

Analysis of Parents Questionnaires regarding school transport (October 2018)

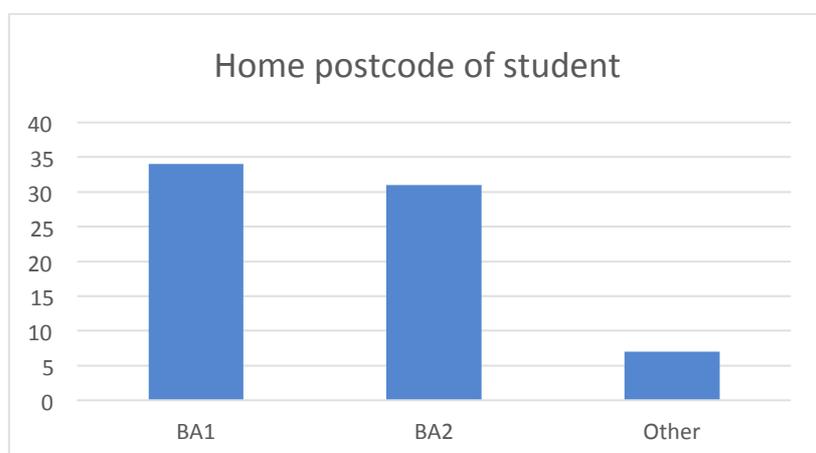
A free SurveyMonkey survey (at Appendix 2) of parents of students at Bath secondary schools was carried out in October - November 2018. The sample size was 75 across many secondary schools in Bath.

Table 1: Schools attended by respondents' children

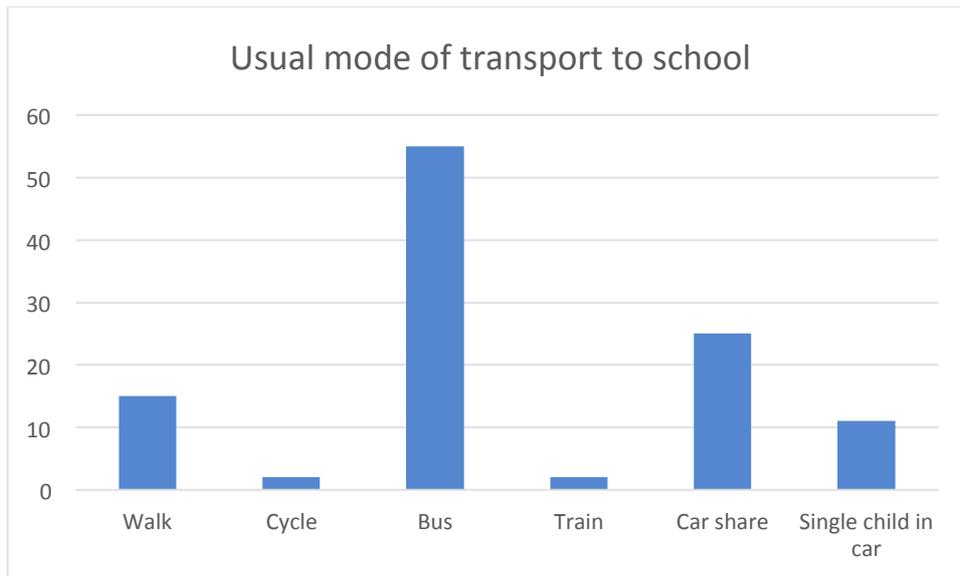
School
Beechen Cliff
Hayesfield
King Edwards
Kingswood
Monkton Combe
Oldfield
Prior Park
Ralph Allen
Royal High
St Gregory's
St Mark's
Other school

Parents were self-selecting, and publicity was carried out informally through community facebook pages, and via e-mail contact lists of concerned parents. It was carried out at a time of particular crisis on bus routes 20 and U2 (thought to be owing to a combination of staff and vehicle shortages, and following: First's takeover from Wessex of one of these routes, the withdrawal of council subsidy, and significant timetable changes).

