



Transport integration in Scotland

– what passengers want

June 2014

Forewords

Passenger Focus

Passenger Focus maintains that travel by public transport should be as easy as possible for passengers. We knew from previous research that many passengers are reluctant to make integrated journeys, as they expect that it will be more complicated, stressful and expensive than using the car.

Almost all rail journeys passengers make are actually integrated, often with other stages (whether bus, another rail leg, car, taxi, ferry, cycle or on foot) at each end. It is very important that the passenger's experience is considered for the entire journey, rather than just the rail element. Simply improving the train section of the journey will not be sufficient.

Passenger Focus is in a unique position within the industry in having no vested interest other than trying to secure the best possible deal for passengers. We were pleased to work jointly with Transport Scotland to look at passenger experiences and perceptions from four stations in Scotland. They provide good case studies for some nationwide issues. The findings are relevant to these stations, throughout Scotland and in the rest of Great Britain.

Anthony Smith
Chief Executive
Passenger Focus

Transport Scotland

Transport Scotland is the national transport agency for Scotland. We are working to encourage sustainable transport choices and to make public and active transport an attractive alternative to the private car.

The Invitation to Tender for the next ScotRail franchise focused on all aspects of the journey experience, including improvements to the passenger environment, on-board services, frequency improvements and reductions to journey times between key cities. Plans are in place for major projects, including the Highland Main Line, rail improvements, the Aberdeen-Inverness rail improvements and the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme. We will also create new journey opportunities through the delivery of the new Borders Railway and the £30 million Scottish Stations Fund, as part of the Scottish Government's £5 billion spend on rail in the current rail investment period (Control Period 5, 2014-2019).

In addition, there are existing incentives to passengers to make integrated rail journeys, through car parking availability at rail stations, timetables aligned with those of bus and ferry services and integrated ticketing products, including PlusBus and Rail&Sail.

Rail passenger numbers are growing, and we see an opportunity to encourage greater rail use through improvements to rail's connectivity with other modes of transport. Our work with Passenger Focus and TNS has resulted in greater insight than ever before into the views of rail users and non-users on rail integration. The report brings to light some of the key reasons why some continue to choose cars over more sustainable modes of transport and how modal shift can be encouraged in future.

This report will be a valuable addition to our growing evidence base on the role that greater integration can have in achieving modal shift and it will be useful also to the rail industry in Scotland in its aims to maintain rail growth and to improve passenger satisfaction. It will inform future thinking and action to help realise the Scottish Government's aims to reduce emissions, reduce congestion and ensure sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

Aidan Grisewood
Director of Rail
Transport Scotland

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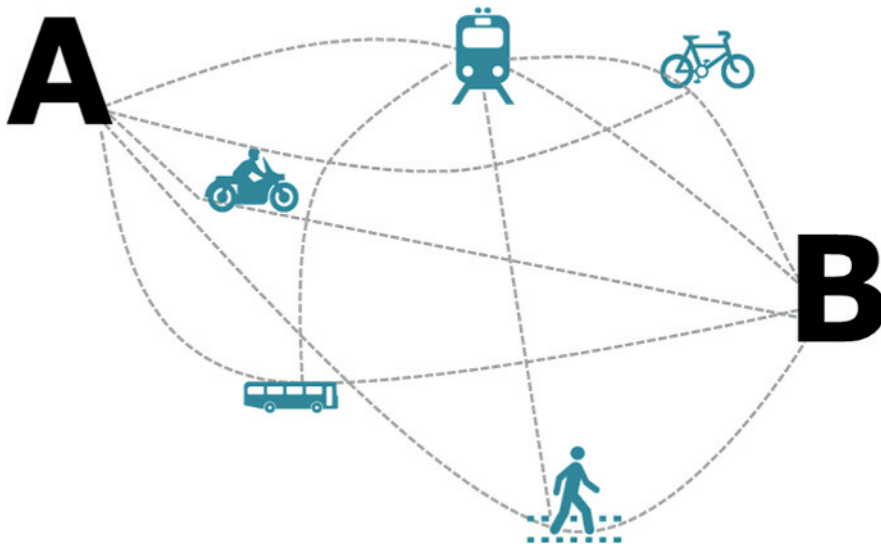


1. Executive summary

The Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy¹ sets out three strategic outcomes for Scotland, to:

- improve journey times and connections
- reduce emissions
- improve quality, accessibility and affordability.

Transport Scotland aims to improve links to rail from other transport modes in Scotland, and across the border, to help make public transport a more attractive option for those travelling for work and for leisure. A multi-modal journey allows a passenger to move from A to B with more than one journey leg and perhaps more than one mode of transport. Good transport integration offers seamless, convenient journeys with well-timed connections. A greater shift to more sustainable, integrated journeys will help to reduce emissions and congestion and the conclusions of this research study will inform future transport policy and investment decisions.



1.1 Key findings

Perceptions and experiences of integrated transport

The research found that expectations of integrated journeys were often low, and passengers preferred to avoid them where they could. Integrated journeys that involved more modes of transport and stages of travel were perceived to be more risky, stressful and more costly. The perceptions were not only fuelled by any personal experiences on public transport, but also by other people's experiences and news coverage about transport disruptions. Thus, it seemed common sense to avoid the 'gamble' of complex or multi-stage journeys by public transport and take the car.

¹ 'Scotland's National Transport Strategy', Dec 2006

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/157751/0042649.pdf>

See also <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/door-to-door-action-plan> referenced on p.4

Where integrated journeys made sense

However, there were many simple and/or routine integrated journeys which passengers made with minimal effort and hassle. This evidence shows that steps taken to create a more consistently seamless door-to-door travel experience - and to communicate about them to passengers - will help overcome negative perceptions.

The need to promote rail travel as part of the overall strategy

This research found that barriers to rail travel needed to be overcome before integrated journeys can be more widely considered across the general public. Currently, there is an issue of gaps between the *perception* of rail travel and the *reality* of the experience. However, rail is favoured in the research – with those tasked with ‘giving rail a go’ more openminded to its benefits – which has revealed opportunities for promoting rail use at times when personal car use is less convenient. In doing so, there will be a need to challenge the car’s strong status as the default benchmark of ‘good travel’ among infrequent/non-public transport users. This is more challenging in rural areas where there is an even stronger tendency towards the car given the lower frequency of transport provision at both peak and off-peak times.

Being ‘greener’

There was no strong support for travelling more sustainably by public transport and minimising use of the car. Greener travel is unlikely to be given status unless personal priorities are met. Decisions on journeys were based on ‘individual ease’ – the need to make journeys as simple and as effortless as possible. Current circumstances make car journeys the far more appealing option over integrated transport.

Passenger needs and priorities

Convenience, speed and cost were key considerations for a satisfactory travel experience, with a slightly differing emphasis placed on each depending on the individual, or the circumstance for the journey. These priorities need to be reviewed in light of different integrated transport combinations to ensure all needs are met for more consistently seamless transitions. Areas for particular attention are:

- the need to consider those who are less experienced in rail travel or are making unfamiliar integrated journeys, such as with information provision and the scheduling of platform changes between trains
- the particular needs of cyclists and those travelling with luggage
- co-ordinated and timely communications between transport providers – the negative impacts have been highlighted by specific passenger experiences, such as those travelling to make ferry connections for a holiday.

The potential for integrated travel

There were four key areas for attention which will enhance the experience of integrated travel for passengers and potential passengers:

- information - to give passengers the tools to proactively plan their journeys and make them smoother and less stressful overall
- travel environment - to improve the comfort and security of rail and integrated travel (note that environment in terms of 'greener' issues are dealt with separately in section 3.3 of the report)
- infrastructure and service provision - to make rail and integrated travel as accessible and as tailored as possible around passengers' needs – for example, car parking for those in more remote areas with limited access to the station
- ticketing, costs and fares - to simplify the purchasing process for passengers by putting in place new technology to enhance convenience and to benefit passengers with potential cost-savings and greater flexibility of available transport options.

For those who rarely or never used rail or other public transport, needs centred more on overcoming environmental barriers on rail and public transport generally. Security and the cleanliness and comfort on trains were key.

More frequent rail users were interested in improvements which would refine the quality of routine and less routine integrated journeys by convenience, comfort and time. They welcomed advances in ticketing technology as they could see the benefits they would bring.

Given the differing outlooks and needs of existing and potential passengers, all four areas should be treated with equal importance. Progress will help to make rail a more positive and credible choice overall, for more journeys and for more people. This will also help to address the needs of passengers who feel more vulnerable when travelling, including women and older people.

2. Research background

This research was jointly commissioned and funded by Transport Scotland and Passenger Focus, which is the independent passenger watchdog, representing the interests of rail passengers across Great Britain. The research was conducted by TNS.

Recent consideration of integrated transport in the UK

A number of factors pertaining to integrated travel are outlined in the Department for Transport 'Door-to-door action plan', first published in March 2013 and subsequently updated in December 2013. The strategy was devised in order to improve integrated travel by focusing on four key areas:

- the quality and availability of information
- smart, integrated ticketing to make transport easier to use
- improving connections and customer confidence in integrated travel
- enhancing transport facilities to meet the needs of passengers.

In January 2010, research was undertaken by Passenger Focus² to explore the perceptions and experiences of integrated travel. This research discovered a number of potential barriers to integrated travel such as cost, convenience and perceptions around journey length. In addition, it was found that perceptions of difficulties associated with rail travel did not correlate with reality.

Understanding integrated travel in the Scottish context

Since then, Passenger Focus and Transport Scotland have identified a need to undertake work with specific reference to Scottish transport provision. Previous surveys³ in Scotland had provided some contextual information into the nature of integrated travel behaviour in Scotland, having found that integrated travel journeys (involving trains or other transport) was relatively low and a sizeable proportion of these trips involved a portion of the journey taken by car, rather than by public transport.

The desire was for further exploration of integrated travel behaviour and attitudes in Scotland to build on this data to inform future transport policy and investment decisions.

2.1 Research objectives

The study was designed specifically to obtain the views of users and potential users of rail travel around areas felt to have the most potential for increasing integrated travel.

² 'Integrated transport: perception and reality' – Jan 2010, Passenger Focus
<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/integrated-transport-perception-and-reality>

³ Scottish Household Surveys 2007-11 and National Travel Survey

The broad aims of the research were to increase insight around passenger perceptions and expectations, with specific objectives around exploring the following:

- the type of journeys and integrated journeys made and decision making and preferences around this
- the gap between perception and reality of both rail and integrated travel and the differences in views and expectations of frequent and less frequent/rare rail users
- the extent to which integrated travel is recognised as a priority for improvement by passengers (and potential passengers) and specific issues relating to this
- how to make integrated travel more attractive in order to encourage modal shift from less sustainable (personal) car travel – and understanding the extent to which improvements would encourage greater rail use
- how to engage and work with stakeholders to make improvements to the door-to-door journey.

2.2 Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was used to obtain views on rail and integrated travel in Scotland.

Eight focus groups were undertaken as part of this research, with each being 1½ hours in duration. These were forums of around six to seven participants where personal experiences and views of rail and integrated travel were explored within the group.

This discussion was assisted with a 'travel diary' which all participants were required to fill in, the week before the group. This was intended to focus their attention on the more detailed aspects of the journeys they made and how they found it. Participants who were infrequent or rare users of public transport were also tasked to make a rail journey to prepare them for the discussion.

Figure 1. Travel diaries

Rare/non-rail travellers were required to make a rail journey and record their experience

My Travel Diary

Getting from A to B and everything in between

Pre-task before your focus group

Your task: Recording your journeys

- We'd like you to record in detail, each single A/B journey you take that involves a type of transport (can be train, car, bus, coach, cycling). **Please don't include any journeys that were purely travelling by car.**
- We've designed a little diary for you to fill in to make this easy to record and so that you can carry it with you when you are out and about.
- Here is an example & explanation of how to fill it in. We've made up this journey so your entries will of course be different and specific to you! Use as many pages as you need to.

Date	Purpose	Start time	End time	Transport & connections used (record all)	Ease of making the journey*	Comments - tell us about the journey and how you felt during and after taking it
27th Jan	Collecting children	16:30	17:50	Bus and train	2	Had difficulty getting buggy off bus and through train station so missed onward connection. Happied as children were restless but was offered seat on train.

* This score is your judgement of how easy it was to make connections between the different modes of travel. Use the key below to choose what score you use.

Task A: Taking a different Journey: 1: Planning your trip

We know that you rarely use the train as part of your travel routines, even though you could. We're asking you to make a journey at some point in the week/week-end that involves taking the train at some point. Where you can combine this rail trip with other modes of transport such as the bus, coach, taxi, cycling or walking.

