

**Lift usage & user  
profiling**

**07214**

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Research conducted by Synovate

## 1. Executive summary

Lift users were more likely to be 'semi regular' users of the London Underground with over a third using the London Underground 1-4 days a week. They were also more likely to be female, aged 35-59 or over 60, and not in full time work. More than one in ten customers using a lift had some form of mobility disability or impairment with 2% of the all customers being wheelchair users: a higher incidence compared with the profile of LU users more generally.

Most lift users were using London Underground for reasons other than work, although lift users with a mobility disability or impairment were more likely to be using the Underground to get to or from work than for other reasons.

Most customers were using the lift because they were either travelling with a buggy / pram or with small children, or because they were travelling with heavy bags / equipment. These customers travelling with an encumbrance made up nearly two thirds of customers using the lifts. Those customers using the lifts because they had a mobility disability or impairment made up slightly less than one in seven of all lift users.

Three quarters of customers using the lifts were aware of the presence of the lift at the station beforehand, mostly because they had used the stations before rather than because they had checked in advance. Customers with mobility difficulties were the most likely to have checked in advance, while those who were travelling with an encumbrance were the least likely of all customers surveyed to be aware of lift availability in advance. Of those customers that had check lift availability in advance of travelling, most had found this information through the internet, either through Journey Planner or another internet. The TfL website was the third most cited source of information for step free access.

Across all lift users, the extent of lift availability has only a limited effect on customers' route and station choices: over four fifths of customers (82%) would not have changed stations if there had not been a lift present. However just under a quarter of those with a mobility disability or impairment would have used a different station. The majority of lift users don't or only very infrequently plan their routes via a station with a lift, although a quarter of lift users plan their routes to use Underground stations with a lift on at least a weekly basis. However, lift users who had a disability or impairment were nearly twice as likely to do so (41% versus 22%).

## 2. Background to and objectives of the research

### 2.1 Introduction

The provision of step free access routes in London Underground (LU) stations is a critical element in opening up the system to groups of people who are currently excluded from using it, or who have difficulty accessing it. Currently 47 LU stations are step free, and LU have targets of 25% and 33% of stations to be step free by 2010 and 2013 respectively.

In order to inform development and investment priorities in the step free programme, greater knowledge is required around the current usage of lifts at step free stations, specifically who are using the lifts and why are they being used.

### 2.2 Research objectives

The overarching business objective is to understand the usage of lifts during normal station operating hours. Specifically, the research objectives are:

- Understand the usage of lifts during normal station operating hours, specifically providing data in relation to extent of lift usage and profile of lift users;
- Specifically to profile the users of lifts in terms of socio-demographics (gender, age), accessibility indicators (disability, mobility, encumbrance) and Underground usage (frequency, travel purposes);
- Understand the reasons for using lifts amongst those customers that are using them;
- Gauge the extent of (prior) awareness of lift provision at stations and the sources of awareness of lift availability (actual used and preferred);
- Gauge the extent to which lift availability at stations guides / has guided LU route and station choice and general travel plans.

## 3. Research details

### 3.1 Methodology

Quantitative face to face interviews were conducted with customers using the lifts at 13 selected LU stations, with customers just after they had exited the lifts. Two interviewers were used, one at the station level lift entrance / exit, and one at the platform level lift entrance / exit, to maximise the opportunities for customer interviews.

### 3.2 Sample

A target of 100 interviews with lift users at each station was required, and overall a total of 1,462 interviews were conducted, broken down by station as follows:

Station	Completed interviews (n)
Brixton	116
Canary Wharf	105
Canning Town	95
East Ham	137
Green Park	133
Hounslow East	142
Kilburn	86
Kings Cross St Pancreas	141
London Bridge	103
Stratford	121
Tottenham Hale	85
Wembley Park	115
Westminster	61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,462</b>

Customers were selected for interview on a 'next available person' basis, with no quotas on the profile of lift using customers applied.

