



Department for
Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

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Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme

2019 Survey Analysis



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Theme: Travel and Transport

Coverage: Northern Ireland

Frequency: Ad-hoc



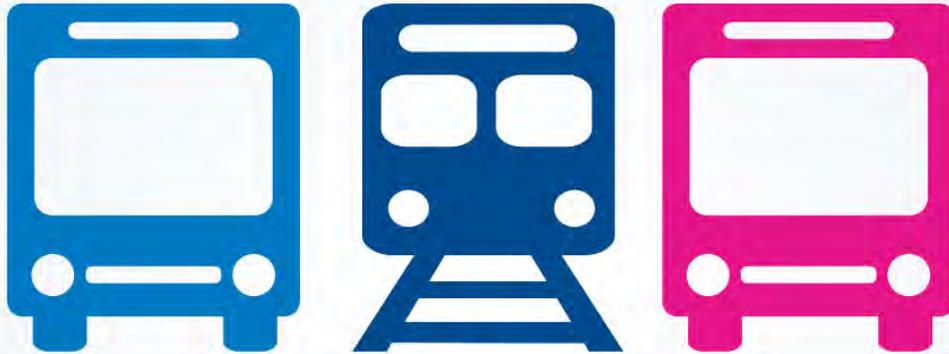
Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

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88% agreed that having a SmartPass increased their usage of public transport



86% said SmartPass enabled them to 'be more active'



23% said 'less reliance on friends and family for transport' was the most important benefit of having a SmartPass

Respondents used their SmartPass for:

Social Visits



Shopping



Hospital Visits



KEY POINTS

- When asked to compare their usage before and after they had their SmartPass, almost 9 out of ten respondents (88%), agreed that the SmartPass had increased their use of Public Transport.
- The SmartPass enabled respondents to be more active (86%), afford more as public transport is cheaper/free (86%), make more social visits (85%), and be less reliant on friends and family for transport (84%).
- Being less reliant on friends and family for transport (23%) was the most important benefit of having a SmartPass for respondents.
- Respondents used their SmartPass to travel for shopping trips (67%), social visits (67%), and to attend hospital appointments or visits (58%).

Acknowledgements

The survey was carried out by Dfl, supported by IMTAC, a Committee of disabled people and older people whose role is to advise Government and others on mobility issues affecting disabled and older people.

Thanks are due to IMTAC for their help in facilitating this research.

Thanks also to all the groups and organisations who helped to promote and distribute the survey and finally, the help of all of those members of the public who give their time and co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

Background

The Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme was established to promote access to public transport for members of the community who are most at risk of social exclusion, through providing free and discounted travel on bus and rail services. By facilitating greater access to public transport, the Scheme connects people and opportunities through our infrastructure, helps to protect our environment through more sustainable travel and promotes long, healthy and active lives.

Uses of the data

The results will allow us to demonstrate the contribution of the Scheme towards Outcome 8 of the Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018-2019 - 'we care for others and help those in need'. It is also an opportunity to review feedback on the SmartPass and identify opportunities to improve the administration of the Scheme.

The survey was developed in conjunction with the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee and promoted by organisations who represent older people and people with disabilities. Launched on Thursday 15th August 2019, the survey was open for three months, until Thursday 10th October 2019. The survey was available to complete online, with the option to receive a copy by e-mail, post, or in an alternative format (eg. large text). IMTAC offered telephone assistance and group assistance in completing the survey for those who wished to avail of it.

For further detail on the number of responses received and breakdowns of the characteristics of those who responded, please see the 'Demographics' and 'Technical Notes' section at the back of this report.

If this document is not in a format that meets your needs, please contact us to make alternative arrangements:

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Results

The number of responses varied for each question and the base for analysis is noted in each relevant chart.

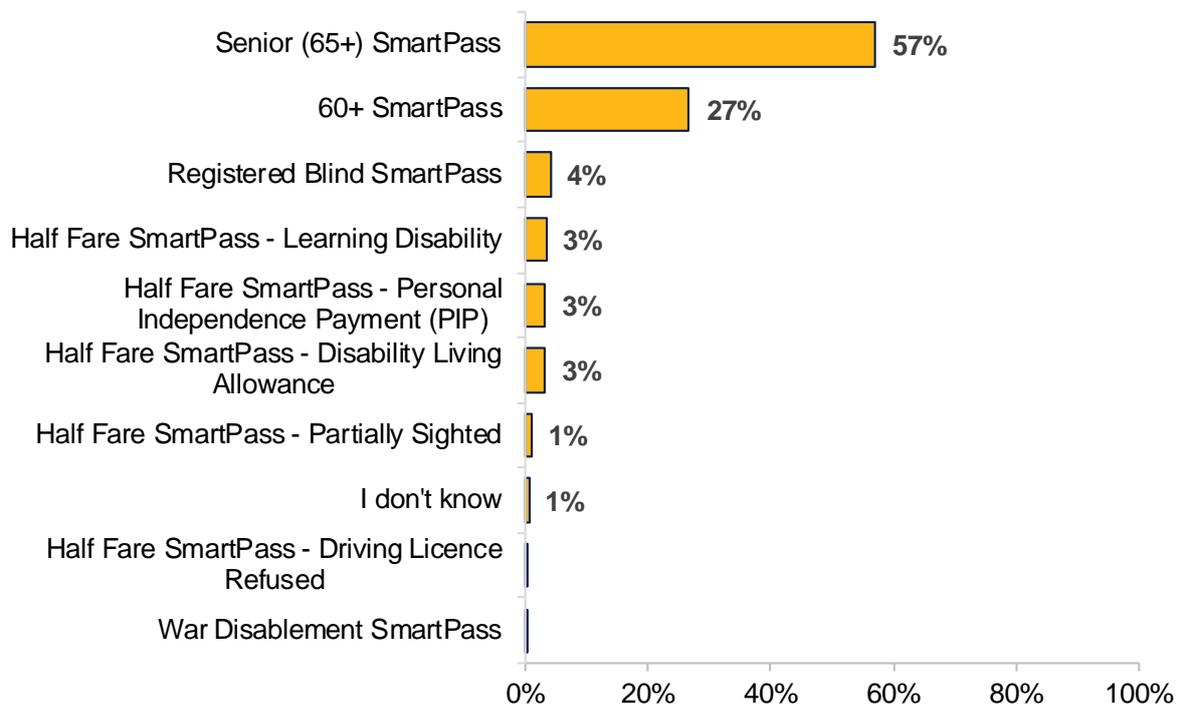
1. Type of SmartPass held

To provide context, respondents were asked which type of Smartpass they held and there were 1,092 responses to this question.

The most commonly held pass was the 'Senior (65+) SmartPass', which was held by over half (57%) of respondents. A quarter of respondents (27%) held the '60+ Smartpass'.

There are 5 different types of half fare Smartpasses and holders of these accounted for around 10% of respondents while a further 4% of respondents were 'Registered Blind Smartpass' holders.

Figure 1: What SmartPass do you hold?



