

LU Signage Research  
February 2014  
TfL number: 12263  
SPA FT number: 1509  
V1.0





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# Research objectives

Transport for London received positive feedback during the London 2012 Games around the event signage that was in place across the London Underground network. As part of TfL's Games legacy, the organisation wishes to review current signage to determine if any learning from the Games period can be implemented across the network.

To this end four pilot stations have been identified for a review of their signage; these stations being Paddington, London Bridge, Kings Cross and Stratford. TfL have asked SPA Future Thinking to undertake a programme of accompanied journeys with customers travelling through these stations to understand how they use the signage pre and post pilot.

The research will assist TfL by feeding into management decisions as to whether the signage needs to be updated across the network and if so, which areas need to be changed to address what customer requirements.

Research objectives split into two main areas:

## **Does the signage provided at pilot stations meet customer needs?**

- At each stage of the customers journey
- Is signage suitably located, appropriately sized, easily understood and representative of TfL's style and image
- Does PRM signage (eg lifts) meet customer needs

## **How well does current event, attraction and continuation of journey signage meet the needs of customers?**

- Is there sufficient signage
- Where in the journey should signage be in place
- Does the proposed signage fit within TfL's sign family



# Methodology

## Pre-pilot journeys (April 2013)

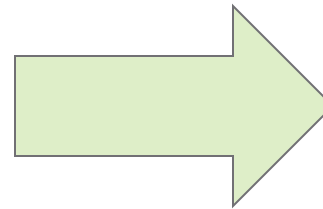
30 journeys conducted through the pilot stations:

- Paddington
- London Bridge
- Kings Cross
- Stratford

Key findings:

- Signage was felt to be plentiful, in keeping with the TfL brand and provided guidance and reassurance when traveling on the network
- Some signs were thought to be restricted due to its positioning (too high, too far away)
- Signage for key locations (O2, Westfield) was expected early in the station (ie at platform level)
- Consistency is important, providing reassurance
- Some confusion with non-LU signage (ie Network Rail or borough signage)
- Temporary signage was sometimes unclear

## Signs changed in pilot stations



## Post-pilot journeys (November 2013, Feb 2014)

30 journeys conducted through the pilot stations:

- Kings Cross
- London Bridge
- Stratford
- **Signage at Paddington was included in Feb 2014**

Signs of interest:

- way out to key locations outside the station
- interchanges between lines and modes
- step-free interchanging between platforms



# Key findings

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# Key findings – King’s Cross, London Bridge, Stratford

Overall, customers thought signage on the network was good, however there was a few minor things that could be improved

	Evaluation		Suggested improvements
<b>Way out to key locations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “When in doubt, follow ‘Way out’” attitude towards exiting the station, which tends to work</li><li>• New signage has stand out among other TfL signs making it easy to follow</li><li>• Black and yellow thought to have more stand out than blue and yellow</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would prefer more consistent signage from platform to street level, providing reassurance and relying less on their knowledge of the network</li><li>• Would also prefer signage style (size and colour) to continue into the National Rail station and outside</li></ul>
<b>Interchanges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using colour, numbers, back lighting and symbols was helpful, especially at busy interchanges (particularly to visually impaired customers)</li><li>• Positive response to the frequency, height, size and visibility of signage throughout</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More consistent use of colour on LU signs, making it easier to ignore the rest of the signs</li><li>• More frequent signs on the platforms at Stratford, one sign at the end of the platform was not enough</li></ul>
<b>Step free interchanges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lifts were not used, although signage was acknowledged and generally thought to be adequate</li><li>• No one noticed the lift layout diagram</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lift signs should say ‘Lift’ or use a lift symbol, making it clearer from a distance</li><li>• One mobility impaired respondent requested a sign that indicated the distances between interchanges</li></ul>



# Key findings - Paddington

There have been notable improvements to the signage at Paddington, however there is still much confusion about the H&C interchange and ticket hall, with people relying heavily on staff to navigate the station

