

# **Transport Service**

## **Home to School Transport Parents Survey**

**Research study for**  
Transport Service

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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 mainstream home to school transport service. This information will be used to assess how effective the Best Value improvements have been and will be compared to the research undertaken in 2001.

A questionnaire was sent to 3,000 parents or carers of children who use Lancashire County Council's home to school transport service. 1,011 questionnaires were returned giving an overall response rate of 34%.

Overall the level of satisfaction with the home to school transport service is high with 89% of respondents being satisfied with the overall service, an improvement of 14% on 2001. 18% of parents also feel that the service has improved since their child has had transport, only 8% saying it has got worse, showing that the service has improved.

The survey tested user satisfaction and importance on a number of key service attributes. These include service punctuality, condition and reliability of vehicles used, service given by drivers, perceptions of their child's safety and the Safer Travel Unit, satisfaction with the transport application process, perceptions of information from Lancashire County Council about their child's transport and complaint handling.

Ratings of these service attributes are generally good especially for the punctuality of the service, condition and appearance of the vehicles, and perceptions of the drivers.

The main recommendations are:

- Decide what the preferred method of finding out about the school transport service is. Currently 62% of parents find out about the service from the school. Decide if Lancashire County Council wants to take a more proactive role in promoting the service.
- Consider alternatives to using double-decker buses for school transport, because people who use them are less satisfied with the service. If this is not possible then the satisfaction of people that use double-decker buses needs to be increased by concentrating on the recommendations below.
- Continue to build on the 17% increase in satisfaction with the condition and appearance of vehicles since 2001, paying particular attention to double-decker buses, because safety is the most important issue for parents and is a key driver of overall satisfaction.

- Make sure that the punctuality of the service is maintained, and improved for the bus services and the morning services because it drives overall satisfaction with the service.
- Set up driver training programmes so they know the routes better, can effectively deal with anti-social behaviour (especially for bus drivers) and are more confident with children.
- There has been no significant reduction in the incidence and repetition of bullying since 2001, the problem being greater for bus users. Therefore, the work of the Safer Travel Unit needs to be promoted so that they are seen as the first point of call by parents for cases of anti-social behaviour. Consideration also needs to be given to other methods of reducing bullying such as having supervisors on school transport and removing passes after a certain number of warnings have been given.
- Carry out more research to find out what would make the information provided with the Travelpasses more useful to parents. Then make the necessary changes to the information.
- Analyse the types of complaints and decide which the best channels for handling them are so that actions can be taken to sort out the problem. Promote these channels to parents and set performance indicators to measure the number of complaints and satisfaction with the outcome with these baseline data.
- Carry out further research to monitor future changes in user satisfaction as a result of undertaking these recommendations.

## 2 Introduction

The School Transport Service provides return transport between home and school/college for children in education.

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 the School Transport Service. These 2001 results will be used as a basis for comparison for the 2004 research results.

## 3 Research Objectives

The home to school transport 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 2004 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 home to school transport;
- levels of satisfaction with different service aspects;
- identifying the most important factors in home to school transport;
- identifying the awareness of and satisfaction with the Safer Travel Unit;  
and
- monitoring complaints, and complaint resolution.

A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

## 4 Methodology

The home to school transport parents survey was an 8-page self-completion postal questionnaire. It was sent to a random sample of 3,000 parents whose children receive home to school transport with their Travelpass application form. The sample was obtained from a list of approximately 11,000 children who receive home to school transport.

The 2004 questionnaire included some questions that were not in the 2001 questionnaire. Where questions are the same for both the 2001 and 2004 surveys accurate comparisons can be made.

The questionnaires were posted on Wednesday 24 March 2004. Fieldwork was undertaken over a period of five weeks, ending on Friday 30 April 2004.

No incentive for respondents to complete the questionnaire was given. In total 1,011 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 34%.

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

## 5 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 Respondents	of	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50		14%	13%	8%
100		10%	9%	6%
250		6%	6%	4%
500		4%	4%	3%
1000		3%	3%	2%

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 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	100	17%	16%	10%
100	100	14%	13%	8%
200	100	12%	11%	7%
200	200	10%	9%	6%
400	50	15%	13%	9%
400	200	8%	8%	5%
500	300	7%	7%	4%
500	500	6%	6%	4%
550	400	6%	6%	4%

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

For example, for two samples of 500 responses in each at around 50% of responses in each category to be compared, the difference needs to be over 6% to be statistically significant. This is to say that the difference is not due to chance alone.

## 6 Main Research Findings

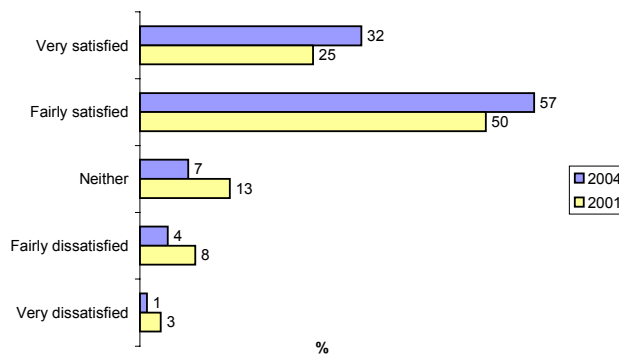
A marked up questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

### 6.1 Overall Satisfaction with Home to School Transport

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

On the whole, there are high levels of user satisfaction with home to school transport, with 89% of parents being satisfied with the service.

**Chart 1 - Overall satisfaction with home to school transport**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (996), 2001 (1476)

There are 14% more parents satisfied with home to school transport than there were in 2001. This shows a significant improvement in satisfaction with the transport service.

User satisfaction does differ significantly between the modes of transport that are provided and the age of the child being transported. The parents of children that travel in a taxi and on a single-decker bus are more satisfied than average with the service; and those that travel on a double-decker bus are less satisfied than average with the service. Parents of children aged less than 12 years of age are also more satisfied with the service than on average, this also occurred in the 2001 survey.

Further statistical analysis of the data has shown that older children (those over 12) are more likely to travel on double-decker buses. Analysis shows that the parents whose children travel on double-decker are less satisfied with the service. This explains why parents of children aged under 12 are more satisfied with the service.



Parents were asked if the service had improved over the last 12 months or so. The results are in the table below.

<b>And overall, do you think the home to school transport service has got better or worse over the last 12 months or so, or has it stayed the same?</b>	
Got better	18%
Got worse	8%
Stayed the same	67%
Don't know	7%

Base of all respondents: 994

A just under fifth of parents felt that the service their child receives has improved (18%), two thirds felt it had stayed the same (67%), and significantly only a minority of 8% 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 has improved.

## 6.2 Satisfaction Levels with Different Service Aspects

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

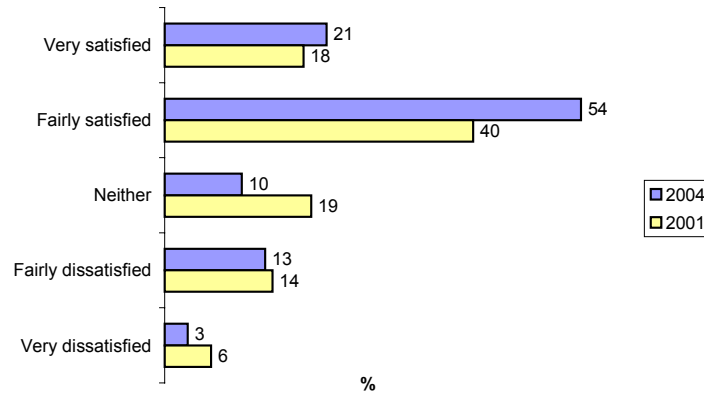
- satisfaction with the vehicle;
- perceptions of the driver;
- punctuality and reliability of transport;
- perceptions of their child's safety on the journey;
- awareness and perceptions of the Safer Travel Unit;
- perceptions of the process of transport application; and
- information they receive from Lancashire County Council about their child's transport.

