

# Passengers' ticket purchasing and journey experiences

July 2013



## Purchasing and journey experiences

**London TravelWatch** is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public, including the users of all forms of public transport.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience for all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.

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## Purchasing and journey experiences

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### Executive summary

In recent years there have been significant changes to the way in which passengers purchase their tickets and use products such as Oyster. This, combined with increases in fares and proposals to change or reduce the hours of ticket offices at stations, has formed a significant proportion of London TravelWatch's casework in this period. There has also been public concern that fares and ticketing is not as transparent a process as it could be, and, as a result, passengers feel that they are getting poor value for money. Further changes to fares and ticketing are being proposed as part of a Government review of policy and practice in this area.

To inform this debate, London TravelWatch wanted to find evidence of passengers' understanding of the current ticket purchasing channels available to them, and how they used them in practice, in addition to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system and potential improvements that could be made. We were also interested in finding out to what extent there were still 'knowledge and information' gaps about how to use Oyster Pay As You Go (PAYG), two years on from our previous research into Incomplete Oyster PAYG journeys.

We commissioned AECOM to conduct qualitative research, comprising focus groups and in depth interviews during accompanied journeys, among passengers with regular experience of purchasing tickets and Oyster products for journeys. These journeys included those made on a selection of different modes that accept Oyster PAYG (National Rail, London Underground, Docklands Light Railway, buses and London Tramlink services).

#### 1.1 Key insights

1. There is a generally high level of awareness of the range of channels available for purchasing tickets and Oyster products for use across the London transport network. The main exception to this is that many Oyster PAYG users are unaware that they can top up their balance online.
2. In spite of broad awareness of ticket purchase channels, usage and experience of them tend to be extremely limited in most instances. The majority tend to associate specific channels with specific modes and journey purposes and therefore have limited exposure to channels that they use for infrequent journeys.
3. Staff numbers and their availability can be an emotional issue when raised as a subject for discussion in focus groups. Some of the passengers interviewed acknowledged that they had concerns about a

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hidden agenda of potential cuts by transport operators, and the need for and importance of staff, and could therefore have become subject to rational over claim. However, although many people are reluctant to compromise on the issue of staff availability, they are willing to consider the possibility that on some occasions, deploying staff outside the ticket office may meet passenger needs more flexibly, and widen their functionality.

4. Oyster PAYG is positioned as being the easiest and cheapest way to travel around London, but usage experiences indicate that this is not always the case, especially when a lack of knowledge can cause an overcharge to be applied that may go undetected by the user. We identified this issue in our previous research and it is clearly still a problem for passengers.

The research confirmed findings from our previous work, which indicated that most users tend to have high confidence levels about purchasing tickets only within a narrow comfort zone. For the majority, this is confined to a small number of journeys that are made most often but, beyond this, help and advice is often required across all purchasing channels.

The research shows that passengers still believe that it is essential for ticket offices in all staffed stations to be open at times when services are running. However, when issues are discussed in more detail in group discussions, most believe that staff can also be a greater resource in some situations when they are combining ticket sales with other responsibilities, especially at smaller stations.

A consistent and positive finding of this research is that passengers recognise that the quantity and quality of information available across all modes has improved over recent years. However, where they perceived shortcomings in this respect, these are most likely to be at times of greatest need, such as during periods of unplanned service disruption. In these situations, there is growing evidence to suggest that other information sources such as social media are likely to be regarded as being more reliable amongst those passengers with access to this.

In spite of broad satisfaction with Oyster, there is some concern that Pay As You Go usage is not always as simple and user-friendly as the system which has become the 'default' payment method for travel in London should be. The research highlighted that communication is required to fill the knowledge gaps that exist, especially in terms of the correct procedure for touching in and out at modal interchanges and how to avoid incomplete journeys or resolve them when they do occur.

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The common consensus among passengers is that ticketing does not need to be more sophisticated than just an Oyster card or similar smartcard. There is still resistance to other technologies, except among a small minority of 'early adopters'.

### 1.2 Key recommendations

The research recommends the following:

#### 1. Broaden the role and utility of ticket office staff for passengers.

- Having highly visible staff who are able to answer passengers' queries and resolve problems
- Roaming staff to offer help with Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) and sell tickets from portable devices as well as from behind the counter

#### 2. Address current usage barriers and functionality concerns with TVMs.

- Promote consistency of design and interface where possible
- All machines to allow Oyster PAYG top-up and provide journey history information

#### 3. Improved access to Oyster PAYG usage details and journey costs is required.

- Clearer information relating to peak and off-peak fares
- Explanation of how the daily cap works
- Reassurance that Oyster PAYG is the cheapest way to travel in London (and the explanation of the exceptions and caveats)
- Information about extensions and what to do beyond Zone 6

#### 4. Further communication to fill knowledge gaps in relation to Oyster PAYG incomplete journeys is needed.

- What these are and why they occur
- Clearer instructions about when to touch in and out, especially at interchanges
- When to use route validators rather than yellow readers
- Promotion of the facility to obtain card balances, including at TVMs
- Clearer indication that an incomplete journey has occurred

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- Promotion of the facilities available to resolve incomplete journeys, including online
- Allow incomplete journeys to be resolved at all stations where Oyster cards can be used

### 5. Further research and development of ticketing technologies with more obvious and compelling passenger benefits to replace Oyster cards will be required,

- Contactless and mobile payment technology is too recent and untested to be appealing to consumers
- Satisfaction with Oyster is generally high so passengers are reluctant to consider an alternative that raises overt practical and security concerns

### 6. Continue to make improvements to the quality and quantity of information available to passengers, especially at times of unplanned disruption.

- Information that is reliable, transparent, accurate and real time is required
- Challenges still remain at an intermodal level in this respect and across the rail network
- Cater more fully for passengers using apps and social media for information purposes in addition to retaining communication methods for those without access to social media

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## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Research background

In 2011, London TravelWatch commissioned research to discover why substantial numbers of journeys that were made using Oyster PAYG were left 'incomplete' by passengers, and the reasons why such incomplete journeys were often left unresolved.

Our research found that there were knowledge gaps with Oyster PAYG, which led to large numbers of incomplete journeys. There were also poor perceptions or experiences of the resolution process. Publicity surrounding our report led to a 10% increase in people claiming the compensation that was due to them. We secured changes to station infrastructure to make the system clearer for passengers as well as significant progress with the Oyster PAYG 'auto complete' facility. We also called for a programme of public education to remind people how best to use their Oyster cards. We decided to revisit our research two years on, to see what progress has been made, and to widen it to give a broader picture of passengers' purchasing and journey experiences

### 2.2 Research objectives

The intention of this project was to find out whether passengers' understanding and use of Oyster PAYG had changed in the period since the publication of the research in 2011, and to provide additional layers of understanding through a more detailed examination of passengers' experiences of purchasing tickets and Oyster products.

The research investigated in detail all aspects of the ticket purchasing process from a customer perspective. It covered a range of different types of purchasing and journey experiences via the inclusion of a range of modes, journey type / purpose and demographics within the sample.

The research objectives of the project were:

- To evaluate passengers' experiences of the various options to purchase tickets and Oyster products across the network.
- To determine the extent to which the various purchasing channels are known and used.
- To assess levels of passengers' understanding of the current system.
- To understand the extent to which the existing system meets passengers' expectations.



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- To identify potential improvements and how passengers would like or expect their experience to differ in the future.

### 2.3 Methodology and sample

A qualitative approach was adopted and the project was conducted in two stages:

- Stage one comprised four focus groups, and was intended to identify broad attitudes towards purchasing channels and journey experiences across all modes of public transport in London.
- Stage two consisted of eight in depth interviews conducted in the form of accompanied purchasing and journey experiences, which were designed to investigate any problems that had been identified from stage one in more detail and in real time with passengers.

The sample was constructed to represent the views of passengers with regular experience of purchasing tickets and Oyster PAYG products and using National Rail, London Underground, Docklands Light Railway, buses and London Tramlink.

Group discussions were conducted in Southwark and Croydon, and the in depth interviews were conducted in Central and South London. Full details of the sample structure are outlined in appendix B:

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### 3 Purchase channels

There are a number of different methods of ticket purchase that passengers can use to buy different travel products. These are:-

- Ticket offices
- Newsagents
- Online
- Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs)
- Directly from a bus driver or train conductor

The focus groups looked at each of these methods with the exception of the tickets purchased directly from bus drivers and train conductors. These were not included as they are usually a very simple transaction in the case of buses, and train issued tickets are very rarely available in the London area, such that it would have been difficult to get hold of passengers with experience of this.

The focus groups were also asked to compare their experience of self-scan tills in shops with ticket vending machines at stations.

#### 3.1 Ticket offices

All of the focus group discussions around the subject of ticket office staff tended to elicit highly strong feelings among passengers. The difficulty in researching this issue is that respondents tended to assume that the objective was to understand how often they required staff assistance, in order that this could be used to justify future reductions in staffing levels. Consequently, even those who made limited usage of this purchasing channel stated that ticket office staff were indispensable, and were not prepared to accept a reduction on their numbers or availability.



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*"If the station is open there should be someone there. We pay so much to travel that there should be someone to consult." [Business user, London]*

*"One of the reasons I get a Travelcard is so I don't have to deal with the queues but I still think there should be someone available all the time, even though I don't really need it." [Business user, London]*

*"I prefer to get a ticket from the office because the machines often don't take coins, I can ask for a receipt and can get help with planning my journey and other information if I need it." [Accompanied journey, Croydon]*

It is possible to ascertain how best to serve passengers' needs by understanding how passengers currently use ticket offices, and what they want from staff at stations. The majority are unlikely to use ticket office staff on a regular basis. In fact they are more likely to try to avoid using this channel whenever possible since it tended to be associated with queues and lengthy delays, especially at busy times. The queues demonstrate the level of demand which still exists for staff selling tickets behind the counter at busy times. Respondents often prefer to use newsagents for topping-up their Oystercard or have learnt how to top-up their Oystercard or buy a regular ticket from a TVM.

