



What Matters to Rail Passengers in Great Britain

Summary report

June 2026



Forewords

We are delighted to have worked with Network Rail to generate up to date understanding of what matters to rail passengers in all parts of Great Britain. The timing of this research is important. Making sure that Great British Railways (GBR) is born with the passenger interest at the heart of its thinking is vital. That requires GBR's first five-year financial settlement (2029-34) to be planned with clarity about passengers want from the railway.

So, what did the 12,750 passengers and 2500 current non-users we spoke to tell us? They reiterated the importance of the basics: that running trains on time and not cancelling them really matters, alongside value for money (a mix of price, punctuality and reliability, comfort of the journey) and passenger information, including when something has gone wrong. And for some, including disabled passengers, that focus on basics extends to things like lift maintenance and delivery of passenger assistance.

A key finding is that passengers put personal safety and security – on the train and at stations – in second and third place in their 'what matters' list. For women, some disabled people and passengers in all ethnic groups except white, personal safety and security on the train tops the 'what matters' list. This is a significant issue for the railway, both as a public service and commercially. Perceptions matter: people need to feel safe as well as be safe. We look forward to discussing initiatives in this area with the rail industry and others such as the British Transport Police.

These quantitative and qualitative results give deep insight into what passengers want when travelling by train, and how it varies between Britain's nations and regions. The research also shows how 'what matters' is different for different people, varying according to type of disability and ethnic group. Understanding and embracing passengers' priorities is crucial to achieving a railway that is trusted by its users, achieve high levels of customer satisfaction and is commercially successful.

We have used these findings to inform the priorities set out in our commentary on the first six months' data from the new Rail Customer Experience Survey, which will be

published shortly. We will also use them to test whether the key policies and strategies produced by governments and the railway – both before and after GBR is established, and both locally and network-wide – align with what matters to passengers.

As well as being at the heart of planning for Funding Period 1 (2029-2034) and the associated GBR Integrated Business Plan, we will expect these findings about what matters to passengers to inform GBR's customer strategy, its accessibility strategy and related delivery plans – and similar in Scotland, Wales and elsewhere that rail services are devolved. The findings should also be central to the UK Government's Long-Term Rail Strategy – which will set the railway's strategic objectives over a 30-year horizon – and delivery of the National Transport Strategy in Scotland and the National Transport Delivery Plan in Wales. They should also be used by individual train operators alongside other insight to ensure focus on activities that will make the most difference to passengers.

Alex Campbell,
Director, Strategy, Insight & External Affairs
Transport Focus

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Forewords

As we move towards Great British Railways, the railway is evolving to bring track and train together into a more integrated system – to deliver a simpler, more accountable railway and improve customer experience. Network Rail is now working hand-in-hand with DfT Operator and train operators to develop plans for Funding Period 1 (from April 2029 to March 2034) and looking ahead to Funding Period 2 (2034-2039), to establish GBR’s first integrated business plan – which will set out what it will do to deliver the railway we need for the future.

We were pleased to work with Transport Focus on this comprehensive, network-wide research, which provides a robust and timely understanding of what matters most to current passengers, and to lapsed passengers and non-users. The outputs from the research will be a critical input into our planning for Funding Period 1, helping to ensure that our priorities and investment decisions are grounded in the needs and expectations of passengers and customers. Listening to passengers and communities, and understanding their priorities, will be fundamental to the success of GBR. The analysis in this study provides insight at the national and local level, with the local insight being relevant to our current organisational arrangements as well as to the future business units which will be at the heart of GBR.

The findings from the research are clear. Passengers’ top priority remains a reliable railway, with trains running on time and not being cancelled. However, performance in this area continues to fall short of expectations, reinforcing the need to focus on improving punctuality and reducing disruption. Alongside this, lower fares would be the single biggest factor in attracting lapsed and non-users back to the railway. The value for money of ticket prices is also an important factor for existing passengers.

Personal safety and security have increased in importance and remain fundamental to passenger confidence. The research shows us that this is particularly important to females, we see it highlighted for passengers with disabilities and those with accessibility needs and is the most important issue for ethnic minority passengers. At

the same time, the research highlights that how we manage disruption is critical: clear, timely and accurate information during delays is one of the most important drivers of passenger satisfaction. Finally, while passenger priorities are broadly consistent across the network, there are important differences between groups – particularly for those with accessibility needs – underlining the importance of designing services that work for everyone.

By focusing on the areas that matter in our planning – reliability, value for money, safety, communicating effectively during disruption, and responding to the needs of different passenger groups – we can build a railway that is more attractive, more efficient and better able to support the needs of passengers, communities and the wider economy. This is what passengers are telling us they need – and this research tells us we have no excuse not to listen.

Paul McMahon
Director, Planning and Regulation
Network Rail



What Matters to Rail Passengers in Great Britain

1 Trains run on time and are not cancelled

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

2 My personal safety and security on the train

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

3 My personal safety and security at stations

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

4 The ticket price is value for money

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

6 Accurate and timely information about train times

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

7 Getting a seat on the train

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

8 Trains are sufficiently frequent

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

9 Easily accessible to older and disabled people

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

10 Inside of trains being clean and well-maintained

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

5 Kept informed about delays and options during disruption

Progress: 100% (Green dotted bar)

Scan the QR code or visit transportfocus.org.uk to learn more

The green dotted bars show the relative importance of each issue to passengers, the blue line indicates average importance across all 25 issues. Research carried out in 2025.

Key messages

1

Trains running on time and not being cancelled is the most important issue for passengers overall, and one where many believe the railway is currently underperforming. It tops the 'what matters' list for passengers using all parts of the railway bar one, where it is eclipsed by personal safety and security on the train.

Trains running on time is more important than speeding up the service or reducing cancellations. But that does not mean that passengers will be comfortable with cancellations. Delays and cancellations are two sides of the same coin.

These issues are linked to the biggest cause of frustration for passengers: inadequate information in the event of disruption. Clear, consistent and useful information, as well as supportive and empathetic staff, makes a difference during disruption.

2

Personal safety and security both on trains and at stations is higher up the 'what matters' list than previously, while being an area where current performance is judged to be reasonably good overall. For some, personal safety and security on trains tops their 'what matters' list, including women, disabled people, passengers in all ethnic groups except white and those travelling in one part of the network.

Passengers have increased awareness of crime and risk of crime generally, and they would like more done to ensure their personal safety when travelling by train.

