

Shaping Rail's Future: Customer Community

Report: Apr 2023

Getting to and from railway stations

Shaping Rail's Future: objectives



- ✓ Hear about rail users' – and potential users' – experiences, impressions and opinions of the railway in Britain
- ✓ Understand our strengths and weaknesses, where improvements are needed
- ✓ Involve customers in potential solutions and new ideas to help shape the future of rail

Introducing our customer community

40

Participants with a mix of:

- Rail usage purpose and frequency
- Rail dependency
- Disabilities and not, and other needs e.g. travelling with buggies
- Demographics, lifestyles, attitudes
- Regions and urban, rural or suburban context

Names have been changed throughout this report to protect anonymity



Each month, participants complete activities and answer questions around a particular topic

Via short videos, text, images

Individually, interacting with a moderator, and/or with each other

In addition, two face to face workshops to discuss topics further, generate ideas, and feed back on proposed concepts and solutions



12 months from February 2023



Topic focus in April 2023:

Integrated Transport

(Getting to and from railway stations)

In April 2023 our community...



Told us about their most recent, **end-to-end journey**, specifically:

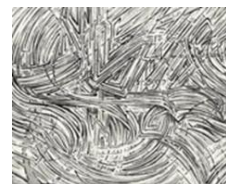


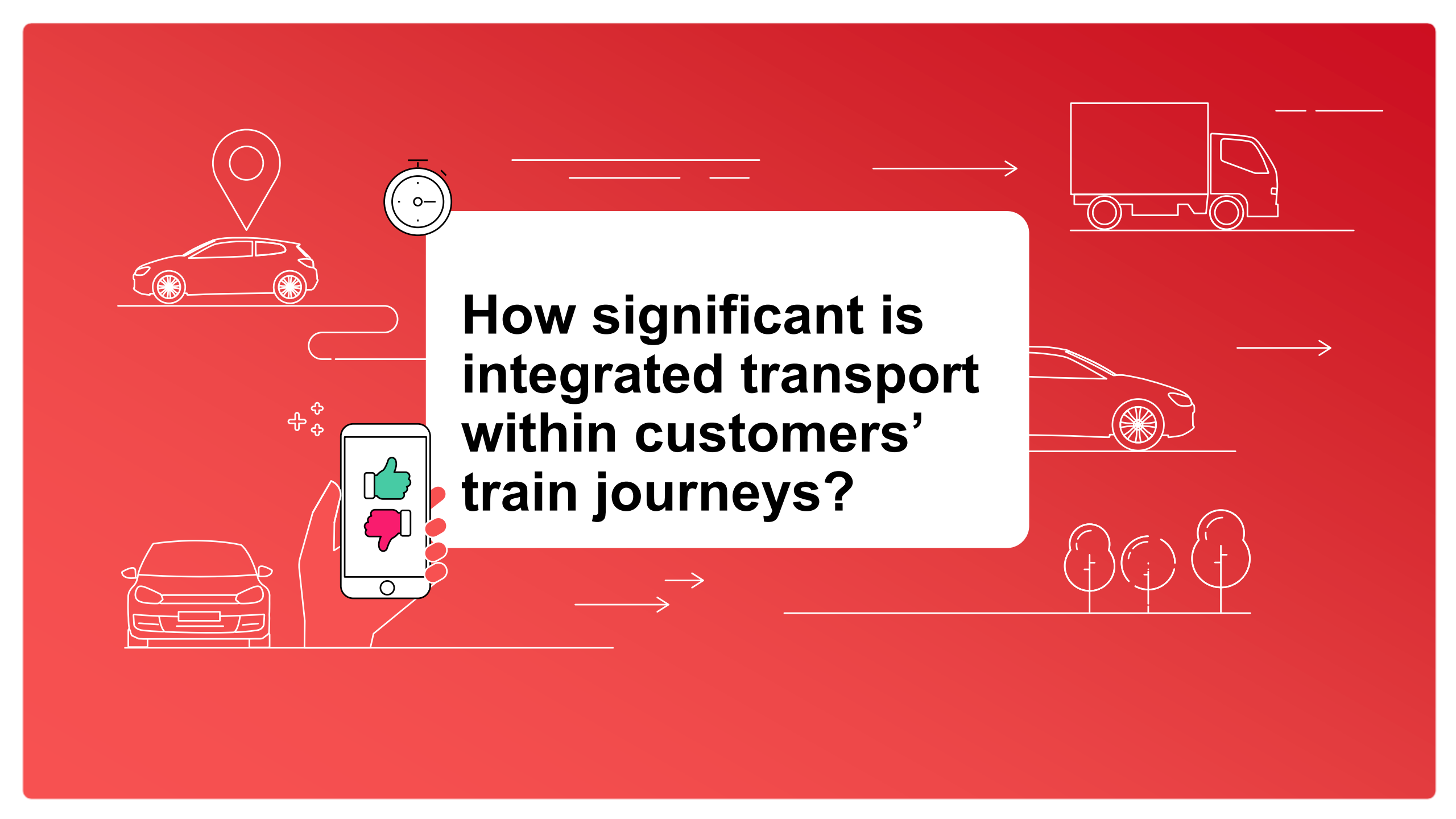
- How they got to and from the stations at either end, and on the return
- Why they used these modes of transport
- What the experience of these modes was like, and how well set up the railway was to facilitate these parts of the trip
- How they planned the journey to and from the stations, and why



Talked to us about **how transport options to and from stations impact their train usage** more broadly

(Updated us on how they feel about travelling by train generally)

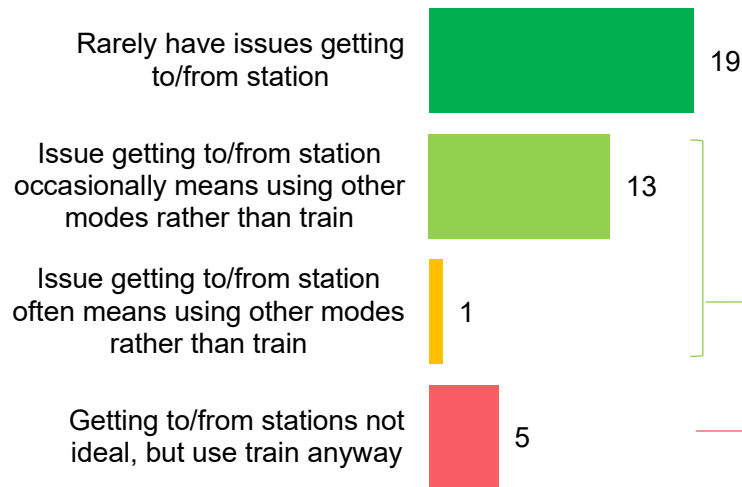




**How significant is
integrated transport
within customers'
train journeys?**

For this community, getting to and from stations is not usually a barrier to using the train, though it is sometimes a factor and can reduce its appeal overall

Typical ease of getting to or from a railway stations
(Task 18)



People living in urban areas are least likely to have issues getting to stations; more mixed in suburban areas, and while it's mixed in rural areas too, this is where people are most likely to be prevented from travelling by train.

No real difference by general engagement and satisfaction with train services: indicating that getting to and from stations is not a dominant factor in usage of rail. Rather, engagement with rail is driven more by the need to travel at all, and impressions of its reliability and cost.

For these people:

- Walking is most often an obvious or viable option
- Or they can easily drive or be dropped off at stations, or have frequent, reliable local buses

For some, growth of Uber reduces the need to plan onward travel from destination station, even where unfamiliar

Other factors – especially cost – usually have a bigger influence over the mode used for the journey as a whole, than the provision of transport to and from stations (see following page)

Issues getting to / from the station are based on a mixture of factors within and outside of industry influence:

- Distance of start / end points
- How well served the precise locations are by public transport
- Accessibility of stations – from different transport arrival modes – for those with a disability / luggage, etc.

There isn't a bus that goes straight from the end of my road to the station. I would have to get two, which can be quite time consuming ... Sometimes I decide to just drive as its easier.
(Claire, suburban, leisure)

This includes where the benefits of train outweigh difficulty accessing stations:

- Longer trips where train is most direct / fastest / cheapest
- Journeys into a city centre from where onward travel is easy and outweighs effort at the start

But also includes:

- Those with no other choice (no access to car)
- Those unhappy about car parking charges / facilities – this is usually a reason to begrudge train travel, rather than prevent it

For work, I have to travel by train as it is quicker ... but parking [at the station] can be difficult or expensive For personal use ... it is just cheaper to [drive] and ... the local stations are so far away from where I am going, that the car is more convenient.
(Clive, rural, business)

Rather, **impressions or experience with the train journey itself** are more likely to put people off travelling by train

Cost

*Getting to or from a station hasn't prevented me from travelling by train. Since I travel long distances, the only alternative would be to fly ...I recently opted to [fly] to Edinburgh ...My only reason was **the flight was far cheaper than the train.***
(Barbara, urban, business)

*So **the overriding factor would be ...cost**, second, time... I will take a **slightly inconvenient journey to and from a station ...if it is substantially cheaper than an alternative like taxi or driving [the whole journey].***
(Jay, suburban, commuter/leisure)

Reliability

*If I don't use the train then I'd primarily drive instead ...**The journeys from and to the station are fine** for me. It's just **the train journey itself that is sometimes unreliable** and costly.*
(Alice, urban, commuter/leisure)

*When trains get **delayed or cancelled** last minute... [is] **one of the reasons I have given up on trains.***
(Charles, urban, commuter/leisure)