6.2.1 Satisfaction with the vehicle

Respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the condition and appearance of the vehicles used to transport their child.

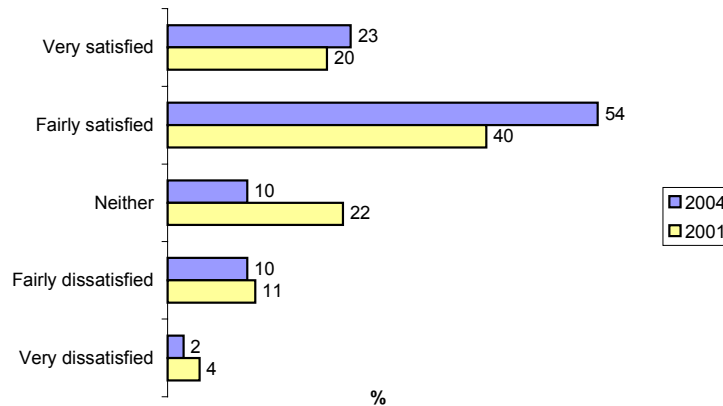
The results show that 75% are satisfied with the condition of the vehicle used; and 77% are satisfied with the appearance of the vehicle used.

**Chart 2 - Satisfaction with the condition of vehicles used**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (1000), 2001 (1476)

**Chart 3 - Satisfaction with the appearance of vehicles used**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (981), 2001 (1476)

17% of parents are more satisfied with the condition and appearance of the vehicles than they were in 2001, showing that the vehicles used for home to school transport have improved.

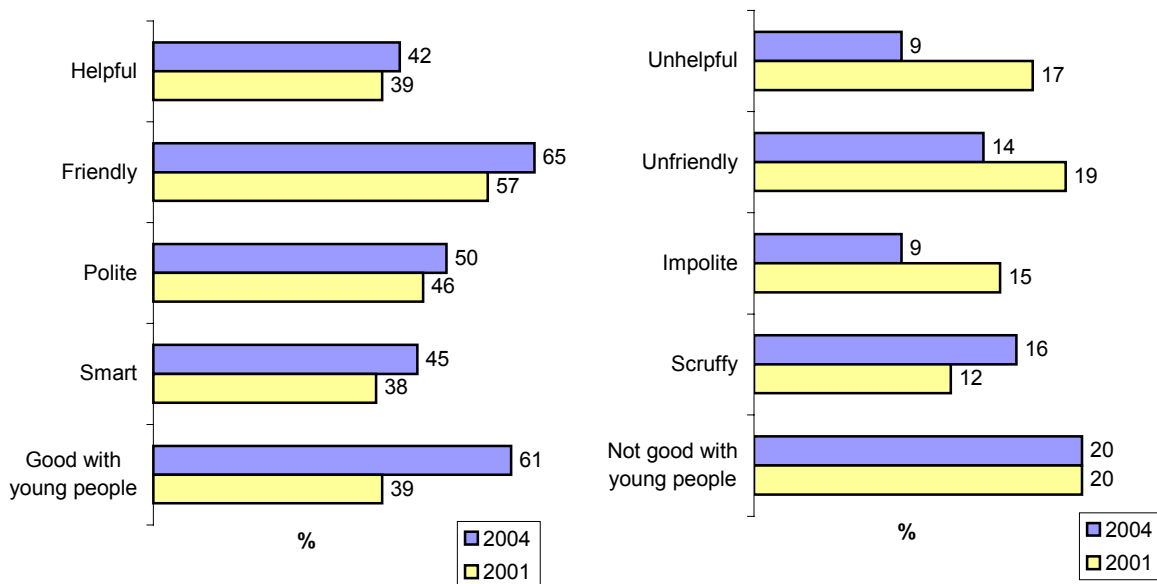
There are differences between the type of transport and the child’s age and the levels of satisfaction with the vehicle. The parents of children that travel in a taxi and on a single-decker bus are more satisfied than average with the condition and appearance of the vehicle; and those that travel on a double-decker bus are less satisfied than average with the condition and appearance of the vehicle. Parents of children aged less than 12 years of age are also more satisfied with the condition and appearance of the vehicle than on average.

**6.2.2 Perceptions of the driver**

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the drivers that transport their children including their friendliness, politeness, helpfulness, how smart they are and how good they are with young people. The results are in the charts below.

Overall parents’ views are more positive than negative about all the aspects of driver service. The most positive net ratings (eg number of ‘friendly’ responses less the number of ‘unfriendly’ responses) are that the drivers are friendly (51%), polite (41%) and good with young people (41%). Although it must be borne in mind that a fifth of parents think that drivers are not good with young people, so there is still room for improvement.

**Chart 4 - Perceptions of the driver**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (881), 2001 (1476)

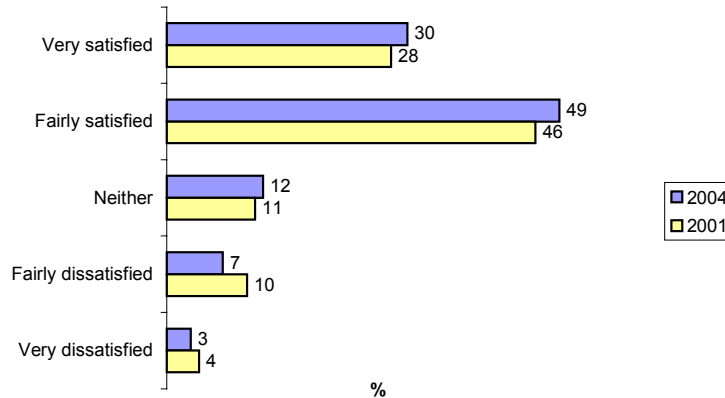
There are some differences between sub-groups. Respondents that travel in a taxi are more likely to say that the drivers are helpful, friendly and polite compared to those using buses.

There are also some changes that have occurred since 2001, the most notable improvement being in how good drivers are perceived to be with young people.

**6.2.3 Punctuality and reliability of the transport**

Parents were asked about the punctuality of their child’s transport in the mornings and the afternoons, and they were asked about the reliability of the vehicles.

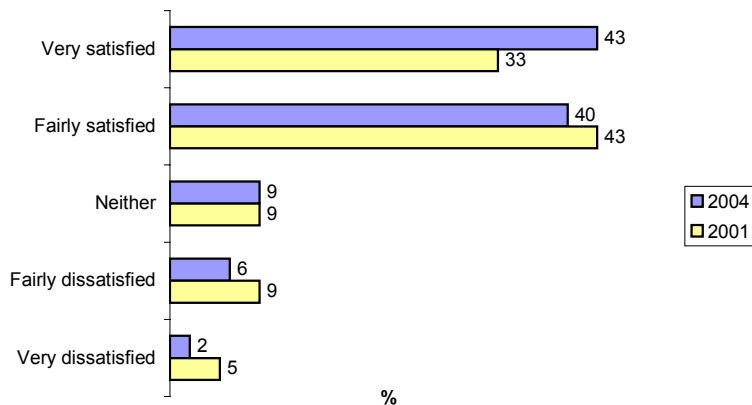
**Chart 5 - Punctuality of the service in the morning**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (999), 2001 (1476)

There are four-fifths of parents (79%) satisfied with the punctuality of the service in the morning, and importantly only 10% dissatisfied. The only significant differences between sub-groups is an increase in satisfaction against the average for those respondents whose child uses a taxi or is aged under 12.

**Chart 6 - Punctuality of the service in the afternoon**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (996), 2001 (1476)

There are four-fifths of parents (83%) satisfied with the punctuality of the service in the afternoon, and again very few dissatisfied parents (8%). There are no significant differences between sub-groups. There are also significantly more parents that are in the very satisfied category for punctuality of the service in the afternoon than there were in 2001, an increase of 10%, showing that the service has improved.

Parents were also asked if the vehicles have ever broken down; and if they have how many times in the last year. The results are in the table below.

