

# Developing Methods to Increase Young Adult Rail Patronage

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**Submitted By:**

Reid Atchison  
Jacob Dalphonse  
Dominic DiPofi  
Lloyd George  
Mason Mish

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**Submitted to:**

***Project Advisors***

Althea Danielski  
Linda Looft

***Project Sponsors***

Fiona Saxon  
Andrew Cope

Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership

# Abstract

The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership has identified young adults as an area for growth in terms of rail patronage. The purpose of this research was to identify potential inhibitors to young adult rail travel and develop methods to increase ridership. The team researched young adults' perceptions of rail travel and interviewed stakeholders to determine areas for growth. Our results showed that young adults believe that rail travel is both unaffordable and unreliable. In addition, young adults have concerns about safety and find the conditions of certain amenities on trains and in stations undesirable. Using these results, the team created marketing infographics and a factsheet that the WCRP can use to lobby for future projects and policy changes.

# Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership (WCRP) is a community based organisation which works to encourage community involvement with the rail system through volunteer projects. Working with the WCRP, our team developed a project to identify factors preventing young adults in Worcestershire from travelling by rail and the materials the WCRP can use to tailor future projects to a young adult audience.

## Background

Through our research, the team identified several historical events that affect the rail network, as well as potential inhibitors that play a part in how young people perceive the rail network. Dr. Beeching's 1963 report, "[Reshaping of British Railways](#)", led to the closure of thousands of miles of rail lines as well as thousands of stations (Smith, 2025). From 1950 to 1980, around 42% of rail lines and 58% of rail stations were closed across the UK, primarily in rural areas (Gibbons et al., 2024). Since the initial cuts, only approximately 130 stations have reopened (Siraut, 2021).

The UK began reprivatising its railways in 1993, and concluded when all railways in Great Britain were fully handed over to the private sector in 1997 (Lynch, 2023). However, due to rising costs and inefficiencies, ownership of railways is changing again following passage of the [Passenger Railway Services Act of 2024](#). The process of renationalisation of railways began in 2025 and will take several years to complete (Benson, 2025). This act allows the British government to lease rolling stock from companies operating at a financial loss, and to gain control of their fare structure and timetables (Benson, 2025).

Our sponsor, the WCRP, seeks to increase the level of rail ridership through station improvements and community involvement. They incentivise a station adoption scheme, whereby communities near individual stations are encouraged to improve their local station through carrying out projects and events (*Adopt a Station*, n.d.). Connecting the local community to the station allows each station to become part of the local culture, which encourages the

betterment of stations through the creation of museums, stores, or other installations near the stations (Alexander & Hamilton, 2015). In addition, these adoption efforts foster a sense of community pride, leading to an increased level of patronage (Alexander & Hamilton, 2015).

The team identified several barriers to rail travel to investigate in this study. Despite the high levels of safety in Worcestershire rail stations, the perception of safety, or lack thereof, is a psychological barrier to rail travel. Additionally, rail lines need to be sufficiently accessible if people are to choose rail transit over other forms of transportation. For the purposes of this study, the term accessibility includes both physical and psychological aspects. Furthermore, the cost of train travel as well as frequent cancellations and delays are often major factors as to whether people choose to take the train (Armstrong, 2019; Dempsey, 2018). Finally, comfort in stations and on trains is an important factor in choosing a method of transportation.

## Methods

The goal of this project was to identify barriers to young adult rail patronage in Worcestershire and strategies to increase this demographic's ridership. To achieve this goal, we identified the following objectives:

1. Documenting young adults' perception of rail travel
2. Identifying current policies from regulatory organisations affecting youth ridership
3. Examining efforts taken by volunteers and community groups
4. Developing strategies to increase young adult ridership

To address Objective 1, we surveyed young adults, conducted interviews with young adults, and completed a station-by-station observation checklist. The team created research questions to explore young adults' perceptions of rail infrastructure, safety, cost, and alternative forms of transportation.

In order to achieve Objective 2, we employed three different research methods. The first method was archival research on the effects of current policies on ridership. An example of this is the British Transport Police's statistics related to efforts to keep British railways safe (Dempsey, 2018). The archival research process included documenting information such as locations of criminal activities and frequency of usage of force by law enforcement from the British Transport Police website (*Stats and Data*, n.d). We used this data to provide context into young adults' perception of safety when travelling by rail.

To achieve Objective 3, the team attended the WCRP's annual event, at which several partners and station adopters gave presentations detailing projects completed in the previous year across Worcestershire. These presentations allowed the team to gain further understanding of completed projects, their impact on their local communities, and any challenges volunteers faced in the process of implementation. The team also interviewed a representative from Platform Rail, one of the WCRP's partner groups focused on education.

To achieve Objective 4, the team identified the most significant barriers to rail travel by analysing the collected data. This was done by looking at the trends in responses to the young adult survey, specific answers to the free response questions, and insights gained through young adult interviews. The team then identified which of these barriers fell within the scope of the WCRP by looking at the information collected through expert interviews, noting what aspects are controlled by the government, the railway companies, and all other factors. After interviewing with volunteers and station adopters, the team gained an understanding of what projects have been conducted and what their community's reaction was, and whether they had an impact on ridership levels.

## **Results**

The team surveyed 220 young adults, and conducted three interviews with university students. Through this research, the team found that young adults believe that they are overpaying for a service that they cannot rely on to be on time: 47% of respondents rated rail travel as unreliable. Several respondents, when prompted to share suggestions for improving rail travel, indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the number of delays and cancellations of trains. The issue survey respondents most frequently identified as a problem was the cost of tickets. 63% of respondents believed tickets were too expensive, and written responses contained many comments from young adults about how lower ticket fares would improve rail travel.

The team also interviewed representatives from two train operating companies: West Midlands Railways and CrossCountry Trains. These companies address different travel needs, with West Midlands Railway focusing on commuting and CrossCountry being leisure travel oriented. West Midlands Railway prioritises train reliability over lowering ticket fares, based on a survey done by Transport Focus. CrossCountry, the leisure-focused rail operator, is facing

difficulty with capacity, as the increase in leisure traffic often results in overcrowding. CrossCountry is also refurbishing much of their rolling stock, reducing their available fleet and placing further strain on remaining CrossCountry services.

The team also had the opportunity to interview a member of Network Rail. From this interview, the team learned the responsibilities of Network Rail include overseeing track maintenance schedules, train timetables, and both passenger and freight rail traffic. Network Rail is currently attempting to increase freight rail in order to decrease the number of lorries on the motorways. Moving freight onto rails helps prevent motorway damage, reduces congestion, and emits less carbon dioxide. Currently, UK train maintenance is scheduled around peak commuting hours, leading to most maintenance being performed in evenings or on the weekends. However, with the shift in travel purpose from commuting to leisure, there is higher demand for trains during these maintenance periods, causing confusion and delay for those affected.

Through our observations, the team was able to see the impacts of different station adopters at the various stations throughout Worcestershire. The most notable impacts to the team were at Worcester Foregate Street, Great Malvern, Worcestershire Parkway, and Droitwich Spa. Improvements included artworks, flower gardens, and walking maps for the surrounding area. The team interviewed a representative from Platform Rail, an organisation that teaches primary and secondary students about train etiquette and building good habits about using the train. Platform Rail also takes children on field trips using the trains, giving them firsthand experience to build confidence with rail travel. The team then had the opportunity to attend the WCRP's annual event, where different station adopters were able to talk about their experiences and challenges with improving the stations.

## Recommendations

Following the findings of this study, the team developed recommendations for the WCRP to improve ridership among young adults in Worcestershire. Our suggestions are as follows:

- **Encouraging WCRP station adopters to add the WCRP logo to station improvements** to encourage the Worcestershire community to recognise the WCRP.
- **Increasing the WCRP's social media presence** to improve the WCRP's visibility among young adults.
- **Updating the WCRP website** for ease of navigation and accuracy of information.

- **Producing a young adult-focused marketing campaign** to improve young adults' perception of rail travel.
  - Focusing future communication efforts on making young adults feel as though rail travel is worth their time and money.
  - Placing emphasis on environmental sustainability as a benefit of rail travel.
  - Using provided infographics as samples for social media posts or flyers for physical distribution.
- **Lobbying members of Parliament, Network Rail, and rail operators** for changes to the rail system that would benefit young adults. The team provided a factsheet with collected data for the WCRP to use in lobbying efforts.
  - **Lowering the cost of rail travel** by extending the current freeze in rail fare increases past March of 2027, increasing the discount that railcards provide for young adults, and subsidising rail tickets.
  - **Changing rail maintenance schedules** to prioritise off-peak hours during the work week, such as midday between commuting times or at night.
  - **Centralising information** about train schedules, delays, and cancellations into one website or app.

Based on our research, pursuing these recommendations would have a positive impact on young adults' rail patronage in Worcestershire. In the midst of a climate crisis, making sustainable transportation choices is crucial. The train is a sustainable form of transportation for which extensive infrastructure already exists. All that remains is for young adults to ride.

# Authorship

Section	Author(s)	Editor(s)
Abstract	DiPofi	Atchison
Executive Summary	Atchison, DiPofi	Atchison, DiPofi, Dalphonse
1.0 Introduction	Atchison, DiPofi, Mish	Atchison, Dalphonse, George
2.0 Background	Atchison	Mish
2.1 History of Rail Transportation in the United Kingdom	DiPofi	Atchison
2.1.1 The Beeching Cuts	Atchison, DiPofi	Atchison
2.1.2 Further Changes in Rail Ownership	DiPofi	Atchison
2.1.3 Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Rail Travel	Atchison	Mish
2.2 The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership	Mish	Atchison, Dalphonse
2.2.1 The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership's Projects	Mish	Atchison, Dalphonse
2.3 Potential Inhibitors to Rail Travel	Atchison	Mish
2.3.1 Safety	Dalphonse	Atchison, George, Mish
2.3.2 Accessibility	Atchison, Mish	Atchison, Dalphonse
2.3.3 Cost and Reliability	George	Atchison, Dalphonse, DiPofi, George
2.3.5 Concluding Remarks on Inhibitors to Rail Travel	Dalphonse	Atchison
3.0 Methodology	Atchison	Atchison, George, Mish

3.1 Documenting Young Adults' Perception of Rail Travel	Mish	Atchison, George
3.2 Identifying Current Policies from Regulatory Organisations Affecting Youth Ridership	Atchison	Atchison, DiPofi
3.3 Examining Efforts by Volunteers and Community Groups	DiPofi	Atchison, Mish
3.4 Developing Strategies to Increase Young Adult Rail Ridership	Dalphonse	Atchison, George
3.5 Ethical Concerns	DiPofi	Atchison
4.0 Results and Analysis	Mish	Atchison
4.1 Young Adult Perceptions and Experiences	Atchison, Mish	DiPofi, Mish
4.1.1 Safety	Atchison	DiPofi, Mish
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4.1.3 Cost and Reliability	Atchison	Mish
4.1.4 Comfort	Atchison	Mish
4.2 Expert Insights and Recommendations	DiPofi, Mish	Atchison, Dalphonse, Mish
4.3 Volunteer Efforts and Response to Projects	DiPofi, George, Mish	Atchison, Mish
4.4 Opportunities for Growth	Atchison	Atchison, Mish
4.5 Summary of Key Findings	Atchison	Atchison
5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations	Atchison, Dalphonse, George, Mish	Atchison, Mish
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# 1.0 Introduction

Rail travel produces over eight times fewer carbon emissions than traveling in a petrol or diesel car (*National Rail, 2024*). Choosing more environmentally friendly modes of transportation is one way the United Kingdom (UK) can work toward its goal of reaching [net zero carbon emissions](#) by 2050 (Stewart et al., 2026). However, in 2024, rail travel only accounted for 2% of trips per person compared to 60% by car in the UK (*Rail Factsheet, 2024*). Since rail travel is far more environmentally friendly than traveling by car, increasing rail transportation is an important step for the UK to achieve environmental sustainability (*Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transport in 2023, 2023*). This goal is of particular importance in the county of Worcestershire, which has been in a declared climate emergency since July 2019, due to warmer wetter winters, hotter drier summers, and an increased frequency of extreme weather events (*Sustainability, 2026*).

Young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are a demographic with potential for increased rail patronage. Increased patronage among young adults should be prioritised, as changes in their transportation habits will have a longer-lasting impact than older age groups. To increase ridership among young adults, it is important to understand what they value when choosing transportation. Prior research on opportunities for rail travel improvement has been conducted by rail companies as well as independent research teams. UK rail companies conduct service quality studies to determine customer satisfaction (*Service Quality Excellence, n.d.*; *Service Quality Report, n.d.*), while external research groups such as the Transport Research Group from the University of Southampton have investigated barriers to rail travel through literature review (Blainey et al., 2012; Stanton et al., 2013). However, these previous research efforts did not focus specifically on young adults.

The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership (WCRP) is a community based organisation which works to encourage community involvement with the rail system through volunteer projects. Working with the WCRP, our team developed a project to identify factors preventing young adults in Worcestershire from travelling by rail. Understanding underlying factors in young adults' transportation choices will assist the WCRP in effectively tailoring future projects toward young adults to address the identified issues. Our objectives to achieve

this goal were to document young adults' perception of rail travel, identify policies from regulatory organisations that affect youth ridership, examine efforts by volunteers and community groups to increase rail travel, analyse trends in young adults' transportation habits, and identify strategies to increase young adult rail ridership.



Photo 1: A West Midlands Railway service to Birmingham New Street loads while a Great Western Railway service to London Paddington pulls into the station at Worcester Foregate Street.

## 2.0 Background

This chapter will cover the history and significance of rail transportation in the United Kingdom, examining how past policies have contributed to the current lack of opportunities for increased ridership in Worcestershire. This historical summary will be followed by a discussion of the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership, this project's sponsor, and its role with Worcestershire communities' interaction with the rail system. Finally, we will discuss the issues identified as opportunities for improvement in further detail.

### 2.1 History of Rail Transportation in the United Kingdom

The first railways in Great Britain were private ventures, beginning in 1825 with the opening of the [Stockton and Darlington Railway](#), the first steam powered passenger rail service in the world (*History of Rail*, 2025). British railways would remain under private ownership until the passing of the 1947 Transportation Act, when all ownership of railways was transferred to the government (Smith, 2025). The driving factor for nationalisation was to repair the decimated rail system after World War II, as well as to improve safety and modernise the rail system (Cowie, 2018). However, profitability of the newly nationalised railways began to fall in the late 1950s (*Railway Grouping*, 2026). In the UK, rail companies were required to carry all freight traffic offered by shipping companies, regardless of whether the rail company made a profit, although this requirement was removed in 1963 due to government concerns about escalating costs (*King's Printer of Acts of Parliament*, 1968; *Railway Grouping*, 2026). As a result, Ernest Marples, the transport minister at the time, appointed [Dr. Richard Beeching](#) with the goal of making the railway profitable again, as by the time of the cuts, the motorway system had reduced ridership to a fraction of what it had been 20 years before (Smith 2025; *TransportXtra*, 2013).

