

Northern Transport Voices **Passenger Experience of Rail Station Accessibility in the North**

June 2025



About Transport for the North

Transport for the North is a statutory sub-national transport body, working with mayoral combined authorities, local transport authorities and other stakeholders across the North of England. We advise central government on the strategic ambitions and priorities for the region's transport system, and work with our partners to enable delivery of investment.

Our vision is that by 2050 the North of England will have become a thriving, socially inclusive region. Our communities, businesses and places will have benefitted from sustainable economic growth, improved health and wellbeing, and access to opportunities for all. This is to be achieved through a transformed zero emission, integrated, safe and sustainable transport system, that will enhance connectivity, resilience, and journey times for all users.

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Executive Summary

Transport for the North has conducted research focused on understanding the accessibility of rail stations in the North of England from the perspective of passengers, with particular interest in the voices of those with health conditions or illnesses. This report identifies accessibility challenges that respondents face when using rail stations and how these barriers affect their journeys.

The findings reveal that respondents with significant health conditions or illnesses experience more difficulties and find aspects of the rail station experience less accessible compared to those without such conditions. This is true across many aspects of using a train station.

These accessibility challenges have impacted the decisions and the experiences of many respondents in different ways. Some mentioned additional difficulty and additional time needed to use a station. Some respondents said that the accessibility challenges led to them using different rail stations or different modes of travel, and others mentioned travelling less or not at all.

This report presents findings from an online survey. The survey was initially sent to members of our research community, Northern Transport Voices, before we opened it up for responses from all residents of the North of England. The survey ran between March 2024 and June 2024, 2,012 completed responses were received and analysed. Respondents had the option to complete the survey multiple times to comment on accessibility at different rail stations that they use. Responses were received for 374 unique rail stations within the North (of a total of just over 600 existing rail stations within the region).

Respondents provided an average overall rating for station accessibility of 3.38 out of 5. However, those who have a significant health condition or illness rated station accessibility lower, at an average of only 3.05 out of 5.

Key findings:

- Planning rail journeys and getting to the station

The cost of rail travel can be seen as an accessibility barrier for many. Around 3 in 10 respondents reported having at least some difficulty with the cost of getting to and from the station, while around 6 in 10 respondents had at least some difficulty with the cost of train tickets. For both these types of costs, those with a significant health condition or illness were most likely to experience difficulty. This highlights that many find the cost of rail travel a barrier, and this is particularly likely for those with a significant health condition or illness. Some suggested that cost led them to use modes other than rail, and some said they travelled less.

Respondents generally have a positive experience when looking for accessibility information in advance of train travel. Respondents with a significant health condition or illness mentioned using various methods to access station accessibility information, including online, via apps, over the phone and asking staff. Most had a positive experience accessing information, and they were able to find accurate information. Respondents said the information available was

helpful for finding train times and accessibility information. However, some did have issues with finding information and its accuracy, and a few said there was insufficient information, particularly about whether lifts were working.

The most common way respondents get to the station is by walking/wheeling.

Other modes, such as the bus, private cars (as drivers or passengers), and taxis, were also widely used. Across all modes of getting to the station, respondents with a significant health condition or illness reported having more difficulty using them. This is particularly the case with getting another train to the selected station, where 35% of those with a significant health condition or illness had difficulty compared to just 13% of those who did not. Those affected most by a condition or illness were much less likely than average to walk/wheel, but more likely to be a passenger in a private car or use taxis.

There were mixed views around facilities such as accessible parking, accessible drop-off points, and accessible taxis. The most common concern respondents had about all these was that there were not enough of them available to use.

Booking online was the most common way for respondents to purchase tickets, but ticket offices remain important for many.

Ticket offices were particularly important for older respondents, as almost half of respondents over 75 reported using them. The availability and opening hours of ticket offices seem to be an issue for some, with around a fifth of respondents who prefer to buy from ticket offices saying they were not available or open when they typically use the station. Many also mentioned problems with ticket office busyness and queues. This suggests some unmet need for ticket office services.

Respondents who use passenger assistance have had mixed experiences.

Around half of respondents with a significant health condition or illness said they use or require passenger assistance. Most of these were satisfied with the assistance they received and said that staff were particularly helpful. However, many did have mixed or negative experiences, facing issues with assistance not turning up, being unable to find assistance staff, and challenges with complex journeys.

- Accessibility when using the station

Around 3 in 10 respondents with a significant health condition or illness had difficulty with audiovisual information. Some of the main issues included difficulty hearing announcements, and difficulties with reading information screens, due to issues such as the size and placement of the screens, and the size of the text on them.

Around 3 in 10 of all respondents reported having at least some difficulty moving around the station. This proportion is much larger for those with significant health condition or illness, as 85% of this group experience at least some difficulty. Many who had trouble moving around the station had issues with a lack of step-free access or the quality of step-free facilities like lifts and ramps. Overcrowding was also mentioned as a physical barrier, with jostling and lack of seats a concern.

Many noted that accessibility issues with moving around the station meant their journey was more difficult or that they could not use part of a station, or could not access specific stations at all.

Rail Stations can be a challenging sensory environment, particularly for those who are neurodiverse. Respondents often had issues with the loud environment, poor lighting, smells, and the appearance of stations. Some respondents mentioned that these led to anxiety and overstimulation. Respondents also mentioned ideas for improvement, such as better PA systems and more waiting areas, including quiet areas.

Many find that station facilities like retail, waiting rooms and toilets are not accessible, particularly those with significant health conditions. There was mixed feedback on station facilities. Regarding waiting rooms, 20% said they were not accessible, which rose to 38% among respondents with a significant health condition or illness. There were also some issues with toilets. Many found them inaccessible for reasons such as their frequent closure and the cubicles being too small. Additionally, there is high demand for Changing Places toilets, which have additional accessibility features, as 40% of the respondents with a significant health condition or illness who use a station without a Changing Places toilet said they would use one if available.¹

Respondents find staff helpful, but many want to see more staff at stations. 8% of respondents reported using help points. This was higher at 16% among respondents with a significant health condition or illness. Those who asked for help at a station from staff or a help point had mixed views on the quality of the response. Many highlighted that staff were helpful and solved their queries. However, others brought up issues such as no one answering the help point, and insufficient staff at the station to provide help.

This report highlights the accessibility difficulties faced by some people when using rail stations and some of the key factors that contribute to this. The findings underscore the need for targeted accessibility improvements across many areas of the rail station experience to ensure equitable access for all rail users. The findings of this research will inform the work of the Rail North Committee (which advises the Transport for the North Board on rail services and infrastructure improvements) focused on improving accessibility at North's rail stations. More detailed findings from this research for selected rail stations will also be shared with Train Operating Companies which manage the stations. We are committed to continuing to work with partners across the North to address accessibility challenges and create a more inclusive rail network for all rail passengers to use.

¹ Changing Places toilets can be described as larger facilities that have the right equipment, including a changing bench and a hoist, designed to support disabled people who need assistance.

Introduction

Rail Station Accessibility in the North

Our [Strategic Transport Plan 'Transforming the North'](#) sets the vision, strategic ambitions, and the long-term transport priorities for the North of England up to 2050. It recognises the scale of change required in transport accessibility needed to unlock opportunity and reduce the number of people living in areas of the North with a high risk of social exclusion by one million people by 2050.

When it comes to the North's rail system, the current poor accessibility at many of the North's stations presents a significant barrier to residents travelling by rail more often, or even travelling by rail at all. Some of the North's rail stations are still partially or wholly inaccessible to people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

Rail North Committee and other regional stakeholders are concerned about both the poor overall state of accessibility for passengers with mobility and sensory impairments, and the considerable variation in the provision of different types of facilities. Transport for the North's analysis of facilities at 600 rail stations in the North found that:

- 48% of the North's stations have step-free access to all areas (with fewer being fully accessible)
- 38% of the North's stations have accessible waiting shelters
- 77% of the North's stations have a public address system (which is particularly important for passengers with visual impairments)
- 83% of the North's stations have customer information system (CIS) screens (particularly important for passengers with hearing impairments)
- 87% of the North's stations have an adequate level of lighting.

A particular focus of concern is that only about half of our stations enable step-free access to all areas for persons of reduced mobility.

The Rail North Committee is working together on a plan to deliver station enhancements more quickly. At the present rate of progress, Network Rail's 'Access for All' programme will not provide step-free access to all areas of the North's rail stations until the early years of the next century ([Transport for the North, Strategic Rail Report, May 2023](#)).

Previous analysis undertaken for Transport for the North has estimated that bringing all of the North's stations to a high standard of inclusivity - with step-free access, customer information and public address systems, and CCTV security provided at every station - would cost £1,451 million (2021 prices), but over 30 years would provide a higher return in social and economic benefits than the net investment cost (Mott MacDonald, for Transport for the North, Northern England Station Enhancements Programme: Strategic Outline Business Case, May 2022).

But accessibility isn't just about being able to physically get into a rail station. It's also about things like being able to afford to travel on rail, being able to get to a rail station safely and comfortably, being able to move around the station easily,

being able to access the required information when travelling, and feeling safe and comfortable while waiting for the train service, as well as onboard the train.

Poor accessibility at stations can impact a passenger's rail journey in many negative ways, from a lack of comfort, to causing increased stress and anxiety, or exacerbating the discomfort or pain from physical or mental health conditions. For some passengers, a lack of accessibility can mean the difference between making a journey and staying at home, or making a journey with the risk of becoming stranded, trapped, or having to significantly prolong their journey to get to an accessible station.

When stations are not fully accessible, many passengers, particularly passengers with disabilities, rely on staff for support and assistance. However, over half (58%) of the rail stations in the North are completely unstaffed. This potentially cuts off passengers with disabilities or other accessibility challenges from access to the rail network from the station nearest to their home (or having to extend the overall length of the journey to board from a more accessible or better staffed station).

This means that many passengers with disabilities may avoid travelling on rail unless essential, potentially increasing feelings of loneliness, isolation or social exclusion.

We are determined to change that. To deliver a fully inclusive transport system, we need public transport, including rail travel, to be more affordable, more reliable, safer, better integrated with other modes of travel, and more accessible to all population groups.

Research objectives and methodology

Research objectives

We recognise that understanding the experiences of rail passengers, and particularly their experiences of the accessibility of rail journeys, is crucial to identifying where accessibility improvements are most needed on the North's rail network.

This new research was intended to help us better understand passengers' views about accessibility at rail stations in the North. We designed a comprehensive survey, open to all groups of passengers, which aimed to capture their views and experiences relating to accessibility when using a specific rail station in the North. By making the survey open to all passengers, we aimed to get a wide-ranging understanding of how and why different groups of people experience accessibility issues and how this may differ based on their demographic characteristics and the station that they may be using. By asking the respondents to focus on one specific station when describing their experience, we aimed to ensure we can identify clear recommendations for improvement for specific, named stations, in addition to describing any differences in accessibility challenges between different station size categories and the types of places the stations are serving.

The survey was open to everyone who travels on rail within the North, inviting rail users to comment on the accessibility of different aspects of a station of their choice, across different stages of using the station (starting from arriving at the rail station, to boarding a train for their onward journey).

We asked survey respondents to think about a specific station when answering survey questions – this could be a station that is nearest to their home, or a station that they use most frequently, or a station that they feel requires most improvement in terms of accessibility. We offered respondents the opportunity to complete the survey multiple times if they wanted to focus on a different station when completing the survey another time.

We will use the insights gathered via the survey to help inform plans for accessibility improvements to our rail stations, developed in collaboration with our partners.

Developing the survey

We designed a survey with just under 80 questions in total, which incorporated routing throughout the survey to probe for further detail when respondents said they experienced accessibility challenges with a particular element of the station environment. This meant that the maximum number of questions a respondent could be asked was 80, but most respondents completed a much smaller number of questions, depending on the extent of the challenges they had experienced.

The first part of the survey was designed to capture contextual information about the respondent, including some of their demographic characteristics and their patterns of rail use. The demographic questions included: the respondent's age bracket, gender identity, ethnicity, long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses and the extent to which they reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, and an optional question about describing their condition and how it affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Questions about patterns of rail use covered: frequency of rail travel by National Rail services, purposes of rail travel, barriers to rail travel, the extent of the need for staff assistance or company of another person when travelling on rail, and describing the main ways in which accessibility issues may make rail travel challenging for the respondent.

The second part of the survey started by asking the respondents to identify a specific station which they wanted to give their views on. This was followed by a series of questions exploring experiences of accessibility of different station elements, with additional probing questions asked when respondents indicated issues or challenges. The topics explored in this part of the survey included:

- Affordability of getting to the station and the cost of rail travel for the passenger and any travel companions
- Transport modes used to get to the station and accessibility challenges for different modes, including:
 - Accessible parking spaces
 - Accessible drop-off points
 - Accessibility of taxi services

- Methods for booking tickets/paying for tickets, including accessibility of ticket vending machines and staffed ticket offices
- Experiences with passenger assistance (including pre-booked assistance and Turn-Up-and-Go)
- Accessibility of audio-visual information at the station (such as Customer Information System screens, and Public Address System announcements), including experiences with:
 - Embossed or tactile signs
 - Hearing loops
 - British Sign Language
- Experience of moving around the station, including accessibility of ticket barriers, lifts, escalators, and ramps, travelling with an assistance animal, and use of tactile surfaces on paving and/or handrails
- Sensory environment in the station
- Accessibility of waiting areas, toilet facilities, and retail facilities
- Use of Help Points
- Perceptions of personal safety at the station
- Overall accessibility rating for the station.

Rail industry partners, including train operating companies, as well as representatives of disabled rail user groups contributed to the design of the survey. Report authors would like to thank all partners and stakeholders for their valuable input into the development of the survey.

Survey fieldwork

The survey fieldwork took place between 15 March 2024 and 7 June 2024.

The survey was initially promoted to members of Northern Transport Voices, Transport for the North's online research community. The research community, launched in January 2023, brings together residents of the North of England to discuss topics relating to transport in our region. Members of the community are invited to engage in an ongoing programme of research activities, designed to provide new evidence on transport behaviours, needs, challenges, and opportunities in the North, to inform the development of transport policies and strategies.

At the time of delivery of this research to the members of Northern Transport Voices (15 March – 12 May 2024), there were 600 members from across the North of England. Just over 200 responses to the rail station accessibility survey were received from members of the community during this period.

To extend the opportunity to share experiences to the greatest possible number of rail passengers across the North, from 15 May 2024 a public campaign was launched to publicise the link to the survey to rail users within our region using press and social media channels. The format of the survey open to members of the public was the same as that completed by members of the Northern Transport Voices research community.

Survey fieldwork closed on 7 June 2024 with 2,039 completed responses received. After data cleaning, 2,012 completed and valid responses were retained for data analysis. The number of unique respondents may be less, as respondents were able to complete the survey more than once to focus on different train stations.

There were 374 unique rail stations identified by respondents to this survey. Please see Appendix B for further details about the breakdown of stations which respondents were focusing on when completing this survey.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of our survey analysis dataset, a thorough data cleaning process was undertaken. The data was cleaned by correcting formatting issues, such as fixing spelling issues, and addressing data entry errors. Alongside the incomplete responses, a further 28 other responses were removed from the dataset due to issues such as random responding or not referring to a specified Northern station. For the analysis of quantitative data, data tables were created for each survey question, along with cross tabulations to explore relationships between different variables. These tables were then analysed to identify key data points and potential patterns or relationships. For the qualitative data, due to the large number of responses, an AI-based text analysis tool within the Northern Transport Voices online platform (which was used to host the survey) was used on some questions to identify key themes and summarise the responses. Manual thematic analysis was performed on questions with fewer responses.

The data in this report has not been weighted for demographics or any other factors.

Research Findings

Survey respondents and their rail travel patterns

Summary of Key Findings:

- **Demographic Breakdown:** The survey included a demographic profile of respondents. The most relevant for this report was their health condition status. 64% of respondents reported no long-term health conditions, while 36% did, slightly overrepresenting those with health conditions compared to the Northern population.
- **Impact on Daily Activities:** Among those with health conditions, 14% reported no impact on daily activities, 56% reported a little impact, and 30% reported a significant impact. Those impacted a little are slightly overrepresented.
- **Rail Travel Frequency:** Most respondents to the survey were frequent travellers, travelling by train at least once a week or month. Frequent users are overrepresented compared to general population data.
- **Barriers to Traveling More:** Key barriers to travel more for those with significant health conditions include lack of step-free access, insufficient wheelchair spaces on trains, cost, reliability, and a lack of assistance.
- **Travel Purposes:** Leisure is the most common reason for rail travel, followed by visiting family/friends, shopping, and working. Those with health conditions are less likely to use the train for work purposes than those without but are more likely to use the train to travel for health-related purposes and visit family/friends.
- **Assistance Needs:** Most respondents can travel alone without assistance, but those with significant health conditions are more likely to need significant assistance or travel with someone.

Appendix A provides a full breakdown of the respondents' demographic profile, including comparisons to the population of the North of England (based on 2021 Census data). Health condition or illness status was a particularly relevant demographic characteristic for this report and is heavily featured in the analysis. Figures 1 and 2 show the health condition or illness status of the survey respondents compared to the North's population in general.

The data for the Northern population in Figures 1 and 2 are based on 2021 Census data you can see the data and how it was used in Table 1.

Item	Number	Percentage of total population of the North	Percentage of those with disabilities or long-term health conditions
Total population	15,545,186	100.0%	-
All disabilities and health conditions	4,096,638	26.4%	100.0%
Disabled (day-to-day activities limited a lot)	1,368,841	8.8%	33.4%
Disabled (day-to-day activities limited a little)	1,660,547	10.7%	40.5%
Not disabled but has Long-term health conditions	1,067,250	6.9%	26.1%

Table 1 – Data from the 2021 Census, TS038 Disability, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber

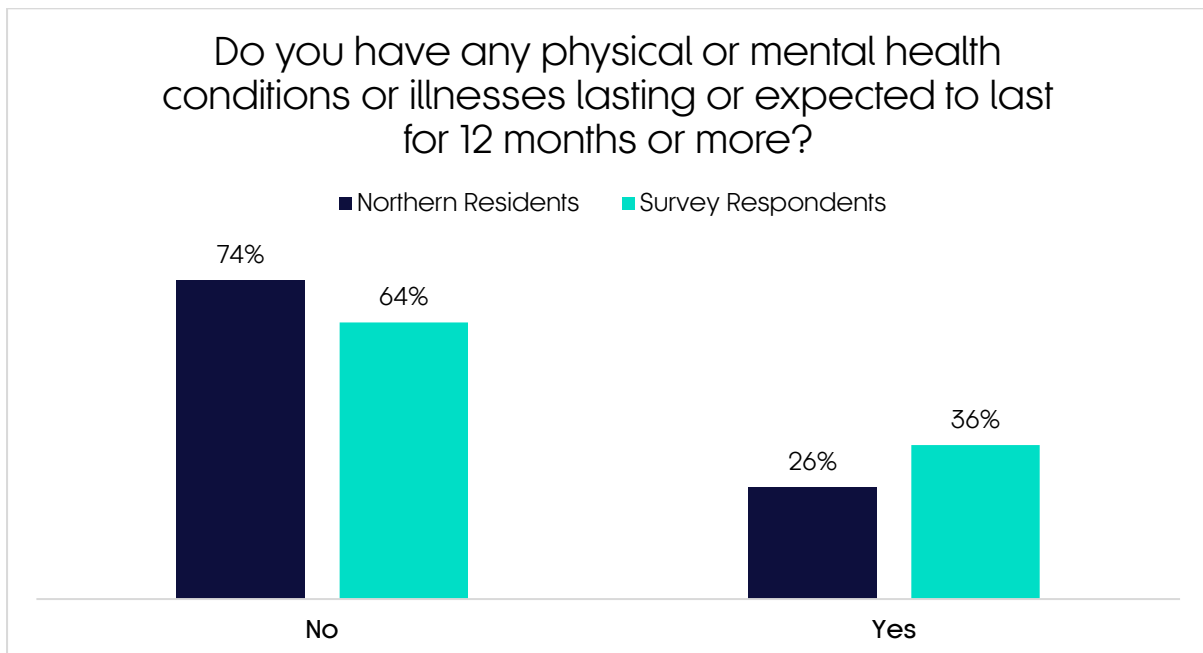


Figure 1: Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more? Survey Respondents N: 2012. North Residents' figure is from the 2021 Census, TS038 Disability, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Figure 1 shows that 64% of the survey respondents had no physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.

Throughout the report, this group will be referred to as having 'no health condition or illness'.

36% of survey respondents did have a physical or mental health condition(s) or illness(es) lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more. This group will be referred to as 'those that have a health condition or illness'. Figure 1 shows that those that have a health condition or illness are slightly overrepresented in this survey.

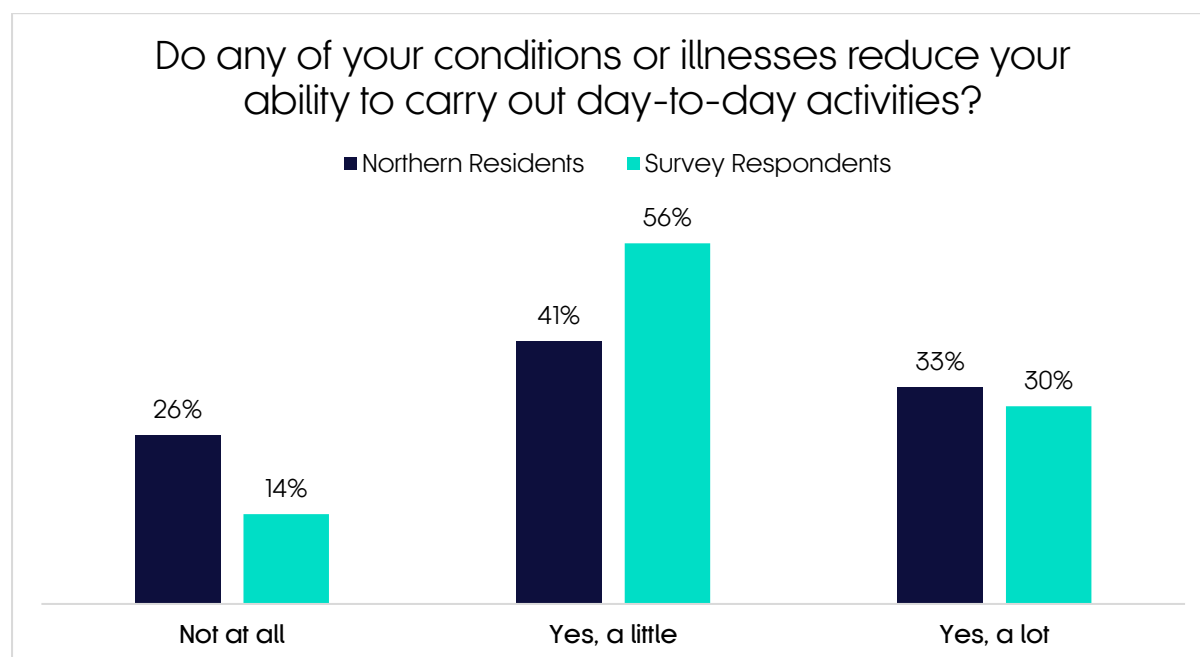


Figure 2: Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? Survey Respondents N : 2012. North Residents' figure is from the 2021 Census, TS038 Disability, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber. Closest fits were used i.e. Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited = Not at all.

To understand in more detail the impact of a health condition or illness on those who are affected by it, we asked about the extent to which it reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. The results of this are shown in Figure 2. 14% of respondents with a health condition or illness answered, 'Not at all', making this an underrepresented group based on the Northern Census comparison. The group that answered 'Yes, a little' was, however, overrepresented in the survey, with 56% of respondents compared to just 41% of Northern residents. Finally, 30% of respondents answered, "Yes, a lot". This group is relatively accurately represented among survey respondents compared to the Northern population.

The group of respondents who have a physical or mental health condition(s) or illness(es) lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more and affect(s) their ability to carry out day-to-day activities by a lot is referenced on many occasions throughout the report. For the purpose of simplicity, this group is referred to as those with a 'significant health condition or illness' in the remainder of the report.

Along with respondents' demographic information, the survey also captured some information on their rail travel patterns and purposes. Figure 3 shows the frequency that respondents travel by National Rail, with most respondents travelling relatively

frequently—26 % travelling at least once a week and 34% travelling at least once a month. While most travel frequently, some respondents are not frequent users of National Rail—9% travel only at least once a year, and for 6%, this was less than once a year.

Given the nature of the survey, which focused on rail, this may have encouraged a higher response from those who frequently use National Rail. Compared to similar reporting, there seems to be an overrepresentation of the most frequent train users in the response to this survey. YouGov research in 2024 suggests that only 14% of British adults use the train at least once a week, and another 14% use it once a month (YouGov, 2024).

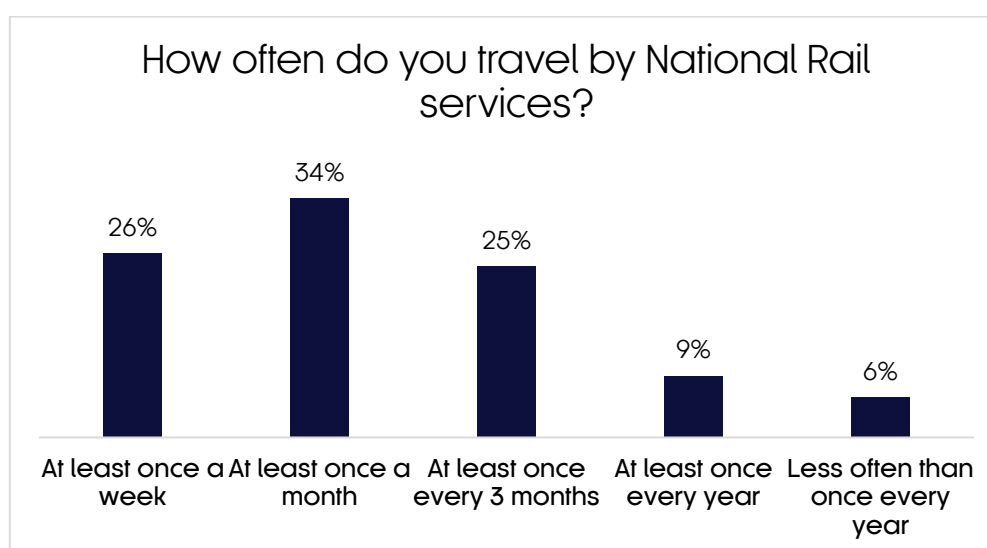


Figure 3: How often do you travel by National Rail services? – N: 1999

Respondents were asked whether they would like to travel more and, if so, what is making it difficult for them to do so. When looking particularly at those with a significant health condition or illness, many wanted to travel more, but several barriers to this were mentioned.

