

**Trafford Council Budget 2016/17 Consultation:**  
***The future of travel assistance for children,  
young people and adults***

*A report by The Campaign Company*  
*February 2016*

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# 1 Executive Summary

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## Overview

Trafford Council has recently completed a two phase public consultation on their 2016/17 budget. As part of this process, a number of themes and specific proposals have been developed for the public to consider and feedback on.

One of these themes is 'Working Smarter' – finding the best way to do things to deliver the best services at the lowest cost. One of the proposals under this theme is to bring adult and children's transport services together under one revised *All Age Travel Assistance Policy*.

The Council currently spends £3.2 million a year on door-to-door transport services, independent travel training and mile reimbursement for 454 children, young people and adults through their travel assistance programme. Because of the number of people impacted by this proposal, a separate '*The future of travel assistance for children, young people and adults*' public consultation was undertaken on this issue directly with service users, their families and other interested parties. This report contains an independent analysis of the responses received to these proposals.

This consultation ran from 30 November 2015 to 2 February 2016. 242 responses were received from service users, their parents and or/carers and interested professionals and groups. Respondents used a number of channels to feed back their views:

- A survey available online and in hard copy and produced in both standard and easy read format
- Written comments submitted in letters, e-mails and the Council's online comment submission system
- Consultation meetings in SEN schools and elsewhere

This report also incorporates analysis of discussions that took place in the wider Budget Consultation public meetings that focussed specifically on the revised *All Age Travel Assistance Policy*.

It is important to remember that the results contained in this report are not representative of the population – they only refer to the people and organisations that responded to the consultation.

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## Key messages for the Council

- Concerns about the proposals to introduce an element of cost for assisted travel for sixth-formers and adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has led there to be a general rejection of the proposals that have been put forward. This is across all service user and carer groups and not just those who are directly impacted.
- People want to defend the current provision and scope of services . Proposals that suggest alternatives and appear to undermine the status quo are not welcomed.
- The over-riding concern is that the most vulnerable and needy will be impacted: they will no longer be able to afford an invaluable service that does not simply provide access to learning but also promotes independence and social well-being as well as respite for families and carers
- There is little confidence that the Council's powers to exercise discretion to ensure there are arrangements in place to support those individuals and families on low income could be applied in a simple, consistent and fair way.
- The 'all age' aspect has led a number of people to raise questions about travel assistance to pre-school children (ie those under five years of age).

## Key findings

The '*Future of travel assistance for children, young people and adults*' was framed around the new '*All Age Travel Assistance Policy*' and sought feedback on the following key areas:

- Perceptions of current transport services
- Principles that should underpin any potential change
- Funding and other elements of the travel assistance policy
- Suitable alternatives for meeting travel assistance needs

## Profile of respondents

- Three-quarters of respondents were female (76%)

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- Over half of respondents (57%) were service users or parents/carers of service users. They represented the following age groups:
    - 34% were service users or parents/carers of those aged 5-16 years
    - 11% were service users or parent/carers of those aged 16-19 years
    - 12% were adult service users or parents/carers of adult learners or social care users
  - 42% of respondents were interested professionals or other interested parties

### **Perceptions of current transport services**

There appears to be positive perceptions of current transport services:

- 81% of respondents agree or strongly agree that existing services are of good quality
- 90% agree or strongly agree that services are currently safe
- Two-thirds (67%) agree or strongly agree that existing services are tailored to the needs of individuals with 28% strongly agreeing.
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) agree that existing services promote independence.

### **Principles behind any potential change**

The three most important principles that respondents felt the Council should use to guide changes to travel assistance were:

- Ensuring individual needs and circumstances are considered
- Fully considering the views of service users and the wider community before making and final decisions
- Ensuring provision and funding is available for the small number of service users that have no alternative to council funded travel assistance.

### **Funding and other elements of the new travel assistance policy**

- 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Council should provide travel assistance when a child starts school at the age of 5 (two-thirds (64%) strongly agreed)
- 43% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Council should increase the mileage rate from 20p per mile to HMIC rate of 45p per mile (for all ages). 38% remained neutral or did not know (more than double of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed – 18%)

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- Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents disagreed that the Council should remove the discretionary duty of offering transport for temporary disability or illness
  - Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents agree that the Council should provide Passenger Assistants to escort people on public transport to develop independence while 20% disagree or strongly disagree with this.
  - 45% do not agree that the Council should use pick up points as well as door to door transport for those who qualify for travel assistance. 39% agree with this. Service users and their parents/carers tend to disagree while interested parties tend to agree with this.
  - The majority of respondents (64%) do not agree to the levy of 50% of the average cost of a journey for 16-19 year olds with Special Education Needs and 58% do not agree that this should apply for adult learners / adults with a social care need either.
  - There is agreement from half the respondents that adult learners / adults with an eligible social care need should apply for travel assistance through an application process once the assessment of social care need is complete.

Concerns and anxieties are also raised about the most vulnerable being impacted by these changes and the need for fairness in the application of this policy.

### ***Suitable alternatives for meeting travel assistance needs***

Four alternatives to the travel assistance options were outlined in the All Age Travel Assistance Policy:

- concessionary travel;
- disability allowance / personal independent payment (mobility component);
- Blue Badge scheme
- Community Transport

Respondents were asked to think about advantages and disadvantages of each of these alternatives. While there were issues raised that were specific to each, there were also some common themes among these alternatives. This included:

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- A common advantage cited was the fact that these schemes promoted more independent lifestyles that sometimes extended to providing opportunities beyond access to learning
  - Common concerns were that these schemes could be subject to abuses and/or misuse by individuals. There was also concern about the complexity or cost of accessing these.

### **Other comments and suggestions**

Each of the response channels provided respondents the opportunity to express their views on the impact of the proposed changes to service users, their families and the community in their own words. The majority of comments focussed on concern that the most vulnerable individuals and their families would lose out on what is currently perceived to be a valuable **and free** community service.

A minority of respondents in different forums also expressed concern that both the existing and new policy did not extend to under five year olds and seemed to exclude children needing access to nursery schools.

## **2 About the consultation**

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This section of the report describes the background to the consultation and the way the consultation has been conducted. It provides a summary of the different types of responses that were received throughout the consultation period; the quantity of responses by each consultation method; the process that was carried out to collect and manage these responses; and how they have been analysed to produce this report.

### **2.1 Background to the consultation**

Trafford Council have undertaken a two phase consultation process to develop options and consult upon budget savings for 2016/17 and to inform the budget for 2017/18. Phase 1 ran during September 2015 and sought the views of the public and other key stakeholders on how best to make the £20m savings required in 2016/17. Phase 2 ran from 17 November to 16 December 2015 and again sought to engage the public and other key stakeholders on the savings and income generation options developed by the council following the feedback from Phase 1.

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Six themes were used throughout the process to frame discussions on budget options:

- **Working smarter** – *looking at the way we do things such as redesigning our workforce and systems*
- **Buying better** – *working with our partners and suppliers to ensure we get best value for our expenditure*
- **Maximising income** – *maximising our income from our services and generating income from assets such as advertising*
- **Eligibility and access** – *ensuring the most needy receive support and making more use of technology and equipment to support people in their own homes wherever possible*
- **Joining up services and working together** – *looking at how we deliver community health and social care services for adults in Trafford*
- **Promoting independence** – *helping people to help themselves, through our care strategy*

Specific proposals within each of these themes were developed during Phase 2 of the consultation for consideration by the public. One of these, within the 'Working smarter' theme, was the proposal to bring together the currently separate travel assistance policies for children, young people and adults. This would provide a more consistent, high quality and better value transport service for those who needed it most to be delivered.

The Council currently spends £3.2 million a year on door-to-door transport services, independent travel training and mile reimbursement for 454 children, young people and adults through their travel assistance programme. As the proposal to combine the policies affects a large number of users, their families and carers a separate consultation was undertaken to allow more in-depth deliberation and insight to be collected on this issue.

The '*Future of travel assistance for children, young people and adults*' was framed around the new '*All Age Travel Assistance Policy*' and sought feedback on the following key areas:

- Perceptions of current transport services
- Principles that should underpin any potential change
- Funding and elements of the new travel assistance policy
- Suitable alternatives for meeting travel assistance needs



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## 2.2 The consultation process

Trafford Council designed and conducted this consultation which ran from 30 November 2015 to 2 February 2016. The following channels were provided for people to respond to the consultation throughout the consultation period:

- **A consultation survey** – the main channel for responses. This was sent to all service users and was available online on Trafford's budget consultation hub website (<http://www.trafford.gov.uk/the-budget-2016-17/>) and in hard copy. It was also produced in both standard and easy read format.
- **Written comments** submitted in letters, e-mails and the Council's online comment submission system
- **Consultation meetings** in SEN schools and elsewhere

This report also incorporates analysis of discussions, that took place in the wider Budget Consultation public meetings in November and December 2015, that focussed specifically on the revised *All Age Travel Assistance Policy*.

The Campaign Company was commissioned by Trafford Council to provide an independent analysis of the consultation responses of each of these channels. This report sets out the findings from this analysis.

## 2.3 Responses to the consultation process

A total of 242 responses were received. Below details the number of responses received through each response channel.

*Table 1: Total responses received by response channel*

Response type	No. of responses
<b>Standard survey</b>	<b>171</b>
Online	99
Paper	72 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Easy read survey</b>	<b>27</b>
Online	18
Paper	9
<b>Letters to the Council</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Emails to the Council</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Online comments</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Notes from meetings at SEN schools (Brentwood, Delamere, Pictor)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Budget consultation public meeting table discussion notes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Extended responses from organisations (Trafford Parents Forum; Trafford Parents and Young People's Partnership)</b>	<b>2</b>

#### **Note on misprinted surveys**

Of the 72 paper standard surveys received, 16 were completed on an apparently misprinted survey. This survey differed from the approved version in the following ways:

- One of the statements concerning existing services was missing from Question 1: *Existing services are tailored to the needs of the individuals.*
- The other statements in Question 1 were reprinted at least once at the end of the survey.
- All statements in Question 4 after The Council should remove the discretionary duty of offering transport for temporary disability or illness were omitted.
- All questions in the approved version after Question 4 were omitted.

The qualitative feedback expressed in this version of the survey has been analysed, and responses to the quantitative questions have been included where they existed, except in instances where different responses were given at different points in the survey to those questions that were reprinted

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<sup>1</sup> This figure includes 16 surveys that appear to have been misprinted.

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## 2.4 Interpreting the responses

The Campaign Company was commissioned by Trafford Council to provide an independent analysis of the consultation responses of each of these channels. This report sets out the findings from this analysis.

The Campaign Company collated responses made throughout the consultation period and feedback representations made through the different engagement formats. Data collected by Trafford Council was shared with The Campaign Company for the purposes of this analysis.

There are a number of issues to bear in mind when interpreting these responses. This consultation was targeted at users of the Council's door-to-door transport services, to ensure informed evidence on this issue was collected, so respondents were not representative of the population as a whole. In addition, as with all public consultations, responses are self-selecting: only people who chose to give their views have had them recorded. As is evident in many of the responses, this is an emotionally charged topic and those who are directly impacted have responded at this emotional level. This self-selection could also mean that the responses are not representative of the service user population as a whole.

The primary method of analysis is qualitative with approaches used to understand the particular issues raised by those who have contributed, to capture the themes that emerge from response and gauge the strength of perceptions by different groups. Quantitative data is analysed in this way, as indicators of the perceptions of different respondents.

For the analysis of the survey responses, closed question responses are described as percentages. A number of partially completed responses were noted: some questions applied to specific service user groups so others did not respond to these for example. As a result, the base number for many questions varies and is stated for each question.

In places, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent. This is due to rounding or questions allowing multiple responses. Where questions have allowed multiple responses this is clearly stated.

Open questions and free text responses were analysed using a qualitative data analysis approach. Using qualitative analysis software (NVivo) all text comments have been coded thematically to organise the data for

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systematic analysis. To do this, a codeframe was developed to identify common responses; this was then refined throughout the analysis process to ensure that each response is categorised and could be analysed in context.

In terms of the qualitative analysis, quantity of response is not in this case representative of the level of agreement or disagreement with a viewpoint, but rather indicates the reasons for those viewpoints being expressed in response to the consultation.

The analysis has been presented thematically. Quotations from responses and submissions are included to illustrate these themes.

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### 3 Findings

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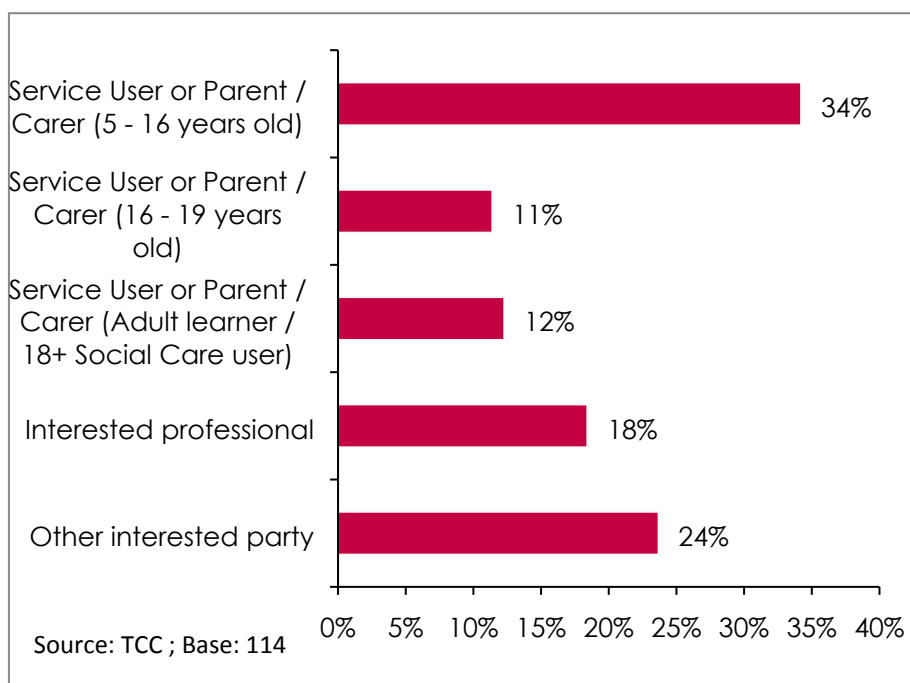
Quantitative survey findings and qualitative findings from the open questions in the surveys and the more open form channels (ie meetings, e-mails, letters and so on) have been analysed in line with the following themes outlined in the survey:

- Perceptions of current transport services
- Principles that should underpin any potential change
- Funding and elements of the new travel assistance policy
- Suitable alternatives for meeting travel assistance needs
- Other thoughts or suggestions

#### 3.1 Profile of respondents

Service users, their families, carers and interested parties were invited to take part in this consultation. The types of respondent to this consultation are shown below.

Fig. 1: Type of respondent



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Over half (57%) of respondents are service users or parents/carers of service users. 42% are interested professionals or other interested parties. The survey did not ask respondents to specify their 'interest' in this issue but the qualitative responses in the survey would suggest that these include educational and social care professionals, friends or relations of service users.

Demographic information, where this information has been recorded in the survey, is recorded in detail in Appendix 1.

## 3.2 Perceptions of current transport services

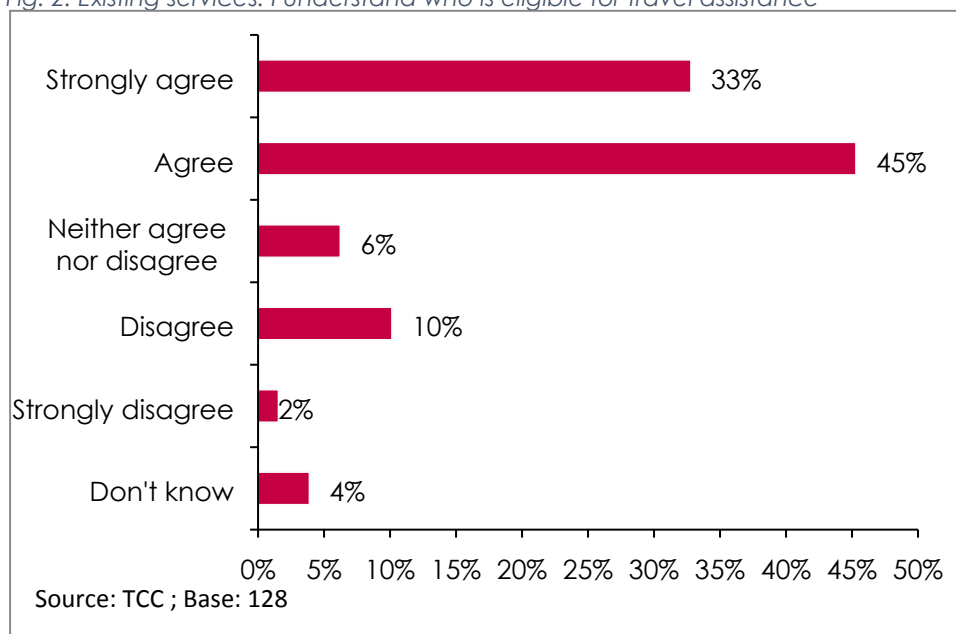
### **Quantitative findings**

The survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed with a set of statements about existing services.

#### 3.2.1 I understand who is eligible for travel assistance

The majority of respondents (78%) agree to some extent that they understand who is eligible for travel assistance. A third (33%) say they strongly agree. In contrast, just over a tenth (12%) disagree.

