



Department
for Transport

Public attitudes towards train services: results from the February 2015 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Moving Britain Ahead

December 2015

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Summary of key findings

- 1 In February 2015, just over half (55%) 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 the South East and in higher household income groups were more likely to have used rail.

Short-distance rail services

- 3 Forty-four per cent of adults had used short-distance rail services in the previous 12 months with journeys most often made for days out, shopping and visiting friends or relatives.
- 4 The majority of adults (63%) thought that short-distance rail services had stayed the same over the previous two years and 26% thought that short-distance rail services would improve over the next two years¹.
- 5 Overall, 74% of users and 61% of non-users rated the quality of short-distance rail services positively. Users rated the cost of fares for short-distance rail services more positively than in 2012 (from 22% to 34%).
- 6 Almost three-quarters of short-distance rail users said that their recent experiences of rail travel met their expectations, which was significantly higher than in 2012.
- 7 The main reason infrequent users and non-users of short-distance rail services gave for not using these (more often) was because it easier to use a car (36%).
- 8 Users reported that speed (30%) and reliability and punctuality (30%) were the most valued aspects of short-distance rail travel.

Long-distance rail services

- 9 Overall, we estimate that 30% 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.
- 10 The most popular reasons given for using long-distance rail were that it was quicker by train (42%) or it was easier by train (40%). 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 England², it is likely that this is with respect to car travel.
- 11 Seventy-eight per cent of users and 63% of non-users rated the overall quality of long-distance rail services positively. Fifty-seven per cent of users and 58% of non-users said long-distance services had stayed the same over the last two years.

¹ Excludes 'Don't know' responses.

² In 2014, car or van accounted for 64% of the average number of trips made per year and 78% of the average distance travelled. National Travel Survey tables NTS0301 and NTS0302.

- 12 The most common main reason for infrequent users not using long-distance rail (more often) included it being easier to use alternative modes of transport (25%).

Train tickets

- 13 Overall, 29% of rail users and 21% of non-users thought that there were too many ticket types available when travelling by rail.
- 14 Thirty-one per cent of users claimed to have fully understood the different types of tickets available, with 29% who said that they did not understand. Two in five users said they partly understood the different types of tickets available.
- 15 Almost half (45%) of those who purchase rail tickets said they normally did so at a ticket office; 37% said they normally purchased their tickets online from a website. The majority of users (85%) rated the ease of purchasing tickets using their main method of purchase positively.

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 their ratings of a number of ticket features.
- 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 and most recently February 2015.

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 2015, the survey achieved a response rate of 56% (1,034 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 significant³ 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 are presented in Annex A to this document which may be found in the same location.
- 1.9 This report also contains selected results from the Department for Transport's 2014 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 2014, the survey achieved a standard response rate of 59%. This equates to interviews with approximately 18,000 interviews in 7,500 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

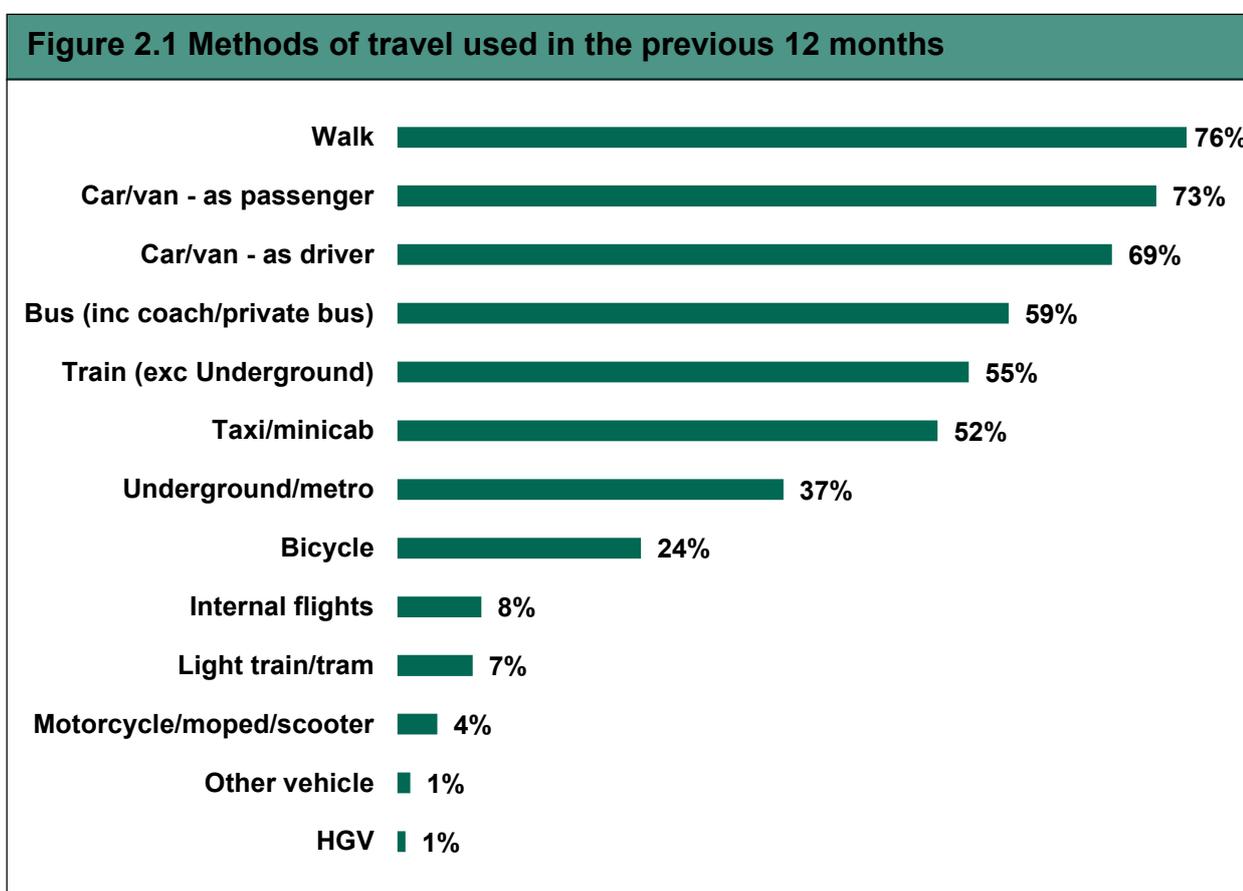
- 1.13 The main source of information on attitudes to rail travel is the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS). Transport Focus runs the NRPS twice a year. Passenger opinions are collected from a representative sample of rail journeys providing a network-wide picture of customers' overall satisfaction,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

³ 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 2015, just over half (55%) of the adults in Great Britain had used a train at least once in the previous 12 months. This is not significantly different from the result for 2012 (54%).



Un-weighted base: All respondents (1,021)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%

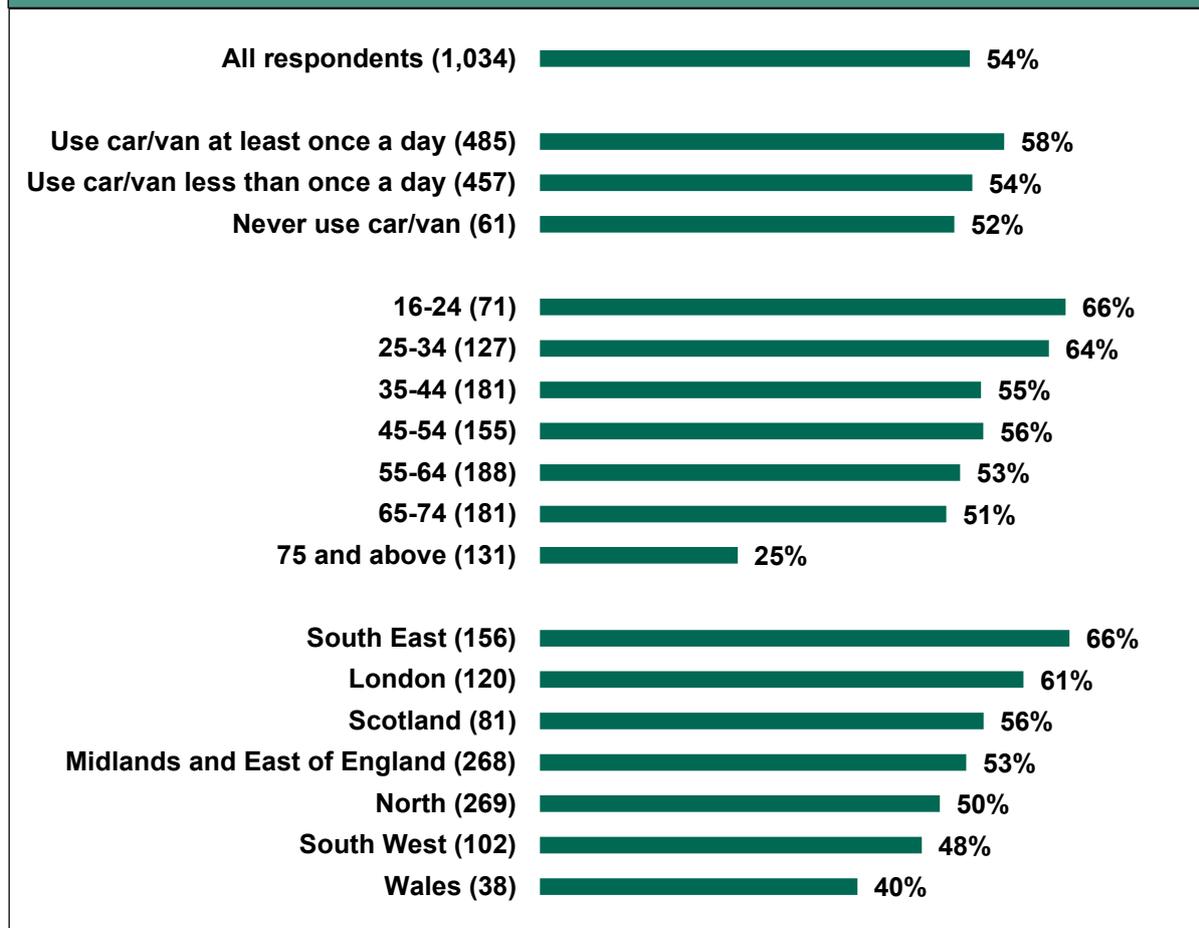
- 2.2 Those who said they never travel by car⁴ were less likely to use rail compared to those who travel by car at least once a day (52% to 58% respectively). The South East had the highest rail usage at 66%; the North, Midlands, East of England and

⁴ To note that one of the interview pre-codes for frequency of travel changed in 2015 from "2-5 days a week" used in 2012 to "More than once a week" in 2015.

South West regions had rates of rail usage of 48% to 53%. In London, 61% 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: 25% of those aged 75 and over reported having used rail in the past 12 months, compared to 51% to 66% for other age groups. Those aged 65 years and under were at least twice as likely to have travelled by train in the previous year compared to those aged 75 and older.

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 (1,034)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

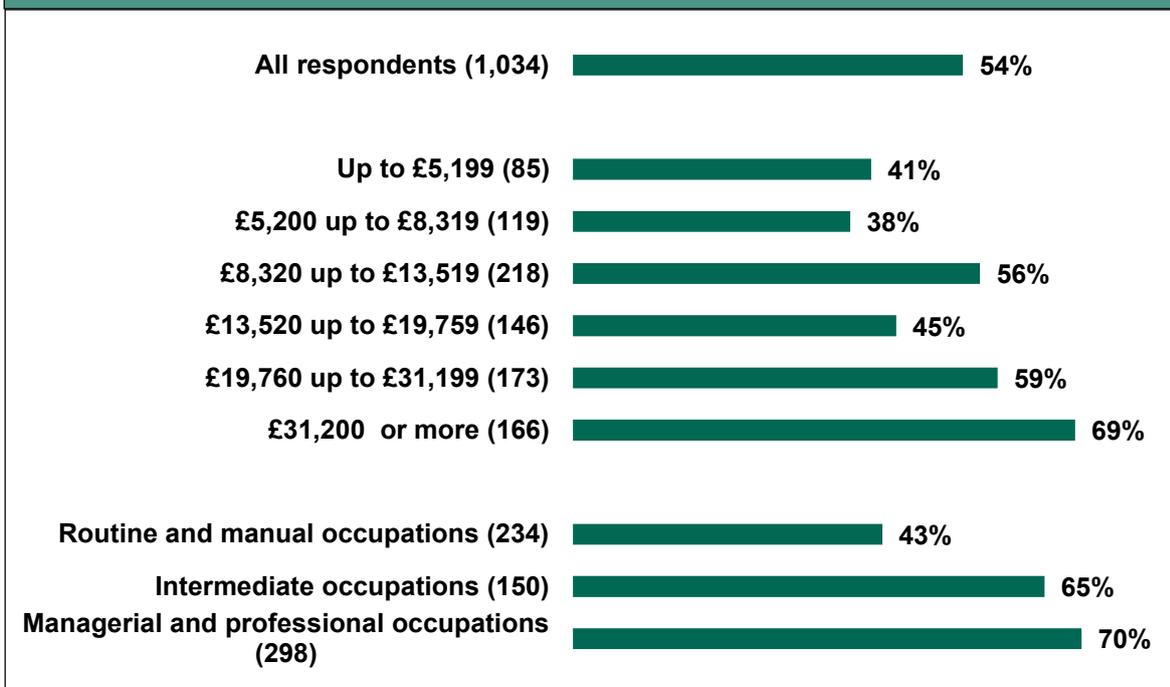
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

- 2.4 The 2014 National Travel Survey reported that 57% of rail trips in England were for the purpose of commuting or business⁵, so it perhaps follows that adults of pensionable age make fewer rail trips than others.
- 2.5 In February 2015, fewer adults in routine and managerial occupations used trains: 43%, compared to 65% of those in intermediate occupations and 70% of those in managerial and professional occupations.

