



BREAKING BLUE

Experiences of Passenger Assist

Research report 2019-20

Office of Rail and Road

July 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive summary	3
2. Introduction	8
3. Background and objectives	9
4. Methodology	11
5. Who we spoke to	14
6. Importance of Passenger Assist	19
7. What assistance are passengers booking?	21
8. Experience of booking Passenger Assist	26
9. Experience on the day of travel	34
10. Satisfaction with assistance on journey measured	40
11. Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist, staff and station facilities	44
12. Conclusions and recommended improvements to Passenger Assist	50
Appendix 1 – Margins of error crib sheet	57
Appendix 2 – Key metrics by SFO and disability type	58
Appendix 3 – Questionnaire	62

1. Executive summary

Background

Passenger Assist is a free service offered by rail companies providing passengers with disabilities or anyone else who may require help, with assistance to enable them to make their journey. Rail companies' participation in Passenger Assist is mandated through their regulatory requirement to have an Accessible Travel Policy (ATP)¹ approved by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). The intent of Passenger Assist is to make rail travel accessible to everyone.

Passengers can request assistance by booking it in advance of their journey. Train and station operators can require bookings to be made at least 24 hours prior to travel. Passenger Assist is open to anyone who needs assistance; this could be due to a disability or long-term health condition, a temporary health issue or old age, and no proof is required to demonstrate eligibility to use the service. Assistance can take various forms – from being assisted into the station and help getting on and off the train, to help with luggage and while moving around stations. The responsibility for the assistance at each station is with the designated operator of each station, known as the Station Facility Operator (SFO).

In 2017-18 and 2018-19, Breaking Blue undertook research on behalf of ORR to investigate the extent to which Passenger Assist was meeting users' needs and expectations overall and how well individual operators were performing in terms of meeting their Passenger Assist obligations. ORR commissioned a third wave of this research to cover the period 2019-20, the results of which are set out in this report.

Methodology

When booking assistance, a record is created in the Passenger Assist database for each assist rather than for each journey, journey leg, or passenger. A record is created for each type of assistance booked in advance by the passenger. Each station a passenger is travelling through where they require assistance has a record created for each type of assistance they have booked. In order to ensure our sample was representative of the rail industry as a whole, interview targets were set for each SFO based on the proportion of total assist bookings received in 2018-19.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG), who manage the Passenger Assist booking system, provide Breaking Blue with assistance records on a fortnightly basis during the survey period, segmented by each booking method. All files are de-duplicated to ensure each participant only appears once in the file, and when new sample is received passengers who have previously been contacted are removed. To maximise participation the research consists of a combined approach of online and telephone interviews. In total, for the 2019-20 fieldwork period Breaking Blue achieved 4,079 interviews²: 1,745 by telephone; 2,334 online.

¹ <https://orr.gov.uk/rail/licensing/licensing-the-railway/accessible-travel-policy>

² Data provided to ORR by RDG shows that for 2018-19 there were 122,877 unique users of Passenger Assist across the entire GB network. At the time of publishing the figure for 2019-20 was not yet available.

Significance testing was conducted at a level of +/- 95 per cent and where there are differences between sub-groups with a large enough sample size and/or difference in results to be significant, these have been reported.

Who we spoke to

We spoke to passengers requiring assistance themselves (78 per cent) and companions travelling with someone requiring assistance (22 per cent).

Most people using Passenger Assist had used the service before (72 per cent) and most passengers use the service once or twice a year or more frequently (86 per cent). The most common reason for travelling is for leisure (80 per cent) rather than business or commuting to work or study.

The majority of people who use Passenger Assist are female (70 per cent). Most people who use Passenger Assist are aged 65 or older (64 per cent), and a similar proportion are retired (65 per cent).

The most common type of disability that people who receive assistance have is physical (61 per cent). A smaller proportion have a long-term illness (20 per cent), hearing impairment (17 per cent) or vision impairment (16 per cent). Just over one in ten do not have any disability or long-term health condition (12 per cent).

Importance of Passenger Assist

Almost three in five passengers (56 per cent) stated they could not have completed their journey without Passenger Assist. A further four in ten (40 per cent) could have completed their journey, but it would have been more difficult for them without Passenger Assist.

As in 2018-19 passengers with mental health problems are most likely to agree that they could not have completed the journey without Passenger Assist (67 per cent).

What assistance are passengers booking?

Passengers can request a range of assistance types depending on their needs. The most common type of assistance booked is help boarding the train (69 per cent), and this has risen significantly from 57 per cent last year. The second most common type of assistance is help with luggage (61 per cent, again a significant rise from 55 per cent in 2018-19), followed by help alighting the train (59 per cent, another significant rise from 45 per cent last year). Significant increases are also seen for the majority of remaining assistance types, with the exception of provision of a ramp and 'other types of assistance'.

Passengers are booking more assists per journey leg this year than in previous years, with 34 per cent booking more than five types of assistance compared to 19 per cent in 2018-19 and 10 per cent in 2017-18. The average number of assists booked per journey leg this year is 3.98, an increase from 2018-19 where it was 3.31 (an increase of 20 per cent year on year). It is important to note that the results for assistance requested are self-reported and therefore may not be a true representation of what was booked by the passenger. Note also: this data relates to the assistance required at a single

station; the total number of assists requested on a typical journey will be a multiple of these numbers. For example, a journey from Glasgow Central to York via a change at Edinburgh Waverley could reasonably involve five to ten different types of assistance being requested overall to complete the journey in each direction.

Around one in four (28 per cent) have in the past arrived at a station and asked for assistance without having booked it prior to travelling³; of these people the vast majority received the assistance they requested (91 per cent).

Experience of booking Passenger Assist

Passenger Assist can be booked by telephone, by email or via the web. The majority of the people we interviewed had booked via the telephone, although there had been a significant decrease from 2018-19 to 2019-20 (76 per cent to 69 per cent). Of the remaining interviews, the majority booked via email (24 per cent), consistent with 2018-19 (22 per cent). A small percentage booked via the web (six per cent). Booking assistance by telephone takes on average 8 minutes 46 seconds.

Just over two in five (44 per cent) are asked when booking if they would like assistance with luggage. Those booking by telephone are more likely to be asked this (50 per cent) compared to those booking by email (30 per cent) or via the web (32 per cent). Almost two in three (62 per cent) do not book assistance at the same time as booking a train ticket. Most passengers booked their train tickets further in advance of when they would be travelling than their assistance. In addition, only a small number of operators currently allow passengers to book tickets and assistance at the same time.

There has been a significant increase in the number of passengers receiving a booking confirmation this year (up to 89 per cent from 87 per cent in 2018-19 and 82 per cent in 2017-18). The majority of passengers (96 per cent) find the information in their confirmation is correct. The majority of those who receive a booking confirmation find the information about **when** to meet the staff easy to understand (87 per cent). There has been a significant increase in the number of passengers finding the information on **where** to meet staff easy to understand (82 per cent in 2019-20, up from 80 per cent in 2018-19). Passengers are slightly less confident having made the booking that all of their requirements will be met (67 per cent compared to 68 per cent in 2018-19).

Satisfaction with all elements of the booking process remain high. Satisfaction with the booking process overall and the assistance arrangements are both 92 per cent, whilst satisfaction with the helpfulness of staff when booking assistance is slightly lower at 90 per cent.

Experience on the day of travel

Nearly eight out of ten passengers (79 per cent) are met by rail staff in what they consider is a reasonable timeframe. One in ten (9 per cent) are not met by staff and around another one in ten (9 per cent) are met, but after some delay.

³ This type of spontaneous assisted travel that is not booked in advance is most commonly known as 'Turn-up-and-go'.

Most Passenger Assist users book multiple types of assistance for each leg of their journey, but just under three in four (74 per cent) receive all of the assistance they book: this is down from 76 per cent in 2018-19 and 80 per cent in 2017-18.

Although the number receiving all assistance booked has decreased, almost all passengers are still able to complete their journey leg as planned (95 per cent). Three per cent complete their journey leg but not as planned and just one per cent are unable to complete that leg of their journey at all.

Satisfaction with journey measured

The majority of passengers who receive assistance at the station are satisfied: 88 per cent, the same as in 2018-19. It is important to note that satisfaction with the journey is not asked of everyone booking assistance, only those who are met by staff. The majority of those who receive each individual type of assistance however are satisfied with it.

Satisfaction with staff is generally very high. The highest scoring measure for staff is satisfaction with the helpfulness and attitude of staff providing assistance at the station with over nine in ten satisfied (92 per cent), up one point from last year. The second highest scoring measure is satisfaction with the knowledge and proficiency of staff in providing assistance, which has risen significantly, from 89 per cent in 2018-19 to 91 per cent in 2019-20.

Passengers with social or behavioural issues are least satisfied with how well staff assisting them understand their particular needs (79 per cent) and also how knowledgeable and proficient staff are in how to assist them (83 per cent) compared to passengers with other disabilities.

Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist

Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist based on all past usage is at 82 per cent this year, the same as in 2018-19. Satisfaction with station facilities has also increased slightly this year (78 per cent to 79 per cent).

The Net Promotor Score (NPS; likelihood to recommend Passenger Assist) has also increased slightly, from 66 in 2018-19 to 67 in 2019-20.

Conclusions and recommendations

The proportion of passengers receiving all of the assistance they booked has decreased further this year to just under three quarters. Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist and satisfaction with assistance at the station on the day remains high for 2019-20 and is consistent with 2018-19. Satisfaction with the knowledge and proficiency of staff in providing assistance, has risen significantly, whilst the other satisfaction measures with staff show small increases.

Although satisfaction levels have increased, as in 2017-18 and 2018-19, one per cent of passengers are unable to complete their journey leg. However, failure of individual aspects of assistance can be as high as twenty per cent. As mentioned in the previous reports, the inconsistency between failure rates and the small proportion of incomplete journeys could be due to passengers managing by

themselves, being helped by fellow passengers, or eventually being assisted by staff after a delay (e.g. assisted on to a later train).

There are a number of improvements to the service that would enhance passengers' experience. Staff training remains key, particularly when dealing with passengers with hidden conditions and complex needs, as satisfaction is lowest amongst these passengers. Passengers mentioned the inconsistency in service from staff, and want better consideration for their needs. They also mentioned a desire for better communication throughout the journey, in terms of reassurance to them as a passenger and passing on information between stations.

Communication by staff between stations should be also a key area of focus going forward: many passengers describe situations when they have been delayed on one journey leg, information has not been passed on to the next station, and therefore help was not in place on subsequent legs of the journey.

Station facilities remain considerably less satisfactory than other aspects of the journey. Passengers ultimately want to be less dependent on assistance and more accessible stations and trains will enable that in the longer term.

2. Introduction

The independent safety and economic regulator for Britain's railways is the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). A condition of the operating licences that ORR grants to mainline train and station operators requires them to establish and comply with an Accessible Travel Policy (ATP, previously Disabled People's Protection Policy, DPPP). This ATP sets out in detail the arrangements that an operator will put in place to support disabled passengers. A key aspect of ORR's regulatory work is to oversee that Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and Network Rail fulfil the commitments made to passengers in their ATP.

A primary element of the ATP is the requirement for train and station operators to participate in Passenger Assist, which obligates them to provide assistance free of charge to passengers with disabilities, and anyone else who may require help, to enable them to make their journey. Passenger Assist therefore plays a crucial role in making rail travel accessible to all irrespective of their circumstances.

In 2017-18 and in 2018-2019, ORR commissioned Breaking Blue to investigate the extent to which Passenger Assist was meeting users' needs and expectations overall, and to explore how well individual operators were performing in terms of meeting their Passenger Assist obligations.

ORR commissioned a third wave of this research for 2019-20 to support its ongoing compliance monitoring in this area and build on the wider body of evidence about how well Passenger Assist is meeting user needs and expectations, the results of which are set out in this report.

3. Background and objectives

Passenger Assist allows passengers who need assistance to book it in advance of their journey. Train and station operators can require bookings to be made at least 24 hours prior to travel. Bookings can be made by email or online, although the majority of bookings are made by telephone using a Freephone number.

Passenger Assist is open to anyone who needs assistance; for example due to a disability or long-term health condition, temporary health issue or old age, and no proof is required to demonstrate someone's eligibility to use the service. The service can take various different forms – from being assisted into the station and help getting on and off the train, to help with luggage and while moving around stations. The responsibility for the assistance at each station is with the designated operator of that station, the Station Facility Operator (SFO). However, the provision of assistance in the station can be subcontracted, for example, from Network Rail to a TOC, or this responsibility can be shared between TOCs. Nevertheless, the SFO, from a regulatory perspective, remains responsible for the station and is accountable for any assistance provided within it.

Consistent with this, for the purposes of this research ORR decided that the assistance provided at each station would be allocated to the relevant SFO, regardless of which company the staff providing the assistance worked for. The results at company level are accordingly grouped and analysed by SFO. Since it may not be apparent to the passenger who the SFO is for a station, the assignment of results to SFOs is based on the Passenger Assist booking records, rather than by the passengers' recall of who they booked or travelled with.

The overall aim of this research is to explore passenger experiences of Passenger Assist across all aspects of the service, and to seek feedback on any potential areas for improvement. The specific research objectives are as follows:

- Profile assisted travel service users, including their demographic characteristics, impairment type, the journey purpose, frequency of use of the train and the assisted travel service;
- Evaluate a recent journey, from booking assistance through to the actual journey and experience on the day;
- Understand overall satisfaction when travelling by train using Passenger Assist and reasons for any dissatisfaction; and
- Gather feedback from Passenger Assist service users on ways to improve the service.

In 2017-18 ORR and Breaking Blue, with input from Network Rail and a number of TOCs (especially those TOCs with experience of using surveys to measure Passenger Assist satisfaction on their own services and stations), developed a quantitative questionnaire addressing the above objectives. In 2018-19 minor changes were made to the questionnaire and in 2019-20 no changes were made to the questionnaire, ensuring it remains comparable to 2018-19.

What?	How?	Which questions?
Screening and introduction	Concise, precise questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether booked for self or other • How heard about and frequency of using Passenger Assist • Confirmation recall journey
Experience booking assisted travel	Combination of closed questions and open end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of assistance booked • If confirmation of booking received • Ease of understanding booking information • Satisfaction with booking process
Journey experience	Combination of closed questions and open end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journey purpose, whether travelling alone, if a repeat journey • Whether met by a member of staff • Assistance received and satisfaction • Whether experienced disruption and impact on journey • Satisfaction with staff and station facilities
Satisfaction with service	Combination of closed questions and open end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist • Likelihood to recommend Passenger Assist • Use of 'turn up and go' and booking via an App
Classification data	Concise, precise questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics – gender, age, employment status and disability type • Charity donation

Clarifying the parameters of the research

At some stations, there is also a 'Turn up and Go' service whereby passengers can arrive at the station and request assistance that has not been booked in advance⁴. This type of unbooked assisted travel was outside the scope of this research. Nonetheless, a small number of questions regarding the use of 'Turn up and Go' have been included this year.

⁴ Rail operators are also required to provide assistance to passengers even if this has not been arranged in advance, where this is reasonably practicable. This type of unbooked assistance is commonly known as 'Turn up and go'.

4. Methodology

When booking assistance, a record is created in the Passenger Assist database for each assist rather than for each journey, journey leg or each passenger. A record is created for each type of assistance booked in advance by a passenger for each station on the journey. For example, a passenger travelling from London Euston to Birmingham New Street who requested help with luggage, and assistance boarding and alighting the train would have a record created for each assistance type requested at each station (so there would be four records created for the outbound journey – two at London Euston and two at Birmingham New Street – and a further four for any return journey – two at Birmingham New Street and two at London Euston). At least one additional field for each journey leg is created showing any disability type, for example visually impaired, learning disability etc. To allow attribution of the results to a specific SFO, passengers are asked about assistance given at a particular station rather than across the entire journey (or indeed instead of their experience of the entire service).

In order to ensure that the sample was representative of the rail industry as a whole, interview targets were set for each SFO based on the proportion of total booked assists they received in 2018-19. These targets are shown in the adjacent table.

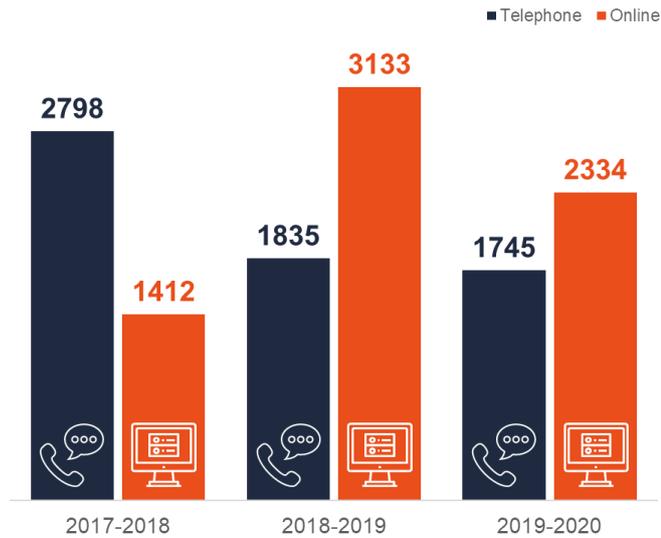
Some operators have a low target sample size due to the lower number of Passenger Assist bookings that they receive. These operators are c2c, Merseyrail, TfL Rail and London Overground. This means that for these operators there is a very limited number of passengers in the sample files we are able to contact to interview. Data for these operators is not available individually, although they are included in the overall sample.

SFO	Target no. of interviews
Network Rail	1,360-1660
Great Western Railway	650-790
Avanti West Coast/ Virgin Trains West Coast	425-520
London Northeastern Railway (LNER)	415-510
South Western Railway	275-340
ScotRail	240-290
Transport for Wales/ Arriva Trains Wales	230-280
East Midlands Railway/ East Midlands Trains	225-275
Govia Thameslink Railway	185-225
Northern	150-180
West Midlands Trains	140-170
Greater Anglia	135-165
TransPennine Express	100-125
Southeastern	100-115
Chiltern Railways	100
Other TOC/station operator*	As many as possible
TOTAL	5,200

Fieldwork was conducted between 8th May 2019 and 7th May 2020⁵. The Rail Delivery Group (RDG), who manage the Passenger Assist system, provided sample from their database on a fortnightly basis during this period, which was segmented by each booking method.

⁵The research includes those using Passenger Assist between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020.

A combined approach of online and telephone interviews was used to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the manner they felt most comfortable with. Note that fieldwork covering Rail Periods 12-13 was considerably impacted by COVID-19 with far fewer passengers booking assistance than for the same period in 2019. In total 4,079 interviews were achieved in 2019-20 overall.



The initial approach for all records containing an email address was by email. The telephone sample was drawn from those not supplying an email address at the time of the booking, those not completing the survey online, and those who indicated a preference to be interviewed by telephone.

The balance between telephone and online interviews changed in 2019-20 for two reasons. Firstly, fewer passengers in the sample had provided an email address to contact them on. Secondly, due to the lower sample numbers, more attempts were made to contact those who had provided a phone number.

The sample files contained a record for each assist booking rather than each passenger, which meant they needed to be de-duplicated. To maximise interview numbers with each SFO, prioritisation was applied to the sample file, with SFOs further from the interview target prioritised above those closer to the target. All other elements were randomly selected for each participant to avoid sample bias: the leg of the journey; the station (start, finish or interchange); and the type of assist. In addition, for each sample file, passengers who had been contacted previously were removed from the new sample.

In 2019-20, the number of records for each Rail Period was considerably lower than for 2018-2019. This was compounded by more records being removed during the de-duplication process. Therefore, the exclusion period which was applied to the sample was updated from 12 months to 6 months. In addition, roughly halfway through fieldwork, a charity donation was added as an incentive to encourage participation.

