



Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023

April 2023

Introduction



Transport Focus published an initial report [*Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare*](#) on the £2 capped bus fare in February 2023. We repeated the work in March - so this report provides updated awareness of the capped £2 bus fare and details about journeys being made on buses as a result of this fare since January.

From 1 January the government introduced a £2 capped single bus fare in England (outside of London). Participation in the scheme is voluntary and some bus companies chose not to take part

but most major bus operators offer it. A £2 capped fare was introduced in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and West Yorkshire in autumn 2022.

Transport Focus obtained the views of 1111 people (aged under 65 within England who live outside London); a representative subset of 2000 people across Great Britain interviewed over the weekend of 24 - 26 March 2023.

The questions we asked are shown in the appendix.

Key findings



1.

Awareness of £2 bus fare cap now at 56 per cent – slightly higher than in January when it was 53 per cent.

2.

Almost a quarter have used the £2 capped bus fare.

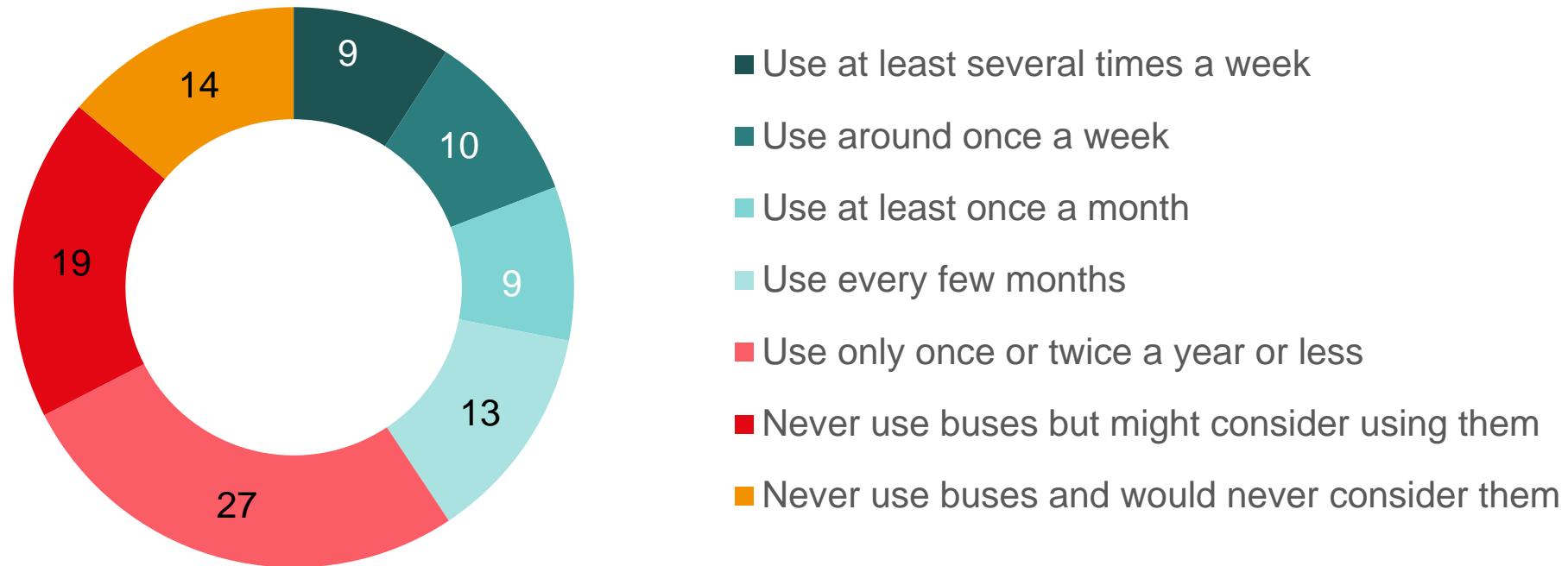
3.

11 per cent say £2 bus fare has increased their bus use, up from seven per cent in January.

4.

80 per cent agree the £2 fare cap will help people with the cost of living.

As in January, just over a quarter use buses at least once a month and around one in five don't use buses but would consider using them



Values shown are percentages

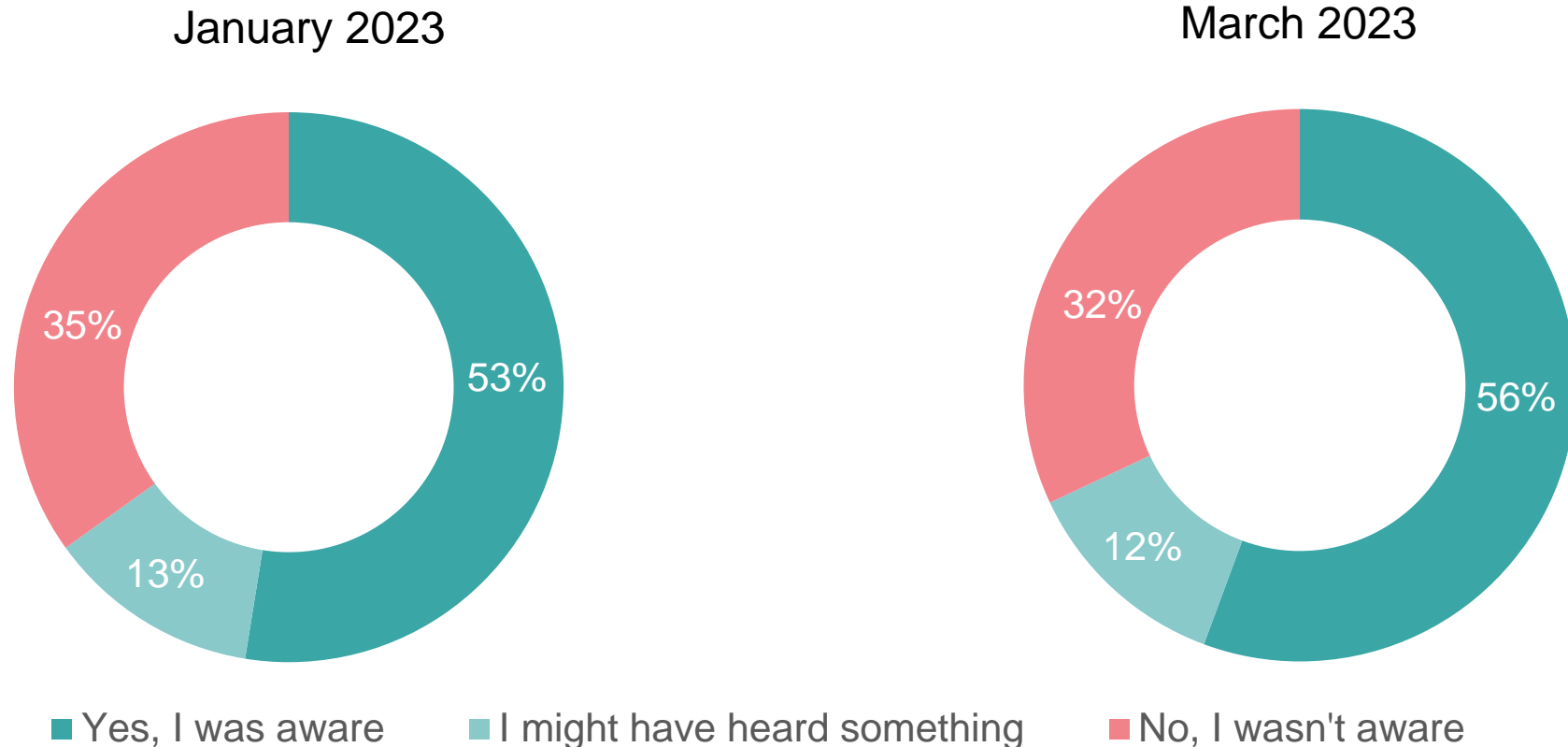
Q. Which of these best describes how you use buses?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample = 1111

The background features a red gradient with white line-art icons. On the left, a hand holds a smartphone displaying a green thumbs-up and a red thumbs-down. Below it is a bus. Above the phone is a location pin and an alarm clock. On the right, a train is shown moving to the right, indicated by motion lines and arrows. At the bottom right, there are three trees. The central text is in a white rounded rectangle.

Awareness of £2 bus fare

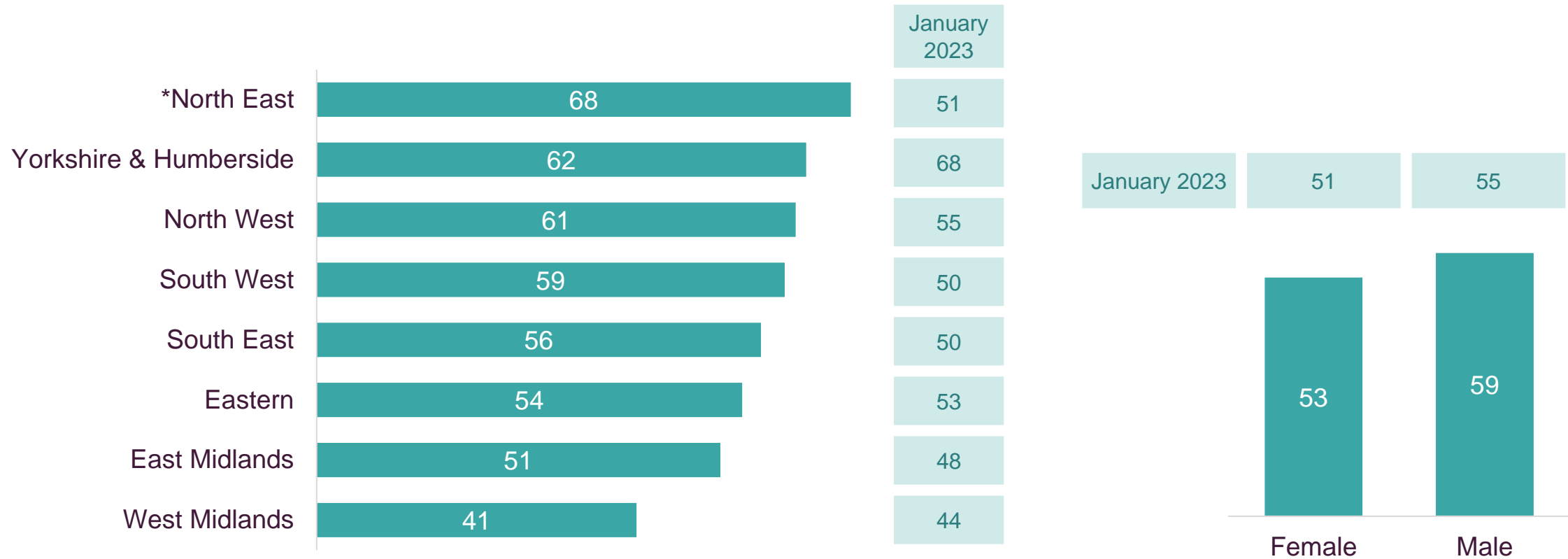
56 per cent are now aware of the £2 capped single bus fare – up slightly from January



Q. Are you aware that many bus companies outside London have introduced a capped or maximum fare of £2 for a single journey?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size = January 1108, March 1111.

