The challenge of getting to the station passenger experiences

August 2011

Index

1 - Executive summary

How do passengers access the rail network?
Both the National Passenger Survey and the last National Travel Survey tell us that most passengers already arrive at the station under their own steam, by foot. After that, excluding over/under-ground train connections where they are available, the second most common mode of access is by car; be that dedicated trips to the station where the car is parked, or being dropped off at the station by a third party.

Satisfaction with accessing the station
Nationally, satisfaction with public transport connections at stations is reasonably high (72%) but in areas where the network of public transport provision is less dense satisfaction noticeably dips. In contrast, satisfaction scores for the provision of car parking across the country are consistently low.

Do passengers want to access the station in a different way?
Over one in ten people, responding to the National Passenger Survey, indicated that there was an alternative mode of transport that they would like to use, if circumstances were different. More than a third of those suggested that they would like to use a bus or coach to get to the train station. In order to encourage passengers to make the switch to bus (as a mode of access to the station) passengers want to see a more frequent bus service that connects with the trains that they want to catch.

Car parking at stations
Research indicates that the main issue passengers would like to see improved when it comes to car parking at stations is pricing, and increased availability of cheaper season tickets. In some areas of the country demand for car park spaces often exceeds capacity by the end of the morning peak, and causes a problem for those wishing to make journeys at times when the trains themselves are less busy. Research indicates that a lack of available spaces can suppress demand for rail travel, or at least increase the proportion of the journey being undertaken by car.

Travelling by bus to the station
In order to encourage people to interchange between bus and train, where rail is the primary mode, information about services and fares needs to be easy to understand and readily accessible. Multi modal ticketing needs to be made available, and interchange facilities need to be designed so that the switch from one mode to another is quick and easy. Importantly, connections between trains and buses need to be well planned.

Cycling to the station
Cycling as a mode of access to the station, has the potential to help reduce road congestion, cut down CO_2 emissions, free up car parking spaces and reduce the door –to-door journey time of some passengers. In order to convince people that cycling is a viable option, the number of secure cycle parking facilities need to be increased at stations, and the wider access arrangements improved e.g. segregated cycle paths. However, rather than take a 'one size' fits all approach more use needs to be made of Station Travel Plans so that the

needs and expectations of passengers at individual stations are taken into account before decisions on where to target resources are made.

2 - Introduction

Despite the economic recession, passenger demand for rail travel has remained relatively resilient; the national number of passenger journeys in 2009/10, was higher than two years previous[1] and in some sectors there is predicted growth of more than 30% in the next 10 years. By the end of 2019 route utilisation strategies for regional commuter markets, serving cities such as Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, and Edinburgh indicate a growth of anything between 70% and 170%. The extra demand does not just have an impact on the number of seats, or standing room, available on trains. With such large increases predicted considerable attention will need to be paid not just to how the rail network will carry these people but how they are going to access and pass through stations in the first place. The Network Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS) on stations, produced by Network Rail, identifies over 100 stations where passenger congestion needs to be addressed and concludes that in some instances, if left unchecked, it could actually choke demand. Part of the solution, at some stations, will be to release that suppressed demand by improving public transport links and parking provision.

Getting to and from the railway station is an integral part of travelling by train; research has indicated that if getting to the rail station proves inconvenient potential rail passengers will often choose to make their whole journey by car[2], increasing congestion on the roads and adding to transport's carbon footprint. The Association of Train Operating Companies recently predicted that an additional 200,000 car park spaces would be needed if suppressed demand was to be met[3]. With limited space at many stations, prohibiting the provision of additional parking, and the industry's desire to look at more sustainable options, Passenger Focus has lent its support to the concept of Station Travel Plans. Not just because they promote the use of environmentally friendly access options, but because they are ultimately designed to make it easier for people to travel to and from stations, and increase patronage on the rail network.

The railway already has a very good record in terms of the number of passengers accessing the station on foot, but there is much room for improvement in terms of the number of passengers accessing the rail station by other sustainable modes. This report draws together research on what passengers think about the existing access modes available to them and the barriers that prevent public transport from becoming a more attractive and realistic option for more passengers.

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[1] Planning Ahead, Association of Train Operating Companies, 2010
[2] Parking at the station – summary of research conducted in East of England, Passenger Focus, 2007
[3] Better Rail Station, Department for Transport, 2009

3 - How do passengers access the rail network?

Of the 1.2 billion journeys that were made by train in 2007-08, just over half of passengers (55%[4]) begin their journey by using another form of transport to get to the rail station.

How passengers access the station

(NPS waves Spring 2006 - Spring 2011)
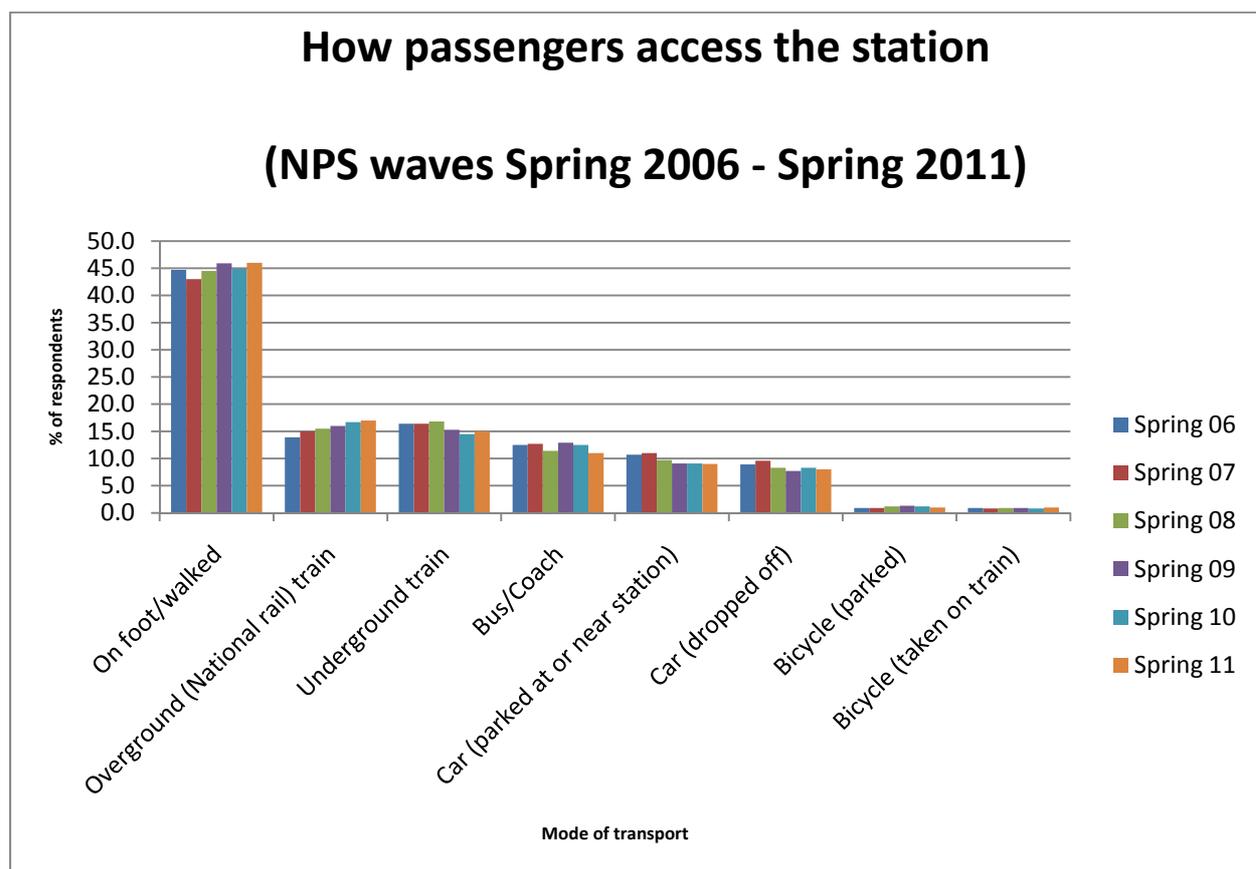
The results of the National Passenger Survey (NPS[5]) reveal that rather than using public transport or cars to get to the station, most passengers begin their door-to-door journey on foot (46%). Although this might sound surprising given the recent high profile of sustainable transport projects and initiatives, the modal split of passenger access to the station has changed little over the last four years.