This report details the findings overall and any differences between relevant sub-groups (such as age, disability type, and how the booking was made). Certain sub-groups are only reported for questions that are directly relevant to them. For example, differences between Network Rail (NR) Fully Managed and Managed Light stations⁶ are only reported with respect to the assistance given by station staff, and not for the bookings process, which is the same for journeys via either type of station.

⁶ A Fully Managed Network Rail station means that all the assistance is provided by Network Rail staff. In a Managed Light station, Network Rail sub-contract assistance provision to one or more TOCs. Regardless of the assistance provision arrangements in place, Network Rail remains responsible for all assistance provided in these stations as the station licence holder and SFO.

Significance testing was conducted at a level of +/- 95 per cent and where there are differences between sub-groups with a large enough sample size and/or difference in results to be significant, these have been reported. We have generally avoided reporting differences between sub-groups which are not statistically significant, however in a small number of cases we have done so (mainly where they are consistent with other data points which are statistically significant). If there is no mention of the sub-groups then this is because there are no meaningful differences to be reported.

Within the report, figures that have significantly increased this year are shown in green in the charts and tables, and figures that have significantly decreased are shown in red. Note that due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

5. Who we spoke to

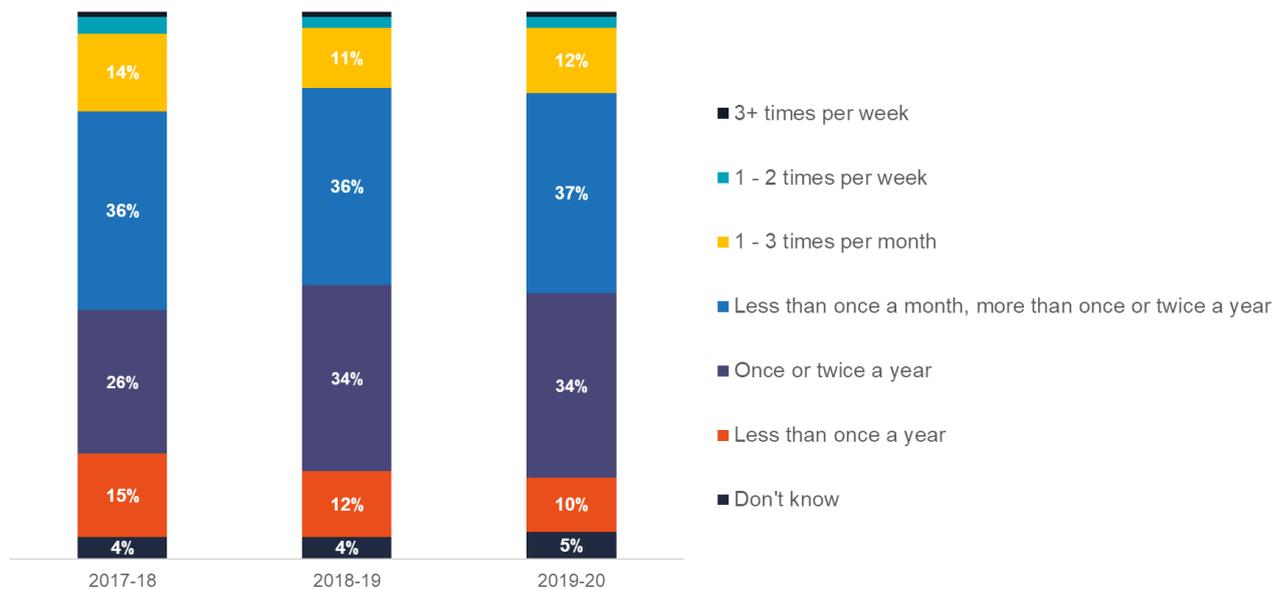
A total of 4,079 passengers were interviewed. Over three in four (78 per cent) of people we spoke to are passengers using Passenger Assist themselves, and just over one in five (22 per cent) are companions who accompanied someone using Passenger Assist.

SFO	No. of interviews
Network Rail	1020
Avanti West Coast	610
London North Eastern Railway	588
Great Western Railway	364
ScotRail	229
Northern	191
West Midlands Trains	189
Transport for Wales	166
Greater Anglia	136
TransPennine Express	136
South Western Railway	125
East Midlands Railway	103
Govia Thameslink Railway	89
Southeastern	70
Chiltern Railways	40
Other SFOs	23
TOTAL	4,079

Frequency of use of Passenger Assist

Just under three in four passengers (72 per cent) have made the same journey before, the same percentage as last year. The most common reason passengers are travelling is for leisure purposes (80 per cent), down just one per cent from last year.

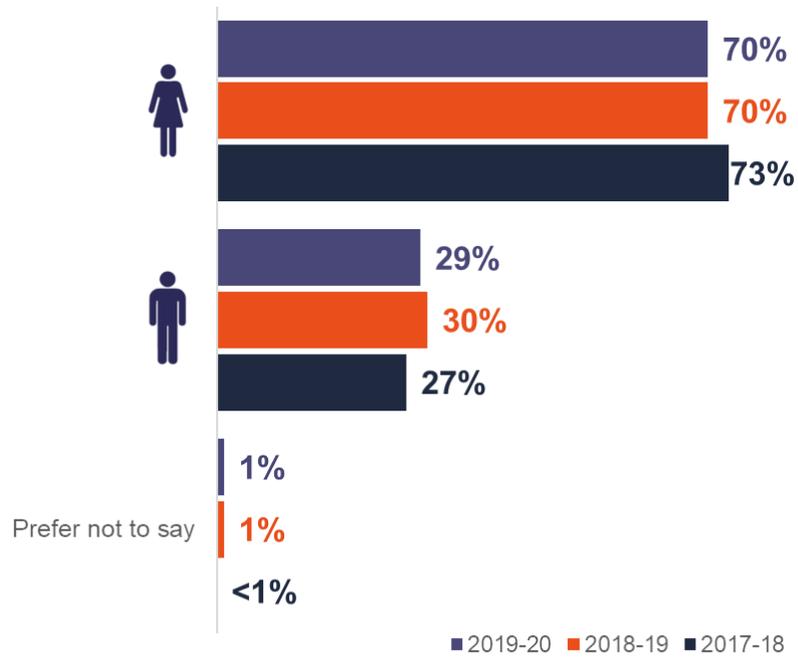
Despite the high proportion having made the journey before, the majority use Passenger Assist infrequently; over four in ten (44 per cent) use Passenger Assist no more frequently than once or twice a year whilst just over a third use Passenger Assist less often than once a month, but more often than twice a year (37 per cent).



A3. How often do you typically use Passenger Assist?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

Profile of users

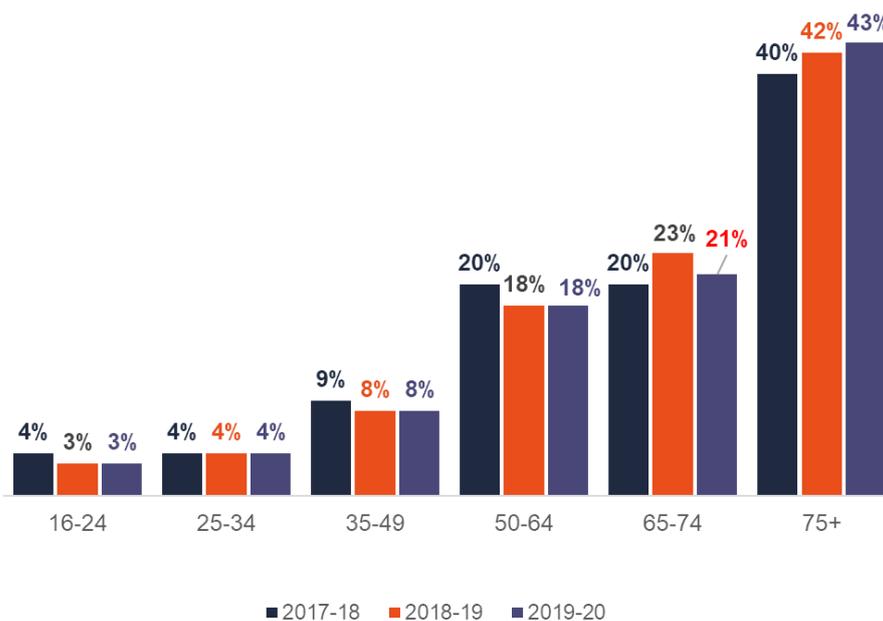
Women continue to make up the majority of passengers using Passenger Assist (70 per cent), while the proportion of each gender using Passenger Assist has stayed nearly the same as last year (70 per cent women, 29 per cent men). The gender split shown is representative of the sample file showing that a true difference between male and female users exists.



F1. Are you...

Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968; 2019-20: 4,073)

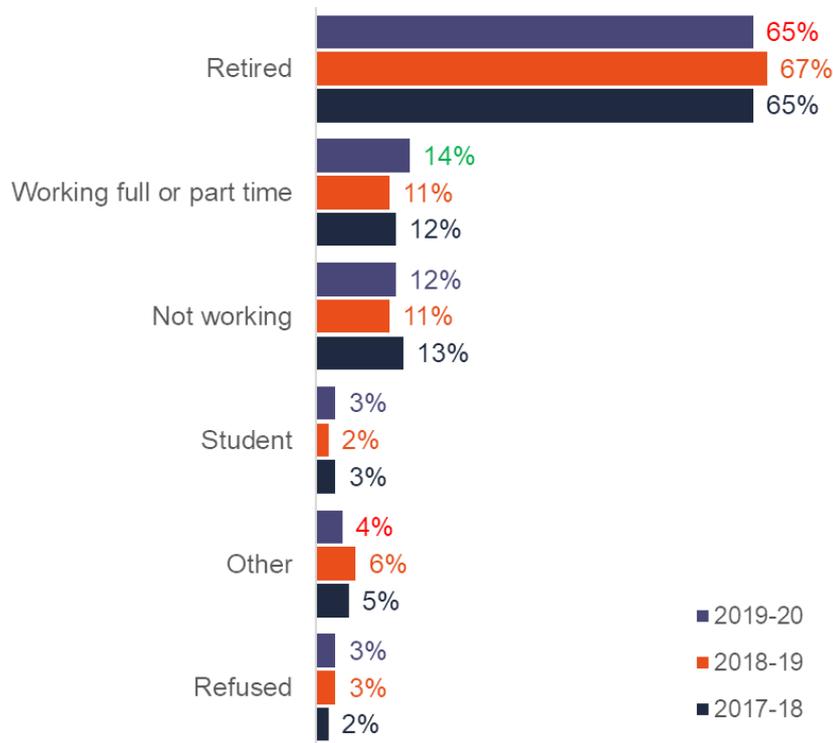
The majority of people who require assistance are aged 65 or over (64 per cent), whilst a small proportion (seven per cent) are aged 34 or under.



F2. How old are you?

Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968; 2019-20: 4,050)

Reflecting the age profile, almost two in three people who require assistance are retired (65 per cent).



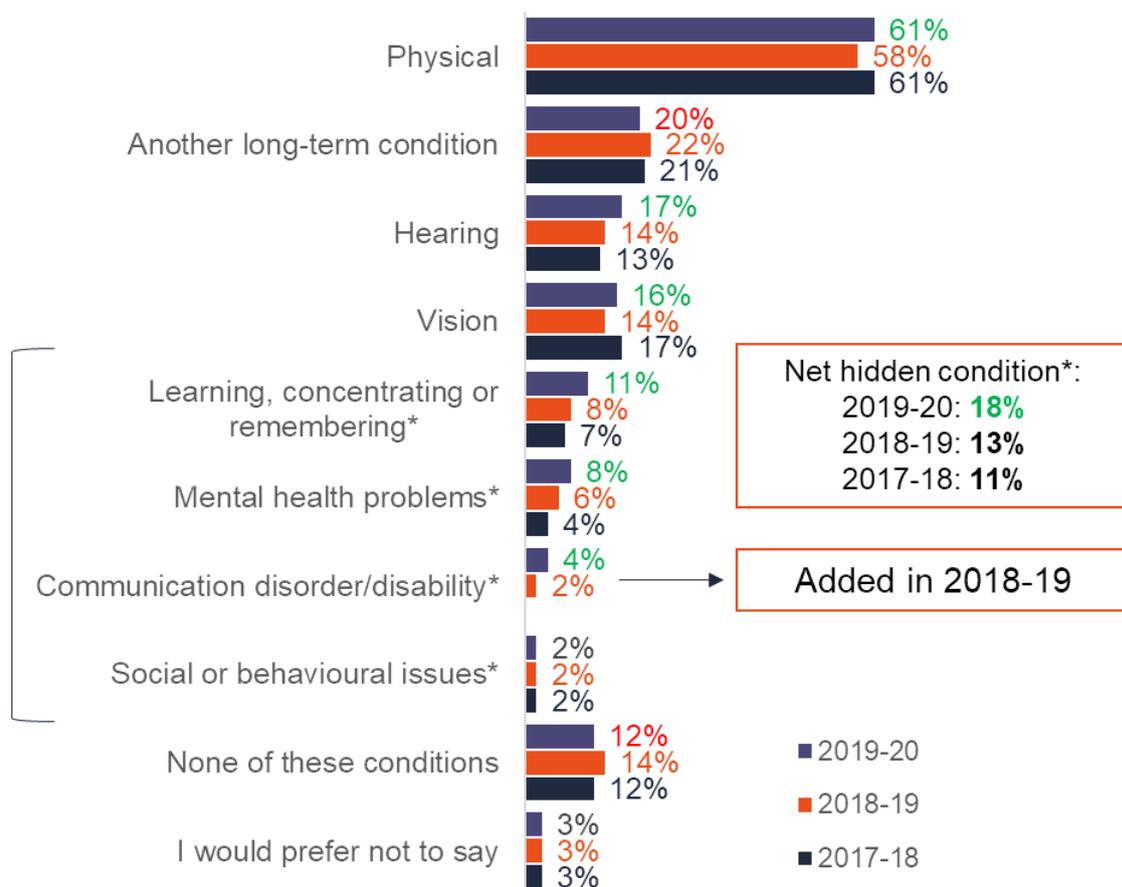
F3. Which of the following best describes your current circumstances?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,048)

Type of disability or condition

As was the case in both previous years, the most common type of disability that people requesting assistance have is physical, and this has seen a small but significant increase to 61 per cent, from 58 per cent last year.

The percentage of passengers with a visual impairment has also risen significantly (from 14 per cent to 16 per cent), while the net percentage of those with a hidden condition (learning, concentrating or remembering, mental health problems, social or behavioural issues and/or communication disorder or disability) has increased significantly to 18 per cent (from 13 per cent in 2018-19 and 11 per cent in 2017-18).

One in five (20 per cent) have another kind of long-term condition, and although it is still a relatively small number of passengers, there has been a significant fall in the number who do not have a disability or long-term health condition using Passenger Assist this year compared to 2018-19 (12 per cent and 14 per cent respectively). Passengers who do not have a disability are more likely to be aged 65+ than under 65.



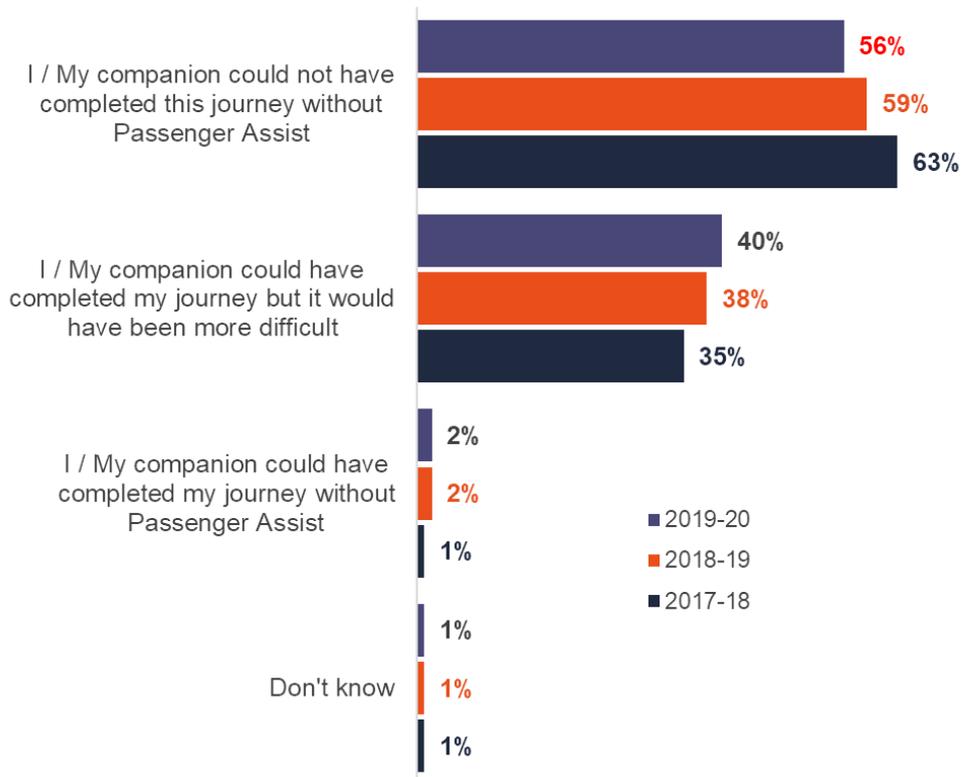
F4. Do you have any of the following long-standing physical or mental health conditions?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,045)

The incidence of disabilities and impairments is linked to the age of the passenger using Passenger Assist and shows a very similar pattern to 2018-19. Passengers in the two oldest age brackets are the least likely to have a physical disability compared to younger passengers. Furthermore, a greater proportion of older passengers have another long-term condition or hearing difficulties. A greater proportion of younger passengers are likely to have a hidden disability or a visual impairment. The table below shows disability type or condition by age.

Disability or condition	16-24 (123)	25-34 (146)	35-49 (344)	50-64 (734)	65-74 (867)	75+ (1,725)
Physical	64%	66%	72%	71%	63%	54%
Vision	28%	22%	22%	17%	13%	15%
Hearing	6%	10%	8%	11%	13%	25%
Learning or concentrating or remembering	27%	18%	15%	16%	8%	8%
Mental health problems	20%	20%	22%	18%	4%	2%
Communication disorder or disability	24%	8%	6%	5%	3%	1%
Social or behavioural issues	20%	7%	5%	3%	0%	0%
Another long-term health condition	11%	8%	18%	25%	22%	19%
None of these conditions	2%	9%	4%	7%	13%	17%
I would prefer not to say	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
NET: Hidden condition	46%	34%	33%	27%	12%	10%

6. Importance of Passenger Assist

Passenger Assist is of extreme importance to those who use it: over half (56 per cent) indicate they could not have completed the journey without it. This has significantly decreased however, from 59 per cent in 2018-19 and 63 per cent in 2017-18. In turn, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of passengers who say they could have completed their journey without Passenger Assist, but it would have been more difficult (40 per cent, up from 38 per cent in 2018-19 and 35 per cent in 2017-18).



*D20. We are keen to know how helpful you found Passenger Assist in terms of making the train journey possible or simply more convenient. Which of the following best describes your experience?
Base: All met by staff (2017-18: 3,716, 2018-19: 4,402, 2019-20: 3,634)*

Compared to 2018-19, there is now little difference between travel companions and service users in the perceived helpfulness of the service.

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Passengers requiring assistance getting to the wheelchair area and provision of a ramp are most likely to agree they could not have completed their journey without Passenger Assist (78 per cent and 75 per cent respectively). Similarly to 2018-19, passengers with mental health problems are most likely to agree that they could not have completed the journey without Passenger Assist (67 per cent).

