in Lancashire

Life in Lancashire
Wave 20
Transport Information

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Lancashire County Council

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1 Executive Summary

This wave of the Life in Lancashire panel dealt with the public's awareness of transport information and their preferences for accessing it. All 1742 members of the panel were sent a single mailing of the survey. In total 1172 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 67%.

1.1 Current transport information use

- The vast majority of the public think that it is easy to get information on public transport (73%).

- The internet is the most frequently used way of accessing a variety of transport information, such as car journey and train information. Printed information is preferred for bus information (eg at the stop), and other information types are preferred for road delay information (eg via radio).

- For bus information at bus stops, similar proportions would prefer a timetable showing all departures from the stop and a full timetable (43% and 39% respectively). Most people think bus timetable leaflets are easy to use (62%).

1.2 Internet and mobile phone information

- Four in five panel members have access to the internet (79%), with the majority having access at home (71%). Most people with internet access use it every day (63%).

- The most well known travel website was **nationalrail.co.uk**, which the majority of respondents had heard of, used before or used regularly (58%). Three in ten have heard of or used **traveline.info**, and one in five have heard of or used **transportforlancashire.com**.

- Close to half of respondents have used a journey planner. The most likely use was for longer car journeys (77%).

- Nine in ten panel members have a mobile phone. Only 1.4% of these have used the SMS next bus information service (5% of those who use the bus daily or weekly).

1.3 Real-time information

- The most preferred source of real-time information was at point of access, such as the bus station, train station or car park. The next most popular method was on electronic displays, followed by internet access.

- Almost all panel members who expressed an opinion on electronic car park information signs found them useful (95%). Nine in ten people who have used electronic bus stop signs have found them useful (90%).

1.4 Conclusions

- There is a wide range of preferences for accessing transport information, with differences depending on type of transport and the person accessing it. The internet is now seen as the main way to access certain types of travel information and access to it is now very high. Therefore improving online information services must be a priority, perhaps with particularly for bus information, since internet access is lower for this than for other transport types.

- It is however important to ensure there are still other ways to access transport information such as by printed media, especially for people aged 60 years or over, who less likely to have access to the internet.

- As only 5% of regular bus users have used the SMS next bus information service, this is an area to improve in the future, especially as the vast majority have a mobile phone.

- Electronic information signs are seen as useful in car parks and bus stops. As the general preference for real-time information is at the point of access, add more electronic information signs where possible.

2 Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Life in Lancashire regularly since August 2001. A panel of willing participants is recruited and is approached on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics and themes. Panel members are voluntary participants in the research they complete and no incentives are given for completion.

The panel has been designed to be a representative cross-section of the county's population. The results for each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the county's population.

The panel provides access to a sufficiently large sample of the population so that reliable results can be reported at a county wide level. It also provides data at a number of sub-area and sub-group levels.

Each Life in Lancashire wave is themed. Firstly, it enables sufficient coverage on a particular topic to be able to provide insight into that topic. And secondly, it comes across better to the residents completing the questionnaires if there is a clear theme (or 2-3 clear themes) within each survey.

The panel is refreshed periodically. New members are recruited to the panel and some current members are retired on a random basis. This means that the panel remains fresh and is not subject to conditioning i.e. the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole.

3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this consultation are:

- to gain an awareness of the types of transport information the public of Lancashire use, and their preferences for it.

4 Methodology

This wave of Life in Lancashire was sent to 1749 members of the panel on 21 November. No reminder was sent, and the fieldwork ended on 14 December 2007.

In total 1172 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 67%.

All data are weighted by age, ethnicity and district to reflect the Lancashire overall population, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. The weighted responses have been scaled down to match the effective response of 969, which is the equivalent size of the data if it had not been weighted and was a perfect random sample.

4.1 Limitations

The table below shows the sample tolerances that apply to the results in this survey. Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample as well as the percentage results.

Number of respondents	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50	14%	13%	8%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%
500	4%	4%	3%
1000	3%	3%	2%
2000	2%	2%	1%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1000 respond with a particular answer, the chance are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 47% and 53% (ie +/- 3%), versus a complete coverage of the entire Lancashire population using the same procedure.

