

# **Transport Service**

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

**Research study for**  
Transport Service

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**Prepared by**

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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.

A questionnaire was sent to 800 parents or carers of children who use Lancashire County Council's home to school transport service. 429 questionnaires were returned giving an overall response rate of 54%.

Overall the level of satisfaction with the home to school transport service is high with 93% of respondents being satisfied with the overall service, with an improvement of 12% of parents being very satisfied on 2004. 14% of parents also feel that the service has improved in the last 12 months, only 6% saying it has got worse, showing that the service is improving.

The survey tested user satisfaction and importance on a number of key service attributes. The results show that:

- four in five are satisfied with the condition and appearance of the vehicles;
- perceptions of the driver all have positive net ratings – averaging +42%;
- reliability is poor – 53% have experienced a breakdown, with an average of two breakdowns amongst these in the last year;
- more than half of parents are worried about bullying or anti-social behaviour – 15% of parents said their child had been a victim;
- concern about smoking remains high (although it has fallen since 2004);
- awareness of the Safer Travel Unit and how to contact them is low;
- parents are satisfied with the process of transport application and Travelpass issue, and find the information they are sent useful; and
- one in five parents have complained about home to school transport.

The main recommendations are:

- Maintain satisfaction with the condition and appearance of the vehicle, and improve it for double-decker bus users.
- Improve the safety of the vehicles by making sure that there are enough seats for everyone, having seatbelts, making sure there is no smoking, and making sure the drivers don't speed or use mobiles when driving.
- Improve the reliability of the transport so that there are fewer breakdowns and look into the reasons why double-decker buses break down more.
- Pass on the positive feedback to the drivers about how parents now think they are more friendly, polite and helpful. And consider offering training to

improve the way they interact with young people and how smart they are, paying particular attention to drivers of double-decker buses.

- For services transporting younger children and those with a disability try to ensure the same drivers are driving each day.
- Maintain the punctuality of the service and improve punctuality of double-decker buses. Some comments parents made also suggested that the transport shouldn't leave before the scheduled time, which meant that some children missed their bus.
- Implement further measures for reducing the amount of bullying and anti-social behaviour (including smoking) on school transport, especially double-decker buses. For example, encourage parents to report bullying – perhaps by promoting a helpline – and ensure that action is taken to reduce the number of times children are the target of bullies. Parents suggested having adult supervisors on buses or cameras.
- Decide on how school transport is best promoted – if this is by the school then it is working effectively as parents did not find it difficult to learn of the service. Continue processing travel applications and issuing Travelpasses in the same way as parents are satisfied with the system.
- Look at ways of improving the awareness of the Safer Travel Unit and how to contact it (eg by running more education sessions, including information when Travelpasses are sent out).
- Ask parents what information they would find useful to be sent with Travelpasses, and incorporate it into the pack (eg reporting and tackling bullying or anti-social behaviour, the Safer Travel Unit). Consider sending different information tailored to each mode of transport or age group because children travelling on single-decker buses don't find it as useful. This could be because there is less bullying on single-decker buses and they don't need this type of information, or because older children have had the same information previously.
- To reduce the number of complaints, analyse them to decide how to handle them and deal with the cause of the problem. The present situation, where complaints are directed at the operators and schools, means that the county council may not hear of all the complaints and therefore can't resolve them. Also creating performance indicators for the number of complaints and the satisfaction with the outcome will help to measure improvement.
- 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. This survey has been run every three years since 2001. The results from the previous surveys will be used as a basis for comparison for the 2007 research results.

## **3 Research Objectives**

The home to school transport parents survey was undertaken to provide data to evaluate service improvements. The 2001 and 2004 survey results provide a basis for comparison that will identify any changes in levels of user satisfaction.

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.

## **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 800 parents whose children receive home to school transport with their Travelpass application form. The sample was obtained from a list of approximately 8,000 children who receive home to school transport.

The 2007 questionnaire was identical to the 2004 questionnaire although it included some questions that were not in the 2001 questionnaire. Where questions are the same accurate comparisons can be made between surveys.

The questionnaires were posted on Monday 2 April 2007. Fieldwork was undertaken over a period of four weeks, ending on Friday 30 April 2007.

No incentive for respondents to complete the questionnaire was given. 429 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 54%.

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

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 500 respond with a particular answer, the chance are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 46% and 54% (ie +/- 4%), 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
60	200	14%	13%	9%
100	100	14%	13%	8%
400	400	7%	6%	4%
400	800	6%	6%	4%
400	1000	6%	5%	3%

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

For example, for two samples of 400 responses in each at around 50% of responses in each category to be compared, the difference needs to be over 7% to be statistically significant. This is to say that the difference is not due to chance alone.

As there were only 19 questionnaires returned from parents whose children travel to school in a taxi there aren't enough responses to perform many comparisons between taxis and the other modes of travel.

## 6 Main Research Findings

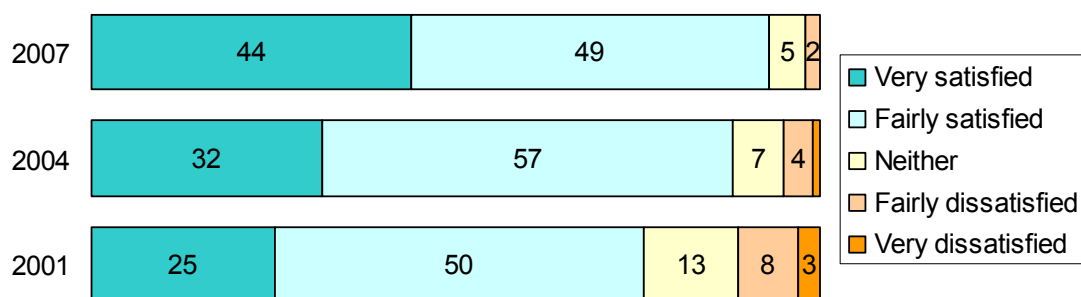
A marked up questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

### 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.

Overall satisfaction with home to school transport is high – with 93% of parents being satisfied (very and fairly satisfied) with the service.

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



Base: all respondents – 2007 (413), 2004 (996), 2001 (1476)

There are 12% more parents very satisfied with home to school transport than there were in 2004, which shows progressive improvement of the service. Although the parents of older children (those 14 and over) and those with a disability are less satisfied with the home to school transport service overall (38% and 22% very satisfied respectively). It seems to be a trend over the last three surveys that parents of children under the age of 12 are more satisfied with the service (57% very satisfied).

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

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?	
Got better	14%
Got worse	6%
Stayed the same	74%
Don't know	6%

Base of all respondents: 412

One in seven parents felt that the service their child receives has improved (14%), three-quarters felt it had stayed the same (74%), and significantly only a minority of 6% felt that the overall service had worsened. The only difference was by mode of transport. Parents whose children travel on double-decker buses were more likely to say that the service has got worse (10%) compared to children who travel on single-decker buses (2%).

