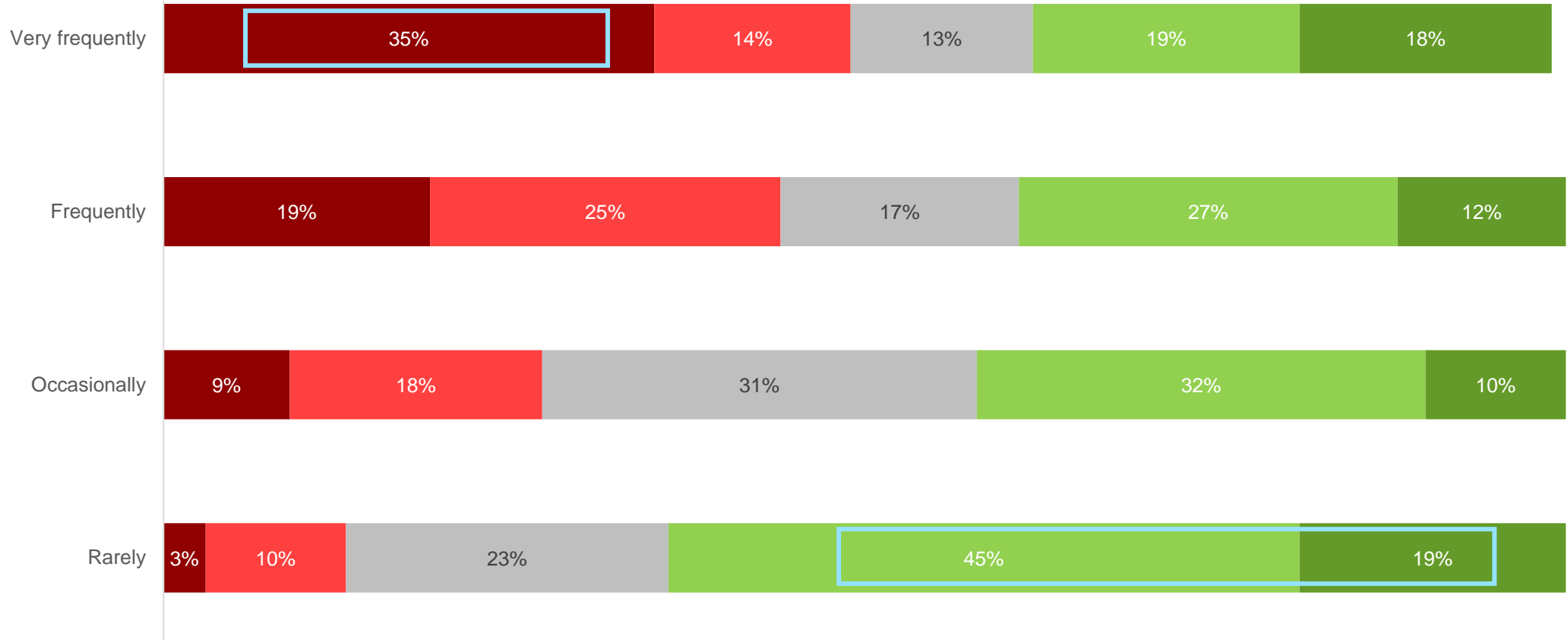
The most positive are those who only rarely experience unplanned disruption

■ quadrangle

Phase 1 – Qual
Phase 2 – Quant
Phase 3 – Qual

Unplanned
disruption

Satisfaction with unplanned disruption

Frequency of unplanned disruption

Legend: ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Frequency	Very dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
Very frequently	35%	14%	13%	19%	18%
Frequently	19%	25%	17%	27%	12%
Occasionally	9%	18%	31%	32%	10%
Rarely	3%	10%	23%	45%	19%

QA7. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which the unplanned disruption was handled by the train company and others involved?
Base: Very frequently = 98 Frequently = 217, Occasionally = 471 Rarely = 366

UNPLANNED DISRUPTION: STRONG COMMUNICATIONS IS KEY – LOTS OF CLEAR UPDATES, EMPATHETICALLY DELIVERED

quadrangle

Satisfaction – key themes

✓ Did their best in the circumstances/not their fault
✓ Compensation offered
✓ Good service
✓ Minimal impact/short delay
✓ Good comms/regular updates/information provided

> "A train ended up delayed and then cancelled but it's a station with frequent trains and they had it fixed by the next train. A **conductor/staff** member was also walking up and down the platform giving us **updates** about the issue."
>
> Female, 28, leisure

> "It meant we would arrive a bit late but it's all good. I never understand people getting over concerned about these kind of things."
>
> Male, 63, commuter

> "I was in First Class, and they **fed us** while we waited for the line to reopen."
>
> Male, (age not given), pre-pandemic commuter

> "It was **sympathetically** and **quickly** handled."
>
> Male, 37, commuter

> "Kept informed about the delay almost every 15 minutes."
>
> Male, 54, pre-pandemic commuter

> "Although this causes an issue, nothing really could have been done at the time, even clearing the **leaves** would have been futile owing to the time of year, and them coming down frequently."
>
> Female, 64, leisure

> "Informed via **numerous media points**."
>
> Male, 48, leisure

Dissatisfaction – key themes

• Lengthy delays
• Impact on their plans
• Poor environment - crowded trains during pandemic, cold platforms
• No/little/poor communication/information
• Lack of understanding from the operator

> "A complete **lack of information** about the delay was exacerbated by staff redirecting passengers to two different platforms before directing us back to the original platform **two hours** after the scheduled departure time."
>
> Female, 75, leisure

> "I was stuck in an open station in the dead of night **in the cold for four hours**."
>
> Prefer to self-describe, 24, leisure

> "**Communication** with passengers was **shocking**. Sat on tracks stationary for over three hours with hardly any updates. Whole journey was 11 hours, and it should have been less than three."
>
> Female, 39, business

> "I could have listed up to eight reasons, but lack of communication stands out - **travellers NEED TO KNOW!**"
>
> Female, 77, leisure

> "**Dreadful communication**, no leadership, no compensation despite need for **overnight stay**, no adherence to **Covid** regs, just **appalling**."
>
> Female, 59, leisure

> "**They're leaves!!** Not blocks of concrete! If Canada can have a running train service in deep snow, why do we go into melt down with flipping leaves on the track?"
>
> Male, 41, leisure

quadrangle

Phase 1 – Qual
Phase 2 – Quant
Phase 3 – Qual

*"**Apologise properly** rather than saying beyond their control which is ridiculous."*
Male, 66, business

*"Been **honest**, given us the option to go home a different way."*
Female, 27, leisure

*"Give **more notice** of which platform to wait at and don't change it once decided, and make sure people have time to get to the platform to board the train."*
Female, 30, commuter

*"Give further **information** on what other train services are available, at what time, and **how to reschedule** to the nearest time at no added costs."*
Male, 30, commuter

*"If disruption is to last more than an hour **buses** should be put on and **extra staff** should be on the platform advising customers what to do. No good just tweeting delays and expecting people to just wait it out."*
Male, 43, leisure

*"**Manage queues**, manage **access to other train companies**. Point out toilets in a five-hour queue, provide **guidance** on timing; offer coffee (as airlines would), show interest in care of the elderly, not employ a five-year-old to manage things etc etc."*
Male, 64, business

*"Put people on the floor to assist passengers, drink or **food vouchers** for passengers, **prioritise older passengers**."*
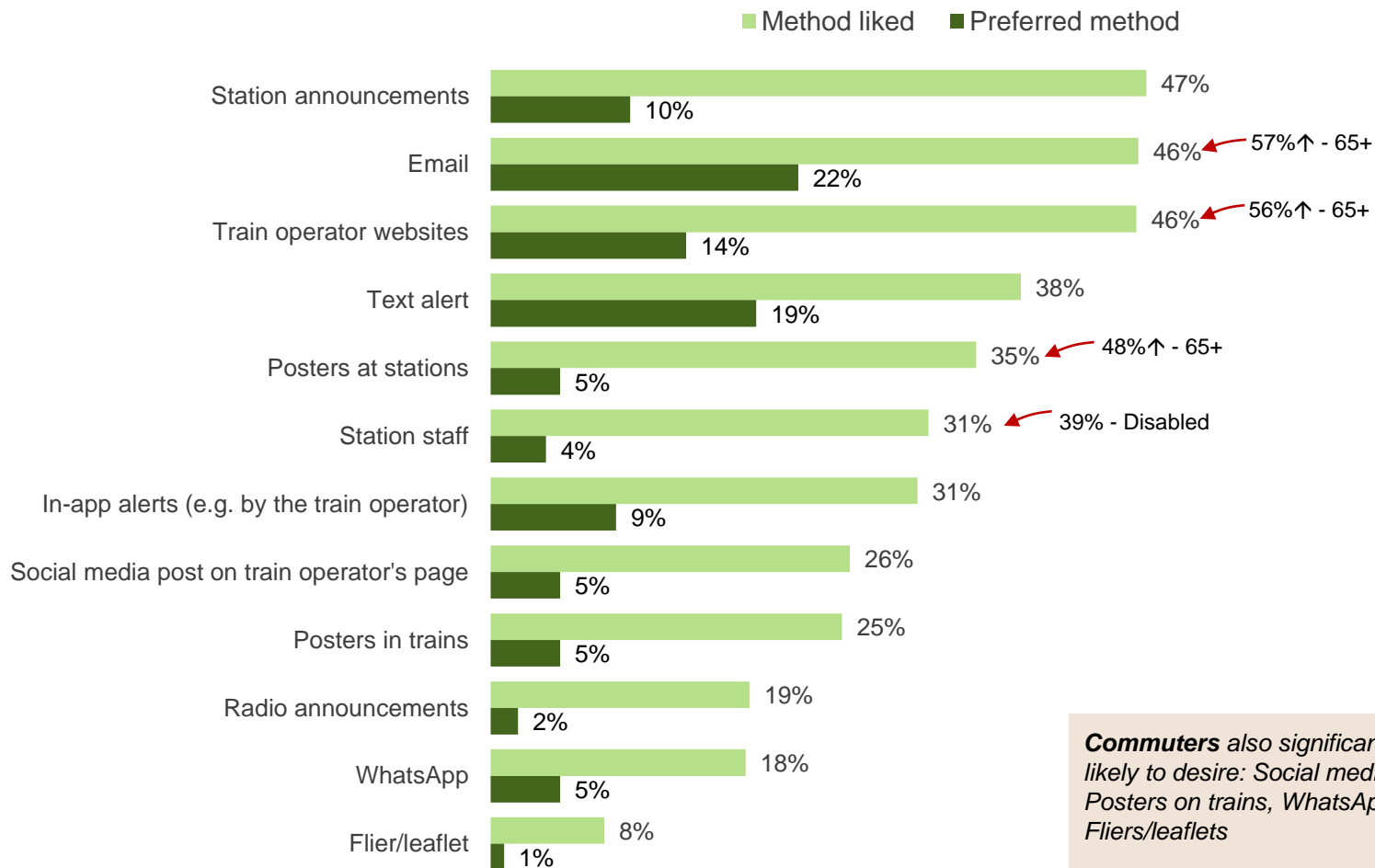Male, 68, business

QA9. Other than reducing the length of the delay, is there anything which the rail company could have done to communicate or manage the situation better?

transportfocus

quadrangle

EMAIL AND TEXT ALERTS ARE THE MOST PREFERRED METHODS OF COMMUNICATION FOR PLANNED DISRUPTION

Station announcements, email and train operator websites are the most widely liked communication channels

Methods of communication for <u>planned</u> disruption

Legend: ■ Method liked ■ Preferred method

Method	Method liked	Preferred method	Significant diff note
Station announcements	47%	10%	
Email	46%	22%	57%↑ - 65+
Train operator websites	46%	14%	56%↑ - 65+
Text alert	38%	19%	
Posters at stations	35%	5%	48%↑ - 65+
Station staff	31%	4%	39% - Disabled
In-app alerts (e.g. by the train operator)	31%	9%	
Social media post on train operator's page	26%	5%	
Posters in trains	25%	5%	
Radio announcements	19%	2%	
WhatsApp	18%	5%	
Flier/leaflet	8%	1%	

Commuters also significantly more likely to desire: Social media posts, Posters on trains, WhatsApp and Fliers/leaflets
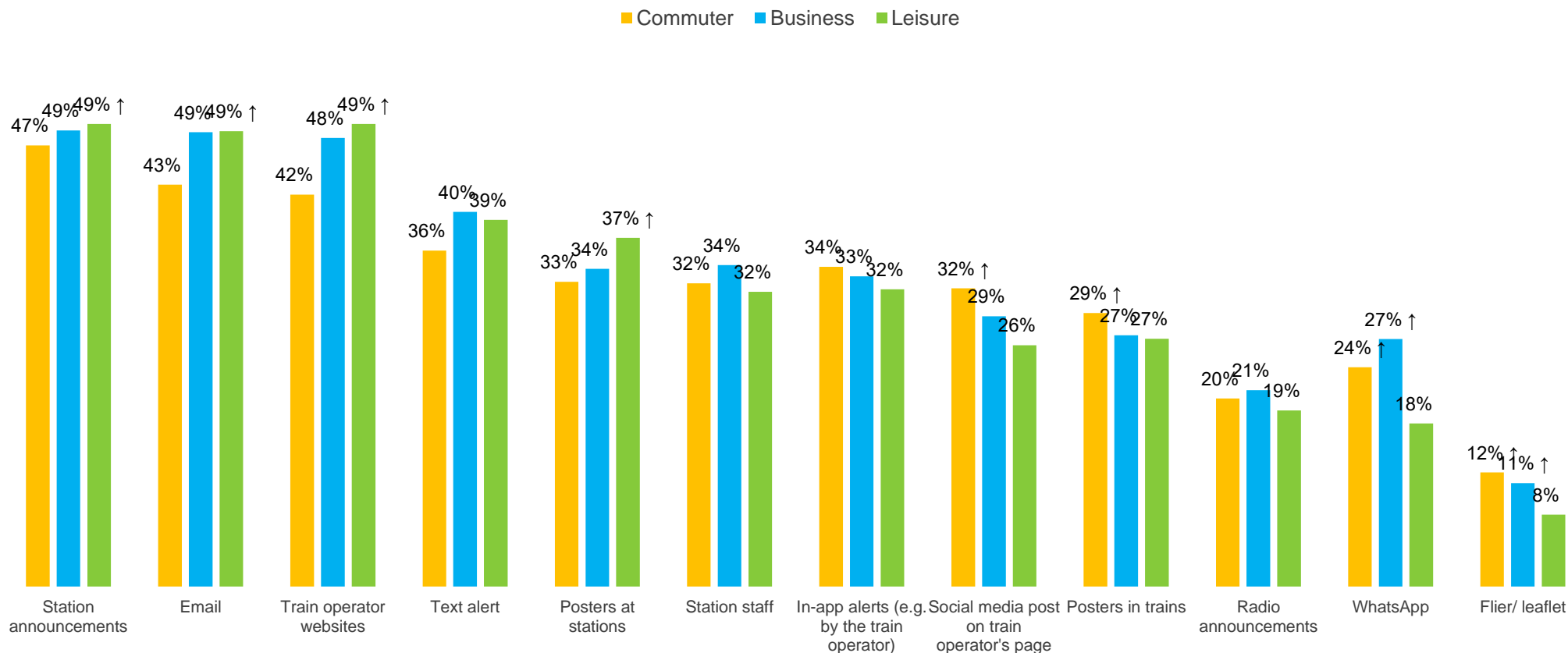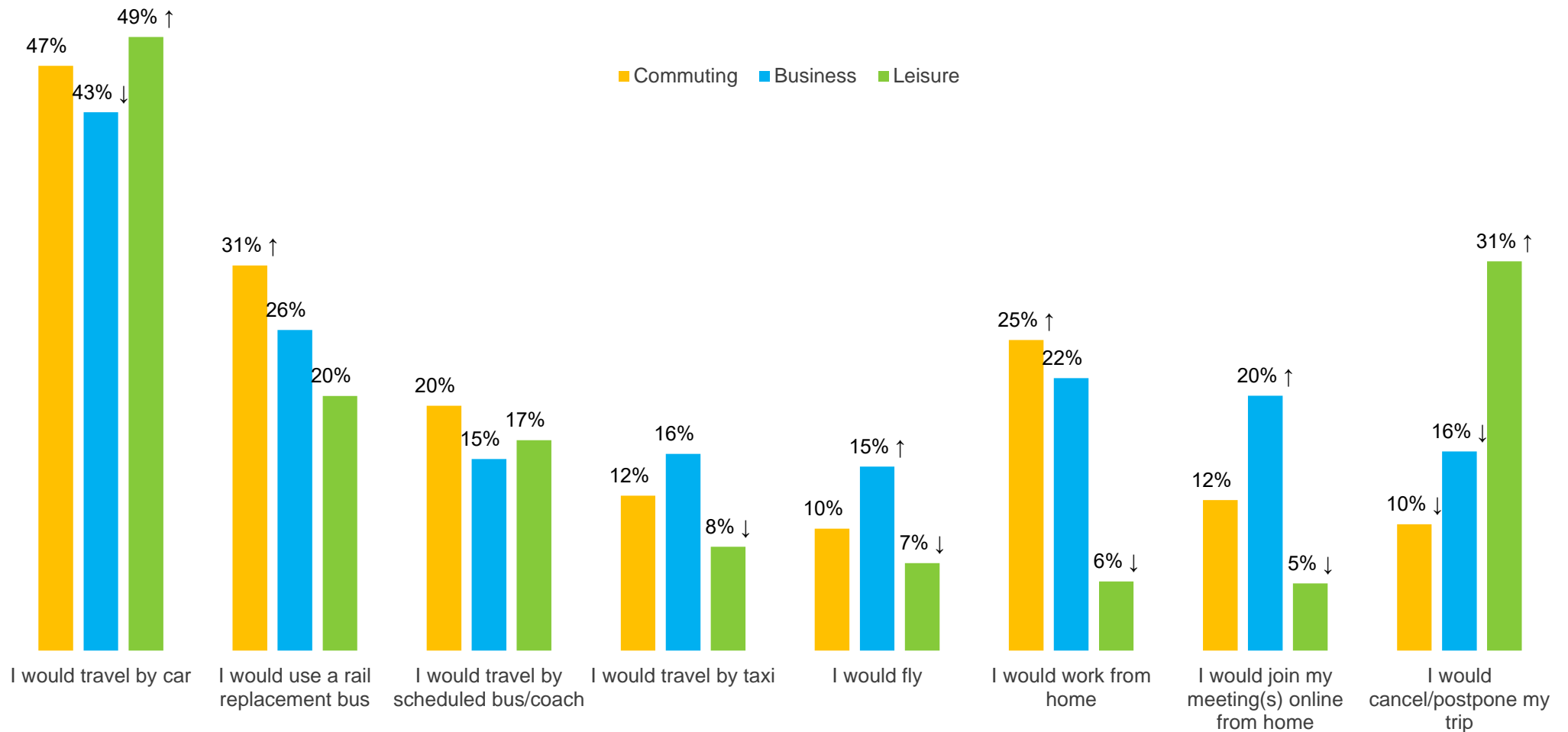
QB1a. When thinking about planned disruption to a main line that you use/have used, which of the following methods of communication would you like to receive the information through?
Base: Total = 1,409, Avanti West Coast = 511

