



STAY BEHIND THE YELLOW LINE

UK RAIL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT

How do UK TOCs score on accessibility?

A Twitter Study Using Deep Learning, NLP & Linguistics

 **wordnerds**

 **3rd LEVEL INSIGHT**

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Our First Love

A very warm welcome to the first ever edition of **Third Level Insight**. This is a new kind of report, focussing not just on information, but on action.

As Wordnerds grows, so does the range of sectors we work in. But whisper it quietly, rail will always be our first love.

No-one needs reminding about the tumultuous nature of the last two years, but the rail industry has been a cornerstone of getting things back to how life used to be.

Train operators have been under the pump like never before, having to constantly react to government guidelines and the credible concerns of cautious customers.

In our laboratory of linguistics, we know what makes train passengers smile and shout (*ideally with a mask on*). From the infinite number of issues people may encounter when travelling from A to B, whatever it is they are talking about, we can tell you how many of them are vociferous about that specific topic, and how they *really* feel about it.

With that we bring to you what we call 'Third Level' insights. In-depth, specific, measurable insights that you can actually do something about. In this report, you'll find a deep dive into a key issue in the sector, along with a rundown of what's new with each of the major UK TOCs.

We've opened with an absolutely pivotal aspect of rail travel - accessibility. As I may have mentioned, we love rail, and we want it to be available to everyone.

We just can't keep away from the World Passenger Festival, it's always a highlight in our calendar and despite the circumstances, this year is no different.

Our love affair with train companies is showing no signs of stopping, and I for one hope that continues.



Pete Daykin
CEO, Wordnerds

So what the hell is Third Level Insight?



If you asked someone what pizza toppings they liked, and they said "meats and vegetables", you'd think they were being monumentally unhelpful. Sadly this is what most text analysis tools on the market give you.

Wordnerds coined the phrase third level insight to describe the specific, actionable and measurable insight that a business requires to make the most of their text data.

First level insight is sentiment analysis. How people feel about the general idea of things. An absolutely vital part of understanding text, but useless by itself.

Second level insight is categorisation. An AI putting your data into a pre-arranged list of generic categories. It's incredibly useful for tracking issues, but you need to know what you're looking for, and training to find something new is time-consuming and expensive. Plus, it doesn't give you actionable insight - specific things within those categories that you can actually do something about.

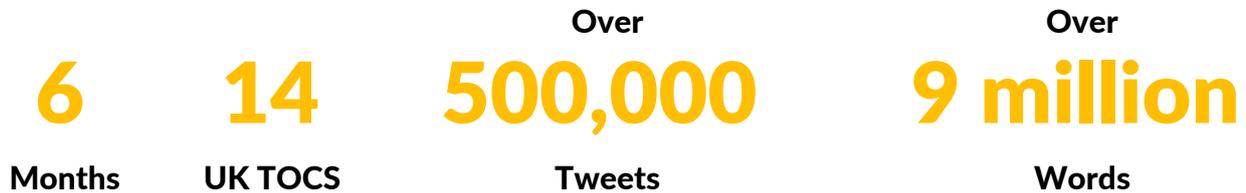
When it comes to finding insight in unstructured text, everyone focuses on levels one and two. How they do it has radically changed - Natural Language Processing has found new and exciting ways to establish sentiment and categorise data. But the outcomes remain the same - from the biggest megacorp to the edgiest startup, you're getting general feelings about general categories.

The Wordnerds platform uses first and second level analysis a lot. They're both super-important. But we have the only tool on the market that offers **third level insight**. We break the data down into topics that allow you to easily understand what's happening, and crucially, what you can do about it. These topics are completely unsupervised - no training, no waiting. It's just there for you, from the first time you add your data to the platform.

And with that, we're off for a meat and vegetable pizza.

What we did

We fed 500K (public) tweets mentioning 14 UK TOCs and conversations around rail accessibility through our text analysis and insight platform.



What we found



Great Western Railway

Top the charts in accessibility sentiment



LNER

Had the happiest passengers



Govia Thameslink Railway

Had the unhappiest customers



Broken contact forms, errors on payment gateways or no availability to book seats caused issues for all customers but was a **significant barrier to travel** for many passengers **reliant on booking a seat and assistance**.



Cancelled, late or busy commuter trains mean busier carriages. But this also led to some **vulnerable passengers being overwhelmed**, wheelchair spaces taken up with luggage or **wheelchair users denied access to trains** and told to wait for the next train.



Unconfirmed Passenger Assistance bookings, no shows or unstaffed stations left passengers feeling ignored or worse, abandoned.

Why read this report?

The UK's national rail network is blooming marvellous. Enabling people to travel the width and breadth of our beautiful country - safely and comfortably (most of the time).

Before COVID upended the entire planet, there were **3.5 million passengers travelling by train every day in the UK**, making ours one the busiest railways in Europe (Hull Trains).

And rail is always under the microscope of public scrutiny. Thanks to Twitter in particular, passengers can vent publically and directly to TOCs, with furore around delays and price hikes on already pushed commuter lines trending across the country.

We know you're on it. We already work with some phenomenal TOCs who go above and beyond to ensure their passengers get the best experience.

From automated emails timed to end of journey perfection, to web live chat, WhatsApp support, NPS surveys... And marvellous social teams.

You name the data source, your passengers have the platform to feed back.

And you're using the findings to make decisions. Decisions that impact passengers, both good and bad.

But are you confident that the decisions you're making truly reflect what is happening? Do you know *why* something is happening, not just what is happening?

What about a topic that means the world to a specific group of passengers - whose freedom to travel relies on your ability to understand their needs before they even make a booking.

Using our game-changing text analysis software, we've analysed over 500K tweets mentioning some of the top UK TOCs and accessibility topics to uncover:

- Which TOC is outshining the rest in the accessibility space?
- What topics are unique about each TOC?
- What parts of the passenger journey create a barrier to travel for passengers with varying needs?

Grab a coffee, sit back and read our deep dive into rail passenger sentiment on accessibility over the last six months.

It won't just tell you what's going on in the rail sector. It tells you why.



Freedom of travel

or a bucket load of stress?

Are your passengers experiencing the journey that your policies promise them?



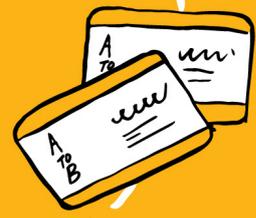
Anatomy of a journey

Some disabled passengers face barriers to travel before they even hit the book a ticket button. Here we've broken down the user journey and the various points at which passengers requiring additional support experience issues.



! Making a booking

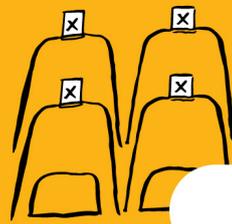
! At the station



! Staff knowledge and helpfulness



! Late train



! Bikes and luggage

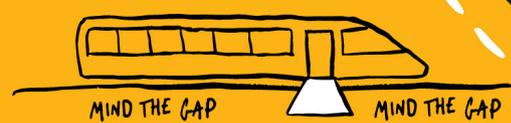
! Busy train



! Train toilet accessibility



! Destination station





MAKING A BOOKING

"What we need is real equality: a one stop solution to booking and buying."

- @Doug_Paulley

While Passenger Assistance has made significant progress for booking assistance, the third-party app adding a second step in the booking process doesn't resolve issues with booking a train journey for passengers with accessibility needs.

Top topics

- Pending status of Passenger Assistance booking
- Website errors (broken forms, booking system down)
- Unable to reserve seats
- Unable to reserve wheelchair space
- Unable to book wheelchair space in first class



Andrew Galvin @AndrewGalvin14

Why are trains in this country so utterly useless?!
 Trying to book wheelchair assistance with both @SouthernRailUK and @WestMidRailway and the form on neither of your websites and apps don't work!!!!
 Why is it always disabled people that are underserved and abandoned?!

6:07 PM · Aug 17, 2021 · Twitter for Android

63%

of Passenger Assist
 travellers buy tickets and
 book assistance in separate
 transactions
 {Office of Rail and Road}

Passengers are asking for:

Integrated Passenger Assistance with online train booking systems so it's a one-stop-shop to buy train tickets and book required assistance

Unified comms between passenger and assistance
- Both parties know where to meet

Improved comms for passengers requiring assistance when a train is delayed, cancelled or changed.



MAKING A BOOKING

Key issue by passenger disability

The percentages here show the proportion of the comments from people with the specific disability that pertain to this issue. (For example, 4.36% of comments from wheelchair passengers are about seat reservations).

Topic	Seat reservations	Value for money	Website/app
Deaf/hearing impaired	0.91%	2.55%	2.19%
Blind/visually impaired	0.92%	0.69%	2.77%
Neurodivergent passengers	1.91%	2.19%	1.91%
Invisible disability	3.90%	1.30%	-
Wheelchair passengers	4.36%	2.22%	2.46%
Overall	2.47%	3.40%	3.44%

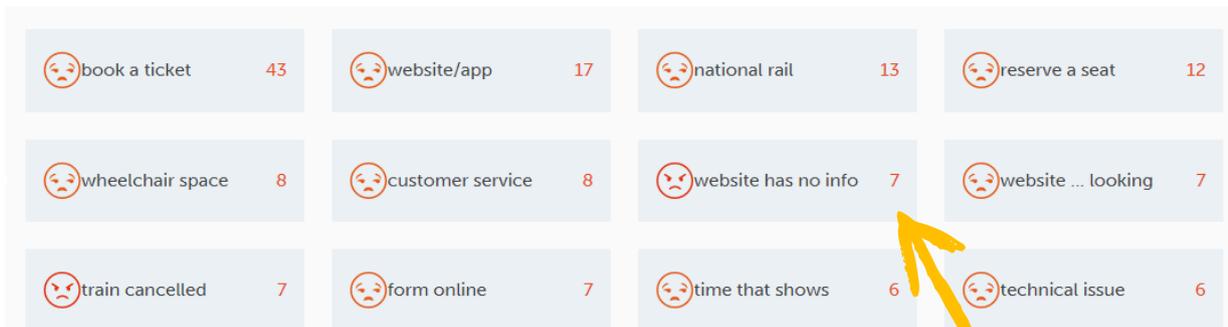
Passengers with wheelchairs are considerably more likely to have an issue with the reservation process than in the dataset as a whole.