They feel that increased staff visibility, including ticket checking and challenging low-level anti-social behaviour, use of CCTV 'in the moment' and not just to provide evidence will help. In general, passengers don't expect staff to put themselves at risk by intervening directly in a serious incident.

3

Value for money matters to all passengers, and its importance relative to other factors is higher in Yorkshire/ North East England and western England*, among over 45s, men, those of white ethnicity and passengers without additional accessibility needs (groups among which personal security tends to be of slightly lower relative importance). The railway's current performance on value scores least well of all factors explored in the research.

Clearly, price is a key part of how passengers assess value, but punctuality and cancellations, journey comfort, including getting a seat, and disruption handling all play a part. Many passengers feel that value has worsened, linked to past fare rises and perceptions of poorer reliability and quality of service.

While many are aware of ways to save money (advanced booking, split tickets and so on), some feel it doesn't work for them. At times, the cost of train travel is compared unfavourably to driving.

4

Accessibility matters to all passengers, not only disabled people and those with additional access needs. It is of above average importance for passengers using every part of the railway, while current performance is judged to be reasonably good overall. As well as disabled people, accessibility is particularly important for women, under 45s, over 65s and people with Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British ethnicity.

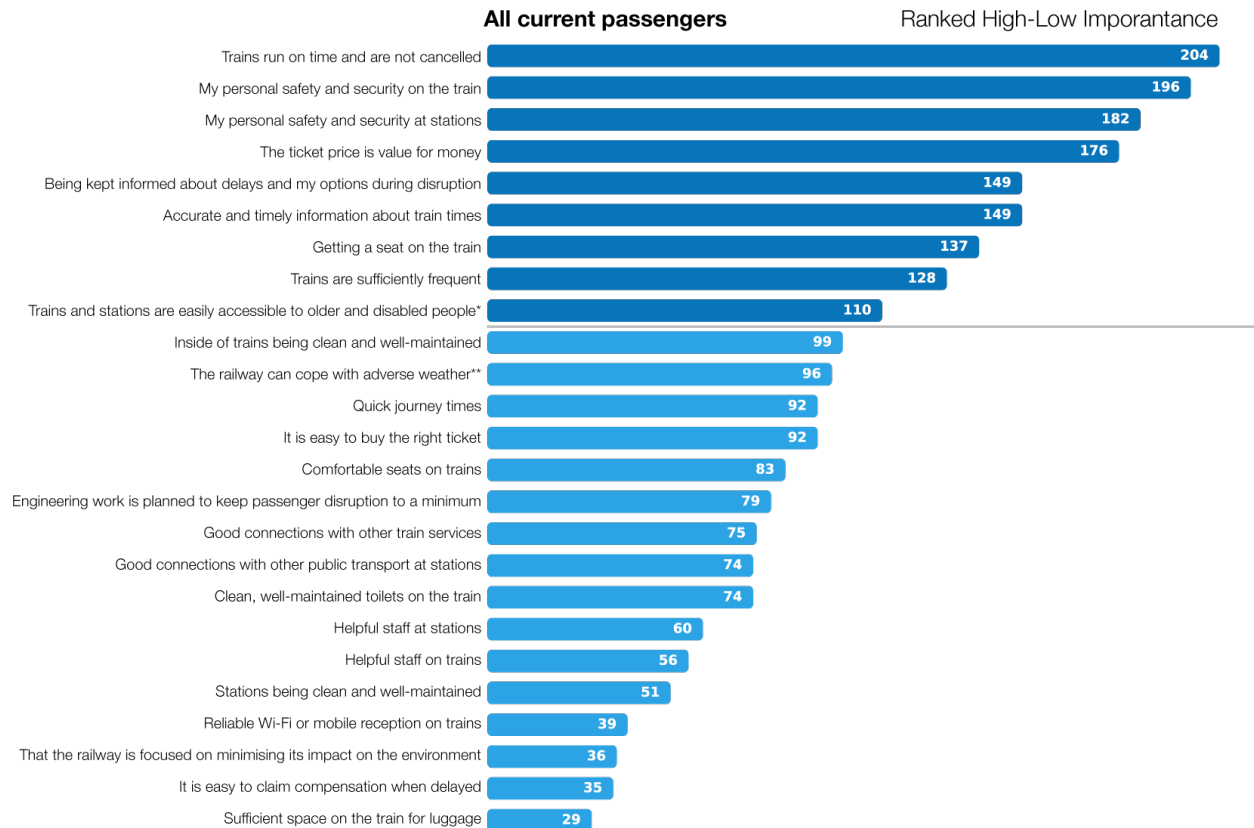
Clear, audible announcements and working accessible toilets are highlighted as the top priorities to improve accessibility for all passengers. Quiet carriages and clear visual information are appreciated by those with some non-visible disabilities.

Having confidence that assistance will be delivered matters, particularly to those with physical accessibility needs. Some report difficulty with booked passenger assistance.

* Journeys made on Network Rail North and East Route and Network Rail Western Route respectively

What matters to passengers in Great Britain: full results

‘Trains run on time and are not cancelled’ matters most to passengers, followed by **‘my personal safety and security on the train’** and **‘my personal safety and security at stations’**. **‘The ticket price is value for money’** is the fourth most important issue. Although the order has changed, nine of the top 10 priorities in 2025 featured in the top 10 in 2022. The new entry is **‘trains and stations are easily accessible to older and disabled people and those with pushchairs, bicycles, luggage etc’**, which has displaced **‘quick journey times’**.



Passengers were asked about 25 aspects of a train journey. The results have been indexed, with the average importance being 100. This means that any feature with an index score over 100 is more important than the average importance, and a score below 100 is less important than the average. A feature with a score of 200 is therefore twice as important than the average, and a score of 50 is half as important as the average.

