

Round Table Event  
**Access for All: the benefits of improving  
accessibility of rail stations**

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3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> March  
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# Assessment of accessibility improvements at railway stations

- Overview of Presentation
  - Study objectives and elements
  - Research
  - Key results
  - General lessons
  - Q & A

# Study Objectives and Elements

- The aim of this study:
  - To assess and quantify the benefits of the Access for All (A4A) programme to passengers and train operators; and
  - To consider how the programme could be improved to maximise these benefits
- The study itself involved the following:
  - Analysis of station footfall and Railcard use data;
  - Site visits / audits;
  - Station user research;
  - Station user classified counts; and
  - Economic appraisal of benefits for a selected set of A4A stations.
- The study encompassed six stations representing a cross-section of all A4A stations: Bridgend, Huddersfield, Kidderminster, Purley, Rutherglen and Vauxhall (London).

# Station User Research and Counts

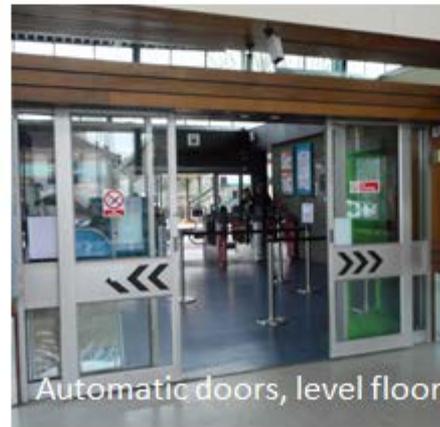
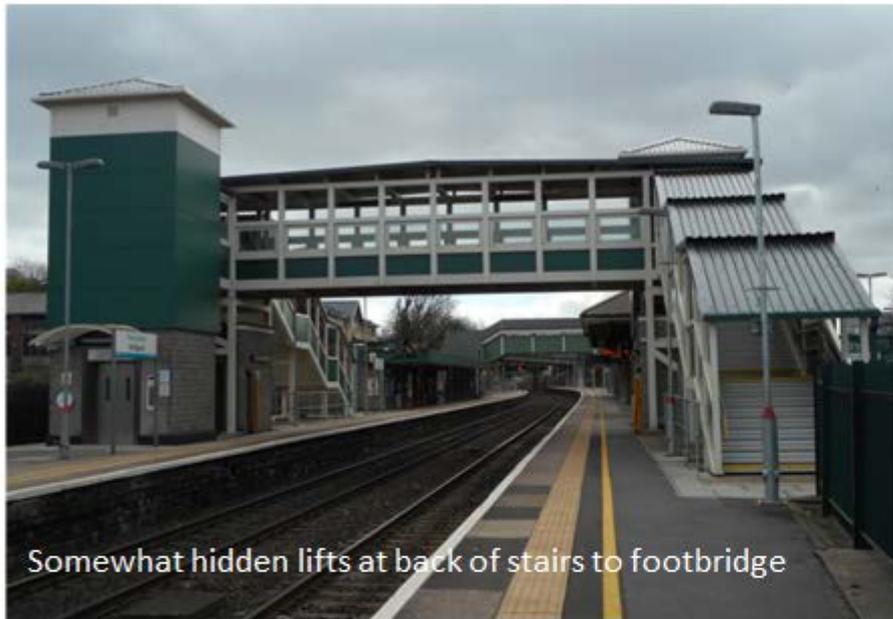
- Station user classified counts
  - Station users
  - Lift usage
- Passenger Interviews
  - Experience of station and importance of station elements
  - Noticeable improvements following A4A intervention and impact of this on travel
- User Categories:
  - Mobility impaired (users with walking aid, frail elderly users, etc.);
  - Wheelchair users;
  - Hearing impaired;
  - Sight impaired;
  - Encumbered (users with small children, heavy luggage, etc.); and
  - Unencumbered (everyone not included above).

# Sample stations

Sample of stations designed to be representative of all A4A stations

Station	Type of Works (main elements)	Completed
<b>Bridgend</b>	2 lifts installed and a new footbridge	March 2012
<b>Huddersfield</b>	2 glass lifts installed from subway to platform level, new stairways	September 2011
<b>Kidderminster</b>	2 lifts installed and a new footbridge	July 2008
<b>Purley</b>	4 lifts (platform to subway) and substation, significant station refurbishment	July 2008
<b>Rutherglen</b>	1 lift installed, new ticket office and foyer renewal	March 2009
<b>Vauxhall London</b>	4 lifts (platform to subway) and substation, significant station refurbishment	July 2012