Below is an example of how to fill your diary in for this task. This entry is made up and your entries will of course detail your experience

Date - time journey started and purpose of journey	
How you decided to travel/ what types of transport to take, what information you had or needed, what else happened/you saw/other things that interested you/other stuff	
What do you expect this journey to be like? What's why and how you are feeling about this, what you've noticed about travelling	

The focus groups used a combination of group exercises and stimulus materials to assist with discussion and expand on thoughts around potential areas of improvement for integrated travel. These included:

- flip-chart exercises to elicit more spontaneous views and feelings on travel
- sort-card exercises to prompt more detailed responses on aspects of the travel experience (for example, timetabling and ticketing) and the potential areas for improvement (for example, integrated smart cards) – these were also useful to identify the areas of prioritisation from the passenger perspective
- an exercise whereby participants were encouraged to come up with the ideal measures that they would put in place for their local area in order to encourage greater rail and integrated travel.

The qualitative approach

A qualitative approach was specifically chosen for this study to complement the existing quantitative data around integrated travel behaviour. In contrast to a quantitative approach, which seeks to provide statistically valid measurements, the focus in qualitative research is on gathering insights and building on understanding through discussion.

It should be noted that qualitative research relies on smaller samples than numerically-based quantitative studies. Since the sample is generated from a niche audience base, it cannot be projected onto the overall population due to sample selection, interviewing methods and sample size.

2.3 Research sample

The sample for the focus groups was based on rail users, segmented by frequency of rail use in Scotland over the past 12 months. There were two types of segments, with four groups of each:

- frequent and semi-frequent rail users
- infrequent and rare rail users.

These were defined as follows, with a roughly equal representation of each type of passenger within each group:

- **‘frequent’**: travel on a weekly basis
- **‘semi-frequent’**: travel on rail at least once a month
- **‘infrequent’**: travel on rail less than six times a year
- **‘rare’**: travel on rail no more than three times, or less, in the past year.

Participants for the research were drawn from four locations: Paisley, Perth, Dunbar and Aviemore. With input from Regional Transport Partnerships, each location was selected by Transport Scotland to provide a representative picture of Scotland, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Representative sampling locations

Paisley	Perth	Dunbar	Aviemore
Three local rail stations, buses and airport link with good car/taxi/walking/cycling integration.	Typical example of a rail-rail interchange. Anecdotally perceived to be poorly integrated with bus service and town centre.	Passenger profile is close to that of many stations across the rail network. Serves Edinburgh commuter and leisure.	Feeder station for Inverness and beyond. Strong tourist profile.

A total of eight focus groups were conducted in late February 2014, with two groups in each location split between frequent/semi-frequent rail users and infrequent/rare rail users. Each group included a mix of respondents in terms of age, gender and social grade.

Further sampling criteria were applied across the groups as follows:

- a mix of attitudes to rail, with outright rejecters of rail travel excluded
- representation of participants with different experiences of different transport options and of walking and cycling as part of the journeys they made
- a mix of passengers making journeys for different reasons including commutes to work, business trips, journeys for education/study, in addition to journeys made for leisure purposes.

3. Perceptions and experiences of integrated transport

Integrated journeys are ones which involve more than one stage of travel, whether this is by the same or different forms of public transport, car, bicycle, or on foot.

This section highlights both positive and negative experiences of integrated travel and explores where there are differences between perception and the realities of integrated travel involving rail, which need to be addressed.

3.1 Perceptions of integrated travel

Expectations of integrated journeys were very low, particularly those that involved more types of transport and stages of travel. They were viewed to be:

- time consuming with more waiting and transfer time between connections, as well as the need to rely on slower modes such as buses
- involving a high degree of effort, for example, the need to plan in advance (a more complex task if multiple stages and/or transport use are involved) or greater physical exertion required for making the connection between stages
- potentially stressful with little prior knowledge or control over all elements en route or at the end destination to ensure a comfortable experience
- unpredictable and ‘a gamble’ with a high potential for upsetting plans if connections are missed and delays accumulate
- expensive given the need to pay more fares between different transport and the possibility of unexpected costs ‘when things go wrong’.

Geography or local factors also served to heighten barriers to the idea of integrated travel. When people did not live (or work) close or within easy access to a bus stop or rail station, it reinforced the view that car was the only viable option for making a door-to-door journey. However, this was not the case for all:

“For me, it has to be the car because the train does not stop in East Linton, so I’d have to go by car into Dunbar if I was going to use it on a regular basis and then my work is so far from the train station. The best fit is the car, but in an ideal world, I would take the train everyday.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

This was a notable issue in rural areas where there were greater distances between train stations and bus stops and a lower frequency of service provision across the different transport types, as discussed later in this report.

The general feeling was that integrated journeys did not satisfy the need for simplicity and ease and that they introduced unnecessary complexity and risk.

“You try to make it as easy as possible for yourself, don’t you? I don’t know why you would look at getting one method of transport and then getting another one. [You go for] whatever is easiest.”

“You only do it if you have no option and you have to get on a bus and a train – that’s the only time I’d do it. It’s double the price paying two fares.”
Aviemore, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (male)

The underlying assumption was of increased risk of ‘things going wrong’ the more stages of an integrated journey there were. Any poor experiences on public transport, (whether personal or reported by others) only served to fuel negative expectations. This was reinforced by negative media coverage when there were transport disruptions.

Case study: Integrated travel is time consuming and expensive

Karen lives in Aviemore and only has use of a car every second weekend. In order to visit her brother and niece in Auldearn, she takes a train to Inverness before taking two bus connections, followed by a walk to get to her brother’s house. The whole journey takes two hours, compared to 40 minutes if she does it by car and is “expensive”. She finds the experience frustrating especially when she knows that she has to make the same journey on the way back. She has tried to investigate better alternative routes by public transport but says it’s “a nightmare” to do so. When she can, she asks her brother to meet her in Inverness to “avoid the hassle”.

The extent to which indirect experience is able to strongly influence attitudes and behaviour is backed up by the theory of *behavioural economics*⁴ which holds that the events that come more readily to mind are perceived more likely to happen.

“I don’t like the thought of ‘oh oh, this train is running late, it’s going to have a knock-on effect’ – that puts me off that kind of journey. I would be more at ease thinking I had half an hour so it’s giving you a bit of time if your train is late... with the train I have this fear of missing the next one and having to wait an hour.”
Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

The desire to build in contingency to journey times where multiple forms of transport or stages were involved was a strong indication of low expectations. Despite best-laid plans, it was not uncommon for people to feel that things could still go drastically wrong, as this comment highlights:

⁴ Behavioural economics highlights how behaviour is partially governed by short cuts or ‘rules of thumb’ in order to help us make decisions and judgements on a daily basis, which can lead to systematic biases in our thinking

“As much as you build in contingencies, let’s say you’ve got 30 minutes between changes, or 20 minutes and it will only take you five minutes to walk from one platform to another, or walk from the taxi rank to the platform... it just needs a 10 minute or five minute delay somewhere and suddenly your window of opportunity becomes less – and if you’ve got a fixed ticket because that was what was most cost effective, then you can see that suddenly adds to the stress. It’s one of those balancing acts. I’m prepared to put up with the stress on the chance that it will work out.”

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

Thus, unless circumstance dictated otherwise, it seemed common sense to avoid any complex or multi-stage journeys by public transport, where possible, and take the car.

“There is an element of a gamble because you are relying on someone else. If there’s too many gambles I’ll get in the car because then it’s my fault if I’m late or delayed.”

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passengers

3.2 General experiences of integrated travel

The research included participants who made integrated journeys on a regular and less regular basis. Those who made integrated journeys did so for a number of reasons:

- due to a lack of driving skills or car ownership
- financial constraints dictating a need for taking a cheaper mode of transport
- the need to avoid the frustration and stress of car travel at peak times, such as on busy arterial routes in and out of cities
- driving being impractical for journeys where parking is an issue or when alcohol is involved
- a general preference for the experience of public transport over the car.

Negative experiences

Some of those who made these journeys reported negative experiences involving excessive journey times, delay, uncertainty and discomfort, in addition to ‘the effort’ required to organise a trip.

“I went to Carlisle and it was bus, train and then my daughter picked me up. It was fine - but it took over two hours!”

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

“Connecting times is the tricky part. You have to make sure there’s enough time between each.”

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

Those who lived in rural or semi-rural areas were very keenly aware of the issues of integrated travel. Longer distances between stations and stops and less frequently-running services made public transport inflexible for their needs.

For example, in Aviemore, participants spoke of limited service timetables which made it difficult, even 'impossible', to arrive at destinations at the times they needed for work or for appointments. These issues were further compounded when making changes or switching between different modes of transport, with too much time between transitions adding to the overall journey time. Conversely, the situation could be too little time as to prevent a comfortable switch. All this served to further strengthen opinion in favour of the car.

"You can't get to Inverness before 10am on public transport unless you get the bus that takes the kids to college and that leaves at 7am in the morning from Newtonmore and Kingussie. So if you have appointments before 11am, you can't make it on public transport."

"Tonight I can't get home to Kingussie – I've had to arrange a lift home because I've come on the train and there's no train back! It's not easy!"
Aviemore, infrequent/rare passengers (female)

Positive experiences

However, there were also many simple and/or routine integrated journeys which passengers made and did not complain about. These were not perceived to be an issue or a compromise forced upon them by circumstance and included:

- simple journeys on familiar routes or to familiar destinations
- long distance journeys on rail where car might be otherwise discounted as an option
- journeys on established routes with highly integrated infrastructure such as the rail-airport connection in Paisley.

Integrated journeys, in these cases, were perceived positively either because they had become ingrained in the routine or they were so simple as to require little thought or planning. Familiarity, or a sense of 'having done something before', bred confidence and perceptions, shifted towards viewing these journeys as the norm. Whereas those who made journeys by public transport on an infrequent basis, or had to make a new or unfamiliar journey were more inclined towards low expectations. This was insightfully captured by one passenger who commented:

"If you're less familiar, you need to plan ahead more. Once you've done it, it will get easier."

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Sometimes it was the case that the benefits, over alternative options for travel, were very clear for these journeys having been informed by experiences of different (and far worse) options. This is highlighted by one participant's account of her integrated commute below:

“I used to make the journey I make now by car because the thought of taking three trains really put me off, but I’ve noticed recently that it really isn’t an issue and I would still take the train. The reality was better than I thought. I started taking the train because the bypass is so horrendous and at night my eyes would be tired. The train is just great. It’s really relaxing and you can do something, read something. All you can do in the car is listen to the radio.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

3.3 Decision making around choice of transport

A number of elements influenced decision making around how people made journeys, with participants reporting that they tailored their transport use to need and occasion.

The factors influencing decision making are listed below

Habit

Habit often lay behind decision making. Regardless of the reality, it was evident that people liked to maintain the status quo and were unwilling to trial alternatives, especially if they expected this to entail more time, effort and risk of problems.

Convenience and ease

Considerations around convenience or ease played a considerable role and were evaluated in terms of proximity of the station or stop to your home and destination, the simplicity of the journey and whether there were anticipated issues. Related to this were the decisions on the route or transport modes to take and whether there were any journey time pressures to be factored in.

Comfort and stress

Related to convenience and ease were anticipated comfort and stress levels – also a strong aspect influencing the thought process around what transport people chose to take. For example, a preference for taking a ‘more comfortable’ train over a bus because of more chance of seating and legroom; or avoiding the bus during bad weather due to the need to walk or wait at bus stops.

Parents often wanted to avoid the stress and hassle of taking children on public transport. Those travelling with items such as bicycles, luggage or bags wanted to minimise the energy and effort required, in carrying items and ease of storage.

Travel time of day

The time of travel was a consideration in terms of anticipated issues around congestion, parking, or not wanting to be crowded on public transport. The need to travel ‘after dark’ also meant that some preferred to take the car instead of public transport for safety reasons.

Cost

Cost of travel was very much top of mind and affected which modes of transport people chose to take, such as senior citizen bus pass holders or those opting for a 'cheaper' bus route over the train. Rail was also deliberately chosen for cost reasons, such as when passengers knew to take advantage of advance fares or deals on 'first class', or when long-distance rail travel made sense because it was cheaper than driving. A common reason for taking the car was because it was cheaper than buying multiple tickets on public transport.

"If you travel in the morning by car, it's horrible."

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent rail passenger (female)

"I've got two small kids so it's easier to pop them in the car and drive. I took my little boy on the train and he enjoyed it. It was something he'd never done. It was 11am on the Tuesday and it was fine but I wouldn't fancy it in the weekend. It's too much hassle for me with a double buggy and my wee boy who's two and a half wants out of the buggy to look out the window."