### 3.3 Timescales

Initial pilot shifts were conducted at five stations on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

Remaining fieldwork was conducted at all stations between 14<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2008.

## 4. Main findings

### 4.1 Lift user profile

Compared with the overall London Underground user profile (from the London Underground User Survey (UUS) 2007<sup>1</sup>), lift users were more likely to be female, aged over 60 and not in full time work. Lift users were also less frequent Underground users, with a particularly smaller proportion of lift users using the system 5+ days a week. (see below)

Profile group	Profile type	Lift user profile	UUS profile
Gender	Male	34%	59%
	Female	65%	41%
Age	16 to 34	50%	63%
	35 to 59	36%	33%
	60+	13%	4%
Working status	Working full time	51%	74%
	Working part time	14%	8%
	Other	35%	19%
Frequency of using LU	5+ days a week	35%	67%
	1-4 days a week	36%	23%
	Less often	27%	12%

Just over one in seven (14%) lift users had some form of disability, impairment or long term illness, with people with mobility difficulties forming the largest proportion of this group at just over one in ten people (11%). (see over, left)

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<sup>1</sup> 2006/07 Underground Users Survey (c.30,300 face-to-face interviews between January 2006 and December 2007)



Disability / Impairment.	
	Total sample (n=1462)
Any disability / impairment	14%
Mobility impairment	11%
Visual impairment	*%
Age-related mob. difficulty	2%
Hearing impairment	*%
Learning difficulty	*%
Serious long term illness	1%
Other	1%
None	84%
Not stated	2%

Ever use a Wheelchair	
	Total sample (n=171)
Yes	13%
No	77%
No answer	10%

Over one in seven of lift users with with disability or mobility problems used a wheelchair, and in total wheelchair users comprised 2% of all lift users interviewed. (see above, right)

Compared with London Underground users overall, lift users were much less likely to be travelling to and from work, and more likely to be using it for other reasons such as visiting friends, holidays and shopping. week. (see over)

Main reason for using Underground station		
	Total sample (n=1462)	UUS 2007* <sup>2</sup>
Travelling...		
Going to / from work	21%	50%
Visiting friends /	20%	12%
Holidays	14%	2%
Shopping	14%	6%
Other	11%	1%
Sightseeing	6%	2%
Personal business	5%	6%
Other social ( e.g. pub / restaurant	4%	7%
Going to / from education	2%	5%

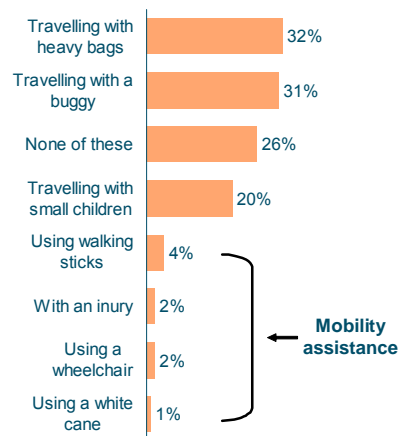
Customers who were using the lift due to convenience or because they had mobility difficulties, were more likely to be using the Underground station to get to or from work than people who were using the lift because they had heavy bags or small children.

People with mobility difficulties were also more likely to be using the Underground station for the purposes of; personal business, going to the cinema / theatre / concert or for shopping. People who were using the lifts because they had heavy bags or were with small children were more likely to be using the Underground station because they were visiting friends / relatives or because they had been on holiday.

