Making bus a better choice for young people

Workshop summary

Summary

More young people use the bus than any other single group of passengers. Yet despite the importance of bus to younger people, the Bus Passenger Survey shows that they are the least satisfied group of users.

In February 2018 Transport Focus published research that set out to understand the experience and views of young bus passengers. It looked at how the industry could attract and retain young people as bus users of tomorrow.

Transport Focus wanted to share that research and encourage governments and the industry to make buses a more attractive and sustainable choice for younger people.

In February and March 2019 Transport Focus worked with Business Adapts to run five workshops across the country. They were held in five locations: Birmingham, Colchester, Exeter, Oxford and York. These workshops brought together more than 100 participants representing local bus users and around 70 different organisations including bus operators, local authorities, bus manufacturers and transport consultants.

The objectives of the workshops were:

- To share the top-level findings and recommendations of the *Using the bus: what young people think* report.

- To generate ideas by collating examples of good practice where bus operators and transport authorities are running initiatives that encourage young people to use the bus.

- To identify any challenges and barriers that bus operators and transport authorities have when engaging with young people and consider what can be done to overcome them.

- To gather feedback and good practice examples to produce a report which will be shared with bus operators, stakeholders and ultimately with Governments. This will outline the work the industry is doing, and plans to do, to get more young people onto buses and to take more journeys.

This document summarises the outputs of the workshops.
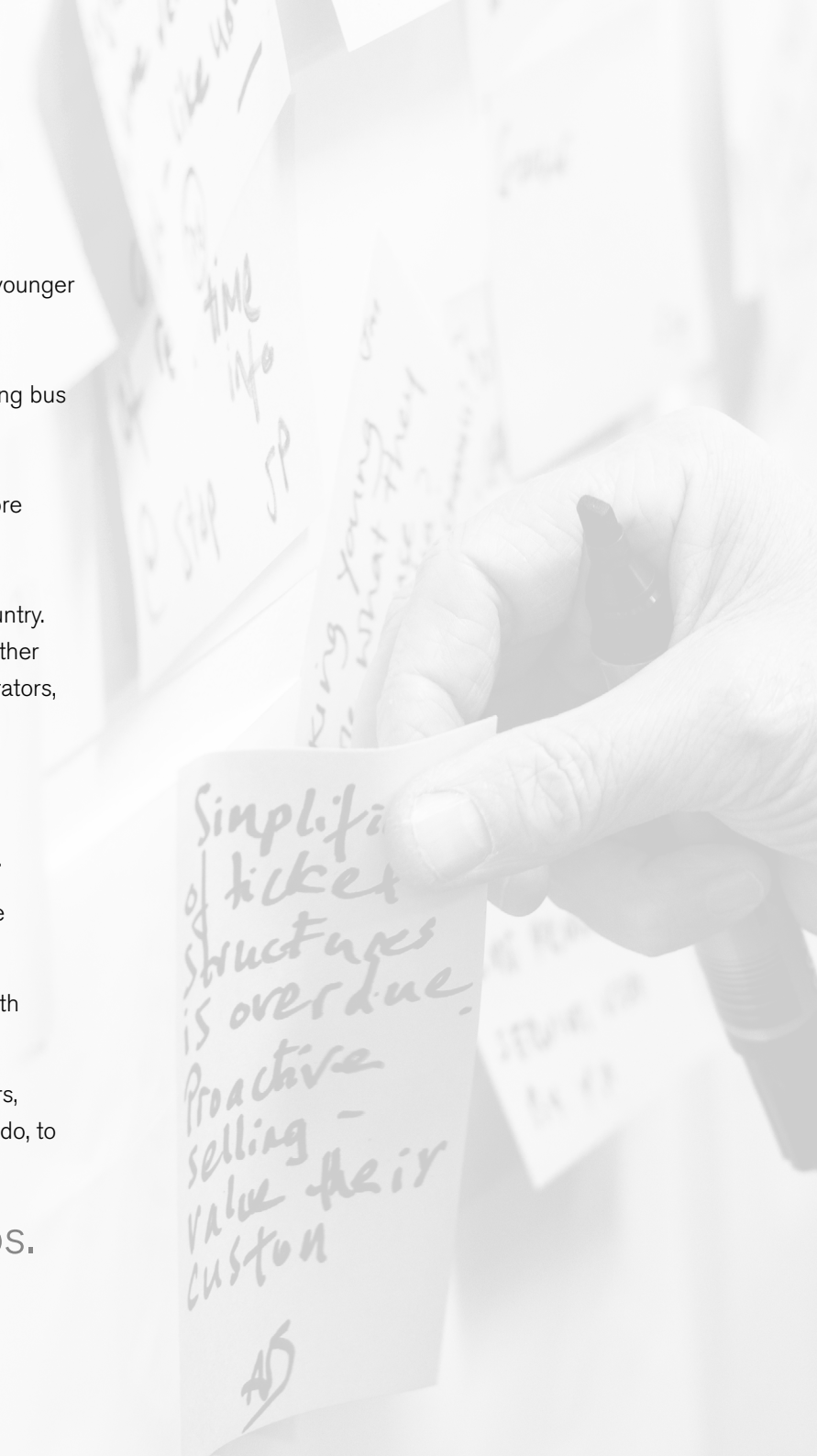
"Thank you to everybody that gave their time to attend our five workshop sessions. There were so many good ideas generated at the workshops and I was delighted with the levels of positive engagement and openness to deliver improvements for young people. I am looking forward to working through the steps and actions that Transport Focus will take to help operators and local authorities make bus an even better choice for young people."

