

15 March
2023

16 and 18 March rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey



Introduction



Transport Focus asked a representative sample of 2000 people from across Great Britain about the rail strikes due to take place on 16 and 18 March 2023.

The RMT strikes on 16 and 18 March will impact most train companies in England, but strike action is not taking place at Network Rail. This means, in contrast with most previous survey waves, it is expected train companies not directly affected by the strike action will run a largely normal service on these dates.

This report details awareness levels of the strikes,

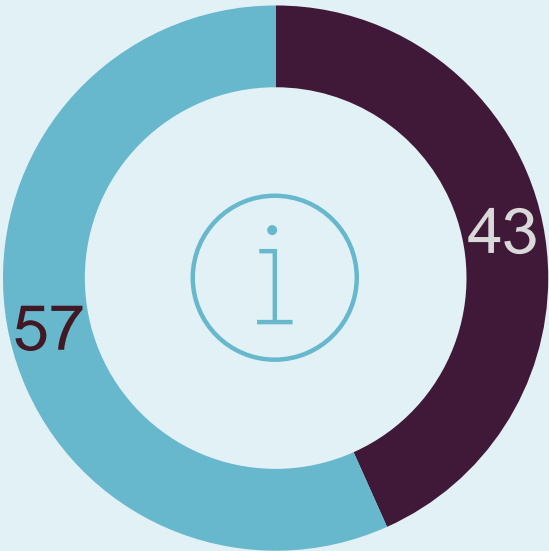
the rating of information provided about services running or not running and rating the information about ticket refunds/exchanges.

Overall, we obtained responses from 285 people who said they intend to travel, or now no longer intend to do so because of the strike disruption between 16 and 19 March.

The survey was conducted between 10 and 12 March. Further detail on how we carried out this survey is available on page 14.

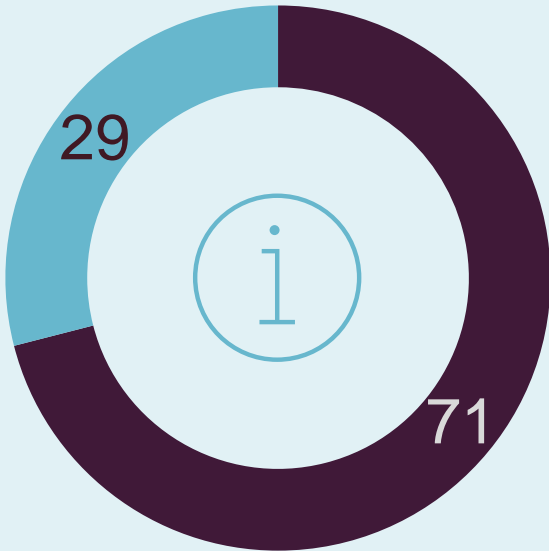
Just over four in ten are aware of strikes on 16 and 18 March. Higher among those who intended to use trains on those days at seven out of ten

Awareness among all respondents



■ Yes
■ No

Awareness among those who intended to travel on 16 or 18 March



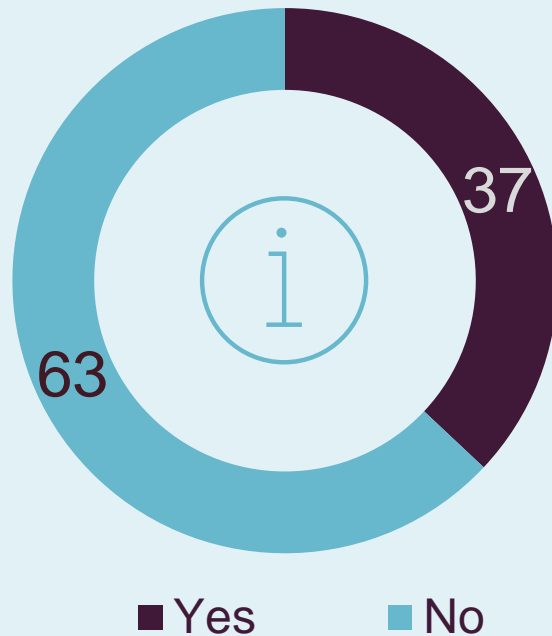
■ Yes
■ No

Q) Were you aware of the expected strike disruption on the days of the strikes (16 and 18 March);

