

Public attitudes towards train services: results from the April 2012 Opinions Survey

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Summary of key findings

1. In April 2012, just over half (54 per cent) of the adults in Great Britain had used a train at least once in the previous twelve months. 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 London, in higher household income groups or within shorter walking distance of railway stations were more likely to have used rail.
2. Forty-five per cent of adults had used short distance rail services in the previous 12 months. These journeys were most often for the purposes of shopping, days out, visiting friends or relatives and other leisure trips.
3. The majority of adults (63 per cent) thought that short distance rail services had stayed the same over the previous two years and a similar number (61 per cent) thought that they would remain the same over the next two years¹. Overall, 72 per cent of users and 60 per cent of non-users rated the quality of short distance rail services positively. Users indicated that since 2009, the number of short distance destinations, information on fares before travelling and personal safety at stations had improved.
4. The main reasons infrequent users and non-users of short distance rail services gave for not using these more than once a month were because it is easier to use the car (31 per cent) or because they do not need to travel or use trains more often (28 per cent). Around half of non-users based their opinions on personal experience (51 per cent) and the majority (57 per cent) based their opinion on information from friends, family and colleagues: all of whom are more likely to report bad experiences rather than uneventful journeys. This may negatively influence non-users' perceptions of rail travel.
5. Users reported that speed and frequency of trains were the most valued aspects of short distance rail travel (40 per cent and 39 per cent respectively) and around a quarter valued the reliability or punctuality and general convenience. When asked what improvements might encourage infrequent users (and non-users) of short distance rail services to use these services (more), a majority said 'cheaper fares' (43 per cent) despite only nine per cent of these infrequent (and non-users)

¹ Excludes 'do not know' responses.

stating they did not use short distance rail services because train fares are too high.

6. We estimate that 27 per cent of adults had used long distance rail services in the previous 12 months. The most popular reasons for doing so were because it was quicker by train (44 per cent) or because it was easier by train (38 per cent). 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 Great Britain², it is likely that this is with respect to car travel. The most common purpose for long distance rail journeys was visiting friends or relatives (44 per cent).
7. Eighty per cent of users and 64 per cent of non-users rated the overall quality of long distance rail services positively. Asked whether they thought long distance rail services had improved or got worse over the last two years, results for users and non-users were very similar, with 63 per cent of non-users and users said that they thought services had stayed the same.
8. The most common ways of passing time on long distance journeys were reading a book, magazine or newspaper (69 per cent) or looking at the view (47 per cent). Reading was the activity that adults spent most time doing (40 per cent) and 11 per cent of users said that they spent most time doing work for their job.
9. Main reasons for not using long distance rail (more often) included it being easier to use alternative modes of transport (23 per cent), it not being convenient (20 per cent) and train fares being too high (16 per cent). As with short distance rail services, the proportion of non-users indicating that cheaper fares (62 per cent) would encourage them to use long distance rail services more (often) outweighed the proportion who had stated rail fares as the main reason they did not use services more (often) by a considerable measure.
10. Overall, 28 per cent of rail users and 23 per of non-users thought that there were too many ticket types available when travelling by rail. Since 2009 more users felt there were about the right number of ticket types and fewer thought there were too many ticket types. Approximately one third of users claimed to have fully understood (32 per cent), partly understood (33 per cent) or not understood (35 per cent) the different types of tickets available. The proportion of users who said they did not understand the range of different ticket types has fallen in the past three years, while the proportion who said they understood to some extent has increased.

² In 2010, car or van accounted for 64 per cent of the average number of trips made per year and 78 per cent of the average distance travelled. National Travel Survey tables [NTS0301](#) and [NTS0302](#).

11. Users rated the availability of tickets (80 per cent) and ease of purchasing tickets (78 per cent) more positively than the information available about tickets (61 per cent) or the range of tickets (51 per cent).

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The following report summarises adults' experiences of, and attitudes towards, rail travel in the United Kingdom. It considers short distance journeys of less than 50 miles 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 and what improvements would encourage them to use trains more often. 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 omnibus survey in February 2006, March 2009, and most recently April 2012.

The ONS Opinions Survey: methodology

- 1.3** The Opinions 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 April 2012, the survey achieved a response rate of 59 per cent (1,085 interviews).
- 1.4** The Opinions 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 Survey is 84-86 per cent 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.

Supporting materials

- 1.7** Tables supporting the data in the charts and commentary in this report table can be found at http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post_type=table&s=att04. The questions are presented in Annex A to this document which may be found in the same location.
- 1.8** This report also contains selected results from the Department for Transport's 2010 National Travel Survey (NTS), including the average number of rail trips and the average distance travelled by rail.

The National Travel Survey

- 12.** The NTS produces high quality National Statistics on how much people in Great Britain travel, how they travel and why they travel. It is the DfT'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 DfT since 2002.
- 13.** 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 2010, the survey achieved a standard response rate of 60 per cent. This equates to interviews with approximately 19,000 interviews in 8,100 households.
- 14.** Further data, themed fact sheets, details of the NTS methodology and other technical information may be found on the NTS homepage at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey>.

The National Passenger Survey

- 1.9** Passenger Focus runs the National Passenger Survey (NPS) twice a year³. Passenger opinions are collected from a representative sample of

³ See <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/national-passenger-survey-spring-2012-main-report> for more details.

Results are produced for each sector; routes within Train Operating Companies (TOCs), and national results including analysis by journey purpose, age and gender. However, as it is a passenger survey it does not provide information on the perceptions of non-users or why they do not use trains. In contrast, the Opinions survey is a survey of the general population which allows the comparison of results for rail users and non-users.

- 1.10** 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 significant⁴ at the 95 per cent level of confidence. These calculations assumed an average design factor (DEFT) of 1.2.

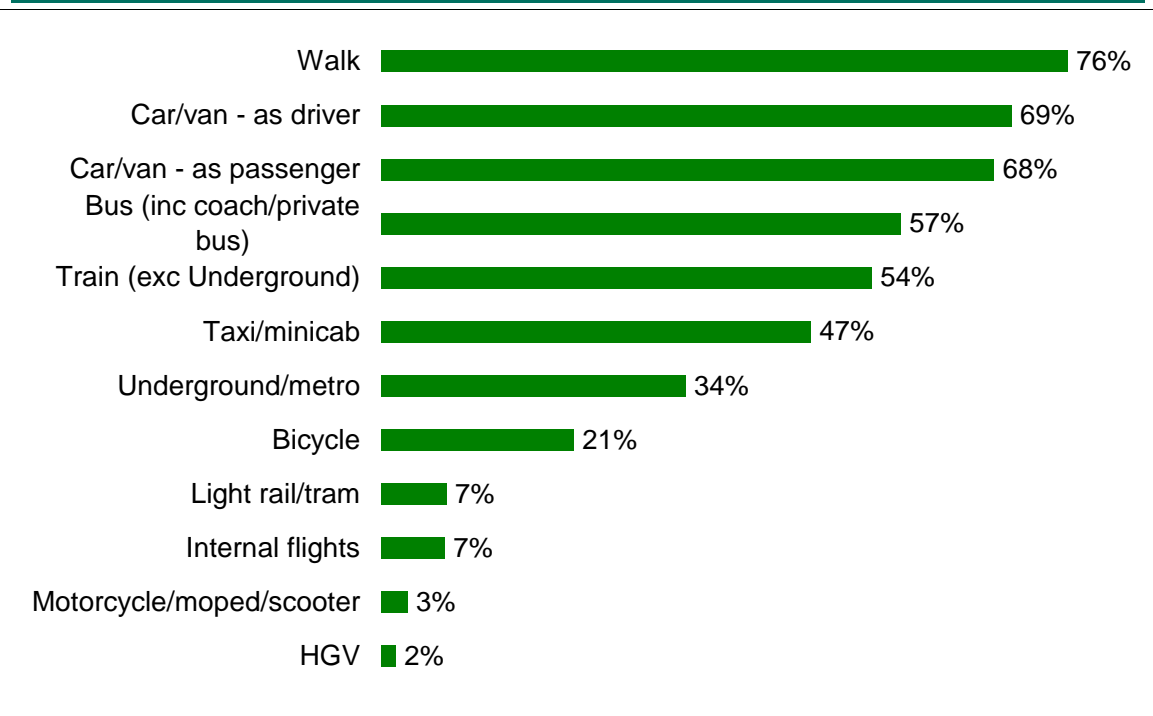
⁴ If a difference between two survey results is found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent level of confidence, it means that, if the survey were repeated a large number of times, we would expect the two results to be different on at least 95 per cent of occasions. This means that the difference 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 April 2012, just over half (54 per cent) of the adults in Great Britain had used a train at least once in the previous twelve months. This is not significantly different from the result for 2009 (55 per cent) but is higher than the result for 2006 (49 per cent).

Figure 2.1: methods of travel used in the previous 12 months



Un-weighted base: All respondents (1,084)

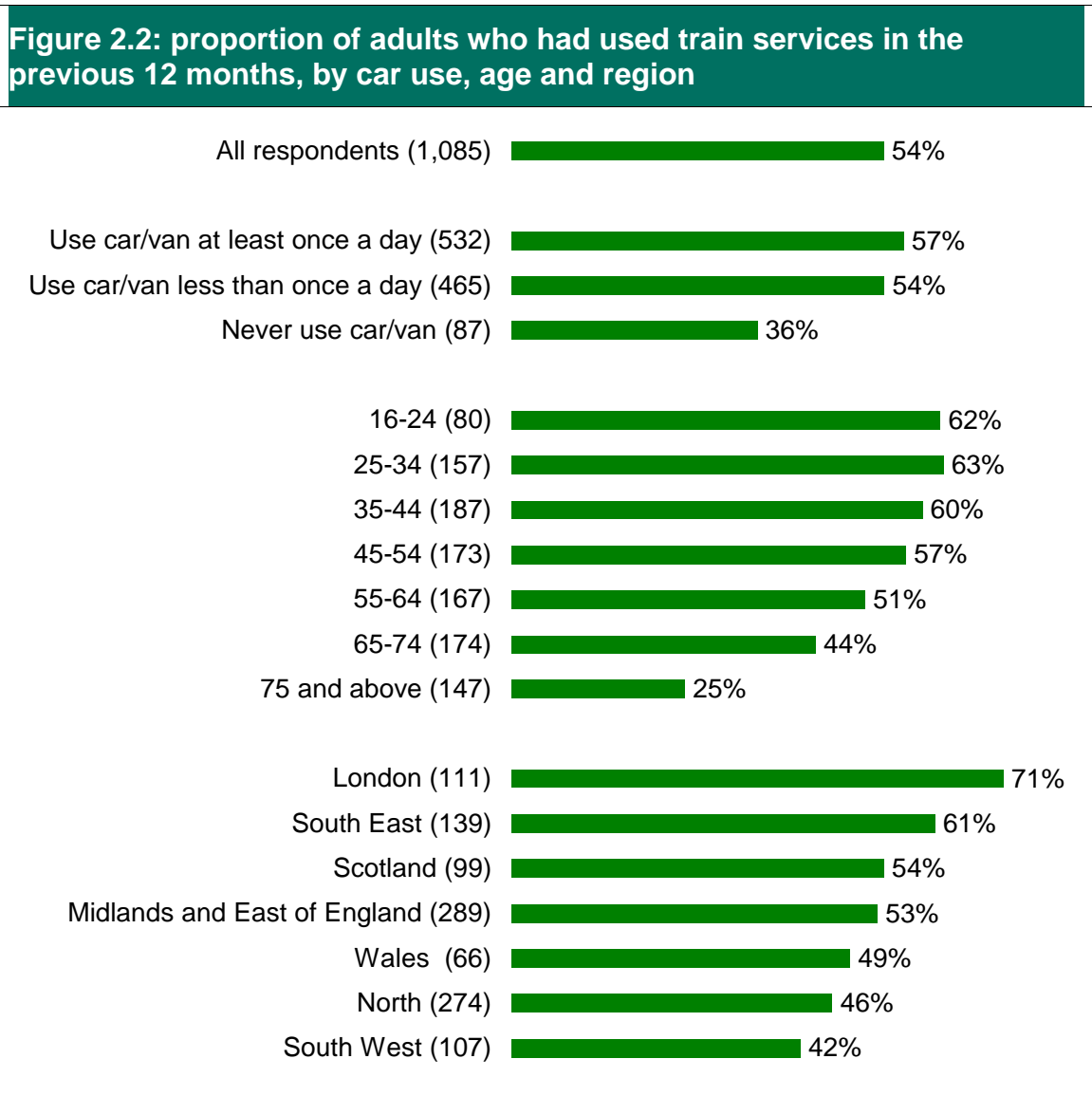
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

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 used trains less than other adults (36 per cent, compared to 55 per cent of those who travel by car)

although this group forms just eight per cent of the population and may be regarded as atypical. London had higher rail usage than the North; Midlands and East of England, and South West regions (71 per cent for London residents compared to 42-53 per cent in the other named regions).