⁵ National Travel Survey Average number of trips by purpose and main mode: England (with charts)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts04-purpose-of-trips>

2.6 Those in higher household income groups were more likely to have used rail than other adults, with 69% of Britons living in households with a gross annual income of £31,200 or more having used a train in the previous 12 months, compared to between 38% and 59% of those in lower income households.

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



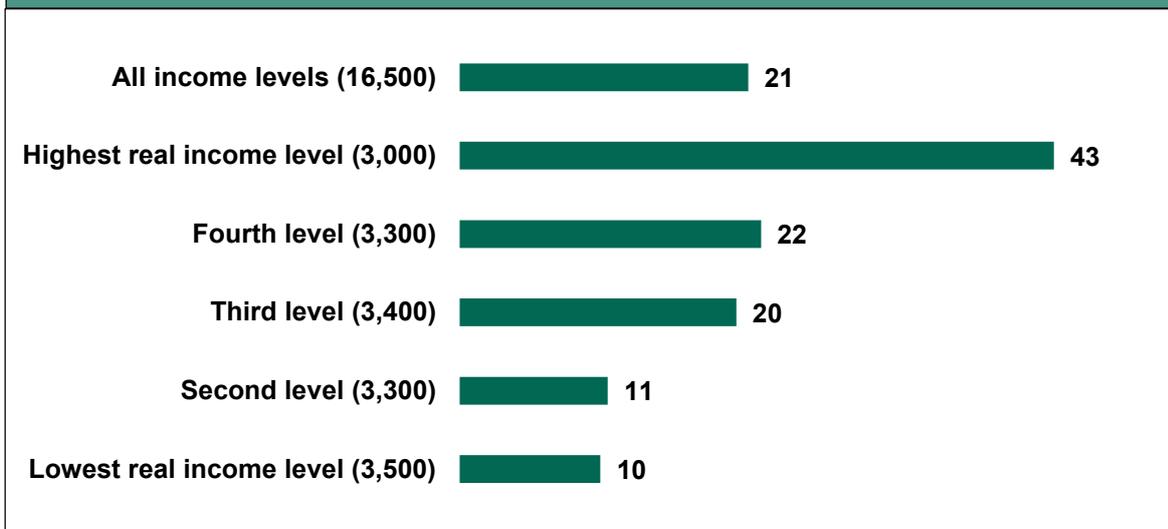
Un-weighted base: All respondents (1,034)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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 twice the rate for all household income levels combined (43 trips compared to 21 trips and 1,404 miles compared to 596 miles).

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

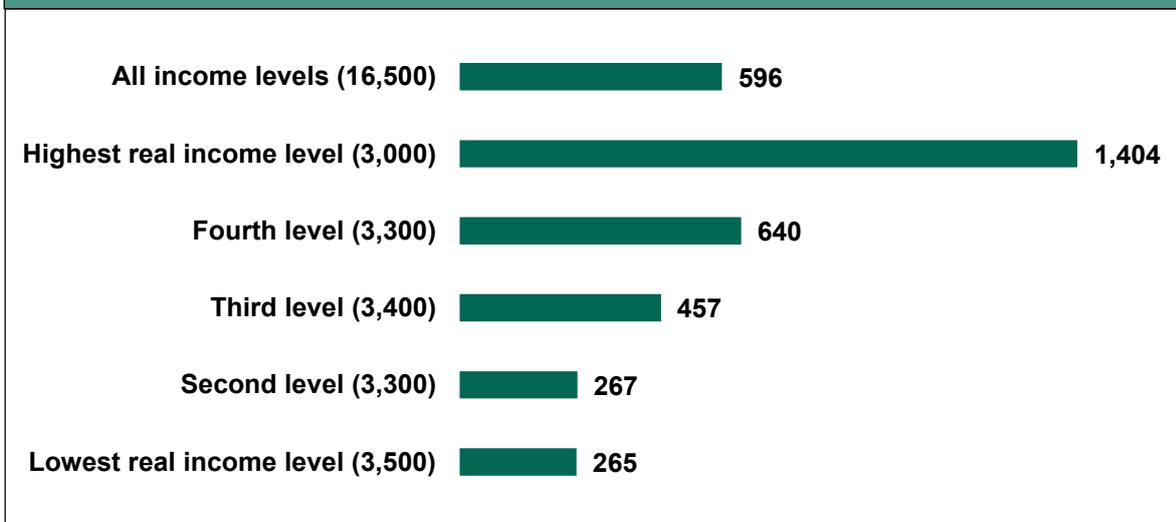


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: National Travel Survey, 2014

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

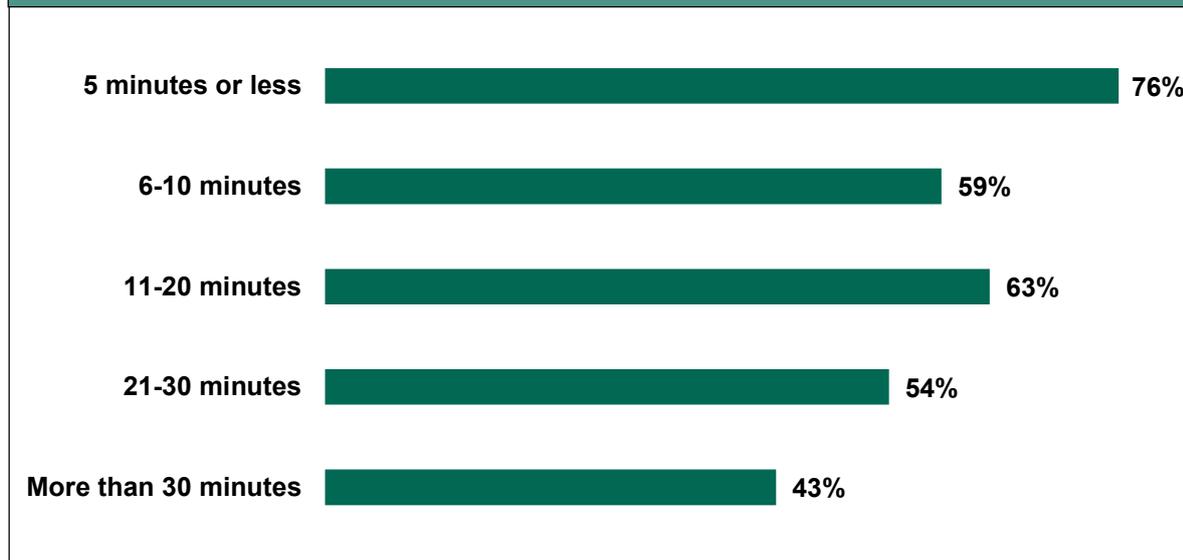
Source: National Travel Survey, 2014

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 station⁶

- 2.8 Those who live within close proximity to the nearest railway station were more likely to have used a train in the previous year than those who live further away. Around three-quarters (76%) of those living within five minutes' walk of the nearest railway station were rail users, compared to 43% of those living within more than 30 minutes' walk. Almost two-thirds (63%) of those living within an 11-20 minute walk of the nearest railway station had used a train in the previous year.

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 (537)

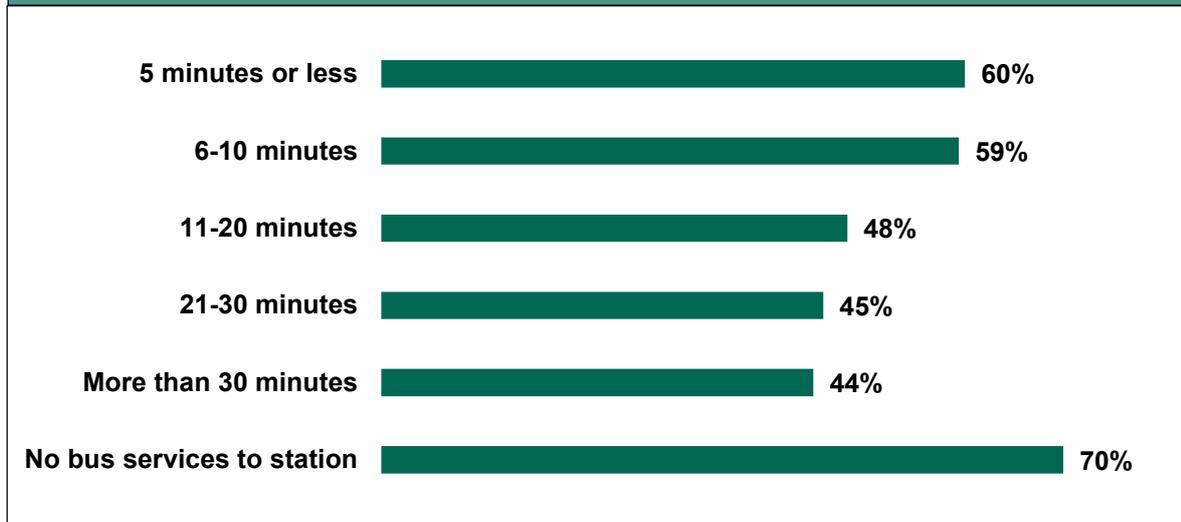
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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 per cent of adults lived more than 30 minutes' walk from the nearest railway station, 16% lived within 21-30 minutes' walk, 23% lived within an 11-20 minute walk and 14% lived within a 6-10 minute walk. Eight 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, although those who live within a five minute bus journey appear to be more likely than those living within a 11 minute or longer bus journey to have used rail in the previous year. Seven in ten rail users live in an area with no bus service to the nearest railway station.

⁶ To note that the interview pre-codes for time taken to travel (by bus or by foot) to the nearest railway station changed in 2015. In 2012, the pre-codes used were: "6 minutes or less"; "7-13 minutes"; "14-26 minutes"; "27-43 minutes"; and, "44 minutes or longer".

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 (508)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

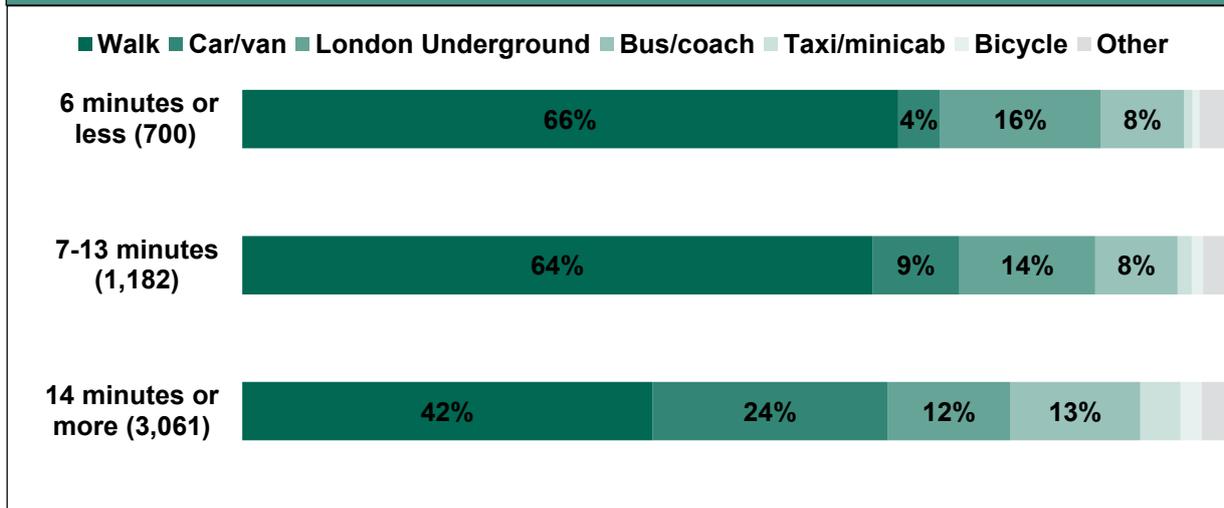
Note: 'rail users' are defined here as those having used rail services in the previous twelve months

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 2015.