*"If I know where I'm going and I know what ticket I want then I go to the machine but if I'm not sure then I would rather go to a person." [Business user, London]*

However, the majority felt that for infrequent or unusual journeys, and the need for ticket office staff to provide additional support for others, were crucial elements of station staff's duties. Many talked in terms of staff being needed in the event of making an unfamiliar journey or when TVMs were broken, or spoke on behalf of tourists who would be more likely to use ticket offices as their default purchasing channel. People also visited the ticket office to ensure that they got the best deal for a specific journey.

*"I feel that people tend to go to a ticket office when you're not sure what you need to buy and you need help, like to ask what's the cheapest way to get somewhere." [Business user, London]*

*"For leisure, I always need to ask someone about the best way to do the journey and how to get the cheapest ticket. I have to show my Railcard to get the discount so I couldn't do that at a machine." [Business user, Croydon]*

Many recognised they were more likely to need staff to provide help and advice or resolve problems rather than to sell them a ticket, except for occasional or complex purchases. This was reinforced by the overall view

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that having a human presence at certain stations was required to provide reassurance and security to passengers in a way that is not possible to achieve with CCTV.

The overall conclusion on the subject of ticket offices as a purchasing channel, and the staff that work in them, is that passengers value this method more than other means of ticket purchase as part of their overall travel experience and place considerable extra value in their presence. It is likely that in some circumstances a 'floor walker' could be more useful than a member of staff solely confined to a ticket office. While there will always be a need for staff working behind ticket office windows, especially during peak and busy periods, at other times staff may be more usefully employed carrying a mobile device and helping passengers to use TVMs, so long as they were able to sell tickets over the counter if this was necessary.

*"If the person is selling tickets only then it doesn't matter if they are there all the time because they could split their time between selling tickets and giving travel advice." [Business user, London]*

### 3.2 Newsagents

Many respondents welcomed the convenience of having more informal and alternative purchasing channels available to them. A number of advantages were cited over 'conventional' transport specific channels:

- Some preferred to separate the purchasing transaction from the journey experience. Topping-up an Oyster PAYG card when visiting the shop for another purpose was considered to be less stressful than having to do this immediately prior to the daily commute, especially when this was against the clock;
- Some integrated the transaction with others, such as buying a newspaper on the way to the station. This provided the opportunity to top-up at a time when there were few other customers around, which was unlikely to ever occur at a station at busy times when ticket office staff are very busy; and
- Some were regular visitors to their local newsagent and therefore preferred to check their Oyster PAYG balance in this way, rather than use a TVM or ticket office staff for this and would then top-up if required.

*"I prefer to top up at the newsagent rather than the station because they tell you how much is on the card, put how much you want on it and give you a receipt so it's easier than having to use a machine." [Leisure user, London]*

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*"My newsagent is open from 6am and I live next to it so I may only have to wait for two customers as opposed to waiting 30 minutes for a machine or to get served at the station on a Monday morning." [Leisure user, London]*

Certain disadvantages with this channel were also acknowledged but passengers still chose to use it. Specifically, newsagent staff are unable to provide help and advice with journey planning in the same way station staff could. Indeed, a couple of respondents claimed to have been given inaccurate information about fares and the amount of credit to put on their Oyster card, which had resulted in considerable inconvenience and a penalty fare in one instance.

### 3.3 Online

In the context of making journeys by public transport, use of this channel was almost exclusively restricted to booking National Rail tickets, with little use of the Oyster PAYG online top up facility.

One of the main advantages of making purchases in this way was a high level of confidence in the ability to use this channel. This was derived from a widespread familiarity, which came from experience of purchasing a range of other items online. This was also felt to be made easier, because the customer was in full control of the decision making process, which would usually be taking place at home in an unpressured environment, rather than at a rail station immediately prior to departure.

This purchasing situation was also recognised as offering the additional benefit of being able to take the time to do any necessary research required into areas such as route planning and the best fares available. This was considered to be especially beneficial in the event of needing to book tickets for an unfamiliar journey. Even those who were infrequent rail users or were unfamiliar with the booking process claimed to feel reassured by the internet facility, where they could have different windows open simultaneously allowing comparison between different websites or train operating companies.

*"It's really easy to book trains online. You can see everything in front of you and can see all of the details relating to the journey such as whether it will be cheaper to buy two singles instead of a return and when you reserve a seat you can specify what you prefer." [Leisure user, London]*

Many of those who were booking rail tickets online acknowledged that the availability of discounted advance fares represented a considerable incentive to use the online purchasing channel. However, awareness of this was by no means universal and there was uncertainty as to whether advance fares could be obtained exclusively through this channel or whether it was possible to buy



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discounted tickets at a ticket office. Passengers were also unsure about how to be certain of getting the cheapest and therefore the best deal. There was no spontaneous awareness of how far in advance of departure discounted tickets were released by train operating companies or whether the pricing structure was similar to the airline model where there was some correlation between the cost of the ticket and when it is booked.

*“If you travel outside London you can get some really good prices if you book online and far enough in advance. It’s much cheaper than buying tickets on the day you travel and you can even get good deals on first class tickets.”*

*[Leisure user, London]*

The main disadvantage of booking tickets online was felt to be that the onus of responsibility in terms of awareness of ticket terms and conditions fell on the passenger rather than ticket office staff who would be familiar with them and explain it to the customer at the point of sale. All respondents claimed to know that certain terms and conditions applied to advance tickets, but none were confident that they were fully aware of all the restrictions that would apply. This tended to create a certain amount of ambivalence towards the online booking process, as while the facility to obtain discounted tickets was welcomed, some were wary of incurring a penalty fare if the tickets purchased were not valid on the service they subsequently travelled on. A simpler system would therefore help to remove much of this uncertainty.

The majority of respondents in the sample were using Oyster PAYG for some or all of their journeys made but only one or two were topping-up online. Some were unaware that this facility was available and others knew that to allow online top-up the card needed to be registered but were reluctant to do so. This was due either to having lost cards that had been registered and not wanting to go through the registration process each time a new card was acquired; or because of latent discomfort at the thought of Transport for London (or others) being able to track the movements of the card owner. A small minority mentioned a further reason for not topping-up online was because any credit refund due on a registered card would be applied to the card only when touched in at a nominated station rather than instantly, as is the case when other channels are used.

*“I tried doing that once but I had problems with the password and tried three different times with someone on the phone and it didn’t work so I just gave up.” [Business user, London]*

Similarly, there was limited evidence of respondents using the auto top-up facility for their Oyster PAYG cards. Although not discussed in detail during the course of this research, this also appeared to be due to a lack of awareness among some people and a misunderstanding of how this worked

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among others. In one focus group some claimed to be reluctant to use auto top-up, which was assumed to work like a direct debit with a fixed amount being debited from the customer's bank account every month irrespective of usage and the balance on the card. This would seem to suggest that there is a need for TfL to provide clearer information about the Oyster PAYG auto top-up facility to show that this is not the case.

In the context of advance rail tickets being available online, a few claimed that the lack of discounted rates was a reason for being disinclined to top-up their Oyster card online. When asked by the moderator what level of discount would be required in order to make this facility more attractive, respondents felt that 10% would be insufficient to cause them to consider changing their behaviour. In spite of this response in a discussion group environment, it is unlikely that a financial incentive would be necessary to promote Oyster PAYG online top-ups if there were better understanding of the advantages of Oyster PAYG online top-ups.

*"Buying tickets online is a necessity for trains and coaches because you get really good deals if you book in advance. There's no incentive to top up your Oyster card online but if there was them maybe more people would do it."*  
[Leisure user, London]

### 3.4 Ticket vending machines

Research findings relating to usage of ticket vending machines were consistent with those of recent previous work conducted in this area<sup>1</sup>, with confidence levels among passengers remaining low. Some had had a bad experience in the past that had made them reluctant to try again, but most respondents did not trust themselves or the machines to guarantee that the correct ticket for their journey would be obtained.

*"I don't feel confident using them at all. I had a problem the first time I tried to use one so now I am worried that I will lose my money if I put it in."* [Leisure user, London]

*"I don't like having a relationship with a machine. I just feel more at ease when I am dealing with a person."* [Leisure user, London]

*"It's surprising how many people don't know how to use the machines. You see them standing in front of them like a dalek, wondering what's going on."*  
[Business user, London]

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<sup>1</sup> Passenger Focus, TVM usability research, 2010

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Obviously there were some exceptions. Those using Oyster PAYG were aware of the facility to top-up their balances using TVMs and found this a convenient alternative to queuing for the ticket office in busy stations. However, not all were aware that this was possible and some who had no experience of using machines were reluctant to experiment for fear of doing something wrong or funds not being correctly credited to their card. Others had learnt how to buy a ticket for a regular journey from a TVM and were therefore happy to use this channel in preference to a ticket office. In almost all cases, those who claimed to be comfortable using a machine tended to be performing a repeat transaction for a familiar journey.

This underlines the need for staff to be available to help if people have problems with a TVM, just as they are at supermarkets with 'self scan' checkouts, and to be available to sell tickets in a traditional manner to those who are not making a repeat purchase.

*"I think they are quite reliable. It's easier to fix a machine than a person. If they go wrong, they tend to detect it quite quickly because people are using them all the time."* [Leisure user, London]

*"They are only user-friendly if you know what you want. I wouldn't use one for an unfamiliar journey or if I was travelling with children and I wouldn't have a clue about peak and off-peak times because it is so confusing."* [Business user, Croydon]

Hardly any respondents felt confident enough to attempt to buy a ticket from a machine if the journey was an unfamiliar one or if the level of perceived risk involved was felt to be high e.g. for an expensive transaction. Furthermore, relatively straightforward journeys could be complicated by the need to include details of a Railcard to obtain a discount and this was another common example cited to explain passenger reluctance to use a TVM.