Journey experience

*I **tend to avoid [rush hour]**... as it's expensive, **over-crowded and a lot harder to travel.***
(Katherine, suburban, commuter/leisure)

Individual circumstances

*I always compare...: door to door time,...**if I have to get there well rested or have ..work to do on the journey, [the] effect if trains are cancelled or delayed, [and] since Covid, I factor in personal space and safety.***

After comparison, usually travel by car comes up on top.
(Charles, urban, commuter/leisure)

Habit

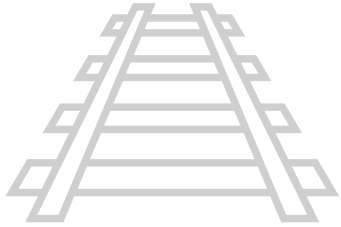
*I'm lucky to have a station a 10 minute walk away, **but sometimes when the car is sat outside the house, having to plan, book a ticket and walk seems like an extra hassle** as it is easier to just get in the car and go [the whole way by car].*

*However when I have used the train it always seems quicker and simpler than having to drive/park etc, so it may be **more of a mental barrier than a real one.***
(Rachel, rural, commuter/business)

Occasional perception:
planning is effortful

While seeking to increase options and reduce friction in getting to and from stations is worthwhile, this is, of course, just one way in which rail travel can be made to be – and seem – more attractive. There is work to do operationally and reputationally (to improve the overall offer and ensure people see this), and in marketing more generally (to ensure train travel is in the consideration set).

(As a case study, participants were asked how they would expect to travel to central Manchester for a workshop session related to this rail community project:)



The vast majority would use the train
for such a journey

(coming from a wide range of start points across Britain)

Their rationale and the benefits they see in this are:

- **Direct** (faster and more efficient than other options)
- **Lower effort** (not confident in driving a long way or in a busy city centre, no parking hassle)
- **Comfort**
- Ability to work or **use the time**
- **No other viable option** (no access to a car)
- **Known arrival time** (compared to driving and being potentially held up by traffic), providing all goes to plan
- *Cost was also mentioned by some and was very dependent on where they were coming from – where in some cases the train was seen as good value compared to alternatives, and in other cases the high cost was generally justified to a degree by the benefits – but in this case participants will not have to pay for their travel themselves, and they were aware of this*



A very small number expect to drive, use a bus, or be driven

In this case, reasons for not using the train are based on **personal, contextual factors outside of rail (or other transport) industry influence**, and the **nature of the train journey itself**. **How they get to or from stations at either end has relatively little impact**. For example:

- Live fairly close to the venue and a bus is more convenient
- Nervous about travelling alone in unfamiliar areas, so dependent on a family member to drive door to door (despite using trains in local area, and (recently) being able to drive)
- A train would involve too many changes (between trains as well as other transport) – not ideal especially for this person who is a part time wheelchair user
- Reluctant to be bound by train timetables, and be exposed to potentially bad weather

While transport to and from the relevant railway stations may also play a minor part in some of these decisions (weather, multiple legs, unfamiliar areas), even in these case, **the nature of the train journey itself is the biggest factor in rail being unappealing**

Indeed, while some planning usually goes into the train element of a journey, for most in the community getting to and from the station – while important – is more of an afterthought

Participants described their most recent train journey, including how they got to and from the stations at either end, and how they planned the trip.

The majority did some research into train timings and route options – including, in some cases, whether train was the best mode overall.

Even where little research was involved, most participants checked times and operational status in advance, as a minimum.

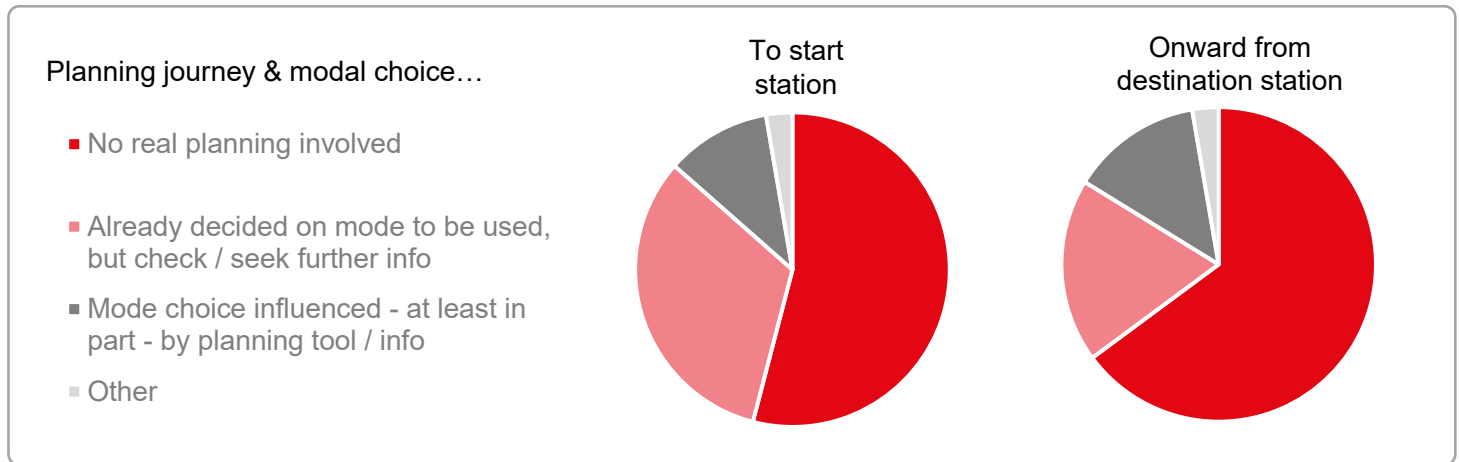
I used the [NRE] app as a primary source but also Google Maps, Trainline and LNER. I haven't made this journey ...before so explored options and importantly prices [focusing first on the train].
(Fiona, suburban, leisure)

This is a journey I make twice a week so I didn't put much thought into it. On Sunday, I logged onto Trainline and bought my tickets... Night before the journey, I double checked arrival time of my train to ensure I arrive at the station at the appropriate time.
(Anna, suburban, commute)

Base: all community participants, Apr 2023 (37)

By contrast, fewer than half of participants put any real thought into getting to or from the station:

Graphs provide a qualitative indication of the number of end-to-end trips for which any planning went into the journey to and from the stations.



Deliberate planning for getting to / from stations, and use of any planning tools or information for these elements, is:

- Very slightly more likely when the whole journey is less familiar
- Least common for commuter journeys

Deliberate planning is a little less common for onward travel from a destination station, due to:

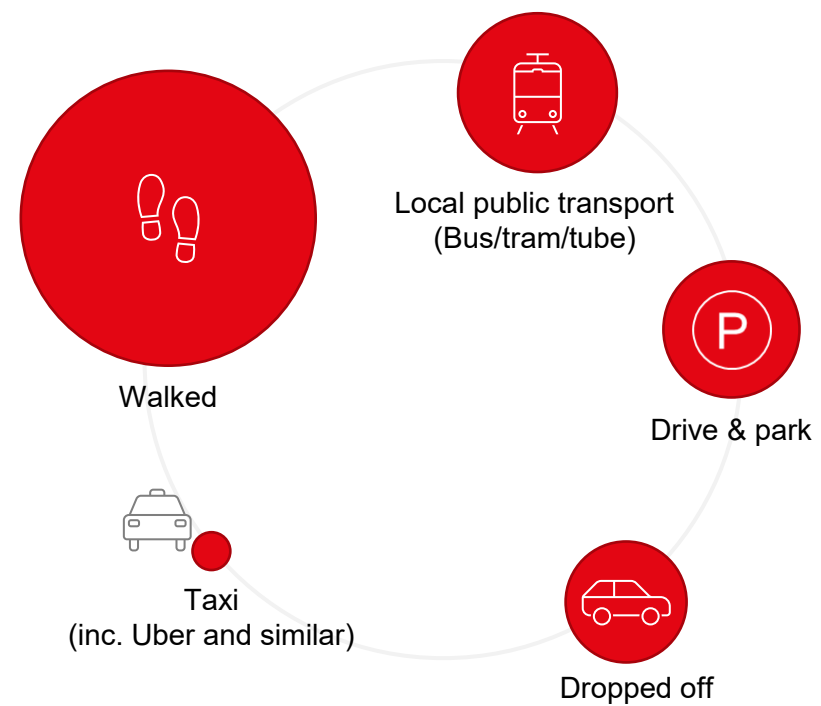
- Less need to check and know timings of preferred or possible modes – no risk of missing a train
- Frequency with which people are dependent on someone else is more common at a destination station
- Frequency with which people walk to nearby attractions / venues / workplaces in city centres, is more common at destination stations



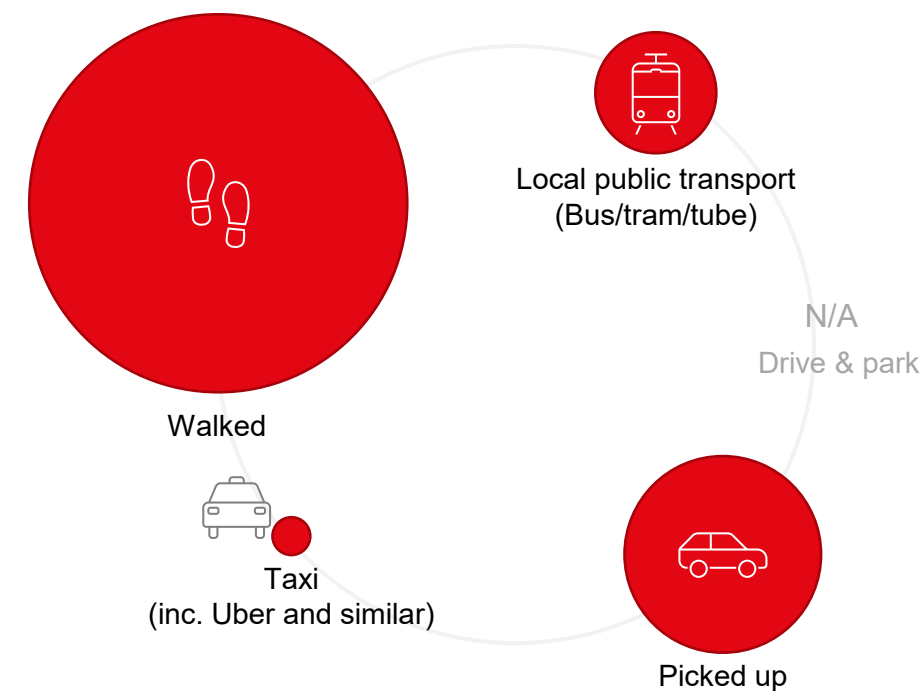
How do rail users get to and from stations – and why?