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

"If you've got a lot of shopping, how do you get it back on the train? It's really quite inconvenient. I have to get my husband to pick me up at the station."

"I could pay for parking for five hours in the centre of Glasgow for the same price of the train with the kids."

Paisley, infrequent/rare passengers (female)

"If myself and my partner take the train to Inverness, you're looking at close on £30. Whereas taking the car is at least half that in petrol."

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Different factors took precedence depending on the person or the nature of the journey. For example, trade-offs between time and cost were sometimes made depending on how time critical a journey was. Some always chose to take the fastest or what they felt to be the most comfortable means of travel regardless of cost, whilst those on a tighter budget favoured a cheaper route over a faster route if cost differences were significant.

"The train is slightly more expensive than the bus, but it's so much more comfortable."

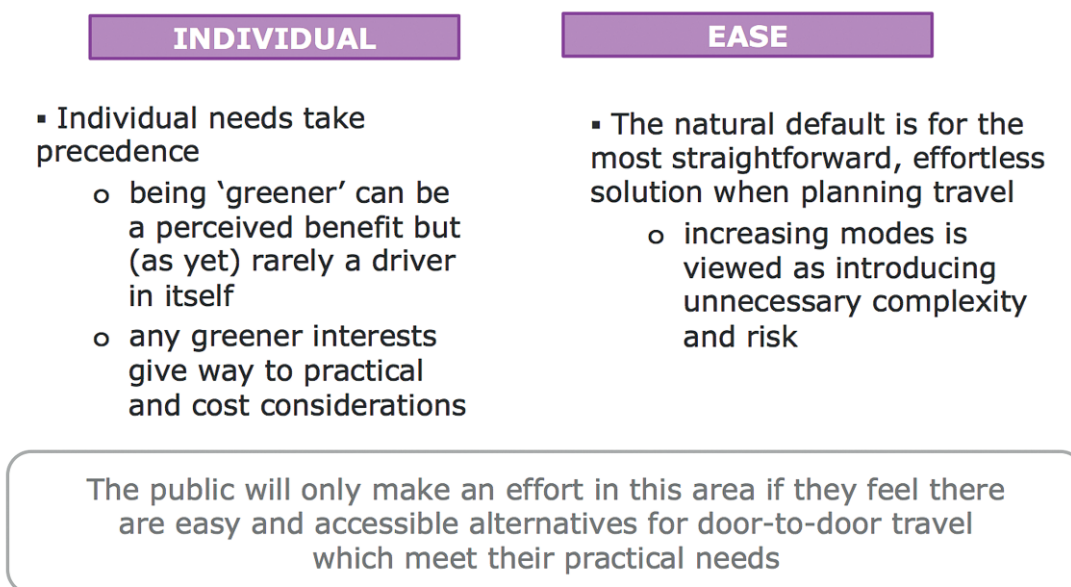
Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

Attitudes to sustainable travel

It was clear that there was no strong support for travelling more sustainably on public transport and very few participants expressed a desire to avoid or minimise car use for environmental reasons.

Participants saw no compelling mandate for pursuing more integrated travel. Passengers put their needs first and this centred on making journeys as simple and effortless as possible, whether this involved car or public transport. Figure 3 highlights how any motivations around being more environmentally friendly swiftly fell secondary to personal considerations around convenience, ease and cost.

Figure 3. Passengers put their needs first



When prompted about reducing personal car travel, participants spoke about the need for there to be some financial incentive to go 'greener' or placed the onus back on transport operators to prove their own efforts in this area. Others were cynical about train operators' motivations for using sustainability as an angle for encouraging more people onto the trains, demonstrating some fatigue around messages in this area.

"You put your own needs first and then if you were to weigh it up, it's just six of one and half a dozen of the other. I think if you were conscious of it, you would go for the greener option – but for me and everybody I know, it wouldn't come into the thought processes at all."

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

"It would have to be proved that the train companies were not just jumping on the 'green band wagon' It would have to be: 'we're green, look at what we are doing', rather than 'why don't you just use us? We're putting the prices up but we're 'green'."

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

"I think people would love to do something that doesn't harm the environment, but this society runs on fuel and it won't benefit you personally."

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

3.4 Perceptions and experiences of rail travel

The findings show that there are opportunities for encouraging greater use of rail over less sustainable modes of travel, such as personal car use. Achieving progress in this area will pave the way for more integrated travel.

Rail travel emerged favourably from the research in terms of speed, reliability and comfort. However, it was evident that there were issues of perception, depending on exposure or frequency of use, which need to be addressed to encourage greater use of rail.

Figures 4 and 5 summarise the contrasting perspectives of different participants and how perceptions are informed strongly by experience.

Figure 4. Frequency of rail travel is linked to positive perceptions of rail use

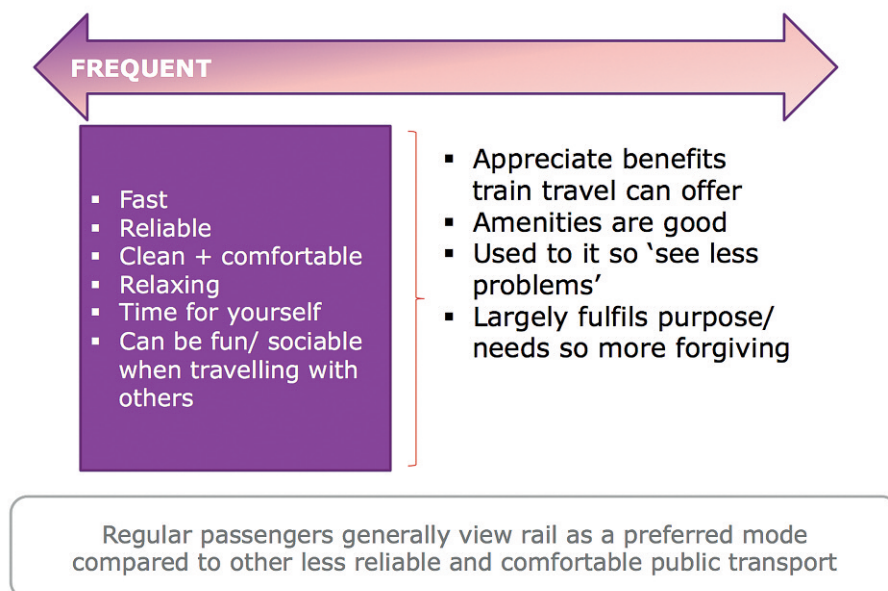
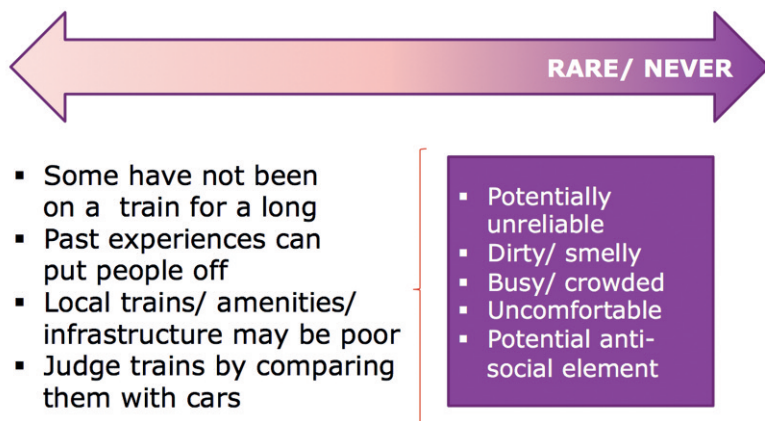


Figure 5. Travellers that rarely take the train have more negative perceptions



Perceptions persist and attitudes harden if views are left unchallenged
– and so the cycle perpetuates...

Perceptions of frequent/semi-frequent passengers

These passengers were quick to praise the advantages of train travel in terms of being:

- fast - covering greater distances than other forms of transport in a shorter time
- generally reliable, smooth and efficient
- clean and comfortable
- relaxing, in terms of allowing the passenger to 'switch off' or engage in other 'time out' activities such as reading
- a chance to catch up with work or business activities, with access to tables, wifi and business/quiet coaches
- a sociable environment to share with friends on trips away, or fun for children.

"I like trains, it's relaxing and if you're going in a group, you can all sit together. It's sociable."

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

For these passengers, train travel was generally acknowledged as being ideal for routine journeys with fairly fixed schedules where spontaneity was not required. The benefits of rail use were evident for peak-time travel and for local and longer distance journeys. Because they used rail more regularly and it fulfilled their needs, they were more forgiving of negative incidences.

“I always use the train for work because it is much quicker...”

“...I like not having the hassle of having to drive through Edinburgh and getting stuck for hours on the bypass. I like sitting on the train and reading my book.”
Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (female)

“The train is relaxing, you don’t feel you’re actually travelling. In a bus or car, it’s much more stressful. There’s a buffet car, toilets, you can stretch your legs.”
Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

Perceptions of infrequent/rare passengers

The perceptions of these passengers show the need to close gaps between perception and the reality of rail travel. This can be done by encouraging passengers to try travelling by train.

Limited exposure to rail meant that some had grown increasingly remote to the notion of rail as an attractive and suitable mode of travel for their needs. An extreme illustration of the extent to which attitudes can become hardened to rail or public transport, was one Perth-based participant who opted to drive through the night to Wembley, London, for a football match, rather than take the train. He drove home to Scotland that same night after the match. He preferred to do this despite facing high petrol costs and a lack of sleep.

For many of these participants, rail was seldom used because it did not meet their needs in terms of local infrastructure and proximity, or they had a car which meant that it did not make sense to incur the additional expense of public transport. This lack of direct current experiences meant there was no opportunity for views to be challenged otherwise. Negative media reports also had a role to play in reinforcing unfavourable perceptions.

“I am a very impatient person and when you go to Inverness, you’ve got to plan your day. On the train, you’ve got to think what time you’re coming back, so you’re limited. Whereas when you’ve got your car, you think – this is great. I can do what I like. Trains are expensive as well.”
Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

“I would never take the train. It’s dirty, you can’t be sure of getting a seat, even when you book it. Trains are so full that you have to stand like sardines next to the toilets. If a train like that would crash, it would give me a scare.”
Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

In addition, older passengers, or those with young children, felt more vulnerable embarking and disembarking trains at busy times. This was also the case with other public transport, such as buses.

“Your everyday commuter is rude. It’s a rush to get on and off.”
Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

A need to address the wide gap between perceptions of rail travel and the reality was apparent when participants (infrequent or rare rail travellers in the sample) were easily persuaded of the benefits of rail travel on further exposure to trains during the research process.

After being tasked with making a train journey before attending the group discussions, these participants were pleasantly surprised to discover how easily their former negative expectations around cost, cleanliness, comfort, and efficiency were overturned. As a result of this experience, their outlook shifted to become more similar to that of more frequent rail passengers, as illustrated by the accounts below.

"I remember trains years ago used to be filthy things and there was a cleaner who got on at [Glasgow] Central as we were getting off. It wasn't busy and I would do that again if I was going up to Glasgow. It wasn't hugely expensive either."
Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

"It was cheaper than travelling by car..."
Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

"I arrived at the station by car... talked to the girl and bought a day-return ticket. She showed me the return times. I bought a newspaper, looked at the screen, walked to the platform, got on the train and then it took off. It was very smooth. The train was clean and warm and comfortable. And the return journey was as good as the way out."
Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Some were fully converted to rail travel and were relieved to find that they did not have to worry about battling traffic congestion on certain routes when they could take the train instead. They could clearly see the advantages of rail for certain occasions and how sitting on a train could add to the enjoyment of their journey.

"I got a taxi to Canal Street [rail station]. It was pouring with rain and I thought 'oh my god, waiting on train?!' But there was a nice shelter and a wee seat and I could buy my ticket under the shelter. And then the train arrived before it was due and I was really surprised. The train was lovely. It was warm, comfortable and clean, cleaner than buses and not too busy. It would make me think about getting the train again because you are stressed getting into Glasgow [by car]."
Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

"After taking the train journey, I would say I definitely prefer the train - you don't have the hassle of the A9. I was clamped to the window - put it that way - I think it's great. I love a train journey, you don't have to drive yourself, you can move around, you see a different view every 10 metres. It's an adventure!"
Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

“I enjoyed it... I was looking outside and seeing everything differently. I discussed with a lady opposite how you see things from a different perspective on the train. You see the back gardens of houses... but not just the gardens, the countryside, the rivers, everything – it’s transfixing.”

