



Passenger expectations of how railway engineering works are managed

August 2023

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Foreword

Nobody welcomes disruption to their railway journey, even when it is planned and there is an understanding of the need and benefits it will bring. Previously Transport Focus has asked passengers how they would like engineering works handled in an overall general sense, and in relation to specific infrastructure improvement projects. This has included the rebuilding of stations like London Waterloo, Reading or London King's Cross, and upgrades such as on the Brighton Main Line, or the Transpennine route.

All our research has shown the importance of keeping people well informed about future disruption. Passengers also want advice on how journeys will be affected and the alternatives they have to make their journey.

This report adds to our body of knowledge with two studies looking at the impact of current

engineering works. The first is the construction of the HS2 interchange station on the Great Western Main Line at Old Oak Common. The second is the completion of the electrification of the Midland Main Line between London and Sheffield. It looks at how attitudes to planned disruption have changed following the Covid-19 pandemic and includes findings from our 2022, large-scale, quantitative study *Britain's railway: what matters to passengers*.

Much has been done to improve the passenger experience during planned disruption, but there is still more that can be done. This report includes our updated recommendations about how engineering works on the railway should be managed.

Anthony Smith
Chief executive



Introduction

This report summarises findings from three research projects, all touching on the same issue: what rail passengers want when there are planned engineering works. Qualitative projects look at planned engineering work on the Great Western Main Line for the construction of the new HS2 station at Old Oak Common and on the Midland Main Line for further electrification work. In addition, a major quantitative study (15,000 interviews) looks at what matters to passengers when it comes to planned engineering works. The detailed reports for each project can be found on our website – see links in the appendix.

Although each project had different objectives, the findings were broadly consistent so we are presenting the insight in a single summary report. It covers

attitudes to engineering works; timing of the works; alternative travel; communications about the works; and compensation. It ends with Transport Focus's recommendations about how best to approach planned engineering projects from a passenger perspective.

The qualitative research confirms findings from previous studies. Disruptive engineering works and associated mitigations should be planned with the passenger in mind and communicated in a timely manner and through multiple channels. The quantitative project adds to our understanding of passengers' views about the best – or perhaps more correctly the 'least bad' – way to carry out disruptive engineering works on the railway.

Key findings

Attitudes towards engineering works

Typically, passengers are not well informed about upcoming engineering works or the resulting disruption to their journeys. Those we spoke to had little awareness of future disruption on East Midlands Railway or CrossCountry for the Midland Main Line electrification work, or on Great Western Railway and Elizabeth line for the HS2 work at Old Oak Common.

They do know what the term 'planned disruption' means, although occasionally they think it also covers strike action. They also understand the difference between planned disruption such as engineering works, and unplanned such as signal failure, trains breaking down or poor weather.

Passengers we spoke to are broadly supportive of engineering works. They feel that investment in modern infrastructure, new routes and high-speed travel is positive in terms of wider societal and economic benefits.

In particular, passengers reacted positively to the electrification of the Midland Main Line. They expect the works will deliver cleaner, smoother, faster, more reliable trains, in addition to having environmental benefits.

Overall, the passengers we spoke to are willing to experience disruption for wider gain – even if they won't personally benefit. In particular, passengers

"If the work has to be done, fair enough, it's better for the environment and I am all for having a greener way of getting about. That's one reason why I got rid of my vehicle."

Nottingham to Manchester, wheelchair user with cerebral palsy, leisure

"It's better for the environment; there will be fewer emissions, fewer diesel fumes, and less usage of diesel."

Sheffield/Chesterfield, leisure

we spoke to in the Old Oak Common research were generally supportive of High Speed 2 (HS2), despite few of them believing it offers new travel opportunities for them personally.

There is broad agreement about the principles that should underpin the railway's approach to disruption.

Primarily passengers want a focus on minimising the 'aggregate pain'. Although seldom raised spontaneously, when the issue is raised, passengers say they want the railway to prioritise sustainability that is, minimising environmental damage and depletion of natural resources (even if the work takes longer). Most acknowledge that projects of this type are not quick to

deliver, although to some the seven-year estimate for the Old Oak Common works was a shock and seen as 'depressingly long'.

