

Consultation Findings Report Home to School Transport Review

February 2019

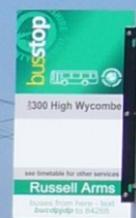


Table of Contents

1. Context	4
2. Pre-consultation preparation	5
2.1 Understanding the needs of Buckinghamshire’s population and profile of the current children receiving home to school transport (see background papers).....	5
2.2 Best practice research and benchmarking of policies and arrangements in 13 local authorities.....	5
2.3 Qualitative research through holding focus groups with service users and stakeholders.....	6
3. The consultation process and methodology	7
3.1 Consultation via an online questionnaire.....	7
3.2 Consultation through meetings:.....	7
3.3 Working collaboratively with FACT (Families and Carers Together) Bucks and Buckinghamshire SENDIAS (SEND Independent Advisory Service) on the detailed development of the Home to School Transport Policy to ensure the document is as clear as possible to parents.	8
4. Overall findings from the Consultation process	9
4.1 Profile	9
4.2 Responses.....	9
4.3 Feedback from key groups	10
4.3.1 Post-16 SEND	10
4.3.2 Ivinghoe residents	10
4.3.3 Evreham residents	11
Questionnaire Responses and Key Themes.....	12
5.1 Profile of Respondents	12
6. Proposed changes to the Home to School transport arrangements	18
6.1 Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport	18
6.2 Proposal 2: Providing statutory free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school (Ivinghoe and Evreham [Iver]).....	30
6.3 Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with (SEND) aged 16+	34
7. Feedback from Consultation Events	43
7.1 Public Meetings	43
7.2 SEN Parent Forum and dedicated sessions for parents with children with SEN.....	43
7.3 Young People’s Views.....	44
7.4 Transport Operator sessions	45
8. Summary	46

Appendix A – Copy of Consultation Questionnaire51
Appendix B – Copy of Young People’s Questionnaire56
Appendix C – Organisational Response from FACT Bucks59

1. Context

A public consultation regarding proposed changes to the current arrangements for home to school transport was launched on 31 October 2018 and closed on 4 January 2019.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the consultation process to aid the County Council in its decision-making process regarding the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy and working practices.

The current Home to School Transport Service requires review in the light of rising demand which will place increased pressure on limited resources. The current annual cost of providing home to school transport is £15.1million, out of which £12.7million is spent to meet the local authority's statutory duty to provide free transport to eligible students. Transport is also provided for 4,810 children at a cost of £2.4m in accordance with other statutory transport duties and powers.

Revising the way the service is provided presents an opportunity to support more young people to travel independently, as well as making better use of public transport routes. Full details of the proposals for a modern Home to School Transport Service are set out in the draft policy.

2. Pre-consultation preparation

Prior to going out to consultation, the Council undertook a range of pre-consultation research to inform the development of proposals for change. This research included:

2.1 Understanding the needs of Buckinghamshire's population and profile of the current children receiving home to school transport (see background papers).

An analysis of the profile of key demographic groups currently receiving home to school transport shows the following:

- The overall pupil population in Buckinghamshire is growing
- The percentage of pupils with EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans) is growing, and the rate of growth in relation to this group is accelerating faster than growth in the general pupil population
- The range of needs that this cohort of pupils have are increasingly complex and varied, which means that the local authority needs to review its current provision and adjust where appropriate
- There has been a change in the age range of pupils (19-25 years) who could hold an EHC plan which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of students with EHCPs. Developing independence for students whilst still in full time education is critical to allow an effective transition to adulthood and therefore there should be an increasing emphasis on encouraging use of independent travel options.

2.2 Best practice research and benchmarking of policies and arrangements in 13 local authorities (statistical neighbours of the Council).

This process revealed that:

- Only 5 out of the 13 other local authorities examined offered some free transport for post-16 pupils.
- All 13 local authorities offered travel assistance; however none have a policy of full cost recovery.
- Out the 13 local authorities, 12 have a contribution-based policy within which parents and carers are asked for a contribution to subsidise the cost of transport.
- Out of those areas that offered subsidised transport, the contributions ranged from £321 to £1,411.50 per annum.
- The majority of local authorities (9 out of 13) charged for post-16 home to school

transport.

- Only 3 of the 13 local authorities offered personal transport budgets to clients to self-manage.

The overall findings from the benchmarking exercise suggests that the proposed changes within the consultation process are in line with current practice deployed by other local authorities.

2.3 Qualitative research - holding focus groups with service users and stakeholders.

During July 2018 two focus groups with service users and organisations were held to explore the opportunities and options for changes to the Council's Home to School Transport policy and arrangements. In addition to these groups there was also engagement with key stakeholders including FACT Bucks and transport providers prior to the launch of the consultation. This was to enable stakeholders to have input into the design of the consultation process. Discretionary elements of the current Home to School Transport were reviewed with an explanation as to why these were/have been implemented and how these could be potentially changed. The focus groups identified a number of areas where it would be sensible to consider a change in approach, which included: Paid for transport for compulsory school age pupils, SEN Post-16 transport, and the current arrangement for Ivinghoe and Evreham. The group identified a number of options around these areas and considered these through undertaking a risk analysis and made the following recommendations:

- Discounted travel (subsidised) on public networks or other appropriate provision
- Extend the use of Independent Travel Training to support students with SEND
- Remove contracted transport so that public transport becomes the available travel option (recommended for viable routes)
- Remove the option of free school transport for Ivinghoe and Evreham, instead implementing charging for transport and offering routes to the commercial sector

The feedback obtained helped to develop the consultation questions and inform the policy development process.

3. The consultation process and methodology

The Council carried out a consultation process in a robust and collaborative manner, with the principal aim to seek the views of local residents within the county (and particularly from parents of children and young people) on the following proposed changes:

- Changing how we provide school transport – greater integration of school bus services with public bus services.
- Only providing free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school, withdrawing historic, discretionary transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver).
- Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged over 16.

The communications were particularly targeted at parents/carers to encourage them to participate in the consultation process. The Council was particularly keen to understand the views of parents who were likely to be making secondary school choices for their children during the next two years, parents of children with special educational needs and key stakeholder organisations.

In order to reach a wide range of residents and key stakeholders, a number of different consultation methods were employed. These included:

3.1 Consultation via an online questionnaire

Residents were able to access an online questionnaire to complete via the Buckinghamshire County Council website. A total of **2,308** people responded via the online questionnaire.

The consultation survey was promoted via social media, schools and governors, bulletins, newspapers articles, radio coverage, television, internal newsletters, parish newsletters, and banners on relevant webpages.

3.2 Consultation through meetings

A number of dedicated public meetings were held in order to provide an opportunity for residents to raise questions and better understand the proposed changes. These meetings included:

- **11** Council public meetings for all to attend held in venues across Buckinghamshire (with a total of 59 attendees).

- 1 SEN Parent Forum facilitated by FACT Bucks (Charity, Families and Carers Together in Buckinghamshire).
- 2 sessions specifically for parents with SEN children.
- 1 session with the Youth Voice Executive Committee.
- 4 sessions with transport operators (held between September and December 2018).

3.3 Consultation through collaboration

This involved working collaboratively with FACT Bucks and Buckinghamshire SENDIAS (SEND Independent Advisory Service) on the detailed development of the Home to School Transport Policy to ensure the document is as clear as possible to parents.

The overall communication plan and the associated outcomes from the consultation can be summarised in the following diagram:

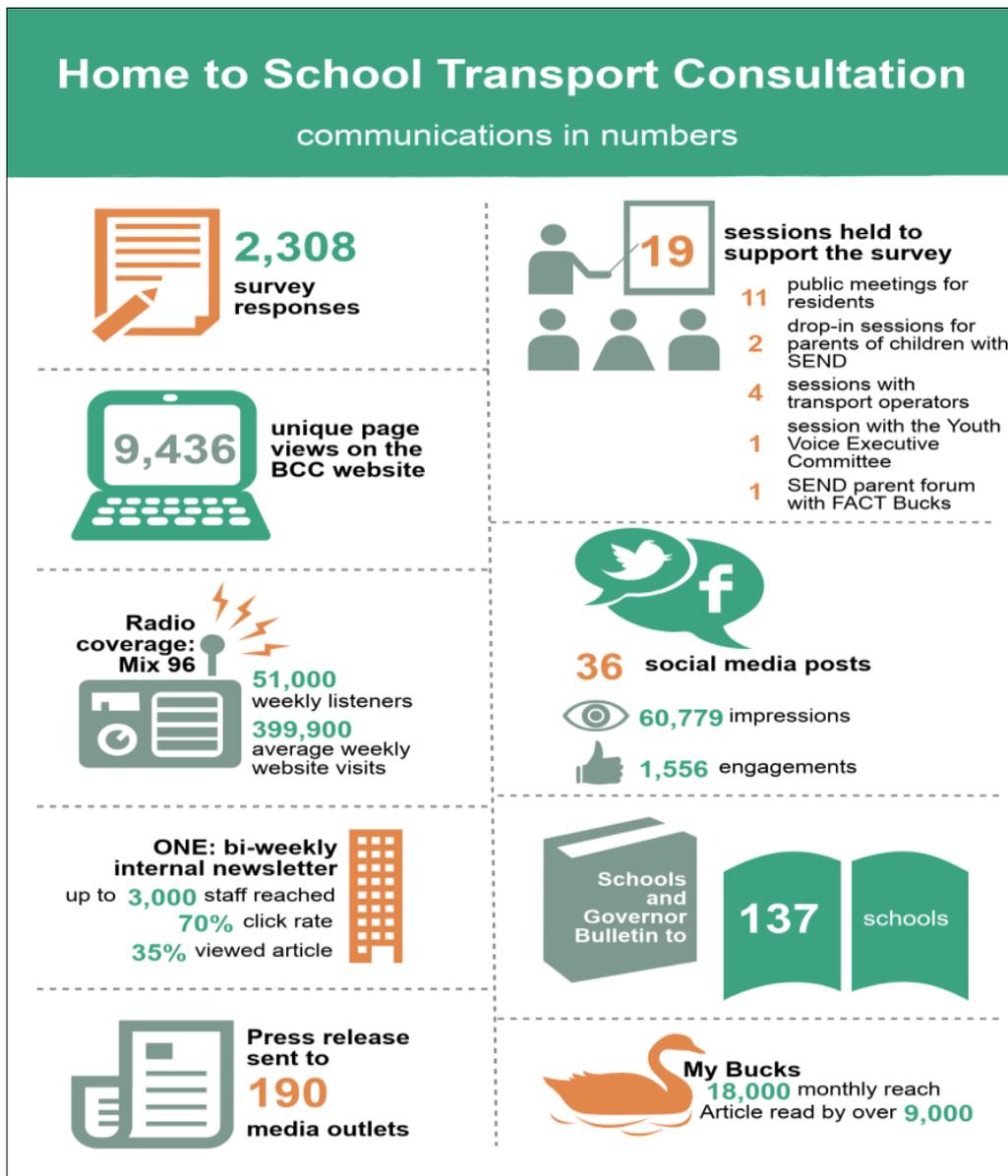


Figure 1

4. Overall findings from the Consultation process

4.1 Profile

- **2308** responses were received in total
- **91%** of respondents were parents with children attending school or college.
- **33%** of respondents are parents with a child that receives free home to school transport.
- **12%** of respondents are parents with a child with SEN
- **67%** of respondents do not currently receive free Home to School Transport.

Respondent	Responses	Percentage
Parents with a child that travel to school or college	1,879	91%
Parents with a child that receives free home to school transport	689	33%
Parents with a child with SEN	245	12%

4.2 Responses

Below is a breakdown of overall survey responses. It is important to note that 67% of all respondents do not currently receive free home to school transport.

- **66%** of respondents had concerns about their children travelling on a public bus service, but only 12% of all respondents were parents with a child with SEN (a group impacted by the proposals).
- **48%** of those responding did not think their child would benefit from having a more flexible bus service for after school activities etc.
- There were comparable proportions of respondents who would (23%) and would not (24%) change to a public service that was more cost effective. The remaining respondents either did not currently pay (39%), or were not sure what decision they might make (14%).
- **24%** of all respondents disagreed that those in the Ivinghoe and Evreham areas should have the current discretionary transport offer removed.. This is much lower compared to the respondents who live in Ivinghoe (213 respondents) and Evreham (245 respondents), where 46% and 76% respectively disagreed that the transport provision should be in line with the statutory guidelines.
- **35%** of all respondents agreed that those who are currently receiving free transport in Ivinghoe and Evreham should have to start paying from September 2020. This is higher compared to those respondents who live in Ivinghoe and Evreham, where 20% and 9% respectively agreed.
- **55%** of all those responding to the online survey disagreed that parents should have to pay a contribution for their children to attend post-16 education.
- **48%** of all respondents preferred a flat fee if a charge for post-16 SEND transport was to be implemented. 28% thought the fee should be based on

distance, and 24% did not mind. In comparison, 70% of respondents who have a child/children with SEND preferred a flat fee.

- **63%** of all respondents said that those post-16 students already receiving transport should not have to pay from September 2020. This is significantly lower compared to the respondents who have a child/children with SEND where 91% disagreed.

4.3 Feedback from key groups

The three key groups who will be most impacted by the proposals set out through the process are:

4.3.1 Post-16 SEND

There were 245 responses from parents/carers who received free home to school transport due to their child having SEND, out of which 80 responses that stated that they had a child/young person over the age of 16 who had SEND. All of these responses stated that they currently received free home to school transport, therefore this group would be directly affected by the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport arrangements if their child remains in Post 16 education from the date of the implementation of the proposal.

Of these responses:

- 71 answered Q11, with 99% (70) saying that they did not agree with the banded charge proposal. 1 responded that they were not sure – meaning no-one in this group agreed with the proposal.
- 53 answered Q12, with 72% (38) having a preference for a flat fee per year. 6 responses (11%) preferred a fee per year based on distance between home and school, and 9 (17%) said they did not mind.
- 71 answered Q13, with 97% (69) saying that SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport should not start paying from September 2020.

4.3.2 Ivinghoe residents

The current arrangement allows Buckinghamshire children who are closer to Tring School in Hertfordshire to receive free home to school transport to Cottesloe School without meeting all of the eligibility criteria, as it is not their nearest school.

There were 213 responses with postcodes in the Ivinghoe area. 184 answered Q3 about whether they currently received free home to school transport – 56% of these received free home to school transport. However, under the new proposals, these respondents may not necessarily still qualify as they may not be attending their nearest school. It is evident from this group of respondents that there are strong reservations about the proposed changes.

Out of the 193 that answered Q6 about moving to public bus routes, 85% said they had concerns.

- 192 answered Q7 about being able to benefit from more flexible transport routes/timings, with only 15% agreeing that their child would benefit.
- 192 answered Q8 about moving to public services if it was cheaper. 54% (104) said they currently didn't pay. 9% (17) said they would consider moving to public services.
- Q9 was about withdrawing historic, non-statutory arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham, and 191 answered this question. 23% (43) agreed with the proposal. 46% (88) disagreed, and 31% (60) said they were not sure.
- 190 answered Q10. 66% (125) said that students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest suitable school should not have to start paying from September 2020. 14% (27) said they did not mind, and 20% agreed.

