

Ormskirk-Preston Traveller Survey – Key Findings

Over 380 surveys were completed by passengers travelling between Ormskirk and Preston from 15th-20th July across all of the services except first in the day and later evening.

The sample provided sufficient information to produce findings, some unexpected, that are reliable pointers to travel patterns and traveller requirements; it should be noted that many of the surveys represent the views of 2 or more people. Nearly all were making return journeys so direction of travel was not considered significant.

Ormskirk-Preston Travellers - 280 surveys completed.

It may have been a leading question, a clear majority of 164 said the temporary timetable was an improvement on the regular service but notably 68 said it was not. There was an even split on whether the existing timetable met the passenger's need: 122 Yes, 124 No.

This was explained by traveller's sensitivity to arrival time, eg for work, and making connections. The temporary timetable had changed travel times significantly and caused many to have long delays in their onward journey and/or disruption to their work/ domestic arrangements.

What are the travellers' requirements and priorities?

- Regular, frequent service 28%: 22% would be satisfied with hourly but 6% were seeking at least 2 services an hour.
- More daily services: >10%
- More services in commuting hours, notably evening: 5%
- Later services: >4%
- Do not change current times: 4%
- Connections: 8%, the majority of those travelling beyond the terminal points

Sunday Service - An unprompted response was the need for trains on a Sunday, even if a limited timetable; raised by more than 7% with many reasons cited, eg work, education, leisure, shopping/ access.

Burscough Curves - 5% of journeys were taken by people (not OPSTA members) whose nearest station was on the Southport-Parbold line with half of them actually using that service before traversing a virtual curve to Burscough Junction. Another 2% requested a direct service to Southport.

Blackpool – the through service undoubtedly excited a lot of interest with many extending their journey to visit the resort and asking for this to be retained for at least some services. Furthermore, many were travelling to and from Blackpool on a regular basis, eg for work.

Travel Patterns

More than 20% (1 in 5) stated their nearest-to-home or destination station was between Moorfields and Town Green. A further 9% were travelling between Preston and Liverpool.

Other home/destination stations served by Merseyrail:

- Northern Line south of Central: 3-4%
- Northern Line Bootle/Crosby: 4%
- Wirral: 2%

Travelling to/from:

- East Lancashire towns (Blackburn & further): >4%
- Lancaster: 4%
- Beyond Lancaster: 7%
- Leyland, Bamber Bridge, Kirkham: 4%
- Skelmersdale: 2%
- Midge Hall: 1%

Alternative Route Users – 103 surveys completed by travellers saying they used this service because of the WCML closure.

40% clearly had no reason and/or stated they would not use this route again. Real percentage is higher because many identified as ARU did not complete a survey.

Surprisingly many did not know the service existed and 1 in 5 (as with regular users) gave their home or destination as being on the Liverpool- Ormskirk corridor.

There is clear potential for passenger growth, eg those living north of Liverpool city centre with many commenting that, online information, right timetable, eg hourly, and reasonable connections at Ormskirk and Preston would persuade them to use this rail service again.