The most common concern was about the accessibility of stations, particularly the lack of step-free access that restricts access to platforms and trains. Other accessibility issues were also mentioned, such as a lack of wheelchair spaces on trains.

“If I don’t know that I’m going to definitely be able to get to the platform - no steps, broken lifts etc - and be able to use vital facilities such as toilets, then I’m not going to put myself through the hassle of trying to use trains. Then once I’ve reached the platform, I have to know that I can definitely get on the train, and that my booking will be honoured. It is no use to me if I’m told bookings are no longer valid because a train was cancelled - where am I supposed to go on a hugely overcrowded train in a wheelchair?” – Respondent with Multiple sclerosis, aged 60-64, referring to Sheffield station.

Cost and reliability of rail services were also common barriers to rail travel. For many, the cost of rail fares remained a barrier to travelling more often despite having a Disabled Persons Railcard. Poor reliability in terms of cancellation or delays was also an issue, leading to concerns that the train would not turn up.

Some also mentioned concerns around staff and passenger assistance as a barrier to travelling more. Many said that they may need more assistance to travel more often, for example, help finding and getting on their train. Others highlighted previous negative experiences that had put them off more frequent rail travel, such as passenger assistance staff not turning up.

Finally, conditions at stations and on trains were also identified as a concern that put respondents off rail travel. Sensory issues were particularly prominent here, with comments on uncleanliness, noise, and overcrowding. The lack of accessible toilets at some stations was also identified as a barrier to travelling more.

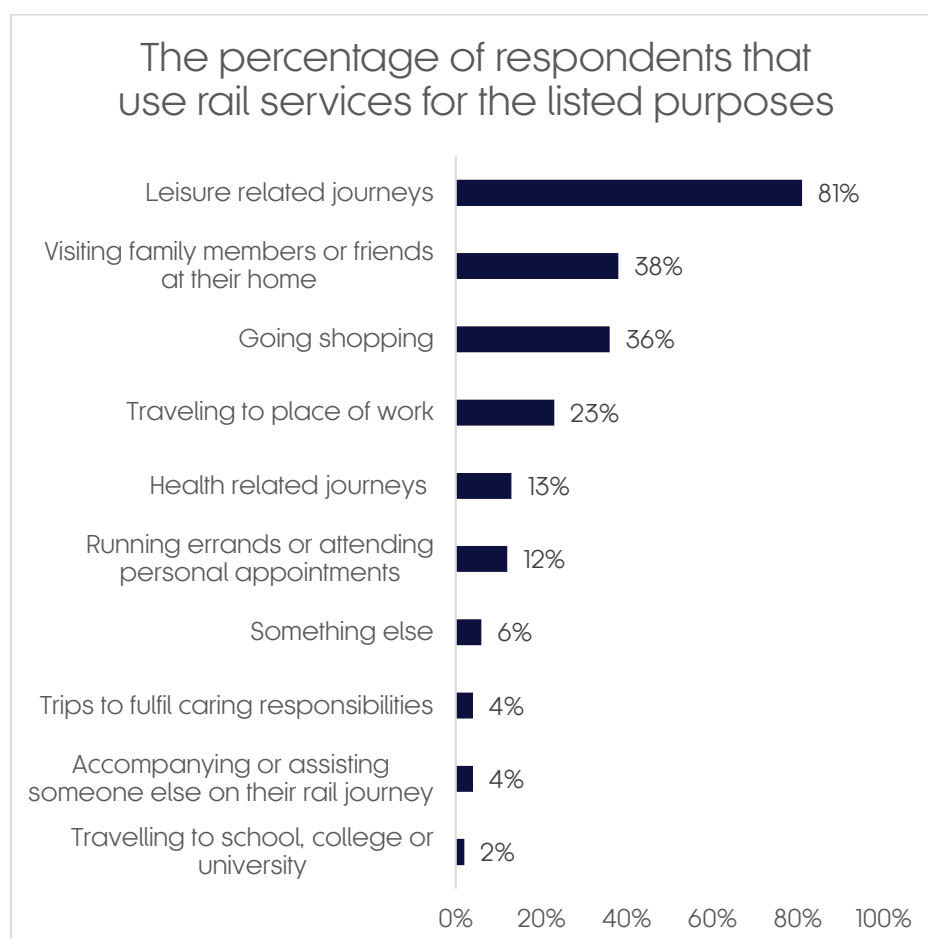


Figure 4: What is typically the purpose of the journeys you undertake on rail services? Respondents were able to select more than one option. N: 2012

When looking at rail journey purposes, by far, the most common reason respondents used rail services was for leisure, with 81% saying they use rail for this purpose. Other common purposes included visiting family or friends (38%), going shopping (36%), and travelling to work (23%).

There were some notable differences in travel purposes by health condition or illness status. Firstly, those who do not have a health condition or illness are much more likely to use National Rail for travel-to-work purposes than those with a health condition or illness, with 26% and 16% using rail for this purpose, respectively. However, the opposite is true when it comes to using rail for health-related purposes, where 23% of all those with a health condition or illness and 32% of those with a significant health condition or illness use rail for this purpose, compared to just 8% of those without a health condition or illness. Those with a health condition or illness (47%) are also more likely to use rail to visit family and friends compared to those who do not have a health condition or illness (33%). These results show that rail can play an important role in the health and social inclusion of those with long-term health conditions or illness.

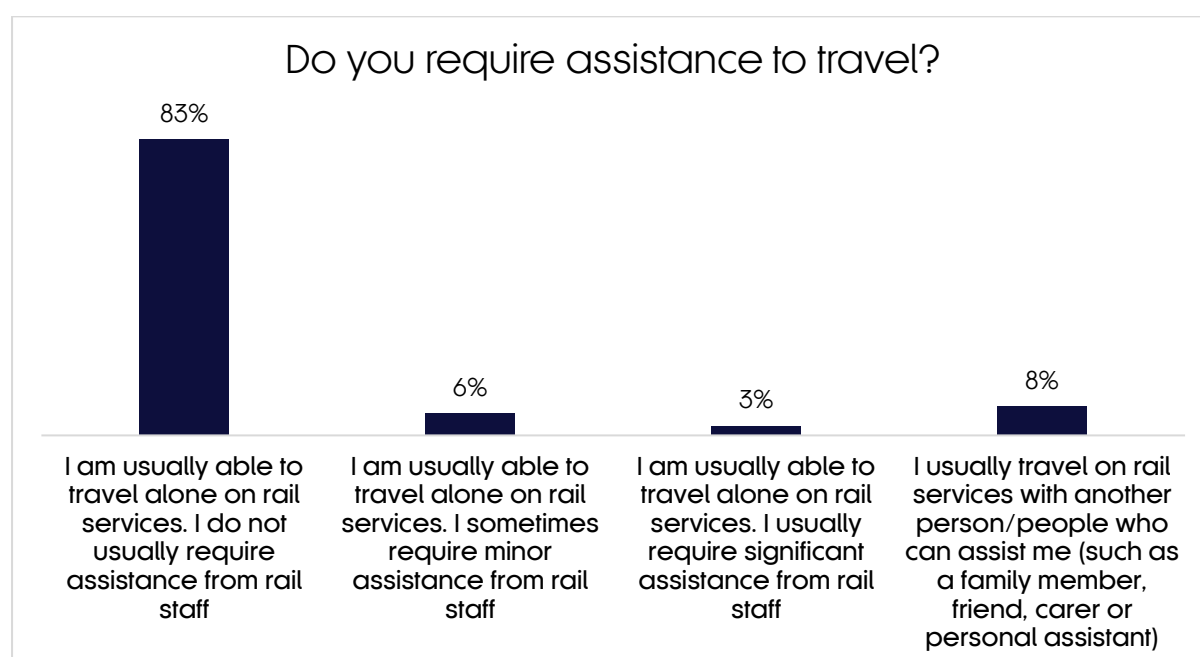


Figure 5: Please select one of the following options which best applies to your experience of travelling on rail. – N: 1944 – excluding "Prefer not to Say", "don't know" and "other".

Alongside travel purposes, respondents were also asked whether they can usually travel alone without assistance or need assistance to some extent. Figure 5 shows that most respondents (83%) are usually able to travel alone without assistance, although there were still many that did require assistance. Some of these could travel alone with assistance from staff – 6% said they needed minor assistance, and 3% said they required significant

assistance. However, 8% of respondents said they usually travel with someone to assist them.

As shown in Figure 6, there was a difference in the level of assistance that respondents said they usually require to travel when comparing different health condition or illness status groups. Those with a significant health condition or illness were much more likely than the other groups to need significant assistance from staff or travel with another person to assist them. 39% of this group use or require staff assistance to travel in some way and 44% travel with another person to assist them. Improved assistance, such as having more staff available, could enable more of those who travel with another person to travel alone with the help of staff.

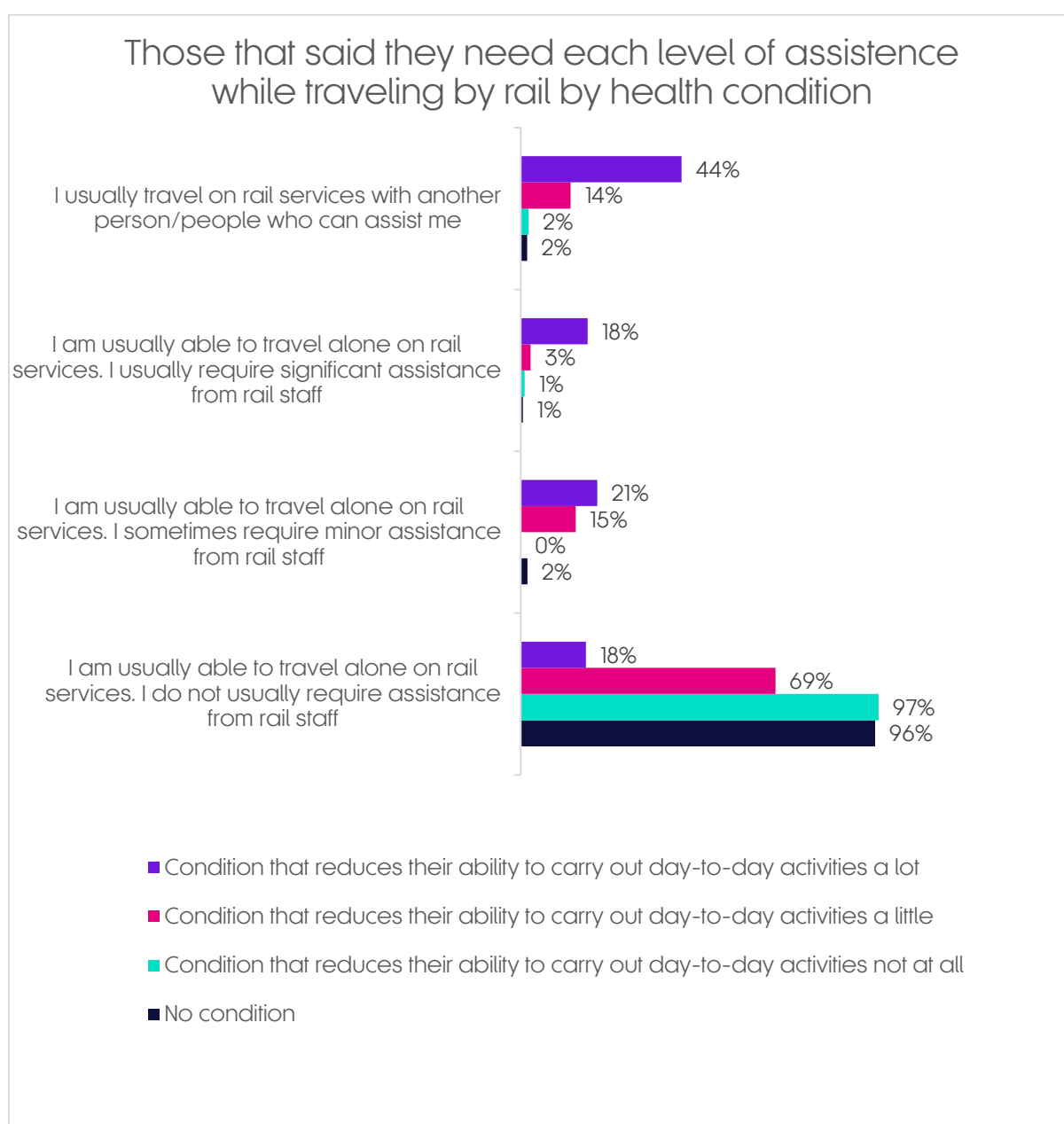


Figure 6: Please select one of the following options which best applies to your experience of travelling on rail. – excluding “Prefer not to Say”, “don’t know” and “other”. Crossed by health condition or illness status. No condition N:1220. Not at all N: 94. yes, a little N: 377. Yes, a lot N: 193

Cost of travel as an accessibility barrier

Key Findings:

- **Difficulty with Costs:** Around one-third of respondents have at least some difficulty with the cost of getting to the station. For train fares, a majority of respondents report finding these costs at least somewhat difficult to afford.
- **Impact on Demographic Groups:** Respondents with significant health conditions are the most likely to experience difficulty with costs related to rail travel.
- **Taxi Costs:** High taxi costs are a common issue for those with significant health conditions. Some said they had no choice due to the lack of viable public transport options.

The cost of travel can be a major barrier—there are costs associated with getting to the station and, of course, travelling on the train. These costs will be different in terms of affordability as average incomes differ between different groups. Cost has been particularly prevalent as a barrier in recent years, as high inflation has reduced the purchasing power of many rail users. Our recent report looking at the legacy of Covid-19 and the Cost-of-living increases highlights that from the perspective of northern residents, the period referred to as the ‘Cost-of-living Crisis’ appears to have a larger legacy than the COVID-19 pandemic on current travel behaviours.

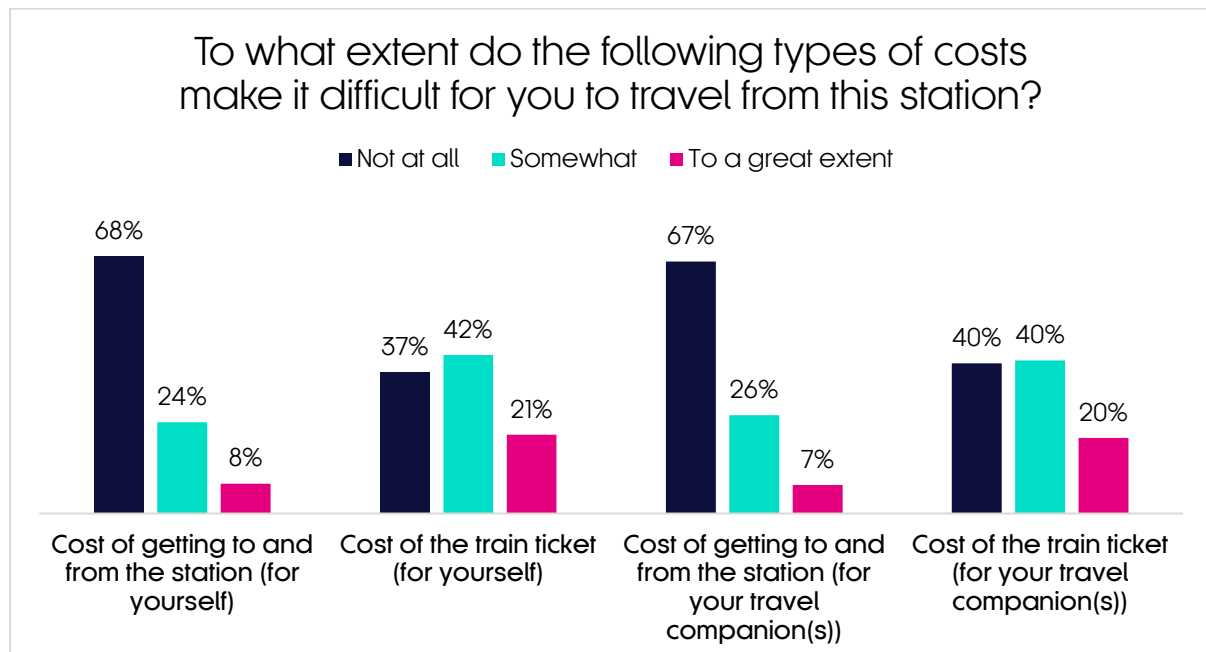


Figure 7: To what extent do the following types of costs make it difficult for you to travel from this station (to travel as often as you might like to, or to travel at all)? – Excludes “not applicable” for all types – Cost of getting to and from the station (for yourself) N: 1696. Cost of getting to and from the station (for your travel companion(s)) N: 1241. Cost of the train ticket (for yourself) N: 1888. Cost of the train ticket (for your travel companion(s)) N: 1269.

Figure 7 shows how difficult, if at all, respondents find the costs associated with travelling to the station and purchasing a train ticket for both themselves and their companions.

Most respondents do not have any difficulty with the cost of getting themselves and their companions to the station, with around two-thirds answering “not at all” when asked if they had challenges with these costs. However, it is worth noting that this leaves around a third of respondents who have at least some difficulties with the costs of getting themselves and their companions to the station, which is still a significant number.

When it comes to the cost of train tickets, Figure 7 shows that more respondents reported difficulty with this type of cost. Most respondents had at least some difficulty with the cost of train fares for themselves (63%) and their companions (60%). The result highlights that for many, affording rail fares may be a barrier to accessing this mode of travel.

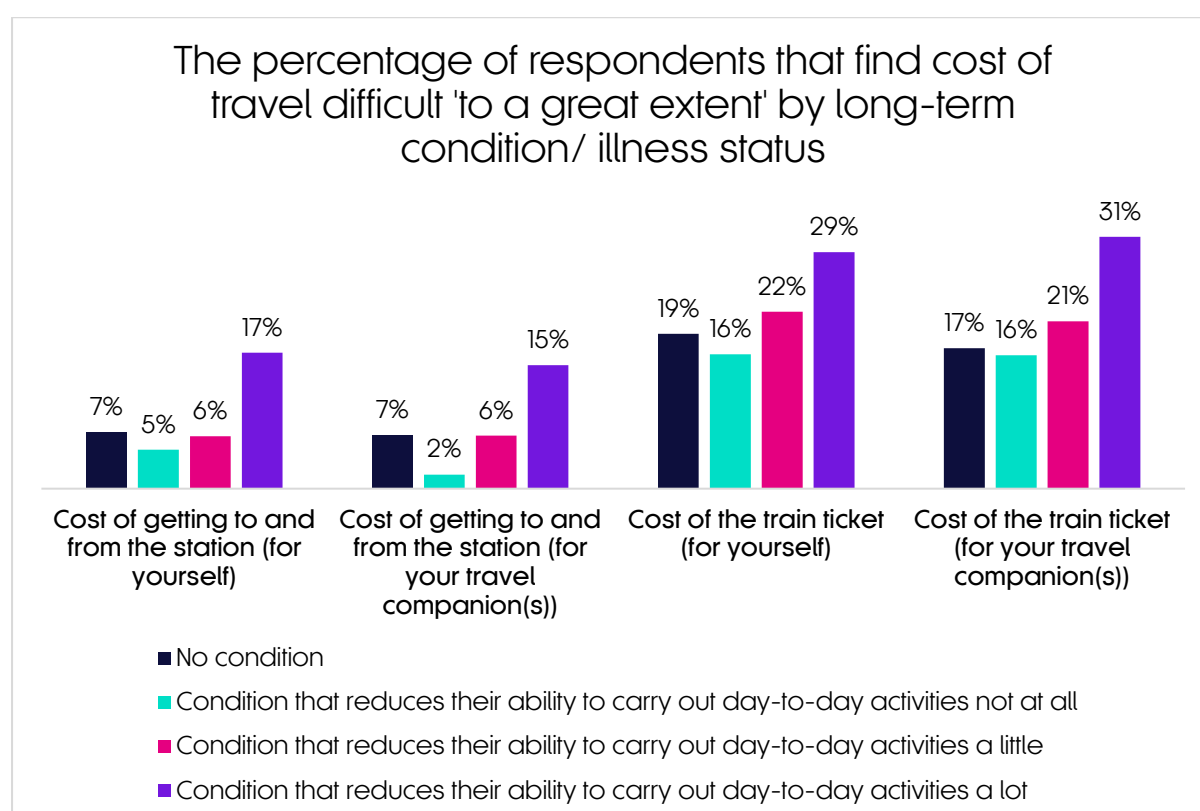


Figure 8 To what extent do the following types of costs make it difficult for you to travel from this station (to travel as often as you might like to, or to travel at all)? Those that answered, “To a great extent” Crossed by health condition or illness status – Excludes “not applicable” for all types - Cost of getting to and from the station (for yourself) (No condition N:1057 Not at all N: 84 yes, a little N: 327 Yes, a lot N:180). Cost of getting to and from the station (for your travel companion(s)) (No condition N:784 Not at all N:58 yes, a little N:231 Yes, a lot N:132). Cost of the train ticket (for yourself) (No condition N: 1179 Not at all N:91 yes, a little N:355 Yes, a lot N: 200). Cost of the train ticket (for your travel companion(s)) (No condition N: 795 Not at all N:55 yes, a little N: 234 Yes, a lot N:149).

While there are respondents across all groups who have difficulty with some of the costs associated with train travel, this can be more prevalent within some demographic groups. Figure 8 shows that across all situations asked about, respondents with a significant health condition or illness were more likely to

experience difficulty with travel costs compared to those who do not have a condition or have a condition that does not affect their ability to carry out daily activities. This is most clearly seen when looking at the cost of a train ticket for a companion, where 31% of respondents with a significant health condition or illness experience a great amount of difficulty, compared to just 17% of those who do not have a health condition.

Respondents with significant health conditions or illnesses highlighted several points regarding how affordability affected their rail journeys. Taxis were commonly mentioned as an expensive means of getting to the station. They were the most used mode of transport to the station for this group (as discussed in the 'Getting to the Station' section). Despite the cost, some felt they had no choice but to use taxis because other options, like public transport, were not viable due to lengthy journeys, unsuitable bus routes, and lack of accessibility. The higher use of taxis may explain why this group experiences more difficulty with the costs of getting to the station, as shown in Figure 8.

Other common areas of expense highlighted were the train fares themselves and parking charges. A few respondents mentioned that the need to travel with a carer added to the expense, making travel harder financially.

"Affordability is a major issue these days. Ticket prices are very high and if you then have to pay for parking or taxis then it becomes too much. National services you get a carers ticket for free but local you have to pay full price for your carer."
– Respondent is a wheelchair user, aged 45 – 59, referring to Newcastle Station.

For some, views on the affordability of rail travel did result in a change of behaviour. Many respondents said that the cost involved with rail travel caused them to look to different modes, which was often the car, but bus and coach were also mentioned. Others said the expense of rail travel led to them travelling less or not at all.

Among those that did not report any issues with rail travel costs, reasons for this included having other priorities such as convenience or using active travel to get to the station. Railcards, passes, and other similar discount schemes were also mentioned, with many saying they made travel more affordable, although for some, even with these discounts, travel was still expensive.

Journey planning

Key Findings:

- **Sources of Information:** Respondents use various sources to access accessibility information, including Network Rail and train operator websites/apps and calling.
- **Mixed Experiences:** Many respondents gave conflicting reports on the experience of finding information. Some said it was easy to locate and accurate, particularly regarding train times, accessible toilets, and wheelchair access. Others said the opposite, with a few mentioning issues with the status of lifts.

Journey planning can be an important element of preparing for a rail journey. For many, this includes checking routes, times and platforms. However, for lots of people with a health condition or illness, there are other important elements to consider, not least the information on the accessibility of stations that they want to use as part of their journey.

To understand how people with a significant health condition or illness find accessing information about the accessibility of stations prior to travel, we asked them to share their experiences.

Respondents reported using several different sources of information, such as National Rail and train operator websites and apps. Some respondents also reported using their phone to call for information about the accessibility of a station.

In terms of experiences, respondents had often had positive experiences of accessing accessibility information before travelling at a station. Many said that they found the information easy to find and that it was accurate. Some respondents also highlighted that the information was useful for train times and specific accessibility information, such as disabled toilets and wheelchair access.

“I have looked at wheelchair access across the Ilkley-Leeds line and the Ilkley-Bradford line for visiting family. It seemed straightforward as long as the conductor was aware.” – Respondent with asthma and environmental allergies, aged 45 – 59, referring to Leeds Station.

However, some respondents did have a mixed or negative experience. Again, the reasons given for this focused on locating and the accuracy of information, but these respondents had difficulty finding the information they needed and said it was often incorrect. A few also said that there was not enough information provided, with some specifically referencing a lack of information about whether lifts were working.

“Sometimes difficult to find out whether lifts are working prior to visiting station.” – Respondent with arthritis, aged 65 -74, referring to Newton-Le-Willows station.

The experiences of respondents suggest that it is important that information relating to the accessibility and facilities of stations is easy to find, covers all key aspects, and is accurate across all sources.