David Sidebottom

Director - Transport Focus

Birmingham

Colchester

Exeter

Oxford

York

Workshop overview

The workshops were made up of four activities.

1. Briefing session

We shared details of the research and highlighted the key findings.

2. Knowledge sharing

We asked participants to share examples of projects they were working on or knew about that engaged young people.

3. The ideas bit!

We created a series of questions to ask the workshop participants. These questions prompted participants to share their experiences, talk about the challenges and generate ideas to improve the bus offer and get more young people onto buses.

4. Reflections and next steps

Each workshop ended with participants reflecting on the activities and conversations of the day and what the industry might do next.

Knowledge sharing

In advance of the workshops Transport Focus asked participants to share examples of projects they were working on or knew about that are making the bus more attractive to young people. During the workshops participants discussed these ideas, shared best practice and debated the pros and cons of each initiative. The next few pages summarise a selection of those ideas and capture the key observations made by the groups.

Offering discounted travel offers to young people in the West Midlands

Making bus more attractive for young people is one of the key objectives of the Bus Alliance in the West Midlands. There is a suite of initiatives such as:

- extended under-18 half-price travel for apprentices and trainees, so an extra 31,000 young people now get the 50 per cent discount.

- through the Workwise scheme jobseekers get half-price travel for three months when they start work.

- National Express West Midlands serves deprived areas with large student populations. 70 per cent of students would not be able to afford to go to college if they didn't have a discounted student fare. To unlock access to education, the operator worked with smart ticketing provider Masabi on a web-to-mobile ticket for students. They now order a term's bus pass on-line with a code and it turns up on their phone in minutes. 40 per cent of customers now travel more frequently by bus. In the first two months, revenues rose by over 100 per cent.

All these initiatives have brought 12 per cent growth in young people journeys over the last year - 2 million more journeys - against a declining trend.

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- Who funds these initiatives? Is there a local or national subsidy?

- Great schemes, but do these put additional pressure on smaller operators?

- How would this work as a multi-operator scheme?

- Good to see increasing passenger numbers

- Needs enough time to become viable - long term vision

- Needs continuous marketing

- Build partnerships with jobcentres, colleges etc for success

- Signing people up to schemes like these allows you to keep engaging with your future customers.

Setting up a Youth Transport User Group in South Yorkshire

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE) recognised that existing transport user groups in the region were held on mid-week mornings and were rarely attended by younger people. SYPTE wanted to give young people the opportunity to contribute to transport decision making so set up a new group. The group meets once a quarter, timed to coincide with school holidays and is attended primarily by Youth Council members but open to all young people.

A key project for the group was to enhance SYPTE's travel pass offer for young people. Previously, concessionary travel was only available for under 16s and 16-18 year olds in further education. Working with the group and the Youth Cabinet, an extended offer was developed to serve all under 19s with a new, simple application process (just proof of age and address are needed, and young people only need to apply once to be covered until 18). The group also decided on the name for the card, the design of the card itself and the marketing campaign.

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- Great way to give young people a voice

- Need to make it easy for them to contribute (apps/social media)

- Would meeting by webinar/Skype be more suitable for young people? WhatsApp Groups?

- Could hold bus user groups in schools?

- Engage by raising issues that relate to climate change and positive benefits by using public transport

- Challenge and coordinate approach to all schools

- This could challenge the sometimes poor experience of using bus in early years

- This group could help with travel training among several schools

- Make sure you create a feedback loop and show impact/legacy.

Rebranding the bus ID card in Brighton

In Brighton there were plans to review the plastic ID card young people use to prove their age and identity to get a discount. Brighton & Hove Buses conducted research with local young people that showed teenagers liked having the plastic card and said they didn't want an app. They described the ID card as the fourth most coveted possession after door keys, wallet and phone. Having the card gave them a feeling of freedom and independence. They suggested ways to improve the card such as a better-quality photo, including the date of birth so it can be used as ID elsewhere, having clearer branding and a less old-fashioned design. More research is still needed to understand parents' viewpoints.

"I am going to do some research with young people in my local area because these workshops have highlighted it's not one size fits all."

Oxford

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- Shows the value of speaking to young people about what they want

- We make assumptions about what young people want and are surprised technology is not always the answer

- The card scheme should run up to 18 to align with compulsory education

- The card has a wider use as ID which gives it greater value

- Shows that views differ from area to area – this seems like a 'local' solution

- Other research indicates that apps are popular with young people

- Works because the card and branding were already well-established – might not be the same elsewhere

- The scheme is liked and works, so don't break it.

Offering a simple flat fare to under 19s in Liverpool City Region

Merseytravel, working in partnership with local bus operators, recognised that the cost of travel for young people was a huge issue. Whether that be for trips to places of education, work or leisure. "MyTicket" was made available for young people across Merseyside aged 5-18 years old. The passenger asks the driver for a "MyTicket", at a current cost of £2.20, and that provides unlimited travel for the day across participating operators in Merseyside and Halton.

