Department for Transport

Public attitudes towards train services: results from the February 2018 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Moving Britain Ahead

February 2019

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Summary of key findings

1 In February 2018, almost two thirds (64%) of adults in Great Britain had used a train at least once in the previous 12 months.

2 Those who never travel by car, were aged 75 years or older or worked in routine or manual occupations were less likely to have used rail. Those living in higher household income groups were more likely to have used rail.

Short-distance rail services

3 Fifty-four per cent of adults had used short-distance rail services in the previous 12 months with journeys most often made for days out (44%), shopping (34%) and visiting friends or relatives (32%).

4 The majority of adults (63%) thought that short-distance rail services had stayed the same over the previous two years and 23% thought that short-distance rail services would improve over the next two years[1].

5 Overall, 65% of users and 55% of non-users rated the quality of short-distance rail services positively. Users rated the cost of fares for short-distance rail services less positively than in 2015 (from 33% to 24% in 2018)[2].

6 Three quarters (74%) of short-distance rail users said that their recent experiences of rail travel met their expectations.

7 The main reason infrequent users and non-users of short-distance rail services gave for not using these (more often) was because it is easier to use a car (49%).

8 Just under half (48%) of infrequent short-distance rail users identified cheaper fares as an improvement that would encourage them to use short-distance trains (more often).

9 Regular users reported that speed (36%), convenience (32%) and frequency (25%) were the most valued aspects of short-distance rail travel.

Long-distance rail services

10 Overall, it is estimated that 34% of adults had used long-distance train services in the previous 12 months. The most common purpose of long-distance rail journeys was visiting friends or relatives (54%).

11 The most popular reasons given for using long-distance rail were that it was quicker by train (47%) or it was easier by train (41%). This question did not record which mode of travel this was in comparison to, however, given that the car is the preferred mode of transport in England[3], it is likely that this is with respect to car travel.

[1] Excludes 'Don't know' responses.
[2] Excludes 'Don't know' responses.
[3] In 2017, car or van accounted for 61% of the average number of trips made per year and 78% of the average distance travelled. National Travel Survey table NTS0303.

12 Sixty-nine per cent of users and 49% of non-users rated the overall quality of long-distance rail services positively. Sixty-five per cent of users and 53% of non-users said long-distance services had stayed the same over the last two years[4].

13 The most popular way that users had passed time on their last long-distance train journey was reading books, magazines and newspapers (57%).

14 The most common main reason for infrequent users not using long-distance rail (more often) was it being easier to use alternative modes of transport (36%).

15 Two thirds (66%) of infrequent long-distance rail users and non-users identified cheaper fares as an improvement that would encourage them to use trains (more often) to make long-distance journeys

Train tickets

16 Overall, 29% of rail users and 27% of non-users thought that there were too many ticket types available when travelling by rail.

17 Twenty-five per cent of users said they had fully understood the different types of tickets available, while 28% said they did not understand. Almost half of users (46%) said they partly understood the different types of tickets available.

18 Forty-two per cent of those who purchase rail tickets said they normally did so at a ticket office; 32% said they normally purchased their tickets online from a website.

19 Eighty-two per cent of users rated the ease of ticket purchase using their normal method positively, with 68% rating the availability of advance tickets positively.

20 Sixteen per cent of adults in Great Britain had used smart tickets to make a journey by rail. Just over one third (34%) were aware of smart tickets for rail journeys, but had not used them.

[4] Excludes 'Don't know' responses.

1. Introduction

1.1 The following report summarises adults' experiences of, and attitudes towards, rail travel in Great Britain. It considers short-distance journeys of 50 miles or less and long-distance journeys of more than 50 miles. It examines: the accessibility of railway stations; the frequency and purpose of train journeys; how users and non-users rate and perceive train services; whether experiences have met expectations; which features users most value; why non-users and infrequent users do not use services (more often); what improvements would encourage them to use trains (more often); and, how rail tickets are normally purchased. It also seeks adults' opinions on the number and range of train tickets available and smart tickets.

1.2 The Department for Transport has sponsored questions on attitudes towards rail travel on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opinions and Lifestyle survey (formerly Opinions omnibus survey) in February 2006, March 2009, April 2012, February 2015 and most recently in February 2018.

The ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey: methodology

1.3 The Opinions and Lifestyle survey is a monthly face-to-face omnibus survey of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain. It is used by public sector and charitable organisations to collect Official Statistics on a range of topics. In February 2018, the survey achieved a response rate of 46% (833 interviews).

1.4 The Opinions and Lifestyle survey uses a random probability sample stratified by: region; the proportion of households with no car; National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC); and, the proportion of adults aged over 65 years. The sampling frame is the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) of 'small users' in Great Britain. One person is interviewed in each selected household.

1.5 Sampling errors depend on several factors including the size of the sample, clustering and the effect of weighting on the variable of interest. On average the Effective Sample Size of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey is 84% to 86% of the actual sample of individuals.

1.6 Weighting factors are applied to correct for the unequal probability of selection caused by interviewing only one adult per household or restricting the eligibility of the module to certain types of respondent. The weighting also adjusts for some non-response bias by calibrating to ONS population totals.

1.7 Where this report discusses a difference in results between years or sub-groups of respondents (such as users and non-users, age or demographic categories), these have been tested and found to be statistically significant[5] at the 95% level of confidence. These calculations assumed an average design factor (DEFT) of 1.2.

Supporting materials

1.8 Tables supporting the data in the charts and commentary in this report table can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/att04-attitudes-and-behaviour-relating-to-train-travel. The questions may also be found in the same location.

1.9 This report also contains selected results from the Department for Transport's 2017 National Travel Survey (NTS), including the average number of rail trips and the average distance travelled by rail.

The National Travel Survey

1.10 The NTS produces high quality National Statistics on how much people travel, how they travel and why they travel. Since 2014, the NTS has been conducted with people in England only. It is the Department for Transport's primary source of personal travel data and is primarily used to track long term trends and to support transport modelling and forecasting work. The NTS has operated continuously since 1988 and has been managed by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) under contract to the Department for Transport since 2002.

1.11 The survey consists of a face-to-face placement interview, a seven-day paper diary and a short pick-up interview. The NTS covers travel by people of all ages including children. In 2017, the survey achieved a standard response rate of 53%. This equates to interviews with approximately 16,500 people in 6,800 households.

1.12 Further data, themed fact sheets, details of the NTS methodology and other technical information can be found on the NTS homepage at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics.

The National Rail Passenger Survey

1.13 The main source of information on attitudes to rail travel is the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS). Transport Focus runs the NRPS twice a year. Passenger opinions are collected from a representative sample of rail journeys providing a network-wide picture of overall satisfaction, along with satisfaction with a range of specific aspects of rail services.

1.14 Results are produced for each sector, routes within Train Operating Companies (TOCs), and national results including analysis by journey purpose, age and gender. The NRPS is the main source of attitudinal evidence on rail passengers; the Opinions and Lifestyle survey is a survey of the general population which allows comparison of results for rail users and non-users.

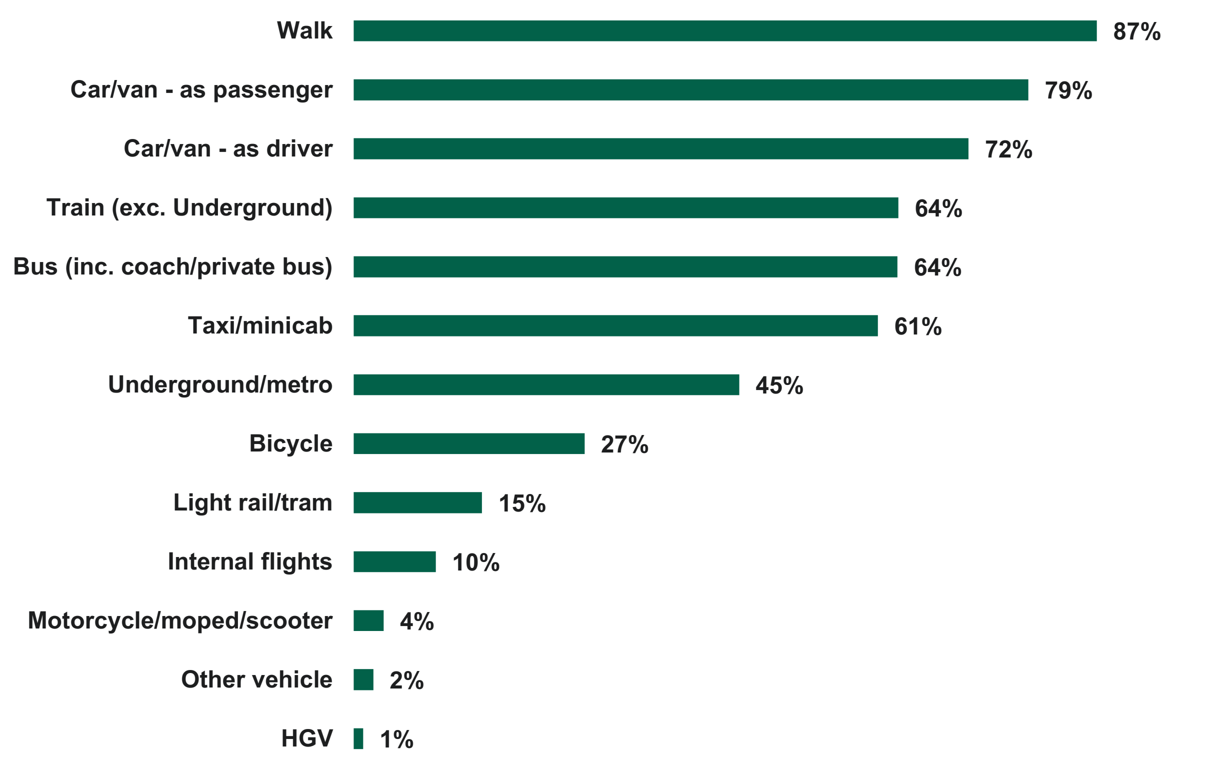
[5] If a difference between two survey results was found to be statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence, it means that, if the survey were repeated a large number of times, we would expect the two results to be different on at least 95% of occasions. This means that the difference between the results is likely to be caused by an actual difference in the population, not merely by variation in the sample of people selected for interview.

2. Access to, and use of train services

Use of rail services

2.1 In February 2018, almost two thirds (64%) of adults in Great Britain had used a train at least once in the previous 12 months. This is significantly different from the result for 2015 (55%).

Figure 2.1 Methods of travel used in the previous 12 months

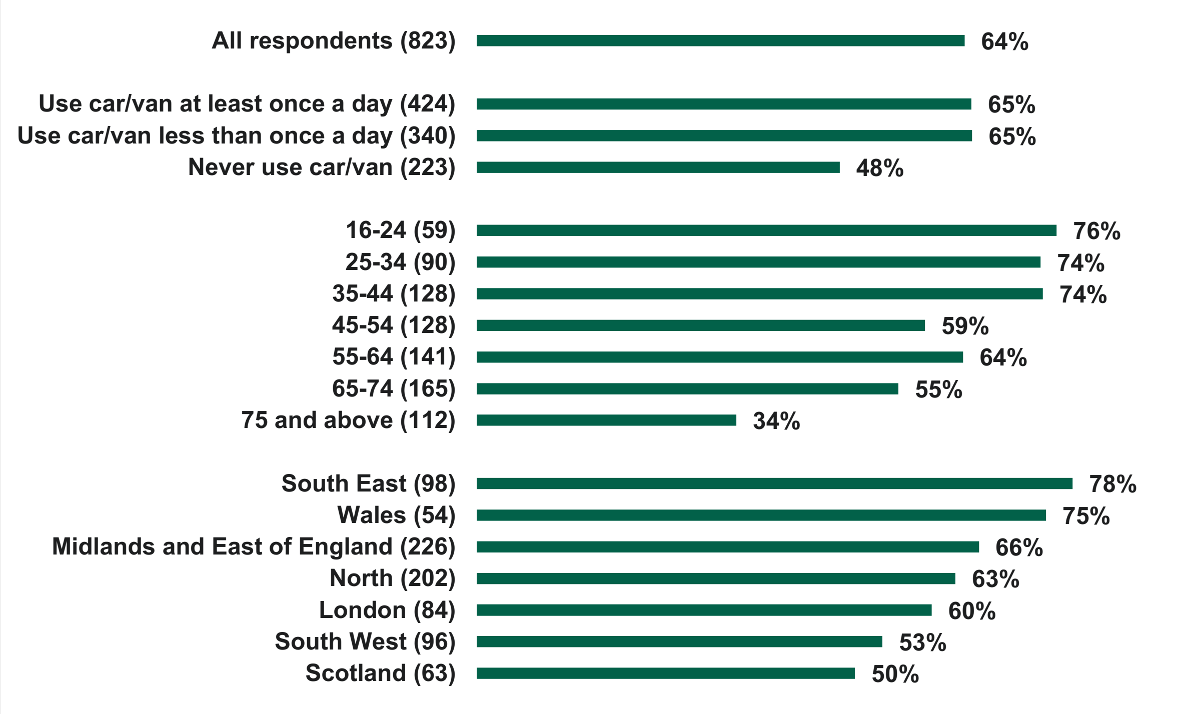


Un-weighted base: All respondents (830)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%

2.2 Those who said they never travel by car were slightly less likely to use rail compared to those who travel by car at least once a day (48% to 65% respectively). The South East had the highest rail usage at 78%; the North, Midlands and the East of England and South West regions had rates of rail usage of 63% to 53%. In London, 60% of adults used train services in the last 12 months.

2.3 Fewer adults aged 75 and older used train services compared to the rest of the population: 34% of those aged 75 and over reported having used rail in the past 12 months compared to 55% to 76% for other age groups.

