Transport for London

"Alight Here" messaging evaluation

09034

September 2009



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Research conducted by Synovate

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1. Executive summary

Research was commissioned in order to assess customer views of the new 'Alight Here for....' technology that is being trialled on three bus routes in London: route 36 (New Cross / Queens Park); route 45 (Kings Cross / Streatham Hill); and route 407 (Caterham / Sutton). Face-to-face quantitative interviews were conducted with 167 bus users at 'announced' bus stops along these three routes.

The main findings of the research are as follows.

Awareness of the 'Alight Here' technology is high and the system is well received:

- 22% of bus users spontaneously mention that they knew when to get off their bus because of the 'Alight Here' information;
- When prompted, 57% say they saw or heard this extra information, with 22% saying they found the information helpful;
- The majority of those who are aware of the extra information are satisfied with it;
- 4% spontaneously mention that they liked the 'Alight Here' announcements; no-one spontaneously makes negative comments about the 'Alight Here' information.

There is a high level of support for the 'Alight Here' information on London buses:

 Expansion of the technology to other routes is welcomed: 97% say it definitely or probably should be introduced to other routes in London.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

2007 saw the introduction of 'Next Stop' signage technology to a number of bus routes. From an initial trial on seven routes, the technology has now been extended to the majority of bus routes in London. At the time when the technology was running on the trial routes only, customer research provided the following key insights.

- Awareness of the technology was high.
- The system was generally well received, particularly by those who travel by bus less frequently, or those travelling on less familiar routes.
- Relatively few customers typically high frequency users of the trial routes –
 mentioned irritation with the announcements, and they acknowledged the benefits to
 other passengers less familiar with the routes or more in need of the audible / visual
 information being provided.
- Broadly, expansion of the technology across the system was welcomed, particularly those in central London most used by tourists.

More recently, a trial of additional 'Alight Here...' messages on three routes has started. On these routes, the 'Next Stop' messages are followed by 'Alight Here for...' messages, informing customers on the main 'landmarks' at each stop, e.g. "Bressenden Place. Alight here for Buckingham Palace.". This should make it easier for customers to identify the stop they need.

2.2 Research objectives

There was a specific need for research to assess customer views of this technology. In particular, the research needed to:

- gauge levels of awareness and 'usage' of the 'Alight Here' messages;
- gauge levels of satisfaction with the messages, with specific reference to clarity of messages, customer understanding, perceived usefulness (to them and to others, on familiar and unfamiliar routes), and specific content (helpful, as expected);
- understand the impact of the messages on customer journey experience and satisfaction;
- understand whether the 'Alight Here' messages should be rolled out to further routes.

3. Research details

3.1 Methodology

Face-to-face quantitative interviews were conducted at bus stops with customers who were exiting buses 'announced' by the 'Alight Here...' messages.

Interviews were brief, averaging 7-8 minutes in duration.

See Appendix 5.1 for the full questionnaire.

3.2 Sample

167 adult bus users (ages 16+) were interviewed:

- 60 using bus route 36 (New Cross / Queens Park)
- 48 using bus route 45 (Kings Cross / Streatham Hill)
- 59 using bus route 407 (Caterham / Sutton)

Interviewing was conducted at bus stops that were announced by the 'Alight Here' messages. Interviewing was conducted in morning/daytime or daytime/evening shifts on weekdays, or daytime shits at weekends. Respondents leaving the bus were approached on a 'next available person' basis. No quotas were applied on the profile of respondents, other than that they should be aged 16 or older.

See Appendix 5.2 for the interviewing locations, and Appendix 5.3 for the full sample profiles.

3.3 Timescales

Fieldwork was conducted between 29th July and 29th August 2009. Certain shifts were scheduled for a higher response rate, e.g. interviewing at Oval station stop during the time of the 5th Ashes test match.

4. Main findings

4.1 Impressions of recent bus journey

4.1.1 Overview

The majority of bus users are satisfied with their recent journey. The majority of positive comments about the journey relate to the speed and quality of the service. 4% mention (unprompted) that they like the 'Alight Here' announcements. Two-thirds do not have any negative comments to make, and no customers make unprompted negative comments about the 'Alight Here' information.