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- This is a simple easy to understand offer

- This solution grows patronage

- Being easy to buy is often as important as cost

- The flat fare is not cost effective for short journeys so there are winners and losers

- Does this work commercially and how long can a cheap fare be sustained?

- Concerns around fraud e.g. 25-year-olds claiming to be 18

- This ticket doesn't allow the operator to obtain customer contact details – how do they retain the adult customer?

- Could it be multi-modal?

- It's a multi-operator ticket – how do different operators with different brands market it?

  The support of the local authority might be important and give the offer credibility.

Operating a night bus in the South West

In the six weeks run up to Christmas, Stagecoach ran a night bus every 30 mins over the core section of route 21 between Bidford, Barnstaple and Braunton. The service mirrored the evening service but extended through until 4am on Friday and Saturday nights. It was very well used and the night club (Fever and Boutique) placed an advertisement each week on its Facebook site. The first week that the advert was run it ended up with 500 plus comments, 250 shares, 300 likes. Then there was a petition to have it extended through to Ilfracombe. This initiative gave young people the access to affordable transport (instead of taxis or possibly drink driving) to go out and enjoy themselves with friends and family in the run up to Christmas.

"It's clear from the research that there's no single solution, and bus companies need to look at the needs of young people in their local area."

Colchester

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- Partnering with businesses that appeal to young people is crucial - it wouldn't have been as successful without the clubs' Facebook adverts

- Would partners, such as the night clubs, be willing to subsidise the bus service?

- Publicity in colleges and universities would promote this service

- It generates important seasonal revenue

- Anti-social behaviour could be a problem – how is the bus kept clean?

- Passenger and driver safety could be a concern

- Last mile of the journey is a factor – could this be addressed?

Easing the transition to secondary school in Merseyside

This is a project that looks to create independent young people through improving their knowledge and confidence when using the public transport system during the transition from primary to secondary school. It includes classroom sessions and site visits to help provide children with the knowledge and experience to gain more confidence to travel independently. It is also trialling bus tickets to provide the opportunity of a dummy run before they move schools.

The practical delivery of the sessions provides the opportunity to tailor them to focus on issues within geographical areas. It is delivered in partnership with both bus and rail operators, Merseyside police, British Transport Police, schools, Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, and some local authority independent travel trainers.

The project has noted a positive impact on young people:

- better knowledge - of how to plan journeys, use the public transport system

- greater confidence of making a trip independently - although understanding how many have done so is difficult

- widen travel horizons - many children have not otherwise ventured outside their local community.

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- Scale is difficult as it is resource intensive - how do you provide to all schools?

- Peer independent travel training could work

- Important that bus is a key part of the school travel choice

- Needs local network and product expertise

- Need to find a way to engage with the parents who are the key decision makers at transition age

- There are peaks such as before start of school year when this could be most useful

- Breaks down negative perceptions

- Information is crucial – school services timetable often not listed and hard to access

- Governors/ambassadors to reinforce the message

- Having multiple options for ticket types to offer choice - day passes give security, mobile may drain data

- You must reiterate the options at multiple stages

- Educating about buses shows that there are future careers in industry other than bus driver

- Must monitor and evaluate benefits of programme post-delivery which is challenging as they have changed schools

- Needs to be a partnership between authority, operators and schools to be successful

- Is there a commercial benefit? Does it grow patronage? (short and long term).

Removing barriers to travel in West Yorkshire

The West Yorkshire Bus Alliance has focused on improving services for young people, including understanding and removing barriers to travel. The Alliance took on board the Transport Focus research particularly around the need to make sure young people are accessing the best fares available and that interaction with the bus driver can be a potential area of concern.

An issue was identified around having to show a pass to receive half fare when a child was in school uniform and clearly travelling to school. This went against their pledge to make it as easy as possible for young people to catch the bus. The partnership agreed that half-fare entitlement would apply to all pupils boarding the bus in school uniform without having to show a pass. This change meant that a young person who wasn't a regular bus user and didn't have a pass could still catch the bus for school and not be disadvantaged by paying full fare. It is also felt to have gone towards improving the relationship with the bus driver as the potential conflict around challenging a child to provide a pass has been removed.

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- Simple, common-sense improvement to the customer experience

- Removes a barrier to travel

- Takes away an area of anxiety for young people

- Makes it easier and nicer for drivers too – empowers them!

- Good idea but could it be extended to the evenings and weekend?

- Can easily be introduced across multiple operators

- Doesn't cost much to implement

- Could speed up boarding times

- Could require quite a culture shift among some bus companies/drivers

- Safer for children which reassures parents

- Could fingerprint recognition on ticket machine replace need for pass?

