Department for Transport

Research on experiences of disabled rail passengers

Moving Britain Ahead

COVERING NOTE

Disabled Rail Passengers Research Summary Report

Much of Britain's railway network can be old and difficult for people to access, with some parts relying on Victorian infrastructure that is challenging to modernise. Disabled people travel less frequently and for different reasons compared to people without disabilities[1]; this is also true for rail trips, such that in England in 2017 people with a mobility difficulty each made 10 rail trips on average, compared to 26 for those without a mobility difficulty[2].

There have been recent advancements in the accessibility of Great Britain's railways, such as the more than 200 rail stations that have had accessible obstacle-free routes installed under the Access for All programme since 2006 and the 82% of the mainline rail fleet that is now compliant with modern accessibility standards[3], up from 42% in 2008. However, the Department acknowledges that more needs to be done.

Research into the experiences of disabled rail passengers was commissioned by the Department for Transport, working with Transport Focus in 2017. The research was carried out by Illuminas, with additional workshops carried out by the Research Institute for Consumer Affairs (RICA, now Research Institute for Disabled Consumers RiDC). The aim of the research was to understand better the experiences of disabled passengers and the barriers and challenges they may encounter when travelling by train. The research was commissioned and undertaken prior to the publication of the Inclusive Transport Strategy, which outlines the government's plans to make transport systems more inclusive and better for disabled people. This included commitments related to awareness and enforcement of passenger rights, staff training, improving information, improving physical infrastructure and the future of inclusive transport.

The Department recognises the accessibility challenges of the railway highlighted in this research, and as part of the Inclusive Transport Strategy we have committed to:

- supporting the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) in the introduction of the new Passenger Assistance application, designed to enable passengers to book assistance through a single click;

- support the RDG Passenger Assistance awareness-raising campaign;

- providing £300 million of funding until 2024 to extend the Access for All programme which provides access improvements at railway stations; and,

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[1] Clery, E; Kiss, Z; Taylor, E and Gill, V (2017) Disabled peoples; travel behaviour and attitudes to travel https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-people-attitudes-towards-travel
[2] Department for Transport (2018) National Travel Survey: 2017 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2017
[3] Department for Transport (2019) Rail vehicles built or refurbished to modern accessibility standards https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-rail-vehicles-built-or-refurbished-to-modern-accessibility-standards

- support the work of RDG to explore how real-time information on the availability of access facilities such as step-free access, accessible toilets and Changing Places facilities can be provided to passengers.

This is part of a wider programme of work being progressed by the Department in order to achieve our ambition of creating a fully inclusive transport network by 2030, ensuring that passengers with physical and non-physical disabilities alike can travel easily, confidently and without extra cost.

Disclaimer

Contents

Executive summary

This research is on the experiences of disabled rail passengers in Great Britain. The research focused on the full end-to-end rail journey, looking in depth at rail travel and when and how challenges and barriers may be experienced by disabled passengers.

The research was conducted with disabled passengers and disabled people who do not currently travel by rail. Research participants self-reported disability or an impairment; results are not representative of all disabled people or passengers in Great Britain.

Travel by rail

When asked why they travel by rail, a third of disabled rail passengers said they travel by train as it is the quickest option, with one in five reporting that it is cost effective. Just under one in five said they travel by train as it is the most convenient option.

Over a third of disabled passengers reported that they never book assistance services in advance whilst travelling by rail, with one in five reporting that they book assistance in advance every time they travel.

Half of disabled rail passengers reported travelling by rail alone, with just under two in five travelling with family or friends. Just under a quarter reported that they had owned a Disabled Person's Railcard in the last 12 months.

Frequency of barriers experienced when travelling by rail

One third of passengers reported that they don't experience any problems at any journey stage when travelling by rail. Two thirds of passengers did however report experiencing at least one problem during their rail journey.

The journey stage with the highest proportion of passengers reporting experiencing a problem was on-board trains, where 23% of passengers reported experiencing a problem. The journey stages with the lowest level of reported problems were at the station, with 9% experiencing a problem, and "other" problems, where 3% reported experiencing a problem during their journey.

Journey planning

Over half of disabled rail passengers who reported a problem at the journey planning stage reported a lack of confidence. This problem was ranked by passengers as the problem having the biggest impact on their journeys at the journey planning stage.

Other problems experienced at the journey planning stage included not being able to find enough information, not being able to find enough accessible information, and not being aware of which stations and trains aren't accessible.

Passenger Assistance

Awareness of Passenger Assist was found to be low amongst interview participants, but of those who do use it, they reported that the service generally works well and increases their confidence to travel by rail.

Of those who experienced a problem at the passenger assistance journey stage, two in five said that the barrier related to a lack of "Turn Up and Go" services, with a further two in five stating that assistance services were not available.

Qualitative evidence indicates that passengers' propensity to use Passenger Assist services once they are aware of them depends on two factors: how "qualified" passengers feel to use such services and if they are travelling alone or with others.

Accessibility of the network

Passengers reported experiencing challenges in getting to a rail station, including parking and vehicle access. The availability of disabled parking and its location in relation to a station was key for some interview participants in determining mode choice.

Of those who reported encountering a problem at this journey stage, around a third each mentioned public transport not being frequent enough, the cost of taxi services and the cost of public transport as barriers when getting to a railway station.

Ticketing

Disabled passengers may experience a range of barriers related to ticketing when travelling by rail, with almost two in five reporting the ticket office not being open as a barrier when buying tickets. Over a third each reported that ticket choices were too complicated and knowing they had the right ticket were barriers experienced when travelling by rail.

Problems with using ticket vending machines was the most common anticipated problem when buying tickets. Research participants also reported challenges with rail tickets being confusing, or with there being too many tickets.

Stations

Survey respondents indicated that they anticipated multiple challenges at the station, with one in five saying that they anticipated experiencing a problem at a train station when travelling by rail. However, 9% of disabled rail passengers reported experiencing a problem at a railway station.

Almost a third of passengers who reported experiencing a problem at the station, reported experiencing a lack of suitable, or any, toilets at the station.

Almost a third of respondents who reported experiencing problems at stations said that they have difficulty in negotiating the gap between the train and the platform. Some rail passengers reported experiencing conflicting and confusing information regarding boarding a train with a wheelchair or scooter.

The qualitative research found that disabled rail passengers can plan journeys in great detail to mitigate the impact of delays or disruption to their journey, for example in ensuring they have enough energy and resources to complete a rail journey. Unplanned delays and disruption can have an impact on disabled passengers, for example through jeopardising pre-booked assistance at interchange or destination stations or through compromising onward journey travel arrangements.

On-board

Of disabled passengers who reported experiencing a problem on-board trains, almost three in ten each cited a lack of on-board toilets or the attitudes of other people or passengers as a barrier to rail travel. Almost three in ten reported that toilets on-board being difficult to use was a barrier they experienced when travelling by train.

Priority seating on trains was an area where disabled rail passengers reported experiencing problems, or anxiety around the anticipation of problems. These problems included both a lack of availability of seating and a perceived "hierarchy" of need for the priority seating.

Almost a third of disabled passengers reported that they had experienced anti-social or discriminatory behaviour from other passengers when travelling by rail. Almost three in ten who experienced problems on-board trains reported an issue with the attitude of other passengers.

Onward travel

Over a third of disabled rail passengers who reported experiencing a barrier at the onward travel journey stage reported that they experienced difficulty in finding exits and onward travel at their destination station. Around one third each also reported the cost of public transport and difficulty in getting around the destination station as barriers they experienced when travelling by rail.

Qualitative evidence indicates that for some passengers, barriers are more likely to be experienced at less familiar destination stations if they haven't been planned and mitigated for.

Future travel

Just under half of disabled rail passengers reported that they anticipated problems with future rail travel, with those travelling for commuting purposes being the most likely to anticipate barriers.

Across all journey types, disabled passengers would ideally like to travel by rail more frequently than they do currently.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents findings from research carried out by the Department for Transport (DfT) with Transport Focus in 2017 on the experiences of disabled rail passengers in Great Britain. The research was carried out by Illuminas and RICA, two independent research organisations.

1.2 The research focused on the full end-to-end rail journey, looking in-depth at rail travel and when and how challenges and barriers may be experienced by disabled passengers. The research was conducted with disabled passengers and disabled people who don't currently travel by rail.

1.3 There was an additional research project undertaken by the Research Institute for Consumer Affairs (RICA, now Research Institute for Disabled Consumers RiDC) as part of the overall research project. This involved design focused workshops to help develop solutions for problems with ticketing, anti-social behaviour and toilets that disabled passengers may face when travelling by rail.

1.4 This report focuses mainly on the main piece of research undertaken by Illuminas. Where relevant, results from the RICA research are referenced.

Background

1.5 In 2017-18, there were 1.7 billion passenger rail journeys in the United Kingdom[4] and the average number of surface rail trips per person in England in 2017 was 21[5].

1.6 Although surface rail made up 2% of all trips made in England in 2017[6], and is a frequent mode of travel for many, for some disabled people, rail travel can be less frequent, problematic and sometimes not possible. Analysis of historical National Travel Survey data has found that people who report at least one difficulty when travelling by rail, or a disability, make fewer trips by rail compared to those with no reported disability or difficulties when travelling[7].

1.7 The aim of this research is to better understand the experiences of disabled rail passengers, and disabled people who may not travel by rail to provide evidence to improve the experience of travelling by rail and make the railway more accessible.

Methodology

1.8 The research had four main stages, detailed below.

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[4] ORR (2018) Passenger Rail Usage 2017-18 Q4 Statistical Release https://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/previous-data/previous-statistical-releases

[5] Department for Transport (2018) National Travel Survey Factsheets https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2017

[6] Department for Transport (2018) ibid.

[7] Clery, E; Kiss, Z; Taylor, E and Gill, V (2017) Disabled peoples' travel behaviour and attitudes to travel https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-people-attitudes-towards-travel

Literature review

1.9 This was an overview of the existing literature focused on the barriers people may experience when travelling by rail, along with the experiences of disabled passengers when travelling by rail. Sources consulted for the review included published evidence from transport regulatory bodies, government bodies, charities and campaign groups, transport watchdogs and academic institutions. The aim of the literature review element was to inform the expert interviews and the design of the quantitative and qualitative research instruments.

Expert interviews

1.10 In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 experts in disability and rail travel. The experts were selected from a range of organisations, including the rail industry, charities and a non-departmental public body. The aim of the expert interviews was to inform the design of the qualitative and quantitative research instruments.