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

transportfocus

LEISURE PASSENGERS LIKE THE BROADEST RANGE OF CHANNELS TO BE USED TO INFORM THEM ABOUT PLANNED DISRUPTION

Commuters and business travellers are more likely than average to prefer digital channels, along with methods which might be more likely to be seen by regular travellers (i.e. posters on trains and fliers/leaflets)

Methods of communication for <u>planned</u> disruption

Legend: ■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Station announcements	47%	49%	49% ↑
Email	43%	49%	49% ↑
Train operator websites	42%	48%	49% ↑
Text alert	36%	40%	39%
Posters at stations	33%	34%	37% ↑
Station staff	32%	34%	32%
In-app alerts (e.g. by the train operator)	34%	33%	32%
Social media post on train operator's page	32% ↑	29%	26%
Posters in trains	29% ↑	27%	27%
Radio announcements	20%	21% ↑	19%
WhatsApp	24% ↑	27% ↑	18%
Flier/ leaflet	12%	11% ↑	8%

QB1a. When thinking about planned disruption to a main line that you use/have used, which of the following methods of communication would you like to receive the information through?
Base: Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1160

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

AROUND HALF OF PASSENGERS WOULD TRAVEL BY CAR IF THERE WAS A PLANNED LINE CLOSURE FOR A WEEK. ONE QUARTER OF COMMUTERS WOULD WORK FROM HOME

Three-in-ten leisure travellers would cancel their trip

Likely reaction when a line closed for a week

Legend: Commuting ■ Business ■ Leisure

I would travel by car: Commuting 47%, Business 43% ↓, Leisure 49% ↑
I would use a rail replacement bus: Commuting 31% ↑, Business 26%, Leisure 20%
I would travel by scheduled bus/coach: Commuting 20%, Business 15%, Leisure 17%
I would travel by taxi: Commuting 12%, Business 16%, Leisure 8% ↓
I would fly: Commuting 10%, Business 15% ↑, Leisure 7% ↓
I would work from home: Commuting 25% ↑, Business 22%, Leisure 6% ↓
I would join my meeting(s) online from home: Commuting 12%, Business 20% ↑, Leisure 5% ↓
I would cancel/postpone my trip: Commuting 10% ↓, Business 16% ↓, Leisure 31% ↑

QB2_SUM. Still thinking about similar planned disruption, and the type(s) of journey that you make by train, what would be your likely reaction be if you heard that the line was closed for a week?
Base: Commuting = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AND WEEKDAYS ARE THE MOST INCONVENIENT TIMES FOR PLANNED DISRUPTION

Journey purpose has little influence over the most inconvenient time for planned disruption

Most inconvenient times for planned disruption

■ Most inconvenient

A weekday	28%
Christmas holidays	21%
A weekend	15%
School holidays	14%
A weekday during half-term	11%
Bank holidays	10%

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

	Commuter	Business	Leisure
A weekday	28%	29%	28%
Christmas holidays	21%	19%	21%
A weekend	14%	15%	15%
School holidays	13%	13%	14%
A weekday during half-term	13%	14%	10%
Bank holiday	11%	9%	10%
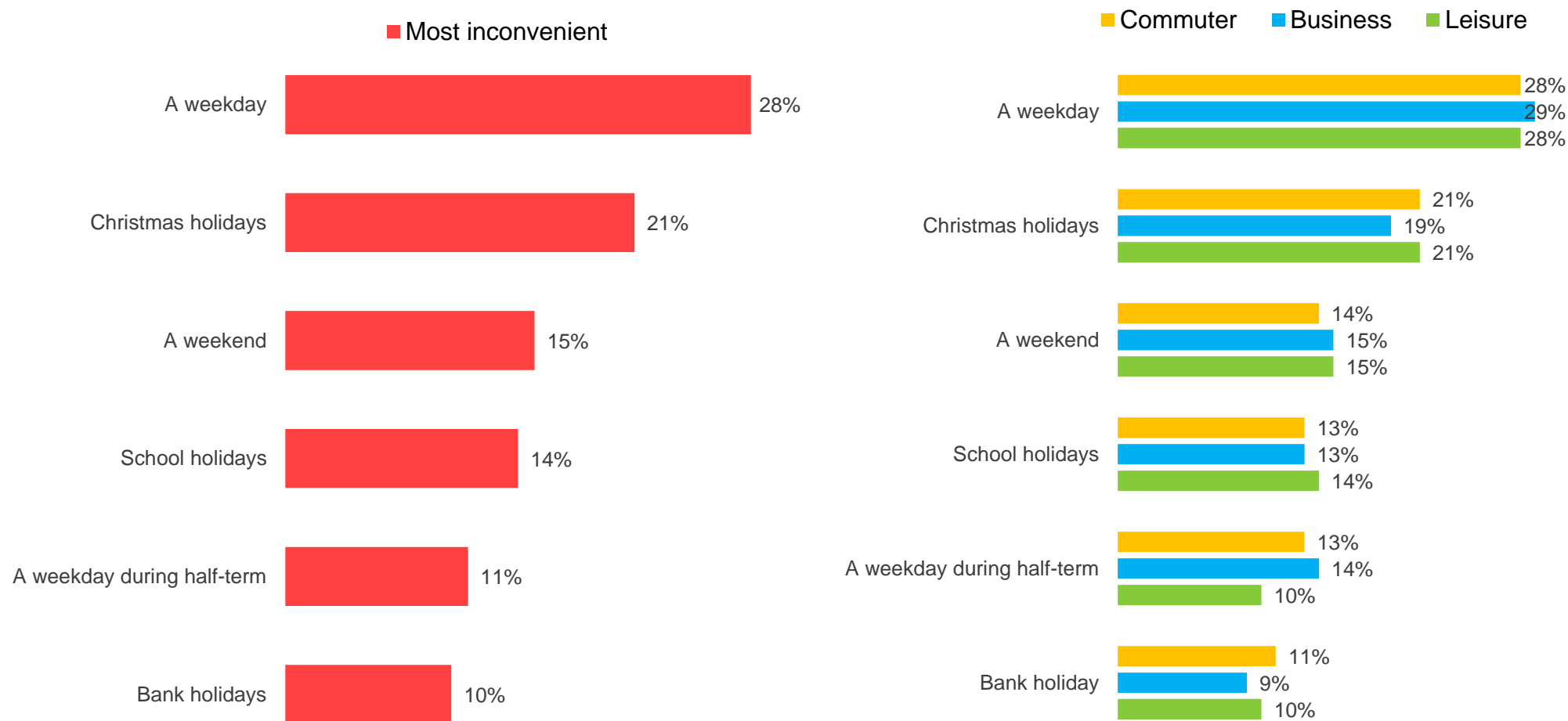
QA10. Traditionally, planned engineering works on railways has tended to take place during generally quieter periods, for example, at weekends or during school holidays. Based on your rail travel patterns now and into the future, please rank the following periods in order of inconvenience, where 1 = least inconvenient and 6 = most inconvenient.
Base: Total = 1,409

MOST PASSENGERS WOULD EXPECT TO HEAR ABOUT ENGINEERING WORKS BY BETWEEN ONE WEEK AND A MONTH IN ADVANCE

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However, those leisure travellers who book advance tickets would like considerably more notice – two-in-five would expect to hear about it more than a month in advance

Expected advance notification

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

Importance of advanced notice
"When you are on there (the website) to make a booking, you should be made aware through banners and warnings that there will be disruption on these routes... So, at the point of purchase, it should be very clear of when the planned works are...."

Older commuter

Leisure Advance ticket purchasers – 39% - 5 weeks+

Leisure Advance ticket purchasers – 15% 3 months+

	A week in advance	2 weeks in advance	3-4 weeks in advance	5-6 weeks in advance	7-8 weeks in advance	3 months in advance
Commuter	24%	21%	26%	10%	9%	6%
Business	26%	21%	24%	9%	12%	7%
Leisure	19%	21%	28%	10%	11%	8%
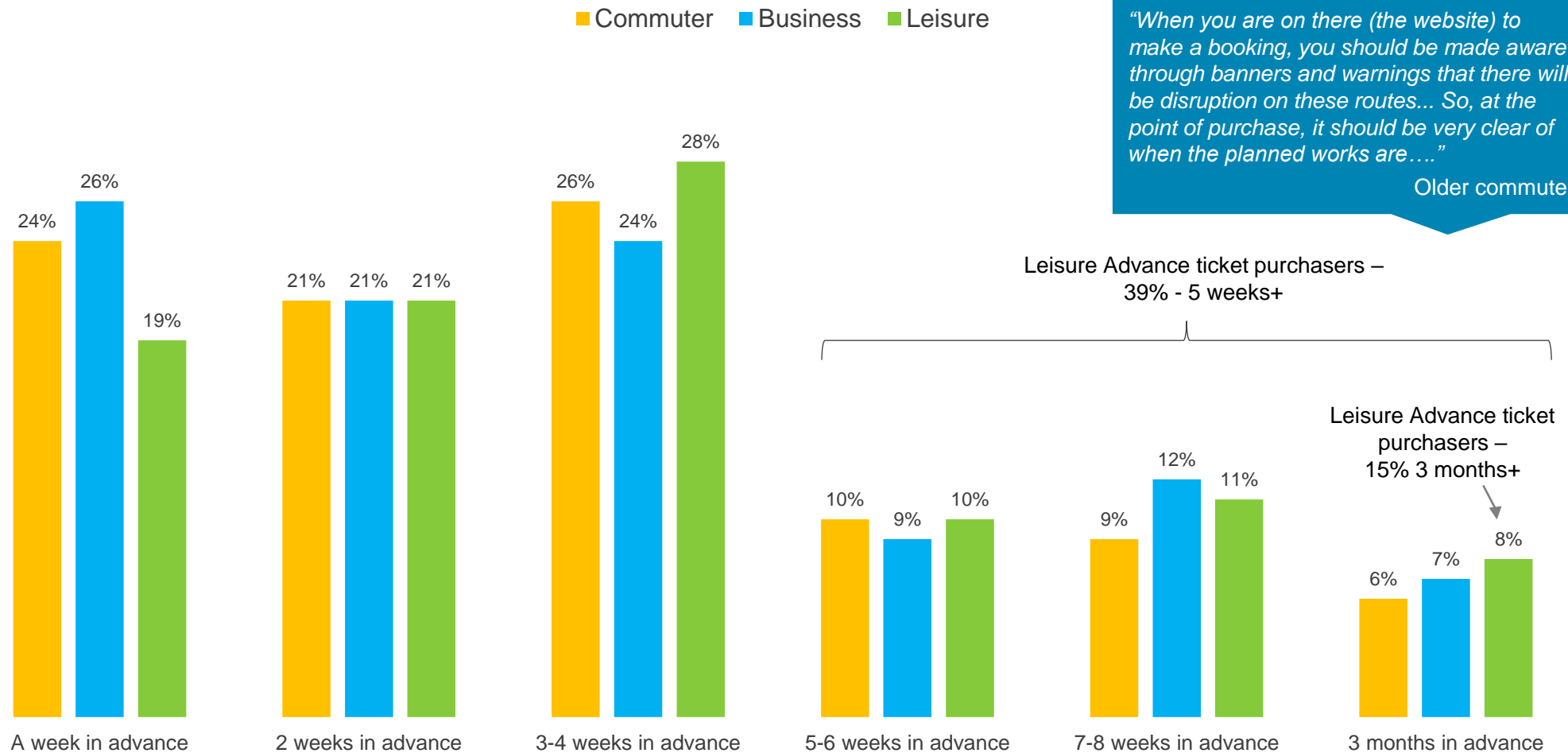
QB6. Now thinking about a scenario where a line would be close for engineering works for one week, approximately how far in advance would you expect to be informed about the line closure?
Base: Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

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FACED WITH UNPLANNED DISRUPTION TO A DAY TRIP, LEISURE PASSENGERS APPEAR LEAST LIKELY TO CONTINUE ON AN OVER-CROWDED TRAIN AND MOST LIKELY TO ABANDON THEIR JOURNEY

Overall, however, the variation in behaviours across journey purposes are perhaps not as great as they might have been pre-Covid

Preferred options when encountering <u>unplanned</u> disruption by type of journey

■ Travel on an overcrowded train with standing room only
■ Share a taxi (with little luggage space) provided by the train company
■ Travel on a replacement bus
■ Abandon the journey and return home

Please note that this is a reaction to a day trip. We saw in the qualitative research, that for other 'bigger' leisure trips (e.g. weekends away, weddings or other overnight trips) leisure passengers are more likely <u>not</u> to abandon their journey.

Travelling to work on a regular commuter train: 25%, 19%, 35%, 18%

Travelling to a work meeting: 23%, 19%, 32%, 20%

Planned daytrip with family or friends: 15%, 18%, 36%, 24%
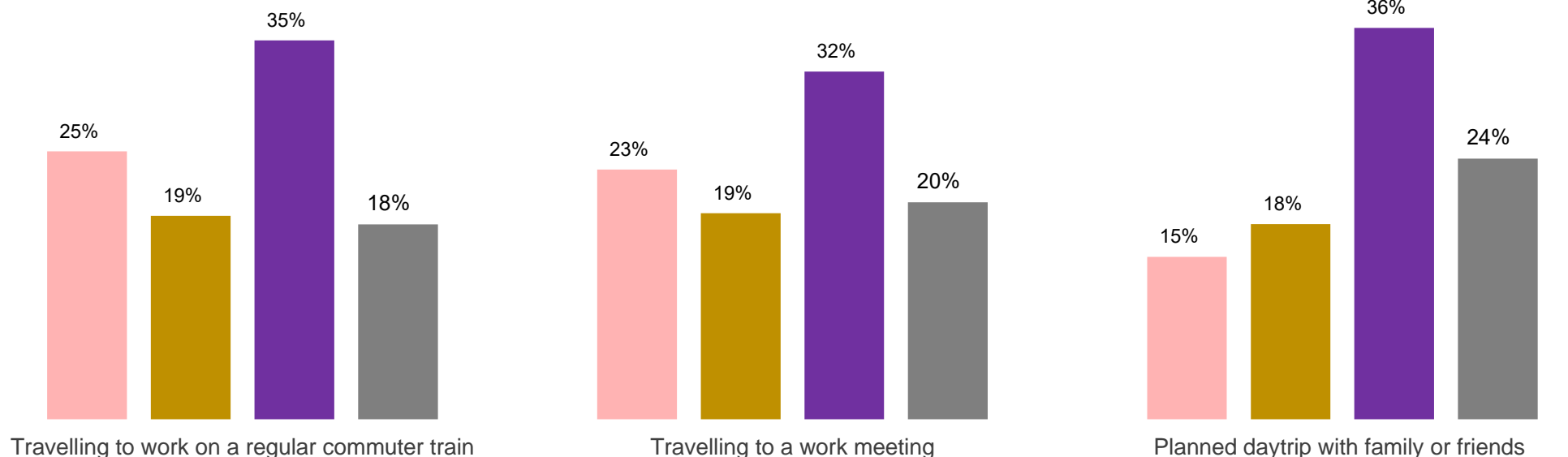
QC1. You have arrived at your local railway station in the morning hoping to travel to work on your regular commuter train. When you arrive, you learn that there is disruption on the line which is causing a delay to the departure of your train. On an average day, which, if any, of the following alternative travel options would prefer? QC2. You are travelling to a work meeting in another part of the country and have arrived at your local railway station. When you arrive, you learn that there is disruption on the line which is causing a delay to the departure of your train. On an average day, which, if any, of the following alternative travel options would prefer? QC3. You have planned a daytrip with family or friends. When you arrive at your local station with your family/friends, you learn that there is disruption on the line which is causing a delay in the departure of your train. On an average day, which, if any, of the following alternative travel options would prefer? Base: Travelled by rail in 2021/22. Travelling to work on a commuter train = 373 (Commuters), Travelling to a work meeting = 320 (Business passengers), Planned daytrip with family of friends = 905 (Leisure passengers)

PASSENGERS ARE SPLIT ON WHERE THEY WOULD PREFER TO WAIT DURING DISRUPTION

First class passenger preference for the concourse perhaps linked to use of lounge facilities

Preferred place to wait during a delay

Legend: Commuter, Business, Leisure

On the train but with no definite departure time: Commuter 27%, Business 32%, Leisure 34%

In the station retail areas: Commuter 26%, Business 28%, Leisure 27%

On the platform: Commuter 21%, Business 18%, Leisure 18%

On the concourse (with limited seating): Commuter 15%, Business 14%, Leisure 9%

32%↑ First class (commuter) vs 10%↓ Standard class (commuter)
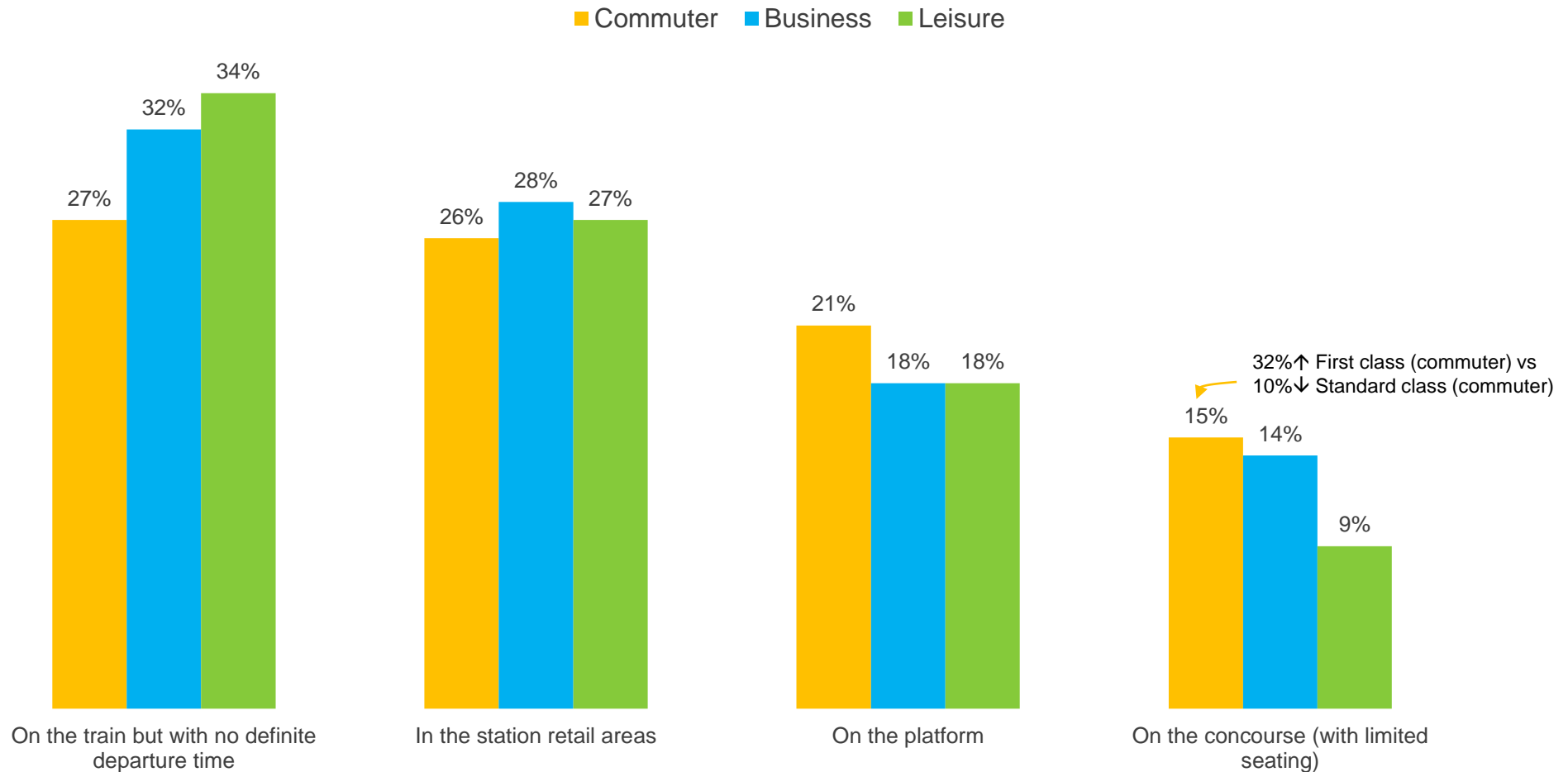
QC7. Again, thinking about if there is a delay to your train, if you have the option, where would you prefer to wait? Base: Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

COMMUTERS AND BUSINESS PASSENGERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO ABANDON THEIR JOURNEYS THAN LEISURE PASSENGERS

Passengers use a variety of factors to determine what to
do when faced with unplanned disruption at stations

Sit it out and wait for the next train

- The **length of the delay** is clearly a determining factor – a short delay is normally not an issue, unless it has major implications in terms of missed connections.

