



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# **Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme – Baseline Data Report**

**June 2022**

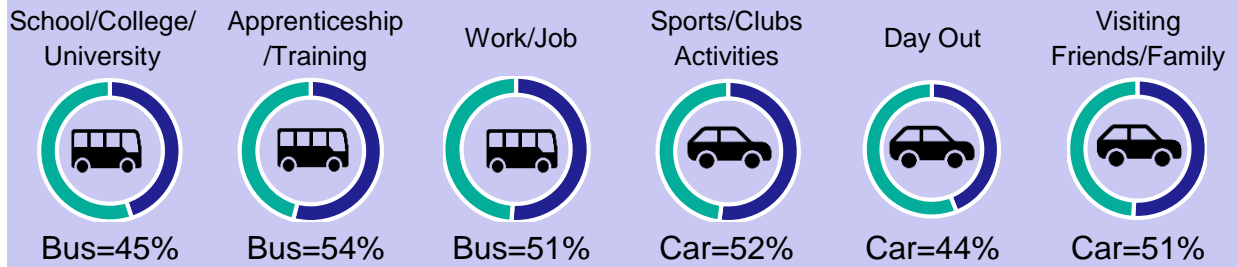
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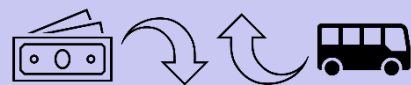
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## Infographic Summary of Findings

### Main Mode of Transport



Bus use increased as household income decreased



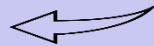
### Transport Spend

Over £75

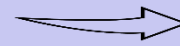


61%

Parents who responded - household travel spend



Young people's own travel spend

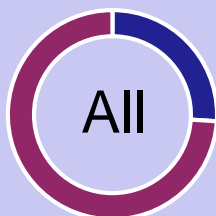


Up to £50



60%

### Affordability - Travel and transport is very or fairly affordable:



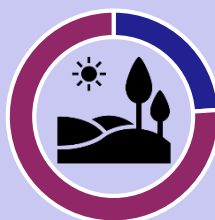
All=26%



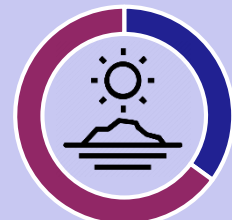
Cities=30%



Towns=25%



Rural=24%



Islands=35%

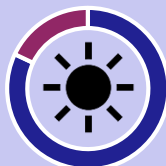
### Accessing Opportunities

**29%** missed out on activities or opportunities due to travel

Mostly social, leisure and sporting activities

Some evidence of impacts on education and work opportunities

### Perceptions of Safety - Always or often feel safe using buses:



Day time=82%



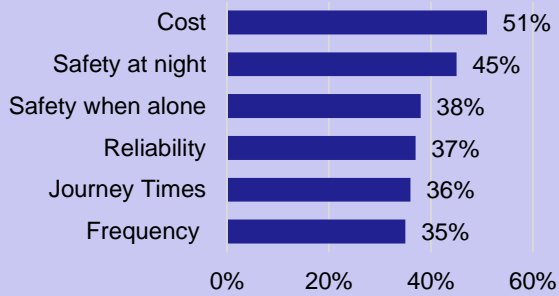
Night time=37%

Those who felt unsafe cited concerns about **anti-social behaviour, bullying or harassment**, and other passengers being under the influence of **alcohol or drugs**

18% had experienced bullying/harassment on board buses

All minority groups had greater experience of this

### Barriers to Bus Use



Timetables, frequency of buses, limited route options, and a lack of bus stops nearby were more acute for those in rural areas and on islands.

Cost and reliability were more acute for those in cities and towns, and for lower income households.

### Awareness & Expected Use of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

**67%** were aware of the free bus travel

**74%** would use at least once a week

**19% - 40%** Would travel to the same destinations **more often**

**10% - 27%** Would travel to **new destinations**

**9% - 33%** Would do **both**

Reasons for not using the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel:



- Lack of available buses locally
- Buses don't go where needed
- Concerns over reliability
- Concerns about anti-social behaviour

### Expected Impact of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

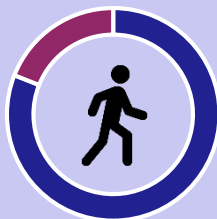


Bus use expected to increase across all journey types  
 Increase in bus use between 21 and 45 percentage points by journey type

**26% - 44%** expect to shift to bus use from private vehicles/cars across all journey purposes

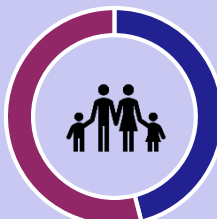


Travel more independently



81%

Use bus for more family journeys



46%

Those more likely to think they would make family trips by bus:

- Those living in cities
- Those with lower incomes

Main reasons for using bus for family trips:

- Affordability
- Removes parking challenges and costs

Main reasons for not using bus for family trips:

- Adult fares too expensive
- More cost effective or convenient to drive/use another mode of public transport

## Introduction

### Background

In 2020, the Scottish Government announced plans to introduce free bus travel to those resident in Scotland aged under 19. Following an extensive [public consultation exercise](#) a further commitment to extend this offer to those aged under 22 was announced in 2021. Up to 930,000 young people across Scotland are eligible for the scheme, which is expected to deliver the following objectives:

- embedding positive sustainable travel behaviours;
- opening up social, education, employment and leisure opportunities; and
- reducing household outgoings to aid children, particularly those living in poverty.

The Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme was implemented on 31 January 2022 and applications could be made from 10 January onwards. All young people and children aged 5-21 years old and resident in Scotland can apply for a card to access free bus journeys (or in some cases can download a travel product to an existing card). The scheme provides free travel on any bus in any part of Scotland, with young people able to travel on buses both locally, and outside the area they live - although a few services, such as premium-fare night buses and City Sightseeing buses, are not included within the free travel scheme.

### Evaluation of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

In line with other travel/transport schemes, Transport Scotland are conducting process, impact and outcome evaluations of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme. These will assess the short, medium and long term impacts of the scheme by comparing conditions at different stages. The evaluation work will consist of:

- **a baseline study** - this will establish current travel behaviour and seek to understand the attitudes and perceptions of young people towards travel. This will be conducted before the scheme is implemented;
- **stage 1 evaluation** - work will take place up to a year after implementation to consider the short to medium term impacts and outcomes of the scheme, as well as to provide insights into how the policy is working in practice; and
- **stage 2 evaluation** - work will take place up to five years post-implementation. This will focus on longer-term impacts and outcomes.

Wellside Research Ltd. (an independent social research consultancy), supported by Stantec (a transport planning consultancy), were appointed to undertake the baseline exercise. Work was conducted between November 2021 and February

2022, with the primary data collection taking place between 6 December 2021 and 24 January 2022 (prior to the start of the scheme). This report outlines the baseline study findings.

## Logic Model

A logic model for the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme was created by the research team (Wellside and Stantec) to support the development of the baseline data collection. It is based on a logic model used to design the overall evaluation of the scheme.

The main components of the logic model are described in more detail below and shown in Figure 1. Each component is related, for example, if the scheme is delivered as intended (output), then the expected changes in travel behaviour (outcomes), should lead to a positive impact on individuals and society (impacts).

**Context:** the transport problems and opportunities which the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme is seeking to address. This effectively forms the rationale for proceeding with the intervention i.e. the 'case for change' which underpins the business case:

- young people are likely to face financial barriers to accessing bus travel
- lack of accessibility reduces employment, education and social opportunities for young people (exacerbating inequality)
- the use of private vehicles is a significant contributor to climate change. Bus offers a greener, more sustainable travel choice
- low income households face cost barriers to travel and/or can't afford to travel with children

**Input:** the investment and processes required to deliver the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme. This includes: the bus operators, National Entitlement Card, Local Authorities, other partners, and back office technology and activities required to deliver the scheme together with the cost of delivery.

**Outputs:** young people aged 5-21 are provided with a valid travel pass allowing them free travel on-board buses across Scotland.

**Outcomes:** changes in travel behaviour which result from the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme:

### Short/Medium-term:

- Increased awareness and use of the scheme.
- Mode switch from: Car driver/passenger; Walking/Wheeling/Cycling; Train/Tram/Subway; Taxis.

- Travel more frequently, changes in destination, new trips made.
- Reduction in travel costs for families.

**Long-term:**

- Increased propensity to use the bus.
- Stabilisation/growth in the bus market and potential for positive or negative supply changes i.e. new bus routes/connections/improved frequency as a result of increased demand and decrease in connections/frequency due to reduced commercial viability of services.
- Fewer drivers means fewer cars on the road and a redistribution of public transport and active travel demand.

**Impacts:** individual and societal changes which occur as a consequence of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme, and are expected to contribute to the National Transport Strategy's Vision (Reduces Inequalities, Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth, Takes Climate Action, Improves Health and Wellbeing) in the following ways:

**Reduced Inequalities and Delivers Inclusive Economic Growth**

- Improved personal independence.
- Increased engagement in leisure and social opportunities, and increased opportunities in employment, education, and training.
- Increased economic activity associated with increased opportunities and disposable income resulting in productivity benefits from widening the labour market.
- Potential reduction in transport poverty.

**Takes Climate Action**

- Reduction in vehicle emissions and improved air quality
- Reduction in congestion

**Improves Health and Wellbeing**

- Improved safety
- Reduced isolation from peer/social group
- Improved opportunities to access support services and social opportunities.

**Potential negative outcomes/impacts:** There are also a number of unintended consequences that could be a result of introducing the scheme. These outcomes/impacts will be monitored and evidenced as part of the evaluation, and include the following:

- Risk of widening inequality gaps (e.g. urban vs rural/islands)
- Reduced active travel (less likely to walk)



- Reduced use or and/or income for other transport operators (e.g. taxis and other public transport modes)
- Risk (real or perceived) of overcrowding/anti-social behaviour resulting in reduced bus use by older/disabled people
- Increased exposure to risk (real or perceived) of anti-social behaviour or harassment
- Impact on current funding landscape and local budgets

The logic model was used to guide the development of the baseline data collection, identifying the evidence required to address each of the potential outcomes and impacts, as well as which elements could be addressed using secondary data sources and where bespoke survey data would be required to fill data gaps.

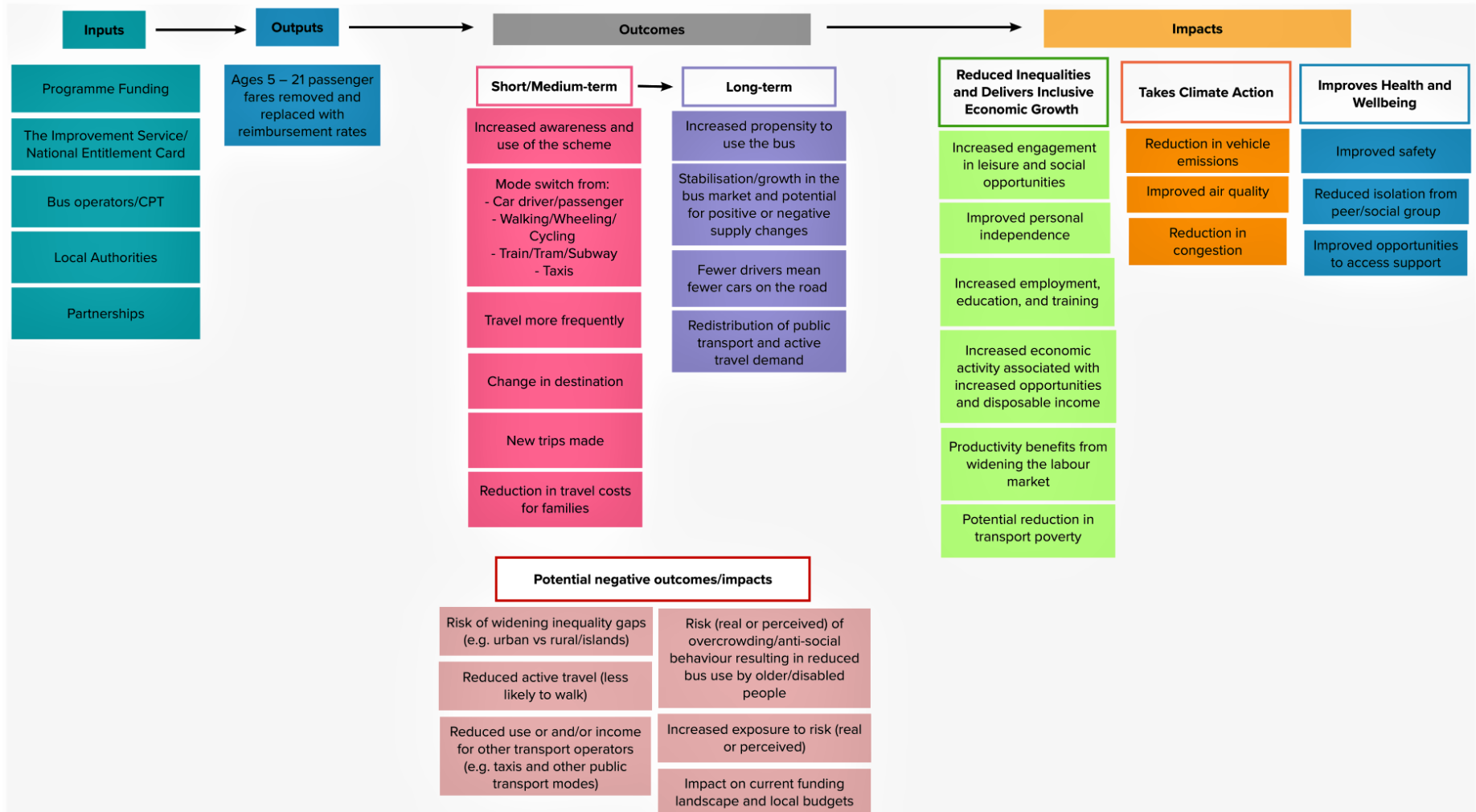


Figure 1: Baseline Logic Model

## Methodology

Baseline data collection was undertaken in order to provide pre-implementation travel pattern data (as outlined below). This will facilitate future evaluations to establish whether the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme has achieved its objectives and delivered the desired benefits to young people.