Quantitative survey

1.11 The quantitative survey strand was carried out with over 1,400 online respondents, and a further 150 face-to-face. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather quantitative data on the experiences of disabled rail passengers, with a focus on the barriers and challenges they may experience at each journey stage. Respondents self-reported disability or an impairment.

Qualitative interviews

1.12 Fifty qualitative interviews were conducted either by telephone or face-to-face in a range of geographical locations to explore the experiences of disabled rail passengers. In addition, 15 of these 50 respondents completed either a familiar or unfamiliar train journey wearing an autographer, a small wearable camera, prior to their interview. The camera automatically takes a picture every 10 seconds, providing a detailed record of the rail journey experience. These images were analysed as part of this research strand.

Design-focused workshops

1.13 The RICA strand was a stand-alone piece of research. It consisted of three design focused workshops with disabled rail passengers on three pre-selected topics: toilets on trains and at stations; ticketing; and, anti-social behaviour. The workshops were held in London, Manchester and Newcastle in March 2017. Each workshop had around nine participants each, with a mix of ages, disability, frequency of rail travel and journey purpose.

1.14 The aim of the workshops was to generate feasible solutions to problems experienced by disabled passengers when travelling by rail in the three themes.

1.15 The workshops saw participants work in small groups to explore one topic to identify the challenges experienced when travelling by rail and to devise some solutions to overcome or minimise these challenges. In the second part of the workshops, the small groups presented their best solutions to the rest of the group, which enabled greater discussion and refinement of the proposed solutions. RICA then identified consistent themes during the analysis of the workshops, providing consolidated solutions across the three topic areas.

Survey and interviews sample composition

1.16 The quantitative survey was conducted with 1,405 people who self-selected into a UK online panel survey in Spring 2017. Of these, 38% reported that they had a

mental health disability, 37% a mobility disability and 16% a stamina disability. Just over one third (33%) were aged 18-29, and 22% were aged 30-39. Just over half (55%) were female, and around two in five were working full-time. A more detailed breakdown of the sample profile can be found in Annex A.

1.17 In addition to the online survey, a further 150 respondents were surveyed via a face-to-face methodology. This was to help ensure those who may not use, or be less likely to use, the internet were not excluded from the sample.

1.18 The qualitative interviews were undertaken with 50 respondents; 38 were conducted by telephone and 12 were face-to-face. Interviews were conducted across a range of geographic locations. Of the 50 respondents: 48% had physical disabilities; 44% had cognitive disabilities; and, 28% had sensory disabilities. Sixty per cent were female, 40% were male; 38% were aged 60 and over, 34% were 40-59 and 28% were aged 18-39. Almost a third (32%) were infrequent rail users, with almost half (48%) frequent users. Twenty per cent were non-users. Frequent users were defined as those travelling most days of the week once every two weeks. Infrequent users were defined as those travelling by train once a month to once every three months. Non-users were defined as not having travelled by train in the last three months.

2. Travel by rail

Introduction

2.1　This section explores disabled passengers' use of the railway, looking at topics such as frequency of travel and the reasons for travelling by train. The results presented here are mainly from the quantitative strand; they are not representative of disabled people in Great Britain.

2.2　The quantitative survey used a range of definitions to gather evidence on the rail travel behaviour of respondents. Long business and leisure trips were defined as those lasting an hour or more, with short business and leisure trips being those under an hour. Non-users were defined as those who hadn't made any rail trips, or had no need to make rail trips for a series of journey purposes within the last 12 months. Respondents were asked to consider their experience of rail journeys for their most frequent purpose in the last 12 months.

Reasons for rail travel

2.3　When asked why they travel by train, one third (32%) of disabled rail passengers say that they do so because it is the quickest option, with one in five saying that it is cost effective, and just under one in five that it is most convenient. The reasons given for travelling by rail varies by journey purpose, with two in five commuters reporting using the train because it is the quickest option. A quarter of short leisure users reported that they travel by rail as it is the most convenient option, with just over one in five saying it is the most enjoyable option.

2.4　Just over one in five (21%) disabled rail passengers reported that they find train travel difficult (Figure 1.1). Although almost a third reported finding travel by rail easy, the reported difficulty of travelling by rail varies; 10% of those with learning disabilities reported finding travelling by rail very difficult, and 29% of people with visual impairments find travelling by train difficult.

Figure 2.1 Disabled passengers' reported difficulty of rail travel (%)
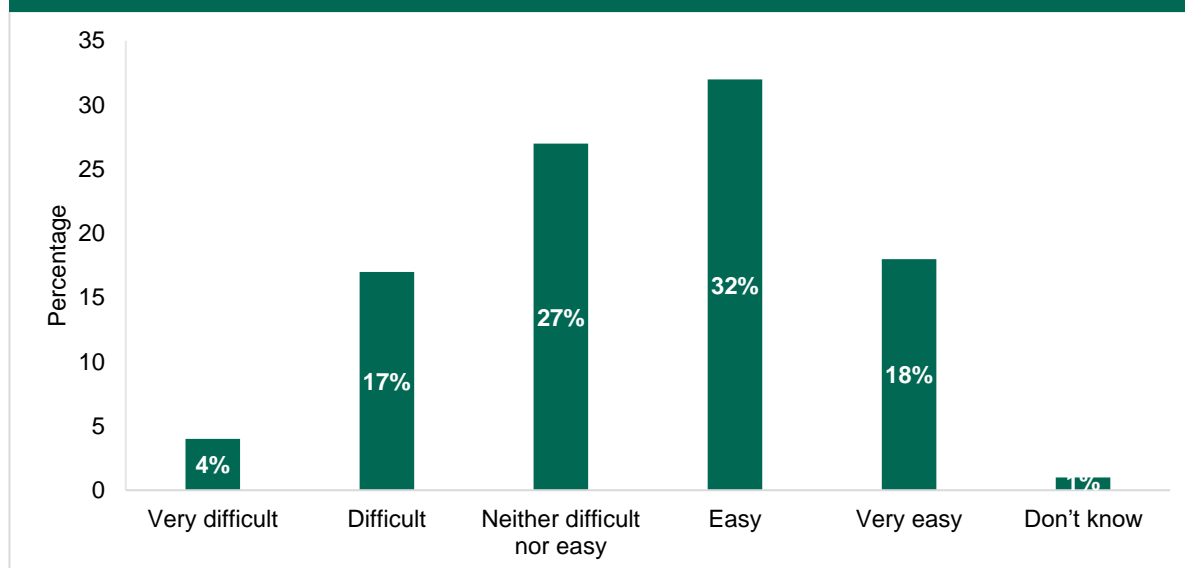
Base: ever travel by rail (877)

Booking assistance services in advance

2.5 Over one third (36%) of disabled passengers reported that they never book assistance services in advance whilst travelling by train, with one in five (20%) reporting that they book assistance in advance every time they travel.

2.6 The frequency of booking assistance varies by journey purpose (Table 1.1), with those travelling on business journeys being the most likely to report booking assistance in advance. Passengers travelling for long business journeys are the most likely to report booking assistance services in advance every time they travel by train.

2.7 Frequency of booking assistance services in advance also varies by disability (Table 1.2).

Figure 2.2 Reported frequency of booking assistance in advance when travelling by rail (%)

Percentage

Everytime	More than half	Half	Less than half	Rarely/once	Never
20%	12%	11%	8%	11%	36%
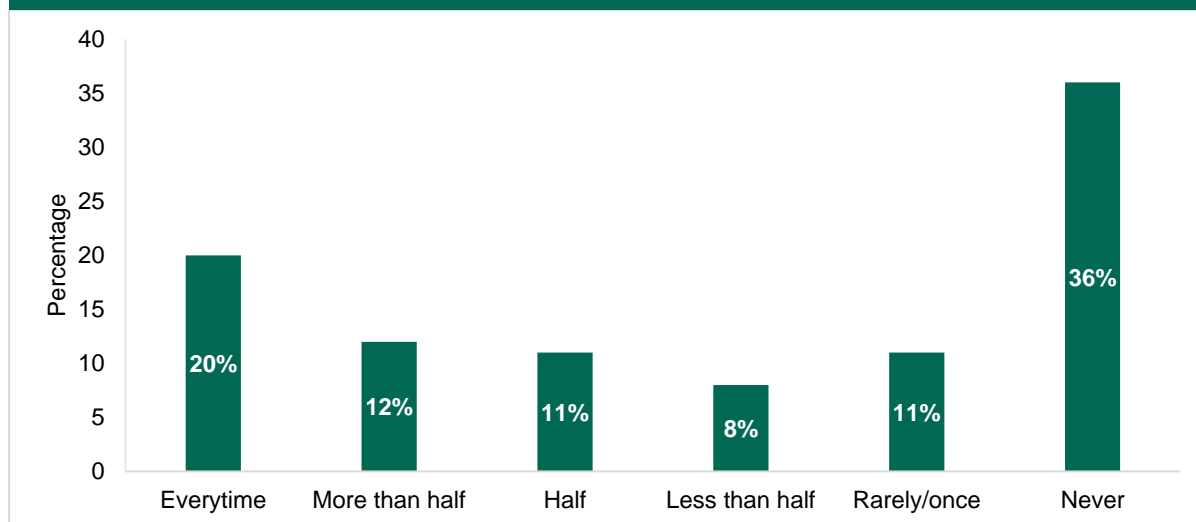
Base: ever travel by rail (877)

Table 2.1 Frequency of booking assistance in advance by journey type

Booked assistance in advance	Journey type				
	Commute (%)	Short leisure (%)	Long leisure (%)	Short business (%)	Long business (%)
Every time	16	11	20	22	33
More than half	13	7	11	14	17
Half	13	10	5	12	14
Less than half	6	5	5	12	11
Rarely/once	12	12	10	12	10
Never	39	52	49	27	15

Base: ever travel by rail (877)

Table 2.2 Frequency of boking assistance in advance by disability

	Disability				
Booked assistance in advance	**Multiple disability (%)**	**Vision (%)**	**Memory (%)**	**Mobility (%)**	**Stamina (%)**
Every time	22	28	28	20	16
More than half	13	15	15	8	10
Half	8	12	10	8	7
Less than half	10	17	11	6	10
Rarely/once	11	9	10	12	8
Never	33	19	23	45	47

Base: ever travel by rail (877)

Travelling alone and with others

2.8 Half of disabled passengers travel by rail alone, with just under two in five (36%) travelling with family or friends. Sixteen percent report travelling by rail with a carer and 1% with an assistance dog.

