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The research process was managed, and the report authored, by Rosy Burgess, Events and Campaigns Officer at the Scottish Youth Parliament from October to December 2018.

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A large-print version of this report is available on the SYP website at: https://bit.ly/2FlhEw1

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OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

This report makes ten recommendations to improve young people's experience of public transport, and a summary is shown below. The full recommendations can be found on page 27. These recommendations are supported by existing SYP policy, which can be found in a literature review survey on the SYP website at: https://bit.ly/2TDxa8T

Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should review existing concessionary fares, and expand the concession to include all young people across all public transport networks.

Transport Scotland should develop an accessible Scotlandwide public transport app.

Public transport companies should sign up to charters which set out best practice for interacting with passengers who have a disability.

Transport companies should raise the age of child fares to include young people up to the age of 18, and co-produce guidance and training with young people for customerfacing staff about how to work positively with them.

Public transport staff should receive training on safety, accessibility, and inclusion, which addresses both visible and invisible disabilities.

Transport
Scotland and
Regional Transport
Partnerships should
improve promotion of the
Thistle Assistance Card to
young people and public
transport companies.

Public transport companies should take steps to ensure friendly customer service; improve standards of safety, hygiene, and cleanliness on buses; and provide WiFi and charging points where possible.

Public transport companies should work with young people to co-design bus timetables and route information which is easy to read and accessible.

Regional Transport Partnerships should ensure young people are meaningfully included in decision-making about public transport which affects them.

Public transport companies should ensure young people are meaningfully consulted on decisions which affect them, and make more effort to gather and regularly review feedback from passengers.

INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people. Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that listens to and values the participation of children and young people, and our goal is to do everything we can to make this vision a reality.

Every year, we run a national campaign focusing on an issue that young people care about. In June 2018, after consulting with nearly 10,500 young people, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) voted for our 2018-19 national campaign to focus on public transport.

The campaign, *All Aboard*, has been designed and developed by young people. It aims 'To improve young people's experience of public transport in Scotland'. To achieve this aim, the campaign focuses on three themes:



Reducing fares

This theme will focus on improving existing concessionary rates on public transport for young people in Scotland up to their 26th birthday.



Accessibility

This theme will focus on improving the accessibility of public transport and waiting areas for young people.



Bus standards

This theme will focus on improving bus services and waiting standards for young people across Scotland.

While there is some existing research about public transport and young people's experiences, there is limited data relating

specifically to the experiences of young people across the whole of Scotland. There is also limited information available about how young people's views are considered by public transport companies, and how young people are involved in informing wider public transport planning and delivery.

As a rights-based organisation, our mission, vision, and values are grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly Article 12: that young people have the right to express their views freely and have their opinions listened to in all matters affecting them. As such, MSYPs consulted young people across Scotland to ensure their voices inform decisionmaking and discussions about public transport in Scotland.

The findings of our research are set out in three key sections. A fourth section focuses on youth participation:

Reducing Fares: This section explores the cost for young people of using public transport, and actions public transport companies could take to help young people find out the best value fares.

Accessibility: This section explores young people's views and experiences about the accessibility of Scotland's public transport, particularly for those young people who consider themselves to have a visible or invisible disability.

Bus Standards: This section explores young people's experiences of travelling on buses, with a focus on initiatives that would encourage them to use the bus more regularly, and how bus companies could improve information for young people about bus timetables and routes.

Youth Participation: This section explores how young people think public transport companies could make sure their views about public transport are listened to.

This report concludes by outlining key recommendations to encourage public transport companies to improve young people's experience of public transport, and to ensure young people's voices are included in discussions and decisions about public transport in Scotland.

OUR APPROACH

The research for this report was carried out during the *All Aboard* consultation phase, between 20th October and 3rd December 2018. Young people's views were collected through a survey, which was available in a paper format or online using the website SmartSurvey.

In total, 1,314 young people aged 12-25 responded to the survey. In addition, 15 young people under the age of 25 took part in a focus group session at the Inclusion Scotland conference on 7th December 2018.

The consultation questions were developed by SYP's Conveners

Group, in collaboration with SYP staff, following discussions with public transport companies, public transport campaigning organisations, children and young people's organisations, and the democratically elected MSYPs. The online and paper surveys included a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions.