On a typical journey, the most common way to get to and (especially) from stations is walking; public transport is relatively less used

Main mode used to get **to the departure station**
(Task 14b)



Main mode used to get **to destination from the arrival station**
(Task 15a)



The community described their most recent train journey, detailing how they got to and from the stations at either end, and whether this differed or not on the return if relevant. Bubble sizes provide a qualitative indication of how frequently these modes were used as the main part of their journey to and from the stations, and are relevant to the outward journey.

Base: all community participants, Apr 2023 (38)

Some examples: how the community travelled to and from stations on their most recent journey

		To departure station	From arrival station to destination	
Barbara Longer distance, familiar journey AM/PM peak Business	Manchester-London	 Tram from near home to station: bus cheaper but requires walk through city centre to station	 Tube (of which there are multiple options) and short walk to office	 Same return journey later in day
Una Longer distance, occasional journey PM offpeak Weekend with family	Leicester-Huntingdon	 Walked: taxi an option but an unnecessary cost when walking is possible, and keen to get steps in	 Picked up: limited public transport here and taxi expensive for relatively short journey; more time with aunt	 Taxi from station to home on the return – late at night, and service is quick, relatively cheap and reliable
Marie Shorter distance, familiar journey Weekend offpeak Day out	Polmont-Glasgow	 Drove and parked at station – could have walked but anticipated being tired on return	 Walked around city centre for day out	 Same return journey later in day
Neville Shorter distance, occasional journey AM peak Medical appointment	Local stations (S. East)	 Walked 8 mins – feels obvious for short local journey and gets some steps in	 Walked 2 mins	 Same return journey a little later

See appendix for more examples, and summary of the factors involved in participants' decisions about which modes to use when travelling to and from stations.

“

...walking or using a mode
of transport that you
control is much easier and
calmer than public
transport

”

Andy (25, suburban, travels long distances for business)

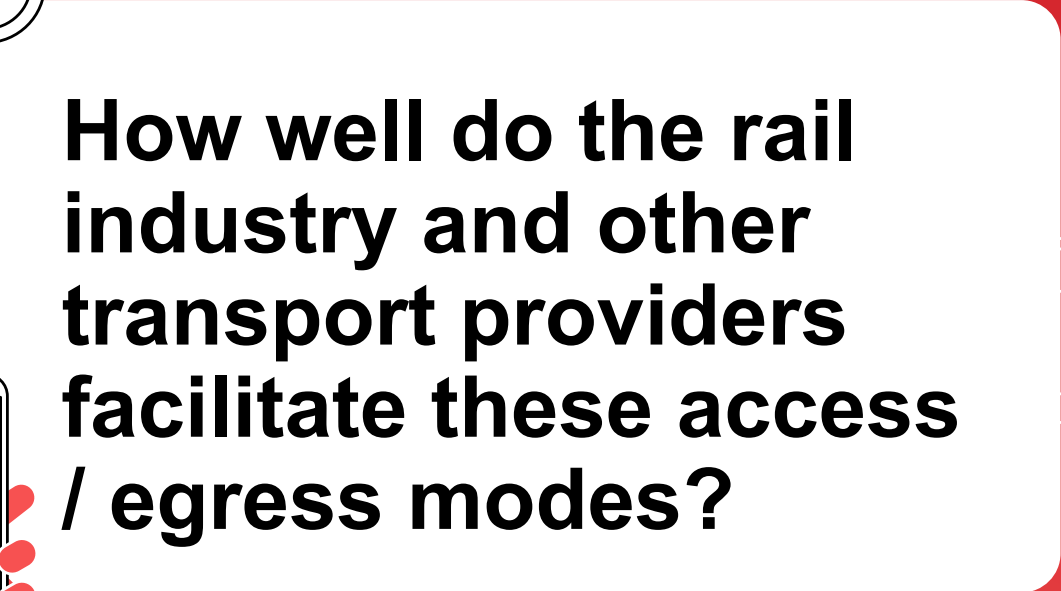
Of course, the modes on offer, and their (perceived) pros and cons, are a major driver of end-to-end journey choices – but a wide range of factors are considered

See appendix for examples of these factors having influence

Journey context	Personal circumstances / characteristics	Other needs or wants from the journey	Which modes are available / viable	
• Weather • Time of day • Distance from start/end point • Planned time/day of return	• Familiarity / confidence • Bags / buggy / kids / dog, etc. • Accessibility with disability • Tiredness / nature of walk (terrain) • Time available / running late • Reason for journey, such as: ○ Involving alcohol ○ Relating to nature of dress (e.g. don't wish to cycle before meeting / impact of heels / work clothes, etc.)	• Exercise • Sociability • Work • Time to yourself / own space / enjoyment of this leg in its own right • Flexibility (for time, for precise destination, ability to stop en route for last minute shopping, etc.)	<i>and</i> <th>Benefits / drawbacks of available modes</th>	Benefits / drawbacks of available modes
			• Impressions or experience with available modes: ○ Reliability ○ Comfort (inc. safety) ○ Speed ○ Complexity / changes ○ (= control) • City centre public transport often more direct and cheaper (ULEZ, parking, etc.) • Proximity to station • Parking / drop-off / pick-up limits (stay time, overnight) • Cost	

No real pattern by journey type (i.e. longer/shorter, familiar/occasional, leisure/work, etc.) or station type – any and all of these factors are relevant in a variety of contexts, except for:

- Driving to **park** often avoided if starting / ending in city centre (though drop off / pick up still appealing)
- Confidence and / or willingness to make the effort with **public transport for onward travel can sometimes be lower for unfamiliar destinations** – perhaps an area where the industry can **seek to provide more information and incentive, and reduced effort**, to increase this

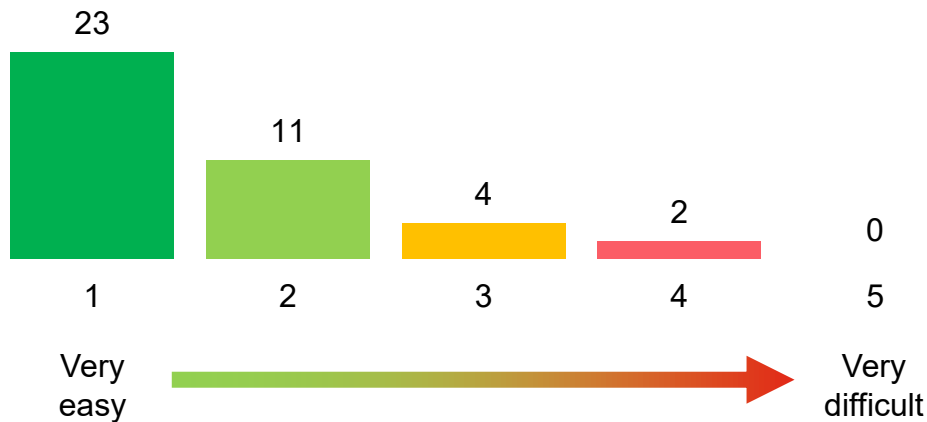


How well do the rail industry and other transport providers facilitate these access / egress modes?



