



Passenger survey report

February 2009

Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership and Passenger Focus

Supported by



Introduction

The Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership aims to increase usage and improve services of the Crewe-Manchester via Stockport and Airport routes. The Partnership was established in 2007 and brings together transport operators, local authorities, parish councils, major employers and passenger groups. The Partnership is funded by Northern Rail, Cheshire County Council, GMPTE, Manchester Airport and Stockport Council.

A survey was carried out by the Rail Partnership, together with Passenger Focus, to build an understanding of usage of the line, attitudes of passengers and identify priority areas for improvement.

Methodology

There were several methods in which the survey was delivered. A dedicated webpage was set up which enabled the survey to be completed electronically. Survey forms were given directly to passengers on trains by volunteers, which passengers were left to fill in, returning by a freepost envelope. Forms were handed out on trains between Crewe, Stockport and Manchester Airport, on the morning of Monday 10th November 2008. Additionally, survey forms were left at train stations and libraries, to be returned also via freepost envelope.

Passenger Focus assisted in the setting up of the survey questionnaires, and carried out statistical analysis of the survey results.

Sample size

A total of 543 responses were returned from rail users. The number of returned responses from non-rail users was however very small at just 21. The summary below relates to the results from the rail users only, due to the very small sample size of the non rail-users.

RESULTS SUMMARY

Demographic profile

58% of respondents are male, 42% female.

In terms of age profile, 15% of respondents are 16-25, 39% are 26-44, 29% are 45-59 and 17% are over 60.

Origin and destination stations

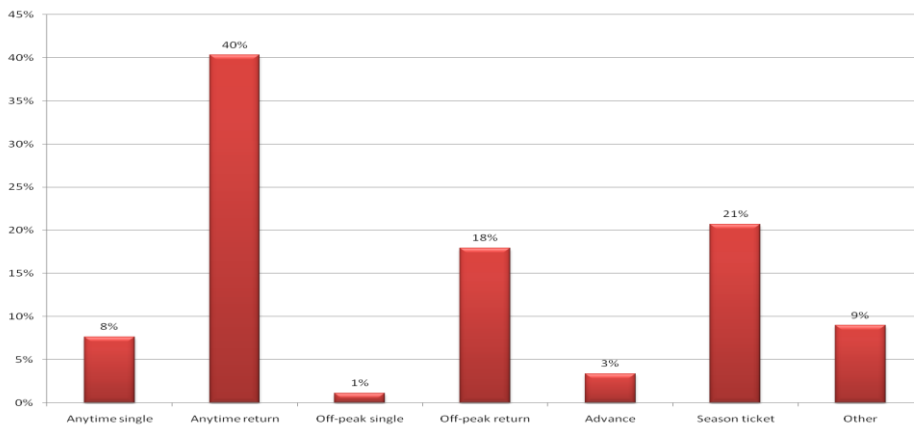
In general, there was a fairly even spread of origin stations. Crewe and Sandbach, with 16% and 15% share respectively were the most frequently cited origin stations, followed by Holmes Chapel and Handforth stations with 12% and 11% respectively.

Manchester Piccadilly was by far the most common destination station, accounting for 44% of respondents, followed much further behind by Wilmslow on 12%, Crewe on 10% and Stockport on 9%.

Frequency and time of travel

65% of respondents travel on the line at least once a week. Only 20% travel less frequently than once a month.

69% of respondents are peak travellers, using either Anytime or Season tickets. Just 3% use Advance tickets.