- Could give rise to reimbursement issues

- If children aren't applying for a pass, then the operator potentially loses some direct contact/relationship building opportunities.
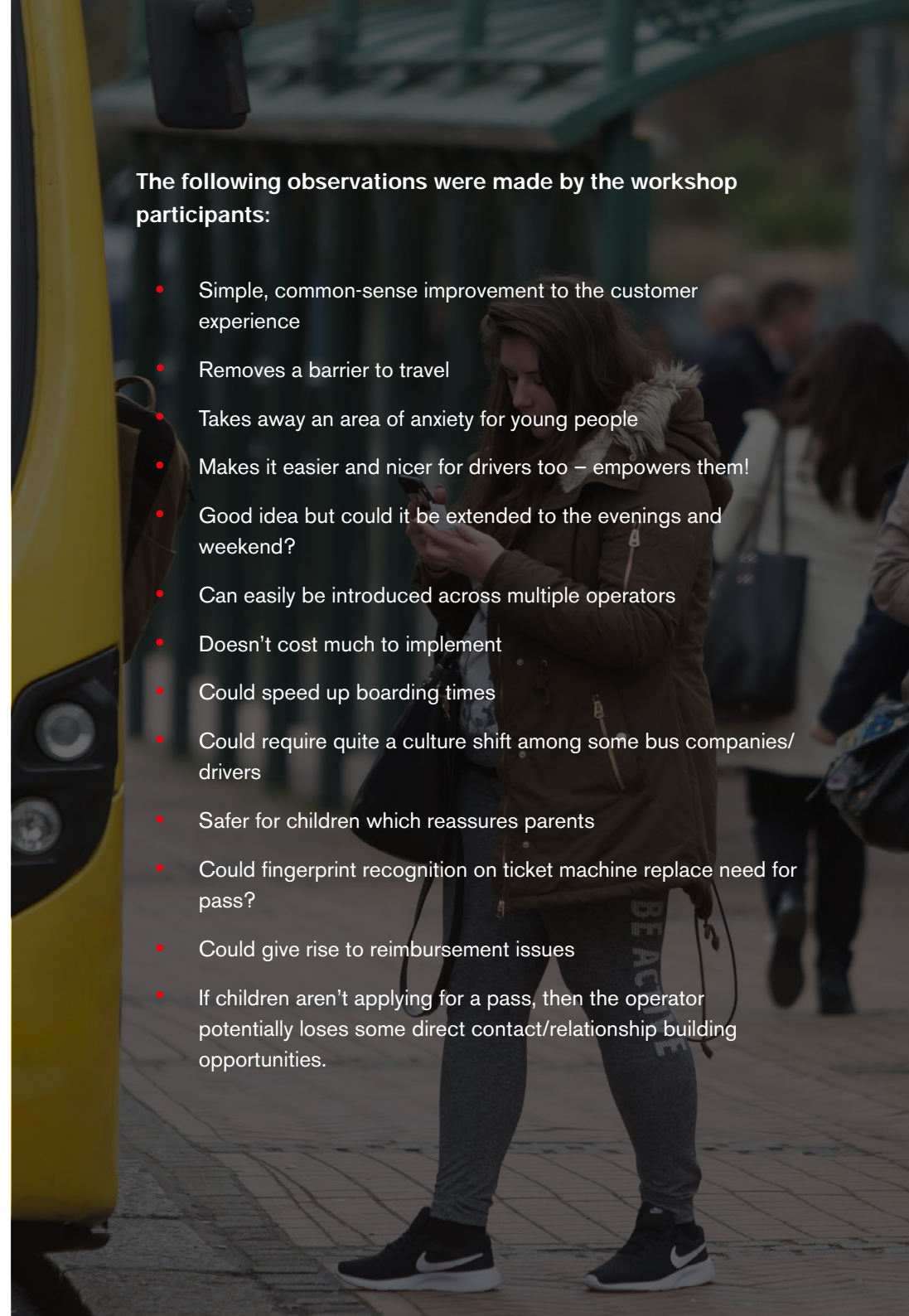
Developing concession options in South Yorkshire

In 2017, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE) introduced an enhancement to its 16-18 concession which previously only extended to those in further or higher education. The concession is now available to all in that age range irrespective of circumstances. As a result, there has been a positive increase in the number of passengers using services. However, the current pass has to be applied for separately from the preceding pass (11-16) and there is no similar local concession option available for over-18s. SYPTE is therefore exploring how to make the principles of lifelong accounts more accessible to customers, starting with their 11-16 concession and then transparently and easily presenting them with options on further concessions or transport products once the expiry of their current concession approaches.

"I was interested to find out young people like to have an ID card - I thought they would prefer it on their phone. As a result of this workshop, I am never going to make assumptions again regarding the requirements of young people."

Oxford

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- Lifelong registration does simplify process

- The need to register at all can create a barrier

- Could there be flexibility about accepting different forms of identification?

- There are clear benefits to gathering users' details

- Who owns and accesses the data – authority or operator?

- What happens at regional boundaries?

- What are young people's attitudes to sharing data

- The registration process may result in a barrier because it was time consuming

- Could an incentive be offered to get people to register?

- All under-19s should be offered concessions as a national standard

- Does this scheme grow patronage and/or retain customers?

- Issues with regional boundaries and differences

- How is it funded and how could it be funded in a national scheme?

Providing real time information in Devon

In Devon a new real time information (RTI) system tracks each bus and compares its actual location with where it should be on its timetable. By comparing these two sets of data, the system can calculate how long it will take each bus to reach all the stops along its route. Each bus sends an update every 30 seconds, so the system is very accurate. The information, available on a website and app, is very appealing to young people. It works well when it works, encouraging a high degree of credibility among customers. But when it falls down, which it can for multiple reasons, it's a big let-down.