MAKING A BOOKING

Key issue by topic

Websites and Apps for disabled users: Selected Topics



Mark @markvauxhall | South Western Railway

Hi @SW_Help, again no lifts working at platforms 7/8 Vauxhall and no info on your website.

<https://t.co/1X25S1kp4o>

How do I reliably check if the lift is working before I travel? <https://t.co/x5GRvbn9Rx>

Themes: Lifts & escalators

Really interesting to see that "website has no info" is particularly prominent in conversations in the booking process with disabled passengers.

Key booking topics by disability: Passenger Sentiment

	Seat Reservations	Value For Money
Deaf /Hearing impaired		50
Blind / visually impaired	50	58
Neurodivergence	50	44
Invisible disability	50	
Wheelchair	47	48

"The app makes it easier to book assistance but takes too long to get it confirmed plus you can NOT book a wheelchair space so no guarantee that your [sic] able to get your specific train."

- @pabwales



AT THE STATION

"An accessible station with a broken lift isn't an accessible station"

- @AlansTweets

Issues occur at stations which social media teams may not be aware of until a passenger tweets. Being prepared to give the best/timely advice can do wonders in helping passengers navigate a difficult situation, especially in relation to accessibility.



Top topics

- Broken lifts without notice or longstanding technical issues
- Incorrect announcements/departure boards information
- Accessible toilets closed due to COVID/social distancing or being locked in the evening
- Lack of step-free access and large/high gaps between train and platform

41%

of stations in Britain aren't step-free.
{Leonard Cheshire}

Passengers are asking for:

Improved comms.

- **Notice given of broken lifts or no step-free access** at departure station to passengers with booked assistance.
- Ensure passengers who are assisted onto a train are **informed of access issues at the destination station before boarding.**
- **Improved station announcements and accurate display boards** at stations that are unstaffed or where offices are closed.



AT THE STATION

Relative size of accessibility issues on train journeys.

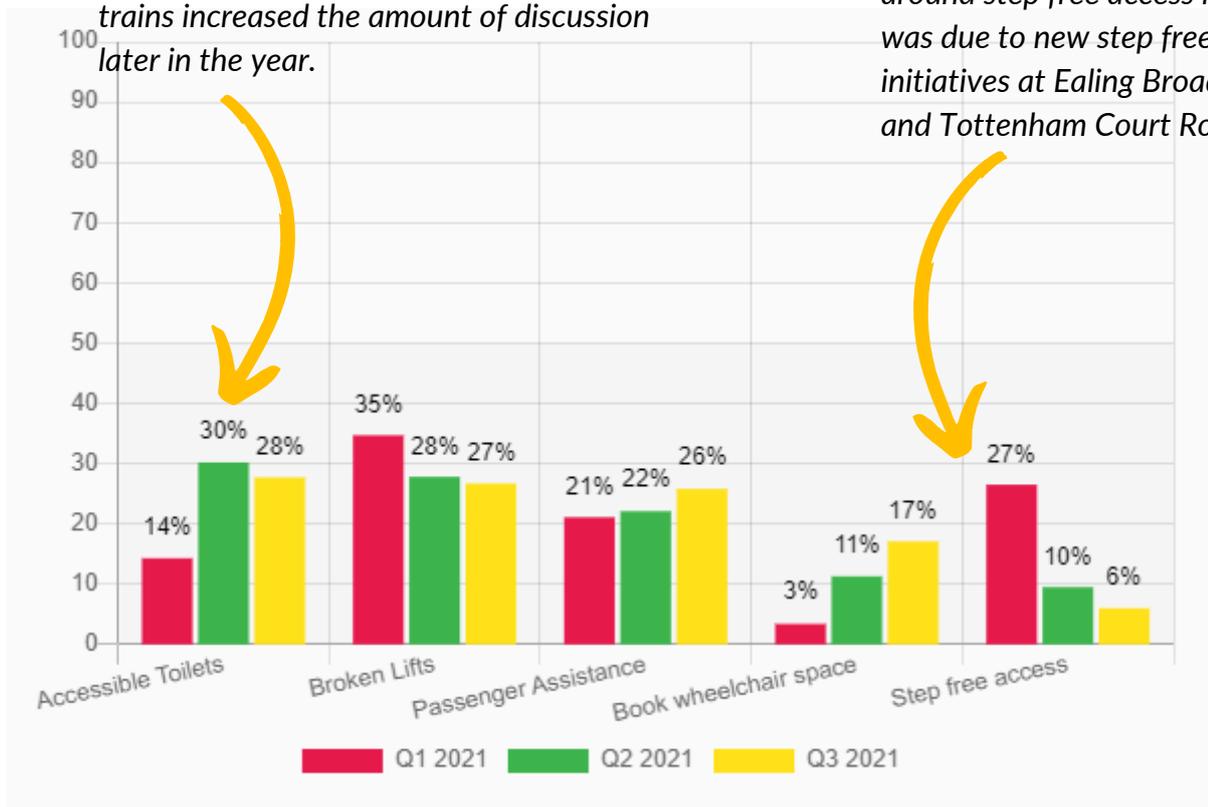
Five broad accessibility issues have been most prominent in the course of the past six months:

- Accessible toilets
- Broken lifts
- Passenger Assistance
- Wheelchair spaces on trains
- Step-free access

Here, we look at the relative size of these five issues - and the reasons for changes in size over the period.

A debate around the distance between wheelchair spaces and accessible toilets on trains increased the amount of discussion later in the year.

The increase in discussion around step free access in Q1 was due to new step free initiatives at Ealing Broadway, and Tottenham Court Road



"It's really frustrating that as a #disabled people with #mobility issues we are at the whims of the trains. Having to miss my normal train and wait for the next one because once there's a lift out.

- @Net_Just_Nat



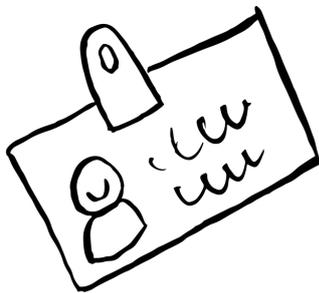
STATION & TRAIN STAFF

"Stress free wheelchair train travel knowing my wheelchair assistance was booked & helpful staff helping at stations"

- @Judithwheeltra1

Passenger assistance is crucial for freedom to travel for many passengers. During the reporting period, thanks were given for excellent service and stress-free travel experiences for passengers. But no shows left some feeling abandoned and ignored.

Top topics



- Passenger assistance no shows
- Ramp quality (comments on age/poor state/missing parts)
- Quality of passenger assistance really making a huge difference to passenger experience and sentiment



Sasha Saben Callaghan
@SabenCallaghan

...

Replying to @daisyholder @GWRHelp and @TransportForAll

The saddest thing is that even if you manage to book assistance, there's zero guarantee of it happening. I'm afraid my horror experiences of rail travel (including being left on an empty train as it headed to the sidings) have made me very cynical.

6:08 PM · Aug 2, 2021 · Twitter Web App

45%

of UK rail stations are totally unstaffed.
{E&T}

Passengers are asking for:

Reliable access to trains

Passengers understand trains and platforms can't be updated overnight and investment and time is required.

Ideas for improvements from passengers:

- More staff to be trained to use ramps
- Ramps developed for easier use by other passengers

The ultimate wish is for **level-boarding** as a standard.



STATION & TRAIN STAFF

Topic	Staff
Deaf/hearing impaired	8.03%
Blind/visually impaired	7.16%
Neurodivergent passengers	9.84%
Invisible disability	5.19%
Wheelchair passengers	8.09%
Overall	8.98%



Rev. Dolly Rotten (Mrs.)
@DollyRotten

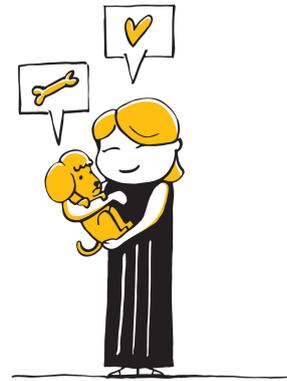
@SW_Help please can you note an official compliment for the lady working platform 10 at Clapham Junction who just saved my journey home by lending a literal hand. I'm autistic and she literally saved me from a serious meltdown. ❤️❤️❤️ sorry I didn't get her name!!

6:02 PM · Sep 8, 2021 from Wandsworth, London · Twitter for Android

6 Likes



Neurodivergent passengers were the most likely to express gratitude to staff, as a proportion of their total comments.



"Thank you to the platform 13 attendant at Clapham Jct. just now who **spoke directly to my wheelchair-using daughter** about our destination (for ramps) rather than to me...this so rarely happens and was brilliant...you made our day! Thank you so much."