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<sup>2</sup> 2006/07 Underground Users Survey The UUS covered approximately 30,300 face-to-face interviews between January 2006 and December 2007

## Observations of respondents appearances



Source: Q2; Base: All respondents (1462)

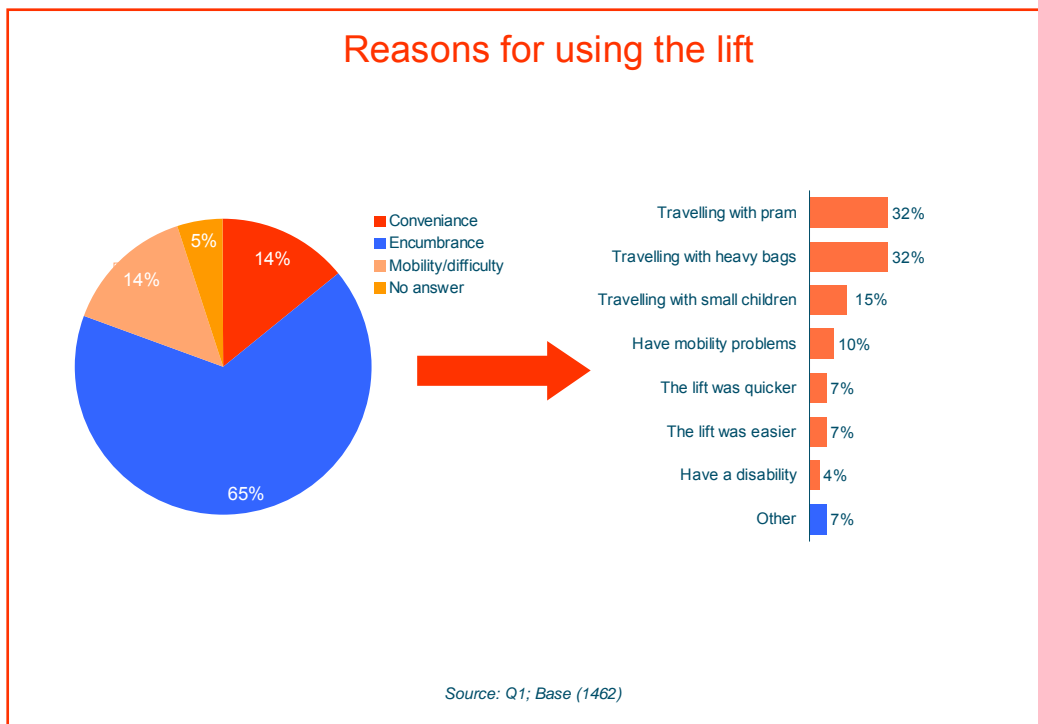
Most customers who used the lifts were seen as being 'encumbered' either with heavy bags, travelling with a buggy / pram, or travelling with small children. A smaller proportion were using the lifts because of disabilities or mobility problems and just over a quarter (26%) were using the lift for no visually obvious reason. Those who were observed as needing mobility assistance were the most likely to use lifts 5 or more times a week, while those 'encumbered' with a buggy / pram or small children were more likely to use the lifts less frequently, but still around weekly. Those customers who were travelling with heavy bags or equipment, were the least likely to use the lifts frequently.

Stratford and Tottenham Hale had the highest proportion of lift users as those travelling with a buggy / pram or with small children (48% and 46% respectively). Kings Cross station had the highest proportion of lift users with heavy bags (63%). Canning Town

and East Ham stations had the highest proportion of lift users (over one in ten) needing mobility assistance.

## 4.2 Reasons for using lifts

Most people were using the lifts because of being encumbered, with travelling with a pram, travelling with heavy bags and travelling with small children the main problems given.