*"I once needed to travel beyond the area that my Oyster was valid for and I didn't have a clue what to do so my son had to do it for me because there was no one there to help. The problem is that you can't do anything like that on a machine."* [Leisure user, London]

Although not directly acknowledged during the research, it was apparent that the breadth / simplicity paradox which has been identified in other studies<sup>2</sup> remained a latent barrier to more frequent experimentation with TVMs. However, on one hand, passengers feel disinclined to use a machine if they

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<sup>2</sup> Passenger Focus, Value For Money research, 2006 and Passenger Focus, Fares and Ticketing research, 2001



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anticipate that the full range of tickets will not be available, since this will limit the likelihood of obtaining the ticket required or the best fare for the journey. On the other hand, if every possible ticket type for all destinations was available, the perception was that the interface would need to be too complicated for anyone without specialist knowledge of the industry to be able to use. The issue of terms and conditions was also felt to be a disincentive to using a TVM because the inability to interrogate the machine about specific aspects of the journey or ticket requirements was felt to put passengers at a disadvantage compared with the alternative option of purchasing from ticket office staff.

Passengers could understand why different TVMs would need to be used for journeys on National Rail or London Underground. However, the fact that different machines are used by different train operating companies and the lack of consistency across the London Underground network contributed to overall levels of confusion in this area and represented a further barrier to more widespread usage of this channel.

*“It’s more complicated because there are different types of machine for London Underground, mainline trains, Docklands Light Railway and London Overground so to avoid the confusion I prefer to ask a member of staff to make sure I get the correct ticket.” [Leisure user, London]*

*“The big ones with the big screens give you all the options and you can pay with notes or a card then there are the slightly narrower ones that aren’t so good.” [Business user, London]*

When respondents were shown stimulus materials featuring different types of TVMs, the examples in this illustration were often singled out as ones likely to be avoided, even by those who were more likely to purchase from a machine. In addition to the barriers highlighted above, these machines were felt to offer restricted usage opportunities with a limited range of transactions available for different reasons. ‘No change given’ was a disincentive in its own right since passengers were naturally concerned about the possibility of paying too much for their ticket. TVMs not having change available was felt to be unacceptable at any time since this would prevent those who are happy to use a machine from doing so. There was some uncertainty regarding the functionality of the ‘Quick ticket’ machine;



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some were unclear about exactly what this machine could be used for, whereas others claimed to prefer using these machines for Oyster transactions as they were more likely to have a shorter queue or no queue at all compared to the machines that offer a wider range of ticket types

*“It really winds me up when these machines say ‘no change’. I think that’s really naughty and there’s no excuse for it so I really object to it actually.”*  
[Leisure user, London]

This qualitative sample may not be representative of the views of all London transport users but the TVMs shown in this illustration were occasionally felt to epitomise passenger attitudes and low propensity to use them. This style of machine has been relatively recently introduced and therefore one of the most up to date examples across the network. However, some passengers claimed to have had poor initial experiences of using these machines, which had fuelled their perceptions of TVMs not being a user-friendly ticket retailing channel. Feedback received focused on a feeling that the interface appeared complex and technical while also appearing to offer a poor range of tickets and being slow to use.



Although not directed at this machine specifically, some respondents disliked the separation of the payment terminal and the Oyster touch-pad since this raised the fear of leaving a credit card in the machine while focusing on the other side of the screen.

*“I don’t like these ones because they seem to be a bit more technical. What’s confusing to me is that you have to put your card in the other side so I’m worried that I will take my Oyster card and leave my credit card in the other side.”* [Leisure user, London]

The following specific areas of dissatisfaction in relation to TVMs were raised by respondents in the Croydon area, especially during the course of the accompanied in depth interviews:

- The journey history information that can be accessed on machines at London Underground stations is not available to Oyster PAYG users at National Rail stations; and

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- Tram users were unable to understand why the facility to top up Oyster PAYG is not available on machines at tram stops. This caused a problem for two respondents with low balances, who had needed to add credit to their Oyster cards during the course of the research but were unable to do so. The alternative was to buy a ticket for a single journey, at a considerably higher cost than the Oyster PAYG fare.

*“If you are travelling by tram you have to use a machine because there are no staff to buy tickets from. The problem is that the machines don’t sell all ticket types and you can’t even top up your Oyster so if you have no credit the journey will cost you twice as much.” [Business user, Croydon]*

One aspect of TVM usage that many respondents were familiar with and positive about, was the facility to collect tickets purchased in advance online. This was generally welcomed as a convenient alternative to printing tickets at home and the machine interface was generally thought to be straightforward. The only disadvantage was the requirement for the person collecting the tickets to insert the payment card that had been used for the transaction, as this removed the option of ‘ticket on departure’ in situations where parents had bought tickets for their children for example. Most were happy to specify the station at which the tickets were to be collected although there were occasional requests for greater flexibility to accommodate an unexpected change of plan. Respondents were therefore surprised to hear that tickets could be collected from stations other than the one nominated and could not understand why a service with such an obvious passenger benefit was not actively promoted by train operating companies or ticket retailing websites.

*“I always collect my tickets from a machine but I don’t understand why you need to have the card with you if the ticket has been paid for. It would be better to have more flexibility so that you could buy tickets for your kids or other people such as work colleagues.” [Leisure user, London]*

### 3.5 Self-scan

In order to contextualise the findings around TVMs, the research included some coverage of consumer usage and attitudes towards self-scan tills in supermarkets and other stores. This was briefly discussed in the focus groups and in some of the accompanied in depth interviews, respondents were asked to make purchases in different stores using the self-scan tills.

At a spontaneous level, the general consensus was that this was not a like-for-like comparison; self-scan tills have a simpler interface as they usually require a lower level of input from the customer in order to produce the desired result. In this respect, respondents claimed to be more likely to attempt to use self-scan tills than TVMs due to the lower perceived risk

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attached to the transaction and the consequences that a mistake could create for the purchaser.

However, some of the issues related to self-scan, compared to a staff operated till, were broadly similar as some respondents felt confident using them for simple and familiar transactions, whereas others welcomed them as an additional facility to be used only when there are long queues at staffed tills and a few had never used self-scan in the past and were reluctant to experiment.

*"I haven't mastered it yet because there's a way you have to put the basket down in a certain place or it doesn't work." [Leisure user, London]*

*"I always try to use the self-serve tills but always end up with someone having to come over to help me because it always messes up." [Business user, London]*

The reality of the experiences during the accompanied purchase in depth interviews served as an illustration that confidence and aptitude at point-of sale were not always correlated with previous usage experience. A couple who claimed to be regular and proficient users had difficulty with their transactions and one who had never used self-scan completed two complicated purchases without any trouble.

In order to provide a challenge partly comparable with using a TVM, respondents were asked to purchase items without barcodes and / or that needed weighing, such as loose fruit and bread rolls or similar products from the bakery. Even when respondents felt they had followed the required procedures, a number of difficulties were experienced including:

- The ubiquitous 'unexpected item in bagging area';
- Causing a malfunction by placing the basket in the bagging area and items where the basket should go;
- Putting a purse or keys on the scales;
- 'Staff assistance required' for no apparent reason;
- Being unsure of the variety of apple selected when asked to identify it; and
- Attempting to scan a banana without a barcode rather than weigh it.

*"Self-serve tills can be easier but you can also get stuck and then you need staff to come over and bail you out so it can take just as long. The main problems seem to be with the bagging area not registering items." [Accompanied journey, London]*

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One area in which self-scan was felt to give customers greater confidence than when using TVMs, was the increased availability of staff in the event of assistance being required. On the occasions when help was needed during the transactions, a member of staff tended to be on hand before the respondent realised that a problem had occurred. Only one respondent thought ticket office staff were more likely to be readily available than in other retail environments.

However, one major disadvantage identified in the supermarkets visited was that the self-serve tills allowed transactions using payment cards only, much to the surprise of respondents who did not shop regularly at this store. In order to offer maximum flexibility and provide an incentive to be served by a machine rather than a person, all respondents agreed that it is important to allow a choice of whether payment is made by card, notes or coins. TVMs should reflect this, and all should offer the option of payment by cash as well as cards.



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### 4 Staff and information needs

#### 4.1 Staff

Across the focus group sample, passenger views and attitudes to staff were extremely positive. Most recognised the difficulties involved with customer-facing roles and felt that staff generally tend to cope well in often challenging circumstances, especially since the nature of the work can be unpredictable and requires staff to be responsive with the frequent need for multi-tasking.

*“It depends whether you want to provide a service or if it’s just functionality. Functionality is a machine and service is a person. TfL need to figure out what they want to give the public.” [Business user, London]*

The function of National Rail and London Underground station staff was perceived to comprise three core elements, which were evaluated under the following headings:

- Ticket sales;
- Help and advice; and
- Passenger security.

#### Ticket sales



As previously discussed, this tended to be regarded by respondents as the primary function of station staff. Respondents felt there was always a need for this role to be fulfilled while timetabled services were operating. The natural assumption was that staff needed to be working in a ticket office in order to be selling tickets, although most acknowledged that a more flexible role could be more

beneficial to passengers in some situations. Rather than being ‘confined’ to a ticket office, there was some feeling that a ‘floor walker’ able to sell tickets from either a portable machine or behind the counter may be able to meet a wider variety of customer needs in certain circumstances, especially at smaller stations.