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[4] The remaining 45% of passengers walked to the station. Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009 http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf

[5] The National Passenger Survey is a network wide picture of passengers satisfaction with rail travel. Passenger opinions of train services are collected twice a year from a representative sample of journeys. Passengers' overall satisfaction and satisfaction with 29 specific aspects of service can, therefore, be compared over time. Around 25,000 passengers are surveyed in Spring, and a further 25,000 in Autumn, each year.

Discounting the number of people who were given the NPS questionnaire when changing trains at a station (17%), the second most common mode of transport used to access the station was underground train (15%). Following that were bus and coach (11%), car parked at the station (9%). The high number of rail passengers who use the underground to access the rail network can be explained by the fact that most rail travel (51%) starts/finishes in London.[6]

The findings of the National Passenger Survey are supported by those of the National Rail Travel survey (NRTS), which in 2008 reported that 55% of passengers accessed the station on foot or bike; a vast majority of those passengers accessing the station on foot.[7] Having looked at how different types of passenger access the station, NRTS showed that business passengers are far more likely to use a car to reach the station than commuters, or leisure travellers. Leisure travellers, on the other hand, are more likely to take a bus or coach to the train station[8].

It is worth noting that overall, one in five passengers came from households with no access to a car or van; and that the higher probability of leisure passengers travelling by public transport to the station reflects the fact they are less likely to come from a car owning home[9].

Number of cars	Commuters	Business	Leisure	Total
None	18%	17%	30%	20%
1	46%	38%	40%	44%
2	28%	35%	23%	28%

(National Travel Survey 2008)

Mode of access to the station	Total	Commuter	Business	Leisure
Walk/Cycle	55%	60%	45%	51%
Bus/Coach	10 %	10 %	8 %	13 %
Car	20 %	16 %	29 %	23 %
Underground/Light Rail/Metros/Trams	14 %	14 %	18 %	12 %
Other	-	-	-	1 %

(Journey Purpose: by main mode used to travel to station of origin, National Travel Survey 2008)

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[6] National Rail Trends 2007/08, Office of Rail Regulation http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/375.pdf
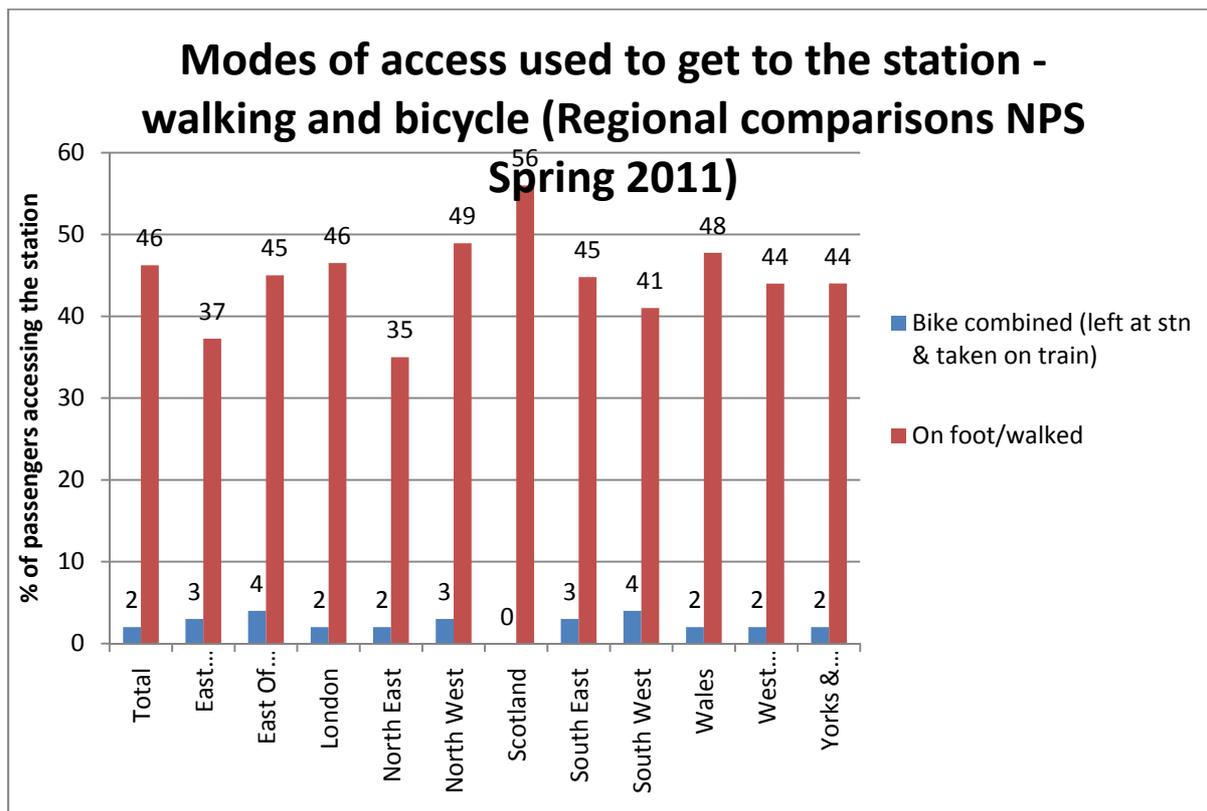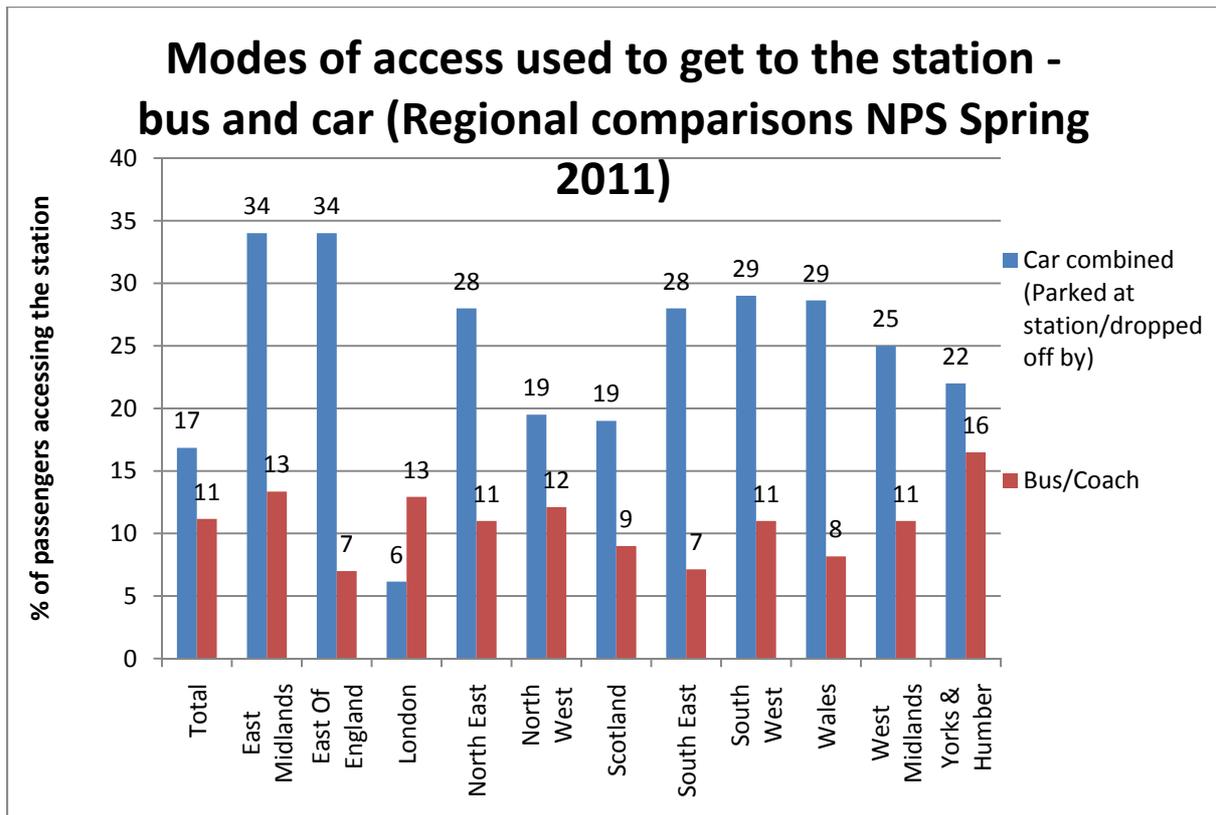
[7] Ibid

