Transport for London

MAYOR OF LONDON

Fares information review

09006
July 2009

MAYOR OF LONDON

Transport for London

Contents

Confidentiality:

Research conducted by Synovate

1. Executive summary

1.1 Background and objectives

TfL is currently conducting a review into fares information provision across both printed and online channels. The objective of this review is to help develop an integrated fares information solution that is: accessible 24 hours a day; easy to understand; timely; accurate; and actionable.

The key objective of this research was to identify exactly what type of information customers require about fares and ticketing, and to understand what factors influence these. This research also aimed to provide specific feedback on the printed and online channels, to assess the usability of existing information, in order to identify areas for improvement.

1.2 Methodology

Customer research

10x 2 hour focus groups were conducted with customers. All customers (with the exception of the 'new to London' group) had lived in a London Borough for more than 3 months. The sample included a wide range of different ticket users, including frequent and infrequent Oyster PAYG users, Oyster period ticket users, paper period ticket users and frequent cash users.

Staff and visitor research

In total, 110 intercept interviews were carried out during this project.

- 58 with staff, conducted at a range of London Underground stations, bus stations, Travel Information Centres and customer contact centres.
- 44 with visitors, conducted at a range of London Underground stations, bus stations and Travel Information Centres.

1.3 Key Findings

Information needs

For most customers, most of the time, fares and ticketing information is not a high priority, as it does not influence their decision to travel. Most people frequently travel on the same journey and use the same type of ticket, and therefore do not require information about fares. Even when these customers decide to take a different journey, they are aware that the ticket price will always be within a certain (affordable) range when travelling in London, so do not usually seek information about fares.

However, there are some key occasions which drive the need for fares and ticketing information.

- **Journey specific issues.** Regular customers making a journey they have never made before. Customers using Oyster PAYG on National Rail, as it is not currently valid on all services. Post-journey enquiries to double check or query a fine. Checking Oyster card balance.

- **General needs.** Customers who are new to London, or have recently moved house or got a new job require information to find out what 'the right ticket' is for them (for example finding out if it is worthwhile for them to buy a period ticket). They may also need information about using Oyster if it is new to them. Some customers require information about buying or renewing period tickets. Others seek information when there are changes to the fares, to find out how much their journey will cost them

The type of customer can also influence information needs about fares and ticketing. For example, visitors, concessions and cost-conscious customers are all more likely to require (more) information about the fares and tickets available.

Overall, people want information that is:

- concise;
- trustworthy;
- tailored;
- quick; and
- primarily on system.

Most customers see it as TfL's responsibility to provide information about fares and ticketing because the system is complex, and it is 'TfL's system'. As a result, there are expectations that TfL should provide the information customers require about fares and ticketing, in a simple and straightforward format, exactly where and when they require it. It is also thought that TfL should be proactive at providing this information, and customers should not have to go out of their way to find the information they need.

Channels of information: overview

Staff are currently the first port of call for many customers because they meet all of the key customer needs (i.e. concise, trustworthy, tailored, quick and on system). While other sources have strengths, none of them meet <u>all</u> of the demands of public transport users in the way that staff do. However, if staff are not available on system, most customers will attempt to find out the information they require using leaflets or ticket machines. This will be more challenging for visitors who are not familiar with how the fares system works, and they may struggle to understand the printed information available without assistance.

- The **TfL website** provides depth, but is not available on system which is where most customers require information about fares and ticketing.
- **Leaflets** are available on system, but it is not easy to filter down to the relevant information when using them, and as a result they are not quick to use. However, despite this, there are two strengths of leaflets. Many staff use leaflets to help explain the fares structure when assisting customers, and leaflets are also useful as a source of information if staff are not present at a station/or if there are queues to speak to staff.
- **Posters** are on system but cannot answer specific questions.
- **Machines** are not fully interactive and may not be quick to use (e.g. some customers find them confusing and there are often queues to use them).
- Oyster **Ticket Stops** are not widely used as a source of information about fares and ticketing. Customers do not currently view newsagents as a place where they would go to find out information about fares and ticketing.

In the longer term, it is thought that additional machines at stations with a wider source of ticket information (other than just for purchasing) may have significant potential to answer all consumer needs and act as an alternative to staff. However,

we recognise that this is only a solution for certain modes, for example London Underground and overland services. A proliferation of 'smart phones' on the market also has the potential to make the internet a more viable all-encompassing information source on system.

In addition to this, some customers (particularly those who are more confident using the internet as a source of information) are open to receiving email updates from TfL about fares and ticketing. These customers would like to receive email updates when there are changes to fares or any changes to the system that may affect the ticket they use.

Information needs according to mode of transport used

Information needs vary most by the type of occasion and customer type. However, the mode of transport used can also influence the type of information required by customers.

- **Bus** users do not require much information about fares and ticketing. Bus fares are considered much more straightforward than Underground and overland train fares. They are usually a standard, set amount, regardless of which zones customers are traveling to/from.
- Customers who travel by **Underground** generally have low information needs. The introduction of Oyster has guaranteed that customers will always pay the 'best' fare when using this system. Most customers understand the zonal fares structure and are aware that journey prices are within a set range, depending on where they are traveling to/from. When customers do need information about traveling by Underground, the enquiries are usually about Oyster and/or the types of concession tickets available.
- Customers travelling by **overland train** generally have the highest information need. There is a large range of tickets available and the cost can be higher than travelling by both bus or by Underground. These customers therefore require a wide range of information about how the overland system works, including the types of ticket available, whether Oyster PAYG is valid and the types of concessions available.

Breaking the habit and changing customers' behaviour

One of the main challenges to encouraging customers to seek information about fares and ticketing off system is that they are not currently in the habit of doing this. Most customers are currently in the habit of only seeking information on system, therefore breaking this habit, and encouraging them to change their behavior may be a challenge.

The link between requiring information and purchasing a ticket

With certain information channels, such as ticket office staff and ticket machines, there is a direct link between seeking information about fares and tickets and purchasing a ticket. Customers who approach ticket office staff for information about fares are likely to purchase their ticket at the same time: they have had the opportunity to seek reassurance that they are buying 'the right ticket', and it is convenient to buy the ticket at the same time. Similarly, those using ticket machines to find out information will also often purchase the ticket at the same time, as it is quick and easy to do, and the information provided on the machine is trusted. However, most customers who seek information on the website are less likely to purchase their ticket from there, as some are unsure about how to do this, and others want to seek reassurance from staff that the information they have found on the website is correct. The level of trust that customers have in the internet as a source of information, and the level of trust they have in themselves (when using that source of information) influences whether or not customers will purchase their ticket at the same time. Therefore, building customers' trust in using the website to find out information about fares and ticketing may encourage them to purchase from the website.

Online information

There are currently some problems with online fares and ticketing information available on the TfL website. The main issue is that it is hard for customers to quickly navigate and locate the information that they need because the website is not intuitive. The fact that fares information is not linked with the Journey Planner function can be confusing, as some customers automatically expect it to be there.[1]

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[1] Customers were given a task during the focus groups to locate information about fares and ticketing using the TfL website, and many went straight to Journey Planner as they expected the information to be there.

However, TfL's proposed changes to improve the fares and ticketing information available on the website are positively received.

One of the key questions is how TfL can encourage customers to use the website more for fares and ticketing information, rather than waiting until they get on system for this information. By accessing information off system the need for on system information (especially staff) is reduced.

The website is a more obvious source for certain customer groups or information needs, e.g. visitors, period tickets and those who are price conscious.[2] These customers are more likely to use the website to find out information about fares and ticketing, because it allows them time to browse through the various different options available to them, without the pressure to purchase. However, it will be more challenging to encourage regular customers making unfamiliar journeys to use the web, as these are the people who are more likely to want this information on system.

Linking fares information to Journey Planner might help with this group of customers, as they would not usually be seeking this information, but may look at it if it was integrated with journey planning which they are already using.

Some customers (particularly those who are more confident using the internet as a source of information) are open to receiving email updates from TfL about fares and ticketing. These customers would like to receive email updates when there are changes to fares or any changes to the system that may affect the ticket they use.

Printed information

Leaflets have several key areas of strength as a source of information about fares and ticketing. They are comprehensive, available on system and portable, which is an advantage as customers can take them away and read them in their own time.

However, customers find it hard to use leaflets to find answers to their specific questions quickly, as the level of detail provided within these is overwhelming and difficult to navigate. It is thought that the current leaflets could be improved by aiding

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[2] However, we do acknowledge that some cost conscious customers may not have access to the internet so finding out information in this way may not be possible for some.

navigation e.g. adding contents pages. However, these leaflets will still be organised round the system rather than round customer needs.

Another option would be to produce booklets with tailored information for specific customer types or needs e.g. a fares leaflet specifically aimed at visitors/concessions. Having leaflets tailored to customers' needs/occasions would make it easier for customers to find information which is relevant to them.

Using Oyster PAYG on National Rail

Current PAYG customers are pleased to hear the news of the Oyster extension. However, many think the system sounds complex, particularly the fact that there is no simple zonal system for categorising the cost of a journey and the need to use validators when taking an alternative route to avoid central London. The idea that this may be a complicated system conflicts with customer perceptions of Oyster being easy to use.

As it is TfL's system, it is seen as TfL's responsibility to make it as simple as possible and to communicate about it clearly. The fact that the charging structure means it will be at least as cheap as a normal ticket is satisfactory for most, so it will be vital to communicate this clearly. Communication is particularly important, because customers are likely to need more reassurance given the potential cost of the fares involved on extended overland journeys compared to current PAYG fares. There are also a variety of other specific information needs which communications need to address, primarily around cost, fines and how to use PAYG further out of London.

1.4 Recommendations

Short & medium term recommendations: web based information

- Consider linking fares and ticketing information to Journey Planner to help 'intercept' customers who are not actively seeking this information.
- The new proposed landing page is an improvement over the current page, as the visual ticket icons make it easier to navigate. However, the proposed page could be further improved, by focusing more on customer needs, for example, adding links for 'finding the right ticket', cost conscious customers and Oyster PAYG users on overland services.

- Change Single Fare Finder to the new execution which displays the alternative route options plus the Oyster validator symbol.

Short & medium term recommendations: print based information
- Break up 'Your guide to fares and tickets within Zones 1-6' into a series of leaflets more clearly targeting customer needs.
- Ensure that the cover/title of each leaflet clearly communicates the customer need addressed to encourage customers to pick up unaided.
- Consider adapting the current 'Staff guide to fares and tickets' booklets to make them smaller and more portable (pocket sized) as most staff spoken to during this research do not currently use them[3].
  - The new staff leaflet should ideally contain basic information about fares and ticketing for staff to have to hand, but also an appendix with more detailed information (for example about eligibility of concession tickets available).
  - Staff will then be able to use the tailored customer leaflets when helping customers with general queries, but will also have the more detailed, pocket size staff guide in case they require more detailed information.