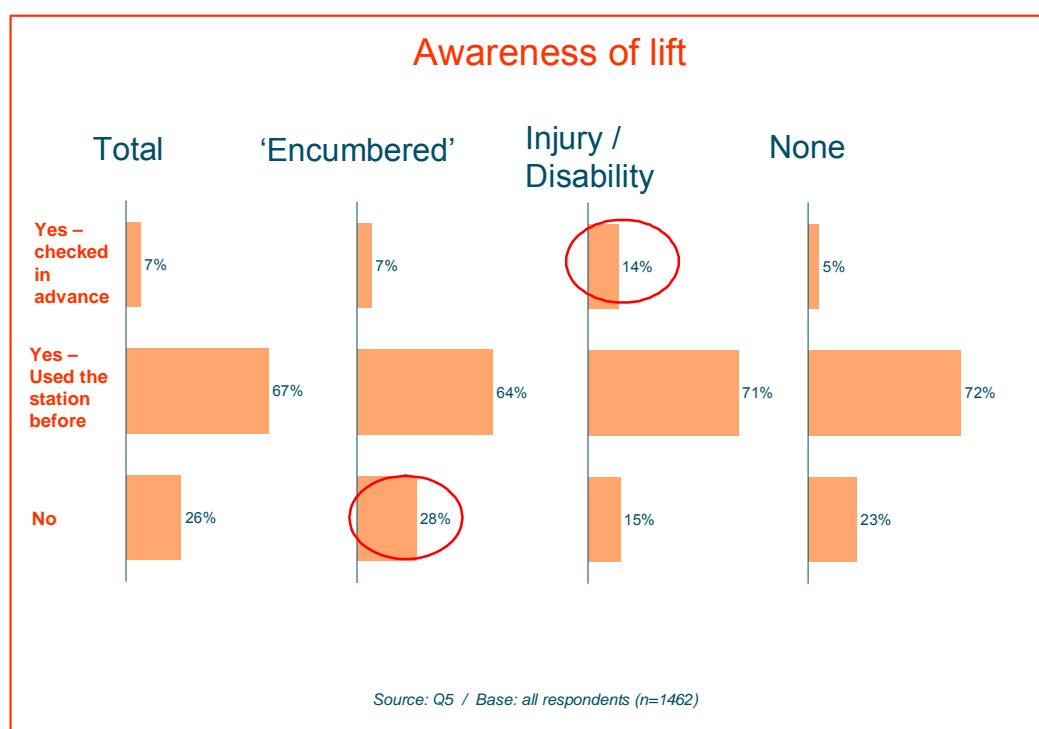


One in seven lift users (14%) used the lift because they had problems with mobility or other difficulties, with one in ten people having problems with mobility and just fewer than one in twenty having a disability. A further one in seven people used the lift because it was more convenient, with lift being quicker (7%) and easier (7%) the two main reasons given.

Reasons for using lifts varied slightly across the stations, with customers at Wembley Park more likely to use the lifts because of convenience (29%), customers at Kings Cross / St Pancras more likely to use it because they are encumbered (80%) and customers at Kilburn being more likely to use it because of mobility and disability difficulties (23%). These differences highlight how customers needs tend to vary by the geographical location of the station.

The reasons for using lifts also tend to differ by the number of times customers use them. Those who use lifts for mobility and disability difficulties are the most likely to use them weekly, whilst those who use them for convenience purposes are more likely to use lifts monthly rather than weekly. Those who use them because they are encumbered are more likely to use them less often than other groups.