Figure 2.2 Proportion of adults who had used train services in the previous 12 months, by car use, age and region



Un-weighted base: All respondents (823)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

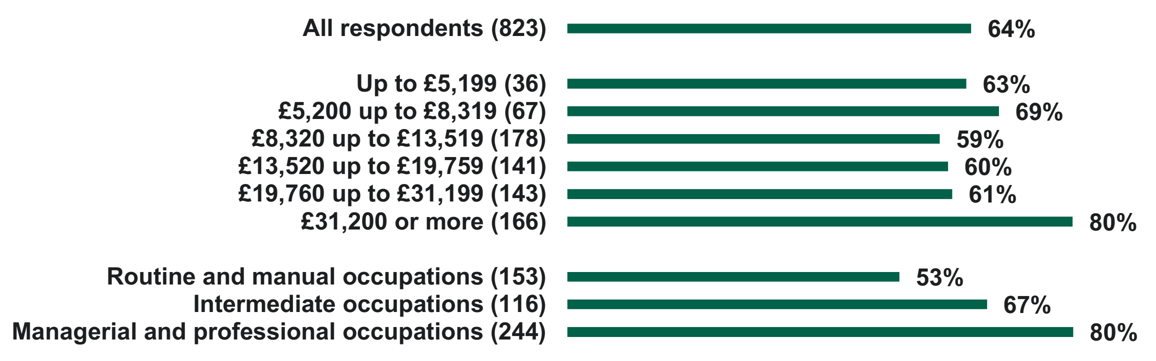
2.4 The 2017 National Travel Survey reported that 47% of rail trips in England were for the purpose of commuting[6], so it perhaps follows that adults of pensionable age make fewer rail trips than others.

2.5 In February 2018, fewer adults in routine and manual occupations used trains; 53%, compared to 67% of those in intermediate occupations and 80% of those in managerial and professional occupations.

2.6 Those in the highest household income groups were more likely to have used rail, with 80% of those living in households with a gross annual income of £31,200 or more having used a train in the previous 12 months, compared to those in lower income households.

[6] Department for Transport (2018) National Travel Survey factsheets https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729524/nts-factsheets.pdf

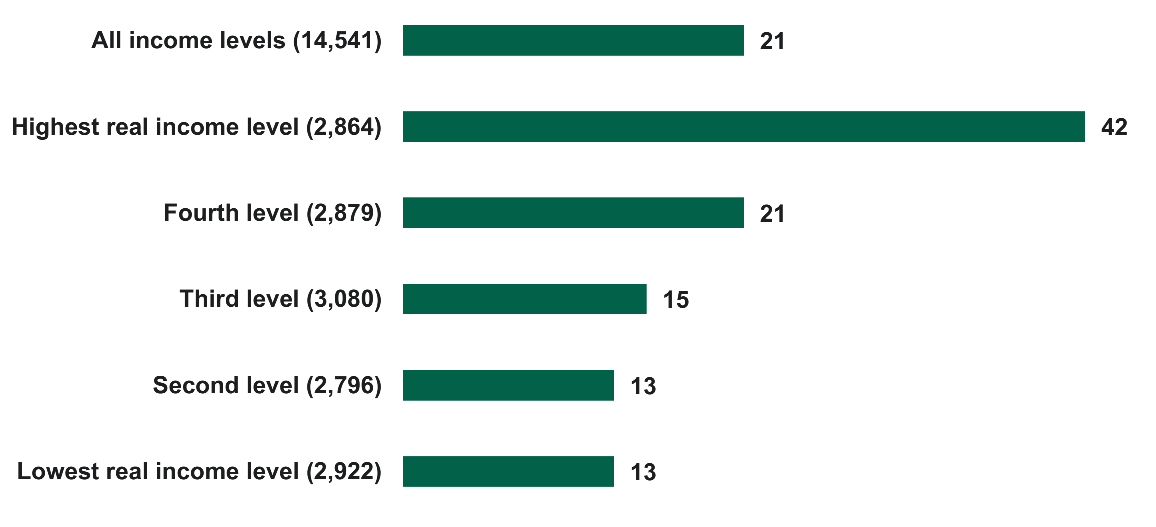
Figure 2.3 Proportion of adults who had used train services in the previous 12 months, by household income and occupation



Un-weighted base: All respondents (823)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

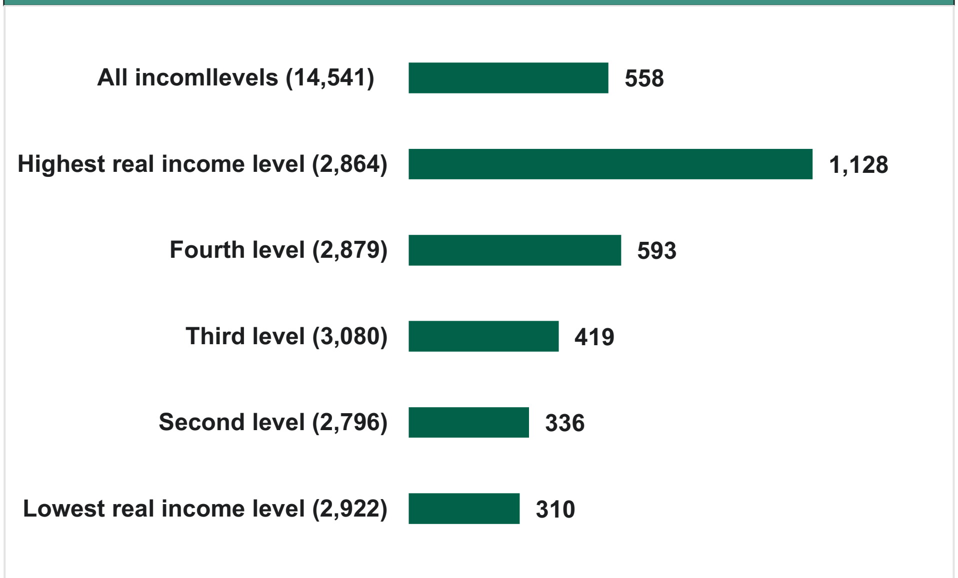
2.7 NTS data for England shows similar results, in that those on higher incomes travel more by rail than those on lower incomes in terms of the average number of trips per person per annum ('trip rate') and the average distance travelled per person per year. As can be seen in Figures 2.4 and 2.5, the number of rail trips and distance travelled per person in the highest household income quintile was over three times the rate for all household income levels combined.

Figure 2.4 Average number of rail trips in England by income quintile (per person, per year)



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: National Travel Survey, 2017
Notes: Figures only include surface rail trips. Table NTS0705 contains average data for all modes of travel by household income quintile.

Figure 2.5 Average distance travelled by rail in England by income quintile (number of miles per person, per year)

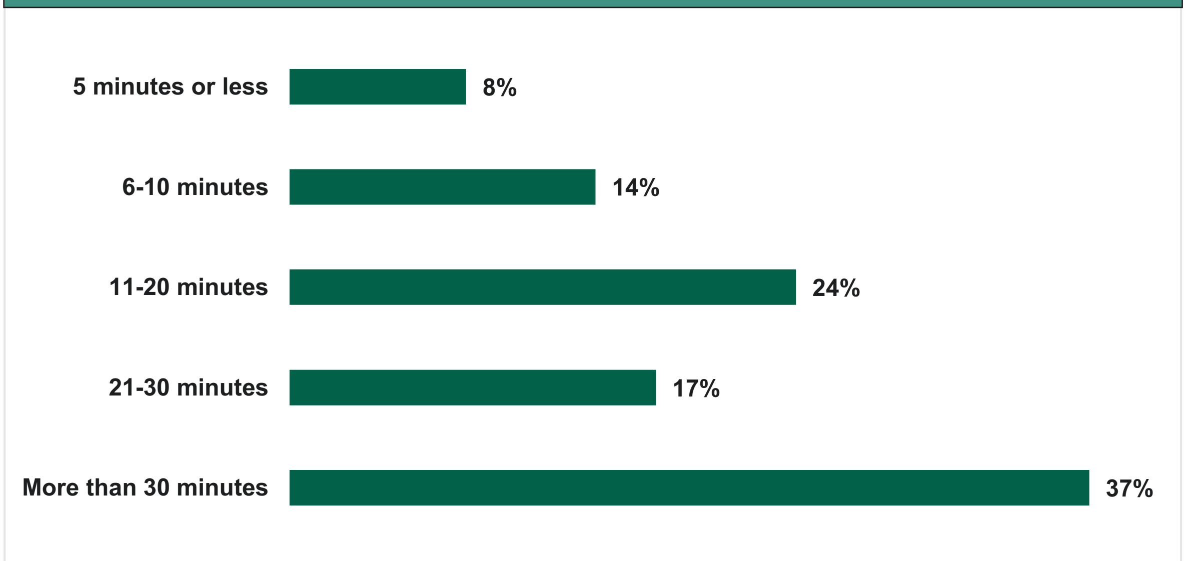


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: National Travel Survey, 2017
Notes: Figures only include surface rail trips. Table NTS0705 contains average data for all modes of travel by household income quintile.

Use of rail services and proximity to the nearest station

2.8 Around a quarter of rail users (24%) lived within 11-20 minutes' walk of their nearest railway station; almost two in five rail users (37%) lived more than 30 minutes' walk from their nearest railway station.

Figure 2.6 Proportion of adults who were rail users by time taken to walk to the nearest train station

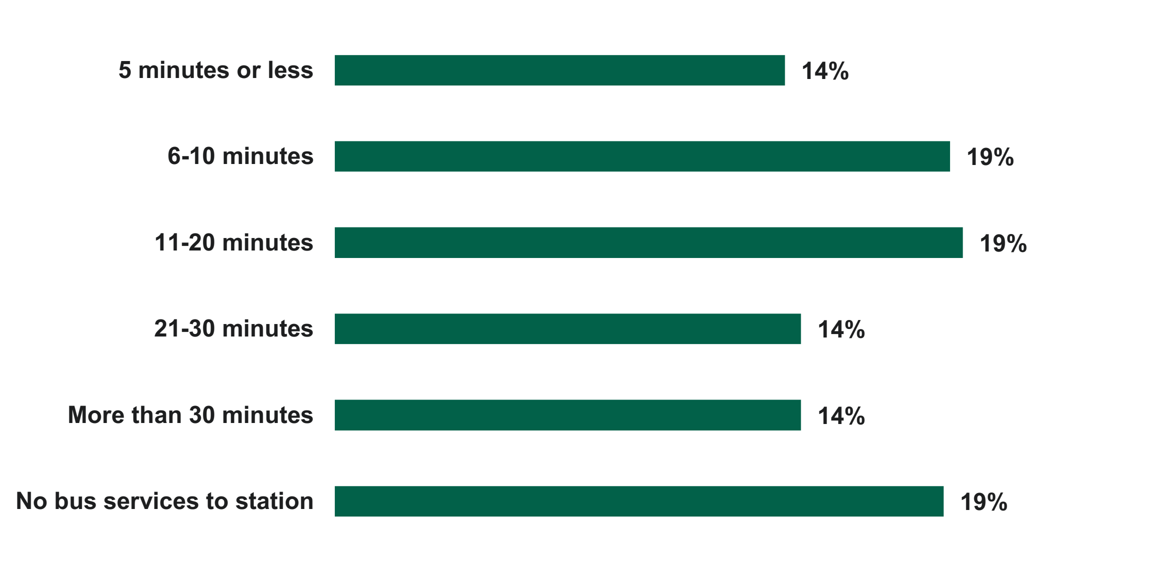


Un-weighted base: All rail users (489)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Notes: ‘Train station’ does not include Underground stations or specialist tourist stations such as steam railways. ‘Rail users’ are defined here as those who had used rail services in the previous twelve months. Walking is based on the time taken by an ‘average person’

2.9 Forty-two per cent of adults lived more than 30 minutes' walk from the nearest railway station, 18% lived within 21-30 minutes' walk, 21% lived within an 11-20 minute walk and 13% lived within a 6-10 minute walk. Seven per cent of adults lived within a five minute walk of their nearest railway station (Table ATT0402).

2.10 The time taken to get to the nearest railway station by bus appears to have less influence on determining whether or not adults use the nearest station, with around two in five users living within a six to 20 minute bus journey from their nearest station. Just under one in five (19%) rail users live in an area with no bus service to the nearest railway station.

Figure 2.7 Proportion of adults who were rail users by time taken to get to the nearest train station by bus



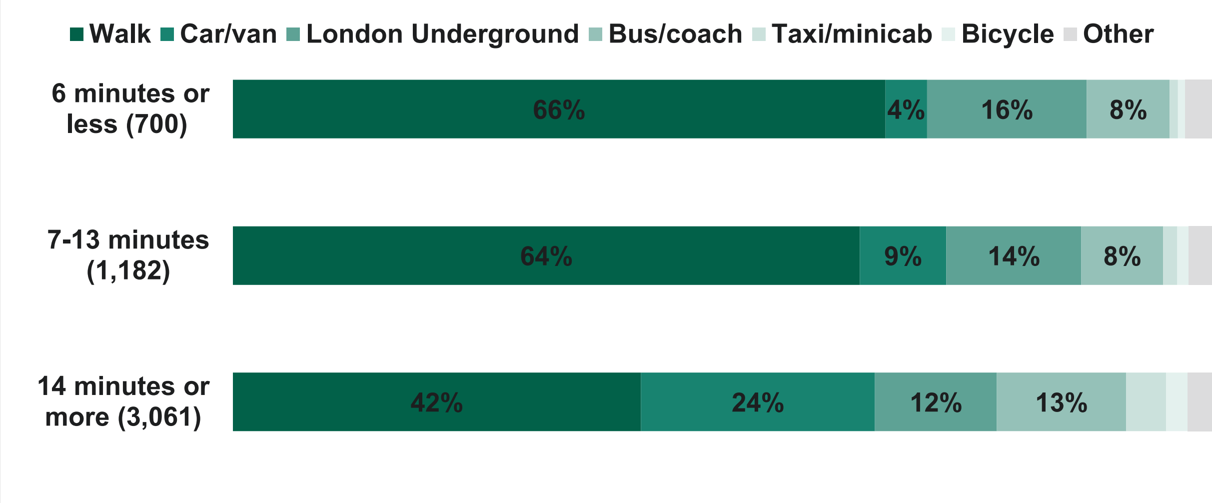
Un-weighted base: All rail users (453)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: 'rail users' are defined here as those having used rail services in the previous twelve months

2.11 It is perhaps worth considering how people typically get to the station when they travel by rail. According to the National Travel Survey:

- Sixty-six per cent of rail trips originating within a six minute walk of the nearest railway station were preceded by a walk to the station;
- Sixty-four per cent of rail trips originating within 7-13 minutes' walking distance of the station were preceded by a walk to the station; and,
- Forty-two per cent of rail trips originating within at least 14 minutes' walking distance from the station were preceded by a walk to the station. However, just 13% of rail trips originating at least 14 minutes' walking distance from the station were preceded by a bus ride. The most popular alternative to walking to a station which was at least 14 minutes' walk from the journey's origin was travelling by car (24%).