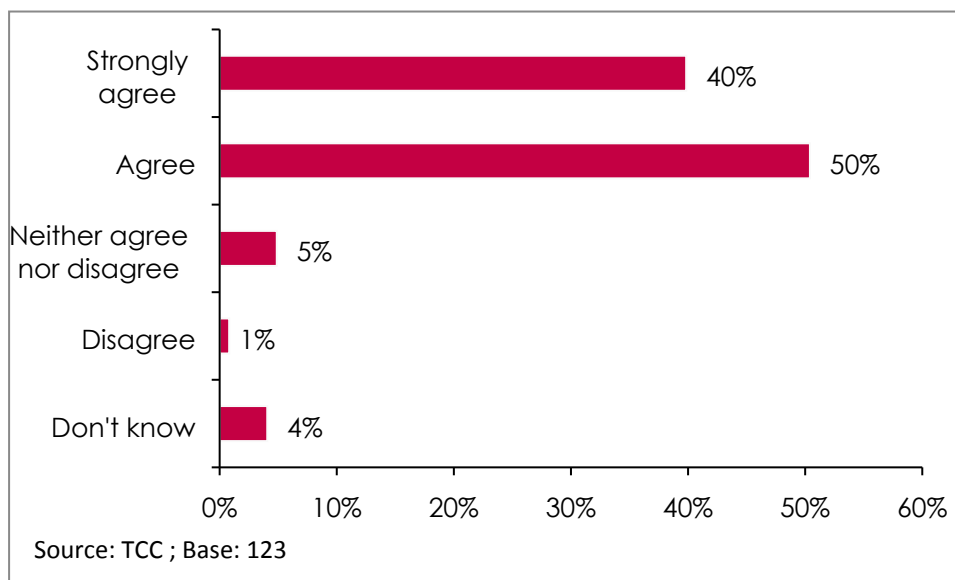
Fig. 2: Existing services: I understand who is eligible for travel assistance



### 3.2.2 Existing services are safe to use

The vast majority (90%) also agree that services are currently safe to use. 40 per cent strongly agree, while no respondents said they strongly disagree.

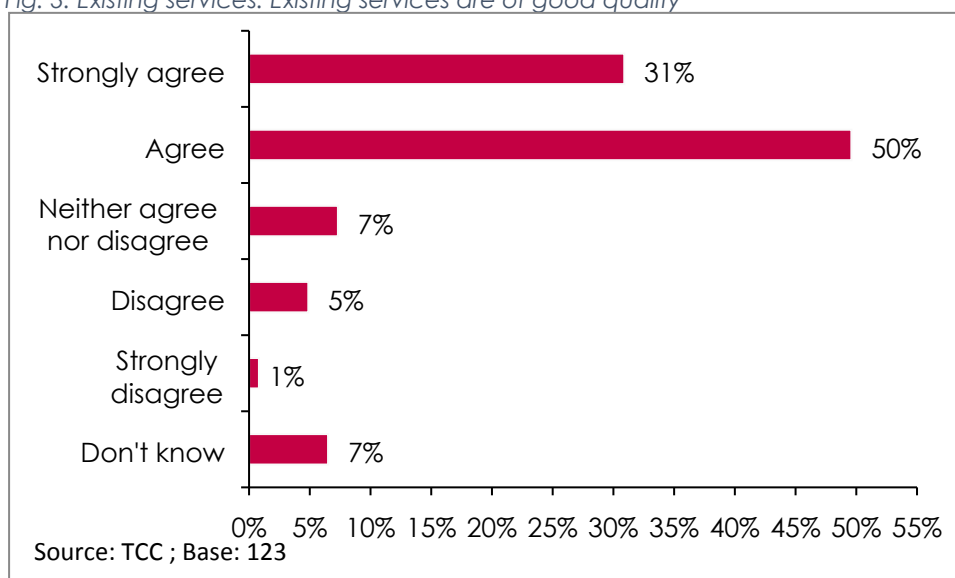
Fig. 2: Existing services: Existing services are safe to use



### 3.2.3 Existing services are of good quality

81 per cent of respondents say they agree that existing services are of good quality, with almost a third (31%) saying they strongly agree.

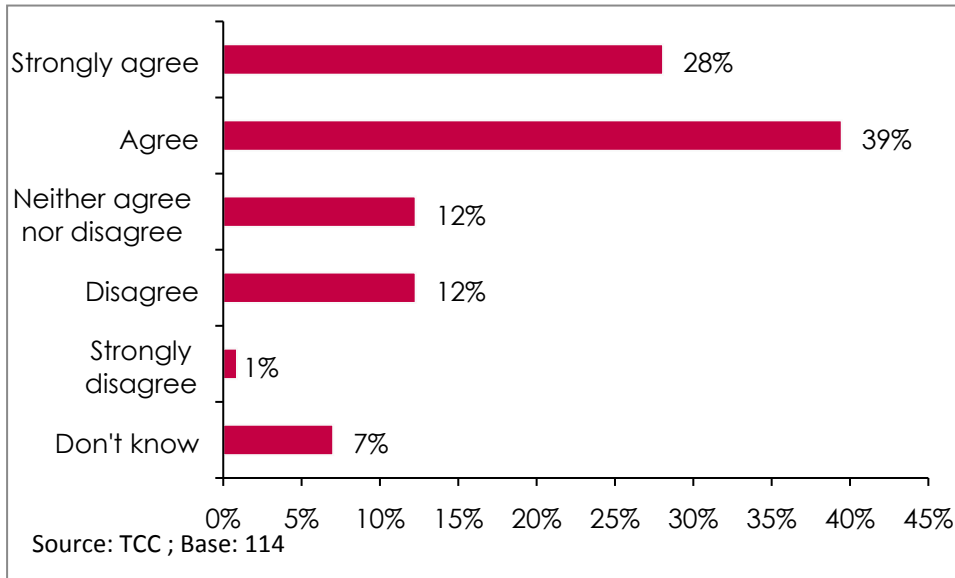
Fig. 3: Existing services: Existing services are of good quality



### 3.2.4 Existing services are tailored to the needs of individuals

The majority (67%) agree that existing services are tailored to the needs of individuals. More than a quarter (28%) strongly agree. 13 per cent disagree with the statement to some extent.

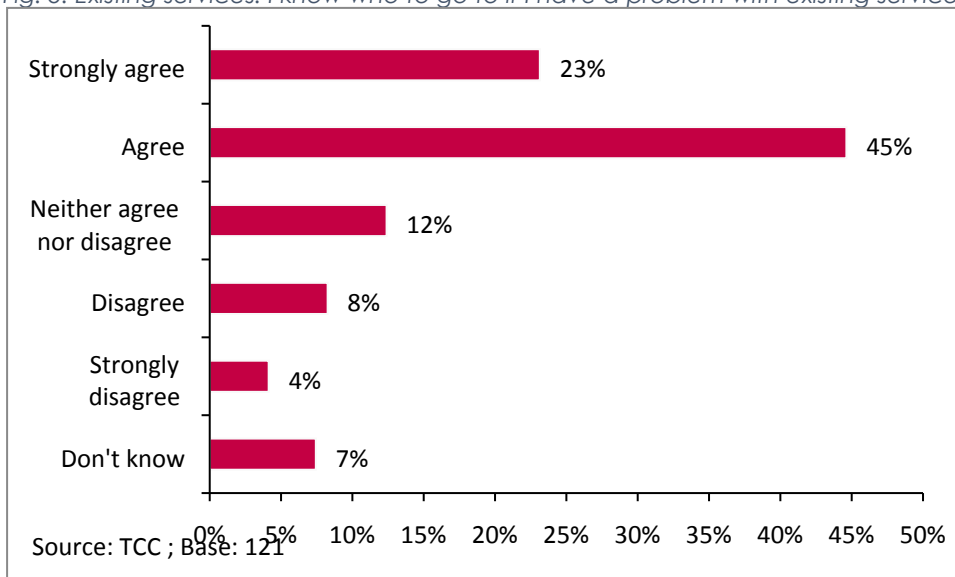
Fig. 4: Existing services: Existing services are tailored to the needs of individuals



### 3.2.5 I know who to go to if I have a problem with existing services

48 per cent of respondents agree to some extent that they know who to go to if they have a problem with existing services. In contrast, 12 per cent disagree to some extent with this statement.

Fig. 5: Existing services: I know who to go to if I have a problem with existing services



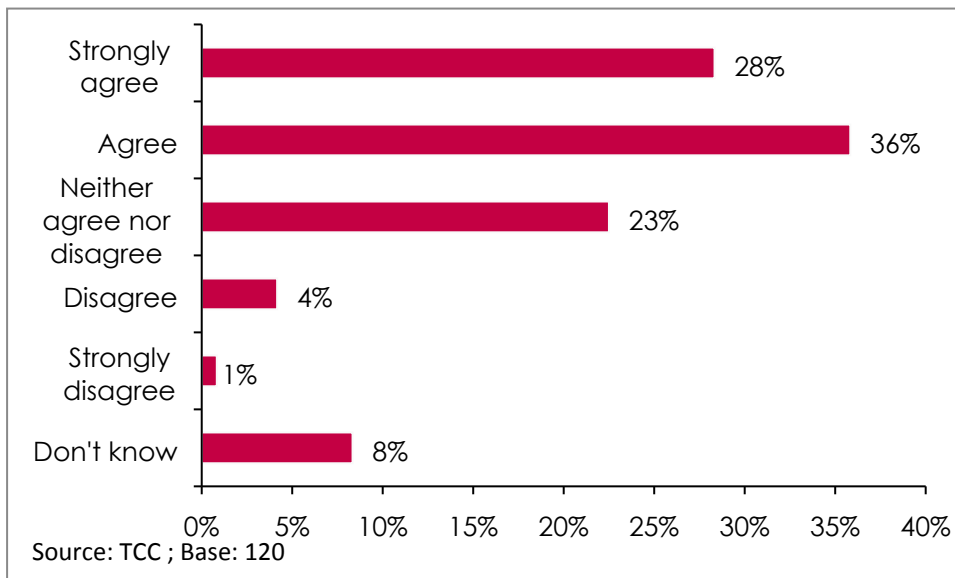


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### 3.2.6 Existing services promote independence

While again a majority (64%) of respondents agree to some extent with this statement, there is a higher neutral response than given to the other statements, with almost a third (31%) of respondents expressing no view one way or another.

Fig. 7: Existing services: Existing services promote independence



#### Qualitative findings

- The majority of views expressed towards existing services are positive.
- Many express the personal benefits they or their children get from the service as well as the opportunities for socialising and more independence that these services provide.
- The benefits for children with complex and additional needs is also highlighted by some.

*“Existing services enable my daughter to have a degree of independence from me that she would not otherwise have and this is so important I cannot quantify it. My daughter relies on me for dressing, cleaning herself, getting around...she is fully dependant. Her transport to school is the one time she can be less reliant on me.*

*The present provision is a lifeline for parents and provides young people with the opportunity to participate in 'normal' life. They go to school, socialise, learn, feel included and valued by*

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*society and retain their dignity and independence as young citizens.*

- Concern is expressed by those who fear that the changes will impact the poorest, the neediest and the most vulnerable.

*Please continue to help disabled people of all ages to travel free of all costs. There are many desperate people who rely on these free services whose lives would be ruined by these proposals.*

- Criticisms of existing services revolve around the fact that under-5s don't have access to the service; that the quality of support provided is not consistent; and that there is poor understanding of the needs of users with complex problems.

*The existing service is flawed, chaotic and failing young people with SEN. It appears to have a lack of understanding of SEN, in particular autism. This leads to the compounding of stress for service users, their families and the escorts, when routes/ escorts etc are changed without warning.*

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### 3.3 Principles behind any potential change

#### **Quantitative findings**

Respondents were asked in the survey to state how important they felt different principles behind the potential change to the services were. The principles were provided as those which 'the Council think should guide [it] when making changes to travel assistance'. Respondents were then asked to choose the three principles they felt were most important. For the purposes of a comparative analysis, these selections have been given the following values:

Selection	Value assigned
First most important principle	3
Second most important principle	2
Third most important principle	1
Not selected	0

*Table 2: Values assigned to three 'most important' principles behind potential change*

Ensuring individual needs and circumstances are considered in granting travel assistance is regarded overall as the most important (169 'points' assigned) of the prompted principles in the survey. This is closely followed by full consideration of the views of service users and the wider community before making any final decisions (151 'points'). Ensuring provision and funding is available for service users that have no alternative to council funded travel assistance (112) and ensuring suitable alternatives are in place for service users that will no longer have their travel assistance needs funded by the council (101) are also popular selections.

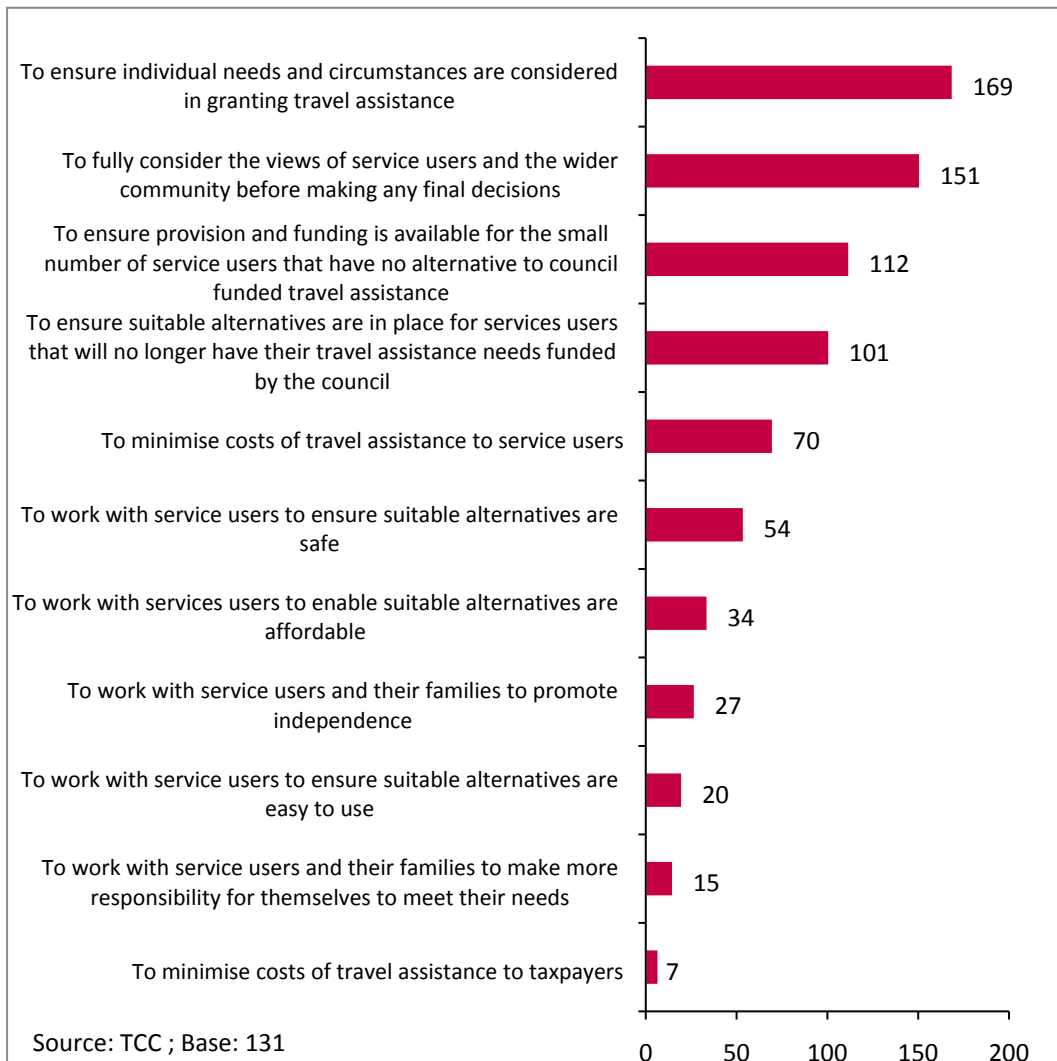


Fig. 6: Principles behind any potential change, importance indicated

Due to the format of the question – selecting a top three, rather than ranking the entire list – those towards the bottom of the list are not necessarily seen as less important by the others around them; they are merely not chosen as often in respondents' 'top threes'.

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### 3.3.1 To minimise costs of travel assistance to service users

More than three quarters of respondents (77%) feel this principle is important. Just under half (48%) believe it is very important. 13 per cent of respondents feel it is unimportant.

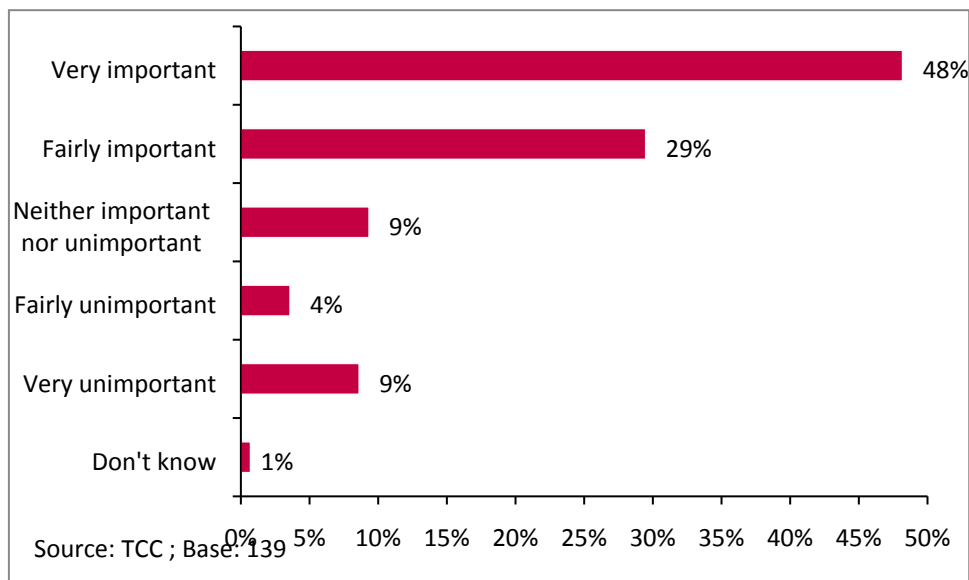


Fig.9: Principles behind any potential change: To minimise costs of travel assistance to service users

A greater proportion of those who responded as 16-19 year old service users or their parents/carers feel this principle is important (92%) than others.

