



Welcome Points Trial

Final Report

Rail Delivery Group

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1 Executive summary

The Rail Delivery Group (**RDG**), with support from the Department for Transport (**DfT**), introduced **Welcome Points** as part of a trial across 37 UK railway stations. The trial ran from December 2024 to April 2025, receiving over 31,000 unique passenger visits.

These Welcome Points serve as consistent, recognisable locations near station entrances where passengers, particularly those with accessibility needs, can get information on their travel or summon assistance.

1.1 *Background and purpose*

Findings from previous station research (*Research on experiences of disabled rail passengers, Department for Transport, 2019, page 7, 14*) and retail reform initiatives highlighted that some passengers, particularly those unfamiliar with rail travel, or with specific needs, such as disabled passengers, face inconsistent and fragmented support, resulting in travel anxiety and reduced confidence in using rail services. This reduces rail usage in those groups contributing to reduced individual mobility, and poor passenger experience, and lower revenues for the industry.



In response, RDG proposed a trial of emerging technology solutions to simplify, improve and better integrate the passenger experience on entering a station. This resulted in the development of Welcome Points as a consistent, visible and inclusive means of accessing information and assistance.

1.2 Welcome Point design

RDG collaborated with a wide range of design experts, accessibility panels and stakeholders, including UK Government's Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), London TravelWatch, Transport Focus, Disability Rights UK and groups such as RNIB, Guide Dogs UK and others representing people with a range of disabilities and needs. This co-design process resulted in the agreement of the seven key **Welcome Point Design Principles of Placement, Recognition, Accessibility, Information, Advice, Support, and Availability**. These have also been used as the criteria for measuring the impact and success of the Welcome Points.

RDG worked with three different technology suppliers, building on both existing solutions used in rail today and new innovative technology, to develop Welcome Point units against these Design Principles, developing three separate Welcome Point units for testing at stations.



1.3 Trial design, rollout and evaluation

To test the viability of the Welcome Points, RDG established a five-month network-wide trial at stations between December 2024 and April 2025. The trial design ensured both national coverage to account for regional variation, station type and size and passenger demographics. Of the 75 candidate stations initially identified, 37 locations were selected to give the best overall spread for the three different Welcome Point unit types.

Rollout of the trial included station staff training sessions, to familiarise and equip employees with information on the operability and processes for providing high-quality service to disabled customers, and local engagement on placement and operation. Welcome Point units were delivered to the trial stations in a phased rollout, accompanied by passive passenger communications regarding the trial.

Evaluation of the trial was conducted in multiple phases. Prior to the delivery of the Welcome Point unit a baseline assessment was undertaken at each location, followed by an interim and final assessment by an external research organisation. The evaluation included unit usage data, passenger and staff feedback and the use of 'accompanied journeys' with researchers to better understand the impact of the units. Findings of the evaluation were assessed against how customer and staff experience of the Welcome Points performed against the Design Principles.

1.4 Key findings

The Welcome Points trial has successfully demonstrated passenger adoption and satisfaction without the need for active promotion. Over **31,000 unique customer visits** with the Welcome Points took place between December 2024 and April 2025, with usage **driven by customer need rather than station size or footfall**.

The Welcome Points have proven technically reliable and highly valued, with 93% of users reporting satisfaction with the solution. They are particularly beneficial for disabled customers, among whom 99% of users surveyed were satisfied, enhancing accessibility, addressing travel barriers and key gaps to support staff with service delivery. While customers overall still prefer direct staff interaction to using other support channels in the station, Welcome Points are used as much, if not a little more frequently than Help Points and Ticket Vending Machines. Those using the Welcome Points are more likely to be disabled customers, who are as positive about Welcome Points as they are about staff channels in several areas.

There is strong agreement with the Design Principles against which Welcome Points were designed, meaning that customers using Welcome Points

- Can easily find them in the station
- Recognise them as a place to go to for information or assistance
- Find them easy to access
- Find them to be available when needed
- Receive information or assistance that is clear and understandable
- Can easily get the assistance, advice or support they need
- Can easily get information about the station or their journey

We have improved operational processes during the trial, supporting efficient staff response and reinforcing the Welcome Points' role in enhancing customer journeys. Staff feedback is positive, recognising their value in supporting service delivery.

Areas for improvement include optimising placement for better visibility and access to further align performance with the **Design Principles**.

1.5 Conclusion

Overall, Welcome Points are a practical and impactful addition to stations, supporting a broad range of customer needs. The feedback has helped to understand what is working well in terms of physical form and design, and what developments should be considered.

2 Introduction

Railway stations are pivotal gateways for millions of customers, yet as identified in the Department for Transport's 2019 research on the experiences of disabled rail passengers, inconsistent and fragmented support services have historically created significant challenges, particularly for disabled customers, often leading to travel anxiety and discouraging them from using the rail network.

Disabled customers, accessibility advocacy groups, charities, and industry stakeholders have highlighted the urgent need for a solution that could deliver a more inclusive and seamless travel experience. This is supported by government, with the rail regulator, Office for Rail and Road (ORR), mandating that all train and station operators create and adhere to an Accessible Travel Policy (ATP). The ATP details how operators will support disabled and older passengers, including arrangements, procedures, and benefits to ensure a safe and accessible journey.

Train Operating Companies (TOCs) have adopted a range of differing approaches to customer support points at stations to meet their commitments within their ATPs and passenger and Passenger Body feedback. However, provision remains patchy, with ORR's **Reliability of help points at stations** (*The Office of Road and Rail Report on the Reliability of help points at stations 2024*) report published in November 2024 highlighting varied and inconsistent approaches to the provision, maintenance, and monitoring of help points across the rail network. The findings indicated unreliable support for passengers especially for customers with accessibility needs.

With the move to public ownership and establishing Great British Railways, a better, more consistent approach is required across the network. The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) already supports operators with network-wide service provision, and is dedicated to ensuring that railway travel is inclusive and accessible for all customers through the provision of a range of central services, including the Passenger Assist service.

2.1 Welcome Points

To enable a more coherent approach and develop a consistent customer offer to supplement and enhance existing support, the RDG has developed the concept of **Welcome Points**. The intent of a station Welcome Point is to serve as a consistent, recognisable location near station entrances where passengers, particularly those with accessibility needs, can get information on their travel, or summon assistance.

To confirm the viability and effectiveness of the Welcome Point concept, the RDG, supported by the DfT, has co-ordinated trials of different options at a range of stations across England. This centralised approach and trial have the benefit of ensuring consistency and enabled a common approach to evaluation, aligning passenger interests and broader policy objectives.

The Welcome Point trial was conducted from December 2024 through to April 2025, ensuring a minimum trial period of three months at each of the chosen locations. Utilising the core Design Principles agreed with a range of design experts, accessibility panels and stakeholders, three Welcome Point units were developed with different suppliers, blending existing technologies already in use at stations with new innovations to better support passengers with specific needs.

The Welcome Points were placed at 37 stations across England. The TOCs and other bodies who have participated in the trial are:

- East Midlands Railway
- Govia Thameslink Railway
- Great Western Railway
- Greater Anglia
- Northern
- Southeastern
- TransPennine Express
- Transport for London
- Network Rail

This report provides insights from the trial evaluation, to help stakeholders understand what the project team has learned about the staff and customers' experience at stations with the introduction of Welcome Points, and the emerging conclusions for the future provision of support at stations.

3 Understanding the customer need

Customers want information about a wide range of journey related queries, a significant proportion of those who need information or assistance at stations are disabled.

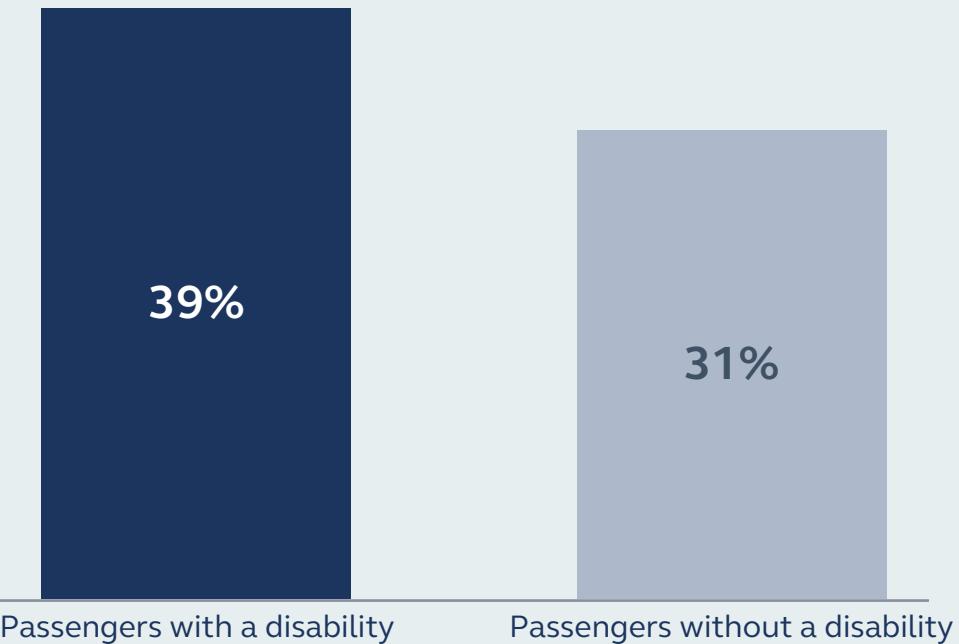
Previous research shows that information and assistance provisions can sometimes disadvantage disabled passengers. 21% experience a problem at the journey planning stage and 9% at the station (*Research on experiences of disabled rail passengers, Department for Transport, 2019, page 17*), and over half of these report a lack of confidence. Problems experienced at the journey planning stage include not being able to find enough information and not being able to find enough accessible information. (*Research on experiences of disabled rail passengers, Department for Transport, 2019, page 7, 14*)

At the station, signs, information boards and announcements can be unclear or unsuitable for the needs or abilities of disabled customers, often being too small to read, or not being clear or loud enough to hear, creating a barrier to travel for disabled customers. Additional qualitative research has identified informational barriers for disabled customers at stations, such as a lack of provision for live and up to date information on station and train facilities and inaccessible live train information (particularly a barrier to rail travel for those with hearing and visual impairments.) (*Disabled people's experiences of rail, Department for Transport, 2025, pages 38-40*) Accessibility features at stations can also be unavailable, out of order, or inconsistent, making the journey difficult, confusing, or impossible for disabled customers. (*Research on experiences of disabled rail passengers, Department for Transport, 2019, pages 30-33*)

Accessible information provision is varied across the station network. Across Great Britain, 12% of large, 23% of medium and 64% of small stations have either low quality or no audio and visual announcements. 14% of stations do not have customer information screens and 51% do not have printed information in place. (*National Rail Stations Accessibility: Key Findings Report, GBRTT, 2024, page 28*)

During your time at this station today, did you use information or assistance?

Those answering **yes** or that they had been looking for information or assistance

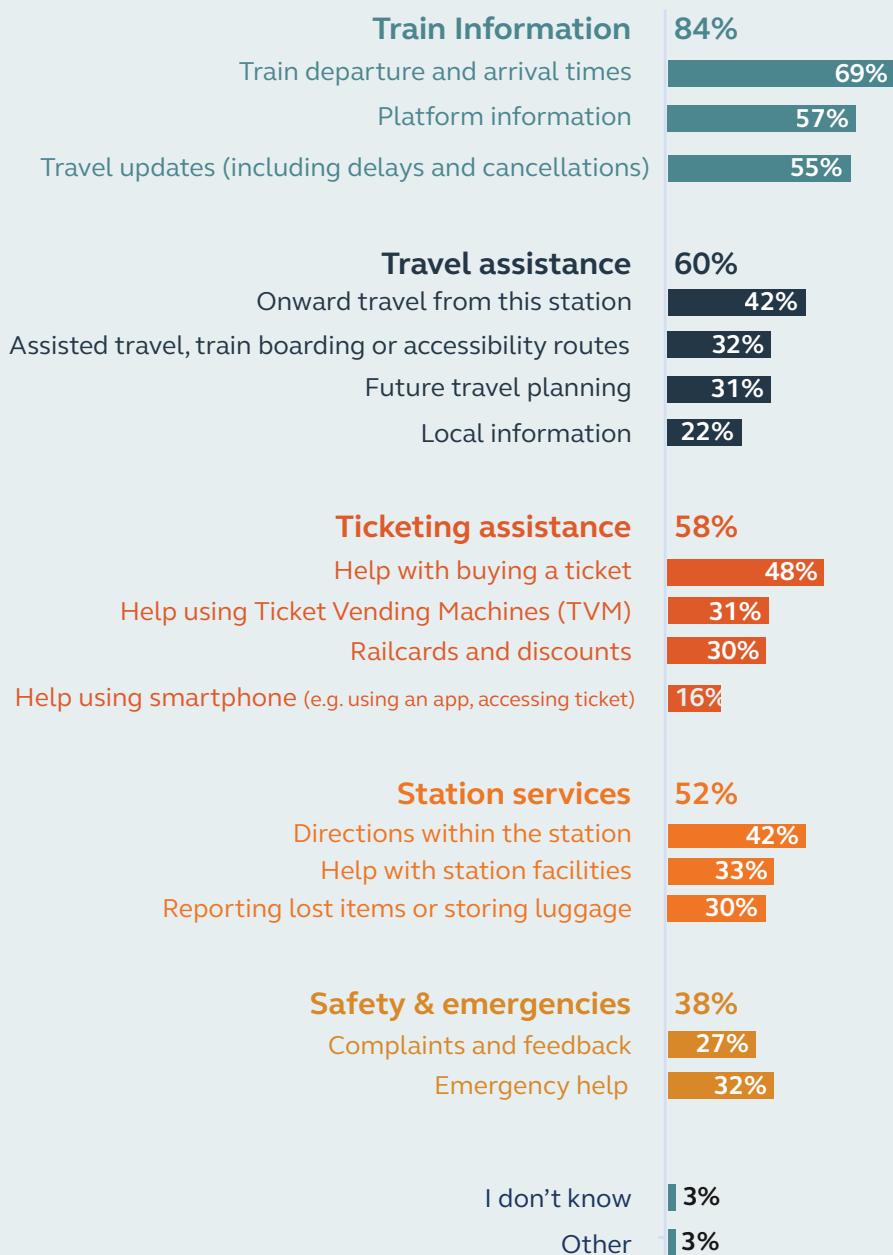


Welcome Points Evaluation Benchmarking Wave, Station Users, disabled (192), no disability (1,199)

Almost 1 in 3 (31%) station users without a disability had looked for information or assistance in the station on the day of their visit. This increases to 2 in 5 (39%) of station users with a disability.

Customers expect support in stations to be available for a range of different queries and requests. Information and assistance channels in stations need to offer support to cover a breadth of different topics and areas. In the baseline measure, 84% expected support across train information, 60% travel assistance, 58% ticketing assistance, 52% station services, and 38% safety and emergencies.

What would you expect information or assistance at this station to help you with?



Welcome Points Evaluation Benchmarking Wave, Station Users, (1,439)

4 Objective and design principles

The objective of the Welcome Point Trial has been to determine the effectiveness of a Welcome Point concept and design against the agreed Design Principles, at different station types and sizes. The trial also had the objective to assess the differing benefits of physical form, features and arrangements for contacting staff to best support the customer need.

The trial findings are to inform a decision on the broader adoption of Welcome Points on the rail network and refine the approach, design and alignment of Welcome Points alongside other passenger services.

4.1 *Design principles*

The intent of a Welcome Point is to provide a recognised and consistent focal point at stations across all train operators to ensure that all customers, irrespective of their circumstances or familiarity with a specific station or train travel can access the information they require and be supported where necessary in the use of other customer support points and station services.

To achieve this, seven **Design Principles** for the Welcome Point were developed and agreed with a range of design experts, accessibility panels and stakeholders:

1. **Placement** - Obvious from the main station entrance(s)
2. **Recognition** - Customers should be able to recognise the Welcome Point as a place to seek assistance and support at any station irrespective of the train operator at that station
3. **Accessibility** - Be accessible to all, especially to customers with disabilities
4. **Information** - Enable the provision of consistent information on station facilities and service times
5. **Advice** - Enable the provision of clear advice on common customer questions on services at and from that station
6. **Support** - Provide access to further support if / when it is required
7. **Availability** - Subject to station location, this could be 24/7, or only at times the station is open

The Design Principles form the basis from which impact and success could be measured, to help understand the extent to which the Welcome Points effectively address the identified needs and achieve the intended impact. For this reason, the success criteria demonstrate how well Welcome Points perform against the Design Principles. For example, in terms of the information principle, through the evaluation, we wanted to measure how well Welcome Points have enabled the provision of consistent information on station facilities and service times.



5 Trial scope

DfT commissioned RDG to undertake trial of Welcome Points at c.30 stations in England, representing a cross-section of station types and usage. Specifically, the trial was to include:

- **Design and Development of the Welcome Point units.** This included the development of alternative units, with differing specifications, costs and functions for assessment.
- **Design and Agreement of the Assessment Methodology.** This included the engagement of external support to provide:
 - Baseline assessment to determine current support and experience of passengers requiring assistance at stations
 - Trial assessment to determine the impact of introducing Welcome Points at stations on the passenger experience
- **Roll-out of the Welcome Points.** Agreement with local operators for the placement and operation of the trial units for the trial period. This included proactive local liaison with staff and necessary familiarisation, or training required.
- **Assessment of Welcome Points.** Gathering and analysing feedback, monitoring and reporting on unit feedback by location, and documentation of findings.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback.** Working with known stakeholder groups to promote the concept of Welcome Points and seek broader community feedback outside of the station usage assessment.

The trial scope was limited to staffed stations so that the Welcome Points could be monitored and maintained locally, and existing staffing and processes would be available to respond to requests for assistance. The processes for unstaffed stations will need to be different. The trial has enabled RDG to collate data on usage and survey expectations of passengers outside of staffed hours when some trial stations were unstaffed, for further development, should Welcome Points be found to be effective through the trial.

Following initial planning the scope of the trial was refined to the provision of three Welcome Point models with differing features and functionalities, installed and assessed at 37 stations across England for a period of at least 3 months at each location. The scope was restricted to the use of mobile units only, due to the temporary nature of the trial that prohibited any fixed units and required the trial units to be free-standing, and battery powered.

Additionally, due to the temporary nature of the units, it was not possible to introduce more permanent wayfinding fixtures such as changing directional signage at stations or installing tactile paving, which had been identified as potential accessibility improvements. Without these improvements in scope, the assessment is limited to the unit itself rather than the broader concept.

The specific limitations of the trial locations also meant that some Welcome Points units were not positioned in the preferred, or ideal location due to current station layouts and the need for proximity to existing power sockets for charging.