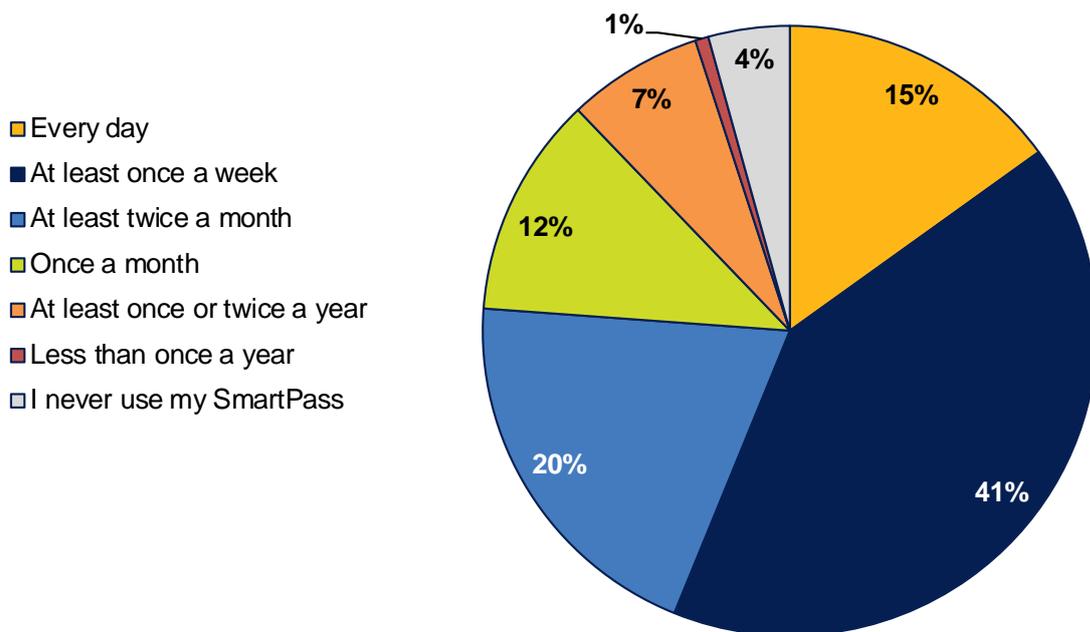
Base: 1,902

The remaining analysis presented looks at the overall response to the survey and the responses that were received across the full achieved sample.

2. Frequency of SmartPass use

Respondents were asked how often they use their SmartPass, and of the 1,988 responses to this question, over half (56%) used their SmartPass often with 41% using theirs 'at least once a week' and 15% using theirs SmartPass 'every day'. One in five (20%) use their SmartPass 'at least twice a month' with a further 12% using it around 'once a month'. One in five (20%) use their SmartPass 'at least twice a month' with a further 12% using it around 'once a month'.

Figure 2: What best describes how often you use your SmartPass?



Base: 1,988

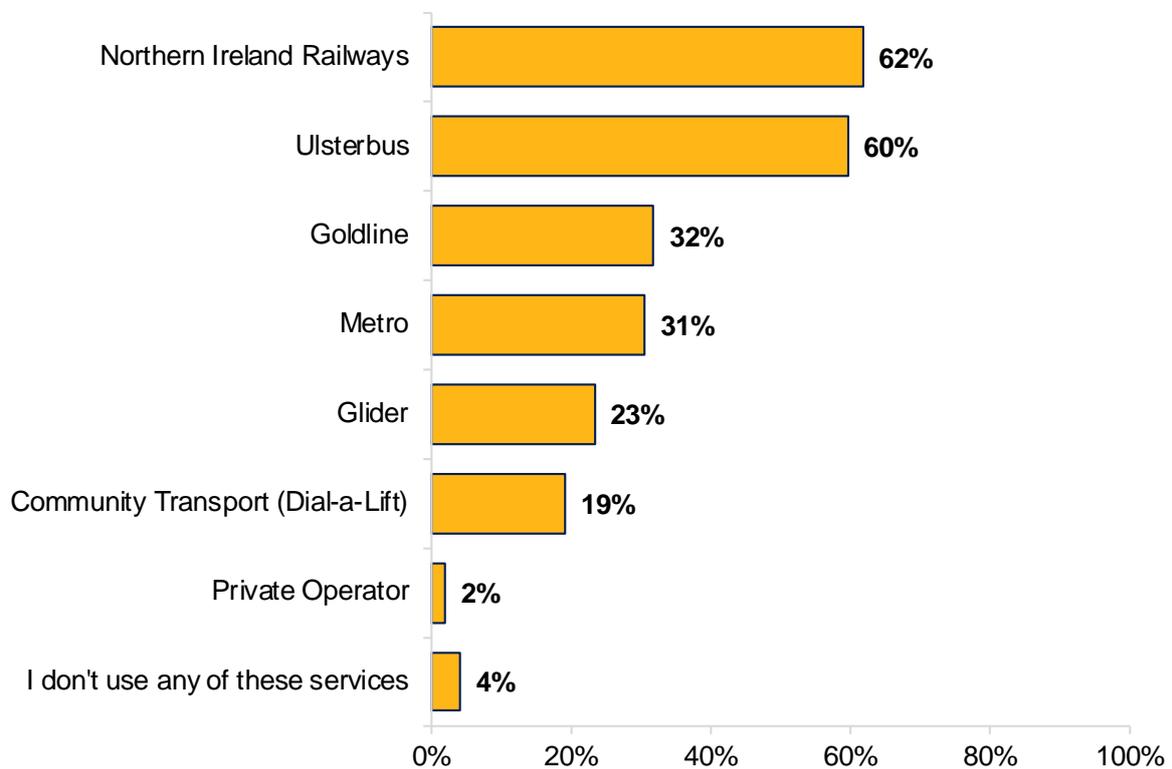
3. On which services do you use your Smartpass to travel?

Among respondents, the services used most frequently were 'NI Railways' (62%) and 'Ulsterbus' (60%). 'Goldline' services were used by almost a third of respondents (32%).

Urban based services such as 'Metro' and 'Glider' were used by 31% and 23% of respondents respectively, and around a fifth used Community Transport (Dial-a-Lift) (19%).

Services offered by 'Private Operators' (2%) were the least used.

Figure 3: On which services do you use your SmartPass to travel?*



*Respondents could choose more than one answer

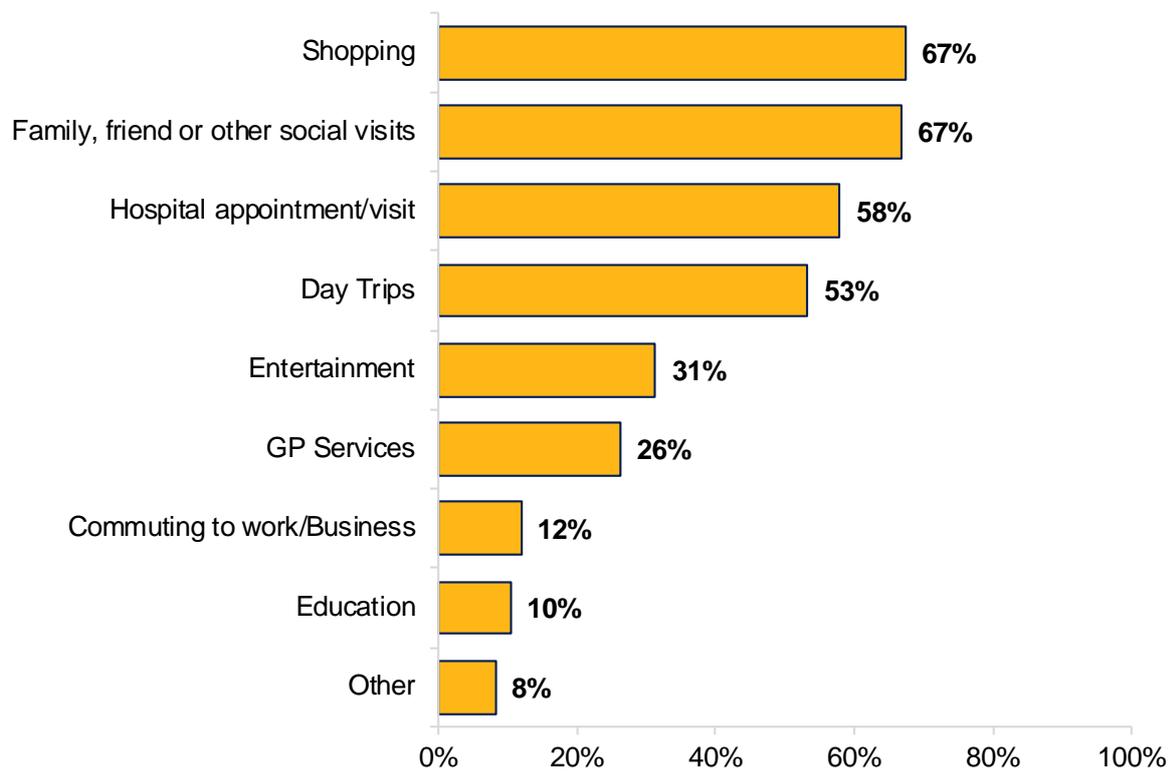
Base: 2,004

4. Reasons for using SmartPass

Around two thirds of respondents indicated that they used their SmartPass for 'shopping' (67%) and 'family, friends and other social visits' (67%).