Getting to the station

Key Findings:

- **Modes of Travel:** The most common mode of travel to the station is walking/wheeling. This is true for all health condition status groups except those with significant health conditions, who are more likely to use private cars (as passengers) and taxis.
- **Difficulty by Health Condition:** Those with long-term health conditions report more difficulty using all modes of travel than those without health conditions. Notable differences include using trains and walking/wheeling.
- **Accessible Parking and Drop-Off Points:** The main concern was the availability of these facilities, with many saying there were few or none available. Other issues for accessible parking included the cost and misuse of spaces. Regarding drop-off points, many highlighted the number of taxis using the point as an issue.
- **Taxis/Private Hire:** Pre-booked private hire vehicles are the most common type of taxi used by respondents to get to the station. They are particularly important for older taxi-using respondents who are less likely to use app-based services. Some respondents require accessible taxis, for which availability was a key concern.

Getting on the train and travelling out of the station is not usually the first step in the overall journey—for most, it will be the second or an even later stage. Therefore, it is also important to consider the accessibility of getting to the station in the first place. With this in mind, we asked respondents about their journey to the station that they chose to focus on.

Figure 9 shows a range of modes of travel and the percentage of respondents that use each of these modes to get to the station. Walking or wheeling was the most common mode of travel used, with just under half (48%) of all respondents reporting using this method. Following this was the Bus, with 29% of respondents using this mode to get to the station. Private cars as drivers (25%), private cars as passengers (21%), and taxis (21%) were also commonly used modes.

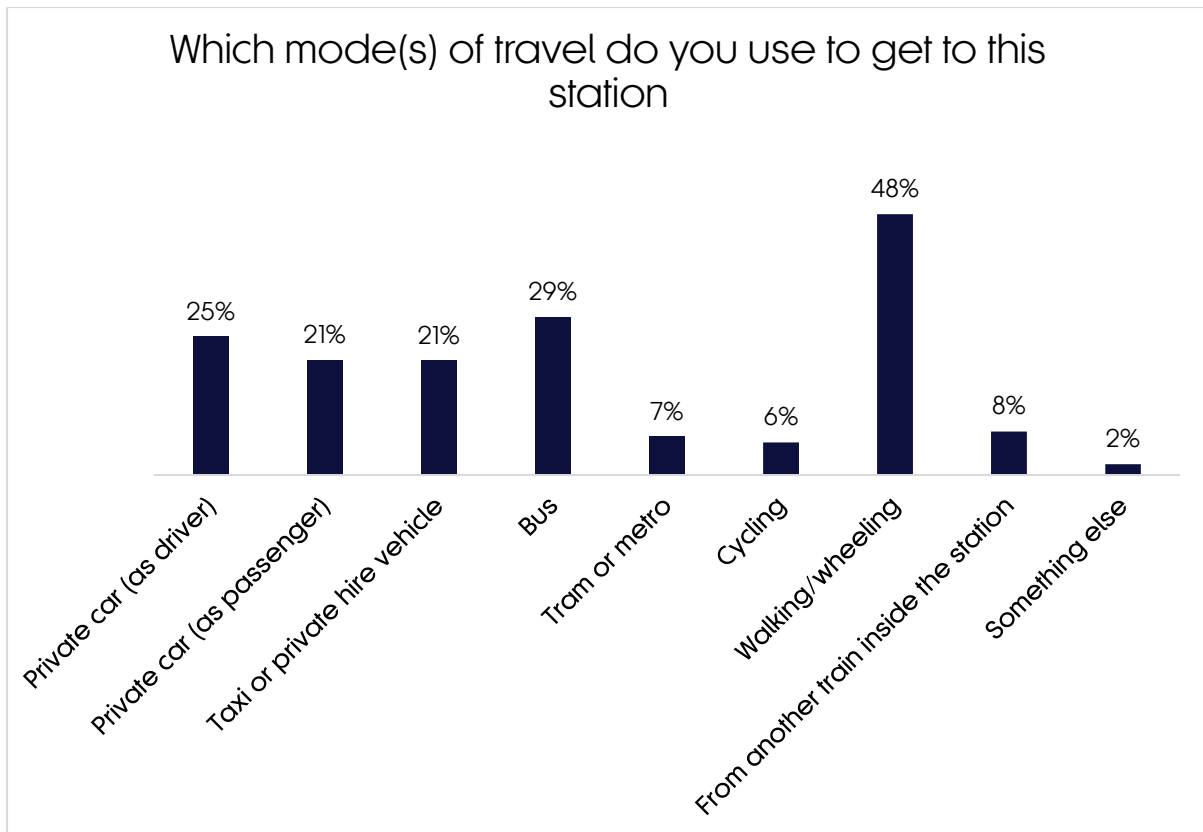


Figure 9: Which of the following modes of travel do you usually use to get to this station? - Respondents were allowed to select multiple options that applied to them – N: 2012

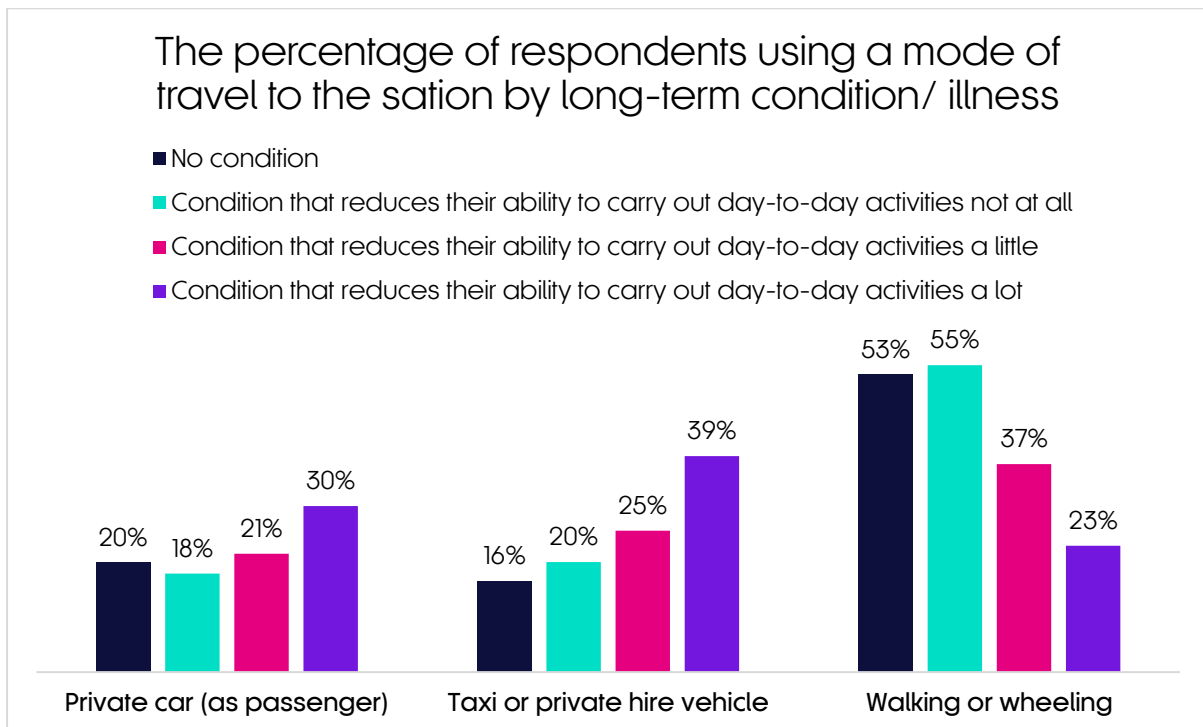


Figure 10: Which of the following modes of travel do you usually use to get to this station? Please select all that apply. Crossed by health condition or illness. No condition N:1251. Not at all N: 96, yes, a little N: 385. Yes, a lot N:211

As seen in Figure 10, respondents with a significant condition or illness were more likely to use a private car (as a passenger) and a taxi or private hire to get to the station but much less likely to walk/wheel to the station. Walking/wheeling to the station was the most common mode of getting to the station across all health condition or illness groups except for those most affected by a condition or illness – for this group, the taxi was the most common mode.

For many, the choice of travel mode will be determined by the level of ease or difficulty they experience using each mode. However, of course, there are instances where respondents may have little choice in what mode they use to get to the station, as, for example, there may be limited public transport options available. Figure 11 shows how difficult or easy the respondents find each mode they use to travel to a station.

Generally, the majority of respondents across all modes find them easy to use. However, some modes are more challenging than others. For example, around a quarter of respondents who use buses to get to a train station said they find them difficult.

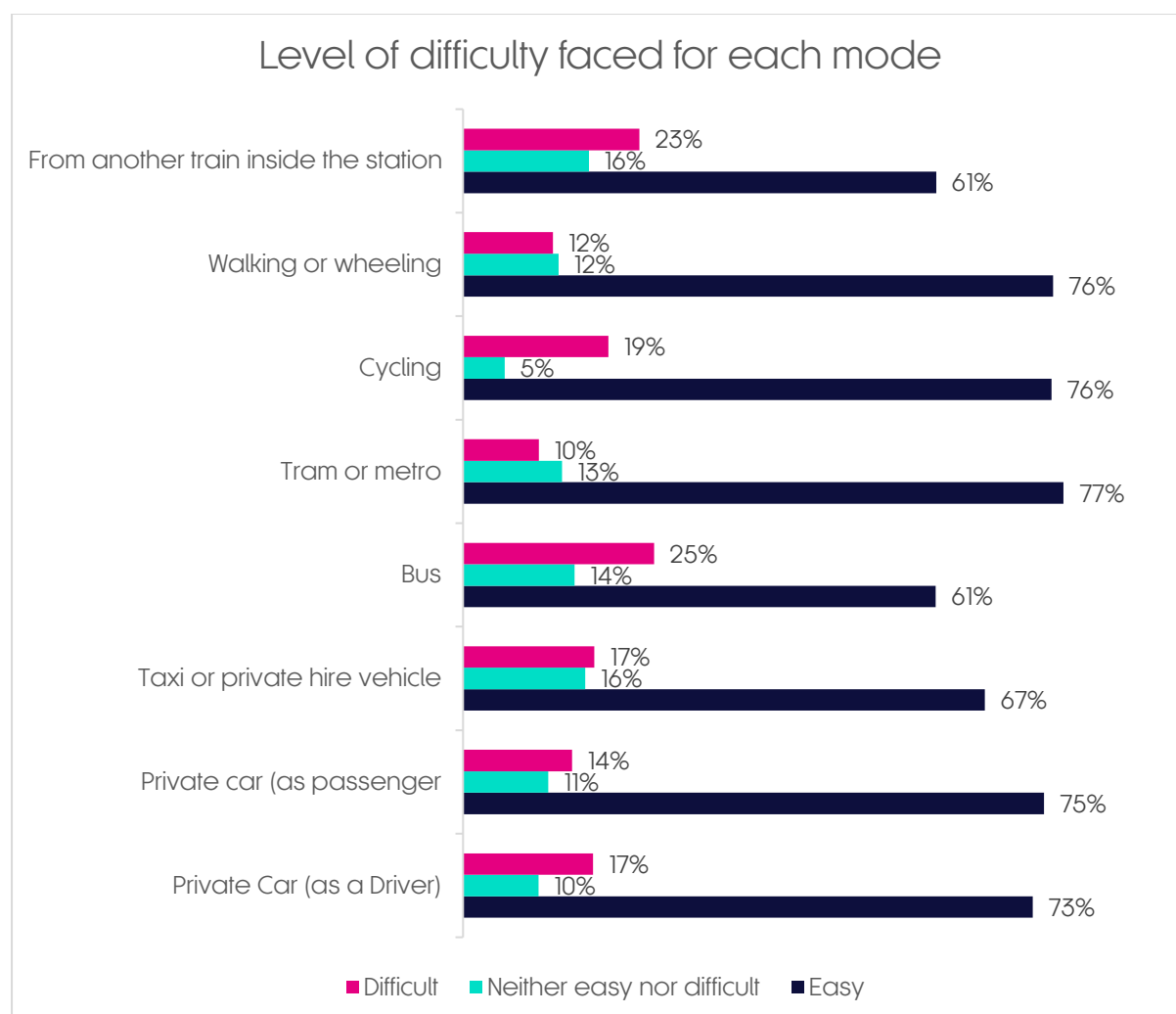


Figure 11: How easy or difficult do you find using each mode of travel to get to this station? Respondents only asked about modes they said they use. From another train N: 154. Walking or Wheeling N: 967. Cycling N: 112. Tram or Metro n: 133. Bus N: 584. Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle N: 419. Private Car (as Passenger) N: 427. Private Car (as a driver) N: 513.

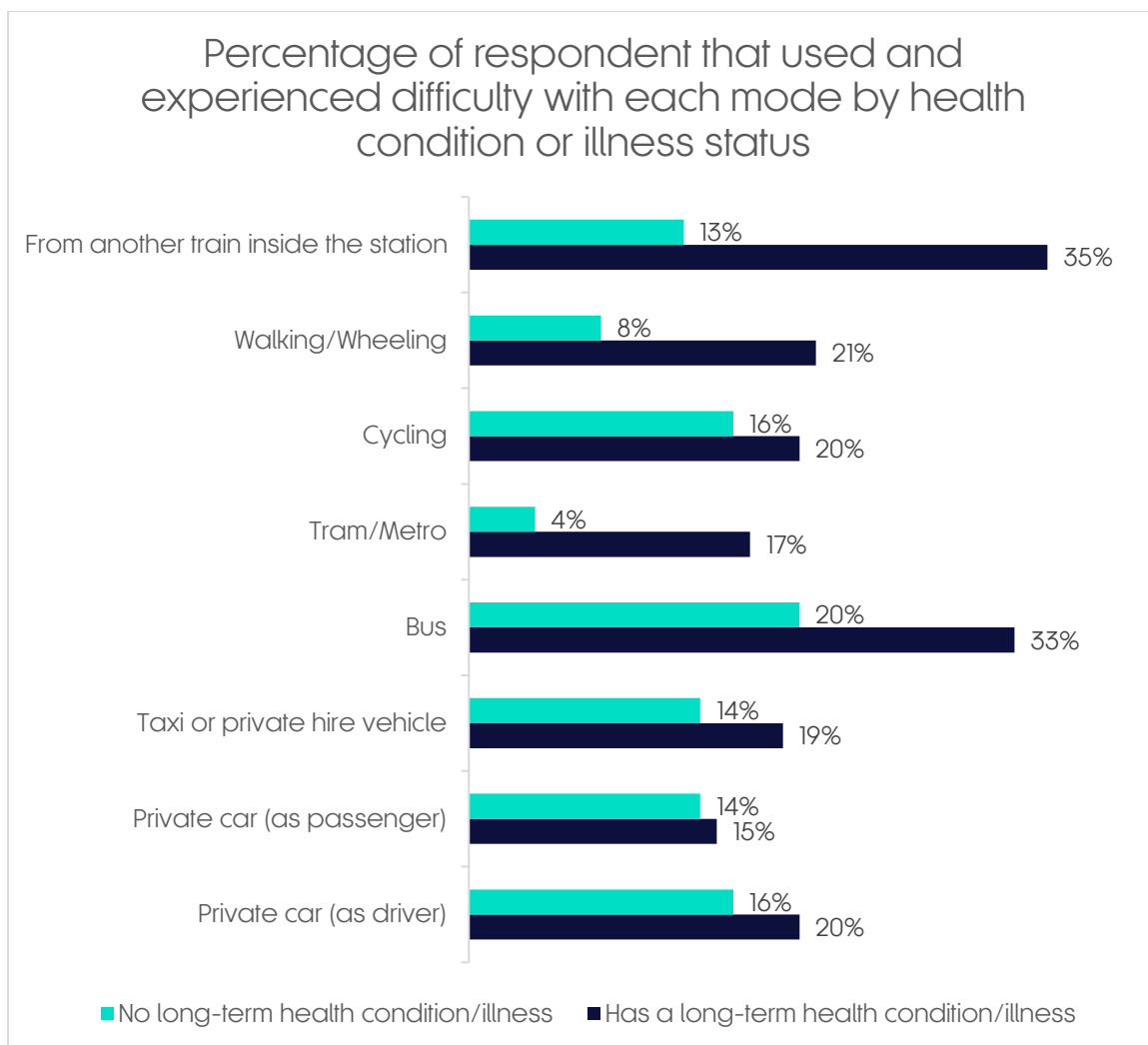


Figure 12: How easy or difficult do you find using each mode of travel to get to this station? Respondents only asked about modes they said they use. Crossed by health condition. Number of respondents to the question: From another train - has condition N: 69, no condition N: 78. Walking or Wheeling - has condition N: 253, no condition N: 673. Cycling - has condition N: 15, no condition N: 92. Tram or Metro - has condition N: 59, no condition N: 72. Bus - has condition N: 228, no condition N: 338. Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle - has condition N: 202, no condition N: 205. Private Car (as Passenger) - has condition N: 164, no condition N: 249. Private Car (as a driver) - has condition N: 152, no condition: 345.

Figure 12 shows that across all modes asked about, a larger percentage of respondents with a long-term health condition or illness had difficulty using that mode compared to those who did not have a long-term health condition or illness. There are some examples where this difference in experiences is noticeably larger. The largest difference is in the experience of using a train to get to the selected station, where 35% of those with a health condition compared to only 13% of those with no health condition reported difficulty. This highlights that those with a long-term health condition or illness may have more difficulty disembarking trains and leaving a station or making a change of train in a station. Another notable difference is in walking and wheeling, where again, those with a long-term health condition were much more likely to report facing difficulty.

- Accessible Parking

For many who use a private vehicle to get to the station, accessible parking is essential, as they or someone they travel with may have a mobility-limiting condition. Accessible parking spaces should, in most cases, be larger bays, providing more space to get out of the vehicle and be located as close as is feasible to the rail station's entrance (Department for Transport, 2021).

Around a quarter (23%) of the respondents who used a private vehicle (as a driver or passenger) to get to the station reported that they use or require accessible parking spaces.

However, the situation around accessible parking at stations seems to be mixed, particularly as 12% of respondents who said they use or require accessible parking reported that it was not available at the station they referred to throughout the survey. The lack of accessible parking for respondents did seem to be a more significant issue at smaller stations. Of respondents who require accessible parking and referred to a classification F station (Class F refers to a small unstaffed station. A full list of classification and description is in Appendix B), 22% said there are no accessible spaces available.

Where there was a lack of or no accessible parking spaces at the station, a few respondents mentioned that they had to find alternate parking locations. One respondent said they took the bus due to the lack of spaces and the parking requiring a mobile phone to book.

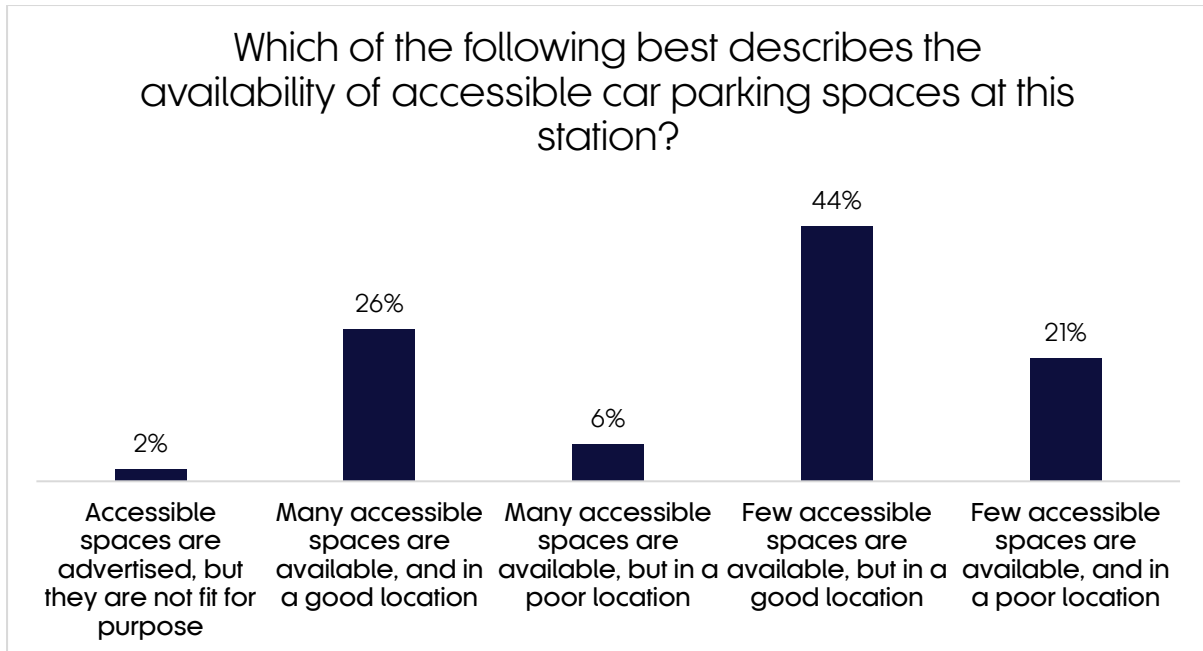


Figure 13: Which of the following best describes the availability of accessible car parking spaces at this station? Excludes "other" and "Don't Know". Only asked if they use a private car to get to the station and use accessible parking. N: 160

Again, when looking at the experiences of those who use or require accessible parking spaces and it is available at their station, the results are mixed. Figure 13 shows that when it comes to availability, almost two-thirds (65%) said that there

were only a few accessible spaces available for them to use. However, respondents were more positive about the location of accessible spaces, with 70% suggesting that the available spaces were well located.

When we asked respondents to provide further details about their experience, the key themes that arose were that very few or no accessible spaces were available. Some also mentioned that others misused the spaces and that the price was an issue. Regarding quality, those who had issues at their station highlighted a lack of accessibility and poor location in terms of getting from parking to the station.

“Accessible parking is pointless if you then need to walk up a steep slope to access the station. My son finds it really difficult to access the Bradford interchange at the moment as will anyone else who is either elderly or has a physical disability like my son.” – Respondent aged 45-59, referring to Bradford Interchange Station.

- Accessible Drop-Off Points

Alongside accessible parking spots, accessible drop-off points – sometimes known as kiss-and-ride points – can also be important. If present, they usually provide a way for someone to drop off or pick up a person near the entrance/exit to a station. Around a third of respondents (32%) who use a private vehicle (as a driver or passenger) to get to the station use or require accessible drop-off points,

When those who reported using or requiring accessible drop-off points were asked about their availability, 20% said they were not available at the train station they were referring to. This suggests that there may be demand for more of these facilities.

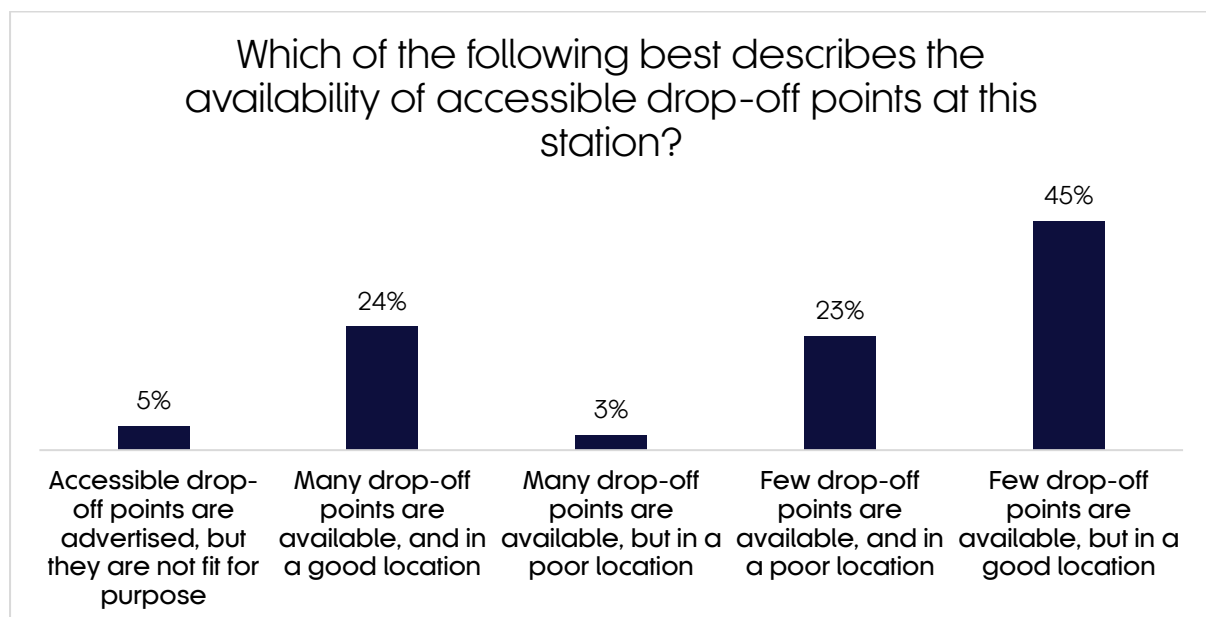


Figure 14: Which of the following best describes the availability of accessible drop-off points at this station? Excludes “other” and “Don’t Know”. Only asked if they use private car to get to the station and use accessible drop off points. N: 209

Similar to accessible parking, when asked about the experience of accessible drop-off points, the results were mixed. Figure 14 highlights that of those who use or require accessible drop-off points and these were available at their station, over two-thirds (68%) said that there were only a few points available for them to use. However, again like accessible parking, respondents were more positive about the location of drop-off points, with 69% of respondents suggesting that they were well located.

When asked for further details of experiences with accessible drop-off points, the most common comments were around the points being too busy or that there were none or not enough spaces. Many also highlighted that the spots are heavily used by taxis, which can reduce space for others. Despite most being positive about the location there were some respondents that said they were inaccessible or poorly located and that time limitations and charging can cause problems.

“You are given limited time to see your passenger safely to the platform. Cameras monitor your arrival and fines are sent if times are too long. 30 minutes should be a free time allowed. If you are dropped off and picking up then 5, 10 minutes is all that’s required, but if you need to help with luggage or wheelchair assistant, more time is needed.” Respondent aged 60-64 referring to Darlington Station.