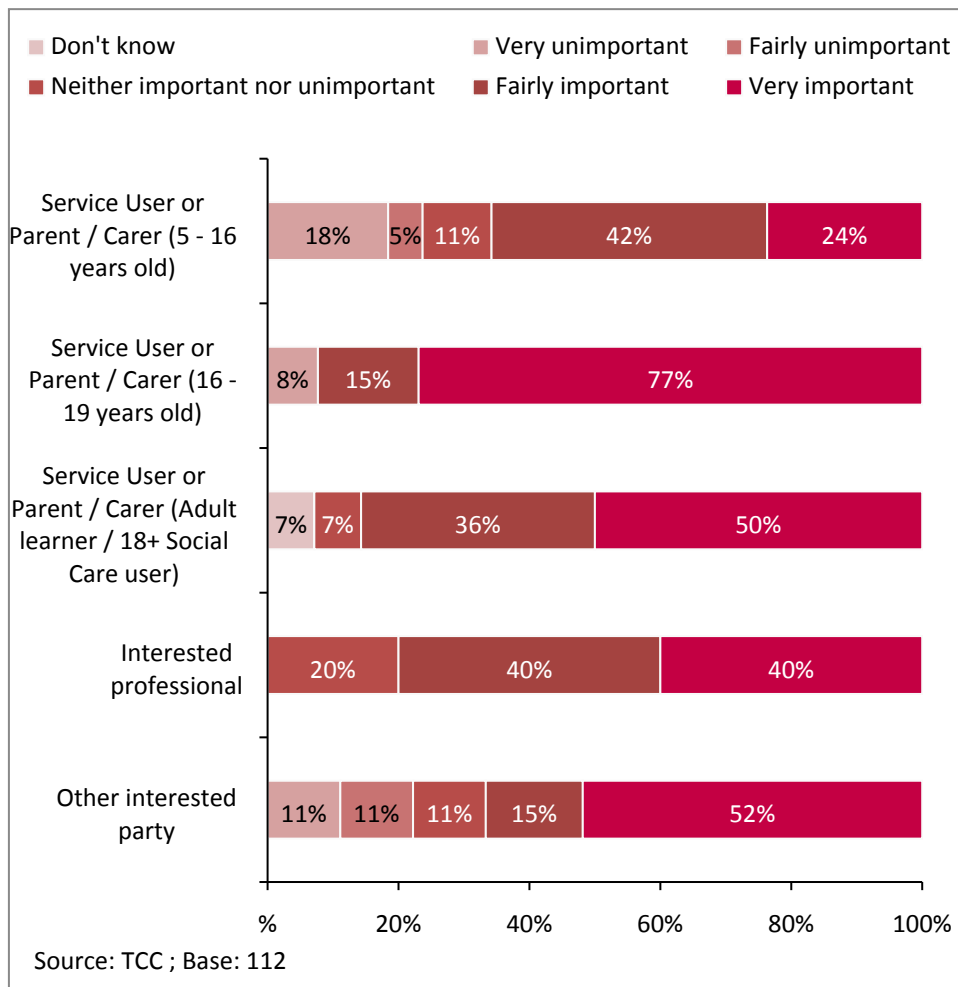
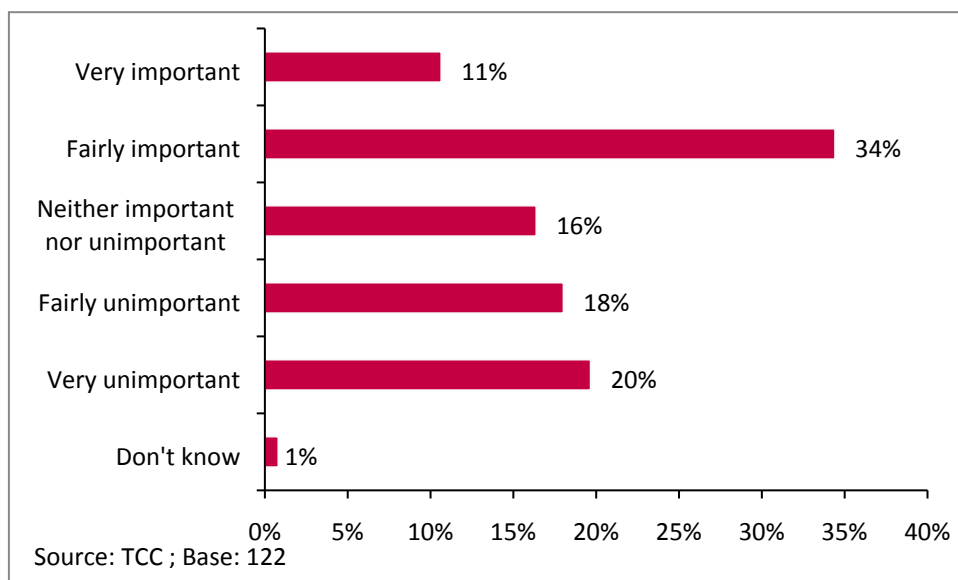


Fig.10: To minimise costs of travel assistance to service users, Respondent type

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### 3.3.2 To minimise costs of travel assistance to taxpayers

There was a more balanced reception to this principle, with 38 per cent determining it unimportant. However, this is still outweighed by those who think it important (45%).



*Fig.11: Principles behind any potential change: To minimise costs of travel assistance to taxpayers*

Although there is generally not a great amount of difference in the proportions of different respondent types who deem this important, a much greater proportion of 16-19 year old service users or their parents/carers feel it is unimportant (75%) and a lower proportion feel it is important (17%) than other groups.

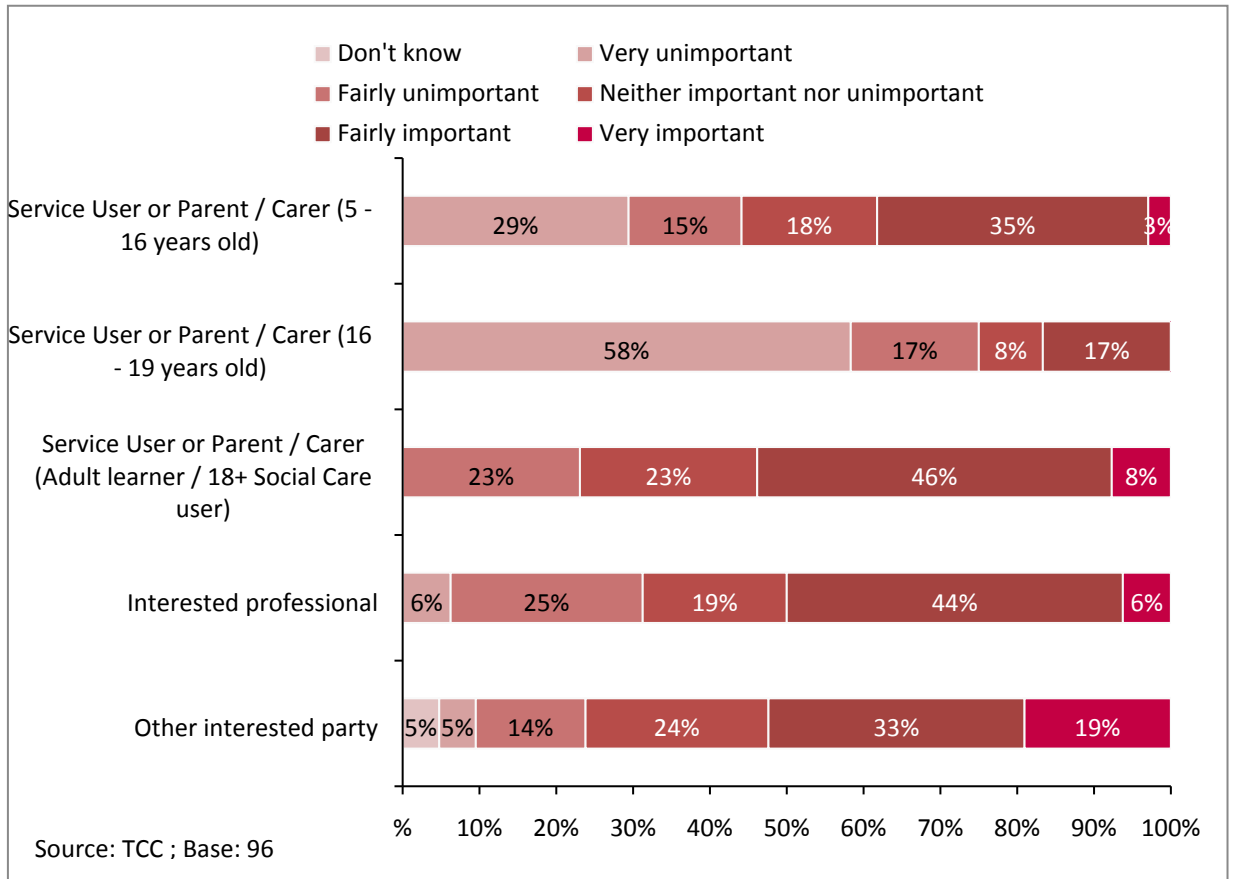


Fig. 12: To minimise costs of travel assistance to taxpayers, Respondent type

### 3.3.3 To ensure individual needs and circumstances are considered in granting travel assistance

Ensuring individual needs and circumstances are considered in granting travel assistance is overwhelmingly seen as a very important principle behind potential change (91%). Just 1 per cent of respondents deem it unimportant.



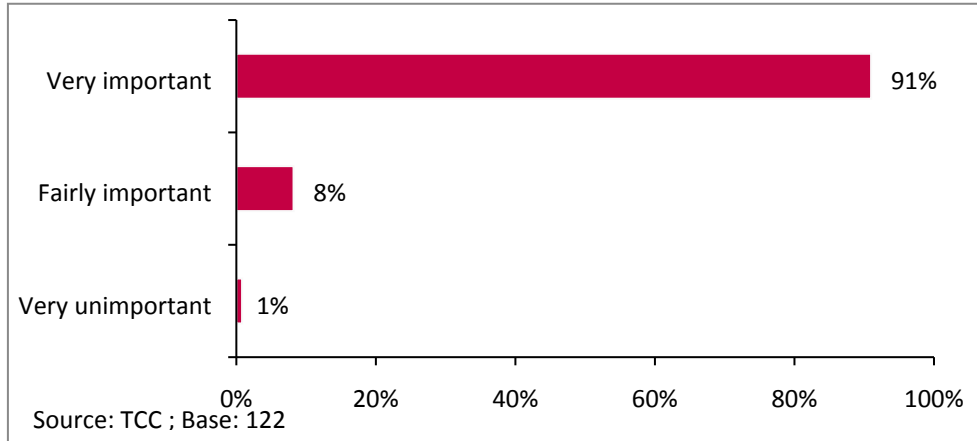


Fig. 7: Principles behind any potential change: To ensure individual needs and circumstances are considered in granting travel assistance

### 3.3.4 To ensure suitable alternatives are in place for services users that will no longer have their travel assistance needs funded by the council

Again, an overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) believe ensuring suitable alternatives are in place for service users that will no longer have their travel assistance needs funded by the council is very important. None of the respondents consider this to be unimportant.

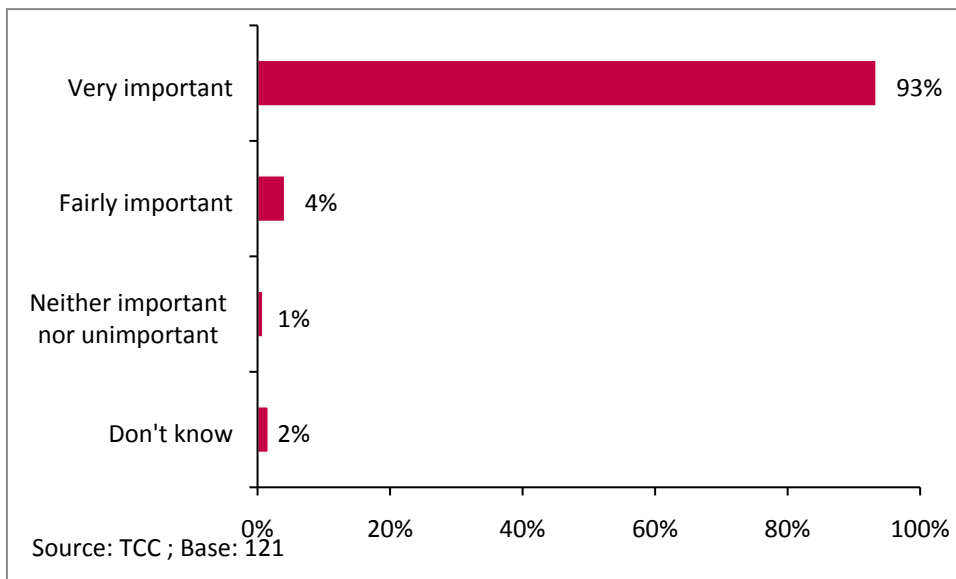


Fig. 14: Principles behind any potential change: To ensure suitable alternatives are in place for services users that will no longer have their travel assistance needs funded by the council

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### 3.3.5 To work with services users to enable suitable alternatives are affordable<sup>2</sup>

Working with service users to enable suitable alternatives to be affordable is seen by 84 per cent of respondents to be very important. A further 8 per cent believe it is fairly important.

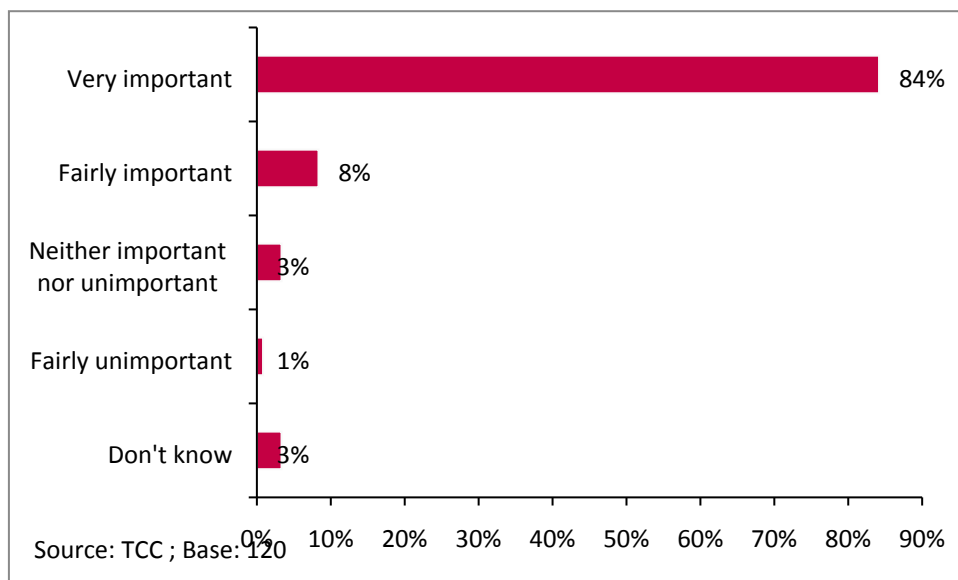


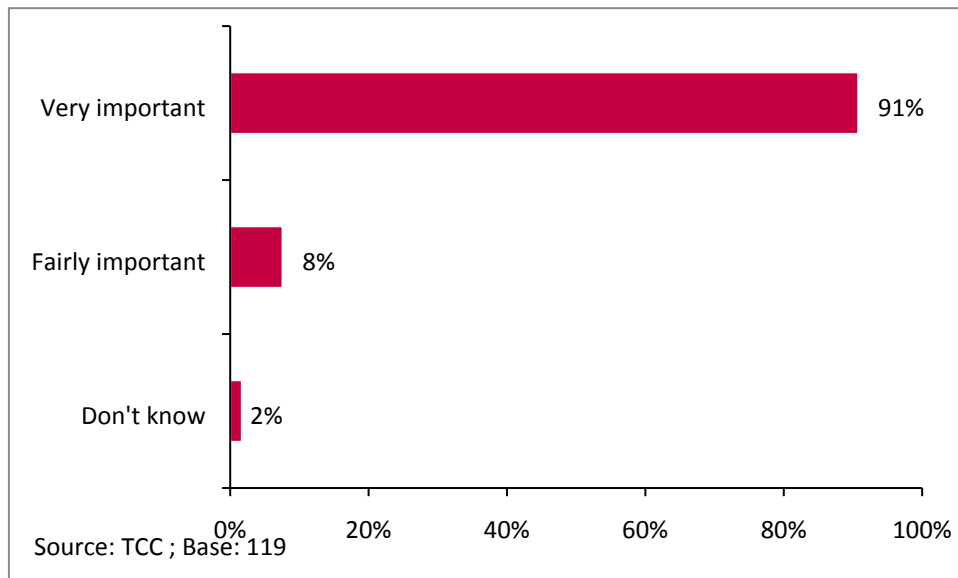
Fig.15: Principles behind any potential change: To work with services users to enable suitable alternatives are affordable

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<sup>2</sup> As printed on paper survey.

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**3.3.6 To work with service users to ensure suitable alternatives are easy to use**  
Ensuring suitable alternatives are easy to use, by working with service users, is seen as very important by 91 per cent of respondents. A huge 98.3 per cent of respondents feel it is important to some extent.

