

Shaping Rail's Future: Customer Community

Report: June 2023

Workshop: focus on stations
Getting around stations



Shaping Rail's Future: the customer community



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

40

Participants with a mix of:

- Reasons for using rail, 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



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

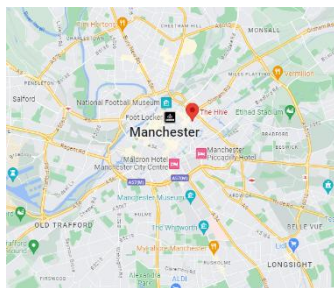
Via short videos, text, images

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



Saturday 17th June 2023
Central Manchester

Full day workshop

with nearly all of the community,
joined by GBRTT and Transport
Focus colleagues



Deep focus on customer experiences at stations:

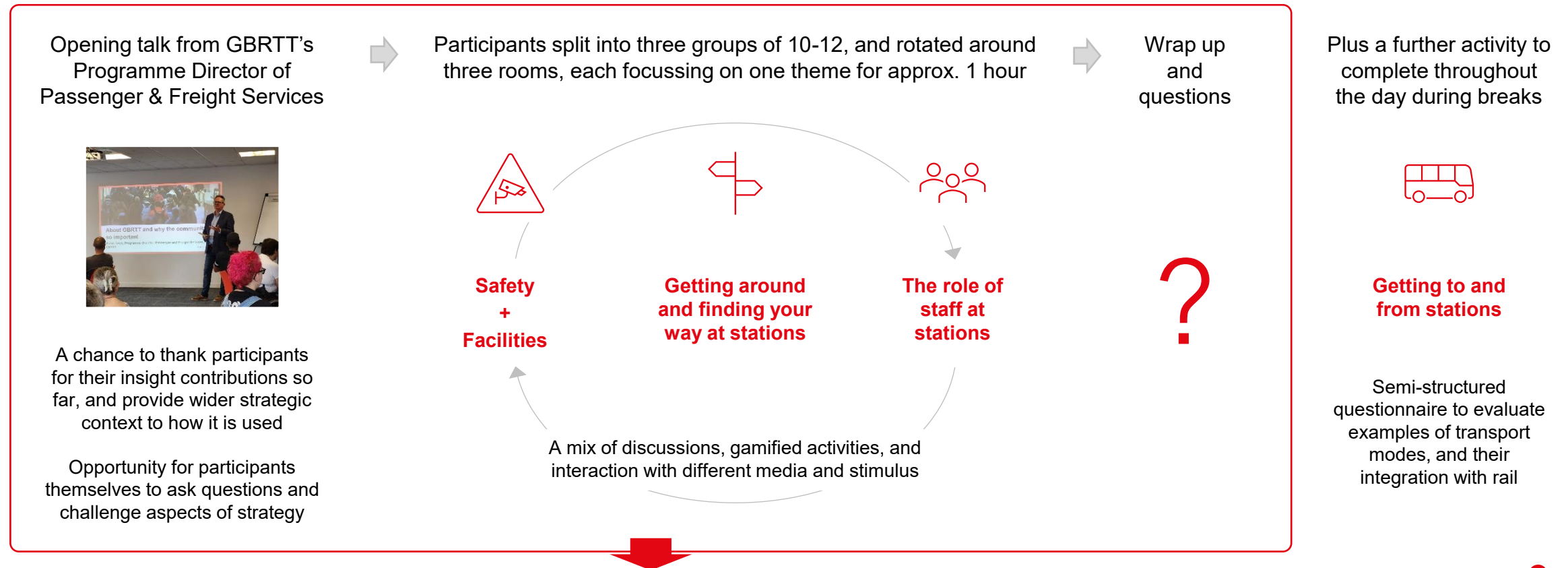
Safety
Facilities
Getting and finding your way around
The role of staff
(Onward travel)

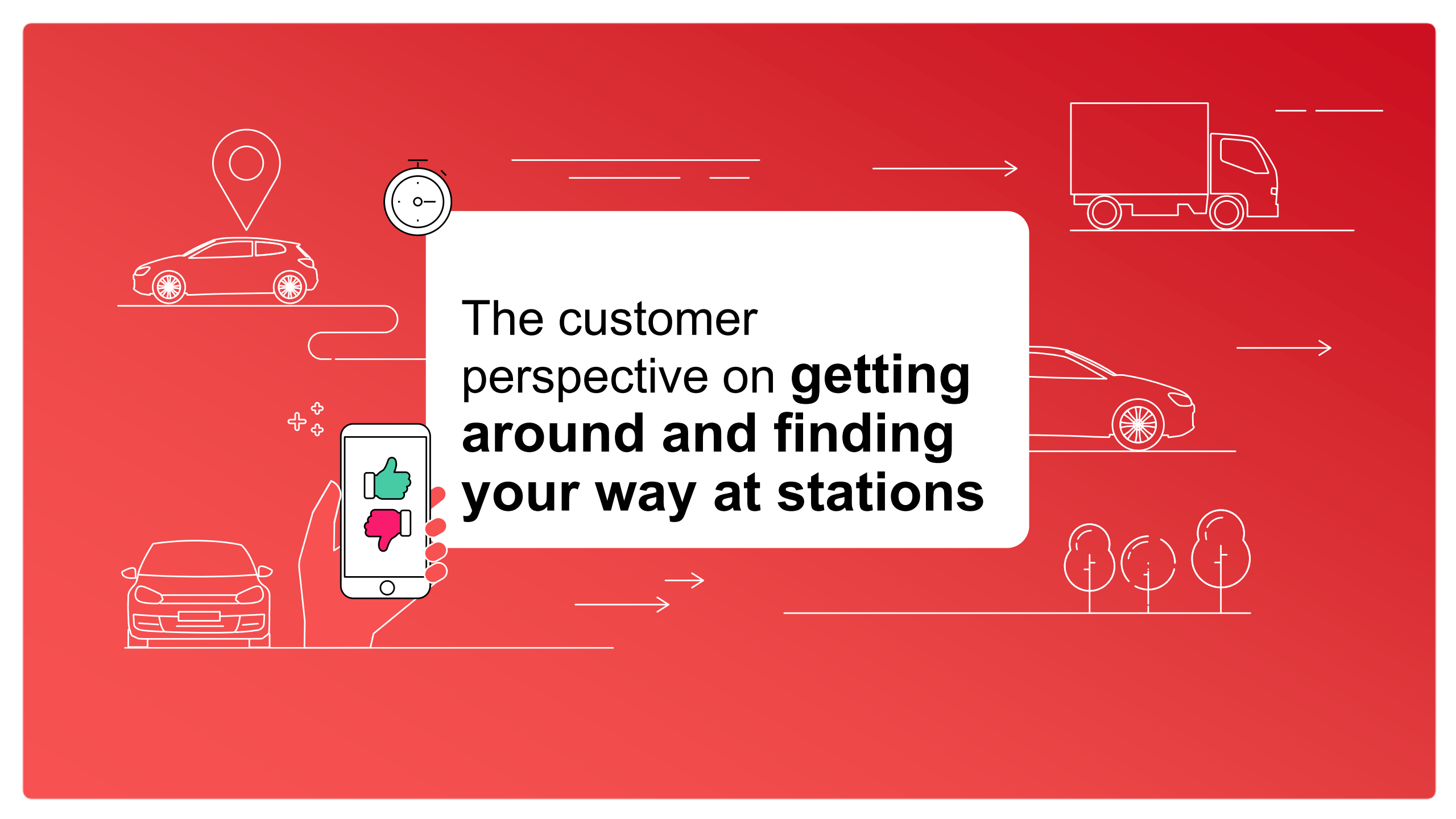
Second workshop to take place in
November 2023, focussing on
customers' on-board experience



The workshop: a chance to engage face to face with the community, and hear richer discussion around customer needs to complement their online feedback

....and they worked hard!