	Evaluation		Suggested improvements
<b>Awareness H&amp;C ticket machines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signage on platform 12 was not noticed immediately</li><li>• There was some confusion about the ticket purchase options (ie fast ticket machines)</li><li>• Those unfamiliar with Paddington Station did not realise they could buy their tickets on the H&amp;C concourse</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People need a better understanding of Paddington station, the feeling of leaving the station made people unsure they were going in the right direction</li><li>• Signage was felt to be more Network Rail than TfL and a more distinguished TfL look and feel would have more stand out</li></ul>
<b>Interchanges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conflicting signage throughout the station confused people</li><li>• Position of the signage often made it difficult to see</li><li>• Positive response to the increased size and visibility of signage on route to the H&amp;C line</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One respondent liked the mat at the beginning of the line to the Heathrow Express because it stood out more than the TFL line</li><li>• In consistencies need to be addresses to avoid confusion and use of station staff</li></ul>
<b>Step free interchanges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When interchanging the walk to the H&amp;C platforms was thought to be too long for those who were mobility impaired</li><li>• The line on the ground along platform 12 led to the bottom of the stairs and not the ramp</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The signage should indicate the distance before they attempt it</li><li>• One mobility impaired respondent felt that the line should have led to the ramp as this would be easier for him to use</li><li>• Use of larger font size should be used where possible</li></ul>



# Navigating the station

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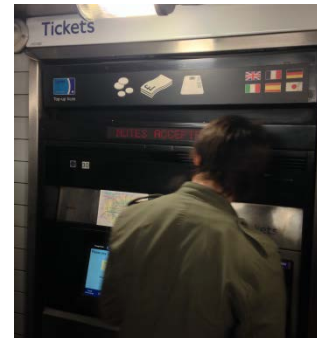


# Navigating the station - ticket hall

Ticket halls/machines are thought to be well signed throughout the station and easily visible once inside the London Underground



Signage was felt to be clear, well placed and legible throughout



Ticket prices could be better displayed and easier to understand, with the help of more staff to help choose the most appropriate ticket option for the journey

Customers had no difficulties finding the ticket offices/machines, they were well signed and located, at the bottom of the escalators



Signage on Platform 12 at Paddington was not immediately obvious and those unfamiliar with the station were not aware of the ticket machines at H&C concourse



There was some confusion about ticket purchase options

On entering London Bridge station from Tooley Street, one respondent felt that the signs for the ticket office were not immediately obvious and was confused by the sign to the taxi rank and buses. They opted for following the signs to the LU instead, as they assumed this would take them to the ticket office





# Navigating the station – planning

The maps in the ticket halls were used to plan the journey, for route planning and reassurance, line diagrams at London Bridge were useful for reassuring customers of their journey

Maps in the ticket hall and throughout the station were often used to plan an unfamiliar journey and for reassurance on a familiar journey



Other planning and reassurance tools included paper tube maps and google searches before starting the journey using smartphones/apps

The line diagrams at London Bridge station were noticed by most customers, together with overhead signs they were used to navigate the way to the correct platform



The lift layout diagrams were not noticed on any of the journeys with mobility impaired customers

Although one customer had pre-planned her journey she wasn't aware of the H&C line at Paddington and thought she had to travel to Edgware Road

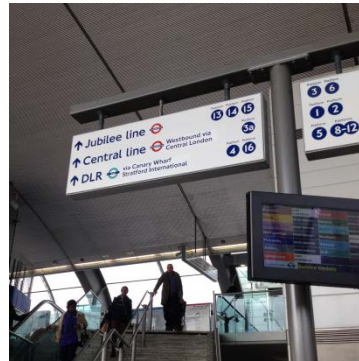




# Navigating the station – to platform

Due to the complexity and multi-modal nature of the pilot stations, customers felt reassured by the numbering and information provided by overhead signage and line diagrams

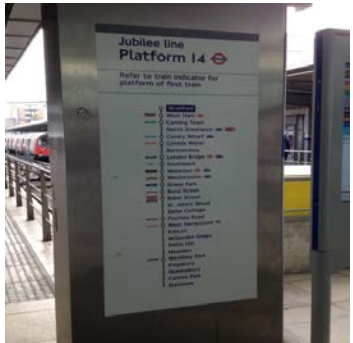
Platform numbers were thought to be really helpful, particularly at Stratford where there are multiple platforms, the numbers added extra reassurance and made it easier to navigate through the station