- **Leisure travellers** on long journeys (familiar or unfamiliar) are also likely to sit and wait – they have often paid for activities or accommodation at their destination, and/or have important social reasons for their trip. At the same time, they may not have very tight deadlines (i.e. they are not going to a meeting at a set time).

- The **stations facilities** (e.g. seating and refreshments) are important up to a point, but for most it just makes the wait more comfortable, rather than significantly impacting on their decision.

Use alternative arrangements

- **Rail replacement bus services** are not a popular solution because they normally add significant amounts of time to the journey time. However, they are **a means to an end**, and there is no other simple and cost-effective option, passengers will take it.

- Using **alternative routes** are preferred if

  a) It is clear that the other operator will accept their ticket

  b) That the route is not too complicated, with too many connections

  c) It is going to be quicker than the alternatives

Abandon their journey

- **In many cases this is not an option**, unless the delay is so significant and impacting other travel routes, that the customer will miss the event or activity that they are going to.

- However, since the Covid-pandemic, working from home and attending meetings remotely has become far more commonplace for **commuters** and **business** travellers – making them more likely to abandon their journeys. (This obviously doesn't apply when they are on their return journey.)

Scenario planning based on the available information
"Be honest. You can make your own informed decisions usually based on worst case scenario... "Is there a chance this train will be cancelled yes or no?" Then I will base my decision on what I am going to do, who I am going to see. If it is likely to run, how long might the delay be? 7 hours? 5 hours? - you narrow things down so you can make your decision."

Older leisure passenger

No choice but to travel
"There was advice not to travel if you don't have to, but when you make plans several weeks in advance it is not really that simple… I think I could travel the next day for free, but obviously for me that's no use. When you have already spent so much in hotels or whatever, it is not worth not going, you just lose too much money."

Younger leisure passenger
who travels to watch Charlton AFC

Importance of the journey
"It is obviously down to the reason why I am travelling in the first place. It depends on how important it is. If it was a work meeting I just can't get there, but if it was my best friend's wedding...."

Older business passenger

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Passengers use a variety of factors to determine what to do when faced with unplanned disruption at stations

Additional perspectives

- **Following the herd**. One person, provided an honest assessment – which is perhaps more common than others liked to admit – in that she followed what others were doing. If everyone was getting off the train, so would she.

- **Overcrowding.** Another observation was about the predicted impact of crowds on train capacity. As one respondent observed, if there are huge crowds at a station or platform, he is normally concerned about being able to get on to the next train, and so will either abandon his journey or seek other travel arrangements.

- **The believability of information**. If passengers have confidence in the information being provided they are more likely to sit and wait, even if it is for a relatively long time (in the case of leisure travellers).

- **Refund status** – if you know you are going to be refunded regardless, you are more likely to return home.

- The **amount of time to move between platforms**. For some travellers – e.g. the elderly or those with limited mobility – it can take a lot longer to move between platforms (e.g. waiting for space on lifts), this can be stressful.

- **Trainline** is often referenced. Most are positive about the information that they receive about disruption – even if 45min-1 hour before the journey, it can mean that people avoid a wasted journey to the station.

Challenges with equipment and tannoy messages

"In Crewe station the tannoy is awful and you can struggle to understand what they are saying, or they will rattle through it quite quickly, and you have to go on the internet to find out a little bit more."

Older leisure passenger

*"I used to book through the **Trainline** app and the communication I got through them was much better. In the app I got a notification to tell me if the train was cancelled or delayed, but I have booked direct (on the website) the last few times because the prices have been better – I don't know if Avanti even have an app, I have not been made aware of it if they do?"*

Younger leisure passenger, physical disability

*"If we are given **information that is believable** and you feel that the people passing on the information have faith in it… then we would wait for the next train…. I would rather wait an hour or an hour and a half in the stations, rather than traipse home and have to do the same thing later the same day or the following day."*

Older leisure passenger, reduced mobility

47
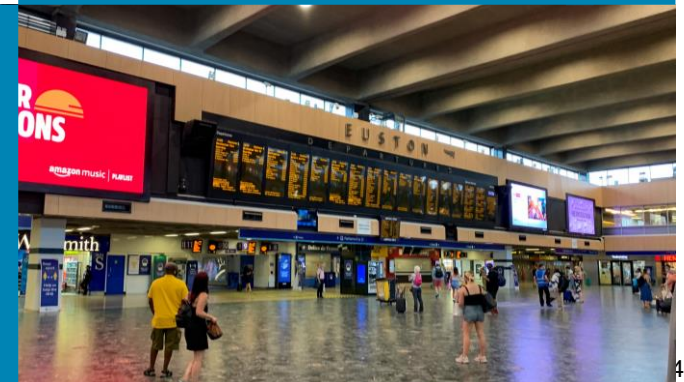
THOSE ON UNFAMILIAR ROUTES CAN BE CONFUSED BY GEOGRAPHIC REFERENCES – AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE IS PREFERRED

People's comprehension of references to, for example, points of the compass, vary significantly – above all, most desire clarity around the status of their specific train.

Describing lines and services disrupted

- Many people are confused by references to points on a compass when it comes to their train journeys – references to northbound or southbound services can be very confusing

- There is slightly less of an issue when it comes to using final destinations in communications ("the next train to Manchester from platform 2") – especially for more seasoned travellers familiar with the route – however, this is largely because they can often check that this is their train by looking at display boards in stations or on the trains themselves

- In an ideal world the communication would include:

  - The train time "the 12.43 to Manchester from platform 2" – as this is often a way that passengers identify their trains

  - And if possible, a list of destinations "the 12.43 to Manchester from platform 2 calling at…" although many realise that this might be impractical

---

Unfamiliar journeys

"I can go into panic mode when I am getting on a train to a destination I have not been to before, and I have to get someone to tell me that it is the right train that I am getting on. Every other mode of transport I am okay with, it is just trains that panic me."

Older leisure passenger

Compass confusion

"I just need to know if I am going from Glasgow to Euston, no north, south, west – not even the in between bits, just the A to B, then I can work it out."

Older business passenger

Compass confusion

"My geography is really bad, unless I am clearly going north or south, anything other than that really confuses me, I have to Google if I am not clear."

Younger commuter

Using multiple sources

"When you buy the ticket it is quite clear which service you are getting on, also the screens at the train stations tell you the train you are getting on, and you also have it written all over the train as well."

Younger commuter

Compass confusion

Are you okay with descriptions using points on a compass?

"Absolutely not! Honestly, I have not got a clue. I know Manchester is north and London is south. Done. That's all I need to know."
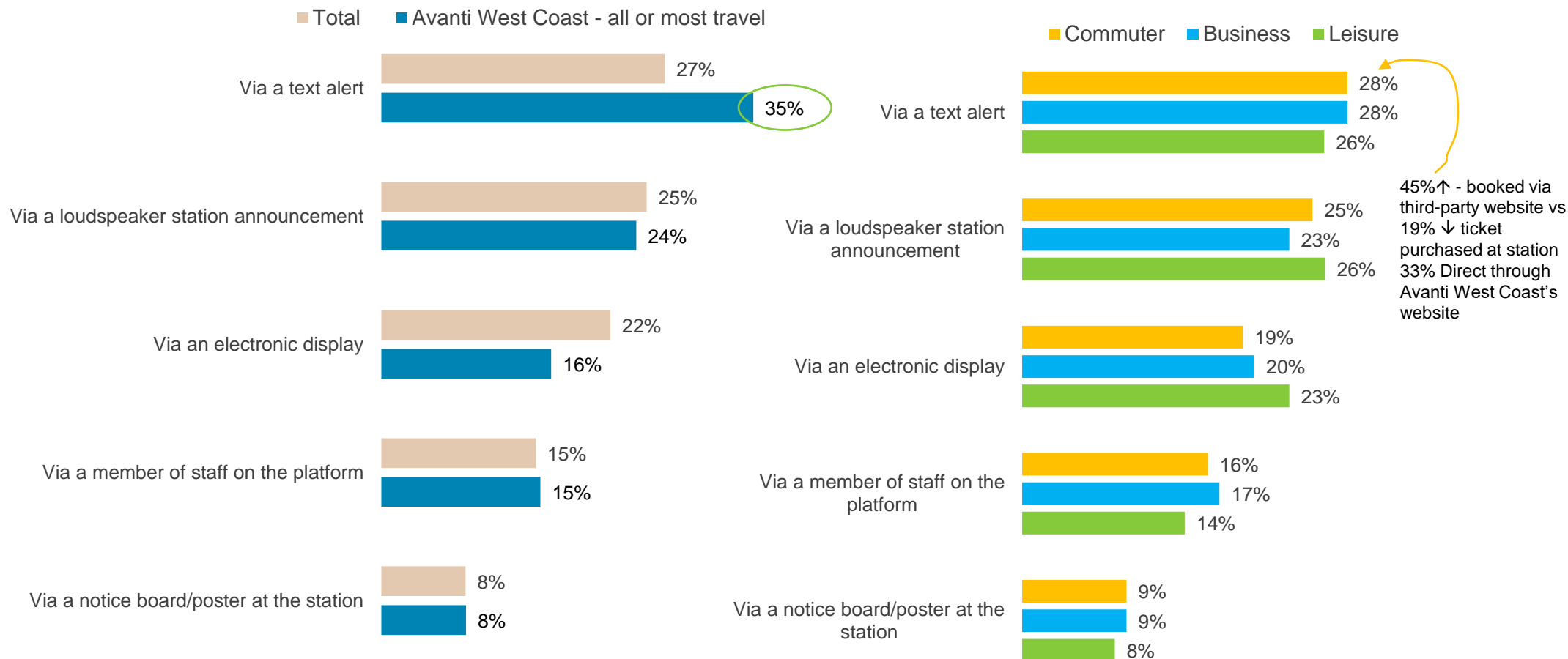
Younger commuter

HAVING STARTED THEIR JOURNEY, THREE-IN-TEN AVANTI AND BUSINESS PASSENGERS WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE TEXT ALERTS WITH UPDATES ON UNPLANNED DISRUPTION

quadrangle

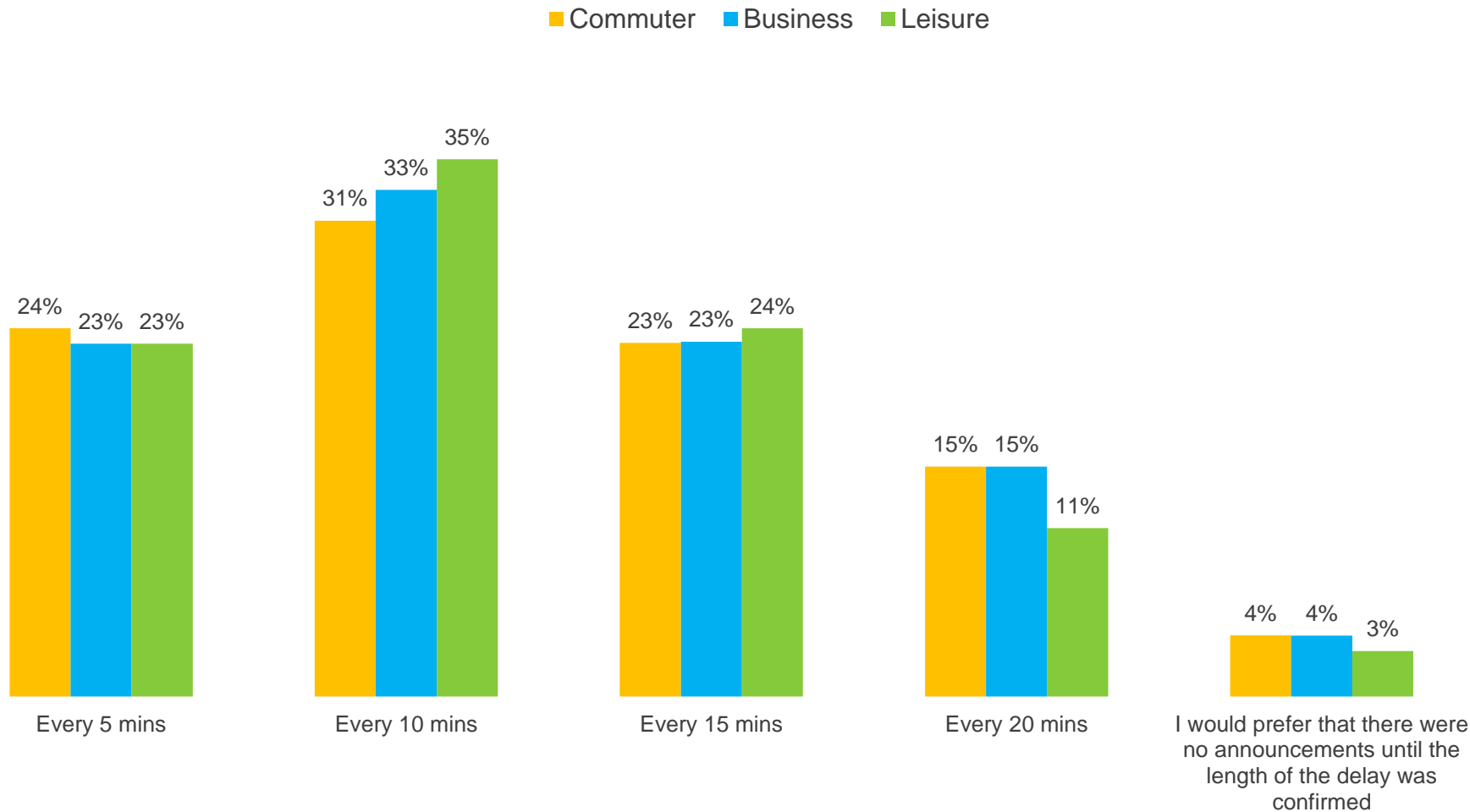**Preferred channels for <u>unplanned</u> disruption updates**

Legend: ■ Total ■ Avanti West Coast - all or most travel

Via a text alert
- Total: 27%
- Avanti West Coast: 35%

Via a loudspeaker station announcement
- Total: 25%
- Avanti West Coast: 24%

Via an electronic display
- Total: 22%
- Avanti West Coast: 16%

Via a member of staff on the platform
- Total: 15%
- Avanti West Coast: 15%

Via a notice board/poster at the station
- Total: 8%
- Avanti West Coast: 8%

Legend: ■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

Via a text alert
- Commuter: 28%
- Business: 28%
- Leisure: 26%

Via a loudspeaker station announcement
- Commuter: 25%
- Business: 23%
- Leisure: 26%

Via an electronic display
- Commuter: 19%
- Business: 20%
- Leisure: 23%

Via a member of staff on the platform
- Commuter: 16%
- Business: 17%
- Leisure: 14%

Via a notice board/poster at the station
- Commuter: 9%
- Business: 9%
- Leisure: 8%

45%↑ - booked via third-party website vs 19% ↓ ticket purchased at station 33% Direct through Avanti West Coast's website

QC6. If you discover there is a delay to your train when you arrive at the station, how would you prefer travel updates be communicated? Base: Total=1,409, Avanti West Coast= 250; Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

HALF OF PASSENGERS WOULD LIKE ANNOUNCEMENTS AT LEAST EVERY 10 MINUTES, INCLUDING THREE-IN-FIVE LEISURE PASSENGERS

Preferred time between announcements – even if no news

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Every 5 mins	24%	23%	23%
Every 10 mins	31%	33%	35%
Every 15 mins	23%	23%	24%
Every 20 mins	15%	15%	11%
I would prefer that there were no announcements until the length of the delay was confirmed	4%	4%	3%

QC4. If there is a delay to your train, how frequently would you expect updates via station announcements, even if it is to merely update passengers that the train operator is still working on the issue?
Base: Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

PASSENGERS WANT TO BE KEPT INFORMED – REGARDLESS IF THERE IS NO FURTHER NEWS ON THE LENGTH OF THE DELAY

quadrangle

Phase 1 – Qual
Phase 2 – Quant
Phase 3 – Qual

Unplanned
disruption

Two-thirds would also like to be told the precise reasons behind disruption

Regular announcements are still helpful even if the train operator doesn't know how long the delay will last
% agree/disagree

3%   1%

18%

47%

31%
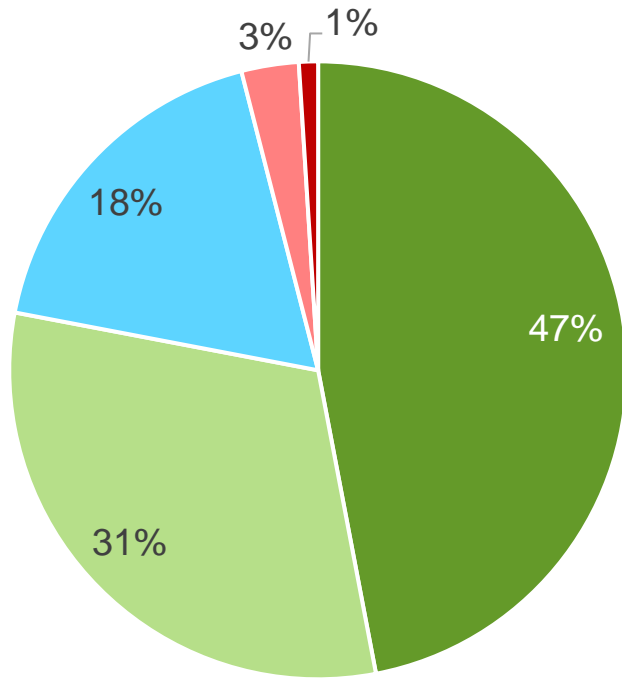
- ■ Strongly agree (9-10)
- ■ Agree (7-8)
- ■ Neutral (4-6)
- ■ Disagree (2-3)
- ■ Strongly disagree (0-1)