4.3.3 Evreham residents

There is an historic arrangement that children living in the catchment area of the former Evreham Secondary School would receive free home to school transport to Chalfont Community College. However, under the new proposals, these respondents may not necessarily still qualify as they may not be attending their nearest school. It is evident from this group of respondents that there are strong reservations about the proposed changes.

There were 245 responses with postcodes in the current Evreham promise area. 224 answered Q3 about whether they currently received free home to school transport – 62% of these received free transport.

- Out of the 235 that answered Q6 about moving to public bus routes, 80% said they had concerns.
- 232 answered Q7 about being able to benefit from more flexible transport routes/timings, with only 17% agreeing that their child would benefit.
- 231 answered Q8 about moving to public services if it was cheaper. 65% (115) said they currently did not pay. 8% (19) said they would consider moving to public services.
- Q9 was about withdrawing historic, non-statutory arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham, and 231 answered this question. 11% (25) agreed with the proposal. 76% (175) disagreed, and 13% (31) said they were not sure.
- 230 answered Q10. 84% (193) said that students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest suitable school should not have to start paying from September 2020. 7% (17) said they did not mind, and 9% agreed.

5. Questionnaire Responses and Key Themes

The survey data has been analysed in-house by the Council's Business Intelligence & Insight Team.

Responses to closed-ended questions have been analysed overall and for different groups of people. Where possible, results have been compared within demographic categories to show where results are statistically different from each other (to a 95% level of confidence)¹.

Free text responses have also been analysed to identify key themes and categorised under the most common themes. Each comment can be attributed to more than one theme.

5.1 Profile of Respondents

Questions 1-5 of the consultation survey were about respondents. From the responses submitted to these questions we know that:

- 91% of respondents had children, of which 53% used the bus as their main mode of transport to school, with a further 29% using the car.
- 70% of the responses to Q2 regarding the age groups of children had children aged 11-16 years, 41% had children aged 5-10 years and 20% being aged 16 years or older (note that respondents often had more than one child which is reflected in the responses).
- 67% of the respondents did not receive free transport. Of those that did, 15% received free transport because of being over the statutory walking distance from the school, with a further 12% receiving free transport due to their child having SEN D (246 respondents).
- 63% of respondents who stated that they receive free home to school transport because their child had SEND indicated that ASD best described their child's needs, with a significant number (57%) citing Speech, Language and Communication needs.

A full breakdown is provided in this section in response to these questions.

¹ Note that this is a self-selecting survey and although it is standard practice to statistically test results, the theoretical application of significance testing is based on random sampling approaches (rather than self-selecting surveys). Statistical differences are also noted when there are at least 28 respondents in a demographic group.

**Q1: Do you have children in your household that travel to school or college?
Please select all that apply**

Answered: 2,308 Skipped: 0

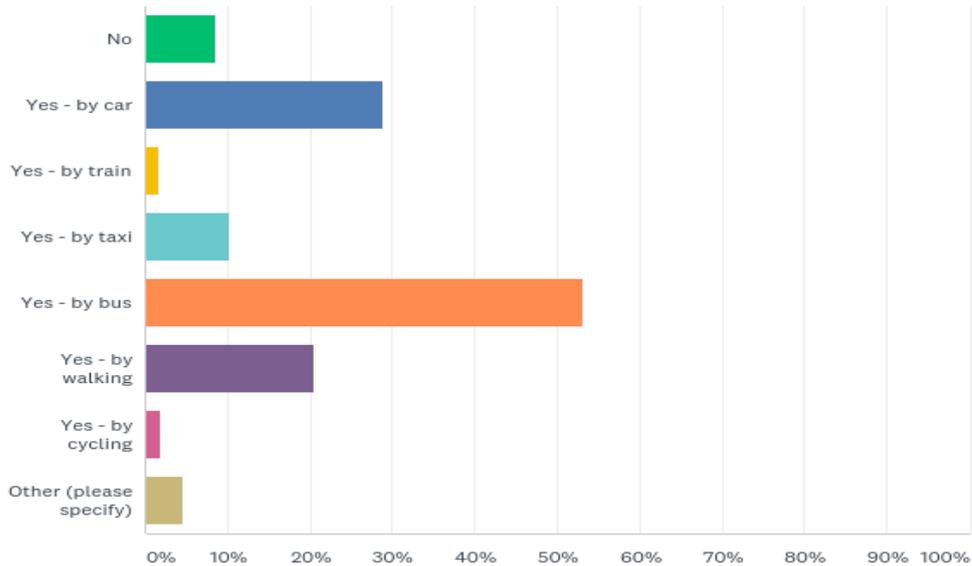


Figure 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	8.62%	199
Yes - by car	28.77%	664
Yes - by train	1.60%	37
Yes - by taxi	10.27%	237
Yes - by bus	53.16%	1,227
Yes - by walking	20.49%	473
Yes - by cycling	1.82%	42
Other (please specify)	4.51%	104
Total Respondents: 2,308		

Figure 3

All 2,308 respondents answered this question. Overall, slightly over half of the respondents reported that children in their household travel to school or college by bus (53.2%), with a further 28.8% travelling by car and 20.5% walking. Alternative modes of transport including train, taxi, cycling or other totalled approx. 18% overall. It is worth noting that 9% of the respondents do not have children who travel to school or college.

Q2: Which age group(s) are your children in? Please select all that apply

Answered: 2,097 Skipped: 211

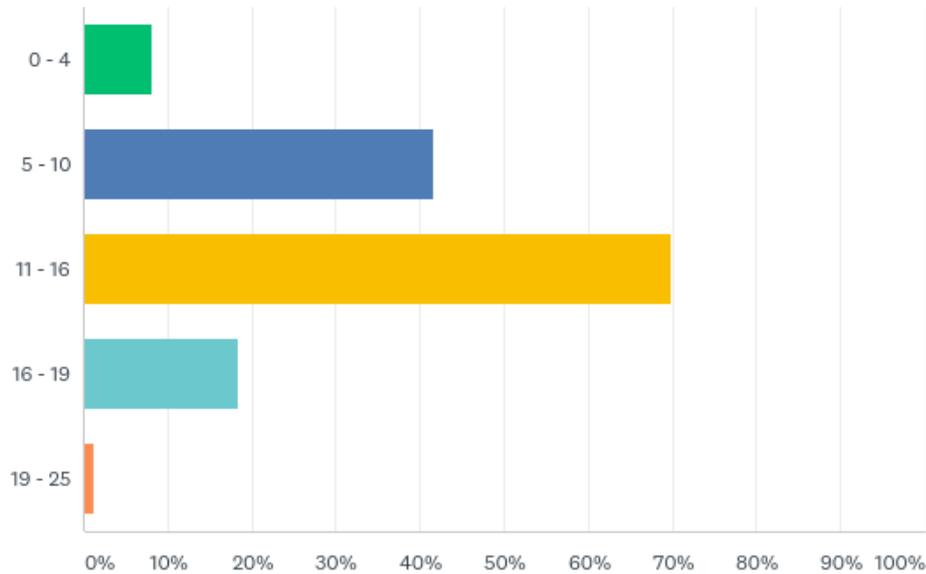


Figure 4

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 - 4	8.20%	172
5 - 10	41.63%	873
11 - 16	69.91%	1,466
16 - 19	18.31%	384
19 - 25	1.34%	28
Total Respondents: 2,097		

Figure 5

2,097 respondents answered this question (91%). Respondents were asked to select all of the age groups applicable for their children. 69.9% of respondents who answered this question have children aged between 11-16 and 41.6% have children aged 5-10.

Q3: Do your children receive free home to school transport?

Answered: 2,085 Skipped: 223

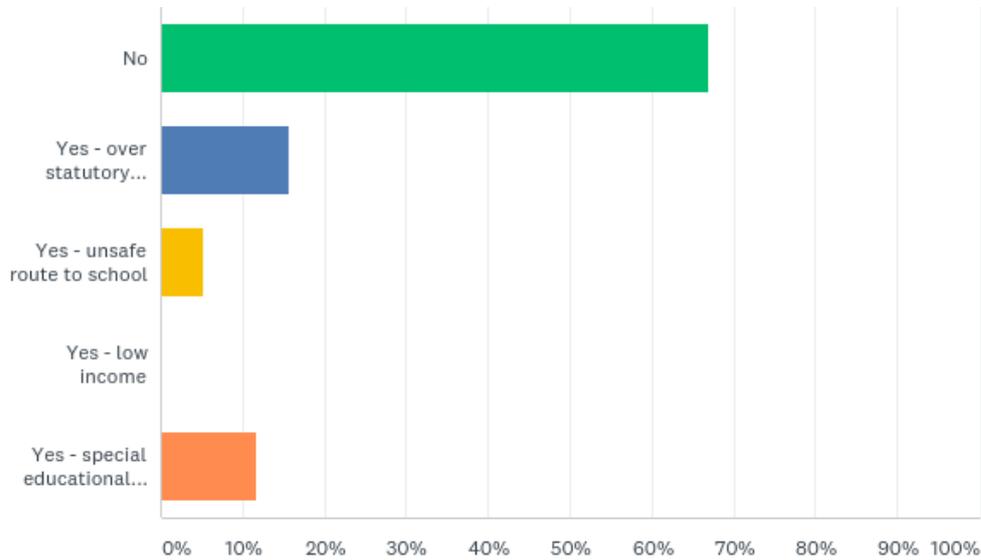


Figure 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	66.95%	1,396
Yes - over statutory walking distance	15.73%	328
Yes - unsafe route to school	5.32%	111
Yes - low income	0.19%	4
Yes - special educational needs or disability or mobility problems	11.80%	246
Total Respondents: 2,085		

Figure 7

2,085 respondents answered this question (90%). 66.9% of these respondents do not receive free home to school transport. Respondents in receipt of free home to school transport were most likely to receive this because they live further than the statutory walking distance (15.7% of people who answered this question) or because their child has special educational needs, disability or other mobility problems (11.8% of people who answered this question). 5.3% of respondents who answered this question receive free transport due to the route to school being unsafe, and less than 1% receives this provision due to low income.

Q4: Which of the following descriptions apply to your child? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 245 Skipped: 2,063

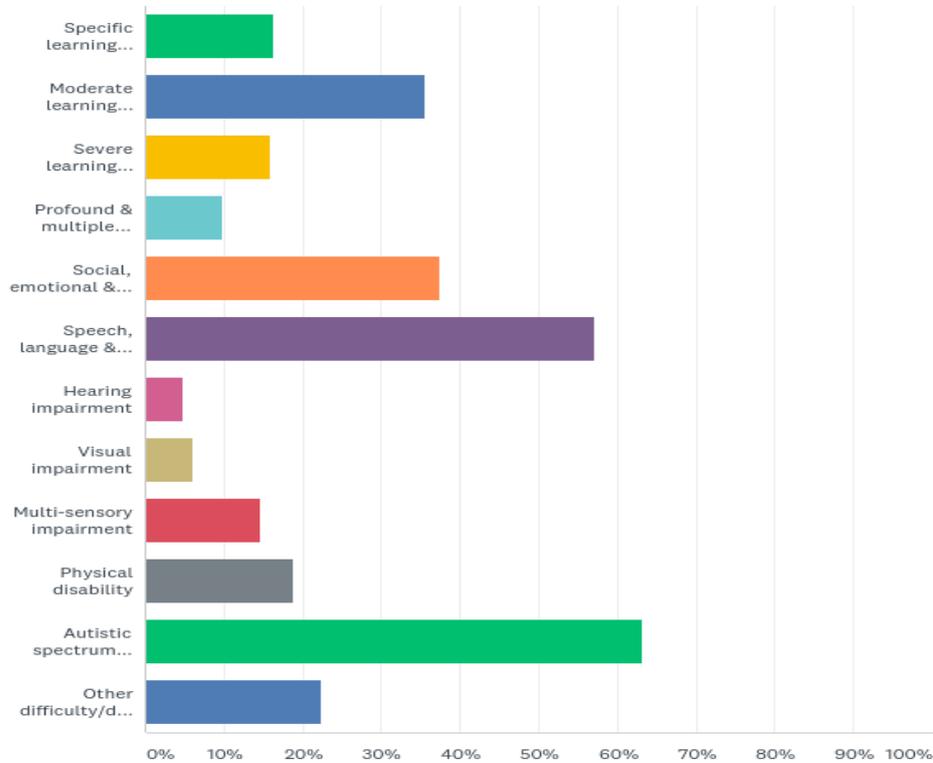


Figure 8

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Specific learning difficulty	16.33%	40
Moderate learning difficulty	35.51%	87
Severe learning difficulty	15.92%	39
Profound & multiple learning difficulty	9.80%	24
Social, emotional & mental health	37.55%	92
Speech, language & communication needs	57.14%	140
Hearing impairment	4.90%	12
Visual impairment	6.12%	15
Multi-sensory impairment	14.69%	36
Physical disability	18.78%	46
Autistic spectrum disorder	63.27%	155
Other difficulty/disability	22.45%	55
Total Respondents: 245		

Figure 9

245 respondents answered this question (11%). Several respondents identified multiple difficulties/disabilities applicable to their child. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (63.3% of people who answered this question) and Speech, Language and Communication needs were the most commonly identified in the survey (57.1% of people who answered this question). This is in line with information published in the SEND JSNA chapter, which identified that these are the two most prevalent need types for young people with Education, Health and Care plans.

Q5: Respondents were asked to submit their full postcode.

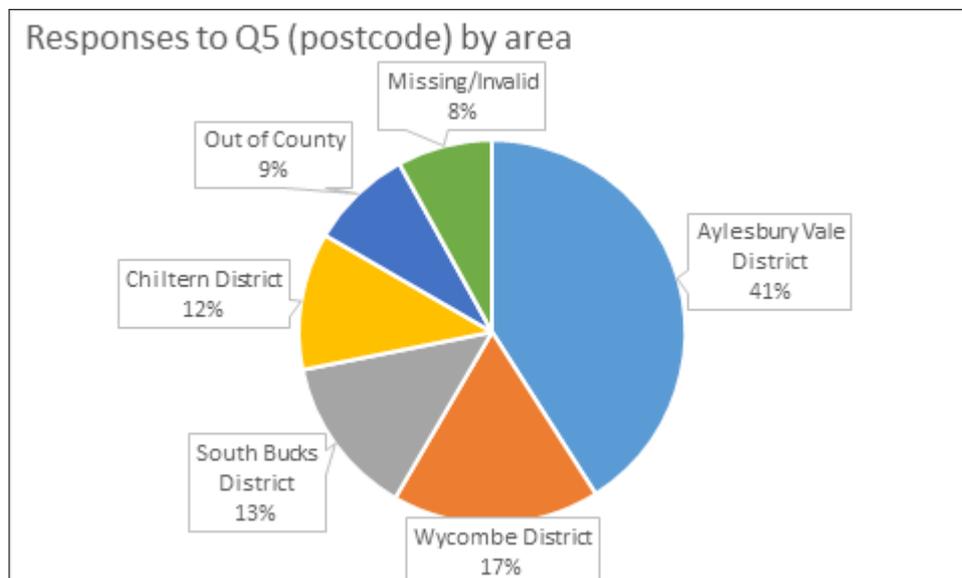


Figure 10

The majority of respondents (41%) resided in the Aylesbury vale area, with 17% of responses coming from residents in the Wycombe District and 13% in the South Bucks District.

