Using the bus: what young people think

4D youth Matter

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Objectives

- Planning a journey
  - Where do they look for information?
  - What are the potential barriers?
- Views on transport options
  - Private vehicles, public transport, Uber/car share
- How do young people currently use buses?
  - Frequency, time of day, journey length
  - How has their bus use changed over time?
- What are their views on bus services?
  - How does the entire process work for them – from planning a journey to destination?
  - How do they ‘feel’ when using the bus?
  - Reliability, punctuality and timetabling
  - Facilities/environment on board – spending time ‘usefully’
  - Impact of other people on the bus
  - Cost of travelling, plus awareness of promotions
  - Different bus companies and routes
- How can bus operators make bus services more attractive to young people?
- How will their bus use change and why?
  - Using private vehicles, public transport, Uber/car share

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Overview of method

- Mixed method approach
- Fieldwork conducted February – 31st March 2017

- Covered experiences of and attitudes towards different modes of transport and bus use in specific detail

- Detailed qualitative fieldwork:
  - Ethnography – recorded bus journeys
  - X 8 Face-to-face focus groups

- Quantitative survey of 1000 14-19 year olds, England only

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Qualitative process

- 64 participants recruited (with parental permissions under 16)
- Eight face-to-face focus groups
  - x2 urban local authorities
    - Leeds, Shirley (in Solihull)
  - X2 rural local authorities
    - Norwich, Shenfield (in Essex)
  - In each area:
    - one group of 14-16 year olds, and one of 17-19 year olds
    - Bus users and non-bus users
    - Mix of activities in older groups (working, college, apprenticeships, not in work)
- Respondents undertook a pre-task
  - One bus journey each prior to focus group
  - Recorded a welcome ‘selfie’ video
  - Answered each question on the EthOS app during journey
  - Received around 900 posts over course of project

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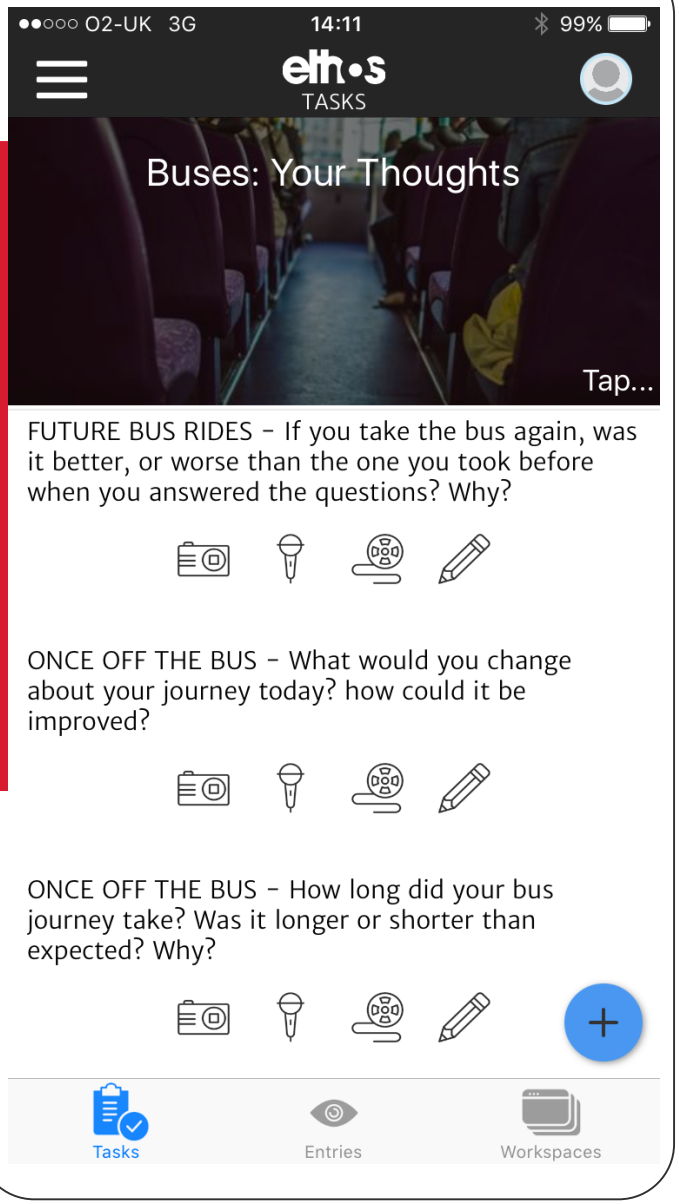
EthOS ethnography app



- App on iOS/Android:
  - Participants emailed with link to download app onto their phones
- Could upload:
  - Videos
  - Photos
  - text comments
  - audio files

- Brief and questions listed on app:
  - Clicked on an icon to submit/post a response
- Participants worked through each question on their journey
- All posts automatically sent to web interface

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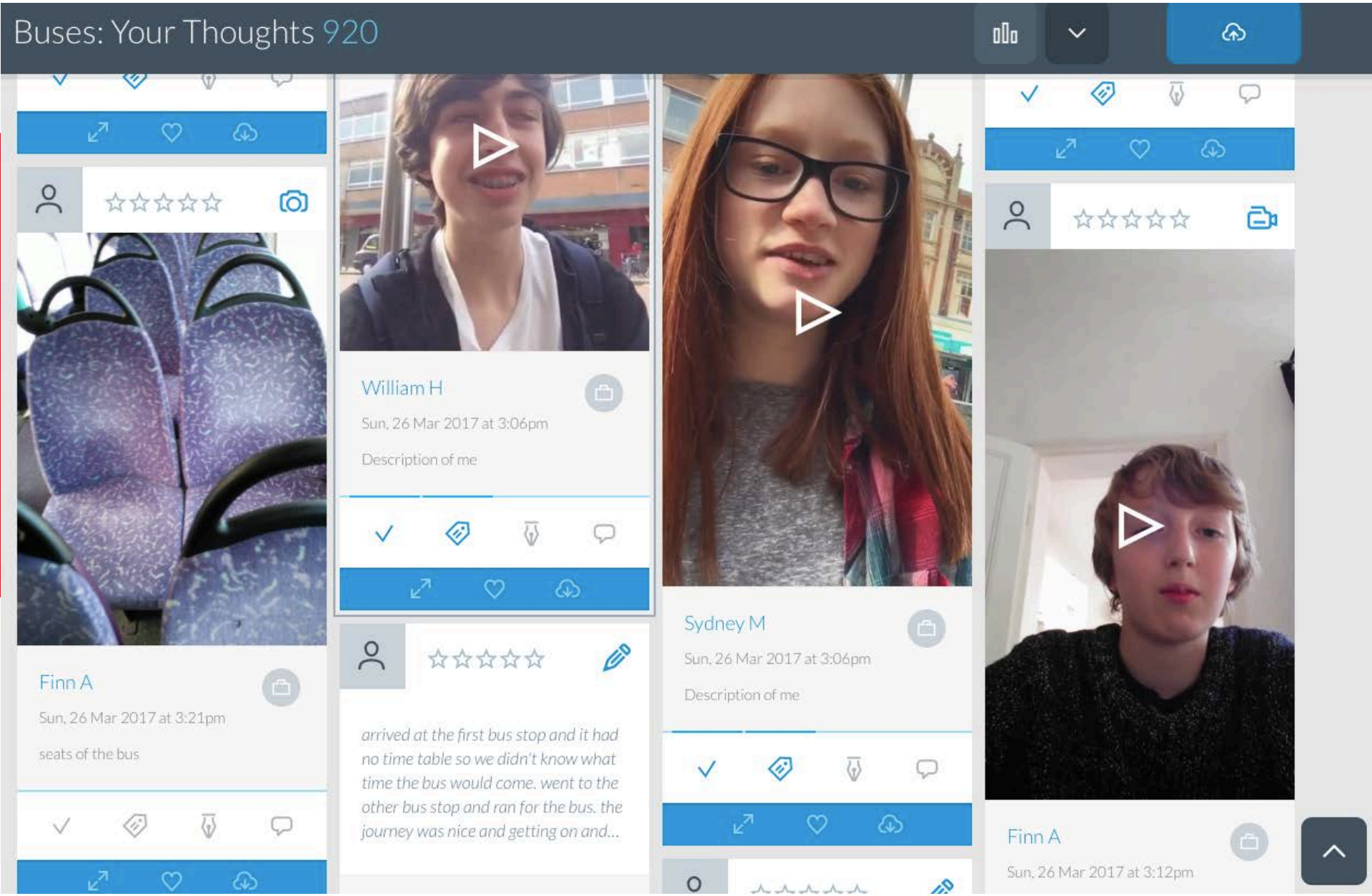
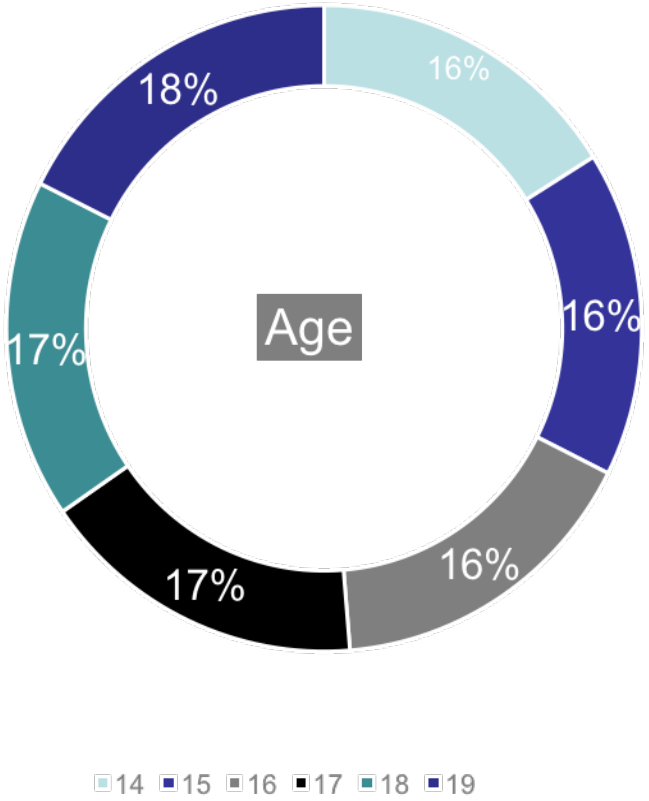
EthOS ethnography app

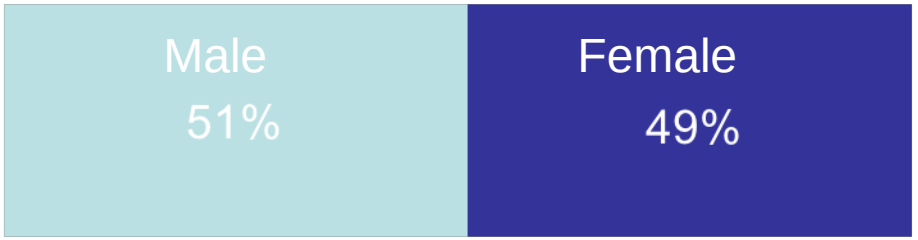


Demographics – 1000 14-19 year olds

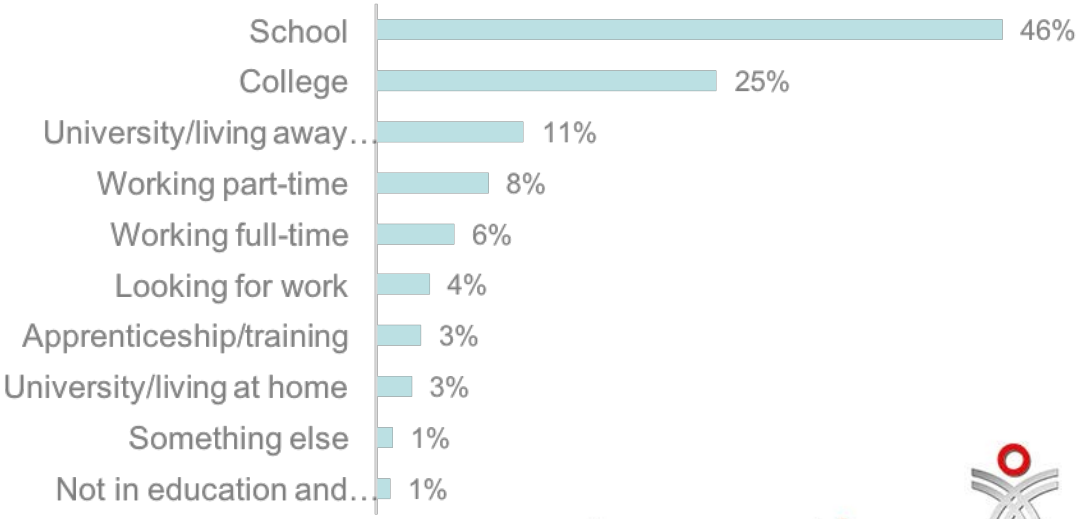


Demographics representative of Census figures – weighted by age, gender and region