Exact wording presented

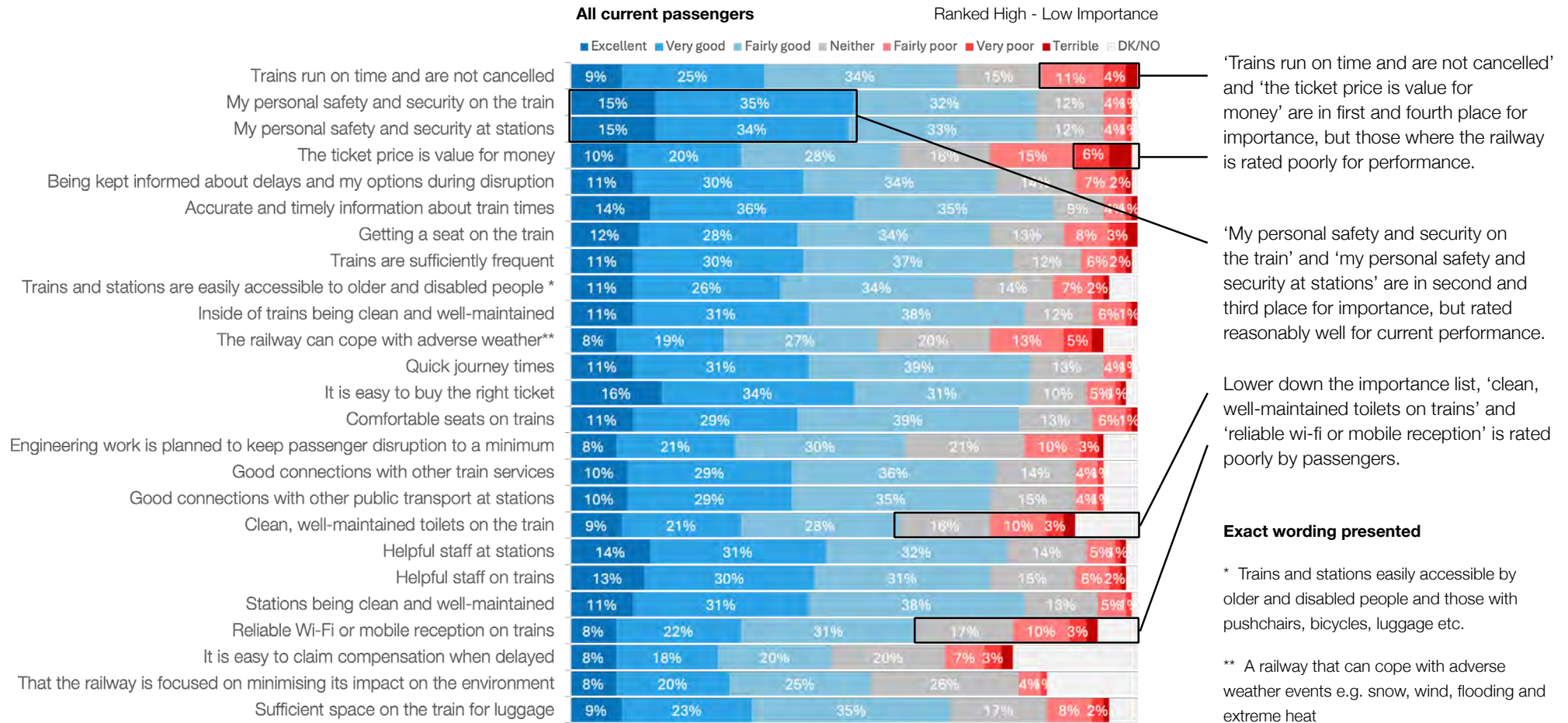
* Trains and stations easily accessible by older and disabled people and those with pushchairs, bicycles, luggage etc.

** A railway that can cope with adverse weather events e.g. snow, wind, flooding and extreme heat

Question asked: Please tell us which of the items are most and least important to you when travelling about your commute / most frequent business trip / most frequent leisure trip/ most frequent trip for your personal business. n = all current passengers, 12,764

How well passengers think the railway is currently performing on these issues: full results

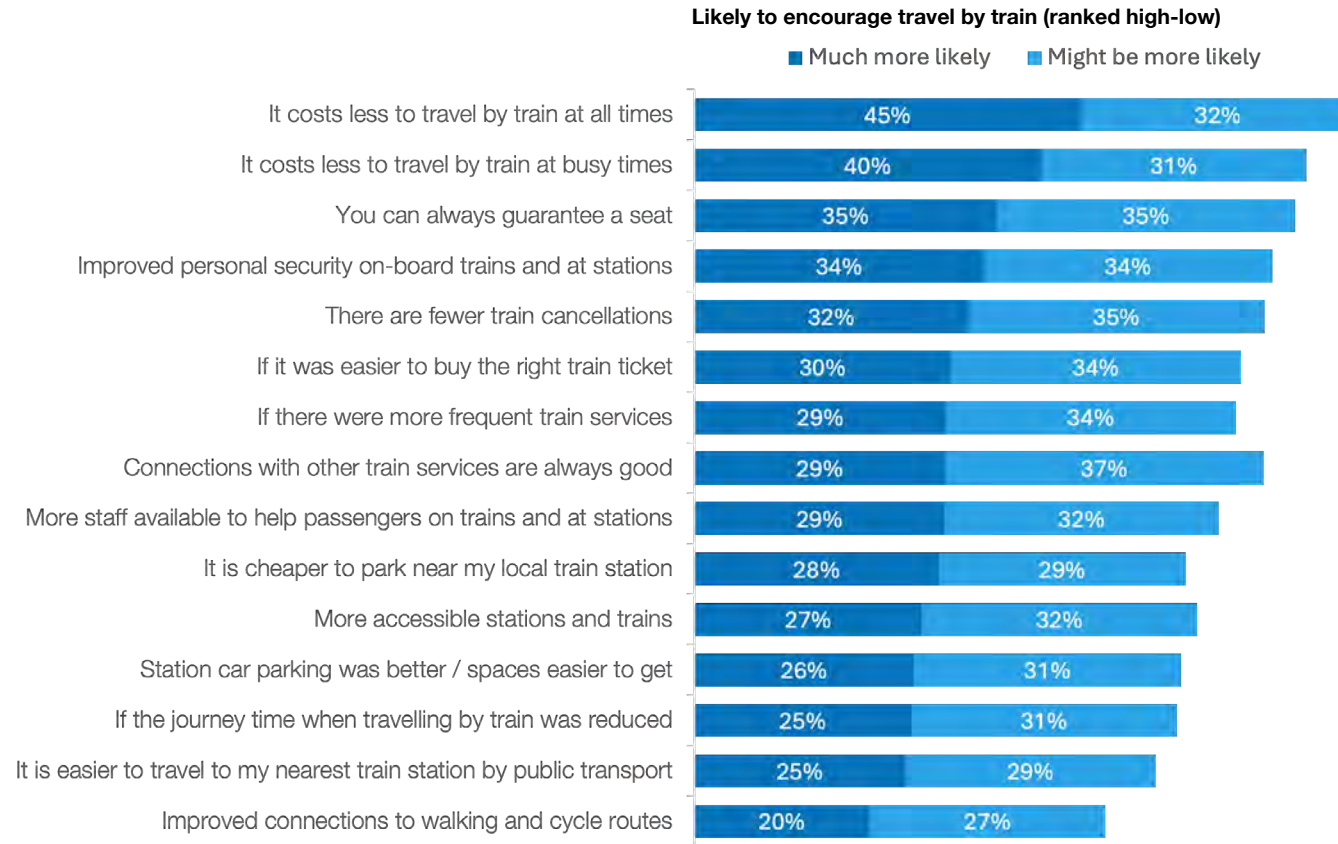
Passengers were also asked to say how well they think the railway is performing on the same 25 aspects of a train journey.