Highest awareness in North East, Yorkshire and Humberside and North West. West Midlands only region with awareness below 50 per cent



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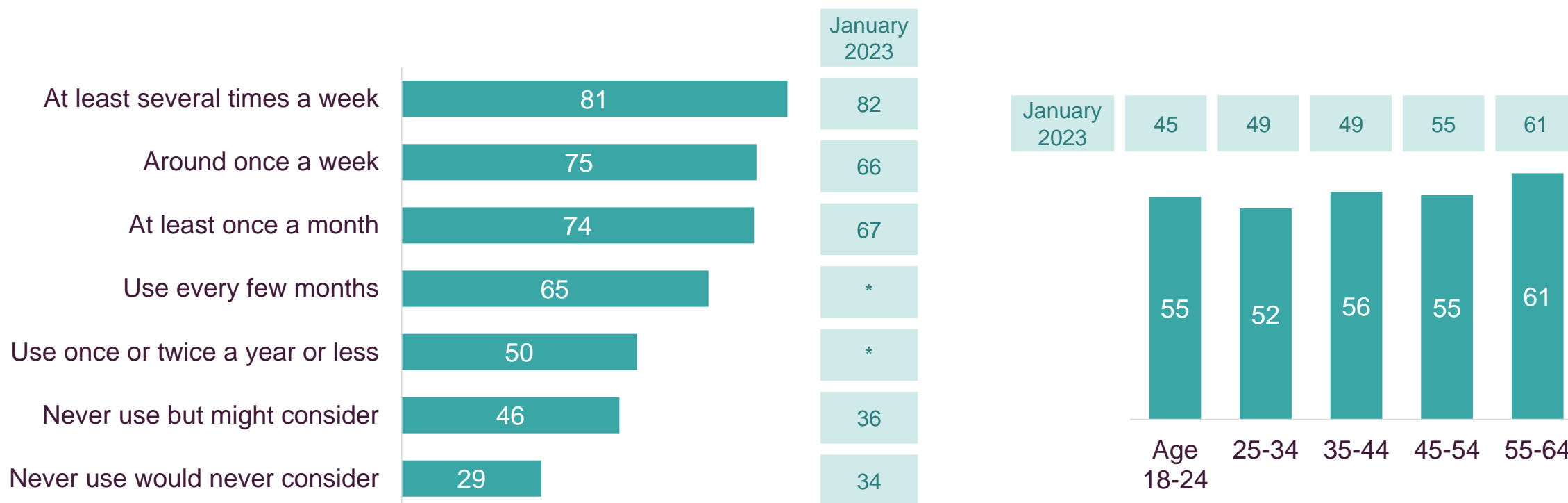
Q. Are you aware that many bus companies outside London have introduced a capped or maximum fare of £2 for a single journey?

* Low sample size low (58) result should be treated indicatively.

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65.

Sample sizes: Region (categories top to bottom): 58, 143, 171, 107, 191, 146, 135, and 160; gender (categories left to right): 560 and 546

Three quarters of regular users now aware of £2 fare cap, up from two thirds in January. Increase seen among those aged under 45.



Values shown are percentages

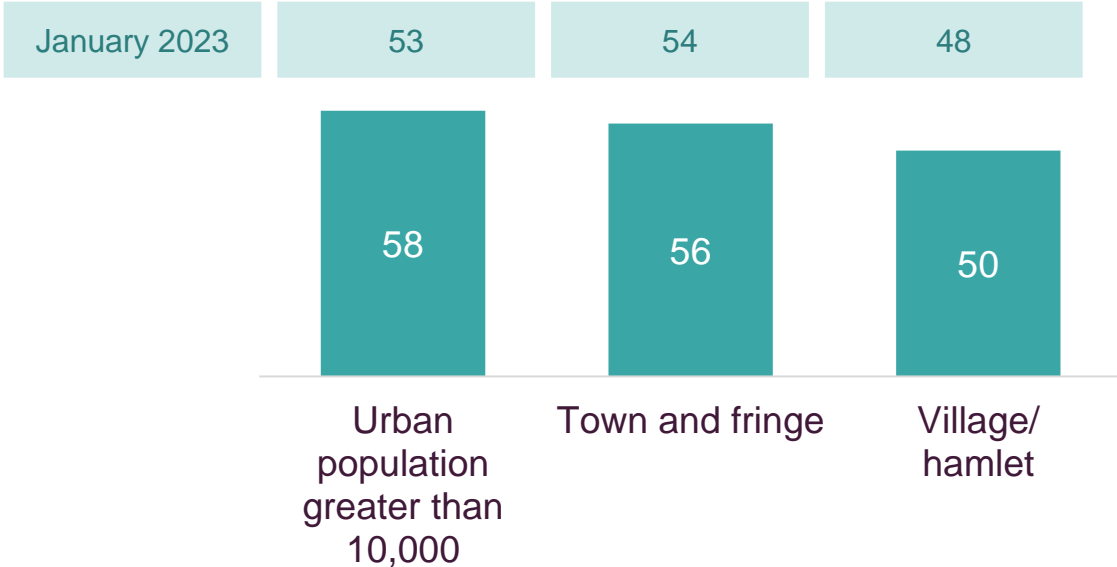
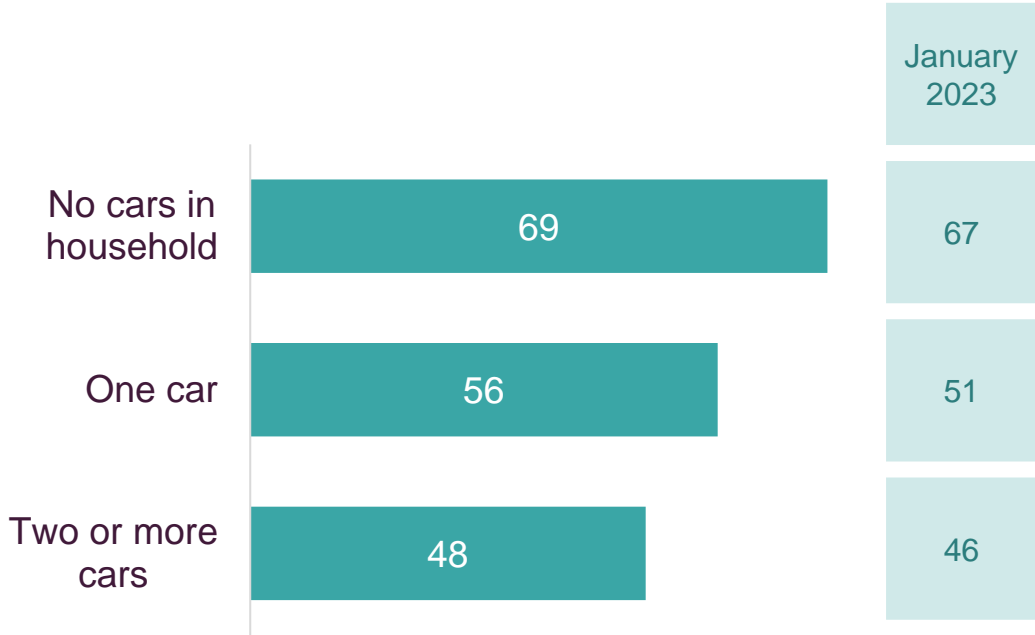
Q. Are you aware that many bus companies outside London have introduced a capped or maximum fare of £2 for a single journey?

* Frequency categories expanded in March – previous category of ‘Occasionally/when need to’ had 52% awareness in January - replaced by every few months/once or twice a year

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65.

Sample sizes: frequency of use (categories top to bottom): 101, 117, 105, 145, 283, 203, 157; age (categories left to right): 148, 256, 225, 257, 225.

Over two thirds of households without a car are aware of the £2 fare cap. It has risen most in one-car households and urban areas.



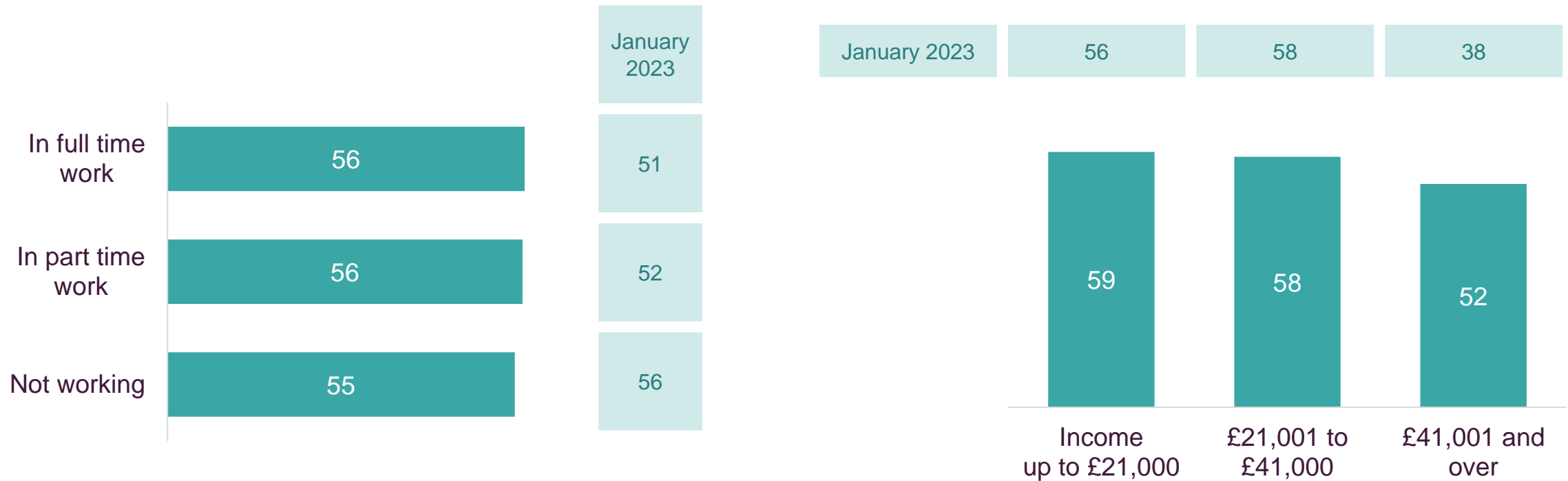
Values shown are percentages

Q. Are you aware that many bus companies outside London have introduced a capped or maximum fare of £2 for a single journey?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample sizes: cars in household (categories top to bottom) 218, 549, 344; location (categories left to right): 446, 468, 197.



