

How do users find the Dartford Crossing?

April 2018

Summary of findings

- Two thirds of panellists say that they expect to experience a delay to their journey at the Dartford Crossing. 59 per cent expect a minor delay, 8 per cent expect a major one and a third do not expect to be delayed at all.
- Despite two thirds expecting to be delayed at the Dartford Crossing, less than half (44 per cent) actually experience a delay. For slightly more than half of these panellists the delay was of up to ten minutes, while for others the delay was longer. Eight in ten of those who were delayed were not aware of the reason for the delay.
- Amongst the 35 per cent who checked to see if there was likely to be a delay, the majority did so using an app or a website. The primary reason given by those who did not check was they had no alternative than to take this route, at this particular time.
- For seven in ten panellists the time taken to cross was equally as long as expected. For one in five it was quicker than expected and for one in ten it took longer than expected.

Summary of findings (continued)

- Seven in ten panellists using the Dartford Crossing are satisfied with this experience, while one in ten are not. Experiencing a delay is correlated with the level of satisfaction; those who are not delayed are twice as likely as those who are, to be satisfied with the experience.
- Three quarters of panellists who used the Dartford Crossing say that the experience matched their expectations. 16 per cent say that the experience exceeded their expectations, while for eight per cent the experience fell below.
- Three quarters of panellists say the signage on approach to the crossing is clear, while one in ten disagree. Users of the Queen Elizabeth II bridge are more likely than users of the tunnels to find the signage to be clear.
- The majority of users pay for their use of the crossing online via their account. A quarter pay online, but on a one-off basis. Three quarters say that paying to use the crossing on this occasion was easy, half said that information on the different ways to pay was easy to find, and a quarter said that the price paid for using the crossing represents value for money.

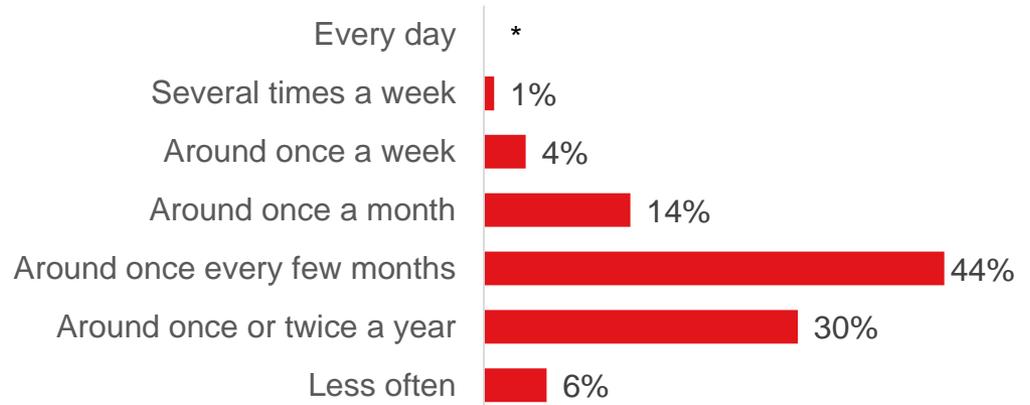
Profile of Journeys: Use of the Dartford Crossing

32 per cent of panellists say that the last time they used the crossing was between four and six months ago, 28 per cent two to three months ago and 30 per cent in the last month. 19 per cent use the crossing once a month or more frequently, 44 per cent around once every few months and 36 per cent less often.

When was the last time that you used the Dartford Crossing?



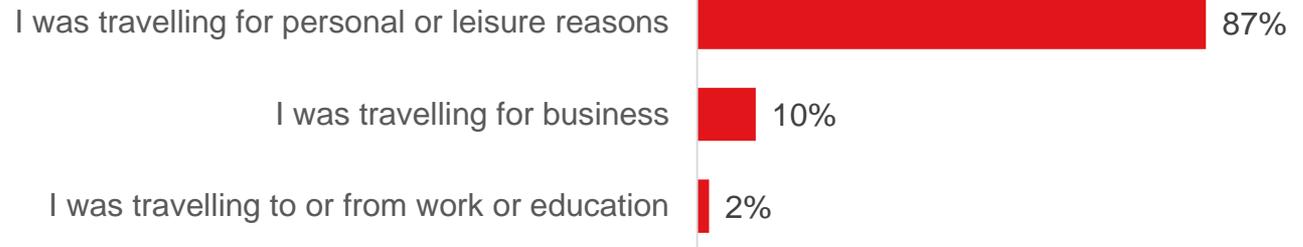
And approximately how often do you use the Dartford Crossing?