Gender



Status



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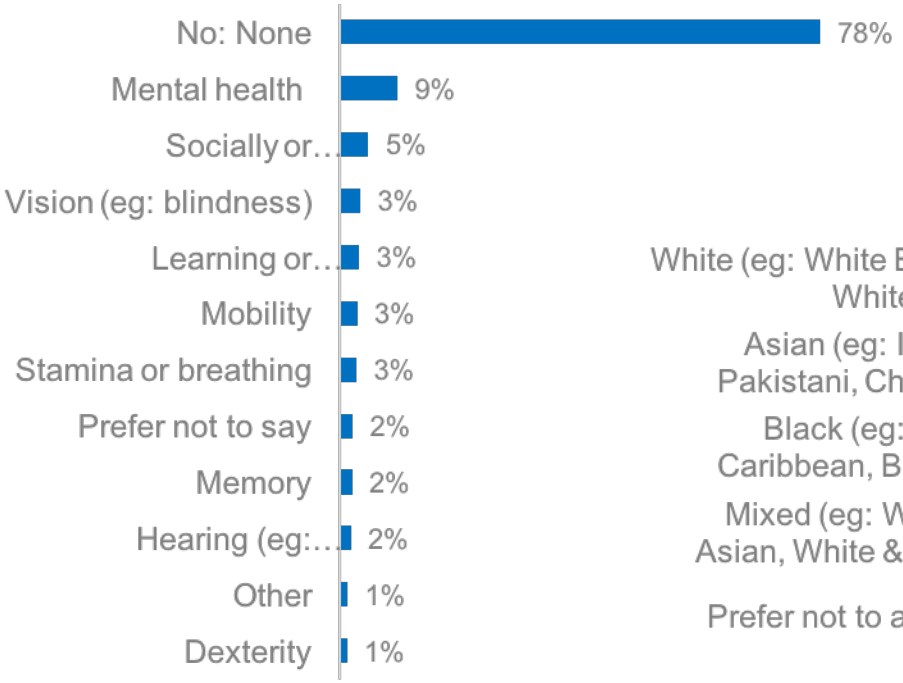
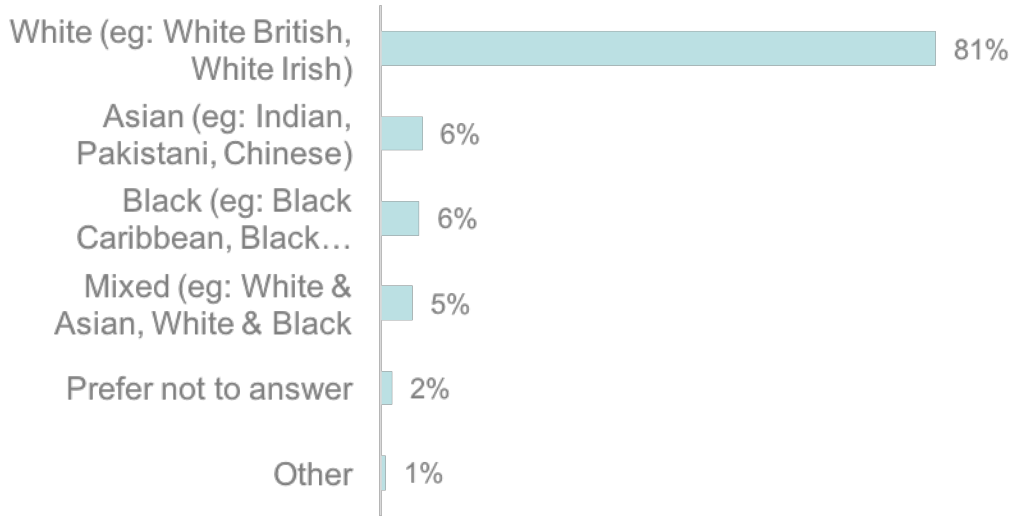
Base: all (1003)

Disability and ethnicity

Disability



Ethnicity



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Base: all (1003)

Structure of report

- Overview of thought processes and behaviour
  - Planning a journey
  - Modes of travel considered – convenience – time & access
  - Views on private vehicles, driving and Uber/car share, walking & cycling
  - Views of public transport
  - Views on buses specifically
- The role of ‘freedom’ & fragility
  - Social anxieties around taking a bus journey
- From planning to reaching a destination by bus
  - Cost and awareness of discounts
  - Experience starts at the bus stop
  - Feelings when on bus (including role of bus driver)
  - Progress/dealing with delays on journey
  - Spending time ‘usefully’ on the bus
- Older and younger groups and their changing needs
- What surprised the non-bus user?
- Key features of the perfect bus journey
- Perceptions of operators (routes, facilities offered)
- Perceptions of operators (efforts to meet their needs)
- Recommended actions

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Planning a journey
Modes of transport

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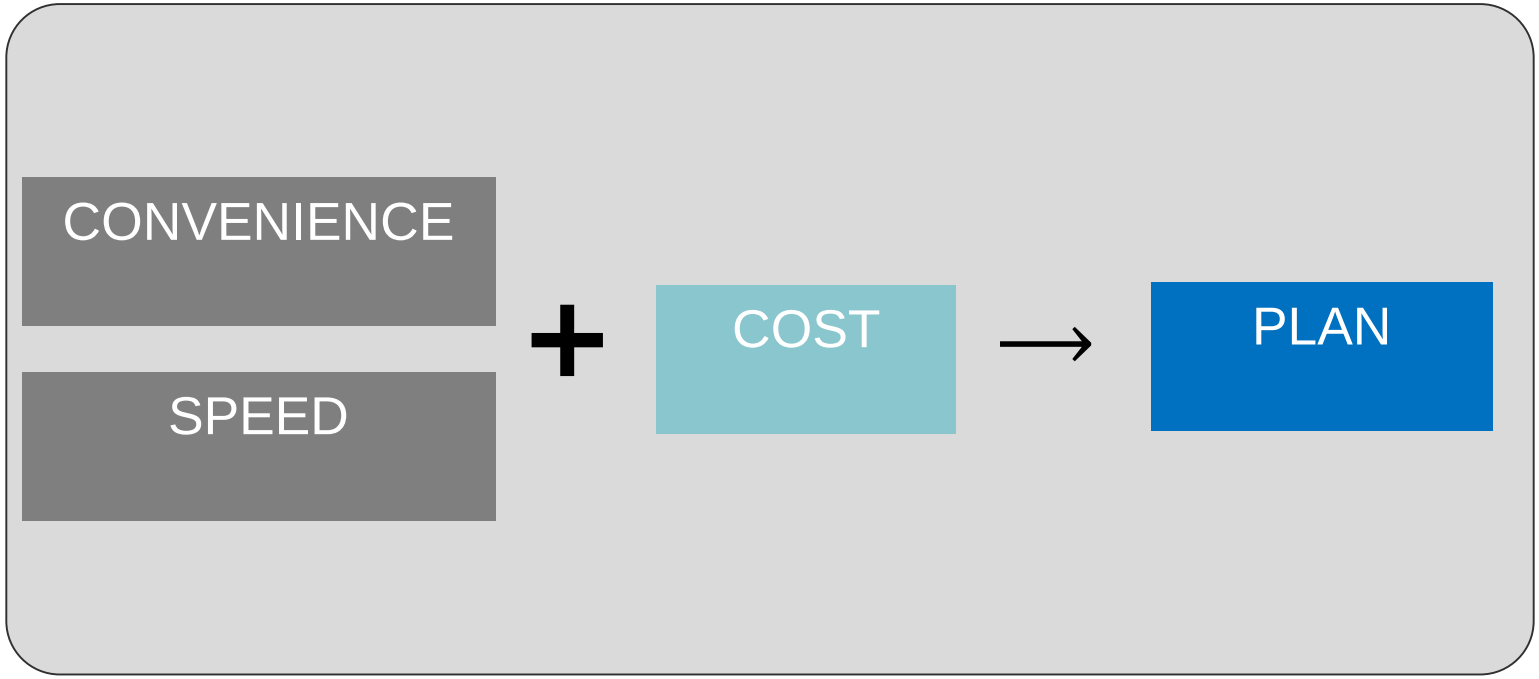
Planning a journey: a two step process

‘How are you going to get there?’



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Planning a journey: first thought-process

‘How are you going to get there?’

1. a) **what is most convenient for me**? and b) **what is quickest**?

- What is most convenient? (a range of different factors here)
  - Is there a bus stop or train station near to my house?
  - Can someone give me a lift? (parents/carers, other family members, friends)
  - Can I easily get to a taxi rank, bus stop etc from my house or where I am? Can I leave my house just 5-10 minutes before? (especially if bad weather)
  - Convenience is big factor for older groups – more precious about their time
  - Don’t want to leave home until they absolutely have to and this is more of a case with bus than other forms of transport

- Where am I going to? (what is quickest journey time)
  - Actual destination (city/town centre vs someone’s house; out of town)
    - Going to local city/town? Bus is probably quickest
  - How far am I travelling?
    - Would choose train over bus if going out of town as probably faster
  - Reliability of transport (will it turn up when stated?)
    - Don’t want to get stuck somewhere

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Planning a journey: second thoughts

‘How are you going to get there?’

2. **How much will this cost me?** appears to be a secondary factor/consideration

- Points to consider:
  - Initial cost of ticket/fare if on public transport or using Uber or taxi
  - Cost of petrol (how many are sharing the car? How many people is cost split between?)
  - Cost of parking

- Older groups (17-19s) prepared to pay out a bit more to guarantee convenience (which is highly valued):
  - May be £2-3 more to get Uber, but worth it because of its door-to-door convenience

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Planning a journey: key factors

"If my parents take me then that just seems easier than having to time it all."
(Essex, 14-16s)

"I would bike up to park & ride, lock my bike up and then hop on the bus, because that is cheaper than getting a bus the whole way. It's only 80p vs £2 on First Buses."
(Norwich, 14-16s)

"Not confident it would turn up on time, so if I had to be somewhere on time then I wouldn't want to use a bus. I would want to make sure that I controlled when I got there."
(Essex, 17-19s)

"I would think about cost of parking, so if I was going to town for a full day, it would cost about £15 to park, so would be better to get public transport."
(Leeds, 17-19s)

"If it's really expensive, then you might look to get there some other way, but if it's slightly more expensive but much easier, then you would probably do that."
(Essex, 17-19s)

"It depends how much longer it takes. If it doesn't cost much more, but gets there much quicker, then I would go for that."
(Essex, 14-16s)

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Planning a journey

What are the ’go to’ tools?

- Google Maps consistently mentioned in focus groups
  - Brings up all possible forms of transport, including how long it takes to walk or cycle
  - Can search from current location to anywhere you would like to go (many seem to already have ‘location’ enabled)
  - Most already have this app on their phones, so doesn’t require any additional downloading
  - Includes live information (times, delays with public transport)
  - Has a sense of reliability about it

- Will ask friends or mum/dad for information if needed
- Local bus operator apps
- Others that people have heard of but not necessarily used (for example. Citymapper)
- These findings are supported by the quantitative data

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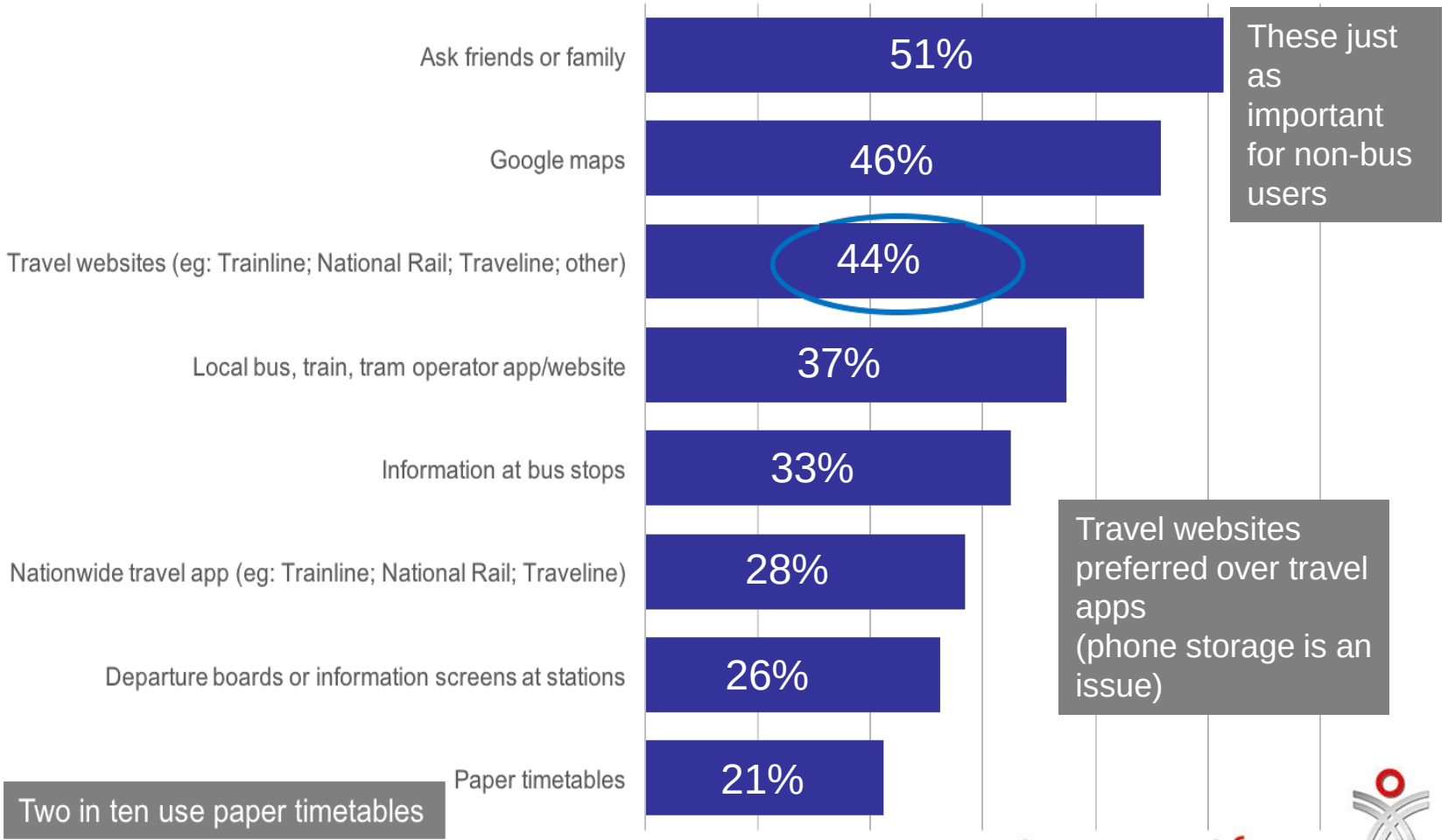
Friends & family, Google Maps & travel websites – key information sources



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Q5) How do you find information about your journey/plan how you are going to get somewhere – Journey planning? Base: all (1003)