[8] National Rail Travel Survey (Great Britain), 2008 http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/railways/nrtsfnlreport2008.pdf

[9] National Rail Travel Survey (Great Britain), 2008

3.1 Mode of access to the station across the regions

Looking at data from the National Passenger Survey for each of the nine governmental regions, the number of passengers accessing the station by foot is broadly consistent across England, Scotland and Wales. Notably, the region with the second lowest percentage of passengers walking to the station (37%), the East Midlands, is also one of the regions where the number of passengers accessing the station by car is high. East Midlands and East of England have the joint highest number of passengers using cars to gain access to the station where they began their rail journey (34%).

Modes of access used to get to the station - walking and bicycle (Regional comparisons NPS Spring 2011)

Modes of access used to get to the station - bus and car (Regional comparisons NPS Spring 2011)

% of passengers accessing the station

Region	Car combined (Parked at station/dropped off by)	Bus/Coach
Total	17	11
East Midlands	34	13
East Of England	34	7
London	6	13
North East	28	11
North West	19	12
Scotland	19	9
South East	28	7
South West	29	11
Wales	29	8
West Midlands	25	11
Yorks & Humber	22	16

The car, as a mode of access to get to the station, is that popular in the East Midlands that at some stations car park capacity is at 90% by 9am on weekdays[10]. In the worst cases capacity is fully stretched, leaving passengers unable to find a car park space at the station. Recent research in the East Midlands Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS) area revealed that of the car park users surveyed, 16% reported that they were unable to park their vehicle or bike in the previous three months. Of those, 79% said it had happened between one and five times[11]. This would suggest that the question of improving access to those stations should be high on the agenda as passenger demand continues to increase.

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[10] Parking at the station – Results of car park research for the East Midlands region and the Midland Mainline to London St Pancras, Passenger Focus, July 2010.

[11] Parking at the station – Results of car park research for the East Midlands region and the Midland Mainline to London St Pancras, Passenger Focus, July 2010.

4 - Satisfaction with accessing the station

As part of the National Passenger Survey, passengers are asked to rate how satisfied they are with various attributes associated with the station where they were given the questionnaire. Of those, two have a direct link with the way that passengers get to and from the station 'Connections with other forms of public transport' and 'car parking'. Over the past four years the satisfaction scores for both of those attributes have only varied by one or two percent.

NPS % of respondents satisfied - Trend data	Aut 2007	Spr 2008	Aut 2008	Spr 2009	Aut 2009	Spr 2010	Aut 2010	Spr 2011
Connections with other forms of public transport	72	72	73	73	74	74	74	73
Parking at the station	46	43	44	44	45	48	49	49

Whilst both station attributes are consistent in their scores there is a significant gap between the two in terms of the satisfaction spectrum. 'Connections with other forms of public transport' was the fifth highest rated station attribute (NPS Spring 2011), whilst satisfaction with the facilities provided for car parking was the lowest (thirteenth), with a score of just 49%. As can be seen from the table below the scores, for car parking, are worse for those passengers using stations in London and the South East and for those who are travelling by train as part of their commute.

NPS % of respondents satisfied - Spring 2011	London & SE	Long Distance	Regional	Commuters	Business	Leisure
Connections with other forms of public transport	74	76	67	70	74	77
Parking at the station	47	56	53	44	48	56

Across the governmental regions, London, and the South East, the levels of satisfaction with 'Connections to other forms of public transport' do not vary by a significant amount. London scores the highest with 80%, reflecting the fact that there is a dense bus and underground

network across the capital. In contrast, in those regions where stations are served less well by public transport the satisfaction scores are naturally lower.
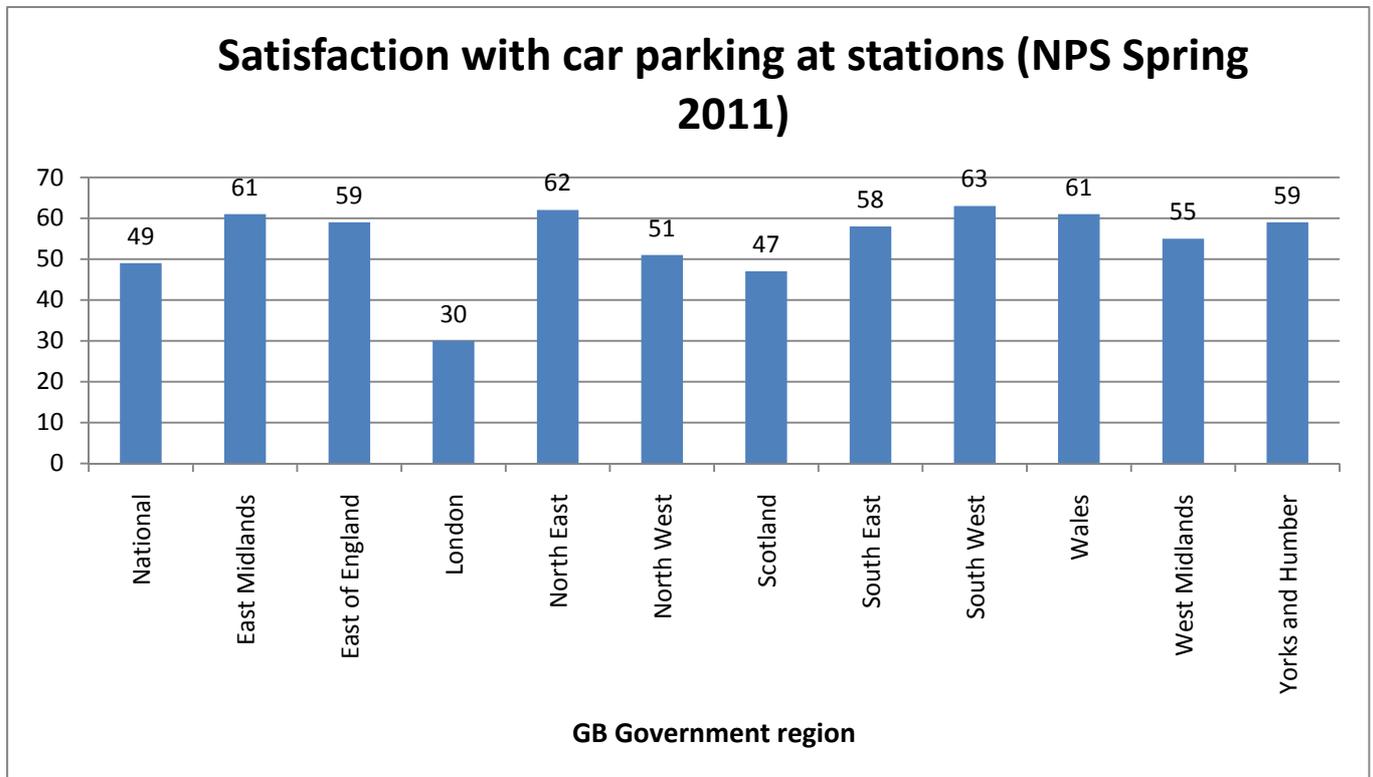