## 6.2 Satisfaction Levels with Different Service Aspects

Service users were asked about a number of different service aspects including:

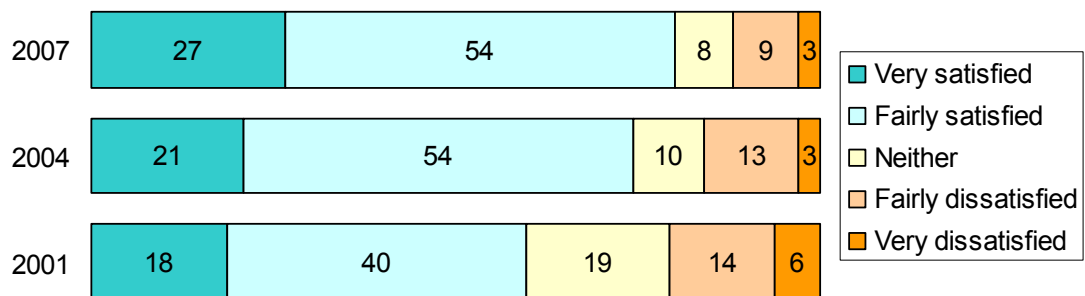
- satisfaction with the vehicle;
- perceptions of the driver;
- punctuality and reliability of transport;
- perceptions of their child’s safety on the journey;
- awareness and perceptions of the Safer Travel Unit;
- perceptions of the process of transport application; and
- information they receive from 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 81% are satisfied with the condition and appearance of the vehicle used. Again satisfaction with the condition and appearance of the vehicles has improved since 2004 (6% and 4% respectively).

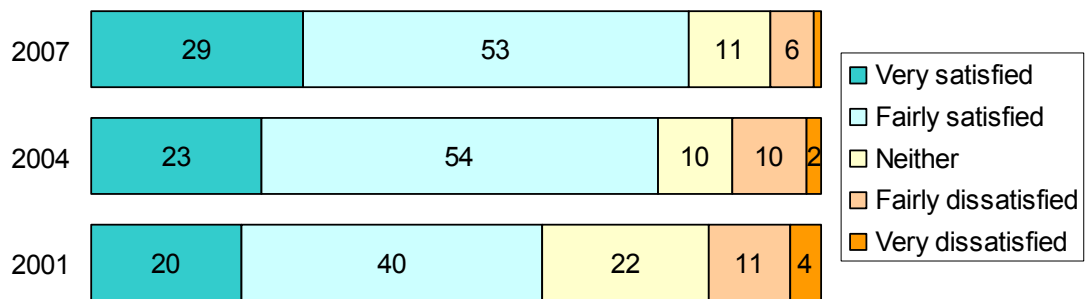
**Chart 2 - Satisfaction with the condition of vehicles used**



Base: all respondents – 2007 (421), 2004 (1000), 2001 (1476)



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



Base: all respondents - 2007 (413), 2004 (981), 2001 (1476)

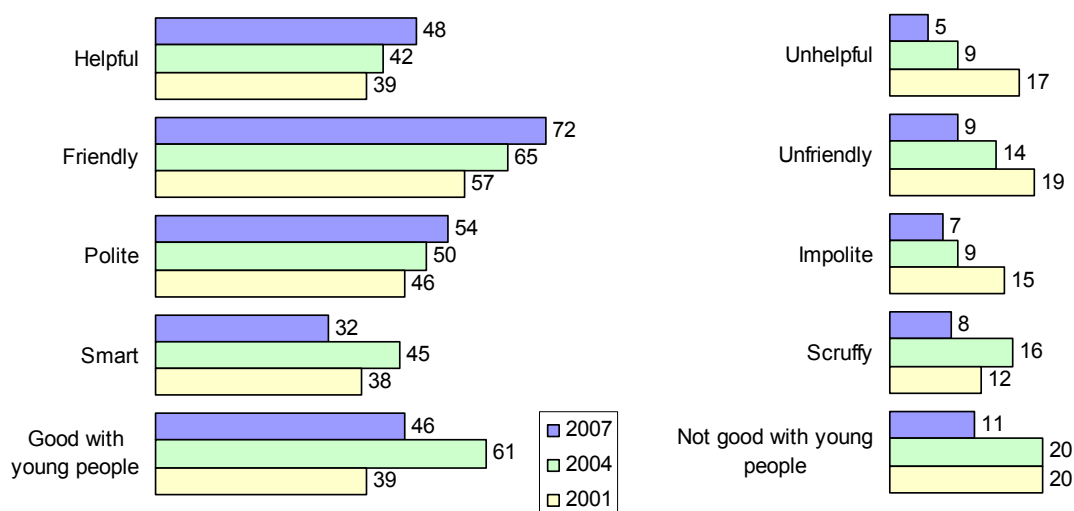
There are similar differences in the levels of satisfaction with the vehicle to the survey in 2004. Again parents of children who travel on double-decker buses are less likely to be satisfied with the condition and appearance of the vehicle (16% very satisfied for both). This ties with the satisfaction levels of the different age groups because the under 12s are more likely to be satisfied with the appearance and condition of the vehicle (42% and 40% very satisfied respectively), and these are the children who are more likely to travel on a single-decker bus (55%) or in a taxi (13%).

### 6.2.2 Perceptions of the driver

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the drivers who transport their children including their friendliness, politeness, helpfulness, how smart they appear 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 (63%), polite (47%) and helpful (43%). There is still room some room for improvement though because one in ten parents thought that the drivers weren't good with young people and were unfriendly.

**Chart 4 - Perceptions of the driver**



Base: all respondents - 2007 (408), 2004 (881), 2001 (1476)

Respondents whose children travel in a double-decker bus are less likely to say that the drivers are helpful (41%), whereas the under 12 age group are more likely to say they are helpful (68%). Parents of boys are more likely to say that the drivers are helpful (54%), friendly (77%) and smart (41%).

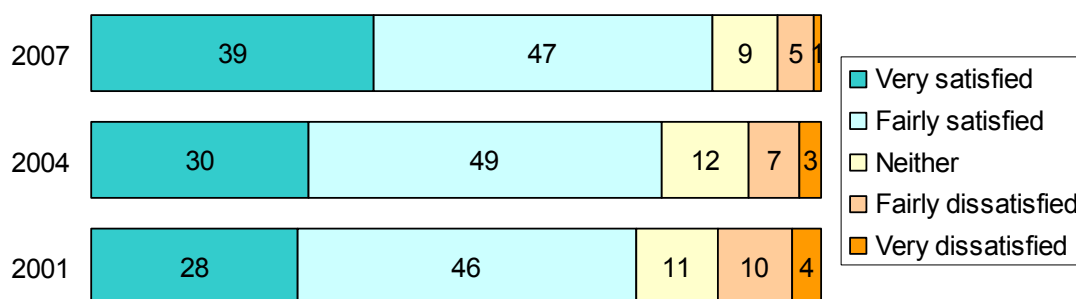
There are also some changes that have occurred since 2004, the most notable improvement being the friendliness and helpfulness of drivers (12% and 10% increase respectively). Two factors have had net decreases – the perceptions of how good the drivers are with young people and how smart they appear (6% and 5% fall respectively).

### 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 the reliability of the vehicles.

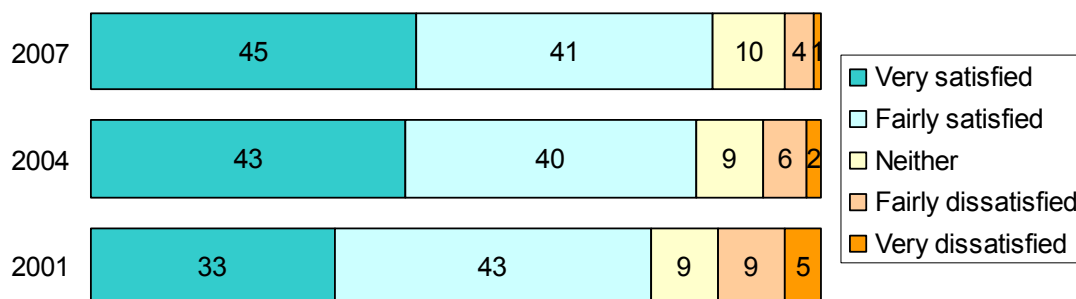
Six in seven parents were satisfied with the punctuality of the service in the morning and afternoon (86%). Only a handful of parents were dissatisfied with the services punctuality (6% in the morning, 5% in the afternoon).