6 Welcome Point design

Through the Welcome Points we are introducing a new channel that is intended to provide a range of support as well as assisted travel services that are key for disabled passengers. The Welcome Point concept and units were designed and developed accounting for the following:

1. Accessibility stakeholder feedback and input, to ensure the learnings from the passengers were included from the outset of the design.
2. Usability and accessibility design best practice, to ensure design concepts and approaches from other industries and experts were included.
3. Alignment and reuse of existing rail technology and initiatives, to accelerate and reduce the cost and complexity of development and rollout.

6.1 Stakeholder engagement

Our engagement with a wide range of accessibility stakeholders has been fundamental to ensuring the Welcome Points concept and design will meet its stated objectives and work on the ground for disabled customers. From early stages of development, policy experts and representatives were consulted, many of whom have lived experience through a range of disabilities. The feedback we received has been incorporated into final designs.

Our audience has included Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Disability Rights UK, Guide Dogs UK, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Thomas Pocklington Trust, Whizz Kids, Disability Studies – Leeds University, Northern Accessibility Panel, and Disability Equality North-West.

The consultations identified some key considerations that informed the final design, including locating the unit at busy stations and interaction with the call for assistance functionality. Through the consultation process stakeholders identified specific requirements that Welcome Points:

- Serve as a focal point for information and assistance, obvious from main station entrances.
- Enable customers to summon assistance from staff who may be in a different part of the station.
- Are inclusive and accessible to all, including for the visually impaired, with induction loops where needed.

- Differentiate between information seeking (self-serve) and more complex assistance requests (in person).
- Can provide access to further support if required.
- Enable customers to get advice on common questions, for example about station services and support with using Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs).

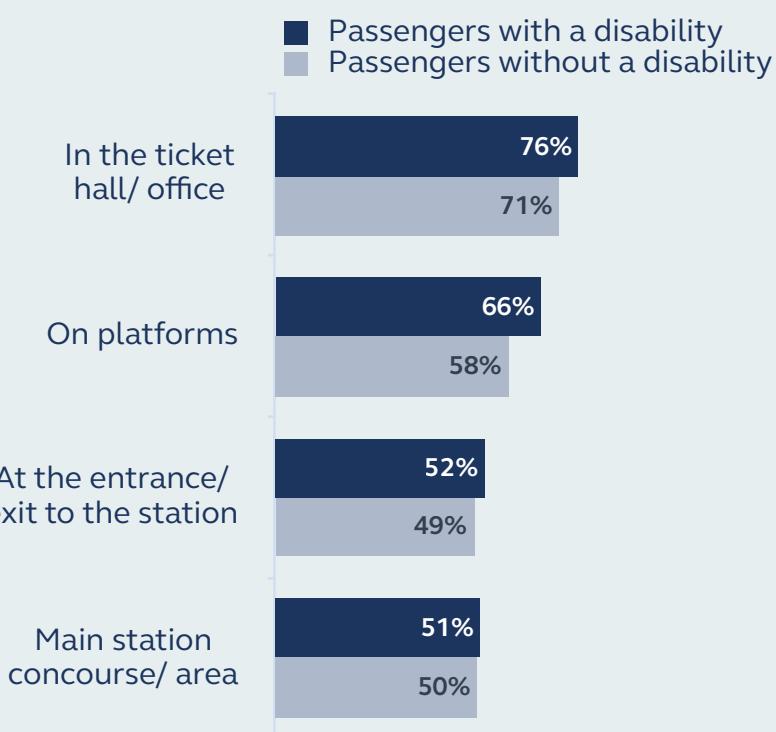
6.2 **Usability and design best practice**

By working with an external design agency with experience of stations and accessibility, the Welcome Point design was refined to adopt best practice where possible. The refinement included:

- **Visual & Physical Design** (yellow on black high contrast cabinet): The units stand out in busy station environments, making them easily recognisable arrival focal points.
- **Communications** (both call only and two-way communication capability): The touchscreen units support live audio (and potentially video) links to remote staff, enabling real-time interaction even when staff are not present.
- **Support functionality** (including journey information & station maps): interactive models display real-time departure boards, route planners, and station layout maps, helping passengers orient themselves as they arrive.
- **Personalised reassurance:** upon pressing sensors or buttons, automated on-screen and voice confirmation signals staff engagement (“staff are on their way”), including British Sign Language visualisation.

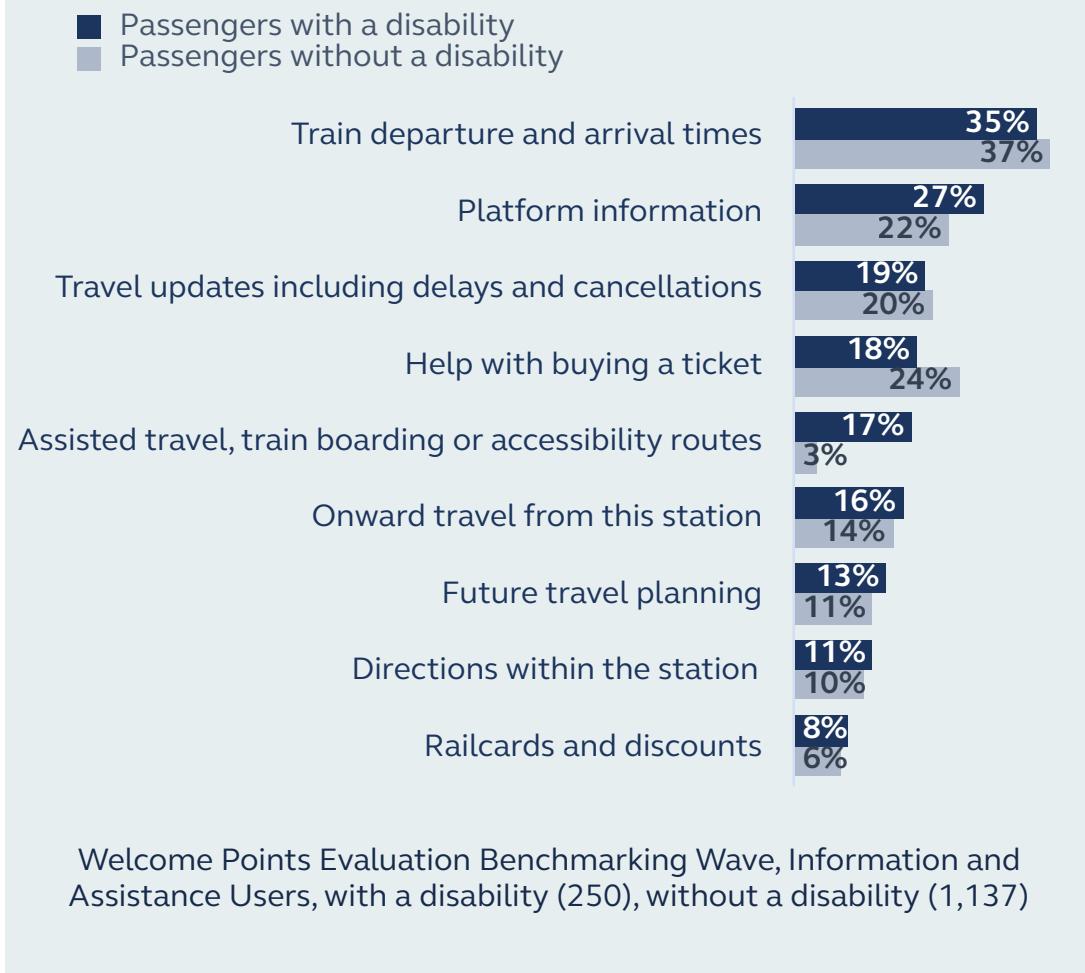
Offering information and assistance channels which can be accessed at any part of a journey is key to catering to the needs of customers with a disability. For this reason, we have focused on developing units that can be located at a consistent place close to entrances. Customers, on arrival, can obtain information about their journey and station information that may be helpful as they progress through the station. This will mean that in some stations the Welcome Points may be placed in ticket halls and/or on station concourses.

“Where in the station would you expect to find information or assistance?”



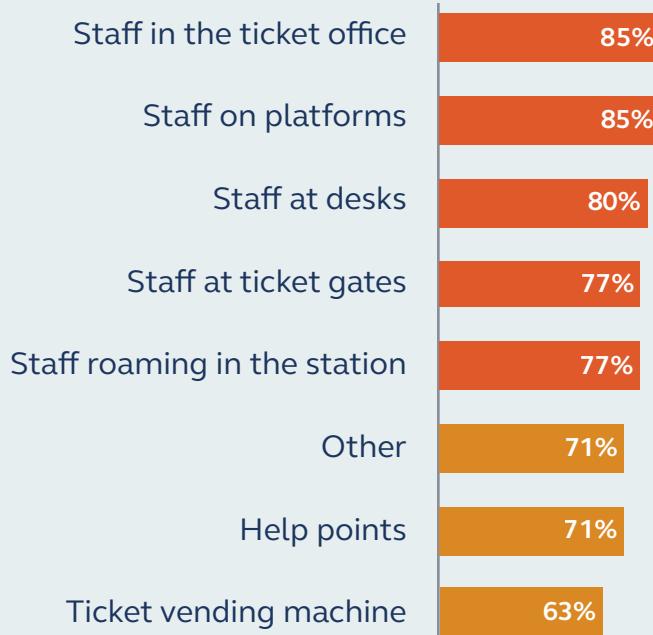
Welcome Points Evaluation Benchmarking Wave, Information and Assistance Users, with a disability (250), without a disability (1,137)

“What information or assistance were you looking for?”



It is also clear that staff are mostly delivering on customer needs, however there is room to improve the information and assistance provision of channels which support staff. The Welcome Points trial has provided an opportunity to do this.

“To what extent did information and assistance at this station meet your needs?”



Welcome Points Evaluation Benchmarking Wave, Information and Assistance Users, Staff in ticket office (484) Staff at desks (69) Staff roaming (160) Staff on platforms (216) Staff at ticket gates (233) Ticket Vending Machines (91) Help Points (48) Other (141)

6.3 Concept / technology reuse

The rail industry already has several different approaches and solutions in place to support passengers throughout their journey. As shown in the table below, these different approaches were assessed during the Welcome Point design process to determine what features, functions and technologies were effective and where previous approaches would not meet the objectives set out for Welcome Points.

An example is the wide use of induction loops to support those with hearing difficulties and included as a key element of the Welcome Point design. Conversely, the visibility and location of some support services, such as Help Points, reinforced the need to take an alternative approach.

The assessment of the suitability of existing solutions is supported by ORR's report on Reliability of help points at stations (*The Office of Road and Rail Report on the Reliability of help points at stations*) which found that whilst the average usage of Help points is less than one call per station per day indicating they are not the primary means of support, they remain a critical fallback for passengers needing assistance. More detail on the ORR's findings on Help Points is provided at Appendix A.

To address the limitations and maximise reuse of the current offering for customers, including Help Points as highlighted in the ORR's report, the Welcome Points were designed building on existing solutions available for stations, whilst introducing new features into a new solution. A key element of reuse for one type of Welcome Point was to adopt the core structure of Digital Information Totems previously developed and in use at some stations. These Totems already provided many good features which could be enhanced through the learnings from the best practice accessibility design and stakeholder consultations. This also dramatically reduced the design and development costs and timescales.

	Welcome Point	Help Point	Staffed Information Desk	Ticket Office	Digital Information Totem	Passenger Assistance Meeting Point	Current Staff role (eg. Customer Ambassador)
Focal point for info / assistance obvious from main station entrances	100%	25%	50%	50%	25%	25%	25%
Ability for passengers to summon assistance from staff who may be in a different part of the station	100%	25%	25%	0%	25%	25%	N/A
Accessible to all - including for the visually impaired	100%	0%	25%	50%	100%	25%	0%
Provision of Induction Loops	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	0%
Differentiate between information seeking (self-serve) and more complex requests (in-person)	100%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%
Can provide access to further support if required	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%
Able to get advice on common passenger questions on station services, ticket purchase options and use of TVMs	100%	0%	100%	100%	25%	25%	100%

Figure 1: High Level Assessment of Alternative Passenger Support Services

6.4 Final trial models

Three types of Welcome Points were developed through the design process:

1. **Interactive Touchscreen Units** (used at stations like Sheffield and Manchester Victoria): These feature a full digital interface with live departure information, journey planning, station maps, and British Sign Language translation. Two versions were tested:
 - a. **Unit 1:** Tactile call button on the **side**, plus interactive touchscreen with AI British Sign Language translation and a flip screen mode for wheelchair users.
 - b. **Unit 2:** Tactile call button on the **front**, similar interactive features including British Sign Language videos.
2. **Assistance Request Only Units** (used at stations like Nottingham, Lincoln and Chesterfield): Simpler design focused on notifying staff for help with a large tactile button with a QR code to access information but no additional features.
 - a. **Unit 3:** Includes new assistive beacon technology for blind users providing audio directions to locate the Welcome Point and describe the layout of the features, touch-free call button, with British Sign Language, audio, and text messages on activation.



Figure 2: Welcome Point Units 1,2 and 3

6.5 Environmental impact considerations

During design and manufacture stages we worked with suppliers who take a robust and proactive approach to sustainability, integrating environmental responsibility across all aspects of operations, from material selection to energy efficiency, low carbon manufacturing and product lifecycle management including end-of-life disposal, with supply chain partners who also uphold environmentally sound and ethical standards.

When delivering and installing units at stations, at all times suppliers attempted to minimise environmental disruption, ensuring energy consumption and power management for efficient energy use as well as durability so that products are built to last in high-use environments to reduce replacement frequency.

Over 60% of the Welcome Points will remain in-situ after the trial to provide an ongoing service for customers, but for those that we need to remove to accommodate the requirements received during the trial, suppliers will support us with responsible disposal and reuse. Materials and components are recyclable, and our suppliers offer take-back schemes or refurbishment.

6.6 Trial station identification and Welcome Point allocation

To ensure the widest range of passenger ‘use cases’ and scenarios could be tested, the trial set out to include a range of different size stations and staffing arrangements. The station selection across the participant TOCs therefore was based on the following criteria:

- **Size** - An equal distribution of small, medium and large stations across the breadth of their stations, including one London Terminal.
- **Location** - A fair geographical distribution across England.
- **Staffing arrangements** - A mix of staffing arrangements to include part-time staffed and single staffed stations.
- **Current assistance** - A range of Passenger Assist rates.

RDG visited 75 stations to check the suitability for introducing a Welcome Point, and reviewed aspects such as space, ceiling heights, power availability and all safety or security considerations. This also provided the opportunity to actively involve station colleagues at each station in decisions about the location and the type of Welcome Point unit at each station. At some stations it was necessary to install two Welcome Point units to have additional opportunities for further findings.

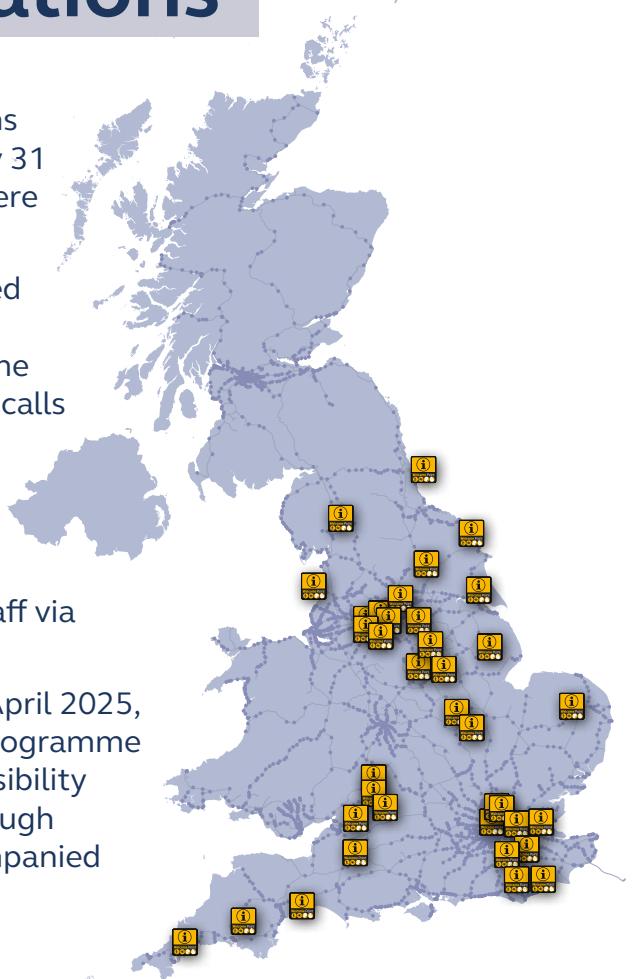
7 Trial rollout at stations

The rollout of Welcome Points at trial stations began in December 2024, with 36 in place by 31 January 2025. In total, 37 Welcome Points were introduced by 7 February 2025.

Station staff training sessions were conducted to familiarise and equip employees with information on the operability of the Welcome Points and also processes for facilitating the calls for assistance.

Subject to the operational requirements of the TOCs involved in the trial, two call routing processes were tried: calls direct to station staff and calls routed to station staff via contact centres.

Since their introduction at stations until 30 April 2025, RDG initiated a comprehensive evaluation programme involving real customers, focussing on accessibility needs, assessing impact and experience through in-station customer intercept surveys, accompanied journeys and station staff interviews.



Station	Unit
Blackpool North	2
Bristol Parkway	3
Castle Cary	1
Chesterfield	3
Deansgate	2
Derby	1
Farringdon	2
Gatwick Airport	2x2
Gloucester	3
Harrogate	2
Harrow and Wealdstone	1
Hastings	2
Hazel Grove	1

Station	Unit
Huddersfield	2
Hull	3
Kemble	3
Kettering	3
Lewes	3
Lincoln	3
Liskeard	1
London Cannon Street	3
Manchester Airport	2&3
Manchester Victoria	1
Market Harborough	3

Station	Unit
Norwich	2
Nottingham	3
Orpington	2x3
Rochester	1
Scarborough	2
Sheffield	1
St Erth	2
Stroud	2
Sunderland	2
Teignmouth	1
Tonbridge	2
Willesden Junction	2
Windermere	1

8 Evaluation approach

The **Design Principles** underpinning all aspects of the trial (detailed in Section 4) have determined the trial **success criteria**, formed the basis for measuring the impact of the Welcome Points at stations as well as informed the approach to the formal evaluation.