Longer term recommendations
- Target customer needs which could be met off system, as there are currently some customers/scenarios where information is not required urgently (e.g. concessions and medium to long term product decisions).
- In order to promote value for money, encourage customers to check that the ticket they are using the most cost effective option for the journeys they make.
  - There are a number of customers who do not think that they need information about fares and ticketing, but admit that they may not be using the most economical ticket.

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[3] Please note that the staff booklet is used by other groups of staff within TfL. This research did not cover all of the different groups of staff who may use this booklet.

2.   Introduction

2.1   Background

TfL is currently conducting a review into fares information provision across both printed and online channels. The objective of this review is to help develop an integrated fares information solution that is: accessible 24 hours a day; easy to understand; timely; accurate; and actionable. The aim is for an improved set of fares information to be in place supporting customers (and operational staff, where relevant) prior to the planned rollout of route validators on the TfL estate / PAYG on National Rail, scheduled for later this year.

Customer research was required to understand what information customers need in relation to fares and ticketing, and how this should be delivered. This encompasses both general information about ticketing (e.g. eligibility for discounted tickets, fares changes, Oyster, product suitability, etc.), and journey-specific information (e.g. cost, ticket options and validity, zonal eligibility and other related information, etc.). This project also included interviews with TfL staff, to explore the information sources they use and their perceptions of how the information available to customers is currently performing.

2.2   Objectives

The main objective of this research was to identify exactly what type of information customers require about fares and ticketing, and to understand what factors influence these. Within this, the more specific objectives included:

- to identify when and where these needs occur and key requirements regarding how they are met;
- to understand current channel usage for fares information, and drivers of channel choice; and,
- to identify any potential customer issues and help to inform communications and support around the introduction of new system features (e.g. intermediate validators).

This research also aimed to provide specific feedback on the printed and online channels:

- to assess the usability of existing information, in order to identify areas for improvement;
- to assess the level of customer requirement for online fares and ticketing information, and the implications if fares information was available mostly / solely online; and
- to gain feedback on new concepts, including the upgraded single fares finder.

The staff phase of this research also aimed to answer the following objectives:
- explore the sources of information used by staff when dealing with customers;
- understand how the sources of information available to staff (such as the staff handbook) are currently performing; and
- understand staff perceptions of the information available to customers and how this information could be improved.

2.3   Methodology

A qualitative methodology was employed to gain a detailed and in-depth understanding of customer and staff information needs.

Customers

10x 2 hour focus groups were held with customers

Group	10 x 2 hour focus groups
1	Frequent Oyster PAYG users (using PAYG at least 3-4 times a week)
2	Infrequent Oyster PAYG users (using PAYG at least once a month but not more than once a week, and not using other ticket types more frequently)
3	Paper One Day Travelcard / Bus Pass users (using these tickets at least once a fortnight, and more frequently than other ticketing options)
4	Paper / Oyster 7-Day Travelcard / Bus Pass users (using these tickets at least once a month, and more frequently than other ticketing options)
5	Oyster Monthly - Annual Travelcard / Bus Pass users (but also occasional users of other travel tickets, e.g. Oyster PAYG, One Day Travelcards / Bus & Tram Passes)
6	Frequent single / return ticket users on London Underground / DLR / London Overground (using these tickets at least once a week, and more frequently than any other ticketing options, and using these modes most frequently)

7	Frequent cash users on buses / trams (using cash at least once a week, and more frequently than any other payment / ticketing options, and using these modes most frequently)
8	National Rail users who are likely to switch to Oyster PAYG on trains (not currently using Oyster PAYG on trains, but intend to when they are able to, and using trains more frequently than other public transport modes)
9	Concessionary pass (e.g. New Deal / Bus & Tram Discount photocard / Freedom Pass) holders, who use this to travel at least once a week
10	People new to living in London (moved to London in the previous one to three months, never having lived in London before, using public transport in London, using any ticket types)

General recruitment criteria were:

- all to have lived in a London Borough for more than three months;
- mix of male and female in each group;
- mix of lifestages across groups; and
- spread of SEGs across sample: BC1C2, C1C2, C2DE.

Visitors

44 intercept interviews were carried with visitors across a range of London Underground stations, bus stations and Travel Information Centres

Location	Visitor intercepts (3-6 minutes)
Heathrow LU station (T1,2,3)	8
Heathrow TIC	8
Victoria LU station	6
Victoria TIC	8
Victoria Bus station	6
Hammersmith LU station (H&C line)	8
Hammersmith LU station (D&P line)	8

The visitor interviews covered a mix of customers who had just bought their ticket(s) for travel, as well as those who had not yet purchased a ticket. The visitors interviewed during this fieldwork were from a range of different countries, including

China, Brazil, India, America, Finland, France, Germany and Scotland. The duration visitors were staying in London varied from 1 day to three weeks, and the main reasons for visiting were to visit friends or family, and/or go sightseeing.

Staff

58 intercept interviews were carried out with staff across a range of London Underground stations, bus stations, Travel Information Centres and customer contact centres.

Location	Staff interviews (15-20 minutes)
Heathrow LU station (T1,2,3)	6
Heathrow TIC	6
Victoria LU station	8
Victoria TIC	6
Victoria Bus station	5
Hammersmith LU station (H&C line)	6
Hammersmith LU station (D&P line)	6
Hammersmith Bus station	4
Oyster Call centre	6
Travel Information Call Centre	6

The staff interviews were conducted with staff across a range of different levels, from Station Managers and Supervisors to Customer Service Assistants (both those working at the gatelines and at the ticket offices).

3.   Customer Needs - Overview

Most customers, most of the time, do not require information about fares and ticketing. There are a number of reasons why most customers do not look for information about fares and ticketing, and these are be explored in the first section of this chapter. Following this we then go on to discuss some situations when information about fares and ticketing is required.

3.1 Why do most customers not require information about fares and ticketing?

Most customers believe that the prices of travelling within London are - to a certain extent set. This is mainly due to the zonal system on the Underground and £2 bus fare. Therefore they do not feel it necessary to seek information about fares, unless they are travelling outside London. The fact that there is a limit on the price of tickets reduces the 'risk' of customers not knowing the actual cost, as they know they can only be charged a certain amount. Information about how to make a certain journey (e.g. journey planning) almost always comes before finding out how much it costs to travel.

> *"I never actually look to plan how much it's going to cost me. I am not trying to throw a spanner in the works but I never really bother about how much it's actually going to cost me, I think it's a sort of standard amount that you have to pay, so you have got to pay it and all I am really just concerned with planning my route and getting there, I top up and I pay as you go"*
> (Male, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

The reason why customers may seek information if they are travelling outside London is because this is known to be more expensive.

> *"It's a bit different if you're travelling out of London because that's when the fares get much more expensive. Travelling within London you know you're not going to get stung too much, so I wouldn't kind of worry too much"*
> (Female, Single/Return ticket user)

Ultimately, customers using public transport in London have to make the journeys they make in order to carry out their daily routine (e.g. commute to work/to collect the children etc). As many of the journeys made by customers are (considered) essential, the price of the ticket they need will not prevent them from travelling. Therefore most do not feel it is necessary to research ticket prices at all.

> *"Well, if I've got to go somewhere, then I've got to be somewhere at a certain time so I'm not really going to be thinking about, you know, prices.... Cause whatever price it's going to be, that's what I'll pay, because I've got to get somewhere. I can't change that, depending on the price if you know what I mean?"*
> (Male, Single/Return ticket user)

However, although most customers do not seek information about fares and ticketing, it does not necessarily mean that they always buy the most suitable ticket for them. These customers may benefit from information about fares, but are not currently aware that they need it.

> *"I'm usually in a rush, I've got young children, so I'm in a rush to get out the door and it's just easier and quicker to put the money in and get a single or return and I know it's much more expensive, but I tend not to think about that"*
> (Female, Frequent Single/Return ticket user)

3.2 When do people require information about fares and ticketing?

While most customers do not need information about fares and ticketing regularly, there are some occasions when information about fares is required. These occasions can be broken down into three main categories, as follows:

Journey specific issues

When customers who are familiar with the routine journey they make on a daily basis (e.g. travelling to/from work) have to make an unfamiliar journey (e.g. going to visit friends) they may seek information about the fares and tickets available for that new journey. Also, customers who have taken an unfamiliar journey are more likely to want to check information about fares after they have completed the journey, to

double check how much credit remains on their Oyster card, or enquire about a fine they have to pay as a result of accidently using an invalid ticket on the new journey.

General needs

Customers who want to find out what 'the right ticket' is for them will usually seek information before making a purchase (for example finding out if it is worthwhile for them to buy a period ticket). This group includes customers who may have moved house, started a new job, or are new to London, and want to work out the most cost effective ticket is for their new journey.

Customers who are buying or renewing period tickets may want to enquire about ticket prices, as they are making a bigger investment over a longer period. When there are changes to the price of tickets, customers may also enquire about how much their journey will cost

Customers using new products such as Oyster may also need information about how it works.

However, in addition to this, the type of customer can also influence the information about fares and ticketing required.

- **Visitors** are unfamiliar with how the transport system in London works, and therefore require more information about the fares and tickets available.

- **Concessions** and more **cost conscious customers** are more likely to seek information about fares and ticketing as they are looking for ways to save money.

- **Customers using PAYG on National Rail** services also require information about fares and ticketing because they want to know exactly where they can use their Oyster card.

3.3 How should information about fares and ticketing be provided?

Regardless of the specific types of needs outlined above, customers want information about tickets to be concise, trustworthy, tailored, quick and primarily on system.

Concise

Customers are not looking for a high level of detail in the information they require. Usually they just want a quick answer to their specific question, so the information provided must be concise.

> *"I don't want to know about all the different types of fares. I want to be presented with the cheapest fare that I can pay to travel on that route"*
> *(*Female, Frequent Single/Return ticket user)

Trustworthy

As the current fares and ticketing system is considered complex, customers need reassurance from trustworthy sources. Customers want to know that the information they have received is accurate and up to date in order to avoid confusion and potentially buying the wrong ticket.

> *"If it (the TfL website) proved to me that any of the information that was presented in a leaflet was out of date, I would be extremely annoyed, especially if I'd picked up that information at the train station"*
> (Male, Frequent Single/Return ticket user)

Some customers do not trust themselves to find the correct information when using printed information or online sources, so will often try and confirm what they have read with staff at the ticket office.