The customer
perspective on **getting
around and finding
your way at stations**

Understanding the customer perspective on getting around at stations: overview of approach

Workshop activities and discussion



Group discussion: what contributes to easy or difficult navigation and movement around stations

Supported by photo examples from a wide range of stations in the UK and abroad as discussion stimulus



Further mini group discussions on specific areas:

Parking | Accessibility |
Pre-information to facilitate customer use of stations

Workshop follow-up

Activities in the online platform, beginning the week following the workshop



Evaluation of signage at large stations

Using virtual models: MAN | LIV
Introduction to the model concept during workshop;
evaluation conducted later in the online platform
(Part of a wider feedback exercise to inform signage redesign at Network Rail managed stations)

**Overview:
The customer
experience of getting
around at stations**

Moving and wayfinding around stations is usually a part of overall rail experience that goes relatively unnoticed – but can bring unnecessary friction in some circumstances



As an illustration, when participants evaluated proposed new signage at Manchester and Liverpool, a clear majority found it fairly easy to complete the wayfinding tasks they were set*



But when people do experience difficulty with either getting around physically, or finding their way, it can have real consequences, such as...



....causing people to (worry they will) miss a train, or to unintentionally cross a gateline, with ticket/payment implications

I was at the station in good time but no-one was there to assist [me in my wheelchair] and the lift was locked... I watched my service depart from the station... When I eventually did get into London, I'd missed my connection.

(Joshua, leisure journey)

[Once], I was lost... [I had] to catch a connection... I was quite worried, to be honest, because I didn't know where I was, and I had to be somewhere by a certain time ... luckily someone helped me ... let me through because obviously my tickets weren't working on the barriers because I had already gone through once [mistakenly] and I was stuck.

(Katherine, commuter / business)



...or creating additional effort and stress

...finding the toilets did prove a challenge as the signs seem to get you to [the right area] but if you do not look right you can easily miss them especially if the station is crowded... I ended up [at] the toilets upstairs and totally missed the downstairs toilets which are much larger.

(Clive, mainly business travel)

I had to [make a connection] ...but it was unclear which platform I needed to go to ...the train would be leaving in 10 minutes... I went down the stairs ...but I could not find any further information ...I had a heavy bag and had to go back to where I started. I eventually found someone to ask ...[but] it was very rushed and caused me some anxiety.

(Julie, leisure)

* As part of a wider project to redesign signage at Network Rail managed stations, participants were asked to find their way to a number of different points in these stations, using interactive, virtual 3D models. Between them, participants had a mix of different levels of familiarity with each of the stations.

Some factors, which are superficially outside of station operators' control, are can affect the experience

Characteristics of station buildings

Size



Moving and finding your way around is inevitably a more salient issue at larger stations

Though some also felt that smaller stations can be difficult to navigate, where assumptions may be made that finding key features like exits and the right platforms is simply evident, that limited staffing can leave customers helpless, or that complacency creeps in because most users are assumed to be local and familiar

Layout



Multiple platforms – especially where not laid out linearly, due to expansion over time for example

Different levels / areas – meaning some platforms, exits or facilities are not visible or are accessed separately

Temporary changes or compromises to routes around the station, e.g. due to construction work

Age



Newer stations are expected to be accessible to all, and while many accept that older (e.g. Victorian) buildings were not designed with this in mind, it is increasingly felt that this is unacceptable and should be addressed

Customer context



Factors affecting ease of movement, e.g.:

Having a disability

Carrying luggage or equipment, e.g. buggy

Travelling as a large group, or with dependents incl. children or elderly people



Anxiety or difficulty with the environment, due to:

Unfamiliarity with a station, or rail travel in general

Neurodiversity, cognitive or mental health factors

Experience (or perception) of unreliability, crowding or other issues, predisposing many people to feel stressed from the outset when they turn up to travel by train

Disruption, causing short term and unexpected changes to timetables, platforms, etc, as well as stress making it harder for customers to process information

...but some aspects of station / footfall management can fail to address, or even create or exaggerate these issues



Of particular frustration or confusion are:

Non-linear platform numbering

The use of a/b in platform numbering (is there an “8”, an “8c”?)

Colour-coding (noted specifically at Birmingham New Street)

Platform announcements leaving little time to reach the train – causing congestion and anxiety

Efforts to optimise movement and wayfinding around stations are worthwhile – especially for, but not limited to, unfamiliar travellers or those with other challenges to getting around – and getting around easily should be something customers can rely on, despite legacy features and other challenges with some stations: ways to address and mitigate for these are usually not beyond industry influence



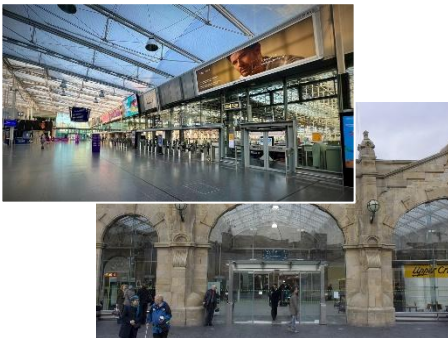
How can operators
help customers to
find their way
around at stations?

(In addition to signage) some other features are important in helping customers to find their way around easily at stations

Management of the space

Open plan / transparent walls & doors

As well as allowing sight lines, feeling light and open promotes a perception of being able to get around easily – part of a more general overall feeling of being in control*



Avoiding clutter

Of both station furniture and other obstacles, and around wayfinding signage (e.g. catering signage, other advertising)

*It was very easy [to find my way at the station].... Signs were large and clear. The environment was open, clear to access and not cluttered with too much unnecessary information.
(Rachel, business)*

Quiet areas

Needed by those feeling anxious or overwhelmed – for any reason – to reset and re-orientate

Lighting

For example, where a thoroughfare to a certain facility or area is not well lit, or free of signage or other signs of life, customers can lose confidence in whether they “should” be taking that route

*It was hard to find ...eventually I stumbled upon 13b but ...the entrance appeared to be very darkly lit Also, [the] space seemed more closed and small in comparison to the main concourse.
(Clive, mainly business)*

Further information provision

Staff presence

As a back-up or clarifier to other information, for more complex wayfinding needs, or customers with additional challenges to using the wayfinding information

*...there may be instances in which people are looking for specific help which might be less clear through the signs.
...[this needs] approachable, knowledgeable staff around the station to ask, or perhaps an interactive / touch screen map, with a search function and help button. I do think the value of having real humans for help is invaluable.
(Rachel, mainly business travel)*

Information hubs

In larger stations: maps, interactive screens, staffed information desks

*See also separate report on safety at stations

There are some specific features and requirements for signage and other wayfinding devices – in terms of **placement**

It's important that signage follows a route through, all the way...