Important that passengers know the precise details behind causes of disruption
% agree/disagree
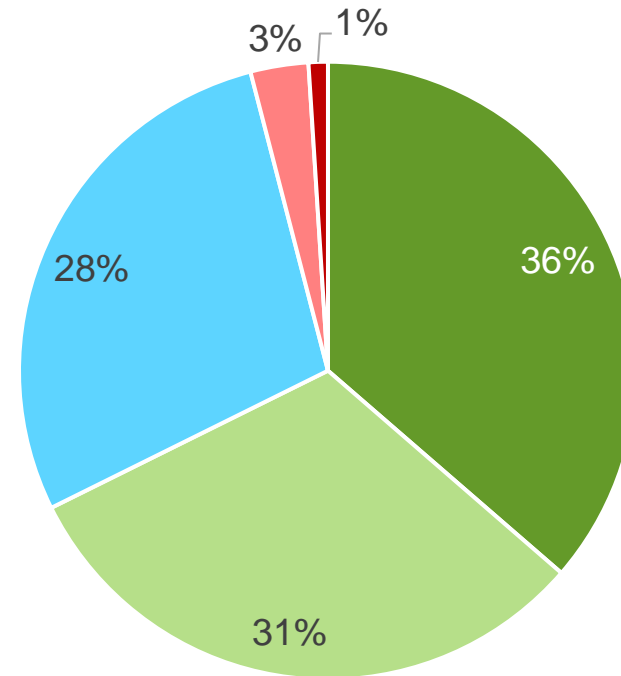
3%   1%

28%

36%

31%

- ■ Strongly agree (9-10)
- ■ Agree (7-8)
- ■ Neutral (4-6)
- ■ Disagree (2-3)
- ■ Strongly disagree (0-1)

QD2_5. Still on the subject of rail disruption, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - When the train operator doesn't know how long the delay will last – regular announcements on when the next update will be is still very helpful. QD2_9. Still on the subject of rail disruption, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - It is important for passengers to know the precise details behind the causes of disruption
Base: Total = 1,409

quadrangle

A 'LITTLE EXTRA' COMPENSATION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR PASSENGERS DURING A DELAY – BUT ALL THE FACTORS WERE IMPORTANT TO A SIZEABLE MINORITY

Most important in making a delay more bearable

This question was tailored to the individual, with each person shown the response they gave for each of these categories

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

	Waiting location	Channel of communication	'Little extra' compensation	Station announcements
Leisure	17%	25%	34%	19%
Business	19%	23%	30%	23%
Commuter	16%	24%	34%	21%
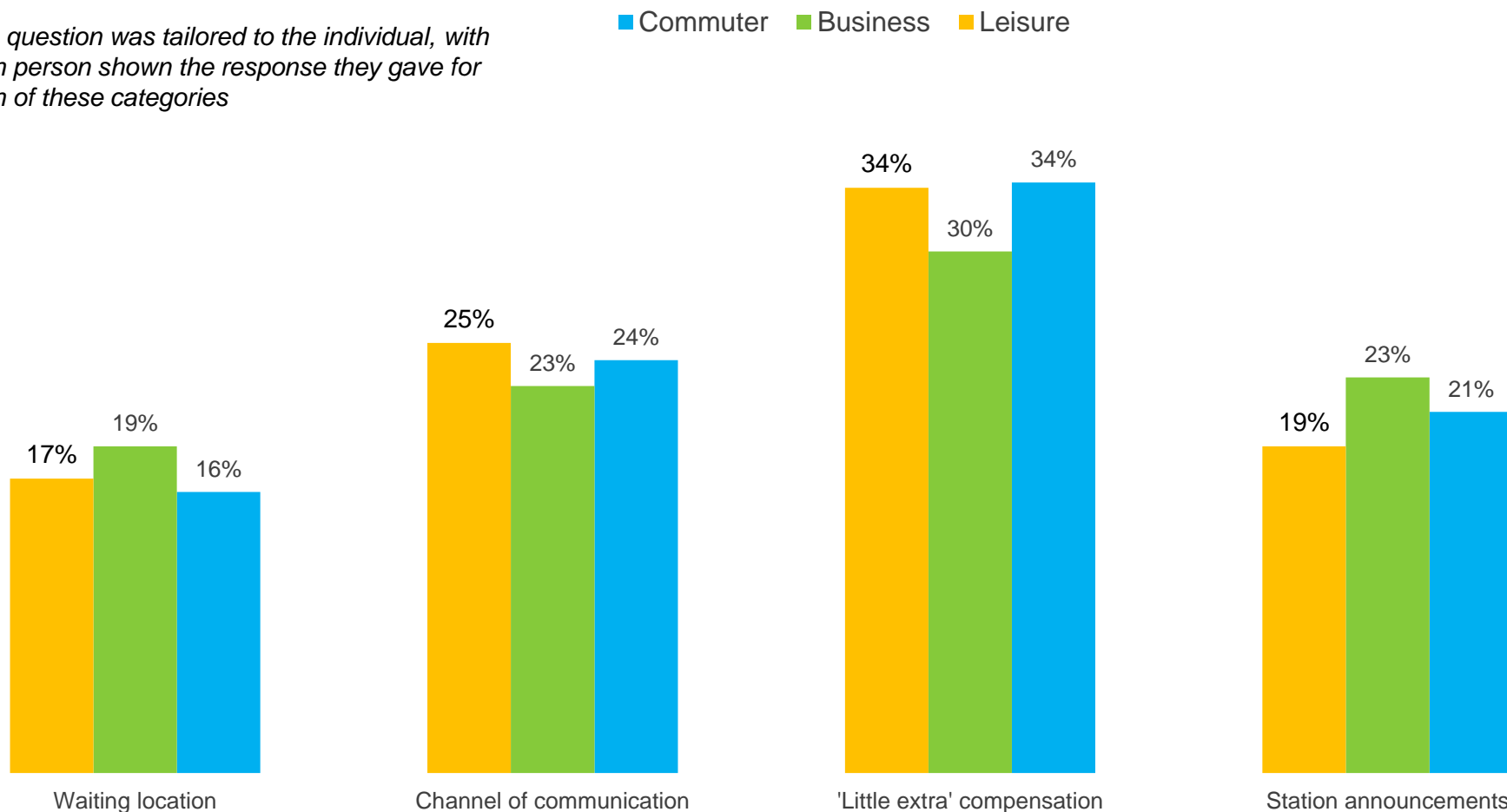
QC8. Still thinking of an unexpected delay to your train journey, overall, which of the following factors is most important to you in terms of making the delay more bearable. Base: Total = 1,409, Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

A CASH VOUCHER OR DISCOUNT IS THE MOST POPULAR TOKEN AS COMPENSATION FOR A DELAY – ALTHOUGH THIS IS LESS POPULAR WITH FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS

quadrangle

Phase 1 – Qual
Phase 2 – Quant
Phase 3 – Qual

Unplanned
disruption

Preferred 'little extra' compensation

53%↑ Standard class
vs 34%↓ First class

23%↑ First class
19%↑ Annual season ticket

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

	Commuter	Business	Leisure
A £5 voucher for a discount off future travel	48%	41%	48%
A free hot drink	21%	25%	23%
A sandwich voucher	14%	15%	12%
A bottle of water	9%	10%	6%
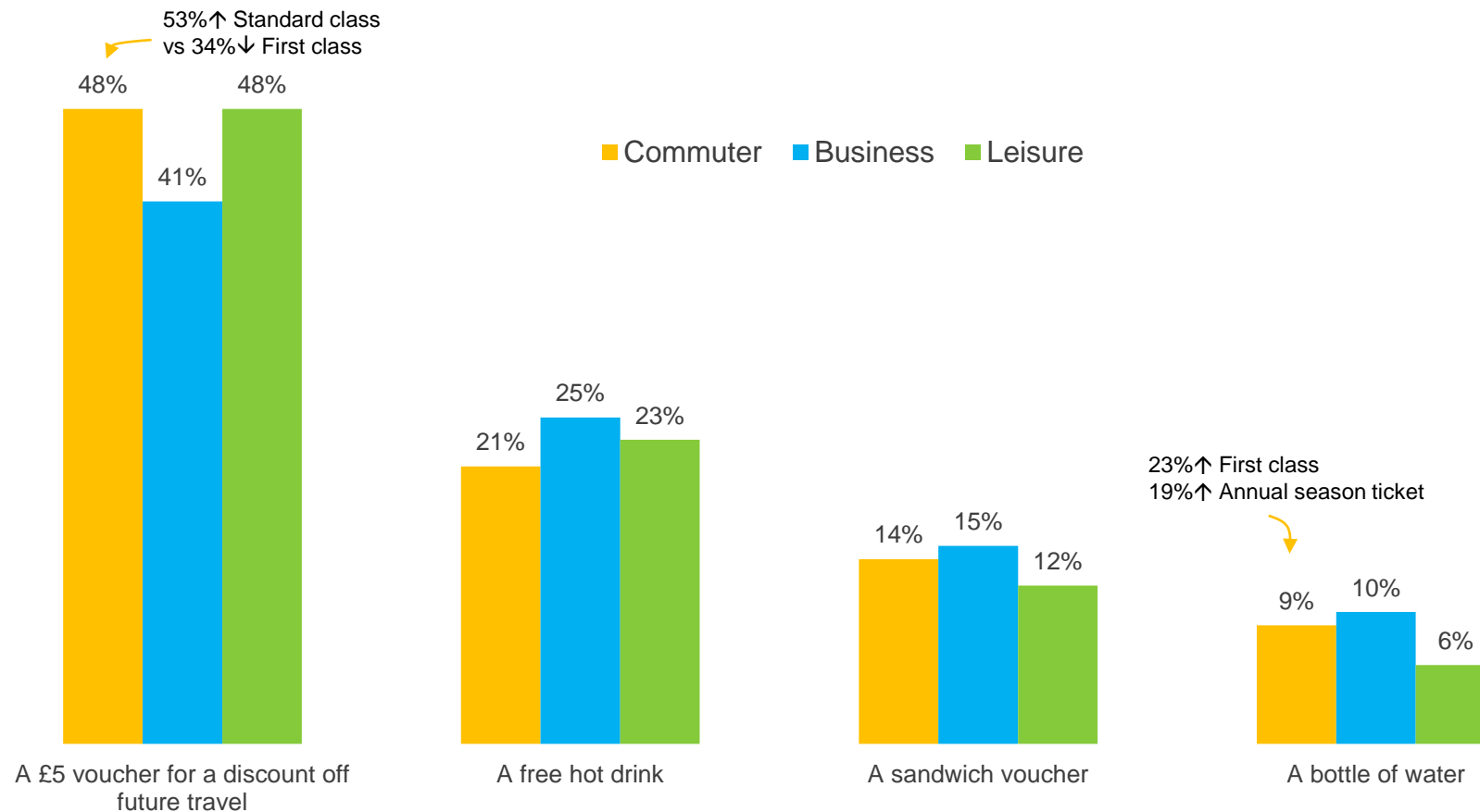
QC5. If there is a delay to your train, which, if any, of the following would you prefer as a 'little extra' compensation for the inconvenience caused? Base: Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

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QUALITATIVE INSIGHT SUPPORTS THE VALUE IN 'LITTLE EXTRAS' AND THAT PASSENGERS DO NOT HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

quadrangle

Phase 1 – Qual
Phase 2 – Quant
Phase 3 – Qual

Unplanned
disruption

Customers like the idea of a "little extra" as a gesture that illustrates that the train operator recognises that the delay has caused an inconvenience.

Stimulus – lessening the impact of disruption

For passengers who decide not to abandon their journeys, what can we do to make them feel as positive about the situation as possible?

Think about:

How important is the waiting area? Where would they prefer to wait?

How should we handle compensation? Would they expect it in this instance?

A little extra: after what length of delay do you think they would expect or hope for a gesture from Avanti West Coast (over and above any compensation)? Why this amount of time?

The sort of gesture would you expect to receive

What about

- *Coffee voucher?*
- *£5 discount for a future journey?*
- *Sandwich voucher?*
- *Bottle of water?*

Summary

To a large extent, **the specific gesture is of secondary importance to the fact that it is made at all**.

As we found in the quantitative research, the discount voucher for future travel is probably the most popular, but the specific selection often comes down to personal preference.

Some reference that the compensation paid via delay repay is a legal requirement so, while Avanti West Coast is often praised for doing this quickly and without hassle, the payment of the compensation itself is often dismissed as something that must be paid.

In contrast, money-off for a coffee or a bottle of water, might be lower in value, but it is a simple way of saying "we understand that you have been inconvenienced" – **an indirect and perhaps less risky way of illustrating empathy than messages through communications channels**.

Overall, it is clear that **customers don't have unrealistic expectations** – some may suggest a pair of vouchers (e.g. a discount on future travel and a coffee) but even a small gift would be valued. However, it also should be positioned appropriately, it is a baseline illustration of kindness, no more.
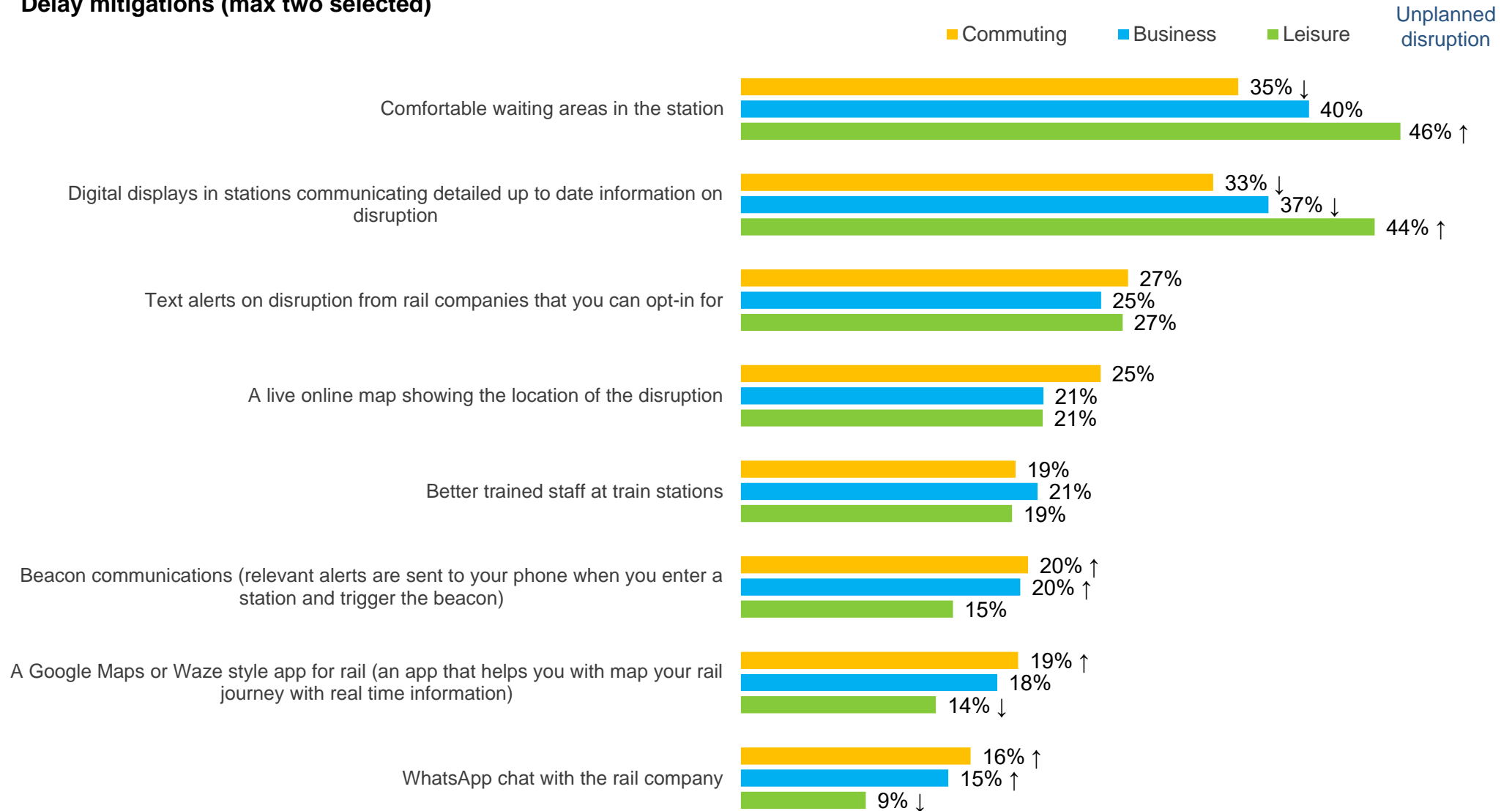
Thoughts on the length of the delay upon which a gesture might be triggered varied considerably. Half-an-hour tended to be the minimum length of delay proposed, with some not expecting anything before an hour or so.

Outside of those suggested, other gestures included:

- Staff proactively handing out delay-repay forms to passengers on disrupted services
- Upgrades for future travel
- Offer of vouchers/discounts to attractions close to the West Coast Mainline
- Refreshments laid-on in waiting areas

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COMFORTABLE SEATING AND DIGITAL DISPLAYS ARE THE TOP PRIORITY FOR PASSENGERS – ESPECIALLY LEISURE PASSENGERS

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Delay mitigations (max two selected)

Unplanned disruption

■ Commuting   ■ Business   ■ Leisure

Comfortable waiting areas in the station
- Commuting: 35% ↓
- Business: 40%
- Leisure: 46% ↑

Digital displays in stations communicating detailed up to date information on disruption
- Commuting: 33% ↓
- Business: 37% ↓
- Leisure: 44% ↑

Text alerts on disruption from rail companies that you can opt-in for
- Commuting: 27%
- Business: 25%
- Leisure: 27%

A live online map showing the location of the disruption
- Commuting: 25%
- Business: 21%
- Leisure: 21%

Better trained staff at train stations
- Commuting: 19%
- Business: 21%
- Leisure: 19%

Beacon communications (relevant alerts are sent to your phone when you enter a station and trigger the beacon)
- Commuting: 20% ↑
- Business: 20% ↑
- Leisure: 15%

A Google Maps or Waze style app for rail (an app that helps you with map your rail journey with real time information)
- Commuting: 19% ↑
- Business: 18%
- Leisure: 14% ↓

WhatsApp chat with the rail company
- Commuting: 16% ↑
- Business: 15% ↑
- Leisure: 9% ↓

QD1T1. Thinking about the future, please select up to TWO of the following things – with the first being the MOST important - that you think would be of greatest benefit in helping you to manage the impact of rail disruption on your daily life Base: Commuter = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,409

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

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ADAPTING TO THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PASSENGERS

Those with a disability will fall within the overall typologies, but specific needs concerning disruption may vary depending on the type of disability

Broadly, principles around communication and communication channels remain, but additional interventions could be considered to help improve the disruption experience for passengers in vulnerable circumstances

The need for careful planning is a feature of the feedback we received from vulnerable passengers. Disruption clearly undermines all passengers' preparation, but it is likely to cause even more distress among vulnerable customers

Overall, there is a sense that a lot more could be done to support vulnerable customers

"Forward planning is really important. I know from my background as a mental health nurse, small changes to routine can have catastrophic effects. It can create anxiety and cause people to internalise things and blame themselves. People need to have time to plan changes when it comes to disruption"

Older, Sensory Disability

Physical

For those with physical or mobility related impairments, rail travel is managed through careful planning. Disruption can have significant secondary impacts:

- **Harder to access alternative stations** – routes taking passengers to alternative stations because of disruption are sometimes not viable for those with mobility issues if they have poorer accessibility. Quite often it will be easier to cancel the trip all together e.g. if the taxi bay is not by the station, if there is a long route out of the station, if there is no assistance there

- **Passenger assist not available** – needs to be booked in advance, disruption can result in a problem if the alternative route results in use of a station where there is no assistance

Potential interventions:

- **More flexibility of ticket** – ability for passengers to choose alternative routes with their ticket (allowing them to travel to nearby stations that have better accessibility and are more suited to their needs)

- **More detailed information about stations to help passengers plan** – for planned disruption passengers may need to consider which alternative routes allow them to use stations that they can safely access. It can be challenging to find up to date information about stations and knowledge from people answering the phones is mixed e.g. about if the lifts are working, if the toilets are open, staff availability

- **Real-time notifications** – if entrances or exits are blocked off or closed, ideally those with a physical disability need to be notified in advance

OTHER IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING THOSE WITH COGNITIVE AND SENSORY DISABILITIES

These suggestions may provide useful stimulus for ideas on how passengers in vulnerable circumstances may be better served during disruption

Cognitive

We spoke to passengers with a range of cognitive and mental health issues impacting their experience of disruption. At a broad level disruption leads to a change in circumstances that can be tough to navigate – especially 'in the moment'. This creates a high level of stress. We heard a number of intervention ideas that would improve their experience of disruption:

- **Different ways of communicating alternative routes** (e.g; by a usable step-by-step process) to help give extra clarity and prevent anxiety from spiking (e.g. those with dyslexia can struggle with working out timings, especially in the moment and 'on the go')

  - Services like Google Maps can help passengers plan their route more easily – can Avanti be better integrated within this (insofar as being able to provide live, up to date, timings)?

