Department for Transport

Rail Passenger Experience of Disruption Handling

Moving Britain Ahead

May 2021

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Accent

Rail Passenger Experience of Disruption Handling

February 2021

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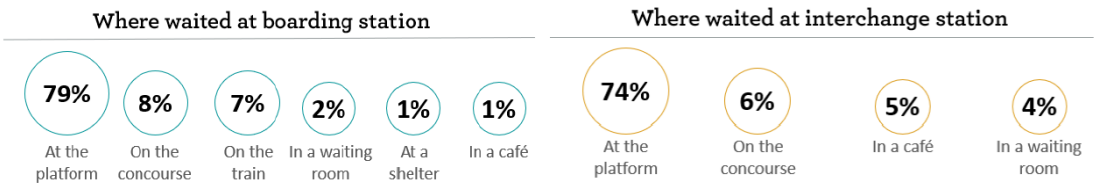
Executive Summary

Introduction

In March 2019 the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned research to explore passengers' needs during times of unplanned rail disruptions. The aim of the project was to explore the needs of rail passengers from across Great Britain when they experience unplanned delays and disruption on the rail network. The project incorporated a two-staged approach consisting of qualitative (journey diaries, pre-tasked discussion groups and depth interviews) and quantitative (a large scale self-completion survey of disrupted travellers) methods. Overall, 85 travellers contributed to the qualitative stage, with a further 1,790 passengers entering the survey.

MAIN FINDINGS[1]

Waiting during disruption

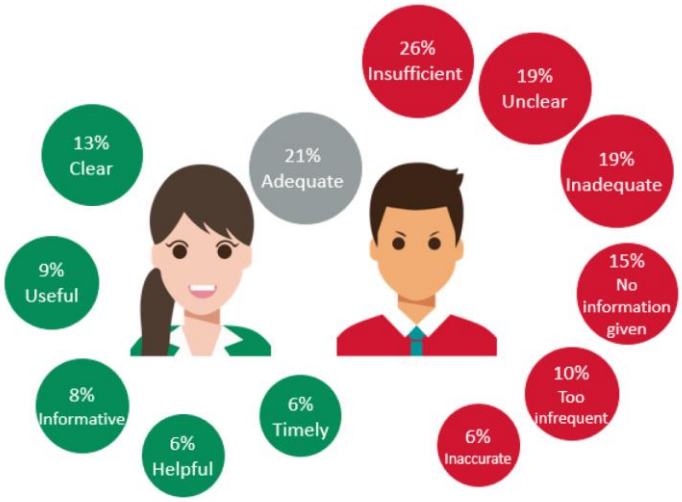


- Most passengers waited on the platform if they experienced disruption at their boarding station or the interchange station. Very few passengers waited in a waiting room or shelter.
- Only 38% of passengers reported that the wait was comfortable with 62% saying their wait during disruption was uncomfortable.
- Passengers were more likely to feel comfortable if they waited on the train or in a café or waiting room. The longer the delay at the boarding station the more uncomfortable it was perceived to be. 78% of passengers who experienced a delay of 60 minutes or more said their wait was uncomfortable. This compares to 57% of passengers who said their wait of less than 5 minutes was comfortable.

Handling of the disruption

- Handling of the disruption by the TOC was perceived as poor or very poor by 38% of passengers, with only 22% thinking it was handled well. Longer disruptions contributed to poor ratings, as did cancellations.

[1] This section refers to the quantitative phase only. Throughout the report, findings from the qualitative stage are interwoven. However, findings from both stages are very similar across the different aspects tested.



- Overall, the information given during the disruption was perceived as negative: 95% gave negative comments (e.g. 26% insufficient, 19% unclear, 19% inadequate, 15% no information given) and 42% gave positive comments (e.g. 13% clear, 9% useful, 8% informative).

- 45% rated the information provided as poor or very poor. 25% rated the information as good or very good: for example, reason given for the disruption (32%) and the length of delay (17%).

Reception of information

- 39% of passengers first noticed information about the disruption via a display at the station, 18% via an announcement on the train, and 16% via announcements at the station.

- Passengers said that apps and websites are relatively unimportant sources of information on disruptions: just 13% first learned about the disruption through those means.

- About three quarters of passengers would like information to be disseminated every 0 to 5 minutes for a slow running service or for a disruption. However, this is dependent on the nature of the journey being made and the length of journey.

- Four fifths preferred that an announcement was made with very little or no information than having to wait until there was some information.

Additional information required during disruption

- Even if the disruption was very severe only 5% of passengers said they would abandon the journey.

- During severe disruptions the most required information was about connections or alternative routes as well as the cause of disruption.

- For both normal and severe disruptions participants most want 'correct' (30%) and 'clear' (25% for normal, 23% for severe) information. 61% prefer very detailed information on the disruption and 37% quite detailed information.

- 80% said it was very important that the train company be honest even if that means saying they do not know what is happening. 80% wanted additional information on causes of disruption with signal and points failures (71%), engineering works (67%) and knock-on delays (62%) the most sought-after information.

- Across the groups and depths interviews, commuters were the group that experienced most delays. Although they were familiar with alternatives, they still wanted to be advised of what to do in case of a disruption.

- Even though participants in the qualitative stage showed different behaviours in journey planning, at the point of disruption, information needs are very similar. In addition, participants with particular needs required much of the same information but reported that they need more time to action/process.

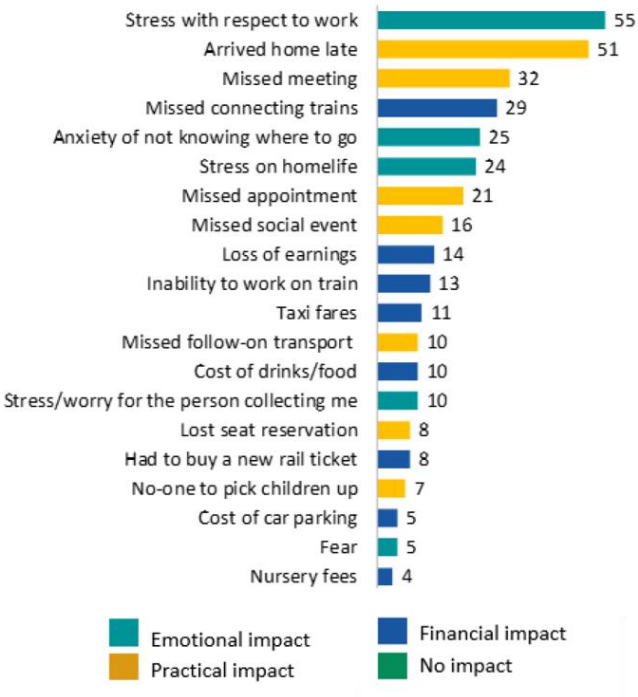
Delivery mechanism of information

During disruptions most seek information through apps or websites and half use more than one source. 10% didn't use any.

There was a general distrust in information sources.

PA announcements were the most trusted sources of information and they were seen as essential by more than half the participants

Behavioural and sentimental responses to disruption



- 33% cited emotional impacts, 48% practical impacts and 18% financial impacts from disruption.

- The main impacts were stress with respect to work (55%), arriving home late (51%) and missed meetings (32%).

- Leisure travellers were often unfamiliar with routes. This meant that disruptions often unsettled them and resulted in stress around missing events, arriving in the dark and personal safety.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

How TOCs handle delays is of paramount importance to rail passengers, so much so that according to the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)[2] it has the biggest impact on overall passenger dissatisfaction.

NRPS data shows that in spring 2019 just 40% of delayed passenger journeys were rated as satisfactory for the way in which Train Operating Companies (TOCs) dealt with delays when they occurred. There are large variations in the performance of TOCs during disruption as well as geographic variations in passenger satisfaction when things go wrong.

However, the last time any tailored research was undertaken on this subject was in 2014 when the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) commissioned Transport Focus to undertake research into passengers' experiences of information handling during delays and disruption. Transport Focus concluded that improvements were not being seen by passengers in the availability of information during delays and disruption. The most important information for delayed passengers was understanding the impact of a disruption on their journey.

This work was the last time a significant, TOC wide assessment was conducted on this subject (although the ORR's annual Measuring Up report analyses some aspects of the communication between passengers and TOCs).

When continued significant delays occur on the rail network, understanding how best to handle disruption is paramount. As such, the DfT commissioned Accent to undertake research to explore passengers' needs during times of unplanned rail disruption, and how Train Operating Companies (TOCs) communicate with passengers during periods of delay on the rail network.

The aim of the project was to explore the needs of rail passengers from across Great Britain when they experienced delays and disruption on the rail network. The project captured passengers' real-time experience of unplanned disruption to inform rail policy.

1.2 Objectives

The aim of the research was to explore the needs of rail passengers from across Great Britain when they experience unplanned delays and disruption on the rail network. The project captured passengers' real-time experience of unplanned disruption.

The objectives for the overall study were:

[2] The NRPS surveys more than 50,000 passengers each year to give a network-wide picture of rail passengers' satisfaction with rail travel

- To explore perceptions of how TOCs handled recent periods of severe disruption especially the wintery weather in March 2018 and the changes to timetabling in May 2018.
- To capture any examples of best practice the industry could learn from when faced with handling rail disruption.
- To explore what passengers' expectations are in terms of customer service delivery and information provision when delays occur.
- To understand the different sources of information passengers access at different journey stages, and which of these information sources they trust most.
- To provide a clear and detailed recommendation as to the most appropriate actions the industry can take to meet the needs of rail passengers when they are delayed.
- To recommend any messaging approaches related to disruption that passengers find more or less informative, as well as how the tone and timing of messages impact on different groups of passengers.

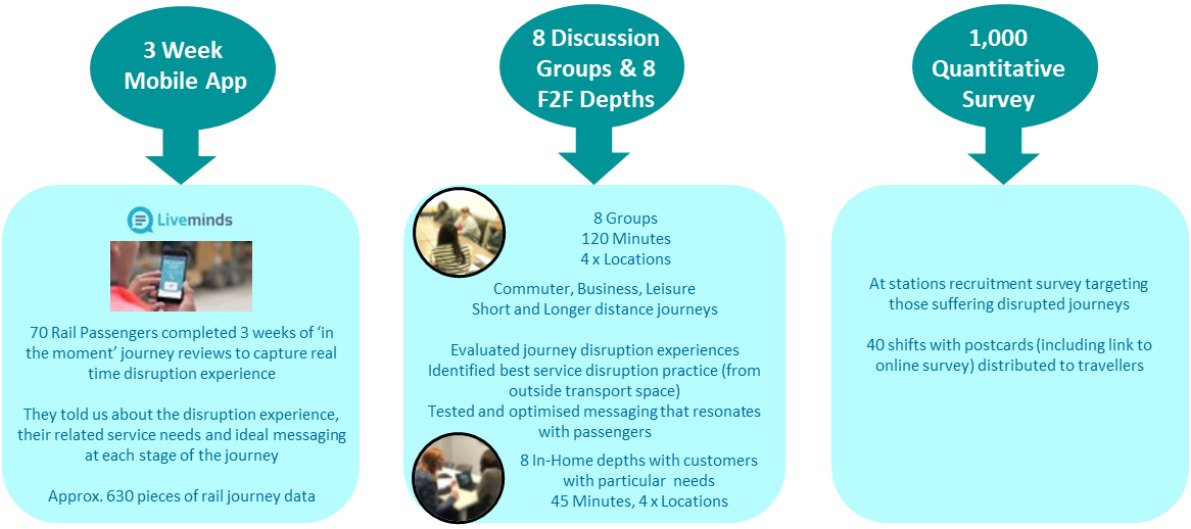
2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

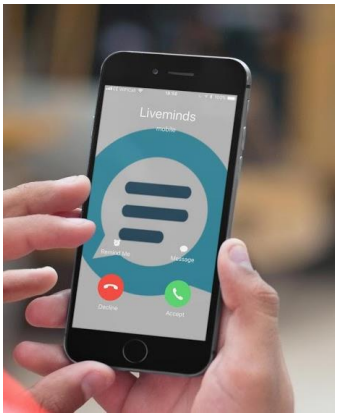
The approach was two-staged:

- Qualitative: journey diaries, pre-tasked discussion groups and depth interviews
- Quantitative: a large scale self-completion survey of travellers during a disrupted rail journey or who had recently experienced a disruption.

Figure 1: Research Approach



2.2 Qualitative Methodology



As one of the critical elements of this research was to understand the emotional consequence of any journey disruption and the specific information and messaging that was required at a particular journey moment, a real-time methodology was adopted. The LiveMinds mobile app was used by participants to record their experience of rail journey disruptions *as they happened*.

Eighty-five passengers were recruited to use the app for three weeks prior to attending a discussion group. The sample was chosen to ensure that a range of journeys were captured and to optimise the chance of picking up journey disruptions. Through the app, simple questions relating to the journey and the disruption experience (where they look for information, helpfulness of staff, extent of TOC ownership) were asked as well as questions around information needs and how information needed to be delivered at specific pinch points.

Following this Accent moderated eight two-hour discussion groups and eight face-to-face depth interviews with the 85 participants. The face-to-face forum allowed for interrogations of the journey data and experiences collected in the three-week period via the app. The groups took place in four different locations: London, Birmingham, Manchester and St Albans. Attendance was broken down by journey type (commuter, business, leisure) and distance and included participants who had experienced severe disruptions.[3] The eight in-home depth interviews covered customers with particular needs when travelling and took 45 minutes each. They took place in the same cities as the discussion groups.

A variety of techniques were used to dissect customers' needs in both the groups and the depth interviews. Key topics for both methods were their rail journey disruption experiences (e.g. waiting during disruptions, information needs, and information received) and best in class service models.

Demographics of Qualitative Stage

Overall, 85 travellers contributed to the qualitative stage, 77 of these participated in discussion groups across four different locations and eight participants provided feedback in the form of face-to-face depth interviews.

There was a mix of gender for all groups and the depths. The groups were structured by customer type, journey length and TOCs. Figure 2 shows the structure of the discussion groups. The groups took place between 11 and 19 March 2019.

Figure 2: Qualitative fieldwork plan

	All to have experienced a journey disruption in the past 12 months							
Group No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Location	London		St Albans/Hatfield		Birmingham		Manchester	
Customer Type	Commuter (3 times or more per week)	Business (Travel 1 a week or more)	Commuter (3 times or more per week)	Leisure	Commuter (3 times or more per week)	Business	Commuter (3 times or more per week)	Business
Journey Length	Commute	Long Distance	Commute	Long or London	Commute	Long Distance	Commute	Long Distance
TOCs Coverage	Thameslink, SWR, Southern, Great Northern, Virgin		Thameslink, Great Northern		Cross Country, Virgin West Coast, West Midlands		Virgin West Coast, Northern Trains, TPE	

[3] For a fieldwork schedule of the qualitative stage, see Figure 2.

2.3 Quantitative Methodology

Survey Recruitment

Passengers were invited to take part through postcards distributed at stations. The sampling focused on eleven stations where there was a relatively high likelihood of some disruptions such as London termini, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly.

Following a pilot at London Liverpool Street and London Victoria on 11 June 2019, the main stage took place between 2 July and 12 July 2019.

Response Rate and Questionnaire Length

In total, 1,790 entered the survey, equating to 16% of the cards handed out. 172 were out of scope (because they had not experienced any delays). Of the 1,618 in scope, 1,049 (65%) completed and 569 did not. A paper version of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

Demographics of Quantitative Sample

Completion of the survey link in the 11,040 postcards handed out during quantitative fieldwork was left to fall out naturally. There were no quotas and data has not been weighted.

Overall, the sample was made up of 52% male and 46% female participants (2% preferred not to answer this question). 79% of participants did not have a disability, 7% had a physical or mental disability and 7% had mental health issues or a social disability. 37% of participants were between 16 and 35, 44% were between 36 and 55 and 18% were 56 or older.

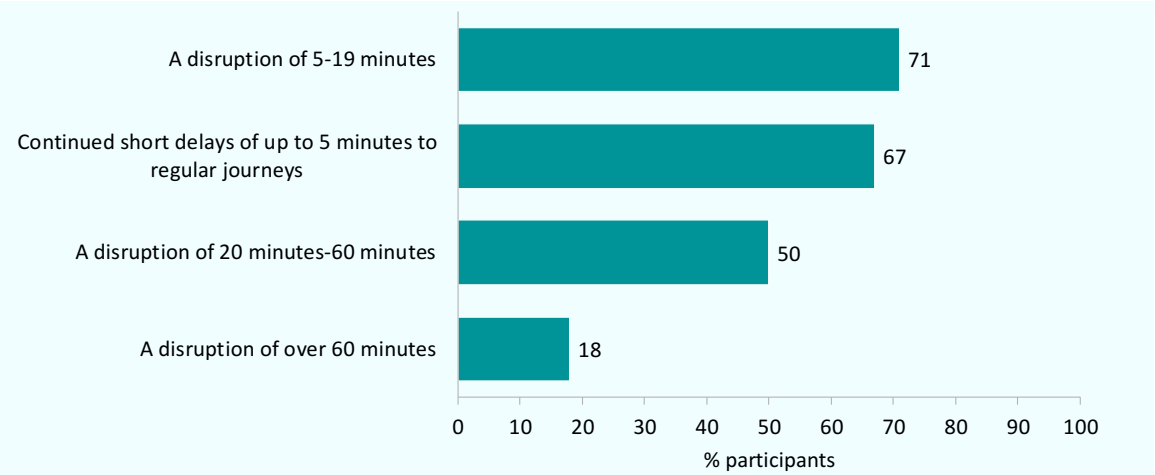
Our sample is comparable to the 2019 National Travel Survey (NTS) figures for rail users. The NTS shows that males made slightly more rail trips than females in 2019 (24 compared to 21) and that users with mobility difficulties travelled less than those without and were particularly less likely to use rail. On average they made 5 times fewer rail trips. In addition, the age spread is in line with the NTS figures with most rail trips being made by people aged between 20 and 50.
Males made slightly more rail trips than females in 2019 (24 compared to 21). Users with mobility difficulties travelled less than those without and were particularly less likely to use rail. On average they made 5.0 times fewer rail trips

3 Experiences of Past Delays and Handling of Disruption

3.1 Disruptions Experienced

Amongst quantitative survey participants, the majority of travellers had experienced at least one disruption of 5-19 minutes (71%) in the past four weeks.[4] The second most frequent disruption were continued short delays of up to 5 minutes (67%), followed by a disruption of 20-60 minutes, which half the participants experienced. Under a fifth (18%) experienced a disruption of over 60 minutes.

Figure 3: Disruptions experienced in the past four weeks

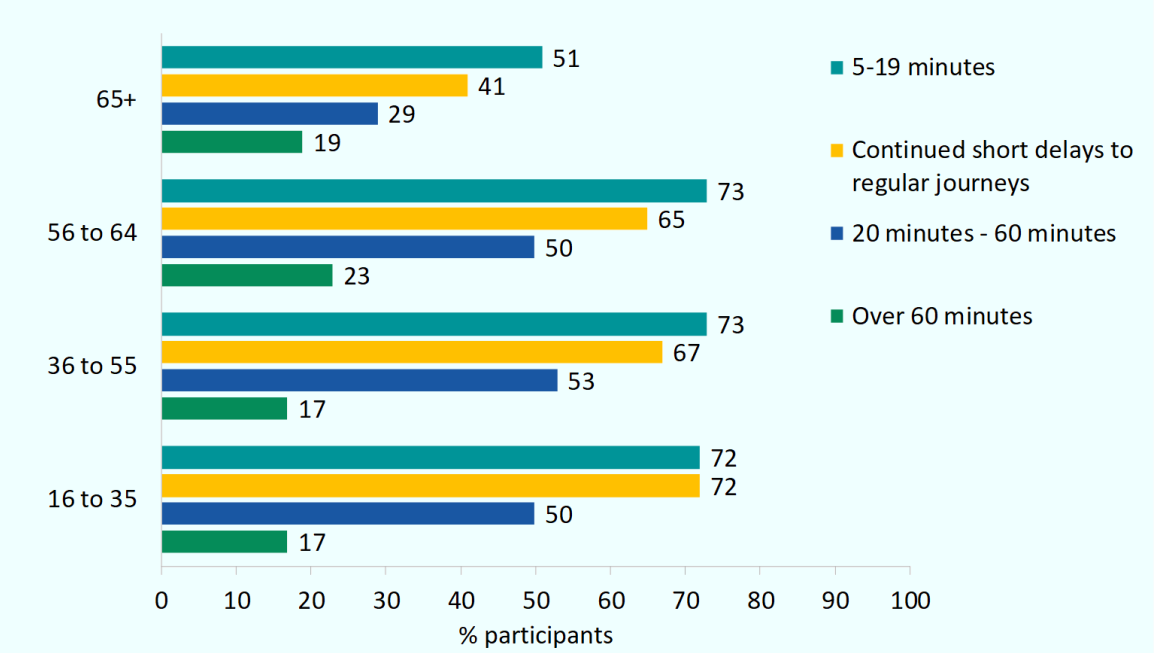


Base: 1,049. more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Commuter journeys were significantly more often affected by delays than leisure journeys (except disruptions of 60 minutes or over). It is perhaps not surprising therefore that participants of 65 years or older were significantly less likely to have experienced delays than younger participants

[4] Half the sample experienced a disruption in the past 24 hours, another 31% experienced one in the last 2 to 6 days and the remaining 19% experienced the last disruption in the past one to four weeks.

Figure 4: Delays experienced by age of participant



Base: 388 (16-35), 464 (36-55), 127 (56-64), 59 (65+); more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Most Recent Disrupted Rail Journey

As a large proportion of quantitative survey participants had experienced more than one disruption. Participants were asked to respond on the basis of their most recent disruption with 39% of passengers experiencing a disruption of 5-19 minutes, 31% experienced continued delays of up to 5 minutes to regular journey, 23% experienced a disruption of 20-60 minutes, and 7% of participants said their disruption lasted over 60 minutes.

To put into perspective the reasons for journey disruptions, we asked about the nature of the most recent disruption experienced, the length of the disruption and some other key aspects of the disruption. For most of the remainder of the questionnaire, participants were asked to focus on the most recent disrupted journey.

For half of the sample the most recent disruption was experienced on that day or the day before. 31% experienced a disruption to their journey within 2-6 days of completing the survey, 14% within the past 2 weeks, and 4% experienced a disruption between 3 and 4 weeks before completing the survey.

In the qualitative stage, participants spoke of recent improvements to the number of disruptions they experience. However, they felt that further improvements were needed still. There was a sense that disruptions had settled from March-May 2018, when the timetable changed, but there was still a considerable way to go.

"It was complete and absolute chaos day after day."

St Albans, Depth interview

"The difference is that you don't travel to the station expecting a delay there might be one but you are not expecting it."

London, Commuter

Case study 1: Thameslink

- **Who?** Female businesses traveller (45 64 years old) from Borehamwood.
- **When?** Uses train three times a week to go from Borehamwood to London St Pancras.
- **What?** Ongoing timetable issues
- **Problems encountered:** Delayed and cancelled trains, inconsistency in information (across app, platform and station), dismissive staff, continually late for work or late home)
- **Positives encountered:** Hot chocolate sachet

It was reported by some that in March-May 2018, they experienced disruptions every day on every service. This coincided with a period of significant disruption on the rail network caused mainly by the weather due to the "Beast from the East" and the timetable changes in May 2018. During this time some passengers told us that information provision was very poor, and staff were ill informed and nervous. Passengers reported that they made choices about travelling by rail and often worked from home more or took alternative modes of transport to get to the office. It had a significant impact on life and work for the participants.

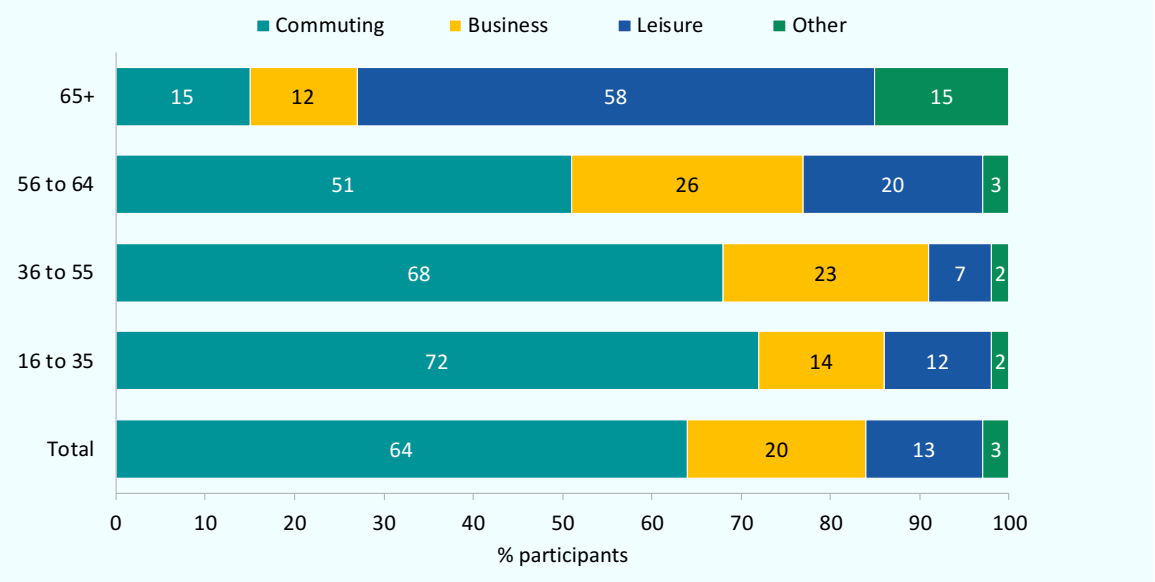
Although the level of disruption may have calmed down, no consistent difference was perceived in the communications when there were disruptions. During the fieldwork, qualitative participants felt that disruptions still occurred, but were less frequent. Information provision was still perceived as poor and staff were still perceived to lack information, resulting in continued lack of confidence in the services from passengers' side.

Purpose and Outcome of the Journey

Amongst quantitative survey participants, the main purpose of the train journey of the most recently disrupted journey was commuting (64%), followed by business (20%). Leisure journeys formed the smallest purpose for travelling (13%).

Looking at different age groups, those aged 16-35, 36-55 and 56-64 were significantly more likely to have experienced disruptions when commuting (72%, 68% and 51% respectively). Those travelling for business were significantly more likely to be 36-55 (23%) or 56-64 (26%), whilst almost 3 in 5 of the 65+ year old participants travelled for leisure.

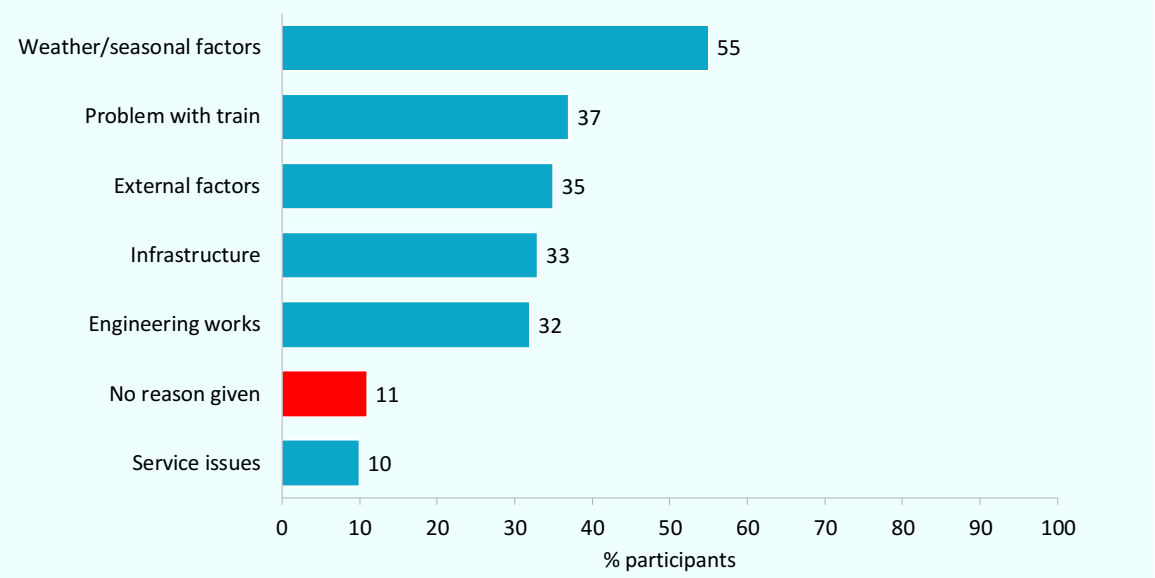
Figure 5: Purpose of disrupted journey



Base: 1,049 (total), 59 (65+), 127 (56-64), 464 (36-55), 388 (16-35)

In most cases, the disruption did not result in a cancellation of the train (77%). However, 55% of disruptions caused by weather or seasonal factors[5] were cancelled, and 37% of journeys where problems with the train had caused disruptions were cancelled. Service issues and when the disruption remained unexplained caused the small proportion of cancellations, as Figure 6 shows.