More than half of higher income households now aware of the £2 fare cap, up from 38 per cent in January

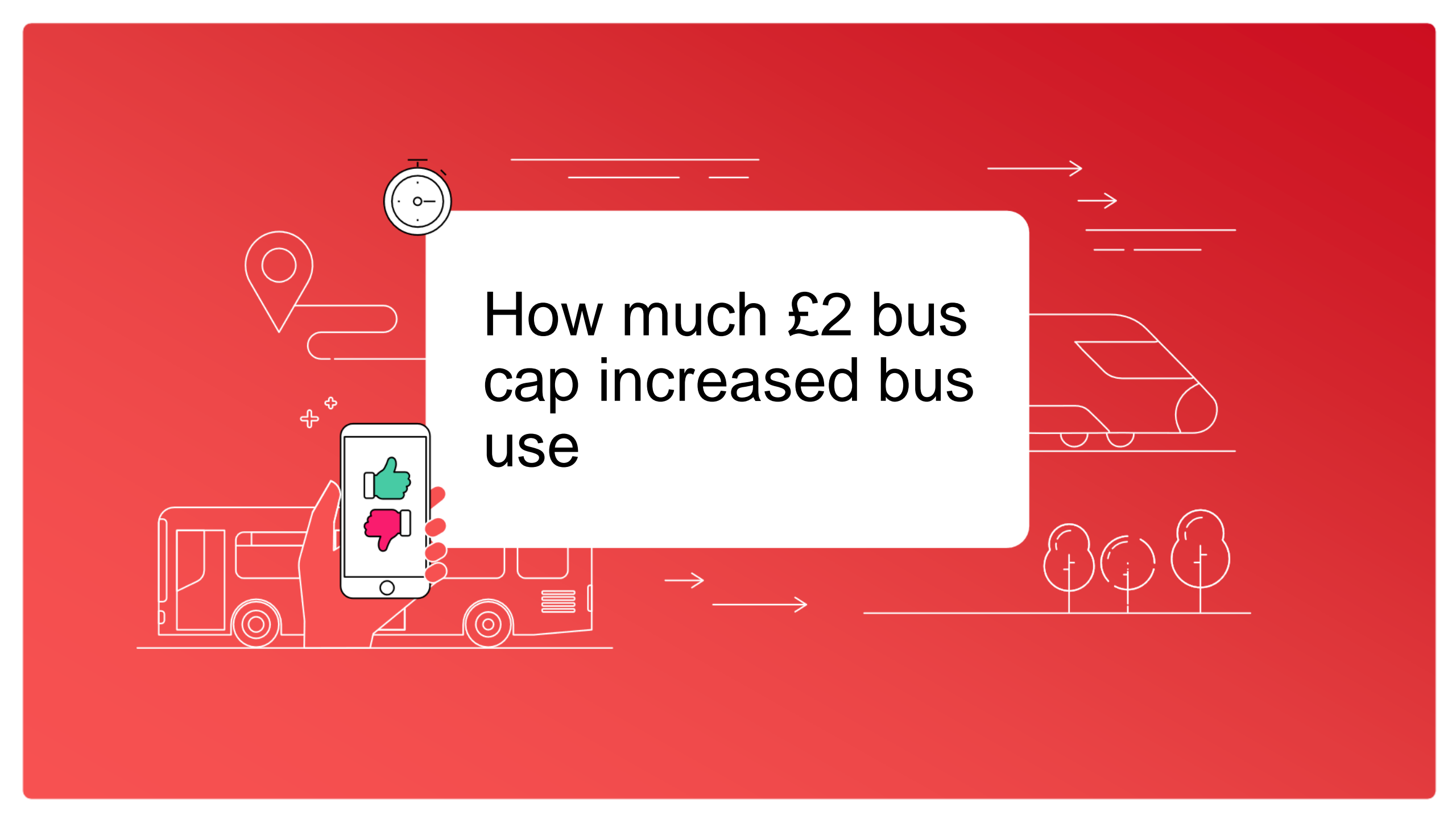


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Q. Are you aware that many bus companies outside London have introduced a capped or maximum fare of £2 for a single journey?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65.

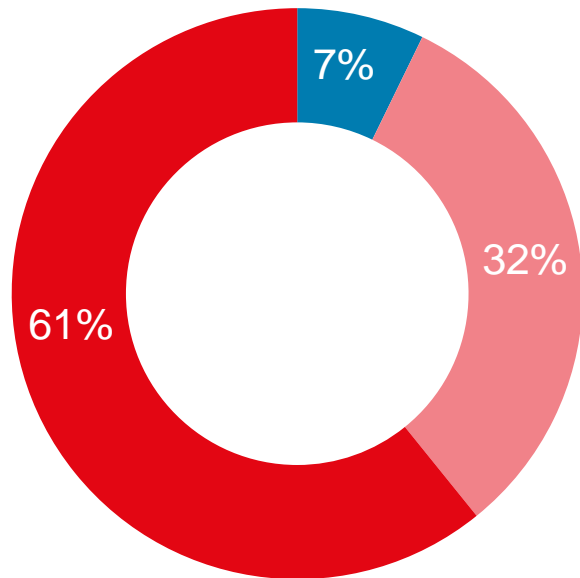
Sample sizes: work status: 558, 213, 340; income (categories left to right) 312, 467 and 255.



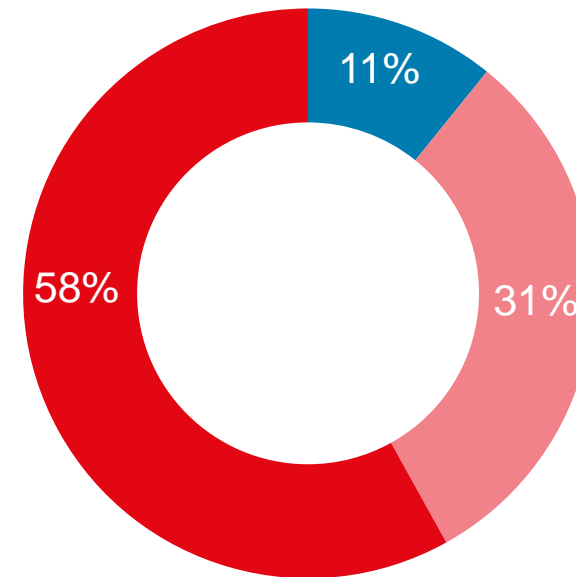
How much £2 bus cap increased bus use

One in 10 now say they are already using buses more, slightly up since January 2023

January 2023



March 2023



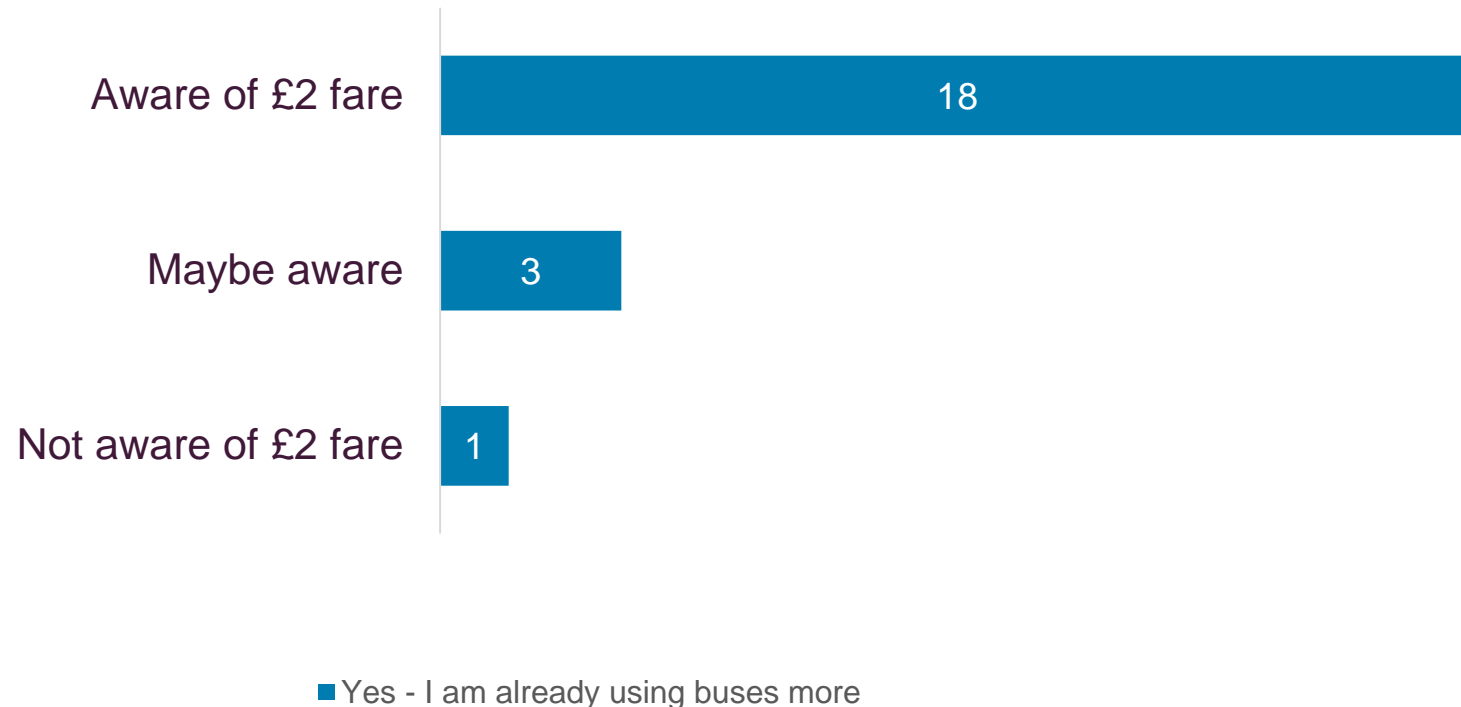
■ Yes – I am already using buses more ■ Yes – I might use buses more but haven't yet ■ No – it makes no difference

Q. Does the £2 capped fare make any difference to your use of buses?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample sizes: January 1108; March 1111.