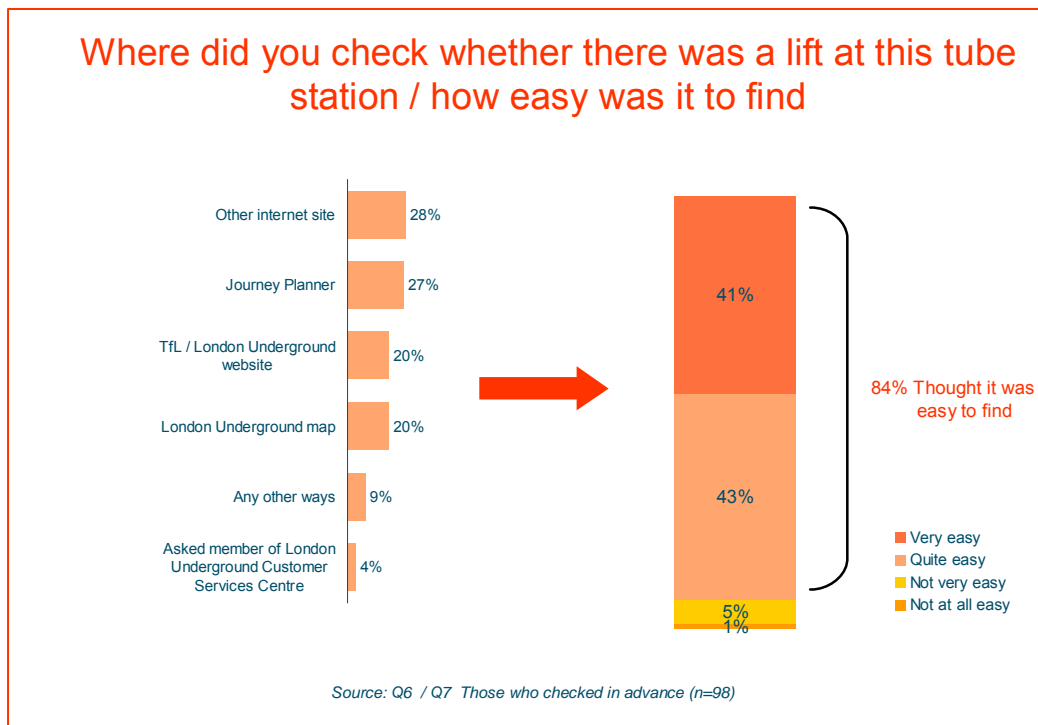
### 4.3 Awareness and extent of awareness of Lifts



In total, nearly three quarters of people knew there were lifts at the station. The vast majority, (two thirds of the total) were aware of the lift at the station because they had used the station before, while less than one in ten had checked in advance. Over a quarter of people were not aware of a lift at the station.

Those who were injured or had a form of disability were more likely to have checked in advance to see if there was a lift at the station. Those who were encumbered with bags or with small children were the most likely not to have checked in advance. Customers at Canary Wharf were the most likely to have checked in advance of travelling whilst those at Wembley Park were the most likely to have used this station before and to

have known about lifts at that station. Those at Kings Cross were the least likely to have known about there being a lift there.



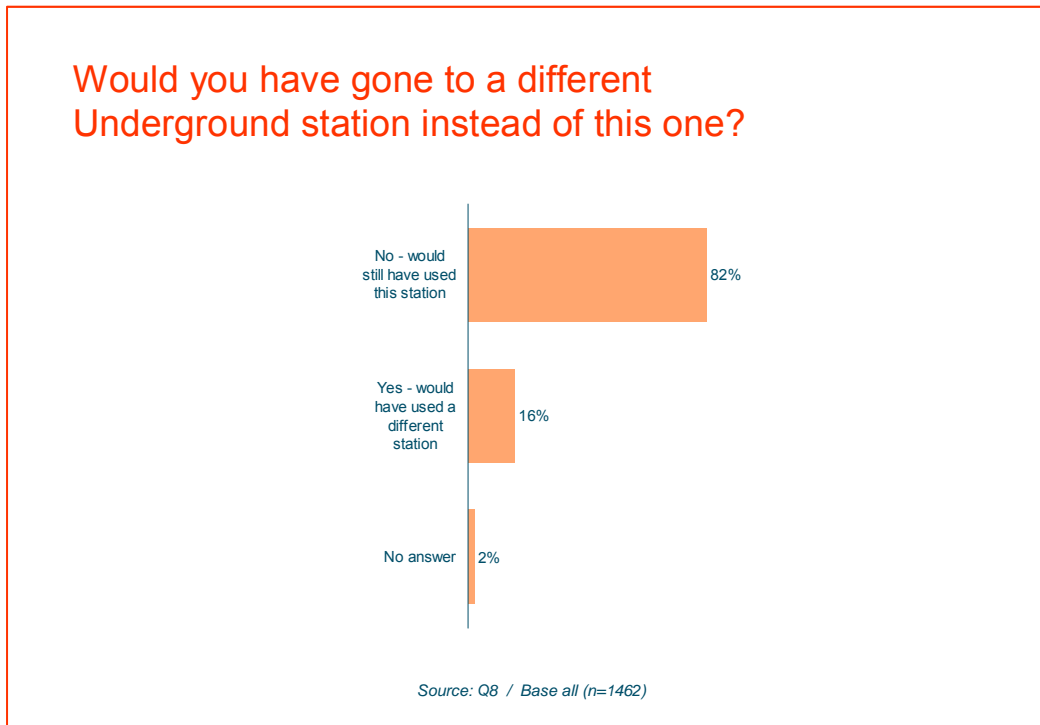
Of those who had checked in advance, people were most likely to have found out whether there was a lift at the station through ‘another’ internet site, that wasn’t the official TfL website. Just over a quarter of people found out about the location of lifts through a journey planner. One fifth of people found out about the location of lifts at the TfL website while a further fifth found out about them on the London Underground map.