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

It should be noted that not all who were encouraged to ‘give train a go’ had a positive experience or moved to change their point of view. There were many infrequent rail travellers who were generally reluctant to use rail or public transport due to negative perceptions or past bad experiences and this outlook continued to be justified by existing issues.

One notable example is from a participant in Paisley who had a bad experience with anti-social elements on the train in the past which made her reluctant to take trains. Her experience of train travel as part of the research reinforced this issue and is detailed in the case study below.

Case study: Anti-social behaviour on trains

Carol is in her 60s and from Paisley. She was returning from a pleasant lunch and shopping day out in Glasgow when she had an unexpected bad experience on the train at about 5pm in the afternoon. A fight broke out in her carriage and Carol found herself pushed up against the driver’s door. She saw clothes being torn, blood, heard screaming and saw a girl trampled by panicking passengers trying to escape. She was very frightened and now rarely takes the train, preferring to drive instead. Her husband is worried for her safety and has effectively banned her from the train.

Unfortunately, Carol had another bad experience on the journey she was pre-tasked to make for this research which has further put her off trains. She felt intimidated by a loud group of young men who had been drinking alcohol, which she thinks was on their way to a night out. As this was around 6pm and not late in the evening, it was completely unexpected.

This example highlights the importance of tackling local issues as a matter of priority, as part of the greater move towards encouraging train travel - and is discussed again later in this report in the section on local issues.

3.5 Perceptions and experiences of rail compared to buses

Buses fared less favourably compared to rail travel. Observations made in this research on buses were based on both experiences and perceptions, although it should be noted that there was no requirement to make a bus journey as part of the involvement in the group discussions.

Frequent bus users took buses due to financial constraints or for local journeys, if they did not have a car. There were also others who used buses to get to the rail station. Buses were generally not viewed as a desired mode of travel, especially for non-local or long-distance journeys, due to:

- experiences of poor reliability and a lack of information at (some) bus stops about next available services or delays
- speed - due to road congestion, routes and the need to pick up passengers
- comfort - with passengers reporting feeling 'cramped' (with less room for legs and bags) and cold
- anti-social elements - a common complaint and a more notable issue in the smaller environs of a bus, in comparison to the train.

"If the train is late for any reason, it tells you when it's going to be there. You can arrive on time for a bus and it doesn't show up and you think it has already gone."
Perth, frequent and semi frequent rail passenger

"There are social problems [on the bus]. You get people on mobile phones, cursing and swearing and shouting... unclean. That applies to trains too."
Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

"You can move around on the train. On the bus you can't get away from unsavoury characters and drunks."
Aviemore, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

3.6 Perceptions and experiences of rail compared to car use

Infrequent rail or public transport users often drove out of habit, admitting it was easy to 'jump' in the car when it was close to hand, especially as it did not require thinking or planning. The car was generally favoured by most for the freedom, convenience and comfort that it offered. Participants praised the ease and commonsense of using the car when travelling with others, when shopping out of town, or when running errands, as illustrated by comments below from both frequent and infrequent/rare rail users:

"If I'm going to Inverness, I wouldn't just go to the one place. I put lots of things together as much as I can in the one trip. The car's just way more handy."

“If you want to shop in the outskirts, it means getting a bus – it wouldn’t cost me anything [with a senior citizen bus pass] but it’s just more convenient to take the car if you needed shopping in any of the retail parks or supermarkets.”

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passengers (female)

“If you’re doing a journey on your own and it’s in the city centre then you’ll jump in the train. But as soon as there are two of you, you might as well get in the car.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

Restricted spontaneity of travel on trains was a particular issue for wheelchair users who had to book trains 24 hours in advance, as noted by one passenger whose son was in a wheelchair.

“I’ve been with my son and his wheelchair where we just showed up at the station and it caused a lot of bother. That was ScotRail. They wanted to know what train we were coming home on and I said ‘I don’t know, we’re just going out for the day’... the guard was really reluctant to get the ramp out, it was a hassle. And that was his manual chair which is easy to get on the train [compared to] his mechanical chair.”

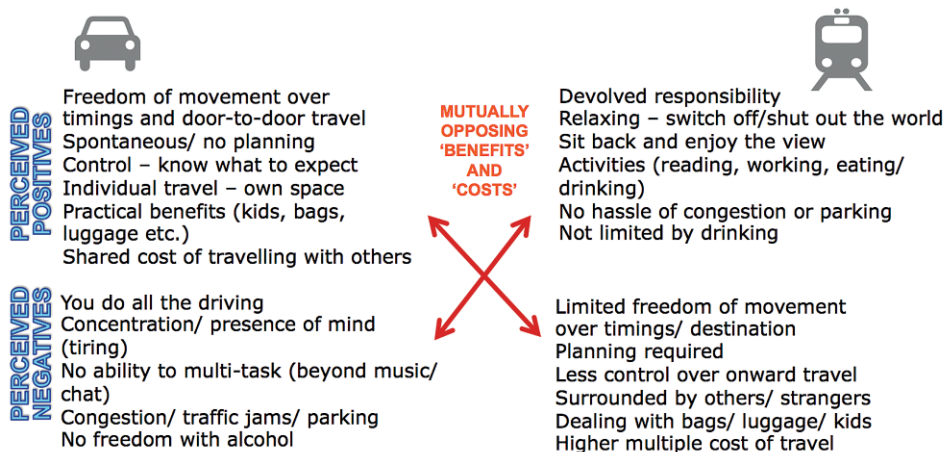
Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

A similar issue was faced by cyclists and is discussed further in section 4.2.

It is clear that rail cannot fully replace the freedom of movement and cost benefits that car travel can offer and should not seek to compete in the same domain. Rather, the differences between car and train travel should be viewed in terms of the differentiated benefits that both have for different occasions, as illustrated in Figure 6. Both have clear advantages and disadvantages which emerged from the discussions in the research:

Figure 6. Pros and cons of car compared to integrated rail travel

The problem lies in comparing train travel to car travel – they are not comparable and offer different benefits



Both 'positives' and 'negatives' are mutual and complement the different travel needs people have. Making train travel a 'positive' choice (rather than a necessity) reaffirms these clear benefits

This suggests that rail can be positioned and promoted as an attractive, viable and practical alternative for all, at times when car is less convenient, such as on evenings out or the morning commute to work.

“The train is great; you have 20 minutes to read your papers. It would be a waste of time sitting in my car because you can’t do anything.”

“I arrive at work more relaxed if I’ve been on the train.”
Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (female)

However, people’s attachment to driving was evident indicating the need to disrupt habitual thinking around the car (Figure 7) to open up more opportunities for rail. The advantages of car travel tended to be more front of mind – or were judged to far outweigh the disadvantages, which led to this being the easy default option. Existing rail users were more able to recognise the disadvantages of car travel and the benefits of rail travel for different types of journeys.

“On the weekend - I would go by car, because you’re not bound by train times, but for work - the train is great.”
Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent rail passenger (female)

In contrast, habits and negative perceptions of rail (or other public transport) had become so ingrained in the psyche of infrequent/rare rail users that some had concluded that the car was their only viable option for getting around and were difficult to persuade otherwise.

Figure 7. Challenging the status of cars among those less inclined to rely on public transport

TANGIBLE BENEFITS ARE COMPELLING...

BUT THERE ARE ALSO CLEAR PRACTICAL DISADVANTAGES

(Given that the benefits of other transport alternatives are not so front of mind, **THE CAR'S BENEFITS TEND TO OVERSHADOW THE NEGATIVES**)



There is a clear need for a strategy to disrupt mindsets and habitual decision making around taking the car

This needs to be combined with positioning rail as a viable and positive option rather than a back of mind compromise

3.7 Conclusions on perceptions and experiences of integrated transport

- Integrated journeys were sometimes found to add unnecessary complication, risk and time which led to passengers avoiding such journeys. However, there is also the issue of low expectations which compounds the issue for transport providers. In order to overcome barriers, the research has demonstrated how there is as much a need to address perceptions and attitudes - as there is a need for practical steps to improve specific aspects of the travel experience that have been identified as issues.
- Simple or routine integrated journeys were not perceived to be an issue which suggests these journeys can become 'the norm' if negative perceptions are overcome and steps are taken to ease access to transport and smooth the transition process.
- Rail has emerged from the research as a good way to travel - speedy, reliable and comfortable – gaining strong support from detractors who were tasked with 'giving it a go' in the research.
- This suggests there are opportunities for encouraging greater rail use by overturning negative perceptions and encouraging trial. Whilst, there is little motivation for putting sustainable travel (by public transport) before their own needs of cost, convenience and comfort there are clear advantages that rail could offer which makes it more appealing for certain times and occasions.
- In doing so, the car's status as the default benchmark of 'good travel' needs to be challenged among those who travel by rail less regularly. There is a need to foster greater openness to the possibilities on public transport, which could provide a better alternative for travel.

4. Passenger needs and priorities

A key aspect of the research was to identify passenger needs and priorities in the overall journey experience whether by rail or involving rail in combination with other transport. These passenger priorities provide further insight into why complex journeys across integrated transport modes tend to be avoided and highlights why personal car travel is still largely favoured over more complex means of integrated travel.

For the public to consider making more journeys by rail, integrated travel provision needs to be sympathetic to these needs and to build passenger confidence.

4.1 Core travel needs

To prioritise what future developments would be of real tangible benefit to passengers, it is important to firstly establish what travel needs are in general.

Three 'core needs' were identified: convenience, speed/time and cost, with each encompassing a variety of criteria that needed to be met for a satisfactory travel experience. It was evident that these 'core needs' underpinned decision-making around the plans people made to travel, and, as discussed earlier in this report, the relative importance of these needs varied by individual and the reason for travel.

Each of these 'core needs' are discussed in more detail below.

4.1.1 Convenience

In the context of the integrated transport experience, convenience means minimising energy and effort for the passenger. It also means having the freedom to tailor travel plans to personal needs as well as being able to adapt quickly as and when situations alter or plans change.

Passengers wanted convenience in terms of:

- contemplating when and how to travel
- the process of making detailed plans for travel
- having a choice of options to hand
- a smoother process
- a travel environment adapted to needs.

Contemplating when and how to travel

Passengers valued freedom and spontaneity when contemplating or making decisions for travel, which was why car use was so highly valued despite its drawbacks. For example, it was made clear in the focus group discussions that in rural areas, where there were limited services throughout the day, passengers were prevented from making journeys at times that were more suited to their schedules. Another common example was when passengers in Perth, Dunbar and Aviemore reported having to curtail weekend nights out due to the last train leaving earlier than during the week.

“Coming from Dundee, the last train to Dundee is 11.50pm and in the weekend it’s 10.10pm. Why on earth does the train stop so early in the weekend? Are they afraid of drunks or something?”

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

“If I go for a night out in Edinburgh, it’s the only time I take the train. But you have to get the last train back or take a taxi, so you have to finish whatever you are doing by 9.30pm. I don’t understand why there isn’t a later train.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

The process of making detailed plans for travel

Passengers wanted the tools for making travel plans to be clearly available and easy to use. In other words, knowing whether the information was available and not having to hunt it out. It was also important for it to be in a form that was accessible, whether online, via a mobile application, in person or over the phone. There was a strong desire for it to involve minimal effort in gathering information, investigating options and making accurate, confident decisions. This would help with tailoring journeys to exact circumstances or allowing passengers to change their minds about plans when out and about.

“You spend so much time looking at the schedules online... it doesn’t give you enough information. It’s hard to find out how the trains go and which ones take longer.”

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

Having a choice of options to hand

Passengers wanted options to be able to access transport in a convenient manner that was tailored around their needs. An example of this is timing buses to meet late trains, instead of incurring the expense of a taxi fare, or having accessible taxi ranks at stations.

A smoother process

Passengers wanted to reduce the ‘hassle factor’, in other words, the stress, physical effort or inconvenience to them or to travel companions. This means minimising walking and waiting time and providing clear information so that they can make comfortable, confident and informed progress when switching between modes. This also includes the provision of real-time information at times of delays or disruptions to allow for informed decision making about onward travel to reduce stress or anxiety and allow for avoidant action.

A travel environment adapted to needs

Passengers required protection from the weather when switching between modes or when waiting, in addition to facilities for travelling with bags or luggage, bicycles, or with young children and prams. As an example, participants spoke about the difficulties of accessing Aviemore station with luggage due to parking being at the rear of the station and the need to cross over a bridge.

“[When with] bags, Gilmour Street [rail station] is useless. There’s no parking at it and you have to go upstairs as well. When I went up to Glasgow, I went to Lochead because the car park is right at the station – compared to the likes of Gilmour St. which is not fit for purpose really.”

