What makes a good transport hub? Understanding passenger needs at London's transport interchanges

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1   Introduction

In recent years, much has been done to improve interchange in London. This has focused on information provision and attempts to improve facilities and the way that interchanges are managed.

In 2011, London TravelWatch produced a report focusing on aspects of the walking environment experienced by interchanging passengers.[1] Members reviewed a spectrum of interchanges and their surrounding areas in London to identify best and poor practices and priorities for future improvement. The review was conducted at a time of economic recession when transport operators and highway authorities may have been seeking to make small changes that could improve the passenger experience.

The review highlighted certain stations at which conditions for interchanging passengers were considered to be excellent and also very poor interchange experiences, including at one of London's major rail terminals. Some of the key observations of this exercise can be summarised as follows:

Strengths
- Good quality and quantity of information available
- Integration facilitated by good modal adjacencies
- Accessible bus stops nearby
- Legible London or other way finding information provided
- Level and continuous pavements

Weaknesses
- Lack of signage and mapping
- Inadequate information about local bus services
- Pavements and surrounding areas not being accessible to all passengers
- Lack of pedestrian crossings or other connections beyond the interchange
- Streets cluttered with advertising hoardings
- Out of date and incorrect bus stop signing system
- Poor pedestrian environments for those interchanging on foot

The quality of interchange in London has remained an area of high interest for London TravelWatch, who are now interested in exploring the possibility of ongoing monitoring and evaluations through a mystery shopper exercise.

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[1] Walking and interchange in London, London TravelWatch, September 2011

2 Research objectives and method

London TravelWatch would like to build an understanding of passenger requirements of interchanges and the way in which stations perform against a number of key criteria. In order to achieve this, it is proposed that interchanges will be assessed and awarded a rating based on a consistent set of criteria. This will help to determine the strengths and weaknesses of interchange stations and will identify areas in which London TravelWatch should prioritise when campaigning for future improvement.

The intention is that interchanges will be visited by mystery shoppers and given a rating of Outstanding, Good, Adequate or Poor across a number of dimensions including physical infrastructure, journey information, station area management, interchange between modes, facilities, personal security, environmental quality, information on fares and availability of staff.

Some survey questions were drafted by London TravelWatch to form the basis of the framework for interchange evaluation. Qualitative research was required to contribute to the refinement of the evaluation criteria and survey questions.

This research explores the extent to which each of the proposed evaluation categories are considered to be important among passengers using a range of different interchange types in London. The research also explores which criteria should be used to assist with the assessment of each category and provides guidelines intended to maximise the usefulness of the mystery shopper exercise.
The specific research objectives of the project were:

- To provide an understanding of primary interchange needs from a passenger perspective;

- To confirm the relevance and importance of the proposed evaluation criteria;

- To determine the key attributes within each of the interchange dimensions to be assessed; and

- To provide guidance for the development of the Mystery Shopper exercise.

A qualitative approach was adopted comprising six, 90 minute focus groups in order to reflect the views of a broad range of passengers and interchange usage in London. The groups included regular commuters as well as leisure travellers and the demographic profile of the focus groups reflected London's population.

Before attending the group discussions, all respondents completed a pre-sensitisation exercise. The purpose of this was to encourage respondents to consider and engage with the key interchange issues before attending the focus groups. This ensured that passengers were able to talk from a basis of recent and actual experience rather than merely recollections.

Respondents were provided with the draft survey questions and asked to complete them based on a visit to a specific interchange. Respondents were provided with brief instructions about how the questionnaire should be completed and the criteria that need to be considered in order to make an evaluation. They were also asked to record any comments and observations and to award an overall rating for the interchange on each of the categories.

The sample was constructed to represent the views of passengers using a spectrum of different interchanges including major London termini, medium sized interchanges and smaller stations.
Group discussions were conducted among passengers living in a wide variety of locations across London and the South East. The sessions were conducted in Central London, Croydon and Bromley.
Full details of the sample structure are outlined in Appendix B. The research approach adopted for this study was qualitative rather than quantitative because the primary objective was to gain insights from passengers and an understanding of which categories and criteria are considered to be most important in terms of interchange usage. The intention was to include a cross section of different interchange types in the London area rather than attempting to represent all of them equally within the research. The sample size and structure was designed to be sufficiently robust to have confidence in the findings which should be regarded as indicative of the views of interchange users rather than statistically significant.

3   Context

3.1 Rating guides

The pre-sensitisation exercise completed by respondents had alerted them to the subject matter of the research being focused on rating interchanges on a number of dimensions. In order to provide a context for this, initial discussions in the focus groups covered awareness, attitudes and usage of rating guides in other areas. This was not intended to provide a comprehensive evaluation of these facilities, but instead helped to understand the way in which output from a mystery shopper exercise conducted by London TravelWatch might be perceived if made available to passengers. Key strengths and weaknesses of a selection of brands associated with rating guides can be summarised as follows:

	Strengths	Weaknesses
tripadvisor	• Brand recognition • Volume of ratings	• Credibility problems • False reports
Which?	• Consumer champion • Authoritative / respected	• Membership required • How impartial?
Ofsted	• Sector expertise • Longitudinal evaluation	• May not get the full picture • Other criteria important
London TravelWatch	• Independent • Passenger champion	• Unfamiliar • Scope of evaluations

The key implications in terms of established rating guides are therefore:
- Consumers are unlikely to believe that any brand or rating guide is completely credible or impartial
- Any rating tends to be regarded with heavy caveats and unlikely to reflect the exact requirements or circumstances of the user
- A rating guide needs to be considered as one of a number of sources of information rather than in isolation

"The only way you can trust these things is from the volume of reports. If a hotel has 400 reports, it's unlikely they would go to the trouble of creating that number of false accounts but if there are only two reviews it could be dodgy." [G1 London termini]

"It's good if the evaluation has been done by an independent, professional company rather than someone with a gripe. These things may not be 100% reliable but they can provide a steer if you have no idea." [G2, London termini]

"You never know if you can trust the information you get so you have to take it with a pinch of salt and use more than one site." [G3, medium interchanges]

The main implication for London TravelWatch is that the scope of the mystery shopper exercise is unlikely to be sufficient to form the basis of interchange ratings that would be meaningful or usable for passengers. The common feeling was that all interchanges would need to be evaluated on at least a weekly basis in order for information to be considered current and reliable. Given that the level of investment required to achieve this would be untenable and the issues described in relation to source reliability, this suggests that interchange evaluation may be based around the needs of passengers but is unlikely to be widely used by them.