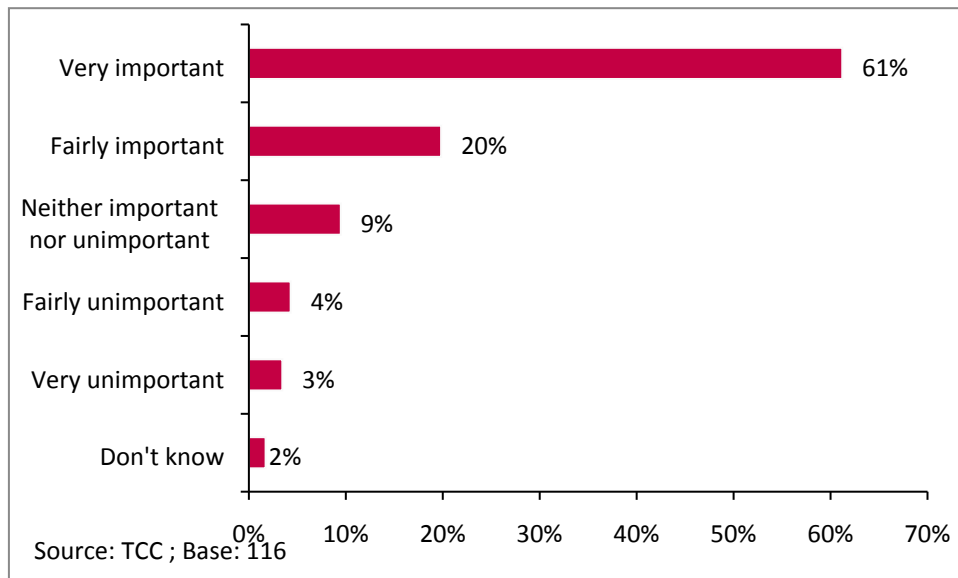


*Fig. 16: Principles behind any potential change: To work with service users to ensure suitable alternatives are easy to use*

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### 3.3.7 To work with service users and their families to promote independence

While there is less strength of feeling expressed towards the importance of this principle, a large majority of 81 per cent still feel it is important, with just 7 per cent actively disagreeing.



*Fig. 17: Principles behind any potential change: To work with service users and their families to promote independence*

While at least half of all types of respondents feel this is very important, the greatest proportion of those who feel it is important to any extent is found among adult learners, 18+ social care users and their parents/carers (92%).

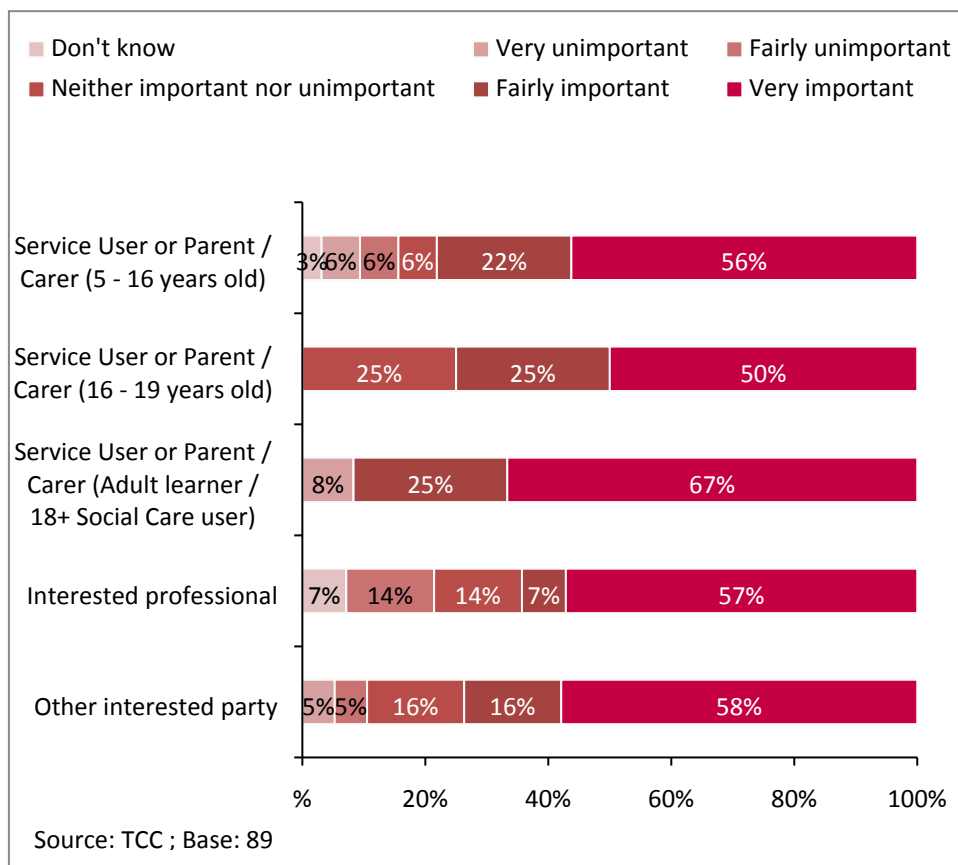


Fig. 18: To work with service users and their families to promote independence, Respondent type

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### 3.3.8 To work with service users and their families to make more responsibility for themselves to meet their needs<sup>3</sup>

Unlike many of the previous principles, there is a substantial portion of respondents who feel this is unimportant (27%). Over a tenth believe it is very unimportant (13%), and almost one in five do not deem it important or unimportant (19%). However, again a majority of 53 per cent feel it is important.

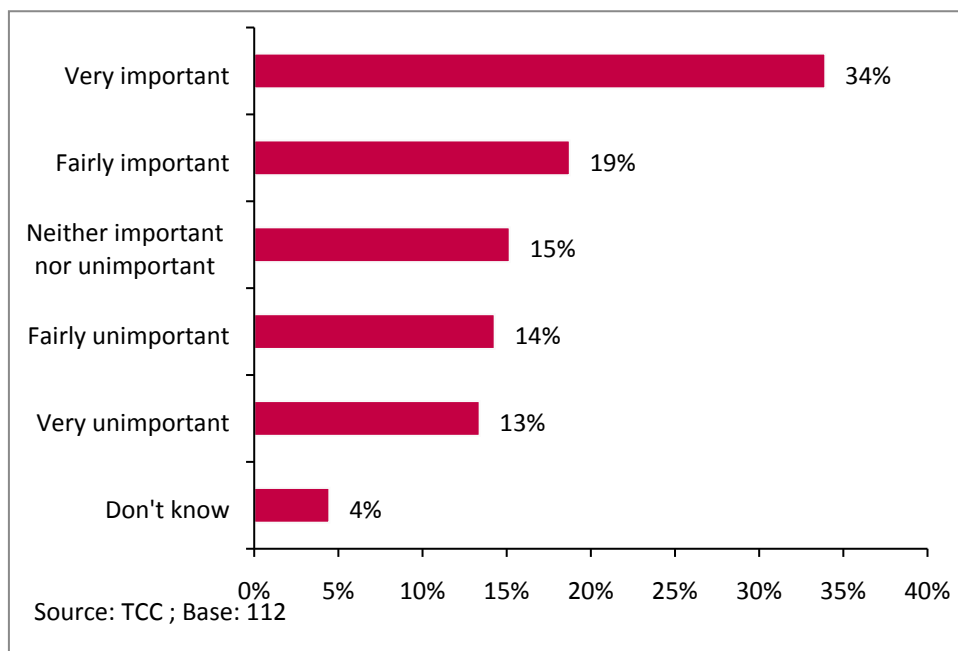


Fig. 19: Principles behind any potential change: To work with service users and their families to make more responsibility for themselves to meet their needs

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<sup>3</sup> As printed in paper survey.

Larger proportions of those who feel this principle is important are found among survey respondents who are adult learners or 18+ social care users, or their parents/carers (75%), and interested professionals (65%). Those who feel it is unimportant make up a larger proportion of 16-19 year old service users and their parents/carers (50%) than other groups.

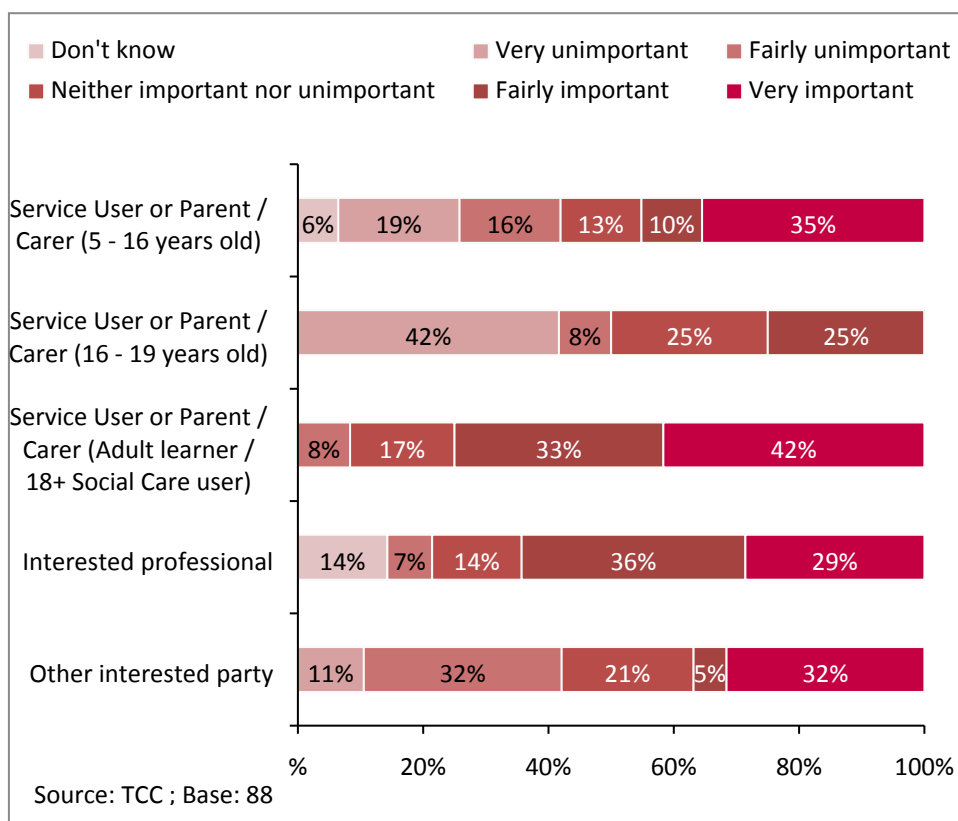


Fig. 20: To work with service users and their families to make more responsibility for themselves to meet their needs, Respondent type

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### 3.3.9 To work with service users to ensure suitable alternatives are safe

The vast majority (97%) feel it is important to work with service users to ensure suitable alternatives are safe, with 92 per cent saying it is very important. No respondents feel it is unimportant.

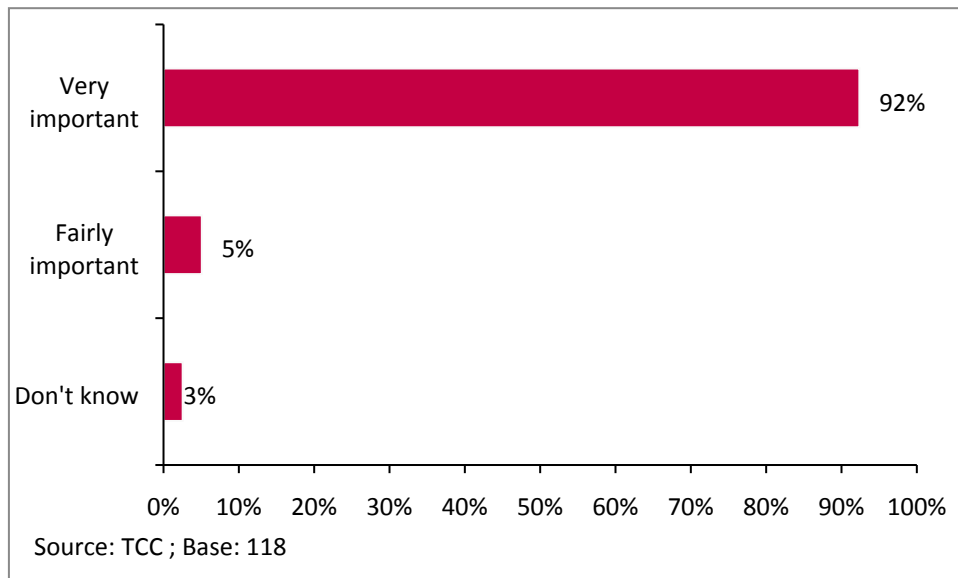


Fig. 21: Principles behind any potential change: To work with service users to ensure suitable alternatives are safe



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### 3.3.10 To ensure provision and funding is available for the small number of service users that have no alternative to council funded travel assistance

This principle is considered very important by more than nine in ten respondents (91%). A further 6 per cent of respondents feel it is fairly important, while just 2 per cent deem it unimportant.

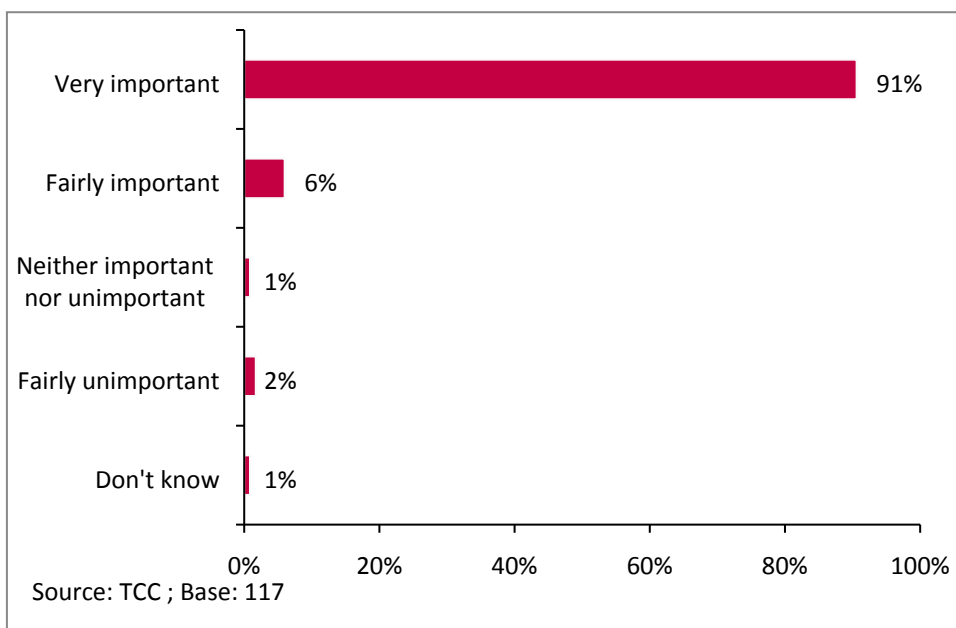


Fig. 22: Principles behind any potential change: To ensure provision and funding is available for the small number of service users that have no alternative to council funded travel assistance

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### 3.3.11 To fully consider the views of service users and the wider community before making any final decisions

There is no balance at all in the perceived level of importance of this principle, with 100 per cent of respondents saying it is important. 91 per cent feel it is very important.

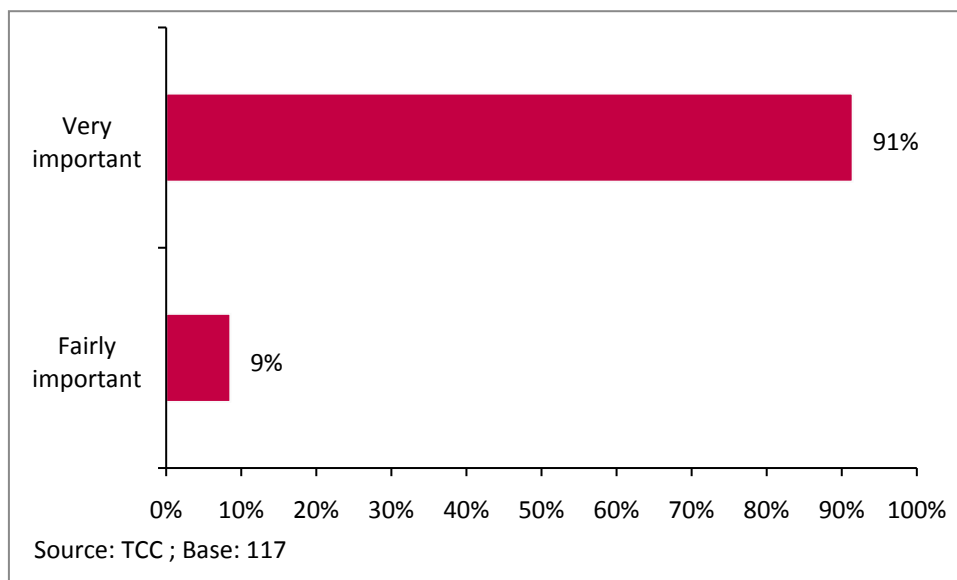


Fig: 23: Principles behind any potential change: To fully consider the views of service users and the wider community before making any final decisions

#### **Qualitative findings**

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the principles. The comments relating to these from other response channels (including letters, e-mails and meetings) are also included here. Comments provided in this section of the survey which do not refer to 'principles' but refer to general views about the proposed policies have been analysed in the 'Any other thoughts' section of this report.

- Many expressed concern that principles relating to financial need were not included. There was concern about the financial burdens that the removal of post-16 travel assistance would place on families who are already under pressure. This was linked in many instances to wider human costs and costs on health and social care.

*The suggested cost of 10pounds/journey is a ridiculous amount to ask for. How can we afford 100pounds /week just for school*

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*transport even benefits like the Disability Living Allowance won't be enough to cover that cost providing that those students have lots of needs which we as parents have to top up to fulfill.*

*Without affordable safe and accessible travel assistance the service users are at increased risk of hospital admission, GP time and family breakdown, all of which will cost the council and health service a substantial amount of money.*

- A significant number were also concerned that the principles did not appear to protect the most vulnerable especially those with complex disabilities and needs.