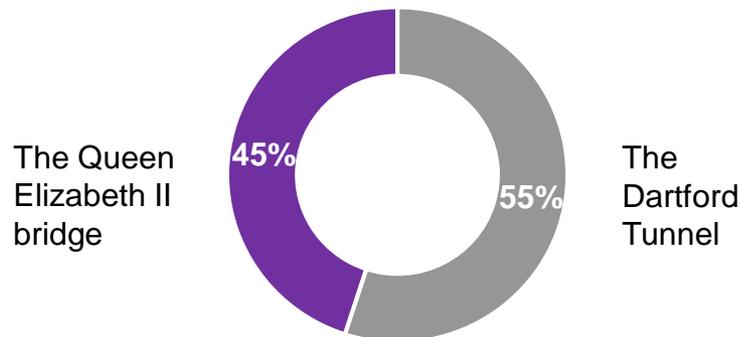
Purpose, direction and time of use

On the last occasion they used the crossing 97 per cent of panellists were travelling for the same reason that they usually do, when making this journey. For 87 per cent this was for personal or leisure reasons. 55 per cent were using the Dartford Tunnel and 45 per cent the Queen Elizabeth II bridge. 86 per cent were using the Dartford Crossing at off peak times, during the weekend or during a Bank Holiday.

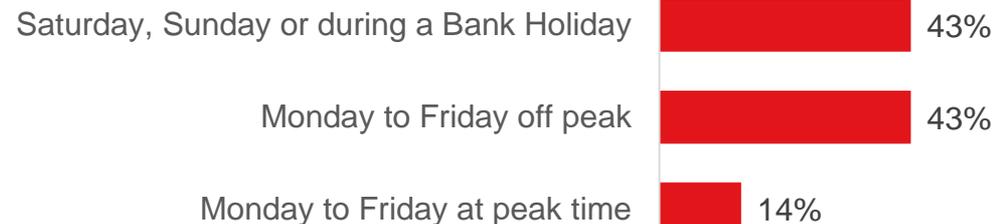
On the last occasion that you used the Dartford Crossing, which of the following best describes the reason for which you were travelling?



On the last occasion you used the Dartford Crossing did you use the tunnels (south to north) or the Queen Elizabeth II bridge (north to south)?



Which of the following best describes the day and time you used the Dartford Crossing on this occasion?



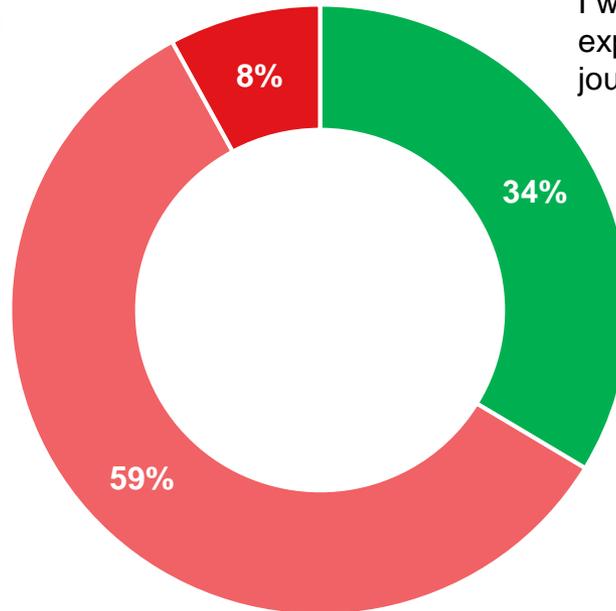
Delays: Expectations

Six in ten panellists who used the Dartford Crossing in the last six months say that before they travelled they expected to experience a minor delay at this point in their journey. Eight per cent expect to experience a major delay, while 34 per cent expect not to be delayed at all. Those using the crossing at peak times are more likely than those travelling at other times to expect to be delayed.

Which of the following statements best describes your expectations before using the Dartford Crossing on the last occasion?