#### 2.1.1 The Beeching Cuts

Dr. Beeching's 1963 report, "[Reshaping of British Railways](#)", led to the closure of thousands of miles of rail lines as well as thousands of stations (Smith, 2025). From 1950 to 1980, around 42% of rail lines and 58% of rail stations were closed across the UK, primarily in rural areas (Gibbons et al., 2024). Figure 1 below shows the map of the UK rail network before

and shortly after the cuts. Figure 2 is the present-day map of the UK rail network. Since the initial cuts, only approximately 130 stations have reopened (Siraut, 2021).



Figure 1: Map of UK rail lines in 1950 (left) and 1980 (right) (Gibbons et al., 2024)

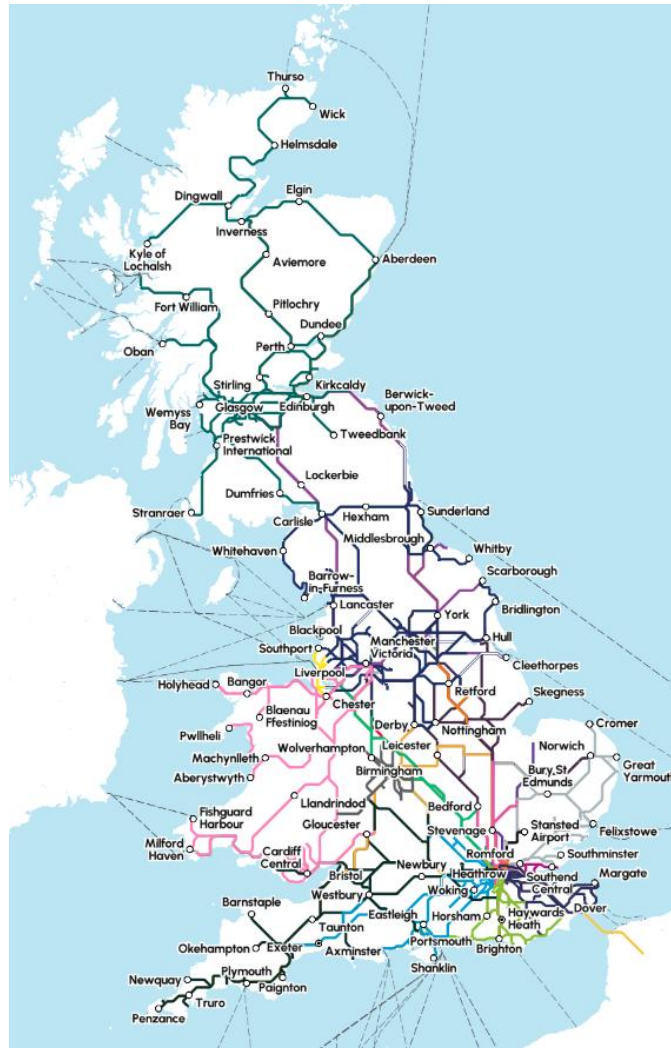


Figure 2: Map of present-day rail network in the United Kingdom (*National Rail*, 2026)

### 2.1.2 Further Changes in Rail Ownership

The UK was a member of the European Union (EU) when the EU required the separation of the government from the operation of the railways in 1991, necessitating the need for privatisation of the rails (Lynch, 2023). In the UK, rail privatisation was seen as an opportunity to introduce competition into the rail industry with rival companies competing for passenger traffic flows (Butcher, 2010). However, limitations on track capacity prevented competition from forming with the exception of some isolated pockets (Pettinger, 2024). Thus began the process of privatisation in 1993, which concluded when all railways in Great Britain were fully handed over to the private sector in 1997 (Lynch, 2023). However, due to rising costs and inefficiencies, the ownership of railways is set to change again following passage of the [Passenger Railway](#)

[Services Act of 2024](#), with the process of renationalisation of railways beginning in 2025 (Benson, 2025). This act allows the British government to lease rolling stock from companies operating at a financial loss, and to gain control of their fare structure and timetables (Benson, 2025). In addition to these difficulties for the rail network, it is also necessary to consider the effects of COVID-19 on rail travel.

### 2.1.3 Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Rail Travel

The COVID-19 pandemic had a lasting impact on rail travel habits in the UK. In 2020, the use of rail travel decreased significantly (*Rail factsheet: 2024, 2024*) due to the fear of contracting COVID-19 while traveling on public transportation and the shift to working from home (Harrington & Hadjiconstantinou, 2022). Since 2020, the number of passenger journeys has returned to pre-COVID levels (*Rail factsheet: 2024, 2024*), but the breakdown of common purposes of rail travel among UK citizens has shifted, as shown below in Figure 3.

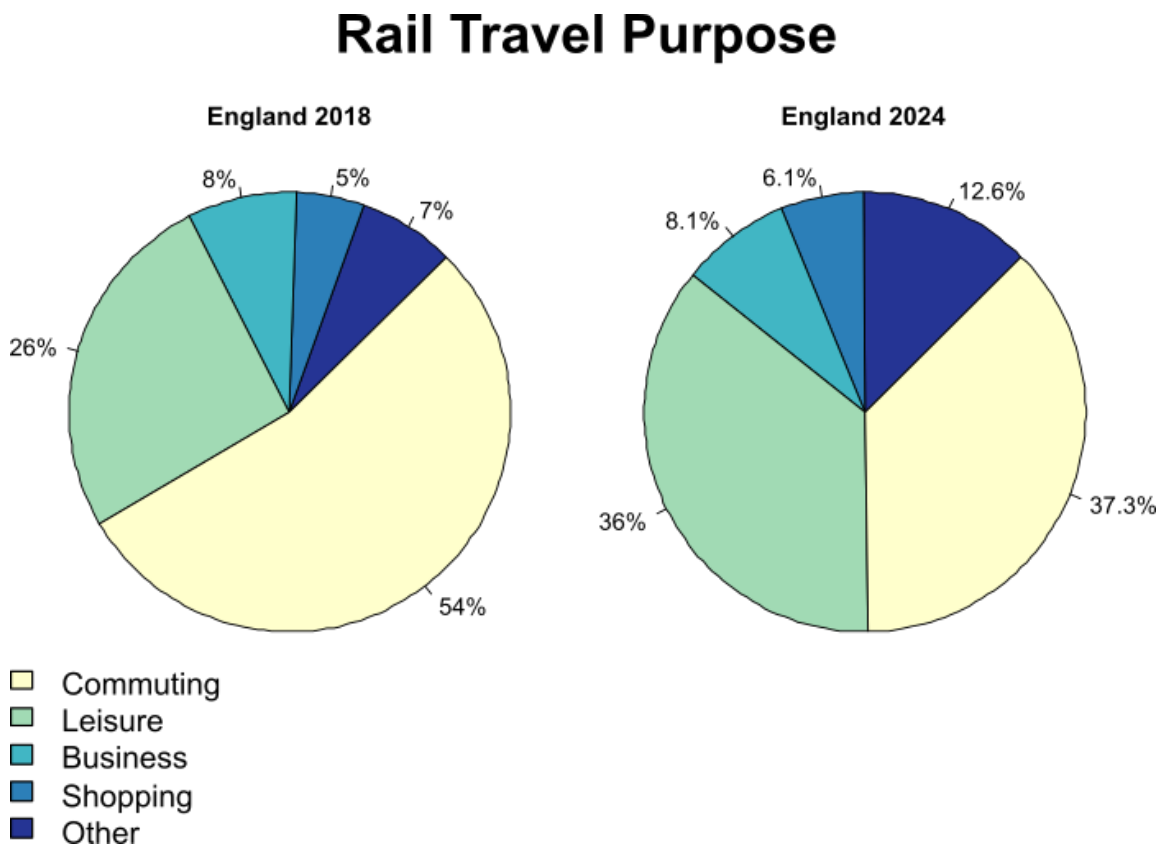


Figure 3: Statistics for rail journey purpose in 2018 (left) and 2024 (right) (*Rail Factsheet—December 2019, 2019; Rail factsheet: 2024, 2024*)

In 2018, 54% of rail journeys were for commuting and 26% were for leisure (*Rail Factsheet—December 2019, 2019*), but in 2024, only 37% of rail journeys were for commuting and 36% were for leisure (*Rail factsheet: 2024, 2024*). While these statistics are for the wider UK population and not just young adults, it is important to understand this shift in travel patterns, which can help inform future plans to increase ridership.

## 2.2 The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership

Increasing ridership in Worcestershire is one focus of the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership. The WCRP was established in 2019 through the joint effort of local councils, rail user groups in the county, and train operating companies such as CrossCountry, West Midlands Railway and Great Western Railway (GWR). Their primary goals are to improve the railway stations, enhance community pride, and to increase rail ridership. Figure 4 below includes a map of the rail network in Worcestershire, where the WCRP focuses its efforts (*About Us, n.d.*).

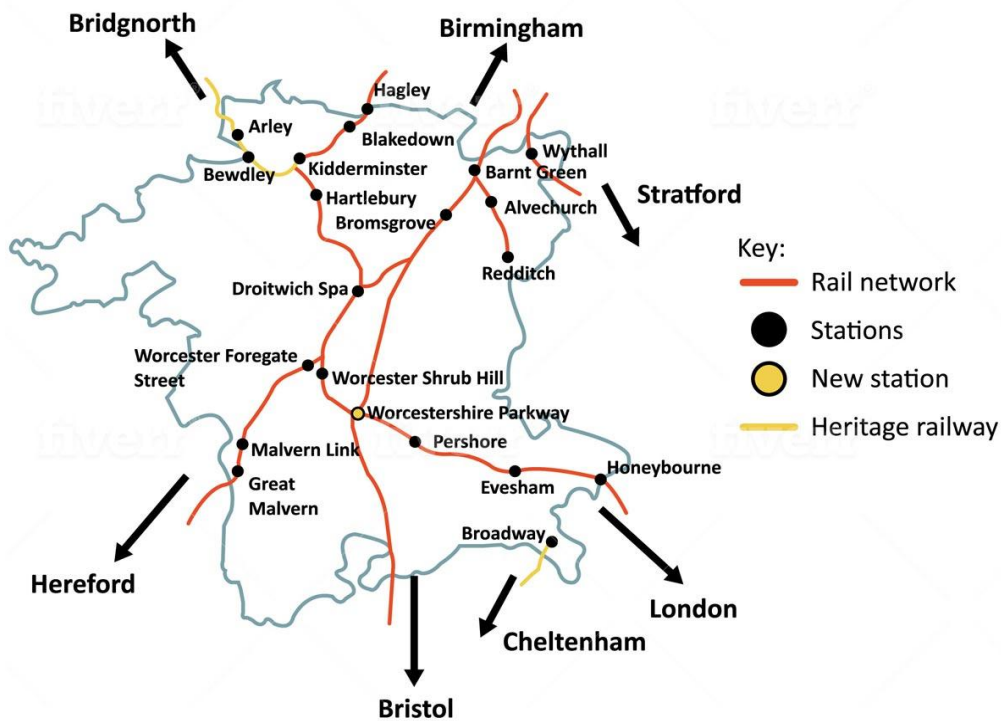


Figure 4: Map of the rail lines throughout Worcestershire (*About Us, n.d.*)

### 2.2.1 The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership's Projects

The WCRP seeks to increase the level of rail ridership through station improvements and community involvement. They incentivise a station adoption scheme, whereby communities near individual stations are encouraged to take it upon themselves to improve their local station and carry out projects and events (*Adopt a Station*, n.d.). The WCRP follows the example of other volunteer groups throughout the UK who have also set up station adoption schemes with great success (Alexander & Hamilton, 2015). Connecting the local community to the station itself allows each station to become part of the local culture, which encourages the betterment of stations through the creation of museums, stores, or other installations near the stations (Alexander & Hamilton, 2015). In addition, these adoption efforts foster a sense of community pride, leading to an increased level of patronage (Alexander & Hamilton, 2015).

WCRP local volunteer groups have adopted 10 of the 18 Worcestershire rail stations (*Adopt a Station*, n.d.). For example, Great Malvern station has been adopted by the [Friends of Malvern Railway Group](#), a group of local volunteers (*Great Malvern Station*, n.d.). The Friends of Malvern Railway Group undertook the complete refurbishment of Great Malvern station, completing it in 2022, and still have plans for future projects and improvements to the station, such as reopening the Lady Foley tea room on Platform 1, and the refurbishment of the Worm, an enclosed walkway that connects the station to the former Imperial Hotel (*Friends of Malvern's Railway*, 2024). Other groups have implemented smaller scope projects and improvements for their stations, such as gardens, public art projects, educational opportunities, historical exhibits, and decorative planters (*Adopt a Station*, n.d.). These efforts and installations help to form a positive outlook on the stations and the WCRP as a whole. Some photos of station improvements can be seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Various impacts volunteer groups have had on their local stations

The majority of the WCRP's community projects are geared towards younger children, such as working with Platform Rail, a rail education group (*About Us*, n.d.), that commissioned a local artist to work with primary schools to add art displays to Shrub Hill Station (*Worcestershire schoolchildren*, n.d.), and hosted workshops for primary school children to create handmade bee hives at Worcestershire Parkway Station (*Creating a Buzz*, n.d.). The WCRP has not focused on young adults as a target demographic. Their most notable project for young adults took place during the summer of 2025, when the WCRP worked with local pubs to develop a Rail to Ale promotion (*Worcester Rail to Ale Summer 2025*, n.d.). Some of their other young adult-oriented projects have a darker tone, focusing on railway safety advice. Although safety resources are informative for riders, they can contribute to young adults' anxiety about rail safety, which could be a factor as to why they may be more infrequent patrons of the railways (Išoraitė, M., et al, 2023). The next section of the report will analyse potential barriers to rail travel, focusing on the disconnect between patrons' perception and the reality of the train network.

## **2.3 Potential Inhibitors to Rail Travel**

Barriers to rail travel in the United Kingdom have been studied broadly in the past, notably by Blainey et al. in 2012 and Stanton et al. in 2013. However, specific research involving young adults is lacking. Using past research about wider populations, we have identified four

potential issues that may deter young adults in Worcestershire from using rail travel. These issues, namely safety, accessibility, cost, and comfort, are discussed in detail below.

### **2.3.1 Safety**

Despite the high levels of safety in Worcestershire rail stations, the perception of safety, or lack thereof, is a psychological barrier to rail travel. The scope of safety includes travelling to the station, waiting on the platform, and riding the train.