It is likely that there is a 'research effect' at play here. Passengers taking part in the qualitative research had time to consider the issues and think about the bigger picture, leaving them more engaged and potentially more supportive than the public in general.

Timing of planned disruption

Most disruptive days

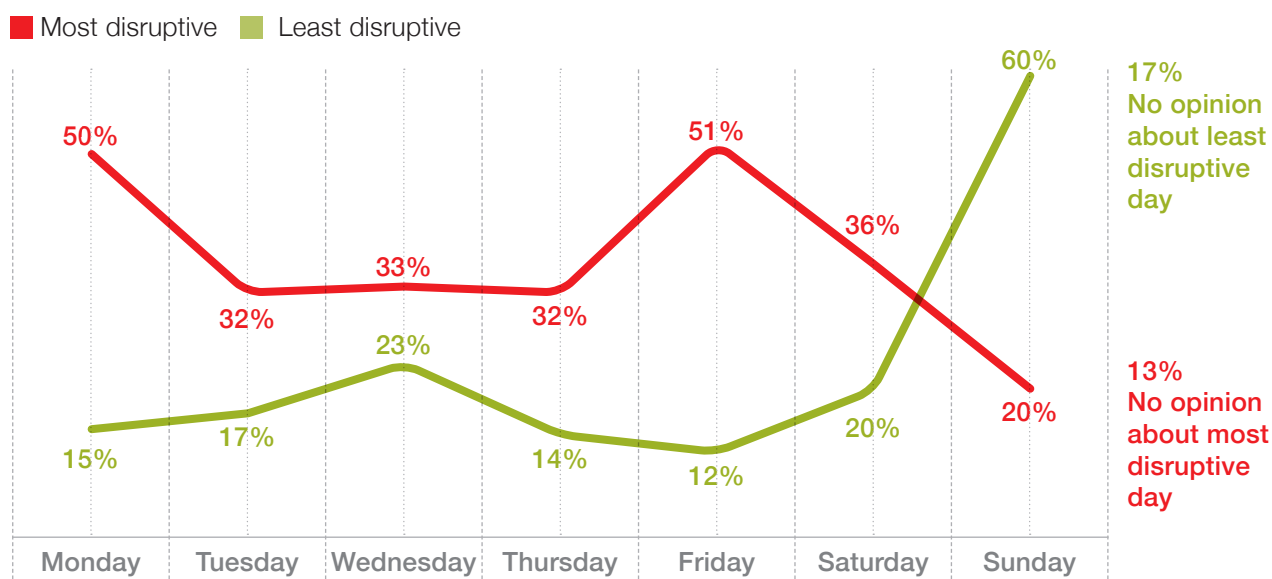
It is very difficult to reach a consensus as to when planned disruption should take place. Protecting the working week is generally seen as the right approach. However, there is also an expectation that the railway will strive for balance. For example, can weekend disruption be planned more creatively to protect at least some of the weekend?

In *Britain's railway: what matters to passengers*, 60 per cent of passengers considered Sundays to be the least disruptive day of the week for works. This compared to 20 per cent who said it is the 'most disruptive' day for closure. However, for longer-term work, a one-week closure was felt preferable to six consecutive weekends.

Mondays and Fridays are considered to be the most disruptive days for planned disruption, with 51 per cent of all passengers saying Friday is most disruptive day and 50 per cent saying Monday.

There are a number of factors that are likely to be influencing these preferences. Passengers are used to engineering works being carried out at the weekend and there is an ongoing belief that the 'working week' should be protected. This is even though employees in many sectors commute at the weekend and despite the rise in working from home. Furthermore, many leisure journeys that take place at weekends (such as visiting family) are seen as easier to defer.