Value of private cars, Uber/car share

- Driving
  - Value of this is significant – implies freedom – can go wherever they like, whenever they want
  - It's a 'no-brainer'
  - Cost of parking and petrol are considerations, but don't outweigh the independence gifted by having your own car
- Car share
  - Benefit of travelling with friends, a group activity
  - Cheaper
- Uber (more in urban areas of Leeds and Solihull)
  - Real pull for older ages (17-19s)
    - So convenient – can see who is in your area, can book them in and pay via PayPal before you even travel
    - No interactions required
    - Even though it's more expensive, some would use this as a first choice if available, as it's so easy
  - Younger groups
    - Good awareness of Uber
    - Not desperate to try it – doesn't factor in their lives just now
  - Rural – groups aware but not available in these areas, so don't feel they are missing out

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Walking and cycling

- In rural areas, appeared to be more willing to walk or cycle for longer distances to get into city/town, before considering other transport methods
  - Up to 2 or 3 miles
  - Some are using these methods for getting to school/college/work
  - This is normal for them, so not questioned - it's just a way of life
  - Offers personal freedom can set off and leave whenever they choose
- In urban areas, think about walking, but less committed
  - How long would it take to walk to where I want to go?
  - Perhaps more frequently – how long will it take to walk to bus stop or train station?
    - Varies from 15-30 minutes maximum to walk somewhere or to wait for other transport
    - Tolerance of this means of travel is perhaps more limited compared to those living in more rural areas

"Train, walking or parents. I wouldn't get the bus, because I feel like they're not that reliable. If I was going somewhere quite local then I would walk, because I can choose when I leave." (Essex, 14-16s)

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Immediate thoughts on public transport

- Key elements mentioned:
  - Overcrowded – lots of other people around
  - Have to mix with other members of the public
  - Convenient
  - Quick
  - Can be expensive
  - Trains vs buses
  - Waiting
  - Provides freedom to those who are old enough to travel without parents
  - It's for people not old enough to drive/don't own a car

"They can be unreliable. I have been late for work many times because my bus driver has either been late or not turned up at all." (Norwich, 17-19s)

"[public transport gives me] Confidence, because you are getting used to travelling on your own." (Essex, 14-16s)

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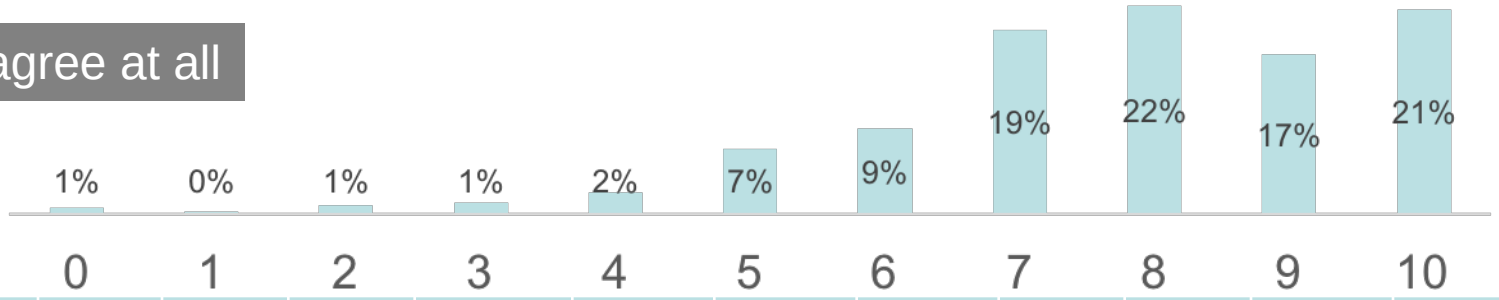
Agree that public transport is essential for helping everyone get where they want or need to go

Agree strongly

Don't agree at all



	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Meets my needs well	**1%**	**2%**	**3%**	**5%**	**6%**	**10%**	**13%**	**22%**	**21%**	**10%**	**8%**
For people without a car	3%	2%	5%	6%	7%	11%	**11%**	**17%**	**18%**	10%	11%
Good for environment	2%	1%	2%	3%	5%	**16%**	**14%**	**19%**	**17%**	10%	11%
Needs more investment	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	11%	11%	**19%**	**21%**	**15%**	**20%**

Investment clearly seen as a priority

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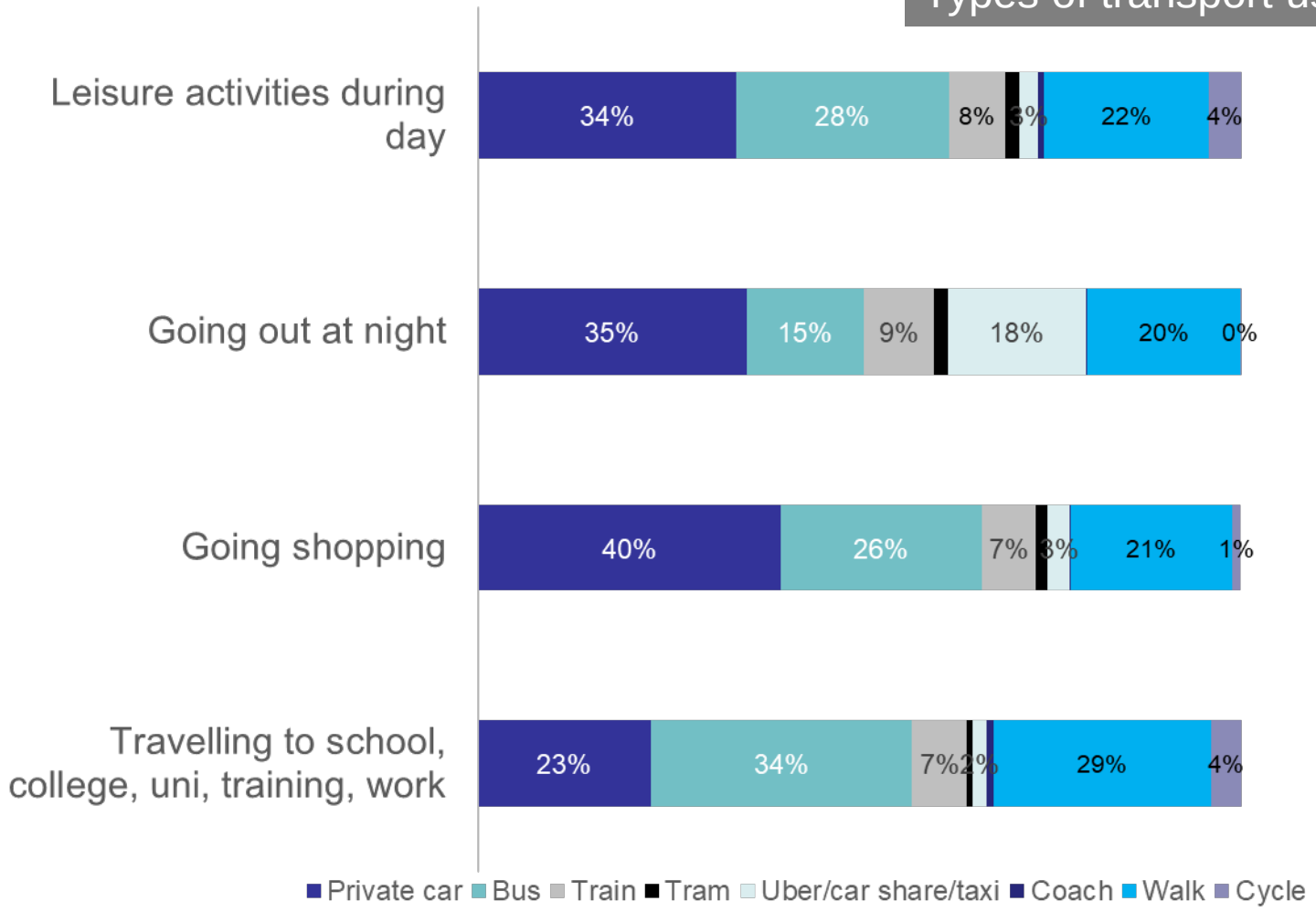
Q6) To what extent do you agree with the following statements about public transport?
Base: all (1003)

Using bus when travelling to school/college, day leisure activities, shopping

Types of transport used the most



Q4) What types of transport do you tend to use the most for the following activities?
Base all (1003)

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Typologies: do certain types of people use certain types of transport?

- Difficult to generalise, but some common statements about this
- Business people are more likely to get the train than bus
  - Can work on the train, use tables
  - Can get you to places quickly, which is useful if you have meetings to attend at different times of day

- Clearer about what groups of people tend to get the bus specifically
  - This appeared to be easier to categorise
- Elderly people; school children; people with young pre-school children
  - People who are not in a rush to get somewhere
  - Not driving around as often
  - Cheaper than other forms of transport
  - Might not want to walk to train station
  - People with mobility issues – bus lowers to people on, trains don't

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Thoughts on buses
Planning a bus journey

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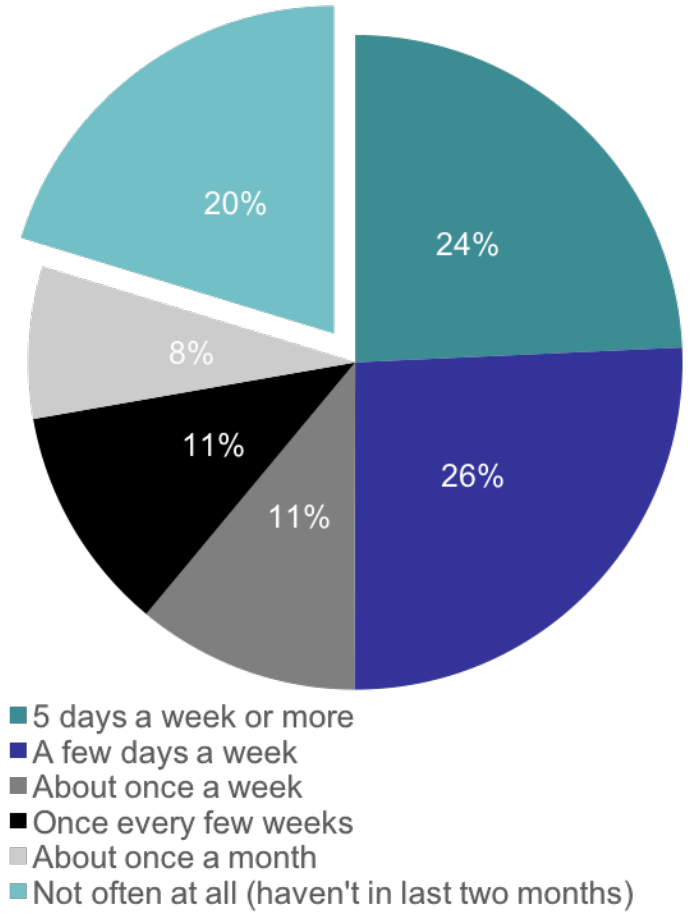
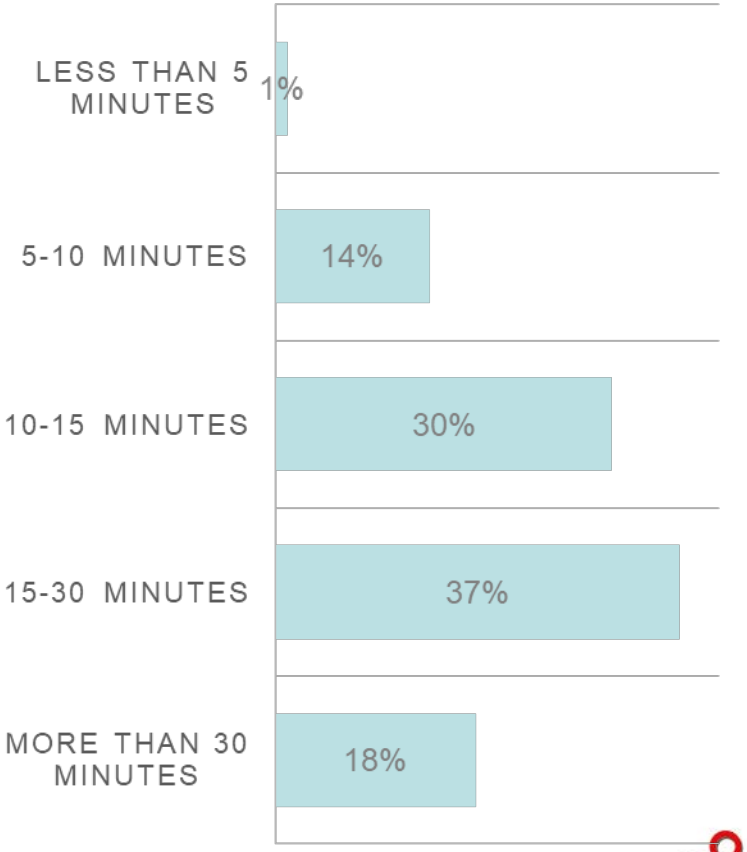
50 per cent use the bus at least a few days a week

6 in 10 journeys are 10-30 minutes in length

Frequency of bus use



Length of journey



Q10) How often do you use the bus? Base: all (1003)
Q11) How long is the journey that you make most often on the bus?…
Base Bus users (807)

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Immediate thoughts on buses

- Key elements mentioned:
  - Overcrowded
    - Especially before/after school and college
    - Why can't they introduce more double-decker buses or buses coming more often?
  - Dirty
    - Dirty seats and floors (dusty, stains)
    - Rubbish on seats and floors (food and drink containers, plastic bags)
    - Overflowing ticket 'bin'
    - 'Smells'
  - Unreliable
    - Often late turning up at bus stop
    - Buses not turning up at all or breaking down
  - Weird people
    - People talking to me
    - People sitting next to me when there are other free seats elsewhere in bus
  - Grumpy bus drivers
    - Unfriendly if not sure what ticket/fare you need
    - Stories of being thrown off bus if don't have right change
  - Never know if you have the right change
  - Rattling buses, loud
  - Unsafe driving
  - A 'last resort'
    - For those not regularly using buses

"You can't rely on buses turning up on time and not breaking down." (Essex, 17-19s)