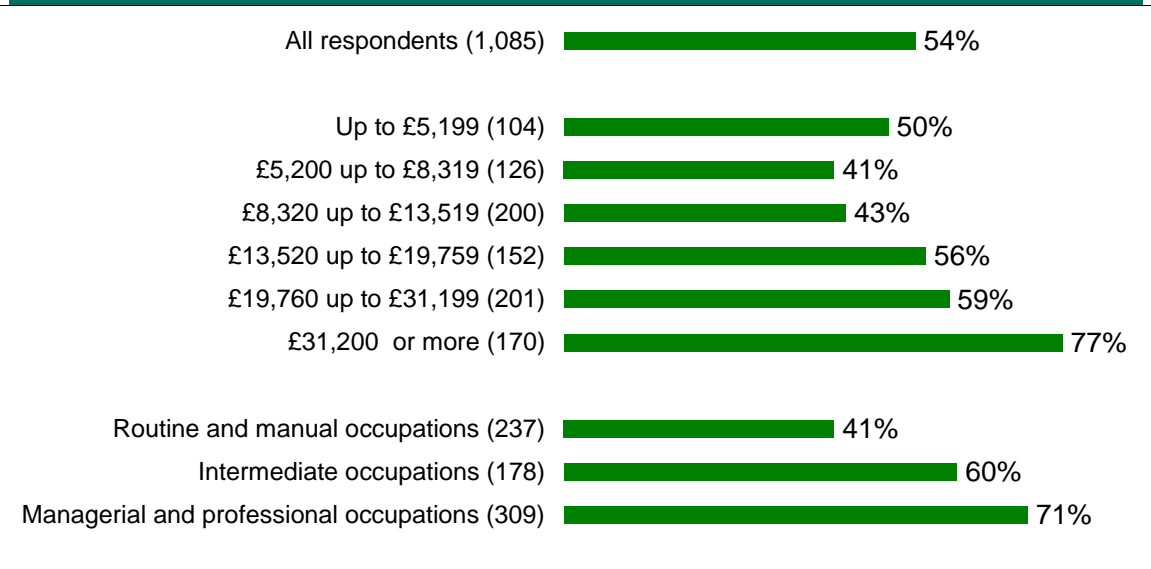
2.3 Fewer adults aged 75 and over used train services compared to the rest of the population: 25 per cent of those aged 75 and over reported having used rail in the previous 12 months, compared to 44-62 per cent of other age groups. Those aged 65 years and under, were at least twice as likely to have travelled by train in the previous year compared to those aged 75 and over.



Un-weighted base: All respondents (1,085)
 Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012
 Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

- 2.4** The 2010 National Travel Survey reported that 53 per cent of rail trips 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** Fewer adults in routine and manual occupations used trains: 41 per cent, compared to 60 per cent of those in intermediate occupations and 71 per cent of those in managerial and professional occupations.
- 2.6** Those in higher household income groups were more likely to have used rail than other adults. Seventy-seven per cent of Britons living in households with a gross annual income of £31,200 or more had used a train, compared to 41-59 per cent 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 (1,085)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

⁵ National Travel Survey: 2010, Why people travel <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010/nts2010-04.pdf>

2.7 NTS data confirms that those on higher incomes travel more 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. This is particularly true of rail travel (as illustrated in Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5). In 2010, the number of trips and distance travelled per person in the highest household income quintile was approximately twice the rate for all household income levels combined (35 trips compared to 19 trips, and 1,017 miles compared to 506 miles).

Figure 2.4: average number of surface rail trips by income quintile (per person, per year)

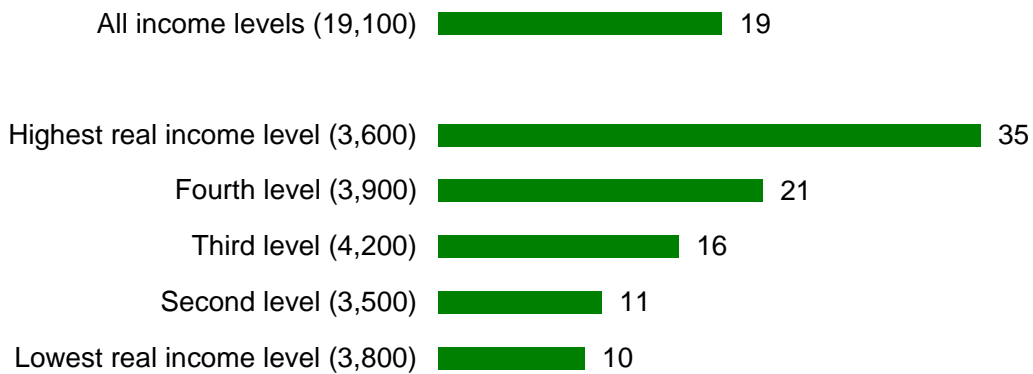
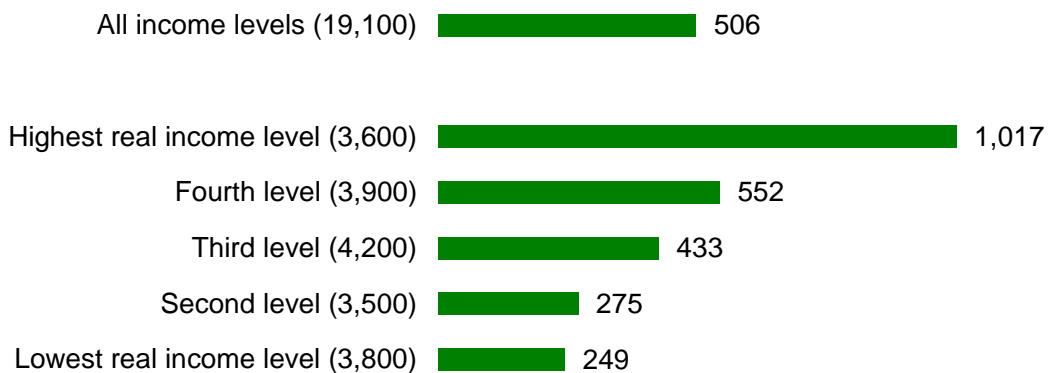


Figure 2.5: average distance travelled by surface rail by income quintile (number of miles per person, per year)



Un-weighted base: number of trips shown in brackets

Source: National Travel Survey, 2010

Notes: 'surface rail' includes London Overground, but excludes London Underground and light rail. Table [NTS0705](#) contains average trip data for all modes of travel by household income quintile. Figures 2.4 and 2.5 above vary from the published table where the definition of rail includes London Underground.

Use of rail services and proximity to the nearest station

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. Seventy-one per cent of those living within six minutes walk of the nearest railways station, 68 per cent of those living within 7-13 minutes of the nearest railways station were rail users and 57 per cent of those within 14-26 minutes walk of the nearest station were rail users. Just under half of those living more than 26 minutes walk from the nearest 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 station⁶



Un-weighted base: all respondents (1,063)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

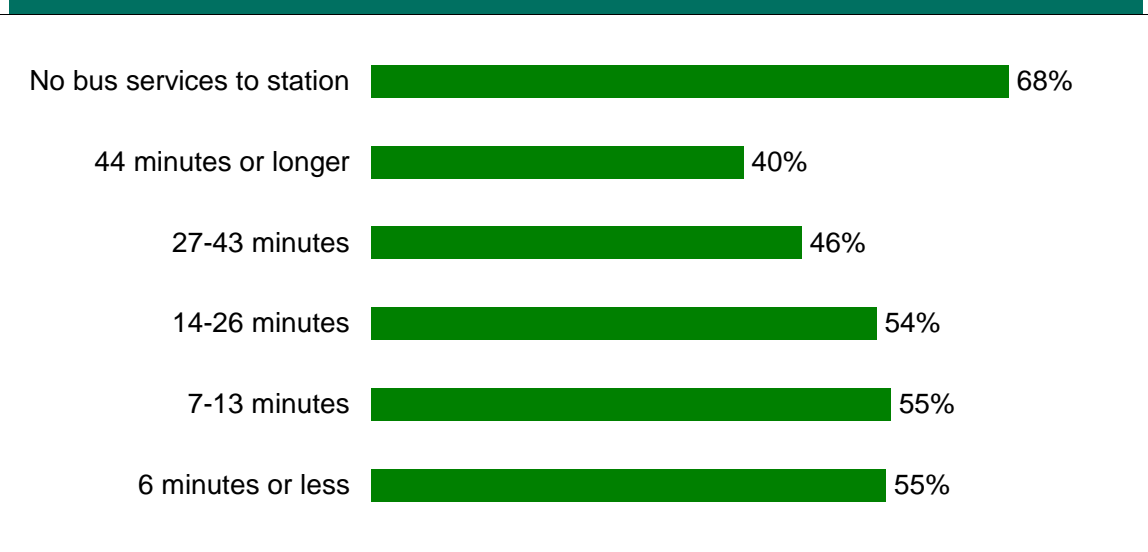
Notes: 'rail users' are defined here as those who had used rail services in the previous twelve months. Walking is based on the time taken by an 'average person'.

2.9 Twenty-eight per cent of adults lived within 13 minutes walk of the nearest rail station, 26 per cent lived within 14-26 minutes walk and 46 per cent lived more than 26 minutes walk from the nearest station (Table [ATT0402](#)).

⁶ Does not include Underground stations or specialist tourist stations such as steam railways.

2.10 The time taken to get to the nearest station by bus appears to have less influence on determining whether or not adults use the nearest railway station. Although those living in an area where it takes more than 26 minutes to get to the nearest station by bus appear to be less likely to have used rail in the previous year (40-46 per cent compared to 54-55 per cent) those living where there are no bus services to the nearest station are more likely to be users (68 per cent).

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



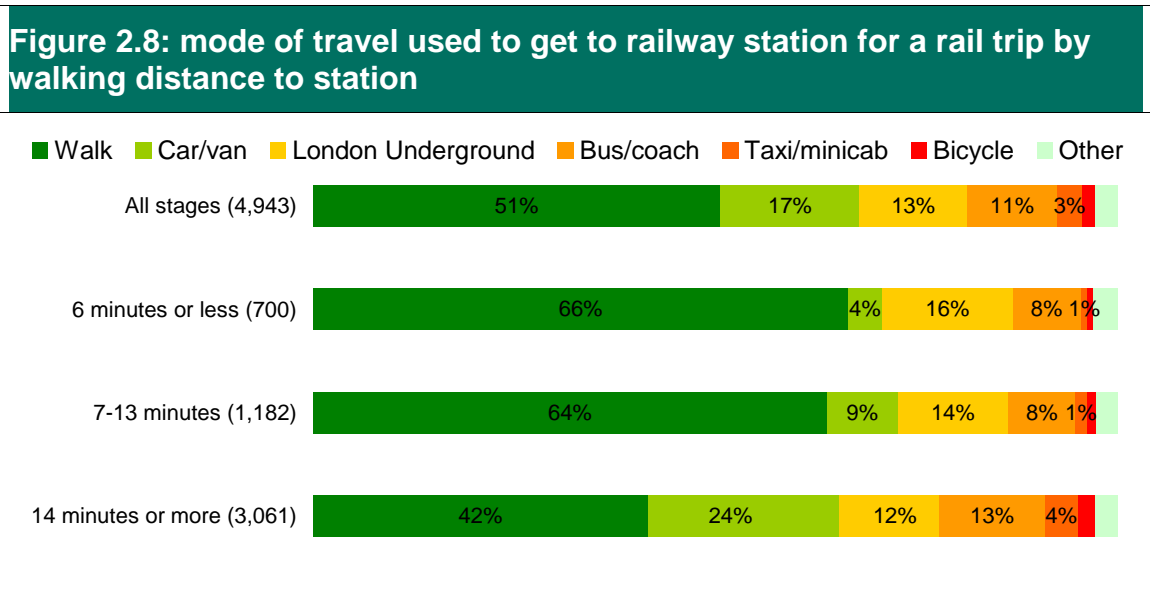
Un-weighted base: all respondents 1,003

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: 'rail users' are defined here as those who had 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:

- 66 per cent of rail trips originating within a six minute walking distance of the nearest railways station were preceded by a walk to the station;
- 64 per cent of rail trips originating within 7-13 minutes walking distance of the station were preceded by a walk to the station, and
- 42 per cent of rail trips originating at least 14 minutes walking distance from the station were preceded by a walk to the station. However, just 13 per cent 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 per cent).