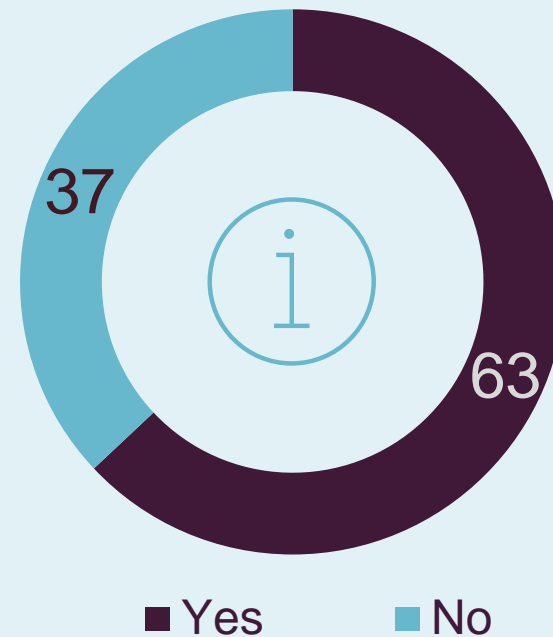
16 and 18 March rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey. Sample sizes of charts: left 2000; right 224.

Overall, around a third are aware of potential disruption on 17 and 19 March. Closer to two thirds among those intending to travel those days.

Awareness among all respondents



Awareness among those who intended to travel on 17 or 19 March

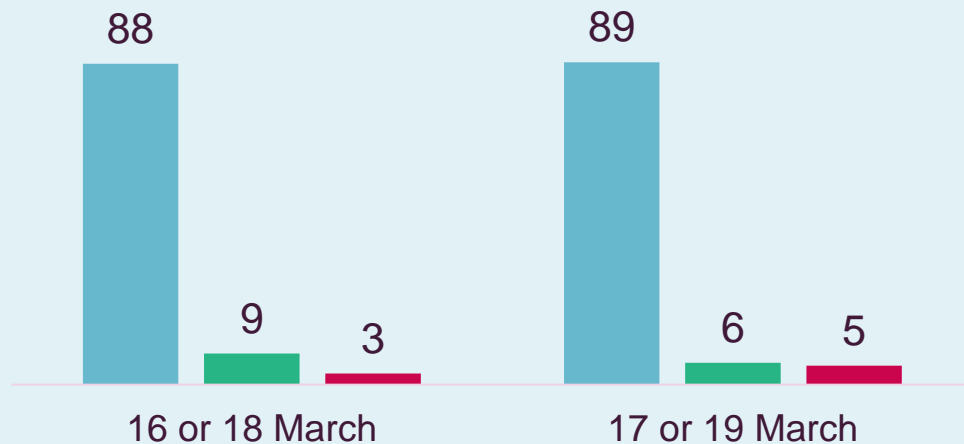


Q) Were you aware of the expected strike disruption on these days? The days following strikes (17 and 19 March) when services may be disrupted or reduced

16 and 18 March rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey. Sample sizes of charts: left 2000; right 215

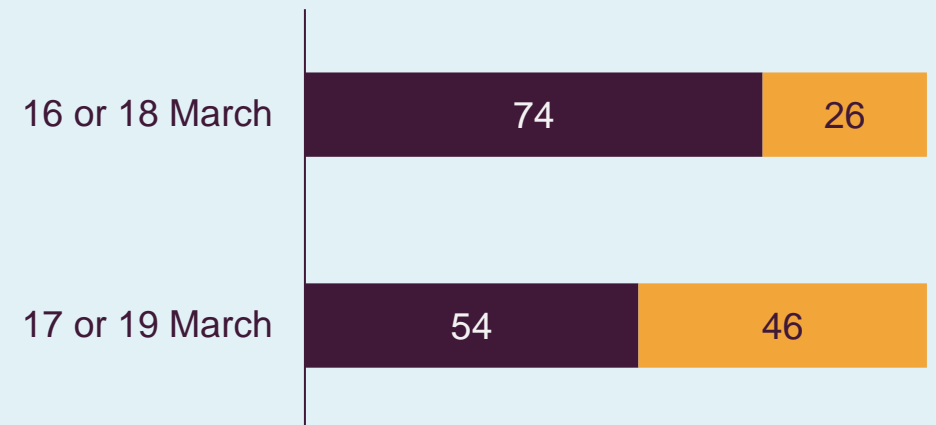
The majority of those who planned to travel on the affected days say they will no longer do so