*Once again the most vulnerable group are targeted. Schools and colleges are vital to those with disabilities as they need all the help they can get - as do their carers.*

*We feel that the principles are not tailored to individual specific needs to cater for the wide spectrum of S.E.N.D.*

- A significant number also suggested that the principles should be extended to apply for 'early years' learners (under 5s) and many had not appreciated that current provision did not apply to them.
- Other themes relating to principles are best summarised in the following quotes.

*Considering the needs of users is the most important principle - certainly more so than the cost to taxpayers and the council have a responsibility to those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged (for whatever reason).*

*I strongly feel that the principles stated and the questions / statements used in the previous section of this survey are flawed. Some services such as travel assistance for children with disabilities should not and must not be based on cost.*

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*The overriding principle has to be that those who need the service and cannot access alternative provision should have a reliable, safe and affordable service.*

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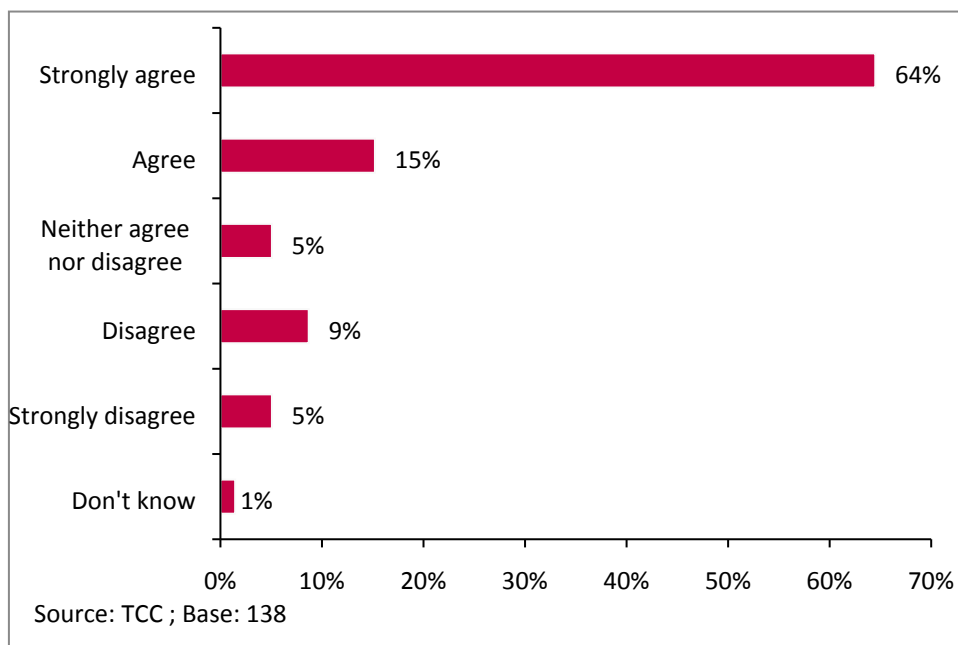
### 3.4 Funding travel assistance and other aspects of the policy

#### **Quantitative findings**

Respondents to the standard survey were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements about the All Age Travel Assistance Policy.

#### 3.4.1 The council should provide travel assistance when a child starts school at the age of 5 or from the start of the academic year in the year that the child turns 5 years old

Over three quarters (79%) of respondents agree with this statement. Just under two thirds strongly agree (64%).



*Fig. 84: Funding travel assistance: The council should provide travel assistance when a child starts school at the age of 5 or from the start of the academic year in the year that the child turns 5 years old*

Agreement with the statement is more unanimous among respondents who are 5-16 (90%) or 16-19 year old ( 92%) service users and their parents/carers than other groups.

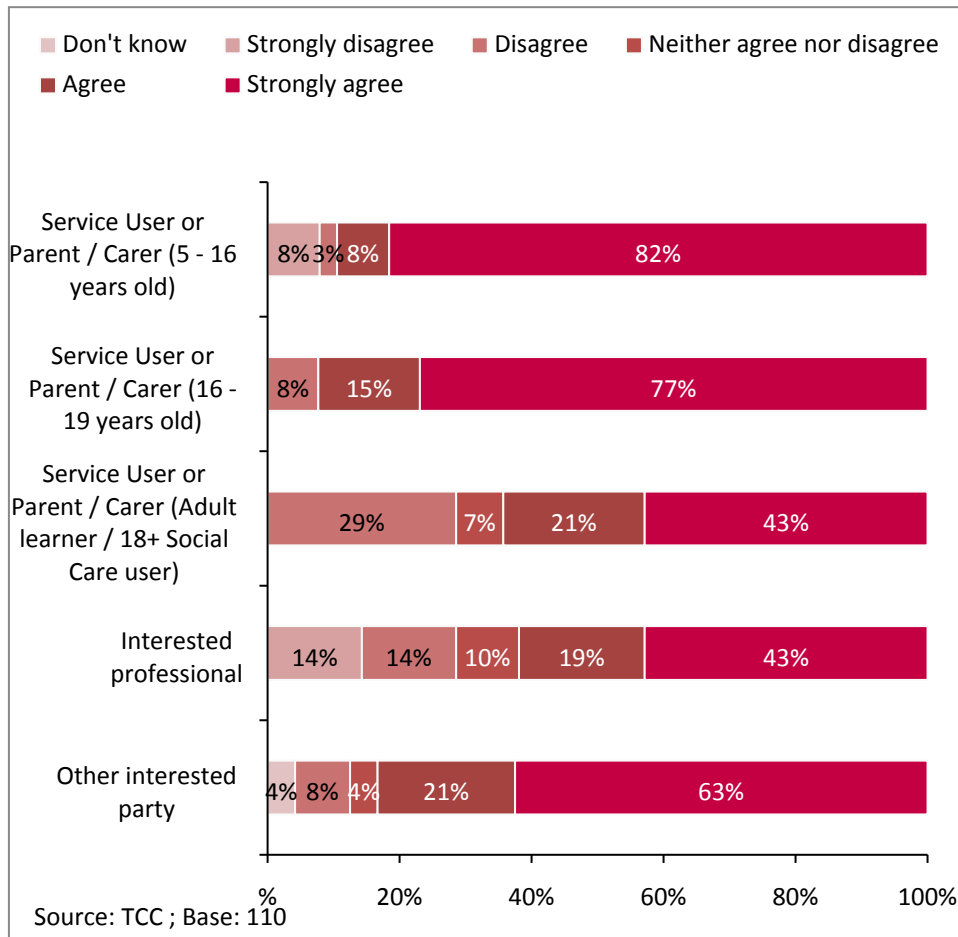
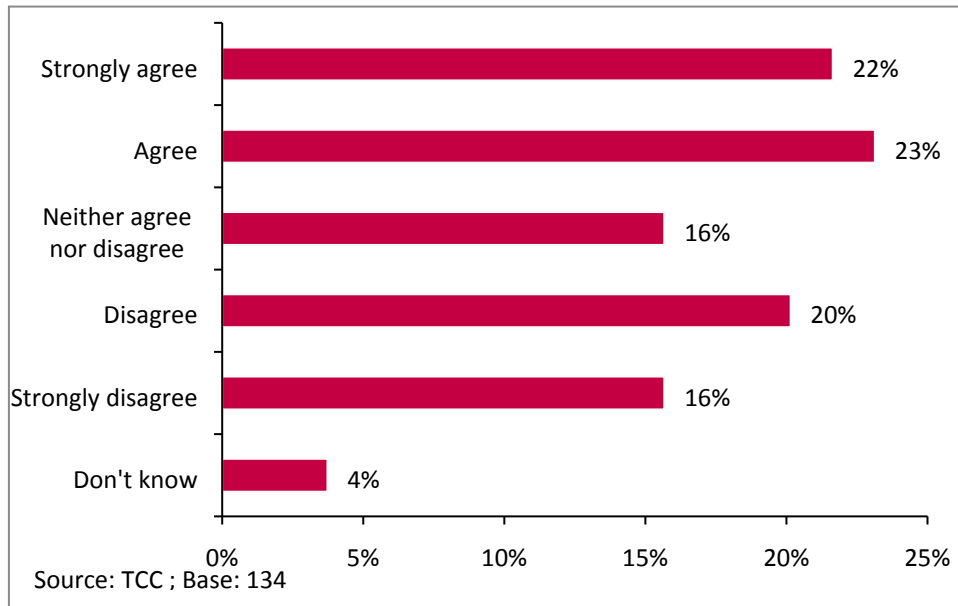


Fig. 25: The council should provide travel assistance when a child starts school at the age of 5 or from the start of the academic year in the year that the child turns 5 years old, Respondent type

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### 3.4.2 The Council should not provide travel assistance to a grammar school when it is not the nearest eligible school

There is a balance of opinion on this statement from survey respondents. While just under half agree (45%), over a third disagree (36%). There is also a substantial remainder who do not give an opinion either way (20%).



*Fig. 26 Funding travel assistance: The Council should not provide travel assistance to a grammar school when it is not the nearest eligible school*

While the majority of 16-19 year old (67%) and 18+ (65%) service users and their parents/carers agree with the statement, there is also a substantial proportion of each group in disagreement – the largest proportion among other interested parties (48%).

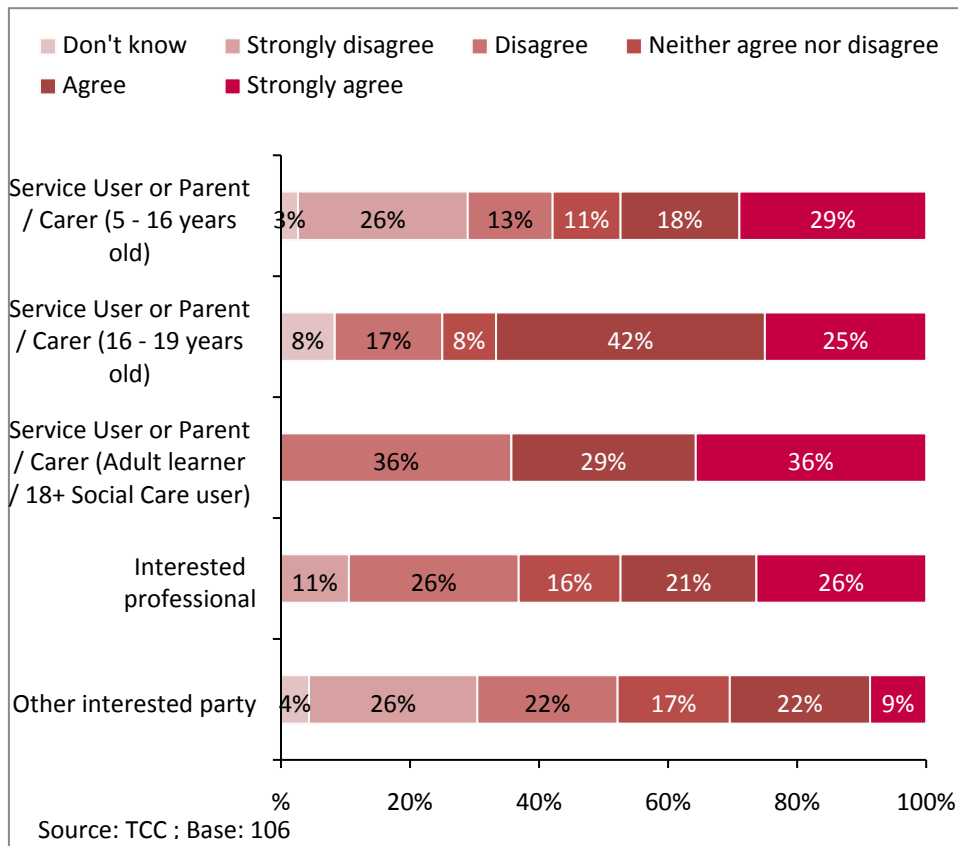


Fig. 27: The Council should not provide travel assistance to a grammar school when it is not the nearest eligible school, Respondent type



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### 3.4.3 The Council should increase the mileage rate from 20p per mile to HMIC rate of 45p per mile (all ages)<sup>4</sup>

Generally agreement with this statement (43%) outweighs disagreement (18%) among survey respondents. Respondents remain neutral or don't know (38%) account for more than double those who disagree.

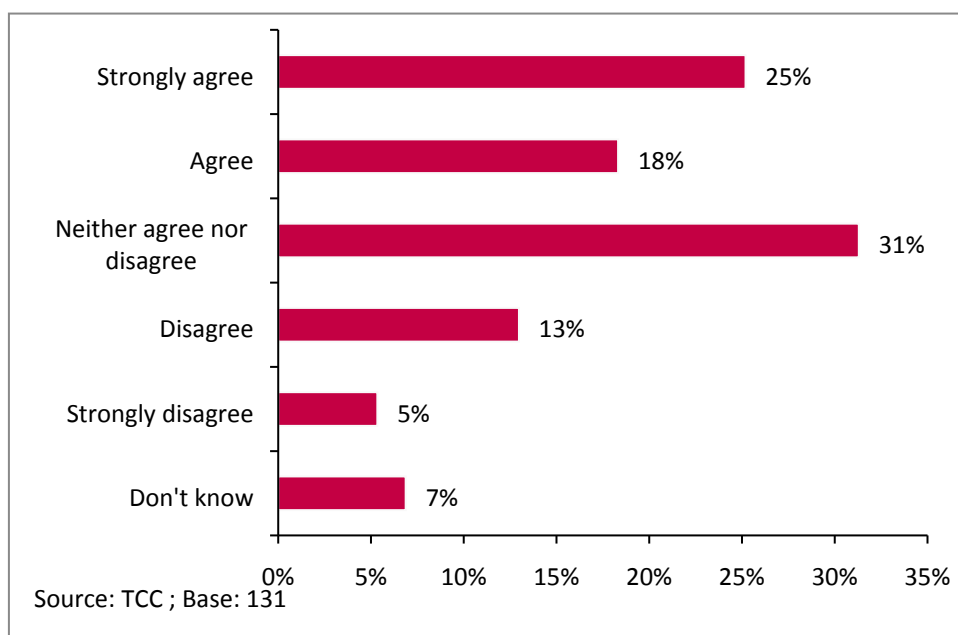


Fig. 9: Funding travel assistance: The Council should increase the mileage rate from 20p per mile to HMIC rate of 45p per mile (all ages)

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that on the misprinted version of the paper survey, the reference to 'all ages' was omitted.

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### 3.4.4 The Council should review the application process moving to an electronic process online via the Trafford website (all ages)<sup>5</sup>

Similar proportions of survey respondents agree, disagree with this statement and indicate neither opinion, those in agreement (37%) narrowly outnumbering those who disagree (34%) and those who remain neutral or don't know (29%).

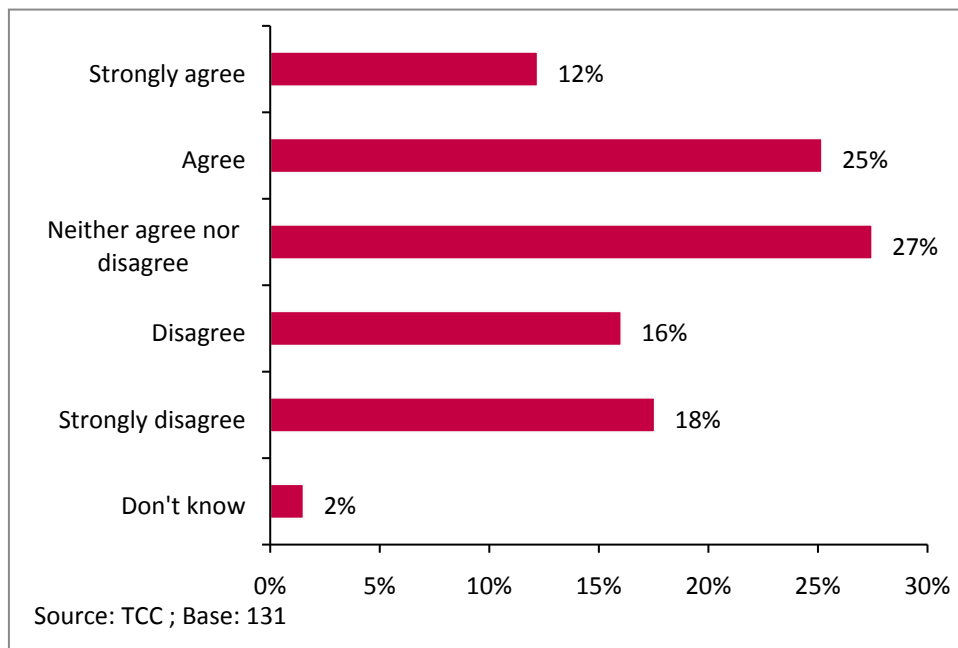


Fig. 29: Funding travel assistance: The Council should review the application process moving to to an electronic process online via the Trafford website (all ages)

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that on the misprinted version of the paper survey, the reference to 'all ages' was omitted.

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### 3.4.5 The Council should only allow Parents/ carers only one alternative address than their home address for pick ups/ drop offs

Agreement with the statement (43%) is more prevalent among survey respondents than disagreement (33%) – almost a quarter are neutral (23%).