Figure 6: Proportion of cancellations by disruption cause

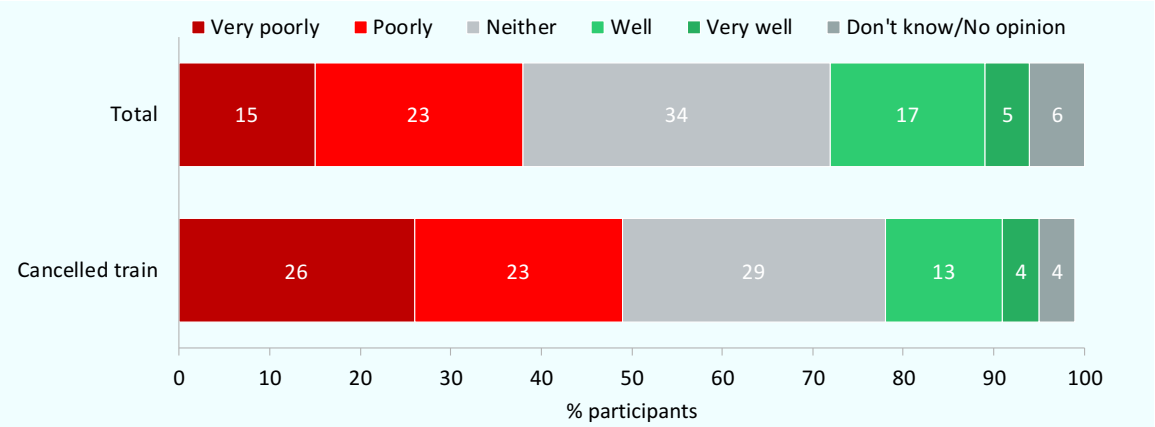


Base: 11 (weather), 120 (problem), 48 (external factors), 227 (infrastructure), 25 (engineering works), 283 (No reasons), 161 (service issues).

Cancellations had an impact on the satisfaction with how the individual TOCs handled the disruption. 49% of participants who experienced a cancelled train rated the TOC experience of disruption as poor or very poor.

[5] Very low base, n=11.

Figure 7: Satisfaction with handling of disruption



Base: 1,049 (total), 245 (cancelled train).

Nature of Disruption

Participants in the qualitative stage reported of a wide range of disruptions:

- Long Delays
- No First-Class carriages
- No seating
- Ongoing small delays
- Cancellations
- Changes to timetable
- Overcrowding
- Slow running
- Change of platform
- Short forming
- Unexpected stop

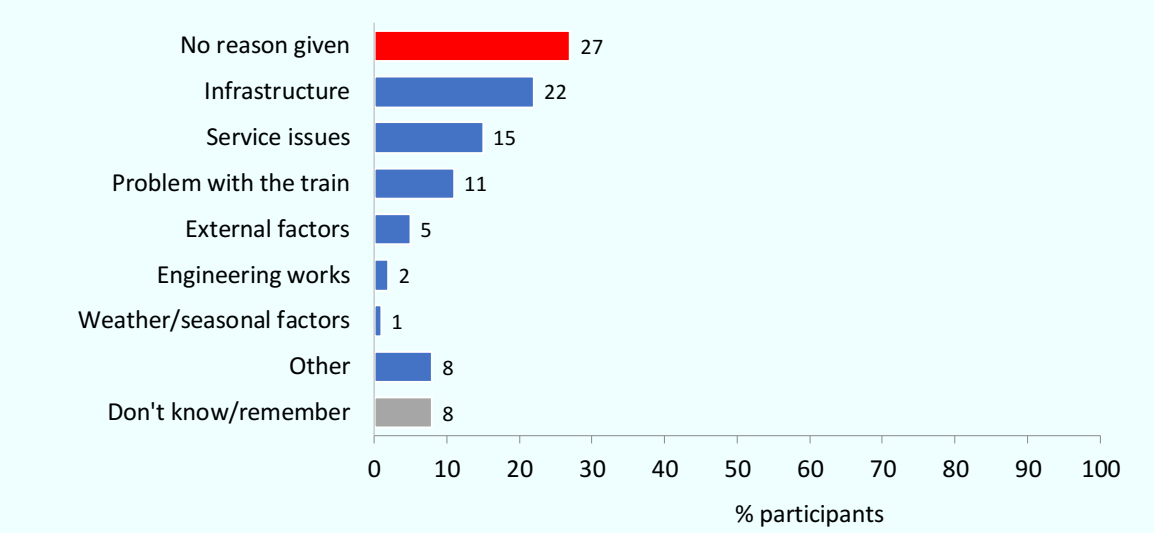
Regardless of the type of disruption, qualitative participants wanted to feel in control and that they had choices to allow them to change their journey plans. They showed more tolerance for disruptions that are 'out of Operator control', such as severe weather events, powerlines, suicide or trespassers and vandalism. Operational issues such as staff shortages/no train driver, leaves on the line, last minute platform changes and train congestion[6] received less tolerance as they were considered avoidable.

In the LiveMinds app exercises, participants discussed unintended consequences of disruptions, such as extra childcare costs after missing nursery pick-up, disagreements at home as spouses are waiting at the station, work reputation, e.g. continually being late for work, missing out on work (missing an audition and therefore losing a part), missing social engagements such as a family party and losing property because of rushing through a station.

Quantitative survey participants reported that when experiencing disruptions, just under a third were not given a reason for their disruption (27%) and of those disruptions a reason was given for, problems with the infrastructure (22%) and service issues (15%) were the most common, followed by problems with the train (11%).

[6] Other mentions here include wrong type of snow, lack of foresight, e.g. train delayed immediately after leaving a station giving people no chance for alternative and replacement bus services that don't offer enough capacity.

Figure 8: Reasons for most recent disruption



Base: 1,049

The quantitative stage showed that problems with the train were reported significantly more often in journeys that were more than six minutes delayed, with 20% reported problems causing a delay of 21-30 minutes. Similarly, infrastructure problems were reported significantly more often when journeys were delayed for more than 11 minutes with over half of reported problems causing a delay of more than 60 minutes. The top three reasons for disruptions per delay length were:

0-5 minutes delay
- No reason given (55%)
- Service issues (17%)
- Don't know (13%)

11-20 minutes
- No reason given (22%)
- Infrastructure (21%)
- Service issues (18%)

31-60 minutes
- Infrastructure (31%)
- Other (15%)
- No reason given (14%)

6-10 minutes
- No reason given (34%)
- Service issues (22%)
- Train problems (11%)

21-30 minutes
- Infrastructure (28%)
- Train problems (22%)
- No reason given (16%)

60+ minutes
- Infrastructure (58%)
- Other (14%)
- Train problems (11%)

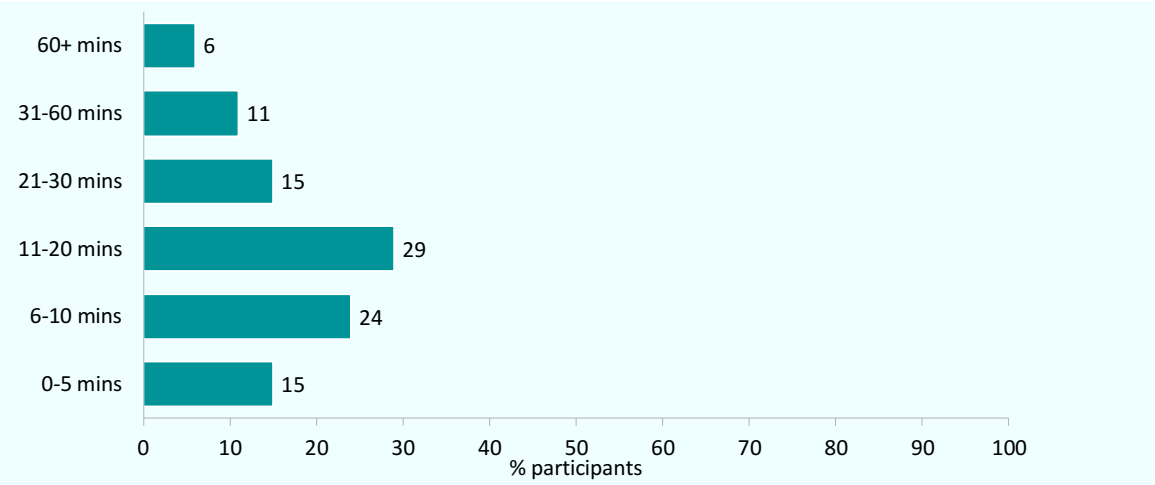
Base: 0-5 minutes 160, 6-10 minutes 250, 11-20 minutes 302, 21-30 minutes 155, 31-60 minutes 118, 60+ minutes 64

In contrast to this, for over half of delays of less than five minutes no reason was given for the delay. This dropped down to 34% for journeys of 6-10 minutes and to 22% for journeys delayed by between 11 and 20 minutes. These differences were significantly different.

Delay Length

The average length of delay experienced by quantitative survey participants was 24 minutes. The distribution of delay length is shown below.

Figure 9: Delay length

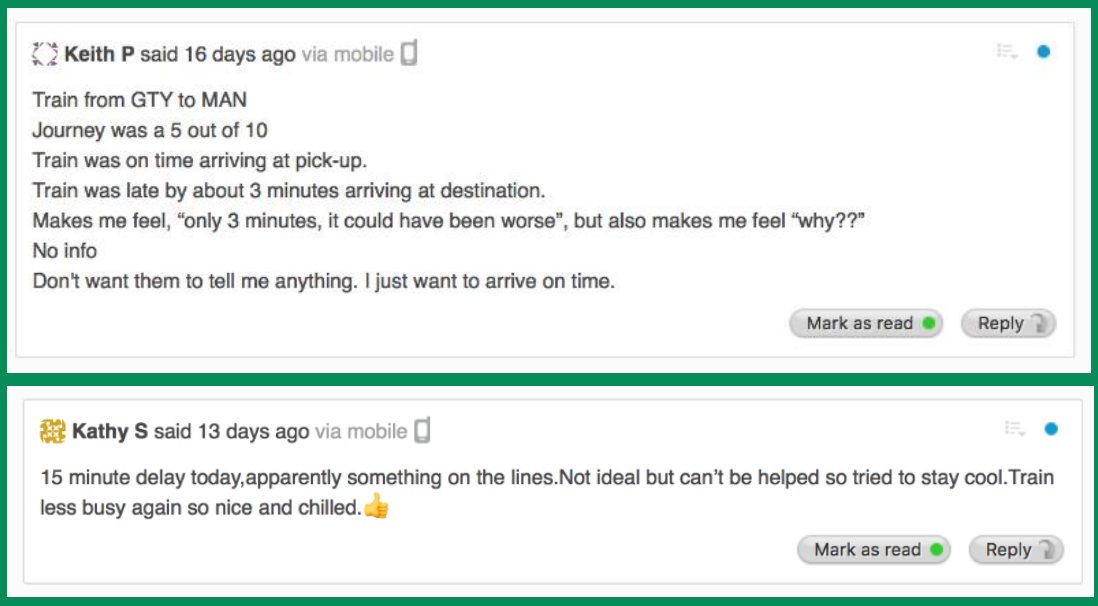


Base: 1,049

The qualitative stage explored the impact of disruptions.[7] Participants reported that the impact of disruptions on their lives went beyond the practical, and often had emotional and financial consequences.

Regardless of the length of journey, qualitative participants felt that more than a few minutes of delay were unacceptable. They felt equally as frustrated when the journey was delayed by a few minutes, regardless of whether they were travelling from Manchester to London or from St Albans to West Hampstead.[8] There was a general sense of frustration around excuses for delays and a belief that trains should "simply be on time."

Case study 2: LiveMinds exercise



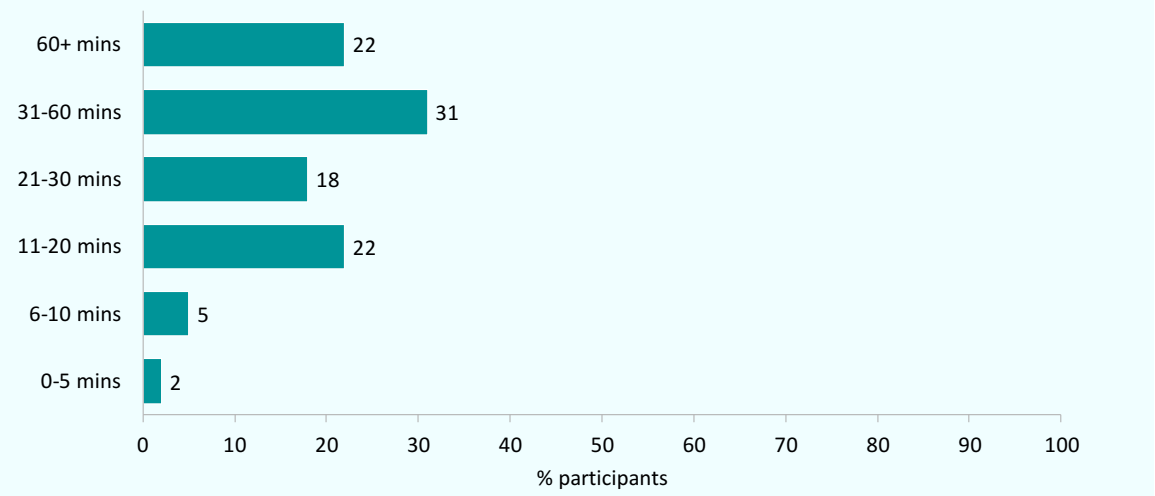
[7] More on this can be found later in this report, in part 3.11 Behavioural and Sentimental Responses to Disruption.

[8] However, some of the Manchester audience appeared to accept longer delays on longer routes.

Expected Journey Length

Asking quantitative survey participants about the most recent disruption experienced, the scheduled journey time did not have a significant impact on length of the delay. This reflected to a large extent the fact that the majority of journeys with disruption experiences were commuting journeys. Figure 10 shows the distribution of scheduled journey length.

Figure 10: Scheduled journey length



Base: 1,049

Table 1 shows a matrix of delay length by scheduled journey length for quantitative participants. This uses shading to indicate the highest proportions. The most frequent delay length of 11-20 minutes occurred most often across all scheduled journey times.

Table 1: Matrix of length of delay by scheduled journey length

		Length of delay					
		0-5 mins	6-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-60 mins	60+ mins
scheduled journey length	0-5 mins	*	*	1	*	*	0
	6-10 mins	1	1	2	1	*	*
	11-20 mins	4	6	6	3	2	1
	21-30 mins	3	4	6	3	2	1
	31-60 mins	4	8	9	5	4	1
	60+ mins	2	4	6	4	3	3

Base: 1,049
* = less than 0.5%

Journeys of a scheduled length of 60+ minutes saw the highest proportion of delays that lasted 60 minutes or longer. Delays for shorter journeys were generally shorter.

Qualitative stage participants reported that they built in extra time for travelling in order to avoid being caught out due to disruptions. This then often had an impact on their personal lives and personal value of time as it was often seen as missing an opportunity of doing other things. Some participants reported that a steady erosion of confidence in disruption management meant that they were getting earlier trains to ensure they arrived

on time. This then resulted in a re-evaluation of their value of time as loss of personal time. Opportunity cost and financial implications were also considered when making a decision regarding train travel. Participants reported that they traded in their personal time when experiencing delays travelling, for example:

- Getting the earlier train to work everyday
- Setting off early from work for specific leisure events
- Travelling the night before for to get to the airport/party
- Leaving two hours to get to a meeting.

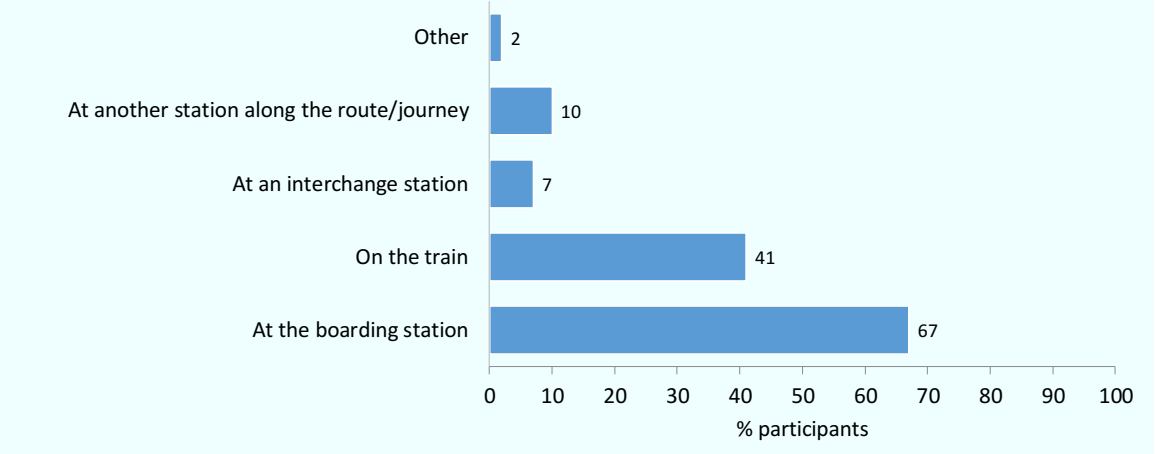
> *"I'm losing an extra hour every day."*
>
> Manchester, Commuter

> *"If I have to get somewhere that takes an hour I'll always take two hours and that's an hour I could be working."*
>
> St Albans, Business

When Passengers First Heard of Disruption

The quantitative survey showed that disruptions were most likely to occur at the boarding station (67%), followed by on the train (41%) and at another station along the route (10%). Only 7% of survey participants had a delay at an interchange station.

Figure 11: Where disruption occurred



Base: 1,049

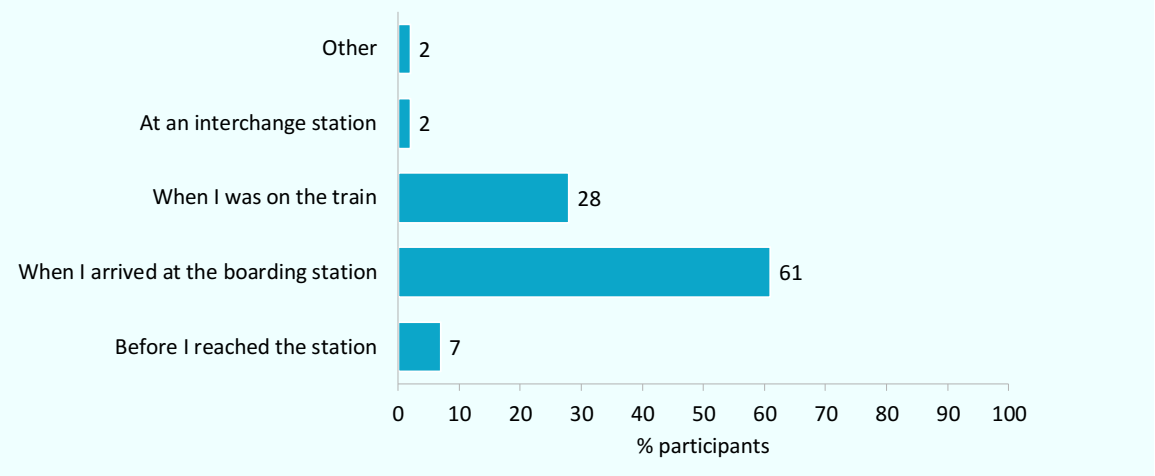
Commuting journeys were significantly more likely to be delayed on the train than leisure journeys (45% vs 31%).

A delay whilst on the train was also experienced significantly more often when the nature of the disruption was a service issue (58%) than when it was a problem with the train (43%), external factors (32%) or when no reason was given (39%).

Only 7% of participants learned about the disruption to their journey before they reached the station. With 67% of delays occurring are the boarding station there is clearly an

opportunity for more to be done in terms of letting passengers know their service is delayed (particularly as a large proportion are commuters. Sixty-one per cent of participants found out about the disruption to their journey when they arrived at the boarding station. A further 28% of participants found out while on the train and only 2% learned about this at an interchange station.

Figure 12: Where first learnt of disruption



Base: 1,049

Cancellations occurred more often to trains where a disruption was noticed when arriving at the boarding station (68%) than any other point of initial noticing of disruption.

In the preceding six months, 46% of participants had experienced rail disruptions when things were handled particularly badly and in the same time period only 14% had experienced disruptions where a TOC excelled in the way they handled the disruption.

The examples of when TOCs excelled are:

	%
Good information provided - updates etc	6
Good customer service/relations - vouchers/drinks offered	3
Staff are well-informed/efficient	3
Onward travel/alternative arrangements are good - information provided	2
Reclaim process good - offered refund etc	2
Good communication - clear/concise/accurate	2
Apology given	1
Timely information provided - in advance etc	1
ETA provided	1
Worked to resolve issue	1
Good service/handling - general	1

Base: 143

Summary[9]

Most participants experienced more than one disruption over the past month.

The most recent disrupted rail journey was typically a commuting journey (64%). For 23% of reported disruptions the train was cancelled and the satisfaction with how the disruption was handled was much worse when there was a cancellation compared to delays.

For 27% of the disruptions no reasons were given for the disruption with this occurring more often for shorter delays. Infrastructure (22%) and service issues (15%) were the main stated causes of disruptions.

The scheduled journey time did not have a significant impact on length of the delay. The most frequent delay length of 11 20 minutes occurred most often across all scheduled journey times.

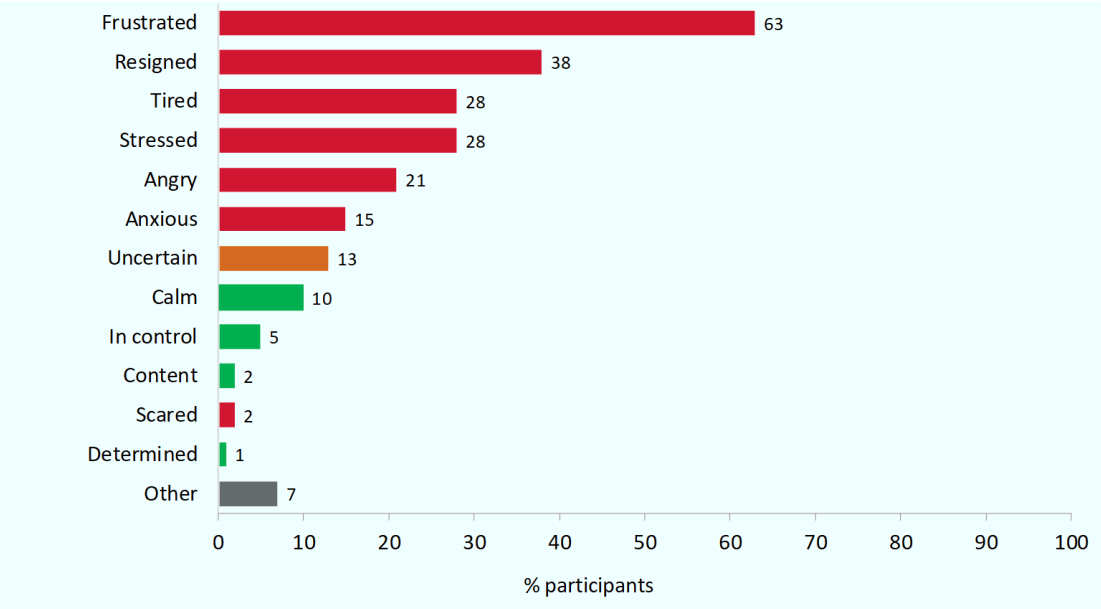
Disruptions were most likely to occur at the boarding station (67%), followed by on the train (41%) and at another station along the route (10%). 61% first learnt about the disruption when they arrived at the boarding station, 28% while on the train and just 7% before they arrived at the station.

3.2 Waiting During Disruption

Participants were asked to think about how and where they spend the time during the disruption to their journey. They were asked how they felt when they first learnt of the disruption and shown a list of potential emotions. Amongst quantitative survey participants, disruptions caused a mix of emotions, though unsurprisingly negative emotions occurred more often than neutral or positive emotions.

[9] This and subsequent summaries are focusing on the quantitative findings only.

Figure 13: Emotions when initially learning about disruption



Base: 1,049; more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100

A number of factors had an influence on the emotional state of participants: Those with mobility issues were significantly more likely to feel anxious, angry and stressed than able-bodied participants.

Participants who were on a commuting journey when the disruption occurred were significantly more likely to be frustrated (63%) than those travelling for business (59%) or leisure (44%), whilst those travelling for business or leisure were significantly more likely to feel in control than those commuting (7% and 8% respectively vs 3%).

The biggest contributor to negative or positive emotions were the duration of the delay. Delays of 11 minutes or more caused significantly more participants to feel frustrated, angry and/or stressed than delays under six minutes, whilst delays of 6-10 minutes resulted in significantly more participants feeling calm than participants who experienced longer delays.

The qualitative research with eight vulnerable customers showed that plug sockets on trains and in waiting rooms was even more important for those with heightened anxiety as they needed to be able to track trains in real time. It was also really important for the waiting areas to be warm and for early information (with loading information) to provide people with mobility issues and/or pain time and space to get from platform to the train.

Case study 3: Southern Rail

- **Who?** Female traveller with particular needs (18 45 years old) from London.
- **When?** Disruption to Brighton to Clapham Junction to Watford Junction journey
- **What?** Monitors train as it's moving on thetrainline.com and sees that there will be a cancellation to connecting trains
- **Problems encountered:** Absence of any information, no staff to ask for information, no clear alternatives, battery on phone was low and nowhere to charge phone
- **Positives encountered:** Using the app helped her to work out that her mother was able to pick her up from Finchley

"I really really didn't know what to do."

Lesson: Importance of having plug sockets on trains and in waiting rooms. This is even more important for those with heightened anxiety that need to be able to track trains in real time

Case study 4: Northern Rail

- **Who?** Female traveller with recent back surgery and ongoing pain (18 45 years old) from Manchester.
- **When?** Regularly travels from Bolton to Manchester (3 4 times a week)
- **What?** Ongoing disruption to the journey and capacity problems, causing overcrowding
- **Problems encountered:** Short forming, trains too full to get on, never a guaranteed seat, lack of real time information wants to know train loading information, limited staff to ask
- **Positives encountered:** Nothing

"I have to let 1 or 2 trains go by every morning people don't know I have a back problem."