2.12 It should be noted that this NTS data is for the period 2002 to 2010 and applies to surface rail for the whole of Great Britain. It is therefore somewhat dated and not comparable to the more recent NTS data presented earlier which applies to England only. It also utilises different interview codes for walking duration than was used for the Opinions and Lifestyle survey in February 2018.

Figure 2.8 Mode of travel used to get to railway station for a rail trip by walking distance to station



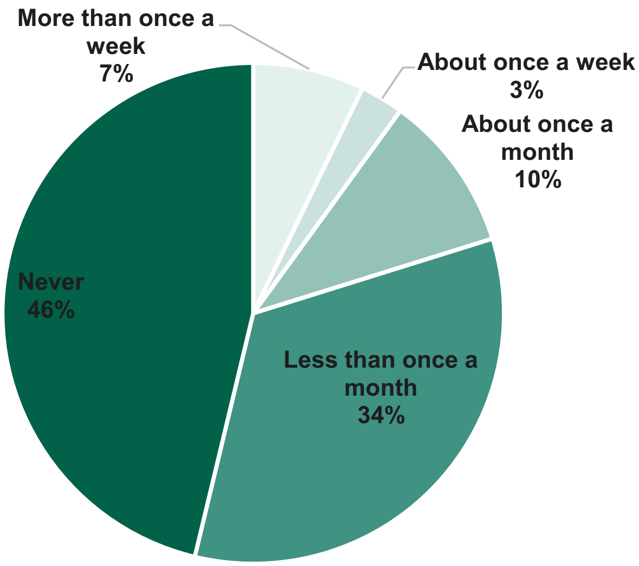
Un-weighted base: trips shown in brackets
Source: National Travel Survey, Department for Transport
Notes: Survey years 2002 to 2010 combined. Data labels for 'Bicycle' and 'Other' not presented. Based on 'day seven' travel records only. 'Other' = motorcycle, surface rail, light rail, air and all other modes of transport.

3. Short-distance train services[7]

Frequency of use of short-distance rail services

3.1 In February 2018, 54% of adults said that they had used a train to make a short-distance journey in the previous 12 months. Seven per cent of adults reported using short-distance rail services more than once a week, whilst 3% said they made short-distance journeys by train about once a week and 10% about once a month. Thirty-four per cent said that they used rail for short-distance journeys less than once a month.

Figure 3.1 Frequency of travelling by train for short-distance journeys in the previous 12 months



Un-weighted base: All respondents (822)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

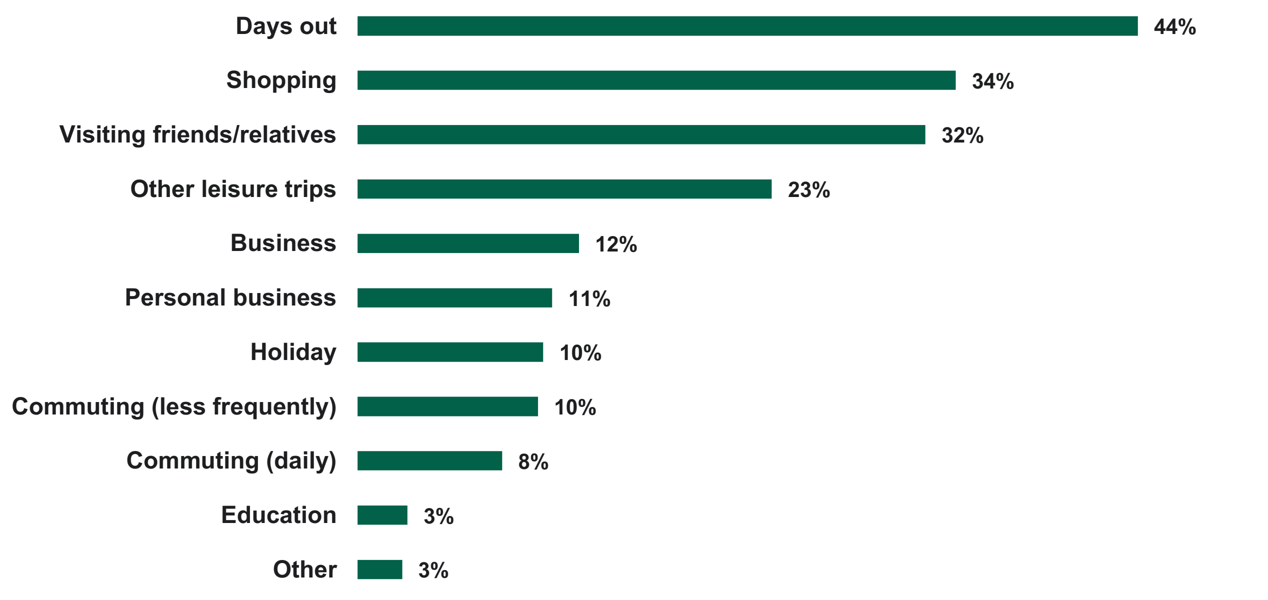
3.2 Demographic analyses of how frequently adults travel by short-distance rail reveal similar findings to those identified for rail users and non-users in Chapter 2 of this report. That is, older age groups and those in routine and manual occupations tend to use short-distance rail services less frequently than others (Table ATT0404).

[7] A short-distance journey is considered here as a journey of 50 miles or less. These exclude Underground services, light rail/tram and specialist trains such as steam railways, but include London Overground services.

Purpose of short-distance rail use

3.3 When users were asked what types of short-distance journey they had made by rail, the most popular responses were days out (44%), shopping (34%) and visiting friends/relatives (32%). Twelve per cent of users had used rail to make short-distance business journeys; 8% had used rail for commuting short-distances on a daily basis and 11% had used rail for personal business. Only 3% of users had used rail to travel short-distances for educational purposes, although as the Opinions and Lifestyle survey only interviews adults over the age of 16 years, most school children are excluded from the sample.

Figure 3.2 Purpose of short-distance train journeys in previous 12 months

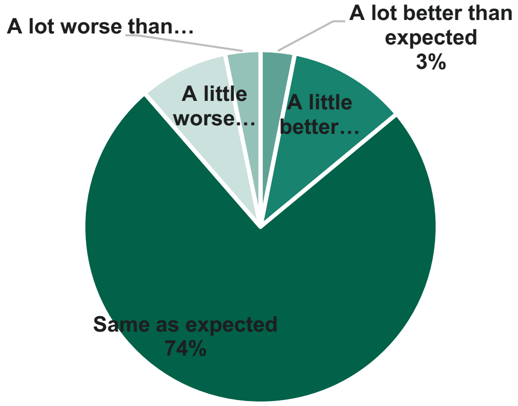


Un-weighted base: short-distance train users (403)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%.

Experiences of short-distance rail services

3.4 As can be seen in Figure 3.3, three-quarters (74%) of short-distance rail users said that their recent experience of rail travel met their expectations, which was unchanged from 2015 (74%). In 2018, 14% said that their experience had been better than they had expected. Eleven per cent of short-distance rail users reported that their recent experience had been worse than expected, including 3% who said that it had been a lot worse than they had expected.

Figure 3.3 Recent experience of short-distance rail services versus expectations



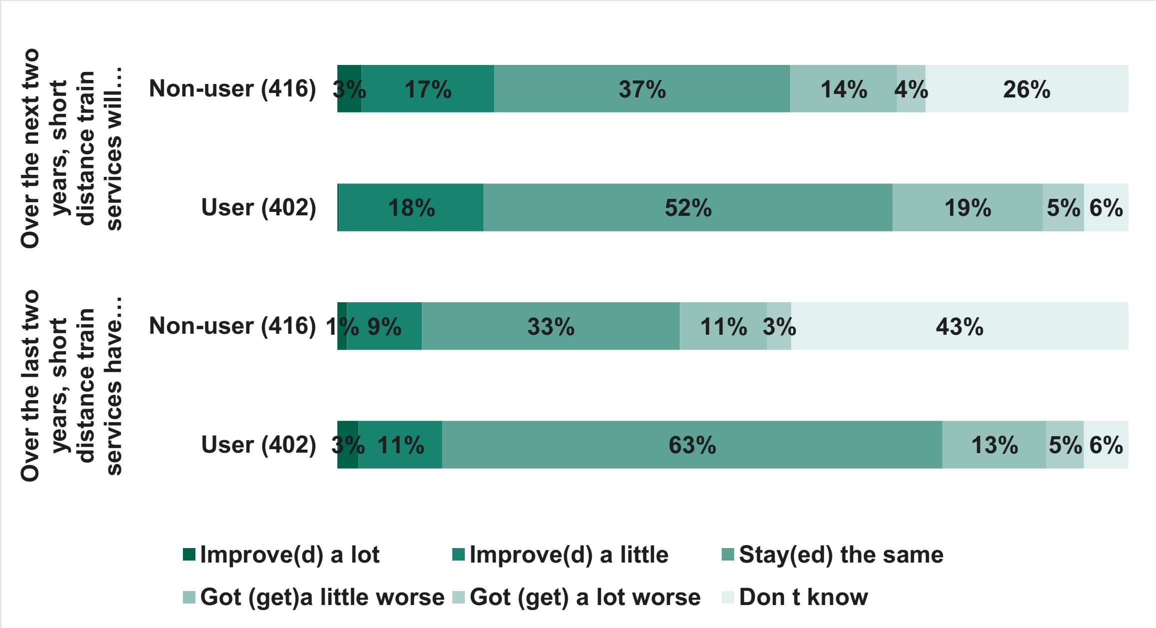
Un-weighted base: short-distance train users (402)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: 'Don't know' and 'No recent experience' response categories are excluded

Change in short-distance rail use

3.5 When asked how the number of short-distance journeys they had made during the previous 12 months had changed, 66% of rail users reported that this had stayed the same. Eleven per cent of rail users reported that the number of journeys they made using short-distance rail had increased and 21% said that this had decreased. The proportion of users saying the number of short-distance rail journeys they made had decreased was significantly higher in 2018 than in 2015, when it was 15%.

Views on how short-distance rail services have changed/will change in the last/next two years

Figure 3.4 Opinions and perceptions on whether short-distance train services have changed in the last two years and whether they will do so in the next two years, by user status

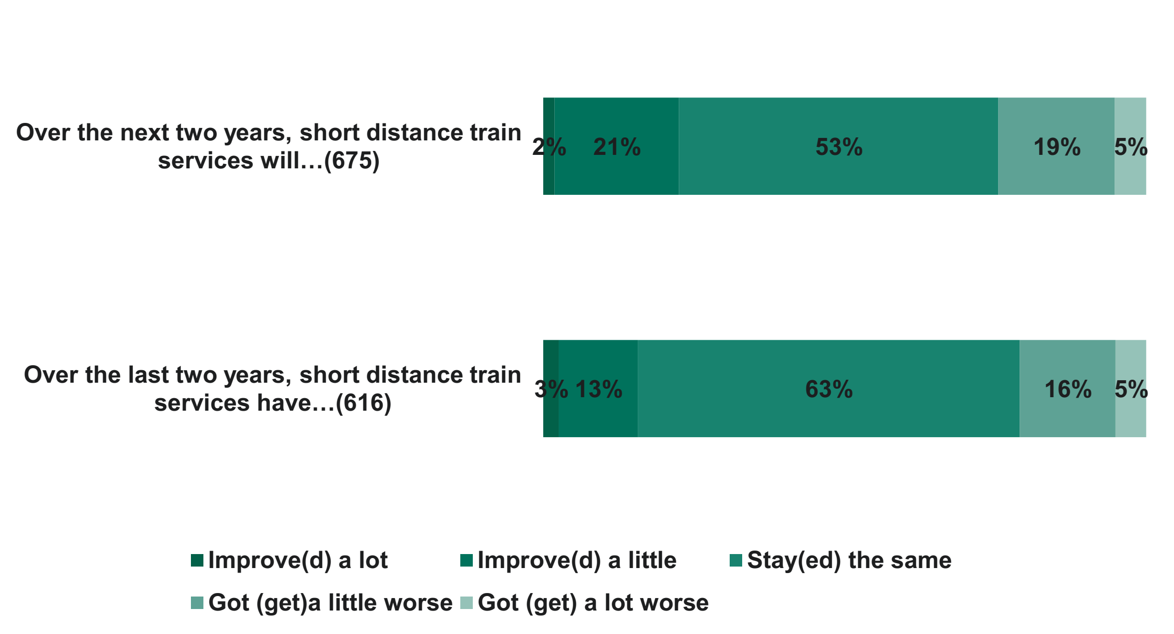


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

3.6 When asked for their opinion on whether short-distance train services have improved, stayed the same, or got worse over the previous two years, and whether they expect them to improve, stay the same of get worse over the next two years, large numbers of non-users said they did not know. Forty-three per cent of non-users said they did not know whether services had changed over the previous two years and 26% said that they did not know if they would change over the next two years.