Other popular reasons for using SmartPass were 'hospital appointments/visits' (58%), 'day trips' (53%) and for 'entertainment' purposes (31%) while a smaller proportion use their SmartPass for 'commuting' (12%) and 'education' (10%).

Figure 4: What are the reasons you use your SmartPass?*



*Respondents could choose more than one answer

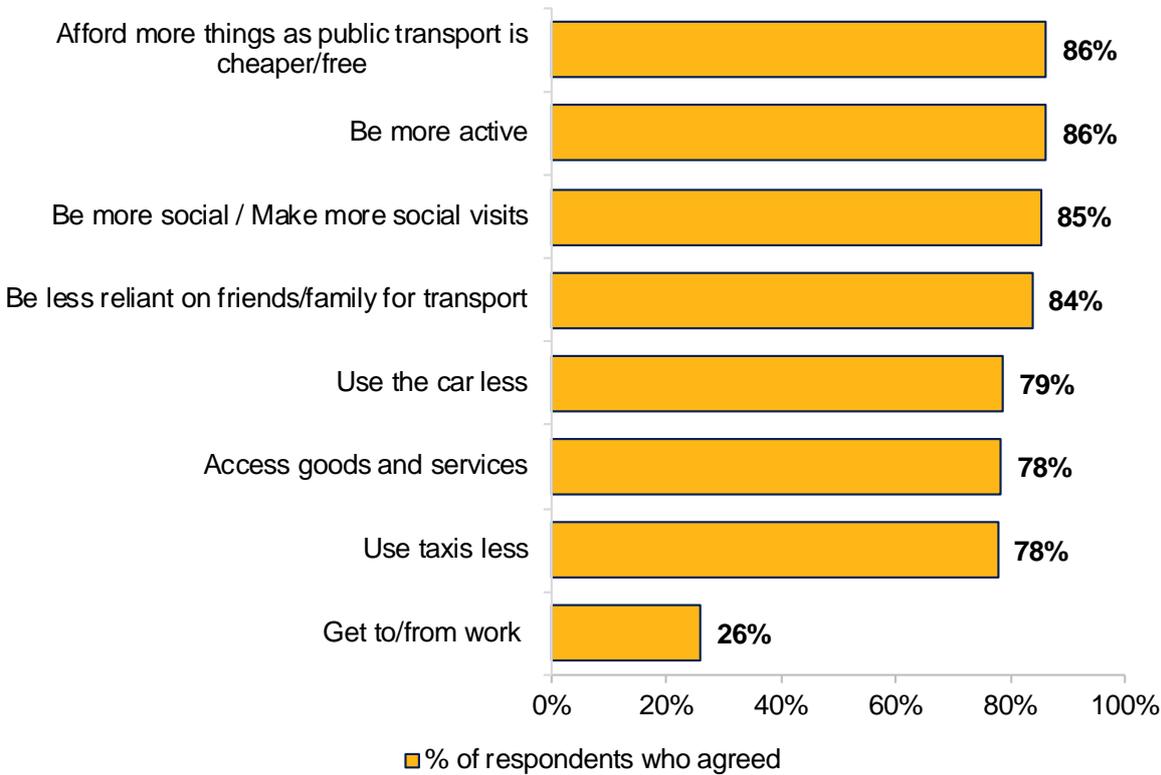
Base: 1,766

5. Using a SmartPass enables me to...

Respondents were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements regarding SmartPass usage and how it enabled them to carry out everyday activities.

There were 1,774 responses to this question and the majority of respondents agreed that their SmartPass enabled them to 'be more active' (86%) and 'afford more things as public transport is cheaper/free' (86%), 'be more social' (85%), 'be less reliant on friends and family for transport' (84%), and 'use the car less' (79%).

Figure 5: Using the SmartPass enables me to...



Base: 1,774

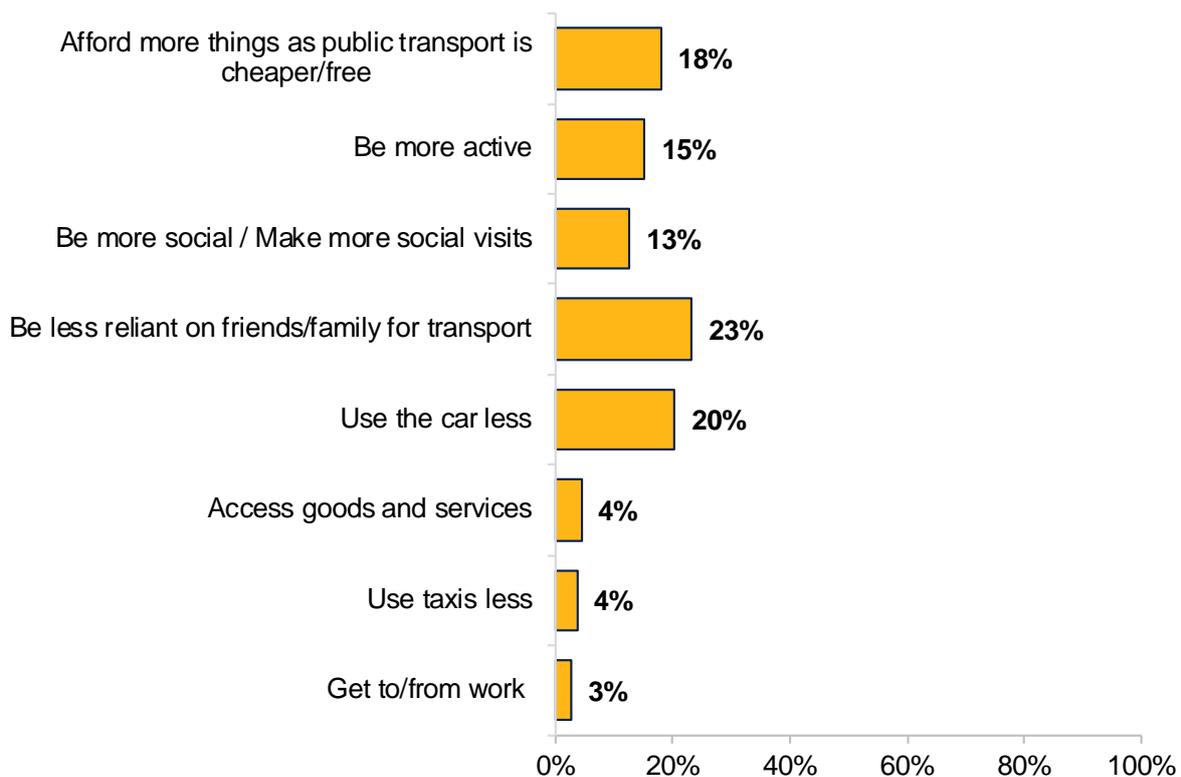
6. What is the most important benefit of using a SmartPass?

Respondents were then asked to indicate which of these statements was most important to them.

Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) said that enabling them to 'be less reliant on friends and family for transport' was the most important thing using their SmartPass enabled them to do followed with a further one in five (20%) saying that 'use the car less' was the most important to them.

Just under a fifth (18%) said that being able to 'afford more things as public transport is cheaper/free' was the most important benefit.

Figure 6: You previously commented on what the SmartPass enables you to do. What would you say is the most important of those?



Base: 1,741

7. In the past 12 months, did any of the following reasons make it difficult for you or prevent you from using your SmartPass on public transport?