Lesson: Importance of warm waiting areas and early information (with loading information) to provide people with pain and mobility issues time and space to get from platform to the train

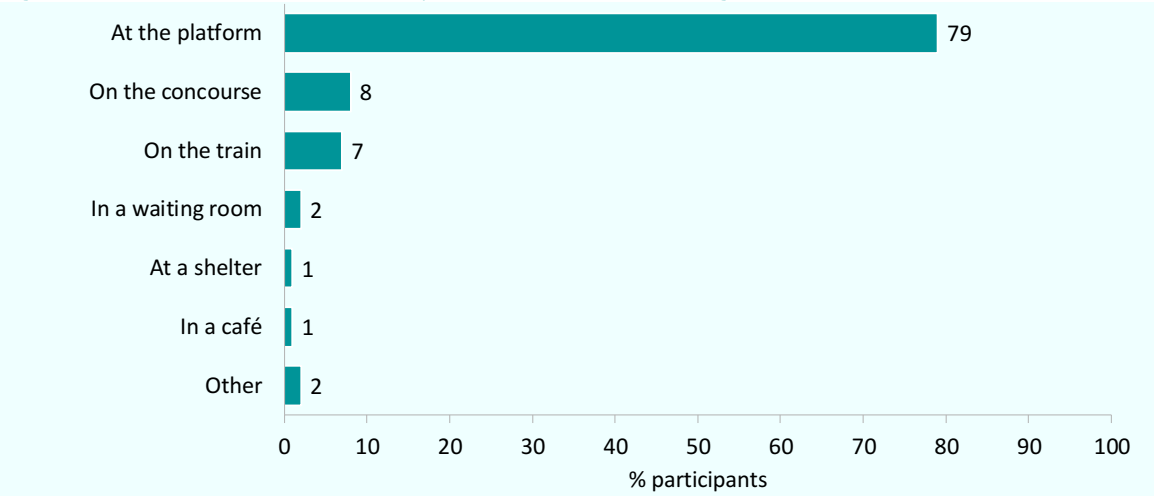
Waiting During the Delay

While being disrupted, 54% of quantitative survey participants noticed a waiting room or café at the boarding station where they were delayed. However, this was not where most participants waited – the key area for participants to wait during a delay was at the platform. 79% of participants who were delayed at the boarding station waited there (see Figure 14), as did 74% of those who were delayed at the interchange station (see Figure 19).

Amongst the latter, only 40% noticed a waiting room or café at the interchange station with an additional 21% unsure about whether these facilities were present at the interchange station. This indicates that a delay increases uncertainty about further travel and travellers remain put or at least as close to that as possible to not cause further disruption to their journeys.

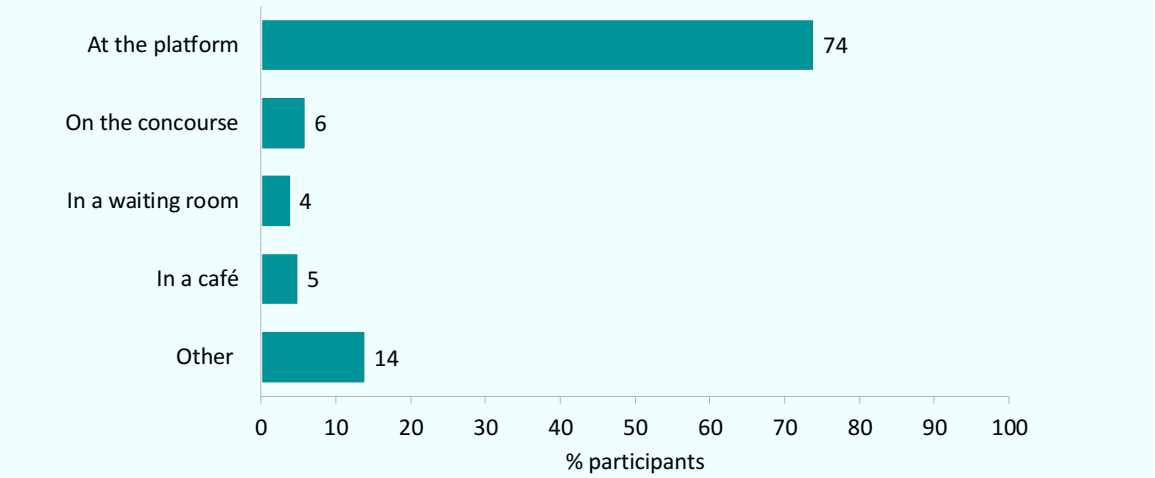
Of those delayed at the boarding station, 16-35-year olds are significantly less likely to wait on the concourse than any other age group. They are more likely to wait at the platform (83%, not significant).

Figure 14: Where waited when disruption occurred at boarding station



Base: 706 who were delayed at the boarding station.

Figure 15: Where waited when disruption occurred at interchange station



Base: 77 who were delayed at the interchange station.

Interestingly, almost nine in ten participants who found out about the disruption before reaching the station waited on the platform, rather than on the concourse (2%). Longer delays at the boarding station (31 minutes or more) resulted in significantly more participants waiting on the concourse (c20%) rather than on the platform (c5%). However, this may be due to the platform number not being announced for longer delays until closer to the time that the train arrives.

The top three locations when waiting during a disruption per delay length were:

0-5 minutes delay
- At the platform (90%)
- On the train (7%)
- Anywhere else (4%)

11-20 minutes
- At the platform (81%)
- On the concourse (9%)
- On the train (7%)

31-60 minutes
- At the platform (65%)
- On the concourse (18%)
- On the train (5%)

6-10 minutes
- At the platform (81%)
- On the train (13%)
- On the concourse (4%)

21-30 minutes
- At the platform (83%)
- On the concourse (6%)
- On the train (4%)

60+ minutes
- At the platform (54%)
- On the concourse (22%)
- Waiting room/on train (10%)

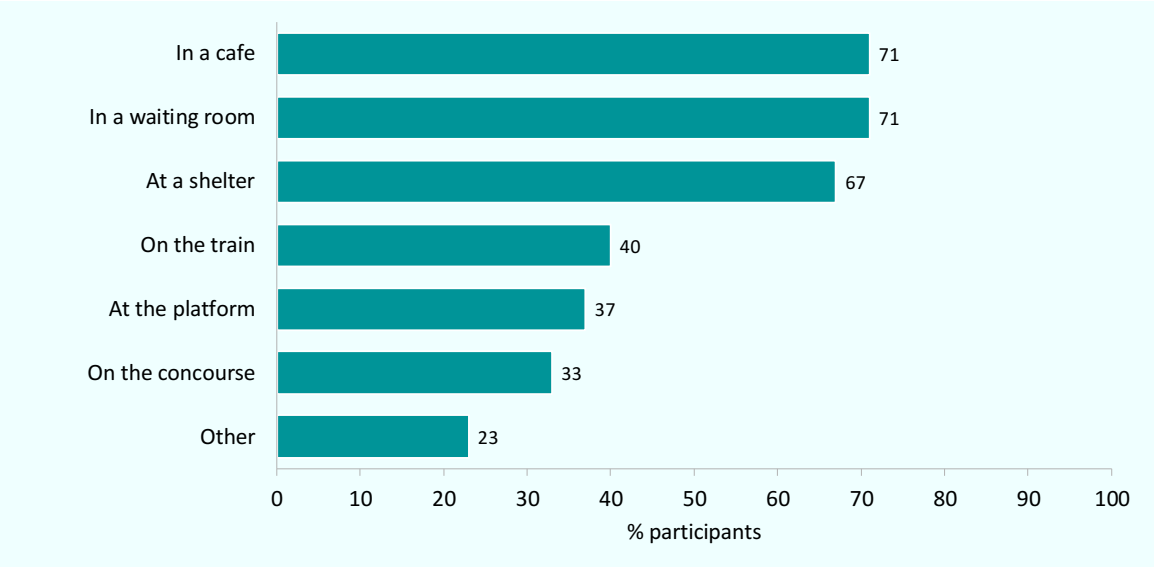
Base: 0-5 minutes 160, 6-10 minutes 250, 11-20 minutes 302, 21-30 minutes 155, 31-60 minutes 118, 60+ minutes 64

Comfort During Wait

Participants were generally uncomfortable wherever they waited during the disruption. Only 38% of quantitative survey participants who were delayed at the boarding station found their location of choice comfortable. Those who were delayed at the interchange station were slightly more comfortable (44%).

Comfort levels varied very much depending on the waiting location. Waiting in a café or a waiting room resulted in the highest levels of comfort. Participants who waited on the platform, the main location where participants waited, were significantly less comfortable than those who waited in a café or waiting room.

Figure 16: Proportion who said they were comfortable by waiting location at boarding station

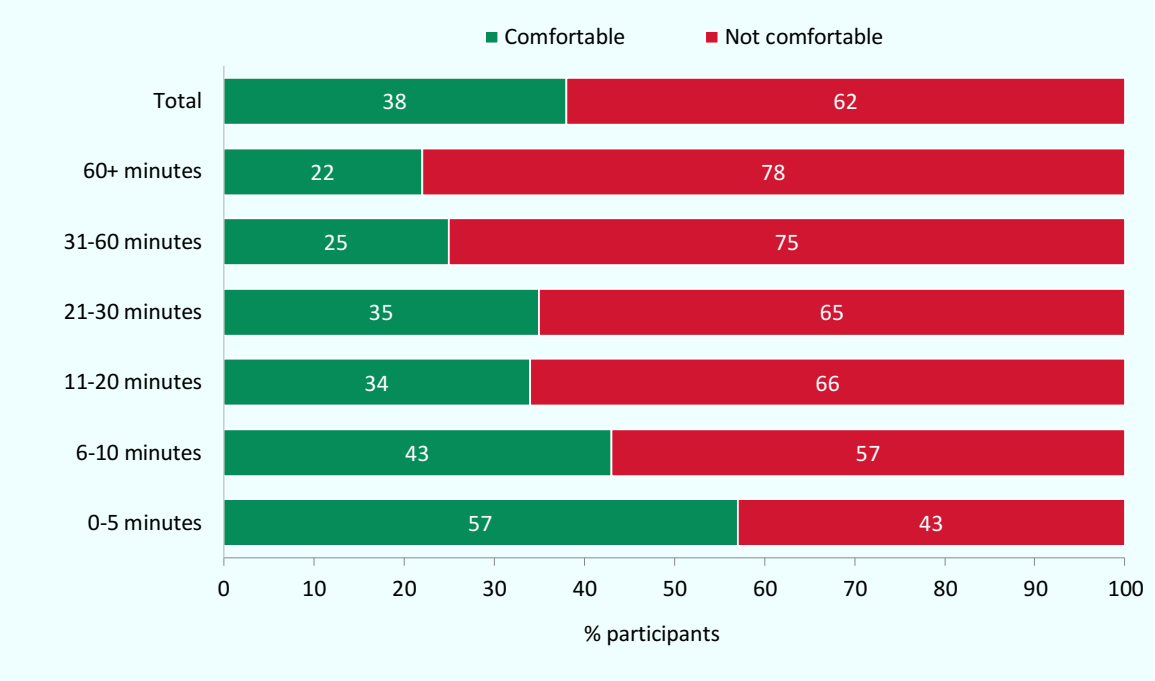


Base: 7 (café), 14 (waiting room), 6 (shelter), 52 (train), 559 (platform), 55 (concourse), 13 (other). Very low bases for some of these subgroups

Where the disruption was first noticed (i.e. before reaching the station, when arriving at the boarding station or when already on the train) did not have a noticeable impact on comfort levels, suggesting that even if rail users are given notice of the disruption, their discomfort and likely satisfaction is not impacted positively or negatively.

However, the length of the disruption, of course, did have an impact on levels of comfort, a Figure 17 shows.

Figure 17: Comfort during disruption by length of delay



Base: 706 (total), 37 (60+), 84 (31-60), 101 (21-30), 218 (11-20), 160 (6-10), 106 (0-5); those who were delayed at the boarding station

Longer delays at the boarding station resulted in a decrease in comfort – 57% of those delayed 0-5 mins were comfortable, compared to only 34% of those delayed 11-20 minutes (statistically significant).

Summary

The longer the disruption, the more frustrated, resigned and stressed passengers get, particularly when the disruption occurs during a commuting journey.

79% of those at the boarding station and 74% at an interchange station waited for the disruption to end on the platform.

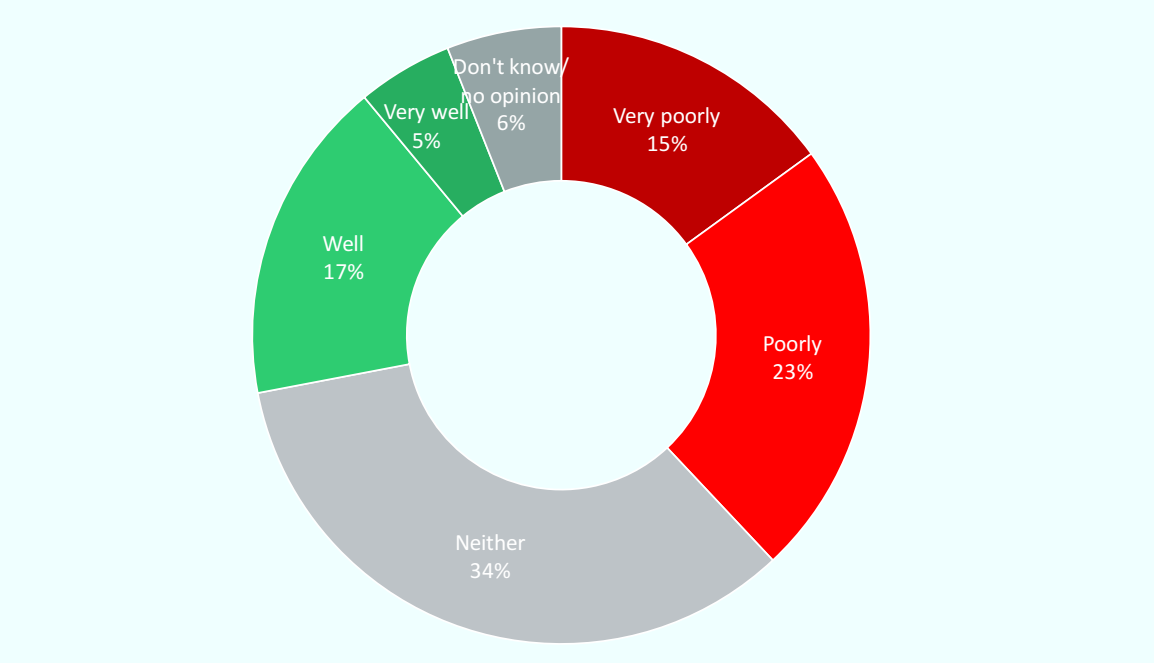
Only 37% said the wait on the platform at the boarding station was comfortable (whereas for the few who waited at a café or a waiting room, 71% said the wait was comfortable).

The longer the delay at the boarding station the more uncomfortable it was perceived to be.

3.3 Handling of the Disruption

Overall, when asked to rate how well the rail company handled the disruption, quantitative survey participants felt that the travel disruption was not handled very well. Only 22% believed that it was handled well.[10]

Figure 18: Rating of how the rail company handled the disruption



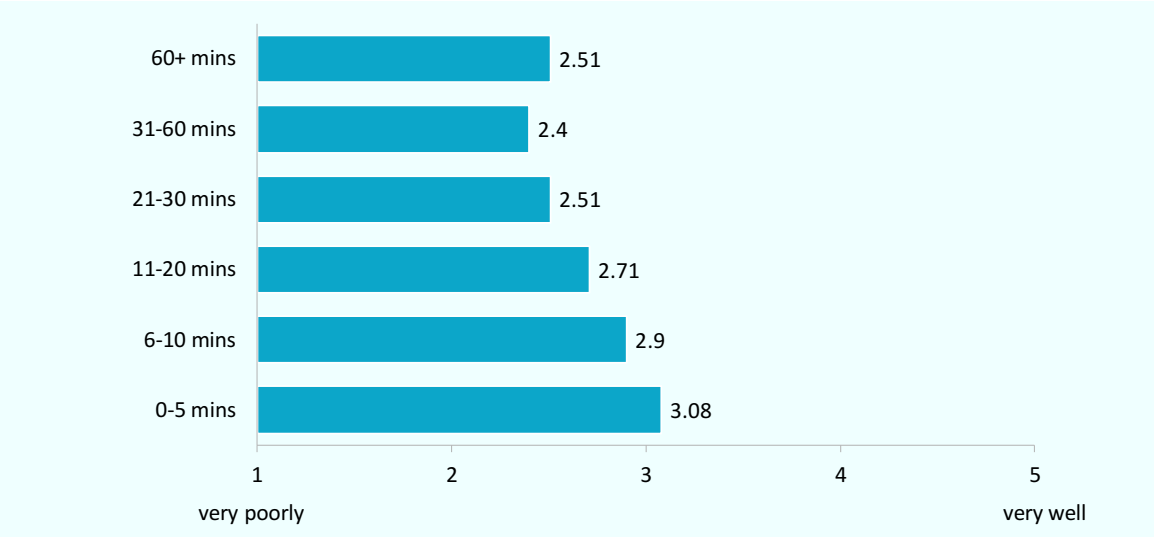
Base: 1,049

Over a quarter (27%) of commuters found the handling poor, compared with 15% of business travellers and 17% of those travelling for leisure. Similarly, commuters were significantly less likely to find the disruption was handled very well (2%) than business (8%) and leisure travellers (13%).[11]

Unsurprisingly, the length of the delay contributes to the dissatisfaction with the handling of the disruption, as the proportion of participants viewing this as poorly rises from 6% and 11% for the shortest delays to 31% for 31-60 minute delays and 27% for delays of more than 60 minutes. The mean satisfaction score (where 1 = very poorly and 5 = very well) by disruption length is shown in Figure 19.

[10] A further breakdown of answers to this question can be found above in Figure 7.
[11] However, there is no correlation between purpose of the disrupted journey and satisfaction with handling the disruption. The difference was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 19: Mean rating of how the rail company handled the disruption by disruption length

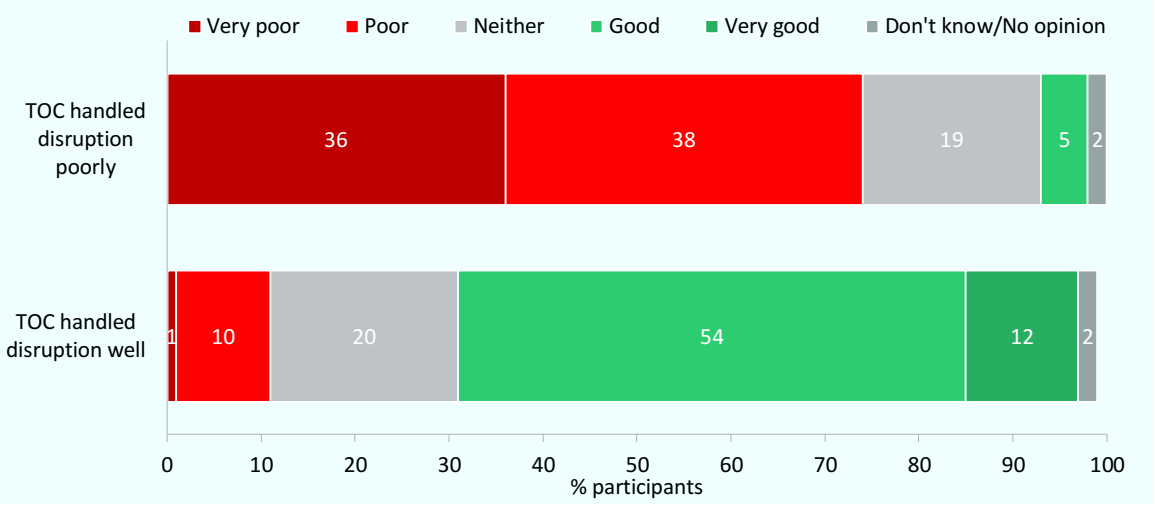


Base: 0-5 mins 160, 6-10 mins 250, 11-20 mins 302, 21-30 mins 155, 31-60 mins 118, 60+ mins 64

Age does not correlate with the rating of how a disruption is handled to a great extent, though those 65 years or older are significantly more likely to say that the disruption was handled very well (17%) than any other age group.

Another key driver for satisfaction with the handling of the disruption was the satisfaction with the information received during the disruption: 66% of those who felt that the information received during the disruption was good or very good, also felt that the rail company involved in the disruption handled this well, whilst only 5% thought the rail company didn't handle the disruption well, this difference is statistically significant. Similarly, 74% of participants who felt the information received was poor or very poor also thought the handling was poor.

Figure 20: Rating of information by how well the rail company handled the disruption

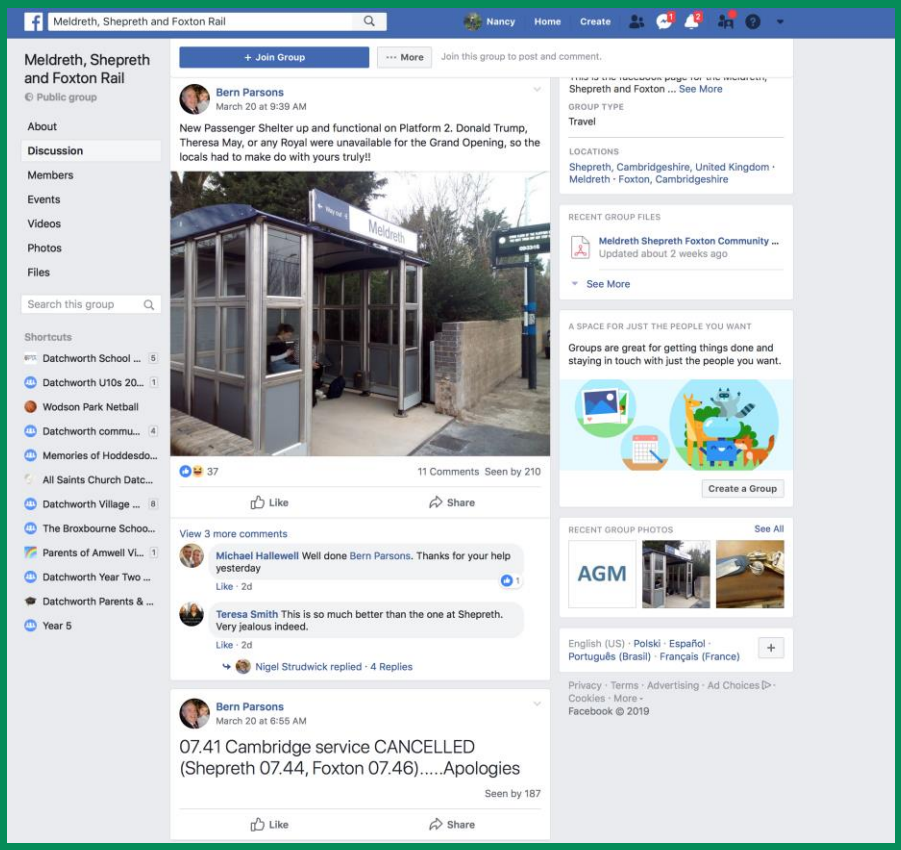


Base 234 TOC handled information well, 397 TOC handled information poorly

Amongst qualitative participants, there were a handful of positive disruption stories. The station master at Meldreth, Bern, for example updated his local Facebook page to advise passengers of disruptions. The information could also be seen on a blackboard that was kept up to date. At the time of disruption, he met and greeted passengers before they

parked to advise them of changes and saved them time parking their vehicle. He booked taxis for passengers to neighbouring Royston if there were known disruptions to the village stations. It was the helpful advice and meaningful alternatives that made this disruption handling very successful.

Case study 5: Bern, Station Master, Meldreth.



Example of best practice: Up-to-the-minute communication delivered in a reliable and friendly way (f2f and local social media groups) offering helpful advice and meaningful alternatives

Furthermore, Virgin West Coast were described as very good at delivering key information at point of disruption. Participants reported that they provided times for each of the stations, connection information and alternatives, delivered in person or across tannoy offering face-to-face contact if needed and offered appropriate refreshments. They further provided follow-up notices about compensation implications. FGW and LNER were also singled out as having train guards with big personalities who are proud of their roles, are highly personable and committed to customer service.

When delays occurred, it was critical to qualitative participants that TOCs are proactive and advise of potential issues to allow passengers to make alternative plans. They thought a disruption was handled well if they could see the following:

- Reason, respond, remorse, responsibility
- Human touch
- Cross network approach
- TOCs liaising with regards to connections and transferring tickets

- Anticipating problems and advising of alternative routes, e.g. *"You could change here as there might be some congestion which would cause delay"*

Summary

Handling of the disruption by the TOC was perceived as poor or very poor by 38%, with only 22% thinking it was handled well. Commuters were most likely to find the handling of the disruption as poor. Longer disruptions contributed to poor ratings as did cancellations.

4 Information During Disruption

Information Needs

Participants in the qualitative stage were asked to complete 'journey maps,' focusing on the information needed at different stages of the journey they undertake.

Before travelling, they wanted to know:

- Is my train running on time?
- Will I get a seat? Is my train overcrowded?
- Have trains run on time today?
- What platform is it on?
- Where to stand on the platform?

Once **at the station**, they were concerned with:

- Should I purchase my ticket/car park?
- Is my train still due in at x time?
- Is there a platform change?
- Up to date loading data

If a disruption was to occur at this stage of the journey, their key questions would be:

- Around disruption scale:
  - Reason – congestion vs. suicide
  - How long it will be delayed
  - Connection implications
- Around alternative travel arrangements:
  - Where shall I go instead?
  - What is the fastest route from A to B?
  - Other relevant modal information e.g. buses/cabs
  - Are tickets transferable?

At the point of disruption, qualitative participants said they would check multiple sources, so that consistency of information was a key concern for them. One way of achieving this would be through development of a multi-modal app.

Information about disruptions occurring before getting on the train were received in a variety of ways. For example, the majority opted for 'alerts' via text or push notification and many also checked the TOC's app or their Twitter feed. Participants also reported that they 'used big data' to personalise the information. Whilst a blackboard/white board outside of station or in ticket office was also cited repeatedly as source of information, it became clear that station staff are now key to get up to date with travel information (Station Master or staff in high vis clothing, who have iPads on the platform/concourse). Participant were looking for platform screens to include matrix, touch screens, video feeds

with real-time news, which means that websites need to be updated continuously. This was especially important as participants said they would continue to check journey alerts.

Once on the train, participants wanted to receive information mainly around disruption scale and alternative travel arrangements. Questions around information needs during this stage of the journey included:

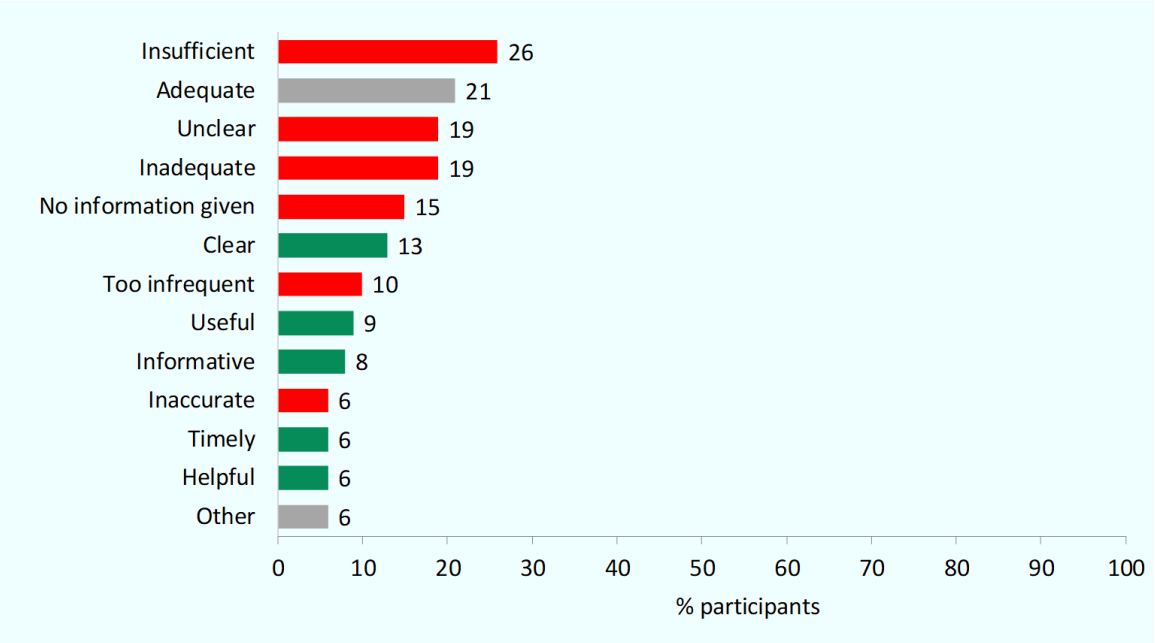
- Why the train has stopped?
- What is the reason for the delay?
- What is the scale of the delay?
- What is the ETD?
- What is the ETA at each station?
- What implications does this have for connections?
- What is the best alternative?
- Where could I get off?
- Whether tickets are transferable?
- What are the compensation arrangements?