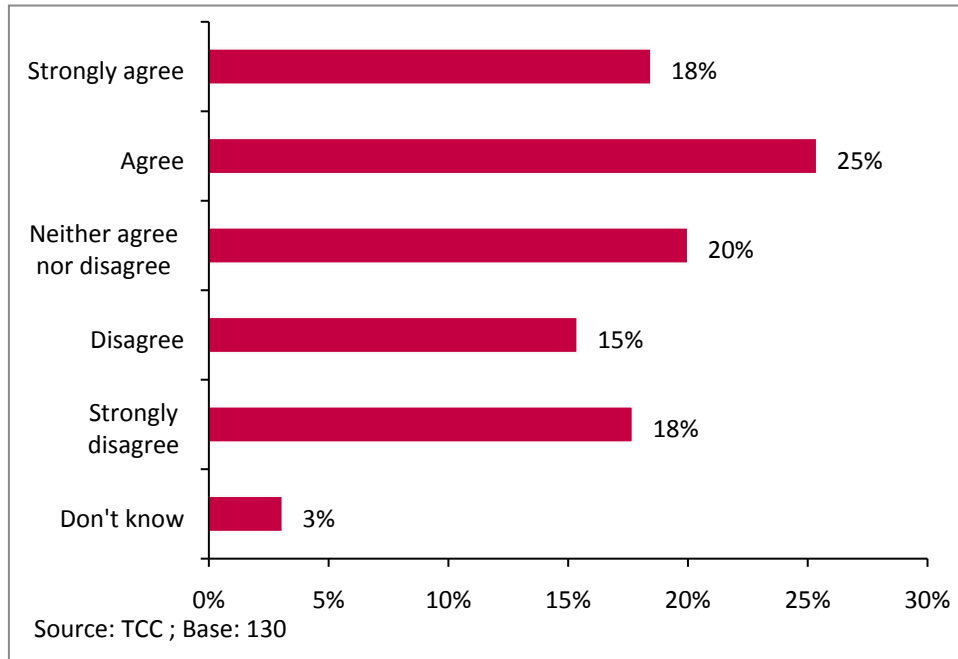


Fig. 30: Funding travel assistance: The Council should only allow Parents/ carers only one alternative address than their home address for pick ups/ drop offs

While levels of agreement with this statement are fairly similar across most groups (excepting other interested parties who are less in agreement), 16-19 year old service users and their parents/carers are far more heavily in disagreement than other groups, with two thirds expressing this viewpoint (67%).

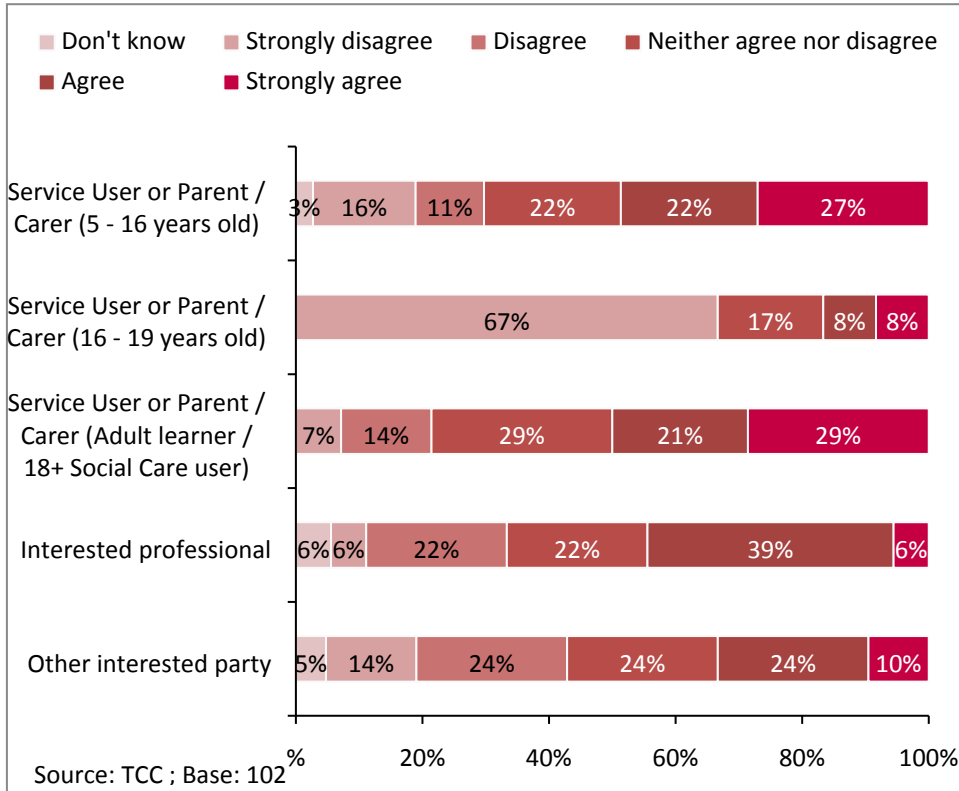


Fig. 10: The Council should only allow Parents/ carers only one alternative address than their home address for pick ups/ drop offs, Respondent type

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### 3.4.6 The Council should remove the discretionary duty of offering transport for temporary disability or illness

Almost two thirds of survey respondents disagree with this statement (64%). This is in contrast to just 14 per cent who agree.

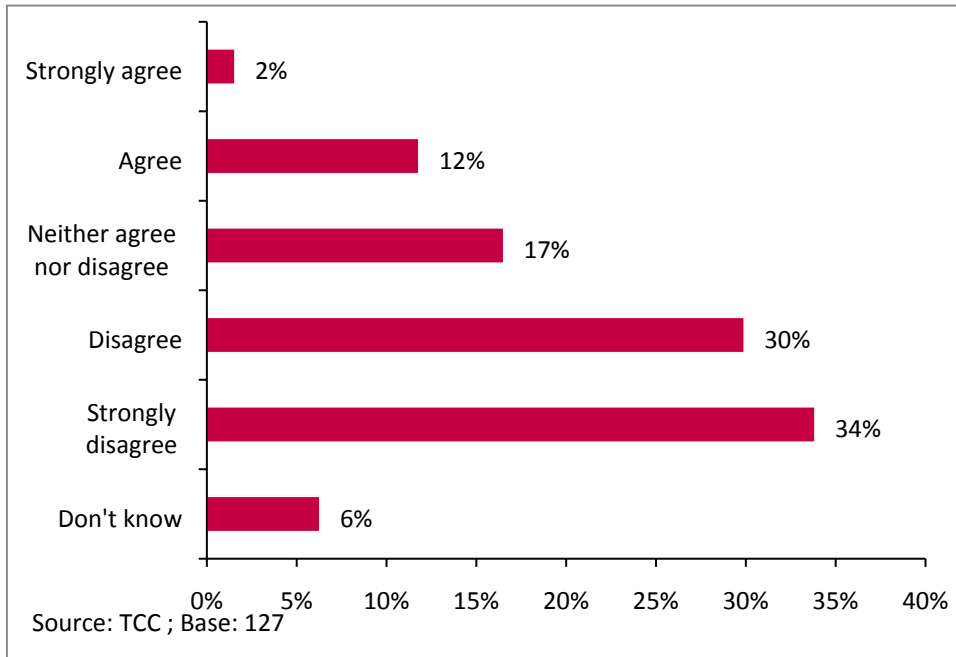


Fig. 11: Funding travel assistance: The Council should remove the discretionary duty of offering transport for temporary disability or illness

Although disagreement consistently dwarfs agreement levels across all types of respondents, there is greater agreement among adult learners and 18+ social care users and their parents/carers (31%) than other respondents.

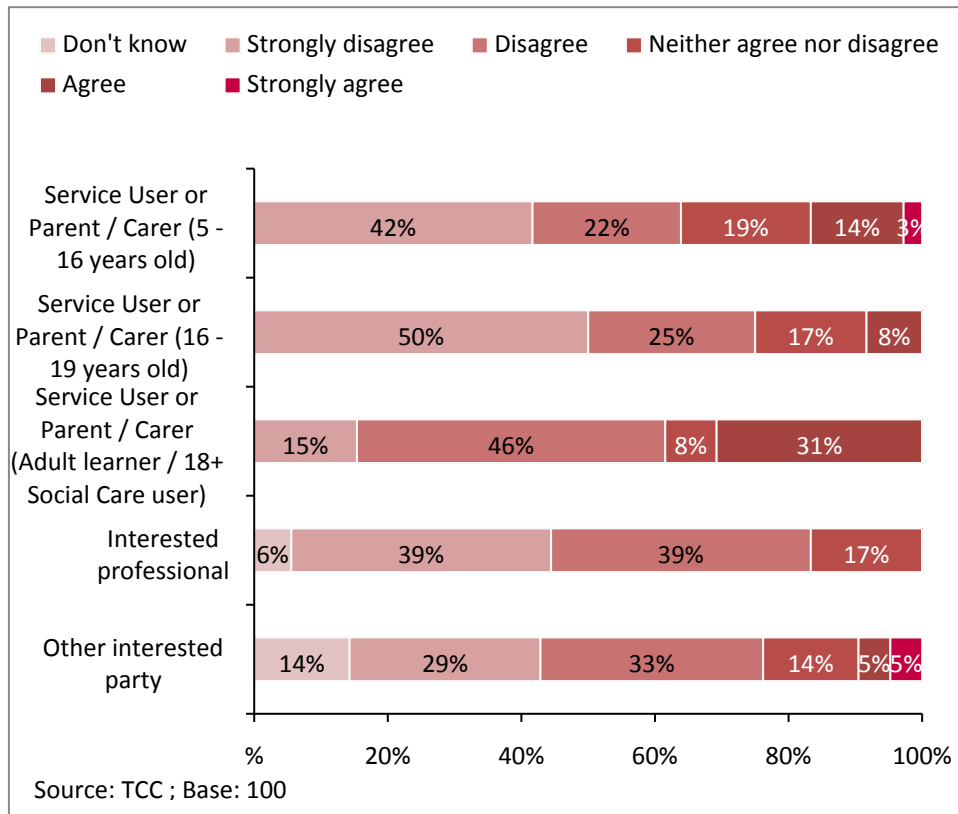
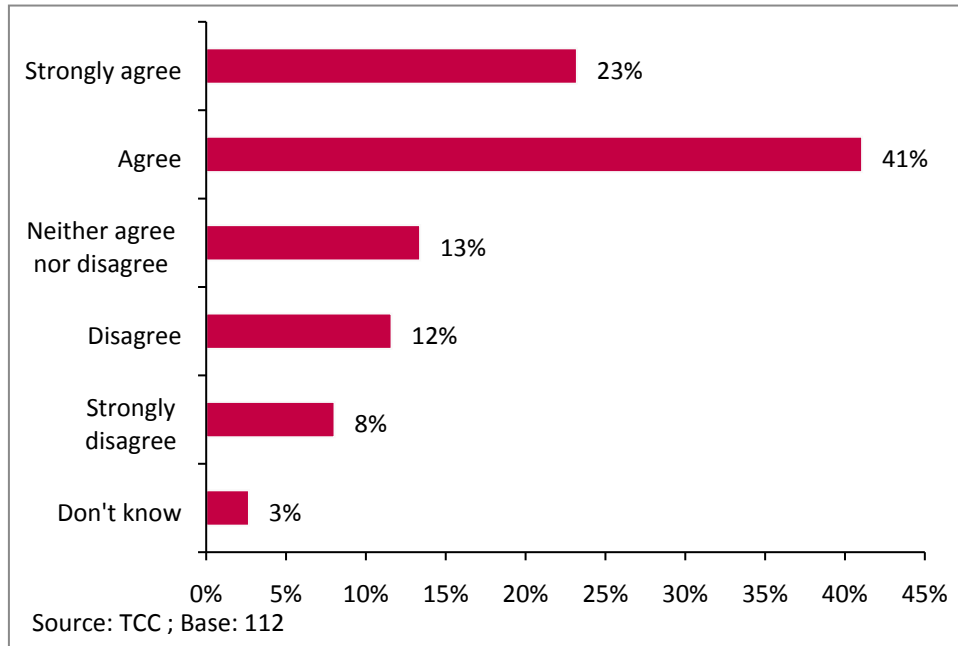


Fig. 33: The Council should remove the discretionary duty of offering transport for temporary disability or illness, Respondent type

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### 3.4.7 The Council should provide Passenger assistants to escort People on public transport to develop Independence

Just under two thirds of respondents disagree with this statement in the survey (64%). A fifth, on the other hand, disagree (20%).



*Fig. 34 Funding travel assistance: The Council should provide passenger assistants to escort people on public transport to develop Independence*

At least 48 per cent of all types of respondents surveyed agree with the statement, but both the overall level of agreement (76%) and the proportion who strongly agree (46%) is greatest among 5-16 year old service users and their parents/carers.

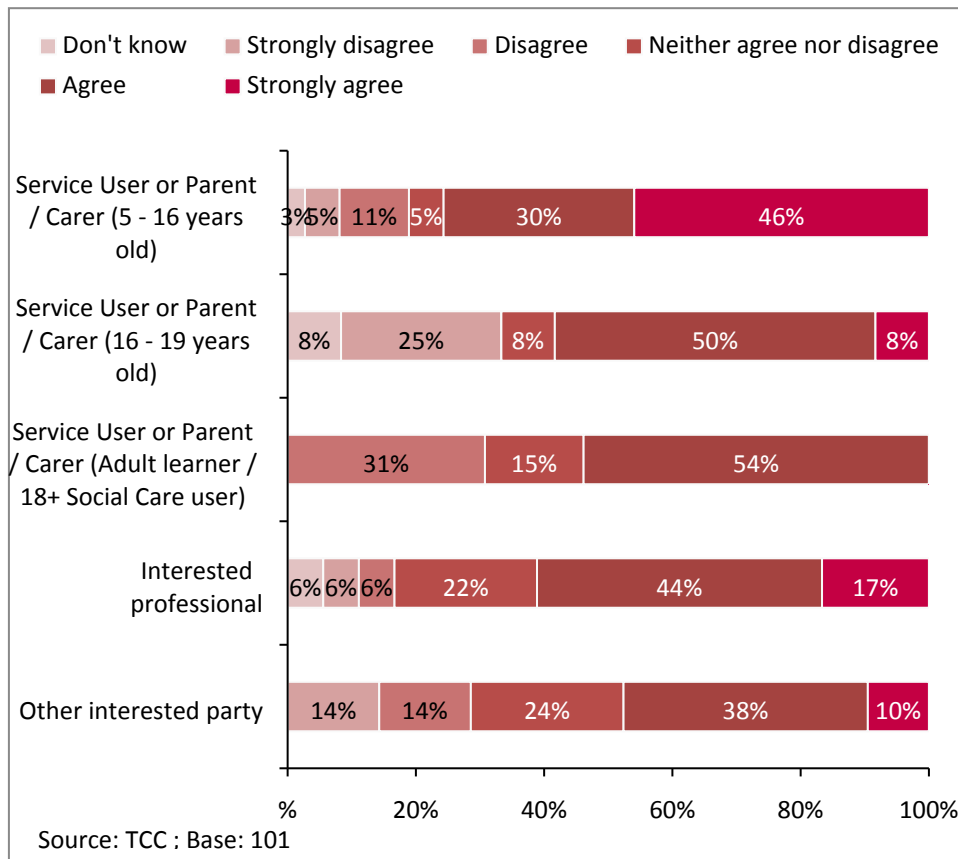


Fig. 35: The Council should provide passenger assistants to escort people on public transport to develop Independence, Respondent type



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### 3.4.8 The Council should use pick up points as well as door to door Transport for those who qualify for travel assistance

Just under half of the survey respondents disagree with this statement (45%). This narrowly outweighs those in agreement (39%).

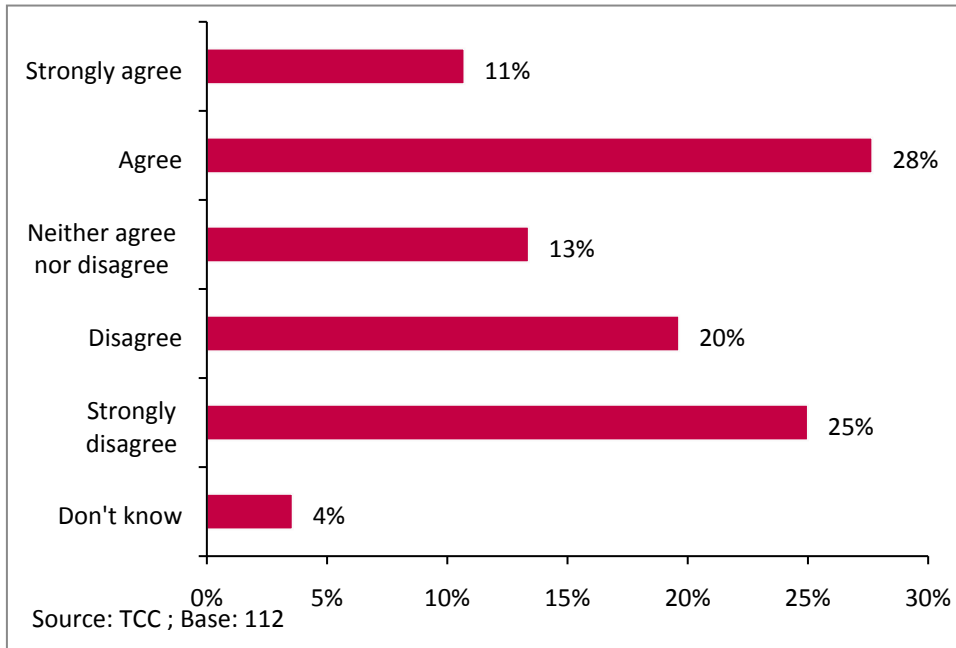


Fig. 12: Funding travel assistance: The Council should use pick up points as well as door to door transport for those who qualify for travel assistance

There are marked differences in opinion expressed by different types of respondents. While a majority of 5-16 (65%) and 16-19 (83%) year old service users and their parents/carers disagree, more than half of other interested parties (62%) agree with the statement.