To understand what is working well and where we need to improve, the success criteria for each of the Design Principles has been measured by:

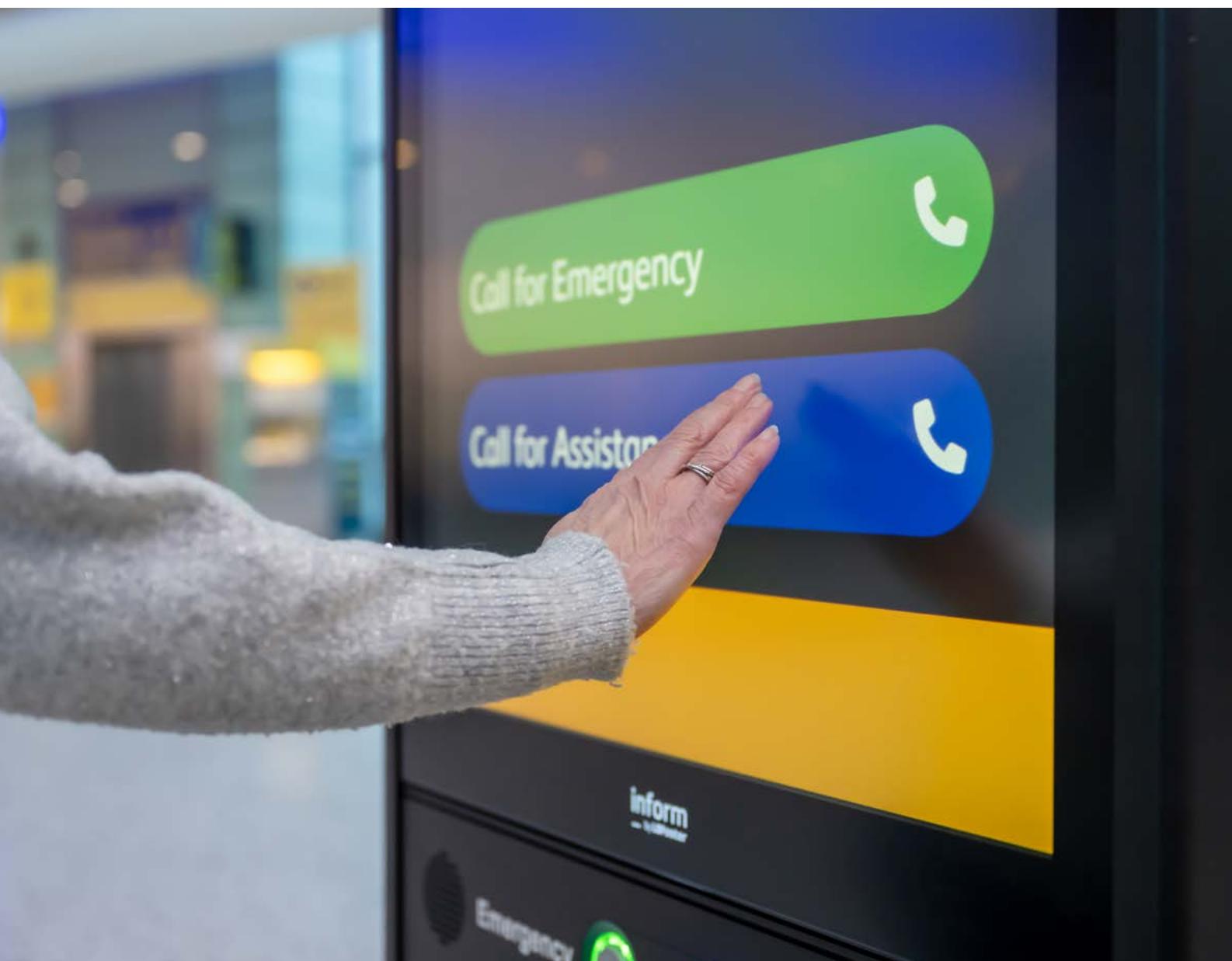
1. **Placement:** How easily can customers locate the Welcome Points from the main station entrance(s)?
2. **Recognition:** Do the Welcome Points stand out and can they be recognised as a place to seek assistance and support at any station irrespective of the train operator at that station?
3. **Accessibility:** Are they effectively accessible to all, especially to customers with disabilities?
4. **Information:** Do they effectively enable the provision of consistent information on station facilities and service times?
5. **Advice:** Do they effectively enable the provision of clear advice on common customer questions on services at and from that station?
6. **Support:** Do they provide effective access to further support if / when it is required?
7. **Availability:** Are they available when required by customers?

In summary, the evaluation approach included:

- **Customer Surveys.** To compare awareness and experiences before and after Welcome Point installation. Half the surveys targeted general station users; the other half targeted support/info users (baseline) or Welcome Point users (trial). Two waves of face-to-face surveys were conducted across all trial stations:
 - Baseline Survey (Sept–Nov 2024), with **2,230** responses (**1,439** general station users (representative sample), and **1,442** users of existing support channels (e.g. staff help, info desks))
 - Trial Survey (Jan–Mar 2025) - Total responses: **1,751**, **1,410** general station users, **193** natural Welcome Point users, **130** recruited to try the Welcome Point during the survey
 - Included in the customer surveys was measurement of the performance of Welcome Points (and other support channels in the baseline assessment) against the seven Design Principles

- **Accompanied Journeys.** 90-minute in-person sessions focusing on station experience and Welcome Point usability. Participants included a wide range of disabilities, ages, and digital confidence levels. **24 interviews** were conducted with disabled customers at **12 stations**.
- **Staff Interviews.** 20-minute interviews focused on staff impressions of Welcome Points and their impact on customer service. **29 staff members** were interviewed at the **same 12 stations**.
- **Welcome Point Usage Data.** Data collected from all unit types (3 models), for monitoring performance and anomalies and identifying improvement opportunities. This included **Touchscreen use** (date, time, type) and **Call for assistance** (date, time, response) functionality.

Further details on the evaluation approach including methodology, sample sizes and limitations can be found at **Appendix B**.



9 Summary of key findings

Insights gathered from the Trial indicate the following:

1. **Organic adoption has taken place:** Customers are using Welcome Points independently, with no need for promotional efforts.
2. **Customer usage is need driven, not linked to station size:** From 5 Dec 2024 to 30 Apr 2025, there were approx. 31,286 unique visits, on par with Passenger Assist numbers.
3. **Units have high technical reliability,** with 98.1% uptime; minor downtime due to network issues.
4. **Customer satisfaction is high:** 93% of users are satisfied, showing Welcome Points meet expectations. 99% of disabled users are satisfied.
5. **Welcome Points reduce travel barriers:** Disabled customers find them helpful for information and support.
6. **Used comparably to the other technology at stations:** Used marginally more frequently than Help Points and Ticket Vending Machines, though staff interaction remains preferred. For disabled customers Welcome Points are the second most used channel after ticket office staff.
7. **Perform well against Design Principles:** Especially effective for information and advice, with scope for improvement in other areas.
8. **Placement needs to be consistent:** Need to ensure positioning near station entrances
9. **Improve the overall journey experience:** Welcome Points improve journeys by providing clear, accessible support, especially for disabled customers.
10. **Operational efficiency has improved during the trial:** changes were introduced to support staff with responding to customer requests for help more efficiently.
11. **Staff Feedback was positive:** seeing Welcome Points as a useful customer service tool.

9.1 Measuring against the design principles

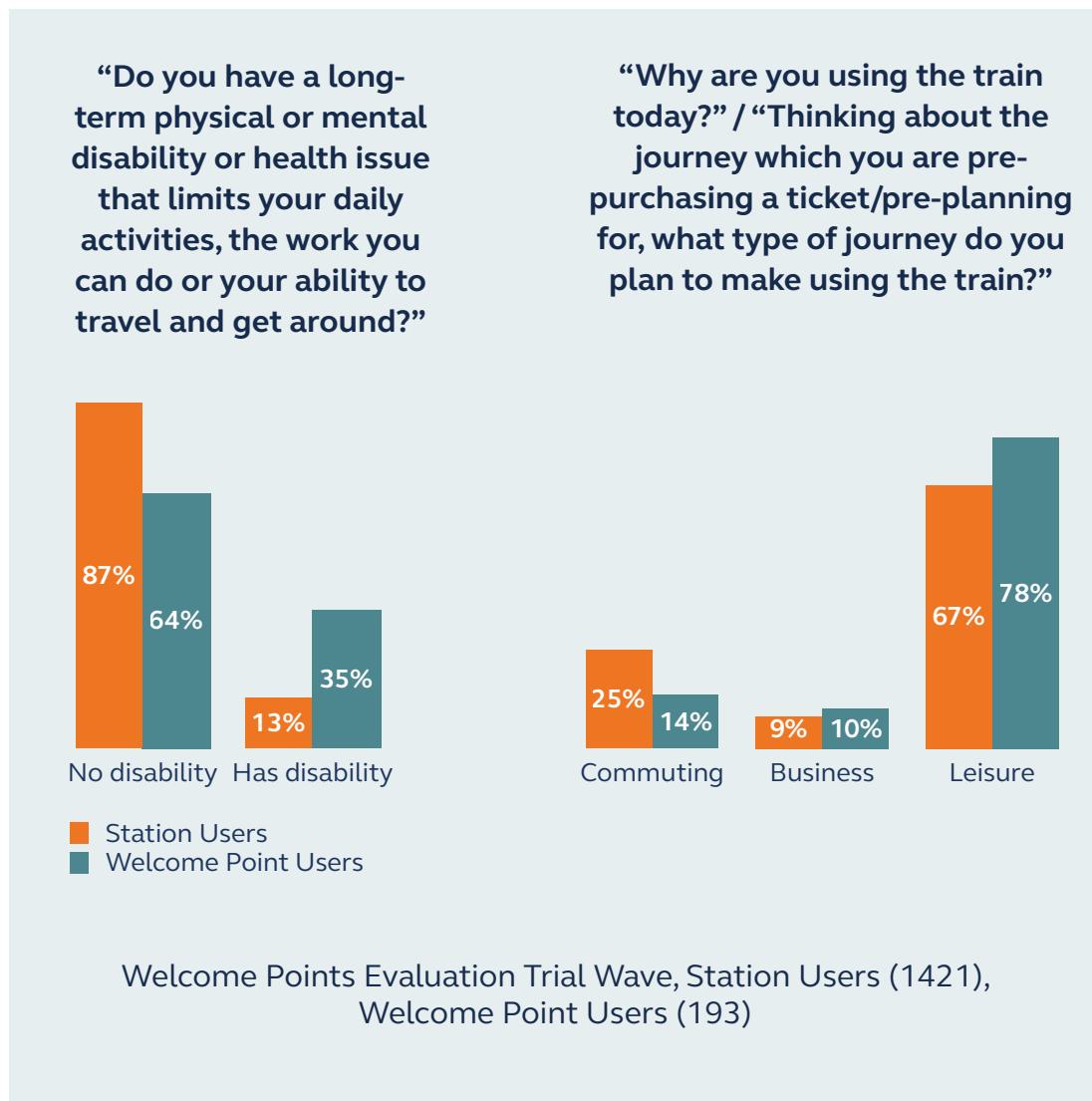
The Design Principles have provided a framework for assessing success of the Welcome Points Trial (the success criteria). Based on their performance against these Design Principles, it is evident that the Welcome Points are effectively fulfilling their objective of improving customer experience at stations:

Principle name	Principle description	% of Welcome Point users that agree	% of disabled Welcome Point users that agree
Advice	“The information / assistance I received from the Welcome Point was clear and understandable”	93%	99%
Availability	“The Welcome Point is available when I want it”	90%	93%
Accessibility	“The Welcome Point is easy to access at this station”	90%	93%
Support	“I can easily get any assistance, advice or support I need from the Welcome Point”	88%	94%
Information	“I can easily get information about the station or my journey from the Welcome Point”	88%	93%
Placement	“The Welcome Point is in a location easy to find”	84%	81%
Recognition	“It is clear I should go to the Welcome Point to find information / assistance”	82%	93%
Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Points Users (193), Disabled Welcome Points Users (68)			

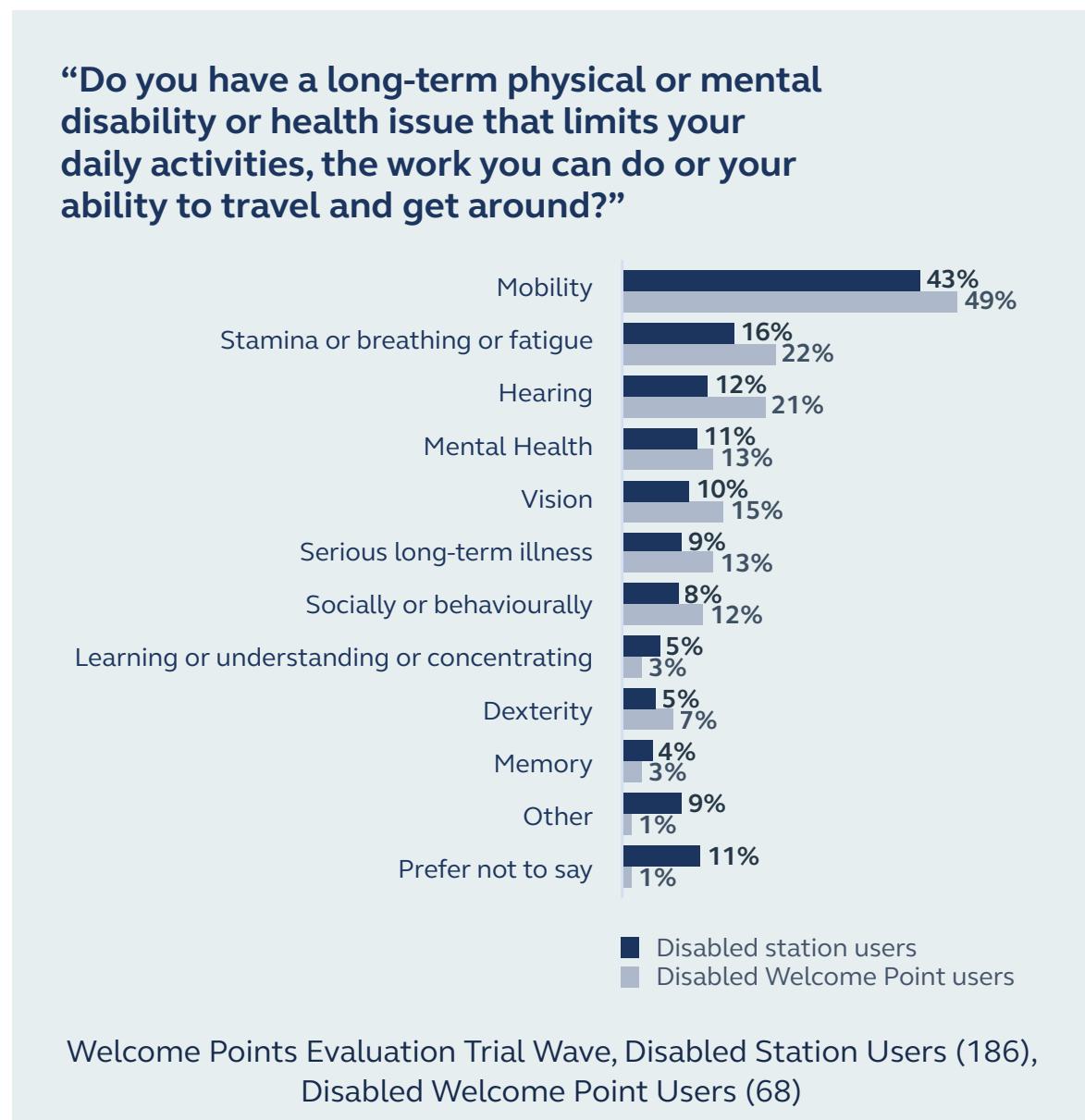
The findings do, however, show room to improve placement and recognition of the Welcome Points. This is largely due to trial constraints limiting location options at some stations, suggesting the need to make adaptations to some current station environments to ensure Welcome Points can be placed at preferred locations near entrances. It highlights the need to align with the key principle of ensuring Welcome Points are positioned close to station entrances.

9.2 User profile - who has been using the Welcome Points?

Disabled station users are significantly more likely to use the Welcome Point than those without a disability. Welcome Point users are also more likely to travel for leisure than station users overall.



The range of disabilities that Welcome Point users have is comparable to those among the station user population, though Welcome Point users are somewhat more likely to have a hearing impairment.



9.3 Welcome Points usage data

Welcome Points at stations have been organically adopted by customers without any formal awareness campaigns. To date, there have been 31,286 unique visits, with users primarily engaging via the touchscreen (83% of interactions), seeking travel-related information such as arrivals and departures (50%) and onward journey details (15%). Calls for assistance account for 17% of usage, totalling 5,308 calls. Usage volume does not directly correlate with station size or category.

Accessibility features are actively used, with nearly 20% of interactions involving functions like screen height adjustment, colour contrast changes, and British Sign Language (BSL) translation. Language options are accessed in about 3% of interactions. Notably, 14% of all usage occurs during unstaffed hours, enabling access to information independently of station staff.

Units 1 and 2 show consistent usage patterns, with a small percentage of interactions involving calls for help (5% and 8%, respectively) and predominant use for live travel information. The screen flip feature is the most used accessibility tool across these units.

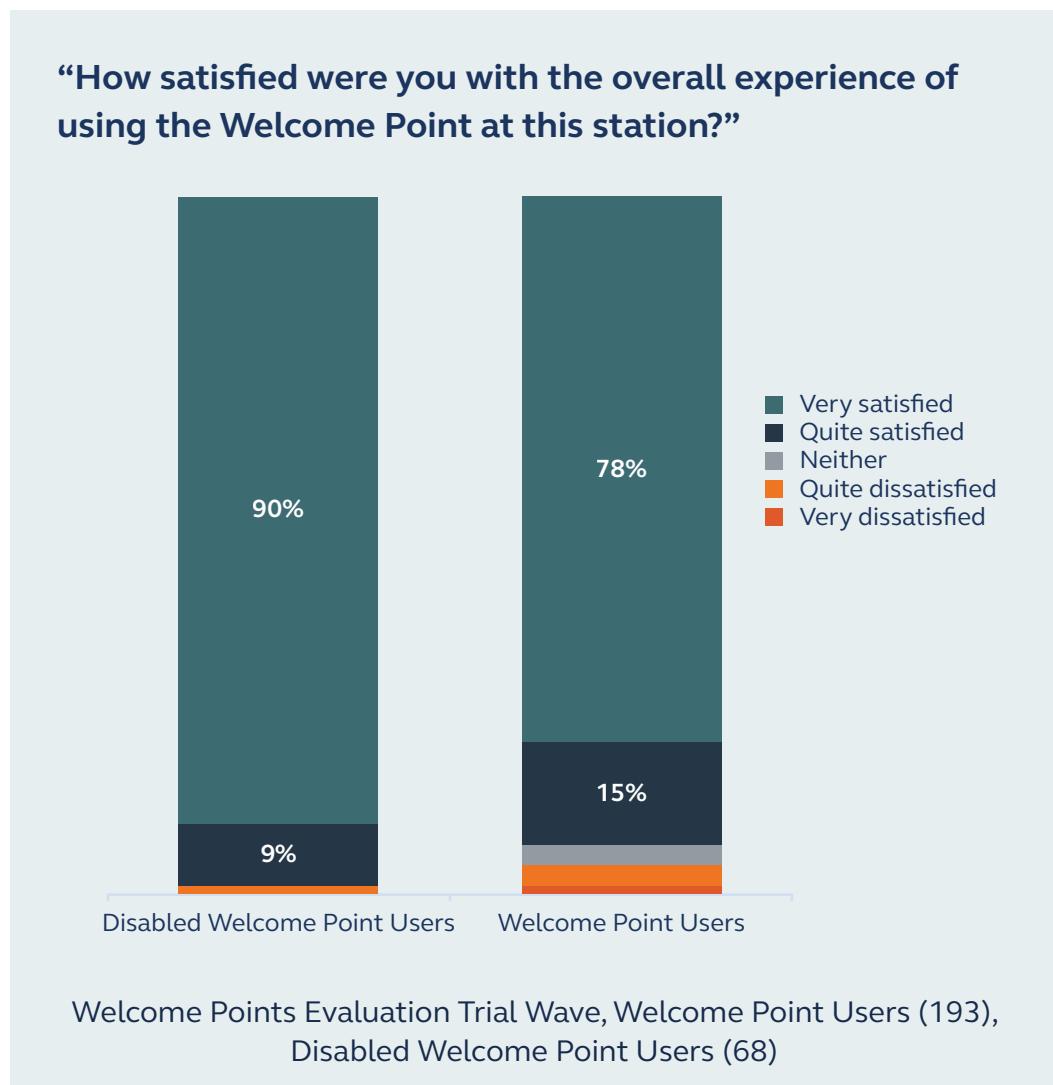
Data from Units 1 and 3 on calls for assistance highlighted some unanswered calls, often due to factors like staff attending to other critical duties or providing in-person help without answering the call. Enhancements during the trial such as adjusting ring length, reducing false call sensitivity, and implementing two-step verification have improved response rates.