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



Base: all respondents - 2007 (422), 2004 (999), 2001 (1476)

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



Base: all respondents - 2007 (414), 2004 (996), 2001 (1476)

There are more parents who are very satisfied with the punctuality of the service in the morning than there were in 2004 (9% increase). There are some differences for different groups: double-decker bus users, and those whose children are over 14, are less satisfied with the punctuality of the service in the morning (33% very satisfied for both).

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

**Chart 7 - Have the vehicles ever broken down?**

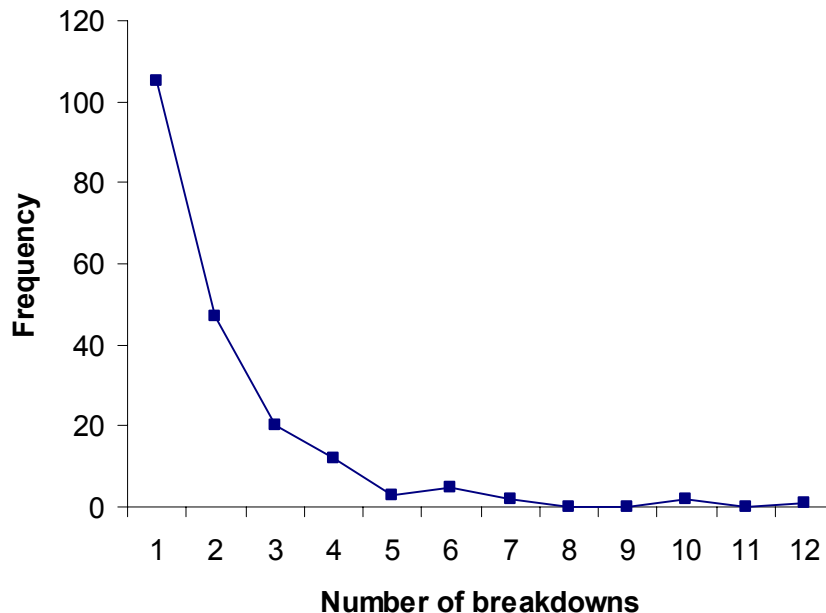


Base: all respondents - 2007 (419), 2004 (1001)

**If 'Yes', about how many times in the last year?** 2.02

Base of all respondents with a child whose vehicle has broken down in the last year: 197

**Chart 8 - Distribution of vehicle breakdowns in the last year**



Base of all respondents with a child whose vehicle has broken down in the last year: 197

Over half of parents said that their child's transport has broken down (53%). Double-decker buses (69%) were more likely to have broken down than single-decker buses (41%). Of these people the transport has broken down twice in the last 12 months showing 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.

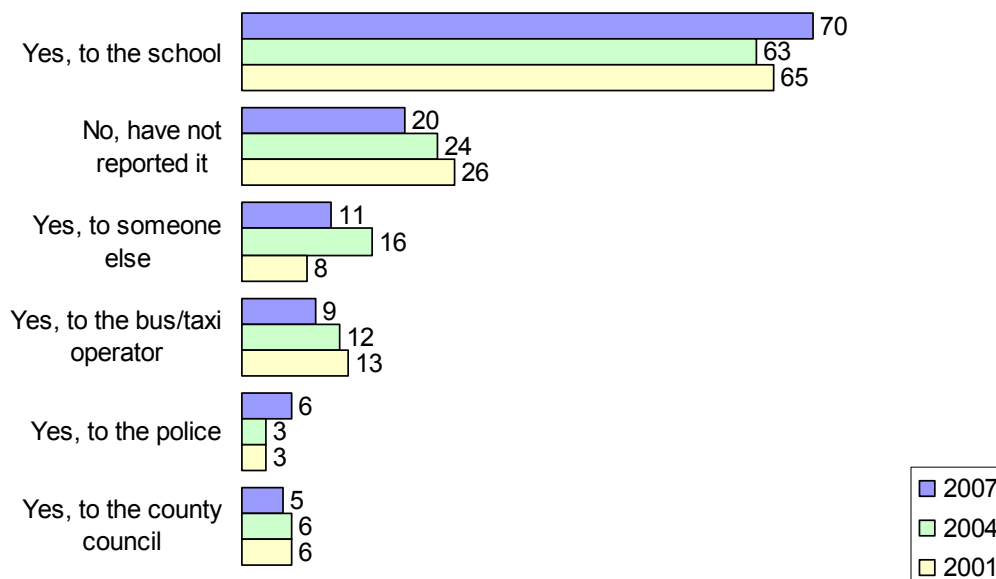
Has your child ever been the victim if bullying or anti-social behaviour whilst travelling on home to school transport?	
Yes	15%
No	81%
Don’t know	3%

Base of all respondents: 418

15% of respondents say that their child has been the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour whilst travelling on home to school transport. Children travelling on double-decker buses (21%) are more likely to have been the victim of bullying than children travelling on single-decker buses (10%). More than three-quarters of those who have been bullied said that this has happened more than once (77%), showing that bullying remains a problem on home to school transport.

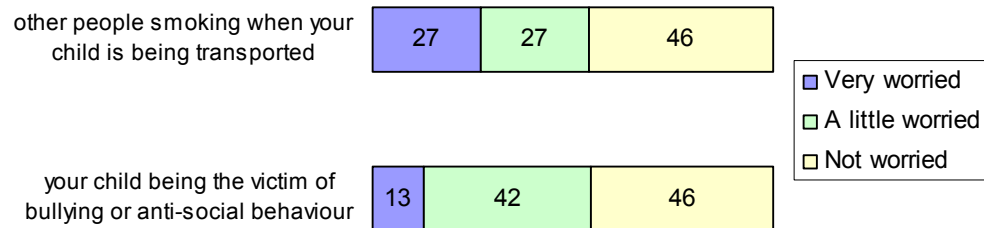
Of those that say their child has been the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour the most common place to report it to is the school (70%). A fifth of incidents go un-reported (20%). There are no significant changes in who incidents are reported to since 2004.

**Chart 9 - Reporting of incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour**



Base: all respondents with a child being the victim of bullying or anti-social behaviour - 2007 (64), 2004 (188), 2001 (334)

**Chart 10 - Parental concern about antisocial behaviour and smoking**



Base: all respondents 400

Parental concern about other people smoking, and bullying or anti-social behaviour when their child is being transported remains high with over half of parents being worried (both 54%). Although progress is being made because concern about smoking and bullying or anti-social behaviour has fallen since the 2004 survey (16% and 9% fall respectively). As in 2004, parents are more likely to worry about anti-social behaviour or bullying (62% worried) and smoking (64% worried) when their child travels to school on a double-decker bus. Therefore the problem of monitoring children on the top floor of a double-decker bus remains.

### 6.2.5 Safer Travel Unit

A number of questions looked at the Safer Travel Unit. Only 13% of parents and 16% of children are aware of the Safer Travel Unit; whilst most respondents (77%) have never heard of it. Since 2004 there are fewer parents saying they have never heard of it (9% fewer).

Of the people who are aware of the Safer Travel Unit less than half (45%) 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	10%
Yes, my child has contacted the Safer Travel Unit	1%
No	91%

Base of all respondents: 105

There are six respondents who are satisfied, one who is dissatisfied and two who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the outcome of contacting the Safer Travel Unit. As there are only nine respondents that have contacted the Safer Travel Unit these results are inconclusive.