Respondents were asked to indicate what reasons, if anything, made it difficult for them to use their SmartPass in the past 12 months. The most frequently given response was 'lack of services' (21%). This was followed by 'no direct services' (17%), and 'bus/train stop is too far away' (12%).

Less than one in ten (9%) said that 'difficulty getting on and off vehicles' made it difficult while 9% cited 'other reasons' such as;

"Due to disability (using a wheelchair) I only use Community Transport"

"I must carry cash when using the half-price SmartPass, but due to learning disability I don't like to carry cash"

"I have to have someone to travel with me on public transport because of disability"

"Lack of parking at railway stations"

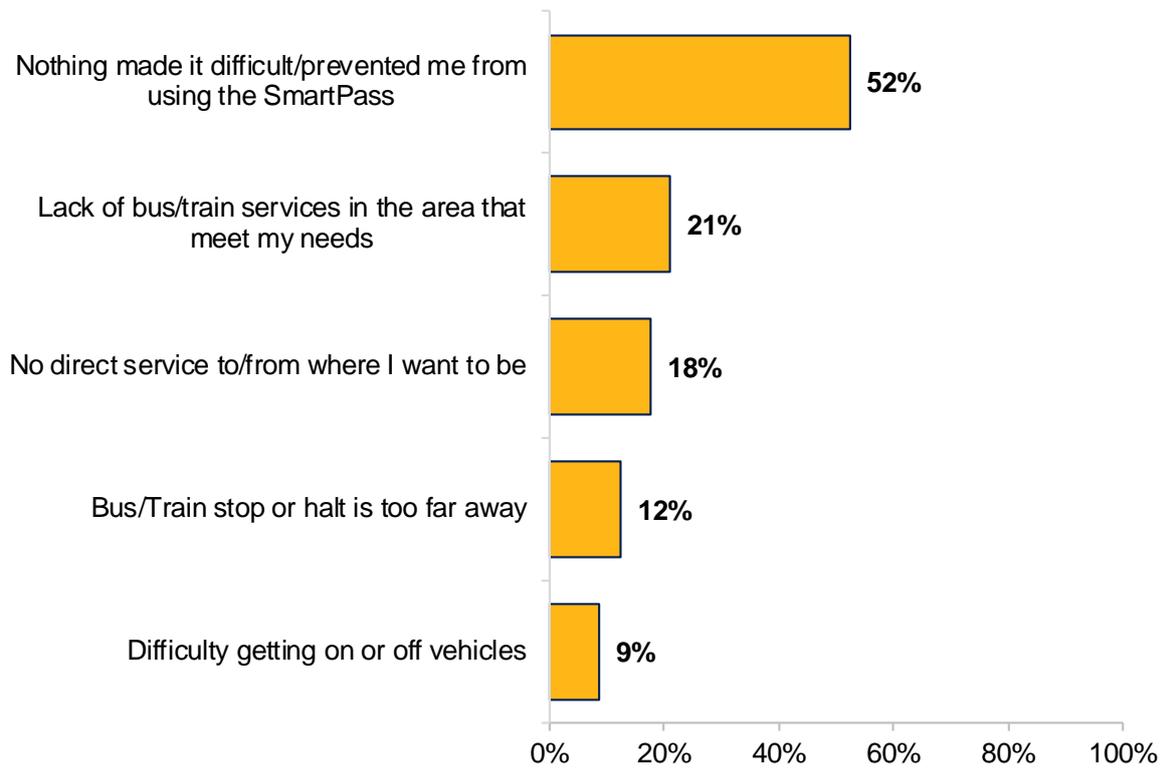
"Community Transport is better as driver assists with carrying items"

"Drivers need to give people more time to board, get seated, alight"

Over half of respondents (52%) said 'nothing made it difficult/prevented me from using Public Transport in the previous 12 months'.

The five most common responses are presented in Figure 7 overleaf with the full range of responses presented in [Appendix 1, on page 25](#).

Figure 7: In the past 12 months, did any of the following reasons make it difficult for you or prevent you from using your SmartPass on public transport?*



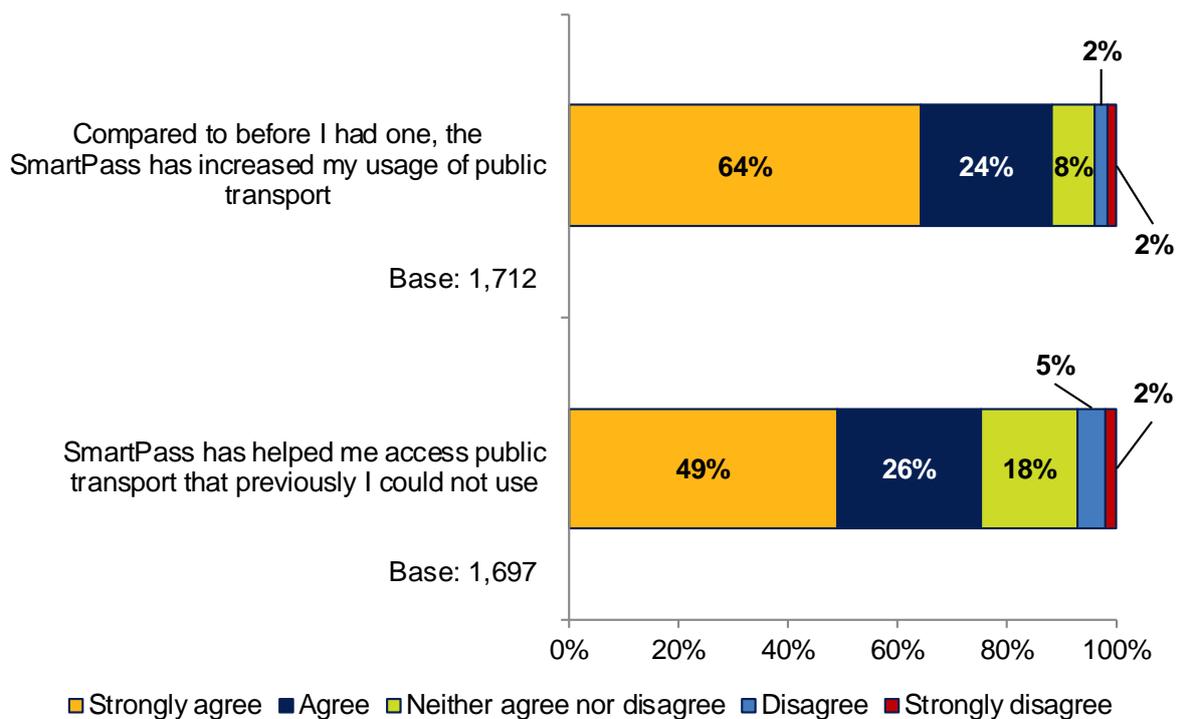
*Respondents could choose more than one answer

Base: 1,712

8. Access and usage of Public Transport

When asked to compare their usage before and after they had their SmartPass, almost 9 out of ten respondents (88%) agreed that the SmartPass had increased their use of Public Transport. 4% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