Proportion intending to use train (%)



- Never intended to use the train
- Intended to use the train but not doing so now
- Still planning to use the train

Current intention among those who planned to travel on these days (%)



- Intended to use the train but not doing so now
- Still planning to use the train

Q. As far as travelling by train between Thursday 16 March and Sunday 19 March which applies for each of these?

Sample size left chart = 2000, sample size right chart: 16 or 18 March = 224; 17 or 19 March = 215.
16 and 18 March rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey

Examples of what those who decided not to travel by train said



Was going to an evening church meeting on 18th, will go by car instead.

Cannot travel to a social occasion by train, will now have to pay a lot more for a taxi.

I usually travel home by train to avoid spending money on fuel and parking. However now I will have to use my car this weekend.

It affects me getting to work. If the trains aren't running I have to drive, which costs me more money and takes a lot longer to get there and back.



Difficulty in getting to work so I will have to work from home and not commute.

Planning to visit my mother in London. Won't be able to travel down there now, if Thameslink is striking.

Will not be able to attend volunteer shifts. Will be worried about impact this has on the charity and those who are able get to attend on these days, the increased workload and stress they have to carry.

I can't get to work. It restricts my other activities. I can't travel in or outside of London to see my family.

Having to borrow a car to get to work.

Examples of what those who are still intending to travel by train said



Will be delayed getting to work will have to start early.

When I am attempting to travel, it takes longer to get to my destination, which means there will be stuff which I have to leave for another day.

I will be coming back from holiday with luggage on Friday, I expect the rail strikes will delay me cause extra waiting time and make it difficult to travel with luggage, aged 73.

They may make trains busier since there will be fewer and I may have to leave work earlier.



In reality, it only affects me in one day, it is not a major thing, I can do it later, it is not very relevant. If extended, it can affect a lot.

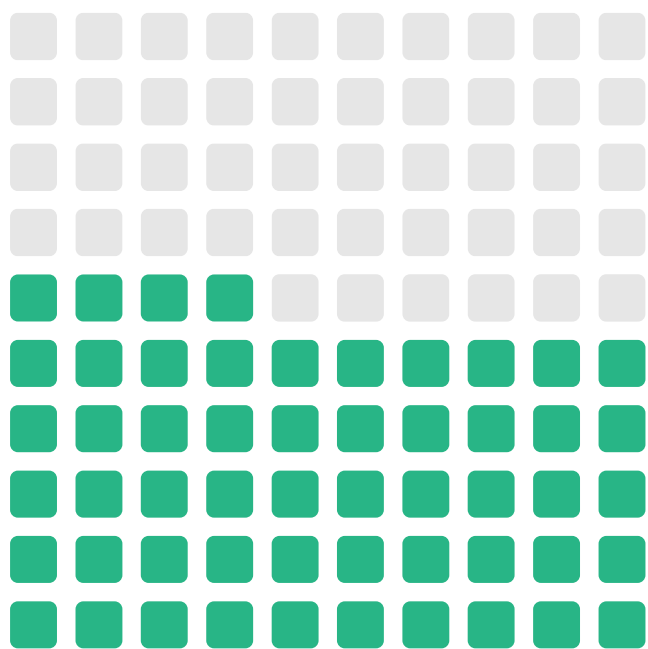
It is definitely going to affect my commute time.

I hope that by travelling mid morning on the day between the strikes I will not be affected by the strikes.

Was planning on going into London to babysit grandchild. Will need to extend stay now in order to guarantee being there on time.

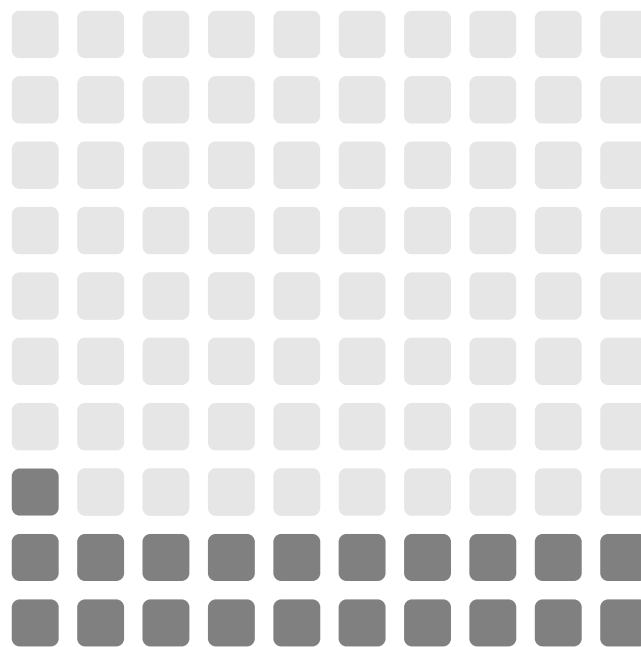
I'll struggle to visit my brother in hospital.