Days when planned disruption would be most and least disruptive



Q: To start, thinking about the days of the week when planned disruption might occur, please could you tell us

- the day(s) of the week when you think closures would be most disruptive
- the day(s) of the week when you think closures would be least disruptive

Base: All current passengers (n=12,565)

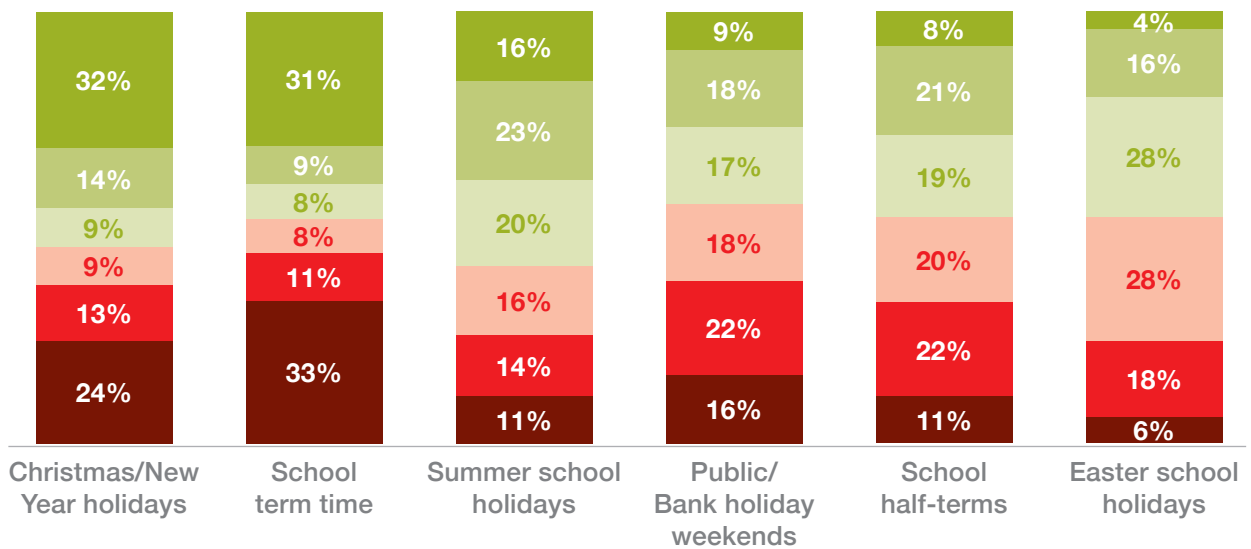
Holiday disruption

There is no consensus about holiday disruption. In *Britain's railway: what matters to passengers*, views are polarised on the best time of year for planned works. School term times and the Christmas and New Year holiday periods are considered both the most and the least disruptive periods depending on

the reason for travelling. Commuters and business travellers are less concerned about Christmas and New Year disruption, but many leisure travellers (including those without access to a car) want to travel by train to be with family at these times.

Times in the year when planned disruption would be most and least disruptive

■ Most disruptive ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ Least disruptive



Q: This time thinking about the times in the year when planned disruption might take place, please rank the following periods in terms of the **least disruptive** to the **most disruptive** times for engineering works to take place.
 Base: All current passengers (n=12,575)

In the Old Oak Common research, closures on bank holidays and at Christmas were (reluctantly) seen as preferable to weekday closures. However in the Midland Main Line research plans for Christmas work produced the strongest negative reactions (possibly accentuated by disrupted Christmas festivities due to the pandemic in previous years). Passengers also wanted major events, for instance sport and concerts, to be considered when planning engineering works.

“Not Christmas Eve as people travel to see family and friends... Christmas is a thing on its own, a lot more people travel then – it could be awful as people are trying to get back to their families.”

Sheffield/Chesterfield, leisure

“I think Christmas should be a no-no... To think that people suddenly have a car so they can travel to see family because the rail services are so disrupted, I think it's really unfair.”

Leicester, commuting

Passengers in the Old Oak Common research who were specifically asked about this issue, appreciated the rationale for minimising disruption over the summer months, with holidays seen as high importance leisure trips. However there was also a perception among some passengers that fewer people use the railway in summer (regardless of whether this is actually the case).

There is also a perception that rail is less resilient and reliable during the winter, meaning it is important to keep passengers moving at this time of year. Some suggest that shorter days and poor weather in winter makes disruption more unpleasant, and a minority point out that bad weather may disrupt the work itself.

In the Old Oak Common work the timing, scale and variety of anticipated disruption is worrying for many passengers, particularly given the expectation that the works will take longer than claimed.

Overall there is clearly no 'best time' for engineering works. They must be done when needed and passengers hope that they will be planned to minimise the pain. What is critical is that the railway is open and transparent about what is happening and provides ample notice of disruption.