4.1.2 Spontaneous likes about bus journey just made

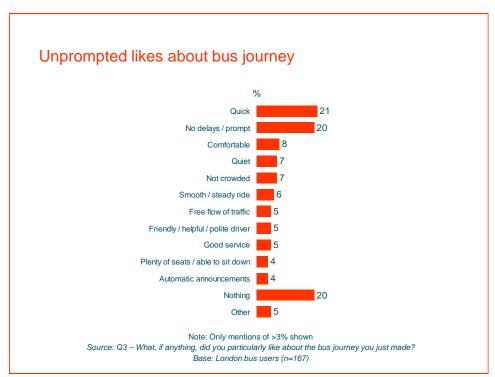
Bus users were asked what, if anything, they had particularly liked about the journey they had just made (see over, top).

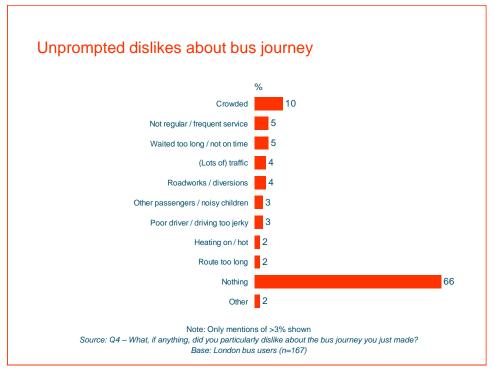
4% spontaneously mention that they liked the automatic announcements on their recent bus journey. However, the majority of positive comments about bus users' journeys relate to the speed and quality of the service.

4.1.3 Spontaneous dislikes about bus journey just made

Bus users were then asked what, if anything, they had particularly disliked about the journey they had just made (see over, bottom).

Overall, 66% do not have any negative comments to make about their recent bus journey. Unprompted mentions of specific journey dislikes are at low levels. No-one spontaneously makes negative comments about the 'Alight Here' information.



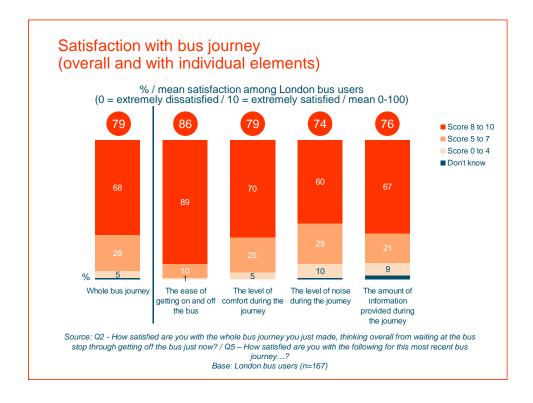


4.1.4 Satisfaction with bus journey

Bus users were asked how satisfied they were with their bus journey, both overall and on a number of specific elements (see below).

The majority of bus users are satisfied with their recent journey overall:

- the average satisfaction rating is 79¹.
- more than two-thirds (68%) give a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.



Satisfaction is higher among those who are using bus route 36 (average satisfaction rating 84; 80% rating 8 to 10) than among those using route 45 (74; 58%) or route 407 (77; 64%).

¹ On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is 'extremely satisfied' and 0 is 'extremely dissatisfied'. The average rating is multiplied by a factor of 10 to give an average satisfaction score between 0 and 100.

The majority of bus users are also satisfied with each of the individual elements of their journey (see previous).

- In terms of the ease with which bus users were able to get on and off the bus, the average satisfaction rating is 86, with 89% giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.
- The level of comfort during the journey receives an average satisfaction rating of 79,
 with 70% giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.
- The level of noise during the journey receives an average satisfaction rating of 74,
 with six in ten 60% giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.
- The amount of information provided during the journey receives an average satisfaction rating of 76, with 67% giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.

Those travelling on bus route 36 are more satisfied than those travelling on route 45 with the amount of information provided during the journey (average satisfaction rating 81 vs. 73). There are no other statistically significant differences between sub-groups.