As the quote highlights, people with a health condition or illness may require additional time in drop-off zones to get safely out of a vehicle without being rushed. Charges could penalise people in this group who need more time. Stations could consider allowing more time at drop-off points for people with disabilities or blue badge holders.

- Taxis and Private hire

Taxis and private hire vehicles are essential for many people to get to the train station—21% of all respondents reported using taxis or private hire vehicles in this way, as shown previously in Figure 9. Furthermore, this mode is particularly important for those with a significant long-term health condition or illness, as shown in Figure 10 - 39% of this group reported using taxis or private hire vehicles to get to the station.

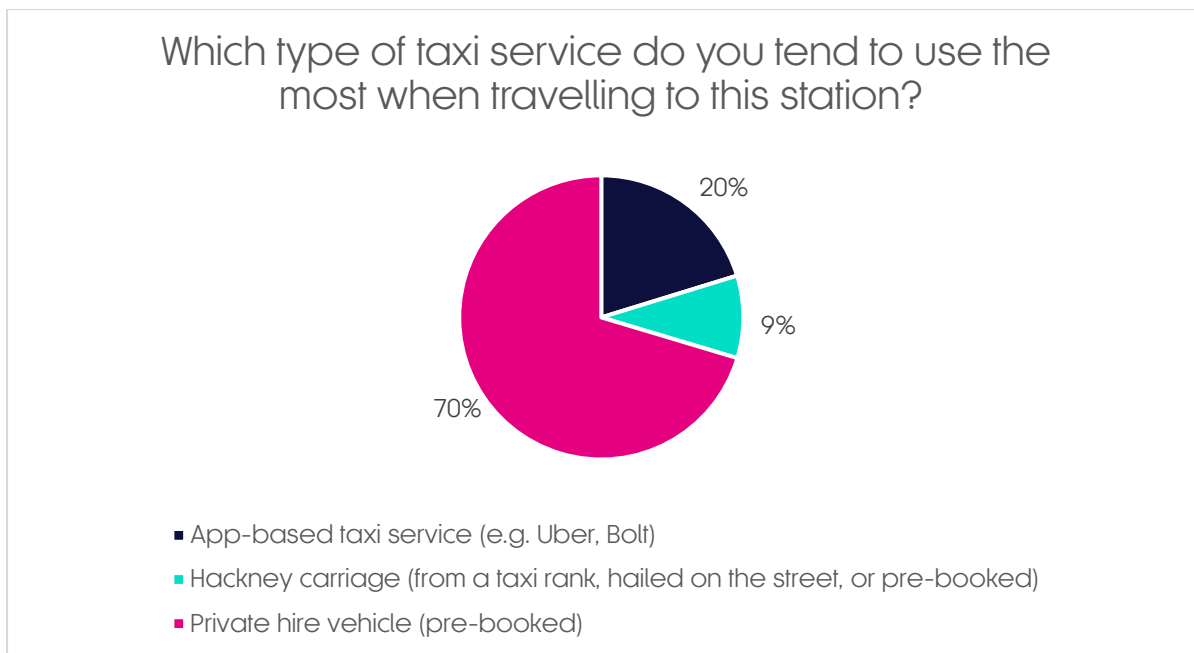


Figure 15: Which type of taxi service do you tend to use the most when travelling to this station? – excludes “Don’t know”. Only asked to those that said they use taxis to get the station. N: 415

Of course, there are different types of taxi services on offer. Figure 15 highlights the types of taxi services that taxi-using respondents reported using most. A large majority (70%) use pre-booked private hire vehicles the most. A fifth of respondents choose to use App-based taxi services. Only 9% of respondents use Hackney carriages the most.

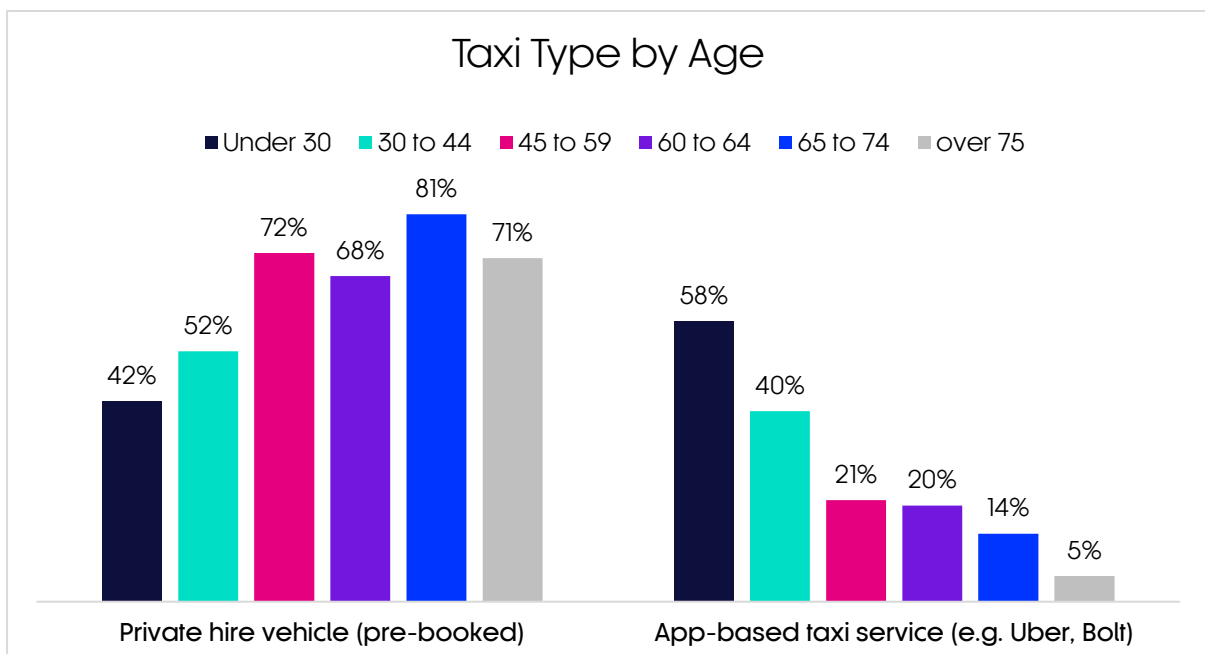


Figure 16: Which type of taxi service do you tend to use the most when travelling to this station? – excludes “Don’t know”. Percentage of each age groups that the each taxi type (does not show hackney carriage). Only asked to those that said they use taxis to get the station. Under 30 N: 16. 30 to 44 N: 48. 45 to 59 N:109. 60 to 64 N: 65. 65 to 74 N:113 75 and over N: 56

The types of taxi service used most differed by respondents' age bracket. Older respondents, particularly those over 45, were much more likely to use pre-booked private hire vehicles than younger groups. Conversely, when it comes to app-based taxi services, younger groups are more likely to use these. Only 11% of taxi-using respondents over 65 used app-based taxis. This may be due to these groups having less access to and confidence in using smartphone apps and other emerging technologies. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that traditional forms of booking taxis, such as by phone calls, remain available, to ensure that older groups that depend on taxis but do not use the relevant technologies are not excluded.

Some people with disabilities who use taxis to get to the station will require more specialised taxis that meet their needs. For example, people who use a wheelchair may need a taxi with a ramp to get in and straps to hold the wheelchair in place. 13% of respondents who use taxis said they use or require accessible taxis.

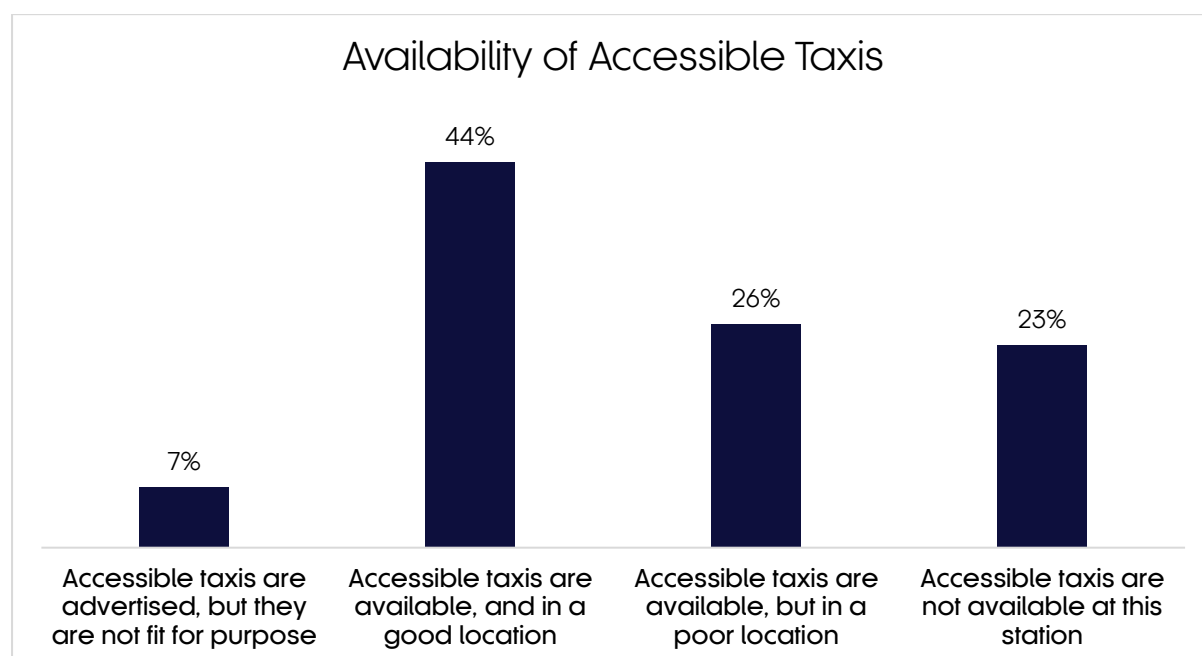


Figure 17: Which of the following best describes the availability of accessible taxis at this station? – Excludes "other" and "I don't Know". N: 43

When asked about the availability and experience of accessible taxis, Figure 17 shows that 44% of respondents who use or require accessible taxis to get to the station thought that accessible taxis were available and well located. However, over half had some form of issue (33%) or found them to be unavailable at their station (23%).

When asked to provide some further information on the experience of accessible taxis, respondents brought up issues including there not being enough accessible taxis, a long wait, or needing to book in advance. Some also highlighted problems with the waiting area, saying that it was either too far from the station or there were

sensory concerns, such as being dirty. The cost was also mentioned - it was suggested that accessible taxis can cost more than standard ones.

“There is no taxi service, I have to arrange my own and local companies are not always accessible and charge extra for the same car!!!” - Respondent aged 30-44, with limited mobility, referring to Gorton Station.

Buying tickets

Key Findings:

- **Methods of Purchase:** By a considerable margin, the most common method respondents use to purchase tickets is online booking via websites/apps, although many respondents did report using staffed ticket offices and ticket vending machines.
- **Age Differences:** Older respondents are less likely to use online methods than younger respondents and more likely to use staffed ticket offices. Many of those who used ticket offices said they were easy to use, although there were issues, including queues, limited opening hours, and accessibility challenges.
- **Ticket Vending Machines:** Respondents reported good availability of ticket vending machines, and many users had no issues. However, many did have issues, including machines being out of service, complex to operate, and poorly located.

Another area of accessibility to consider is how passengers purchase their train tickets. Some, for example, may struggle to purchase tickets online, and others may need support determining what type of ticket they need.

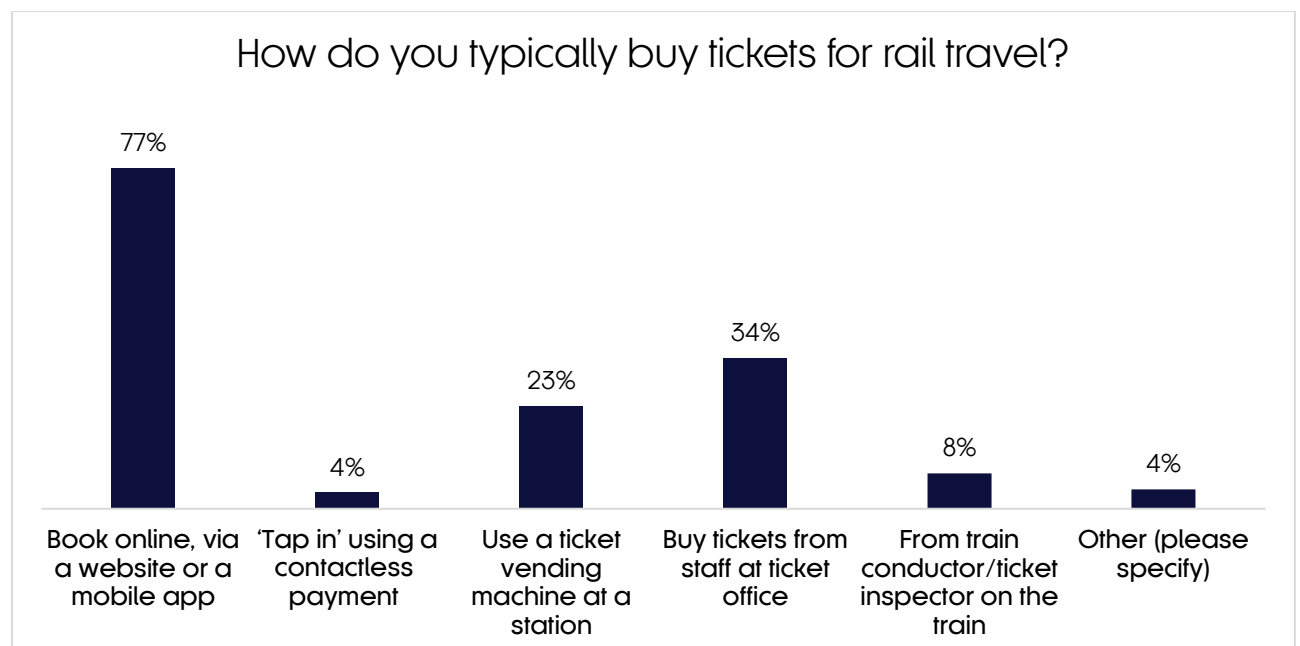


Figure 18: How do you typically buy tickets for rail travel? Please select all that apply. N: 2012

We asked respondents what method(s) of purchasing tickets they typically use. The results are shown in Figure 18. The most common way that respondents paid for

their tickets was through online booking via websites/apps, which over three-quarters (77%) of respondents said they use. Significantly more respondents used this method than any other. The second most used method was buying tickets from a staffed ticket office, which around a third (34%) of respondents reported using. Whilst not the most used, this shows that it is still an important method of purchasing tickets for many. Similarly, Figure 18 also shows that ticket vending machines are also used by a considerable proportion of respondents, with just under a quarter (23%) of respondents using this method.

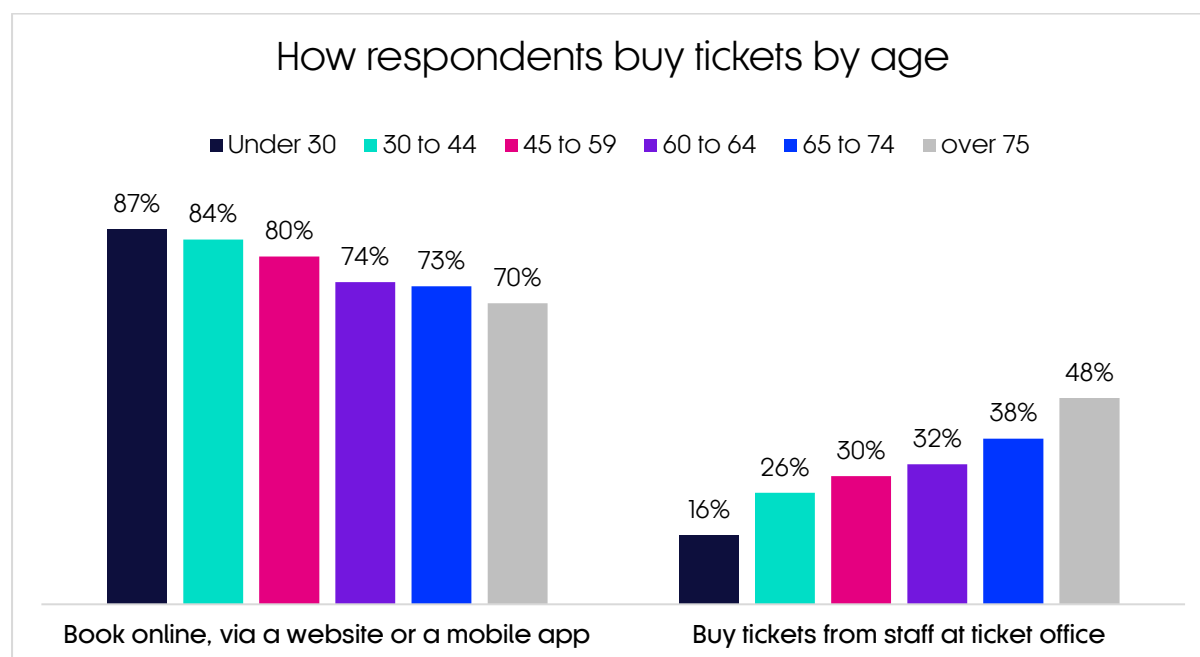


Figure 19: How do you typically buy tickets for rail travel? Please select all that apply. Crossed by Age bands. The percentage of each age band that buy tickets online and that buy from staffed ticket office. Under 30 N: 75. 30 to 44 N: 241. 45 to 59 N: 513. 60 to 64 N: 338. 65 to 74 N: 622 75 and over N: 233

There are notable differences in the methods used for purchasing tickets by age. Firstly, while booking online is the most common method used for each age band, Figure 19 shows that the share of respondents using online methods does decrease as the age band increases, with only 70% of respondents over 75 booking online, compared to 87% of those under 30s. The opposite is true when looking at staff ticket offices, as the percentage of respondents using this method increases significantly through the age bands. Only 16% of under 30s use staffed ticket offices, compared to 48% of over 75s. This shows that some groups still depend on staffed ticket offices, particularly older groups, which are less likely to use online methods.

Among respondents who reported using staffed ticket offices to buy tickets, almost a fifth (19%) said there was no staffed ticket office available when they typically used the station they referred to in this survey. The result suggests that there are many respondents that want to buy tickets from staffed ticket offices, but these are not available at their primary station.

To gain a deeper understanding of the accessibility of ticket offices, respondents with a health condition or illness that use them were asked about how easy or

difficult they find using them. Most had positive experiences of using ticket offices, and a large majority of respondents reported finding them easy to use. Respondents were particularly complimentary about ticket office staff, saying they were friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. Many also mentioned that they were happy that ticket offices were saved from closure and that without them, they could not travel.

Some elements did come up in a negative light, with one of the most common being that the offices could be busy and that queues moved slowly. For some, this was an issue when in a rush for a train, and it was mentioned as an issue for those who struggle standing for long periods. These issues led some to suggest that there should be more staff available. These issues signal that there is some unmet need for ticket office support.

Another key issue mentioned by some respondents was that ticket offices were closed permanently or on specific times and days. One respondent highlighted that this means they have to travel to a different station.

“The staffed Ticket Office at Halifax is easy to find BUT due to staff shortages it isn't always open in the afternoon. This is most inconvenient when needing to purchase a £10 Rail Rover... this then needs a road trip to Hebden Bridge station”-Respondent aged 75-89, referring to Halifax

There were some physical accessibility issues mentioned. A few said that getting to the ticket office was tricky, with some respondents saying that getting there at their station requires a long walk or using stairs. A couple of respondents also said the ticket office counters were too high for wheelchairs.

As shown in Figure 18, ticket vending machines are another popular way to purchase tickets. Respondents said there is good coverage of ticket vending machines at northern stations, with almost all (98%) of respondents who use these machines reporting that they are available at their station.

However, when we asked respondents with a health condition or illness about their experience using ticket vending machines, there was a mixed response. While many had no issues with the ticket machines and thought they worked well, some difficulties were also mentioned. One of the most common issues mentioned was that the machines were out of service or broken. One respondent said this was particularly an issue when tickets could not be purchased on the train.

“When the ticket machine does not work, or cannot provide a promise to pay... and the conductor cannot sell tickets... it's limiting and then some. But the ticket machine is difficult to work for me. Too complicated, but also does not provide the best prices” Respondent aged 75-89 referring to Burley-in-Wharfedale station.

As shown in the quote above, some respondents also had issues operating the machines. Common issues included:

- Finding them complex
- Difficulty finding the correct tickets and the best price
- Issues with the display, such as glare from the sun and the text being too small
- Difficulty with touch screens like finding it unresponsive or having a condition or cold weather affect their hands.
- Challenges making payments - with some saying it often does not work.

Respondents also had some issues with the physical aspects of the machines. This included issues with placement, such as the locations of machines being difficult to access, requiring long walks or stairs to reach or being in tight areas. Many thought machines were needed in more areas of the stations. Some also had issues with machines being outside and open to the elements, as they said rain and cold impacted their ability to use the machines.

Passenger Assistance

Key Findings:

- **Usage of Passenger Assistance:** Over half of respondents with significant long-term conditions use or require passenger assistance.
- **Pre-Booked Assistance:** Most respondents book assistance online or via an app and generally have positive experiences, though issues include assistance not turning up and difficulties with complex journeys.
- **Turn Up and Go:** More mixed experiences, with common issues being around staffing levels.
- **Staffing concerns:** For many, a lack of staff seemed to lead to patchy service. Some say this caused stress and concerns about being stranded.

Some travellers require additional assistance from station staff. Station passenger assistance services are put in place across the country and should be able to help passengers in ways such as navigating the station, carrying their bags, and arranging a ramp up to the train.

Passengers who require passenger assistance can either prebook it or, if needed, request it at the station at the time of travel (known as Turn Up and Go). National Rail advises passengers to book in advance and suggests that the Turn Up and Go service may take longer (National Rail, 2024).

Figure 20 shows that around a tenth of survey respondents (9%) reported that they use or require passenger assistance when they use the station referred to in this survey. Figure 20 also shows the significant difference in the percentage of respondents requiring passenger assistance by health condition or illness status. This is particularly true for those with a significant long-term condition or illness. Over half of respondents (53%) in this group said they use or require passenger assistance. This highlights the importance of passenger assistance being available to support passengers who have conditions or illnesses that significantly impact their daily lives.

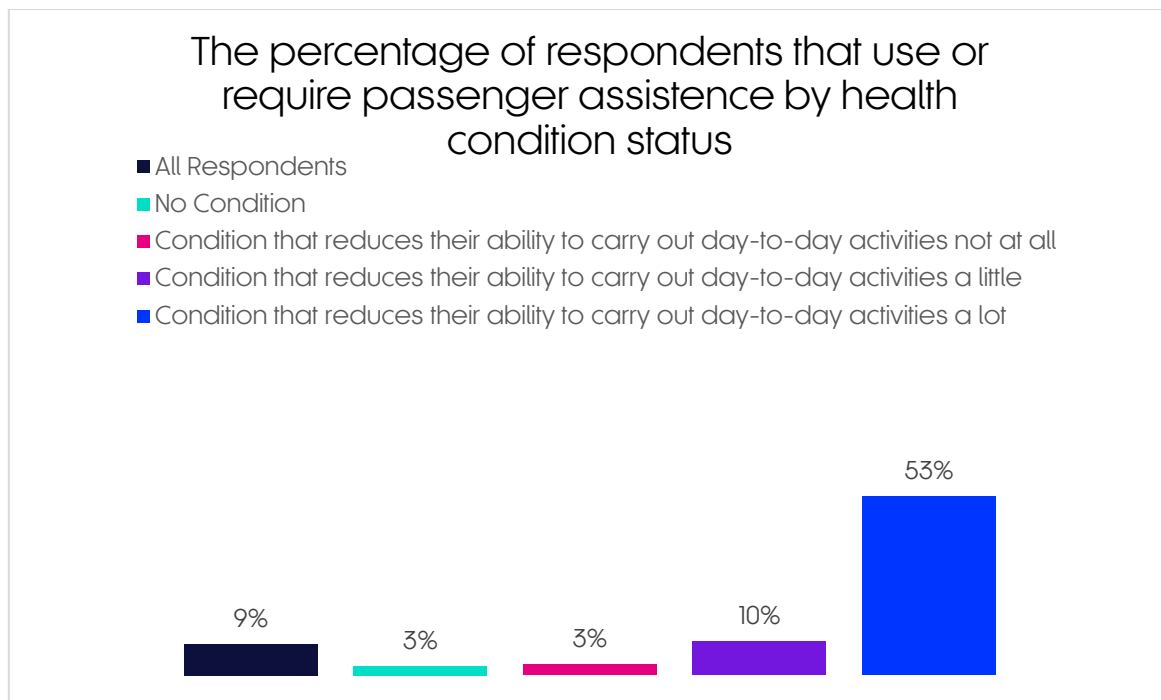


Figure 20: Do you use or require passenger assistance when using this station. Excludes "don't know". Crossed by health condition or illness status. All Respondent N: 1997. No condition N: 1246. Not at all N: 96, yes, a little N: 369. Yes, a lot N: 201.

We asked respondents who require passenger assistance about their experience of both pre-booked assistance and Turn Up and Go.

Regarding pre-booked passenger assistance, the most common way respondents mentioned booking was online and via the passenger assistance app. However, a significant number did use other booking methods, such as by phone and at the station. Most users seemed to be satisfied with the service they received, and many mentioned that station staff were very helpful.

Some respondents had mixed or negative experiences of pre-booked passenger assistance. Common issues included assistance not turning up, challenges with getting to and/or locating the assistance, and difficulty organising assistance for more complex journeys with changes, returns, or delays. There were also concerns around station staffing capacity, sometimes leading to patchy or no passenger assistance.

When asked about Turn Up and Go, while again many were satisfied, more had a negative or mixed experience. Similar issues were present, particularly around staff, as many were positive about the staff themselves but found the availability of staff an issue which contributed to a patchy or non-existent service.