Almost one in five of those who were aware of the £2 cap say that it has increased their use of the bus

Increased bus use as a result of £2 fare cap by awareness of scheme

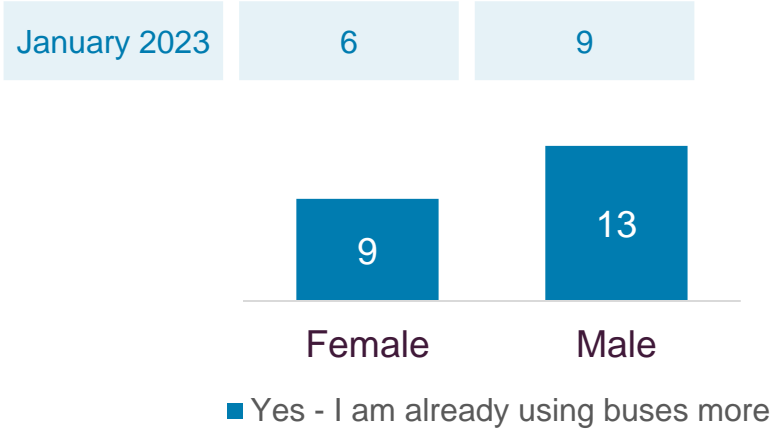
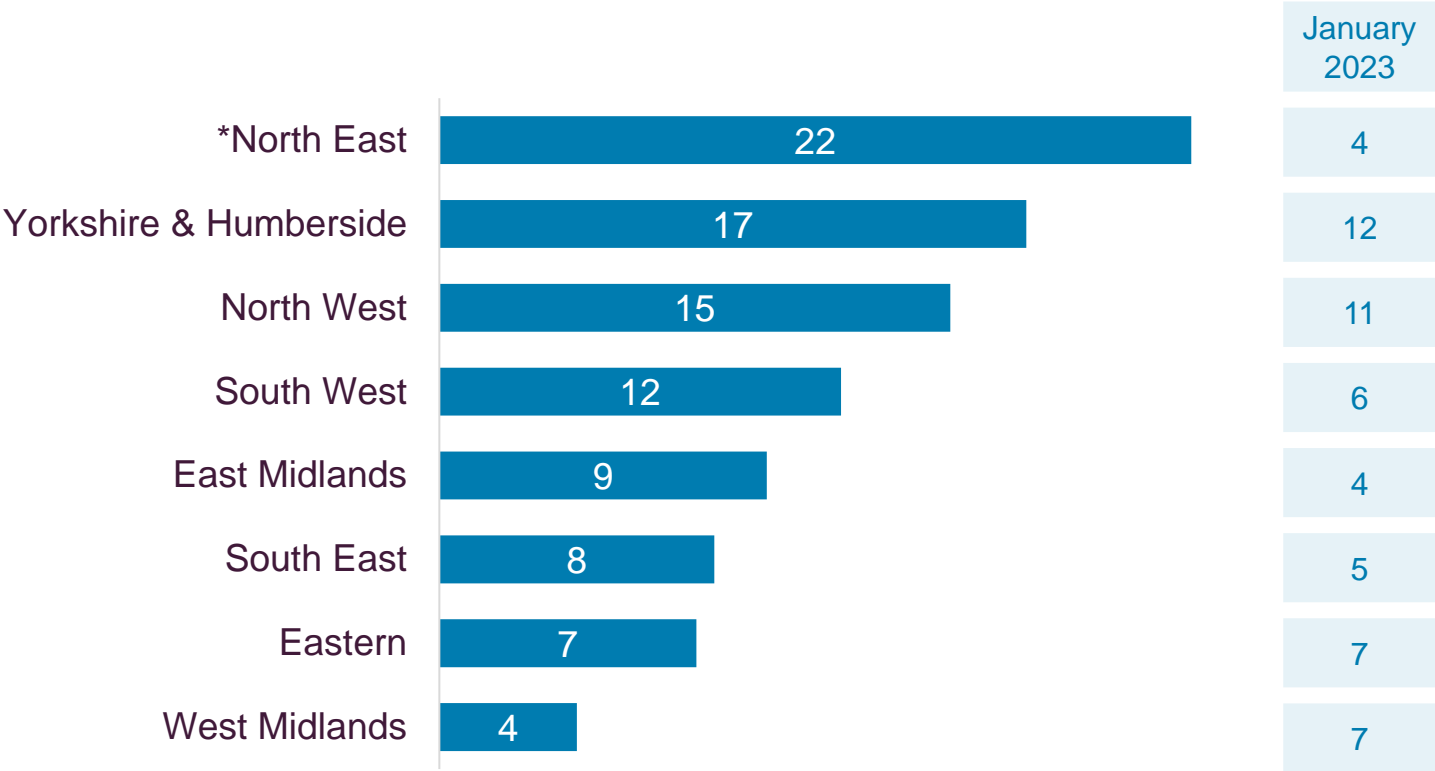


Values shown are percentages

Q. Does the £2 capped fare make any difference to your use of buses?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size = 119.

North East and Yorkshire and Humberside have highest increased bus use because of the £2 capped fare



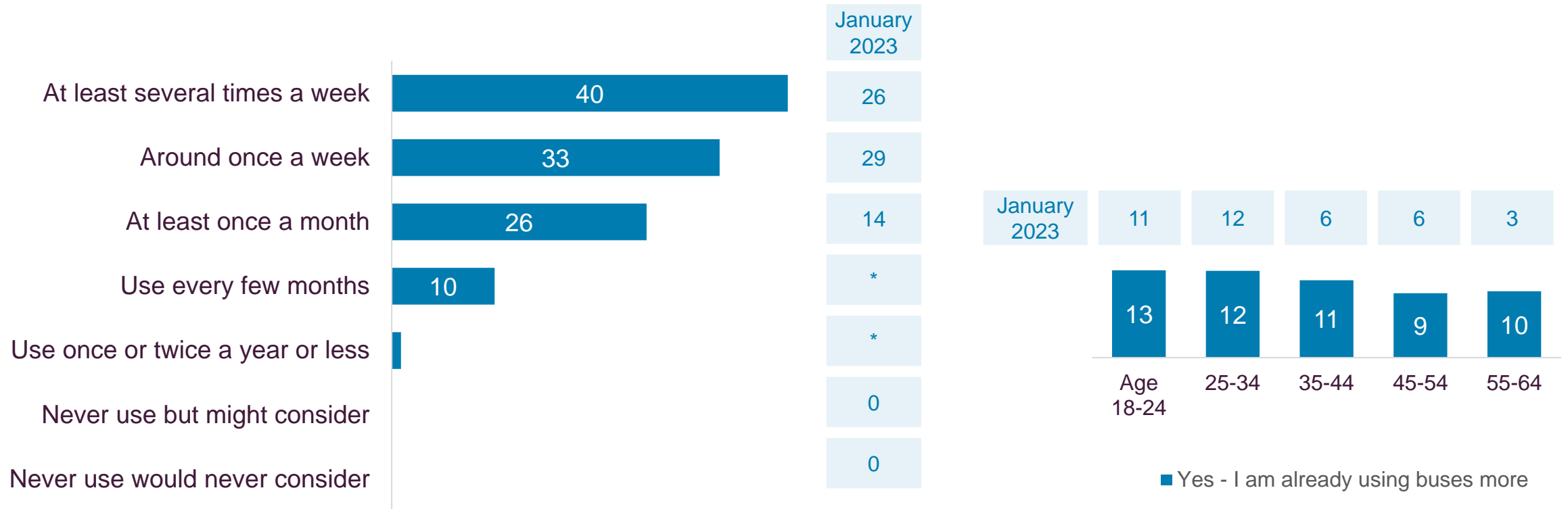
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Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample sizes: Region (categories top to bottom) 58, 143, 171, 107, 135, 191, 146 and 160; gender 560 and 546.

More than a third of those who use buses once a week or more say they are using buses more as a result of the £2 fare – up from January



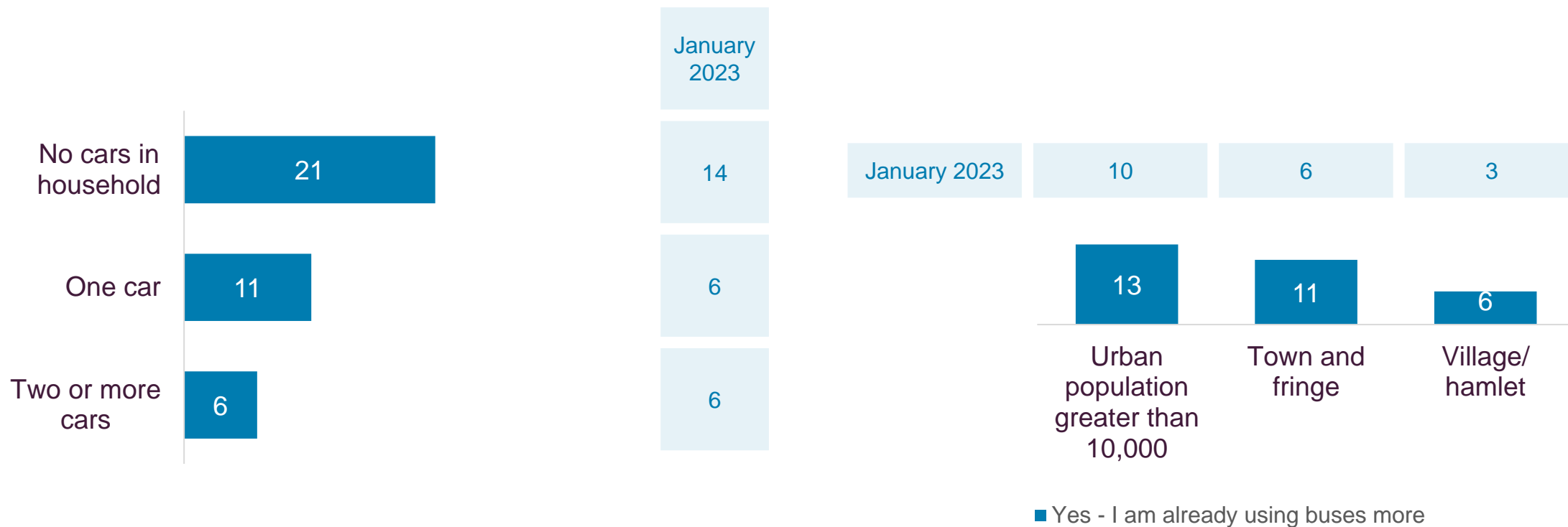
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Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample sizes: frequency of use (categories top to bottom): 101, 117, 105, 145, 283, 203, 157; age (categories left to right): 148, 256, 225, 257, 225.