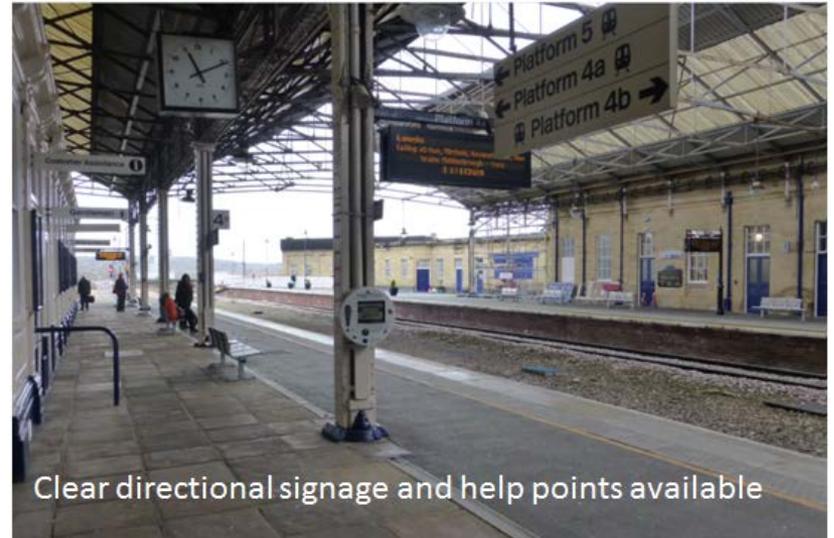
# Bridgend



# Huddersfield



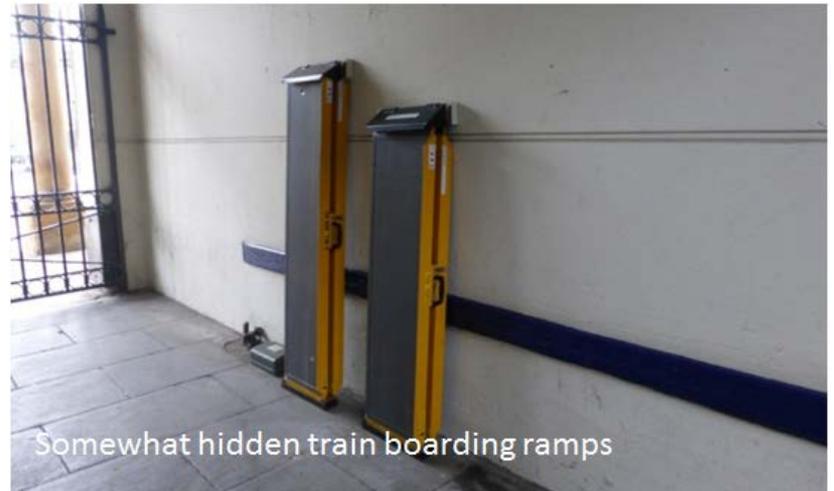
Disabled parking outside station



Clear directional signage and help points available



Visible and easily accessible lifts



Somewhat hidden train boarding ramps

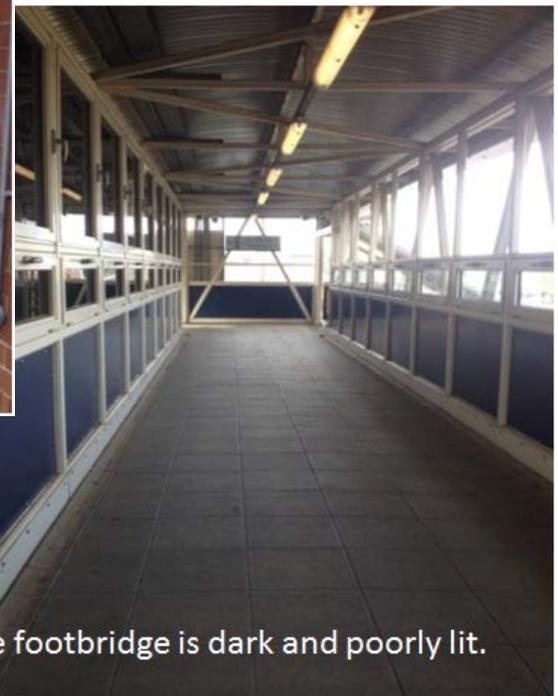
# Kidderminster



Stairs obscuring view of the lifts



Clear signage and help-point on platform

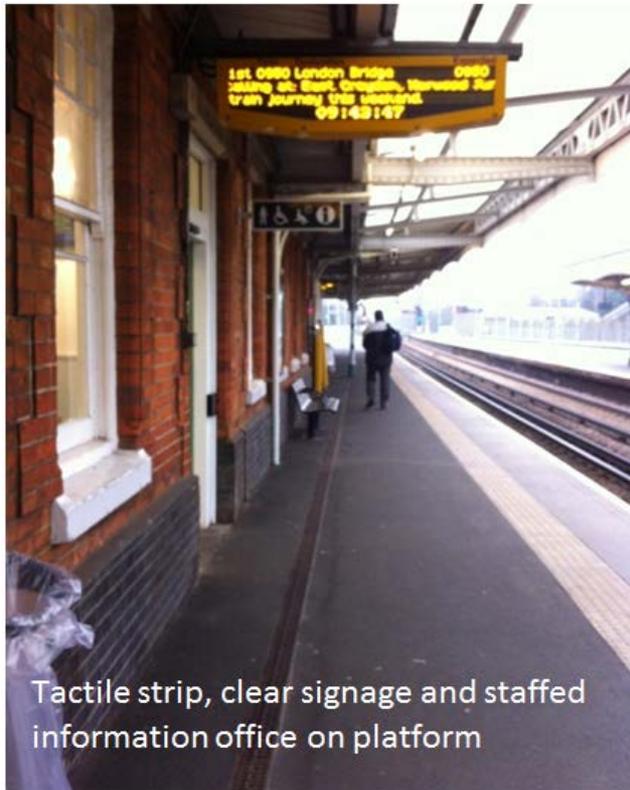


The footbridge is dark and poorly lit.