Un-weighted base: trips shown in brackets

Source: National Travel Survey, Department for Transport

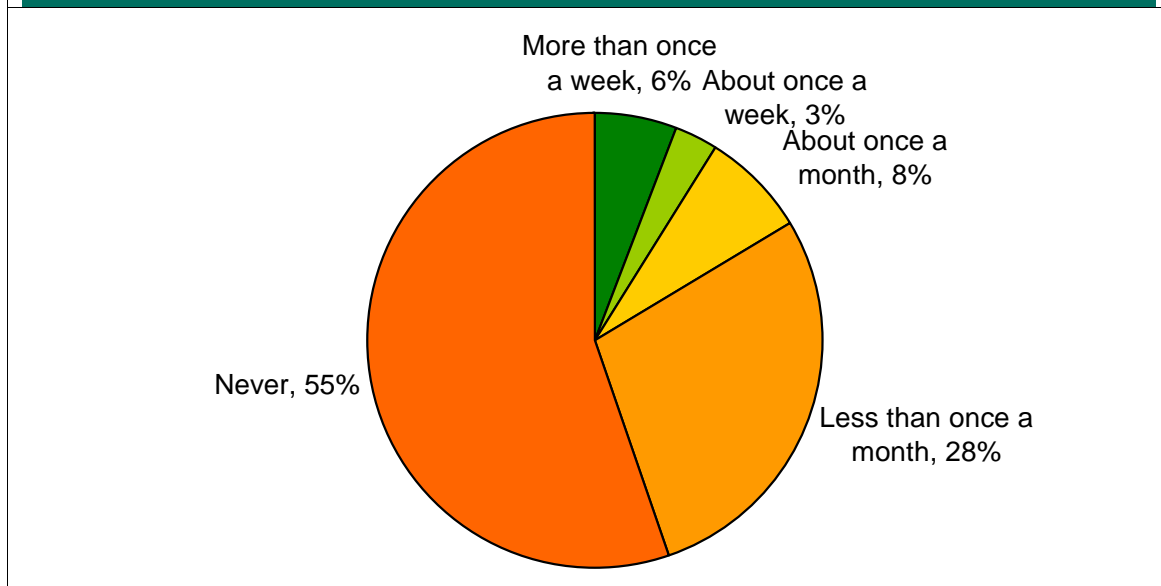
Notes: survey years 2002 to 2010 combined. Data labels for 'Bicycle' and 'Other' not presented. Based on 'day seven' travel records only. 'Other' = motorcycle, surface rail, light rail, air and all other modes of transport.

3. Short distance train services⁷

Frequency of use of short distance rail services

3.1 In April 2012, 45 per cent of adults said 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. Three per cent of adults said that they made short distance journeys by train about once a week and eight per cent said they used them about once a month. Just over a quarter of Britons said they use rail for short distance journeys less than once a month. These values were unchanged when compared to the 2009 results.

Figure 3.1: frequency of travelling by train for short distance journeys in the previous 12 months



Un-weighted base: All respondents (1,085)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

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.

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, the elderly and those in routine and manual occupations tend to use rail less frequently than others, whereas those on high incomes and living close to stations or in London tend to use rail for short distance journeys more frequently.

Purpose of short distance rail use

3.3 When asked what types of short distance journey they had made by rail, the most popular responses were shopping (38 per cent of users), days out (36 per cent of users) and visiting friends and relatives (32 per cent of users). Nine per cent of users had used rail to make short distance business journeys; nine per cent had used rail for commuting short distances on a daily basis and eight per cent used rail for commuting short distances on a less regular basis. Only three per cent of users had used rail to travel short distances for educational purposes, although as the Opinions 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 (459)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

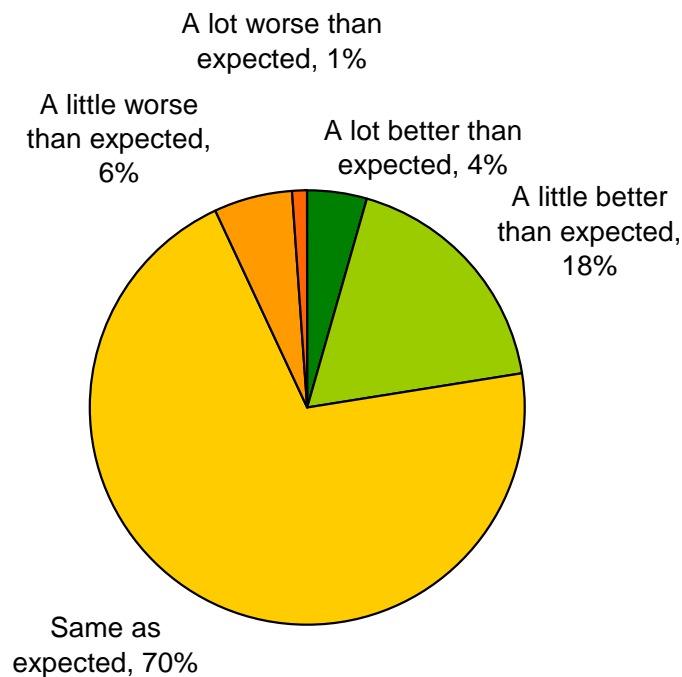
Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%. The results of this question are not directly comparable to earlier results owing to a number of small changes to the interviewer pre-codes in 2012:

- 'Travelling to/from work was split into 'daily commuting to/from work' and 'less regular (than daily) commuting to/from work', and
- A new category was added in to allow the 'shopping trip' to be identified from 'personal business'.

Experiences of short distance rail services

3.4 As seen in Figure 3.3, the majority (70 per cent) of short distance rail users reported that their recent experiences of rail travel met their expectations. In contrast, 23 per cent said that their experience had been better than they had expected and seven per cent said that their experience had been worse than they had expected. This was unchanged when compared to 2009.

Figure 3.3: recent experience of short distance rail services versus expectations



Un-weighted base: short distance train users (458)

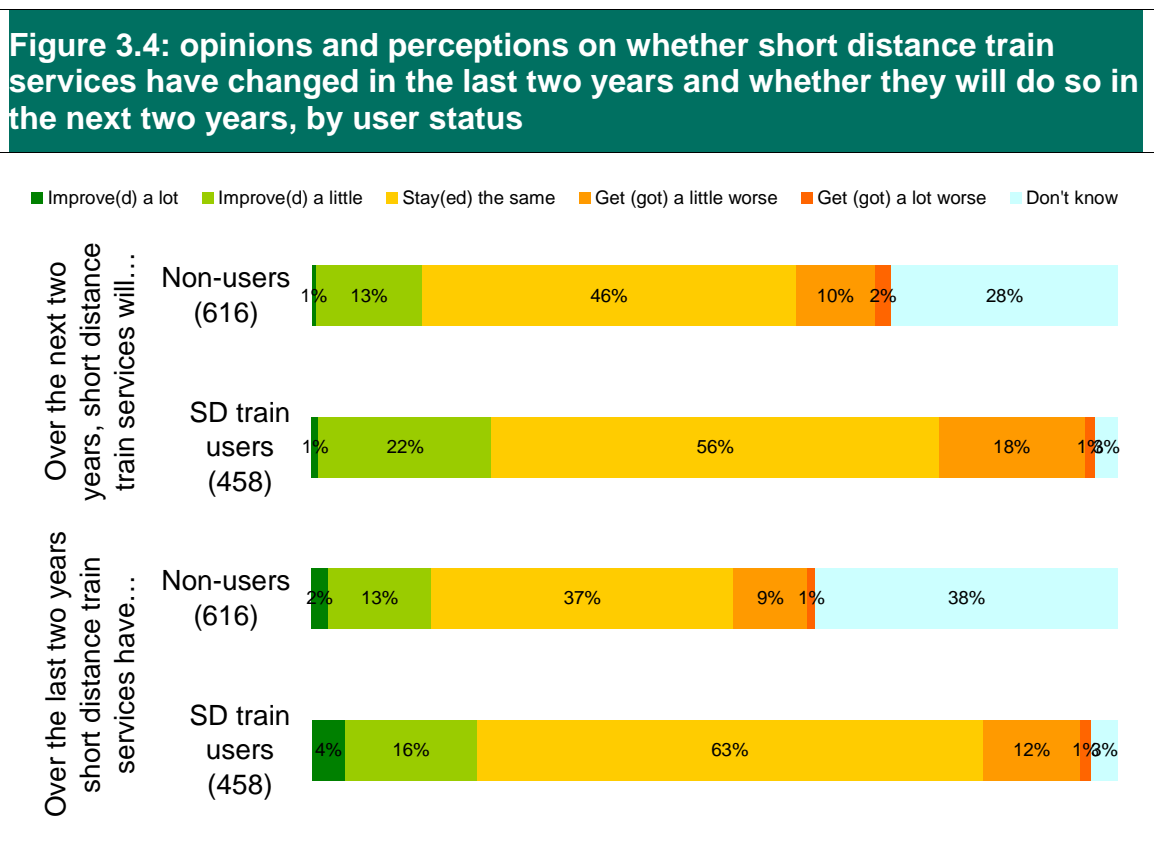
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

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, 73 per cent of rail users reported that this had stayed the same. Thirteen per cent of rail users said that the number of journeys they made using short distance rail had increased and 14 per cent said that this had decreased. One per cent of rail users said the number of short distance rail journeys they made fluctuated over the year.

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. Thirty-eight per cent of non-users said they did not know whether services had changed over the previous two years and 28 per cent said they did not know if they would change over the next two years.



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

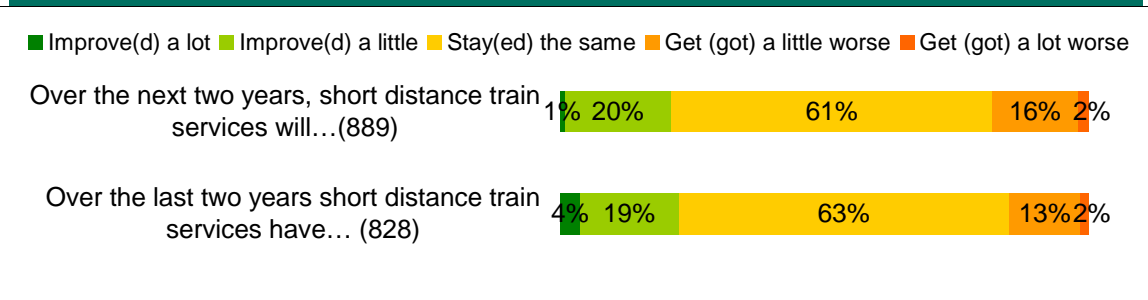
3.7 However, if we exclude the 'don't know' responses from the analysis, there are no significant differences between the responses for non-users and users and overall:

- Four per cent of adults said that short distance rail services had improved a lot over the previous two years, 19 per cent said they had improved a little, 63 per cent said that they has stayed the same, 13 per cent said they were a little worse and two per cent said they were a lot worse, and
- One per cent of adults said that over the next two years they expected short distance rail services to improve a lot, 20 per cent thought they would improve a little, 61 per cent thought they would stay the same, 16 per cent thought they would get a little worse and two per cent said they expected them to get a lot worse.

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

3.8 Overall, 22 per cent of adults with an opinion said that short distance train services had improved over the past two years, 63 per cent said they had stayed the same and 15 per cent said they had got worse. Looking ahead to the next two years, 21 per cent of adults with an opinion expected services to improve, 61 per cent thought they would stay the same and 18 per cent thought they would get worse.