Getting to the station to begin a train journey is easy for most; onward travel from destination station very slightly less so overall

How easy was it to get **to the departure station**
(Task 14c)



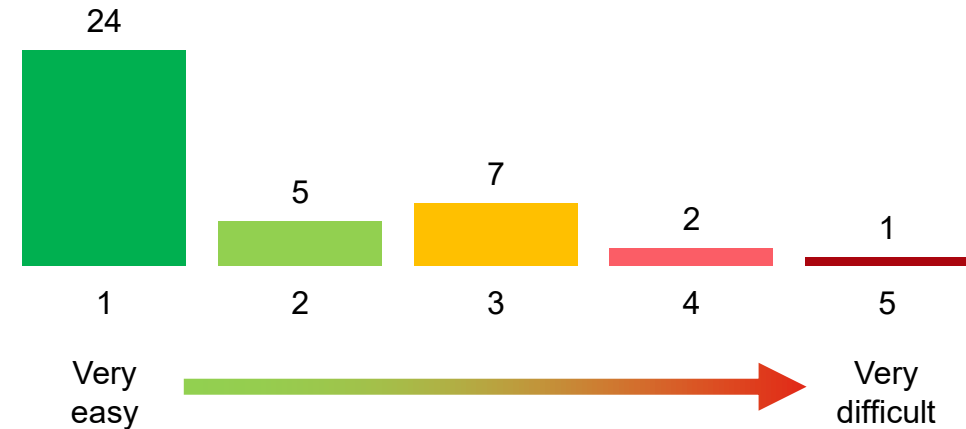
Those finding it easier typically:

- Started from **urban locations** and had a mix of **different transport options**
- Started from **rural locations and drove** (though this was usually the only choice)

Effort more mixed for those who:

- Started from **suburban locations** – less consistency of access to other modes / level of choice
- Were (dependent on being) dropped off – with a combination of **less access to car and less public transport**

How easy was it to get to your **destination** from the arrival station
(Task 15b)



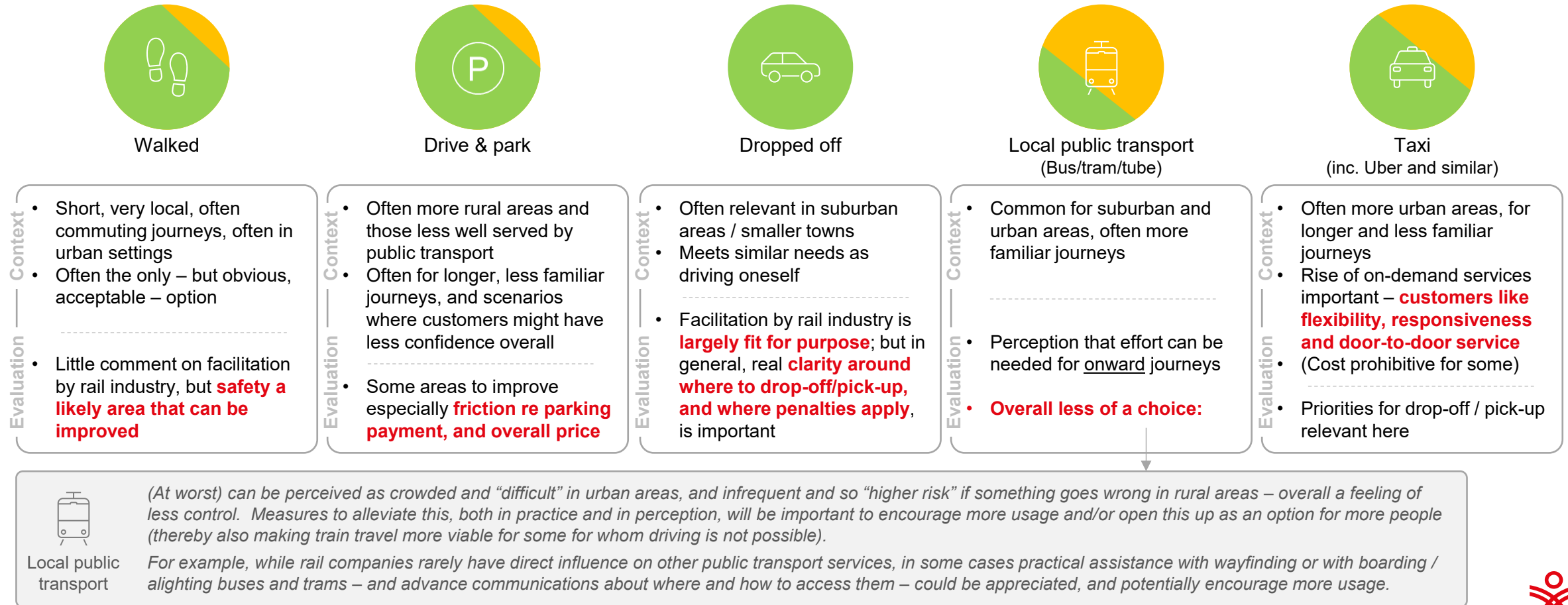
Those finding it easier were:

- More likely to be **commuters (making familiar, relatively short onward journeys)**
- More likely to have been **picked up or used a taxi**

Effort more mixed for those **ending their journey in a larger city and taking public transport** from the station – this evaluation more often **due to crowding** rather than lack of, or difficulty accessing the transport

Participants (all existing rail users) find most modes of transport relatively easy for getting to/from stations; public transport most ripe for improvement

Overall evaluation of transport modes used to get to/from railway stations, for most recent train journey: *(See appendix for more detail)*



The community described their most recent train journey, detailing how they got to and from the stations at either end. “Traffic light” colours used here provide an indicative summary of the qualitative feedback on how easy and enjoyable they found these different modes as part of an end-to-end trip.

Key practical features and principles within industry control, and which are important for customers, for facilitating connections in and out of stations

Expectation for really strong public transport integration at larger stations

Both in terms of proximity to station, and help to use it

...[in my] rural area ...ideally [buses] would be more frequent, but that's unrealistic.

*But **more could be done at major hubs like Leeds.***

*Perhaps **information desks** where you input your destination and get detailed public transport options - a more advanced version of Google Maps, basically.*

*And **transport options at the station, [not] the other side of town**, makes a difference. ([e.g.] in Doncaster, the bus station used to be a horrible walk from the train station... recently been addressed.*

(John, rural, mainly business)

Clear, designated, well-equipped (e.g. with shelter) areas / zones

e.g. for public transport or drop off / pick up / taxis

*The station has a whole taxi-rank set up and it's **well coordinated** as well as having a separate entrance for wheelchair access.*

(Una, urban, commuter)

*When I was getting picked up from the station ...**I struggled to find where my grandad had parked** ...and so I was stood around for about 20 minutes but the staff were very helpful and were always checking to see if there was anything they could do. **I waited in the main bit of the train station** where my grandad came to me.*

(Una, urban, commuter)

Wayfinding signage and assistance

*At Euston, all the **labels and directions help me to navigate the station** to get the connecting tube that I need.*

*Also there are **very helpful people ...who have helped me in the past with directions to the tube** I need to take to get to my destination.*

(Barbara, urban, business)

*I am very used to [my station] so I know how to locate everything easily, but **maybe more signposting or helpers around** in case someone is unsure or doesn't speak English.*

(Alice, urban, commuter)

Suitability of property accommodation

(car, bike, etc.)

Security, proximity, ease of access and usage, length of stay

Personal safety in and around stations

For all transport access/egress modes

At all times when train services are running stay

Characteristics and principles that the industry and partners should consider and aim to feature in existing and newly developed services

In order to give customers the widest set of options (and to encourage “better” choices where this might be a priority)*

I want to get to and from the station in a way that:

Makes me feel in control

Well-informed about where / when transport to/from stations is, and how long it will take / what's involved

Trust in reliability of service / transport option

Is on my terms

Allowing for my wider journey context

E.g. stopping on the way, allowing for exercise or fresh air

Has minimal friction in paying / booking

Minimises waiting / dead time

Timetable integration with bus / tram, etc.

Or fully flexible

And/or appeal for many in being able book or alert a lift from the station on approach (at click of a button)

Is relevant / adapted to my journey context

e.g. needing education, reassurance and help because I'm unfamiliar, versus needing efficiency because I know what I'm doing

Acknowledges wider societal concerns

e.g. environment, exercise

Is low cost

Is safe, comfortable

**e.g. for environmental, health, or local congestion reasons*

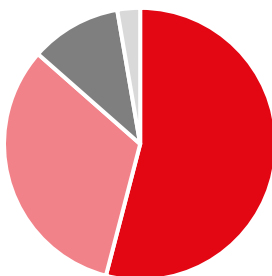


Planning transport connections into / out of train journeys

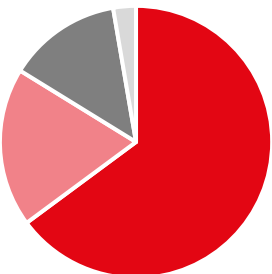
We saw earlier that for most journeys, people put relatively little planning into the non-train legs of a journey

Recap: planning journey & modal choice...

To start station



Onward from destination station



- No real planning involved
- Already decided on mode, but check / seek further info
- Mode choice partly influenced by planning tool / info
- Other

For those that do plan at all:



Google Maps is very dominant:

Used for:

- ✓ Overview of overall journey length/time, and possible end-to-end transport options
- ✓ Estimating **duration and routes for walking or driving**
- ✓ Estimating **duration and checking timetable information for public transport options**



Largely reliable, up to date (live), ubiquitous, familiar (used in other contexts, e.g. in-car navigation, general search)

- Used exclusively by some, especially when plan to walk, or know transport options reasonably well already
- And alongside other more localised or mode-specific apps and websites by others – “building on” the overview from Google with what can be perceived as more accurate, trustworthy information “direct from the source”



Other websites / apps – especially Citymapper and regional transport aggregators – used in the same way



Some use apps/websites for a local bus/tram/underground provider, to find timetables, and especially to check live status using live tracker info

A minority also use advice from their end destination (e.g. an attraction or venue) on “how to find us”, advice from friends or family, or from staff at stations

...and most of these who do any planning at all (also) use a train timetable / ticket booking app or website for the train portion of their journey (operator website, Trainline, NRE).

“

Citymapper and Google Maps are very handy and easy to use. I can't think of anything I could improve about them.