# Purley



Accessible ticket machine

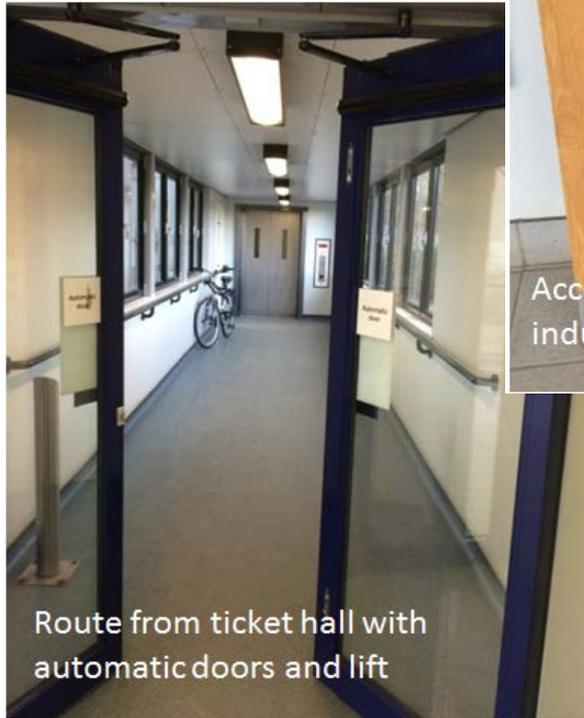


Tactile strip, clear signage and staffed information office on platform

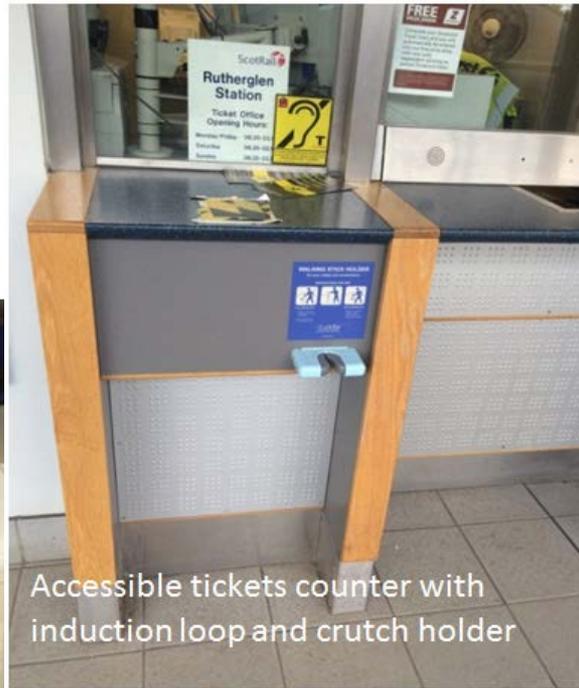


Meeting Point, clear signage and ramp available on platform

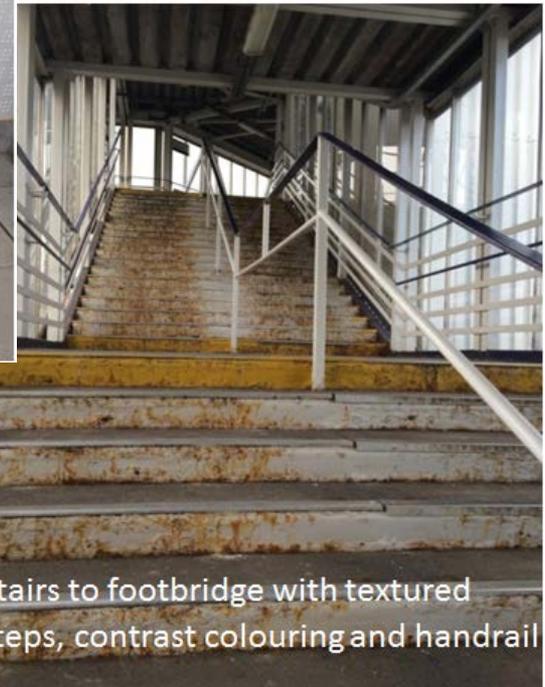
# Rutherglen



Route from ticket hall with automatic doors and lift