Half of those with no condition say they could have completed the journey but it would have been more difficult for them (53 per cent), a slight increase compared to 2018-19 (51 per cent).

"I could not have even considered journeying by rail without passenger assistance. This has opened up a whole new way of travelling for me. Having only travelled by car because of my disability it was really refreshing to travel and be able to view the countryside and wildlife instead of motorways and lorries."

65-74, physical disability

"I think it is a great service and many people would not be able to travel without it."

75+, physical disability

7. What assistance are passengers booking?

Type of assistance booked

At the assistance booking stage passengers are able to request a range of different types of assistance. While there is no centralised record of the mix of assists, the interview data allows us to make reliable inferences about their general composition.

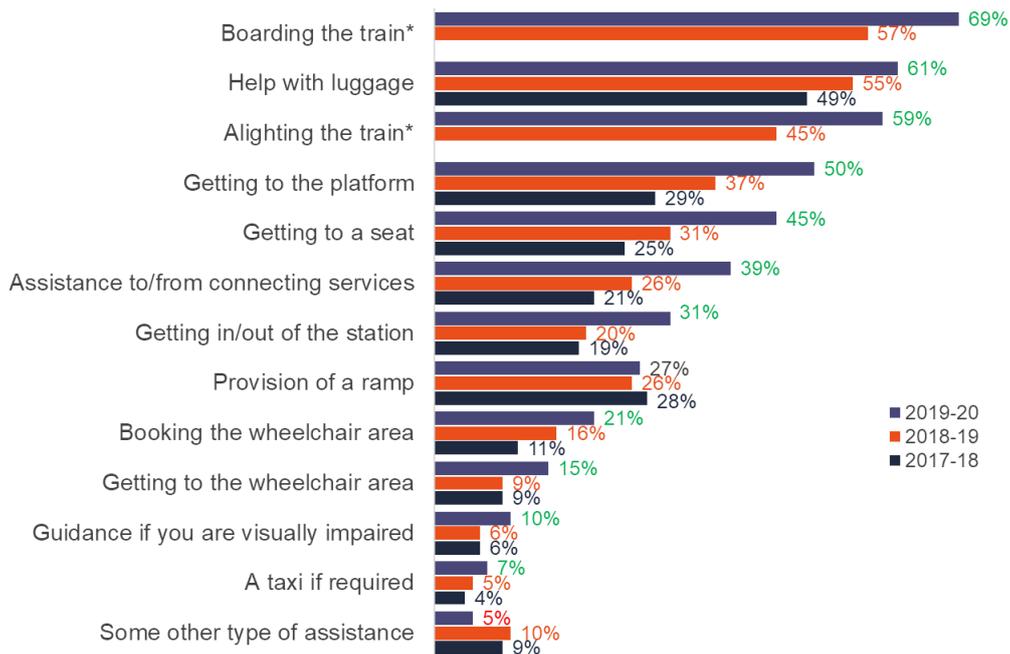
Similar to previous years, the most common types of assistance booked are those that are the broadest in relation to the needs that they meet, and therefore not linked to specific disability types or conditions. The most common type of assistance booked is help boarding the train (69 per cent), and this has risen significantly from 57 per cent last year. The second most common type of assistance is help with luggage (61 per cent, again a significant rise from 55 per cent in 2018-19), followed by help alighting the train (59 per cent, another significant rise from 45 per cent last year).

Significantly more passengers request help boarding the train than alighting the train (69 per cent and 59 per cent respectively). This could indicate a greater awareness of the assistance that can be requested when arriving at the initial departing station, compared to the assistance that can be requested when arriving at a station or changing services.

Significantly more passengers have requested help with getting to the platform compared to previous years (up to 50 per cent from 37 per cent in 2018-19 and 29 per cent in 2017-18). Significant rises from last year have also been seen in:

- getting to a seat (31 per cent to 45 per cent)
- assistance to or from connecting services (26 per cent to 39 per cent)
- getting in and out of the station (20 per cent to 31 per cent)
- booking the wheelchair area (16 per cent to 21 per cent)
- getting to the wheelchair area (9 per cent to 15 per cent)
- guidance for the visually impaired (6 per cent to 10 per cent)
- and a taxi if required (five per cent to seven per cent).

It is important to note that the results for assistance requested are self-reported and therefore may not be a true representation of what was booked by the passenger.



C1 – Which of the following types of assistance did you request at <INSERT STATION>?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

Booking provision of a ramp remains highest amongst younger passengers (56 per cent aged 16-24 and 50 per cent aged 25-34). Booking this type of assistance steadily decreases as age increases; only a small number (16 per cent) of those aged 75 or older book provision of a ramp.

Booking help with luggage has remained consistent with 2018-19 and is highest amongst older passengers (72 per cent aged 75 or older and 63 per cent aged 65-74). This growing trend further confirms that amongst older users of Passenger Assist it is not just those with physical disabilities and vision or hearing impairments who require help accessing the rail network, but a much wider group, including many passengers who require assistance with particular parts of the journey.

Those with a visual impairment are most likely to request assistance getting to a seat (60 per cent) and those with a hidden disability or physical impairment are most likely to book the wheelchair area (both 29 per cent) and provision of a ramp (39 per cent and 38 per cent respectively). Those who have a vision impairment are most likely to book assistance to and from connecting services (47 per cent).

There are also differences depending on the gender of the passenger, with more females than males requesting help with luggage (66 per cent and 48 per cent respectively), getting to the platform (51 per cent and 47 per cent respectively) and assistance to and from connecting services (40 per cent and 35 per cent respectively). More males than females request provision of a ramp (33 per cent and 24 per cent respectively), booking the wheelchair area (26 per cent and 19 per cent respectively) and getting to the wheelchair area (18 per cent and 14 per cent respectively).

There are also some differences in the assistance requested depending on whether it is the passenger or travel companion booking the assistance. More passengers than travel companions book help with luggage (63 per cent and 52 per cent respectively). In addition, more passengers than

travel companions request help alighting the train (61 per cent and 54 per cent respectively), getting to the platform (52 per cent and 43 per cent respectively), getting to a seat (47 per cent and 36 per cent) and assistance to and from connecting services (41 per cent and 31 per cent). These series of results could indicate that when a Passenger Assist user is travelling with a companion, there are some things that the companion will help with, rather than depending on rail staff.

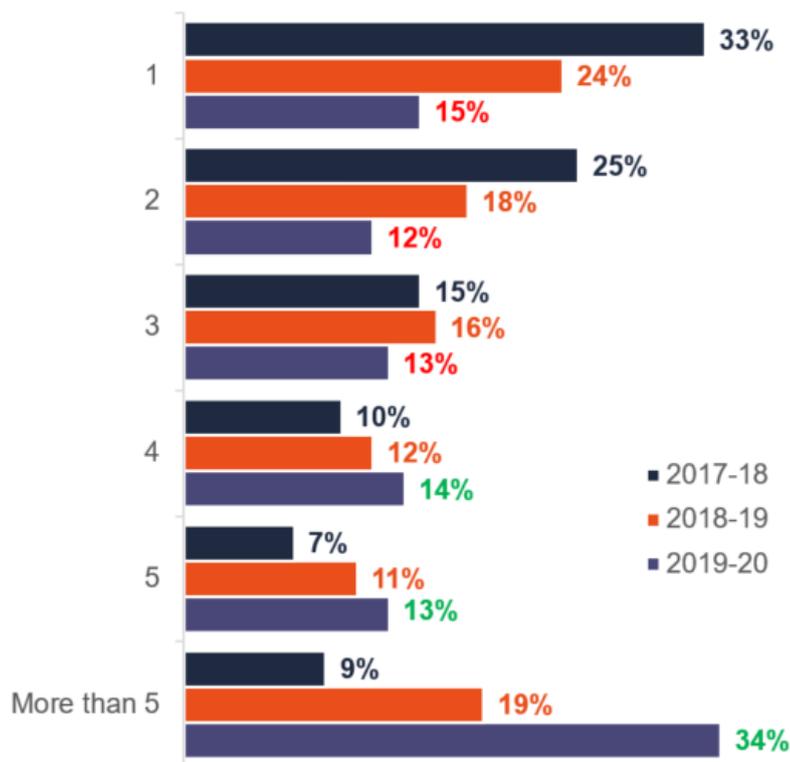
Similarly to 2018-19, more companions than passengers book provision of a ramp (37 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). Companions are also more likely to book the wheelchair area itself (28 per cent) and help getting to the wheelchair area (19 per cent) compared to passengers (20 per cent and 14 per cent respectively). We hypothesise that this is because passengers needing wheelchair assistance are more likely to travel with a companion than other Passenger Assist users, meaning that a greater proportion of assists booked by companions would require wheelchair assistance.

Number of assists booked

Passengers and companions are requesting more assists per booking this year than in previous years. There has been a significant decrease in the percentage of those booking only one assist (15 per cent, down from 24 per cent in 2018-19 and 33 per cent in 2017-18) and two assists (down from 18 per cent in 2018-19 to 12 per cent). However, there has again been a significant increase in those booking five assists (11 per cent to 13 per cent), while the number booking more than five assists has risen to 34 per cent from 19 per cent in 2018-19 and nine per cent in 2017-18.

The average number of assists requested per station in 2019-20 is 3.98, an increase from 2018-19 where it was 3.31 (an increase of 20 per cent year on year). As mentioned above, it is important to note that the results for assistance requested are self-reported and therefore may not be a true representation of what was booked by the passenger. The increase in the number of assists nonetheless indicates a greater need amongst passengers and/or a greater awareness of the different assistance types that can be requested.

It is important to note that this data relates to the assistance required at a single station; therefore, the total number of assists requested on a typical journey will be a multiple of these numbers. For example, this suggests a journey from Glasgow Central to York via a change at Edinburgh Waverley could, on a routine basis, reasonably involve around five or six different types of assistance being required overall to complete the journey in each direction.



C1 – Which of the following types of assistance did you request at <INSERT STATION>?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

The average number of types of assistance booked by passengers is 4.04, and is significantly higher than the average number booked by companions (average number of assists 3.75). Passengers with a visual impairment booked the most types of assistance (average number of assists 4.55), significantly more than passengers with a hearing impairment (average number of assists 4.36) or a physical disability (average number of assists 4.15). Passengers with a hidden condition booked the second highest number of assists (average number of assists 4.43), significantly more than those with a physical disability. There are no significant differences by the passenger's age or gender, or the day of the week when they travelled in the number of types of assistance booked.

8. Experience of booking Passenger Assist

How do people book?

Passenger Assist can be booked by telephone, by email or via the web. Booking records from the RDG show that the most common method for booking is by telephone. Consistent with this, almost seven in ten of those we interviewed booked by telephone (69 per cent). However, this has seen a decrease from 76 per cent in 2018-19. Of the remaining interviews, the majority booked via email (24 per cent), consistent with 2018-19 (22 per cent). A small percentage booked via the web (6 per cent).



Average booking time:
8 mins 46 secs

Passengers booking by telephone take on average 8 minutes, 46 seconds⁷ to book their assistance, up 11 seconds from last year. Those with hidden disabilities take significantly longer than average to book assistance via the telephone. Passengers with mental health problems take longest at 10 minutes 3 seconds. Passengers with learning, concentrating or remembering difficulties take 9 minutes, 55 seconds; passengers with communication disorders take 9 minutes, 38 seconds and passengers with social or behavioural issues take 9 minutes 13 seconds on average. Passengers with hearing impairments take 9 minutes 54 seconds on average to book their assistance.

Additional help booked or offered

Over two in five (44 per cent) are offered help with their luggage when booking their assistance. Those booking by telephone (50 per cent) are significantly more likely to be offered assistance with luggage than those booking via the web or email (32 per cent and 30 per cent respectively).

When booking their assistance, around one in seven (15 per cent) ask for help planning their journey. Those with learning, concentrating or remembering difficulties, or communication disorders are most likely to ask for help (both at 19 per cent).

Almost two in three (62 per cent) do not book assistance at the same time as booking their train ticket. When asked why this was, the majority of passengers said it was because they had booked tickets in advance, and they only booked assistance a day or two before travelling. In addition, only a small number of operators currently allow passengers to book tickets and assistance at the same time. Around 11 per cent of those who do not book assistance at the same time as their ticket mention booking assistance by telephone.

⁷ However it must be noted that the time taken to book assistance can vary significantly by passenger depending on the nature of their journey and assistance needs.

Confirmation received

Significantly more passengers and companions receive confirmation of their booking this year than in previous years (up to 89 per cent from 87 per cent in 2018-19 and 82 per cent in 2017-18). Similar to 2018-19, less than one in ten (9 per cent) do not receive a confirmation. The proportion receiving a confirmation when booking by email (91 per cent) is significantly higher than the proportion receiving a confirmation when making their booking by telephone (88 per cent) or the web (85 per cent). This is a reversal of the results for 2018-19 when a greater proportion booking via email (95 per cent) received confirmation than those booking via telephone (85 per cent).

“The one criticism I might have was use of an ambiguous abbreviation in the assistance confirmation: Assistance departing station by taxi, BUGGY NR (LST). I initially misunderstood NR to be an abbreviation for not required until I realised it meant National Rail. Similarly, though I’m personally aware that LST is Liverpool Street it might be confusing to others.”
75+, physical disability

“Sometimes when I book online the confirmation email has the details mixed up e.g. I book assistance for a 08.23 departure which arrives at 09.23 but the booking confirmation is for a 09:23 departure.”
16-24, physical disability

The majority of passengers (96 per cent) find the information in their confirmation is correct. The number booking by phone (97 per cent) reporting an accurate confirmation is significantly higher than those booking by email (94 per cent). 96 per cent of passengers who booked via the web report the booking confirmation is accurate.

Booking confirmation received



2019-20: 89%
2018-19: 87%
2017-18: 82%

Booking confirmation accurate



2019-20: 96%
2018-19: 96%
2017-18: 97%

C3. Did you receive confirmation of the assistance booking?

Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079;

C4. Was the information in the booking confirmation accurate?

Base: All who received confirmation of booking (2017-18: 3,463, 2018-19: 4,314, 2019-20: 3,617)

Ease of understanding

A small number of those who receive a booking confirmation do not receive information about **where** (6 per cent) or **when** (four per cent) to meet the staff member.

Of those who do receive a confirmation, the majority find the information about **when** to meet staff easy to understand (87 per cent, compared to 86 per cent in 2018-19). There has been a significant increase in the proportion who find instructions about **where** to meet staff easy to understand (80 per cent to 82 per cent).

Ease of understanding instructions regarding when to meet staff



Ease of understanding instructions regarding where to meet staff



C5. How easy to understand were the instructions within the booking confirmation about where to meet the staff member?
 Base: All who received confirmation of booking (2017-18: 3,463, 2018-19: 4,314, 2019-20: 3,617);
 C5. How easy to understand were the instructions within the booking confirmation about when to meet the staff member?
 Base: All who received confirmation of booking (2018-19: 3,463, 2018-19: 4,314, 2019-20: 3,617)

Instructions regarding **when** to meet staff are somewhat easier to understand when the booking has been made via telephone or website (88 per cent) than by email (84 per cent). Ease of understanding information about **where** to meet staff has significantly increased for those who booked via email (75 per cent to 79 per cent, compared to 80 per cent in 2017-18. It has also risen significantly for bookings by telephone, following a significant drop (84 per cent in 2017-18, 82 per cent in 2018-19 and now 84 per cent in 2019-20).

Although there has been a small increase across all booking modes (two per cent), those who book via telephone remain significantly more likely to find the instructions on where to meet staff easy to understand (84 per cent) than those booking via email (79 per cent). Note that there is a low base for booking via web.

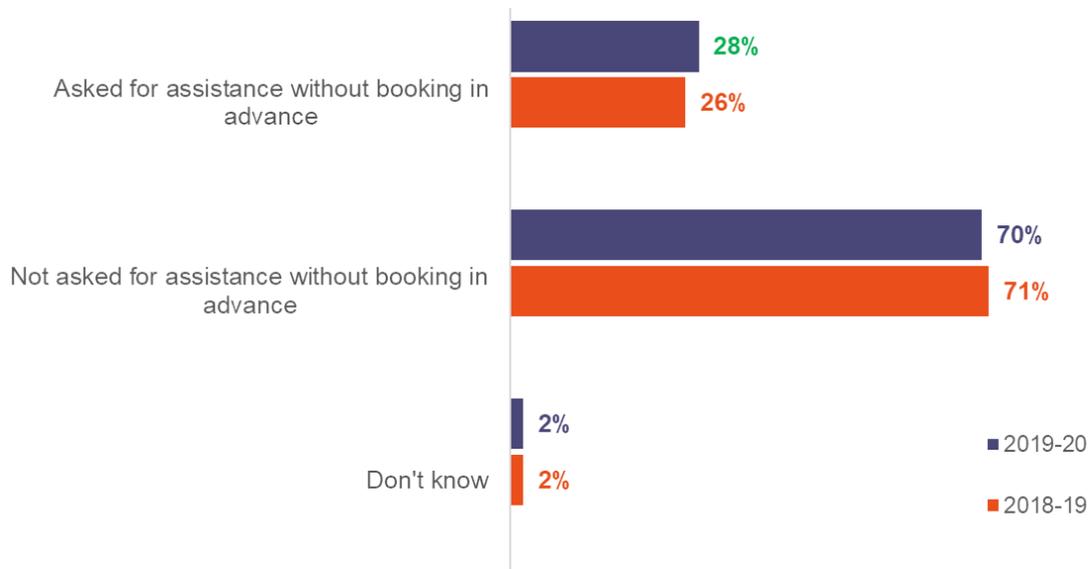
Awareness of an app for booking

A Passenger Assist smartphone app is being developed for booking and tracking assisted journeys across the network; some train operators may be trialling this or using their own apps currently⁸. The majority of passengers (86 per cent) are not at present aware of any app they can use to book assistance. Just over one in ten (13 per cent) have heard of such an app, although when asked most mentioned a specific train company app. As in 2018-19, a small proportion mentioned that they have heard of the Passenger Assist app suggesting there has been limited communication about the app.

⁸ The Passenger Assist app is being developed by RDG and Transport on behalf of the rail industry.

Awareness and use of 'Turn Up and Go'

More than one in four passengers (28 per cent) have in the past asked for assistance at a station without having booked it in advance⁹, a significant increase compared to 2018-19.