6. Proposed changes to the Home to School transport arrangements

6.1 Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport

Questions 6 to 8 of the questionnaire related to proposed changes on how school transport is provided.

Q6. We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?

Answered: 2,030 Skipped: 278

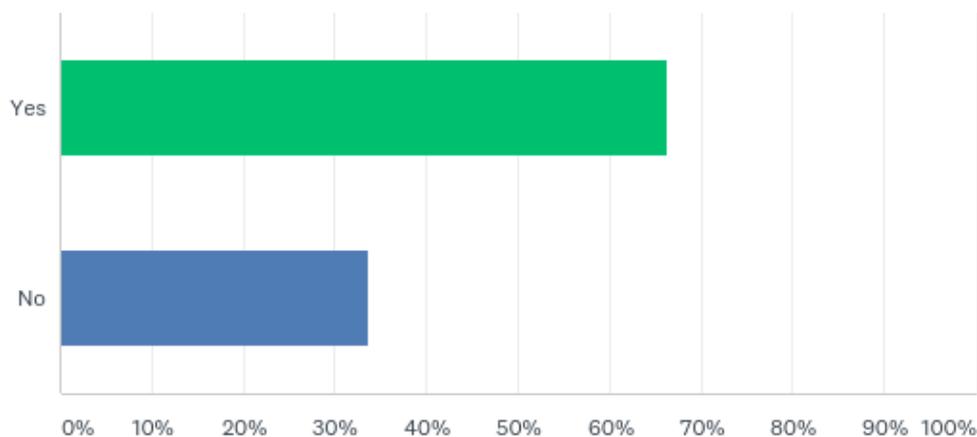


Figure 11

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	66.40%	1,348
No	33.60%	682
TOTAL		2,030

Figure 12

2,030 respondents answered this question (88%). Two thirds of respondents expressed concerns about their child travelling to school on a public bus route (66%).

It should be noted that the number of respondents who reported concerns (1,348) is higher than the number of people who reported in Question 1 that their child currently travels to school by bus (1,227).

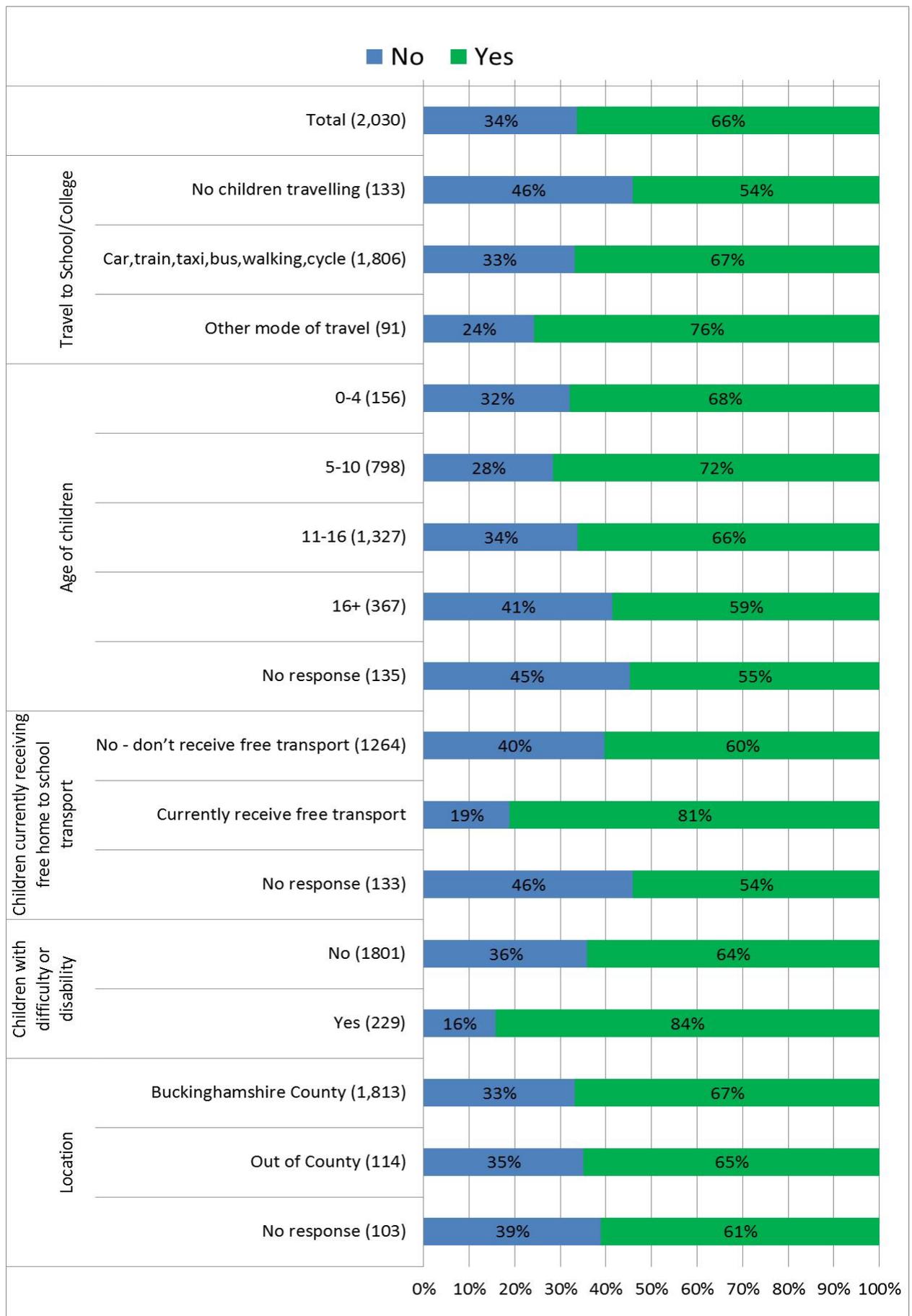


Figure 13

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups².

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Children with a difficulty or disability** – respondents whose child had a disability are more likely to raise concerns about their child travelling to school on a public bus route (84% compared to the 66% average).
- **Age** – respondents with younger children are more likely to raise concerns than those with older children (72% of those with children aged 5-10 years old, compared to the 66% average).
- **Those currently receiving free transport** – respondents in this group are also more likely to raise concerns regarding their child(ren) travelling to school on a public bus route (81% compared to the 66% average).

Q6 Key Themes from open text

Out of the 2,308 respondents to the survey, 1,345 made specific comments in response to Question 6 (58%). Each comment was categorised to understand common themes. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories.

The top three themes were:

- a) Safety
 - b) Routes
 - c) Times
- a) **Safety** — There were 524 comments which referenced safety. Concerns included children travelling on buses with members of the public who are not DBS checked, pupils walking to and from bus stops that are further away and children getting off the bus before they get to school.

“You don’t know how safe your child is if members of the public use same bus.”

“It is not clear from the information provided that the necessary safeguarding requirements will be met.”

² Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence

“Child would have to walk down an unlit and very wet / muddy / overgrown road to reach the bus stop if they used public transport.”

- b) **Routes** — 494 respondents commented on not having a public bus route near to their home, public bus routes not going directly to the school (with pupils having to change buses) or concerns that public bus routes could be cancelled by the bus companies.

“I would love there to be a public bus route to my child’s school. At present if they were to use public transport they would have to change buses three times and take 2 hrs to get home.”

“Only if the trip is directly to the school without any bus changes.”

“But we don’t have a public bus service that runs through our village.”

- c) **Times** — 283 respondents raised comments regarding public bus timetables not coinciding with school start and finish times. There were also concerns that public bus routes would increase journey times for the children.

“There is only a partial timetable and no full bus runs at the required times”

“It would make the journey to and from school longer so would require leaving earlier/home later in limited day light in Autumn/Winter.”

“But what if the public bus is full and he has to catch next bus - and therefore late for school.”

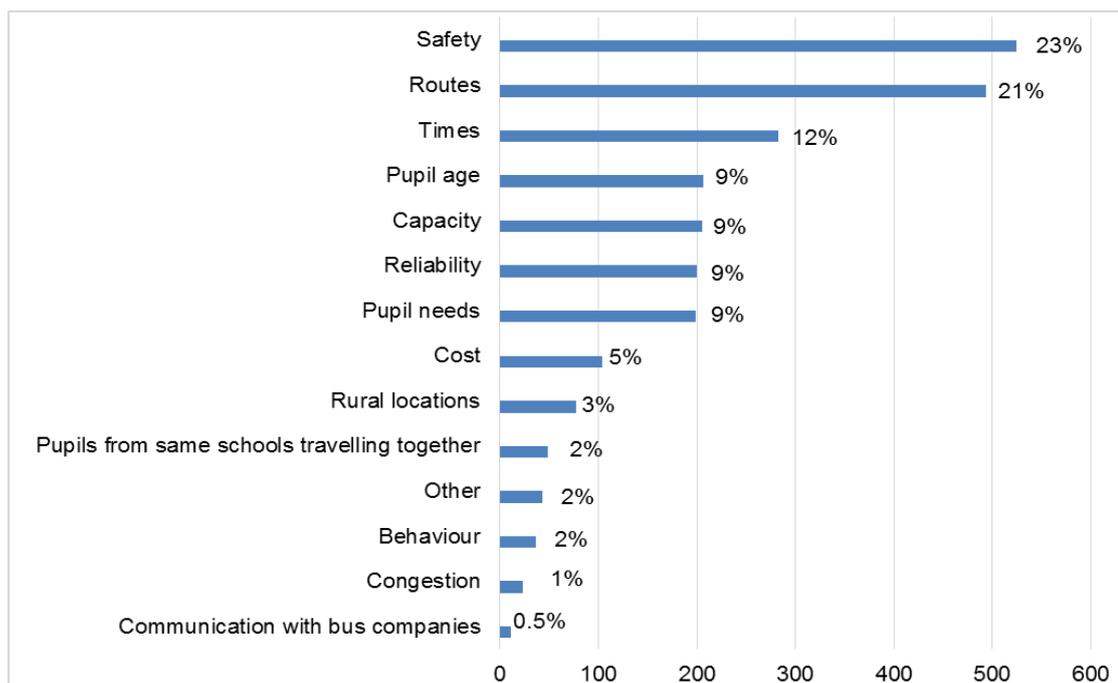


Figure 14

Other key themes included concerns about: children being too young to travel on public bus routes without adult supervision; bus capacity and overcrowding; reliability of public buses and the need to ensure that provision was in place for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

Q7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in after-school clubs or activities.

Answered: 2,010 Skipped: 298

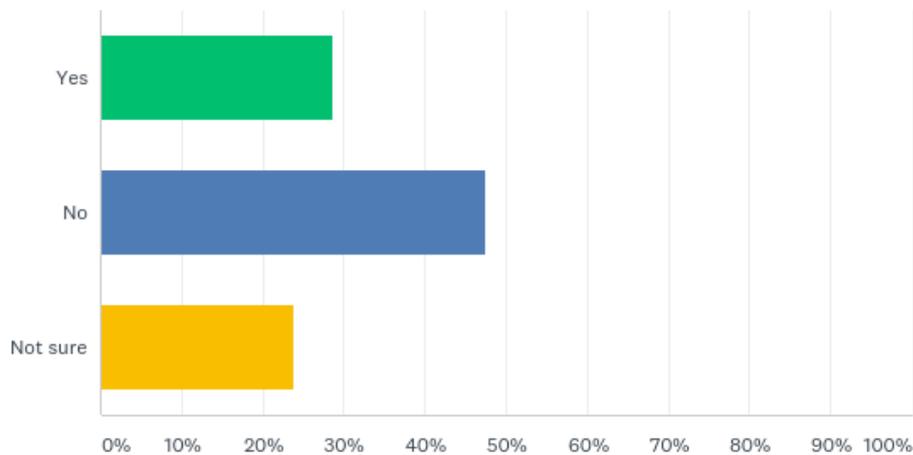


Figure 15

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	28.61%	575
No	47.56%	956
Not sure	23.83%	479
TOTAL		2,010

Figure 16

2,010 respondents answered this question (87%). These respondents were most likely to report that their child would not benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route (48% of people who answered this question). 29% indicated that their child would benefit from this proposal, but 24% reported that they were not sure.

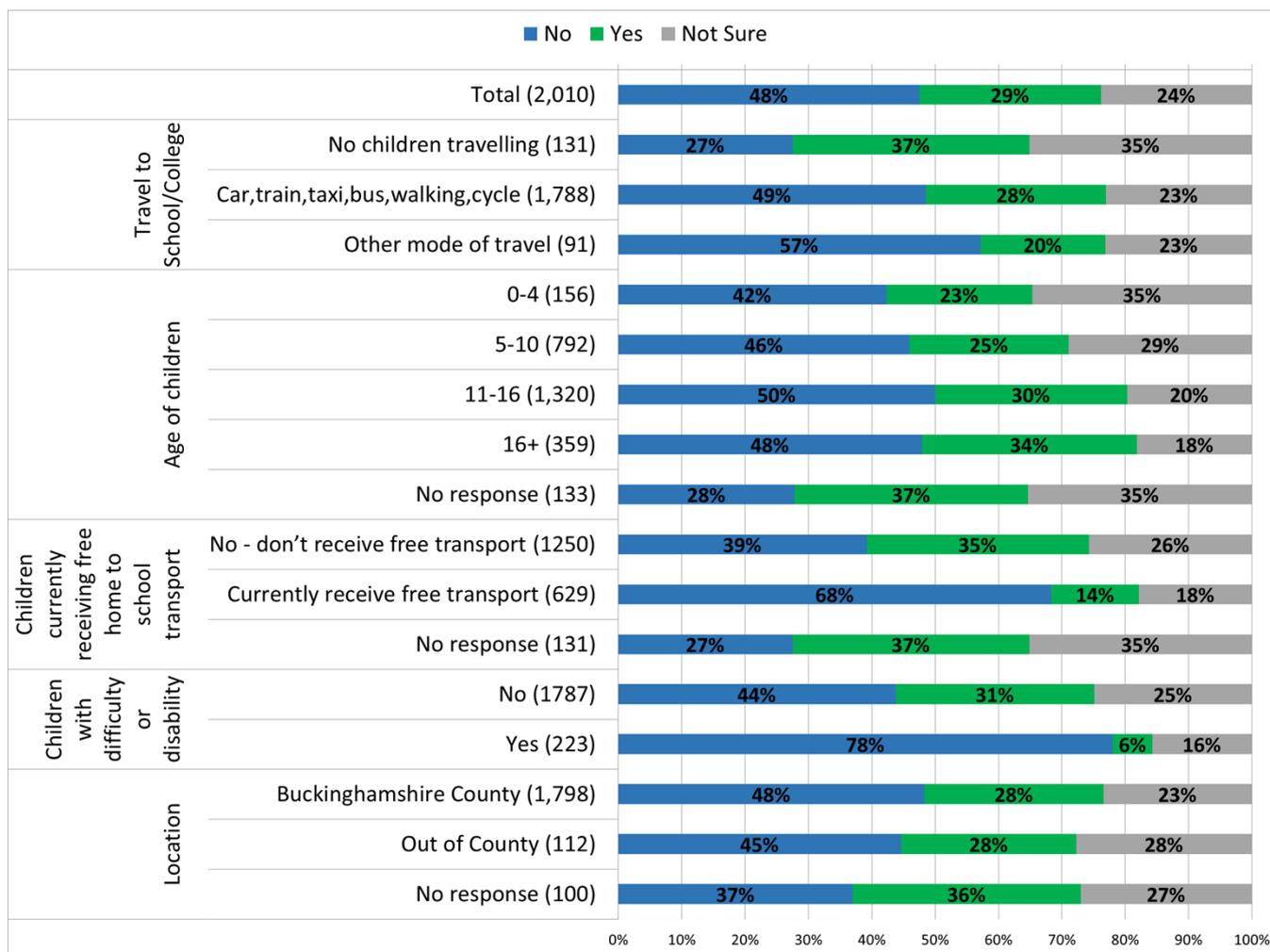


Figure 17

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups³.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Currently receiving home to school transport** – respondents with children currently receiving free home to school transport are statistically more likely to say flexible bus routes would **not** be beneficial (68% v 48% average).⁴
- **Children with a difficulty or disability** – respondents with a child who has a disability are statistically more likely to say flexible routes would **not** be a benefit (78% v 48% average).⁵

³ Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence

⁴ Significantly different to those with a child not currently receiving free HOME TO SCHOOL transport.