Accessible tickets counter with induction loop and crutch holder

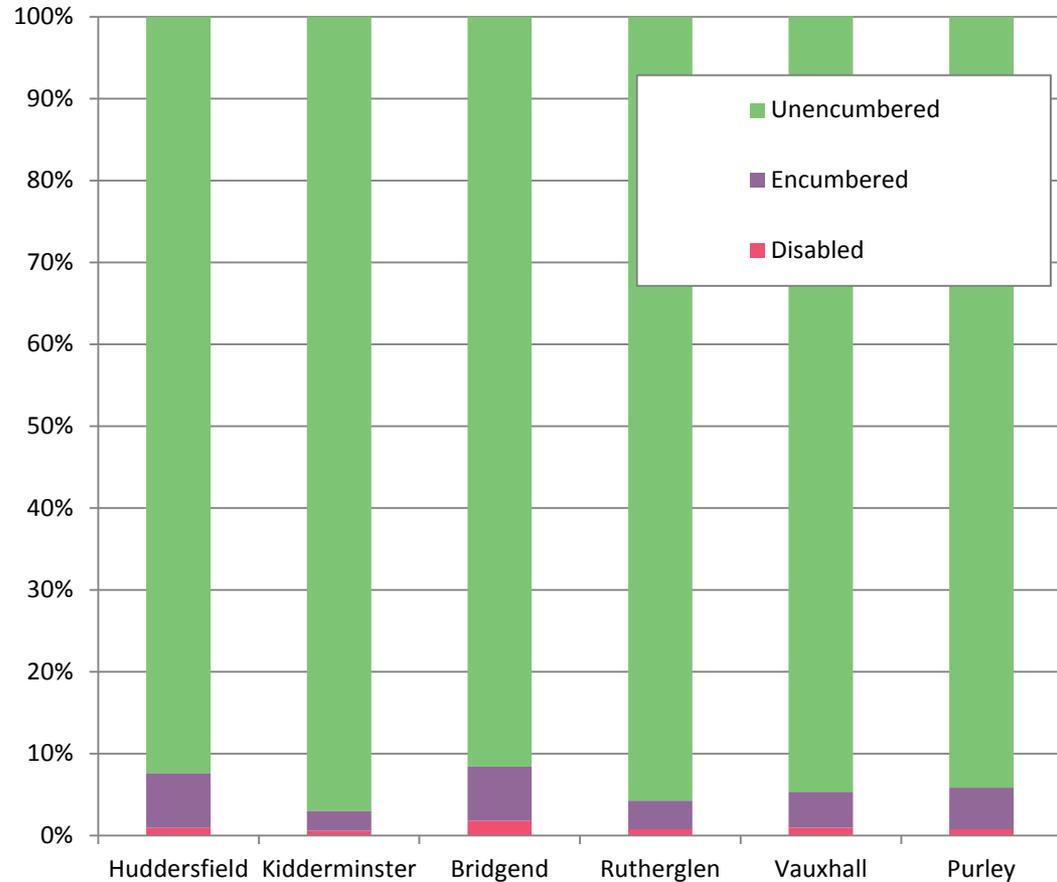


Stairs to footbridge with textured steps, contrast colouring and handrail



# Station user counts

- Disabled users represent 1% of total passengers.
- Bridgend had the highest proportion at just over 2%.
- Encumbered users represented 5% of passengers overall.
- Ranging between 2.5% and 7% (see opposite).