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*“If the person is selling tickets only then it doesn’t matter if they are there all the time because they could split their time between selling tickets and giving travel advice.” [Business user, London]*

*“You don’t need someone behind the desk full-time as long as there is always someone there who has access to it to be able to deal with any problem or inquiry you have.” [Business user, London]*

As previously mentioned, many focus group participants acknowledged that the time they were most likely to need to buy a ticket from a member of staff was for unfamiliar journeys rather than for those made on a regular basis. This was felt to reinforce the argument in favour of always needing to have someone available to sell tickets since this need is likely to be infrequent rather than part of a regular travel pattern and therefore impossible to predict in advance. The consensus among passengers was therefore that it is essential to have someone selling tickets at all times, especially as this is likely to be coupled with the need for information about the best way to make an unfamiliar journey.

*“The machines are complicated and can be difficult to use for some people so there needs to be someone in the ticket office all the time.” [Leisure user, London]*

*“They want to close down ticket offices to save money but I really think it’s vitally important to have someone selling the tickets because people get nervous when they are travelling so it’s better to have a human face telling them what to do.” [Leisure user, London]*

Although experiences in this area were generally positive, there was some feeling that staff are not always able to provide accurate information about the correct ticket required for certain journeys as a result of gaps that exist in their knowledge. However, most respondents felt that any lack of awareness was due to the complexity of the fare structure and therefore tended to blame the system rather than the staff for these shortcomings. Problems were felt to be more likely to occur when using National Rail rather than other modes, due to the size of the network and because journeys could involve the use of multiple Train Operating Companies.

*“I had a problem with my Oyster card when I was making a train journey to East Croydon so I went to the ticket office to ask what to do and was told that I would have to go to an underground station to sort it out!” [Business user, Croydon]*

A related area which caused more dissatisfaction was when passengers suspected staff could identify the cheapest fare for a particular journey. This

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tended to be associated with the complexity of the rail network but there were also isolated examples cited, e.g. when London Underground staff had been unsure about the cheapest way to make journeys, especially those requiring modal interchange or extending beyond a Travelcard boundary.

*“I asked for an extension to my ticket which they sold me then another customer told me there was a cheaper way so I asked if I could refund and change the ticket and they said no because I had already bought it so that was it.” [Business user, London]*

## Help and advice



Notwithstanding knowledge gaps relating to fares, staff were felt to perform very well in this area. In almost all circumstances, experiences were reported to have been extremely positive and passengers remarked that they had been impressed with the extent of staff knowledge of the public transport network in London. There were occasional examples given of when a member

of staff had been unable to provide information for a specific mode or for a journey starting in London to another area of the country but these were regarded as exceptions, and totally acceptable because it would be unreasonable to expect every member of staff to know everything about every possible journey.

*“On the whole I’m impressed with their knowledge but you get the impression that they don’t always tell you about the cheapest ticket, like whether there will be a discount if you are travelling with a Railcard or a season ticket holder.” [Leisure user, London]*

In the context of the discussions surrounding purchasing channels, this specific staff function was often given a broader interpretation. The nature of the help that was likely to be required was often thought to be related to obtaining a ticket from a machine, having staff available to sell tickets in the event of TVMs being faulty or to resolve problems with Oyster cards.

*“The ideal would be to have more machines but there always needs to be at least one member of staff in case you lose your Oyster or want to buy a ticket you can’t get from the machine so there has to be someone there.” [Business user, London]*



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*“It’s not just about selling tickets; staff are there for help and advice. When my Oyster card broke, if there had been no one there I would have had to walk two miles to the next station.” [Business user, London]*

*“Staff always need to be on hand because they are the eyes and ears of the station. They keep it clean and tidy, deal with passenger management issues and provide information when there are delays and cancellations.”  
[Accompanied journey, Croydon]*

The only real problem area identified in relation to staff providing help and advice was the availability of staff at some stations rather than their willingness or ability to offer assistance when asked. Although respondents understood it may not be possible to increase staff numbers, they felt that being able to recognise and identify staff more easily would help and it was suggested that high-visibility clothing would help in this respect.



Respondents also acknowledged there had been occasions when they had experienced a poor attitude from staff when they asked for help or advice. However, it was generally agreed that this situation had improved considerably recently and that such instances were now isolated rather than commonplace. For the most part it was felt that problems could be attributed to someone having a bad day rather than being endemic at an organisational level. This was perceived as understandable in the context of staff frequently needing to deal with passengers experiencing difficulties with their journeys.

*“Sometimes staff can be a bit miserable at train stations. You get the impression they are put out if you ask them something and they keep interrupting when you are talking to them.” [Business user, Croydon]*

## Passenger security

Respondents tended to acknowledge this as an indirect function fulfilled by staff rather than it being their primary purpose or part of their job description. Many passengers, especially women who travelled alone and after dark, claimed to feel reassured by the knowledge that a member of staff would be

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present at the station they were travelling to. The need for this was agreed to be especially acute at smaller stations in more remote suburban areas and was not restricted only to the immediate station environment but extended to the surrounding area. Most felt the primary role of staff in this respect would be to serve as a deterrent to undesirables loitering at stations rather than to prevent any crime being committed and a more visible staff presence was therefore generally considered to be preferable.

*“With all the crime there is today, it gives you a sense of security when you see someone behind the counter. You need someone to report incidents to, if someone falls off the platform or gets bashed over the head.” [Leisure user, London]*

*“It’s even more important to have someone there all the time at some train stations because when you get further out and there’s no one there you can feel unsafe if it’s like a ghost town and you might need some information.” [Business user, London]*

*“Staff are important for personal safety reasons too. Even if the guy isn’t like Rambo, it provides a certain sense of security to know that there is someone available in a uniform in case you need them.” [Business user, London]*

### 4.2 Information

Responses to information provision were broadly consistent with attitudes to staff. Respondents recognised it was an area where there had been deficiencies in the past but that steps had been taken to address many of the issues recently.

There was a common consensus amongst respondents that the quality and quantity of information available to passengers is now better than ever before, and attempts to make ongoing improvements across all modes and by all operators were acknowledged. One of the most important advances that was perceived to have been made was in relation to the reliability of information provision. Respondents were often able to recall times when information had been non-existent or of such poor quality that it could not be relied on; this was contrasted with the current situation where details available to passengers were usually comprehensive and further reassurance was available through a variety of sources and channels.

The primary requirement identified by focus group participants in this respect was for information to be both honest and accurate, not only to ensure passengers could have confidence and trust in the operator providing it, but to allow them to use it as a basis for decision making in the event of problems arising. Most agreed that since information is now regularly updated and

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often available in real-time, this has the effect of empowering passengers to make informed decisions about the alternatives available to them, especially when things are not running smoothly.

However, it was also widely acknowledged by respondents that the time when information provision is likely to be less reliable is on the occasions when passengers have the greatest need for it. The feeling among respondents was that information systems work well as long as the network was working well but that gaps appeared as soon as there was any (unplanned) disruption to services. While passengers naturally understood why there was a correlation between these two events, this did not compensate for the fact that difficulties experienced with journeys tended to be exacerbated by a deterioration in the quality and quantity of information available to them.

*“Electronic displays are good unless something has gone wrong. If a train is cancelled or a platform is changed no one knows what is going on. So if anything out of the ordinary happens, you’re stuck because it all breaks down.” [Leisure user, London]*

*“Nowadays the information that you get tends to be very good when services are running normally and terrible when they are not.” [Leisure User, London]*

This was often coupled with the realisation that consumer information needs in all areas of life, not just in the context of public transport, are becoming increasingly difficult to satisfy. Naturally the popularity and penetration of social media in the recent past has raised the bar of consumer expectations and there was some reference to the fact that channels such as Twitter are now considered to be the first port of call in distress situations since they have proved to be more reliable than conventional or formal industry sources.

A number of respondents mentioned they were regular users of travel apps, including those that are not free to download, and there were frequent reports of positive experiences to the extent that usage has become second nature for some. Indeed, smartphones have now become so widespread that there was evidence to suggest that many with them automatically turn to them as a supplement to traditional information sources and younger consumers especially were likely to regard them as a default channel.

### 4.3 Mode specifics

#### London Underground

London Underground emerged as the mode most likely to elicit positive responses in relation to information available to passengers. Respondents were especially appreciative of the range of information sources available

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from staff, to displays and posters, to Passenger Information Systems on platforms and announcements made by drivers on trains. These sources were felt to combine successfully and keep passengers updated at regular intervals.

*“You can’t compare London Underground and trains. On the trains I don’t expect anyone to tell me what’s happening but on the London Underground I’m sure that I will get that information from someone.” [Business user, London]*

*“Sometimes you can’t hear the announcements because they are muffled and sometimes they say the service is good when it isn’t but information on the underground is generally good.” [Business user, Croydon]*

Rainbow Boards (which show the operating status of each line at the entrances to stations) were a welcome addition to information available at stations and the use of this device has become instantly recognisable to the extent that it has become an iconic representation of the London Underground service. The main strength of this device was recognised as the ability to communicate headline service information about each line clearly and quickly with the potential to show real-time changes on electronic displays. The disadvantage of Rainbow Boards was their inability to communicate details in the event of problems or poor service which often means that they are inadequate as a stand-alone information channel.



*“Any information is better than none so these boards are useful but the problem is that you often can’t read them clearly because they are hand-written.” [Leisure user, London]*

*“Those coloured boards are good but when there is a problem it doesn’t give you any details or a solution so you have to find a member of staff.” [Business user, Croydon]*

While hand-written boards were acknowledged to have the potential to overcome the lack of detail issue, they also needed to be updated regularly in order to keep pace with changes to service patterns. The tendency among passengers was therefore to assume that the information was more likely to be unreliable or misleading rather than an accurate reflection of the actual situation at that moment in time. Rather than rely on the boards, most claimed they would be more likely to ignore them and find a member of staff to provide details instead.

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*"I tend to ignore anything that has been hand-written because you have no idea whether the information is up to date or not." [Business user, Croydon]*

### Bus

Respondents were also very positive in their comments relating to passenger information for bus users. Most were aware that Passenger Information Systems at bus stops had transformed bus travel several years ago to help remove the uncertainty about the interval between services. One or two also made passing references to the fact they thought reliability of buses had improved in the more recent past, although no specific details were volunteered.