People may be wary of using the train due to news of recent crime or police altercations at their local station. For example, in 2021, a Worcestershire railway security guard was jailed for a sexual assault on a 14 year old girl (Connell, 2026). News releases about such events have a significant correlation with fear among young adults (Chiricos et al. 2014). Despite the perception of lack of safety at rail stations, crime has been falling in Worcestershire stations. In 2024 there was a 31% drop in reported crimes in Worcester rail stations, falling from 167 incidents in 2023 to 113 incidents in 2024 (Williams, 2025). Despite Worcester becoming statistically safer, there are still several environmental factors that affect people's perception of safety.

The perception of safety drastically changes at night. Less than 15% of young adults felt unsafe on public transport during the day, however over 40% of young adults felt unsafe using public transport at night (Currie et al., 2013). 42% of people felt unsafe due to a poorly lit station or stop (*National Travel Attitudes Study Wave 8*, n.d.). The biggest concern for travellers is being alone at night; people are afraid there will be no one present to help them if they are in danger (Uzzell & Brown, 2007).

Perceptions of safety can be improved with some simple changes to station norms. Between 2020 and 2023, the West Midlands Railway replaced the incandescent lighting with LED lighting in their rail stations, resulting in a 500% increase in lighting levels at many stations (*LED Rollout Across WMT Network*, 2024). Increased lighting improves the atmosphere of stations and reduces hiding places for potential attackers (Lorenc et al., 2013). Another aspect of safety perception is the ability to call for help, which UK rail stations address by installing Help Points, the publicly accessible communication devices that allow users quick access to information or emergency services. There are more than 4,500 Help Points across UK Rail

stations, enabling passengers to speak to a human operator when station staff may not be available (*Reliability of Help Points at stations*, 2024).

One agency dedicated to protecting passengers is the British Transport Police (BTP). The BTP use previous trends and statistics to determine which areas are in most need of patrols. This allows the BTP to reallocate officers to those stations, reducing the chance passengers are alone on the rail lines (Williams, 2025). The placement of a dedicated rail system police force allows for quicker responses to rail-related incidents (*What Makes Us Different*, n.d.). However, despite these efforts to increase safety, 32% of people felt unsafe some of the time while walking to the station (*National Travel Attitudes Study Wave 8*, 2023). Accessibility plays an important role in personal safety concerns as well (Friman et al., 2020).

### **2.3.2 Accessibility**

Rail lines need to be sufficiently accessible if people are to choose rail transit over other forms of transportation. For the purposes of this study, the term accessibility includes both physical and psychological aspects. The definition of psychological accessibility, as used in this report, is the convenience and desirability of rail travel compared to other forms of transportation. Suitable transportation to and from a train station is an example of physical accessibility, while ease of navigation of the different rail companies' ticket policies is an example of psychological accessibility.

Physical accessibility of the rail system across the United Kingdom was greatly affected by the Beeching Cuts, following Dr. Richard Beeching's 1963 report "Reshaping of British Railways" discussed in Section 2.1.1. As a result of these closures, large areas of the UK had their rail lines and stations closed, making rail travel inaccessible in those areas, including parts of Worcestershire (Gibbons et al., 2021). Although approximately 130 stations have reopened since the original cuts (Siraut, 2021), many areas still remain inaccessible.

Due to both physical and psychological reasons, there are limits to how far and how long people are willing to walk to a public transit station before they choose a different method of transportation (Yang et al., 2013). Acceptable ranges for walking depend on several factors, including pedestrian safety and distance from destination, and varies from person to person. Following railway network cuts, many areas that were previously within acceptable walking distance for many people were removed, subsequently removing effective walking access to rail

stations. In addition, several stations in Worcestershire are miles from the town centres that the stations serve. For example, Pershore Station is approximately 1.6 miles from the town centre, requiring a 37 minute walk from the station to the town (Google, n.d.). The decreased viability of walking necessitates the use of other modes of transportation to access railway stations. These methods include using buses, cars, or cycling, though each of these are affected by different accessibility concerns (Stanton et al., 2013). Examples include the convenience of driving to the train station being affected by available parking, cycling being affected by the availability of cycle routes and safe bike storage, and bus services being affected by bus routes and frequency of service.

Improving physical access to stations may increase ridership in areas already covered by the existing rail network. A study on the Dutch rail network, which is extensive enough to sufficiently reach most major areas in the Netherlands, found that opening new stations is not always necessary to increase train usage (Brons et al., 2009). Researchers project that if the amount of public transport services to local rail stations in the Netherlands increased even one more time per hour, the expected increase in rail trips was 6,537 additional trips per year, which is an increase of 5.18%. Given that 20.5% of households in the city of Worcester do not own motor vehicles (*Number of cars or vans - census maps, 2021*), increasing public transportation services to Worcestershire railway stations could have a similar effect on ridership.

As mentioned previously, convenience of rail travel plays a significant role in transportation choice as well. For example, although some locations are physically accessible using the rail system, they require connections between different rail lines owned by different companies. The need to change between rail lines on a more complicated journey adds variables and complications to a trip that can be undesirable for potential passengers (Blainey et al., 2012).

Additionally, access to seating on trains varies by rail company. West Midlands Railway does not offer seat reservations on any of their train services (*Tickets FAQs., 2026*). However, West Midlands will provide the opportunity to reserve a seat for other trains if a segment of the journey involves a different company offering reservations. GWR does offer reservations on some of their trains, though the company also ensures some seats remain unreserved, allowing some travellers to pick their seat as they get on the train (*GWR seat reservations, 2026*). While the complication of the rail system creates a barrier for some passengers, so does the cost.

### 2.3.3 Cost and Reliability

The cost of tickets is a major factor in transportation choices (Topham, 2025). Following the privatisation of the British rail network, beginning in 1993, prices across all rail networks increased. The price of long distance fares increased at a greater rate than short distance fares; between 1995 and 2018, long distance fares increased by 36%, whereas short distance fares increased by only 12%, as seen in Figure 6 (Dempsey, 2018).

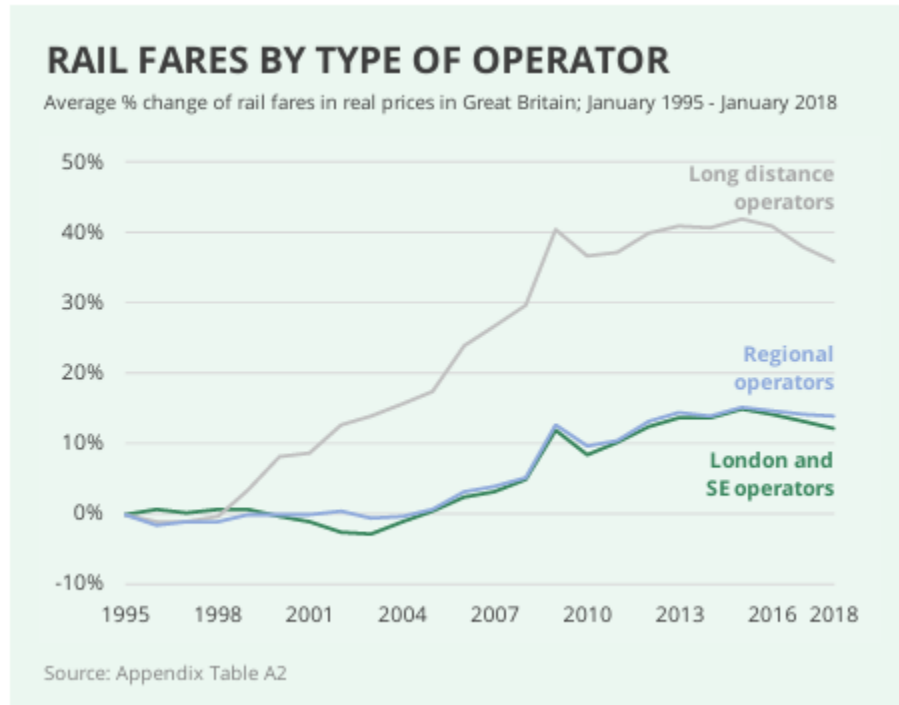


Figure 6: Fare increases of long distance vs. short distance tickets (Dempsey, 2018)

All Worcestershire passenger train operators are regulated, meaning that these operators cannot raise prices at the rates of unregulated operators (see Fig. 7). However, regulated fares are still subject to fare increases. Between 1995 and 2018, the regulated fare increased by 4.5% (Dempsey, 2018). In addition, in 2019, the rail fare in England and Wales increased by 3.1%, outpacing the average wage growth of 2.6% (Armstrong, 2019).

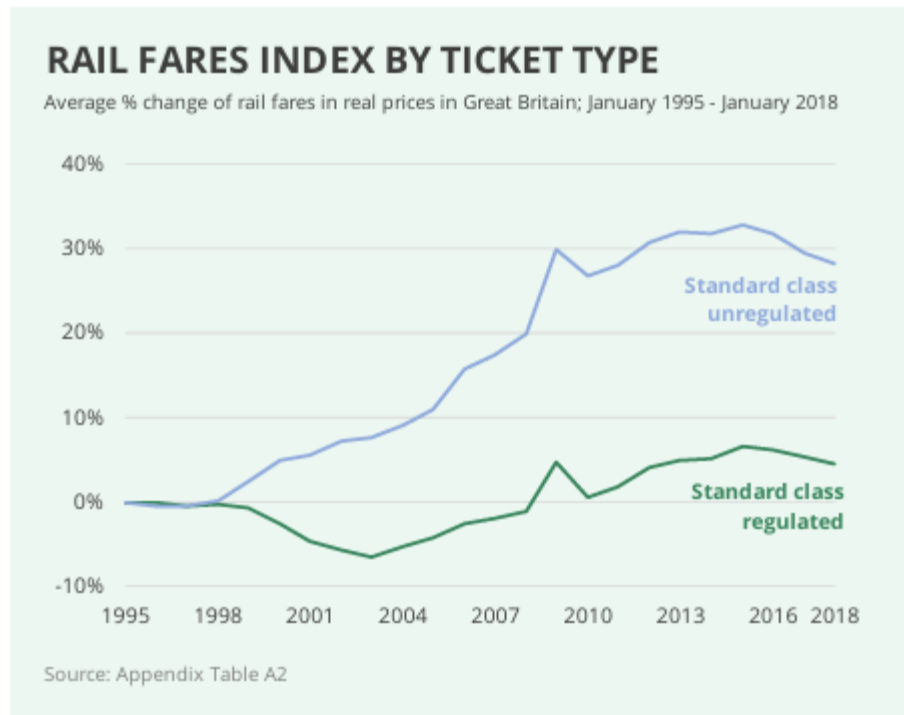


Figure 7: Fare increases of unregulated vs. regulated tickets (Dempsey, 2018)

A significant factor in the price of tickets is ticket type. Both the West Midlands Railway and the GWR offer Advance, Off-peak, and Anytime tickets. The relative price of each ticket type is related to the level of restriction in eligible trains. Advance tickets, for a specific date and time, are the cheapest type of ticket. Off-peak tickets are more expensive, requiring a specific departure time, but allowing flexibility for return times within off-peak hours. Anytime tickets are the most expensive type due to the lack of time restrictions (*Ticket Types*, n.d.). In addition, the GWR offers the Super Off-peak ticket, which is cheaper than the Off-peak ticket in exchange for more restriction in eligible return times (*Train ticket types explained*, n.d.). The West Midlands Railway offers two unique ticket types as well. Flexi-season tickets allow for 8 rides within 28 days, and season passes allow unlimited travel for up to a year between two selected stations (*Ticket Types*, n.d.).

Some rail operators offer discounts on rail fares for certain groups. For example, many young adults are eligible for student discounts. The West Midlands Railway offers a 50% discount on all tickets for students aged 16 and older (*Termly student season tickets*, n.d.). Another way for young people to save on ticket fares is through purchasing a railcard, which

offers 33% off all ticket purchases (*16-25 Railcard*, n.d.). The variety in tickets and pricing lead to an expensive and difficult system to navigate.

The cost of train travel as well as frequent cancellations and delays are often major factors as to whether people choose to take the train (Armstrong, 2019; Dempsey, 2018). The reason for most delays is knock-on effect, where the delay of one train causes the train behind to be delayed as well (*Delays Explained*, 2025). Reasons for initial delays are varied, but among the common reasons are inclement weather, engineering works, broken rail, leaves on the rail, and vandalism, among many other things (*Delays Explained*, 2025). 2019 saw the lowest level of rider satisfaction, with a large number of cancellations and a massive fall in punctuality leading to protests of ticket fare price increases that year (Armstrong, 2019). GWR and the West Midlands do not offer reimbursement for any delays under 15 minutes and generally follow the same pattern for delays and reimbursement (*Delay Repay*, n.d.; *GWR Delay Repay*, n.d.). For daily tickets on the West Midlands Railway and the GWR, the reimbursement scheme is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Ticket reimbursement schemes for West Midlands Railway and GWR (*Delay Repay*, n.d.; *GWR Delay Repay*, n.d.)

Length of delay (in minutes)	Single ticket (% of original price)	Return ticket (% of original price)
15-29	25%	12.5%
30-59	50%	25%
60-119	100%	50%
Over 120	100%	100%

Aside from the cost, the experience of rail travel affects transportation choices as well.

### 2.3.4 Comfort

When choosing a method of transportation, comfort is often one of the most important aspects of making that decision. The idea of being comfortable when travelling can influence a person’s decision about whether they travel by train. The definition of comfort includes the ride on a train as well as the quality of the stations. Facilities offered are an important aspect of station quality. For example, reported issues with Pershore Station in Worcestershire include the lack of a warm waiting area, toilets being limited to two stalls, and refreshment stands being closed during common hours (Albutt, 2025). These complaints led to a rating of 3.1 out of 5 on Google for Pershore Station, which could dissuade potential riders from using this particular station.

The idea of comfort also extends to the station atmosphere; the feeling of a space can invite or repel potential travellers. Worcestershire Parkway station, completed in 2022, was designed with a modern look with open areas, glass panels, and strip wood ceilings. However, these design choices stand out significantly from the local countryside, making the station seem out of place for what it aims to achieve (*My Favourite Parks*, 2022). Such a mismatch between an environment and its surroundings can cause a sense of anxiety or discomfort, which may dissuade people from engaging in activities in that environment (Lee, 2025). Minimising anxiety-inducing environments is particularly important for young adults, as they experience higher rates of anxiety than other age demographics (Gagné et al., 2022).

### **2.3.5 Concluding Remarks on Inhibitors to Rail Travel**

Young adults' transportation choices in Worcestershire are linked to a few key factors. Passengers on the train line must feel safe while traveling. The rail system needs to be easily accessible physically and psychologically. Ticket prices need to be affordable for young adults, a population with lower average income than other age groups (Thornhill, 2026). Finally, the rail stations must have a comfortable and inviting atmosphere for young people.