- Need for **additional reassurance** – generally seen as best delivered in person from someone on the platform with honesty and 'professional empathy', but can also be engendered through easy refunds and clearly communicated alternative routes

"If information comes on the tannoy and says 'there's a train leaving at x on platform whatever as there's disruption on the line' for me personally that's just background noise – I don't know that relates to me, my head just goes in the clouds so easily"

Younger, Cognitive Disability

Sensory

We also spoke to some passengers who were hard of hearing. As a result announcements at stations, on platforms and on trains are often very hard to make out. They suggested the following:

- **Multichannel approach** - generally ensuring that there are a range of different channels providing up-to-date information is particularly helpful for this customer group

- **App Notifications** to let people know that the train is stopped at a different platform, or a text message

- **Digital displays** around the station that can provide disruption updates, and are more reader friendly than the current boards

- **Passenger Assist Plus –** support on onward travel journeys or having a personal phone number they can use. Likewise more training about the needs of customers with different disabilities can help

"Travelling can be really stressful – I find it especially stressful these days. When plans change in the last minute, it's really horrible. You have to find some other way of getting there and sometimes it has to be done quickly, and you might not be able to work it out"

Older, Sensory Disability

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During the research we tested disruption communications provided by Avanti West Coast to understand passenger perceptions and gather ideas for how communications could be improved.
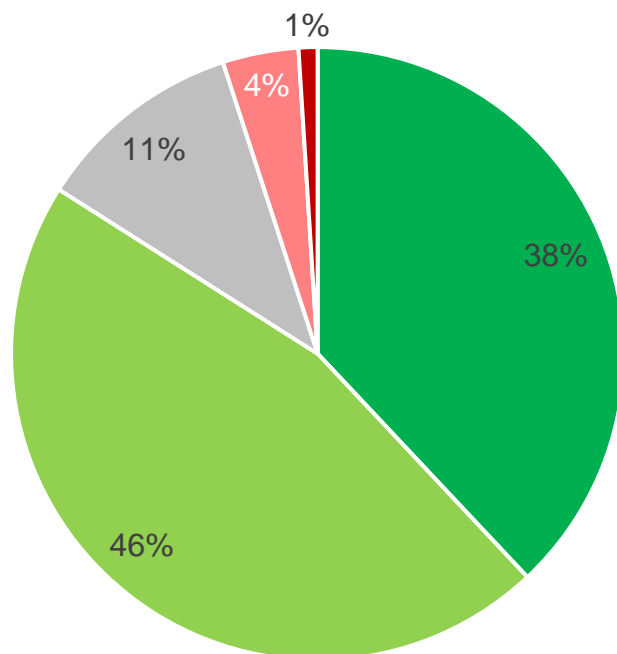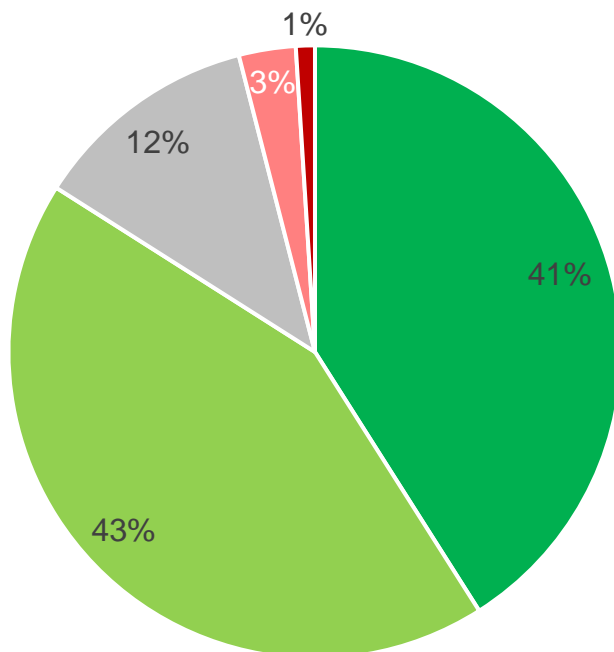
EMAIL CONTENT SHARED WITH PASSENGERS WAS WELL RECEIVED – BANK HOLIDAY ENGINEERING EXAMPLE

Responses were consistent across the different sub-groups

Planned disruption

Rating of overall message

- Very Good
- Fairly Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor

1%
4%
11%
38%
46%

Helpfulness rating
Passengers were asked to select a maximum of four words or phrases in the below communication and rate each on a scale of one to five, where one is 'most helpful' and five is 'least helpful'.
Key: words/phrases rated as 'most helpful' by:

- Over 21% of passengers
- 11-20% of passengers
- 1-10% of passengers

Hello,

Over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend (Saturday 29 – Monday 31 May), there'll be changes to our services as Network Rail carry out major upgrade works on the West Coast Main Line.

With sections of the West Coast Main Line closed, there will be changes to services on all routes. In addition, journeys will take longer and may involve a rail replacement service.

We strongly recommend you plan your journey in advance, make a reservation, and check the Avanti West Coast website before travelling.

We're committed to making your essential journey as safe as possible. From all of us at Avanti West Coast, we'd like to thank you for your patience and understanding with our teams and each other.

Avanti West Coast

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QB3a. Please read the following message and indicate how good it is in conveying the information that you would need as a passenger. Base: All asked = 931

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EMAIL CONTENT SHARED WITH PASSENGERS WAS WELL RECEIVED – BANK HOLIDAY ENGINEERING EXAMPLE

Essential to include scores
Passengers were asked to select a <u>maximum of three words or phrases</u> in the below communication that they consider essential to include.

Key: words/phrases selected as essential to include by:

- Over 21% of passengers
- 11-20% of passengers
- 1-10% of passengers

Responses were consistent across the different sub-groups

Planned disruption

Suggested improvements

- To be shorter
- To be more detailed/specific

Hello,

Over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend (Saturday 29 – Monday 31 May), there'll be changes to our services as Network Rail carry out major upgrade works on the West Coast Main Line.

With sections of the West Coast Main Line closed, there will be changes to services on all routes. In addition, journeys will take longer and may involve a rail replacement service.

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We're committed to making your essential journey as safe as possible. From all of us at Avanti West Coast, we'd like to thank you for your patience and understanding with our teams and each other.

Avanti West Coast

> "The whole message is too long and unclear, it needs to be concise and smaller. It just needs the basics."
> Female, 74, leisure

> "They could talk about which trains, what the rail replacement service will be, exactly which routes etc."
> Male, 52, business

> "A bit waffley. Don't need all the polite stuff. Just the basic must knows."
> Female, 61, leisure

> "It is not really contrite enough."
> Female, 36, commuter

> "More info about what kind of changes are happening and where the rail replacement will run from/to ."
> Female, 30, commuter

> "More detail - which parts of the line, where there is a bus service and exact timings - not enough detail in that message."
> Male, 71, leisure

QB3a. Please read the following message and indicate how good it is in conveying the information that you would need as a passenger. Base: All asked = 931

EMAIL CONTENT SHARED WITH PASSENGERS WAS WELL RECEIVED – LANDSLIP AT RUGBY EXAMPLE

Responses were consistent across the different sub-groups

Rating of message

- ■ Very Good
- ■ Fairly Good
- ■ Neutral
- ■ Poor
- ■ Very poor

1%
3%
12%
41%
43%

Helpfulness rating
Passengers were asked to select a <u>maximum of four words or phrases</u> in the below communication and rate each on a scale of one to five, where one is 'most helpful' and five is 'least helpful'.

Key: words/phrases rated as 'most helpful' by:

- • Over 21% of passengers
- • 11-20% of passengers
- • 1-10% of passengers

Hello,

We're getting in touch as you're due to travel with us shortly and there is currently some disruption that may impact your journey today between Birmingham New Street and London Euston at 8:51 AM. If you've already decided not to travel, you can ignore this message.

Due to a landslip near Rugby there will be alterations as our trains are diverted. As a result, there will be changes to departure/arrival times at some stations with trains being retimed on these days. In addition, journey times will be extended by around 15 – 30 minutes, as our trains will be diverted via Northampton.

We strongly recommend checking the National Rail Enquiries website before travelling for the latest updates about your journey.

If your journey has been delayed by 15 minutes or more, you might be entitled to some compensation. Head to www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/delayrepay for more information.

We're really sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Avanti West Coast

QB5a. We would now like you to think about the type of message that the train operator might send out via an email to notify potential passengers about the disruption. Please read the following message and indicate how good it is in conveying the information that you would need as a passenger. Base: All asked = 938

EMAIL CONTENT SHARED WITH PASSENGERS WAS WELL RECEIVED – LANDSLIP AT RUGBY EXAMPLE

Essential to include scores
Passengers were asked to select a maximum of three words or phrases in the below communication that they consider essential to include.

Key: words/phrases selected as essential to include by:

- Over 21% of passengers
- 11-20% of passengers
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Hello,

We're getting in touch as you're due to travel with us shortly and there is currently some disruption that may impact your journey today between Birmingham New Street and London Euston at 8:51 AM. If you've already decided not to travel, you can ignore this message.

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If your journey has been delayed by 15 minutes or more, you might be entitled to some compensation. Head to www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/delayrepay for more information.

We're really sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Avanti West Coast

Responses were consistent across the different sub-groups

Suggested improvements

- To be shorter/concise
- To be more specific and informative

"Needs to be much shorter. Maybe bullet point main parts. Please think of those struggling to read/English is second language/dyslexic + people with busy lives."
Female, 59, commuter

""Some stations" is not helpful and specific enough. Is my station going to be affected?"
Male, 22, leisure

"Again, much shorter, concentrate on key information such as stations affected by the disruption, dates and times."
Female, 62, leisure

"On these days - what days? Some stations - which stations?"
Female, 50, business

QB4a. We would now like you to think about the type of message that the train operator might send out via an email to notify potential passengers about the disruption. Please read the following message and indicate how good it is in conveying the information that you would need as a passenger. Base: All asked = 938
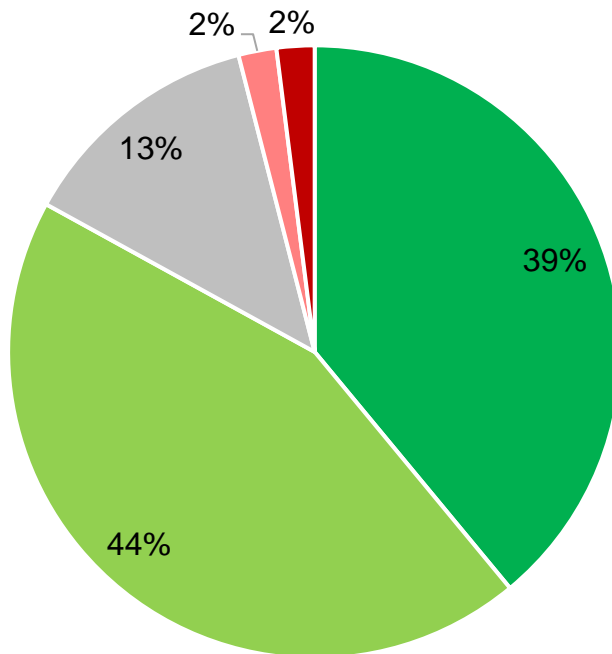
EMAIL CONTENT SHARED WITH PASSENGERS WAS WELL RECEIVED – ADVERSE WEATHER EXAMPLE

Responses were consistent across the different sub-groups

Unplanned disruption

Rating of message

- Very Good
- Fairly Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor

2% 2%

13%

39%

44%

Hello,

Due to expected heavy rain bringing adverse weather conditions in Scotland, the West Coast Main Line will be closed between Carlisle and Scotland on Tuesday 23 February until midday Wednesday 24 February.

As a result, there will be no trains to/from Motherwell, Glasgow and Edinburgh and changes to our services between Preston and Carlisle.

In addition, we'll be operating an amended timetable between Preston and Carlisle with an hourly service. Journeys between these stations may be subject to further alterations as a result of the heavy rain forecast in Lancashire and Cumbria.

For more information, please follow the link to the latest travel advice below.

We're really sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Avanti West Coast

Due to technical fault the highlighter rating was not completed for this message

QB4a. We would now like you to think about the type of message that the train operator might send out via an email to notify potential passengers about the disruption. Please read the following message and indicate how good it is in conveying the information that you would need as a passenger. Base: All asked n = 938

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EMAIL CONTENT SHARED WITH PASSENGERS WAS WELL RECEIVED – ADVERSE WEATHER EXAMPLE

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Responses were consistent across the different sub-groups

Unplanned disruption

Hello,

Due to expected heavy rain bringing adverse weather conditions in Scotland, the West Coast Main Line will be closed between Carlisle and Scotland on Tuesday 23 February until midday Wednesday 24 February.

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For more information, please follow the link to the latest travel advice below.

We're really sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Avanti West Coast

Due to technical fault the highlighter rating was not completed for this message

Suggested improvements

- To offer alternative travel arrangements
- To be more concise
- To offer compensation

"What alternative travel options are being provided or are available and whether tickets are able to be used on the alternative."
Male, 57, leisure

"Offer more information about the amended Service and if there are any alternatives for the cancelled routes."
Female, 37, Leisure

"Maybe offer compensation for delays or loss of trip."
Female, 36, commuter

"Over wordy. Needs to be shorter, more brevity."
Male, 81, business

"Remove unnecessary wording. Keep it short and factual, no waffle. Separate the info about no trains from the info about amended trains."
Female, 63, commuter

"Compensation should be offered as a norm, given the obscene cost of the tickets."
Male, 66, leisure

QB4a. We would now like you to think about the type of message that the train operator might send out via an email to notify potential passengers about the disruption. Please read the following message and indicate how good it is in conveying the information that you would need as a passenger. Base: All asked = 938

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IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH, USING EXAMPLES, WE ASKED PASSENGERS TO STEP INTO THE SHOES OF THE TRAIN OPERATORS

i. Euston closure - optimising communications and providing journey options for customers during an unplanned event

The challenge

For a given locality not all options will always be available, or we may advocate one method over the others more strongly.

As an operator you are required to provide the following information to passengers:

1. **Information on whether your journey by train is currently possible**

2. **Options for travelling by another route**

3. **Options for Emergency Replacement Transport**

4. **Options for travelling at a later time or on a later day**

5. **Customers are also entitled to a refund on a disrupted journey** if they abandon it because of the rail conditions

ii. Communicating the evolution of unplanned incidents

The challenge

It can take longer to restore the train service to normal, than to fix the initial problem - this is particularly true for long-distance journeys.

Following a line closure, some initial trains will start operating again.

But there will often be a period of more infrequent trains and a limited capacity.

How do you feel this will be best communicated to your passengers, when it cannot be certain when a normal service is likely to resume?

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Euston closure - optimising communications and providing journey options for customers during an unplanned event.

Stimulus

Part 1.

Unfortunately, we won't be able to run any services through the disrupted area for the next few hours. In the meantime, <u>you can use your original ticket to take a detour and get moving quicker</u>.

If you have a First-Class ticket, different operators will usually accept it wherever they can, but they might offer a different type of service to ours.

Part 2 – the solution (example*)

North West:

For everyone heading north west, please travel between London King's Cross and Leeds using London North Eastern Railway (LNER) and then switch to Transpennine Express services to Manchester Piccadilly, Liverpool Lime Street or Northern services for Preston, changing there for Lancaster.

* See the appendix for all regional descriptions

Summary

On the whole, passengers recognised the challenge posed with so many solutions required to cover all the potential routes and destinations that those trying to travel north out of Euston might be heading.

They were broadly satisfied with the information provided.

Part 1

The initial information is clear and to the point and says that **you have another option to get to your destination that we will help you with**.

This is critical.

Many passengers say that **the solution can often get lost in the problem**. They tend to be only interested in the cause of the delay up to a point, what is of paramount importance is what the operator and they can do about it. They need to regain control of their journey.

Part 2

Again, most people felt that the information which described the different solutions, depending on your end destination, was a good start point. However, this would obviously lead to further questions, especially for those who are unfamiliar with London, or the route diversion. For example:

- *How do I get to King's Cross/St Pancras/ Marylebone?*

- *Is my ticket valid on all services?*

- *How long is this route likely to take? When am I likely to reach my destination?*

This said, most appreciate that there is only so much that can be provided through this type of communication – key will be that they can get their follow-up questions adequately answered.

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transportfocus

I. EUSTON CLOSURE – OPTIMISING COMMUNICATIONS (II)

Euston closure - optimising communications and providing journey options for customers during an unplanned event.

quadrangle

Stimulus

Part 3.

London Underground are accepting tickets between Euston and Kings Cross / St Pancras and between Euston and Oxford Circus for connections to Marylebone or Paddington in both directions.

If you need any further information, please talk to a member of our team or tweet us @Avanti West Coast.

We're sorry for the disruption to your journey today. If you're delayed for 15 minutes or more you may be able to claim compensation through Delay Repay. Find out more at avantiwestcoast.co.uk/delayrepay.

Summary

Part 3

The final part of the Euston closure message was also generally well received.

In some instances, there was concern among those unfamiliar with the London Underground about where they would need to go, but generally they were comfortable with being able to work this out.

Clearly, the option to tweet @Avanti West Coast is only open to some customers – and generally (even those on twitter) would prefer to speak to someone face-to-face. In these circumstances, when the disruption is so significant, passengers often like the reassurance of hearing what is going on from a member of staff – it provides them with greater confidence.

Being conscious of the challenge for people with disabilities

"A passenger on the platform was visually impaired and he couldn't hear what was being said on the tannoy, so he couldn't hear, he couldn't see and he was asking people around him if they could help. In the end me and a friend helped him get to the right platform."

Older leisure passenger

transportfocus

quadrangle

While passengers recognise the challenge of dealing with emerging situations with regards disruption, they think it can be mitigated through regular, honest communications.

Stimulus – handling the evolution of unplanned incidents

You oversee disruption communications for Avanti West Coast.

Your challenge:

It can take longer to restore the train service to normal, than to fix the initial problem - this is particularly true for long-distance journeys.

Following a line closure, some initial trains will start operating again.

But there will often be a period of more infrequent trains and a limited capacity.

How do you feel this will be best communicated to your passengers, when it cannot be certain when a normal service is likely to resume?

Summary

Ultimately, passengers recommended regular updates through multiple channels – traditional and tech based – to help keep travellers informed of the status of the line and limit any confusion.