...from the start

...there is an overhead sign with solely "Way Out" indicated. In the distance there is a sign ...with both "Way Out" and "station facilities". It would be better to have station facilities on the first sign, as I turned round thinking they must be another way.
(Simon, business)

You can't see the signs [to the specific platform] from the entrance, you have to start walking before you see [them]. It isn't part of the main station and there are no signs from the main concourse.
(Tracy, leisure)

...to the conclusion of a route



When testing proposed new signage at MAN / LIV, several people went in the right direction for toilets for example, following overhead signs, but couldn't ultimately find them when they reached the right general area, due to being tucked in a corner or dwarfed by another service and signs

...including all start points and natural breaks



Some found lifts or a PA lounge for example, but then couldn't initially navigate away from these points due to lack of signage immediately on exit from them

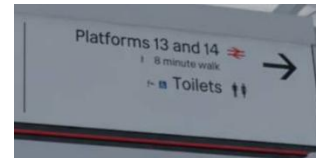
Consider the full practicalities of following signs through to their conclusion

Signage to key facilities and platforms to be provided with additional detail such as:

- Precise navigation information to avoid wasted time / steps

For the passenger assistance it should [have] precise info ...like "Passenger Assistance (Ground Floor by Lifts)" for example.
(Jay, commuter)

- Consideration for time needed to get to the right area, through any gates, and on board



Ensure "way out" signs, and at-exit information, take account of

accessibility: a common frustration for those requiring step-free access was to be routed to an exit, only to discover when they reached it that they could not use it.

Of course, it's critical that wayfinding is easily visible

For most people this means high signs, above eye level, but consider other ways to aid navigation and routing of people around stations:

Floor markings – using stickers (providing they are maintained) or light projections, which can also be used flexibly

- Especially useful for those sitting at a lower level in a wheelchair, or who might otherwise find it difficult to look up, but a potential way to mitigate for other eye-level clutter for all
- Can also assist with following a route through from start to finish
- And reinforce signage for key services

Railings / stretch barriers (providing these do not create clutter or feel like obstacles**)

[The external walkway has] yellow railings making a very visible clear pathway so fewer decisions to make about which way to turn! It's often useful to be "shepherded" in the right direction!

(Becca, business)

** See separate report on safety at stations, where a key principle in feeling safe was appropriate use of barriers where necessary, but without creating enclosed, trapped-feeling spaces or making it difficult to move around or away from potential threats

There are some specific features and requirements for signage and other wayfinding devices – in terms of **content & design**

Clean and clear

The amount of information required is somewhat subjective, but generally in the separate exercise to evaluate proposed signage redesign*, participants felt that the right balance had been struck

Use of visual cues:

- Icons are generally popular as a shortcut to finding the information needed when scanning multiple signs
- Clear visual identity helps to find specific services – like Merseyrail or Metrolink in the LIV and MAN examples evaluated. Some felt this could be usefully extended to other services like Passenger Assistance or toilets, and/or incorporated into the use of icons and symbols.

The use of different colours for different facilities (black background for 'way out'; blue background for 'wheelchairs'; etc.) is very helpful.
(John, leisure / business)

[Could you give] Passenger Assist its own visual (a bit like the Metrolink)? This would also help neurodiverse customers and help with assistance seeming like a common offer across the entire network.
(Joshua, commuter)

Understanding the terminology and visuals

For example, participants highlighted queries or confusion over the meaning of terms like “services” or “Passenger Assistance”

There was a sign for “station services”; I think it could have done with some symbols to summarise what services were there, like does that include toilets?
(Gavin, leisure)

The Passenger Assistance ...could have had a sign to make it clearer who could use it and what kind of assistance is on offer. It wasn't clear what to do once there other than sit and wait.
(Rachel, mainly business travel)

Not easy to find Mobility Assistance at all. Almost mistook the massive lift signs with the picture of wheelchair and suitcase as Passenger Assistance.
(Oliver, mainly business travel)

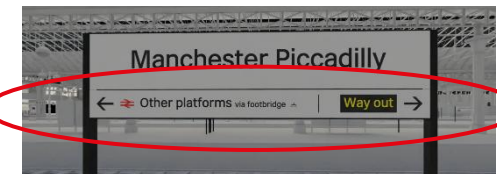
The need for more consistency is a common theme

- Some misinterpretation in the exercise – toilets/PA/lifts
- Different language used, even within one station: “mobility assistance”, “passenger assistance”
- Airports are felt to be the gold standard here – consistent internationally

Remember that some may not know the area, station, or related services

For example...

A common source of confusion in the evaluation exercise: on disembarking a train, to find the Metrolink (tram service) should I head for the way out, or to other platforms?



Tell me what landmarks or local destinations are at each exit, not the street name



* At Network Rail managed stations

There is also a role for information about the station itself, available separately

Participants generally felt they would only rarely look up information about the station in advance – but it was universally felt that this should be available *in the event* of it being needed, since in that case the need would likely be significant

Potentially relevant to anyone travelling to/from unfamiliar station
Particularly useful for people with any additional challenges

- to moving around
- with navigating, due to comprehension or difficulty dealing with busy, noisy public spaces

These customers want to know about...

What facilities are present and operational (and not) at the station

Broad layout, including any platform idiosyncrasies, for example

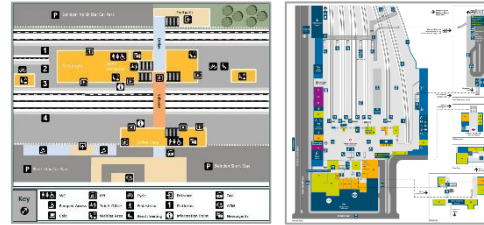
How to get in and out, and where key facilities are, like ticket purchase, platforms, gates, toilets

An idea of how long it will take to get to places

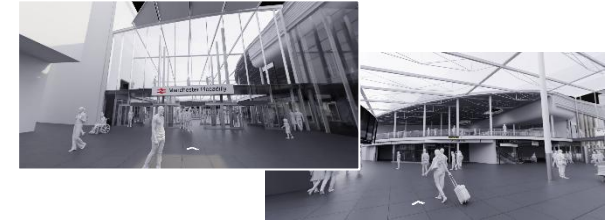
Accessible routes, facilities and assistance

Virtual tours, pictures and descriptions are useful to enable familiarisation in advance, especially for people who may be anxious or find navigation difficult generally

How should it be delivered



Existing, 2D station maps are not always intuitive for consumer use: inconsistent in design (some use of different symbols, inconsistent presence of key, use of schematic, etc), and do not provide information about the physical environment for wheelchair users, for example



Interactive, 3D “streetview” style information is increasingly used in other contexts, and becoming more expected.

Most participants preferred 3D models like the ones used to facilitate evaluation of signage (though this was not their intended purpose).

3D interactive navigation was acknowledged as potentially complex and not needed at all stations, but felt to be **useful for very large, busy stations**, with a **mixture of maps and photos for smaller stations**.

