Transport Safety Consultation Report

Purpose

The Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV), a multi-agency partnership dedicated to reducing and preventing serious violence, recently launched a survey to explore how and why people use public transport to travel across the area's four boroughs.

The purpose of the survey is to understand how the members of the public across Cleveland use public transport, their experiences on public transport and how they would increase safety, however they choose to travel.

The six-week consultation commenced on Monday 17th February and concluded Monday 31st March.

This feedback will inform the delivery of the Town Centre Violence Reduction Action Plan, which seeks to create a safe and thriving town centres for visitors to enjoy and businesses to succeed. Central to this is increasing safety around the modes of transport providing accessibility to town centres.

Consultation Methods

Face-to-face consultation

OPCC staff held face-to-face stalls in transport hubs across the Cleveland area. The engagement was carried out through short, specific questions that captured quick effective feedback.

At times the public can be short of time or hesitant with completing surveys. Therefore, the in-person questions provided a way to gather quantitative data, using an interactive and condensed version of the online survey.

The specific questions:

1. Using the measures below, how safe do you feel using public transport?
2. Select all the options that apply to your most used form of public transport.
3. Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of the following on the bus? *Multiple choice of answers to select that apply.*

4. Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of the following on the train? *Multiple choice of answers to select that apply*.
5. Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following in a taxi? *Multiple choice of answers to select that apply.*

The engagement stalls in Cleveland took place at the following locations:

- Middlesbrough Bus Station
- Hartlepool Train Station
- Stockton High Street
- Saltburn Train Station
- Nur Fitness
- Middlesbrough Football Club
- Teesside University
- Hartlepool Safer Streets Event
- Deaf Empowering Network Event
- Larchfield Community

Online Consultation

The Transport Safety Survey was a detailed online survey with up to 25 questions about safety on buses, trains, and taxis. Respondents were asked to select the form of transport they used most, after which the question set was customised specifically for that choice.

The survey was widely promoted through:

- Weekly reminders and pinned posts on the OPCC's social media pages, especially Facebook.
- Paid Facebook advertisement, including location-based pop-ups (e.g., near bus and train stations) and targeted ads for behaviours (such as commuting).
- Emails shared with elected members, stakeholders, partners, and organisations.
- Flyers distributed at engagement stalls with a QR Code for the survey.

Responses

The Transport Safety Survey gathered:

- 731 responses from a six-week online consultation
- 191 responses through face-to-face engagements

Demographics

Demographic data was a critical component of the online survey, capturing details such as age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and journey starting points. This data provided valuable insights into respondent profiles, aiding in understanding their perspectives.

By analysing demographic trends, the survey guided decision-making and refined targeting strategies. During the survey process, demographic monitoring highlighted areas requiring face-to-face engagement to broaden participation and amplify the representation of public transport users across Cleveland.

For the face-to-face engagement, we captured demographic data regarding gender. Of those who chose to disclose, 54.45% identified as male, and 45.55% identified as female.
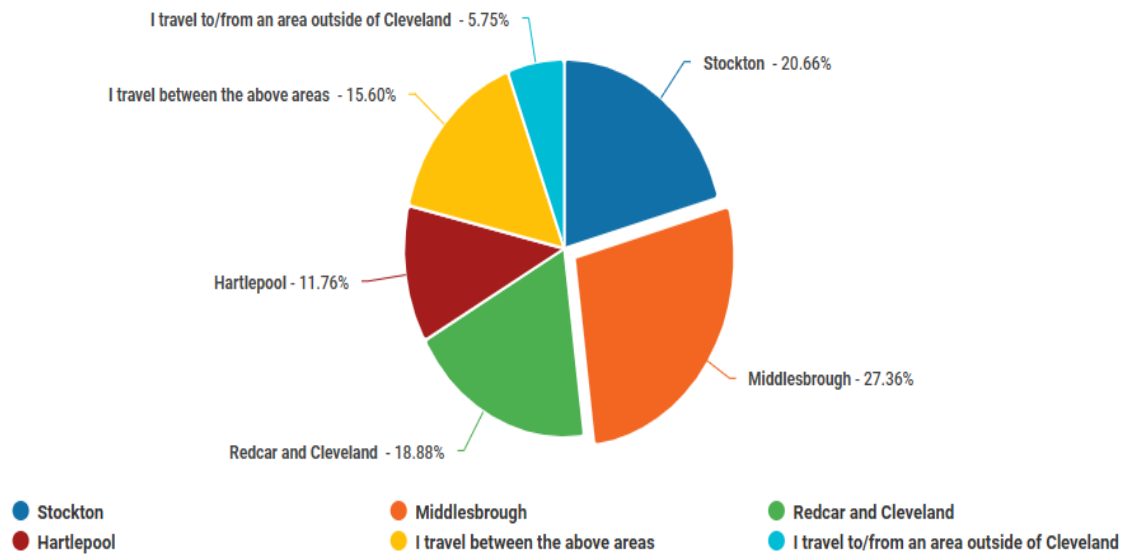
Of the demographics identified by those who completed the online survey, 35.16% of respondents identified as male and 57.87% as female. The remaining respondents chose not to disclose or considered themselves as nonbinary or transgender. 31.60% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability.

77.15% of respondents identified as heterosexual, 15.73% preferred not to disclose and fewer people identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer or pansexual.

Most respondents to the online survey (91.66%) identified as White British. There were a very small number of responses from people who identified as Asian, Black, Mixed Heritage, or Other Ethnic Groups, but most respondents who did not identify as White British chose not to disclose their race.

The survey captured which area of Cleveland they usually travel within, shown as below:
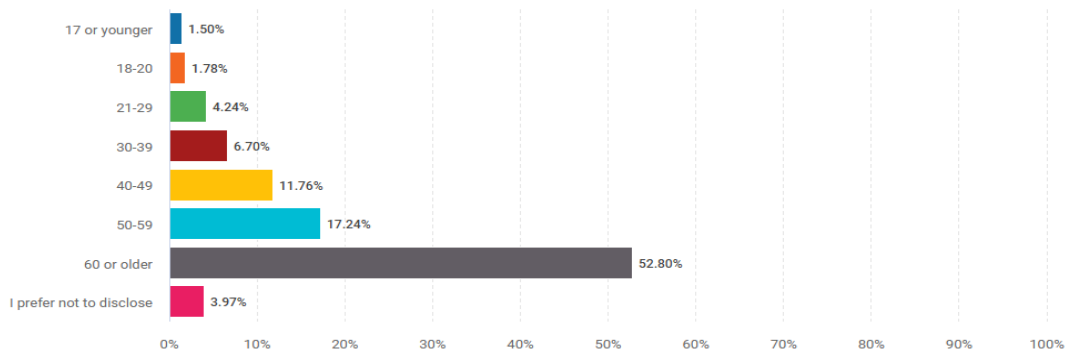
Which area of Cleveland do you usually travel in?

I travel to/from an area outside of Cleveland - 5.75%

I travel between the above areas - 15.60%

Hartlepool - 11.76%

Stockton - 20.66%

Middlesbrough - 27.36%

Redcar and Cleveland - 18.88%

- 🔵 Stockton
- 🔴 Middlesbrough
- 🟢 Redcar and Cleveland
- 🔴 Hartlepool
- 🟡 I travel between the above areas
- 🔵 I travel to/from an area outside of Cleveland

The largest age group among respondents was 60 or older (52.80%), with the lowest number of responses from the 17 or younger to 20 age group (3.28%).

A full age breakdown of respondents is as below:

What is your age?

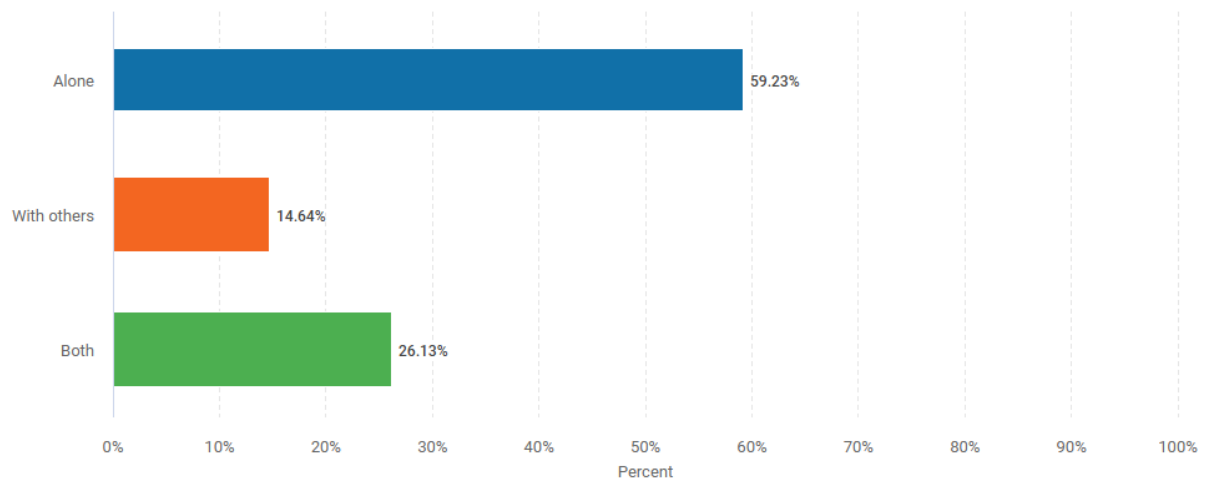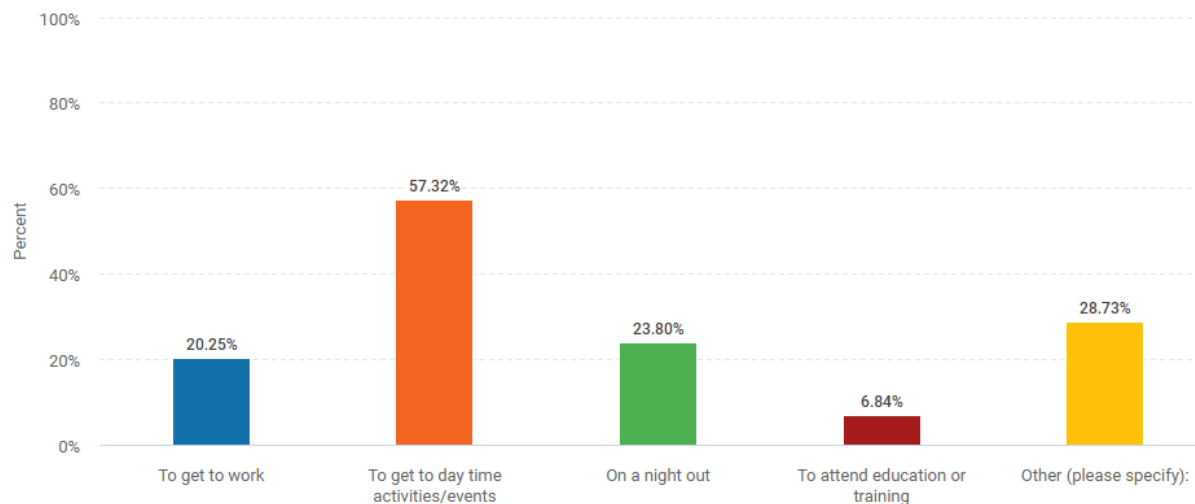| Age group	Percentage
17 or younger	1.50%
18-20	1.78%
21-29	4.24%
30-39	6.70%
40-49	11.76%
50-59	17.24%
60 or older	52.80%
I prefer not to disclose	3.97%

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Findings

Getting around

The online survey was designed to gain insight into respondent's travel patterns and decision-making processes regarding public transport. Dividing the survey into sections allowed us to capture insights into the "how" and "why" behind respondent's choices, highlighting the factors influencing their preferred form of public transport.