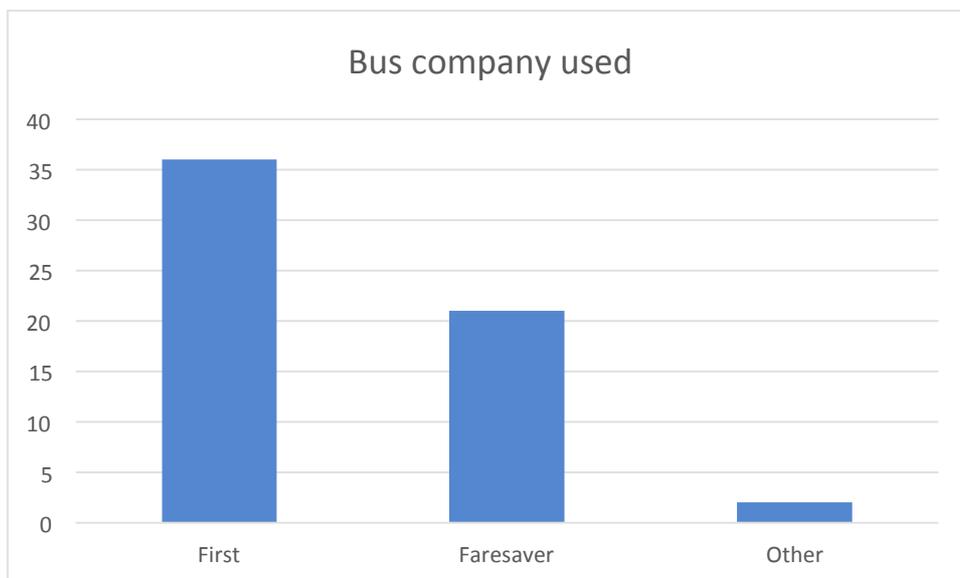
Families surveyed came from both north and south of the river, and from outside Bath:



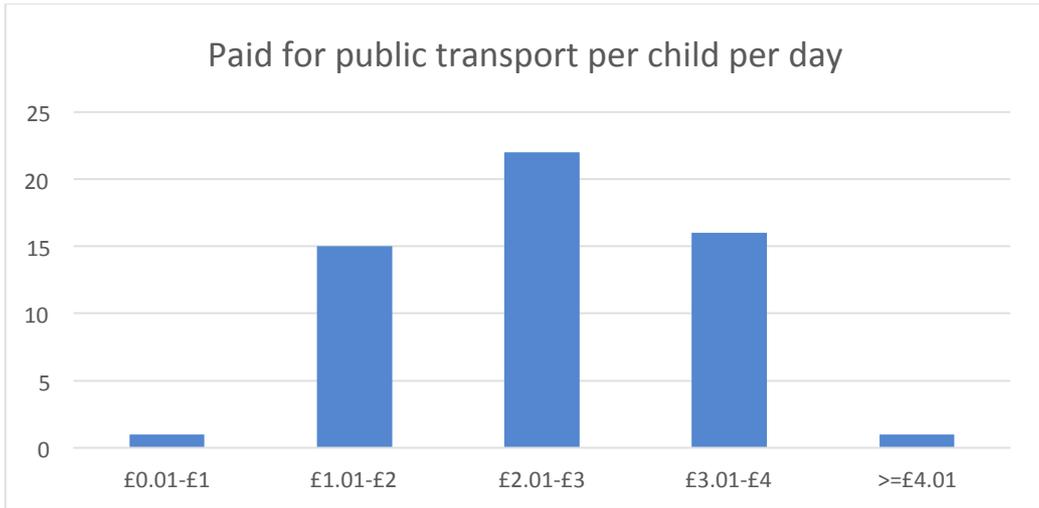
The usual mode of travel to school was predominantly bus. There were just two cyclists in the survey sample. (More than one choice of mode was allowed.)