"They're [passenger assistance staff] all lovely but often short staffed. I have been let down though, especially early in the morning or late at night. I always worry about this as I fear being stranded on the train. Makes it all so stressful." - Respondent with limited mobility, aged 45-59, Newcastle Station.

Audio-visual information

Key Findings:

- **Difficulty Accessing Audio-visual Information:** 15% of respondents report having difficulty accessing audio-visual information. Respondents with health conditions are more likely to experience these difficulties.
- **Visual Information Issues:** Common problems include small text size, glare, fast-changing information, and poor placement of screens. Vision impairments and reading challenges also contribute to difficulties.
- **Audio Announcement Issues:** Challenges include poor audio quality, environmental noise, and low volume. Some respondents also struggle with understanding announcements and their accuracy.
- **Specialised Communication Needs:** Regarding hearing loops and BSL support, while some have positive experiences, many say this support is unavailable or do not know if it is. A few wanted audio information to their hearing aids via Bluetooth.

Many passengers depend on information within the train station delivered through audio-visual means, such as information screens or Public Address (PA) announcements. The information provided can help people navigate around the station and find essential details about their train, like departure times and platforms. Therefore, it is important that people can access and understand this information. However, people can have difficulty accessing audio-visual information, for example, due to difficulty hearing or reading. There are also people with sensory disabilities who, to access information, may require it in more specialised forms, such as hearing loop and British Sign Language (BSL). Figure 21 shows how difficult respondents found accessing or understanding audiovisual information.

While most respondents (85%) reported having no difficulties with accessing or understanding audio-visual information at the station, a notable number, 15%, reported having at least some difficulty. These results show that there is still some work to do to ensure that passengers can receive and understand all the information they need during their journey.

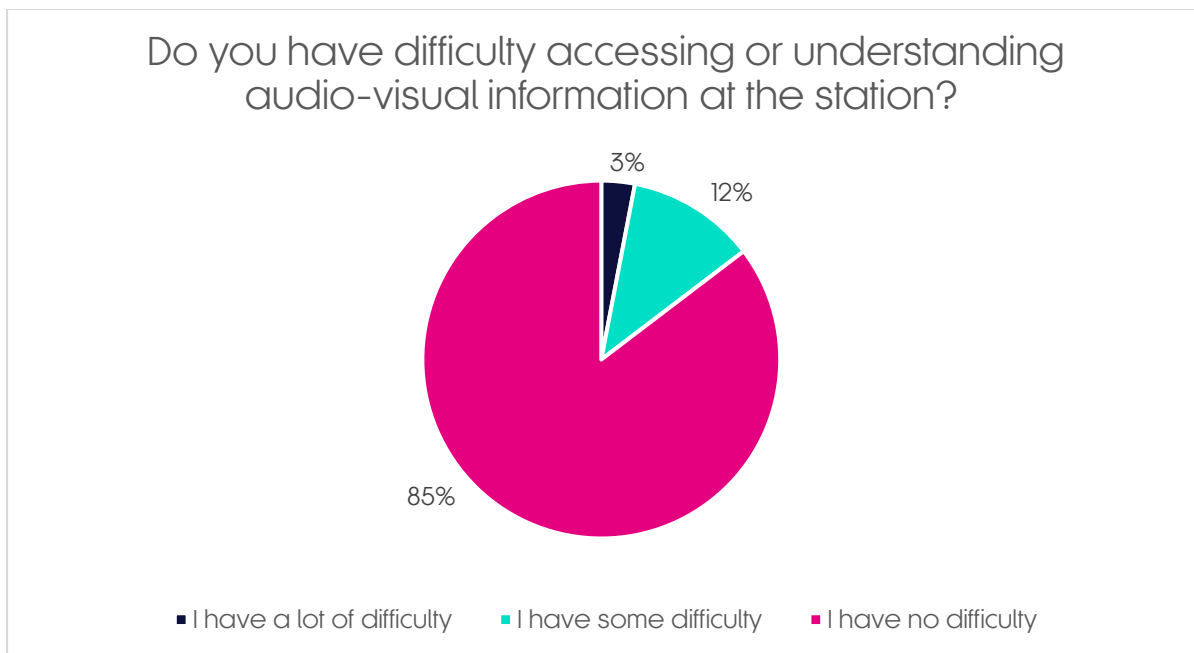


Figure 21 - Do you have difficulty accessing or understanding audio-visual information at the station? – Excludes “don’t know”. N: 1952.

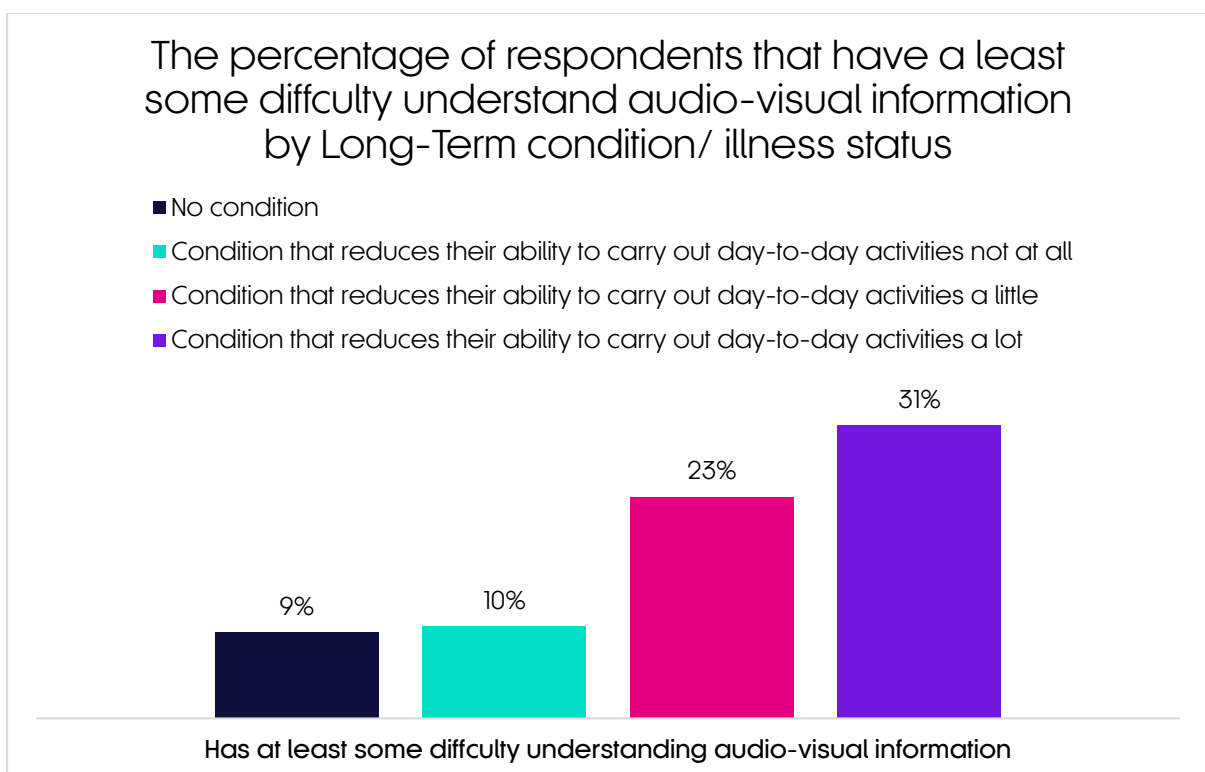


Figure 22 - Do you have difficulty accessing or understanding audio-visual information at the station?." has at least some difficulty understanding audio-visual information" combines those that said "I have some difficulty" and "I have a lot of difficulty". Excludes "don't know". Crossed by health condition or illness status. No condition N: 1219 Not at all N: 92, yes, a little N: 375. Yes, a lot N:203.

There is a notable difference in the percentage of respondents experiencing difficulty with audio-visual information at the station by different health condition status. This is shown in Figure 22. The percentage of those affected most by a

condition or illness (23% for those affected 'a little' and 31% for those affected 'a lot') is significantly larger than that of those who do not have a health condition. Therefore, more needs to be done to support these people in receiving and understanding the information they need.

However, it is also worth noting that a significant portion of those who do not consider themselves to have a long-term health condition or illness still report having some difficulty with audio-visual information, highlighting that more could be done to help across all groups.

To better understand the challenges faced by passengers who have difficulty with audio-visual information at stations, we asked respondents who had difficulty with this to describe their experiences and accessibility challenges.

Looking specifically at visual information such as signs and digital information screens, several issues were highlighted, the most common relating to problems with the display. Many highlighted that the size of the board or the text it contained was too small, some said glare on the screen was an issue, and many said that the information on the board moved and changed too quickly. Many respondents highlighting these issues said that it made reading the information difficult for them.

Related to this, many also had issues with the placement of visual information. This was particularly with reference to the height of information screens—many said that they were too high, which made them difficult to read, but for some, it caused issues such as neck aches. Another placement issue commonly mentioned was that respondents wanted to see more journey information screens around the station so they could get the information they needed easily without needing to walk far to look for a board.

Some respondents highlighted that visual information was not accessible due to a health condition or challenge they have. Many highlighted vision problems, including generally poor eyesight and visual impairments. Some also highlighted that they have reading challenges such as language barriers or dyslexia.

A final area of difficulty related to the information itself. Some highlighted that the information could be unreliable, outdated, or incorrect. A few also highlighted that they would like more information displayed, such as more train services listed on information screens and information about all train service stops. However, some thought the opposite, finding information screens confusing and hard to follow because they showed too much information, were cluttered, and were poorly laid out.

Turning to audio announcements, respondents had a lot to say about the accessibility of this form of information. Respondents highlighted several areas of difficulty. One common issue is that the announcements are difficult to hear. There was a range of reasons for this, with one of the most common being poor quality of audio systems that made the sound seem muffled, distorted or garbled. Some also said announcements were difficult to hear because of the station environment due to noise from trains, passengers, and echoes in the station. Others suggested that the clarity of announcements was an issue as they were spoken too fast, were highly accented and not enunciated properly. Volume was also highlighted as a problem making it difficult to hear—many suggested that the volume of

announcements was too low and needed to be increased. In some cases, respondents mentioned that announcements were not reaching certain areas of a station. Several respondents also said they could not hear the announcement due to an issue with their hearing, such as hearing loss or deafness.

Whilst most challenges revolved around struggling to hear the announcements, some respondents highlighted issues in other areas, including understanding the information and its accuracy. A few respondents said they had difficulty understanding announcements due to an inability to process the information. A few said this could be due to a language barrier or a mental health/learning condition. On accuracy, some noted that announcements in the past had provided incorrect information or were missing some critical pieces of information. A few respondents said this was particularly an issue with platform changes where they were given information too late to get to the other platform.

For some passengers, traditional audio and visual information does not fit their needs, and they require more specialised methods of communication. We asked respondents about some of these communication methods.

For example, hearing-loops/induction loops aim to make it easier for those with hearing aids and cochlear implants to hear announcements. Not many of the respondents to this survey used this technology, but among those who did, the majority said it was not available at their station, or they did not know if it was available. There were also a few respondents who said the hearing loops did not work for them due to their hearing aid using Bluetooth instead.

“This is obsolete technology. Why are you not using Bluetooth?” – Respondent with hearing difficulties aged 45-59, referring to Manchester Piccadilly Station.

We also asked respondents to tell us about their experience using stations if they were British Sign Language (BSL) users. Similarly to hearing loops, only a small number of respondents were users of BSL or knew someone who was. There was a mixed response to this. Some said they had a positive experience, with a few highlighting BSL screens as particularly useful to get information. However, some were less positive, with a few saying that no station staff knew BSL and that some staff needed to be more understanding of communication challenges.

“The [BSL] videos are useful to me when I can access them but this seems to be solely on the concourse and not once I am on platforms which means I am often unaware of changes to platforms or delays to trains” – Respondent wheelchair user, aged 22-29 referring to Leeds Station.

Moving around the station

Key Findings:

- **Difficulty Moving Around the Station:** 29% of respondents have at least some difficulties moving around the station. This was much larger for respondents with a significant health condition (85%).
- **Key issues:** When asked an open question about challenges moving around the station, respondents highlighted step-free access and overcrowding as key issues.
- **Ticket Barriers:** Respondents who find these to not be accessible reported challenges such as difficulties with operating barriers, and some barriers being too narrow. Respondents were aware of wider accessible barriers, but a lack of availability of these was a concern.
- **Lifts and Escalators:** Many respondents say that these are not available at the station they referred to, leading to additional difficulty or not being able to use the station. When they are available at the station, many say they are often out of order. Some have challenges with the small size and location of lifts. Many are unable to use escalators due to their health condition.
- **Ramps:** Again, many said these were not available at the station. If they were present, those who found them to not be accessible had issues with the steep gradients and long length.
- **Assistance Dogs:** While most are satisfied with their experience, some respondents mentioned needing more facilities like toileting areas and water bowls.
- **Tactile Surfaces:** Visually impaired respondents generally find tactile surfaces helpful for wayfinding and safety, though maintenance issues are common. Some stations lack tactile surfaces, posing hazards for visually impaired passengers.

Once people have arrived at the station and know what platform their train is leaving from, they need to get there, go to any other station facilities they may need, and board the train. The ease with which a person can do this is another crucial area of station accessibility, and some, particularly those with a disability that reduces their mobility, may have more difficulty. Figure 23 shows that while most respondents (72%) had no difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting the train, a significant portion did. Around 29% of respondents

reported having at least some difficulty, with 6% of this group having a lot of difficulty.

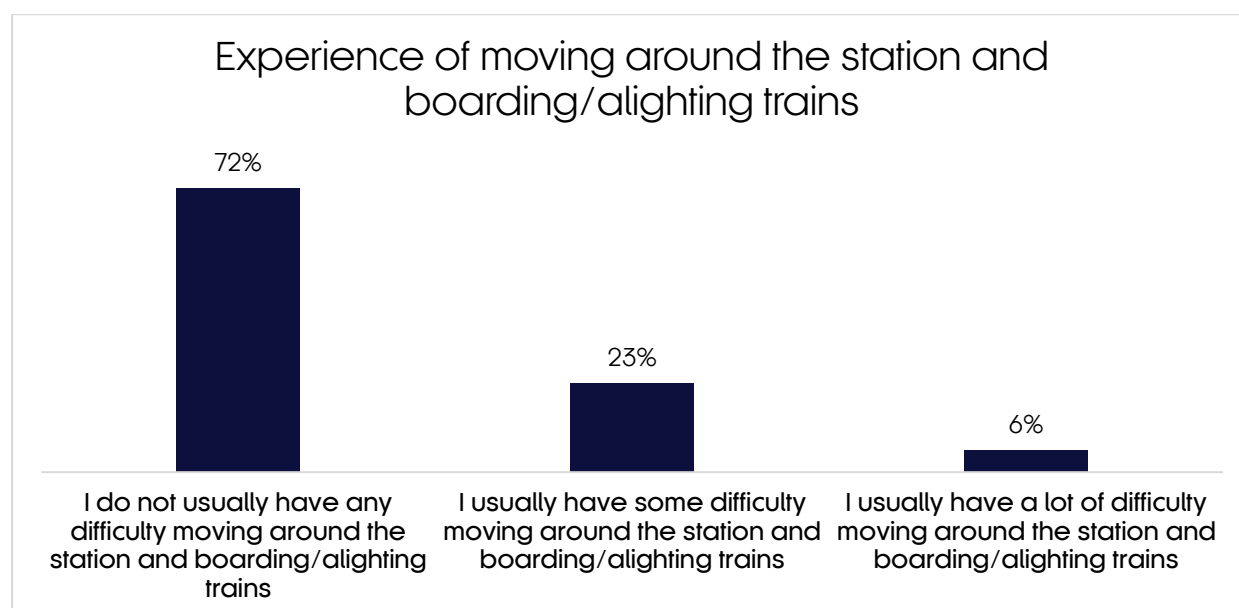


Figure 23: Please select one of the following options which best describes your experience of moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains. - Excludes respondents that answered "Don't Know". N: 1989

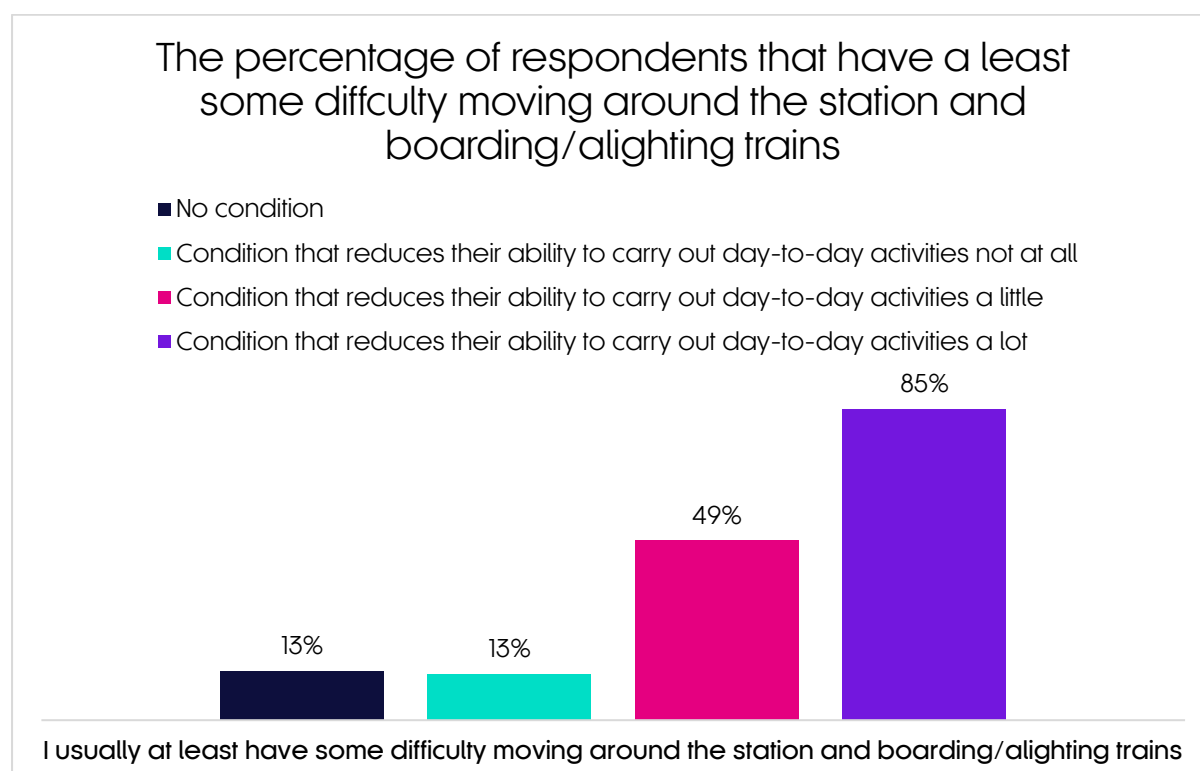


Figure 24: Please select one of the following options which best describes your experience of moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains. - Combines Answers "I usually have a lot of difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains" and "I usually have some difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains". "Don't Know" excluded. No condition N: 1237. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities not at all N: 96. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a little N: 383. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot N: 208.

There were clear differences across different health condition or illness status groups when looking at the percentage of each group having at least some difficulty moving around the station. Figure 24 shows that a large majority (85%) of those with a condition that impacts their ability to carry out daily activities a lot have at least some difficulties moving around the station. Additionally, just under half of those with a condition that impacts their ability to carry out daily activities a little have at least some difficulties moving around the station. This is compared to just 13% of those who do not have a condition.

In order to understand some of the key physical accessibility issues that cause difficulty at the station, we asked a broad and open question asking respondents to identify these. A range of themes were brought up in the responses, from infrastructure accessibility to space management.

Accessibility relating to step free access was the most cited type of concern. Many respondents reported having difficulty with stairs and steps. This was raised as an issue, particularly by those who use a wheelchair or have difficulty walking, due to it creating a lack of access for this group. Similar challenges were also raised regarding the gaps between the train and the platform, which make it difficult for many to board trains. Alongside concerns around steps and gaps, there were also issues with the availability and accessibility of facilities like ramps and lifts that exist to mitigate the problems that steps create for those with mobility challenges.

For some, these issues were compounded when they also had to manage heavy luggage. They noted extra difficulty moving around with luggage, navigating steps, getting on trains, and stowing their items.

Issues with space management in stations, particularly overcrowding, were also prevalent in the responses. In terms of overcrowding, respondents highlighted issues both in the station and on trains, highlighting in many cases the difficulty of getting a seat. Overcrowding was an issue for many groups, including those that have a health condition or illness and those that do not. For some respondents, overcrowding was particularly challenging due to the anxiety they experience when surrounded by large crowds.

"I have no significant mobility issues, but I am affected by crowding and jostling at busy stations with bottlenecks" - Respondent aged 30-44 referring to Bolton Station.

Across the survey, many respondents also highlighted concerns about slippery paths and stairs when moving around the stations. Respondents who mentioned this were particularly concerned about slipping when conditions are wet, snowy, and icy.

To examine in more detail the challenges of moving around the station, respondents who said they had difficulty were asked about some specific aspects of the station to identify where they did and did not have trouble. These included ticket barriers, lifts, escalators, and ramps. We also asked about their experience, if any, of using assistance dogs and tactile surfaces.

- Ticket Barriers

At stations with ticket barriers, 27% of respondents who said they have difficulty moving around the station did not find these to be accessible. This number increases significantly to 42% in the group who have a significant health condition or illness. This shows that ticket barriers can cause difficulties for those who struggle to move around the station, and this is particularly the case for the groups that have conditions that impact their daily lives the most.

Respondents who had difficulty with ticket barriers highlighted a range of challenges when asked about their experiences concerning these and how they found them inaccessible. The most common difficulty was operating the barriers, which included respondents struggling to scan tickets, particularly if their hands were in use due to carrying luggage or the need to use mobility aids like a walking stick.

Many also highlighted challenges passing through the barriers. This is due to several reasons, including finding that the barriers close too quickly for them to get through and are too narrow, particularly when carrying luggage or using mobility aids.

“New [Ticket] barriers at Hull are very narrow and difficult to negotiate with a stick and a suitcase. Worse, the barrier shuts very quickly and have been trapped between them- and it really hurt!” - Respondent with Spinal condition aged 65-74.

Respondents also highlighted that overcrowding at ticket barriers was an issue causing long queues, and it was also mentioned as overwhelming.

“When travelling with my autistic son the barriers are yet another problem with Leeds station. They concentrate people and can overwhelm his senses.” - Respondent aged 30-44 referring to Leeds Station.

Respondents did recognise that wider and accessible barriers do exist. However, they also highlighted that there needed to be more of them, and they could be unavailable or require long waits due to a lack of staff present to support people.

- Lifts

When looking at lifts, Figure 25 shows that for 45% of respondents who have difficulty moving around the station, lifts are not available at the station that they refer to. We asked these respondents how this affected their experience at the station. Most respondents reported some form of difficulty, with many having to use less accessible methods to get around. The most common was having to use stairs, which many said was difficult for them, particularly when steep, and for some, it caused breathlessness and pain. Related to this, many said that they had to use

a footbridge to cross platforms, which again caused issues. Some respondents said there were ramps, slopes or hills where people could get up and down without a lift. However, many had problems here as well, with some, including a few wheelchair users, commenting on challenging gradient and length.

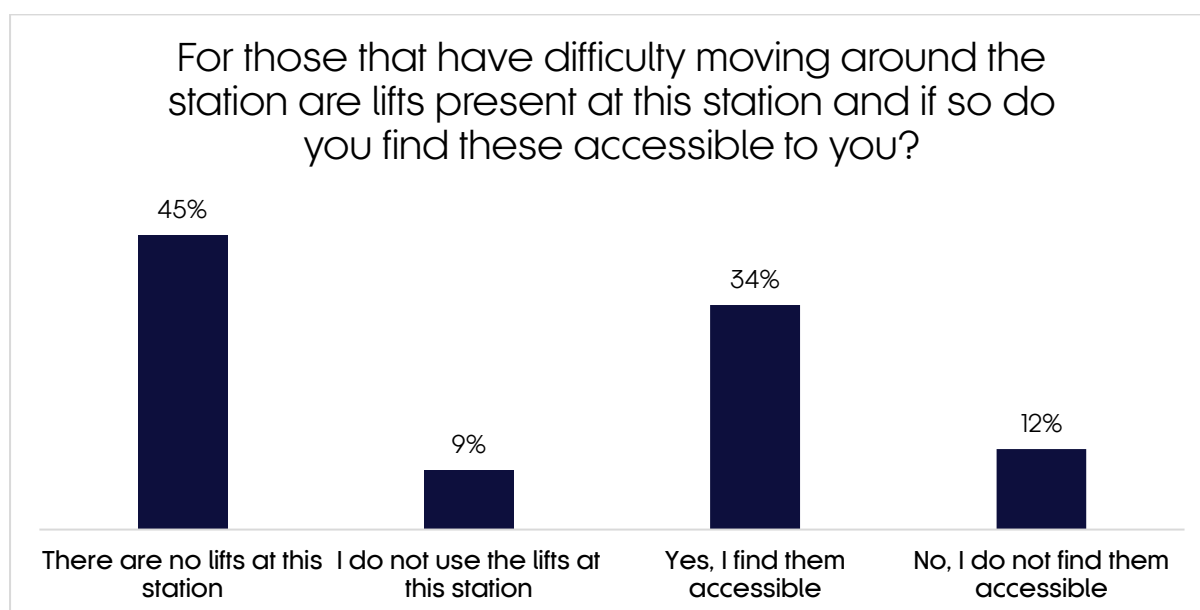


Figure 25: If lifts are present at this station, do you find these accessible to you? - N: 557 (made up of those in figure 23 that said they have at least some difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains" Or said they "Don't Know"). Excludes "don't know".

Many respondents mentioned struggling, particularly when carrying luggage, pushing a pram or using a bike. Some said they would be able to manage stairs and ramps without these items, but with them, it was not possible, leading to some not using the station.