"It could be interesting for tourists if you could have links from the main travel websites" [G1 London termini]

"If London TravelWatch make the information available, it would be good for tourists but too restricted for locals who would find it difficult to avoid certain stations" [G3, medium interchanges]

3.2 Terminology

During the course of the discussions, respondents were asked for their views in relation to the term 'interchange'. These are represented by the following word cloud:

It transpires that interchange is an uncomfortable word for many consumers. Some claimed to have been previously unaware of the term and others had heard it used but were unsure of its meaning. Even those who felt they knew the meaning thought the word to be clumsy or difficult and industry jargon for a station at which public transport connections can be made. A small minority thought that the word is specifically associated with either the inside or the outside of such a station.

"Interchange is a word I have come across before, but not one that I would use very often. I assume it means changing from one train to another, or one type of transport to another." [G1, London termini]

"Underground to Overground or any other change you need to make to continue your journey." [G4, medium interchanges]

"I use Purley Station, but I wouldn't call that an interchange, even though you can get off the train and catch a bus outside." [G6, smaller stations]

"I think interchange means inside the station only. It wouldn't include buses because that would be an outerchange." [G5, smaller stations]

In reality, this is likely to be an academic issue. If the evaluation is conducted by mystery shoppers, their briefing will cover the explanation of what an interchange is and they will be told which interchanges to assess. As

explained above, passengers are unlikely to be accessing the output from the evaluations.

Although uncomfortable with the word, respondents were unable to identify a suitable alternative. In a number of the focus groups, the term 'transport hub' was suggested although this was always felt to be more appropriate to large London termini rather than smaller stations and therefore inappropriate.

"To me the word hub evokes something that is really busy rather than some of the smaller interchanges outside London" [G1, London termini]

3.3 Rating scale

The pre-sensitisation task asked respondents to provide an overall rating for each of the evaluation categories using the following scale:

Outstanding   Good   Adequate   Poor

The overall feeling across the sample was that this is not the easiest scale to use to summarise views in relation to each category. Two consistent issues were identified in this respect:

Although each of the words is universally understood, there is some feeling that the choice of a specific word in certain circumstances may feel inappropriate and require qualification. Some also thought that the choice of word may confer an unintended subjective emphasis rather than a rating. For example, respondents often claimed they wanted to award the top or second best rating to a category, but did not necessarily feel that the word 'outstanding' or 'good' represented an accurate summary of their evaluation. This is exacerbated by the fact that each of the words can be subject to different rather than consistent interpretation.

There are arguments in favour of using a four point scale, especially to prevent respondents from defaulting to the mid-point as an easy option that avoids the need for them to resolve any areas of indecision. For the purpose of this exercise however, there is frequent evidence to indicate that the gaps between the options feel too big to allow accurate evaluations.

"I found the scale difficult to use because sometimes the word didn't match the rating I wanted to give and sometimes I wanted to go somewhere between 'Outstanding' and 'Good'." [G1, London termini]

"I found the ratings difficult to use. It would be better to break it down more because it's a big jump from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'." [G3, medium interchanges]

"The rating wasn't always easy to use because I found that things often fell in between the definitions that were provided". [G6, smaller stations]

"I was finding that 'Good' and 'Adequate' were merging a lot so it would be better to use a 10 point scale" [G5, smaller stations]

From a passenger perspective, the consensus is that the scale should be more neutral than it may be possible to achieve if words are used and something that is more likely to be readily and universally understood.

This emerged as the preferred option from the research. The main reason is that the five star system is less ambiguous and each point is not subject to varying interpretation of meaning. This is supported by the fact that this is acknowledged to be an established and therefore familiar convention in the context of understanding a rating that can apply to almost anything. In order to provide an additional layer of reassurance, it may be desirable to provide guidelines and explanations for each level in order to ensure consistency across all mystery shoppers.

"It would be better to use a five star system because it's more common and familiar and it would provide better average ratings across all the categories."
[G3, medium interchanges]

"It would be easier to use a scale from one to five because you wouldn't be forced to choose words that don't really apply." [G6, smaller stations]

4 Most important categories

The pre-sensitisation exercise was in the form of a simple self-completion questionnaire comprising nine categories for evaluation. Within each category, a number of questions and 'prompts' were provided to give respondents an idea of what to take into consideration in their overall rating.

The primary purpose of this exercise was not to provide an evaluation of the interchanges visited, but to provide an understanding of which categories were felt to be most important from a passenger perspective. At a secondary level, the intention was to assess the ease or difficulty of completing the evaluation in order to help refine the mystery shopper exercise.

Understandably responses were varied and idiosyncratic according to the specific interchange visited and interpretation of the evaluation categories and attributes. However, there was broad consistency across the sample (and different types of interchanges) in terms of perceived passenger priorities.

A common theme to emerge was that respondents often considered the evaluation form to be complex and repetitive. This tended to create the impression that the task took too long to complete, especially for larger interchanges. In reality, this would not be a problem for mystery shoppers (who would be paid according to the length of the questionnaire) but this insight helped to illustrate the overall feeling that certain evaluation criteria were felt to be more relevant than others.

On balance, six of the categories were considered to be essential to evaluate on the basis that they represent the most critical aspects of the way in which an interchange performs at a functional level. The following sections provide a summary of passenger responses to the evaluation categories that were considered to be most important and the rationale for their suggested inclusion.

Responses to the evaluation process, discussed during the focus groups, have been used to produce a suggested template for the mystery shopper questionnaire (provided as an appendix).

4.1 Accessibility

Accessibility was consistently identified as the most important aspect of any interchange across the focus groups. Findings in this respect tended to be consistent with previous research conducted for London TravelWatch that

has indicated this to be a universal concern among passengers and a key performance indicator.[2]

It is widely acknowledged that passengers with disabilities must be considered to be the priority in this respect. All recognise that accessibility is even more important for an interchange than other stations as a result of the additional complexities associated with needing to make a connection.

"This is mainly for people with disabilities but it would also be helpful for parents travelling with buggies or people with luggage." [G3, medium interchanges]

"Accessibility issues are more important for disabled people because they have no way to get round the problems so it's essential for them to know." [G5, smaller stations]

However, it is also recognised that accessibility issues could potentially be equally important to other user groups using interchanges. Most frequently cited in this respect are elderly passengers or parents with children (especially in push-chairs), but could also include those travelling with luggage, or even commuters who often need to carry a laptop and other heavy cases in the course of their work.

"It means how accessible the station is to all people not just disabled passengers. How easy it is for everyone to get into and around the station." [G4, medium interchanges]

"I need to carry a heavy case around for my work so I need to take notice of which stations have lifts even though I'm not disabled." [G1, London termini]

In reality, discussion around this subject was often extended to include all passengers. The common feeling is that by definition, an interchange is likely to present specific challenges in relation to accessibility and that this therefore needs to be the main priority for all users. If any area of an interchange is difficult for any passenger to use for any reason, it can't be considered to be truly accessible. The key issue in this respect should therefore be defined as ease of access rather than accessibility.