Reasons for using the line

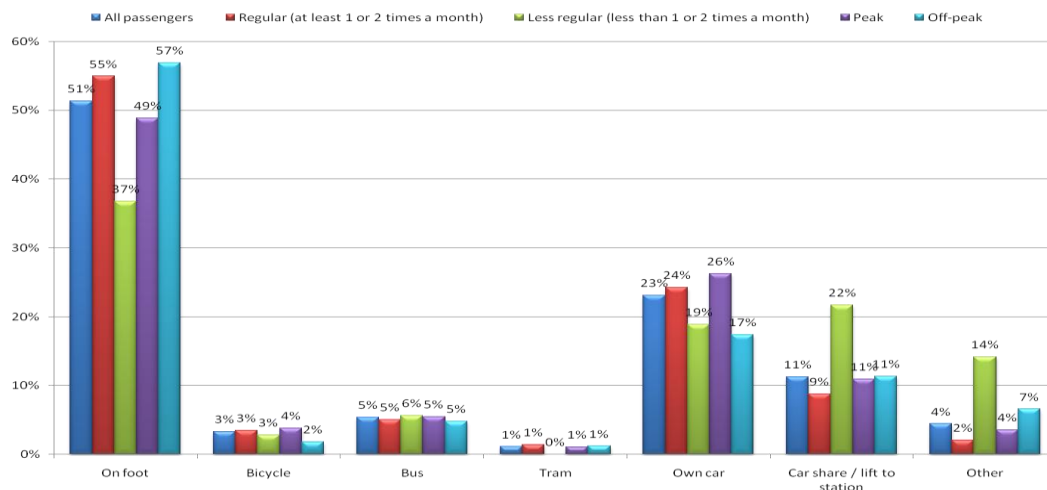
The convenient location of stations is the most frequently cited reason (by 68% of all respondents) for using the line, particularly for regular and peak users. Speed of service and reliability of service are the next most frequently cited reasons, followed by cost of service and wish to avoid travelling by car.

Journey purpose

Daily travel for work or education purposes accounts for over half of respondents' journey purpose at 52%. Less regular commuting for work or education accounts for a further 15%.

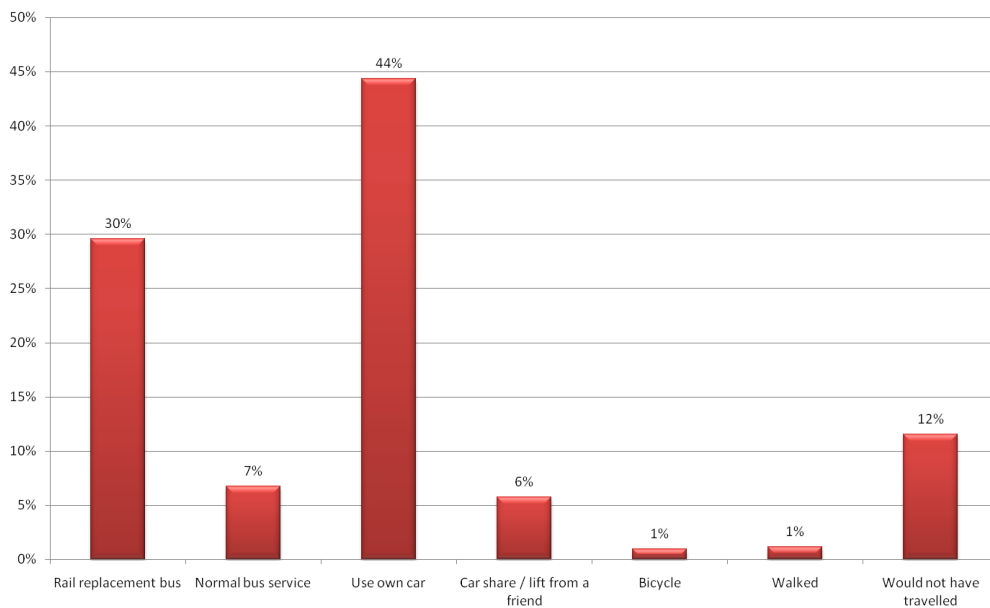
Method of travel to station

Over half of all respondents, 51%, travel to the station on foot. There is a marked difference amongst regular and less-regular travellers though, with 55% of regular travellers and 37% of less regular travellers accessing the station by foot. Travelling by own car accounts for 23% of all respondents' journey to station. Being driven to station by someone else (sometimes referred to as 'kiss and ride') accounts for 11% of journeys as a whole, though amongst less regular travellers accounts for 22% of journeys.



In the event of the train not being available, 44% of respondents would get to their destination using their own car, 30% would take the rail replacement bus and 12% would not travel.

Way of getting to destination when train is not running



Base – 521

Opinions on origin station

Ticket purchasing facilities, attitude/helpfulness of staff and provision of information about train times/platforms, score particularly well amongst respondents. Areas which do not score well include facilities and services at station, connections with other forms of public transport, facilities for car-parking and personal security whilst using station.