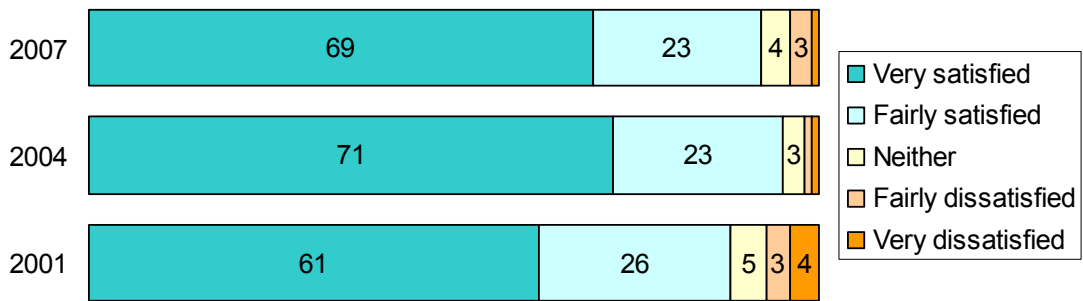
The education sessions organised by the Safer Travel Unit are not well attended because only 12% of respondents' children have attended one. The 14 and over age group (6%) are less likely than children aged 12 to 13 (17%) to have attended an education session.

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.

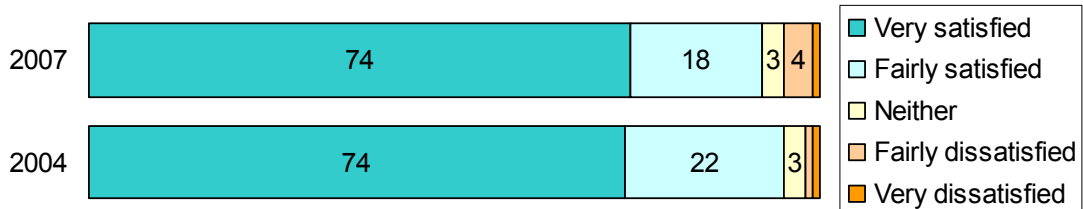
Overall 92% of respondents were satisfied (very satisfied and fairly satisfied) with how their application for transport was dealt with and how their Travelpass was issued – the majority of these being very satisfied (69% and 74% respectively). There were no differences in perceptions between the different groups.

**Chart 11 - Satisfaction with the process of transport applications**



Base: all respondents - 2007 (416), 2004 (995), 2001 (1476)

**Chart 12 - Satisfaction with the issuing of Travelpasses**



Base: all respondents - 2007 (419), 2004 (1000)

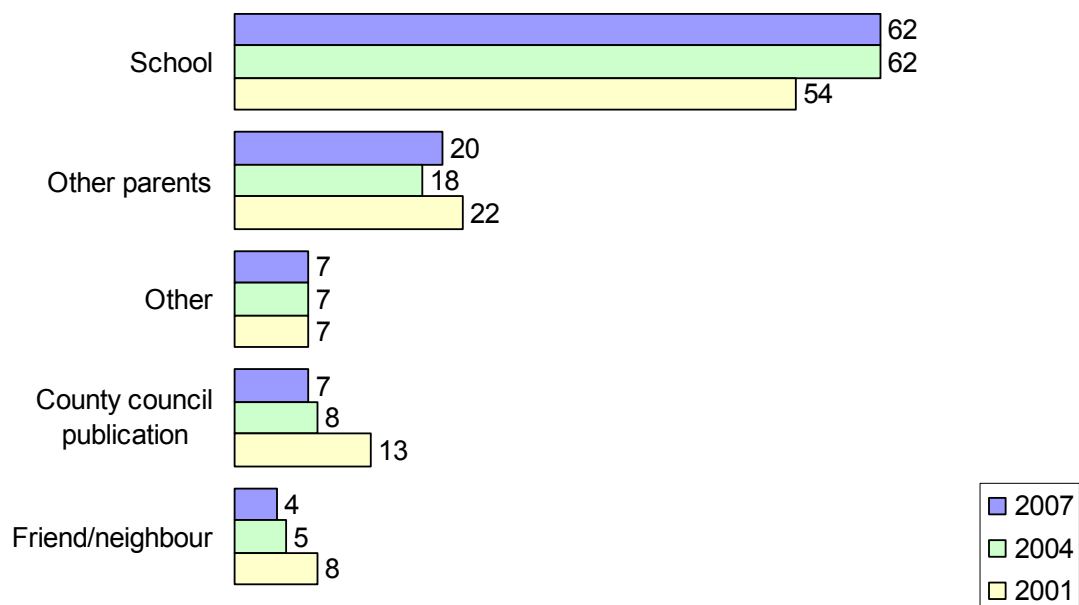


6.2.7 Information about the school transport service

Respondents were asked about how they found out about the school transport service, 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%) followed by other parents (20%), while friend/neighbour (4%) was the least mentioned.

**Chart 13 - Method of first finding out about the school transport service**



Base: all respondents - 2007 (415), 2004 (1000), 2001 (1476)

Methods have not changed significantly since 2004. Parents whose children use double-decker buses were more likely to say they heard about the school transport service from the school (70%) than the other modes of transport.

Most parents found it easy (92%) to find out about the school transport service, only 8% finding it difficult. Parents with children who have a disability were more likely to say that they found it difficult to find out about the school transport service (21%).

Most parents have read the information that comes with their child's Travelpass (91%). Only 7% of parents did not read the information. Of those who have read the information most found it fairly useful (58%) and two-fifths 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	58%
Not useful	1%
Don't know	1%

Base of all respondents: 369

Parents whose children travel on double-decker buses were more likely to find the information useful (48% very useful) compared to children travelling on single-decker buses (30% very useful).

### 6.3 Importance of Service Aspects

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

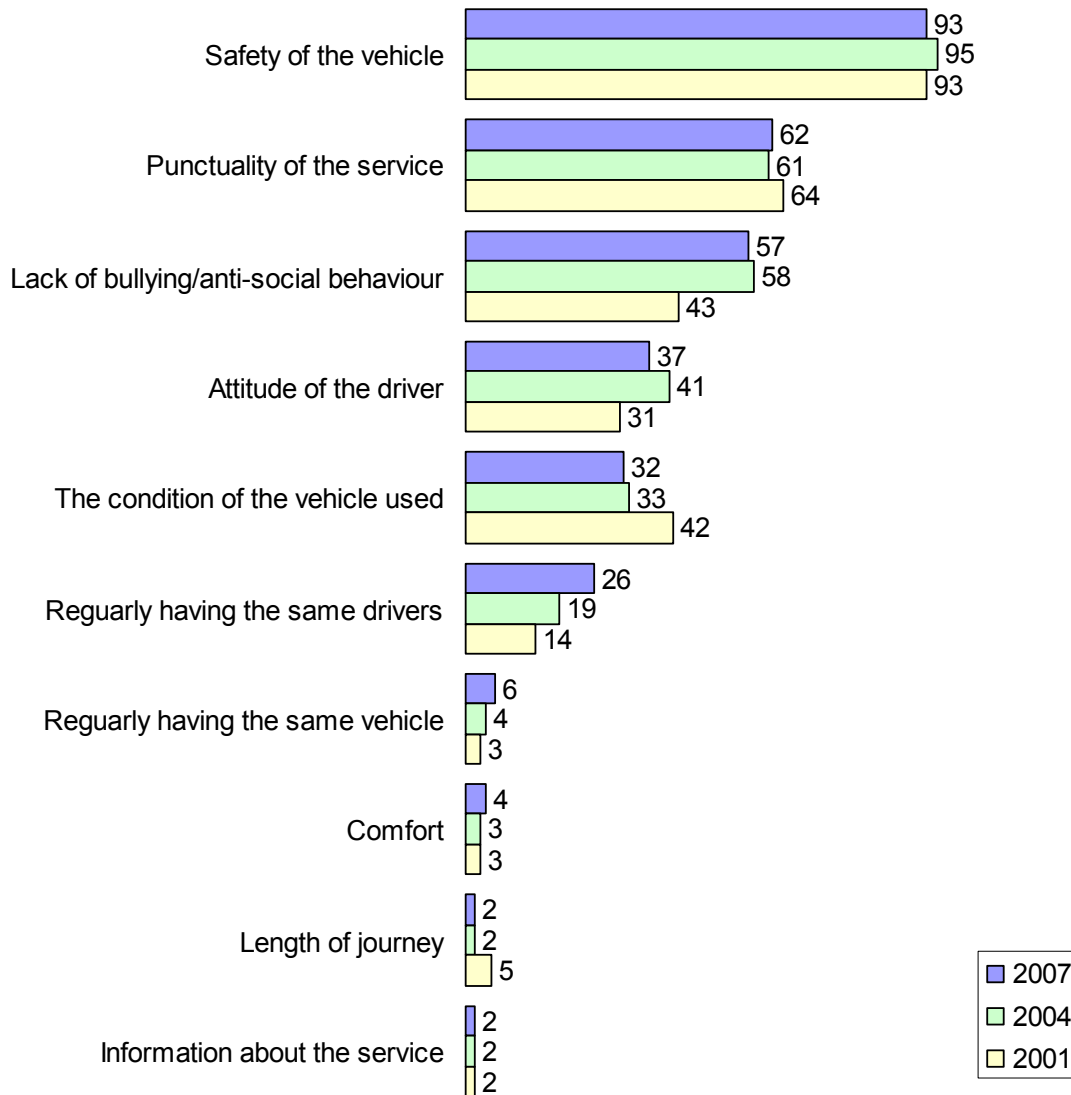
The three most important aspects of the home to school transport service are the safety of the vehicle (93%), punctuality of the service (62%) and lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour (57%), which is the same ranking as 2004. By far the most important to parents is the safety of the vehicle, having 31% more parents citing 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 again the condition and appearance of the vehicle and the punctuality of the service in the morning.