Figure 8: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



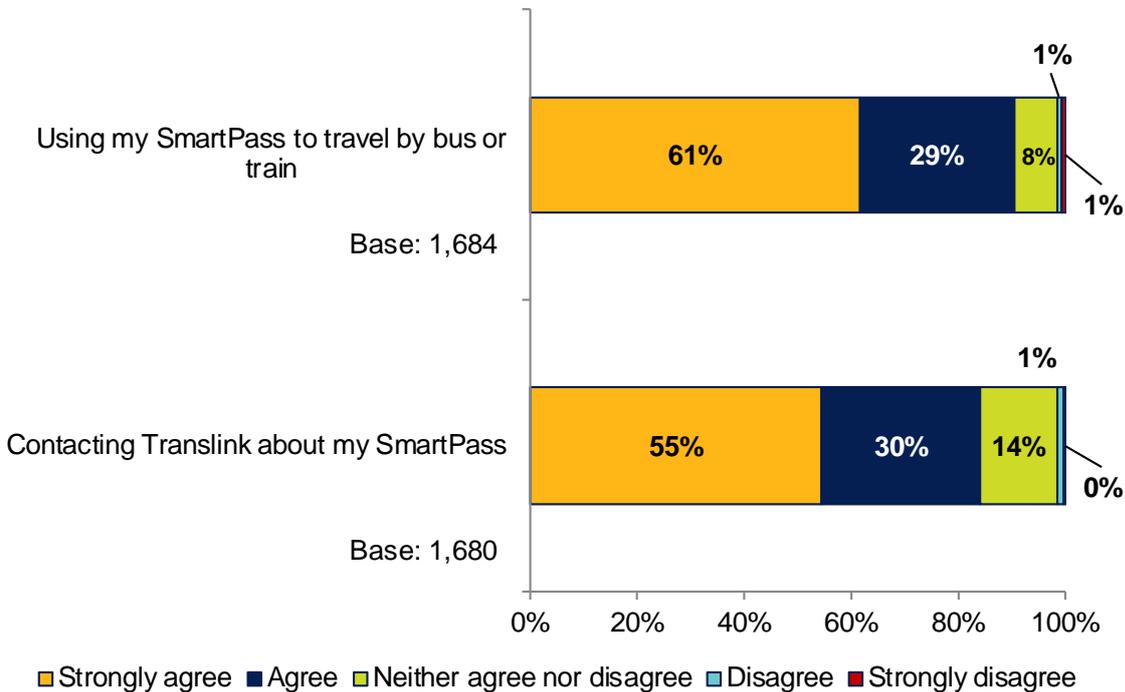
When asked if Smartpass has 'helped me access public transport that previously I could not use', three quarters (75%) of respondents agreed with this statement. Around a fifth (18%) neither agreed nor disagreed and the remaining 7% disagreed.

9. Experience of Service when using their Smartpass

Respondents were asked to consider if they were treated well, that is professionally and respectfully, under different scenarios in relation to use of their SmartPass.

Nine out of ten (90%) respondents agreed that they are treated well when using their SmartPass to travel by bus or train. 2% disagreed with this.

Figure 9: I am treated well that is, professionally, respectfully and provided with the service I need when...

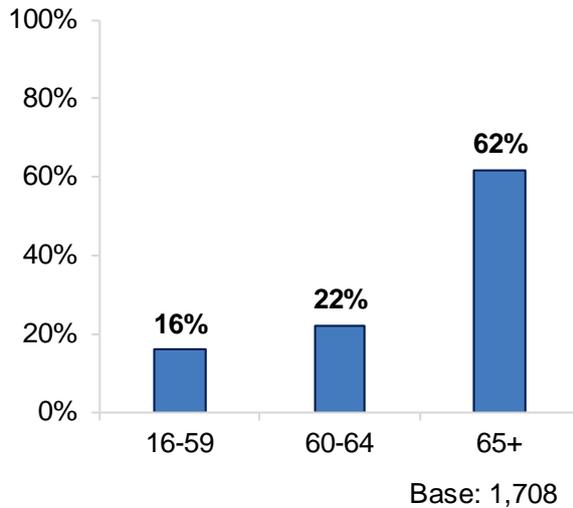


85% agreed that they are treated well when contacting Translink about their SmartPass.

Demographics

Age

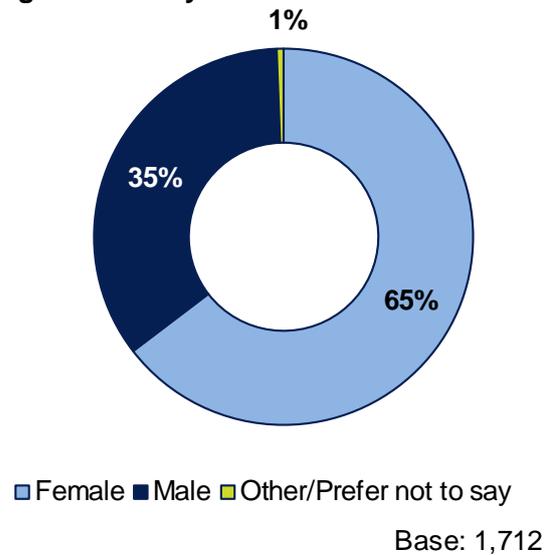
Figure 10: To which age group do you belong?



62% of respondents were aged 65 and over, while 16% were aged 16-59.

Gender

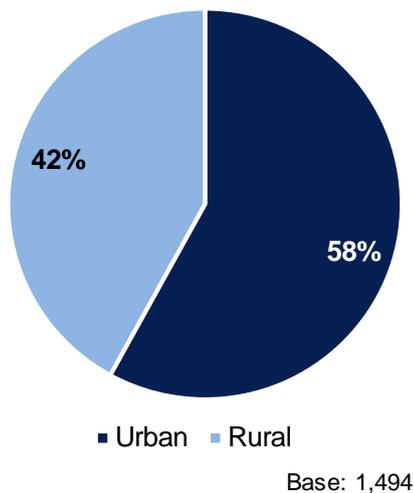
Figure 11: Are you...?



65% of respondents were female, and 35% were male.

Urban/Rural¹

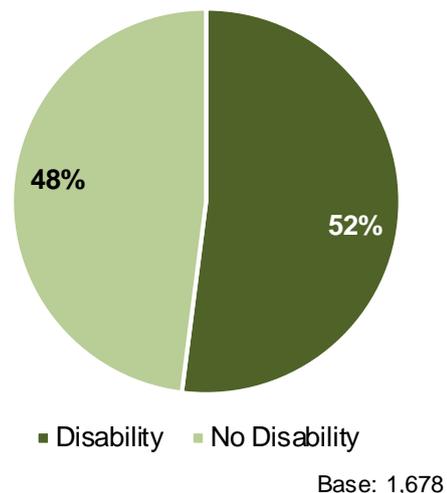
Figure 12: Urban/Rural



58% of respondents were in urban areas, and 42% in rural areas.

Disability Status²

Figure 13: Disability Status



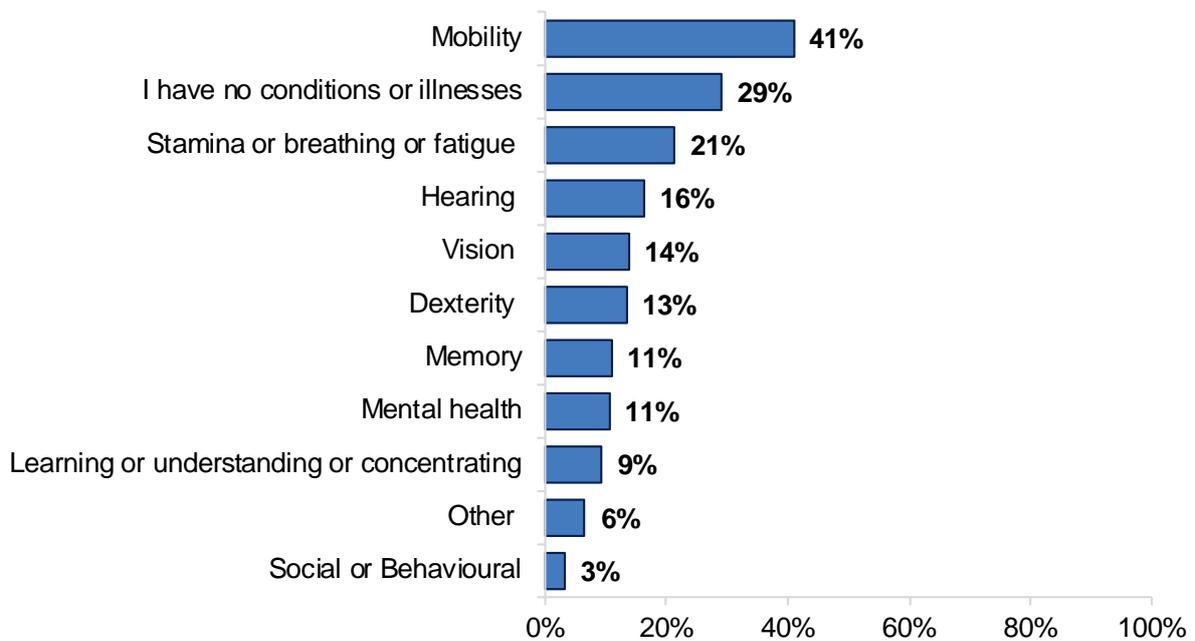
52% of respondents have a disability, and 48% do not have a disability.