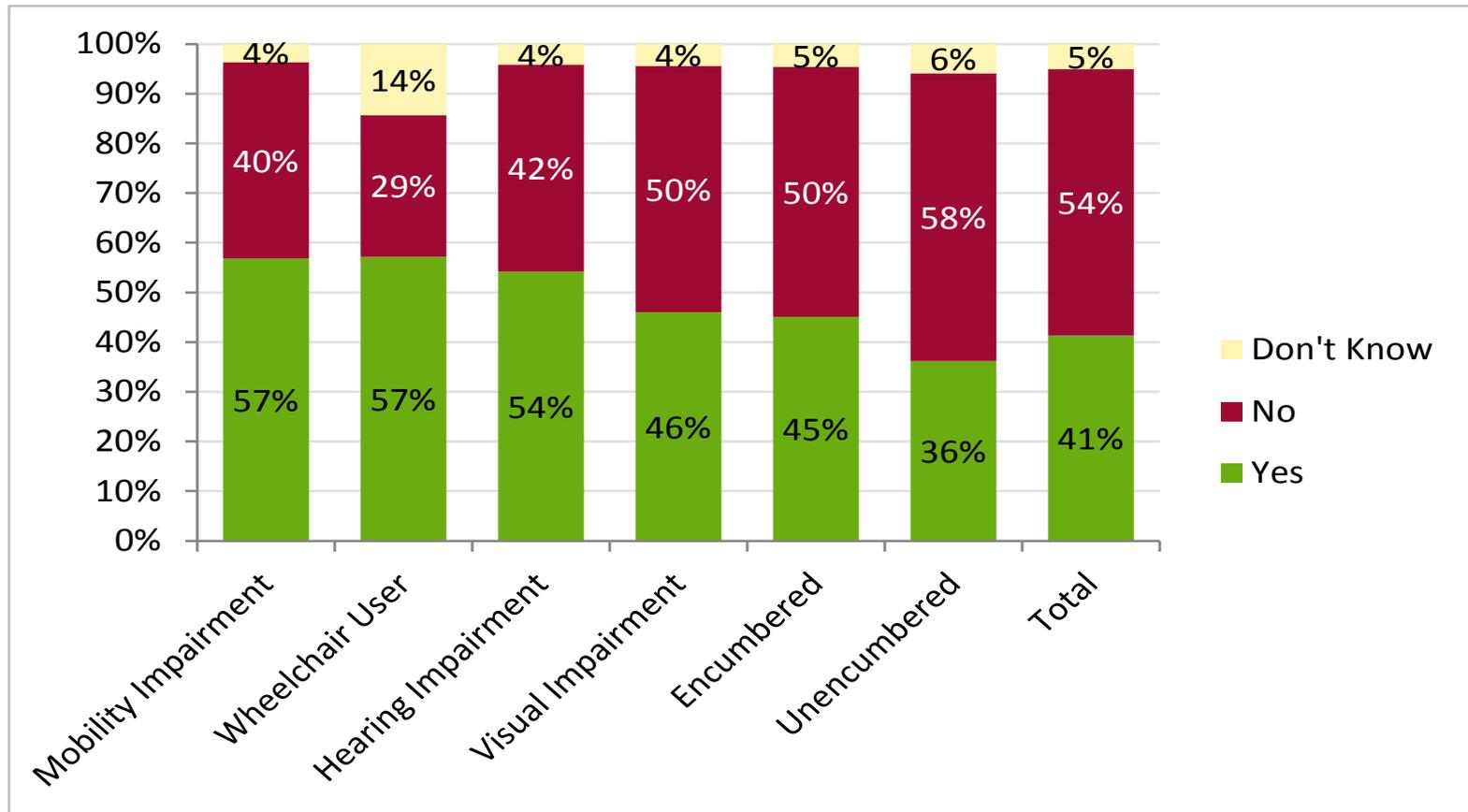
# Lift usage

- Overall, 5% of station users make use of the lifts
- Most users (73% on a weekday) are unencumbered
  - 4% are disabled
  - Remaining 23% encumbered
- At some stations only a proportion of disabled users utilise the lifts
  - Passenger interviews suggest there is an awareness issue