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

“In Amsterdam, their system works well. You get on the bus at the airport. You’re straight on and there’s one every couple of minutes. They’re clean and there’s loads of space for luggage and it stops right at the airport.”

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

4.1.2 Speed/time

Passengers wanted the quickest way of getting to a destination (when balanced against other needs like cost and convenience) and being able to keep up the momentum of travel.

In terms of speed/time, passengers valued:

- guidance and clearly accessible information for the fastest means of getting to a destination, whether from staff, online or over the phone
- momentum in terms of direct routes and access to the station by foot, car or bicycle and progress through the station, for example, using escalators instead of stairs
- faster options, such as greater provision of ‘fast-train services’ to destinations and dedicated station bus services to ‘speed up’ the overall journey time
- joint planning of timetables between transport providers to minimise excessive waiting time and reduce the overall journey time
- clear guidance in terms of staff and/or clear and well positioned signage in station or outside station areas to facilitate speedy progress through or between stations - and when making the switch from rail to other means of travel.

“...the only annoyance is running around at train stations to make the journey as fast as possible.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

4.1.3 Cost

Passengers generally wanted the most cost-efficient journey for their requirements. This did not necessarily mean opting for the cheapest means of getting around – instead it was about the reassurance of ‘value for money’ for the way they chose to travel.

Cost was a consideration for passengers in terms of:

- the cost of the overall journey
- having clear, accessible information on the cheapest or most cost-effective route or means of travel
- reducing the costs associated with an additional fare for each leg of an integrated journey
- minimising hidden costs, such as parking fees at station car parks when a car is the only means of getting to the station
- avoiding penalties – particularly an issue at smaller, unmanned stations in rural areas where difficulties were reported with obtaining tickets prior to travel, or where there have been disruptions experienced leading to concerns about transferring tickets to later services
- not becoming victim to ‘unfair’ costs as a result of travel plans being disrupted, such as the need for a taxi when ‘stranded’ by late night train cancellations
- minimising the added costs of ensuring safe return at night. For example, getting a taxi instead of a walk and/or a long wait at a bus stop away from the station.

“My problem with the trains is trust. I only take the train on a night out and the last train goes at 12.15am, but I’m always scared that it’s going to get cancelled. And there could be drunken people on the train. I always take the one before last, just to make sure. Otherwise it’s a £40 taxi, or having to phone a friend.”

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

4.2 Specific experiences or perceptions of integrated travel

There are some specific issues with different types of integrated journeys which will need to be addressed and which are highlighted below:

Rail ↔ rail

This was generally viewed as less problematic than other integrated journeys across different transport modes.

The main area for attention appears to be around delays or cancellations, which were associated with missing onward rail connections and the subsequent ‘knock-on’ effects. Less frequent rail travellers had lower expectations around this generally, but those who had faced this were able to describe the experience. Such incidents were more frustrating at non-peak times when there were longer waits in between services, or in rural areas where there were less regular services throughout the day.

“The journey I normally make works fine, but once I was delayed and when you get outside the commuter times, I had to wait one and a half hours to get the next train to Dunbar.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (female)

Sometimes it was not just an issue of being inconvenienced by time. One passenger reported being ‘stranded’ a number of times at Livingston station after her train was cancelled due to bad weather. She expected there to be replacement buses for passengers, but she had to take a taxi as there was no replacement provided.

There was also nervousness about switching from one train to another on unfamiliar routes or stations, which points to another area of attention. Last minute platform changes and ‘confusing’ stations where it was difficult to find platforms, such as Waverley in Edinburgh, heightened the stress of the change. This prospect was something that put off less frequent train users, as highlighted by the comment below:

“You’ve got either two minutes to get from one platform to another and you’ve no idea where you’re going, or you’ve got to wait an hour. It’s one extreme or the other.”

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Passengers also raised the example of the short walking route between Glasgow Queen Street and Glasgow Central station, which would benefit from a clearly signposted route, for those unfamiliar with the city or with making this change.

Those who used trains more regularly also welcomed efforts towards easing the process in order to make their journey more comfortable. Confident rail users could also find the experience stressful on routes or stations they were unfamiliar with.

“I panic if I have to change at a station that I haven’t been to before and I don’t know where the platforms are.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (female)

Rail ↔ car

Those who used rail infrequently or rarely often spoke of this interchange as a reason for not taking trains. This suggests that ease of access to the station by car is important to make rail more accessible for those who are not conveniently placed by bus or on foot. There is also a need to discourage the thinking that they ‘might as well drive all the way’ rather than using the car for a short journey to the station.

Issues around car access related to the following:

- a lack of parking at stations which required hunting around for spaces – this could result in the inconvenience of a walk back to the station if a spot was not found close by
- poor road access to station car parks, such as the need to drive around one-way systems, or difficulties with picking up or dropping off passengers due to the location of the drop off points or car parks
- parking fees at station car parks, which in some areas such as Perth were deemed expensive
- security fears either around getting to cars at night, or leaving cars overnight, in ‘unsafe’ areas or poorly lit spots.

“The bad thing about Dunbar station is that you have to pay for parking. And it’s about £4 for a day.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

Access to the station needs to be considered as it was particularly an issue in rural locations where there were greater distances between transport amenities, which made walking impractical. The need for reliance on cars was further highlighted by inadequate local bus provision, whether in terms of service offering or reliability.

Rail ↔ bus

Apart from the car, bus was the other main transport that people relied on for getting to and from the rail station, providing they were conveniently located to a bus route.

There were a number of issues about how buses and rail link, which need to be reviewed to encourage more integrated journeys:

- large areas poorly serviced by a bus network, such as parts of Paisley and outlying villages surrounding Dunbar, which limited means of getting to the station
- limited or irregular services throughout the day, such as in rural or semi-rural locations, which made it difficult to co-ordinate timings with onward travel plans and journeys more time consuming overall
- unreliable services, which meant that passengers missed buses or had the frustration of waiting at bus stops not knowing when the next service was due
- bus services which did not run late enough in the evening to meet trains
- ‘poor value for money’ bus fares or poor customer service in terms of ‘grumpy’ drivers and ‘dirty’ or ‘cold’ buses which discouraged people from using the bus.

These issues were evident when passengers spoke of their wariness and reluctance to rely on the bus for making rail connections. Some related accounts of ‘overcrowded’ buses which sailed past them at stops, which was annoying especially after a long wait.

“My house is between Kingussie and Aviemore, so it’s not really practical. You need to get to the station and we’ve had issues with the bus stopping outside our house before. They’re quite happy to pick us up but they don’t like dropping us off – when they’re picking you up, they’re taking money off you, but dropping you off is putting their timetable back. Some of the drivers are very unpleasant about it.”

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

“The other day we wanted to go to Edinburgh. It was a Sunday and the bus never showed up, so we had to go and take the car because we had to get the train that we had booked. So that’s where the stress started.”

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

There was a strong desire to build in contingency time when buses were involved, which meant adding unwelcome extra time to people’s overall journey. It made this type of integrated journey unsuitable for those under pressure of time, or travelling at peak times.

“You might wait 20 minutes [for a bus] and then it comes along and it’s packed, so you can’t get on”

“[If on a deadline] I think I would have to leave so early to make sure I got there in time.”

Paisley, infrequent/rare passengers (male)

Rail ↔ walking

Some people were willing to make short walks to the stations and welcomed the exercise – even viewing this to be an enjoyable aspect of the journey.

“I guess there’s a limit to how long you’re willing to walk. I think that’s quite a nice part of it – but it would have to be less than 20 minutes.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (female)

However, the prospect of bad weather often put people off walking, especially when carrying items, such as shopping. For others, the need to walk also added unwelcome time to their travel and was an off-putting prospect at the end of a journey.

“It’s more time consuming because you’ve got to walk down to the train station and then when you get back from your shopping, you’ve got to carry your bags up the hill again.”

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

For those in rural areas, walking longer distances was often an unfortunate necessity due to villages not being on the bus network. Participants in these areas reported having to walk as much as a few miles to finish off their journey. For those who were on a bus network, this was made worse by the fact that bus services could be unreliable and there was no information, or no up-to-date information, at bus stops to help them to decide whether or not to wait for the bus.

Walking to and from stations thus raises areas of attention in terms of the following:

- the need for direct and accessible routes to the station and sheltered walking routes
- busy roads outside stations for speedy and safe access for those in a hurry
- quiet, heavily shrubbed or poorly lit walking routes which reduce perceptions of safety.

“They’ve just put up a new bridge, but there should be access from that bridge onto the station, rather than having to go all the way around.”

“You need to cross a busy road which is not convenient when you need to catch your train.”

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (male)

Rail ↔ cycle

There are several ways to increase the convenience of this type of integrated journey.

There was often uncertainty as to whether all trains took bicycles and where these should be stored. Certainly there was some feeling that bicycles were not actively encouraged - even discouraged – and that it could be a ‘gamble’ if you discovered that the train did not allow them on, such as at busy times.

“I’d like to cycle more and take my bike into Glasgow on the train but are all trains allowed bikes? I thought that some do and some don’t.”

Paisley, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

“They’re not always keen for you to take a bike on a train - if it’s busy. I’ve heard of people not being allowed to take their bikes on. I don’t know what you would do if that happened on the way home?”

Aviemore, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

Those who did take bicycles onto trains – or knew someone who did - spoke of being made to feel unwelcome by the train guard and the inconvenience of having to book 24 hours in advance, which posed an obstacle to spontaneity.

There were also issues relating to storage with insufficient racks for bicycles on trains and the racks being too high for shorter passengers.

“I once saw this guy trying to get his bike on the train but there was not enough room. It only fits about two bikes.”

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Rail ↔ ferry

Passengers with experience of this in the research were pleased to discover the co-ordination of rail with ferry timetables, even at times when there were delays on the train. A seamless journey which took into account unexpected occurrences was especially important at times when people were on their holidays and a relaxing, stress-free experience was all the more important.

However, it was equally important that there be consistent and timely communication about the co-ordination between rail and ferry services to reassure passengers should train services be running behind. When this did not happen, it caused unnecessary stress and anxiety, as was the case with one participant whose experience is described below.

Case study: Experiences of a train to ferry service during disruption

Julie was due to take a ferry with her family for a holiday on one of the Scottish islands. The journey involved taking the train from Edinburgh to Glasgow, then a train from Glasgow to Oban where she was due to make the ferry crossing. However, the train from Glasgow was cancelled which resulted in a one and a half hour wait for a replacement bus service to Oban and anxiety around the possibility of an overnight stay in a hotel to catch the ferry service the next day. They managed to arrive at the ferry terminal 15 minutes before the ferry was due to leave. This experience ‘took the whole pleasure out of the journey all together’ and ruined the start of their holiday. In addition it had them worrying about what they might have ‘to endure’ on the way home. Looking back at the incident, Julie felt that ‘a wee bit of foresight’ would have been helpful in this situation to avoid such a long wait on the replacement bus.

Rail ↔ air

Those who used rail frequently were more likely to consider using rail to access airports and appreciated not having ‘the hassle’ of driving at peak periods, and the added cost of parking or a taxi fare. However, there was often hesitation at the thought of using public transport to get to the airport for family holidays. This decision was based on weighing up costs of public transport against the car, but was also heavily influenced by a desire to ease the process given the need to marshal children and handle a lot of luggage.

Given this added complication of luggage, passengers valued a seamless transition to the airport from other transport links, for example, being able to 'step off the train and straight into the terminal' with minimal effort and time. The Prestwick Airport rail link was praised as a good example of this type of infrastructure with its regular service and ease of transfer. The regularity of the bus service transfer between Edinburgh Waverley and the airport was also acknowledged. However, it required more effort for those who were less fit and able because of the steep incline from the station to street level, where the airport shuttle buses were located.

The amount of luggage space and access to luggage were the main areas that passengers felt needed addressing for this type of integrated travel, but also for train journeys generally. Some passengers spoke of difficulties with accessing high racks above seats. There was also wariness about leaving luggage away from seating and out of sight. One passenger commented how she found it 'annoying' having to keep an eye on her luggage throughout the journey.

"It can be off-putting on a train and there is no space for your case where your seat is. So you're concerned for your bag."

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

"It needs to be bigger so it's large enough for your cases."

