

Results report

Consultation on home-to-school transport for all children

- This consultation was open for 7 weeks: 4th September to 22nd October 2017.
- **543 survey responses** were received:
 - 515 online surveys
 - 28 paper surveys
- Results look at **findings as a whole**, though where possible some **indications of differences** in views between different groups have been included.
- Results for each question are shown below in questionnaire order.
- Brief summaries of open comments questions have been provided, to give a flavour of common themes. A full list of all comments received is provided separately.

Are you completing this questionnaire: (Please select all those that apply)

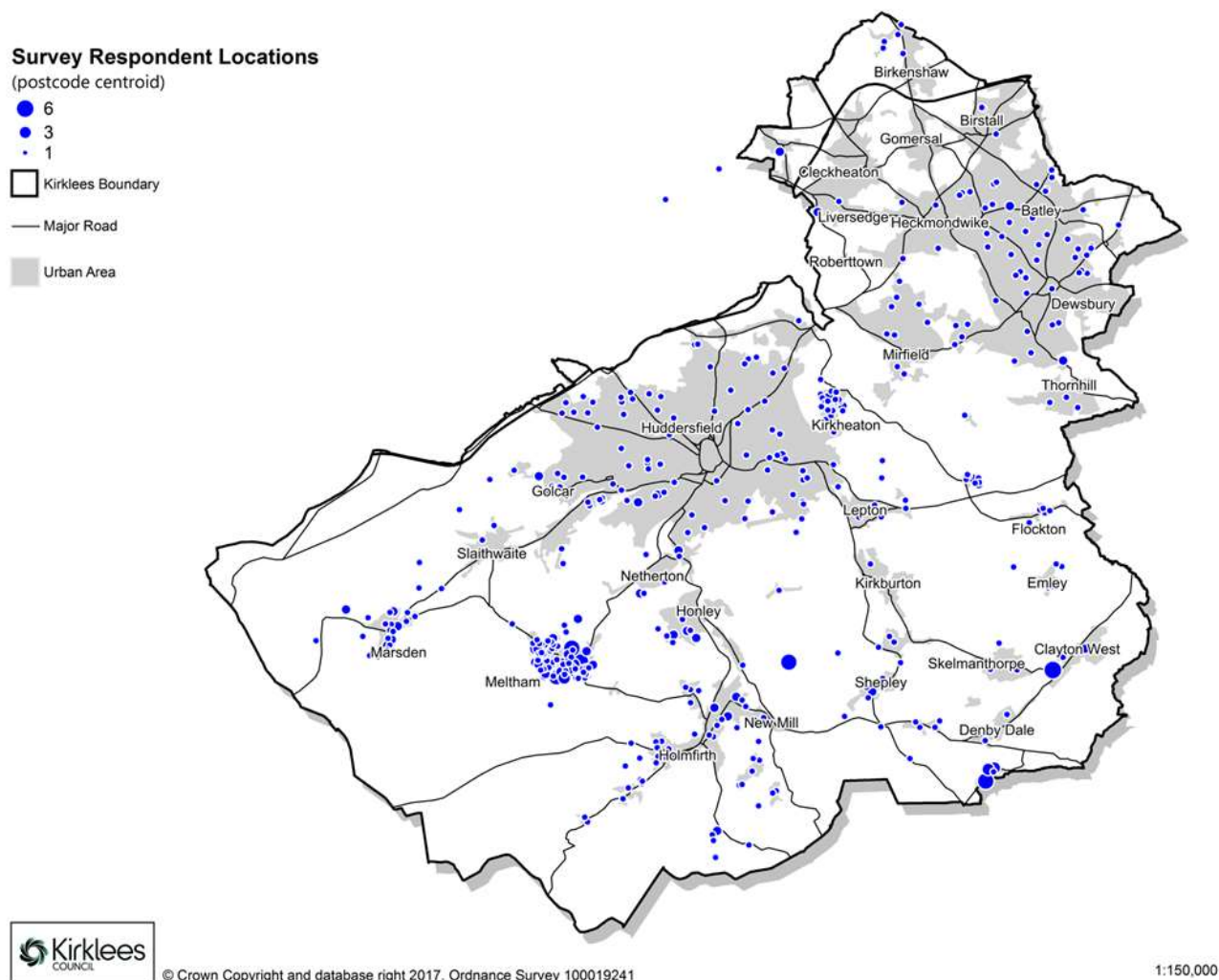
256 (48%)	As someone who lives in Kirklees
11 (2%)	As a young person (up to 16 years old) without special educational needs or disability
12 (2%)	As a young person (up to 16 years old) with special educational needs or disability
265 (49%)	As a parent or carer of a child (up to 16 years old) without special educational needs or disability
131 (24%)	As a parent or carer of a child (up to 16 years old) with special educational needs or disability
17 (3%)	As a parent or carer with a disability who is unable to take your child (up to 16 years old) to school
66 (12%)	As a teacher / head teacher / school governor / other education professional
45 (8%)	As a Kirklees Council employee
15 (3%)	In another capacity