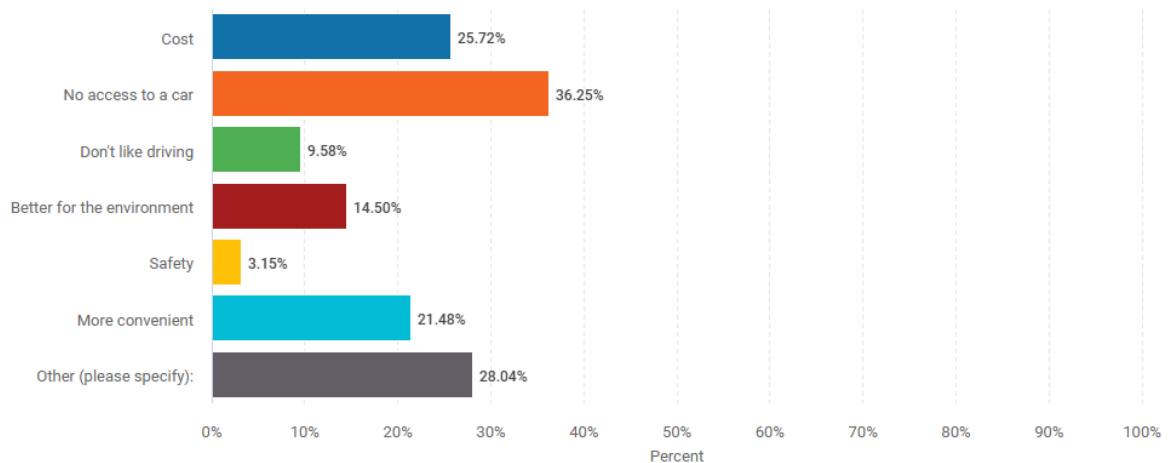**Do you usually travel alone or with others?**

Response	Percent
Alone	59.23%
With others	14.64%
Both	26.13%

When do you use public transport? Please select all that apply

Category	Percent
To get to work	20.25%
To get to day time activities/events	57.32%
On a night out	23.80%
To attend education or training	6.84%
Other (please specify):	28.73%

When considering 'other' reasons for travel, respondents most commonly used public transport to travel to medical appointments and to go shopping. They also said they used public transport to visit family and friends, to travel for leisure outside of the Cleveland area, and for work/volunteering roles.

Why do you use public transport? Please select all that apply

Reason	Percent
Cost	25.72%
No access to a car	36.25%
Don't like driving	9.58%
Better for the environment	14.50%
Safety	3.15%
More convenient	21.48%
Other (please specify):	28.04%

The most common 'other' reasons highlighted by respondents were the use of a free bus pass (largely due to being over 66 years of age) and the ability to travel safely following the consumption of alcohol.

Other respondents said they used public transport because:

- They do not drive or cannot drive (sometimes for medical reasons)

- Their car sometimes does not work or needs repairs

- They feel it costs too much or is not safe to park their vehicle in town centres.

The chart below illustrates respondent's perceptions of safety across various forms of public transport.

Over half reported feeling unsafe at night, particularly on buses (63.47%), followed by trains (54.06%) and taxis (41.18%). In contrast, more respondents felt safe during the day when using taxis (33.24%), trains (30.10%), and buses (26.18%).

Additionally, over a quarter of respondents remained neutral about daytime travel safety for all forms of public transport.

Do you agree with the following statements?
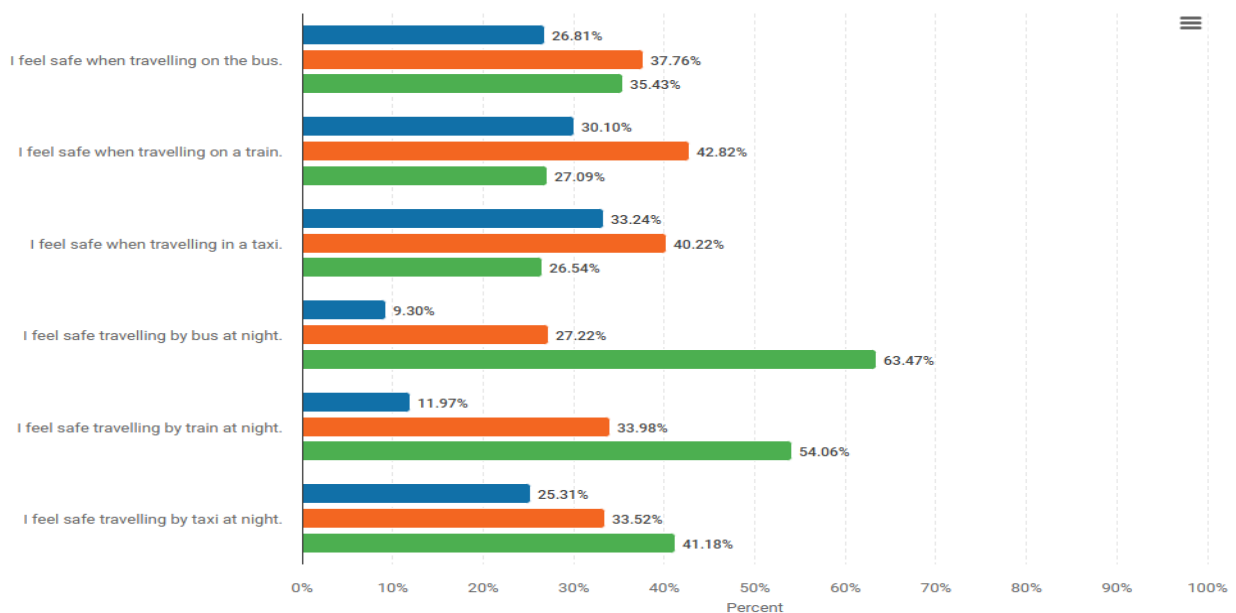
Agree   **Neutral**   **Disagree**

Respondents were asked whether worries about safety had prevented them from using any form of public transport. 51.71% of respondents agreed and 48.29% disagreed.

Of those that agreed with the above question, there was an option to explain further, the most common worry people have about public transport is using it at night-time or after dark. Many respondents reported avoiding going out after dark and had concerns about waiting at isolated bus stops/train stations. They also reported that behaviour on public transport was worse in the evening or at night.

Some respondents said they would avoid using public transport like buses and trains on football matchdays or when schools finish for the day and at peak times (including weekend trains to and from cities like York or Newcastle).

> *"As a female travelling alone at night, I don't feel safe as I believe I would be an easy target, especially as there are less people around and not many staff if any at the stations!"*
>
> *"There have been several incidents such as stabbing in a bus station which has left me uncomfortable to use the bus station as I don't feel safe in [my] town centre. Also, there have been reports of inappropriate actions by certain taxi drivers. I prefer to use Uber where I can see a picture of the driver, previous customers ratings, and a live GPS map when I'm in the vehicle to aid my own safety."*
>
> *"Due to antisocial behaviour in the area and surrounding areas, I struggle to get outside due to buses always being targeted for antisocial behaviour, no one should have to feel scared getting a dam bus, and something needs to be done."*

> *"Yes, I'm unable to use public transport during busy times cos the crowds and having hidden disabilities means I'm more likely to face verbal abuse or discrimination."*
>
> *"Too many youths hanging around along with drug addicts and alcoholics. Not enough police/wardens presence. Not enough bus inspectors. Just do not feel safe."*

These comments are reflected in the chart below which demonstrates that 56.36% of respondents have concerns about traveling day and night but are least concerned travelling during the day at 6.43%.

Are your concerns relating to day or night travel?
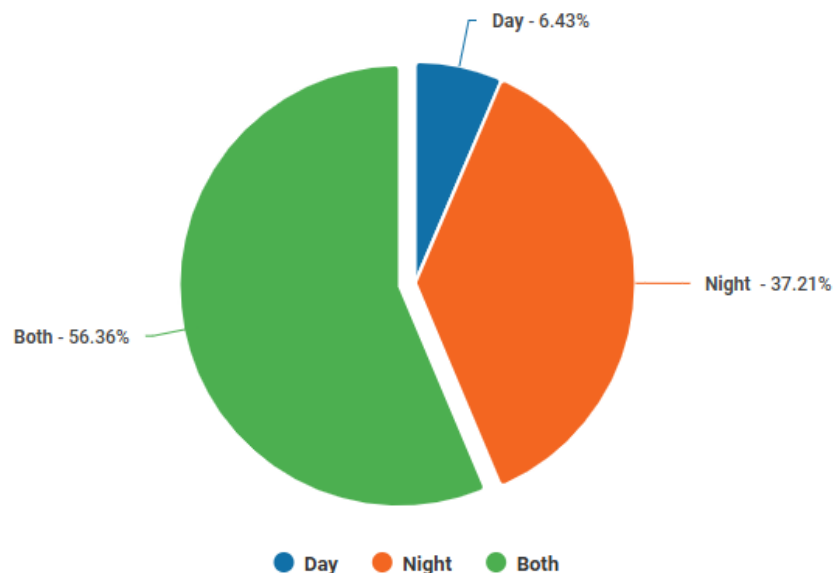
Among respondents to the online survey, 75.65% identified the bus as their most frequently used form of public transport. This was followed by taxis, with 33.65% of respondents, closely by 33.55% by train. The next section of the survey focused specifically on these forms of transport, tailoring questions to the respondent's selections.
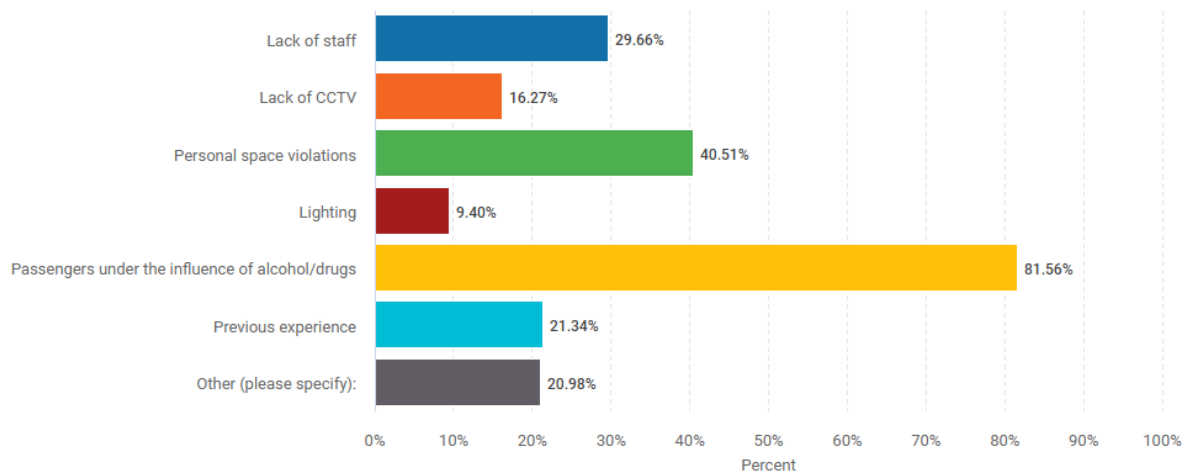
Travelling By Bus

This section focused on exploring respondent's experiences of bus travel. The aim was to understand whether individuals have adjusted their behaviour to enhance their sense of safety while using public transport. Additionally, it examined the likelihood of respondents reporting incidents or concerns related to bus travel safety.