4.2 Impact of 'Alight Here' messages

4.2.1 Overview

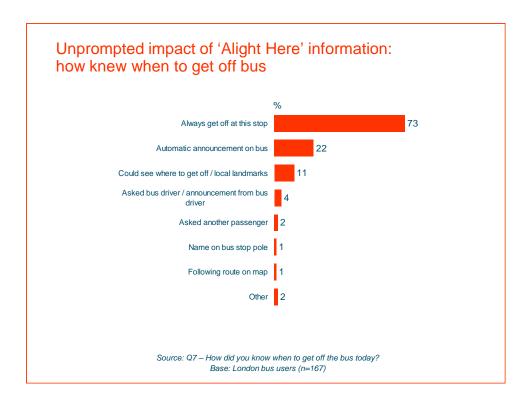
Awareness of the 'Alight Here' technology is high and the system is well received.

- 22% of bus users spontaneously mention that they knew when to get off their bus because of the 'Alight Here' information.
- When prompted, 57% say they saw or heard the extra information, with 22% saying they found the information helpful.
- The majority of those who are aware of the extra information are satisfied with it.

4.2.2 Unprompted impact of 'Alight Here' information: knowing when to get off the bus

Bus users were asked how they had known when to get off the bus on the journey they had just made (see below).

22% of bus users were prompted to get off the bus by the 'Alight Here' automatic announcement on the bus. Significantly more customers on bus routes 36 and 45 than on route 407 mentioned using the automatic announcements (route 36 - 37%; route 45 - 21%; route 407 - 7%).



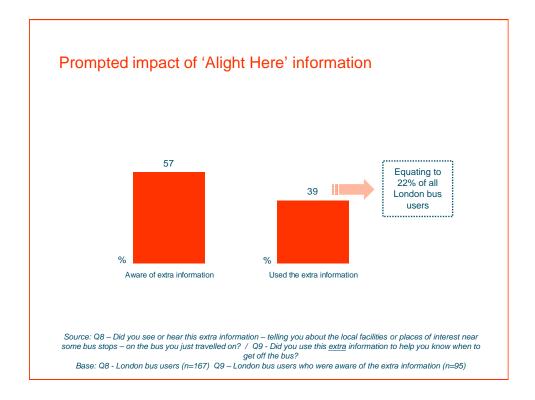
73% say they always get off at this stop. This is higher among those who are travelling for work or study (88%) than among those who are travelling for other reasons (63%).

11% were prompted by the sight of local landmarks and 4% asked the bus driver for information about when / where to get off. These are higher among those who are travelling for reasons other than work or study (16% used local landmarks; 6% asked the bus driver) than among those who are doing so (3%; no mentions).

2% asked another passenger for information, 1% looked for information on the bus stop pole, and 1% followed their route on a map.

4.2.3 Prompted impact of 'Alight Here' information

Bus users were asked whether they had seen or heard the information telling them about the local facilities or places of interest near some bus stops on the journey they had just made. If so, they were also asked whether this information had helped them to know when to get off the bus (see below).



Overall, 57% have seen or heard the 'Alight Here' information. Of these, 39% found the information useful in helping them to know when to get off their bus. This equates to 22% of bus users using the extra information overall (comparable to the 22% who mentioned that they used the information to know when to get off the bus).

Overall, significantly more customers on bus route 36 than route 407 say they used the extra information (30% vs. 15%).

4.2.4 Satisfaction with information provided during the journey

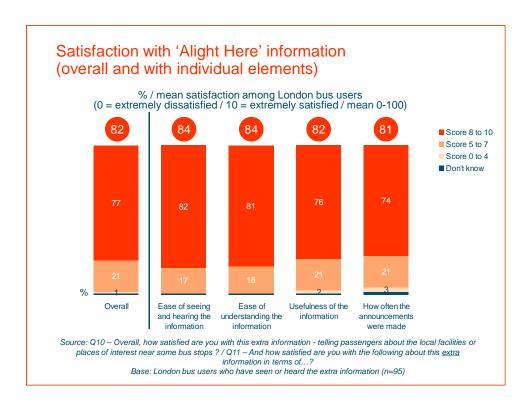
Those who are aware of the extra information, and those who used it, give significantly higher ratings of satisfaction with *the amount of information provided during the journey* (also see section 4.1.4). This could relate to the 'Next Stop...' and 'Alight Here...' messages, as well as other information provided on the bus or by the driver.