Do you or a member of your family receive free transport from home to school?

306 (57%)	Yes
231 (43%)	No

What is your postcode? This will help us see if results vary in different areas.

518 valid postcodes were provided, showing responses received from across Kirklees, with Meltham providing a hotspot of responses:



Out of the 518 valid postcodes, the majority (60%) were from Kirklees Rural District Committee, 22% were from Huddersfield, 8% from Batley and Spen and 8% from Dewsbury and Mirfield:

Ward	Count	%			
Almondbury	18	3.5	Dewsbury West	12	2.3
Ashbrow	10	1.9	Golcar	19	3.7
Batley East	11	2.1	Greenhead	10	1.9
Batley West	8	1.5	Heckmondwike	7	1.4
Birstall and Birkenshaw	8	1.5	Holme Valley North	121	23.4
Cleckheaton	3	0.6	Holme Valley South	54	10.4
Colne Valley	38	7.3	Kirkburton	39	7.5
Crosland Moor and Netherton	15	2.9	Lindley	15	2.9
Dalton	35	6.8	Liversedge and Gomersal	4	0.8
Denby Dale	39	7.5	Mirfield	9	1.7
Dewsbury East	11	2.1	Newsome	10	1.9
Dewsbury South	12	2.3	Out of area/invalid	10	1.9
			All responses with Postcode	518	

The following three questions were not included in a version of the paper questionnaire (involving 26 responses), so the total response here is slightly lower than for other questions.

We are proposing to usually provide free home-to-school travel arrangements only where the law says we must.

What do you think of our idea to make this change to our home-to-school transport policy?

56 (11%)	Very good idea	30% in favour overall
96 (19%)	Good idea	
93 (18%)	Neither a good nor bad idea	Overall 52% against
110 (21%)	Bad idea	
159 (31%)	Very bad idea	

- ★ The level of support for this change varies slightly among different (self-reported) groups. Unsurprisingly, those that don't benefit from the service are more likely to support a return to statutory provision, while education professionals and families that receive standard free home school transport were less positive about this proposed change:

- ★ No member of family receives free home school transport – 34% in favour of making the change
- ★ Parents / carers of a child with SEN or disability – 30% in favour
- ★ Parents / carers of a child without SEN or disability – 28% in favour
- ★ Member of family receives free home school transport – 27% in favour
- ★ Teacher or other education professional – 23% in favour

Differences in views – transport type:

- ★ Family member receives bus or train pass / boarding card or equivalent funding – 22% in favour
- ★ Family member receives taxi, minibus, travel training, or mileage payment – 30% in favour

What would be the impact on you and your family if we were to make this change?