There are differences in parents' views on levels of importance. Parents are more concerned about:

- having the same vehicles when their children travel in a single-decker bus or taxi (8% and 16% respectively) compared to double-decker buses (3%) – which could be because the condition and appearance of double-decker buses is rated more poorly;
- having the same driver when their child is under 12 (40%), when they travel in a taxi (58%), and when they have a disability (56%);
- the punctuality of the service when their child doesn't have a disability (63%) compared to when they have a disability (39%); and
- bullying and anti-social behaviour when their child is aged 12 to 13 (64%) compared to the over 14s (49%).

**Chart 14 - Importance of Service Aspects**



Base: all respondents - 2007 (418), 2004 (1000), 2001 (1476)

## 6.4 Complaints

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

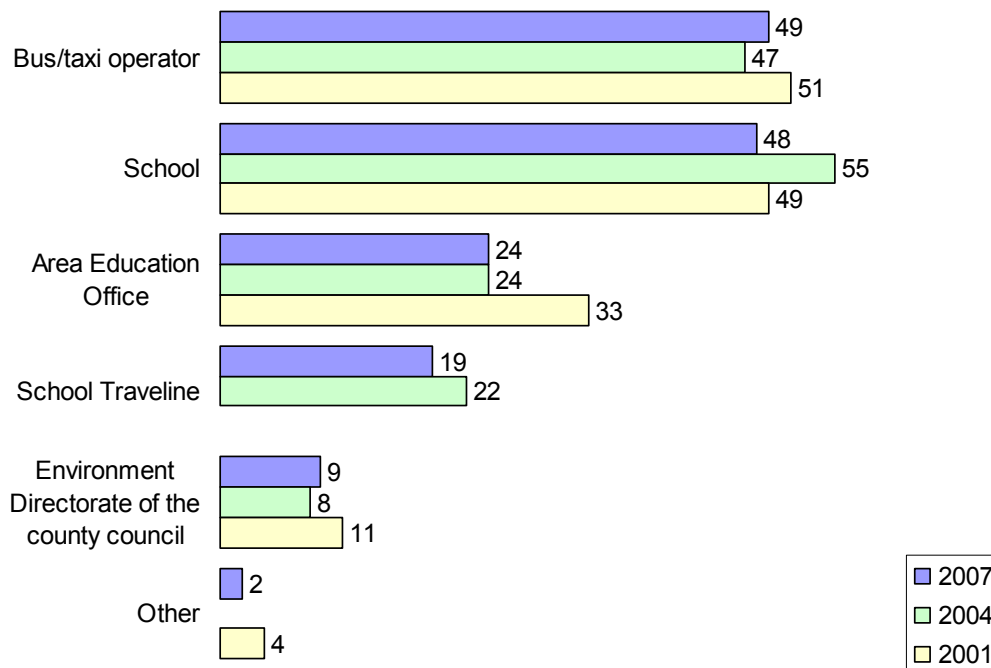
### *Number of complaints:*

Out of 408 respondents' a fifth (20%) 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 79 respondents who have complained the majority contacted the bus/taxi operator (49%), closely followed by the school (48%). Only one-fifth of parents use the School Traveline (19%).

**Chart 15 - Who was contacted about the complaint**



Base: all respondents making a complaint - 2007 (79), 2004 (220), 2001 (476)

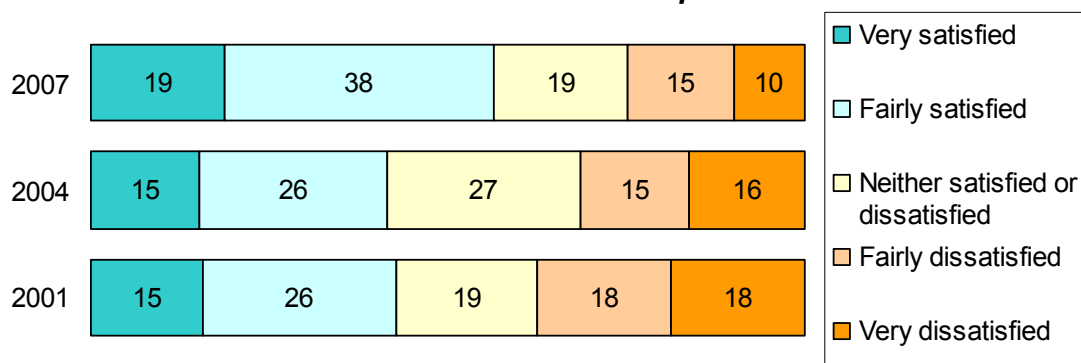
<sup>1</sup> School Traveline was not included in this question in the 2001 survey

The only significant differences are by mode of transport. Parents whose children travel on a single-decker bus are more likely to contact the bus operator compared to double-decker bus users (63% and 33% respectively). Parents are less likely to contact the school when their child travels in a taxi compared to double-decker bus (11% and 56% respectively), which may be because the complaint is less likely to be about a problem with other children when they travel in a taxi.

*Satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint:*

When asked about their satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint almost three-fifths of parents were satisfied (58%), although only 19% were very satisfied. A significant proportion of respondents (25%) were dissatisfied with the outcome. There has been an improvement in satisfaction since 2004 (17% more parents are now satisfied) showing there has been an improvement in the effectiveness of complaint handling.