"Without lifts, and if the foot crossing is not available, it means carrying a bike up and down the footbridge stairs. Even if I don't have my bike, walking downstairs is a challenge anyway due to my arthritis." – Respondent with osteoarthritis aged 60-64 referring to Workington station.

"It's totally impossible to go north from the station if I have the children in their push chairs as access to the north bound platform is by stairs and footbridge only" – Respondent aged 30-44, referring to Sandbach Station.

Due to the challenges caused by the lack of a lift at the station, some respondents said they could not use the station or some parts of the station. For some, this meant not travelling at all or using other modes such as the bus. A few did mention having to go one stop further to get off at a different station, and one said they had to catch a train back to get off at a more accessible platform.

"To exit the station when travelling from the north back to Alfreton station one has to travel further south to a station with lifts then travel back north to Alfreton to alight on the platform that has exit access. This is an unnecessary waste of time." – Respondent aged 65-74, referring to Alfreton Station.

Many respondents were still able to use the station despite the lack of a lift, but several reported that it took them longer or that they needed assistance from staff or a carer to get to where they needed to be.

There was also a group of respondents who said they had no issues with the lack of lifts, although even in this group, many said they thought it would be or was inaccessible for other people, including friends and relatives.

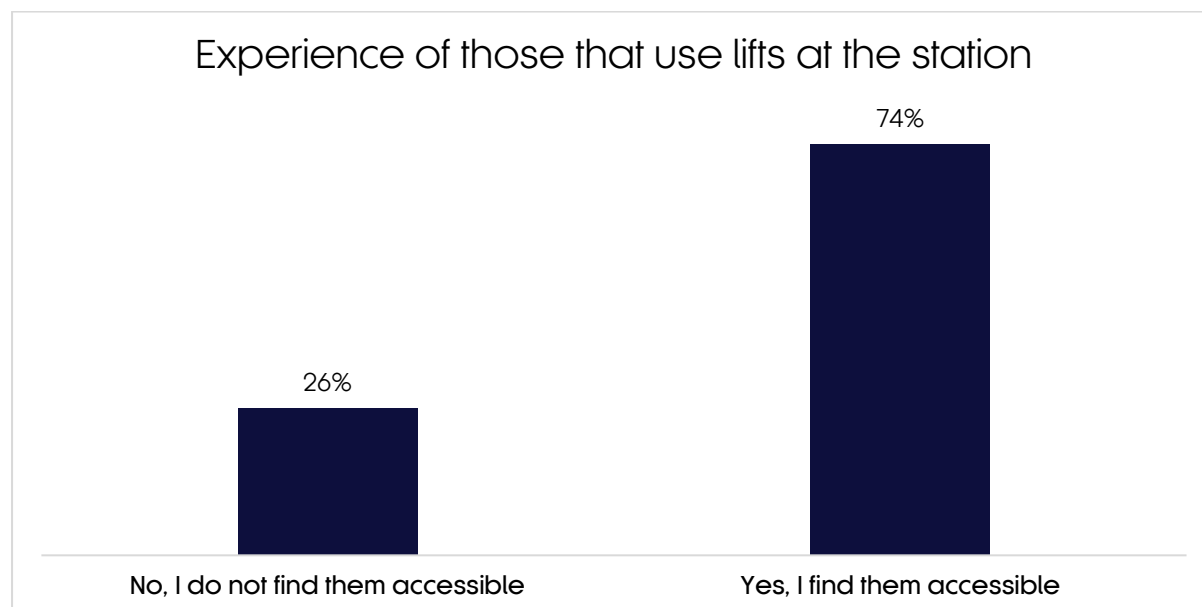


Figure 26: If lifts are present at this station, do you find these accessible to you? – N: 258 (made up of those in figure 23 that said they have at least some difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains" Or said they "Don't Know"). Excludes "don't know", "There are no lifts at this station" and "I do not use the lifts at this station".

Figure 26 shows that where lifts were available, over a quarter (26%) of respondents who have difficulty moving around the station and use the lifts said they were not accessible. This suggests that more work may be needed to ensure that all people who struggle to move around the station are able to use the lifts to aid them during their journey.

When asked to provide further details of their experiences and why they did not find the lifts accessible, the most common response was that the lifts were either closed or out of order when the respondents wanted to use them.

"in the early evening and the ticket office is closed, the lifts can't be used then because there is no-one to call to activate them! With at least 30 steps up from the platform to the car park it makes life hard for someone like me." – Respondent with mobility and dexterity conditions, aged 60-64, referring to Bingley Station.

Some also highlighted issues with the physical accessibility of lifts, voicing concerns about lifts being too small, particularly for wheelchairs, and being too far away from platforms respondents wished to reach. Many respondents also reported difficulty locating lifts, with a few suggesting that they are poorly signed. Sensory issues were also a concern, with respondents finding the lifts unclean and having an unpleasant smell. Finally, some respondents were frustrated that lifts were slow in their operation and that they had to wait to use them when they were busy.

“The lift is small, unclean and not signposted.” Respondent aged 30–44, referring to Halifax Station.

- Escalators

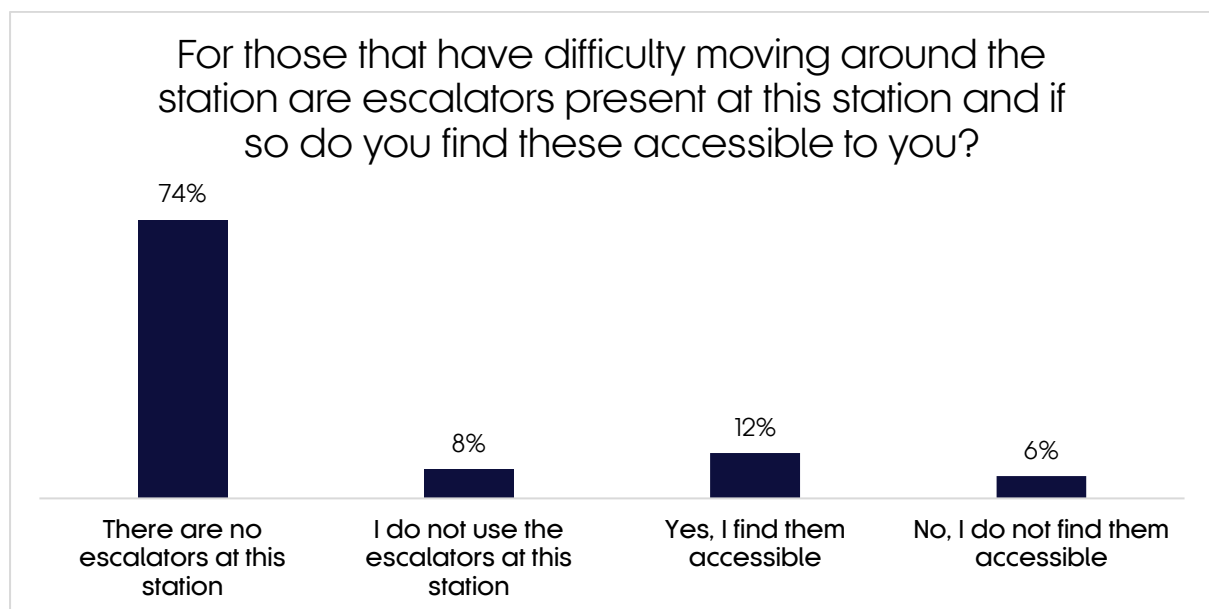


Figure 27: If escalators are present at this station, do you find these accessible to you? – N: 570 (made up of those in figure 23 that said they have at least some difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains” Or said they “Don’t Know”). Excludes “don’t know”.

For those who have difficulty moving around the station, figure 27 shows that almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents reported that there were no escalators at the station they referred to. For a further 8%, escalators were available, but they chose not to use them.

Many who do not have escalators at their station did not think it affected their experience, either because they do not need them or because, for accessibility reasons, they would not be able to use escalators even if they were available.

However, some respondents were still affected by a lack of escalators. Many said they had to use other methods, such as stair ramps and bridges, and most of these people said there were issues with this, such as finding them steep, long, unsafe and difficult to use due to a disability. Some of these respondents also mentioned particular difficulty when carrying luggage and prams. Several

suggested that they could not access parts of the station or use the stations at all as there were no escalators.

Some said they used the lift as there were no escalators. However, people in this group still had some challenges, such as the lifts being busy, slow, and out of order. Many suggested that an escalator would be useful as a backup for the lift.

Many respondents were generally positive about escalators, saying they would be a beneficial addition to the stations and could improve experiences.

"I have to use stairs which is very painful and takes a long time escalators would be easier than stairs as I could use them with my stick and I would be in less pain" – Respondent with arthritis and limited mobility, aged 45-59, referring to Sheffield Station.

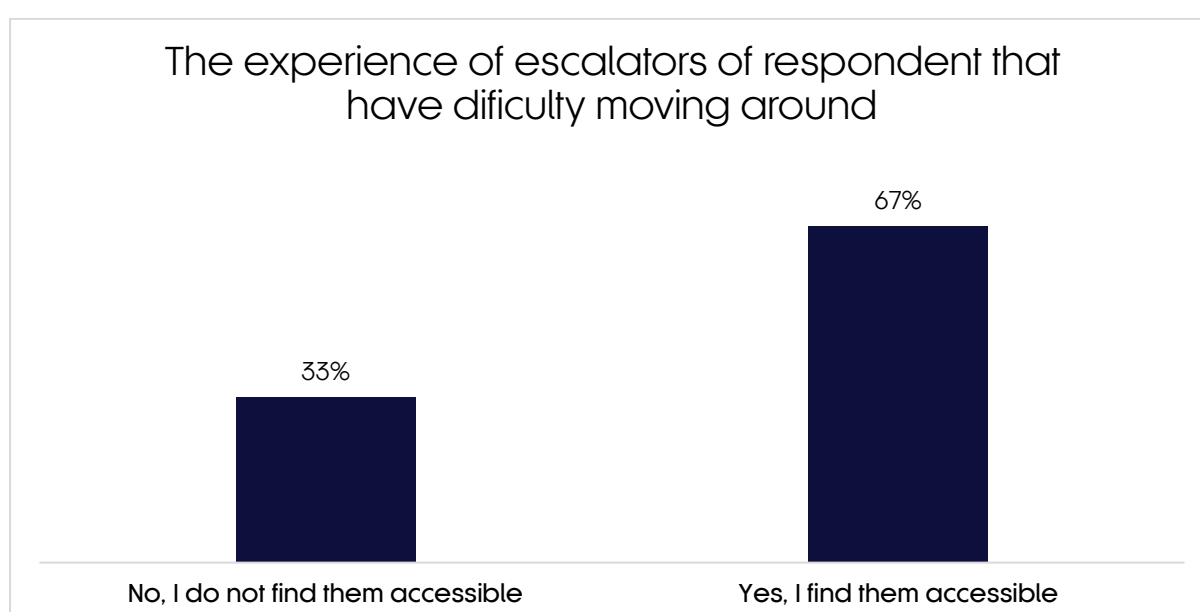


Figure 28: If escalators are present at this station, do you find these accessible to you? - N: 103 (made up of those in figure 23 that said they have at least some difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains" Or said they "Don't Know"). Excludes "don't know", "There are no escalators at this station" and "I do not use the escalators at this station".

Figure 28 shows that of those who struggled to move around a station and used the available escalators, a third said these escalators were not accessible. This percentage is larger for the group of respondents who also had a significant health condition or illness, where 41% thought the escalators were not accessible.

When providing further details of their experiences and challenges with escalators at stations, similar to lifts, the most common theme mentioned was escalators being closed or out of order.

"Escalators, and travelators, which do not work make travelling to platforms 12 & 13 difficult" – Respondents aged 65-74, referring to Manchester Piccadilly Station.

Many also highlighted that they had issues concerning balance, with some saying they had difficulty getting on and off and found them too fast. This was particularly the case for those using walking sticks. Alongside this, others mentioned difficulty using escalators with luggage and that they were too busy.

“I am frightened that I might overbalance when trying to step on using my stick” – Respondent with arthritis and limited mobility, aged 65-74, referring to Manchester Piccadilly Station.

- Ramps

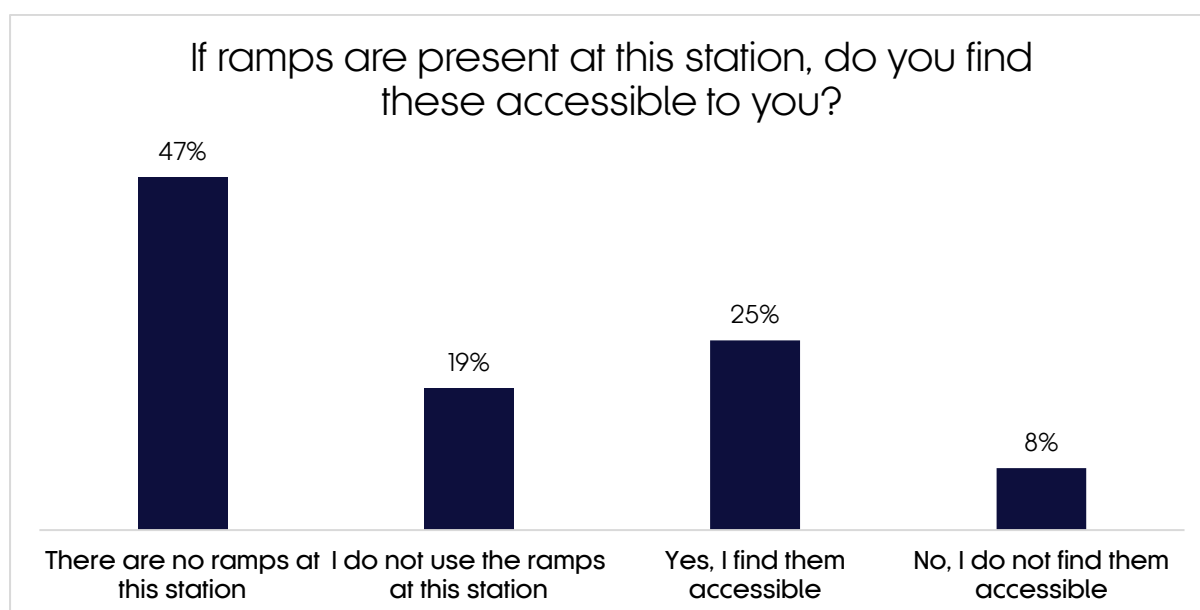


Figure 29: If ramps are present at this station, do you find these accessible to you? - N: 531 (made up of those in figure 23 that said they have at least some difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains" Or said they "Don't Know"). Excludes "don't know".

Figure 29 shows that just under half (47%) of respondents who had difficulty moving around the station said there were no ramps present at the station they referred to. Almost a fifth of respondents highlighted that they did not use the ramps that were available.

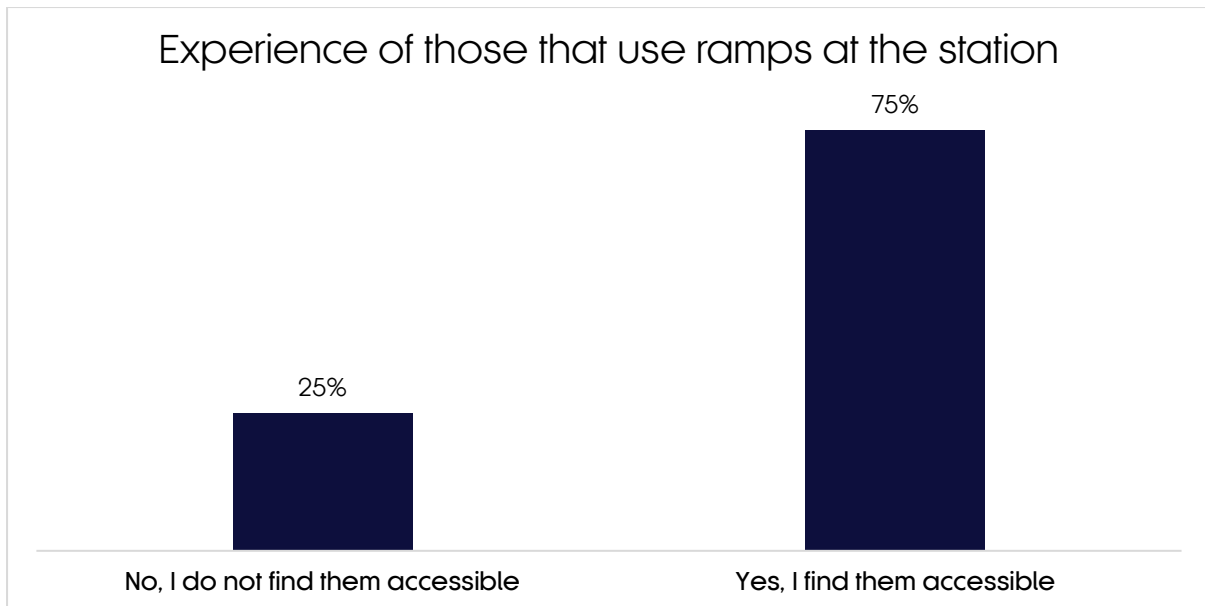


Figure 30: If ramps are present at this station, do you find these accessible to you? - N: 179 (made up of those in figure 23 that said they have at least some difficulty moving around the station and boarding/alighting trains" Or said they "Don't Know"). Excludes "don't know", "There are no ramps at this station" and "I do not use the ramps at this station".

When ramps were present at the station, around 25% of respondents who had difficulty moving around the station and used ramps said they were inaccessible. This is shown in Figure 30.

These respondents felt that ramps at stations were not accessible for various reasons. The most common issue respondents referenced was the gradients of the ramps, which were too steep, making it challenging for people to go up and control the speed of a wheelchair when going down. Many also highlight that the ramps are too long, which suggests that some longer ramps may require breaks to enable people to recover.

"The ramp between the main entrance and the ticket office is a bit too long and steep to maintain a controlled descent, especially when the station is busy because it is very difficult to avoid crashing into people." – Respondent, who is a wheelchair user, aged 22-29, referring to Leeds Station.

A few respondents also highlighted other quality issues around ramps, including their poor condition and related infrastructure, such as inadequate lighting. Finally, some highlighted that some areas were not accessible by ramp at all, or in some cases, the ramps themselves also featured steps, which is not easy for some to manage, particularly those using wheelchairs.

- Assistance Dogs

A person can have an assistance dog for a wide range of reasons, from needing support with a sensory disability or anxiety to needing to be warned of signs of a seizure. Only 2% of the survey respondents who have difficulty moving around a station reported travelling with an assistance dog.

While this is a small proportion of respondents, they provided valuable feedback about their experience. Most respondents were satisfied with their experience and stressed the vital role of their assistance dog in enabling them to travel. Some difficulties were mentioned, however, including needing more facilities for toileting dogs and water bowls. One respondent also highlighted that they had previously faced judgment for having an assistance dog.

To reduce the likelihood of judgment, it could be beneficial to build more awareness in staff and passengers around the range of reasons a person may travel with an assistance dog, including hidden disabilities.

- Tactile Surfaces

Tactile surfaces can include items such as paving and handrails, which have different surfaces, textures, and colours. They are used to convey information about a place, including directional and hazard information, to people with visual impairments. To understand respondents' thoughts about tactile surfaces, we asked whether they used them and, if so, what their experience was.

Where tactile surfaces were present, those with a visual impairment were generally satisfied and found them helpful for wayfinding and safety. Although many mentioned maintenance issues, such as paving not being aligned, highlighting the importance of maintaining these facilities well.

“The wayfinding paving in the main is excellent, there are a few quirks to iron out, but it makes a big difference. I like that the lift marking takes me to the correct spot for the call button.” - Respondent who is Visually impaired, aged 30-44, referring to Dore & Totley Station.

However, some visually impaired respondents reported that there were no tactile surfaces at the station they referred to, which could create issues such as a lack of warning for hazards.

“There is no tactile info at this station to assist in not falling off the platform. ...It does need this. They have painted a yellow line helps some visually impaired people but not me I need the tactile warning as I use a cane.” - Respondent who is a wheelchair user and visually impaired aged 30-44 referring to Sandbach.

Sensory environment in the station

Key Findings:

- Respondents mentioned a range of concerns around the sensory environment, including:
 - **Noise** – Such as from trains, other passengers and the nearby areas
 - **Lighting** – Both too bright and too dark
 - **Smells** – Many said that smells, for example, train fumes or from toilets, contributed to a negative sensory experience. Some recommended more regular cleaning
 - **Weather Protection** – Many respondents said there was no shelter or that shelters were poor quality
 - **Overcrowding** - the busy environment caused anxiety and discomfort
 - **Other Passengers' Behaviour** – Including drunken behaviour and smoking.

The sensory environment of a station is also important for accessibility. It can be hugely important for things such as hearing announcements and whether the station feels welcoming. The sensory environment is also particularly important for neurodivergent passengers, for whom sounds, noise, and lighting can cause them to be overwhelmed or anxious. Respondents were asked to identify what issues were present with the sensory environment at the station and what improvements they would like to see.

Noise was the most common difficulty respondents reported about the sensory environment. Respondents highlighted sources of noises such as a train idling, other passengers, and nearby roads. Many said that noise impacted their ability to hear announcements, meaning information was missed. Some also mentioned that it affected their health condition, and a few used headphones to mitigate the noise.

"I suffer from mild autism [which] means that the cacophony of sounds makes the station a very unpleasant environment for me and I try to minimise my time in the station" - Respondent aged 60-64 referring to Newcastle Station.

Regarding this sensory challenge, respondents wanted to see improved audio announcement equipment and more information screens so it would be easier to get information in a loud station environment. Some respondents also suggested

creating quiet areas where neurodiverse passengers could get away from overwhelming sensory issues such as noise.

Lighting was also a sensory issue for many. However, the reason lighting was an issue differed significantly. Some said that the lighting was too bright and harsh, which was overstimulating for some. Others noted that the station was too dark, meaning some passengers had difficulty seeing and a few felt unsafe. There were also a few cases of flickering lights. One respondent said these triggered migraines, and another said it affected their epilepsy. Many respondents wanted to see improvements made to lighting, such as warmer lighting where possible and better lighting in the evening.

Some respondents also mentioned issues with smells in the station, particularly Smells like urine and diesel fumes. A few noted the potential negative health impacts of diesel fume. To fix these issues, many asked for a general clean-up and more regular cleaning. Some also want to see more electrification of trains to reduce the presence of diesel fumes in stations.

There were other sensory issues worthy of note, weather-related issues being one of them. Many highlighted they did not feel protected by the weather at the station, saying it is cold and windy there. For this, many wanted to see more shelter or warm indoor waiting rooms.

Additionally, overcrowding was raised again, with respondents feeling “crammed,” “penned in,” and “claustrophobic.”. One respondent said the overcrowding was not good for their anxiety.

“The amount of people getting the rush hour trains Vs the size and number of carriages can make it near impossible to access. As someone with high levels of anxiety about crowded spaces, being so packed in that you can't move is a no go for me. And I will often simply have to miss a train due to this.” – Respondent with sensory difficulties and anxiety, aged 30-44, referring to Salford Crescent Station.

Some also had an issue with passengers' behaviour, including drunken behaviour and smoking. Some wanted to see more done to manage passengers' behaviour, including crowd management, announcements about respecting fellow passengers, and increased work to tackle antisocial behaviour.

Station Facilities

Key Findings:

- **Waiting Areas:** Around two-fifths of respondents with a significant health condition do not find waiting rooms accessible. Common problems include uncomfortable seating and difficulty entering the rooms.
- **Retail Facilities:** A quarter of those with significant health conditions who have retail facilities at their station do not find them accessible. Issues include small, crowded spaces, difficulty reaching facilities, and inconvenient opening times.
- **Toilets:** Where there are toilets, respondents highlighted several concerns, including toilets being closed, out of order, or locked. Respondents also had issues with the small size of cubicles, narrow doors, and lack of space for wheelchairs or carers. Cleanliness was also a major concern.
- **Changing Places Toilets:** Changing Places toilets provide essential features like hoists and changing benches for those with complex disabilities. There seems to be a significant unmet demand for these toilets. 40% of respondents with significant health conditions who do not have Changing Places Toilets at the station they referred to said they would use these facilities if available.

Station facilities like shops and waiting rooms also affect how we experience rail travel. Many may take for granted the ability to grab a quick coffee or toilet break before hopping on a train, but this can be a much trickier process for some.

Respondents were asked to give their thoughts and opinions on a range of common station facilities to gauge their feelings about their accessibility.

- Waiting Areas

Firstly, respondents were asked whether they felt that waiting rooms were fully accessible. Most thought they were, but a substantial proportion, 20%, as shown in Figure 31, believed that they were not. Figure 31 also shows that a noteworthy proportion of respondents across all health condition or illness groups found waiting rooms not fully accessible. However, this is particularly the case for those with a significant health condition or illness, as 38% of these respondents reported that waiting rooms were not fully accessible.

The percentage of respondents in each health condition or illness status group finding waiting areas not accessible

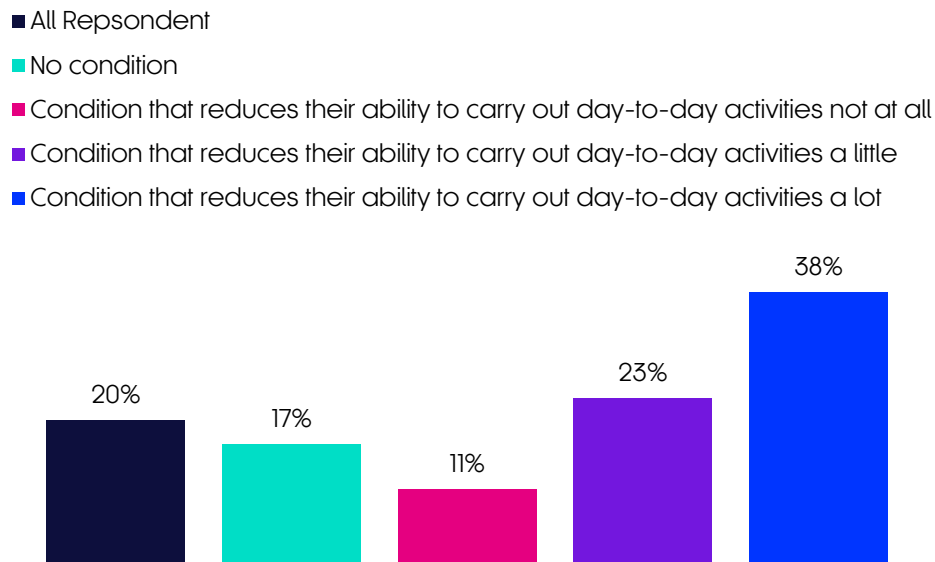


Figure 31: Are the waiting areas/ seating areas at this station fully accessible to you? - excluding "Don't Know" crossed by Health condition or illness status. All Respondent N:1887. No Condition N:1185. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities not at all N: 94. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a little N: 362. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot N: 185.