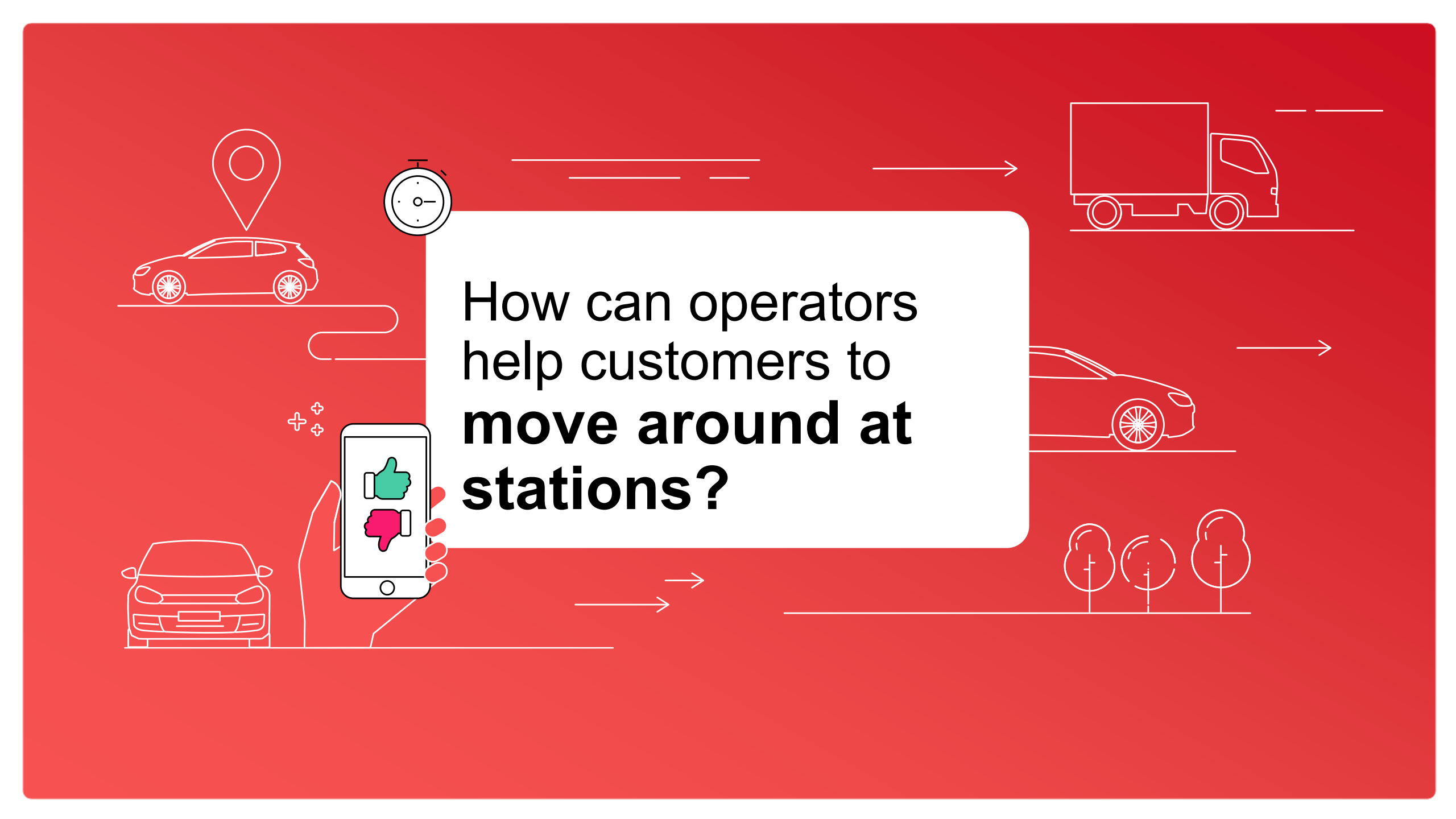
The usefulness of this type of information provision extends to on site at stations themselves

(As we have seen):

- Quiet areas within the station to orientate oneself
- Information and maps – including touchscreen, interactive presentation, and presence of staff to assist

And it must be promoted and publicised well

Very low awareness of the existence of this currently



How can operators
help customers to
**move around at
stations?**

Accessibility: an engaging topic, relevant to a large proportion of participants as representative of customers

While important for inclusivity of disabled travellers, ensuring that stations are accessible is by no means limited to considering people with visible impairments or to those with reduced physical mobility:



Those using wheelchairs and walking aids

Or with reduced mobility in other ways

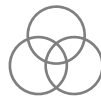


With conditions affecting stamina, breathing or fatigue

The second most frequently reported type of impairment in the UK, after mobility



With sensory impairments, e.g. to hearing or vision



With neurodiversities

Potentially bringing additional challenges with, for example, navigation, dealing with stimulation



Or cognitive or understanding impairments



Those with luggage or additional equipment



Those with additional dependents such as small children, dogs

Potentially needing dedicated (outside) space to exercise, feel calm; potentially requiring different toilet facilities or water

To ensure they are accessible to all, there are some fundamental requirements* for all stations, regardless of size:

Stations must facilitate my....

Access to / interface with rail

Step-free & other deliberate accessibility features

- In/onward transport within easy and close proximity to station, and to its step-free entrances
- Lifts & ramps available as often as possible: increasingly felt to be unacceptable not to do so
- Consideration for width of gates, thoroughfares, corners, etc.
- Info. about appropriate areas on trains, and where to wait on platforms to reach them efficiently
- Presence of these features (or not) to be made known in advance – incl. temporary changes
- Wide access gates for those with luggage, children, wheelchairs, etc.
- More needed in some stations
 - More time allowed to pass through before the gate closes
 - Staff assistance or facility to set bags down, if hands are full or have limited use
- (Consistently) more manageable gap between train and platform – another area of frustration especially at newer stations or integrating with newer rolling stock. Really effective mitigation of this where the issue is insurmountable, including:
- More time to board / alight
 - Assistance from staff
 - Management of crowding at doors

Ability / right to travel

Assistance & information

- (Wayfinding, moving around, boarding trains, etc.)
- Delivered via face-to-face staff where possible
- With consideration for different sensory or other needs (incl. audio, visual, large print and simplified information)
- Remote assistance call buttons as a minimum, including near to lifts for example in case of operational problems
- Special passenger assistance where possible
- With reliable advance booking & info
 - Better promotion and understanding of who may use this
- Better and consistent recognition and response to signals such as sunflower lanyard (gained some traction during Covid, which has not been fully maintained), disabled / pregnant badges, etc.