- Provide some information on why it will take longer to resume full services, but don't get bogged down in explaining the issue – focus on the service and solutions

- Frequent updates (every 10-15 mins) to confirm the current status – explain that trains are still being disrupted and (if it can be accurately estimated) that services will continue to be for the next X hours – if this is too difficult to estimate, say that the passengers will be informed as soon as possible

- Potentially provide a range of times that services will return to normal based on experience, but avoid specific timings on resolutions until 100% sure to avoid further disappointment

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Regular information for decision-making

"I feel that on occasions that I was delayed (London to Liverpool) that the approach taken was inconsistent. On some occasions I was updated regularly on what was going on, what had caused the delay and how long they thought it was going to take, while on others I was left in the dark… it is so frustrating where you're sitting on a train and you have no idea what is happening, especially when you have family wating for you… I'd much rather that there were too regular updates, even if that is every 10 mins rather than not enough."

Younger leisure passenger

"As long as the message is loud and clear. Quite often there is bit of an echo, you can't hear what they are saying… I still have to go and find a guard to see if he can clarify what is going on."

Older leisure passenger, restricted mobility

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transportfocus

Further examples of where regular updates help

"Even if it is just to say, I am really sorry, there is no further update, we are trying to confirm further information. We will update you as soon as we can."

Younger leisure passenger

Passenger was returning from London to Manchester (6pm-ish), got on the train and was told there was a delay because of a disruption, but no explanation given. He was told the delay would be 20/30mins but it took four hours to resolve. No communication was given which meant he couldn't assess if to get off and find an alternative or not.

"People don't usually talk on trains, but we all started asking each other what was going on, no one knew. If everyone else had got off the train, I probably would have too, but others didn't, so I waited too."

Younger business passenger, cognitive disability

Ongoing updates

"When they have communicated the issue for the first time, then you may see a sign in the station, and when you board the train, but you also want it as part of your journey. If you are going on a long journey, you still want notifications that there might be disruption somewhere along the route – rather than just at the beginning."

Older business passenger

Provide solutions

"They're great at giving you problems but they never give solutions to the problems. So, I would always look to somebody to give me advice on what is the best thing for me to do."

Older business passenger

transportfocus

ULTIMATELY, IT IS INVARIABLY SEEN AS THE RAILWAY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SORT OUT RAIL DISRUPTION, EVEN IF IT IS NOT DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE

quadrangle

Phase 1 – Qual
Phase 2 – Quant
Phase 3 – Qual

Disruption is understood in terms of its impact on passengers: while some may appreciate that the rail network and its operation is complex, they generally don't see it as their problem

This lack of engagement often leads to misconceptions about what is currently possible for train operators, e.g.:

- TOCs can easily re-route passengers to their destination around areas of disruption (i.e. on railways that don't exist)

- The ability of train drivers to take on alternative routes at the last minute

- The ability for different operators to communicate seamlessly between each other and for information about disruption to be more easily available

- The ability of TOCs to contact passengers through digital channels (even if tickets are purchased through third parties or at the station)

- Contingencies that are in place across a range of disruption scenarios

Ultimately, they have paid for their ticket, and they want to get to their end destination, if there is disruption in getting there, they want Avanti West Coast to resolve this with as little inconvenience to them as possible

Misunderstandings about the operational realities of running a rail network can create a high level of dissonance, disillusionment and mistrust in the management of disruption

Passengers expect a clear focus and appreciation for the impact disruption has on them, regardless of the complexities that may sit behind it

"We were left completely in the dark… nobody turning up and nobody telling us what is happening, it was horrific…. Twitter was the only way people got answers, which I kind of understand but… it is more the fact that on the platform there was absolutely no information whatsoever, which led people to be angry"

Older, Commuter

TAKING OWNERSHIP - MOST PASSENGERS FEEL THAT IT IS THE TRAIN OPERATOR WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING THE PASSENGER THROUGH DISRUPTION

Two-thirds of passengers would like more consistent service provided by train operators

Legend: ■ Strongly disagree (0-1) ■ Disagree (2-3) ■ Neutral (4-6) ■ Agree (7-8) ■ Strongly agree (9-10)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The train operator responsible for me missing a subsequent, connecting journey, is responsible for helping me get through disruption		2%	23% ↓	29%	44% ↑
Regardless of the issue, the train operator is responsible for managing disruption to passengers' journeys		3%	23% ↓	29%	43% ↑
The company who I purchase my rail ticket from should be ultimately responsible for helping me get through disruption	%	4%	32% ↑	27% ↓	34% ↓
I wish the quality of service provided by railway station staff was more consistent	2%		32% ↑	31%	34% ↓
It is helpful for me to understand exactly where on the line the problem has occurred	%	3%	29%	35% ↑	30% ↓

Overlapping 'agree' scores reflect a simple desire for the issue to be sorted out

QD2. Still on the subject of rail disruption, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Total = 1,409

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

PASSENGERS ARE SEEKING GREATER OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY FROM TRAIN OPERATORS, AND EMPATHY LEVELS COULD BE IMPROVED

quadrangle

Commuters and business passengers are more likely to identify that train operators are being empathetic

Train companies show **'the right level of empathy'** when communicating to customers about train delays and disruption
% agree/disagree

25%↑ Commuters
23%↑ Business

18%

29%

38%

8%

6%
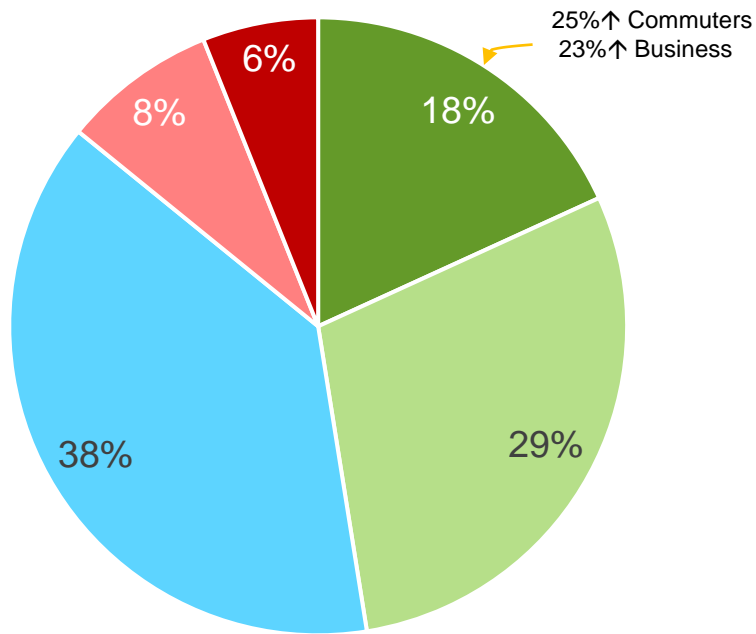
- Strongly agree (9-10)
- Agree (7-8)
- Neutral (4-6)
- Disagree (2-3)
- Strongly disagree (0-1)

Train operators '**could be more open and transparent'** about what id happening during delays and disruption
% agree/disagree

2% 1%

24%

41%

32%

- Strongly agree (9-10)
- Agree (7-8)
- Neutral (4-6)
- Disagree (2-3)
- Strongly disagree (0-1)

QD2_6. Still on the subject of rail disruption, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - Train companies generally show the right level of empathy when communicating to customers about train delays and disruption QD2_8. Still on the subject of rail disruption, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - Train operators could be more open and transparent about what is happening during delays and disruption Base: All = 1,409

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence

EMPATHY LEVELS SHOULD BE FLEXED DEPENDING ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE DISRUPTION IS DEEMED TO BE IN THE RAILWAY'S CONTROL OR NOT

In general, if the issue is related to the provision of train services or the track itself, it is perceived as **something which the railway has *some* control over**. In some instances passengers will be able to differentiate between the train operator and Network Rail, but even when this is the case it doesn't excuse the train operator from having to take some responsibility.

In contrast, adverse weather conditions are accepted as **outside of the control of the railway** (although issues such as leaves on the line cause mixed reactions).

Passengers expect different types of communication depending on which of these categories the disruption falls into.

Under control of the railway	**Mixed views**	**Out of the control of the railway**
• Staff shortages • Signal failure • Mechanical failure	• Leaves on the line • Anti-social behaviour	• Weather • Person hit by a train
Tone and content	**Tone and content**	**Tone and content**
• Take responsibility • Sincerely apologise for the trouble this will cause passengers • Offer a "little extra" for longer delays	• Potential need to better educate passengers on these issues and the impact they cause/the challenge in managing	• Take ownership rather than responsibility • Recognise the impact on passengers' plans but keep it short • A 'little extra' more about necessity e.g. water on a hot day

#1 priority

Put me in control
- ✓ Clearly outline my options (ideally there are several)
- ✓ Back this up with joined-up, detailed instructions at all contact points

When do train operators need to be empathetic?

"It depends what the reason for the disruption is. I've been on trains and or been at a station and they've not got enough staff, and I think "How has that happened!?" Surely they've got back-up?"

Younger commuter

"If it is something that they have no control over then I will feel sympathetic towards them because it is not their fault. Whereas, if they don't have enough train drivers then it is their fault, and I would be more irate."

Younger leisure passenger

PASSENGERS EXPECT DISRUPTION COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH A WIDE RANGE OF CHANNELS
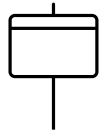
Passengers receive communication relating to disruption across a range of different channels

Different channels suit certain types of disruption better than others, and so can be most effective if deployed for the most suitable purpose

Usage of these channels is likely to differ significantly by the type of customer (this is something that will be explored more in the quant)

Posters/Display/ Traditional advertising

• For unplanned disruption, 'old fashioned' notice boards are seen as acceptable

• 'Digital' boards on the platform are often criticised for their inability to communicate a lot of information quickly, and/or clearly – but they do provide a mechanism for reaching many passengers who may not have access to other communication channels

Social Media/ Websites

• Websites are seen as particularly effective in communicating at the point of sale, as well as notification of planned disruption

• Social media can be deployed for both planned and unplanned disruption

• Passengers suggest a social media page specifically to report on unplanned disruption

E-mail Communication

• E-mail communication is seen as most appropriate for business-as-usual communication surrounding planned disruption

• It is not always likely to be read so would work less well in scenarios where urgency is key

Texts/Push Notifications

• Text messages and push notifications (for third party app users) are seen as more likely to be read than e-mails and appropriate for situations where decisions need to be made quickly

• There are expectations that TOCs will have access to this information (through previous purchases), and passengers will have an appetite to 'opt-in' to specific disruption related comms

• For some WhatsApp may be better than text, but text has more universal usage
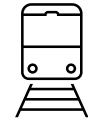
At the station

• Passengers generally reflect on the fact that the 'most important' communication is likely to be delivered by staff on platforms, or the PA systems

• This is particularly the case for passengers who aren't digitally engaged

• Equally station staff can create the highest level of stress when they aren't seen to be in control

• Passengers perceive further limitations around how they deliver a lot of information to a large number of passengers

THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH MANY CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION – LIKE THE ELDERLY – NEED TO BE CATERED FOR

Summary

The continued growth in digital services has provided a range of new ways of passengers gathering information about their journeys – whether direct from the train operator or through other sources.

However, it is important to reflect that the use of email, social media, apps, web sites etc. still excludes important passenger groups who are often in the greatest need.

Here we reflect on the challenge posed by a passenger with a physical disability who is not online.

> *"Texts and direct communications work for me but they wouldn't work for my gran – if I text her it sometimes takes her a week for her to reply!"*
> Younger leisure passenger, sensory disability

> *"I got a reply within about 10 days with vouchers for rail travel, for the full amount for rail travel for both of us, which is not quite as good as getting a cheque… okay I have a year to use it but if I pop my clogs, too bad, I've lost it."*

Maureen, 77 years old

Maureen lives in Paisley near Glasgow with her retired partner. She has reduced mobility following two hip replacements.

They travel by train to see her brother in Morecambe every couple of months. She purchases the tickets up to four weeks in advance from her local station.

Her challenge.

- *She has no access to email – occasionally relying on her son*

- *She has an old-style mobile phone – she can receive texts but not access online services – she would be open to signing up for texts about disruption*

- *She struggles hearing tannoys at stations, or understanding the regional accents, which means that she relies heavily on the advice of staff at stations*

- *Recent delay repay process involved going to Glasgow to get the form, and then going to a Post Office for proof of posting but couldn't get that because freepost*
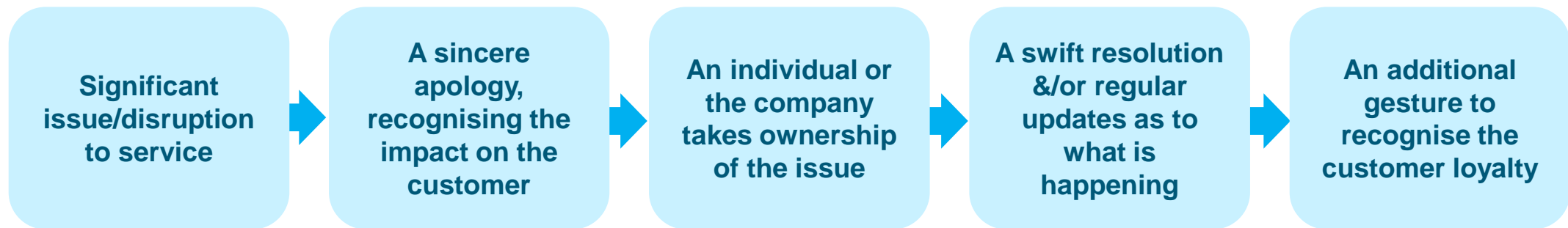
Passenger Suggestions

- Can **ticket machines be better integrated with information about delays**? – e.g. warnings of disruption when purchasing tickets on specific routes/for specific times

- **Use of maps** – some passengers would like the ability to see a map (e.g. on the website/app/click through on an email) that illustrates where the issues are on the network (similar to London Underground and TFL) as this will help them better understand where the issue is

- **Keeping station staff better informed** – sometimes it is clear that staff are not sure how to handle specific incidents

- **Passenger alerts for short connection times when purchasing tickets**, and that seat allocations won't be carried over to later trains e.g. for disabled passengers they may need more time

- **Tell me what number I am in the queue when I ring up to find out information** – then I can decide whether to hang on or not

Impressing customers when dealing with complaints or disruptions to services comes down to; taking the issue seriously, a swift resolution and providing "a little extra".

When passengers spoke of examples where they had been impressed with how brands in other service sectors deal with issues, the process often follows a similar pattern:

Significant issue/disruption to service → **A sincere apology, recognising the impact on the customer** → **An individual or the company takes ownership of the issue** → **A swift resolution &/or regular updates as to what is happening** → **An additional gesture to recognise the customer loyalty**

Implications for Train operators

- Be **honest, transparent** and **communicate** – make sure passengers are not kept in the dark, cancellations don't just happen, but often passengers refer to being told nothing until after the train was originally due to depart

- Take **ownership** and **empower staff** to make decisions – **regardless of what caused the disruption, own the resolution**

- Just resolving the problem and providing compensation (which is a legal requirement) is not enough, customers are looking for something **a little extra in recognition of the inconvenience caused**

- **Improve wait times on the phones** – some passengers said it took a long time to get through to Avanti West Coast by phone

IMPRESSING CUSTOMERS WHEN DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OR DISRUPTION COMES DOWN TO TAKING THE ISSUE SERIOUSLY, SWIFT RESOLUTION AND PROVIDING SOMETHING A LITTLE EXTRA

quadrangle

Phase 1 – Qual
Phase 2 – Quant
Phase 3 – Qual

Thomas Cook

"Coming back from Spain, at the check-in desks there was no information about there being a delay to our journey, and you go to the boards and you go "hang on a minute, the departure time is in about 10 hours!?… firstly. be honest in the outset. They took us away from the airport and really looked after us and gave us food and drink (which did a lot to resolve the situation)."

Older leisure passenger

CALEDONIAN SLEEPER

"We got an email before we arrived to say there was no water in our carriage but that they would try to move us. When we arrived, there were three members of staff who were very apologetic, they got us another room and they gave us a (£60) discount. The way they treated us was first class, and they made you feel like a valued customer."

Older leisure passenger

British Gas

"A man came out to fix a problem but made it worse. They were really apologetic but also really quick to respond to our call. A senior engineer came out within a couple of days and they also gave us a cheque as a gesture of good will to apologise for the inconvenience. They restored our confidence in them."

Younger leisure passenger

sky

"It went down overnight and I got regular text messages and then ways of how to claim for the loss of network – it's all about communication, I am a loyal customer and wanted to be treated with respect – they kept us up to date and told us where to go for further support. When I called I got through straight away and they were really helpful."

Younger leisure passenger

IN SUMMARY, GOOD COMMUNICATION GIVES CUSTOMERS A SENSE OF CONTROL, AND HELPS REDUCE OR AVOID STRESS

quadrangle

Principles of good communication during disruption are unlikely to deviate significantly from 'long standing' fundamentals

Throughout our qualitative exploration of different 'disruption scenarios', the best communication was when it helped to give customers a **sense of control** as well as minimise stress

It is about filling the void with information that **also helps engender confidence in the train operator's response to disruption; it tells passengers that things are in-hand**

CERTAINTY/CLARITY

- **Why it's important?**

  Passengers are looking for certainty and clarity with communication as it empowers them to make decisions around alternate arrangements (or just to sit tight for a while)

- **What this looks like?**

  Providing parameters of predictability: Even if the train operator has no update or information on the disruption, it is important that passengers are made aware of this. At the earliest possibility start to communicate the likely length of the delay

  Unfortunately, in this digital age, there is a danger that the passenger is getting different information from an online source. Try to generate as consistent a message as possible across all channels

TRANSPARENCY

- **Why it's important?**

  Transparency is associated with being a key contributor to certainty: disruption communication is often associated with being seemingly deliberately vague and obtuse, which augments the sense of uncertainty among passengers

  Transparency also helps show passengers that TOCs are happy to take 'responsibility'

- **What this looks like?**

  Providing a clear reason for disruption can help reduce the stress for passengers: their delay is now justified (if it needs to be). If there is initial uncertainty about the reason for the delay passengers just want to hear that (but they will expect the TOC to find out relatively quickly and provide an update)

EMPATHY/TONE

- **Why it's important?**

  Empathy is important as ultimately it gives passengers confidence that train operators understand the gravity of the situation, and are putting things in place to remedy it

  This plays a key role limiting stress

- **What this looks like?**

  True empathy is about offering solutions to the problem, the fundamental display to passengers that 'we care'

  It is also about delivering communications that offers the right empathetic 'tone' commensurate to the severity of disruption – this is especially true when considering the right tone for making apologies

PASSENGERS STRUGGLE TO THINK TOO FAR INTO THE FUTURE BUT THE PREVALENCE OF 'DIGITAL' TOOLS IS AUGMENTING EXPECTATIONS ABOUT WHAT 'SHOULD' BE IN PLACE TO TACKLE DISRUPTION

- Digital usage and savviness has continued to accelerate during the pandemic

- Expectations around what can be achieved through 'data' act as a (sometimes unrealistic) benchmark for what companies (and train operators) can do to target and communicate real time information to customers. Anecdotally passengers talk about:

  - Having complete visibility through parcel tracking, Airline apps, targeted social media adverts, Waze, Citymapper etc.