Those who say they used the 'Alight Here' information give an average satisfaction rating of 86 for the amount of information provided during the journey. Overall, those who are aware of the extra information give this an average rating of 80. Those who say they are not aware of the 'Alight Here' messages give an average satisfaction rating of 70 for the amount of information provided during the journey.

However, the 'Alight Here' messages do not add significantly to overall journey satisfaction: those aware of and who used the 'Alight Here' messages are not more satisfied with the bus journey overall:

4.2.5 Satisfaction with 'Alight Here' information

Bus users were directly asked how satisfied they were with the extra 'Alight Here' information, both overall and on a number of specific elements (see over).



The majority of bus users who are aware of the 'Alight Here' information are satisfied with it: the average satisfaction rating² is 82, with more than three-quarters (77%) giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.

The majority of bus users are also satisfied with each of the individual elements of the extra information.

- In terms of being able to see and hear the information, the average satisfaction rating is 84, with 82% of those who are aware of the information (82%) giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.
- The ease of understanding the information receives an average satisfaction rating of 84, with 81% giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.

² On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is 'extremely satisfied' and 0 is 'extremely dissatisfied'. The average rating is multiplied by a factor of 10 to give an average satisfaction score between 0 and 100.

- The usefulness of the information receives an average satisfaction rating of 82, with 76% giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.
- How often announcements were made receives an average satisfaction rating of 81, with 74% giving a satisfaction rating of 8 to 10.

There are no statistically significant differences between sub-groups.

4.3 Support for use of 'Alight Here' information

4.3.1 Overview

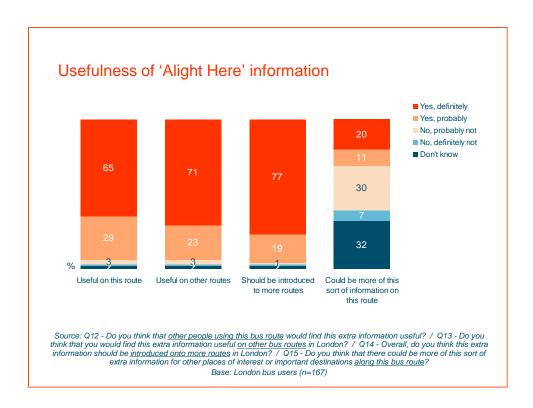
There is a high level of support for the 'Alight Here' information on London buses. Expansion of the technology to other routes is welcomed: 97% feel that it should definitely or probably be introduced onto more routes in London.

4.3.2 Usefulness of 'Alight Here' information

Bus users were asked a series of questions about how useful they find the extra 'Alight Here' information *(see over)*.

94% also feel that such extra information will be useful to them on other bus routes in London. 97% feel that it should be introduced onto more routes in London.

94% feel that other people using the bus route will definitely or probably find this extra information useful.

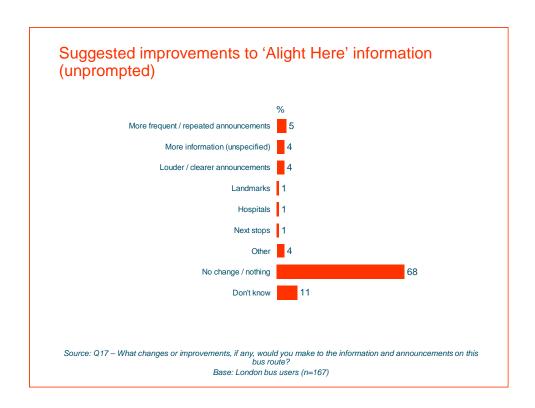


31% of bus users feel that there could be more of this type of information along their route specifically, with a similar proportion (32%) unsure. The remainder (37%) feels that there is no need for more of this type of extra information along their route.

These opinions are consistent across sub-groups.

4.3.2 Suggested improvements to 'Alight Here' information

Bus users were asked what changes or improvements, if any, they would make to the information and announcements on their bus route (see below).