”

Sarah (41, urban, travels mainly for leisure)

There is muted appetite for a “one-stop-shop”, end-to-end journey planning tool, but potential benefits are already largely met elsewhere

There is **appeal in principle**: many already **use tools** that do this to an extent, and there is an **expectation in the age of data** that this should be possible and easy

*The Citymapper App is **very useful and can be used in many cities**. I love the fact you can follow directions and it shows how many stops and **how long the journey will take by different transport modes**.*

(Ann, urban, leisure journey)

*I wanted to take public transport from and to Leeds station but, researching it on Google Maps, there wasn't really an option. So I then used Google Maps to plan a walking route. **Google Maps is usually my first and main resource, and I take it from there...** It would be lovely to have a **national database that could plot reliable public transport routes** from A to B, give links to timetables and tickets, etc. **But without this, Google Maps isn't too bad.***

(John, rural, business journey)

And there was **muted interest in a purpose-built app** among some of our participants who were asked about this directly

*I love the idea ...to be able to compare bus timetables, train times, even the location of taxi ranks, or tube info all together. **How well that would work in practice though, I don't know...** An app that had all of that.. and pedestrian maps etc... I think that would feel **overwhelming**, unless it was designed really well! ...I suppose someone well skilled could probably [create] one main journey page with links to other info?*

(Becca, suburban, business)

Though note that **people also like to shop around for other reasons** – e.g. where driven by loyalty schemes and pricing offers

*All the ...apps have their own foibles. I booked with **LNER** because I got **discounts** on multiple journeys.*

(Fiona, suburban, leisure journey)

*For the train tickets I used the SWR app... **they give the best deals** ...for this journey...I then used the Reading Buses app ...**I get a student deal**.*

(Lucy, urban, leisure journey)

Requirements for a potential, fully integrated planning tool:

Functions

- Time / complexity comparison
- Disruption alerts (all relevant modes, planned and unplanned)
- Cost comparison
- Expectation of a fully one-stop-shop service: planning **plus**:
 - live status / tracking information
 - ticket purchase / booking / seat reservation
 - ticket storage / fulfilment
- Some appeal for a **combined ticket** for multiple elements (e.g. car park + train on one ticket) though not covered in detail here.

Characteristics / benefits

- Accurate, reliable information: expectation for live or real typical traffic / transport data to be used, rather than timetables alone
- Specific day and time of arrival / departure
- Free
- National – or at very least regional
- Ability to both explore a full range of options... or to filter by quickest / cheapest / specific modes / step-free / “greenest”

Google Maps' vast data and proven reliability, combined with familiarity and intuitive user experience, makes it difficult to beat, and **difficult to see how this would be a justified investment** (especially given other priorities that rail users have for train services more generally) – unless an especially different and additional benefit is introduced as part of such as product, such as around tickets.

Instead, and in the shorter term, there is likely to be more benefit to customers in making more of existing information channels

For example:

More localised help from train companies:



Rob travels from Sheffield to Milford Haven a few times a year – a long and potentially difficult trip (give it involves multiple legs which introduces risk of things going wrong).

He happens to know the destination area well, and visits regularly enough to maintain this knowledge. But feels that for journeys like this, **more could be done to point people in the right direction for their onward travel – links to local transport options at the time of booking, for example** (given that such a journey is likely to be booked in advance and so customers are open to planning around the train element itself as well).



John sees a role for **information hubs at larger stations which are dedicated to onward travel around the local area** – perhaps with kiosk screens for detailed information



Several participants have talked about how they appreciate **local area advice from staff at stations**, which is by nature **tailored to their precise needs** at the time, and provides **genuine reassurance and grounding** in an unfamiliar area

Ensuring existing information is truly accurate and reliable



Oliver goes into his work's office occasionally or to other different locations, mainly around Yorkshire, for work.

He takes a bus to the station, then a direct train to Leeds if possible, but depending on what time he has arrived at the station (influenced by the bus) sometimes it's faster to make a two-leg train journey to Leeds. He then walks to the office.

Despite the journey being familiar, **he uses several different apps** to work out timings and cost options. **He doesn't like having to check multiple information sources, but a key reason for doing so is a lack of trust in the information**, and feeling a need to cross-check and verify things – he finds that bus or train cancellations or delays are not always registered on one or more app/website.

Summary



Summary:

Getting to/from stations is a relatively minor influence on rail use and experience

Feedback from the community shows that, for about half of (existing) rail users, **the ease of getting to and from railway stations can influence train usage itself in some way** – sometimes driving people to use another mode or not travel, or diminishing the overall journey experience. It can also affect the time of the train a customer can catch, or the specific stations and route that they use.

It is therefore important that people have options for connecting into and out of the railway, which are viable and accessible, both practically and in terms of cost, to help make rail itself as accessible and frictionless as possible.

The rail industry can play a part in facilitating this, and is expected to do so by customers

That said, the ease of getting to and from stations is only one, relatively minor factor affecting rail usage:

- Reflecting that, within a total end-to-end journey, the train element is usually the longest and most expensive, people tend to make the decision about whether to travel by train (or not) first, and then work out how to get to and from stations as a secondary exercise.
- Getting to and from stations is generally found to be fairly easy, so it's relatively rare that this prevents rail usage entirely (i.e. forces people to use another mode or precludes travel at all).

Other factors are often more significant: the cost of train tickets themselves, impressions of reliability and the overall experience of using trains, a customers' individual needs at the time, and habit.

All of this is reflected in, and partly caused by the fact that, for most journeys, people can simply walk to and from the stations at either end, and many others drive or can be driven: **most current rail users have little practical difficulty in accessing the railway.**

Summary:

Nevertheless, there are some areas for improvement

Public transport is felt to be more difficult than other modes for getting to / from stations, and is used less than other modes in this context.

Because this research is conducted with rail users (albeit including some who are infrequent), we do not look fully here at the extent to which some people may be entirely excluded from rail because their local area or typical destinations are not served well by other transport. However arguably, the more negative feedback about public transport integration here may suggest that this in particular does present a bigger barrier than is evident on the surface.

The key issues with integration of public transport specifically are:

- **Lack of or insufficient frequency** (especially in rural and sometimes suburban areas – see more below)
- **Unreliability** – both real and perceived
- **Crowding** (especially in more urban areas)
- **General “hassle” including difficulty boarding / alighting**, especially with luggage, equipment, dependents, or disabilities

While the rail industry may not have influence over all of these issues, it can do more to aid customers in places, both in practice (e.g. with wayfinding, assisting people with boarding / alighting), and to help break down barriers of perception where they exist

The ease of getting to and from stations varies by type of area, again especially relating to public transport, and particularly in:

- Rural areas, with inevitably longer distances to railway stations and often sparser public transport services.
- Suburban areas, where access to car is typically a little lower than in rural areas*, but public transport options still do not always fill the gaps

In cases where it is not commercially viable to operate public transport, other more innovative approaches may have a role and should be explored (one example from the community being flexible, on-demand taxi-buses, for instance)

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts99-travel-by-region-and-area-type-of-residence>: Table NTS9901

Summary:

Developments and improvements in integrated transport

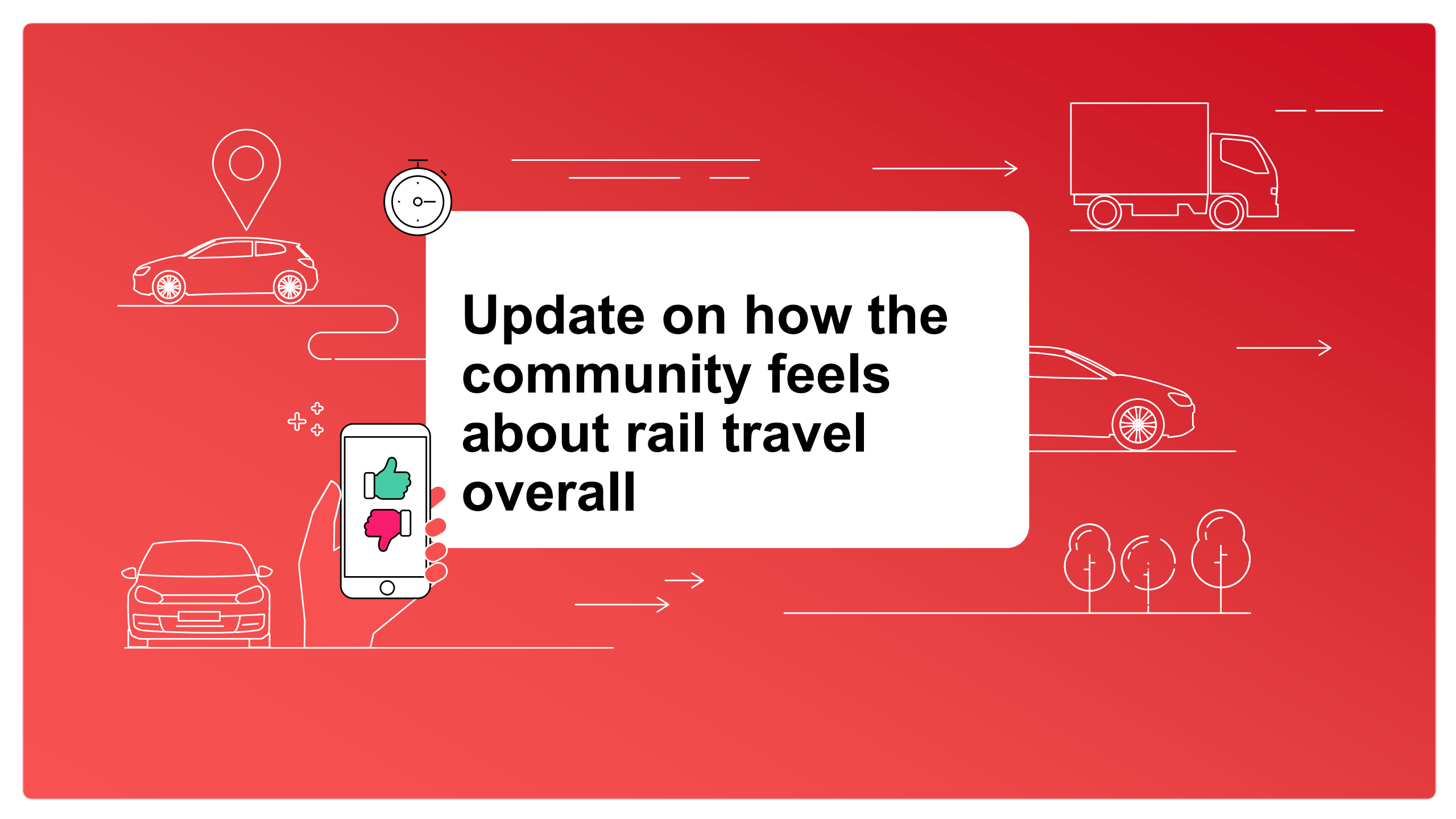
In removing any (real or perceived) barriers to rail presented by access to stations, or when providing or developing new ways to get to and from stations, there are some **key factors for the industry and partners to consider** in addition to putting the practical logistics in place:

- Customers needing to feel in control
 - Ensuring people know exactly what's involved with using any given mode, and that it feels clear and intuitive: where, when, durations, how to access, how to pay, etc. – with the level of information provided also being relevant to customers' familiarity with their journey
 - Reassurance that the modes on offer will get people to and from the station on time and with little effort.
- Acknowledging and allowing for other needs: stopping along the way, exercise, etc.
- Minimising cost, and friction to pay
- Optimising the experience of waiting for onward transport: minimising waiting times, feeling comfortable and safe

Participants in the community typically use Google Maps and rail apps and websites (especially Trainline and TOCs' own assets) – and often a combination of both – to plan end-to-end journeys.

They are largely happy with planning tools on offer, and **while there is some appeal in a dedicated transport planning app to bring all modes together, this may be somewhat redundant given the ubiquity and effectiveness of Google Maps in particular.**

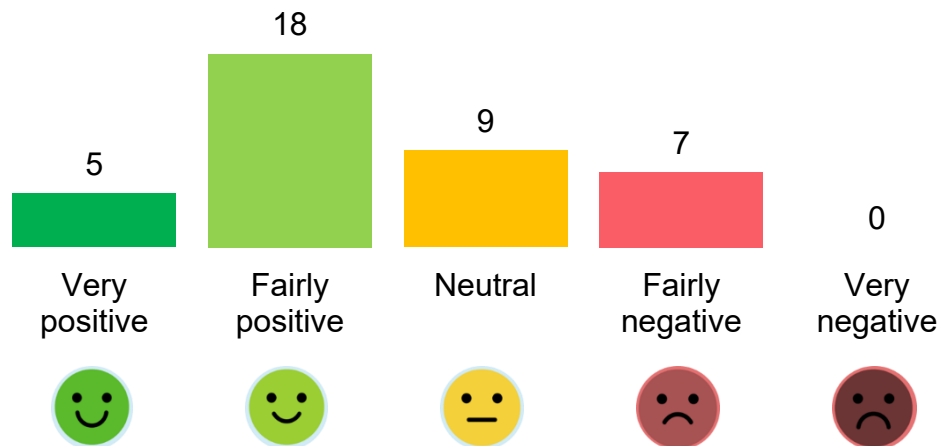
Instead, customers are likely to benefit more from, and appreciate, improvements to existing transport services into and out of stations, the information provided about them, and the way railway stations and staff facilitate their integration.



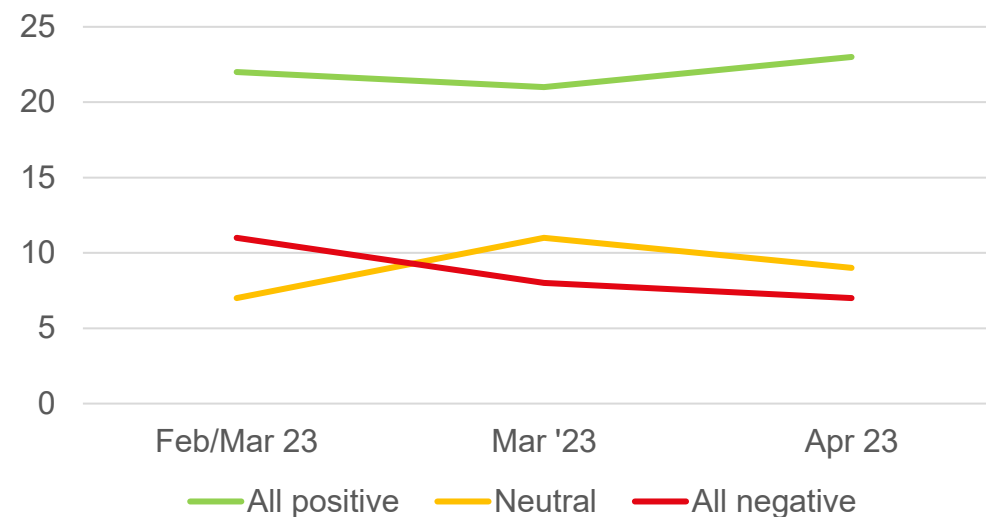
Update on how the community feels about rail travel overall

Very mixed impressions of rail overall among the community, slightly improved from Feb/Mar with reduced impact of strike disruption

How you feel about travelling by train at the moment: A snapshot
(Task 13)



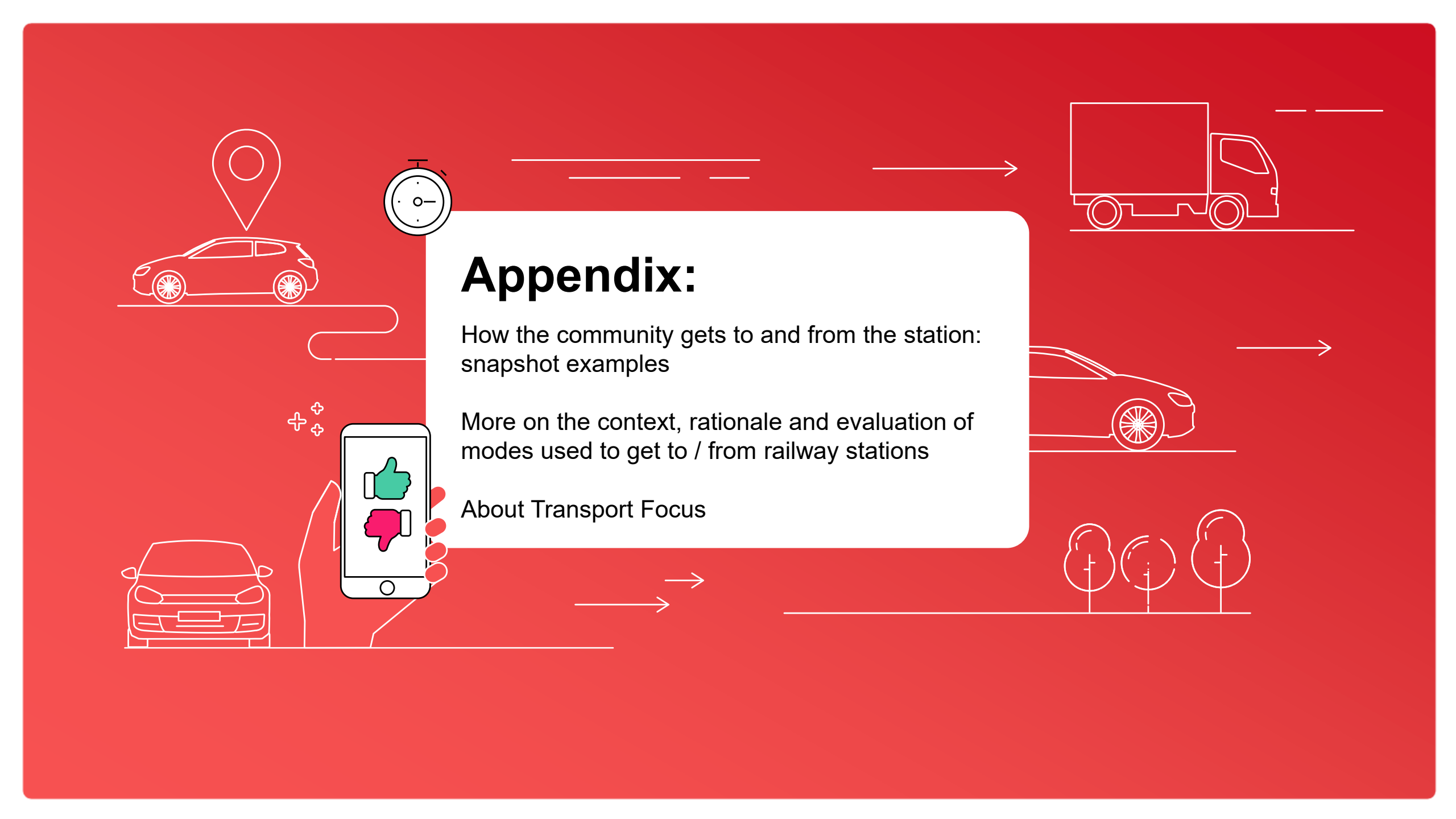
Trend so far



Participants are more likely to be positive when they....