I was expecting to experience a **major** delay to my journey at the Dartford Crossing

I was not expecting to experience any delay at all to my journey at the Dartford Crossing



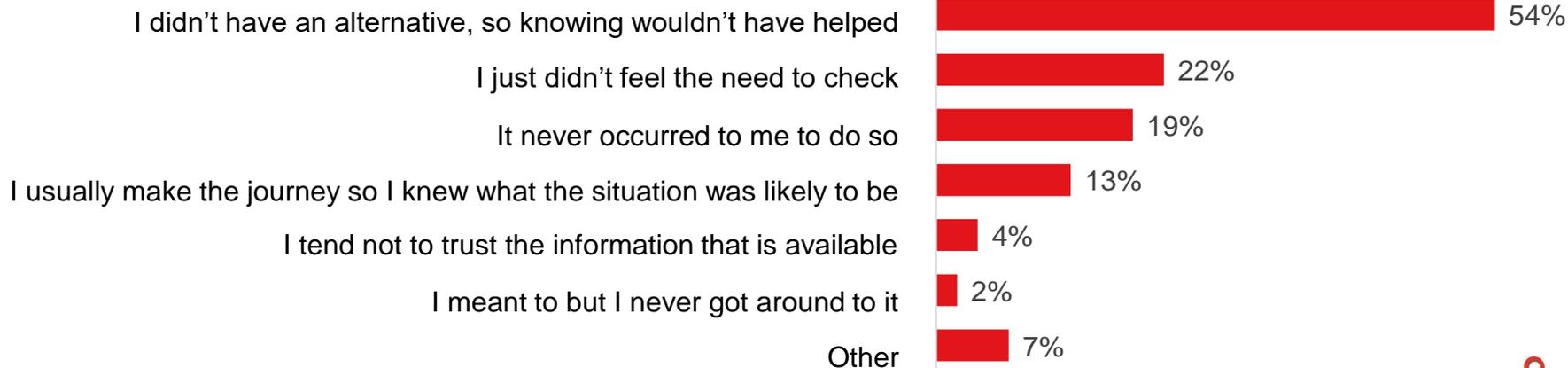
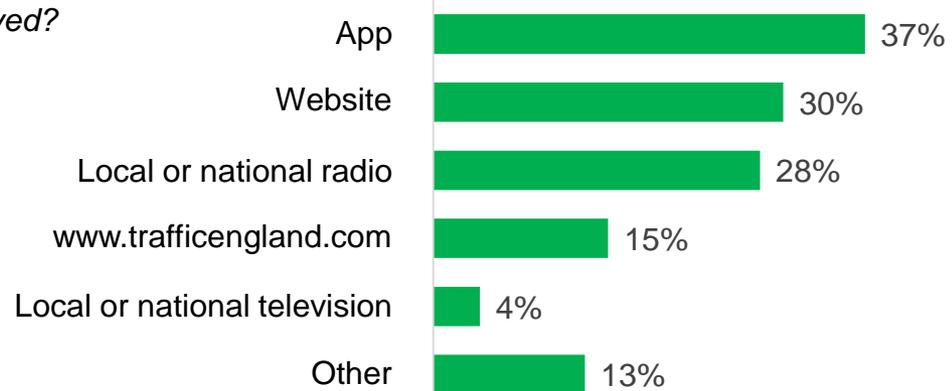
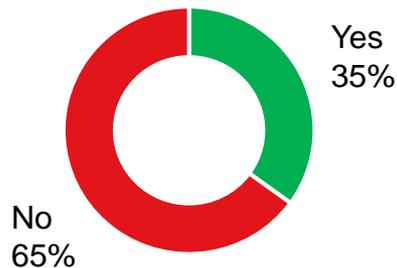
I was expecting to experience a **minor** delay at all to my journey at the Dartford Crossing

	Peak time users	Off-peak users
Expected no delay	20%	36%
Expected a minor delay	66%	57%
Expected a major delay	14%	7%

Journey planning

35 per cent checked to see if they were likely to be delayed at the Dartford Crossing before they travelled, while 65 per cent did not. 41 per cent of those travelling at peak times say that they checked to see if they were likely to be delayed, compared with 34 per cent of those travelling at other times. Those who checked tended to use an app or website. More than half of those who did not check, didn't do so because they had no other option than to take this route, at this particular time.

Before using the Dartford Crossing did you check to see if you were likely to be delayed?