⁵ Significantly different to those with a child without a disability.

Q7 Key Themes from open text

Of the total 2,308 respondents, 488 (21%) made specific comments about whether their child would benefit from moving to a more flexible public route. Each comment was categorised to understand common themes with some comments given more than one category. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories. Of the 488 comments, 66 responses did not fall under a common theme and were not categorised. (These are included in the 'other' category).

Themes identified were similar to Question 6 with routes, times and safety being key issues for respondents.

The top three themes were:

- a) Poor bus route/frequency of buses
- b) Journey times, flexibility and reliability
- c) Safety

- a) **Poor bus route/frequency of buses** - 137 respondents commented on the quality and frequency of public buses. Comments also mentioned the location of bus stops, length and frequency of journeys. Comments highlighted that there are school routes with no public route from their home to school. This tended to be in rural areas.

"If the public bus route existed, was frequent, and was reliable!!! It doesn't / isn't."

"There is no public bus route running daily near our home, so this will not be helpful."

"The public buses in the villages have been increasingly withdrawn. There is no guarantee that the public bus will continue in our area. The public bus takes a lot longer as it is not a direct route, meaning that the children will have to catch the bus at an unreasonably early time."

- b) **Journey times, flexibility, reliability** – A high number of comments stated views on journey times (28), flexibility (49) and reliability (54) of public transport with some positive views about the flexibility of buses but negative views around the length of journey times and reliability. Some respondents stated that their view would depend on the public route offer.

"Depends on frequency and timings"

"Provided public buses provide similar services without the need to change or lengthy delays"

“Makes complete sense, there should be flexibility”

“Public services are not reliable. Would rather pay for a school bus that’s reliable”

- c) **Safety** – 86 respondents commented on safety of public buses. Comments included concerns around journeys for children from public bus stops to their home, referencing poor street lighting, speed of roads and location of bus stops. Other comments mention perceptions of the safety of public transport compared to school buses and some commented that they would choose to pick their child up from school instead of using public buses.

“I would rather collect them from school, far safer than public bus.”

“It would depend where the stop was e.g. how close to the school/ home.”

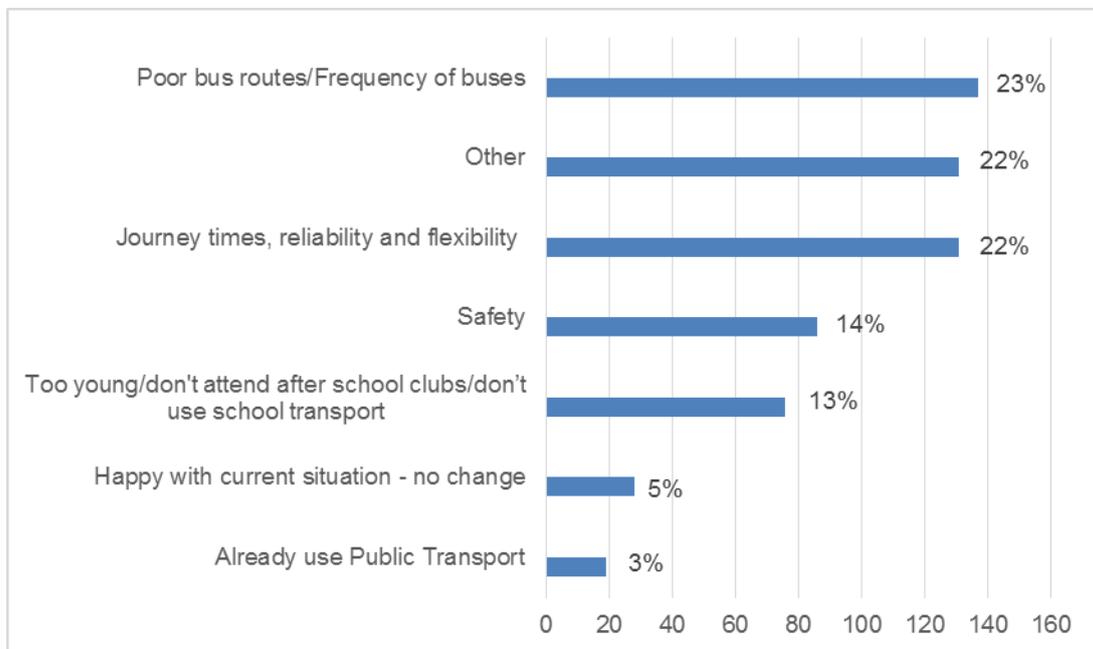


Figure 18

Other themes included: some respondents thought their children were too young to use public transport (usually primary school age but older for some individuals); comments that children did not attend after school clubs or they were happy with their current travel arrangements; a small number of respondents already taking advantage of public transport.

Q8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?

Answered: 1,988 Skipped: 320

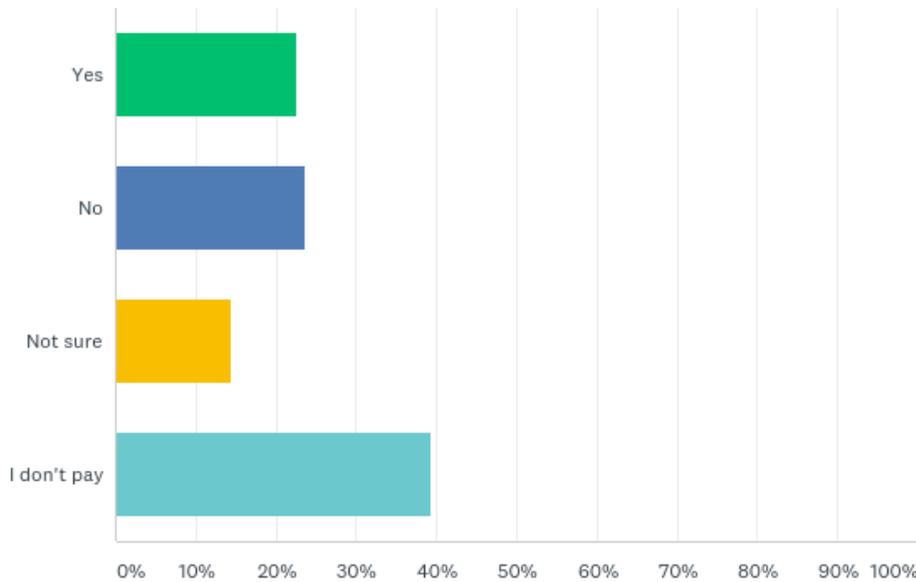


Figure 19

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.64%	450
No	23.74%	472
Not sure	14.39%	286
I don't pay	39.24%	780
TOTAL		1,988

Figure 20

1,988 respondents answered this question (86%), out of which 780 (39%) stated that they did not currently pay for home to school transport. From the remaining 1208 responses, roughly a quarter of all respondents (24%) would not consider moving to a public bus service if it meant saving money compared to 23% who would consider public transport.

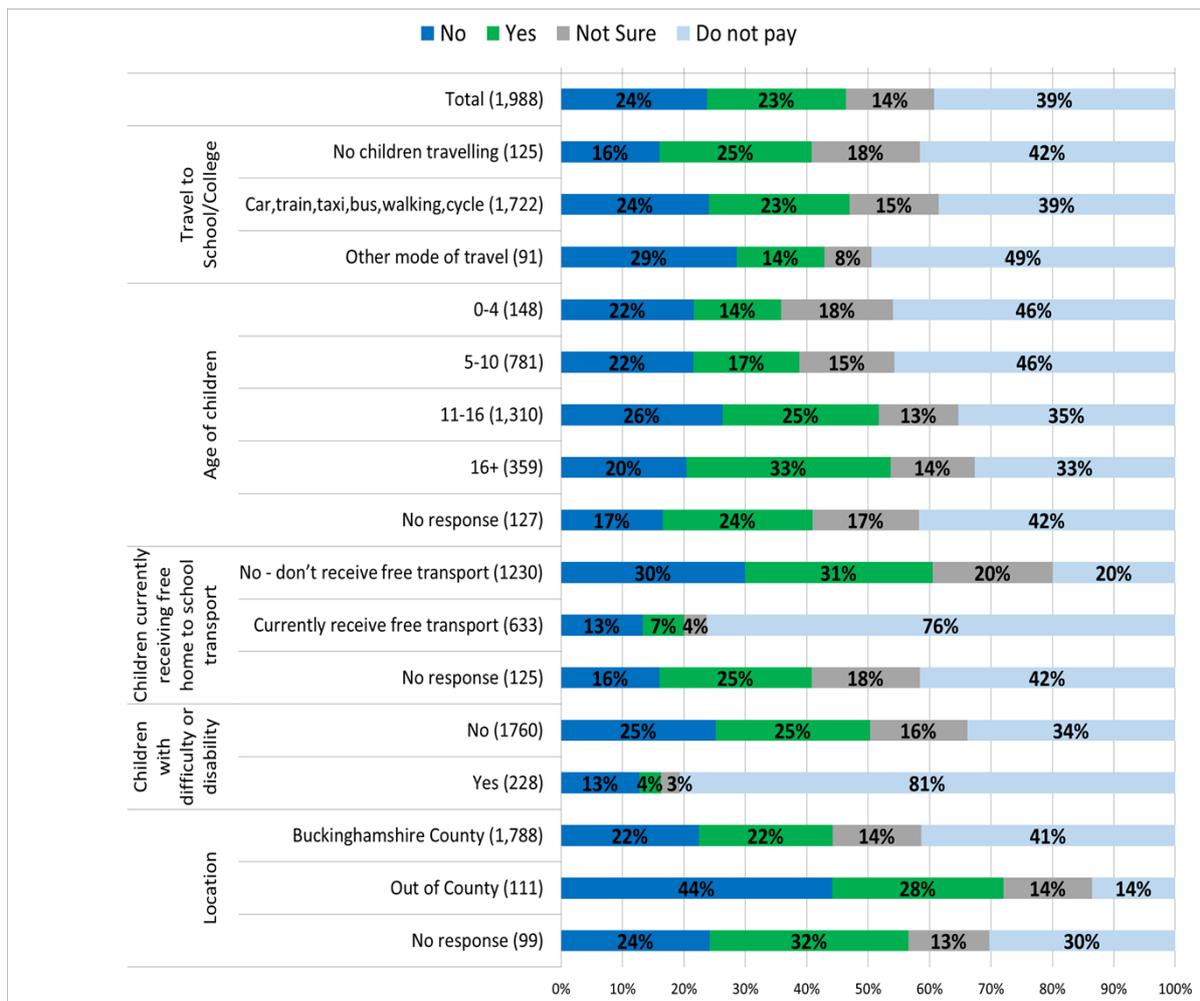


Figure 21

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups⁶.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Age** - respondents with older children (aged 16+) are statistically more likely to move to a public bus service if it saved money (33% v 23% average).⁷
- **Not receiving free home to school transport** – respondents with children not currently receiving home to school transport were statistically more likely to switch to a public service if it saved money (31% v 23% average)⁸

⁶ Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence

⁷ Significantly different to those without a child aged 16+.

⁸ Significantly different to those with a child currently receiving free HOME TO SCHOOL transport (7%).

- **Children without disabilities** – respondents with children without a disability are statistically more likely to switch to a public service if it saved money (25% v 23% average).

Q8 Key Themes from open text

Out of the total number of respondents 2,308 to the survey 443 (19%) made specific comments on whether respondents would consider moving to a public bus service if it meant saving money. Each comment was categorised to understand common themes with some comments given more than one category. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories. Of the 443 comments, 48 responses did not fall under a common theme and were not categorised (these are included in the 'other' category).

Themes were similar to questions 6 and 7 where safety, journey times, reliability and flexibility being key issues for respondents.

The top three themes were:

- a) Safety and wellbeing
- b) Journey times, reliability and flexibility of buses
- c) Depending on saving and options of routes/times available

- a) **Safety and wellbeing** – 144 respondents commented that safety of their children was a high priority for them. Some respondents commented that they would prefer to spend more on a school bus as they deemed this a safer option for their child. Respondents also commented that the general public on buses were a safety concern, locations of bus stops and danger of high speed roads.

“No, I would rather pay more to ensure my son arrived at school safely and on time.”

“This would depend on how the scheme is run. Safety for the children is my paramount concern.”

- b) **Journey times, reliability and flexibility** – comments were received regarding bus services, particularly in regard to the lack of reliability (74). A number of respondents stated that their views would depend on the routes and proposal if changes were made.

“Possibly if it was a direct route, which didn't take longer than the current school bus and the timings were suitable.”

“It would depend on the saving v the bus stop location (distance and the safety of the walking route to it) and the timing of the service.”

“I would for definite however the public bus service has to be far better and frequent.”

- c) **Depending on saving and options of routes/times available – 77** respondents said their decision to switch to public transport would be tied to options for routes, how much they would save and the potential flexibility.

“Would depend how much less.”

“It would depend on the saving v the bus stop location (distance and the safety of the walking route to it) and the timing of the service.”

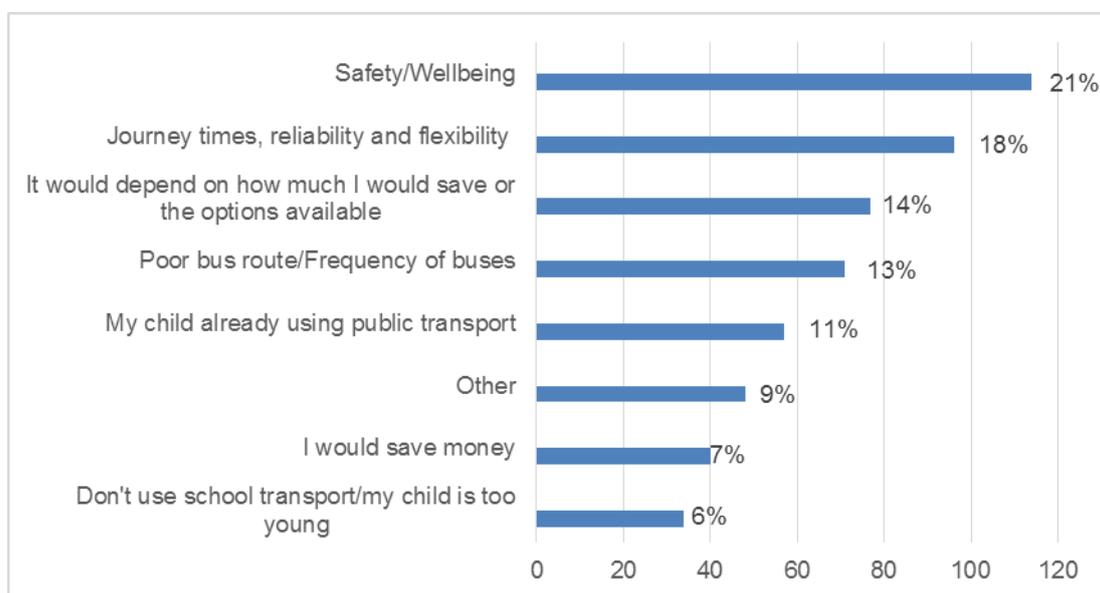


Figure 22

Other themes included: parents who already use public transport (57) with some stating it was cheaper and more flexible for them, comments around poor bus routes, frequency of buses.

