

Transport Service

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Home to School Transport Parents Survey

Research study for
SEN Transport Service

November 2003

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1 Executive Summary

The home to school transport parents survey was commissioned by Transport Policy – Bus Service Procurement for the purpose of finding out the current levels of user satisfaction with the Special Education Needs (SEN) home to school transport service. This information will be used to assess how effective the Best Value improvements have been.

A questionnaire was sent to 600 parents or carers of children who use Lancashire County Council's SEN home to school transport service. 242 questionnaires were returned giving an overall response rate of 40%.

Overall the level of satisfaction with the home to school transport service is high with 93% of respondents being satisfied with the overall service. 35% of parents also feel that the service has improved since their child has had transport, showing a trend towards an improving service.

The survey tested user satisfaction and importance on a number of key service attributes. These include service punctuality and reliability, condition and suitability of vehicles used, service given by staff, perceptions of their child's safety and information from Lancashire County Council about their child's transport.

All service attributes have shown an improvement in user satisfaction since 2001, on average 8% over all aspects. The most significant improvement is in information provision about their child's transport, although this still has the lowest satisfaction level.

The main recommendations are:

- Improve punctuality and reliability of transport, especially taxis.
- Improve the quantity and quality of the information that is provided to service users.
- Make sure parents are kept informed of changes or delays to their child's transport.
- Ensure appropriate training is provided to passenger assistants so they are able to cope with the varying special needs of the children they escort.
- Where possible make sure passenger assistants are on minibuses.

- Maintain the continuity of escort and driver because they know the special needs of the children and the children feel safer with people they have come to know, allowing a good relationship to be built up between the child and escort/driver.
- Make sure complaints are acted upon as soon as possible and give staff the autonomy or appropriate chain of command to make decisions.
- Investigate complaints further on a regular basis to identify what complaints go unresolved or have an unsatisfactory outcome. This enables appropriate changes to be made.

2 Introduction

Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport provides return transport from home to school/college for children with special educational needs.

Over the past three years Best Value reviews have been operating at Lancashire County Council. Best Value aims to examine and challenge the ways in which services are provided to the general public in Lancashire. As part of this process school transport services have been reviewed. The aim was to reflect the views of service users in the way services are delivered.

Research carried out in October 2001, by RBA on behalf of Lancashire County Council, established levels of user satisfaction and areas for improvement within SEN transport.

3 Research Objectives

The SEN parents survey was undertaken to provide data so that Best Value improvements to the service can be evaluated. The 2001 survey results provide a basis for comparison that will identify any changes in levels of user satisfaction. The 2003 survey also provides a basis for measuring changes to user satisfaction levels in the future.

The main themes of the questionnaire were:

- Overall satisfaction with SEN home to school transport
- Levels of satisfaction with different service aspects
- Identifying the most important factors in SEN home to school transport
- Monitoring complaints, and complaint resolution

A copy of the covering letter can be found in Appendix 2 and a copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 3.

4 Methodology

The SEN parents home to school transport survey was a 4-page self-completion postal questionnaire. It was sent to a random sample of 600 parents whose children receive SEN home to school transport. The sample was obtained from a list of approximately 3,000 children who receive SEN home to school transport.

An almost identical questionnaire was used for both the 2001 and 2003 surveys to enable accurate comparison.

The questionnaires were posted on Wednesday 8 October 2003. Fieldwork was undertaken over a period of two weeks, ending on Friday 24 October 2003.

No incentive for respondents to complete the questionnaire was given. In total 242 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 40%.

All data are unweighted, figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated.

5 Limitations

The survey produced only a small sample of 242 people. This means that the data could not be compared on many different breaks due to the risk of statistical errors. This has meant that comparisons cannot be made between children whose transport is bus, ambulance or coach because there are too few people in each sub group.

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 Respondents	of 50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50	14%	13%	8%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%
240	6%	6%	4%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 240 respond with a particular answer, the chance are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 44% and 56% (ie +/- 6%), versus a complete coverage of the entire customer base using the same procedure.

The following table shows what the percentage differences between two samples on a given statistic must be greater than, to be statistically significant.

Size of Sample A	Size of Sample B	50/50	70/30	90/10
50	50	20%	18%	12%
50	100	17%	16%	10%
100	100	14%	13%	8%
200	200	10%	9%	6%
260	230	9%	8%	5%

(Confidence interval at 95% certainty for a comparison of two samples)

For example, for two samples of 100 responses in each at around 50% of responses in each category to be compared, the difference needs to be over 14% to be statistically significant. This is to say that the difference is not due to chance alone.

6 Main Research Findings

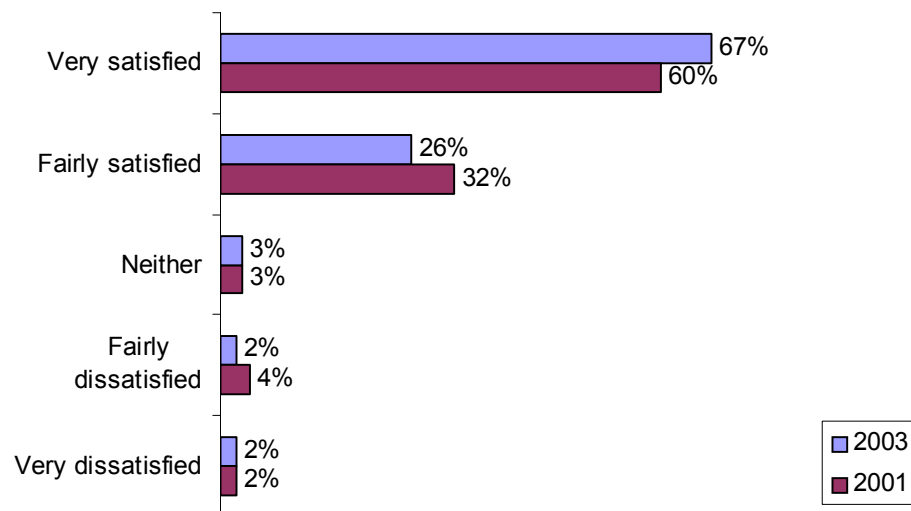
A marked up questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 and all qualitative comments from question 17 are in Appendix 4.