2.9 Reporting travelling alone or with others varies by disability, with those with learning and vision disabilities most frequently travelling with a carer; those with other disabilities most likely to report travelling alone; and, those with dexterity disabilities most likely to report travelling with friends or family.

Disabled Person's Railcard

2.10 Just under a quarter (24%) of survey respondents reported that they had owned a Disabled Person's Railcard in the last 12 months; 33% of those who describe themselves as disabled had owned a Disabled Person's Railcard in the last 12 months.

2.11 Passengers with visual impairments were the most likely to own a railcard, with 51% having owned one in the last 12 months. Almost two in five passengers with a hearing impairment reported owning a railcard in the last 12 months, with 39% of passengers with a learning disability and 36% with a memory disability also owning a railcard in the last year. Seven per cent of those with other disabilities owned a Disables Person's Railcard, the lowest of all groups.

3. Frequency of barriers experienced when travelling by rail

Frequency of barriers

3.1 One third of passengers reported that they don't experience any problems, at any journey stage, when travelling by rail in Great Britain. However, this means that two thirds of passengers report experiencing at least one problem at some point during their rail journey.

3.2 The journey stage where the highest proportion of passengers report experiencing a problem is on board the train, where 23% of passengers reported experiencing a problem. The stages with the lowest level of reported problems were at the station, with 9% experiencing a problem and other problems, where 3% experienced a problem.

Figure 3.1 Proportion of disabled rail passengers reporting a problem when travelling by rail, by journey stage
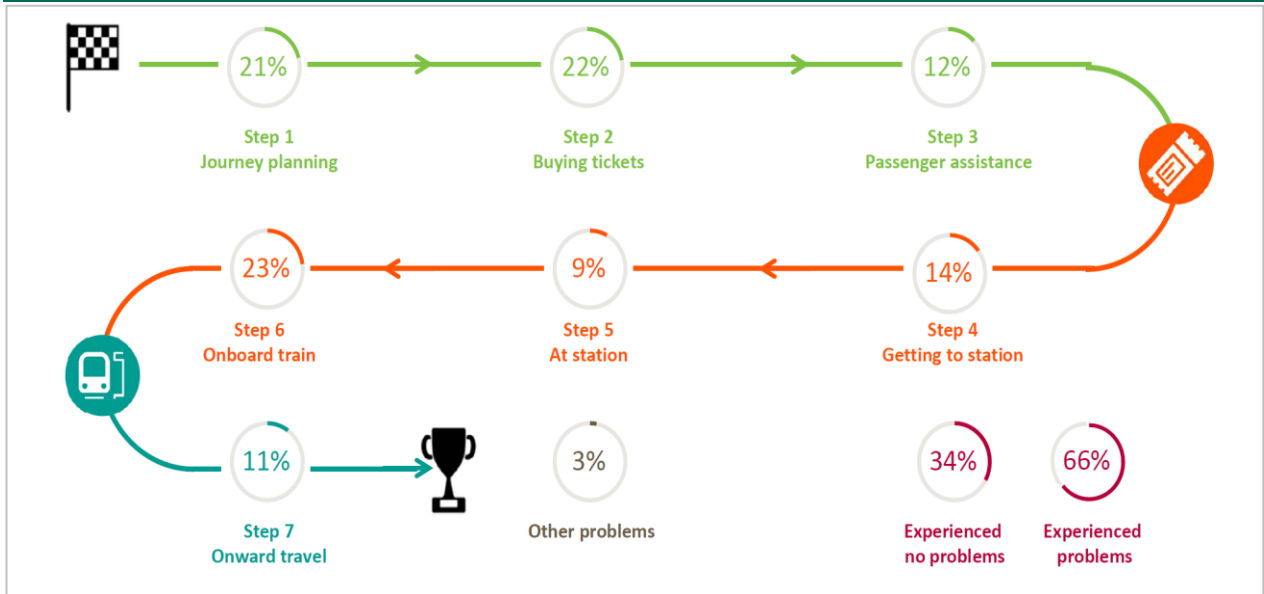
Illuminas (2019) Base: ever travel by rail (877)

3.3 The frequency of reported problems at each journey stage varies by journey purpose, with disabled passengers undertaking long business journeys by rail reporting the most problems; the on-board experience is most problematic for those undertaking commuting journeys by rail. Half of disabled passengers (51%) undertaking short leisure journeys by rail said that they do not experience any problems (Table 2.1).

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Table 3.1 Proportion of disabled passengers reporting a problem at each journey stage when travelling by rail by journey purpose

	Commuter (%)	Short leisure (%)	Long leisure (%)	Short business (%)	Long business (%)
Journey planning	18	9	17	23	36
Buying tickets	21	19	25	17	29
Passenger assistance	12	8	11	12	20
Getting to the station	18	11	10	15	19
At station	11	6	9	8	9
On-board	27	17	22	24	24
Onward travel	10	12	14	9	9
Other	2	3	6	2	3
None	34	51	36	31	17

Base: ever travel by rail (877).

3.4   There is also variability in the proportion of passengers reporting problems at each journey stage by disability type, with those with vision disabilities being more likely to report problems at the journey planning stage, and respondents with learning disabilities being most likely to report experiencing problems when buying tickets (Table 2.2).

Table 3.2 Proportion of disabled passengers reporting a problem at each journey stage when travelling by rail by disability

	Dexterity (%)	Hearing (%)	Learning (%)	Memory (%)	Mental Health (%)	Mobility (%)	Social (%)	Stamina (%)	Vision (%)	Other (%)
Journey planning	25	30	34	34	23	14	31	15	42	.
Buying tickets	23	33	40	32	24	20	27	18	39	.
Passenger assistance	23	13	24	21	13	17	22	19	23	.
Getting to the station	20	16	27	26	15	19	19	19	19	.
At station	11	12	10	10	8	11	16	13	15	.
On-board	29	21	28	31	23	25	23	28	40	.
Onward travel	14	14	14	13	10	15	19	15	15	.
Other	5	3	5	2	2	4	.	6	1	7
None	32	25	19	22	35	35	27	34	15	.

Base: ever travel by rail (877). Note: . = zero responses

4. Journey planning

Frequency and type of problems at the journey planning stage

4.1 The quantitative survey found that 57% of disabled passengers who reported a problem at the journey planning stage, reported a lack of confidence. This was most likely to be reported when making a long business journey and least likely for a short leisure journey. Almost all of those reporting a lack of confidence (95%) reported experiencing this at least half of the time. Lack of confidence was ranked by passengers as having the biggest impact on their journeys at the journey planning stage.

4.2 Other common problems encountered when planning journeys by rail included not being able to find enough information (48% of those reporting a barrier when planning a journey by rail), not being able to find enough accessible information (24%) and not being aware of which stations and trains aren't accessible (9%). Lack of confidence was most frequently experienced at the journey planning stage by passengers with social disabilities, with information barriers most frequently experienced by those with learning and memory disabilities.

Figure 4.1 Reported frequency of experiencing barriers at the journey planning stage of rail journeys (%)

	Everytime	More than half	Half	Less than half	Rarely/once
Lack of confidence	41	29	25	2	3
Other	33	33	11	11	11
Awareness of accessible stations	26	37	16	16	5
Cannot find enough information	26	37	16	16	5
Cannot find enough accessible information	19	26	37	12	7
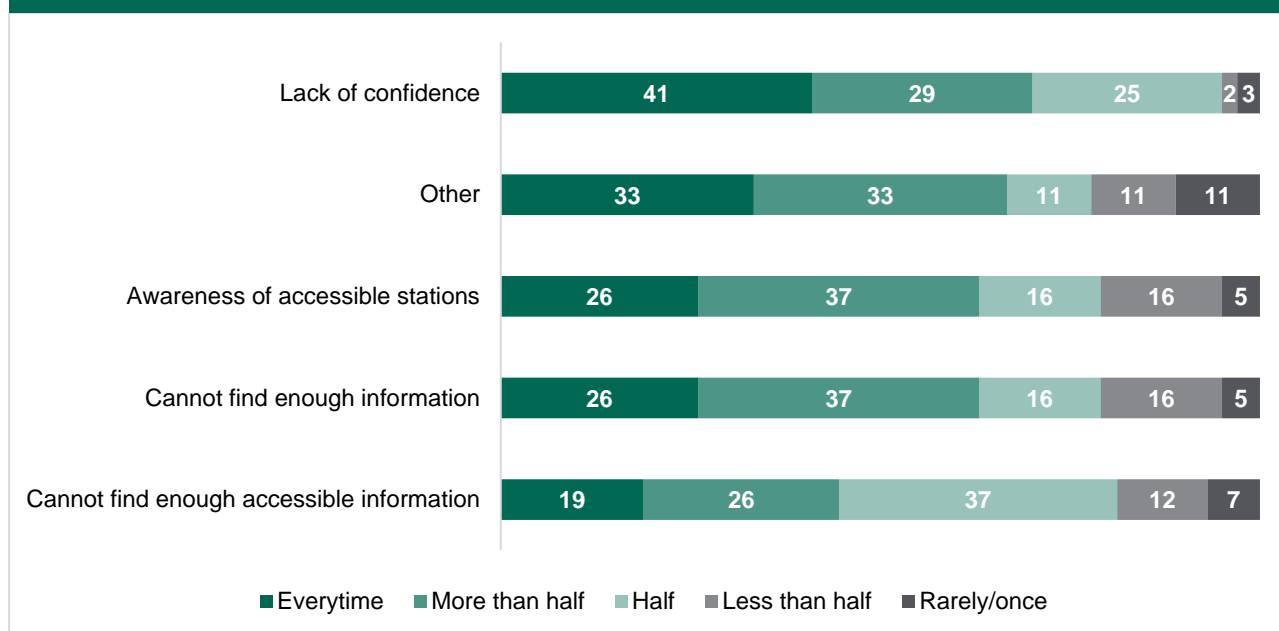
Base: those who reported a problem at the journey planning stage (103)

Journey planning behaviour

4.3 The qualitative research found that rail journeys are often planned in meticulous detail by disabled passengers to help ensure a successful journey. Some of the barriers passengers can face if journeys are not planned in advance include: encountering an inaccessible station; lack of on-train priority seating; being put in potential medical risk by not having a seat or assistance; and, being stranded at certain points along the journey.