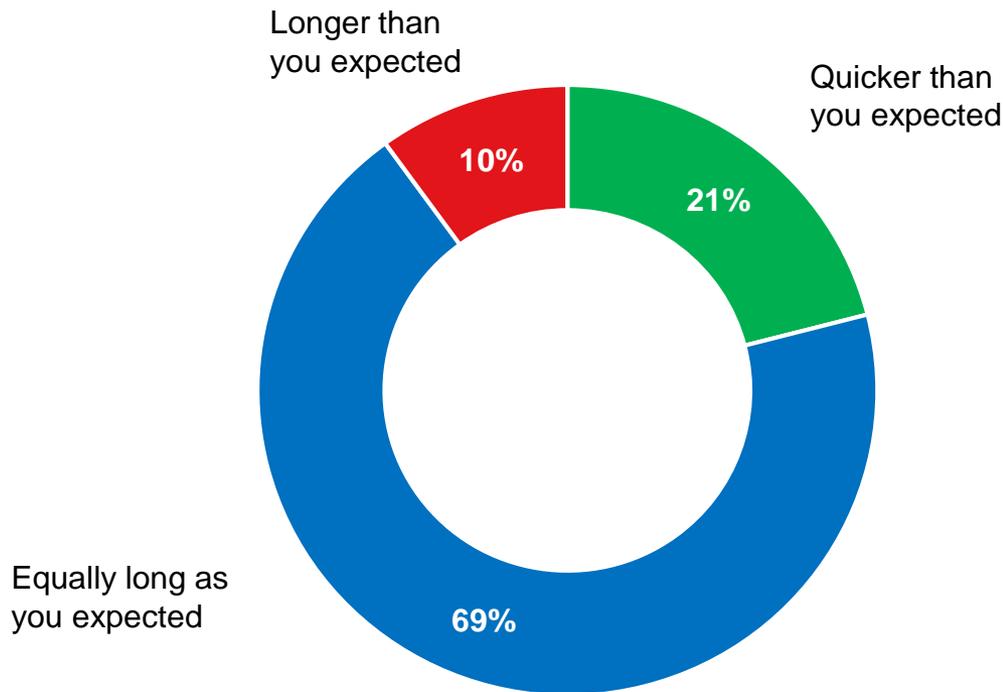


Base: All (447). Those who checked if they would be delayed (153), those who did not check (283).

Time taken to cross

For 69 per cent of panellists the time it took to cross at the Dartford Crossing matched the time they anticipated. For 21 per cent the time taken to cross was quicker, while for ten per cent the time taken to cross was longer than expected.

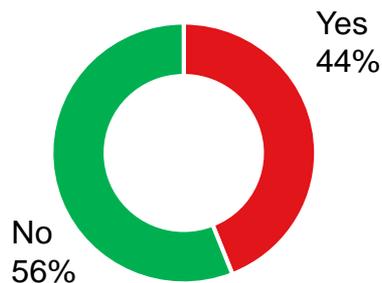
Was the time it took to cross..?



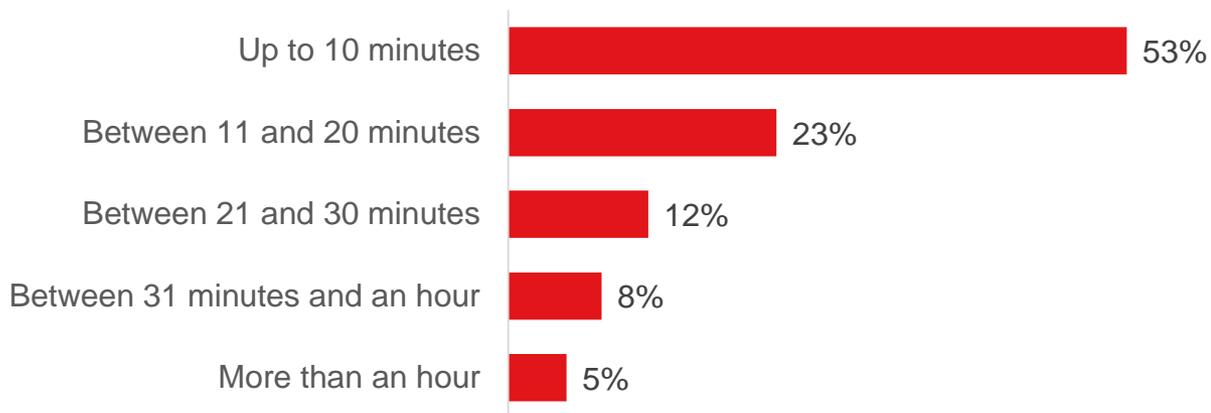
Delays

44 per cent were delayed as they approached the Dartford Crossing. 53 per cent of these were delayed for ten minutes or less. 79 per cent of those who were delayed were not aware of the reason for this. 56 per cent of those who expected to be delayed were, while 44 per cent were not delayed when they thought that they would be.