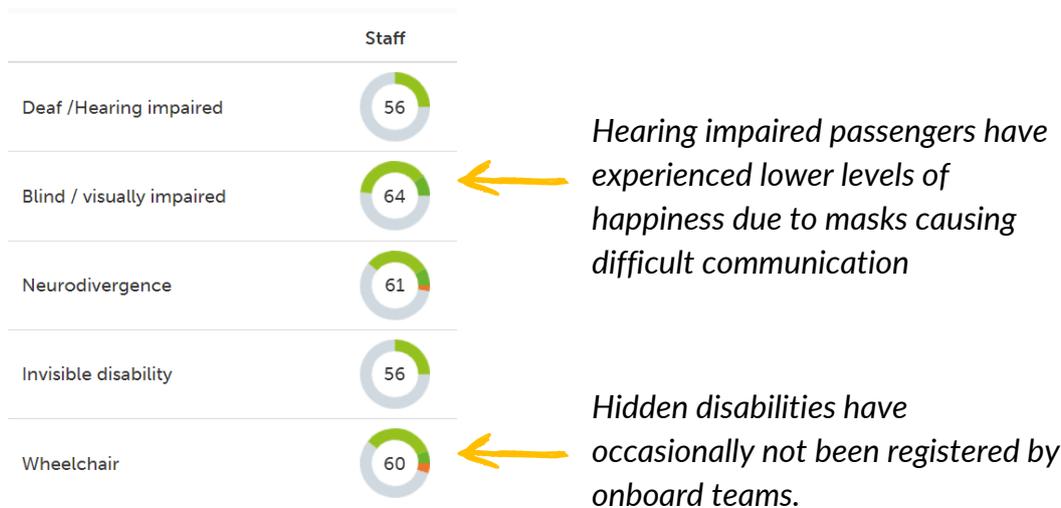
- @ricadams



STATION & TRAIN STAFF

Sentiment around Staff

While staff had comfortably the highest level of sentiment, the lowest sentiment towards staff was felt by deaf passengers, and passengers with hidden disabilities.



"(I) was forced out of my priority chair as another passenger wanted it. I felt humiliated in front of other passengers. Can I suggest invisible disability training to your staff & a more appropriate approach."

- @sarah_feast

It is definitely the case, however, that staff overall received enormous support from passengers with access needs. Expressions of gratitude were the most common type of conversation.

Topic	Volume	Volume %	Sentiment	Unique
help ... appreciated	99	2.11%	77	
the station staff member	61	1.30%	60	
help ... staff	59	1.26%	69	



LATE, BUSY & CANCELLED

"It makes such a difference when staff actively check to make sure you're ok & phone ahead to the next station for you."

- @mrsdenyer

A cancelled or late train can cause stress to staff and passengers alike. But the impact this has on vulnerable passengers or those requiring assistance is often significant.

Top topics



- Passengers with wheelchairs were prevented from boarding busy trains, despite reserving a space/seat
- Reports of trains terminating at inaccessible stations
- Passengers relying on passenger assistance left feeling abandoned when trains are cancelled or service suspended.
- No assistance at arrival stations due to delays



Jayne@Home
@JayneHome1

I really can't believe that we were refused entry on a train because we use a wheelchair. They let all the able bodied customers board first and we had to wait (we come after them) they used up the disabled space! We got told "sorry, no room you can't get on" We pre booked!

2.4%

The cancellation score (20-21 Q4) is the best it has been since 16-17. A vital metric for vulnerable passengers or those relying on assistance.

{Office of Rail and Road}

Passengers are asking for:

When trains are late

- A way for passengers to contact assistance if train change is part of their journey.

When trains are busy

- Ensuring wheelchair passengers are given priority boarding when a reservation has been made.

When trains are cancelled

- Ensuring vulnerable passengers are supported with alternative travel arrangements such as a taxi. All replacement buses/coaches should be accessible.

"There is not a simple cookie-cutter solution, but designing processes and "user experience" from POV of disabled traveller is a good first step. Eg: wheelchair users who are changing trains, first one delayed, assistance for second cancelled or told "not enough time"

- @sunildvr



LATE, BUSY & CANCELLED

Key issue by passenger disability

Topic	Crowding	Delays
Deaf/hearing impaired	0.73%	10.04%
Blind/visually impaired	2.31%	5.77%
Neurodivergent passengers	1.09%	4.37%
Invisible disability	2.60%	-
Wheelchair passengers	2.06%	5.95%
Overall	2.20%	7.91%



Passengers who are deaf or have hearing impairments were considerably more likely to experience an issue with delays due to station announcements and inaccurate display boards.

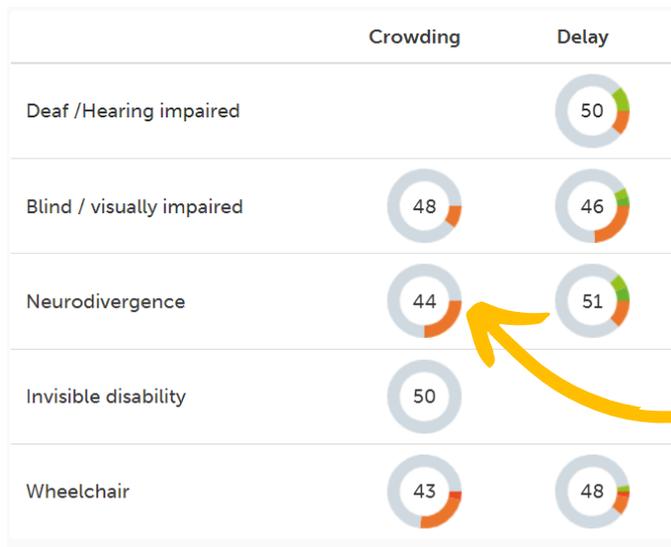
"Deaf train travel... Will miss my connection because train I was on terminated early & no change to the on board display. By the time I'd been spotted by a passing member of staff I'd missed the train others had been sent to. #deaflife"

- @SarahChapman30



LATE, BUSY & CANCELLED

Key issue by passenger disability



Although a relatively small issue in terms of volume, neurodivergent people can experience particular distress due to crowding

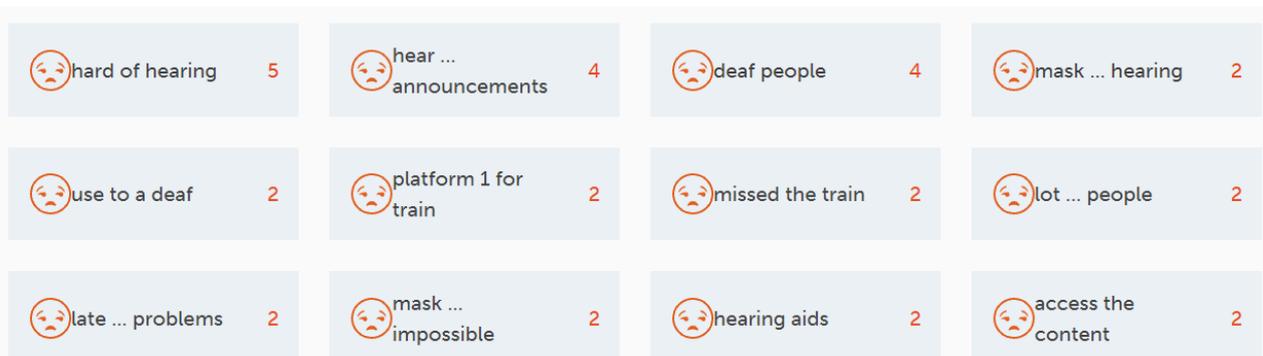


FourFoot Snakes 🙄😂🇬🇧 @FookingFab · Sep 11
 @TPEXpressTrains I'm currently on the 10:54 from Liverpool Lime Street and getting off in Huddersfield, 1st class. We now have fairly rowdy people standing and not having paid for 1st as train is really full. I'm autistic and this is causing me great stress 1/2

Focus on Deaf Passengers

Three key issues regularly affect deaf passengers:

- Not hearing announcements, especially for delays or platform changes
- Understanding staff wearing masks
- Lack of visual information on the train



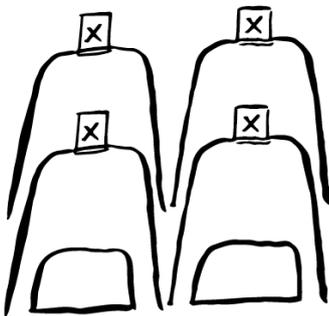


ON BOARD

"Where wheelchair users have to sit is pretty grim."

- @LadyAurelius

Bikes and luggage and pushchairs, oh my. From busy trains to travelling parents unable to fold away pushchairs - wheelchair spaces are constantly at risk from being filled up with anything but wheelchairs.



Top topics

- Deaf and hearing-impaired passengers felt ignored by **inadequate information sharing** on trains
- **Conscientious train guards and conductors** appreciated by passengers who required assistance
- Multiple occurrences of **passengers left on a train**, other passengers holding doors open so the train doesn't leave the station or other passengers helping passengers off the train in the absence of passenger assistance.

92%

of trains in public transport were accessible but passengers without a disability made x3 more trips by rail in 2019.

{Gov.uk}

Passengers are asking for:

Better provisions for luggage, buggies & bikes

- Meaning wheelchair space won't be taken up by the latter.

Better signage for visually impaired passengers

- Colours used, placement and indications at floor level for cane users.

Passenger assistance confirmed at destination stations

- At unstaffed destination stations where level-boarding isn't available, passenger assistance should be confirmed ahead and if not, onboard measures to be taken.