"Some places have accessible facilities but they are unusable. Liverpool Street has lots of escalators, but during rush hour they are absolutely packed so they can't cope with the volume of people and could be very difficult for a disabled person to manage." [G4, medium interchanges]

"It's not just about whether the station is accessible, but you need to know how accessible it is and what do they have there to help you." [G4, medium interchanges]

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[2] Value for money on London's transport services: what consumers think; London TravelWatch; August 2013

As an illustration of the universal importance of interchange accessibility, almost all attributes within this category were considered to be essential by almost all respondents.

Most important in this respect is whether there is step free access to all areas of the interchange and whether there are lifts or ramps and the numbers and location of these. If access is not step free, then it is essential to know how many steps and flights need to be negotiated and details of the nature of these since many will consider spiral stairs or steep steps to be dangerous and will need to avoid them. Some indicated that walking distances can also present a problem. Kings Cross St Pancras is an illustration of an interchange that is accessible. but access from one station to the other may not be easy for all passengers due to the distance involved.

The questions need to relate to specific parts of the interchange because certain areas of it may be more accessible than others. At Marylebone, the tube station is absolute hell for wheelchair users, but the train station is perfect." [G1, London termini]

"If the station isn't accessible, it would be helpful to know how many steps there are and how easy they are to negotiate and whether anyone is available there to help you." [G4, medium interchanges]

"Some of the spirals on the Northern Line are dangerous when you have lots of people going down them. It would only take one person to slip and a whole batch could be taken out in one go." [G4, medium interchanges]

A key issue in relation to accessibility is whether there are gaps between platforms and trains. Even if the interchange is accessible, the services from it may not be if platform gaps are too difficult for some passengers to negotiate. Clapham Junction was cited as a particular problem in this respect.

"The gap between the train and the platform is important to know about because that can be difficult for some people." [G4, medium interchanges]

"Accessibility can be important even if you are not disabled. At Clapham Junction, there are massive gaps between the trains and platforms and the height of them means there can be quite a drop." [G2, London termini]

"The gap is important for the elderly and people with pushchairs because I recently saw an old lady struggling to get on a train." [G6, smaller stations]

"It's essential to know about gaps because it can be dangerous and there are times when you literally have to jump. I once saw someone fall between a train and the platform at London Bridge." [G5, smaller stations]

There is minimal interest in evaluating the area surrounding the interchange except in terms of accessibility. The rationale is that there is minimal value in the interchange being accessible if access and egress is difficult for any user groups. Similarly, it is important to indicate whether any facilities provided are not fully accessible to all passengers.

The final requirements in terms of accessibility are whether help is readily available for any passengers needing assistance, and the extent to which more accessible alternative stations and facilities are clearly flagged.

"It's important to know if assistance is available and whether it needs to be booked in advance. It would be helpful to know when staff are available and to provide the phone number needed to book help." [G2, London termini]

The only issue that was considered to be less important was an evaluation of local bus stops, although it transpired that this is as a result of confusion and misunderstanding. Respondents assume that all bus stops in London are accessible since they all have ramps for wheelchairs and push chairs. However, this fails to take into account issues such as kerb height and whether the bus cage is clearly defined with yellow markings to prevent cars from parking in the bus stop. These are areas that should therefore be included and flagged as part of the interchange evaluation.

"I think it's less important to know about the buses because they all have a step that comes out to the pavement now. Perhaps it would only be worth knowing if the buses aren't accessible." [G4, medium interchanges]

"I think the bit about kerb heights at bus stops is less relevant because all new buses have ramps." [G2, London termini]

"You would just need to know if the bus stops are not accessible so you could avoid that station and get off at another stop." [G6, smaller stations]

The only issue felt to present any potential difficulty is the extent to which accessibility can be effectively evaluated by mystery shoppers who are not disabled, elderly or travelling without children or luggage.

"I imagine all the important information is already out there so this is unlikely to come up with anything new. I also think accessibility would be difficult to assess if you are an able-bodied person" [G3, medium interchanges]

4.2 Layout

The layout of interchanges is considered to be important due to the implications that this will have for accessibility. However, this was often identified as being a difficult category to define since the interpretation of the issues involved is extremely broad and potentially subjective. Evaluation therefore needs to be facilitated by providing clear cues for mystery shoppers and also by taking into consideration the size of the interchange and the time of day that the evaluation is conducted. The key finding in relation to this category is that appraisals can only be meaningful in the context of the relationship between the size of the interchange and passenger volumes.

"This is all about how much room there is for the number of passengers using the station and how easy it is to get from one platform to another, or to different areas within the station." [G3, medium interchanges]

"I would want to know if the concourse is rammed all the time because I'm not very good in crowds – so it would put me off using the station and I would use somewhere else instead." [G5, smaller stations]

"It needs to be done at different times of the day because it will be completely different at peak and off-peak times and probably at the weekend, as well as week days." [G4, medium interchanges]

One of the issues frequently highlighted in the focus groups was the need for this category especially to be evaluated by a mystery shopper who is unfamiliar with the interchange. This is due to the need to understand spatial relationships and the extent to which the layout is considered to be easy to navigate. These attributes can be assessed more meaningfully by someone who has not had the opportunity to learn short-cuts or other ways to make movement around the interchange easier than it would be for a first-time visitor.

"I could walk round the station I rated blindfolded so I think it's important they should be visited by people who don't know them to get a true impression and fresh insight." [G1, London termini]

"I found it easy to do because I know the station really well so it would be better if they get people to do the assessments who aren't familiar with the interchange" [G4, medium interchanges]

"This is all about understanding where everything is in relation to everything else, especially if you haven't used the station before. It would be better if the person didn't already know the station because then they will need to think more and they will learn more." [G6, smaller stations]

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An important part of the layout is whether it seems to be logical and if not, why not. London Bridge was provided as an example of a layout that is not logical, due to the fact that train platforms 1 to 6 are separated from the others and access between them is not always easy or clearly signposted.

Closely related to this is speed of movement around the interchange, especially in terms of the amount of time that needs to be allowed from one area to another when needing to make connections. The possibility of providing airport style signage to provide guidance for passengers in this respect was occasionally suggested by respondents.

"The key issue is where do you need to go to get where you are going. London Bridge is an example of a station that is confusing and could be difficult to understand for someone who doesn't use it regularly." [G2, London termini]

"London Bridge would be rated poor, Victoria is better, but the platforms are still in three sections and Waterloo would be best because there is one line of platforms." [G2, London termini]

"London Bridge is a nightmare. It would be helpful to give an idea of how long it takes to get from one part of the station to another, like they do at airports with departure gates." [G3, medium interchanges]

"You might want to know how long it takes to walk within the interchange, especially at busy times when you are having to dodge between other people." [G1, London termini]

Two issues relating to ticket barriers were identified that impact on perceptions of the layout. First is whether movement around the interchange is restricted in any way, especially in terms of whether there are bottlenecks caused by passengers being held at gate lines. Second is the knowledge of what is on either side of the barriers and how clearly this is communicated to passengers. The ease of access and egress is also an important general consideration and one that can be affected by the location of the ticket barriers within the interchange layout. Camden Town was cited as an example of a station that is too small to cope with passenger volumes and where ticket gates cause potentially dangerous bottlenecks that can overflow onto the surrounding streets.