Satisfaction with connections with other forms of public transport at stations (NPS Spring 2011)
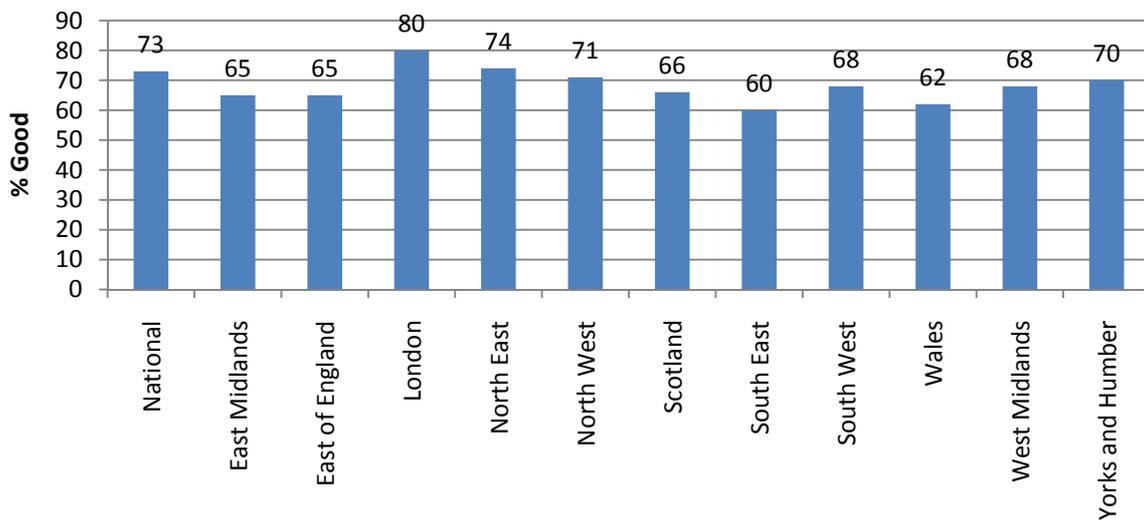
The fact that passengers score station car parking facilities in London so poorly, is most likely attributed to the low number of parking spaces available. With a dense network of urban stations, and space being at a premium, it is often inpracticble for train operators in the capital to provide a designated car park at every station.

Satisfaction with car parking at stations (NPS Spring 2011)

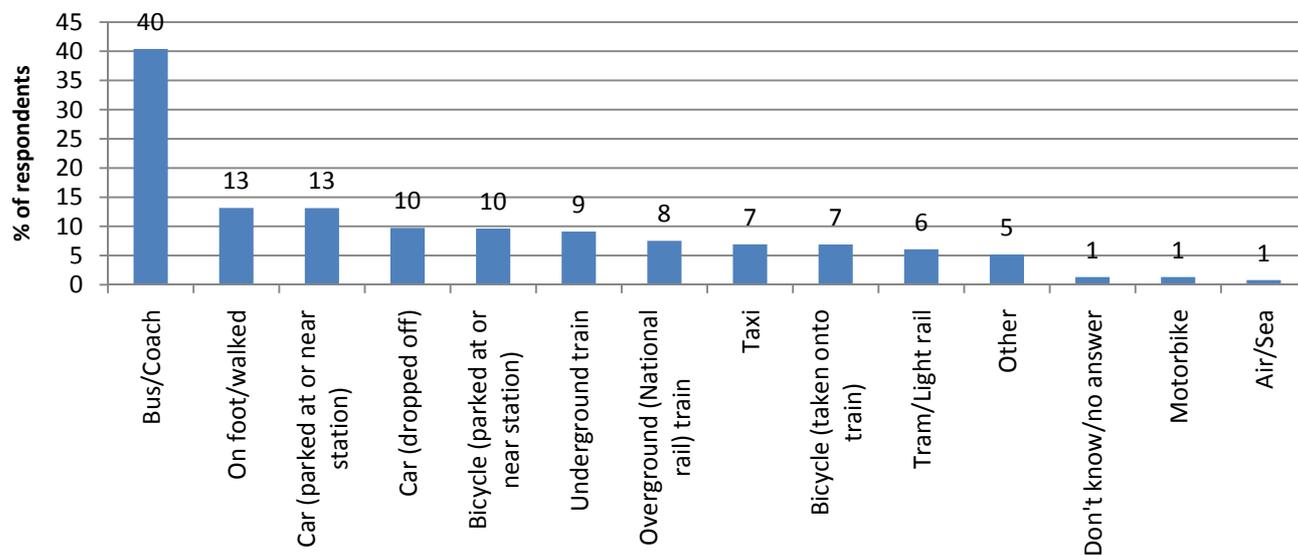| Region	Value
National	49
East Midlands	61
East of England	59
London	30
North East	62
North West	51
Scotland	47
South East	58
South West	63
Wales	61
West Midlands	55
Yorks and Humber	59

GB Government region

5 - Are there alternative forms of transport passengers would like to use to get to the station?

In addition to asking passengers what mode of transport they used to get to the station NPS also asks them whether there is an alternative mode of access they would like to use, if circumstances were different. Across the regions, passengers in the East of England appear most willing to consider alternative modes of access to the station (21%). Similarly, around one in five passengers said they would be willing to consider an alternative mode of access to the station in the East Midlands. This would suggest that in those regions where car trips to the station are highest there is greater potential to encourage a switch to more sustainable modes of access.
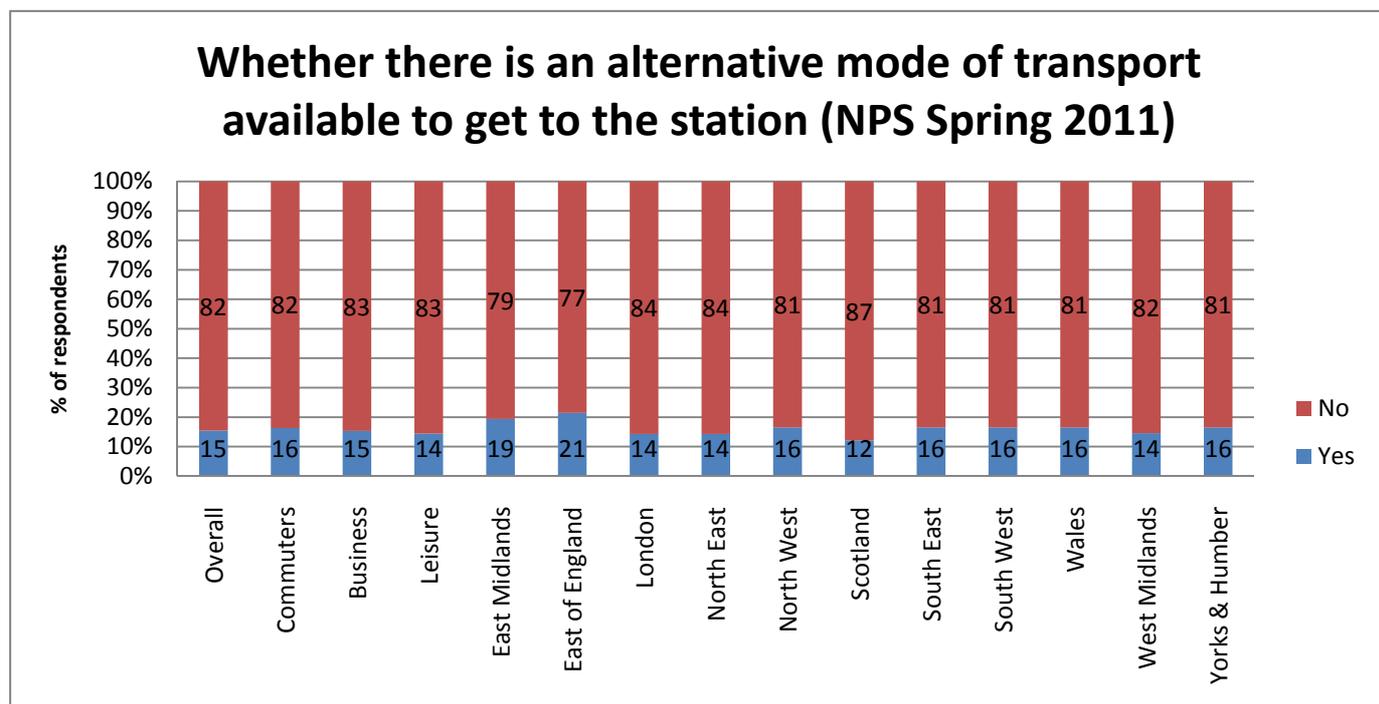
When asked what alternative mode of transport they would like to use, most passengers (40%) selected bus and coach. This was followed by 13% who would like to drive and park at the station and 13% who would like to walk.