3.7 Overall, 16% of adults with an opinion said that short-distance train services had improved over the past two years, 63% said that they have stayed the same and 21% said that they had got worse. Looking ahead to the next two years, 23% of adults with an opinion expected services to improve, 53% thought they would stay the same and 25% that they would get worse.

Figure 3.5 Opinions and perceptions on whether short-distance train service have changed in the last two years and whether they will do so in the next two years



Un-weighted base: all respondents excluding 'Don't know' (count shown in brackets)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

Ratings of aspects of short-distance rail services

3.8 Excluding 'Don't know' responses, 65% of short-distance rail users rated the quality of short-distance journeys as 'very good' or 'fairly good'; 20% said that the overall quality was 'neither good nor poor'; and, 15% rated services as 'fairly poor' or 'very poor'[8]. The 'good' and 'neither good nor poor' ratings were significantly different from the 2015 results (74% and 12% respectively).

3.9 In order to compare the experiences of users and the perceptions of non-users, the following analysis of adults' ratings of aspects of short-distance rail services excludes 'Don't know' responses. Data for these charts may be found in Table ATT0409 (including 'Don't know' responses) and Table ATT0410 (excluding 'Don't know' responses). Figure 3.6 presents the ratings of users, Figure 3.7 presents the ratings of non-users and Figure 3.8 compares the proportion of users and non-users providing positive ratings for each of the items.

3.10 The features rated most positively by short-distance rail users included the politeness/helpfulness of staff (76%), the frequency of trains (69%) and the information on board trains (69%).

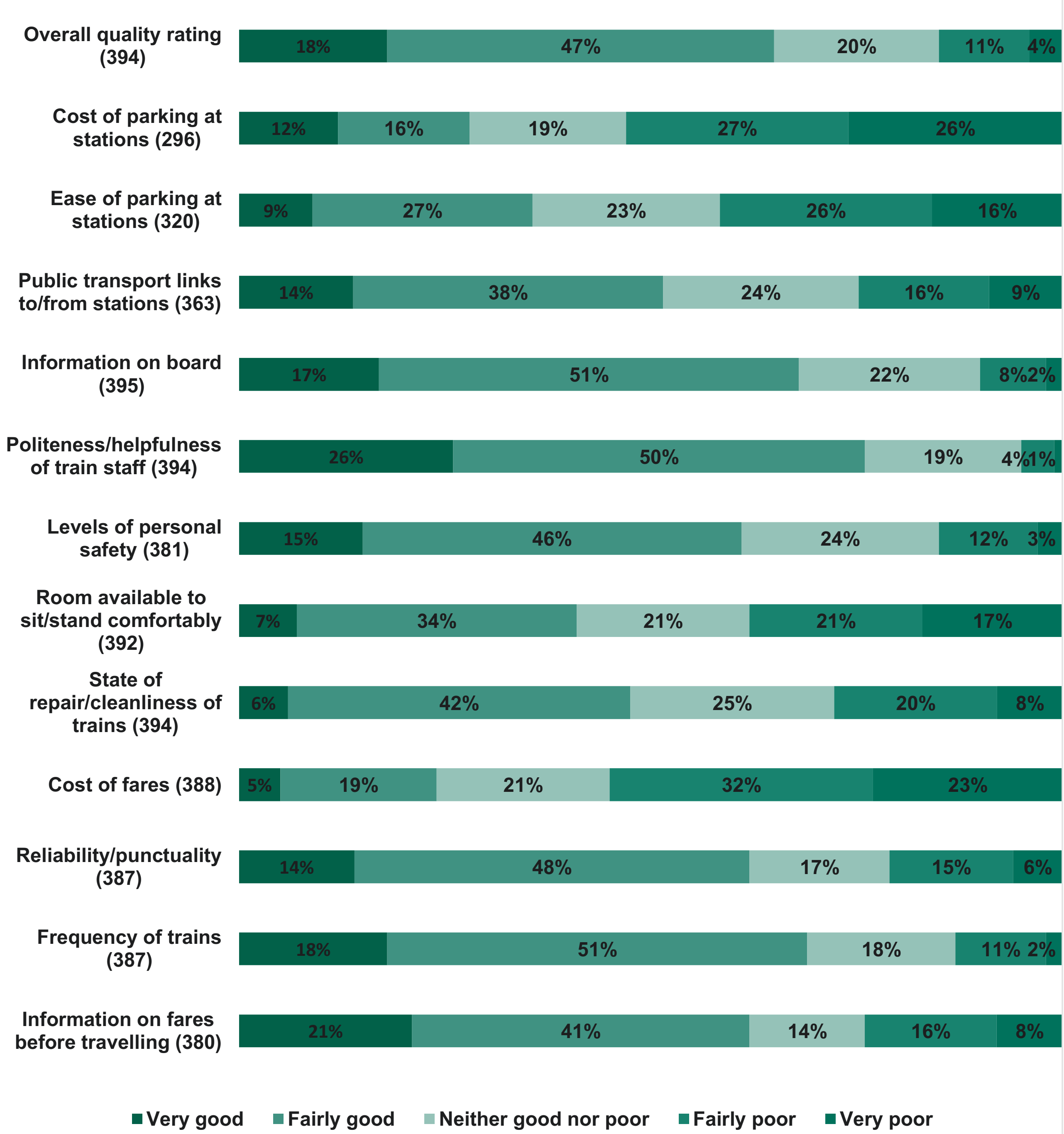
3.11 The cost of fares, the cost of parking at stations, the ease of parking at stations and the room available to sit/stand comfortably were rated most negatively, with negative ratings of 55%, 54%, 42% and 38% respectively.

3.12 Compared to the results from 2015, the proportion of users rating the cost of fares as good has decreased significantly from 34% to 24%.

[8] For simplicity 'fairly good' and 'very good' are often grouped together and referred to as 'good'. Similarly, 'very poor' and 'fairly poor' are often grouped together and referred to as 'poor'.

3.13 Five of the listed items which were directly comparable to questions in 2015 were rated significantly less favourably in 2018. These were the frequency of trains (78% in 2015 to 69% in 2018), the reliability/punctuality of trains (74% in 2015 to 62% in 2018), the state of repair/cleanliness of trains (57% in 2015 to 48% in 2018) and the cost of fares (34% in 2015 to 24% in 2018). One of the listed items, the cost of parking at stations (19% in 2015 to 27% in 2018) was rated significantly more positively in 2018 compared to 2015.

Figure 3.6 User rating of selected aspects of short-distance train services



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

3.14 Excluding 'Don't know' responses, 55% of non-users rated short-distance rail services positively, 25% had no opinion and 20% rated them as poor. This was not significantly different to the 2015 results. Non-users were generally more likely to rate services negatively rather than positively when compared to users.

3.15 The most positive ratings from non-users were very similar as for users: the politeness/helpfulness of staff (72%); the frequency of trains (62%) and the information on board (61%).

3.16 The least positive ratings of non-users were also in the same order as those for users, namely cost of fares, cost of parking at stations, ease of parking at stations, and the room available to sit/stand comfortably were rated most negatively, with negative ratings of 68%, 66%, 50% and 36% respectively.

3.17 Three of the comparable items were rated significantly less favourably by non-users in 2018 than in 2015. These were: information on fares before travelling (57% in 2015 to 46% in 2018); public transport links to/from stations (58% in 2015 to 48% in 2018); and, information on fares before travelling (57% in 2015 to 46% in 2018).

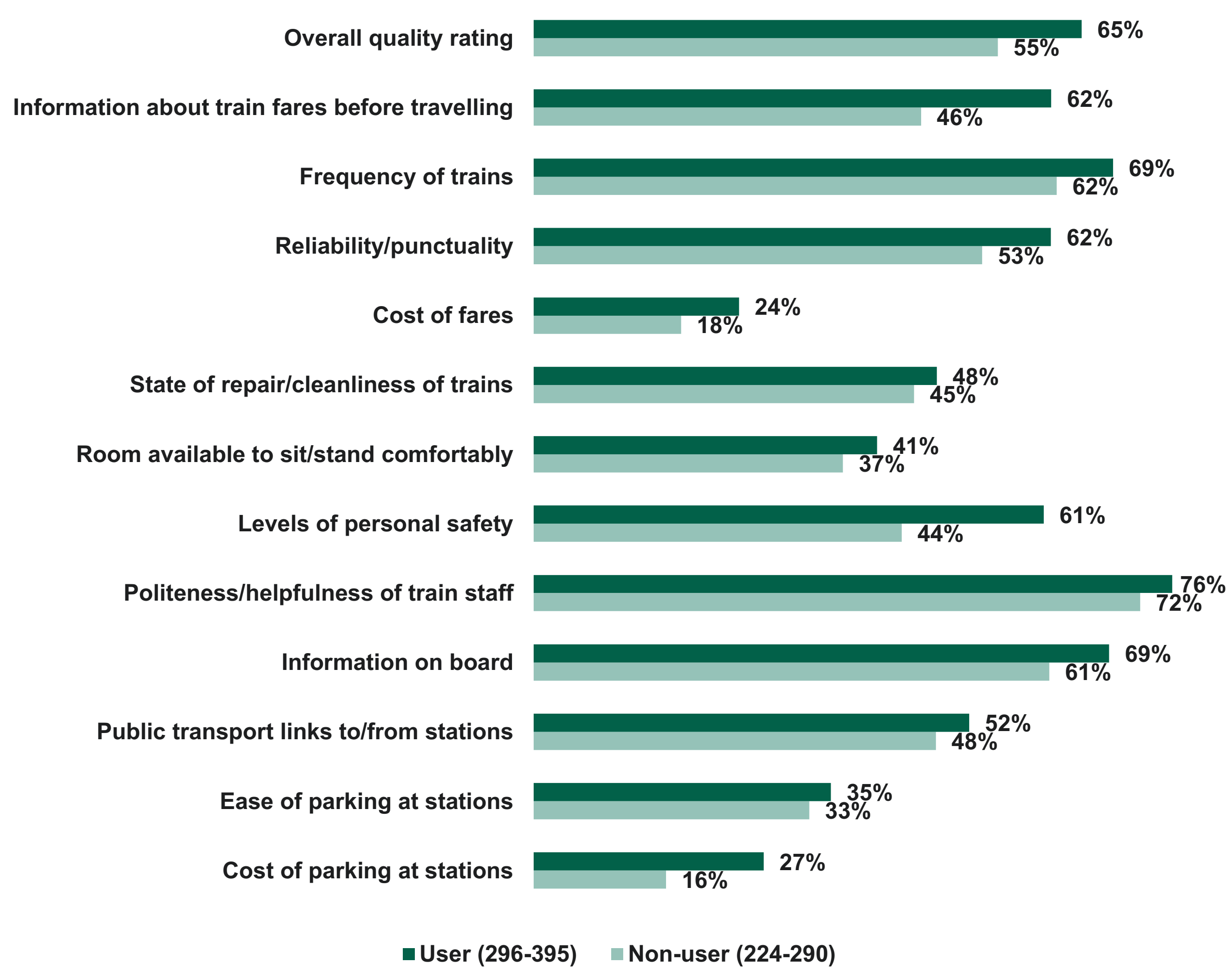
Figure 3.7 Non-user rating of selected aspects of short-distance train services

Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

3.18 As illustrated in Figure 3.8, users are more likely than non-users to rate all aspects of short-distance rail services more positively than non-users. Aspects where these differences are significant:

- Sixty-one per cent of users rated the levels of personal safety on board positively compared to 44% of non-users;
- Users were more likely than non-users to rate the information on fares before travelling positively (62% of users compared to 46% of non-users);
- Twenty-seven per cent of users rated the cost of parking at stations positively whilst 16% of non-users rated this aspect of short-distance rail services positively; and,
- Sixty-five per cent of users rated the overall quality positively compared to 56% of non-users.

Figure 3.8 Proportion of users and non-users rating selected aspects of short-distance train services as 'very' or 'fairly' good

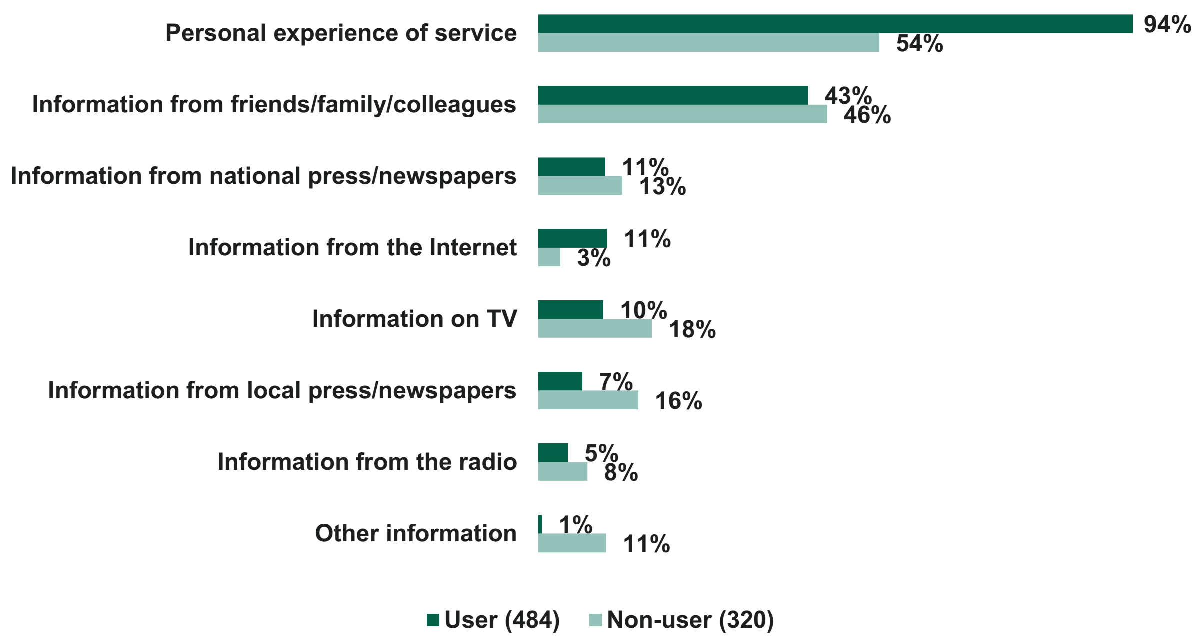


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets, see Table ATT0410 for exact base numbers
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

Basis of views on short-distance rail services

3.19 Nearly all (94%) rail users based their opinions about rail services on personal experience compared to just over half (54%) of non-users. Users were also more than twice as likely to base their views on information from the internet. Non-users were more likely than users to have based their view on information from friends, family and colleagues, national press, local press, radio, other information and television.