"Have been trapped on trains many times. Once able-bodied passengers had to manually hold doors so they didn't drive me abandoned to the sidings... even when I book and they know I'm on"

- @SbrCraftmylife



ON BOARD

Key issue by passenger disability

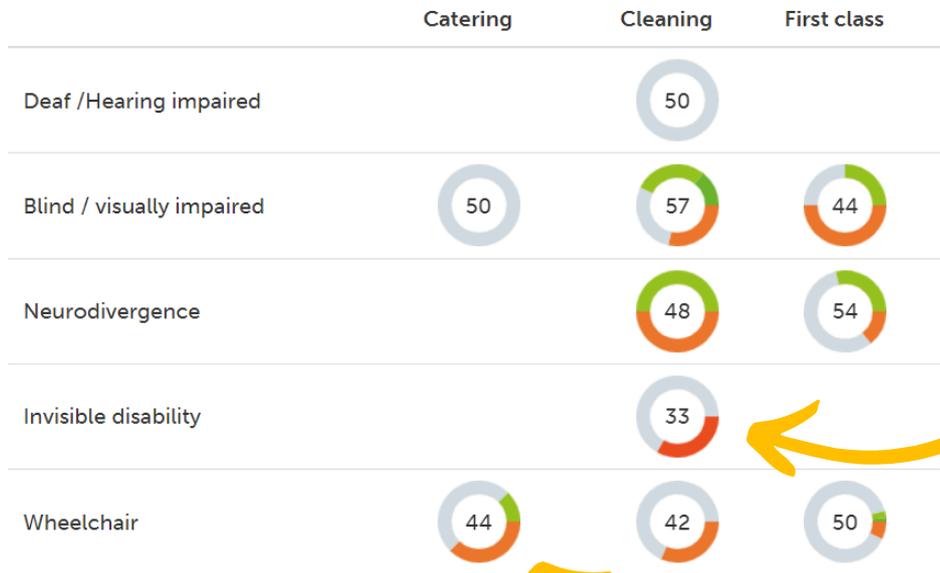
Topic	Catering	Cleaning	First class
Deaf/hearing impaired	0.5%	1.09%	0.18%
Blind/visually impaired	0.69%	1.62%	0.92%
Neurodivergent passengers	-	0.55%	1.91%
Invisible disability	-	1.30%	-
Wheelchair passengers	0.63%	1.51%	5.63%
Overall	0.87%	1.27%	1.20%



Passengers with wheelchairs are considerably more likely to have an issue around the topic of (lack of) first class availability



ON BOARD



IBS Sufferers were particularly affected about hygiene on trains.

Wheelchair users are significantly concerned with clutter in carriages.

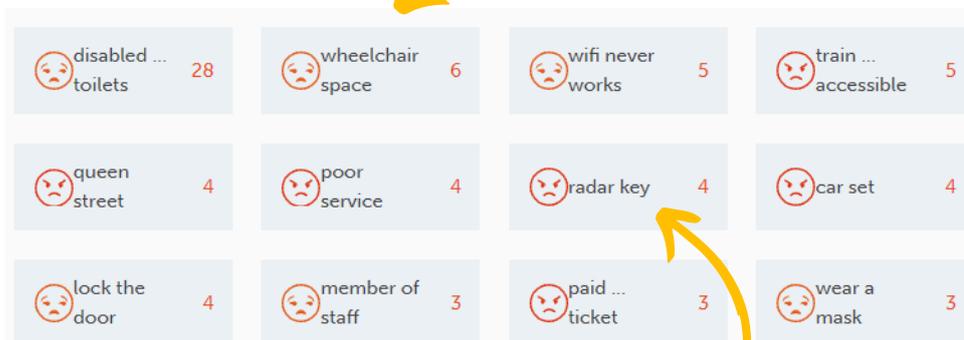


Homer rules @Scottishpeople · May 29

@ScotRail during this difficult time you keep advertising that your cleaning more often that may be the case but in Perth, train is covered in litter from previous journeys, also while I'm having a moan the ramp to the bridge is disgusting and got holes in it 1604 to Edinburgh

Focus on accessible toilets

The distance between wheelchair spaces and the accessible toilets was regularly discussed.



In stations across the country, a disabled person must go to get a radar key before accessing the toilet



Be careful if you want to ride an @ScotRail train with IBS or are lactose intolerant or... just any self-respecting human that needs the toilet! Feel free to retweet! @ScotRail #scotrail @Daily_Record @ET_News @Glasgow_Live

A message from Tony

We had to give the final word on these issues to someone who lives them every every day. Enormous appreciation to Equality & Disability Rights Campaigner Anthony Jennings for these wise words.



There is a solution. The government must take equal access seriously and invest in a rolling program of accessible infrastructure enhancements and level boarding which is safer for everyone and enables wheelchair users to travel independently.

Merseyrail are proving it's possible and specified low floored trains with automatic retractable gap fillers and adjusted the platforms to the UK standard to enable level boarding.

In future, it is important Great British Railways (GBR) prioritises accessibility and collaborates with disabled people with lived experience and expertise when forming inclusive transport strategies and policies.

Disabled people need to be involved at the design stage for new trains, stations and refurbishments, so the mistakes of the past aren't repeated. Enabling future generations to enjoy an accessible railway that is fit for purpose.

An inclusive railway benefits everyone.

Anthony Jennings: Disability Rights Campaigner

Equality & Disability Rights Campaigner, Co-Chair Avanti Accessibility Panel, Member of Northern Access User Group Member Cumbria, and Connected Panel for Level Boarding.

MAKING WAVES

Progress is accessible rail travel

National strategy must commit to significant additional investment and rolling programs to deliver #LevelBoarding and step free platform access in a reasonable timescale



disabilitynewsservice.com
Ministers pledge to publish their first 'robust' rail access



CrossCountry trains
@CrossCountryUK

When travelling with your Guide Dog, we will reserve a seat for you and your dog so that your dog is able to sit next to you under the seat. We're introducing cards for customers to carry that will alert others the seat next to you is reserved. More info available soon.

9:30 AM · Sep 8, 2021 · TweetDeck

Dedicated social media community helps disabled people with rail travel in industry first from Avanti West Coast

Exclusive social media forum aims to build interactive online community for disabled people travelling on the West Coast Main Line.



Campaign for Level Boarding · Sep 11

This is so excellent. Excellent for disabled people - wheelchair users, people with impairments, people with visual impairments Excellent for people with pushchairs, luggage Excellent for staff. No downsides!

HH @HH23tt · Sep 11
step free train to platform
[Show this thread](#)



@LevelBoarding with an automatic sliding step at every door of new trains enables safer travel for Metro's 50,000 wheelchair users, people with children's buggies, luggage or bikes



Inside the Swiss factory where the new futuristic Metro trains are being built. This is the Swiss factory where the first new-look Metro train is just weeks away from completion.
shieldsgazette.com

The World's First 5G Tram helping the Visually Impaired make more Independent Journeys

Sven Koster



GoMedia



JELLY HEAD @LordOrk · Sep 28
Transport for Wales support for Alzheimer's Society Cymru is on track

Transport for Wales (TfW) has unveiled a new design on one of its flagship trains in support for the Alzheimer's Society.



Transport for Wales support for Alzheimer's Society...
Transport for Wales (TfW) has unveiled a new design on one of its flagship trains in support for t...
news.tfw.wales

Costs aside, infrastructure upgrades take time. And you can't cut corners when passenger and employee safety is at stake.

So when you're a company that's committed not just to meeting accessibility standards, but "accessible and enjoyable for everyone" - what steps can you take in the interim to make that possible?

Throughout our analysis, we came across example after example of LNER doing everything possible to ensure the utmost is done for passengers reliant on accessibility access/or passenger assistance.

As progress is made in step-free stations and level-boarding, here are some of the ways in which LNER are making accessible travel easy and enjoyable for passengers.

FIRST CLASS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



Social media replies

LNER's social team were credited with speedy and helpful replies - often with genuine empathy for irremediable situations.



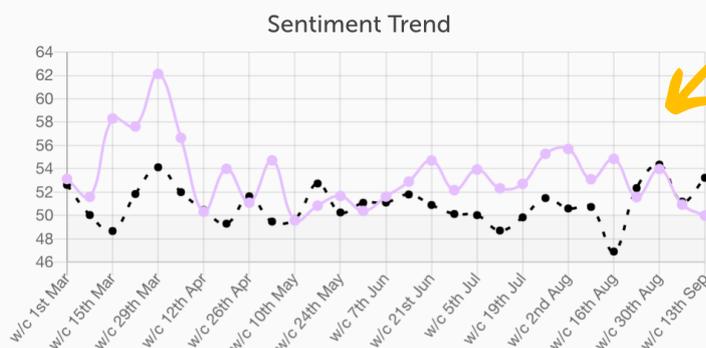
Accessible travel information

Top marks were given for their easy to find accessibility information, all housed on one easy to find page.



Staff, Train Manager and Conductors

Patient, helpful, compassionate - even big hearted, were some of the ways to describe staff, which saw their average sentiment score on the topic sit above the market average for the duration of the reporting period.



LNER stayed above the market average sentiment line for the vast majority of the reporting period.

Roadmap to a better passenger experience

01

Listen

What are passengers saying about certain topics and how are they changing? Get ahead on emerging issues to find passengers experiencing problems early and take the action that matter most.

02

Get better insight

Aggregate all your passenger channels to monitor feedback in one place. With a layered view of social, passenger and employee data, you can measure the true impact of change and make informed decisions.

03

Improve your services

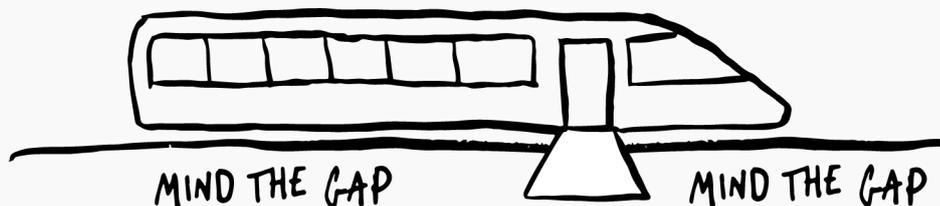
Get aligned to what your passengers and employees are asking you to do to build better experiences based on accurate data and lived experiences.