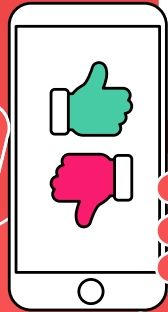
Comfort as a customer

Comfortable, practical waiting areas

- Involving seating, in most populated areas but on all platforms as minimum
- Sufficiently close to and visible to/from platform edge, for easy, efficient access to train
- Empathetic layout / location (e.g. quiet room not located close to pub)

** The focus here is on getting around at stations, and points made here build on the fundamental requirements for station facilities more broadly, including toilets for example. See more on this in the separate report on facilities at stations*

Getting to and from stations



Understanding the customer perspective on getting to and from stations: overview of approach

(Separately from the workshop)

Activities in the online platform



At an earlier stage of this community research project (in April 2023), participants had told us more broadly about how they get to and from stations and how they feel this is facilitated

Workshop activities



Further mini group discussion within the workshop session on parking at stations, specifically



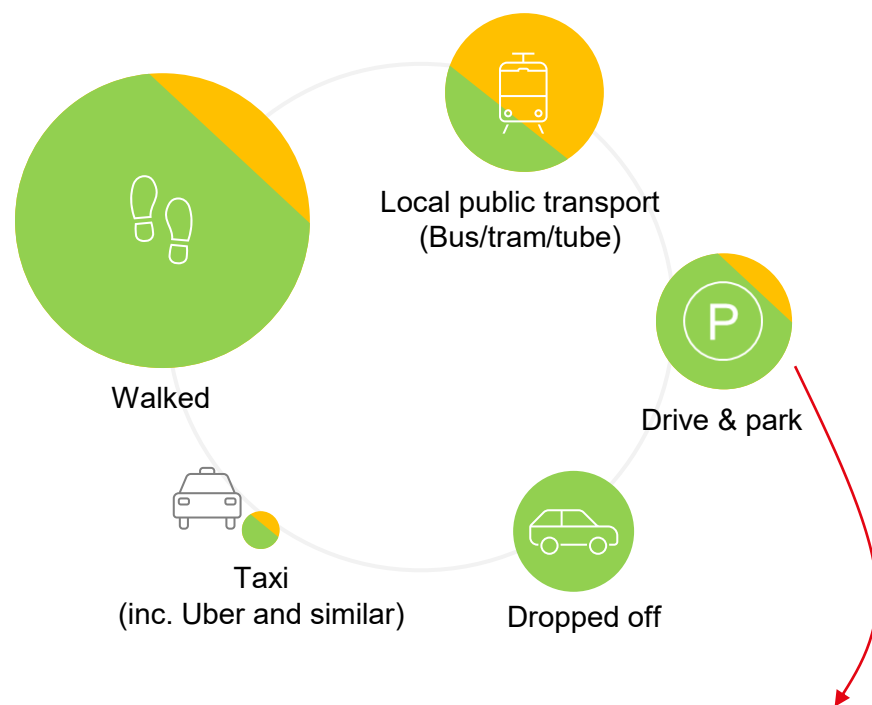
Semi-structured questionnaire to evaluate examples of transport modes, and their integration with rail

Activity completed throughout the day during breaks

A brief recap on earlier insights from the community about getting to and from stations

Main mode used to get to the departure station, and **evaluation of experience** for most recent train journey

(Taken from activities in the online research platform: April '23)



(parking at stations is relevant to a relative minority, and is largely felt to be delivered well)

In facilitating these modes, practical features and principles within industry control, and which it should seek to deliver on, include:

- **Expectation** for really strong public transport integration **at larger stations** *(Both in terms of proximity to station, and help to use it)*
- **Clear, designated, well-equipped** (e.g. with shelter) areas / **zones** *(e.g. for public transport or drop off / pick up / taxis)*
- **Wayfinding:** signage, assistance
- **Suitability of property accommodation** *(e.g. car, bicycle)*
- **Personal safety** in and around stations *For all access/egress modes; at all times when train services are running*

Characteristics and principles that should be considered / featured in existing and newly developed services:

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

- Puts me in control, on my terms
- Is relevant to my journey context *(e.g. needing education and reassurance because I'm unfamiliar)*
- Acknowledges wider societal concerns *(e.g. environment, exercise)*
- Is low cost, and has minimal friction in paying / booking
- Minimises waiting / dead time
- Is safe, comfortable

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

Parking is thus a relatively low saliency issue overall for customers; nevertheless there is room for improvement to reduce effort for those to whom it's relevant

While the price of car parking is also always a key factor for many, the more critical areas for discussion among workshop participants were:

If payment for car parking is required, make it easier

- There is frustration with the need to download multiple payment apps for different stations
- And a growing sense of unease at the withdrawal of cash options in many places
- Rail ticket + car parking in one ticket / transaction is popular – providing this doesn't involve additional validation for example, at the station

Protect car parking availability and capacity

- Some car parks at or close to stations are not exclusively for rail users. Participants favoured free or reduced-price parking for rail users, with non-users required to pay, to protect capacity (providing this is clear and any validation is made easy)
- Pre-booked spaces (e.g. via Q-Park and similar operators) can be popular

Ensure car parking is comfortable and easy to use

Considerations for:

- Safety*
- Size of spaces (especially for those with additional accessibility needs, and including where a disabled badge may not be used, such as with children)
- Information about current capacity on entry (or even before leaving home) to avoid time wasted on searching for a space

Keep the rules consistent

Many participants reported driving to a station further away from their start point, in order to guarantee a space and / or to avoid parking charges ... But in some circumstances this easily tips over into driving the full distance.

Participants felt that being more consistently and overtly on the side of rail users in these ways would be more appropriate, and in keeping with environmental benefits that rail can bring; instead, the current set up can be seen as something of a discouragement of greener travel

Workshop participants also responded to a number of other existing and early concept ideas for facilitating access to stations:

Active travel



Provision of cycle storage at stations



Deliberate steps to facilitate walking / cycling



Pay & go cycle / scooter hire, stations as a hub



PlusBus



Dedicated taxi / Uber stands

Car rental



Traditional car rental at stations



Train + EV hire

Centralised onward travel

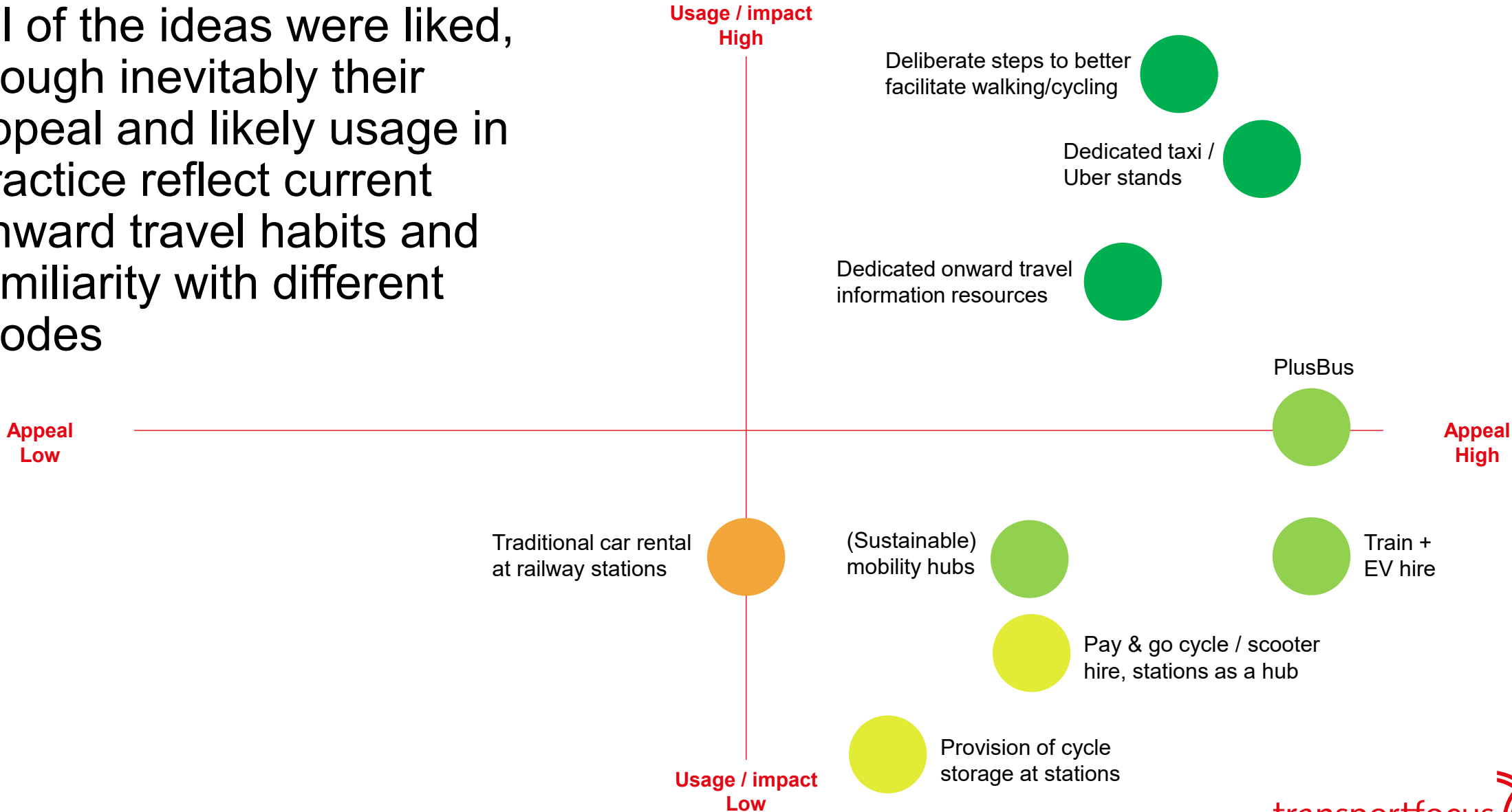


Dedicated onward travel info resources



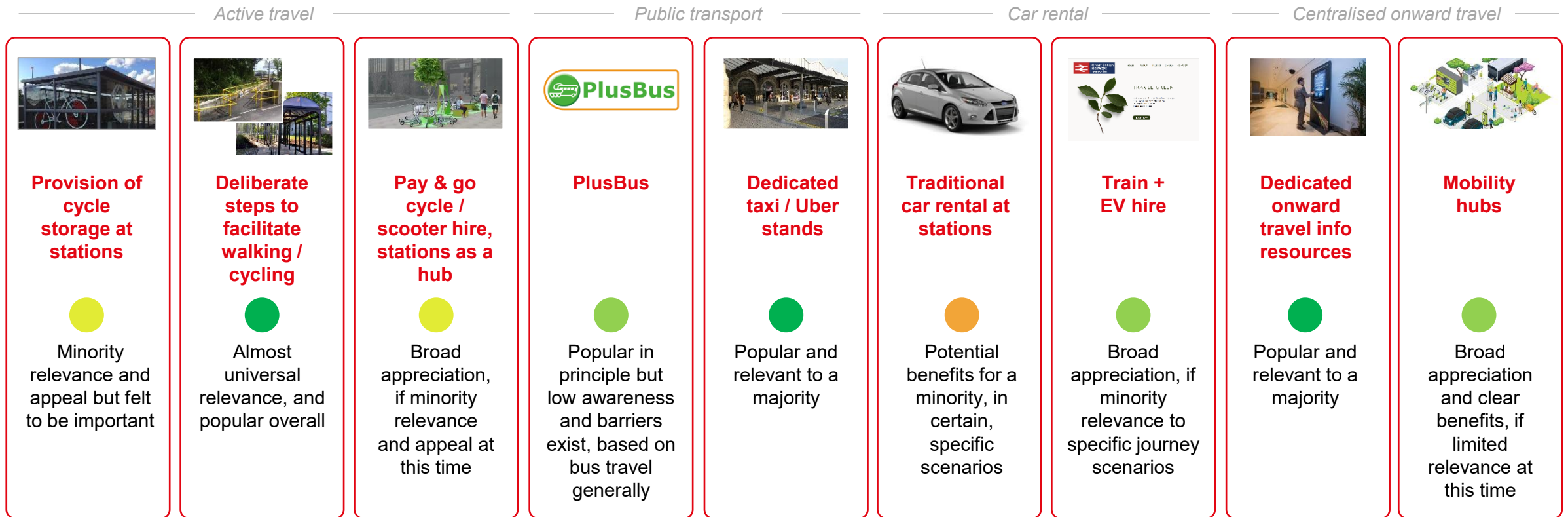
Mobility hubs

All of the ideas were liked, though inevitably their appeal and likely usage in practice reflect current onward travel habits and familiarity with different modes



Many of the ideas were intriguing in principle, with tentative interest in trying them in the right circumstances, and once they feel both mainstream and low effort

See Appendix for more detailed feedback on each concept



This indicates that in many cases these types of new ideas need to be trialled in practice – and publicised loudly, and possibly incentivised – to assess likely usage. Much of the time, people don't think, let alone act, beyond their comfort zone, and so there is a degree of needing to bring innovations and create demand rather than be driven by existing interest.

Evaluation of these ideas also built on the earlier feedback*, to highlight further best practice themes in facilitating in/onward travel to stations; in terms of:

Physical infrastructure

Where property (e.g. bikes) and personal security (e.g. when walking, or waiting for onward transport) are potential concerns, **security needs to be proportionate but overt**

- Close to station, or developed to feel closely connected
- Lighting
- Sheltered, enclosed – but not “trapped” (glass is great)
- CCTV (demonstrably working)
- Restricted access / lockable

Station proximity, shelter and lighting also contribute to comfort of using any mode to get to and from stations – extending to covered, lit external walkways as well as areas within the station itself – **as does seating** for modes involving a potential wait

Clearly marked zones, bringing together several onward modes, bring many of these benefits: safety, convenience, comfort, and potentially opening up options a customer has previously not considered.

To work well for customers, hubs must have strong queue management, and staff presence for customer service

The **upkeep of the wider station environment** – within and without – impacts on mode choices

Broader management principles

Facilitating cheaper and greener choices is seen as the right thing to do

(In contrast, some feel uncomfortable at less sustainable options being accommodated, such as ICE cars and to a lesser extent taxis. While these are still popular, the industry must be mindful of this demand for greener, which is likely to grow)

Advance booking, especially together with train journey, and managing all travel in one app, are popular

Cost is a big factor in mode choice: **discounts, unlimited travel (PlusBus) and integrated tickets popular**

Reducing customer effort everywhere and anywhere should be a guiding principle. This applies across:

- Accessibility – ramps/lifts/steps, strength required (to navigate cycle storage, kerbs, doors, etc.) distance to travel around and outside a station
- Wayfinding – signage, but also clearly demarcated routes where relevant
- Payment and booking
- Consistency in all of these

Broader perceptions hamper some modes' appeal, despite efforts to facilitate them at stations: e.g. road safety for cyclists / scooters, unreliability for buses, and some options simply not being “for me”. **But...**

- Steps within rail industry influence, like improving safety immediately around stations, or making the case for better integrated timetabling, may help dispel them somewhat
- Where barriers to usage of these modes are based on more subjective perception, normalising these modes and raising their profile via integration with rail is arguably an important part of removing those barriers – thus a reason to facilitate them, not to deprioritise them

In general, **promoting** available modes of transport is important to ensure their consideration

* As summarised on pg 20 and detailed in the earlier report on getting to and from railway stations

Summary

Moving and finding your way around stations is a relatively low priority issue for most customers – it's often intuitive (or the station is familiar) and accessibility is straightforward for most people.