A literature review of existing public transport-related reports was also carried out prior to the launch of the consultation. A summary of this review is available download as a background to this report from the SYP website here: https://bit.ly/2TDxa8T.



Our approach focused on a research process that would produce robust findings, but also ensure the voices and experiences of young people remained at the heart of the research. The responsibility for consulting with young people across Scotland lay with MSYPs, who were trained and provided with resources to support their consultations.

SYP also shared the online survey link with other organisations who work with children and young people, with public transport companies, and with other campaigning organisations to promote the survey more widely. Young Scot points were also

available to any young people who completed the survey online, through the Young Scot Rewards programme.

Although answering each question was optional, and respondents were not compelled to complete the whole survey, every question was completed by a substantial number of respondents.

Qualitative data was analysed by grouping responses into themes based on those identified in respondents' comments, to ensure the experiences of young people remained at the heart of the research process.²

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1) Reducing fares

This section explores how much young people spend in an average week on travel to take part in a range of activities, and discusses young people's suggestions for how public transport companies could help them find out what fare is the best value for them.

1A) In an average week, how much do you spend on travel to take part in the following activities?



KEY FINDING!

Nearly one third of respondents (31.4%) pay more than £12 to travel to school, college, or university each week.

Survey respondents were given a table showing seven activities young people may take part in during an average week, and were asked to tick a box in the price column which best shows how

much they spend on travel to take part in each activity.

These results are show in the tables below.³

School/college/uni Work/Apprenticeship Volunteering

Less than £3 (22.0%) £3.01-£6 (16.2%) £6.01-£9 (18.4%) £9.01-£12 (12.1%) £12.01-£15 (10.4%) More than £15 (21.0%)

Less than £3 (20.2%) £3.01-£6 (26.7%) £6.01-£9 (14.1%) £9.01-£12 (17.3%) £12.01-£15 (10.3%) More than £15 (21.4%) Less than £3 (35.8%) £3.01-£6 (26%) £6.01-£9 (13.5%) £9.01-£12 (8.2%) £12.01-£15 (5%) More than £15 (11.5%)

Clubs and hobbies

Less than £3 (35.8%) £3.01-£6 (26.0%) £6.01-£9 (13.5%) £9.01-£12 (8.2%) £12.01-£15 (5.0%) More than £15 (11.5%)

Visiting friends and family

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Less than £3 (33.6%)
£3.01-£6 (26%)
£6.01-£9 (14.5%)
£9.01-£12 (8.7%)
£12.01-£15 (4.2%)
More than £15 (13.1%)
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Medical and/or other appointments

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Less than £3 (55.56%) £3.01-£6 (20.52%) £6.01-£9 (9.81%) £9.01-£12 (6.31%) £12.01-£15 (3.10%) More than £15 (4.70%)
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Nearly 25% respondents said they spend over £12 on travel to 'other', but no further information was provided regarding what this includes.

Some young people responded that the cost of public transport is too high, particularly if they only earn minimum wage and/ or don't live close to the places they need or want to visit such as the nearest town or city,

supermarkets, clubs and hobbies, or other entertainment venues.

Other comments referred to the range in price of bus passes, from £9.50/week to over £50/month. Some young people, however, commented that they receive a free bus pass, either because they have a disability or because these are provided by the school / local council. This is not the case across the country.

It costs me two hours' worth of wages a week on average to get to work. I get paid less than an adult, and am expected to pay the same for transport as an adult."

I spend £600 to get to uni each semester and it's because my Young Scot card doesn't work at peak times." A further group of young people shared examples of how much they spend to use public transport. In some cases, despite making use of concessionary travel offers including the 16-25 Railcard or the Scottish Government concessionary discount which is facilitated through the Young Scot National Entitlement Card, some young people are paying over £50 per week to travel to work, with one respondent paying nearly £90 per week.

A number of young people who responded to this question suggested the cost of public transport should be reduced for young people under the age of 18, and for those in low-income families. Where existing concessionary fares exist, it was suggested that these should be reviewed to include peak time

All under 18s should be eligible for child fares if they get paid less than over 18s."

travel, so that young people do not have to worry about the cost of transport to work, for example.

Finally, a large number of young people commented that they rely on cars or walking rather than using public transport, for a variety of reasons. Some live in rural areas where there is no public transport, or where the public transport doesn't run at the times they would need to use it to get to (for example) clubs and hobbies. In other cases, for example those living in towns, they might not need to use public transport on a regular basis as they can walk, but they will use a car for longer journeys as it is quicker and easier.