04

Prioritise inclusivity

"Disabled people need to be involved at the design stage for new trains, stations and refurbishments, so the mistakes of the past aren't repeated".

(Tony Jennings)



What can you do right now?

Many of things that need to happen in accessibility are long term, complex and expensive. We totally understand that advice like, “make all station platforms step free”, requires a huge amount of infrastructure change. We should all be aiming for it, but it’s not something that will happen overnight.

So we have selected some key ideas and solutions from the access community that are relatively simple to implement and could make a huge difference.



Start a social media group. Avanti have received significant praise for their disability social media forum. Could the creation of such a group allow you to better inform, and listen to, your disabled passengers?

Check on platform changes. Deaf passengers have experienced considerable issues with service or platform changes only being announced via tannoy. Is there any consistent visual cue you could give at the same time?



Centralise information on broken lifts. Broken lifts will always be an issue for disabled passengers, but where this issue causes particular distress is when the passenger wasn’t aware of it in advance. Is it possible to collate information on broken lifts in one place, so the passengers always know?

Acknowledge challenges and speak to passengers with empathy. LNER’s high sentiment score with accessibility issues has been in part due to the empathy of their social media team. How does your team go about displaying empathy?



Recreate the first-class experience for wheelchair users. At present, first class is simply an unavailable option to wheelchair users on many services. Are there any perks of the first-class experience that can be replicated for wheelchair users elsewhere on the train?

The Third Level

Wordnerds' definition of a third level insight is something that is:

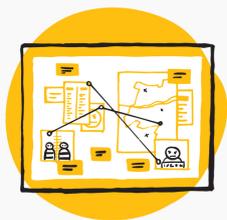
- **Specific:** it has to move beyond a vague generalisation ("problems with ticketing" is not third level)
- **Actionable:** You have to be able to actually do something with the information
- **Measurable:** You must be able to quantify, track and measure the insight over time

These are the Top 12 Third Level Insights in passenger accessibility that you should be aware of. All have possible solutions, and all have come directly from the opinions of passengers with access needs.

Third level insight	Relative Volume	Sentiment Score	Most common for
Reserving wheelchair space at the same time as seat reservations	214	49	GTR
New step free access in stations	156	51	Merseyrail
Lack of wheelchair access in first class	71	50	GTR
Hidden disabilities have occasionally not been registered by onboard teams.	49	49	South Western Railway
Disabled toilets locked in early evening, or due to COVID	45	45	ScotRail SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY
Lack of information on broken lifts	44	45	AVANTI WEST COAST

The Third Level {cont...}

Third level insight	Relative Volume	Sentiment Score	Most common for
Distance between wheelchair space and disabled toilets	37	49	GTR
Neurodivergent passengers most likely to express gratitude to staff	33	61	TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS
Deaf passengers struggle with masks	27	52	GWR
Deaf passengers miss announcements	21	51	LNER <small>LONDON NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY</small>
Clutter on trains affecting wheelchair users	19	42	GTR
Colourblind passengers unable to see visuals	16	59	First Hull Trains <small>welcoming you on-board</small>



For more insights like these, visit wordnerds.ai/demo

The TOC Rundown

Every month, along with our deep dive into a key issue, we give you an overview of what's been going on with the major UK TOCs.



Is your TOC missing?

Drop us a line for a couple of key insights just for you.

[wordnerds.ai](https://www.wordnerds.ai)



LNER
LONDON NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

GTR

ScotRail
SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY

AVANTI
WEST COAST



UK TOCs League Table

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

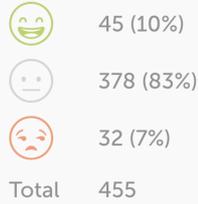
League table of a selection of UK TOCs based on a weighted average of Wordnerds' generated sentiment score out of 100. We'll be tracking this every month, so check the next edition to find out who's experienced the biggest rises and falls in October.



One-pager explainer

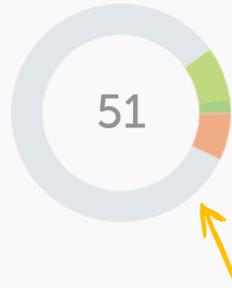
At a glance, see what topics people liked, didn't like and things they asked about

No. of tweets



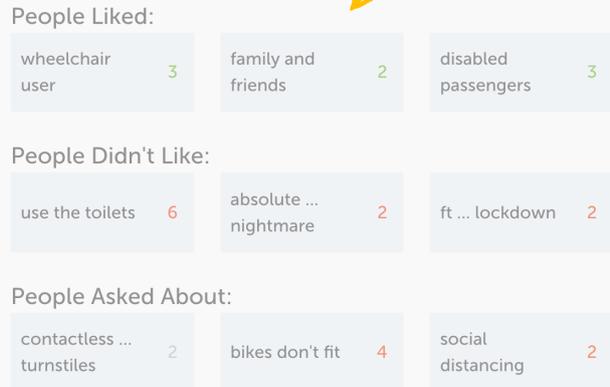
Understand the breakdown of positive, negative and neutral sentiment

Sentiment score



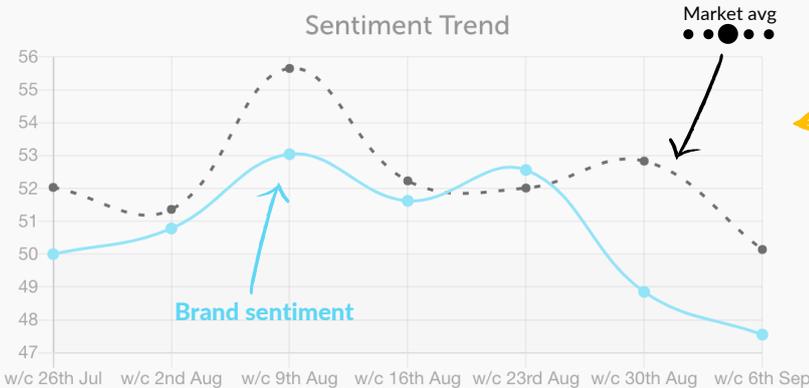
Dataset sentiment score and visual breakdown of polarity.

Top level topics



Word	Volume	Volume +/-	Volume %	Sentiment	Sentiment +/-	Unique
disabled 	42	-5	9.23%		-4.86	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
toilets 	37	+6	8.13%		-4.45	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glasgow 	50	+18	10.99%		-2.58	<input type="checkbox"/>
wheelchair 	25	-9	5.49%		+7.21	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Trending dashboard allows a user to see unsupervised clustered topics by volume, sentiment and what's unique to that dataset.



See how sentiment fluctuates over time and understand where your brand sits against the market average. Where sentiment regresses from the mean, we can filter the data to quickly understand the attribution behind the variance.

One to watch: Here we'll highlight a growing threat or an opportunity

Avanti West Coast

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021



General overview

No. of tweets

Overview ?

	1,506 (13%)
	9,145 (77%)
	1,188 (10%)
Total	11,839

Sentiment score

Sentiment score



Top level topics

Topics

People Liked:

west coast	23	roller ... tortoise	15	roller skating	11
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People Didn't Like:

cancelling my train	141	social distancing	38	wear a mask	51
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People Asked About:

standard premium	39	seat reservation	61	manchester ... london	55
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UNIQUE TO AVANTI

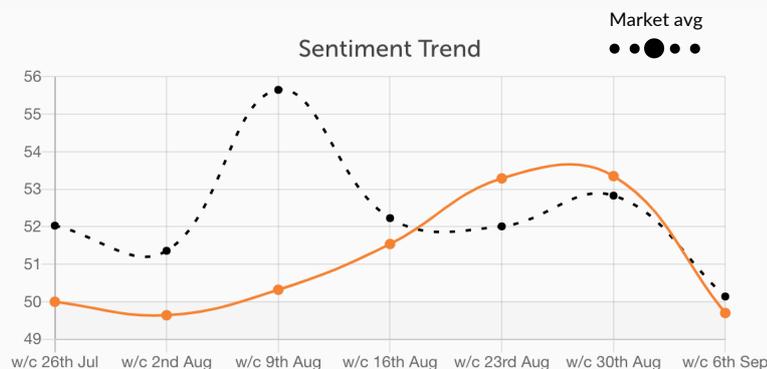
What passengers talk about more with Avanti than with anyone else

standard premium	47	+15	42
seat reservations	122	-54	34
a roller skating tortoise	38	+38	68

Social media support credited with **quick** and **personable support**.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Bus replacements, cancelled trains, delays and signal failures saw a surge in support queries.

Issues that are tenfold for passengers travelling who require assistance.

Excellent passenger assistance was highlighted multiple times.

One to watch: Passengers unable to reserve a seat via website bookings caused concern for passengers who require a seat because of a disability, injuries or age/physical ability.