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

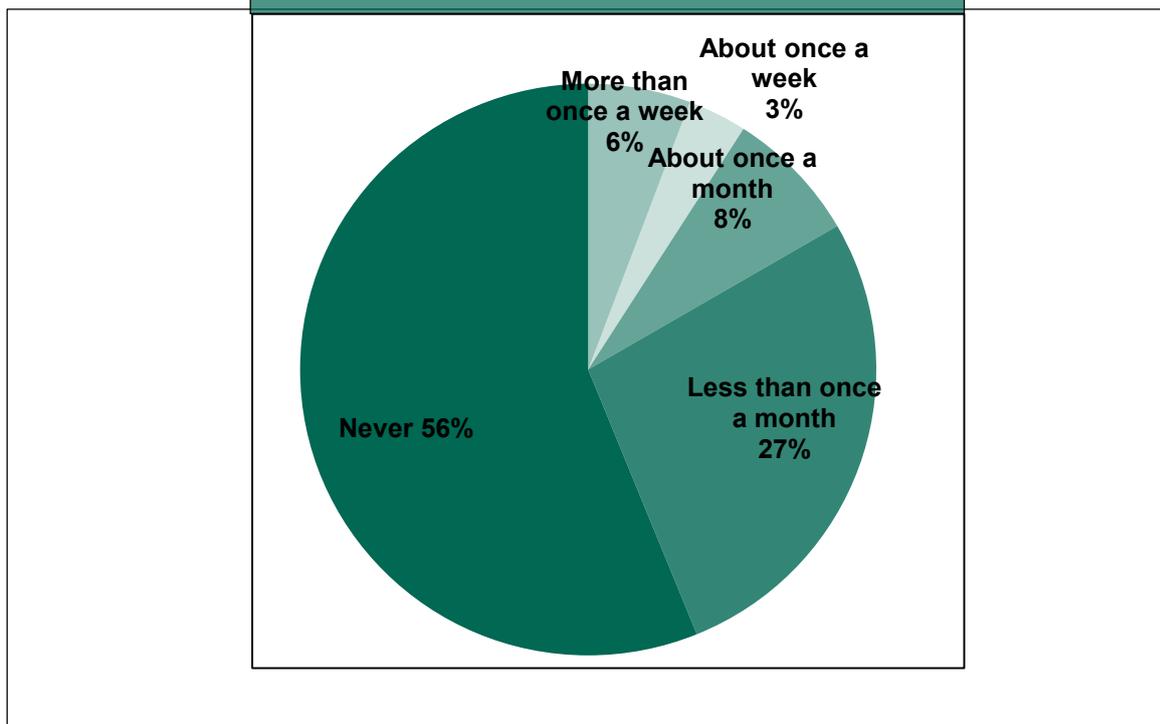
Notes: Survey years 2002 to 2010 combined. Data labels for 'Bicycle' and 'Other' not presented. Based on 'day seven' travel records only. 'Other' = motorcycle, surface rail, light rail, air and all other modes of transport.

3. Short-distance train services⁷

Frequency of use of short-distance rail services⁸

- 3.1 In February 2015, 44% of adults said that they had used a train to make a short-distance journey in the previous 12 months. Six 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 8% about once a month. Twenty-seven per cent of Britons 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 (1,034)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

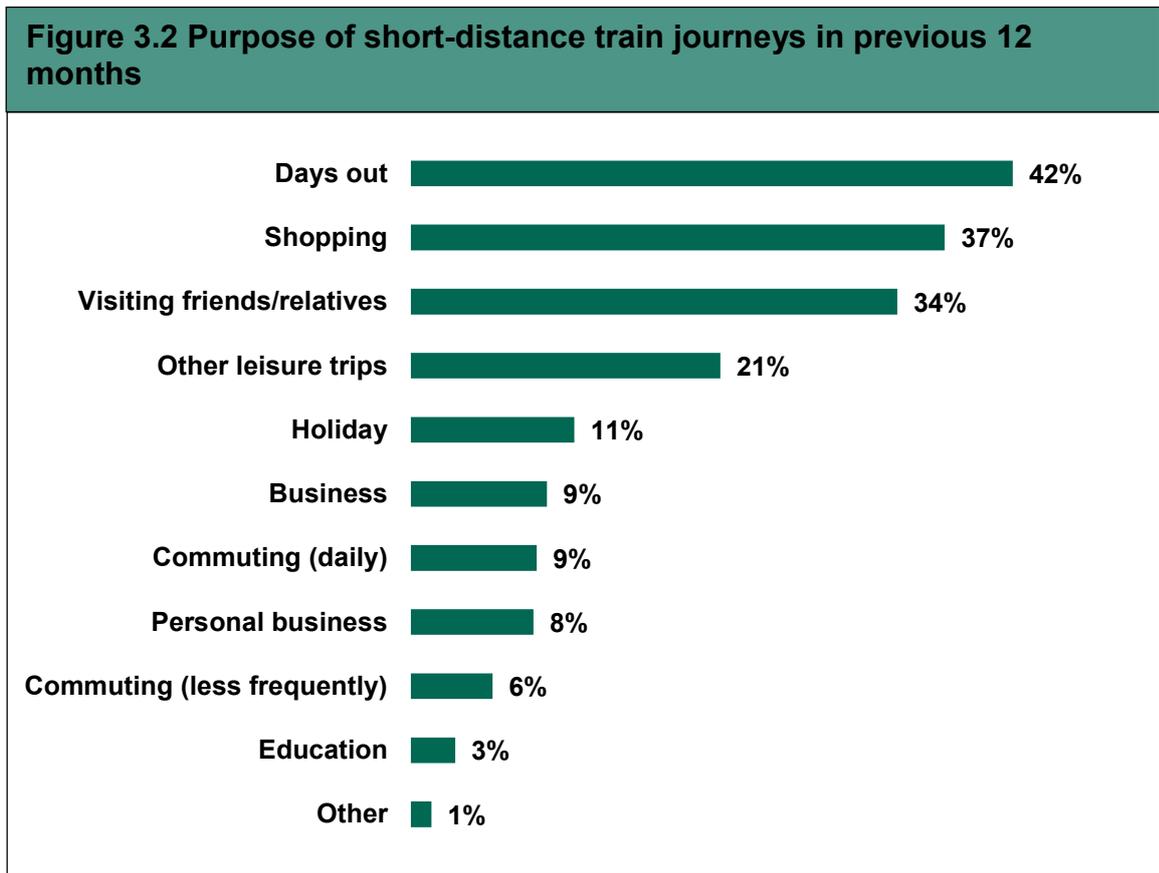
⁷ A short-distance journey is considered here as a journey of 50 miles or less. These exclude Underground services, light rail/tram and specialist trains such as steam railways, but include London Overground services.

⁸ To note that one of the interview pre-codes for frequency of travel changed in 2015 from "2-5 days a week" in 2012 to "More than once a week" in 2015.

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 and those on high incomes and living close to stations tend to use rail for short-distances more frequently. Those living in London tend to use rail for short-distance journeys more frequently than those living in other regions (Table [ATT0404](#)).

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 (42%), shopping (37%) and visiting friends/relatives (34%). Nine per cent of users had used rail to make short-distance business journeys; 9% had used rail for commuting short-distances on a daily basis and 8% 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.



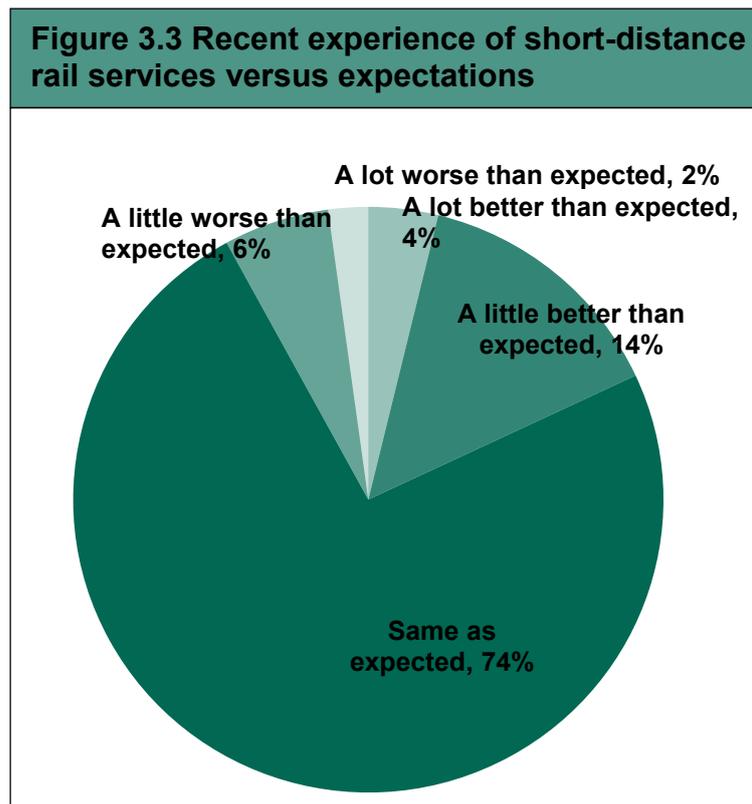
Un-weighted base: short-distance train users (424)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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, almost three-quarters (74%) of short-distance rail users said that their recent experience of rail travel met their expectations, which was significantly higher than in 2012 (70%). In 2015, 18% that their experience had been better than they had expected. Eight per cent of short-distance rail users reported that their recent experience had been worse than expected, 2% said that it had been a lot worse than they had expected.



Un-weighted base: short-distance train users (424)

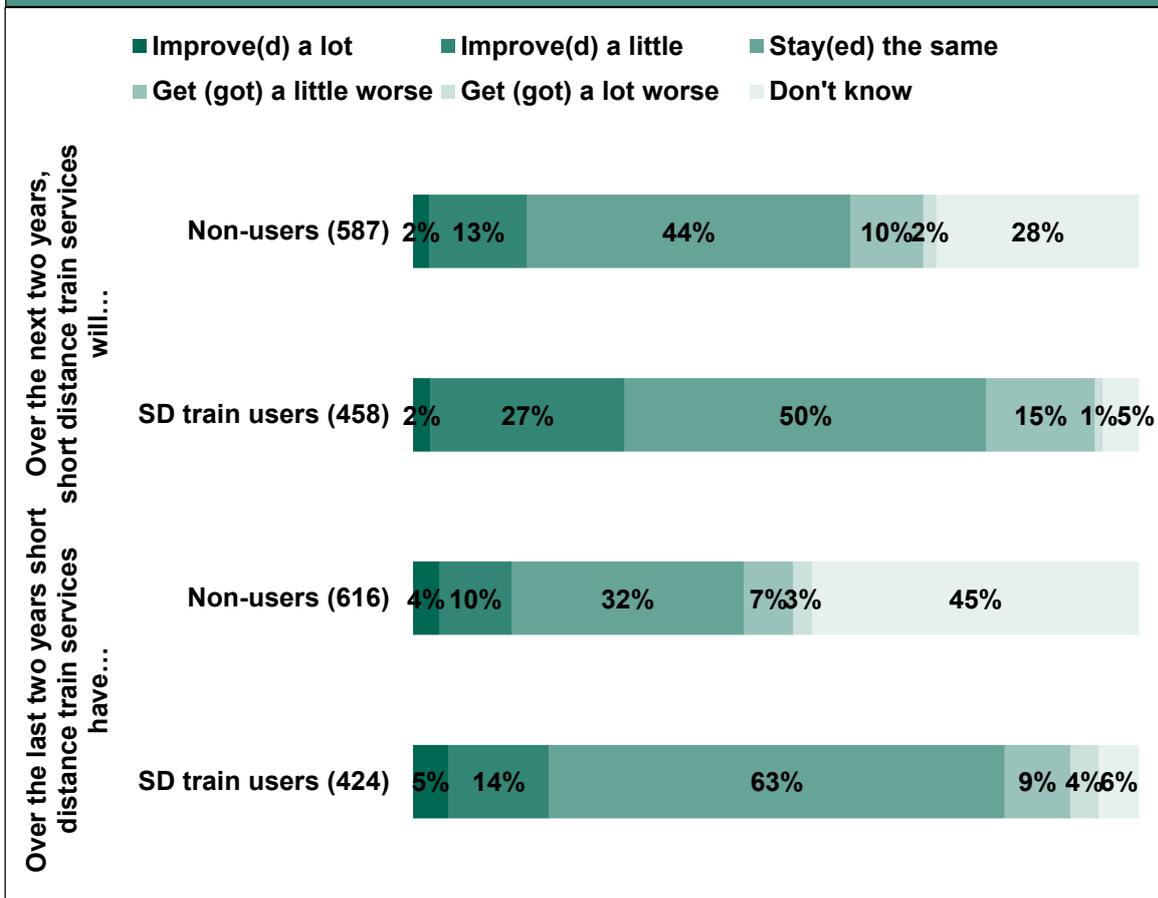
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

Note: 'Don't know' and 'No recent experience' response categories are not presented

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, 71% of rail users reported that this had stayed the same. Fourteen per cent of rail users reported that the number of journeys they made using short-distance rail had increased and 15% said that this had decreased.
- 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 or get worse over the next two years, large numbers of non-users said they did not know. Forty-five per cent of non-users said they did not know whether services had changed over the previous two years and 28% said that they did not know if they would change over the 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



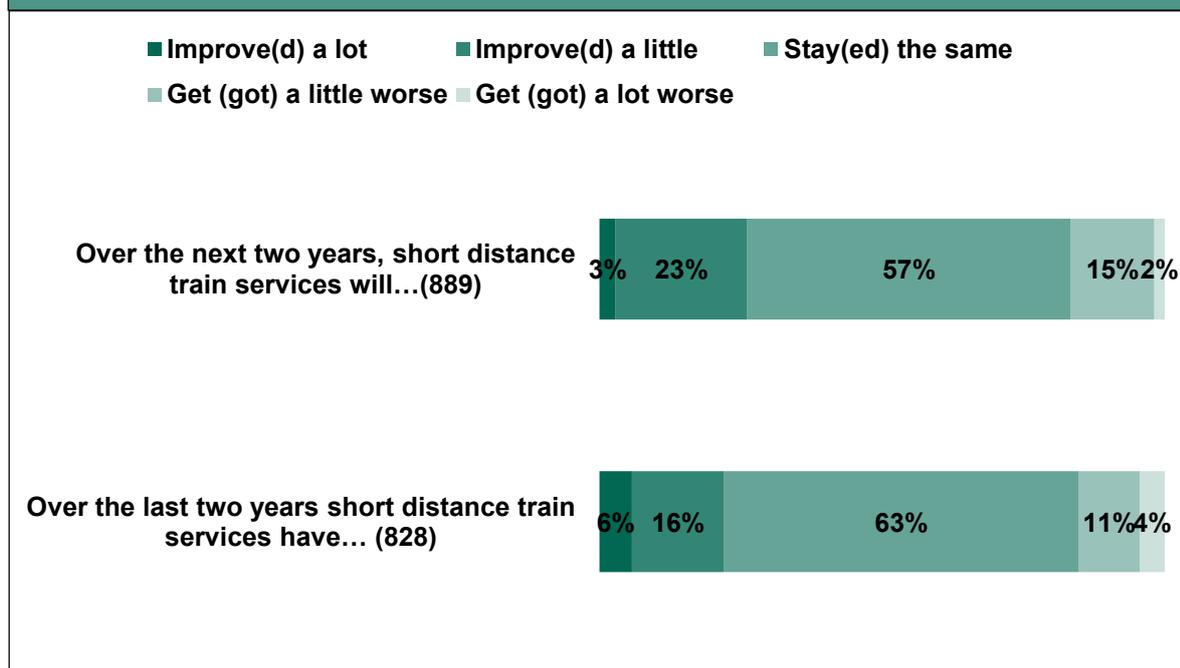
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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