2 out of 10 non-bus users 'agree strongly' that 'buses are for people who can't get access to a car'

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Dirty seats

Examples of photographs taken on bus journeys and submitted through app

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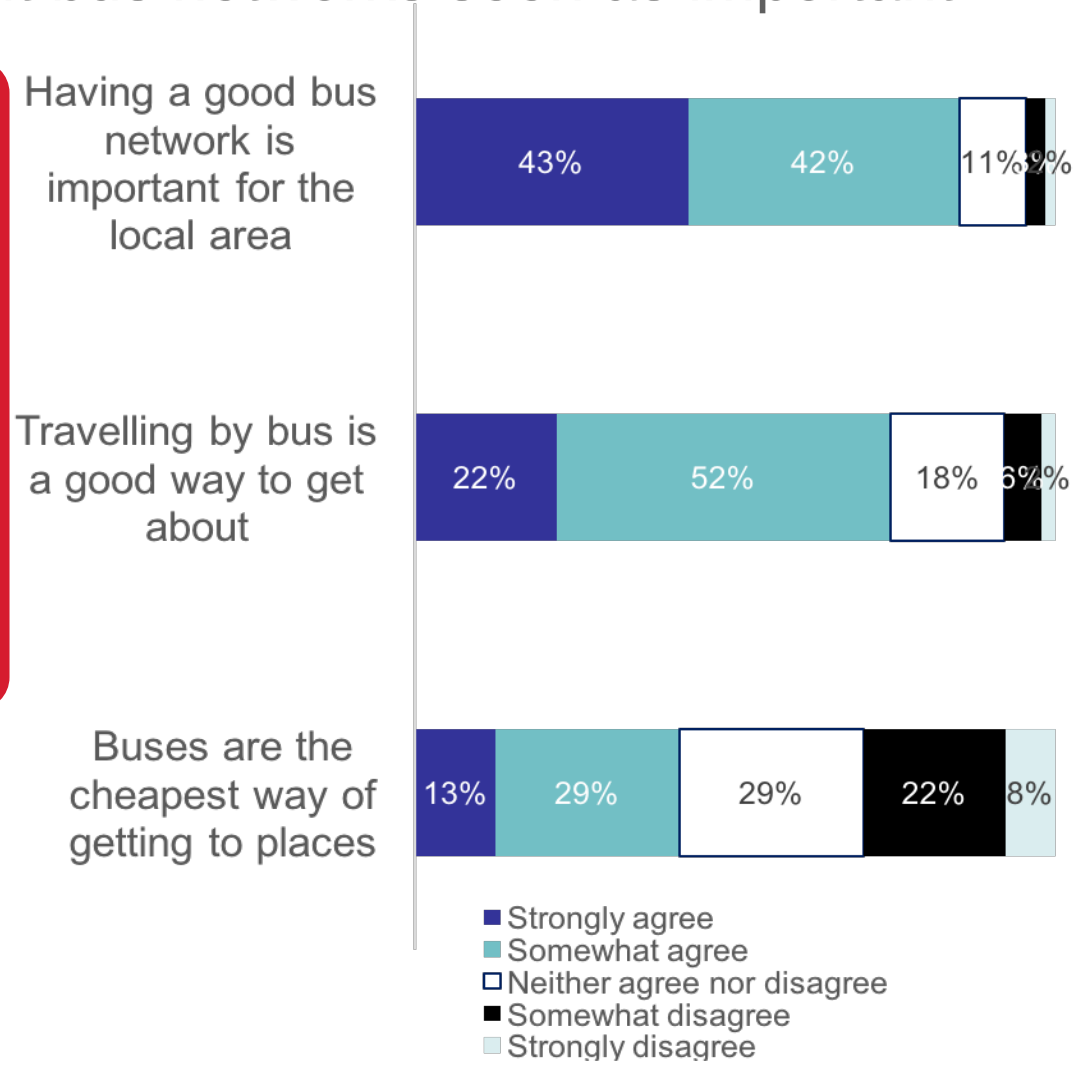
Buses are not necessarily the cheapest way of getting around

But bus networks seen as important



Total strongly	Bus user strongly	Non-user strongly
13%	14%	6%
Total somewhat	Bus user somewhat	Non-user somewhat
29%	31%	21%

22%	25%	10%
Total somewhat	Bus user somewhat	Non-user somewhat
52%	54%	43%

43%	48%	23%
Total somewhat	Bus user somewhat	Non-user somewhat
42%	40%	51%

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Q9) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about travelling by bus?
Base: all (1003)

The role of ‘freedom’ and fragility

Social anxieties & bus journeys

- Around 14/15yrs – they are starting to use different transport options without parents
  - Moving away from this security
- Real appeal in being trusted to do this
  - A start to their coming independence
- Like the idea of relaxing, talking to friends, enjoying the journey

They want to ‘get it right’

- These initial experiences then inform development of their attitudes towards buses
  - Determines ongoing thoughts about buses and grows with them
- Difficulties in getting on the bus, overall bus journey may resonate for a while – not easily forgotten
- Getting the bus is a **core life skill** that must be learned
- Prevalance of attitudes
  - If don’t use bus as much after this point, have formed assumptions that may not be challenged Wi-Fi. buses are always late and are dirty - these early experiences can be pivotal to their tendency to want to use the bus

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The role of ‘freedom’ and fragility – Uncertainty and ‘What If’s’

Key factors/concerns they are considering (part of this process):

- How do I get there?
  - I don’t know how to find out how to get there
  - Which is the best bus for the route I need? (which will get me there, quickest)
- How do I catch the bus?
  - Where is my nearest bus stop for that route?
  - Is my stop safe – in middle of nowhere? Dark? No shelter if raining?
- What time will my bus arrive?
- What if my bus is late? How do I know when it will be getting to bus stop?

- Once on the bus:
  - What do I say to bus driver? What fare am I asking for?
  - How much will it cost me?
  - What if I get this bit wrong? What if I’m asked to get off bus?
  - How will I know what bus stop to get off?
- What time are the buses coming back?

Older groups who don’t use bus often also reported these concerns

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Awareness of fares

- Real confusion as to **a) what fares they should ask for** and **b) how much these cost**
  - What are these fares called? What am I eligible for if under 16, under 18?
  - If I have a pass in the week, can I use this at weekends?
  - Does one operator charge more than others?
  - Why does the cost keep changing? What are the factor influencing this?
- Why do I have to pay adult fare at weekends if I have a child bus pass?
  - Felt an adult fare is unfair if under 18
- Reported lack of information as to probable fare

- Limited recall of discounts or offers promoted by bus companies
  - However, could report on some seen for students, OAPs
- Ads reported on back of buses and a few inside the interiors
- Usually seen as something targeted at others and 'not for them'
  - This adds to an assumption that bus operators do not consider them to be a target demographic – a group that is of real benefit/monetary value to them as companies.

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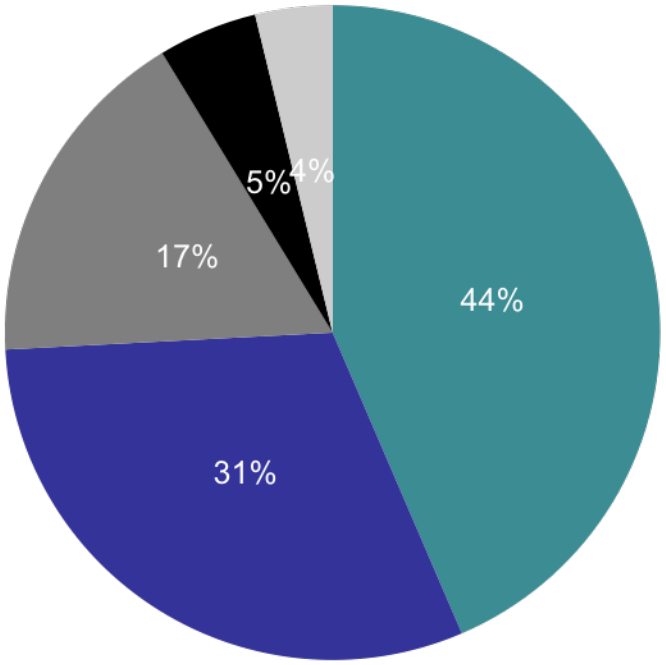
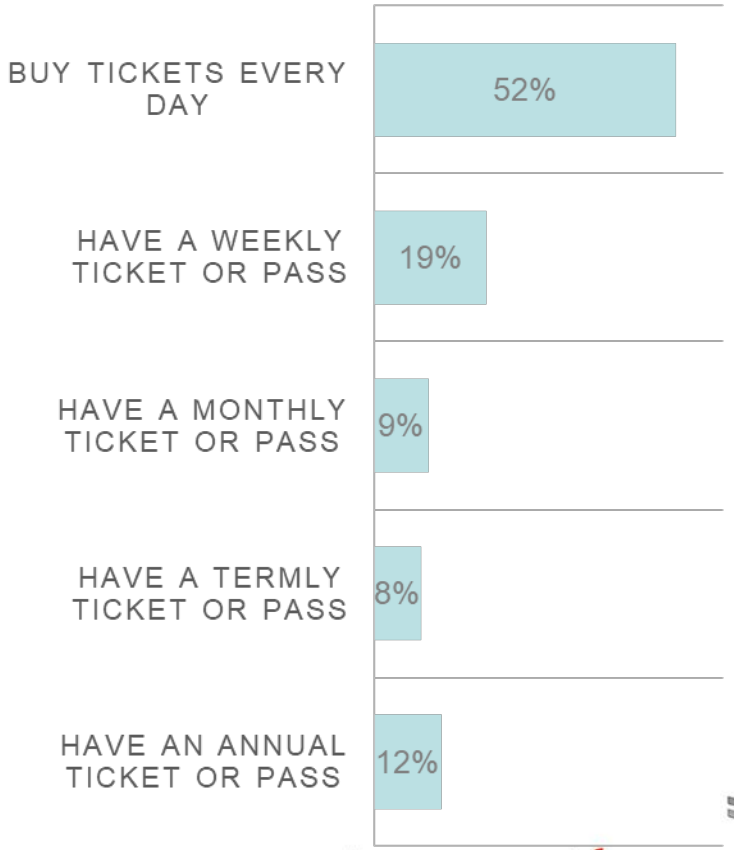
Majority (75 per cent) spend under £10 on bus travel per week, while half of bus users buy a ticket on the day

£ spent on bus travel in a typical week



Less than £5 | £5-£9.99 | £10-£14.99 | £15-£20 | More than £20

Type of ticket



Q17) How much do you spend on your bus travel in a typical week?
Q18) And do you…
Base Bus users (807)

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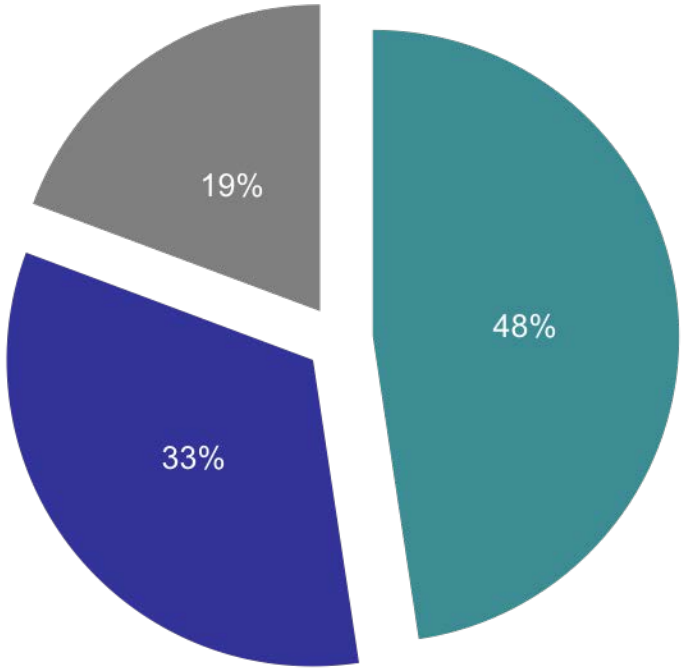
52 per cent are not sure exactly what special fares are available

Includes just under two in ten not sure that these exist



- **48% feel there are a good range of fares and discounts – very positive**
- However, an equal proportion are unsure of details or don't know if these offers are available to them
- Important, considering how **just over one third** (35%) of survey respondents pay for fares from their own pocket money/money they have earned
- 51% say their fares are paid for by parent/guardian/someone else

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Comments on fares

"You don't really know how much it will cost until you get on the bus, there is nothing to tell you how much It will be."
(Essex, 14-16s)

"I think my bus pass for a month would be about £48, which would mean I would get 2 weeks of the month free, but I don't know how to go about getting it. It says the prices online, but doesn't tell me how to get it."
(Norwich, 17-19s)

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Taking a bus journey

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The experience starts at the bus stop

- Negative comments about condition of bus stop and facilities:
- Condition:
  - Dirty/rubbish lying around
  - Defaced timetables so can't actually read the information contained therein
- Facilities
  - Frustration where it is just a pole with a sign on it
  - No roof
  - Poor lighting
  - No live tracker board
  - No timetables - uncertainty as to when bus will actually be turning up
  - No comfortable seats or no seats at all
- Will my bus turn up?
  - What if it is late – what do I do? How do I find out where the bus is, why it is delayed and what time it will get here?
  - A few checking operator apps (not many)
  - Bus driver drives past them (doesn't stop)

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Info | Comments | Codes | Notes | Location

Created

Mon, 20 Mar 2017 at 5:27pm

Participant

Henry

Tags

18- cotteridge

Tasks

1. AT THE BUS STOP - Take a photo of the bus stop where you are waiting. What information is there? Timetables? Live tracker information? And tell us what you are doing and thinking while waiting Eg; looking for information, checking times – seeing where bus is, texting, messaging, online browsing, look at scenery.

Description

Waiting at the bus stop in Cotteridge. Difficult to read times but there is live tracker avaliable which is generally working. Looking through social media and occasionally chatting to friends. I would like to sit down but there are no seats avaliable.