Alternative methods of transport passengers would like to use (NPS Spring 2011)

Category	% of respondents
Bus/Coach	40
On foot/walked	13
Car (parked at or near station)	13
Car (dropped off)	10
Bicycle (parked at or near station)	10
Underground train	9
Overground (National rail) train	8
Taxi	7
Bicycle (taken onto train)	7
Tram/Light rail	6
Other	5
Don't know/no answer	1
Motorbike	1
Air/Sea	1

To help assess what changes would be required to encourage modal shift, to and from the station, passengers were then asked to indicate what additional facilities would have enabled them to use an alternative mode of transport. The most common answers provided by passengers directly related to the most popular alternative method of transport, bus and coach:

- better connection times between trains and buses (16%)

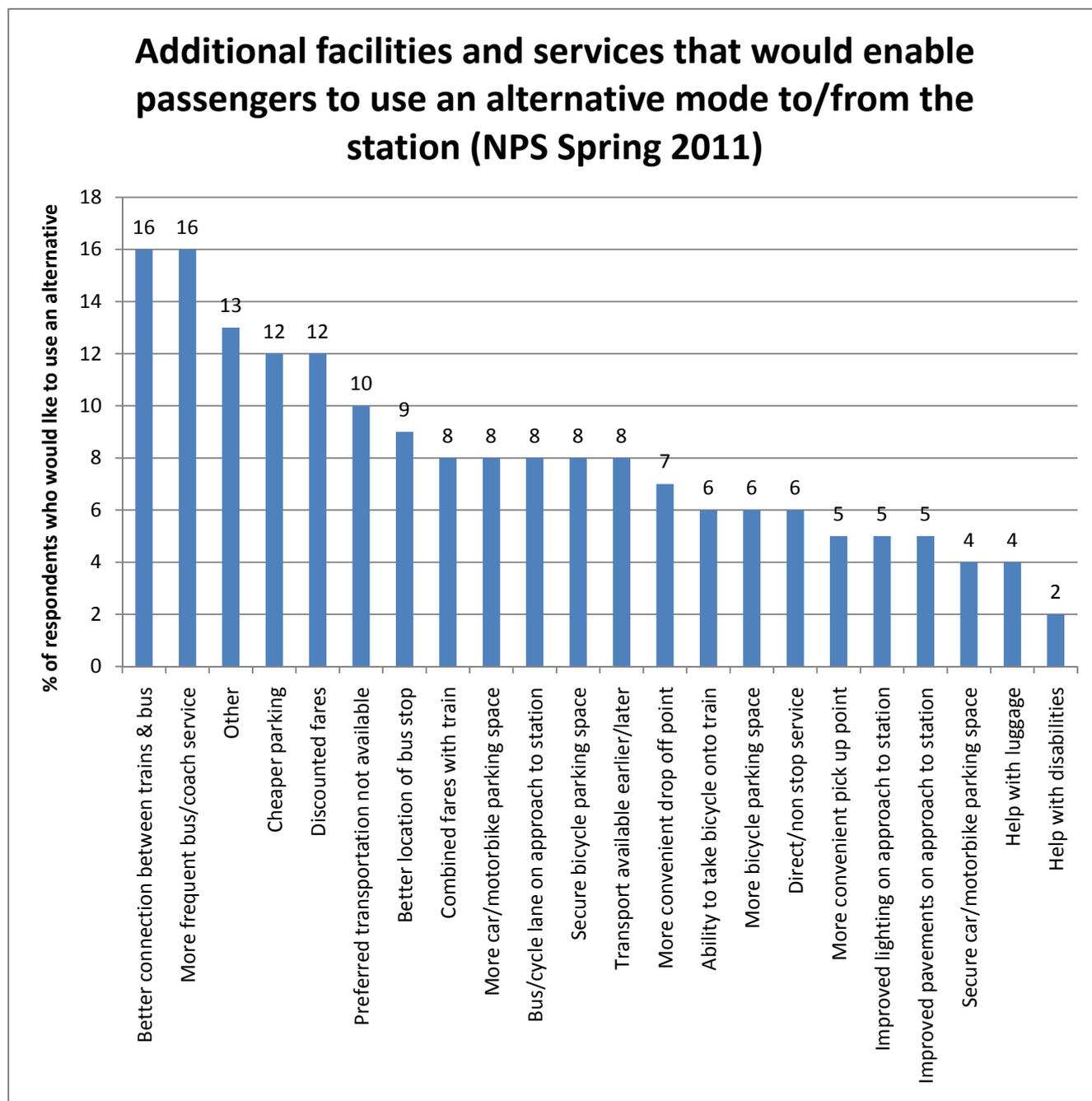- more frequent bus service (16%).

Other enabling factors that might increase the modal shift to bus included: combined fares with train (8%) and better location of bus stop (9%). In addition to these two factors a further 12% reported that discounted fares would enable an alternative mode of transport to be used – though this may not specifically relate to bus fares.

For those passengers that said they would consider driving to the station, the additional facilities/change in circumstances required are quite clear; 12% suggested that they would do so if there was cheaper parking, whilst 8% said that additional parking spaces were required.

Looking at what additional facilities and services passengers said would enable them to use the alternative mode of transport to and from the station reveals little in terms of those who said they wanted to walk. The additional facilities connected with improving the walking route to the station, lighting on the approach to the station and improved pavements were each selected by 5% of respondents. However, other research would suggest that the major hurdle in encouraging people to walk to the station is their perception of security. 'After dark,

51% of women and 20% of men feel unsafe walking from home to the station, and 61% of women and 26% of men feel unsafe walking from the station to home[12].

It is also reasonable to suggest that one of the main reasons for passengers not walking to the station is the distance of their homes/starting location from it. If passengers live within walking distance of a train station they will generally walk to it[13].

Additional facilities and services that would enable passengers to use an alternative mode to/from the station (NPS Spring 2011)

Y-axis: % of respondents who would lke to use an alternative

Category	Value
Better connection between trains & bus	16
More frequent bus/coach service	16
Other	13
Cheaper parking	12
Discounted fares	12
Preferred transportation not available	10
Better location of bus stop	9
Combined fares with train	8
More car/motorbike parking space	8
Bus/cycle lane on approach to station	8
Secure bicycle parking space	8
Transport available earlier/later	8
More convenient drop off point	7
Ability to take bicycle onto train	6
More bicycle parking space	6
Direct/non stop service	6
More convenient pick up point	5
Improved lighting on approach to station	5
Improved pavements on approach to station	5
Secure car/motorbike parking space	4
Help with luggage	4
Help with disabilities	2

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[12] Passengers' perceptions of personal security on public transport – Qualitative research report, Independent Social Research, April 2009

[13] Getting to the Station, Passenger Focus, March 2007

5.1   Passenger Focus comment

Walking to the station

Train Operating Companies should work closely with Local Authorities to make sure that the best possible provisions are in place for pedestrians. Possible barriers to walking to the station include:

- the marked route to the station may be indirect, and unnecessarily long walking routes may be poorly maintained
- there could be no pathways to the station or crossing provisions on major roads
- the routes could be seen as insecure – poor lighting, secluded etc
- poor or misleading sign posting
- physical barriers including: roadside railings, hedges, etc.

Train companies should also work with local authorities, the British Transport Police and the local police force to make the station and the surrounding areas secure for passengers.

5.1   Passenger Focus comment

6 - Car parking

Although Passenger Focus is supportive of public transport access to stations, for many passengers, particularly in rural areas, the car is the most practical way for people to get to the train station.