Figure 3.9 Basis of opinions on short-distance rail services



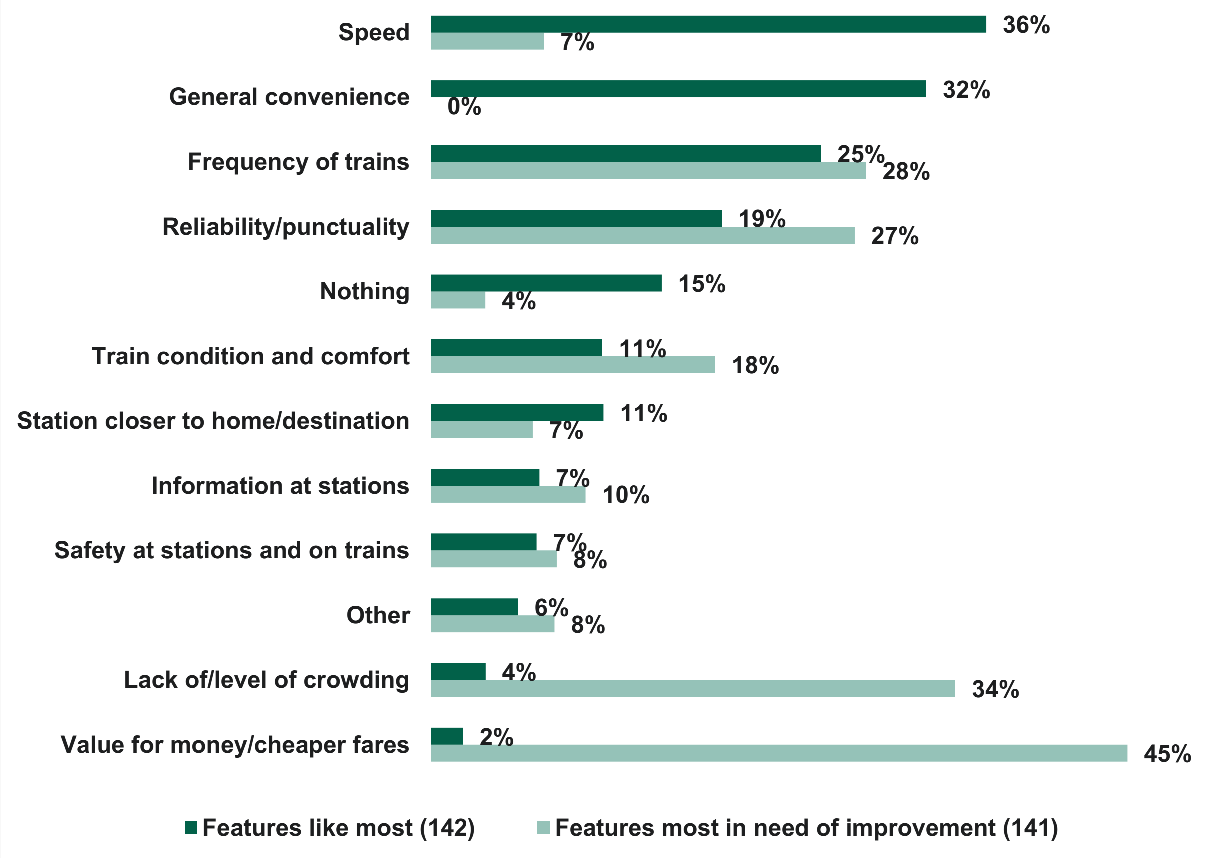
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: respondents could choose up to three answers so responses may sum to more than 100%

Features valued by short-distance rail service users

3.20 When asked what they most value about short-distance rail services, 36% of regular users[9] said it was the fastest way to make the journey, 32% the general convenience, 25% reported it was that trains are frequent and 19% reported that it was the reliability/punctuality of trains. The areas of short-distance rail services identified as being most in need of improvement by users were the value for money/cost of fares (45%), the level of crowding (34%) and the frequency of trains (28%).

[9] Regular short-distance rail users reported travelling by short-distance rail services at least once a month

Figure 3.10 Most popular feature of short-distance train services



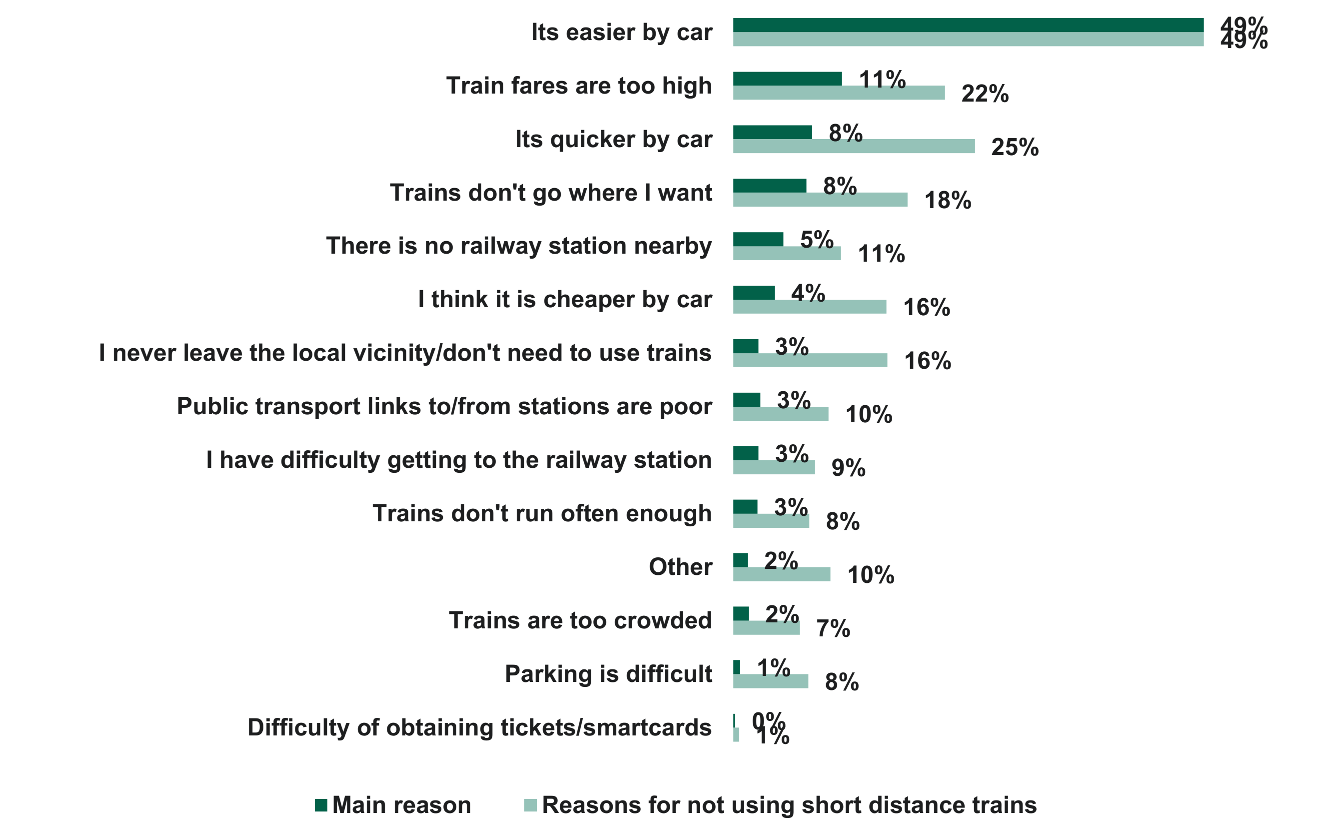
Un-weighted base: use short-distance train services at least once a month (142)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Notes: respondents could choose up to three answers so results may sum to more than 100%. Answers identified by less than 5% of respondents are not presented here. See Table ATT0412 for all categories.

3.21 Seven per cent of regular short-distance rail users valued the information at stations, 4% valued the lack of crowding and 2% valued the cost of fares/value for money. Six per cent of users mentioned a range of 'other' items as the features they liked most about short-distance train services.

Reasons for not using short-distance rail services (more often)

3.22 Infrequent users of short-distance trains - those who use them less than once a month or never - were asked why they do not use them (more often). The most frequent main reason was because it is easier by car (49%), while 11% said that train fares are too high. Eight per cent of infrequent users and non-users said that they do not use trains (more often) as the trains don't go where they need to go, or that its quicker by car; 5% said that there was no railway station nearby.

Figure 3.11 Reasons for not using short-distance train services (more often)



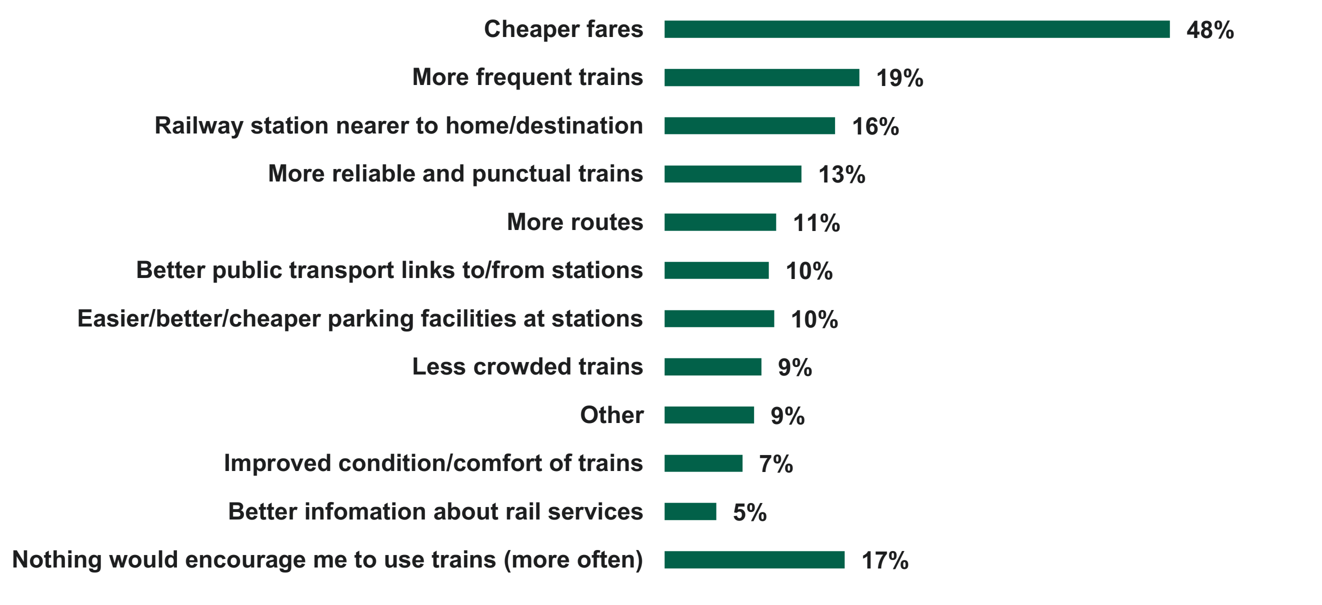
Un-weighted base: use short-distance train services less than once a month (347)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: respondents could choose up to three answers so results may sum to more than 100%. Answers identified by less than 5% of respondents are not presented here. See Table ATT0413 for all categories.

3.23 Infrequent users of short-distance trains were more likely to say that they don't leave the local vicinity was the reason for them not using trains (more often) in 2015 (27%) compared to 2018 (3%). However, non-users/ infrequent users were more likely in 2018 than 2015 to say that it was easier by car as a reason for them not using short-distance trains (36% in 2015 compared to 49% in 2018).

Improvements to encourage greater use of short-distance rail services

3.24 Just under a half (48%) of infrequent short-distance rail users identified cheaper fares as an improvement that would encourage them to use them (more often), while 17% said that nothing would encourage them to use short-distance trains (more often).

Figure 3.12 Improvements to encourage infrequent users of short-distance train services to use them (more often)



Un-weighted base: use short-distance train services less than once a month (661)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: respondents could choose up to three answers so results may sum to more than 100%. Answers identified by less than 5% of respondents are not presented here. See Table ATT0414 for all categories.

3.25 Nineteen per cent of infrequent users of short-distance rail services suggested that more frequent trains might encourage them to use trains (more often); 16% suggested a station nearer to home/destination, 13% said more reliable and punctual trains, 11% more routes and 10% suggested better public transport links to/from stations. Nine per cent said that less crowded trains might encourage them to use trains (more often).