As identified in the chart below, 83.43% of respondents feel particularly unsafe whilst passengers are under the influence of alcohol/drugs. Whereas poor lighting at 13.14% is the least common reason given to explain feeling unsafe.

What makes you feel unsafe on buses? Select all that apply

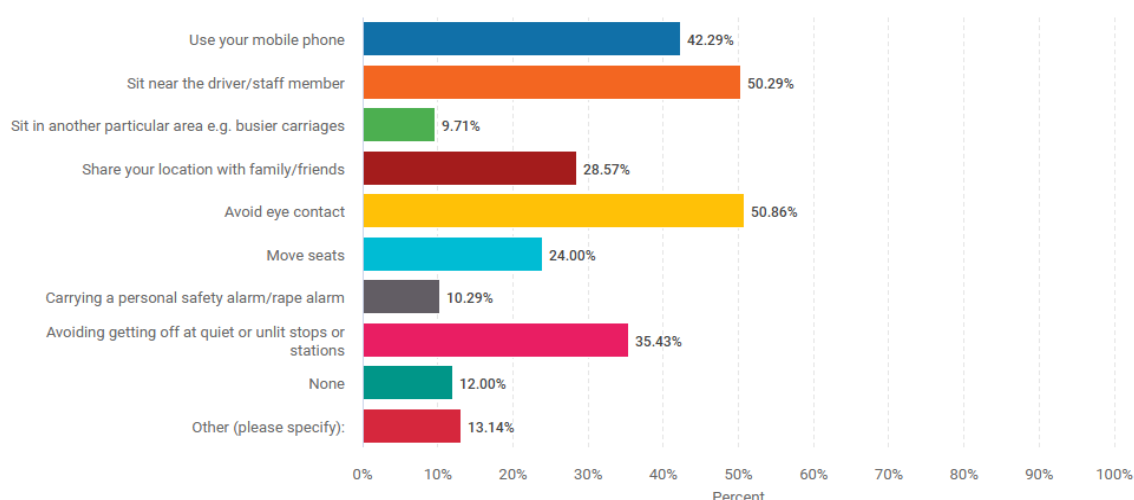| Category	Percent
Lack of staff	29.66%
Lack of CCTV	16.27%
Personal space violations	40.51%
Lighting	9.40%
Passengers under the influence of alcohol/drugs	81.56%
Previous experience	21.34%
Other (please specify):	20.98%

In addition to the issues highlighted above, respondents specifically reported antisocial behaviour (usually described as being groups of young people), sexual harassment or sexual violence, and intoxication of other passengers. Many people had either witnessed or experienced the above and felt that insufficient action was taken by the driver or the police.

Respondents also said they felt isolated waiting for buses and the unreliability of services left some people with a fear of being stranded in an unknown or quiet location. For respondents with a disability or additional need, some said they felt discriminated against when their needs were not met or understood by the driver or other passengers.

The data highlights that half of the respondents take safety precautions when travelling by bus. The most common measures include avoiding eye contact (50.86%) and sitting near the driver or staff (50.29%). In contrast, carrying a personal safety alarm was the least adopted measure, chosen by only 10.29%, as shown in the chart below.

Do you do anything differently to make yourself feel safer on buses? Select all that apply:

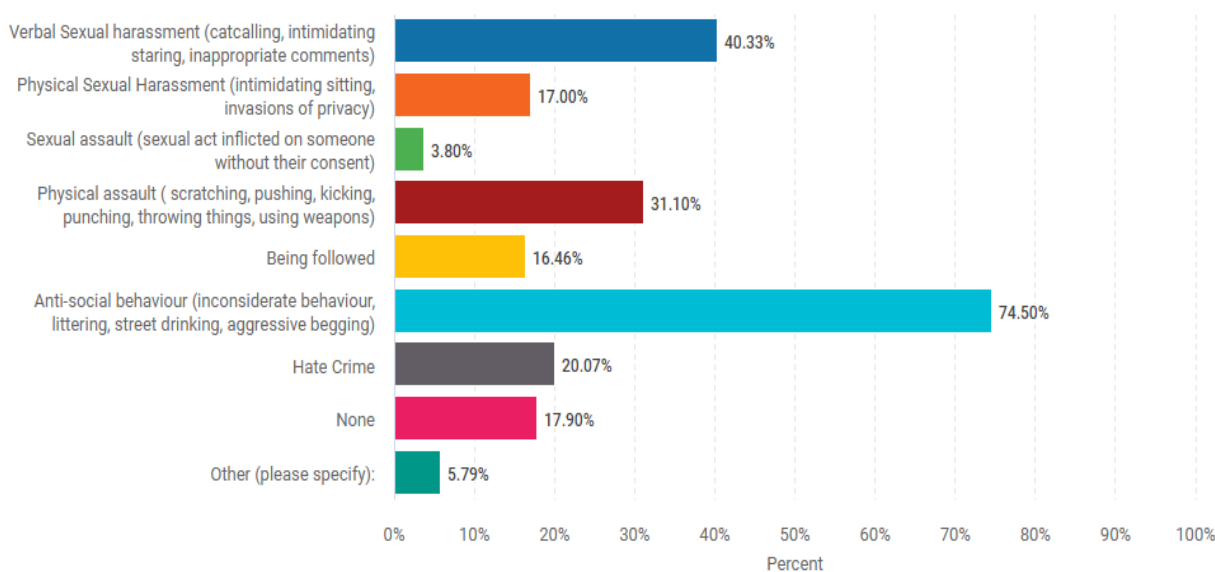| Option	Percent
Use your mobile phone	42.29%
Sit near the driver/staff member	50.29%
Sit in another particular area e.g. busier carriages	9.71%
Share your location with family/friends	28.57%
Avoid eye contact	50.86%
Move seats	24.00%
Carrying a personal safety alarm/rape alarm	10.29%
Avoiding getting off at quiet or unlit stops or stations	35.43%
None	12.00%
Other (please specify):	13.14%

For the 'other' options, respondents said they would avoid travelling at certain times of day (e.g. at night), avoid certain passengers who make them uncomfortable, or travel with other people whenever possible. Some reported that they read the newspaper or put headphones on to avoid engaging with other people. One respondent purchased a car to avoid public transport altogether.

The chart below reveals that a significant proportion of respondents— approximately three-quarters (74.50%)— reported experiencing or witnessing antisocial behaviour, marking it as the most commonly observed issue. The least reported is sexual assault, with only 3.80% of respondents indicating exposure to such incidents.

Additionally, 20.07% of respondents identified experiences or observations of hate crimes. Within the additional comments provided, some respondents explicitly noted instances of disability discrimination, shedding light on the nuanced nature of hate crime incidents.

Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of the following on the bus? Select all that apply:

Option	Percent
Verbal Sexual harassment (catcalling, intimidating staring, inappropriate comments)	40.33%
Physical Sexual Harassment (intimidating sitting, invasions of privacy)	17.00%
Sexual assault (sexual act inflicted on someone without their consent)	3.80%
Physical assault (scratching, pushing, kicking, punching, throwing things, using weapons)	31.10%
Being followed	16.46%
Anti-social behaviour (inconsiderate behaviour, littering, street drinking, aggressive begging)	74.50%
Hate Crime	20.07%
None	17.90%
Other (please specify):	5.79%

Respondents specified the other text box noting the incidents involving antisocial behaviour among young people, including offensive language. Additionally, a few comments noted concerns regarding poor driving standards among bus drivers.

> *"Most antisocial behaviour is from some school pupils, very noisy and inconsiderate and they seem to begrudge older people travelling."*
>
> *"Aggressive behaviour-punching and kicking seats, lewd behaviour, inappropriate sexual language by men and young adult boys, and when asked to reduce the volume or please not discuss sexual acts with women and pornography just started shouting at people and kicking chairs."*

The majority (81.74%) indicated these behaviours were perpetrated by members of the public, while 2.53% identified transport staff as responsible. The remaining responses were not applicable.

Over half (61.84%) of respondents reported choosing not to report their experiences. A further 11.57% opted to report incidents, with the remaining responses indicating the question was irrelevant.

To delve deeper, respondents were asked to share insights regarding the outcomes of their reported incidents or reasons for choosing not to report. The most common themes that emerged include:

- Uncertainty about how or where to report incidents.
- Lack of confidence in the reporting mechanisms and doubt about achieving a positive outcome.
- Absence of follow-up after complaints and lack of communication regarding the outcomes.
- Fear of potential repercussions for reporting incidents.

Travelling by Train

This section focused on exploring respondent's experiences during train travel. The aim was to understand whether individuals have adjusted their behaviour to enhance their sense of safety while using public transport. Additionally, it examined the likelihood of respondents reporting incidents or concerns related to train travel safety.

In the chart below, the majority of the respondents (80.02%) felt unsafe due to passengers being under the influence of alcohol/drugs and the least contributing factor is poor lighting (10.61%).