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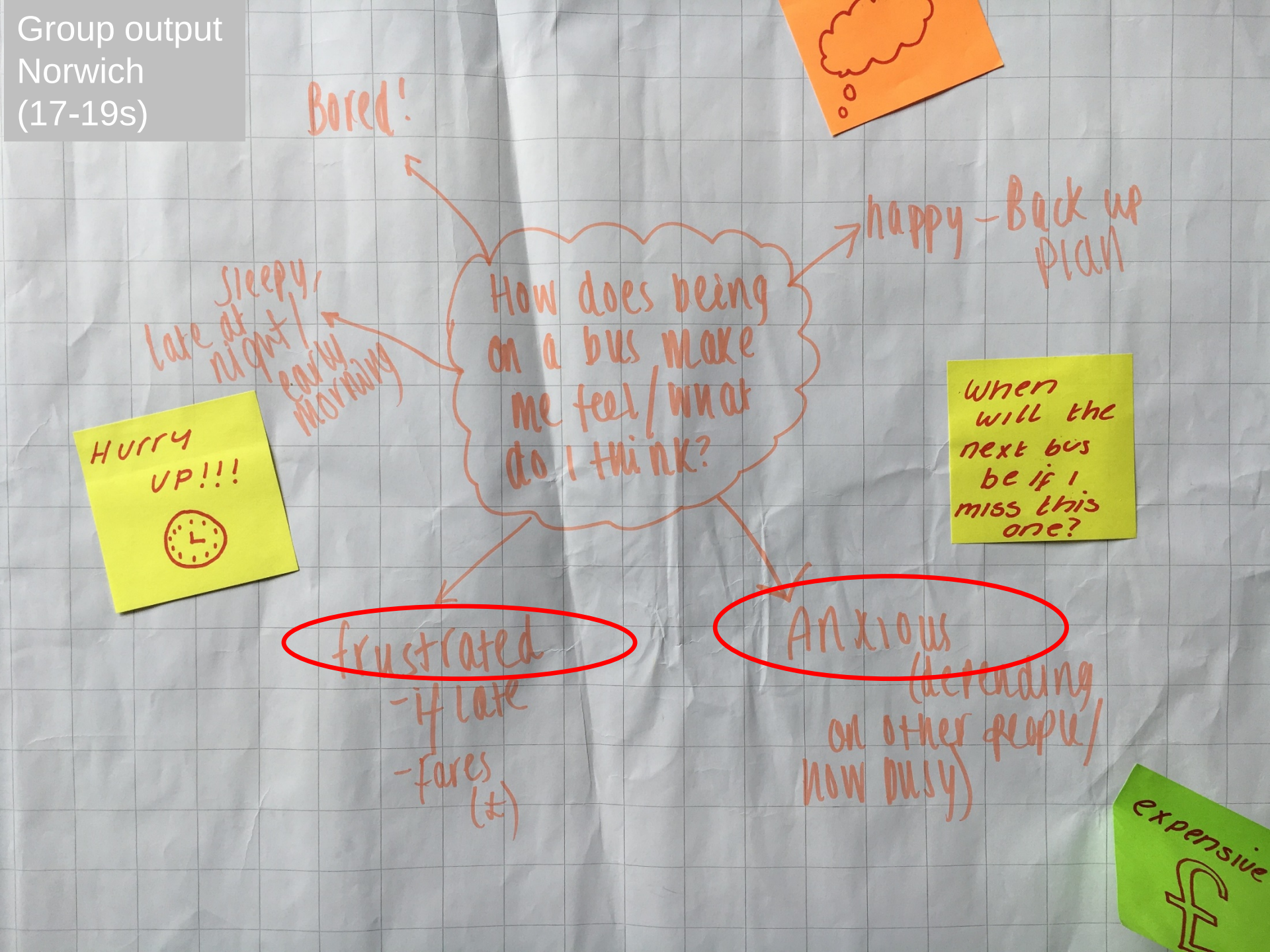
Group output
Norwich
(17-19s)



Waiting for the bus

"If the bus is late, usually it just stays on 2 minutes on my app or on the digital thing at the bus stop, but I would prefer it to be more realistic, so rather than '2 minutes' say '10 minutes'. Also, when the bus actually comes, it would be nice if the bus driver could say 'Sorry this bus is 20 minutes late'."
(Leeds, 17-19s)

"If you are waiting in the rain, then you would rather be on the bus, but if it's sunny then you don't mind waiting as much." (Norwich, 17-19s)

"Proper seats at bus stops [would be good], because the current ones you are semi stood up at, not comfortable. I think it's to deter homeless people from sleeping on them."
(Solihull, 17-19s)

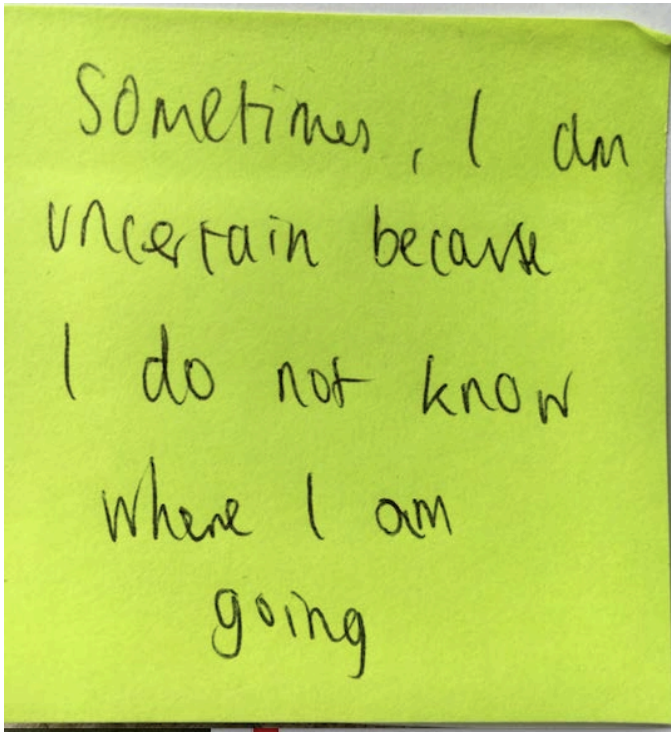
transportfocus

Getting on the bus: feelings

- This initial experience can impact on their enjoyment of the journey
- Very much focussed around the interface with the bus driver
- Will this bus driver be nice to me?

- Asking for a ticket/fare:
  - Do I know where I am going? Will the bus driver understand what I'm asking for?
- Paying for ticket/fare:
  - Do I have enough money?
  - Do I have the right change?
  - Will my card/pass work?
- Finding somewhere to sit:
  - How busy is it?
  - How noisy is it?
  - Do I feel comfortable sitting upstairs?

"When you first get on, it's quite unnerving – you don't know what the people are going to be like and you know the place you want to get to, but you don't know the actual destination." (Essex, 14-16s)



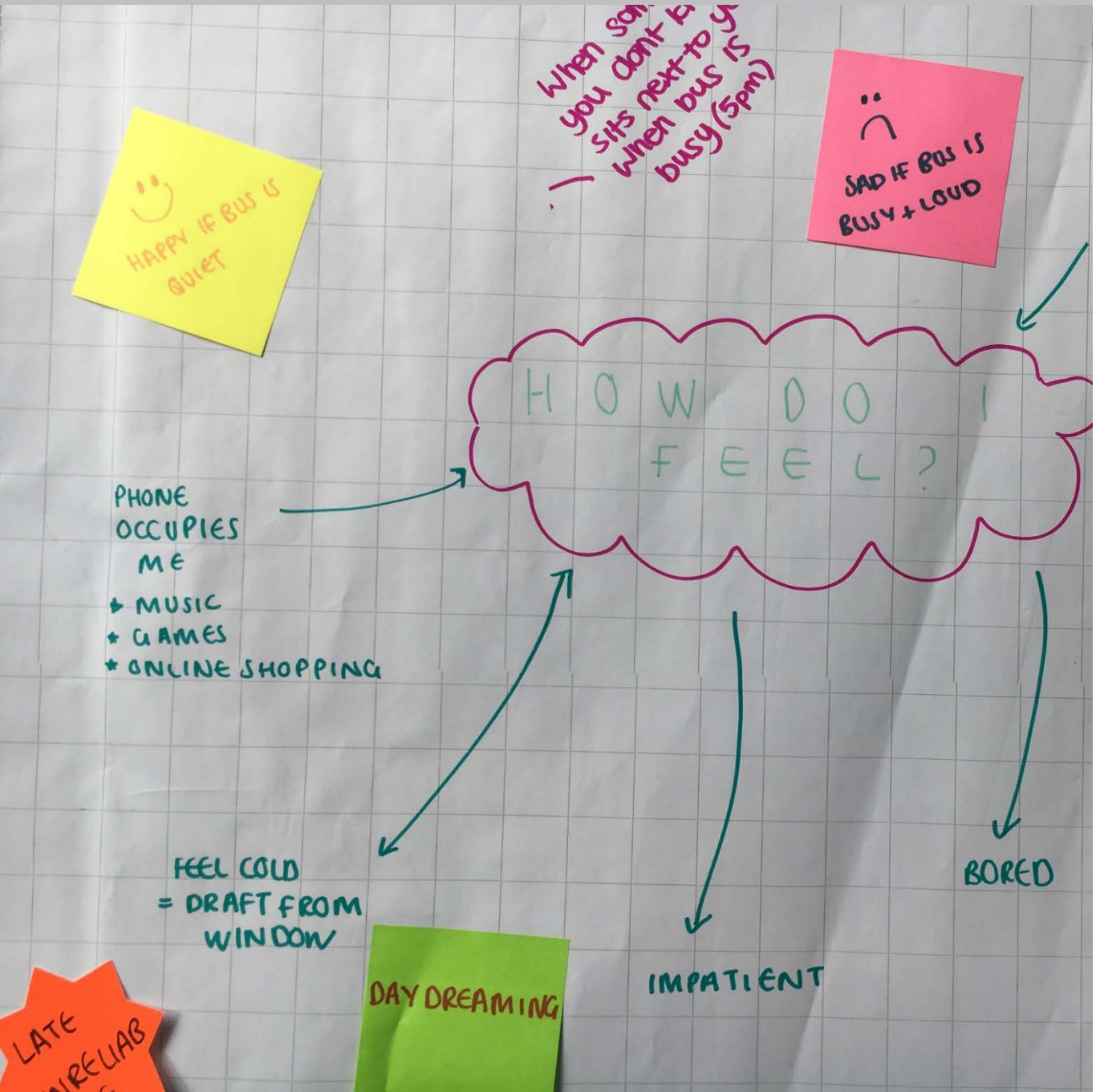
Once on the bus: feelings

- Mix of positive and negative reactions
- Discomfort:
  - Overcrowded
  - Stranger sits next to them when spare seats elsewhere
  - Bored
  - Impatient
  - Bus driver has been rude so now feel aggrieved
  - Unsure of where they are going and where to get off
  - Seats are dirty and uncomfortable
  - Litter is making them feel uneasy

- Comfort (positives):
  - Pleasantly surprised – bus has turned up on time
  - Driver was friendly
  - Bus driver lets them on for free
  - Friends are on bus with them
  - Spare seats around them/room
  - Room for their bags too

transportfocus

Group output: Leeds(17-19s)



transportfocus

Examples of ‘not good’ on bus

“My bus was so dirty, you can smack the fabric seats and all the dust will fly off.” (Leeds, 17-19s)

“I think some buses allow you to give the driver cash and they give you change, not that stupid thing where you have to put the money in.” (Solihull, 17-19s)

“They don’t really bother me [bus drivers], I don’t speak to them, I just ask for the ticket I want, then get on the bus. Sometimes there can be some moody bus drivers though, if I am 2p short then they don’t let me get on the bus.” (Solihull, 14-16s)

“You would think that the buses would get cleaned every night at the depot, but they don’t, because you can get on a bus early in the morning and it’s disgusting.” (Leeds. 17-19s)

“Uncomfortable, because I like having my own space, so when I am sitting that close to someone, I try not to touch them.” (Norwich, 17-19s)

“You don’t want to sit somewhere that’s dirty, because you won’t want to rest your arms anywhere.” (Norwich, 14-16s)

“On a train you know no one will speak to you, because its like an unsaid rule, but on a bus you are more nervous that someone might speak to you, it’s a bit weird that this person I have never met thinks they can have a conversation with me.”(Essex 14-16s)

transportfocus

Examples of ‘good’ on bus

“One time I was getting on a bus and I didn’t have my bus pass, but the driver didn’t notice because he was on his phone.” (Essex, 14-16s)

“This is a happy one, because sometimes on a Monday they let you on for free because everyone is buying weekly tickets, and they don’t have enough covers for the ticket to go in, so they say ‘Oh, just get on’” (Leeds, 17-19s)

“Sometimes you get on a bus and don’t know anyone on there, there might be people you feel like you have to stay away from, but it can be exciting, because it’s a different experience, it’s having some independence.” (Solihull, 14-16s)