## 3.0 Methodology

The goal of this project was to identify barriers to young adult rail patronage in Worcestershire and strategies to increase this demographic's ridership. To achieve this goal, we identified the following objectives:

1. Documenting young adults' perception of rail travel
2. Identifying current policies from regulatory organisations affecting youth ridership
3. Examining efforts taken by volunteers and community groups
4. Developing strategies to increase young adult ridership

### 3.1 Documenting Young Adults' Perception of Rail Travel

To address this objective, we surveyed young adults, conducted interviews with young adults, and completed a station-by-station observation checklist. The team created research questions to explore young adults' perceptions of rail infrastructure, safety, cost, and alternative forms of transportation.

The team surveyed young adults using [Qualtrics](#), an online survey platform. The researchers approached young adults in city centres and on university campuses to survey their feedback on the rail system. Participants accessed the survey by scanning the QR code provided on flyers. The survey contained questions on participants' transportation habits and their perception of rail travel. Before completing the survey, participants were required to agree to the informed consent statement. The survey questions and informed consent statement are in Appendix B.

Additionally, the team interviewed young adults at the University of Worcester using a semi-structured format. Before conducting the interview, participants were asked to agree to an informed consent statement. During the interview, one researcher asked the questions while another researcher took notes. The interview template and informed consent statement are in Appendix C.

The final method for this research objective was observation. The team travelled on the train lines throughout Worcestershire, taking different trains and visiting numerous stations and town centres on each journey, completing a checklist of station amenities and services, and taking notes and photos at each station visited. See Appendix D for the observation checklist.

## **3.2 Identifying Current Policies from Regulatory Organisations Affecting Youth Ridership**

To achieve this objective, we employed three different research methods. The first method was archival research on the effects of ridership policies, such as The British Transport Police's statistics related to efforts to keep British railways safe (Dempsey, 2018). The archival research process included documenting information such as locations of criminal activities and frequency of usage of force by law enforcement, and is free to access on the British Transport Police website (*Stats and Data*, n.d). We used this data to provide context into young adults' perception of safety when travelling by rail.

The second method for achieving this objective was semi-structured expert interviews with members of regulatory organisations such as West Midlands Railway and Network Rail. The WCRP has several regulatory organisations among its official partners (*Our Partners*, n.d.) as well as expert contacts within other organisations. The WCRP provided researchers with introductions to these industry experts. Appendix E includes the structure and questions for these interviews.

The final method for achieving this objective was direct observation. To standardise the observation process, the team developed an observation checklist based on prior research about factors that may be important to travellers. The template for the checklist is in Appendix D. Researchers completed this checklist for fifteen of the eighteen stations in Worcestershire. These stations were selected based on the population of their towns, and by recommendation of our sponsors at the WCRP. Researchers assessed the presence and quality of amenities under the control of regulatory organisations at several stations, such as restrooms, concessions, lighting, and temperature-controlled waiting areas. Researchers took photos of each station visited as well as detailed notes to collect specific qualitative data on each station visited.

## **3.3 Examining Efforts by Volunteers and Community Groups**

To achieve this objective, the team attended the WCRP's annual event, at which several partners and station adopters gave presentations detailing projects completed in the previous year across all stations. These presentations allowed the team to learn about completed projects, their impact on their local communities, and any challenges volunteers faced in the process of

implementation. The team also interviewed a representative from Platform Rail, one of the WCRP's partner groups focused on education, in order to collect specifics about Platform Rail's goals and any travel trends they have noticed (Appendix E.3).

Additionally, the team conducted archival research to find and catalogue previous volunteer projects conducted at railway stations, including both those by the WCRP and others. These projects were chosen to gain an understanding of what makes a potential project successful or not. By investigating these results alongside interviewing the volunteers who undertook the projects, we sought to find out the wider community's response to these projects.

Finally, the observation checklist discussed in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 included a space for additional notes and photos (Appendix D) to track specific observations of any visible volunteer impact on stations throughout Worcestershire. By documenting noticeable instances of projects undertaken, researchers sought to determine how well known the volunteer efforts were at a given station, as well as if the WCRP's involvement was publicised nearby.

### **3.4 Developing Strategies to Increase Young Adult Rail Ridership**

To achieve this objective, we identified which barriers are most significant to increasing young adult rail patronage by analysing the data collected in Objectives 1-3. This was done by looking at the trends in the answers provided in the young adult survey, specific answers to the free response questions, and insights gained through young adult interviews. The team then identified which of these barriers fell within the scope of the WCRP by looking at the information collected through expert interviews, noting what aspects are controlled by the government, the railway companies, and other factors. After interviewing volunteers and station adopters, the team documented recently conducted projects and found the ridership data from associated stations from the [Railway Data Centre](#) to determine potential impact.

### **3.5 Ethical Concerns**

Ensuring the protection of all study participants when collecting data and interacting with participants is vital to research. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary, avoiding situations in which a perceived reward or consequence could cause bias. All interview participants signed an informed consent form, located in Appendix C, prior to their interviews,

and surveys contained a statement of anonymity and confidentiality of responses that all participants acknowledged before taking the survey, which is in Appendix B.

## **4.0 Results and Analysis**

This section presents the results from the surveys, interviews, observations, and archival research our team conducted to identify the current state of young adult rail patronage. The team analysed these results to create a list of recommendations for the WCRP to use in boosting young people's interest in riding trains in Worcestershire.

### **4.1 Young Adult Perceptions and Experiences**

In order to understand young adult's perceptions and experiences, the team surveyed young adults throughout Worcestershire, at the University of Worcester, at town and city centres in the county, and at the University of Birmingham. The team collected a total of 220 surveys, with 176 respondents belonging to the 18-25 age demographic. However, some respondents did not answer all questions, so on the graphs representing their answers, the number of responses obtained is noted. Through these survey results, the team learned that 73.7% of young adults rode the train at least once a month. The most common uses for rail travel were commuting and visiting friends and family, at 52% and 56% respectively, as seen in Figure 8. However, the number of respondents using other forms of transportation for the same purposes was greater than rail travel in every specified category, with the largest differences being in the shopping and personal business categories. The team noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive; for example, someone travelling for leisure may choose rail travel for some destinations but another form of transportation for others, or a commuter may take a bus to the train station to travel by train.

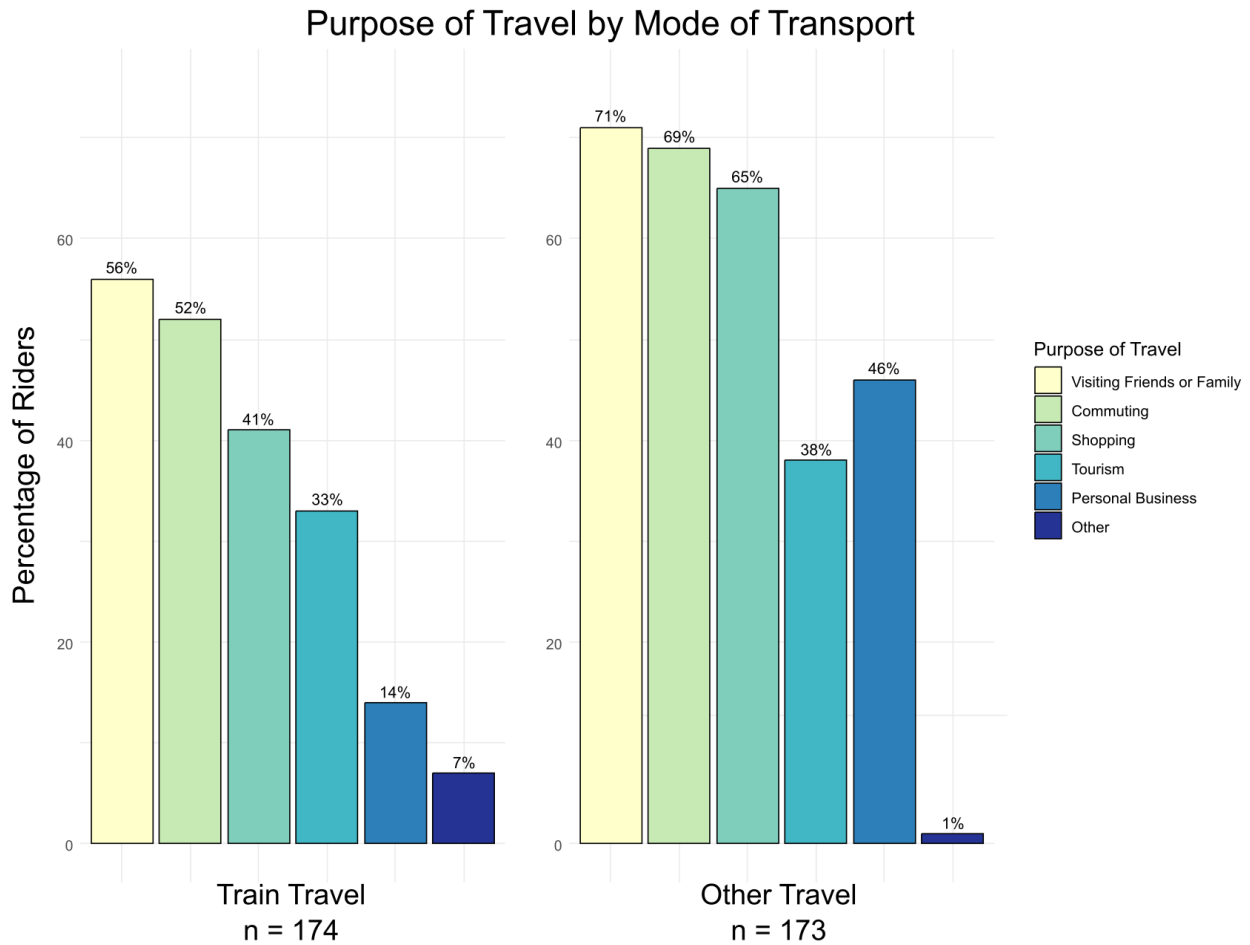


Figure 8: Purposes of travel by rail (left) and by other forms of transportation (right) by young adults

Our data also showed that many young adults are not taking the train although they recognise that rail travel is a viable option for their journey. From the surveys, 53% of respondents reported that they could have used rail travel instead of an alternative form of transportation in the previous week, as seen below in Figure 9. This indicates that there is the opportunity for growth in young adult ridership levels, as they have opportunities for travel in which they are not using the train system. With this information in hand, the team looked to identify data in the survey responses that would explain young people’s decision not to take the train.

**Percentage of Young Adults That Reported They Could Have Used the Train in the Past Week but Chose Other Transport**

n = 173

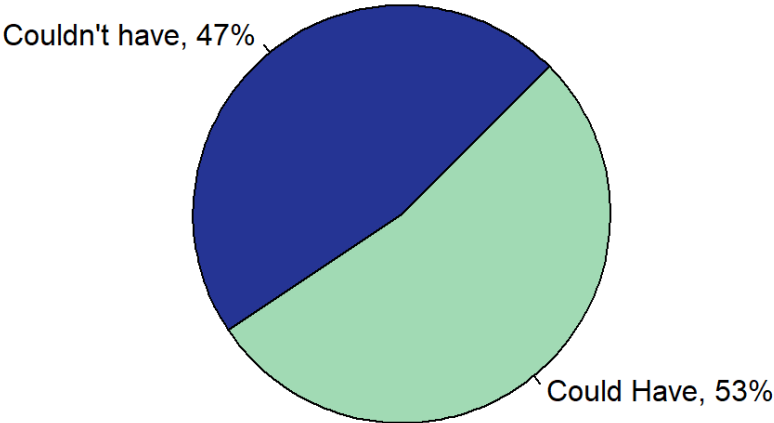


Figure 9: Percentage of young adults could have travelled by rail instead of alternative transportation in the past week

Another question on the survey asked about respondents' main forms of transportation. Only 52% of survey respondents selected rail travel as one of their main modes of transportation, compared to 59% selecting automobile travel, as shown below in Figure 10. Driving and walking are most popular among young adults, with rail travel placing third. Rail travel outranked bus and bicycle as preferred modes of transport.

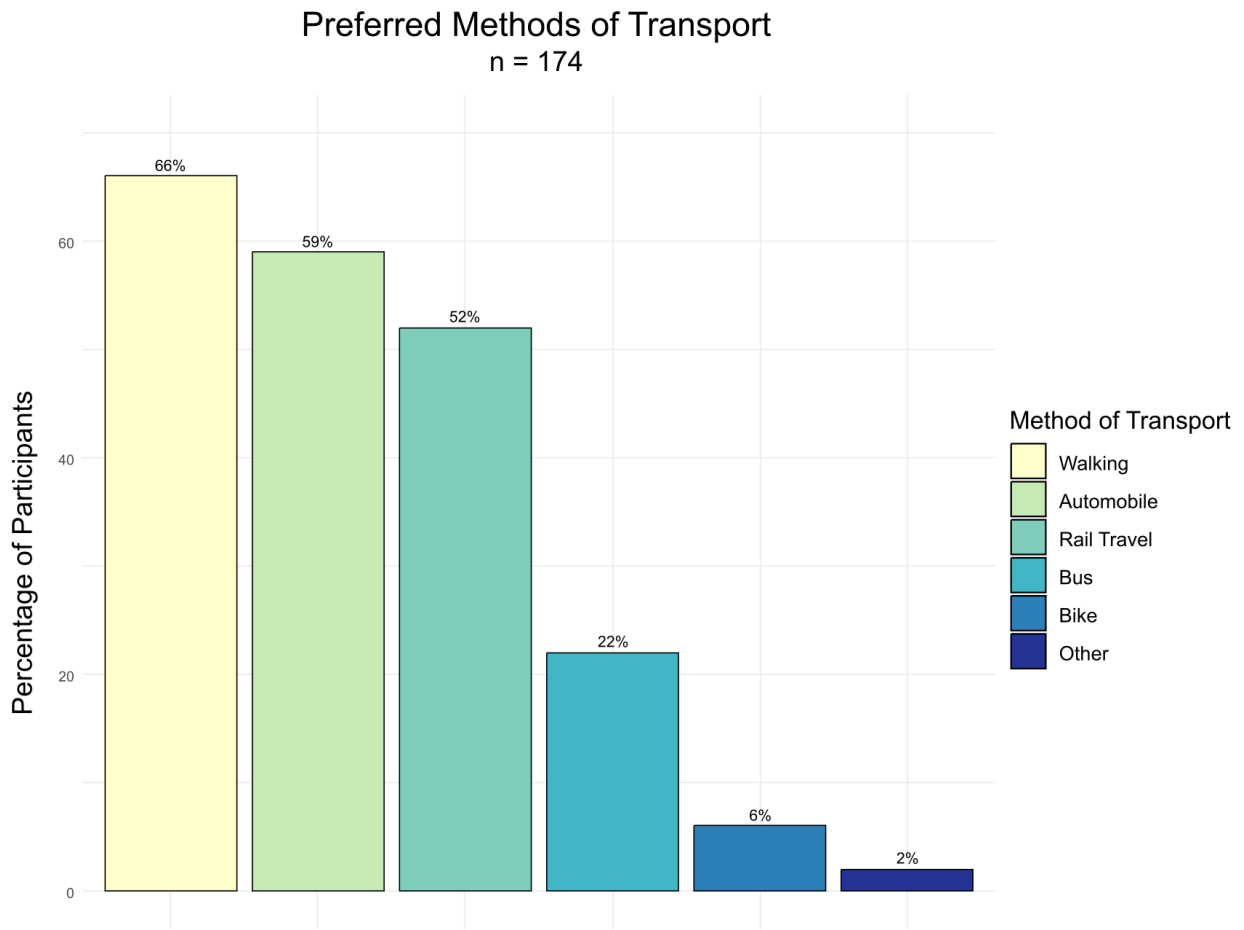


Figure 10: Most popular methods of transportation among young adults

Young adults in both surveys and interviews were asked questions relating to what was preventing them from using train travel more often, or why they chose other forms of transportation. Several respondents noted that they had personal vehicles, and felt that because they had them, it made sense to prioritise cars over other forms of transportation. Other data on young adult perceptions and concerns about rail travel are discussed further in the following subsections on safety, accessibility, cost and reliability, and comfort.