The following observations were made by the workshop participants:

- RTI provides reassurance to bus users (all users – not just young people)

- If the information is reliable then it builds trust and confidence

- If the information is unreliable (even once) then it erodes trust and confidence

- Can the bus industry learn from the train industry? But buses are considered more unpredictable than trains

- Passengers need to understand if they are looking at real-time or scheduled information

- The system reduces anxiety for parents as they can see the progress of their child's bus if required

- Trackers need to be on all vehicles

- Road closures and disruptions are potential pitfalls

- The capital investment to set the system up is only part of the financial consideration, it also requires ongoing resource to maintain and deliver the system.

The ideas bit!

In the workshops participants were asked to think about some of the areas that Transport Focus knows are important to young people. They took an honest look at the challenges those areas present and the opportunities and ideas to improve them. The next few pages detail the questions posed and capture the key observations made by the groups.

Interaction between the driver and young people. What could you do to improve it? What challenges do you face?

Customer service

Participants felt the role of the driver was crucial and they should focus on customer care. More value must be placed on the driver as an ambassador for the bus company. Don't place the driver in a 'policing'/revenue protection role. This may require a change in focus from senior management/group level. Operators need to understand how investing more in drivers will benefit their business.

The attitude of the bus driver

The attitude and approach of the driver can improve the experience for young people. Drivers should be recruited for a positive, customer-service oriented attitude then trained to drive (rather than being recruited entirely for driving skills). There is a tendency to assume that 'young people are all the same' – there needs to be a shift in thinking to treat young people as valued, paying customers. This could be helped by delivering the basics well such as smiling and making eye contact.

Some drivers may assume that young people are dishonest when requesting a reduced fare and this attitude needs to be challenged. Behavioural standards for drivers set by their employers could help. But the group also cautioned that some of the problems with interaction are created by young people. It would be helpful do more work with drivers to understand how they feel about these issues.
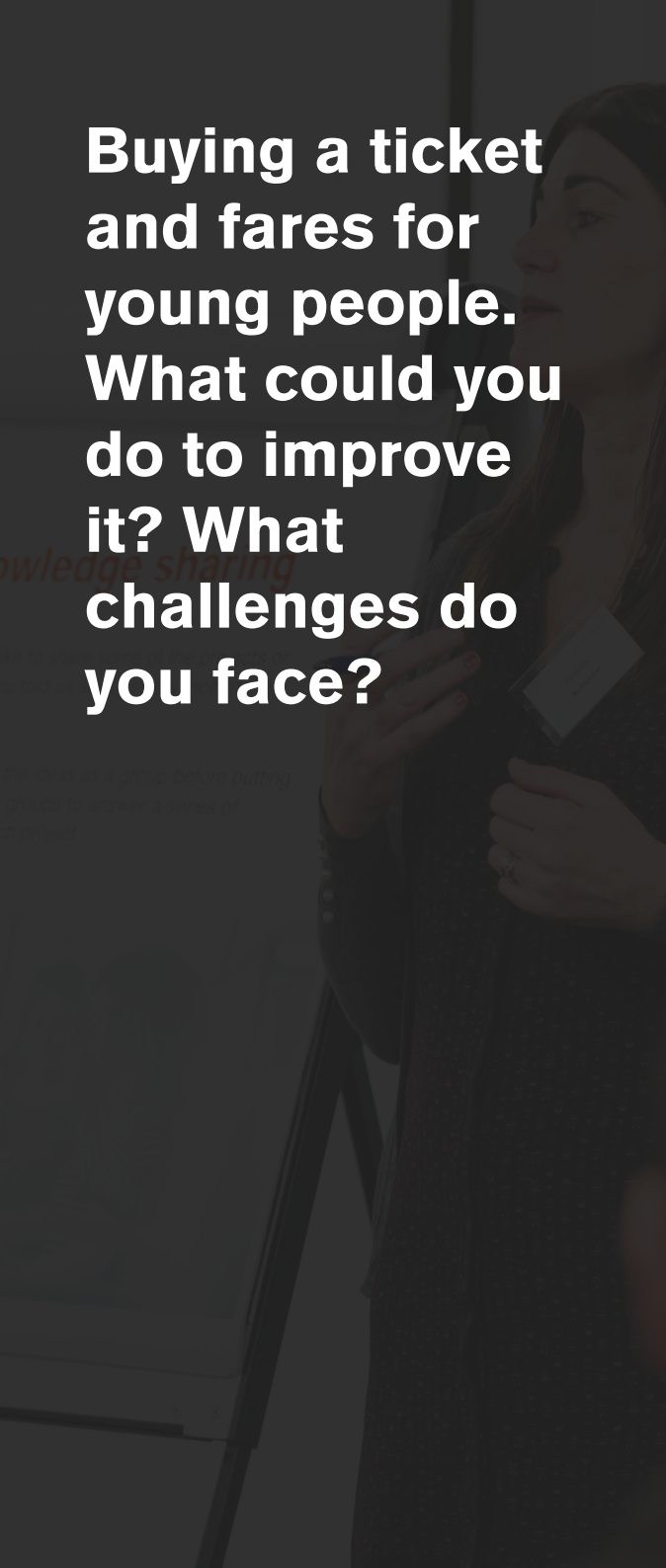
Training

Improved customer service training is seen as vital to deliver better interaction with young people. It was broadly felt that much current training isn't hitting the mark. Suggestions to improve training included: bringing young people into the process, more local training, accessibility training including awareness of vulnerable young people and recognising cognitive and social anxiety disorders. Drivers must be trained and empowered to handle situations on an individual basis. There were suggestions for incentivising drivers and rewarding excellence through mystery shopping schemes, 'rate my driver' and passenger nominations.