Figure 3.5: 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



Un-weighted base: all respondents excluding 'don't know' (count shown in brackets)
 Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

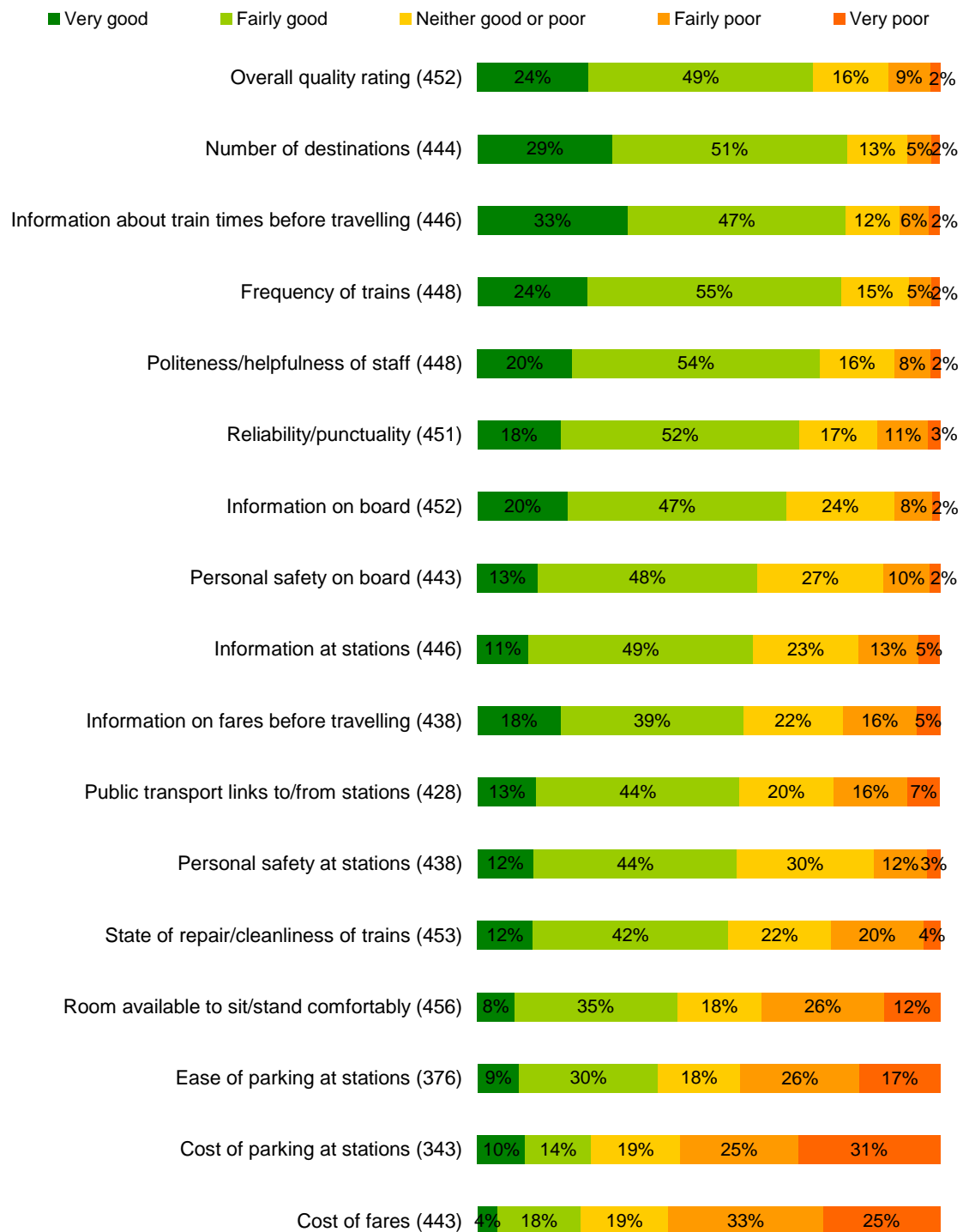
Ratings of aspects of short distance rail services

- 3.9** Overall, 72 per cent of short distance rail users rated the quality of short distance train journeys as 'very good' or 'fairly good'; 16 per cent said that the overall quality was neither good nor poor, and 11 per cent rated services as 'fairly poor' or 'very poor'⁸. Two per cent of users said they did not know how to rate the overall quality of short distance train journeys.
- 3.10** In order to compare the experiences of users and the perceptions of non-users, the following analysis of adult's 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.
- 3.11** Excluding 'don't know' responses, 73 per cent of users rated short distance rail services positively and 11 per cent rated them as poor. This was not significantly different from the 2009 result.
- 3.12** The features rated most positively by short distance rail users included the number of destinations (80 per cent), the information available about train times before travelling (80 per cent) and the frequency of trains (79 per cent). The cost of fares, the cost of parking at stations and the ease of parking at stations were rated most negatively, with 59 per cent, 56 per cent and 43 per cent of short distance rail users respectively rating these items as poor.
- 3.13** Compared to the results from 2009:
- The proportion of users rating the number of short distance destinations as good had increased from 71 per cent to 80 per cent in 2012;
 - Short distance rail users were more positive about the information available on fares before travelling (58 per cent compared to 48 per cent), and
 - Short distance rail users were more likely to rate personal safety at stations positively, increasing from 47 per cent to 56 per cent in 2012.

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'.

- 3.14** None of the listed items were rated less favourably than in 2009, indicating that users of short distance train services have found them no worse than they were three years ago.
- 3.15** The cost of parking, state of repair and cleanliness of trains and room available to sit or stand comfortably were new questions in 2012. As noted above in paragraph 3.12, the cost of car parking is generally perceived to be poor: Twenty-five per cent of users rated this positively and 56 per cent rated this negatively, producing an overall net rating of poor (32 per cent). Just over half (54 per cent) of users rated the state of repair and cleanliness of trains positively, 22 per cent had no clear opinion and 24 per cent rated this as poor. Forty-three per cent of users rated having the room available to sit or stand positively, 18 per cent had no clear opinion and 39 per cent reported that this was poor.

Figure 3.6: user rating of selected aspects of short distance train services



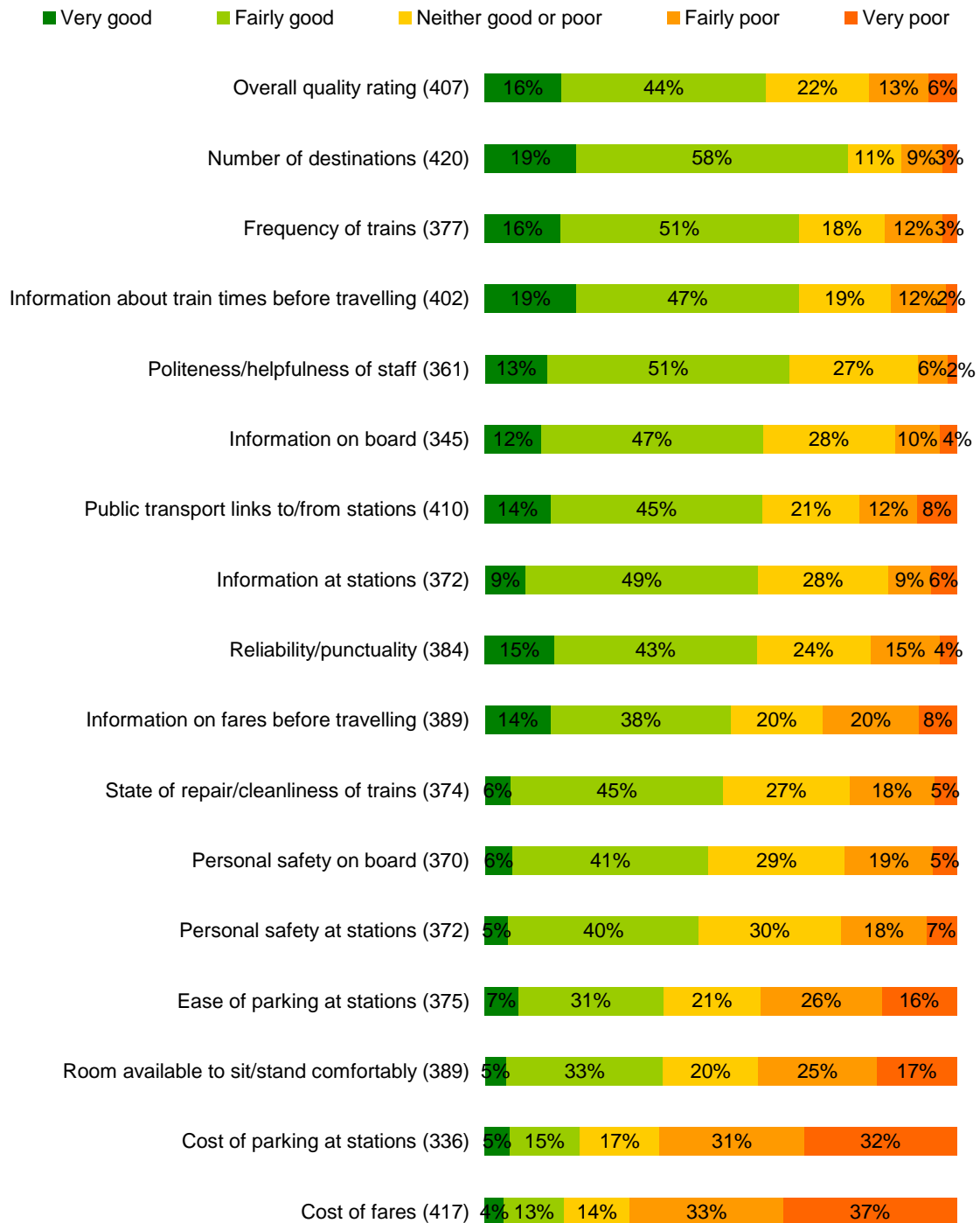
Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses.

- 3.16** Excluding 'don't know' responses, 60 per cent of non-users rated short distance rail services positively, 22 per cent had no clear opinion and 19 per cent rated them as poor. This was not significantly different from the 2009 result. Non-users are more likely to rate services negatively rather than positively when compared to users.
- 3.17** The most and least positive ratings from non-users of short distance rail services were in the same order as for users: the number of destinations (77 per cent), information about train times before travelling (67 per cent) and frequency of trains (67 per cent) were rated as very or fairly good; and the cost of fares (69 per cent), cost of car parking (63 per cent) and ease of car parking (42 per cent) were rated as fairly or very poor.
- 3.18** There were no changes in the ratings of non-users between 2009 and 2012.

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



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

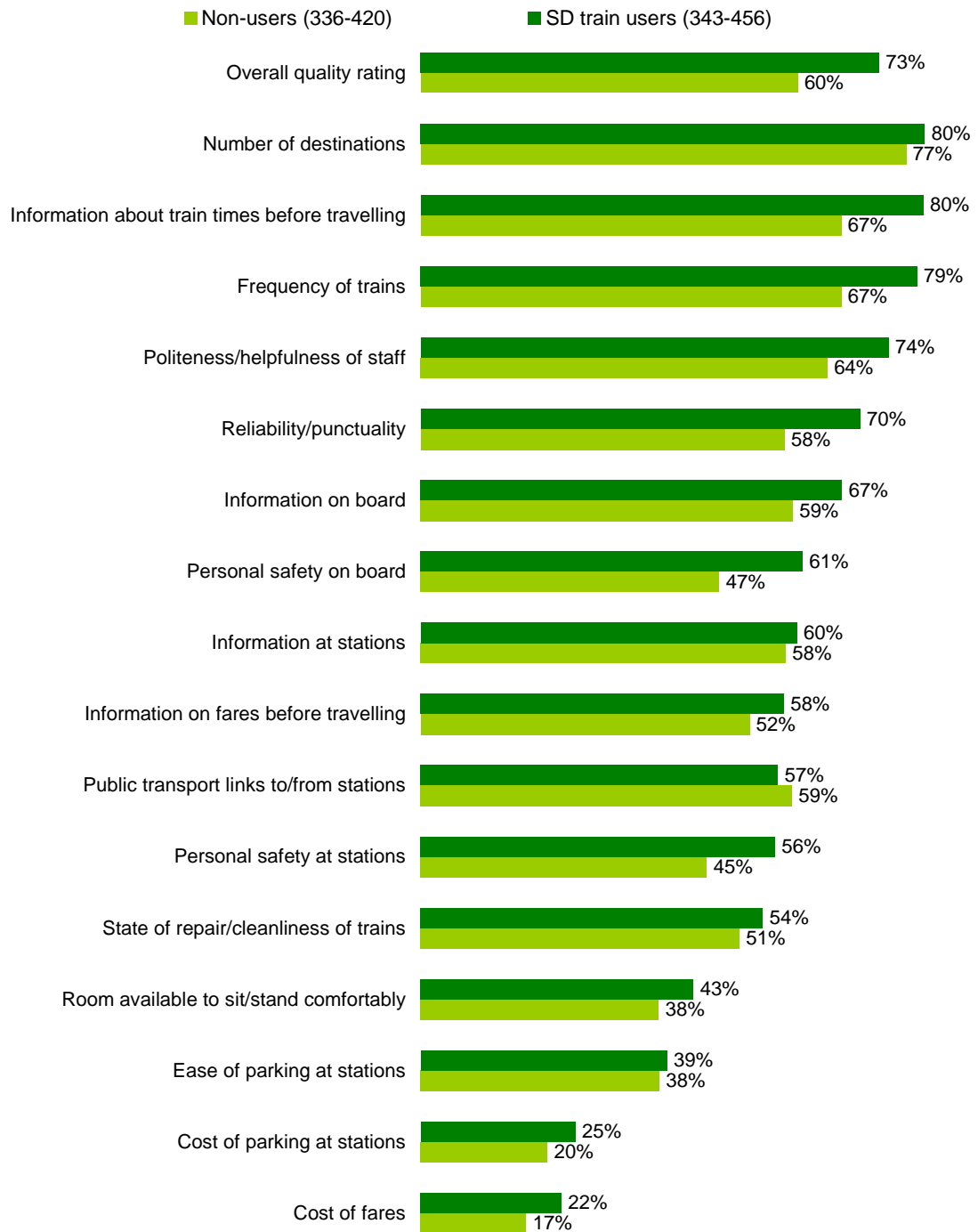
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses.