#### **4.1.1 Safety**

According to our findings, perception of safety is a factor in young adults' transportation choices, particularly at night. Although only 4% of respondents felt unsafe during the day, 27% felt unsafe travelling by train at night, as shown in Figure 11. Through interviews, the team found that these findings broke down by sex: the two female interviewees noted feeling unsafe at

night, whereas the one male interviewee noted feeling safe all the time. This is corroborated by the data from the National Travel Study Wave 8 (2023), which shows that 63% of female travellers felt unsafe traveling alone at night, compared to only 34% of males feeling unsafe. Some survey respondents noted the lack of security personnel on the trains, which contributed to their perception of train travel safety.

# Safety Perception

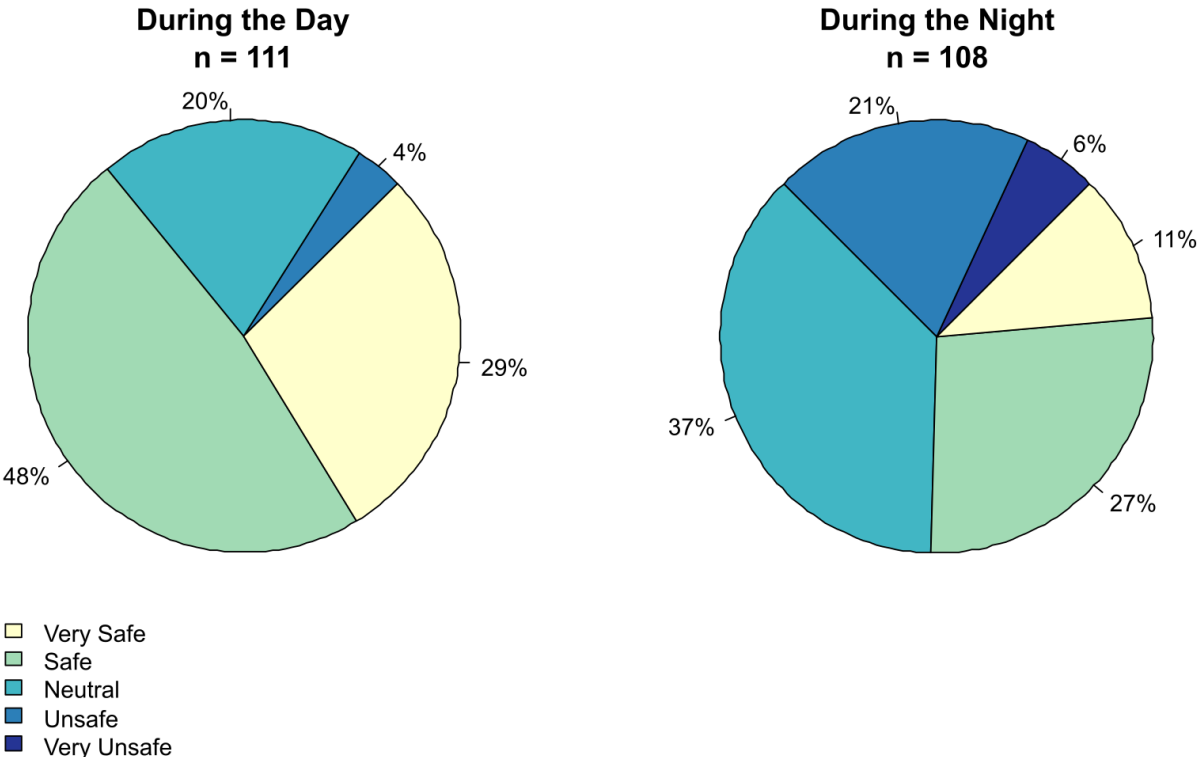


Figure 11: Young adults’ perceptions of safety during the day (left) and night (right)

## 4.1.2 Accessibility

Survey results indicated that the two most common modes of transportation respondents used to access their local train system were walking at 73%, and driving at 32%. Results for most popular forms of transportation are shown below in Figure 12. Train stations serving rural towns are often far enough from town centres that people prefer to drive to the train station rather than walk. Driving to the station is only viable if the station has sufficient parking, and rural stations

often have small car parks. Some survey respondents from rural areas reported that they lived far enough from the nearest train station that reaching the station required driving their personal vehicle, and with the amount of time required for driving to the train station, parking, waiting for the train, and taking the train, they believe that it is simpler and faster to drive the full distance to their intended destination instead of adding the extra step of rail travel.

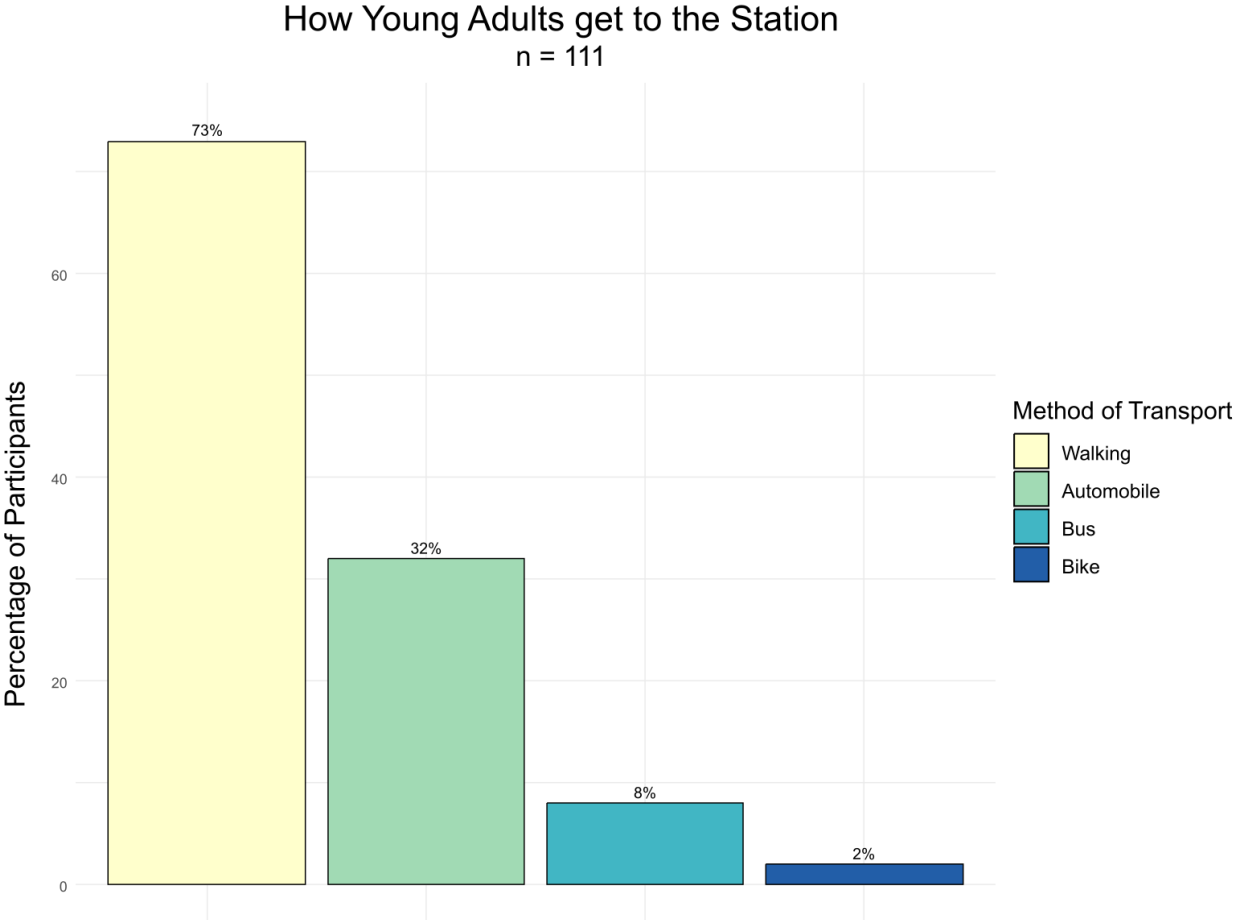


Figure 12: How young adults travel to their local train station

Many stations in Worcestershire were near bus stops, but only 8% of respondents used the bus to access the train. Further study could determine whether the reason for low bus ridership is due to the range of the bus network, lack of services, or other reasons. In direct observation, the team rated 10 out of 15 stations to have fair or better connection with other public transportation. A limitation in our observations however is the difference in public transportation between the United Kingdom and the United States. Due to the team being

accustomed to the low quality or complete lack of public transit in the US, the team may have been biased to rate the UK options higher than UK-based researchers would.

In addition, many stations are equipped with racks for bicycles, but only 2% of respondents cycle to the train station. Cycling is affected by certain infrastructure, such as proper storage and paths, which are often available. However, cycling is not a viable option for potential passengers looking to travel with luggage, and leaving a bicycle at a train station may be undesirable depending on time and length of travel. If a passenger wishes to travel with their bicycle on the train, their journey is affected by the availability of cycle storage in the train carriage.

The ability to find a seat on the train is worth studying in further detail, as seat availability is heavily dependent on the time of day and train route. [Transport Focus](#), an independent watchdog group, conducts a rail user survey every year. In their rail user survey results from 2025, one passenger was quoted discussing train overcrowding and their inability to find a seat on their most recent train ride (*About Transport Focus*, 2025). However, in our localised survey of Worcestershire and surrounding areas, finding a seat was not a major issue for young people, with 49% of respondents reporting that finding a seat was easy, as shown in Figure 13. It is unlikely that seat availability plays a major role in young adults' transportation choices in Worcestershire.

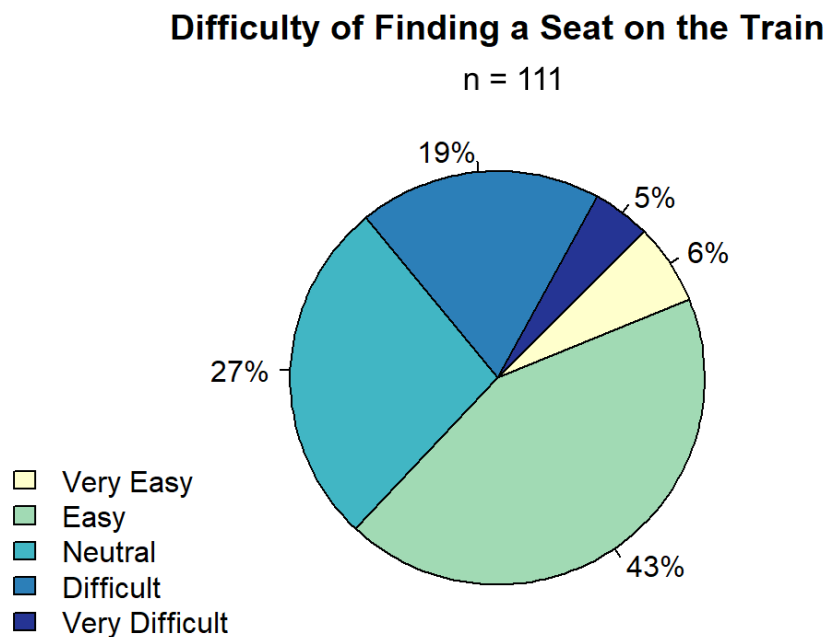


Figure 13: Difficulty of finding a seat on the train according to young adults

One survey respondent reported that they could not take the train specifically because of how inaccessible rail travel is for mobility aid users. However, with the opening of the lifts at Barnt Green Station, 17 out of Worcestershire’s 18 train stations are accessible for passengers with mobility issues. The sample size of mobility aid users among our survey respondents is too small to indicate patterns, but perception of rail travel among travellers with mobility issues is a subject that requires further study.

### 4.1.3 Cost and Reliability

Cost and reliability were the largest issues with rail travel, according to survey respondents. Reliability was rated poorly, with 47% of respondents rating rail travel as unreliable, as shown in Figure 14. Several respondents, when prompted to share suggestions for improving rail travel, indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the number of delays and cancellations of trains. Perceptions of unreliability may be affecting young adults’ transportation choices, particularly if they believe automobile travel to be more reliable than rail travel.

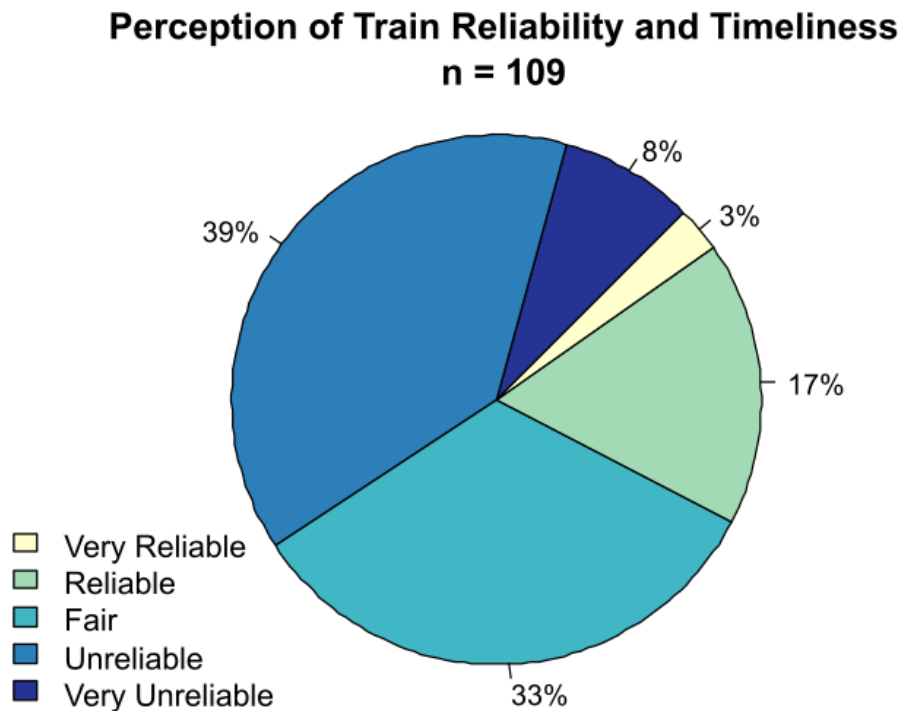


Figure 14: Young adults’ perceptions of train reliability and timeliness

The issue most frequently identified by survey respondents was the cost of tickets. 63% of respondents believed tickets were too expensive, as shown in Figure 15, and the written responses contained many comments from young adults about how lower ticket fares would improve rail travel. Cost was more of a concern than reliability for most respondents, which indicates a change from previous West Midlands survey results in Worcestershire, discussed in Section 4.2.