"At some stations there are only a couple of the gates that are entrances and all the others are exits and that can cause chaos in the rush hour, so it would be useful to know things like that." [G4, medium interchanges]

"Sometimes it's a nightmare at Highbury and Islington because they hold people at the barriers when the platforms are too crowded, so that's an important element of the layout of that station." [G4, medium interchanges]

"It would be good to know what facilities are on the concourse and the platforms so you know what is on either side of the barrier." [G5, smaller stations]

The pre-sensitisation task asked whether retail outlets and kiosks caused a problem with interchange layouts. The majority view was that these tend to enhance rather than detract from the overall passenger experience. The only exception is in rare circumstances when a structure is felt to impede movement around a busy station.

"At Paddington you have to weave through all the little kiosks and it can be really annoying trying to get round the station – so I think it is relevant to know about the layout." [G1, London termini]

"I'm less concerned about whether there are retail outlets at the station and the layout of them, as long as they are not in the way when you are trying to move around." [G2, London termini]

"You would only need to have a list of the different retail outlets. It's not a layout issue." [G3, medium interchanges]

Three attributes included in the self-completion task were identified as being potentially difficult to assess in the context of the mystery shopper exercise:

- A general impression of the layout for the large London termini especially. This is due to the sheer size of some of these and the amount of time that is required to complete a full evaluation and the fact that the layout could be good in certain areas and poor in others

- 'Fitness for purpose' is considered to be too subjective and open to interpretation to produce meaningful or reliable evaluations. Some respondents were unsure how to respond to this or did not feel sufficiently qualified to provide an assessment

- Being asked to assess whether an interchange has a 'logical layout' causes some difficulty for similar reasons.

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4.3 Information and continuing your journey

Both are considered to be so critical to the successful functioning of an interchange that there is a strong argument in favour of having a dedicated section for each as part of the evaluation process.

"Signposting is one of the most important things. We do things on automatic pilot so we know where we are going, but, if you go to a station for the first time, you want to take your time to look at the information while you are on the concourse because then you know what you are doing at it will make journeys much calmer." [G4, medium interchanges]

Information and signage

The key issue for passengers is the quality, quantity and visibility of information available (although quality is more important than quantity). If needs in this respect are not immediately visible (perhaps due to the size of the interchange), details required must be easy to locate in an obvious and prominent position. One or two respondents also suggested that adopting a consistent style and format of information would help to make information easier to understand and remove some of the potential for confusion.

"I think this is one of the most important aspects of the whole thing because this is one of the only things I would be looking for." [G1, London termini]

"This is one of the most important criteria, but it's difficult to evaluate because there's lots to look for. It would be better to split this section otherwise it could be confusing." [G3, medium interchanges]

"You always need good information whether it's an interchange or not so this feels like it should be two separate sections." [G6, smaller stations]

"Lots of information is available on apps now, but it's still important to have good information because they are not always the first port of call and you may not have a smart phone or be underground." [G5, smaller stations]

"It would be helpful if they could ensure a uniform presentation of information so no matter where you are you always know what you are looking for." [G4, medium interchanges]

Ideally a station plan or directional guidance at floor level will be provided to facilitate navigation around larger stations. Timetables and line of route maps are also an essential requirement and if they are available in a format for passengers to take this is often appreciated. Quickly accessible details of departures, arrivals and service status are considered to be so fundamental that the rating should focus on the quality of this information rather than on its availability. Information on engineering works and associated disruptions is also a key need, if services from the interchange are affected.

London Underground tend to be a bit ahead of the train companies in terms of providing information about their services. They usually have good updates and real-time running information – so that should be used as the benchmark." [G2, London termini]

Even in situations where the provision of information and signage is rated very highly, passengers also expect that the option to talk to staff, ideally in the form of a manned information point, should always be available.

"I want to know whether staff are available to help because, even if this stuff is available, I always ask to double check to avoid making a mistake and wasting time." [G1, London termini]

"It's pointless having an information point if there is never a human being there that you can talk to, like in the banks. Barking has a kiosk, but I have never seen anyone in it." [G4, medium interchanges]

Continuing your journey inside and outside the interchange

This section of the evaluation should be focused specifically on information and signage that is intended to be used by passengers making connections and onward journeys. The first requirement is therefore to provide clear guidance to help with navigation within the interchange and clear indications about which exit to use (when more than one).

"It doesn't matter how complex a place is as long as the information is good." [G1, London termini]

Signage for passengers making onward journeys should show directional differences for the avoidance of doubt, so rather than being labelled as 'exit to bus stop', it should be clear exactly which route should be taken to travel in a particular direction away from the interchange.

"If it's a big station, there needs to be clear signage for which exit to use to make sure you leave at the right place. It's only a little thing but it would be really helpful and could save a lot of hassle." [G4, medium interchanges]

"Bank station is a good example of the type of information that should be provided for passengers. It's really big and could be confusing, but it's well signposted in terms of the exits and how to get to places of local interest." [G2, London termini]

"There is so much going on at some of the big stations in London, so passengers need to know how to navigate them. For example, Victoria coach station is a long way from the train station and the information on how to get there is really poor." [G2, London termini]

Respondents recognise the benefit of having local area maps and information available to assist with onward journeys. The minimum

requirement in this respect is for posters to be available at each exit of the interchange. Many also appreciate this being supplemented by the Legible London way-finding system. It is worth noting however that, although almost all are familiar with this initiative, none know it as Legible London so this needs to be included as part of the briefing for mystery shoppers.

"Maps of the station and local area are probably one of the most important things that you need and they need to be situated somewhere where you can stand and look at them without being hassled." [G4, medium interchanges]

"The maps of local streets are not in every station, but they are very useful when they are available." [G4, medium interchanges]

"Legible London information should be included here for people continuing their journey, otherwise it will be difficult to provide an overall rating." [G3, medium interchanges]

"The aspiration should be to have the type and quality of information that was available during the Olympics for all forms of public transport that is available from all stations." [G6, smaller stations]

There are three areas that have emerged as being less important in the context of interchanges for passengers but that London TravelWatch may still want to include as part of the evaluations:

- Having an obvious street presence or a clear station sign is something that was perhaps felt to be irrelevant rather than unimportant. Most assume that, by definition, an interchange will be evident enough to passengers to not require signposting. This is likely to be a function of respondents being familiar with the interchange they were asked to evaluate. We suggest that it is appropriate to ask about the visibility of signage (but avoid using the term 'totem' as this is confusing).