6.2 Proposal 2: Providing statutory free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school (Ivinghoe and Evreham [Iver]).

This will withdraw the historic, discretionary transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver). We have offered free transport in these areas that allowed pupils to attend a school that was not their nearest. Withdrawing these historic arrangements will bring Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) in line with the rest of the county and eligibility for free school transport would be consistently applied across the county.

Q9. Do you support this proposal?

Answered: 1,985 Skipped: 323

Figure 23

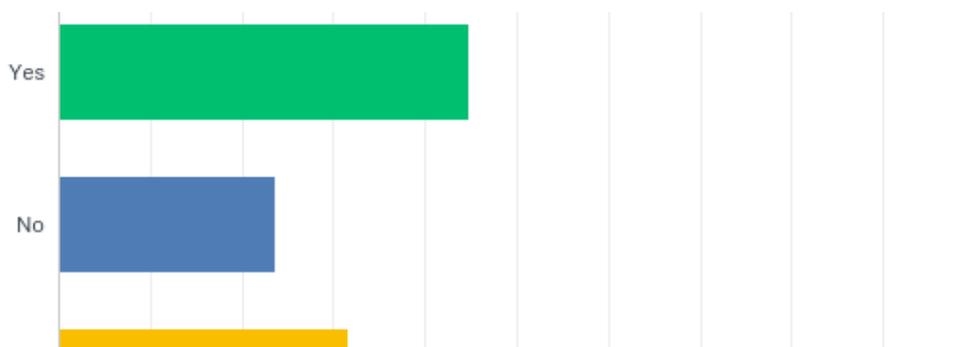


Figure 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	44.74%	888
No	23.68%	470
Not sure	31.59%	627
TOTAL		1,985

1,985 respondents answered this question (86%), of which 213 were from Ivinghoe and 245 were from Evreham. Less than half of respondents agreed with the proposal to remove the current discretionary arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (45%), whilst 24% disagreed with the proposal. Almost a third (32%) of respondents were not sure whether they supported the proposal.

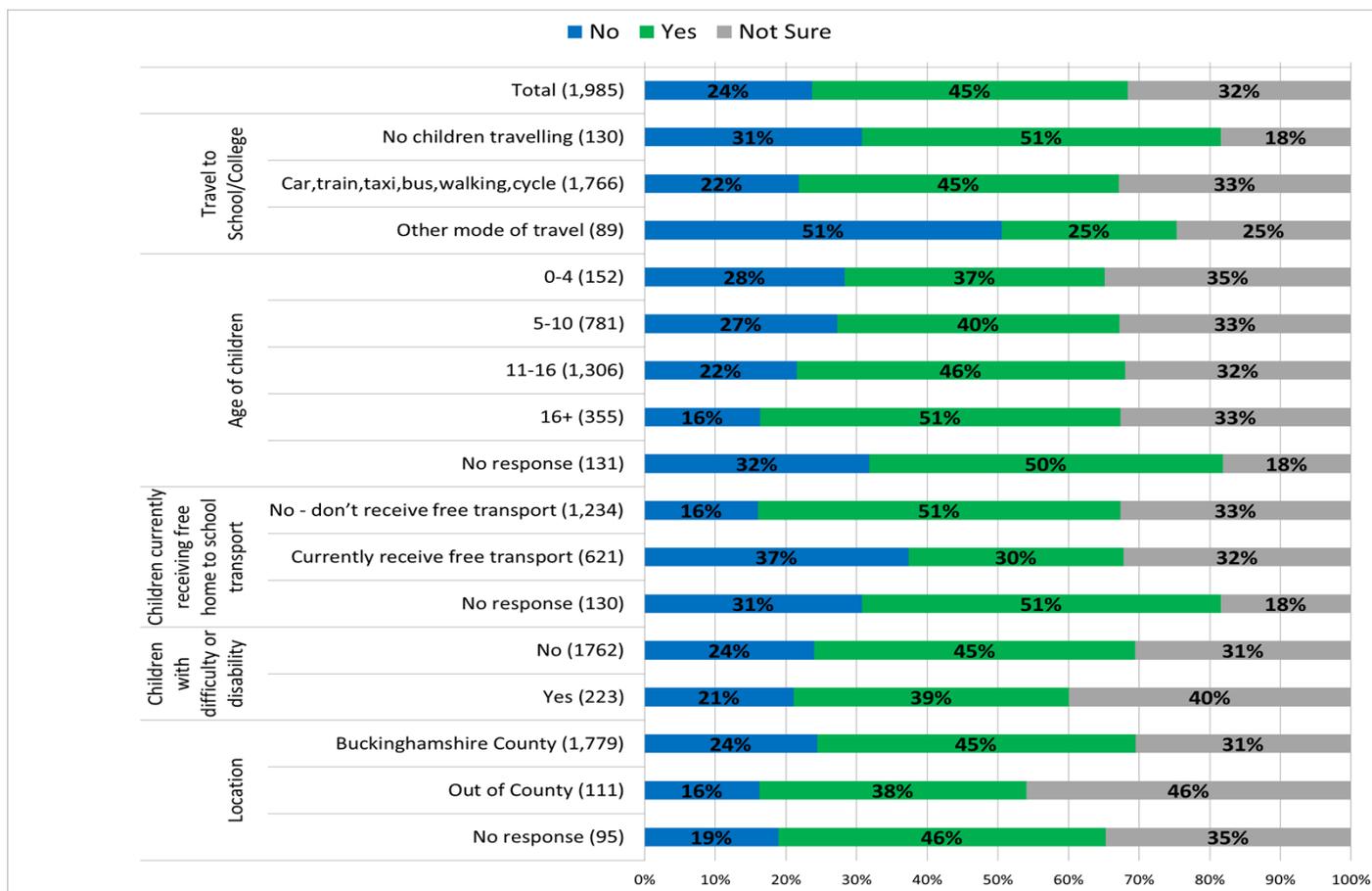


Figure 25

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups⁹.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Receiving free home to school transport** – respondents with children currently receiving home to school transport were statistically more likely to disagree with removing the discretionary arrangements (37% v 24% average).¹⁰
- **Age** - respondents with a child aged 11-16¹¹ or 16+¹² were statistically more likely to be in favour of removing existing discretionary arrangements (46% & 51% respectively v 45% average).
- **Location** – 213 of the respondents were from Ivinghoe and 245 were from Evreham and have expressed strong views as they will be most affected by the proposed changes.

⁹ Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Evreham/Ivinghoe area

¹⁰ Significantly different to those with a child not receiving free home to school transport

¹¹ Significantly different to those without a child aged 11-16

¹² Significantly different to those without a child aged 16+

Q10. Should students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest eligible school, start paying from September 2020?

Answered: 1,973 Skipped: 335

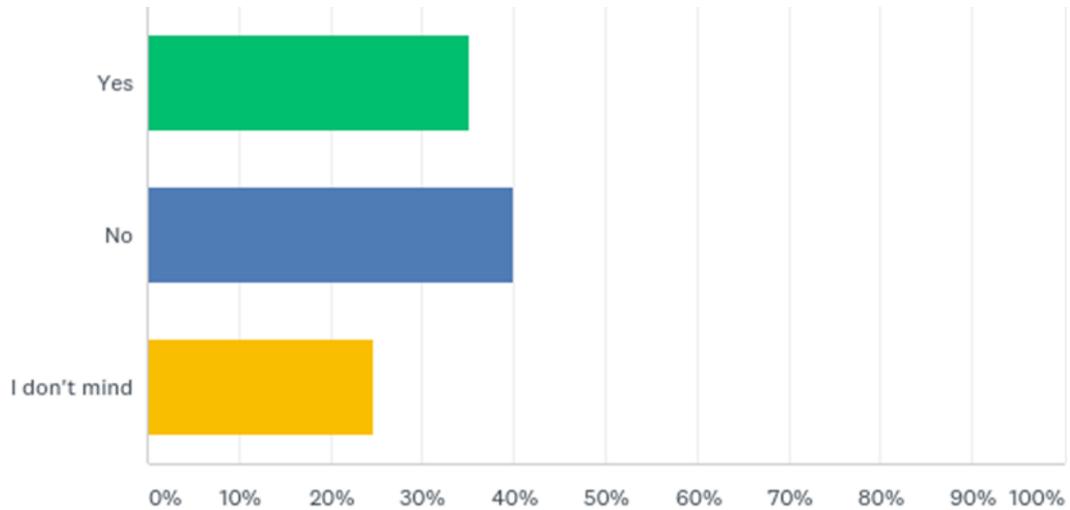


Figure 26

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	35.17%	694
No	40.04%	790
I don't mind	24.78%	489
TOTAL		1,973

Figure 27

More than one third of respondents (35%) agreed that students in Ivinghoe and Evreham should start paying from September 2020 with a further 25% of respondents expressing that they don't mind, whilst 40% disagreed. It is worth noting that 213 respondents were from the Ivinghoe area and 245 respondents were from Evreham which would account for 23% of the respondents to this question.

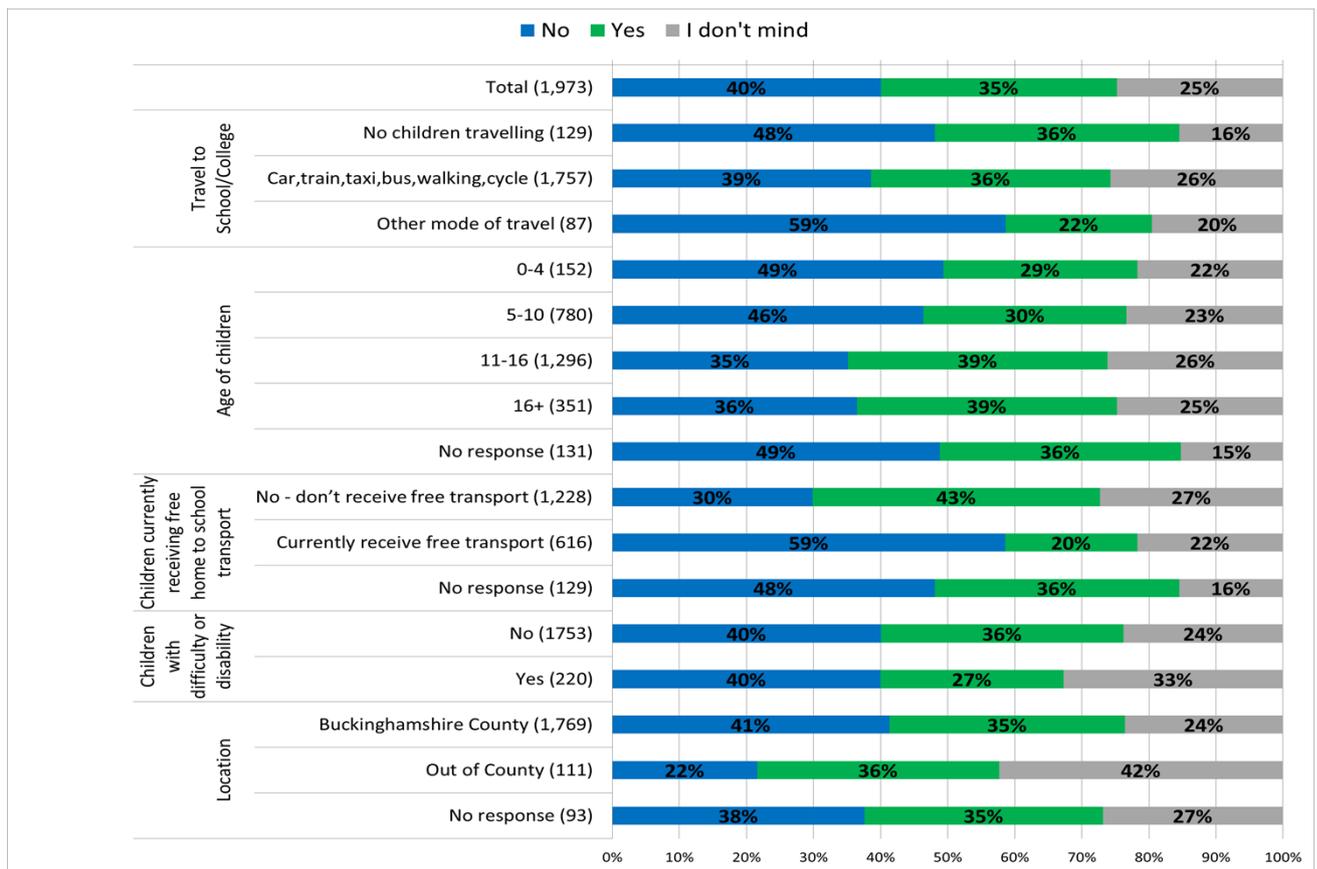


Figure 28

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups¹³.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Age** – respondents with a child aged 0-4¹⁴ or 5-10¹⁵ were statistically more likely to disagree with the proposal to implement the change from September 2020 in Ivinghoe and Evreham (49% & 46% respectively v 40% average).
- **Not receiving free home to school transport** – respondents without children currently receiving free home to school transport are statistically more likely to agree with the proposal to implement the change from September 2020 (43% v 35% average)¹⁶
- **Location** – 213 of the respondents were from Ivinghoe and 245 were from Evreham and have expressed strong views as they will be most affected by the proposed changes.

¹³ Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

¹⁴ Significantly different to those without a child aged 0-4.

¹⁵ Significantly different to those without a child aged 5-10.

¹⁶ Significantly different to those with a child who is currently receiving free home to school transport.

6.3 Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with (SEND) aged 16+

We currently offer free transport to SEND students aged 16+. We are proposing that parents make a financial contribution to the cost of transport. Typically students with SEND have to travel further to attend a school or college that meets their needs.

There are two charging options (1) the flat fee would be £660 per year. (2) If charges were made based on distance between home and school, the fee per year would be banded: Under 4 miles = £660, 4-4.99 miles = £772, 5-6.99 miles = £884, 7-9.99 miles = £998, 10 or more miles £1,111.

Q11. Do you support this proposal?