Working patterns post Covid

Despite a reduction in daily commuting and an increase in working from home following the Covid-19 pandemic, passengers still want to see weekday services prioritised over those at weekends and holidays. Hybrid working has become commonplace for some, but many jobs cannot be done remotely. Of those who must physically attend their place of work, many are shift workers and travel at weekends as well as on weekdays but not to a 'nine to five' pattern.

“Working in recruitment, when we are reaching out to people for jobs, pretty much everyone expects a role to be fully remote or hybrid. There’s not really anyone that doesn’t ask if it was Monday to Friday, full time in the office. So on that side of things, I would probably say that is the new norm.”

Leicester, commuter

“I just get daily tickets just because I’ll be honest, my work since the pandemic has actually changed to more to having to commute because business is booming. In the cleaning industry, obviously, since the pandemic, a lot of businesses and domestic people are just needing more cleaners to a very high volume. So, I’m having to commute a lot more now since the pandemic than I did before. And I’m getting a hell of a lot more business now.”

Nottingham, commuter

The Old Oak Common research indicates that people are planning further ahead to buy tickets for leisure journeys in part to get the best fare deals. On the other hand commuters and business travellers are more likely to leave buying tickets to the last minute. The implication is that when planning engineering works the railway needs to ensure that people who have not planned ahead are still able to travel. A priority group in this regard is those who have no choice but to commute to work, such as retail, healthcare, construction and hospitality workers.

Length and distribution of planned disruption

Britain’s railway: what matters to passengers, research showed a preference for longer continual periods of disruption if it would avoid rolling weekend disruptions over an extended period. Longer but fewer disruptions are easier to remember and easier to plan around. Both are easier to communicate to passengers and easier for them to communicate to others impacted (such as their employer or customers).

The table on the next page shows that passengers have a slight preference for a one-week planned closure (including a weekend at either end) over six consecutive weekend closures. Almost two in five (37 per cent) say they would prefer this, compared to three in 10 (29 per cent) who would prefer the six weekends. It also shows that support for a concentrated one-week closure rises if the number of weekends required to complete the work increases, with 50 per cent preferring the concentrated closure once the number of weekends reaches 14.

Preference for a one-week closure in place of multiple weekends

	Number of weekends required instead of a one-week closure					
	6	8	9	11	13	14
Preferred weekend closures	29%	25%	23%	21%	18%	16%
Prefer 1 week + 2 weekends (11 days)	37%	41%	43%	45%	48%	50%

Q: You said that you would prefer the line to be closed for 6 weekends in a row instead of a one-week closure (9 days, including 2 weekends). Would you still prefer a closure of [INSERT WEEKEND NUMBER] to a closure of one week (9 days, including 2 weekends)?

However if the closure is extended it becomes harder to make the trade-off with 38 per cent of passengers choosing a two-week closure (including three weekends) as opposed to 28 per cent choosing the six weekends.

Preference for longer continuous closures in place of six weekends

	Length of continuous closure required instead of closures over 6 weekends						
	1 week closure (9 days, 2 weekends)	1.5 weeks (12 days, including 2 weekends)	2 weeks (16 days, including 3 weekends)	2.5 weeks (19 days, including 3 weekends)	3 weeks (23 days, including 4 weekends)	3.5 weeks (26 days, including 4 weekends)	4 weeks (30 days, including 5 weekends)
Prefer six weekend closures	29%	33%	38%	41%	45%	47%	50%
Prefer continuous closure	37%	33%	28%	25%	21%	19%	16%

Q: You said that you would prefer the line to be closed for one-week (9 days, including 2 weekends) instead of 6 weekends in a row. Would you still prefer a line closure of [INSERT DURATION] to a closure of 6 weekends in a row

In the Midland Main Line research there was a clear sense that ‘getting it all over and done with’ was of value.

“If you’re going to do night working for like, six months or whatever, then I don’t know if it’d be best to just say, ‘Oh, well, we’re just gonna shut all the trains off for two weeks here’. And then just do it the entire time and have day teams and night teams. So it’s done as quick as possible, rather than just having so many disruptions that people don’t know about, and then show up for or whatever.”

East Midlands Parkway/Loughborough, commuter

“Get it over and done with within a week. So you got seven days completely shut, do it, and then it’s just for a week rather than it being dragged on for a month.”