*"The information is usually accurate, considering they need to allow for traffic. It helps you to decide whether to wait or walk and it's very reassuring to know when the next one is coming." [Leisure user, London]*

Only a small minority felt there was room for improvement. In the context of the improvements that technology has made to information provision, one or two felt there should be no excuse for the occasional inaccuracies in the service arrival times displayed at bus stops.

*"Buses are fantastic now that they have the GPS systems. The only problem is that they are supposed to be able to provide live updates but sometimes the display will say that the bus will be there in two minutes but it takes ten minutes to arrive." [Business user, Croydon]*

*"Information at bus stops is generally good but not at East Croydon station for some reason. It's important for it to be clear otherwise passengers are unsure about what is going on." [Accompanied journey, Croydon]*

### London Tramlink

Comments from tram users tended to echo those from bus users. Generally information provision was felt to be even more reliable and accurate than for buses, with no problems or complaints received in this respect from the small number of tram users represented in the sample.

*"My experience of the electronic boards and maps at tram stops has been pretty good. It's all straightforward and accurate and the arrivals are timed to the second." [Business user, Croydon]*

The only request received for potential improvements was in relation to the amount of detail that could be displayed on Passenger Information Systems at tram stops. In addition to the countdown and destination of the next service to arrive, it was suggested that it would be helpful to list the stopping points for



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the benefit of users who may be unfamiliar with the system. National Rail were cited as the example to follow in this respect, but the alternative of showing timetables or route maps (as at bus stops and London Underground stations) would also be welcomed in the absence of anything providing equivalent detail at tram stops.

The need for high quality information was highlighted as being especially important for tram users due to the fact there was no visible staff presence for this mode, with the exception of revenue protection officers who were acknowledged to be both welcome and omnipresent.

### National Rail

Overall, respondents acknowledged that as for other modes, there have been similar improvements to the information provided to rail users over recent years. On balance, attitudes in this respect were therefore generally positive rather than negative or critical.

However, it was also conceded that the quality of information tends to be worse for rail than for other modes, although respondents accepted there were often likely to be mitigating circumstances. There was some correlation here with the issue discussed previously in relation to staff knowledge of fares. Given that the rail network is more complex than that of other modes and extends beyond the Greater London area, it was felt that there was more scope for problems to occur and that these may be beyond the control of the train operating company respondents were currently travelling with. Although this meant that some respondents could understand why it may be more difficult to provide accurate and up to date information, it did not make its absence excusable.

*"I was once waiting at Ilford station for two hours without any information about why trains had been cancelled. London Underground are a lot better at getting that information to you but with the trains you can be kept waiting and waiting." [Business user, London]*

Some focus group participants thought that it was unreasonable to expect smaller stations to have access to the same quality of information as bigger stations in Central London, but others claimed that a lower service frequency should make it easier for the company concerned to know what is going on and to communicate this to passengers.

*"It's important to get information about the reasons for any delays because then you can make a decision about whether to wait where you are for the next train or look for other ways to get where you are going." [Business user, London]*

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### 5 Oyster Pay As You Go

#### 5.1 Journey cost

Our findings overall in relation to Oyster PAYG were broadly consistent with those identified in research conducted for London TravelWatch in 2011. Most passengers recognise Oyster PAYG as usually the cheapest way to make journeys in London and it is now seen as the natural or default choice for most. The majority of users also agree that Oyster provides good value for money, especially compared to cash fares. However, there are a number of knowledge and information gaps that create the perception that Oyster is not being used to maximum advantage.

*“It’s cheaper for me to buy a paper Travelcard than to use Oyster because I can get a discount with my Railcard. I found that out through my friends because TfL keep that secret and don’t promote it.” [Accompanied journey, London]*

One of the main issues identified in this research is that awareness of the cost of making journeys by Oyster tends to be low. Most participants in the focus groups conceded the reason for this was because they know the cost of the journeys they make most often and have limited need to know the cost of other fares. Some claimed to have no interest in knowing the cost of individual journeys since they had the reassurance of knowing Oyster is the cheapest way to travel and therefore simply ensure the balance is topped-up when required.

*“You never know how much each journey costs; there is no way of knowing so you just have to trust the system. You can find out online but who can be bothered to do that?” [Business user, London]*

*“I tend to use the bus mostly and I know it’s the same price each time so I don’t know how much it will cost to get into London and back but I would imagine that it will be about £1.50 per journey if I am using Oyster.” [Accompanied journey, Croydon]*

Nevertheless, many respondents acknowledged their low awareness of fares beyond regular journeys could create a problem in certain situations, especially for those who tended not to keep high balances on their cards. Oyster usage has resulted in low awareness of Pay As You Go fares as was illustrated during the course of the accompanied in depth interviews. Respondents were given details of the journey they were about to make and asked to top-up their Oyster card to ensure that the balance would be sufficient. None knew how to calculate the cost of the journey, but perhaps more importantly none were able to easily find this out from the information

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readily available to them. Most respondents claimed this would not represent a major problem in reality however since they had the option to ask station staff or simply top-up their Oyster with a 'safe' amount (although only one respondent equated this to the cost of a daily Travelcard). However, this was a problem for respondents starting their journey at a tram or bus stop since the facility to ask staff or top-up Oyster cards is not available in either situation.

*"Since I'm starting this journey from a tram stop I wouldn't have a clue how to find out the cost of the journey we are about to make. I think off-peak starts at midday and then I would look for something to show zones but usually I would ask at a ticket office." [Accompanied journey, Croydon]*

*"I have no idea of what the journey will cost or how to find out. I don't know whether I can use Oyster on DLR or London Overground or the trams so I am totally flummoxed. I don't want to seem naive and ask but I'm scared I will get into trouble if I don't." [Accompanied journey, London]*

There were a number of other factors identified which contributed to uncertainty over the cost of journeys. Most prevalent of these was common confusion over the definition of peak and off-peak. At the most fundamental level, some were unsure about whether different peak and off peak fares apply to Oyster PAYG usage. This confusion was partly exacerbated by the knowledge that fixed fares apply to bus and tram journeys. Many of those who knew there was a difference between peak and off-peak fares were unsure of the extent of the difference and the definition of these periods and to which times of day they applied. The latter was especially unclear among rail users who were occasionally aware that an off-peak Travelcard would be valid on services that were subject to peak fares in the evening. This also challenged the widely held belief that Oyster is always the cheapest way to travel if Pay As You Go users could be paying a peak fare when those with a Travelcard could be travelling at off-peak rates.

*"I use Oyster PAYG because I use buses regularly and it's a much cheaper way to travel because you only pay half the cash fare but there's no benefit to using Oyster for train journeys." [Leisure user, London]*

*"I know it's more expensive before 9.30am and I assume it will be more expensive at other times but I don't know the details so I know there is a cost difference between peak and off-peak but I get muddled up." [Accompanied journey, London]*

A further issue related to the Oyster maximum daily fare cap. Many were unaware of this, since the nature of journeys made meant that it was often not relevant to them. Some of those who were aware claimed not to trust it on the



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basis of past experiences of it not being applied (possibly due to having incurred an incomplete journey but not realising at the time). The Oyster research conducted for London TravelWatch in 2011 showed that respondents in the Croydon area tended to buy a Travelcard when making journeys into London rather than using Oyster PAYG since this was felt to be the only effective way to cap the cost of journeys on a given day.

*“I’m aware that there is supposed to be a price cap but in my experience it hasn’t always been applied and I don’t know why. I don’t know whether I have done anything wrong but I find it confusing so I always buy a Travelcard to avoid the hassle.” [Business user, Croydon]*

The only other area of uncertainty relating to the cost of Oyster journeys was when an extension was required. This could be either in the event of needing to travel outside the zones of a Travelcard or beyond the boundary of the Oyster zone. Although awareness of what to do in such situations was low, respondents assumed the answers would be readily available if required either from station staff or online.

### 5.2 Interchanges

All Oyster users claimed to be familiar with the process of touching in and out at the beginning and end of journeys and said that this behaviour had become engrained to the extent of it being second nature. However, further consideration and discussion of the issues revealed this was an acquired habit and not always as straightforward as claimed, even among the most frequent users.

Two main problems were identified which appear to represent the vast majority of problems likely to be experienced in this area of Oyster usage. Consistent with previous work, ungated stations were felt to cause difficulties, even for those who experienced them regularly. The main issue identified was the absence of a physical barrier that needs to be opened by touching out since the ‘trigger’ is therefore removed for Oyster users.

*“You know when you are supposed to touch in and out but at stations like Finsbury Park that don’t have gates it can be confusing because it’s easy to forget, even though it takes the maximum fare if you do. In some places the readers are not always very obvious or on your way out so it’s easier to miss them.” [Business user, London]*

*“When you need to change, it’s only easy when you need to pass through barriers because it’s easy to forget if you have to find a reader. I think you are supposed to touch in and out for each mode you use but problems occur when the card details don’t get read for some reason.” [Leisure user, London]*

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However the biggest problem by far was thought by the focus group participants to be when an interchange was required, especially during the course of a multi-modal journey. There was evidence of considerable uncertainty in this respect with some claiming the correct procedure was to touch in and out at the start and end of journeys only, and others suggesting this should always be done when changing from one mode to another. A few claimed they thought the safest approach was to touch their card on every reader they passed.