I spend £70-90 every week on my commute from Glasgow to Edinburgh, and that's with a 1/3 off with the 16-25 Railcard, which I only have 1 year left of. I don't know how I will be able to afford the commute thereafter."

1B) How could public transport companies help you to find out what fare is the best value for you?



KEY FINDING!

65.4% respondents felt a mobile phone App would help them to find out what fare is the best value for them.

56.5% respondents suggested posters at stations and bus stops would help them to find out the best value fares.

A mobile phone app (65.4%)
Posters at stations and bus stops (56.5%)
Social media campaign (32.0%)

A page on the company website (31.7%) Posters inside the vehicle (31.1%) A page on another website (9.3%)



A small number of comments were made in response to this question, but most supported the suggestions listed in the survey, as shown in the graph above.





2) Accessibility

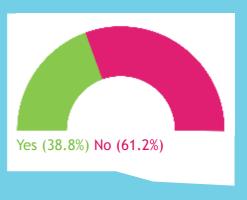
This section explores how young people who consider themselves to have a visible or invisible disability feel using public transport, and discusses these young people's suggestions of what public transport companies could do to make public transport more accessible for them.

2A) If you have a disability or access requirement, do you feel comfortable using public transport?



KEY FINDING!

Nearly two in three respondents (61.2%) with a disability or access requirement do not feel comfortable using public transport.



Excluding those respondents who indicated they do not have a disability or access requirement, 134 young people responded either 'yes' or 'no' to this question.

Comments in response to this question highlighted some of the challenges young people face in relation to the accessibility of public transport.

Young people commented that they find it hard to access public transport in a number of ways. Some specifically mentioned difficulties they have faced when pushchairs or other passengers are in the accessible seats or spaces at the front of buses. Others referred to the challenges, and sometimes stigma, of needing extra assistance when boarding public transport.

Some young people indicated that anxiety can be exacerbated by public transport. For some, their existing anxiety is made worse because they are scared that something unexpected might happen; while others become more anxious if they don't know the route or how much a journey will cost.

There was a mixture of responses regarding other passengers.
Some young people felt that public transport is a welcoming environment, and that other passengers are always friendly; whereas others feel more uncomfortable using public transport because it is crowded, noisy, and there is limited personal space. Some of these

comments also suggest young people have different experiences with other passengers depending on whether they have a visible or invisible disability. A small number of young people suggested they now feel comfortable using public transport, but it has taken them time to grow in confidence. Other comments from young people generally indicated that these respondents sometimes feel comfortable using public transport if they are travelling with friends or family. However, others felt that the attitude and behaviour of staff on public transport can have an impact on how comfortable they feel using

I have issues with noisy and crowded areas, I can't travel alone on public transport and am anxious about how I may react to certain situations and how others may react to me."

I get very anxious and second guess myself constantly about if I get the right train/bus, and am always worried about price/getting off at the right time."

public transport.

The main accessibility issue highlighted by participants at the Inclusion Scotland conference focused on the ScotRail Assisted Travel service.

Although some young people have had positive experiences, the majority of participants said they regularly face issues such as staff not turning up or not providing the requested ramp/wheelchair. In addition, participants said they find the information on the National Rail website/app to be

People on the bus are nice and help me if I need it."

very unreliable on whether or not a station is staffed, which has resulted in young people being left stranded or needing to rely on other passengers to lead them to Help Points or station exits. Finally, participants also identified issues with public transport staff attitudes. A shared experience amongst most of the participants was of conductors making jokes around them faking their disabilities for cheaper tickets, which left them feeling humiliated and insincere.

I think there is a stigma about asking for a ramp for special needs."

2B) What could public transport companies do to make public transport more accessible for you?



KEY FINDING!

Young people with a disability felt physical improvements to vehicles, and training for public transport staff, could make public transport more accessible for them.

The majority of responses to this question referred to issues such as public transport routes, the cost of public transport, and public transport timetables. However, as these issues are discussed elsewhere, this section will look specifically at accessibility for young people who consider themselves to have a visible or invisible disability.

Overall, young people who responded to this survey question focused on physical changes that could be made to public transport to increase accessibility for them.