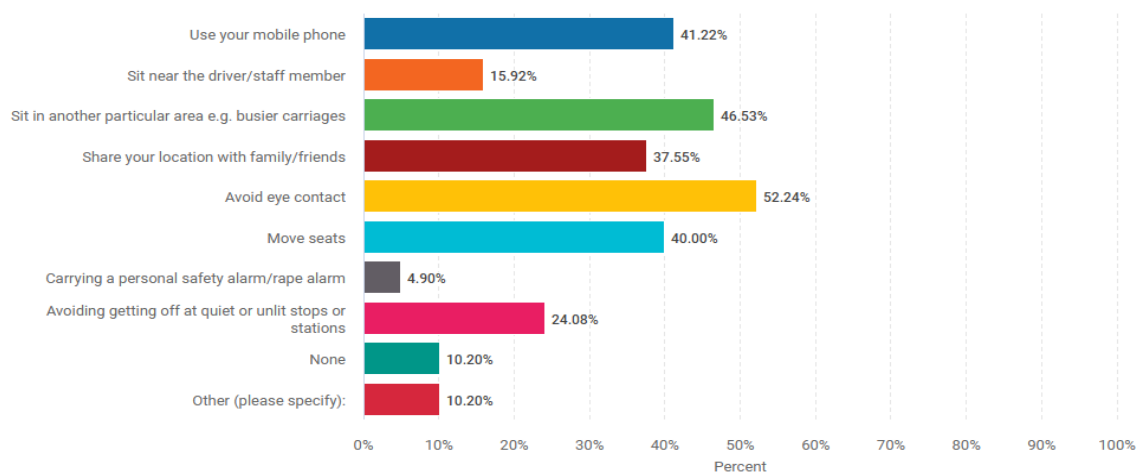**What makes you feel unsafe on trains? Select all that apply**
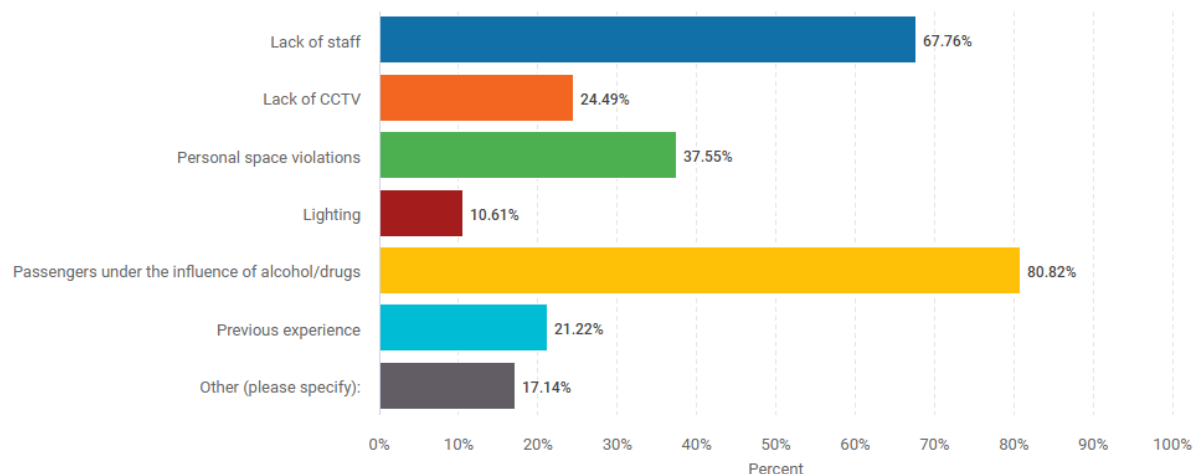
Respondents used the free text box to specifically identify antisocial behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence, and theft as factors that make them feel unsafe on trains. They said other passengers can make them feel uncomfortable, especially when the train is too busy for staff or passengers to move freely around the carriage.

Some respondents expressed their discomfort at using poorly lit, quiet, and unmanned stations – especially if trains are cancelled and they are left in an isolated location alone.

Respondents were surveyed on measures they adopt to feel safer while travelling on trains. The most common measure, selected by 52.24% of respondents, was avoiding eye contact. This was followed by choosing to sit in particular areas, such as busier carriages (46.53%), and using a mobile phone for distraction or reassurance (41.22%). The least adopted measure, as shown in the accompanying chart, was carrying a personal safety or rape alarm.
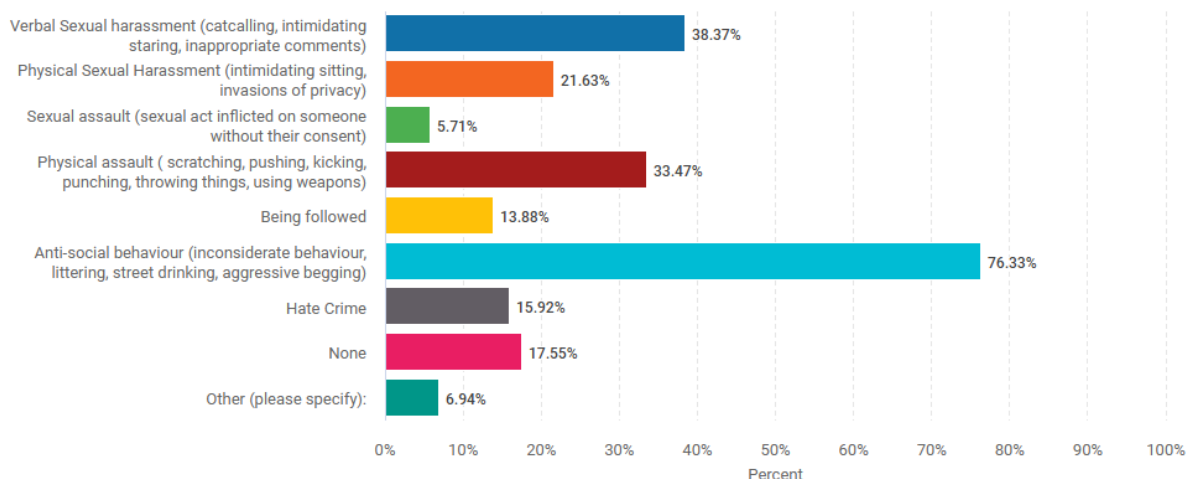
Do you do anything differently to make yourself feel safer on trains? Select all that apply:

Response	Percent
Use your mobile phone	41.22%
Sit near the driver/staff member	15.92%
Sit in another particular area e.g. busier carriages	46.53%
Share your location with family/friends	37.55%
Avoid eye contact	52.24%
Move seats	40.00%
Carrying a personal safety alarm/rape alarm	4.90%
Avoiding getting off at quiet or unlit stops or stations	24.08%
None	10.20%
Other (please specify):	10.20%

In addition to the above, respondents said they choose to travel with other people whenever possible and avoid passengers that make them feel uncomfortable. Some respondents have opted to pay additional costs to travel in first class for a safer and more comfortable experience. One respondent said they travel in a high-vis jacket, so they look like they work for the rail network, whilst others reported sitting in a locked toilet to feel safe.

For further context, respondents were asked about their experiences whilst travelling by train. A significant portion of respondents selected anti-social behaviour (76.33%) and the least indicated experienced or witnessed was sexual assault (5.71%) demonstrated in the graph below.

Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of the following on the train? Select all that apply:

Response	Percent
Verbal Sexual harassment (catcalling, intimidating staring, inappropriate comments)	38.37%
Physical Sexual Harassment (intimidating sitting, invasions of privacy)	21.63%
Sexual assault (sexual act inflicted on someone without their consent)	5.71%
Physical assault (scratching, pushing, kicking, punching, throwing things, using weapons)	33.47%
Being followed	13.88%
Anti-social behaviour (inconsiderate behaviour, littering, street drinking, aggressive begging)	76.33%
Hate Crime	15.92%
None	17.55%
Other (please specify):	6.94%

A small number of respondents provided additional comments under "Other," noting that passengers are more likely to be intoxicated after certain events. To ensure passenger comfort and safety, the British Transport Police are present during these times and may relocate individuals to separate carriages.

The data shows that 82.45% of respondents observed these behaviours being carried out by other members of the public, while transport staff were rarely involved (0.41%). For the remaining respondents, the question was deemed not applicable.

68.98% of respondents reported choosing not to report their experiences. A further 7.76% opted to report incidents, with the remaining responses indicating the question was irrelevant.

To delve deeper, respondents were asked to share insights regarding the outcomes of their reported incidents or reasons for choosing not to report. The most common themes that emerged include:

- Uncertainty about how or where to report incidents.
- Lack of confidence in the reporting mechanisms and doubt about achieving a positive outcome.
- Absence of follow-up after complaints and lack of communication regarding the outcomes.
- Fear of potential repercussions for reporting incidents.

> *"British Transport Police offered to prosecute the offenders. I just wanted them removed from the train."*
>
> *"In one incident a member of the public was aggressive to railway staff and used superglue on Middlesbrough station Police were called and in attendance. A second incident midway through the afternoon a group of young people again at Middlesbrough station were giving a person grief on the platform and running up the stationary train attacking the windows, on this occasion no station staff appeared the young female guard alighted the train, and chased the young people. I wrote to Northern Rail commending the guard's action and how well the young lady acted when her passengers were suffering harassment."*
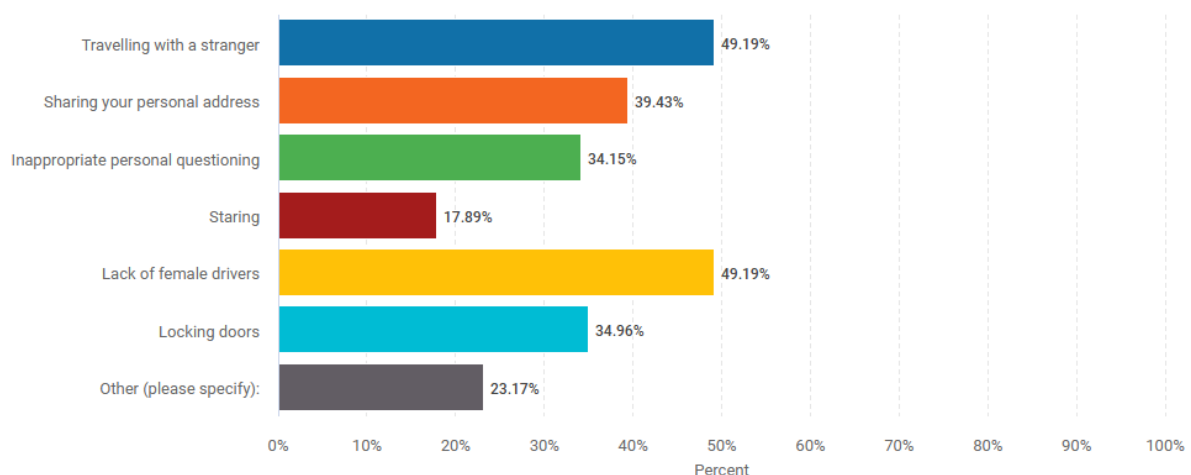>
> *"I used the British Transport Police text service. It was useless. They kept texting me and asking me questions I'd already given the answers to. I gave up in the end."*

Travelling By Taxi

This section examines respondents' experiences during taxi travel, focusing on whether they have modified their behaviour to feel safer on public transport. It also assesses the likelihood of reporting incidents or concerns related to taxi travel safety.