Bus and process design

Some young people prefer an automated experience that reduces the need for interaction with a driver. Contactless ticketing or options to buy tickets before boarding could help with this. Bus design is seen as important by 'designing out' some of the areas that cause an issue for young people. Next bus display, audio information and tailored online journey information all help with this. The participants generally thought that removing screens would be a positive move to improving driver interaction.

> "The bus driver is very important – asking the bus driver's view on these outputs is key."
>
> **Colchester**

Buying a ticket and fares for young people. What could you do to improve it? What challenges do you face?

Make it easy

Participants thought that the fares on offer should be straightforward and easy to understand. The information about fares should also be clear and easy to access. Flat fares are attractive for their simplicity but don't always offer the best value. A simple zonal structure can also work well. There is some tension between having a simplified fare structure and offering a wider range of tickets to suit all.

Payment technology

Technology is seen as the key to offering fares and ticketing in a way that is more attractive to young people. The overriding view was that contactless is the way forward and should be offered via card or phone (such as Apple pay). Participants generally thought it would be better to focus on this rather than local smart cards. A contactless system must calculate the best price for the passenger and this will require time and consistency to build trust. Contactless ticketing should be multi-operator and multi-modal – but this sort of integration is seen as a complex and challenging area. Some suggested that one app covering all transport modes and including tickets as well as information would be the best thing, however, it was acknowledged that many bus operators would not be happy with this approach.

Payment options

Participants pointed out that there is no 'one size fits all' solution. Some young people don't have contactless bank cards. People have different travel patterns and financial situations. Young people should be offered options about payment methods including contactless, smartcards, apps and cash. Carnet and flexi tickets could be a benefit. There could be more direct debit options for both parents and young people as upfront cost can be a barrier.

The best ticket

Making sure that young people know what ticket options are available and can confidently choose the best ticket for them is important. More promotion is needed of discounts, tickets and ways to pay. Ticket prices should be readily available online, on the bus and at bus stops. An online best-value ticket tool could help. Consider that parents need to think fares are good value as well as young people. Creative incentives for loyalty such as discounts and reward schemes that would appeal to young people were proposed.

Eligibility for concessionary fare

Making this more straightforward could make young people more confident to board and buy a ticket. Suggestions included having a standard age when fares go from 'child' to 'adult', using technology to make proving age easier (for example enter ID online rather than having to do it in person), offering free ID cards and making any application process easier. Some participants suggested a national bus discount scheme for young people, similar to the 16-25 Railcard, as it would be simple to understand – some questioned how this would be funded.

Information provided in a way young people want. What could you do to improve it? What challenges do you face?

Real time information

Good quality, reliable real time information is not just desired but expected by young people. They are discerning customers who expect to have the information they need at their fingertips and compare bus to what other industries offer them. This includes information at bus stops, apps and online. Buses should be trackable – similar to Uber. Route mapping should be very clear and visual – and integrated with other modes.

Digital solutions

A popular suggestion was for one app which provides everything young people want instead of many different apps. The collaboration needed to make this happen would be a challenge. Participants thought that the industry needs to get better at using the information channels that young people are interested in – which may not be the traditional ones. Different social media channels, online chat and working with partners to share information could work. Lack of 4G or enough data on phone can be a challenge.

Personalisation

Participants thought that information could be improved if it was more closely tailored to what the young person want and need. So, they can choose the channel they use to get the information and select the things they wanted. Pushing notifications out about relevant things would be good such as letting them know when their regular bus was due or offering the best ticket deals. Use customers contact details when they sign up to something to keep in touch and get to know them.

Ask young people

Not everyone wants the same thing. Don't assume that all young people want an app. Ask them to find out what they want and how they want it. Offer a variety of options. Get feedback on what works and what doesn't.

Communication and engagement with young people. What could you do to improve it? What challenges do you face?

Sound relevant

Most young people aren't interested in engaging with a bus company. Unless industry tries new and creative ways to engage they will never really reach younger customers. Tone of voice and language are important – these have to be relevant to young people but not sound embarrassingly like old people trying to be cool. It has to be fun not educational or preachy. It's also important that young people can trust what they are told.

Try new channels

Most young people don't follow bus companies on social media so it's a challenge to engage with them. Use targeted posts and push things out using a range of channels, possibly Facebook, Instagram, Twitter but ask young people how they'd like to engage. They want an approach that requires minimum effort from them. Offer the opportunity for in-app feedback – and then actually use it!

Traditional approaches may be more relevant in younger years, going into schools and targeting transition phases. Some young people, particularly from more disadvantaged or vulnerable groups might be hard to reach – how do you make sure you engage with all young people?

Challenge negative perceptions

Young kids love buses – how do you transfer that to teens? Raise the profile of bus by demonstrating the benefits – promote the aspects that may appeal such as free Wi-Fi and charging points. Use a peer to peer approach as young people are more likely to listen to other young people they respect - try working with young influencers who can get the message out more effectively. Consider sourcing relevant local insight and harnessing it to deliver a tailored local message.