Caledonian Sleeper

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

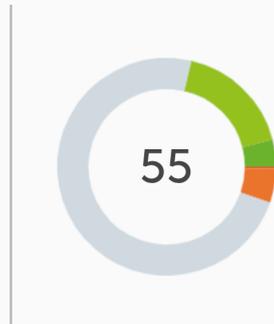


General overview

No. of tweets

	383 (21%)
	1,314 (73%)
	96 (5%)
Total	1,793

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

caledonian sleeper	46	fort william	20	bucket list	7
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People Didn't Like:

kaye adams	6	ice cold air	5	held hostage	4
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People Asked About:

club car	19	fort william	16	con up full blast	5
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UNIQUE TO CALEDONIAN SLEEPER

What passengers talk about more with Caledonian Sleeper than with anyone else

car clubs	18	+11	63
double bed	8	+6	63
way to travel	11	+4	73

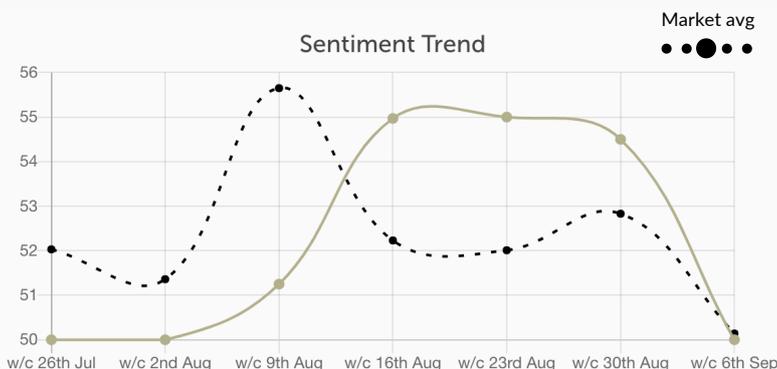
Passengers gushed about their **good night's sleep**.

Other passengers commented that **staff were the highlight of the journey**.

Frustrations centred around service issues causing trains to stop at Edinburgh instead of Glasgow.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Passengers expressed gratitude for disability travel discounts and **excellent service for passengers with guide dogs**.

One to watch: The **website contact form issue** reported by a number of people was a particular issue for a **disabled passenger who was unable to contact you** by telephone which wasn't an option for them due to their disability.

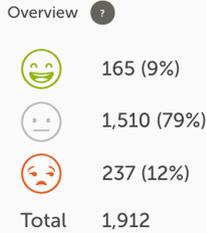
Chiltern Railways

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

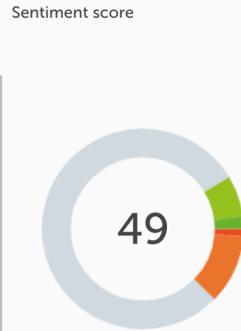


General overview

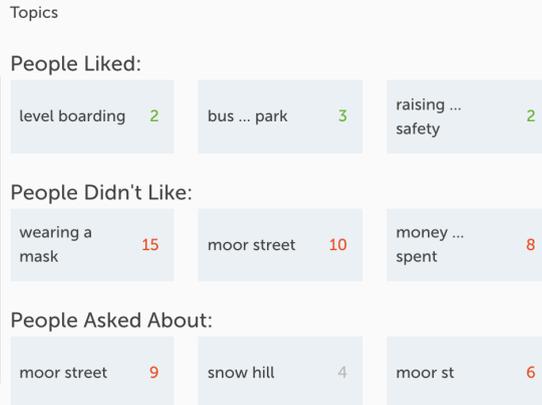
No. of tweets



Sentiment score



Top level topics



UNIQUE TO CHILTERN

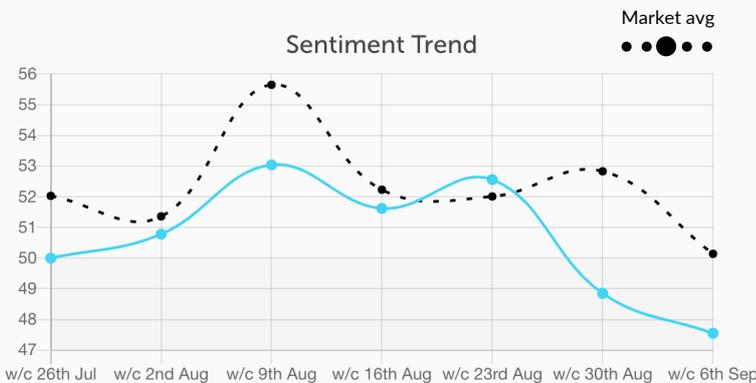
What passengers talk about more with Chiltern than with anyone else

seat reservations	32	-23	38
book on phone	10	+10	52
train manager	19	-9	53

Passengers not wearing masks, busy trains and no social distancing was a top concern for many passengers.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Credit for **exceptional passenger assistance** either received or observed by other passengers was shared on Twitter.

Tactile paving reported missing at Marylebone platforms.

One to watch: Kate Pennick's Twitter thread, with 13.3k impressions and 4k RTs citing **no staff to help her board, no level boarding and wheelchair spaces taken up by bikes** - was not publically replied to on Twitter. Which was observed by a number of Twitter users.

CrossCountry

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

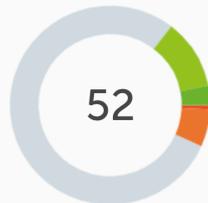


General overview

No. of tweets

- 549 (15%)
- 2,970 (79%)
- 256 (7%)
- Total 3,775

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

upgrade work	173	morning crosscountry	33	signalling ... area	8
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People Didn't Like:

cross country	16	wearing masks	16	new street	19
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People Asked About:

reserve ... seat	21	bike space	11	seat ... reservation	20
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UNIQUE TO CROSS COUNTRY

What passengers talk about more with Cross Country than with anyone else

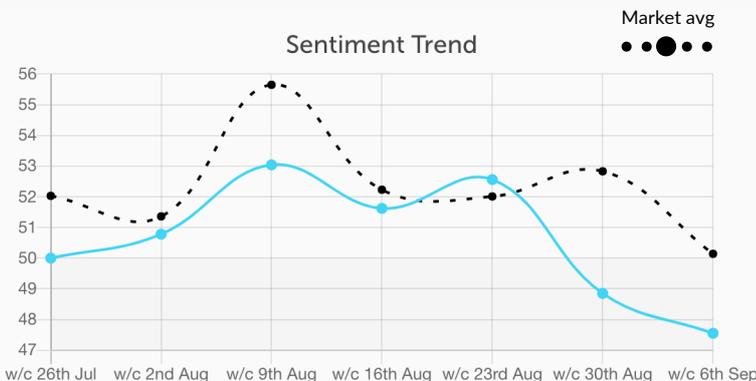
seat reservations	32	-23	38
book on phone	10	+10	52
train manager	19	-9	53

Train managers received particular praise during the reporting period.

Issues with website **payment gateway** caused frustrations.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Gratitude for **speed of passenger assistance** during busy service.

x2 instances reported **assistance services losing or leaving behind passenger luggage**.

One to watch: Lack of spaces for prams and pushchairs cited to be leading passengers to **use up wheelchair spaces** as parents often can't fold up prams and store them as luggage.

Govia Thameslink Railway



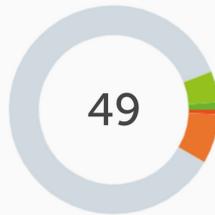
Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

General overview

No. of tweets

	885 (6%)
	12,675 (86%)
	1,242 (8%)
Total	14,802

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

save money	76	extra cost	21	toc ... appreciated	17
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People Didn't Like:

cancelled trains	394	access ... available	78	paper ticket	88
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People Asked About:

london bridge	127	replacement bus	50	east croydon	48
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UNIQUE TO GTR

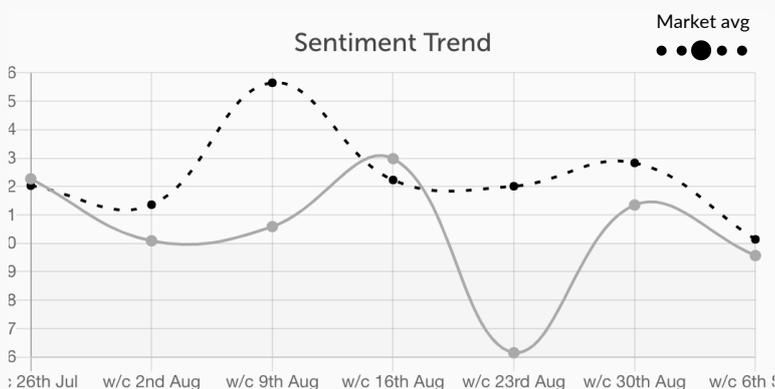
What passengers talk about more with GTR than with anyone else

trains ... cancelled	174	+2	28
delay repay	35	+8	31
season ticket	24	-21	31

Last minute train cancellations coupled with **poor/lacking comms** were passengers' top gripe.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

GTR franchises, particularly Southern, were often criticised for a lack of wheelchair space in First Class.

Wheelchair users unable to access buffet car was criticised.

One to watch: Luton station has caused particular challenges to wheelchair users, with the lift only making certain platforms accessible.

Great Western Railway



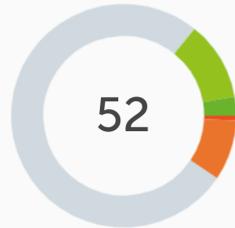
Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

General overview

No. of tweets

	5,447 (14%)
	29,375 (76%)
	3,630 (9%)
Total	38,452

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

toc ... appreciated	109	morning, gwr	132	vs ... appreciated	50
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People Didn't Like:

wearing a mask	209	social distancing	141	ticket was bought	292
----------------	-----	-------------------	-----	-------------------	-----

People Asked About:

seat reservations	174	replacement buses	102	social distancing	73
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UNIQUE TO GREAT WESTERN

What passengers talk about more with Great Western than with anyone else

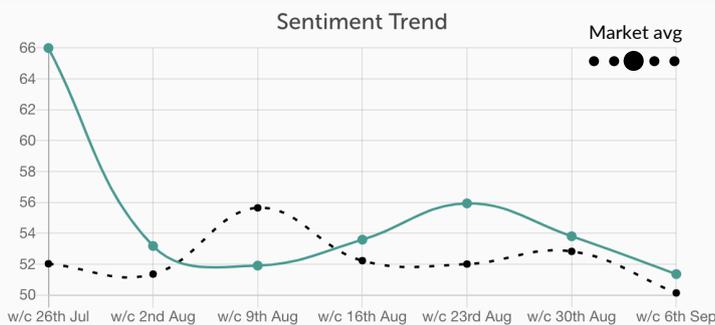
buy a ticket	68	-34	34
seat reservations	57	-37	35
paddington station	16	+7	61

Pullman dining is a real winner

Outreach at Paddington station was popular



Accessibility focus



Highlights

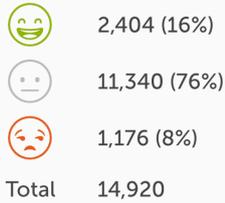
Passengers who required priority seats or wheelchair users faced restrictions in making bookings via the website because a seat wasn't guaranteed.