**Chart 16 - Satisfaction with outcome of complaint**



Base: all respondents making a complaint - 2007 (80), 2004 (219), 2001 (476)

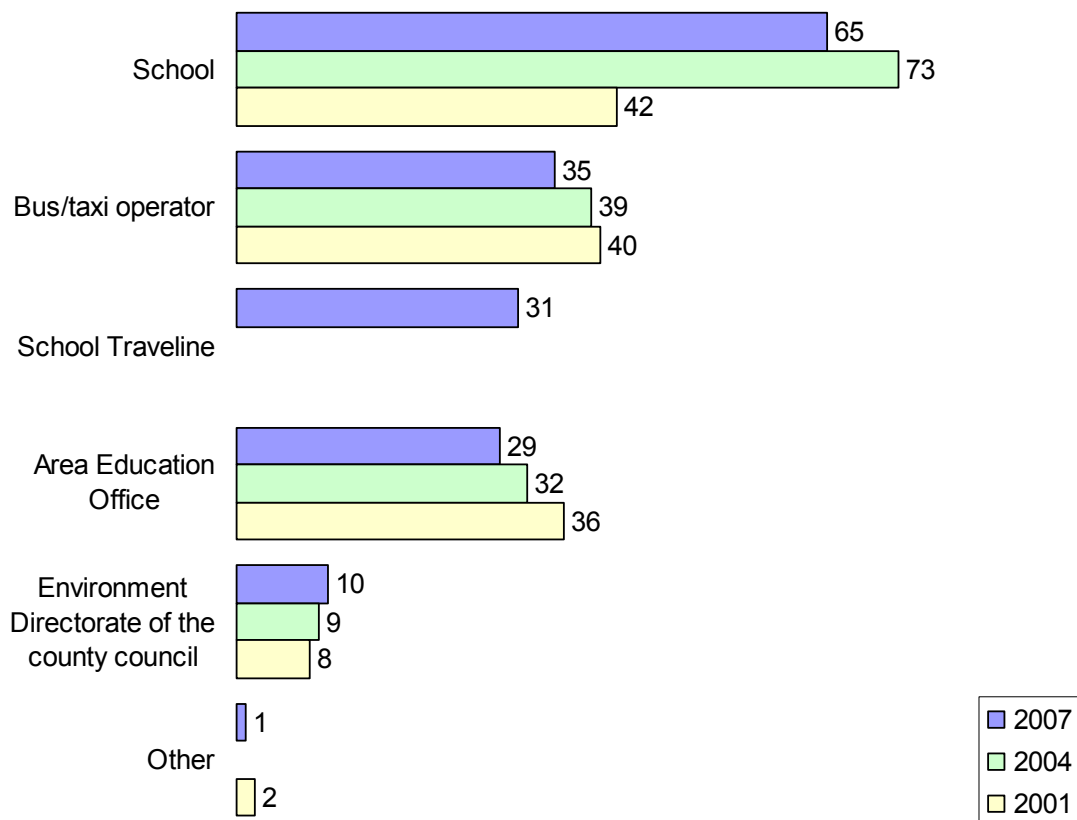
There are no differences between who the respondent complained to and their level of satisfaction with the outcome.

*Who parents would prefer to complain to:*

When asked who they would contact if they wanted to complain parents mentioned the school most (65%), followed by the bus/taxi operator (35%) and School Traveline (31%).

These rankings have changed from those people who were contacted about a complaint. The school has become top ranking (30% more parents mentioned this than the bus/taxi operator) and the School Traveline is ranked third. The most notable difference from 2004 is that a third of parents would now contact the School Traveline (31%) whereas no one mentioned it in 2004.

**Chart 17 - Who parents would prefer to contact about a complaint**



Base: all respondents - 2007 (410), 2004 (878), 2001 (476)

There were a number of differences in who parents would prefer to contact.

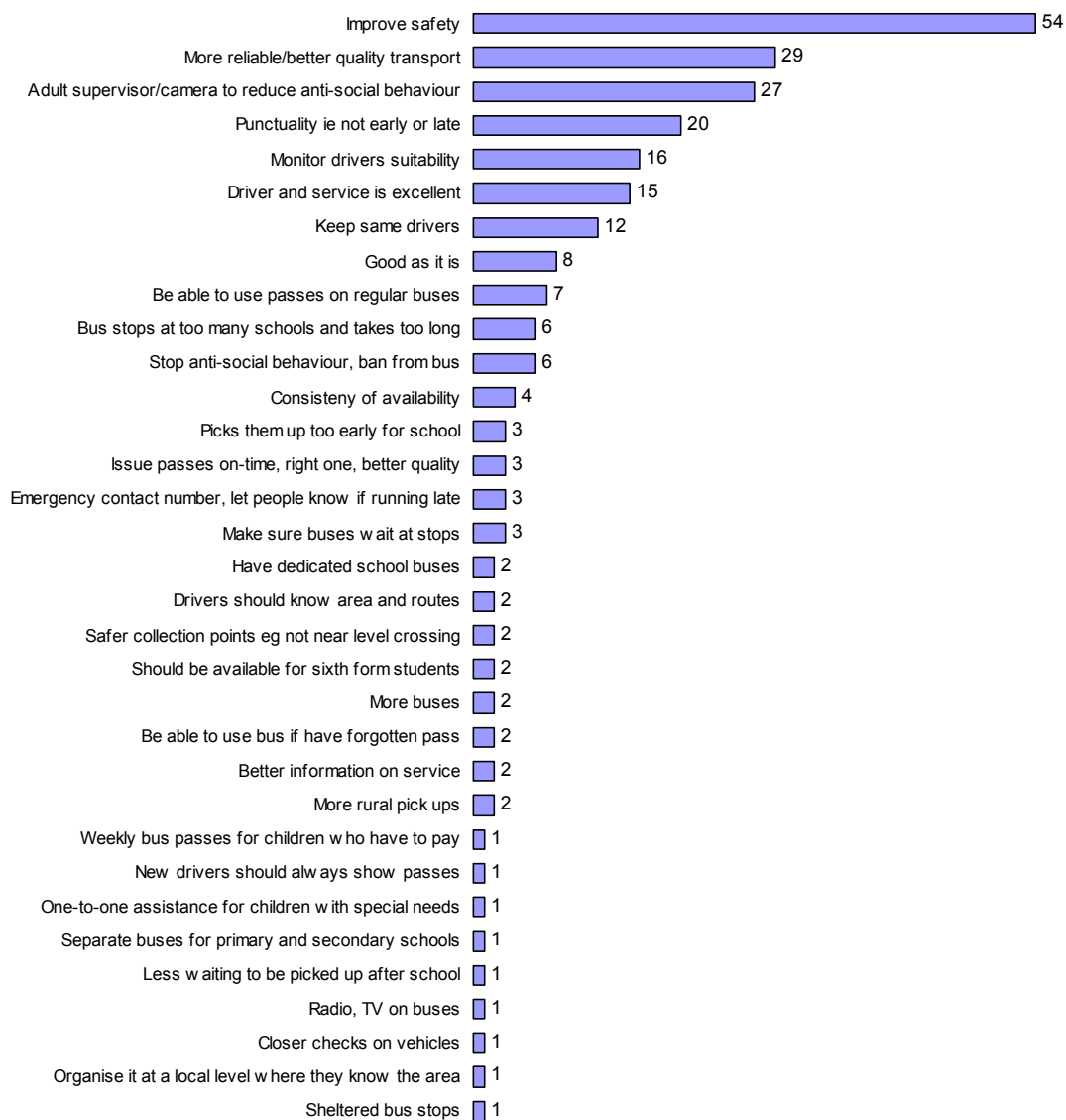
- The school is less likely to be contacted when children travel by taxi (26%).
- The area education office is more likely to be contacted when children travel by taxi (63%) and when they are under 12 (43%).
- The bus or taxi operator is more likely to be contacted when children travel by single-decker bus and taxi (43% and 58% respectively).

## 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 16 below, showing the actual number of responses for each category.