The chart below reveals that nearly half of the respondents feel unsafe due to travelling with a stranger (49.19%) or the lack of female drivers (49.19%). The least selected factor contributing to feelings of unsafety is staring, chosen by only 17.89% of respondents.
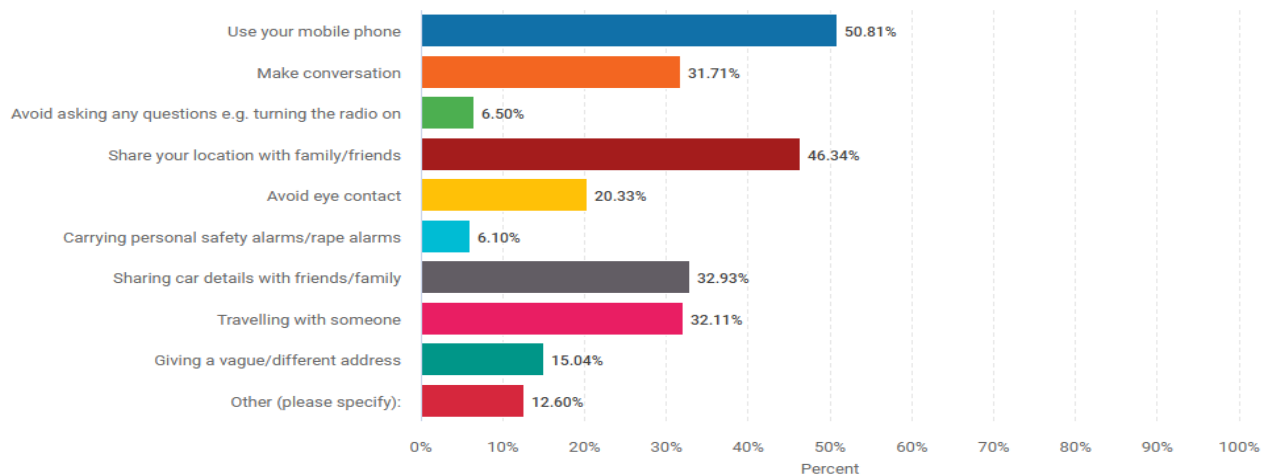
What makes you feel unsafe in a taxi? Select all that apply

Category	Percent
Travelling with a stranger	49.19%
Sharing your personal address	39.43%
Inappropriate personal questioning	34.15%
Staring	17.89%
Lack of female drivers	49.19%
Locking doors	34.96%
Other (please specify):	23.17%

The most common issue raised in the 'other' option is the poor standard of driving by taxi drivers. Examples include using excess speed, making dangerous manoeuvres, and using their mobile phones whilst driving. Driver behaviour was also reported as making passengers uncomfortable, with people saying drivers made sexualised comments, played loud music, or spoke on the phone whilst driving, often in a language other than English.

Half of the respondents identified in the chart below adopt measures to make themselves feel safer in the taxi by using their mobile phones (50.81%). Followed closely by sharing location with family/ friends (46.34%). Whereas least avoid asking any question e.g turning the radio on (6.50%) or carrying personal safety alarms/ rape alarms (6.10%).
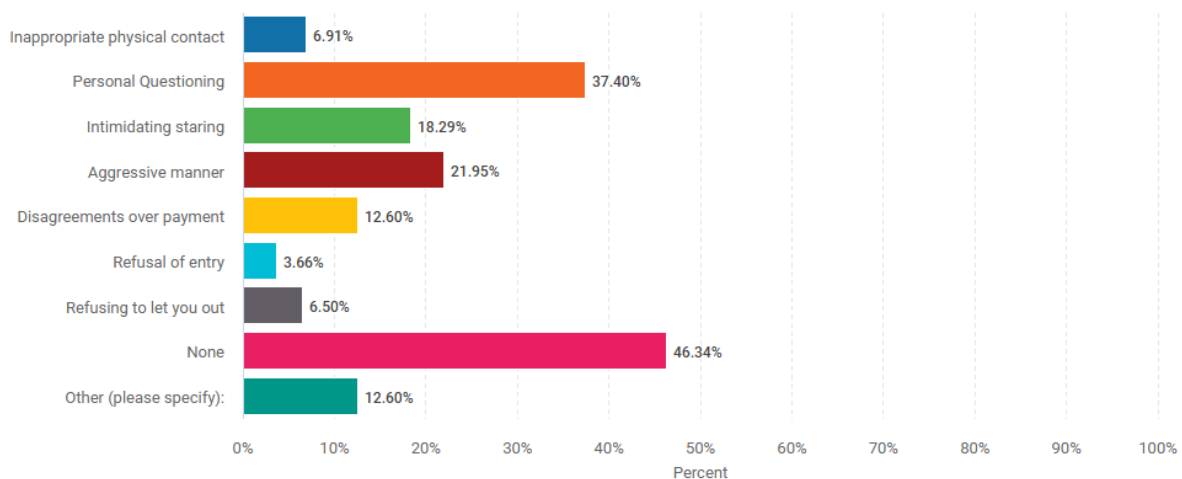
Do you do anything differently to make yourself feel safer in taxis? Select all that apply:

Response	Percent
Use your mobile phone	50.81%
Make conversation	31.71%
Avoid asking any questions e.g. turning the radio on	6.50%
Share your location with family/friends	46.34%
Avoid eye contact	20.33%
Carrying personal safety alarms/rape alarms	6.10%
Sharing car details with friends/family	32.93%
Travelling with someone	32.11%
Giving a vague/different address	15.04%
Other (please specify):	12.60%

In the 'other' responses, people said they would only use a registered taxi company or Uber and would avoid particular drivers that made them comfortable.

The data reveals below that nearly half of the respondents (46.34%) did not report any notable experiences or incidents while travelling by taxi. Among those who did, 37.40% mentioned encountering or witnessing personal questions from taxi drivers. A minority, just 3.66%, identified refusal of entry as an issue. This analysis offers a clear view of respondent's varied experiences.

Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following in a taxi? Select all that apply:

Response	Percent
Inappropriate physical contact	6.91%
Personal Questioning	37.40%
Intimidating staring	18.29%
Aggressive manner	21.95%
Disagreements over payment	12.60%
Refusal of entry	3.66%
Refusing to let you out	6.50%
None	46.34%
Other (please specify):	12.60%

In other free text, the majority of the comments were made about reckless driving and inappropriate comments from the driver.

44.72% of respondents revealed that they had not reported their experiences, while 47.56% selected "Not Applicable." The remaining respondents indicated that they had reported their experiences.

To explore further, respondents were invited to provide insights into the outcomes of their reported incidents or the reasons behind their decision not to report. The key themes that surfaced were:

- Uncertainty about the process or channels for reporting incidents.
- Lack of trust in the effectiveness of reporting systems and disbelief about achieving positive outcomes for the complainant.
- Inadequate follow-up on complaints and insufficient communication regarding their outcomes.
- Fear of repercussions, particularly due to taxis having access to passenger's home addresses.

"They knew my address, I was scared"

"No outcome assured that drivers are safe, and cars are safe. Concerns ignored."

"Sexual assault he went to prison for 12 months"

Improving safety

In the final section, respondents shared their perspectives on measures they felt would improve safety while using public transport. All participants contributed to this section, providing valuable qualitative data through the use of a free-text response box, which allowed them to elaborate on their ideas and suggestions for enhancing safety.

The majority of respondents (62.93%) highlighted the addition of more CCTV as a key measure to improve safety on buses and trains. Over half (56.22%) suggested that staff should wear body-worn cameras to enhance security. In contrast, apps for planning routes were the least selected safety improvement measure, with only 17.10% of respondents opting for this, as illustrated in the graph below.

How would you improve safety on buses and trains? Select all that apply

Measure	Percent
More CCTV	62.93%
Better lighting	29.69%
Vulnerability training for staff e.g. Ask for Angela	36.53%
Body worn cameras for staff	56.22%
More female drivers	20.79%
More information on reporting	42.54%
Apps for planning routes	17.10%
Other (please specify):	22.85%
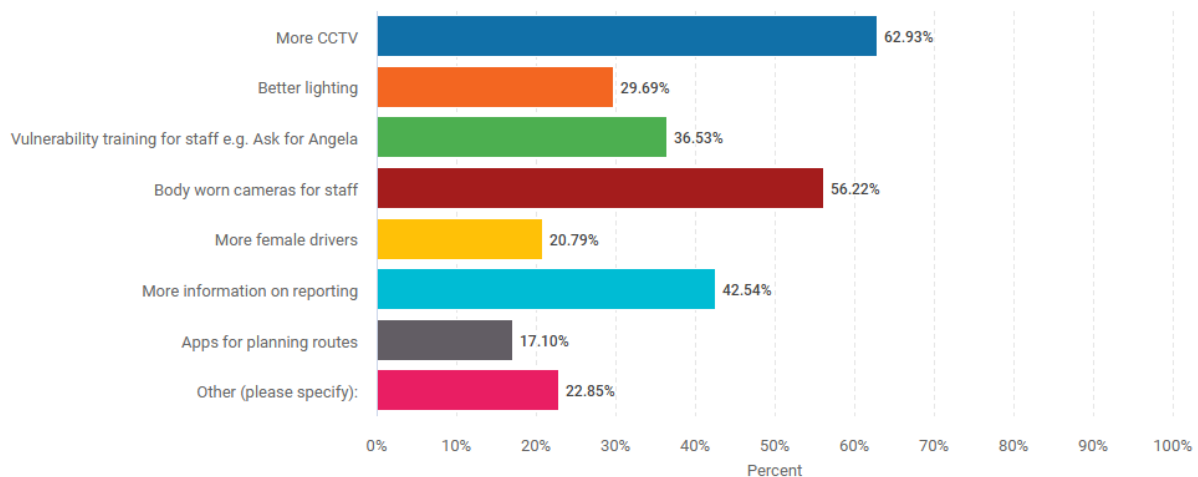
From the analysis of the free-text responses, several key themes emerged regarding suggestions to enhance safety while traveling on buses and trains:

- **Increased enforcement and security presence** to deter anti-social behaviour and ensure passenger safety.
- **Greater staffing levels, including conductors or additional members of staff,** to assist and monitor passenger conduct.
- **Proactive removal of passengers exhibiting inappropriate behaviour,** especially those under the influence of drugs or alcohol, to maintain a safer environment.
- **Stronger penalties or sentencing for individuals engaging in anti-social behaviour (ASB) or committing crimes** to reinforce accountability and deter future incidents.

> *"More training/responsibility for drivers to help passengers who are in need or being harassed by passengers."*
>
> *"Security, especially at night. The driver cannot do anything, and most people wouldn't pull emergency alarms even if needed, there's no one*

To enhance safety for taxi passengers, the proposed measures were positively received by respondents. The most favoured suggestions included installing CCTV in taxis (64.30%), providing the ability to track taxis during the journey (58.14%), and increasing the availability of female drivers or offering the option to request a female driver (53.08%). Equally, the measure with the least support, though still identified by over a quarter of respondents, was providing more information about licensed vehicles (43.50%).