The moment the train pauses or goes unusually slowly participants were looking for an 'implications explanation' and wanted regular updates throughout the delay. Participants would like to receive this from the train guard (longer distance journey), train driver, LCD/visual displays, touch screens with alternatives, via a helpline or a live chat during train operating hours.

Perception of information given

The information given during the disruption was perceived as more negative than positive, with 95% of mentions being negative and only 42% positive.

Figure 21: Perception of information given



Base: 1,049; more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100

Cancellation of trains resulted in considerably more negative comments as did delays of over 60 minutes.

Table 2: Perception of information given by length of delay and whether train cancelled

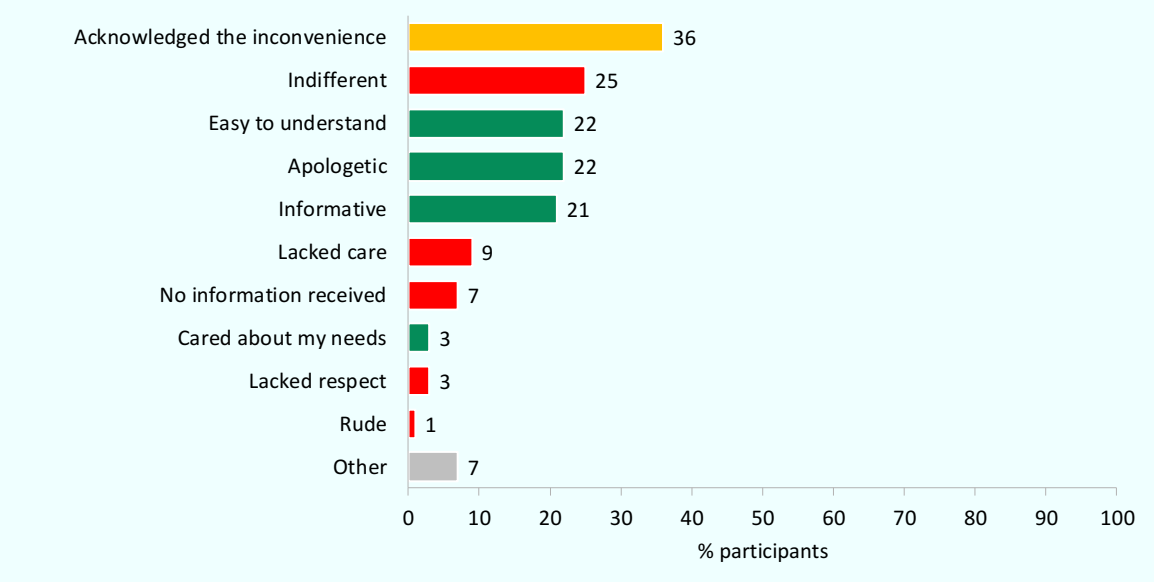
		Length of delay						Whether train cancelled	
	Total %	0-5 mins %	6-10 mins %	11-20 mins %	21-30 mins %	31-60 mins %	60+ mins %	Yes %	No %
Insufficient	26	21	18	26	31	36	45	32	25
Adequate	21	21	29	18	20	18	16	18	22
Inadequate	19	9	11	22	26	26	36	30	16
Unclear	19	8	15	19	26	26	33	27	17
No information given	15	27	16	15	8	8	3	9	17
Clear	13	14	16	12	12	14	11	11	14
Too infrequent	10	6	6	11	10	17	23	12	10
Useful	9	11	10	10	5	6	5	7	9
Informative	8	9	10	7	8	8	6	6	9
Helpful	6	8	7	6	6	5	5	5	7
Timely	6	7	7	6	3	6	3	4	6
Inaccurate	6	3	2	8	5	10	16	9	5
Other	6	4	7	6	8	4	14	9	6
Base	**1,049**	**160**	**250**	**302**	**155**	**118**	**64**	**245**	**804**

Tone of information

As a whole, the tone of information given was perceived as neutral: the inconvenience caused was acknowledged, however the general tone was deemed indifferent.

Just over a fifth of quantitative survey participants each described the tone more positively: 22% easy to understand, 22% apologetic and 21% informative.

Figure 22: Tone of information provided

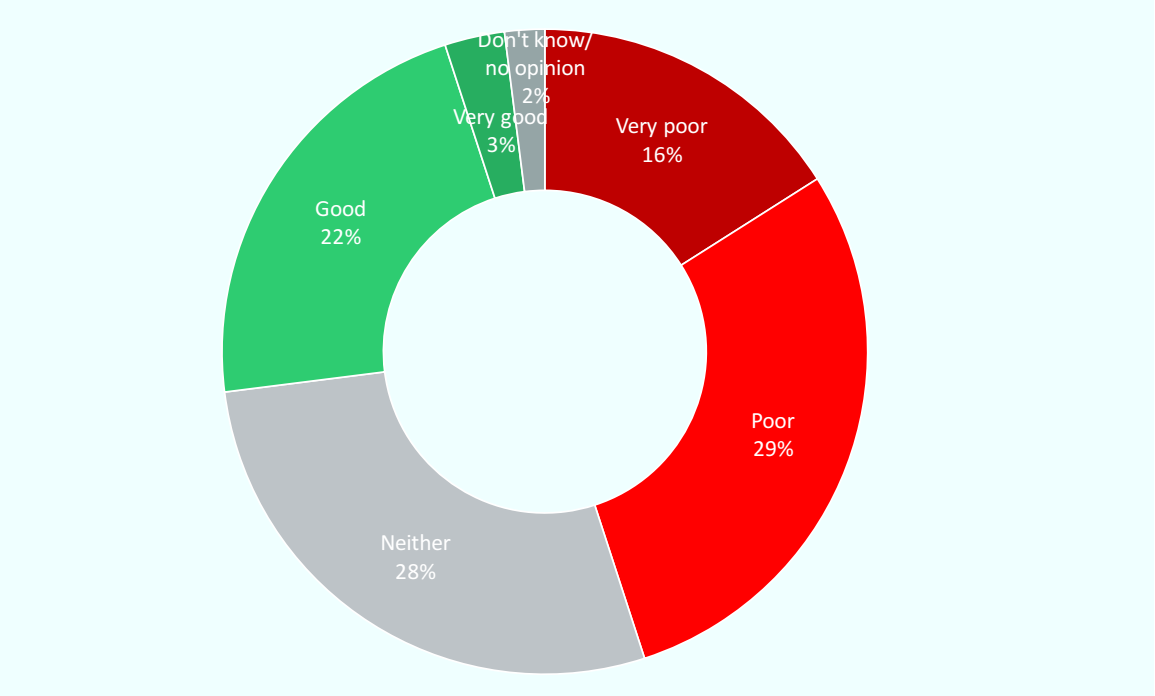


Base: 895 (all those who were given information); more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Rating of information

Overall, 25% rated the information as good or very good and 45% as poor or very poor. See Figure 23.

Figure 23: Rating of the information received about the disruption

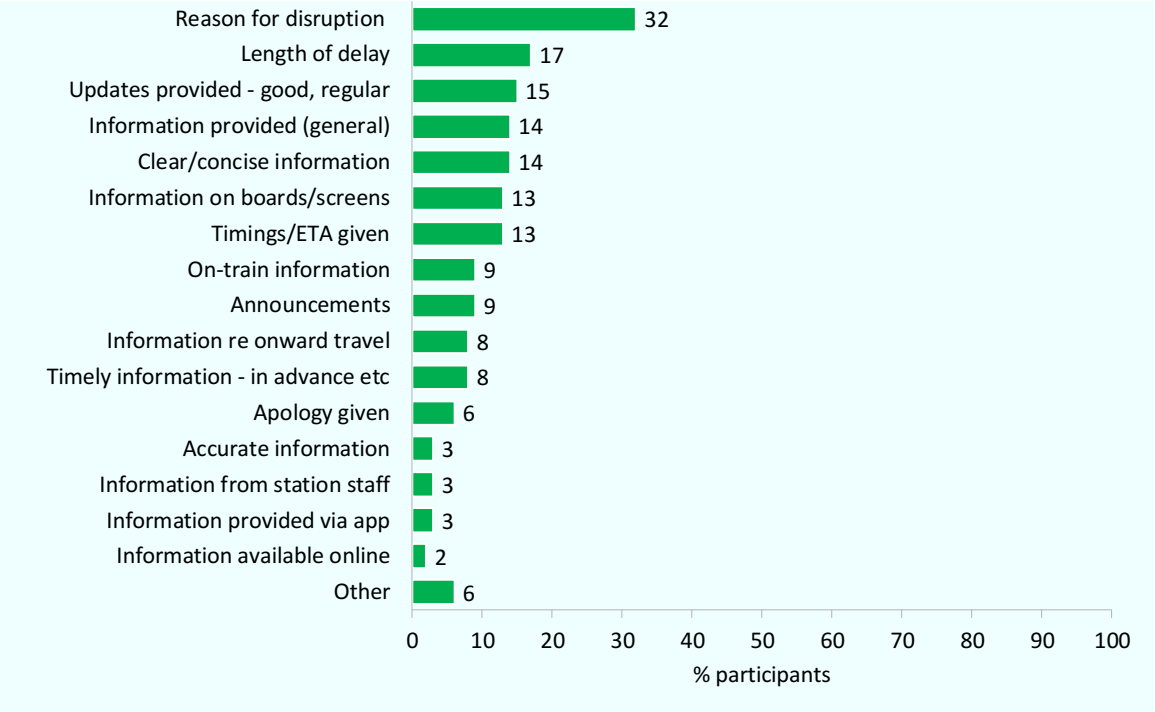


Base: 1,049

When asked about what information was poor, participants focused especially on the content of the information provided to them during the disruption: a lack of or inadequate information was noted by almost a quarter of participants and a similar proportion of participants were unhappy about a delay in providing information. The information was deemed vague, unclear or inaudible by 10% of the participants.

Similarly, key information perceived as good centred around reasons given for the disruption. In contrast to vague, unclear, inaudible information as reported by those who found the information poor, it was reported as reported clear and concise by some. These should be the focus of what and how TOCs provide information during disruption.

Figure 24: Good information during disruption



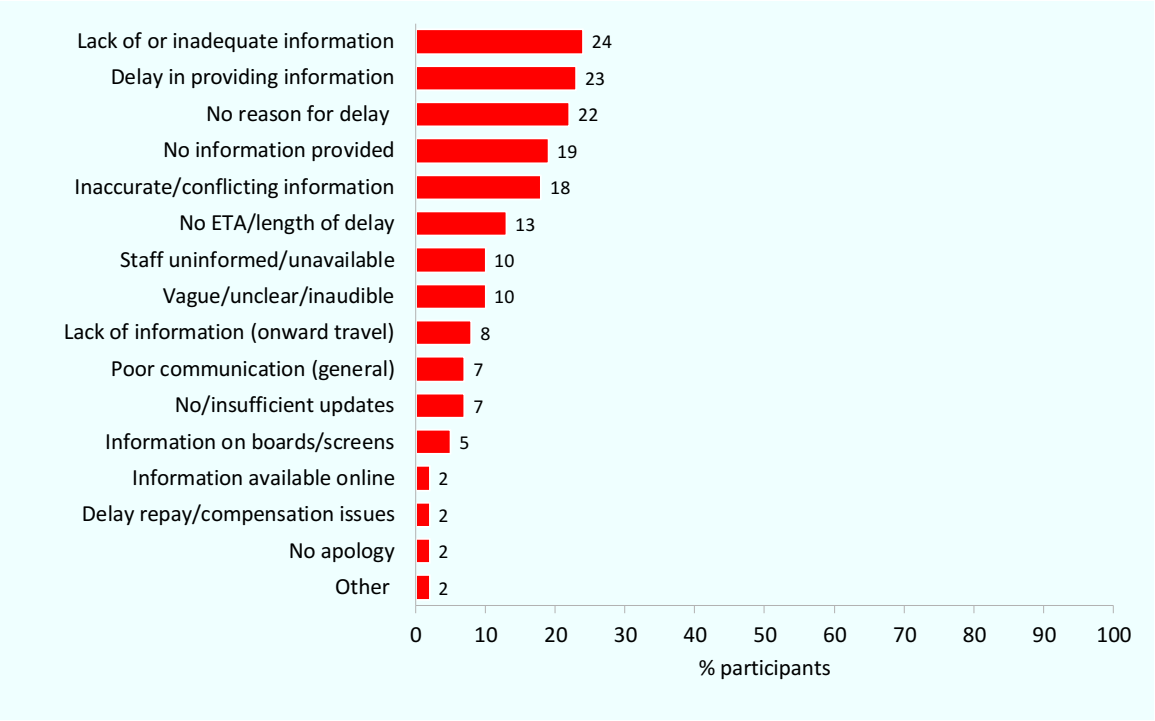
Q28. Base: 263 (those who found information good); more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100. Chart only shows mentions >1%.

During the qualitative stage, participants said they would want to hear the following:

- An apology (more than once)
- The reason the train is delayed e.g. sheep/suicide/staff
- Estimated time of arrival at EVERY station
- Impact on connections/ticket validity
- We will update you again within 5 minutes
- We are doing everything we can to get you in on time
- Please check your app
- We know this isn't acceptable
- We will refund – this is how

As with the quantitative findings, participants here also said that the tone of voice was very important. They were looking for information that was delivered in a very apologetic, almost self-flagellating way, showing genuine concern and with a reassuring, optimistic and bright tone. A human touch, if appropriate humorous was also welcome. Key to this was that the information would be given proactively, via text message or email or via a TOC app.

Figure 25: What information during disruption was poor



Base: 467 (those who rated the information as poor); more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100. Chart only shows mentions >1%.

Summary

Overall, the information given during the disruption was perceived as more negative than positive: 95% negative comments (e.g. 26% insufficient, 19% unclear, 19% inadequate, 15% none given) and 42% positive comments (e.g. 13% clear, 9% useful, 8% informative).

As a whole, the tone of information given was perceived as neutral: 36% said the inconvenience caused was acknowledged, 25% said it was indifferent. Just over a fifth each described the tone more positively: 22% easy to understand, 22% apologetic and 21% informative.

Overall, 25% rated the information as good or very good and 45% as poor or very poor. The main examples of poor information were lack of or inadequate information (24%), delay in providing information (23%) and no reason given (23%). The main examples for good information were reason given for the disruption (32%) and the length of delay (17%). These findings provide clear pointers as to how TOCs should provide information during disruptions.

4.1 Reception of Information

Participants were asked where they first received information about the disruption.

Amongst qualitative stage participants, there was a high demand for an app built on real-time GPS data with push notifications. Participants were reliant on a range or apps for journey planning and perceiving real-time information, including Citymapper, National Rail Enquiries and Trainline.com.

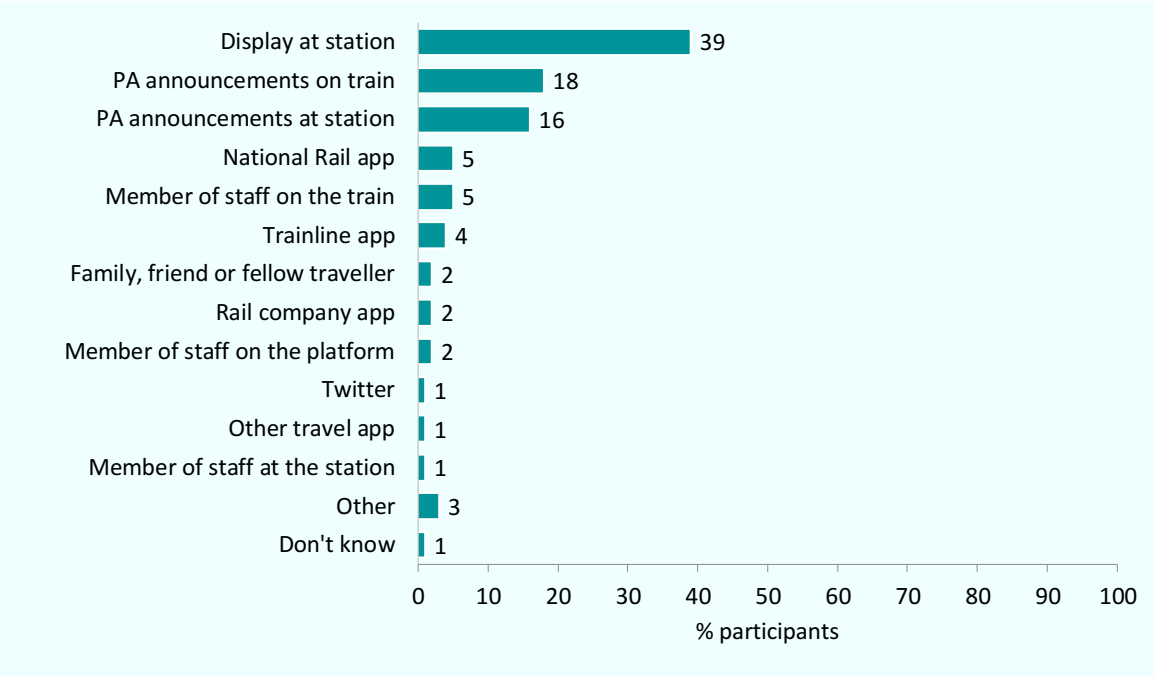
Third party apps were viewed as independent, highly trusted, delivering the bigger picture, e.g. offering more than just network data and also show early updates that are accurate. However, many commuters were more familiar with their TOC and would prefer apps from them. These apps were viewed as good for specific routes with dedicated journeys saved in the app and many qualitative participants would check the apps first thing in the morning and before leaving the office. There was a general feeling amongst participants that none of the existing apps goes far enough and that these apps are not always consistent with other information especially at times of disruptions.

Participants hence were looking for something that was an all-in-one ticket/payment and information source. Key for this to work would be GPS data, TOC data, personal data, accuracy in information and real-time information. Participants were looking for this app to provide disruption alerts for pre-set journeys, fastest journey prediction including alternative TOCs/modes, platform information and changes, seat availability and loading data as well as rail driver information.

> *"They should look at Uber. It's so easy to use and you can track where your driver is at any moment."*
>
> London, Commuter

Amongst survey participants, nearly four in ten (39%) first noticed information about the disruption to their train journey via a display at the station. Rail staff continues to be one of the key early delivery methods of information, though predominantly via PA announcements. Face-to-face information through members of staff only make up 8% of all initial points of information. Only 13% of participants learned about the disruption first via an App or the internet with the National Rail app the main one.

Figure 26: How information is first received



Base: 1,049

Amongst the survey participants who learned about the disruption before reaching the station, App usage was significantly higher than amongst those who learned about the disruption at a later stage. A third of all participants who learned about the disruption before reaching the station were significantly more likely to hear about this via the National Rail app, 22% learned about it via the Trainline app and 8% found out through a particular rail company's app compared to almost none of the participants who learned about this later.

Where the first information of the disruption was delivered via a Rail company app, PA announcements on the train or members of staff on the platform, participants were most likely to be satisfied with the handling of the disruption by the TOC. Other travel apps and displays at the station had the opposite effect – here, participants were significantly more likely to think the situation was handled poorly rather than well.

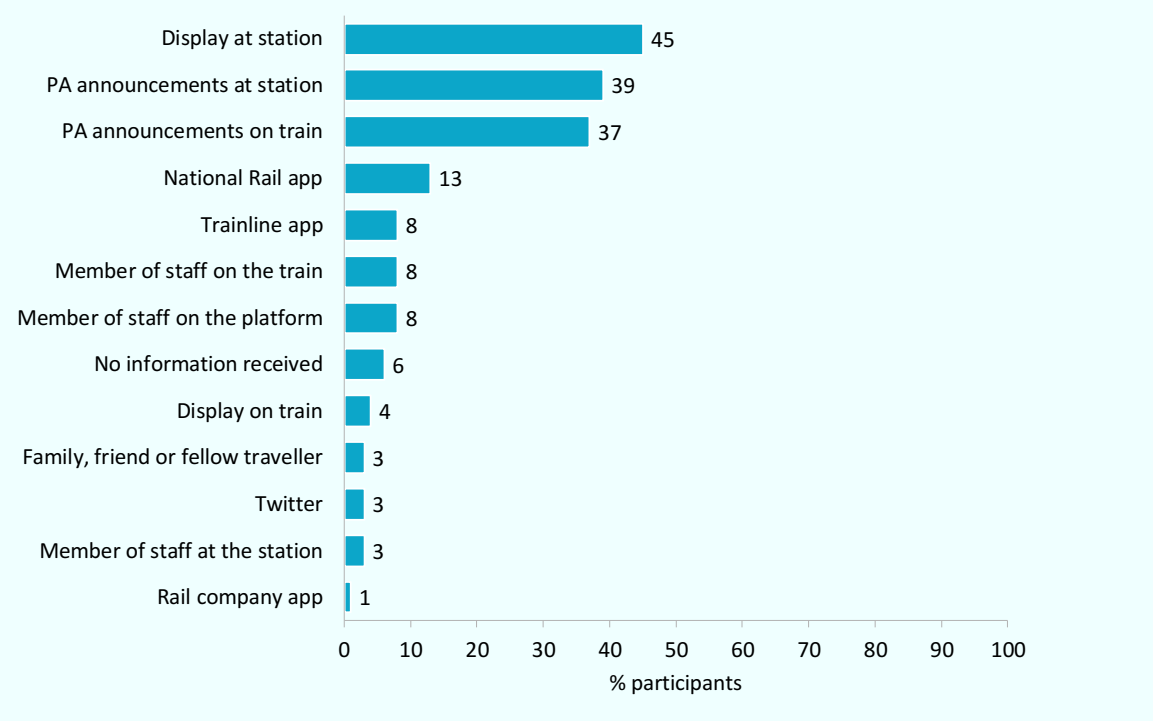
Table 3: Rating of how TOC handled disruption by information source

	% TOC handled disruption well	% TOC handled disruption poorly	Base
Rail company app	37	32	19
PA announcements on train	33	31	187
Member of staff on the platform	31	25	16
Trainline app	28	43	40
PA announcements at station	25	34	173
Member of staff at the station	25	42	12
Twitter	25	25	8
Display on train	25	0	4
Member of staff on the train	23	42	48
National Rail app	19	42	53
Display at station	17	42	406
Other travel app	15	54	13
Family, friend or fellow traveller	6	28	18

When asked which, if any, sources they recalled receiving information about the disruption **during** the disrupted journey this was a little different from the initial source mainly because more than one source could be mentioned although the ordering is similar.

Quantitative survey participants recall receiving information about the disruption predominantly when it's announced through a display at the station (45%), PA announcements at the station (39%) or on the train (37%). The next most frequently remembered method of delivery is the National Rail app (13%), followed by members of staff on the platform and on the train as well as via the Trainline app (8% each).

Figure 27: From which sources received information about the disruption during disrupted journey



Base: 1,049

Qualitative stage participants found visual displays on the train helpful, but pointed out that they needed to provide ETD, implications and ETA at each station. There was a keen interest for these to be used more actively, answering questions such as:

- How long will the train be held at a red signal?
- What time do we get in at the next station?
- Is it now better to get off and change?

Emotions When Receiving Initial Information

Finding out that their journey was disrupted caused a range of emotions in participants.

Qualitative stage participants felt that poor management of disruptions and lack of communication exacerbates emotional and financial impact. There was a clear desire for honest, dynamic information delivered proactively to allow for passengers to regain control.

The lack of proactive 'up to date' information dominated the range of frustrations voiced by qualitative stage participants and they had a strong desire for increased staff visibility. However, addressing the information hole via automated/digital channels would help all the frustrations. Participants reported of a variety of frustration 'categories':

- 'Human'
  - Absence of staff to answer questions e.g. on the platform, Live Chat
  - No human response – they all hide!
  - Lack of clear diction – do you know the Muffle Man?
  - Dismissive staff
  - Need some 'RRRR' - reason (what's happened), response (what are we doing about it), remorse (we are sorry), responsibility (we will rectify in the future by.....)

- Connection
  - Knock on impact e.g. missing connecting trains
  - Implications for seat availability for longer journeys - where trains are cancelled, and seat reservations get ignore

- Informational
  - Absence of any explanation
  - No real time information e.g. train stops without reason
  - Inconsistency of information e.g. Platform screen different to App to Twitter
  - Lack of confidence in real time information e.g. expected train time keeps being delayed by 1 minute then 2 minutes, then 3 minutes, etc.

Case study 6: Greater Anglia

- **Who?** Female commuter (45 65 years old) from London.
- **When?** 4 5 times a week from London Liverpool Street to Hertford East
- **What?** Trouble with the power lines
- **Problems encountered:** chaos at Liverpool Street Station, dismissive staff, boards/announcements not up to date and not informative, no ETD or alternatives provided
- **Positives encountered:** one staff member eventually radio'd the train driver to get a specific ETD which allowed passenger to make a choice and to Moorgate Hertford North and then take a taxi home

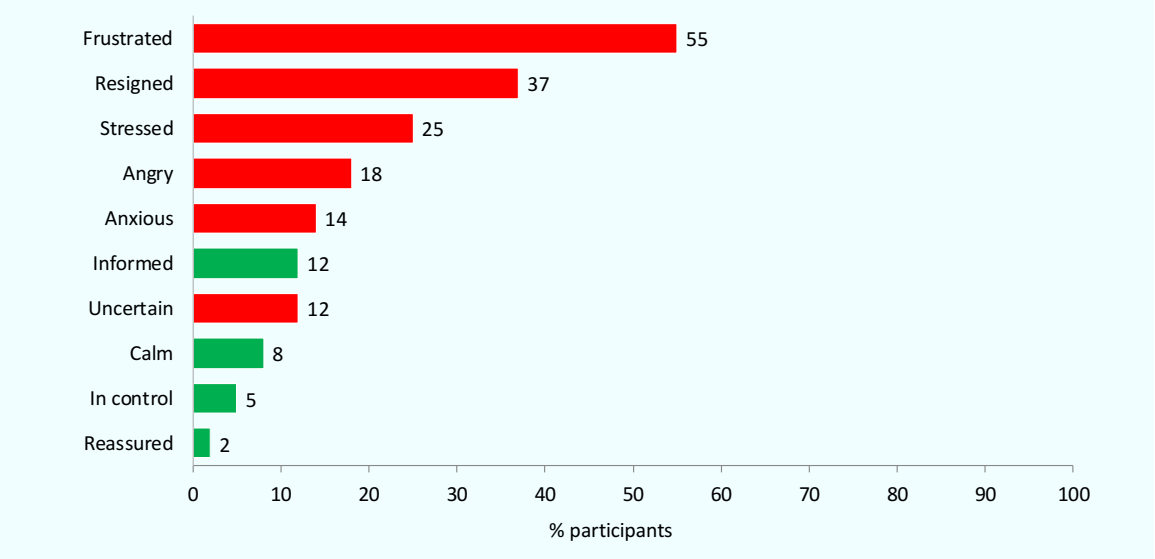
"The station staff at Liverpool Street were … I mean she just flicked her hand at me in a dismissive way and said 'I don't know, read the boards'."

"I'm lucky that I have two choices of train line near me but I have a season ticket so it's important that the ticket is then transferable."

Quantitative survey participants reported mostly negative emotions when first receiving information about the disruption which were very similar to those recalled when initially

learning about a disruption (see Figure 13), though slightly more balanced. Only 55% felt frustrated (rather than 63% in the previous question) and 12% felt informed.

Figure 28: Emotions when receiving initial information



Base: 974 (all those who were given information).