Just over half rated information on the train services which will and will not be running as good and a quarter said it was poor



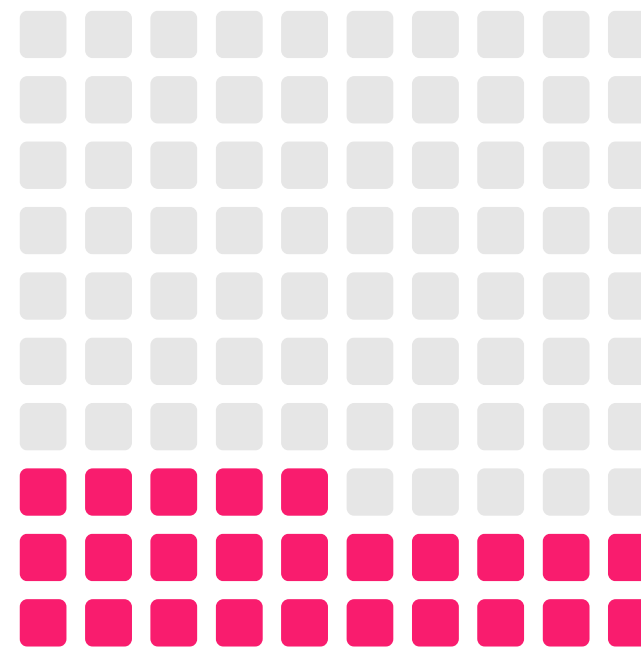
54%

Fairly good or very good



21%

Neither good nor poor



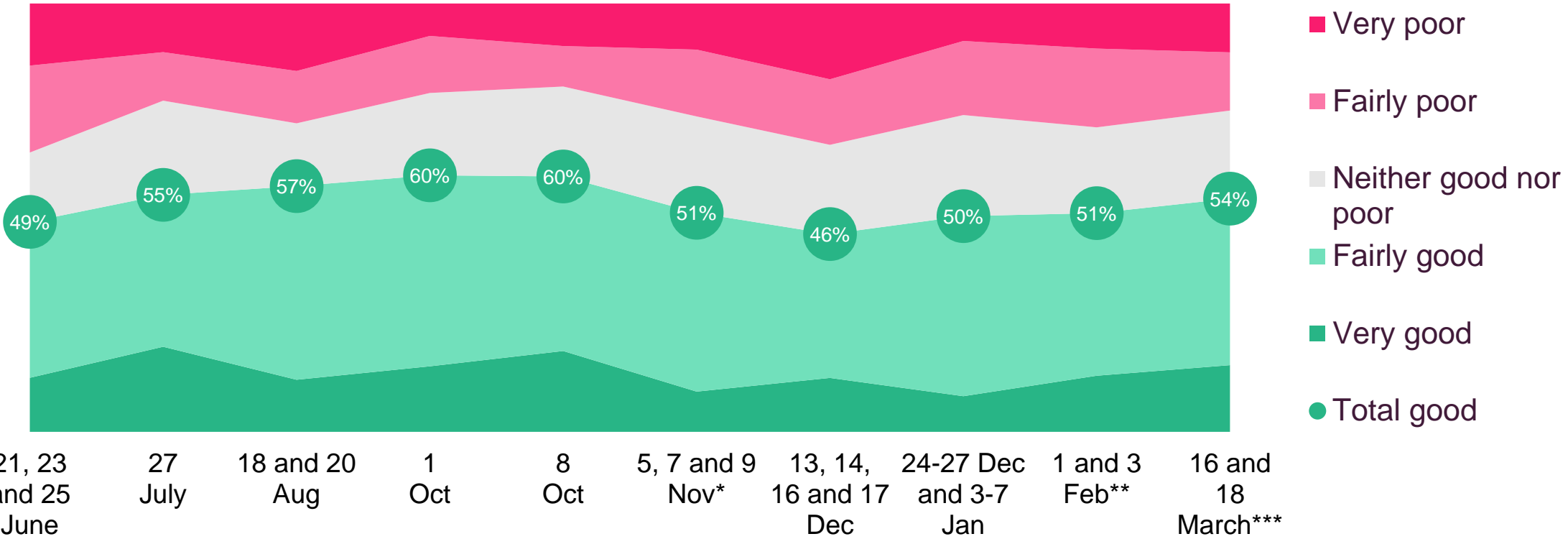
25%

Fairly poor or very poor

Asked of those aware and who intended, or still intend to travel either on strike days or days following when services may be impacted. Q. How do you rate the information available about the strikes in terms of: the train services which will and will not be running. Sample size = 193. Results exclude those who said: 'Don't know/Did not look for information'.

16 and 18 March rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey.

Rating of information available on 'which train services were running' during strikes over time



* Nov strike dates were cancelled after our survey. ** ASLEF/RMT driver strike only. ***RMT train company strike (not Network Rail).

Asked of those who intend or intended to travel on strike but then did not because of the strike affected days and aware of the strikes. Excludes those who said: 'Don't know/Did not look for information'. Sample sizes from left to right = 273, 134, 160, 204, 141, 242, 289, 339, 165, 193.

16 and 18 March rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey.



Examples of what was said about information on which services were running



The affected train companies should make more use of social media e.g. Twitter to give customers information.

It's not always obvious which services won't be running from the list of strike participants so you have to look it up on the timetable.

Whilst the strikes are annoying, knowing about them beforehand makes it easier to arrange my week.

It's quite easy to find with a quick google which services won't be operating, however this is on news websites rather than train websites typically.



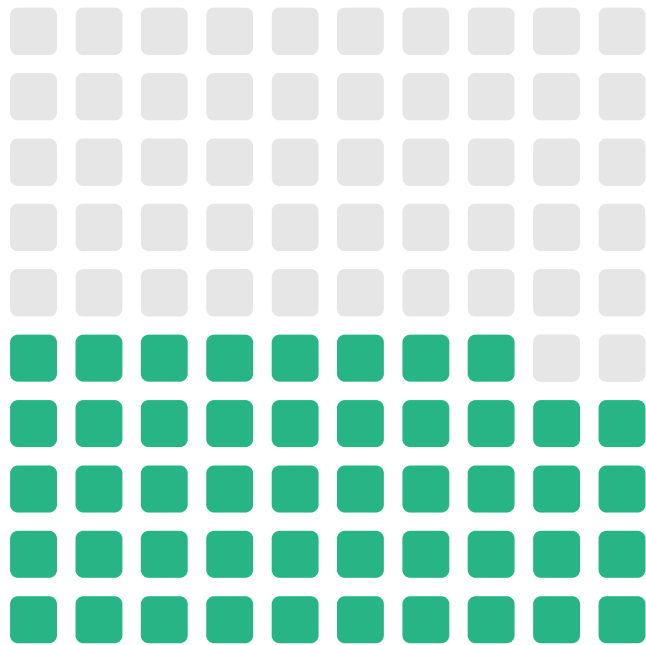
There are posters at the stations at both ends of my commute explaining what impact the strikes will have on service and also how to claim compensation for the disruption. There is also information on the GWR website and app.

Used Trainline which gave some indication of likely strikes but the timetable information was a bit sketchy.

Less than two weeks from the strikes the National Rail site just said - more information will be available closer to the time.