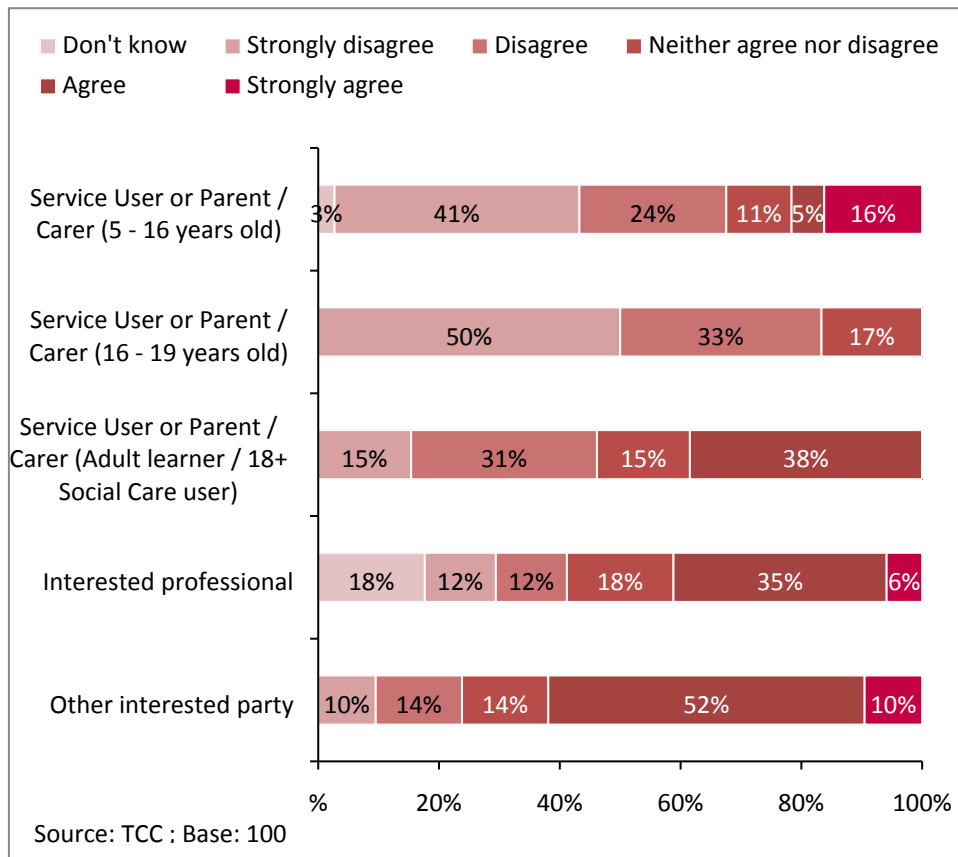


Fig. 37: The Council should use pick up points as well as door to door transport for those who qualify for travel assistance, Respondent type

3.4.9 Where there are no travel assistance options available, the council may offer transport to enable participation in education. A contribution of 50% of the average cost of a journey will be required. This currently is £10.00 per journey. (16-19 year olds with Special Education Needs)

The majority of respondents disagree with this statement (64%), with almost half strongly disagreeing (47%).

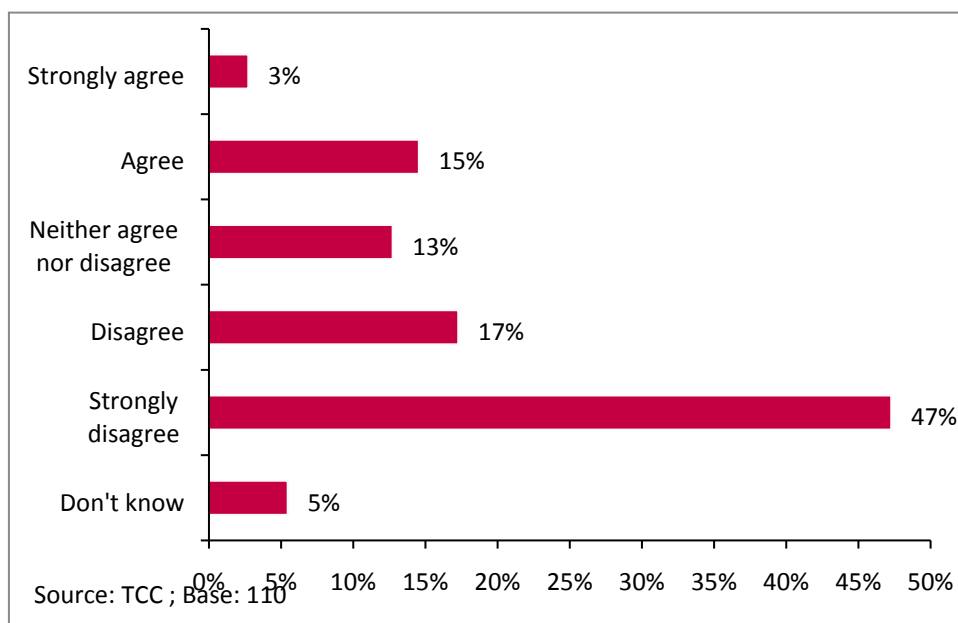


Fig.38: Funding travel assistance: Where there are no travel assistance options available, the council may offer transport to enable participation in education. A contribution of 50% of the average cost of a journey will be required. This currently is £10.00 per journey. (16-19 year olds with Special Education Needs)

Among some groups of respondents there is a balance of opinion, but disagreement outweighs agreement among all types, with 16-19 year old service users and their parents/carers disagreeing without exception (100%).

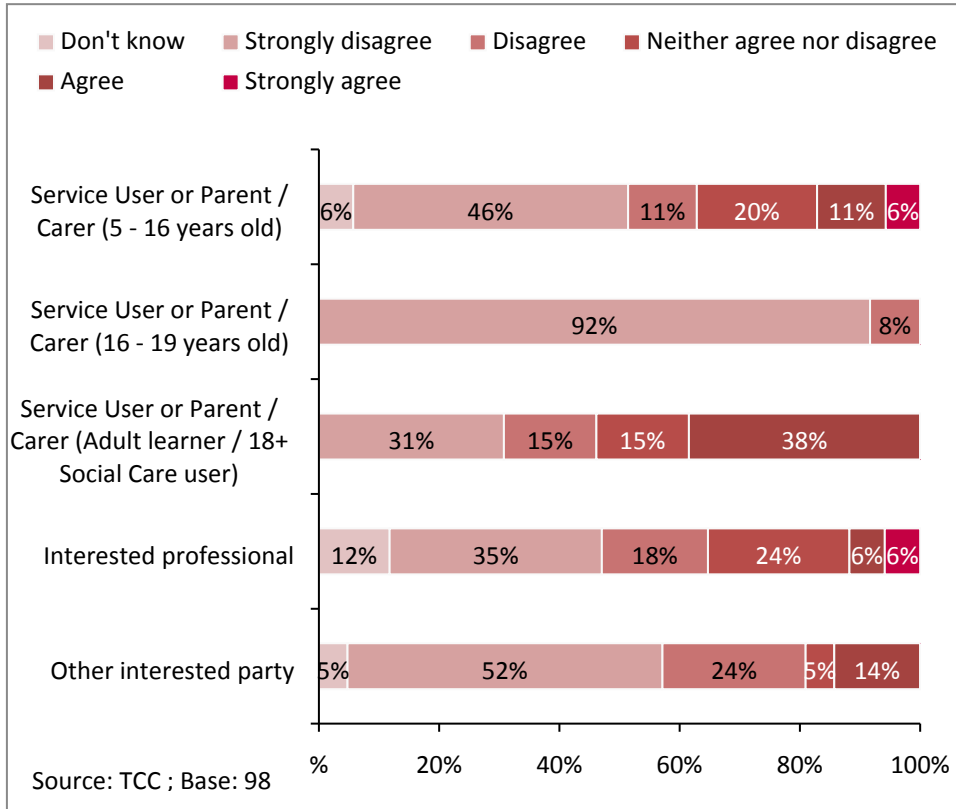


Fig39: Where there are no travel assistance options available, the council may offer transport to enable participation in education. A contribution of 50% of the average cost of a journey will be required. This currently is £10.00 per journey, (16-19 year olds with Special Education Needs) Respondent type

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3.4.10 The Council should ask the adult/ parent/ carer to apply for travel assistance through an application process once the assessment of social care need is complete (Adult learners/ Adults with an eligible social care need)

Half of respondents agree with this statement (50%), with a little under a third in disagreement (32%).

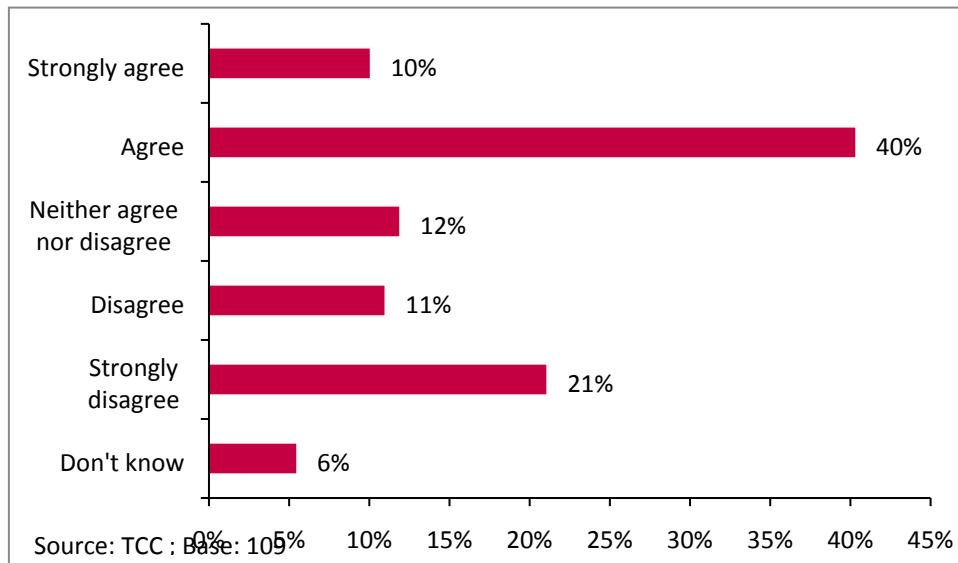


Fig. 40: Funding travel assistance: The Council should ask the adult / parent / carer to apply for travel assistance through an application process once the assessment of social care need is complete

The majority of adult learners and 18+ social care users and their parents/carers (71%) and interested professionals (62%) agree, but a large majority of 16-19 year old service users and their parents/carers disagree (75%).

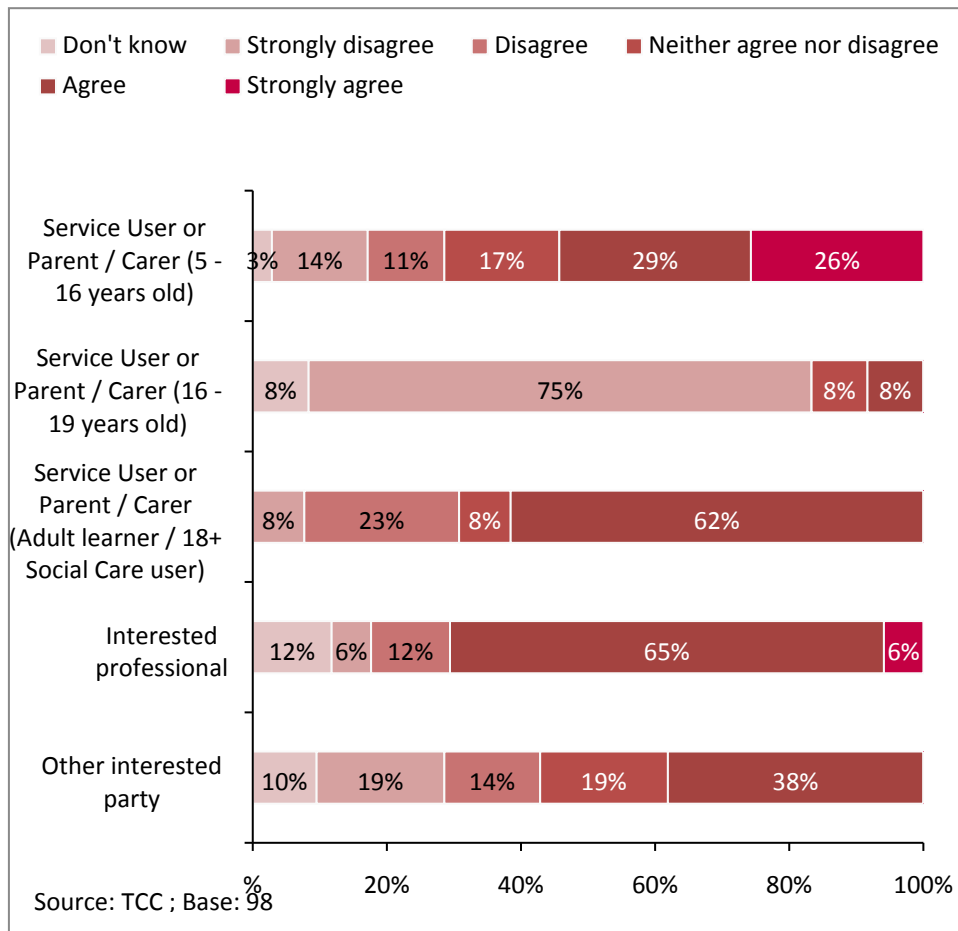


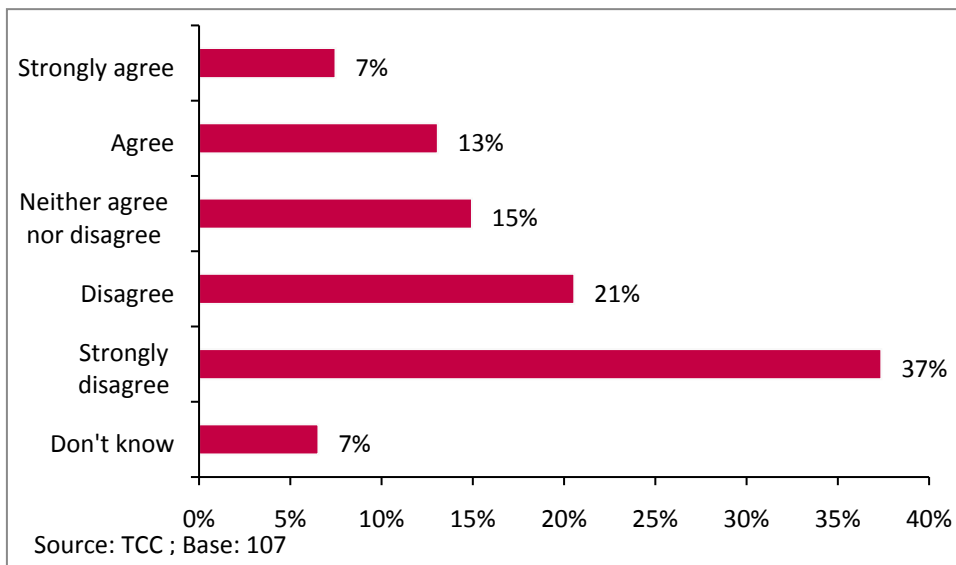
Fig. 131: The Council should ask the adult / parent / carer to apply for travel assistance through an application process once the assessment of social care need is complete, Respondent type

3.4.11 Where there are no travel assistance options available, the council may offer transport to enable participation in education or an assessed eligible social care need to access valued occupation or activity. The Council should increase the contributions from £2 per journey to meet 50% of the average cost of a journey. This is currently £10.00 per journey (Adult learners/ Adults with an eligible social care need)

More than half of survey respondents disagree with this statement (58%), with more than a third strongly disagreeing (37%). A fifth of respondents

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agree (20%), but they are outnumbered by those who do not give an opinion either way (28%).



*Fig. 42: Funding travel assistance: Where there are no travel assistance options available, the council may offer transport to enable participation in education or an assessed eligible social care need to access valued occupation or activity. The Council should increase the contributions from £2 per journey to meet 50% of the average cost of a journey. This is currently £10.00 per journey. (Adult learners/ Adults with an eligible social care need)*

While those who disagree outnumber those who agree among all types of respondents, this is most pronounced among respondents who are 16-19 year old service users or their parents/carers (83% disagree, 8% agree).

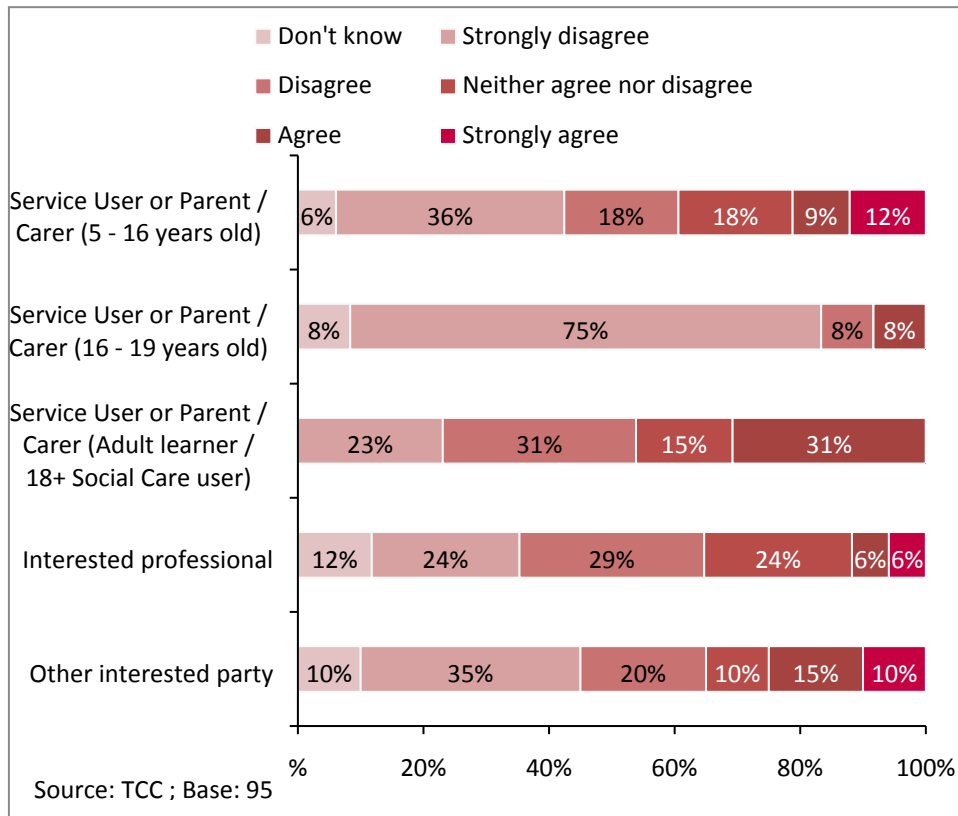


Fig. 43 Where there are no travel assistance options available, the council may offer transport to enable participation in education or an assessed eligible social care need to access valued occupation or activity. The Council should increase the contributions from £2 per journey to meet 50% of the average cost of a journey. This is currently £10.00 per journey (Adult learners/ Adults with an eligible social care need), Respondent type

### Qualitative findings

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments about funding travel assistance. The comments relating to these from other response channels (including letters, e-mails and meetings) are also included here. Comments provided in this section of the survey which do not refer to funding or other aspects of the policy but refer to general views about the proposed policies have been analysed in the 'Any other thoughts' section of this report.