Mixed methods were employed, including an online survey, development of counterfactual data, and secondary data analysis - each of which is outlined below.

### Online Survey

An online survey was conducted with children, young people and their parents. The survey aimed to capture the current travel habits of children and young people (before the free travel was introduced), and sought feedback on the impact of COVID-19 on travel behaviours, perceptions of bus travel and any barriers faced, as well as awareness, perceptions and expected use of the free bus travel.

Directors of Education were asked to support the promotion of the online survey through schools, with schools requested to circulate an invitation email and survey link to parents. The survey was also promoted to College and University students via the Higher Education Institution (HEI) Trickle page (an internal platform for communicating with colleges and universities across Scotland). Wider promotion was also undertaken with appropriate agencies including Young Scot and Skills Development Scotland advertising the survey to their members. While young people aged 12+ were able to complete the survey themselves, those aged 5-11 needed a parent to complete this on their behalf - parents were also able to respond on behalf of older children as well. As this was a self-completion based survey, all respondents were self-selecting, and no quotas for particular respondent typologies were applied (although weighting was utilised in the analysis to adjust any over/under-representation - this is discussed under 'Survey Analysis' below).

The survey ran for seven weeks, from 6 December 2021 to 24 January 2022.

### Counterfactual Data

In addition to understanding current travel patterns, the research aimed to establish counterfactual data in order to determine the extent to which any future impacts were driven by the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme rather than other factors. A range of options were considered and discounted however, including:

- Those age 5-21 not eligible for the provision - as the free travel provides a universal benefit to all those aged 5-21 across the whole of Scotland, such a control group was not available.
- A sample from other age groups - they are distinctly different from those aged 5-21, and they too may be impacted by the scheme (e.g. older bus users who may experience capacity issues). Therefore, any survey would also be measuring impacts of the scheme rather than providing a true control group.
- An equivalent survey of those aged 5-21 in England or Wales - different local and national policy context, the extent and nature of transport provision, and potential existing subsidies would differ from the Scottish context, and it would be impossible to control for any potential issues or incentives which may impact on bus use in the counterfactual area.

It was agreed that the most reliable method to gather counterfactual data was to include questions within the online survey to determine the extent to which travel patterns would change as a result of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme. This can be compared with any future post-implementation survey results to determine whether expectations were realised, and the extent to which the free travel was a determining factor in any changes. This approach also has limitations, however. For example, other external factors could be influential in changing travel patterns, and so this will need to be accounted for in any comparisons of pre- and post-implementation data.

## Secondary Data

In addition to the primary data collection, a wide range of secondary data sources were also reviewed and analysed. This included data from the following sources:

- Scottish Household Survey;
- Census Data;
- Scottish Transport Statistics;
- Data provided by the Scottish Government on youth card journeys;
- Travel to School Hands Up Survey; and
- Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

An extensive exercise was undertaken collating and analysing 96 individual data sets. Where data was available, time series analysis was undertaken which tracked trends on each dataset over time. This analysis will be important for future evaluations Transport Scotland undertake of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme.

Data can be considered to fit within the following categories:

- Main mode of travel;
- Journey purpose and reasons for transport choice;
- Distance travelled and journey times;
- Car availability, driving tests, holders of driving licenses and driving frequency;
- Bus usage and operating data;
- Public views of transport services; and
- Concessionary fare passes.

## Sample Profile

In total, 17,462 responses were received from the online survey. Of these, 76% (n=13,303) were submitted by parents responding on behalf of their child, and 24% (n=4,159) were submitted by young people themselves. Responses represented the views and experiences of:

- 6,187 (36%) age 5-11;
- 7,729 (44%) age 12-15; and
- 3,546 (20%) age 16-21.

Responses were received from all local authority areas, although this ranged from 1,998 (11%) responses from Aberdeen City Council area and less than 10 (>1%) from respondents in Orkney. A full breakdown of responses by local authority is included at Appendix A. A good range of responses were also provided from across urban and more rural areas (see Table 1).

| Location                  | Number        | Percent     |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| A city                    | 5,497         | 32%         |
| A town                    | 6,857         | 39%         |
| A village/the countryside | 4,705         | 27%         |
| Not disclosed             | 403           | 2%          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>17,462</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 1: Urban/Rural Location

Those age 16+ were asked to identify whether they were in education, training or work (multiple responses were possible to this question). Nearly three quarters (73%, n=2,571) were at school, while around a quarter worked (28%, n=980) or were

in college/university (24%, n=852). When school pupils aged 5-15 were included, and those aged 16+ allocated to their main sector (where respondents were in school, college/university, or an apprentice/in training, and worked a part-time job, the educational/training sector was allocated as their main sector), responses largely represented the views and experiences of school pupils (94%, n=16487).

|  | Age 16-21*   |                  | Main Sector Age 5-21 |             |
|--|--------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------|
|  | Number       | Percent of Cases | Number               | Percent     |
| In school  | 2,571        | 73%              | 16,487               | 94%         |
| In College/University                                  | 852          | 24%              | 665                  | 4%          |
| Apprentice/In Training                                 | 120          | 3%               | 79                   | <1%         |
| In work (including full-time, part-time and voluntary) | 980          | 28%              | 166                  | 1%          |
| Not in education/training/work                         | 68           | 2%               | 65                   | <1%         |
| <b>Base</b>  | <b>3,546</b> | <b>100%</b>      | <b>17,462</b>        | <b>100%</b> |

Table 2: Education/Training/Work

\* Multiple responses were possible at this question.

## Respondent Demographics

Half of the achieved sample represented the views and experiences of females (50%, n=8,745), 46% (n=7,990) of males, 1% (n=257) identified as either trans (where a person's sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex), non-binary (where a person does not define their gender in terms of traditional binary oppositions, such as male and female), or in another way, and 3% (n=470) did not disclose this information.

Around three quarters of all respondents (76%, n=13,202) identified as being from a white ethnic background, while 9% (n=1,614) were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. A further 15% (n=2,646) did not disclose their ethnic group.

Only those respondents aged 16+ (or parents responding on their behalf) were asked about sexual orientation. Of the 3,546 respondents in this age cohort, 73% (n=2,590) indicated they were straight/heterosexual, 12% (n=430) indicated they were either gay/lesbian, bisexual or had another sexual orientation, and 15% (n=526) did not disclose this information.

Respondents were also asked whether their/their child's day-to-day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability which had lasted, or was expected to last, at least 12 months. Most (87%, n=15,199) noted they did not have such limitations, while 3% (n=493) said they were limited a lot, and 7% (n=1,193) were limited a little. A further 3% (n=577) did not disclose this information. Results from those who were limited a lot and a little were collated for analysis purposes.

Household income varied and is detailed in Table 3 below.

| Household Income  | Number        | Percent     |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Less than £10,000 | 2,133         | 12%         |
| £10,000 - £19,999 | 2,251         | 13%         |
| £20,000 - £34,999 | 2,462         | 14%         |
| £35,000 - £49,999 | 2,178         | 12%         |
| £50,000 - £74,999 | 2,230         | 13%         |
| £75,000 - £99,999 | 1,140         | 7%          |
| £100,000 or more  | 778           | 4%          |
| Not disclosed     | 4,290         | 25%         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>17,462</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 3: Household Income

Respondents were also asked how many cars or vans were owned, or were available for use, by members of their household. Over three quarters (79%, n=13,865) indicated they had one or more vehicles available.

| Vehicles Available | Number        | Percent     |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 0                  | 2,718         | 16%         |
| 1                  | 6,800         | 39%         |
| 2                  | 5,968         | 34%         |
| 3+                 | 1,097         | 6%          |
| Not disclosed      | 879           | 5%          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>17,462</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 4: Number of Cars Available

## Survey Analysis

The sample profile above represents the true breakdown of respondents, however, the following quantitative analysis is based on weighted data.

Survey data was weighted by education/training/work (ETW) status to ensure the results were representative of the age 5-21 population in this respect. This assigned and weighted respondents based on whether they were primarily at school, in further/higher education, being an apprentice/in training, being in work (including full-time, part-time and voluntary), and not being in education, training or work.

Crosstabulations by gender were weighted to the gender split for those aged 5-21 in the Scottish population to again ensure results were representative.

While crosstabulations by each of the other demographics outlined above were also explored to identify any differences in experiences/views, these are weighted by ETW only and not the equivalent population data. This was largely due to the difficulties in identifying equivalent population data for this age cohort, but in some cases, population data would also reduce the weight of responses from some key groups which represent minorities in the population but who had responded in good numbers to this research (e.g. those in rural areas and those in low income households).

The only exceptions to using weighted data were where responses were relevant to only one age group. A small number of questions were asked of/about those aged 16+ only, this included all crosstabulations by sexual orientation, plus questions in relation to travel spend and learning to drive. In these cases, the raw data was used to conduct the analysis.

Frequencies and crosstabulations were conducted, and the results outlined below highlight any differences which were identified at the 95% confidence level.

Qualitative data was also read to identify the key themes and issues - these varied by question and were based on the responses provided rather than trying to assign data to pre-determined codes. Quotes have been included where relevant to illustrate the main points raised.

## Research Conventions and Caveats

Overall, the total sample size achieved by the survey provides good levels of statistical reliability. It provides tight confidence intervals (+/- 1%) for disaggregation - for example, at the 95% confidence level where 50% of those surveyed gave a particular response, the true figure would be in the region of 49% - 51%.



Despite this statistical reliability, however, it should be noted that not all local authority areas are equally represented, some areas took part in greater numbers while others participated in only very small numbers. As such, some of the challenges and issues faced by young people and their families in these areas may not have been identified by the research.

Similarly, the sample is dominated by the views and experiences of those attending school, with those in apprenticeships/training programmes, at college/university, and those in work taking part in smaller proportions. Indeed, the number of respondents undertaking an apprenticeship/training programme was particularly low compared to all other groups (and may require more dedicated research approaches to boost involvement going forward). While the data has generally been weighted to address this disparity, it should be borne in mind when interpreting the results.

As the survey was only available online there is a risk that it was not accessible to all young people and their families. Due to the prevalence of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic it was assumed educational establishments would be able to communicate electronically with the majority of their young people and parents to disseminate and advertise the survey. A good response rate was achieved indicating the survey was largely accessible, however, the risk remains that some families might have been unable to access it. Similarly, the current survey only considered the views and experiences of children and young people, it did not invite feedback from other bus users. However, this age group presented a data gap, with little information available regarding their travel behaviour beyond travel to school data, hence the requirement for a bespoke survey. Conversely, current travel patterns for adult populations is generally available from existing data sources while wider views and concerns were gathered via the previous public consultation.

In order to generate urban/rural/island comparisons, the location data outlined at Table 1 was amended to create a distinct 'Island' category. All respondents who identified themselves as living on Orkney, Shetland or the Western Isles were included within this groups. It should be noted however, that other respondents from these locations may have chosen not to identify their local authority area and so they would have remained grouped under the city/town/rural response provided at this question. Similarly, respondents from other island locations, for example within Argyll and Bute or Highland local authority areas could not be identified within the data, and so again, they remain grouped within the city/town/rural categories.

Percentages in the tables have generally been rounded to whole numbers and to ensure a total of 100%.