*“At Wimbledon, I used to change between underground and trains and was never sure whether to touch out of one and in to the other within the same station. Sometimes I did and sometimes I didn’t but I never thought to look on my statement to see what I had been charged.” [Leisure user, London]*

*“I never know what to do so I just touch the reader if I pass one and just hope that this is the right thing to do. I assume it is better to touch too many readers rather than not enough.” [Business user, London]*

*“I prefer to get a Travelcard to avoid the queues that everyone has been talking about and so I have something to show me where I can go so I don’t need to worry about when I am supposed to touch in and out.” [Business user, London]*

*“There’s a reader I go past at Limehouse and I don’t have a clue what I’m supposed to do so I just look to see what other people are doing and I follow them!” [Business user, London]*



*“I feel very uncomfortable on the DLR so I avoid using it because I don’t know what to do. It’s easy to walk past the readers because there are no gates and it’s not obvious where the readers are so I’m unsure about when to touch in and out.” [Accompanied journey, London]*

This situation was confused further when stimulus showing pink route validators was shown to respondents in the focus groups. Although some respondents claimed to have seen them, none knew how they differed from the yellow readers and therefore when they should be used.

*“Is it for you to touch on so it leaves a trace on your card so the system knows where you have been, so you can come out and then go back in without deducting anything from the card?” [Business user, London]*

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*“Whenever I see anyone about to touch on that I always want to tell them not to do it because it might be deducting their money for no reason.” [Business user, London]*

*“I haven’t seen one of those so I would be very wary of touching on that. I haven’t got a clue why that is a different colour and I would find that very confusing.” [Business user, Croydon]*

These interchange difficulties were illustrated during the accompanied interviews, most of which were planned to involve an interchange at a station with route validators. None of the respondents had experience of using one previously and all were uncertain about the procedure to follow. Some therefore touched their Oyster on the reader since they assumed that doing so would be unlikely to cause a problem, even if this was in fact the wrong thing to do. Others needed to ask a member of staff but were still unsure about when or why the validators should be used, especially at Wimbledon station and when the tram was one of the modes being used.

*“I’ve never seen one of these before and I would have walked straight past it. When I read the instructions I had no clue what I should do so I asked a member of staff but I still don’t understand what the purpose of it is so I would touch it and hope for the best.” [Accompanied journey, Croydon]*

*“It’s confusing to have the pink and yellow readers so close together at Wimbledon station and totally unclear about what you are supposed to do. I would be worried that I would get charged the maximum fare if I don’t do the right thing so I think that’s misleading and unfair.” [Accompanied journey, Croydon]*

The main problem was felt to be that the instructions provided were not just unclear but seemed to be contradictory. As shown in the illustration, Oyster PAYG users seem to be told they should touch their cards on the reader but then told not to touch in or out (when the reader is not located near a station entrance or exit). Understandably, this confusion caused some concern among respondents when these messages were accompanied by a warning that they could be liable to a penalty fare or prosecution if they had misunderstood what they were supposed to do.

### 5.3 Incomplete journeys

As illustrated by findings from the previous section, the risk of incurring an incomplete journey remains high as a result of the knowledge gaps which exist around the protocol to follow when interchanging, among other things. Further discussion of this revealed that many were still unaware of what an incomplete journey was or how it happened. One or two respondents said

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they were aware that an unexpected amount had been deducted from their balance but assumed this to be a 'penalty' for having made a mistake or used their card in the wrong way somehow.

*"I got charged the maximum fare once because I didn't touch out properly. I don't know whether it was because there was a rush of people going through the barrier and it didn't register properly or whether it was my fault for not doing it properly." [Business user, London]*

*"If you have a problem it's a nightmare to resolve because the only way you can do it is at a London Underground station or to write to them." [Business user, Croydon]*

Some claimed to be unaware of whether they had ever been charged for an incomplete journey since they did not check their balances regularly, especially those who made many journeys with no regular usage pattern. Although passengers were aware that balance information was displayed when passing through gates at stations, many claimed this was not always easy to see, especially at busy stations in peak periods. Although impossible to be certain on the basis of this qualitative sample, there was therefore evidence to suggest that many instances of incomplete journeys are likely to be undetected by Oyster PAYG users.



However, many respondents were aware of incomplete journeys (although not by this name) and how they occurred, often from repeat experiences of encountering the same problems. In these situations, users were naturally more alert to the consequences of an incomplete journey and also the facility which existed to resolve it. Indeed, there were frequent references to positive experiences of approaching London Underground staff when a problem was suspected during the course of a journey and of the issue being clearly explained and immediately resolved.

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*"I've had good experiences when I have done it on the phone. They just told me the card would be credited next time I touched in and it was. I think it must depend on the time you call and who you get." [Business user, London]*

There was no awareness of the facility to resolve incomplete journeys online. When explained, respondents claimed to be reluctant to use this channel due to expectations of the process being complex and difficult to use. This is therefore one of the areas that would be likely to benefit from improved communication of the issues surrounding incomplete journeys. It would help educate Oyster PAYG users and provide information about how easy it is to resolve a problem.

*"It would be too complicated to get it resolved online. That's the sort of thing that you need to talk to someone about rather than having to write about what happened." [Leisure user, London]*

*"I didn't know you could do it online but I can't imagine they will make it easy for you to get your money back." [Business user, London]*

## 5.4 Statements

Respondents in the focus groups were briefly shown four styles of Oyster PAYG statements available from ticket offices:

- Postal;
- Online;
- Printable online; and
- Mini statement.

Oyster Journey Statement

Date/Time	Journey/Action	Charge	Balance
<b>Thursday, 07 February 2013</b>			<b>£1.40 daily total</b>
08:17	Bus journey, route 73	£1.40	£17.70
<b>Wednesday, 06 February 2013</b>			<b>£6.50 daily total</b>
21:32	Bus journey, route 76	£0.00	£19.10
21:24	Bus journey, route 30	£0.00	£19.10
18:09	Bus journey, route 254	£0.00	£19.10
17:53	Bus journey, route 26	£0.00	£19.10
17:33	Bus journey, route 135	£0.20	£19.10
15:32	Bus journey, route 205	£1.40	£19.30
14:07 - 14:24	Tower Hill to Kings Cross (Met, Circle, H&C lines)	£2.10	£20.70
11:35	Bus journey, route 56	£1.40	£22.80
10:32	Bus journey, route 56	£1.40	£24.20
<b>Tuesday, 05 February 2013</b>			<b>£4.30 daily total</b>
21:13	Bus journey, route 76	£1.40	£25.60
21:01 - 21:10	Hackney Central to Dalston Kingsland	£1.50	£27.00
21:01	Auto top-up, Hackney Central	+£20.00	£28.50
17:08	Bus journey, route 254	£1.40	£8.50



## Purchasing and journey experiences

All three options were positively received at a conceptual level although levels of awareness and previous usage of any version were low.

Overall, the post and printable online statements tended to be preferred at an aesthetic level. Both were felt to benefit from clear, concise and simple layouts and seemed to provide the key information that would be required at a glance. It should be noted however, that the examples provided did not feature any journey or transaction that could be regarded as complex so it is not possible to comment on how this type of information would be interpreted or how well flagged an incomplete journey would be.

*“The layout is good and you can see everything you need at a glance. The day and journey details are clear, everything is evenly spaced and your eye is drawn to the total in bold.” [Leisure user, London]*

The online journey history information was felt to be adequate for the purposes of providing a quick summary of recent transactions and balance status. Indeed, the only difference between this and the printable version was its visual appearance and layout which was not felt to compromise the accessibility of the content when viewed online.

*“That would be fine if you became aware of a problem and needed to resolve it instantly but I would like to be able to get that information from a ticket machine.” [Leisure user, London]*

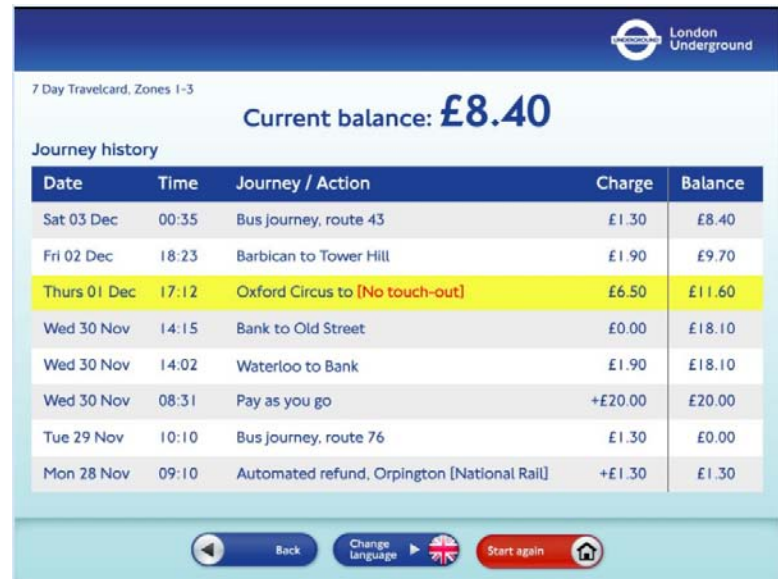
LONDON UNDERGROUND LIMITED Oxford Circ	
*** OYSTER USAGE STATEMENT ***	
CARD ID No. OEP Clear	0562689524 01
08/02 08:33 Add Pre Pay	£20.00
02/03 12:53 Add Pre Pay	£30.00
13/03 10:16 Add Pre Pay	£30.00
15/03 11:49 Pre Pay Entry	
15/03 12:20 - Baker St	Willesden Junct £4.90
15/03 12:35 Baker St - Oxford Circ	£4.90
15/03 13:57 Oxford Circ - W Hampstead L0	£2.10
	£0.00
15/03 13:57 *** cap applied ***	
15/03 14:12 Oxford Circ - Bond Street	£1.50
15/03 14:12 *** cap applied ***	
15/03 15:47 Oxford Circ - W Hampstead L0	£0.00
15/03 15:47 *** cap applied ***	
15/03 15:48 Pre Pay Entry	
15/03 16:07 Unstarted - Oxford Circ	W Hampstead LU £4.90
15/03 16:19 Rejected Entry (Code 36)	£7.20
	Oxford Circ £0.00
Current Balance	<b>-£1.80</b>
Please keep this receipt safe. You may need to quote your Oyster card number if you go online <a href="http://www.tfl.gov.uk/oyster">www.tfl.gov.uk/oyster</a>	
15/03/2013 16:23:05 305375 03 0669	

The mini statement performed well in the context of the focus groups in terms of providing a summary of recent journeys rather than comprehensive details about them. However, during the course of the accompanied interviews, this style of statement was felt to be unhelpful when requested, as a result of difficulties experienced during some of the journeys. In the example shown, it seemed that additional charges had been deducted after the daily cap had been applied and terms such as ‘unstarted’ and ‘rejected entry’ were unclear, even when explained by ticket office staff.