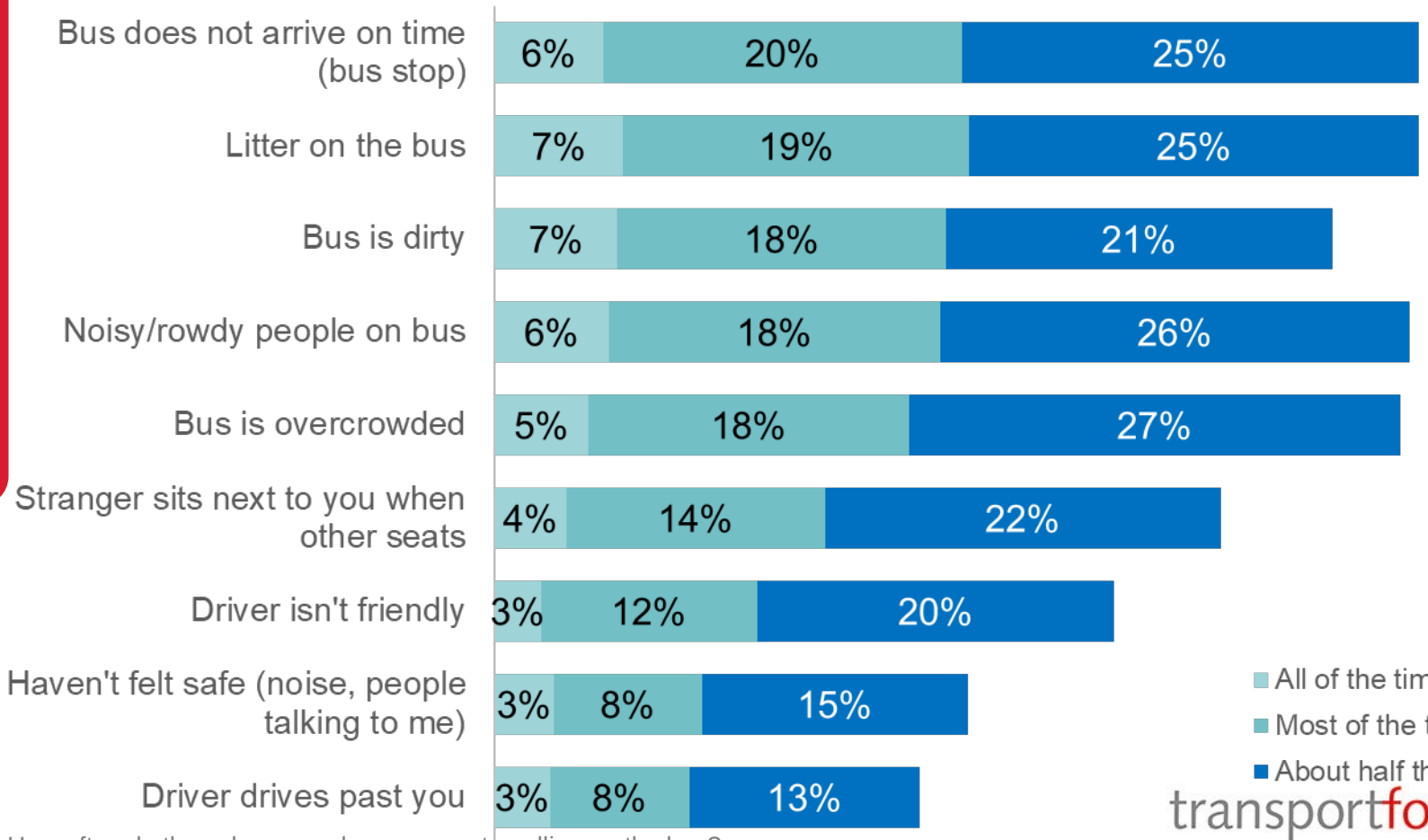
“They can be slow, but they are cheap and easy too, and if they have Wi-Fi that is convenient.” (Leeds, 14-16s)

“Quite helpful [bus drivers], especially if you are lost or it’s a new destination, they will tell you the best place to get off.” (Essex, 17-19a)

transportfocus

One quarter claim bus is late most of time/all of time

Similar proportion report litter and dirty buses as regular occurrence, plus noise and overcrowding



transportfocus

Q15) How often do these happen when you are travelling on the bus?
Base: Bus users (807)

Tracking progress on the bus

- Use Google Maps to assess progress along route
  - Check with bus stop they are at – physically check along the route until they are near where they want to be
- Digital display boards highlighting next stop and recorded announcements would be good

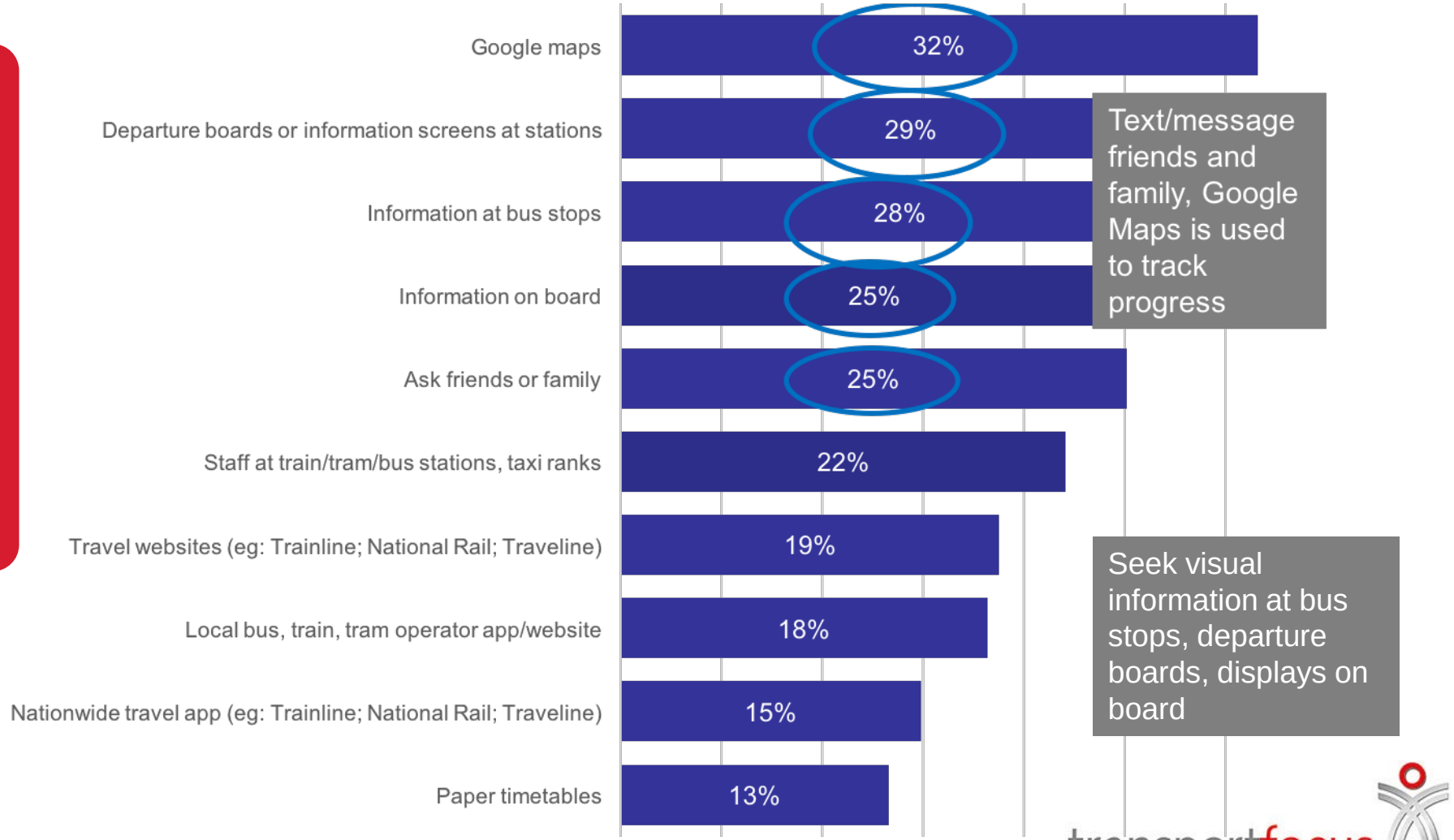
Technology important, but still value face-to-face contact, even though riddled with 'what ifs' for them

- **If delayed**
- Quite a high tolerance of this
  - Can see why there is a delay (usually traffic-related)
  - This is far less frustrating than a bus being late arriving at bus stop for them to get on/board the bus
- However, most would appreciate
  - Announcements on bus to say reason for delay and new expected timings - either recorded or from bus driver
  - Continued updates
- A few will check bus operator apps

transportfocus

Google maps and visual information favoured on journey, personal contact

Websites and travel apps used less…



transportfocus

Q5) How do you find information about your journey/plan how you are going to get somewhere – During journey?
Base: all (1003)

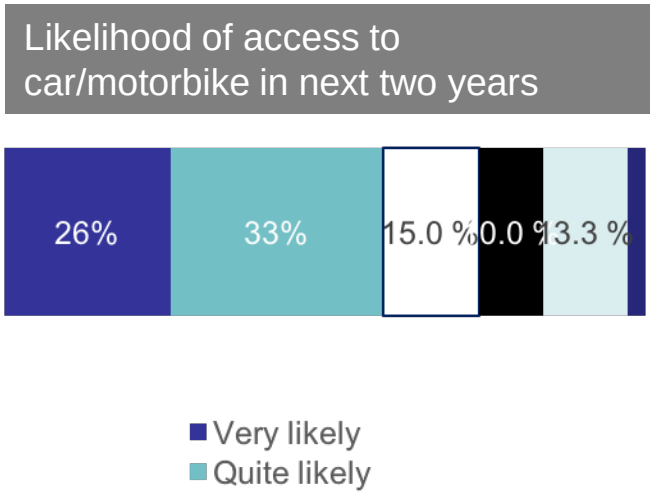
Spending time ‘usefully’ on the bus

- Common themes emerged as to how young people prefer to spend their time on the bus:
  - **Listening to music** (practically everyone in groups mentioned this)
  - **On social media** – Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat
  - **Talking with friends on the bus**
  - **Browsing other sites**
  - Charging their phones if buses have device chargers
  - **Looking out of the window** (when listening to music)
  - Younger participants mentioned they can be quite happy to just look out of the window if it is a fairly short journey (10 minutes) –
    - Older groups were far less willing to do this and would rather distract themselves as much as possible from the fact that they are on the bus
  - Only a few mentioned working/preparing for school or college
    - Even when bus has Wi-Fi, can be a fairly slow connection, not fast enough to really get anything done

transportfocus

Older young people and changing needs

- Older groups (17-19's) tend to have a bit more life experience
  - Know strengths and weaknesses of different types of transport – have developed opinions
- Start to reject buses in favour of driving and Uber/car share
  - Convenience wins them over
- However…
  - Although they are expecting to use buses less in future, they still have an important role in supporting their social life, even if not using for work, college
  - Nights out especially



Q8) How likely is it that you will have access to a car or motorbike/moped in the next two years?
Base: all (1003)

transportfocus

Younger groups – expectations for future use

- Younger ages very optimistic about having their own cars as soon as able to drive
  - Seen as the next steps towards independence
- Expectations that they will use their own cars/lifts from friends more as they get to 17 and over
  - Would rather drive to work, college
  - Unless bus is more convenient (door-to-door) and cheaper
- Need to improve their experiences when younger
  - Help inform a more balanced view towards buses
  - Make this a real option once novelty of cars wears off

transportfocus

What surprised the non-bus user about their bus journey?

- Buses came on time (for some)
- Buses were only a few minutes late, not say 10 minutes as expected

- Cleaner than expected
- Seats were more comfortable than expected
- Journey was shorter
- Didn't realise Wi-Fi was available

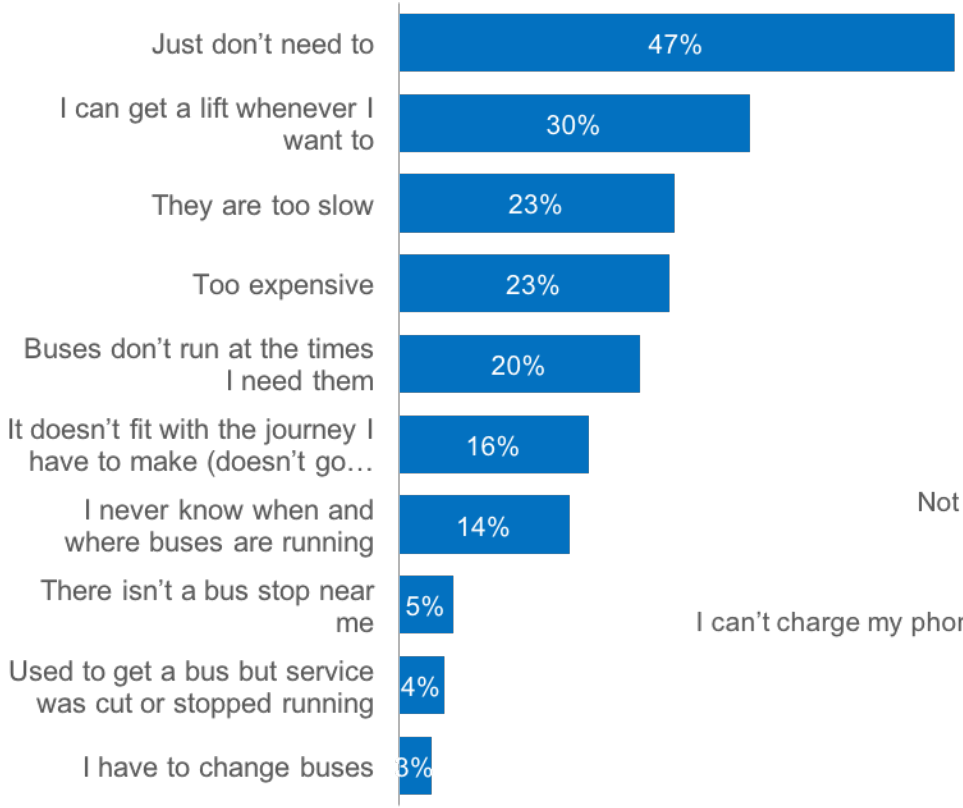
"I was surprised at how nice it was, the seats on the bus were nicer, it was quite clean and it was a lot less busy." (Essex 14-16s)

"Mine actually came on time. I always think of buses as unreliable and an effort, but it came on time, think it was because of the time that I got it though, was on a Sunday, whereas if I had got it on a Saturday I don't think it would have been on time." (Leeds, 17-19s)