Question asked: Thinking again about the type of journey you make most often, please tell us how you rate the railway's performance on the following n = all current passengers, 12,764

What would encourage current non-users to the railway?

We explored the things that would encourage current non-users of the railway, including lapsed passengers, to travel by train. Price reductions top the list, with being confident that you'll get a seat and personal security on-board trains being the most significant journey experience factors.



Question asked. We'd now like to know what, if anything, might encourage you to travel by train again in the future. Looking at the following list, please rate the extent to which these changes would make you more likely to travel by train

Base: All rail non-users (n=2,502)

Deep dive: trains run on time and are not cancelled

The research explored this topic in detail, asking passengers to identify what was more important to them: trains running on time or each of: the avoidance of cancellations; a faster journey; and providing more seats. Punctuality consistently emerged as the most important factor for passengers, without significant variation between different passenger groups.

That does not mean that passengers are comfortable with cancellations; ultimately, people want the timetable delivered properly with neither delays nor cancellations. For example, 'the specific trains I use run on time' and 'the specific trains I use are not cancelled' are of near equal importance for passengers who need step-free access (37 per cent and 39 per cent respectively). And neither does it mean that passengers would not welcome extra or faster trains in the timetable; they just don't want them delivered at the expense of a punctual railway. Fewer cancellations was cited by two-thirds of current non-users of the railway (67 per cent) as something likely to encourage them to travel by train again in the future.

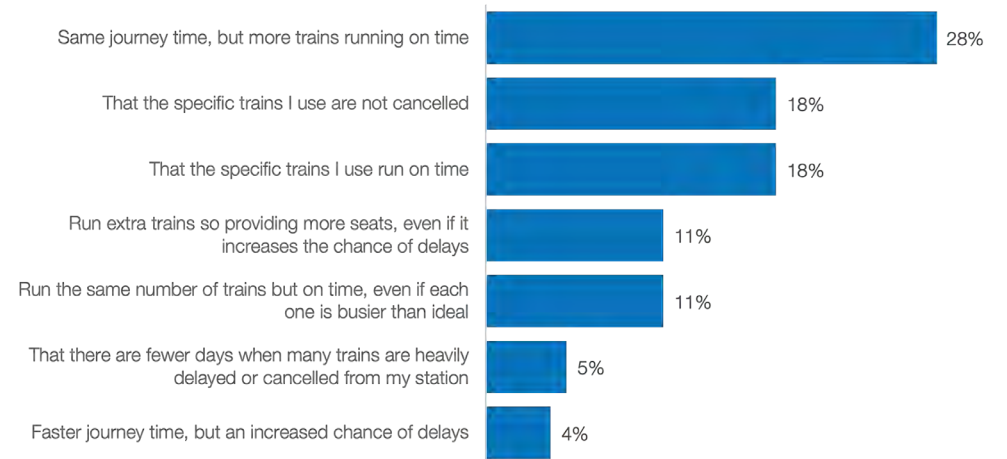
There are some differences, however. Passengers with a mobility disability or requiring step-free access attach equal importance to extra trains that provide more seats as they do to punctuality. There are differences by age, for example one in five under 35s (21 per cent) but fewer than one in 10 aged 55 years and above (7 per cent) favouring a faster journey over punctuality.

Conclusion

The railway must have a relentless focus on running trains on time and not cancelling them. The causes of delay and cancellations must be identified and systematically tackled, including forensic analysis of where the timetable works in theory but imperfectly in practice.

In the discussion groups, passengers spoke unprompted about the negative impact that both delays and cancellations have on them, emphasising the knock-on effect on their plans and their confidence in the railway getting them where they need or want to be. For some disabled passengers, things not going to plan adds to the physical and mental effort of travelling and generates additional anxiety for people with some neurodiverse conditions.

Q: In Summary, using your answers from previous questions, which of the following is most important to you?



Base: All current passengers (n = 12,764)

Deep dive: personal safety and security

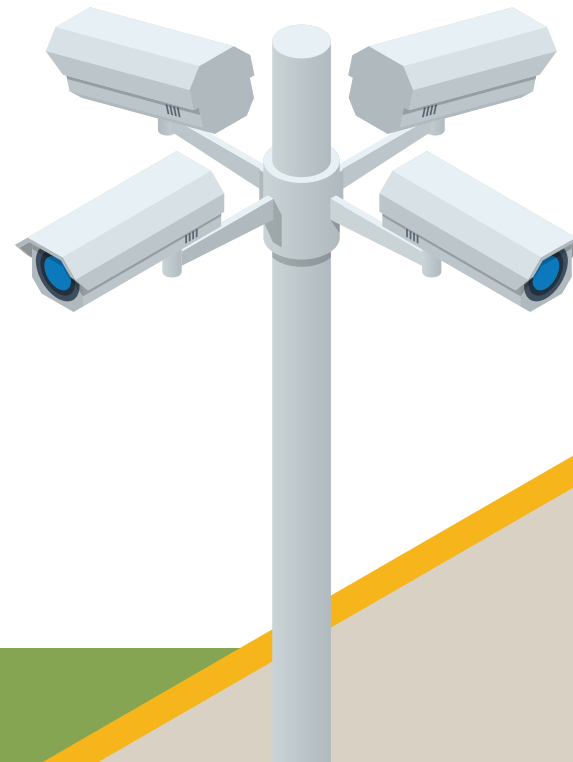
Personal safety and security on trains and at stations are, respectively, 'what matters' issues two and three for passengers, and are of greater importance than when similar research was conducted in 2022. Personal safety and security on trains was the most important issue for women, disabled people, all ethnic groups except white and passengers travelling in one part of the network**, overtaking 'trains run on time and are not cancelled'. Passengers taking part in discussion groups were unsurprised to see this issue high up on others' 'what matters' list. They discussed general increased awareness of crime, mentioning concerns about travelling after dark, the potential for theft, aggression and violence. These sentiments are in line with increasing concern about crime in society generally. Passengers felt they are perhaps more likely to hear about incidents now than in the past because of social media and news online supplementing traditional media.