- Typically travel for leisure, rather than work reasons (with regular commuters in particular being less positive overall)
- Live in more urban areas
- Do not have a disability or other health condition

Base: all community participants, Apr 2023 (39); figures shown are absolute number of people



Appendix:

How the community gets to and from the station:
snapshot examples

More on the context, rationale and evaluation of
modes used to get to / from railway stations

About Transport Focus

How the community gets to and from the station:

Longer distance occasional journeys

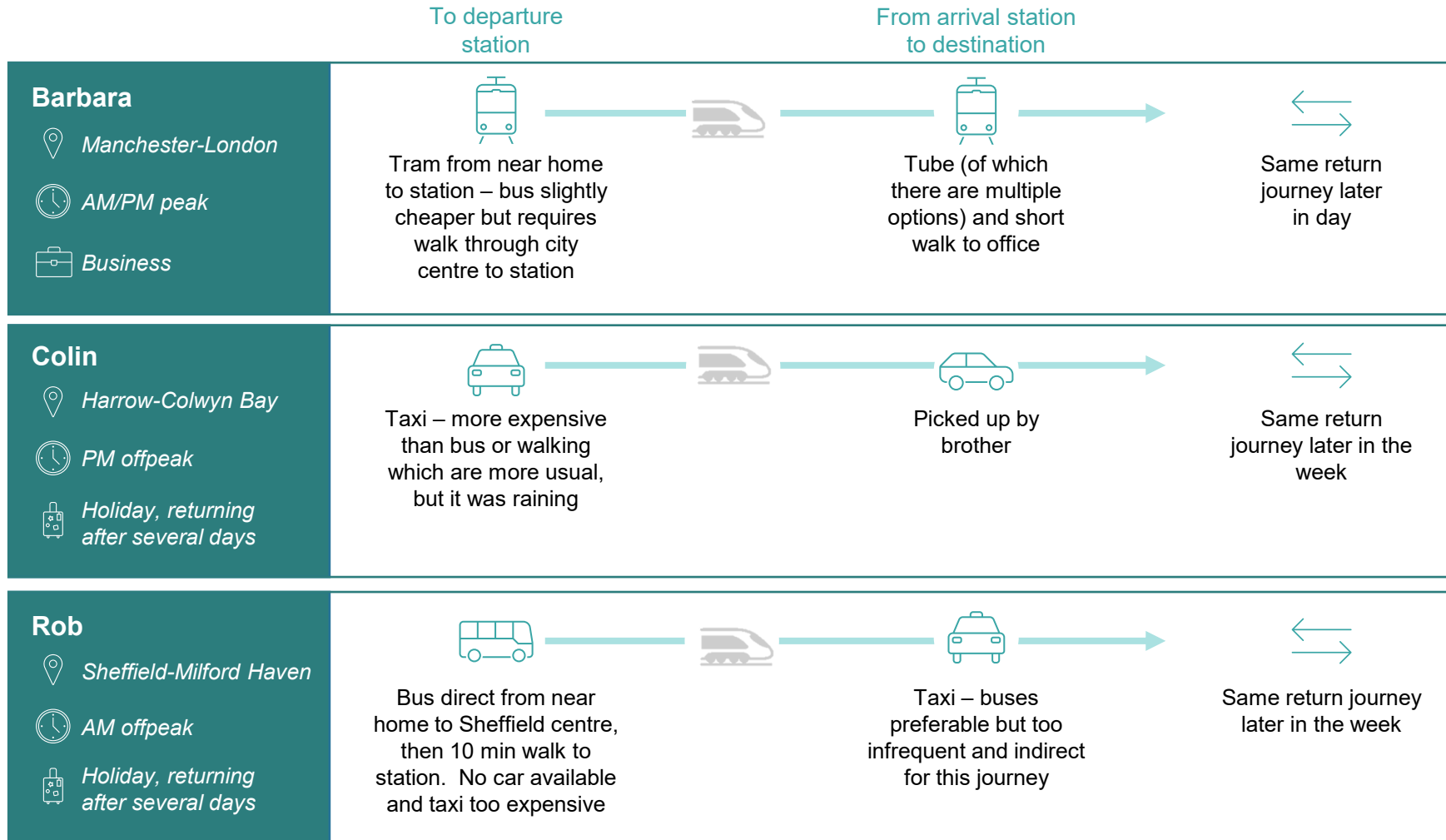
	To departure station	From arrival station to destination	
Andy Nott'ham-Manchester Early AM (pre-peak) Business trip	 Dropped off – could have taken taxi but didn't trust it 100% for that time in the morning, and drop-off here is easy	 Walked 25 mins to conference – good weather, he would otherwise be inactive for the day, and he felt in control, i.e. no risk of unreliability or discomfort on public transport	 Same return journey later in the day
Fiona London-Glasgow AM offpeak Holiday, returning after several days	 Walked to local station, then train and tube to Euston. Public transport most efficient and cheapest for starting journey in central London	 Picked up by friend at Glasgow – easiest option (given luggage and lower familiarity with this part of the journey), and starts the holiday with the friend	 Same return journey later in the week
Joshua St Neots-Gatwick Very early morning Holiday, 1 week	 Drove and parked in blue badge space for a week.	 Walked / monorail to airport terminal	 Same return journey a week later
Una Leicester-Huntingdon PM offpeak Weekend with family	 Walked – could have taken taxi but an unnecessary cost when walking is possible, and keen to get some steps in	 Picked up – limited public transport from station and taxi expensive for relatively short journey; plus more time with aunt	 Taxi (Bolt) from station to home on the return – late at night, and service is quick, relatively cheap and reliable

Factors involved in decisions

- Weather
- Time of day
- Distance from start/end point
- Planned time/day of return
- Familiarity / confidence
- Luggage
- Exercise
- Sociability
- What modes are available / viable
- Impressions or experience with available modes: reliability, comfort, speed
- City centre – public transport often more direct and efficient
- Car parking restrictions (e.g. max stay time)
- Cost

How the community gets to and from the station:

Longer distance familiar journeys



Factors involved in decisions

- Weather
- Luggage
- What modes are available / viable
- Impressions or experience with available modes: complexity, speed
- Proximity of public transport to station
- Cost

How the community gets to and from the station:

Shorter distance occasional journeys

	To departure station	From arrival station to destination	
Julie Leeds-Newark AM/PM peak Family visit / day out	Drove, parked nearby for free. Public transport too indirect and slow, and on returning she likes to know she can get off the train and get going (with own music)	Picked up by sister (who she texted 10 mins before train arrived) – convenient, and they had freedom to go on to wherever they wished, spontaneously	Same return journey later in the day
Michelle B'ham-Stoke on Trent PM offpeak Day out	Driven 45 mins from home and dropped off. Preferred over taking train from local stations due to hassle and nervousness about interchanging	Picked up – more convenient and quicker than using buses, about which she also lacks confidence when using in an unfamiliar area	Return made entirely by car for other reasons
Neville Local stations (S. East) AM peak Medical appointment	Walked 8 mins – feels obvious for short local journey and gets some steps in	Walked 2 mins	Same return journey a little later
Sarah Waterloo-Hounslow Weekend offpeak Family lunch out	Bus direct from near home, to outside station. Driving impractical in London / nowhere to park	Wheeled to destination – relatively close to station and good weather	Same return journey a little later

Factors involved in decisions

- Weather
- Distance from start/end point
- Familiarity / confidence
- Accessibility with disability
- Exercise
- Sociability
- Flexibility
- Time to yourself / own space
- What modes are available / viable
- Impressions or experience with available modes: complexity
- City centre – public transport often more direct and efficient

How the community gets to and from the station:

Shorter distance familiar journeys

	To departure station	From arrival station to destination
Katherine S. Wales-Cardiff AM offpeak Day out	 Walked 10 mins downhill and through town centre	 Walked around city centre for shopping and cinema
Lucy West Drayton-Reading AM offpeak Day out	 Dropped off by friend – bus would have taken longer. This influenced which station Lucy started from, as the alternative fines for a drop-off.	 One direct bus from right outside station
Marie Polmont-Glasgow Weekend offpeak Day out	 Drove and parked at station – could have walked but anticipated being tired on return	 Walked around city centre for day out
John Hebden Bridge-Leeds PM off-peak Business	 Bus direct from home to station. Walking preferable but it was raining, and John discounted driving as he expected to drink	 Walked 50 mins despite rain – buses infrequent and indirect so would have taken as long, and taxi too expensive

Factors involved in decisions

- Weather
- Distance from start/end point
- Exercise
- Tiredness / nature of walk (terrain)
- Reason for journey (e.g. involving alcohol)
- What modes are available / viable
- Impressions or experience with available modes: complexity, speed
- Proximity of public transport to station
- Drop-off / pick up restrictions
- Cost

More on the context, rationale and evaluation of modes used to get to / from railway stations: **walking**



Context

- Start station: more common in more urban areas, and for shorter, especially commuting journeys
- The dominant way of travelling onward from arrival stations in city centres



Reasons for using / benefits

People who walk are less likely to have access to a car, but for many walking is the obvious choice as the journey to/from the station is very short

They also like it for:

- The chance for fresh air / enjoy surroundings (especially vs. public transport)
- Exercise
- Flexibility to stop on the way for coffee / shopping
- It's free



Evaluation

Typically felt to be very or fairly easy, and more enjoyable than not – for getting to and from stations at either end



Important factors within industry influence

Little evaluation from our participants on how well stations are set up to facilitate pedestrian access – though some comments more generally on:

- Safety, which perhaps affect pedestrians or those waiting near the station for public transport or a pick-up
- Wayfinding, both out of the station, and then beyond

I chose to walk to the station so that my dog could go to the toilet and get some of her energy out for the journey.