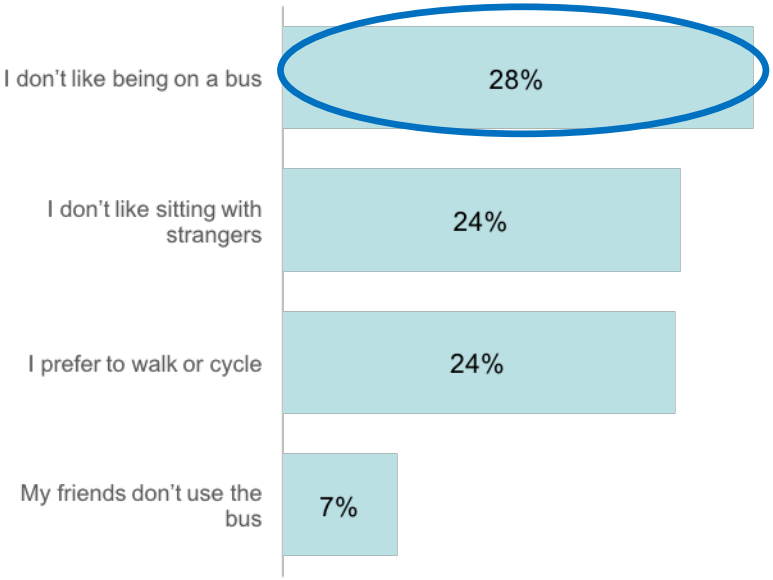
transportfocus

Reasons for not using the bus: too slow, expensive, dislike being on bus, sitting with strangers

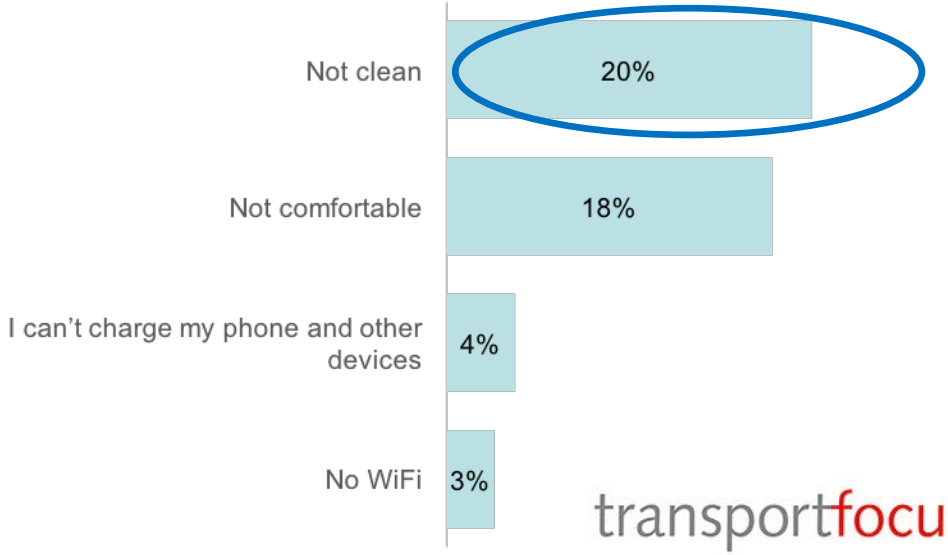
Practical considerations



Emotional/behavioural



Facilities



transportfocus

Q20) What are your reasons for not using the bus?
Base: non-bus users (196)

Ideal bus journey
Suggestions for future use

transportfocus

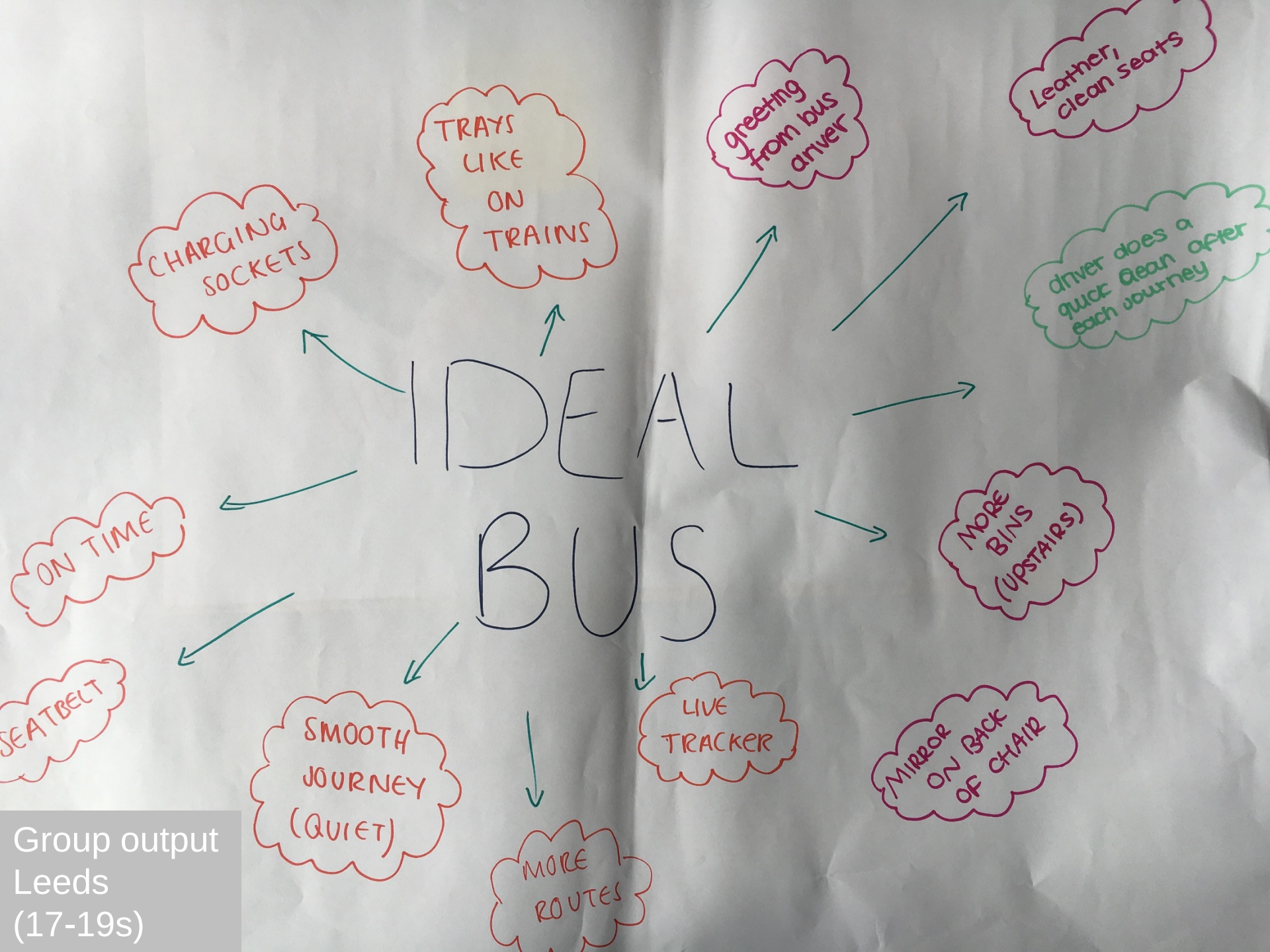
Key features of the perfect bus journey

- Main things are:
  - **Reliability of buses (turning up on time)**
  - **Clean seats and floors,**
  - Comfortable seats (leather effect)
  - Friendly bus driver – smile and say ”hello”
  - Device charge points
  - Fast Wi-Fi (fast enough to stream music)
  - Better legroom
  - Newspapers?

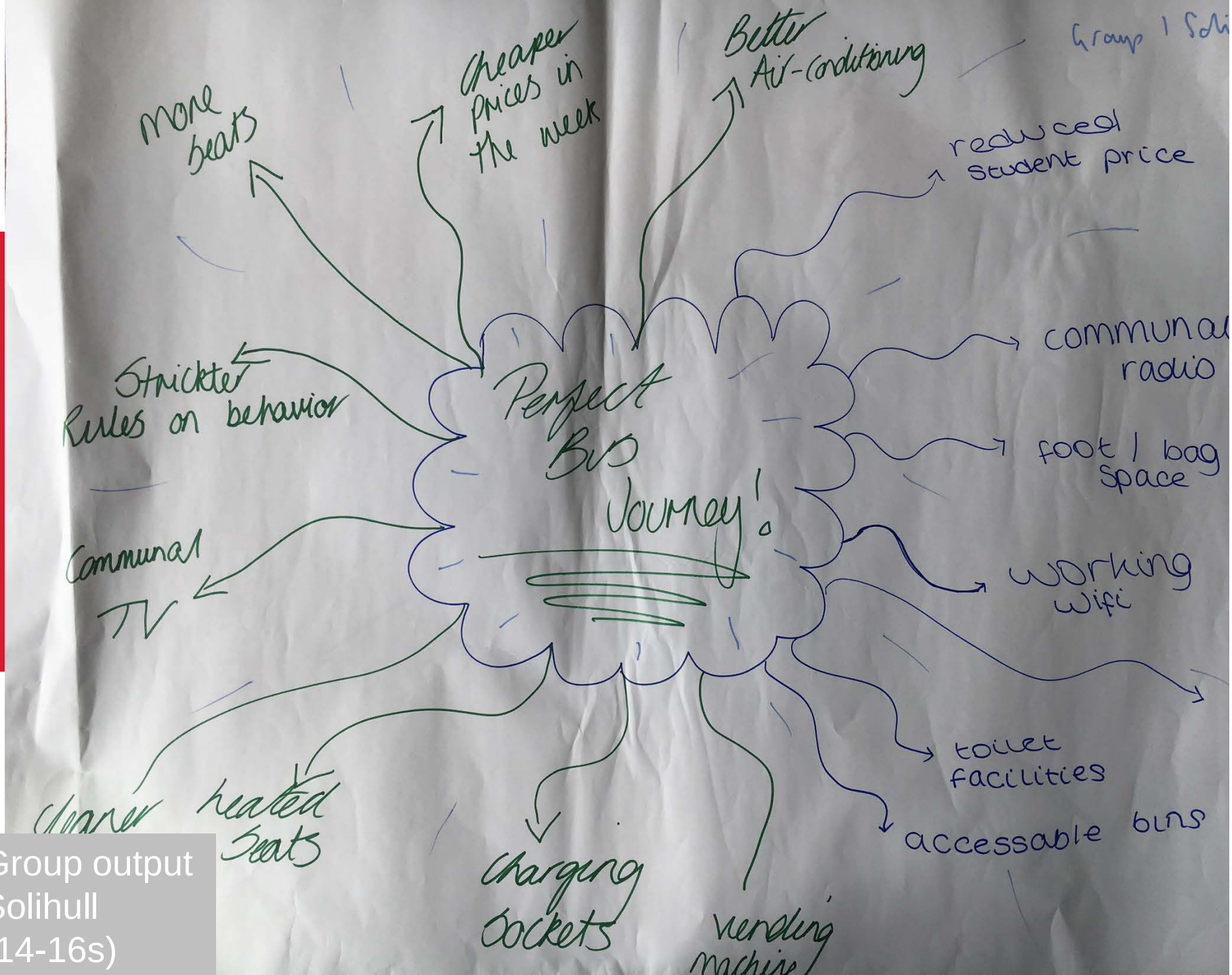
- However, this in itself is not enough
  - It is also about the communication of how easy and useful a bus journey can be
    - And development of these social skills – the actual facilities just further add to this positive experience
  - Digital display boards/live trackers

Group output Norwich (17-19s)

transportfocus



Group output
Leeds
(17-19s)



Group output
Solihull
(14-16s)

The perfect bus journey

"The best solution would be to have the electrical signs or an online thing where you could track your bus, so then I can judge when I need to leave home." (Essex, 17-19s)

"Clean, on time, drivers that greet you, maybe something to do on the bus like the Metro and more reliable, make sure it's on time every time." (Leeds, 17-19s)

"Would be nice to have something that tells you where you are or when you are getting to a certain bus stop because I had to look on Google Maps on my phone, or at least for it to say the name of the bus stop at the actual stop." (Essex, 14-16s)

"Charging sockets, free Wi-Fi, clean, comfortable seats, a happy driver. If the driver isn't moody with you then that puts you in a better mood, with Wi-Fi and charging sockets, you can do something other than just sit there." (Leeds, 14-16s)

"Air conditioning, charging USB ports, comfortable seats, more room for people standing, and more rails, carpeted floor so it's not slippy when it gets wet, and it's cleaned thoroughly throughout the day, more seating at the bus stop with a shelter for when it's raining." (Solihull, 14-16s)

"Display bus fares at the bus stop, with the timetable." (Essex, 14-16s)

"Advertise any discounts more. They could have child, teen and student prices, and make it clear what the age groups for each category are." (Essex, 14-16s)