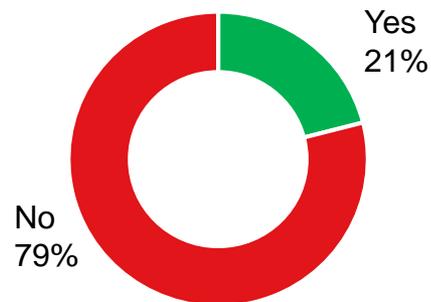
Were you delayed as you approached the Dartford Crossing?



What was the length of this delay?



And were you aware of the reason for this delay?

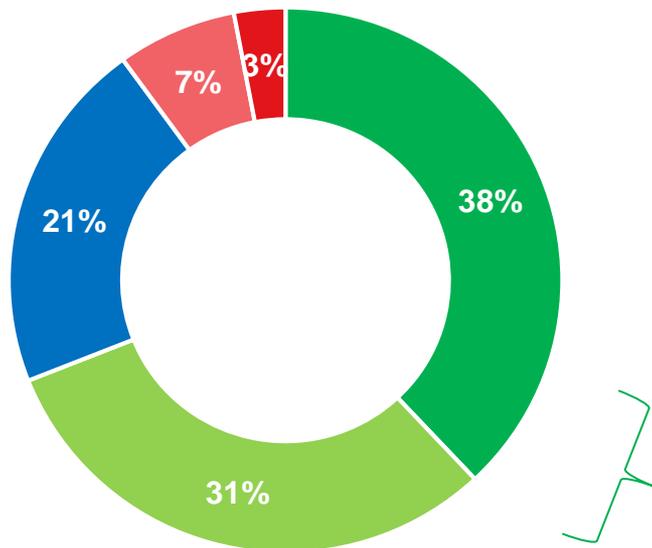


	Expecting delay	Not expecting delay
Delayed	56%	21%
Not delayed	44%	79%

Overall Journey Experience: Satisfaction with journey

Seven in ten panellists were satisfied with their experience of using the Dartford Crossing on the last occasion that they did so, while one in ten were dissatisfied. Those who say that they did not experience a delay at the approach to the crossing are twice as likely as those who said that they did, to be satisfied with the experience overall.

Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the experience of using the Dartford Crossing on the last occasion that you did so?



	Delayed	Not delayed
Satisfied	45%	89%
Dissatisfied	22%	*

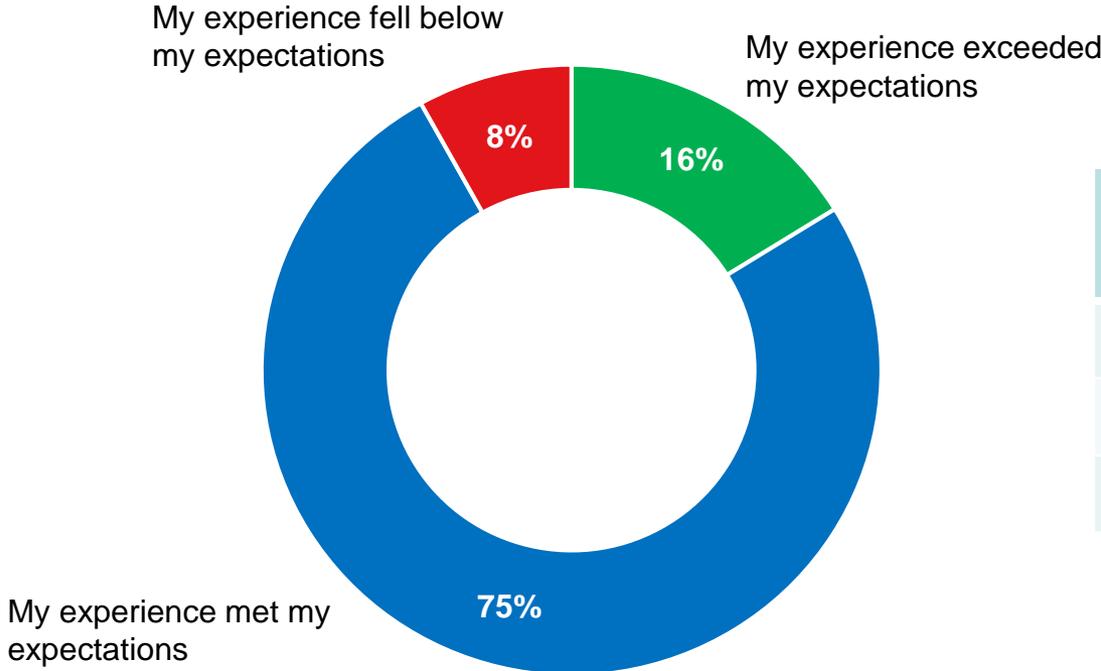
- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