Predictably, feeling angry and stressed increased as the length of disruption increased. A very short delay (0-5 minutes) unsurprisingly lead to significantly fewer quantitative survey participants saying they felt frustrated (40%) than delays between 11 and 60 minutes (60-69%). This feeling decreased, however, for delays of 60 minutes or more, where the percentage dropped to 57%. These participants had an increased feeling of uncertainty (26%) compared to those with a delay of 10 minutes or less.

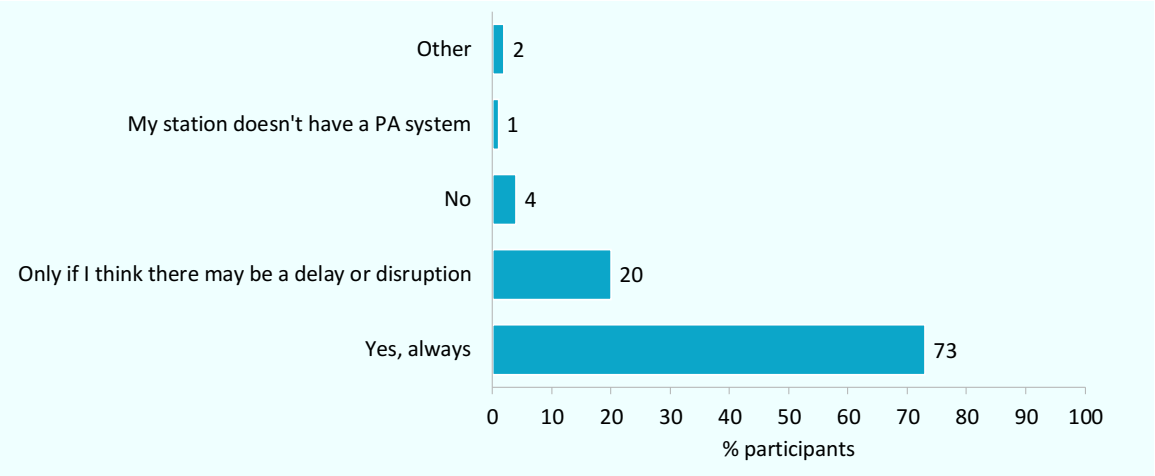
Some factors influenced the emotions of quantitative survey participants. For example, when the reason of the disruption remained unexplained or were service-related issues, participants felt significantly more resigned (41% and 44% respectively) than when a problem with the train caused the disruption (22%). Commuting participants felt significantly more frustrated (60%) than leisure travellers. Those, in turn, felt significantly more uncertain when experiencing disruptions (19%) than commuters (11%) or business travellers (9%).

Listening for Announcements

To avoid those frustrations, most quantitative survey participants said they always actively listen for announcements at the boarding station (73%) and on the train (51%).

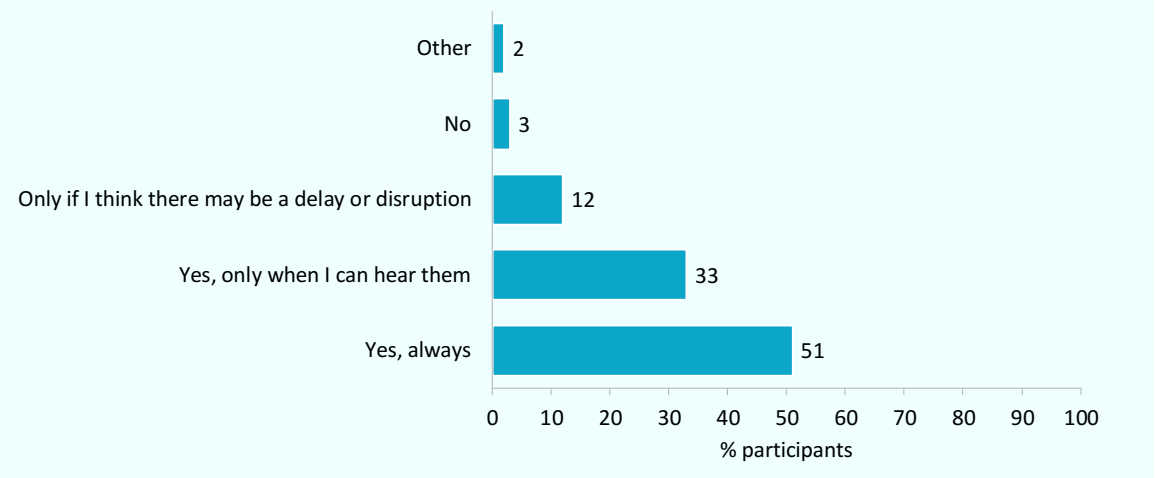
Age seems to have an influence on the frequency of listening out for announcements. Participants older than 65 generally try to listen to announcements on the boarding station (85%) and on the train (63%), whilst participants under 35 make less of an effort to always listen (65% and 47%). At the boarding station and on the train, however, the younger participants are more likely to listen if they think there may a delay or disruption (26% at station and 15% on train vs 12% and 2% of the 65+ year olds).

Figure 29: Whether actively listen for any announcements at the boarding station



Base: 1,049

Figure 30: Whether actively listen for any announcements on the train



Base: 1,049

Frequency of Announcements

Frustrations can also be avoided when information about disruptions are given at the right time.

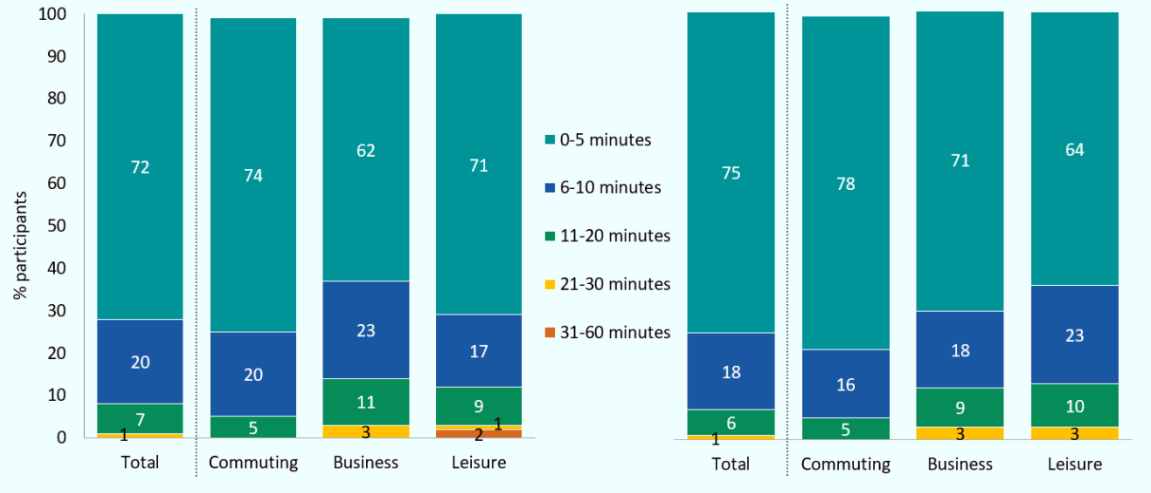
Overall, if on a train that seems to be running slower than it should be or stops between stations, 72% of quantitative survey participants wanted to receive information about the delay within five minutes and 20% within 6-10 minutes.

Overall, when there is a disruption to the rail service slightly more (75%) would like announcements to be made within five minutes and 18% within 6-10 minutes.

See Figure 31 which all shows the data disaggregated by journey purpose.

Commuting participants are more likely to be interested in receiving information about slow running every 0-5 minutes: 74% of participants feel that this is appropriate when being on a train that seems to be running slower than it should be or stops between station and 78% feel this is appropriate when a disruption is already occurring.

Figure 31: Immediacy of information during slower service (left) vs during disruption (right)

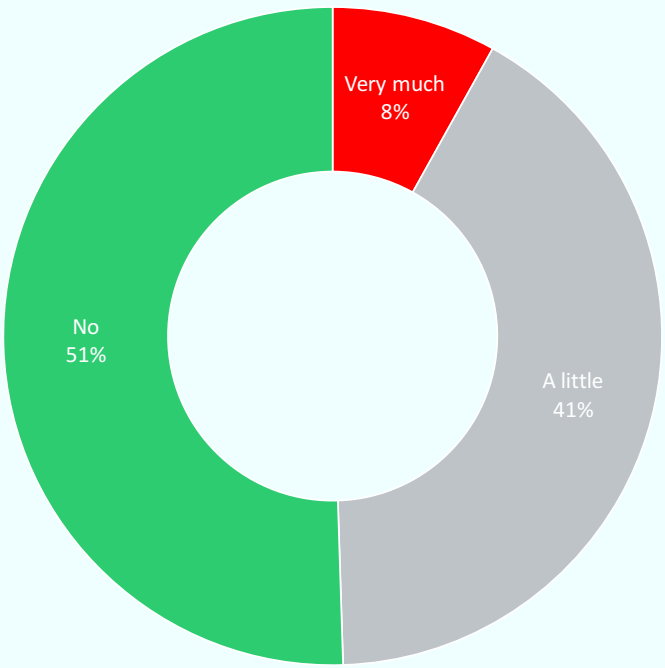


Base: 1,049 (total), 674 (commuting), 205 (business), 138 (leisure)

Business and leisure travellers have contrasting view in the two scenarios: where business travellers would like more frequent updates during slow running of service, leisure travellers would like more information during disruptions.

Quantitative survey participants were then asked whether it would be annoying if announcements were made more frequently than their preferred frequency. For just over half it would not be annoying and for 41% it would be a little annoying. Just 8% said it would be very annoying.

Figure 32: Would it be annoying if announcements were made more often than preferred frequency



Base: 1,049

Leisure travellers are significantly less likely to feel very much annoyed (2%) compared with commuters (9%) or business travellers (10%).

In summary, our research shows that announcements are likely to be most welcome if they are made within five minutes for both slow running services and disruptions, and most passengers would not be annoyed if it was more frequent than their preferred frequency.

Participants were asked which they would prefer in situations when there are no announcements made because the train company doesn't have enough information:

A) an announcement made with very little or no information
B) an announcement made once there is some information

The consensus across rail passengers is that an announcement made with very little or no information is much better (80%) than having to wait for an initial announcement until there is some information (20%).

Summary

39% first noticed information about the disruption via a display at the station. PA announcements on train (18%) and PA announcements at the station (16%) are also important sources. Only 13% first learned about the disruption via an App or the internet with the National Rail app the main one. If the information source was a rail company app, PA announcements on the train or members of staff on the platform were most likely to be satisfied with the handling of the disruption by the TOC. Other travel apps and displays at the station had the opposite effect.

Unsurprisingly, learning about a disruption to the journey resulted in negative emotions and participants tried to avoid these by always actively listen for announcements at the boarding station and on the train.

Participants felt that the ideal frequency for information to be disseminated is every 0 to 5 minutes: 72% for a slower running service and 75% for a disruption.

If the frequency of announcement is higher than preferred, most would not be annoyed.

Announcements made within five minutes for both slow running services and disruptions would be most welcomed by passengers.

Four fifths prefer that an announcement is made with very little or no information than having to wait until there is some information.

4.2 Additional Information during Disruption

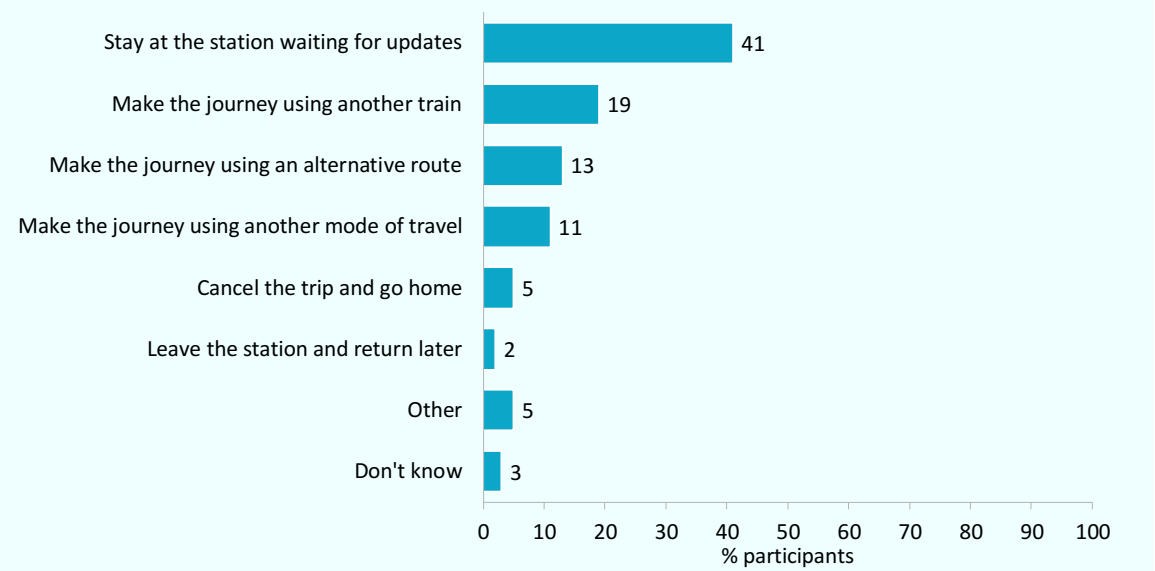
Participants were asked what else, in addition to general information about the disruption, they are looking for and what tone the information should be delivered in. In addition, they were asked about their likely behaviour during severe disruptions.

Behaviour in Severe Disruption

A disruption of up to 45 minutes for a journey of 60 minutes length and having to change trains in order to reach your destination was classified as a severe delay in this survey.

In cases of a severe delay like this, a large proportion of survey participants would stay at the station waiting for updates (41%) or make the journey using another train (19%). Only 7% of participants would leave the station in this scenario - 5% of participants would cancel the trip altogether, whilst 2% would return later to continue the disrupted journey. A further 13% would make the journey using an alternative route and the remaining 11% would make the journey using another mode of travel.

Figure 33: Behaviour if arrived at the station to find out about severe disruption



Base: 1,049

Participants who said they would stay at the station and wait for updates were asked what was the longest they would be prepared to wait for such a journey:

- 0-5 mins 1%
- 6-10 mins 3%
- 11-20 mins 20%
- 21-30 mins 31%
- 31-60 mins 37%
- 60+ mins 8%

The average time was 45 minutes.

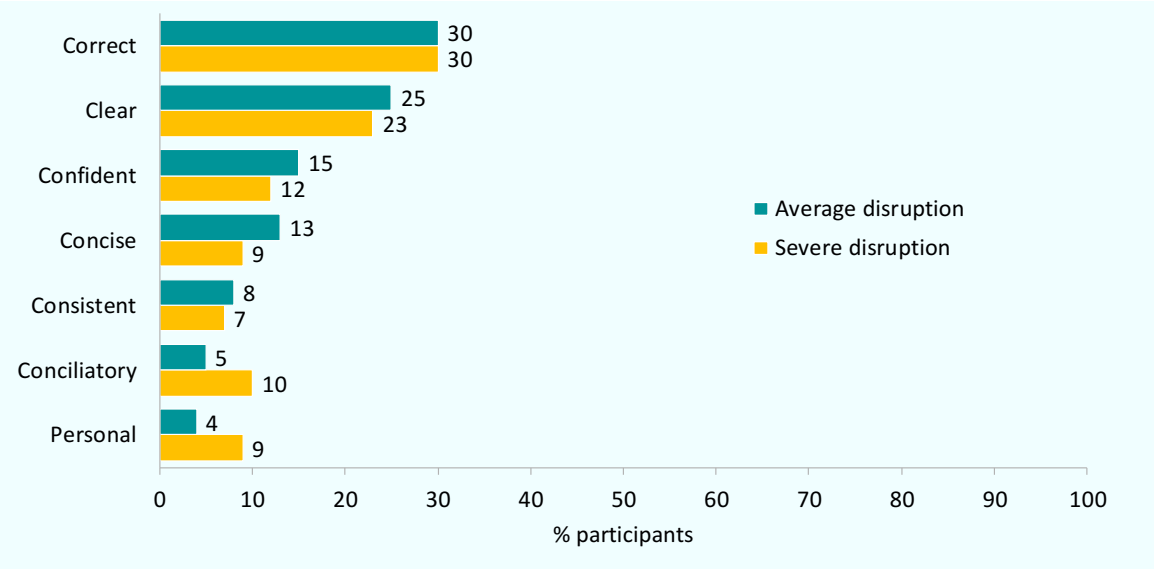
Tone of Information

Quantitative survey participants were also asked which of the following tones of information they would prefer in normal and severe disruptions. Qualitative research had shown that these seven tones of information were in particular demand from travellers during disruptions:

- Clear = easy to hear and to understand
- Correct = factual and up to date
- Concise = short and regular
- Confident = genuine and honest
- Conciliatory = apologetic and empathetic
- Consistent = across different channels and/or providers
- Personal = tailored to your circumstances

The quantitative survey participants could give a maximum of three answers out of a list of seven tones, specifying their first, second and third choice. Overall, participants were looking for assurance through information provided about the disruption, therefore looking predominantly for correct and clear information during normal disruption, but also during severe disruption that would increase the journey time by 75%.

Figure 34: Preferred tone of information provided[12]



Base: 1,049

As the disruption gets more severe, participants would like to see a conciliatory tone of voice and a more personal touch to the message.

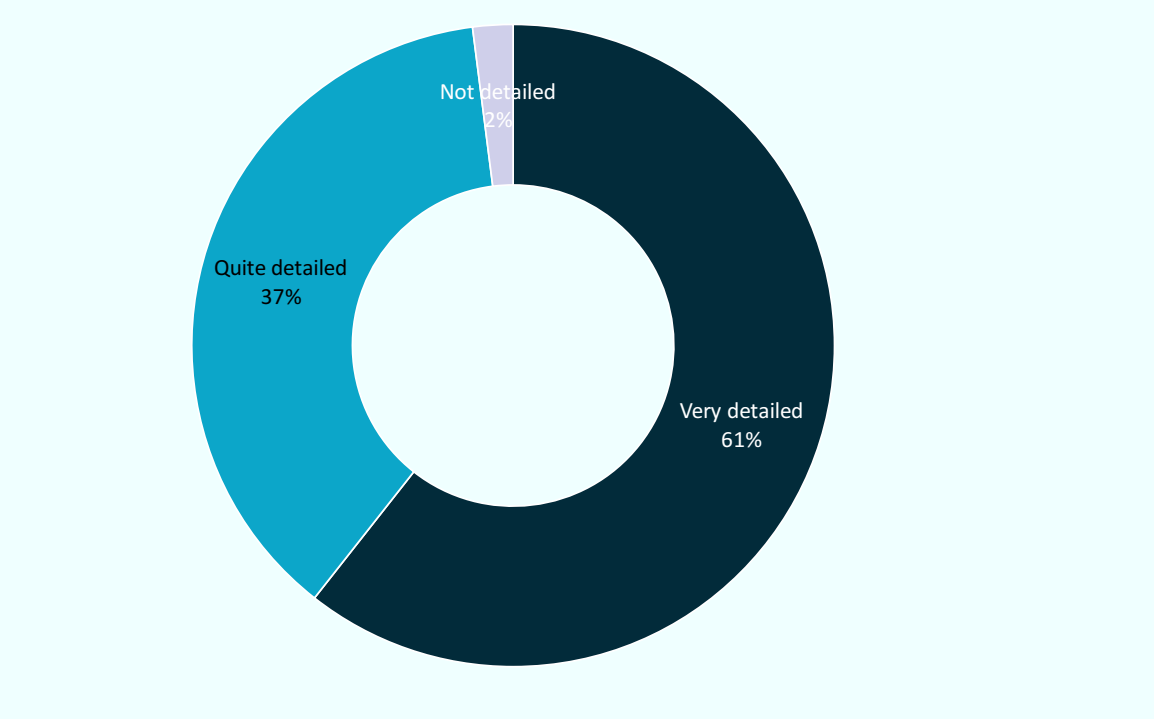
[12] To distil the one preferred tone of voice, the count for each tone was multiplied by three for the first choice, by two for the second and by one for the third. The values were then added up and divided by 6, before dividing it by 1,049 to get the overall percentage.

Level of Detail of Information during Disruption

Quantitative survey participants were asked what level of detail about the cause of the disruption they would prefer from the following:

- Very detailed, for example, this train is running 25 minutes late because of damage to the overhead electric wires between Birmingham New Street and Longbridge caused by a falling tree.
- Quite detailed, for example, this train is running 25 minutes late because of damage to the overhead electric wires between Birmingham New Street and Longbridge
- Not detailed, for example, this train is running 25 minutes late.

Figure 35: Level of detail about the cause of the disruption preferred



Base: 1,049

Over six tenths prefer very detailed information on the disruption, containing for example the length and exact nature of the disruption. Quite detailed information, comprising of length and some information on the nature of the disruption was preferred by 37%. Only very few participants would look for basic, not-detailed information (2%).

Some differences of opinion can be seen when looking at age of the passenger and satisfaction with handling of the disruption. 16 to 35-year olds are significantly more likely to want very detailed information (67%) than passengers that are 36 to 55 (57%) or 56 to 64 (54%). Furthermore, significantly more participants who rate the TOC handling of the disruption as poor would prefer very detailed information (67%) than those who rate the handling good (55%).

Table 4: Preferred level of information

Level of information	16 35 %	36 55 %	56 64 %	65+ %	Well handled %	Poorly handled %
Very detailed	67	57	54	58	55	67
Quite detailed	30	40	44	41	42	31
Not detailed	3	3	2	2	3	2
Don't know	1	*	0	0	*	*
Base	**388**	**464**	**127**	**59**	**234**	**397**

* = less than 0.5%.

Preferred Staff Behaviour in Severe Disruptions

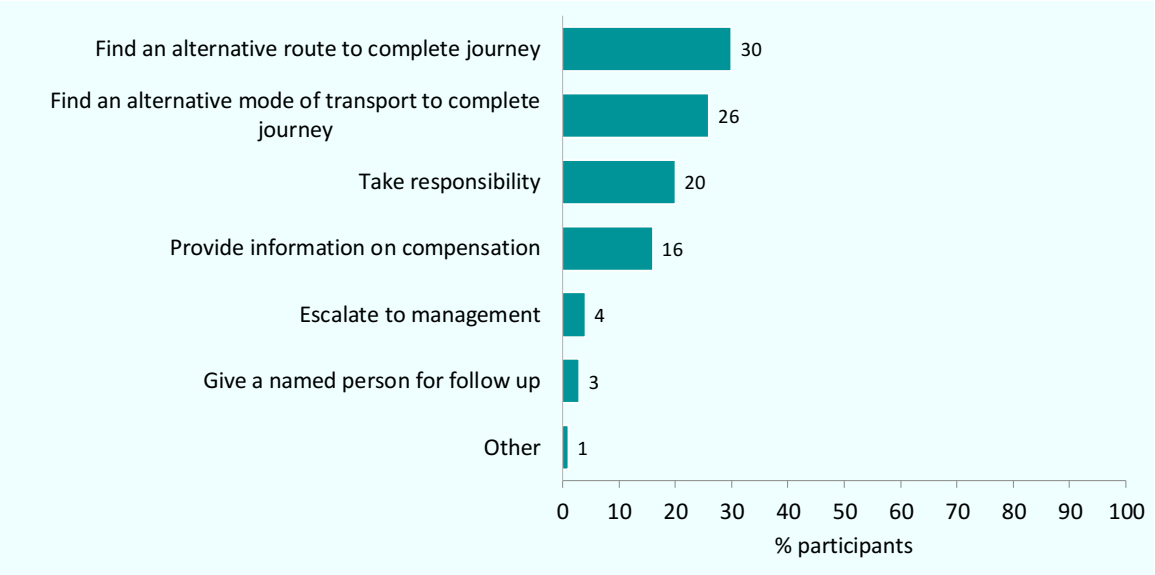
Quantitative survey participants were asked which of the following they would like staff to do if the disruption was particularly severe:

- Take responsibility
- Give you a named person for follow up
- Escalate to management
- Find me an alternative mode of transport to complete my journey
- Find me an alternative route to complete my journey
- Provide information on compensation
- Other

They were asked to choose the top three.

As only 5% of participants would consider abandoning a severely disrupted journey, participants were predominantly interested in information that would help them find an alternative arrangement to complete the journey, as Figure 36 demonstrates.

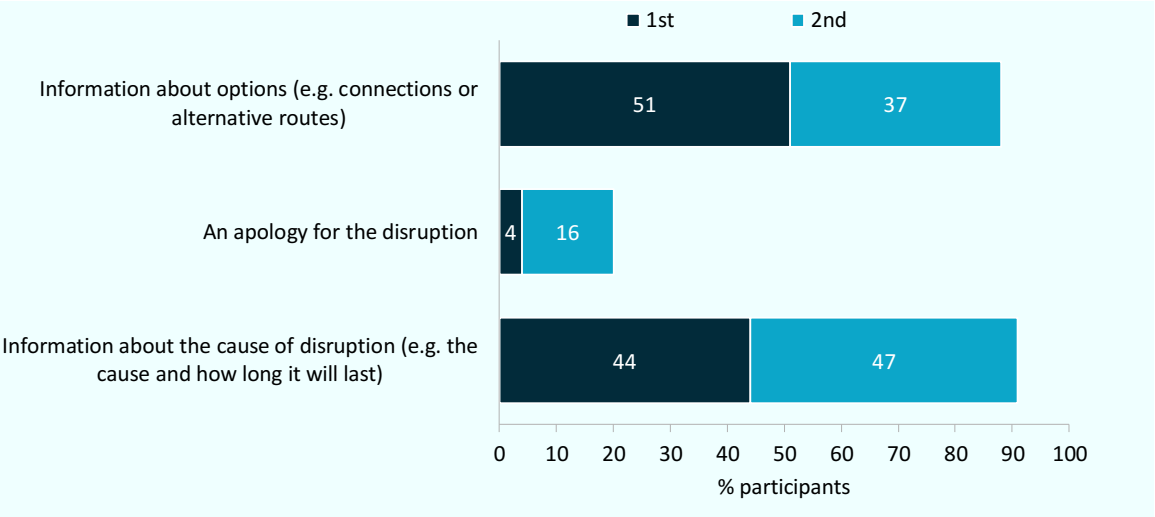
Figure 36: Preferred staff behaviour in severe disruptions[13]



Base: 1,049

In case of a severe disruption, the majority viewed information about options such as connections or alternative routes as most important (51%), followed by information about the cause of disruption (44%). An apology for the disruption was viewed as less important (4%).

Figure 37: If the disruption was particularly severe, which of the following would be most important and 2nd most important



Base: 1,049

[13] the count was multiplied by three for the first choice, by two for the second and by one for the third. The values were then added up and divided by 6, before dividing it by 1,049 to get the overall percentage

Case study 7: Virgin West Coast

- **Who?** Female business and leisure traveller with osteoporosis (65+ years old) from Birmingham.
- **When?** First Class journey from Birmingham New Street
- **What?** Severe weather (Storm Gareth)
- **Problems encountered:** other than the disruption itself, none
- **Positives encountered:** uniformed staff on the platform, equipped with iPads to inform travellers of alternatives, proactively opened the waiting room and 1st Class lounge for people to shelter and keep them warm, kept everyone information of expected arrival and departure times

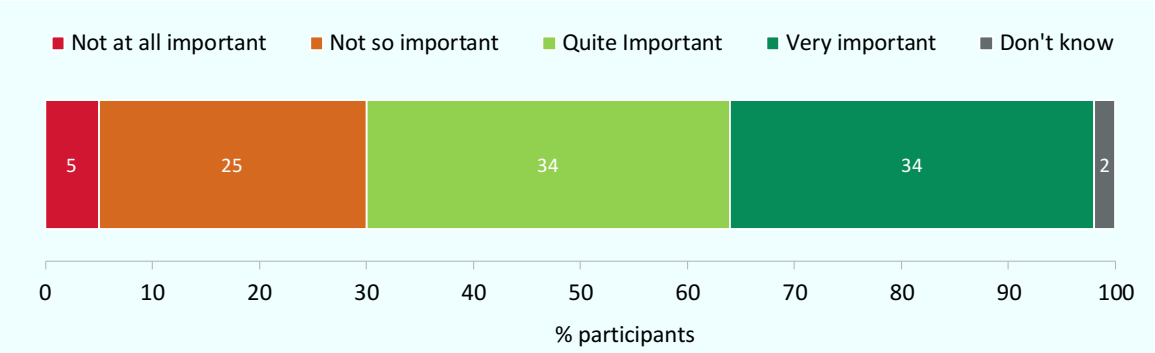
"I can't thank Virgin enough for that they are like a Swiss rail company."