3.19 As illustrated in Figure 3.7, there are a number of instances where ratings for users and non-users of short distance rail services differ, with users supplying more positive ratings:

- Nine per cent of users rated the number of destinations poorly compared to 12 per cent of non-users;
- Users were more positive about the information available about train times before travelling (80 per cent versus 67 per cent from non-users);
- Users were more likely to rate the politeness of staff as good than non-users (79 per cent compared to 67 per cent);
- Users were more likely to rate the reliability and punctuality of short distance rail services positively (70 per cent of users and 58 per cent of non-users);
- 21 per cent of users rated the information available on fares before travelling negatively compared to 28 per cent of non-users, and
- Users rated personal safety on board the train more highly than non-users (61 per cent compared to 47 per cent of non-users) and also rated personal safety at the station more highly (56 per cent compared to 45 per cent 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: range shown in brackets, see Table [ATT0410](#) for exact base numbers

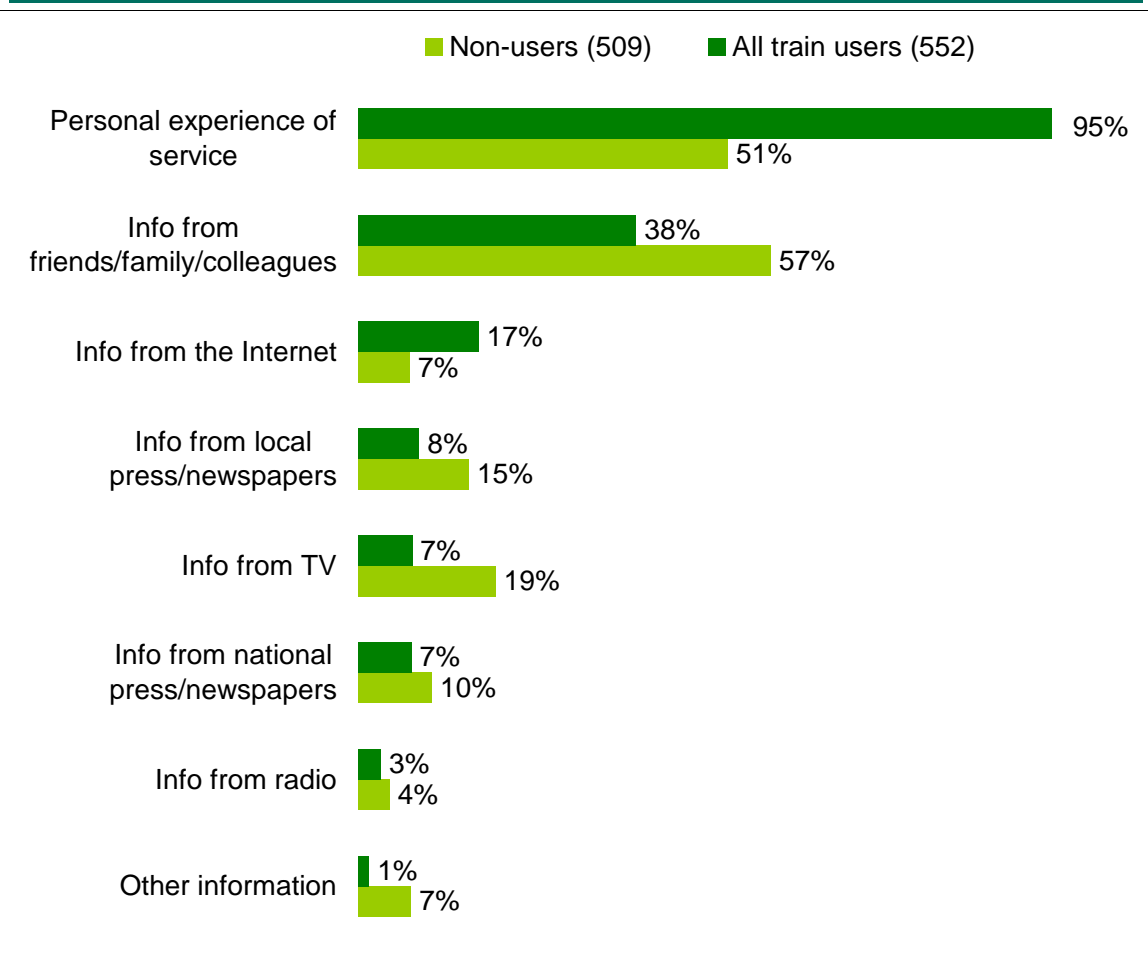
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: excludes 'Don't know' responses.

Basis of views on short distance rail services

3.20 Nearly all (95 per cent) rail users based their opinions about rail services on personal experience compared to around half (51 per cent) of non-users. Users were also approximately twice as likely to base their views on information from the internet. Non-users were more likely than users to have based their views on information from friends, family and colleagues; the local press and television.

Figure 3.9: basis of opinions



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

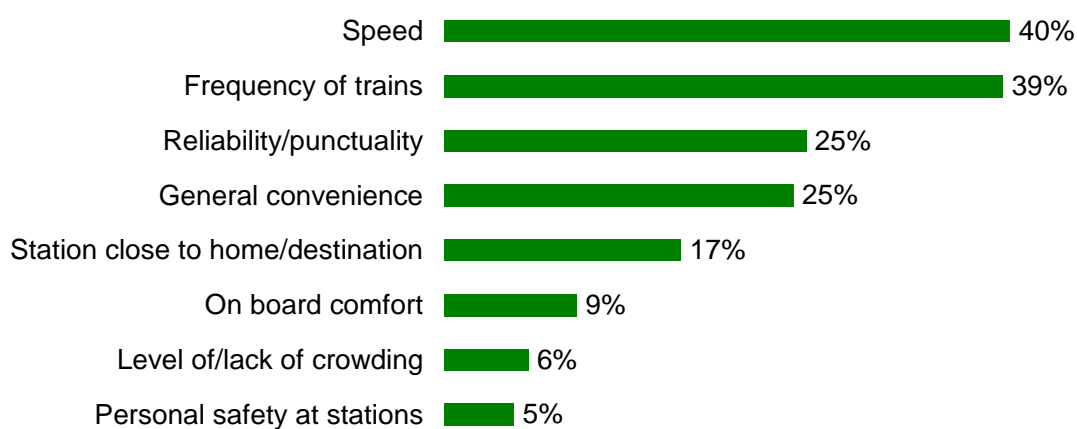
Note: respondents could choose up to 3 answers so responses may sum to more than 100%

3.21 The show card for this question was simplified in 2012 by merging the two categories 'what you have seen on TV news' and 'what you have seen on other programmes' into 'what you have seen on TV'.

Features valued by short distance rail service users

3.22 When asked what they most value about short distance rail services, 40 per cent of regular users⁹ said it was the fastest way to make the journey, 39 per cent said that trains are frequent, 25 per cent each reported the reliability and punctuality of trains and 25 per cent valued the general convenience.

Figure 3.10: most popular features of short distance train services



Un-weighted base: use short distance train services at least once a month (170)
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012
Notes: respondents could select up to three answers, so results may sum to more than 100%. Answers identified by less than five per cent of respondents are not presented here. See Table [ATT0412](#) for all categories.

3.23 Four per cent of regular users valued the cost of fares highly, three per cent valued not having to drive (because it was stressful, they wanted to drink alcohol or avoid parking costs), three per cent liked being able to do things such as reading or working and three per cent valued the information at stations. Two per cent of regular users mentioned a range of 'other' items including being able to watch the views from the window.

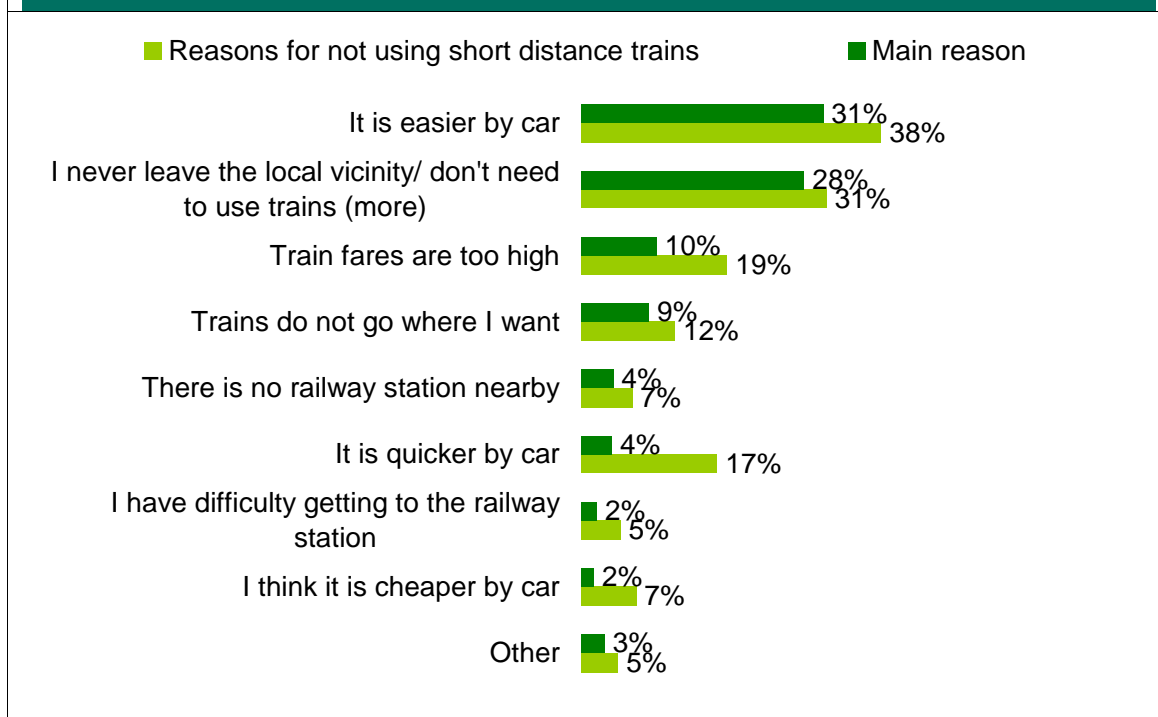
⁹ Regular short distance rail users reported travelling by short distance rail services at least once a month.

- 3.24** The pre-codes for this question were amended in 2012 to shorten the list of pre-codes from 16 to 12. This was achieved by:
- Removing 'I feel safe on the trains', 'number of routes' and 'staff are polite and helpful', and
 - Merging 'railway station is near to home' and 'railway station nearer to my destination'.
- 3.25** Removing pre-codes does not prevent respondents from giving these answers as this is not a show card question. Any answers not fitting into one of the listed pre-codes would be recorded as 'other' along with a short text description. If there are a large number of similar 'other' answers when the data are analysed, they are coded into a new category. Limiting the list of pre-codes to a short list does mean that interviewers can identify the correct category more easily, and therefore have a greater chance of coding items correctly and improving data quality. The decisions on which pre-codes would be dropped were based on which categories had a low proportion of responses in 2009.
- 3.26** Of the categories that can be directly compared to the 2009 result the only change was that regular users were more likely to value the speed of the journey (40 per cent). This was up from 23 per cent in 2009, but was not significantly different from the result of 34 per cent in 2006. This may be a trend change or a difference resulting from the improved coding frame.

Reasons for not using short distance rail services more often

3.27 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' (38 per cent) and a large number said that they simply do not need to use trains more often (28 per cent). Ten per cent of infrequent users said that train fares were too high to use them (more often), and nine per cent said that trains do not go where they need to go.

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 (905)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: respondents could select up to three answers, so results may sum to more than 100%. Reasons identified by less than five per cent of respondents are not presented here. See Table [ATT0413](#) for full details.

3.28 Four per cent of infrequent short distance rail users preferred to use an alternative mode. This was because they had already invested in a car, had a concessionary pass that allowed them free bus travel, because the bus stopped nearer their destination or was easier to use. Other 'main' reasons for not using short distance rail services (more often) given by one per cent of infrequent users included poor public transport links

to/from stations, trains not running frequently enough or overcrowding. One per cent of infrequent users stated the main reason they did not use short distance rail services (more often) as accessibility. This was owing to difficulties caused by ill health, old age or disabilities, and the lack of step free access to platforms and onboard space for buggies. A small number of respondents said they needed to carry equipment or tools for work purposes [and needed to use a car or van to do so].