E6. Have you/has your companion ever asked for assistance at a train station without having booked in advance?
 Base: All respondents (2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,060)

The majority of these passengers received the assistance requested (91 per cent). Passengers with a visual disability are most likely to ask for assistance on the day without having booked (41 per cent) followed by those with social or behavioural issues (40 per cent) and those with mental health problems (37 per cent)

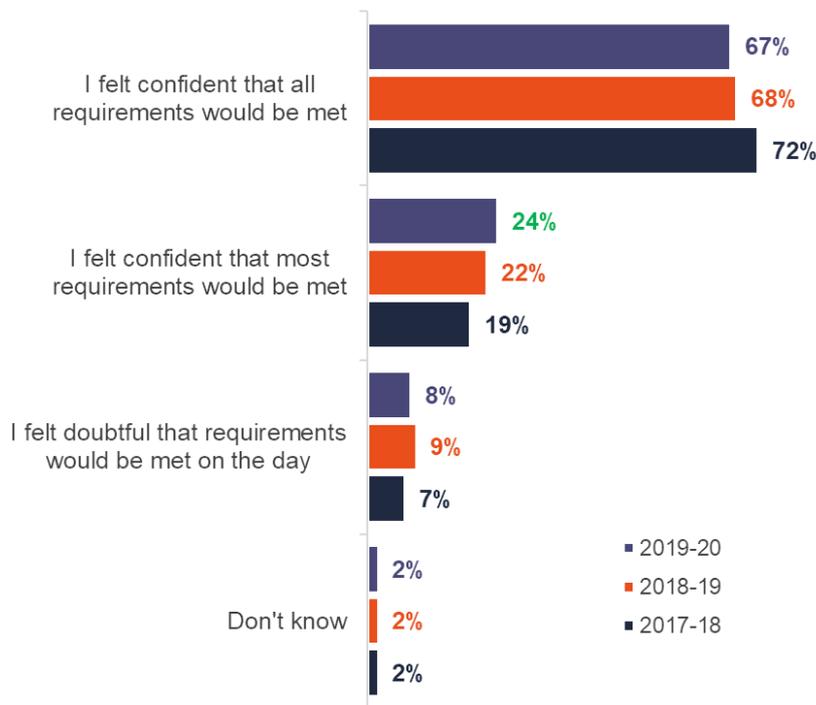
“It took a little time for the ramp to be provided and no-one seemed to be responsible for it. My companion was sent from one person to another after being told it wasn't the first person's job. In the end the first person she spoke to got the ramp for me but it was a stressful experience for both of us.”
75+, visual impairment

“I asked for assistance at Euston when I saw another person receiving help. The member of staff was very kind and helpful and included me on the buggy trip with my luggage.”
65-74, physical disability

⁹ This type of unbooked assistance is commonly referred to as 'Turn up and go'.

Confidence in booking

Anecdotal comments from Passenger Assist users suggest that confidence that their bookings will be fulfilled is important to their overall experience of the journey. Two thirds of passengers (67 per cent) are confident after booking that **all** of their requirements will be met on the day of travel, down from 68 per cent last year and 72 per cent in 2017-18. The number who feel confident **most** (but not all) of their requirements will be met has in contrast significantly risen each year (from 19 per cent in 2017-18 to 22 per cent in 2018-19 and 24 per cent this year). Eight per cent feel doubtful their requirements will be met at all.



C6. Before we go on to discuss the actual day of your journey, please tell us which of the following best describes how you felt after making your booking?

Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

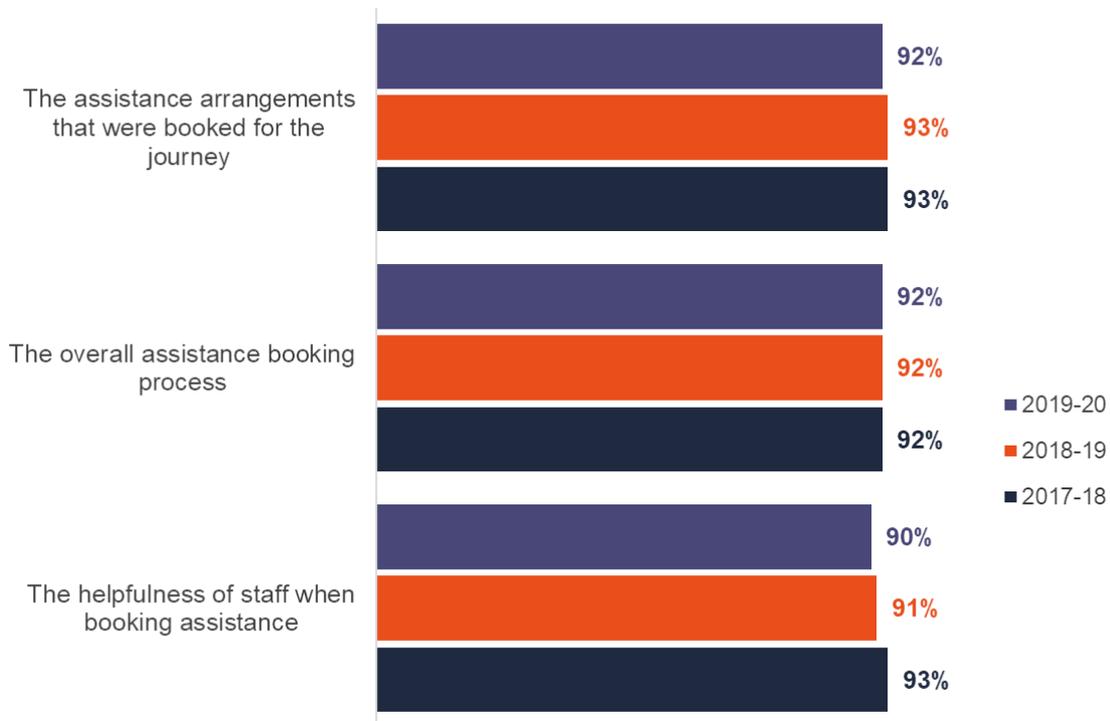
The proportion booking via the web who feel confident that all requirements will be met (70 per cent) is higher than via the other modes of booking (69 per cent by telephone, dropping significantly to 60 per cent by email).

Similar to 2017-18, older passengers are more confident than younger passengers that their requirements will be met. Those most confident are aged 75+ (71 per cent), the same proportion as last year, and 65-74, which although not significant has seen a decrease (70 per cent to 69 per cent). Those with the least confidence are aged 25-34 (49 per cent) and 16-24 (56 per cent).

Those with social or behavioural problems and those with mental health problems are least likely to feel confident in their requirements being met (54 per cent and 59 per cent respectively). Indeed, passengers with these two hidden conditions are also the most likely to feel doubtful (14 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).

Satisfaction with the booking process

The proportion of passengers and companions either fairly or very satisfied with the overall booking process remains consistent at 92 per cent for all three years of the research. Overall satisfaction with the booking process is significantly and consistently higher among those booking by telephone (93 per cent) compared to those booking by email (89 per cent).



C7. Thinking about the booking process, how satisfied were you with... What score out of 5 would you give where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied?

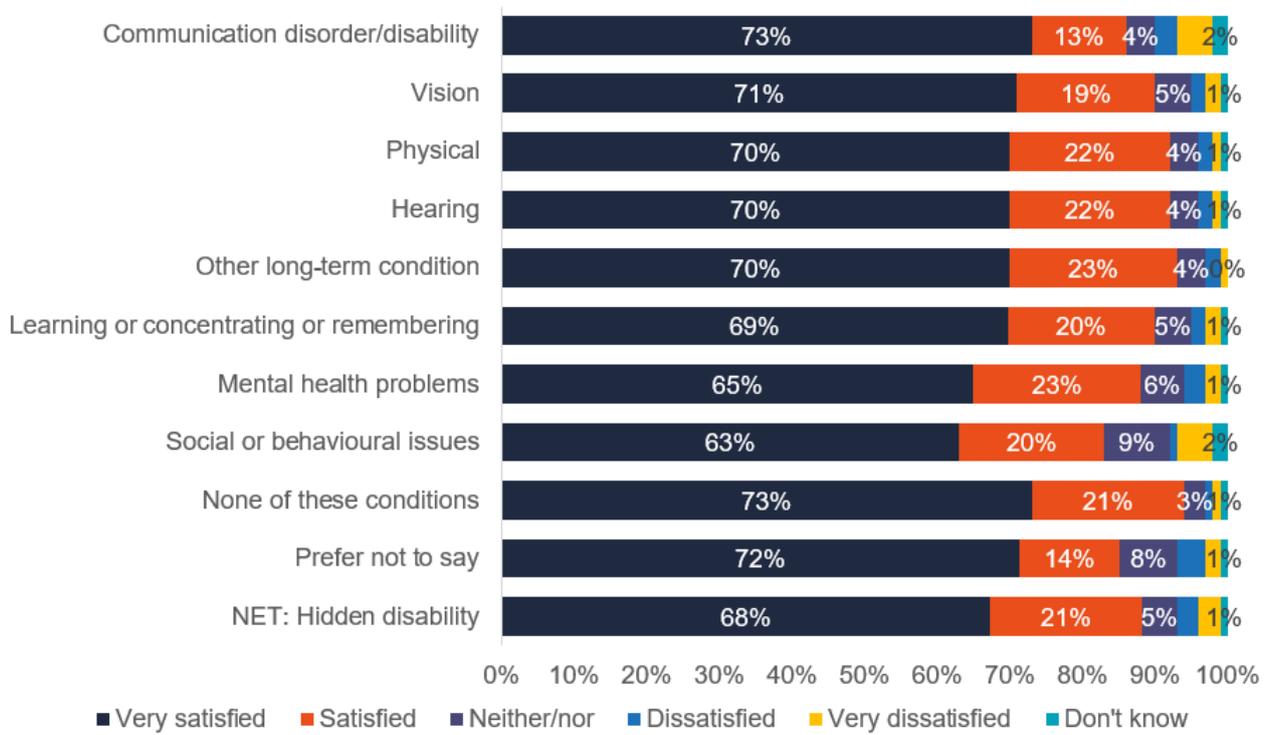
Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

Satisfaction with the arrangements and assistance that are booked for the journey has dropped to 92 per cent (from 93 per cent in 2018-19), while satisfaction with the helpfulness of staff who dealt with the booking has also decreased (from 93 per cent in 2017-18, to 91 per cent in 2018-19 and 90 per cent in 2019-20).

“Make telephone booking easier for ticket booking staff. I am often told that the systems are separate and cumbersome to use by agency staff. TPE, Northern and LNER telephone staff have said this. Local Northern railway station find it near impossible to book assistance so we now book tickets and assistance by telephone.”
16-24, physical disability

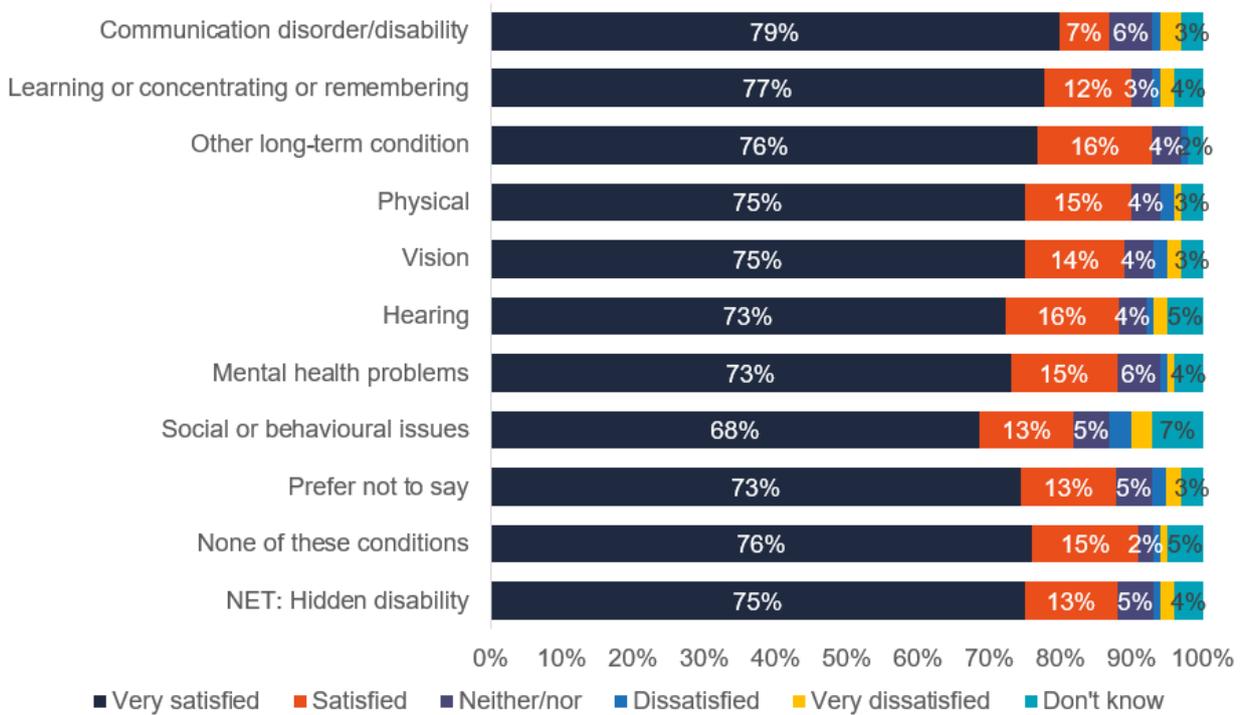
“The booking process for passengers causes me no end of stress and worry in the following key areas: 1. The telephone booking line - I can often be on hold in excess of 45 minutes without a person picking up the telephone. Sunday evenings are worst when the phone is never answered. 2. The online booking system is inconsistent.”
50-64, other long term condition

There are some differences by disability type in terms of overall satisfaction with the booking process: those with social or behavioural issues are significantly less likely to be satisfied compared to the average (82 per cent compared to 92 per cent).



C7. Thinking about the booking process, how satisfied were you with... What score out of 5 would you give where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

As shown in the below chart, passengers with social or behavioural issues are also less likely to be satisfied with the helpfulness of staff when booking assistance (81 per cent compared to an average of 90 per cent).



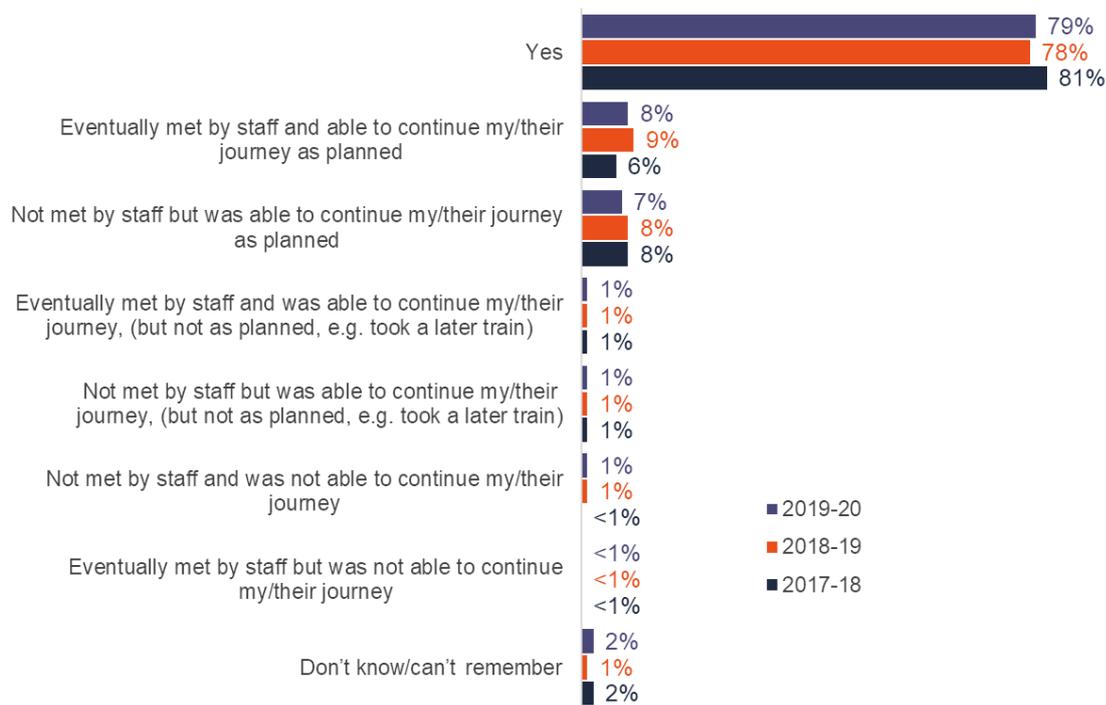
C7. Thinking about the booking process, how satisfied were you with... What score out of 5 would you give where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied?

Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

9. Experience on the day of travel

Met by staff

Nearly eight out of ten passengers (79 per cent) are met by rail staff in what they consider is a reasonable timeframe. Those with social or behavioural issues are less likely to say staff are there within a reasonable timeframe (74 per cent) while those with a hearing impairment or communication disorder are most likely to say they are met in a reasonable timeframe (both at 82 per cent).



*D4. Was a member of staff available to meet you within an acceptable time frame?
Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)*

Out of the types of assistance requested, those asking for help with luggage or assistance to and from connecting services are least likely to say staff are there to help within a reasonable timeframe (both 80 per cent).

Eight per cent of passengers this year say they are eventually met by staff and able to continue their journey as planned.

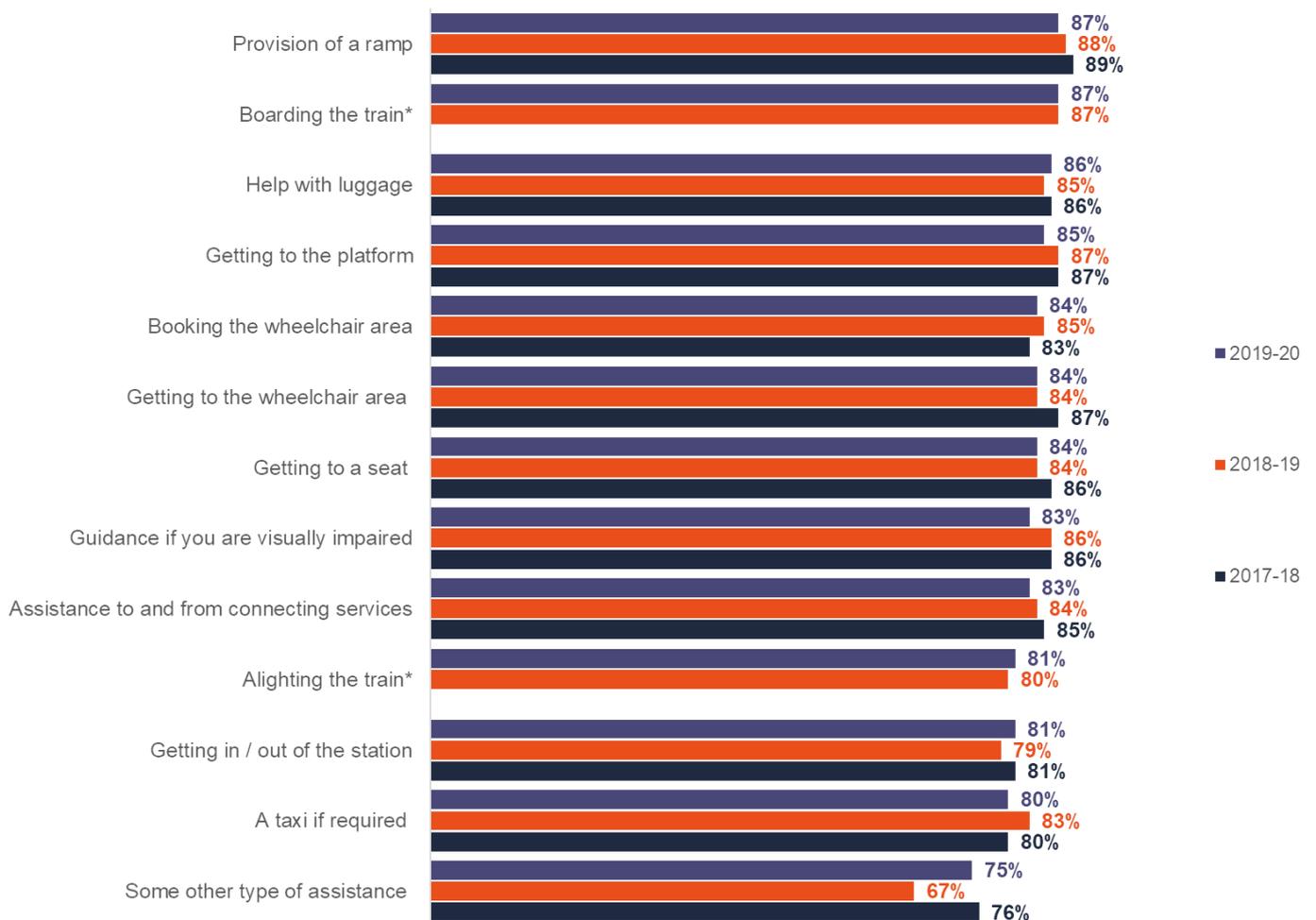
The proportion not being met by staff but nevertheless able to continue their journey as planned has remained consistent (seven per cent). One per cent are not met by staff and as a result are not able to continue their journey.