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

4.3 Conclusions on passenger needs and priorities

- Passengers have strong core needs around convenience, speed/time and cost which influence how they choose to travel and their perceptions of the travel experience. These need to be addressed to encourage more rail and integrated transport use.
- As integrated transport provision is sometimes failing – or, at least, perceived not to meet needs in these regards - passengers feel the onus is on them to plan and tailor their own travel plans accordingly. This can enforce reliance on the car.
- If transport providers want to give passengers more attractive reasons for leaving the car at home, they will need to demonstrate a commitment to the passenger's overall door-to-door journey.
- As part of this, specific issues around the transition between different transport modes will need to be dealt with in order to achieve a more 'seamless travel experience'.

5. Where can integrated travel start to meet needs?

In order for more people to consider making integrated journeys, there is a need to make journeys more convenient, less time-consuming and less costly. In addition to this, there is a need to convince the public that integrated journeys can offer a viable, attractive alternative for door-to-door travel over the car.

5.1 Areas for attention

Discussion in the groups focused around the following potential areas for improvement:

- information – to give passengers the tools to take a proactive approach to planning their journeys and easing their progress
- travel environment – to improve the comfort and security of rail and integrated travel
- infrastructure and service provision – to make rail and integrated travel as accessible and as tailored as possible around passengers' needs
- ticketing, costs and fares – to simplify the purchasing process and putting in place new technology to enhance convenience for passengers, with potential cost-savings.

These needs apply regardless of location. However, there were slightly differing priorities depending on how frequently people relied on rail and public transport.

For those who seldom relied on rail, or other public transport, their needs tended to centre more on environmental factors. This was required to overcome their barriers towards rail and public transport in general. Security and the cleanliness and comfort of rail were key aspects.

More frequent rail users were interested in improvements which would refine the quality of integrated journeys in terms of convenience, comfort and time. They welcomed advances in ticketing technology as they could see the benefits that these would bring to them.

The options detailed below can help to address passenger needs more closely.

5.1.1 Information

Improvements to information provision were felt to be key to enhancing the passenger experience by increasing convenience, reducing travel time and helping to avoid unwelcome additional costs.

There were two areas where information was needed: firstly at the planning stage, and secondly, while travelling.

Planning journeys

Passengers welcomed online 'journey planning' information about integrated travel options available to their destination. Ideally, this would include information about the following:

- any alternative routes and corresponding information about delays or disruptions
- the length of the journey
- the different stages involved, including any requirement to walk and whether there are parking spaces at stations
- the costs for the different available transport options.

"It would be great if you could pick up the phone and say 'I want to go from A to B' and someone says 'here's your ideal journey in the most cost effective way.'"

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

This information would encourage more integrated journeys and help those who were currently making journeys to do so in the most cost and time-effective way. For example, one respondent commented on a college friend who discovered that she could reduce the time and cost of a journey she made regularly, as described below.

"I have a friend from university who stays in Hamilton. She's always got the train from Barrhead to Central and then a train from Central to Hamilton. Then she found out about six months ago that you can get off at Crossmyloof and get a bus which goes every 10 minutes which takes you to our uni. That cuts off 25 minutes from her journey and saves her money."

Paisley, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

Making decisions 'on the go'

It was important for passengers to be able to tap into accessible and real-time information just before setting off or en route to their destination. This would equip them with the information to assess the available options, make quick 'on-the-spot' decisions and take decisive action where required.

"... you don't know where to go, the boards telling you where to go are not clear and once you've figured it out, you only have two minutes to get on the train."

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

It was evident that information needed to be timely but also clear and well-placed in order to be most effective and give passengers a greater sense of control over their movements and progress through their journey. This was particularly important for passengers who were less used to rail travel as highlighted by one participant below.

"We had to go up the stairs to this huge area where there were huge screens and you can't find [your train] on the screen. If you're already a bit nervous, it can be difficult and bedazzling."

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Addressing information needs of this nature, therefore, requires developments around the following:

- information points at or around station areas to include information about onward travel at key interchanges. Some passengers wanted to see more staff to provide information, such as at helpdesks. Information, but also staff presence, was important for infrequent travellers but also for anyone making a journey on a new or unfamiliar route
- availability of staff to provide information or guidance at non-peak or quieter periods
- the provision of reliable real-time information about delays and disruptions and options for onward travel ideally provided in multiple ways such as audible station and onboard announcements as well as via mobile devices and smartphone applications (currently used by some focus group participants)
- clear and strategically-placed signage designed for passengers on the move, for example, to help with locating platforms and options for onward travel
- clear guidance and information about taking bicycles on trains, including clear signposts on trains to show where bicycles can be taken on board.

“If only the bus and rail companies worked together – they could link up and give out more information on disruption and journeys would be smoother.”

Aviemore, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

“The apps are fantastic, they tell you exactly when the trains are running.”

“They are really good, even if it’s just a minute late, they’ll tell you.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passengers (female)

5.1.2 Travel environment

Focus group participants did not generally raise environmental factors, such as comfort and security. However, when prompted, it became clear that these issues were particularly important for encouraging more rail use among less frequent users, or to address the needs of passengers who feel more vulnerable when travelling, including women and older people.

Access to the station

Direct routes into the station were considered important, particularly for those arriving on foot or by car. This included having easy access to car parks from the main road, for example, not having to drive around a one-way system.

Progress within the station was felt to be helped by escalators, especially for passengers with bags and to save time waiting for lifts. This, for example, was noticed as an improvement in Perth station.

Security

Security was an important aspect in terms of:

- avoiding poorly lit or hidden areas in the immediate area around the station such as at car parks
- ensuring safer walking routes to and from the station, including to onward transport in terms of lighting and location. This might include avoiding routes past quiet estates and heavily shrubbed or wooded areas
- staff presence at night at both stations and on-board trains
- minimising time spent waiting or 'standing around' in quiet or poorly lit spots.

"I find the station at night when no one is around quite creepy. There should be a presence of some sort. That's the smaller stations, bigger stations are usually busier."

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

"I'm basically worried about security using public transport – standing in the rain, maybe in the dark, walking to the bus stop and all that when you can just get in the car at the door.... and not have to worry about missing the last bus."

"I drive to Johnstone and leave my car in the car park there overnight if I'm on a night out. I don't know if I'd leave my car in other stations overnight."

Paisley, infrequent/rare passengers (female)

"Some stations are just not nice to hang around. There isn't a presence at the station. Sometimes there will be a ticket collector, but most of the time there's not even anyone on the train."

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Protection from the weather

Improvements in this area were welcomed by both existing and potential passengers. The prospect of putting up with bad weather, or past experience of exposure to the elements was one aspect that put people off public transport. This was worse when combined with experiences of delays or disruptions leading to long, uncomfortable waits. One complaint at quieter stations or in more rural areas was of locked waiting rooms or an absence of shelter from the wind.

"I always have memories of being freezing cold when waiting for a train. And at certain stations there were no shelters and there were no people, no machines."

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Overall, passengers were receptive to potential improvements:

- covered walkways or footbridges
- shelter from the wind and rain on the platform and at other waiting points such as taxi ranks
- shelter for outside bicycle storage (to avoid wet seats)
- bus stops sited nearer to the station to avoid exposure to bad weather.

“They have walkways that are not covered, which is a big issue when the weather is bad.”

Perth, frequent, semi-frequent passenger (female)

Comfort

As discussed earlier in this report, there were a few key elements of train interior and design which, whilst not key passenger priorities, had the effect of undermining perceptions of comfort and security of rail.

The issue of ‘dirty, smelly trains’

The environment in Intercity trains was reported to be highly unpleasant by the time they reached rural areas like Aviemore. Passengers complained about ‘smelly toilets’, overflowing bins and the refreshment trolley not being refilled after Perth. This made train users feel neglected and ‘forgotten’ as if their needs towards the end of the line were not as important as those on the start. A frequent complaint was that train travel was ‘expensive’ and this poor level of service made them further resent what they were paying for tickets. Adding to their irritation was the ‘hassle’ of having to walk down aisles, examining seat reservation tickets to see if they have been used. Luggage and crowding on the train made this difficult.

Views around potential improvements included:

- sufficient and accessible space and security of storage for luggage
- sufficient and accessible storage for bicycles
- for those getting onto Intercity services from areas nearer the end of the line, such as Aviemore and Kingussie, reviewing the cleanliness of the train environment and easy location of non-reserved seating.

“I noticed when I got on the train today, every single seat had a ticket on it. But nobody sat in them. They’d all been on and done their journey already... maybe the conductor or steward could take them off so we can see. People go past and don’t even look. It was only because I knew to look.”

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

5.1.3 Infrastructure and service provision

Gaps in infrastructure and service provision were the main underlying reason for less frequent use of rail among those who used car for local journeys, with two key issues being:

- limited access to the station in terms of distance and available transport options
- restricted transport offer in terms of lower frequency or reliability to make taking public transport a practical and viable option.

The areas detailed below can be addressed to meet passenger's needs.

Access to, and options for, onward travel

Easier access to and from stations by car, bus and taxi, with suggestions for improvement from the research participants, including:

- dedicated shuttle buses to stations
- station transport hubs which have bus stops and car parking
- bus information at rail stations for planning onward travel
- station taxi ranks.

“At Waverley you're very lucky. You have taxis in the stations, buses right upstairs but at different stations, there are no taxis or anything. It's the same in Dunbar, there are never any taxis waiting.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

Sufficient availability of car parking was often mentioned by both frequent and less frequent rail passengers, but it seemed particularly relevant for those living in more remote areas for whom access to rail was only possible by car. Related to this was a common complaint about the need to pay at station car parks with some commenting that this stacked the argument against taking trains when drivers might otherwise be inclined to leave the car at home.

“It's always car and train for me because I don't live right in Aviemore. There's not a great deal of parking and it's tricky sometimes. You have to park somewhere else and walk down to the train. It doesn't make it easy for you to leave your car and go for the train that day instead.”

Aviemore, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

“In Fife they have a hub for the bus and car connection... it would be great if they had something like that.”

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

Timetabling

A higher frequency of services in more remote areas during the day and at the weekend could encourage greater rail use by giving passengers greater freedom to tailor travel around their needs. For example, as mentioned earlier in the report, trains could run later at weekends to accommodate those making leisure journeys.

There is a need to support rural passengers, or potential passengers, in particular, with one Aviemore resident reporting on the difficulties of relying on public transport both at night and during the day. In Dunbar, residents faced similar issues - but to a lesser degree - with comments on the gap in the train timetable in the morning peak period.

“If you’re going out for the night, you have to get a taxi really – otherwise you can’t get back! Even during the day, if you need to be somewhere at a certain time, you have to get a taxi.”

Aviemore, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

“There’s lots of commuter times – in the morning, they’re every hour but then there’s a gap in the middle. And also, in the morning, lots of people would get into Edinburgh for 8.30am so that they can drop off their kids and get the train. But there’s one that gets in at 8.10am and then one for 9.20am, so there isn’t one in between that would be really good.”

Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

The joint-planning of timetables between rail providers as well as between rail and different transport providers emerged as a key area of development to improve the speed/time taken on integrated journeys. Addressing this requires attention to the following:

- optimised waiting times between transport connections – not too long, for example, an hour, but not so short as five to ten minutes
- ‘meeting’ trains with onward transport services, such as buses – particularly important at busy peak periods to avoid overcrowding and for late night services to enhance feelings of security
- co-ordinating key services during delays or disruptions, such as when ferries wait for late-running trains, or trains being held back to meet other delayed services.

“Timetabling is very important. You don’t want to wait a long time, but you also don’t want to run the risk of missing your connection.”

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

“[There should be] shared timetables between trains and buses with enough time between the two. You shouldn’t end up with only two minutes to make a change.”

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

5.1.4 Ticketing, costs and fares

Discussion around ticketing and fares touched upon a number of areas including ticket purchasing points, fare options, the cost of fares and reactions to the prospect of smart and integrated ticketing. These are outlined in more detail below:

Ticket purchasing points

The issue of unmanned stations where some passengers have been unable to purchase tickets prior to travel needs to be addressed. Passengers reported anxiety over accusations of fare-dodging and subsequent penalties, as described by one passenger below:

“I was anxious about not having a ticket. I had my purse ready to prove that I was going to pay. I thought I might get fined – I don’t know and that’s what I don’t like.”
Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

Fare options and cost of fares

Passengers wanted easily accessible and impartial information about the costs of travel to enable them to work out the most cost-efficient routes, combination of fares and/or times to make journeys. Even those who travelled fairly frequently by rail spoke of the uncertainty of navigating the array of fare options available and appreciated help from staff around the most suitable fare to buy to save both costs and time. As one older passenger commented:

“I like it to have someone to talk to when I buy my ticket, but there are often not enough people to help you and get your ticket in time.”
Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (female)

“It’s actually not always cost effective to do a return. You can better book two singles and then you might also have more flexibility. But you only know this if you do your maths. The machine will not tell you this.”
Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

Another related issue was around flexible use of pre-booked fares. Passengers noted this to be a potential issue if connections were missed due to disruptions or delays. They also appreciated the idea of being able to use tickets on earlier or later trains to give them more flexibility.