> *"I did read about the yearly ticket online, but then I went and asked them about it at the station as well. I just wanted to make sure that what I read was the right amount – it's a lot of money to pay, so I also wanted to make sure it was worth me getting it"*
> (Female, Oyster annual Travelcard user)

Tailored

As journeys are often complicated, it is important that the information is filtered and tailored to customers' specific needs. Therefore, the information that customers are provided with must be relevant to them. Customers do not want to have to spend

their own time reading through information in order to locate exactly what they need to know.

> *"I just want to know if there is a ticket I can buy that will last me for the 3 days I am staying here and if I can use it to go to all of the places I want to. That's all I was looking for"*
> (Visitor from Germany, Heathrow London Underground station)

Quick

Customers want to spend the minimum time possible finding out about fares and ticketing, as they do not feel they should have to spend their own time searching for this information.

> *"I haven't got time to look at how much my ticket is going to be. so with the machines it just tells you whatever it costs and you put your money in"*
> (Female, National Rail user)

3.4 When and where do customers require information about fares and ticketing?

Most customers only seek information about fares and ticketing when they require it. This is usually just before they travel (when at the overland/Underground train station).

> *"I would start at the station itself because if I was there anyway, en route, I would just go up to the staff and ask them for the information"*
> (Male, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

> *"You need to be able to see what you want, and then say "Right, that's what I want, I'm off".*
> (Female, National Rail user)

However, there are some occasions where customers are more likely to research ticket options at home/off system. For example, visitors planning a trip to London may go online to find out information about tickets before they arrive in London, in order to save time and stress at the station. Also, customers who may be eligible for

concession tickets may browse the website to see what types of passes are available and how to apply for them. The reason some customers may look for this information off system, is because their needs are less urgent and the information is not required for an imminent journey.

Transport for London is perceived as a monopoly and customers do not feel it should be their responsibility to have to find out information about fares and ticketing, particularly as it is considered difficult to understand. Rather, they feel that TfL should provide them with all of the information they need about fares and ticketing, when they need it (which is usually on-system, before travelling). Some feel that the fares structure is complicated and confusing, so many prefer not to think about it at all.

3.5 Overview of main channels used

How well do the current information sources meet customers' needs?

While there are a number of sources of information available, the extent to which these sources offer the information customers want, and in the format they want varies considerably. This section provides an overview of how well the current information sources meet customer needs. *(NB: this is only an overview; please see Chapters 6-10 for more detailed information about sources of information).*

Face to face station staff

Staff in ticket offices and throughout LU stations are the only source of information that currently meets all of the key information needs; concise, trustworthy, tailored, quick and on system. Staff are trusted to provide accurate and up-to-date information, and are considered the quickest means of answering a query as they are usually able to answer most questions immediately. Staff are also able to listen to customers' requests, and tailor the information they provide to meet customers' individual needs. However, one of the drawbacks to relying on face to face staff to provide information about fares is that there are often queues to speak to staff, and some stations are not staffed. In cases where staff are not available, or there is a queue to speak to staff, customers will attempt to find out this information either using leaflets or the ticket machines. However, this is more challenging for visitors, as some struggle to understand the printed information available without assistance.

Website

The TfL website does not currently meet all customers' needs, but has the potential to do so, particularly for non-urgent issues such as information about concessions and period tickets. The website provides comprehensive and detailed information, but is often time consuming to navigate and is not available on system, which is where most customers currently seek this information. In addition to this, the website is also not able to tailor information to meet customers' specific needs in the quick and succinct way that staff can.

Machines

Ticket machines[4] are considered quick and easy to use, however they do not meet all customers' needs as the level of information they provide is limited. Ticket machines are only useful for basic queries, such as to check how much credit remains on an Oyster card, or find out the cost of a return ticket or Travelcard. As the current ticket machines have not been designed specifically as an information source, the extent to which they can filter down information and provide relevant tailored results is limited. However, customers suggest that there is the potential for machines to be a valuable source of information about fares and ticketing in the future. It is thought that introducing new, more interactive machines which are designed to provide information to meet a range of customer needs (rather than just sell tickets) may reduce the pressure on staff.

Call centres

The call centre is not an obvious source of information about fares and ticketing. Many customers are not aware that you can receive information about fares by calling up the Travel Information Call Centre or Oyster Helpdesk, so have not experienced this service.

As most information about fares and ticketing is required on system, call centres are only felt to be appropriate for non urgent queries, such as finding out what types of

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[4] The machines referred to in this section are the ticket machines that can be found at LU stations and overland services. Ticket machines at bus stops are not used as a source of information are only used for purchasing tickets.

concession tickets are available, or how much a period ticket costs (in advance to purchasing one).

Leaflets

Leaflets meet most customer needs, as they are available on system and provide comprehensive and detailed information about fares and ticketing. However, the leaflets that are currently available are felt to provide too much information and are difficult to navigate as a result. One of the main issues with the current leaflets available is that they are not tailored to meet individual customers' needs. It is thought that introducing clear and concise leaflets aimed at specific types of customers (e.g. visitors/concessions) or occasions (e.g. fare changes/unfamiliar journeys) will better meet customers' needs.

Posters

Posters in London Underground stations are only considered suitable for short and concise general information messages, such as fare changes and the introduction of Oyster card. Posters do not currently meet all customers' needs, as they do not provide enough information about the range of ticket options available, and are also not tailored to meet specific customer needs.

4. Information needs according to mode of transport

Although information needs vary most by customer type (e.g. concession/visitor), purchase types (medium to long term product decisions) and familiarity with the journey, the mode of transport used can also influence the type of information required by customers. This following section explores the information needs according to mode of transport used, for bus, overland and Underground.

4.1 Bus users

On the whole, bus users do not require much information about fares and ticketing. In comparison to the fares on the overland and Underground, bus fares are considered much more straightforward as the fares are usually a standard, set amount, regardless of which zones customers are traveling to/from.

> *"I still remember when in London they said, it doesn't matter what journey you go on a bus, this is what it's going to cost"*
> (Male, frequent single/Return ticket user)

Customers who frequently travel by bus talk positively about the simplicity of the fares system, and feel that similar, consistent fares should be rolled out to other transport networks such as the Underground.

> *"They should say, for this amount of time this will be what it costs you for a train journey in London. I think they would get a lot more people using it because you wouldn't have this confusion of, what is it on Monday or Friday, this is what it's going to cost us"*
> (Male, frequent single/return user)

The journey cost for travelling by bus is also lower, so most customers feel less of a need for information about bus prices. In addition to this, buses are most often used by regular customers who are familiar with the system and therefore have less information needs than customers who are travelling on a new/unfamiliar journey.

Visitors to London who have become familiar with the Underground zonal fares structure are often confused about the lack of zones on buses:

> *"A lot of people are still confused that there are no zones on buses, this needs to be included in information provided to customers"* (Bus driver, Victoria Bus station)

4.2 London Underground users

Customers who travel by Underground generally have low information needs, particularly since the introduction of Oyster has guaranteed that customers will always pay the lowest fare when using this system. Most customers understand the zonal fares structure and are aware that journey prices are within a tight range, depending on where they are traveling to/from. When customers do need information about traveling by Underground, the enquiries are usually about Oyster card and/or the types of concession tickets available.

However, there are a high number of visitors using the Underground who find the fares system overwhelmingly complex and require considerable information from staff when purchasing a ticket.

> *"We get a lot of tourists coming through here and they really just don't know where to start when it comes to buying a ticket. They'll usually ask us and we'll show them over to the ticket machine and help them buy the right ticket"* (Victoria London Underground Staff at gate-lines)

4.3 Overland train users

Customers travelling by overland train generally have the highest information need, as there is a large range of tickets available and the cost can be higher than travelling by both bus or by Underground. These customers therefore require a wide range of information about how the overland system works. Some customers seek information about the types of ticket available, some want to find out whether Oyster PAYG is valid on the particular overland route. Others want to find out about concessions available and whether children travel free.

Customers traveling on overland are also more likely to need information about fares and ticketing as the overland network includes trains which travel outside London, and therefore some tickets are significantly more expensive than others.

Customers are also aware that it is more likely to be fined when using overland trains, so many take extra care to ensure they are buying a ticket that is valid on the service they will be using, as well as best value for money.

5. Customer Needs – In detail

The occasions when information about fares and ticketing is required can be broken down into two groups: journey specific issues; and general needs. In addition to this, the type of customer also influences the information about fares and ticketing required. The following section provides background on the different types of occasions/ customers and outlines their main information needs.

Journey specific issues

5.1 Customers taking an unfamiliar journey

Customers who are generally confident using the system are also more likely to require information about fares and ticketing when they are making a one-off, unfamiliar journey. For example, customers who are taking a journey to visit friends of family, or go on a day trip with their children are likely to take a route which they are not familiar with. In these situations, customers seek information about what tickets are available to ensure that they get a ticket that is valid for their journey. These customers also want advice when making the decision about what type of ticket would be most appropriate and cost effective for their journey.

Information these customers seek includes:
- types of ticket available (and child tickets available);
- cost of tickets available;
- the most cost effective ticket for their journey;
- Travelcards and period tickets available for the new route;
- whether Oyster PAYG is valid on the new route.

What sources do they use?

Most customers taking an unfamiliar journey approach staff for information about fares and ticketing, because they are trusted to provide reliable, up to date information. As staff are present and visible at most stations they are considered the most convenient way of finding out this information. In addition to this, at the same time as finding out about the types of tickets available, customers are able to buy their tickets from staff.

5.2 Oyster PAYG customers using overland services

Oyster PAYG customers using overland services are open to information about fares and ticketing because it affects where they can travel to using their Oyster card. Many customers do not feel very knowledgeable about where they can and cannot use their Oyster PAYG card when traveling on overland trains and would like more information about this.

> *"It's still confusing which stations you can use Oyster on. I know it has been in the press that all overland trains are going to have Oyster but I don't know where and when"*
> (Female, Frequent cash user on bus/tram)

These customers seek information mainly to avoid the inconvenience and embarrassment of being fined. The information that these customers require includes:

- Which stations/routes they can travel on using Oyster PAYG
- When an extension ticket is required
- How and where to buy an extension ticket

What sources do they use?

Most Oyster PAYG customers using overland trains currently find out information about where they can use their Oyster card from staff at stations, however it is thought that some staff are not very knowledgeable about how the system currently works. Some customers mentioned that they have noticed posters at certain overland stations displaying information about where Oyster PAYG can be used, but feel that these need to be more prominent. While some Oyster PAYG customers may use the TfL website to find out where they can use their Oyster card, most people look for this information at the station.