68% say they would change nothing. This is significantly higher among those using bus route 36 (77%) than among those using bus route 45 (54%) and among those who are travelling for work or study (78%) than among those who are travelling for other reasons (60%).

5% say they would like more frequent / repeated announcements, while 4% would like louder / clearer announcements.

Of those (29%) who say that there could be 'Alight Here' messages for other places of interest or important destinations along their route, the main suggestions are for tourist attractions (17%), named urban areas (10%) and key stations (10%) (see below). However, a greater proportion (40%) say they don't know what the extra information could be.

	more of t other p	Q15 – Do you think that there could I more of this sort of extra information other places of interest or importan destinations along this bus route?									
	All	Route 36	Route 45	Route 407							
	Yes 29%	Yes 28%	Yes 33%	Yes 25%							
	•	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ							
	Q16 – What other places along this bus route do you think could or should be mentioned in these announcements?										
Attractions / tourist attractions, e.g. Tower Bridge	17%	29%	13%	7%							
Named urban areas, e.g. Camberwell/ Brixton	10%	6%	13%	13%							
Stations / Underground stations	10%	6%	19%	7%							
Other interesting places / buildings	8%	6%	13%	7%							
Parks & green spaces	6%	12%	0%	7%							
Shopping areas, e.g. Oxford St., shopping centres	6%	0%	6%	13%							
All stops	2%	6%	0%	0%							
Famous streets, e.g. Fleet Street	2%	0%	6%	0%							
Other	13%	0%	13%	27%							
Don't know	40%	59%	38%	20%							

There are no significant differences in suggestions across the different routes.

5. Appendices

5.1 Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION - READ OUT

- SAY Good morning / afternoon / evening. I am from Synovate, an independent market research company and we are currently conducting a research project on behalf of Transport for London, looking at customers' experiences of travelling by bus. The interview will only take a few minutes and the answers that you give will form part of a confidential market research study. Would you be willing to help us?
- S1 Firstly, can I just check what age are you? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Under 16	1	THANK & CLOSE
16 to 19	2	
20 to 24	3	-
25 to 34	4	
35 to 44	5	-
45 to 54	6	-
55 to 59	7	CONTINUE
60 to 64	8	
65 to 74	9	-
75 or older	0	-
(Refused)	Х	_
(Don't know)	V	-

Q1 What is the main purpose of your bus journey today? PROMPT USING ANSWERS BELOW IF NECESSARY

SINGLE CODE ONLY

	c.35
Going to / from place of work	1
Going to / from place of education	2
Visiting friends / relatives	3
Theatre, cinema, concert etc	4
Sporting activity / event	5
Other social (e.g. pub, restaurant)	6
Museum / exhibition	7
Shopping	8

Personal business (e.g. doctor, bank, church)	9
Sightseeing	0
Holidays	Χ
Business travel	V
	c.36
Other [PLEASE SPECIFY]	1
(Refused)	Х
(Don't know)	V

Q2 How satisfied are you with the **whole** bus journey that you just made, thinking overall from waiting at the bus stop all the way through getting off the bus just now?

Please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is extremely satisfied and 0 is extremely dissatisfied. **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

	Extremely dissatisfied							Extr	emely	/ satis	fied		1
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	
Overall journey	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Х	V	

Q3 What – if anything – did you particularly **like** about the bus journey you just made?

WRITE IN ALL ANSWERS FULLY

c.38
c.39
c.40
c.41

And what – if anything – did you particularly **dislike** about the bus journey you just made?

WRITE IN ALL ANSWERS FULLY

c.42
c.43
c.44
c.45

And how satisfied are you with the following for this most recent bus journey?

Please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is extremely satisfied and 0 is extremely dissatisfied.

READ OUT IN ORDER

SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH

		Extr	Extremely dissatisfied						Extremely satisfied					
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	
а	The ease of getting on and off this bus	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X	V	c.46
b	The level of comfort during the journey	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Х	V	c.47

С	The level of noise during the journey	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Х	V	c.48
d	The amount of information provided during the journey	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Х	V	c.49

Q7 How did you know when to get off the bus today?