Overall, the Welcome Points demonstrate strong technical reliability, being operational 98.1% of the trial period, with any downtime mostly caused by network issues.

Further detail on the data generated by the Welcome Points, including graphs to show the breakdowns across the different Welcome Point units and trial stations can be found at **Appendix C**.

9.4 Customer satisfaction

93% of customers who used the Welcome Points expressed that they were satisfied with their experience and felt that their needs were met. Satisfaction among disabled users is even higher at 99%, with 90% being very satisfied.



Despite their recent introduction, Welcome Points have been used as frequently as other contact channels like Help Points and Ticket Vending Machines at 4%. Use of the Welcome Points rises to 17% among disabled customers, making it the second most-used support channel after staffed ticket offices (22%) for that group.

Overall, customers are most satisfied when they can interact with station staff directly for information and assistance, but among disabled customers Welcome Points perform comparably to interactions with staff across most of the Design Principles. While staff provide more personalised assistance, Welcome Points offer clear information and the option to call for help. There is scope for improving where in stations they are located to ensure they are positioned close to station entrances.

Welcome Points improve journey experiences with 85% of users saying they improved their overall journey; 52% said it made the experience “a lot better.”

Further details on the findings from the customer surveys, including how customer experience of Welcome Points compares to other channels for information and assistance at stations can be found at [Appendix D](#).

9.5 *How Welcome Points are helping customers*

Qualitative interviews with disabled customers while using Welcome Points on their journeys have shown that this group is very positive towards them. Welcome Points provide a set place to receive information in an accessible way. Accessibility features are highly valued, including Beacon navigation, British Sign Language translation, call for assistance buttons, and features such as large text and high-contrast screen options.

Welcome Point calls are programmed to be answered within 5 rings (15 seconds) before the call hands over or diverts to a different phone number. Response times for staff to respond to calls and notifications requesting staff attend customers at the Welcome Point vary depending on the Welcome Point placement in stations.



Helping customers overcome barriers

The interviews have highlighted a number of barriers relating to information, train travel and the overall station environment that customers have said the Welcome Points have helped address.

Identifying and approaching staff	Anxiety in the station environment	Difficulty processing audio information	Inaccessible information boards	Inability to speak to staff (owing to impairment)
A set point for staff to meet customers that is easy to spot within the station rather than customers needing to approach staff	Providing a clearly designated point to contact staff, customers can feel assured that they can reach staff	Customers can independently find the information they need without having to rely on audio announcements.	A dedicated place to read information on a clear display at eye level at the customer's own pace (units 1 and 2)	Alternative access to support, particularly for those who struggle to communicate with staff
	Tools such as the 'Station Information' page on Unit 1 allow customers to look up information independently	Enabling customers to process information in their own time without pressure – particularly useful for neurodivergent customers	Accessibility features such as large text, icons and high contrast screen	Simplified process for initiating a conversation when staff are needed

Customer case studies at stations illustrating how the Welcome Points are addressing these barriers can be found at [Appendix E](#).

9.6 Staff feedback

Staff generally support Welcome Points, especially in busy or understaffed stations, viewing them as helpful in reducing routine queries. Features like Journey Planning and BSL translation are valued. However, misuse of call buttons and lack of two-way communication at some units caused frustration. Welcome Points are thought to be most useful in large or less-staffed stations. At smaller, well-staffed stations, staff consider that customers prefer approaching staff directly for face-to-face help.

Staff face several barriers when answering assistance calls, including:

1. Staff unavailability due to other duties,
2. Short ring times,
3. Lack of familiarity with the system,
4. Poor audio quality,
5. Challenges for hearing-impaired users, and
6. The lack of two-way communication for Unit 3 stations.

Factors that enable better response rates include the proximity of Welcome Points to help desks or gatelines, lower station footfall, and clear understanding of staff roles.

Staff have highlighted the need for improved disability awareness training and increased communication to understand the Welcome Points' purpose and functionality. This would help build confidence in the technology and how it can be used to support their roles.



10 Refining the Welcome Point final design

Through the surveys and interviews, we understand how well the different design elements are working and preferences of customers and staff for different features.

The overwhelming majority of those surveyed believe that the Welcome Points do stand out at stations.

87% of customers think the colours and the branding of Unit 1 stands out a lot or quite a lot, 88% say the same about Unit 2 and 95% about unit 3.

During the trial, station staff identified opportunities for improvement and the project team was able to promptly address those, making enhancements to the Welcome Points while in situ, for instance:

- Battery optimisation,
- Extending the ring time to allow staff more time to answer calls,
- Renewing the server to activate the audio and redirect NRE locations to a new server,
- Amending the language of the customer feedback option on unit 2,
- Placing a notice on unit 3 to clearly identify this as a contact point to reach staff,
- Introducing a two-step verification for unit 3 so that customers are asked to verify that they want to contact staff.

Customers have also highlighted what could be improved in future versions of the units:

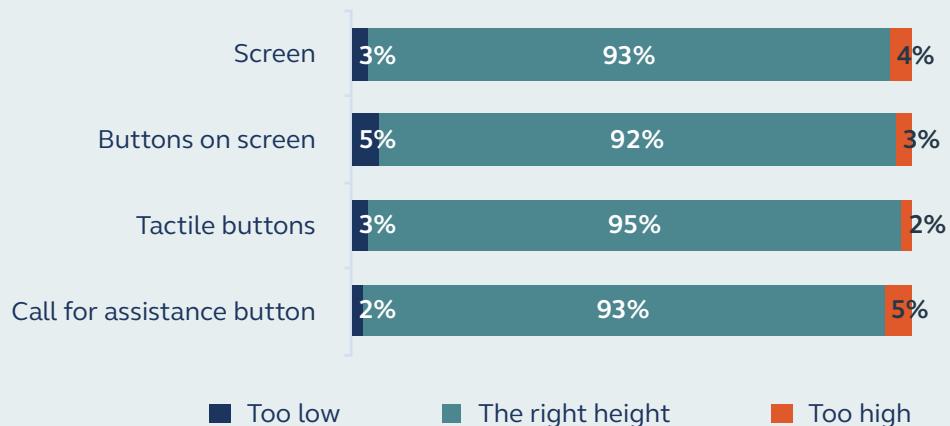
- There could be further consideration of call button positioning on the Welcome Points.

The screens on the units are the right height for 93% of customers for unit 1, 92% for unit 2 and 95% for unit 3. 93% say the height of the call button on unit 1 is right, whilst 85% say the same for unit 2 with most of the remainder saying they are too low. 98% say the height of the touch-free call for assistance sensor on unit 3 is the right height.

Offering both tactile buttons and a touch free sensor is key to meeting the needs of all, and is particularly beneficial in order to meet the needs of those with a disability.

Unit 1

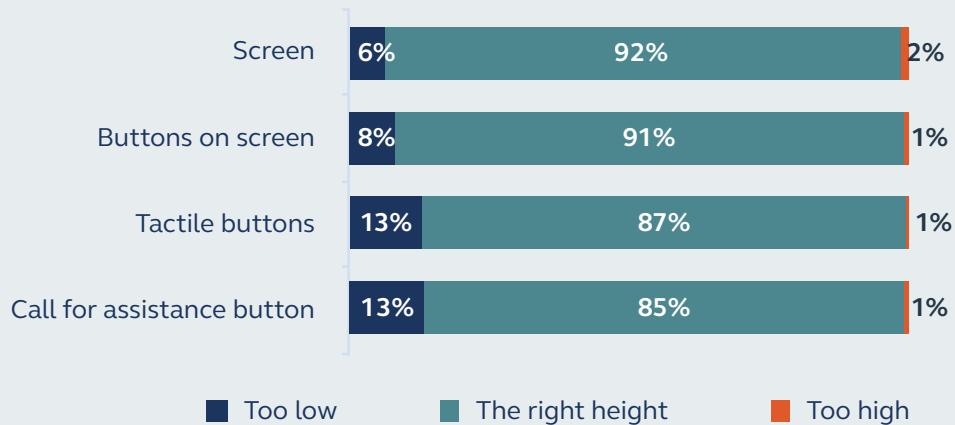
“...tell us whether or not each of the following was the right **height** for you and your needs?”



Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Point Unit 1
Users (101, includes non-Welcome Point users recruited to
participate in the evaluation)

Unit 2

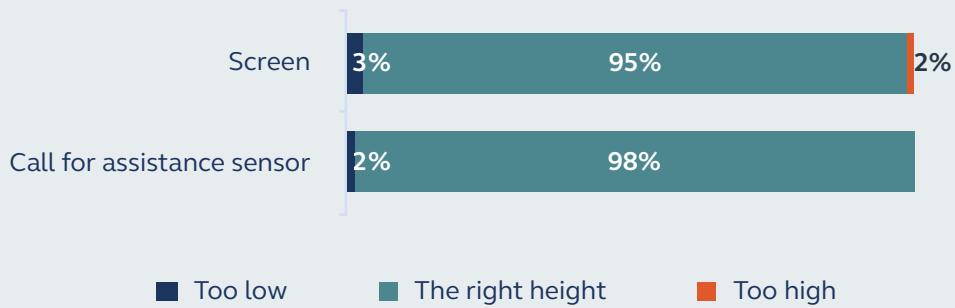
“...tell us whether or not each of the following was the right **height** for you and your needs?”



Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Point Unit 2
Users (150, includes non-Welcome Point users recruited to
participate in the evaluation)

Unit 3

“...tell us whether or not each of the following was the right **height** for you and your needs?”



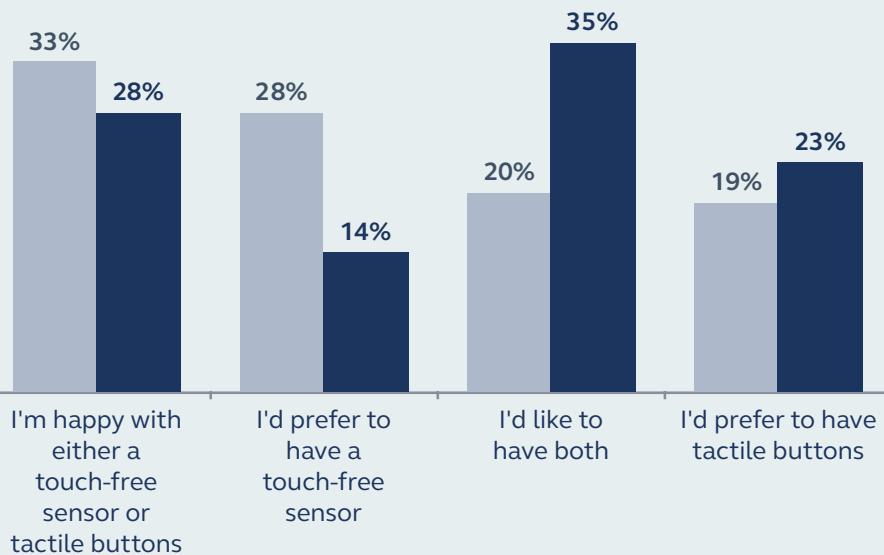
Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Point Unit 3
Users (64)

Other things suggested for consideration in the design include:

- High audio volume can be an issue, drawing attention to the user,
- Placement of tactile buttons could be reviewed and improved,
- Flip screen as a term is not well understood as a feature for wheelchair users,
- Units revert to the home screen too quickly,
- Vibration in addition to beeping sound could be useful in a station environment,
- Onward journey/maps text is difficult to read due to size, and zoom function is difficult to use,
- Placement of the unit when not close to the station entrance was noted as needing to be improved,
- Technical problems were noted by customers and staff where, on occasion, the screen froze/stopped working momentarily due to connectivity issues.

“Would you prefer to use a touch-free sensor or tactile buttons which you can press?”

■ Welcome Point Users
■ Welcome Point Users with disability



Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Point Users (323),
Disabled Welcome Point users (86, includes non-Welcome Point
users recruited to participate in the evaluation)

11 Conclusions

Overall, the Welcome Points trial has demonstrated Welcome Points offer clear value in enhancing customer experience, especially for those requiring additional support. With organic customer engagement, high satisfaction rates, and positive staff feedback, they are fulfilling the overarching objective of providing a recognised focal support for all customers, irrespective of their circumstances or familiarity with a specific station or train travel and proving effective within current operational models.

While there is room to refine placement and expand functionality, the evidence supports the need for continued development of Welcome Point units and a broader rollout as a solution to a more inclusive and accessible station environment.

Specifically, the trial has determined:

11.1 Welcome Points are effective in supporting customer needs

The trial has determined the effectiveness of a Welcome Point at different station types and sizes, along with the most appropriate physical form, features and arrangements for contacting staff to best support the customer need.

The introduction of Welcome Points at stations has generated a positive response from customers and staff at different types of stations. Furthermore, disabled customers agreed that the features included improve accessibility.

These findings suggest that Welcome Points are allowing people to access the information provided, regardless of their individual needs or familiarity with the station.

The data also shows that Welcome Points are meeting a demand for information that is not currently consistently available at train stations and that it supports a wide range of customer needs.

Use of Passenger Assist has been increasing and is now at higher volumes than before the COVID-19 pandemic. (***Passenger Assistance Statistics, RDG/ORR***).

With an aging population, it is likely that use of Passenger Assist will continue rising. Welcome Points can complement this and other channels providing additional comprehensive accessibility features, as well as being a very positive source of support in their own right.

Welcome Points can therefore play a useful role as a designated point in the station for customers as part of their passenger assist requirement.

11.2 Design improvements for any future implementation

The feedback received across each of the three different designs has been hugely valuable to identify the functionality, features as well as considerations for improvements to combine as part of a future model.

The features that provide a dedicated place for support and key travel information, such as arrivals, departures, travel updates, and journey planning are highly valuable, especially for customers with disabilities who may struggle with other information sources.

Accessibility features such as Beacon navigation, British Sign Language videos, call-for-assistance buttons (both physical and touch-free), large text, and high-contrast screen options are strongly supported and enhance the overall experience. These should be maintained and prioritised to ensure inclusive and accessible travel support.

Subject to TOC and station specific arrangements, both options for call routing direct to station staff as well as routing to contact centres need to remain available. Call routing direct to station staff has been most suitable for smaller stations and those stations with consistent staff presence. At busy stations, where staff may be less readily available, for example, due to critical duties, the facility to let customers know they can try again shortly remains fundamental.

We are aware connectivity and the quality of the audio for the calls should be improved. We also need to further assess the optimum positioning of the units for wheelchair users, the potential for further BSL translation and other ideas for supporting visually impaired customers.

The key area for optimising customer experience and satisfaction is to ensure the placement of the Welcome Points at stations is consistent with the aim of providing a focal point close to station entrances.

11.3 Stations at which customers would receive the greatest benefit from the addition of a Welcome Point

In addition to those stations where the Welcome Points could serve well to support staff with high levels of assistance rates, particularly where there are gaps in provision of, or outdated, accessible information, through the evaluation we have identified that Welcome Points will be most beneficial for customers at:

- Busier stations, especially those with mixed modes of transport such as trains and buses.
- Stations that are not staffed 24 hours, and those where staff are less readily available.
- Stations where a Welcome Point would be accessible to complement existing customer support channels outside of staffed hours, for example, positioned near information desks so customers could use it when the desk is closed and not placed in ticket halls which are closed when station staff leave.

We recognise that the Welcome Points call for assistance function would not work as effectively, or in the same way, at unstaffed stations. Further consideration is needed to determine different processes and what would work best within the TOC specific existing arrangements supporting customers at unstaffed stations.

Network Rail's Station Accessibility Dashboard could help identify specific station environment, gaps in support provision and other considerations at a more granular level. This would, for example, help identify what other channels for information and assistance are available at stations and where in the stations these are located.

In summary, the Welcome Points Trial has delivered measurable benefits across customer satisfaction, accessibility, and operational efficiency. The uptake by customers, driven organically by customer need, combined with positive feedback from both users and station staff highlights their potential as a scalable solution for enhancing customer experience at stations.

While further refinement is required in areas such as physical placement to align with the **Design Principles**, the evidence supports a considered expansion. Continued investment in Welcome Points as part of a long-term strategy would elevate customer experience and meet the diverse needs of all station users.

11.4 Endorsements

“It was great to see the Welcome Points in action and to hear about the thought that’s gone into making stations more accessible. While there’s still work to be done to ensure they meet a wider range of access needs, including for people like myself who don’t have upper limbs, I’m hopeful this is the start of more inclusive solutions across the network.”

Isaac Harvey MBE, Disability Advocate and President of Wheels and Wheelchairs

“Welcome Points are a great new piece of equipment for disabled passengers — when information is available in accessible formats and support is easy to find, it means you can travel with confidence, dignity, and independence. Getting the right help from the start makes all the difference.”

Helen Dolphin MBE, Accessibility and Inclusion Lead Network Rail, Chair East Midlands Railway Inclusivity Panel, Chair Heathrow Accessibility Advisory Panel

“We support Welcome Points and the joined-up approach to improving customer services across the rail network and RDG have listened to our recommendations.

We hope the trial will encourage passengers to use the Welcome Points and that in the longer-term Welcome Points will be rolled out nationally to help improve access to rail services and better information sharing.”

Disability Rights UK

“No matter how perfect digital accessibility becomes, there will always be a need for staff to assist people – including those with sight loss – for whom the technology isn’t available or suitable. Welcome Points have the potential to reduce some barriers that blind and partially sighted people currently face at all stages of rail travel – journey planning, ticket purchase, station navigation, emergency help, and safety at stations.

Co-production with disabled people and organisations representing them is crucial to inclusivity in any design, and we appreciate that the Rail Delivery Group recognises that here and has involved us from early on.”