Example of best practice

Importance of an Apology

Amongst quantitative survey participants, taking responsibility nevertheless only came out as the third most important aspect of what staff should do. 34% viewed an apology from the TOC for the disruption as very important and a further 34% as quite important. Only 30% find this not at all, or not so important.

Figure 38: Importance of an apology from the TOC

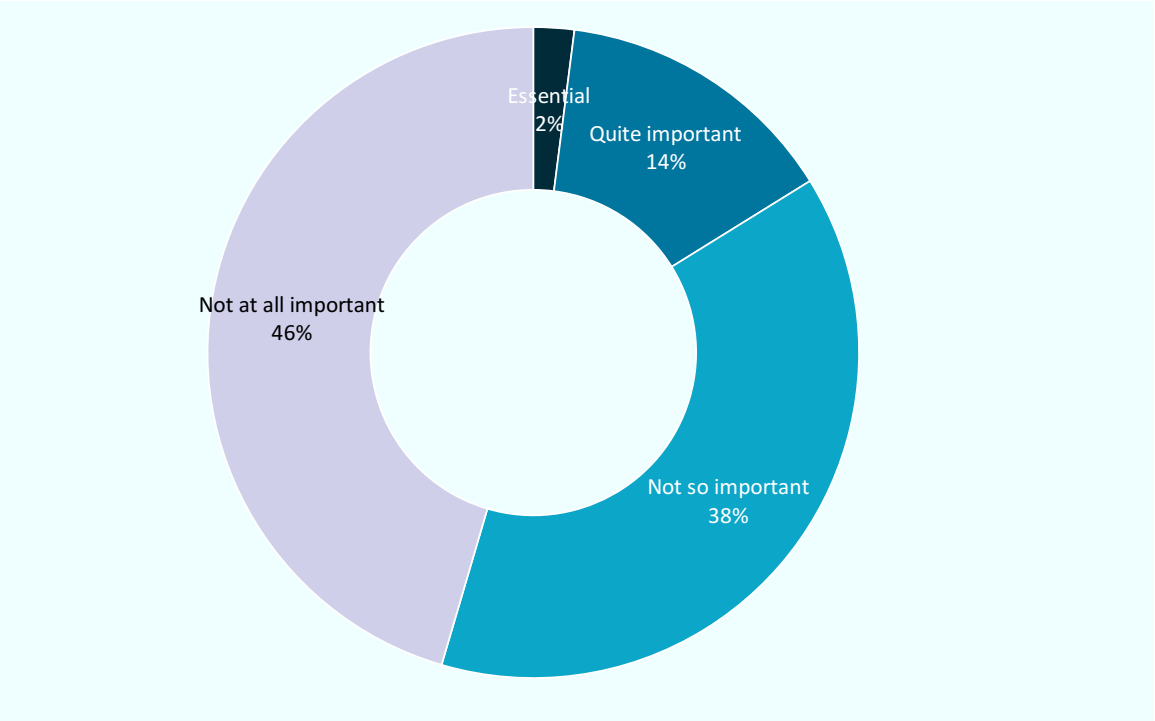


Base: 1,049

During the qualitative research, participants showed that ongoing disruption experience and bad handling of it could encourage modal shift. Frustrations with the rail service lead to a lack of confidence in the service which ultimately resulted in participants questioning why they were taking the train rather than driving. An apology or apologetic tone could somewhat break this cycle.

However, quantitative survey participants did not find it very important to see rail staff when there are interruptions to the rail service: only 2% thought this was essential and a further 14% found this quite important.

Figure 39: Importance of being able to see rail staff when there are disruptions to the rail service



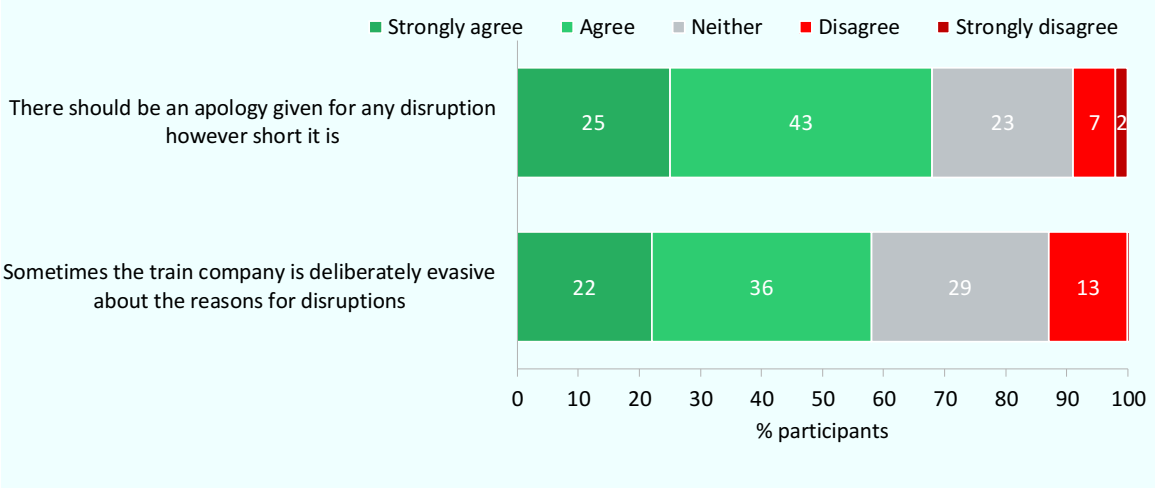
Base: 1,049

Agreement with statements about disruptions

Overall, 68% of quantitative survey participants agreed that there should be an apology for any disruption however short it is. Only 14% disagreed. Female passengers found it more important to hear an apology, as 40% found an apology very important (29% men, statistically significant).

When asked if they agreed with the statement that 'sometimes the train company is deliberately evasive about the reason for disruptions', only 13% disagreed with this statement, signalling that there is a lack of trust in TOCs.

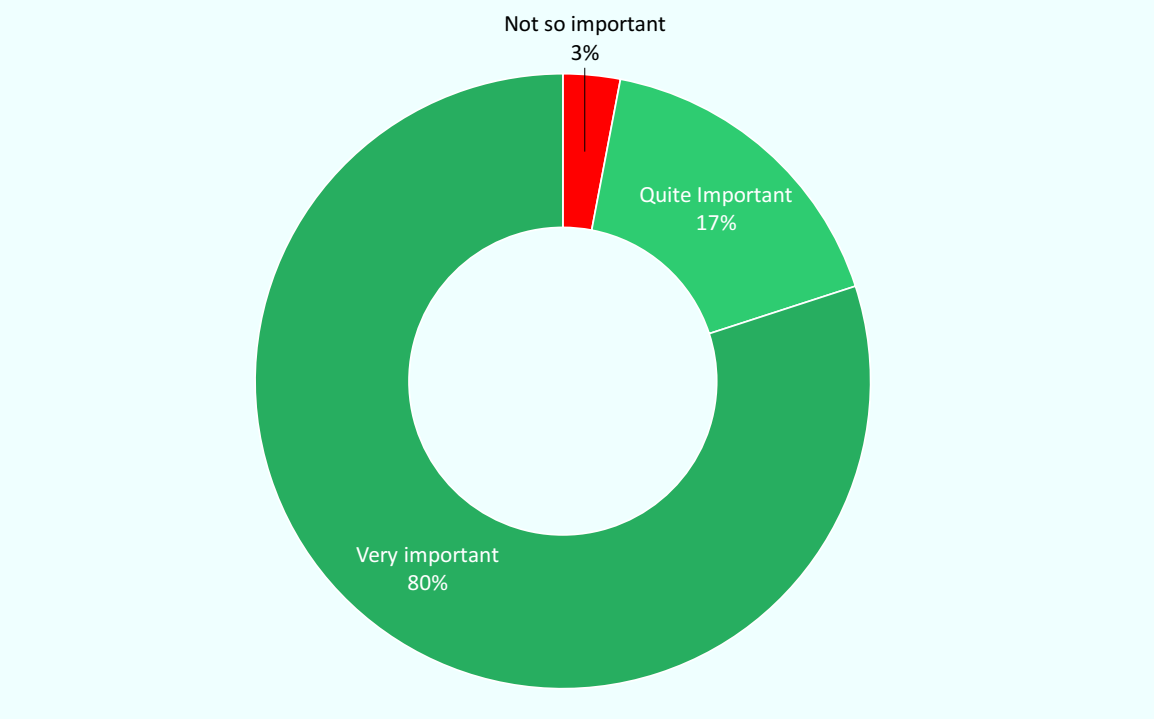
Figure 40: Agreement with statements about disruptions



Base: 1,049

Honesty was viewed as extremely important: 80% of participants said it was very important that the train company be honest even if that means saying they do not know what is happening.

Figure 41: Importance that the train company is honest even if that means saying they do not know what is happening

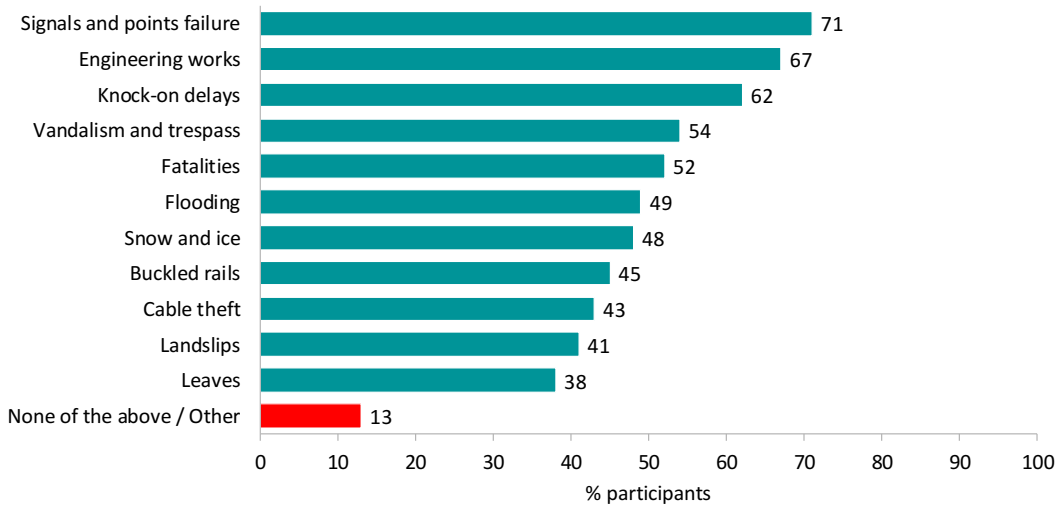


Base: 1,049

Content and Delivery of Additional Information

Quantitative survey participants were also asked whether and how they would like to receive information about the causes of the disruptions. 80% of participants said they would like this additional information and they are interested in hearing about certain events more often than others. Amongst qualitative participants, similar needs were reported. Figure 42 demonstrates the response from survey participants:

Figure 42: Events about which information would be appreciated

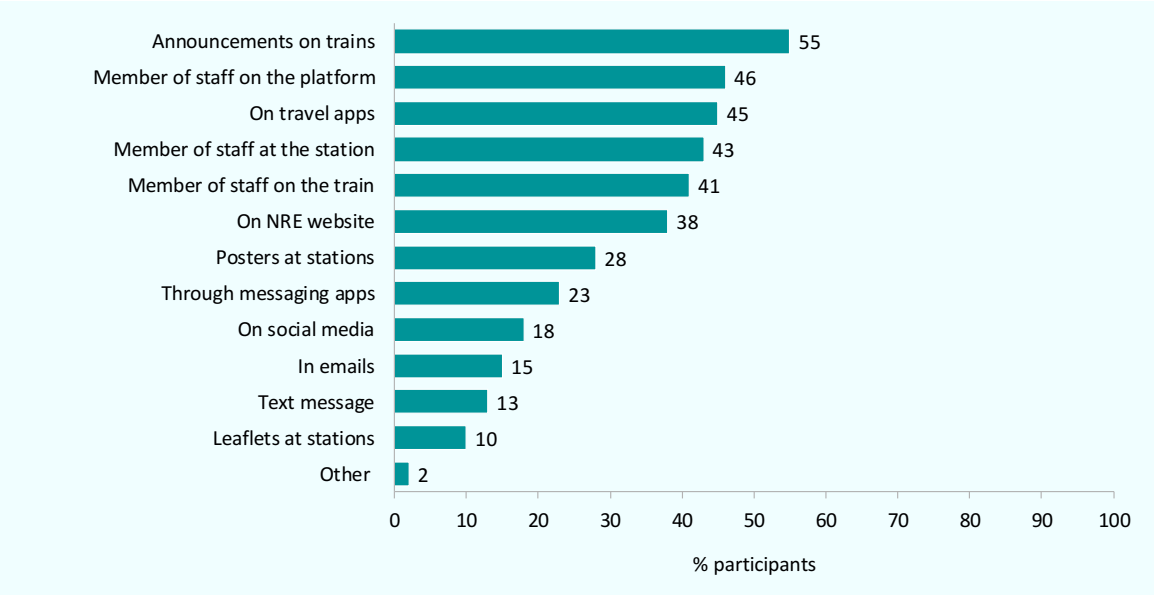


Base: 835 (those who would like to receive information about causes).

Weather related causes of disruptions were less important to quantitative survey participants than infrastructure issues, engineering works or external factors like vandalism. Sixty-two per cent of participants would want to know about knock-on delays.

Amongst the preferred method of delivery for information on these events are announcements on trains (55%), through a member of staff on the platform (46%) and on travel apps (45%).

Figure 43: Preferred delivery method of information



Base: 835 (those who would like to receive information about causes); more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Significantly more participants with a mental health and/or social disability would like announcements on trains (70%) or on social media (36%) than participants without any disability (55% and 16% respectively).

Summary

If they experience a severe disruption only 5% would abandon the journey. Almost half would stay at the station waiting for updates and be prepared to wait an average of 45 minutes. In cases like this, participants said they would want information about options such as connections or alternative routes, but also know about the cause of disruption.

For both normal and severe disruptions participants most want 'correct' (30% normal, 30% severe) and 'clear' (25% normal, 23% severe) information. As the disruption gets more severe, participants would like to see a conciliatory tone of voice and a more personal touch to the message.

61% prefer very detailed information on the disruption and 37% quite detailed information.

In case of a severe disruption, 51% viewed information about options such as connections or alternative routes as most important, followed by information about the cause of disruption (44%). An apology for the disruption is viewed as less important (4%).

80% said it was very important that the train company be honest even if that means saying they do not know what is happening.

80% wanted addition information on causes of disruption with signal and points failures (71%), engineering works (67%) and knock on delays (62%) the most sought after information.

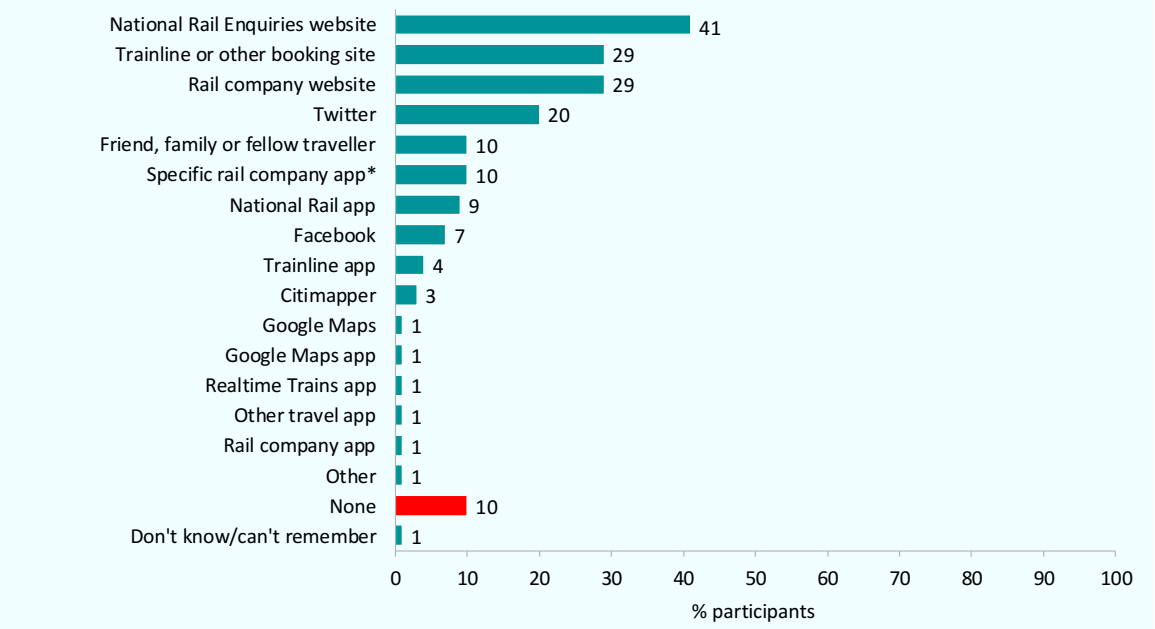
Infographic style information on causes of disruptions via a variety means such as posters at stations, on their apps and websites, leaflets at stations etc would be welcomed by passengers.

4.3 Delivery Mechanism of Information

This section focuses on how information is obtained during disruptions, looking particularly at PA announcements.

To stay up-to-date with journey information, the majority of survey participants used at least one app or website during their journey being disrupted – only 10% did not use any and 50% used more than one method. The most popular method to obtain information during disruption was the National Rail Enquiries website.

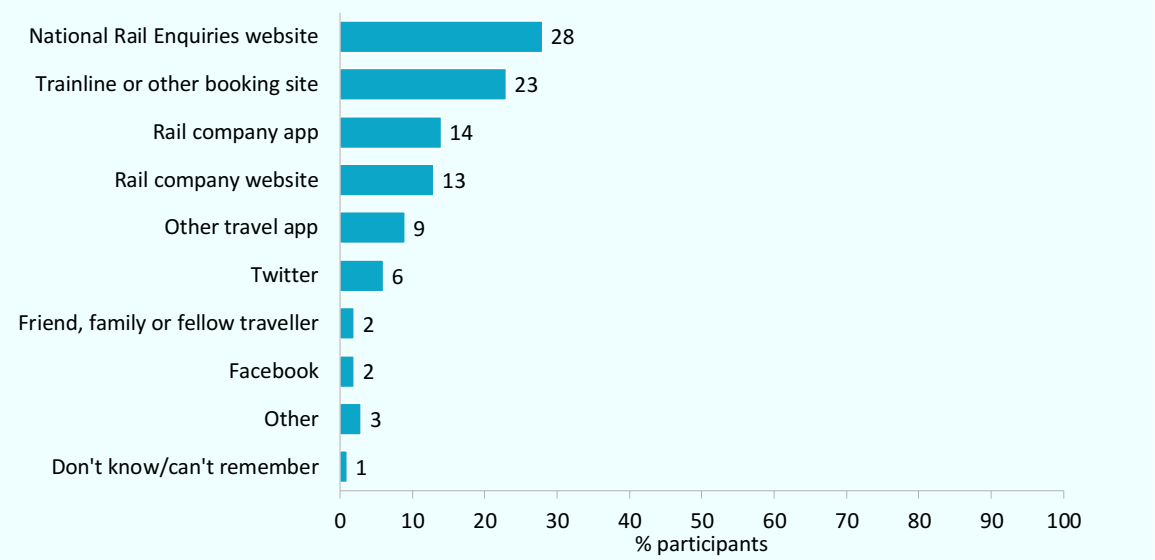
Figure 44: Apps and websites used during disruption



Base: 1,049; more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100. *This code combines apps such as Thameslink app, Southern app, SWR app etc.

The apps and websites used most when there is a disruption are shown in Figure 45. The two main sources were the National Rail Enquiries website (28%) and Trainline or other booking site (23%).

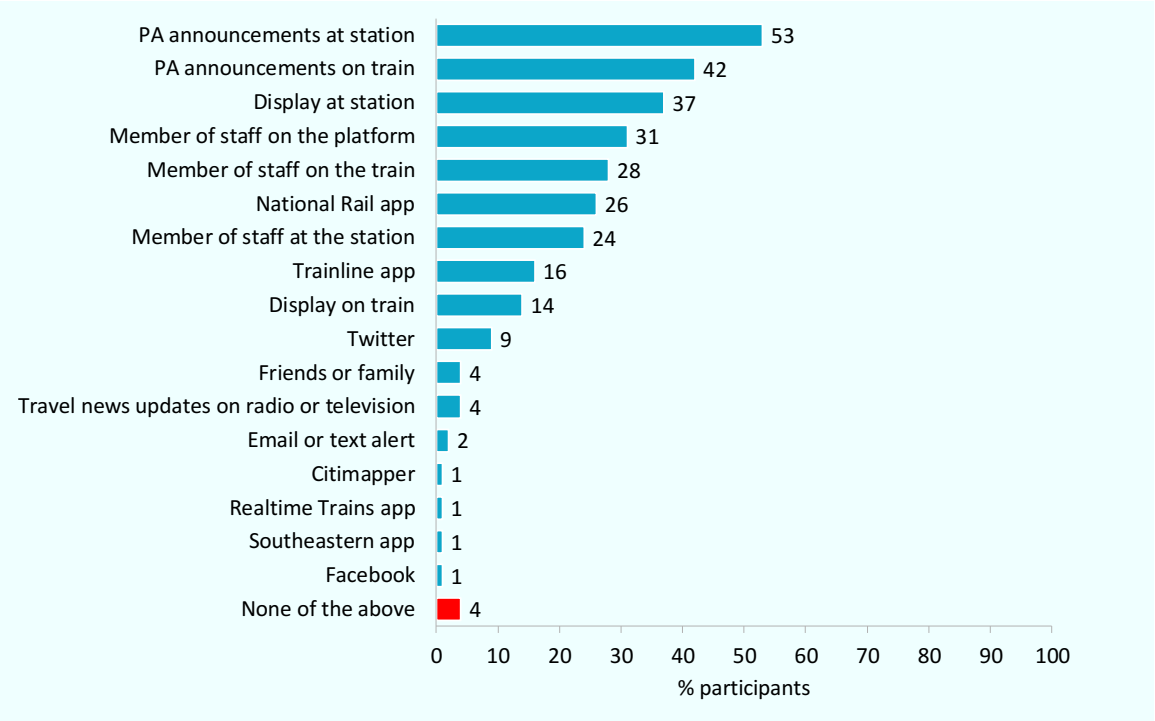
Figure 45: Apps and websites used most



Base: 931 who used one or more apps or websites

Considering that 50% of quantitative survey participants said they use more than one source of information to keep updated on disrupted journeys, it is not surprising that not all of the sources available are trusted. When asked which method they would trust most for information about disruptions, participants gave a large range of answers, with PA announcement at stations and on train most trusted followed by displays at stations. The top five most trusted sources of information are linked directly to rail staff, whether this is through PA announcements, displays or members of staff. Interestingly, apps and websites were not as trusted as the more traditional means.

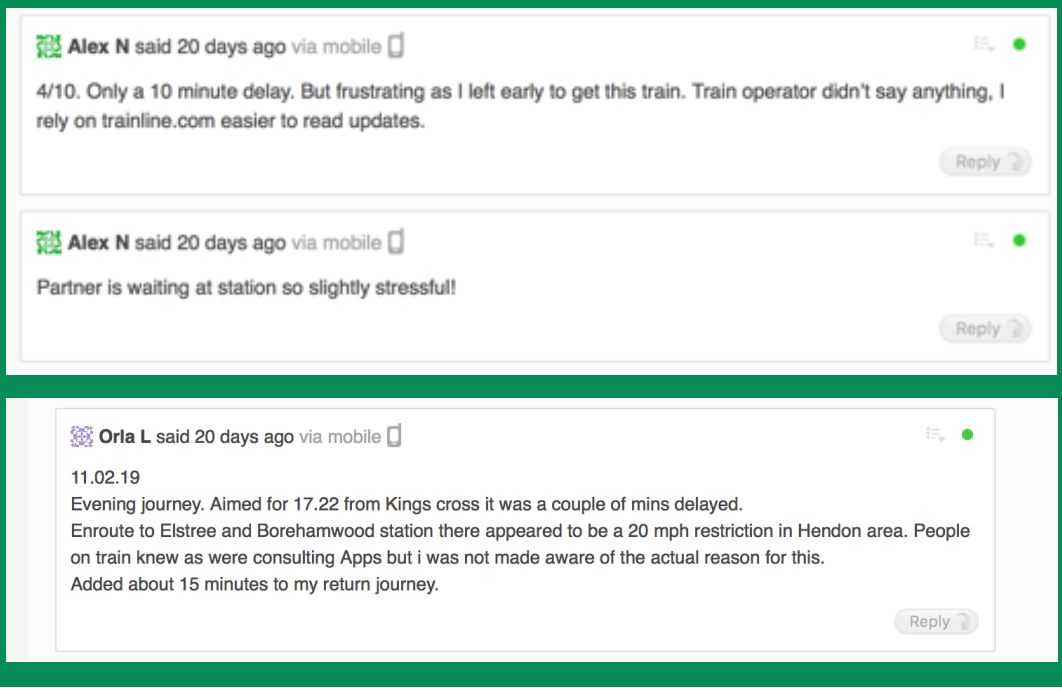
Figure 46: Trusted most for information about disruption



Base: 1,037. More than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Qualitative stage participants also showed a higher level of trust in third party websites and apps than in individual TOCs.

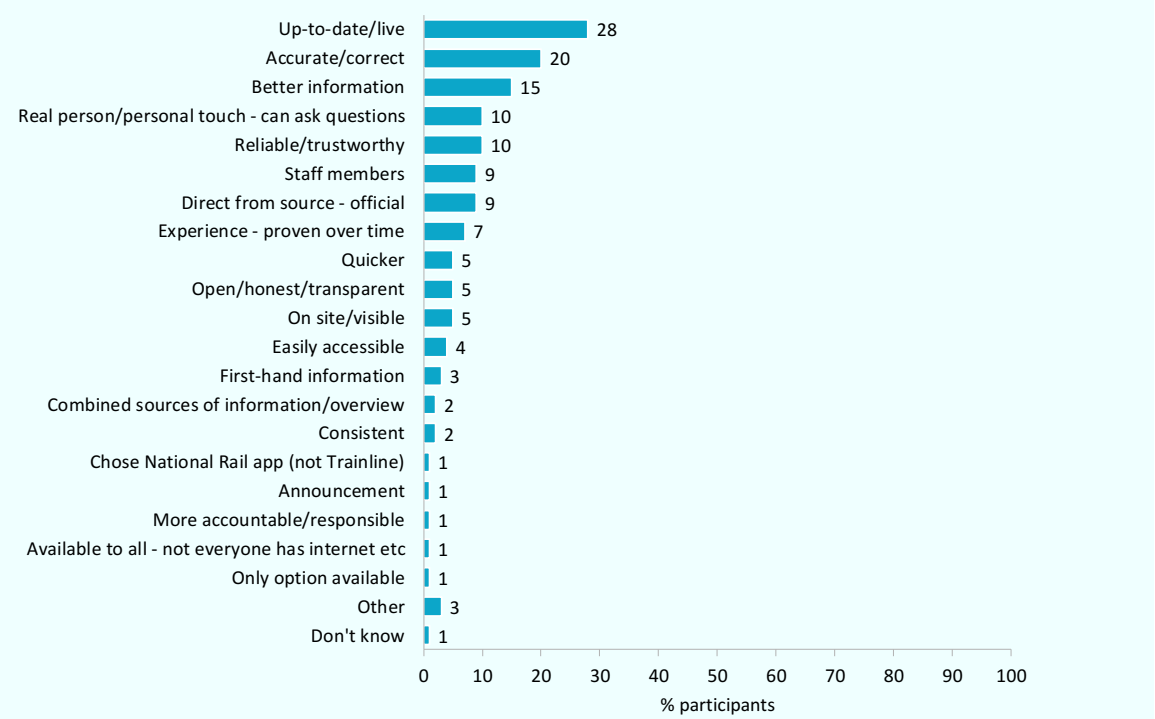
Case study 8: LiveMinds exercise



Quantitative survey participants were asked why they trusted the source they mentioned and the responses were 'hand-analysed' and coded to a code frame.