3.29 This question was amended in 2012 to shorten the list of pre-codes that interviewers use to code respondents answers from 20 items to 13 items:

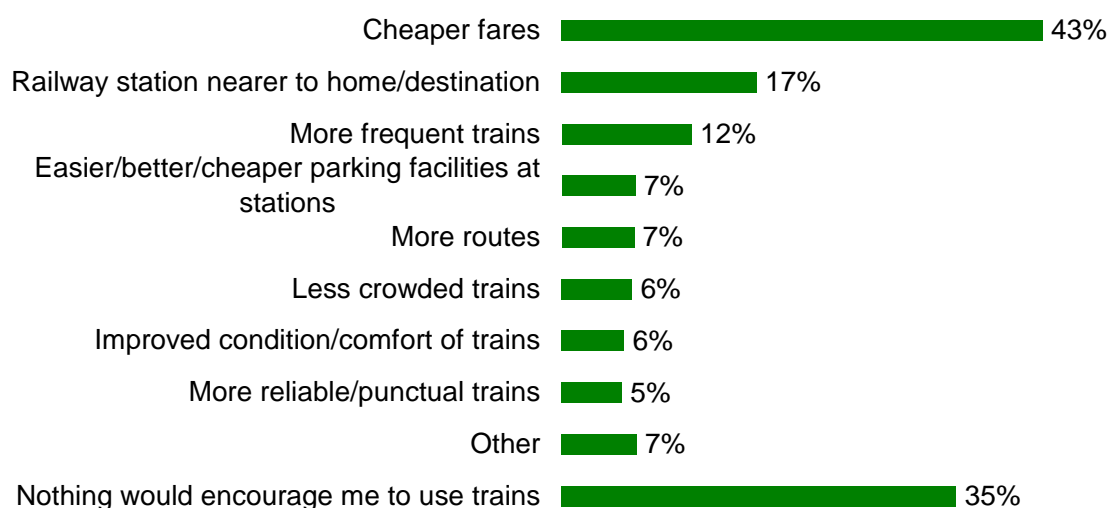
- 'I don't know what train services are available'; 'trains aren't reliable enough'; 'I have difficulty getting on and off trains'; 'I don't feel safe on the trains'; 'I don't feel safe at railway stations'; 'trains are not in good condition/very comfortable', and 'lack of information about how to make whole journey (door to door)' were removed; and
- 'I never leave the local vicinity' was amended to 'I never leave the local vicinity/ do not need to use trains'.

3.30 In 2009, seven per cent of respondents said they never left the local vicinity and six per cent said that they did not need to use the train. When these categories were grouped together in 2012, 31 per cent of responses were coded thus. This may indicate a trend change or may simply be an effect of the changes to the coding frame. A number of 'other' responses where respondents stated that had 'no need to' travel by short distance train were also moved into this category in 2012.

Improvements to encourage greater use of short distance rail services

3.31 Nearly half (43 per cent) of infrequent short distance rail users identified cheaper fares as an improvement that would encourage them to use them more often and around one third (35 per cent) 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 (889)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Notes: respondents could choose up to 3 features so responses may sum to more than 100%. Answers identified by less than five per cent of respondents are not presented here. See Table [ATT0414](#) for all categories.

3.32 Four per cent of infrequent users of short distance rail services suggested that better information about services might encourage them to use trains more (often), three per cent suggested improving personal safety at stations, two per cent mentioned better bus links to and from stations and two per cent mentioned faster journey times. 'Other' suggestions included special offers, free concessionary travel for the elderly or children, and lifts and other facilities to improve accessibility at stations or on board trains.

3.33 This question was amended in 2012 to shorten the list of pre-codes that interviewers use to code respondents answers from 19 items to 13 items. This was done by:

- Removing 'better personal safety on trains'; 'friendlier/more helpful staff'; 'easier for older/disabled adults to get on and off'; 'better information about whole journey (door to door)' and 'better transport links to/from stations';
- Merging 'railway station nearer to home' and 'railway station nearer to destination', and
- Amending 'easier parking' into 'easier/better parking facilities at stations'.

3.34 Two-thirds of those who currently travel infrequently by short distance train service (less than once a month) and 59 per cent of those who never travel by short distance train said that they would increase their use of these services if the improvements they had suggested (Figure 3.12) were implemented. Overall, nearly one in five (18 per cent) infrequent users said that they would use short distance train at least once a week if these improvements were implemented.

4. Long distance¹⁰ 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, five per cent of adults replied at least once a week, 11 per cent said about once a month (down from 17 per cent in 2009) and 35 per cent less than once a month. Half of adults reported that they had not made any long distance journeys in the UK in the last 12 months (increasing from 39 per cent in 2009).

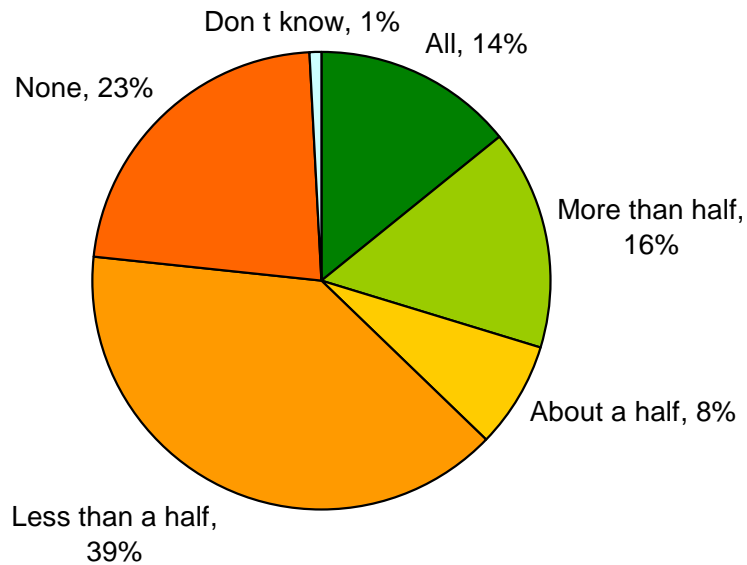
Use of rail to make long distance journeys

- 4.2** Of those who had made long distance journeys and used a train in the last twelve months¹¹ 23 per cent said they had not used a train to make any of those long distance journeys (Figure 4.1). Fourteen per cent had used trains for all of their long distance journeys; 16 per cent had used a train for at least half (but not all) of those journeys; eight per cent had used a train for about half of those journeys and 39 per cent had used a train for less than half of their long distance journeys.

¹⁰ In the UK; does not include Eurostar

¹¹ The exact filter for this question is respondents who did not state they had 'never' made any long distance journey in the previous 12 months, had used a train in the previous 12 months and were not housebound.

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 (364)

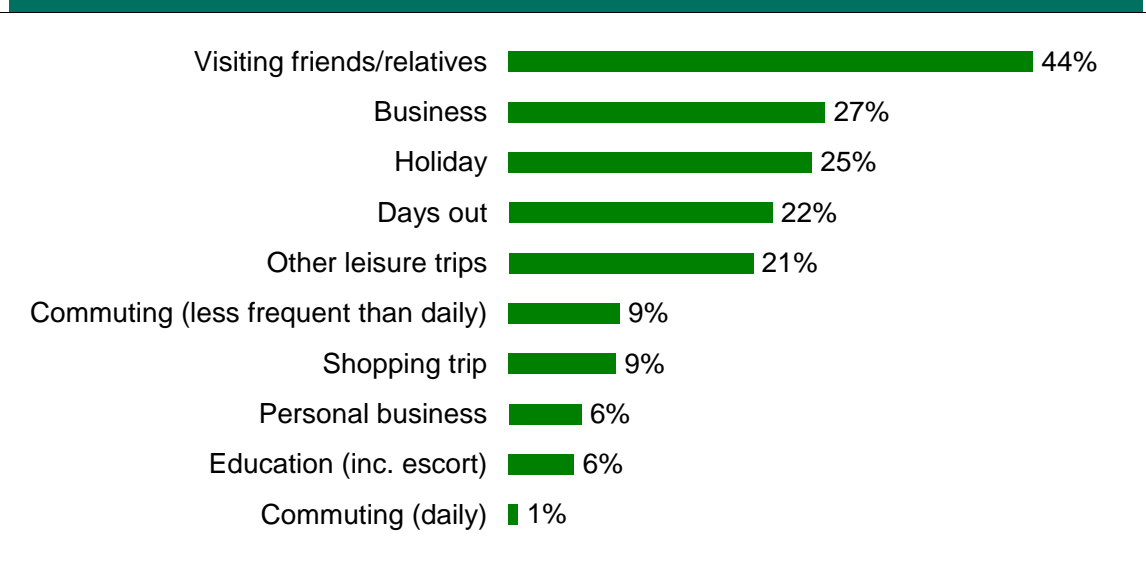
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

4.3 Overall, we estimate that 27 per cent of adults had used long distance trains services in the previous 12 months. Those aged 75 and over (seven per cent) or those in routine and manual occupations (19 per cent) 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 (51 per cent).

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 (44 per cent). Approximately one in four long distance train users said they had travelled for business (27 per cent), holidays (25 per cent) or days out (22 per cent). Just one per cent had used long distance rail for daily commuting and nine per cent 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 (281)

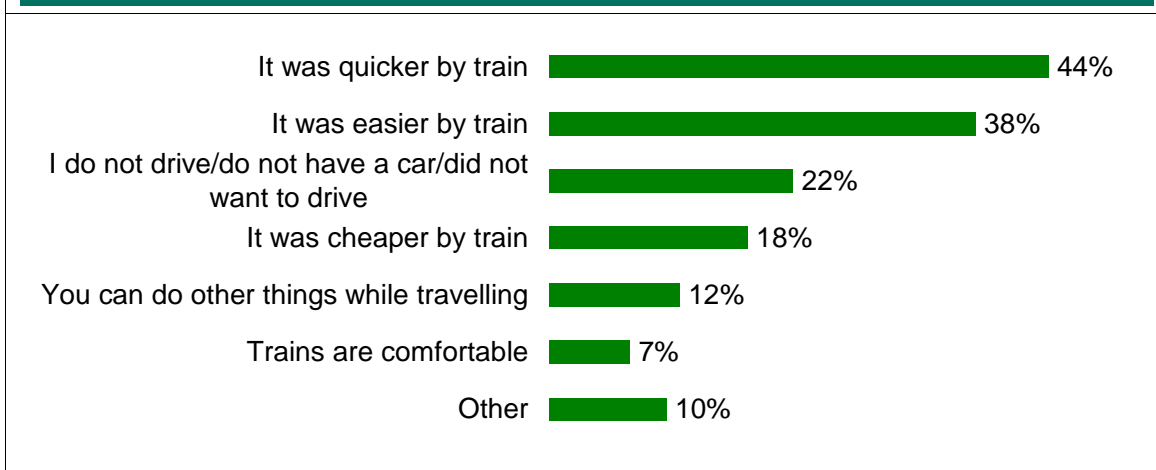
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore responses 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, 44 per cent of long distance rail users said it was quicker by train. This had increased from 34 per cent of responses in 2009. Exactly which mode of transport the train is quicker than was not captured, however, it is likely to be in comparison to car use. Thirty-eight per cent of users said they had used a train to make their long distance journey because it was easier and 22 per cent said they did not want to drive or use the car. This included responses where the reasons for not wanting to drive were concerns about parking (particularly in Central London) or wanting to drink alcohol. Eighteen 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 (281)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%. Answers with a response of less than five per cent are not presented here.

4.6 Ten per cent of users stated some 'other' reason, these included answers such as the train being more relaxing and less stressful, (possibly compared to driving) and more convenient. Three per cent of long distance users said they had used the train for their last long distance journey because someone else had planned the journey, three per cent had used the train because they are reliable and punctual, two per cent said it was convenient and two per cent said it was because there is a railway station close to their home or destination.

Overall rating of long distance rail services

4.7 When asked to rate long distance rail services, 41 per cent of non-users did not know how to rate them. If we exclude these responses from the analysis we can compare non-users ratings to those of users. Excluding 'don't know' responses indicates that users rate long distance rail services more highly than non-users: 80 per cent of users and 64 per cent of non-users rated long distance services as 'very good' or 'fairly good'. However, there is no difference in the proportion of users and non-users rating the services as 'fairly good' (59 per cent and 53 per cent respectively). The difference lies within the 'very good' rating category: chosen by 21 per cent of long distance rail users and 12 per cent of non-users. Non-users were also more likely to say that long distances services were neither good nor poor (23 per cent compared to 12 per cent of users).