Assistance received

The vast majority of assistance booked is received; for the assistance most commonly booked, boarding the train, 87 per cent of those who booked this assistance received it. ‘Other types of assistance’ is the only category scoring lower than 80 per cent, with 75 per cent of those booking help receiving this.

There are no significant variations by mode of booking for assistance types received.

There are only small differences in completion rates by day of the week the journey was made, with the exception of assistance to and from connecting services – with those travelling on a weekday more likely to receive assistance (81 per cent) than those travelling on a weekend (77 per cent).



D5. And did you actually receive the following assistance?

Base: All who booked that type of assistance (2017-18: varies between 166 and 2,372; 2018-19: varies between 250 and 2,855; 2019-20: varies between 211 and 2,829)

BREAKING BLUE

“Had to go to ticket office to let them know I have arrived and booked assistance so therefore buy my ticket there.”

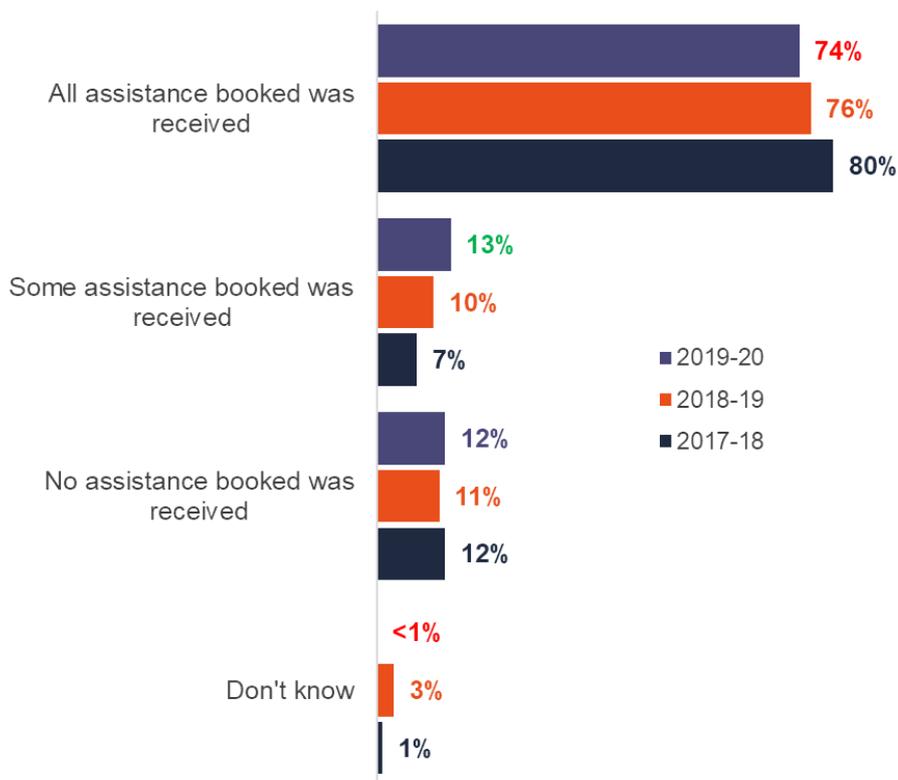
50-64, visual impairment

“I think it is an excellent service, staff seem always to ring ahead at next change or disembarking to say which carriage I am in and say I’m on the way, always most helpful. I would not be able to travel, were it not for the assisted travel.”

75+, other long term-condition

Amount of assistance received

As noted above, many passengers book multiple types of assistance for each journey leg. In total nearly three in four (74 per cent) receive **all** of the assistance they book; this is down from 76 per cent in 2018-19 and 80 per cent in 2017-18.



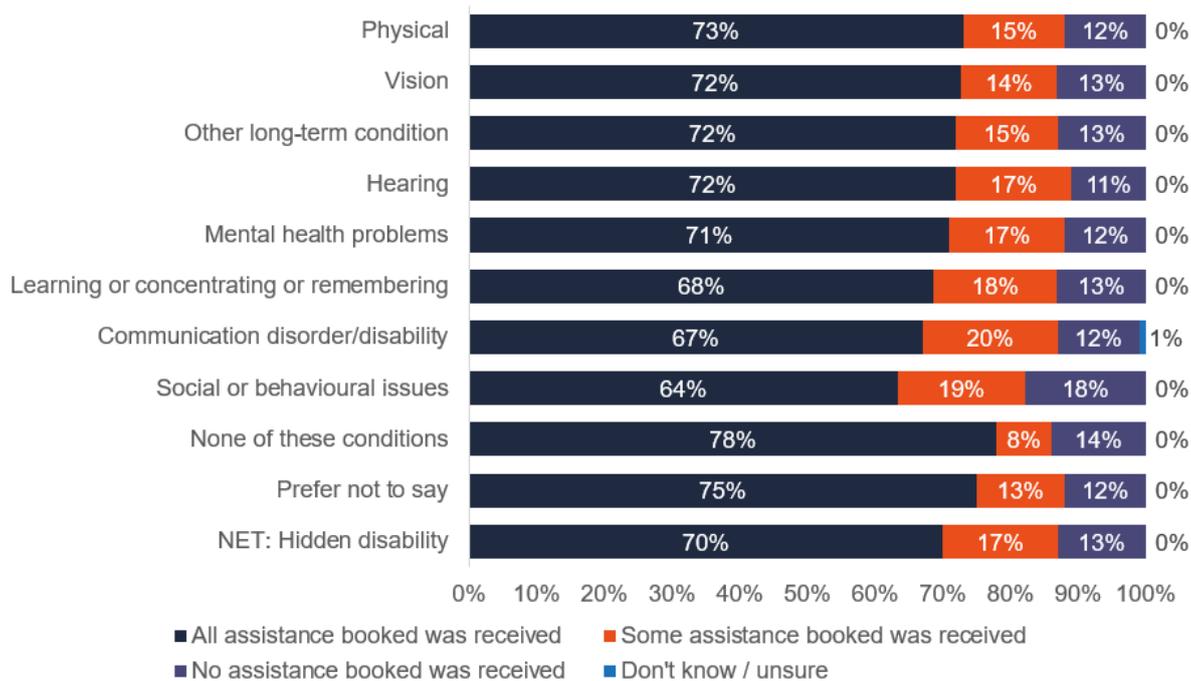
D5. And did you actually receive the following assistance?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

Passengers travelling on weekdays (75 per cent) are more likely to receive all the assistance they booked than those travelling at the weekend (71 per cent). Passengers booking assistance at a

Network Rail Managed Light station (81 per cent) are more likely to receive all assistance than passengers booking assistance at a Managed Light station¹⁰ (76 per cent).

The amount of assistance received varies significantly by train operator: with the worst scores received by Northern (62 per cent of passengers receiving all assistance booked), South Western Railway (65 per cent receiving all assistance) and Transport for Wales (69 per cent receiving all assistance).

Comparing results by disability type or condition, the highest proportion who receive all assistance is passengers with no disability (78 per cent). The remaining differences by disability type for whether the assistance booked is received are small. All assistance received is highest for people with a physical disability (73 per cent), followed by those with visual or hearing impairments (both 72 per cent). Although not significant, a lower proportion of those with hidden conditions such as mental health problems and learning, concentrating or remembering difficulties receive all assistance booked (71 per cent and 68 per cent respectively). Those with social or behavioural issues are the least likely to receive all assistance requested (64 per cent). Again, this indicates a challenge around providing assistance for those with less visible disabilities.



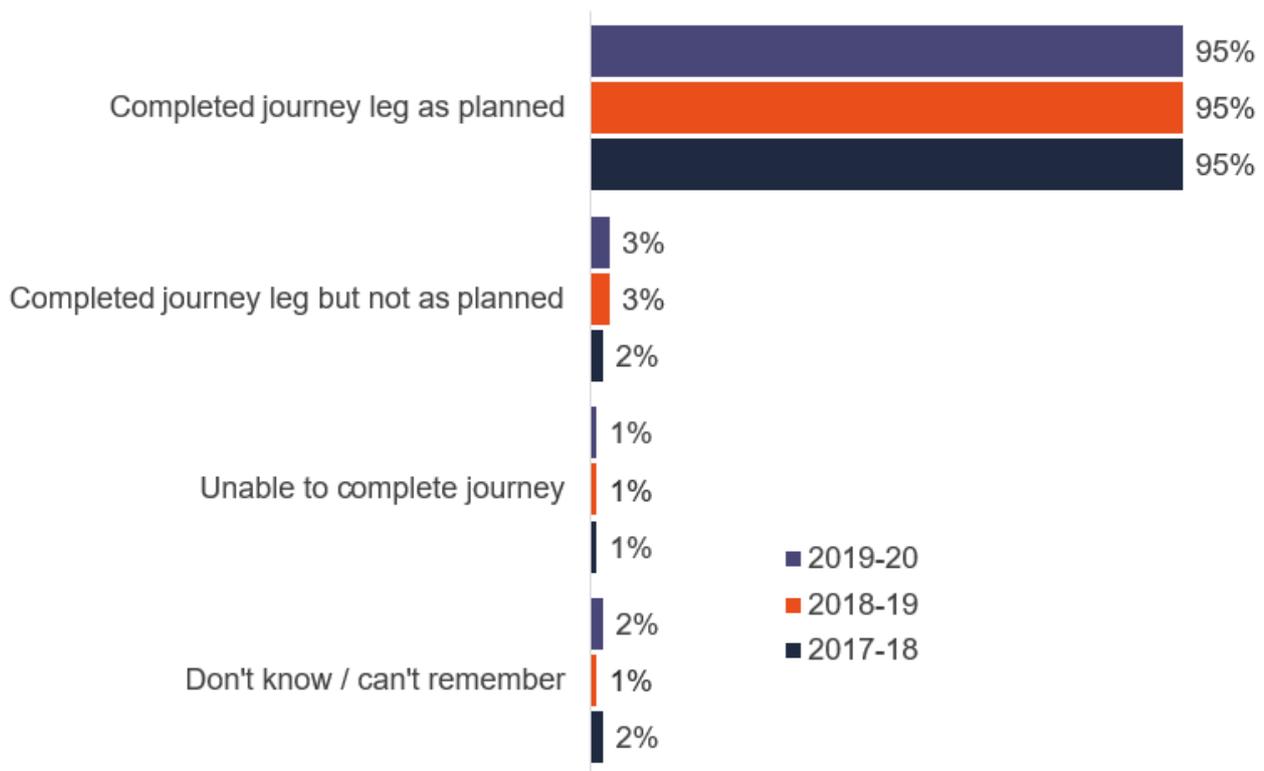
D5. And did you actually receive the following assistance?
 Base: All respondents (2019-20: 4,079)

¹⁰ A Fully Managed Network Rail station means that the assistance is provided by Network Rail staff. At a Managed Light station the assistance is usually provided by train operator staff whose services depart from that station.

Journey leg completion

In addition to asking whether staff met the passenger and if they received their assistance, passengers are also asked if they were able to complete their journey. By combining this with data on whether passengers were met by staff, this allows us to measure the proportion of those using Passenger Assist who completed their journey leg.

As in 2018-19 the vast majority (95 per cent) are able to complete their journey leg as planned and a further smaller proportion are able to continue their journey but not as planned (three per cent). Just one per cent are unable to continue their journey due to a lack of available staff.



D4. Was a member of staff available to meet you within an acceptable time frame?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

Those with social or behavioural issues are least likely to have been able to continue their journey as planned (90 per cent). There are no significant differences by age, whether the passenger is travelling on a weekday or at the weekend, or how the booking was made.

Alternative accessible transport provided

Train and station operators are obligated under the requirements of their ATP to provide Alternative Accessible Transport (AAT) to passengers, usually in the form of an accessible taxi, when a station or train service the passenger wants to use is inaccessible to them. For example, if a passenger is a wheelchair user and their local station has no step-free access to the platform, then AAT should be provided to take the passenger to the nearest or most convenient accessible station to allow them to continue their journey.

For the majority of passengers using AAT, the vehicle arrived on time (81 per cent). This has risen slightly from 79 per cent in 2018-19. Vehicles are thought to be suitable by 93 per cent of users.



D11. Did the vehicle arrive on time? Base: All who used a taxi (2017-18: 300, 2018-19: 447, 2019-20: 401)
 D12. Was the vehicle suitable for you? Base: All who used a taxi (2017-18: 300, 2018-19: 447, 2019-20: 401)

“Sometimes a let down at Euston if train on from Oxenholme is delayed. New taxi arrangement at Euston means you have to walk instead of being taken by a buggy.”
75+, physical disability

“If possible to have passenger assistance to meet taxi with wheelchair this would have helped for return journey.”
65-74, physical disability

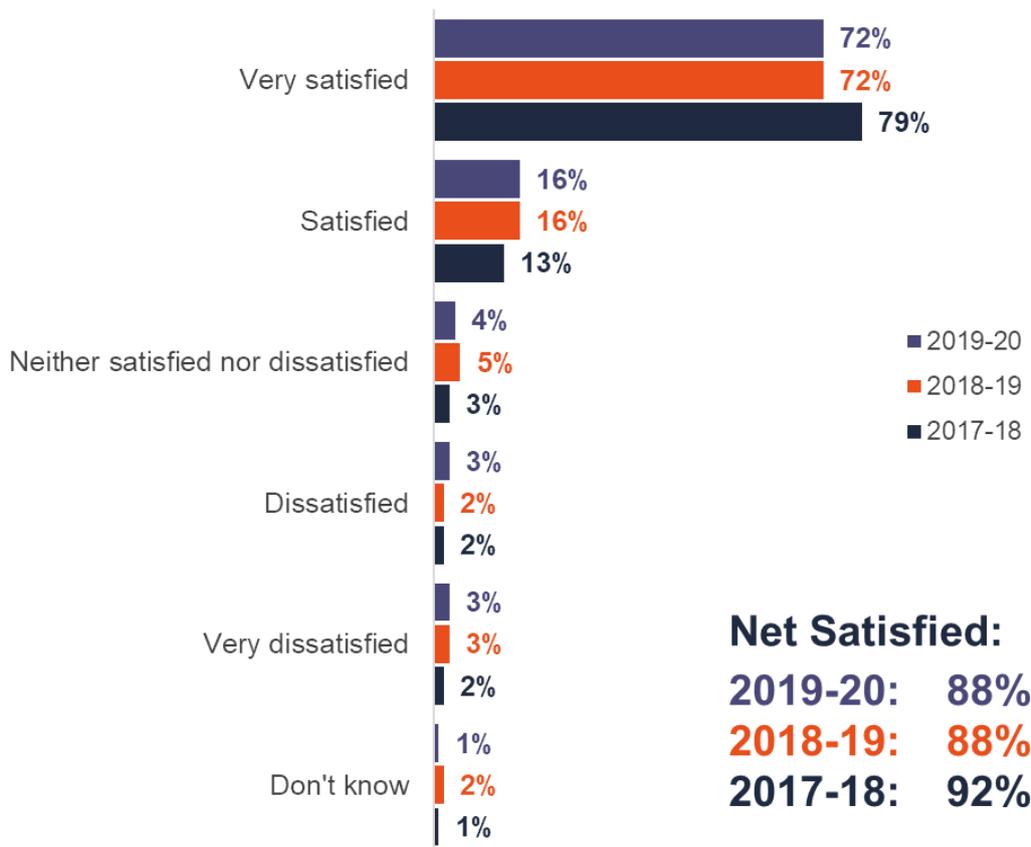
“The parts of my journey from Newark to London Kings Cross and to the taxi rank at Kings Cross were completely satisfactory.”
65-74, other long-term condition

10. Satisfaction with assistance on journey measured

Overall satisfaction with assistance at the station

It is important to note that overall satisfaction with the assistance received on the journey leg measured is not asked of everyone who had booked assistance, but only those who are met by staff (89 per cent). The remaining respondents who are not met by staff are assumed not to have received the assistance they booked and therefore that the assistance had failed, meaning questions about their satisfaction with assistance received are not applicable.

The majority of passengers who receive assistance at the station are satisfied: 88 per cent, the same as in 2018-19.



D7. And how satisfied were you with the overall assistance?
 Base: All respondents met by staff (2017-18: 3,716, 2018-19: 4,402, 2019-20: 3,634)

Those travelling at the weekend (86 per cent) are less likely to express satisfaction with assistance at the station than those travelling on weekdays (89 per cent). There are small differences by mode of booking (web at 90 per cent, telephone at 88 per cent, email at 87 per cent).

There are no significant differences by disability type but those with social or behavioural issues or a communication disorder express the lowest levels of satisfaction with assistance at the station (84 and 85 per cent respectively).

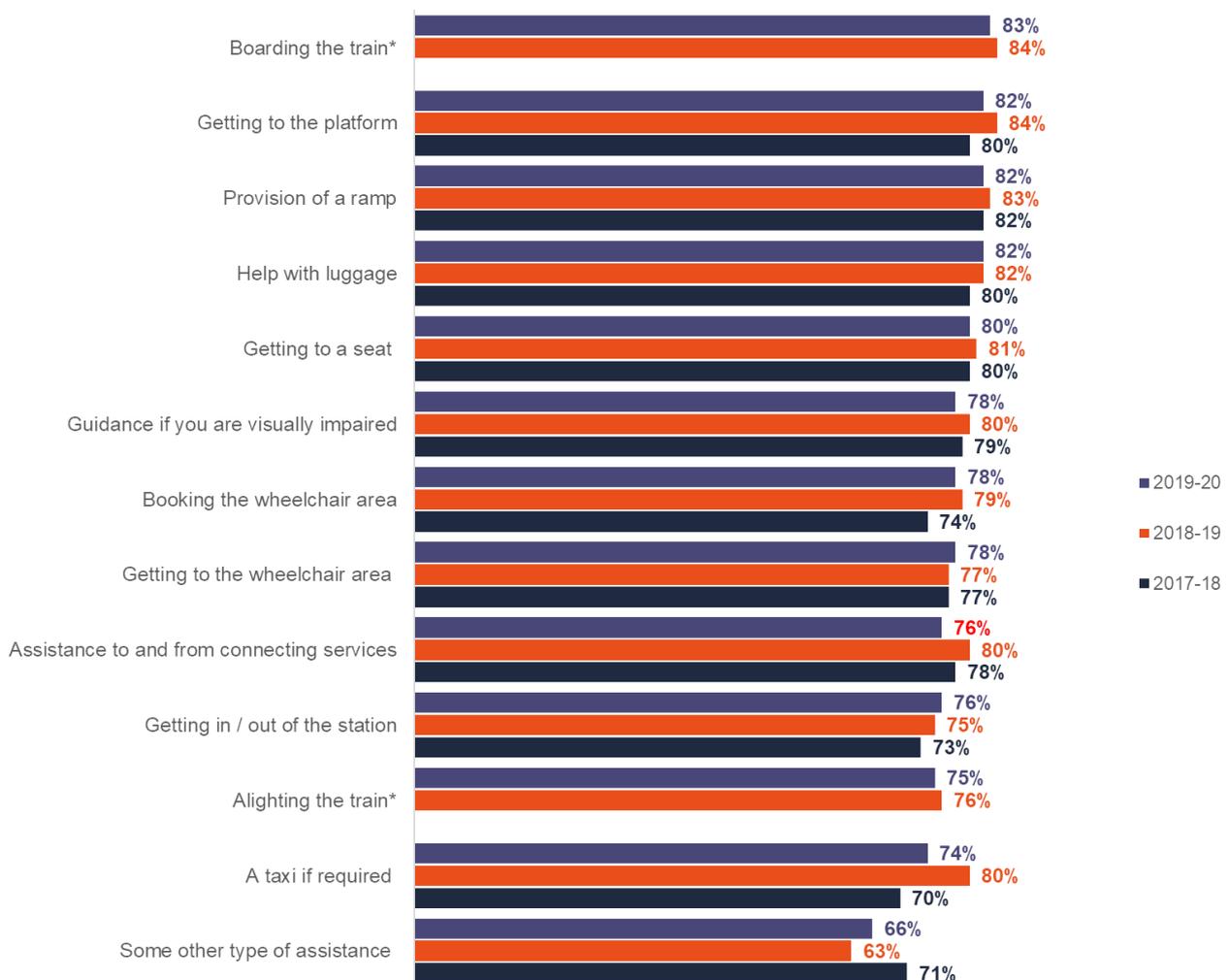
Satisfaction by operator varies, with Northern having the lowest percentage of passengers (79 per cent) expressing satisfaction with assistance at stations, compared to Great Western Railway and TransPennine Express with the joint highest (both 92 per cent).