21 per cent living in households without a car are now using the bus more because of the £2 fare, up from 14 per cent in January

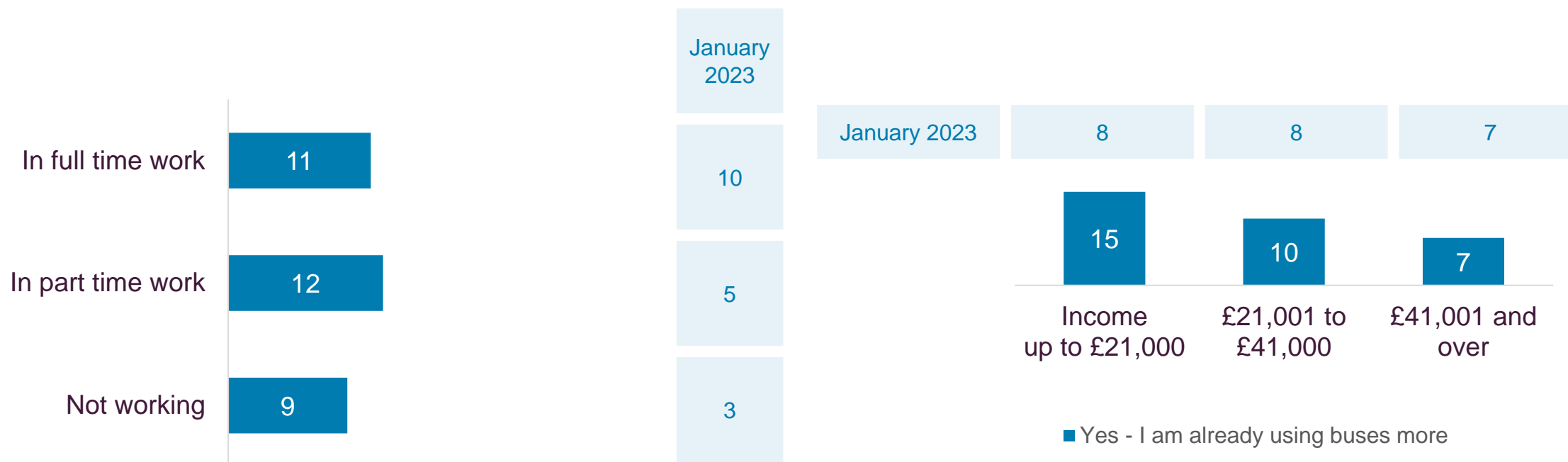


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Q. Does the £2 capped fare make any difference to your use of buses?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65.
 Sample sizes: cars in household (categories top to bottom) 218, 549, 344; location (categories left to right): 446, 468, 197.

15 per cent in lowest income households are using buses more, compared to eight per cent in January



Values shown are percentages

Q. Does the £2 capped fare make any difference to your use of buses?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample sizes: work status: 558, 213, 340; income (categories left to right) 312, 467 and 255.

Those travelling more due to the £2 fare talked about saving money, replacing the car for journeys and going to new places



Before it was about £4 for a single journey and £7 for a return which is so expensive. £2 is a great price and should be made permanent.

Female 22 East Midlands

It's so much cheaper to get anywhere. If there are more than one of us we'd usually get a taxi as it's the same price but this makes us use the bus more.

Female 40 North East

It's very cheap, it keeps actual payment to the driver quick and simple. The cost of fuel is outrageous, if I can get somewhere for £2, I'm gonna do it.

Male 52 South East



Buses are expensive so I wouldn't use them for leisure. The two pound fare lets me travel to different places within my region without incurring high cost. I then have cash to spend at the destination.

Male 52 North East

It's as easy as driving. No cost of parking. Able to have a drink out.

Male 50 South West

I can get to nice coastal locations for days out at a far cheaper price than normal.

Female 29 Eastern



Those who might use bus more as a result of the £2 fare talked about saving on parking and fuel costs and reducing stress and enjoying the journey



Ecofriendly, less stress, less traffic, no worries of parking, saving high fuel costs.

Female 54 South East

I might use the bus to go to places further away than I would normally go by bus.

Male 25 West Midlands

Because it is cheaper than I thought and might make journeys cheaper than paying for fuel and parking in town centres.

Female 22 Eastern



Makes it more economically viable and helps with the negatives of using public transport.

Female 63 South West

I think it could be cheaper than driving some where and I could enjoy the journey

Male 44 Eastern

My local town is 2 miles away (downhill), I walk there but I could only buy a day bus ticket £4.90 which was dearer than a taxi until this new scheme. A lot happier to pay £2 to get home with my shopping instead.

Female 52 West Midlands



Those not interested in the £2 fare cap were generally not interested in using or able to use the bus itself



I don't use buses currently and I have no intention to use them. Using a bus would add a lot more time to my journeys that I take.

Female 31 Yorkshire and Humberside

Would only use a bus as a last resort anyway so this change makes no difference for me.

Male 22 North West

It makes no difference as the journeys are sometimes essential so I'd have to use the bus no matter the price.

Female 36 North East



I buy an all day pass as I do multiple trips.

Male 24 West Midlands


I work nights and to travel to work at the times required buses are not available from where I live, whilst using any form of transport other than my car for anything else is not for me.

Male 61 North West

I live in a rural location. Public transport in this area would not get me to work on time. I need my car for home visits during the day.

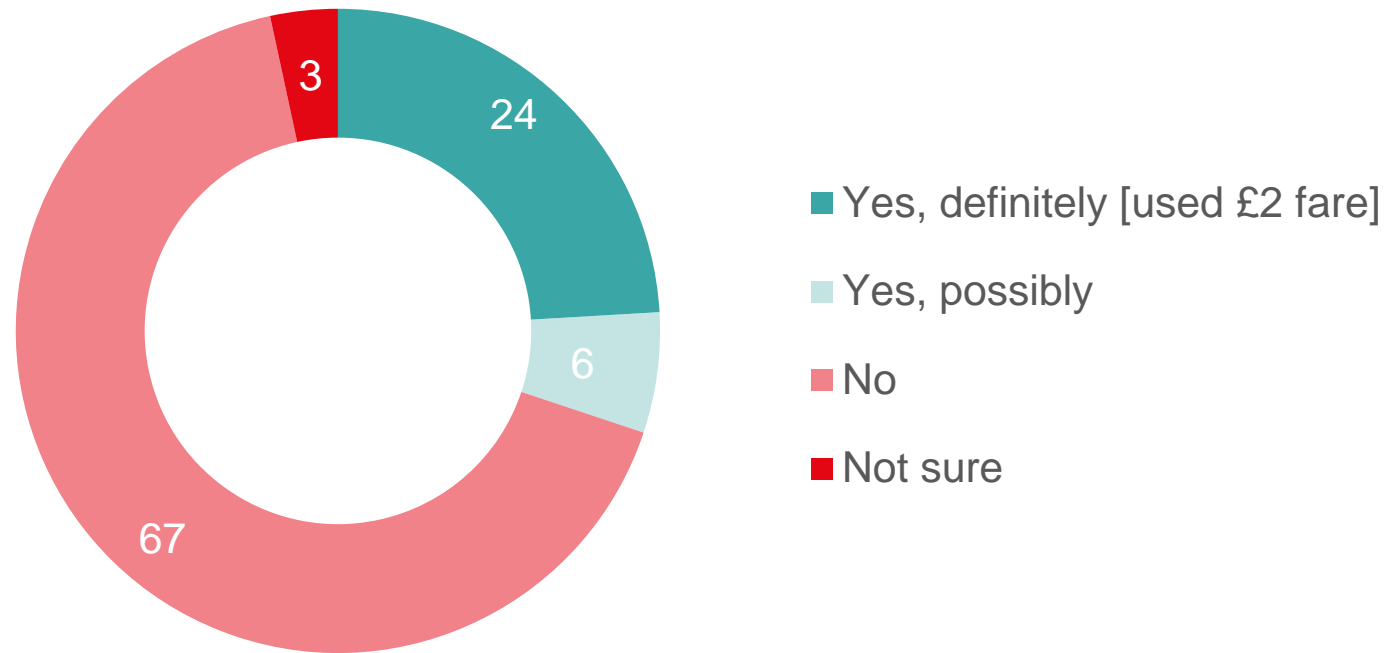
Female 54 South West





Whether have
used the £2 fare

Almost a quarter have used the £2 capped fare

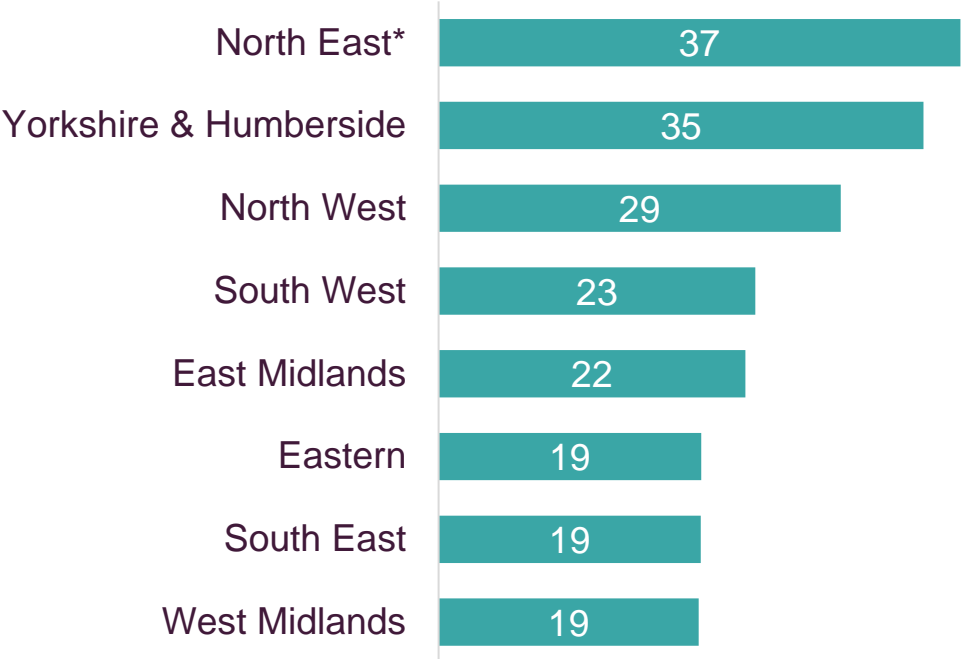


Values shown are percentages

Q. Have you used the £2 fare for any bus journeys?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size = 1111

Usage of £2 fare highest in three northern regions



Values shown are percentages

Q. Have you used the £2 fare for any bus journeys?

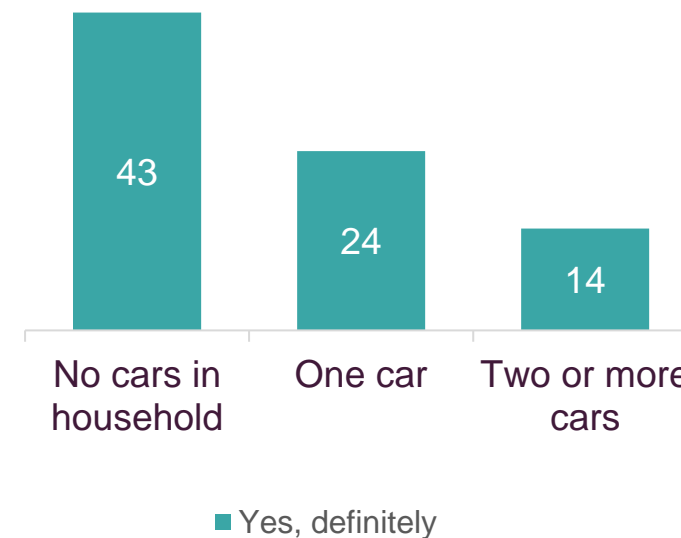
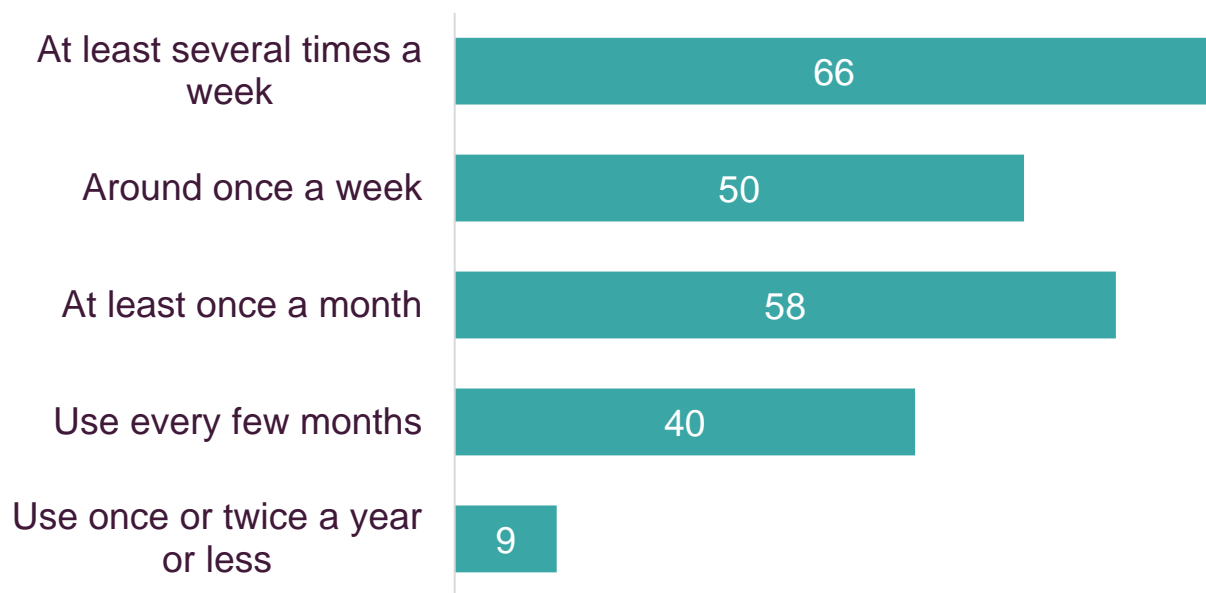
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Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65.
Sample sizes: Region (categories top to bottom) 58, 143, 171, 107, 135, 146, 191 and 160; Population area (categories left to right) 446, 468 and 178.

■ Yes, definitely



More than half those who use buses at least monthly have used the £2 capped fare. Those in households without cars more likely to have used the fare



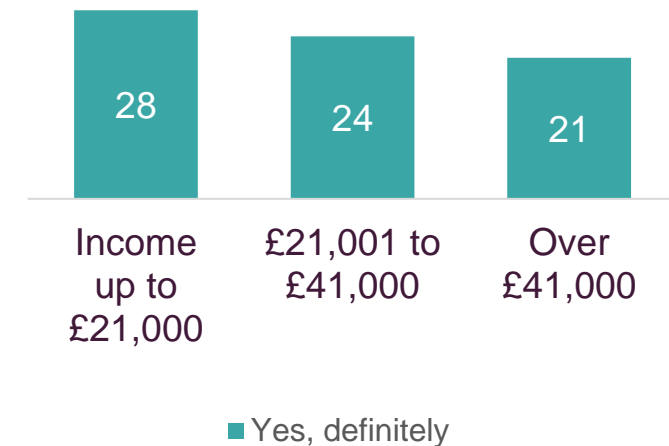
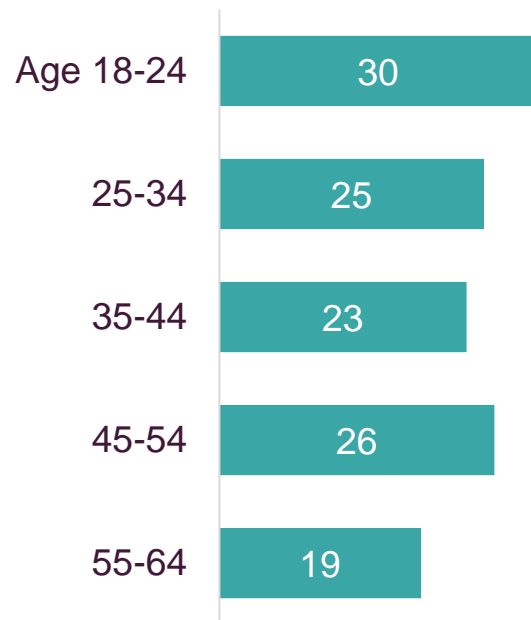
Values shown are percentages

Q2. Have you used the £2 fare for any bus journeys?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65.

Sample sizes: frequency of use (categories top to bottom) 101, 117, 105, 145 and 283; and cars in household (categories left to right) 218, 549 and 344.

Usage of £2 capped fare is highest among under 24s and people with lower household incomes

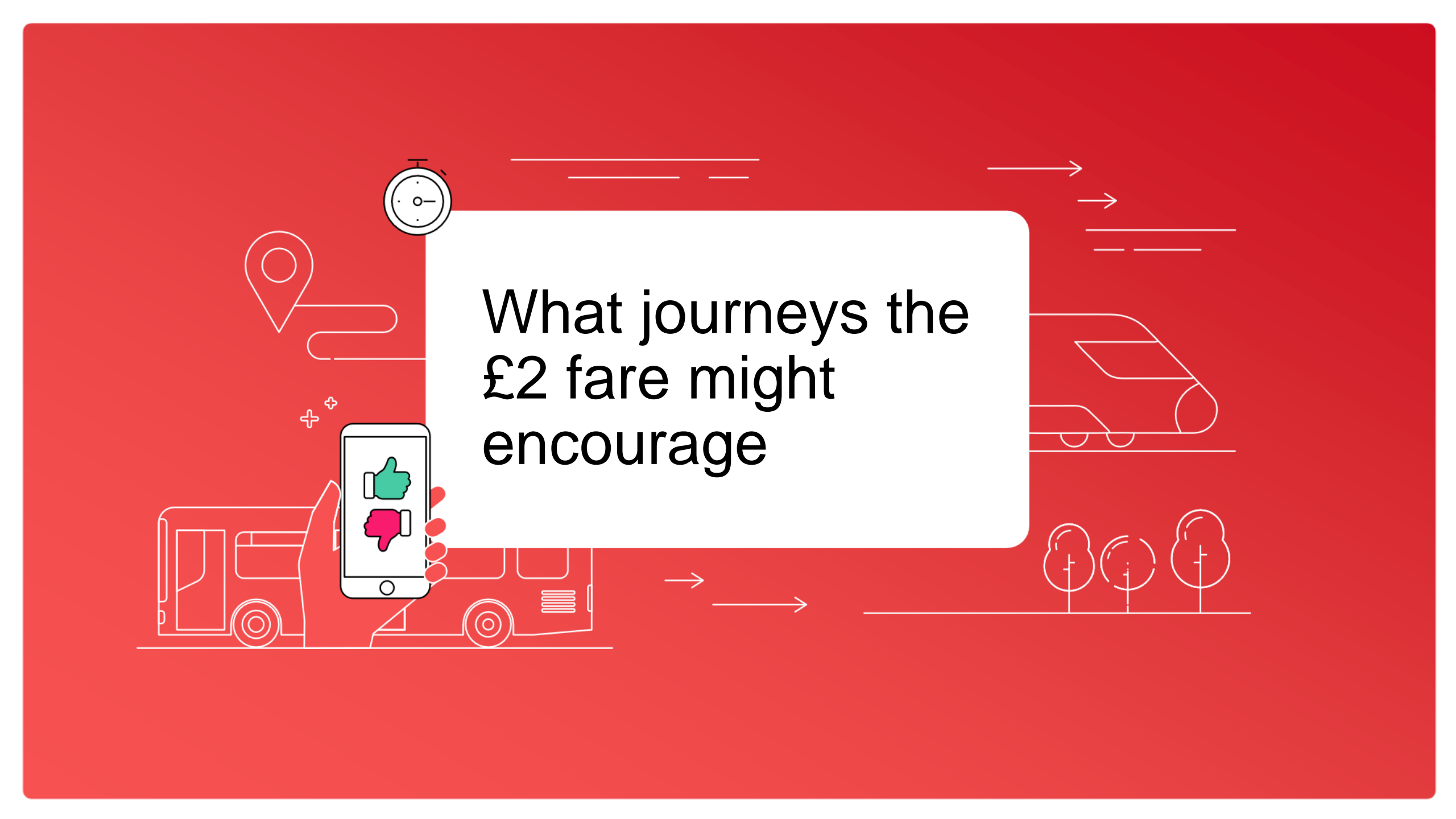


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Q2. Have you used the £2 fare for any bus journeys?