The experience on-board the bus for young people. What could you do to improve it? What challenges do you face?

Productive use of time on the bus

Participants suggested creating an environment that allows young people to use the time on the bus in the way they want. This could be watching Netflix, checking social media, browsing the internet, charging the phone, sitting in groups with their friends, chatting, listening to music. Ask young people locally what they want to do on the bus. Showing how time on the bus can be spent could be a positive way to promote bus over driving, riding a motorbike getting a taxi/Uber.

Bus design and technology

Groups suggested that buses and technology should allow young people to do the things they want to do – they are an enabler rather than an end in themselves. It probably means offering free Wi-Fi, charging points etc but ask them and get it right. Involve young people in designing buses. Once things are provided they must be maintained to a high standard for example don't accept that plug sockets don't work. It is a challenge to offer a bus environment that young people can feel in control of and is personalised to their requirements.

Interaction with drivers

Customer focussed drivers who make the boarding experience easy and pleasant improve the overall experience. Could buses have a named driver advertised on the front of the bus?

Cleaning and litter

Improving the experience on the bus should go back to basics. Contemporary standards of design and maintenance will make it easier to keep clean and tidy. Passengers need to be educated to keep it clean and not put feet on seats. But make it easy for them by providing bins and having frequent turnaround cleaning.

On-board information and security

Live stop updates provide reassurance and make the experience more relaxing. Would it be worth putting an additional member of staff on late night buses to make younger people feel safer?

How could you work in partnership with others to improve the offer for young people?

Businesses

Find out which businesses in your local area need to get young people there for example shops, restaurants, bars, cinemas. Work jointly to offer an incentive or discount and to advertise and promote the business and the bus as the way to travel. Work with Jobcentres to offer public transport to job seekers with a view to keeping those people on buses once they have found employment. A similar idea could be used to work with hospitals to demonstrate to patients what a great option the bus would be to travel to appointments. Partner with local employers who could do some of the promotion to their employees. Take advice from these businesses about where routes should run and at what times, understand what local communities want.
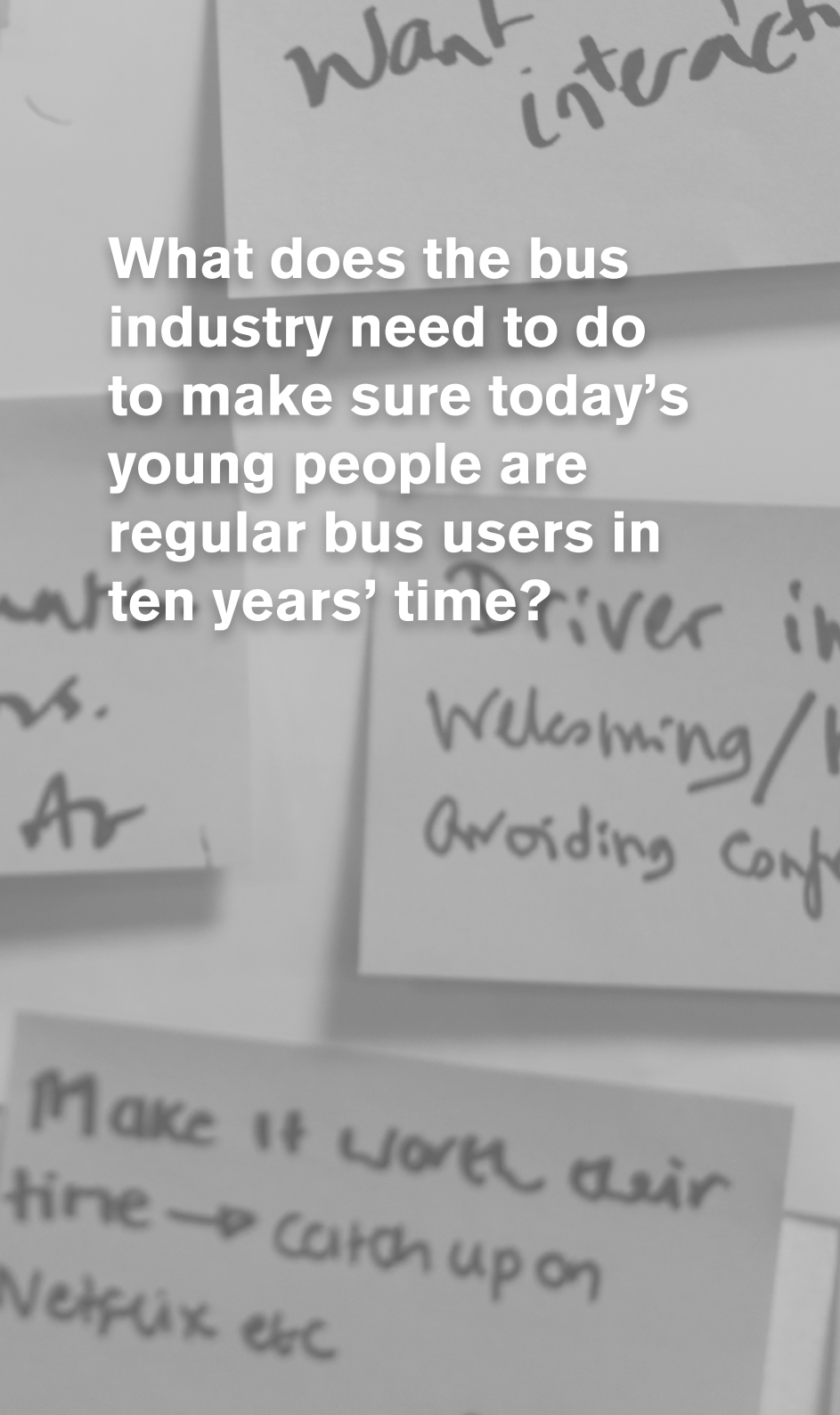
Education providers