- Whether local bus stops have 'Countdown' is felt to be useful to know, but not any more essential in the context of an interchange than elsewhere. It may not be necessary to include this as an attribute used to evaluate interchange performance therefore.

- Passengers are uncertain about the value of white boards. Obviously this type of information is preferable to nothing at all, but almost everything else is considered to be better. Some claim to ignore hand-written notices on the basis that there is no way of knowing whether details are still relevant at the time they are seen (or redundant but not erased by staff).

"I don't know why they have those boards with written information; perhaps they think it will grab your attention more. I think they need a more modern version of it." [G3, medium interchanges]

4.4 Availability of staff for assistance and information

Findings on this occasion in relation to staff were consistent with recent research conducted for London TravelWatch.[3] Having staff available to provide assistance and information is considered to be especially important at interchanges since passengers anticipate help is more likely to be needed due to complexities often anticipated when making connections. The key issue is, therefore, the role played by staff and their helpfulness when approached, rather than simply having staff available.

"The questionnaire is all about the number of staff that are there, but the more important thing is whether they are useful because, when I approached staff to ask a question, they were chatting and ignored me." [G1, London termini]

"The emphasis in this section should be on the helpfulness rather than the availability of staff because it's variable. London Underground staff tend to be more clued up and have a good attitude. Some staff are anoraks with specialist knowledge, but that's what you want as a passenger." [G2, London termini]

"It would be useful to know whether staff have knowledge and information available on the surrounding area, as well as the services that run from the station." [G5, smaller stations]

Once again, security is recognised to be an important staff function since any presence provides a degree of reassurance, although needs in relation to interchanges are no more acute than for other stations.

"Station staff are like the police; you might not need them very often, but it's reassuring to see them around." [G1, London termini]

"A human presence is a deterrent, so it's important to know whether there will be someone there." [G4, medium interchanges]

Although an important category, the staff issues should be relatively easy to assess. The basic need is to identify numbers and locations of staff (in relation to the size of the interchange) and how this varies at different times of the day. The knowledge and helpfulness of staff can be evaluated in terms of how they respond to pre-determined questions.

"The most important thing is to know what hours the station will be staffed. And it would also be nice to know where they are likely to be." [G4, medium interchanges]

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[3] Passengers' ticketing and journey experiences, London TravelWatch, July 2013; Value for money on London's transport services:what consumers think, London TravelWatch, August 2013

Queue length is also considered to be an additional way to assess staff efficiency, and is obviously important to measure during peak and off-peak periods. This evaluation would need to include indications of when the ticket office is manned and issues relating to Ticket Vending Machines, such as numbers available (and working), any queues to use them and whether staff are available to provide help if required.

"You want to know how many ticket windows are manned to help you plan your journey in advance. You also need to know how well staff are deployed and whether they are cross-trained to help you use the ticket machines if necessary." [G6, smaller stations]

"You need to know whether ticket machines are available and the average time you have to queue to get a ticket, so you can plan it into your journey time." [G5, smaller stations]

The only issues that were identified as being difficult for a mystery shopper to assess are the total number of staff on duty at any time in larger interchanges and whether the circumstances of the visit are typical (although this would be mitigated by ensuring visits are conducted at different times of day).

4.5 Personal security

In recent research conducted for London TravelWatch, personal security was identified as an area of high concern among many using public transport in the London area.[4] It is therefore not surprising that this emerged as a critical issue for inclusion in the evaluations, (even though concerns are no greater at interchanges than any other station).

"This is important because, if somewhere got a bad review, you would take notice of it and maybe choose not to use that station, especially if there has been recent crime there." [G1, London termini]

"This is a really important thing to know because I used to be scared of using Crystal Palace Station. You need to know how good the lighting is, whether there are panic buttons and if staff are available to make passengers feel safe." [G6, smaller stations]

"This is really important because there is a lot of crime in London and on public transport, so you want to know whether there are British Transport Police at the station, or if there is a police station nearby." [G5, smaller stations]

The size of the interchange is acknowledged to be an important consideration since different security concerns need to be accounted for at a

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[4] The London travelling environment: what consumers think, London TravelWatch, January 2014

busy London terminal compared with a smaller interchange in a quiet area of outer London. Although the general view is that passengers are unlikely to be the primary users of output from the evaluations, respondents felt that this specific assessment could play an important role in journey planning.

Security issues are closely related to certain staff attributes (and would therefore not require separate evaluation). Most important in this respect are the numbers and locations of staff, and variations at different times of day. Passengers also want to know about the extent of lighting in all areas inside and outside the interchange, and whether subways or alleys need to be used for access purposes. It will also be helpful to know whether exits are onto streets rather than a car park or a vulnerable location and an impression of the local area is also required.

"This is something I would definitely want to know about because I often travel at the weekend with young children. It would be especially important to know whether the station is well lit and whether it is safe to use it after dark." [G2, London termini]

"I want to know how well-lit the station is at night, especially if it's a small station next to a park rather than on a main road." [G5, smaller stations]

There are mixed views on the issue of CCTV. All consider this to be an essential safety feature, but since it is now considered to be universal across the transport network, the evaluation needs to go beyond whether cameras are present. The main concern is whether the CCTV cameras are working and being monitored, and this is likely to be very difficult for a mystery shopper to assess.

"The point about CCTV is irrelevant in London because all stations will have it. The more important point is whether it is working and being monitored." [G1, London termini]

"I assume all stations have CCTV so the key issue is visibility and whether it's monitored and what level of CCTV is available." [G3, medium interchanges]

"CCTV is no substitute for a person and how can you tell if it is working? There's no point in evaluating it because it's no good unless it's being monitored." [G6, smaller stations]

Some recognise that the presence of barrier gates may help to deter undesirables from accessing the interchange, but will not prevent those who are determined. This is therefore felt to be less relevant to the evaluation from a security perspective (but can be included within the Layout category).

4.6 Facilities

Provision of facilities is especially important at interchanges given that passengers are likely to spend more time at them than other stations. Almost everything is considered to be relevant for inclusion, but discussions of toilets dominate the passenger agenda and represent a microcosm of attitudes regarding the evaluation of facilities in a broader sense. In this respect, passengers recognise the importance of distinguishing between the availability of facilities and the quality and cost of them.

"There is a big difference between big stations and small ones so everything needs to be monitored because, as a passenger, you need to know what facilities are available. Everything is valid and necessary." [G2, London termini]

"Toilets are the most important thing. You need to know whether they are available, what condition they are in and whether they are free or not." [G3, medium interchanges]

As long as a simple and uniform assessment can be established that avoids overlaps with other evaluation categories, this is a high priority area for passengers who recognise its potential usefulness, at least at a theoretical level. In this respect, the need to know about car parking facilities was occasionally highlighted, whether from this type of evaluation or another information source.