Over four fifths of people found it easy to find with four in ten people finding it very easy to find.

4.4



## Lift availability and travel planning

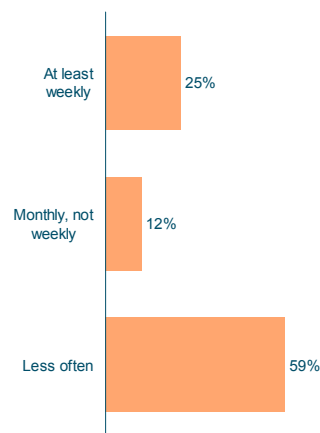


Over four fifths of people would still have used the station if there hadn't have been lifts there. However, opinion was polarized between those with disability / mobility difficulties and those who were using the lifts for convenience or because they were encumbered. Nearly a quarter of people who were using lifts because of an injury / disability (23%) would use a different station, compared to only one in twenty (6%) of people using the lift for convenience, and one in six (16%) using the lift because they were encumbered.

Those who used the lifts 5 or more days a week were also more likely to want to change stations than those who used them less often than monthly, (24% vs 10%).

Customers at Kilburn and Hounslow East were the most likely to have still used the station in the event of there not being any lifts. Customers at Canning Town and Stratford were the most likely to change to a different station.

## How often do you plan your route to ensure you use underground stations which have lifts



Source: Q9 / Base: all respondents (n=1462)

A quarter of people plan their routes to use Underground stations at least weekly, with just under one in ten (7%) saying they do so at least 5 times a week or more. The majority of people (59%) plan their route less than once a month.

Those customers who said they had a disability or any mobility difficulties were nearly twice as likely as those who didn't (41% versus 22%), to plan at least weekly to travel via a tube station. Stations where customers were most likely to have planned ahead at least weekly were East Ham (38%), Brixton (35%), Canary Wharf (35%), Canning Town (35%), and Kilburn (34%). Stations where customers were likely to plan ahead less often than monthly, were at Green Park (78%), Kings Cross (74%), and Westminster (74%).

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

Lifts are used by a varied selection of people, many users are those with heavy bags or small children who don't use the London Underground that often and are not aware of the presence of lifts. They are also less likely to plan their route around the location of lifts on the LU than those who have mobility problems or disabilities.