- Amongst a certain type of customer, this further increases expectations around how disruption is managed, and accentuates the sense of dissonance that exists around why it is not managed better

- This includes:

  - Lack of information held by the rail and station operators about the status of trains

  - Inability of train companies to communicate directly with passengers through their mobile phones

There is also a secondary impact to the assimilation of digital tools – growing consumer empowerment

In large scale quant studies we have run in the past, we have noticed more and more consumers becoming 'digital masters' - using digital to empower themselves

They are competent in using digital tools, which contributes to them reaching a perceived state of autonomy and self-sufficiency

This is likely to have implications on how we best serve (or empower) different types of passengers (covered in more detail later)

PASSENGERS SUGGEST SEVERAL IDEAS TO HELP MANAGE DISRUPTION IN THE FUTURE

Customers did not find it easy to consider ideas for the future and suspect that many of their ideas might have already existed. The 'self-sufficient' group in particular, are keen to help encourage 'positive' behaviours around disruption

Opt-in Text Alerts

- Opt-in at point of purchase (online, face-to-face) to text alerts to get updates

- Passengers could also 'subscribe' to updates for specific train services/ journeys

WhatsApp live chat

- WhatsApp is seen as more convenient than other online live chat functions and more 'mobile', as people always have their mobile on them

Coffee and food Vouchers

- Refreshments are a salient contributor to helping passengers feel comforted and cared for

Waze style app for trains

- Expectation that there needs to be a 'Waze' or 'Google map' equivalent for trains that is real time, and points towards mitigations being offered by TOCs

Weather Predictions

- Expectations that data can be better used to predict, and forewarn customers of weather-related issues to the line

QR Codes

- That passengers can scan on trains to receive relevant up-to-date information on the status of the delay, or space on carriages, or status of refreshments on board

Digital displays

- More advanced displays in station are seen as being able to communicate more information than standard boards on platforms

Beacon communication

- Updates relevant to disruption as people approach stations to ensure everyone's on the same page when approaching the station

"I would drive people towards the app, then 'ping' - there's a delay, here is a £5 voucher on the app, go and get yourself a coffee"

Older, Business

Appendix 1 – Research Methodologies

    Phase 1 – Qualitative (focus groups & depth interviews)

    Phase 2 – Quantitative (online panel survey)

    Phase 3 – Qualitative (focus groups & depth interviews)

Appendix 2 – Phase 1 Qual – examples of good and poor management of unplanned disruption

Appendix 3 – Phase 2 – Quantitative survey profile

Appendix 4 – Phase 3 – Qualitative stimulus

APPENDIX 1

Phase 1 Qual

quadrangle

Group	Date	Time	Life stage	Pre-pandemic travel	Ticket type	Area
1	11th Oct	6pm	Younger	Commuter		Birmingham/Crewe & Stoke-on-Trent
2	11th Oct	7:45pm	Older	Commuter	All monthly/ annual Inc. min 2 First class	London/Glasgow
3	12th Oct	6pm	Younger	Leisure – rarely	Inc. min 3 resp have been on family trips	London/Manchester
4	12th Oct	7:45pm	Older	Leisure – occasional/frequent		Birmingham/London
5	14th Oct	6pm	Younger	Leisure – rarely	Inc. min 3 resp have been on family trips	Crewe & Stoke-on-Trent/ Glasgow
6	14th Oct	7:45pm	Older	Leisure – occasional/frequent		N Wales/Birmingham
7	18th Oct	6pm	Younger	Business		Birmingham/Manchester
8	18th Oct	7:45pm	Older	Business		London/Glasgow

X9 1-2-1 depths with vulnerable passengers

- Cognitive

- Physical (inc. x2 wheelchair users)

- Sensory

transport**focus**

quadrangle

Online panel survey with train travellers

All **1,409 participants** had to:

- Have travelled by train/rail pre-pandemic in 2019 and/or in 2021/2022

- To have travelled to or from any of the stations on the Avanti West Coast Network since early 2020

- To have used one or more of the following train operators

  - **Avanti West Coast – 511 passengers**
  - London North Western Railway – 216 passengers
  - TransPennine Express – 310 passengers
  - Caledonian Sleeper – 59 passengers
  - CrossCountry – 294 passengers
  - ScotRail – 303 passengers
  - Transport for Wales (formerly Arriva Trains Wales) – 179 passengers
  - MerseyRail – 172 passengers
  - Northern – 364 passengers
  - West Midlands Railway – 278 passengers

Fieldwork took place between 14th January and 2nd February 2022

Objectives

To undertake a deeper exploration of customer attitudes towards specific types of disruption communications.

Topics covered include:

1. The use of **geographical references** in disruption communications

2. **Factors which impact on customer behaviours** when dealing with unplanned disruption

3. In the shoes of the train operator

   i. **optimising communications** and providing journey options for customers during an unplanned event

   ii. Communicating **the evolution of unplanned incidents**

   iii. **Lessening the impact of disrupted journeys** e.g. through the offer of 'little extras'

4. Delivering the right **tone of communications**

5. **Best practice** examples from other service sectors

Approach

Planned qualitative research among passengers to explore specific elements of the quantitative survey in more depth.

• Four focus groups 6-7 participants

• Six depth interviews with passengers with a disability – mix of cognitive, physical and sensory

Group	Life stage	Pre-pandemic travel	Rail use in 2022	Ticket type	Areas
1	Younger	Commuter	Mix		Birmingham / Manchester
2	Younger	Leisure	Mix	Min 3 to have been on family trips	London / Manchester
3	Older	Leisure	Mix		Glasgow / Crewe & Stoke
4	Older	Business	Mix		London / Glasgow

APPENDIX 2

Phase 1 Qual – examples of good and poor management of
unplanned disruption

LEARNING FROM GOOD AND BAD UNPLANNED DISRUPTION EXPERIENCES

Turning disruption into a positive story and advocacy.

James suffers from anxiety and his dyslexia means that he finds it hard negotiating unfamiliar places and dealing with changes to his travel plans.

"Travelling down from Scotland by railway when torrential rain hit, and there was flooding along the route. The train was stopped at a station for a long time (still a long way from his final destination, Manchester)

*The attendant came on the PA system to say that we were going to have to get on **a coach transfer, everyone's heart sank** because we were so far away.*

*We got out of the station and **they were waiting with water and refreshments which was nice**. Then we went to this **coach which was waiting** – this must've been why we were stood on the train for so long, to allow the coaches to come.*

*The coaches didn't take us all the way to Manchester, but took us presumably past the flood to a station where **another train was waiting** and carried on.*

*The whole thing must've taken about an hour. **As soon as we stopped they kept us up to date**. Initially they said they didn't know what was going on but then **the announcer came back on and said right: we're going to get a bus, there's going to be refreshments, we'll sort it.** When we got outside, we were all **under cover away from the rain**.*

*They told us to get into a queue, **they told us not to worry** about which bus we get on, that they'd all get there at the same time.*

It was stressful when we were stopped. If they just told me to get on the 14 bus, then the 82 I would still be on that journey! It was like a military operation."

Starting by expecting the worst

Small gestures show empathy and suggest Avanti cares

Transport there and waiting illustrates organisation and planning

Always kept up to date – no opportunity to wonder what was happening

Professionalism, organisation, reassurance

LEARNING FROM GOOD AND BAD UNPLANNED DISRUPTION EXPERIENCES

Poorly managed disruption causes passenger stress and leaves the bad impression of the TOC.

A different experience for James…

*"First train to Manchester, I think from Blackpool. We got there and there was already a commotion – **nobody knew what was going on.***

*People were huddling together and panicking. There's always this one guy who's really rude to the staff asking for 'what's going on'? – **I tried to listen to the responses.***

*The staff didn't have a clue what was going on, maybe they'd just turned up to work. But **they didn't care**. Everyone you spoke to **it felt like you'd accidentally asked the cleaner rather than someone at the train company** – 'I don't know why you're asking me' sort of thing.*

***I had to put in a complaint to get a refund** as I had to get a taxi in the end.*

***It was hell on earth**, everyone was stressing out, there was **no information**. We could see trains leaving from other platforms** so it was like 'where are they going' can we get on those? And why can't our train leave?*

*There was **lots of people just making stuff up** like 'copper had gone missing', or 'someone was on the line' but there was no information given to us.*

***If someone had come to us and said 'Listen there's an issue with the line, it's not going to be a quick fix' then that's absolutely fine.** I can then go – maybe try the bus or maybe try the taxi.*

***If they'd been honest about it, then that's fine, but they never did**."*

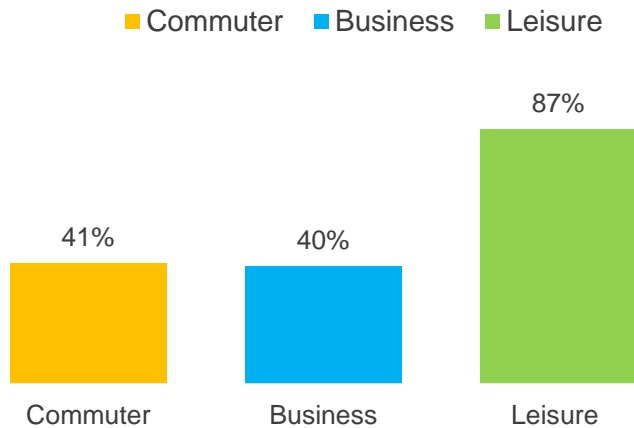|	
Mass confusion	The role of staff on the ground is critical – this was the key difference between James' two experiences
Unsatisfactory way of gathering information	
Lack of staff professionalism, empathy, engagement	
Additional hassle in getting a refund	
Confusion and information void leading to misinformation	
Relatively low customer expectations of what was needed to improve his experience	

APPENDIX 3

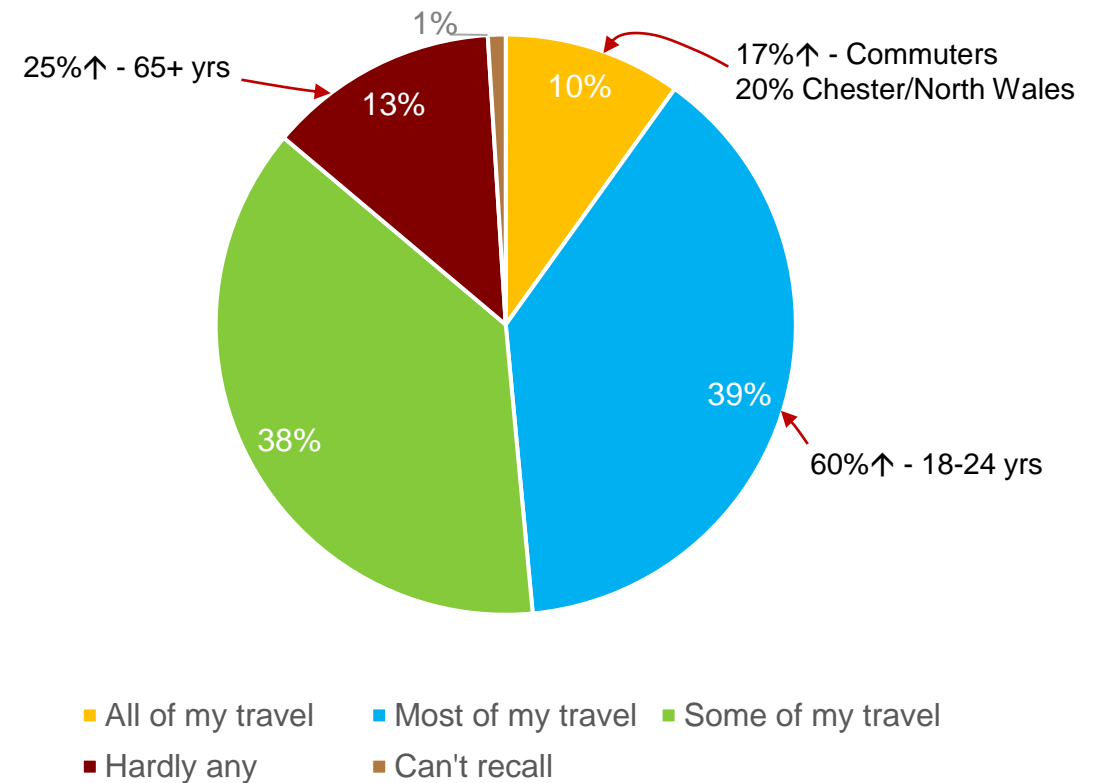Phase 2 – Quantitative survey profile

HALF OF AVANTI PASSENGERS WERE MAKING ALL OR MOST OF THEIR TRAVEL WITH AVANTI

Participating Avanti customers

- More **male** than female (58% vs 41%)

- Even spread **across ages** (28% 18-34 yrs, 20% 35-44, 30% 45-64, 21% 65+)

- Generally **working full–time** (56%) plus 19% **retired** and 5% **students**

- 35% (Leisure) to 39% (Commuter) book through Avanti, 36% (Commuter) to 46% (Leisure) through another website or app, and 15% (Business) to 22% (Commuter) at the station

■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

Proportion of Avanti travel

25%↑ - 65+ yrs

1%

10%

13%

17%↑ - Commuters
20% Chester/North Wales

39%

38%

60%↑ - 18-24 yrs

■ All of my travel   ■ Most of my travel   ■ Some of my travel
■ Hardly any   ■ Can't recall
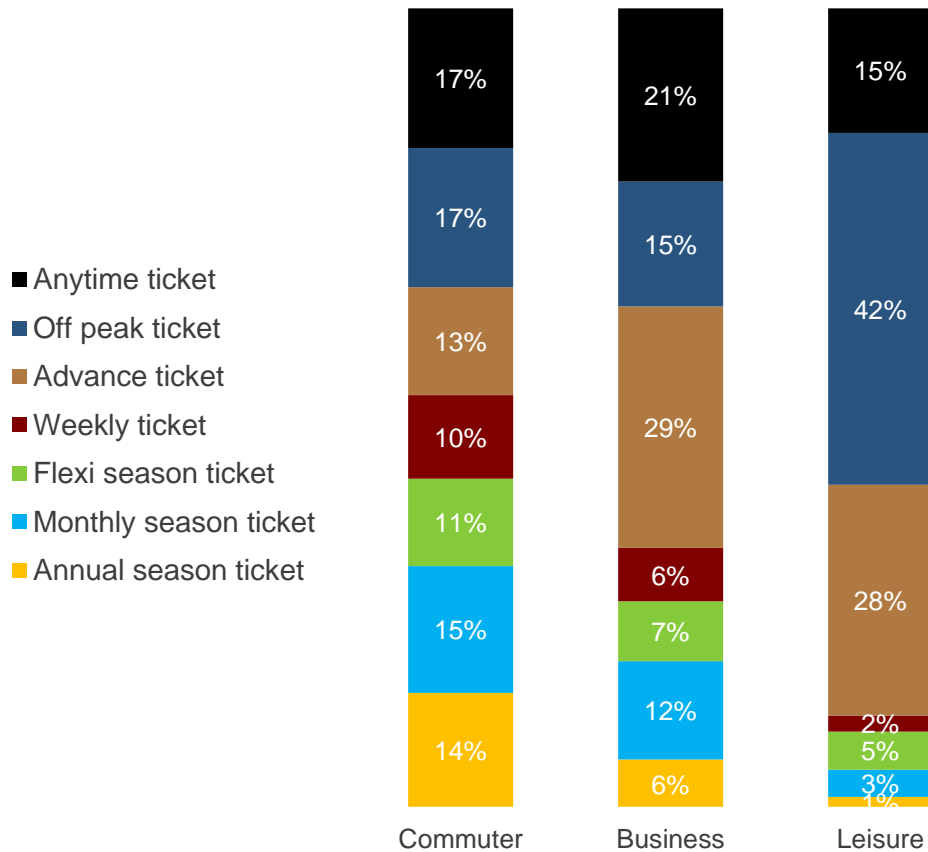
41%

40%

87%

Commuter

Business

Leisure

QS9. And, approximately, what proportion of your rail travel tends to be on Avanti West Coast?
Base: All Avanti passengers = 511

↓↑ Significant diff vs the total sample 95% confidence
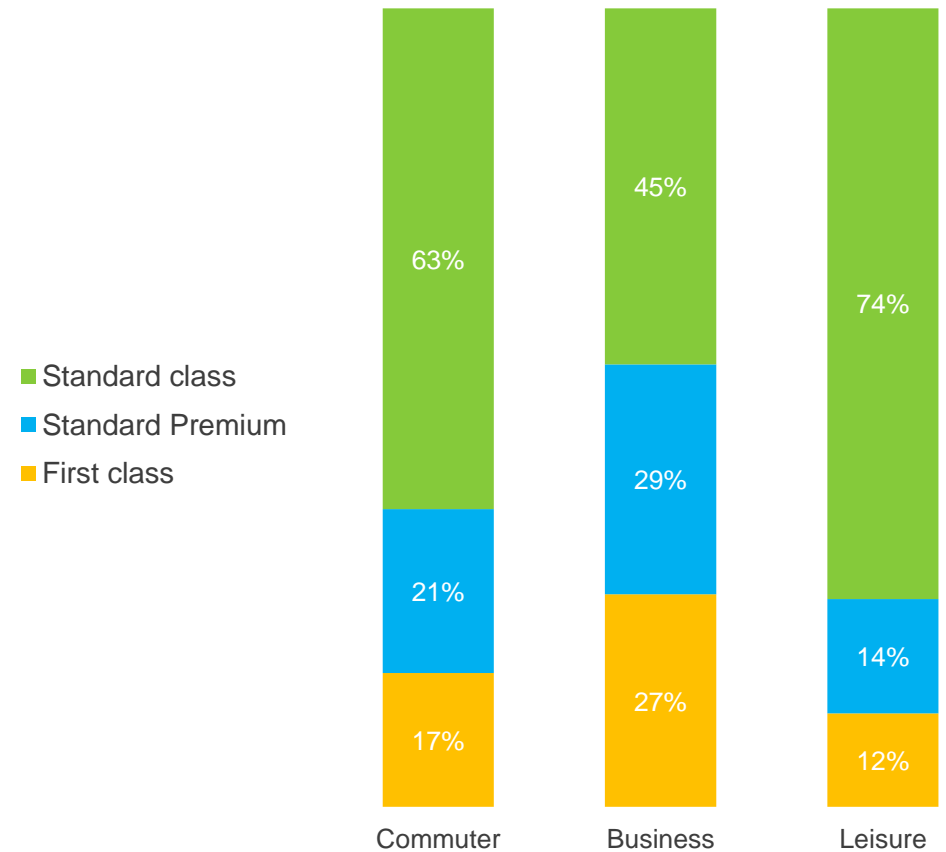
transport**focus**

COMMUTERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO USE SEASON TICKETS AND LEISURE PASSENGERS OFF-PEAK AND ADVANCE TICKETS

First class travel more common among business travellers

Ticket type

Class of travel

Legend (Ticket type):
- ■ Anytime ticket
- ■ Off peak ticket
- ■ Advance ticket
- ■ Weekly ticket
- ■ Flexi season ticket
- ■ Monthly season ticket
- ■ Annual season ticket

Ticket type

Commuter:
- 17% Anytime ticket
- 17% Off peak ticket
- 13% Advance ticket
- 10% Weekly ticket
- 11% Flexi season ticket
- 15% Monthly season ticket
- 14% Annual season ticket

Business:
- 21% Anytime ticket
- 15% Off peak ticket
- 29% Advance ticket
- 6% Weekly ticket
- 7% Flexi season ticket
- 12% Monthly season ticket
- 6% Annual season ticket

Leisure:
- 15% Anytime ticket
- 42% Off peak ticket
- 28% Advance ticket
- 2% Weekly ticket
- 5% Flexi season ticket
- 3% Monthly season ticket
- 1% Annual season ticket