Specific thanks were given to excellent passenger assistance on multiple occasions.

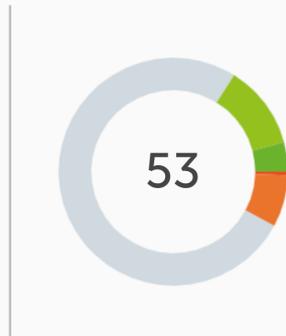
One to watch: The **size of the gap and height from the platform** was raised by multiple passengers. Concerns for the reliability of the ramp's availability coupled with the inability of anyone other than trained staff to operate the ramp were also raised.

General overview

No. of tweets



Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

scored ... goal	47	san siro	32	king's cross	84
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People Didn't Like:

wear a mask	137	seats ... reservation	117	kings cross	88
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People Asked About:

kings cross	92	delay repay	30	seat reservation	61
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UNIQUE TO LNER

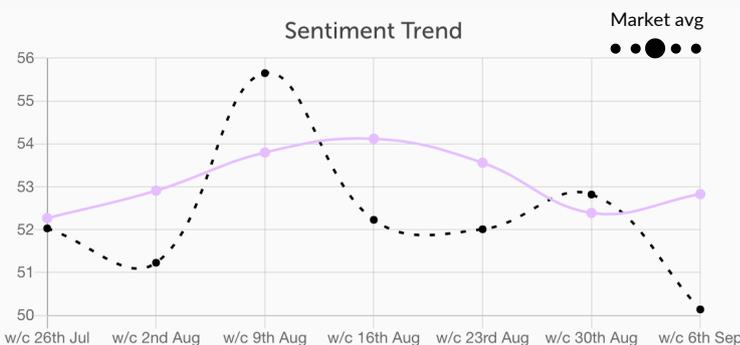
What passengers talk about more with LNER than with anyone else

1st class 🍷	57	-5	45
seat food order 🍴	11	-	64
the new first class lounge 🍷	13	+6	66

Very active and empathetic social responses helped to resolve escalating issues.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Top marks from passengers for **detailed accessibility information all on one page.**

Concerns raised over new ticket office opening hours for customers who require support.

One to watch: Deaf or hearing impaired passengers were more likely to experience **issues with announcements on trains**, more than other TOCs in the report. Passengers are asking for improved information sharing on trains.

London Northwestern



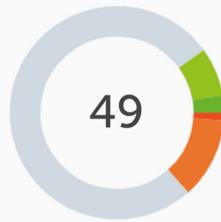
Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

General overview

No. of tweets

	264 (10%)
	2,023 (77%)
	355 (13%)
Total	2,642

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

plan your journey	21	toc ... appreciated	9	northampton ... liverpool	10
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People Didn't Like:

delay repay	25	cancel trains	60	wearing a mask	13
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People Asked About:

milton keynes	8	leighton buzzard	5	engineering works	7
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UNIQUE TO LONDON NORTHWESTERN

What passengers talk about more with London Northwestern than with anyone else

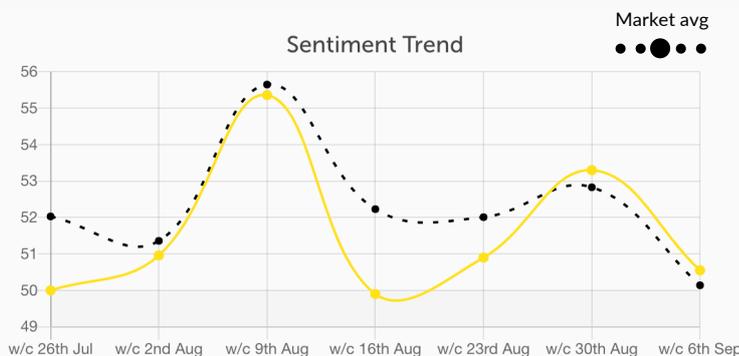
buy a ticket	23	+2	36
late for work	7	+6	20
a flexible season ticket option	9	-1	36

There was also some big love for Senior Conductors

Overcrowding linked to last-minute cancellations coupled with COVID concerns around other passengers not wearing masks was a top area of concern for many passengers.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Frustrations with blue badge holders needing to apply online for permits were raised on behalf of older passengers not as tech savvy as other passengers.

One to watch: A large gap between the train and platform caused an issue for a passenger not expecting to require assistance and was forced to disembark by sitting on the floor and lowering themselves to the platform.

Northern Trains

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021



General overview

No. of tweets

	1,270 (15%)
	6,478 (78%)
	589 (7%)
Total	8,337

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

vs ... toc	38	upgrading ... drainage	16	alderley edge	9
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People Didn't Like:

ticket machine	75	wearing masks	59	buy a duo ticket	69
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People Asked About:

replacement bus	31	wears a mask	30	lime street	13
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UNIQUE TO NORTHERN

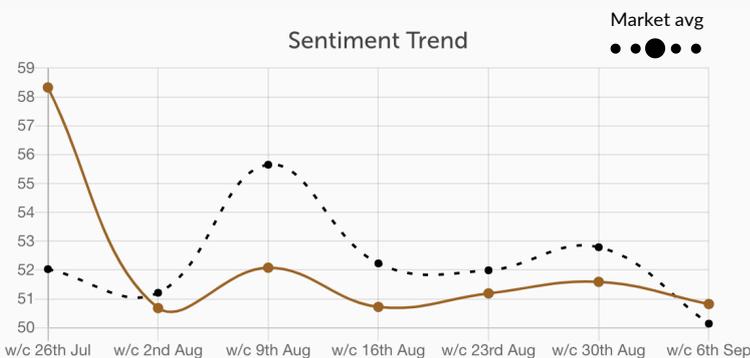
What passengers talk about more with Northern than with anyone else

train conductor	14	+3	56
your self service ticket machine	45	+2	30
wearing masks	41	-7	40

Passengers experienced a myriad of **issues with ticket machines**. This was more than any other TOC during the reporting period.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Called out for not allowing wheelchair users in first class.

Passengers unable to book/guarantee wheelchair space.

Assistance was credited for "**stress free wheelchair train travel**".

One to watch: There was some confusion over fines on board trains when passengers paid by bank card. This problem could be significantly difficult for passengers with learning difficulties.

ScotRail



Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

General overview

No. of tweets

	2,765 (13%)
	17,225 (80%)
	1,672 (8%)
Total	21,662

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

queen street	29	wemyss bay	16	vs ... appreciated	17
--------------	----	------------	----	--------------------	----

People Didn't Like:

wear ... mask	195	public transport	66	buy a ticket	87
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People Asked About:

queen street	57	replacement busses	54	train running	134
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UNIQUE TO SCOTRAIL

What passengers talk about more with ScotRail than with anyone else

train ... sunday	48	+27	36
train conductor	35	+8	46
quick reply	11	+1	73

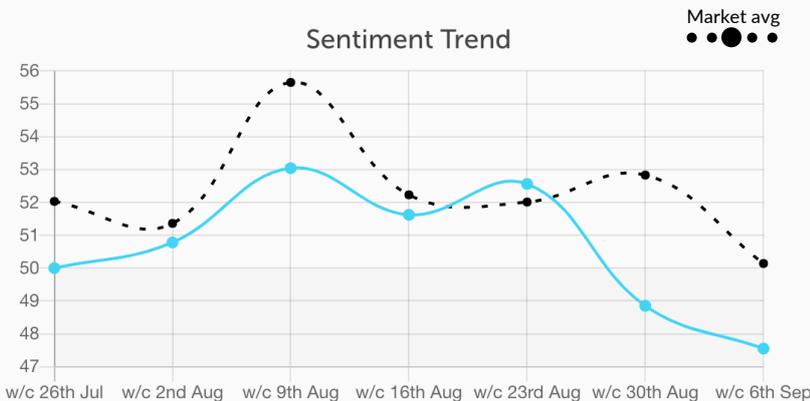
Passengers vented about having to **pay to use station toilets.**

Sunday train service was less frequent than some passengers hoped.



Accessibility focus

Sentiment Trend



Highlights

Closed accessible toilets for social distancing and the state of some accessible toilets were flagged.

No first class bookings available for **wheelchair users.**

One to watch: The **new flooring in Queen Street** station could cause some series issues as the colder and wetter weather sweeps in. **Concerns for people with disabilities and elderly passengers** have already been raised about the slippiness of the floor when dry.