6.1 Overall Satisfaction with SEN Home to School Transport

Respondents were asked overall how satisfied they were with the SEN transport service. This gives a picture of general perceptions of user satisfaction with the SEN home to school transport.

On the whole, there are high levels of user satisfaction with SEN home to school transport, with 93% of parents being satisfied with the service.

Chart 1 - Overall satisfaction with SEN home to school transport



Base: all respondents - 2003 (239), 2001 (263)

This high level of user satisfaction does not differ significantly between modes of transport that are provided (ie taxi, minibus, bus, ambulance or coach), age, gender or ethnicity of child. This demonstrates that the home to school transport services each type of user equally well.

Parents were asked if the service had improved since their child has been having transport. The results are in the table below.

Since your child has had transport has the service overall...?	
Got better	35%
Stayed the same	59%
Got worse	6%

Base of all respondents: 239

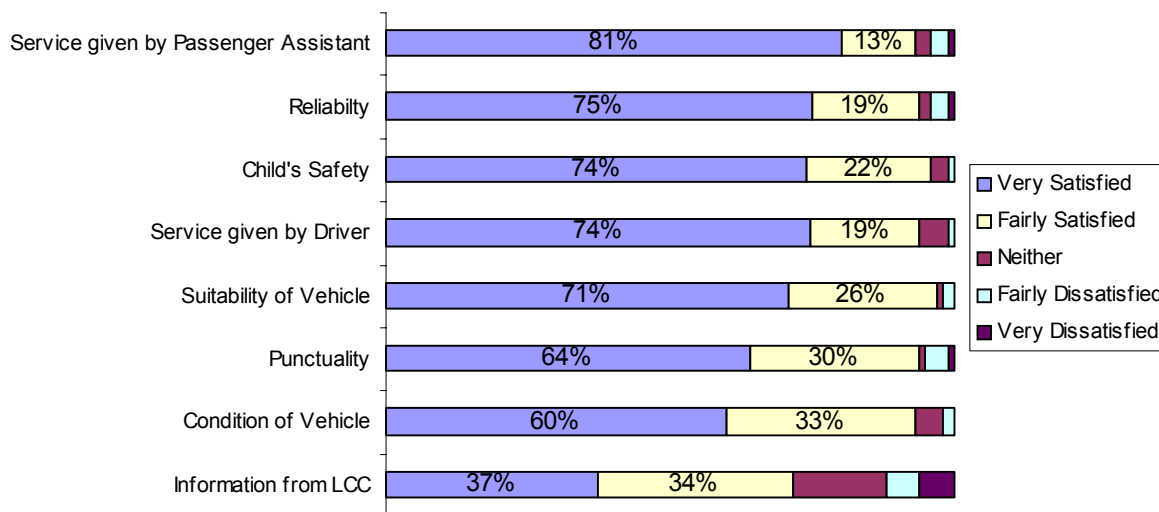
A third of parents felt that the service their child receives has improved (35%), over a half felt it had stayed the same (59%), and significantly only a minority of 6% felt that the overall service had worsened. There are no significant differences when looking at type of transport, gender, age or ethnicity and improvements to the overall service. From this we can see that parents feel the service is improving over time.

6.2 Satisfaction Levels with Different Service Aspects

Service users were asked about a number of different service aspects, which included:

- Punctuality of transport
- Reliability of transport
- Suitability of transport
- Condition of the vehicle used
- Perceptions of their child's safety on the journey
- Overall service given by the driver
- Overall service given by the passenger assistant/escort
- Information they receive from Lancashire County Council about their child's transport

All service aspects have a high level of satisfaction, with all service aspects being rated between 92% and 97% total satisfaction. The only exception is the satisfaction with information provided by the Council, which has a total satisfaction of 71%. Across all service aspects the average total satisfaction is high at 92%.

Chart 2 - Satisfaction with Service Aspects

Base: all respondents (239)

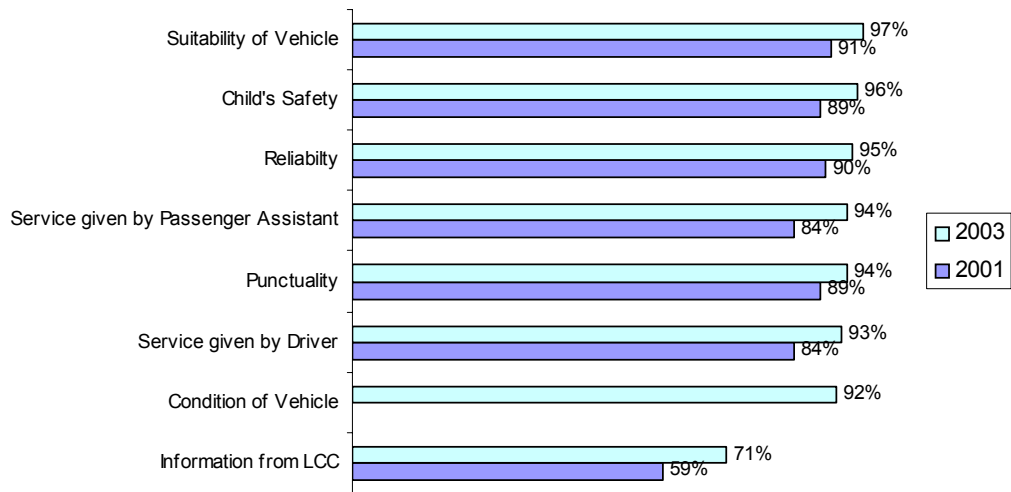
Satisfaction is greatest for the service given by passenger assistant with 81% of parents being very satisfied. Satisfaction levels are also very high for reliability, child's safety, service given by driver, and suitability of vehicle which all have over 70% of parents being very satisfied.

A particular area for improvement is the information provided by Lancashire County about their child's transport. This is evident because only 37% were very satisfied, with less than three-quarters of respondents being satisfied with the information provided (total satisfaction is 71%).

The only difference between satisfaction levels for different modes of transport is for punctuality. Parents are less satisfied with the taxi service than they are with the minibus service (a difference of 9% between the total satisfaction for these two modes of transport).