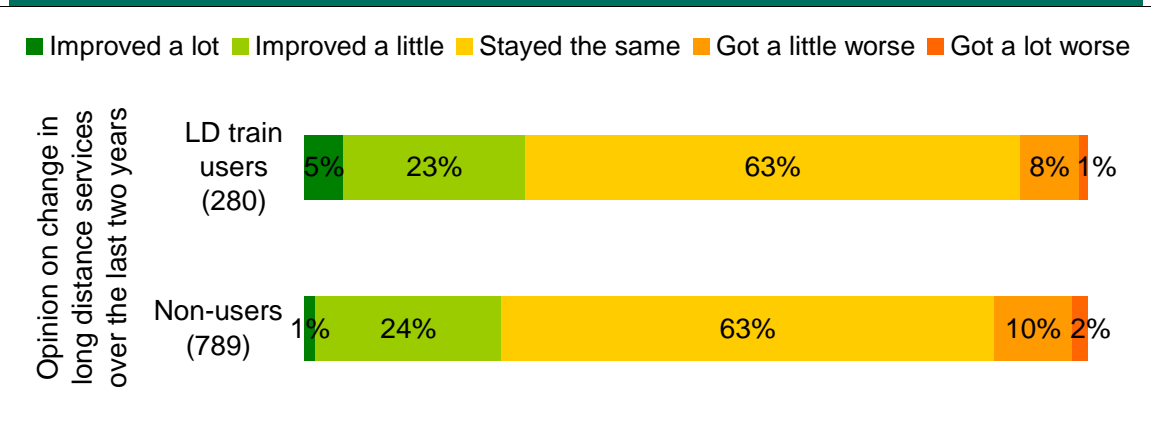


Un-weighted base: shown in brackets, excludes 'don't know' responses.
 Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

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

4.8 Forty-five 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 very similar for most categories. Users were more likely to say that rail services had improved a lot over the past two years, albeit just five per cent of users and one per cent of non-users. Sixty-three per cent of users and non-users said that long distance rail services had stayed the same and just under a quarter (23 per cent and 24 per cent respectively) said that they had improved a little. Overall, nine per cent of users and 12 per cent of non-users said that services had got a little, or a lot worse over the past two years.

Figure 4.5: opinion and perception of whether long distance trains services have changed over the last two years



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: excludes 'don't know' responses.

4.9 Since 2009, the proportion of users saying that long distance rail services had improved fell from 39 per cent to 28 per cent, while the proportion saying things had stayed the same, increased from 50 per cent to 63 per cent.

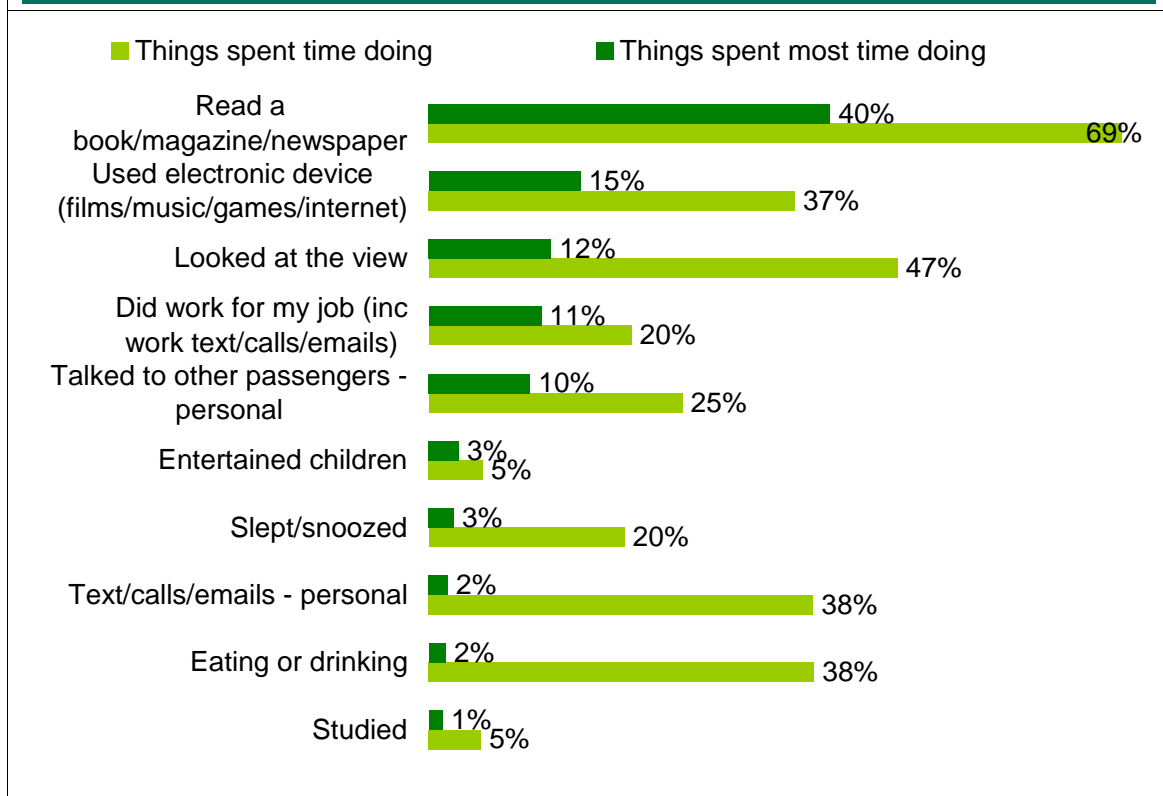
4.10 Users were then asked a further question about whether their recent experiences of long distance rail services had been better than they expected, worse than they expected or about the same as they expected. Thirty-one per cent of long distance rail service users said their recent experiences had been better than expected, 60 per cent said they

were as expected and eight per cent said they were worse than expected (Table [ATT0421](#)).

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 (69 per cent); looking at the view (47 per cent); sending texts, making calls or sending emails for personal reasons (38 per cent); eating or drinking (38 per cent), and using electronic devices to watch films, listen to music, play games or use the internet (37 per cent). A majority (40 per cent) of users said 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 (282)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

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

4.12 The number of pre-codes recording these activities was reduced from 17 in 2009, to 12 in 2012. This was achieved by:

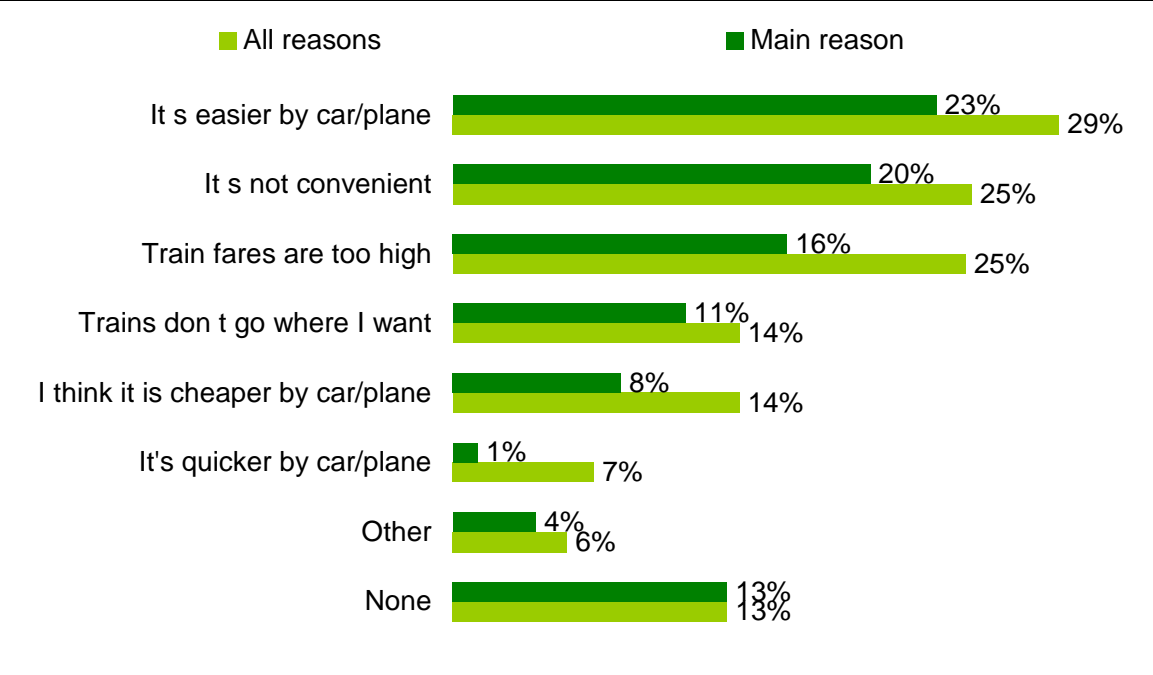
- Amending 'read a book/magazine/newspaper for leisure' to 'read a book/magazine/newspaper';
- Merging; 'listened to radio/music'; 'watched a film/video', and 'logged onto the Internet' into 'used electronic device to watch films/ listen to music/ play games/ browse the internet';
- Merging 'did work for my job' and 'text messages/phone calls - work related' into 'did work for my job (include work related text messages/phone calls/emails)', and
- Replacing 'chatted to friends/family with whom I was travelling' and 'talked to other passengers - personal' with 'talked to other passengers - personal'.

Reasons for not using long distance rail services more often

4.13 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). Thirteen per cent replied that there was no reason why they had not used long distance trains (more often). Many of these said they do not need to use trains or make long distance journeys very often. Twenty-nine per cent of infrequent users said it is easier to travel by car or plane than train and twenty-five per cent reported each of that the train is not convenient or that fares are too high.

4.14 When asked what the main reason was, 23 per cent said that it was easier by car or plane, 20 per cent said trains were not convenient and 16 per cent said that fares were too high. Eight per cent of infrequent users said their main reason was that it was cheaper to go by plane and one per cent said it is quicker 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 (293)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore 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. Answers with a response of less than five per cent are not presented here.

4.15 Two per cent of infrequent users said that the main reason they did not use trains for long distance journeys (more often) was because there were no railways stations nearby. There were a number of reasons which less than one per cent of the response groups selected as their **main** reason; these included poor public transport links to and from stations, overcrowding, difficulty getting to the railway station and parking difficulties (Table [ATT0423](#)).

- 4.16** There were a number of significant differences between the 2009 and 2012 results for this question; however, the question was revised in 2012 to reduce the number of pre-codes available to the interviewer from 19 in 2009 to 13 in 2012. Pre-codes removed from the 2009 question included:
- 'Trains don't run often enough';
 - 'I don't know what train services are available';
 - 'Trains aren't reliable enough';
 - 'I don't feel safe on trains';
 - 'I don't feel safe at railway stations';
 - 'Trains are too crowded', and
 - 'Lack of information about how to make whole journey (door to door)'
- 4.17** 'It's not convenient' was added into the list following a number of 'Other' responses relating to this in 2009.
- 4.18** Comparison of the low frequency long distance rail users¹² and non-users¹³ highlights just one significant difference. Non-users were more than twice as likely as low frequency users to say the main reason is because it is easier to travel by car or plane (42 per cent compared to 16 per cent).