Young people who took part in the focus group discussion at the Inclusion Scotland conference agreed that customer-facing staff should receive comprehensive training on safety, accessibility, and inclusion, including visible and invisible disabilities; and this training should be co-produced and delivered by facilitators who have a disability.

More audio announcements and visual guides. I rely on a mobile phone app for platform announcements and timing updates.
This would be highly inconvenient if I didn't have access to internet."

Make it clear disabled people are welcome and discrimination of any form shall not be tolerated. Have a quiet section of the transport (More attainable on trains/double decker buses)."

3) Bus standards

This section discusses young people's experiences of travelling on buses, including what would encourage them to use the bus more regularly, and how bus companies could improve information for young people about bus timetables and routes.

3A) How would you rate our experience of travelling on buses? Why?



Okay (45.4%) Good (32.1%) Excellent (4.8%)

Overall, the majority of respondents rated their experience of travelling on buses as 'okay' (45.4%) or good (32.1%). While 4.8% of respondents rated their experience as 'excellent', 12.8% rated their experience as 'poor', and 5.0% as 'terrible'.

Comments from respondents who rated their experience as 'terrible' or poor' focused on issues relating to cleanliness, reliability, and timing. A small

KEY FINDINGS!

Nearly one in five respondents rate their experience of travelling on buses as poor or terrible.

Over one in five female respondents (21.9%) said they do not feel confident travelling alone, compared to less than one in ten male respondents (8.5%).

number of comments also focused on the behaviour of other passengers and attitudes of bus drivers.

On the other hand, respondents who rated their experience as 'good' or 'excellent' indicated that, generally, they had very few problems using public transport, although some said they rarely use buses.

As a pram user I can never get a bus. 6 different buses refused to allow me on this morning resulting in being late for a health visitor appointment. The GP surgery has now removed us from the surgery's list for being late to attend."

The buses I go on are very comfortable and the staff are really nice."

Sometimes there is litter all over the floor but otherwise buses are fine."

3B) What would encourage you to use the bus more regularly?

Young people who responded to this question identified a number of changes that would encourage them to use the bus more regularly.

Cost of using the bus

Nearly one third (31.5%) of young people who responded to this question said they would use the bus more regularly if it was cheaper, or if there were promotions or higher concessionary discounts. A number of respondents also felt that the child fare should include all young people under the age of 18.

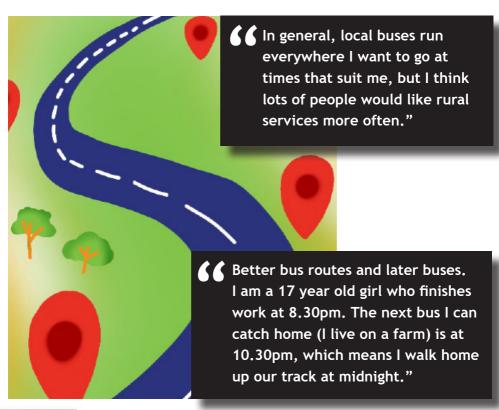
A further group of young people said they would use the bus more regularly if they didn't need to use exact change, or if they could use contactless payments with a debit card or smart card.

Cheaper prices or promotions for young people."



Availability of buses

Over 20% of young people who responded to this question said they would be more likely to use the bus if there were more regular buses, at times that would better suit their needs, or if there were bus routes that go to places they want to travel to.



Bus standards

15.6% of respondents to this question indicated they would be encouraged to use buses more regularly if bus standards were improved. Within this, they

identified the following issues:

 Cleanliness - over half of respondents said they would like buses to be cleaner. A large number also suggested buses could smell nicer.

- Access to WiFi and charging points - Some respondents said the availability of reliable WiFi or mobile phone charging ports would be beneficial.
- Safety a small number of respondents would use the bus more regularly if they felt safer.



Safer buses. A lot of people fight and argue, smoke and drink on them."



Increased focus on keeping women safe and free from harassment on public transport. Clear zero tolerance campaigns in and out of buses and trains."



Although a smaller number of respondents raised this compared to other issues, some respondents felt that bus drivers could be friendlier, happier, and more polite. All these respondents said this would encourage them to use the bus more regularly.

3C) How could bus companies improve information for young people about bus timetables and routes?



KEY FINDING!

Over 75% respondents suggested online information about bus timetables and routes could be improved.