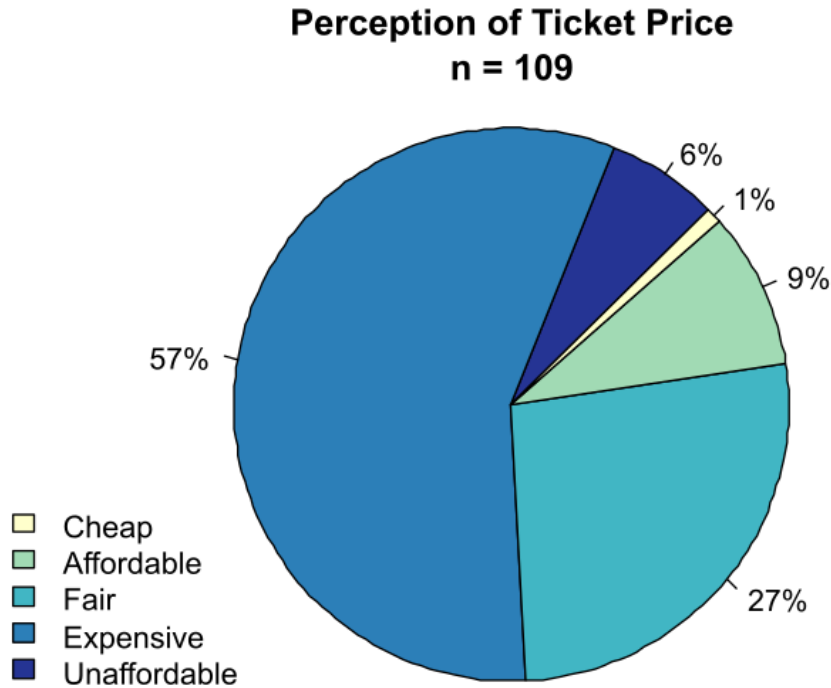


Figure 15: Young adults' perceptions of train ticket price

#### 4.1.4 Comfort

Satisfaction with comfort on trains varied depending on the aspect of comfort addressed. Most respondents were satisfied by power outlet availability on trains, suggesting that these outlets are a useful amenity. Wi-Fi availability on trains was not as satisfactory; most responses indicated either neutral feelings or dissatisfaction with Wi-Fi, as seen in Figure 16.

### Experience with Wi-Fi on Trains

n = 111

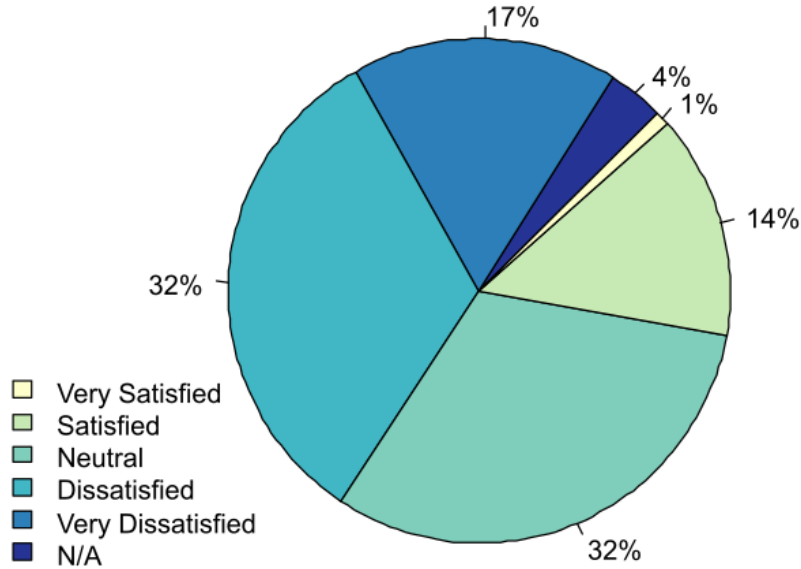


Figure 16: Young adults' experiences with Wi-Fi on trains

However, the amenity on the train with the lowest satisfaction rate was toilets. 47% of respondents were dissatisfied with the toilets, with several comments about cleanliness. These results can be seen in Figure 17.

### Experience with Toilets on Trains

n = 111

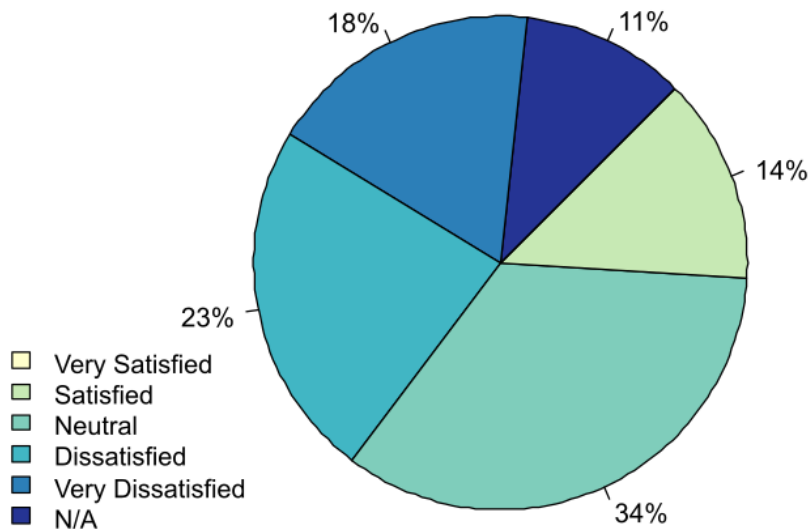


Figure 17: Young adults' experiences with toilet facilities on trains

Sentiments on amenities at stations varied. Of all the station amenities listed on the survey, respondents were least satisfied with toilets at stations, with 43% rating the toilets as unsatisfactory (see Fig. 18). The team noted that, when present, toilet facilities are often located in the station’s ticket office. Ticket offices are not always open during train operating hours, which affects toilet access. With more passengers traveling for leisure than before the COVID-19 pandemic, many passengers are not travelling within standard commuting hours. Ensuring consistent staffing of ticket offices would improve toilet access at applicable stations.

**Experience with Toilets at Stations**  
**n = 111**

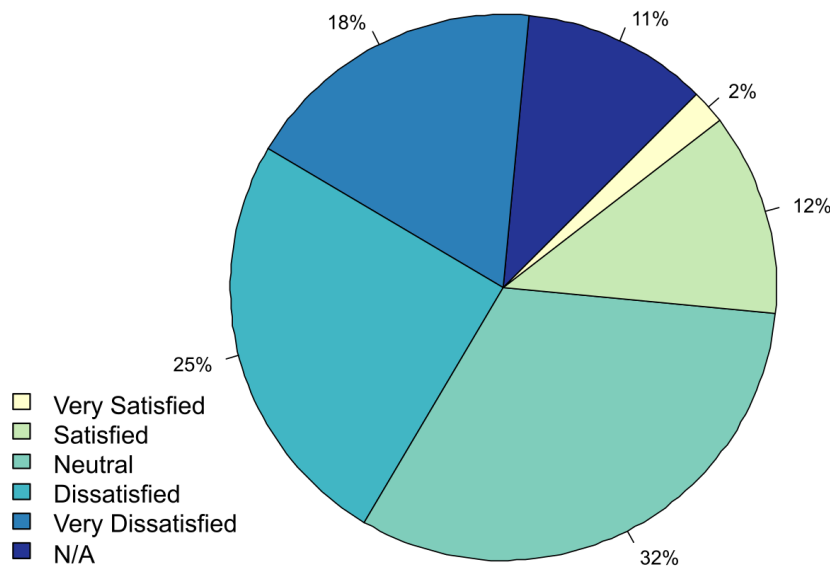


Figure 18: Young adults’ experiences with station toilets

While conducting direct observations, the team rated the waiting room accommodations at each station, and most responses indicated that waiting rooms were very poor quality. It should be noted that most survey respondents indicated their local station was a larger, urban station, while the team directly rated several small stations in rural areas. Researchers often rated the waiting room accommodations in large stations highly, but small stations were often rated poorly. Providing better waiting accommodations, such as full-size benches or heat lamps, may encourage more young people in these rural communities to travel by rail.

## 4.2 Expert Insights

To determine expert insights on current policies from regulatory organisations, the team interviewed representatives from West Midlands Railway and CrossCountry Trains. These companies address different travel needs, with West Midlands Railway focusing on commuting and CrossCountry being leisure travel oriented. The West Midlands Railway prioritises train reliability over lowering ticket fares, based on Transport Focus data. Transport Focus surveyed rail users across the UK and asked them to rank how important different aspects of rail travel were to each participant. The Transport Focus study's participants included all age demographics, and the results indicated that Worcestershire rail passengers found reliability more important than cost. However, as discussed in Section 4.1.3, more young adults are dissatisfied with the cost of tickets than with train reliability. The study also predates the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that the results are outdated and may no longer be relevant following the shift in journey purpose discussed in Section 2.1.3. CrossCountry, a leisure-focused rail operator, is facing difficulty with their aging fleet. Refurbishing aging trains requires taking trains out of service, placing strain on the remaining CrossCountry operations and allowing competing rail services to replace those routes. Decreasing services exacerbates train overcrowding, an issue that CrossCountry struggles with. Many CrossCountry trains are nearly full, and a single seat is potentially booked for 4 or 5 people along different legs of a long journey.

Our perceptions on rail company oversight have changed after learning about Network Rail's influence. According to the representative from the West Midlands Railway, Network Rail owns all the train tracks in the UK. Therefore, the responsibilities of Network Rail include overseeing track maintenance schedules, train timetables, and both passenger and freight rail traffic. Rail operators may only submit new timetables once every six months. From the perspective of the rail operators, Network Rail is currently prioritising freight traffic over passenger services in the West Midlands due to government guidance to move freight away from roads and onto rails. However, according to a Network Rail representative, freight is not being prioritised, and instead is simply picking up whatever openings are available in the timetables. The contradiction in perspectives indicates a lack of communication between Network Rail and passenger train operators. When a train operating company wishes to run their trains along a line, they bid on the slot against other passenger rail and freight operators. After signing that contract,

the train operating companies are required to run an agreed upon number of trains per day along that line. According to Network Rail, freight companies often obtain the bids for odd hours or night travels, since they require only one driver and the freight itself has no time preference. However, the representative stated that in the West Midlands region, the rail network runs at approximately 97% capacity, leaving little room for trains to be added, or errors to arise without impacting travellers.

A Network Rail representative provided the team with information about how maintenance timings are scheduled. Currently, UK train maintenance is scheduled around peak commuting hours, leading to most maintenance being performed in evenings or on the weekends. Network Rail requires each section of rail to be regularly checked for maintenance needs, with most stretches of railway getting checked on a cyclical basis every week or every other week. This allows issues with the track to be identified rapidly when they arise, so that engineering work is scheduled promptly. However, following the post-COVID shift to more leisure and less commuting travel, scheduling maintenance around peak commuting hours interferes with more passengers' journeys.

With leisure becoming a more common purpose of train travel, companies have had to adapt to the new demand and change their operating doctrine. Now that more people are taking the train on weekends and at night instead of peak commuting hours, scheduling track maintenance is more difficult and shuts down track that companies rely on. However, even when all tracks are open, the rail network has physical limitations for the amount of rail services that it can sustain. At present, the network is almost at full capacity, causing heavy competition between freight and passenger services.

### **4.3 Volunteer Efforts**

To research volunteer impact, the team visited and evaluated stations throughout Worcestershire, attended the WCRP's annual event, and interviewed a representative from [Platform Rail](#). For the station observations, the team focused on volunteer efforts from WCRP station adopters. The stations with the most noticeable volunteer impact were Worcester Foregate Street, Great Malvern, Worcestershire Parkway, and Droitwich Spa. Worcester Foregate Street featured murals on the ground floor of the station interior, shown in Figure 19 below. These murals include a map of Worcester, art illustrating locations within the city, and a

depiction of the River Sever, all done in a colour palette inspired by the buildings in Worcester. This artwork was installed in the station in 2024.



Figure 19: Murals at Worcester Foregate Street station

As mentioned in section 2.2.1, the Friends of Great Malvern Railway Group oversaw the refurbishment of the Great Malvern railway station. The team visited the [Technology Station](#), another volunteer effort at Great Malvern station. The Technology Station is an educational resource dedicated to showing visitors historically significant technological advancements which were developed in Malvern. At Worcestershire Parkway, which was adopted by the Bee Friendly Trust, the waiting room features a mural dedicated to saving bees. Outside the station, there are flower garden boxes built to attract bees. Droitwich Spa, adopted by the Friends of Droitwich Spa group, featured a community herb garden and artworks around the station.

The general atmosphere of each unadopted station was often welcoming despite a lack of WCRP influence. The stations within Worcestershire were clean and well lit; however, bathrooms were often closed, unavailable, or in unsatisfactory condition. All stations featured waiting areas with roofs, but many of these waiting areas were reminiscent of bus shelters. They were partly exposed to the elements, and the seating was inadequate. An example of poor seating at Hartlebury Station is shown below in Figure 20. Comparatively, stations that were newly constructed or that had recently gone through refurbishment have improved shelters and seating areas. It was difficult to determine whether some stations had been adopted through the WCRP. Occasionally, art installations and other works were present; however, there was a lack of clear

signage, making it difficult to determine WCRP involvement. There is a list of adopted stations on the WCRP website, but many of their pages were last updated in 2022, making it unclear if the list of adopted stations was up to date.



Figure 20: Waiting area seating at Hartlebury

The team interviewed a representative from Platform Rail. Platform Rail is a community rail education program staffed by former primary and secondary teachers that operates alongside multiple community rail partnerships in the UK. Platform Rail's goal is to educate primary and secondary school students about rail travel through workshops. Platform Rail workshops are hour-long sessions at schools where students are taught proper train etiquette, given information on the safety and sustainability of rail travel, and introduced to safety organisations that oversee rail travel. These classes are often followed by a rail journey for the students. This process helps these younger students understand the process of rail travel, equipping them with knowledge for future rail journeys. The representative also noted that students are often excited to use the train, seeking out further rail journeys after the workshop has concluded. Platform Rail's education scheme is fairly new, and they have not collected data on how these workshops promote further ridership as students age. However, based on research from other rail education groups, the representative believes that teaching students to travel safely provides them the autonomy and confidence to travel by rail as young adults.