## Current Travel Patterns

### Travel Patterns

#### Frequency of Travel

Respondents were asked how often they currently travelled for a range of different purposes. Table 5 details the results, and shows that those travelling to education or for an apprenticeship/training programme were more likely to do so daily, those who worked were more likely to travel at least three times a week, while all other activities involved less frequent travel.

| Journey Purpose                    | At least 5 days a week | 3-4 times a week | 1-2 times a week | 1-2 times a month | Less than once a month | Rarely/ Never | Total   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|---------|
| School/College/ University         | 62%                    | 15%              | 9%               | 2%                | 1%                     | 11%           | 14,757* |
| Apprenticeship/ Training Programme | 58%                    | 15%              | 16%              | 2%                | 2%                     | 7%            | 292*    |
| Work/Job                           | 40%                    | 31%              | 16%              | 2%                | 2%                     | 9%            | 3,502*  |
| Sports/Clubs or Other Activities   | 6%                     | 21%              | 30%              | 7%                | 6%                     | 30%           | 17,462  |
| Health Care                        | 1%                     | 1%               | 3%               | 19%               | 40%                    | 36%           | 17,462  |
| Grocery Shopping                   | 2%                     | 9%               | 34%              | 14%               | 10%                    | 31%           | 17,462  |
| Other Shopping                     | 1%                     | 5%               | 23%              | 33%               | 19%                    | 19%           | 17,462  |
| Social Activities (day)            | 4%                     | 12%              | 31%              | 20%               | 12%                    | 21%           | 17,462  |
| Social Activities (evening/night)  | 3%                     | 12%              | 26%              | 19%               | 13%                    | 27%           | 17,462  |
| Day Out for Leisure/ Event         | 1%                     | 3%               | 20%              | 32%               | 22%                    | 22%           | 17,462  |
| Visiting Family/ Friends           | 6%                     | 14%              | 32%              | 25%               | 11%                    | 12%           | 17,462  |

Table 5: Frequency of Travel per Journey Purpose

\* Note: Only respondents who previously indicated they attended these activities were asked about associated travel patterns, multiple responses were also possible across these activities.

| Frequency of Travel - Demographic Analysis |  |
|--|--|
| Urban/ Rural/<br>Island                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only minor differences were noted in the frequency with which respondents generally participated in leisure type activities (such as sports/clubs or other activities, non-grocery shopping, and daytime and evening social activities). However, those in towns and rural areas were more likely to report they rarely/never took part in these.</li> <li>Across all activities, those living on islands were the most likely to indicate that they only rarely/never participated.</li> </ul>   |
| Gender                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Females were less likely than males to travel frequently for sports/clubs or other activities.</li> <li>Those who identified as trans, non-binary or in another way were most likely to indicate they rarely/never travel for sports/clubs or other activities, and for days out.</li> <li>While still a minority, those who identified as trans, non-binary or in another way were likely to travel more often for health care purposes.</li> <li>Males were slightly more likely to indicate that they rarely/never travelled for groceries or other shopping, or did so once a month.</li> </ul>   |
| Disability                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those whose activities were limited due to a health condition were more likely to indicate that they rarely/never took part in certain leisure activities, including sports/clubs or other activities and evening social activities.</li> <li>There was little difference for other activities such as non-grocery shopping, daytime social activities, days out, and visiting family/friends.</li> </ul>   |
| Income                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those with household incomes up to £35,000 were more likely to indicate that they/their child rarely/never travelled for sports/clubs or other activities.</li> <li>Those with higher incomes travelled for clubs and activities more often.</li> <li>As incomes reduced the proportion of respondents who indicated that they rarely/never travelled for a day out increased.</li> <li>Those on the lowest incomes (less than £10,000) were more likely to travel for non-grocery shopping once a week or more, and more likely to access daytime social activities at least three times a week, compared to all other income groups.</li> </ul> |

Where respondents noted that they travelled less than once a month or more, they were also asked to indicate what mode they used and how long their journey took.

## Current Mode of Travel

Nearly half (45%) of those travelling to/from education used a bus (either a school bus or service bus), while over a quarter (29%) used active modes (i.e. walking, cycling and scootering). Those travelling to an apprenticeship/training or to work were more likely to use the bus or drive/be driven. For all other activities, the main modes used tend to be to drive/be driven and using the bus. Active modes feature as the main mode for at least 10% across most journey purposes, with the only exceptions being to travel to apprenticeships/training, having a day out for leisure or to attend an event, and for visiting family/friends.

| Journey Purpose                      | Drive/<br>Driven | Taxi | Walk/Cycle/<br>Scoot | School bus | Bus/<br>Minibus | Train | Other | Total  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------|----------------------|------------|-----------------|-------|-------|--------|
| School/College/<br>University        | 19%              | 1%   | 29%                  | 15%        | 30%             | 5%    | 1%    | 13,173 |
| Apprenticeship/<br>Training          | 27%              | 3%   | 3%                   | -          | 54%             | 10%   | 3%    | 271    |
| Work/Job                             | 29%              | 1%   | 11%                  | -          | 51%             | 5%    | 3%    | 3,176  |
| Sports/Clubs or<br>Other Activities  | 52%              | 1%   | 15%                  | 1%         | 27%             | 2%    | 2%    | 12,191 |
| Health Care                          | 49%              | 2%   | 15%                  | <1%        | 31%             | 2%    | 1%    | 11,233 |
| Grocery Shopping                     | 53%              | 3%   | 16%                  | <1%        | 26%             | 1%    | 1%    | 12,009 |
| Other Shopping                       | 42%              | 1%   | 11%                  | 1%         | 37%             | 6%    | 2%    | 14,212 |
| Social Activities<br>(day)           | 33%              | 1%   | 21%                  | 2%         | 37%             | 4%    | 2%    | 13,778 |
| Social Activities<br>(evening/night) | 42%              | 5%   | 12%                  | <1%        | 33%             | 6%    | 2%    | 12,734 |
| Day Out for<br>Leisure/Event         | 44%              | 1%   | 5%                   | 1%         | 36%             | 11%   | 2%    | 13,695 |
| Visiting Family/<br>Friends          | 51%              | 1%   | 9%                   | 1%         | 30%             | 6%    | 2%    | 15,418 |

Table 6: Mode of Travel per Journey Purpose

| Mode of Travel - Demographic Analysis |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Urban/ Rural/<br>Island               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in cities were less likely to drive/be driven across all journey purposes.</li> <li>Those in rural areas and on the islands were generally more likely to drive, and less likely to use the bus - this is consistent with results from the Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020), where 71% of those aged 18-35 used the bus once a year or less, or never.</li> <li>Those in rural (mainland) areas were less likely to walk/cycle/scoot.</li> </ul>           |
| Gender                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those who identified as trans, non-binary and other were less likely to drive/be driven and more likely to travel by bus to education, and to take part in sport/clubs or other activities. They were also less likely to drive/be driven and more likely to walk/cycle/scoot across all other journey purposes. Further, they were more likely to use the bus for evening social activities.</li> <li>Males were slightly more likely to walk/cycle/scoot to education.</li> </ul> |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Females were more likely to drive/be driven to work, while males were more likely to choose an active mode.</li> <li>Females were the least likely to walk/cycle/scoot for daytime social activities.</li> </ul>  |
| Disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those whose activities were limited by a health condition or disability were less likely to travel to education by active modes and more likely to use the bus, compared to those whose activities were not limited.</li> <li>For most other journey purposes, those whose activities were limited were less likely to drive/be driven and more likely to travel by bus.</li> </ul>   |
| Income     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As income rose so too did the likelihood that children/young people would travel to education via walking/cycling/scootering.</li> <li>Similarly, as incomes rose so too did car use across a range of other journey purposes (up to incomes of £100,000 at least).</li> <li>As incomes decreased however, bus use increased across most journey purposes - indeed, those on the lowest incomes were the most likely to use the bus across all purposes.</li> </ul> |

The secondary data analysis considered travel to school data (Hands Up Survey Data 2015-20, Scottish Household Survey 2015-19), as well as reasons for transport choice to children's full time education establishment from 2015 to 2019 (Scottish Household Survey 2015-19).

Both the Hands Up Survey and the Scottish Household Survey showed that around half of pupils used active modes to travel to school between 2015 and 2020, compared to around a quarter who were driven and between 14% and 21% who used the bus. However, the difference in the age of survey respondents should be noted between the Hands Up Survey and Scottish Household Survey (both focused on school only) and the current research (age 5-21). The Scottish Household Survey also showed that buses scored highly (39%) as being the most convenient method of travel for school compared to other modes. Comparisons between the current survey results and the Scottish Household Survey 2019 data also suggest that this younger cohort are more reliant on bus travel to access their place of employment compared to the general adult population (51% in this survey used bus for work, compared to only 10% in the 2019 Scottish Household Survey who were more likely to travel by car (63%)).

## Journey Times

Table 7 below outlines the time it takes respondents to travel to each destination. This shows that, to access education, sports/clubs/other activities, health care, grocery shopping, daytime social activities, at least three quarters of young people were travelling for up to 30 minutes. For all other journey purposes, it was more likely that young people would travel up to an hour.

| Journey Purpose                   | Up to 10 minutes | 11-30 minutes | 31-45 minutes | 46 minutes-1 hour | 1-1.5 hours | Over 1.5 hours | Total  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| School/College/University         | 28%              | 42%           | 14%           | 9%                | 5%          | 2%             | 13,059 |
| Apprenticeship/Training Programme | 8%               | 29%           | 25%           | 21%               | 7%          | 10%            | 271    |
| Work/Job                          | 15%              | 43%           | 17%           | 17%               | 7%          | 1%             | 3,123  |
| Sports/Clubs or Other Activities  | 22%              | 53%           | 17%           | 6%                | 1%          | 1%             | 11,982 |
| Health Care                       | 32%              | 44%           | 13%           | 7%                | 3%          | 1%             | 11,122 |
| Grocery Shopping                  | 31%              | 48%           | 15%           | 5%                | 1%          | <1%            | 11,869 |
| Other Shopping                    | 14%              | 45%           | 23%           | 12%               | 4%          | 2%             | 14,031 |
| Social Activities (day)           | 18%              | 49%           | 20%           | 9%                | 3%          | 1%             | 13,546 |
| Social Activities (evening/night) | 15%              | 49%           | 22%           | 10%               | 3%          | 1%             | 12,533 |
| Day Out for Leisure/Event         | 5%               | 29%           | 27%           | 22%               | 11%         | 6%             | 13,523 |
| Visiting Family/Friends           | 13%              | 36%           | 19%           | 12%               | 9%          | 11%            | 15,238 |

Table 7: Journey Times per Journey Purpose

| Journey Times - Demographic Analysis |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Urban/Rural/Island                   | Those in rural areas often (but not always) appear to have to travel for longer across many of the journey purposes compared to their peers in urban areas, towns, and on islands. |
| Disability                           | Those whose activities were limited due to a health issue often appear to have longer journey times across most journey purposes.  |
| Income                               | Those on the lowest incomes often reported longer journey times across most journey purposes.  |

The secondary data analysis considered the duration of journeys made between 2015 and 2019 (data held by Transport Scotland), and showed that the majority of trips (65%) last between 5 to 20 minutes. In addition, the percentage of journeys by road network and main mode of travel was examined, and showed that over half (58%) of all bus journeys were between 2km to under 10km, which roughly translates to between 6 and 30 minute journey times.

## Impact of Covid

All respondents were asked the ways in which COVID-19 had changed their/their child's travel behaviour, and how they thought this behaviour might change again when all COVID-19 restrictions had been eased. Figures 2 and 3 outline the results.

Generally, the results show that over half of the respondents indicated that they were travelling less, both in general (57%) and by public transport (51%) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For both travel by car/van and by active modes (such as walking, cycling and scooting), travel was considered to have either stayed the same (46% and 52% respectively) or had increased (31% and 36% respectively).

However, once COVID-19 restrictions are eased, most respondents suggested their/their child's general travel and travel by public transport will either increase (58% and 57% respectively) or remain the same (36% in both cases). Only a small minority expect that these types of travel will decrease (6% and 7%). Travel by car/van and active modes were expected to remain largely the same (53% and 64% respectively), or to increase albeit for a lower proportion of respondents (23% and 27% respectively). Again, walking/cycling/scooting was only considered likely to decrease by a minority of respondents (9%), although nearly a quarter (24%) expected that car/van use would decrease once COVID-19 restrictions were eased.