5.3 Fines/Refunds

Customers who have been fined or are trying to claim a refund are usually in a reactive state of mind and are sometimes confrontational with staff. These customers want information quickly and usually expect a detailed explanation about why their particular situation has arisen. For example, a customer who has just been fined will usually want to know exactly why they were fined, so that they can justify having to

pay more money, and also ensure they do not end up in this situation again. Customers wanting a refund have usually had a negative experience and feel that they are 'owed' money by TfL. These customers are often also more likely to seek information about fares and ticketing to avoid being fined in the future:

> *"Where I am, there aren't any ticket barriers and every now and then, transport police will come to my station and go through everyone's tickets and I have been stopped because I've inadvertently bought the wrong ticket. Luckily they didn't fine me, but that's my underlying worry, which is why I'm slightly obsessive now about making sure I have the right ticket."* (Female, Frequent Single/Return ticket user)

Overall, these customers usually require information about:

- The rules about fines
- Why they were fined
- How and where to pay fines
- Why their Oyster card was charged a certain amount (usually more than expected)
- Why their ticket cost more than expected
- How to avoid being fined in the future

What sources do they use?

Customers who require information about fines and refunds usually approach staff to find out why they have been fined or how to claim a refund. Staff are usually the first port of call for these customers, as they are often confused and/or annoyed about the system and want to vent their frustration with a member of staff. Speaking to staff at the station also gives these customers an opportunity to find out about how they can avoid being fined in the future. However, in the case of refunds, customers find that station staff will usually refer them to the call centre for more information.

General needs

5.4 Customers who want to find 'the right ticket' for them

Customers who are new to London, or have moved house and/or got a new job need information about fares and ticketing to help find 'the right ticket' for them. These

customers usually want reassurance that the ticket they buy is the most economical option for the journeys they will be making. The needs of these customers is similar to those who are considering buying a medium to long term product (please see 4.5).

Overall, these customers usually require information about:

- The types of tickets available (including period tickets)
- How much each of the types of ticket cost
- Which ticket/mode is the most cost effective for the journeys they will be making

They may also need further information about using a product such as Oyster if it is new to them.

What sources do they use?
Customers making decisions about what 'the right ticket' for them is may research the cost of tickets online, but will usually seek further information/clarification from staff before purchasing a ticket. Some customers may do some research on the internet to begin with, as it allows them to browse the various ticket options available in their own time, without the pressure to purchase from staff. However, these customers also seek information from staff prior to buying the ticket because many do not trust themselves that they have found the correct information online and want to 'double check' that they are buying the 'right' ticket. These customers want to make sure that the information they have read online or in leaflets is correct and that they are buying 'the best' ticket for them.

5.5 Medium to long term product decisions
Customers who are making a decision about whether or not to purchase a medium to long term product (e.g. Oyster and/or period tickets) are more likely to find out information about fares because they are making a bigger investment. These customers want reassurance that they are making the right decision, and that the ticket they buy is the most economical option for the journeys they will be making on a regular basis.

"I wanted to know whether it is actually cheaper buying a monthly or annual for my usage, or whether it is worth me getting pay as you go instead of a season ticket"
(Male, National rail user)

Customers who are making a decision about medium to long term products seek information about:

- Types of period tickets available and costs of each (in order to make comparisons and choose the most suitable ticket for their usage)
- Modes and zones these tickets are valid on
- What to do if you lose you lose your period ticket/Oyster card, and other product-related user information

What sources do they use?
Customers making decisions about medium to long term products often research the cost of tickets online, but will usually seek further information/clarification from staff before purchasing a ticket. The internet is often used as a starting point, as it allows customers to browse the various ticket options available in their own time, without the pressure to purchase from staff. However, these customers also seek information from staff prior to buying the ticket because many do not trust themselves that they have found the correct information online. These customers want to make sure that the information they have read online or in leaflets is correct and that they are buying 'the best' ticket for them.

5.6 Changes in fares
Changes in fares prompts customers to seek information, because most customers want to feel in control of their finances and ensure that they are still using the most cost effective ticket available. Most customers are aware that fares usually change in January, but some would still like more information when there are changes to the system like this.

> *"You want to know about the price changes before hand definitely because you want to avoid penalties"*
> (Female, Paper/Oyster 7 day pass user)

When there are changes to the fares, customers want to know:

- When the changes will occur (e.g. January)
- The difference in the cost
- New cost of Travelcards and period tickets

What sources do they use?

Customers find out information about changes in fares from staff, leaflets the ticket machines. Staff are most often approached for this type of information as they are trusted to provide accurate and up to date information. Some customers may use leaflets to find out about the new fares because they can read about this information in their own time. However, others prefer to use ticket machines to find out this information at time of purchase, because they are usually quick and easy to use.

Customer types

5.7 Visitors

Visitors have the least amount of knowledge about fares and ticketing, and therefore require the most help in filtering through information to find exactly what they require. Visitors find the current fares and ticketing structure highly complex and often approach staff for guidance, as they struggle to find the relevant information without assistance.

> *"I don't know what ticket I need to get to my hotel and then travel around on, so I am going to ask the man over there and hopefully he can tell me which one will be best to get"*
> (Visitor from India, Heathrow Underground Station)

For visitors, information about fares and ticketing also usually comes hand in hand with other information about journey planning and sightseeing tours, as staff in stations are often approached for general enquires before tickets are purchased. If

there is a queue to speak to staff, visitors will often wait as long as it takes, as most are not aware of any other way they can find out the information they need

The specific information visitors usually require includes:

- Which ticket is the most suitable for their limited stay – visitors are often looking for a 1 day / 3 day / 7 day Travelcard and want to ensure that is the most cost effective method
- Information about the visitors Oyster card – how to get it and how much it costs

What sources do they use?

Although most visitors rely on staff for information about fares and ticketing, some use the internet before they travel to London to find out about the different types of tickets available. However, even those who have used the internet to find out about tickets will often also approach staff at the station to 'double check' that the information they read online was accurate and up to date. This is usually because they do not trust themselves to find the right information, and also because there are concerns that what they have read online may not be up to date.

> "Before I came to London I was reading about the Oyster card on the internet, and it said that Oyster is the cheapest way to travel so I think I need to get an Oyster card'
> (Female, Visitor from , Heathrow LU station)

Visitors also find out information about fares and ticketing via word of mouth, usually from friends or family.

> "My sister lives here and she told me that I should just get an Oyster card, because you can keep topping it up and things and I can use it every time I come and visit her"
> (Female, Visitor from Edinburgh, Victoria LU station)

5.8 Concessions

Concessions are motivated by the potential opportunity to save money, so will often seek information about fares and ticketing to see what concession tickets they may be eligible for. Some visitors to London have read on the internet that there is a special Oyster card called the visitors' Oyster, so want more information about how to buy one. Students also seek information about the types of tickets available to them

Also, customers taking their children on a journey are often unsure about whether or not they are eligible for a discount and would like more information about child tickets.

> *"I'd like information about travelling as a family, is it cheaper? Are there family tickets on the tube?*"
>
> (Female, Frequent Single/Return ticket user)

The information that these customers look for includes:
- types of concessionary passes tickets available;
- details about eligibility;
- how to apply for them;
- how to use them – what modes, zones and times of day they are valid.

What sources do they use?

Customers who are eligible for a concession ticket are open to a variety of different channels, including staff, internet and booklets. However, most concession customers prefer to approach staff to find out about the tickets available, as they can check if they are eligible and pick up an application form at the same time. Some concession customers may use the internet to research the types of tickets available and how to apply for them. Although other channels may be used to research concessionary tickets, (such as booklets and the TfL website) staff are often consulted in addition to these sources, either to help fill out the form or for reassurance that they are buying the most suitable ticket for them.

5.9 Cost conscious

Customers who are more cost conscious tend to be lower socio-economic groups, students, pensioners, large families or those who are especially careful with their money. This group of customers also includes people who do not trust the system and are concerned that it will charge them more than it should. These customers seek information about fares and ticketing, to ensure that the ticket they are paying for is the best value for money for the journeys they make.

> *"You need to know if you've got enough money or how much it will cost if you have a budget for how you are doing your travel"*
> (Male, Oyster/Paper Monthly/Annual Pass or bus pass user)

Some cost conscious customers will research the price of travelling on their regular journey using different modes, and may choose to travel on the cheapest mode as a way of saving money, particularly in the current economical climate.

> *"If it's much more expensive to go the same kind of route on the overground which is what I can foresee happening, I'd stick to the tube…these are tough times and I need money for other things."*
> (Male, Oyster/paper monthly/Annual pass)

Other customers, especially those with more flexible working hours, may choose to travel at different times of day to avoid having to pay the higher rush hour prices.

> *"Through experience you learn it's cheaper to travel at this time or before this time, so you sort of tailor your day around that"*
> (Male, Frequent Single/Return ticket user)

Sometimes these customers will also double check the cost (and the credit on their Oyster card) to ensure they have not been overcharged, and are more likely to try and claim a refund than other customers. Therefore, cost conscious customers mainly seek information about:

- the cost of different options for their journey (so that they can make comparisons and ensure that they have the most cost effective ticket);

- how much credit remains on their Oyster card after travelling;
- how to claim a refund (if overcharged).

What sources do they use?

Cost conscious customers use a range of different sources to find out information about fares and ticketing. Some use the TfL website to research the cost of tickets to make sure that they are using the most cost effective ticket for the journeys they frequently make. Others prefer to speak to staff to find out information about fares to 'double check' that what they are paying is the most economical option. Cost conscious customers may also use ticket machines to check how much credit remains on their Oyster card after making a journey.

6. Online fares and ticketing information

6.1 Current usage of the TfL website

The TfL website is considered a useful source of information, but it is predominantly used by customers for journey planning information, rather than for information about fares and ticketing. Most customers do not feel that they should have to spend their own social time researching fares and ticketing information on the internet, as they are of the opinion that it should be TfL's responsibility to provide them with this, usually when they require it and when it is relevant – often at the station. Although the TfL website does not currently meet all customers' needs, but has the potential to do so, particularly for non-urgent issues such as information about concessions and period tickets.

6.2 TfL Website - Strengths

One of the main strengths of the TfL website is that it provides comprehensive information and is considered a one stop shop for all travel issues in London. Customers use the website for finding out a wide range of information, from how to make a certain journey, to planning how long the journey will take, as well as finding out information about the types of tickets available (particularly concessions or period tickets). The website is especially useful for information about foreseeable journeys and purchasing tickets in advance. For example, customers who are planning a group outing are more likely to go on the website to research the different ticketing options available and find out if there are any special offers.

The website helps customers like this to plan in advance, and can help them to avoid queues or have to think about how to buy the tickets on the day they travel. Another key strength of the TfL website is that it is also available in multiple locations. The internet is much more widely accessible nowadays, so customers have the opportunity to access the TfL website while they are at home, at work, staying in hotels or at internet cafes. Some customers also mentioned the potential of those with smart phones to access the TfL website, although none of the respondents we spoke to had done this.