Erik Matthies, Policy Lead, RNIB

“Welcome Points are a positive addition to the railway. They incorporate specific accessibility features that provide opportunities to meet the needs of travellers from a pan-disability perspective.

Different models incorporate different features such as: displays that can be inverted to allow easier access for wheelchair users, people of short stature and younger travellers, British Sign Language (BSL) translation technology to better support Deaf passengers and Bluetooth Smart Beacon integration that creates new ways for visually impaired passengers to navigate the station and call for assistance. Passengers with hidden disabilities, and all those requiring assistance, are likely to benefit from the sense of safety, information and connectivity Welcome Points can provide when they’re correctly deployed.

A common feature is the ability to connect to a member of staff - either on the station or at a remote customer service location. The importance of human interaction cannot be underestimated when considering the user experience of those passengers requiring assistance when travelling.

The prototypes on trial have allowed lived experience experts to provide feedback on the Welcome Point design and deployment, this should allow for positive improvements to be made during a wider rollout.”

Mark Cutter, Chair of Northern Accessibility Panel, Chair of RAIF and Member of DPTAC (lived experience)

“We welcomed the opportunity to provide some feedback on the initial proposals. Alongside well-trained staff and accessible station design, help-points have the potential to play an important role in giving everyone equal access to our railway network.”

Chris Theobald, Senior Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns Manager, Guide Dogs UK

“We were excited to take part in the Welcome Points trial and explore the difference they can make for young wheelchair users navigating public transport. These points represent a step forward in making stations more accessible and journeys more welcoming. By working closely with rail operators and RDG, we’re optimistic that a joined-up rollout in the coming months will improve access and empower more young wheelchair users to travel confidently and independently.

Joanna Fashen, Director of Engagement and Policy, Whizz Kidz

11.5 Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who have participated in, or been supporting, the trial:

- 2CV
- Northern Rail
- Great Western Railway
- Greater Anglia
- Govia Thameslink Railway
- East Midlands Rail
- Transport for London
- Network Rail
- Southeastern
- TransPennine Express
- Design Mad
- Fabrik Design & Communications
- L.B. Foster
- Kadfire
- Sm@rt Technology
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)
- Disability Rights UK
- Disability Studies
- Guide Dogs UK
- RNIB
- Thomas Pocklington Trust
- University of Leeds
- Transport Focus
- London TravelWatch
- British Transport Police

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13 Appendix A: Summary of ORR findings - Help Points

The ORR's review found Help Points vital, but in need of **significant improvements in reliability, monitoring, connectivity, and communication**, especially before the 2027 landline switch-off.

Help Point design and accessibility vary widely across stations and operators, with many lacking consistent features. For example, while most have hearing support (84%), only 63% provide visual indicators, reducing accessibility for some users. Differences in suppliers, contact centre arrangements, and investment have led to inconsistencies in installation and maintenance, limiting the effectiveness of Help Points as a support service. The ORR report highlighted:

13.1 Reliability issues

- Approximately **25%** of stations audited by the Department for Transport between April 2023 and August 2024 had at least **one non-functional Help Point** at the time of inspection.
- Maintenance and testing regimes vary widely among operators, meaning **failures may go undetected or unrepaired for extended periods**.

13.2 Usage & passenger importance

- Help Points, installed at 83% of UK stations (>4,500 across ~2,100 stations), are used on average **less than once per day per station**.
- Most calls are for passenger information (~49%), with small percentages requesting assistance (0.3%) or emergencies (0.04%).
- Despite infrequent use, they serve as a **critical backup**, especially at unstaffed stations.

13.3 Communication & connectivity risks

- Remote or unstaffed stations sometimes rely on **mobile coverage for Help Point or freephone connectivity**, increasing the risk of failure due to poor signal.
- There's often no clear signage directing passengers to alternative communication methods when a Help Point fails.

13.4 Data & monitoring shortfalls

- Not all station operators **collect or analyse call volume and response data**, limiting oversight of service quality.
- Without robust data, operators can't track fault resolution times or identify recurring issues effectively.



14 Appendix B: Details on approach to evaluation

14.1 Customer surveys

Two waves of face-to-face customer intercept surveys of 8-10 minutes were carried out at all stations in the trial.

Phase		Number of responses
Baseline surveys 12 Sep - 6 Oct, 8 Nov - 28 Nov 2024	Survey to provide a baseline of awareness, use and experience of support channels in stations, prior to the installation of Welcome Points. Survey interview shifts split into two types: Station users – survey designed to capture a representative sample of station users Information/assistance users – longer survey focused on the experience of support channels. Recruitment focused on customers using these support channels to maximise sample sizes	2,230 1,439 1,442
Trial surveys 20 Jan – 23 Mar 2025	Survey to understand awareness, use and experience of the Welcome Point in the station. Survey interview shifts split into two types: Station users – as with the baseline measure, designed to capture a representative sample of station users Welcome Point users – longer survey focused on the experience of the Welcome Point. Recruitment focused on customers using the Welcome Point to maximise sample sizes Additional customers recruited in the station to use the Welcome Point, who hadn't used it naturally during their visit	1,751 1,410 193 130

The benchmarking and trial survey waves had parallel approaches. Half of interviewer shifts in both surveys were designed to capture a representative sample of station users to understand areas such as the profile of station users and awareness of support facilities (including Welcome Points) in the station. Where results are reported on 'station users' they are intended to provide this representative view.

The other half of survey shifts were focused on interviewing, in the benchmarking wave, those who had used information or assistance from any source in the station, or, in the trial wave, those who had used the Welcome Point in the station for information or support. The purpose of these 'information or assistance user' and 'Welcome Point user' surveys were to understand customers' experiences of using this source of support in the station.

In addition to the 193 customers surveyed who naturally used the Welcome Point during their station visit, 130 were recruited by surveyors to use the Welcome Points. The results from these customers have been included in questions about the Welcome Point design (section 8 in this report).

Note that survey findings are reported on sample sizes over 30. Sample sizes of fewer than 100 respondents are present for results based on: disabled Welcome Point users (68 for most questions, 86 for questions on the design of the units), users of some other support channels (staff at desks (69), Help Points (48), all support channels where reported among disabled users of those channels), those feeding back on the design of unit 3 (64).

14.2 Accompanied journeys

Twenty-four 'accompanied journeys' were completed at 12 stations. These were 90-minute interviews carried out with disabled customers in stations where the Welcome Point was installed. These interviews aimed to understand disabled customers' experiences in the station and the extent to which the Welcome Point proposition would improve these experiences. These customers were also asked to use the Welcome Point and evaluate their experience. Recruitment for the interviews focused on those with additional needs to fully test the Welcome Points functionality including hearing, visual, mobility impairments of varying degrees as well as ADHD and Autism. Customers were of varying age ranges (from 20s to 60s) and ranged from not confident travelling by rail at all to very confident frequent travellers. Some were very familiar with using technology for journey planning whereas others were not confident to do so.

14.3 Staff interviews

At the same stations, staff were asked to take part in 20-minute interviews to understand their thoughts on the Welcome Points and how well they thought the proposition helped customers and themselves to fulfil their roles in serving customers. 29 staff were interviewed across the same 12 stations that the accompanied journeys took place.

14.4 Data generated by the Welcome Points

In addition to the customer surveys, accompanied journeys and staff interviews, we have taken steps to model for industry a consistent and reliable means of providing quality assurance across all the Welcome Points. This has involved collating and monitoring quantitative usage data generated from all the Welcome Point units.

For each of the respective station Welcome Point units, the suppliers have been able to provide us with:

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Touchscreen - Date	✓	✓	n/a
Touchscreen - Time		✓	n/a
Touchscreen - Type	✓	✓	n/a
Call for Assistance - Date	✓	✓	✓
Call for Assistance - Time		✓	✓
Call for Assistance - Response	✓		✓

The objective has been to understand how to improve the customer experience at different types of station environments rather than build a narrative on trend analysis.

We have configured the data prior to performing the analysis. This enabled us to break it down by station, TOC, station category, date/week, and to be able to create a synergy between the units despite their different specifications.

We have used the data:

- To support the technical performance monitoring of the Welcome Point units
- To identify and explore anomalies and to support the continual improvement of the units
- To be able to report on the progress of the trial
- To identify emerging patterns and themes

14.5 Note on limitations

In reviewing the findings, there have been a few considerations to bear in mind.

In some places, low sample sizes have impacted the level of analysis that could be conducted. For example, there are limitations to the analysis that can be conducted by different disabilities. The minimum sample size that is reported on for quantitative survey results is 30.

When understanding experience of the Welcome Points, it should be noted that this is a new technology. During the trial, some teething issues cropped up that were addressed as quickly as possible, for example, addressing the call ring times for staff.

Additionally, it should be noted that this new technology was initially unfamiliar to staff and customers. Welcome Points had been installed for up to 4 weeks before fieldwork took place, and there were no proactive communications to inform the public, raise awareness or educate around the Welcome Points.

The evaluation looks at Welcome Points and other support channels separately from one another, but customers might use more than one channel for different information in practice.

For the staff interviews, this involved a different number of staff at stations, between one to four staff members based on staff availability, shift patterns, size of station, unforeseen staff illness and level of staff knowledge relating to the Welcome Point. Feedback is therefore based on different numbers of staff per station, but we are confident that the views expressed cover the key qualitative insights by station at the time of fieldwork.

With regards to the usage data generated by the Welcome Points, it was not possible to roll out the Welcome Point units with fully comprehensive data retrieval systems. This has been largely due to the balance of the time and cost to configure the supplier systems to RDG needs against the short trial period.

Whilst the number of significant variables inherent within the trial means the usage data generated is, on its own, limited in its ability to extrapolate meaningful patterns, the TOCs and staff at each trial station have helped us to better understand context for some of the data generated.

15 Appendix C: Welcome Points usage data

Customers at stations are using the Welcome Points – familiarisation with the units has occurred organically and without a campaign aimed at proactively raising awareness.

The Welcome Points are meeting a demand for customers seeking self-serve information. 31,286 unique customer visits of Welcome Points have occurred. 5,308 calls for assistance have been made. The Welcome Points are predominantly being used to access information via the touchscreen. 83% information v 17% calls for assistance.

Over 65% of touchscreen use has been to seek travel-related information. 50% to find arrival and departure information, 15% to find onward journey-related information (including walking directions from the stations).

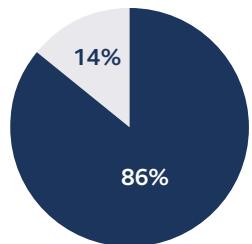
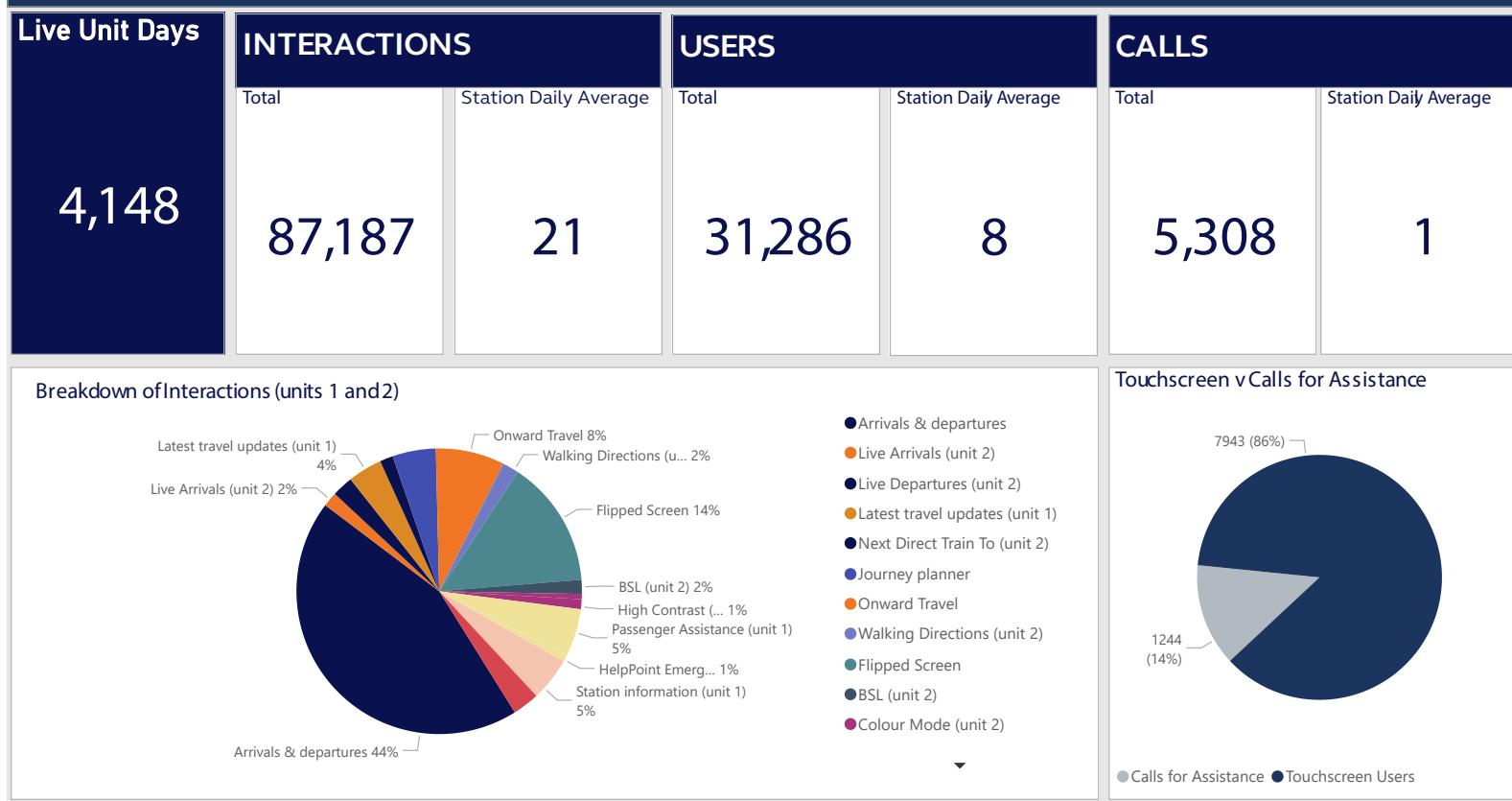
Nearly 20% of the interactions have made use of the accessibility functionalities, to flip the screen for height adjustment; to change colour and contrast to support visibility; to access BSL arrivals and departures (Unit 1 has BSL on each information site by default). A further 3% of the interactions have been to access the language options.

The Welcome Points are providing access to information outside of core hours and independent of station staff. 14% of all use has been during unstaffed hours.

Notes on number of interactions

The total number of interactions with the units is 87,187 – this includes all calls plus each touch of the screen to navigate to information. The number of users is a calculation - suppliers/units do not have the capability to identify the number of individuals using the Welcome Points. Where multiple touchscreen interactions occur within the same minute, we have taken that to be one user.

SERVICE PROVISION - Overall: volume of use/type of use



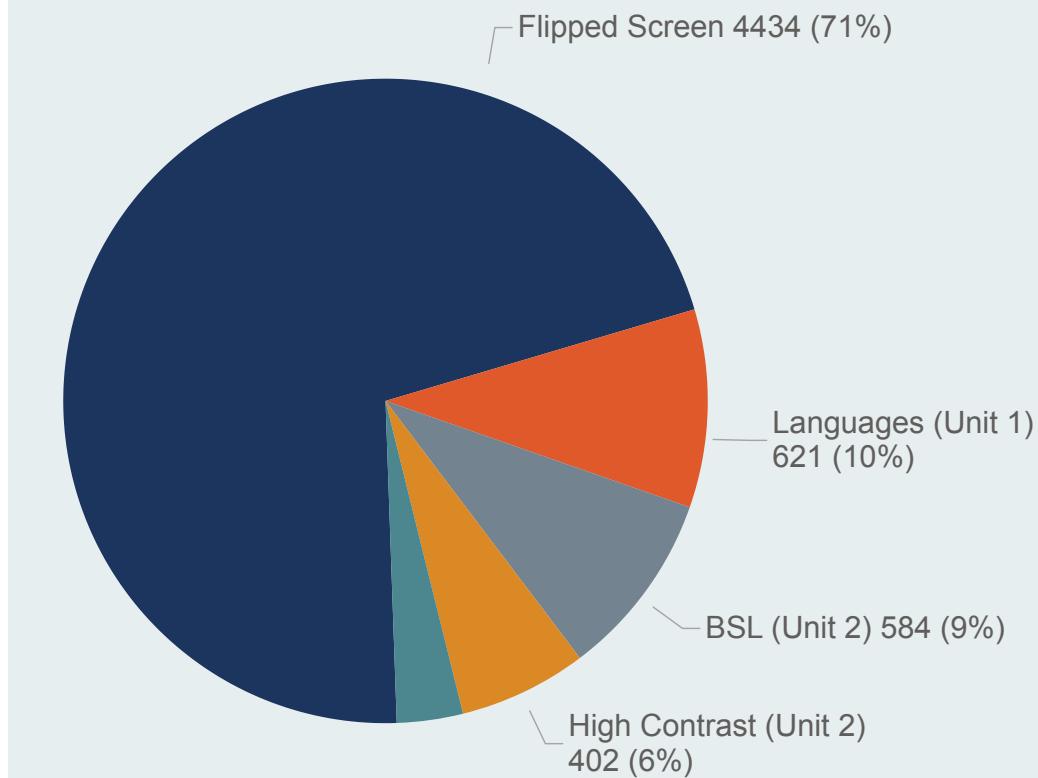
Use of the Enhanced Units: Within/Outside Staffed Hours

- Within staffed hours
- Outside staffed hours

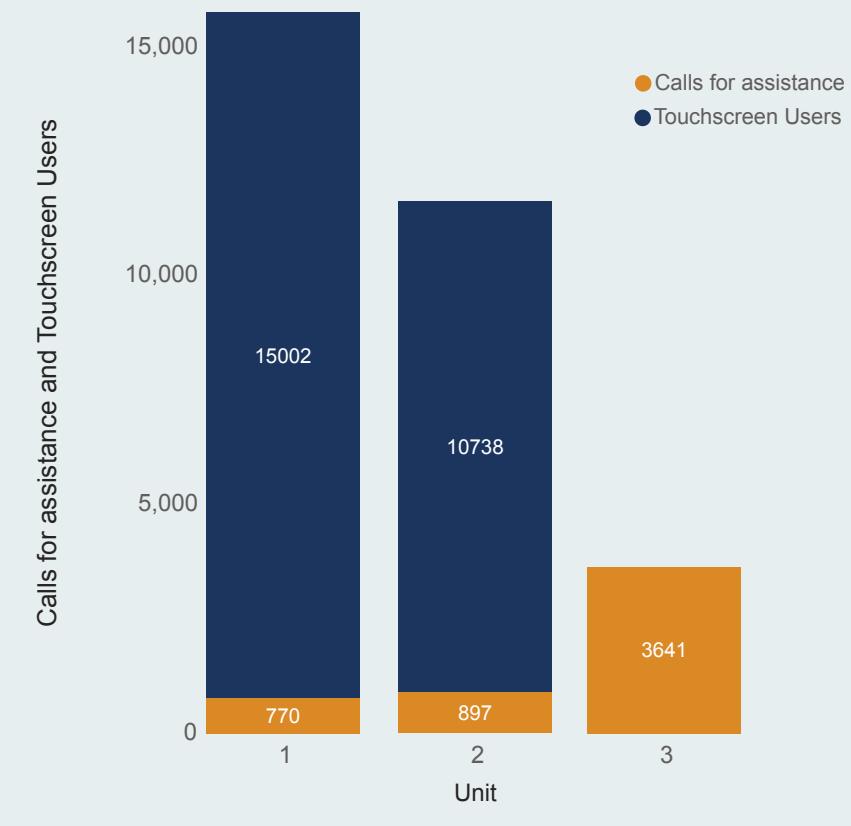
Unit 1 and 2 Welcome Points provide information accessed by touchscreen functionality in addition to the ability to call a member of staff for assistance using a button. Whilst the information varies in presentation and offerings, use of each unit was consistent insofar as:

- Both Units 1 and 2 were both used predominantly for self-serve information: 5% of the total unit 1 WP use and 8% of the total unit 2 WP usage was to call for assistance.
- Units 1 and 2 were both used predominantly to access live arrival and departure information. The flip screen 'button' was the most used accessibility functionality across the two units.