The team attended the WCRP’s annual event, which featured presentations on WCRP and partner projects from the previous year. These presentations featured sessions by Platform Rail, the WCRP leadership, Network Rail, and Friends of Evesham, the group that adopted Evesham station. The community gardens at Evesham station were one notable project, focused on growing gardens on each platform and elsewhere nearby. However, this project did not come without challenges, including difficulty gaining funds, a restriction to site access, and low water pressure at the station which caused difficulty maintaining the plants. Another recent project was the new artwork at Worcester Shrub Hill Station. To complete this art installation, primary school children each decorated a tile based on patterns found at Shrub Hill. Volunteers then used the decorated tiles to make three full sized artworks for display. The goal of these projects was to create a more hospitable atmosphere for passengers and connect the station to its community. Volunteers did not indicate any evidence of increased ridership at stations following their improvements. However, based on patterns from stations elsewhere in the UK, it is likely that station improvements have a positive impact on ridership (*Town’s stations see, 2024*). Table 2 below shows several stations, WCRP impact noted during the annual event, and the station’s change in ridership between the 2023-2024 period and 2024-2025 period according to the [Railway Data Centre](#). All stations with recent WCRP projects saw increases in ridership, with Worcestershire Parkway experiencing the largest increase. Evesham, a newly adopted station with multiple completed projects, saw a notable increase in patronage as well.

Table 2: Stations, their WCRP volunteer efforts (if applicable), and their changes in ridership

<b>Station</b>	<b>WCRP Impact in 2025</b>	<b>Ridership Change (2023-2024 to 2024-2025)</b>
Evesham	New adoption, fence repainting, community garden	+11.13%
Worcestershire Parkway	Handmade beehives	+34.54%
Worcester Shrub Hill	Primary school art project	+9.53%
Barnt Green	New lifts (collaboration with Network Rail)	+9.91%

## 4.4 Opportunities for Growing Young Adult Ridership

The team synthesised the data from all previously mentioned surveys, interviews, observations, and archival research efforts, to determine which aspects of rail travel have the greatest potential for improvement, and how these improvements can be achieved. Some opportunities for change which would lead to growth do not fall within the WCRP's jurisdiction and addressing those issues would require significant involvement and effort from regulatory organisations. However, the WCRP can still lobby these organisations for change. Finally, there are opportunities to change young adults' perception of rail travel that the WCRP can pursue directly.

One opportunity for change that the WCRP cannot pursue without significant involvement from regulatory organisations is directly addressing young adults' concerns about rail travel. As discussed in section 4.1, many young adults have complaints about toilet cleanliness and availability at stations, and providing more consistent staffing of station custodians and ticket office employees would effectively address this concern. For young adults that feel unsafe using rail travel at night, providing additional staff after dark would improve the safety of rail travel. Reliability of trains could be improved by changing maintenance schedules to match changing peak travel days. Several other factors, such as Wi-Fi quality on trains, information availability at stations, and public transportation services to stations are all potential areas for improvement as well. However, based on discussions with rail experts, direct improvements in any of these areas requires significant involvement from organisations such as rail companies and the government. As an independent nonprofit organisation, the WCRP's involvement in these matters is limited to lobbying.

One area the WCRP can address is young adults' perception of rail travel. If ticket fares cannot be lowered, the WCRP can pursue strategies to convince young people that the many benefits of rail travel, such as the ability to multitask, increased safety, and environmental sustainability, are worth the cost. Similarly, the WCRP has no effect on train reliability, but they can affect young adults' perception of the convenience of rail travel. Additionally, although research shows that Worcestershire train stations are safe, many young adults still feel unsafe at night. In all these cases, addressing young adults' perception of these issues may be a more effective and feasible strategy for improving ridership than focusing on the issues themselves. The team analysed this data and determined the largest problems that young adults perceive. The

team focused on these perceptions and compared the reality of rail travel to automotive travel, creating a rail travel infographic, seen in Appendix F. This infographic focuses on the affordability of rail travel, the safety of trains versus cars, the convenience of multitasking on the train, and the sustainability differences between the modes of transport. Additionally, the team created an infographic emphasising how safe rail travel in Worcestershire actually is to combat young adults' perception of a lack of safety during rail travel. This safety infographic is located in Appendix G. Alongside creating these infographics, the team developed specific strategies and recommendations for the WCRP to increase young adult rail patronage. These include project suggestions as well as recommendations for lobbying. The team prepared factsheets with collected data from this study for the WCRP to use in lobbying efforts (see Appendix H).

## **4.5 Summary of Key Findings**

This section provides a summary of key findings from this chapter.

### **Survey Findings**

- Young adults primarily take the train for visiting friends and family (56%) and commuting (52%).
- Many young adults (53%) are not taking the train even when rail travel is an option for their journey. The primary competitor to rail travel is automobile travel.
- Very few young adults (4%) feel unsafe taking the train during the day, but more young adults (27%) feel unsafe at night.
- Most young adults (73%) walk to their local train station, although some young adults (32%) drive to their stations.
- Nearly 1 in 4 young adults believe that finding a seat on the train is difficult.
- Many young adults (47%) believe rail travel is unreliable; they are dissatisfied with train delays and cancellations.
- Most young adults (63%) believe rail travel is too expensive.
- Only some young adults (21%) are dissatisfied with Wi-Fi on trains, but a higher percentage (29%) are dissatisfied with toilets on trains.
- 29% of young adults are dissatisfied with toilets at stations.
- Several young adults declined to take the survey because they did not use the train at all.

## **Interview Findings**

- Female interviewees felt unsafe at night, while male interviewees felt safe all the time.
- Only one young adult interviewee was aware of the environmental benefits of rail travel.
- Network Rail owns all rail track in the UK, approves timetables, and determines maintenance schedules.
- CrossCountry, a leisure-focused operator, faces difficulty with overcrowding, while West Midlands Railway does not.
- West Midlands Railway prioritises train reliability over lowering ticket prices.
- Passenger train operators compete with freight operators for track access, decreasing viability of increasing passenger services.
- The purpose of rail education schemes is to provide students with positive rail experiences and increase the likelihood that they will choose rail travel in the future.

## **Observation Findings**

- The atmosphere at most stations was satisfactory.
- It was difficult to locate evidence of WCRP involvement at many stations.
- Many stations had unsatisfactory waiting areas.
- Ticket offices and toilets were often closed.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, the team developed the following recommendations for the WCRP to improve ridership among young adults in Worcestershire. These recommendations include short-term changes, ideas for future WCRP projects, and lobbying for substantial change with policymakers and regulatory agencies. The WCRP can implement short-term recommendations immediately and mid-term recommendations within a year. Long-term recommendations require significant involvement from outside organisations and thus have no specific time frame.

### Short-term Recommendations

#### 1. The WCRP should increase their social media presence.

The WCRP has social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram; however, there is room for improvement in their activity level. Instagram should be their main focus, as it is more popular among young adults than Facebook (Zote, 2026). There is a strong positive correlation between posting more frequently and growing your page (Lang 2025). Increasing the WCRP's social media presence will increase their publicity among young adults. Additionally, collaboration posts with other groups such as station adopters and rail companies can help with growth. The posts can be anything from short form videos promoting rail travel to photos of station artwork sanctioned by the WCRP.

#### 2. The WCRP should encourage station adopters to add the WCRP logo to where they have made improvements.

In our observations, we noticed a lack of WCRP branding on stations adopted by volunteers of the organisation. Although station improvements were present, such as artwork, gardens, and other projects, there is not always a visual indication of WCRP involvement. Prominently displaying the WCRP logo will help build name recognition amongst members of the Worcestershire community, which will lead to increased interest and support, and further community involvement with stations.

## Mid-term Recommendations

### **3. The WCRP should update its website for ease of navigation and accuracy of information.**

Many pages on the WCRP's website are out of date and reference some station adoptions as ongoing when they have either been completed or fallen through. The website can also be complicated to navigate, which creates difficulty for potential station adopters to find information on how they can benefit their local stations. In addition, regarding the WCRP's event-focused projects, website navigation issues can also prevent potential attendees from learning about these events, decreasing the potential benefits of attendance. Updating the WCRP website is a significant undertaking, and could be considered for a future WPI student research project.

### **4. The WCRP should produce a marketing campaign based on comparing the benefits of rail travel over automobile travel targeted toward young adults.**

Most young adults believe that rail travel is too expensive. Showing that rail travel is worth the cost, both financially and in time spent, is one way the WCRP can help alter this perception. The WCRP could compare the price of a train ticket to all associated costs with automobile travel, such as petrol, maintenance, insurance, and parking to help dispel the belief that traveling by automobile is more cost effective. Regarding time spent, the WCRP could promote the convenience of rail travel for multitasking. A driver's focus must remain on the road at all times, but when making a journey by rail, passengers can work, consume media, communicate with friends, as well as many other activities that are impossible when driving. Additionally, rail travel allows passengers to be more present with their companions than they could be while driving. Rail travel is also more sustainable than automobile travel. Environmental sustainability is important to young adults (*Over 80%*, 2021); as such, the team recommends that sustainability be featured in this campaign.

The team prepared infographic-style marketing materials comparing the sustainability, cost, and convenience of automobile and railway travel as a sample for future WCRP efforts. The first infographic highlights the positive aspects of rail travel and compares them to the negative aspects of automotive travel, as elaborated earlier in this recommendation and section 4.4 (Appendix F). The team also created an infographic that addresses young people's perception on safety at the train station by providing facts and statistics about safety on the railways (see

Appendix G). These infographics are intended for social media posts and physical distribution. Displaying them in a variety of areas frequented by young adults, such as university campuses, near car parks, or near restaurants and pubs, increases visibility among young adults that are not riding the train. Focusing on the positive aspects of rail travel could improve young adults' perception of travel by train by illustrating that the train is worth their time and money.

## **Long-term Recommendations**

### **5. The WCRP should lobby Parliament to extend the current freeze to rail fare increases and lower ticket costs.**

Young adults' primary concern with rail travel is the cost of tickets. The team recommends extending the current freeze of rail fare increases past March of 2027. The end goal for Parliament should be decreasing rail fares, and continuing this freeze allows time for Parliament to develop a more permanent solution for decreasing fares or restructuring the fare system. One option for reducing ticket fares is increasing the discount that railcards provide for young adults. On a wider scale, subsidising rail tickets decreases the cost for passengers, incentivising them to ride the train more often, bringing more revenue to the train companies from more ticket sales. The team recommends that the WCRP use the factsheet in Appendix H when lobbying Parliament and rail companies for changes in ticket fares.

### **6. The WCRP should lobby Parliament and Network Rail to update track maintenance schedules.**

With more passengers using rail travel for leisure, the team recommends changing rail maintenance schedules. Currently, track maintenance occurs primarily on weekends. However, with the increase in leisure travel, more passengers are travelling during maintenance times. This disruption leads to passengers becoming confused with how to best proceed when encountering these delays and rail replacement options. Performing more maintenance during off-peak hours during the work week, such as midday between commuting times or at night, decreases the likelihood that passengers' leisure trips are affected by maintenance. The team recommends that the WCRP use the factsheet in Appendix H when lobbying policymakers and Network Rail for changes in track maintenance schedules.

### **7. The WCRP should lobby Parliament and rail companies to centralise information about train schedules, delays, and cancellations into one easily accessible website.**

The current structure of the rail system during renationalisation causes confusion for passengers while planning travel. Currently, to plan travel without preference for any specific rail company requires using third-party websites or apps. Additionally, information screens at rail stations can be difficult to find and for travellers to understand, which creates difficulty for passengers seeking information on delays and cancellations. A centralised website and app, which includes travel planning, delays and cancellations across different rail companies, and other pertinent information, would benefit passengers. The team recommends that the WCRP use the factsheet in Appendix H to assist in making a persuasive argument on these issues when interacting with policymakers, rail companies, and authorities.

## **5.1 Final Remarks**

Based on our research, we are confident that pursuing these recommendations will have a positive impact on young adults' rail patronage in Worcestershire. Young adults' transportation habits are shaped by their perceptions of different modes of transportation; therefore, improving young adults' perception of rail travel will help increase patronage. Addressing young adults' concerns about rail travel, whether directly through policy changes or through a marketing campaign promoting the benefits of rail travel, will improve young adults' perception of rail travel. Rail travel is an important area of focus, given its comparative environmental benefits when compared to automobile travel. In the midst of a climate crisis, achieving environmental sustainability is crucial. The train is a sustainable form of transportation for which extensive infrastructure already exists. All that remains is for young adults to ride.



Photo 2: The sun sets behind the railway bridge over the River Sever in Worcester.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Research Timeline

The following schedule is the research timeline that the team followed to complete this project. Each column corresponds to a week of research, and boxes beneath each column are filled according to the types of research conducted that week.

Week of 3/23/26	Week of 3/30/26	Week of 4/6/26	Week of 4/13/26	Week of 4/20/26
Surveys	Surveys	Surveys	Surveys	
			Young Adult Interviews	Young Adult Interviews
	Expert Interviews		Expert Interviews	Expert Interviews
Observation	Observation	Observation		

## Appendix B: Survey for Young Adults

The following appendix includes the informed consent statement and survey questions the team provided to all survey participants. The team conducted these surveys in city centres and on university campuses. Participants received different questions depending on the frequency of their rail travel.

Informed consent statement:

You are being asked to participate in a survey as part of a research project to gain insight into young adults' transportation habits, perceived benefits and drawbacks of rail travel, and how rail travel could be improved to increase ridership among young adults in Worcestershire. We are a group of university student researchers from the United States. This survey would take you approximately 5 minutes and we hope to get your feedback about the rail system. This survey is anonymous and your personal data will not be collected. The data from this research will be available in an academic database. This survey is fully voluntary, and you are free to not participate, skip questions, or stop at any time.

1. Do you consent to being in this study?

- Yes
- No

*If yes, go to Appendix B.1, if no, end survey*

### Appendix B.1: Identify participant as Active or Inactive Train Rider

2. How frequently do you travel by train?

- Never
- Less than once a month
- At least once a month
- At least once a week
- More than once a week

*If once at least once a month, go to Appendix B.2, if less than once a month, go to Appendix B.3*

### Appendix B.2: Active Train Rider Survey

3. What age range do you fall under?

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46+

4. What is your local railway station?

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5. How do you get to your local railway station?

- Automobile
- Bus
- Bike
- Walking
- Other

If you selected “Other” please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are your main forms of transportation?