Exploring what is behind these findings, four in 10 passengers (41 per cent) said they had experienced anti-social behaviour by other passengers that has made them feel vulnerable. This rises to over half of passengers with a learning/memory disability or who are neurodivergent (57 and 60 per cent respectively) and was also higher among under 35s. A third of women (33 per cent) and of passengers with a disability (32 per cent) strongly agreed that they feel nervous at railway stations after dark, a markedly higher proportion than among men or people without a disability. There is a similar pattern with feeling nervous travelling on trains after dark. The qualitative research underlined that, as well as any worries about the risk of serious crime, a key issue is people behaving in ways that intimidate others. Groups of young people, including after school or college has finished, groups who are or have been drinking alcohol, often but not exclusively related to football and other sporting events, were cited as part of a feeling that standards of etiquette have declined. That problem includes things like playing music without headphones, using bad language and a general attitude that the rules don't apply to them and that they are untouchable.

Probing what might be done to improve things, around two-thirds (64 to 66 per cent, depending on the question) felt it was very important to have evidence standard CCTV at stations and on trains, and that it should be monitored in real time. Six in 10 (61 per cent) strongly agreed that visible presence of uniformed staff on stations and trains is very important. Fewer people felt that communication campaigns encouraging

"I've seen a lot of incidents where they've been quite violent on trains and I've never been a part of it, but I see it on Facebook all the time."

Business passenger



** journeys using Network Rail Kent Route

respectful behaviour were important. The discussion groups indicated that alongside improved lighting, passengers want the railway to 'enforce' higher standards of behaviour through a mix of increased staff visibility, including ticket checking and challenging low-level anti-social behaviour, and use of CCTV 'in the moment' rather than just to provide evidence following an incident. Many felt that CCTV on the railway is perhaps too subtle, citing that many buses have live images making it clear 'you are on camera, so behave'. Passengers felt that technology should be used in conjunction with properly trained uniformed staff and Police to provide a presence that encourages good etiquette and deters poor behaviour. However, in general, passengers don't expect staff to put themselves at risk by intervening directly in a serious incident.

Eight in 10 passengers felt the railway was performing well on personal safety and security, and approaching two-thirds (62 per cent) agreed that rail travel is relaxing and pleasurable. However, having four in 10 passengers saying anti-social behaviour has made them feel vulnerable when travelling is clearly not good for business. There should be a commercial prize in tackling this: it is likely that patronage is being suppressed. Indeed, four in 10 passengers (42 per cent) said they would be likely to travel more by train if enhancements were made to personal safety and security, rising to almost six in 10 (58 per cent) of under-35s and two-thirds (66 per cent) of passengers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ethnicity. Among current non-users of the railway, two-thirds (68 per cent) said improved personal security on-board trains and at stations is likely to encourage them to travel by train again in the future.

Conclusion

The railway has not caused the concern passengers have about personal safety when travelling, but must own the problem and develop a comprehensive strategy to address it. The public realm the railway is responsible for must be managed in a way that passengers are safe and feel safe.

"...staff or management should have at the least, the training to handle various situations. We don't know what's gonna happen. So, them being able to adapt to the situation is very helpful. And you would expect that if they are on the train, they should actually intervene or help out at least.."

Leisure passenger

"I've got young daughters, I wouldn't let them travel on the train by themselves, no way."

Commuter

Deep dive: value for money

That ‘the ticket price is value for money’ is the fourth most important issue for passengers, and the one where passengers feel the railway is performing least well out of all 25 issues in the research. One in four (25 per cent) of passengers rated it fairly poor, very poor or terrible. Value for money is of higher relative importance to passengers in Yorkshire/North East England and western England***, among over 45s, men, those of white ethnicity and passengers without additional accessibility needs (among whom personal safety and security is of slightly lower relative importance).

“I use split tickets. Even if I have to split between 5 or 6 stations, if I’m saving £40 or £50, I’ll do it”

Commuter

Many feel that tickets are expensive (in particular for long-distance travel), and express concerns about service quality (reliability, comfort and crowding). Commuters and business travellers in particular feel frustrated and ‘trapped’ by high peak prices which they cannot avoid paying. Passengers are generally aware of – and many use – the popular ways to save money, such as booking in advance and buying split tickets, but that does not work for everybody. Some object to being forced to jump through hoops to get a good price, which is perceived to put the digitally savvy at an unfair advantage.

Conclusion

Alongside continual focus on delivering a quality product (a punctual railway with few cancellations, effective management of disruption and cleanliness among others), work must continue to simplify the fares system and look to charge what passengers judge to be a fair price for the service they are receiving.

*** journeys using Network Rail North and East Route and Network Rail Western Route respectively

Although price is a key part of how passengers assess value, punctuality and cancellations (including how disruption is handled) and journey comfort (including getting a seat, cleanliness and personal safety and security) all play a part. If passengers are dissatisfied with these areas, it can negatively impact their value for money perception. But sometimes it simply feels too expensive, however good the product is.

In the discussion groups, some passengers compared the cost and reliability of train travel unfavourably with driving. Among current non-users of the railway, lower fares is the biggest motivating factor in encouraging people who could use trains to do so. Over three-quarters (77 per cent) said they would be more likely to travel by train if it cost less at all times.

“Why should someone with a computer get a better deal than me, it’s just not fair.”

Digitally less able

“I pay £30 a day, it’s a new train, it’s clean, it’s comfortable and it’s pretty reliable but it’s still expensive. £20 would feel more like it”