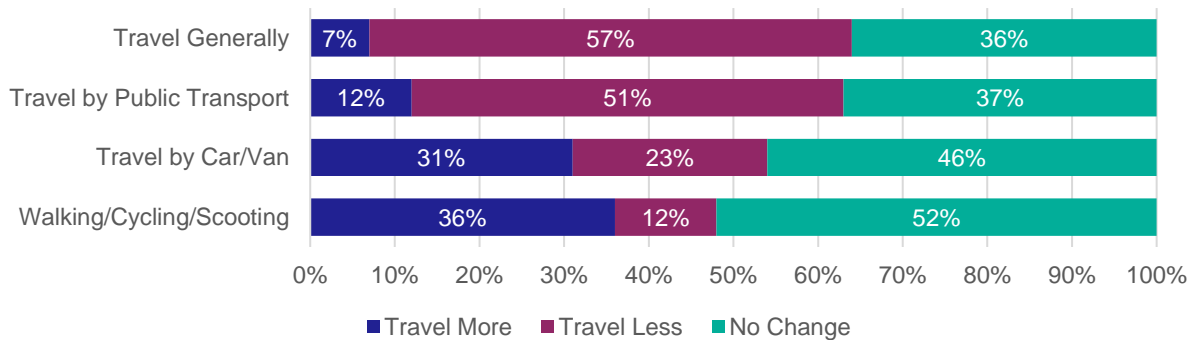


Figure 2: Changes to Travel Behaviour Due to COVID-19

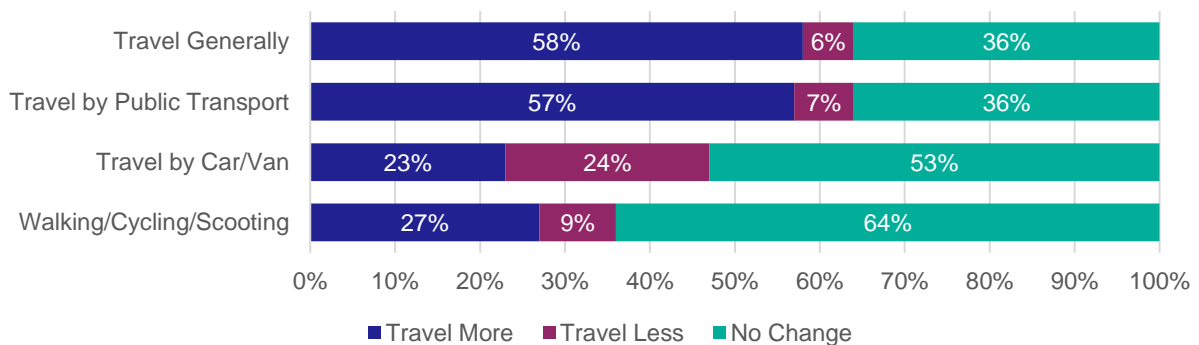


Figure 3: Expected Changes to Travel Behaviour When COVID-19 Restrictions Have Eased



| Impact of Covid - Demographic Analysis |   |
|--|---|
| Urban/ Rural/<br>Island                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in urban areas were more likely to be travelling more by public transport and active modes as a result of COVID-19, and expected travel by these modes to increase upon the easing of restrictions.</li> <li>Those living in rural areas and on islands who were more likely to say that travel patterns remained unchanged and were likely to stay the same going forward.</li> </ul>  |
| Gender                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Females were more likely to be travelling by private vehicle more often due to COVID-19.</li> <li>Those who identified as trans, non-binary or in another way were more likely to be travelling less often by car, and more likely to be travelling more often by public transport.</li> <li>Males were the least likely to think they would travel more by public transport when the restrictions eased.</li> </ul>   |
| Disability                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those whose activities were limited due to a health condition were more likely to be travelling less often, both in general and by each mode, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>Once restrictions are eased, those whose activities were limited were more likely to indicate that they would travel more by public transport, and more likely to say they would travel more and less often generally (by both private vehicle and by active modes compared to those whose activities were not limited).</li> </ul> |
| Income                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those on the lowest incomes (less than £10,000) were more likely to be travelling more, both generally and by public transport, and were less likely to be travelling more by private vehicle, compared to other income groups as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>Once restrictions ease, those in lower income groups were more likely to state they would travel more by active modes.</li> </ul>  |

## Travel Spend

### Discounted Travel

All respondents were asked if they/their child currently used any discounted or free travel (other than child fares). Just over one in five (21%, n=3,581) said they did.

Of the 3,546 respondents who went on to detail the type of card and mode of transport they used, 62% indicated they had a National Entitlement Card (NEC), while 35% had a travel pass issued by their school, college or university (see Table 8). With the exception of the railcard, most respondents used their discount/free travel options on board buses (ranging from 73% for the NEC to 95% of those using an education issued card).



| Type of Discount Card        | Number       | Percent of Cases |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| National Entitlement Card    | 2,193        | 62%              |
| Companions (+1 on NEC)       | 340          | 10%              |
| Education Travel Pass        | 1,231        | 35%              |
| Railcard                     | 809          | 23%              |
| Other Discounted/Free Travel | 436          | 12%              |
| <b>Total*</b>                | <b>3,546</b> | <b>100%</b>      |

Table 8: Types of Discount Cards Used

\* Multiple responses were possible at this question.

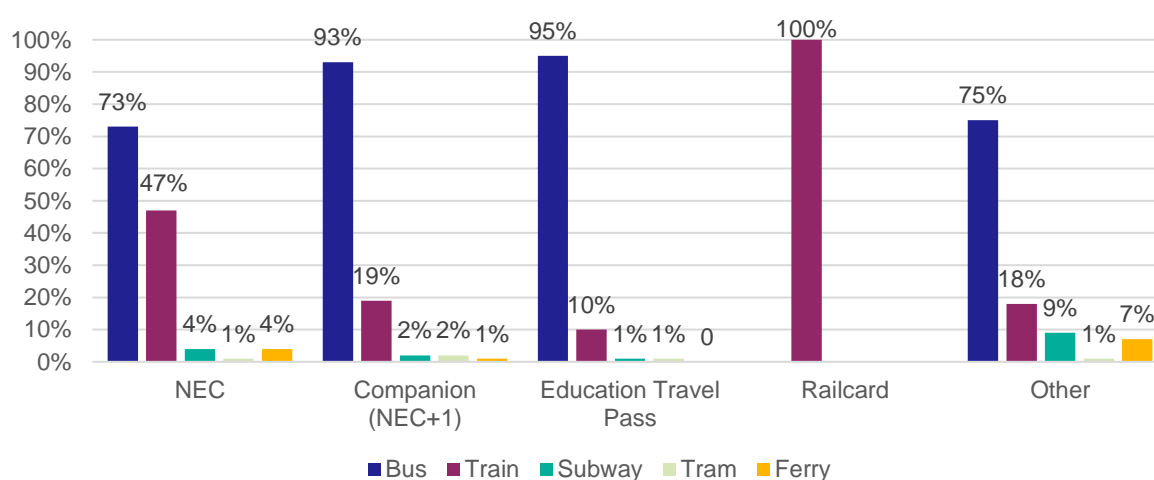


Figure 4: Travel Mode by Type of Discount Card Used

The secondary data analysis also examined figures on possession of a concessionary fare pass from 2015 to 2019 by age group (Scottish Household Survey 2009-2019). Adults aged 65+ had the highest percentage and average percent (91%) with a concessionary fare pass. Adults aged 16-60 had significantly lower concessionary fare pass percentages (28%), taken from a sample size of 9,780. This data will no doubt evolve as the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme is introduced.

## Spend on Travel

Parents/carers were asked to estimate their total household spend on travel expenses per month, as well as to identify what proportion of that was spent on their child (who was the subject of the questionnaire). In total, 9,313 respondents provided spend details at both questions, with the breakdown of results shown in Table 9. Generally, those with the lowest total household spend on travel also tended to

spend a lower proportion of this on their child, however, the proportion allocated to the child's travel expenses rose as the total household spend increased.

| Percent Spent on Child | Total Household Spend |                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                        | £0-£10                | £11-£25             | £26-£50               | £51-£75               | £76-£100              | >£100                 |
| <10%                   | 69%                   | 37%                 | 23%                   | 18%                   | 19%                   | 16%                   |
| 10%-25%                | 22%                   | 37%                 | 37%                   | 36%                   | 34%                   | 34%                   |
| 26%-50%                | 4%                    | 12%                 | 23%                   | 26%                   | 26%                   | 29%                   |
| 51%-75%                | 1%                    | 5%                  | 9%                    | 14%                   | 15%                   | 16%                   |
| 76%-100%               | 4%                    | 9%                  | 8%                    | 6%                    | 6%                    | 5%                    |
| <b>Total (n)</b>       | <b>272<br/>(3%)</b>   | <b>532<br/>(6%)</b> | <b>1312<br/>(14%)</b> | <b>1479<br/>(16%)</b> | <b>1771<br/>(19%)</b> | <b>3947<br/>(42%)</b> |

Table 9: Travel Spend by Portion Spent on Child

Young people aged 16-21 who responded to the survey themselves were also asked to identify their monthly spend on travel expenses. In total, 1,843 respondents provided a response, with just under half (45%) indicating that they generally spent between £11 and £50 on travel per month (analysis of this question was based on unweighted data as only one age group responded).

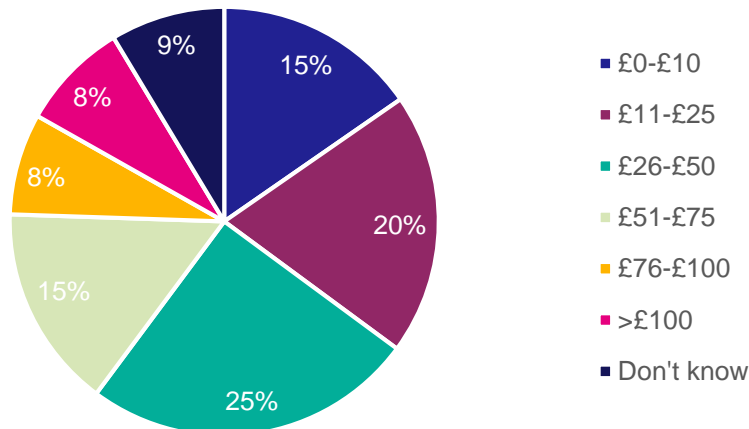


Figure 5: Travel Spend (respondents = young people aged 16-21 only)

| Travel Spend - Demographic Analysis |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Urban/ Rural/ Island                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers from rural areas and those living on islands were more likely to be spending £100+ each month on household travel compared to those living in urban areas and towns.</li> <li>Differences in proportion of spend on the child's travel, however, were not statistically significant.</li> <li>Young people (who completed the survey themselves) living on islands were more likely to be spending £0-£10, while those living in mainland rural areas were more likely to be spending £100+ on their travel.</li> </ul> |
| Disability                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers of those whose activities were limited by a health issue were less likely to spend £75+ on household travel and transport, and more likely to be spending 51% and over on their child's travel expenses compared to those whose activities were not limited.</li> <li>Young people whose activities were limited (and participated in the survey themselves) were more likely to indicate they spent up to £50, while those who were not limited were more likely to spend over £50 on their travel.</li> </ul>         |
| Income                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers in lower income households were likely to spend less on household travel and transport, and were significantly less likely to spend £100+ on travel each month compared to higher earning households.</li> <li>As income reduced, the proportions that were spent on their child's travel tended to increase, with those on lower incomes less likely to spend &lt;10% on this, and more likely to spend 51%+ compared to other income groups.</li> </ul>   |

In terms of passenger revenue on local bus services, the secondary data analysis showed an overall decline between 2015 and 2019, of £37 million (Source: DFT Bus Statistics). Scottish Government support (which included the Bus Service Operators Grant, Concessionary Bus Travel and Local Authority gross costs incurred in support of bus services) had increased 8% over the four years to 2019.

All respondents were asked to rate how affordable or unaffordable they find travel and transport. Of the 16,601 who provided a rating, nearly half (48%) indicated they find this generally unaffordable, compared to around a quarter (26%) who find it generally affordable.

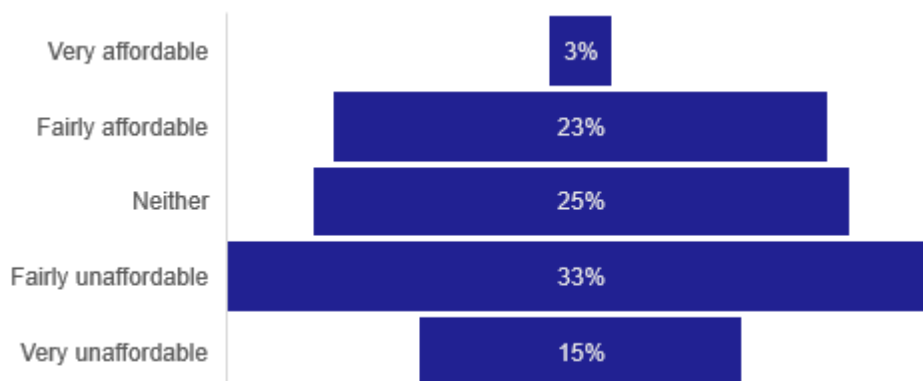


Figure 6: Affordability of Travel and Transport

| Affordability - Demographic Analysis |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Urban/Rural/<br>Island               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those in cities and living on islands were more likely to find travel and transport affordable and less likely to consider it as unaffordable compared to those living in towns and rural areas.</li> </ul> |
| Disability                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those who were limited in their activities due to health reasons were less likely to find travel and transport affordable and more likely to consider it as unaffordable.</li> </ul>                        |
| Income                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those in lower income groups were less likely to find travel and transport affordable and more likely to consider it as unaffordable.</li> </ul>  |

## Difficulty Accessing Activities/Opportunities

All respondents were asked if they felt there were any activities or opportunities that they/their child missed out on due to access or travel restrictions. Of the 17,415 who answered the question, 29% (n=5,066) said there was.

| Accessing Activities/Opportunities - Demographic Analysis |  |
|---|--|
| Urban/Rural/<br>Island                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those in rural areas and living on islands were more likely to indicate that they/their child missed out on activities/opportunities.</li> </ul>  |
| Gender  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those who indicated that they/their child identified as trans, non-binary or in another way were only slightly more likely to indicate that they/their child missed out on activities/opportunities.</li> </ul> |
| Disability  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those whose activities were limited due to a health issue were more likely to indicate that they/their child missed out on activities/opportunities.</li> </ul>   |
| Income  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those with household earnings up to £50,000, were more likely to indicate that they/their child missed out on activities/opportunities.</li> </ul>  |

Respondents who indicated that they/their child was missing out on activities or opportunities due to access or travel restrictions were invited to detail what they felt they missed out on and why. In total, 3,888 respondents provided a response.