East Midlands Parkway/Loughborough, leisure

Alternative travel during disruption

In the Midland Main Line research, passengers reacted to the closure plans by assuming the railway would not provide any alternatives, and started to think for themselves as to their options in the event that there were no trains. The Midland Main Line and Old Oak Common research found that being shown a range of potential mitigations provides reassurance, and many begin to reconsider their initial assumptions about the viability of using the railway during disruption.

There are barriers to using alternatives including lack of familiarity with stations, changing trains, carrying luggage, capacity concerns and extended journey times. The closer the alternatives to the normal situation in terms of journey time and number of changes the better.

Passengers seldom see bus and coach replacement as an attractive alternative and many had horror stories to share, particularly in the Midland Main Line research.

“The dreaded replacement bus service! I can’t travel on buses anyway. I’m sick as a dog, but it’s like just making a painful journey more painful. It’s yeah, it’s just the slowest form of transport known to man”.

Derby, commuter

However, sometimes the dread of a replacement bus is worse than the actual experience. One passenger spoke about how well a previous closure in Nottingham had been managed.

“When Nottingham shut, there were loads of coaches and it was brilliant, a slick operation. There were announcements about it for ages, so you knew it was coming and it was really well handled ... You’d get a drink and pastry in the morning ... Never underestimate the power of a bun and a drink – it goes a long way. It shows ‘we know it’s a pain, but we do actually care’.”

Long Eaton to Nottingham, deaf passenger, business/leisure



Changes of mode can be particularly problematic for disabled passengers and those with additional needs.

“I’d rather go through the hassle of staying on the same train for longer than getting off and getting a bus. I’ve done that once when I first started my job in this area and I’ll never do it again. It was a nightmare.”

Thames Valley, disabled passenger

“Just the thought of like it being different... I think those kind of situations are the worst, in my having to use multiple different modes of transport in one journey. So, if I had to you know, get off the train on to a coach, I feel like those kinds of things are very stressful.”

Leicester to Derby, autistic passenger, leisure

“It’s better if you can stay on the same train rather than lots of changes. I hate that, as if they are shouting directions and it’s not visual, you are wondering where to go, especially if you don’t know the station.”

Kirby to Mansfield, deaf passenger, leisure

Avoiding the disruption

Those who have access to a car or the ability to pay more for an alternative (such as a taxi) are most likely to try to avoid the railway when there is planned disruption. The exception is if they can stay on the same train, but it diverts around the work area without significantly adding to the journey time.

Passengers expect the railway to suggest alternatives, for example using other lines, and expect there to be coordination between rail operators and other services such as coaches, buses and trams to ensure that suggested alternatives have sufficient capacity during the disruption period.

If the only option is a replacement bus, it can put passengers off booking. Those with less flexibility and fewer resources, in particular those who have to travel to work, are more likely to find themselves reliant on replacement services including buses where no alternatives are available.

“I’ve just tried to book a trip to New Street for the end of October... There are literally no trains coming back into Derby because of engineering works, and it’s a rail replacement bus, which I don’t fancy going on really, because I think it’s an hour and 45 minutes. So, I’m actually buying a single ticket from Derby to Birmingham. And then I’m going back into Litchfield, Trent Valley, which is about half an hour from my house.”

Derby, leisure



Communications

Passengers see effective communications as essential to help them successfully navigate disruption. Passengers want to know what alternatives are available and to receive advice about how to use the alternatives effectively.

Key information requirements include:

- the dates and times of the planned disruption
- the routes and stations affected
- using diagrams to supplement verbal and written information which alone might not be clear
- a clear explanation of the alternatives including the approximate additional journey time and do not leave passengers to work this out for themselves
- other alternatives that may exist
- clarity regarding additional costs – although these are clearly not wanted – and any discounts available.

In the qualitative research, passengers wanted to understand the context – why something is happening, and how they or others, will benefit. But a research effect is likely to be in play here. In reality, passengers' primary concern is likely to be how the disruption affects them, and communications don't need to lead on the benefits. Nevertheless, it is helpful to explain the benefits that will result and provide assurances that the work will be completed on time.