Younger passengers aged 16-24 are significantly less likely to be satisfied with the assistance received at the station (75 per cent) compared to those aged 65-74 and 75+ (both 90 per cent).

Overall satisfaction with each type of assistance booked

The majority of those who receive each type of assistance are satisfied with it. Satisfaction is highest among those booking assistance to board the train (83 per cent), followed by those booking assistance to get to the platform, provision of a ramp and help with their luggage (all at 82 per cent). For most types of assistance satisfaction has fallen 1-2 per cent relative to last year.

Satisfaction among those booking assistance with getting to and from connecting service has fallen significantly, from 80 per cent in 2018-19 to 76 per cent this year. Although not to a significant degree, satisfaction among those booking a taxi has also fallen considerably, from 80 per cent in 2018-19 to 74 per cent.



D6. And how satisfied were you with the assistance?

Base: All who booked that type of assistance (2017-18: varies between 166 and 2,372; 2018-19: varies between 250 and 2,855; 2019-20: varies between 211 and 2,829)

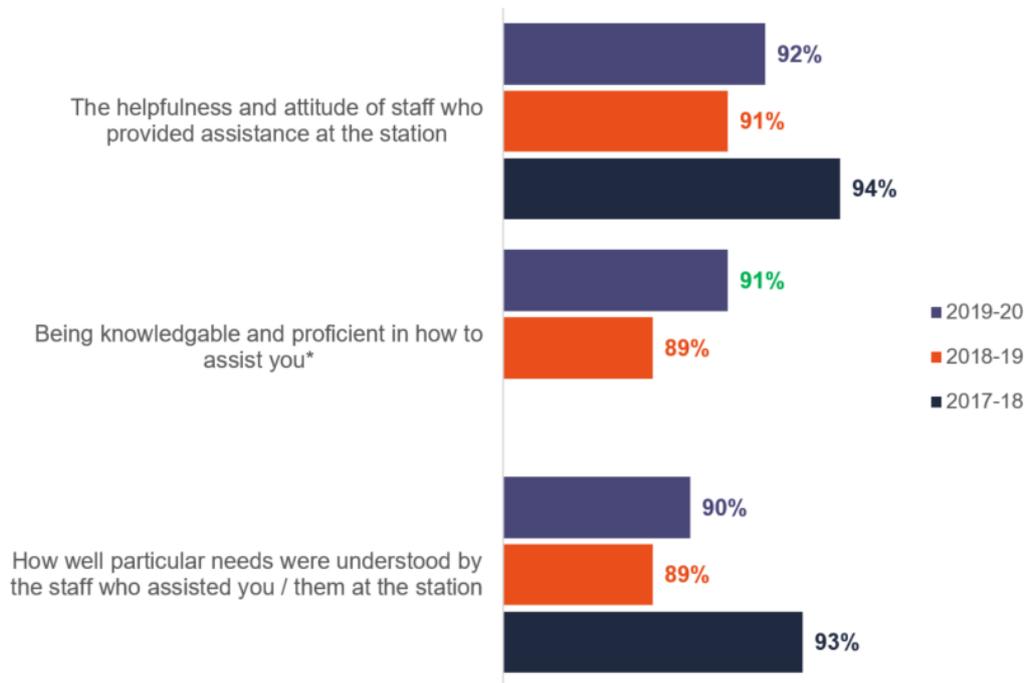
Older passengers are typically more satisfied with the assistance they booked: for example, 97 per cent aged 65-74 and 75+ are satisfied with help boarding the train compared to 88 per cent aged 16-24. They are also more likely to express satisfaction with assistance alighting the train: 95 per cent of those aged 75+ and 97 per cent of those aged 65-74 compared to 79 per cent of those aged 16-24.

“When I got off the train with the help of my son getting out of train by collapsing wheelchair and hobbling off a member of staff explained that ramps could be made available and I was immediately asked if I would like to get a buggy to the taxi rank, and was also told about the pre-booking assisted travel system. I found this very helpful.”

50-64, hearing impairment, physical disability, learning impairment, other long term condition

Satisfaction with staff at the station

Satisfaction with staff is generally very high. The highest scoring staff-related measure is satisfaction with the helpfulness and attitude of staff providing assistance at the station with over nine in ten satisfied (92 per cent), up one point from last year. The second highest scoring measure is satisfaction with the knowledge and proficiency of staff in providing assistance, which has risen significantly, from 89 per cent in 2018-19 to 91 per cent in 2019-20.



*Statement wording changed for 2018-19 so not comparable with 2017-18

D17. Thinking about the journey assistance at <INSERT STATION>, how satisfied were you with...
 Base: All respondents met by staff (2017-18: 3,716, 2018-19: 4,402, 2019-20: 3,634)

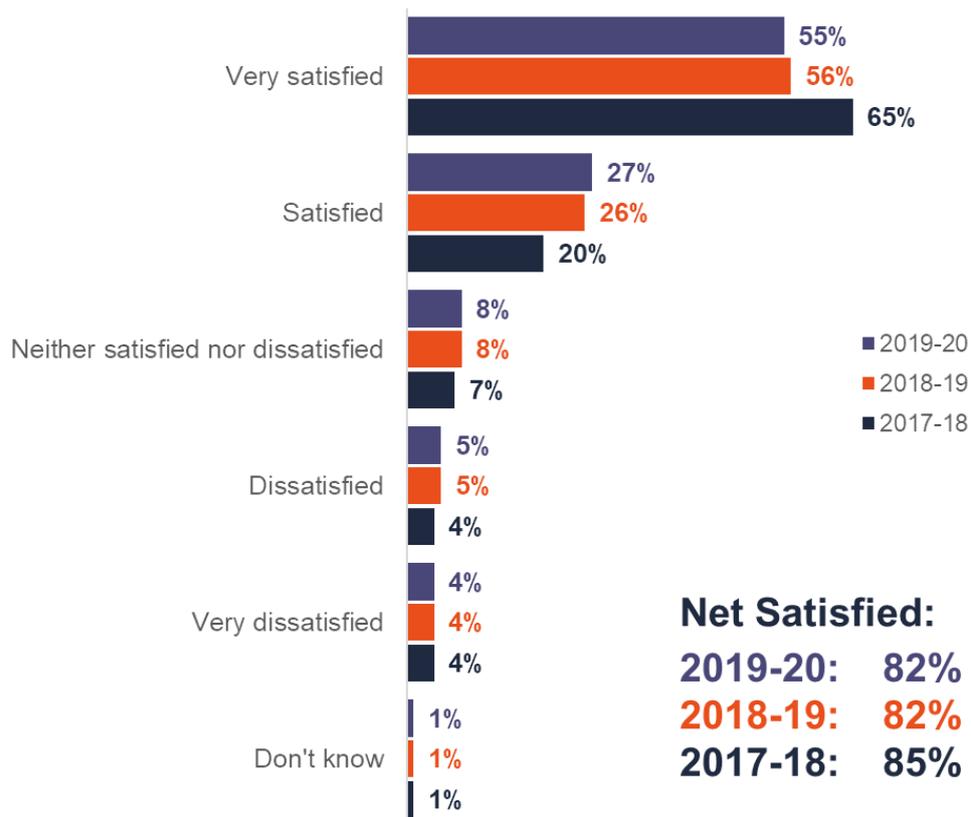
“Again I would be warning anyone using this to trial it out before with a companion, as some staff are really good, but others aren’t sadly and if you’re in a wheelchair, you don’t have the option of getting on or off the train without help.”
50-64, physical disability, other long term condition

Passengers with social or behavioural issues are least satisfied with how well staff assisting them understand their particular needs (79 per cent) and also with how knowledgeable and proficient staff are in how to assist them (83 per cent). This suggests that further training is required in this area.

11. Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist, staff and station facilities

Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist

Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist based on all past usage is at 82 per cent this year, the same as in 2018-19. The breakdown is also similar to last year, with the proportion of those who are overall ‘very satisfied’ at 55 per cent, and the proportion who consider themselves ‘satisfied’ at 27 per cent. The proportion saying they are ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with the service has also remained stable at nine per cent this year.

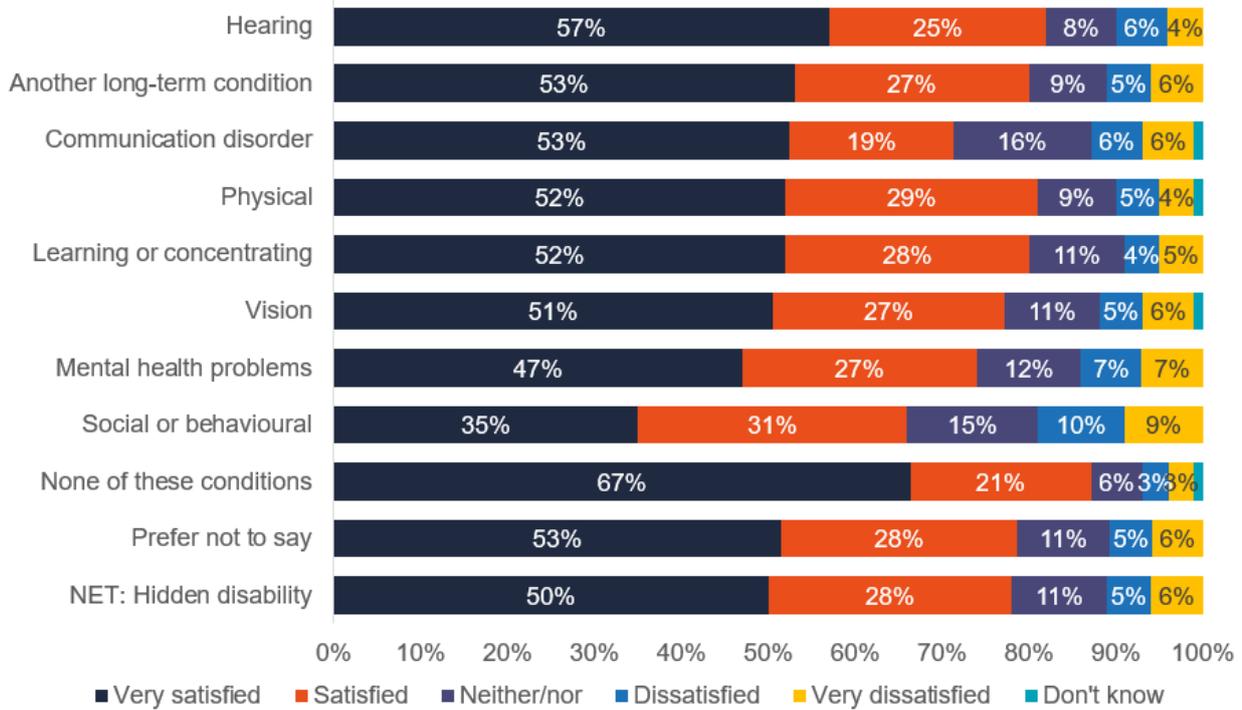


E1. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied, how satisfied are you with Passenger Assist?
 Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

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Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist ranges from 66 per cent among those with social or behavioural issues to 88 per cent of those with no disabilities.

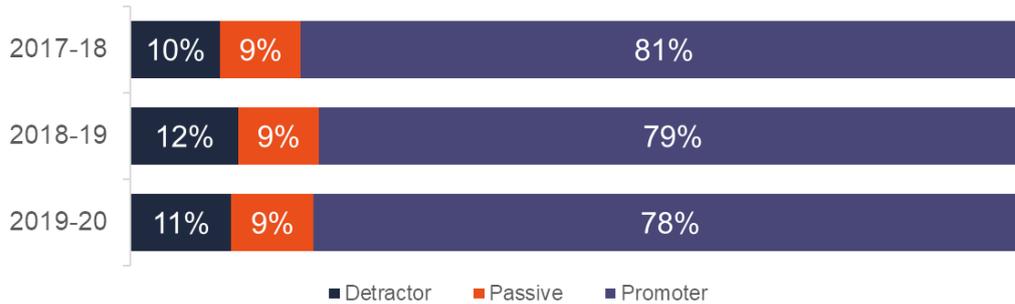
Those with social or behavioural issues are also the most likely to be dissatisfied with Passenger Assist (19 per cent), followed by those with mental health problems and a communication disability (14 per cent and 11 per cent respectively).



E1. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied, how satisfied are you with Passenger Assist?
 Base: All respondents (2019-20: 4,079)

Likelihood to recommend Passenger Assist

The Net Promotor Score (NPS) is a customer loyalty score, ranging from -100 to 100, calculated by asking passengers one question: “On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely would you be to recommend Passenger Assist to a friend or family member who may require such a service?” The NPS for Passenger Assist is at 67 this year, up from 66 in 2018-19, with a slight fall in both promoters and detractors. Passengers with social or behavioural issues are least likely to say they would recommend Passenger Assist (65 per cent) followed by those with mental health problems (71 per cent).



Net Promotor Score:

2019-20: 67%

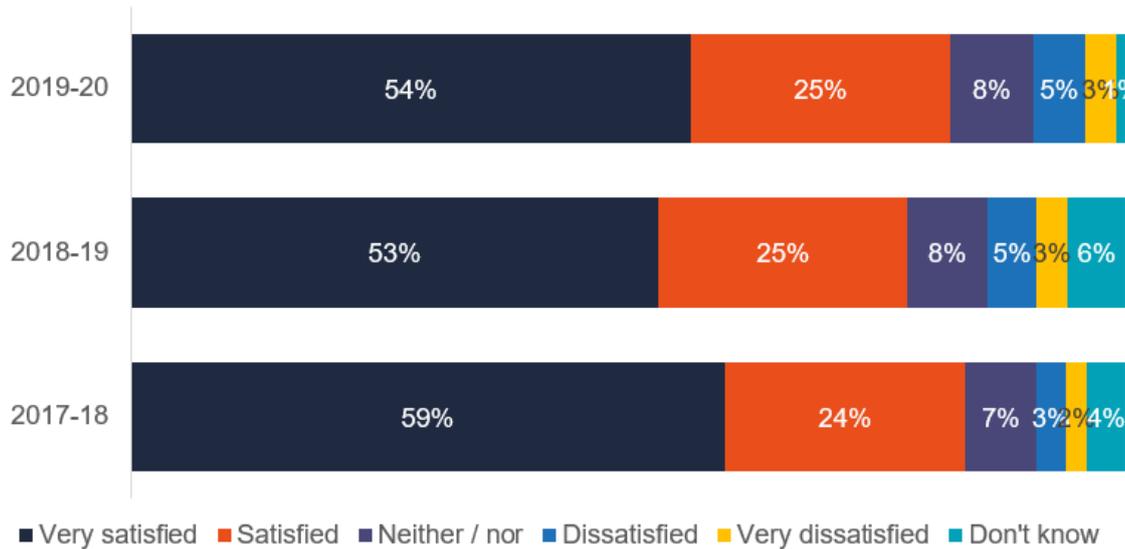
2018-19: 66%

2017-18: 71%

E4. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is very unlikely and 10 very likely, how likely would you be to recommend Passenger Assist to a friend/ family member who may require such a service? Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,062)

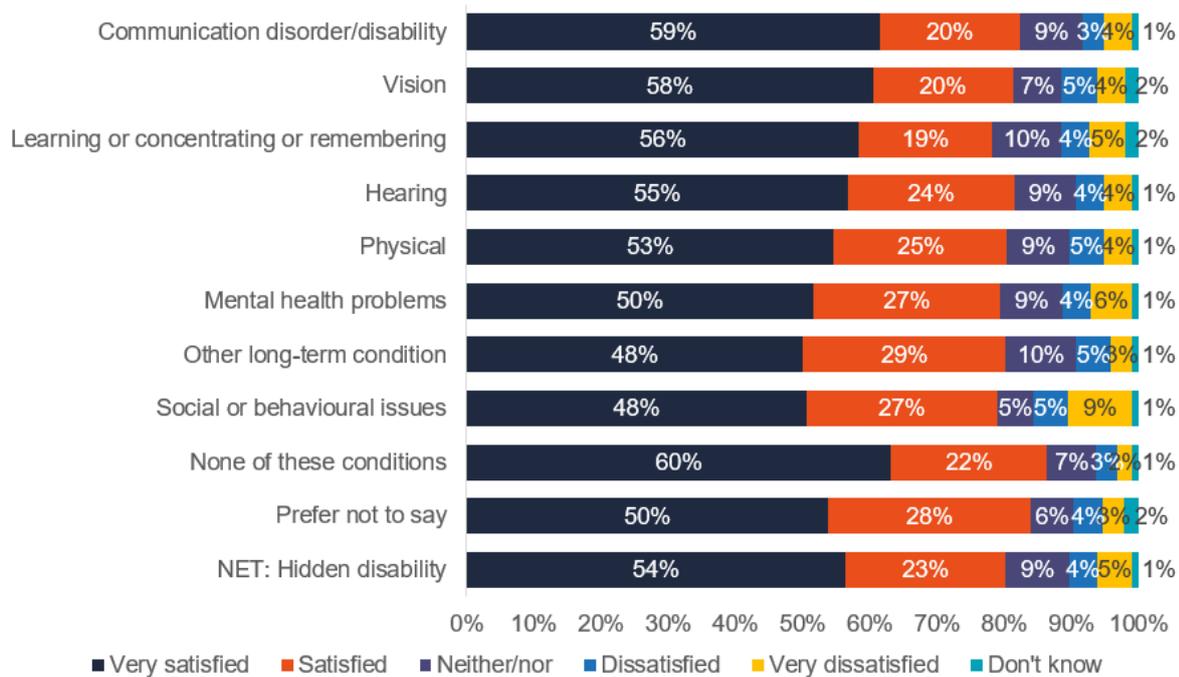
Satisfaction with station facilities

Over three in four are satisfied (very satisfied or satisfied) with station facilities being suitable for their needs (79 per cent), up slightly from 78 per cent in 2018-19.