(Claire, suburban, leisure journey)

I don't really enjoy walking in my work clothes early morning when it's cold, ...but I'm trying to keep fit... [and] I live in a rural area so there isn't really any alternative as I...don't have anyone to drive me.

(Rachel, rural, commute)

I was more than happy to walk to the station. I love this convenience and it does not cost me. I suppose I could catch a bus but hardly worth the wait for two stops...

I had checked directions online and once there I followed signs and directions. There was a criss-cross of subways that was confusing so I had to ask someone directions too

(Riz, urban, business journey)

Edinburgh station ..has many access points, which enables you to head towards whichever attraction you are interested in...But it's pretty confusing if you are new.

(Charles, urban, leisure journey)



[This] entrance has a short footpath ...not somewhere you want to loiter long after dark...it is pretty bleak.

(Fiona, suburban, mainly leisure)

More on the context, rationale and evaluation of modes used to get to / from railway stations: **driving to start station**

 Context	More common for people living in rural areas, and for less familiar and leisure journeys (Only slightly more common where the train journey itself is longer rather than shorter)
 Reasons for using / benefits	People use this method for: • Control of this leg for both the outward and return journey ◦ Speed, flexibility (leaving it last minute) ◦ Distance to station from home ◦ Luggage ◦ Own space ◦ In preparation for return journey – expect to be tired, have bags, etc • And where alternatives are unavailable, expensive, too indirect / inconvenient, not trusted, or less practical due to a disability or poor weather
 Evaluation	Typically felt to be very easy and fairly enjoyable – very few complaints about car parking provision by our community, except for a few mentions of it being expensive in some cases
 Important factors within industry influence	What helps: • Free parking! (at or near station) • Ability to leave car overnight What hinders • Restrictions or friction around paying / registering for parking • Capacity • Price of car parking

There is no public transport at that time of the day...The [public, non-railway] car park has an area ...for rail users and you enter your car details into a machine on the platform to activate the discount. It's a good idea really.
(Clive, rural, business journey)

I like to park close to the station so I know that on the return journey I can get home easily and do not have to wait around for a bus. I also like the comfort of my own car as I can put on music and sing along!
(Julie, urban, leisure journey)

We could have walked [but on] return ...we'd be really tired ...so the thought of a further walk was not very appealing.
(Marie, suburban,, leisure journey)

As a blue badge holder I find parking one of the easiest parts ...it's on my terms and I'm in control.

[However] an irritant is having to register for parking each time on the app. I would love an ANPR that just did it all for me or it knew me from the journey I booked and did things on auto. ...It would also be good to be able to tell APCOA I'm on holiday! ...you have to remember to renew while abroad... Parking at the station for me is so vitally important.
(Joshua, rural, leisure journey)

More on the context, rationale and evaluation of modes used to get to / from railway stations: **being dropped off / picked up**

 Context	➤ Start station: more common in suburban areas, and where train leg itself is longer and less regular ➤ Arrival station: most common for people arriving into smaller towns
 Reasons for using / benefits	Like driving oneself, people like this method for... • Control and speed ○ When distrustful or nervous about public transport, or wanting to minimise risk in multiple changes ○ When timing is critical – public modes less trustworthy ○ Flexibility – to stop on the way, go somewhere else, take a different route • Comfort and ease ○ Rarely any waiting around (aided by ability to call ahead so driver is ready) ○ Travelling with luggage or dependents • And where alternatives are not available or unattractive ○ “Out of hours” for public transport or taxis ○ Area not served well by public transport, or when car cannot be (happily) left overnight at station ○ To avoid fares / car parking charge ○ Tired, public transport feels like an effort
 Evaluation	➤ While perceived effort and enjoyment is mixed for being dropped off, being picked up is overall a positive experience – the difference largely due to context (drop-off is sometimes the only option so there is lack of choice; pick-up has a sociable aspect, and is a relaxed point in the journey)
 Important factors within industry influence	What helps: • Designated drop-off / pick-up area – not interrupting other traffic flow, easy to access for pedestrian and driver • Well signed / easy to find drop-off / pick-up area What hinders: • Penalties for drop-off – especially when unclear

My aunt picked me up... [town] doesn't have reliable transport links from the station ...so I'd have to get cab ...expensive.
(Una, urban, leisure journey)

...I just wanted to get there rather than stress about different trains. ...[being dropped off] allowed me to travel on a direct train to my destination without changing in between.
(Michelle, urban, leisure journey)

Other stations [are] ...anxiety-inducing as a driver, not knowing if I will be ticketed... [Town] station ...side road is great for traffic flow as you aren't causing a jam waiting to turn into the drop off area.
(Andy, suburban, business journey)

The station [is] ...well set up for car drop off and pick up as there is clear space for that right outside ...More stations need sheltered space to wait however as when it is raining you either have to wait in the station ...and you can't see your lift, or outside and get wet
(Riz, urban, business journey)

I could have used a taxi, but as it was very early in the morning, I trusted my partner to take me over a taxi.
(Andy, suburban, business journey)

More on the context, rationale and evaluation of modes used to get to / from railway stations: **public transport**

 Context	➤ Start station: more common in suburban areas, and for familiar journeys, often where the train leg itself is shorter distance. ➤ Arrival station: all examples given by our community were town or city centres
 Reasons for using / benefits	People who use public transport to get to the start station are also a little less likely to have access to a car: (while not begrudged) public transport to the start station is less often a choice, unless... • It's especially direct and convenient • Driving is not viable due to lack of parking near the station • ...or there is expectation of drinking alcohol
 Evaluation	➤ Getting to start station typically felt to be easy – but with a mixed degree of enjoyment ➤ Both effort and enjoyment are mixed when using for onward travel – with crowding a big factor
 Important factors within industry influence	What helps: • Proximity of stop to station • Proximity of stop to home / start point • Good signage from drop-off point to station entrance and relevant area of station / platform • Sheltered waiting areas • Discounted / free travel (e.g. for 60+) • Real time tracking info (via apps / on stops), for confidence and practical planning assistance • Directness and speed (trams, tube) What hinders • Often: indirect / multiple legs / no stop near to home • Occasionally: doesn't stop close enough to station • Frequency / integration with train timetable • Dealing with luggage to get on and off public transport • Can be slow (buses)

The best thing about the bus journey is it takes me from door to door and I can monitor on an app when it is about to arrive so I don't waste any time. The annoying thing is that it often entails a wait at the train station as there is only one bus an hour.
(John, rural, commute)

It was great to be able to find my way quickly as the pace of foot traffic in London ...is fast, so I needed to be able to find and read signs quickly as it's often not possible to take your time... you're in people's way! [And it] really helped ...using the app in advance to know which tube trains I needed
(Becca, suburban, business journey)

The tram stop is right outside my house. And ...it stops right at Piccadilly station. Compared to the bus which I would have to stop in the city and make about a 10 minutes walk to the train... it's more expensive than the bus but I prefer it anyway.
(Barbara, urban, business journey)

Despite the ease of the bus, I cannot say that I particularly enjoyed the experience because there was always the underlying tension ...of an unexpected delay.
(Becca, suburban, business journey)

More on the context, rationale and evaluation of modes used to get to / from railway stations:

Taxi / Uber or similar

 Context	Relatively much less common overall than other modes, but where used by our participants for their most recent journey, this was mainly for those starting or ending in urban areas, and where the train journey itself was longer and for leisure.
 Reasons for using / benefits	People like this method for similar reasons to being dropped off: • Luggage / dependents • Driving impractical or impossible • Public transport unavailable or unattractive • Bad weather • Tiredness
 Evaluation	Typically felt to be very easy, at both start and end of journeys, but with mixed enjoyment: • People like the speed of being able to call and get into a taxi (especially Uber and similar services, and the ability to plan a ride while on the train) • Cost and reliability at certain times of day were the only drawbacks mentioned
 Important factors within industry influence	Little evaluation from our participants on how well stations are set up to facilitate access to taxis / Ubers – similar to being dropped off / picked up

Some other modes used by a minority

Katherine walked to the station in the morning, but **booked a fflecsi bus for the journey home later on that day**, to avoid an uphill walk at the end of the day.

She lives in a suburban area, where many local buses were discontinued but replaced by an on-demand minibus service, booked via an app like an Uber (but cheaper).

She likes the **flexibility to book shortly before wanting it**, and to use it for shorter journeys **right to her front door**.

fflecsi
Bwcabus

Colin was the only participant who **sometimes cycles to his local station**

He lives in an urban area and uses the train for business and leisure reasons

He finds it a hassle to take a bike on board so leaves it at the station. **He always chains it up on the platform**, despite there being cycle spaces outside in the car park, because **he perceives this to be more secure**



About Transport Focus

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



Bus, coach and tram users across England outside London.



Rail passengers in Great Britain.



All users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads (the Strategic Road Network).

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

We work to make a difference for all transport users.