¹ See [Technical Notes \(page 23\)](#) for classification of urban/rural

² See [Technical Notes \(page 23\)](#) for classification of disability

A further question was included in the survey to ascertain the types of health conditions or illnesses respondents had. There were 1,655 responses to this question, with 41% indicating that they have a condition or illness that affects their mobility (e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs). A smaller proportion indicated that they have an illness or condition that affects their stamina, breathing, or causes fatigue (21%) while 29% stated that they had no conditions or illnesses.

Figure 14: Do you have conditions or illnesses that affect you in any of the following areas?

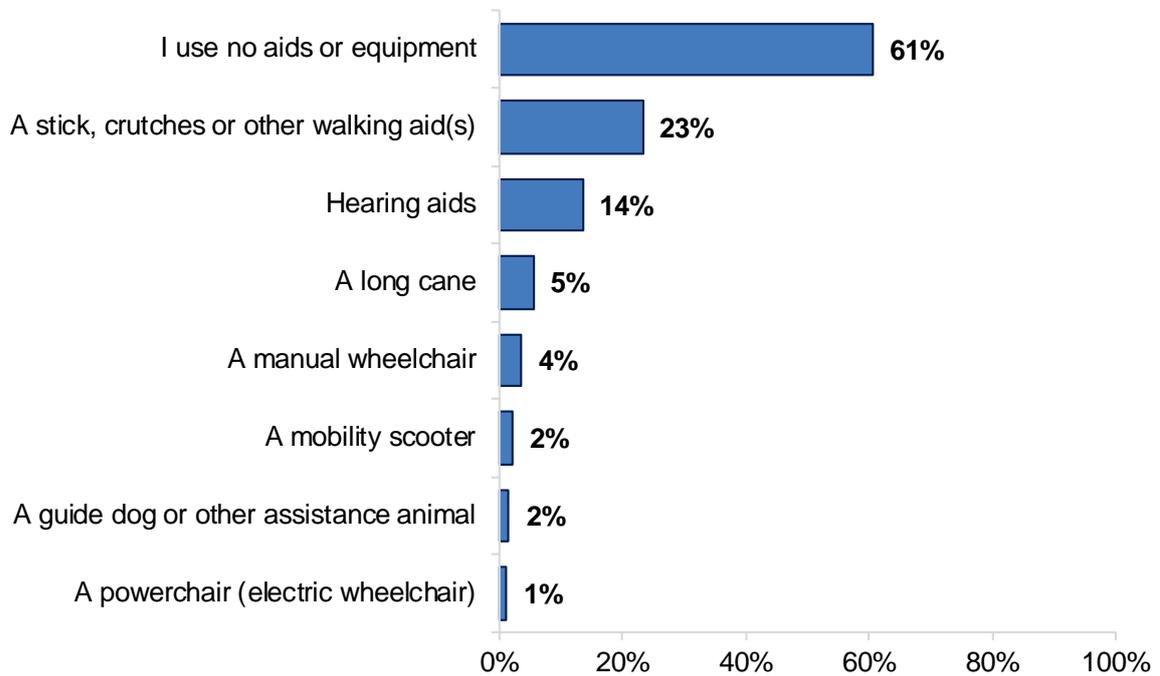


*Respondents could choose more than one answer

Base: 1,655

Respondents were then asked if they used any aids or equipment. The majority of respondents (61%) said they did not use any aids or equipment and almost a quarter (23%) indicated that they used a stick, crutches or other walking aids, while 14% used hearing aids.

Figure 15: Do you use any of the following aids or equipment?



*Respondents could choose more than one answer

Base: 1,608

Technical Notes

Methodology

In order to promote and distribute the survey, DfI used a variety of Social Media channels such as Twitter and Facebook and in addition, the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) used their contacts with private individuals and other groups and organisations who work with disabled and older people to assist with the promotion and completion of the survey.

This technique is known as ‘snowball sampling’ and this type of sampling technique is cost effective and simple, however it does mean that there is little control over the sampling method and representativeness of the sample cannot be guaranteed. As a non-probability sampling technique, snowball sampling does not allow computation of estimates of sampling error or tests of significance. Therefore results contained within the survey may not necessarily be representative of the population of SmartPass holders in Northern Ireland.

Characteristics of the achieved sample

The total number who completed this survey was 2,060, however every respondent did not answer every question. For example, if a respondent did not provide a valid postcode, the urban/rural split could not be determined.

Table 1 outlines the number of respondents that could be determined by category (age group, gender, disability status, urban/rural split).

Table 1: Number and proportion of respondents for whom age group, gender, disability status¹, and urban/rural split² could be determined

Respondent Group	Age Group	Gender	Disability Status	Urban/Rural Split
Number of respondents whose status could be determined (N)	1,708	1,712	1,678	1,484
Proportion of respondents whose status could be determined (%)	83%	83%	81%	72%

From the most recent census in 2011, we know that just over one in five (21%) of the usually resident population in NI had a long-term health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activities. Almost seven-tenths (69%) of usual residents in NI did not have a long-term condition. The most common long-term conditions among the usually resident population in NI were a mobility or dexterity problem (11%) and long-term pain or discomfort (10%).

We know from both the 2011 Census and the 2007 Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitations and Disability (NISALD) that the prevalence of disability amongst adults varies significantly with age, ranging from a low of 5% amongst young adults aged 16-25 to 60% amongst those aged 75 and above. Indeed, amongst the very elderly, aged 85 and above, the prevalence of disability increases to almost 67% (NISALD).

Among the achieved sample (Table 2), the incidence of disability was highest among the 16-59 age group (81%) and lowest among the 65 -

¹ See [Technical Notes \(page 23\)](#) for classification of disability

² See [Technical Notes \(page 23\)](#) for classification of urban/rural

69 age group (39%). Overall, just over half (52%) of those in the sample were determined to have a disability.

Table 2: Prevalence of disability¹ among achieved sample

Age group / Disability Status	16-59 (%)	60-64 (%)	65-69 (%)	70-75 (%)	Over 75	Overall number of respondents (%)
Without a Disability	19	59	61	50	44	48
With a Disability	81	41	39	50	56	52
Base (N)	271	374	380	307	338	1,670*

*differs from previous Disability Status (N) due to some respondents not answering both age group and health

condition questions

Since this survey targeted those who hold a concessionary fare SmartPass, differences from the NI population would be expected.

Classifications

Urban/Rural Classification:

Respondents are classified as 'urban' or 'rural' using provided postcode information. More information about urban and rural classification can be found on the [NISRA webpage](#).

Disability Classification:

Respondents are classified as having a disability if they answered 'yes' to the question;

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

And "yes, a little" or "yes, a lot" to the question:

Do any conditions or illness reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?

Symbols and Conventions

- Agree/Disagree responses – Where a respondent has indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with a statement, this has been categorised as 'agreed', and conversely where a respondent has indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, this has been categorised as 'disagreed'.
- Rounding of figures - In tables and text, where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be an apparent slight discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total shown.
- Multiple response questions - Respondents can give more than one response to these types of questions if they wish and therefore if individual percentages are summed they may add to more than

100%. These types of questions have been highlighted with the footnote “Respondents could choose more than one answer”.

- Please note that survey findings are reported as a percentage of the total number of respondents who provided a response to that particular question. This means that the valid total number of respondents (Base) will vary from one question to another.