It is possible to compare the 2003 results to the 2001 survey results because the same questions were asked, with the exception of the question about the condition of the vehicle used being added to the 2003 questionnaire. The total average satisfaction level in 2001 was 84%, which represents a significant improvement in total satisfaction (an increase of 8%) over the last two years.

Chart 3 - Service Attributes Total Satisfaction



Base: all respondents - 2003 (240), 2001 (263)

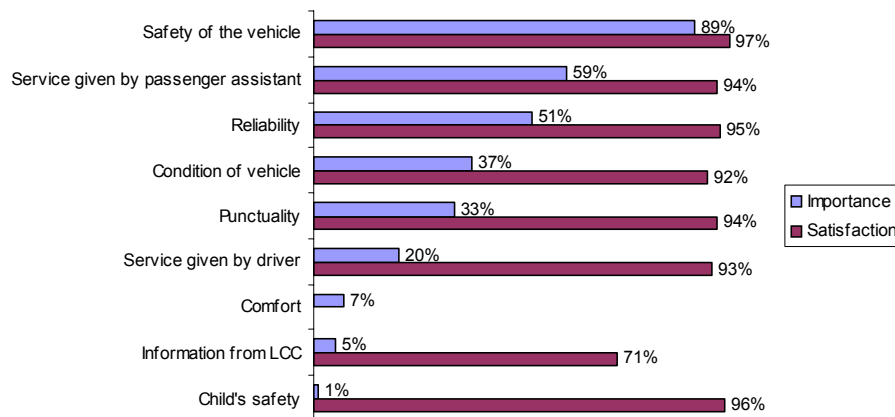
All service aspects show a significant improvement in total satisfaction over the last two years. The areas of the SEN home to school transport that have improved the most are information provided by the Council, the service given by the passenger assistant and the service given by the driver. This is important because the information provided by the Council was one of the areas for improvement highlighted in the 2001 survey. This shows progress in the right direction, although there is still room for improvement.

6.3 Importance of Service Aspects

Respondents were asked which of the service aspects, listed in 6.2, were the most important in SEN home to school transport.

The three most important aspects of SEN home to school transport are the safety of the vehicle that is used, service given by the passenger assistant and the reliability of the service. By far the most important to parents is the safety of the vehicle used to transport their children, having 89% of the respondents citing this (30% more people cited this than the next aspect).

Chart 4 - Importance of Service Aspects



Base: all respondents (238)

Of the three most important service aspects parents were satisfied with them all¹. No significant improvements are needed but the level of service must be maintained to move more people into the very satisfied categories. There are differences in parents' views on levels of importance.

- Parents are more concerned about the service given by the passenger assistant where their child is transported in a minibus (66%) rather than a taxi (49%), and when their child is under 11 (71%) rather than when their child is older (53% between age of 11 to 16). Parents may feel that younger children and those travelling in groups on a minibus need good passenger assistants to ensure their child's safety on the journey.
- Parents are more concerned about the punctuality of the service when using a taxi (41%) than when a minibus is used (28%). This may be because parents are less satisfied with the punctuality of taxis (89%) compared to the punctuality of a minibus (98%). An area for improvement could therefore be to improve the punctuality of the taxi service.

¹ The importance of safety of the vehicle is compared with the satisfaction of suitability of the vehicle.

6.4 Complaints

The questionnaire looked at how many service users have complained, who was contacted, what they complained about, the ease of the process of making a complaint, and how satisfied they were with the outcome.

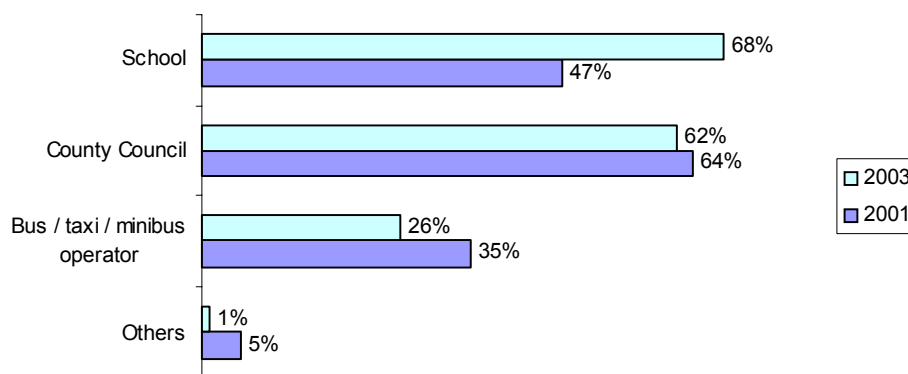
Number of complaints:

Out of 242 respondents' a third (31%) had complained about the SEN home to school transport. Complaints are evenly distributed over type of transport used, gender and ethnicity. Parents are more likely to complain when their child has a long-standing illness or disability (19% more parents complain when their child has a disability). There are more parents who complain when their child is aged between 11 to 16 (38%) than when the child is aged under 11 (24%).

Who was contacted about the complaint:

Out of the 74 respondents who have complained the majority contacted the school (68%) or the County Council (62%), while only a quarter (26%) contacted the bus / taxi / minibus operator and 1% contacted the escort. More people are contacting the schools with their complaints than they were in 2001 (an increase of 21%).