- 
- The common themes expressed are that:
    - all children and young people who attend special needs schools / places of learning (including under 5s and over 16s) should have funded travel
    - the proposed costs are too high
    - the Council has a 'social' duty and responsibility to meet the financial burden not vulnerable young people or adults who get improved social, wellbeing and other benefits, in addition to learning, by attending educational establishments
    - This puts pressures on families and carers not just the young people / adult learners
  - A number of respondents mention that they would prefer to see an increase in Council Tax rather than having these services cut in any way.

*This should be funded by taxes even if it means increasing council tax. Money would better spent providing an assisted service for those of need rather than spending on those who don't.*

### 3.5 Identifying suitable alternatives

Four alternatives to the travel assistance options were outlined in the survey:

- concessionary travel;
- disability allowance / personal independent payment (mobility component);
- Blue Badge scheme
- Community Transport

Respondents were asked to think about advantages and disadvantages of each of these alternatives. These were open questions so responses are all qualitative in nature. While there were issues raised that were specific to each, there were also some common themes among these alternatives. This included:

- A common advantage cited was the fact that these schemes promoted more independent lifestyles that sometimes extended to providing opportunities beyond access to learning

- 
- Common concerns were that these schemes could be subject to abuses and/or misuse by individuals. There was also concern about the complexity or cost of accessing these.

The common themes described for each option are outlined below.

#### *Concessionary travel*

- Advantages of this option included the fact that this promoted independent living and opportunities to socialise; it allows travel with carers, families and friends at a reduced rate; and allows travel at all times.
- Disadvantages mainly revolved around that it was not practical or safe for those with severe disabilities or who struggle to travel independently; and because it applied during off-peak times it would not allow students to get to school / college on time.

#### *Disability allowance / Personal Independent Payment (Mobility Component)*

- Advantages of this option included the fact that access to a 'private vehicle' promoted independent living and opportunities to socialise at all times
- Disadvantages cited were mainly concerns that this system could be abused by some who did not need it; it placed greater demands on parents / families; and that the suggested amounts even on those on the higher rate of Disability Allowance or Personal Independent Payment would not meet the costs required to fund travel

#### *Blue Badge scheme*

- Advantages of this option included the fact that this was more accessible, cheaper and better for people with mobility needs who could not walk long distances
- Disadvantages cited were mainly concerns that the eligibility system was unfair and potentially discriminated against a number of disabled groups

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(including those with autism) and that this system could be abused by some who did not need it.

### *Community Transport*

- Advantages of this option included the fact that this was a safer way of promoting independence and opportunities to socialise.
- Disadvantages cited were mainly concerns that it was not always practical because of the limited times and that it was difficult to book.

In response to the question 'do you have any other comments or know of any other suitable alternatives to the travel assistance arrangements', most suggested that the Council should keep to current arrangements.

Others recognised that a 'one size fits all' approach is not suitable for this group of people with all have varied and different needs.

## 3.6 Other thoughts and suggestions

Survey respondents were invited to put forward any other comments or suggestions they may have about the proposals. Comments also raised in the response channels that have not been mentioned have also been re

Some of the issues raised included:

- Concern about the consultation process itself
- Anxiety about the pick-up points that were mentioned in the policy
- The fact that this appeared to be an extremely unfair and possibly discriminatory policy.

A number of concerned e-mails had been prompted by media coverage about children at Brentwood School who were no longer able to have access to the 'school bus'.

Many of the additional comments were stories of the personal impact on self or children (depending on the respondent) that these changes would have on them.

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*We cannot lose our son's transport. He is severely mentally disabled, with no language or concept of personal/road safety. If the bus did not collect him, we would find it.*

*I am 16 and would like to continue to get the minibus to school with my friends to Brentwood. I cannot get to school by myself.*

The majority of comments though reflected what have been the common themes throughout the survey and consultation:

- This impacts the most needy and vulnerable and their already burdened families
- Consideration must be given to all who need access to special schools / places of learning including under fives as well as the over-16s.

Appendix 2 highlights key themes raised in the non-survey response channels.

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## Appendix 1: Demographic profile

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Demographic data was collected on the standard survey. The demographic distribution of the respondents who provided this information is shown in the charts below:

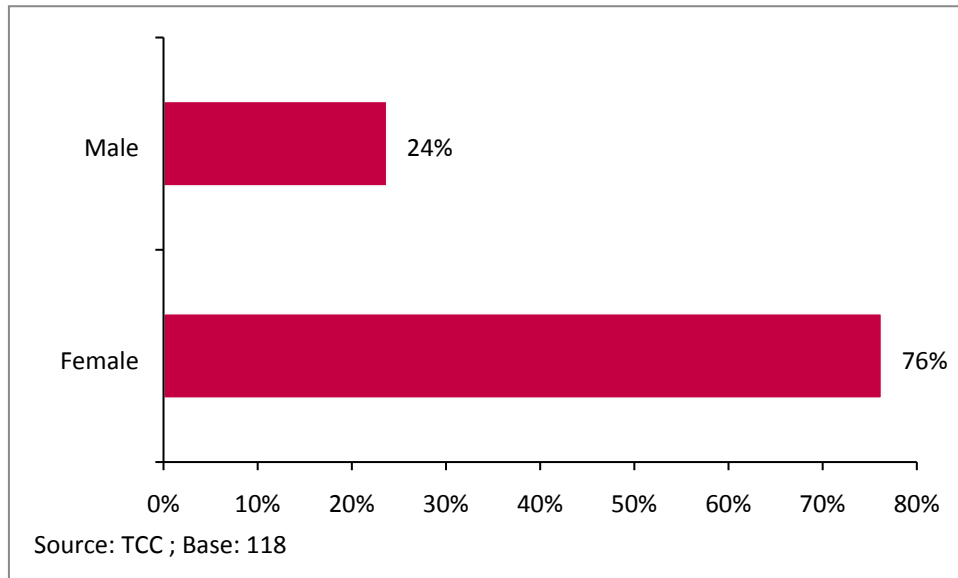


Fig. 14: Standard survey respondents, Gender

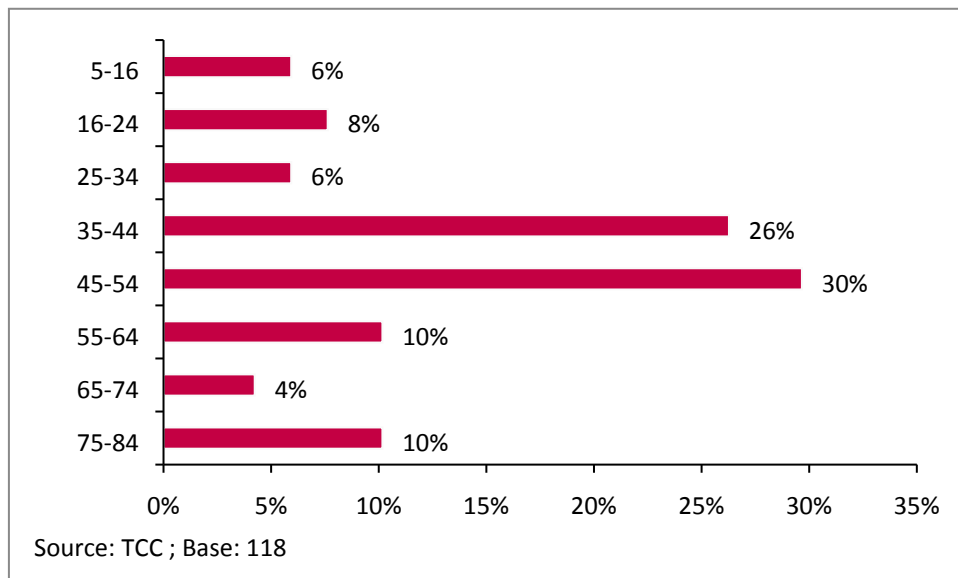


Fig. 15: Standard survey respondents, Age

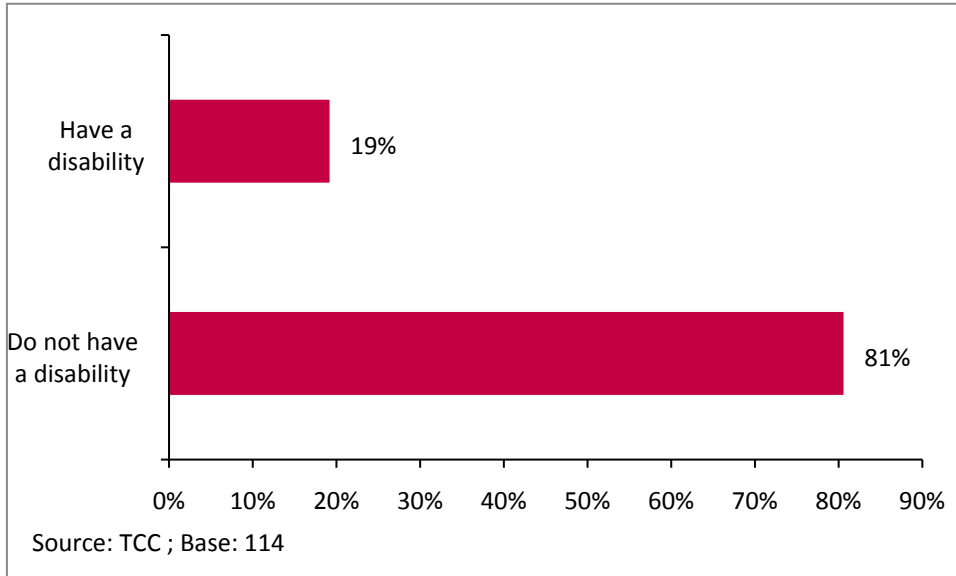


Fig. 16: Standard survey respondents, Disability

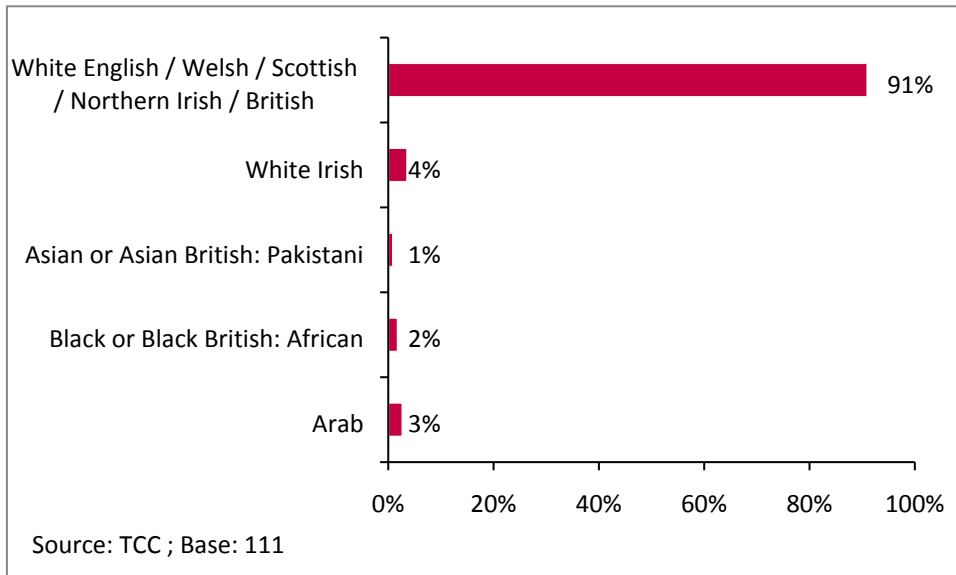


Fig. 17: Standard survey respondents, Ethnic group

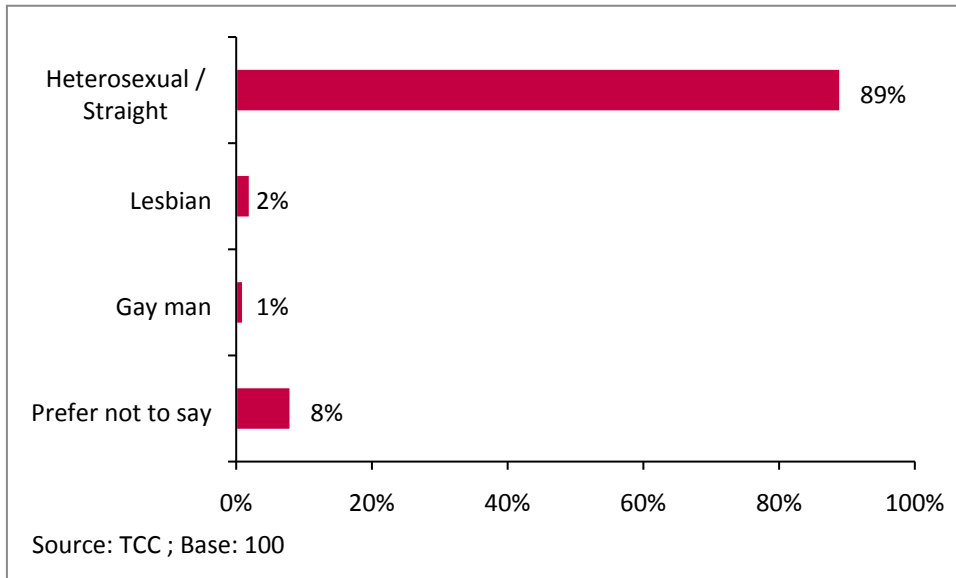


Fig. 18: Standard survey respondents, Sexuality

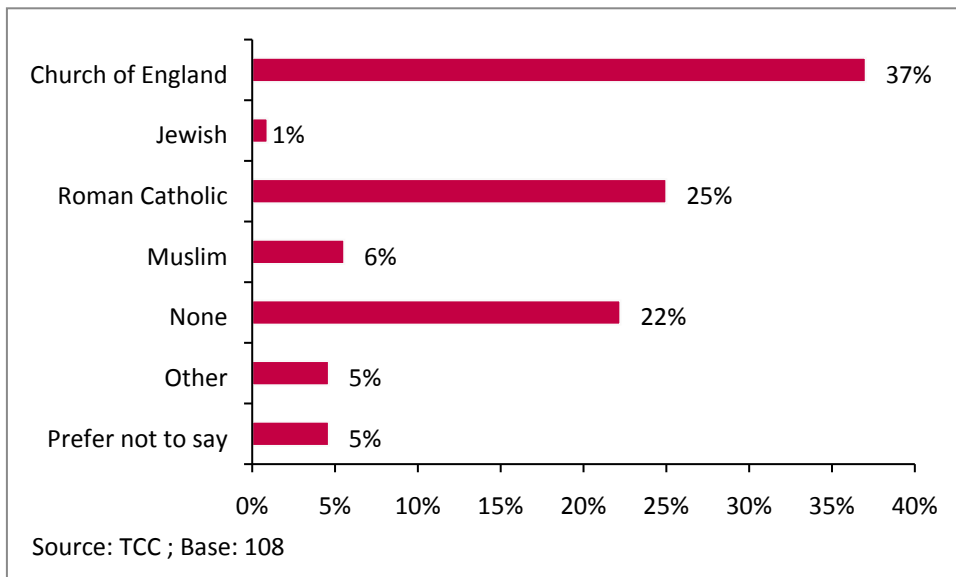


Fig. 19: Standard survey respondents, Religious belief/faith

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## Appendix 2: Non-survey response channels

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A total of 242 responses were received. 198 of these were survey responses. 44 were received from other channels listed below.

Table 20: Total responses received by non-survey channel

Response type	No. of responses
<b>Letters to the Council</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Emails to the Council</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Online comments</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Notes from meetings at SEN schools (Brentwood, Delamere, Pictor)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Budget consultation public meeting table discussion notes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Extended responses from organisations (Trafford Parents Forum; Trafford Parents and Young People's Partnership)</b>	<b>2</b>

Some of these responses are much wider in scope than the questions asked in the survey. These responses have been analysed and the findings have been incorporated in the qualitative analysis described in the report. However the following key points from these responses need to be noted.

- Because of the free-form nature of these responses, people and organisations were able to express their feelings about the all age travel assistance proposals more strongly and openly. Without exception, these responses were all extremely critical of the proposals.
- The 3 letters submitted were all from parents of children who attend Brentwood school. They all expressed deep concern about the direct impact of these proposals on their children and others.
- The e-mails and online comment received were also primarily from parents and some service users who were extremely concerned about the implications of these proposals. A small number of e-mails received were from concerned members of the public who were responding to local media stories about the pupils of Brentwood school who were potentially impacted by these proposals.
- The depth of feeling around these proposals was not surprisingly expressed by parents in the consultation meetings held at three SEN



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schools: Brentwood School, Delamere School and Pictor School. At these meetings, parents not only expressed concern about the additional cost and pressures put on families and children who value the dignity and independence that the current arrangements bring but also highlighted the following issues:

- Much information about how this would work in practice was still unclear or unavailable for example eligibility, pick-up points and so on.
- This did not feel like a 'proper consultation' – the consultation process itself was not clear, information about it was hard to find, and it felt like a 'done deal'