Many noted that they/their child missed out on social, leisure and sporting activities, detailing a wide range of specific clubs/classes and venues which they felt they missed out on, as well as not being able to visit/spend time with friends and family. This was noted to impact upon their levels of independence, while a few respondents felt this also impacted their mental health. There was also some evidence that work and educational opportunities, as well as the ability to access/attend support and respite groups, were limited by travel and transport. A few respondents also noted that this had an impact on their ability to attend health appointments (hospital, doctor and dentist appointments):

*“Cost of public transport limits the location of the jobs I can apply for.”*

*"[Missing out on] Extra-curricular activities. Socialise with friends. Reduced level of independence."*

*"Bus service from my village is very limited. It is having an impact on social activities which has an impact on positive mental health."*

The cost of travel and transport was noted as being a key reason why some children/young people were missing out on opportunities - this included social/leisure activities as well as educational, work opportunities and support/respite services. This was both an issue in general, and where journeys would require multiple connections to reach a necessary/desired destination. For some this meant only more local activities/opportunities could be accessed, or there was an impact on how frequently they could attend social/leisure/work/educational activities/venues, while for others it meant they could not attend some/all such opportunities, including not applying for jobs in certain areas due to the costs associated with getting there:

*"Apprentices are on low wages so if my child can't get a lift he walks as public transport eats in at his already low wage. Earning just over £4 an hour means transport is a stretch."*

*"Jobs and clubs... it's £8 for a day ticket. I can't afford that. And because I can't afford to travel I can't get a job to afford to travel."*

*"Expensive to afford travel out of local area. Don't travel far due to cost."*

*"He used to go to clubs and after school things but had to cut back as I couldn't afford the bus fare... I just couldn't afford it so he had to stop going to some things."*

In addition, a lack of reliable public transport services or there being no public transport options available, limited journey times and frequencies were also noted as key reasons why children/young people's opportunities were seen to be limited - this was again noted to impact upon social/leisure, educational and employment opportunities. It was suggested therefore, that the provision of free bus travel would not support all children/young people equally:

*"Due to lack of bus services my son is unable to engage in social and leisure activities. He is also unable to gain employment."*

*"[Missing out on] Education due to poor transport links for college start times."*

*“Because of where he lives... he needs a car to take him wherever.  
Few buses pass this route so free travel isn't a help for him and his  
sister.”*

## Perceptions and Barriers to Bus Use

### Perceptions of Buses and Bus Use

All respondents were asked to what extent they/their child would agree or disagree with a range of statements related to buses and bus use. Over half of those who provided a rating agreed that buses were environmentally friendly (59%), although respondents were also concerned about viruses (such as COVID-19, flu, etc.) spreading on board (54%). The areas respondents were most likely to disagree with related to affordability (with 42% disagreeing that buses are affordable), and that the routes available meet their current needs (33% disagreed here).

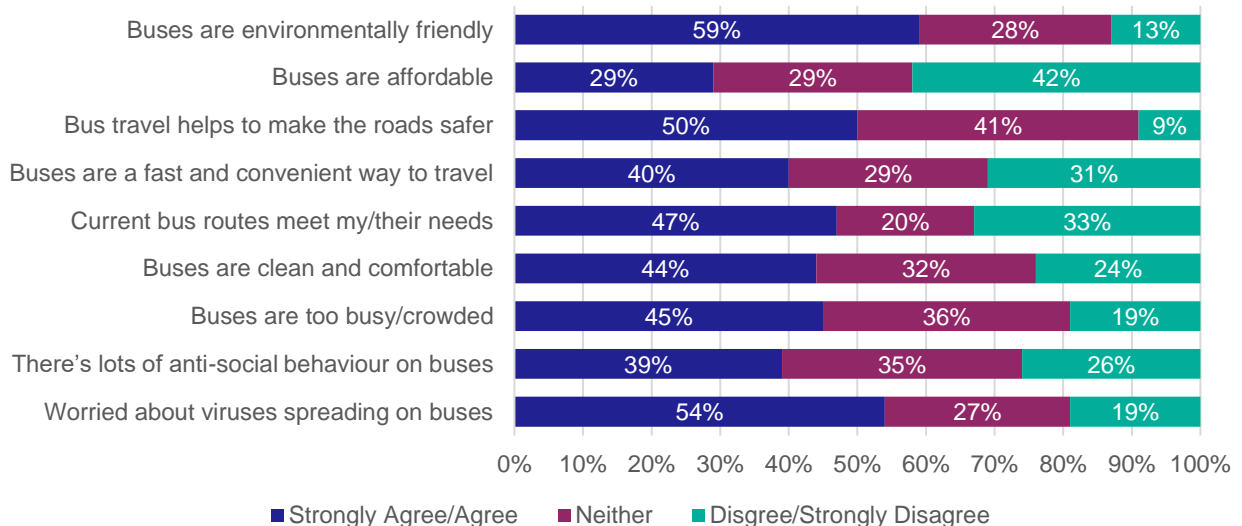


Figure 7: Perceptions of Bus Use

The secondary data analysis also looked at views from people who had recently used the bus. Feedback from the 2019 Scottish Household Survey showed satisfaction was fairly high with all aspects of bus travel. It showed that just over half (55%) thought that fares were good value and (56%) agreed that buses were environmentally friendly, while 81% felt buses were clean.

### Personal Safety Issues

Respondents were also asked about their/their child's personal safety with regards to bus use.

It is important that the results in this section are considered in context. The issue of safety is not restricted to buses alone, with other research highlighting that this is a wider issue for public transport, and other aspects of society, more generally.

Data from the [Scottish Household Survey](#) shows that twice as many women than men disagree that they feel safe and secure on the bus and train in the evening, and that twice as many women than men cite 'concerns for personal safety on dark/lonely roads' as a barrier to cycling to work. A 2018 report for the [International Transport Forum](#) discusses safety for women when using trains is an issue across many countries. In addition, UK data from the [UK Government Equalities Office](#) shows that:

- Of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport;
- 72% of women were worried about experiencing sexual harassment on public transport, compared to 40% of men; and
- 62% of women reported changing their behaviour in relation to public transport to avoid sexual harassment, compared to 35% of men.

## Safety by Time of Day

Firstly, respondents were asked whether they/their child felt safe using buses during the day and at night. Of those who provided a rating, respondents generally felt safer during the day than at night/in the dark. Indeed, 82% felt safe always or often during the day, while only 2% never felt safe. Meanwhile, at night/in the dark, nearly a quarter (24%) never felt safe, 39% only sometimes felt safe, and 37% always or often felt safe.

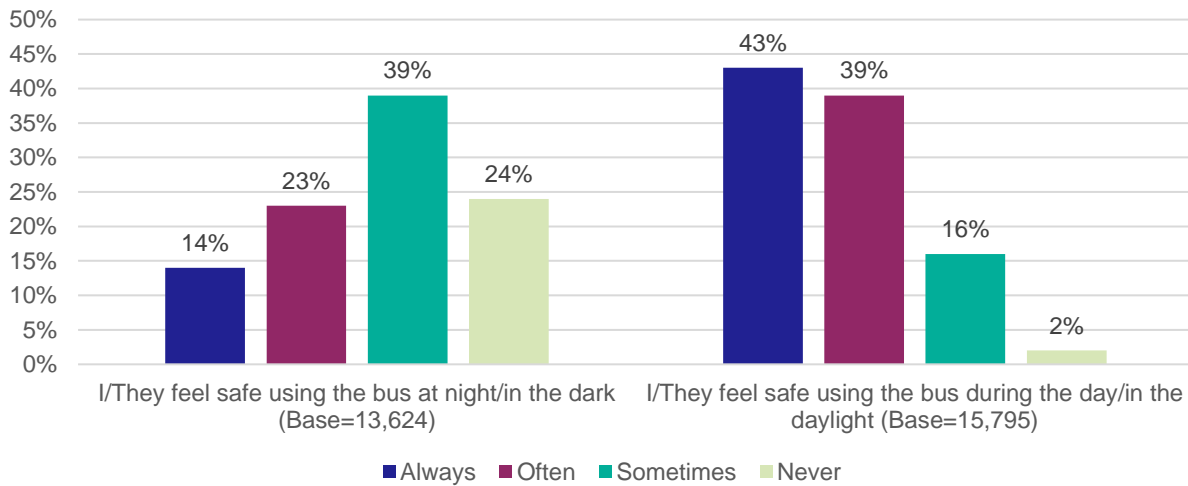


Figure 8: Safety Concerns by Time of Day

| Safety Concerns – Demographic Analysis |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Gender</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Night time travel - females and those who identified as either trans, non-binary or in another way were less likely to indicate that they felt safe using the bus at night either always or often, and were more likely to state that they never felt safe using the bus at night compared to males.</li> <li>• Daytime travel - differences were far less pronounced.</li> </ul> |



|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Sexual Orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Night time travel - straight/heterosexual respondents were slightly more likely to feel safe always or often when travelling at night, while LGBT young people were slightly more likely to say they felt safe only sometimes or never.</li> <li>Daytime travel - there were no statistically significant differences.</li> </ul>  |
| Disability         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Night time travel - those whose activities were limited due to a health issue were less likely to note feeling safe/secure travelling on buses either always or often, and more likely to only feel safe sometimes or never, compared to those who were not limited in this way.</li> <li>Daytime travel - those who were limited in their activities were again less likely to say they always felt safe, and were more likely to say they sometimes felt safe compared to others.</li> </ul> |
| Ethnicity          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Night time travel - differences were not statistically significant.</li> <li>Daytime travel - those from black and other ethnic minority groups were more likely to indicate that they always felt safe compared to those from white ethnic groups, while white respondents were slightly more likely to select all other response options compared to those from black and other ethnic minority groups.</li> </ul>   |

Similarly, the secondary data analysis showed that respondents were less likely to agree that they felt safe/secure travelling on buses at night compared to daytime travel - 69% agreed they felt safe at night compared to 93% who felt safe during the day (Scottish Household Survey, 2019).

Respondents to the current survey, who indicated they only sometimes or never felt safe using buses either during the day or at night/in the dark, were asked to explain why. Overall, 7,362 respondents provided a substantive response, with their concerns covering all aspects of bus travel, including travel to/from the bus stop, waiting at bus stops, and travelling on-board.

For some, the age of the child and a sense that it would not be safe for them to travel alone, or that they would not feel confident/safe travelling alone, was their main concern. Others noted that having a disability or autism, ADHD, sensory issues, anxiety etc. meant that they/their child did not feel safe/secure travelling on the bus. Others mentioned that they/their child either did not like travelling in the dark and/or alone:

*“He is autistic and thinks bad things will happen, especially if the bus is too crowded or loud.”*

*“He is disabled... and is very conscious of being in public spaces.”*

*“I struggle with social anxiety, I particularly find the bus unsafe if I'm travelling really late at night or in an area I'm unfamiliar with.”*

A range of other issues were noted. Key concerns included exposure to anti-social behaviour and bad language, witnessing or being personally subjected to bullying or

harassment, there being 'gangs' on-board, and being exposed to those under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or those potentially carrying weapons/knives. The perpetrators of such negative experiences were considered to include groups of children or teenagers, as well as individual/groups of adults:

*"In the evening, you are more likely to be met with people under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol which is intimidating."*

*"Just because I'm young, and when it's dark, it tends to be drunk and uneasy people getting on and I'm not sure anyone would help if something happened."*

*"Larger groups, kids and teenagers make loud noise, showing off, bullish, using bad language, anti-social behaviour."*

While most did not indicate whether this was based on experience or a perception a few did provide clarification, with some noting it was purely a perception, and others basing their response on previous experiences:

*"Had a bad experience with drunk people shouting at me and my friends."*

*"Had experience with a group of kids picking on him on the bus."*

There were also a large number of respondents who expressed concerns over the personal safety of females. This was partly due to perceptions and fears fuelled by recent events and media coverage, however, some also outlined personal experiences which made them more aware of/fearful over their safety:

*"I am a teenage girl therefore being anywhere with strangers at night is a risk, I would have to walk in the dark from the bus stop to my home which feels unsafe and the bus itself also may have individuals that make me feel uncomfortable."*

*"I am a young female who has to travel on the bus by myself at night. I feel extremely vulnerable and uncomfortable sometimes."*

*"I am biologically female, and I am often cat-called or touched inappropriately by creepy guys at night."*

*"I am a young woman who often gets leered at and sexually assaulted because people (generally people presenting as male) think it's okay."*

For a few, there was a double impact of being female and having other protected characteristics:

*“I am a woman and I am gay so have often been a target of abuse from strangers. I’m the type of person to shrug it off and deal with it however my girlfriend is not, it makes me dread getting on a bus with her when I see it’s busy because I know how nervous it makes us and how likely it is for something to happen again.”*

*“I [am] openly disabled, gay, autistic and female. I worry I will be harassed or assaulted.”*

Respondents from other minority groups also indicated that their personal characteristics meant they had experienced negative behaviour:

*“I am in an ethnic minority group and sometimes are the target of intimidating drunk people waiting for the bus.”*

*“I have been verbally abused on the bus before on a number of occasions - when I was younger, a man once physically tried to pull me out of the Priority Seat when I would not stand up for an older person (this person did not have a mobility aid and other seats on the bus were available, whilst I have a mobility aid and cannot stand on a moving bus without falling or becoming unsteady on my feet)... As a person who is perceived as a woman, and as a visibly disabled person, I do not feel safe on buses.”*

COVID-19 was also noted as a concern for some around bus travel currently, with respondents worried about the lack of mask wearing and about catching the virus from other passengers:

*“I don't feel safe using the bus because COVID-19 could spread and my sister is vulnerable. I could catch it and pass it on to someone.”*

There was also a sense among some, that the driver either cannot see what is going on (as they are driving) or that the driver and other passengers would not intervene to address any negative behaviour - indeed several indicated this had been the case in their own situations. This contributed to the perceived lack of safety/security on board buses. However, a few respondents did note that drivers were good at supporting young service users and putting them at ease:

*“Lack of a conductor on the bus means that peoples bad behaviour is largely left unchecked. The driver cant effectively monitor*

*passengers at the same time as driving the bus or don't confront the poor behaviour.”*

Other concerns raised by respondents included that services were often busy/overcrowded, with several also noting a lack of seatbelts on-board.