“I'd want to have some kind of clear image in my head about what is the long-term goal as a train passenger who is going to be frequently using this, in years to come after the work is done? What are we aiming for? What's going to make me continue doing it? What's going to be the vision for the future? We said obviously they're going to do this work to make things better in the future. How's that going to look? For me as a customer? That's what I would like the train company thinking about now. What's that vision? Share it with me.”

Nottingham, leisure

Communications from different organisations need to have consistency in terms of message. For longer

duration projects such as Old Oak Common, part of keeping passengers on side will be providing updates highlighting what has been achieved.

Timing of communications

Ideally, passengers want to be notified as soon as there is clarity about the planned disruption. Although there are fewer season ticket holders post-pandemic, for them knowledge of the works is needed a long way in advance. Significant planned disruptions need to be flagged well in advance with a programme of phased communications. Communications need to be proactive with push notifications via multiple channels.

“I would want to know as early as possible. I would say the Trainline app – all the main apps people use – should push out notifications. If most of these companies have people's email addresses from when they previously booked tickets, they should email to let you know. People are going to need to be constantly reminded that this is coming.”

South West, commuter

“I'd want a combined effort between Network Rail and GWR.”

Thames Valley, disabled passenger

Ways to communicate

Stations are important sites for messaging but there is also an expectation of communication using the following media:

- app notifications and website information – including all operators and third-party resellers
- social media – particularly Twitter
- email notifications to passenger who have bought tickets on affected days or routes
- local radio (both advertising and travel bulletins).

Passengers want to see messaging spread across as many channels as possible and expect the railway to use digital channels to provide up to the minute information and advice.

Compensation

The Old Oak Common research showed that passengers' expectations of compensation are limited. Compensating season ticket holders is seen as important given their heavy investment and long-term commitment to the railway. Passengers believe that price should reflect the mode of transport. They expect that replacement bus and coach services should cost less than a train. Financial compensation in the form of discounted fares is seen as the most appropriate approach.

Although passengers have limited expectations regarding compensation, they are clear they should not have to pay more to use alternative routes – and ideally less if the alternative is not a train.

Non-financial benefits such as refreshments have a role to play but need to be positioned carefully to avoid being seen as tokenistic or gimmicky.

“I think the only people that should get compensation are the season ticket holders because obviously their journeys will be disrupted, and they’ve paid a lot of money. Otherwise, I wouldn’t expect any kind of compensation because you’re providing, I’d say, above and beyond what I would expect to get me my journey that I paid for.”

Thames Valley, disabled passenger

“I think Virgin Trains gave compensation many moons ago when they were upgrading the rail network from London to Manchester. They did compensate you with either a meal voucher up to the value of £20 or sometimes it was just a voucher off your next ticket. That kept me happy at that moment.”

Cotswolds, commuter

The Midland Main Line research results were similar and passengers felt that season ticket holders should be compensated, and that disruption should not leave passengers out of pocket. Here there was a little more support for compensatory gestures such as a free drink, to make up for the inconvenience of having to take a replacement bus service.

“I do like the idea of the incentive. You stomach you know, a journey on a rail replacement service. You get a voucher. 50 per cent off your next ticket with that same company. Yeah, we’ve inconvenienced you, but you’ve still stuck it out. So I’ll tell you what, whatever ticket you buy next, we’ll give you 50 per cent off it.”

Sheffield/Chesterfield, commuter



Recommendations

Transport Focus has previously made various recommendations for managing planned engineering works and the resulting disruption to passengers' journeys. For completeness we restate them here, whether or not the research covered in this report specifically addresses each point.