However, where getting around at stations is more difficult, the consequences for customers can be difficult – either tangibly, such as missing a train, or in terms of perceptions and confidence in the railway.

Some of the factors which influence how easy it is to get around are difficult for the rail industry to control directly – like the age and design of buildings, and the diverse challenges of individual customers. **Nevertheless, there are measures that operators can take to optimise outcomes for customers:**

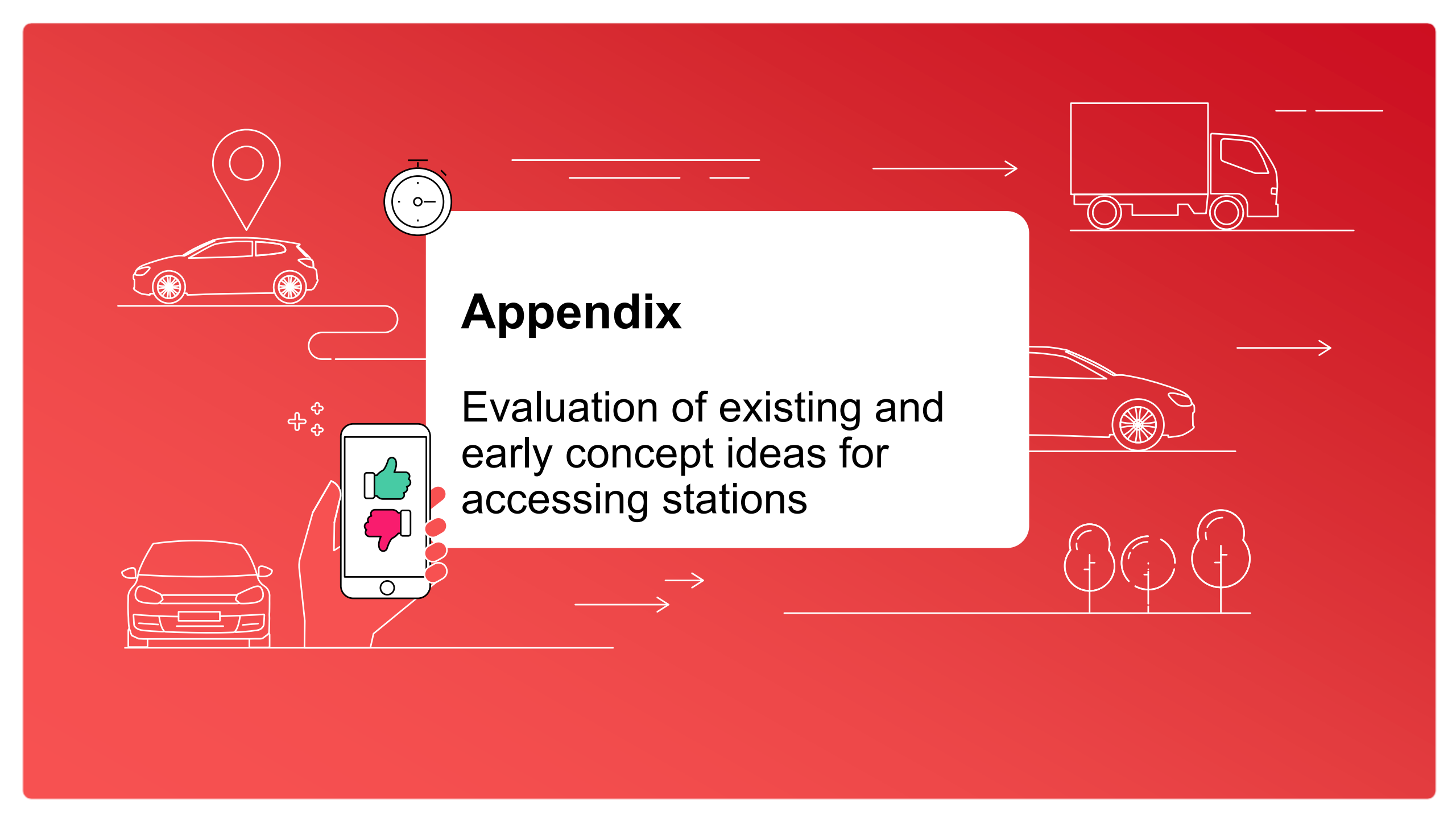
In the discussions and exercises about wayfinding, the community highlighted four main areas that station operators need to think about, and make work collectively:

- **Signage and other wayfinding devices** – with some key principles emerging already around how to ensure clarity and genuine, practical effectiveness: these will continue to be built on further as the community evaluates proposed signage for the remaining Network Rail managed stations over the coming months
- **Managing the space** – prioritising openness and freedom from clutter, but also with consideration for special areas like quiet zones, and how lighting affects how people feel about and move around in different spaces
- **Further on-site information provision** – prioritising the role that staff can play, as well as other information resources, potentially brought together in hub areas
- **Information about getting around and facilities at the station, that is available in advance (and on site)** – perhaps not used widely, but with real potential value for those who need it

They also highlighted some **principles in the way that stations can be made accessible and easy to move around:**

- Employing a wide range of measures based on the need for step-free movement, wider throughfares, reducing wasted effort via good information, providing more comfort, and considerate placement of facilities and services
- Putting real emphasis on assistance available on site

In some additional exercises, the community also built on the principles for in/onward travel at stations, which they had first discussed via activities in the online research.



Appendix

Evaluation of existing and early concept ideas for accessing stations

Evaluation of existing and early concept ideas for accessing stations (1/5)

★ Ideas which resonated particularly well with participants

Provision of cycle storage at stations

Minority relevance and appeal but felt to be important

(Likely to be used by fewer than a third of participants)



York



Nearby street



Newark



Solihull

- ✓ **Generally seen as necessary**, vital to encourage greener and cheap travel
- × **But broader issues still put people off:**
 - Perception that cycling on roads is generally unsafe
 - Need to keep clean, fresh, wear certain clothing
 - General distrust of cycle storage safety, despite security measures in place

When cycle storage works well:

- **Overtly secure** with a range of measures to demonstrably ensure this – Newark seen as best-in-class example: **fully contained, access-controlled, lit, with CCTV**
- **Close to or preferably within the station** – again for safety, but also for convenient access. Solihull and on-street examples felt to be too removed and so less safe for individuals, less secure for property
- **Wider station environment must also feel secure and well kept**
- Incorporating shelter from the weather (and aids security perception)
- Tiered storage acknowledged as space-saving, but some put off by perceived effort

Deliberate steps to better facilitate walking/cycling

Almost universal relevance, and popular overall



- ✓ **Generally seen as necessary and important**, for cyclists / pedestrians' safety and ease, to encourage greener travel, for people unfamiliar with the area

Particularly popular features and devices:

- **Step-free / smooth access towards stations** – for luggage / buggies / mobility-limited people / cyclists – and it generally feels “open”
 - **Dedicated and clearly demarked cycle/pedestrian routes** – for safety, wayfinding / orientation
 - Clear signage
 - **Covered / sheltered areas and walkways**
- × Opinions on the design and format of signage is quite subjective, and **inconsistency – especially on the more detailed/complex map boards – can make things more difficult**