Those who were familiar with the network felt that a key station on the overhead platform signs added extra reassurance and should be consistent across the network



H&C lines were not noticed and Heathrow Express mat stood out



Line diagrams, provided reassurance that that the customer was travelling in the right direction and was a final reminder of the number of stops until their final destination



The larger font at Paddington was noticed and thought to be clearer, especially for those visually impaired





# Navigating the station – interchanges

Customers generally felt that the position of the signage at interchanges was well placed, at the right height and clear, navigating them through the station and reassuring them that they were heading in the right direction



Back lit signs attracted attention and were clear and easily visible

Over head interchange signs were thought to be at the appropriate height and visible, particularly during busy periods.



When interchanging with National Rail, signage was large, visible and informative. Platform numbers, modal logos and arrows helped customers navigate their way to the next part of their journey



Pilot stations were thought to be large and complicated, when a sign was missed or wrong exit taken, customers retraced their steps to a point where they could see a sign that put them back on track



Overall journey experiences were positive, the number of signs provided reassurance while consistency in style provide direction



On the Jubilee Line platform at Stratford, it was felt that there were not enough interchange signs and customers had to walk to end the of the platform before they were sure they were going in the right direction, either for an interchange or an exit

Changing onto the H&C line at Paddington was thought to be confusing and often people relied on the help of station staff



# Navigating the station – step free

Lift signs were acknowledge, however our mobility impaired respondents preferred to use the escalators



One person found the wheelchair and a person with a pushchair symbols confusing, it was thought that if the sign was indicating the way to a lift then it should have a lift symbol or say 'Lift' as this would be easier to see at a distance

Attitudes to lift signage was generally positive, however none of our mobility impaired customers used the lifts to access the station or to interchange between platform/modes



At Paddington the signage for the H&C took our respondent to the stairs, however his mobility impairment meant he would have found the ramp easier to use

One mobility impaired respondent mentioned they would like signs that told them the distance between interchanges, giving them enough warning and allowing them to make a more informed choice between escalator and lift





# Navigating the station – consistency

Colour and style consistency throughout the journey allowed customers to ‘zone out’ and ignore all the other signs, by making them easier to spot and therefore easier to follow



Back lighting made the signs to the Jubilee Line easier to see, however the lack of consistency with the Northern Line sign was thought to be odd, making it stand out less

Where there were inconsistencies this was thought to make the signs harder to see among all the other signs and was thought to feel disjointed



The consistent use of colour on the signs to help navigate through the station to the correct platform was useful, particularly for those with visual impairments



At Paddington there were several inconsistencies in the information shown, with the same sign showing the Circle line in two opposite directions



# Exiting the station

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# Exiting the station – overview

Customers had a ‘when in doubt, follow the Way out’ attitude to exiting the station, however additional signage that reassured them that they were heading in the right direction was appreciated and helpful

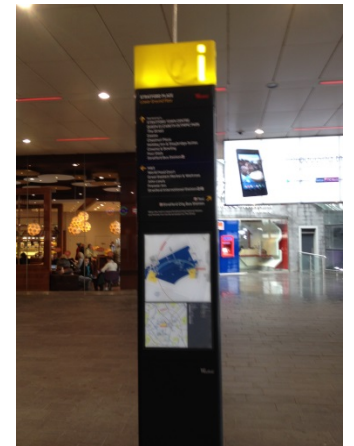
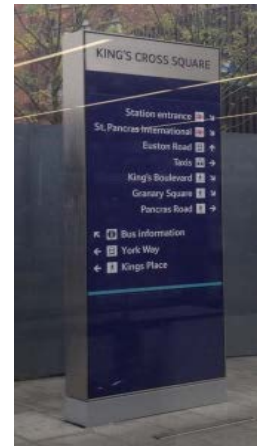


Exit signs throughout the station were seen as visible, clear and well placed, however there was some inconsistency noted in the look and feel of these signs