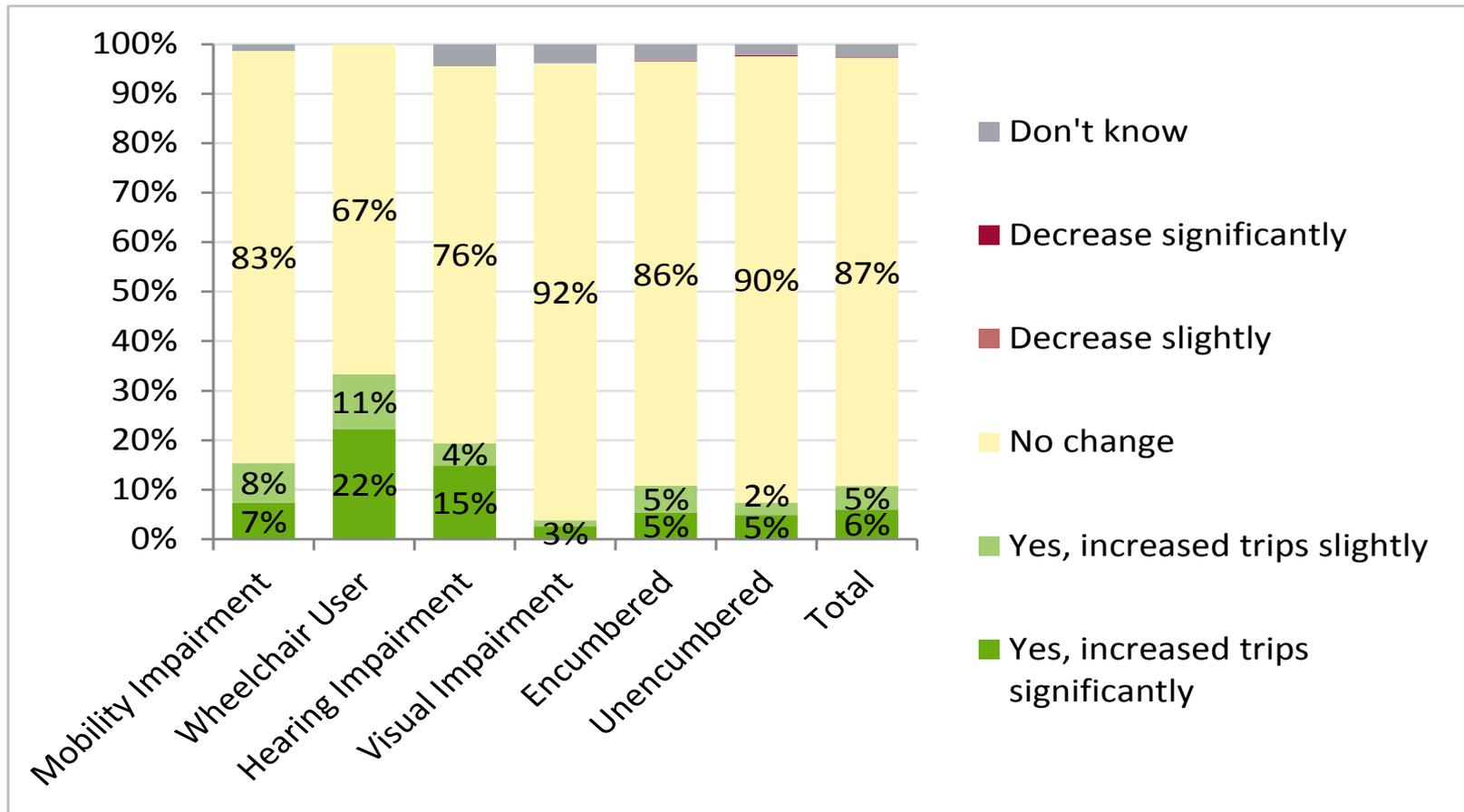
## Passenger interviews - awareness

- Are you aware of any changes made to this station in the last few years to make it easier to use the station?