Legend (Class of travel):
- ■ Standard class
- ■ Standard Premium
- ■ First class

Class of travel

Commuter:
- 63% Standard class
- 21% Standard Premium
- 17% First class

Business:
- 45% Standard class
- 29% Standard Premium
- 27% First class

Leisure:
- 74% Standard class
- 14% Standard Premium
- 12% First class

QS11: What type of ticket do you normally buy when going on the following type of travel?
QS12: . What class of travel do you tend to buy for the following type of travel? Please state your most common class of travel, whether you purchase in advance or upgrade on the train.
Base: Commuting = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

PASSENGER PROFILE – THE OVERLAP OF TRAVELLER TYPES

Around three-quarters of commuters and business travellers are also leisure travellers
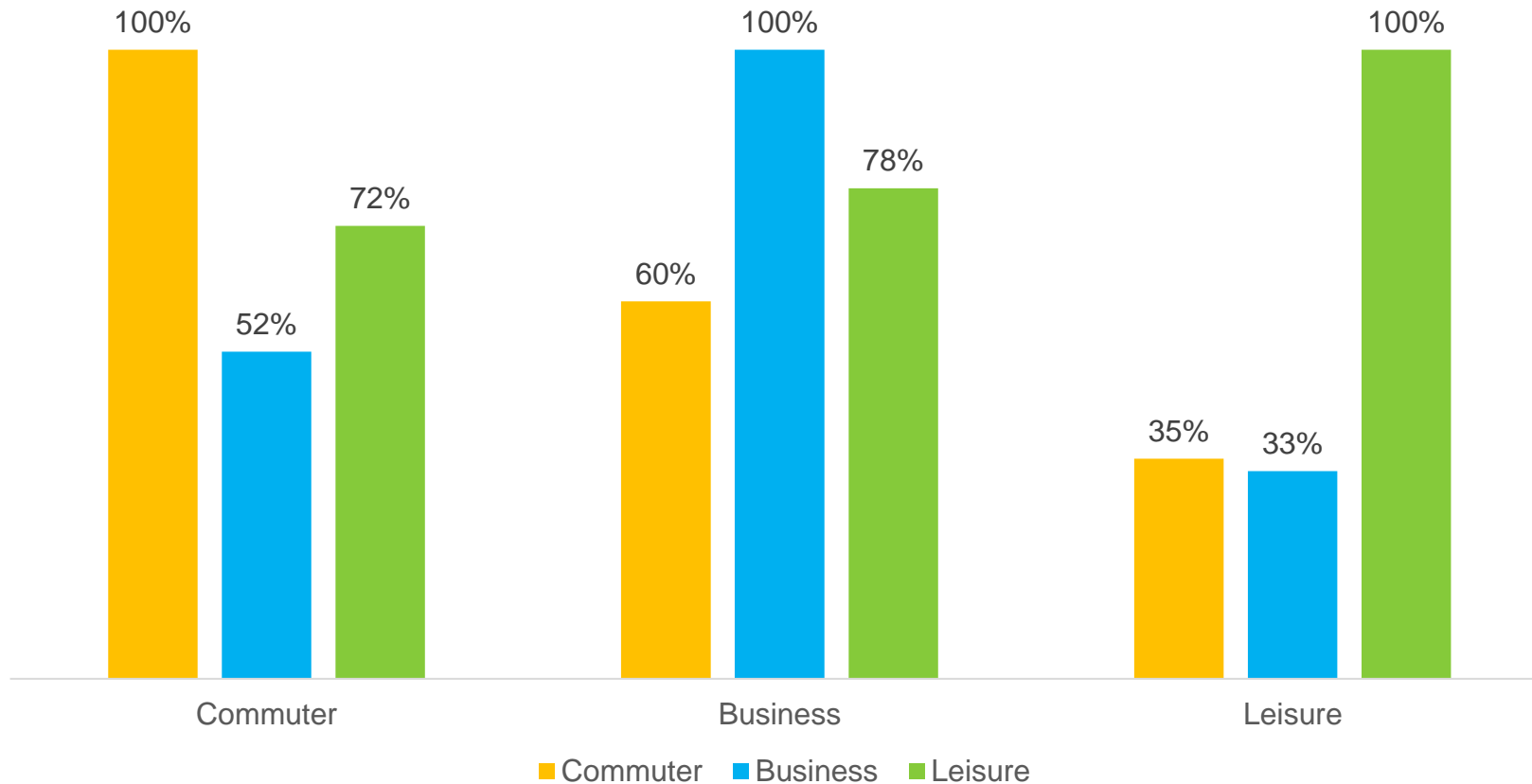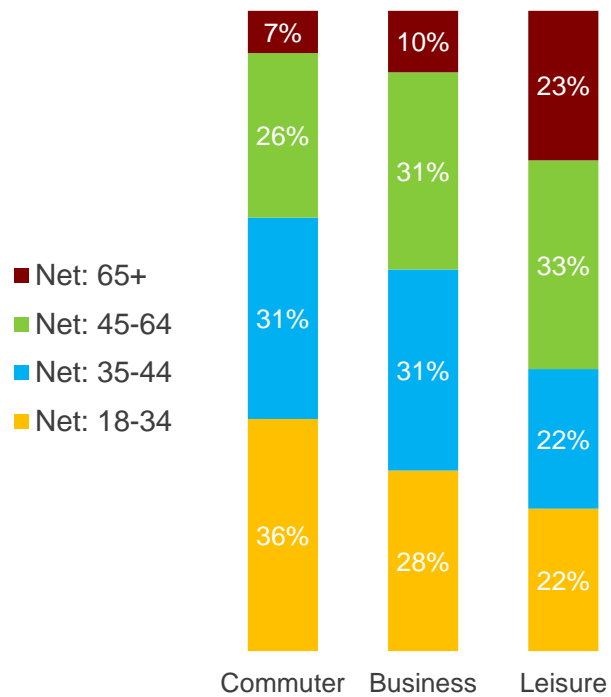

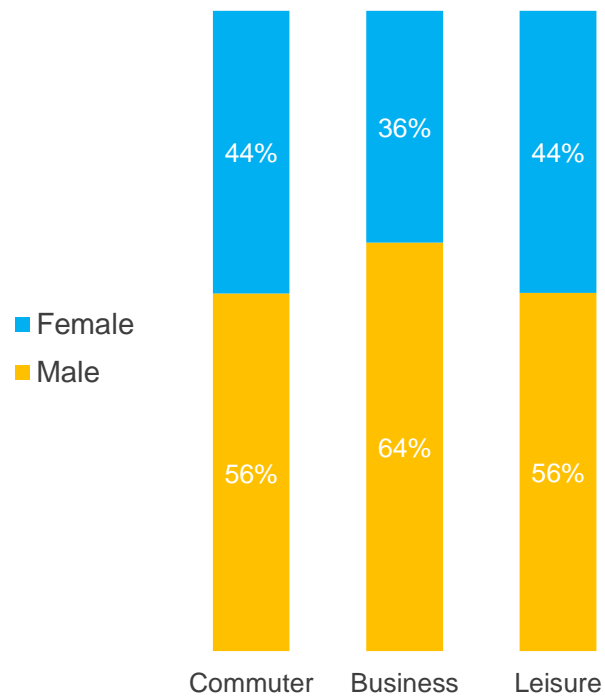Bases: Commuters = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

COMMUNTERS AND BUSINESS PASSENGERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE YOUNGER MALES WHILE LEISURE PASSENGERS TEND TO BE OLDER PASSENGERS

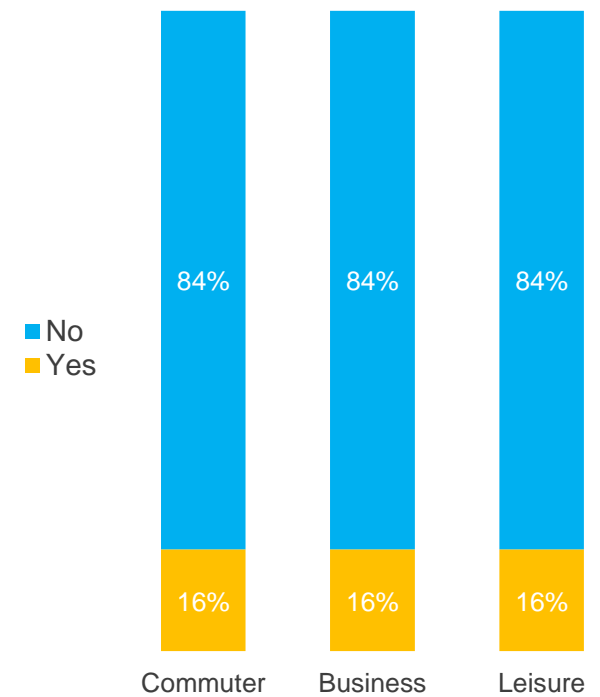Demographic profile of rail passengers by journey purpose

Age group

	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Net: 65+	7%	10%	23%
Net: 45-64	26%	31%	33%
Net: 35-44	31%	31%	22%
Net: 18-34	36%	28%	22%

Gender

	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Female	44%	36%	44%
Male	56%	64%	56%

Disability

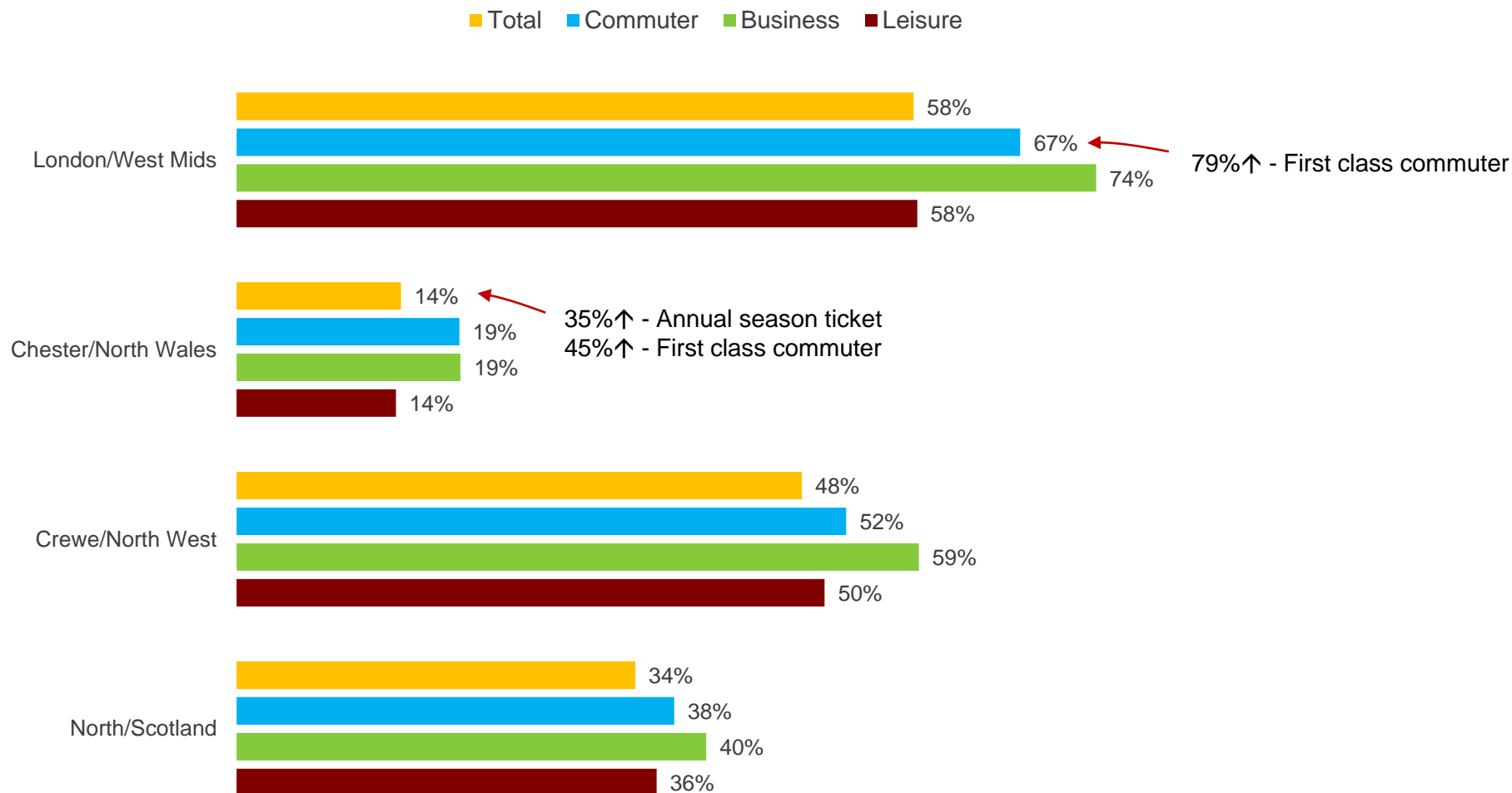|	Commuter	Business	Leisure
No	84%	84%	84%
Yes	16%	16%	16%

QS1a. Firstly, how old are you? QS2. Do you identify as…? QE5. Do you have a physical or mental health condition, that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more, and reduces your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?
Age group base: Commuting = 561, Business = 491, Leisure = 1,149;
Gender base: Commuting = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160
Disability base: Commuting = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

AROUND THREE-IN-FIVE PASSENGERS ON THE WEST COAST MAIN LINE WENT TO, OR FROM, STATIONS IN LONDON AND THE WEST MIDLANDS

quadrangle

Legend: ■ Total ■ Commuter ■ Business ■ Leisure

London/West Mids
- Total: 58%
- Commuter: 67% → 79%↑ - First class commuter
- Business: 74%
- Leisure: 58%

Chester/North Wales
- Total: 14% → 35%↑ - Annual season ticket / 45%↑ - First class commuter
- Commuter: 19%
- Business: 19%
- Leisure: 14%

Crewe/North West
- Total: 48%
- Commuter: 52%
- Business: 59%
- Leisure: 50%

North/Scotland
- Total: 34%
- Commuter: 38%
- Business: 40%
- Leisure: 36%

dQS7b - TRAIN REGION
Base: Total = 1409, Commuting = 570, Business = 494, Leisure = 1,160

APPENDIX 4

Phase 3 – qualitative stimulus

quadrangle

Hello,

Due to expected heavy rain bringing adverse weather conditions in Scotland, the West Coast Main Line will be closed between Carlisle and Scotland on Tuesday 23 February until midday Wednesday 24 February.

As a result, there will be no trains to/from Motherwell, Glasgow and Edinburgh and changes to our services between Preston and Carlisle.

In addition, we'll be operating an amended timetable between Preston and Carlisle with an hourly service. Journeys between these stations may be subject to further alterations as a result of the heavy rain forecast in Lancashire and Cumbria.

For more information, please follow the link to the latest travel advice below.

We're really sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Avanti West Coast

Upon hearing about disruption customers might,

1. sit it out and wait for the first available train;

2. use alternative arrangements (e.g. a different operator or replacement bus) or;

3. abandon their journey altogether

How do the following impact on your decision?

*   Journey length

*   Journey familiarity

*   Relative length of time of the diversionary options and its complexity e.g. interchange

*   Whether you are at the origin of their journey or not, relative to your home / office

*   Options for safe accommodation in your current location e.g. home, friends and family

*   Whether rail replacement bus is involved or a train

*   Availability of space / seats / reservations on alternative trains

*   Importance of the journey and financial implications e.g. a non-refundable show or business meeting

*   Availability of waiting facilities e.g. seats /. Shelter

*   The impact on non-rail journeys e.g. if it's snowing and poor driving conditions

*   The visibility and believability of the problem i.e. do you really believe that there will be a long delay or do you think the operator is exaggerating

*   Impairments including temporary ones e.g. luggage and kids

quadrangle

Problem: train operators want to optimise and consistently provide journey options for customers during an unplanned event, however for a given locality not all options will always be available, or may advocate one method over the others more strongly

As an operator you are required to provide the following information to passengers:

1. Information on whether your journey by train is currently possible

2. Options for travelling by another route (e.g. via another train operator, but sometimes this may not be possible)

3. Options for Emergency Replacement Transport (this can be hard to arrange in sufficient quantities at short notice, and the journeys will take longer than train)

4. Options for travelling at a later time or on a later day (this may not be helpful for some passengers and/or services the following day could already be full)

5. Customers are also entitled to a refund on a disrupted journey if they abandon it because of the rail conditions

Your challenge: how do you easily communicate this information to your passengers?

Unfortunately, we won't be able to run any services through the disrupted area for the next few hours. In the meantime, you can use your original ticket to take a detour and get moving quicker.

If you have a First Class ticket, different operators will usually accept it wherever they can, but they might offer a different type of service to ours.

Scotland:

If you're heading to Scotland, travel between London King's Cross and Edinburgh Waverley using London North Eastern Railway (LNER) or Lumo. You'll then need to use Scotrail for any onward connections.

North West:

For everyone heading north west, please travel between London King's Cross and Leeds using London North Eastern Railway (LNER) and then switch to Transpennine Express services to Manchester Piccadilly, Liverpool Lime Street or Northern services for Preston, changing there for Lancaster.

North Wales:

If you're going to North Wales, travel with Great Western Railway from London Paddington – which is just a few stops on the London Underground and Circle Line from Euston Square Station. You'll need to change at Newport for services to North Wales with Transport for Wales.

West Midlands:

Customers going to Birmingham can travel from London Marylebone with Chiltern Railways to Birmingham Moor Street. New Street station is just a short 5 minute walk from there for the City Centre.

If you're heading to Tamworth and Lichfield Trent Valley, travel with East Midlands Railway from London St Pancras to Derby and change trains.

If you want to go to Stoke on Trent or Crewe, travel with East Midlands Railway from London St Pancras to Derby and change trains.

If you're travelling between Coventry and Wolverhampton you can also use West Midlands Railway services using a Avanti West Coast ticket.

Milton Keynes:

A rail replacement coach service will run from Milton Keynes Central to Luton Airport Parkway with a journey time of approximately 45 minutes.

London Underground are accepting tickets between Euston and Kings Cross / St Pancras and between Euston and Oxford Circus for connections to Marylebone or Paddington in both directions.

If you need any further information, please talk to a member of our team or tweet us @Avanti West Coast

We're sorry for the disruption to your journey today. If you're delayed for 15 minutes or more you may be able to claim compensation through Delay Repay. Find out more at avantiwestcoast.co.uk/delayrepay

You oversee disruption communications for Avanti West Coast.

Your challenge.

It can take longer to restore the train service to normal, than to fix the initial problem - this is particularly true for long-distance journeys

Following a line closure, some initial trains will start operating again.

But there will often be a period of more infrequent trains and a limited capacity.

How do you feel this will be best communicated to your passengers, when it cannot be certain when a normal service is likely to resume?

Think about:

How you manage differing needs / expectations of passengers

Language used

Channels of communication

Tone of communication

Frequency of communication

For passengers who decide not to abandon their journeys, what can we do to make them feel as positive about the situation as possible?

Think about:

- How important is the waiting area? Where would they prefer to wait?

- How should we handle compensation? Would they expect it in this instance?

- A little extra: after what length of delay do you think they would expect or hope for gesture from Avanti West Coast (over and above any compensation)? Why this amount of time?

- The sort of gesture would you expect to receive

What about

- Coffee voucher?

- £5 discount for a future journey?

- Sandwich voucher?

- Bottle of water?