The main reasons are concerned with the information being up-to-date/live (28%) and accurate (20%).

Figure 47: Why trust source



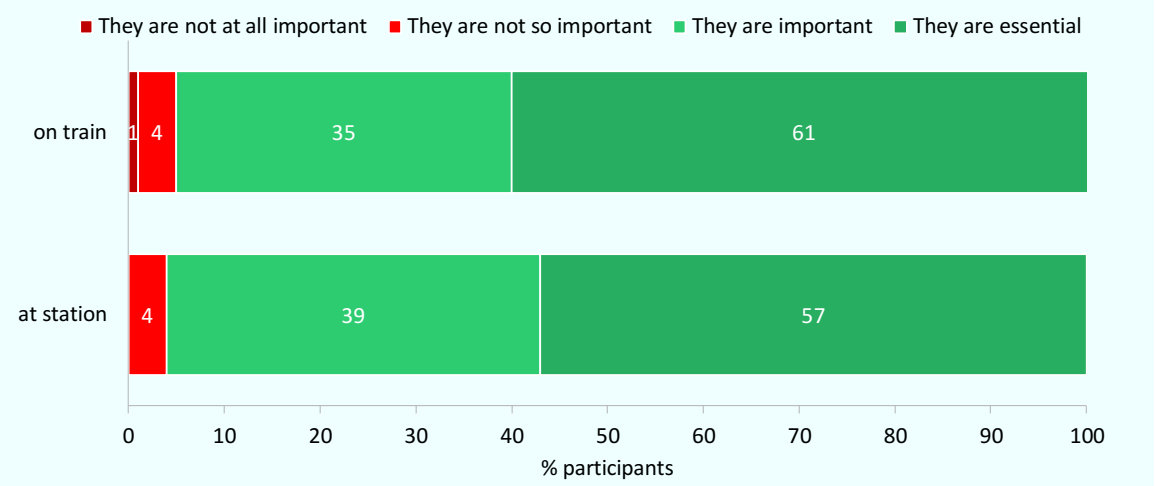
Base: 1,009

PA Announcements

Quantitative survey participants were asked how much they valued PA announcements when there are disruptions at the station and on the train.

PA announcements are not only trusted most, but the majority of participants also viewed them as essential. 57% felt that PA announcements at the station were essential and 61% felt that PA announcements on the train were essential.

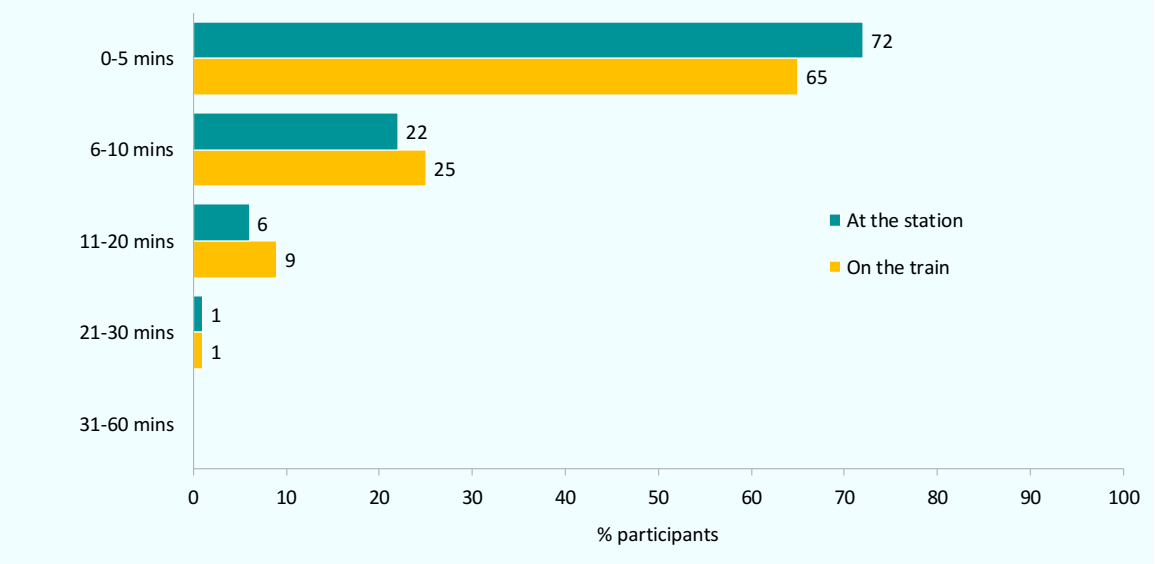
Figure 48: How valued PA announcements are at station and on the train



Base: 1,049

The preferred interval for PA announcements was probed. By a large margin, participants preferred PA announcements to be every 0-5 minutes at the station and on the train.

Figure 49: Preferred interval of PA announcements



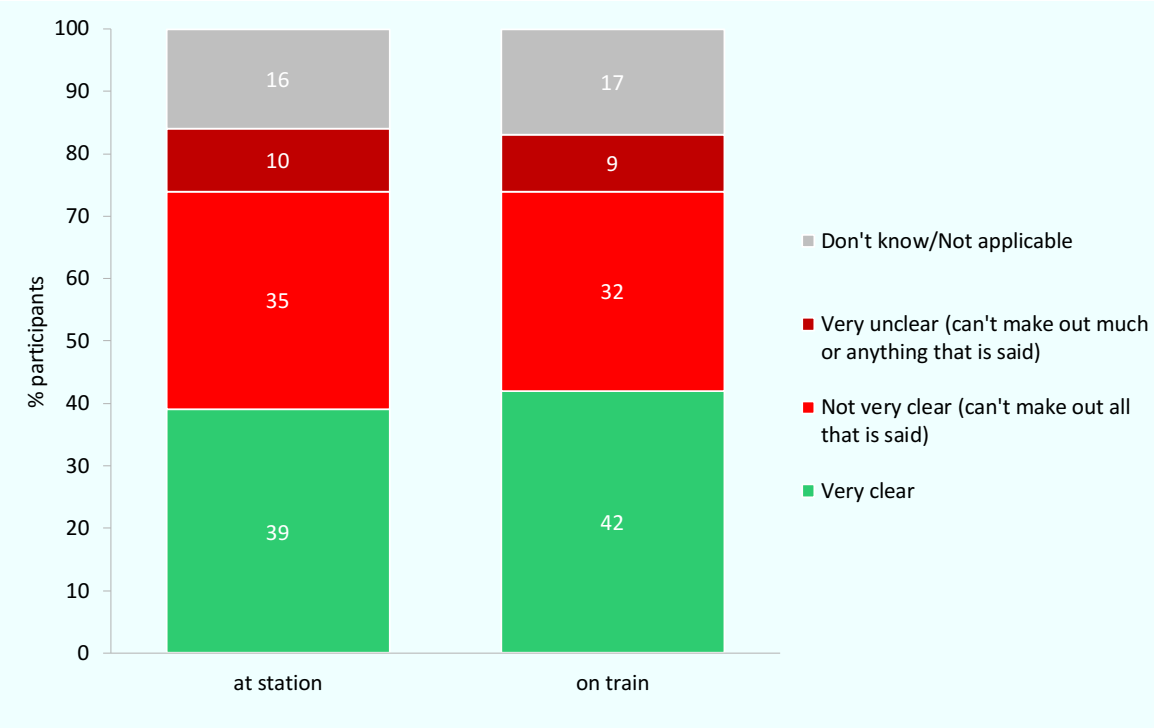
Base: 1,049

Commuters were more likely to be in favour of a 0-5 minute frequency to updates than business or leisure travellers. Participants who found the handling of the disruption by the TOC to be poor were significantly more in favour of 0-5 minute frequency that those who thought the handling was done well (76% vs 65% at stations, 70% vs 55% on trains).

The length of the most recent delay and the nature of the disruption do not have a significant impact on the preference, nor does when the disruption was noticed.

In addition to timeliness, it is important that PA announcements are easy to understand. Participants thought that the PA announcements during their most recent disrupted journey were slightly less clear at the station than those on trains, and overall, the majority thought they were not clear.

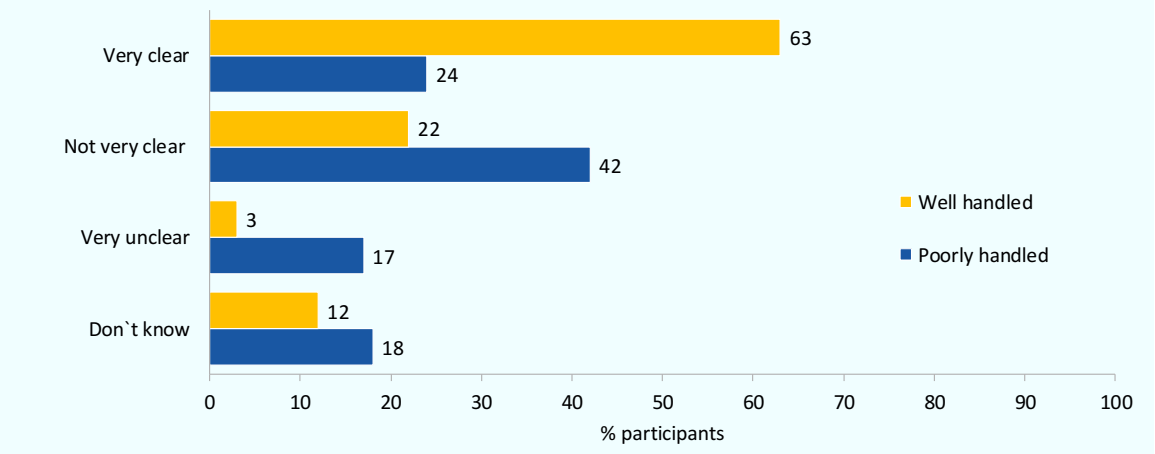
Figure 50: Clarity of announcements at stations and on trains



Base: 1,049

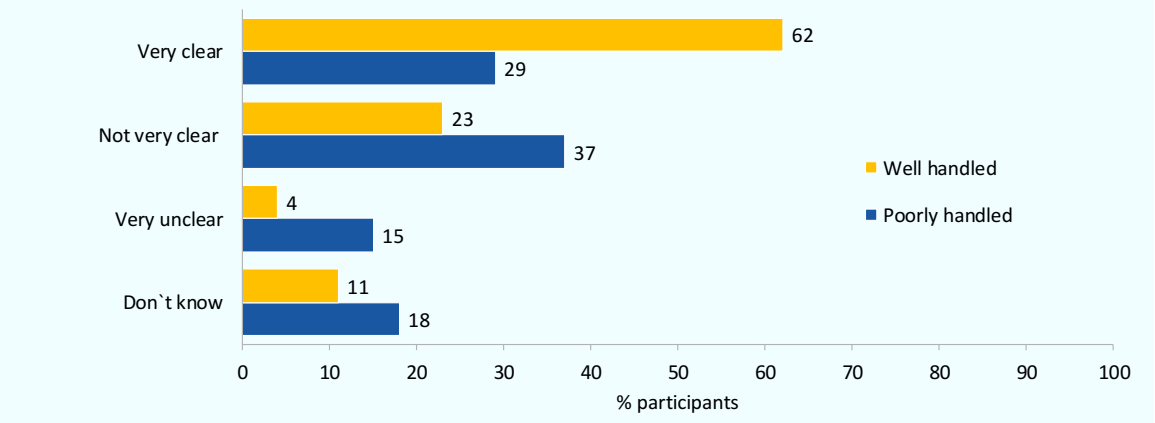
Participants who thought the TOC had handled the disruption well found the PA announcements both at the station and on the train significantly clearer than those who thought this was handled poorly.

Figure 51: Clarity of PA announcements at the station



Base: 234 (well), 397 (poorly)

Figure 52: Clarity of PA announcements on the train



Base: 234 (well), 397 (poorly)

Summary

When experiencing disruptions, most participants sought information through apps or websites and half of them used more than one source. 10% used none. The most popular method to obtain information during disruption was the National Rail Enquiries website.

There seems to be a general distrust in information sources, though overall, PA announcements were the most trusted sources of information and they were seen as essential by more than half the participants. The top five most trusted sources of information are linked directly to rail staff, whether this is through PA announcements, displays or members of staff. Interestingly, apps and websites were not as trusted as the more traditional means.

Key to information via PA announcements during disruptions is timeliness 0 5 minutes was the preferred interval for around three quarters at stations and two thirds on trains. The clarity of the announcements was poor with the majority assessing the PA announcements unclear at both stations and on trains.

PA announcements are used, trusted and seen as essential. Therefore, it is very important that they are frequent (every 0 5 minutes) and clear when there are disruptions.

5 The Impact of Disruption

5.1 Behavioural and Sentimental Responses to Disruption

Qualitative stage participants reported a number of stress factors when considering the impact disruptions have on them. Although there were a number of factors that impacted real-time stress levels, delivery of information was the key driver of stress levels. Where information was provided, stress levels went down, whereas a lack of information resulted in escalated stress levels.

Case study 9: LiveMinds exercise

"I travelled from Smethwick Galton Bridge to Birmingham Snow Hill and the train was due at 17.22. There was an announcement that this train would be 3 minutes late. Looking at the display information sign, I could see that it then became 4 minutes, then 5 minutes and each time the clock would go forward as to expecting time. it eventually came 7 minutes late. My anxiety increased with each minute."

Birmingham, Leisure

Factors that impacted stress levels negatively were:

- No information
- Ever increasing delays
- Finding out about delay on the train
- Length of delay
- Frequency of delays
- Impact on personal/work life.

Factors that helped bring stress levels down were:

- Information to plan alternative route
- Predictive information
- Proactive information e.g. finding out at home/before interchange.

There was an overarching preference for Train Operating Companies to manage expectations with accurate timetables even if the journey time is slower. For customers,

managed expectations meant manageable stress levels. Knowing that their train would arrive at the timetabled time was important for onward planning and for prompt arrival at work. Ongoing, predictable delays for commuters elevated frustrations and stress levels began to escalate after every minute that the train is held. This then led to:

- A general sense of mismanagement
- Erosion of confidence in the network
- Modal shift to road.

They also reported other factors impacting dissatisfaction with rail travel, such as cleanliness and availability of toilets, overall costs, seat availability and safety, but poor resolution of disruptions has a significantly negative influence on stress levels.

On the emotional side, participants reported of:

- In the moment anxiety of not knowing where to go/who to ask
- Stress of homelife e.g. more pressure on childcare
- Lower confidence from missing out on meetings
- Unprofessional, embarrassing – negative impact on self-worth
- Fear when left at stations, late and in the dark.

Practical implications included:

- Missed connecting trains
- Missed meetings
- Missed parties
- Missed life changing appointments
- No-one to pick up children.

Financial impact was felt in the form of:

- Loss of earnings (commuters/business travellers)
- Inability to work on train (business)
- Nursery fees
- Taxi fares
- Cost of car park
- Cost of drinks/breakfast.

"I was terrified and will never use that train again."

St Albans, Leisure

"I had to make up the time, so it made me tired all the time."

London, Commuter

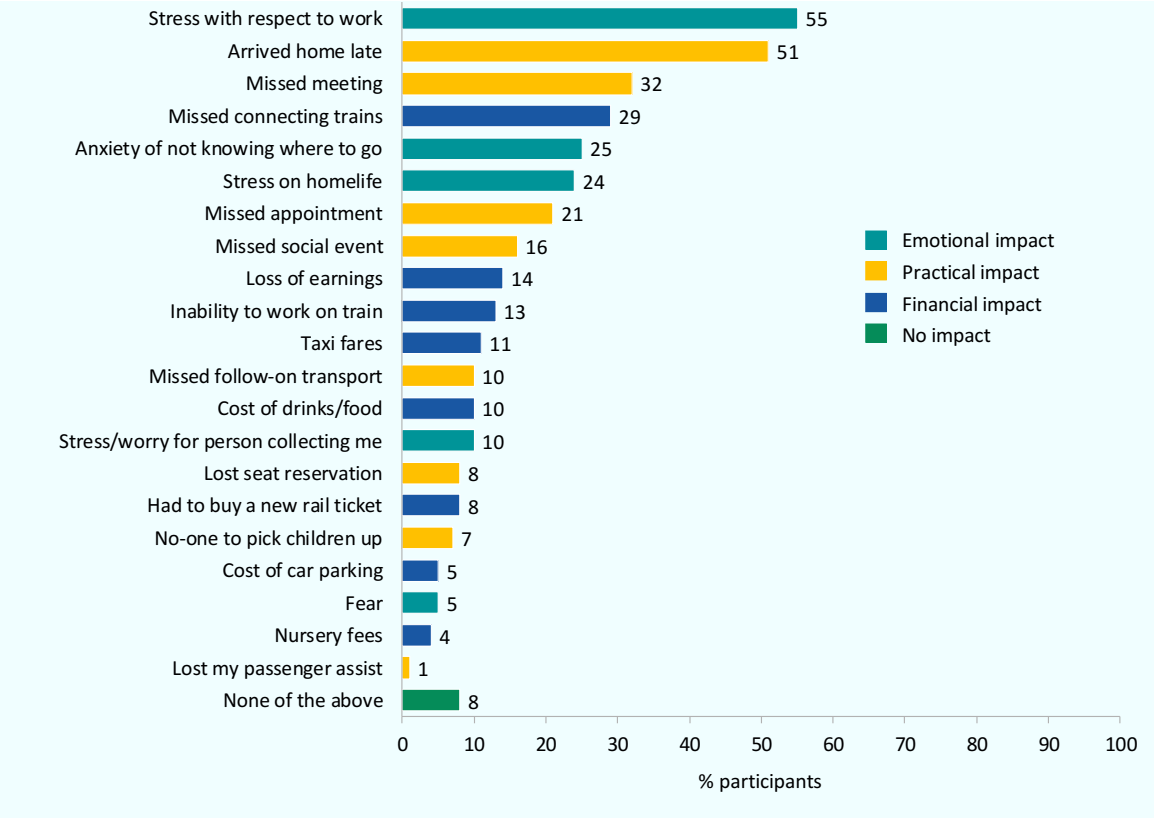
"No one seemed to know what they are doing and that's what happens each time."

Birmingham, Commuter

Quantitative survey participants were asked about the emotional, financial and practical impacts the disruption had caused them.

A third of the impacts cited were emotional, 48% were practical and 18% were financial. On average, 3.8 impacts were mentioned by each participant. The main impacts were stress with respect to work, arriving home late and missed meetings.

Figure 53: Impact of disruption

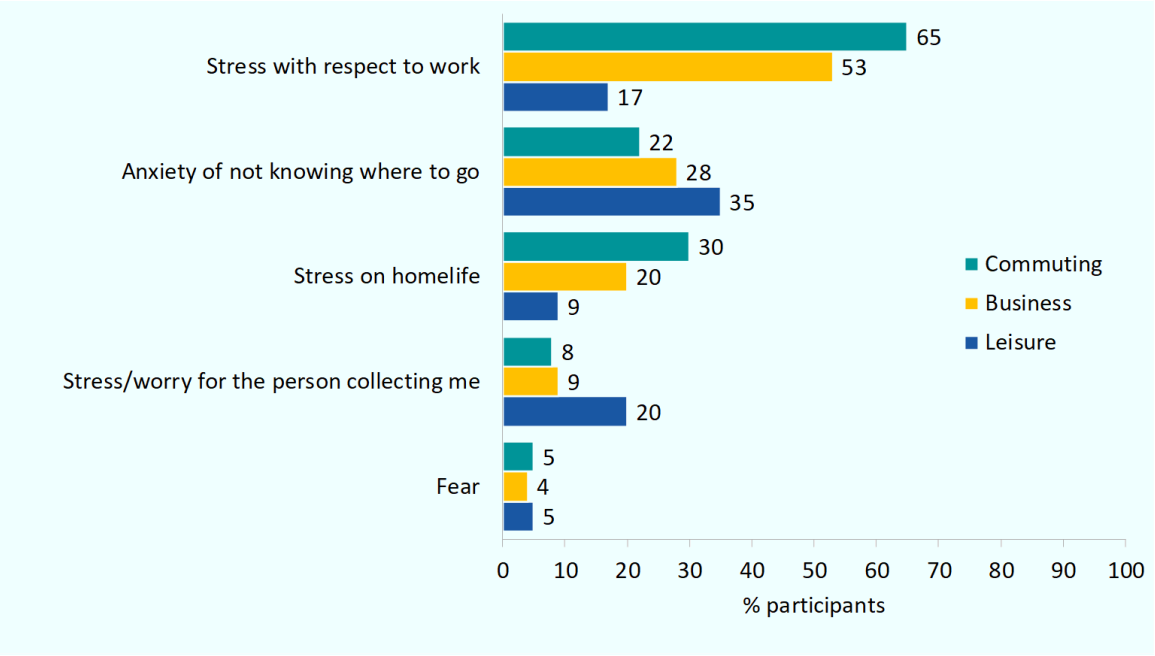


Base: 1,049; more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Quantitative survey participants with a disability experienced more emotional impacts of the disruptions than those without. Particularly those with mental health issues or a social disability reported on this.

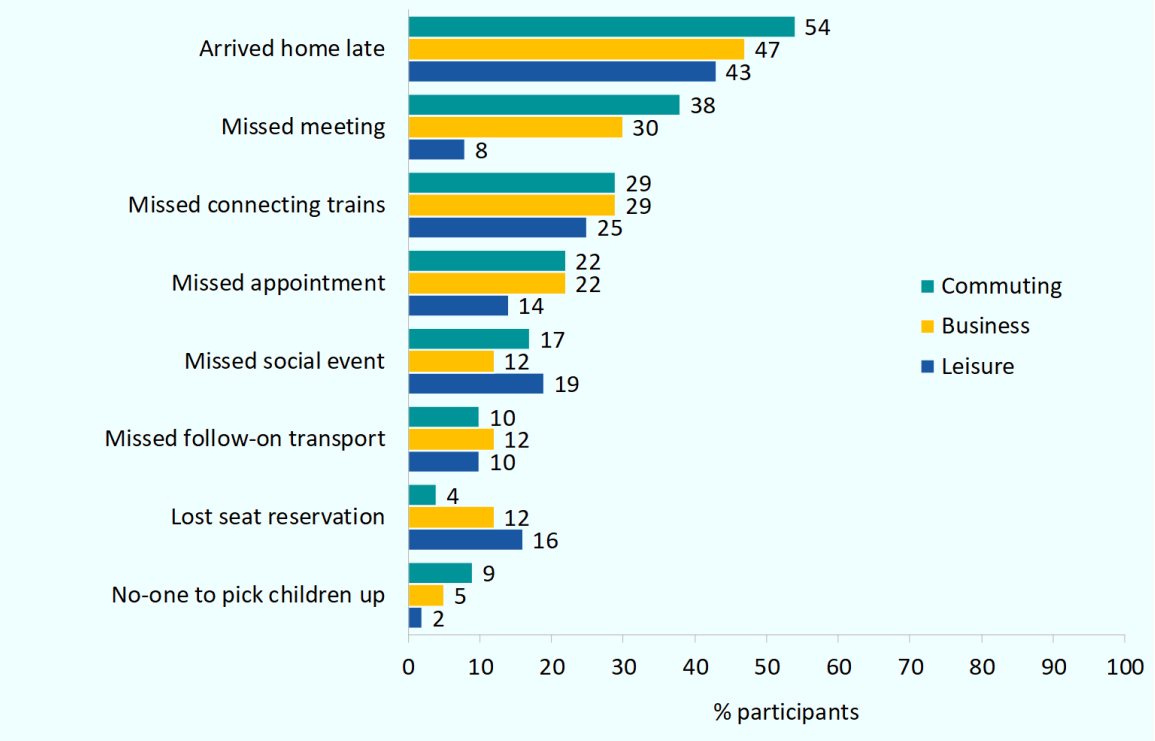
In addition, younger age groups were more effected emotionally than older age groups. More than six out of ten of 16 to 35-year olds were more stressed with respect to work and more than a third of them experienced anxiety of not knowing where to go or who to ask.

Figure 54: Emotional impacts by purpose



Base: 388 (16-35), 674 (commuting), 205 (business), 138 (leisure); more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Figure 55: Practical impacts by purpose



Base: 388 (16-35), 674 (commuting), 205 (business), 138 (leisure); more than one answer could be given, so percentages add up to more than 100.

Summary

Participants were asked about the emotional, financial and practical impacts the disruption had caused them.

33% cited emotional impacts, 48% practical impacts and 18% financial impacts. On average, 3.8 impacts were mentioned by each participant. The main impacts were stress with respect to work (55%), arriving home late (51%) and missed meetings (32%).

5.2 Compensation and Redress

Qualitative stage participants were asked about their attitudes to compensation for tickets. Although they welcomed Delay Repay, they felt that currently this was not efficient or effective enough. They welcomed:

- TOCs do mention it or give out forms
- Gets you part of your money back
- Once it's set up, it's relatively easy
- Additional compensation (outside of Delay Repay) for ongoing timetable changes.

However, they thought the service needs improving because:

- It puts the onus on the customer
- The process feels cumbersome and daunting
- Lack of consistency across TOCs
- Suspect the TOC will quibble and doubts that any money will actually be repaid
- It's based on individual journey delays vs. whole trips e.g. missed connections.

"I got over £400 back and that was good, but my season ticket is £4,500k and it doesn't really account for the wider impact on my life."

St Albans, Depth Interview

"So, I missed my connection at Watford Junction to Northampton because of a significant delay from Euston but I only could claim the first bit."

St Albans, Business

There was an overwhelming preference for a compensation ethos that makes customers feel valued regardless of journey purpose. The minimum expected compensation would be money back for the ticket cost.

Qualitative stage participants would begin to value the compensation if they received something unexpected and/or if the compensation would take into account spend during the delay. It was also felt that automatic refunds should be possible where travellers had purchased an e-ticket or a mobile ticket and where the TOC already had the relevant bank details to refund the costs. Participants were looking for automatic compensation that demonstrates that the customer is valued, and which might include multiple, minimal journey disruptions, e.g. five delayed journeys in one month.

"I just have to think about Amazon and the way that they give you your money back without even asking for the product."

St Albans, Commuter

"They know you don't really have an alternative, so it feels like they feel that they don't have to do this."