4.4 Some disabled passengers were found to employ a range of strategies when planning a rail journey to try and minimise encountering barriers. Some of the strategies included: travelling less at peak times; booking ahead, including reserving a seat or booking assistance; and, ensuring there is enough time within journeys to allow for unplanned or unexpected events such as broken lifts. Although some passengers feel that making these contingencies is part of "being disabled", many passengers in the research were frustrated to have to take extra precautions when planning a journey by rail.

4.5 Some passengers reported that technology can help them when planning journeys, with apps such as the trainline and National Rail providing a live stream of information to enable them to stay informed throughout their journey.

4.6 The design workshop devised a potential solution to help disabled passengers increase their confidence when using the railway. The workshop solution was half a day of training for passengers provided by train operating companies (TOCs) that would introduce the basics of rail travel and the ticketing system. The suggestion was for the training to be provided to disabled passengers to cover the basics of rail travel, including topics such as how to buy a ticket, the various ticket types available and what to do if you buy the wrong type of ticket.

5. Passenger Assistance

Passenger Assist

5.1 Passenger Assist provides rail passengers with assistance to travel by rail. The assistance can be booked in advance and includes a range of services, such as meeting passengers at stations and accompanying them to a train, provision of a ramp to get on and off a train and someone to help with luggage. Although assistance may be booked up to 24 hours in advance, passengers can also receive assistance to travel via "Turn Up and Go" without booking in advance, but this is dependent on staff availability. Passenger Assist is provided by station facility operators (SFOs), with the booking system managed by the Rail Deliver Group (RDG).

5.2 In 2017-18, there were 1.3 million passenger assists across the GB rail network. On average, there were 3.4 assists per booking. Most assists were carried out by Train Operating Companies (TOCs), with just under a third carried out by Network Rail[8].

Awareness of Passenger Assist

5.3 The interview element of the research found that many disabled passengers are unaware of passenger assistance services that are available when travelling by rail. None of the qualitative participants were aware of "Turn up and Go" assistance services. Research undertaken by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), also found low awareness of assistance services amongst disabled rail passengers[9].

5.4 Of those that were aware of assistance services, they reported that they generally worked well and increased their confidence to travel by rail. However, when failures in assistance services were experienced, they can be emotionally draining for passengers and lead to negative experiences of rail travel.

Problems experienced with Passenger Assist

5.5 The research found the following types of failures in assistance services reported by participants: being left on a train at a terminus; not being met at a station where they needed to alight; not being met at the departure station; and, experiencing rude and discriminatory behaviour from staff. Although a lack of staff training was sometimes attributed to staff failing to deliver assistance appropriately, respondents also reported instances of when staff had been very helpful and provided an excellent service.

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[8] ORR (2018) 2017-18 factsheet: Rail passenger assists https://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/statistical-releases
[9] ORR (2017) ORR: Research into passenger awareness of assisted travel https://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/analytical-and-research-reports

5.6 Of respondents who reported experiencing a barrier to travel related to assistance services, 39% reported that this referred to there being no "Turn Up and Go" services, with a further 39% stating that assistance services were not available. Thirty-two per cent said that they cannot find "Turn Up and Go" services. Those travelling for commuting or short leisure purposes were more likely to report a lack of "Turn Up and Go" services as a barrier.

5.7 Passengers with vision disabilities were more likely to report experiencing problems with a lack of "Turn Up and Go" services, whereas those with a mobility disability were most likely to report a problem with assistance services not being available when they travel by rail. A lack of confidence at the passenger assistance stage of a rail journey was found to have the biggest impact on disabled passengers' journeys at this stage.

5.8 A lack of "Turn Up and Go" services, and assistance not being available were the problems experienced most frequently by those reporting problems with passenger assistance, with 62% experiencing either problem more than half of the times they travel by rail. Five in ten reported that they experience an error in a passenger assist booking more than half of the time they travel.

Figure 5.1 Reported frequency of experiencing barriers at the passenger assistance stage of rail journeys (%)
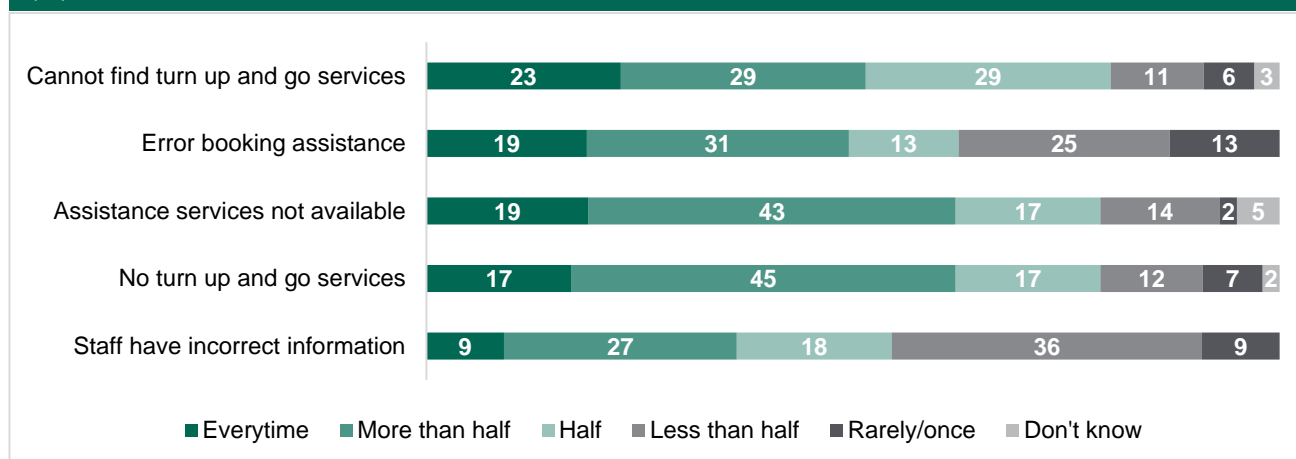
Base: those who reported a problem at the passenger assistance journey stage (42)

Use of Passenger Assist

5.9 When interview respondents were aware of the availability of passenger assistance services, their propensity to use it depended on two main factors: how qualified they felt to use it; and, if they are travelling alone or with others. The concept of being "qualified" relates to how passengers view their own disability in relation to others, with those with non-visible disabilities often feeling reluctant to use assistance services, reporting that they feel unjustified to use them.

5.10 Travelling with others means that passengers may feel that they have practical and emotional support already, and don't necessarily require further assistance. Those that feel most qualified to use assistance service and who are travelling alone are most likely to use assistance services; those travelling with others and who feel least qualified to use services are the least likely to use assistance services.

6. Accessibility of the network

Getting to the station

6.1 Getting to the station was often an aspect of a rail journey where disabled passengers reported encountering challenges. One area where challenges were reported was in parking and vehicle access. Availability of disabled parking, and its location in relation to a station was key for some interview respondents in determining mode choice. For those commuting by rail, there are a few key factors which are key to the choice of rail: proximity of parking to the station; number of available parking bays; closeness to the entrance or platform; steps and other objects to navigate; cost of parking; and, the length of the permitted stay. Drop off and pick up areas for cars can often be sources of problems, particularly at larger and busy stations. Some of the specific challenges encountered include poorly situated drop off points, obstacles such as maintenance works and busy locations.

6.2 For passengers who do not, or choose not to drive to a station, they can be reliant on others to drive them to a station, or public transport, which can present challenges. As can be seen in figure 5.1, over a third of respondents cited a lack of accessible public transport as a problem they anticipate encountering when getting to a railway station, with a quarter citing the time and distance it takes as a potential issue.

Figure 6.1 Proportion of disabled passengers anticipating problems with getting to a rail station (%)

Category	Percentage
Lack of accessible public transport	34%
Takes a long time/ distance	25%
Impaired mobility	19%
Lack of confidence	16%
Parking issues	6%
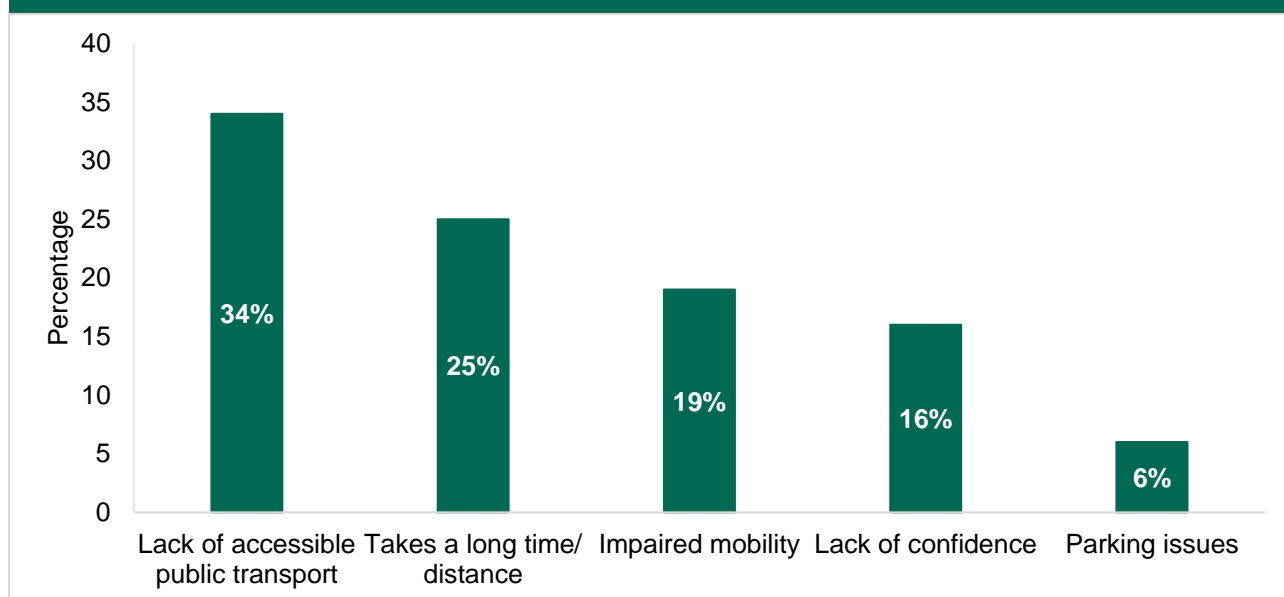
Base: those who anticipated a problem with getting to a rail station (102)

Problems experienced in getting to the station

6.3   Of those reporting a barrier when getting to a rail station, around a third each mentioned public transport not being frequent enough (36%), the cost of taxi services (34%) and the cost of public transport (31%). Those travelling by rail for short leisure journeys were most likely to report public transport as not being frequent enough. Respondents with vision impairments were most likely to say that public transport not being frequent enough was a barrier experienced when travelling to a station, with respondents with learning disabilities being most likely to say that they cannot use public transport. The cost of public transport was found to have the biggest impact on disabled passengers getting to the station.