**Chart 18 - Parents comments about home to school transport**



Base: all respondents making comment (165)

The most mentioned comment was to improve safety which included comments about making sure there were enough seats so no children had to stand, having seatbelts, and making sure there is no smoking. The next most commonly mentioned things were to have better and more reliable transport, have an adult supervisor or cameras to stop anti-social behaviour, and to make sure the transport is punctual and doesn't arrive too early or late. It was also suggested that there are problems with some drivers because parents wanted their suitability to be monitored more closely – for instance making sure they don't smoke, use mobiles or speed.

#### 6.5.1 General Comments from Parents

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

“Child friendly drivers, flexible passes.”

“It is important that the same driver is used so the pupil feels comfortable, also the driver has to have a pleasant attitude and who also understands the pupils.”

“I would like to raise the point that we are very grateful that this service is available, it is a huge source of help and is greatly appreciated.”

“Some buses leak when it rains.”

“Please improve the condition of the bus (inside).”

“Punctuality as child often arrives late for school. More buses at peak times.”

“My 12 year old son is afraid of missing the bus home from school at 3.15. Could the bus wait 5 minutes longer?”

“More CCTV on buses to combat unruly kids and also catch drivers out that smoke and are arrogant, as well as stupid with the kids.”

“A conductor on the bus, particularly on the double-deckers, to keep order, thus allowing the driver to concentrate on driving.”

“The continuity and attitude of drivers is important and should be improved.”

“Stop people smoking.”

“My son says a bigger bus with more seats, it also smells of smoke when you get on.”

“More seat places (lot of pupils have to stand).”

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## 7 Conclusions

The 2007 survey results again show that the home to school transport service is well regarded by the service users – 93% of users are satisfied with the service (12% more parents are very satisfied than in the 2004 survey) and 14% felt that the service had improved in the last 12 months.

Perceptions of service aspects are generally good:

- Four in five parents are satisfied with the *condition and appearance of vehicles*, which again shows progressive improvement over time.
- *Perceptions of the driver* all have positive net ratings, with an average of +42% across all attributes. Though the majority of aspects have improved there has been a net fall in perceptions of how good the drivers are with young people and how smart they appear (-6% and -5% respectively).
- The high levels of satisfaction with the *punctuality* of transport in the mornings and afternoons have been maintained over time (86% satisfied). More parents are now very satisfied with the punctuality in the morning (9% increase). This is important because punctuality of the service is parents' second most important service aspect and the punctuality of the morning service is one of the key drivers of overall satisfaction.
- The *reliability* of transport is again poor because 53% of respondents have experienced a breakdown, and the average number of breakdowns in the last year is just over two.
- Parent's third most important aspect of the transport service is the *lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour*. More than half of parents were worried about it (54%) although progress is being made because 9% fewer parents are worried about it now. One in seven parents (15%) said their child has been a victim – more than three-quarters having it happen more than once. The problem of bullying or anti-social behaviour is still a greater problem on double-decker buses. Most cases of bullying are reported to the school, but a fifth goes unreported.
- Concern about *smoking* is also remains high (54%), and increases for those who travel on double-decker buses. Although concern has fallen by 16% since 2004 so again progress is being made.
- Awareness of the *Safer Travel Unit* (23%) and how to contact them (45%) is low among respondents, only 9% actually contacting the Safer Travel Unit. Education sessions run by the Safer Travel Unit are attended by 12% of children.

- The process of transport application and Travelpass issue is well regarded by service users (92% satisfied).
- Most parents find out about school transport from the school (62%) and find it easy (92%). Most parents (91%) have read the information that comes with the Travelpass, and 98% of these found it useful.
- A fifth of parents have complained about home to school transport. Most complained to the bus/taxi operator (49%) closely followed by the school (48%). The actual and preferred people to contact about a complaint do differ – the school has become the top ranking followed by the bus/taxi operator, and the school Traveline has moved up to third. There are still opportunities for improving complaint handling because 58% of parents are satisfied with the outcome, although it has improved by 17% since 2004.
- The open comments at the end of the questionnaire highlighted the need to improve safety, make sure the transport is more reliable and is of better quality, have adult supervisors to stop anti-social behaviour, and improve the punctuality of the service.

## 8 Recommendations

The following recommendations outline some changes that would help to further improve satisfaction, particularly for parents with older children and those with a disability.

Maintain satisfaction with the condition and appearance of the vehicle because this is parents' most important service aspect, and improve it for double-decker bus users. Further analysis has shown that the condition and appearance of the vehicle is a key driver of overall satisfaction.

Many parents also commented that they wanted the safety of the vehicles improving by making sure that there are enough seats for everyone, having seatbelts, making sure there is no smoking, and making sure the drivers don't speed or use mobiles when driving.

Improve the reliability of the transport so that there are fewer breakdowns. The problem of reliability is more of an issue for double-decker buses and the reasons behind this should be looked into further.

Pass on the positive feedback to the drivers about how parents now think they are more friendly, polite and helpful. But continue to work with the drivers to improve the way they interact with young people and how smart they appear, paying particular attention to drivers of double-decker buses. For services transporting younger children and those with a disability try to ensure the same drivers are driving each day.

Continue to make sure the punctuality of the service is maintained. Some small improvements could be made with the morning punctuality and of double-decker buses. Some of the comments parents made also suggested that the transport shouldn't leave before the scheduled time, which meant that some children missed their bus.

Further improvements need to be made for reducing the amount of bullying and anti-social behaviour (including smoking) on school transport – especially double-decker buses. Encourage parents to report bullying perhaps by promoting a helpline, and ensure that action is taken when bullying is reported to reduce the number of times children are the target of bullies. Some of the things parents suggested to tackle bullying and anti-social behaviour were to have adult supervisors on buses or cameras.

Decide on how school transport is best promoted – if this is by the school then it is working effectively as parents did not find it difficult to learn of the service. Continue processing travel applications and issuing Travelpasses in the same way as parents are satisfied with the system.

Look at ways of improving the awareness of the Safer Travel Unit and how to contact it (eg by running more education sessions, including information when Travelpasses are sent out).

Ask parents what information they would find useful to be sent with Travelpasses, and incorporate it into the pack (eg reporting and tackling bullying or anti-social behaviour, the Safer Travel Unit). Consider sending different information tailored to each mode of transport or age group because children travelling on single-decker buses don't find it as useful. This could be because there is less bullying on single-decker buses and they don't need this type of information, or because older children have had the same information previously.

A similar proportion of parents are making a complaint about the service as they were in 2004. In order to reduce the number of complaints they need to be analysed to decide how to handle them and deal with the cause of the problem. The present situation, where complaints are directed at the operators and schools, means that the county council may not hear of all the complaints and therefore can't resolve them. Also creating performance indicators for the number of complaints and the satisfaction with the outcome will help to measure improvement.