Create a relationship with local schools and colleges – it could be challenging to resource initially but could be quite light-touch in the long run. Get travel training on local curriculum, appoint 'transport champions' within schools, attend assemblies. Maybe part of the school's attraction is its good transport links and this could be promoted, consider if schools could subsidise a new service. Offer children 'try the bus' tickets. Let schools arrange educational trips to bus depots – good for getting younger customers and also generating interest in future careers in the industry. Offer work experience opportunities. Use sources within schools and colleges to understand what young people want.

Forums

Organise some sort of local transport forum with all relevant stakeholders to tackle issues and identify new opportunities. Don't forget the value of working with others in rail, tram, cycling, walking, taxi etc to offer a genuinely end-to-end flexible solution. Set up a local youth group or tap into any existing youth councils and youth clubs to maximise efficiency.

> "It's been useful to hear ideas from people I wouldn't normally get to talk to. I'm looking forward to taking them away and seeing what could work in my business."
>
> **Birmingham**

What does the bus industry need to do to make sure today's young people are regular bus users in ten years' time?

Get the basics right

Participants said that a stable, reliable network is the key to ensuring young people want to carry on getting the bus. Services must be predictable and meet expectations – every single time. By being 'brilliant at the basics' bus will be a great experience they will want to continue using. Work with partners to target the causes of congestion, consider where bus lanes can be used, reducing the impact of roadworks and improving traffic flow.

Engage

Listening to customers and asking them what they want. Also engage with potential users and find out why they aren't currently using the bus. Young people's views must be taken seriously and responded to, listening can't just be a paper exercise. Make customers the ambassadors of our businesses. Consider things that are important to young people such as air quality and climate change.

Innovation and evolution

The proposition will need to constantly be assessed to see if it meets changing needs – you can't expect passengers to accept solutions from 10 (or even 30) years ago. Information will remain a top priority but it must be able to adapt and change more quickly than the bus industry has done in the past. The same applies to ticketing and payment options – the bus industry must be forward-thinking and looking to continuously improve. Bus must fight to stay relevant and offer a better choice to young people than the car.

What can be done to attract new users to bus?

Improving the image of the bus

Participants thought that a big part of attracting new passengers on to the bus is about improving the image of the bus. One suggestion was to try and reposition the industry by talking about bus as an enabler of free movement and a benefit to society. As interest in air quality and climate change develops these messages may make bus a more attractive option for some. There is still a great challenge to make bus a fashionable/desirable option for young people. Pairing up with businesses and sectors that young people like (sports brands, food chains etc) and partnerships with young, respected influencers could increase the appeal. Trial offers and 'give it a go' opportunities could encourage non-users to find out bus is better than they expected.

Promotion

Bus needs to do better at showing off the things it is good at and letting people know it is a great way to travel. As well as individual partnerships and marketing there could be potential for a national campaign, something with a catchy slogan along the lines of 'Better by bus' (used by the Liverpool City Region Alliance) or British Rail's 'Let the train take the strain'. Learn from other sectors who are doing a good job of engaging with young people (cinemas, Uber, streaming services, gaming, tech/digital, gyms, sportswear, restaurants etc).

Keep it simple

Potential users could be easily put off if they think the process of getting the bus is complicated. People should be able to get information about routes, times and fares very easily. Other industries don't make it difficult to find out how much a product cost before you've committed to buy it.

What happens next?

The Transport Focus workshops helped bring together a wide range of bus industry people in a way that doesn't happen often enough. Especially to focus on something as important as making bus journeys better for young people. The workshops were run in an open and collaborative manner. All ideas were listened to and discussed by participants. No idea was bad!

Having people contribute ideas and real-life experiences really helped participants to challenge their own ways of working and, importantly, thinking objectively about how young people's needs can be better understood to make journeys easier for them and to build their confidence and trust into the future. The aim of the workshops was to encourage ideas, share best practice and for participants to take fresh thinking and new approaches back to their businesses. These aims will be met based on the positive feedback from participants at each of the workshops.

Transport Focus will be reflecting on the ideas and challenges raised in these workshops and sharing them with operators, authorities and Governments.

Transport Focus is the independent consumer organisation promoting the interests of:

- bus, coach and tram users across England outside London

- rail passengers in Great Britain

- all users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads (the Strategic Road Network).

We work to make a difference for all transport users

BusinessAdapts are an organisation focused on the delivery of objective driven workshops and driving collaboration in transport. The team are experienced at being able to take a series of objectives that need to be achieved and running interactive and engaging, but most important output driven workshops to achieve these objectives.