As previously highlighted, by the National Passenger Survey, only 49%[14] of passengers are satisfied with car parking facilities at stations. This was supported by the Office of National Statistics[15], which reported that alongside the cost of fares (18% rating it good), ease of parking at stations was one of the least likely attributes to be rated positively (only 38% rating it good). When we asked how car parking could be improved, passengers, in the East Midlands, and along the Midland Mainline route to London St Pancras, made their top five priorities for improvement very clear[16]:

1. Cheaper one day parking prices (28%)

2. Cheaper season ticket parking prices (21%)

3. More efficient pay machines (10%)

4. More spaces for cars (8%)

5. Larger parking spaces (7%)

Passengers also spelt out which areas they were least satisfied with:

1. Value for money (10%)

2. Car park payment machines (17%)

3. Traffic flow around the car park (39%)

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[14] National Passenger Survey, Passenger Focus, Spring 2011

[15] Public experiences of and attitudes toward rail travel, Office of National Statistics, September 2009

[16] Parking at the station – results of car park research for East Midlands region and Midland Mainline to London St Pancras, Passenger Focus, July 2010

The level of passenger concern shown over pricing was also evident on the West Coast Mainline[17]. When asked what would encourage them to make more use of the station car parks, 47% of passengers said "cheaper one day parking prices", whilst just under a quarter (24%) replied "Cheaper season ticket parking prices".

It goes without saying that those passengers who drive to the station want to be able find, and park, in a space easily before beginning their rail journey. Whilst providing more car parking spaces was only the fourth priority for improvement in the East Midlands, and satisfaction with getting a space is relatively high amongst commuters there (74%), leisure passengers can often find themselves competing for spaces. In the East Midlands for example satisfaction with finding a space drops off significantly amongst leisure passengers to just 58%[18]. This suggests that at some car parks most spaces are taken up prior to off-peak travel times.

The issue of car park capacity is often a source of debate; with some calling for people to use more sustainable modes of transport to help reduce carbon emissions. Requests by rail passengers to increase the number of car park spaces at stations are often, therefore, treated with caution by the relevant planning authorities. However, previous research in Greater Anglia by Passenger Focus has indicated that a lack of car parking spaces at some stations can actually suppress demand for rail travel. If unable to park at their local station, some passengers will drive to the next station, and some will choose to drive all the way to their final destination[19]. The net effect being to increase car usage. Similarly, for every

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[17] West Coast Mainline Route Utilisation Strategy research, Passenger Focus, 2010

[18] Parking at the station – Results of car park research for the East Midlands region and the Midland Main Line to London St Pancras, Passenger Focus, 2010

[19] Getting to the station – summary of research conducted in East of England, Passenger Focus, 2007

passenger that might choose to get a lift to and from the station, rather than park at it, the number of car journeys potentially double.

The alternative for some passengers is to travel earlier in the day to secure a parking space. However this has the unfortunate effect of adding to congestion onboard peak time trains, by virtue of the fact that people would be travelling at busier periods, when they had no need to.[20]

As well as being able to find a space, passengers, rightly, want to know that they and their vehicle or bicycle are safe. Passengers in the East Midlands were asked five questions about safety whilst using the car park at stations; this revealed that whilst most passengers were satisfied with safety during the daytime (84%) this dropped dramatically to just 53% at night[21]:

Satisfaction with car park services (% passengers saying fairly or very satisfied)	
Feeling safe in the car park area in the daytime	84%
The walking route from where you park your vehicle/bike to the station	58%
Feeling safe in the car park after dark	53%
The security of your vehicle/bike when you leave it	49%
The lighting provided in the car park at night	46%

Parking at the station – Results of car park research for the East Midlands region and the Midland Main Line to London St Pancras, Passenger Focus, 2010

Passenger Focus is therefore supportive of the Safer Parking Scheme, which is aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime within parking facilities, and would encourage Train Operators to participate in it.

The scheme provides guidance to owners, operators and developers of parking facilities, on how to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment through the introduction of proven management processes, physical measures and site security systems. In doing so it takes into account crime and disorder within the immediate location.[22]

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[20] Ibid

[21] Parking at the station – Results of car park research for the East Midlands region and the Midland Main Line to London St Pancras, Passenger Focus, 2010

[22] Park Mark, Safer Parking – Surface Parking Facilities General Introduction Assessment Guidelines, British Parking Association

6.1   Passenger Focus comments

Car parking at stations

The increasing length of a working day and the shift towards a '24-7' week means that it is hard to provide a comprehensive rail-bus service that meets the needs of commuters and/or weekend travellers. Fears over personal security also inhibit the use of alternative transport or walking. For these reasons, car parking facilities at stations remain important.

Passenger Focus has long maintained that the provision of car parking at railway stations should be seen as a separate issue in its own right and not part of wider discussions on car parking in general. In many ways a railway station car park is the original 'park and ride' scheme and it is important that it is acknowledged as such.

In those areas where car parking capacity is already at or near capacity there needs to be a comprehensive investment programme to increase the number of spaces provided. This should also be considered at those stations where a small increase in current demand will cause problems. Bicycle parking facilities also need to be expanded in a similar vein.

It is also important to make sure that parking spaces at stations are solely for rail passengers rather than town centre visitors. This may become a particular issue if local authorities use road pricing and parking measures to reduce car use. We understand that car parking revenue is important to individual train operators. However, if spaces are being filled by non-rail passengers, then train companies are not addressing the revenue potential that could be made from rail passengers who pay for parking and a rail fare.

If set too high we know, from prior research in Scotland, that the majority of passengers who drive to the station are unlikely to continue doing so and will stop using the railway. When asked how likely it was that they would continue to travel by rail if the cost of the car park exceeded the price they were willing to pay, 62% said it was fairly/very unlikely[23].

Whilst supportive of those train operators that participate in the safer parking scheme, the schemes' effectiveness, and the ability of train operators to claim accreditation should be intrinsically linked to the measured impact that they have on passengers' perceptions of security. Where value for money allows, we would encourage operators to look at passengers' perceptions and experiences at 'problem' stations. We would also encourage the industry to consider how it could raise passengers' awareness of accreditations when they are made, so that they know what efforts are being made to improve security.

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[23] Research for the Scottish Route Utilisation Strategy, Passenger Focus, 2007 (un-published.)

7 - Travelling by bus to the station

Making interchange between bus and rail simpler, and more convenient, is important if public transport is going to be considered a viable alternative to the car by those who drive to the station or the whole length of their journey. For many of those that drive modal choice is attributed to a series of hard factors such as cost, door to door journey time and the reliability of each leg of a multi stage journey. However other factors such as the availability of information, travelling comfort, security and assurance that each leg of the journey will link up[24] play a considerable role in the decision made by passengers on whether to use public transport or not. Providing a good interchange therefore involves making the whole journey convenient, easy and good value for money[25].

Therefore to encourage passengers to make use of interchanges between bus and train, where National Rail is the primary mode, the industry must look to make sure that:

- there is easy to understand information about services and fares, that is readily accessible at whatever stage of the journey

- multi modal ticketing for the entire journey is available

- the interchange facilities are well designed to make sure that the switch from one mode to another is quick and easy

- connections between trains, buses and other forms of public transport are well planned[26].

7.1   Information

Part of the reason that non-users are put off taking the bus to the station is the information gathering that they have to do, to ascertain whether there is a suitable bus route and a bus at the time that they need it[27]. Train Operating Companies (TOCs) can help lessen the burden of information gathering by providing relevant information in their own timetables and on their websites. Train timetable booklets could display information about onward modes of transport available in particular areas, whilst route diagrams can be used to highlight stations where there are dedicated rail link services and interchange opportunities. Perhaps more importantly TOC literature should include information on the different journey planning tools

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[24] Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009 http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf

[25] Ibid

[26] Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009 http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf

[27] Door to door by public transport – improving integration between National Rail and other public transport services in Britain, June 2009 http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf

that are available e.g. Traveline, which provides a nation-wide public transport enquiry service for bus, tram and train travel. Similarly bus stop timetables and route diagrams should highlight any interchanges with rail stations, which could also be announced to passengers already on-board.