11 (2%)	Very positive impact	This drops to 44% no impact where a family member receives free home school transport
20 (4%)	Positive impact	
265 (52%)	No impact	
100 (20%)	Negative impact	
109 (22%)	Very negative impact	

- ★ Again, different groups had slightly differing views on the impact of this change. Most surprisingly, 44% of those where a family member currently receives free home school transport felt there would be no impact on their family:
- ★ No member of family receives free home school transport – 7% positive; 63% no impact; 30% negative
- ★ Teacher or other education professional – 7% positive; 51% no impact; 42% negative
- ★ Parents / carers of a child with SEN or disability – 6% positive; 58% no impact; 36% negative
- ★ Parents / carers of a child without SEN or disability – 5% positive; 51% no impact; 45% negative
- ★ Member of family receives free home school transport – 5% positive; 44% no impact; 51% negative

Differences in views – transport type:

- ★ Family member receives bus or train pass / boarding card or equivalent funding – 5% positive; 43% no impact; 52% negative
- ★ Family member receives taxi, minibus, travel training, or mileage payment - 6% positive; 48% no impact; 45% negative

Please explain the reasons for your choice:

410 responses received – see page 1 of comments.

Many respondents chose to comment here. Common themes relating to impact on the family included:

Cost

A large number of responses to this question related to issues around covering the cost if the service was withdrawn:

'We have no other school closer to use than the one provided, so we would have extra cost on our monthly household budget if we had to pay for transport to and from school.'

In contrast very few respondents indicated they were already paying or that the cost was the parent's responsibility:

'I don't expect the council to get my children to and from school regardless of distance, I choose their schools so it is my responsibility to get them there'

Impact on safety of child

Another recurring theme was the impact on children's safety. A number of responses cited the dangers of rural roads with no footpaths, children walking long distances and safety of children on dark roads in the autumn and winter months:

'My daughter would have to catch a service bus to Denby Dale then would have to walk either up a lonely road or very very lonely footpath to get home and from Autumn time would have to do this in the dark.'

Impact on children/family

A number of responses cited a wide variety of negative impacts on the child attending school or their family. Some suggest there would be an impact on the child's education, attainment and attendance:

'It would limit the catchment area for my son's school and the mix of pupils and the school and his education would be the poorer for this.'

'This will mean poorer attendance, affecting attainment and engagement, thus perpetuate the cycle of low income'

Others suggest there would be an impact on how the child is treated:

'Currently my children have special needs and have transport to and from school. The current system is very poorly managed the new changes will allow transport services to discriminate against disabled children who require this service... Transport staff unable to take children on and off mini bus appropriately. The new changes will create more problems for the children involved.'

Others suggest a detrimental impact on the whole family:

'The school is based in a semi rural/rural area. Some pupils travel a number of miles to get here. The impact of this proposal could be very detrimental to families, particularly when we are their catchment school.'

'Financial, we are not big earners but just over the threshold. It would have a negative impact on the family.'

Impact of parental choice of school

A number of responses cited that home to school transport changes would have an impact on how parents decided which school to send their children:

'Choosing school based on transport implications rather than educational/emotional outcomes for a child is not in their best interest.'

Fairness

Some responses related to a degree of fairness around who qualifies for free home to school transport in relation to proximity to a school.

'Though all the children at Hade Edge catch the bus from the same bus stop, only houses up from the stop have entitlement to free transport, which is unfair.'

Spending public money where needed

A number of responses covered the appropriate use of council funds. Some suggested the changes were justified:

'I think it's fair to follow the rules on this aspect, especially when there are limited funds and they could be better used in other situations.'

Others indicated that reductions shouldn't be made in this area:

'I have 4 children, all starting high school over the next 4 yrs. Having to pay for a bus that is unachievable for my children to walk is unacceptable... this is yet again making cuts in the wrong area.'

Keeps parents in work

Some responses from working parents indicated that the home to school transport service means they can work; without it some suggested they would have to give up their jobs.

'Parents who work, dont have their own transportation or have more than one child, have disabled children and dependants would have to give up working and can't physically get their children to school.'

Changes unclear

A number of responses indicated the proposed changes are unclear.

'This document doesn't explain what your proposal is in enough detail.'

More cars on the road

In addition to the themes above, a number of respondents also highlighted the potential impact of increased congestion:

'Without bus passes my daughters would travel to and from school by car. This will add to local traffic congestion and pollution.'

What transport support provided by Kirklees Council have you or a family member used to travel to/from school?