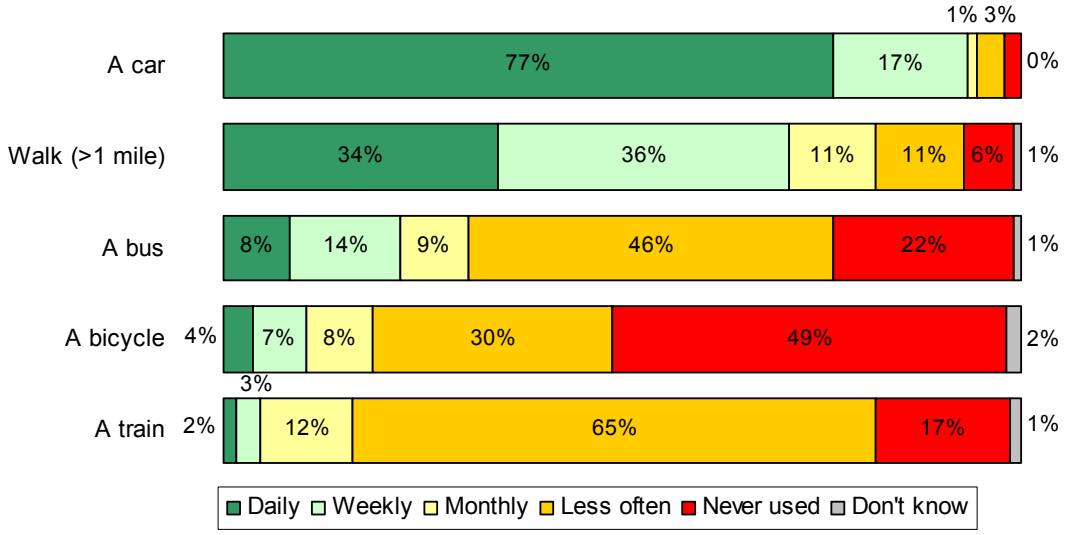
In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

5 Main Research Findings

5.1 Current transport information use

The first questions on travel information in Lancashire dealt with the ways that panel members access travel information. The first question though was to ascertain which types of transport members of the panel use, and how often. This is shown in the chart below.

Chart 1 - How often do you use each of the following modes of transport?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Most respondents use a car daily (77%), though this increases to five in six for those in rural areas (83% use daily). There is also a difference by socio-economic grade, with panel members from the highest AB[1] grades significantly more likely to use a car daily (86%) than those in grades C1 (76%) or DE (70%).