“Maybe there could be flexibility with the tickets. When we were in Manchester, we got to the station at around 11am and the train wasn’t leaving until 12pm. If we could have jumped on the next train, that would have been better... I was sitting there thinking that if I had my car, I would definitely be halfway down the road by now. But we had pre-booked it.”
Dunbar, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

Passengers who travelled infrequently or rarely felt that train travel was expensive suggesting that information on cost-savings and promotions needs to clearly reach this audience. As part of this, there is a need to raise awareness of the difference in costs depending on time of travel and type of ticket in order for potential passengers to more easily weigh up the cost of taking the train or public transport compared to the cost of driving. This was indicated as an issue in the research when non-rail users revealed misconceptions around the cost of train travel.

Smart and integrated ticketing

Passengers who made frequent journeys by public transport welcomed the prospect of developments to smart and integrated ticketing to increase convenience and reduce costs. They liked the idea of tickets that could be used across different transport providers, such as bus, train and tickets for train plus parking, which would allow them to benefit from cost savings. Some felt that greater ticket flexibility would encourage them to 'experiment' with different ways of getting around by public transport.

"Have something like an Oyster card. All your journeys you pay through there and it will save you money."

Perth, frequent/semi-frequent passenger (male)

"The car park should be free. If I pay for a train ticket, the car park costs me money as well. And if it costs me money, I wouldn't use it. Maybe you can get a ticket that you can put on your dashboard."

Perth, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

It was apparent from the issues of provision experienced in more rural areas, such as Aviemore, that locals would benefit from the greater flexibility that integrated ticketing could offer them. This was highlighted by participants in Aviemore commenting on restrictions imposed on their movements by the anticipated expense of integrated-return travel:

"If you could get a train up and the bus back and get that on the same ticket, you've doubled the amount of times you can get back. You have all the train times and all the bus times – you have a better choice of when to get back. There's no way you'd pay an extra tenner just to stay an extra 25 minutes."

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (male)

"Or do you risk getting a single and maybe not be able to get back?"

Aviemore, infrequent/rare passenger (female)

5.2 Specific local issues and priorities

Profiles of the areas visited for the research are provided below. These demonstrate learnings in a number of areas in terms of meeting the needs of different types of passengers in addition to the significance of environment, infrastructure and service to both passengers and potential passengers.

Aviemore

Aviemore is a large town with strong tourist links in the Highlands of Scotland.

The situation faced in Aviemore illustrates probable similar obstacles faced in other rural areas, in terms of the range of factors raised earlier in this report:

- access to rail by foot, bus or car
- general regularity of public transport provision
- unmanned stations
- train environment.

Personal car use was viewed as the only mode of transport able to offer the adequate level of flexibility and freedom of movement required. It is unlikely that locals will be persuaded away from a heavy reliance on the car, as is probably typical of other rural areas, unless integrated transport provision is sensitive to the deep restrictions of travel faced in these areas.

Whilst lower service frequency on both rail and buses was the main barrier to public transport use, the findings have suggested that integrated ticketing could give locals the means to make more full and flexible use of the transport options available locally. This could encourage a greater amenity to rail and integrated travel.

Dunbar

Dunbar is a small town with strong commuter links to Edinburgh.

Passengers appreciated the regular service and fast 20-minute journeys to the city at peak periods in the day. However, timetabling of this service could still be improved for those travelling for both work and leisure. The area would benefit from:

- a commuter service added to the timetable to facilitate arrival in Edinburgh at around 8.30am
- later running weekend services to accommodate nights out in Edinburgh. Residents reported having to leave Edinburgh as early as 9.30pm to catch the last train home.

Dunbar also illustrated how there can be issues of access to the station from surrounding villages by bus and car. There were reports of not being able to get to the station by bus because of the network coverage in these surrounding areas. Those who drove were also put off by the £4 parking charge at the station, which stacked the cost argument against integrated travel.

Whilst passengers appreciated the recent steps to align the local bus service with train times, some felt that the addition of a taxi rank at the station would also be helpful.

With its busy commuter service links to nearby cities, they also felt that more shelter on the platform would improve the experience of waiting at the station.

Paisley

Paisley is a large town with close links to Glasgow. It has three rail stations and good access to rail by car, taxi, walking, and cycling. However, it is an example of an area where local transport provision and safety issues can undermine a solid infrastructure and discourage rail use among less frequent rail users.

Parts of Paisley were reported to be poorly covered by the local bus network, which made bus access to rail difficult for some, depending on where in Paisley they lived. Added to this, numerous complaints about the reliability of the bus service and the quality of the customer service indicated a general reluctance and wariness towards relying on buses. Bus users reported incidences of long waits at bus stops for late-running buses and not being able to get on overcrowded buses. Rail passengers also resented having to take taxis from the station late at night because the bus service did not run as late as the trains.

Security was enough of an issue in Paisley to put people off using public transport, particularly at certain times of day suggesting the need for stronger and more visible enforcement. The issue was reported on buses but also on early evening and late trains, with passengers feeling intimidated by groups of rowdy and drunk young people. Isolated violent incidences were reported, as described in an earlier case study.

Perth

Perth is a small city and was chosen as a location for the research because it was a typical example of a rail-to-rail interchange station.

It is an example of a station where convenient transport access to rail is an issue. This is exacerbated by resentment of having to pay for parking at the station. Bus integration with rail was reported to be inadequate with insufficient coverage from parts of the town and slow and circuitous bus routes. Added to this, some passengers complained about not being able to get on overcrowded buses from the station at peak times, pointing to the need for greater efforts to align bus and rail service provision at the station itself.

In terms of improvements to rail access, passengers wanted complete integration of rail with bus and other transport, with suggestions ranging from a dedicated station shuttle-bus service, bus stops at the station, to a station 'transport hub' which included free parking.

Passengers felt that better access onto station platforms and clearer signage at platforms to ease the change between services would improve the offering for passengers. There were also passengers who wanted to see more of a staff presence at night in the station.

5.3 Conclusions on the potential for improvements

- Opportunities for improvement have been highlighted in a number of areas:
 - information provision
 - travel environment
 - infrastructure
 - service provision
 - ticketing
 - costs
 - fares.
- Improvements to the travel environment will make the most difference with helping to overcome barriers to rail and public transport use by those who have a heavy preference towards the car.
- Whereas improvements to information and infrastructure will help to encourage more public transport use and integrated journeys among existing passengers by smoothing the journey process, particularly at times of delay and disruption.
- Passengers expect the introduction of integrated and smart ticketing to encourage rail and public transport use by making it more convenient for them to experiment with different combinations of transport/routes, without incurring additional costs. This is expected to be of particular benefit for rural areas.

6 Recommendations and conclusions

Passengers want to make convenient, fast and value-for-money journeys and have identified areas where there are opportunities to improve transport integration, in order to simplify the journey and reduce risk – or perceptions of risk.

In order to tailor integrated transport provision more closely around passengers, and the needs of potential passengers, a cohesive strategy should take into account the overall door-to-door travel experience. Equally important will be promoting that passenger needs are being put at the heart of decision making to break down the barriers caused by low perceptions.

It will also be important that service standards are consistently applied, working towards the ideal of a ‘seamless passenger experience’, regardless of what journey or combination of transport modes are taken. By demonstrating a continual commitment to the quality of the passenger’s door-to-door experience, this would over time help to build confidence and trust. It would also encourage more positive word-of-mouth recommendations – for greater willingness to favour public transport over the car.

The research showed there was little or no motivation to put greener choices before individual needs. So transport providers will have to demonstrate to passengers first that their needs are being met – before greener travel becomes part of the passenger agenda.

6.1 The future potential for integrated travel

Targeting infrequent/rare users of rail

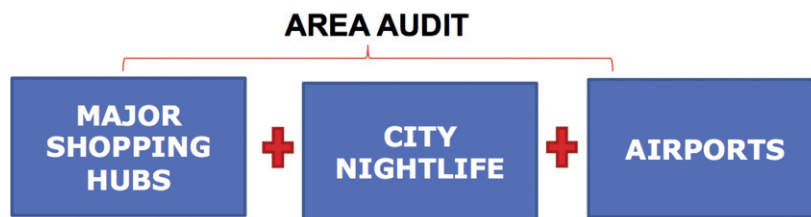
Encouraging more integrated travel requires making it a positive choice rather than a negative compromise. So there is scope for encouraging more potential rail users onto trains when personal car use could be viewed as less suitable. Rail needs to be positioned as an alternative where car is less convenient for certain types of journeys, as highlighted in section 3. The challenge will be to disrupt entrenched habits around car use and to persuade non-rail users to reappraise rail travel as a strong viable alternative, with its own set of differentiated benefits.

Partnership working

Local infrastructure audits will help to identify the areas that hold the most potential for improvements. Partnership working will be key to effective links between rail and local transport networks and local authority initiatives to ensure safe, speedy and smoothly integrated access to rail by foot, bus or car.

Figure 8 illustrates how opportunities for investment might be best maximised based on audits of local areas. Some level of minimal infrastructure, for both train and buses, is required to aid progress towards increasing take up of rail and integrated travel.

Figure 8. Maximising opportunities for rail travel around major hubs to focus investment



MINIMAL INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA IS REQUIRED TO AID SUCCESS WITH TAKE UP:

- Are there sufficient bus routes connecting town and transport hubs to surrounding locales?
- Is it an area where relative frequency of train/ bus services can be negotiated?

Tailoring integrated public transport provision around these types of journeys will help inform the most suitable design, infrastructure and planning of services for passenger needs

Addressing rural needs

As suggested by the Aviemore case study, lower frequency of transport provision and a current heavy reliance on the car presents an inherent challenge in moving people in rural areas towards rail and public transport.

Transport providers will need to be aware of the specific barriers to rail use in different areas, in order to work towards suitably viable solutions.

Integrated and smart ticketing could have the effect of alleviating some of the issues faced, by allowing more flexible use of the existing cross-modal transport infrastructure.

A possible short and medium term outlook

The following could help to encourage greater consideration of both rail use and integrated travel in the short to medium term:

- communicate when and how travel operators are working together to put passenger needs first for cost, speed and convenience
- tackle any local issues, such as anti-social behaviour on trains, as a priority
- encourage non-users onto trains via advertising to update perceptions and debunk myths about the quality and efficiency of train travel and connections
- promote the enjoyment and relaxation benefits of rail travel as previously done by the advertising slogan: 'Let the train take the strain.'
- promote fare concessions for group/family travel to close the cost gap with cars
- plan and promote 'pre-packaged' integrated journeys on popular routes to simplify the planning process for passengers and demonstrate seamless services in action
- raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable travel. Although this should not be viewed as a motivator in itself, it should help to increase the consideration provided other personal benefits to the individual are clear.

6.2 Priorities for encouraging integrated travel

Currently, passengers need help to plan and build in contingency time when making integrated journeys. Transitions should be smoother so as to alleviate stress when things go wrong.

Four key areas have been identified for attention in this research, which are:

- information – to allow passengers to take a proactive approach when planning and making their journeys
- travel environment – to ensure passengers always feel safe and comfortable
- infrastructure and service provision – to improve access, speed and convenience
- ticketing, costs and fares - to simplify the process of purchasing tickets, increase convenience when switching between transport modes and bring in potential cost-savings via the introduction of smart and integrated ticketing.

Addressing each of these areas would, in time, build greater passenger confidence in public transport meeting their needs.

A holistic approach towards encouraging greater rail and integrated travel

Figure 9 shows how an effective programme encompassing these recommendations, should be developed, implemented and evaluated with the following in mind – education, persuasion, design and control. This model of thinking can be applied across any policy area and forms part of TNS’s theoretical model of behaviour change.

To make improvements and engage passengers and potential passengers - with a longer term view to encouraging greater rail use and integrated travel - a holistic strategy should be developed to encompass the following:

- education: often the first step in raising awareness, this should close the gap between any misconceptions and the reality, in order to overcome attitudinal barriers and encourage greater rail and integrated transport use among potential passengers
- persuasion: the traditional domain of advertising, this is often used alongside education to engage and motivate people to act. It will require putting integrated door-to-door travel on the agenda and creating a more positive attitude towards it. There is also a need to reach out to potential passengers to encourage consideration and trial of rail for certain journeys where driving may be less suitable
- design: this encompasses any re-engineering of services and any changes or restructuring of the physical environment to improve the door-to-door travel experience and thus encourage more integrated travel
- control: involves regulation, enforcement and setting service standards. Policy decisions need to co-ordinate with the three other elements above to meet passenger needs.