Those respondents who had a health condition or illness and found waiting areas inaccessible had various reasons for doing so. The most common issues mentioned were related to the seating. Many thought the seats were poor quality and uncomfortable. Some respondents did not like metal seats, saying they were cold. Accessibility was brought up as an issue, with some not liking lean-style benches or thinking seating was too low to get up easily from. Respondents also mentioned the number of seats as a problem, with many saying there needed to be more and that rooms got busy due to the small-sized rooms.

For many respondents, the fact that there were no indoor waiting rooms was an issue, as seats were open to weather conditions such as rain, wind, and cold. One respondent said this was not good for their health condition. Others mentioned that seats being open led to people not using them. Some respondents also had issues with weather when the waiting area was a "bus shelter"-style space.

Access to the waiting rooms was also a vital issue. Some respondents had difficulty getting to and getting inside waiting rooms. For a few, this was due to stairs, but waiting room doors were also an issue, as it was mentioned that the doors were not automatic and were narrow. This was particularly a concern for wheelchair users, who also highlighted a lack of space for wheelchairs in the waiting rooms.

“Not many seats nowhere for wheelchair and no electric door to get in very hard”
– Respondent, a wheelchair user aged 65-74.

A few other issues were mentioned, including the rooms being dirty or closed, and some said they lacked or had poor toilet facilities.

- Retail facilities

Respondents were also asked about the accessibility of retail facilities. For 45% of respondents, there were no retail facilities at the station they were referring to. Where there were retail facilities, most respondents (82%) thought retail was accessible, but a significant portion (18%) did have difficulty. Much like with waiting rooms, the group with the highest proportion saying that retail facilities were not accessible were those with a significant health condition or illness, as 25% of these respondents reported this.

Respondents gave a few reasons why they did not find retail facilities accessible. The facilities being small was one of the key issues, as some respondents said they were crowded and hard to navigate, particularly for wheelchair users who said they were too narrow to move around.

“Not wheelchair friendly narrow shelves stock always blocking way no turning for a wheelchair in any of the retail offerings” – Respondent aged 30-44, referring to Preston (Lancs) Station.

Some respondents also highlighted that they had difficulty getting to the facilities, with some saying that it required a long walk, stairs, or getting to a different platform. Many thought that opening times were an issue and suggested that the facilities were often closed when they wanted to use them. Other issues mentioned included problems at the check-out, such as difficulty with self-service machines and long queues.

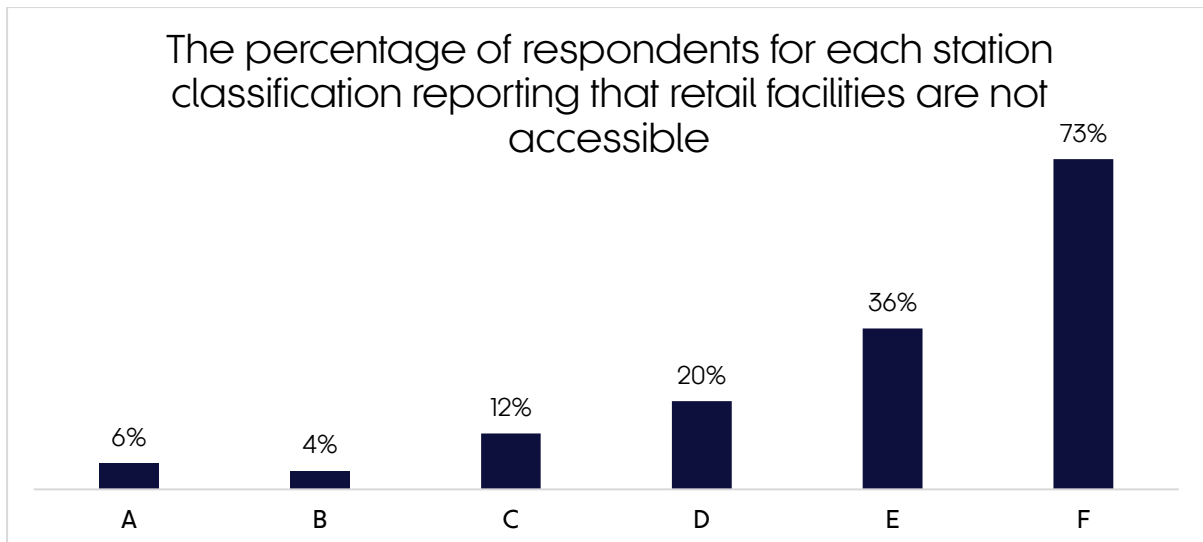


Figure 32: Are the retail facilities (shops and/or cafe) at this station fully accessible to you? – Excludes respondents that answered “Don’t Know” and “There are no retail facilities at this station”. Crossed by the classification of train station respondents selected A N: 345 B N: 241 C N: 121 D N: 102 E N: 109 F N: 109

There is a notable difference in the percentage of respondents saying that retail facilities are not accessible by rail station classification. Figure 32 shows that for larger stations, particularly those classified as A or B, only a small portion of respondents reported retail not being accessible, but for the smallest stations, the opposite was true. For example, for those using class F stations, which are small and unstaffed, 73% of respondents reported that retail facilities were not fully accessible (an explanation of each classification letter can be found in Appendix B). Percentage of respondents for each station classification reporting that retail facilities are not accessible.

- Toilets

Toilets are another important facility for many people who use rail stations. However, there are many stations where there are no toilets, which is an issue for some, including those with a health condition or illness that impacts their need for a toilet.

Where there are toilets, respondents did raise some issues, including a few related to accessibility. One of the most common problems encountered was that toilets were often closed or out of order, so they could not be used. Relatedly, some mentioned that the toilets were locked and then they needed to collect a key from staff or the office. Some mentioned having trouble when the toilet was far away from where they collected the key and when the office was closed, so keys were not available.

“Disabled toilet key is in the office which is up 2 flights of stairs and then you have to walk back up them to take the key back.” Respondent aged 65-74, who has a partner with limited mobility, referring to Poulton-Le-Fylde Station.

In terms of accessing and using the toilets, some respondents thought they were poorly located and, in some cases, difficult to find. Respondents also highlighted trouble getting into the toilets due to the cubicles being small and narrow and the doors being difficult to open. The lack of space was a particular accessibility issue for some due to their condition; for example, it was mentioned that there needed to be more space for a wheelchair, a carer and room for using catheters. The lack of space was also difficult for some who had luggage. Some did highlight the lack of accessible toilets as an issue.

Many respondents also mentioned the cleanliness of toilets, describing them as “very unpleasant”, “not very hygienic”, “disgusting”, and “smelly”. This affected some respondents’ experience of using the toilets; one said, “It’s a misery to use them.”

Finally, a few also wanted to see more toilets at their station. This was because, in some cases, toilets were not available in all areas that respondents wanted them in, and some reported busyness and queues.

- Changing Places Toilets

To completely fulfil the needs of some people, particularly those with multiple or complex disabilities, toilet facilities need to be available that go beyond that of a standard accessible toilet; for some, the additional facilities provided in Changing Places toilets are required. According to the Changing Places consortium, they are designed to: *“Provide sanitary accommodation for people with multiple and complex disabilities who have one or two assistants with them.”* (Changing Places Consortium, 2021). In addition to toileting facilities, Changing Places also have equipment like a hoist and a changing bench, which support assistants to change the people they care for in a hygienic and dignified manner (Changing Places Consortium, 2021). A list of what should be included in a Changing Places toilet and further information from the Changing Places Consortium can be found [here](#).

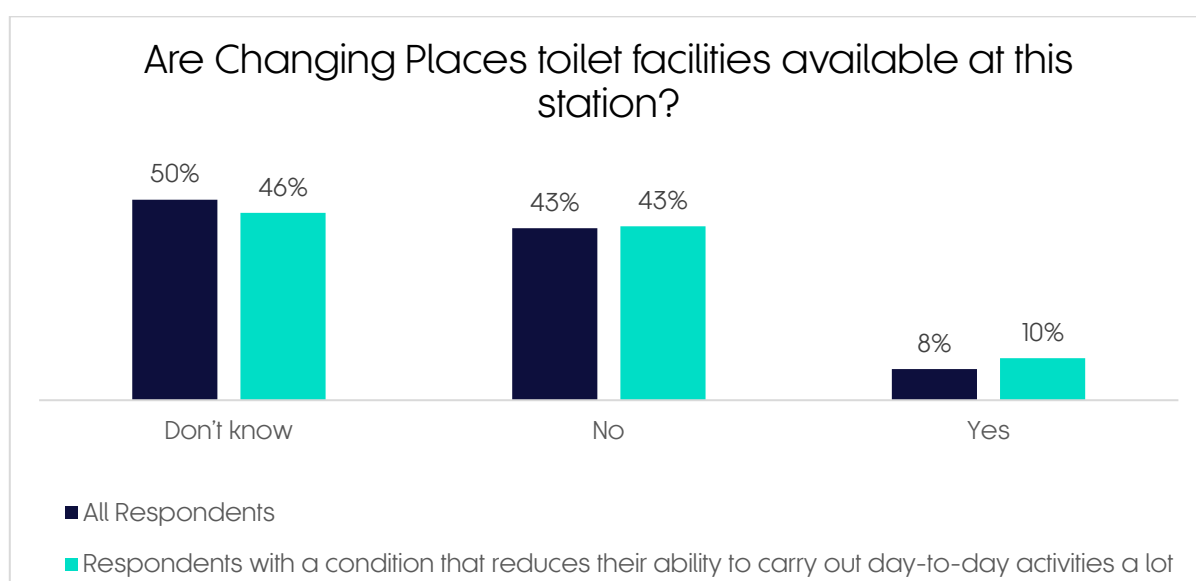


Figure 33: Are Changing Places toilet facilities available at this station? – All Respondents N: 2012. Respondents with a condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot N: 211

Respondents were asked about the availability of Changing Places toilets at the station they were referring to. The results can be seen in Figure 33. Half of all respondents said that they did not know if Changing Places toilets were available, and 43% said that they were not. However, around 8% did say that Changing Places toilets were available.

Figure 33 shows that respondents with a significant health condition or illness think similarly about the availability of Changing Places toilets. However, it does highlight that only 10% of this group report that Changing Places toilets are available at the station they referred to for this research.

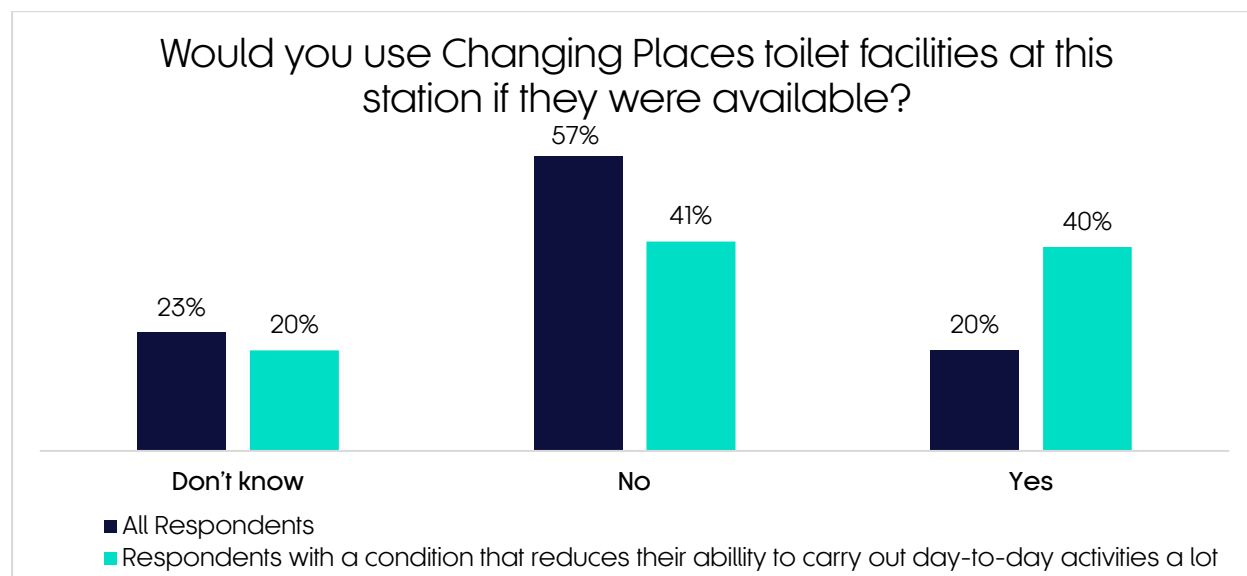


Figure 34: Would you use Changing Places toilet facilities at this station if they were available? – All Respondents N: 1857. Respondents with a condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot N: 189. Only answered those who did not know if Changing Places' toilets were available or said they were not.

Those who did not know if Changing Places' toilets were available or said they were not, were asked if they would use them if they were available. Figure 34 shows the responses of all respondents and just those with a significant health condition or illness. Of all respondents, 57% said they would not use a Changing Places toilet, yet a notable portion, 20%, did say that they would use one if available at the station. The response of those with a significant health condition or illness differs from that of all respondents. 40% of respondents with a significant health condition or illness who said there is not or they don't know if a Changing Places toilet is available said they would use one if it were. This demonstrates a sizable unmet demand from this group for this type of facility. This is likely because the additional features of Changing Places would be beneficial for many in these groups.

"I would like to be able to transfer onto a bench for personal care. Standing up isn't easy for me, and the bars are not in a good position. Transferring onto toilet is awkward. A Changing Places toilet would be good."

"It is harder to manage in an ordinary toilet & on a long journey I could do with a couple of minutes lying down." Respondent is a wheelchair user with a respiratory condition, aged 22-29, referring to Sheffield Station.

Help and support

Key Findings:

- **Help Points:** Those with significant health conditions are more likely to use help points. Respondents who used or tried to use help points reported mixed experiences. Common issues include machines not working, no answer or long wait times, and difficulty hearing staff.
- **Staff Assistance:** Respondents were generally positive about their experiences getting support from station staff. Many described staff as polite and helpful. However, availability is a concern, with some struggling to get support as staff are busy. Many wanted to see more staff at stations.
- **Safety:** Most respondents feel safe during the day, but concerns arise at night due to darkness, lack of people or staff, and issues like drunken and antisocial behaviour. Some respondents avoid travelling in the evening due to these concerns.

All train passengers may sometimes find themselves in a situation where they require help and support from station or train operator staff. This could be as simple as asking for directions or double-checking that you're getting on the right train, but it may also be for more serious emergency situations.

In many stations, one way to support passengers who are having difficulty is through help points. Help points are places where passengers can press a button to speak to an operator for information or in case of emergency. 8% of respondents reported that they had previously used or tried to use a help point.

There is a difference in the percentage of respondents who have used or tried to use a help point by health condition or illness status groups. It is shown in Figure 35 that the group most likely to have used or tried to use one are those respondents who have a long-term and significant health condition or illness, 16% said they had.

The percentage of respondents for each health condition or illness status group that have previously used, or tried to use, Help Points at the station they are referring to.

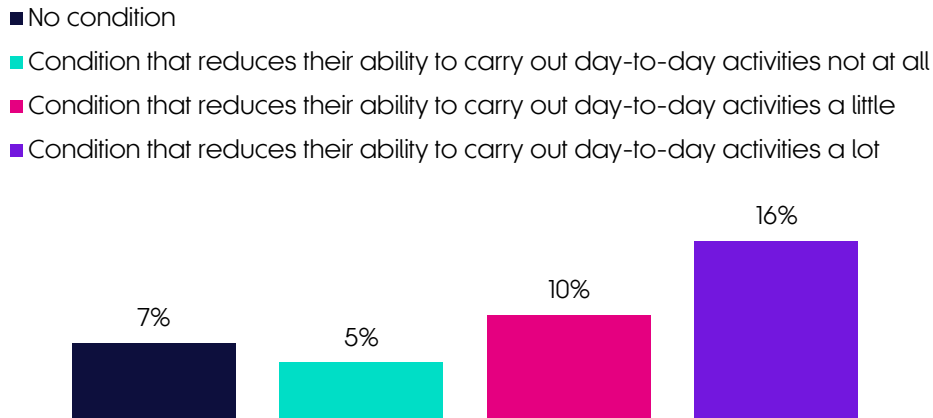


Figure 35: Have you previously used, or tried to use, Help Points at this station? – excluding “Don’t Know” crossed by Health condition or illness status. No Condition N:1233 Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities not at all N: 95. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a little N: 378. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot N:198.

We asked for more information about those who had used or tried to use help points. From the responses, it’s clear that there had been very mixed experiences. A similar number of respondents mentioned that the service was helpful to those who had a negative experience. Of those who found the service helpful, many mentioned that they were provided with useful information and that the staff were helpful.

“It is good when you get put through to the control room. The control room staff can arrange alternatives such as additional stops, ticket acceptance and alternative routes quickly. They also are able to provide accurate information during disruption.” – Respondent aged 22-29 referring to Blackrod Station.

However, as mentioned, many respondents did report some challenges or that they had a negative experience when using a help point. Common issues included the machine not working, the call not being answered or taking a long time, and staff being unable to answer their queries. Some highlighted that their negative experience has led to them not trying to use a help point again.

“Not very successful. Waited lengthy time but got no reply. Have not tried subsequently”. – Respondent aged 75-89 referring to Bardon Mill Station.

“Due to last-minute cancellations, I was forced to change trains... On arriving, no information about onward trains was available on screens and no-one answered the Help Points despite multiple attempts.” – Respondent aged 30-44 referring to Bolton Station.

Another issue that some had, was difficulty hearing or understanding staff on the line. This was particularly a concern for respondents with hearing difficulties.

As well as experience of using help points, we wanted to find out how respondents felt about getting help from staff directly. When asked, a lot of respondents were positive about their experience. Many were highly complementary, saying staff were polite, helpful and knowledgeable. Station staff were able to help respondents with getting their tickets, getting them to their train and what to do when there were delays and cancellations. Some, however, noted that while staff were helpful, they were often busy and not always available.

There was also a group of respondents who had not had good experiences of getting help from staff. Again, this was often around staff availability and struggling to find someone to help. There were a small number of respondents who felt staff had been rude, unhelpful, or unwilling to help, and some also mentioned that staff did not necessarily have the most up-to-date information.

Overall, respondents were generally happy with station staff members, barring a few occasions. However, many thought there were not enough staff available to help. Many said similar things as this respondent: "If they are there, they are excellent."

- Safety

Another area related to help and support is safety and how safe passengers feel using the station. This can be an accessibility issue, as someone who does not feel safe in a station may not feel able to use it. With this in mind, respondents were asked about how safe they feel when using the station.

This question received a mixed response, but most respondents generally felt safe. Key reasons for doing so included using the station during the day, but also, for some, there were lots of people and staff around, or they always travelled with others.

However, there were still a substantial number of respondents who had mixed or negative feelings about station safety. Many highlighted that they were okay during the day, but at night, it was different. Respondents said that issues such as the station being dark and no people or staff being around were unnerving. A few also mentioned drunken behaviour, antisocial behaviour and criminality as concerns and would like to see more CCTV. Issues like those mentioned led to some respondents not travelling in the evening.

Overall views on station accessibility

Key Findings:

- **Overall Rating:** Respondents' average accessibility rating for stations is 3.38 out of 5, indicating that there is room for improvement. Those with significant health conditions rate accessibility lower (3.06) than those without conditions (3.49).
- **Station Size Impact:** Smaller stations (Class E and F) receive lower accessibility ratings (3.06 and 2.99) than larger stations.
- **Positive Areas/Areas for Improvement:** When asked about what's working well accessibility-wise and what needs improvement, respondents raised similar themes. The key areas are step-free access, transport integration, and station facilities. The fact that similar themes were raised for both what's working well and areas to improve emphasises the importance of getting these areas right.

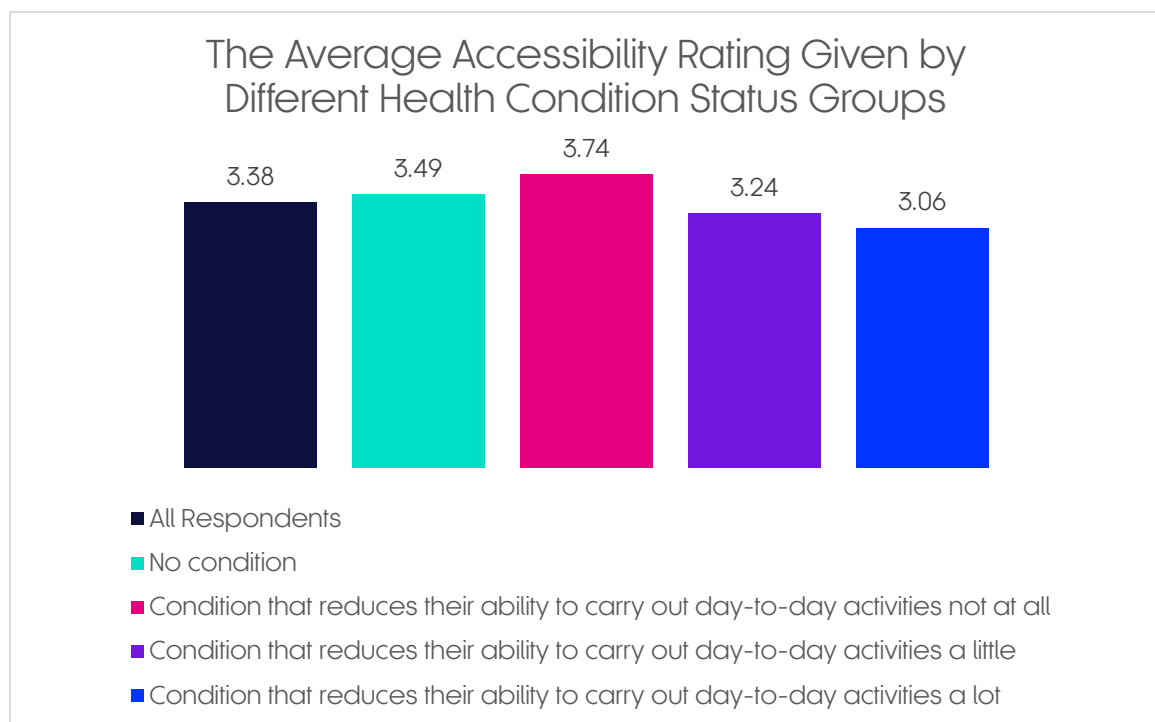


Figure 36. Overall accessibility of the station on a scale from 1-5, where 5 is 'Excellent' and 1 is 'Very Poor', how would you rate the overall accessibility of this station? All Respondents N: 2012. No Condition N: 1251. Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities not at all N: 96 Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a little N: 385 Condition that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot N: 211.

To understand the respondents' overarching feelings about the accessibility of the station they are referring to, they were asked to rate the overall accessibility and highlight the main areas where the station does well but also where it needs to improve.

Regarding the rating of stations, respondents were asked to rate the station they were referring to on the basis of its accessibility out of 5. A rating of 5 indicated that accessibility was excellent, and 1 indicated it was poor. Figure 36 shows the average station accessibility ratings for a range of respondent groups. For all respondents, the average rating given to stations was 3.38, suggesting that there is room for substantial improvement to ensure all needs are fully met.

There are slight differences in average rating by different health condition or illness groups, particularly those most affected by a condition. The group most affected by a health condition or illness did provide a lower average rating than the other groups, with an average of 3.06. This is noticeably lower than those without a condition, 3.49, and those who are affected a little by a health condition or illness, 3.74. This shows that those most affected by a health condition or illness generally find stations less accessible.

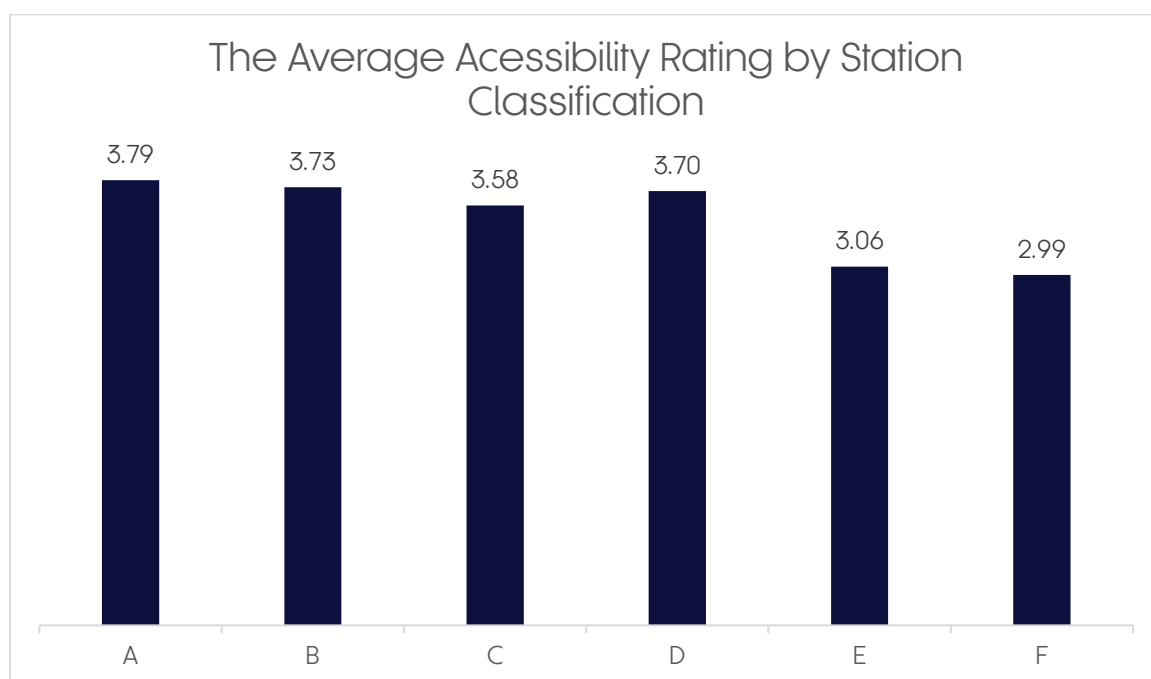


Figure 37. Overall accessibility of the station on a scale from 1-5, where 5 is 'Excellent' and 1 is 'Very Poor', how would you rate the overall accessibility of this station? A N: 374 B N: 264 C N: 178 D N: 192 E N: 433 F N: 513.