"It would be more important to know about car parking than toilets because it's something that you need to plan to use. You would need to know cost per hour and any other relevant details" [G3, medium interchanges]

"You would want to know whether parking is available and how many spaces there are and how much it costs. Also, is there a drop-off point, or is there a red route outside the station?" [G6, smaller stations]

Findings on this occasion are consistent with the report published by London TravelWatch on walking and interchange in London in September 2011. Both projects recognise that the facilities available will depend on the size of the interchange, but that there is an expectation that some things will always be provided, including toilets, shelter, seating and cycle parking. Other facilities that are considered essential to evaluate (that are not covered within other categories) are the availability of refreshments and other retail outlets, a lost property office and a comfortable waiting room (as opposed to a basic platform shelter).
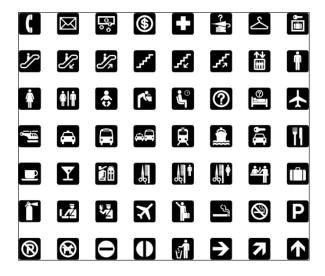
"I would want to know whether there is anywhere to shelter when it's raining because that could make a big difference and I might choose to use a different station on that basis." [G6, smaller stations]

"You need to know whether the station can be accessed with ease. Tulse Hill is a nightmare to drive to so people may decide not to drive there, or to drive to another station instead." [G5, smaller stations]

"I would like to know whether there are waiting rooms or shelters, and how many there are, and whether they are on all platforms." [G5, smaller stations]

"It would be a good idea to include symbols to provide a quick and easy snapshot of the facilities that are available, but it would be important to know what times they are available." [G6, smaller stations]

"They should differentiate between black cabs and mini cabs because some people wouldn't feel happy about getting into a mini cab." [G1, London termini]

5 Other categories

The 'environmental quality' category elicited mixed views in terms of its relevance, but, on balance, our recommendation is for it to be included in the mystery shopper exercise. The other two categories were thought to be less relevant since they seemed to address station generics rather than passenger needs of an interchange. The following sections provide a more detailed appraisal of these three categories from a passenger perspective.

5.1 Environmental quality

The pre-sensitisation exercise revealed some broad consistencies with the findings from the research recently published by London TravelWatch on this subject. Environmental quality is a difficult concept to easily communicate to passengers and, consequently, there was evidence of some misunderstanding and confusion in terms of how to evaluate this category. The general feeling is that, although certain aspects may have an impact on passengers, these are things that are likely to have minimal impact on journeys or the functionality of the interchange. Consequently, this tends to be regarded as a lower priority area, especially since the most important attributes are perceived to overlap with the personal security category.

Environmental quality is less tangible than most of the other evaluation categories and, therefore, more difficult to assess. Passengers seem to be more interested in the implications of poor environmental quality, but this is equally difficult to assess based on a mystery shopper visit. Essentially, what passengers want to know is whether the interchange is the kind of place they would want to spend time at or walk around in the event of needing to wait for a connection.

"The most important is to feel safe in the environment and that is related to the quality of the environment, so perhaps lighting should be included here." [G4, medium interchanges]

"You want the place to look nice and to create a good impression rather than being dirty and run down because it can tell you a lot about the area rather than just the station." [G2, London termini]

"You would just want to know about the scenery and visual aspects of the station, and whether there is a nice view if you need to wait there." [G3, medium interchanges]

"I want to know whether it's a nice place to wait because I often travel with my kids and I would prefer them to be in a nice environment." [G5, smaller stations]

Health and safety issues are assumed to be taken for granted (and beyond the remit of a mystery shopper exercise) so the focus needs to be on whether the interchange seems to be cared for, which could be assessed through issues such as the presence of (un-commissioned) graffiti and the amount of noise and passengers.

"The reason why graffiti is important is because it affects your sense of security when you are at the station, especially if there are subways you need to use." [G1, London termini]

"Graffiti isn't a top priority, but you would want to know whether the station was subject to lots of vandalism due to it being in a rough area." [G6, smaller stations]

"Graffiti can be nice to look at; it depends on the quality of it. So I don't know how you could get someone to provide a rating for that." [G5, smaller stations]

Attributes considered to be less relevant are the aesthetics of the station, litter or graffiti that may happen to be present at the time of the evaluation rather than a permanent problem, and the provision and location of bins. Although these things contribute to the environmental quality of the interchange, they are unlikely to impact on journeys at a functional level.

"Graffiti isn't a big issue at the moment because it's gone the next day; so they are really on it at the moment." [G4, medium interchanges]

"You want to know whether the station is free from litter and whether staff keep it clean and tidy. The issue of litter is difficult in London because it's not always possible to have bins." [G2, London termini]

5.2 Infrastructure and the area around the interchange

This was included in the draft evaluation form used for the pre-sensitisation exercise since 'physical infrastructure' was identified as one of the key themes to emerge from the London TravelWatch members' visits to interchanges in 2011.

This was the category that respondents in this research project had most difficulty completing. The main problem is that these tend to be perceived as separate issues for passengers, both of which are not directly associated with the primary function of an interchange from their perspective. Some respondents did not understand what was meant by the term 'physical infrastructure' and others failed to appreciate the significance of it in the context of their needs of an interchange.

"I thought this section was misleading and unclear. It could include everything to do with the station and is too big a question to answer. It's like

asking twenty questions, but only being allowed one answer." [G6, smaller stations]

"I suppose this means the state of repair of the building. It would only be important if something is unsafe, or if there is construction work going on that will interfere with your journey and movement around the interchange." [G5, smaller stations]

The area around the interchange is considered to be more important. This is consistent with the London TravelWatch report which focuses on the quality of the external public realm within the 'physical infrastructure' theme. This includes issues such as footways, kerb heights, crossings, bus stops and highway furniture. These attributes are or could be included within other categories (such as accessibility), if necessary.

"You might want to know whether the area around the interchange is a ghetto for safety reasons or maybe if you are a tourist and thinking of staying in the area." [G1, London termini]

"The area is more important to know about, especially late at night. You need to know if it is isolated or has alleyways. Things like that could make the difference between me using that station or going to a bigger one." [G6, smaller stations]

The views were reinforced during discussions surrounding this element of the evaluation process during the focus groups. Respondents consider the most important attributes to be the ease of passenger movement around the interchange and its ability to cope with high passenger volumes.

Connectivity between modes and platforms at the interchange is obviously essential as this will reflect the practicalities of the passenger interface with all areas of it. These are all addressed in other sections of the evaluation process.

The only important issues not covered elsewhere are the facilities around the station and whether any long-term re-development work that may impact on journeys is in progress. Both of these can be incorporated into other sections of the appraisal.