6.4   The cost of public transport was the problem most frequently reported, with 77% of respondents reporting this as an issue saying it happened more than half the time. The cost of taxis was also reported as a frequently common problem, with 72% reporting it as occurring more than half the time when travelling by train.

Figure 6.2 Reported frequency of experiencing barriers at the accessing the station stage of rail journeys (%)

Barrier	Everytime	More than half	Half	Less than half	Rarely/once
Cost of public transport	51	26	21		3
Cost of taxi services	49	23	14	9	5
Cannot use public transport	38	31	19	6	6
Taxi services not reliable	33	20	13	27	7
Public transport not frequent enough	30	24	24	20	

■ Everytime ■ More than half ■ Half ■ Less than half ■ Rarely/once
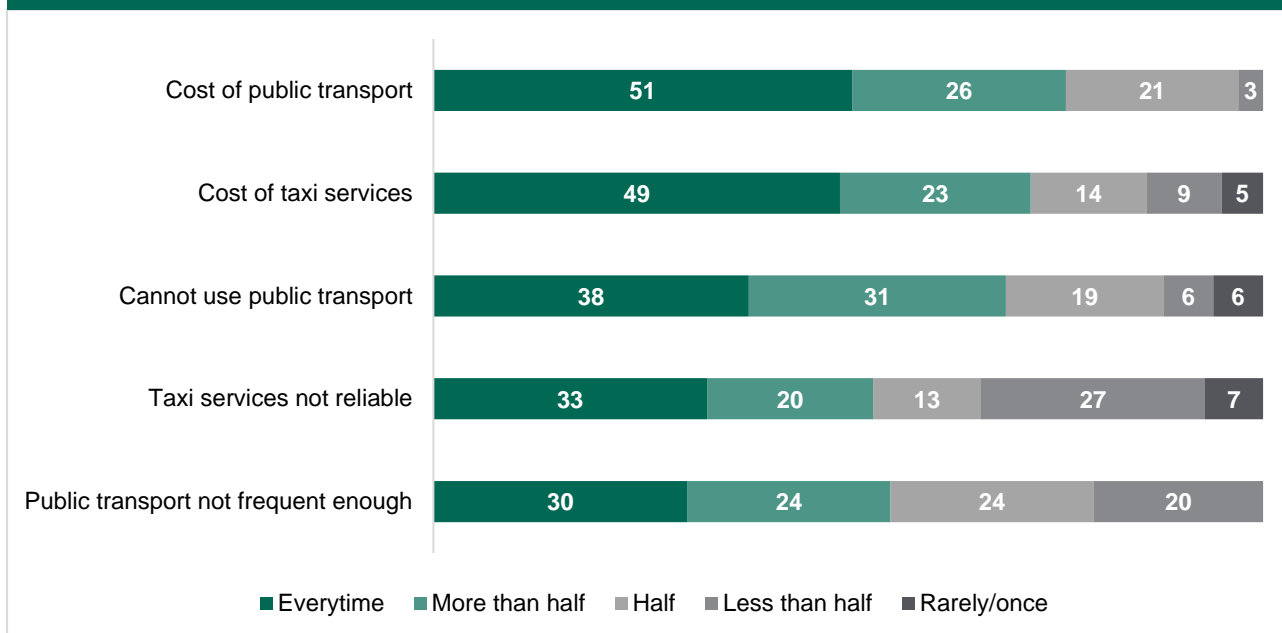
Base: those who reported a problem at the accessing the station journey stage (46)

7. Ticketing

Problems experienced with ticketing

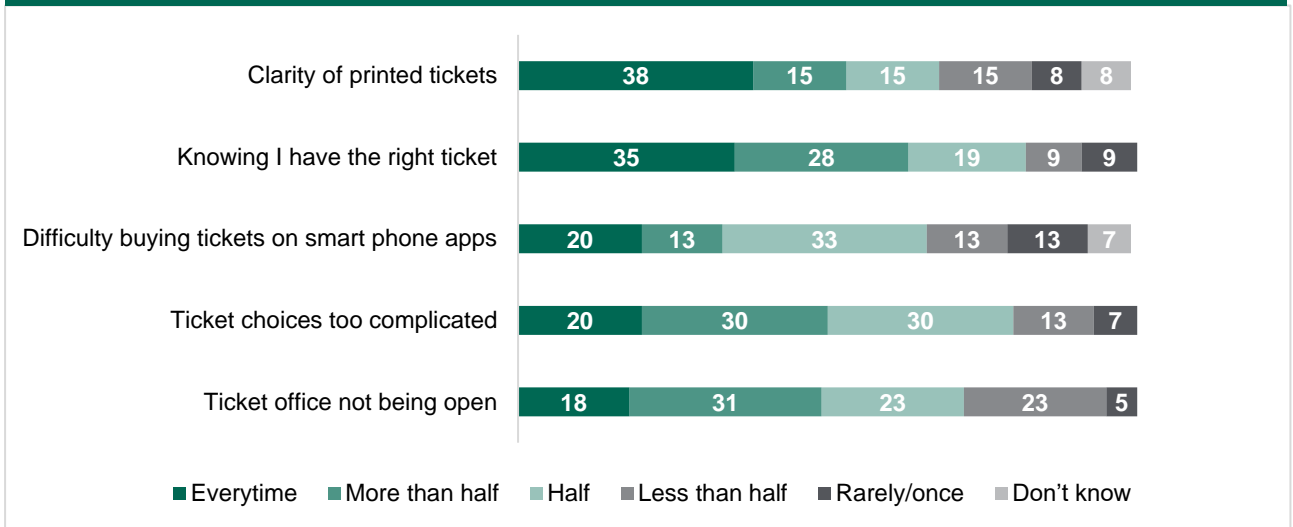7.1 Ticketing is an aspect of rail journeys where many passengers report challenges, such as not understanding the types of tickets available[10] or in using ticket vending machines[11]. However, for disabled rail passengers, ticketing can present additional challenges and barriers, which other passengers may not encounter. One of the challenges reported is the large number of physical tickets, including seat reservation slips, required for a journey.

7.2 Respondents to the survey reported experiencing a range of barriers when buying tickets for rail travel, with the ticket office not being open being reported by 38% of those reporting a barrier at this journey stage, followed by ticket choices being too complicated (37%), and knowing they had the right ticket (35%). Ticket offices not being open was reported as a barrier more frequently by those making short business trips; ticket choices being too complicated was reported most frequently by those making long leisure journeys by rail.

7.3 Passengers with dexterity disabilities reported experiencing the most difficulties with ticket offices not being open. Passengers with social disabilities reported experiencing the most problems with ticket choices being too complicated. Ticket choices being too complicated was reported to have the biggest impact on disabled passengers' journeys in relation to the ticketing stage of rail journeys.

7.4 When asked to indicate how frequently they experienced specific barriers when buying and using tickets for rail journeys, knowing that they have the right ticket was the most frequently reported, with ticket choices being too complicated being the second most frequent.

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[10] Department for Transport (2018) Public attitudes towards train services: results from the February 2018 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-attitudes-towards-train-services-2018
[11] ORR (2017) Research into passengers' experiences of ticket vending machines: Report of findings
hhttps://orr.gov.uk/rail/consumers/what-we-do-for-consumers/ticket-machines

Figure 7.1 Reported frequency of experiencing barriers at the ticketing stage of rail journeys (%)

Barrier	Everytime	More than half	Half	Less than half	Rarely/once	Don't know
Clarity of printed tickets	38	15	15	15	8	8
Knowing I have the right ticket	35	28	19	9	9	
Difficulty buying tickets on smart phone apps	20	13	33	13	13	7
Ticket choices too complicated	20	30	30	13	7	
Ticket office not being open	18	31	23	23	5	

Base: those who reported a problem at the ticketing journey stage (74)

Buying tickets

7.5 One of the challenges encountered by disabled passengers when buying tickets is in using ticket vending machines (TVMs); the most common anticipated problems when buying tickets identified by survey respondents was difficulties in using ticket machines. Interview respondents reported machines not being appropriate for all passengers, including wheelchair users, those with dexterity disabilities, dyslexia, learning disabilities and vision disabilities.

7.6 For some passengers, the ticket office was the "default option", with staff members generally seen as helpful and being able to answer questions passengers may have. However, passengers can also experience challenges when purchasing tickets from a ticket office. These include: the ticket office counter not being at a height suitable for wheelchair users; a lack of space or a shelf for luggage or mobility assistance; the presence of security screens can be a sound barrier for passengers who are deaf or have a hearing impairment; and, ticket offices not always being open.

7.7 Purchasing tickets online was reported by some passengers to be preferable as it was perceived to be less stressful and the passenger would have a choice in how to buy the tickets (i.e. own technology preferences). For some passengers, buying tickets online was part of the travel planning process which enabled the organisation of train travel in advance.

Ticket format and information

7.8 Seventeen per cent of disabled passengers reported that they experienced a problem with rail tickets being confusing. Passengers reported that there are too many tickets for each journey, with passengers often needing multiple tickets (e.g. outbound, return, receipt and seat reservation); they also reported that the text on tickets can be too small and close together, which may be particularly challenging for passengers who are blind, have a visual impairment or have dyslexia. Passengers

also reported that content of ticket text can be confusing and key information can be unclear.

7.9 Challenges with multiple aspects of rail tickets was also echoed by the workshop participants. Challenges identified included: an unnecessary number of paper tickets; too much information on paper tickets (which can be confusing and hard to read); ticket vending machines being difficult to use due to a lack of accessibility; and, communication with staff or lack of staff assistance. The solutions proposed to these challenges fell into three categories: information; booking tickets; and, ticket format.

7.10 Participants reported that they can feel overwhelmed by the amount of ticketing information, both before and during travel; this had led to confusion and mistakes during journeys, such as throwing away the wrong ticket. One of the solutions proposed in relation to ticket information was a single return ticket to simplify tickets and ticket information. This would mean that one ticket rather than two could be used for a return journey, with only the most important information, such as the route taken, seat reservation, time the ticket can be used and an "R" for return, included on the ticket itself. The other main solution was an automated text service to improve communication around ticket information. This service would text passengers with clear and relevant ticketing information and could also be used to provide updates during a journey.