3.7 Overall, 22% 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 15% said that they had got worse. Looking ahead to the next two years, 26% of adults with an opinion expected services to improve, 57% thought they would stay the same and 17% 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



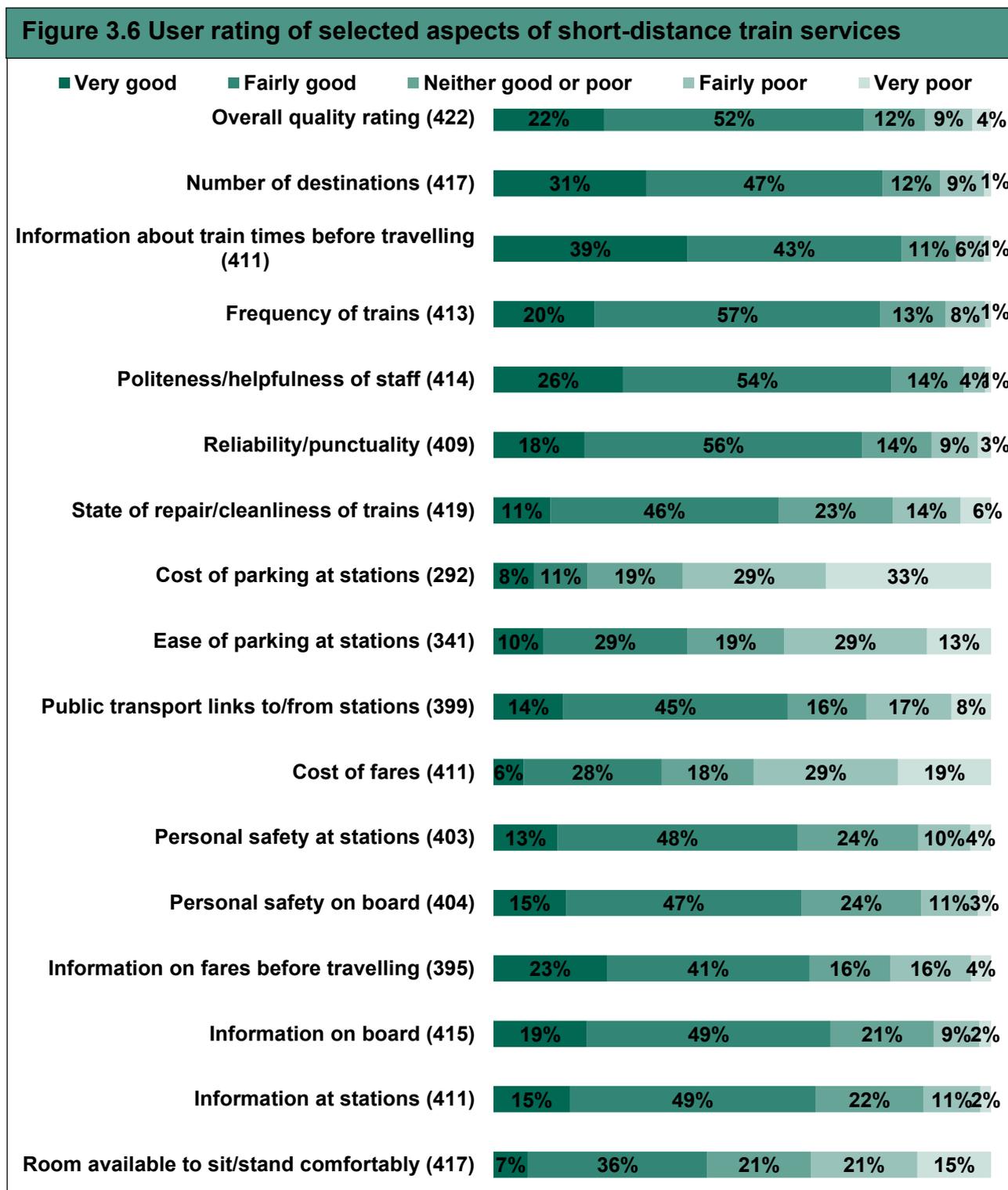
Un-weighted base: all respondents excluding 'Don't know' (count shown in brackets)
 Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

Ratings of aspects of short-distance rail services

- 3.8 Excluding 'Don't know' responses, 78% of short-distance rail users rated the quality of short-distance journeys as 'very good' or 'fairly good'; 12% said that the overall quality was 'neither good nor poor'; and, 13% rated services as 'fairly poor' or 'very poor'⁹. This was not significantly different from the 2012 result.
- 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 any '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 information available about train times before travelling (82%), the politeness/helpfulness of staff (80%), the number of destinations and the frequency of trains (both 78%).
- 3.11 The cost of parking at stations, the cost of fares, the ease of parking at stations and the room available to sit/stand comfortably were rated most negatively, with negative ratings of 62%, 48%, 42% and 36% respectively.
- 3.12 Compared to the results from 2012, the proportion of users rating the cost of fares as good has increased from 22% to 34%.

⁹ 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 None of the listed items were rated significantly less favourably than in 2012, indicating that users of short-distance train services have found them no worse than they were three years ago.



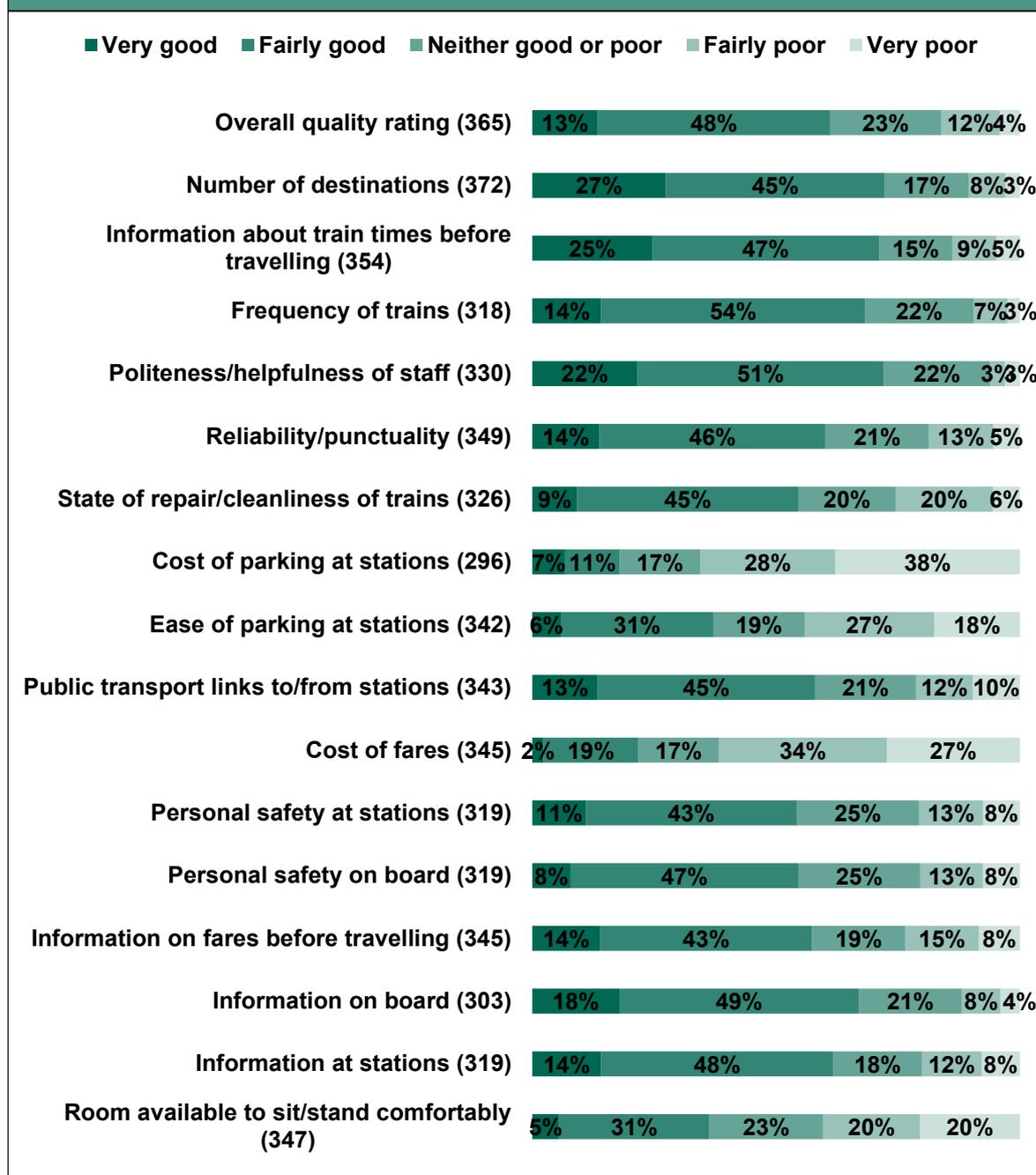
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

- 3.14 Excluding 'Don't know' responses, 61% of non-users rated short-distance rail services positively, 23% had no opinion and 16% rated them as poor. This was not significantly different to the 2012 results. Non-users were generally more likely to rate services negatively rather than positively when compared to users.
- 3.15 There were some similarities for the most positive ratings from non-users as for users: the number of destinations (72%); the politeness/helpfulness of staff (72%); the frequency of trains (68%) and, the information on board (67%).
- 3.16 However the least positive ratings were in the same order as those for users, namely the cost of parking at stations, cost of fares, ease of parking at stations, and the room available to sit/stand comfortably were rated most negatively, with negative ratings of 66%, 62%, 44% and 40% respectively.
- 3.17 Compared to the results for 2012:
- The proportion of non-users rating the politeness and helpfulness of staff as good had increased from 64% to 73% in 2015; and,
 - The proportion of non-users rating personal safety at stations as good had increased from 45% to 54% in 2015.
- 3.18 None of the items were rated significantly less favourably by non-users in 2015 than in 2012.

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 2015

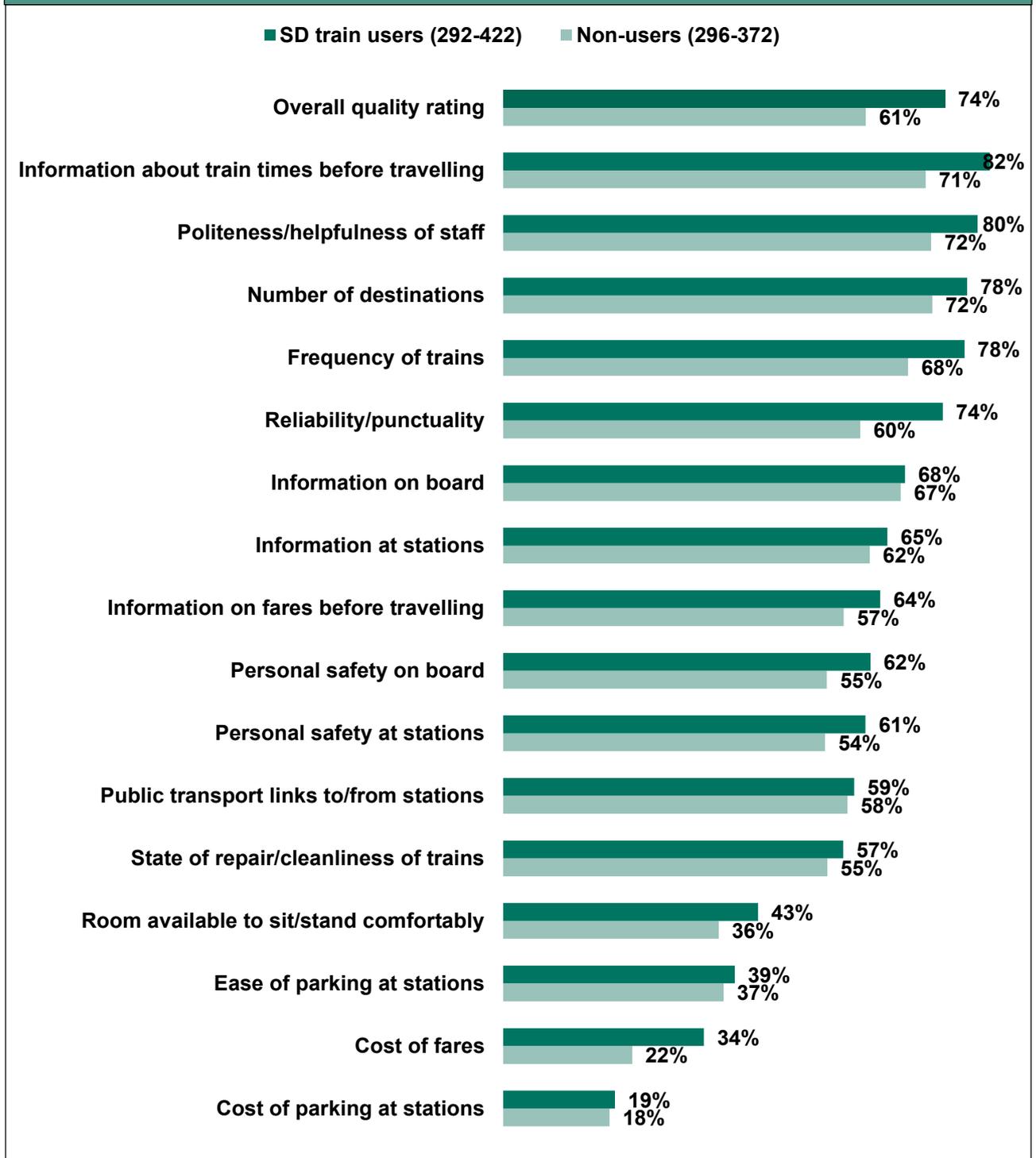
Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

3.19 As illustrated in Figure 3.7, 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:

- Eighty-two per cent of users rated the information about train times before travelling positively compared to 72% of non-users;
- Users were more likely than non-users to rate the frequency of trains positively (77% of users compared to 68% of non-users);

- Seventy-four per cent of users rated the reliability and punctuality of trains positively whilst 60% of users rated this aspect of short-distance rail services positively;
- Users were more likely than non-users to rate the politeness and helpfulness of staff positively (80% of users compared to 72% of non-users); and,
- Just over a third of users (34%) rated the cost of fares positively compared to just over one in five (21%) non-users.