"It would be important to know if there are any major works that will affect usage of the station and this would need to be updated on at least a monthly basis or even weekly, depending on the nature of the work." [G2, London termini]

Attributes considered nice to have, but not critical to the functionality of the interchange, are: aesthetics of the building or surrounding area; cleanliness of buildings and their state of repair; nice station setting; and temporary maintenance, or anything else that does not impact on service provision.

"It's obviously important that things are in a good state of repair but it's not one of the most important things for passengers who are interchanging" [G1, London termini]

There is some feeling that the scope of this evaluation could be too demanding as one element of a mystery shopper visit, especially for some of the larger London interchanges. Passengers do not feel sufficiently qualified to assess issues such as the quality of buildings in terms of whether they are structurally sound and in a good state of repair. The term 'public realm' is not readily understood and would require explanation during mystery shopper briefing sessions.

"Infrastructure is difficult to assess unless you are an expert because it might look in good repair but you might not know" [G1, London termini]

5.3 Physical quality and management of surrounding area and streets

There are a number of parallels between this section and the one described above. It was also included in the pre-sensitisation exercise on the basis of being identified as an important theme in the London TravelWatch report in 2011. This is also an area that passengers find difficult to assess and consider to be tangential to the primary function of an interchange.

"I didn't really know what this section was getting at. I think the questions should focus on the modes of transport rather than the pavements outside to make it feel more relevant." [G3, medium interchanges]

"I felt that this was all a bit too much and a lot of it felt like waffle to me" [G6, smaller stations]

"I don't know what this is about because I tend to keep within the station I use and don't need to go outside" [G5, smaller stations]

These problems are exacerbated by the terminology, which is not readily understood by a layman, and also by the fact that much of the content seems to overlap with attributes identified in other sections. Since this category is concerned exclusively with the surrounding area, it can feel less immediate and, therefore, important in the context of passenger interchange requirements.

"If you are just interchanging and passing through, then this isn't really relevant, only if you are stopping there. It depends how you are travelling." [G4, medium interchanges]

"Some of the questions in this section feel a bit similar to others and I don't think that this feels as though it should be a separate section within the evaluation." [G2, London termini]

Consequently, the self-completion exercises tended to focus only on issues perceived to be directly relevant to interchanging, such as movement within the building and the area immediately outside only. The emphasis on the surrounding area tends to concentrate on modes of transport rather than footpaths, although the need for these to be pedestrian friendly and to have adequate capacity, and crossing provision is recognised. Other relevant issues that could be included in the assessment are parking and drop-off facilities, and whether facilities such as cycle hire, taxi ranks and mini cab offices are available nearby.

"It would be helpful to know if the outside is pedestrian friendly because sometimes, outside a station, it is impossible to cross the road and you have to walk for miles." [G1, London termini]

"The only thing I would want to know is how easy is it to find your way to other modes of transport if you have to go outside the station." [G1 London termini]

"You want to know what facilities there are to continue with public transport when you leave the station such as buses, taxis and cycle hire." [G4, medium interchanges]

"This needs to be more specific to the parts of your journey and travel experience that are more concerned with how you are getting from A to B." [G6, smaller stations]

Specific issues included from the London TravelWatch report that are felt to be less relevant to primary interchange needs are things such as the extent

to which footpaths are cluttered with advertising boards and the presence of abandoned bikes attached to railings.

"Whether there is rubbish or clutter outside is irrelevant because it won't stop me from using the interchange and I won't take it into consideration when I'm planning my journey." [G5, smaller stations]

6   Conclusions

1. Passengers recognise the value of an exercise that is intended to provide an evaluation of interchanges and understand the theoretical benefits of this to them as potential users of this information.

2. In reality, however, it is unlikely that data published by London TravelWatch will be widely used for journey planning purposes. The main reason for this is that it would not be possible for the intended Mystery Shopper exercise to be conducted with sufficient breadth or frequency for passengers to consider it as a reliable enough source of up to date information.

3. It will therefore be important to be clear about the role that a Mystery Shopper exercise will have. In order to maximise the effectiveness of the evaluation process, the design of the questionnaire needs to take into account how the information gathered will be used. Since passengers are unlikely to use it for information and guidance when using interchanges, there may be an opportunity for the exercise to be more specifically focused around London TravelWatch's broader campaigning agenda.

4. There are subtle differences between what passengers and London TravelWatch are likely to consider to be priorities for the interchange evaluation exercise. Passengers are mainly focused on the immediate, tangible aspects of how the interchange works for them at a functional level rather than wider public realm considerations and issues related to the station infrastructure and environment.

5. Passengers (and, therefore, Mystery Shoppers) are likely to find it difficult to evaluate elements that are perceived to require specialist knowledge or expertise. The exercise should therefore focus on issues that were considered to be most important and relevant to avoid evaluation from becoming too complex. The simplest way to achieve this will be to concentrate on issues that are most relevant to interchange specifics rather than more generic aspects of the station.

6. It may be that the Mystery Shopper exercise originally envisaged is used by London TravelWatch as a means to an end rather than being the end itself. In order to best promote the interests of consumers, the draft questionnaire could be used to provide a deeper understanding of passenger needs and requirements of interchanges, and socialise these criteria by conducting a pilot exercise.

7. Once this has been achieved, London TravelWatch could use the insights gained as leverage to support their influence as a passenger watchdog organisation to encourage other bodies to conduct the Mystery Shopper exercise on a scale that would identify priorities for investment and improvement, and have more traction among end users of public transport in the London area.

Appendix A - Focus group discussion guide

London TravelWatch – Interchange
90 Minute Groups - Discussion Guide Final

Introduction
- Introduce self / AECOM / viewing facility
- Explain nature and purpose of research
- Outline research agenda and process
- Respondent details: name, occupation, which interchange used

Context
- Do you ever look for advice or recommendations when making decisions about planned purchases or other aspects of your life?
- Which sources of information are you aware of? Which have you used? *[Spontaneous then prompt with Which?, Trip Advisor, Egon Ronay, Ofsted reports etc.]*
- Which of these would you take most notice of? Have any ever influenced any decisions you have made? Why / not?
- Which of these sources do you trust most and least? Why?
- What do you understand by the term 'interchange'? Is this a term you are happy with or is it too jargonistic?

Interchange Overview
- How frequently do you use the interchange that you did the pre-task for?
- Which other interchanges do you use at least occasionally?
- How much consideration have you given to the issues raised in the pre-task previously? To what extent do you consider these things to be important to you?
- Have you ever thought that some interchanges are better or worse than others?
- What are the criteria you have used to evaluate them in the past?
- Are there any examples of very good or very poor interchanges you are aware of?
- How easy / difficult did you find the pre-task to complete?
- What are your overall thoughts about the interchanges you evaluated?

[In the following sections, respondents will refer to their pre-task exercises. However, they will be encouraged to focus on the ease of completion of each section and the relevance of the suggested evaluation areas the rather than details of station specifics]

Infrastructure and area around the interchange
- How else could this be described / summarised?
- What do you think this includes?
- How easy / difficult is it to assess these things together?
- How important is the area around the interchange?
- Should the assessment concentrate on the interchange only?
- What additional information / prompts would be useful? e.g...

