



**Travel behaviour of staff and students who attend  
South West College in Dungannon – December 2015**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Consumer Council commissioned research<sup>1</sup> to carry out a self-completion online survey with staff and students who attend South West College's Dungannon Campus. The survey ran from December 2014 to February 2015 and examined the travel patterns to and from the campus, knowledge of Translink's best value fare options and the use of sustainable modes of transport.

This report is the second element of a piece of research looking at the views and experiences of people in Dungannon in relation to public transport. This builds on previous research conducted by the Consumer Council to inform the Integrated Transport Pilot in the Dungannon and Cookstown area<sup>2</sup>.

The research identified that students use a range of travel methods to travel to and from college while the majority of staff tend to travel by car as the main driver or passenger.

As with previous research there was a low level of awareness of the Translink yLink card with under half of student Ulsterbus users indicating that they were aware of the card and only one in five of these students stating that they had one of the cards.

The research showed that one quarter of those who do not already travel by bicycle said that cycle lanes on their route would encourage them to do so. Of those who do not walk to college, 19% said if there were footpaths along their route they would be more encouraged to walk to college.

Those (248 staff and student respondents) who do not already travel by bus to and from college said that they would be encouraged to do so if services were more reliable or punctual (32%); fares were cheaper (31%); a boarding point was closer to home (25%); the journey time was quicker (21%); there were more frequent day services (19%); there was better information on services (19%); there were services in the evening time (17%); and there were more frequent weekend services, (5%).

---

<sup>1</sup> Perceptive Insight was commissioned.

<sup>2</sup> Integrated Transport Pilot Project – Travel Patterns and Transport Needs in the Dungannon and Cookstown areas. August 2014

If these barriers were removed almost two thirds indicated they would be very or quite likely to travel by bus.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Translink should review how it works with South West College to promote awareness of its services, with particular consideration given to how to effectively promote how reliable, punctual and affordable services are.

Translink should review the timings of the services to South West College to ascertain if the services are running at times that meet passengers' needs. Services may be punctual and reliable but not running at the times that best suit the majority of college users.

Longer term, as part of the review of the Translink ticketing systems, Translink could investigate with further and higher education institutions if the presentation of some form of college I.D. such as a student card could be used as a basis for students to receive discounted fares that can be validated by a new ticketing system.

## **3. KEY FINDINGS**

- Over half (56%) of respondents have access to a car or van at home with 49% saying that they have full access. Staff are much more likely to have access to a car (94%) than students (34%).
- Almost two thirds (63%) travel by car (51% as a main driver and 12% as a passenger), 28% travel by Ulsterbus and 8% said that they walk.
- Analysis by college position (staff or student) shows that students use a range of travel methods, with 37% using an Ulsterbus service and 36% driving a car or van. A further 14% travel as a passenger and one tenth (10%) walk to college. In contrast, the vast majority of staff drive to college with 93% of staff respondents indicating that they did so as a main driver and 5% as a passenger.

- Thirty-eight per cent of those interviewed said that they were aware of the yLink card with 7% of them stating that they had one of these cards. Awareness of the yLink card increases to 45% among students who use Ulsterbus to travel to college with 20% of these student Ulsterbus users having one of the cards.
- Respondents who do not already travel by bus to and from college (248 respondents) were then asked what, if anything, would encourage them to do so and given a range of options to choose from. Responses included:
  - A more reliable or punctual service, (32%);
  - Cheaper fares, (31%);
  - Boarding point closer to home, (25%);
  - Quicker journey time, (21%);
  - More frequent day services, (19%);
  - Better information on services, (19%);
  - Services in the evening time, (17%), and;
  - More frequent weekend services, (5%).
- Almost two thirds (65%) indicated that they would be very or quite likely to travel by bus if the issues that they identified were addressed.
- Almost two thirds of respondents (62%) live more than five miles from the college campus, which means that staff and students are likely to need motorised transport as walking may not be a feasible option.
- Thirty-two per cent of those who do not already travel by bicycle said that they would be encouraged to do so if they lived closer to the college with 31% saying better weather and 25% saying cycle lanes on their route would be an encouragement.
- For those that could be encouraged to cycle to and from college, 11% said they would be prepared to cycle more than 10 miles, 12% between five and 10 miles, 18% between three and five miles, 27% between one and three miles with 21% prepared to cycle 1 mile or less.

- Of those who do not walk to college, 41% said they would be encouraged to walk if they lived closer, with 24% saying better weather and 19% saying if there were footpaths along their route. However, 38% said that nothing could persuade them to walk.
- Six per cent would be prepared to walk more than five miles to and from college, 7% between three and five miles, 45% between one and three miles with 32% prepared to walk a mile or less each way to and from college. Eleven per cent of respondents said that they were unsure of the distance they would be prepared to walk.
- Of those who could be encouraged to travel by these means if the aforementioned problems were no longer an issue, 63% would be very or quite likely to walk and 46% would be very or quite likely to cycle to and from college

#### **4. INTRODUCTION**

The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (the Consumer Council) is an independent consumer organisation, working to bring about change to benefit Northern Ireland (NI) consumers. Our aim is to *'make the consumer voice heard and make it count'*.

We have a statutory remit to promote and safeguard the interests of consumers and have specific functions in relation to energy, water, transport, food, and postal services. These include considering consumer complaints and enquiries, carrying out research, and educating and informing consumers.

Building on previous qualitative and quantitative research conducted by the Consumer Council to inform the Integrated Transport Pilot, quantitative research was undertaken with consumers in the Dungannon area with regards to their travel behaviours.

This report details the views of staff and students who attend South West College in Dungannon regarding:

- The current modes of travel of students and staff members who attend South West College Dungannon campus;

- South West College staff and students' knowledge of Translink best value fare options;
- The propensity of South West College students and staff to use sustainable modes of travel, and students' and staff views on acceptable distances and the changes required to encourage greater use of these modes; and
- The times of the day and days of the week when students and staff need to attend college, and any difficulties they have in travelling at these times.

This research was part of a wider project into consumer awareness and usage of public transport services in Dungannon. The other part of the project looked at the usage and awareness of Dungannon residents who live within a 400 metre radius of the Ulsterbus town network. This report can be viewed [here](#).

Together, the research aims to inform the development of the Integrated Transport Pilot Project and will assist transport stakeholders in developing future local transport plans elsewhere in NI.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

A self-completion online survey was emailed to staff and students at the South West College. A total of 356 questionnaires were completed. A copy of the questionnaire can be found at Annex 1.

The survey captured respondent characteristics, including gender, age, position in college (staff/student), access to a vehicle and if the respondent has a disability. The full characteristics of respondents are outlined in Appendix One.

## **6. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **6.1 Characteristics of respondents**

Of the 356 respondents, almost six in 10 (59%) have a full driver's licence. The research found that a much larger percentage of staff have a full driver's licence (97%) than students (49%).

Over half (56%) of respondents have access to a car or van at home with 49% saying that they have full access. However, it was found that staff are much more likely to have access to a car (94%) than students (34%).

Respondents were asked how far they lived from South West College and almost two thirds (62%) live more than five miles away, over a quarter (27%) live between one and five miles and 8% live within one mile of the college. Four per cent were not sure of the distance.

When asked to record all of the times during the week when they normally attend college, Monday to Thursday mornings appear to be the most popular times with over three quarters of respondents indicating that they attend the college then. Monday to Thursday afternoons are also busy with between 63% and 70% saying they attend college at this time. Evenings (after 6pm) and weekends have significantly less attendance at the college. This can be seen in Appendix 2.

## **6.2 Usual method of travel to and from college**

Respondents were asked how they usually travel to college. Almost two thirds (63%) travel by car (51% as a main driver and 12% as a passenger), 28% travel by Ulsterbus and 8% said that they walk.

Students used a range of travel methods with 37% using an Ulsterbus service, 36% driving a car or van with a further 14% as a passenger and a tenth (10%) walking to college.

In contrast, the vast majority of staff drive to college with 93% of staff respondents indicating that they did so as a main driver and 5% as a passenger.

Results were similar when respondents were also asked how they travelled home from college.

These results can be seen in Appendix 3.

### **6.3 Translink yLink card**

Respondents were asked if they were aware of the Translink yLink smartcard<sup>3</sup>. While 38% said that they were aware of the yLink card, just 7% had one. Awareness of the yLink card increases to 45% among students who use Ulsterbus to travel to college, with 20% of these student Ulsterbus users having one of these cards.

Those who are aware of the yLink smartcard were asked why they do not have one. Nearly half (47%) responded by saying “I don’t travel by bus frequently enough to need one”, while a third (33%) said that they already had a free bus pass (Appendix 4).

Focusing on those yLink students who do not have a free bus pass and who are aware of the smartcard (43 people), two thirds said they do not travel by bus often enough to need a yLink smartcard and 21% considered it to be too much hassle.

Translink has advised that it promotes best value fares including the y-Link card and Multi-Journey cards. Multi-Journey cards can offer financial savings if at least five journeys are purchased at the same time.

### **6.4 South West College students and staff use of sustainable modes of travel**

#### ***Cycling***

All respondents who do not already travel to and from college by bicycle (354 respondents) were asked if they own or have access to a bicycle. Forty-six per cent said they had. Fifty-five per cent of staff said they owned or had access to a bicycle compared to 42% of students.

These same respondents were then asked to choose from a range of options, what would encourage them to travel to or from college by bicycle. Almost one third indicated that they would be more inclined to cycle if they lived closer to the college or if the weather was better – issues over which there is little control.

---

<sup>3</sup> The yLink smartcard entitles the card holder to discount on cash single bus and railway services. It is available for those aged between 16 and 23 and costs £8.

However one quarter would be encouraged by more cycle lanes on their route and one in five would consider cycling if they did not have as much to carry. A breakdown of results can be viewed in Appendix 5.

If these, along with other options selected, were not an issue, 46% of respondents reported that they would be either very or quite likely to regularly cycle to and from college.

For those that could be encouraged to cycle to and from college, 11% said they would be prepared to cycle more than 10 miles, 12% between five and 10 miles, 18% between three and five miles, 27% between one and three miles with 21% prepared to cycle one mile or less.

### ***Walking***

Respondents who didn't already walk to and from college (323 respondents) were asked to choose from a range of options that would encourage them to start doing so. Responses were similar to cycling and the top reasons included:

- Living nearer to the college, (41%);
- Better weather, (24%); and
- Footpaths along my route, (19%).

Thirty-eight per cent of respondents said that nothing would encourage them to walk to and from college.

A full breakdown is available in Appendix 6.

Of those that could be encouraged to do so, 63% said that they would be very or quite likely to regularly walk to and from college if the previously mentioned problems (in Appendix 6) were no longer an issue.

Six per cent would be prepared to walk more than five miles to and from college, 7% between three and five miles, 45% between one and three miles with 32% prepared to walk a mile or less each way to and from college. Eleven per cent of respondents said that they were unsure of the distance they would be prepared to walk.

### ***Travel by bus***

Respondents who do not already travel by bus to and from college (248 respondents) were then asked what, if anything, would encourage them to do so. Responses are shown in Appendix 7 and included:

- A more reliable or punctual service, (32%);
- Cheaper fares, (31%);
- Boarding point closer to home, (25%);
- Quicker journey time, (21%);
- More frequent day services, (19%);
- Better information on services, (19%);
- Services in the evening time, (17%) and;
- More frequent weekend services, (5%).

The 31% of respondents who said cheaper fares would encourage them to travel more often by bus were then asked what price the fare would need to be in order to encourage them. Responses for single fares were as follows:

- £0 to £1.00 single, (24%);
- £1.01 to £2.00 single, (12%); and
- £2.01 to £3.00 single, (4%);

Responses for return fares were as follows:

- £0 to £1.00 return, (4%);
- £1.01 to £2.00 return, (17%);
- £2.01 to £3.00 return, (15%);
- £3.01 to £4.00 return, (4%);
- £4.01 to £5.00 return, (12%); and
- £5.01 to £6.00 return, (1%).

Fourteen per cent did not specify a preferred cost.

Forty-six respondents (19%) indicated that more frequent day services would encourage them to travel more often by bus. When asked how frequent the service would have to be, responses were:

- Seven replied every 15 minutes;
- Nine replied every 20 minutes;
- Eleven said every half an hour;
- One replied every 45 minutes;
- Nine replied every hour; and
- Nine did not specify how frequent.

If these issues were addressed, respondents were asked how likely they would then be to travel by bus as their main method of travel to and from college. Almost two thirds (65%) indicated that they would be very or quite likely to travel by bus if these issues were addressed.

## **6.5 Issues with travel**

Respondents were asked to explain any further problems they encounter when travelling to and from the college. Of those who replied with a problem (67 respondents) the main issues identified were heavy traffic, (31%), a lack of a reliable bus route from my area (15%) and poor parking facilities (10%). Appendix 8 shows all the issues that were identified by respondents.

When looking at these results further, while heavy traffic was the number one problem identified by staff (71%) the lack of a reliable bus route was the top problem identified by student respondents (21%).

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Given the nature of the survey and the number of respondents, the following conclusions are intended to be informative rather than a representative view of all students and staff attending the college.

There is a noticeable difference in method of travel to and from college by both students and staff. Half of the students travel by car either as a driver (36%) or as a passenger (14%) with a further 37% saying they use Ulsterbus services.

This is in contrast to the staff who seem to greatly favour travelling by car, with 98% of staff saying that this is how they travelled either as a main driver (93%) or as a passenger (5%).

This is understandable as a higher proportion of staff have a full driver's licence (97%) compared to students (49%). Staff are also much more likely to have full access to a car or van (94%) compared to just over a third of students (34%). This lack of access to a car or van at home then in turn means that students have to find alternative modes of travel to and from college.

Almost two thirds (62%) live more than five miles from the college campus meaning that the majority of staff and students are likely to need motorised transport.

Only 23% of those who could be encouraged to cycle were prepared to travel more than five miles. Only 28% of those who could be encouraged to walk were prepared to walk more than two miles.

Therefore, more detailed analysis would be needed to determine whether improving infrastructure around the college area would be an effective means of encouraging more staff and students to make use of these sustainable forms of transport.

It is positive to note that in the current climate of fare increases and service reductions this research indicates that there is the opportunity to increase passenger numbers by improving awareness of public transport services among students.

Of those who do not already travel to and from college by bus, almost a third (32%) said that a more reliable or punctual service would encourage them to do so more often.

Translink's Passenger Charter monitoring results consistently report very high levels of reliability and Ulsterbus punctuality often records scores of over 90%. Therefore, it is possible that services are running and are on time but just not operating at the times that would best suit college users.

Furthermore, although 31% stated cheaper fares was an issue that needed to be addressed; only 38% of student respondents (or 45% of student Ulsterbus users) were aware of the Translink yLink smartcard.

Translink has worked to promote best value tickets and visited South West College's campuses and local schools to engage directly with students. However, given the research identified many students are not aware of the cheaper fares available and the consistently high reliability and punctuality scores achieved by Ulsterbus, more needs to be done to improve passenger perceptions and awareness of discounted ticket types.

This research and the research conducted with local Dungannon residents show that there are people that want and need to use public transport services. What is required is a fresh approach to how those needs are met and marketed.

## Appendix 1 – Characteristics of Respondents

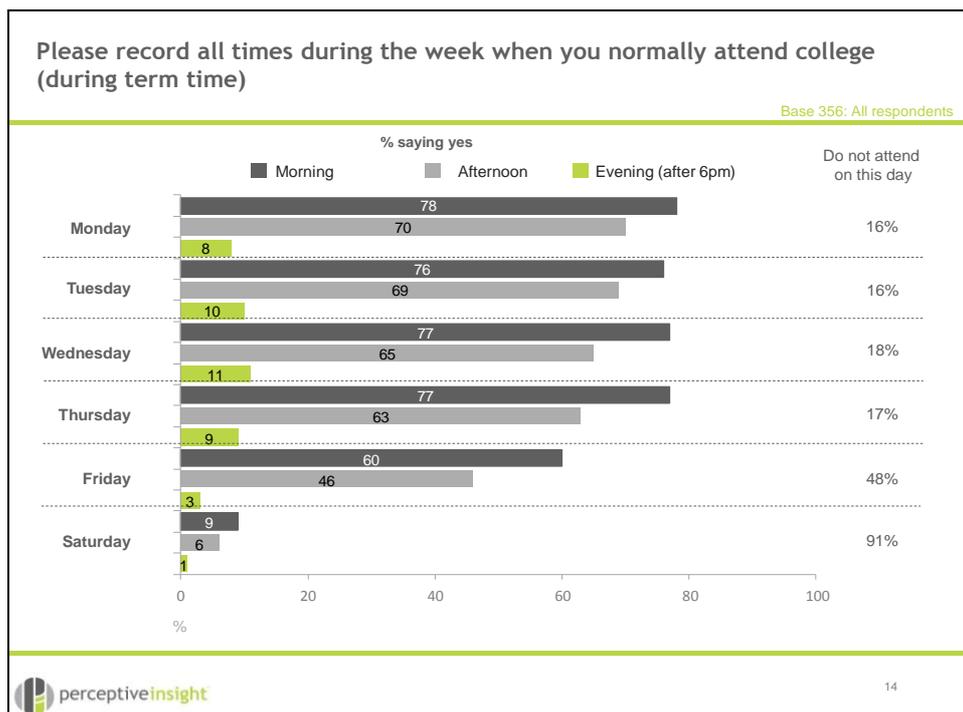
### 1. Respondent demographics

49% of those who took part were male and 51% female. Fifty-nine per cent were full time students, 14% part time students, 25% were staff members (16% full time staff and 9% part time staff) and 1% classing themselves as other.

### 2. Prevalence of people with a disability

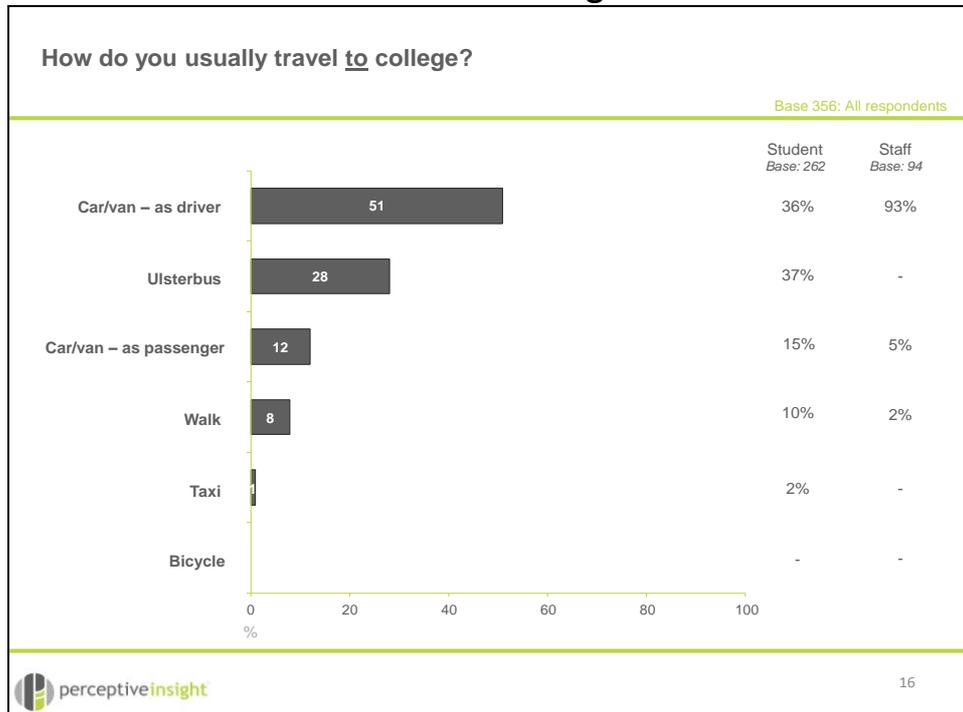
Respondents were asked if they had a disability which affects their normal day-to-day activities. Six percent said yes meaning 94% said that they did not.

## Appendix 2 – Frequency of attendance at college

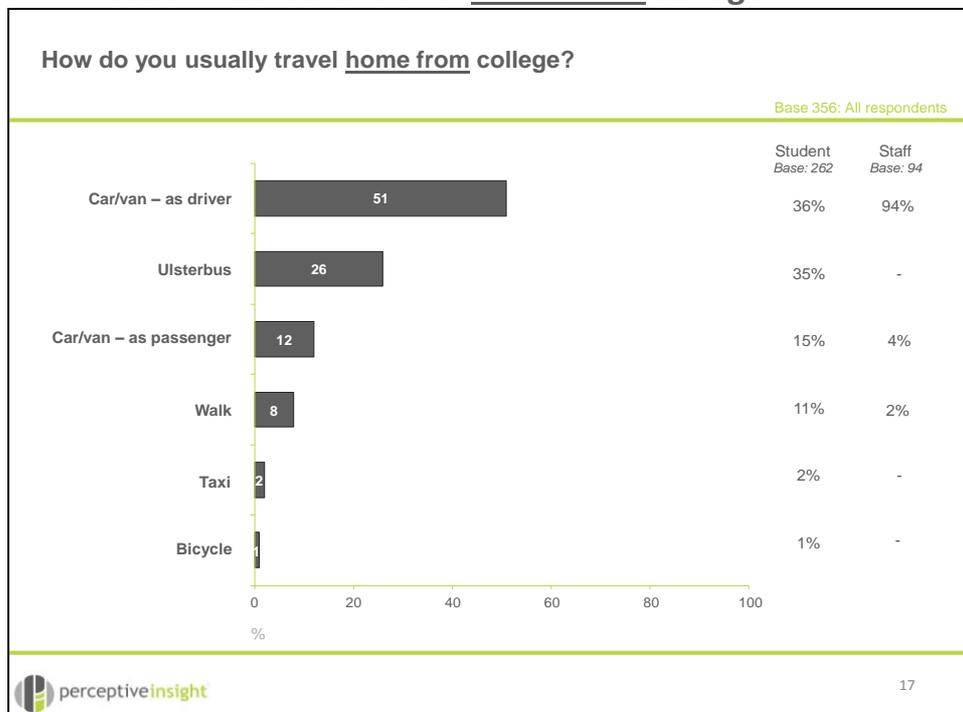


## Appendix 3 – Usual method of travel to and from South West College

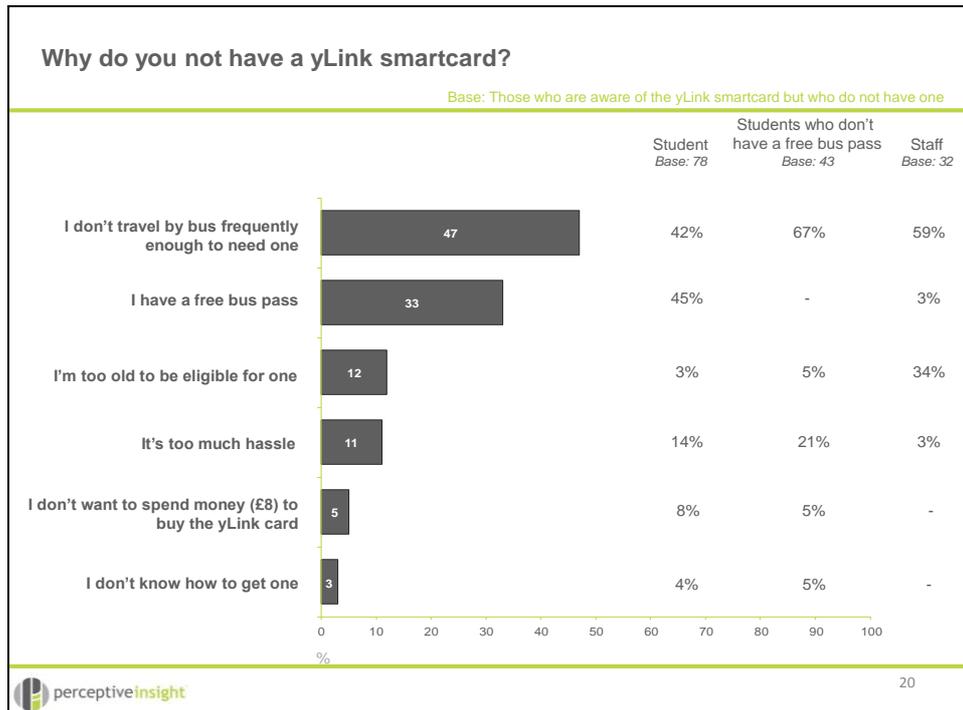
### Usual method of travel to college



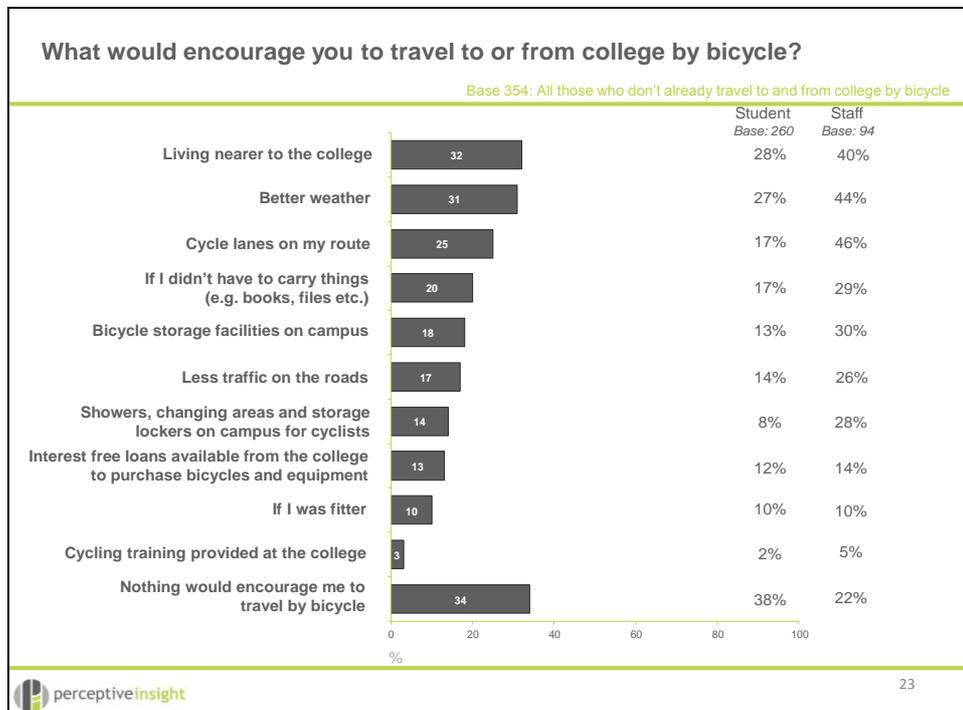
### Usual method of travel home from college



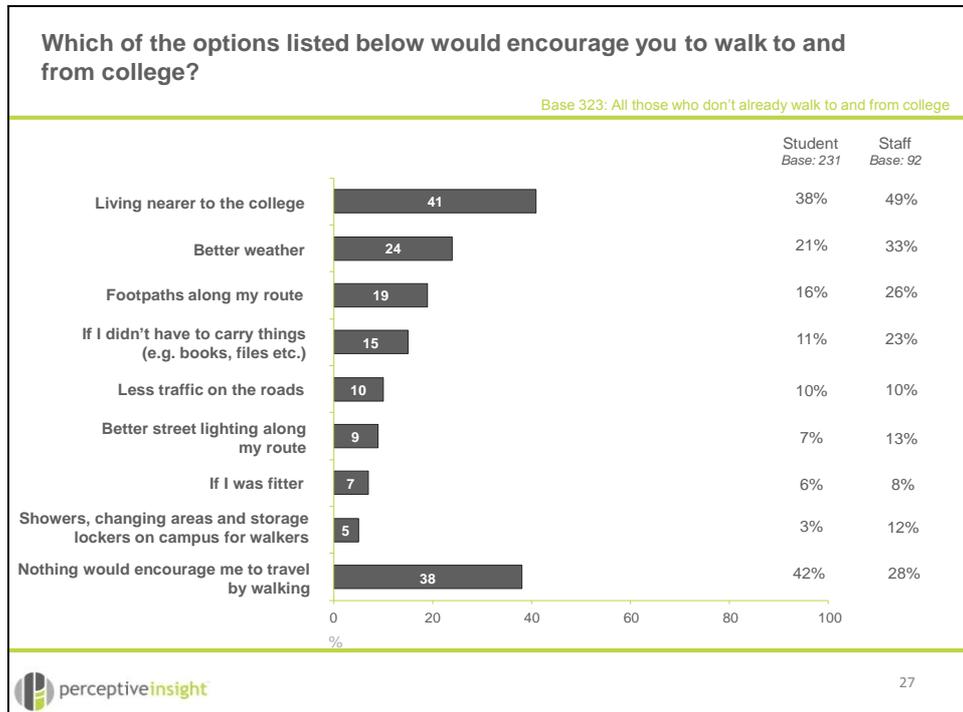
## Appendix 4 – Reasons for not having a yLink card



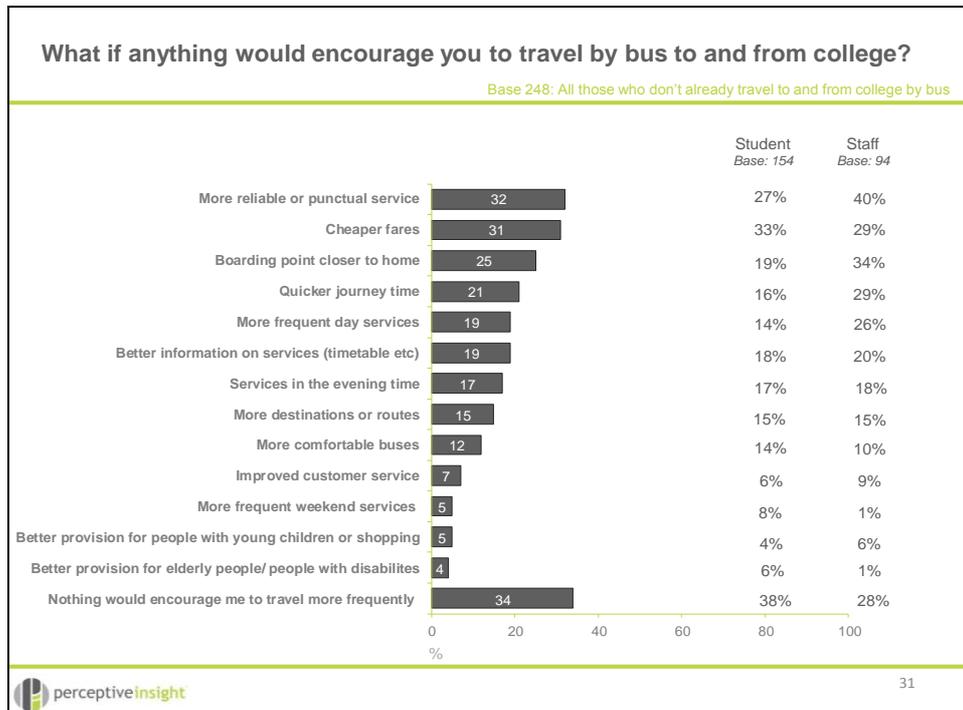
## Appendix 5 - What would encourage more travel to or from college by bicycle



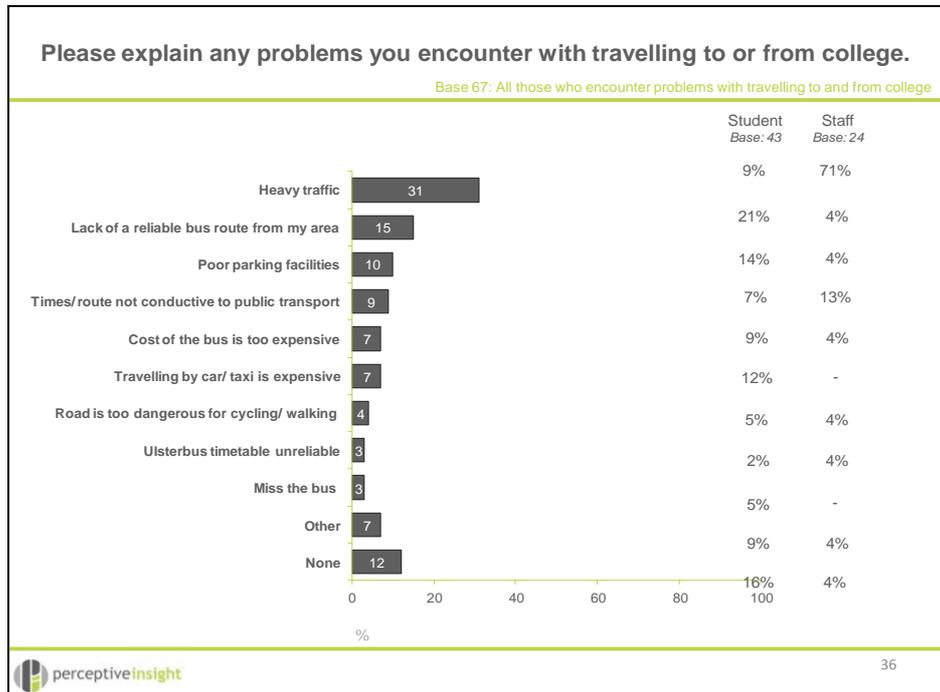
## Appendix 6 – What would encourage more travel to or from college by walking



## Appendix 7 - What would encourage more travel to and from college by bus



## Appendix 8 - Other problems encountered with travelling to or from college



## ANNEX 1

### Transport Survey



The Consumer Council and South West College want to find out what staff and students think about transport in the Dungannon area. They have asked Perceptive Insight, a local market research company, to undertake a survey on their behalf.

We would appreciate if we could have a few minutes of your time to answer some questions.

Firstly please be assured:

- All of your responses will be treated as confidential.
- We are bound by the Data Protection Act and the market research code of conduct.
- You will not be targeted for any sales or promotional activity as a result of taking part in this survey

If you have any queries please contact Mark McCartney at Perceptive Insight on 028 90737090 or [mark.mccartney@pimr.co.uk](mailto:mark.mccartney@pimr.co.uk)

#### Section A: Background

A1 What is your gender

- Male  
 Female

A2 Are you a ...

- Full-time student  
 Part-time student  
 Staff member  
 Other

A3 Do you have a disability which affects your normal day-to-day activities?

- Yes - respondent  
 No

A4 Do you have a full driver's licence

- Yes  
 No - **Go to Section B**

A5 Do you own or have access to a car or van at your home?

- Yes
- No car at the household - **Go to Section B**

A6 How much access do you have to a car or van at your home?

- Full access - you are the main driver
- Limited access - ie you are not the main driver
- As a passenger only

A7 How far do you live from South West College?

- 1 mile or less
- More than 1 mile but less than 3 miles
- More than 3 miles but less than 5 miles
- More than 5 miles
- Not sure

A8 Please record all times during the week when you normally attend college (during term-time).

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening (after 6pm)
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section B: Mode of travel to college

B1 How do you usually travel to college?

- Car/van - as driver
- Car/van - as passenger
- Taxi
- Ulsterbus
- Disability Action Transport Scheme
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Motorcycle/scooter/moped
- Other - please specify

B1

Other

B2 How do you usually travel home from college?

- Car/van - as driver
- Car/van - as passenger
- Taxi
- Ulsterbus
- Disability Action Transport Scheme
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Motorcycle/scooter/moped
- Other - please specify

B2 Other

### Section C: Translink yLink smart card

The Translink yLink smartcard allows people aged 16 to 23 years old to save 33% when paying with cash for single fares on Ulsterbus services.



C1 Before today were you aware of the Translink yLink smartcard?

- Yes
- No - [Go to Section D](#)

C2 Do you have a yLink smartcard

- Yes - [Go to Section D](#)
- No

C3 Why do you not have a yLink smartcard?

- I don't know how to get one
- It's too much hassle
- I don't want to spend money (£8) to buy the yLink card
- I don't travel by bus frequently enough to need one
- I have a free bus pass
- Other

Please specify

## Section D: Cycling

D1 Do you own or have access to a bicycle?

- Yes
- No

**Do not ask if respondent travels to college by bicycle at B1 or B2**

D2 Which of the options below would encourage you to travel to or from college by bicycle?

- Cycle lanes on my route
- Bicycle storage facilities on campus
- Showers, changing areas and storage lockers on campus for cyclists
- Interest free loans available from the college to purchase bicycles and equipment
- Cycling training provided at the college
- Less traffic on the roads
- Better weather
- If I didn't have to carry things (eg books, files etc)
- Living nearer to the college
- If I was fitter
- Nothing would encourage me to travel by bicycle - **Go to Section E**

D3 If the options you picked in the previous question were not an issue, how likely would you be to regularly cycle to and from college?

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely

D4 How far would you be prepared to cycle each way to and from college?

- 1 mile or less
- More than 1 mile but less than 2 miles
- More than 2 miles but less than 3 miles
- More than 3 miles but less than 5 miles
- More than 5 miles but less than 10 miles
- More than 10 miles
- Not sure

## Section E: Walking

Do not ask if respondent walks to college at B1 or B2

E1 Which of the options listed below would encourage you to walk to and from college?

- Footpaths along my route
- Better street lighting along my route
- Showers, changing areas and storage lockers on campus for walkers
- Less traffic on the roads
- Better weather
- If I didn't have to carry things (eg books, files etc)
- Living nearer to the college
- If I was fitter
- Nothing would encourage me to travel by walking - [Go to Section F](#)

E2 If the options you picked in the previous question were not an issue, how likely would you be to regularly walk to and from college?

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely

D4 How far would you be prepared to walk each way to and from college?

- 1 mile or less
- More than 1 mile but less than 2 miles
- More than 2 miles but less than 3 miles
- More than 3 miles but less than 5 miles
- More than 5 miles
- Not sure

## Section F: Travel by bus

F1 What if anything would encourage you to travel by bus to and from college?

- Cheaper fares
- More reliable or punctual services
- Boarding point closer to home
- Quicker journey time
- More destinations or routes
- More frequent weekend services
- Services in the evening time
- More frequent day services
- Improved customer service
- More comfortable buses
- Better information on services (timetable etc)
- Better provision for elderly people /people with disabilities
- Better provision for people with young children or shopping
- Other
- Nothing would encourage me to travel on the services more frequently - [Go to Section G](#)

Please specify

F2 You said cheaper fares would encourage you to travel more often. What price would the fare need to be to encourage more frequent travel?

Please specify cost and type of ticket - eg single or return

F3 You said more frequent weekend services would encourage you to travel more often. How frequent would weekend services need to be to encourage more frequent travel?

Please specify - eg every hour/ every 20 minutes

F4 You said more frequent day services would encourage you to travel more often. How frequent would weekend services need to be to encourage more frequent travel?

Please specify - eg every hour/ every 20 minutes

F5 If these issues were addressed, how likely would you be to travel by bus as your main way of getting to and from college?

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely

## Section G: Issues with travel

G1 If you encounter any problems with travelling to or from college please explain them below.

Please click the submit button to ensure we receive your completed questionnaire.  
If you have any queries please contact Mark McCartney on 028 9073 7090 or [mark.mccartney@pimr.co.uk](mailto:mark.mccartney@pimr.co.uk).



# ***Making the consumer voice heard and making it count***

Floor 3  
Seatem House  
28-32 Alfred Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8EN

Freephone: 0800 121 6022  
Switchboard: 028 9025 1600  
Fax: 028 9025 1663  
E-mail: [info@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@consumercouncil.org.uk)  
Website: [www.consumercouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)