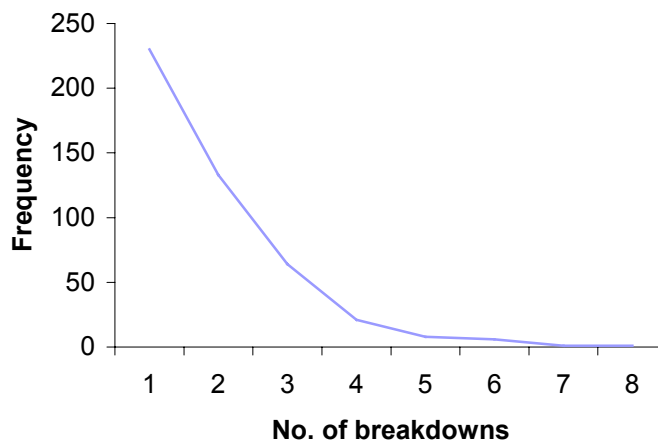
Have the vehicles ever broken down?	
Yes	49%
No	44%
Don't know	8%

Base of all respondents: 1001

If 'Yes', about how many times in the last year?	1.86
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Base of all respondents with a child whose vehicle has broken down in the last year: 465

**Chart 7 - Distribution of vehicle breakdowns in the last year**



Base of all respondents with a child whose vehicle has broken down in the last year: 465

Nearly half of parents said that their child's transport has broken down. Of these people the transport has broken down nearly twice in the last 12 months. This indicates that the reliability of the vehicles needs to be improved.

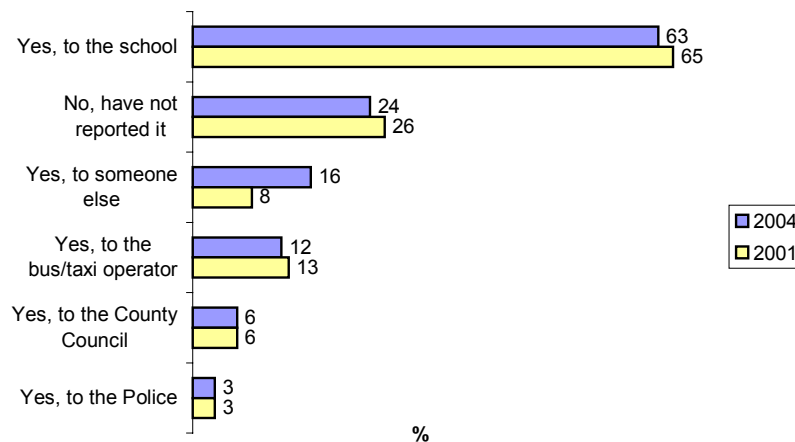
### 6.2.4 Perceptions of their child's safety on the journey

A number of questions were asked about parent's perceptions of their child's safety on the journey paying particular attention to bullying, anti-social behaviour and smoking.

19% of respondents say that their child has been the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour whilst travelling on home to school transport. Boys are significantly more likely to have been bullied than girls (difference of 9%), and those children who travel in taxis are less likely to have been bullied than those children who travel on double-decker buses. Nearly three-quarters of those who have been bullied (72%) said that this has happened more than once, showing that bullying is a problem on home to school transport.

Of those that say their child has been the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour the most common body to report it to is the school (63%), and nearly a quarter of incidents are not reported at all (24%).

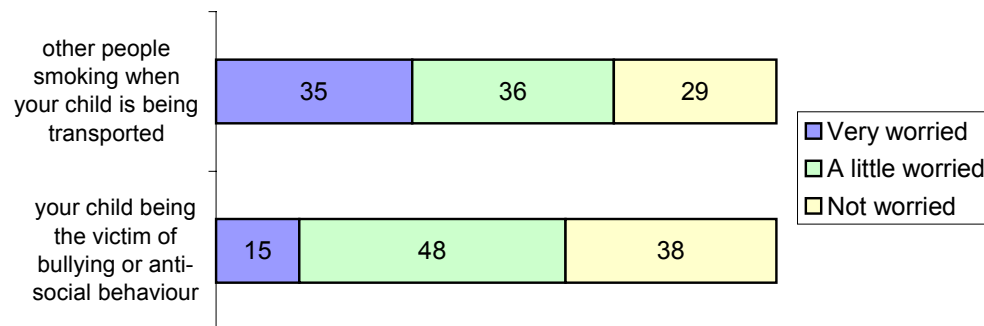
**Chart 8 - Reporting of incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour**



Base: all respondents with a child being the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour - 2004 (188), 2001 (334)

There are no significant changes in who incidents are reported to since 2001. The only significantly different sub-group is that the parents of girls are less likely (23% difference) to report incidents of bullying to anyone. This may be because it is a different kind of bullying they are subject to.

### Chart 9 - Parental concern about antisocial behaviour and smoking



Base all respondents: 953

Parental concern about bullying and anti-social behaviour is high with 63% of parents being worried, although there are only 15% very worried. The amount of concern about bullying and anti-social behaviour decreases from the average for children that travel in a taxi.

Parental concern about other people smoking when their child is being transported is high with over 70% being worried, and significantly a third of parents are very worried. The amount of worry increases for parents when their child travels to school on a double-decker bus, and is lower than average when their child travels on a single-decker bus or taxi. This is likely to be because it is more difficult to watch children on the top floor of a double-decker bus. Also parents of children under 12 are significantly less likely to be worried about other people smoking when their child is being transported.

#### 6.2.5 Safer Travel Unit

A number of questions looked at the Safer Travel Unit. Only 8% of parents and 8% of children are aware of the Safer Travel Unit; whilst most respondents (86%) have never heard of it.

Of the people who are aware of the Safer Travel Unit less than half (44%) know how to contact the unit. The following table shows how many respondents have contacted the Safer Travel Unit.

<b>Have you or your child ever contacted the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
Yes, I have contacted the Safer Travel Unit	5%
Yes, my child has contacted the Safer Travel Unit	0%
No	95%

Base of all respondents: 144



There are three respondents who are satisfied and four who are dissatisfied with the outcome of contacting the Safer Travel Unit. As there are only seven respondents that have contacted the Safer Travel Unit these results are inconclusive.

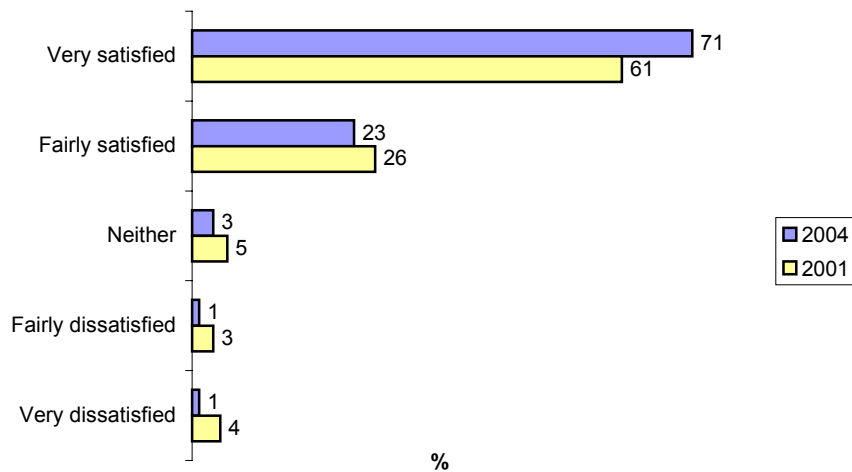
The education sessions organised by the Safer Travel Unit are not well attended because only 15% of year 7 children have attended an education session.

**6.2.6 Perceptions of the process of transport application**

Respondents were asked their perceptions of how their transport application was dealt with and the issuing of Travelpasses.

Overall 94% of respondents were satisfied (very satisfied and fairly satisfied) with how their application for transport was dealt with, 71% of these are very satisfied. Whilst only 2% of parents were dissatisfied with the process.