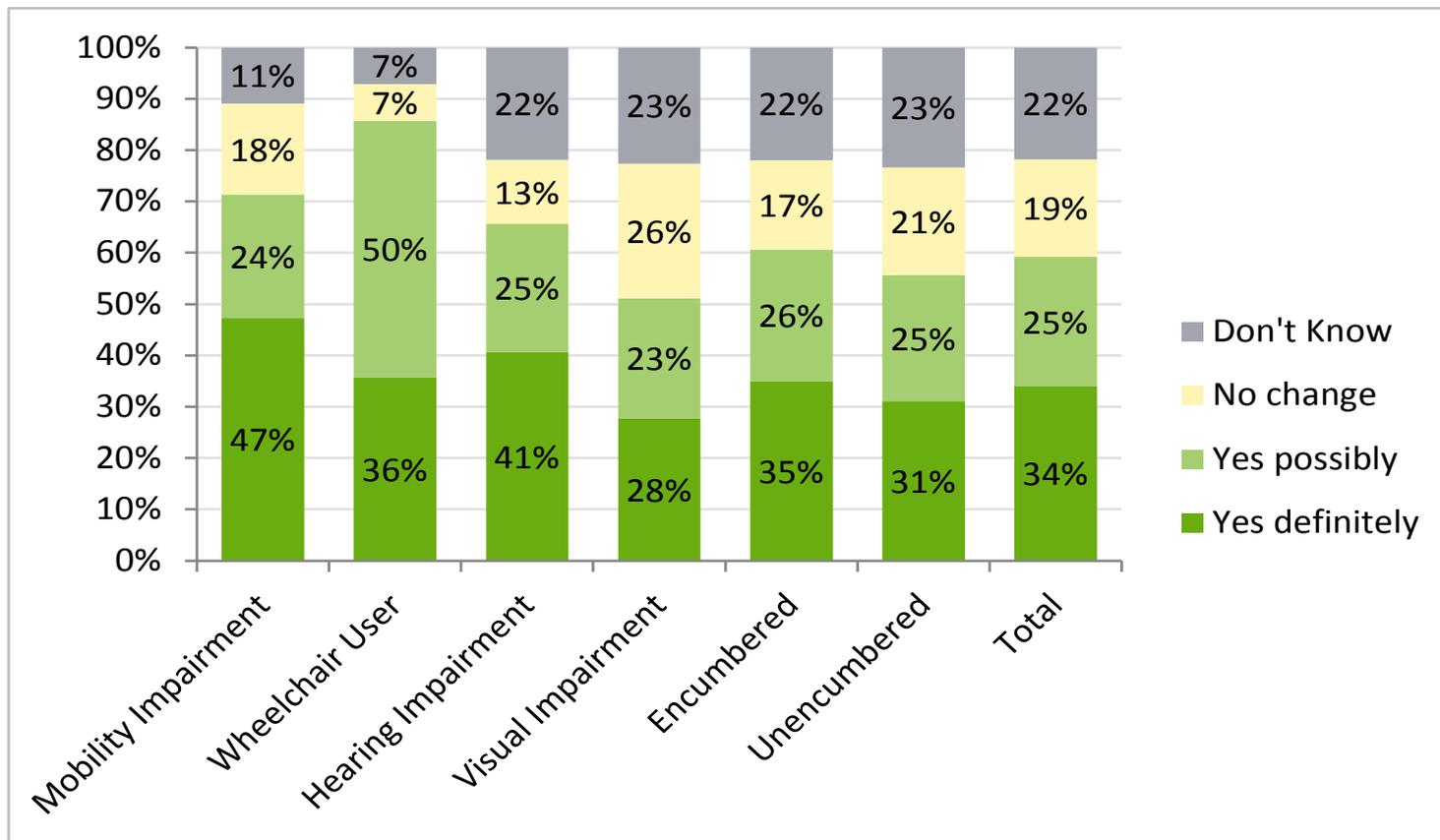
# Passenger interviews – impact of improvements

- Have any of these improvements affected your use of this station?



# Passenger interviews – impact of improvements

- Do you think these improvements, if any have encouraged other people with limited mobility or a disability to use this station more?

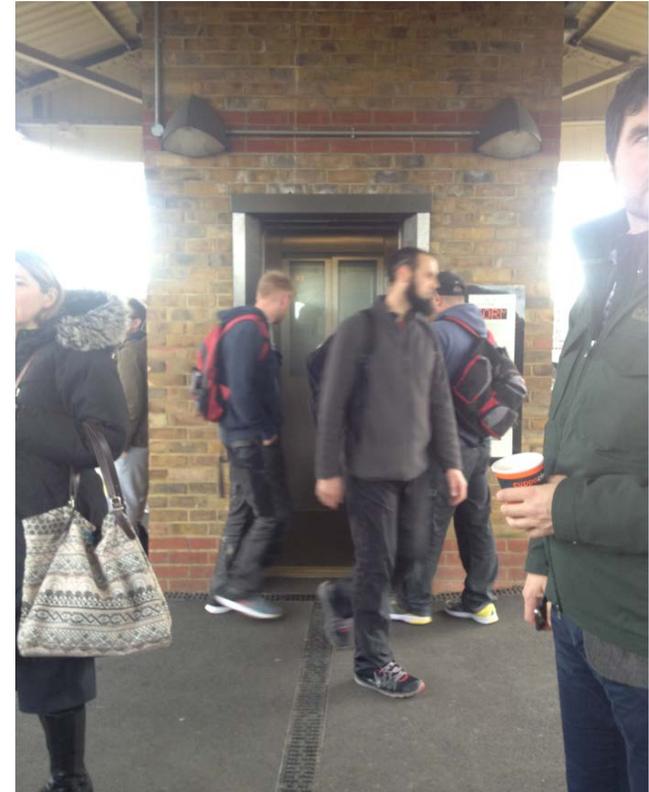


# Economic appraisal

- Overall Benefit Cost Ratio of 2.4
- Range of results of sensitivity tests: 1.1 – 19.5
  - Highest value includes benefits for passengers without a disability
- Considerable variation between stations
- Key factors – station footfall and number of disabled and encumbered users
- But only part of the benefit
  - Unencumbered users
  - Social inclusion
  - Ageing population