Commuter

Deep dive: managing disruption

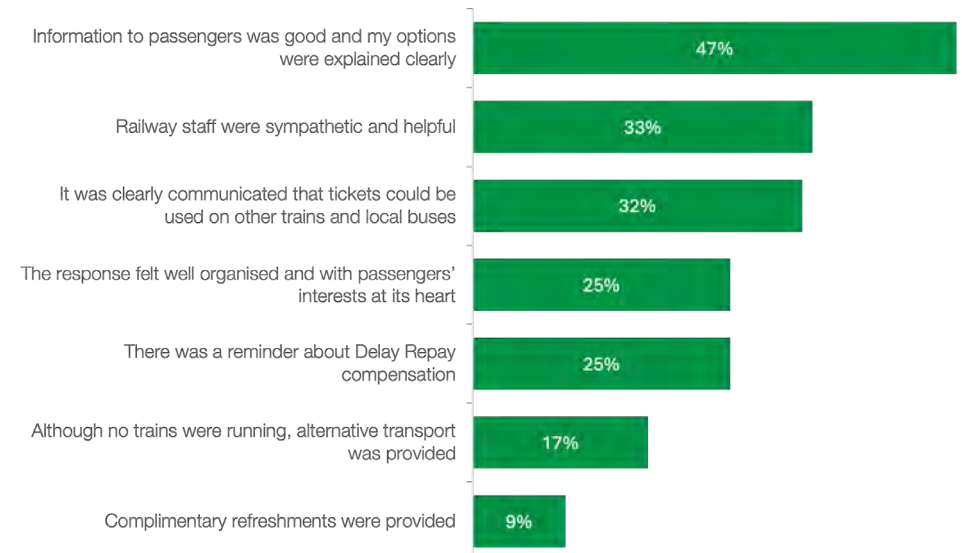
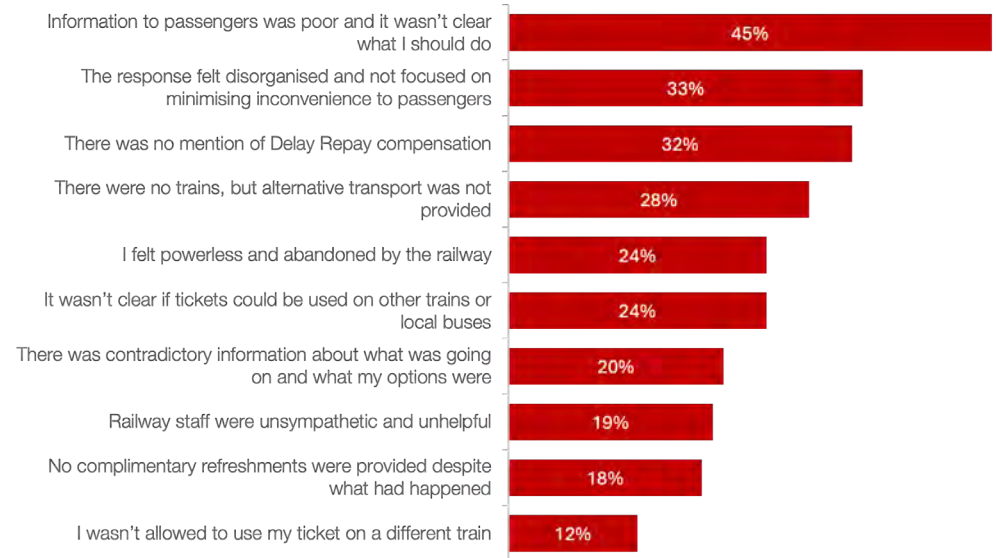
In the research we dug into what drives dissatisfaction with the handling of delays. The more frequently somebody experiences a problem, the more likely they are to be dissatisfied with the handling of disruption. There are only slight differences of view depending on journey purpose.

The reason cited for dissatisfaction with disruption handling is dominated by ‘information to passengers was poor and it wasn’t clear what I should do’, followed by ‘the response felt disorganised and not focused on minimising inconvenience to passengers’. Information was cited by approaching half (45 per cent) of passengers as a reason for their dissatisfaction, and the proportion was slightly higher among women and over 55s. The industry’s response not being passenger focussed is cited by a third (33 per cent), and a larger proportion of over 65s, those who are neurodivergent or have a mobility disability. Feeling powerless and abandoned by the railway was cited by a quarter of passengers (24 per cent), more among over 55s, passengers in Scotland, in Wales and those with stamina and breathing issues.

Among passengers who were satisfied with the way disruption had been handled, information also dominates as the reason. ‘Information to passengers was good and my options were explained clearly’ was cited by almost half (47 per cent) of passengers, followed by ‘railway staff being sympathetic and helpful’ at one-third (33 per cent), and ‘good communication about tickets being valid on other trains and local buses’ also a third (32 per cent). ‘Sympathetic and helpful staff’ was particularly cited by passengers with a disability, travelling with a mobility scooter or travelling with a dog, whether a pet or an assistance dog.

Conclusion

The railway must deepen its resolve to minimise the inconvenience and frustration passengers experience when something goes wrong. It is clear that information is critical to this. Where information is good, passengers are positive about the way disruption has been handled – but where it is poor they are critical. The railway must act to implement the recommendations set out in our January 2026 publication [Improving the passenger experience when trains are disrupted](#).



Deep dive: accessibility

'Trains and stations being easily accessible to older and disabled people and those with pushchairs, bicycles, luggage etc' is the ninth most important issue for passengers, and did not feature in the top 10 in the 2022 research. As well as disabled people, it is particularly important for women, under 45s, over 65s and people with Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ethnicity.

The clarity of audio announcements was identified as the most important factor, with almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of passengers thinking that this is very important. Accessible toilets, clear and accurate visual displays and ticket machines that are easy to use also rank as important.

Over one in three current disabled passengers (37 per cent) say they would travel by train more if accessibility was improved – but this drops to one in seven (14 per cent) of non-rail users with a disability, suggesting that initiatives such as 'try the train' events for disabled people may also be needed to attract new passengers.

Responses varied by the type of barriers to using the railway individuals face. Those with a disability impacting their mobility, learning and memory, or stamina and breathing, were most likely to say that all areas of accessibility on the railway are very important. Passengers who are neurodivergent also rate all areas of accessibility as important, but visual displays and real-time information come out as their top priorities, emphasising the need for clear, concise and useful information.