Chart 5 - Who was contacted about the complaint

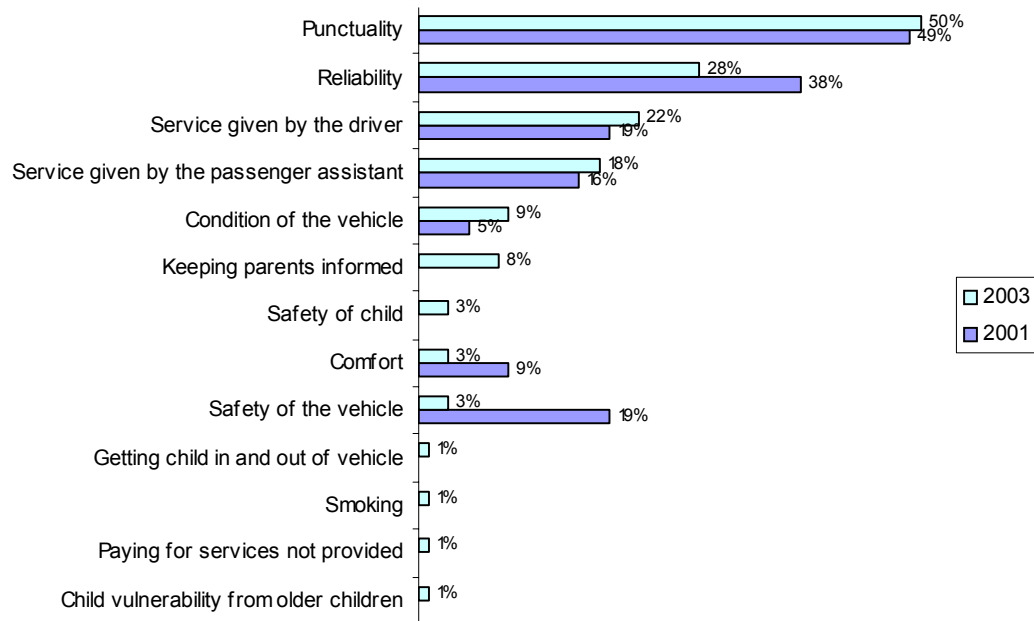


Base: all respondents making a complaint - 2003 (74), 2001 (95)

What was the complaint about:

Parents were asked to state what they complained about. Half of respondents had complained about the punctuality of the service, followed by reliability (28%), service given by the driver (22%) and service given by the passenger assistant (18%). These are similar to the most common complaints in 2001, although there are now fewer complaints about the safety of the vehicle, a reduction of 16%.

Chart 6 - Reasons for Complaints



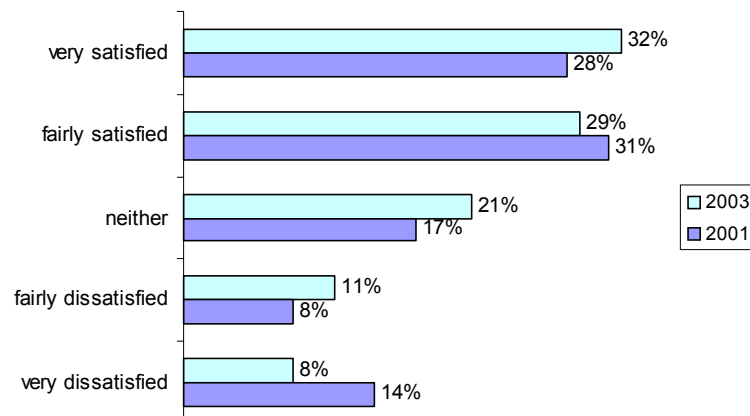
Base: all respondents making a complaint - 2003 (74), 2001 (95)

There are no significant differences between the type of complaint and the type of transport, gender, age or ethnicity of the child.

Satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint:

When asked about their satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint over half of parents were satisfied (61%), and half of those satisfied were very satisfied (32%). Although a significant proportion (19%) were dissatisfied with the outcome. These results are similar to those from 2001, showing there has not been a significant improvement in the effectiveness of complaint handling.

Chart 7 - Satisfaction with outcome of complaint



Base: all respondents making a complaint - 2003 (73), 2001 (95)

Of the people dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the main complaints are about the service given by the passenger assistant (57%), punctuality of the service (36%), reliability of the service (29%), and service given by the driver (29%).

Process of making a complaint:

Parents were asked about how efficient and helpful they found the staff and how easy it was to get hold of the right person.

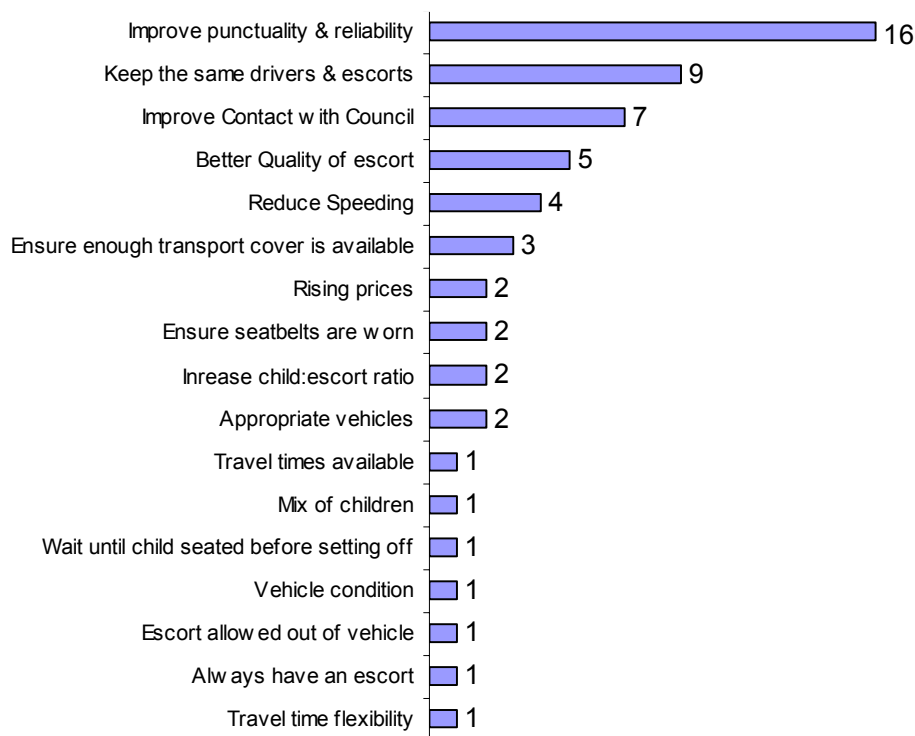
The majority of people found staff helpful (86%), efficient (78%) and easy to contact (73%). There were no significant differences between the results for who was contacted or the type of transport they were complaining about.

6.5 Improvements Parents Suggested for SEN Home to School Transport

Parents were asked if they had any comments about the SEN home to school transport. This provides a qualitative perspective of general perceptions about the SEN home to school transport service.

The general comments were categorised and the results are detailed in chart 8 below.