## Purchasing and journey experiences

### 5.5 Ticket vending machine journey history

After the first two focus groups, a screenshot of the current style of journey history information available from TVMs at London Underground stations and an example of what a proposed upgrade would look like was added to the discussion material. These were shown to respondents in the remaining two sessions in Croydon only.



Date	Time	Journey / Action	Charge	Balance
Sat 03 Dec	00:35	Bus Journey, route 43	£1.30	£8.40
Fri 02 Dec	18:23	Barbican to Tower Hill	£1.90	£9.70
Thurs 01 Dec	17:12	Oxford Circus to [No touch-out]	£6.50	£11.60
Wed 30 Nov	14:15	Bank to Old Street	£0.00	£18.10
Wed 30 Nov	14:02	Waterloo to Bank	£1.90	£18.10
Wed 30 Nov	08:31	Pay as you go	+£20.00	£20.00
Tue 29 Nov	10:10	Bus Journey, route 76	£1.30	£0.00
Mon 28 Nov	09:10	Automated refund, Orpington [National Rail]	+£1.30	£1.30

All were unaware of the current facility but acknowledged its potential usefulness if information was required quickly and especially in direct response to suspected journey problems. The current version was felt to be adequate, clear and able to provide a good summary of the details likely to be required. However, the proposed new design was felt to represent an improvement and was unanimously preferred. The presentation of the details was felt to be clearer and more concise and therefore easier to digest quickly (so more appropriate for the environment in which it would be viewed). Two further advantages were felt to be the bold display of the current balance at the top of the screen and the yellow highlighting to identify where a problem had occurred.

*“I think the new one is much better. The presentation of the information is clearer and there are fewer columns so it’s not so confusing. It’s just like one of those mini bank statements.” [Business user, Croydon]*

*“That’s much clearer than the current version and you can instantly see if there is a problem because it’s highlighted in yellow. I like the current balance being bold at the top because that’s the key information you are likely to be looking for.” [Leisure user, London]*

It should perhaps be noted that these respondents may have been unaware of this journey history information since it is not available outside the London Underground network. It was suggested that since Oyster is used by people in Croydon and that locality to travel by rail, bus and tram, the facility should also be available on TVMs at rail stations (or even tram stops in conjunction with Oyster top-up functionality).

## Purchasing and journey experiences

### 6 Ticketing technology

#### 6.1 Contactless payment

The option to combine an Oyster card with a bank payment card tended to be poorly received across the sample. In the focus groups, this was partly due to the fact that a small number of respondents had experienced or were aware of problems that were associated with this technology. One passenger explained how she had contacted her credit card issuer to query several London transport transactions on her statement and was told that payment had been deducted from her card when her wallet containing her Oyster card was touched on a reader.



*“I looked at my credit card bill and had loads of TfL journeys on it and what had happened was that money had been taken from my card when I was touching my Oyster on the readers. I went mad because it’s not even linked to my Oyster but they were in the same wallet.” [Leisure user, London]*

*“I think that would be too insecure. I would be worried it would take money from my Oyster and the bank card if they were in the same wallet and the problem is that there is a delay in getting your bank statement so you might not become aware of the problem for a long time.” [Business user, Croydon]*

Even for those who were unaware of such problems, the concept of combining the functionality of a pre-paid travel card with a bank card tended to be resisted due to a mistrust of technology, and the degree of vigilance it was expected to require in relation to each account.

*“I don’t mind being able to use a bank card but it needs to work by chip and PIN because I don’t like the idea of just touching in and getting charged.” [Leisure user, London]*

Some had more practical concerns in relation to the way their cards are currently used and stored. Respondents claimed to be uncomfortable about the idea of using a combined card on the basis that they preferred to keep their Oyster and payment cards in separate wallets (this was evidenced by some of the accompanied interviews). In these instances, the idea of taking out their bank card with the frequency that would be necessary for Oyster usage represented an unacceptable security risk.



## Purchasing and journey experiences

*"I'd be worried if it was connected to a bank card because it would be much more serious if I lost it. I wouldn't want to keep getting it out all the time because I carry my bank cards in a separate purse." [Accompanied journey, London]*

### 6.2 Mobile payment



This idea was introduced briefly at the end of the sessions in order to elicit broad reactions to the concept rather than to provide a detailed appraisal of the mechanics. As such, interest in the idea was somewhat limited by a lack of understanding about how this would work in practice. Respondents were therefore unsure about whether the phone would

store payments on a chip that would reside within the phone or whether the phone itself would somehow act as a method of payment when touched on an Oyster reader.

Consequently, interest from focus group participants in the concept of mobile payment tended to be relatively low, even among younger respondents who were most comfortable and familiar with technology. The key barrier related to functionality concerns about whether the Oyster element would fail if the signal in the area was weak or unavailable or if the battery level was too low. One or two also wondered if there was a risk of triggering a payment by walking past a reader with the phone in a pocket or a bag.

*"I think it sounds fantastic and I love the idea of it but mobile phones are not bug free so I would be worried that there would be a problem with the signal or Wi-Fi or something that would mean that it wouldn't be reliable." [Business user, Croydon]*

At a practical level, many were also concerned that this would represent an unacceptable security risk. Those with expensive smartphones claimed that they would be reluctant to walk through gates and touch their phone onto readers, especially at busy times, in case they were targeted by thieves or dropped their phone on the ground. Some also thought that touching in and out would increase the amount of wear and tear that the phone would be subject to and that it would need replacing more frequently than usual, at the owner's expense. One respondent was also concerned about a possible 'Big Brother' effect from TfL due to linking his phone (and all the information it contained) to his Oyster card.

## Purchasing and journey experiences

*"I don't want to be getting my mobile phone out when I'm going through the barriers and there are 50 people pushing into me. It's too personal and if people see what phone you've got they could mug you for it." [Business user, London]*

*"I'm not interested. It would be strange to touch a phone on the reader and I would be worried that TfL could track where I am through GPS or that they could get access to everything I have stored on my phone." [Accompanied journey, London]*

## 7 Conclusions

### **Knowledge and awareness of purchase channels is broad but usage and experience remains narrow for the majority of passengers**

Most passengers operate within a comfort zone that includes a small repertoire of journeys made on a regular basis. For some, this may even be restricted to a single journey using one mode of transport (such as their commute to work). The ticket used for these journeys will therefore be consistent and familiar.

Most tend to use the same purchasing channel over time and will not feel the need to experiment with others they know to be available. This means that if the need arises to access an alternative channel or purchase a ticket for an unfamiliar journey, many lack the confidence to do this or the knowledge they need to obtain the correct fare.

This tends to increase the level of importance and emphasis passengers place on the function of selling tickets by station staff.

### **Most passengers wish to see greater availability of ticket office staff, but available to provide access to help and advice as well**

Passengers do not want to see a reduction in the number of staff selling tickets (in this research and similar previous studies), but would like staff able to provide other services as well.

Most feel that staff can be under-utilised in some situations when their role is restricted to just selling tickets behind a counter. A member of staff in a ticket office full time is less useful to passengers than one who divides their time between the ticket office, providing help and advice to customers using TVMs and providing a reassuring presence on platforms and around the station depending on demand.

Passengers were clear that they felt that staff should be available to sell tickets as their primary duty, and that staff available for complicated or unusual journeys were invaluable.

### **Oyster is positioned as the easiest and cheapest way to travel around London but this is not always reflected by usage experiences**

This tends to be true for most passengers for the majority of journeys made and Oyster usage generates high levels of satisfaction with value for money among users.

## Purchasing and journey experiences

However, there are some usage difficulties in certain circumstances when using Oyster PAYG. Ungated stations continue to cause a problem as do interchanges from one mode to another, especially in the event of needing to use a route validator.

These situations are a common cause of incomplete journeys and many remain unsure of why or when these occur. For those who may not realise that they have been charged the maximum fare or are unaware of how to resolve it, over time, this will have a negative impact on their value for money perceptions of Oyster.

Some also prefer to use a (more expensive) paper daily Travelcard since they lack confidence that the cap will be applied if they use Oyster PAYG.

## Purchasing and journey experiences

# 8 Appendix A

## 8.1 Focus group discussion guide

### **Purchasing and Sales Experiences 90 minute Groups - Discussion Guide Final**

#### Introduction

- Introduce self / AECOM / viewing facility
- Explain nature and purpose of research
- Outline research agenda and process
- Respondent details: name, age, occupation, where live (including zone)

#### Background

- What types of journeys do you typically make by public transport?
  - Commute / business / leisure
  - How frequently do you make these journeys?
  - Which modes do you use most often / occasionally?
- What ticket options are available for the journeys that you make (period pass / Oyster / paper ticket)? Which do you tend to use? How do you decide? What are the influencing factors? When would you use each?

#### Ticket purchasing overview

*[For each ticket type mentioned above, discuss as follows:]*

- What are the options available for purchasing this type of ticket?
- What are the general issues in relation to purchasing from staff vs TVM vs online?
- What are the pros and cons of each option?
- Which do you tend to use most often? Why do you use this method rather than others?
- Are there any specific issues in relation to different modes?
- What are your preferences in relation to purchasing? How would the ideal process work?