Of the 1,050 young people who responded to this question, three quarters (75.3%) suggested online information about bus timetables and routes could be improved:

- 44.6% suggested there should be an app where they can look up timetables and route information, as well as being able to find out the cost of travel and pre-book tickets.
- 15.7% felt the information should be available and clear on the company's website.
- 15.1% suggested companies could make better use of social media to share timetables and route information, updates of any delays, cancellations, and arrangements for replacement services.

- the information about bus timetables and routes could be much clearer and easier to read. An additional 3.2% suggested route maps should be available so young people can see the routes buses take, which would help them to feel more confident that they know where they are.
- A further 7.6% felt they cannot trust the accuracy of bus timetables and route information, and suggested this should be updated online and at bus stops or stations as soon as any changes are made.

A map highlighting how routes overlap and link, similar to the London Underground."

4) Youth participation

SYP is a human rights based organisation. Young people's rights underpin all SYP activities, and therefore meaningful participation should be at the heart of all decisions affecting young people. This section outlines young people's suggestions for ensuring their views are taken into consideration in public transport decision-making.

4A) How could bus companies make sure young people's views about public transport are listened to?



KEY FINDINGS!

Young people want public transport companies to actively ask for their views, to listen to their suggestions, and take action to make changes.

Over one third of respondents suggested bus companies could carry out surveys to find out young people's views.

807 young people responded to this question. It's very clear from the responses that young people want public transport companies to ask for their views, to actively listen to these views, and to take action to make changes, as suggested by nearly one third (29.3%) of respondents.

It is also clear that young people want to know what changes have been made as a result of their feedback, and would like companies to tell young people what action they have taken so young people and other passengers feel their views are being listened to and acted upon.



Over one third (34.4%) of young people who responded to this question suggested that bus companies could carry out a survey

to make sure young people's views are listened to. Some respondents suggested these surveys could be carried out regularly across Scotland; whereas others suggested young people could be encouraged to give 'snap' feedback while on the bus, for example by printing a rating scale on the back of bus tickets and encouraging passengers tow put these in a feedback box before leaving the bus.

By putting little ballot boxes on buses so they can fill forms out while on the bus and give them to the bus driver when they get off."

Online engagement

Nearly one in five respondents (19.0%) suggested public transport companies should use online methods, including social media (9.7%), an app (7.2%),

or the company website (2.1%) to enable young people to rate their journeys, give feedback, and share suggestions for improvement.

Face-to-face meetings with young people

In addition to online methods, 7.7% respondents suggested public transport companies should speak to young people face-to-face by attending schools, colleges and universities to find out young

people's views and promote local transport options (5.6%); and hold public meetings, Q&A sessions, and other events for young people (2.1%) to give feedback.

Youth forum

Furthermore, 5.2% respondents recommended public transport companies should involve young people at all levels of decision-

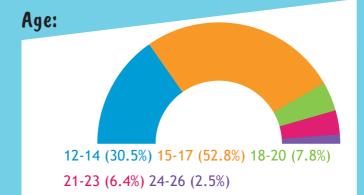
making by establishing a youth advisory group or youth forum.

RESPONDENTS PROFILE



IMPORTANT POINT!

Responses were received from young people in thirty local authorities across Scotland.



Gender:



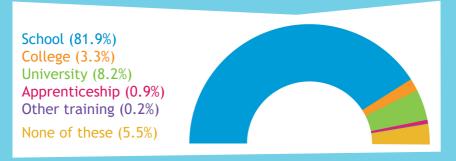
Do you consider yourself to have a visible or invisible disability?

Yes (10%)
No (76.9%)
Not sure (9.2%)
I prefer to not to
say (3.9%)

Do you feel confident travelling alone?



Are you currently in...



Do you have a job?



RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research is to find out young people's views and experiences of using public transport in Scotland, and to make recommendations which will help to improve young people's experiences of using public transport in Scotland.⁴

Reducing fares

- Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should review the existing
 concessionary discount on public transport, available to 16-18 year olds
 through the Young Scot National Entitlement Card, to expand the concession
 to include all young people (up to their 26th birthday) at no cost to young
 people across all public transport networks.
- Transport companies should raise the age of child fares to include young
 people up to the age of 18, and provide with guidance and training for
 customer-facing staff about how to work positively with young people. This
 should be carried out in conjunction with young people.
- Transport Scotland should work with transport companies and other organisations to develop and roll-out a Scotland-wide app, such as Navigogo⁵, to make sure young people have live and accessible information about the range of fares, timetables, routes, and discounts available to them, and can make an informed decision about their travel choices.