Opinions on train journey

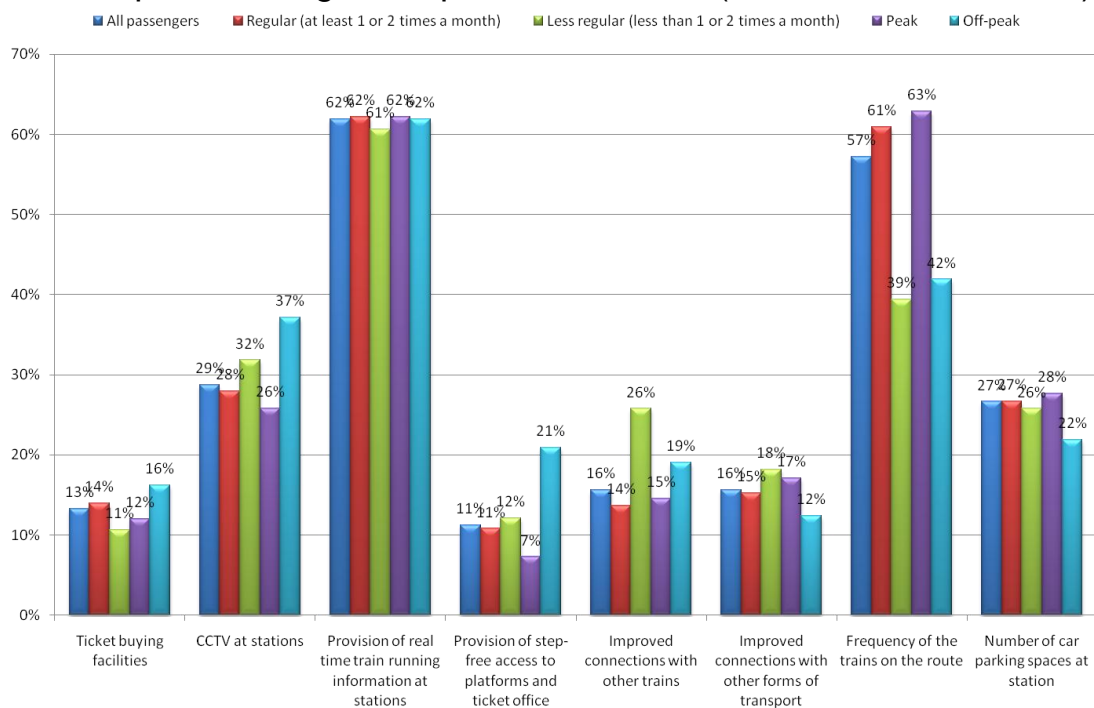
Cleanliness of train, attitude/helpfulness of train staff, personal security on train, ease of getting on/off train, and sufficient space for passengers to sit score particularly well amongst respondents. Areas which do not score well include provision of information during journey, toilet facilities and space for bicycles.

Length of time journey is scheduled to take, punctuality/reliability of train and frequency of trains during week score particularly well amongst respondents. Areas which do not score well include frequency of trains at weekend and value for money for price of ticket.

Improvements to stations – closed question responses

The most requested improvements are for real time train information at stations (62% of respondents) closely followed by improved frequency of trains (57% of respondents), with CCTV and increased car-parking the next most frequently requested improvements.

Most important things to improve on the line (choose three answers)



Base – All passengers (383); Regular (315); Less regular (66); Peak (275); Off-peak (105)

Other comments – open question

At the end of the survey a question invited respondents to make any other comments and suggestions for improvements. By far the biggest response was on frequency of trains, with over 100 respondents commenting on this area, a large number of whom expressed concerns over reduction in peak services resulting from the December 2008 timetable. A number of comments also requested better late evening and Sunday services and more direct services to Manchester Oxford Road and Deansgate stations.

The next biggest area of complaint on this question related to cost of tickets which attracted comments from over 40 respondents. Concerns were raised particularly over peak fares and the lack of incentives for students and other young people to use the train during the morning peak due to railcard restrictions.

There were a number of comments on punctuality and reliability, although the responses were mixed here, with many positive comments in addition to the complaints.

A variety of other areas were raised, including car-parking, the need for live train-running information at stations, condition of stations and trains, lack of ticket checks on trains, seating capacity and the need for step-free access at stations.