South Western Railway



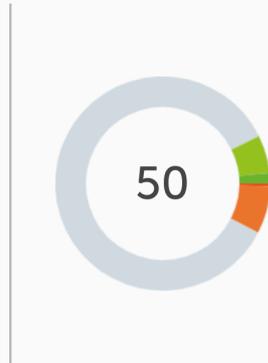
Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

General overview

No. of tweets

	540 (7%)
	6,281 (85%)
	561 (8%)
Total	7,382

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

key workers	13	toc ... appreciated	12	proactive team	8
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People Didn't Like:

buy tickets	43	hounslow loop	13	replacement bus	22
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People Asked About:

replacement bus	27	clapham junction	22	engineering work	19
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UNIQUE TO SOUTHWESTERN

What passengers talk about more with Southwestern than with anyone else

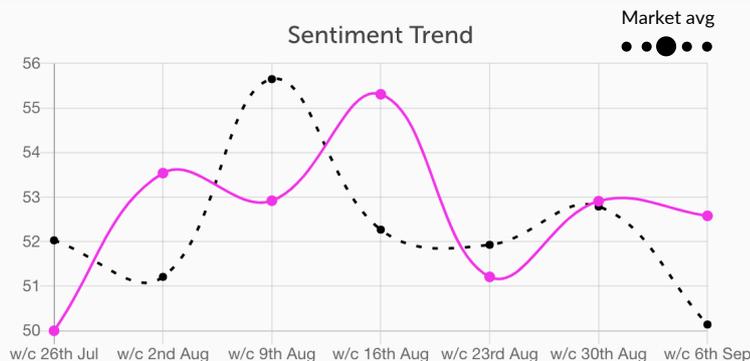
smart' card tickets	19	+12	33
guard ... train	19	+1	50
ticket office	21	+7	44

Age and quality of some trains were mentioned more than other TOCs during the reporting period.

A train guard received heartfelt thanks for purchasing a customer's ticket out his own pocket.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Access issues were reported at Dorchester south and west

No reply on Twitter in two cases where **passengers with wheelchairs reported being "stranded" on a train**

One to watch: Bikes and pushchairs vs wheelchairs. Frustrated passengers with bikes vented about the lack of bike provisions **forced their hand into using up wheelchair space** - otherwise, they have no option than to not travel.

Transpennine Express

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

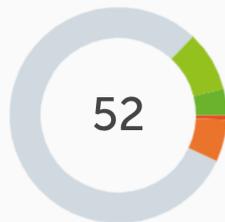


General overview

No. of tweets

	506 (13%)
	3,122 (80%)
	274 (7%)
Total	3,902

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

sorry ... discomfort	14	inconvenience caused	9	east coast	7
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People Didn't Like:

mask wearing	28	formal complaint	14	bought a ticket	27
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People Asked About:

engineering works	13	york to scarborough	9	bike spaces	8
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UNIQUE TO TPE

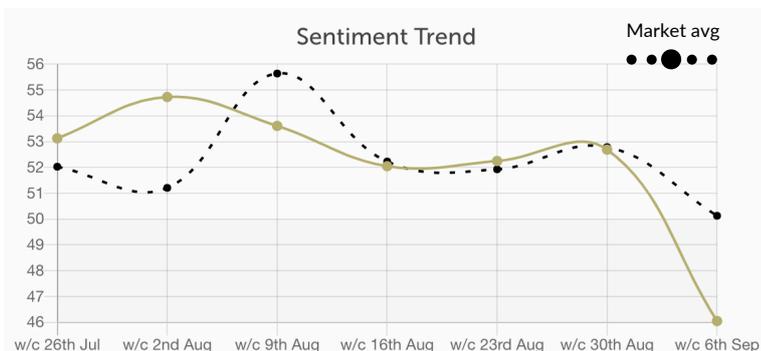
What passengers talk about more with TPE than with anyone else

new ... service	14	+10	57
1st class	14	+7	41
book train tickets	16	-10	38

Dedicated bike space helped to reduce wheelchair access issues but some raised concern with size of bike space available obstructing the door



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Some confusion over wheelchair availability in first class due to website wording. Other passengers clarified query.

Missing open button, or incorrect door labelling, or doors not opening was reported more than other TOCs in the report.

One to watch: Passengers commented on train announcements warning that steps down to the platform were "greater than usual" - at 80% of stops.

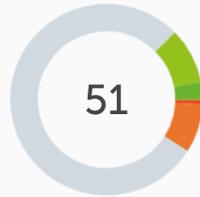
Transport for Wales

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

General overview

No. of tweets Sentiment score Top level topics

😊 674 (12%)
 😐 4,269 (79%)
 😞 490 (9%)
 Total 5,433



People Liked:

accelerator ... programme	10	toc ... appreciated	12	programme ... solution	8
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People Didn't Like:

wears masks	76	social distancing	23	buy ... ticket	24
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People Asked About:

replacement bus	28	buy a ticket	16	pembroke dock	4
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UNIQUE TO TFW

What passengers talk about more with TfW than with anyone else

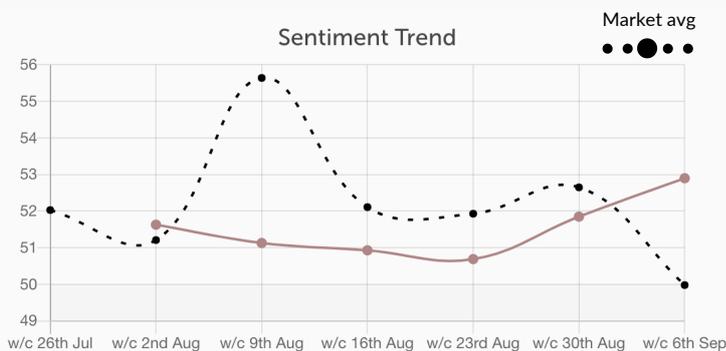
accelerator ... programme 🏆	11	+8	75
demo day	16	+16	65
trains ... overcrowded 🏆	14	-10	28

TfW's demo day has received positive reviews.

Credit given to **friendly and approachable** staff.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Overcrowding was the biggest problem area, specifically due to:

- Blocked accessible entrances and exits.
- Wheelchair areas overtaken by luggage and/or people.

One to watch: Multiple reports of **wheelchair users unable to board due overcrowding** on trains, or double-booked accessible spaces.

West Midlands Trains

Based on tweets 1st Aug - 11th Sep 2021

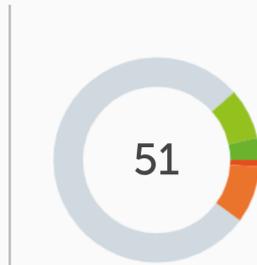


General overview

No. of tweets

	394 (11%)
	2,699 (79%)
	345 (10%)
Total	3,438

Sentiment score



Top level topics

People Liked:

upgrade work	173	signalling ... area	8	restrictions ... eased	8
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People Didn't Like:

cancelled trains	124	snow hill	23	bus replacement	20
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People Asked About:

replacement bus	22	snow hill	18	new street	18
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UNIQUE TO WEST MIDLANDS

What passengers talk about more with West Midlands than with anyone else

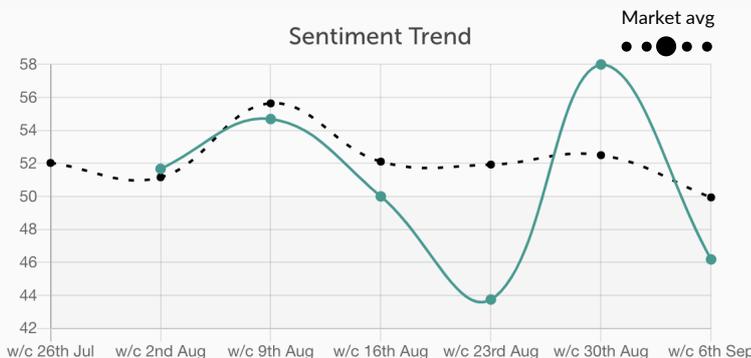
trains ... cancelled	73	-8	27
available train crew	13	-	38
replacement bus	11	-8	31

Conversations mentioning staff had a more negative average sentiment than other TOCs during the report period.

Cancelled trains was the most mentioned issue.



Accessibility focus



Highlights

Instances of vulnerable passengers or those requiring assistance left to find alternative travel due to cancelled trains.

One to watch: "Robot Announcer Lady" called out for **multiple errors and announcements** - announcements which are heavily relied on by visually impaired customers.

All this from a sample of Twitter data only.

What could you achieve with a **layered view of social, customer, product and employee data?**



Discover the stories behind the data

Wordnerds gives you real-time, actionable insight to:

Objective measure of CX

Track and monitor changing customer expectations and shifts in priorities. Understand how seismic shifts in public opinion is impacting CX and what you can do to improve.

Measure the true impact of change

Monitor what your customers or the market are talking about right now and see the issues that are impacting sentiment or being talked about most.

Better strategic decision-making

Chart progress against strategic objectives. Then improve it.

Competitor insight & benchmarking

Measure how you are doing relative to the other brands in your space and spot opportunities to delight or where you need to improve.

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Thank you for reading the first ever edition of Third Level Insight. This is the start of a new way of disseminating insight from the Wordnerds platform, based on what you can measure and what you can action.

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<p>Feb 22</p> <p>Catering options.</p> <p>From the station to the buffet car to first class, what gets customers' mouths watering</p>	<p>Mar 22</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>How to keep your passengers safe.</p>	<p>Apr 22</p> <p>Environment and climate change.</p> <p>In celebration of Earth Day, how to present your green credentials</p>	<p>May 22</p> <p>Cost</p> <p>What passengers really think of ticket price and fixed season tickets.</p>
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If you're not acting on what your customers say about you, speak to **Wordnerds**.

Abstract sentiment scores are meaningless. Social listening software is great for measuring impact but it won't tell you what people say.

Wordnerds is different.

Our linguistics-first approach to the latest AI/NLP techniques, produces a SaaS platform that genuinely understands language... in all its misspelt, sarcastic, colloquial glory.

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