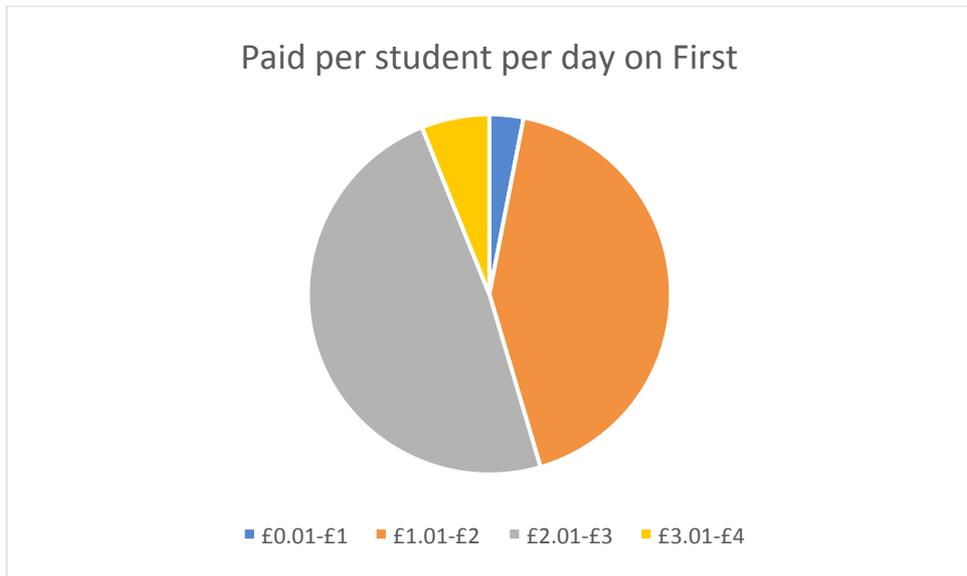
The bus companies used by respondents are shown here. Most used First or Faresaver.



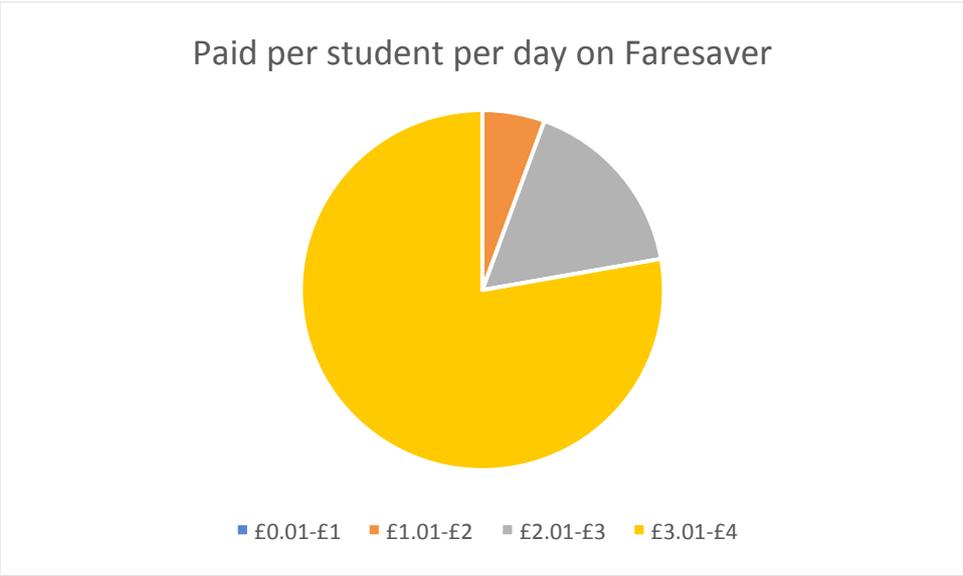
The sum spent on fares per student per day ranges from £1.01-2 to more than £4, with the majority paying between £1 and £4 per day. These figures may include a combination of single, return, and share of season ticket, as the question did not discriminate between ticket types.