**Chart 10 - Satisfaction with the process of transport applications**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (995), 2001 (1476)

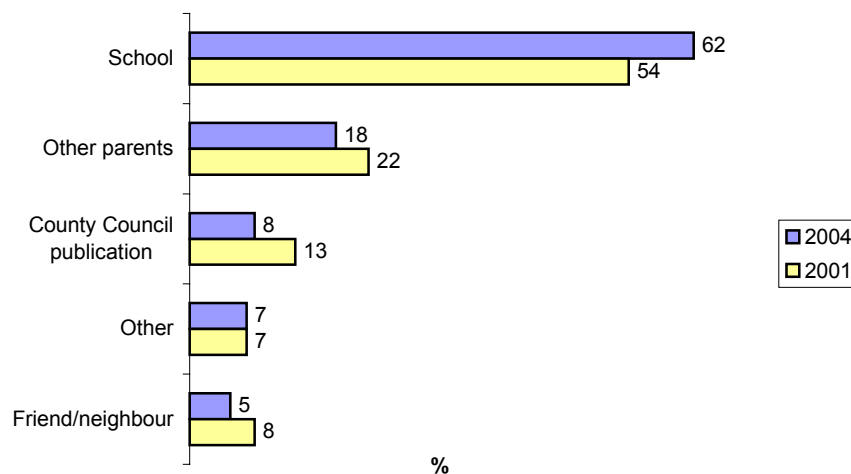
The levels of satisfaction with how Travelpasses were issued was also asked. 96% of respondents were satisfied (very satisfied and fairly satisfied) with how their child’s Travelpass was issued, and 74% of these were very satisfied. There is a slight reduction in satisfaction against the average for parents with children that have a disability.

### 6.2.7 Information about the school transport service

Respondents were asked about how they found out about the school transport service and how easy it was, and about the information sent with the Travelpasses.

The most mentioned method of first finding out about the school transport service was the school (62%), while friend/neighbour (5%) was the least mentioned.

**Chart 11 - Method of first finding out about the school transport service**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (1000), 2001 (1476)

Methods have not changed significantly since 2001. But there are some sub-group differences. Parents are less likely to find out about the taxi transport service from the school and more likely to find out about it from other parents (significantly different to children who use double-decker buses).

Most people found it easy (94%) to find out about the school transport service, only 6% finding it difficult.

Most parents have read the information that comes with their child's Travelpass (92%). Only 6% of parents did not read the information. Of those who have read the information most found it fairly useful (59%) and 40% found it very useful.

<b>Overall how useful did you find the information you received with your child's Travelpass?</b>	
Very useful	40%
Fairly useful	59%
Not useful	1%
Don't know	1%

Base of all respondents: 914

There are no significant differences between the sub-groups showing that the information is equally useful to everyone.

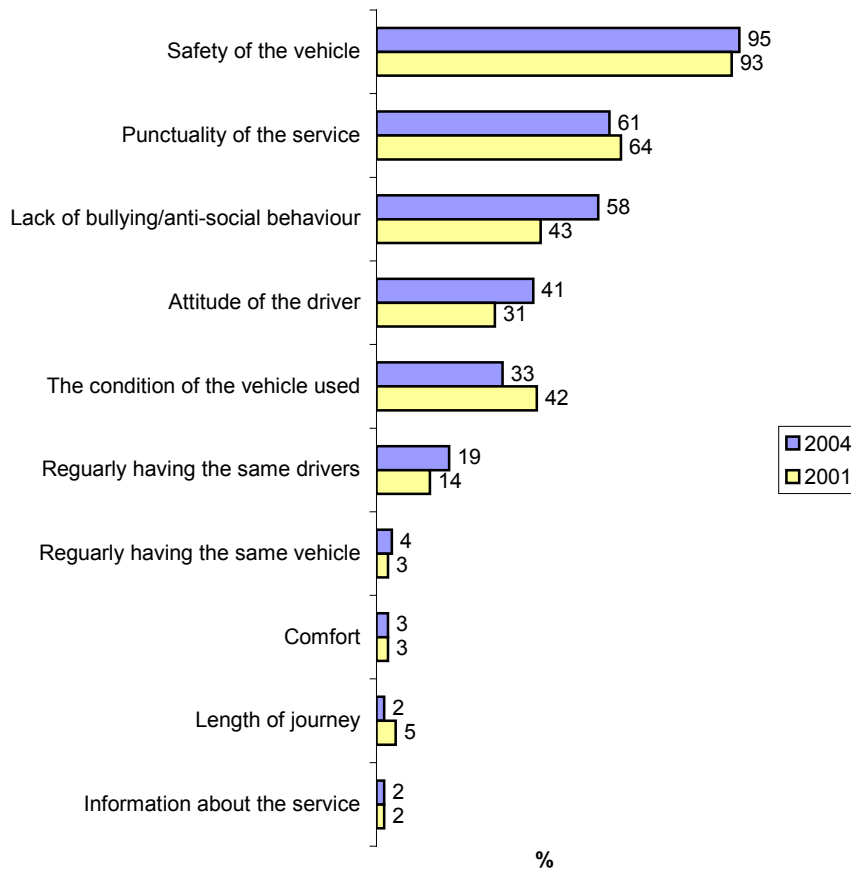
### 6.3 Importance of Service Aspects

Respondents were asked which the most important aspects of the school transport service were.

The three most important aspects of the home to school transport service are the safety of the vehicle, punctuality of the service and lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour. By far the most important to parents is the safety of the vehicle, having 95% of the respondents citing this (34% more people cited this than the next aspect).

Further statistical analysis of the data confirms this finding. It shows that the key drivers of overall satisfaction with the school transport service are the condition and appearance of the vehicle closely followed by punctuality of the service in the morning.

**Chart 12 - Importance of Service Aspects**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (1000), 2001 (1476)

The top three rankings are the same as 2001 although lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour and attitude of the driver have become more important to parents.

There are differences in parents' views on levels of importance.

- Parents are less concerned about bullying/anti-social behaviour when their child travels in a taxi and their child is under 12 years of age (compared to parents of children aged 12-13).
- More parents want the same drivers every day when their child is taken to school in a taxi and when their child is below 12 years of age.

#### **6.4 Complaints**

The questionnaire looked at how many service users have complained, who was contacted and how satisfied they were with the outcome.

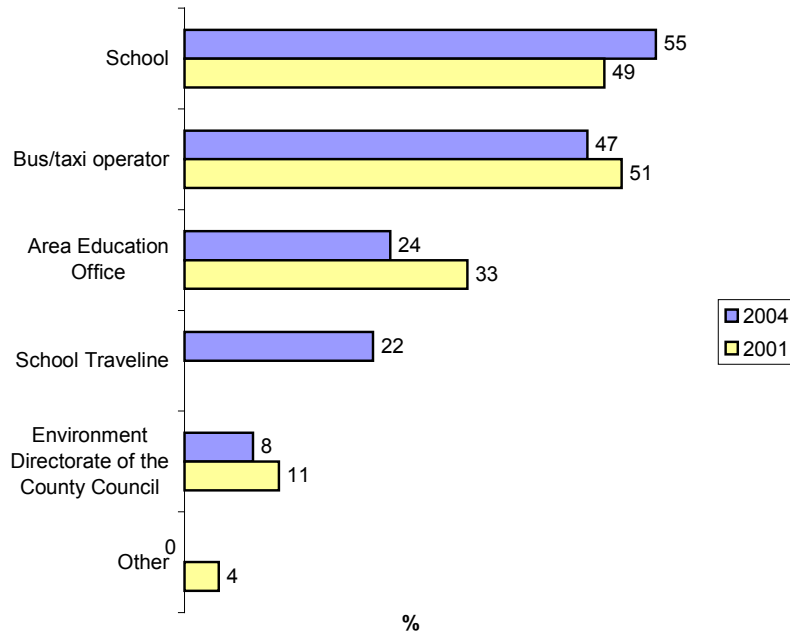
*Number of complaints:*

Out of 1004 respondents' over a fifth (22%) had complained about home to school transport. Complaints are evenly distributed over type of transport used, gender and ethnicity.