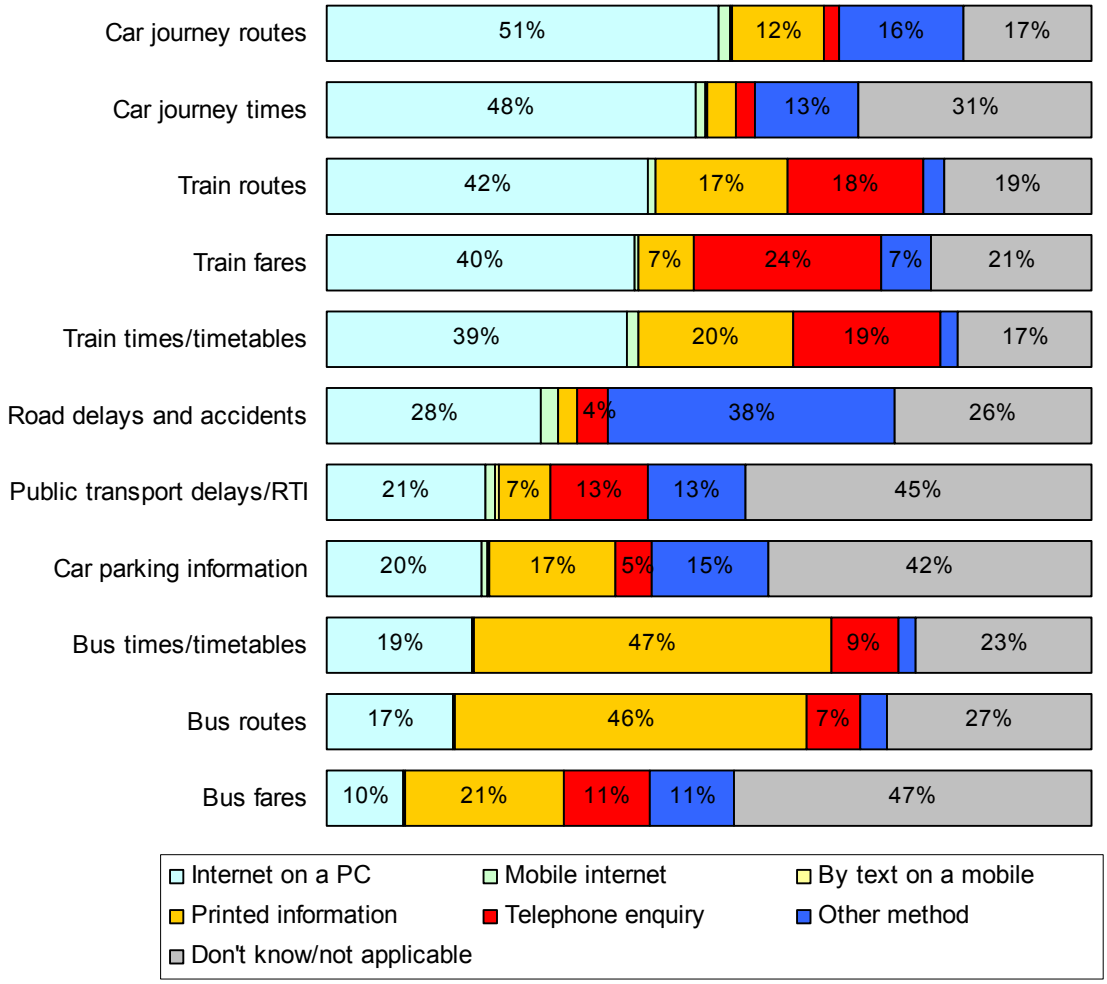
A third of the panel walk more than a mile daily, with no differences demographically. Less than one in ten respondents use the bus daily (8%), and just over one in five use the bus weekly or more often (22%). There is a great difference in bus use by age, with those aged 60 years and over much more likely to use the bus daily or weekly (35%) than those aged 45 to 59 years (20%) or 25 to 44 years (15%). This is also reflected in working figures, since only 13% of those working full-time and 14% of those working part-time use the bus daily or weekly, compared with 30% of those not working (eg retired). This may suggest that the bus is often not seen as convenient for work, (as well as being linked to subsidised bus travel amongst the over 60s).

[1] See Appendix 6.1 for socio-economic group definitions

Only 11% of respondents ride a bicycle daily or weekly, while only 5% use the train daily or weekly.

The next set of questions asked how panel members get their travel information, whether from the internet on a PC or mobile, by text, printed information, telephone or another method. These are shown below, ranked by internet use.

Chart 2 - How do you usually find out about the following types of travel information?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

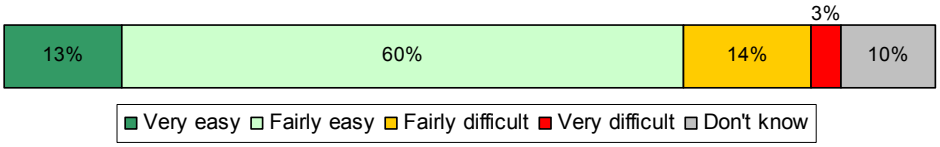
While internet use is the most common method for many types of travel information, there is marked difference by age. For information on car journey routes for example, the proportion using the internet decreases with age, varying from four in five of those aged less than 25 years (79%), two-thirds of those aged 35 to 44 years (64%) and just over half of respondents aged 45 to 59 years (55%). This contrasts with only a quarter of those aged 60 years and over (24%). This suggests that while internet use is

increasingly being seen as the main source of transport information for many people, it is important that it should not be the only source.

While the internet is the most frequently used method for car journey and train information, it is less likely to be used for bus information, where printed information is preferred, suggesting that the needs are met at the bus stop. The other area where the internet is less used is for road delays and accidents, where other information types are preferred, such as updates via radio. This perhaps reflects a need for information while travelling, rather than looking before setting off.

The next question asked respondents how easy they thought it is to get public transport information generally. The vast majority thought it was very or fairly easy to do so (73%): only about one in six thought that it was difficult (17%). There were no significant differences by demographic subgroup, though respondents who have used the bus in the last month were twice as likely to say that it was very easy (20% versus 10% of those who don't use the bus).