In addition to this, customers using Oyster cards are usually encouraged to register their Oyster cards on the TfL website, which may remind them that the internet can be used as a source of information.

6.3 TfL Website - Weaknesses

The TfL website is only interactive to a certain degree, and sometimes it can be tiresome and time consuming to have to work through the numerous filters to find out the necessary information. The menus are not always intuitive and therefore navigation can sometimes be difficult.

> *"You should be able to go straight to tickets and find out how much it costs, rather than make us fight for it "*
> (Male, New person to London)

> *"I got lost because I went into the Travelcards and passes and then went into the monthly and assumed it would be there straight away and when it wasn't I got lost and then went back and came back in"*
> (Female, New person to London)

The TfL website is most often used to gather information about journey planning, rather than for fares and ticketing information. Most customers spoken to during this research had not looked at the TfL website specifically to find out information about fares and ticketing. One of the reasons for this is that this information is usually sought on system and the internet is generally not available out of the office or the home (apart from those who own 'smart phones').

There is not currently a strong link to purchase tickets when using the TfL website to research fares and ticketing information. A number of customers mentioned that the website could be improved so that it is similar to the Train Line website which is popular as it displays fare information alongside the recommended route.

> *"I've just gone into it (the TfL website) and gone to a route but it still doesn't give me an option to check the price and what I have to do is come back out of it and go and find the price, that's not very user friendly"*
> (Female, Frequent cash user)

Although internet purchasing is often associated with saving money, this is not the case with public transport in London. Most customers are aware that the cost of tickets are set and do not feel that there is any opportunity for getting discounted tickets by purchasing them in advance.

In addition to this, finding out information about fares and ticketing is considered something which should be done as part of the journey, rather than in leisure or private time. The reasons for this are that customers don't expect to have to spend their own time researching information about fares and ticketing, instead they feel that it should be provided by staff as and when they need it.

> *"Travel is kind of… in my head it's like the whole standing at the ticket office and doing that, that's kind of like part of my work day. When it's my free time, I can't imagine going on the internet to sort of check out work related stuff that kind of way"*
> (Male, frequent single/return ticket user)

Another reason why most customers do not usually research this information on the website is because they do not have a high level of interest in information about fares and ticketing.

> *"It's just the thought of going to the website to have a look at it…it fills me with absolute boredom."*
> (Male, frequent single/return ticket user)

6.4 Response to proposed website changes
During the focus groups, customers were shown a mock-up execution of the new 'Tickets' landing page for the TfL website and asked for their opinions on this. Customers compared the new execution with the current landing page (which they looked at using laptop computers during the group).

New landing page

Overall the new landing page is felt to be an improvement over the current one, which is considered busy and difficult to navigate. Customers feel the new page is visually more attractive and provides obvious clues as to what should be clicked on first.
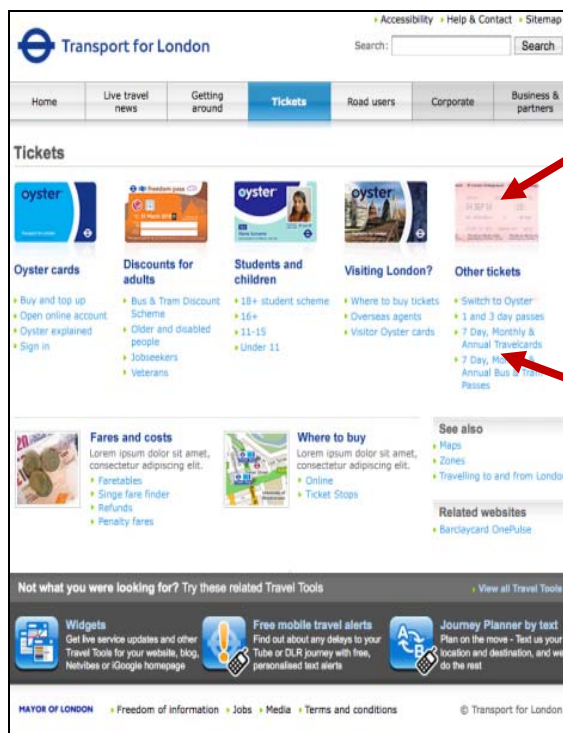
The icons symbolising the different ticket options available are eye catching, and customers feel these would make the site easier to navigate.

There are also a manageable number of relevant headings under each of the ticket options, particularly for Oyster.

"It's probably going to make it easier to navigate around the website because you can easily find your tickets and fares because I would assume it would bring up the fares and things that you're looking at"
(Female, New person to London)

Most customers were able to navigate easily on the landing page by clicking on the 'Tickets' icon at the top of the page. Customers understand that any information regarding Oyster cards will come under the 'Tickets' heading, as it is known as a type of ticket. However, there was an element of confusion when looking at the various ticket options available, as Oyster is currently displayed as a separate option, and it is not clear where to click, for example if you want a child Oyster card.

"One thing that I think is a bit misleading is that they have the Oyster cards section, but then what if you want a student Oyster or a child Oyster card –

> *do you click on 'Oyster' or on the 'Students and children' bit?"*
> (Female, Infrequent Oyster PAYG user)

Most customers think that information about Oyster cards should therefore be integrated within all of the ticketing options, rather than be a separate stand-alone option on the landing page.

However, despite this, customers feel that it is a good idea to have the 'Visiting London?' section for customers who do not necessarily know what the most suitable ticket is for them. Some customers suggest that this should be a more interactive webpage, where visitors could enter in the details about how long they will be in London for and where they will be travelling to, and then the result could be calculated to meet their needs.

> *"They should make it, you know like 'Ask Jeeves' or something like that, there's nowhere to ask the question – I'm going here, what is my best way – it's always drop downs and sometimes that doesn't fit what you want"*
> (Male, Frequent Oyster user)

New single fare finder
During the focus groups, customers were also shown two mock up executions of the new Single Fare Finder webpage and asked their opinions on these. Customers were shown these executions in rotation and then given time to compare and contrast the different pages before giving feedback to the rest of the group.

Using single fare finder
Although most customers mentioned that they do not usually use the Single Fare Finder, when given the task to find a single fare during the focus groups most customers did end up using it. However, despite this, many customers expected to find information about fares either in or linked to Journey Planner and were confused when they discovered that this information was not where they had expected it to be.[5]

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[5] Most customers spoken to had not previously used the website to find out information about fares and ticketing, but during the groups, customers were made to think about where they would go if they did require this information online.

> *"I went to Journey Planner and typed in the two stations and I was expecting a price there and there wasn't one"*
> (Female, Oyster/Paper Monthly or Annual pass user)

While several customers initially tried finding the single fare information through Journey Planner, others simply typed in 'single fares' into the 'search' feature and were confused with the numerous options that arose.

> *"I searched here – I typed in 'single price ticket' and a lot of different things came up, PDFs and things but I think ideally it should be integrated within the Journey Planner so for the journey I know how much it's going to cost"*
> (Female, Oyster/Paper Monthly or Annual pass user)

Response to new single fare finder

Customers were shown the mock-up stimulus of the new Single Fare Finder during the focus groups after they had seen the current fare finder application. Having already commented that they feel the fares information should be integrated within Journey Planner customers were pleased to see the proposed new mock ups displaying this information.

Overall, most customers preferred the version of the Single Fare Finder which provides information about which route to take to avoid travelling through central London, rather than the other version which displays information about touching in and out. Customers feel that the information about alternative routes is potentially more useful than the text contained on the other version, because it provides them with the journey planning information they would need if they did decide to avoid central London and pay a reduced fare.
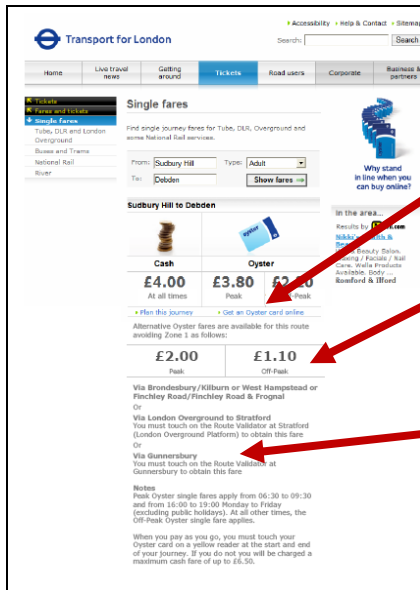
Link to 'plan this journey' is considered useful

Customers notice that there are cheaper fares available by avoiding central London

Information about alternative routes is clearly displayed
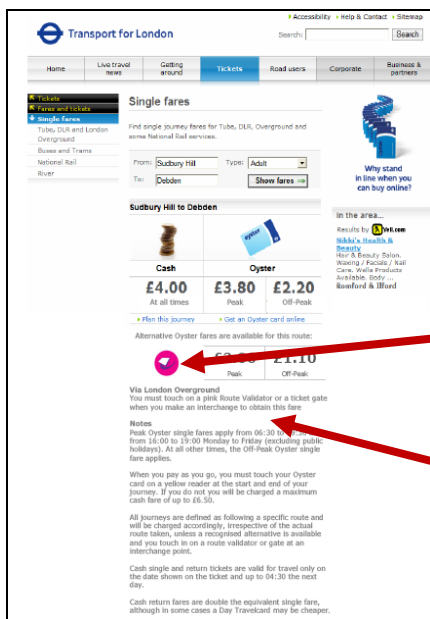
Pink validator system stands out and reminds customers to touch to pay a reduced fare

Information about peak and off peak hours is useful as many mentioned that they are not familiar with this information

"It tells you when the peak time is though – 6.30am to 9.30am and 4pm to 7pm"
(Female, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

However, in addition to providing the alternative journey, some customers mentioned that they would also like to know how much longer it would take to avoid central London, as this would ultimately influence their decision about which route to take.

"How long it would take, because if it is going to take me two hours to get to Heathrow I'll go round the edge, or only half hour if I go through the middle, I will go through the middle. I am not going to touch that thing, at the end of the route I am going to say no way, I went round. That is what I would do"
(Female, National Rail user)

While most customers prefer the fare finder displaying alternative routes, they feel the pink validator symbol should be included on this page. Customers feel that it is important that the validator symbol is included, as it quickly and visually reminds people that this is the cheaper alternative route. It is also thought that this symbol would act as a reminder for customers to touch in at the validators if they did decide to take that route.