7.11 Another solution was to provide an accessible ticket vending machine in every station. Adaptions to these machines suggested by participants included an angled screen for improved vision, a voice instruction option, enlarged fonts, tactile buttons and rails for support. Another solution was the use of sound boards at customer service points to reduce noise levels when communicating with staff at these points; moving ticket offices to a less noisy part of a station was also seen to be potentially beneficial.

7.12 Workshop participants reported that paper tickets can be difficult to manage, especially for passengers with dexterity disabilities and visual impairments. A proposed solution to this challenge was the use of digital and online tickets, making tickets available via accessible and easy to use apps and digital platforms. Increasing awareness of the ability to print tickets at home was also seen as potentially worthwhile.

8. Stations

Problems experienced at stations

8.1 Survey respondents indicated that they anticipated multiple challenges at the station when travelling by rail, with 21% saying that they anticipated experiencing a problem at a train station when travelling by rail. Almost half (48%) of those anticipating problems at rail stations see the problems as being associated with accessibility and mobility. However, only 9% of disabled rail passengers reported experiencing a problem at a station.

8.2 One of the areas where passengers either anticipate or experience problems at train stations is in navigating and moving around the station, with some passengers reporting getting lost, confused, tired and panicked by not being able to get around the station; this in turn can lead some to not complete their journey. Almost a third of passengers who reported experiencing problems at rail stations cited signs and instructions being difficult to follow. It is also the case that customer information boards and announcements are not suitable for some disabled passengers; display boards can be too small, announcements can lack clarity or be difficult to hear alongside the high levels of background noise in stations.

8.3 The type of barriers experienced varies by journey type, with those on commuter journeys more likely to report experiencing a problem with a lack of any or good toilets at stations, and those on long business trips being more likely to experience problems related to lighting levels at the station.

Challenges with the physical environment of stations

8.4 Some newer and redesigned stations can present challenges for some disabled passengers, with the scale of buildings and open spaces sometimes proving difficult to navigate.

"I appreciate that it is now a lovely space and cleaner, brighter…. appears to have been planned with little thought to passengers such as myself. I wanted to cry because it was lovely, but the distance to walk and the effort…"

8.5 The layout and number of people at stations can also present challenges for disabled people when travelling by rail, with a lack of accessible facilities also a problem; almost half (48%) of survey respondents who reported experiencing problems at stations, said that they experienced issues with step-free access. Some other areas where respondents reported challenges were:

- Lifts. These can be unavailable at multi-level stations, out of order or in locations which are nonsensical.

- Ramps. These can be unavailable at multi-level stations, too steep or in nonsensical locations.

- Crowding. This can be a challenge at particularly busy stations.

- Hand rails. These can be unavailable throughout stations.

- Escalators. Can be challenging and frightening for some passengers to get on and off.

8.6 Some interview respondents reported that the availability and quality of accessibility provision, such as lifts, can be worse at smaller and local stations compared to larger stations.

8.7 Almost a third of passengers who reported a barrier at the station when travelling by rail reported that they experienced signs or instructions being difficult to follow (32%), a lack of good or any toilets (32%) or it being difficult to negotiate the gap between the train and the platform (31%). Poor parking at the station has the biggest impact on disabled passengers' rail journeys in relation to being at a station.

8.8 Difficulty in negotiating the gap between the train and the platform and signs/instructions being difficult to follow were each experienced more than half the time by 91% experiencing this problem, with 88% of those reporting a lack of any or good toilets as a barrier at the station saying it occurs more than half the time they travel by train.

Figure 8.1 Reported frequency of experiencing barriers at the station stage of rail journeys (%)

	Everytime	More than half	Half	Less than half	Rarely/once
Difficult to get around station	35	24	24	12	6
Lighting levels in the station	33	13	20	20	7
Lack of any/good toilets	33	42	13	13	
Difficult to negotiate gap between train and platform	26	48	17	9	
Signs/instructions difficult to follow	25	33	33	8	

■ Everytime ■ More than half ■ Half ■ Less than half ■ Rarely/once
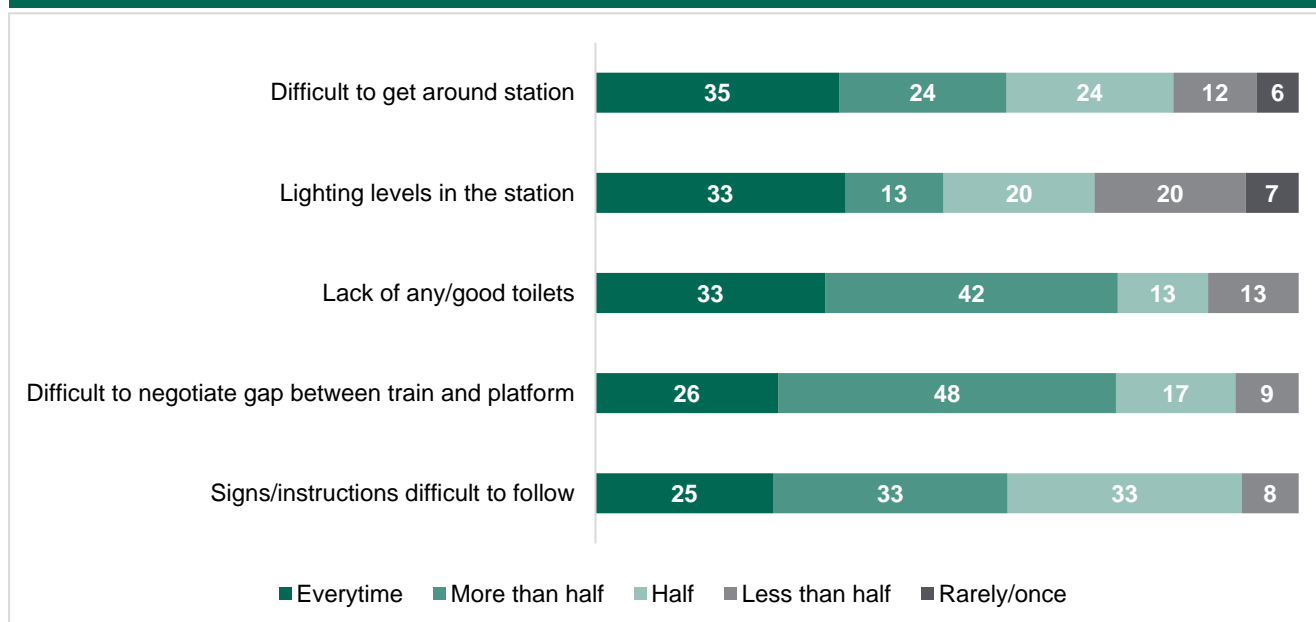
Base: those who reported a problem at the stations journey stage (24)

Station facilities and services

8.9 The physical environment of stations is not the only area where disabled passengers can face challenges, station facilities and services can also be problematic. Some interview participants reported arriving early at stations to mitigate the impact of any barriers they may encounter when travelling by train. As a result, they may spend some time at stations, and the facilities and services on offer are important for passenger wellbeing, energy levels and comfort.

8.10 For some passengers, a lack of seating in many stations, along with a lack of leaning points or handrails can make using railway stations difficult. It was also reported that although refreshments are available at larger stations, this is not always the case at smaller stations.

8.11 One of the areas where station facilities can be problematic is toilets, with almost a third of passengers experiencing a problem at stations reporting that a lack of suitable or any toilets is a problem they encounter. Passengers reported that a lack of accessible toilets, including Changing Places[12], can be degrading and that toilets with a full range of facilities should be available at every station.

"If I need the toilet and can't use [it], but it's like everyone else can, then that's not fair is it?"

8.12 Participants in the design workshops also identified challenges with toilets at railway stations, although they were generally seen more favourably than toilets on trains. Some of the challenges participants identified with station toilets included RADAR[13] toilets having an additional lock, requiring users to find a member of staff to assist and a lack of hoist or Changing Places facilities at stations.

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[12] Changing Places provide more space and equipment than standard accessible toilets http://www.changing-places.org/the_campaign/what_are_changing_places_toilets_.aspx
[13] RADAR refers to the National Key Scheme, developed as some public toilets designed for disabled people need to be locked to prevent damage and misuse https://nks.directenquiries.com/nks/page.aspx?pageid=10&tab=National%20Key%20Scheme&level=2

On platform and boarding the train

8.13 Thirty-one per cent of respondents who reported experiencing problems at stations said that they have difficulty in negotiating the gap between the train and the platform with no staff to help, and the "gap" can be seen as a potentially anxiety-inducing situation.

8.14 Disabled passengers travelling with wheelchairs or mobility scooters also reported facing confusing and conflicting information regarding boarding the train.
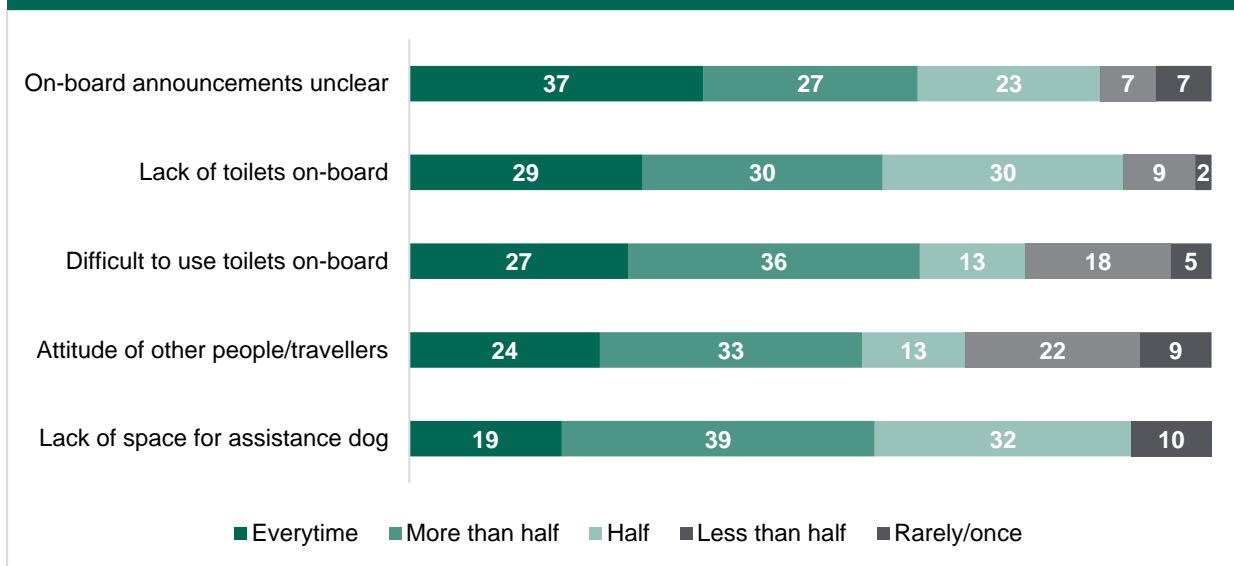
"I've got my mobility scooter that I like to take with me on days out…but it's always 'oh you can't take that on here' – when I know that you can because I done it last week. It means I have to take a chair with me 'cos I can't walk or stand up for the whole day"

9. On-board

Problems experienced on-board

9.1 Although the station may be a journey stage where disabled passengers most anticipate experiencing a problem, the journey stage where most problems were reported by disabled passengers is on-board a train.