DO NOT PROMPT MULTICODES POSSIBLE

	c.50
Always get off at this stop	1
Could see where to get off / local landmarks	2
Looking at local street names	3
Following route on a map	4
Name written on bus stop / bus stop pole	5
Automatic announcement on bus	6
Asked bus driver / announcement from bus driver	7
Asked another passenger	8
Didn't know / just guessed	9
Actually got off the wrong stop	0
	c.51
Other [PLEASE WRITE IN]	1
(Don't know)	V

Q8 On all London buses now, there are announcements and messages displayed telling passengers the name of the next bus stop. Now, on this bus route, there is extra information given at some of the bus stops. This extra information tells passengers about local facilities or places of interest that are close to some of the bus stops along this route. It helps customers know when to get off if they want to visit these places. This extra information is given as an announcement or is shown on the visual display.

Did you see or hear this **extra** information – telling you about the local facilities or places of interest near some bus stops – on the bus you just travelled on?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

	c.52	
Yes	1	ASK Q9, Q10 AND Q11
No	2	CO TO 042
(Don't know)	V	GO TO Q12

ASK IF SEEN / HEARD THE EXTRA INFORMATION ('Yes' / CODE 1 AT Q8)

Did you use this **extra** information to help you know when to get off the bus? **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

	c.53
Yes	1
No	2
(Don't know)	V

ASK IF SEEN / HEARD THE EXTRA INFORMATION ('Yes' / CODE 1 AT Q8)

Q10 Overall, how satisfied are you with this **extra** information – telling passengers about the local facilities or places of interest near some bus stops?

Please use a scale of 0 to 10 (where 10 is extremely satisfied and 0 is extremely dissatisfied)? **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

	Ext	Extremely dissatisfied						Extremely satisfied					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	
New information system on the bus	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Χ	٧	(

ASK IF SEEN / HEARD THE EXTRA INFORMATION ('Yes' / CODE 1 AT Q8)

Q11 And how satisfied are you with the following about this **extra** information in terms of...

READ OUT IN ORDER

SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH

REMIND RESPONDENT OF SCALE IF NECESSARY

Again, please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is extremely satisfied and 0 is extremely dissatisfied.

		Extremely dissatisfied			Extremely satisfied									
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	
а	The ease of seeing and hearing the information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Х	V	c.55
b	The ease of understanding the information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X	V	c.56
С	The usefulness of the information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Х	V	c.57
d	How often the announcements were made	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X	V	c.58

Q12 Now you know about this **extra** information – telling passengers about the local facilities or places of interest near some bus stops – do you think that **other people using this bus route** would find this **extra** information useful?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

	c.59
Yes, definitely	1

Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
(Don't know)	V

Q13 Do you think that **you** would find this **extra** information useful **on other bus routes** in London? **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

	c.60
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
(Don't know)	V

Q14 Overall, do you think this **extra** information should be introduced onto more routes in London? **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

	c.61
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
(Don't know)	V

Q15 Do you think that there could be more of this sort of **extra** information for other places of interest or important destinations **along this bus route**?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

	c.62	
Yes, definitely	1	ASK O46
Yes, probably	2	ASK Q16
No, probably not	3	
No, definitely not	4	GO TO Q17
(Don't know)	V	

ASK IF THINK SOME EXTRA ANNOUNCEMENTS COULD BE MADE ON THIS ROUTE

Q16 What other places along this bus route do you think could or should be mentioned in these announcements?

WRITE IN ALL ANSWERS FULLY

		c.6 c.6 c.6
)17	What changes or improvements – if any – would you make to the information and announcements on this bus route? WRITE IN ALL ANSWERS FULLY	
		c.6 c.6 c.6 c.7

ASK IF ON A DOUBLE DECK BUS

Q18 Were you mostly downstairs or upstairs on the bus you have just got off? **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

	c.71
Downstairs	1
Upstairs	2
(Not applicable)	Χ
(Don't know)	V

Q19 And were you mostly been at the front, the middle or the back of this bus? **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

	c.72
Front	1
Middle	2
Back	3
(Don't know)	V

Q20 How often would you say that you travel on **this bus route** in particular? **PROMPT USING ANSWERS BELOW IF NECESSARY**

SINGLE CODE ONLY IN FIRST COLUMN

Q21 And how often would you say that you travel using buses in and around London?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: By 'London' we mean all of Greater London, not just central London.