- Passengers generally understand the need to undertake maintenance and make improvements to the railway but do not like the disruption this may entail. **Engineering works should be planned to cause minimum disruption** and take account of changes in the passenger mix/journey types post-pandemic.
- Many passengers react negatively to the idea of buses or coaches providing a rail replacement service – especially the disabled and passengers travelling with buggies or heavy luggage. **Where possible passengers should be offered a rail alternative if a line is closed.** Coaches are generally seen as offering a better experience than buses, although the needs of disabled passengers unable to board a conventional coach must be met.
- Passengers dislike having to change to a bus or coach (especially at stations with which they are not familiar). **Operators should have adequate provision for staff at interchange points, directional signage, and labelling of vehicles to make the process as pain-free as possible.**
- Disabled passengers can have fewer alternative travel options if there is rail disruption. **Their needs must be considered in planning and managing disruption and accessible rail replacement services.**
- Passengers will be frustrated whenever disruptive work is undertaken. Christmas and the New Year when families wish to be together remain contentious among leisure travellers. Commuters are not happy to have their weekday journeys disrupted but are more accepting than they were pre-pandemic, with many able to work from home for a few days. **The railway should consider the 'least bad' time to undertake disruptive engineering work** bearing in mind the passenger mix on the route in question.
- While the passenger mix and future travel patterns are still settling down post-pandemic, it is becoming clear that weekend leisure journeys will be a more important part of the mix than previously. **The railway should be prepared to consider short term weekday closures (such as over school half terms) rather than longer periods of multiple weekend (and/or overnight) disruption.**



- Passengers like to know about disruptive engineering works well in advance so as to be able to plan their lives. **An outline of the impact on passengers' travel options should be given at least six months in advance** to allow, among other things, holidays to be arranged to avoid the works and so commuters are aware when renewing season tickets.
- Passengers expect timetable information to be available, on average, three months in advance. **The industry must get back to providing accurate timetable information twelve weeks in advance (T-12) as soon as possible**, and work to better this wherever it can. Passengers can then book their tickets and make seat reservations with confidence.
- Passengers expect timetable information to be accurate and to reflect any planned alterations so they can reliably plan their lives. **If the timetable has not been finalised, passengers should be warned that there could be changes and told when they should check for revised, accurate timetable information.** The railway must ensure that the dates and the impact of any disruption are prominent in any communications and are not buried within any broader information about the benefits to be delivered.

- Passengers should not be out of pocket when forced to use an alternative route and there is a widely held view that fares should reflect the inconvenience to passengers. **During periods of sustained disruption the railway should offer compensation such as temporary fare reductions or ‘extra days’ on season tickets.**
- It can be a challenge to communicate with infrequent travellers. **Train operators should continue to use all channels at their disposal.** We note a number of areas for particular consideration:
 - digital media may be effective only when people are engaged with the railway and actively looking to travel
 - getting passengers’ permission to receive marketing communications and signing them up to a marketing database can provide a valuable communications channel
 - for longer projects, creating a database of people interested in receiving regular updates/newsletters can also be valuable and can help with awareness in the broader community
 - facilitating news coverage in local media can be effective in generating awareness and support for the works.
- Passengers appreciate knowing what is being done and why but this sits lower in their priorities than knowing when it will be, what it means for their journey, and what the alternatives might be. **The railway must ensure that the dates and the disruptive impact of any project are prominent in any communications and are not subsumed within any narrative about the benefits to be delivered.**
- It can be little things that make all the difference to a passenger’s journey experience. **Operators should look to provide covered waiting areas with seating and toilet facilities at bus/coach interchanges, approachable marshals, and refreshments to make disrupted journeys more tolerable.** Some projects have, for example, distributed free tea and coffee, bottled water, ice cream, and child activity packs.
- With a view to ‘winning back’ passengers post-pandemic as well as persuading people to use sustainable transport, **the industry must listen to people’s frustrations and expectations, and must ensure the passenger perspective is foremost in its thinking** – including in managing planned engineering works.





Appendix: methodology

The Old Oak Common research used qualitative research to explore passengers' reactions to the works on the Great Western Main Line as part of HS2 construction. The Midland Main Line Electrification research also used qualitative research to look at plans to complete the electrification of the Midland Main Line from London to Nottingham/Sheffield via Derby. *Britain's railway: what matters to passengers*, is a broader quantitative study exploring what matters to passengers, and has a section devoted to planned engineering works. All three studies were completed in October 2022.

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/old-oak-common-impact-of-hs2-infrastructure-works/>
Old Oak Common – impact of HS2 infrastructure works

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/extension-of-the-midland-main-line-electrification/>
Extension of the Midland Main Line electrification

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/news/back-to-basics-what-passengers-want-from-rail-services/>
Britain's railway: what matters to passengers - Transport Focus

This summary should be understood in the context of the qualitative research environment of both projects that allows for the staged release of information to respondents and a considered evaluation of alternatives. In these cases, passengers' views are likely to be more pragmatic than will be found in the 'real world'. While effective communications can help win hearts and minds and should be encouraged, passengers are in reality likely to be more frustrated and less accepting when faced with alternatives. The quantitative research gives a more accurate picture of how passengers are likely to react when they have less time to consider the implications.