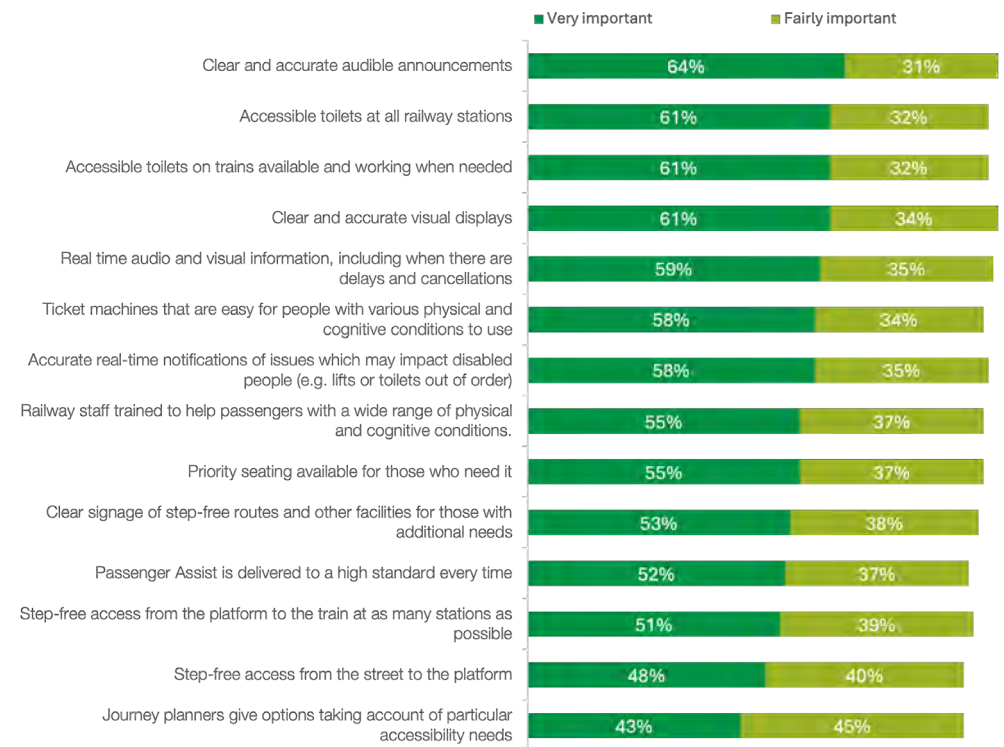
The discussion groups indicated a sense that the railway being accessible to all passengers is 'hit and miss'; sometimes excellent and sometimes far from it. There was a sense that inconsistency, the not knowing if it is all going to work that day, can make travel daunting for some.

"Sometimes it's good, sometimes you'll have a good journey or sometimes it's a nightmare"

Passenger with non-visible disabilities

Inevitably, accessibility needs – and how good the railway is at meeting them – varies depending on the adjustments individuals require to make their journey accessible. The table below sets the issues out under four headings, although some issues are related to more than one heading.

Q: How important, if at all, do you think it is for the railway to achieve the following?



Base: All current passengers (n = 12,764)

Mobility

Some passengers report specific journey challenges, such as:

- passenger assistance not being delivered, even when pre-booked
- crucial lifts being out of action for weeks or months
- crowding leading to instances of staff being unavailable to deploy ramps, resulting in delays or needing to find alternative transport
- cleanliness and accessibility of train and station toilets is sometimes poor
- seating can be uncomfortable with insufficient legroom.

Hearing and visual disabilities

Improving the clarity of station announcements was important to most, but particularly those who are blind or partially sighted.

Signage is generally regarded as better than many elements of the rail experience, but some recommend further improvements and greater consistency. For example, having connectional information on your arrival platform when changing trains and more information on the outside of trains.

Non-visible disabilities

Travelling alone can be intimidating – although some find travelling by train simpler, more convenient and more relaxing than other options such as driving.

Disruption, noise and crowds can be particularly challenging for passengers with non-visible disabilities, who often prefer to plan ahead and familiarise themselves with the journey in advance.

Early announcements, clear information and greater understanding from staff would be appreciated.

Quiet carriages were praised as beneficial, particularly for neurodivergent people and those suffering with anxiety.

Buggies, luggage, bicycles

Passengers travelling with bikes, buggies and luggage sometimes worry about accessibility.

It is not always clear which space is allocated for which users (for example, who has priority – buggies or wheelchair users), and this can lead to tensions.

Some are more comfortable than others asking for help with luggage, buggies and so on. This can lead to some people being less inclined to travel by train if the effort and logistics are considered too much.

“There’s not enough room to be able to sit down...the train’s full, there’s not enough room to stow luggage and I feel like you just had a constant battle navigating space on the train.”

Passenger with sensory/mobility disability

“I suffer panic attacks and things like that so I don’t tend to travel on my own and I don’t travel when it’s busy because I can’t deal with the crowds and the noise and when it’s just too stressful.”

Passenger with non-visible disabilities

Conclusion

While the railway works on delivering actions within the UK Government’s Accessibility Roadmap, to reduce the barriers faced by disabled rail users it also needs to develop an accessibility strategy. One that will power a long-term transformation for disabled passengers. This needs to be co-produced with disabled people and the organisations representing them.

Deep dive: reliable wi-fi or mobile reception

Although lower down passengers' 'what matters' list at 22 out of 25 issues, 'reliable wi-fi or mobile reception on trains' is also among the poorest performing. Just three in 10 (30 per cent) of passengers rate performance in this area as excellent or very good. Wi-fi and mobile reception on trains is of greater importance to under 35s, those with a learning or memory disability, those travelling with a mobility scooter, bicycle or dog (a pet or assistance dog), and all ethnic groups except white.

We explored passengers' expectations and experiences of internet connectivity in the discussion groups. Passengers generally feel that ontrain wi-fi is not up to standard – noting that the connection is often poor or inconsistent. There is frustration among some that a hygiene factor of modern life is not being taken seriously by the railway, despite the high fares paid to travel.

In the discussion groups, many passengers said that all they expect is basic reliability, so they can send and receive emails, access train tickets and travel information through apps and so on. They said they generally aren't looking to stream content or download large files, and would download what they needed beforehand.

Some passengers were resigned to receiving a poor service in this area and use their own mobile data of necessity rather than choice. Others, in particular commuters and business passengers, felt that internet connectivity is a basic requirement which the railway should deliver properly.

Conclusion

Although of lower importance overall, at the same time many passengers expect high-quality ontrain wi-fi for basic day-to-day tasks, particularly on longer journeys (but would welcome the facility to do more than just basics if they can). Some see weaknesses in current wi-fi provision as systematic of poor value in return for a high-priced product.

"It's pointless trying to get on it, as it's so poor. It seems that some operators only really want you to use their entertainment services to connect to their Wi-Fi rather than using your laptop to do some work."

Passenger with sensory and mobility disabilities

"Sometimes the Wi-Fi is so poor or it drops out every time you go under a tunnel, or it drops out at certain points. It's almost pointless doing it."