'Satisfied' – 69%

Overall journey experience

75 per cent say that the experience of using the Dartford Crossing matched their expectations on the last time that they did so. 16 per cent say that the experience exceeded their expectations, while for nine per cent the experience fell below expectations. As indicated previously 67 per cent expected to be delayed at the crossing, while 44 per cent were actually delayed. Reflecting this, for one in five of those who expected a delay their experience of using the crossing exceeded their expectations.

To what extent did your experience match your expectations?



	Expecting delay	Not expecting delay
Exceeded	21%	8%
Met	72%	81%
Fell below	7%	11%

Why did the experience of using the Dartford Crossing exceed, meet, or fall below expectations?

Exceeded

'Expected traffic congestion but removal of tollbooths means passage is much quicker than it used to be.'

Frequent user, travelling off-peak

'Because there wasn't a delay and the traffic flowed smoothly with no problem whatsoever, not stopping and starting. Which is very rare on the roads especially at peak times.'

Infrequent user, travelling during the peak

'Because it doesn't matter what time of the day or which day I use the tunnel there is always a queue, even at 22:00! Removing the tolls has made absolutely no difference to what is always an appalling journey with queues inevitable.'

Frequent user, travelling off-peak

'Paying by Dart very easy.'

Less frequent user, travelling off-peak

'Always caught up in delays when ever I travel through it. It is no longer fit for purpose. Too much traffic using it and so constant traffic jams due to volume of traffic...Very galling we have to pay for it and as a Dartford resident living close to it suffer the toxic pollution too.'

Frequent user, travelling off-peak

Met

'I expected to be delayed and I was delayed.'

Frequent user, travelling off-peak

'Fed up with almost constant hold ups particularly using the tunnel. Its now far worse than before the changed road layout and removal of toll booths.'

Frequent user, travelling off-peak

Fell below

'I naively believed I could still pay by cash. Unexpectedly having to pay by phone caused me a few difficulties.'

Less frequent user, travelling off-peak

'Local signage on roads leading to the tunnel from Bluewater completely inadequate.'

Less frequent user, travelling off-peak

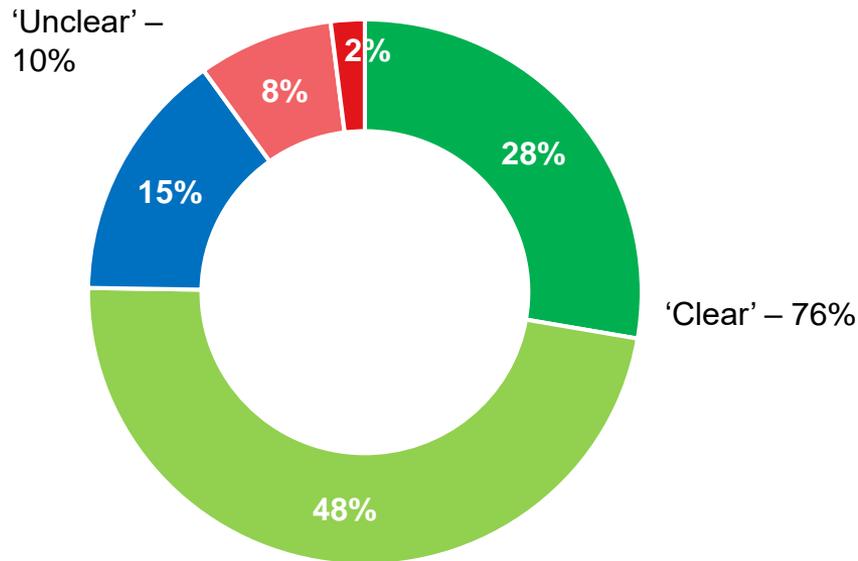
'With no delay at toll booths any longer why does traffic back up way beyond the A2 junction?'