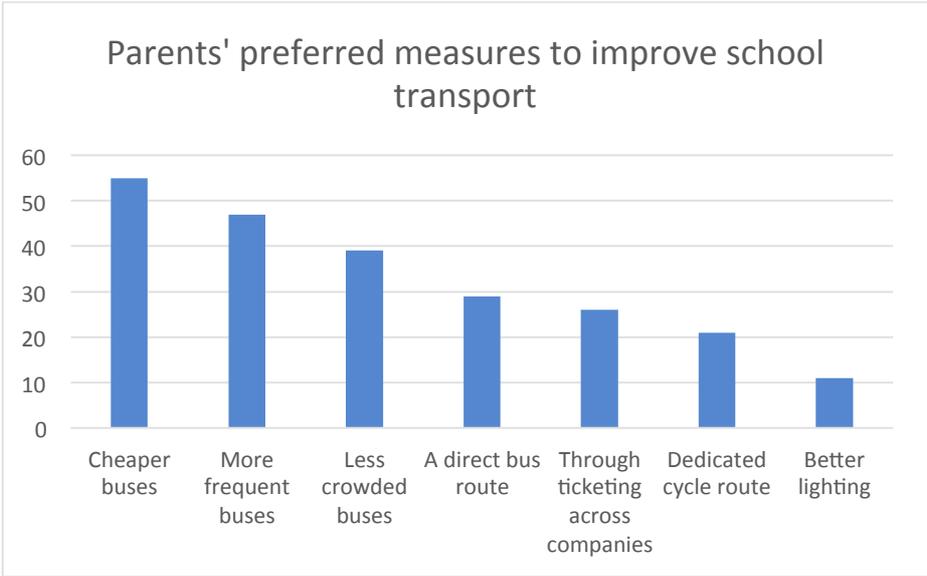
For students travelling by First bus, the most frequently cited figure was £2.01-£3, with £1.01-£2 close behind:



Faresaver fares are more expensive, with a most frequent figure of £3.01-£4, and no one paying below £1 per day:



Parents were asked which measures they thought would be most likely to encourage families from their locality to make more frequent use of public and active transport to school. More than one response was permitted.



A fairly popular response was “Through ticketing across companies”. In fact, this already exists, known as the Bath Rider ticket, but it is not well publicised. There were slight differences of emphasis between parents of students travelling with the different bus companies in their suggestions, with more emphasis by First passengers on the need for a direct bus route, and on bus crowding, and by Faresaver on through ticketing, and cycling as an alternative:

Parents' preferred improvements: families using First routes



- Cheaper buses
- More frequent buses
- Less crowded buses
- A direct bus route
- Through ticketing across companies
- Dedicated cycle route
- Better lighting

Parents' preferred improvements: families using Faresaver routes



- Cheaper buses
- More frequent buses
- Less crowded buses
- A direct bus route
- Through ticketing across companies
- Dedicated cycle route
- Better lighting

Parents were also given the opportunity to suggest further measures as free text, and to make other general comments about transport to school. These are included here as Appendix 1.