9.2 Of disabled passengers who reported experiencing problems on-board whilst travelling by train 28% cited the lack of toilets on-board as a barrier, with a further 28% mentioning the attitude of other people or travellers. Almost three in ten (28%) reported toilets on board being difficult to use as a barrier.

9.3 Those travelling for commuting purposes were most likely to cite the lack of toilets on-board as a barrier, with those making short leisure journeys more likely to report the attitude of other people or travellers as a barrier. Passengers with mobility disabilities were most likely to cite the attitude of other people or travellers as a barrier experienced on board; those with a memory or vision impairment were most likely to cite the lack of space for an assistance dog. Those with dexterity disabilities were the most likely to report that on-board toilets were difficult to use was a barrier. The attitude of other people or travellers had the biggest impact on the on-board journey stage of disabled passengers' journeys.

9.4 The barrier that was reported to occur most frequently was on-board announcements being unclear, with 64% of passengers reporting this, saying it happens more than half the time. Fifty-nine per cent of disabled passengers who reported a lack of toilets on-board as a barrier said that this was something they encountered on more than half of rail journeys they made.

Figure 9.1 Reported frequency of experiencing barriers at the on-board stage of rail journeys (%)

	Everytime	More than half	Half	Less than half	Rarely/once
On-board announcements unclear	37	27	23	7	7
Lack of toilets on-board	29	30	30	9	2
Difficult to use toilets on-board	27	36	13	18	5
Attitude of other people/travellers	24	33	13	22	9
Lack of space for assistance dog	19	39	32	10	

Base: those who reported a problem at the on-board journey stage (56)

On-board toilets

9.5 On-board toilets were generally seen to be more of a challenge when travelling by rail by the design workshop participants than toilets at railway stations. Participants reported that toilets on trains were often dirty, badly designed, lacking in information, and as largely inaccessible for disabled people. Participants acknowledged the space limitations of on-board toilets, but did suggest some design solutions to help improve toilet accessibility.

9.6 Two solutions were offered to the issue of on-train cleanliness. The first was ensuring toilets are cleaned before and during a journey, especially for longer journeys. The second was to provide cleaning materials, such as toilet brushes, hand and seat sanitisers, air fresheners and wet wipes in toilets for all passengers to use to improve the cleanliness of toilets.

9.7 On-board toilets were seen by workshop participants to be not accessible, with not enough room to manoeuvre a wheelchair, or an easy way of transferring from a wheelchair to the toilet. One of the solutions they proposed to overcome the poor design of on-board toilets (which also applied to station toilets) was to provide more fixtures and fittings appropriate for multiple disabilities. Some of the specific design-based solutions were: hand rails outside on-board toilets to help people whilst queuing; a place in the toilet to place crutches/walking aids; shelving for additional equipment people may have; toilet paper dispensers that are positioned in reach of the toilet; appropriate height placing of hooks and mirrors; the use of mixer taps as opposed to two separate taps; and, improved on-train luggage storage to prevent luggage blocking access to toilets. The need for more space in toilets was also a concern.

9.8 Workshop participants identified challenges with identifying available toilets for use when travelling by rail, along with how information about on-board toilet control buttons (such as opening or locking the door) can be challenging, especially for those with visual impairments.

9.9 The solutions proposed in response to these information challenges were the provision of up to date toilet information, such as location and if they are engaged or broken through audio and visual outputs on-train (and at the station); the other was the use of voice chips and LED lights for control buttons and switches.

Priority seating

9.10 One area where the research indicates that disabled passengers experience problems, or anxiety in anticipation of problems on-board trains, is around priority seating. Interview respondents indicated that they may need priority seating on trains for a range of reasons, including mobility requirements or for those with anxiety. For many who require priority seating whilst travelling by train, they feel that there is not enough of it available.

9.11 Lack of availability was not the only challenge surrounding priority seating that interview respondents raised; the concept of a "hierarchy" of need for the seating was also a potential challenge. Respondents reported that there is often debate around which passengers should sit first in train priority seating with the picture becoming complex when people's different needs are considered, for example non-visible disabilities and the needs of pregnant or elderly passengers. For some disabled passengers, they feel that they may come low down on the perceived "hierarchy" for priority seating and that they don't "deserve" to use it.

"Who sits where? I've been on the train and there is me, a pregnant lady, an elderly couple and then that's only the people I've seen. There might be people with other disabilities, you know?"

9.12 A solution to some of the challenges experienced by disabled rail passengers around priority seating was presented in the design workshops. At present, priority seating is often located close to train doors, with passengers facing away from the doors, which can make it difficult for passengers in these seats to see if others may require them. It was suggested that priority seating should be positioned facing the doors of train carriages, enabling passengers in these seats to be better able to see if others need these seats when they board the train.

Space on-board

9.13 Space on train carriages can be especially important to some passengers, for example wheelchair users, those with an assistance dog, those who need support or something to hold on to, and those who become anxious in crowded spaces. However, the space available on a train carriage was also an area where passengers reported experiencing barriers and challenges.

9.14 As with the priority seating, interviewed passengers reported a perceived "hierarchy" for space on the train and over who has priority for space, including spaces near doors. Another challenge can be other passengers occupying space that a disabled passenger may need to make their journey, for example passengers with luggage, bicycles or prams occupying a wheelchair space on a train.

9.15 Some passengers also reported that a limited amount of wheelchair space on trains prevents them travelling by rail altogether. Others reported that it is often not certain when boarding a train if there is space available for a wheelchair or mobility scooter and that it can feel like a "lottery" for those boarding if there will be space available for them when they get on the train.

9.16 Overcrowding, especially at peak times was cited by some respondents to be a challenge on-board. Some respondents who were wheelchair or mobility scooter users, or those with mobility disabilities, reported that they avoided travelling at peak times altogether due to overcrowding.

Anti-social behaviour

9.17 The behaviour and attitudes of other passengers was a challenge identified by respondents, with 31% reporting that they had experienced anti-social or discriminatory behaviour from other passengers; a further 28% who experience problems on board trains reported an issue with the attitude of other people/travellers. Although most journeys are not likely to include instances of anti-social or discriminatory behaviour from fellow passengers, a single incident can put passengers off travelling by rail again for some time.

9.18 Disabled passengers reported instances of anti-social or discriminatory behaviour from other passengers, including aggressive responses when asking to sit in a priority seat, or feeling vulnerable in instances of confrontation. Interviewed passengers also reported that often their needs can conflict with those of other passengers, for example a need to have the window open to help with nausea and panic associated with anxiety may conflict with other passengers who are cold.

"I'm trying to explain what it's like…being old. You get this vulnerability. If someone starts or there is some trouble you can't just jump out the way of it. Yes, I feel vulnerable"

"I can't stand it when people stare. I had it the other day on the train"

9.19 Anti-social behaviour was one of the three topics explored in the design workshops. Participants indicated that some of the anti-social behaviour experienced by disabled rail passengers is the same as that experienced by all passengers, such as other passengers being rowdy or inebriated and a lack of awareness. However, the participants did report that anti-social behaviour during rail travel can be experienced differently by disabled passengers as they may not be able to easily avoid or remove themselves from the situation.

9.20 The solutions proposed by the workshop participants can be divided into three categories: those aimed at preventing anti-social behaviour; those aimed at promoting good behaviour; and, those aimed at reinforcing good behaviour. The main solution presented for preventing anti-social behaviour was "dry" trains, as participants felt that alcohol was the root cause of much of the anti-social behaviour experienced on trains; they cited the London Underground as an example of where this approach had been successful.

9.21 To help promote good behaviour, workshop participants suggested the use of posters and signage, employing "nudge theory" principles to be considerate of other passengers. An example could be a reminder on the back of each seat that an individual was seated in the quiet carriage. It was also thought that supportive behaviour from train staff could be encouraged and promoted, for example through a staff reward system.

9.22 Two solutions to reinforcing good behaviour were proposed by workshop participants. One was the use of technology, for example passengers being able to activate the CCTV on the carriage or platform and for the activated camera to indicate that it was on and working; it was felt that the camera could be activated by

text or a button, and that the feature should be advertised to act as a deterrent. Staff intervention occurring when required was seen as critical to the success of this solution. The second solution was more staff on trains and at stations.

On-board comfort

9.23 Comfort was another area on-board trains where disabled passengers in the interviews reported experiencing challenges and barriers to travel. Some of the specific issues were around the temperature of the carriage, with air conditioning seen as beneficial for some passengers, a lack of handrails inside carriages and difficulties in getting refreshments if they are travelling by themselves. One of the biggest sources of challenges to comfort on board trains for disabled passengers was toilets. The top two problems reported being experienced on-board trains were about toilets, with almost three in 10 (28%) passengers reporting experiencing a lack of toilets on-board trains and a further 28% reporting toilets on trains being difficult to use. Some respondents indicated that they refrain from drinking during journeys to not have to use on-board toilets.

9.24 Some of the respondents in the qualitative research reported that they prefer travelling in the "quiet carriage" of trains, especially those with anxiety or hearing impairments, where there is less background noise.