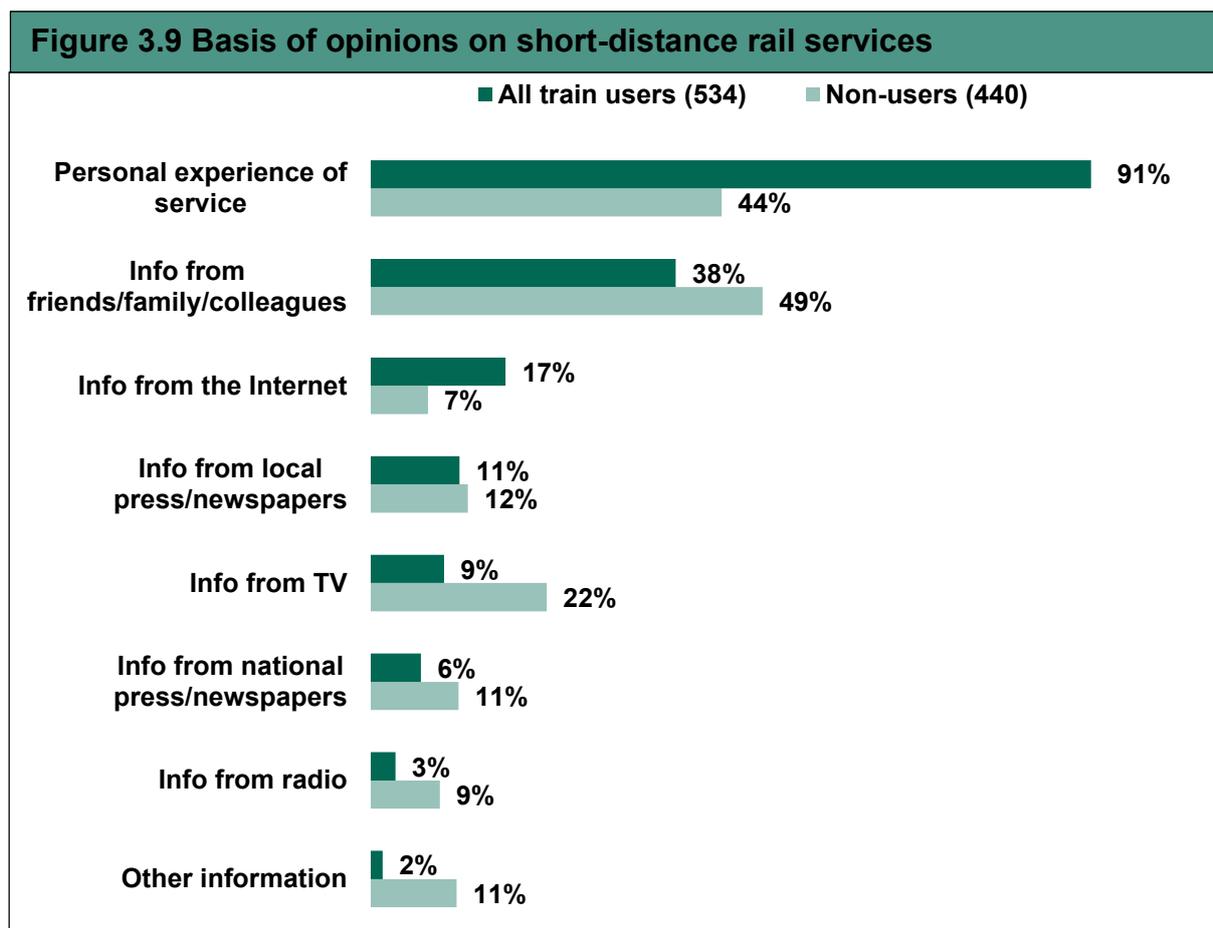
Figure 3.8 Proportion of users and non-users rating selected aspects of short-distance train services as 'very' or 'fairly' good



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets, see Table [ATT0410](#) for exact base numbers
 Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015
 Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

Basis of views on short-distance rail services

3.20 Nearly all (91%) rail users based their opinions about rail services on personal experience compared to less than half (44%) of non-users. Users were also approximately 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 and television.



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

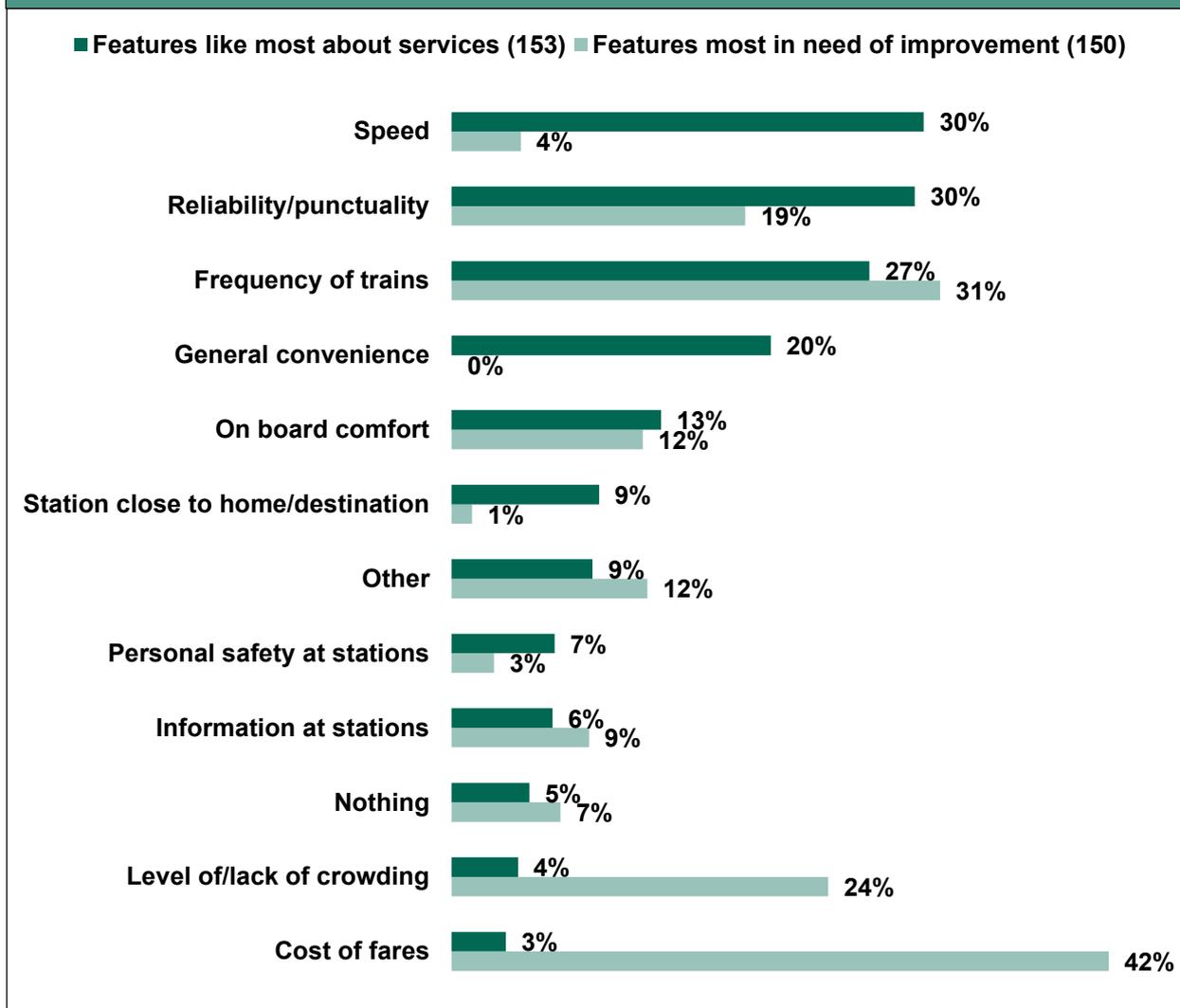
Note: respondents could choose up to three answers so responses may sum to more than 100%

Features valued by short-distance rail service users

3.21 When asked what they most value about short-distance rail services, 30% of regular users¹⁰ said it was the fastest way to make the journey, 30% reported it was reliability/punctuality and 27% said that trains are frequent. The areas of short-distance rail services identified as being most in need of improvement by users were the cost of fares (42%), the frequency of trains (31%) and the level of crowding (24%).

¹⁰ 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 (150-153)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

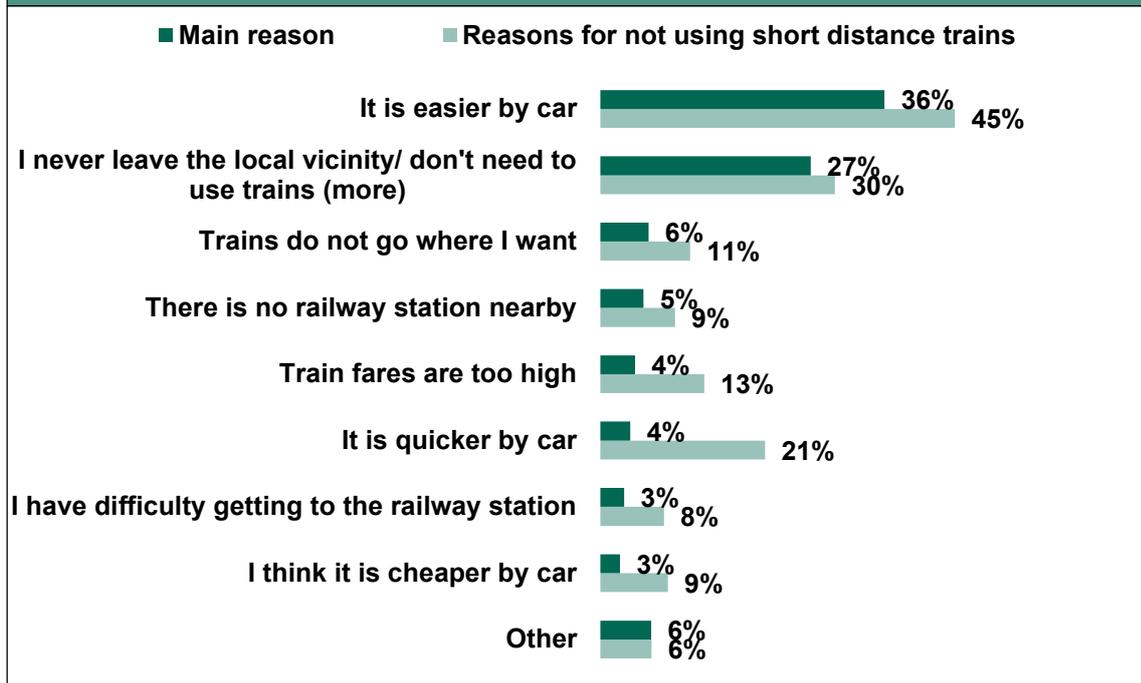
Notes: respondents could choose up to three answers so results may sum to more than 100%. Answers identified by less than 5% of respondents are not presented here. See Table [ATT0412](#) for all categories.

3.22 Six per cent of regular short-distance rail users valued the information at stations, 4% valued the lack of crowding and 3% each valued the cost of fares, not having to drive or that it was relaxing. Nine 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

3.23 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 (36%), while 27% said that they do not leave the local vicinity or don't need to use trains more often. Six 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, while 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 (858)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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.

3.24 Infrequent users of short-distance trains were more likely to say that train fares being too high was the main reason for them not using them more often in 2012 (10%) compared to 2015 (4%) or that trains do not go where they want (9% in 2012 compared to 6% in 2015).