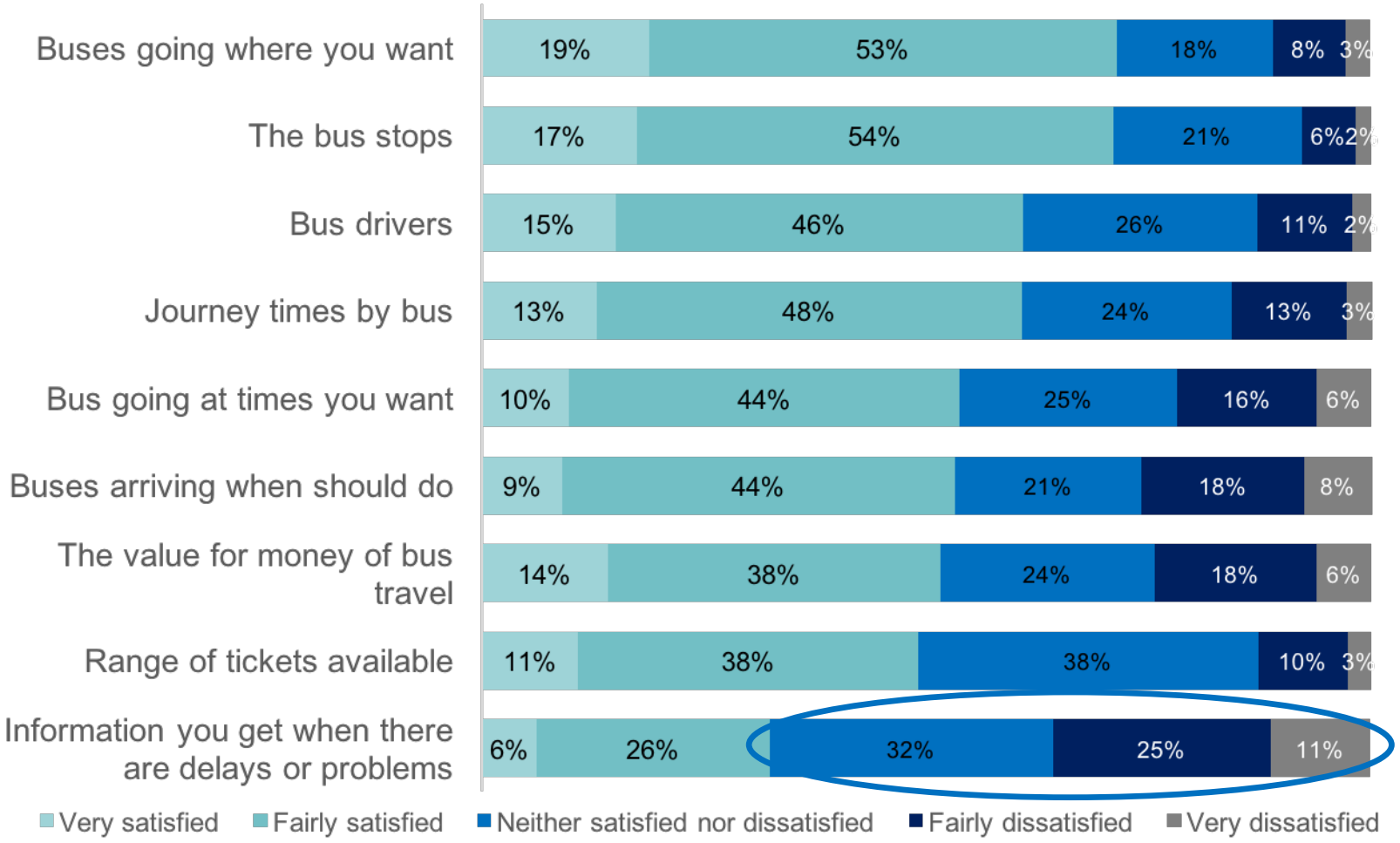
transportfocus

Perceptions of operators (routes, facilities offered)

- Fairly good awareness of routes covered by different buses
  - Good recall of which bus covered which routes in local areas
- In rural areas, demand for more frequent weekend services
- Could say which buses had the 'better' facilities for example, comfier, leather effect seats and Wi-Fi
- A few also mentioned device-charging points on some services
- Had to probe more for details of which operator delivered these different facilities
  - Better understanding of route numbers and colours of buses than named company that is running them
  - Some made guesses as to which companies were involved, but tended to be more comfortable talking about services

transportfocus

Good levels of satisfaction with bus operators BUT issues with information during delays



transportfocus

Q14) Thinking about the bus company that runs most of the services you use, how satisfied are you with the following?
Base: Bus users (807)

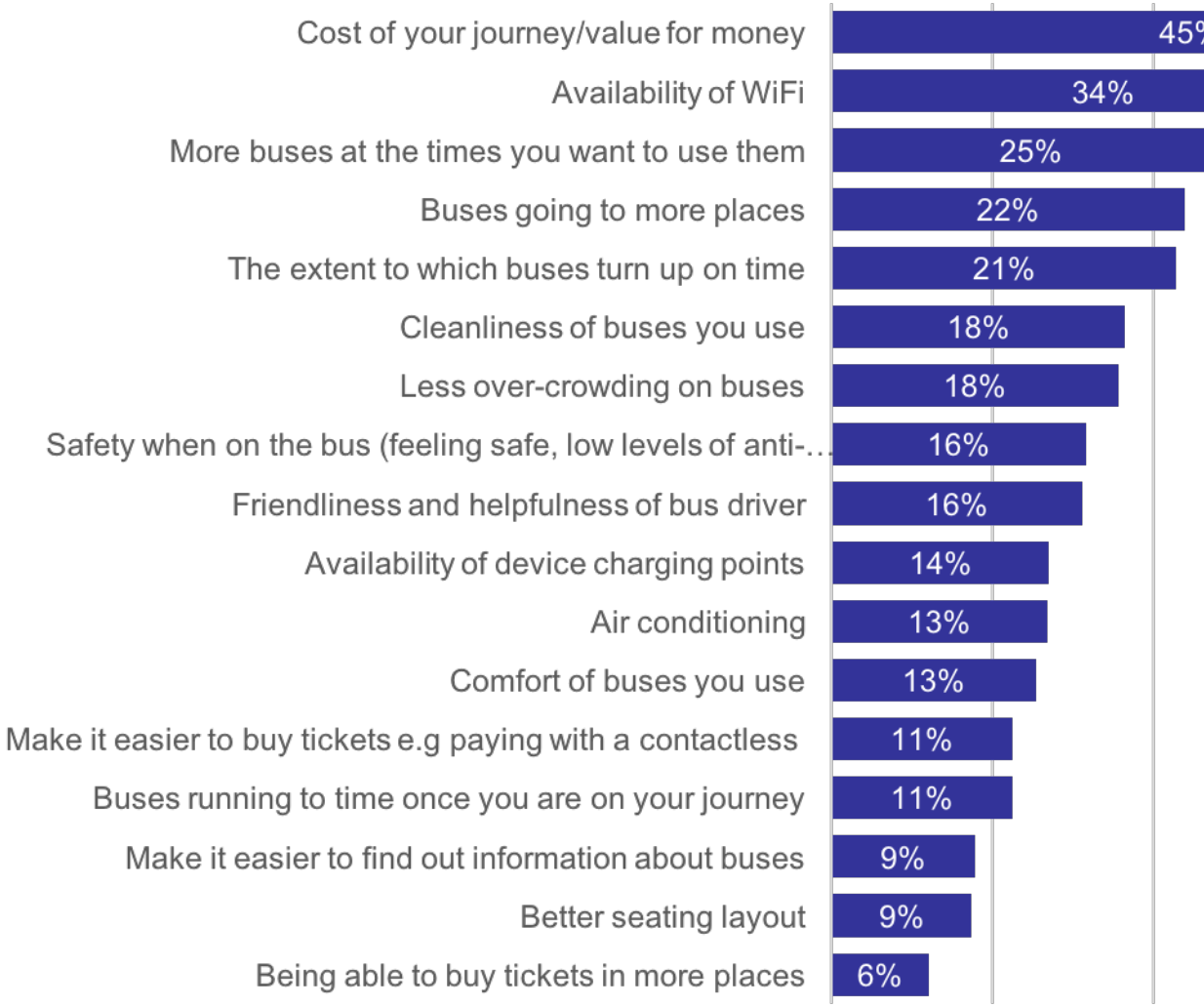
Perceptions of operators' efforts to meet their needs

- Agree that operators are making an effort to make bus journeys a more pleasant experience for all passengers
- However:
  - General perception that operators are not doing enough to:
  - **a) offer them something that is 'for them'**
  - **b) b) actually ask them what services and facilities they would like to have**
- Services and facilities not designed with them (young people) in mind:
  - Older people, people with kids happier to just sit there, but they want to be occupied
  - Not convinced that operator considers their requirements for different fares
- Suggestions for asking their thoughts:
  - Interact with them on social media - twitter, Facebook & Instagram
  - Use pop-up surveys within bus operator phone apps
  - Details on back of bus ticket for online survey so they can have their say
  - Ask them to fill in short questionnaires (paper) on bus
- These could be incentivised through offering a prize draw of free monthly passes or other money off deals for people their age

transportfocus

Desired Improvements: value for money, Wi-Fi, more frequent services, more routes

Reliability, cleanliness & reduced over-crowding also feature



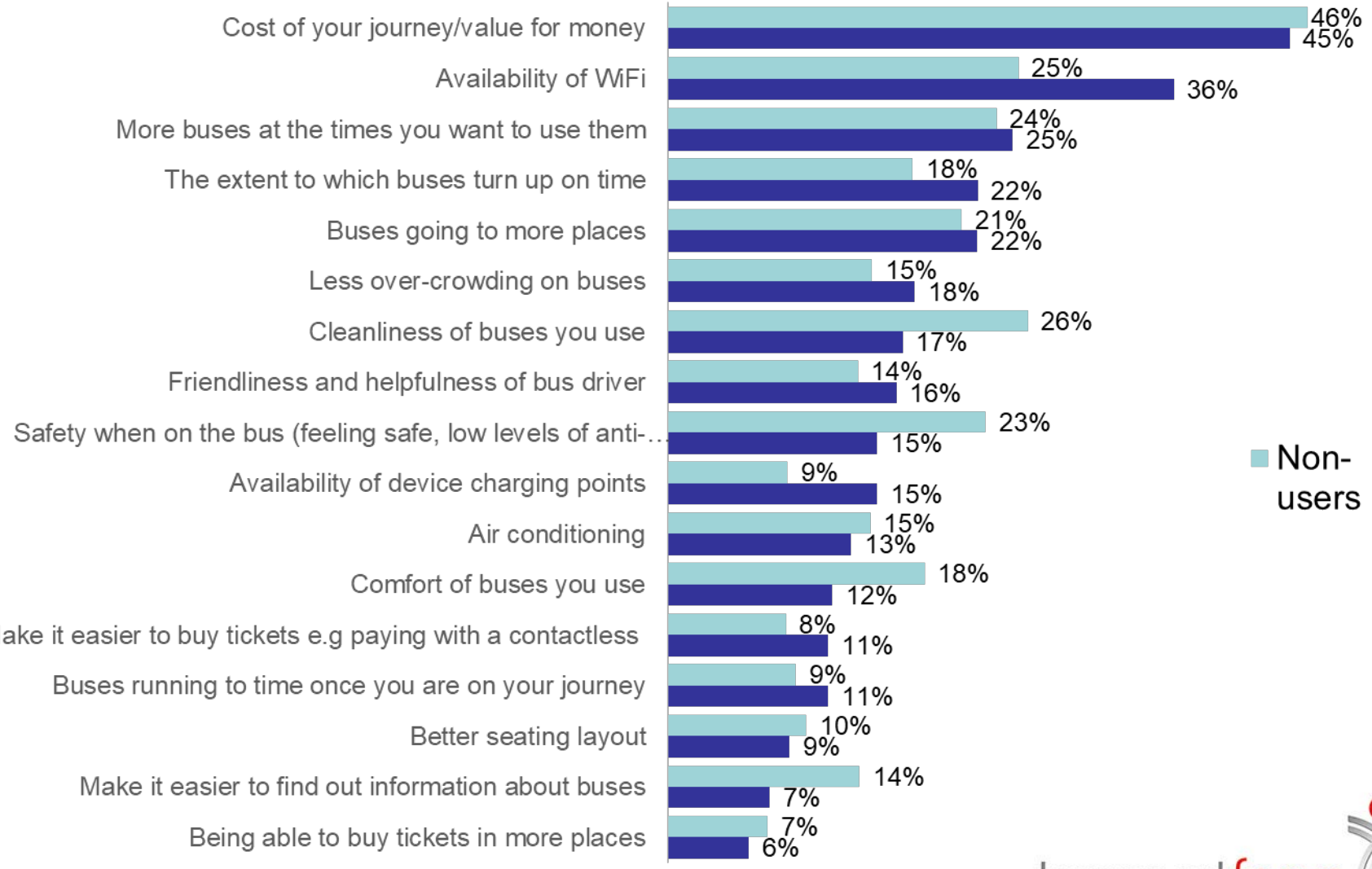
"They have focused on social media with the live timetable, but they haven't really improved the services once you are on the bus."
(Solihull, 17-19s)

transportfocus

Q23) If bus operators were to improve their bus services, what top 3 things should they prioritise?
Base: all (1003)

Improvements: mon-bus users mainly agree with bus users

Greater proportion of non-users selected cleanliness and safety



transportfocus

Q23) If bus operators were to improve their bus services, what top 3 things should they prioritise?
Base: bus users (807); non-bus users (196)

Recommended actions

1. **Clear, streamlined communication of bus routes, times, operators and cost**

- Bus is a convenient and quick option – build awareness
- Visual ‘map’ – indicating numbered/named stops on a route, like a London Underground map
  - Stops that can be mentioned when getting on bus and asking for a fare/ticket
  - Displayed at every bus stop and inside buses, at bus stations and on operator owned websites and travel apps
  - Shared on social media (Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)
- Each route/operator may display expected frequency of buses at each stop for example. every 10 minutes, every 30 minutes
- Each stop to include cost range from initial departure stop for example. £2.40-£3.00 single, £3.40-4.00 return
- Whether just cash or contactless/smart ticketing accepted
- Can I use my bus pass/season ticket for this journey?
- This could be promoted in schools and colleges

transportfocus

Recommended actions

2. **Build young people's confidence around using buses efficiently and with correct/up to date information**

- Digital board that announces next stop on route (including name of stop)
- Include verbal announcement
- Incorporate a delays update system
- Automated announcements with expected delay time and reason for delay
- Train bus drivers to provide their own updates/announcements where required

3. **Address cleanliness and littering on buses**

- Communicate to operators the impact of this on young people's perceptions of buses
- Clean, high quality vehicles can 'wow' young people
- Consider how best to communicate how often buses are cleaned and whose responsibility this is (bus driver? Other?)
  - Operators could test ideas with young people and comms methods

transportfocus

Recommended actions

4. **Address overcrowding on some routes**
- Consider how overcrowding could be minimised
- Introducing additional services, double-deckers
- Highlight services which are less busy, where they would get a seat

5. **Encourage operators to review conditions and facilities at bus stops**
- Cleanliness, shelter from inclement weather, lighting
- What is available to them? Live trackers?

6. **Bus operators could advertise speed/quality of Wi-Fi where this is on offer**
- Youth-specific communications via social media
- Research to test this with different ages

transportfocus