The conclusions from these reports are consistent with an earlier piece of research into the Transpennine Route Upgrade¹ in summer 2019, and not dissimilar to work carried out for the Department for Transport² in summer 2021.

¹ Please see: www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/transpennine-route-upgrade-what-do-passengers-want

² Please see: <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-infrastructure-disruption-disruption-passenger-perspectives-qualitative-research> and: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-infrastructure-disruption-passenger-perspectives-quantitative-research>

Old Oak Common

The research comprised focus groups and in-depth interviews as follows:

Group discussion programme			
Location	Journey length	Journey purpose	Operators
Thames Valley	Shorter	Leisure/business	Elizabeth line
	Shorter	*Commuter	Elizabeth line
	Shorter	Leisure/business	GWR
	Shorter	Commuter	GWR
West and Wales (Lines to Bristol and South Wales with journeys starting/ending at Swindon or beyond)	Longer	Leisure/business	GWR
	Longer	Leisure/business	GWR
Cotswolds (Lines to Gloucester, Hereford, Banbury)	Longer	Leisure/business	GWR
	Shorter	Commuter	GWR
South West (Lines to Exeter, Plymouth, Penzance)	Shorter	Commuter	GWR
	Longer	Leisure/business	GWR
Heathrow Express**	N/A	Business	Heathrow Express

Depth interview programme with disabled passengers		
Location	Journey length	No. of interviews
Thames Valley	Shorter	4
West and Wales (Lines to Bristol and South Wales with journeys starting/ending at Swindon or beyond)	Longer	2
Cotswolds (Lines to Gloucester, Hereford, Banbury)	Mix	2
South West (Lines to Exeter, Plymouth, Penzance)	Mix	2

* Commuters: the definition of 'commuter' was designed to reflect the changing nature of work and travel. All used the railway to travel to/from work but, within this we provided representation of:

- those who **can work from home if necessary** (but *choose not to*)
- those who **can work from home and choose to do so** some of the time
- those who **cannot work from home** for example working in retail, hospitality, emergency services.

** An additional three in-depth interviews were conducted with frequent business users of Heathrow Express

There were 11 groups and 10 depth interviews in total; all fieldwork was conducted in August and September 2022.

Midland Main Line electrification

The research comprised 12 90-minute focus groups with commuters and leisure travellers, and 10 in-depth interviews with disabled passengers. Fieldwork was conducted in September and October 2022.

The focus groups were distributed as shown below. Six passengers were invited to each group and most attended, so groups had either five or six participants.

Group No.	Main reason for travel	Using trains departing from...	...or through from other branches
1	Leisure	Sheffield/Chesterfield	
2	Commuter	Sheffield/Chesterfield	
3	Leisure	Derby	
4	Commuter	Derby	
5	Leisure	Derby	Matlock/Crewe
6	Commuter	Nottingham	
7	Leisure	Nottingham	
8	Commuter	Nottingham	Worksop/Lincoln
9	Leisure	East Midlands Parkway/Loughborough	
10	Commuter	East Midlands Parkway/Loughborough	
11	Leisure	Leicester	
12	Commuter	Leicester	

- Groups and depths were mixed by sex and covered a spread of ages and social grades
- Depths with **disabled passengers** covered a range of health issues, including those with: visual impairment, deafness, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mobility problems/needing a wheelchair, mental health issues.
- They travel from a mix of the core stations.

Britain's railway: what matters to passengers

This comprised a 20-minute online survey of more than 15,000 passengers, as shown below, carried out in August 2022. The data was weighted to proportions

set by a nationally representative telephone omnibus (2000 interviews).

All passengers	Weighted %	Interviews
Travelled in last 3 months	64	10,179
Travelled in last 4 – 12 months	20	2386
Lapsed Travellers	16	2661
Total		15,226

Current passengers	Weighted %	Interviews
Commuter	19	2329
Business	19	2323
Leisure	44	5576
Personal Business	19	2337
All current passengers		12,565

Contact Transport Focus

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council