Frequent user, travelling off-peak

Clarity of signage

More than three quarters of panellists state that the signage on approach to the Dartford Crossing is clear, while ten per cent disagree. Those who use the crossing at least once every few months ('frequent users') are more likely to find the signage clear than those who use the crossing less often. Similarly users of the Queen Elizabeth II bridge are more likely than those using the tunnels to find the signage to be clear.

Thinking about the signage on approach to the Dartford Crossing, how clear or unclear was it which lane you needed to be in?



- Very clear
- Fairly clear
- Neither clear nor unclear
- Fairly unclear
- Very unclear

	% 'Clear'
Frequent users	80%
Infrequent users	69%
Tunnel users	72%
QEII bridge users	81%

Base: All (447). Those who use the crossing once every few months or more (283), those who use the crossing once or twice a year or less (164). Those who used the tunnels on the last occasion (244), those who used the QEII bridge (203).

Making a Payment: Method of payment

57 per cent of respondents paid to use the Dartford Crossing online through their own account, while 25 per cent made a one-off payment online.

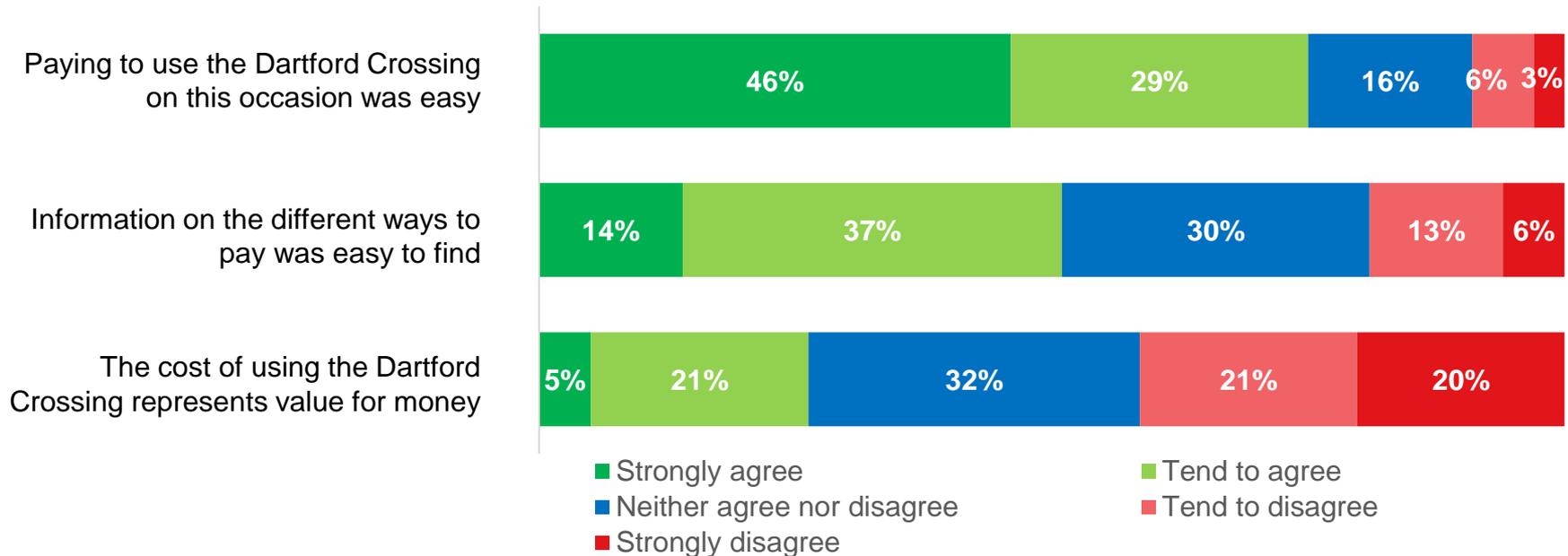
How did you pay to use the Dartford Crossing on the last occasion that you did so?