Chart 8 - Parents comments about home to school transport



Base: all respondents making comment (44)

The most mentioned improvement was to improve punctuality and reliability of the service, as many parents felt it was frequently early/late and on occasion did not arrive. The next most commonly mentioned was that the transport service should ensure the continuity of drivers and escorts, so that the children become familiar with them making them feel safer and the escorts are fully aware of the needs of the children they escort. Also a number of comments were about the contact with the Council where they were not informed of delays or changes to their child's transport or had problems when making a complaint.

6.5.1 General Comments from Parents

The following statements are a selection of the comments that parents made in question 17. A full list of all comments can be found in Appendix 4.

There was a mix of comments. Many were positive and some included areas that parents felt need improvement and suggestions for these.

"We are extremely satisfied with the services offered. Our escort provides valuable communication about our child and is always friendly."

"Our son has a fantastic driver and escort, not only do they make his journey to and from school on a target time they make all the children's journey enjoyable."

"The transport has always had a friendly driver and often very helpful. The escort provided has always been extremely helpful, polite and happy. But please don't keep changing them the children must have a familiar face."

"I don't think that full consideration is taken into account when children are moved to different runs and how deeply it can effect their sense of security and unsettle them."

"The taxi/minibus system works provided the taxi company has enough taxis and drivers to cover all the contracts in the event of sickness or holidays and taking on extra work. This is not always the case."

"Please give more notice when service is to be changed and allow time for consultation."

"That the escort has a better understanding of the child or is willing to learn. My child suffers from autism and I found it frustrating trying to deal with one particular escort who had no understanding whatsoever and even criticised him."

"Received three letters from school about lateness last term even though the escort said my son was being dropped off on time."

7 Conclusions

The survey results show that in general the SEN home to school transport service is well regarded by the service users. A third of the service users (35%) feel that the service has improved since their child has been having transport.

All service aspects score highly on satisfaction, with an average total satisfaction (ie sum of very satisfied and fairly satisfied categories) across all aspects of 92%. There is also an improvement in average satisfaction across all service aspects since 2001 (an increase of 8%).

Comparing satisfaction against importance ratings:

- Safety of the vehicle is the most important factor (89% of parents), and 97% of parents are satisfied.
- 59% of parents see the service given by the passenger assistant as important. This factor is especially important to parents whose children travel in a minibus or are under the age of 11. Results show 81% of parents are very satisfied, the factor with the highest number of very satisfied parents. Passenger assistants are a real strength of the SEN home to school transport service.
- 51% of parents view the reliability of the service as important, and 95% of parents are satisfied in total.

These importance ratings represent a change from 2001 because service given by the escort has risen by 15% in importance making it the second most important. The condition of the vehicle has fallen in importance (15% fall) although it is still the fourth most important factor.

One third of parents still complain about the service they receive. This is a high level of complaints. There are opportunities for improvements in complaint handling because 19% of parents are dissatisfied with the outcome, with no significant improvement since 2001.

8 Recommendations

The SEN home to school transport is highly rated by its users because satisfaction is very high, and the trend is towards an improving service. The following recommendations outline some changes that should be considered to improve satisfaction further, made as a result of this research.

- The most common complaint and suggested improvement from parents are regarding the punctuality and reliability of transport, especially the punctuality of the taxi service. Making sure there is enough transport cover in the event of sickness and holidays may assist this.
- One of the reasons for dissatisfaction highlighted in the 2001 survey was 'information received from the County Council about children's transport'. The most marked improvement in any service attribute since 2001 has been made in the perceptions of information provision by Lancashire County Council (a 12% increase in total satisfaction). But given that this is still the attribute with the lowest overall satisfaction (71%) and only 37% are very satisfied, there is still room for improvement. Although it is not seen as an important service aspect by parents, it is the cause of 8% of complaints. The SEN transport service must keep parents informed about changes to their child's transport and delays in pick up wherever possible.
- Try to provide passenger assistants on all minibuses to make parents feel that their child's safety is ensured.
- Ensure appropriate training is provided to passenger assistants so they can meet the varying special needs of the children that they transport. This will help to reduce the number of complaints about passenger assistants.
- It was recommended in 2001 that investment be made in maintaining the vehicles used to transport the children to school. Given that less than two-thirds of parents (60%) are very satisfied in the condition of vehicles used improvement needs to be made.
- One fifth of people are still dissatisfied with the outcome of complaints. Making sure complaints are acted upon as soon as possible, giving staff the autonomy or appropriate chain of command to make decisions may help to reduce dissatisfaction.

- Investigate complaints further on a regular basis to identify what complaints go unresolved or have an unsatisfactory outcome. Particular attention should be paid to the service given by the passenger assistant, punctuality, reliability and service given by the driver as these are the complaints made by the people who are dissatisfied with the outcome. Monitoring these enables appropriate changes to be made.
- Maintain the continuity of escort and driver because they know the special needs of the children and the children feel safer with people they have come to know, allowing a good relationship to be built up between the child and escort/driver.
- Undertake further research to monitor future changes in user satisfaction.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendices 1: Marked Up Questionnaire

All values are given in percentages

Base: All Respondents (242) unless otherwise stated

Q2	How does your child travel to school?	
	Taxi	41%
	Minibus	55%
	Bus	3%
	Ambulance	1%
	Coach	0%

Q3	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?				
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a) Punctuality of your child's transport	64%	30%	1%	4%	1%
b) Reliability of your child's transport	75%	19%	2%	3%	1%
c) Suitability of the vehicle for your child	71%	26%	1%	2%	0%
d) The condition of the vehicle used	60%	33%	5%	2%	0%
e) Your child's safety on the journey	74%	22%	3%	1%	0%
f) Overall service given by the driver	74%	19%	5%	1%	0%
g) Overall service given by the escort / passenger assistant (if one is provided)	81%	13%	3%	3%	1%
h) The information you receive from the County Council about your child's transport	37%	34%	16%	6%	6%

Q4	Which of the following do you think are the three MOST IMPORTANT aspects of home to school transport?	
	Safety of the vehicle	89%
	Service given by the escort / passenger assistant (if one is provided)	59%
	Reliability of the service	51%
	The condition of the vehicle that is used	37%
	Punctuality of the service	33%
	Service given by the driver	20%
	Comfort	7%
	Information about the service	5%
	Other	1%
	PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX	