## Experiences of Bullying or Discrimination on Buses

Respondents were also asked if they/their child or their friends/family had ever experienced bullying or discrimination when travelling on the bus, such as having seen or been the target of racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, etc. Of the 16,701 who provided a response, 18% indicated that they had, 65% had not, and 17% did not know.

The disaggregated results show, that across all minority groups, respondents were more likely than the average for the survey as a whole, to have experienced bullying or discrimination while travelling on buses.

| Experiences of Bullying/Discrimination on Buses – Demographic Analysis |  |
|--|--|
| Gender   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slightly more females (17%) than males (15%) indicated that they had experienced bullying or discrimination on-board buses.</li> <li>Those who identified as trans, non-binary or in another way were significantly more likely to note they had had such negative experiences - 45% indicated they had experienced bullying or discrimination when travelling on the bus.</li> </ul> |
| Sexual Orientation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those (aged 16+) who identified their sexual orientation as either gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or in another way were considerably more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination while travelling on buses - 43% compared to 18% of those who identified as straight/heterosexual.</li> </ul>  |
| Disability   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those whose activities were limited due to a health issue or disability were more likely to flag that they had experienced bullying or discrimination compared to those who were not limited in their day-to-day activities (32% and 16% respectively).</li> </ul>  |
| Ethnicity  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those from black and other minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination compared to those from white ethnic groups (25% and 17% respectively).</li> </ul>   |

Those who had had such an experience were also asked (where they felt comfortable) to describe the experience. While several indicated that they did not want to share their experiences, 2,713 respondents provided a substantive response.

Several simply outlined either who had been the victim (themselves, friends or family members, the bus driver or other passengers) or perpetrator (typically other passengers, although some did suggest the bus driver had been inappropriate) of

the bullying or discrimination, while others provided more detail about the nature of the incident(s). This involved general bullying, often (but not exclusively) from other children/young people - including both verbal and physical abuse, and was sometimes said to be linked to the person's appearance (i.e. hair style/colour, wearing glasses, clothing brands, etc.):

*"A friend had a can of juice poured on her head by some boys a few years ago due to her image."*

*"A group of youths shouted abuse and taunts."*

*"A grown adult swearing at my then 6 year old cause she said she wasn't allowed to talk to strangers."*

Many respondents, however, noted that the bullying/discrimination had focused on a range of protected characteristics, with a significant number indicating multiple instances of negative behaviour, including:

- gender/sexism/misogyny and issues of sexual harassment and assault;
- ethnicity/racist abuse - including discriminatory comments made to those whose first language was not English and anti-English sentiment;
- religion/faith/belief;
- disability/ableism;
- sexual orientation/homophobia; and
- transphobic abuse.

*"80% of my bus ride includes a male talking to me in a way I feel uncomfortable (in both sexual and ethnicity context). It happens during day time too."*

*"As a minority and a Muslim I've had various experiences of racism and islamophobia during journey on the bus. If it's not racism and islamophobia then it's someone creating an uncomfortable environment, for example staring, moving seat closer, etc."*

*"Homophobic comments about friends, have seen other people being racist and horrible to others. I get a lot of sexist and suggestive comments."*

*"Been called names for my sexuality plus the way I dress."*

*“My son is trans. He's had people shout out [abusive comments], not always by other teens, sometimes by grown adults. People refusing to sit beside him on the bus, etc.”*

*“Ableism all the time. I've been threatened about my own disability in front of my child. I don't feel confident traveling by bus anymore due to verbal abuse from passengers.”*

It was also highlighted that young people suffered from ageism in that they were often stereotyped by bus drivers and other passengers, and were treated with suspicion or disrespect:

*“Ageism, sometimes drivers are dismissive of younger people tarring them all with same brush.”*

*“Adult members of the public regularly complain loudly about young people being on buses and filling busses. Their anger is targeted at the type of people using the bus rather than the bus providers not providing enough busses for a route.”*

These issues resulted in children/young people feeling intimidated, threatened, scared or worried, with some suggesting that they were reluctant or refused to use buses after such incidents.

## **Barriers to Bus Use**

Respondents were also asked to identify what issues or barriers they/their child faced in using buses. Of the 16,616 who provided a response, the biggest barriers were cited as cost (51%) and safety concerns at night (45%). Over a third of respondents also indicated that frequency of services (35%), journey times (36%), and reliability issues (37%) were issues/barriers faced, along with safety concerns when travelling alone (38%).

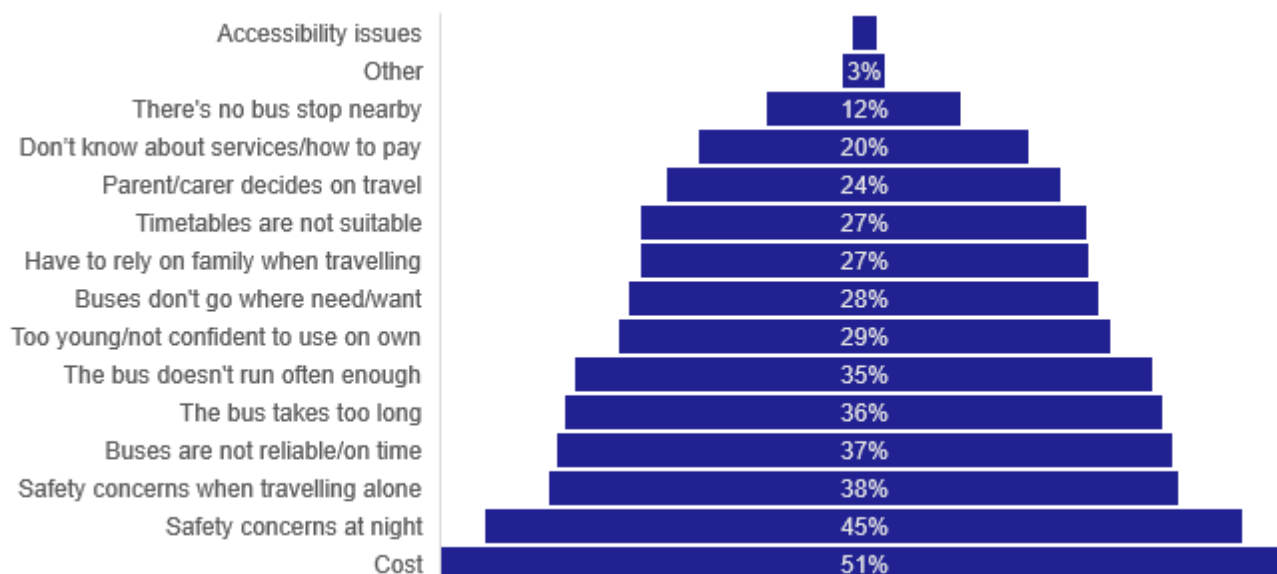


Figure 9: Issues and Barriers to Bus Use

(Multiple responses were provided to this question)

| Issues and Barriers to Bus Use – Demographic Analysis |   |
|---|---|
| Urban/ Rural/ Island                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in rural areas and on islands were more likely to cite timetables, frequency of buses, limited route options, a lack of bus stops nearby, and having to rely on family members when travelling as issues they faced, compared to those living in towns and cities.</li> <li>Those in towns and cities were more likely to highlight cost and reliability issues as barriers to use.</li> <li>Those living on islands were much less likely to have safety concerns, either at night or during the day.</li> </ul> |
| Gender  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Females and those who identified as trans, non-binary or in another way were more likely to highlight safety concerns at night and when travelling alone compared to males.</li> <li>There were few other differences between males and females, however, those who identified as trans, non-binary or in another way were more likely to identify cost and reliability as issues.</li> </ul>  |
| Disability  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those whose activities were limited by a health condition, were more likely to indicate that all issues were relevant to them compared to those who did not have a health issue - with the exception of the 'parent/carer deciding how their young person travels'.</li> </ul>   |
| Income  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost was more of an issue as household incomes reduced.</li> <li>Reliability was more of an issue for those in the lowest income households (less than £10,000).</li> <li>As household income increased respondents were increasingly likely to highlight issues with current bus routes not going where they wanted/needed, there being no bus stop nearby, and that parents/carers were in control of their child's travel.</li> </ul>   |

While respondents living on islands were more likely than those in towns/cities to identify a lack of bus stops nearby as an issue in the current survey, this was still



identified by a minority (17%), and is consistent with results of the [Scottish National Islands Plan Survey \(2020\)](#), where 14% of those aged 18-35 strongly disagreed or disagreed that they could access a bus within walking distance of home. Further, while 29% of those on islands indicated that the bus did not go where they need/want in this survey, three quarters (75%) of respondents aged 18-35 to the Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020) either agreed or strongly agreed that their local bus connected to essential services, such as schools, hospitals, GPs, and supermarkets. It should be noted, however, that the age cohorts available across the two surveys varied and so results are not directly comparable.

Respondents who noted 'other' issues were asked to outline what these were. Some noted that they did not use the bus, or that they experienced no issues or barriers. However, others noted issues including:

- challenges for those with autism or learning disabilities/difficulties travelling alone;
- a lack of services locally;
- drivers not stopping for children/young people waiting at stops;
- buses being too busy/overcrowded;
- safety concerns (again including personal safety on-board, the safety of the route to/from the bus stop and with the bus stop itself, and the risk of catching COVID-19);
- requiring correct change for the fare;
- timetables being difficult to read;
- young people being made to pay an adult fare rather than the appropriate child fare;
- needing to use multiple buses to reach their destination and/or that onward connections were not joined-up or convenient;
- travel disruption (including reduced timetables due to COVID-19, delays and disruption due to congestion and roadworks); and
- a few noted that they get travel sick on buses.

The Scottish Household Survey also included information on barriers to bus use from 2012 to 2018. This outlined elements that discouraged passengers from using buses more often, with the top three notable reasons being that they tend to use their own car instead (22%), simply no need for the bus (19%), and that the bus took too long (15%).



Consistent with the findings above, wider literature, (Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) (2015) 'Reducing the barriers to bus use' and Transport Focus (2020) 'Barriers to bus use in the West Midlands'), also highlights journey times, reliability and cost as barriers to bus use, along with the need for multiple buses to complete a journey making it an unattractive option. The need to have the correct change for the fare, and perceived inconsistencies in fare structures were also identified as issues. The prevalence of anti-social behaviour was an issue outlined in the literature, along with perceptions around poor quality on-board experiences.

# Awareness, Perceptions and Expected Use of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

## Awareness of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

All respondents were asked if they/their child had heard about the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme before taking part in the survey. Of the 17,362 respondents who answered the question, around two thirds (67%) noted that they had heard of it, compared to 28% who had not and 5% who were not sure.

## Expected Use of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

Respondents were also asked to estimate how often they/their child was likely to use the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme after it was introduced. Of the 17,389 respondents who provided a response, over a third (37%) thought they would use it at least five days a week, with a further 38% suggesting they would use it at least once a week. Only 8% of respondents thought they would use it rarely or not at all.