How would you improve safety in taxis?
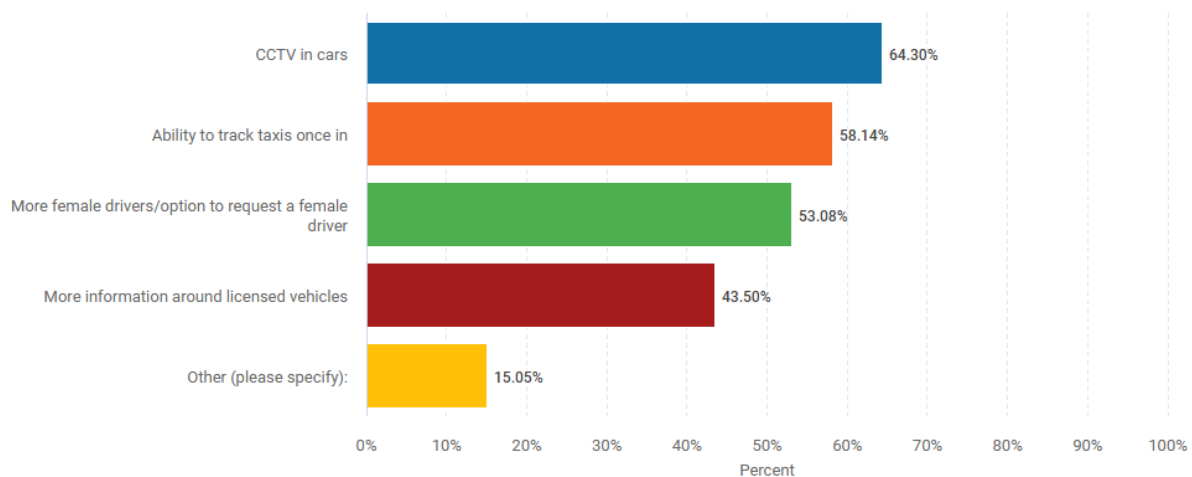
From the analysis of the free-text responses, several key themes were highlighted:

- **Enhance communications** to accommodate drivers for whom English is not their first language.
- **Remote monitoring and tracking of drivers' speed** to ensure safe driving practices and passenger security.
- **Strengthened and more frequent DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks** for taxi drivers to maintain high standards of safety and reliability.

> *"Tougher tests for drivers. No transferability of foreign licenses or out of town licenses. Tachographs, black boxes, DBS checks".*
>
> *"Better vetting of who has a taxi license eg. Not to anyone with a criminal history."*
>
> *"Safety features in taxi apps. Uber is currently bringing in a service where you or the driver can speak to a real person live by phone or message if there is a safety concern."*

In the final "Improve Safety" section, respondents were invited to share additional suggestions through a free-text box. Among the key themes that emerged, staff training was frequently mentioned as crucial for improving the management of passengers exhibiting inappropriate behaviour. Additionally, concerns were raised about bus stops and shelters situated in quieter areas, with calls for enhanced lighting and the installation of CCTV to improve safety and deter anti-social behaviour.

> *"More staff in public spaces. Staff visible/accessible/reassuring on public transport and in areas where people wait for and exit public transport. Staff alert to safety issues and confident in dealing with them- more staff training, and awareness of passengers with additional needs. Clear reporting advice. Bystander training and safety advice for the general public- notices with information about how to report/get assistance"*
>
> *"Yes, make it frequent and affordable, disability and parents with small babies friendly (I had twins - hard/ impossible to get two babies/toddlers on and off without other adult's help. More people using – self-policing! Creeps wouldn't get away with stalking without clear signs with emergency stop chains for abused to call for help. And fine for abuser! Unfortunately, many members of the public are afraid to intervene as it isn't without personal risk. More transport police patrols focused on reducing crime and passenger well-being."*
>
> *"Unreliable so could wait for extended periods of time for a bus to turn up. Youths in gangs gathering around bus stops can be very dangerous or intimidating"*
>
> *"a llocal bus company should be required to properly maintain their bus fleet. There is one bus route to the part of my town where I live, and when I finish work if a bus is cancelled. I'm generally sitting waiting in a badly lit area for about half an hour with no real idea if a replacement will ever arrive."*
>
> *"There needs to be staff, I see staff at the stations but I never see a member of staff on the train except during the day. People are out of control and see trains as their own private party trains, with drinks spilling all over and loud aggressive people shouting etc. It's truly awful, I suggest someone in charge takes the last train home on a weekend a few times and experiences how awful it is"*
>
> *"Taxi drivers are an absolute nightmare for making women and girls feel extremely uncomfortable due to inappropriate comments and behaviour including very personal questions. Many demonstrate a misogynistic attitude. Make misogyny a*

hate crime and enforce sentences. Mandatory training for drivers in what constitutes a hate crime, harassment, or inappropriate behaviour. Better reporting systems with penalties. Uber has a system where passengers can rate drivers and report unacceptable behaviour and the driver will be investigated and suspended. Other private hire firms don't do this, if you phone with a complaint they just say they will speak to the driver and nothing more is done. Private hire drivers should have to have a badge registered with the council the same as Hackney drivers. Bus stops in more isolated areas should be better maintained with adequate lighting. Investment into replacing old trains and buses and having more drivers to prevent cancellations."
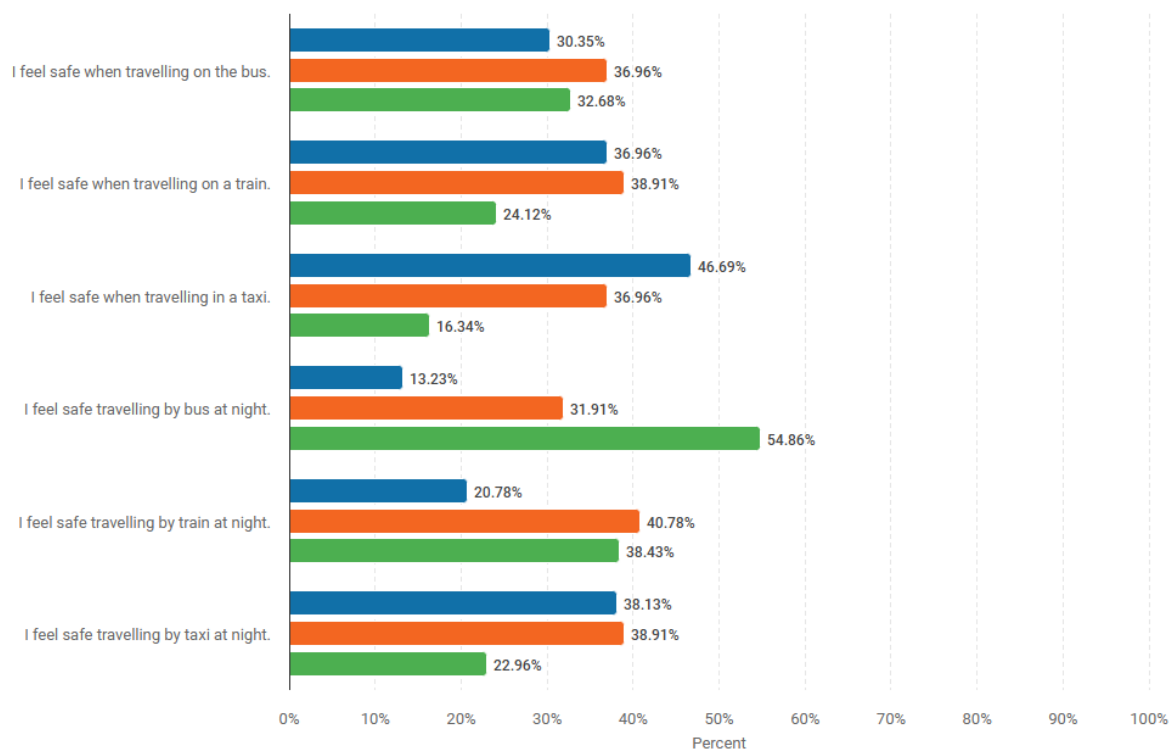
Further insights

The data analysis of the online transport safety survey provided an opportunity to explore deeper correlations between demographics. Notably, gender-specific themes and trends highlighted significant differences in experiences and perceptions of safety between male and female respondents. These insights offer valuable guidance for shaping targeted measures to improve transport safety and address the unique concerns raised by each demographic group.

The graphs below illustrate respondent's reflections on safety while traveling by taxi at night. The data reveals a notable gender disparity, with nearly a quarter of male respondents (22.96%) expressing that they do not feel safe, compared to over half of female respondents (50.83%). This also applies to traveling by train at night, 38.43% of male respondents do not feel safe compared to 61.76% of female respondents. When traveling by bus at night, over half of male respondents (54.86%) and an even higher percentage of female respondents (66.90%) reported feeling unsafe.
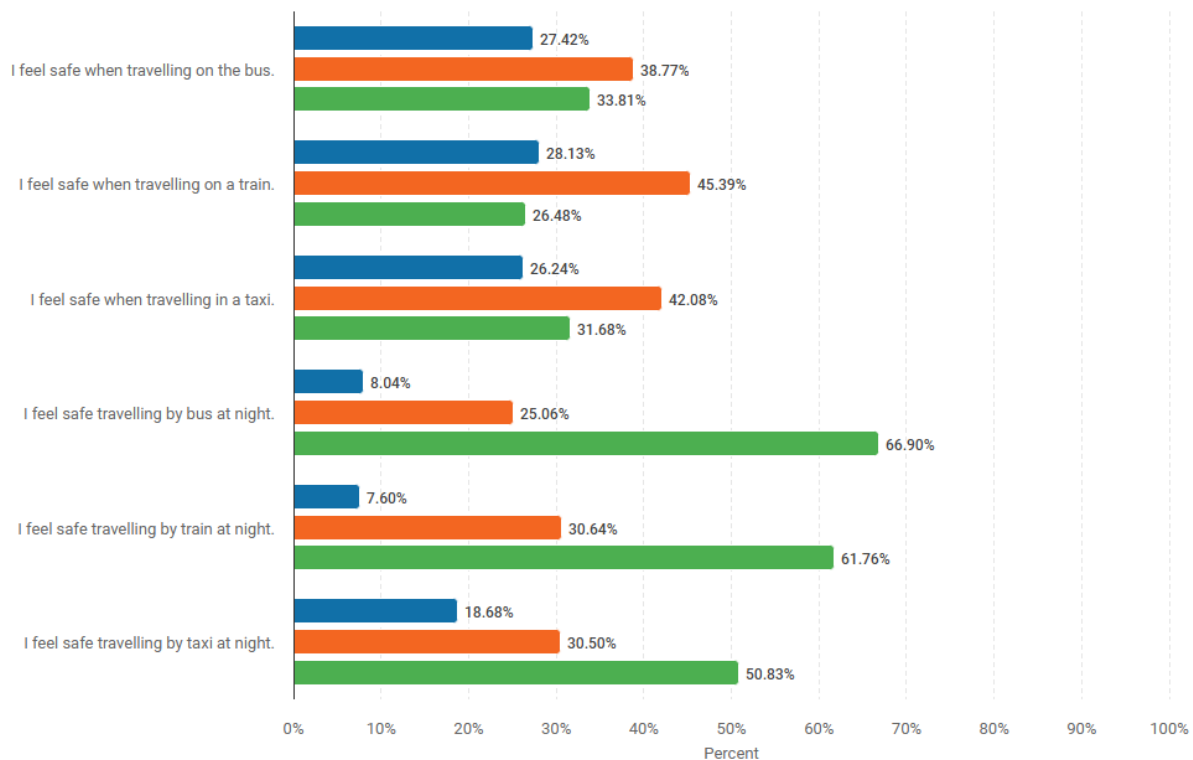
Male respondents

Do you agree with the following statements?