Accessibility

- In line with existing SYP policy, transport companies should sign up existing
 bus, train, and tram charters which set out best practice for service
 providers when interacting with passengers who have a disability, such as the
 RNIB 'We're on Board' accessible travel charter.
- Customer-facing public transport staff should receive comprehensive training on safety, accessibility, and inclusion, including visible and invisible disabilities. This training should be co-produced and delivered by facilitators who have a disability.

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Transport Scotland and Regional Transport Partnerships should improve
promotion of the Thistle Assistance Card⁶ to young people and public
transport companies, to help increase young people with visible and invisible
disabilities confidence that they will be treated with respect and dignity by
staff when travelling.

Bus standards

- Public transport companies should work with young people to co-design bus timetables and route information which is easy to read and accessible. This information should be included on an app, the company's website, and at bus stops and in waiting areas, and should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is up to date and accurate.
- Public transport companies should improve young experience of travelling on buses by taking steps to ensure friendly customer service by all staff; aiming for higher minimum standards of safety, hygiene and cleanliness on buses; and providing WiFi and charging points on buses where possible.

Youth participation

- Regional Transport Partnerships should take a human rights based approach
 to ensure young people are meaningfully included in decisions about public
 transport which will affect them. This could include the establishment of a
 regional young transport users forum, and building and strengthening links
 with existing youth voice mechanisms within the region.
- Public transport companies should ensure young people are being consulted
 on decisions affecting them, and make more effort to gather and regularly
 review feedback from passengers. For example, as a minimum, they
 could print a short rating question on the back of bus/train tickets, which
 passengers could put in a collection box as they exit the bus. This would
 enable companies to collect on the spot feedback, and to recycle used
 tickets.

KEY FINDINGS!

Nearly one third of respondents (31.4%) pay more than £12 to travel to school, college, or university each week.

65.4% respondents felt a mobile phone app would help them to find out what fare is the best value for them.

Nearly two in three respondents with a disability or access requirement do not feel comfortable using public transport.

Nearly one in five respondents rate their experience of travelling on buses as poor or terrible.

56.5% respondents suggested posters at stations and bus stops would help them to find out the best value fares.

Young people want public transport companies to actively ask for their views, to listen to their suggestions, and take action to make changes.

Over one in five female respondents (21.9%) said they do not feel confident travelling alone, compared to less than one in ten male respondents (8.5%).

Over 75%
respondents
suggested online
information about
bus timetables and routes
could be improved.

Over one third of respondents suggested bus companies could carry out surveys to find out young peoples' views.

Young people with a disability felt physical improvements to vehicles, and training for public transport staff, could make public transport more accessible for them.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Given the demographics of respondents, this research cannot claim to be fully representative of Scotland's young people, particularly in terms of age (the majority of respondents were aged 12 to 17, with a relatively small number of respondents from the 18 to 26 age group). However, this research identifies some important issues pertinent to young people as a whole, and also pinpoints issues for specific groups of young people that could benefit further research. A profile of respondents is available on page 25.
- The graphics software we have used requires all data for each question to add up to 100%. As a result, for some questions, the answer with the highest percentage has been slightly adjusted. The adjustments made create a maximum of 1% difference to the answer with the highest percentage for each question.
- 3 Graphs show responses excluding those respondents who indicated they pay £0 on travel to take part in each activity.
- These recommendations are supported by existing SYP policy, which can be found in the literature review summary which can be downloaded from the SYP website: https://bit.ly/2TDxa8T
- 5 https://www.the-espgroup.com/project/navigogo/
- 6 https://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/thistle-assistance-card/

All Aboard is the Scottish Youth Parliament's 2018-19 national campaign, which aims to improve young people's experience of public transport in Scotland.

This report is the result of a Scotland-wide consultation with 1,329 young people aged 12-25, and the findings are based on four themes:

- Reducing fares
- Accessibility
- Bus standards
- Youth participation

Based on our findings, we make ten recommendations to improve young people's experience of public transport, and to ensure young people's voices are included in discussions and decisions about public transport in Scotland.

Scottish Youth Parliament

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