# Key Findings

- Better information to reap further benefits
  - Awareness of improvements amongst current users – 57% of mobility impaired aware, less for other users groups
  - New potential users – raise awareness within local community / station catchment
  - Awareness of the availability of aids – 26% of mobility impaired and 33% or encumbered used lifts
- Benefits a broad cross-section of passengers, not only those with a disability
  - Lift usage – 73% unencumbered, 23% encumbered, 4% disabled
  - Increased use of station following improvements – 7% unencumbered, 10% encumbered



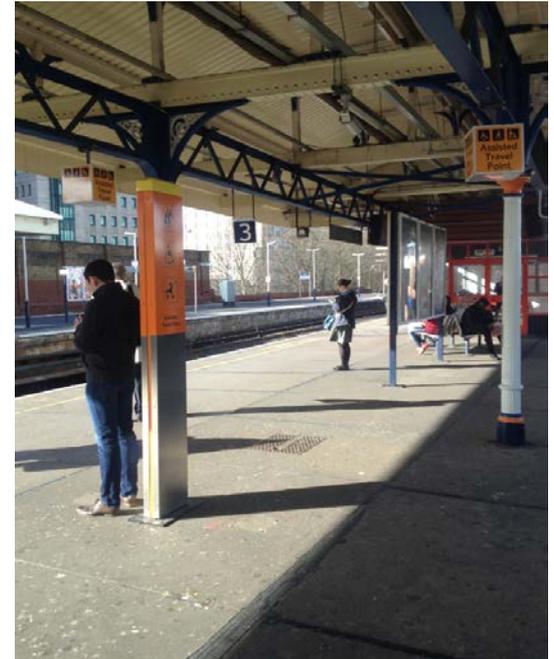
# Recommendations made

- Continuation of A4A programme
- Improved communication of station changes
  - On station – signage & information to existing users
  - Off station – information to potential new users in the local community
  - Online – review / update post implementation
- Develop guidance on appropriate communication / promotion complementary measures
  - An amount equivalent to 10% of capital cost set aside
  - Complementary communications plan
  - Role of station operator and TOC(s)



# General lessons

- To maximize the benefit of investment need to consider both the “hard” infrastructure and the “soft” complementary measures
  - Communication, information, signage
  - Staff training and awareness.
- Designing for people with poorer mobility, sight, hearing promotes better designs for all.
  - End result is more use of public transport to the benefit of passengers, non-users and operators.
- Accessibility to a transport service is only as good as the weakest link
  - Need to consider the end to end journey.
- There is a wider benefit in creating a more caring society which everyone can be proud of.



## Q&A

- 1) Do you have a recommended method to make appraisals of projects without before/after data? How would you estimate users in the absence of interviews?, which are no doubt a relatively expensive way to collect data?
  - Observing (and counting) passengers using the facilities provided is a relatively low-cost way of assessing their value
- 2) Is there data in the UK (from census or similar) about proportion of people who use a walking aid for transport? If so, could we estimate a maximum proportion of walking aid users for a catchment population, or estimate this based on age structures, for example?
  - The Census does provide data on numbers of people with a long term illness or disability
  - In England and Wales 8.4% have a a long term illness or disability which affects their mobility ‘ a lot’ and another 9.5% ‘a little’

## Q&A

- 3) Did you consider access to the station itself, that is, the accessibility of the whole journey? Were any changes to local pedestrian networks included as part of station upgrades?
  - No, improvements were only on the station estate itself
  - This is a significant issue in the UK where stations are often poorly integrated with their surroundings
- 4) Do you have any thoughts on how to quantify different elements of accessible station design in a 'level of service' framework? Which aspects of infrastructure are in themselves the most cost-effective?
  - Need to consider here the weakest link point: lifts are expensive but if they are needed to provide access to platforms then they are cost-effective

## Q&A

- 5) How important is the benefit-cost ratio in overall project appraisal in the UK? Are the benefits that you identify also included in appraisal of other transport schemes?
  - They are a standard part of all transport appraisals in the UK and are a hurdle to overcome
  - Not the whole story though, political support is also required
- 6) Have these findings been used by local or national transport policy makers to date? How do you see these data influencing prioritisation or delivery of accessible infrastructure in the UK?
  - They have been used to help gain continued funding for the Access for All programme
  - Not aware of them being used outside of this

# Further questions

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