D19. Thinking about your experience at <INSERT STATION> how satisfied were you in terms of the following... Base: All respondents (2017-18: 4,210, 2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

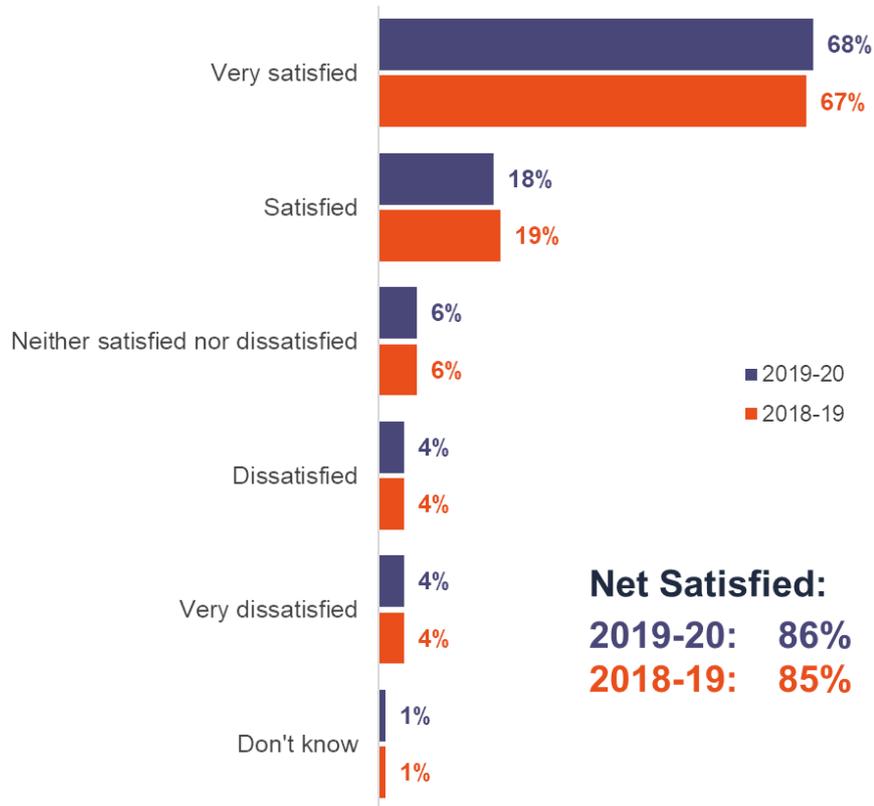
There are only small differences in satisfaction by disability type, with satisfaction ranging from 82 per cent for those with no disability to 75 per cent for those with learning or concentrating difficulties.



D19. Thinking about your experience at <INSERT STATION> how satisfied were you in terms of the following...? Base: All respondents (2019-20: 4,079)

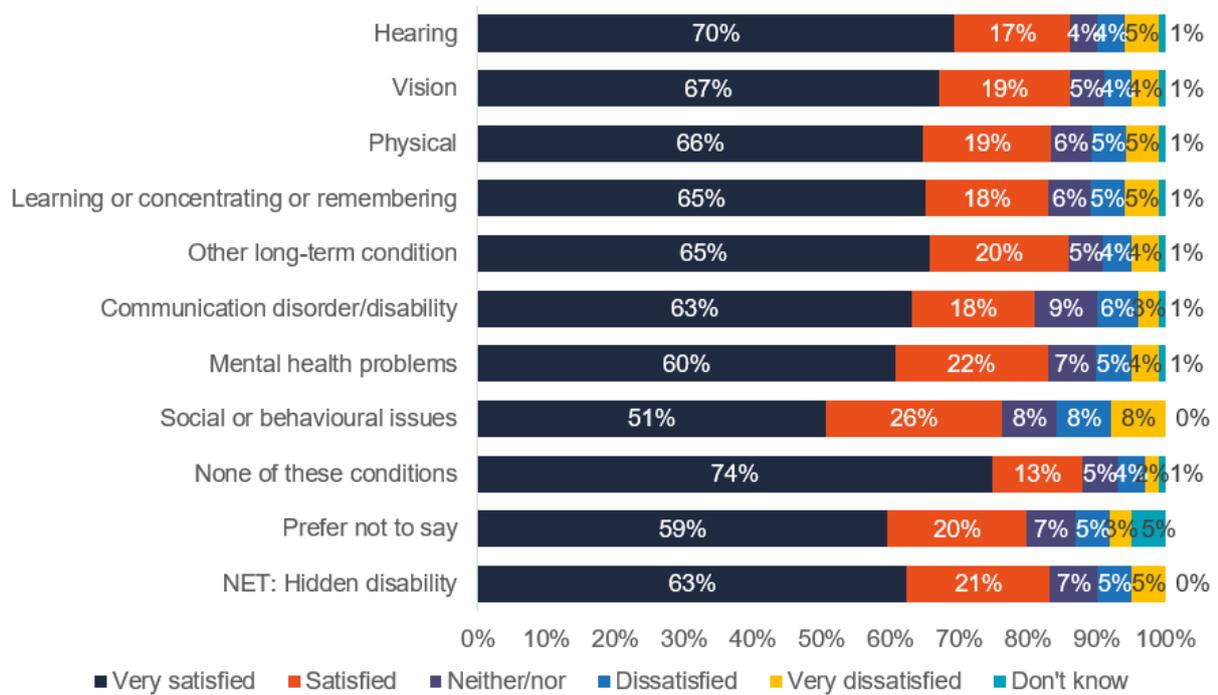
Satisfaction with the whole process – booking and assistance

The majority (86 per cent) are satisfied with the overall process from their initial booking to receiving assistance at the station, with a very similar spread of responses to 2018-19.



QD21. Overall how satisfied are you with the whole process from booking the assistance to the assistance received at <INSERT STATION> on < INSERT DATE>? Base: All respondents (2018-19: 4,968, 2019-20: 4,079)

Passengers with a social or behavioural problem are least likely to express satisfaction with the whole process (77 per cent) followed by those with a communication disorder (80 per cent). Those who are most satisfied are those with a hearing disability (87 per cent). Please note that this question was introduced in 2018-19.



QD21. Overall how satisfied are you with the whole process from booking the assistance to the assistance received at <INSERT STATION> on < INSERT DATE>? Base: All respondents (2019-20: 4,079)

12. Conclusions and recommended improvements to Passenger Assist

Conclusions

Passenger Assist plays a crucial role in making rail travel accessible, with three in five stating they would not have been able to travel without it. Passengers book a range of different assistance types, and are increasingly booking more assists per journey leg. The most commonly booked assistance types are help boarding the train, help with luggage and alighting the train.

The booking process on the whole works well, with the average time spent booking on the telephone slightly longer this year. Across all booking modes, more passengers this year received confirmation of their booking and the accuracy of booking confirmations has remained steady. Passengers find information on **where** to meet staff less clear than **when** to meet staff, although there has been an improvement in the ease of understanding instructions about where to meet staff.

Satisfaction with the overall booking process remains high, with approximately nine in ten passengers satisfied overall (seven in ten very satisfied). There is, however, still a concern that only two in three passengers are confident that all elements of the assistance they have booked will be delivered on the day of travel. Anecdotal evidence suggests this could be due to previous bad experiences of assistance failures which can undermine users' confidence when making future bookings. Confidence in the booking arrangements, and a possible nervousness or uncertainty about what to expect for each leg of the journey can affect the quality of passengers' journeys, regardless of whether the assistance is eventually received.

Almost eight in ten passengers are met by staff at the station within what they consider an acceptable time frame. For those met by staff either late or not at all, only a very small proportion are unable to complete their journey.

The proportion of passengers receiving all of the assistance they booked has decreased further this year to just under three quarters. Considering the individual types of booked assistance, the majority of those booking each type of assistance receive it (all types of assistance except getting in and out of the station and 'other type of assistance' are received by at least eight in ten of those booking).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the apparent inconsistency between these significant failure rates (between one in ten and one in five) and the very small proportion of passengers not completing their journey is due to being helped onto a later train by staff members, the passengers managing themselves or fellow passengers assisting them.

The importance of Passenger Assist to the passenger and the difference it makes in terms of enabling them to make a journey, means there are huge implications when Passenger Assist does not work well. Firstly, passengers who have bad experiences when using Passenger Assist may choose not to travel by train in future if the service has not met their needs or expectations, or in extreme cases not allowed them to complete their journey as planned, or indeed at all. A positive experience for Passenger Assist service users is crucial in building their trust and confidence in the service.

Secondly, there is an implication for train companies providing assistance if Passenger Assist does not deliver the outcomes expected. There is the potential for lost revenue if passengers either choose not to travel or choose to avoid travelling with train companies who do not provide assistance to a sufficient standard. The potential for lost revenue is heightened because the majority of passengers using Passenger Assist are travelling for leisure purposes and thus many journeys could be optional.

In more serious cases where Passenger Assist users receive a particularly poor level of service, such as being put on the wrong train or missing their stop because of an assistance failure, then there can also be significant reputational repercussions for the company responsible.

Overall, it is clear that the significance and importance of Passenger Assist working well for both passengers and the industry means it must be closely monitored, to ensure that it is delivering the level of service and outcomes intended.

“Better standardisation across all stations as I know from experience that not all assistance is as good as I have had at London Euston. It makes me feel vulnerable when travelling alone and puts me off some journeys. Also being able to travel spontaneously would be terrific and not always having to book way in advance.”

65-74, physical disability, mental health problems, other long term condition

When assistance is received, passengers are generally satisfied with the quality provided. Levels of satisfaction are high across all sub-groups, although there is some evidence of lower satisfaction amongst those with hidden conditions.

Satisfaction with rail staff providing assistance is relatively high and has increased for staff being knowledgeable and proficient in how to assist the passenger. The vast majority are satisfied with the helpfulness and attitude of staff who provided assistance at the station and their understanding of their needs. Again, passengers with hidden conditions are less likely to express satisfaction with staff understanding their particular needs.

Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist based on all past usage remains consistent with last year, with over four in five satisfied. Satisfaction with the whole process for the journey leg passengers were interviewed about in detail is higher, with two in three very satisfied with the end-to-end experience of the booking process through to the assistance received at the station.

Satisfaction with the assistance received at the station on the journey measured has remained consistent with 2018-19, with around seven in eight very satisfied.

Whilst the majority of passengers are satisfied with station facilities, the proportion who are very satisfied is just over half, which suggests this could be an area for improvement.

Suggestion for improvements

Staff training in understanding different passenger needs

As in previous years, some passenger types (especially those with hidden conditions such as learning or concentrating difficulties, mental health problems and communication disorders) give lower satisfaction scores, suggesting that staff both during the booking process and when assisting passengers do not have enough knowledge to provide adequate help.

“Some staff at some stations are absolutely not suited for journey assist and seem to think they are really putting themselves out for you and make me feel really guilty just for asking for a ramp. Whereas some staff could not be nicer...I think careful selection and training of staff is the most important as it makes the difference between a journey ending in smiles or tears.”

35-49, physical disability, other long term condition

“Sometimes staff have not taken on board what I tell them, the information on the information sheet or the nature / actuality of being disabled. More staff training on what M.E. / fibromyalgia is and non-visible disabilities and illnesses and the differences between disabilities and illnesses would be extremely worthwhile for both your customers and your staff because when your staff don't know what people are having difficulty with they cannot understand, be sympathetic and offer the right help.

50-64, physical disability, learning or concentrating, or remembering impairment, mental health problems, other long term condition

In particular, passengers suggest deepening and widening staff training to give them a better understanding of the complexity of different disabilities, and appreciation that passengers often need extra time and assurance that they are going to make their connection.

Communication when there is disruption

A repeated issue passengers report about Passenger Assist is that when there is disruption they often don't receive the assistance they booked. Passengers who have booked assistance can find this stressful, regardless of their specific circumstances or journey. Staff need to ensure that there is a more joined-up process when there is disruption and that there is communication so that assistance is still available to help the passenger even at a different time to that originally requested. Staff should also provide reassurance to the passenger once they are on the train that they will be met at the next station and receive the assistance they require.

"There is often the problem of communications from one station to another. There have been occasions that due to disruptions, I may have to take another train, be it earlier or later. The end station does not meet me to help me off the train, with luggage etc. and no assistance to leave the station."

50-64, physical disability, learning or concentrating, or remembering impairment, mental health problems

"Passenger Assist normally works very well. If there is any form of disruption to the train timetable Passenger Assist becomes non-existent and staff just want you out of the station to become someone else's problem."

65-74, physical disability

Reassurance that alighting assistance will be there

It can be a particularly stressful time for a passenger when approaching an alighting station if they are unsure whether assistance will be waiting for them. Completion rates for assistance alighting the train and assistance to and from connecting services is lower than for the majority of the other types of assistance. Passengers want reassurance that someone will meet them when they arrive and help them alight the train. This could be in the form of a member of staff clearly identifiable waiting on the platform or even a text message or message via an app ahead of arrival to confirm that assistance is waiting.

“Confirm by text that assistance is arranged at station of arrival to take stress out of the journey wondering if there will be someone there and save waiting.”

65-74, visual impairment

“Was slightly concerned after theatre outing that we may be late for return journey, and more reassurance that this would be coped with would have been good. Also was worried what I would have done if on arrival back in Staplehurst late evening what I would have done if lift wasn't operating as there is no staff at this time of night. Although everything was fine it might be nice to know what to do in such circumstances.”

50-64, physical disability

“Reassurance that the train will not leave until you have alighted. On the occasions when no-one was there to meet us with a ramp, my mother has been very upset and panicked because she thought she would be left on the train. Luckily, she is able to get out of her wheelchair to step down with my help, but that makes it very stressful for her and for me trying to help her and get the chair off the train as well.”

75+, physical disability

Easily identifiable staff

Passengers suggest that Passenger Assist staff at the station are very difficult to identify which can cause unnecessary stress. Staff could wear a specific Passenger Assist uniform, a particular jacket, badge or lanyard to help passengers identify who they need to speak to. Clearer signage in stations for meeting points would also improve the assistance process.

"It would be helpful if assistance staff could wear some sort of identifying clothing so making it easy to find them at the station before boarding." 65-74, no disabilities mentioned

"Clear, visible, high viz jackets to easily identify assistance staff, particularly when passenger is arriving at a station to start their journey. I am anxious when I am waiting to board a train that I can find the staff who will be providing the assistance in plenty of time." 65-74, no disabilities mentioned

"Clearer indication of passenger assist points on station maps and at stations. Ensuring that all staff at general information desk at stations know where and how a passenger can to obtain assistance." 75+, physical disability

Recommended actions for ORR and the rail industry

In 2017-18, we recommended that a metric measuring the percentage of all booked assists successfully delivered should be used to monitor performance. In 2018-19 this was implemented and the data is published regularly on ORR's website.¹¹

Beyond measures monitoring performance, there are improvements to the service which would enhance passengers' experience. Staff training continues to need to be deepened and broadened, and communications skills improved; service users want staff to understand better the complexity of disabilities and appreciate the challenges each person faces. Satisfaction is lowest on many measures for passengers with hidden disabilities, so there should be a particular focus on training staff on understanding how to best assist people who have hidden disabilities. Passengers mentioned the inconsistency in service from staff and want better consideration for their needs. They also mentioned better communication throughout the journey, in terms of reassurance to them as a passenger and passing on information between stations.

Station facilities continue to be considerably less satisfactory than other aspects of the journey. Passengers ultimately want to be less dependent on assistance and so more accessible stations and trains will enable that in the longer term.

Additional qualitative research among non-users of Passenger Assist would enable a greater understanding of awareness and knowledge of the service and any reservations in using it. In particular, there is scope to understand the reasons why fewer men than women use Passenger Assist.

¹¹ORR data portal: https://orr.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/41436/measuring-up-annual-rail-consumer-report-july-2019-findings-by-train-company.pdf

Appendix 1 – Margins of error crib sheet

SFO	No. of interviews	Answer = 50%	Answer = 70%	Answer = 90%
Network Rail	1020	+/-3.1%	+/-2.8%	+/-1.8%
Avanti West Coast	610	+/-4.0%	+/-3.6%	+/-2.4%
London North Eastern Railway	588	+/-4.0%	+/-3.7%	+/-2.4%
Great Western Railway	364	+/-5.1%	+/-4.7%	+/-3.1%
ScotRail	229	+/-6.5%	+/-5.9%	+/-3.9%
Northern	191	+/-7.1%	+/-6.5%	+/-4.3%
West Midlands Trains	189	+/-7.1%	+/-6.5%	+/-4.3%
Transport for Wales	166	+/-7.6%	+/-7.0%	+/-4.6%
Greater Anglia	136	+/-8.4%	+/-7.7%	+/-5.0%
TransPennine Express	136	+/-8.4%	+/-7.7%	+/-5.0%
South Western Railway	125	+/-8.8%	+/-8.0%	+/-5.3%
East Midlands Railway	103	+/-9.7%	+/-8.9%	+/-5.8%
Govia Thameslink Railway	89	+/-10.4%	+/-9.5%	+/-6.2%
Southeastern	70	+/-11.7%	+/-10.7%	+/-7.0%
Other SFOs	63	-	-	-
TOTAL	4,079	+/-1.5%	+/-1.4%	+/-0.9%

Appendix 2 – Key metrics by SFO and disability type

Satisfaction and assistance received by SFO (proportion satisfied or very satisfied)

SFO	All assistance received (D5)			Satisfaction with assistance at station (D7)		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Avanti West Coast	84%	78%	74%	93%	91%	88%
East Midlands Railway	73%	78%	71%	90%	84%	88%
Govia Thameslink Railway*	79%	70%	73%	93%	83%	82%
Great Western Railway	81%	76%	74%	93%	91%	92%
Greater Anglia	76%	75%	74%	89%	87%	88%
London North Eastern Railway	87%	79%	77%	96%	91%	91%
Network Rail	82%	76%	78%	92%	89%	89%
Northern	73%	64%	62%	85%	76%	79%
ScotRail	81%	76%	79%	96%	84%	89%
South Western Railway	76%	69%	65%	91%	87%	86%
Southeastern*	76%	75%	71%	88%	82%	87%
Transport for Wales	73%	69%	69%	87%	83%	85%
TransPennine Express	83%	79%	76%	93%	90%	92%
West Midlands Trains	77%	79%	70%	93%	90%	85%
TOTAL	80%	76%	74%	92%	88%	88%

*GTR and Southeastern have low base sizes (less than 100)

At station metrics by SFO (proportion satisfied or very satisfied)

SFO	Staff helpfulness (D17)			Station facilities (D19)		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Avanti West Coast	94%	93%	92%	88%	81%	83%
East Midlands Railway	90%	88%	89%	81%	77%	74%
Govia Thameslink Railway*	90%	90%	86%	71%	75%	67%
Great Western Railway	95%	89%	93%	85%	80%	84%
Greater Anglia	90%	93%	92%	83%	79%	76%
London North East Railway	96%	93%	95%	88%	83%	84%
Network Rail	95%	92%	93%	84%	79%	80%
Northern	87%	80%	87%	80%	65%	69%
ScotRail	96%	93%	93%	85%	79%	80%
South Western Railway	93%	90%	92%	81%	73%	73%
Southeastern*	88%	86%	90%	76%	77%	74%
Transport for Wales	89%	86%	93%	79%	77%	72%
TransPennine Express	95%	89%	94%	88%	79%	85%
West Midlands Trains	91%	92%	88%	82%	73%	76%
TOTAL	94%	91%	92%	84%	78%	79%

*GTR and Southeastern have low base sizes (less than 100)

BREAKING BLUE

Key metrics by disability type

Disability type	Satisfaction with booking (C7)			All assistance received (D5)			Satisfaction with assistance at station (D7)			Overall satisfaction (E1)		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Vision (blindness or visual impairment)	91%	91%	90%	79%	77%	72%	91%	87%	89%	81%	79%	78%
Hearing (deafness or hard of hearing)	95%	92%	91%	79%	73%	72%	92%	89%	90%	86%	83%	82%
Physical (wheelchair user, mobility issues, amputee, dwarfism)	91%	91%	91%	80%	75%	73%	92%	88%	87%	84%	80%	81%
Learning or concentrating or remembering	88%	88%	89%	75%	71%	68%	90%	87%	86%	82%	74%	80%
Mental health problems	87%	86%	88%	73%	71%	71%	90%	85%	85%	78%	73%	74%
Social or behavioural issues*	81%	84%	82%	69%	72%	64%	83%	84%	84%	76%	64%	66%
Another long-term health condition	91%	91%	93%	80%	74%	72%	93%	86%	89%	85%	79%	81%
Communication disorder/disability	-	88%	86%	-	76%	67%	-	88%	85%	-	74%	72%
None of these conditions	95%	94%	94%	82%	76%	78%	95%	89%	89%	89%	88%	88%
Prefer not to say	94%	91%	86%	78%	75%	75%	94%	87%	89%	87%	82%	77%
Hidden Disabilities (NET)	88%	88%	89%	75%	72%	70%	90%	87%	87%	81%	74%	78%

BREAKING BLUE

TOTAL	92%	92%	92%	80%	76%	74%	92%	88%	88%	85%	82%	82%
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*Passengers with social and behavioural issues has a low base size (less than 100)

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is _____ from Teamsearch. We are working on behalf of Breaking Blue, a professional research company. Breaking Blue are working with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). ORR is the independent regulator of the railways, this means they check services are being provided to passengers to sufficient standards.