*Who was contacted about the complaint<sup>1</sup>:*

Out of the 220 respondents who have complained the majority contacted the school (55%), closely followed by the bus/taxi operator (47%). The School Traveline is used (22%) by parents, although this is not enough.

**Chart 13 - Who was contacted about the complaint**



Base: all respondents making a complaint - 2004 (220), 2001 (476)

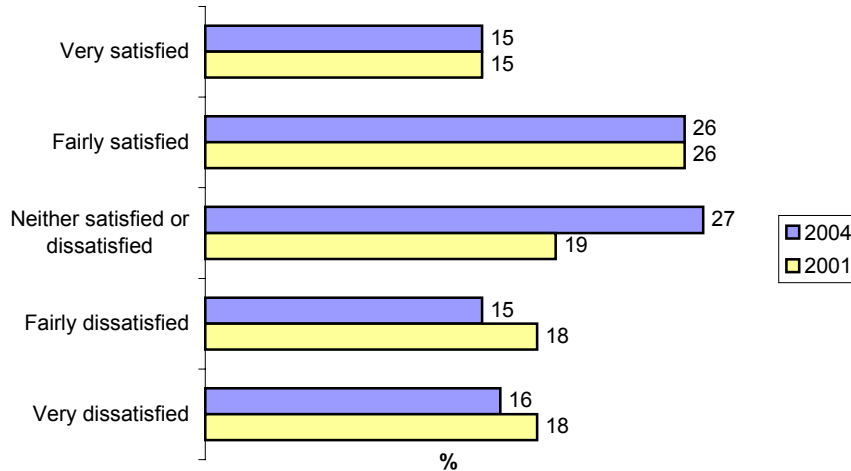
There are no significant differences between who was contacted about the complaint and the type of transport, gender, or ethnicity of the child. The only significant difference is that parents of children aged under 12 are more likely to complain to the school than parents of children aged 12-13.

<sup>1</sup> School Traveline was not included in this question in the 2001 survey

*Satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint:*

When asked about their satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint less than half of parents were satisfied (41%), only 15% of those satisfied being very satisfied. A significant proportion of respondents (31%) 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 14 - Satisfaction with outcome of complaint**



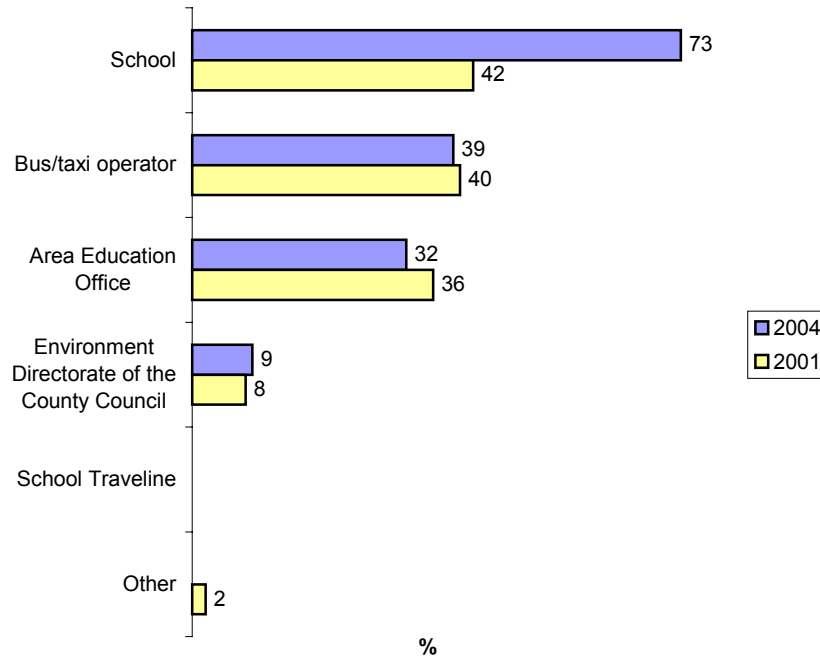
Base: all respondents making a complaint - 2004 (219), 2001 (476)

There are no significant differences between who the respondent complained to and their level of satisfaction with the outcome.

*Who parents would prefer to complain to:*

When asked who they would contact if they wanted to complain parents mentioned the school most (73%), followed by the bus/taxi operator (39%) and Area Education Office (32%). These rankings are the same as those people who were contacted about a complaint. Notably no one mentioned the School Traveline as a point of contact for who they would prefer to contact about a complaint.

**Chart 15 - Who parents would prefer to contact about a complaint**



Base: all respondents - 2004 (878), 2001 (476)

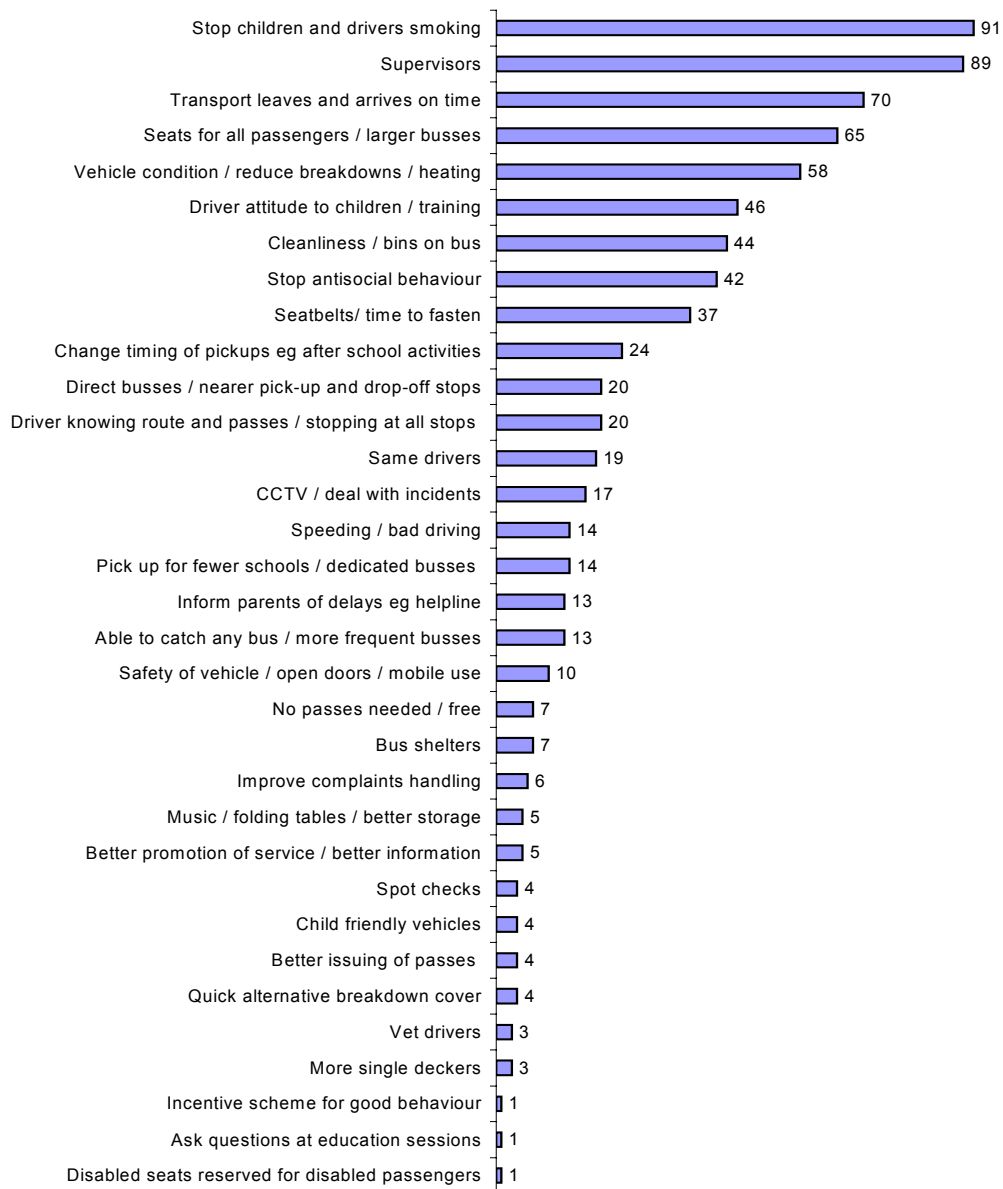
There are now more parents that would contact the school with their complaint than in 2001 (31% increase).