Answered: 1,955 Skipped: 353

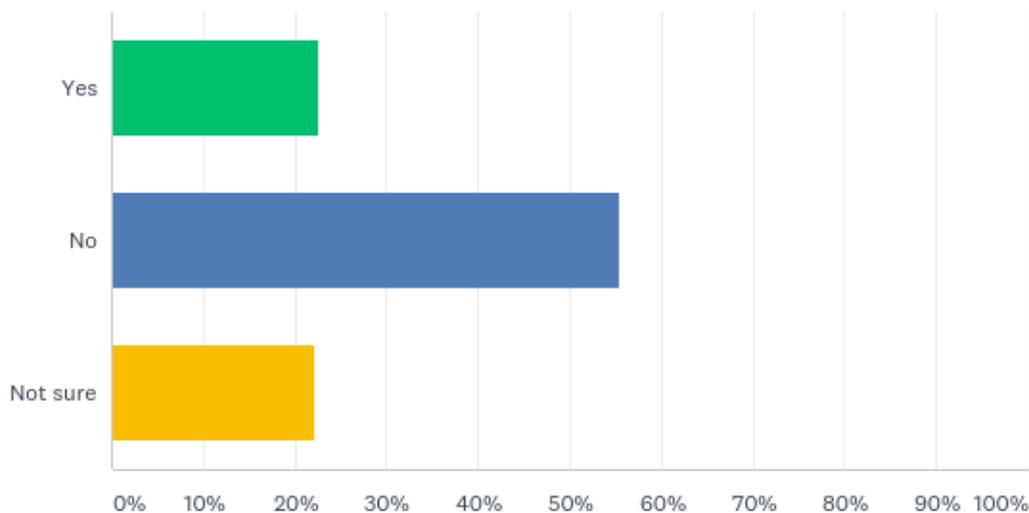


Figure 29

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.51%	440
No	55.35%	1,082
Not sure	22.15%	433
TOTAL		1,955

1,955

Figure 30

respondents

answered this question (85%). More than half of respondents (55%) did not support the proposal for charging options for transport for students with SEND aged 16 or above. 23% supported the proposal and 22% were not sure (45% in total).

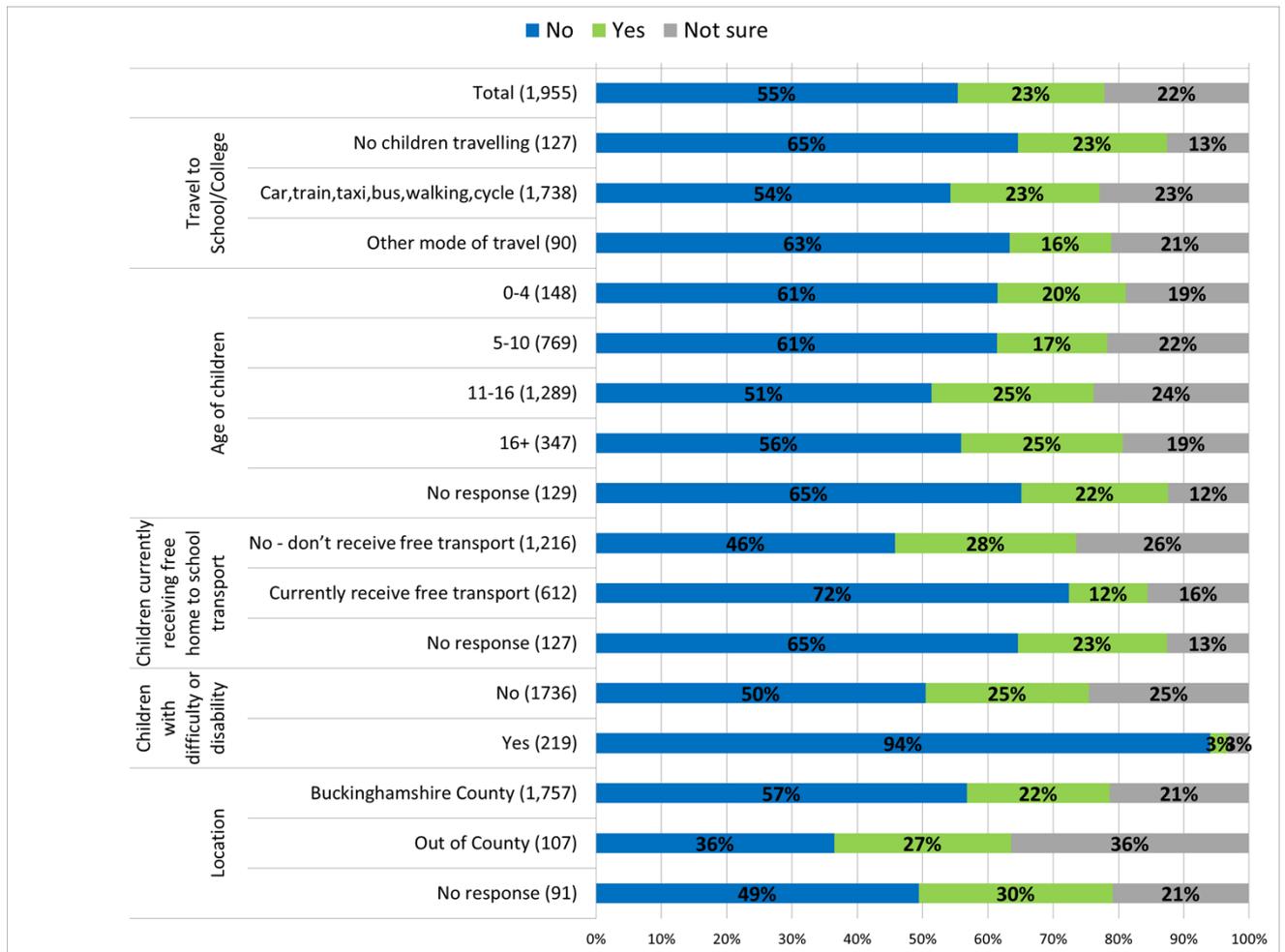


Figure 31

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups¹⁷.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Children with disabilities** – respondents with a child with a disability are statistically more likely to disagree with the proposed charge banding (94% v 55%).¹⁸

Q11 Key Themes from open text

Out of the total number of respondents (2,308) to the survey 607 (26%) made specific comments on proposals for contribution to transport for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+. Each comment was categorised to understand common themes with some comments given more than

¹⁷ Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

¹⁸ Significantly different to those without a disabled child

one category. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories. 28 responses did not fall under a common theme and were not categorised. (These are included in the 'other' category).

Of the 607 respondents who commented, 146 reported to receive free home to school transport for children with a Special Educational Need/Disability/Mobility problem¹⁹. (It is worth noting that this is out of an overall total of 246 respondents who stated that they received free home to school transport because their child has SEND in response to Q3). The remaining 461 respondents who commented reported that they did not receive free home to school transport for children with SEND²⁰. The responses have been separated between these two groups.

The top 3 themes from respondents receiving SEND home to school transport were:

- a) Too expensive/unaffordable.
- b) Fewer special schools mean longer travel distance, so SEND children shouldn't be penalised.
- c) Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND.

- a) **Too expensive/unaffordable** - 94 of the 146 respondents commented that both proposals were too expensive and unaffordable. Comments also cited other costs required to support a child with SEND. Some comments mentioned making alternative arrangements to avoid the cost by either making other travel arrangements or looking for alternative school.

"The costs proposed are completely unaffordable and would result in my son having to leave school."

"I know that I would not be able to afford it but I would personally make arrangements that I would take my child to and from school. As I have others without SEN would mean that the school may have to wait with him until I get there to collect."

"Parents of disabled children are already at a financial disadvantage and this proposal will push some families into poverty."

- b) **Fewer special schools** - 72 of the 146 respondents commented on how the levels of provision of special schools within Buckinghamshire means that SEND children travel longer distances and therefore should not be penalised as a result.

¹⁹ Answering "Yes – special educational need/disability/mobility problem" in Q3

²⁰ Answer either "No", "Yes – Over statutory walking distance", "Yes – Unsafe walking route", "Yes – Low income" in Q3

“Since there are no special schools close to our home there is no choice but to attend a special school 10 miles away. I don’t want to have to send my child 10 miles + to school but what is the alternative when there are no schools that are closer? This proposal would deny access to education for ages 16 + with special needs.”

“I would be being penalised based on the distance when through no fault of mine a suitable school for my child’s SEN needs is not closer to us. We have not moved away in the time since he was born and are not in a position to move closer to the school.”

- c) **Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND** – 43 of the 146 respondents commented that they felt the proposal was unfair and penalised parents with children with SEND.

“It is unfair to financially penalise parents who have children with special needs.”

“The 2nd charging option is particularly unfair on rural special needs pupils. SEN pupils already have some of the longest journey times in the county.”

The top 3 themes from respondents **not** receiving SEND home to school transport were:

- a) Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND
- b) Agree that there should be some contribution
- c) Too expensive/unaffordable

- a) **Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND** – 147 commented that they thought the proposal was either unfair or families with children with SEND should not be penalised financially.

“I think families who send their children to these schools have had to make enough sacrifices (including financial) already.”

“I feel this would be seen as punishing parents for having children with additional needs. It’s not the parents fault that a suitable school is a certain distance away.”

- b) **Agree that there should be some contribution** – 94 thought the proposal was fair with most preferring the flat fee option. However, many commented that this should be means tested (50).

“But only the flat fee should be charged- those parents should not be paying more if the school attended is further away.”

“As long as means testing was also involved.”

c) Too expensive/unaffordable – 84 thought that the proposal would be too expensive or unaffordable for families with students with SEND, stating that putting extra finance pressure on these families would be unfair and the proposed amount would be too expensive.

“Parents who have kids with SEND already have a difficult and I assume a more expensive life. Adding this will cause them more issues.”

“Having a child with special needs is costly. In many families one parent can’t work. It is these families that need the most support.”

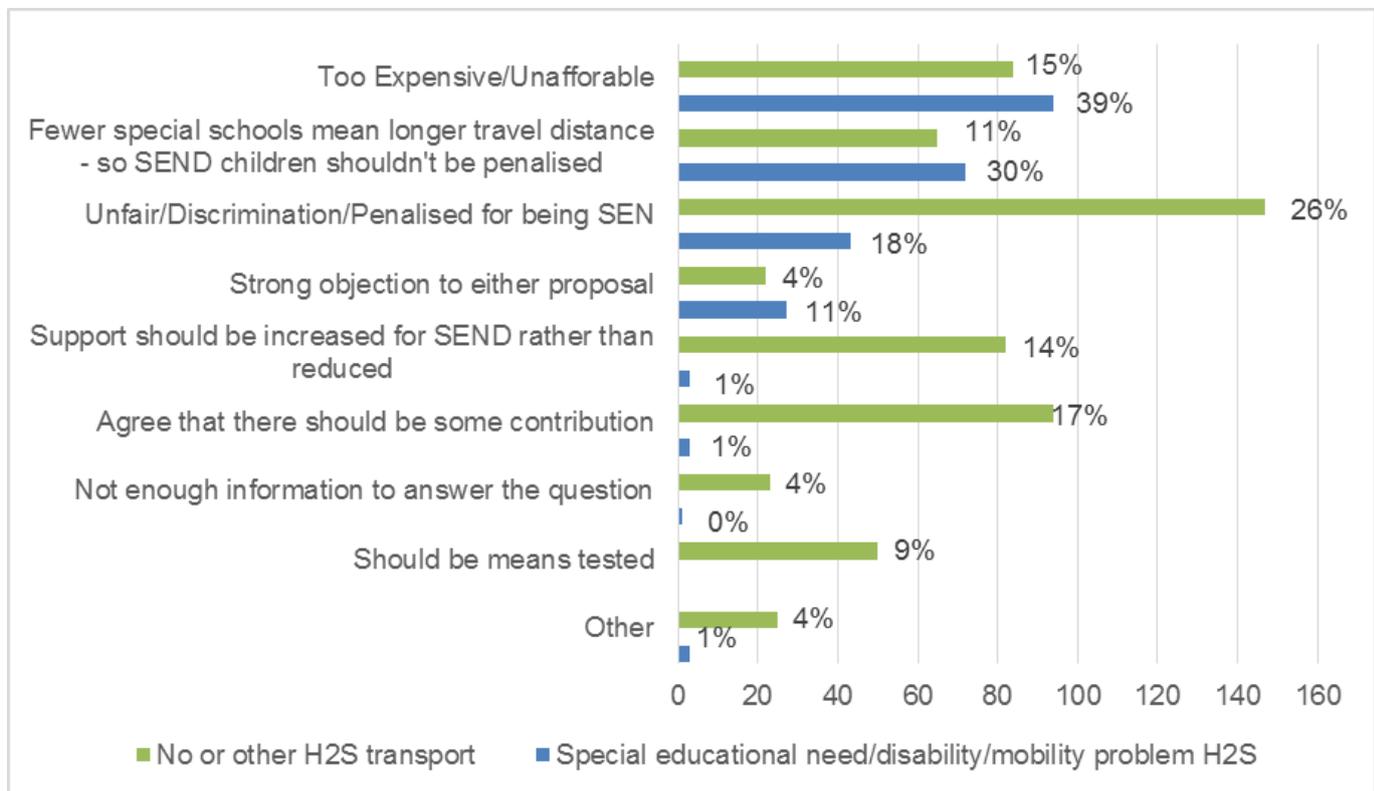


Figure 32

Other comments included: charging should be financially means tested; support for vulnerable groups such as lone parents; more support should be offered for children with SEND and transport should be free. Comments also mentioned that there was not enough information to comment on the proposals or more information was needed to make a comment. A number of comments expressed strong objection to either proposal. A total of 49 comments expressed strong objection out of a total of 1,955 responses (full comments are available on request).

Q12. Which of the two charging options do you prefer?

- Flat fee per year
- Fee per year based on distance between home and school
- I don't mind

Answered: 1,719 Skipped: 589

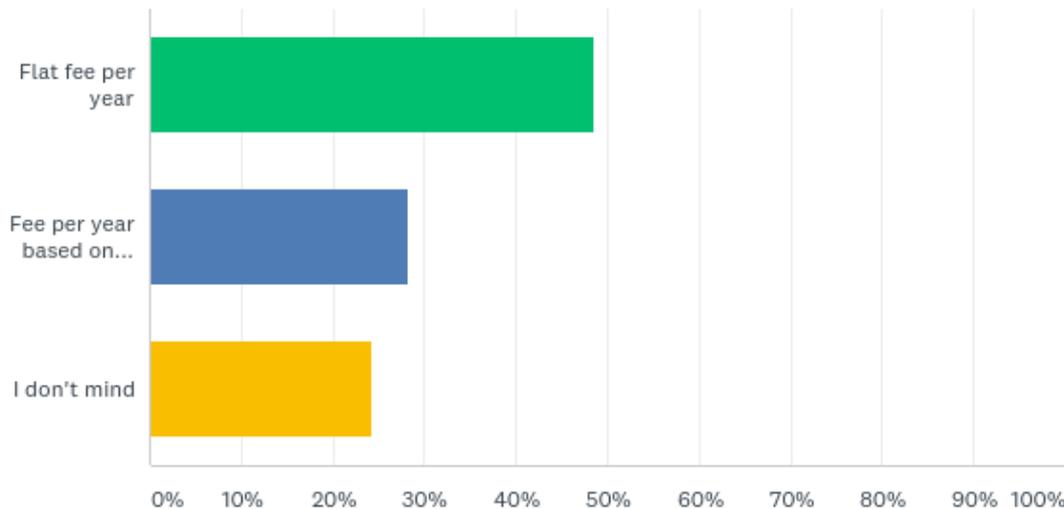


Figure 33

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Flat fee per year	48.46%	833
Fee per year based on distance between home and school	28.33%	487
I don't mind	24.20%	416
Total Respondents: 1,719		

Figure 34

1,719 respondents answered this question (74%). Almost half (48%) of respondents preferred a flat fee per year, with 28% preferring a fee based on distance. Note that almost one quarter of respondents expressed that they did not mind.

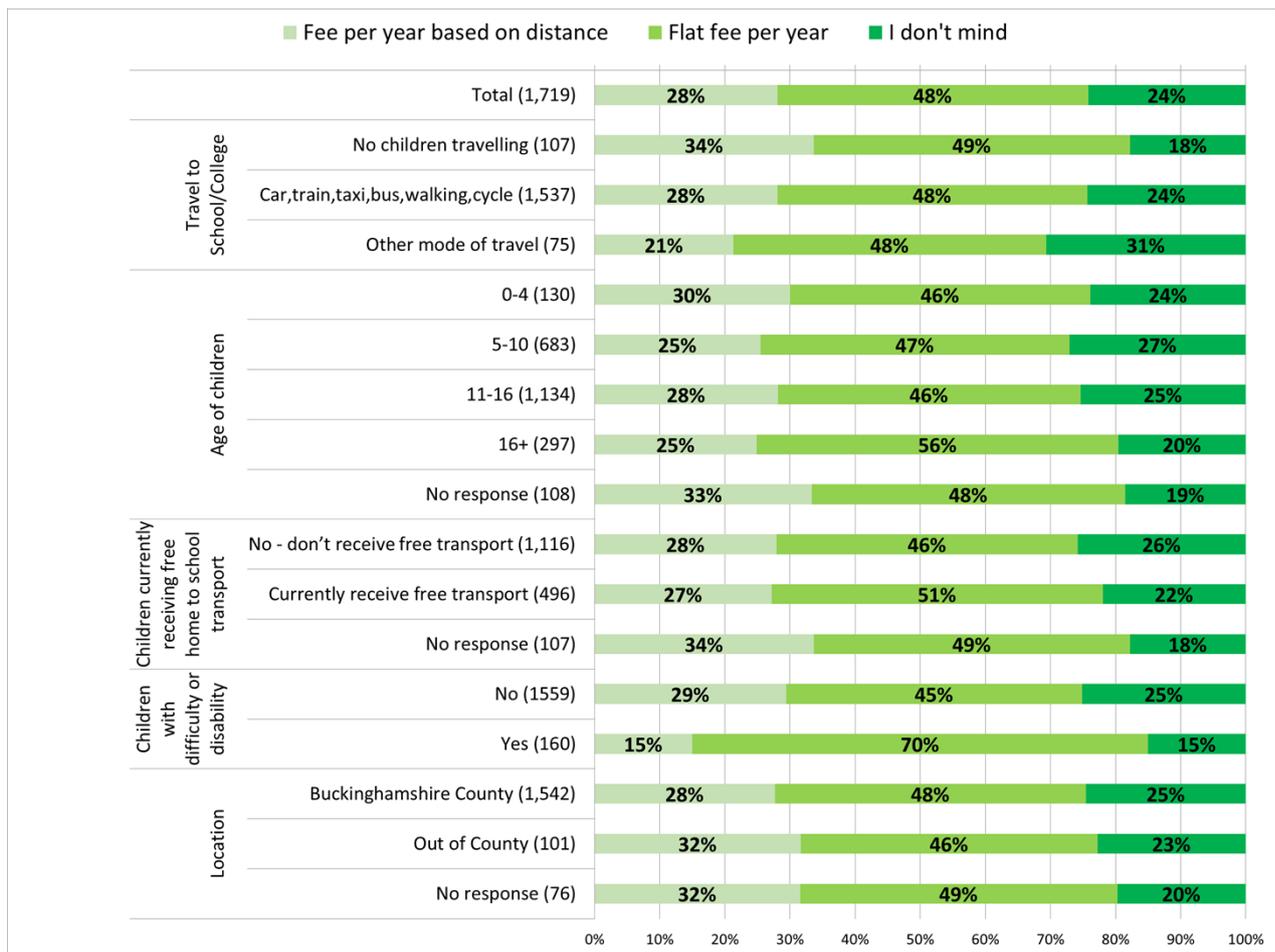


Figure 35

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups²¹.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Age** – respondents with a child aged 16+ are statistically more likely to prefer a flat fee per year (56% v 48% average)²²
- **Children with disabilities** – respondents with a child with a disability are statistically more likely to prefer a flat fee per year (70% v 48% average).²³

²¹ Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

²² Significantly different to those without a child aged 16+

²³ Significantly different to those without a disabled child.

Q13. Should SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport start paying from September 2020?

Answered: 1,939 Skipped: 369

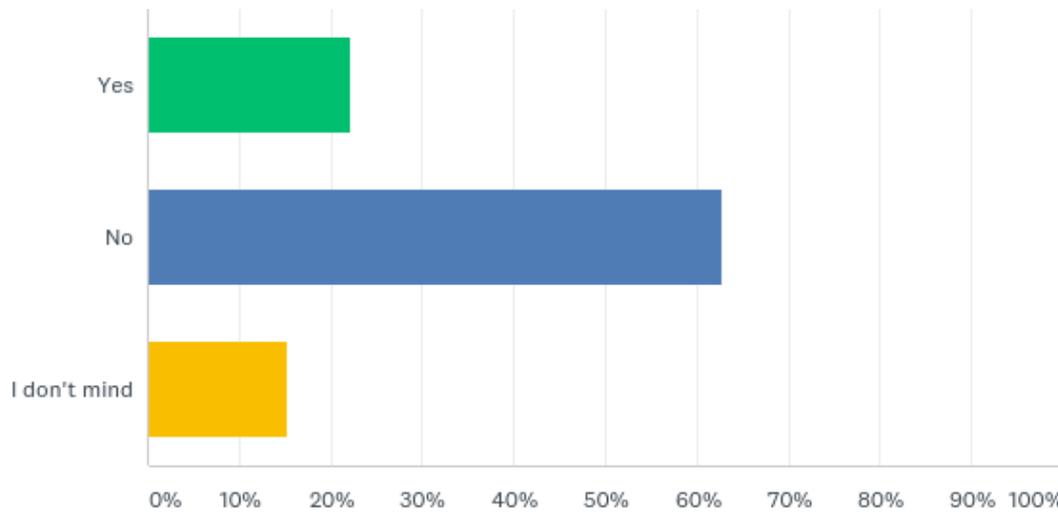


Figure 36

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.07%	428
No	62.66%	1,215
I don't mind	15.27%	296
TOTAL		1,939

Figure 37

The majority of respondents (63%) did not agree that SEND students aged 16+ should start paying for transport to school from September 2020. 22% agreed with the proposal with 15% stating they did not mind.

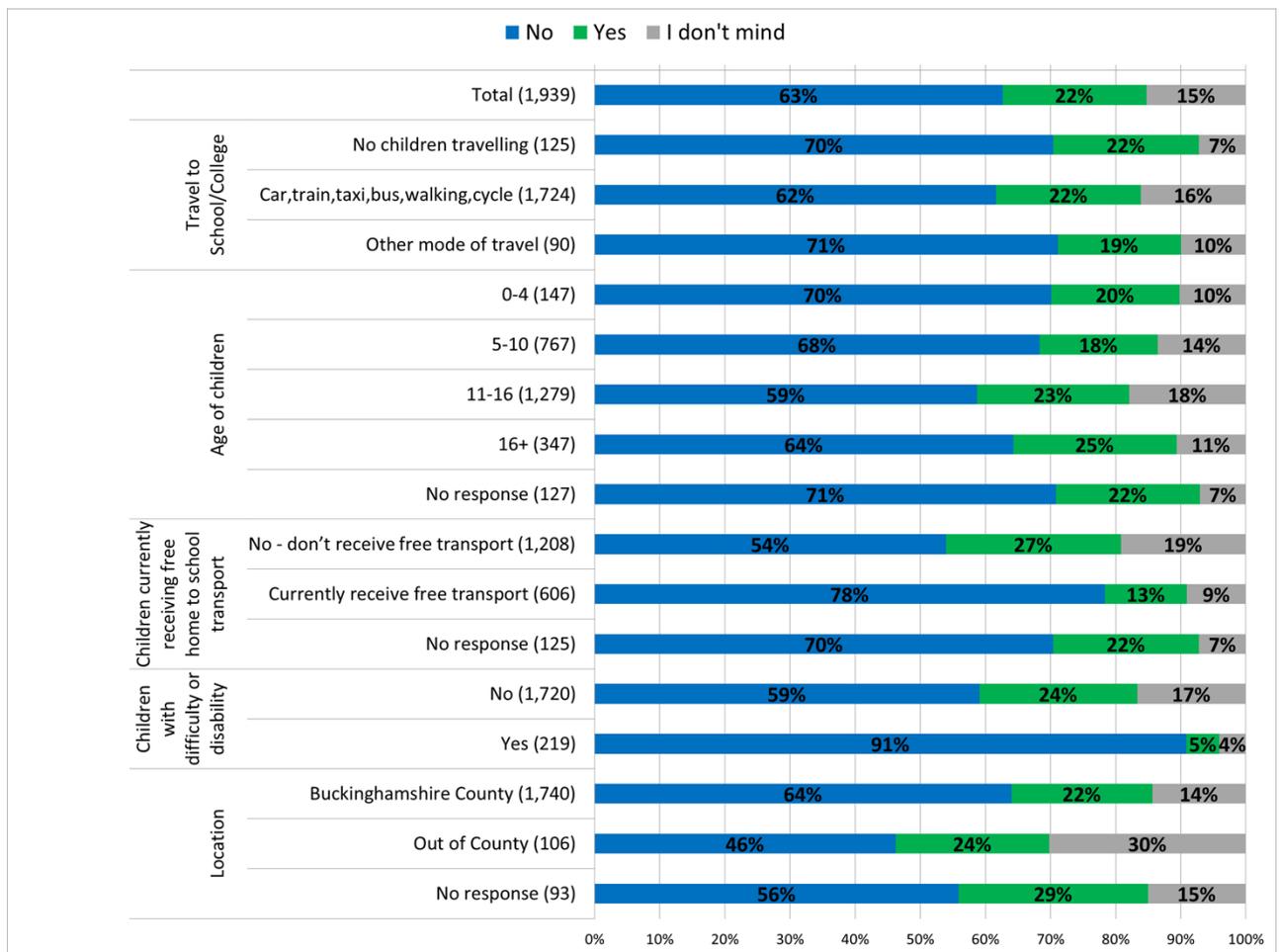


Figure 38

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups²⁴.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Those currently receiving free home to school transport** – respondents with a child currently receiving home to school transport are statistically more likely to disagree with implementing charging 16+ SEN students from September 2020 (78% v 63% average)²⁵
- **Children with disability** – respondents with a child with a disability are statistically more likely to disagree with implementing charging 16+ SEN students from September 2020 (91% v 63% average).²⁶

²⁴ Statistical different tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

²⁵ Significantly different to those with a child not currently receiving free home to school transport

²⁶ Significantly different to those without a disabled child

7. Feedback from Consultation Events

19 events were held and consisted of:

- 11 Council public meetings for all to attend held in venues across Buckinghamshire (in total 59 residents attended).
- 1 SEN Parent Forum facilitated by FACT Bucks.
- 2 sessions specifically for parents with SEN children.
- 1 session with the Youth Voice Executive Committee.
- 4 sessions with transport operators.

7.1 Public Meetings

The following table lists the public meetings events that were held:

SEN Transport Public Consultation Meetings 7:00 - 9:00pm	Venue	No of attendees
Monday 5 November 2018	Buckingham Primary School	0
Tuesday 6 November 2018	Grange School	0
Wednesday 7 November 2018	Misbourne School	2
Thursday 8 November 2018	Cheddington Combined School	17
Monday 12 November 2018	Iver Village Junior School	Approx. 30
Wednesday 14 November 2018	Millbrook Combined School	0
Thursday 15 November 2018	Newtown School	1
Monday 19 November 2018	Princes Risborough Primary Academy	3
Tuesday 20 November 2018	Great Marlow	3
Wednesday 21 November 2018	Winslow CE School	2
Monday 26 November 2018	The Amersham School	4

The key themes raised at the public meetings were (listed in order of popularity):

- Charging and the cost of transport;
- Current arrangements in Iver and the impact of proposed changes;
- Safety and safeguarding in general;
- Availability of bus routes and reliability of providers;
- SEND.

7.2 SEN Parent Forum and dedicated sessions for parents with children with SEN

A SEN Parent Forum was held in November 2018 and facilitated by FACT Bucks, a representative group of parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. In addition two further sessions were held for parents with children with SEN. The key issues and concerns expressed at these events from attendees were:

- The proposed charges would have an adverse impact on families with children with SEN due to the fact that many of these families are already under financial stress.
- Some children with SEN may be able to use a school bus but would not be able to use a public service due to the unpredictability of services and the potential for students to disembark at the wrong destination.
- FACT Bucks acknowledges that the proposal to introduce transport charges for students with SEND aged 16 years+ has been designed to minimise impact on families and are in line with fee levels for other young people in this age bracket.
- The consultation should have made it clear that different statutory arrangements exist for young people aged 19 years and over who attend educational settings.

7.3 Young People's Views

A key part of this consultation process was to hear the views of young people. The Youth Voice Executive Board provided invaluable assistance in co-designing a simple questionnaire to gather the views of young people about travel to school.

The questionnaire was presented and amended with the Youth Voice Executive Committee on Wednesday 5 December 2018. 14 young people were in attendance at this meeting.

The final questionnaire was sent out to committee members to complete within their schools, with a deadline of 19 December 2018. 99 responses were received although not all 99 responded to every question (5 of the 99 responses received were from the SEND Youth Forum).

The questionnaire was distributed to young people through youth organisations, with assistance from the Council's Youth Service (please refer to Appendix B for a copy).

Respondents included young people attending mainstream schools and colleges, and young people with SEND.

The key findings from this questionnaire are as follows:

- The most popular form of transport used by young people to travel to school is public bus (30%), followed by school bus (25%) and then on foot (18%).
- In response to a question "what were the most important things to you about your journey", the top answer was "being on time" (74%), followed by "feeling safe" (10%), and "feeling confident on my own" (3%).

7.4 Transport Operator sessions

Sessions were held between September and December 2018 with all current providers with whom the Council has contracts to provide home to school transport, including public bus providers such as Arriva. The engagement sessions were productive with providers demonstrating that they were interested in running routes. They also put forward helpful suggestions to re-configure routes to maximise coverage in rural areas by grouping contracts.

These sessions were valuable in identifying the challenges and potential solutions to ensuring an effective and efficient transport service is delivered.