Sarah Warren
Better School Transport in Bath & North East Somerset
January 2019

Appendix 1: Freetext comments by parents

Any other comments?
Need buses that were not late. Bigger buses (no 3 is often small during peak school times).
Ticketing is a nightmare - because I drive past the school in the morning they get dropped on the way. Its therefore not worth getting a week pass etc, which leaves them having to use 5 journey tickets - fine if it worked on their Smart Card but you can only load them on the bus or at the bus station. There is no internet etc solution. It becomes hassle and on occasion it then ends up with my wife driving across town to collect them at the end of the day.
The service provided by first on these routes is excellent, The ability to use P&R buses means a regular and clean service.
Single tickets are particularly overpriced - they are often needed as there is only a single bus(x86) option back to Ralph Allen at the end of the school day. When children stay on for after school clubs - a return ticket is not usable on any other bus - and they need picking up in the car and an expensive single ticket to school only (£2.70 per child) for the morning. The X86 has been dangerously overcrowded for the last at least 9 years that my children have used it (children should not be standing up on buses - surely they should be seated with a seatbelt to be safe while traveling on a daily basis? A return bus at 4:30 or 5pm after clubs would be a welcome addition for many and save a lot of car trips from the eastern side of Bath.
We have experienced issues with delays on the buses meaning my son has been late to school or delayed getting home.
Frequent overcrowding and lateness / length of journey are our two biggest issues with bus travel to school. Often our children are refused entry into the bus (because it's full), or have to stand to or from school. The door to door commute by walking and bus is over one hour each way. That's over ten hours per week. Our daughters tell us that sometimes First Bus uses its smaller capacity buses during peak school hours (eg mornings), adding to overcrowding. Hayesfield recently changed its school day so now the Hayesfield girls and Beechen boys all end up trying to board the same buses. Changes to the No 3 route mean many number 3 buses no longer go round Elmhurst Estate, adding to the distance our daughters must walk home, and thus the length of commute. The buses are crowded, noisy and exhausting to travel on as a result, especially after a long day and early (6.15am) start. This detracts from energy available for homework after school. Also, congestion during morning rush hour means the girls are often late for school, even though they've travelled on the dedicated Hayesfield service. All these issues make me really want to drive my children to school - even though for sustainability reasons I don't, because it goes against what I believe.
Buses are quite often running late on our route. The bus also waits in the bus station for at least 5 mins before heading up to Beechen Cliff. On the route back the boys have had to sit on the bus in the bus station on various occasions since September waiting for a bus driver, and one hasn't turned up. They're then asked to get off and go and catch another bus. V annoying as journey times are increasingly getting longer which forces us to pick them up instead.
Public transport has been unforgivably shambolic in recent weeks.
I appreciate that there are many children struggling to find public transport to school because they have been given a school far away from their home. But there are also a significant who aren't willing to walk or cycle more than even a mile, which would take the strain off the busses. My daughter and her friends walk over 2 miles each day to school and have done since year 7. If more were encouraged to do this, they would all be healthier, the roads would be safer and they'd save money on bus fares and free up spaces on buses for those who really need them.
Need a dedicated school bus and after clubs bus
a bus at 7.40 in the morning was scrapped. Ideally an evening bus via KES again

This year the problem has really escalated. Before the kids had a dedicate RA4 service which was axed and since it has become a nightmare relying on the university buses which are already overcrowded! Public transport in the whole city is in disarray and unfortunately it's our kids which are suffering. Everywhere else in Europe councils are sponsoring the public transport to reduce car usage and air pollution, but in Bath we do the opposite and encourage people to use their cars as there are no alternatives!

I would not use expensive school bus if there was a one bus alternative from Batheaston to St gregs

From where we live transport to Ralph Allen school is impossible and very difficult. Ideally a school bus would be easier and more comforting for the children along with cheaper fare.

The new 20 route is actually an improvement as our daughter no longer has to travel home via Twerton and Oldfield Park which literally took hours. The new return route through town is an improvement. However because of the cancelled RA 3 and RA 4 this bus is overcrowded and she usually has to stand. The bus has also not turned up 3 times already since September, there is no alternative so I have had to drive her to school or collect her which is difficult as I have another child whom I need to walk to and from primary school.

There is no bus provision to get children home after school if they stay for clubs. This was not made clear at open evening when RA we're actively selling their provision and encouraging larkhall students to choose RA. It sometimes means (because I work) that my son can not stay to do clubs because I simply can't get him home. I really hate this.

