

Survey Question Bank

A fundamental part of developing a robust evidence base to help inform future decision making for station-based improvements is undertaking primary research. This process can provide valuable insights on local travel choices and characteristics among different user groups. Surveys are a good way of generating feedback among resident and visitor populations, as well as from rail and non-rail users, provided the questions are tailored to local contexts and circumstances.

Shorter surveys are likely to generate higher response rates, which will help with generating representative feedback when the data has been collected and collated. For a survey linked to modal transport choice, you might want to consider a maximum of 20 questions, listed on a double-sided A5 survey, including an introductory paragraph.

Remember to discuss the scope for different surveys being developed and distributed with local stakeholders at the earliest possible stage. Similar surveys may have already been conducted in a locality or in relation to the station specifically, so avoiding duplication and making attempts to complement existing secondary research feedback would be ideal. The 'pick and mix' options of questions in this document should give you some ideas to allow you to tailor the survey accordingly.

Survey Format

The emphasis of the survey should be on collecting rich information that can not normally be extracted through large-scale quantitative datasets, with an emphasis on understanding aspects of the following:

1. Baseline survey references
2. Transport characteristics and journey arrangements
3. Travel behaviour, attitudes and perceptions

This guide lays out some indicative questions under each of the headings above. Having a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions, as well as binary and multiple-choice answer options will help to offset 'survey fatigue' and enable rich information to be extracted.

Baseline Survey References

The opening questions to the survey will depend on the target audience; in fact this is where the survey could take the option of splitting the questions between residents or visitors, or perhaps frequent and infrequent rail users, if there is a desired to reach out to different groups but avoid the cost implications of printing several specific surveys for each group.

This section will also depend on where you wish to distribute the surveys. In the public domain, you may not be able to distinguish groups easily. However, if a targeted approach at set locations where you know certain users will be present and willing to partake in the research, then set surveys would be a suitable option and questions would be applicable to the respondent.

Opening questions could include:

- Are you a local resident of the town?

Visitors / Non- Residents

- What brings you to the town? (Tick all that apply)

Work commitments / friends and family / retail shopping / grocery shopping / further education / tourism attractions / personal business / other (please state)

You may at this stage wish to ask basic questions to ascertain user demographic information, e.g. age, postcode etc, to help cross-reference data.

Transport Characteristics and Journey Arrangements

This section is designed to begin the conversation around travel and access and to provide basic factual feedback on current and historic travel decisions. This will help to set the scene for the level and type of movements being undertaken on an individual and societal level linked to the area and the railway station in question. This section encourages the respondent to reflect on their journey arrangements before assessing their inclination to change their travel behaviour.

Key questions might include:

For residents (rail & non-rail users)

- Where are you travelling today? (please state)
- How often do you travel by rail normally? (please tick one answer)
Almost every day / 5 days a week / 3-4 days a week / 1-2 days a week / once bi-weekly / once a month / A few times over the year / annually / this is my first time / never
- What are the factors that influence your decision to use this station normally? (tick up to three)
Parking availability / cost of parking / rail service frequency / cost of rail ticket / service reliability / quality of trains / journey duration / access to the station / other (please state)
- How do you normally travel to the rail station?
Car (on my own) / car share / car (dropped off or picked up) / walk / cycle (park at the station) / cycle (bike on the train) / public bus / taxi / community transport / other (please state)
- Is this how you travel on your return journey back home? Yes / no / sometimes
- What time do you normally access the railway station in the town (please state)
- What time do you normally get back to the railway station in the town (please state)
- Have you changed the way you normally travel to and from the station in the past six months?
- If you drive for any part of your journey, where do you normally try to park?

Visitors / non- residents (& rail users)

- How long is your visit to the town or the immediate area?
Day trip / couple of days / nearly a week / 10 days / a few weeks / a month / other (please state)
- How did you travel to and from the town today? (Please tick one answer)
Car (on my own) / car share / car (dropped off or picked up) / walk / cycle (park at the station) / cycle (bike on the train) / public bus / taxi / community transport / other (please state)
- How easy was it to access the town by your chosen method of transport?
Very easy / easy / hard / very hard
- To what extent is the way you travel to and from the town influenced by making local journeys?
Hugely significant / significant / insignificant / not significant / don't know

Travel Behaviour, Attitudes and Perceptions

- What are the main factors that influence your travel choice for getting outside of the town?
- What would encourage you to travel by train more often? (Please state)
- Are you likely to change how you travel to the station in the next six months?
Definitely / probably / unlikely / not at all / unsure
- Which other travel modes might you consider in travelling to and from the station?
Car (on my own) / car share / car (dropped off or picked up) / walk / cycle (park at the station) / cycle (bike on the train) / public bus / taxi / community transport / other (please state) / none of the above
- To what extent did you explore travelling by rail when planning your visit? (tick one answer)
1 = No consideration, 5 = fully considered
- How would you think about purchasing rail tickets in the future?
Online mobile app / online website / booking office / other (please state)
- Have you experienced any issues or barriers to accessing the rail station? (Please list)

The end of your survey must always provide room for further comments and questions from the respondent so that any feedback, issues or opportunities they may wish to raise can be submitted.

N.B. – This document was originally produced by West Midlands Trains and has been adapted by ACoRP for use within this toolkit.