## 6.5 Improvements parents suggested for home to school transport

Parents were asked if they had any ideas about how home to school transport could be improved and any general comments about home to school transport (the responses from question 33 and 34 were combined). This provides a qualitative perspective of general perceptions about the home to school transport service.

The comments were categorised and the results are detailed in chart 15 below, showing the actual number of responses for each category.

**Chart 16 - Parents comments about home to school transport**



Base: all respondents making comment (461)



The most mentioned comment was to stop children and drivers smoking, closely followed by having supervisors on the bus to stop smoking and anti-social behaviour. The next most commonly mentioned comments were to have transport that arrives on time and does not leave early, that there are enough seats for all passengers possibly using larger buses or having more of them, and to improve the condition of the vehicle to reduce breakdowns and make the journey more comfortable for the children. It was also suggested that there are problems with some drivers attitude to children and that perhaps this could be improved through training.

### 6.5.1 General Comments from Parents

The following statements are a selection of the comments that parents made in question 33 and 34. There was a mix of comments. Many were positive and some included areas that parents felt need improvement and suggestions for these.

“The bus prefect scheme seems to have cut a lot of child misbehaviour out on the buses.”

“Have another adult on the bus to maintain behaviour and child safety.”

“Buses are late too often which can cause my child to be late, or miss school. There are too many people who have to stand up and there are not enough seats.”

“Seat belts should be compulsory.”

“Have same driver who could get to know the children.”

“Some of the drivers could be a bit more friendly to well behaved children. The general condition of the bus is inconsistent.”

“My son has reported that his bus frequently smells of diesel fumes. In fact, on occasions, the air has been acid and yellow. He has arrived home with red eyes and wheezing – he is asthmatic.”

“My daughter had lost her bus fare and the driver taking her to school told her if she had no money or no pass to get off the bus. This caused much distress, her name and address should have been taken, and she should have been allowed on the bus.”

“I think that the bus passes should be able to be used up to 6pm as my son stays on for after school activities and I have to pay his fares if it is not a school service.”

“On the whole the service is satisfactory but the bus has on occasion failed to stop and pick up the children from the designated stop.”

## 7 Conclusions

The survey results show that in general the home to school transport service is well regarded by the service users as 89% of users are satisfied with the service, and that it is improving over time (increase of 14% since 2001 in satisfaction, and 18% felt that the service had improved in the last 12 months).

Perceptions of service aspects are generally good:

- Three-quarters are satisfied with the *condition and appearance of vehicles*, an improvement of 17% since 2001. This is especially good as the safety of the vehicle is parents most important aspect of the service, and further analysis has shown that the condition and appearance of the vehicle is a key driver of overall satisfaction.
- *Perceptions of the driver* all have positive net ratings, with an average of +39% across all attributes. And an average improvement of 12% across all attributes since 2001, although there is still room for further improvement.
- The *punctuality* of transport is regarded highly by service users in the mornings (79% satisfied) and afternoons (83% satisfied), and an increase in satisfaction of 10% since 2001 for the afternoon service. This is an important improvement because punctuality of the service is parents' second most important service aspect. The punctuality of the morning service is one of the key drivers of overall satisfaction.
- The *reliability* of transport is poorer as 49% of respondents have experienced a breakdown, and the average number of breakdowns in the last year is just under two.
- Parent's third most important aspect of the transport service is the *lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour* (which is more important now than it was in 2001). 63% of parents worried about it with 19% saying their child has been a victim, the problem being greater on double-decker buses. Three-quarters of these saying it has happened more than once. Most are reported to the school, but a quarter going unreported.
- Concern about *smoking* is also high (70%), and increases for those who travel on double-decker buses.
- Awareness of the *Safer Travel Unit* (16%) and how to contact them (44%) is low among respondents, only 5% actually contacting the Safer Travel Unit. Education sessions run by the Safer Travel Unit are also poorly attended (15%).

- The process of transport application and Travelpass issue is well regarded (94% and 96% satisfied respectively) by service users.
- Most parents find out about school transport from the school (62%) and find it easy (94%). Most parents (92%) have read the information that comes with the Travelpass, and 59% of these found it useful.
- Over a fifth of parents have complained about home to school transport. Most complaining to the school (55%), closely followed by the bus/taxi operator (47%). The actual and preferred people to contact about a complaint do not differ, although there are more parents who would prefer to contact the school than in 2001. There are opportunities for improving complaint handling because less than half of parents satisfied with the outcome, with no significant change from 2001.
- The open comments at the end of the questionnaire highlighted the need to stop people smoking, have supervisors on the transport, improve the punctuality of the service, make sure there are enough seats, and improve the condition of the vehicles.

## 8 Recommendations

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

- Decide the preferred method of finding out about the school transport service. Currently 62% of parents find out about the service from the school. Decide if Lancashire County Council wants to take a more proactive role in promoting the service.
- Consider alternatives to double-decker buses for school transport, because people who use them are less satisfied with the service. If this is not possible then the satisfaction of people that use double-decker buses needs to be increased by concentrating on the recommendations below.
- Continue to build on the 17% increase in satisfaction with the condition and appearance of the vehicles used, paying particular attention to double-decker buses. This is especially important because it is a key driver of overall satisfaction and is the most important aspect of the service to parents. It is also among the most common comment in the open questions, and nearly half of respondents experiencing a breakdown.
- Make sure that the punctuality of the service is maintained, and improved for the bus services and the morning services because it drives overall satisfaction with the service. Also make sure that the transport doesn't leave early and that it stops at all pickup points. Parents also suggested that arrangements need to be made so that children can take a later bus if they have after school activities, perhaps by being able to catch any bus or scheduling some buses to leave later.
- Give drivers more training so that they know the routes, are better able to deal with anti-social behaviour (especially for bus drivers) and are more confident with children, as 20% of parents thought drivers were not good with children.
- There has been no significant reduction in the incidence and repetition of bullying since 2001, the problem being greater for bus users. Therefore, the work of the Safer Travel Unit needs to be promoted so that they are seen as the first point of call by parents for cases of anti-social behaviour. It also needs to be easy to contact because a quarter of incidents go unreported and only 6% are reported to Lancashire County Council. Consideration also needs to be given to other methods of reducing bullying such as having supervisors on school transport (eg a teacher, another adult or a prefect) and removing bus passes after a certain

- number of warnings have been given to stop bullying and anti-social behaviour recurring.
- Improve the information provided to parents, perhaps by making it more relevant to them, to improve how useful they think it is. Carry out more research to find out what would make information more useful to parents; for example the format, content and tone of the information.
  - Analyse the types of complaints and decide which the best channels for handling them are so that actions can be taken to sort out the problem. These channels then need to be promoted to service users, perhaps emphasising the use of the School Travelline and Safer Travel Unit as parents first point of contact rather than schools and transport providers. Create performance indicators for the number of complaints and the satisfaction with the outcome. Measure improvement against these baseline data.
  - Carry out further research to monitor future changes in user satisfaction as a result of undertaking these recommendations.