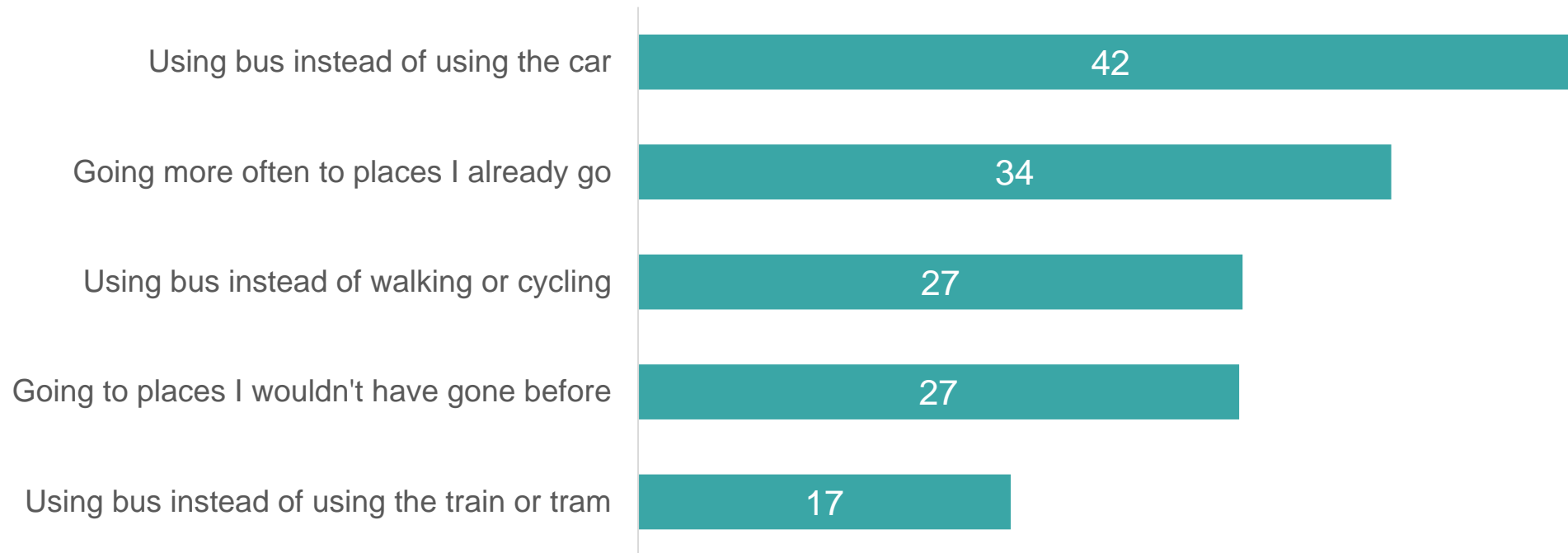
Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65.

Sample sizes: age (categories top to bottom) 148, 256, 225, 257 and 225; and household income (categories left to right) 312, 467 and 255.



What journeys the
£2 fare might
encourage

People making more bus journeys due to the £2 fare have most often used the bus instead of the car or made extra journeys to places they have been to previously

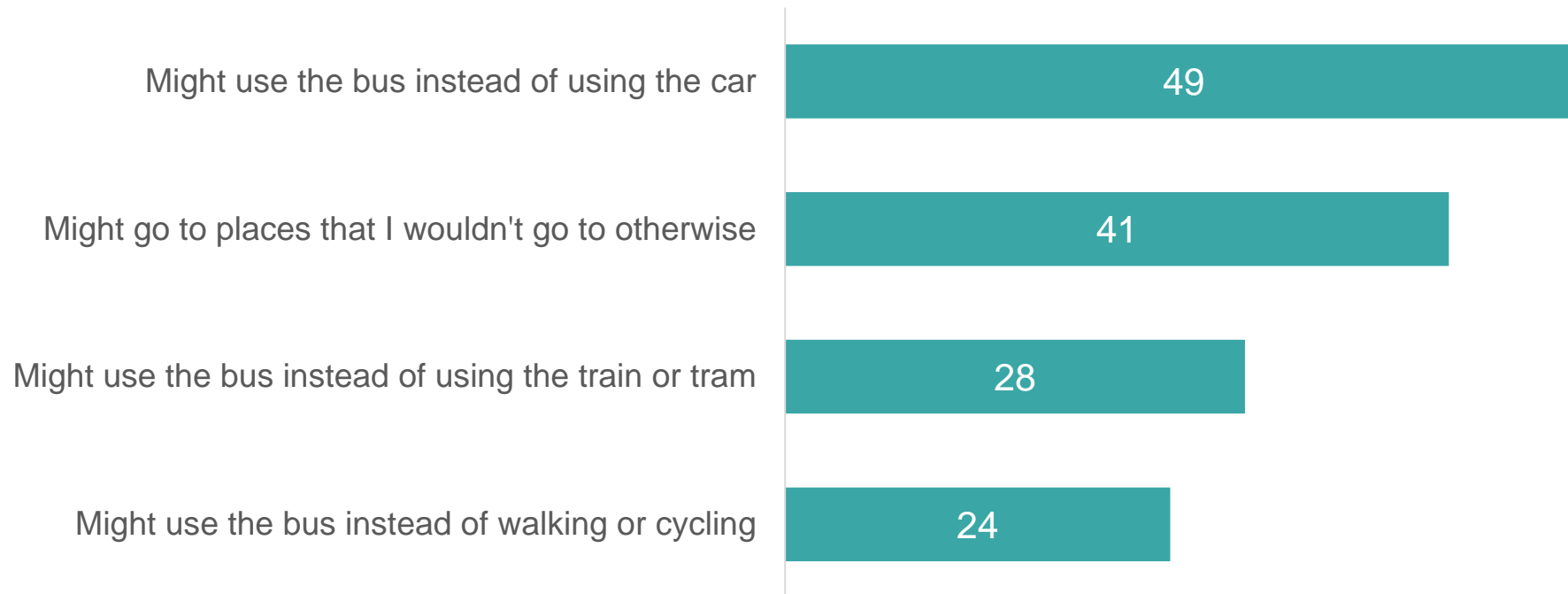


Values shown are percentages

Q. You said you're using buses more. Which of these describes how you're using them more because of the £2 fare?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size: 119.

Similarly half of those who might make more journeys due to the £2 fare cap would replace car journeys. Four in ten might go to places they wouldn't go otherwise



Values shown are percentages

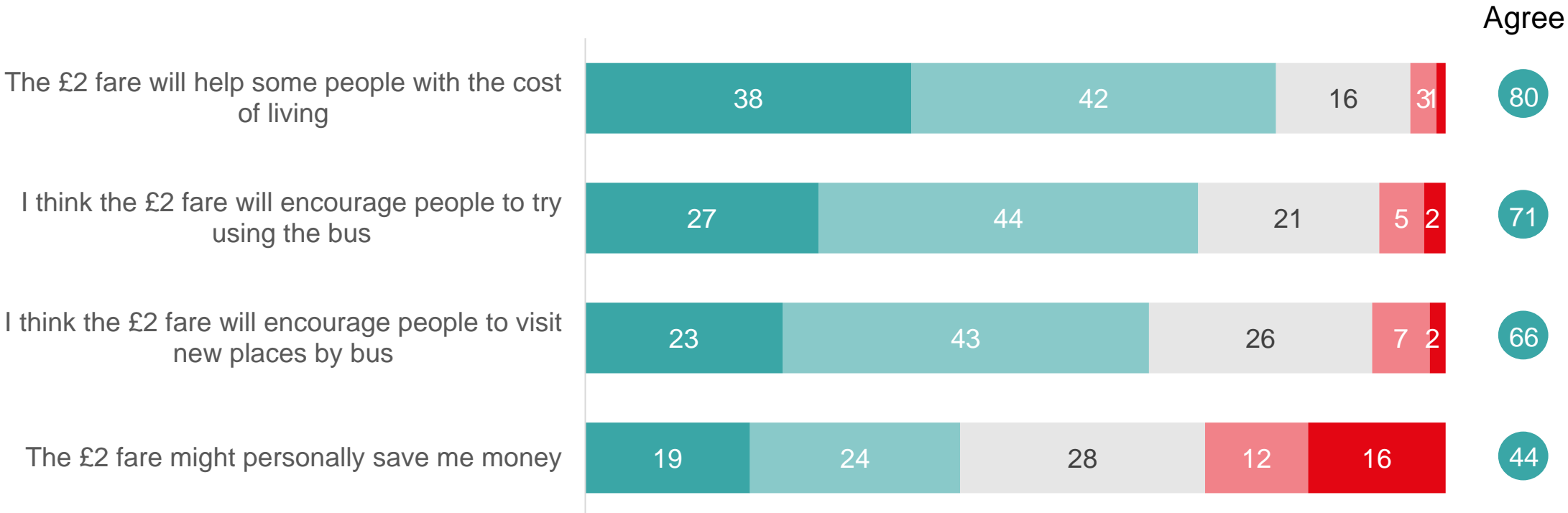
Q. Which of these describes the types of journeys you might make in the future because of the £2 fare?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size: 339.