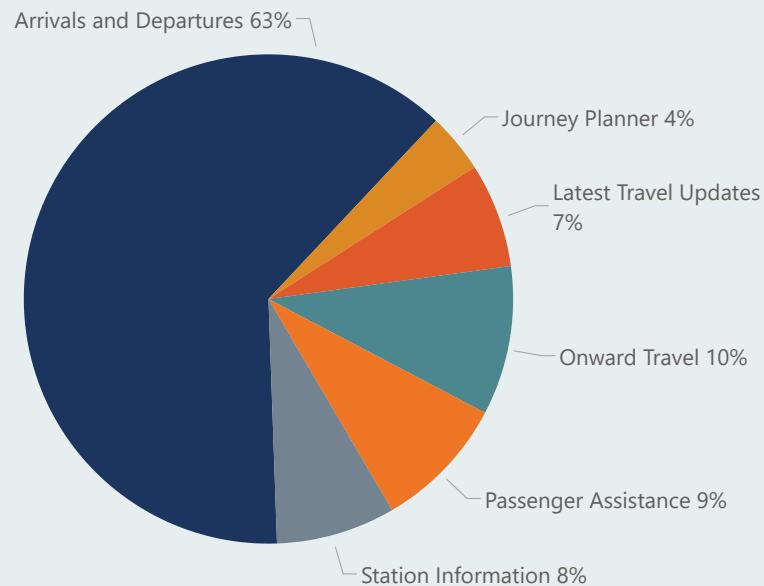
Breakdown of Accessibility Functionality



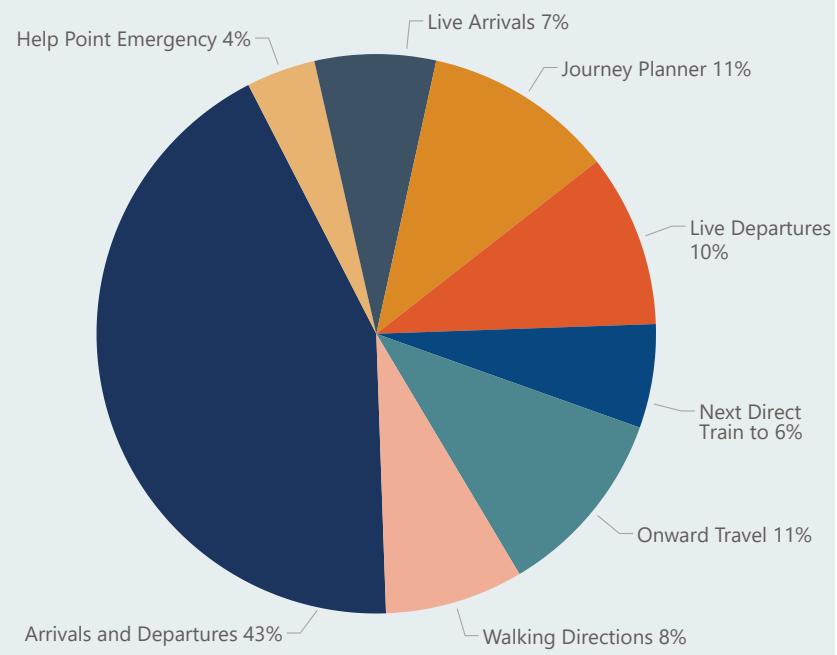
Touchscreen v Calls for Assistance



Unit 1: Information Sought/Touchscreen Breakdown



Unit 2: Information Sought / Touchscreen Breakdown



Engagement with the Welcome Points and the volume of use is not defined by the size/category of the station.

Notes on station categorisation

The station categorisation is the DfT classification, devised in 1996 and reviewed in 2009, and which takes into account the number of trips per annum and the station description (whether a national hub, regional interchange, important feeder, small/medium/unstaffed station)

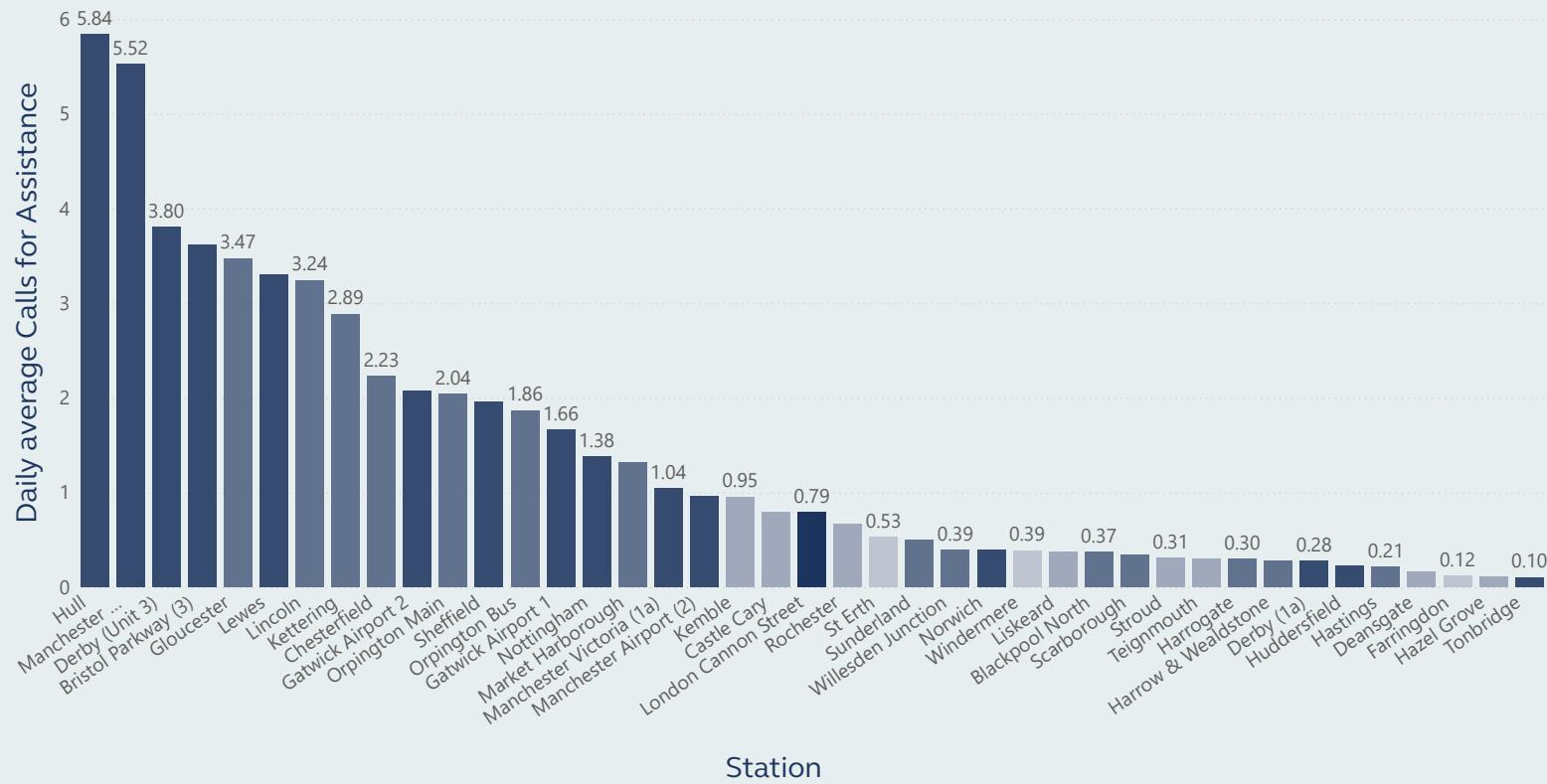
Users: daily average across the trial stations and showing the DfT station category

Station Category ● A ● B ● C ● D ● E



Calls for Assistance: daily average and showing the DfT station category

Station Category ● A ● B ● C ● D ● E

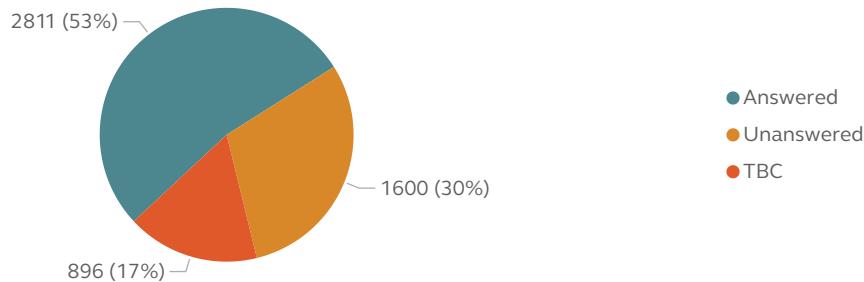


Calls for assistance:

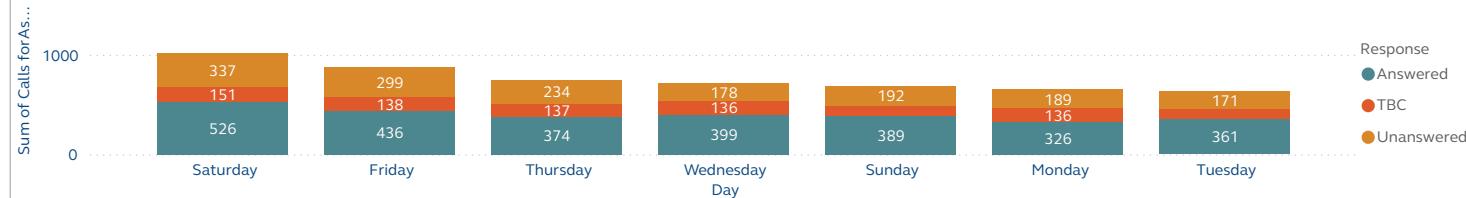
Total Calls for Assistance

5,308

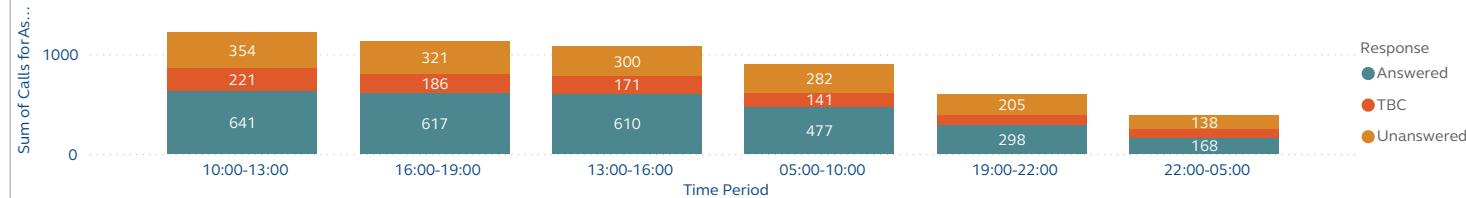
All Trial response rate



Trend: Calls for Assistance - Day of the Week



Trend: Calls for Assistance - Time of Day



Units 1 and 3 have generated data relating to the response to customer calls for assistance. It is important to note that there are a number of reasons for why a call may go unanswered – in this regard, the usage data should not be considered without context:

The response rate to calls for assistance remains affected by data collected prior to enhancements made to optimise the units. During the course of the trial to date, we have introduced enhancements to the Welcome Points that have improved service provision. These enhancements include:

- Adjusting the length of the ring to allow the station staff to reach their telephone (all units)
- Reducing the sensitivity of a unit to reduce the number of ‘false’ calls (unit 3)
- Introducing two-step verification to ensure staff are notified only when a customer is using the unit because they require assistance (unit 3)

Additionally, we identified that at stations where the Welcome Points are located in close proximity to station staff, the staff have been seeing the customer call for help and responding to the call in-person without accepting the call on their telephone. This resulted in a data reading of a high number of unanswered calls when customers were in fact receiving staff assistance.

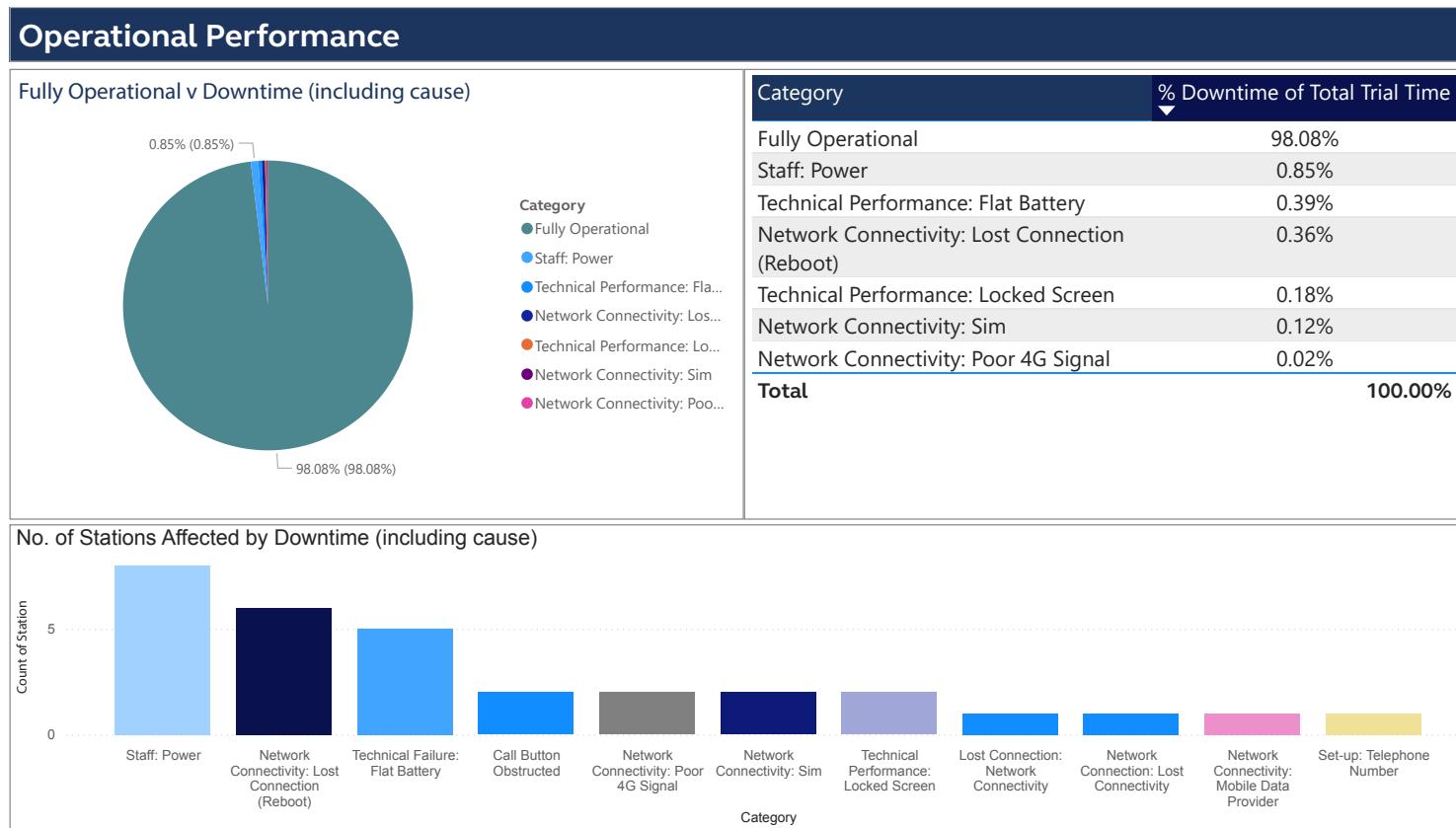
TOCs and staff helped us identify that where calls are not able to be answered, it is due to the performance of other station duties rather than any disinclination or unwillingness to provide support. For example: Several of the trial stations are dispatch stations – staff are precluded from taking calls whilst on a platform receiving a train; when staff are already attending to a customer; performing other safety-critical duties including signalling, installation of components and maintenance.

The Welcome Points are technically robust. The Welcome Points were fully operational for 98.1% of the aggregate live days. Unit downtime was under 2% of the duration of the trial and is most attributed to network connectivity.

Technical notes

The suppliers of unit 2 Welcome Points were unable to configure their centralised data retrieval system to process and provide the information required to perform the call analysis provided for the unit 1 and 3 Welcome Points - both budget and time constraints contributed to the limitations.

In order to support station staff, some Unit 3 Welcome Points were switched off pending the 2-step activation enhancement - an aggregate of 79 days. For the purpose of reporting on the operational success of the Welcome Point units, and to identify substantive operating issues that might affect future use, the period that the Unit 3 Welcome Points were intentionally switched off has been excluded from this data set.

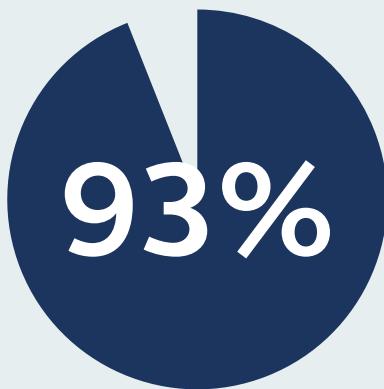


16 Appendix D: Customer surveys and interviews, staff interviews

16.1 Customer satisfaction

93% of customers who used the Welcome Points expressed that they were satisfied with their experience and felt that their needs were met.