Date of Meeting	Discussion items to inform the Consultation
24th September 2018:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided relating to the Contract Renewal Action Plan 2018/19. • Information provided relating to the Councils new procurement portal (Pro Contract) in order to register and participate in future requests for quotes. • Introduction to the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) provided and opportunities for further training.
22nd October 2018:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided about Contract Terms & Conditions Documentation and proposed changes.
26th November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided relating to Tender Documentation and further information relating to the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).
10th December 2018:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop for Operators provided in order to address any outstanding issues following previous Stakeholder events

These series of meetings demonstrated active positive engagement with transport suppliers. Consideration was given to the running of key routes and the possibility of bundling the more profitable routes with ones less profitable to ensure that rural areas are not left without transport. Consideration was also given to how to work with communities to provide local shuttle services that could join larger networks, as well as how to implement digital solutions in the future so that residents could book and view transport delivery in real time.

Overall, these sessions were valuable in identifying the challenges and potential solutions to ensuring an effective and efficient transport service is delivered.

8. Summary

The following table sets out the key themes drawn from the consultation process and findings, and the Council's proposed response to these:

Consultation findings	
<p>Key themes from question about use of public transport (Q6. We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?)</p>	<p>The Council will:</p>
<p>1) Safety – Residents expressed concerns regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children travelling on buses with members of the public who are not DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) checked • Pupils walking to and from bus stops that are further away • Children getting off the bus before they get to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision • Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply • Have robust strategies in place to manage Passenger Assistants and Drivers ensuring children's' safety (Transporting children and/or vulnerable adults constitutes a 'regulated activity' under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act). • Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service and ensure appropriate safety standards • Publish a clear complaints process.
<p>2) Routes – Residents raised comments on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having a public bus route near to their home • Public bus routes not going directly to the school (with pupils having to change buses) • Concerns that public bus routes could be cancelled by the bus companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas • Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes • Implement Mandatory Training for Operators/Drivers/Passenger Assistants as well ensure they sign up to our Code of Good Practice; our partnership agreement includes mandatory training for all suppliers. • Over time, develop mixed provision to include community offer which will widen provision of transport in more rural areas.

<p>3) Times – Residents raised comments regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public bus timetables not coinciding with school start and finish times. • There were also concerns that public bus routes would increase journey times for the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that routes are at appropriate times to coincide with start and end of school day.
<p>Themes from question about increased flexibility (Q7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in after-school clubs or activities).</p>	<p>The Council will:</p>
<p>4) Poor bus route/frequency – Residents commented on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality and frequency of public buses. • The location of bus stops, length and frequency of journeys. • There are school routes with no public route from their home to school (This tended to be in rural areas). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address these issues together through tighter control of contracts as set out in point 2 Some of these issues are outside the scope of the consultation • Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas • Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes
<p>5) Journey times – there was a significant number of residents who expressed views the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journey times • Flexibility and reliability of public transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas and links to school routes. • Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes • Have an even better ‘grip’ and management of the market so as to creating a competitive climate • Incentivise a competitive market to encourage a wider range of stakeholders to be involved
<p>6) Safety - Comments included concerns on</p>	

<p>the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journeys for children from public bus stops to their home, referencing poor street lighting, speed of roads and location of bus stops. • Perception of the safety of public transport compared to school buses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision • Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply • Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service • Publish a clear complaints process.
<p><i>Themes from question about paid for transport and option of cheaper travel (Q8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?)</i></p>	<p><i>The Council will:</i></p>
<p>7) Safety - Residents responding to this question highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the safety of their children was a high priority for them. • Some respondents commented that they would prefer to spend more on a school bus as they deemed this a safer option for their child. • Respondents also commented that the general public on buses were a safety concern, locations of bus stops and danger of high speed roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision • Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply • Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service • Publish a clear complaints process.
<p>8) Journey times - Comments were received regarding bus services, particularly in regard to the lack of reliability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas and links to school routes. • Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes
<p>9) Potential for savings and availability of routes and times -Residents said their decision to switch to public transport would depend on the options for routes and in particular what potential savings could be achieved and the potential flexibility of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with service providers to optimise routes so that all users can benefit from efficiencies in costs • Work with service providers to continue to develop flexibility of routes through development of a mixed provision

routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of contracts – scrutiny of procurement and cost
Themes from Post 16 charging (Q11 – Introducing transport charges for students with (SEND) aged 16+)	The Council will:
<p>10) Too expensive - Residents are concerned about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of transport if charges are implemented for Post 16 SEND pupils. A number commented that both proposals were too expensive and unaffordable. Comments also cited other costs required to support a child with SEND. Some comments mentioned making alternative arrangements to avoid the cost by either making other travel arrangements or looking for alternative school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that it is clearly communicated that charges would be a contribution. The cost of transport will remain heavily subsidised as the average cost per Post 16 SEND pupil is £3,500 per year. Incentivise suppliers to be more competitive which will have an impact on the reducing the cost of transport Work with colleges and other education establishments to help those who require financial support access bursaries. To rationalise routes and bus sizes to be more cost effective.
<p>11) Fewer special schools – Residents commented on how the levels of provision of special schools within Buckinghamshire could mean that SEND children travel longer distance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current sufficiency of SEND provision so that the appropriate support is available to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.
<p>12) Unfair or discriminatory - Respondents commented that they felt the proposal was unfair and penalised parents with children with SEND. Residents who did not receive SEND home to school transport commented that they thought the proposal was either unfair or families with children with SEND should not be penalised financially.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to make transport arrangements for those requiring specialised provision Undertake a transport assessment for every young person prior to their transition to Post-16 education. Develop the Independent Travel Training which will upskill students who have the potential to travel supported or unsupported on public transport. To implement charges that are consistent for all Post 16 students whether they have SEND or not
<p>13) Some contribution is reasonable – Residents who did not receive SEND home to school transport thought the proposal was fair with most preferring the flat fee option. However, many commented that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a financial contribution based on distance banding; this is in line with current charging for mainstream Post 16 students Work with colleges and other education establishments to support those who

<p>this should be means tested.</p>	<p>require it to access financial support via bursaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to have exceptional circumstances taken into account to allow consideration of a reduced contribution in the case of extreme financial hardship.
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Appendix A – Copy of Consultation Questionnaire

Introduction

We need to think differently about our Home to School Transport Service because increased demand will be unaffordable in the future within our limited budget. Revising the way the service is provided gives us the opportunity to support more young people to travel independently as well as making better use of public transport routes. Full details of our proposals for a modern Home to School Transport Service are set out in our draft policy.

Currently, we spend £15.1million on home to school transport. Of that, £12.7million is spent to meet our statutory duty to provide free transport to eligible students. We also provide transport for 4,810 children at a cost of £2.4m in accordance with other statutory transport duties and powers.

This consultation covers:

- Changing how we provide school transport – greater integration of school bus services with public bus services
- Only providing free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school, withdrawing historic, non-statutory transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver)
- Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+

The Council is seeking your views on the draft policy in order to inform a cabinet report in March 2019. It is proposed that if the draft policy is adopted, all new applications will be processed in line with the new policy. We would also like your views on whether the policy should be phased in for students who already receive transport under the current arrangements.

We want to hear from you and invite you to complete this short questionnaire. You may also be interested in attending one of our drop-in information events and full details of these can be found [here](#).

Please be assured that the information you provide here will be used only for the purposes of this consultation, will be kept confidential and will be stored securely in line with data protection laws.

Questions

About your family

1. Do you have children in your household that travel to school or college?

Please select all that apply

- No
- Yes – By car
- Yes – By bus
- Yes – By taxi
- Yes – By train
- Yes –Walk
- Yes – Cycle
- Yes - Other (please state)_____

2. Which age group(s) are your children in? Please select all that apply

- 0-4
- 5-9
- 11-16
- 16-19
- 19-25

3. Do your children receive free Home to School transport? Please select all that apply

- No
- Yes - Over statutory walking distance
- Yes - Unsafe walking route
- Yes - Low income
- Yes - Special Educational Need/Disability/Mobility problem

4. Which of the following descriptions apply to your child? Please select all that apply

- Specific learning difficulty
- Moderate learning difficulty
- Severe learning difficulty
- Profound & multiple learning difficulty
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Speech, language and communication needs
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Multi-sensory impairment
- Physical disability

- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Other difficulty / disability

5. What is your full postcode?

The proposals

Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport

We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes.

6. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?

- Yes
- No

Please give details

7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in afterschool clubs or activities.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Comments

8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Comments

Proposal 2: Provide statutory, free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school. This will withdraw the historic, non-statutory transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver).

We have offered free transport in these areas that allowed pupils to attend a school that was not their nearest. Withdrawing these historic arrangements will bring Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) in line with the rest of the county and eligibility for free school transport would be consistently applied across the county.

9. Do you support this proposal?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Comments

10. Should students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest eligible school, start paying from September 2020?

- Yes
- No
- I don't mind

Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+

We currently offer free transport to SEND students aged 16+. We are proposing that parents make a contribution to the cost of transport. There are fewer Special Schools than other schools in the county, and typically students with SEND have to travel further to attend. Therefore the contribution will reflect the average cost of all 16+ students.

There are two charging options (1) the flat fee would be £660 per year. (2) If charges were made based on distance between home and school, the fee per year would be banded: Under 4 miles = £660, 4-4.99 miles = £772, 5-6.99 miles = £884, 7-9.99 miles = £998, 10 or more miles £1,111.

11. Do you support this proposal?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Comments

12. Which of the two charging options do you prefer?

- Flat fee per year
- Fee per year based on distance between home and school
- I don't mind

13. Should SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport start paying from September 2020?

- Yes
- No

- I don't mind

Thank you for completing our questionnaire. Updates on the consultation and subsequent decisions will be posted on our website ([LINK](#))

Appendix B – Copy of Young People’s Questionnaire

Modernising Home to School Transport

We are running a consultation to ask your views on changes being made to the Council’s Home to School Transport arrangements.

The consultation covers:

- Changing how we provide school transport – integrating school and public bus services
- Only providing free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school, withdrawing historic, non-statutory arrangements in the Ivinghoe and Evreham areas
- Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Full details of the consultation can be found at:

www.buckcc.gov.uk/schooltransportsurvey

We are particularly interested in what is important to young people in Buckinghamshire when they are travelling to and from school and college. We would also like to learn what is most important to you when you are deciding with your families what transport arrangement you will use to get there.

This questionnaire has been designed in partnership by Buckinghamshire County Council and the Youth Voice Executive Board. We will only use the information you provide for this consultation.

Q1 - How do you currently travel to school or college? Please select all that apply

On foot (walk, scooter, etc)	
By car – my parent drives	
By car – car share arrangement	
By car – I drive myself	
By school bus	
By public bus	

By minibus	
By taxi	
By bicycle	
By train	
Other – Please state	

Q2 - What do you like best about how you travel?

It's quick	
It gets me where I want to be on time	
It makes me feel independent	
It means I can change my day and routine without much fuss	
It's clean and comfortable	
I can travel with my friends	
The cost – it's a cheaper option	
Other – Please state	

Q3 - What is most important to you about your journey?

Feeling safe	
Being on time	
Travelling with people I know and trust	
Travelling with people who are friendly, helpful and nice to me	
Feeling confident on my own	
Other – Please state	

Q4 - Please tell us how satisfied you are with the transport you currently use in the following areas.

5 – Very satisfied

4 – Satisfied

3 – Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

2 – Dissatisfied

1 – Very dissatisfied

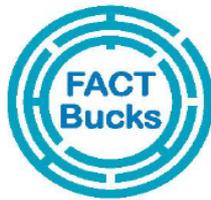
Reliability and arriving on time	
Comfort and quality of the vehicle	
Professional and polite drivers	
Safe and problem free journey	
Overall transport experience	

Q5 – If the proposals were accepted, what concerns do you have about the transport you might use to get to school/college? Please select all that apply

I don't have any concerns	
Buses aren't on time and would make me late	
The condition of the bus	
Safety and security on the bus	
Cost of travel	
Buses don't run regularly in my area	
Behaviour of other people on the bus	
Seeing different drivers all the time	
It might be a longer journey	
Other - Please state	

Q6 – Do you have any other suggestions that might improve transport that takes you to school or college?

Appendix C – Organisational Response from FACT Bucks



Families and Carers Together in Buckinghamshire

Please find below our response to the consultation.

About your family

This section has been left blank as this response is on behalf of an organisation

* 1. Do you have children in your household that travel to school or college? *Please select all that apply*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by bus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by car | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by walking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by train | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by cycling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by taxi | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

Not Applicable

2. Which age group(s) are your children in? *Please select all that apply*

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 - 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 - 19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 - 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 - 25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 16 | |

3. Do your children receive free home to school transport?

- No
- Yes - over statutory walking distance
- Yes - unsafe route to school
- Yes - low income
- Yes - special educational needs or disability or mobility problems

4. Which of the following descriptions apply to your child? *Please select all that apply.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific learning difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate learning difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Severe learning difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-sensory impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profound & multiple learning difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social, emotional & mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Autistic spectrum disorder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech, language & communication needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Other difficulty/disability |

5. What is your full postcode please?

Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport

6. We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?

- Yes
 No

Please give details

Some children with SEN may be able to use a school bus but would not be able to use a public service. Reasons for this could include:

- The unpredictability of the public bus service (drivers, other passengers, equipment)
- Deliberate (or accidental) non-disembarkation at school
- Accidental (or deliberate) non-disembarkation at home

This change could therefore trigger the need for additional travel training or use of a taxi, offsetting some of the savings.

7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in after-school clubs or activities.

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

Comments

Children with SEN are often unintentionally excluded from before- and after-school activities by the inflexibility of their home-to-school transport. Subject to the provisos in the answer to question 6 the timetabling of suitable public transport options at more flexible times could help reduce this.

8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure
 I don't pay

Comments

Currently very few children with SEN pay to use school transport.

Proposal 2: Providing statutory free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school

Any children with SEN impacted by these changes would be impacted in the same way as other children so this section has been left blank.

9. This will withdraw the historic, non-statutory transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver).

We have offered free transport in these areas that allowed pupils to attend a school that was not their nearest. Withdrawing these historic arrangements will bring Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) in line with the rest of the county and eligibility for free school transport would be consistently applied across the county.

Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

10. Should students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest suitable school have to start paying from September 2020?

- Yes
- No
- I don't mind

Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with SEND aged 16+

11. We currently offer free school transport to students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+. We are proposing that parents make a contribution to the cost of transport.

There are fewer Special Schools than other schools in the county, and typically students with SEND have to travel further to attend. Therefore the contribution will reflect the average cost of all 16+ students.

There are two charging options (1) the flat fee would be £660 per year. (2) If charges were made based on distance between home and school, the fee per year would be banded: Under 4 miles = £660, 4-4.99 miles = £772, 5-6.99 miles = £884, 7-9.99 miles = £998, 10 or more miles £1,111.

Do you support this proposal?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

Comments

The feedback from our members and other families with SEN is that any additional charges on families of children with special needs would have a harsh impact. Many of these families are under financial stress as a result of increasing costs of living, stagnant wages and benefits, and cuts to other services such as short breaks, children's centres, libraries etc.

As an organisation FACT Bucks recognises that the proposal has been designed to minimise the impact on families. In particular the fee levels have set at levels to maintain equity with other children in this age bracket and as a result the county would continue to fund the majority of the cost of home to school transport without any statutory obligation to do so.

It should have been made clear in this consultation that different statutory arrangements exist for young people aged 19 and over who attend educational settings.

12. Which of the two charging options do you prefer?

- Flat fee per year
 Fee per year based on distance between home and school
 I don't mind

13. Should SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport start paying from September 2020?

- Yes
 No
 I don't mind