Information about onward travel and integrated ticketing, combined with local area information should also be made available at station ticket offices and information desks. Importantly, if provided, this information needs to be regularly updated totake account of service and timetable alterations.

Where bus stops and stations are not situated close to the station clear way finding signage should be provided, directing pedestrians along a safe walking route from key origin points such as bus stops/stations, town centres and popular destinations such as local authority buildings and shopping centres.

7.2   Multi modal ticketing

Two of the factors that determine passenger's modal choice in getting to the station are convenience and time. If passengers are required to undertake separate transactions for rail and bus travel, as part of the same journey, this adds time, and an element of inconvenience, to the overall door to door journey. One method of overcoming this has been the introduction of PLUSBUS, which provides a discounted bus pass when buying a rail ticket. The bus pass provides unlimited bus travel, on most bus services, around the origin and/or destination town of the rail journey being undertaken. The ticket can be bought for travel in 280 British towns and is accepted by over 200 bus companies. Passengers who buy PLUSBUS for travel in Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield and Wolverhampton are also able to use it for travel on trams. Tickets are available as day or season tickets; last year the rail industry sold just under half a million PLUBUS tickets (30% season, 70% day tickets). PLUSBUS has, so far, experienced a year on year annual growth of around 80%[28]. Tickets can be bought at any train station or online via a range of train operator websites.

In addition to PLUSBUS a number of multi-modal integrated ticketing products are available across the country allowing passengers to travel by bus, metro/tram and train in different conurbations[29]. Examples include 'Travelcard in Tyne & Wear' and 'Network Card' in West Midlands. The products are largely managed and operated by a partnership of participating operators and/or the relevant Passenger Transport Executive (PTE).

Where it is possible to buy these tickets passengers need to be made fully aware of their existence. There therefore needs to be sufficient publicity at rail stations and on appropriate online retail sites.

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[28] Figures provided by PLUSBUS, September 2010

[29] http://www.plusbus.info/

7.3   Passenger Focus Comment

Bus travel to the station

To improve public transport and make sustainable travel more attractive to the travelling public Passenger Focus believes that there must be better modal integration between the railway and buses. There is scope for better co-ordinating rail and bus timetables so that they provide a tighter, more mutually supportive arrangement; more so, given the extension of the PLUSBUS scheme. Train and bus companies should encourage as far as possible improved co-ordination of bus and rail timetables. However, joined up thinking should be encouraged between all operators using a station.

There also needs to be a focus on the interchange facilities at stations. For instance, are bus stops provided and are they situated in the optimum position, are the walking routes from the bus stop to the railway station clearly signed, and are the links secure and well lit?

Other possible bus/rail integration improvements include:

- working with bus companies or local authorities to see if an extra stop can be created where a bus passes a train station, or to whether routes could be altered slightly to make sure buses pass railway stations
- working with bus companies or local authorities to see if schedules could be designed to help buses meet certain morning and evening peak hour trains (including some guaranteed connections)
- displaying bus information at rail stations and train information at certain bus stops/stations
- combined rail/bus tickets or preferably, travelcard schemes
- examining the potential of park and ride schemes
- creation of bus links between rail-heads to complement the network improved facilities for connection between train and bus (e.g. better signing, provision of waiting rooms)

8 - Cycling to the station

Although half of the nation owns a bicycle, and 60% live within a 15-minute ride of a rail station, only 2% of national rail passengers use their bicycle to access the local station[30].

Cycling to the station not only helps reduce road congestion and cut down on CO2 emissions it also has the potential to free up car park capacity. This would allow people that might otherwise have travelled by car for the entire length of their journey to park at the station and take the train.

Not all commuters are able to cycle directly to work, but many might be able to travel at least part way by bike; the average distance for a cycle trip to the station being up to three miles[31]. Door to door journey times are one of the key factors taken into consideration by travellers when deciding what mode of transport to use to[32]. There is therefore a case to be made, that if well integrated at both ends of the journey, cycling could help reduce overall journey times, and cut down on car-only journeys. Furthermore, economic research has indicated that when appraising the environmental, congestion and health benefits of cycle parking at stations there is a strong public sector case for further investment in cycle facilities[33]. In the case of the Essex Thameside Franchise Steer Davies Gleave, who undertook research on behalf of the Cycle Rail Integration Task Force (CRIT), suggested the cost benefit ratio was as high as 4:1 over 15 years.

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[30] Better Rail Stations, Department for Transport, 2009

[31] Ibid

[32] Integrated transport, perception and reality, Passenger Focus, 2010

[33] Investment in cycle facilities at rail stations, developing a business case, Cycle Rail Task Force, 2009

To convince people to cycle to the station, adequate provisions need to be made both at stations and on the approaches to them. In addition to increasing the number of cycle spaces, the industry needs to work with local authorities and think about the wider access arrangements that can be made for cyclists at stations. Things such as segregated cycle routes to busy stations, better signing and road traffic management can help make the prospect of cycling to the station more attractive for those that currently use other modes of access[34]. With this in mind a £14 million package of improvements was announced by the government in September 2009. The money looked to provide a combination of:

- over 10,000 additional cycle park spaces at nearly 350 stations

- 10 new fully staffed cycle hubs, offering a range of facilities for cyclists including secure covered parking, cycle hire, information, retail and repair

- funding for four Train Operating Companies - Merseyrail, Northern Rail, South West Trains and Virgin Trains - to transform the cycling facilities up and down their network to become flagship 'Bike 'n' Ride' train operating companies

- improvements to cycle access at rail stations to make sure that bike users can get to and from the station conveniently and safely, and to improve cycle facilities across the rail network as opportunities are identified.

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[34] Better Rail Stations, Department for Transport, 2009

The funding of the above programme is guided by the Cycle Rail Integration Task Force (CRIT) set up by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2007 to foster improved bike and rail integration. Passenger Focus is a member of CRIT which also comprises representatives from Association of Train Operating Companies, Cycling England, DfT, Network Rail and Transport for London (TfL). The group helps promote station improvements required to increase the access share to rail of cycling. Going forward, the Task Force will work with DfT to propose realistic cycling targets for future franchises, and will develop ideas on alternative funding streams and innovative approaches. The Task Force will also prepare a best practice guide for the rail industry on how to improve cycle facilities at stations.

8.1   Security of cycle parking

Even at suitable locations, providing additional cycle parking space alone will not always be sufficient enough to encourage a sizeable increase in the numbers of passengers cycling to and from the station. Importantly cyclists need to be assured that when leaving their bicycle at the station they can be confident that it will be there when they return. Figures provided by the British Transport Police (BTP) reveal that there were 4322 bicycle thefts, and a further 4938 thefts from bicycles, at national rail stations between 2009 and 2010[35]. However, those figures are likely to under-represent the amount of bike crime at stations. When comparing the number of police recorded cycle thefts across England and Wales, with those of the British Crime Survey, the figures recorded in the latter are often much higher. This would suggest that victims of pedal cycle thefts often do not report the crime to the police. This assertion is supported by TfL's quarterly safety and security survey of Londoners' experiences of travelling around London, which includes questions on cycle theft. Of those reporting to have had a bicycle stolen only 54% had reported the incident to the Police[36].

The industry is already examining a number of innovative cycle storage facilities to try and increase the security of bicycles left at stations. Whilst this is welcome Passenger Focus would encourage the industry to work in partnership with the cycling community, local authorities and the Police to identify any examples of good practice in bicycle crime prevention at stations. As an example, the work of the BTP at Cambridge station in 2009 demonstrates what a targeted approach to tackling crime hotspots can achieve:

Cyclists at Cambridge station were experiencing a high number of bike thefts, with around 100 thefts reported at the station during 2007/08. In response to this British Transport Police adopted a three prong approach[37].