153 (29%)	Boarding card for use on dedicated buses contracted by the Council (certain schools only)
145 (28%)	N/A
140 (27%)	Seat/space in a taxi or minibus
102 (19%)	Bus/train pass for use on public transport
13 (2%)	Other
	41 responses received – see page 25 of comments.
9 (2%)	Mileage payment
9 (2%)	Independent Travel Training
7 (1%)	Funding to make your own travel arrangements at the equivalent cost of a bus/train pass or boarding card

When the support responses were grouped into two categories, with Mileage, Independent Travel Training and Taxi/Minibus in one group, and Boarding cards, Bus/Train pass and Funding own travel arrangements in another group, there was found to be no link between the type of support and geography (at ward level using the respondents postcode).

How valuable do you find each type of support you receive from the Council?

	N/A (I don't receive this service)	Not valuable	Partially valuable	Valuable	Very valuable	Extremely valuable
A Seat/space in taxi/minibus	294 (66%)	2 (0%)	4 (1%)	10 (2%)	13 (3%)	122 (27%)
Bus/train pass for public transport	275 (67%)	8 (2%)	7 (2%)	12 (3%)	28 (7%)	79 (19%)
Boarding card for contracted bus	238 (57%)	8 (2%)	3 (1%)	11 (3%)	20 (5%)	140 (33%)
Funding to make your own travel arrangements at the equivalent cost of a bus/train pass or boarding card	340 (91%)	14 (4%)	2 (1%)	4 (1%)	4 (1%)	11 (3%)
Independent Travel Training	340 (91%)	11 (3%)	5 (1%)	6 (2%)	4 (1%)	7 (2%)
Mileage payment	342 (92%)	11 (3%)	7 (2%)	3 (1%)	3 (1%)	6 (2%)
Other (please enter below)	275 (98%)	3 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)

16 responses received – see page 26 of comments.

- ★ With responses excluded (see below) from those that told us they don't use the service, results indicate that bus / train passes, boarding cards for contracted buses, and taxis / minibuses are highly valued by users, while equivalent funding, mileage payments and travel training received much more mixed reviews:

	Not valuable	Partially valuable	Valuable	Very valuable	Extremely valuable
A Seat/space in taxi/minibus	2 (1%)	4 (3%)	10 (7%)	13 (9%)	122 (81%)
Bus/train pass for public transport	8 (6%)	7 (5%)	12 (9%)	28 (21%)	79 (59%)
Boarding card for contracted bus	8 (4%)	3 (2%)	11 (6%)	20 (11%)	140 (77%)
Funding to make your own travel arrangements at the equivalent cost of a bus/train pass or boarding card	14 (40%)	2 (6%)	4 (11%)	4 (11%)	11 (31%)
Independent Travel Training	11 (33%)	5 (15%)	6 (18%)	4 (12%)	7 (21%)
Mileage payment	11 (37%)	7 (23%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)
Other	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)

If you find any of your support from the Council only partially valuable or not valuable, please tell us why below.

63 responses received – see page 27 of comments.

Some responses here criticised the value of the mileage payment; some would have preferred a place on a bus and others indicated it wasn't suitable when working full time. Other respondents indicated that bus passes for public transport weren't always appropriate due to personal circumstances or disability of the child; others indicated that they needed to top-up money to cover the cost of the bus.

Travel training for children was also deemed inappropriate in some circumstances due to the reasons mentioned above, or that the training wasn't valuable as it wasn't tailored. Taxis and minibuses were thought to be too expensive and some responses mentioned confidence issues and bullying occurring on buses. One response indicated that there weren't enough seats on the bus with some children having to stand. Finally, some responses cited personal reasons why the support wasn't valued and one even stated that *'disabled children who cannot communicate or have poor mental health these services are not suitable.'*

If you find any of your support from the Council as valuable, very valuable or extremely valuable please tell us why below.

254 responses received – see page 30 of comments.

The major themes in response to this question were broadly similar to those from the question ‘What would be the impact on you and your family if we were to make this change?’

Safety

This was the most commonly reported reason the support was considered valuable. There were a number of responses similar to this one:

‘Great safe reliable service. Means we know our child gets to and from school safely with other children but under care and supervision of an escort.’