"What they should do is have the one showing the alternative routes you can take but just put on that pink symbol so that you know if you have to touch it when you change trains – they should just do a combination of the two ideas"
(Male Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

Initially, when customers first viewed the two Single Fare Finder executions during the groups, most focused on the difference in the prices between paying by cash vs. paying by Oyster card. Customers feel that this is a clear indication to customers that it is far more beneficial to have an Oyster card.

Customers then tended to look at the alternative Oyster fares (for avoiding central London) available for the same journey, to calculate roughly how much they would be saving if they did decide to take the alternative journey. After this, the next question many respondents had was about how long it would take them to travel on the alternative journey, and customers were not able to find this information on the website.

"I want to know how much longer it would take me, because most of the time I'm in a rush - I just want to get to where I need to go quickly…so they need to tell you how long it would take if you did go on that other route"
(Female, Regular Oyster user)

7. Printed fares and ticketing information

7.1 Current usage of the printed information available

Leaflets

Overall, most customers (across the sample) do not often use leaflets as a source of information about fares and ticketing. One of the main reasons for this is that customers do not feel they should have to go out of their way to find out this information and leaflets are seen as hard to navigate. Most customers feel that they should be able to approach staff to find out exactly what they need, instead of having to spend their own time trying to find the relevant information. Although customers do not usually look for leaflets spontaneously, they would be more likely to take a leaflet if it was handed to them by staff, or if there were no staff available to provide assistance.

Also, as leaflets are available at the station, they are in competition with ticket machines and staff, both of which customers are more likely to turn to as they are considered quicker and more accessible. Customers feel it is time consuming to locate the relevant leaflet and then read it to find the specific information that they are looking for.

> *"If you are in a hurry the last thing you will do is stop and go to a massive shelf in front of you with 30 odd leaflets about theatres and Brighton trips just to find out the price changes"*
> *(*Male, Frequent cash users on the bus/tram)

> *"I have never picked up a leaflet that told me what I want to know"*
> (Male, National rail user)

Leaflets are not considered a good medium for detailed information, because the more information contained within a leaflet, the more difficult it is for customers to find the sections that are relevant to them. The current leaflets that tackle detailed ticketing information, such as, 'Your guide to fares and ticketing zones 1 -6' are felt to be especially difficult to navigate.

Some customers are concerned that leaflets are not always the most up to date source of information:

> *"Leaflets go out of date too quickly I think, they are always changing them aren't they"*
> (Male, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

Some staff find it particularly frustrating that leaflets about fares are not available in different languages directly from ticket offices, and have to be applied for in advance. It is thought that having leaflets available in a range of foreign languages would make it easier for staff to assist customers who are only able to speak a limited amount of English.

> *"They should have them available here (ticket office) in all different languages, I don't understand why they (visitors) should have to apply for them. They (visitors) need it when they arrive here, they wouldn't send away for it, and if they did it would be too late by the time it arrived – they would already have their ticket by then"*
> (Male, staff, Heathrow LU station)

However, despite the fact that leaflets are not often used by the customers in this sample, some do recognise the potential advantages of providing leaflets as a source of information about fares and ticketing. Leaflets are available on system where customers currently seek this type of information. Leaflets are small and portable, so customers can put them in their pockets/handbags and take them with them when they travel. In this way, customers can read the information whenever it suits them which may be at home or even on the train/bus when they are making a journey.

> *"It's quite nice to take away and have with you and refer back to and to think about reading it another time when you want to maybe."*
> (Female, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

Short leaflets are thought to be suitable for communicating short and succinct statements of information, and customers suggest that the leaflet should direct people to the TfL website for more information. Some customers mentioned that they

might log on to the TfL website if the information they saw in a leaflet was relevant to them. However, visitors are less likely to look up the TfL website, as they are less likely to have access to the internet. Customers feel that short leaflets could also be handed out by staff in stations to inform customers about changes to the system, for example when there are large scale changes in fares. Some customers feel that people will not pick up leaflets unless they are handed out by staff:

> *"I wouldn't go to the racks and get it, they would have to stand there and give it to me, for really important information like the pink validator…I would expect London Underground to have staff physically giving it to people. People never go to the racks, not even visitors"* (Female, National Rail user)

Staff in ticket offices use leaflets as an aid when explaining the fares and tickets available to customers, particularly visitors (for more information on sources of information used by staff please refer to Chapter 11.)

Posters
Posters in London Underground stations are only considered suitable for short and concise general information messages, such as fare changes and the introduction of Oyster card. Posters do not currently meet all customers' needs, as they do not provide enough information about the range of ticket options available, and are also not tailored to meet specific customer needs. For example, the current Single fares poster positioned within London Underground stations only provides the cost of Single Fares, it does not meet the needs of other customers who may be looking for the cost of period tickets/ Travelcards or return tickets.

> *"I never even noticed that to be honest with you. No, I wouldn't use that, it doesn't look like it has much information on it. It doesn't tell you about Travelcards it just has the single tickets so I would always just use the machine anyway"*
> (Visitor from Scotland, Victoria LU station)

Some customers admit that even though they have noticed some posters throughout London Underground stations, they do not usually have time to stop and read them as they are often in a rush during their journey.

> *"I think, for me, from my point of view, you see they have built a massive poster of something, everyone seems to be in such a rush, you don't really get a chance to pay attention to it."*
> (Female, Infrequent Oyster PAYG user)

7.2 Detailed response to current leaflets

'Your Guide to Fares and Tickets within Zones 1-6'

The 'Your Guide to Fares and Tickets within Zones 1-6' is a useful aid for ticket office staff when serving customers and is often given away to customers to keep for future reference. However, customers themselves do not often use this leaflet for information about fares and ticketing for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there is low awareness among customers that this leaflet exists. Many customers spoken to during this research claimed that they had never seen it before.

> *"I have never really seen any leaflets around in stations, the only thing I have seen is a small tube map but apart from that I have never noticed any other leaflets"*
> *(*Female, Infrequent PAYG users)

While a few customers did recall being handed the leaflet when they first bought their Oyster card, these customers mentioned that they had not spent much time looking at it and were unfamiliar with its content.

Once shown the leaflet, most customers consider the level of detail currently contained within it overwhelming. As it includes so much detailed information about all of the fares and tickets available, it is thought to be difficult to navigate and customers struggle to locate the relevant information when using it.

> *"It stressed me out. There's too many words and tables and everything"*
> (Female, New to London)

This leaflet also does not include a standard tube map which proves to be an issue, as most customers require a map to indentify which zone they are in/ travelling, before they can work out how much it will cost using the leaflet.

> *"Well I am trying to look through it to work out which ticket we need, but what I don't see any information about is the zones, what do the zones mean, can you tell me? I don't understand the zone thing"*
> (Visitor from Germany, Heathrow London Underground Station)

'Protect your Oyster card' leaflet

Customers speak positively about the 'Protect your Oyster card' leaflet, as it is short and concise and contains the registration form which is required for registering an Oyster card. Customers who have used this leaflet feel that the form was easy to complete:

> *"I just filled out a form and handed it back to the newsagents"*
> (Female, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

Also, customers who have not yet registered their card mentioned that this leaflet acts as a reminder that they need to register their Oyster card.

> *"First thing tomorrow morning I am going to register can I use this one"*
> (Female, Frequent PAYG user)

Customers also like this leaflet because it is targeted at a specific need – registering your Oyster card, and therefore is simple and easy to navigate. There is no need to have to filter through to find the relevant information because it is all considered relevant.

> *"This one's good because it's specific to Oyster cards so it's got info on there like what you should do if you've lost it or something where as that one ('Your guide to fares and ticketing zones 1-6') is a bit overwhelming because its got more info in there and you have to look and compared to the website where you just have to type in and it takes you straight to where you want to go"*
> (Female, Oyster monthly user)

Although this leaflet is considered useful, many customers stated that they would be more likely to register their Oyster card online rather than fill out a form. Customers therefore want all of the same information to be present on the website, so that they can access it whenever they decide to register their Oyster card.

> *"I think it should be on the website or something just a little section that says I have lost my Oyster card click here because I think that must happen all the time"*
> (Male, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

'Travel Discounts for children, teenagers and students' leaflet
No customers spoken to during the groups had seen this leaflet before. However, customers feel that it is a good idea to have leaflets which are tailored to meet specific needs i.e. types of concessions. Overall customers think that this leaflet is short and concise and easy to read.

'Visitors guide to London' leaflet
The visitors guide is considered a useful source of information for people who are new to London, particularly those who are planning on going sightseeing, as the map indicates which tubes stops to go to for various London sights. This leaflet is also very well presented – it is colourful, the visuals make it eye catching and it also contains a useful map. However, customers note that this leaflet does not contain much information about fares and ticketing, other than a small section about how the Oyster card works. Customers feel that this leaflet could be improved to include more information about the types of tickets visitors may be interested in purchasing, such as 3 day Travelcards. It is thought that providing more information about these types of tickets would make this leaflet a more valuable source of information for visitors.

"The map is really great – we will take this one with us and use it later when we are in town – it will help us find some of the sights we are planning to going to"
(Visitor from Germany, Heathrow London Underground station)

'Get the most from Oyster - a User's Guide' leaflet

Although a few consumers (particularly those who are new to London) recall being given this leaflet when they first purchased an Oyster card, most customers are not familiar with this leaflet and stated that they had not used it before.

"I think this is what I got when I first got an Oyster card" (Female, new to London)

When customers had a look at this leaflet during the groups, they felt it was clear and straightforward and recognised that the information it contains is aimed at customers who have just bought an Oyster card. Some also noticed that this leaflet does not contain specific information about individual fares, however most do not consider this necessary as it is designed to be a 'User's guide' rather than a list of the fares and tickets available.

"It's telling you how to get an Oyster and how to use it very simplistically for me which is marvellous, but no there is no information about prices in it." (Female, return ticket user)

"I think it's good because it tells you straight away how to use your Oyster card when travelling around London and this looks like a clearer sort of set of steps to using it" (Male, infrequent PAYG user)

Customers feel that the main reason for having this leaflet is to educate customers about touching in and out and make sure they are charged the correct amount of money. Many are of the opinion that this leaflet is probably only useful to those who are new to London or visiting; as it is felt that most Londoners are already familiar with how the Oyster card system works (and are frequently reminded by PA announcements to touch in and out)

Not all customers realised that the website address is on the back of the leaflet. Some customers feel that the website address should be more prominent, either in bigger text or on the front cover of the leaflet to encourage customers to seek more information online.

"Oh I didn't see that there, they'd be better off putting it on the front or something so that people see it and know they can look there for more information" (Female, Frequent Oyster PAYG user)

Staff at the Oyster Call Centre feel that the information about using Oyster on National Rail (on page 9) would be easier for customers to understand if there was a map showing the routes where Oyster PAYG is/is not valid. Currently, this page only states the starting and finishing stations for routes where PAYG is valid e.g. 'Amersham to Marylebone' which it is thought would make it hard for customers to understand if it applies to the journey they are making.