We understand that you recently booked assisted travel. [Pipe booking agent] and other train companies are working with the ORR to improve the way the assisted travel service works for passengers. The ORR has commissioned us to conduct research to find out how satisfied you were with your assistance on [DATE] and to gather your feedback on how the assisted travel service could be improved. For every survey completed we will donate £1 to charity...this will mean a total donation of £2,300 should everyone take part!

Please be assured that the survey is conducted under the terms of the MRS (ESOMAR) Code of Conduct. [Pipe booking agent] have advised you have given permission for your contact details to be passed on to us for research purposes only. We guarantee that your answers will be kept completely confidential.

Due to the nature of the survey topic, please be aware that we will be asking a question about your health. You don't have to answer this question if you would prefer not to. Your personal data will not be linked with your answer to this question when passed on to the ORR. We will also ask for your contact details, and if you give us these, they will only be used for back-checking (making sure our interviewers are doing a good job) and then deleted.

Our privacy notice explains your rights in more detail, including your right to change your mind if you do not want us to use your information. Please let me know if you would like the link emailed to you (<https://www.breakingblueresearch.com/privacy-policy/> and <insert link to Teamsearch's privacy policy>)

Consent to all of the above must be recorded electronically (or on paper and then scanned) and retained as long as personal data is kept.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Permission to record must be obtained. Respondent must be told who will have access to the recording, and what it will be used for.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Before we continue – can I just confirm that you are over 16?

YES, 16 OR OVER – CONTINUE; NO, UNDER 16 – THANK AND CLOSE

And can you please confirm that you booked assisted travel recently?

YES, BOOKED ASSISTED TRAVEL – CONTINUE; NO, NOT BOOKED – THANK AND CLOSE

Would you have some time now to answer some questions? The interview will take approximately 15 minutes.

IF YES: Thank you very much for your valuable time. We will refer to the assisted travel service as Passenger Assist throughout the questionnaire.

IF WOULD LIKE MORE DETAIL: The MRS set out professional standards that all research practitioners must prove they work to. If you would like to contact MRS with any questions you can do so on 0800 975 9596.

IF NO: Is there a better time to call you back?

IF YES: INTERVIEWER ARRANGE TIME

IF NO: You can complete the interview online within the next week, and the link is: INSERT WEBLINK

Section A: Travel Habits

We would like to start by gathering some background information on your train travel.

ASK ALL

A1 Have you used Passenger Assist, either on your own or as a companion accompanying someone requiring the service?

SINGLE CODE

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Yes (myself) | CONTINUE AS CUSTOMER |
| 2. Yes (companion) | CONTINUE AS COMPANION |
| 3. No | THANK AND CLOSE |
| 4. Don't know | THANK AND CLOSE |

ASK IF A1 = 2 (COMPANION)

A2 What is your relationship to the person you were travelling with? They are my...

SINGLE CODE

1. Wife
2. Husband
3. Partner
4. Son (including step-son and son-in-law)
5. Daughter (including step-daughter and daughter-in-law)
6. Mother (including step-mother and mother-in-law)
7. Father (including step-father and father-in-law)
8. Brother (including step-brother and brother-in-law)
9. Sister (including step-sister and sister-in-law)
10. Grandparent
11. Grandchild
12. Other relative
13. Friend
14. Neighbour
15. Colleague
16. Other (Please specify)

ASK ALL

A2b How did you find out about Passenger Assist?

MULTI CODE

1. Called National Rail Enquiries/a train company
2. Looked online
3. Told by train/station staff
4. Told by a family member or friend
5. Saw an advert
6. Had used the service before
7. Other (Please specify)
8. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF A2b = 5 (SAW AN ADVERT)

A2ba Where did you see the advert?

OPEN RESPONSE, PROBE FULLY

99 Don't know / can't remember

ASK ALL

A2c What would be the best way of letting people know about Passenger Assist? Please tell us your first and second choices...

CODE 2 OPTIONS - ROTATE

1. Posters
2. Leaflets
3. Radio ads
4. TV ads
5. Online advertisements
6. Through social media
7. Direct mail
8. Inserts in magazines or newspapers
9. Information provided when booking a ticket
10. Other (Please specify)
11. Don't know

ASK ALL

A3 (IF CUSTOMER AT A1): How often do you typically use Passenger Assist?

(IF COMPANION AT A1): How often does your <ANSWER FROM A2> typically use Passenger Assist?

SINGLE CODE

1. Three or more times per week
2. One to two times per week
3. One to three times per month
4. Less than once a month, more than once or twice a year
5. Once or twice a year
6. Less than once a year
7. Don't know

Section B: Confirming journey details

We understand on (FROM SAMPLE) <DATE>, (IF CUSTOMER AT A1) <you> (IF COMPANION AT A1) <your ANSWER FROM A2> made a journey via train. We are interested in the assistance you booked in advance for one specific part of the journey. We would like to ask what happened at (FROM SAMPLE) <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED> station.

ASK ALL

B1 INTERVIEWER: Confirm that the respondent recalls this journey and feels able to answer about this. If not, thank and close.

SINGLE CODE

1. Continue
2. Thank and close

Section C: The booking process

ASK ALL BOOKING BY TELEPHONE (FROM SAMPLE)

C1a Roughly how long did it take to book assistance?

Note: we are only interested in the time it takes to book the assistance only...do not include time for anything else e.g. booking a ticket

TIME BOX IN 5 MINUTE STEPS UP TO 55 MINS, THEN 1 hour, THEN LONGER THAN 1 HOUR

ASK ALL

C1 Which of the following types of assistance did you request at **(FROM SAMPLE)** <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED> station?

MULTI CODE

1. Booking the wheelchair area
 2. Help with luggage
 3. Getting in/out of the station
 4. Getting to the platform
 5. Getting to a seat
 6. Getting to the wheelchair area
 7. Boarding the train
 8. Alighting the train
 9. Provision of a ramp
 10. Assistance to and from connecting services
 11. Guidance if you are visually impaired
 12. A taxi if required (if the station you wanted to use was inaccessible to you)
 13. Some other type of assistance (Please specify)
 14. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know/Can't remember
- THANK AND CLOSE**

ASK IF C1 = 2 (BOOKED HELP WITH LUGGAGE)

C2a Were you asked when booking whether help was needed with luggage or did you request this?

SINGLE CODE

1. I was asked about help with luggage when booking
2. I requested help with luggage
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK ALL

C2c When booking assistance did you ask for help planning the journey?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

ASK ALL

C2d When booking assistance did you book your train ticket at the same time?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

ASK IF C2d = 2 (NO)

C2e Why didn't you buy your ticket at the same time?

OPEN RESPONSE, PROBE FULLY

99 Don't know / can't remember

ASK ALL

C3 Did you receive confirmation of the assistance booking?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF C3 = 1 (RECEIVED CONFIRMATION OF BOOKING)

C4 Was the information in the booking confirmation accurate?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF C3 = 1 (RECEIVED CONFIRMATION OF BOOKING)

C5 How easy to understand were the instructions within the booking confirmation about where to meet the staff member?

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE

5 = Very easy to understand	4 = Fairly easy to understand	3 = Neither easy nor difficult	2 = Fairly difficult to understand	1 = Very difficult to understand	0 = I was not told this	6 = Don't know	7 = N/A
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- a. Information about when to meet the staff member
- b. Information about where to meet the staff member

ASK ALL

C6 Before we go on to discuss the actual day of your journey, please tell us which of the following best describes how you felt after making your booking...

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE

- 1. I felt confident that all requirements would be met
- 2. I felt confident that most requirements would be met
- 3. I felt doubtful that requirements would be met on the day
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know

ASK ALL

C7 Thinking about the booking process, how satisfied were you with... READ OUT FIRST ITEM?

What score out of 5 would you give where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied?

READ OUT SUBSEQUENT ITEMS IN TURN, SINGLE CODE PER ROW, ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

REPEAT SCALE AS NECESSARY

5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	1 = Very Dissatisfied	6 = Don't know
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- a. The overall assistance booking process
- b. The helpfulness of staff when booking assistance
- c. The assistance arrangements that were booked for the journey

Section D: Journey experience

We'd now like to ask you about what happened with regards to the assistance **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> booked for **(FROM SAMPLE)** <DATE> at **(FROM SAMPLE)** <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED> station.

ASK IF A1 = 1 (CUSTOMER)

D1 Were you travelling alone or with someone?

SINGLE CODE

1. Alone
2. With a companion(s)

ASK ALL

D2 What was the main purpose of the journey?

PROBE AS PER PRECODES, SINGLE CODE

1. Commuting (e.g. to work, school or university)
2. Business/ other work (e.g. to a business meeting with a customer)
3. Leisure (e.g. shopping, visiting friends/ relatives, day trip/ holiday)
4. Other (please specify)
5. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

D3 **IF CUSTOMER AT A1:** Have you made this journey before?

IF COMPANION AT A1: Has <your ANSWER FROM A2> made this journey before?

1. Yes
2. No

ASK ALL

D4 Was a member of staff there to meet **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> within an acceptable timeframe?

PROBE AS PER PRECODES, SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No, but I was eventually met by staff and able to continue my journey as planned
3. No, but I was eventually met by staff and able to continue my journey (but not as planned, e.g. took a later train)
4. No, I was eventually met by staff but not able to continue my journey
5. No, I was not met by staff but was able to continue my journey as planned
6. No, I was not met by staff but was able to continue my journey (but not as planned, e.g. took a later train)
7. No, I was not met by staff and was not able to continue my journey
8. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF D4 = 1-4

D5 And did **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> actually receive the following assistance....?

SHOW FROM SAMPLE ASSISTANCE REQUESTED, READ OUT EACH ITEM IN TURN

	Yes	No	DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know/Can't remember
SHOW CODES FROM C1 SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ITEM	1	2	3

ASK IF D4 = 1-4

D6 And how satisfied **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <were you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <was your ANSWER FROM A2> with....

SHOW CODES WHERE D5 = 1, READ OUT SUBSEQUENT ITEMS IN TURN, SINGLE CODE PER ROW

REPEAT SCALE AS NECESSARY

5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	1 = Very Dissatisfied	6 = Don't know
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ASK IF D4 = 1-4

D7 And how satisfied **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <were you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <was your ANSWER FROM A2> overall with the assistance at **(FROM SAMPLE)** <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED> station?

REPEAT SCALE AS NECESSARY

5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	1 = Very Dissatisfied	6 = Don't know
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ASK IF ANY OF D5 = 2 (DID NOT RECEIVE THE ASSISTANCE REQUESTED)

D8 Did not receiving the assistance requested affect **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> being able to get to the final destination?

SINGLE CODE

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF C1 DOES NOT = 12 AND D4 = 1-4

D10 At any point in this part of your journey did the assistance involve a taxi or alternative means of transport arranged by the train company?

SINGLE CODE

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF D10 = 1 OR D5_12 = 1 (ASSISTANCE INVOLVED A TAXI OR ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT)

IF D5_12 = 1 SHOW: You said earlier that your assistance involved a taxi.

D11 Did the vehicle arrive on time?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF D10 = 1 OR D5_12 = 1 (ASSISTANCE INVOLVED A TAXI OR ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT)

D12 Was the vehicle suitable for **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1) <you> (IF COMPANION AT A1) <your ANSWER FROM A2>**?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK ALL

D13 And did **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1) <you> (IF COMPANION AT A1) <your ANSWER FROM A2>** experience any disruption such as delays or cancellations on the stage of the journey at **(FROM SAMPLE) <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED>** station?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF D13 = 1

D15 Did **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1) <you> (IF COMPANION AT A1) <your ANSWER FROM A2>** reach the final destination for the journey?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes as planned
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF D13 = 1

D16 Did someone contact **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> to let **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <them> know that the assistance had changed?

SINGLE CODE

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. This wasn't necessary because the delay had no impact upon the booking
- 4. Don't know/can't remember

ASK IF D4 = 1-4

D17 Thinking about the assistance at **(FROM SAMPLE)** <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED> station on **(FROM SAMPLE)** <DATE>, how satisfied were **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <they> with... READ OUT FIRST ITEM?

What score out of 5 would you give where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied?

READ OUT SUBSEQUENT ITEMS IN TURN, SINGLE CODE PER ROW, ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

REPEAT SCALE AS NECESSARY

5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	1 = Very Dissatisfied	6 = Don't know
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- a. The helpfulness and attitude of staff who provided assistance at the station
- b. How well **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2's> particular needs were understood by the staff who assisted **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <them> at the station
- c. Staff being knowledgeable and proficient in how to assist you

ASK ALL

D19 Thinking about your experience at **(FROM SAMPLE)** <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED> station on **(FROM SAMPLE)** <DATE>, how satisfied are **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <they> in terms of the following...

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE PER ROW, ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	1 = Very dissatisfied	6 = Don't know	7= N/A
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- a. Station facilities suitable for **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <my> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <their> needs
- b. Train facilities suitable for **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <my> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <their> needs

ASK IF D4 = 1-4

D20 We are keen to know how helpful **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> found Passenger Assist in terms of making the train journey possible or simply more convenient. Which of the following best describes **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <your> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <their> experience?

PROBE AS PER PRECODES, SINGLE CODE

1. I/They could not have completed this particular journey without Passenger Assist
2. I/They could have completed my journey but it would have been more difficult (e.g. would have taken more time, needing another person etc.)
3. I/They could have completed my journey without Passenger Assist
4. Don't know

ASK ALL

D21 Overall how satisfied are you with the whole process from booking the assistance to the assistance received at **(FROM SAMPLE)** <STATION WHERE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED> station on **(FROM SAMPLE)** <DATE>?

SINGLE CODE

5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	1 = Very Dissatisfied	6 = Don't know
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Section E: General views on the assisted travel service

We would now like your thoughts on Passenger Assist as a whole. We're keen to understand your perspective on what works well, what doesn't work so well, and how you think the service could be improved.

ASK ALL

E1 Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 very satisfied, how satisfied are you with Passenger Assist? (*Thinking about all journeys you have made using Passenger Assist*)

SINGLE CODE

5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	1 = Very Dissatisfied	6 = Don't know
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ASK ALL

E2 Do you have any other general comments on the Passenger Assist service?

OPEN RESPONSE, PROBE FULLY

- 98 Nothing
- 99 Don't know

ASK ALL

E4 On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is very unlikely and 10 very likely, how likely would you be to recommend Passenger Assist to a friend/ family member who may require such a service?

SINGLE CODE

Very likely = 10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Very unlikely = 0	DK = 11
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ASK ALL

E5 ORR is interested in any feedback you may have regarding Passenger Assist. If you could make one change to make it better, what would that be and why?

OPEN RESPONSE, PROBE FULLY

98 Nothing

99 Don't know

ASK ALL

E6 Have **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> ever asked for assistance at a train station without having booked in advance?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF E6=1

E7a Did **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> receive assistance?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Can't remember

ASK IF E7a = 1 or 2

E7b Tell us a little bit about **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <your> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> experience? (Arriving at the station and asking for assistance without booking in advance)

OPEN RESPONSE, PROBE FULLY

99 Don't know

ASK ALL

E8 Have **(IF CUSTOMER AT A1)** <you> **(IF COMPANION AT A1)** <your ANSWER FROM A2> heard of or used an app for booking Passenger Assist?

MULTI CODE

- 1.No
- 2.Yes – heard of it
- 3.Yes – downloaded it
- 4.Yes – used it

ASK IF E8 = 2, 3 or 4

E9 Can you tell us what the app is called?

OPEN RESPONSE, PROBE FULLY

99 Don't know/Can't remember

Section F: Demographics

Before we finish, we would just like to ask a couple of final demographic questions. This is important as it helps us to better understand if Passenger Assist is meeting the needs of all types of customers.

ASK ALL

F1 **IF CUSTOMER AT A1: DO NOT ASK AND CODE GENDER**

IF COMPANION AT A1: ASK IF A2 = 3 OR 10-16: Is your <ANSWER FROM A2>...

1. Male
2. Female
3. Refused

ASK ALL

F2 **IF CUSTOMER AT A1: How old are you?**

IF COMPANION AT A1: How old is your <ANSWER FROM A2>?

SINGLE CODE

1. 16-24
2. 25-34
3. 35-49
4. 50-64
5. 65-74
6. 75+
7. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK ALL

F3 **IF CUSTOMER AT A1: Which of the following best describes your current circumstances?**

IF COMPANION AT A1: Which of the following best describes your <ANSWER FROM A2>'s current circumstances?

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE

1. Working full or part-time
2. Not working
3. Student
4. Retired
5. Other (Please specify)
6. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK ALL

F4 (IF CUSTOMER AT A1) <Do you> (IF COMPANION AT A1) <Does your ANSWER FROM A2> have any of the following long-standing physical or mental health conditions?

READ OUT, MULTI CODE

1. Vision (blindness or visual impairment)
2. Hearing (deafness or hard of hearing)
3. Physical (wheelchair user, mobility issues, amputee, dwarfism)
4. Learning or concentrating or remembering
5. Mental health problems
6. Social or behavioural issues, for example, due to neurological diverse conditions such as Autism, Attention Deficit or Asperger's Syndrome
10. A communication disorder/disability
7. Another long-term health condition that doesn't fit any of the above
8. None of these conditions SINGLE CODE
9. I would prefer not to say SINGLE CODE

ASK ALL

F5 Thank you for sparing the time to help ORR with this study. Occasionally, it is very helpful for us to be able to re-contact people we have spoken to, either to clarify certain issues, or to get a bit more detail on topics that ORR is particularly interested in. Would you be happy for us to call you back briefly if necessary?

Just to remind you: Your details will be kept completely confidential and all your answers will remain anonymous.

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

ASK ALL

F6 INTERVIEWER: CAPTURE NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER

OPEN RESPONSE

NAME:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

ASK ALL

F7 And finally, as a thank you for every survey completed we will donate £1 to charity...which of the following charities would you like your donation to go to...?

SINGLE CODE

1. Scope
2. Capability Scotland
3. The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)
4. The British Deaf Association
5. Mind
6. The Scottish Association for Mental Health

Those are all of the questions I have for you today. Thank you very much for taking part in this survey. Your answers will help ORR to understand more about passengers' experience of the assisted travel service and identify areas for improvement.

Stay in touch



Charlotte Crichton
Associate Director
Charlotte.Crichton@breakingblueresearch.com
+44 (0)20 7627 7750



Rowan Haslam
Research Consultant
Rowan.Haslam@breakingblueresearch.com
+44 (0)20 7627 7734

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