- Rail Travel
- Automobile
- Bus
- Bike
- Walking
- Other

If you selected “Other” please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Could you have used the train rather than another form of transport for any of your journeys in the past week?

- Yes
- No

8. What do you use the train for? Select all that apply.

- Commuting
- Tourism
- Shopping
- Personal business
- Visiting friends/family
- Other

If you selected “Other” please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9. What do you use other forms of transportation (i.e., car, bus) for? Select all that apply.

- Commuting
- Tourism
- Shopping
- Personal business
- Visiting friends/family
- Other

If you selected “Other” please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Please rate your experience with the availability and quality of food and drink options at your local rail station.

- N/A
- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

11. Please rate your experience with toilet availability and quality at your local rail station.

- N/A
- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

12. Please rate your experience with waiting area comfort at your local rail station.

- N/A
- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

13. Please rate your experience with toilets on trains.

- N/A
- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

14. Please rate your experience with Wi-Fi on trains.

- N/A
- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

15. Please rate your experience with power outlet availability on trains.

- N/A
- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

16. Please rate how easy it is to find a seat on the train.

- Very Difficult
- Difficult
- Neutral
- Easy
- Very Easy

17. How safe do you feel taking the train during the day?

- Very Unsafe
- Unsafe
- Neutral
- Safe
- Very Safe

18. How safe do you feel taking the train during the night?

- Very Unsafe
- Unsafe
- Neutral
- Safe
- Very Safe

19. Please rate the price of ticket fares.

- Unaffordable
- Expensive
- Fair
- Affordable
- Cheap

20. Please rate train reliability and timeliness.

- Very Unreliable
- Unreliable
- Neutral
- Reliable
- Very Reliable

21. How likely are you to recommend rail travel to a friend or acquaintance?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very Likely

22. What improvements would you suggest to improve the rail system?

Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

23. Are there any factors that are not mentioned above preventing you from choosing rail travel more often?

Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix B.3: Inactive Train Rider Survey**

24. What age range do you fall under?

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46+

25. What are your main forms of transportation?

- Rail Travel
- Automobile
- Bus
- Bike
- Walking
- Other

If you selected “Other” please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

26. What do you use the train for? Select all that apply.

- Commuting
- Tourism
- Shopping
- Personal business
- Visiting friends/family
- Other

If you selected “Other” please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

27. What do you use other forms of transportation (i.e. car, bus, etc) for? Select all that apply.

- Commuting
- Tourism
- Shopping
- Personal business
- Visiting friends/family
- Other

If you selected "Other" please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

28. Could you have used the train rather than another form of transport for any of your journeys in the past week?

- Yes
- No

29. How likely are you to recommend rail travel to a friend or acquaintance?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very Likely

30. What improvements would you suggest to improve the rail system?

Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

31. If there are any factors that are not listed above preventing you from choosing rail travel more often, please specify:

Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview for Young Adults**

The team used the following interview structure when interviewing young adults for their in-depth perspectives on rail travel. Each interview participant answered a set of questions depending on how frequently they travelled by train.

Informed consent statement:

You are being interviewed as part of a research project to gain insight into young adults' transportation habits, perceived benefits and drawbacks of rail travel, and how rail travel could be improved to increase ridership among young adults in Worcestershire. We are a group of university student researchers from the United States. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes, and we hope to get your feedback on the rail system. Your responses may be quoted in a paper, but your identity will remain anonymous. The data from this research will be published in our school's academic database. The audio of this interview will be recorded if you consent, and the audio will remain confidential. This interview is fully voluntary, and you are free to not participate, stop, or skip questions at any time.

1. Do you consent to being recorded?
2. Do you have any questions about the study before we start?
3. Do you consent to being in this study?

*If yes, continue to Appendix C.1, If no, end the interview.*

### **Appendix C.1: Identify participant as Active or Inactive Train Rider**

1. How often do you ride the train?

*If once a week or more, continue to Appendix C.2, If less than once a week, continue to Appendix C.3.*

### **Appendix C.2: Active Train Rider Interview**

1. What do you use the rail system for? Examples include tourism, commuting, visiting friends and family, etc.
2. What do you use other forms of transportation (i.e. car, bus) for?
3. How do you get to the rail station?
4. How does riding the train benefit society?
5. How easy is it to find a seat when you travel on the train?
6. When do you feel most safe on the train?
7. When do you feel most unsafe on the train?
8. What are your experiences navigating the rail network?

9. What aspects of rail travel are you satisfied with?
10. What about rail travel do you think could improve?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share?

### **Appendix C.3: Inactive Train Rider Interview**

*If the interviewee rarely uses the trains:*

1. What primary method of transportation do you use?
2. What do you use these other methods of transportation for?
3. Why don't you use the rail system?
4. How does riding the train benefit society?
5. What could be done to encourage you to use the trains more?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share?

## Appendix D: Station Observation Checklist

The team completed the following checklist at 15 of Worcestershire's 18 train stations to rate the presence and quality of amenities, physical accessibility, transportation connections, and general atmosphere. The checklist includes a section for researchers to describe visible WCRP impact as well as a space for additional notes.

Station name: \_\_\_\_\_

Waiting room accommodations

- Absent
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good

Toilet facilities

- Absent
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good

Wi-Fi or Data Connection

- Absent
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good

Distance from town centre (walking)

- Very far
- Far
- Fair
- Close
- Very close

Parking availability

- Absent
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good

Connection with other public transportation

- Absent
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good

Food and drink

- Absent
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good

General atmosphere

- Very poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good

Station cleanliness

- Very poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good

Lighting quality

- Very poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good

Impact by WCRP

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E: Semi-structured Expert Interviews**

The team used the following interview questions for expert interviews. Each subsection in this appendix is titled with either the name of the organisation or the category of organisation the team interviewed using the corresponding questions.

Informed consent statement:

You are being interviewed as part of a research project to gain insight into young adults' transportation habits, perceived benefits and drawbacks of rail travel, and how rail travel could be improved to increase ridership among young adults in Worcestershire. We are a group of university student researchers from the United States.. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes, and we hope to get your feedback on the rail system. Your responses may be quoted in a paper, but your identity will remain anonymous. The data from this research will be published in our school's academic database. The audio of this interview will be recorded if you consent, and the audio will remain confidential. This interview is fully voluntary, and you are free to not participate, stop, or skip questions at any time.

1. Do you consent to being recorded?
2. Do you have any questions about the study before we start?
3. Do you consent to being in this study?

### **Appendix E.1: Network Rail Interview**

1. What is your role within Network Rail?
2. What are the initiatives being undertaken currently by Network Rail to make the railways safer?
  - a. What are the Transport Police doing to convey that railways are safe?
3. What differences have you noticed between pre-pandemic and present day (ridership, crime levels, etc.)?
4. How are passenger and freight timetables balanced, and where does the priority lie?
5. What factors go into closing sections of rail for maintenance?
  - a. How do you determine when this maintenance should occur?
6. What are the barriers to running more trains on the railways?
7. How are ticket price guidelines determined?
8. Do you see young adults as an area for potential growth in rail patronage?
9. Is there any other information we didn't ask about in this interview that you'd like to share?

## **Appendix E.2: Rail Company Representative Interview**

1. What is your role within the company you work for?
2. What are the considerations for setting ticket prices?
  - a. How has the pandemic impacted ticket prices?
  - b. How has the pandemic affected the way people are taking the trains?
3. What efforts is your company making to increase ridership?
  - a. What age demographics do you primarily see taking the train?
  - b. What purpose are people taking the train for?
4. Are young people a target audience for your company?
  - a. If not, how come?
5. Do you make any particular efforts to attract younger customers (18-25) to take the train?
  - a. What would help you attract younger customers (18-25) to take the train.
6. Is sustainability versus other forms of transportation something that you are advertising?
7. Is there any other information we didn't ask about in this interview that you'd like to share?
8. What other public or private organisations would you recommend we reach out to?

## **Appendix E.3: Platform Rail Interview**

1. What is your role within Platform Rail?
2. How do you feel educating primary and secondary school students affects young adult ridership?
  - a. Do you track retention among students that complete your workshops and travel by rail in the future?
3. What methods do you use to educate students about using the rail system?
4. What are your students' perceptions of the train? Are they excited about it?
  - a. How do you think this affects young adult perception?
5. To what extent do you feel that the outcomes you seek from your initiatives are achieved?
6. Does Platform Rail have plans to expand or improve its programs?
7. What are your personal perceptions on the trains and the future of rail in the UK?
8. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for our project?

## Appendix F: Transportation Comparison Infographic

This is an infographic comparing train and automobile travel that emphasises the convenience of rail travel. The team recommends using this infographic as a sample for future WCRP marketing efforts.



Find Out More!



## Appendix G: Rail Safety Infographic

This is an infographic emphasising the safety of rail travel to help improve young adults' perception of safety on railways. The team recommends using this infographic as a sample for future WCRP marketing efforts.



# TRAIN SAFETY

**Check your Perception**

**Only 4% of young adults felt unsafe using the train during the day**




**1 in 4 people felt unsafe using the train at night**




## The REAL Facts

- **Crime on Worcestershire railways decreased by 31% since 2023**
- **British Transport Police are more highly trained than standard police officers**
- **There are help points at every station where you can contact the police at the press of a button**

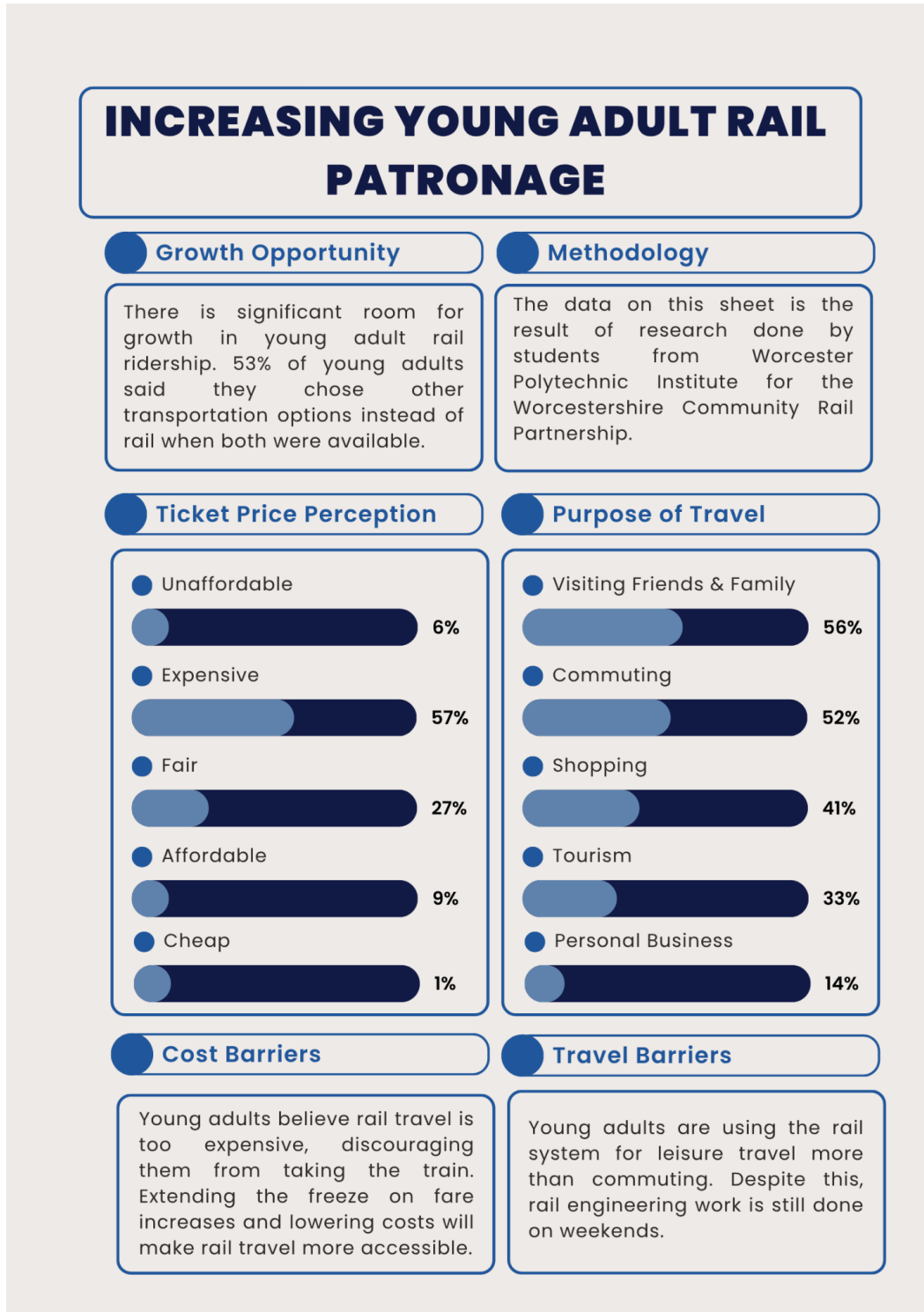


Find Out More!



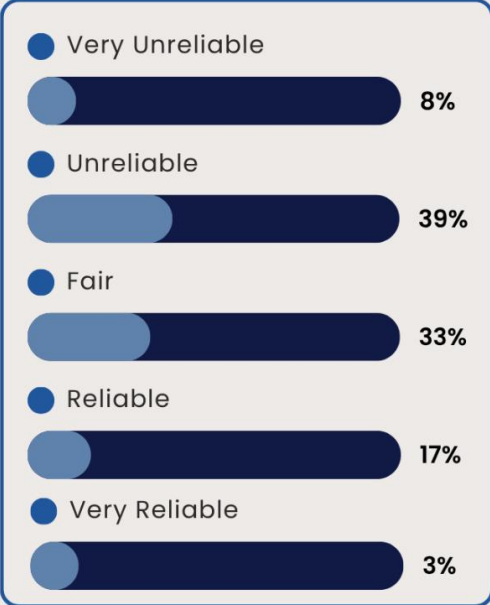
## Appendix H: Factsheet for Lobbying

This is a factsheet intended for the WCRP to use when lobbying regulatory organisations such as Parliament, rail companies, and Network Rail.



# INCREASING YOUNG ADULT RAIL PATRONAGE

## Reliability Perception



## Reliability Barriers

Young adults feel the rail system is unreliable. They are less likely to travel by rail if they are worried about cancellations and delays.

## Ticketing Barriers

Ticketing apps and the variety of ticket types can make rail travel harder for young adults. One young adult said "I missed my connecting train because the ticket wasn't scanning. It turned my 2-hour train ride into a 5-hour train ride." Another young adult said "It's hard to know where your ticket is valid and for what train company."

## Navigation Barriers

Young Adults have a hard time navigating what to do after a cancellation. One young adult said "My train got cancelled and I had to walk 10 minutes to get a signal and find out when the next train was."



For more information, please contact the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership. They can be found on their website: <https://wcrp.org.uk/>