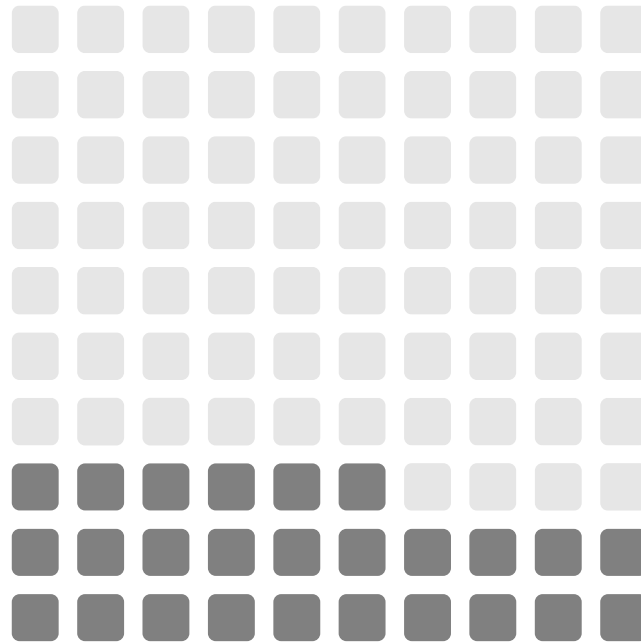
The information is out there if you look for it, but not everybody would know how.

Just under half rated information on changing tickets and refunds as good and just over a quarter as poor



