

Update on Consultation About Changes to Travel Assistance for Children and Young People with SEND

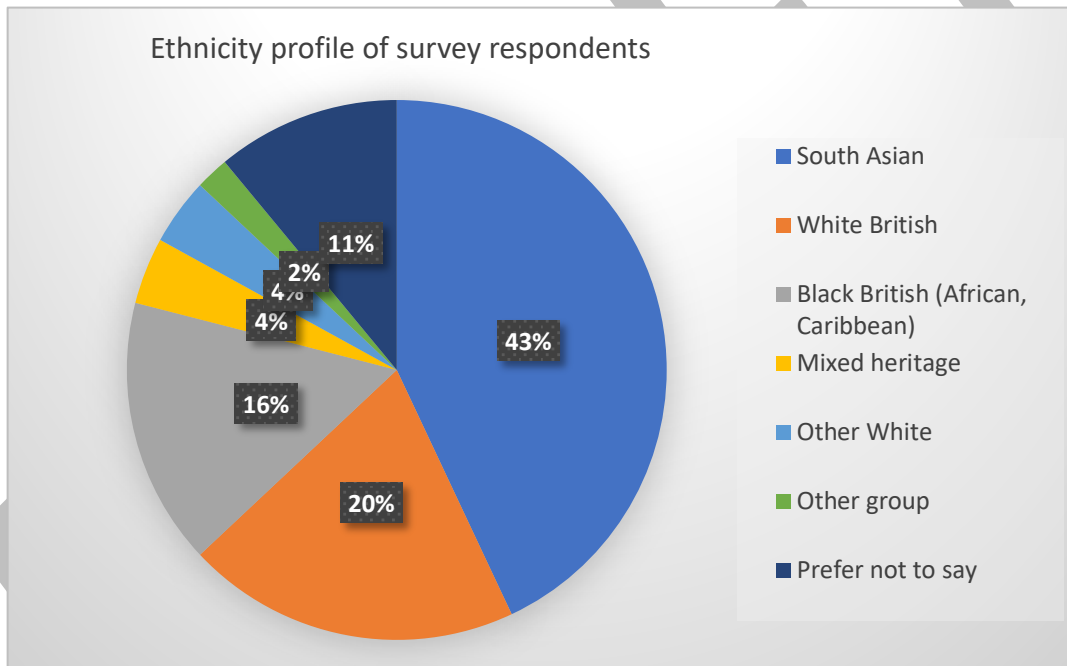
The consultation period launched on 26th February 2020 and the online survey closed on 11th May 2020, a period of nearly 11 weeks. A fourfold increase in responses was achieved in the final two weeks as a result of campaign of phoning stakeholders; primarily parents and carers whose children currently receive travel assistance.

1. Responses to online survey

a. Who responded: A total of **119** responses to the online survey: 88% from parents of CYP with SEND and 3 on behalf of organisations.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents were female and the largest set of responses were submitted from those of South Asian heritage, nearly all of whom identify as British Bangladeshi, followed by White British (see: chart 1).

Chart 1



Of the parents and carers: 95% have children receiving travel assistance, the responses represent 134 CYP with an EHC plan. Three responses were submitted on behalf of organisations: one school and two from a neighbouring local authority.

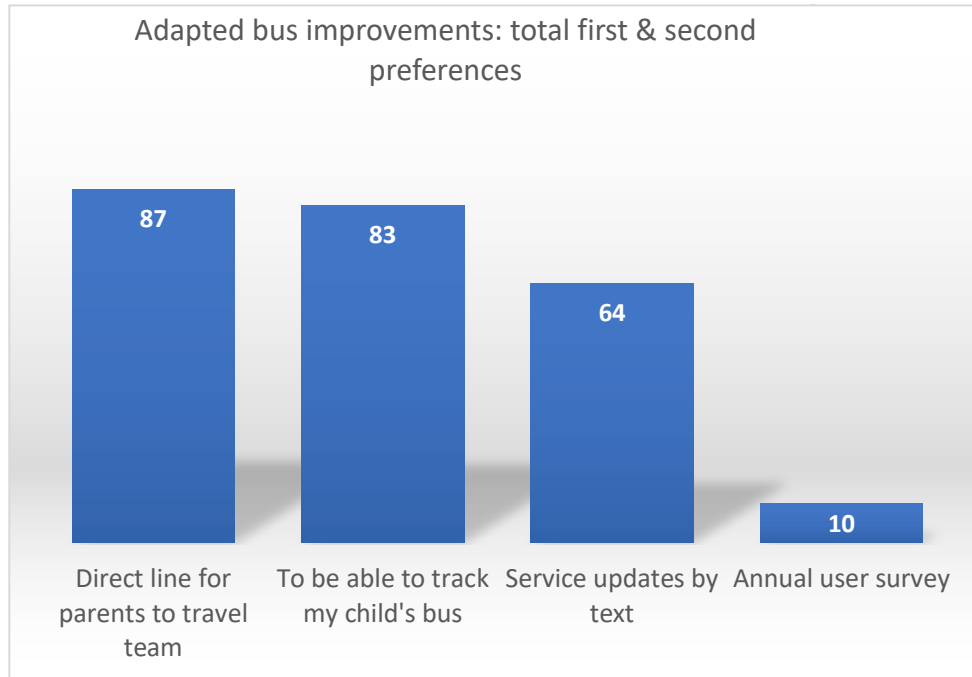
b. Views about the proposals:

A majority responded favourably to all questions about proposed changes.

- The most positive responses were to proposals about:
 - Updated annual assessment questions, which should be published: 57% in agreement.
 - Assessment being focussed on the needs of the child, rather than the wider family: 60% in agreement.

- To extend the options for travel assistance for aged 16 -19, to include personal travel budget or Oyster travel pass: 57% in agreement.
- A list of four service improvements was offered and respondents invited to order these in preference (see chart 2). Being able to track council adapted buses and to have a direct-line for parents to contact the council’s travel services received the most positive responses of the four options.

Chart 2



- A majority were in agreement with the other proposals:
 - That independence be a guiding principle for the council’s Travel Assistance Policy: 43%, as against 35% in disagreement.
 - That council adapted bus or taxi service should be provided for core school day only: 53% agree, against 38% in disagreement.
 - To offer personal travel budget / Oyster travel pass if child is between 5 and 16 years old and if a child is under 5: 45% and 47%, respectively.

2. Process points

- Only one of the six planned consultation meetings were run due to schools’ closures as a result of the coronavirus crisis.
- A total of 48 parents, carers and young people were also involved during pre-consultation meetings, that helped to shape the proposals that have been consulted upon.
- A team from Parent Engagement, plus one or two staff from Independent Travel and SENDIASS, placed many calls to existing users of travel assistance between 29th April and 7th May. A total of over 300 calls were placed, with several hundred follow-up text messages sent.
- New City College was approached to conduct similar advocacy and support with their students who are users of the service to complete the survey.

- A consultative 'session' was booked via two WhatsApp groups of parents of children with SEND. These involve about 150 parents and carers. Messages and information were circulated, and three parents engaged directly.
- A report analysing the responses will be returned to the council by 22nd May.

3. Themes for discussion

- ❖ Independence:
- ❖ Personal travel budgets (PTB):
- ❖ Joining up council support:
- ❖ Improving communication:
- ❖ Anxiety about changes:

- ❖ Recommendations:

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