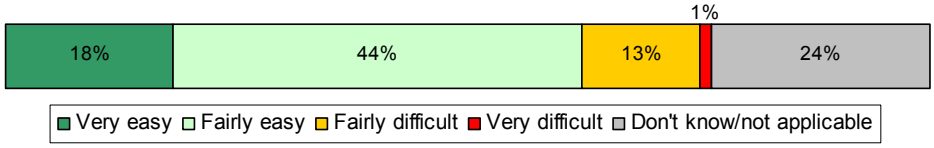
Chart 3 - How easy or difficult do you think it is to get information on public transport?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Most people think bus timetable leaflets are easy to use (62%). Again bus users are about twice as likely to say the leaflets are very easy to use (27% versus 15%).

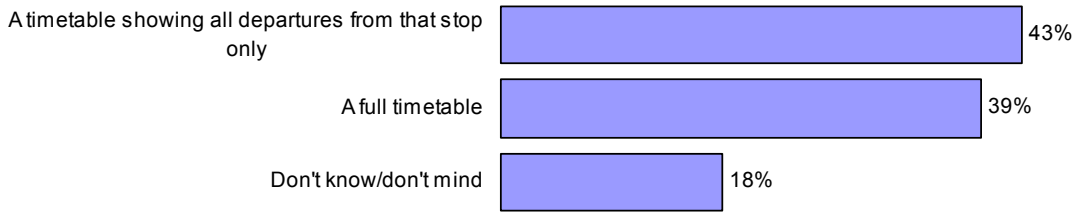
Chart 4 - How easy or difficult do you think bus timetable leaflets are to use?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

At bus stops, similar proportions of the panel would prefer a timetable showing all departures from the stop (43%), and a full timetable (39%).

Chart 5 - Which type of printed timetable information would you prefer to be displayed at bus stops?

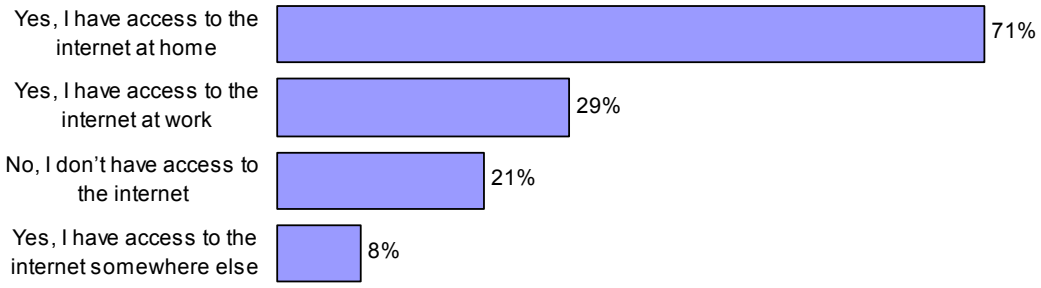


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

5.2 Internet information

The next set of questions looked into the use of transport information over the internet. The first question asked whether respondents have access to the internet. Seven in ten panel members have access to the internet at home (71%)[2], and four in five have access overall, (only 21% do not have access to the internet).

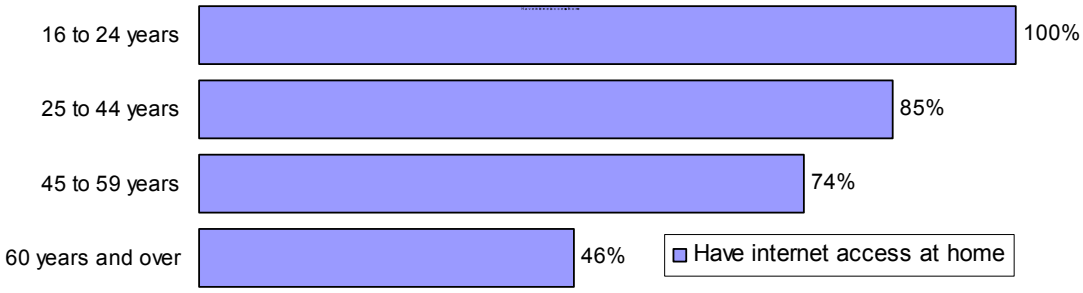
Chart 6 - Do you have access to the internet?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

As might be expected, internet access varies strongly by age. Internet access at home varies from 100% of panel members aged 16 to 24 years[3], to only 46% of those aged 60 years or over. Half of respondents aged 60 years or more have no way to access the internet (47%).