## 9 Appendices

### 9.1 Appendices 1: Marked Up Questionnaire

All values are given in percentages

Base: All Respondents (1003)

<b>Q1</b>	<b>What is your child's main mode of transport between home and school?</b>	
	Double-decker bus	56%
	Single-decker bus	39%
	Taxi	5%

Base: All Respondents (1000)

<b>Q2</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?</b>				
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
The condition of the vehicle(s) that your child uses	21%	54%	10%	13%	3%
The appearance of the vehicle(s) that your child uses	23%	54%	10%	10%	2%

Base: All Respondents (1001)

<b>Q3a</b>	<b>Have the vehicles ever broken down?</b>	
	Yes	49%
	No	44%
	Don't know	8%

Base: All Respondents with a child whose vehicle has broken down in the last year (465)

<b>Q3b</b>	If 'Yes', about how many times in the last year?	1.86
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Base: All Respondents (881)

<b>Q4</b>	<b>Is the driver usually...?</b>			
	Helpful	42%	Unhelpful	9%
	Friendly	65%	Unfriendly	14%
	Polite	50%	Impolite	9%
	Smart	45%	Scruffy	16%
	Good with young people	61%	Not good with young people	20%

Base: All Respondents (999)

<b>Q5</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the punctuality of the bus/taxi service in the morning?</b>	
	Very satisfied	30%
	Fairly satisfied	49%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	12%
	Fairly dissatisfied	7%
	Very dissatisfied	3%

Base: All Respondents (996)

<b>Q6</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the punctuality of the bus/taxi service in the afternoon?</b>	
	Very satisfied	43%
	Fairly satisfied	40%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	9%
	Fairly dissatisfied	6%
	Very dissatisfied	2%

Base: All Respondents (1002)

<b>Q7</b>	<b>Has your child ever been the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour whilst travelling on home to school transport?</b>	
	Yes	19%
	No	78%
	Don't know	3%

Base: all those being a victim of anti-social behaviour (188)

<b>Q8</b>	<b>Has this happened more than once?</b>	
	Yes	72%
	No	28%

Base: all those being a victim of anti-social behaviour (188)

<b>Q9</b>	<b>Have you reported this?</b>	
	Yes, to the school	63%
	Yes, to the County Council	6%
	Yes, to the bus/taxi operator	12%
	Yes, to the Police	3%
	Yes, to someone else	16%
	No, have not reported it	24%

Base: All Respondents (953)

<b>Q10</b>	<b>To what extent do you worry about the following when your child is being transported?</b>			
		Very worried	A little worried	Not worried
	Your child being the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour	15%	48%	38%
	Other people smoking whilst your child is being transported	35%	36%	29%

Base: All Respondents (988)

<b>Q11</b>	<b>Have you, or your child, ever heard of the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Yes, I have heard of the Safer Travel Unit	8%
	Yes, my child has heard of the Safer Travel Unit	8%
	Never heard of it	86%

Base: all those hearing of the Safer Travel Unit (144)

<b>Q12</b>	<b>Do you know how to contact the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Yes	44%
	No	56%

Base: all those hearing of the Safer Travel Unit (144)

<b>Q13</b>	<b>Have you, or your child, ever contacted the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Yes, I have contacted the Safer Travel Unit	5%
	Yes, my child has contacted the Safer Travel Unit	0%
	No	95%

Base: all those contacting the Safer Travel Unit (7)

<b>Q14</b>	<b>How satisfied were you with the outcome after contacting the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Very satisfied	29%
	Fairly satisfied	14%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	0%
	Fairly dissatisfied	29%
	Very dissatisfied	29%

Base: all those with children in year seven (368)

<b>Q15</b>	<b>Has your child ever attended an education session organised by the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Yes	15%
	No	85%

Base: All Respondents (995)

<b>Q16</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your application for transport was dealt with?</b>	
	Very satisfied	71%
	Fairly satisfied	23%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3%
	Fairly dissatisfied	1%
	Very dissatisfied	1%

Base: All Respondents (1000)

<b>Q17</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your child's Travelpass was issued?</b>	
	Very satisfied	74%
	Fairly satisfied	22%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3%
	Fairly dissatisfied	1%
	Very dissatisfied	1%

Base: All Respondents (1000)

<b>Q18</b>	<b>How did you first find out about the school transport service?</b>	
	School	62%
	Other parents	18%
	Friend/neighbour	5%
	County Council publication	8%
	Other	7%

Base: All Respondents (997)

<b>Q19</b>	<b>Was it difficult to find out about the school transport service?</b>	
	Yes	6%
	No	94%



Base: All Respondents (993)

<b>Q20</b>	<b>Have you ever read any of the information you received with your child's Travelpass (eg How to use your Travelpass)?</b>	
	Yes	92%
	No	6%
	Don't know	2%

Base: All Respondents (914)

<b>Q21</b>	<b>Overall, how useful did you find the information you received with your child's Travelpass?</b>	
	Very useful	40%
	Fairly useful	59%
	Not useful	1%
	Don't know	1%

Base: All Respondents (1004)

<b>Q22</b>	<b>Have you ever complained about the school transport service your child receives?</b>	
	Yes	22%
	No	78%

Base: all those with who made a complaint (220)

<b>Q23</b>	<b>Who did you contact about your complaint?</b>	
	Bus/taxi operator	47%
	Area Education Office	24%
	School	55%
	Environment Directorate of the County Council	8%
	School Traveline	22%
	Safer Travel Unit	0%
	Other parents	1%
	Driver	0%
	MP	0%

Base: all those with who made a complaint (219)

<b>Q24</b>	<b>How satisfied were you with the outcome of your complaint?</b>	
	Very satisfied	15%
	Fairly satisfied	26%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	27%
	Fairly dissatisfied	15%
	Very dissatisfied	16%

Base: All Respondents (878)

<b>Q25</b>	<b>If you wanted to complain about home to school transport who would you contact?</b>	
	Bus/taxi operator	39%
	Area Education Office	32%
	School	73%
	Environment Directorate of the County Council	9%
	School Traveline	0%
	School transport office	0%

Base: All Respondents (1000)

Q26	<b>Which of the following do you think are the three most important aspects of home to school transport?</b>	
	Safety of the vehicle	95%
	Regularly having the same vehicle	4%
	Punctuality of the service	61%
	Lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour	58%
	Length of journey	2%
	Regularly having the same drivers	19%
	Attitude of the driver	41%
	Information about the service	2%
	The condition of the vehicle used	33%
	Comfort	3%
	Seatbelts	1%
	Driver knowing route	0%
	Not overcrowded	0%
	Child protection policies	0%
	Seats for all passengers	0%
	Cleanliness of vehicle	0%
	No smoking	1%
	Driving skills	0%
	No heating on bus	0%

Base: All Respondents (996)

Q27	<b>Overall how satisfied are you with the home to school transport service?</b>	
	Very satisfied	32%
	Fairly satisfied	57%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	7%
	Fairly dissatisfied	4%
	Very dissatisfied	1%

Base: All Respondents (994)

Q28	<b>And overall, do you think the home to school transport service has got better or worse in the last 12 months or so, or has it stayed the same?</b>	
	Got worse	8%
	Got better	18%
	Stayed the same	67%

Base: All Respondents (1004)

Q29	<b>What was your child's age on their last birthday?</b>	
	<12	17%
	12-13	51%
	14+	32%

Base: All Respondents (1004)

Q30	<b>Are they...?</b>	
	Male	53%
	Female	47%

Base: All Respondents (1000)

<b>Q31</b>	<b>To which of these groups do you consider your child belongs?</b>	
	White	99%
	Asian or Asian British	0%
	Black or Black British	0%
	Chinese	0%
	Mixed	1%
	Other	0%

Base: All Respondents (1002)

<b>Q32</b>	<b>Does your child have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits their activities in any way?</b>	
	Yes	3%
	No	97%

Base: All Respondents making a comment (461)