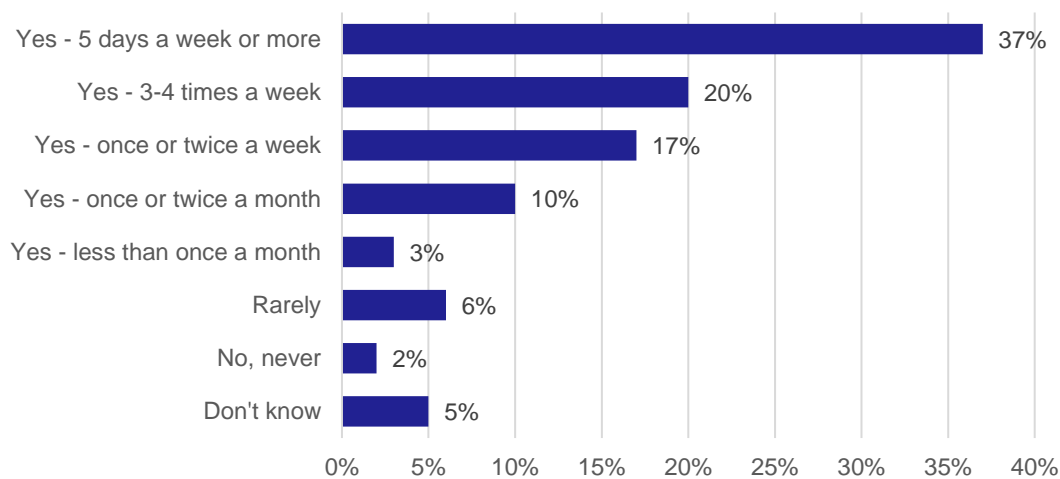


Figure 10: Expected Use of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

Those who indicated they/their child would rarely or never use the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme were asked to outline their reasons for this.

The main reasons given for not using the free bus travel were similar to the barriers outlined above - i.e. that respondents lived in an area not well served by bus services, that the existing services do not go where and when the child/young person

would need/want, reliability issues, and concerns over being exposed to anti-social behaviour/safety concerns. Several noted that they would either have to, or preferred to use the car, with a few noting that other public transport modes were more convenient or that they/their child was able to/preferred to walk wherever they needed to go. The age and ability of the child was also a factor, with some indicating that they would not let younger children travel by bus unaccompanied, or that those with autism or other issues were unable to travel alone:

*“He is too young to use the bus alone and I wouldn’t use the bus with him - they are far too expensive, unreliable and inconvenient.”*

There was also some evidence, however, that the need for accompanying adults to pay a full fare would be prohibitive for some:

*“He is only 5 so will need me with him and I can’t afford the adult ticket price.”*

*“He’s not confident enough and won’t use them without me and I can’t afford the price of a ticket for myself.”*

Many simply indicated that they didn’t use the bus or would have no need to use the bus for their current lifestyle. However, a few did note that they could see the value of the free bus travel for others, or that they might make more use of it in future, for example, after they left school. This corresponds with earlier findings which showed that just over half of those undertaking an apprenticeship/training and those in work were using the bus for such journeys.

## Expected Use by Journey Type

Those who indicated that they/their child would likely use the Young Persons’ Free Bus Travel scheme were asked to indicate which journey types they would use this for. Table 10 below details the results and shows that expected use as a direct result of the free travel ranged from 40% for those travelling to education, to 57% who thought they would use it for daytime social activities and for days out. The table also highlights the current bus use rate and the expected rate after the Young Persons’ Free Bus Travel scheme is implemented, and shows that, across all journey types the total expected bus use represented an increase on current levels, increasing from 21 percentage points for Apprenticeship/Training Programme (where bus use was already high), to 45 percentage points for travel to/from school/college/university. Bus use for all social and leisure journeys (where travel by bus is currently lower than for work and training) is also expected to increase.

| Journey Purpose                   | Will use bus because it's free | Would have used bus anyway | Will not use bus | Don't know | Total  | Expected Bus Use After Implementation | Current Bus Use | Percentage Point Difference |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------|--------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| School/College/University         | 40%                            | 35%                        | 20%              | 5%         | 12,124 | 75%                                   | 30%             | 45                          |
| Apprenticeship/Training Programme | 47%                            | 28%                        | 10%              | 15%        | 4,842  | 75%                                   | 54%             | 21                          |
| Work/Job                          | 48%                            | 32%                        | 11%              | 9%         | 7,774  | 80%                                   | 51%             | 29                          |
| Sports/Clubs or Other Activities  | 51%                            | 19%                        | 16%              | 14%        | 12,152 | 70%                                   | 27%             | 43                          |
| Health Care                       | 39%                            | 23%                        | 25%              | 13%        | 12,126 | 62%                                   | 31%             | 31                          |
| Grocery Shopping                  | 35%                            | 20%                        | 34%              | 11%        | 11,249 | 55%                                   | 26%             | 29                          |
| Other Shopping                    | 53%                            | 26%                        | 12%              | 9%         | 12,879 | 79%                                   | 37%             | 42                          |
| Social Activities (day)           | 57%                            | 24%                        | 8%               | 11%        | 13,347 | 81%                                   | 37%             | 44                          |
| Social Activities (evening/night) | 44%                            | 20%                        | 20%              | 16%        | 12,834 | 64%                                   | 33%             | 31                          |
| Day Out for Leisure/Event         | 57%                            | 22%                        | 8%               | 13%        | 13,476 | 79%                                   | 36%             | 43                          |
| Visiting Family/Friends           | 48%                            | 22%                        | 18%              | 12%        | 13,086 | 70%                                   | 30%             | 40                          |

Table 10: Expected Bus Use Due to Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme vs Current Bus Use

The data was also disaggregated by current travel modes for each journey purpose in order to establish the extent to which respondents expected to switch to bus use from cars, trains and active travel modes as a result of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme. Figure 11 below outlines those respondents who currently use private vehicles/taxis, active modes, and other public transport options (including train, subway, tram and ferry) but indicated that they would start using the bus as it was free. This shows that between 26% and 44% of respondents would be likely to shift to bus use from private vehicles/taxis across all journey purposes. The largest impacts on active modes were expected to be for daytime social activities and travel to education, where 23% and 22% respectively would be likely to start using the bus after the free travel was introduced. Meanwhile, the biggest change in public transport use was expected to be in travel to/from an apprenticeship or training programme, where 27% of respondents would be expected to switch to bus use.

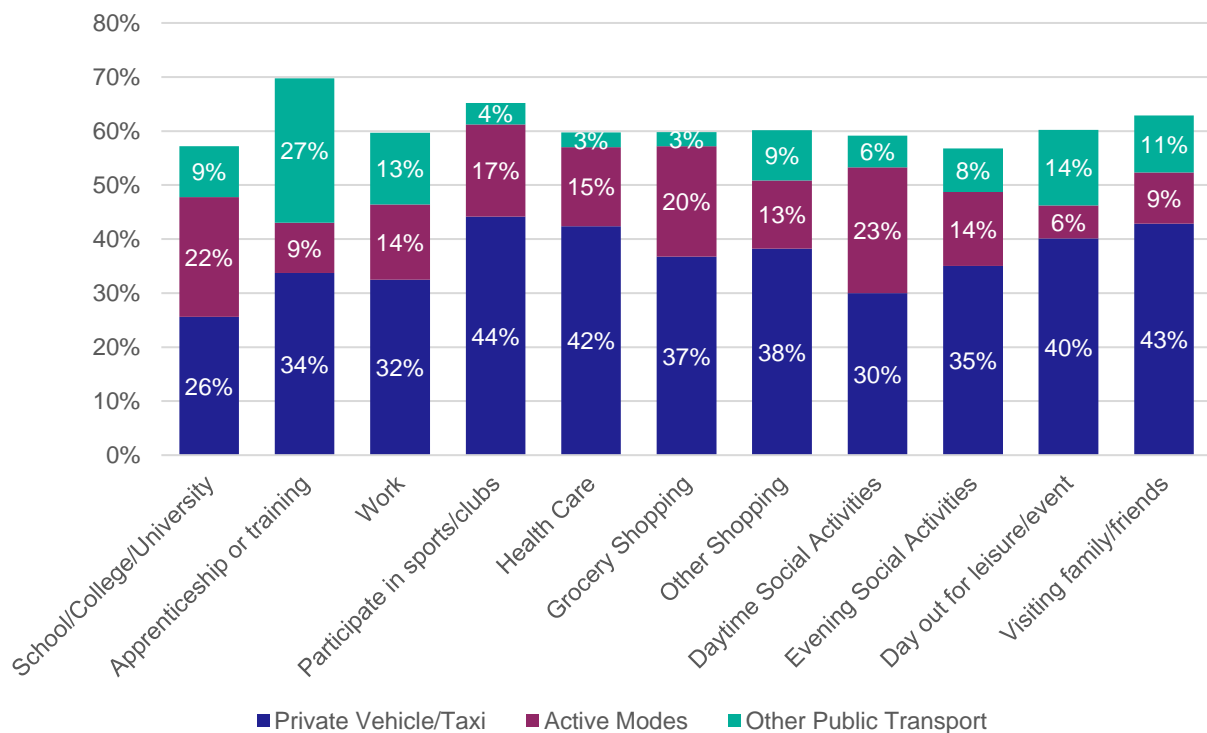


Figure 11: Expected Modal Shift

To establish the expected impact on whether young people will be able to/will access new opportunities, respondents were asked if the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would encourage them/their child to make more journeys and/or start travelling to new places. Table 11 details the results and shows that between 51% (for health care) and 80% (for daytime social activities) of respondents felt that the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would allow them to travel more often to their current destinations, and/or to access new destinations.

| Journey Purpose                   | More journeys to the same places | Travel to new places | Both more journeys and new places | Won't change | Don't know | Total  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------|
| School/College/University         | 39%                              | 13%                  | 13%                               | 31%          | 4%         | 8,704  |
| Apprenticeship/Training Programme | 28%                              | 25%                  | 17%                               | 21%          | 9%         | 3,250  |
| Work/Job                          | 32%                              | 18%                  | 16%                               | 28%          | 6%         | 5,715  |
| Sports/Clubs or Other Activities  | 25%                              | 27%                  | 24%                               | 17%          | 7%         | 8,037  |
| Health Care                       | 32%                              | 10%                  | 9%                                | 42%          | 7%         | 7,096  |
| Grocery Shopping                  | 30%                              | 21%                  | 19%                               | 26%          | 4%         | 5,901  |
| Other Shopping                    | 25%                              | 22%                  | 24%                               | 23%          | 6%         | 9,622  |
| Social Activities (day)           | 23%                              | 27%                  | 30%                               | 14%          | 6%         | 10,392 |
| Social Activities (evening/night) | 25%                              | 24%                  | 26%                               | 18%          | 7%         | 7,874  |
| Day Out for Leisure/Event         | 19%                              | 27%                  | 33%                               | 14%          | 7%         | 10,231 |
| Visiting Family/Friends           | 40%                              | 12%                  | 19%                               | 24%          | 5%         | 8,773  |

Table 11: Opportunities Due to Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

Respondents were also asked if they thought that the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would enable them/their child to travel and do more without an adult. Of the 15,198 who provided a response, over half (58%) felt that it would, and a further 23% agreed that it would, but only once they/their child was old enough.

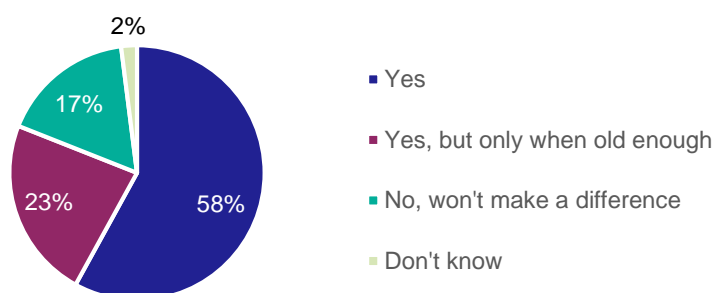


Figure 12: Facilitating Independent Travel

## Impact on Families

Parents/carers who were completing the survey were asked whether they thought the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would encourage them to make more journeys as a family by bus. Of the 10,184 who provided a response, just under half (46%) felt this would encourage more family journeys to be made by bus, while 27% felt it would not. The remaining 27% did not know.

| Impact on Families – Demographic Analysis |  |
|---|--|
| Urban/ Rural/<br>Island                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The more urban the area the more likely it was that respondents felt the scheme would encourage them to make more journeys as a family by bus - those in cities were nearly twice as likely than those living on islands to think this (56% vs 31% respectively).</li> </ul>  |
| Disability                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those whose activities were limited by a health condition, were slightly more likely to indicate that the scheme would encourage them to make family trips by bus compared to those who did not have a health issue (51% vs 46% respectively).</li> </ul>   |
| Income                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As household income rose, respondents were less likely to think the scheme would encourage bus use for family trips - those with the lowest income (i.e. less than £10,000) were nearly twice as likely to indicate that this would encourage them to make more family trips compared to those in the highest income group (i.e. £100,000 or more) (67% vs 35% respectively).</li> </ul>  |
| Other Factors                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of private vehicles available for household use had a significant impact on intentions, with 71% of those with no cars available indicating the scheme would encourage more family bus journeys compared to just 26% of those with 3 or more cars.</li> <li>LGBT young people were more likely to indicate that the scheme would encourage more family journeys by bus compared to straight/heterosexual respondents (56% vs 39% respectively).</li> <li>Those from black and ethnic minority groups were more likely to indicate that the scheme would encourage more family journeys by bus compared to those from white ethnic groups (61% vs 45% respectively).</li> </ul> |

Those who indicated it would encourage them to make more journeys by bus, were asked to outline what type of journeys and why they would use the bus, while those who said it would not make a difference were asked to explain why.

## Encouraging Family Travel

In total, 5,118 respondents indicated that the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would encourage them to make more journeys as a family by bus and outlined what type of journeys they would make and why they would use the bus.

Affordability was the main reason given for increasing family trips as a result of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme. It was felt that families would find it easier

and more affordable to do things together. Other factors included removing the challenges of finding and paying for parking:

*“Yes, because sometimes I don't have enough money to put on my card to take all the children to the town, etc.”*

*“As I have [multiple] children and having to pay for each of them and then myself can be quiet dear, so having them getting a free pass would make it so much more affordable for myself to go new places and take them out more.”*

*“Would take the bus into town instead of taking the car as I'd only have one fare to pay instead of 3 which would make it cheaper than paying for parking. Currently it is more expensive to take the bus.”*

A wide range of different journey purposes were outlined by respondents, including local travel and using the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme to allow the family to reach urban hubs and other more distant and new locations. There was a strong desire for family days out and leisure trips (covering a wide range of activities), as well as visiting family and friends. Shopping and going out for meals were also commonly identified. Several also indicated they would use the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme as a family for travel to/from school, and/or to access after school clubs and activities. A few also suggested that the free travel would support holidays taken across Scotland:

*“Zoo, museums, children's events. We don't have a car, so bus are our preferred choice of travel within the city and if it's free it's even better for us.”*

*“School journeys, days out, visiting family.”*

*“Would visit further away places as it won't cost as much.”*

*“Would travel different places go site seeing places we've never been before.”*

## **No Change to Family Travel**

Conversely, 2,679 respondents indicated that the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would not encourage them to make more journeys as a family by bus and outlined their reasons for this.



Largely, this was due to the cost of the adult fares still being considered to be too expensive. Some felt it would still be more cost effective to drive or use other modes of public transport compared to adult fares on the bus:

*“Adult fares are still too expensive. Still cheaper to park than a return bus fare into town.”*

*“Adult cost will be too high, equivalent local journey by train is cheaper. Child was half price anyway.”*

*“Because as a family it is still expensive even with child free travel. £10 a journey.”*

Other key issues for many respondents, again mirrored the barriers and safety issues discussed above. This included:

- the lack of any bus services locally, or the lack of frequent and reliable services. These respondents again noted that either the routes or times of buses available locally were not suitable or convenient, or that the journey's took too long or were regularly delayed or cancelled;
- safety concerns around on-board travel, travel to/from the bus stop, and at stop safety;
- a lack of direct routes and joined-up services; and
- travel sickness:

*“There are no suitable routes or times from our village.”*

*“Because I'd still have to pay and buses are generally slow, uncomfortable, inconvenient.”*

*“Because of cold bus, unreliable bus service, take too long, need to take more than 1 bus, and the cost of fare.”*

The quality of the on-board environment was also discussed here, with several respondents noting that buses were often 'dirty', 'smelly', 'uncomfortable' and had window's that did not open. The need to have the exact fare was also mentioned by a few respondents as a reason for not travelling more by bus.

Again, many indicated that they would continue to drive - either through necessity, convenience or preference. Similarly, concerns over COVID-19 were raised again as a reason for not using the bus more often as a family.

Finally, a few respondents noted that, as they already used the bus a lot, this would have little impact on their overall travel patterns as a family, it would simply make it more affordable. Others, with older children indicated that their children wanted to spend time with friends rather than their parents and therefore, again, the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would have little impact on family travel patterns:

*“We already use the bus fairly regularly but kids going free will be a bonus.”*

## Learning to Drive

In order to provide a measure which could help determine any future impact of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme on if and when young people might start learning to drive, respondents in the age category 16-21 (and parents/carers who were responding on their behalf) were asked if they drove or were learning to drive. Of the 1,752 respondents who were age 17 and above (i.e. old enough to start driving) who provided a response, just under half (48%) indicated they either drove or were currently taking lessons, while just over half (52%) were not. While this provides a baseline measure of the current situation, any post-implementation assessment would need to need to confirm the extent to which the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme had impacted on when/if they learned to drive (rather than other external factors).

| Journey Purpose | Yes – Drive or Taking Lessons | No – Do not drive or taking lessons | Total        |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Age 17          | 47%                           | 53%                                 | 1,011        |
| Age 18          | 50%                           | 50%                                 | 311          |
| Age 19          | 47%                           | 53%                                 | 204          |
| Age 20          | 44%                           | 56%                                 | 141          |
| Age 21          | 56%                           | 44%                                 | 85           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>48%</b>                    | <b>52%</b>                          | <b>1,752</b> |

Table 12: Driving or Taking Lessons by Age

Note: Analysis of this question was based on unweighted data as only one age group responded.

The Scottish Household Survey also provides a measure of the proportion of young people aged 17-19 who hold a full driving licence. This shows that young people in this age group had been obtaining driving licences in greater proportions between 2015 and 2019 - 26% held a full driver's licence in 2015 rising to 39% in 2019. This compares to the 48% on average in the 17-19 age group who were learning to drive or held a licence in the current survey.

In addition, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) provides data on the [number of tests taken in Scotland for those aged 17-25](#). This shows slightly declining numbers of tests taken between 2016/17 and 2019/20, and a significant decline in 2020/21, presumably due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

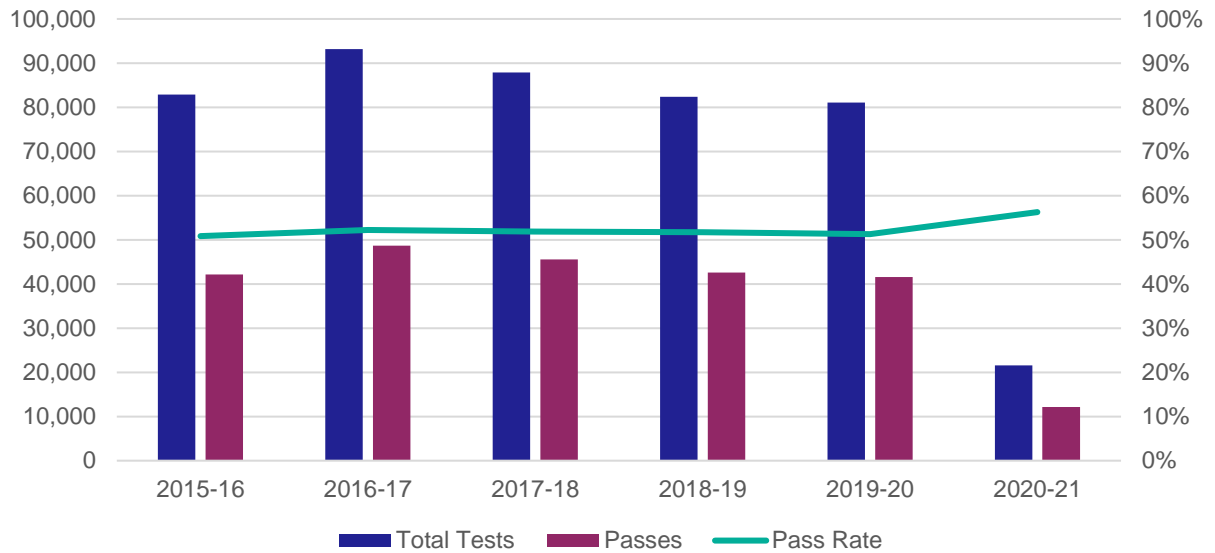


Figure 13: Scottish Driving Test Data (for 17-25 year olds)

## Conclusion

There was good engagement with the travel survey, which achieved a robust and statistically significant sample size for analysis.

There was also fairly good awareness of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme, with around two thirds having heard of this before taking part in the survey.

## Summary of Key Findings

**Bus was used heavily for travelling to education, training or work, but came second to car use across most leisure and social journeys.**

COVID-19 was considered to have reduced people's travel generally, and reduced the extent to which respondents travelled by public transport, although respondents expected these aspects of travel to increase again as the restrictions eased.

**Nearly half of survey respondents felt that travel and transport was unaffordable**, and as the total household spend on travel increased so too did the proportion allocated to the child's travel expenses. **Over a quarter of respondents felt they/their child was missing out on opportunities**, and while this was mostly linked to social and leisure based activities, there was some evidence that difficulties with access to travel/ transport were also impacting upon educational and employment opportunities.

Safety issues related to bus travel were explored in detail, with results found to reflect those prevalent across the public transport sector, as well as across wider society. **Safety issues related to bus travel were more prevalent at night compared to during the day**, with key safety concerns relating to them/their child being exposed to a range of anti-social behaviour as well as bullying or harassment, coupled with a perception that no one would challenge negative behaviour or intervene in the event of an incident. The personal safety of females was also a significant concern for many. While a sizable minority reported experience of bullying and discrimination while travelling by bus, those from minority groups were significantly more likely to have experienced this. Situations ranged from verbal to physical abuse, and were generally focused on the person's appearance or protected characteristics.

**The main barriers to bus use were cost and safety concerns when travelling at night.** It will be important to address these safety concerns and tackle inappropriate behaviour on board buses in order for the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme to reach its full potential and support all young people to access wider opportunities.

**Around three quarters of respondents thought they/their child would use the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme at least once a week**, with them expecting to use the bus more for leisure and social activities compared to current usage. In terms of modal shift, it would appear that **most change will come from replacing car use with bus travel**, although there is potential for a shift from active modes and other public transport. In terms of opening up new opportunities, most respondents who indicated they would use the free bus travel indicated they would do so to travel to the same places more often and/or to travel to new places. **Over half also felt that the free bus travel would allow them/their child to travel more independently**, and **just under half thought this would help families to travel together by bus more often**.

## Taking the Evaluation Forward

While cost and safety concerns were flagged as the main issues related to travelling by bus, another key barrier to use of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme would appear to be the availability of services - this was noted to be an issue throughout the survey. As such, not all young people might be able to benefit equally from this scheme. This is an issue that will require to be monitored going forward as it could result in widening geographic inequalities (i.e. between young people who live in urban, rural and island areas).

It will also be important to consider the experiences and impacts on other groups after the Young Persons' Free Travel scheme has been implemented. This would include other bus users who may (or may not) experience issues accessing services, have different on-board experiences, or who may change their travel behaviour as a result of the scheme. Other important areas to monitor will be the impact on other transport modes, such as taxis and other public transport, as well as any changes in the extent to which children and young people choose active modes (and any seasonal differences) going forward.

The data provided here (and across supplementary tables extracted from secondary data sources) provides a baseline against which future progress and impacts of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme can be measured. This will support the design of evaluation stages one and two (as outlined in the Introduction), and provide key pre-implementation comparison data to determine the impact of the scheme over time.

## Appendix A - Survey Sample by Local Authority

Survey sample breakdown by Local Authority:

| Local Authority               | Number | Percent |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Aberdeen City Council         | 1998   | 11.4%   |
| Aberdeenshire Council         | 1344   | 7.7%    |
| Angus Council                 | 811    | 4.6%    |
| Argyll and Bute Council       | 702    | 4.0%    |
| City of Edinburgh Council     | 1883   | 10.8%   |
| Clackmannanshire Council      | 29     | 0.2%    |
| Dumfries and Galloway Council | 389    | 2.2%    |
| Dundee City Council           | 66     | 0.4%    |
| East Ayrshire Council         | 60     | 0.3%    |
| East Dunbartonshire Council   | 632    | 3.6%    |
| East Lothian Council          | 229    | 1.3%    |
| East Renfrewshire Council     | 61     | 0.3%    |
| Falkirk Council               | 93     | 0.5%    |
| Fife Council                  | 714    | 4.1%    |
| Glasgow City Council          | 1281   | 7.3%    |
| Highland Council              | 51     | 0.3%    |
| Inverclyde Council            | 250    | 1.4%    |
| Midlothian Council            | 587    | 3.4%    |
| Moray Council                 | 498    | 2.9%    |
| North Ayrshire Council        | 112    | 0.6%    |
| North Lanarkshire Council     | 157    | 0.9%    |
| Orkney Islands Council        | 7      | 0.0%    |
| Perth & Kinross Council       | 677    | 3.9%    |
| Renfrewshire Council          | 1453   | 8.3%    |
| Scottish Borders Council      | 465    | 2.7%    |
| Shetland Islands Council      | 248    | 1.4%    |

| <b>Local Authority</b>                    | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| Stirling Council                          | 209           | 1.2%           |
| South Ayrshire Council                    | 198           | 1.1%           |
| South Lanarkshire Council                 | 852           | 4.9%           |
| West Dunbartonshire Council               | 525           | 3.0%           |
| West Lothian Council                      | 63            | 0.4%           |
| Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) | 339           | 1.9%           |
| Not Disclosed                             | 479           | 2.7%           |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>17,462</b> | <b>100%</b>    |



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