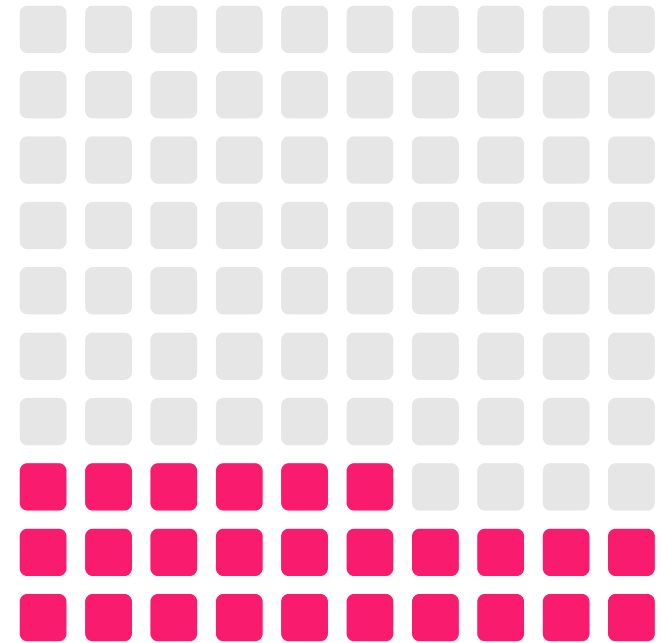
48%

Fairly good or very good



26%

Neither good nor poor



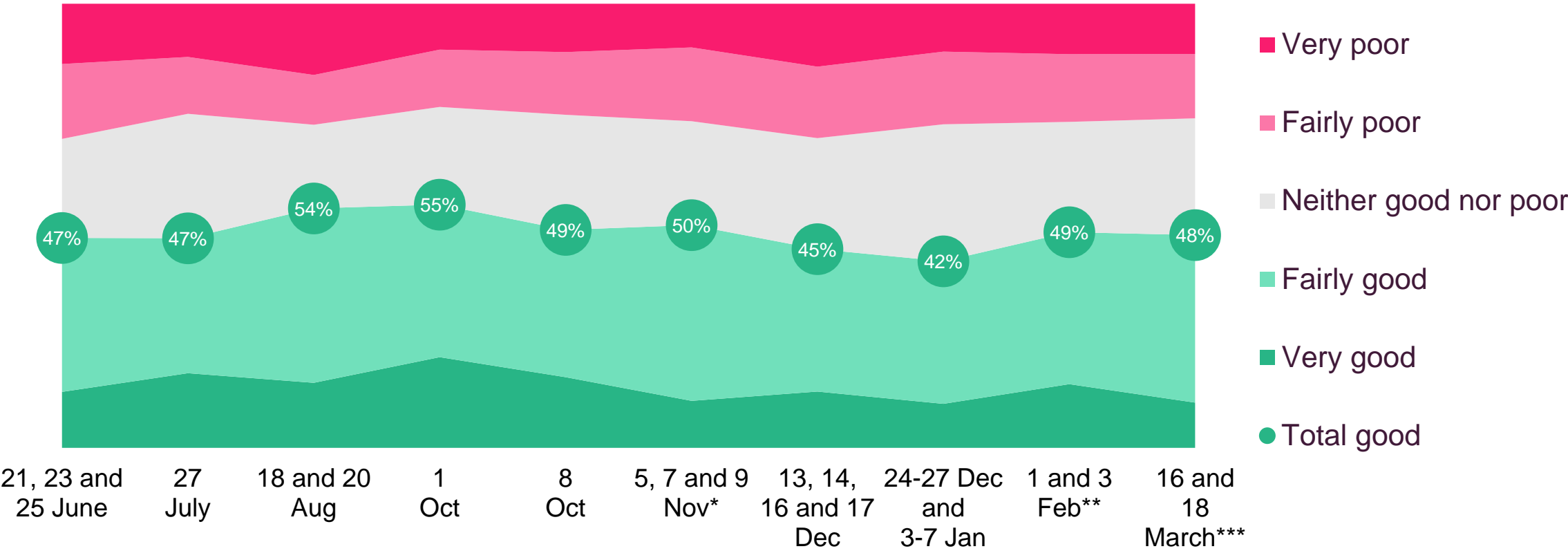
26%

Fairly poor or very poor

Asked of those aware and who intended or still intend to travel either on strike days or days following when services may be impacted. Q. How do you rate the information available about the strikes in terms of: the arrangements for changing your ticket or obtaining a refund if you are no longer travelling due to the strike. Sample size = 146. Results exclude those who said: 'Don't know/Did not look for information'.

16 and 18 March rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey.

Rating information available on 'changing tickets/obtaining refunds' during strikes over time



* November strike dates were cancelled after our survey. ** ASLEF/RMT driver strike only. ***RMT train company strike (not Network Rail).

1 and 3 February rail strikes: pre-strike intentions and information survey.

Asked of those who intend or intended to travel on strike but then did not because of the strike affected days and aware of the strikes. Excludes those who said: 'Don't know/Did not look for information'. Sample sizes from left to right = 223, 119, 136, 177, 125, 190, 252, 277, 146, 160.

Examples of comments about information on ticket exchanges/refunds



I had to look around for more details on the strikes and had to check several rail company sites, it was however easy to understand the refund information.

There is not enough information about strike dates or how to get cash back for pre-booked tickets.

If you order a ticket and you changed your mind then you can get you money back.

I know that I can get a refund if my train is cancelled.



The information is adequate but the methods for refunds and exchanges are poor.

Because I have no idea at all how you go about getting a refund or change of ticket. Info is not easily out there.

It is still possible to purchase tickets for trains which potentially may not be running.

It is hard to find out until the last minute which trains are running but it was very quick and easy to get my ticket refunded.

Refunds are a headache to get back.

Methodology and question text