Cost

Cost was also a very common theme in the responses to this question, and was frequently mentioned alongside safety of the child. The response below was quite typical of this question:

‘If free school bus passes were not available this would put a huge financial strain on my family.’

School attendance

Another very common reason why this council support is considered valuable is because for some parents/carers it’s the only way their children can get to school. There were a number of responses on this theme:

‘We wouldn’t be able to get child to and from school by any other means.’

Parents in work

A number of responses stated that the support they receive helps them stay in work. For example:

‘As a working parent we would not be able to take our daughter to school & rely on the school bus to do this.’

Independence

Some respondents whose children use the bus stated that it allowed their children to develop independence, improve self-esteem and some felt that it gets children used to and ‘promotes public transport use’.

Families with more than one child

A few responses cited that this service is valuable as they had more than one child, each one at a different school, with the service ensuring they get to school. One respondent stated:

‘I have two children who need to be in different schools at the same time. Neither are able to travel independently. I cannot split myself in two.’

Benefits family

A few responses mentioned the affect this service has on family life; some mentioned specific personal circumstances and other responses were broader:

‘Affects our family unit in a positive way both emotionally and financially.’

Finally, some other responses made reference to some other benefits such as parental choice and reducing congestion (on rural roads).

Are you (or someone in your family) eligible to receive transport support from the Council?

For example: Getting to / from school by walking, cycling, public transport, or using your personal car/vehicle.

25 (5%)	I am eligible (or someone in my family is eligible) to receive transport support from the Council, but I make my own transport arrangements . Please provide details below. 8 responses received – see page 42 of comments.
250 (50%)	I am eligible (or someone in my family is eligible) to receive transport support from the Council, and I already receive or have previously received transport support from the Council.
225 (45%)	I am not eligible (and no-one in my family is eligible) to receive transport support from the Council.

Your ideas

The Council wants to help people to be as independent as possible. We have less money with which to do this, but we are firmly committed to helping people live better lives.

Please use this space to tell us about any ideas you have which could help us do this achieve our objectives.

245 responses received – see page 42 of comments.

Training for staff or pupils

Some respondents suggested better trained escort drivers or 'mentors' would be a good idea. Other responses focused on the positive and negative aspects of travel training for pupils; positive aspects included increased independence, negative aspects focused on pupils vulnerabilities/safety.

Funded transport for children to go to another school (if there is a suitable nearer school)

A few respondents suggested that free bus passes shouldn't be given to pupils whose parents don't choose the nearest school, usually in the context of faith schools. Other respondents who chose to send their children to specialist schools, or schools that were more suitable for their children, really valued the current home to school transport service. Other responses noted that '*transport should be provided if a child has not got into their first choice of local school due to oversubscription*'.

Only provide support to those who really need it / Charges or annual fees

A number of people stressed the importance of only providing support to those who really need it. Some responses specifically stated that '*Parents should all pay for school transport unless they are entitled to free transport due to low income (evidenced) or disability*'. Some people suggested that the school transport system should be means tested or reviewed on a case-by-case basis and others suggested everyone should pay either an annual fee or a payment for each journey, and some went as far to say that school transport '*should be free for all or none*'. Of those who suggested a fee should be charged, some indicated everyone should pay the same, usually a small contribution towards a bus pass which should be heavily subsidised, with exemptions for low-income families. In contrast other respondents stated that children's travel to school should be free for all.

Use of mobility cars

A number of responses suggested that those families who have a mobility vehicle should take their children to school and should not receive free school transport.

Shared/centralised transport

A few respondents suggested car sharing with local families/pupils would be a good idea. Others suggested that taxis or parents could drop off children at a central location and then used shared transport (bus) to take them to school.

Active travel and cycle lanes

A few respondents suggested there should be greater encouragement of active travel and the health benefits. Others made reference to cycle routes and their safety.

Other ideas

Some less frequently occurring ideas covered

- Provide schools with their own buses or earlier school opening times
- More volunteer opportunities
- Walking buses
- More traffic wardens
- Better connected bus services for villages
- Supermarkets offering discount on fuel for transporting disabled children