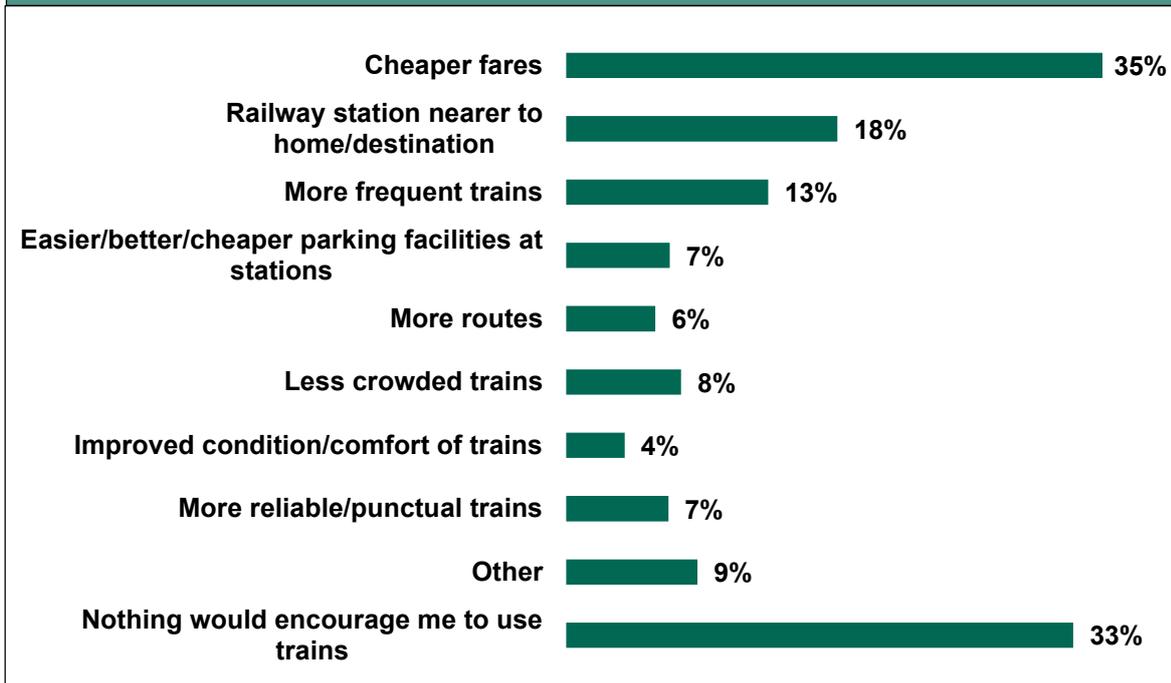
3.25 In 2015, 3% of infrequent short-distance rail users preferred to use an alternative mode of transport and a further 3% said parking was too difficult. Two per cent said that trains were too crowded and 1% said that they had accessibility problems.

Improvements to encourage greater use of short-distance rail services

3.26 Over one third (35%) of infrequent short-distance rail users identified cheaper fares as an improvement that would encourage them to use them more often, while one third (33%) said that nothing would encourage them to use short-distance trains more often¹¹.

¹¹ To note that there was a change in one interview pre-code in 2015 from "Better transport links to/from station" in 2012 to "Better public transport links to/from station" in 2015.

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 (858)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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.

3.27 Six per cent of infrequent users of short-distance rail services suggested that more routes might encourage them to use trains more (often), 4% suggested improved condition or comfort of trains, 3% said better information about train services, 3% faster journey times and 2% suggested better safety at railway stations. One per cent said that better accessibility might encourage them to use trains more (often).

4. Long-distance¹² train services

Frequency of use of long-distance journeys¹³

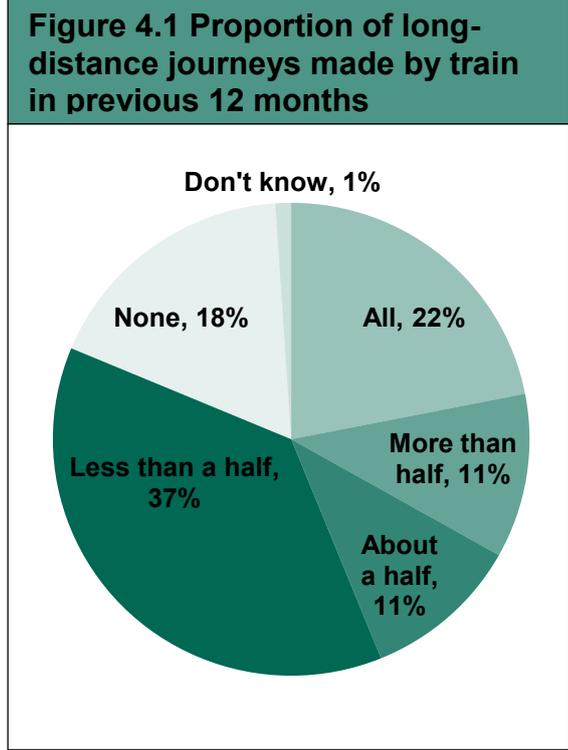
- 4.1 When asked how often they had made long-distance journeys in the UK in the last 12 months, 2% of adults replied more than once a week, 3% about once a week, 11% said about once a month and 37% less than once a month. Forty-seven per cent of adults reported that they had not made any long-distance journeys in the UK in the last 12 months.

Use of rail to make long-distance journeys

Of those who had made long-distance journeys and used a train in the last 12 months, around one in five (18%) said that they had not used a train to make any of those long-distance journeys (Figure 4.1). Twenty-two per cent had used trains for all of their long-distance journeys; 11% had used trains for at least half (but not all) of those journeys; a further 11% had used a train for about half of those journeys and 37% had used a train for less than half of their long-distance journeys.

¹² In the UK; does not include Eurostar

¹³ To note that one interview pre-code for travel frequency changed in 2015 from "2 to 5 times a week" in 2012 to "More than once a week" in 2015.



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 (374)

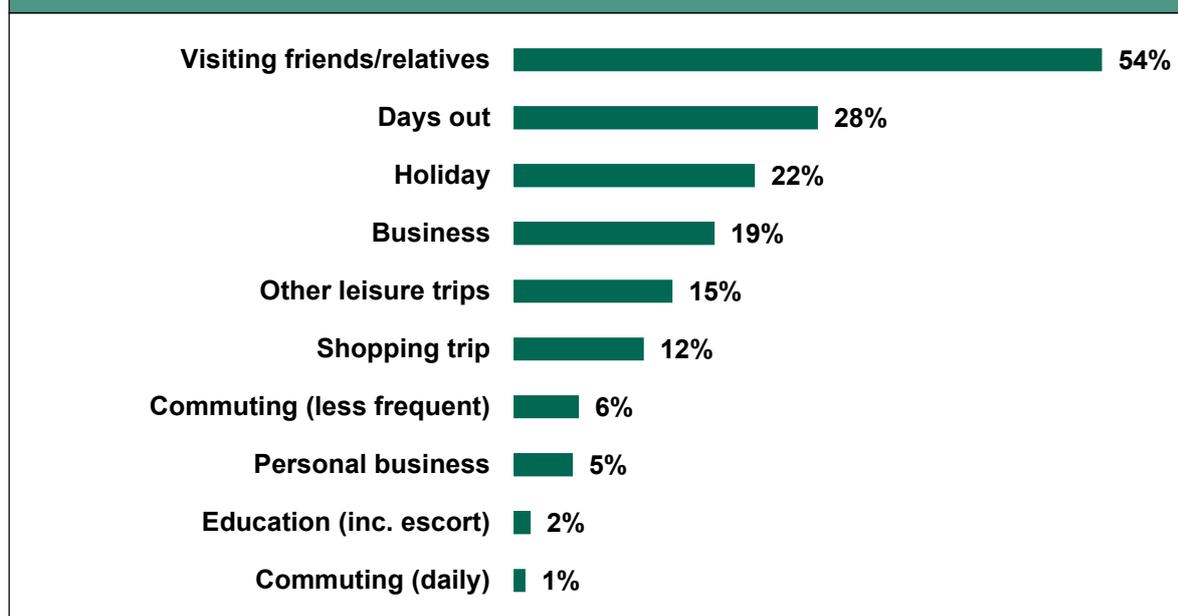
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

4.2 Overall, we estimate that 30% of adults had used long-distance train services in the previous 12 months. Those aged 75 and older (12%) or those in routine and manual occupations (19%) 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 (48%).

Purpose of long-distance rail use

4.3 The most common reason for making long-distance train journeys in the previous 12 months was to visit friends or relatives (54%) a significant increase from 44% in 2012. The second most common reason given in 2015 with 28% was for days out. Approximately one in five long-distance train users said they had travelled for holidays (22%) or business (19%). Just 1% had used long-distance rail for daily commuting and 6% 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 (304)

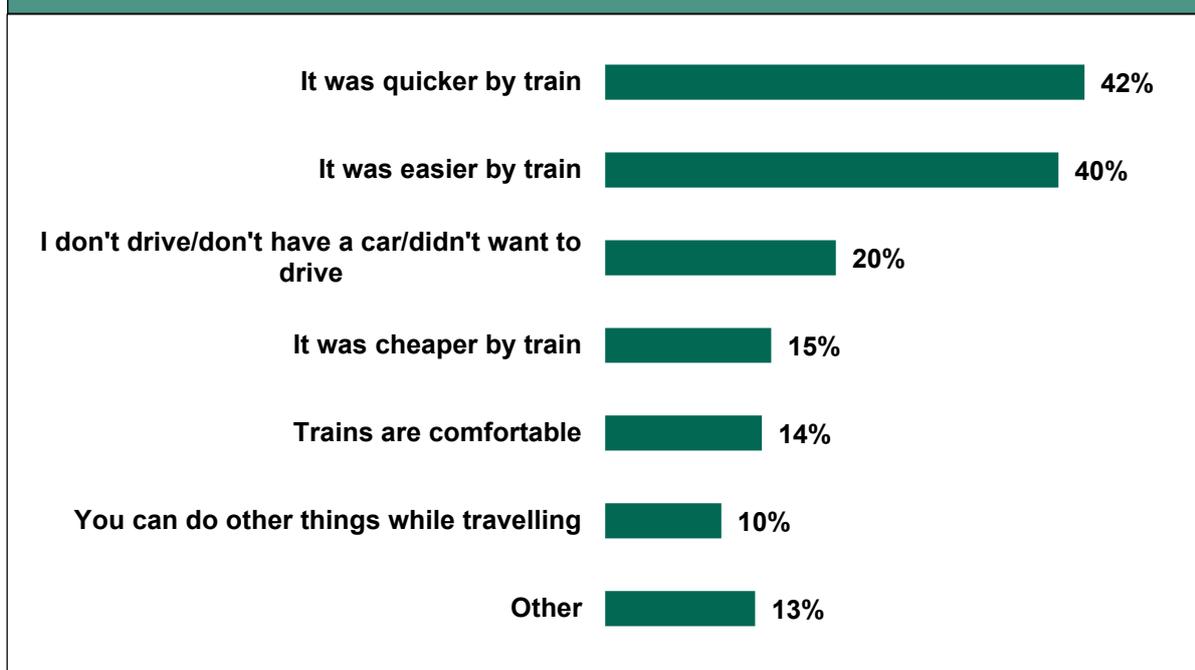
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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

4.4 When asked why they had chosen to use the train last time they made a long-distance journey, 42% 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 per cent of users said that they had used a train to make their long-distance journey because it was easier and 20% said that they did drive, didn't want to drive or don't use a car. Fifteen per cent of users said that using the train for long-distance journeys was cheaper than using the car.

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



Un-weighted base: long-distance train users (302)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

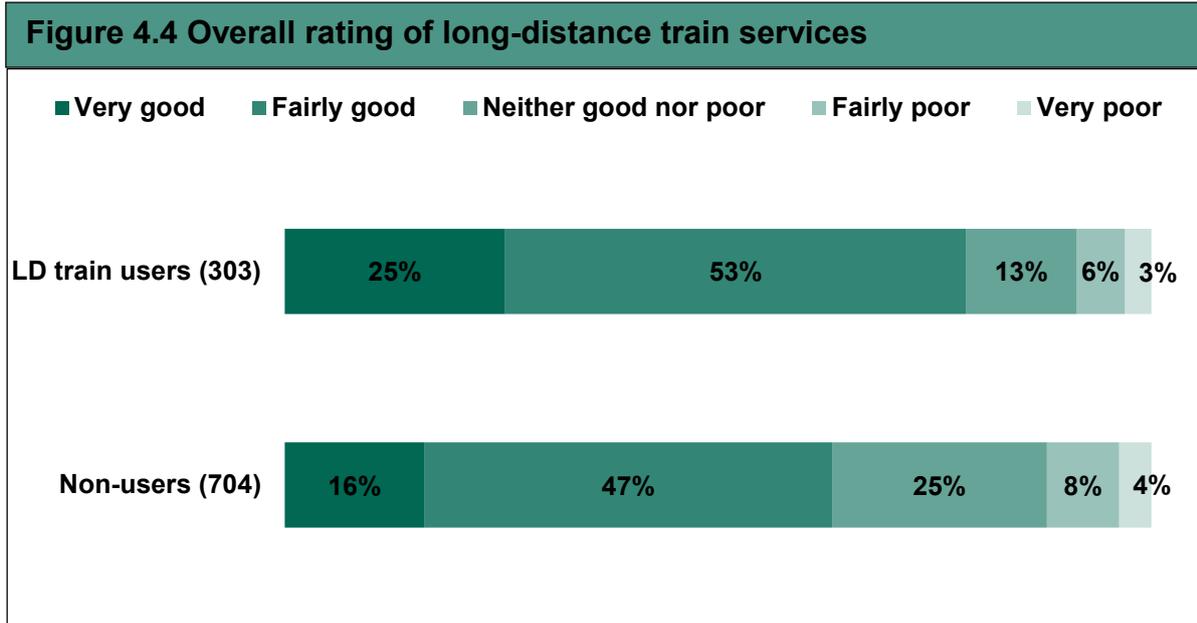
Note: respondents were able to provide more than one answer so results may sum to more than 100%.