Transport Focus asked about the 16-18 March rail strikes on a Yonder Consulting omnibus (conducted 10-12 March). The omnibus is weighted to be nationally representative of the population of Great Britain. The questions asked are shown below.

Intro statement: Rail strikes are planned for Thursday 16 March and Saturday 18 March. Train services may also be impacted as a result on Friday 17 March and Sunday 19 March.

Q1) Were you aware of the expected strike disruption on these days?

i. The days of the strikes (16 and 18 March); ii. The days following strikes (17 and 19 March) when services may be disrupted or reduced:

Answer options: A= Yes; B = No.

Q2) As far as travelling by train between Thursday 16 March and Sunday 19 March which applies for each of these? (please do not count journeys you might make on London Underground):

i. Strike days (16 and 18 March); ii. Days following strikes when train services may be disrupted or reduced (17 and 19 March):

A) Had no plans to travel by train on any of those days; B) Intended to travel by train on one (or more) of those days but won't be doing so now; C) Still planning to travel by train on one (or more) of those days.

Ask Q3 if aware of any strikes and going to be impacted [(Q1 i or ii = A) AND [(Q2 i. or ii = B OR C)

Q3. How do you rate the information available about the strikes in terms of:

- i. The train services which will and will not be running
- ii. The arrangements for changing your ticket or obtaining a refund if you are no longer travelling due to the strike.

Answer options: Very good; Fairly good; Neither good nor poor; Fairly poor; Very poor; Don't know / have not looked for any information.

Ask Q3a if asked Q3.

Q3a) Could you tell us why you gave the ratings you did for the information provided? [Text box completion]

Ask Q4 if going to be impacted by strikes: Q2 i. or ii. = (B OR C)

Q4) Please tell us in as much detail as possible how you expect these rail strikes affect you [Text box completion]

Contact Transport Focus

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

Transport Focus is the independent consumer organisation representing the interests of:

- rail passengers in Great Britain
- bus, coach and tram users across England outside London
- all users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads (the Strategic Road Network).

We work to make a difference for all transport users.

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