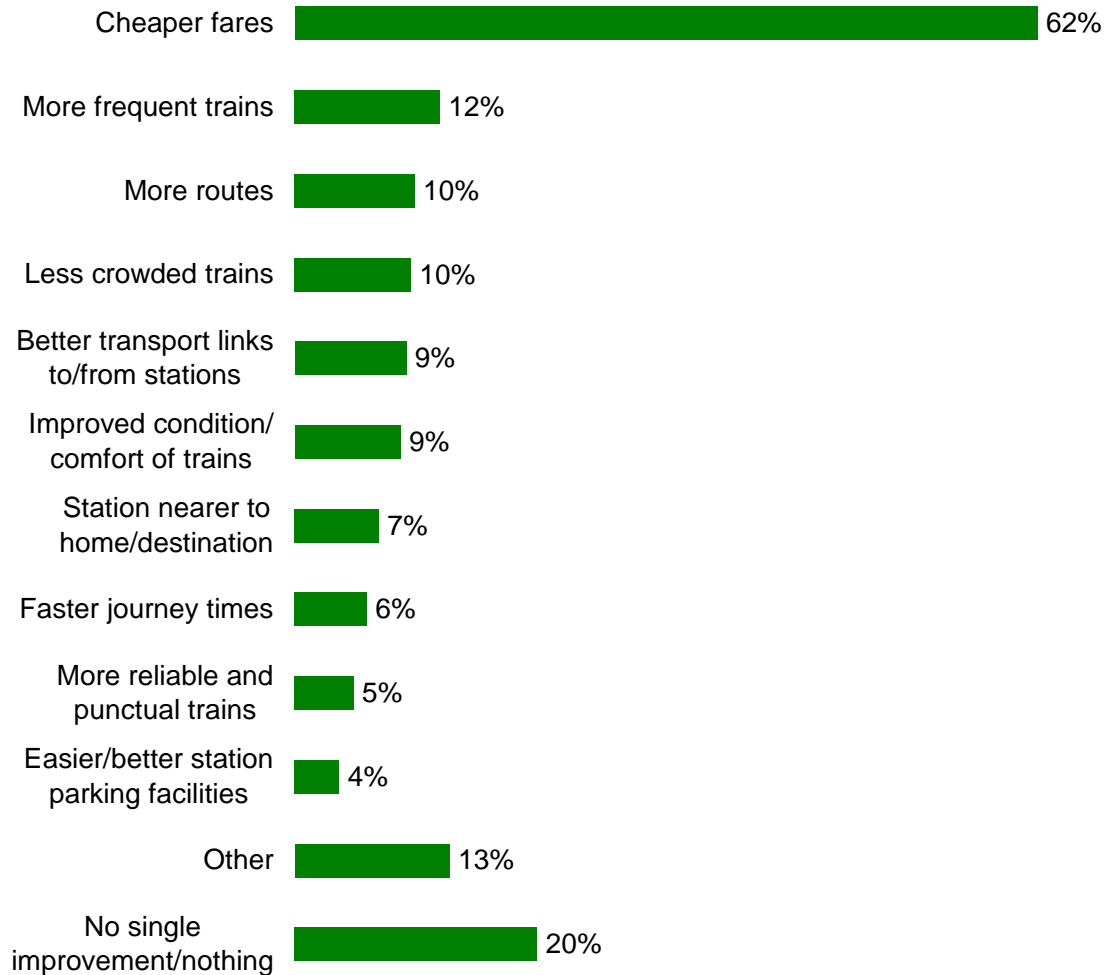
Improvements to encourage greater use of long distance rail services

- 4.19** When asked what improvements would encourage them to use trains to make long distance journeys (more often), the majority (62 per cent) of infrequent users (including non-users) said cheaper fares (Figure 4.8). Twenty per cent said that nothing would encourage them to use rail (more often). This probably reflects the opinions of the group who said they make very few long distances journeys and have no need to make more.

¹² Those who had made at least one long distance journey in the previous 12 months and made less than half, but some of these trips by rail.

¹³ Those who had made at least one long distance journey in the previous 12 months, but had not used rail for any of these.

Figure 4.8: improvements to encourage infrequent users to use train (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 (289)

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

Note: Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question, therefore 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.

4.20 'Other' responses included a wide range of varied items including route and operator specific issues such as earlier and later trains, more trains on Sundays, more space for luggage and simpler or more transparent fares.

4.21 The list of pre-codes for this question was also reduced from 20 in 2009, to 12 in 2012. This was done by:

- Removing 'better information provided at railway stations'; 'better personal safety on trains'; 'better safety at railway stations'; 'politer/more helpful staff'; 'easier for older/disabled adults to get on and off', and 'better information about whole journey (door to door)';
- Merging 'railway station nearer to home' and 'railway station nearer to destination' into one category;
- Merging 'no single improvement could be made to encourage me to use the trains (more often)' and 'nothing would encourage me to use trains (more often)' into one category, and
- Amending 'easier parking' into 'easier/better parking facilities at station'.

4.22 The only apparent difference in responses between low frequency users of long distance rail and those who had not used it at all, was that more of those who had not used long distance rail at all were inclined to say they might use rail more if there were a station nearer to home or their destination (13 per cent compared to five per cent).

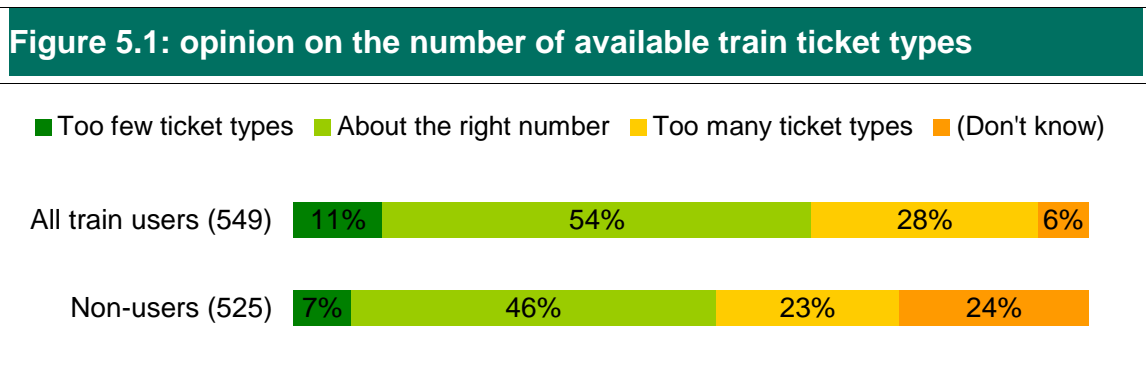
4.23 Asked how their use of trains for long distance train journeys might change if such improvements were made, the majority (53 per cent) of infrequent users (including non-users) said that they would use services less than once a month and nine per cent said never. Thirty-one per cent of infrequent users said they would use long distance services about once a month and seven per cent said they would use these services at least once a week.

5. Train tickets

5.1 The final section of this report concerns attitudes towards train tickets. This 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, 11 per cent of rail users said there were too few ticket types, 54 per cent thought there were about the right number, and 28 per cent said they did not know. A larger proportion (24 per cent) 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 (46 per cent). 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

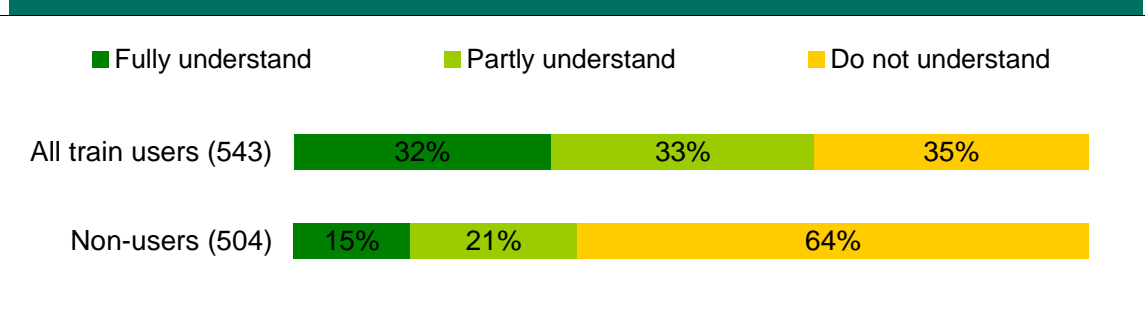
Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

5.3 The proportion of users saying there were too many tickets types fell from 36 per cent in 2009 to 28 per cent in 2012, while the proportion of users who felt there were about the right number of ticket types rose from 46 per cent to 54 per cent. This suggests that users are more satisfied with the number of different ticket types than in 2009.

Understanding of the different ticket types available

5.4 When asked to what extent they understood the range of tickets available, users were evenly split between fully understanding, partly understanding and not understanding. Thirty-two per cent of rail users said they fully understood the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train, one third said they partly understood and 35 per cent said they did not understand. The majority of non-users said that they did not understand (64 per cent) the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train, 21 per cent said that they partly understood and 15 per cent said 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 omnibus survey, April 2012

4.24 Since 2009, the proportion of users who said they did not understand the range of different ticket types available when travelling by train had declined from 57 per cent to 35 per cent. The share of users who claimed to partly understand rose from 20 per cent to 33 per cent and the proportion of users who said they fully understood the range of different types available rose from 24 per cent to 32 per cent. Over the same period, the share of non-users who did not understand the range of tickets available declined from 71 per cent to 64 per cent.

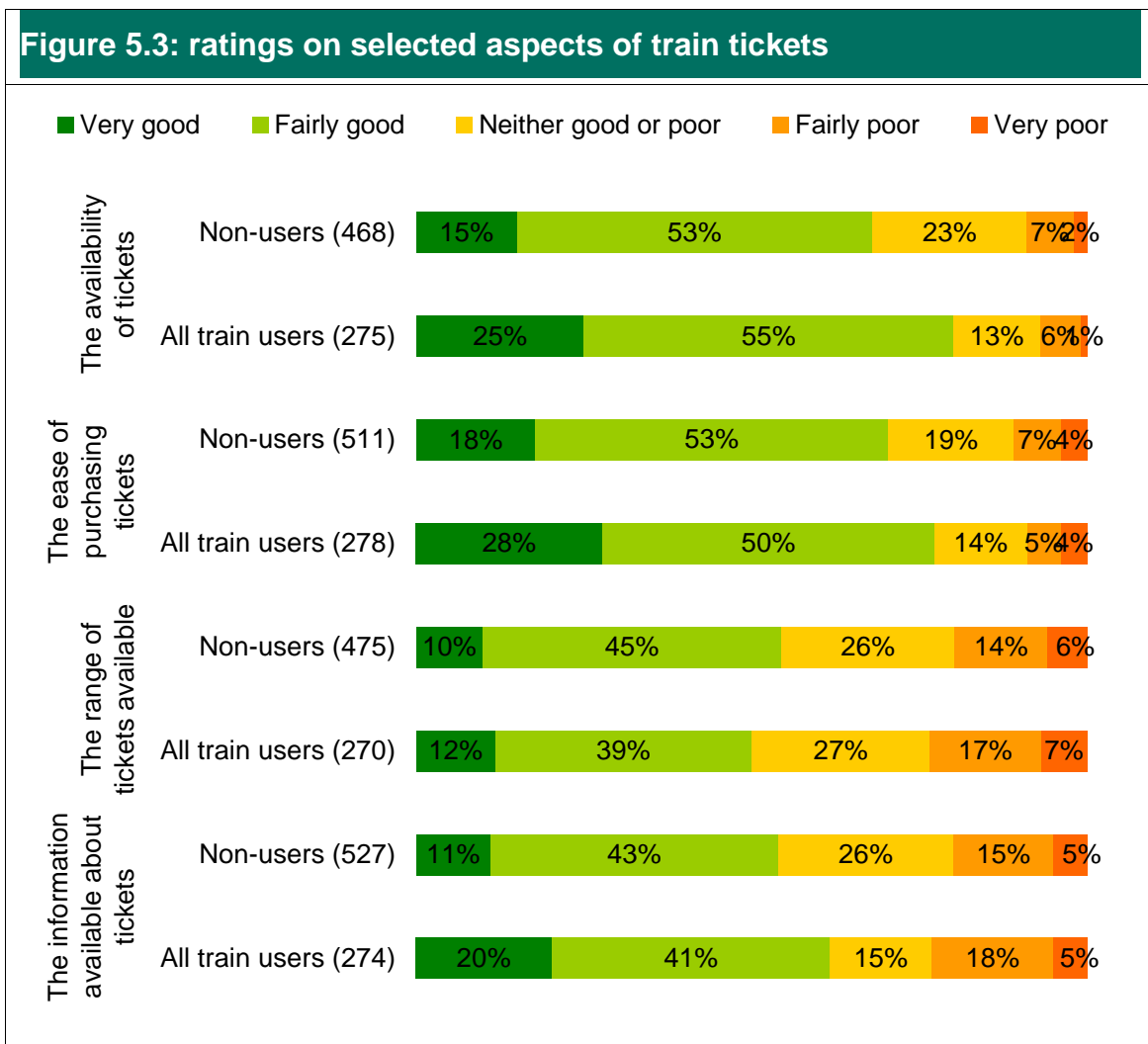
Ratings of aspects of train tickets

4.25 In 2012, respondents were asked four new questions requiring them to rate the information about tickets, the range of tickets available, and the ease of ticket purchase (Figure 5.3). Approximately one third of non-users said they did not know how to rate these items (Table [ATT0427](#)). For comparative purposes, 'don't know' responses have been excluded from the following analysis (Table [ATT0428](#)).

4.26 In summary:

- 51 per cent of users and 55 per cent of non-users rated the range of tickets available positively;
- 61 per cent of users and 54 per cent of non-users rated the information available about tickets as very good or fairly good;
- 78 per cent of users and 71 per cent of non-users rated the ease of purchasing tickets positively, and
- 80 per cent of users and 68 per cent of non-users rated the availability of tickets as very good or fairly good.

Figure 5.3: ratings on selected aspects of train tickets



Un-weighted base: shown in brackets

Source: Office for National Statistics Opinions omnibus survey, April 2012

5.5 Non-users were more likely to say that the availability of train tickets was neither good nor poor than users (26 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). A greater proportion of users than non-users rated the

availability of tickets positively and fewer rated them as neither good nor poor (13 per cent compared to 23 per cent of non-users).