Views on the £2 fare cap

Eight in 10 agree the £2 fare cap will help people with the cost of living and more than four in 10 think it might save them money personally



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

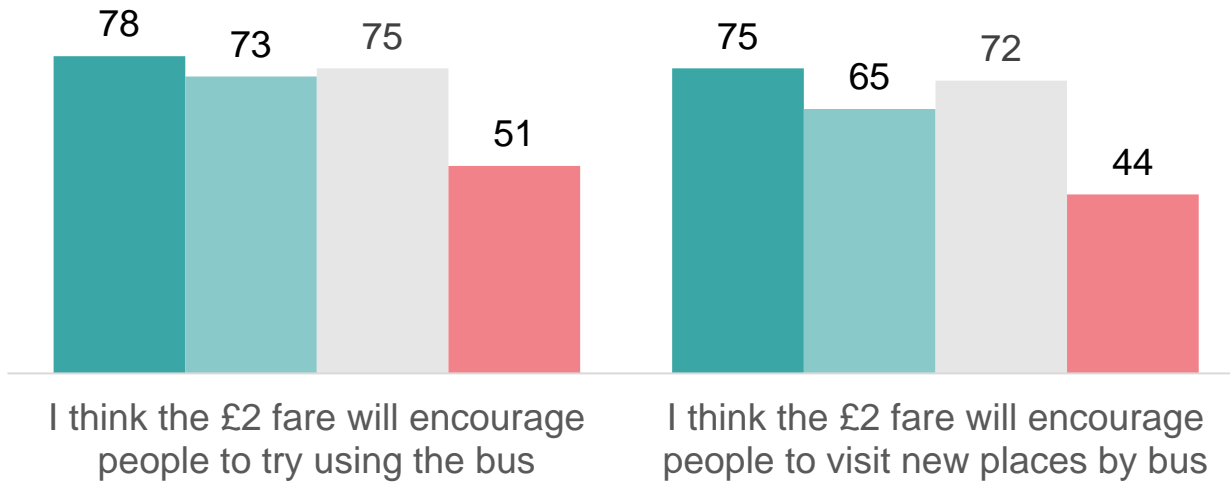
Values shown are percentages

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the £2 bus fare?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size: 1111



A similar proportion of current bus-users, and those who don't use the bus now but are open to doing so, agree that new journeys and users are likely



Highest agreement that the £2 capped fare will encourage people to try the bus (71% overall)

55-64s	74%
North West	78%
South West	79%

- Use buses weekly or more
- Use buses monthly or less
- Non-user open to use
- Non-user not open

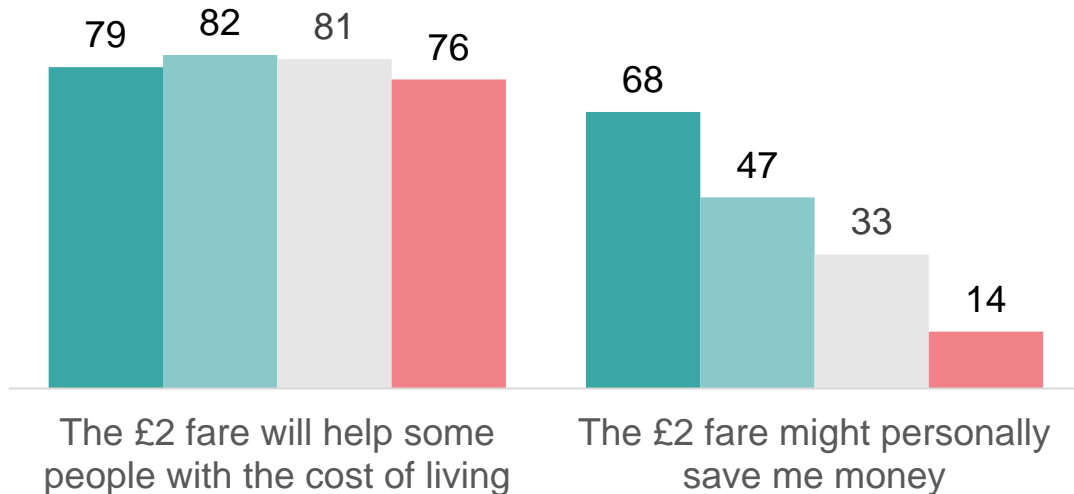
Values shown are percentages

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the £2 bus fare?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size: 1111

Widespread agreement that the £2 fare will help some people with the cost of living.

More frequent bus users most likely to think they might personally save. A third of those non-users who are open to potentially using bus agree they might save.



■ Use buses weekly or more

■ Use buses monthly or less

■ Non-user open to use

■ Non-user not open

Values shown are percentages

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the £2 bus fare?

Awareness and effect of £2 bus fare: March 2023. Those living within England outside of London and age under 65. Sample size: 1111

Highest agreement that the £2 capped fare might personally save them money (44% overall)

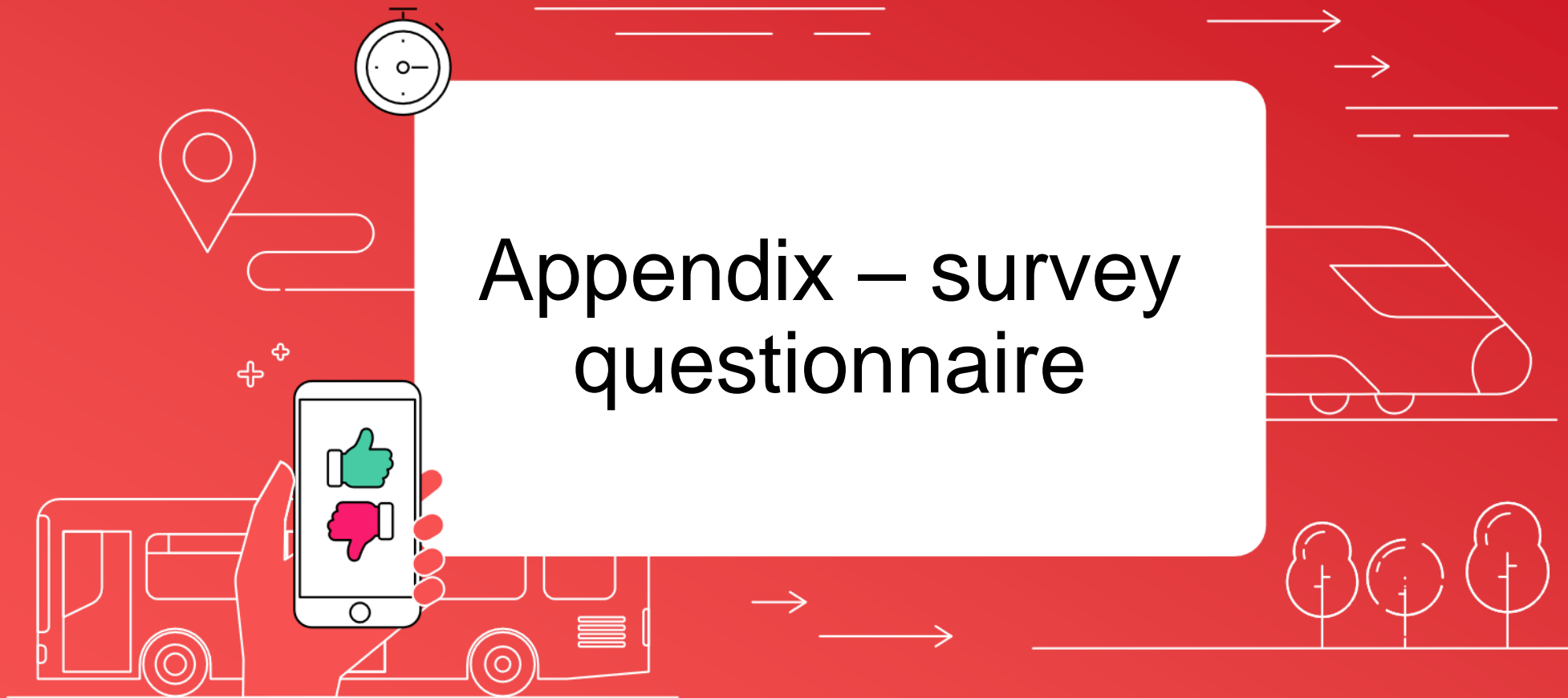
18-24's 54%

South West 53%

North West (care: small base) 52%

No access to car 53%

Appendix – survey questionnaire



Survey questions: awareness and effect of £2 bus fare

Q. Which of these best describes how you use buses?

- a) Use at least several times a week
- b) Use around once a week
- c) Use at least once a month
- d) Use every few months
- e) Use only once a twice a year or less
- f) Never use buses but might consider using them
- g) Never use buses and would never consider them

Q. Are you aware that many bus companies outside London have introduced a capped or maximum fare of £2 for a single journey?

- a) Yes, I was aware
- b) I might have heard something
- c) No, I wasn't aware

Q. Have you used the £2 fare for any bus journeys?

- a) Yes, definitely
- b) Yes, possibly
- c) No
- d) Not sure

Q. Does the £2 capped fare make any difference to your use of buses?

- a) Yes – I am already using buses more
- b) Yes – I might use buses more but haven't yet
- c) No – it makes no difference

Q. You said you're using buses more. Which of these describes how you're using them more because of the £2 fare? MULTICODE

- a) I am using the bus instead of using the car for journeys I would have made
- b) I am using the bus instead of walking or cycling for journeys I would have made
- c) I am using the bus instead of using the train or tram for journeys I would have made
- d) I am going more often to places I already go to on the bus
- e) I am going to places by bus that I wouldn't have gone before

Q. Which of these describes the types of journeys you might make in the future because of the £2 fare? MULTICODE

- a) I might use the bus instead of using the car for some journeys I make
- b) I might use the bus instead of walking or cycling for some journeys I make
- c) I might use the bus instead of using the train or tram for some journeys I make
- d) I might go to places by bus that I wouldn't go to otherwise

Q Please tell us how and why the £2 capped fare [PIPE IN BASED ON Q3 ANSWER: has made you use buses more/might make you use buses more/ makes no difference to your bus use]

Q How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the £2 bus fare...scale strongly agree to strongly disagree

- a) The £2 fare might personally save me money
- b) I think the £2 fare will encourage people to try using the bus
- c) The £2 fare will help some people with the cost of living
- d) I don't think the £2 fare will make a difference to how much people like me use buses
- e) I think the £2 fare will encourage people to visit new places by bus

Contact

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

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

- rail passengers in Great Britain
- bus, coach and tram users across England outside London
- all users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads (the Strategic Road Network).

We work to make a difference for all transport users.

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