London, Commuter

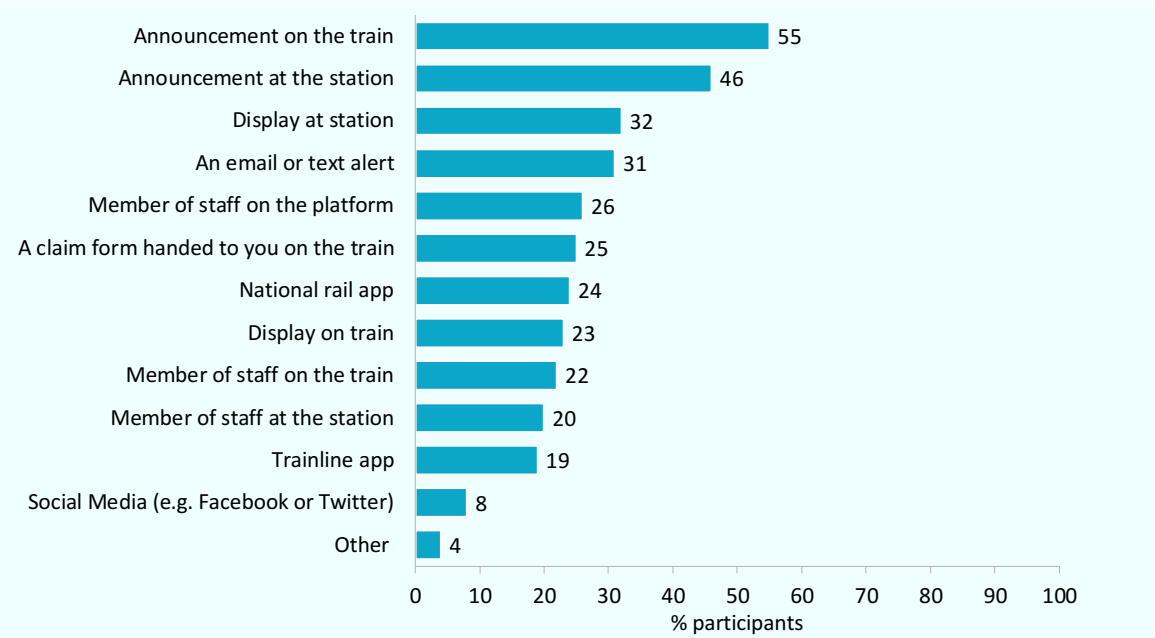
Quantitative survey participants were asked whether if the disruption to the rail service they experienced was long enough to warrant compensation, which of the following means would they prefer to find out about it.

- Announcement at the station
- Announcement on the train
- Display at station
- Display on train
- Member of staff on the platform
- Member of staff at the station
- Member of staff on the train
- National rail app
- Trainline app
- An email or text alert
- Social Media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter)
- A claim form handed to you on the train.

Announcements on the train (55%) and at the station (46%) were the two preferred means.

On average 3.4 sources were mentioned by each participant.

Figure 56: If the disruption to the rail service experienced was long enough to warrant compensation, which of the following means would they prefer to find out about it



Base: 1,049

Summary

If the disruption to the rail service was long enough to warrant compensation the preferred means of hearing about it were announcements on the train (55%), announcements at the station (46%), display at the station (32%) and an email or text alert (31%).

5.3 Best in Class

Qualitative stage participants were also asked about 'Best in Class' examples for customer service to help TOCs to understand what could be done to improve this. Key to thinking of brands as 'Best in Class' was consistency in their service recovery strategies. Whilst some airline companies were mentioned here, no rail company was mentioned amongst 'Best in Class' examples. The list of 'Best in Class' companies included telecoms, leisure, technology and rail companies, such as Amazon, Apple, British Airways, EE, John Lewis, M&S, Premier Inn and Sonos.[14] Their commonalities were that they were easy to speak to, they took responsibility, resolved issues speedily, showed flexibility, proactive communication, had a human touch, refunded/compensated immediately and offered surprise vouchers.

The blueprint of good service for TOCs as seen by qualitative stage participants is demonstrated in Figure 57 below.

[14] Other companies mentioned here included: BT, Delta Airlines, JD Wetherspoons, Sky and TGI Fridays.

Figure 57: Best in Class Blueprint

Information	Staff	Compensation	Extras
■ Give out updates – verbal, push notifications, texts ■ Easy processes to find out information ■ Callback services/LiveChat ■ Monitor social media channels ■ Have people to talk to 'on the ground' ■ Provide reasons and admit they are at fault	■ Are one step ahead ■ Take responsibility ■ Give you a named person for follow ups ■ Escalate to management ■ Empowered to make decisions ■ No blame culture/no quibbles	■ Automatic refund ■ QR codes ■ Provide choices e.g. refund or money off or voucher	■ Cheque for £x ■ Send a sorry notice ■ Flowers/chocolates/cocktails ■ Offer to pay for taxis ■ Offer refreshment ■ Offer entertainment ■ Offer alternatives e.g taxis ■ Offer free ticket for other journeys
Treating with respect	**Human face to a problem**	**Being fair**	**Demonstrating they are valued**

The overarching implications for TOCs then come in three levels: measures that are expected to be implemented, if these are not already in place, followed by a level of measures that would increase customers' opinion of the TOCs and a third level which would really improve how customers see TOCs in the time of delay.

Measures that are expected to be implemented:

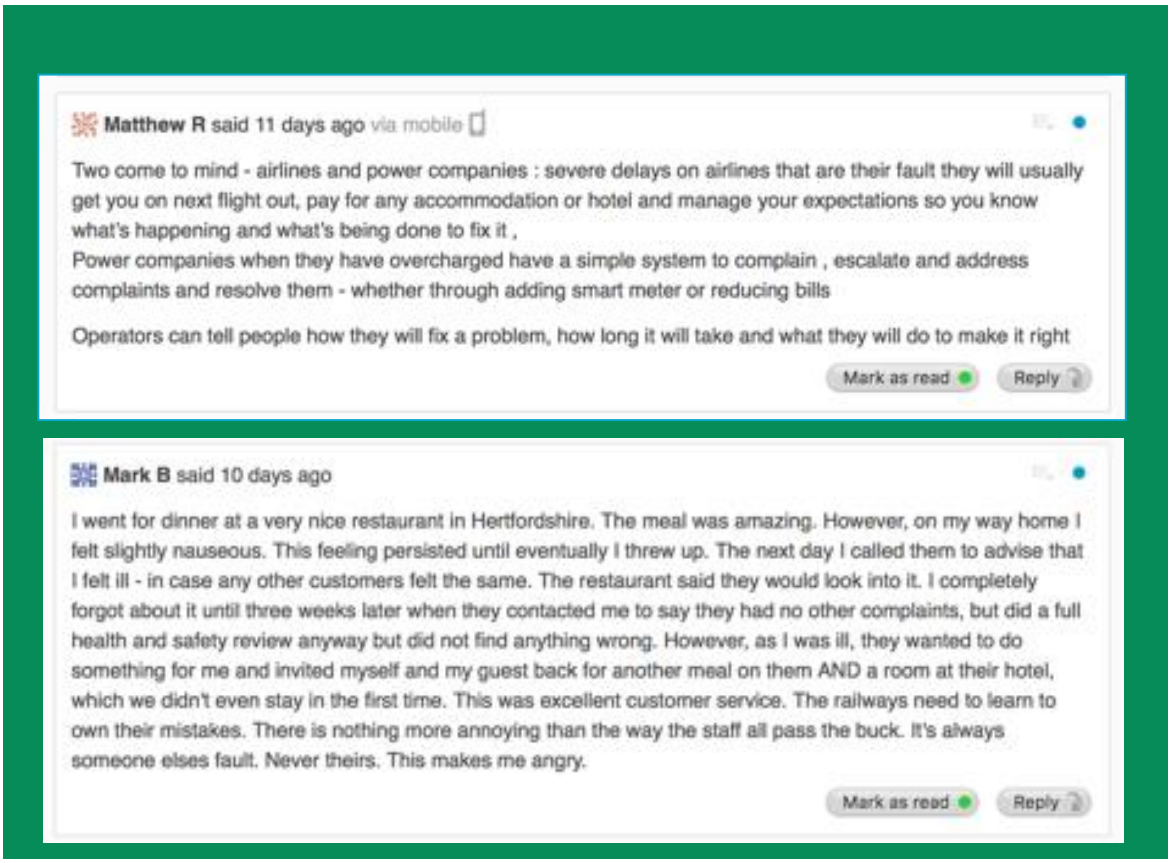
- Human face – approachable, professional, flexible
- Be polite, take responsibility and apologise
- Do not make use internal operational issues as justification e.g. staffing
- No excuses.

Measures that would increase customers' opinion of the TOCs:

- Ability to check disruption status through real time platform
- Provide realistic timing updates
- Make us comfortable
- Prompt payment of compensation
- Provide monetary compensation where appropriate
- Make it easy to report delays
- Provide ongoing text messages with status updates.

Best in Class:

- Do something unexpected e.g. vouchers for a free train ride, free drinks
- Provide live chat messaging feed
- Proactive communication
- Automatic compensation.


Matthew R said 11 days ago via mobile
Two come to mind - airlines and power companies : severe delays on airlines that are their fault they will usually get you on next flight out, pay for any accommodation or hotel and manage your expectations so you know what's happening and what's being done to fix it ,
Power companies when they have overcharged have a simple system to complain , escalate and address complaints and resolve them - whether through adding smart meter or reducing bills
Operators can tell people how they will fix a problem, how long it will take and what they will do to make it right
Mark as read
Reply
Mark B said 10 days ago
I went for dinner at a very nice restaurant in Hertfordshire. The meal was amazing. However, on my way home I felt slightly nauseous. This feeling persisted until eventually I threw up. The next day I called them to advise that I felt ill - in case any other customers felt the same. The restaurant said they would look into it. I completely forgot about it until three weeks later when they contacted me to say they had no other complaints, but did a full health and safety review anyway but did not find anything wrong. However, as I was ill, they wanted to do something for me and invited myself and my guest back for another meal on them AND a room at their hotel, which we didn't even stay in the first time. This was excellent customer service. The railways need to learn to own their mistakes. There is nothing more annoying than the way the staff all pass the buck. It's always someone elses fault. Never theirs. This makes me angry.
Mark as read
Reply

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Introduction

Department for Transport

Accent

Thank you very much for agreeing to complete this on-line survey which is being conducted by Accent on behalf of the Department for Transport. The closing date for completion of this survey is 16 July 2019.

Anyone completing the questionnaire will be eligible for a £5 voucher.

We will just ask you a couple of questions to check that you are eligible to take part in this research.

Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society. If you would like to confirm Accent's credentials type Accent in the search box at: https://www.mrs.org.uk/researchbuyersguide.

IF MOBILE DEVICE SHOW: This survey is best undertaken on a tablet or a PC. If you do use a smartphone you can switch between desktop mode and mobile mode at any time by clicking the button at the bottom of the screen.

For the purposes of administering the questionnaire and for analysis, we may collect demographic information. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to and if you do you can withdraw your consent for us to process this information at any time. Any personal data collected over the course of this survey will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at www.accent-mr.com/privacy/.

Do you agree to proceeding with the survey on this basis?

Yes
No THANK AND CLOSE

PLEASE ENTER THE UNIQUE CODE THAT IS PRINTED ON THE POSTCARD

ALLOW FOR SIX FIGURE ALPHA NUMERIC CODE

Q1. This questionnaire is about disruptions to your rail service and the information provided to you when that happens. For the purposes of this research rail disruptions include delays (including repeated shorter delays), cancelled trains, overcrowding meaning you couldn't board the train, and unplanned station closures.

In the last month have you experienced any of the following disruptions to your rail journeys: TICK ALL THAT APPLY

continued short delays of up to 5 minutes to regular journeys

a disruption of 5-19 minutes
a disruption of 20 minutes-60 minutes
a disruption of over 60 minutes
none of the above **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q2. **IF Q1 HAS MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE ASK:** Which was the most recent?

IF Q1_1=1 SHOW: continued short delays of up to 5 minutes to regular journeys
IF Q1_2=1 SHOW: a disruption of 5-19 minutes
IF Q1_3=1 SHOW: a disruption of 20 minutes-60 minutes
IF Q1_4=1 SHOW: a disruption of over 60 minutes

Q3. When did you last experience #Q2/Q1 IF ONLY ONE RESPONSE AT Q1#?

Today
Yesterday
2-6 days ago
1-2 weeks ago
3-4 weeks ago
More than a month ago **THANK AND CLOSE**

Main Questionnaire

Thank you, you are in scope for the survey. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Q4. Any data collected over the course of this interview that could be used to identify you, such as your name, address, or other contact details, will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so).Our privacy statement is available at www.accent-mr.com/privacy/.

Do you agree to proceeding with the interview on this basis?

Yes
No **THANK AND CLOSE**

For convenience you can stop and return to complete the questionnaire as many times as you wish, although once submitted you will not be able to enter again.

Q5. Please describe your most recent disrupted rail journey below:

Q6. What was the boarding station?	LIST OF STATIONS
Q7. What was the destination station?	LIST OF STATIONS
Q8. What was the **main** purpose of the train journey?	Commuting (including commuting for education) Business (including personal business such as job interviews, dentist appointment etc) Leisure (including shopping, visiting friends or relatives etc) Other (please type in)
Q9. Which train company operated the train service? (If you travelled with more than one train company then you should select the company you travelled on for longest).	Transport for Wales Caledonian Sleeper c2c Chiltern Railways CrossCountry East Midlands Trains Gatwick Express Grand Central

	Great Northern Great Western Railway Greater Anglia Heathrow Express Hull Trains London Northeastern Railway (LNER) London Northwestern Railway London Overground Merseyrail Northern ScotRail Southeastern Southern South Western Railway Stansted Express TfL Rail (excluding underground) Thameslink TransPennine Express Virgin Trains West Coast West Midlands Railway Don't know Other (please type in)

Q10. When did you first find out about the disruption?

Before I reached the station
When I arrived at the boarding station
When I was on the train
At an interchange station
Other (please type in)

Q11. Where were you delayed? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

IF Q10=4 DON'T SHOW: At the boarding station
On the train
At an interchange station
At another station along the route/journey
Other (please type in)

Q12. How long was the delay?

…….. minutes

Q13. And how long was the rail journey scheduled to take?

…….. minutes

Q14. What was the nature of the disruption?

Problem with the train (e.g. faulty train, waiting for a platform, no driver)
Infrastructure (e.g. signalling problem, broken rail, overhead wire problems, unplanned station closure)
Engineering works (e.g. emergency engineering works, planned engineering work over running)
External factors (e.g. person on the line, vandalism, passenger taken ill, obstruction on the line)
Weather/seasonal factors (e.g. flooding, leaves, ice)
Service issues (eg Train congestion, last minute platform changes, overcrowding due to late/cancelled trains)
No reason given
Other (Please type in)
Don't know/can't remember

Q15. Was the train cancelled?

Yes
No

Q16. IF Q11_1=1 (DELAY AT BOARDING STATION) ASK: Where did you wait at the station during the delay?

At the platform
On the concourse
In a waiting room
In a café
On the train
At a shelter
Other (please type in)

Q17. Was this a comfortable place to wait?

Yes
No

Q18. IF Q16_3<>1 AND IF Q16_4<>1 (DIDN'T WAIT IN WAITING ROOM OR CAFÉ) ASK: Was there a waiting room or café you could have waited in?

Yes
No

Q19. IF Q11_3=1 (DELAY AT INTERCHANGE STATION) ASK: Where did you wait at the station during the delay?

At the platform
On the concourse
In a waiting room
In a café
At a shelter
Other (please type in)

Q20. Was it a comfortable place to wait?

Yes
No

Q21. IF Q19_3<>1 AND IF Q19_4<>1 (DIDN'T WAIT IN WAITING ROOM OR CAFÉ) ASK: Was there a waiting room or café you could have waited in?

Yes
No
Don't know

Q22. IF Q15=2 ASK: Thinking about the most recent rail disruption you experienced, how did you feel when you first found out there was a disruption? TICK ALL THAT APPLY
IF Q15=1 ASK: Thinking about the most recent rail disruption you experienced, how did you feel when you first found out there was a cancellation? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

RANDOMISE ORDER
Uncertain
Frustrated
Anxious
Angry
Scared
Stressed

Resigned
Calm
In control
Content
Determined
Tired
Other (please type in)

Past and current experiences of messaging during disruption

Q23. Again, thinking about the most recent rail disruption you experienced, how do you rate how the rail company handled the disruption?

Very well
Well
Neither
Poorly
Very poorly
Don't know/No opinion

Q24. Overall, how would you rate the information provided about that disruption?

Very good
Good
Neither
Poor
Very poor
Don't know/No opinion

Q25. How would you describe the information provided about that disruption? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

RANDOMISE ORDER
Useful
Helpful
Informative
Adequate
Clear
Timely
Inadequate
Inaccurate
Insufficient
Too infrequent
Unclear
No information given GO TO Q27
Other (please type in)

Q26. How would you describe the tone of the information provided about that disruption? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

RANDOMISE ORDER
Apologetic
Rude
Indifferent
Lacked care
Lacked respect
Cared about my needs
Acknowledged the inconvenience
Easy to understand
Informative

No information received
Other (please type in)

Q27. And thinking more generally about when there are disruptions to your rail service, how do you rate the information you received about the disruption?

Very good
Good
Neither
Poor
Very poor
Don't know/No opinion

Q28. IF Q27=1 OR 2 ASK: What information was good?
IF Q27=4 OR 5 ASK: What information was bad?

Q29. In the last six months have you experienced any rail disruptions when things were handled particularly badly?

Yes PLEASE DESCRIBE
No

Q30. In the last six months have you experienced any rail disruptions where a train company excelled in the way they handled the disruption (including the information they gave you)

Yes PLEASE DESCRIBE
No

Q31. Thinking about when you experience disruptions on other forms of transport such as air, the Underground or coach, do you have any examples where the disruption was handled particularly well (including the information you received during this time)?

Yes, PLEASESTATE THE FORM OF TRANSPORT ANDDESCRIBE IN WHAT WAY IT WAS GOOD
No

Timeliness of delivery

The next set of questions are about when and where the information about the rail disruption was delivered.

Q32. And where did you first receive information about the disruption?

PA announcements at station
PA announcements on train
Display at station
Display on train
Member of staff on the platform
Member of staff at the station
Member of staff on the train
National Rail app
Trainline app
Rail company app (please specify)
Other travel app (please specify)
Facebook
Twitter
Family, friend or fellow traveller
Other (please type in)

Don’t know

Q33. From which, if any, of the following sources do you remember receiving information about the disruption during your disrupted journey? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

PA announcements at station
PA announcements on train
Display at station
Display on train
Member of staff on the platform
Member of staff at the station
Member of staff on the train
National Rail app
Trainline app
Rail company app (please specify)
Other travel app (please specify)
Facebook
Twitter
Family, friend or fellow traveller
Other (please type in)
No information received GO TO Q35
Don’t know GO TO Q35

Q34. And how did you feel when you first received the information? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

RANDOMISE ORDER
Uncertain
Frustrated
Anxious
Angry
Scared
Stressed
Resigned
Reassured
Calm
In control
Informed
Pleased
Relieved
Other (please type in)

Q35. When you travel by rail do you actively listen for any announcements at the boarding station?

Yes, always
Only if I think there may be a delay or disruption
No
My station doesn’t have a PA system
Other (please type in)

Q36. And do you actively listen for announcements on the train?

Yes, always
Yes, only when I can hear them
Only if I think there may be a delay or disruption
No
Other (please type in)

Q37. If you are on a train that seems to be running slower than it should be or stops between stations, how quickly do you want to receive information about the delay?

Type in: …….. minutes

Q38. When there is a disruption to your rail service how often would you like announcements to be made?

Type in: Every …..minutes

Q39. If announcements were made **more** often than every [Q38 answer] would that annoy you?

Very much
A little
No

Q40. Sometimes there are no announcements made because the train company doesn't have enough information. In such situations would you prefer:

a) an announcement made with very little or no information
b) an announcement made once there is some information

Q41.

Tone and content

This section is about the tone and content of messages or information delivered when there are disruptions to your rail service.

Q42. Overall, when information is provided about disruptions which of the following styles would you prefer? **PLEASE PICK THE TOP THREE**

RANDOMISE ORDER
Clear = easy to hear and to understand
Correct = factual and up to date
Concise = short and regular
Confident = genuine and honest
Conciliatory = apologetic and empathetic
Consistent = across different channels and/or providers
Personal = tailored to your circumstances
Other (please type in)

Q43. Would your preference change if the disruption was particularly severe? Imagine that you were taking a rail journey for Q8 [purpose] which was expected to last 1 hour. However, due to disruption your journey was now going to take 1 hour 45 minutes and that you had to change trains in order to reach your destination. In that situation which of the following styles would you prefer? **PLEASE PICK THE TOP THREE**

RANDOMISE ORDER
Clear = easy to hear and to understand
Correct = factual and up to date
Concise = short and regular
Confident = genuine and honest
Conciliatory = apologetic and empathetic
Consistent = across different channels and/or providers
Personal = tailored to your circumstances

Other (please type in)

Q44. Still imagine that you are making that journey and you arrived at the station to find out about the disruption. What do you think you would do?

Stay at the station waiting for updates
Cancel the trip and go home
Make the journey using another train
Make the journey using another mode of travel
Make the journey using an alternative route
Leave the station and return later
Other (please type in)
Don't know

Q45. IF Q44=1 ASK: What is the longest you would be prepared to wait for this type of journey?

Enter minutes:

Q46. If the disruption was particularly severe, which of the following would you like staff to do? PLEASE PICK THE TOP THREE

Take responsibility
Give you a named person for follow up
Escalate to management
Find me an alternative mode of transport to complete my journey
Find me an alternative route to complete my journey
Provide information on compensation
Other (please type in)

Q47. What level of detail about the cause of the disruption would you prefer:

Very detailed, for example, this train is running 25 minutes late because of damage to the overhead electric wires between Birmingham New Street and Longbridge caused by a falling tree.
Quite detailed, for example, this train is running 25 minutes late because of damage to the overhead electric wires between Birmingham New Street and Longbridge
Not detailed, for example, this train is running 25 minutes late
Don't know

Q48. Again, if the disruption was particularly severe, which of the following would be most important to you?

Information about the cause of disruption (e.g. the cause and how long it will last)
An apology for the disruption
Information about options (e.g. connections or alternative routes)

Q49. And the second most important?

IF NOT TICKED AT Q48: Information about the cause of disruption (e.g. the cause and how long it will last)
IF NOT TICKED AT Q48: An apology for the disruption
IF NOT TICKED AT Q48: Information about options (e.g. connections or alternative routes)

Q50. Would you like to receive information about the causes of some of the disruptions such as signalling problems, leaves on the line etc? Some examples are shown below:

https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/delays-explained/leaves/
https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/delays-explained/signals-points-failure/
https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/looking-after-the-railway/delays-explained/vandalism-and-trespass/
etc

Yes
No

Q51. IF Q50=1 ASK: Some events can cause regular disruption to the railways. Which of the following would you most like to receive further information on during instances of disruption to your journey: TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Buckled rails
Cable theft
Engineering works
Fatalities
Flooding
Knock-on delays
Landslips
Leaves
Signals and points failure
Snow and ice
Vandalism and trespass
None of the above
Other (please type in)

Q52. IF Q50=1 ASK: How would you like to receive such information? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Posters at stations
Leaflets at stations
In emails
Notifications through messaging apps such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp
Member of staff on the platform
Member of staff at the station
Member of staff on the train
On National Rail Enquiries website
On travel apps
Announcements on trains (eg Did you know…..?)
On social media
Text message
Other (please type in)

Q53. How important is it to you that the train company apologises for the disruption?

Very important
Quite Important
Not so important
Not at all important
Don't know

Q54. Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about rail disruptions:

a) Sometimes the train company is deliberately evasive about the reasons for disruptions

b) There should be an apology given for any disruption however short it is

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Q55. How important is to you that the train company is honest even if that means saying they do not know what is happening.

Very important
Quite Important
Not so important
Not at all important

Delivery mechanisms

This section is about how information is provided when there are disruptions to your rail service.

Q56. Which, if any, of the following apps or websites do you tend to use when your journey is disrupted? TICK ALL APPLICABLE

None GO TO Q58
Rail company website
Rail company app (please specify)
Other travel app (please specify)
National Rail Enquiries website
Facebook
Twitter
Trainline or other booking site
Friend, family or fellow traveller
Other (please type in)
Don't know/can't remember GO TO Q59

Q57. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTIONED AT Q567 ASK: Which of these do you use the most? TICK ONE ONLY

IF Q56_2 = 1: Rail company website
IF Q56_3 = 1: Rail company app
IF Q56_4 = 1: Other travel app
IF Q56_5 = 1: National Rail Enquiries website
IF Q56_6 = 1: Facebook
IF Q56_7 = 1: Twitter
IF Q56_8 = 1: Trainline or other booking site
IF Q56_9 = 1: Friend, family or fellow traveller
IF Q56_10 = 1: Other
Don't know/can't remember

Q58. Which, if any, of the following do you trust most for information about disruptions? TICK ALL APPLICABLE

PA announcements at station
PA announcements on train
Display at station
Display on train
Member of staff on the platform
Member of staff at the station
Member of staff on the train
National Rail app
Trainline app
Rail company app (please specify)
Other travel app (please specify)
Email or text alert
Facebook
Twitter
Travel news updates on radio or television
Friends or family

Other (please type in)
None of the above GO TO Q61

Q59.

Q60. Why do you trust '#Q58#' most for getting information about disruptions?

Q61. When there are disruptions, how much do you value PA announcements at the station?

They are essential
They are important
They are not so important
They are not at all important

Q62. And how much do you value PA announcements on the train?

They are essential
They are important
They are not so important
They are not at all important

Q63. How often should PA announcements about disruptions to the rail service at the station be repeated?

Type in: …….. minutes

Q64. And how often should PA announcements about disruptions to the rail service on the train be repeated?

Type in: …….. minutes

Q65. Thinking about your most recent disrupted rail journey, how easy to understand were the announcements about the disruption at the station?

Very clear
Not very clear (can't make out all that is said)
Very unclear (can't make out much or anything that is said)
Don't know/Not applicable

Q66. And how clear were the announcements about disruption on the train?

Very clear
Not very clear (can't make out all that is said)
Very unclear (can't make out much or anything that is said)
Don't know/Not applicable

Q67. How important is it to you that you are able to see rail staff when there are disruptions to the rail service?

Essential
Quite important
Not so important
Not at all important

Behavioural and sentimental responses to information

Q68. Thinking about the recent disruption to your rail service did you experience any of the following:

Emotional impacts
Anxiety of not knowing where to go/who to ask
Stress on homelife (eg childcare)
Stress with respect to work (eg because late or missing meetings, appointments etc)
Fear (eg being alone at stations at night)
Stress/worry for the person collecting me from the station
Other emotional impact (please type in)

Financial impacts
Loss of earnings
Had to buy a new rail ticket
Inability to work on train
Nursery fees
Taxi fares
Cost of car parking
Cost of drinks and/or food
Other financial impact (please type in)

Practical impacts
Missed connecting trains
Lost seat reservation
Lost my passenger assist
Missed follow-on transport (e.g. air, ferry, bus)
Missed meeting
Missed social event
Missed appointment
Arrived home late/later than anticipated
No-one to pick children up
Other practical impact (please type in)

None of the above

Compensation and redress

Q69. If the disruption to the rail service you experienced was long enough to warrant compensation, which of the following means would you prefer to find out about it? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Announcement at the station
Announcement on the train
Display at station
Display on train
Member of staff on the platform
Member of staff at the station
Member of staff on the train
National rail app
Trainline app
An email or text alert
Social Media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter)
A claim form handed to you on the train
Other (please type in)

Q70.

Classification Questions

Finally, would you please answer some questions about yourself. You do not have to answer any of these questions that you do not wish to and if you do you can withdraw your consent for us to process this information at any time. The personal information you provide during this survey will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at www.accent-mr.com/privacy/.

It will be used by Accent only for this study, which is being undertaken for the Department for Transport.

Q71. Which of the following age groups are you in?

16-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
56-59
60-64
65 or more
Prefer not to answer

Q72. What is your gender?

Male
Female
In another way (please type in)
Prefer not to answer

Q73. Are you affected by any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

No, none
Yes, Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)
Yes, Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)
Yes, Mobility (e.g. only able to walk short distances or difficulty climbing stairs)
Yes, Dexterity (e.g. difficulty lifting and carrying objects or using a keyboard)
Yes, Learning or understanding or concentrating
Yes, Memory
Yes, Mental health
Yes, Stamina or breathing or fatigue
Yes, Socially or behaviourally (eg associated with autism, attention deficit disorder or Asperger's syndrome)
Other (please type in)
Prefer not to say

Q74. IF Q73=YES ASK: Do you have any have specific requirements that would make the experience of experiencing disruptions less stressful or easier to manage?

No comment

Q75. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about rail disruptions?

No comment

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