The colours for the key locations was thought to stand out from the general TfL signs, making them easy to see, only a few people associated the colours of yellow on black with the Way out signs



Once outside the stations people expected the signs to be of similar size and standout, this was often not the case and left people feeling lost and unsure what direction their final destination was in







# Key locations – King's Cross

Signage to the Eurostar at platform level was thought to be inadequate and unless the customer was aware that the train left from St Pancras International, they were unsure that they were heading in the right direction



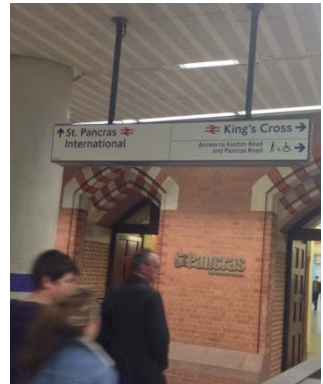
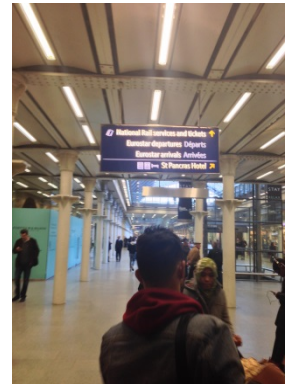
Customers felt that the signs for the Eurostar (that included the Eurostar logo and branding) should be seen at platform level and were not sure they were heading in the right direction until they were exiting the station



Customers heading for the Eurostar relied on their knowledge that this left from St Pancras International and followed these signs from the LU platform



Only once entering the St Pancras station did the Eurostar signs become clearly visible and the customer felt confident that they were in the right place, however this was not felt to be enough





# Key locations – King's Cross

Signage for the British Library at King's Cross was clear, reassuring and well positioning, however on several occasions the customer was left to rely on the Euston Road signs



For customers alighting from the Northern Line, signs at platform level were immediately visible and it made customers feel confident about the direction they need to take



Customers were reassured by the exit signs for the British Library once they were through the barriers, signs were clear, well positioned, however it was felt that they should have also been present earlier in the station

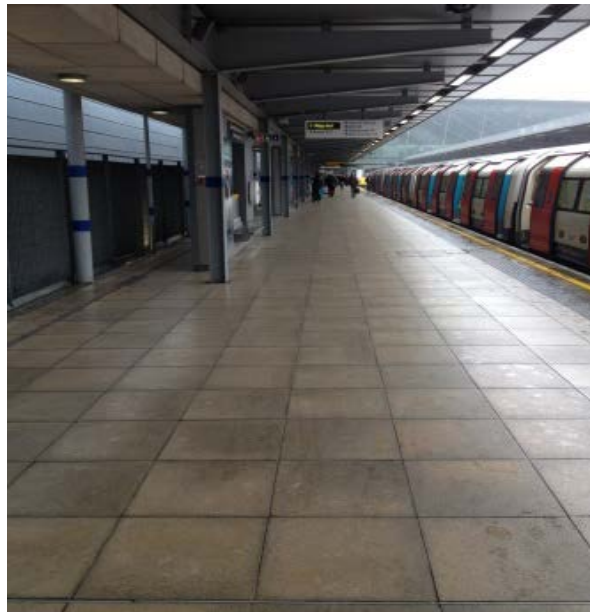


One respondent took the wrong exit to the British Library and was disappointed to find no sign for the British Library on Kings Cross square

From platform to ticket hall, the lack signs specifically to the British Library left customers feeling unsure they were heading in the right direction and they relied on the signs for Euston Road

# → Key locations – Stratford

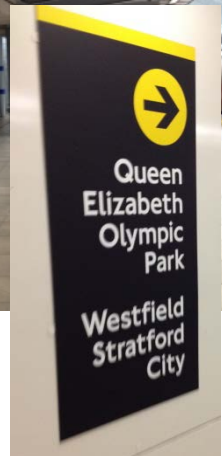
Signs in the station were clear and well placed, however at platform level the signs for key locations were not immediately visible and people initially relied on the Way out



