

Thursday 23 April 2020

Public transport passengers say they could make far fewer trips after pandemic unless their needs are heard

City transport authorities and operators could face a 20% fall in public transport use even after COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted, as passengers told the UK's leading transport researchers SYSTRA that they will avoid journeys unless health concerns are taken seriously, and commuters change their working travel habits. These results are from a representative survey of 1500 adult residents across the UK undertaken between 8th - 14th April 2020.

Key findings are:

- 20% predict making fewer trips by public transport after travel restrictions are lifted rising to 27% for those who use rail to commute.
- Of those expecting to reduce their use of public transport, 49% will do so because of concerns over getting ill; 24% said they will work from home more; and, 14% said they have found another way of making their journey.
- 17% of full and part time workers believe they will work from home far more once COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted. Reasons cited were saving the commute time and cost and wanting a better work-life balance.
- 67% believe virtual meetings will replace some or all business trips or meetings.

"Our climate emergency has not been cancelled. There is no doubt that this situation has opened up different ways of working for many, but if people start rejecting public transport over the car for work and leisure trips - that's a massive step backwards. Public transport operators must rise to this challenge."

Katie Hall, Director Travel Behaviour, SYSTRA

"When we go "back to normal" we won't go back to the old normal. Instead we'll enter a new 'new normal' where many people realise that they have more choice about where they work, how they get to work and how they conduct their day-to-day business. Travel patterns will have changed. Indisputably this is a call to action for policy makers and public transport operators, who must adapt and create new approaches and partnerships."

Chris Pownall, Business Development Director, SYSTRA



“A drop of 20% equates to 5 million fewer trips being made every single day, most of them in and out of our major towns and cities. Our research highlights the need for the public transport sector to think hard and plan ahead to be ready for when travel restrictions are lifted. Public transport operators must reassure nervous passengers by communicating very clearly about their hygiene regimes, driver and passenger responsibilities. A national campaign may well be required.”

Neill Birch, Director of Public Transport, SYSTRA

For more information or to arrange an interview please call:

Sarah White tel +44 (0)1483 616292 swhite@systra.com

Marion Gourlay TransportPR 07801 301 259 marion@transportpr.com

ABOUT SYSTRA

SYSTRA keeps the world moving through connecting people and places. By enabling mobility, our work strengthens communities, increases social inclusion and improves people’s access to employment, education and leisure opportunities. Our specialist social and market research team undertake evidence-based transport research to provide consumer and stakeholder insights, supporting policy developments and developing transport solutions that enhance movement, places and the quality of people’s lives.

Notes to Editor:

1. The survey took place between Wednesday 8th and Tuesday 14th April 2020 with a representative sample of 1,514 UK adults.
2. The survey covered the following regions: London, South East (excluding London), South West, West Midlands, East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, North West, North East, East, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.
3. SYSTRA is undertaking further behavioural modelling to understand the wider impacts of the Covid-19 for UK cities & regions.
4. In the UK, SYSTRA provides Transport Planning Consultancy and Rail and Urban Transport engineering services. We work with our clients to think through complex issues concerning the location and movement of people, goods and services – as well as helping them maximise the potential of their own businesses. We have been providing Transport Consultancy services in the UK for over 50 years and have an excellent reputation for the provision of high quality, robust and independent advice to our clients. SYSTRA is a UK registered subsidiary of SYSTRA Group.
5. In 2019, SYTRA doubled the size of its UK & Ireland operations through the acquisition of TSP Projects, a multidisciplinary engineering firm formed in 1987 with a rich heritage in rail. The combined company provides clients with a complete end-to-end service spanning every aspect of rail projects, as well as specialist understanding of mobility and complex infrastructure. We deliver expertise across the full project lifecycle, from strategic advisory and design to systems integration, programme/ construction management, testing & commissioning, and asset management. This expertise will be delivered through a significantly expanded UK footprint, providing clients with a highly localised service.
6. SYSTRA led [BP’s Future of Transport Study](#) published October, 2019.
7. For more information on forthcoming announcements visit our web site www.systra.co.uk



SYSTRA Ltd • 3rd Floor • 5 Old Bailey • London • United Kingdom • EC4M 7BA

Tel: +44 20 3855 0079 • Website: www.systra.co.uk

VAT Number: GB182382695 • Registered Number: 3383212