Answers with a response of less than 5% are not presented.

4.5 Ten per cent of users said that a reason for using a train for long-distance journeys was that they could do other things whilst travelling, whilst 14% said that trains are comfortable. Other reasons given by users were that someone else had planned the journey (3%), that there is a railway station close to their home or destination (3%), or that trains were reliable and punctual (2%).

Overall rating of long-distance rail services

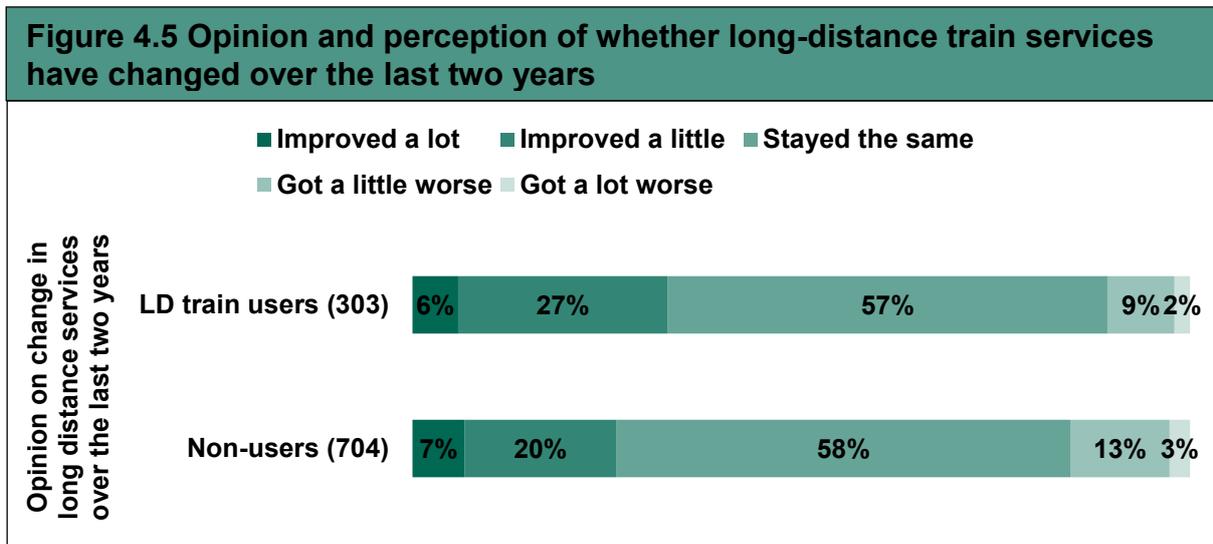
4.6 When asked to rate long-distance rail services, 52% of non-users did not know how to rate them. If we exclude these responses from the analysis, we can compare non-user ratings to those of users. Excluding 'Don't know' responses indicates that users rate long-distance rail services more highly than non-users: 78% of users and 63% of non-users rated long-distance services as 'very good' or 'fairly good'. Non-users were more likely to say that long-distance services were neither good nor poor (25% compared to 13% of users).



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets, excludes 'Don't know' responses
 Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

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

4.7 Fifty-two 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 we exclude those responses, the proportion of users and non-users are similar for most categories. Six per cent of users and 7% of non-users said that rail services had improved a lot over the past two years, and 58% of non-users and 57% of users said that long-distances rail services had stayed the same. Fifteen per cent of non-users and 11% of users said that long-distance train services had got a little, or a lot worse over the past two years.

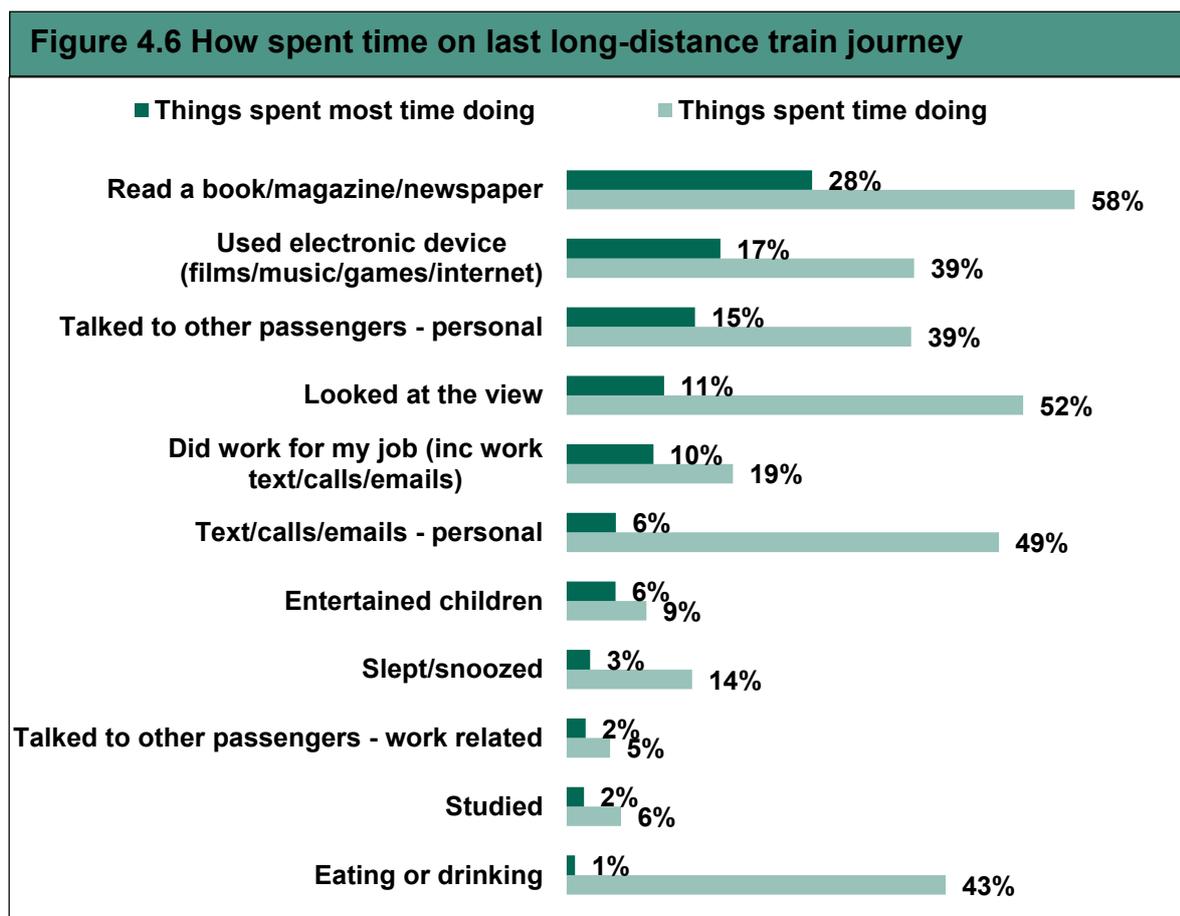


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets
 Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015
 Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses

- 4.8 There was no significant change in the proportion of users saying that long-distance rail services had improved over the last two years since the 2012 survey, however, 7% of non-users said that they had improved a lot in 2015 compared to 1% in 2012.
- 4.9 Users were then asked a further question about whether their recent experience of long-distance rail services had been better than they expected, worse than they expected or about the same as they expected. Twenty-seven per cent of long-distance rail users said that their recent experience had been better than they expected, 62% said they were as expected and 9% said that they were worse than expected (Table [ATT0420](#)).

Ways of passing time during long-distance rail journeys

- 4.10 The most popular ways that users had passed time on their last long-distance train journey included: reading books, magazines and newspapers (58%); looking at the view (52%); sending texts, making calls or sending emails for personal reasons (49%); eating or drinking (43%); talking to other passengers for personal reasons (39%); and, using an electronic device for films, music, games or the internet (39%). A majority of users (28%) said that they had spent most time reading.



Un-weighted base: long-distance train users (303)

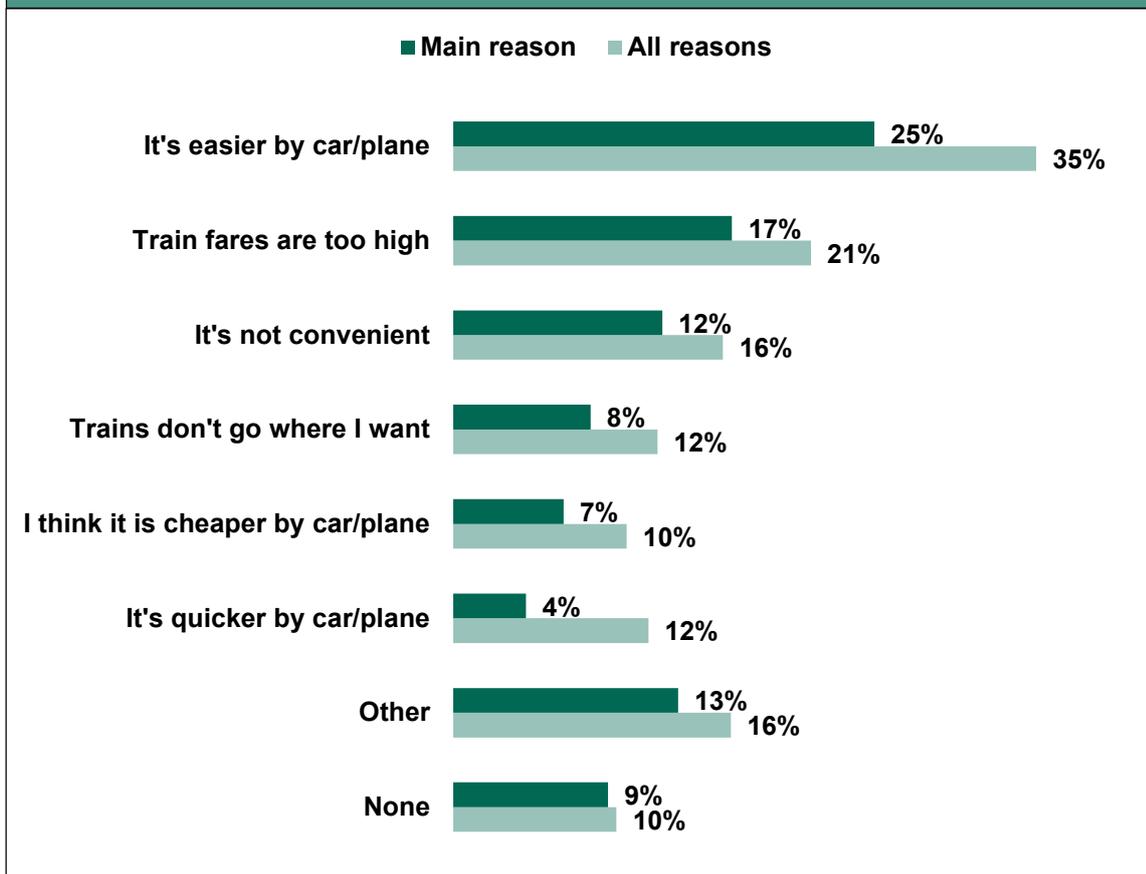
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

Note: respondents were able to provide more than one answer to the first question so responses may sum to more than 100%

Reasons for not using long-distance rail services more often

- 4.11 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). Ten per cent replied that there was no reason why they had not used long-distance trains (more often). Thirty-five per cent of infrequent users said it is easier to travel by car or plane than train and 21% reported that fares are too high.
- 4.12 When asked what the main reason was, a quarter said that it was easier by car or plane, 17% said that train fares were too high and 12% that it was not convenient. Eight per cent of infrequent users said that their main reason was because trains do not go where they want, while 7% said that they think it is cheaper by car or plane. Therefore, many of the main reasons are preferences for another mode such as car or plane or the cost of rail rather than negative aspects of rail travel.