When alighting the train at Stratford the signs for Westfield or Queen Elizabeth Park were not immediately obvious to the customer, however when they were seen they were thought to be clear and well placed



On the Central line, if a customer were to alight from the back of the train then there was no immediate signs, apart from Way out sign much further down the platform

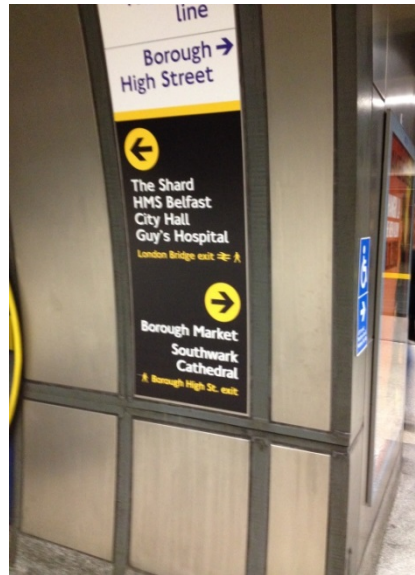






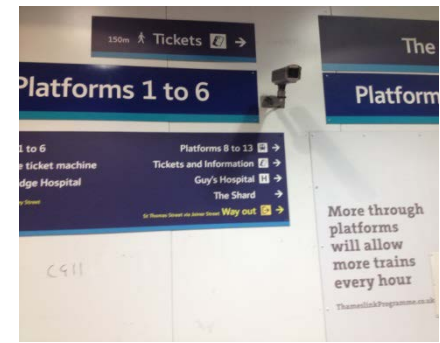
# Key locations – London Bridge

At London Bridge the number of signs was thought to be right, well placed, clear and easy to see, however on exiting the LU station and entering the National Rail, there was a distinct difference in colour and style



Signage provided reassurance that customers were going in the right direction. Signs were clear, well placed and easily visible from platform to street level

Although customers felt that the signage was adequate and did its job, they did notice that once they had exited the LU station the look and feel changed. One respondent felt the contrast between black and yellow was clearer than blue and yellow





# Next steps

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# Next steps

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Paddington Station was not included in this post pilot research as the signage was not yet ready to be tested when we went into field