"If I was a customer I wouldn't be able to work it out from this. You need to know what all the stations are in between Amersham or Marylebone to know if it affects you or not so they should put a map in, the one with the green line showing where you can use Oyster would be better" (Female, Oyster Call Centre Staff)

7.3 Detailed response to 'Single Fares' poster

While a number of customers mentioned that they have noticed the 'Single Fares' poster in some stations, they do not often use it as it only provides a limited amount of information. The information contained within the Single Fares poster (cost of single fares from the station the poster is located in) is also not the type of information that customers are often looking for. More often, customers are seeking more detailed information about the cost of Travelcards or concessions. Customers also mentioned that the small text size is off putting, but admitted that even if this information was better presented, they would still not be likely to refer to it.

Visitors do not find the Single Fares poster a useful source of information either, because they are often looking to find information about 1 day/3 day/ weekend Travelcards, not just the cost of one single specific fare.

> *"Well I don't think that has anything on it about Travelcards like a 3 day pass does it, so that's not much use to me really"*
> (Visitor from India, Heathrow LU station)

8. Ticket machines as a source of information

NB: The machines referred to in this section are the ticket machines present at London Underground stations and overland train stations. Customers do not use ticket machines at bus stations as a source of information, they are only used to purchase paper tickets.

8.1 Usage of ticket machines for information about fares and ticketing

Ticket machines are often used as a source of information as they are on system and can be accessed when this information is needed most. Ticket machines are considered quick and easy to use, however they do not meet all customers' needs as the level of information they provide is limited. Customers usually use them to find out how much credit remains on their Oyster card, or to find out the cost of a Travel card or single/return journey.

8.2 Strengths of ticket machines

Ticket machines are a useful source of information, because as well as providing information about costs they can also be used to purchase tickets, and therefore avoid queues at ticket offices.

> *"I'm pretty comfortable using the machines, I very rarely go to the desk I pretty much always get it from the machine, I know what I have to buy and it tells you the price and everything"*
> (Male, 1 day paper Travelcard user)

Ticket machines also allow customers to research the different tickets available without the pressure to purchase a ticket. Staff appreciate the fact that ticket machines can display the information in a range of different languages, as they often use these options when helping visitors find the information they require.

> *"Sometimes I'll ask them what country they are from and on these machines you can set them on different languages, so that way they can then just read it for themselves"*
> (Staff, Victoria LU station)

Ticket machines are also a valuable source of information at stations where there are no staff (mainly overland train stations), as they allow customers to see the different types of tickets available and purchase a ticket at the same time.

There is the potential for machines to be a valuable source of information about fares and ticketing in the future. Introducing new, more interactive machines which are designed to provide information to meet a range of customer needs (rather than just sell tickets) may reduce the pressure on staff.

8.3 Weaknesses of ticket machines

However, as ticket machines are a popular source of information, customers often feel pressured by others waiting to use the machine and do not have enough time to find out detailed ticket information. More machines throughout stations could negate this issue.

> *"The only problem with the machines is that there aren't that many of them and the customers always have to queue up to use them at rush hour"*
> (Staff, Victoria LU station)

Ticket machines do not currently have sufficient functionality to provide information for intricate journeys, as they are not fully interactive. As a result, some customers find the information presented confusing and are uncertain as to whether they are buying the most cost effective ticket for the journey they are making.

Concession ticket users are often not able to find the discounted fares that are available to them when using ticket machines so often approach staff to buy tickets. Another weakness of using ticket machines is that the information provided cannot be printed or taken away for future reference, unless the details are written down.

9. Staff as a source of information

9.1 Usage of staff as a source of information

Staff in ticket offices and throughout LU and overland train stations are the only source of information that currently meets all of the key information needs; concise, trustworthy, tailored, quick and on system. Staff are trusted to provide accurate and up-to-date information, and are considered the quickest means of answering a query as they are usually able to answer most questions immediately. As a result, staff are a valuable source of information about fares and ticketing and are relied upon by most customers. Staff are also a particularly important source of information for visitors, as they often have difficulty understanding the printed information available and need it to be explained.

However, if staff are not present at a station, customers have to find out information about fares and ticketing either from the ticket machines or leaflets available. While most customers who live in London and are familiar with the system, feel they would be able to manage using these sources of information, visitors would be more likely to struggle to find the information they need and may seek advice from other passengers.

9.2 Strengths of staff

One of the main strengths of using staff on system as a source of information is that they are able to listen to the customer's query and then filter the information they provide based on exactly what the customer needs to know. Therefore, this means that customers are given information which is relevant to them and meets their individual needs.

As staff are knowledgeable about fares and ticketing information they are able to provide customers with quick answers, which is a benefit when people are in a rush when commuting.

> *"If I don't know I just go and ask the staff, so I never picked up any of those leaflets because I don't have time to read them."*
> (Female, Frequent Single/Return ticket user)

In addition to this, staff are able to provide fares information at the same time as answering other queries, such as questions about journey planning, which can be useful and save time for customers. Customers are also able to purchase a ticket from staff (with the exception of gate line staff) after they have received information about fares.

Staff are trusted to provide up to date information about fares and ticketing and can also assist customers when they are using ticket machines or trying to understand printed information. Staff are also able to direct customers to the website for more information to read in their own time.

9.3 Weaknesses of staff

Although staff are the only source of information that meets all customers' needs, there are still some weaknesses of relying on staff for information about fares and ticketing.

While on the whole, most staff are considered knowledgeable, there are occasions when customers have experience staff who have not been very helpful.

> *"Don't you find some of the staff even don't know about half the things that are there, if you go in and ask they say 'don't know about it love you know'"*
> (Female, Concession pass user)

Also, there are often queues to speak to staff, particularly at rush hour and at busy Underground stations (e.g. Heathrow and Victoria).

> *"My station is always full of tourists and has a massive line so I could never wait to try and speak to the staff"*
> (Female, New to London)

9.4 Call Centre staff

The call centre is not an obvious source of information about fares and ticketing. Many customers are not aware that you can receive information about fares by calling up the Travel Information Call Centre or Oyster Helpdesk, so have not used this service to access fares information. However, many customers have called the call centre for information about journey planning.

"I have called them up before once – I was on a night out in town and I wanted to find out what time the night buses were"
(Male, Frequent PAYG Oyster user)

10. Information sources used by TfL Staff

The sources of information used by TfL staff largely depends on where they are based (e.g. call centre vs. ticket office) and the type of customer query. The following section outlines the sources of information used by different types of TfL staff, including call centre staff, ticket office staff, gateline staff and bus station staff.

10.1 TfL Call Centre Staff: Travel Information Call Centre and Oyster Helpdesk

Staff at the TfL call centres use a variety of different sources of information, depending on the type of customer query they are dealing with, and the format they feel most familiar/comfortable with. Staff are content with the sources of information about fares and ticketing that are available to them, which include:

- 'Knowledge Base' (contains the online handbook);
- TfL Website;
- 'Your guide to fares and tickets' (zone 1 -6) – (Customer leaflet);
- staff handbook;
- concessions leaflets.

While some staff prefer to use 'Knowledge Base' to find out information about fares and ticketing, other staff feel more comfortable using the customer leaflet 'Your guide to fares and tickets'.

Only a small number of staff spoken to at the call centres currently use the staff handbook and some claimed that they had never seen it before. The main reason most staff are not using this handbook is because it is considered too big and is therefore difficult to navigate to find the relevant information. Staff feel that they do not often require the level of detail contained within the handbook, but some mentioned that it is 'nice to have' for reference.

> *"This one (staff handbook) is great because it has everything in it, but there's just __so__ much information in there – you can't find what you need in it, so for ease of use the customer one is better - it's much more condensed and user friendly."*
> (Staff, Travel Information Call Centre)

> *"I have seen that before (staff handbook), I remember we used it in training, but I don't ever use it now. It's just too big – there's too much information in it."*
> (Staff, Oyster Call Centre)

Instead of using the staff handbook, many staff prefer to use the main customer leaflet ('Your Guide to Fares and Ticketing zones 1-6) as they are more familiar with the layout, it is easier to navigate and therefore quicker and easier to use when on the phone. However, staff feel that the customer guide could be improved so that it is even easier to navigate if it had a contents page or glossary.

Others prefer to find out almost all of the information they need using their computer, either on 'Knowledge Base' (containing online handbook) or on the TfL website. 'Knowledge Base' (and the online handbook) is used to find out the following information:

- the cost of single fares;
- cost of Travelcards;
- cost of travelling from a LU station to an overland station;
- on peak vs. off peak costs.

Some staff use the Single Fare Finder feature of the TfL website as they find it quicker and easier than looking up the information in a leaflet.

> *"All you have to do is type in where the customer is and where they are going to and it immediately works it out for you, it's great!"*
> (Staff, Oyster Call Centre)

The TfL website is also used to find out information about the concession tickets available and using Oyster PAYG on overland trains.

10.2 Ticket office staff (including Travel Information Centre staff)

NB: This research revealed that Ticket office staff and Travel Information staff have very similar information needs, therefore the following section covers the sources of information used by both types of staff.

Ticket office staff use some of the same sources of information as call centre staff such as the 'Your guide to fares and ticketing zones 1-6' customer leaflet and (very occasionally) the staff handbook. However, the staff working in ticket offices also have a comprehensive directory of fares and ticketing information which is contained in a series of different folders. The information in these folders is kept in the office for reference but is not used on a daily basis. Staff sometimes use the information in these folders to 'double check' the fares, particularly when there are changes to fares (for example in January) or changes to the system (e.g. Oyster PAYG on overland).

> *"We got these folders here and they've got everything in them, but we don't usually need all of that information, so we just keep them here in the back room in case we do need to look at them"*
> (Staff, Hammersmith LU station)

When ticket office staff are serving customers, they often use the fares leaflet as a visual aid, and circle the relevant information for customers, so that they are aware of exactly how much they need to pay. The staff then tend to give the leaflet to the customers to take with them, in case they need to refer to it in their own time. Staff are aware that customers may find it hard to remember the different types of ticket options available, so they feel it is useful for customers to keep this leaflet for their own future reference.

However, more frequently than this, staff use their cash register which displays fares information on their computer screen, and can be used to work out the cost of tickets. Most staff feel that this is the quickest way to find out information about most fares, as they simply have to type in the ticket they need and the cash register displays the cost of the ticket.

> *"It's pretty straightforward and it does all the work for you, so most of the time we just use that really"*
> (Staff, Victoria LU station)

However, when customers need information about concession tickets, or which routes Oyster PAYG can be used on, staff usually have to refer to a customer leaflet, such as the 'Your Guide to Fares and ticketing zones 1-6'.