Chart 7 - Home internet access by age group



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

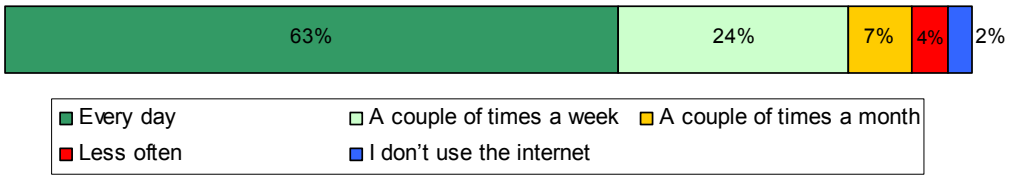
There is also a strong difference in home internet access by socio-economic group, with those from the highest grades AB (82%) and C1 (78%) having significantly greater access than those from C2 (60%) and DE (56%) groups. Panel members who are defined as low service users (those who have used six or less public services in the last 12 months) are significantly more likely to not have any internet access (37%) than those who are medium and high service users (18% and 12% respectively).

[2] This compares with 61% of UK households having access to the internet from National Statistics research http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/inta0807.pdf.

[3] Note small base for this group

The majority of those with internet access use it every day (63%), supporting the earlier finding of the internet as the most popular access point for many types of transport information.

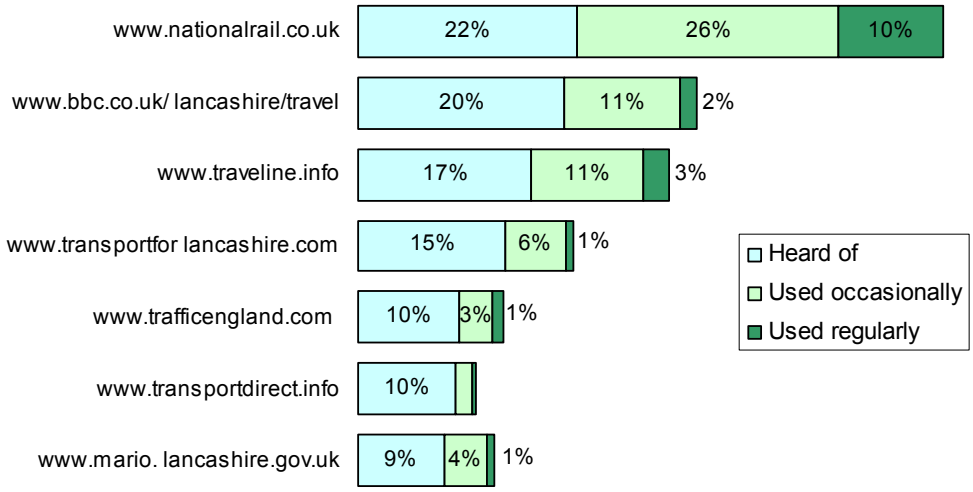
Chart 8 - How often, if at all, do you use the internet?



Base: All respondents with internet access (Unweighted 919, Weighted 801)

Next members of Life in Lancashire were asked if they had heard or used any of a list of travel websites. The most well known was **nationalrail.co.uk**, which the majority of respondents had either heard of or used, and one in ten use regularly (10%). Three in ten have heard of or used **traveline.info**, and one in five have heard of or used **transportforlancashire.com**. It may be worth bearing in mind here that the respondents here are members of a local authority panel, and therefore may be more aware of local travel sites than members of the public generally.

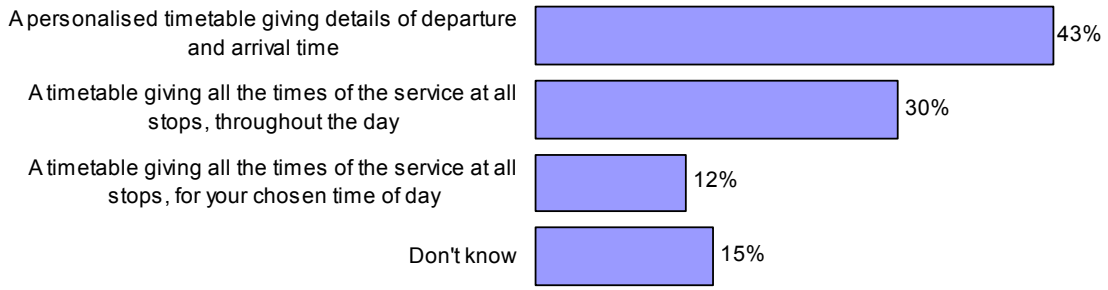
Chart 9 - Which, if any, of the following travel information websites have you used, or heard of?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

The preference for online public transport timetable information would be for personalised timetables (43%), though three in ten preferred a timetable giving times at all stops throughout the day (30%).

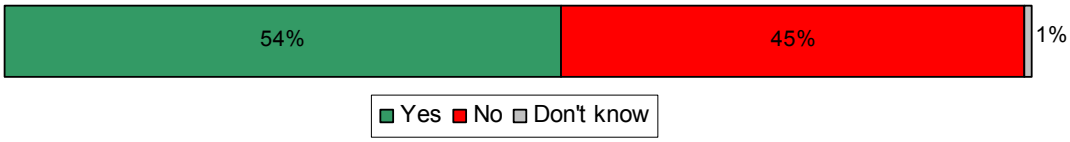
Chart 10 - If you were looking on the internet for timetable information about a public transport service what type of information would you prefer?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Just over half of respondents have used an internet journey planner (54%). Reflecting lower internet use, the oldest age group (60 years and above) have used journey planners the least (29%).

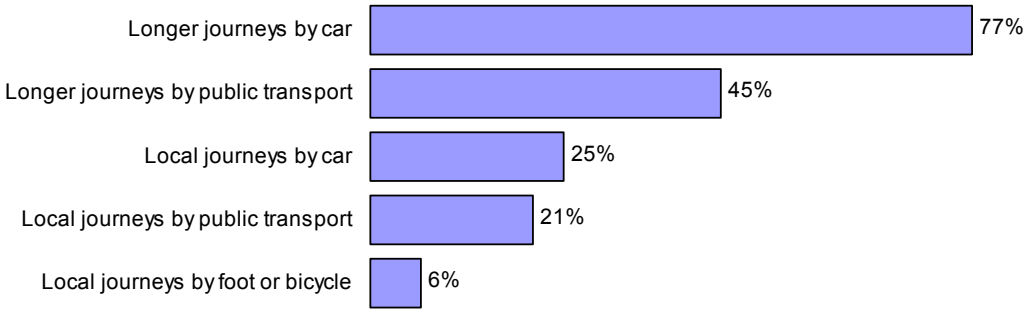
Chart 11 - Have you ever used an internet-based journey planner?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Panel members are most likely to use journey planners for long journeys by car (77%), particularly those who have used journey planners before (88%). Close to half answer they would be likely to use it for longer journeys by public transport (45%).

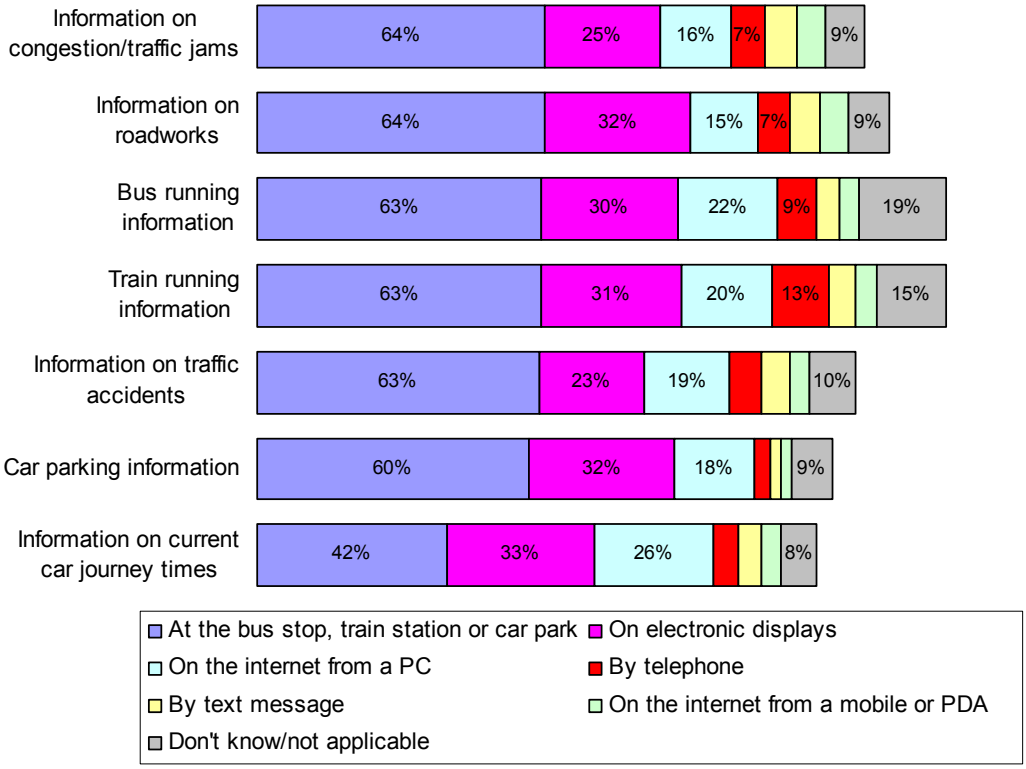
Chart 12 - Which types of journeys would you be likely to use a journey planner for?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

The next question asked how respondents would prefer to receive real-time transport information. The preference was for information at point of access, with between 42% and 64% preferring information at the bus station, train station or car park. The next most popular method was on electronic displays. Internet access was only the third most preferred method of real-time access, reflecting that this information will often be needed when people are travelling rather than at home.

Chart 13 - How would you prefer to receive, if at all, the following types of real-time information?

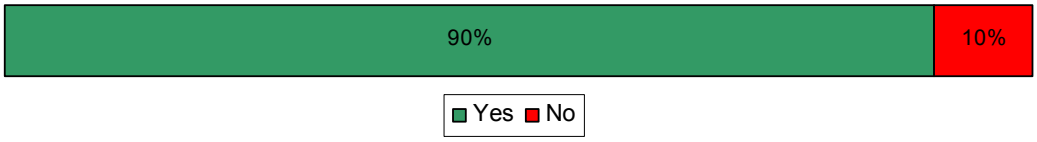


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

5.3 Mobile phone access

Nine in ten members of the panel have a mobile phone (90%). This varies by age, from 95% or more of those aged up to 59 years, to three-quarters of those aged 60 or over (77%).

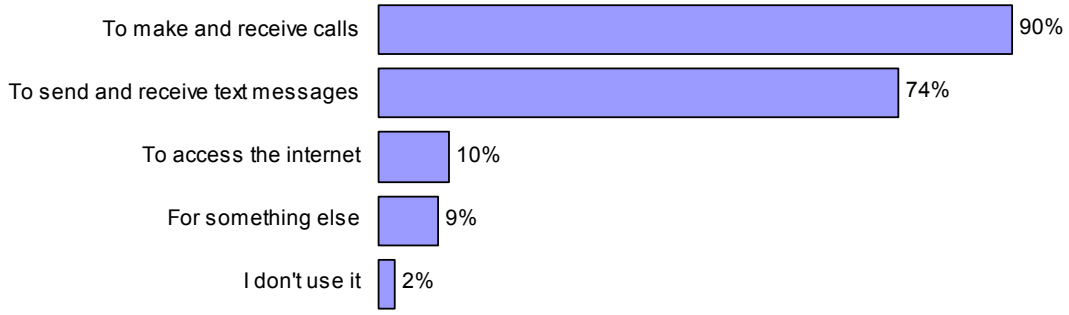
Chart 14 - Do you have a mobile phone?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Nine in ten of those with mobile phones use them to make and receive calls (90%), and three-quarters use them for text messages (74%). A minority use them to access the internet (10%, increasing to 17% of those aged 25 to 44 years).

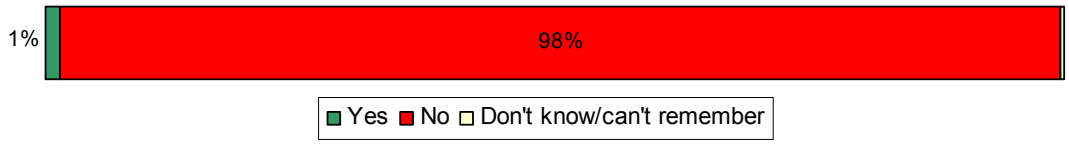
Chart 15 - What do you use your mobile phone for?



Base: All respondents with a mobile phone (Unweighted 1017, Weighted 871)

Only 1.4% of the panel have used the SMS next bus information service. One in twenty respondents who use the bus daily or weekly have used the SMS service (5%).

Chart 16 - Have you ever used the mobile phone SMS next bus information service?

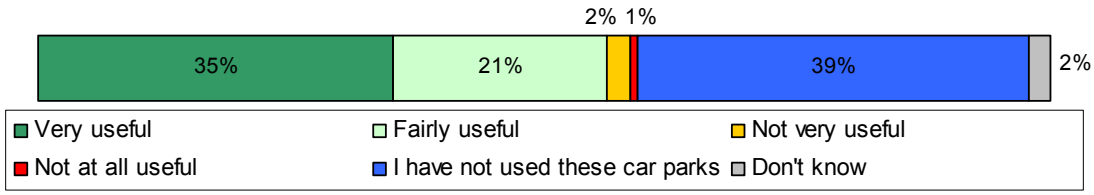


Base: All respondents with a mobile phone (Unweighted 1017, Weighted 871)

5.4 Electronic information signs

The final section of the questionnaire on transport information asked about electronic information signs. The first question asked about these signs for car parking. Almost all people who had used car parks with electronic signs found them useful (95% of those expressing an opinion rating them as very or fairly useful).

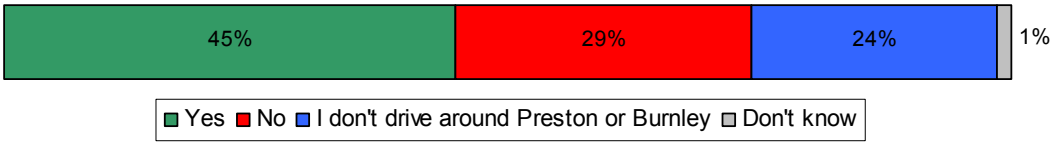
Chart 17 - In Preston, Chorley and Burnley electronic car park information signs have been installed on the roads approaching the large car parks. They show the number of parking spaces available. If you have used any of these car parks, how useful did you find this parking information?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

The next question asked for awareness of driver information signs in Preston and Burnley. Close to half the population are aware of these signs (45%). Awareness is highest in Burnley (83%, which compares with only 59% in Preston, the next highest district.)

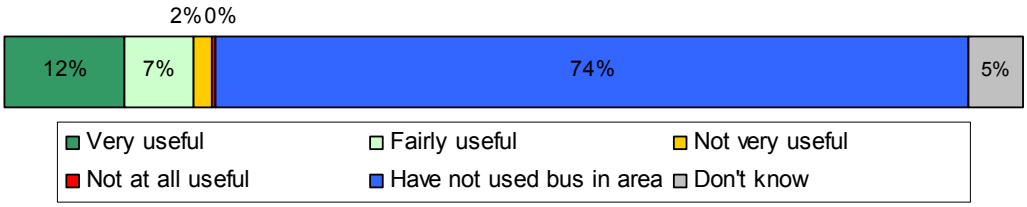
Chart 18 - On some roads in Preston and Burnley large electronic driver information signs have been installed that can display different messages. Are you aware of these signs?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

The final question asked for an opinion on electronic bus signs in Preston and Leyland. As would be expected, only Preston and South Ribble districts have a sizeable proportion of the population who express an opinion. In Preston, three in five express an opinion (59%), and in South Ribble two in five do (42%). Of these, nine in ten people find them very or fairly useful, (Preston 89%, South Ribble 91%), with about half find them very useful (Preston 52% and South Ribble 45%). This suggests that electronic bus signs have been successful in Preston and South Ribble.

Chart 19 - At certain bus stops in Preston, and on the route between Leyland and Preston, electronic bus stop signs have been installed. Do you find these useful?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

6 Appendix

6.1 Socio-Economic-Group Definitions

These groups are based on Market Research Society definitions and on the respondent. They are graded as A, B, C1, C2, D and E.

Group A

- Professional people, very senior managers in business or commerce or top-level civil servants.
- Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows

Group B

- Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications
- Principle officers in local government and civil service
- Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments
- Retired people previously grade B, and their widows

Group C1

- Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions
- Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements
- Retired people, previously grade C1, and their widows

Group C2

- All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers for responsibility for other people
- Retired people, previously grade C2, with pensions from their job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group D

- All semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers
- Retired people, previously grade D, with pensions from their late job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group E

- All those entirely dependant on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons
- Those unemployed for a period exceeding six months (otherwise classified on previous occupation)
- Casual workers and those without a regular income