Evaluation of existing and early concept ideas for accessing stations (2/5)

Pay & go cycle / scooter hire, with stations as a hub

Broad appreciation, if minority relevance and appeal at this time



- ✓ **A majority like the idea**, seen as:
 - Environmentally friendly
 - Convenient and flexible
 - App-based
 - A good alternative to walking (for speed, or fun), or traditional cycling (where exertion may not be compatible with end destination)
 - Hub idea is generally useful – and stations are an intuitive location
- × **But negative perceptions and assumptions create barriers**, especially:
 - Hazards on streets when dropped off without dedicated storage / parking spaces
 - Poor perceived safety record – either due to irresponsible usage, or wider issues with the safety of cycling on roads
 - Questions and concerns about apps (different apps in different cities, potential for unreliability, digital payment and access = potential for not being inclusive)
 - Open to misuse, theft / vandalism, poor hygiene
- × **Many simply don't see this as “for me”** (though growth in time may change this)

People find this most appealing when:

- They have the **option to book in advance** and secure a ride
- The equipment is **“contained” and tidy**
- **In urban areas**

(Sustainable) mobility hubs

Most see clear benefits, if somewhat limited relevance at this time



- ✓ **People generally like the general concept of a hub**, for benefits including:
 - Convenience
 - Presenting and opening up more options for people
 - Safety (likely to be well populated)
 - Potential for assistance to be available
 - Likely to be purpose-built and therefore fully accessible
 - Auxiliary services e.g. cafes, lockers, etc.
- ✓ Encouraging sustainable travel options
- ✓ Stations are an intuitive place (from consumer perspective) for EV charging
- × **Key concern is around space:**
 - Needs to be quite large to be genuinely useful
 - Concern about crowding or over-demand for some modes here in peak times
 - (Could push car parking (even) further away)
- × **And queries about the cost** of these various modes

People find this most appealing when:

- It's **built with safety, customer service presence, and accessibility in mind**
- It is **sheltered** and has **seating**

Evaluation of existing and early concept ideas for accessing stations (3/5)

Traditional car rental at railway stations

Potential benefits for a minority, in specific journey scenarios



- ✓ **Felt to have potential relevance to longer distance trips** lasting more than a day, where the destination is more remote and/or is not well served by public transport
- ✓ In this context participants see several benefits:
 - **Convenience** – proximity of this onward travel mode to the station
 - **Familiar and understood**, relatively trusted (presence of familiar brands helps)
 - **Opens up the local area** around the destination
 - Brings greater **potential for rail to compete with flying** within the UK
- × However, this scenario is relatively infrequent, and car rental rarely considered
- × And it does have some issues:
 - Negative impressions based on experiences abroad – **expensive** including hidden costs, **risk of accidents / car damage**, and how these are dealt with
 - Feels **counterintuitive for rail industry to facilitate a non-sustainable mode**
 - Concern about contributing to **local traffic congestion**
- Where it has appeal and can work well:
 - Ability to **book in advance / all in one with rail ticket**
 - **Needs to be promoted** and made really visible to be considered
 - Must cater for **disabled drivers**
 - Must have **easy to access customer service** when out and about (via app)

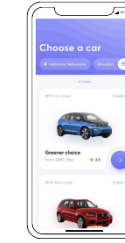
Train + EV hire

Broad appreciation, if minority relevance to specific journey scenarios

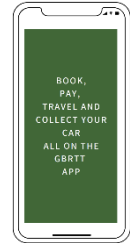
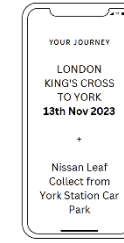
Book your rail journey



Add on your EV or Hybrid car hire



Get 10% off



- ✓ **Very popular in principle:**
 - Participants particularly liked **simple, all-in-one (rail + EV), app-based booking**
 - **Environmentally friendly**
 - **Convenience** – proximity to station
 - **Discount**
 - **Certainty** of knowing onward transport is sorted
- **Similar use-case as for traditional car hire**, though the innovative and more modern elements provide additional intrigue, diminishing the immediate “not for me” barrier
- × **Some queries and concerns**
 - Anticipated high cost
 - General concerns around car hire (where to park, risk of accident / damage)
 - Nervousness / inexperience with EVs (how to charge, how to drive)
 - Existing cynicism around EVs (credibility of green claims, health issues, etc)
 - Digital / smartphone basis can be exclusive (a minority concern)

Evaluation of existing and early concept ideas for accessing stations (4/5)

Dedicated taxi and uber stands

Popular and relevant to a majority



- ✓ A **dedicated area** for taxis and Uber-style rides **feels logical, with clear benefits**
 - **Helps to locate** this onward travel mode easily
 - **Proximity and accessibility to station**, especially given likely usage by those with reduced mobility or luggage
 - **Safety** – less likely to be waiting alone, and waiting for a long time

When traditional / app-based taxis with dedicated areas at stations work well:

- Well sign-posted, **easy to find**
- **Comfortable, accessible and safe**: shelter, lighting, seating

Other considerations:

- Ride-sharing is of interest to many: promotion / deliberate facilitation of this is worth investigating
- Important to carefully consider the way such an area interacts with other car drivers
- Cost prohibitive for some – used infrequently by many, rather than frequently by any
- Uber actively disliked for ethical reasons by a minority
- Potential for confusion - do you still need to book Uber via app or are cars waiting?

PlusBus

Popular in principle but low awareness and barriers exist, based on bus travel generally



- ✓ Clear primary attraction is the concept of booking in one place and having a single ticket covering multiple modes
- ✓ Other benefits which speak to different individuals for different reasons:
 - Unlimited travel promotes a sense of 1) good value for money, 2) convenience – no need to keep buying different tickets
 - Buses do have potential to “take the strain”, reducing need for customer to find their own way around a local area – rail users already naturally predisposed, and keen, to relinquish this type of control
 - Encourages, by helping to facilitate, greener transport options (vs car)
- People are keen that this is available with digital tickets (paper tickets shown in the research stimulus) and that it should cover all local transport, e.g. trams, underground
- × Key barriers are:
 - Lacking awareness of this idea, and/or little understanding about how it works
 - Concern that some services will be excluded / bus drivers being unfamiliar
 - Distrust of bus service frequency and reliability
 - Lack of knowledge about local bus services

Evaluation of existing and early concept ideas for accessing stations (5/5)

Dedicated onward travel information resources

Popular and relevant to a majority



✓ Concept of a **centralised point** for this type of information is very popular

✓ **Tailored** / personal assistance:

- Interactive touch-screen points
- Potential for multiple languages / signposting within the self-serve platform for information relevant to tourists vs other visitors

This concept is felt to be **most likely to work...**:

- **Where in-person and self-serve help are combined** – strong expectation for this:
 - Staff to deal with more difficult / detailed queries, or people who are less confident with tech
 - + self-serve points to reduce the pressure on staff by helping customers with more simple requests – not to replace staff entirely
- At larger stations with high passenger volume, **where many are unfamiliar with the area**

× Potential issues and concerns:

- **Queues / crowding** (one participant suggests a QR code to access same content on your own device)
- **Conflation of onward travel information and assistance, with that for train services** – both need to be covered, or the difference must be really clear
- Tech **not being up to date, not working**
- Not being able to **understand / use the tech**

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.