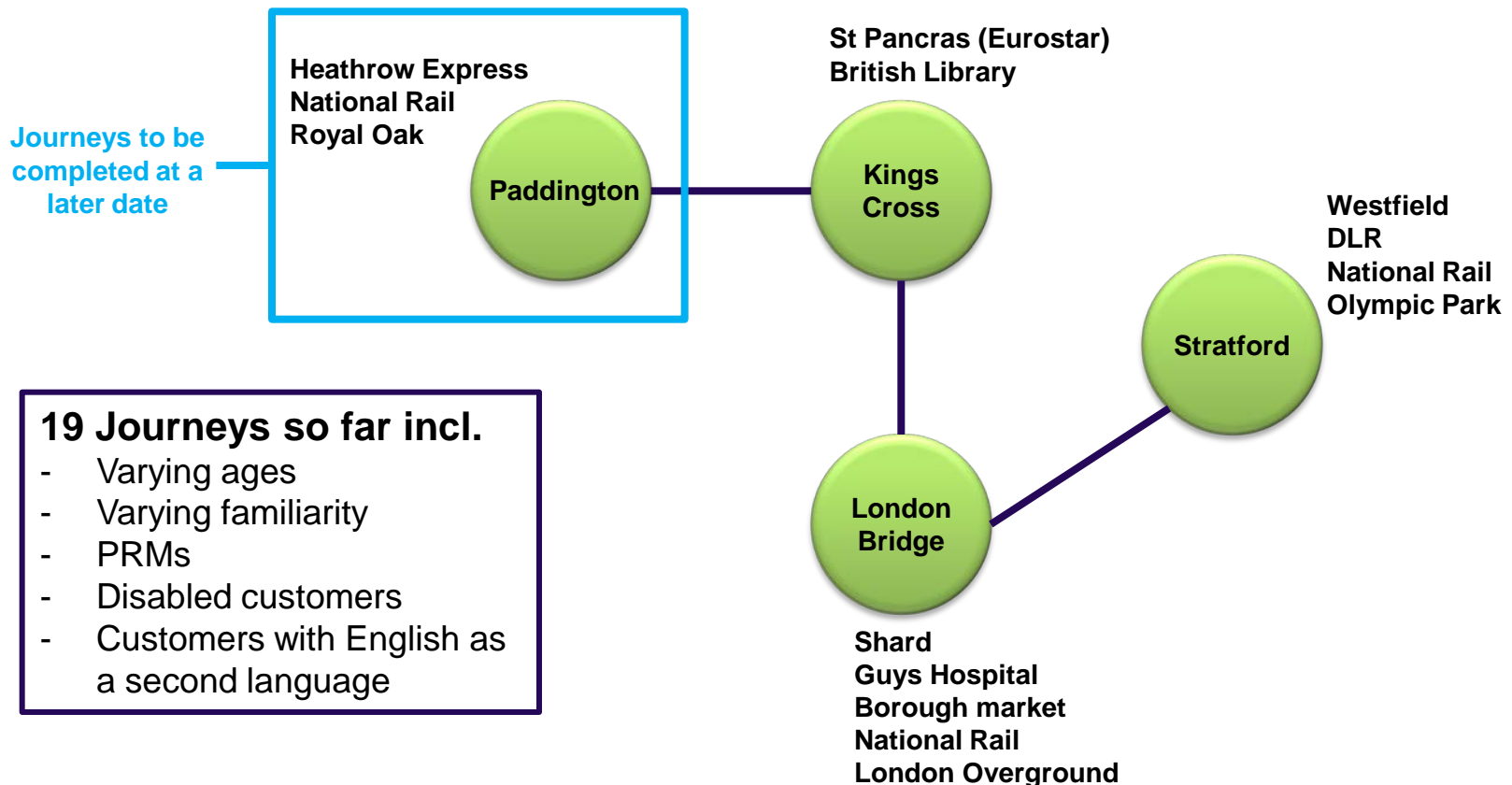
- Once Paddington Station is ready we will re-commence fieldwork, testing interchange and key location signage
- During the fieldwork and analysis we will look for any changes in opinion towards signage and ease of navigation at Paddington
- A slightly revised journey guide will be prepared (for comment and approval by TfL) once Paddington Station is ready for the post pilot research
- A revised debrief document will be preparing, including any new findings from the post pilot research at Paddington