Q5	Overall, how satisfied are you with the transport service?	
	Very satisfied	67%
	Fairly satisfied	26%
	Neither	3%
	Fairly dissatisfied	2%
	Very dissatisfied	2%

Q6	Since your child has had transport, has the service overall...?	
	Got better	35%
	Got worse	6%
	Stayed the same	59%

Q7	Have you ever complained about the school transport service your child receives?	
	Yes	31%
	No	69%

Base: all making a complaint (74)

Q8	Who did you contact about your complaint?	
	School	68%
	Bus / taxi / minibus operator	26%
	County Council	62%
	Escort	1%

Base: all making a complaint (74)

Q9	What was the complaint about?	
	Punctuality of the service	50%
	Reliability of the service	28%
	Service given by the driver	22%
	Service given by the escort / passenger assistant (if one is provided)	18%
	The condition of the vehicle that is used	9%
	Keeping parents informed about changes to escort or transport	8%
	Safety of the vehicle	3%
	Comfort	3%
	Safety of child	3%
	Child vulnerability for older children	1%
	Having to pay for services not provided	1%
	Smoking	1%
	How child is moved in and out of vehicle	1%

Base: all making a complaint (74)

Q10	How satisfied were you with the outcome of your complaint?	
	Very satisfied	32%
	Fairly satisfied	29%
	Neither	21%
	Fairly dissatisfied	11%
	Very dissatisfied	8%

Base: all making a complaint (74)

Q11	When you made your complaint did you find the staff...?			
a)	Helpful	86%	Unhelpful	14%
b)	Efficient	78%	Inefficient	22%

Base: all making a complaint (74)

Q12	When you made your complaint was getting hold of the right person...?			
	Easy	73%	Difficult	27%

Q13	What was your child's age on their last birthday?		
	Under 11		36%
	11 to 16		56%
	Over 16		8%

Q14	Your child's gender...		
	Male		73%
	Female		27%

Q15	To which of these groups do you consider your child belongs?		
	White		88%
	Asian or Asian British		9%
	Black or Black British		0%
	Chinese		0%
	Mixed		2%
	Other ethnic group		0%

Q16	Does your child have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits their activities in any way?		
	Yes		67%
	No		33%

Base: all making a comment (44)

Q17	If you have any comments about home to school transport that you would like to raise please write them in the box below.		
	Improve punctuality and reliability		36%
	Keep the same drivers and escorts		20%
	Improve contact with the Council		16%
	Better quality of escort		11%
	Reduce the incidence of speeding		9%
	Ensure enough transport cover is available		7%
	Prices have risen too much		5%
	Make sure seatbelts are worn		5%
	Increase child to escort ratio		5%
	Appropriate vehicles		5%
	Travel times available		2%
	Mix of children		2%
	Wait until child seated before setting off		2%
	Improve vehicle condition		2%
	Escort allowed out of vehicle		2%
	Always have an escort		2%
	Travel time flexibility		2%

9.2 Appendix 2: Covering Letter

(01772) 531767

(01772) 531952

david.trafford@env.lancscc.gov.uk

To the Parent / Carer of

Our ref SEN Transport Survey 2003
Date 8 October 2003

Dear Parent / Carer,

Special Educational Needs Transport User Satisfaction Survey

Lancashire County Council wants to ensure that the views of Lancashire people contribute to its decisions about how services are delivered.

As a parent or carer of a pupil who uses Special Educational Needs transport we would like to know what you think about our service. We would be grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire for the child named above and return it in the reply paid envelope by 24 October 2003. All information you provide is treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for statistical and research purposes.

We always listen to our customers to help us to improve our services. The information you provide will help us shape policies and improve the service we deliver. If you would like to tell us about a specific issue concerning your child's transport please use the space on the last page of the questionnaire, and provide your contact details if you would like to discuss it further.

If you wish to speak to the Transport Service, please telephone Dave Trafford, SEN Transport Manager, on 01772 531767 or email david.trafford@env.lancscc.gov.uk. Alternatively if you wish to speak to someone regarding this survey please contact Mike Walker, Research Manager, on 01772 533445 or email mike.walker@css.lancscc.gov.uk.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,



Dave Trafford
SEN Transport Manager

9.3 Appendix 3: Questionnaire

**Home to School Transport
Parents Survey**



TRANSPORTING YOUR CHILD

1 Which school does your child attend?
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX IN BLOCK CAPITALS

2 How does your child travel to school?
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Taxi (1)

Minibus (2)

Bus (3)

Other
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

OVERALL SATISFACTION

3 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Very Satisfied (1)	Fairly Satisfied (2)	Neither (3)	Fairly Dissatisfied (4)	Very Dissatisfied (5)
a) Punctuality of your child's transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Reliability of your child's transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Suitability of the vehicle for your child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) The condition of the vehicle used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Your child's safety on the journey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Overall service given by the driver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Overall service given by the escort / passenger assistant (if one is provided)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) The information you receive from the County Council about your child's transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 Which of the following do you think are the three MOST IMPORTANT aspects of home to school transport? PLEASE TICK UP TO THREE BOXES

Safety of the vehicle (1)

Reliability of the service (2)

Punctuality of the service (3)

Service given by the driver (4)

Service given by the escort / passenger assistant (if one is provided) (5)

Information about the service (6)

The condition of the vehicle that is used (7)

Comfort (8)

Other (9)

PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

5 Overall, how satisfied are you with the transport service? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied (1)

Fairly satisfied (2)

Neither (3)

Fairly dissatisfied (4)

Very dissatisfied (5)

6 Since your child has had transport, has the service overall...? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Got better (1)

Got worse (2)

Stayed the same (3)

MAKING A COMPLAINT

7 Have you ever complained about the school transport service your child receives? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes (1) → Go to question 8

No (2) → Go to question 13

8 Who did you contact about your complaint? PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

School (1)

Bus / taxi / minibus operator (2)

County Council (3)

Other (4)

PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

9 What was the complaint about?
PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Safety of the vehicle (1)

Reliability of the service (2)

Punctuality of the service (3)

Service given by the driver (4)

Service given by the escort / passenger assistant (if one is provided) (5)