Problems with behaviour of drunk woman on bus who spat at girls

We need a decent bus service

There should be free school buses!

We live just outside Bath with few buses into the centre. For us there needs to be flexibility in transport to school especially with 3 children of different school ages. More, better and cheaper public transport would mean we would use this more where at all possible. The closure of a public bus service from King Edwards to Batheaston (232) has stopped one of our children using a bus home as frequently as before. He now gets the 3/3A from the centre when appropriate.

As a family with 3 children at 3 different schools, we need as much flexibility in transport as possible so cheaper public transport which is readily available/frequent is better for us as well as more extensive bus routes. Living just outside Bath, I think there is the wider issue of transport from outlying areas and a conversation which extends beyond county boundaries and is necessary between Local authorities to address in a more radical way the question of congestion/pollution etc. Any improvement in pollution/congestion is of course important so long as it is not at the cost of other environmental aspects of the city as a whole (e.g. Bathampton water meadows).

There should be buses provided especially for Ralph Allen children. As parents we shouldn't have to make our children work arrange timetables being changed just for the students to get to school on time

We need a dedicated bus maybe for school kids ?

U2 is awful. First cannot fulfill the contract. More needs to be done.

My son likes taking the bus to school for social reasons, and we want him to use public transport for many reasons, we don't agree with teenagers being driven to school especially since the air pollution in the city is at dangerous levels and congestion is awful. He often walks home, it's almost 3 miles, this is to save money on the return bus fare. It takes him around an hour but lately this has been quicker than taking the bus! We are on low incomes and counting every £, especially since we will soon be paying for 2 kids bus fares. This is their closest co-ed non faith school with a direct bus route. I would love them to be able to cycle, but feel that the Bradford/North Rd is too congested and narrow for it to be safe (we cycle a lot) Cheap, direct, reliable public transport will help parents make the decision to leave their cars at home.

This is aimed at secondary school students but I have two children at primary school who also get the bus with myself from odd down to Combe down and back. We find the buses full and we are passed by a lot my children are only 5 and 6. It would be great if primary school children are also considered to feel comfortable and that they matter aswell as secondary pupils.

Have CCTV on ALL buses. Do not allow your drivers to be abusive to children and/or drive past them with a half empty bus. The cctv will pick this up should a complaint come through. Ensure enough buses are put on the necessary routes. Start providing dedicated buses for school children. Think about the kids and how they are at risk, especially during the winter/dark months, during severe weather and dangerous individuals (2 incidents very recently of possible child abduction attempts)

We HAVE to take the bus as our local school within walking distance has closed, I have 2 other children to take to school and no transport, when the bus drives past my child we are left helpless waiting for one to pick him up... he waits from 7:30am in the morning and still ends up late.

It needs sorting asap. Young children are being left stranded as bus full of students drive past. It is also affecting their attendance record .

Bus 288 is always late arriving to bus stop in bear flat and late arriving at Ralph Allen.

This has all been caused by BANES issuing permissions to dig at the wrong time of year

We are well served by the Park and Ride in general, although it is now getting very crowded. Not having cross ticketing is a problem and means there is only one bus the kids can get to / from the park and ride stop in town to home even though more buses travel that route.

the current services are overcrowded, late running and infrequent. It is urgent that this problem is resolved before winter. The University bus routes should provide a service to help local schools why should Uni students have a better bus service than school children?

There is no proper service for us, it has been terrible for years and now is completely non existent. On top of this students from uni are filling up buses and mocking our children.

If current bus companies can't provide a reliable, safe free service for children then the city needs to look at a community bus service to schools like in USA.

I don't feel it is completely unfair to cut the early bus while the students return home for half term breaks.

We need buses that arrive on time and have the capacity for all the children needing to use it. Unfortunately these 2 basic requirements are not currently achieved.

No choice but to drive currently. To avoid the £9 CAZ charge we'd use the Bathampton Tollbridge, which would surely be overloaded with similar traffic.