Business passenger



Deep dive: the railway and its impact on the environment

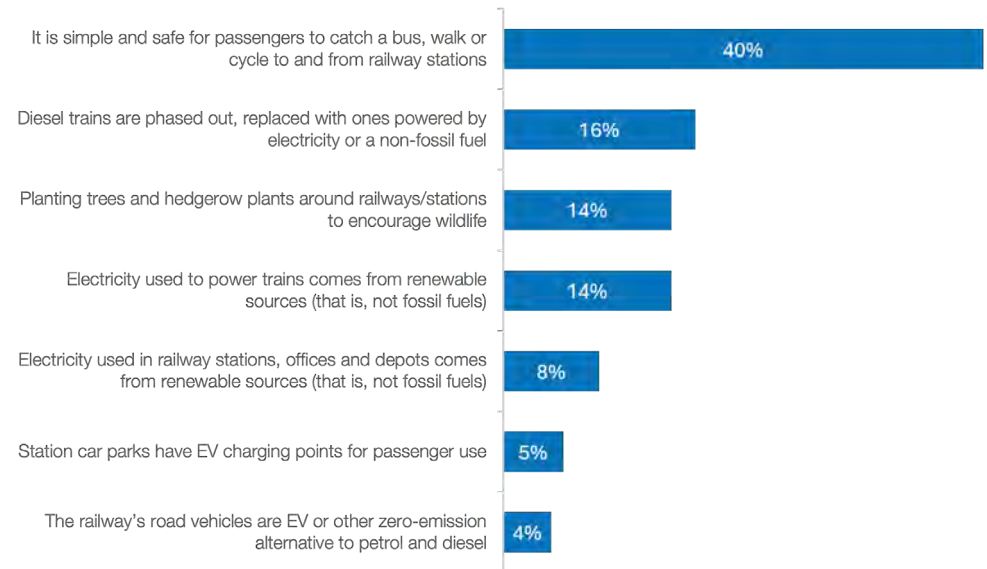
'That the railway is focused on minimising its impact on the environment' is low down the 'what matters' list at 24 out of 25 issues, and the railway's performance on the issue is rated low as well. The issue is of greater importance to under 35s, passengers with a learning or memory disability, those using a mobility scooter or wheelchair, and all ethnic groups except white.

The aspects which resonate most with passengers tend to be more personal and tangible to them, such as it being easy and safe to use sustainable means to get to and from railway stations (for example, catching a bus, walking or cycling). This is considerably more important to passengers than phasing out diesel trains, the use of renewable energy and EV adoption for the railway's road vehicles.

Conclusion

From a passenger perspective, the railway should focus on initiatives with partners to make it simple and safe for people to travel to and from railway stations by more sustainable means. Passengers' views align well with the vision set out in Better Connected, the UK Government's vision for domestic transport in England, and the National Transport Strategy in Scotland and the National Transport Delivery Plan in Wales.

Q: You mentioned that the following are important to you. Which would you say is most important to you?



Base: All current passengers (n = 12,764)



What Matters to Disabled Rail Passengers

1 My personal safety and security on the train

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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2 Trains run on time and are not cancelled

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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3 My personal safety and security at stations

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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4 The ticket price is value for money

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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5 Kept informed about delays and options during disruption

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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10 Inside of trains being clean and well-maintained

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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9 Trains are sufficiently frequent

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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7 Easily accessible to older and disabled people

Green dotted bar	Blue line
------------------	-----------

2 Accurate and timely information about train times

Green dotted bar	Blue line
------------------	-----------

6 Getting a seat on the train

Green dotted bar	Blue line
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Scan the QR code or visit transportfocus.org.uk to learn more

The green dotted bars show the relative importance of each issue to passengers, the blue line indicates average importance across all 25 issues. Research carried out in 2025.

What Matters to Rail Passengers in Scotland

1 Trains run on time and are not cancelled

2 My personal safety and security on the train

3 My personal safety and security at stations

4 Trains are sufficiently frequent

4 The ticket price is value for money

7 Kept informed about delays and options during disruption

6 Getting a seat on the train

9 Easily accessible to older and disabled people

10 Inside of trains being clean and well-maintained

5 Accurate and timely information about train times

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The green dotted bars show the relative importance of each issue to passengers, the blue line indicates average importance across all 25 issues. Research carried out in 2025.

What Matters to Rail Passengers in Wales

1 Trains run on time and are not cancelled

2 My personal safety and security on the train

3 My personal safety and security at stations

4 Trains are sufficiently frequent

4 The ticket price is value for money

7 Kept informed about delays and options during disruption

6 Accurate and timely information about train

9 Easily accessible to older and disabled people

10 Inside of trains being clean and well-maintained

5 Getting a seat on the train

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The green dotted bars show the relative importance of each issue to passengers, the blue line indicates average importance across all 25 issues. Research carried out in 2025.

Great Britain rankings: change between 2022 and 2025

Where notable, reference is made in this report to differences between ‘what matters to passengers’ findings in 2025 and those when similar research was carried out in 2022. The table below shows the rankings in 2025 and 2022. However, caution should be exercised when making comparisons between 2025 and 2022 because neither the sample construction nor the question wording is identical in the two surveys.

Issue	2025 ranking	2022 ranking
Trains run on time and are not cancelled	1	2
My personal safety and security on the train	2	6
My personal safety and security at stations	3	8
The ticket price is value for money	4	1
Being kept informed about delays and my options during disruption	5	7
Accurate and timely information about train times	6	4
Getting a seat on the train	7	5
Trains are sufficiently frequent	8	3
Trains and stations are easily accessible to older and disabled people and those with pushchairs, bicycles, luggage etc	9	13
Inside of trains being clean and well-maintained	10	10
The railway can cope with adverse weather	11	11
Quick journey times	12	9
It is easy to buy the right ticket	13	12
Comfortable seats on trains	14	16
Engineering work is planned to keep passenger disruption to a minimum	15	15

Issue	2025 ranking	2022 ranking
Good connections with other train services	16	14
Good connections with other public transport at stations	17	17
Clean, well-maintained toilets on the train	18	18
Helpful staff at stations	19	20
Helpful staff on trains	20	22
Stations being clean and well-maintained	21	21
Reliable Wi-Fi or mobile reception on trains	22	23
That the railway is focused on minimising its impact on the environment	23	19
It is easy to claim compensation when delayed	24	24

About this research

The research was carried out by independent market research agency Quadrangle on behalf of Transport Focus between December 2025 and February 2026. It comprised:

- A 20-minute online survey with 12,764 passengers and 2502 current non-rail users, asking passengers to identify the most and least important aspects of a train journey. Passengers were asked to respond with reference to the type of journey they make most frequently – whether it be for commuting, business, leisure or personal business.
- Eight follow-up discussion groups with a mix of passenger categories and demographics explored key themes in more depth.

Further detail can be found on the [Transport Focus](#) website.



Contact Transport Focus

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council