The condition of the vehicle that is used (6)

Comfort (7)

Other
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

10 How satisfied were you with the outcome of your complaint?
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied (1)

Fairly satisfied (2)

Neither (3)

Fairly dissatisfied (4)

Very dissatisfied (5)

11 When you made your complaint did you find the staff...?
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH

a) Helpful (1) OR Unhelpful (2)

b) Efficient (1) OR Inefficient (2)

12 When you made your complaint was getting hold of the right person...?
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Easy (1) OR Difficult (2)

YOUR CHILD

13 What was your child's age on their last birthday?
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

years

14 Are they...?

Male (1)

Female (2)

15 To which of these groups do you consider your child belongs?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

- White (1)
- Asian or Asian British (2)
- Black or Black British (3)
- Chinese (4)
- Mixed (5)

Other ethnic group
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

16 Does your child have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits their activities in any way?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

... AND FINALLY

17 If you have any comments about home to school transport that you would like to raise please write them in the box below.

If you would like to discuss your comments further please enter your name and contact number in the space provided below and someone from the County Council's Transport Service will contact you.

Your Name (optional)

Contact Number (optional)

Or you can e-mail us on ENVSchpt@env.lancscc.gov.uk

**Please return your completed questionnaire in the reply paid envelope provided by 24 October 2003.
Thank you for your time.**

Return address:

Transport Survey, Lancashire County Council,
Freeport PR864, PRESTON, PR1 8BR



This survey is undertaken by Lancashire County Council for statistical and research purposes only. For any general data protection enquires please contact the Data Protection Officer on 01772 533974 or email data.protection@lancscc.gov.uk

9.4 Appendix 4: Parents Comments from Question 17

“I don’t think that full consideration is taken into account when children are moved to different runs and how deeply it can effect their sense of security and unsettle them.”

“Although the taxi is reliable in as much as it turns up every day, the timings could be much better. On occasions we get to school 20 minutes early and at the end of the day are picked up from school 15 minutes late. This is not necessarily the drivers’ fault but caused by the taxi firm trying to operate too many contracts and get the children to and from **different** schools for the same start and finish times.

More spot checks on timings need to be carried out.”

“Reliable service, however could do with info re times changing etc.”

“We are extremely satisfied with the services offered. Our escort provides valuable communication about our child and is always friendly.”

“Our son has a fantastic driver and escort, not only do they make his journey to and from school on a target time they make all the children’s journey enjoyable.”

“I am very happy with the service provided though concerned about the number of children travelling on the bus with just one escort. She is very competent but in an emergency where the vehicle must be evacuated there can be up to 6/7 children on it.”

“The transport has always had a friendly driver and often very helpful. The escort provided has always been extremely helpful, polite and happy. But please don’t keep changing them the children must have a familiar face.”

“I certainly do not have any hesitations about putting my child on the bus. They are very friendly indeed and I think they do a marvellous job!”

“The escort and driver are caring, professional and have my utmost trust and respect.”

“We are very happy with the standard of service and our son enjoys the journey to school because of the friendly service offered by the escort and driver.”

“Overall the service is very good, especially for children like my son who has Downs Syndrome, and wouldn’t cope getting to school on his own.”

“The taxi/minibus system works provided the taxi company has enough taxis and drivers to cover all the contracts in the event of sickness or holidays and taking on extra work. This is not always the case.”

“I could not have a better escort, and the drivers are also fantastic. I am confident that my young child is in ‘good hands’ each day. My son too delights in going to school with the escort in the taxi. Thank-you.”

“Please give more notice when service is to be changed and allow time for consultation.”

“I found it very difficult to accept that my 4 year old had to get on a bus at 10 to 8 in the morning and arrive home at 4pm. Mainstream children were only attending school for half days to begin with.”

“The past and present escorts and minibus driver have been superb.”

“The transport service has always been excellent. On the one occasion there was a problem it was dealt with immediately. That particular taxi service has a bad reputation in Burnley already.”

“Very helpful and friendly driver and escort. They are very good in dealing with my son’s varied moods. I think they both deserve the highest praise!”

“That the escort has a better understanding of the child or is willing to learn. My child suffers from autism and I found it frustrating trying to deal with one particular escort who had no understanding whatsoever and even criticised him.”

“The service my son has received since starting Leabrook is excellent and I am glad that they are very safety conscious whilst on the journey.”

“Received three letters from school about lateness last term even though the escort said my son was being dropped off on time.”

“I would like to say that I am very pleased with the service, and that the escort is very pleasant and helpful. I have no complaints.”

“My son’s driver and his escorts are very helpful. The driver even gave my son his telephone number so if he is late or sick he can let them know and it is not a wasted journey. Excellent!”

“Since changing firms there has been improvement.”

“It sometimes comes very early. So sometimes we miss it.”

“Some replacement drivers make us worry about speed and safety considerations. The normal driver and escort are the best, and if they are changed we will have some comments.”

“I had to press for change of transport because of poor service by the carer. My son’s disability required hands on help which she claimed was not part of her job? Also because of his hand problems she still did not help with the seat belt. The taxi driver however helps him out with these issues.”

“My daughter sometimes finishes college earlier than her timetable due to the lessons finishing early, she has then got to wait 2-3 hours for transport home, (on her own). Surely there are not only 1 taxi doing all the runs! I have on these days come out of work so that she doesn’t have this waiting time.”

“I would like to raise a matter, I would like the Transport Service to be able to take my daughter to L & M College on a Wednesday morning, as I feel that she would be safe, and I also disagree to paying taxi fares.”

“I need the transport to arrive on time every day as I have a younger son to take to school. Although things have improved with the new driver sometimes my other son is still late for school.”

“Company changes based on cost means that continuity can be changing. Most of the providers have given excellent service but some changes have been problematic.”

“I have ticked the 3 most important. My son doesn’t understand why his minibus is late, once he is ready he refuses to stay in and wait. I do feel children should attend school on time as this allows them time for their morning routine at school.”

“That a good relationship is built up between the pupil and a regular driver if no escort is made available.”

“The complaint was about the transport used for Garstang and Galgate, same taxi still being used!!”

“Since the start of the new school year and a new taxi driver the service has greatly improved with the taxi arriving on time.”