Q33, Q34	Please tell us about any ideas you have of how the home to school transport service could be improved and any other comments.	Number
	Stop children and drivers smoking	91
	Supervisors	89
	Transport leaves and arrives on time	70
	Seats for all passengers / larger busses	65
	Vehicle condition / reduce breakdowns / heating	58
	Driver attitude to children / training	46
	Cleanliness / bins on bus	44
	Stop antisocial behaviour	42
	Seatbelts/ time to fasten	37
	Change timing of pickups eg after school activities	24
	Direct busses / nearer pick-up and drop-off stops	20
	Driver knowing route and passes / stopping at all stops	20
	Same drivers	19
	CCTV / deal with incidents	17
	Speeding / bad driving	14
	Pick up for fewer schools / dedicated busses	14
	Inform parents of delays eg helpline	13
	Able to catch any bus / more frequent busses	13
	Safety of vehicle / open doors / mobile use	10
	No passes needed / free	7
	Bus shelters	7
	Improve complaints handling	6
	Music / folding tables / better storage	5
	Better promotion of service / better information	5
	Spot checks	4
	Child friendly vehicles	4
	Better issuing of passes	4
	Quick alternative breakdown cover	4
	Vet drivers	3
	More single deckers	3
	Incentive scheme for good behaviour	1
	Ask questions at education sessions	1
	Disabled seats reserved for disabled passengers	1

## 9.2 Appendix 2: Questionnaire

# Home to School Transport Parents Survey 2004



We want to offer you the best service we can and would value your views on our service based on your child's experience of home to school transport.

We would be grateful if you could spend a few minutes completing this questionnaire. We will use the results to improve our services. All information you provide is treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for statistical and research purposes. Please return the questionnaire with your Travelpass re-issue form in the pre-paid envelope provided by 30 April 2004.

If you wish to speak to someone from the Transport Service, please telephone the Traveline on 01772 849111 or you can e-mail us on [ENVSchpt@env.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:ENVSchpt@env.lancscc.gov.uk). If you would like to speak to someone about the survey please contact Mike Walker, Research Manager, on 01772 533445 or email [mike.walker@css.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:mike.walker@css.lancscc.gov.uk).

Thank you very much for your assistance.

1. You may find it useful to discuss the questions with your child when completing the questionnaire.
2. Please read the instructions carefully.
3. Please check you have answered all the appropriate questions.
4. Return your completed questionnaire with your Travelpass re-issue form in the reply paid envelope provided.

### THE VEHICLE

**1** What is your child's main mode of transport between home and school?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Double-decker bus  1

Single-decker bus  2

Taxi  3

**2** 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)
The condition of the vehicle(s) that your child uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The appearance of the vehicle(s) that your child uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**3** Have the vehicles ever broken down?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1 If 'Yes', about how many times in the last year?

No  2

Don't know  3

**THE DRIVER**

**4** Is the driver usually...?  
PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

Helpful  1    Unhelpful  6

Friendly  2    Unfriendly  7

Polite  3    Impolite  8

Smart  4    Scuffy  9

Good with young people  5                                  Not good with young people  10

**PUNCTUALITY**

**5** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the punctuality of the bus/taxi service in the morning?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied  1

Fairly satisfied  2

Neither satisfied or dissatisfied  3

Fairly dissatisfied  4

Very dissatisfied  5

**6** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the punctuality of the bus/taxi service in the afternoon?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied  1

Fairly satisfied  2

Neither satisfied or dissatisfied  3

Fairly dissatisfied  4

Very dissatisfied  5



**SAFETY**

**7** Has your child ever been the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour whilst travelling on home to school transport?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1 → GO TO QUESTION 8

No  2 → GO TO QUESTION 10

Don't know  3 → GO TO QUESTION 10

**8** Has this happened more than once?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1

No  2

**9** Have you reported this?

PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

Yes, to the school  1

Yes, to the County Council  2

Yes, to the bus/taxi operator  3

Yes, to the Police  4

Yes, to someone else  5

No, have not reported it  6

**10** To what extent do you worry about the following when your child is being transported?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Very Worried (1)	A little worried (2)	Not worried (3)
Your child being the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other people smoking whilst your child is being transported	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**11** Have you, or your child, heard of the Safer Travel Unit?

PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

Yes, I have heard of the Safer Travel Unit  1 → GO TO QUESTION 12

Yes, my child has heard of the Safer Travel Unit  2 → GO TO QUESTION 12

Never heard of it  3 → GO TO QUESTION 15





**12** Do you know how to contact the Safer Travel Unit?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1

No  2

**13** Have you, or your child, ever contacted the Safer Travel Unit?  
PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

Yes, I have contacted the Safer Travel Unit  1 → GO TO QUESTION 14

Yes, my child has contacted the Safer Travel Unit  2 → GO TO QUESTION 14

No  3 → GO TO QUESTION 15

**14** How satisfied were you with the outcome after contacting the Safer Travel Unit? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied  1

Fairly satisfied  2

Neither satisfied or dissatisfied  3

Fairly dissatisfied  4

Very dissatisfied  5

**15** YEAR 7 CHILDREN ONLY. Has your child ever attended an education session organised by the Safer Travel Unit? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1

No  2

### APPLICATION FOR TRANSPORT AND ISSUE OF TRAVELPASS

**16** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your application for transport was dealt with?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied  1

Fairly satisfied  2

Neither satisfied or dissatisfied  3

Fairly dissatisfied  4

Very dissatisfied  5

**17** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your child's Travelpass was issued?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied  1

Fairly satisfied  2

Neither satisfied or dissatisfied  3

Fairly dissatisfied  4

Very dissatisfied  5

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICE**

**18** How did you first find out about the school transport service?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

School  1

Other parents  2

Friend/neighbour  3

County Council publication  4

Other  5

**19** Was it difficult to find out about the school transport service?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1

No  2

**20** Have you ever read any of the information you received with you child's Travelpass (eg How to use your Travelpass)?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1 → GO TO QUESTION 21

No  2 → GO TO QUESTION 22

Don't know  3 → GO TO QUESTION 22

**21** Overall, how useful did you find the information you received with you child's Travelpass?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very useful  1

Fairly useful  2

Not useful  3

Don't know  4

**MAKING A COMPLAINT**

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

Yes  1 → GO TO QUESTION 23

No  2 → GO TO QUESTION 25

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

Bus/taxi operator  1

Area Education Office  2

School  3

Environment Directorate of the County Council  4

School Traveline  5

Other   
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

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

Very satisfied  1

Fairly satisfied  2

Neither satisfied or dissatisfied  3

Fairly dissatisfied  4

Very dissatisfied  5

**25** If you wanted to complain about home to school transport who would you contact?  
PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

Bus/taxi operator  1

Area Education Office  2

School  3

Environment Directorate of the County Council  4

School Traveline  5

Other   
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

**HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICE OVERALL**

**26** 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	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Regularly having the same drivers	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Regularly having the same vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Attitude of the driver	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Punctuality of the service	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Information about the service	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	The condition of the vehicle used	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Length of journey	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Comfort	<input type="checkbox"/> 10

Other   
PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

**27** Overall, how satisfied are you with the home to school transport service?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Fairly satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Fairly dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Very dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**28** And overall, do you think the home to school transport service has got better or worse over the last 12 months or so, or has it stayed the same?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Got better	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Got worse	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Stayed the same	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**YOUR CHILD**

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

years

**30** Are they...?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Male	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Female	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

**31** 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

**32** Does your child have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits their activities in any way?  
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes  1

No  2

**... AND FINALLY**

**33** Please tell us about any ideas you have of how the home to school transport service could be improved. PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOX

**34** 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 contact the Traveline on 01772 849111 or you can e-mail us on [ENVSchpt@env.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:ENVSchpt@env.lancscc.gov.uk)

**Please return your completed questionnaire in the reply paid envelope provided by 30 April 2004.  
Thank you for your time.**

Return address:

School Transport Team, Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate,  
Policy and Public Transport, Guild House, Cross Street, Preston, PR1 8RD



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