Staff in ticket offices do not often use the staff handbook, as they find it quicker and easier to use to use their cash register to work out the cost of tickets. The staff handbook is also considered harder to navigate than the customer leaflet, so if staff ever do refer to a leaflet it would usually be the customer 'Your guide to fares and ticketing' leaflet.

Some staff also mentioned that they did not want to be seen referring to a different leaflet that they could not give away to customers.

> *"I don't use this one because if the customer sees me looking at this they will ask me for it and we can't give it to them – this is only for the staff"*
> (Staff, Hammersmith LU station)

Some ticket office staff (mainly those in the TICs) mentioned that they have access to the internet on a computer in the office. However, staff mentioned that they rarely use this for information about fares and ticketing, and that it is mainly used for helping customers with other enquiries, such as the opening times of London attractions.

10.3 Gateline Customer Assistant staff (working in London Underground stations at ticket barriers)

Staff who work at the gatelines in London Underground stations do not have direct access to a computer, so rely on leaflets and ticket machines as their main sources of information about fares and ticketing. Most staff usually carry a copy of the 'Your guide to fares and tickets zones 1-6' customer leaflet in their jacket pocket so that they always have it to hand if a customer asks specifically about fares and ticketing. When staff working at the gatelines are asked questions about tickets, they usually refer to the customer leaflet to show the customer which ticket they need. These staff

will often then give the leaflet to customers so that they can refer to it in their own time, as they are aware that customers cannot always remember all of the details they are told.

None of the staff working at the gatelines carry a copy of the staff handbook as it is considered too big and bulky to carry around. Instead, it is kept as a reference source, usually in the back office. Staff find the customer leaflet more portable and also easier to navigate to mostly refer to this for fares information.

Some staff also use the ticket machines in Underground stations to find out information about fares and ticketing when helping customers. These machines are considered a useful source of information as they are quick and easy to use and provide up to date information.

> *"If they ask about how much a ticket is, sometimes we take them over there to the machines because they show all different tickets and how much they cost. I think most people who live here know how to use them now, but it's just the tourists and the people who are visiting who need more help"*
> (Staff, Victoria LU station)

The only issue with using ticket machines as a source of information is that there are often queues of customers waiting to buy a ticket so these cannot always be relied upon.

> *"As you see here, people are often queuing up to use the machines – it's worse than this at rush hour, so you can't always get to one when you need to help someone"*
> (Staff, Heathrow LU station)

When gateline staff are not able to access the information they need about a specific fares or ticketing enquiry, they usually direct the customer to the ticket office for more information.

> *" I can't sell them a ticket standing here and I don't know everything about all the tickets and things available so sometimes I'll just send them over there (to the kiosk)"*
> (Staff, Victoria LU station)

10.4 Bus station staff

Most staff at bus stations feel confident enough to answer most customer queries using their existing knowledge and experience of the system, and often do not have to refer to any other sources of information.

> *"Most of the information you know by hand. You get asked the same things over and over again so you get used to it and you learn the answers. Deal with the questions as you come. Sometimes you have to use a reference."*
> (Male, bus driver, Victoria bus station)

The fares structure for travelling by bus is also considered more simple than other travel networks such as the Underground or overland trains, so there is less need for information overall.

> *"The fare structure on the buses is a lot easier than it is on the Underground. You don't have to worry about where you're starting and ending your journey because we don't have zones. It's a flat rate and you can go from one side of London to the other."*
> (Male, bus station staff, Hammersmith bus station)

When bus station staff do require information about fares and ticketing to assist customers, it usually involves other transport services such as the Underground or overland trains, not buses. When bus staff are asked about the ticketing options available for other transport networks such as the Underground, they usually refer customers to other sources of information such as the '*Your guide to fares and ticketing zones 1-6'* leaflet or tell them to ask Underground staff). In some cases, staff will also direct customers to the TfL website.

> *"We do have leaflets about fares and ticket information, and we send them to the Underground if we can't answer their questions. We send them in the right direction"*
> (Male, bus driver, Victoria bus station)

A few staff at the bus stations mentioned that they occasionally use the staff handbook as a source of information, particularly for concessions and season tickets, but said that they kept it in the office and did not carry it with them as it is too big.

11. Using Oyster PAYG on National Rail

11.1 Current usage of Oyster PAYG on National Rail

Customers who use Oyster PAYG on National Rail feel that there needs to be clear communication stating exactly where Oyster is accepted, as this is an area customers currently find confusing. Customers feel that there should be large signs or posters advertising which stations/routes Oyster PAYG is valid on.

> *"It's not very clear on what stations you can use it on, say I know you can use it on Kentish Town overground the Oyster in but then if you come out at the other end say at Barking you can't so it's not very clear in that"*
> (Female, Concessionary pass user)

> *"If you came off at Stratford and were using the Central Line and then just jump on to the overland trains there are no visible signs that you can't use your Pay As You Go"*
> (Male, Visitor to London)

Several customers spoken to during this research had recently been fined for using their Oyster PAYG on overland services where it is not valid, so are especially aware of the need for more information about this to avoid being fined again in the future.

> *"I got caught out on an over head train and I had a pay as you go and the guy said 'no, this is not valid' this was like about a year ago or so"*
> (Male, Oyster/Paper Monthly/Annual pass)

At stations where Oyster PAYG is not currently accepted, customers also think there needs to be clear communication about what ticket needs to be purchased to travel on that route. Customers who are not familiar with using overland trains often find the number of ticketing options available overwhelming and are not easily able to make the decision over what ticket to buy.

11.2 Initial Response to the PAYG extension

Overall, customers are pleased to hear the news about the Oyster PAYG extension. A number of customers who use overland trains have been waiting for this change to

occur for some time, and feel that it will make ticket purchasing and usage much more straightforward for them in the future.

The fact that using Oyster PAYG will be at least as cheap as a normal ticket is reassuring, as some customers previously had concerns that using Oyster on overland would be more expensive.

11.3 Key Issues around the PAYG extension
Although the PAYG extension is positively received overall, some customers do have concerns about how the new system will work in practice.

Communication
When the Oyster PAYG extension is rolled out, it is thought that there needs to be clear communication around the pricing structure, and exactly how much it will take to make a journey on overland using Oyster PAYG. There are concerns that travel on overland trains is usually more expensive than travelling by Underground, as there is the potential to travel further (and out of London) on overland trains. Therefore, customers need reassurance that using Oyster PAYG on overland will never be more expensive than a normal ticket and may need to know the price.

> *"How much is it going to be, and when does it stop charging you, because if it's overground you just assume that it's going to be more anyway, so how much is it?"*
> (Female, Frequent single/return ticket user)

> *Are the fare structures for the overland the same, say you are doing an overland journey in 2 zones, but it's just easier to go overland, are they exactly the same?*
> (Male, Frequent single/return ticket user)

Customers think that the changes should be advertised on posters and leaflets, as well as the internet. Customers feel that all staff should be knowledgeable about the new system so that they are able to help with queries.

> *"Make sure all staff are fully aware of all the Oyster changes, and obviously there should be posters and leaflets everywhere saying that there are going to be changes made"*
> (Female, Concessionary pass user)

Alternative routes / Route validators

While some customers welcome the idea of paying a reduced fare for taking an alternative route avoiding central London, many customers are sceptical and concerned that it sounds complicated. Some customers think that this new system will be confusing, and feel that it conflicts with the simplicity of Oyster:

> *"I thought that one of the points of Oyster was to make it a really simple system and now it's just like what's going to be considered the zone and how do you know you're in it how much are you going to be charged"*
> (Female, New to London)

Many customers mentioned that they would not be likely to take an alternative route avoiding central London, as they are often in a rush and need to get to their destination as quickly as possible. However, these customers did accept that this idea may be more appealing to customers who do not lead such busy lives and/or those who are more cost conscious.

Some customers are concerned about the concept of touching their Oyster card on a route validator when taking an alternative route to avoid central London. Customers are often in a rush when commuting, and if they did decide to take an alternative route they are concerned that they may have to queue up to get to a route validator. There are also concerns about overcharging and what would happen if the validators were not working.

> *"How do you know you're not going to be overcharged and what if you're in a rush and forget which is normal"*
> (Female, New to London)

12. Conclusions & recommendations

12.1 Conclusions

Most customers most of the time do not require information about fares and ticketing. However, there are certain occasions/customer types where this information is needed. Overall, customers want information that is concise, trustworthy, tailored, quick and primarily on system.

Staff currently meet all of these key information needs and are heavily relied on by most customers. However, there is the potential for both web and print based information to be improved to better meet customer needs and reduce the pressure on staff.

12.2 Key Recommendations – short and medium term

Web based information

- Consider linking fares and ticketing information to Journey Planner to help 'intercept' customers who are not actively seeking this information
- The new proposed landing page is an improvement over the current page, as the visual ticket icons make it easier to navigate. However, the proposed page could be further improved, by focusing more on customer needs, for example, adding links for 'finding the right ticket', cost conscious customers and Oyster PAYG users on overland services.
- Change Single Fare Finder to the new execution which displays the alternative route options plus the Oyster validator symbol.

Print based information

- Break up 'Your guide to fares and tickets within Zones 1-6' into a series of leaflets more clearly targeting customer needs
- Ensure that the cover/title of each leaflet clearly communicates the customer need addressed to encourage customers to pick up unaided
- Consider adapting the current 'Staff guide to fares and tickets' booklets to make them smaller and more portable (pocket sized) as most staff spoken to during this research do not currently use them[6].

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[6] Please note that the staff booklet is used by other groups of staff within TfL. This research did not cover all of the different groups of staff who may use this booklet.

- The new staff leaflet should ideally contain basic information about fares and ticketing for staff to have to hand, but also an appendix with more detailed information (for example about eligibility of concession tickets available).
- Staff will then be able to use the tailored customer leaflets when helping customers with general queries, but will also have the more detailed, pocket size staff guide in case they require more detailed information.

12.2 Key Recommendations – longer term

- Target customer needs which could be met off system
  - There are a number of customers/scenarios where information needs that are not urgent and could be met off system, e.g. concessions, medium to long term product decisions and changes in fares.
  - Consider tailoring the website to meet these customers' specific needs.

- In order to promote value for money, encourage customers to check that the ticket they are using the most cost effective option for the journeys they make
  - This research revealed that there are a number of customers who do not think that they need information about fares and ticketing, but admit that they may not have the most appropriate ticket for the journeys they make.
  - As these customers would benefit from information about fares and ticketing, TfL should consider ways of encouraging customers to assess whether or not they have the 'best ticket' for them.