4. Long-distance[10] train services

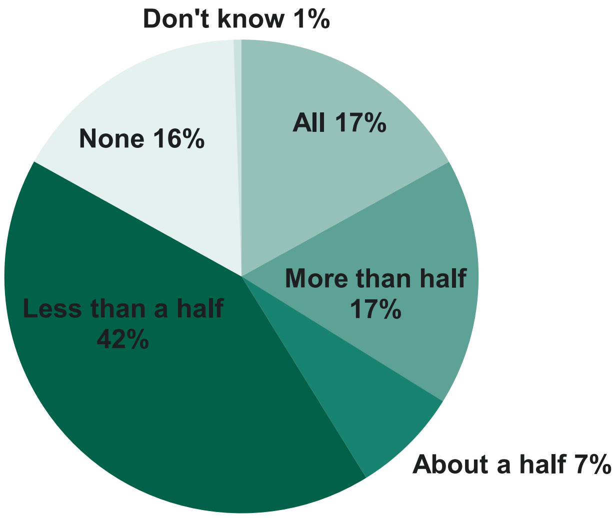
Frequency of use of long-distance journeys

4.1 When asked how often they had made long-distance journeys in the UK in the last 12 months by any mode of travel, 3% of adults replied at least once a week, 4% about once a week, 14% said about once a month and 39% less than once a month. Forty-one per cent of adults reported that they had not made any long-distance journeys in the UK in the last 12 months.

Use of rail to make long-distance journeys

4.2 Of those who had made long-distance journeys and used a train in the last 12 months 16% said that they had not used a train to make any of those long-distance journeys (Figure 4.1). Seventeen per cent had used trains for all of their long-distance journeys; 17% had used trains for more than half of those journeys; a further 7% had used a train for about half of those journeys and 42% had used a train for less than half of their long-distance journeys.

Figure 4.1 Proportion of long-distance journeys made by train in previous 12 months



Un-weighted base: respondents who had made at least one long-distance journey in the previous 12 months and used a train in the previous 12 months (354)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

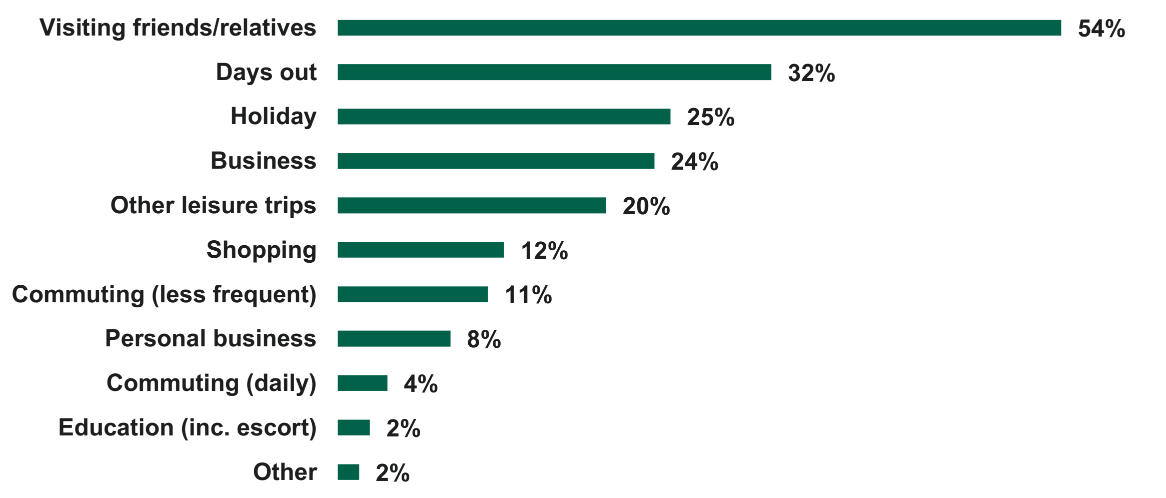
[10] A long-distance journey is considered here as a journey of 50 miles or more. In the UK; does not include Eurostar.

4.3 Overall, it is estimated that 34% of adults had used long-distance train services in the previous 12 months. Those aged 75 and older (13%) or those in routine and manual occupations (18%) were less likely to use long-distance rail services, while those living in higher income households were more likely to be long-distance rail users (55%) (Table ATT0416).

Purpose of long-distance rail use

4.4 The most common reason for making long-distance train journeys in the previous 12 months was to visit friends or relatives (54%), unchanged from 54% in 2015. The second most common reason given in 2018 was for days out (32%). One quarter of long-distance train users said they had travelled for holidays (25%) or business (24%). Just 4% had used long-distance rail for daily commuting and 11% had made less frequent long-distance train journeys to commute to work.

Figure 4.2 Purpose of long-distance train journeys in the previous 12 months

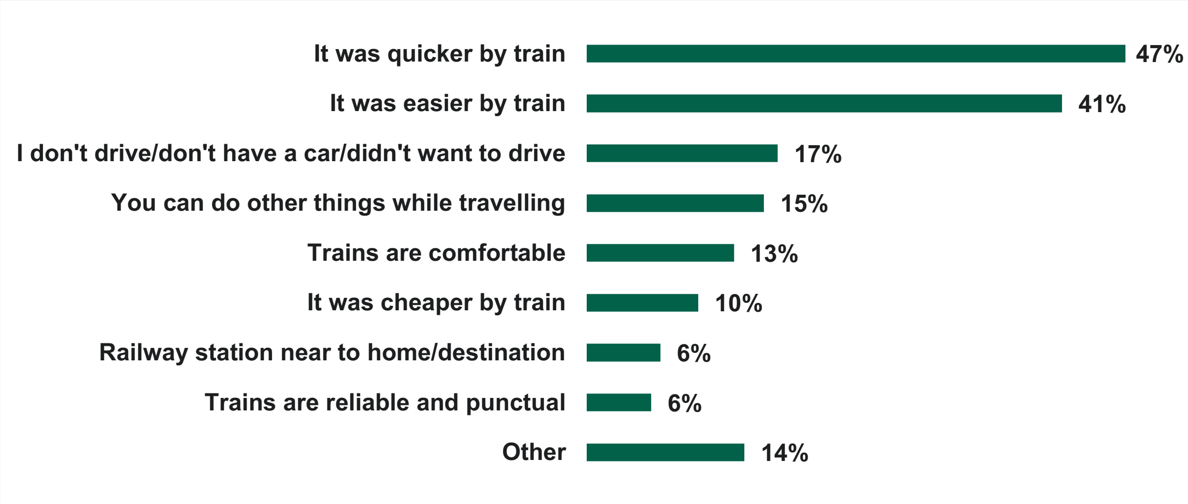


Un-weighted base: long-distance train users (298)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: respondents were able to provide more than one answer so results may sum to more than 100%

Reasons for using long-distance rail services

4.5 When asked why they had chosen to use the train last time they made a long-distance journey, 47% of long-distance rail users said it was quicker by train. Exactly which mode of transport the train is quicker than was not captured, however, it is likely to be in comparison to car use. Forty-one per cent of users said that they had used a train to make their long-distance journey because it was easier and 17% said that they did not drive, did not want to drive or do not have a car. Fifteen per cent of users said the reason they chose to travel by train the last time they made a long-distance journey was because they can do other things whilst travelling.

Figure 4.3 Why chose the train for last long-distance journey



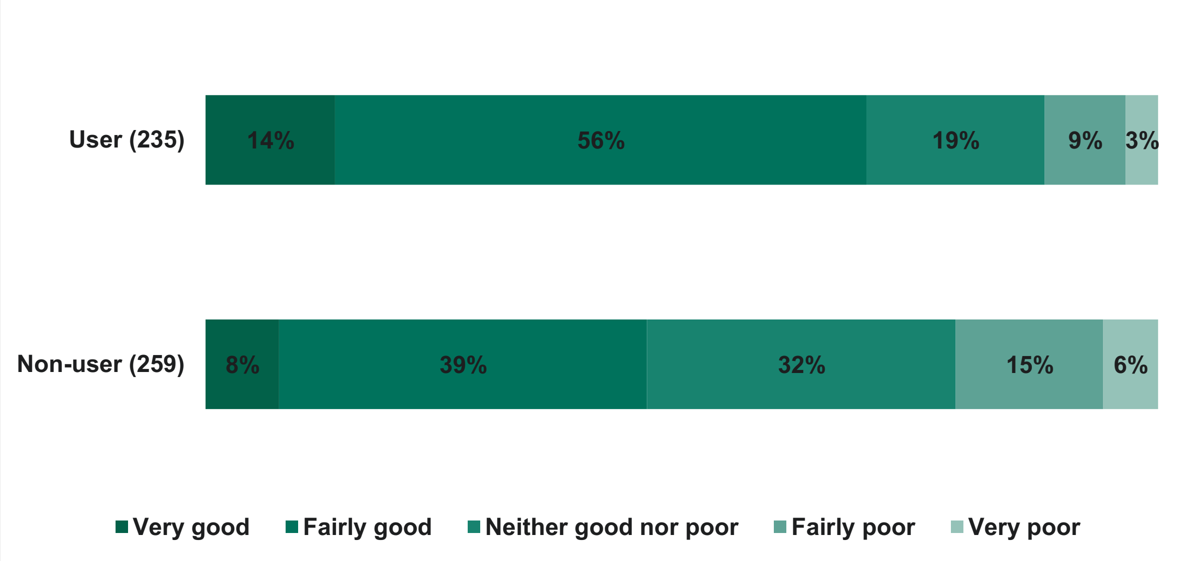
Un-weighted base: long-distance train users (298)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: respondents were able to provide more than one answer so results may sum to more than 100%. Answers with a response of less than 5% are not presented here.

4.6 Fourteen per cent of users said that there was another reason as to why they travelled by train for their last long-distance journey, whilst 13% said that trains are comfortable. Other reasons given by users were that it was cheaper by train (10%), that there is a railway station close to their home or destination (6%), or that trains were reliable and punctual (6%).

Overall rating of long-distance rail services

4.7 When asked to rate long-distance rail services, almost half (48%) of non-users did not know how to rate them. If these responses are excluded from the analysis, non-user ratings can be compared to those of users. Excluding 'Don't know' responses, users rate long-distance rail services more positively than non-users; 69% of users and 49% of non-users rated long-distance services as 'very good' or 'fairly good'.

Figure 4.4 Overall rating of long-distance train services

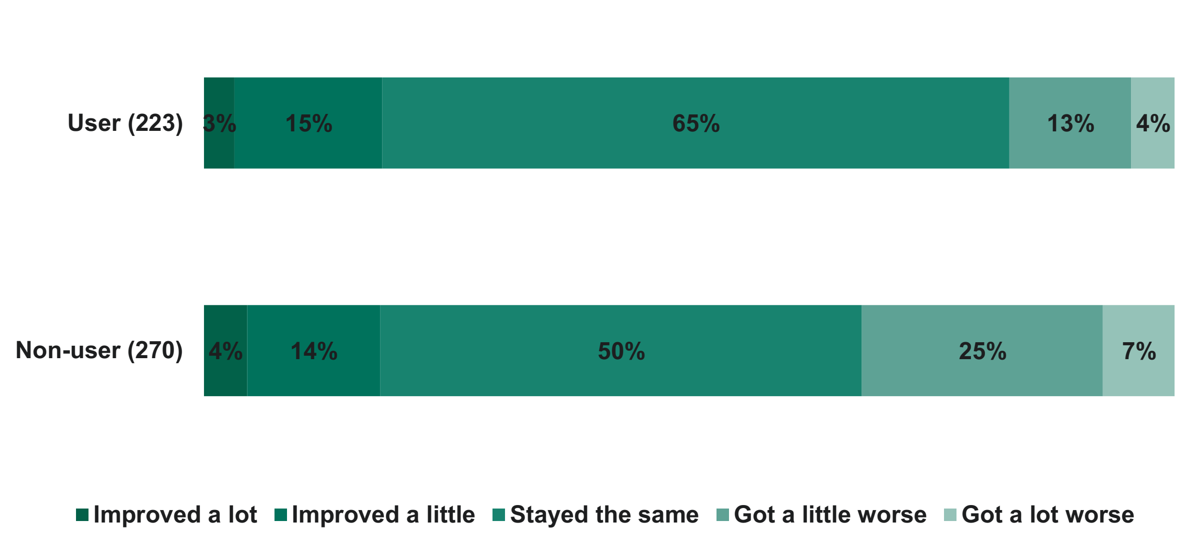


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets, excludes 'Don't know' responses
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

Views on how long-distance rail services have changed/will change in the last/next two years

4.8 Forty-six per cent of non-users said that they did not know how they thought long-distance rail services had changed in the last two years. However, if these responses are excluded, non-users are generally less positive than users. Three per cent of users and non-users said that long-distance rail services had improved a lot over the past two years, and 53% of non-users and 65% of users said that long-distances rail services had stayed the same. Twenty-nine per cent of non-users and 18% of users said that long-distance train services had got a little, or a lot, worse over the past two years.