Appendix 1

The TNS 'beliefs framework' explained

Behaviour is *internally driven* but also significantly influenced by *situational cues* or the *environment* in which it takes place.

The beliefs on the left side of the web of Figure 11 represent more rationalised beliefs, whilst the factors on the right represent the more hidden, less conscious influences on behaviour. Morality and social and cultural norms are factors which can influence at both a conscious or a sub-conscious level and are, therefore, in the middle.

- Costs and benefits: the perceived 'costs' (whether financial, risk, or effort) and 'benefits' of adopting the behaviour (such as gains made or rewards obtained).
- Efficacy: the extent to which a person feels capable, or the adopted behaviour is expected, to achieve the desired outcome.
- Legitimacy: the extent to which a desired behaviour or outcome is viewed as legitimate or fair, especially under current rules or regulations. Without improvements to integrated transport provision to meet the public's needs or demands, there will be no reason to move away from driving to more sustainable forms of door-to-door travel.
- Habit: can undermine the desired behaviour or be broken and replaced by new ones.
- Heuristics: these are short cuts or 'rules of thumb' by which decisions and judgements are made on a daily basis. This can lead to systematic biases in thinking, such as 'inertia' (wanting to maintain the status quo), or a tendency towards avoiding loss at all costs ('loss aversion'). 'Availability' is another heuristic already discussed in this report, in which the events that come more readily to mind are those that people believe are more likely to happen. In the case of public transport, there is a strong need for policy makers and transport providers to 're-anchor' people's starting point for viewing integrated travel, so that different choices are eventually made, such as leaving the car at home.
- Physical environment: the role of the physical context in influencing the behaviour and choices made.
- Morality: the extent to which beliefs about what is 'right' and 'wrong' has a bearing on how people act and make decisions. For the majority, beliefs about 'greener' issues (at the time of the research) are not strong enough to drive behaviour unless criteria around cost and convenience are satisfied first. This could change in the future if 'greener' issues take greater precedence.
- Social and cultural norms: long-standing cultural norms currently drive low expectations around the more complex integrated journeys. Putting passenger needs at the heart of improvements to integrated transport provision could help to challenge and raise expectations over time.

Figure 9.

*Debunk myths and misconceptions about rail travel
Provide planning and information tools to make integrated
journeys more accessible*

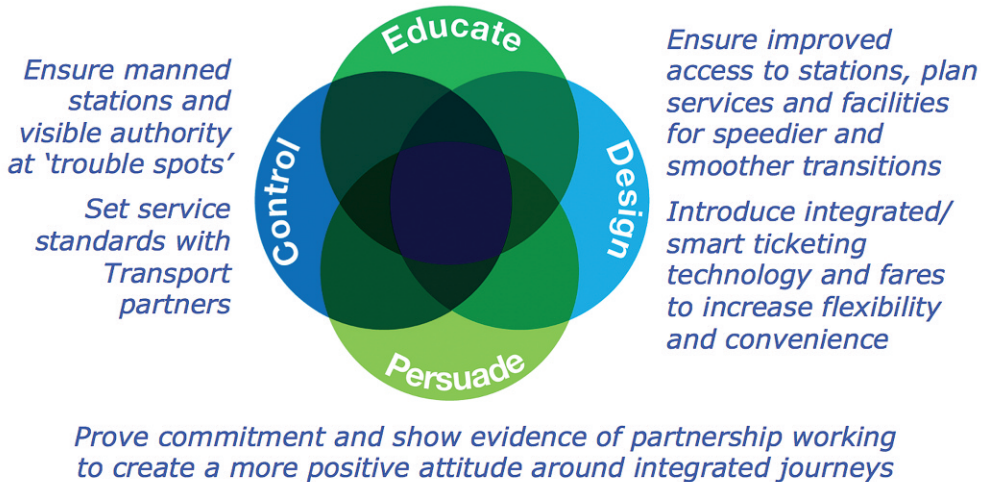
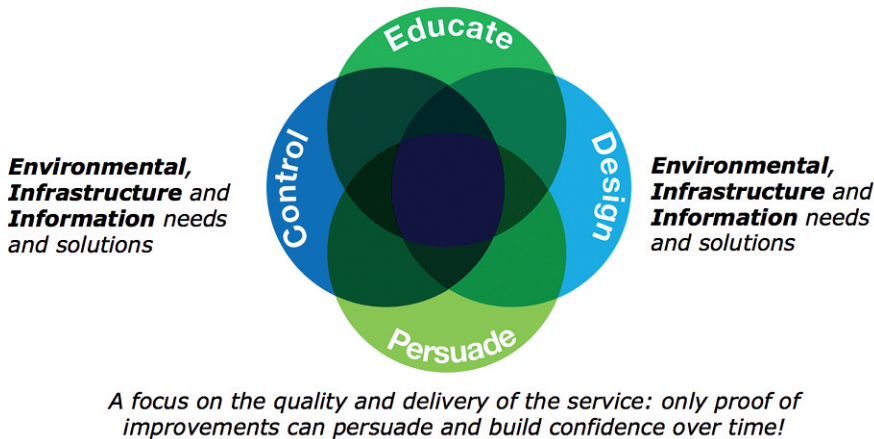


Figure 10 summarises how the improvements to rail and integrated transport provision outlined in this report potentially map onto each of the four areas.

Figure 10.

*Communications and strategy which position rail as a
positive, credible and differentiated choice*



Adopting a holistic perspective on this issue will help to overcome barriers and engage potential rail users in a more cohesive way

Understanding the beliefs which influence behaviour

TNS's model of behaviour change has been designed as a systematic tool for understanding the underlying beliefs which influence behaviour. It is based on the latest behavioural theory and behavioural economics to underpin a pragmatic, systematic approach to behaviour change research.

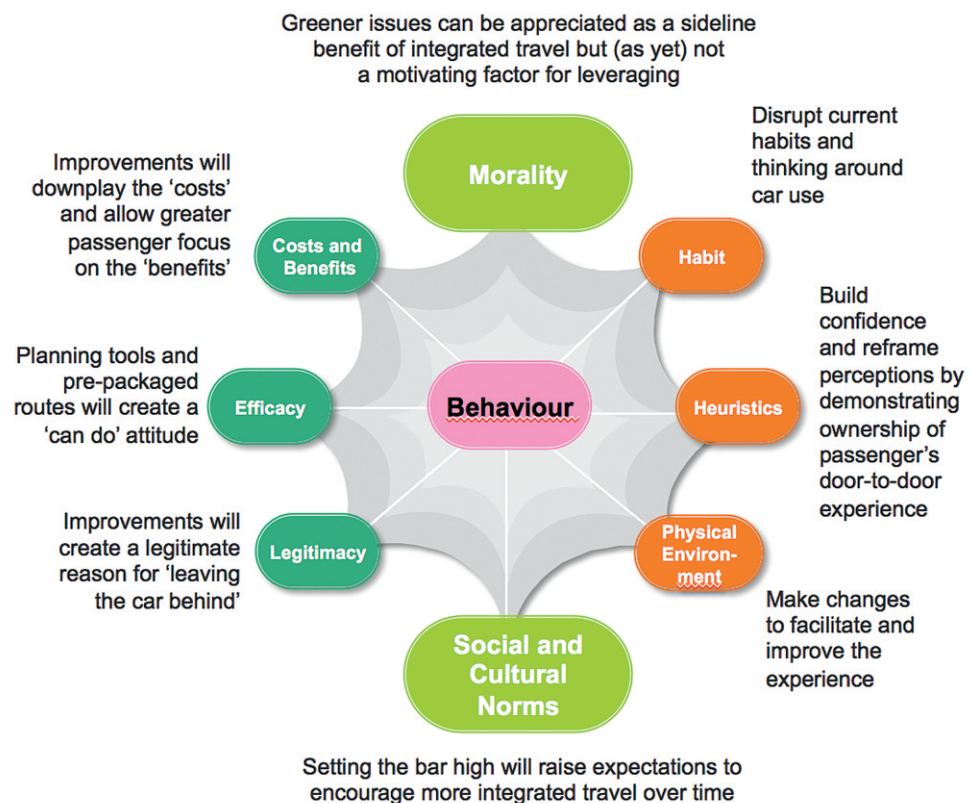
Applying this model to the findings in this report (as illustrated in Figure 11) provides a basis for understanding how the recommended changes could encourage greater rail use and integrated travel. However, behaviour change can be slow and often requires reinforcement of the appropriate levers of education, persuasion, design and control over a period of time.

Figure 11. TNS Beliefs Framework of behaviour change

A demonstrable commitment by Transport Providers will influence passenger decision making in regards rail and integrated travel

Desired behaviours:

- Greater consideration of rail/ integrated journeys at the contemplation and planning stage
- Increased rail-use at times where the car is a less attractive option (e.g. parking, drinking, airport travel)
- More leisure journeys to promoted destinations using integrated public transport combinations



Appendix 2

Summary of the recommendations

Table 1 summarises the four strategic areas into which current travel needs and solutions fall. They demonstrate clear areas to activate as part of the wider strategy for making rail a more positive and credible choice overall, for more journeys and for more people. Given the differing outlooks and needs of *existing* and *potential* passengers, all four areas must work together for maximum effect.

Table 1. Identified for improvement

Areas for attention	Improvement areas	Demonstrated specifically via:	Significance
Information	Journey planning tools	Journey planners for door-to-door journeys across transport modes. For example, planners which are available online, by telephone, and via mobile apps.	To minimise effort for travellers and make integrated journeys more accessible.
	Real-time information	High flow of station or onboard announcements and alerts via SMS or mobile apps (requires promoting existing information apps to those who are not aware of them).	To allow decisive or evasive action and minimising anxiety/stress about impact on onward travel.
	Signage and information	Staff/information at key areas and connection points for onward travel. Clear signage designed for passengers on the move/in a hurry.	Guidance and direction between transport modes will make it a more seamless experience.
Environment	Access to stations/trains	Direct routes to the station and easier car access from the road for pick up/drop off. A preference for escalators in stations	To minimise the 'hassle' and time of journeys and make it more comfortable for less able passengers, or those with bags, etc.

	Security of station and surrounding areas	Clearly lit and high visibility areas. Manned stations at night.	To improve security and perceptions of security at night-time, especially for more vulnerable passengers.
	Train design and interior	Appropriate and accessible luggage and bicycle storage. Cleanliness of trains and easy location of unreserved seating (for passengers on tourist routes/nearer the end of the line).	To improve comfort and ease for those travelling with bicycles and luggage. To address more specific local issues faced by rural passengers to assist with lowering barriers to train travel.
	Comfort/protection from the weather	Shelters on platforms and outside station in waiting areas. Ensuring access to waiting rooms at quieter stations. Covered shelters for bicycles.	To improve the comfort of passengers waiting on train services, especially during bad weather. To improve the comfort of cyclists picking up bikes on rainy days.
Infrastructure and service provision	Access to the station	Bus access, location of bus stops, waiting taxi services, cost and availability of parking for those coming from more remote locations.	To improve access with a view to encouraging more rail use among non-users. To address the more specific access issues of those living in less accessible locations for rail.
	Frequency of services	More options with train times throughout the day, especially on weekend evenings and Sunday services.	To help passengers tailor rail provision more closely around their schedules and to encourage more rail use for certain occasions when driving is not practical.
	Timetabling	Alignment of train timetables with other services such as buses, especially at peak periods and for late evening services. Optimised timetables and platform planning.	To improve convenience and reduce journey/waiting times. To allow for smoother/less stressful transitions from train to train.

Ticketing, costs and fares	Fares/routes	<p>Guidance on the correct tickets to buy and cheaper ticket combinations/advice on routes.</p> <p>Promotion of low cost fares.</p> <p>Ticket transferal between pre-booked train services.</p>	<p>To provide support and reassurance for infrequent/rare passengers that they are buying the best fare/taking the best route for their needs.</p> <p>To close the cost-gap with driving to encourage greater consideration of rail among current non-users.</p> <p>To allow greater flexibility at times of delays/disruptions and reduce the cost penalties on passengers.</p>
	Ticketing purchasing points	Staffed ticket purchasing points.	To avoid potential issues with buying tickets and ease the process for passengers less familiar with rail travel.
	Integrated smart ticketing	Integrated ticketing for trains and buses.	<p>For greater convenience and to reduce costs and encourage experimentation on public transport.</p> <p>To allow rural passengers to make more flexible use of local transport provision to more closely meet their needs.</p>



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