It costs around £600 per year to travel to Ralph Allen from where we are in Batheaston. In order for my son to do after school clubs, we have to get a £15.50 weekly multi-operator ticket that needs to be paid for in cash on the bus and can't be purchased online. It is ridiculously expensive for kids to travel by bus from Batheaston to Ralph Allen and we know a lot of people who drive because they have more than one child and find the fares prohibitive. They are also a lot of low income families who must really struggle to pay the bus fares. If buses in Bath were cheaper, people would leave their cars at home and use them, thereby reducing congestion and carbon emissions.

I would encourage my daughter to use the bus if they were more frequent and cheaper!

The amount of cars doing the school run in the mornings is crazy and the council really ought to offer better public transport options.

We need a quicker/more direct service. My son takes U2 from Lymore Avenue to Ralph Allen and it now travels via Twerton (as RA4 and 20A,20C stoppped) which means the service in the morning leaving approx. 07:47 takes almost an hour to reach Ralph Allen. Last academic school year the bus left from Moorland Rd and didn't go via Twerton and journey time was only 1/2 hour.

There is a 'free' bus from Hinton Charterhouse which goes to & from Ralph Allen and is half full. My daughter is not permitted on this bus so she has to be taken by car, this seems crazy!

The main problem is the very high cost of tickets, with term/yearly tickets not being worth buying due to no late service from school after clubs

My twins are due to start Sept 2019, so I'd have 3 kids travelling to Ralph Allen. I'd like them all to travel by bus, however, I'm not happy for them to sit on the bus for 1.5-2 hrs per day, so unless the U2 route shortens to original 1/2 hr journey time, I will be forced to drive them in by car.

Bus service is not good, we often have to drive to or from school because the bus does not arrive, or does not stop because it does not have room for any more children. It means we always have to be on standby as we can't trust if the bus service will work. Also would be interested in buses after clubs at 4.15.

Going to become even more difficult/expensive if the implementation of the clean air initiative goes ahead

It should be free

Very expensive - £7.40 A day for my sons to get to and from school is too much.

Buses servicing schools after after school activities

The cost is really high. We feel for those that have more than one child. The ability to use your return the next day or that week would be good. Our child injured their foot and had to be collected which meant we lost the return journey cost.

The public buses are cheaper than the school bus but it involves my kids taking two buses which means they spend a lot of time waiting at stops, especially when there are delays or buses are no shows. The more expensive, but direct school bus doesn't have an after school bus available either. The factor that made us in the end choose public over school was we could get weekly tickets the kids can use on the First buses on school days and non school days into town since the school bus would only facilitate them getting to school in the mornig on school days since my kids do after school clubs and have to do a 2 and a 3 to get home. A winning solution would be cheaper weekly bus tickets school kids could use across different bus companies. Biggest concern is the time my kids are waiting outside in the cold and darker periods of the year when the sun is not out as much.

It is frustrating that our children miss out on after school clubs due to no bus transport to the batheaston/Bathford area after 3.15pm

Current concerns regarding increase of Faresaver prices, overcrowding on the buses, Faresaver not listening and are very defensive in their response.

I've ticked more frequent buses, but really better timed buses would be appreciated. Currently have to get son up at 6.50am to be sure of a place in the queue for a 7.45am bus that gets him to school around 8.10am where he then has about 20mins to wait for school to start.

Bus is often overcrowded, and some drivers drive erratically; sometime dangerously.

Routes to cover several schools.

I think the public prefer not to share the bus with groups of over excited school children - school buses would be better .

It's far too crowded and sometimes they can't get on a bus so get are stranded miles from home in the dark while we are at work. And this when we've paid for their bus tickets. Totally unacceptable.