Satisfaction with overall experience of using the Welcome Point

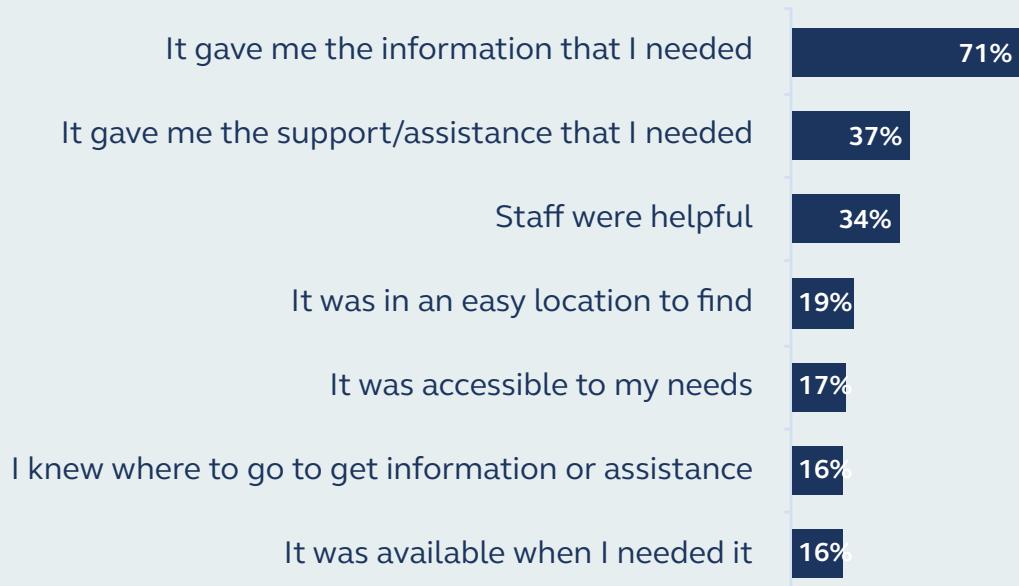


Were either 'very' or 'quite' satisfied

78% were 'very' satisfied

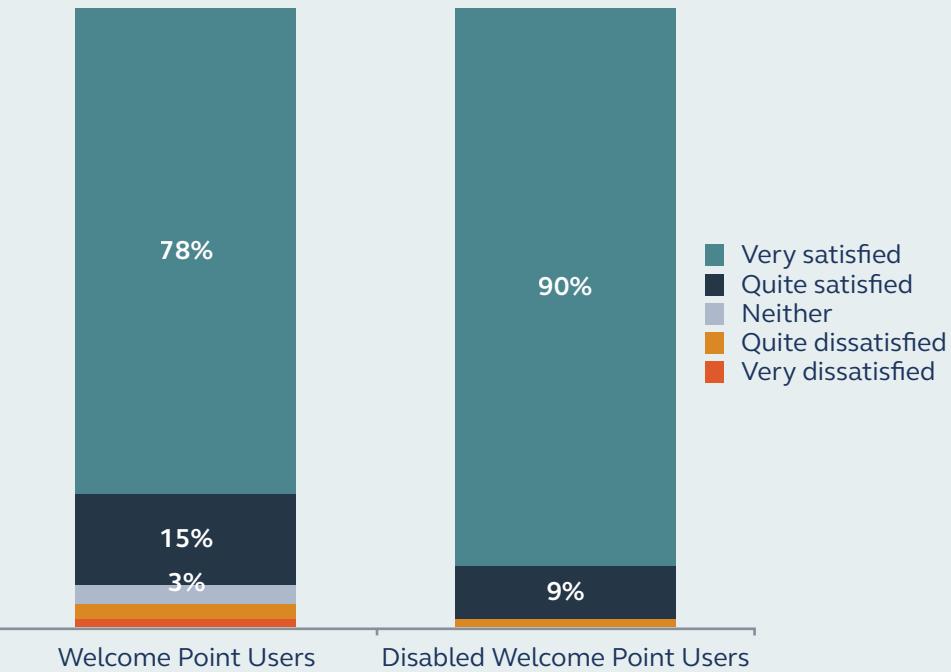
Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave,
Welcome Point Users (193)

“[Tell us] ...why you feel your needs were met?



Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Point Users whose needs were met (185)

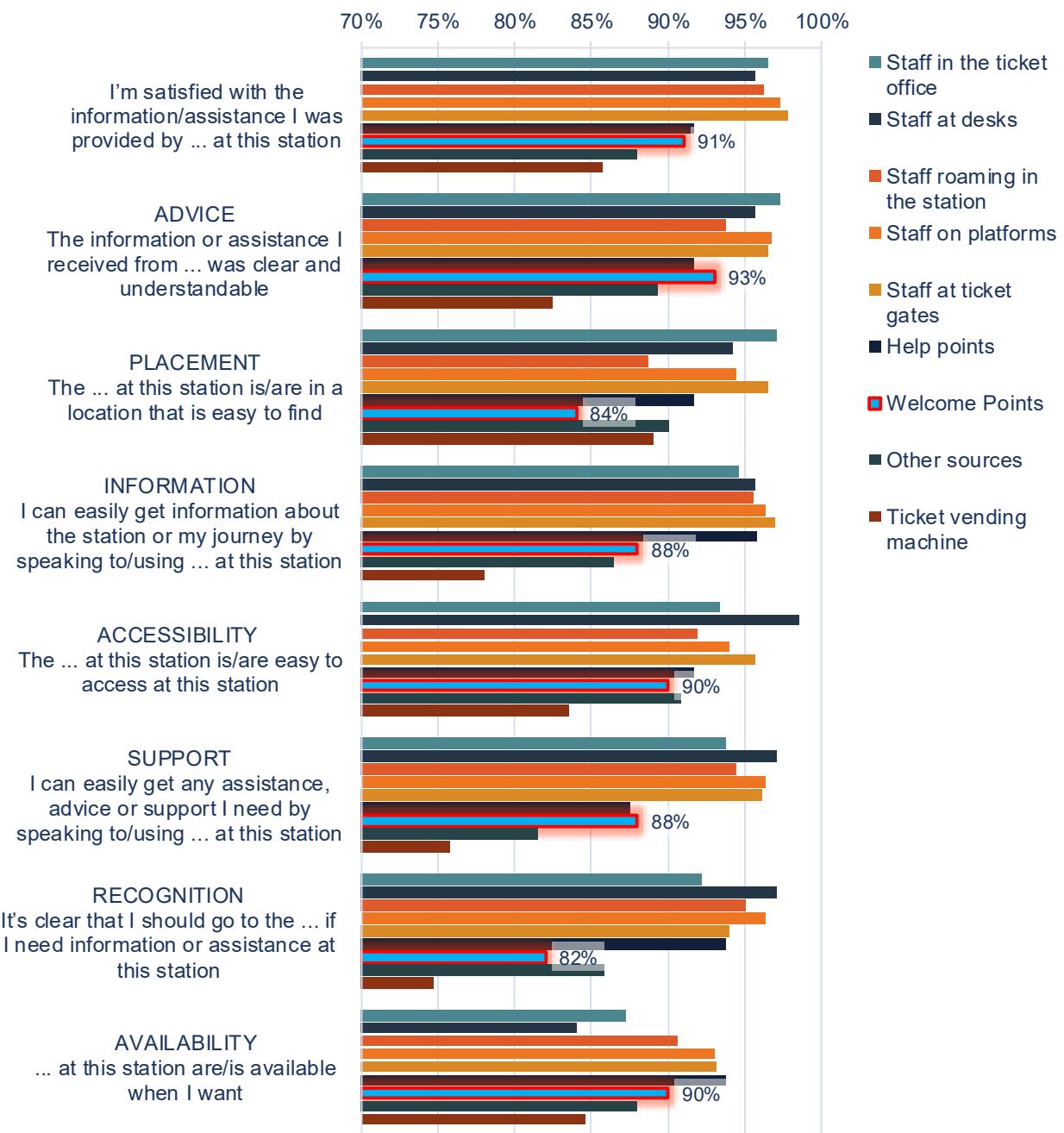
“How satisfied were you with the overall experience of using the Welcome Point at this station?”



Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Point Users (193),
Disabled Welcome Point Users (68)

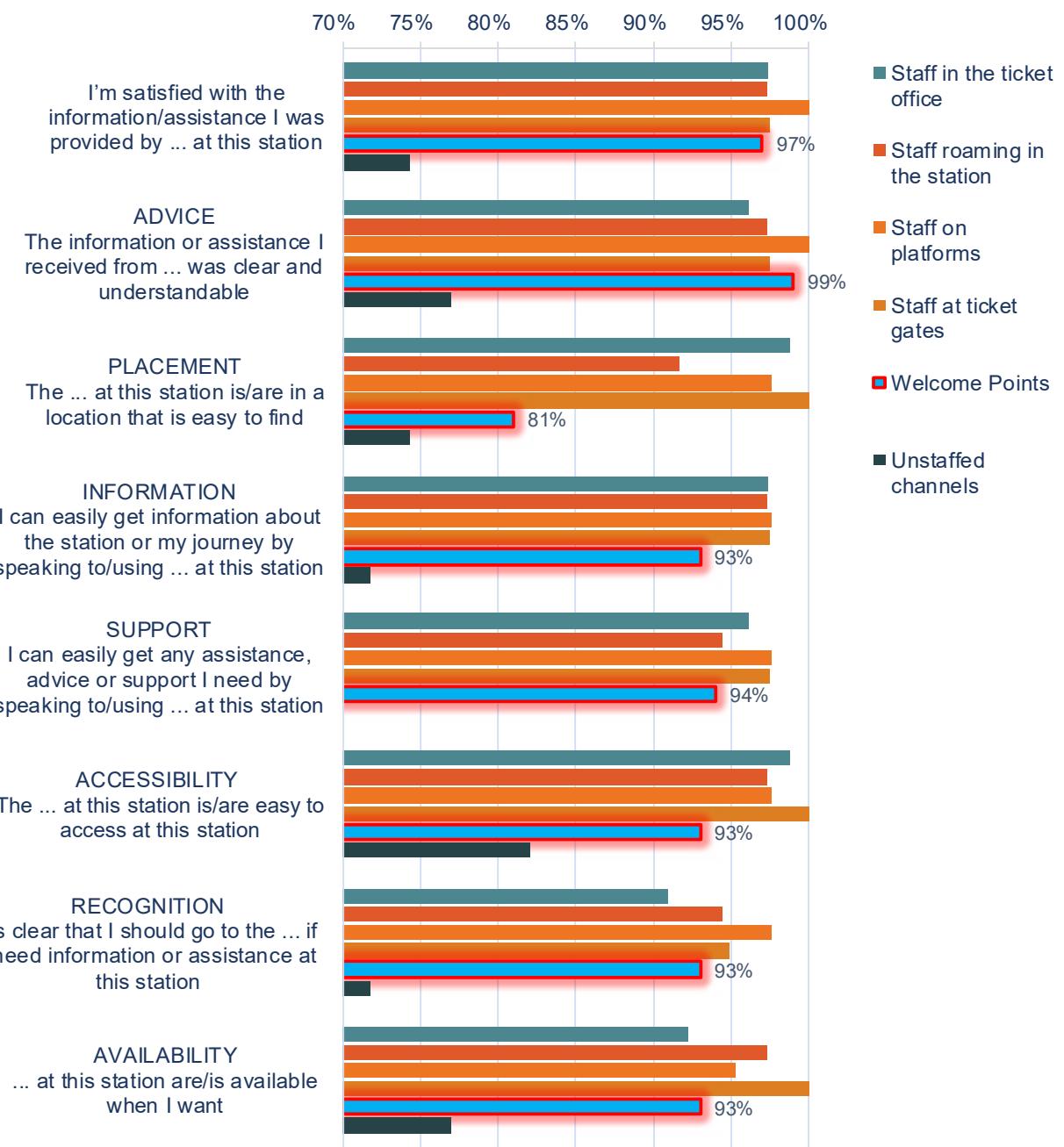
Disabled Welcome Point users are even more satisfied than Welcome Point users overall with 99% very or quite satisfied and the majority of these, 90%, very satisfied (noting the relatively low sample size of 68 for disabled Welcome Point users).

All information/assistance users
"How much do you agree or disagree with the following?"



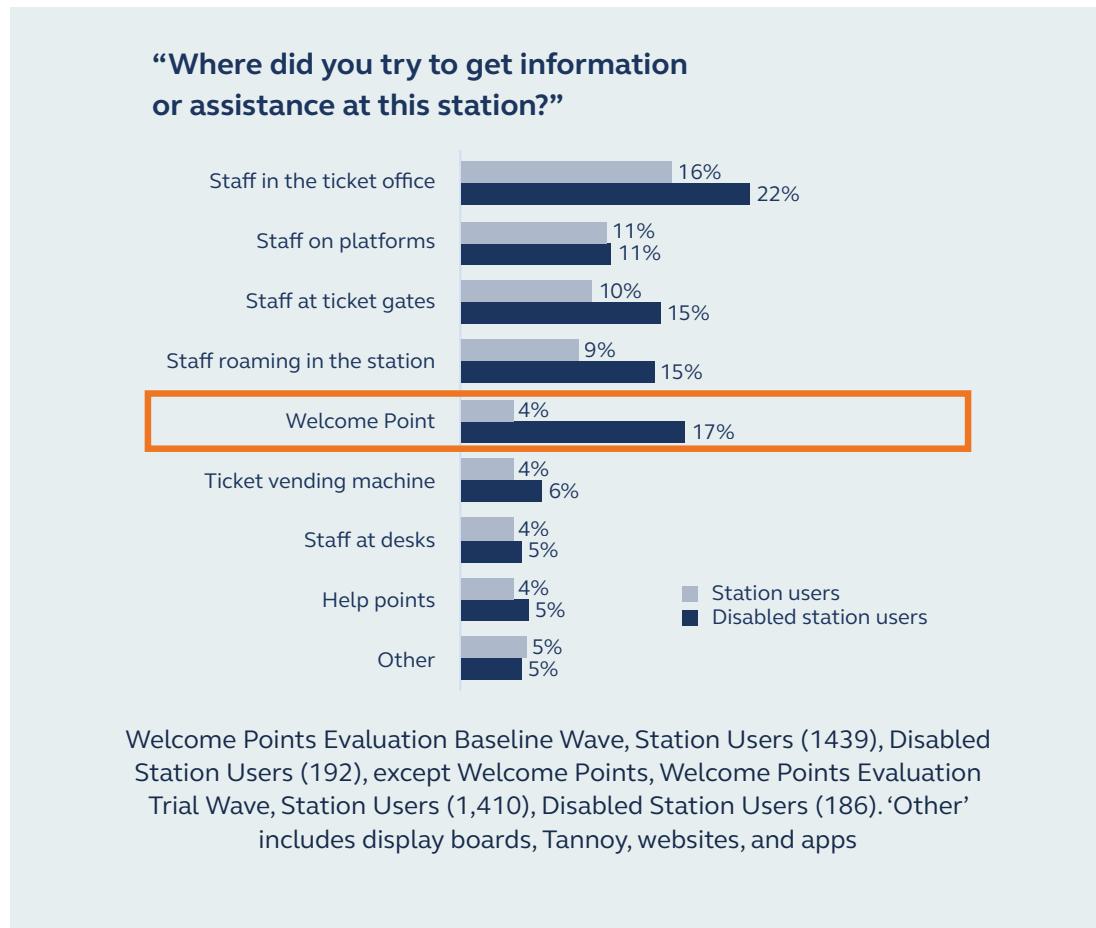
Welcome Points Evaluation Baseline Wave, Staff on platforms (216), Staff at ticket gates (233), Staff roaming in the station (160), Staff in the ticket office (484), Staff at desks (69), Help Point (48), Other (including display boards, Tannoy, websites, and apps), Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Points (193)

Disabled information/assistance users
"How much do you agree or disagree with the following?"



Welcome Points Evaluation Baseline Wave, Staff on platforms (42), Staff at tickets gates (39), Staff roaming in the station (36), Staff in the ticket office (77), Unstaffed channels (a combination of Ticket Vending Machines and 'Other' (including display boards, Tannoy, websites, and apps) (39), Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Points (68)

Welcome Points have been used as much as other contact points such as Help Points and Ticket Vending Machines, and in particular by disabled customers, even though the Welcome Points had only recently been introduced into stations.



Whilst 4% of the surveyed station users overall used the Welcome Point, this increases to 17% among disabled station users.

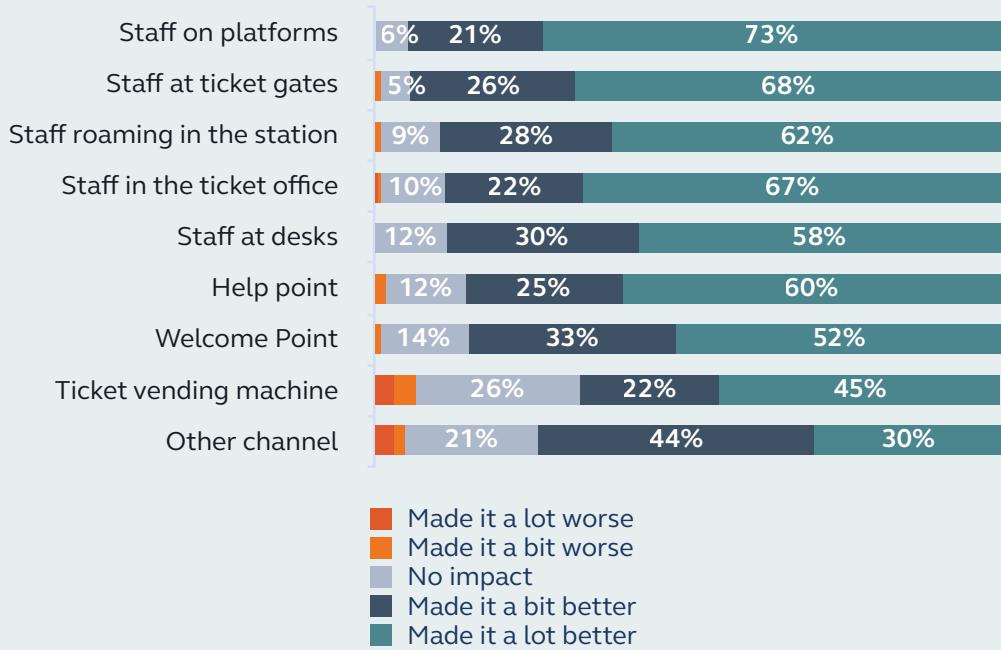
This is the largest delta in channel use between disabled station users and all station users and means Welcome Points are the second most used support channel after staff in ticket offices for disabled customers.

Overall, customers are most satisfied when they can interact with station staff directly for information and assistance, but among disabled customers Welcome Points perform comparably to interactions with staff across most of the principles.

Welcome Points provide a combination of self-serve information and the ability to call staff, whereas staff are able to provide tailored and personable interactions in their support. However, among disabled customers Welcome Points perform comparably to staff channels in being an easily recognisable and available place to go for advice and support. The information and assistance provided at Welcome Points is clear and understandable, though there is scope for improving where in stations they are located to ensure they are positioned close to station entrances.

Welcome Points are helping to make journeys better.