Aspects of making a payment

75 per cent of panellists say that paying to use the Dartford Crossing on this occasion was easy. While 51 per cent agree that information on the different ways to pay was clear, and 26 per cent agree that the cost of using the Dartford Crossing represents value for money. Several users of the Dartford Crossing mentioned the difficulty and extra expense experienced when using the Dartford Crossing in a hire car.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that..?



'We were crossing in a hire car so was more expensive than usual as we couldn't use our account.'

'As I have an account and sometimes use hire cars it would be easier to pass through my account rather than have to log on and pay for the car individually by credit card.'

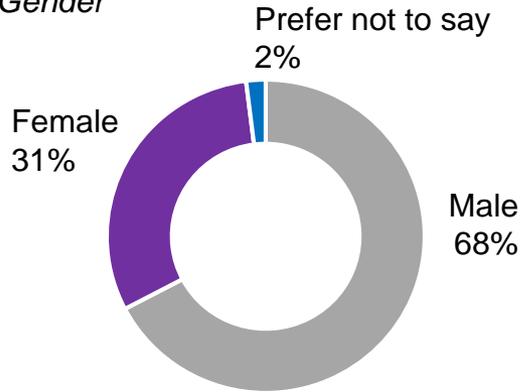
'The methods of payment are virtually useless for people driving hire cars who are subsequently leaving the country. An ability to pre-pay for hire car users would be much better.'

How we completed this survey

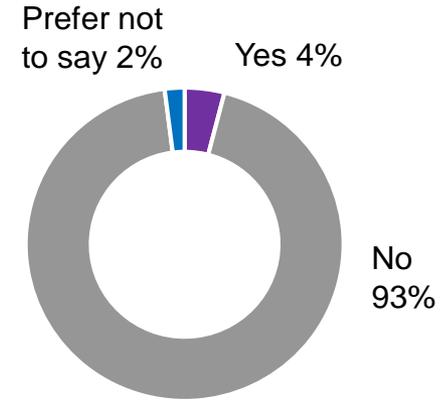
- On 30 January 2018 the online survey was sent to 916 transport user panellists who had indicated that they had used the Dartford Crossing in the last six months. Respondents were asked questions about the last journey they undertook.
- A total of 447 completed surveys had been received when the survey closed on 8 February.
- The data has not been weighted to the profile of all users of the Dartford Crossing and therefore should be seen as indicative rather than statistically significant.
- Where findings do not add up to 100 per cent this is because respondents were asked to select more than one option if applicable, or due to data rounding.

Profile of respondents

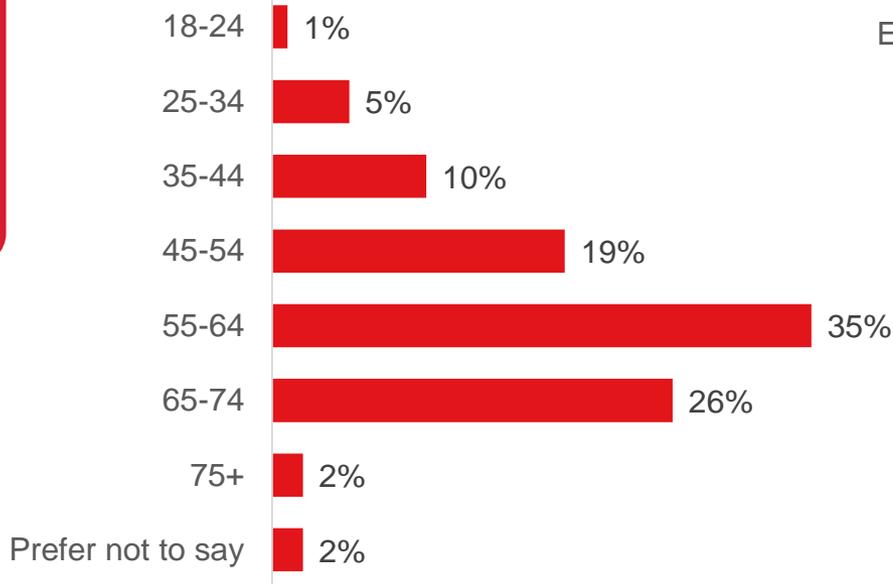
Gender



Disability



Age



Region