Figure 4.5 Opinion and perception of whether long-distance train services have changed over the last two years



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

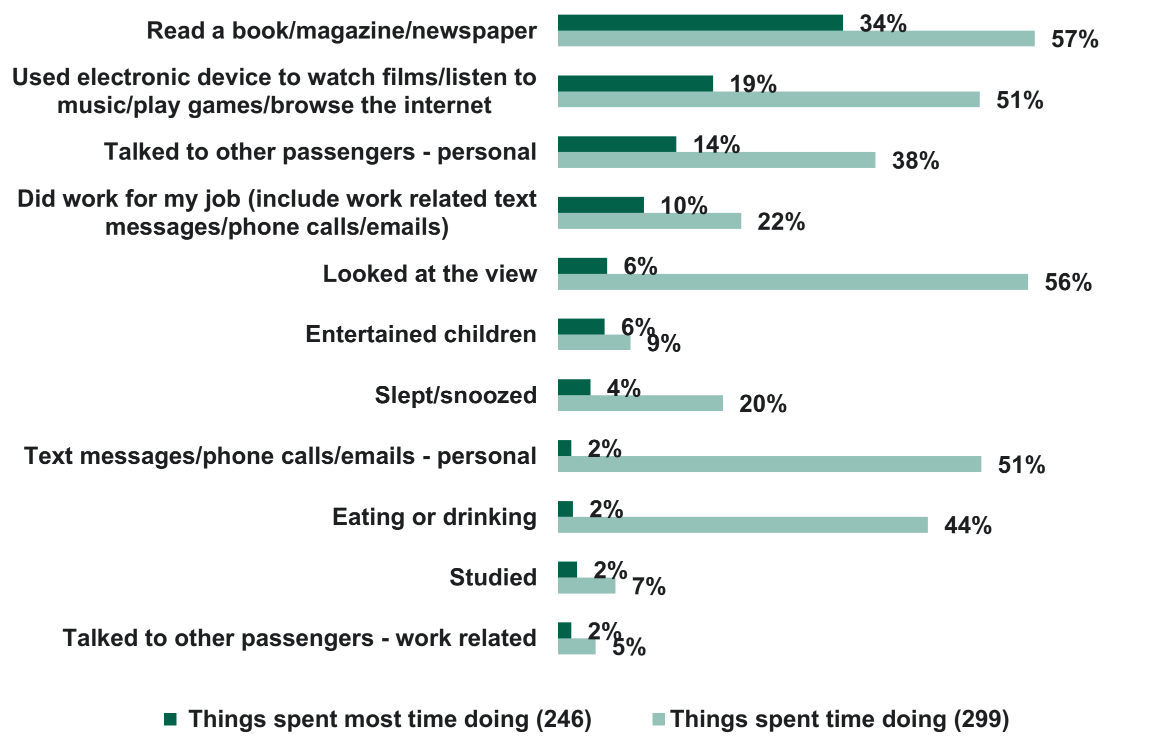
4.9 There was a significant change in the proportion of users saying that long-distance rail services had improved a little over the last two years since the 2015 survey, from 27% in 2015 to 15% in 2018. Twenty-nine per cent of non-users said that they had got worse in 2018 compared to 13% in 2015.

4.10 Users were asked a further question about whether their recent experiences of long-distance rail services had been better than they expected, worse than they expected or about the same as they expected. Twenty-two per cent of long-distance rail users said that their recent experiences had been better than they expected, 64% said they were as expected and 13% said that they were worse than expected (Table ATT0420).

Ways of passing time during long-distance rail journeys

4.11 The most popular ways that users had passed time on their last long-distance train journey included: reading books, magazines and newspapers (57%); looking at the view (56%); making personal calls, texts or emails (51%); using an electronic device for films, music, games or the internet (51%); and, eating or drinking (44%). Just over a third of users (34%) said that they had spent most time reading.

Figure 4.6 How spent time on last long-distance train journey



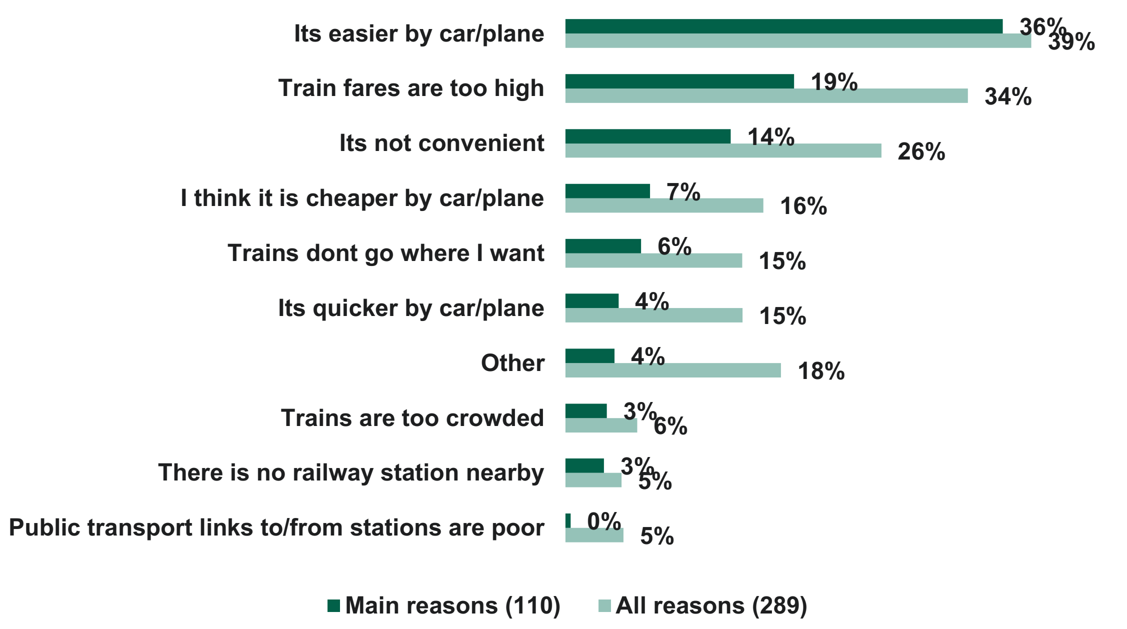
Un-weighted base: long-distance train users (299)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Note: respondents were able to provide more than one answer to the question on things they spent time doing, so responses may sum to more than 100%. Answers with a response of less than 5% are not presented here.

Reasons for not using long-distance rail services (more often)

4.12 Infrequent long-distance rail users who had made at least one long-distance journey in the last year and made less than half of these by rail were asked why they do not use long-distance rail (more often). Thirty-nine per cent of infrequent users said it is easier to travel by car or plane than train and 34% reported that fares are too high.

4.13 When asked what the main reason was, just over a third (36%) said that it was easier by car or plane, 19% said that train fares were too high and 14% that it was not convenient. Seven per cent of infrequent users said that their main reason was because they thought it was cheaper by car/plane, while 6% said that trains do not go where they want. Many of the main reasons were related to preferences for another mode, such as car or plane, or the cost of rail.

Figure 4.7 Reasons for not using long-distance train services (more often)



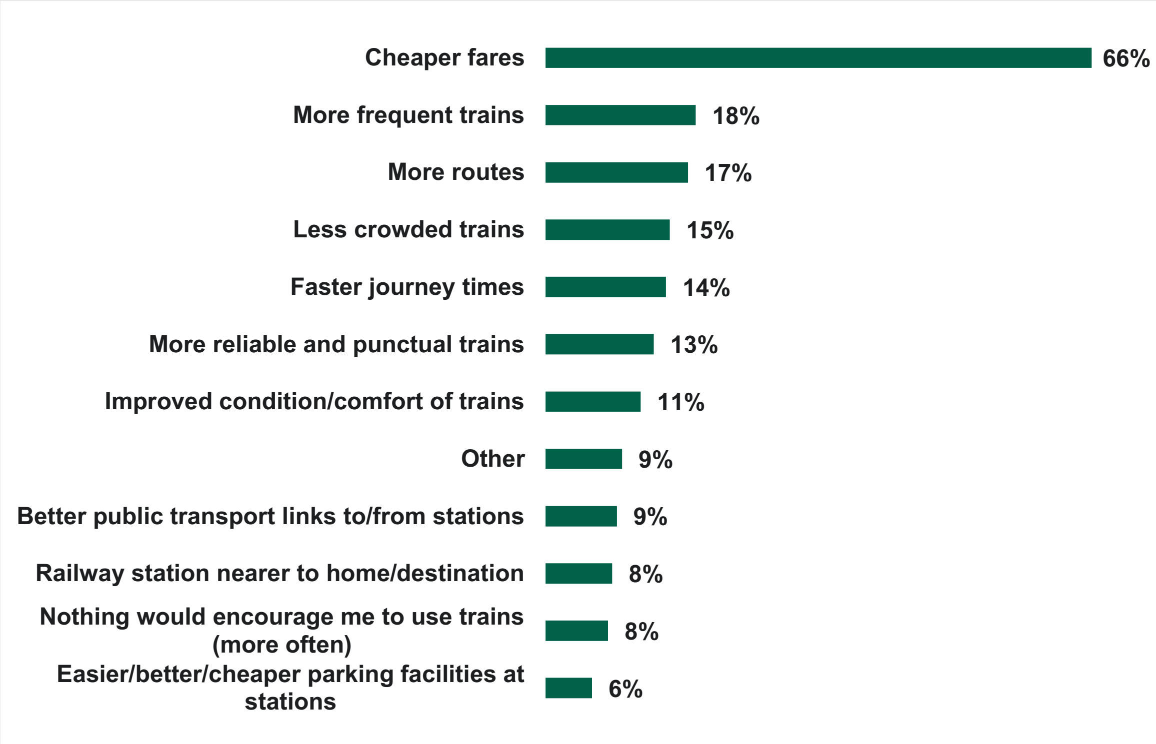
Un-weighted base: infrequent users who have made long-distance journeys in the last year but less than half of which were by train (290)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Notes: respondents were able to provide more than one answer so responses may sum to more than 100%. Answers with a response of less than 5% are not presented here.

4.14 There were a number of reasons which less than 1% of infrequent users selected as their main reason for not using trains for long-distance journeys (more often). These included poor public transport links to and from stations, parking difficulties, difficulty getting to the railway station and difficulty getting on and off trains (Table ATT0422).

Improvements to encourage greater use of long-distance rail services

4.15 When asked what improvements would encourage them to use trains to make long-distance journeys (more often), the majority (66%) of infrequent users (including non-users) said cheaper fares. Eight per cent said that nothing would encourage them to use rail (more often).

Figure 4.8 Improvements to encourage infrequent users to use trains (more often) to make long-distance journeys



Un-weighted base: have made long-distance journeys in the last year and not all of them were by train (290)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018
Notes: respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, so responses may sum to more than 100%. Answers with less than 5% of responses are not presented here.

5. Train tickets

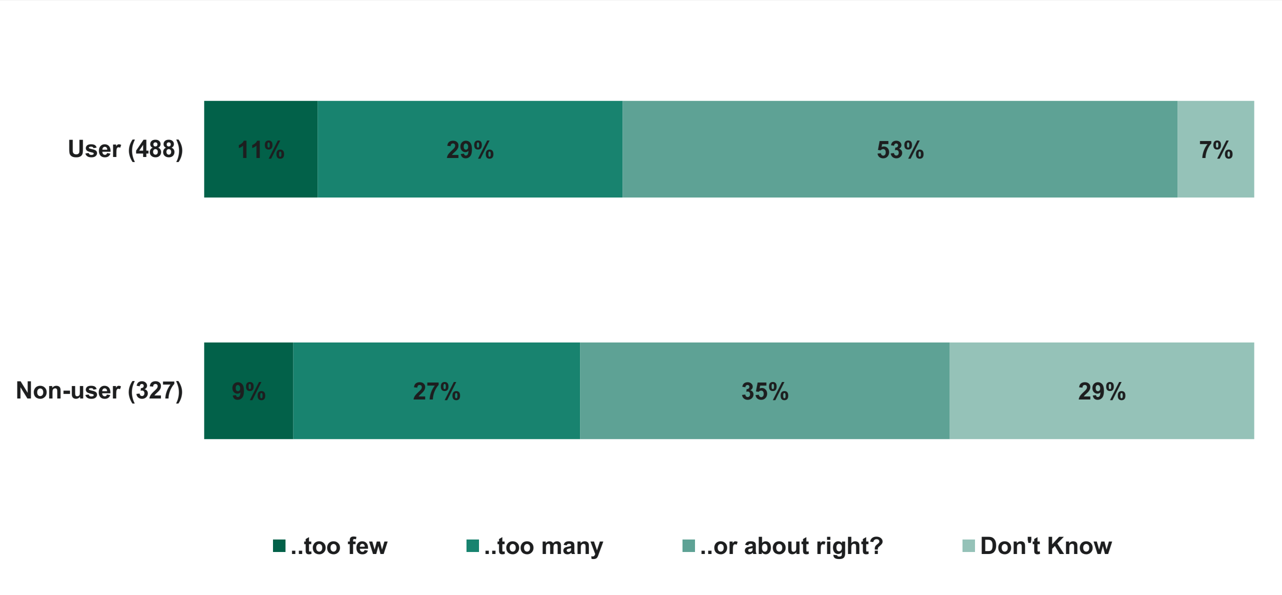
5.1 The final section of this report concerns attitudes towards train tickets and normal method of purchasing tickets. It includes the number of ticket types, range, availability and ease of purchasing tickets. It also includes a question on smart-tickets, a new topic for 2018.

Views on the number of types of train tickets available

5.2 When asked their opinion on the number of ticket types, 11% of rail users said there were too few ticket types, 53% thought there were about the right number, and 7% said they did not know. A larger proportion (29%) of non-users said they did not know whether the number of ticket types was right or not, and the proportion of non-users saying there were about the right number of ticket types (35%) was also lower than for users (53%). If the non-users replying 'Don't know' are excluded, there are significant differences between responses for users and non-users; 34% of users said there were too many ticket types compared to 42% of non-users and 57% of users said that the number of tickets was about right compared to 45% of non-users.