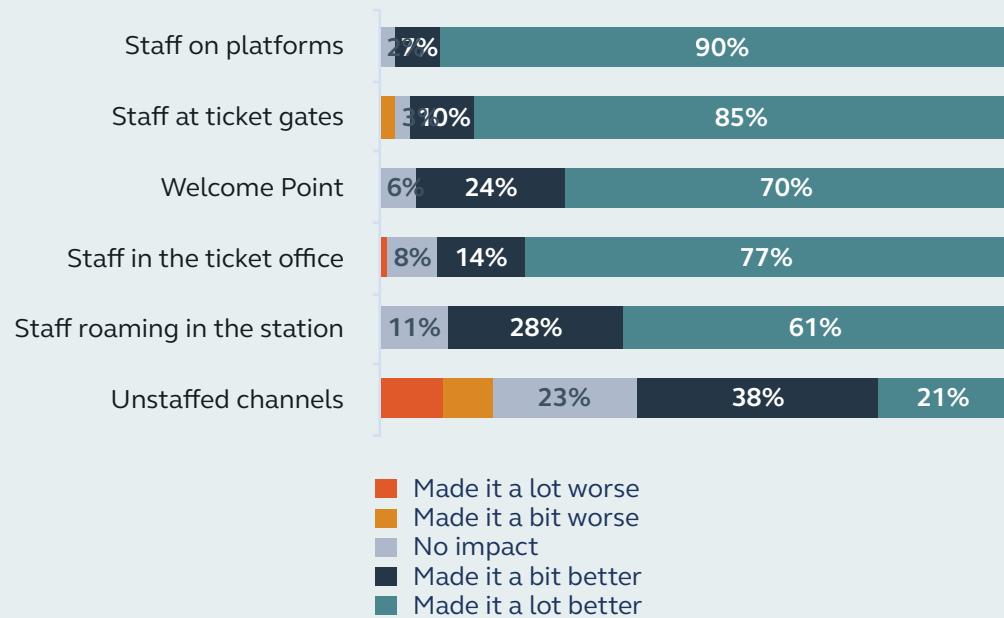
All information / assistance users: “How would you say your experience of speaking to/using ...at this station has impacted your overall journey” It made it...



Welcome Points Evaluation Baseline Wave, Staff on platforms (216), Staff at tickets gates (233), Staff roaming in the station (160), Staff in the ticket office (484), Staff at desks (69), Help Point (48), Other (including display boards, Tannoy, websites, and apps), Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Points (193)

85% of Welcome Point users said that this made their overall journey experience better, with 52% saying it made it a lot better. This compares favourably to the experience when using ticket machines and ‘other’ channels such as display boards, Tannoy, websites and apps.

Disabled information/assistance users: “How would you say your experience of speaking to/using ...at this station has impacted your overall journey” It made it...



Welcome Points Evaluation Baseline Wave, Staff on platforms (42), Staff at tickets gates (39), Staff roaming in the station (36), Staff in the ticket office (77), Unstaffed channels (a combination of Ticket Vending Machines and ‘Other’ (including display boards, Tannoy, websites, and apps) (39), Welcome Points Evaluation Trial Wave, Welcome Points (68)

95% of disabled Welcome Point users said that this made their overall journey experience better, with 71% saying it made it a lot better. Again, Welcome Points provide a better impact than unstaffed channels, but among disabled customers they also compare well to staffed channels.

16.2 How Welcome Points are helping customers

Interviews with disabled customers while using Welcome Points on their journeys have shown that this group is very positive towards the Welcome Points and their numerous features.

The feedback tells us that Welcome Points provide a set place to receive support and commonly sought information such as arrivals and departures, the latest travel updates and journey planning, as this information can be difficult to access for customers with disabilities (e.g. who may have difficulty reading departure boards or hearing announcements).

They are also very supportive of accessibility features, including the Beacon navigation, provision of information in British Sign Language, the call for assistance buttons (including having this as both physical and touch-free sensor) and features such as large text and the high contrast screen options.

Welcome Point calls are programmed to be answered within 5 rings (15 seconds) before the call hands over or diverts to a different phone number. Response times for staff to respond to calls and notifications requesting staff attend customers at the Welcome Point vary depending on the Welcome Point placement in stations.

Where Welcome Points are located near to ticket offices staff response times can be incredibly short, at around 30 seconds. Where staff were not close to the Welcome Point in larger stations, response times ranged from 3-6 minutes for the staff member to arrive.

Please note, following staff feedback at the start of the trial, the ring time was increased to allow staff to answer calls, this was increased from 3 rings to 5 rings.

16.3 Staff feedback

Overall, staff have a positive perception of Welcome Points, viewing them as a valuable tool for enhancing customer support, especially in busy or understaffed stations. Staff appreciate the concept of a centralised, easily accessible area where customers, especially those needing assistance, can obtain help or information.

The Journey Planning feature in Units 1 and 2 is highly praised, especially at busy stations, as it reduces routine queries for staff; one such example is Harrow & Wealdstone station, where the Welcome Point was placed on the opposite side of the station to most staff. Unit 3 is valued for assisting deaf customers, especially where staff lack British Sign Language skills. Welcome Points are most useful in large or less-staffed stations but less valued in smaller, well-staffed ones where customers prefer face-to-face help. Some rural staff worry the units might replace human roles, emphasizing the need to reassure that technology complements staff.

Calls for assistance through Welcome Points are limited and were, initially, often misused, particularly at stations with Unit 3 lacking two-way communication; this caused frustration of staff.

“I really like it. It’s really easy to use. I’ve seen one or two people coming and having a little look at it. People have also used the call for assistance button to ask for journey plans or when they have arrived for Passenger Assistance if the Information Desk is closed. There have also been cases where somebody has just arrived and not booked Passenger Assist and they’ve used it [call for assistance].”

Staff member, large station with Unit 1

Staff have observed limited use of Welcome Points for calls for assistance. Calls for assistance were more common at Gatwick Airport; at this station the majority of requests are from tourists seeking travel directions rather than disabled passengers requesting support. Misuse of the buttons, often by children or due to overly sensitive sensors has caused some issues, particularly at Unit 3 stations, where the lack of two-way communication necessitates manual checks by staff. This has led to frustration and operational inefficiencies at those stations.

“The shortcomings are that we are unable to respond other than turning up. We can be at the other side of the station. I can’t say Hi, it’s Lewis here. I’ll be with you in two minutes because there’s a lack of two-way communication...The second one is, as you have seen, it [the button] can trigger itself. So, I am chasing my tail trying to get a response for someone who isn’t there. Why should I bother?”

Staff Member, large station with Unit 3

“[Welcome Point] would be better utilised if you put it on the other side [of station] where you don’t have a member of staff there often. You’ve obviously got the intercom thing [call for assistance] so they could use that and if they did require assistance, that would make it a lot easier for them to contact us and would save them from walking over the bridge.”

Staff member, small station, with Unit 2

Despite these issues, some features have proven popular. Tourists at stations like Norwich benefit from ‘Walking directions’ and ‘Onward travel’ information. Staff suggest improvements such as including more destinations or adding a postcode search function to make these features even more useful.

Staff face several barriers when answering assistance calls, including:

- Staff unavailability due to other duties,
- Short ring times,
- Lack of familiarity with the system,
- Poor audio quality,
- Challenges for hearing-impaired users, and
- The lack of two-way communication for Unit 3 stations.

Factors that enable better response rates include the proximity of Welcome Points to help desks or gatelines, lower station footfall, and clear understanding of staff roles. For instance, at Sheffield, where the Welcome Point is adjacent to the Information Desk and accessible beyond desk hours, staff see clear value in the unit.

Staff have highlighted the need for improved training and communication to understand the Welcome Points’ purpose and functionality. Confidence in the technology is essential, especially in light of a few technical issues early in the trial. Selecting appropriate staff to manage calls and ensuring minimal disruption during maintenance are crucial to building trust. Ultimately, staff seek reassurance that the Welcome Points are tools to support, not replace, their roles, and that proper integration and training can enhance customer service delivery across the network.

17 Appendix E: Customer feedback case studies

17.1 Barrier 1: Identifying and approaching staff

Why is this difficult?

For mobility impaired customers, the challenge is moving across the station to meet the member of staff, particularly if the member of staff is on the move whilst completing their work.

For visually impaired customers, there are two key challenges:

- Spotting a member of staff, particularly if they are moving within the station
- Navigating across the station to meet the member of staff whilst avoiding trip hazards, such as stairs, bollards and suitcases

“It’s just the whole experience of coming into a busy station. I already tripped over a suitcase when I was coming into the station because someone was coming out.” - Visually impaired customer, 46 years old

This challenge is experienced both by customers who had pre-booked assistance and those requesting help in the moment.

As a result, many customers with mobility or visual impairments either do not travel by train at all or only travel when accompanied by a friend or family member so they could approach staff on their behalf.

How do Welcome Points help?

All three Welcome Point models are seen as a solution to help overcome this barrier as they created a set point for staff to meet customers that is easy to spot within the station rather than customers needing to approach staff.

“You can easily go to here. Press the assistance button and a member of staff can come to you, instead of you having to find them.” - Visually and hearing-impaired customer, 38 years old

Case Studies

Scarborough: Bethany

Bethany is a 46-year-old visually impaired customer. She is registered partially sight impaired due to a progressive disease. She uses a white cane and struggles to navigate new environments. She has not used the train in over ten years, largely due to tripping hazards in stations. She has never used Passenger Assist, citing lack of trust from negative reviews online.

She was excited to see the Welcome Point. The option to go to a set point and have staff come to her could give her the confidence to travel by train again. She was impressed by the screen's large icons and high-contrast display, particularly useful in bright sunlight.

“They would need to be in every station, I would feel confident then definitely. That is so mega. That would make me want to go on a train next week...having something that you can see, which is accessible and knowing that you can call for help if you get stuck ... Just knowing that something like that is coming out would just be amazing, I can leave Scarborough then.”

Hull: Simon

Simon, 79, is visually impaired due to glaucoma and an eye injury. He uses a white cane and only travels with someone, typically his wife. While they have used Passenger Assist with generally good results, finding staff at the start of the journey has been a challenge.

They felt the Welcome Point would help, allowing them to find staff without going through the barriers first. They appreciated the simplicity of the design, which doesn't require technological know-how.

“You know the concrete blocks in front of this interchange... I fell over one of them and cracked two ribs.”

“When we go away in June, we'll use it. Because last time, we thought where is this person that we are supposed to be meeting? ... now, we'll just go up there, press that and then hopefully somebody will come.” – Simon's wife

Hazel Grove: Matthew

Matthew, 67, is partially paralysed and uses a wheelchair. He and his wife typically only travel by train when accompanied by one of their children due to difficulty locating staff for ramp assistance.

They often choose to take the bus or go home when unable to find help at busy stations. Matthew found the Welcome Point helpful, especially its placement near the accessible ramp. He also appreciated the journey planning and disruption information, allowing for greater independence.

“It feels like you’re not a burden when you come to the station. You can do it; it makes you more independent.”

“I think this promotes independence for disabled people to travel, I really do.”
– Matthew’s wife

17.2 Barrier 2: Anxiety in the station environment

Why is this difficult?

For many disabled customers, planning a train journey can be a deeply anxiety-inducing process.

The need to anticipate and plan around potential barriers, including station accessibility and staff availability can be very stressful.

“I’m always confident that I’ve planned it well. I’m never confident that it’s going to end well” Neurodivergent customer, 32 years old

Individual needs can change daily based on health, station design, and companions. This variability increases anxiety and reduces travel confidence.

How do Welcome Points help?

By offering a clearly designated point to contact staff, Welcome Points reduce anxiety and provide reassurance that assistance is accessible.

Unit 1’s ‘Station Information’ page lets passengers check details like step-free access and toilet locations, allowing for independent planning.

The ability to access both support and information in one place helps customers feel more prepared and in control.

Case studies

Chesterfield: Katie

Katie, 31, is an electric wheelchair user with a neurological condition. After a bad experience with Passenger Assist, she now travels only when accompanied. She feels anxious about asking for help, fearing she'll be seen as a burden.

Katie found the Welcome Point reassuring. A dedicated space for requesting help, away from busy areas, could make her feel more confident. She appreciated not having to queue at the ticket office.

She felt that Unit 3 would be a suitable option for a customer like her as it feels designed with her needs in mind and anything more complex with more information might attract more customers, leading to queues which would make her feel anxious.

“Everywhere you go it seems like you’re a bit of a problem and it’s just extra effort for people to deal with the ramps and stuff.”

“Not having to stand in that massive queue would be ideal because you currently have to go up to the desk to ask for assistance. And then they have to ring the other person. But … you don’t need to be in a queue [thanks to Welcome Point]. You could miss your train if you had to queue.”

“If it had more information on it, I don’t know if I’d use it as I imagine that there would be a big queue of customers looking for information and I wouldn’t feel confident enough to go in front of them to press the button.”

Harrow and Wealdstone: Priya

Priya, 75, has mobility impairments and uses a walking stick. She uses Passenger Assist for longer journeys but travels independently for shorter ones.

She found Unit 1 helpful, especially the step-free access and staffing information, though some of the information was inaccurate. She felt reassured knowing she could call staff if needed.

“I find some stations are difficult because the escalators are really fast. That’s really scary.”

17.3 Barrier 3: Difficulty processing audio information

Why is this difficult?

Busy stations with overlapping announcements can make it hard for neurodivergent and hearing-impaired customers to process or hear vital updates. Missed platform changes or delays due to inaudible announcements can lead to missed trains and high stress.

Visually impaired customers also rely on audio announcements, but inconsistent quality can lead to missed information.

“If I’m trying to listen [to audio announcements], all I can hear is the echo of it. My hearing aids … pick up whatever the noisiest thing is – that could be a coffee machine or a squeaking suitcase.” – Hearing impaired customer, 40 years old

How do Welcome Points help?

Welcome Points provide a visual and interactive alternative to audio announcements, allowing customers to process information in their own time. This promotes greater independence and reduces reliance on companions.

Case study

Hazel Grove: Colin

Colin, 66, has been deaf since childhood and uses hearing aids and lip-reading. He finds it hard to understand station announcements and often misses key changes. He usually needs to approach staff to find out what he missed, with mixed success.

Colin felt the Welcome Point could be a helpful backup. While he prefers speaking to people, the unit is useful when staff are unavailable, or queues are long.

“If there’s a platform change, they don’t tell the deaf. You either suss out that there is something going on and go to a member staff to ask, or you don’t, and you miss your train.”

“Yes, I would consider using it [Welcome Point] … if it’s busy or if there is a long queue this [Welcome Point] would then be quicker, and you can find the information you need”.

Gatwick: Laura

Laura, 32, is neurodivergent with autism. She is easily overwhelmed and struggles to process announcements. She often makes multiple backup plans and usually travels with someone, but sometimes must travel alone.

She found the Welcome Point's information pages helpful but was unlikely to use the call button due to anxiety about speaking to staff. She stressed the importance of consistency across stations to make the units a viable backup.

Knowing that this was in every station would make me a lot less stressed. Because you're running five different back-up plans in your head at any time. My phone might run out of battery and if my train is cancelled, what do I do next? This would be where I would go next.'

17.4 Barrier 4: Inaccessible information boards

Why is this difficult?

For people with sight loss, ranging from mild vision loss to individuals who are registered blind, reading information boards in a station can be difficult.

These boards are often mounted high or use small or moving text, making them difficult to read.

How do Welcome Points help?

Units 1 and 2 provide a dedicated point to read information on a clear display at eye level at the customer's own pace.

On Unit 2 the large text and icons and high contrast screen option were particularly commended by customers for being clear.

"The fact that you can change the contrast, that will be really helpful in different kinds of weathers and different glares from the sun." - Visually impaired customer, 46 years old

Case Study

Sheffield: Rose

Rose, 52, is visually impaired with no sight in one eye and limited vision in the other. She frequently travels for work and leisure, despite struggling with inaccessible information boards, especially those affected by glare or poor positioning.

At Sheffield station, she typically uses her phone app for updates. Seeing the Welcome Point offered a refreshing alternative—eye-level information on a larger screen that was easier to read than her phone.

She particularly valued its usefulness during disruption, when clear real-time updates were vital.

Rose suggested that visibility could be improved even further by lighting the icons or adding the green strip of light to the top of the unit.

“Having low-level information boards where you could walk up to them would be so useful. These boards are terrible because the sun comes through the glass.”

17.5 Barrier 5: Inability to speak to staff (owing to an impairment)

Why is this difficult?

For disabled customers, navigating their journey safely often involves relying on staff support, whether through Passenger Assist providing support across the entire journey, or simply needing to ask a staff member a question when an audio announcement is not easy to hear.

However, for some customers, communicating with staff verbally can be a significant barrier.

For example, individuals with neurodivergent conditions, such as autism, may find spontaneous social interactions stressful or overwhelming. Likewise, individuals with hearing impairments may struggle to communicate effectively, particularly in noisy environments or when lip-reading is not possible.

These challenges can make it difficult to access the support customers need while travelling.

“That’s why I like to have things written down or, if I have heard something, I can check with a staff member or even through one of those machines. This is because I don’t always trust how I’ve taken information on board.” - Neurodivergent and mobility impaired customer, 40 years old

How do Welcome Points help?

Welcome Points allow customers to access information independently, without needing to speak to anyone. They can read travel updates, disruption information, and plan journeys at their own pace.

When staff help is still needed, the “Call for Assistance” feature simplifies that interaction and makes it feel more manageable.

“There is stuff on here [Welcome Point] to do with delays and stuff that I may not have heard. I tend to ignore announcements because I think there’s a good chance, I’m not going to hear them.” – Hearing impaired customer, 70 years old

Case Studies

Harrow and Wealdstone: Graham

Graham, 50, is hearing impaired and doesn’t use his cochlear implant due to noise sensitivity. While a confident traveller and tech user, he struggles with announcements and communication barriers when staff aren’t easy to understand.

He found the Welcome Point reassuring, as it let him independently check updates and plan his route—removing reliance on unclear announcements or awkward conversations.

He was especially pleased to see live British Sign Language (BSL) video support—something he had not seen before and felt would be incredibly valuable for others who use BSL more than he does.

“I’ve got Google Maps and that makes it a lot easier. If I’m on the tube or the train and there’s an announcement, I can hear it, but what they’ve said, I have no idea.”

Norwich: Amy

Amy, 40, is neurodivergent and mobility impaired. She uses a wheelchair and is highly sensitive to noise, making busy stations overwhelming. She always travels with her partner and wears earplugs to cope.

Her main difficulty is navigating to find staff and communicate her assistance needs, especially when already overstimulated. The Welcome Point helped by offering a simple, low-pressure way to request support and access written information.

She did note that the call volume was too loud and could draw unwanted attention, suggesting it be quieter and accompanied by faster in-person follow-up from staff.

“With background noise and everything else, that can become a massive issue ... becomes too much.” – Amy’s partner

“Reading for me is a pretty good way of communicating...I can read it until I get it. Whereas if you hear something, you’ve got to wait for that announcement again.”

Rail Delivery Group