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 (419)

<b>Q1</b>	<b>What is your child's main mode of transport between home and school?</b>	
	Double-decker bus	54%
	Single-decker bus	42%
	Taxi	5%

Base: all respondents (413)

<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	27%	54%	8%	9%	3%
	The appearance of the vehicle(s) that your child uses	29%	53%	11%	6%	1%

Base: All Respondents (419)

<b>Q3a</b>	<b>Have the vehicles ever broken down?</b>	
	Yes	53%
	No	41%
	Don't know	6%

Base: all respondents with a child whose vehicle has broken down in the last year (197)

<b>Q3b</b>	If 'Yes', about how many times in the last year?	2.02
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Base: all respondents (408)

<b>Q4</b>	<b>Is the driver usually...?</b>			
	Helpful	48%	Unhelpful	5%
	Friendly	72%	Unfriendly	9%
	Polite	54%	Impolite	7%
	Smart	32%	Scruffy	8%
	Good with young people	46%	Not good with young people	11%

Base: all respondents (422)

<b>Q5</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the punctuality of the bus/taxi service in the morning?</b>	
	Very satisfied	39%
	Fairly satisfied	47%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	9%
	Fairly dissatisfied	5%
	Very dissatisfied	1%

Base: all respondents (414)

<b>Q6</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the punctuality of the bus/taxi service in the afternoon?</b>	
	Very satisfied	45%
	Fairly satisfied	41%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	10%
	Fairly dissatisfied	4%
	Very dissatisfied	1%

Base: all respondents (418)

<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	15%
	No	81%
	Don't know	3%

Base: all those being a victim of anti-social behaviour (64)

<b>Q8</b>	<b>Has this happened more than once?</b>	
	Yes	77%
	No	23%

Base: all those being a victim of anti-social behaviour (64)

<b>Q9</b>	<b>Have you reported this?</b>	
	Yes, to the school	70%
	Yes, to the county council	5%
	Yes, to the bus/taxi operator	9%
	Yes, to the police	6%
	Yes, to someone else	11%
	No, have not reported it	20%

Base: all respondents (400)

<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	13%	42%	46%
	Other people smoking whilst your child is being transported	27%	27%	46%

Base: all respondents (415)

<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	13%
	Yes, my child has heard of the Safer Travel Unit	16%
	Never heard of it	77%

Base: all those hearing of the Safer Travel Unit (106)

<b>Q12</b>	<b>Do you know how to contact the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Yes	45%
	No	55%

Base: all those hearing of the Safer Travel Unit (105)

<b>Q13</b>	<b>Have you, or your child, ever contacted the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Yes, I have contacted the Safer Travel Unit	10%
	Yes, my child has contacted the Safer Travel Unit	1%
	No	91%

Base: all those contacting the Safer Travel Unit (9)

<b>Q14</b>	<b>How satisfied were you with the outcome after contacting the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Very satisfied	33%
	Fairly satisfied	33%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	22%
	Fairly dissatisfied	11%
	Very dissatisfied	0%

Base: all respondents (394)

<b>Q15</b>	<b>Has your child ever attended an education session organised by the Safer Travel Unit?</b>	
	Yes	12%
	No	88%

Base: all respondents (416)

<b>Q16</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your application for transport was dealt with?</b>	
	Very satisfied	69%
	Fairly satisfied	23%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	4%
	Fairly dissatisfied	3%
	Very dissatisfied	1%

Base: all respondents (419)

<b>Q17</b>	<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your child's Travelpass was issued?</b>	
	Very satisfied	74%
	Fairly satisfied	18%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3%
	Fairly dissatisfied	4%
	Very dissatisfied	1%

Base: all respondents (415)

<b>Q18</b>	<b>How did you first find out about the school transport service?</b>	
	School	62%
	Other parents	20%
	Other	7%
	County council publication	7%
	Friend/neighbour	4%

Base: all respondents (409)

<b>Q19</b>	<b>Was it difficult to find out about the school transport service?</b>	
	Yes	8%
	No	92%

Base: all respondents (416)

Q20	<b>Have you ever read any of the information you received with your child's Travelpass (eg How to use your Travelpass)?</b>	
	Yes	91%
	No	7%
	Don't know	3%

Base: all respondents receiving travelpass information (369)

Q21	<b>Overall, how useful did you find the information you received with your child's Travelpass?</b>	
	Very useful	40%
	Fairly useful	58%
	Not useful	1%
	Don't know	1%

Base: all respondents (408)

Q22	<b>Have you ever complained about the school transport service your child receives?</b>	
	Yes	20%
	No	80%

Base: all those with who made a complaint (79)

Q23	<b>Who did you contact about your complaint?</b>	
	Bus/taxi operator	49%
	School	48%
	Area Education Office	24%
	School Traveline	19%
	Environment directorate of the county council	9%
	Safer Travel Unit	1%
	Globe centre	1%

Base: all those with who made a complaint (80)

Q24	<b>How satisfied were you with the outcome of your complaint?</b>	
	Very satisfied	19%
	Fairly satisfied	38%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	19%
	Fairly dissatisfied	15%
	Very dissatisfied	10%



Base: all respondents (410)

<b>Q25</b>	<b>If you wanted to complain about home to school transport who would you contact?</b>	
	School	65%
	Bus/taxi operator	35%
	School Traveline	31%
	Area Education Office	29%
	Environment directorate of the county council	10%
	MP	0%
	Number in promotional leaflet	0%
	Driver	0%
	Globe centre	0%

Base: all respondents (418)

<b>Q26</b>	<b>Which of the following do you think are the three most important aspects of home to school transport?</b>	
	Safety of the vehicle	93%
	Punctuality of the service	62%
	Lack of bullying/anti-social behaviour	57%
	Attitude of the driver	37%
	The condition of the vehicle used	32%
	Regularly having the same drivers	26%
	Regularly having the same vehicle	6%
	Comfort	4%
	Length of journey	2%
	Information about the service	2%
	No smoking	1%
	Seatbelts	0%
	Extra adult to control children	0%
	Enough seats	0%

Base: all respondents (413)

<b>Q27</b>	<b>Overall how satisfied are you with the home to school transport service?</b>	
	Very satisfied	44%
	Fairly satisfied	49%
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	5%
	Fairly dissatisfied	2%
	Very dissatisfied	0%

Base: all respondents (412)

<b>Q28</b>	<b>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 better	14%
	Got worse	6%
	Stayed the same	74%
	Don't know	6%

Base: all respondents (420)

Q29	<b>What was your child's age on their last birthday?</b>	
	<12	19%
	12-13	44%
	14+	38%

Base: all respondents (413)

Q30	<b>Are they...?</b>	
	Male	48%
	Female	52%

Base: all respondents (413)

Q31	<b>To which of these groups do you consider your child belongs?</b>	
	White	97%
	Asian or Asian British	1%
	Black or Black British	0%
	Chinese	0%
	Mixed	1%
	Other	0%

Base: all respondents (401)

Q32	<b>Does your child have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits their activities in any way?</b>	
	Yes	5%
	No	95%

Base: all respondents making a comment (165)

<b>Q33, Q34</b>	<b>Please tell us about any ideas you have of how the home to school transport service could be improved and any other comments.</b>	<b>Number</b>
	Improve safety eg no standing, seatbelts, smoking, heating	54
	More reliable/better quality buses/taxis eg better condition, clean, less breakdowns	29
	Extra adult supervisor or camera to reduce anti-social behaviour	27
	Punctuality ie not early or late	20
	Monitor drivers suitability eg attitude, English speaking, CRB checks, behaviour	16
	Driver and service is excellent	15
	Keep same drivers	12
	Good as it is	8
	Be able to use passes on regular buses	7
	Bus stops at too many schools and takes too long, more direct route	6
	Stop anti-social behaviour, ban from bus	6
	Consistency of availability eg all children in family should have free travel	4
	Picks them up too early for school	3
	Issue passes on-time, right one, better quality	3
	Emergency contact number, let people know if running late	3
	Make sure buses wait at stops	3
	Have dedicated school buses	2
	Drivers should know area and routes	2
	Safer collection points eg not near level crossing	2
	Should be available for sixth form students	2
	More buses	2
	Be able to use bus if have forgotten pass	2
	Better information on service	2
	More rural pick ups	2
	Weekly bus passes for children who have to pay	1
	New drivers should always show passes	1
	One-to-one assistance for children with special needs	1
	Separate buses for primary and secondary schools	1
	Less waiting to be picked up after school	1
	Radio, TV on buses	1
	Closer checks on vehicles	1
	Organise it at a local level where they know the area	1
	Sheltered bus stops	1