“The current minibus is a excellent service, so is the driver and the escorts.”

“On occasion the bus has failed to arrive due to lack of escort – which has left pupils waiting with no way of knowing that the bus has been cancelled. Should ring parents if that is the case.”

“We are very pleased with the service our son receives. The escort is very friendly and takes good care of him and the driver appears to be a careful driver who is also friendly. Our son is very confident when going to school with them.”

“Taxi usually arrives later than expected, never on time.”

“Escorts should have more patience with the children especially those with special needs.”

“An escort must always be present. Pick up from home and return home at a regular time.”

“Very pleased with the service now.”

“The County Council are not very helpful in sorting out transport in time. Do not let you know till last minute what is happening. People need to be able to organise themselves especially if they are working but you leave them hanging and are not very flexible/accommodating.”

“The children get used to the escort and drivers. It really upsets them when changes are made in this area and leads to an upsetting period. Also difficult for parents especially when their child has mobility problems. You have to trust the person that is moving your child. It’s hard when this changes.”

“No! The only complaint I have is with LCC.”

“My son used to get picked up by the School Bus which has a lift and was perfect to get him in and out. But now it’s a taxi minibus which has ramps and I don’t like the way his is pushed in and out of vehicle. His head bangs about on the bars of his pushchair because of the force having to be used in order to get his up the ramps.”

“Escort is not allowed to get out of taxi so if I need to discuss anything private I can’t because of taxi driver present.”

“I am very pleased with escort and the driver they are both friendly and kind which is what I want for my son.”

“Very satisfied with the service.”

“The escort does not do much. If anything has gone wrong on the taxi I ask about it she always says nothing has happened and that’s what happens with her. Now the escort tells my niece not to tell me.”

“The escort on the minibus gives me total peace of mind regarding my son’s safety and well being travelling to and from school.”

“The reliability of the minibus is improving but the condition leaves a lot to be desired. Escorts are fantastic driver is very poor but driving is good.”

“Only concern is that from Sept 2003 there are 5 children on the minibus not 4, and even though we have moved and our pick up time has changed we can sometimes be later to be collected and so my daughter is late for school. The times, I feel would have been OK if the 5th child had had a different arrangement. We moved to a house that was specifically on the bus route because I am so pleased with the driver and escort. Also wondered what the ratio was escort to children.”

“Some concern when new/different escort is provided. Our son has epilepsy, coughing and choking episodes profound and multiple disabilities – awareness and continuity of personnel advisable who know them.”

“Transport from Burscough to Preston is unreliable at times. The bus arrives at 16.40, the minibus arrives at 18.30.”

“My son has autism while physically he has no problems his sense of danger is very limited. Also his driver/escort are first class I couldn't ask for better.”

“We as parents, and our son are very happy with the service provided.”

“Satisfied with the taxi service for both children.”

“I hope the present taxi company keep the contract.”

“My son can't walk that far and if he didn't get transport I would have been stuck because the two children I have they go to different schools and they finish at different times.”

“My son is happy about his transport – driver and escort which is very important.”

“The transport service should be more reliable if breakdowns are going to carry on as often as they are then parents should be informed instead of parents being very worried like they are left to do.”

“Making sure seatbelts are worn. Driver setting off before children are seated, driver speeding to make up time when they are late.”

“Very satisfied with service from Ashton Millers. Very angry with previous service from Hutton taxis. Kept ringing about it but nothing was done. Also had to ring about new taxi provider as they hadn't told me who it was going to be, only found out last minute due to them being over worked and under a lot of pressure.”

“We are very pleased with the service Walton-le-Dale taxis provides. The driver and escort are conscientious and very committed to the work they do. They are always kind and helpful. Our daughter enjoys her journey to and from school. Thank-you!”

“Very happy and satisfied with the service you provided.”

“I have been fetching and carrying my son from school for a couple of months now. I can’t really comment on school transport except to say how angry I am with the lack of consideration not only to myself but to my son.”

“We have only been using the service since September 2003, so it is still early days. So far the service we have received from Walton taxis has been excellent.”

“My son has a good rapport with both the cab driver and the escort. They both make his journeys to and from school enjoyable and are more than willing to help him whenever they can. The continuity of the same escort and driver is important I feel wherever reasonably possible.”

“My oldest son use to go to Moorbank in Preston, but they kept changing taxi companies, thus taxi drivers was always changing. I think that he would of preferred the same driver(s).”

“I would just like to say that the school escort is very helpful especially when my child goes into respite care. She also informs me of any incidents at school or on the bus with other passengers eg scratching or pulling hair etc. Also the drivers are very pleasant each day and always on time.”

“Escort and driver very helpful and cheerful and friendly – very satisfied.”

“Taxi service has been reasonable this year!”

“One minute the taxi is here at 8.15am the next day it can be as late as 8.35am, we are asked to have our child ready of 8.15am.”

“I cannot praise highly enough my son’s escort or driver they are fantastic.”

“I am happy with the service that transport are giving to my daughter to get from and to school. Thank-you.”

“My child has commented that they have reached speeds of 100MPH on the motorway, on several occasions. This is both dangerous and irresponsible and drivers should slow down.”

“The taxi driver should be more punctual as after school my child has to go to mosque. He always go in such a hurry!”

“Ashley cabs very friendly, safe, reliable. We have an absolutely excellent service – no complaints. Inclusion service have gone to great lengths to ensure his safety on the journey.”

“The fair of taxi use to be £4.00 for day but its rise to £5.00 from last few weeks. The taxi fair is gone up from £2.50 local fair so return is £5.00.”

“My son sometimes misses the taxi due to being too late. He’s very slow in the morning.”

“The taxi we have now is very good driver very cheerful. My son gets on well with them. Very reliable. No complaints.”

“Despite reporting to you and sending a copy of child’s specialist doctor’s letter a very uncaring attitude and no change made to the fact that the child in question is not picked up or dropped of at home. Both school and education authority showed a marked uncaring disinterested position and nothing changed.”

“The last escort was very good. But the new was not very helpful or friendly. The first few week he was late for school.”

“I feel when the contracts are up for renewal it is not the cost savings that should be considered but the reliability of the transport plus the quality of service. My escort is excellent.”