- Quality of the buildings – what does this mean?
- Structurally sound – how would you know this?
- Buildings, platforms etc in a good a good state of repair – how important is this?
- Free from maintenance issues – will this always be obvious? Is this a negative or positive element?
- Immediate area around the interchange being well maintained – do you care about this? Does this impact on how you use the interchange and its functionality?
- Public realm quality – what does this mean to you? What if this was expressed as clear of clutter, adequate pavement width, accessible routes and good flooring
- Nice station setting – is this relevant?

Accessibility
- What does this mean to you? – think about how you would use it with luggage or a relative with a mobility problem or travelling with children
- Does this mean for all passengers or for those with disabilities only?
- What aspects were you looking for in your assessment?
- What additional information / prompts would be useful? e.g...
- Guidance on how accessibility should be defined (e.g. If the station is step-free from street to train, that would be outstanding. If just from street to platform, that would be good. A few steps may be judged adequate.)
- How many steps are there from street level to the platform?
- Is there a lift for passenger use?
- Is the platform at train floor level?
- How would you describe / assess the gap between the platform and the train?
- Are the nearby bus-stops accessible? (The kerb is of regular height and there are no impediments)

Layout
- How did you evaluate this?
- What criteria did you take into consideration?
- What additional information / prompts would be useful? e.g...
- Is the station fit for purpose – what does this mean?
- Is the station layout logical?
- Is it too overcrowded on a regular basis or full up with commercial kiosks to the detriment of passenger movement?
- Would it be better to have fewer kiosks? Why / not?
- Is the concourse clear and easy to navigate?
- Are there ticket gates? What impact does this have on your views?
- Are there convenient exits from the station?

Environmental quality
- What does this mean to you?
- How important is this?
- What things were you looking for specifically?
- What additional information / prompts would be useful? e.g…

- Is there any graffiti? Where? Is it offensive or acceptable?
- Is the station clear of litter?
- Are the platforms clear of litter?
- Is the track clear of litter? Why is this important?
- Are there any bins? Where are they situated?
- Are there bins on every platform?
- Is it reasonable to expect no graffiti and no litter?
- What constitutes Outstanding in this respect?

The physical quality and management of the surrounding area and streets
- What does this mean in the context of an interchange?
- How important is this to you as a passenger?
- Is this relevant to all users of the interchange?
- How should the surrounding area be defined? How far beyond the interchange?
- Should this include the bus stops, town centre and nearby stations? How near / far?
- Is this about being step-free, uncluttered, continuous and well signed? Which of these is most / least important?
- What additional information / prompts would be useful? e.g.
- Is the immediate vicinity around the station maintained well (clean/well-lit, etc.)?
- Is movement at the interchange impeded by anything (such as clutter)?
- Are there any Legible London posts? Are you aware of these? Do you use them?
- Is the footway wide, clear and level?

Information and continuing your journey
- What are the key requirements in this respect?
- What type of information should be provided as a basic minimum?
- What do you use as benchmarks for comparison?
- What do you think of information at London Underground stations? How do interchanges compare?
- What additional information / prompts would be useful? e.g.
- Is there good timetable and mapping information for passengers arriving to use the interchange and continuing their journey on from the interchange?
- Are the information signs located in an easy to find / read place?
- Are timetables available and clearly visible?
- Do nearby bus stops have bus stop Countdown?
- If the station doesn't have an obvious presence on the street (e.g. St Pancras), is there a clear station sign?
- Are there any continuing your journey signs / totems?
- Are there directional differences in these signs (e.g. bus to Lewisham →, bus to New Cross ←)?
- Is there an engineering works information board/poster?
- Are these information boards found within the station or on a platform?
- Is information displayed at appropriate places (or wherever there is a space)?
- Is information easily accessible or mixed with advertising?
- Is typeface size and contrast acceptable on all information displays?

- What additional information types / sources could there be?

Facilities – toilets, shopping, café, travel assistance service, waiting room, shelter from the weather, plentiful cycle parking in an overlooked location etc.
- How many of these facilities are there? Which are most / least important?
- Are there toilets? Are they free? If not, what does it cost?
- Is there either a café or a waiting room?
- Is there a cycle park? Is it secure / overlooked?
- Is there a taxi rank?
- Is there a drop off point?
- Is there an information point?
- Is this a staffed information point?
- What other facilities are important and need to be part of the evaluation?

Personal security
- Are staff available on both concourse and platforms?
- Is the station well-lit throughout, particularly in any sub-ways or similar areas?
- Are platforms well-lit?
- Is the immediate vicinity around the station well-lit?
- Is access to platforms controlled by either ticket inspection or automatic barrier gates?
- Does the interchange have any CCTV?
- Are there any other features that need to be considered?

Availability of staff for assistance and information
- Are there staff covering ticket office, platform and concourse at all times so that passengers are not queuing for staff attention for too long?
- Where within the interchange were staff located? Ticket Office? Concourse? Gates?
- Were there any queues for a ticket vendor / machines? How long was the queue? Is this acceptable?
- At major stations, is there a permanent single information point for all services (rather than multiple ones)?

Future interchange evaluation
- How easy / difficult will this be to achieve?
- What are the most / least important dimensions for evaluation? What are the things that matter most to you as interchange users?
- Is it possible to define a clear set of criteria within each evaluation element (to ensure ratings are consistent and objective)?
- Will it be possible to use the suggested scale (Outstanding, Good, Adequate, Poor) or would something else be more appropriate?
- How much notice would you take if the ratings were made available to you as a passenger?
- Would you use the ratings to inform your journey planning / decision making? Why / not?
- Would you favour or avoid certain interchanges based on their ratings? Why / not?

Appendix B - Focus group composition

The composition of six focus groups, each lasting approximately 90 minutes was as follows:

Composition of focus groups – main London termini

	Main London termini	
Age indication	20-40	41-65
Socio economic class	BC1C2	C1C2D
Location	Central London	Croydon
Group no.	1	2

Composition of focus groups – medium sized interchange

	Medium sized interchange	
Age indication	20-40	41-65
Socio economic class	BC1C2	C1C2D
Location	Croydon	Central London
Group no.	3	4

Composition of focus groups – smaller stations

	Smaller stations	
Age indication	20-40	41-65
Socio economic class	C1C2D	BC1C2
Location	Bromley	Bromley
Group no.	5	6

Additional Recruitment Criteria
- A mix of both sexes in each group
- All regular users of relevant interchange stations
- Some in each group to be interchanging from one mode of transport to another at these stations
- Mix of journey types represented, including commuters, leisure users and business users in each group
- Groups were recruited to be representative of the ethnicity of their local area