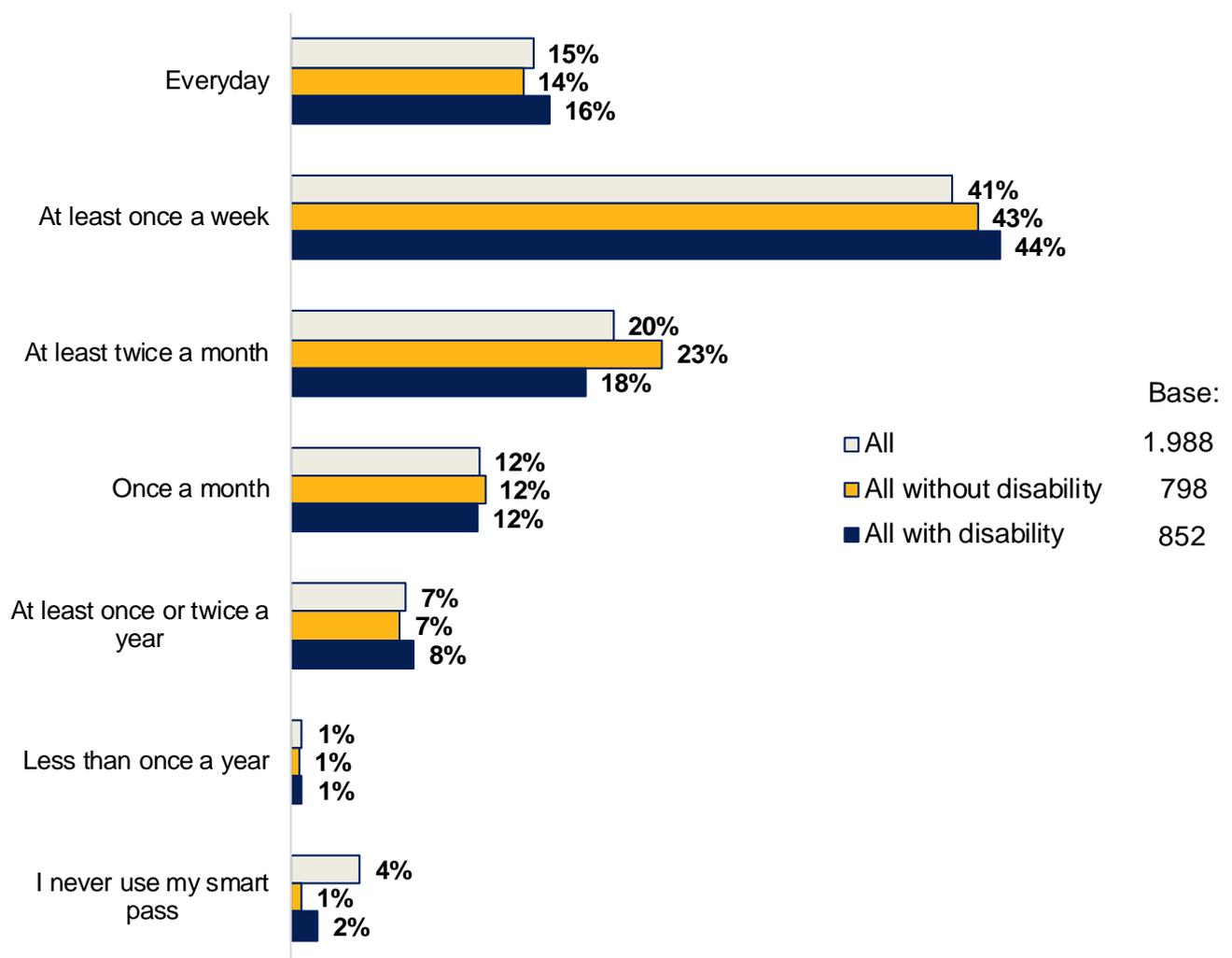
Appendix 1 – Full response range: In the past 12 months, did any of the following reasons make it difficult for you or prevent you from using your SmartPass on public transport?

Reason	(%)
Nothing made it difficult or prevented me from using the SmartPass	52
Lack of bus or train services in the area that meet my needs	21
No direct service to or from where I want to be	18
Bus or Train stop or halt is too far away	12
Difficulty getting on or off vehicles	9
Other	9
Unable to get a seat (or a wheelchair space)	6
Difficulty accessing information about public transport	5
Difficulty hearing announcements at stations or halts	5
I haven't used public transport in the past 12 months	5
Difficulty seeing signs or notices at stations or halts	5
Buses or Train fares are too expensive	4
The service is unreliable	4
Difficulty hearing announcements on buses or trains	4
Negative attitudes of Translink staff	4
I feel unsafe using public transport	4
Lack of pavements in my area or obstacles on pavements	4
Lack of announcements on board vehicles	4
Lack of announcements at stations or halts	4
Negative attitudes of other passengers	2
Base	1,712

Appendix 2 – Frequency of SmartPass use and difficulties experienced (by disability status)

Frequency of use of SmartPass is similar across groups with 16% of those with a disability using their SmartPass ‘everyday’, compared with 14% of those without a disability. 44% of those with a disability said they used their SmartPass ‘at least once a week’ compared with 43% of those without a disability (Figure A).

Figure A: Which of these best describes how often you use your SmartPass? (%)