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 were by train (287)

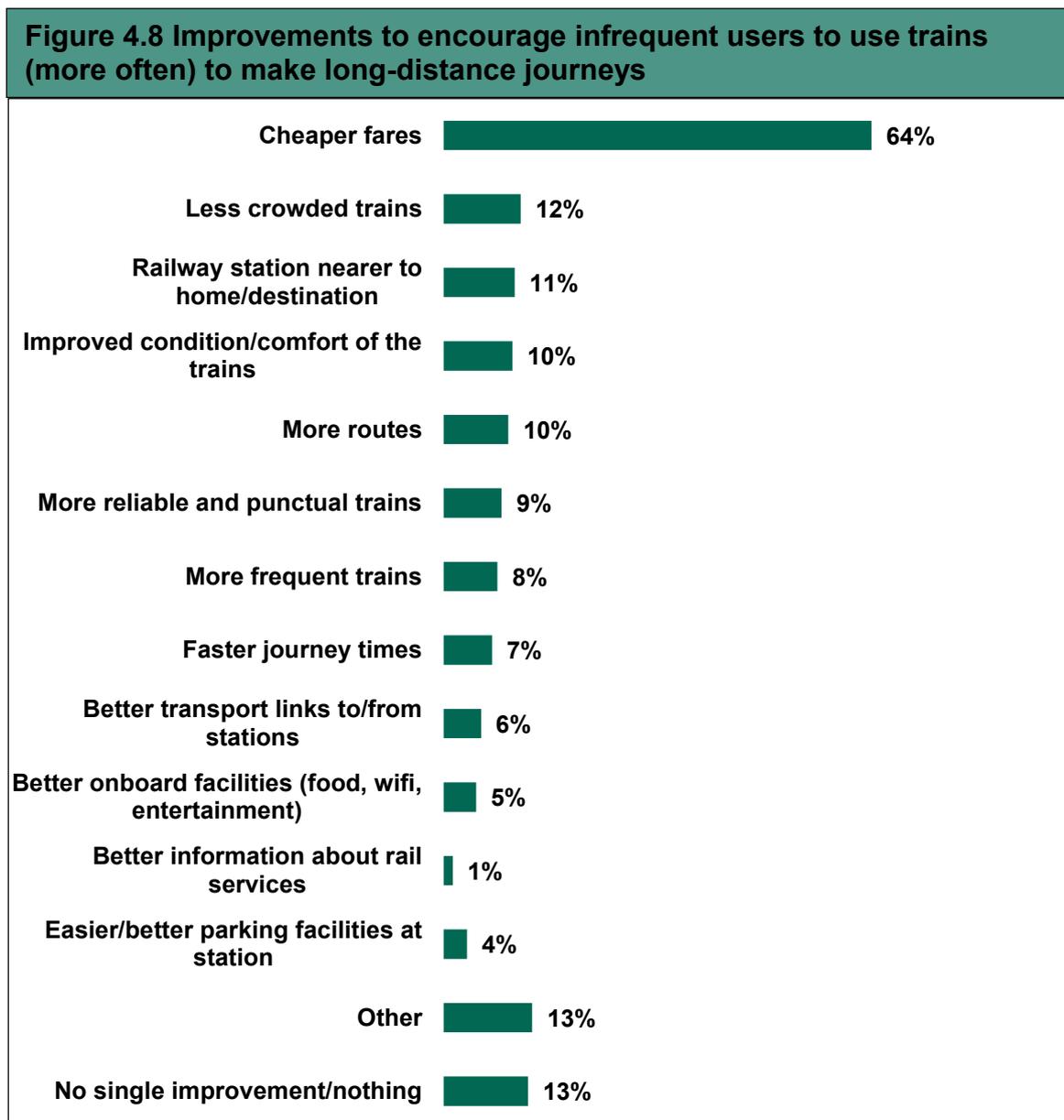
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

Notes: respondents were able to provide more than one answer so responses may sum to more than 100%. 'None' includes a number of adults who said they had no need to make more long-distance journeys. This is because the filter is based on a very approximate usage of long-distance journeys and what share was made by train. Answers with a response of less than 5% are not presented.

4.13 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, overcrowding, difficulty getting to the railway station and parking difficulties (Table [ATT0422](#)).

Improvements to encourage greater use of long-distance rail services

4.14 When asked what improvements would encourage them to use trains to make long-distance journeys (more often), the majority (64%) of infrequent users (including non-users) said cheaper fares. Thirteen per cent said that nothing would encourage them to use rail (more often).



Un-weighted base: have made long-distance journeys in the last year and not all of them were by train (287)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

Notes: respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, so responses may sum to more than 100%. 'None' includes a number of adults who said they have no need to make more long-distance journeys. This is because the filter is based on a very approximate usage of long-distance journeys and what share was made by train.

5. Train tickets

5.1 The final section of this report concerns attitudes towards train tickets, normal method of purchasing tickets and how tickets are normally collected if they are purchased online. It includes the number of ticket types, range, availability and ease of purchasing tickets and the information available about tickets.

Views on the number of types of train tickets available

5.2 When asked their opinion on the number of ticket types, 8% of rail users said there were too few ticket types, 55% thought there were about the right number, and 8% said they did not know. A larger proportion (37%) of non-users said they did not know whether the number of ticket types was right or not, and the share of non-users saying there were about the right number of tickets was also lower than for users (37%). If the non-users replying 'Don't know' are excluded, there are no significant differences between responses for users and non-users.



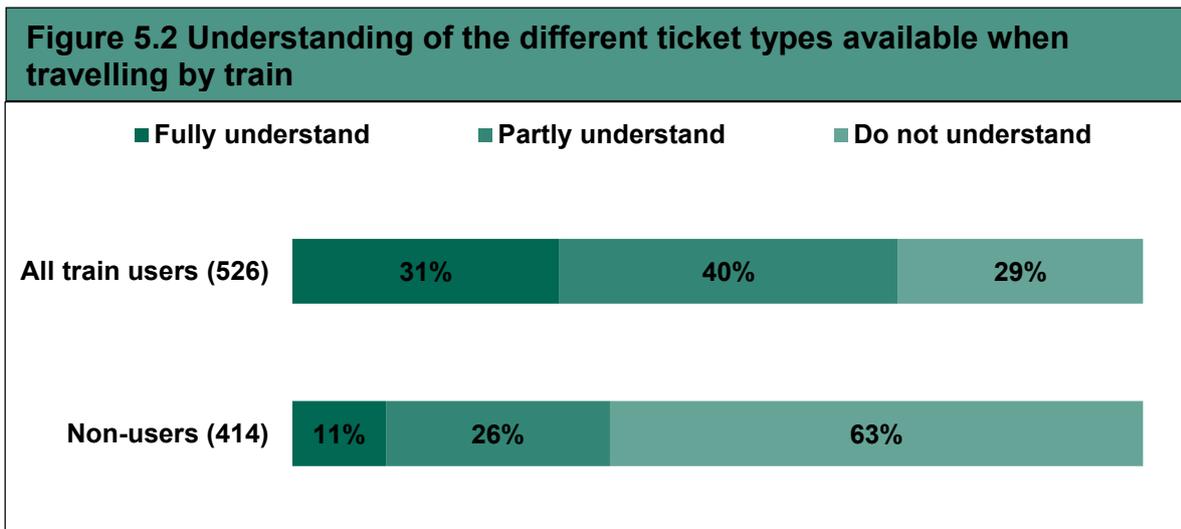
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

5.3 Almost a third (29%) of users thought that there were too many ticket types compared to 21% of non-users.

Understanding the different ticket types available

5.4 When asked to what extent they understood the range of tickets available, around a third of users said they either fully understood (31%) or that they did not understand (29%). Two in five (40%) said that they partly understood the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train. The majority of non-users (63%) said that they did not understand the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train, 26% said they partly understood and 11% said that they fully understood.



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

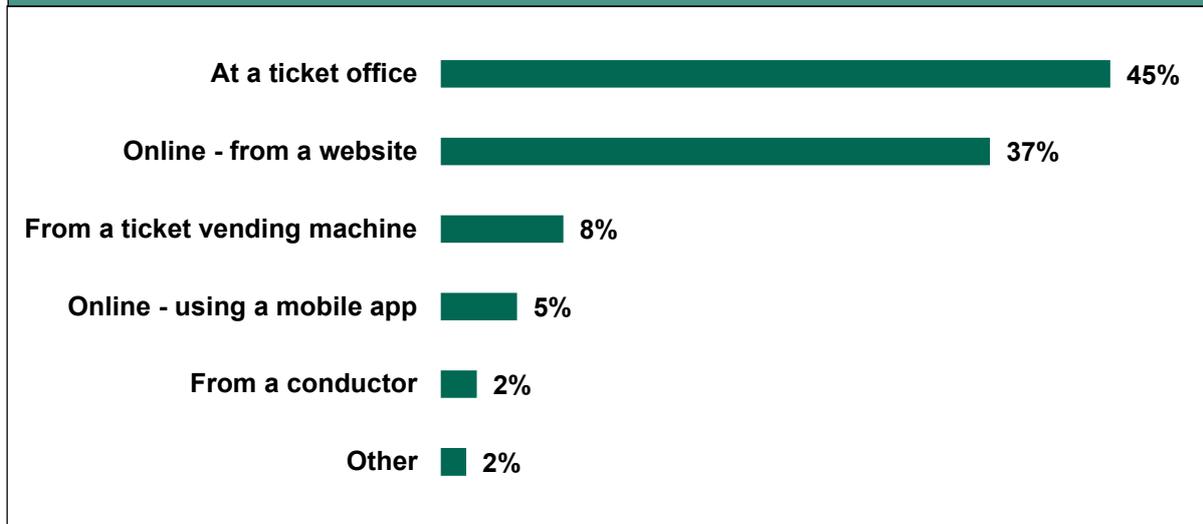
5.5 Since 2012, the proportion of users saying that they partly understood the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train increased from 33% to 40%. The proportion who said that they did not understand decreased from 35% in 2012 to 29% in 2015, but this change was not statistically significant.

Purchasing tickets

5.6 All respondents were asked what the main method they normally use was to purchase a train ticket and almost a third 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.

5.7 When those who don't buy rail tickets are excluded from the analysis, the most common method was at a ticket office (45%), with the second most common method of purchasing being online from a website (37%).

Figure 5.3 Main method used to normally purchase rail tickets



Un-weighted base: All respondents who purchase rail tickets (713)

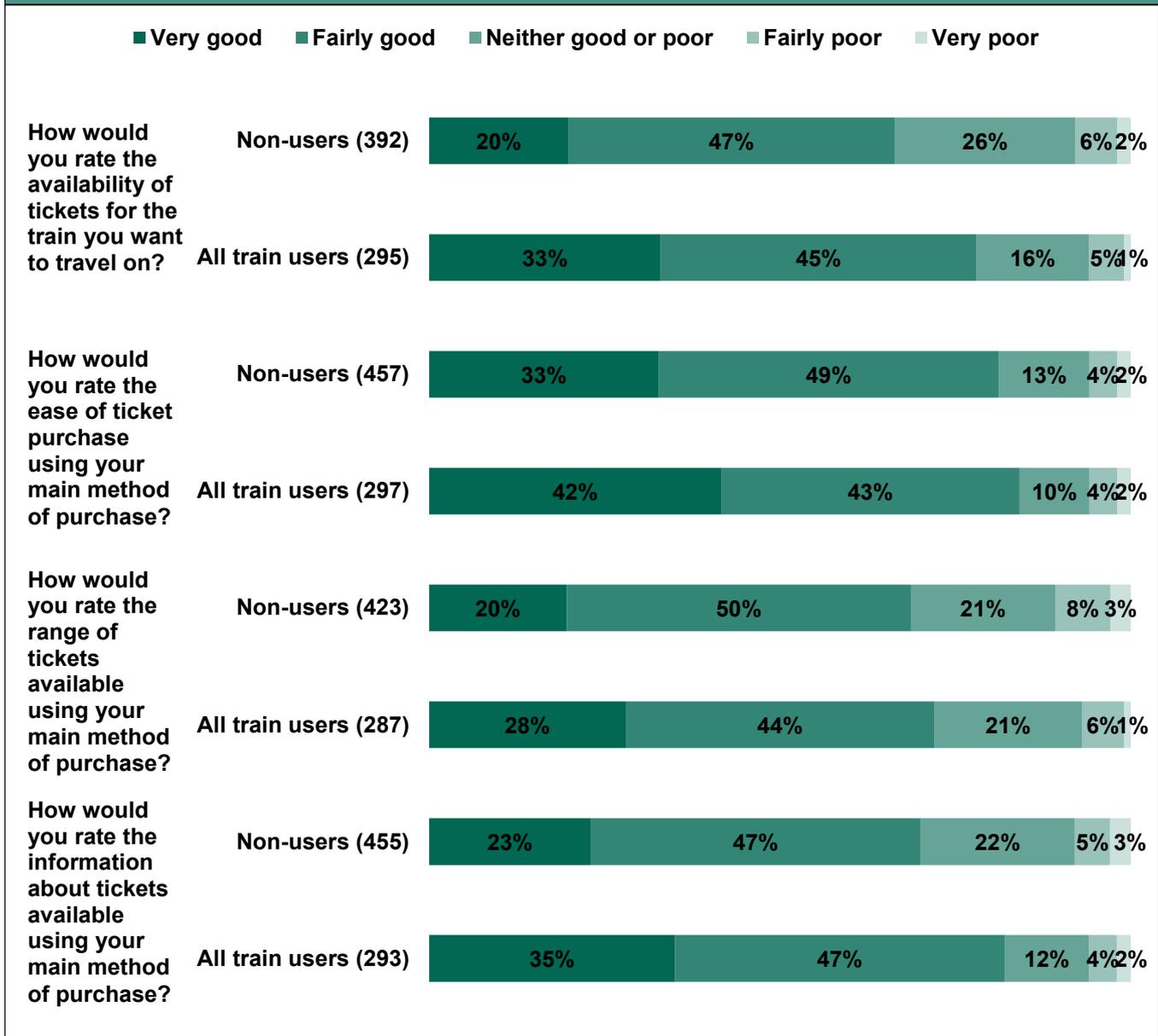
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

5.8 Of those who said that the main method they normally use to buy tickets was online, over half (51%) said that they normally collect them at a ticket vending machine, with 25% receiving them through the post. Sixteen per cent said that they normally receive tickets purchased online via a print at home barcode, with 8% saying they receive them via other means (Table [ATT0428](#)).

Ratings of aspects of train tickets

5.9 Respondents were asked to rate a range of aspects of train tickets using their main method of purchase: the availability of tickets for the train they wanted to travel on; information about tickets available; the range of tickets available; and, the ease of ticket purchase. Approximately one third of 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

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle survey, February 2015

5.10 Users rated the ease of purchasing tickets and the information available about tickets using their main method of purchasing more positively (85% and 82% respectively) than the availability of tickets and range of tickets available using their main method of purchase.

5.11 Users were more likely to rate the availability of tickets for the train they wanted to travel on positively than non-users (78% and 67% respectively); they were also more likely to rate the information about tickets available using their main method of purchase more positively than non-users (82% and 70% respectively).

5.12 Due to changes in the wording of these questions, comparisons cannot be made to 2012¹⁴.

¹⁴ 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.