5.3 Twenty-nine per cent of users thought that there were too many ticket types compared to 27% of non-users.

Figure 5.1 Opinion on the number of available train ticket types

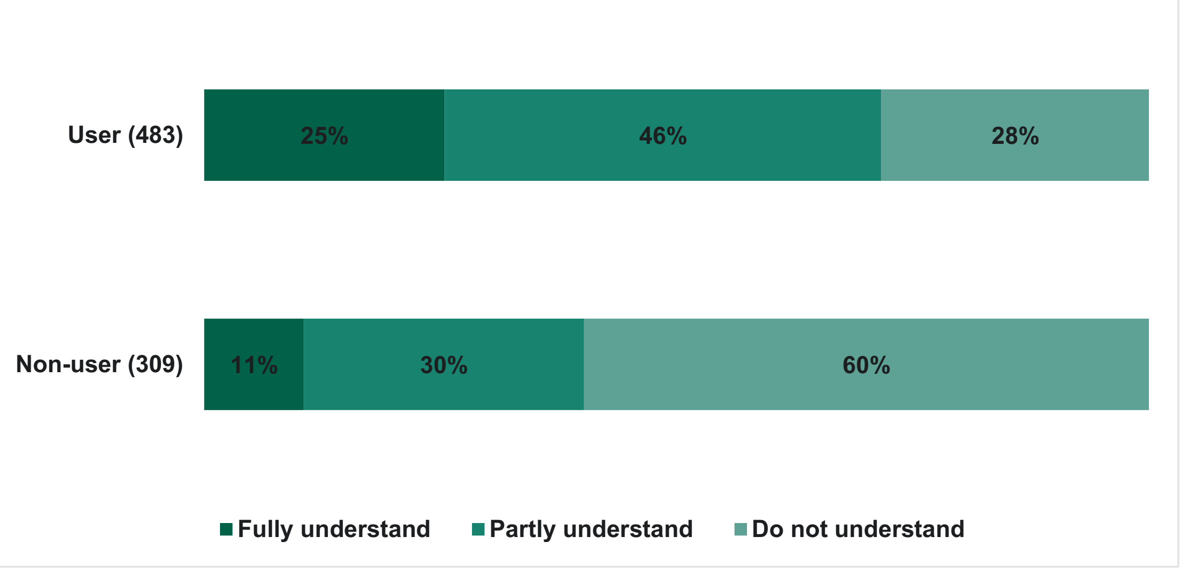


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

Understanding the different ticket types available

5.4 When asked to what extent they understood the range of tickets available, around a quarter of users said they either fully understood (25%) or that they did not understand (28%). Almost half (46%) said that they partly understood the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train. The majority of non-users (60%) said that they did not understand the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train, 30% said they partly understood and 11% said that they fully understood.

Figure 5.2 Understanding of the different ticket types available when travelling by train



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

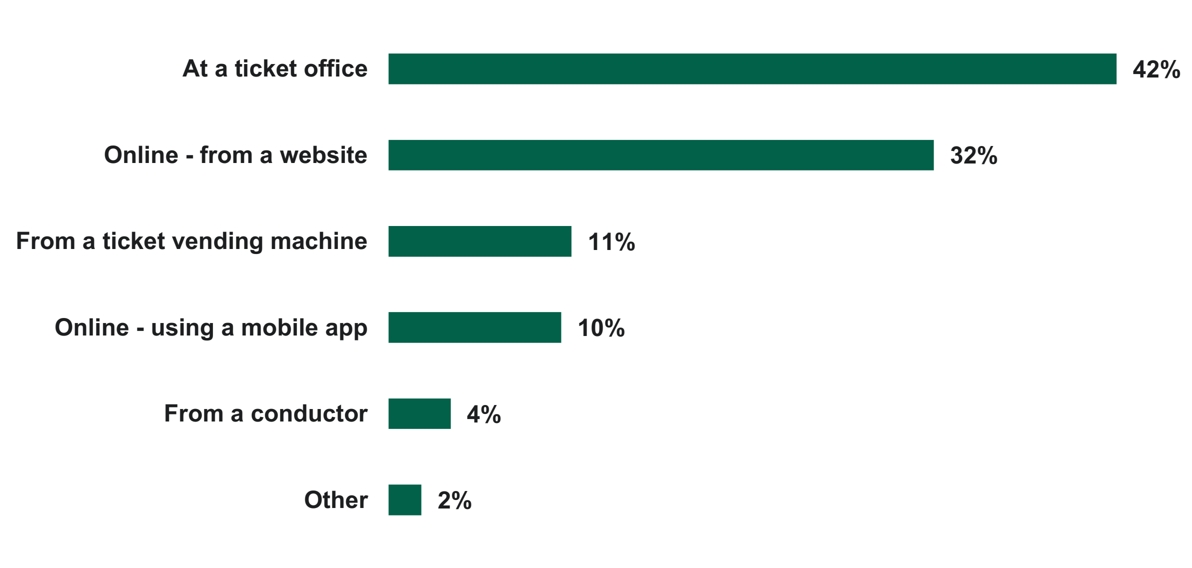
5.5 The proportion of users who said that they partly understood the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train increased from 40% to 46%, while the proportion who did not understand decreased from 29% in 2015 to 28% in 2018. Neither of these changes are statistically significant.

Purchasing tickets

5.6 All respondents were asked what the main method they normally use was to purchase a train ticket and one fifth (20%) spontaneously indicated that they do not purchase rail tickets. It is likely that these individuals may be mainly those who are non-users of rail services. This is a significant decrease compared to 2015, when 30% indicated that they didn't purchase rail tickets. It is likely that this decrease may be in part due to the higher proportion of respondents reporting travelling by train in 2018 compared to 2015.

5.7 When those who do not buy rail tickets are excluded from the analysis, the most common method to normally purchase tickets was at a ticket office (42%), with the second most common method of purchasing being online from a website (32%).

Figure 5.3 Main method used to normally purchase rail tickets

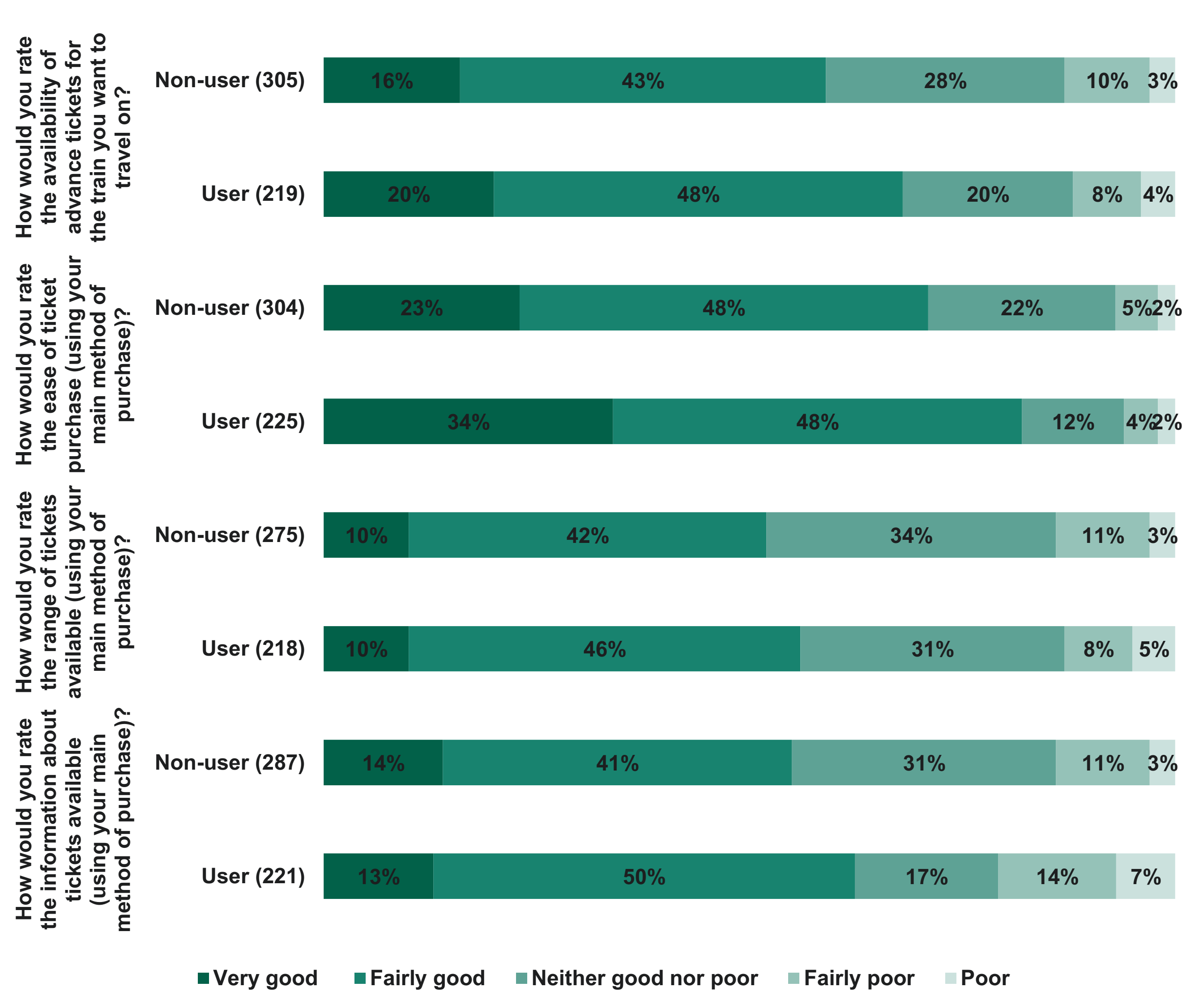


Un-weighted base: All respondents who purchase rail tickets (632). Note: Excludes 'Don't know' responses.
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

Ratings of aspects of train tickets

5.8 Respondents were asked to rate a range of aspects of train tickets using their main method of purchase: the availability of advance tickets for the train they wanted to travel on; information about tickets available; the range of tickets available; and, the ease of ticket purchase. Between approximately one in ten and three in ten non-users said they did not know how to rate these items (Table ATT0425). For comparative purposes, 'Don't know' responses have been excluded from the following analysis (Table ATT0426).

Figure 5.4 Ratings on selected aspects of train tickets



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets. Excludes 'Don't know' responses.
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018

5.9 Users rated the ease of ticket purchase and the availability of advance tickets using their main method of purchasing more positively (82% and 68% respectively) than the information about tickets available (63%) and the range of tickets using their main method of purchase (57%).

5.10 Due to changes in the wording and routing of these questions, comparisons cannot be made to 2012 or 2015[11].

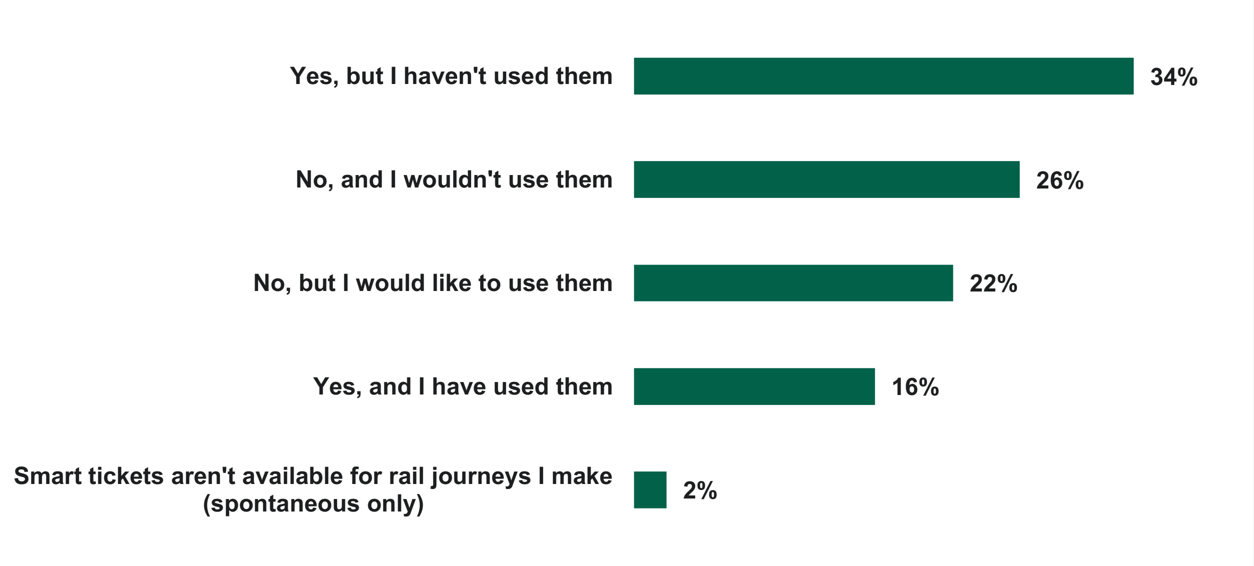
[11] For the questions on information about tickets available, range of tickets available and ease of purchasing tickets, the text "available using your main method of purchase" was added to the question wording in 2015. The question wording on the availability of tickets for the train respondents wished to travel on remained unchanged from 2012. In 2018, these questions were only asked to those who indicated that they ever bought rail tickets; in 2015, all respondents were asked to rate these aspects of tickets.

Awareness of smart tickets

5.11 In 2018, a new question on awareness of smart tickets for rail journeys was included. Just under one in five (19%) reported that they do not purchase rail tickets.

5.12 If the 19% who don't purchase rail tickets are excluded, just over one third (34%) reported that they had heard of smart tickets but hasn't used them. Just over a quarter (26%) said that they had not heard of smart tickets and that they wouldn't use them, whereas just over one in five (22%) said that they hadn't heard of them, but would like to use them. Sixteen per cent said that they had used smart tickets for a rail journey.

Figure 5.4 Awareness of smart tickets for rail travel



Un-weighted base: All respondents who purchase rail tickets (639)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2018