PROMPT USING ANSWERS BELOW IF NECESSARY

SINGLE CODE ONLY SINGLE CODE ONLY IN SECOND COLUMN

	Q20 This bus route	Q21 Any buses in London
	c.73	c.74
5 or more days a week	1	1
3 or 4 days a week	2	2
2 days a week	3	3

Once a week	4	4
Once a fortnight	5	5
Once a month	6	6
Less often than once a month	7	7
Not in the last 12 months	8	8
This is the first time	9	9
(Don't know)	V	V

CODE FOR ALL – DO NOT ASK

Q22 Gender

	c.75
Male	1
Female	2

To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong? **READ OUT** Q23

SINGLE CODE ONLY

White 1
Mixed 2
Asian or Asian British 3
Black or Black British 4
Any other ethnic group 5
(Refused) X
(Don't know) V

Q24 Do you have any long-term physical or mental impairment which limits your daily activities or the

work you can do? PROMPT USING ANSWERS BELOW IF NECESSARY CODE ALL MENTIONED

c.77
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

No / None of these	0
(Refused)	Х
(Don't know)	V

Q25 Can we contact you again in the future about this study?

	c.78
Yes	1
No	2

Q26 Can we contact you again in the future about other market research studies we may be conducting?

	c.79
Yes	1
No	2

SAY Thank you very much for your help with this study. You may receive a phone call from our Quality Control department to check that the interview has been carried out correctly.

HAND RESPONDENT THANK YOU LEAFLET CHECK FRONT PAGE DETAILS ARE COMPLETE AND CORRECT

5.2 Interviewing locations

	n
(ANY) Route 36	60
(ANY) Route 36 stop – towards New Cross	40
Paddington Station 14020	13
Bressenden Place 33477	14
Oval Station 4734	13
(ANY) Route 36 stop – towards Queens Park	18
Oval Station 520	4
Grosvenor Gardens 33447	4
Paddington Station 11666	12
(ANY) Route 45	48
(ANY) Route 45 stop – towards Streatham	14
Fleet Street 8564	0
Blackfriars Bridge South Side 37666	10
Caldecott Road 26325	6
(ANY) Route 45 stop – towards Kings Cross	30
Caldecott Road 26324	8
Blackfriars Bridge South Side 37637	4
City Thameslink 205	0
Kings Cross Station / York Way 18866	20
(ANY) Route 407	59
(ANY) Route 407 stop – towards Caterham	26
Sutton Police Station 14881	1
West Croydon Bus Station R0855	15
Park Street BP1586	10
Swan & Sugar Loaf 17851	0
(ANY) Route 407 stop – towards Sutton	24
Fairfield Halls 17630	0
West Croydon Bus Station R0855	20
Sutton Post Office W41	13

5.3 Sample profiles

5.3.1 Bus users: socio-demographics

%	All London bus users	Route 36	Route 45	Route 407
Significant difference (95%)		A	В	С
Base: All (n=)	(167)	(60)	(48)	(59)
Gender				
Male	53	58	48	51
Female	47	42	52	49
Age				
16-34	51	53	54	47
35+	49	47	46	53
Ethnicity				
White	51	38	54	61 A
BAME	48	62 BC	46	39
Refused	1			2
Disability / impairment				
Yes	6	2	4	12 A
No	94	98 C	96	88

5.3.2 Bus users: journey characteristics

%		Route 36	Davida 45	D1- 407	
%	All London bus users	Route 36	Route 45	Route 407	
Significant difference (95%)		Α	В	С	
Base: All (n=)	(167)	(60)	(48)	(59)	
Bus user	Bus user				
Weekly	89	85	90	92	
Less often	12	15	10	9	
Route user					
Weekly	75	77	60	86 B	
Less often	25	23	40 AC	14	
Journey purpose					
Work / study	44	52	54	47	
Other	56	48	46	53	
Journey satisfaction					
8 to 10	68	80	58	64	
0 to 7	32	20	42	36	
Alight here					
Aware	57	63	58	49	
Used	22	30	21	15	
Not aware	43	37	42	51	