## Purchasing and journey experiences

- What improvements would you like to see implemented in future? What difference would this make to the current experience?

*[Moderator note: Unless specified otherwise, for each of the following sections, focus on primary mode used most often by majority of respondents and compare for other modes used or experienced.]*

## Ticket offices

- Do all stations have a ticket office? How important is it for a ticket office to be available? Why? What do people need a ticket office for (example leisure / irregular or unfamiliar journeys)? What do you use them for? How often?
- What are the opening times of ticket offices? How do you know? How could you find out? Are you aware of any changes in the recent past?
- What are your experiences of opening times? Have you ever encountered any problems? Has a ticket office ever been closed when you expected it to be open? What did you do?
- How long should ticket offices be open for – before first service until after last service; only during scheduled service times; only at peak times; only when there are passengers around? What are the priorities?
- If an office is unstaffed, what would you expect instead? What is currently in place? How good is signposting to TVMs? What else needs to be provided?
- What is your minimum requirement as a passenger? What would represent an improvement beyond catering for basic needs only? What would exceed your expectations?

## Station staff

- What is your view about staff? What experiences have you had?
- What do you perceive the role of staff to be? What is the split between selling tickets, providing help & advice, customer service, passenger safety / security; revenue protection etc?
- How do you think staff should divide their time between the ticket office, ticket gates and platform? What are the priorities for passengers? What is the ideal balance?
- If you had to choose, would you prefer to have the ticket office manned for 5 or 6 hours per day or a member of staff available somewhere on the



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station from the first to last service? *[Moderator: encourage respondents to trade options off to find ideal balance to suit needs for each mode] e.g. Saturdays and Sundays for irregular journeys and advice on engineering works.*

- What has been your experience of staff knowledge regarding advice on journeys and fares? What is reasonable to expect from them? What needs to be improved?
- Why would you prefer to buy a ticket from station staff rather than from a TVM or remotely? In what circumstances? What are the advantages?
- What do you expect in terms of staff availability and access to staff? When do you need them most and least? What do you need them for?
- When no staff are available, what do you want / expect instead?
- What other sources of information are available? Which have you used? Which do you prefer? How do these compare to station staff?
- What is your minimum requirement as a passenger? What would represent an improvement beyond catering for basic needs only? What would exceed your expectations?
- If you have a Season Ticket (e.g. Travelcard), but want to travel to somewhere beyond the validity of your ticket, do you know how and when to buy an extension ticket?

## Purchasing channels

- What other channels are you aware of for purchasing tickets other than face-to-face? Which have you used? Why would you use these instead of a ticket office? In what circumstances? For what journeys?

### TVM

- What are your views on TVMs? When / why have you used them? Are there any reasons why you would not use a TVM?
- What are the advantages over other channels? What are the disadvantages?
- What types of tickets / journeys are you most / least likely to use a TVM for? Why?
- How confident are you in your ability to use a TVM? How confident are you that you will buy the correct / cheapest ticket?
- What are your experiences of Ticket on Departure (TOD)? When have you used this? What do you like / dislike about it? How could it be

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improved? What if you could collect tickets from any TVM rather than the station nominated? What difference would this make? Are you aware of being able to do this at present? Would this encourage you to use it more? How could you be made aware of this facility?

- Have you ever experienced a problem with a TVM e.g failure to complete a transaction, yet money still taken from your debit / credit card?
- How does using a TVM compare to self-service in other retailing situations?

### Online

- What are your views about buying tickets online? When / why have you done this? Are there any reasons why you would not buy online?
- What are the advantages over other channels? What are the disadvantages?
- What types of tickets / journeys are you most / least likely to buy online? Why?
- How confident are you in your ability to use ticket retailing websites? How confident are you that you will buy the correct / cheapest ticket? What are your experiences of using these sites? Which are the best / worst? Why?
- How does buying a ticket online compare to other online purchasing experiences?

### Phone

- What are your views about buying tickets by phone? When / why have you done this? Are there any reasons why you would not buy by phone?
- What are the advantages over other channels? What are the disadvantages?
- What types of tickets / journeys are you most / least likely to buy by phone? Why?
- How confident are you with phone purchasing? How confident are you that you will get the correct / cheapest ticket?
- How does buying a ticket by phone compare to other phone purchasing experiences?

## Customer service and information

- What information needs do you have when you are at stations? Can you remember any specific examples?

## Purchasing and journey experiences

- Apart from staff, what information is available at stations? How well has this met your needs in the past?
- What do you think about the range of information types available? [*show stimulus for Rainbow Boards, information boards, notice boards, platform displays etc*]. For each discuss: awareness, visibility, usage, usefulness, strengths and weaknesses, suggested improvements etc.
- What do you expect in terms of availability of real-time information? What have been your experiences? How accurate are next service arrival times? Any awareness of differences by station or central / outer London?
- Are there any other aspects of customer service that are important to you as a passenger?
- What is your minimum requirement as a passenger? What would represent an improvement beyond catering for basic needs only? What would exceed your expectations?

## Oyster PAYG

- How much does it cost to make journeys? What does this depend on (peak / off-peak; zones; mode etc)?
- Are you aware of the price cap? How does this work?
- What happens if you travel beyond Zone 6? How would you find out?
- What if you interchange between modes? How does this work? When should you touch in and out during these journeys?
- How do you know where / when to touch in and out? How easy is it to locate readers? How well signposted are they?
- What happens at ungated stations?
- What happens if you fail to touch in or out correctly?
- Are you aware of incomplete journeys? Why do these occur? How do you know about them? What can you do to resolve these? What has your experience of doing this been? Are you aware of the facility to resolve these online? What do you think of this?
- What facilities exist to check your card balance? Which have you used? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? What is your experience of using TVMs for this? How could this be improved?
- Have you ever seen a statement? What did you think of it? Where can you get one from? What does this need to show? [Show example] What

## Purchasing and journey experiences

do you think of this? How clear / easy to understand is it? How well does it meet your needs? How could it be improved?

## Ticketing technology

- What do you think of the range of ticketing / payment options currently available? Are there any gaps? How could it be improved?
- What is the role of paper tickets? When do you use / need these? Do they still have a function nowadays? Will there always be a role for them or should they be phased out?
- What other ticketing technologies are you aware of? Which have you used? What would you like to see introduced in the future? What are the current issues that need to be addressed?
- What do you know about mobile phone ticketing? Where have you seen / experienced this? How interested would you be if it was available? What are the strengths and weaknesses? How would this be an improvement on the current systems?
- What do you know about wave and pay? Where have you seen / experienced this? How interested would you be if it was available? What are the strengths and weaknesses? How would this be an improvement on the current systems?
- How would you feel about Oyster being part of your bank card in future? How would this be better than having a separate card? Are there any disadvantages / concerns?

## Other purchasing experiences

- How do these ticket purchasing experiences compare with others that you are familiar with? What are the most obvious comparisons?
- What about buying airline tickets? What are the options available? Which have you used? What has been your experience of each? What are the strengths and weaknesses? Are there any learnings that could be applied to other modes?
- What about self-scan tills in shops? Which have you used? What has been your experience of each? What are the strengths and weaknesses compared to TVMs? Are there any learnings that could be applied to TVMs?

## Purchasing and journey experiences

- What about other face-to-face retail situations (e.g. supermarket, department store, electrical retailer, bank, post office)? How do these compare with ticket purchasing? How readily available are staff? How knowledgeable are they? How much do you trust their advice? How likely are you to get the best / cheapest product? What level of customer service is provided?

## Conclusions

- What are the key themes that have been identified in relation to ticket purchasing?
- What are the situations in which purchasing currently works best? Where is it worst?
- What are the priorities for improvement? What are the things that could be implemented that would make the most difference to you in future?
- What are the situations that we need to focus on in the second stage of research in order to obtain further understanding about the nature of any problems that exist?

## 9 Appendix B

### 9.1 Focus group composition

The composition of **four focus groups**, each lasting approximately 90 minutes was as follows:

	Business Users		Leisure Users	
Life stage	Single or double income with no children	Young family	Older family	Parents but children no longer living with them
Age Indication	18-24	25-39	40-54	55+
Socio economic group	ABC1	C2D	C2D	ABC1
Location	Southwark	Croydon	Southwark	Croydon
Group No.	1	2	3	4

#### *Additional Recruitment Criteria*

- All groups mixed gender;
- Group 1 were mainly business users, comprising commuters and those making journeys for business purposes (may also use for leisure purposes occasionally);
- Group 3 were mainly or regular leisure users (may also use for business purposes but none were commuting as frequently as group 1);
- All purchased tickets and / or Oyster products at least once a month;
- None were using only an annual or period pass lasting longer than a month unless they also bought other tickets at least once a month (eg for zones not covered by their pass, including extensions);
- Groups 1 and 3 purchased London Underground tickets primarily. Some in all of the groups also had recent experience of buying tickets for other modes e.g train, Docklands Light Railway, bus and London Tramlink;
- A range of different purchasing channel experiences were represented in each group, including ticket offices, TVMs and online;



## Purchasing and journey experiences

- Peak, off-peak and weekend purchasing experiences were represented in each group; and
- Groups were recruited to be representative of the ethnicity of the local area.

Eight accompanied purchasing and journey in depth interviews took place, each lasting approximately 90 minutes as follows:

1. Male	Pre-Family	South London	Leisure User
2. Male	Family	South London	Leisure User
3. Female	Family	South London	Leisure User
4. Male	No children at home	Central London	Commuter
5. Female	Family	South London	Leisure User
6. Female	Pre-Family	Central London	Commuter
7. Female	No children at home	Central London	Commuter
8. Female	Family	South London	Commuter

All were Oyster PAYG users in order to allow investigation of modal interchange issues that would not be relevant for other ticket types.

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