I feel safe when travelling on the bus.
- 30.35%
- 36.96%
- 32.68%

I feel safe when travelling on a train.
- 36.96%
- 38.91%
- 24.12%

I feel safe when travelling in a taxi.
- 46.69%
- 36.96%
- 16.34%

I feel safe travelling by bus at night.
- 13.23%
- 31.91%
- 54.86%

I feel safe travelling by train at night.
- 20.78%
- 40.78%
- 38.43%

I feel safe travelling by taxi at night.
- 38.13%
- 38.91%
- 22.96%

Percent

Agree   **Neutral**   **Disagree**

Female respondents

Do you agree with the following statements?

Agree **Neutral** **Disagree**

The survey revealed a notable difference in how safety concerns impact public transport usage among genders. While 59.14% of male respondents indicated that worry has not prevented them from using public transport, over half of female respondents (55.79%) reported that concerns for their safety have deterred them.

Analysis of free-text responses provided further insights. Female respondents often expressed worries about young people or individuals exhibiting anti-social or aggressive behaviour, particularly those intoxicated by drugs or alcohol, with males being prominently mentioned. Similarly, 40.86% of male respondents shared that safety concerns had prevented them from using public transport, highlighting the same issues of anti-social behaviour and intoxicated individuals.

This highlights significant differences in perceived safety between genders, underscoring the need for targeted measures to address these concerns.

> **Male respondent's**
>
> *"Too many idiots and drunks on buses. The public transport is quite dirty and smelly."*
>
> *"Travelling at night on any public transport holds a worry. Young people can be very deceiving in their manners."*

"Too many youths hanging around along with drug addicts and alcoholics. Not enough police/wardens presence. Not enough bus inspectors. Just do not feel safe."

"Poor inefficiency with buses/trains cancelled without notice. Risk of being stranded in unfamiliar areas (many frequented by gangs of foreign males) and having to arrange alternative transport or pick-up."

Female respondent's

"When I leave work late after 7 pm I won't get a bus. Feel uncomfortable on the bus and don't like walking to my home in the dark. Not so bad in the summer. That's why I use my car more."

"As a woman, seeing posts on social media about other women's experiences in taxi's has made me avoid getting taxis when I am alone. I will only get them when I am with other people."

*"The past few times when using a bus I was harassed by a random stranger wanting to take me on a date (I am nearly 65) and another time there was a lady in a wheelchair verbally abusing a black lady, calling her a c***. The bus driver did nothing on both occasions!"*

"I'm too terrified to use any form of public transport. There are too many drugged up people being aggressive and too many people carrying knives."

"I dont use public transport late at night when I am on my own, I would rather leave earlier or ask a family member to collect me. Waiting around at bus stops and the train station feels very unsettling"

"Several years ago, I traveled alone from Hartlepool to Stockton by train alone. When I arrived at Stockton train station, and as I was walking out of / away from the station/platform, I was approached by a man who was very intimidating and who propositioned me (sexually). He continued to follow me and intimidate me despite me walking away from him and making it explicitly clear that I was not interested and wanted him to leave me alone. Another male, who heard/noticed what was happening, came to my rescue and intervened. He challenged the other male before escorting me out of the station and ensuring that I arrived home safely by arranging a taxi, waiting with me until the taxi arrived and then travelling with me in the taxi to ensure I got home safely. Because of the above incident, I have never again/since used public transport."

Face to Face Consultation

The face-to-face consultation for the transport safety survey was a condensed version of the broader survey. As shown in the chart below, participants of the in-person engagement reported feeling significantly safer (56.54%) and least unsafe (16.75%).

The staff from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner conducted these consultations at various public transport hubs across Cleveland, including locations frequently used by commuters. This direct presence and accessibility may have contributed to participants feeling more confident and secure in their travel experiences.

Using the measures below, how safe do you feel using public transport?
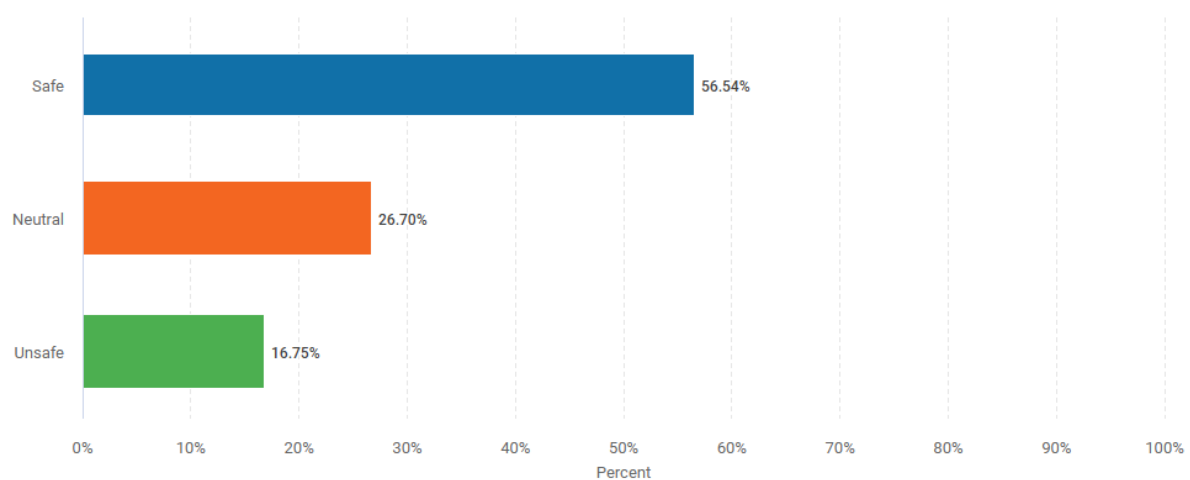
Participants identified their most frequently used forms of transport, as shown below. This selection determined the focus of the subsequent questions, which were customized to their chosen transport type. Over half of the participants (56.54%) selected buses as their primary mode of transport, while taxis were chosen by just over a quarter (32.46%).
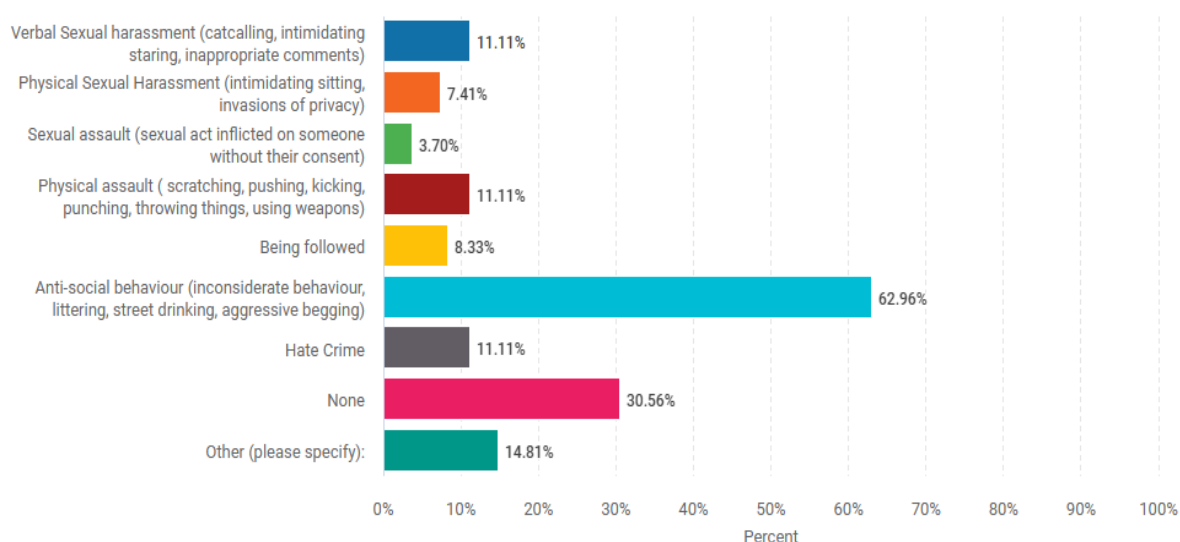
Please select all the options that apply to your most used form of public transport.
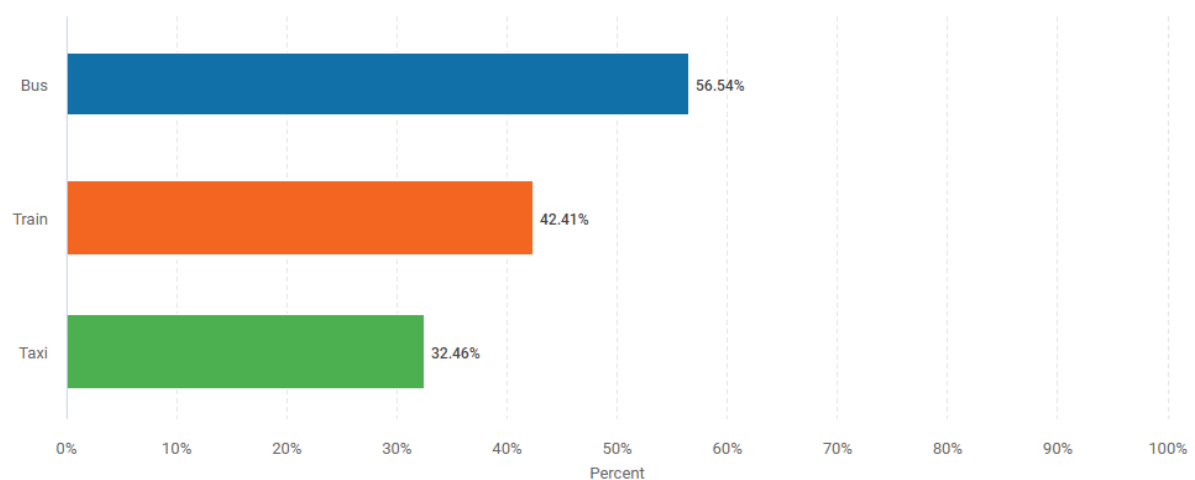
In the below anti-social behaviour (62.96%) is the common dominator witnessed or experienced when traveling on the bus. The least reported is sexual assault, with only 3.70% of participants indicating exposure to such incidents.
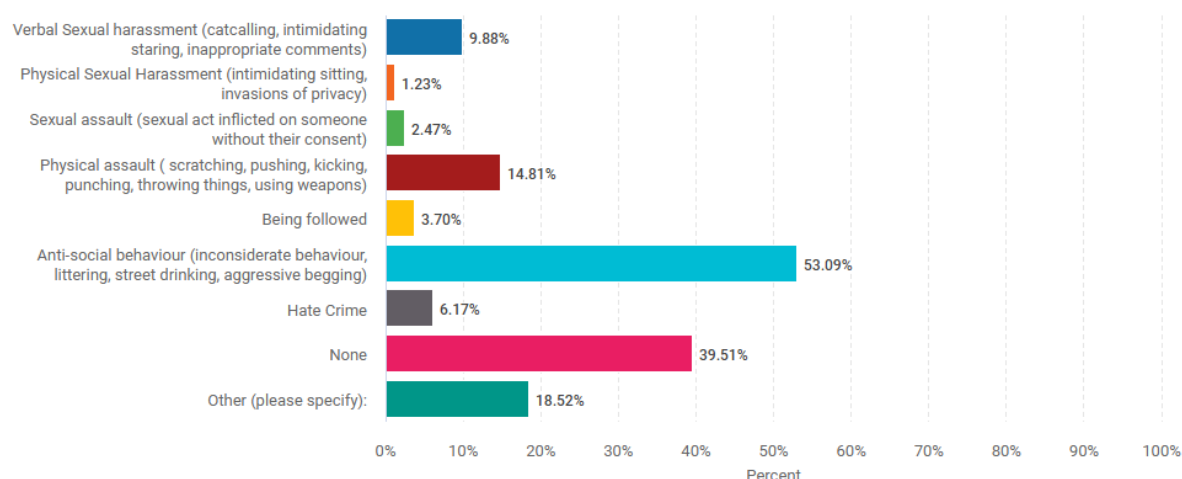
Travelling by Bus

Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of the following on the bus?