Impact and consequences of unplanned disruption

9.25 Unplanned disruption to rail journeys, such as delays and cancellations can be inconvenient for all rail passengers, but for disabled passengers, such disruption can be extremely problematic. The research found that disabled passengers often plan rail journeys meticulously to ensure that they have enough energy, time, resources and potentially medication, to complete a journey. If unexpected disruption occurs to the journey, these plans can be put into disarray, and may impact negatively on the passenger's wellbeing.

"…if the train gets cancelled or something then I feel like that's it for me. What do I do? I can't stand up for too long or I will faint. I just have to accept that I'm going to faint and see what happens I suppose"

9.26 Some of the consequences of unplanned disruption to rail journeys for disabled passengers highlighted in the interviews include:

- Assistance that may have been booked at destination or interchange stations may be jeopardised due to delays.

- Anxiety that a priority seat may be lost or no longer secured.

- Medication timetables may be missed or disrupted.

- Onward travel arrangements may be compromised or missed.

- Passengers can experience stress and lost time.

10. Onward travel

Problems experienced during onward travel

10.1 Over a third (37%) of respondents who reported experiencing a barrier at the onward travel journey stage said they had trouble in finding exits and onward travel at the destination station. A further 34% cited the cost of public transport, and a further 33% difficulty in getting around the destination station.

10.2 Those making long business journeys were most likely to cite difficulty in finding exits and onward travel as a barrier; those making short leisure journeys were the most likely to cite the cost of public transport and difficulty getting around destination stations as barriers. Passengers with social disabilities were most likely to say they experience difficulties in locating the exits and onward travel at the destination station, with difficulty getting around the destination station being reported by passengers with a range of disabilities. The cost of public transport had the biggest impact on disabled passengers' rail journeys in relation to problems experienced during onward travel.

10.3 The barrier that was reported to occur most frequently at the onward journey stage was public transport not being safe, with 75% saying this happens more than half the time. The cost of public transport, was reported by 63% of respondents as happening more than half the time they travel by rail.

Figure 10.1 Reported frequency of experiencing barriers at the onward journey stage of rail journeys (%)

Barrier	Everytime	More than half	Half	Less than half	Rarely/once
Cost of public transport	41	22	19	6	9
Difficulty getting around destination station	29	35	26	10	
Public transport is not safe	25	50		13	13
Taxi service not accessible	25	25			50
Difficulty finding exits and onward travel	11	37	29	14	9

■ Everytime ■ More than half ■ Half ■ Less than half ■ Rarely/once
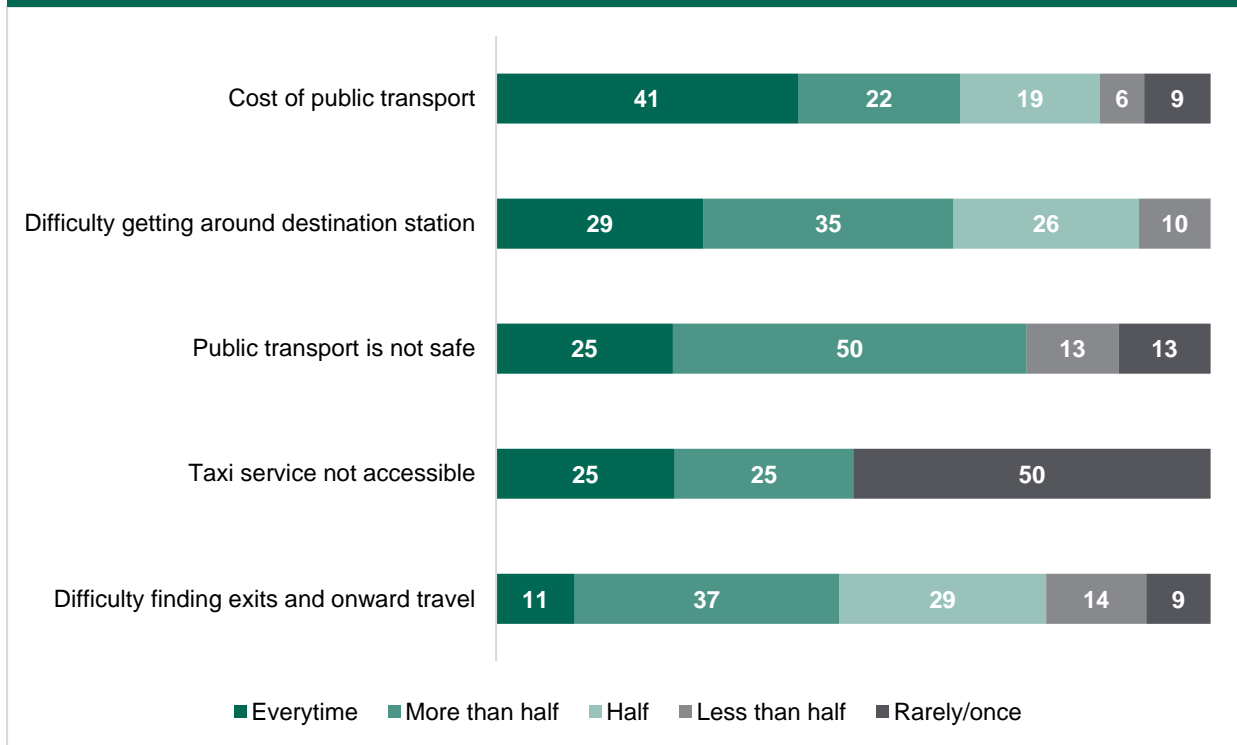
Base: those who reported a problem at the onward journey stage (35)

10.4 Interview respondents who make rail journeys on a regular basis report that they plan journeys in advance and can have mechanisms in place to help with the onward journey. These include:

- Being aware of the platform they are likely to alight at.

- Knowing the route or distance to onward travel modes, such as bus or taxi at the destination station.

- Knowing the location of potential rest areas.

- Having an established relationship with station staff.

10.5 For those who are less familiar with the destination station, barriers to travel are more likely to be experienced as they have not been planned and mitigated for.

"The guy at [station] collects me in a wheelchair and then he wheels me across the road to the taxi rank and makes sure I get in OK. He even brings an umbrella! I am so grateful because otherwise it would be like crossing the Rubicon"

11. Future travel

Desired frequency of rail travel

11.1 Across all types of journeys, survey respondents indicated that they would like to travel more frequently by rail than they do currently.

11.2 When asked how frequently they would like to travel by rail for commuting purposes, 32% said they would like to do so most days of the week, compared to 14% who reported doing so currently. For short business users, a quarter would like to travel by rail two to three days a week, compared to 12% who do this currently.

Figure 11.1 Reported frequency of current rail travel and desired frequency of rail travel by journey type (%)

Illuminas (2019) Current use base: 1,511; desired use short business base: 221; desired use commuting base: 307; desired use long business base: 262; desired use long leisure base: 411; desired use short leisure base: 378

Anticipated future problems

11.3 Survey respondents were asked if they anticipated any problems when travelling by rail that may limit their future use; 45% said they did anticipate problems, with 55% saying that they didn't. Those who travel for commuting purposes were the most likely to anticipate future problems with rail travel, while those who travel for short business purposes were the most likely to not anticipate any future barriers.

11.4 The journey stage where most future problems were anticipated was the buying tickets stage, with 31% of disabled passengers anticipating a problem. A quarter anticipated a problem at the journey planning stage, with 24% anticipating a problem with getting to the station; 27% anticipated a problem with passenger assistance. These are all higher proportions than those who currently report experiencing problems at each of these journey stages.

11.5 The most anticipated problem at the journey planning stage was an inability to find enough information (35% of those anticipating a problem at this journey stage). At the ticket purchase journey stage, the most anticipated problem was difficulty using a ticket vending machine (30%); at the passenger assistance stage, the most anticipated problem was a lack of assistance (73%). At the getting to the station journey stage, a lack of accessible public transport was the most anticipated problem (34%).

11.6 When asked what problem they most anticipated when getting to the station, 34% of disabled passengers who anticipated a problem at this stage mentioned a lack of accessible transport. Almost half (48%) of those who said they anticipated a problem at the station said that they anticipated a problem with accessibility and mobility; lack of space or seats was the most anticipated problem on-board trains (61%). Of those who reported anticipating a problem with onward travel during future rail trips, 47% said that they anticipated this to be in relation to a lack of confidence.

12. Summary

12.1 Disabled rail passengers travel by rail for a range of purposes and reasons, with disabled passengers valuing the speed, cost effectiveness and convenience that rail travel can offer. However, travelling by train can be problematic for disabled passengers, with around one in five respondents reporting that they find train travel difficult.

12.2 Disabled passengers can also experience a wide range of barriers and challenges when travelling by rail, and although some of these, such as delays and challenges with ticketing, may be experienced by all rail passengers, for disabled passengers, some barriers and challenges can be unique. The research has also indicated that for some disabled passengers the challenges and barriers they experience can have profound negative impacts on their rail journeys and can also impact on their confidence to travel by rail in the future. The research also found that almost half of disabled passengers anticipated experiencing a problem during future rail journeys.

12.3 Although the research has found that disabled rail passengers can encounter numerous, and sometimes significant, barriers when travelling by rail, almost half (47%) of terms used by survey respondents to describe train travel were positive. The research also found that over half of respondents didn't anticipate any problems in future rail journeys and that disabled passengers would like to travel more frequently than they do at present. The workshop element of the research devised a range of potential solutions to some of the challenges experienced by disabled rail passengers when travelling by rail.

Annex A: Survey sample profile

A.1 The tables below detail the profile of the online survey sample.

Table A.1 Disability

Disability type	Proportion (%)
Mental health	38
Mobility	37
Stamina	16
Vision	12
Hearing	12
Memory	11
Dexterity	10
Learning	8
Social	7
Other	7
Prefer not to say	3

Base: Respondents who consider themselves to have an impairment or disability (1,555). Totals add to more than 100% as respondents could select multiple responses.

Table A.2 Age

Age	Proportion (%)
18-29	33
30-39	22
40-49	16
50-59	14
60-69	11
70-79	4
80+	0

Base: Respondents who consider themselves to have an impairment or disability (1,555)

Table A.3 Gender

Gender	Proportion (%)
Male	45
Female	55

Base: Respondents who consider themselves to have an impairment or disability (1,555)

Table A.4 Working pattern

Working pattern	Proportion (%)
Working full-time	38
Not working	21
Working part-time	19
Retired	12
Student	6
Other	4
Prefer not to say	1

Base: Respondents who consider themselves to have an impairment or disability (1,515)