# Post-pilot journeys completed

## Post-pilot journeys

Programme to be repeated after signage changes

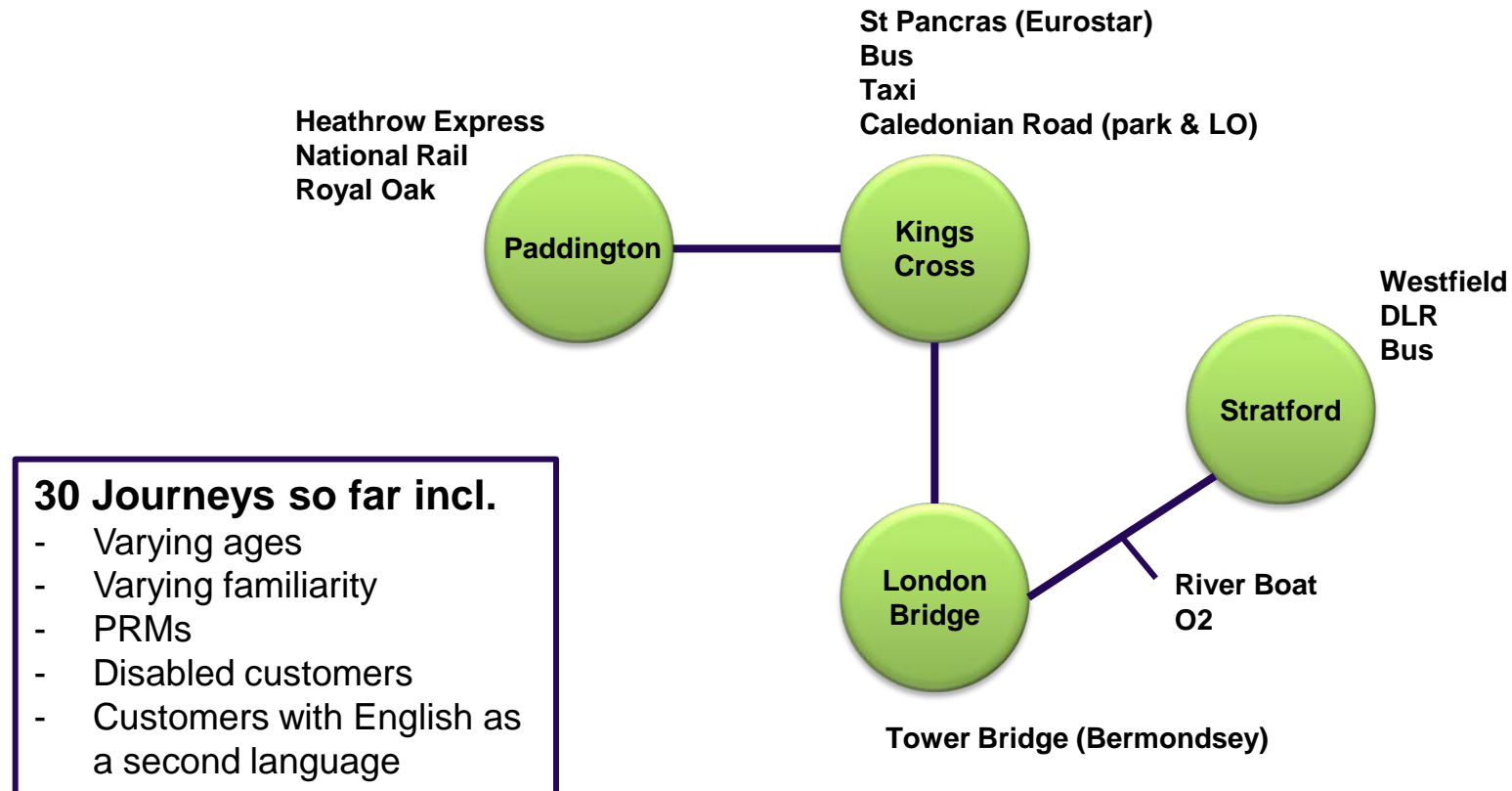




# Pre-pilot journeys completed

Pre-pilot journeys

Programme to be repeated after signage changes



## 30 Journeys so far incl.

- Varying ages
- Varying familiarity
- PRMs
- Disabled customers
- Customers with English as a second language





# Pre-pilot findings

Current London Underground signage is highly regarded, easily understood and acknowledged as fit for purpose by customers

## Current signage

- All customers undertaking journeys as part of the pre-pilot research successfully used LU signage to navigate around the network and were generally reassured by signage that they were on the correct route to their final destinations
- The common look and feel of LU signage is recognised by customers, and helps them to navigate easily due to the common positioning, format and colour coding
- Signage is normally plentiful, and all key elements of the journey are adequately covered
- Some issues were identified during the research, these generally related to the position of specific signs rather than the signs themselves. When this occurred it tended to be situations were:
  - There were multiple options for the customer to consider (eg DLR platforms at Stratford)
  - Signage is restricted in some way, is hung high up above the customer flow or is located at the far end of platforms/corridors
  - Temporary signage was in place

## Events, attractions and moving on from LU network

- Customers often researched and planned their route including how to get to the final destination and we did not observe a strong expectation that LU should provide signage to every event or attraction
- Key locations (Eurostar/Heathrow Express/Westfield shopping centre, the O<sub>2</sub>) were expected to be signed from early entrance to the station eg platform level
- Consistency is important, and the earlier customers see clear signs the more reassured they feel
- While the signage on the LU system was highly regarded and caused little confusion, there were more issues observed after leaving LU property when signs changed to Network Rail, or borough signage schemes