Category	Percent
Verbal Sexual harassment (catcalling, intimidating staring, inappropriate comments)	11.11%
Physical Sexual Harassment (intimidating sitting, invasions of privacy)	7.41%
Sexual assault (sexual act inflicted on someone without their consent)	3.70%
Physical assault (scratching, pushing, kicking, punching, throwing things, using weapons)	11.11%
Being followed	8.33%
Anti-social behaviour (inconsiderate behaviour, littering, street drinking, aggressive begging)	62.96%
Hate Crime	11.11%
None	30.56%
Other (please specify):	14.81%

Others specified in the free text that incidents of anti-social behaviour commonly occur involving either young individuals or those intoxicated by drugs or alcohol. One participant provided a specific example, reporting that a drug user had vomited on them while traveling on a bus.

Travelling by Trains

Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of the following on the train?

| Category	Percent
Verbal Sexual harassment (catcalling, intimidating staring, inappropriate comments)	9.88%
Physical Sexual Harassment (intimidating sitting, invasions of privacy)	1.23%
Sexual assault (sexual act inflicted on someone without their consent)	2.47%
Physical assault (scratching, pushing, kicking, punching, throwing things, using weapons)	14.81%
Being followed	3.70%
Anti-social behaviour (inconsiderate behaviour, littering, street drinking, aggressive begging)	53.09%
Hate Crime	6.17%
None	39.51%
Other (please specify):	18.52%

As highlighted earlier, more than half of the participants (53.09%) reported experiencing or witnessing anti-social behaviour while traveling by train. In contrast, physical sexual harassment was the least reported issue, with only 1.23% of participants indicating exposure to such behaviour.

Within the additional free-text responses, participants highlighted that anti-social behaviour was predominantly driven by intoxicated individuals. One participant shared an incident where two passengers were targeted by another individual due to their LGBTQ+ identity. The participant intervened to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the affected passengers.

Travelling by Taxi

Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following in a taxi? Select all that apply:
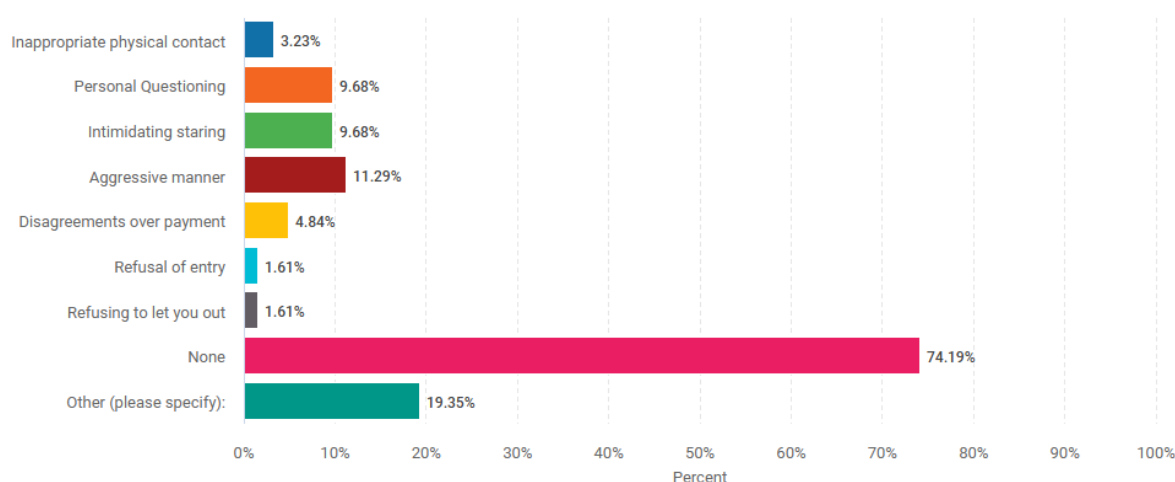
During consultations with participants about their experiences or observations while using taxis, nearly three-quarters (74.19%) reported having no concerns. Conversely, a small minority mentioned incidents such as being refused entry or denied the opportunity to exit, as illustrated in the graph above.

In the additional free text responses, most participants highlighted instances where taxi drivers engaged in reckless speeding, which left them feeling extremely uncomfortable.

Improving Safety

In the final question, participants were invited to share their thoughts and suggestions for improving safety on public transport through a free text box. The responses revealed several recurring themes and key concerns, including:

- **Increase in train carriages during major events:** Participants emphasised the need for additional train carriages during high-traffic events, such as football matches, to reduce overcrowding and enhance passenger comfort and safety.
- **Enhanced police and staff presence at stations:** Many respondents suggested a greater presence of police officers and transport staff at stations, especially during large-scale events, to deter anti-social behaviour and provide immediate assistance if necessary.
- **Stricter enforcement of rules for anti-social behaviour:** There were calls for stricter measures to remove passengers engaging in anti-social behaviour, ensuring a safer and more pleasant experience for all users.

- **Expanded use of surveillance technology:** Participants advocated for increased CCTV coverage on both transport vehicles and at stations, as well as equipping staff with body-worn cameras to improve accountability and security.
- **Increased representation of female taxi drivers:** Several responses highlighted the importance of encouraging more female taxi drivers to provide a greater sense of safety and comfort, particularly for female passengers traveling alone.

> *"More bus staff and more lit areas near bus stops. I won't take a taxi because male drivers"*
>
> *"I Don't feel safe as you don't know if people carrying knives. Police need stronger powers!"*
>
> *"I have not used public transport for a long time and to be honest I would be a bit apprehensive now. Firstly, there are a lot of swear words used by the general public which is not nice to listen to. Secondly many smell of cannabis now, bus stations etc, smell of wee and drugs which is very off-putting. My son has witnessed a lady being verbally abused and had to intervene to protect her. Therefore, good lighting, discipline, cameras, security improvements, more police would help."*
>
> *"Educate the taxi drivers to understand the needs of people with disabilities. Report to my support worker if I have issues. More ramps are needed for buses for people who are disabled and require better accessibility provisions"*

Summary

The survey data analysis provided insights into respondent's perceptions of safety while using public transport. It revealed that most online respondents felt unsafe traveling at night, particularly by bus (63.47%). Overall taxis were perceived as the safest option for traveling by day (33.24%), although only 25.31% of online respondents felt safe using them at night.

To enhance personal safety, over half of the respondents opted for personal measures to keep themselves safe, such as avoiding eye contact on buses (50.86%) in comparison to 52.24% of respondents traveling on trains or using mobile phones in taxis (50.81%).

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) was significantly experienced or witnessed by respondents on buses (74.50% online & 62.96% in person) and trains (80.82% online & 53.09% in person). Respondents said most of the ASB was caused by other members of the public, specifically young people and those intoxicated by drugs or alcohol.

By comparison, 46.34% of online & 74.19% of in-person respondents reported no incidents whilst travelling by taxi. However, some online respondents noted experiencing personal questions from taxi drivers (37.40%). Whereas in-person participants raised concerns over taxi drivers engaged in reckless speeding commonly highlighted in the free text box.

More than half of the participants opted not to report the incidents they encountered or observed while using public transport. The key factors influencing their decision to report or not include:

- Uncertainty about the process or channels for reporting incidents.
- Distrust in the effectiveness of reporting systems and doubted whether complainants would see favourable outcomes.
- Poor follow-up on complaints and lack of clear communication about their resolution.
- Concern over potential retaliation, especially in cases where taxi drivers have access to passengers' home addresses.

Gender differences were apparent, with over half of female respondents feeling unsafe traveling at night by bus (66.90%), train (61.76%), or taxi (50.83%). Male respondents shared similar concerns for buses (54.86%), though significantly fewer expressed feeling unsafe whilst traveling by taxi at night (22.96%).

Respondents, both online and face-to-face, provided valuable insights and suggestions for enhancing safety across various forms of public transport. Their input revealed distinct themes and trends for buses, trains, and taxis:

Safety Improvements for Buses and Trains:

- **Increase enforcement and security presence:**
  Participants strongly advocated for an increased presence of security personnel and law enforcement to deter anti-social behaviour and provide reassurance to passengers.
- **Greater staffing levels:**
  Suggestions included employing additional conductors or staff members to assist passengers, monitor conduct, and intervene when necessary.
- **Proactive removal of disruptive individuals:**
  Respondents emphasised the need for strict policies to remove passengers exhibiting inappropriate behaviour, particularly those under the influence of drugs or alcohol, to maintain a safer and more comfortable environment for all.
- **Stricter penalties for anti-social behaviour (ASB):**
  Recommendations included implementing stronger penalties for individuals engaging in ASB or committing crimes, fostering accountability, and deterring future incidents.
- **Enhanced surveillance measures:**
  Many participants called for expanded CCTV coverage on buses, trains, and at stations, alongside equipping staff with body-worn cameras to bolster accountability and improve overall security. Including better lighting or CCTV for smaller bus stops and shelters in quieter locations.

Safety Improvements for Taxis:

- **Improved communication for non-English-speaking drivers:**
  Respondents suggested developing support mechanisms to enhance communication, ensuring drivers can interact effectively with passengers.
- **Remote driver monitoring:**
  Proposals included the introduction of systems to monitor and track taxi drivers' speed remotely, promoting safe driving practices and passenger well-being.
- **Frequent and thorough DBS checks:**
  Participants recommended strengthening and increasing the frequency of DBS checks for taxi drivers, ensuring adherence to high safety and reliability standards.
- **Increase female taxi drivers:**
  A recurring theme was the importance of boosting the representation of female taxi drivers, which would provide greater comfort and a sense of safety, especially for female passengers travelling alone.

The survey findings have provided critical insights into the perceptions and experiences of safety while using public transport, alongside actionable suggestions for improvement. Addressing prevalent concerns, such as unsafe travel at night, anti-social behaviour, and gender-specific vulnerabilities. Requires a versatile approach that encompasses increased security measures, stricter policies, and an increase in surveillance. These recommendations serve as a vital framework for creating a safer, more inclusive, and reliable public transport system that meets the diverse needs of passengers and ensures a positive travel experience for all.