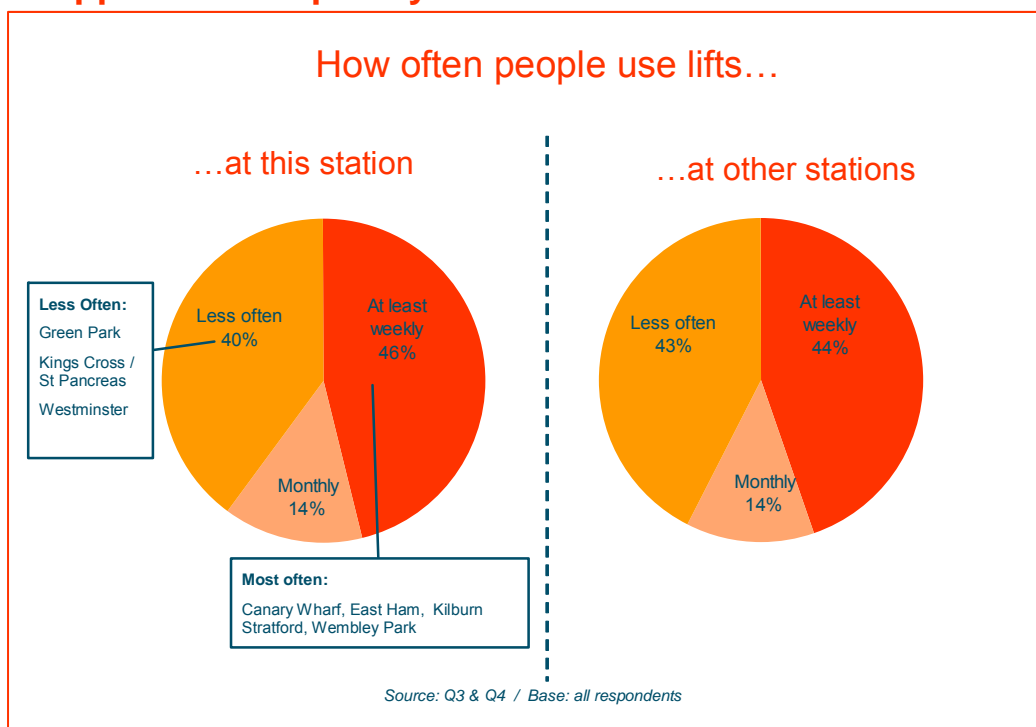
As a large proportion of lift use is made up of people who have relatively little experience of using London Underground and of the presence of lifts, it's hard to tell if their needs are being met by the provision of lifts. As they are unlikely to change their route if there are not any lifts provided at the station, it seems that their needs are being met to a certain extent, and that lifts are an extra provision for them that makes their journey easier.

People with mobility problems and disabilities tended to use the lifts more often, use the London Underground more often and were more likely to use it for getting / to and from work. They were also more likely to plan their journey round the presence of lifts at LU stations.

For these reasons it is important that the needs of this group are met. Indications of the nearest stations with lift availability are needed at stations where there aren't lifts. In addition, adequate advertising and awareness of the sources available to them is needed for when they plan their journeys.