Another area where there is a noticeable difference in average rating can be seen when looking at the different station classifications, as shown in Figure 37. The smallest stations, E and F, are rated notably lower than the larger station classifications, with average ratings of 3.06 and 2.99, respectively. This result shows that respondents referring to these smaller stations generally find them less accessible than respondents referring to the larger stations.

As the overall rating of 3.38 given by respondents suggests, more could be done, but there are some positive areas of accessibility in stations. We asked

respondents to highlight the key areas where they thought accessibility was working well and what needed to be improved. The table below shows the common themes for each.

Areas working well	Areas for improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step Free Access 2. Transport and location 3. Facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step Free Access 2. Transport Integration 3. Facilities

As the table shows the areas raised for both what's working well and what needs improvement were very similar. The similarity highlights how important these areas are for respondents as when done well respondents notice and value it but when not present or done in a way that meets respondents needs, they are commonly raised as issues. For example, when looking at transport integration and location, respondents valued when they could easily get to and from the station through a range of modes but when respondents felt key connections such as bus and parking were not meeting their needs many mentioned it. The below quotes show an example of how these areas came up from both working well and areas for improvement.

Area Working Well	Area for improvement
<p>"Very good access to the station. By car and tram"</p> <p>Respondent who has walking difficulties, aged 65-74, referring to Manchester Piccadilly</p>	<p>"The station needs a bus route so people can navigate to and from the station easily."</p> <p>Respondent aged 30-44 referring to Stockport Station.</p>

Conclusions

This research focused on understanding the accessibility of rail stations in the North from the perspective of passengers, particularly those with significant health conditions or illnesses. It aimed to identify the accessibility difficulties respondents faced when using rail stations, and how these affected their journeys.

The findings reveal that respondents with significant health conditions or illnesses experience more difficulties and find aspects of the rail station experience less accessible compared to those without such conditions. This was evident across most areas, including journey planning and getting to the station, navigating the station, obtaining information, and using station facilities.

Respondents with significant health conditions face more difficulties reaching the station across all modes of transport. They are more likely to depend on taxis or private cars (as passengers) to get to the station, compared to other groups for whom walking or wheeling is more popular. Similarly, this group has more difficulty with the cost of getting to the station and rail fares, particularly among those who travel with companions. Most respondents purchase tickets online, although ticket offices remain essential for many, particularly for older respondents.

Accessing audiovisual information also poses challenges, particularly for those with significant health conditions. Many respondents mentioned difficulties hearing announcements in noisy station environments, and difficulties with reading information screens due to issues with display and placement.

At the station, many respondents encounter accessibility issues when moving around, including a large majority of those with significant health conditions. Common problems include a lack of step-free access and concerns about lifts often being out of order. Overcrowding is also an issue, with complaints about being jostled and not getting seats.

Issues with accessing, moving around, and using facilities are also common. Toilets are often mentioned, especially when they are not available at a station or when respondents believe there should be more. Some highlighted that toilets do not meet the needs of those with significant health conditions, leading to a demand for Changing Places toilets.

Sensory issues such as noise, lighting, smells, and a lack of shelter from the weather are also significant concerns. Some respondents suggested that these issues could be overwhelming when using the station. Many wanted to see improvements in these sensory aspects, including the provision of quiet spaces to wait.

Due to their conditions or the many challenges mentioned, around half of the respondents with significant health conditions require or use passenger assistance. Many also seek support through help points or by asking staff. Respondents reported mixed experiences regarding the support offered at stations. While some praised the staff and services received, others highlighted a lack of assistance, assistance not turning up, and the need for more staff.

The impact of these accessibility challenges is significant. For some, the lack of features such as lifts means having to use stairs, resulting in longer journey times and physical pain. Challenges such as sensory issues and overcrowding also lead to discomfort. Despite many respondents expressing a desire to travel by train more often, due to accessibility challenges many said they travel less, or opt for different modes of transport, such as cars or buses. Some even avoid train travel altogether because of these challenges.

The feedback on the various aspects of rail station accessibility covered in the report, along with the average overall station accessibility ratings of 3.38 and 3.05 out of 5 (given by all respondents, and those with significant health conditions, respectively), indicate that while there are some positive aspects, there are clear areas that need improvement.

This report highlights the accessibility difficulties faced by some people when using rail stations and some of the key factors that contribute to this. The findings underscore the need for targeted accessibility improvements across many areas of the rail station experience to ensure equitable access for all rail users. The findings of this research will inform the work of the Rail North Committee (which advises the Transport for the North Board on rail services and infrastructure improvements) focused on improving accessibility at North's rail stations. More detailed findings from this research for selected rail stations will also be shared with train operating companies that manage the stations. We are committed to continuing to work with partners across the North to address accessibility challenges and create a more inclusive rail network for all rail passengers to use.

Appendix A- Respondent Demographics

There were 2,012 completed responses to the survey after data cleaning. The survey was open to the public, and respondents were able to respond more than once to focus on different stations.

Respondents were asked to answer a series of demographic questions to understand their backgrounds. The charts included in this appendix show the response of survey respondents to demographic questions and data for the North of England based on the same or similar questions asked in the 2021 census. This enables us to look at how the demographic profile of the respondents compares to the whole northern population.

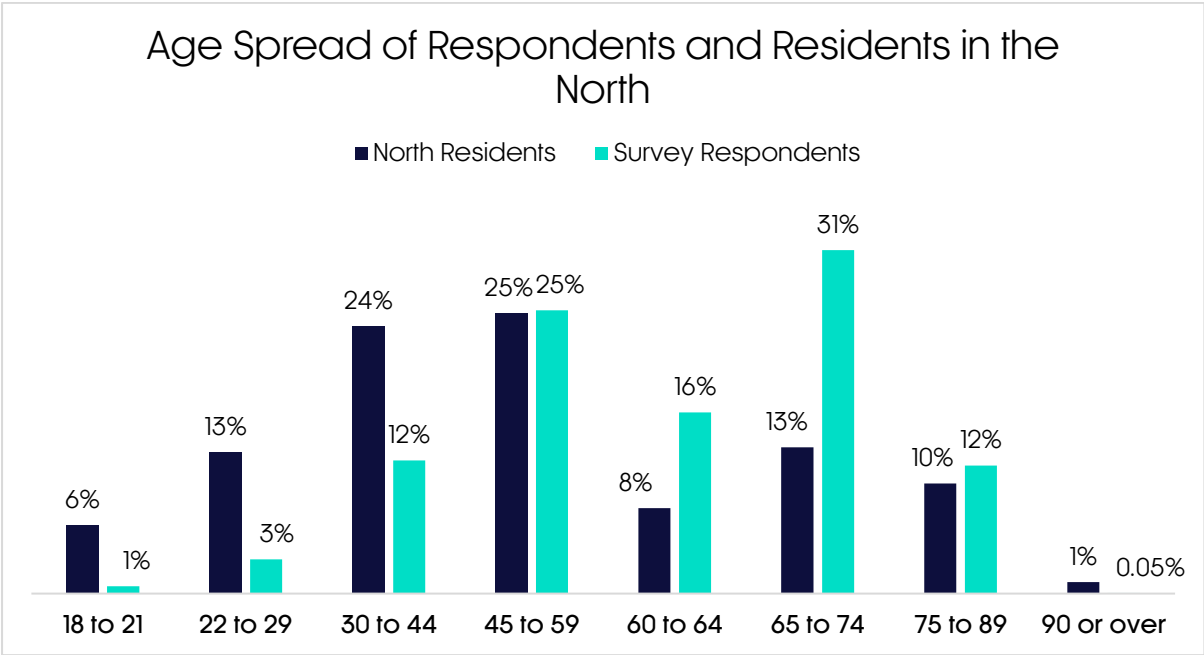


Figure 38: Please confirm the relevant age bracket for you, or the passenger on whose behalf you are completing the survey. Survey Respondents N: 2012. North Residents' figure is from the 2021 Census, TS007 Age by single year, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Figure 38 shows the age spread of respondents and the North. It shows some differences between the two, particularly that younger groups are underrepresented in the survey respondents, whereas those over the age of 60 are generally overrepresented.

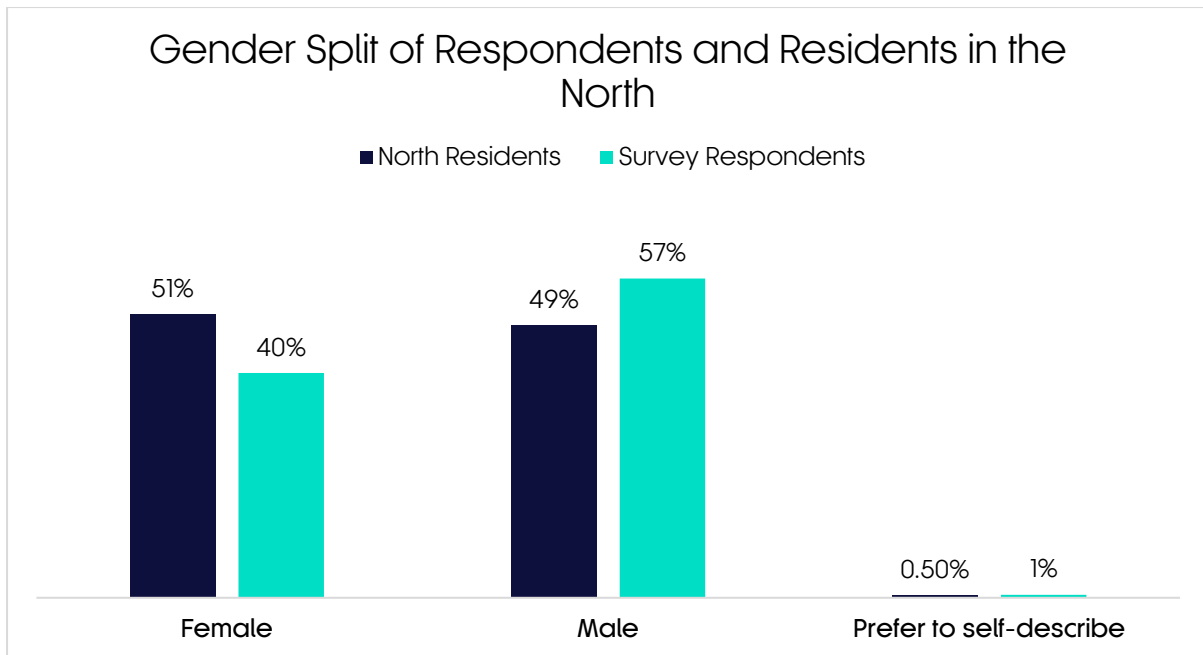


Figure 39: Which of the following do you identify as? Survey Respondents N : 2012. North Residents' figure is from the 2021 Census, TS008 Sex, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Figure 39 shows gender data. It shows that males are slightly overrepresented in the survey responses. Females and those who prefer to self-describe are, therefore, somewhat underrepresented in the survey.

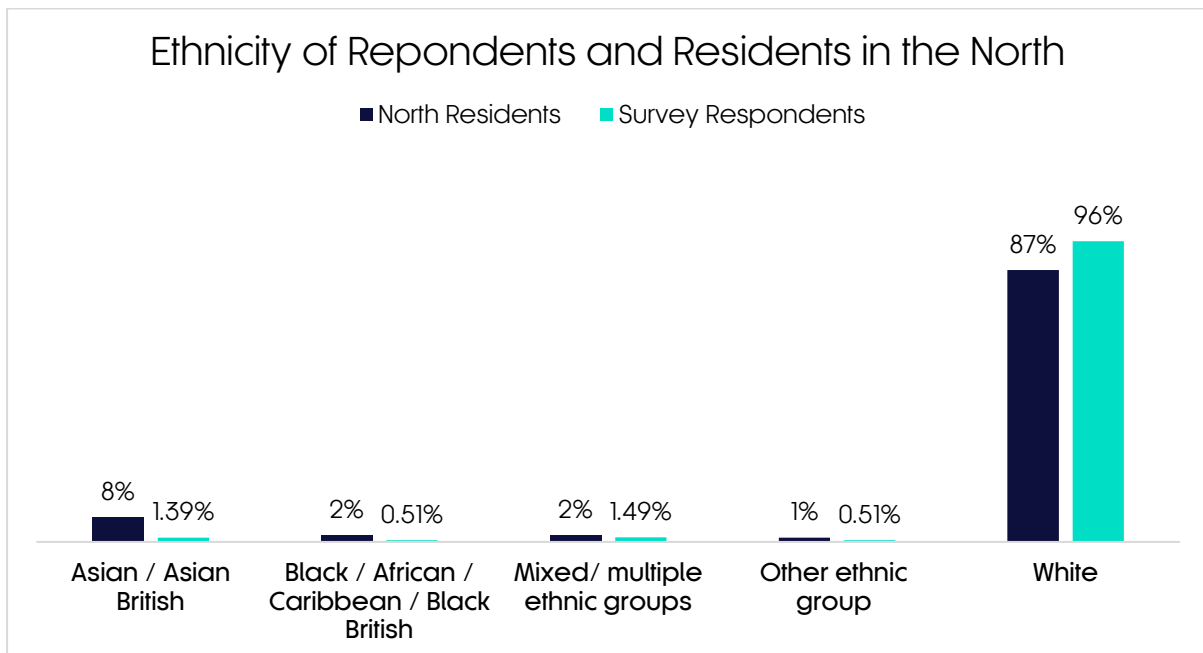


Figure 40: Please choose an option below that best describes your ethnicity. Survey Respondents N : 2012. North Residents' figure is from the 2021 Census, TS021 Ethnic Group, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Those with a white ethnicity are overrepresented among survey respondents, as shown in Figure 40. Minority groups are generally underrepresented in the response, particularly those with Asian ethnicity.

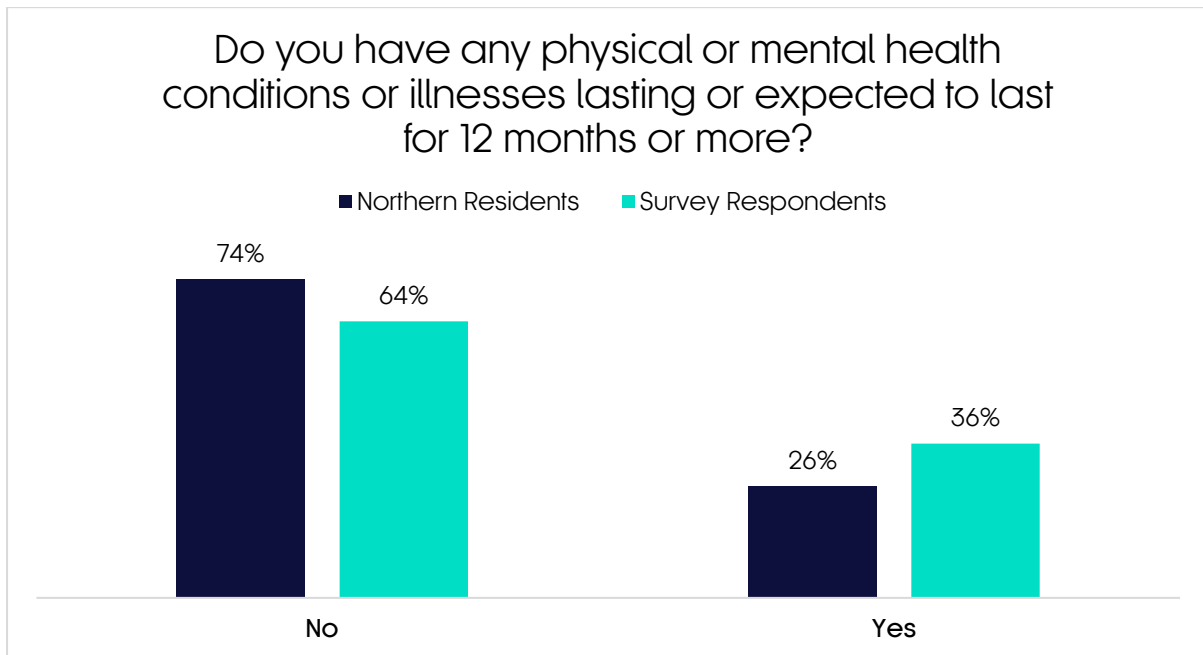


Figure 41: Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more? Survey Respondents N: 2012. North Residents' figure is from the 2021 Census, TS038 Disability, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber.

When looking at health condition or illness, Figure 41 shows that those with a long-term health condition or illness are slightly overrepresented among the survey respondents. This means those without a long-term health condition or illness are underrepresented in the response.

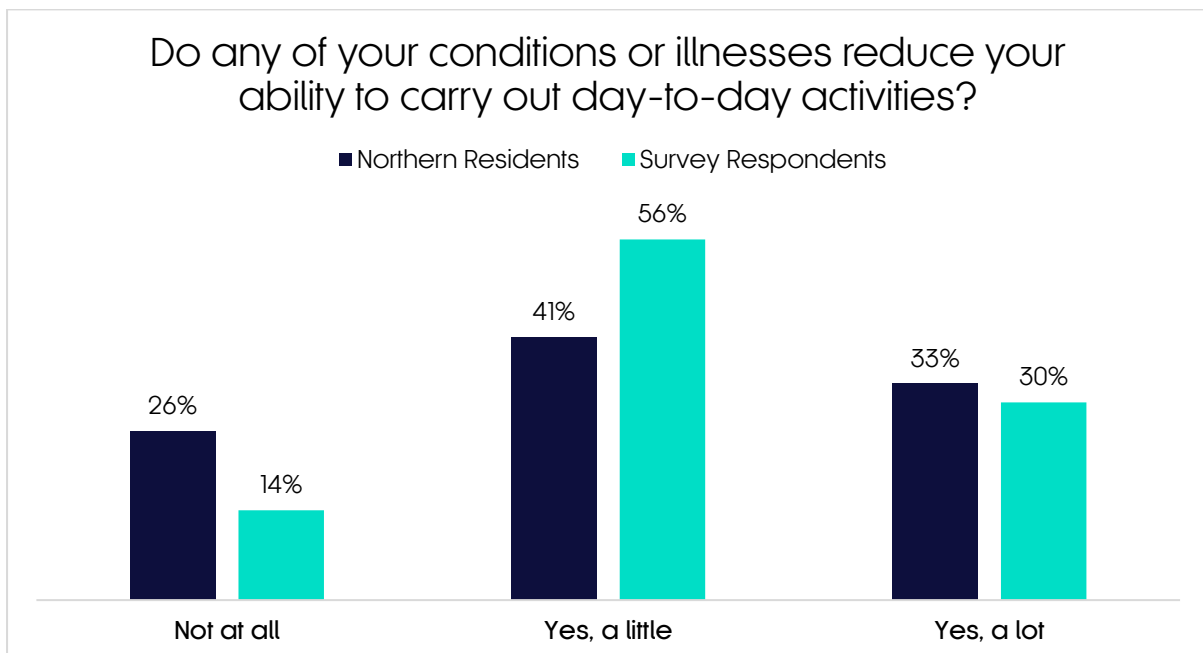


Figure 42. Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? Survey Respondents N : 2012. North Residents' figure is from the 2021 Census, TS038 Disability, using regional data for North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber. Closest fits were used i.e. Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited = Not at all.

Figure 42 shows a breakdown of those with a health condition or illness by how much it affects their day-to-day activities. Respondents who said their condition affects their daily life a little are overrepresented. On the other hand, those who said their day-to-day activities were not affected at all are underrepresented.

Appendix B- Train Stations selected by respondents.

Of the total responses, 1,955 had selected a valid station in the northern area after cleaning. Of the stations mentioned, 374 unique stations were selected by the respondents.

Of the stations, the most frequently mentioned can be seen in Table 2:

Station Name	Number of Mentions
Sheffield	134
Leeds	89
Newcastle	68
Manchester Piccadilly	58
York	52
Sandbach	33
Liverpool Lime Street	31
Preston (Lancs)	30
Hull	25
Manchester Victoria	24
Doncaster	21

Table 2: Which station will you be focusing on in this survey? Top 10 most frequently station. N: 2012

Of these stations, 9 out of 10 were in the larger classification (A or B), with only Sandbach coming from the smaller classification (E).

Station classification was first used in 1996 and was last reviewed by the Department for Transport in 2009. The system sorts stations in the national rail network into six categories (A-F) based on several factors. These factors include the main criteria of footfall and income, but the stations' role and geography are also considered. The stations classified as A are usually the largest and busiest, and those classed as F are the smallest and least busy. Table 3 below shows the classifications and the associated description and base criteria. You can find more detailed breakdowns of each classification in Annex C of the 2009 Better Rail Stations Report [here](#) (Department for Transport, 2009).

Classification	Description	Criteria (per annum)
A	National Hub	Over 2m trips: income over £20m
B	National Interchange	Over 2m trips: income over £20m
C	Important Feeder	0.5 – 2m trips: income of £2-20m
D	Medium Staffed	0.25-0.5m trips: income of £1-2m
E	Small Staffed	Under 0.25m trips: income under £1m
F	Small Unstaffed	Under 0.25m trips: income under £1m

Table 3: The description and criteria for each station classification letter. Source: Department for Transport, 2009, Better Rail Stations Report, Annex C, page 98

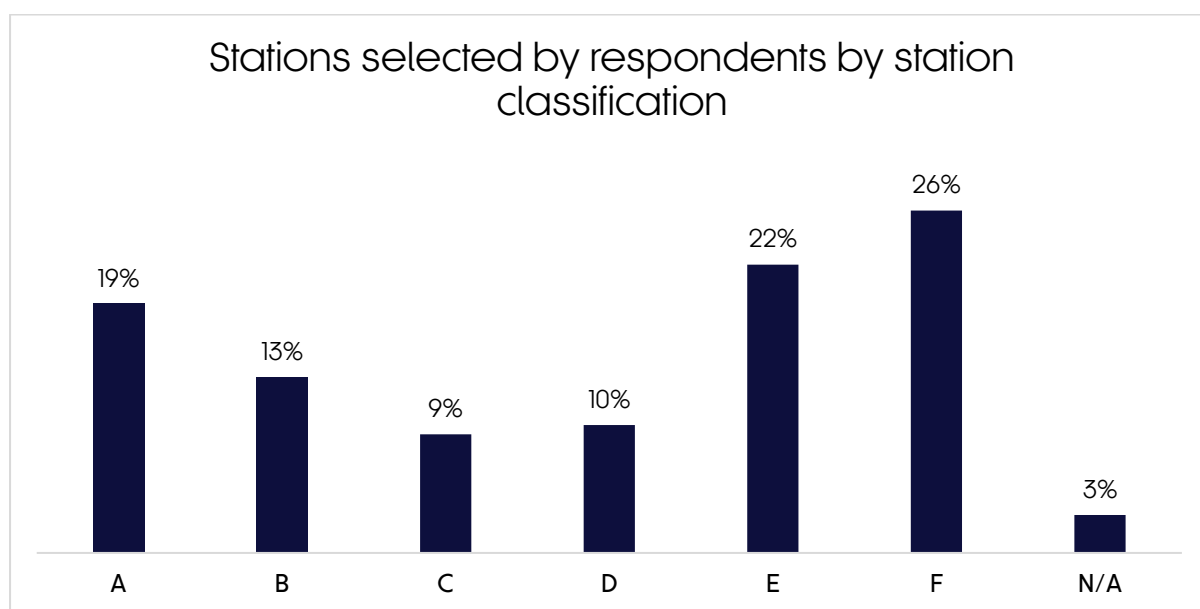


Figure 43: Which station will you be focusing on in this survey? Assigned a station classification N: 2012

Figure 43 shows the breakdown of stations mentioned by respondents by station classification. It shows that the stations mentioned the most were those in the smaller classifications E and F, and almost half of the responses referred to a station in one of these classes. Stations classified as A and B were also common. The least common classes of stations chosen by respondents were those in the middle C and D.

The table below (Table 4) shows which place types the mentioned stations came from. The place types follow Transport for the North's place typology. More information on these place types can be found Transport for the North's [People and Places Framework](#). Table 4 shows that by far, the most common place type of referenced stations was in large conurbations—almost half of all responses referred to a station from a large conurbation. Most respondents generally referred to stations from urban locations, with a much smaller number coming from more rural place types.

Place Type	Percentage of Station Mentioned
Large Conurbations	49%
Other Urban	15%
Transformational Places	13%
Industrial Places	7%
Visitor Centres	4%
Former Metropolitan Counties	4%
N/A	3%
Rural town and fringe	2%
Commuter Towns	2%
Rural village and dispersed	1%

Table 4: Which station will you be focusing on in this survey? – The percentage of stations mentioned that falls into each of Transport for the North's Place Typology N: 2012

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