1. Prevention - Crime Prevention Officers conducted environmental surveys of the cycle parking areas at the station, removing abandoned bicycles and liaising with station staff, to encourage regular/visible visits to the parking areas. A number of engagement events were also held to encourage cycle marking. Leaflets were also

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[35] British Transport Police, September 2010

[36] Draft Cycle Security Plan, Transport for London, 2009

[37] ibid

issued providing advice on how bike theft could be avoided through good locking practice.

2. Intelligence – Victims of cycle theft were contacted by the police so that accurate data could be gained on the hot spot locations, where the number of stolen bicycles was high. CCTV was then checked for quality and evidence, and the victims were encouraged to check eBay, cash converters and second hand bike shops for their stolen bikes. Victims were encouraged to do this as they were more likely to be able to identify their bike than police officers.

3. Enforcement – Police used tracker bikes to gather intelligence on, and arrest offenders. Those arrested were reviewed for potential linked offences.

As a result of the initiatives employed by Police at the station the number of bicycle thefts fell by 43% from 2007/08 levels[38].

Educating cyclists on best practice methods of locking bikes and encouraging them to mark their bikes, so that they can be identified if stolen, would seem to be an effective way of deterring bicycle theft. If a particular station is found to have a problem with bicycles being stolen, then the station operator should look, at the very least, at what it can do to provide advice to those passengers who continue to make use of the facilities.

At Chichester, West Sussex, the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) ran a number of high profile events offering free cycle marking. Commuters, at the local station, were targeted in particular, with over a 100 having their bike marked at a 'biker's breakfast' run by the CDRP. As a result of the scheme over 1000 bikes were marked. In the first year following the high profile events cycle theft in the district dropped by 44%; and although figures have risen since, they remain below pre launch levels[39]. The CDRP

[38] Draft Cycle Security Plan, Transport for London, 2009

[39] Draft Cycle Security Plan, Transport for London, 2009

continue to run cycle awareness days and at the most recent event, on 23 September 2010, marked 20 bikes at Chichester station[40].

8.2   Bicycle rental schemes

In addition to improving facilities for those passengers wishing to take their own bicycles to the station, a number of efforts are also being made to improve the availability of cycle hire facilities at stations. Many train operating companies currently prohibit the carriage of non-folding bicycles on trains during peak periods because of capacity constraints. Therefore whilst passengers may cycle to the station to start their rail journey they are often unable to continue on bicycle once at their rail destination. Whilst a small minority of passengers keep a bicycle at their start and end stations[41], to enable them to cycle both access and egress legs of their journey, the provision of cycle hire facilities would allow an increased number of egress journeys to be undertaken by bicycle. Either by those who cycle to their origin station or those that only want to cycle one leg of their journey.

Current cycle hire schemes in operation/being planned include:

- South West Trains (SWT) bike hire scheme – SWT have made 50 Bromptons (folding bikes) available for hire (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually). An annual hire works out at under £2 a week. The bikes are available from London Waterloo station lost property office. Customers hiring for more than three months get a £10 travel voucher.

- Leeds station – the Abellio Group (whose parent company runs Dutch Railways) opened a cycle point at Leeds Station (summer 2010) offering daily bike rental. This is courtesy of £500,000 funding provided by the DfT, through Network Rail. Evans Cycles are going to run the cycle point. Bikes cost £8 per day. Storage charges are £1 per day, but discounted for season ticket holders. There are proposals for additional cycle points at northern stations including Bradford, Harrogate and Shipton. The DfT and Network Rail had earmarked Liverpool Lime Street, London St Pancras, Victoria, Waterloo, Grimsby, Hull, Scunthorpe, Sheffield, and York for additional cycle points over the next two years.

- Virgin Trains, and the local council, are looking at introducing a cycle point at Stoke station – it will provide a hire scheme aimed at commuters and students

- Merseyrail – a cycle point will be installed at Southport station, linked to the existing seafront hire scheme. This is aimed at the leisure market.

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[40]Source: Chichester District Council.

[41] Association of Train Operating Companies, 2010

8.3   Passenger Focus Comment

Cycling to the station

Passenger Focus acknowledges the specific issues of overcrowding which prevent passengers from being able to carry their bicycles on to trains, making it impractical for many passengers to cycle both to and from their origin and destination stations. This makes it all the more important to increase efforts to provide secure cycle parking facilities at stations. However, rather than take a 'one size fits all approach' by suggesting that every station should have a set number of cycle parking spaces according to passenger footfall, or a ratio of cycle parking to car parking, Passenger Focus supports the increased use of Travel Plans to influence a station by station approach that looks at passenger needs and expectations. Station location, existing facilities, passenger distribution around the station (how far do they come to access the rail station) and passenger demographics all need to be given some consideration when deciding where to target resources.

Where existing facilities are well used, but have unfortunately become a target for bicycle thieves, the station operator should work jointly with the local police and local authorities on measures that will help deter theft as well as identify the perpetrators. This can partly be achieved by educating users on crime prevention techniques. More widely, the industry should give consideration to introducing a Cycle Pass Mark scheme similar to that used at station car parks to promote good design practice, and encourage non-users to cycle to the station.

9 - Perceptions of non-users

Two of the main barriers to increasing the number of journeys undertaken by rail are the assumptions of non-rail users that the door-to-door journey time will take longer, and the belief that travelling by train will add hassle to the journey[42]. Whilst there are no specific references to getting to and from the station in non-users' ranked list of barriers to rail travel[43] the mode of transport used to get to and from the stations undoubtedly effects both journey time and convenience. When non/infrequent rail users were asked to consider a hypothetical rail journey, in relation to a trip they would ordinarily undertake using a different mode of transport, 36% said that they would drive to the station, 27% said they would walk, and 22% said they would get a bus[44]. This undoubtedly reflects the ease of convenience associated with driving to the station, but there are also a number of issues identified by non/infrequent users with each, which warrant additional consideration.

In a qualitative piece of research[45] where non/infrequent users were asked to switch their mode of transport to rail for a week, the following observations were made about the different modes that could be used to access the station:

Car – This was a popular choice, but costs and security concerns were often raised. The security concerns related both to leaving the car unattended and concerns about personal security when using the car parks late at night. Interestingly, many of those participating in the research were unaware that season-tickets for car parking can be bought at a discounted rate.

Bus – Barriers that were frequently mentioned were 'poor image' and 'lack of familiarity'. For non users the task of having to gather information on a service they weren't familiar with was a significant disincentive to travelling to the station by bus.

Cycling – Non-users thought that the option of cycling to the station was one to aspire to, but good intentions were often outweighed by practical considerations such as the need to carry luggage and poor weather conditions. Concerns were also raised about the security of parking facilities and train companies' policies about carrying bicycles on trains.

Walking – Even those non-users that were open to the idea of walking to the station raised the same practical reservations as for cycling.

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[42] Integrated Transport – Perception, reality, Passenger Focus and ATOC, 2010

[43] Ibid

[44] Integrated Transport – Perception, reality, Passenger Focus and ATOC, 2010

[45] Ibid

10 - Conclusions

Having reviewed the available evidence it is clear that whilst a majority of passengers choose to walk to the station, a large number rely heavily on the car to get there – be that as a passenger or a driver. For those passengers, the most pressing concerns are ones of cost, being able to get a space and security. The latter two also being important for those passengers that cycle to the station. For those that already travel to the station by bus, and for those that would like to, the key issues are ones of suitable connection times and frequency, as both have a marked impact on convenience.

A lot of good work is already being done by the industry to improve the different modes of access to stations, but to cement these efforts Passenger Focus would recommend that following considerations be taken into account by the department for transport when tendering future rail franchises:

1. The provision of additional car and cycle parking spaces - particularly where existing provision is over-subscribed and public transport provision is poor.

2. There should be a requirement for bidders to commit to pilot station travel plan schemes in the first year of the franchise with rollout more widely from year two and throughout the life of the franchise. Pilot stations should include a range of station types.

3. Bidders should be required to demonstrate how they will work with local authorities, transport providers and other agencies to improve accessibility to stations by all modes. Where identifiably beneficial schemes for passengers can be delivered by other partners, they should be both encouraged and their future assured. The franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

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putting passengers first