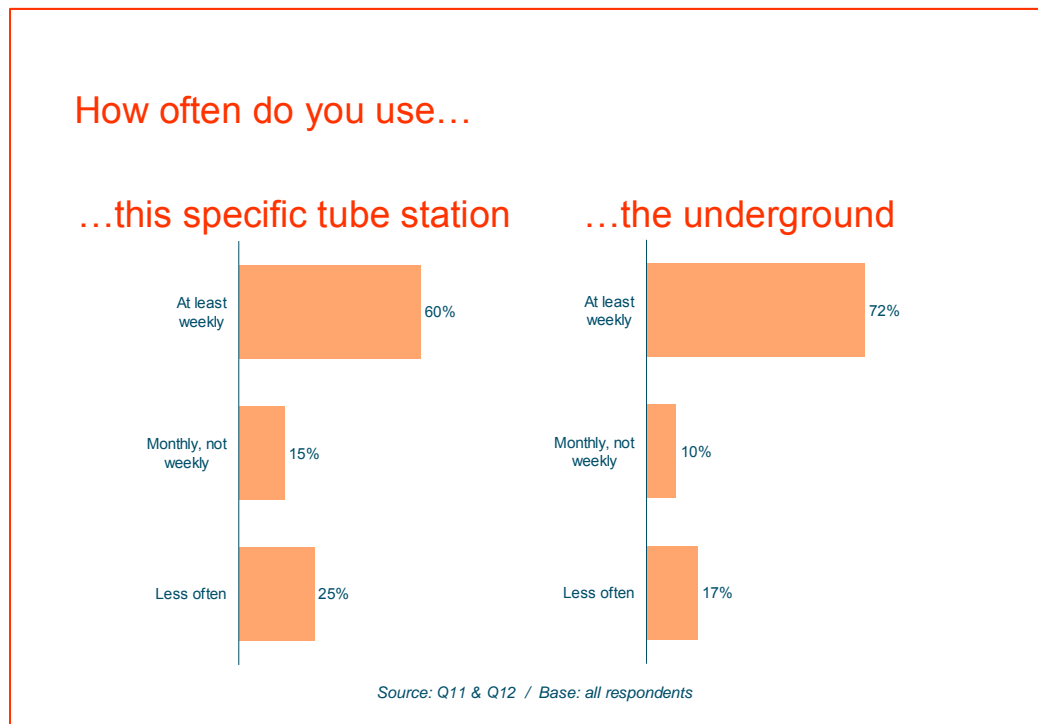
## 6. Appendices

### 6.1 Appendix: Frequency of lift use



Just under half of people used lifts at least weekly, at the stations where they were interviewed. Just fewer than one in six people used the lifts 5 days or more a week. Stations where at least a fifth of people were more likely to use the lifts at least 5 days or more per week were at; Canary Wharf, East Ham, Kilburn and Wembley Park stations. Stations where just over a third of customers were using the lift for the first time were at Green Park, Kings Cross, Tottenham Hale and Westminster. The use of lifts by customers at other stations followed similar patterns to the use at the specific stations where they were interviewed at. Just over a tenth of people used the lifts at other stations 5 days a week or more. A further one in three people (29%) used lifts at other stations at least once a week. People with any form of disability or mobility difficulty were the most likely to use lifts at other stations at least weekly (60%).

## 6.2 Appendix: Frequency of station / LU use



Six in ten lift users used the tube station at least weekly, while a further one in seven (15%) use the tube station at least monthly. Lift users who are more likely to use the station 5 days a week or more, are those with injuries / disabilities rather than those who were using the lift because they were encumbered. People who were aware of the lift were also more likely to use the station 5 days or more a week as were those whose journeys were influenced by the lift.

Nearly three quarters of people used the Underground at least weekly, with a further one in ten using it at least monthly. As seen with regular users of the tube station, regular users of the London Underground (5 days or more) were also more likely to have an injury / disability, be aware of the lift and have their journeys influenced by the presence of the lift.

### 6.3 Appendix: Demographics by reason for lift use.

Ethnicity / Total sample and by reason for using lift				
	Total sample (n=1462)	Mobility / Difficulty	Encumbered (bags / prams / small children etc)	Convenience
White	58%	67%	58%	45%
Mixed	3%	2%	3%	4%
Asian	15%	14%	14%	21%
Black	19%	15%	20%	27%
Chinese	1%	0%	2%	2%
Other	2%	2%	2%	1%
Not stated	1%	1%	1%	2%
Age				
16 to 34	50%	16%	58%	47%
35 to 54	32%	36%	32%	32%
55+	17%	49%	10%	20%
Gender				
Male	34%	39%	29%	43%
Female	65%	60%	69%	56%
<i>Source: QD1/2/5</i>				

Looking at the demographics in the table above, white people were more likely to use the lift because they had a mobility difficulty or because they were encumbered with bags / small children etc. Those aged 16 to 34 were more likely to use the lift because they were encumbered with bags / prams or with children whilst those aged 55+ were more likely to use the lift because they had mobility difficulties or because it was convenient. Males were more likely to use the lift for mobility difficulty reasons while females were more likely to use the lifts because they were 'encumbered'.

## 6.4 Appendix: Questionnaire

(nb) separate doc file.