Children must get to school on time - mine leave at 7.30am and are still often late for school. This is not acceptable

Our son used to get a private bus from Bathampton to Ralph Allen. It was cancelled at the end of last year. It was the safest and most effective way to get him to and from school. I never had to worry if the bus was going to come, or if he was safe. As a parent, that is always my number one priority. Figuring out how to get him to school this year has been a nightmare. The bus system is really not helpful and often not reliable. He was late on the first day of school due to the bus being late. He has been late at other times as the bus is late. It is absolutely unacceptable to have this happen. Kids have enough to worry about at school, they shouldn't have to worry about if their bus is going to come on time or not. His bus is often over crowded, which is very unsafe. They are taking steps to rectify this, but not fast enough or in the right manner. Kids should not have the stress of not knowing whether they will be able to get home from school or not or have to make a split decision on whether to walk to another stop 15 minutes away, just because the bus is too full. I would definitely like to see better

service for kids all around the city. There should be a service that takes them to and from school, no matter which direction they live in.

I don't understand why Faresaver has mobile ticketing, yet doesn't offer a batch of individual app tickets like First Bus. With Faresaver you can buy 11 tickets but you get a physical ticket - if you lose it you lose £27. This is the only Faresaver ticket that lets you 'trigger' an individual ticket as and when you want to use it. All other Faresaver mobile app tickets are 'timed' so that if you buy a month's ticket it is valid for a month from the date you trigger it. Which means if you are offered lift share, or your child is off sick or you drive your child in after they've had an appointment, you've wasted your money. Being able to buy a batch of individual tickets on the app that you can trigger as and when you need to use them, as per First Bus, would make a big difference. Ideally, for a cheaper/subsidised rate than the First Bus £2 a journey rate. I am soon to be a single mum, and am seriously worrying about the cost of all child-related facilities rising (such as very pricey after school care), and the £55/month for what I think is the most economic option for my son's Faresaver school bus ticket is crippling. Any reduction in this cost would be much appreciated.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

School transport

Questionnaire about school transport

This survey of parents of children at Bath schools has been put together by a group of Bath parents known as Better School Transport in Bath and North East Somerset. There are problems with school transport at the moment, affecting students' well-being, and worsening traffic congestion and air pollution in the city. We would like to know more about your family's experience. We are interested in where you live, and the school your child attends, because that will give us information about which problems affect different routes to school. We will only use this information to campaign for improvements to school transport in Bath, never for any other purpose. If you would like us to delete your data from our records at any stage, please contact us at betterschooltransport@gmail.com.



2. We know you may have children at more than one secondary school. If you would like to give us information about more than one school, please repeat the survey for each secondary school.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Beechen Cliff | <input type="radio"/> Prior Park |
| <input type="radio"/> Hayesfield | <input type="radio"/> Ralph Allen |
| <input type="radio"/> King Edwards | <input type="radio"/> Royal High |
| <input type="radio"/> Kingswood | <input type="radio"/> St Gregory's |
| <input type="radio"/> Monkton Combe | <input type="radio"/> St Mark's |
| <input type="radio"/> Oldfield | <input type="radio"/> Other school |

3. How many children do you have at this school?

- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

4. Usual method of travel to and from school (check all that apply)

- Walk Train
 Cycle Car share
 Bus Single child in car
 Other (please specify)

5. Bus route number (if applicable)

6. Bus company (if applicable)

7. For public transport, how much do you pay per child, per day?

- Not applicable, public transport not taken £2.01 - £3
 £0.01 - £1 £3.01 - £4
 £1.01 - £2 £4.01 or more

8. Please consider the following measures and check all that you think would help families coming from your area, to choose public transport, walking or cycling, rather than driving, for transport to school.

- Cheaper buses Through ticketing across more than once bus company
 More frequent buses Dedicated cycle route separate from motor vehicles
 Less crowded buses Better lighting for pedestrians and cyclists
 A direct bus route
 Other (please specify)

9. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about transport to school?

10. If you would like to be kept in touch with the group's activities, please leave your e-mail address here. We will only use it to let you know about our campaign for better transport to school.