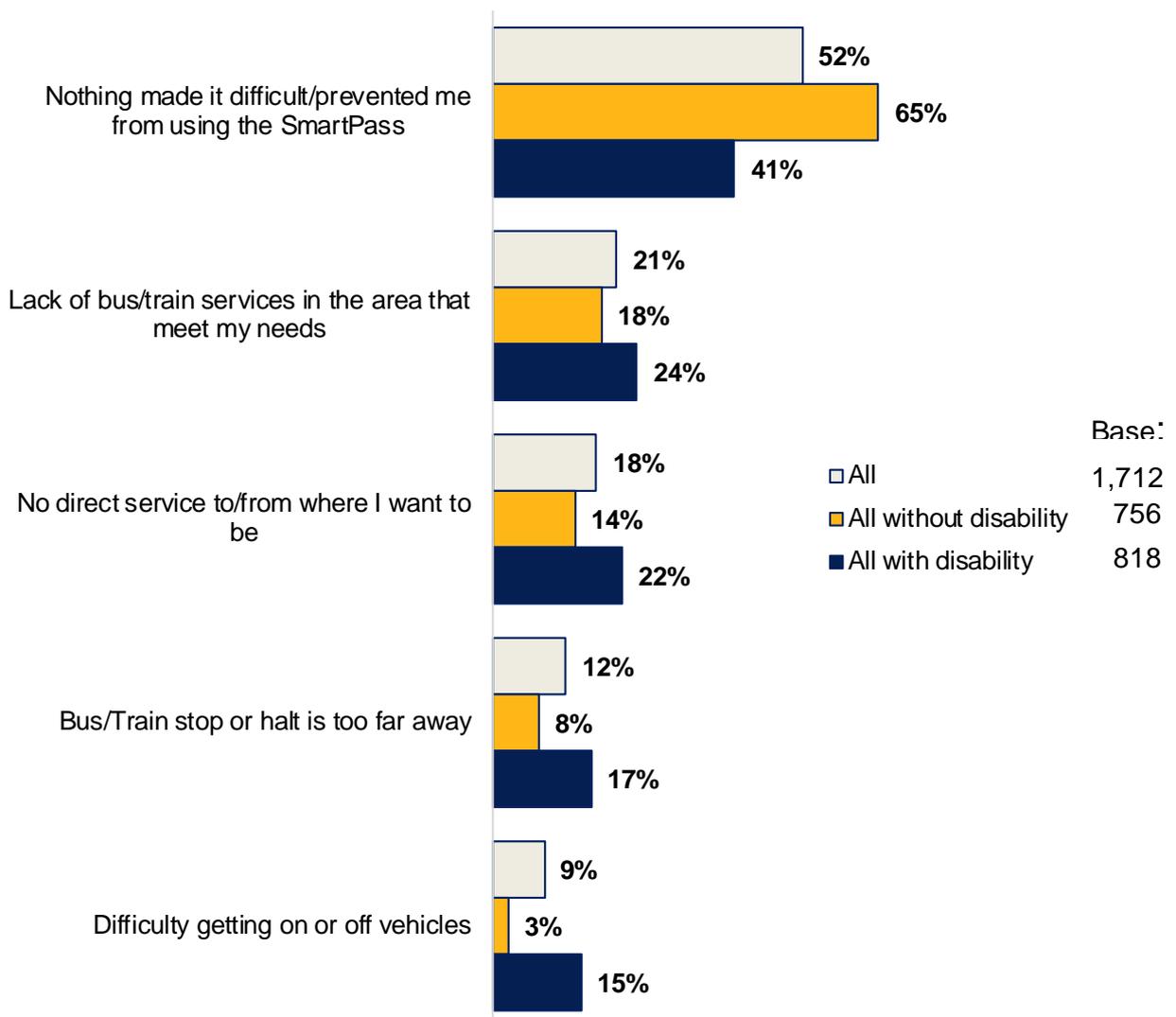


Although the top 5 reasons that made using the SmartPass on public transport difficult were similar across groups, there are differences in the proportions (Figure B). A higher proportion of those without a disability (65%) said that ‘nothing made it difficult or prevented me from using the SmartPass’ compared with 41% of those with a disability.

Conversely, a higher proportion of those with a disability (15%) said that ‘difficulty getting on or off vehicles’ was a barrier to using their SmartPass than those without a disability (3%). Lack of services (24%), lack of direct services (22%) and stop being too far away (17%) were also cited by those with a disability more often than those without (18%, 14%, 8%, respectively).

A greater proportion of those with a disability cited that being ‘unable to get a seat/wheelchair space’ (9%), ‘difficulty seeing signs or notices’ (8%), and ‘difficulty hearing announcements’ (6%) made it difficult or prevented them from using their SmartPass in the past 12 months (compared with 4%, 2%, and 3% of those without a disability).

Figure B: What, if anything, made it difficult for you to use your SmartPass in the past 12 months?



Appendix 3 – Questionnaire

Concessionary Fares

The Department for Infrastructure is seeking your views on the Northern Ireland Concessionary

Fares Scheme and how it improves access to public transport.

The results will allow us to demonstrate the contribution of the Scheme towards Outcome 8 of the Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018-2019 - 'we care for others and help those in need'. It is also an opportunity to review feedback on the SmartPass and identify opportunities to improve the administration of the Scheme.

This short survey should take around 5-10 minutes and has been developed in conjunction with the

Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and the survey is being promoted by a wide range of organisations who represent older and disabled people.

If you require the a copy of survey by e-mail or post or in an alternative format such as a large print version of the survey, please contact Sean Coulter on 028 90540109 or by emailing atsinfo@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

We appreciate, however, that filling in the survey may be difficult for some people. To assist you,

IMTAC can help you complete the survey over the telephone.

If you would like to complete the survey this way please contact Michael Lorimer on 028 9072 6020

(please leave a message on the answerphone if no-one is in the office and Michael will get back to you as soon as possible).

Alternatively email michael@imtac.org.uk. If you are part of a larger group or organisation IMTAC would be happy to arrange a meeting to help your members complete the survey. Please contact Michael Lorimer if you would like to arrange this.

The closing date for the survey is 10 October 2019.

PRIVACY NOTICE

Please see <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/gdpr-privacy-notices-dfi-businessareas> for the related privacy notice.

Your SmartPass

1. What SmartPass do you hold? (Please tick only one)

- 60+ SmartPass
- Senior (65+) SmartPass
- Registered Blind SmartPass
- War Disablement SmartPass
- Half Fare SmartPass - Disability Living Allowance
- Half Fare SmartPass - Driving Licence Refused
- Half Fare SmartPass - Learning Disability
- Half Fare SmartPass - Partially Sighted
- Half Fare SmartPass - Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- I don't know
- I don't have a SmartPass

2. What best describes how often do you use your SmartPass?

- Every day
- At least once a week
- At least twice a month
- Once a month
- At least once or twice a year
- Less than once a year
- I never use my SmartPass

3. On which services do you use your SmartPass to travel? (Please tick all that apply)

- Metro
- Glider
- Ulsterbus
- Northern Ireland Railways
- Goldline
- Private Operator
- Community Transport (Dial-a-Lift)
- I don't use any of these services

Your experiences

4. In the past 12 months, did any of the following reasons make it difficult for you or prevent you from using your SmartPass on public transport (Ulsterbus/Metro/Glider/Northern Ireland Railways/Goldline). Please tick all that apply.

- Lack of bus/train services in the area that meet my needs
- The service is unreliable
- No direct service to/from where I want to be
- Bus/train stop or halt is too far away
- I feel unsafe using public transport
- Difficulty accessing information about public transport
- Lack of pavements in my area/obstacles on pavements
- Difficulty seeing signs or notices at stations or halts
- Difficulty getting on or off vehicles
- Unable to get a seat (or a wheelchair space)
- Lack of announcements at stations or halts
- Lack of announcements on board vehicles
- Difficulty hearing announcements at stations or halts
- Difficulty hearing announcements on buses or trains
- Negative attitudes of Translink staff
- Negative attitudes of other passengers
- Bus or train fares are too expensive
- I haven't used public transport in the past 12 months
- Nothing made it difficult/prevented me from using the SmartPass
- Other (please specify)

5. What are the reasons you use your SmartPass? (Please tick all that apply)

- Commuting to work/Business
- Education
- Shopping
- Family, friend or other social visits
- Hospital appointment/visit
- GP Services
- Day Trips
- Entertainment

6. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- SmartPass has helped me access public transport that previously I could not use
- Compared to before I had one, the SmartPass has increased my usage of public transport

7. I am treated well that is, professionally, respectfully and provided with the service I need when...

- Contacting Translink about my SmartPass
- Using my SmartPass to travel by bus or train

8. The SmartPass enables me to...

- Afford more things as public transport is cheaper/free
- Be less reliant on friends/family for transport
- Use taxis less
- Be more active
- Get to/from work
- Access goods and services
- Use the car less
- Be more social / make more social visits

9. You previously commented on what the SmartPass enables you to do. What would you say is the most important of those? (Please only tick one)

- Afford more things as public transport is cheaper/free
- Be less reliant on friends/family for transport
- Use taxis less
- Be more active
- Get to/from work
- Access goods and services
- Use the car less
- Be more social / make more social visits

10. Do you have any other comments about the SmartPass scheme?

This information will help the Department to group responses and understand the different experiences people have using transport services, depending on the areas in which they live.

11. Are you...?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

12. To which age group do you belong?

- 16 years old or under
- 17-29 years old
- 30-49 years old
- 50-59 years old
- 60-64 years old
- 65-69 years old
- 70-75 years old
- Over 75 years old

13. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

- Yes
- No

14. Do any conditions or illness reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities? Please tick only one

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, a little
- Not at all
- Other (please specify)

15. Do you have conditions or illnesses that affect you in any of the following areas? Please tick all that apply

- Vision (for example blindness or partial sight)
- Hearing (for example deafness or partial hearing)
- Mobility (for example walking short distances or climbing stairs)
- Dexterity (for example lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard)
- Learning or understanding or concentrating
- Memory
- Mental health
- Stamina or breathing or fatigue (e.g. asthma)

- Social or Behavioural
- I have no conditions or illnesses

16. Do you use any of the following aids or equipment? Please tick all that apply

- A manual wheelchair
- A powerchair (electric wheelchair)
- A mobility scooter
- A guide dog or other assistance animal
- A long cane
- Hearing aids
- A stick, crutches or other walking aid(s)
- I use no aids or equipment

17. What is your postcode?

18. How long (i.e. how many minutes in total) did it take to complete this form?

- 0-5 minutes
- 6-10 minutes
- 11-15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes