

Appendix A

Powys Home-to-School Transport Consultation Summary Report

Summary

Powys County Council has drafted a revision to its policy for Transport to School/College and sought the public's views on its contents.

The draft policy was hosted on www.powys.gov.uk alongside the questionnaire. All of Powys' libraries were provided with these documents to ensure that those without access to the internet were able to take part.

The issue was also discussed at the Powys Youth Forum in July and at the Governors Consultative Forum.

Aside from the feedback at these fora, the council received the following responses:

- 318 responses to its online survey (306 via the English version and 12 via the Welsh version)
- 15 email responses

Headlines from the survey

- Charging for post-16 learners to travel on buses generated the most opposition, with 86% of people who responded to the survey opposing the proposal to charge.
- Qualifying distances of two miles (for primary pupils) and three miles (for secondary pupils) were backed by 71% of respondents.
- The proposal to standardise the qualifying distances for all learners (including those attending special schools), as per Welsh Government guidelines was backed by 66% of respondents.
- The proposal to limit journey times to 60 minutes for secondary age pupils was backed by 67% of respondents.
- The proposal to limit journey times to 45 minutes for primary age pupils was backed by 75% of respondents.

- Respondents were split (50.53% in favour and 49.47% against) on the proposal not to provide free transport to a denominational (faith) school when it's not the nearest school.
- In terms of the Welsh language, 67% of respondents backed the council's proposals for funding transport in relation to language choice.
- The suggestion that learners could use public service buses for transport to school and college was supported by 57% of respondents and opposed by 43%.
- Respondents were split equally (50% in favour and against) on the council's proposals regarding its Vacant Seats Payment Scheme.
- The council's proposal to only provide passenger assistants after an assessment for SEN/ALN has been carried out, was backed by 68% of respondents.

Headlines from the email correspondence

- Criticism of the proposal to charge for post-16 transport.
- Correspondence suggesting that the draft policy does not support the ambition of the Welsh Education Strategic Plan to offer Welsh Medium (not dual stream) education.
- Criticism of the consultation process;
- Concerns that safe routes to school are not available in some areas (ie under the qualifying distances)
- Criticism of the lack of impact assessments and lack of map provision;
- Concerns that the policy will lead to school changes for some pupils
- A call to offer the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme to those over 16 in 6th form or further education;

Comments from the Governor's Consultative Committee

- Charging post-16 learners for transport could result in losing learners to out of county colleges which could result in Powys sixth forms not being viable.
- Low income families would be penalised and on that basis provision should be made in order that they would not have to pay for post-16 transport
- Criticism of the wording regarding travel times and suggesting that percentage travel times are used instead.
- Criticism that vacant seats are not available on public service vehicles and that this disadvantaged learners who travelled on such a vehicle.

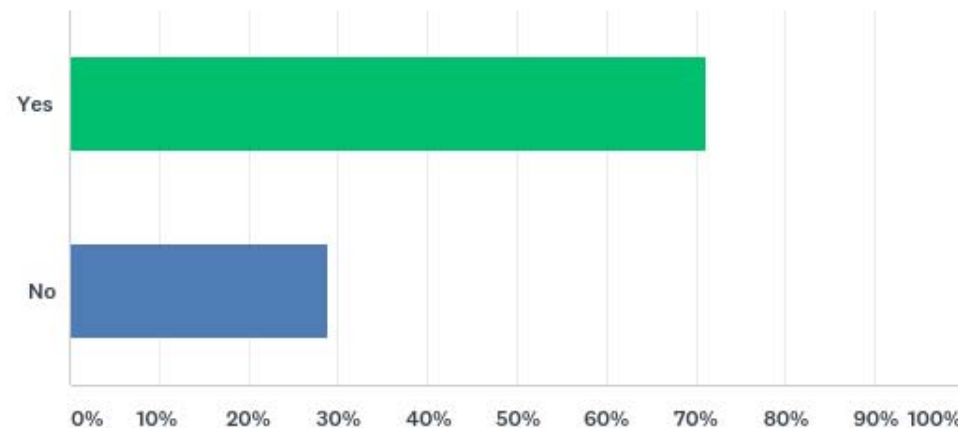
- Suggested using a flowchart to explain the appeals process in the document
- Concern that it was not clear how complaints could be made in terms of this policy.

Comments from the Powys Youth Forum

- post-16 travel should be free
- All children with SEN should be entitled to free transport regardless of distance and whether or no they attend mainstream schools or specialist centres.
- Some felt that 45 and 60 minute travel times were excessive.
- Some were not aware of who to contact if there were to be a problem with school transport.

The results of the survey were as follows:

Q1 The Authority is proposing that transport should be provided to the catchment¹ or nearest suitable² school to the learner's home address if the learner lives more than 2 miles (primary) / 3 miles (secondary) from their nearest suitable school. ¹ the geographic area from which learners are eligible to attend the local school² where the "education or training provided is suitable having regard to the age, ability and aptitudes of the learner and any learning difficulties he or she may have" Do you support this proposal?



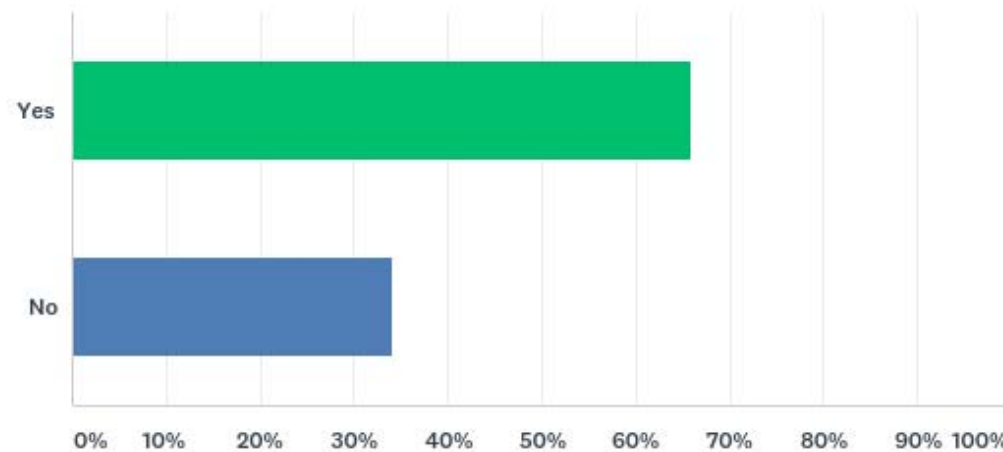
(Question answered by 302)

Q2. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- That learners and their parents should be able to choose where the learner should attend (with some implicitly saying that transport should be free)
- Conversely, others felt that children should attend their nearest school, although setting aside language, SEN and faith issues;
- Fears that there were changes to catchments which could lead to changes of school for learners;
- Distances measured should be distance by road;
- Criticism of past decisions (including the transfer of Welsh Medium students from Brecon to Builth Wells)
- That transport policy should help to strengthen the provision (and demand for) Welsh Medium education in the county;
- Transport should be free for all;
- Where there isn't a safe route, free transport should be provided;
- That there should be flexibility where people may live close to 'borders' of catchment areas.
- Opposition to charging for post-16 travel.
- Calls for the need to state clearly that transport is provided to the catchment school, the nearest school or the nearest school providing Welsh-medium education in paragraphs 2.3.3 a 2.4.3 of the Amended Home/College Transport Policy.
- Claims that paragraphs 3.8.1 and 3.8.2 do not support the ambitions of the council's Welsh Education Strategic Plan

Q3 The Authority is proposing to apply the standard Welsh Government qualifying distances to all learners, both in mainstream schools and special schools/units. (To see the qualifying distances please see paras 2.3 and 2.4 of the policy). Do you support this proposal?



(Question answered by 290)

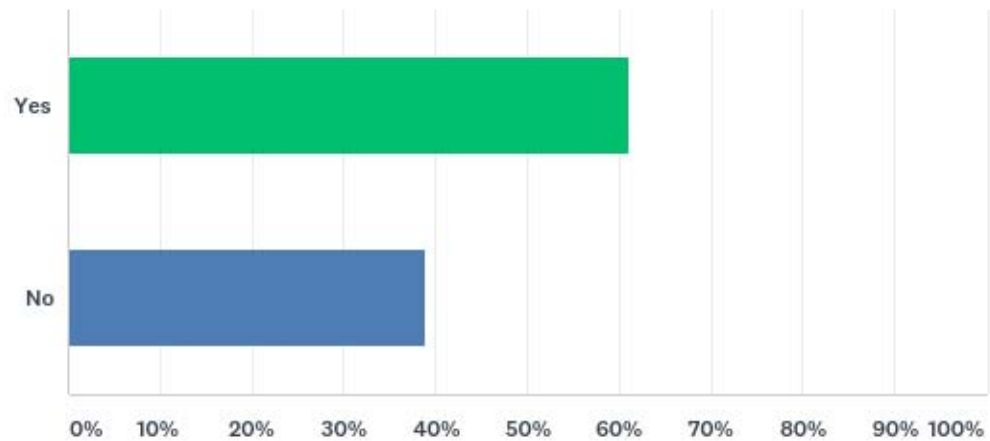
Q4. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- Powys is a rural county and these distances may not be appropriate
- Children would need to be able to walk safely to school where transport is not on offer
- This may not be appropriate for learners with special requirements, for example a child with a disability

- There may need to be exceptions made for children with SEN;
- Again, a call for flexibility in the application of the policy.

Q5 The Authority is proposing that learners living under the qualifying distances will only be provided with home to school transport on grounds of medical need, disability or learning difficulty if identified within their Statement of SEN, including those attending special schools Do you support this proposal?



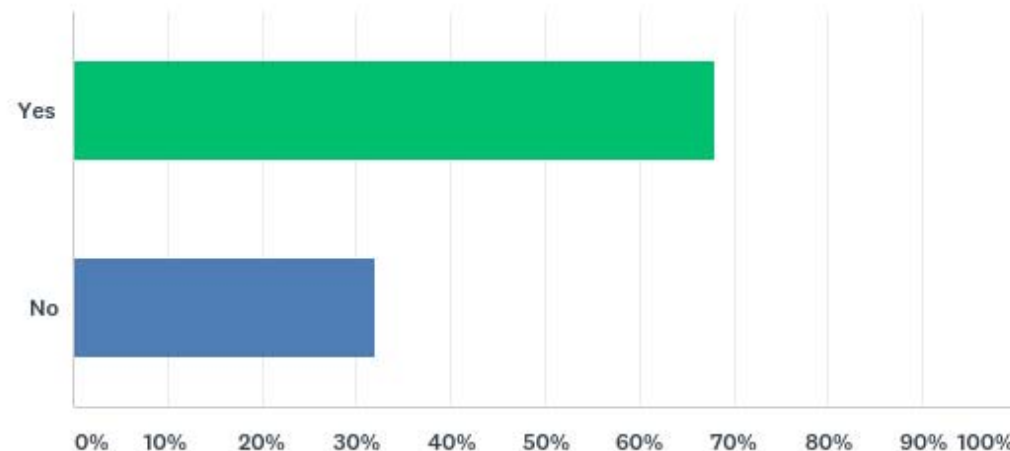
(Question answered by 283)

Q6. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- All children should be provided with free transport
- That not all pupils with SEN have a statement;
- That some children without free transport do not have safe routes to school;

Q7 The Authority is proposing that passenger assistants will not be provided until the need has been assessed on the grounds of Special Educational Need / Additional Learning Need Do you support this proposal?



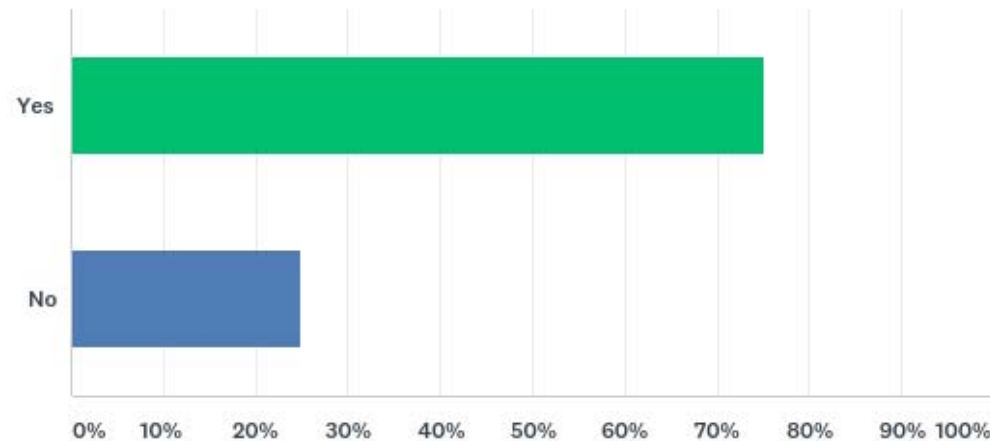
(Question answered by 278)

Q8. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

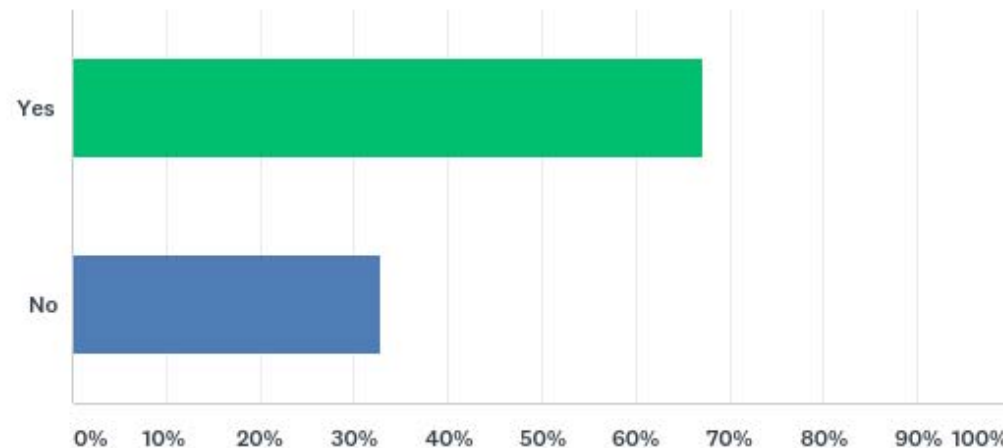
- That the statementing process needs to happen quickly to ensure that children receive the support they require;
- On the same issue that the support should be provided first and then withdrawn should the statementing process suggest that a passenger assistant is not required;
- The health and safety (and wellbeing) risks to all passengers should assistants not be provided (ie drivers may need assistance)

Q9 The Authority is proposing normal maximum single journey times of not more than 45 minutes for primary school pupils Do you support this proposal?



(Question answered by 282)

Q10 The council is proposing normal maximum single journey times of not more than 60 minutes for secondary school pupils. Do you support this proposal?



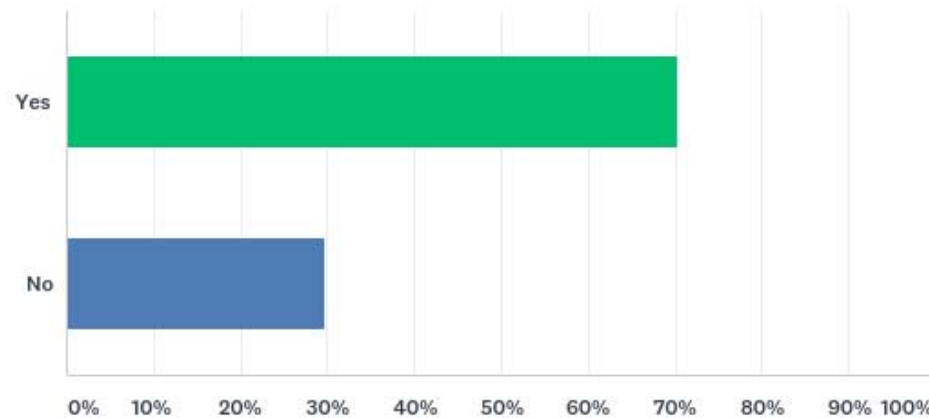
(Question answered by 293)

Q11. Please feel free to comment on the previous two questions.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- That these times can be excessive, particularly for younger pupils at each stage;
- That there can be holdups on rural roads which mean that these journey times are exceeded;
- That travel times should be equal whether the child is travelling for Welsh or English medium education;

Q12 The Authority is proposing a normal maximum journey time of 45 minutes for primary aged learners and 60 minutes for secondary aged learners attending a special school/ specialist centre attached to a mainstream school. However, because of their wider catchment area and the County's geography this may not always be possible. Do you support this proposal



(Question answered by 282)

Q13. If No, please indicate what the maximum single journey time you consider a learner attending a special school / specialist centre should travel?

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

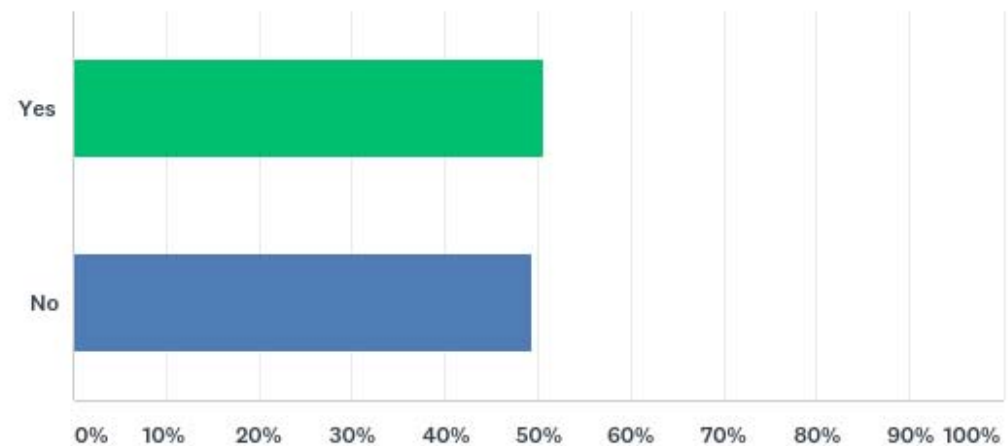
- As short as possible;
- 30 minutes

Q14. Please feel free to comment on the previous two questions.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- The benefits of attending a specialist centre may necessitate longer journeys;
- Travel times should depend on the learners' needs;
- Again, that there should be flexibility in the application of the policy depending on the individual circumstances;

Q15 Do you support the Authority's proposal not to provide transport to a denominational school when it is not the nearest suitable school?



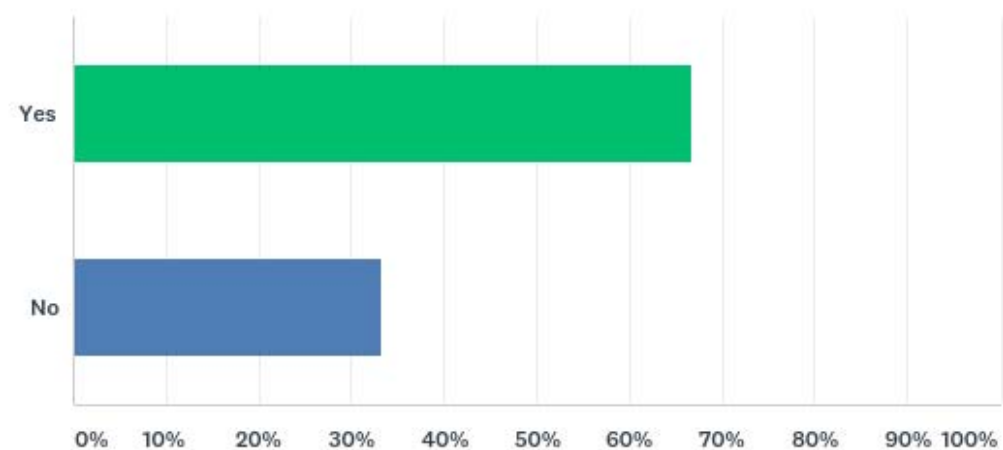
(Question answered by 283)

Q16. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- Parental/learner choice is paramount;
- Transport should be provided to the nearest school which meets the learner's religious needs;
- If parents wish to send their child to faith school which is not their nearest, they should pay for transport;

Q17 Do you support the Authority's proposals in relation to transport for parents/carers requesting Welsh-medium / English-medium provision? (To see the proposals please see para 3.8 of the policy)



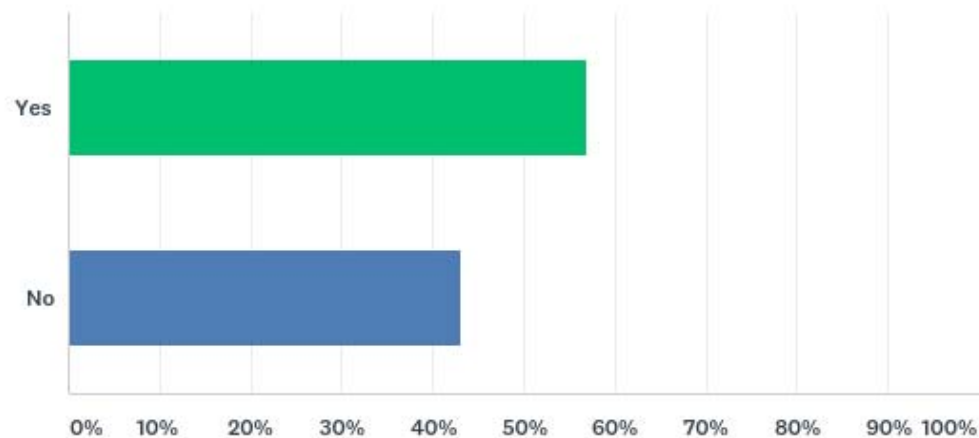
(Question answered by 265)

Q18. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- That transport to support language choice is essential
- That there is a need for Welsh Medium schools (single language stream)
- Language choice is not a priority whereby parental choice should be financially supported;
- That free transport should only be to the nearest Welsh Medium school.

Q19 Do you support the proposal in relation to integrated transport provision whereby secondary aged learners are transported on public service vehicles where available? (To see the proposal please see para 2.4.4 of the policy)



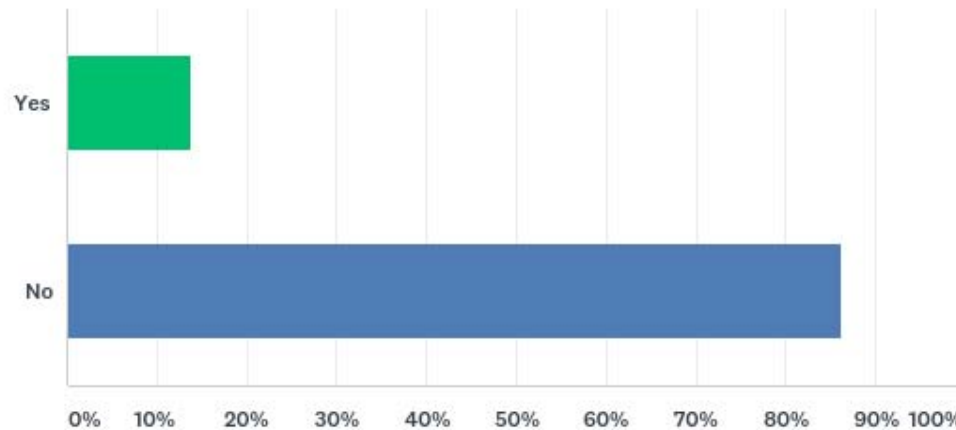
(Question answered by 281)

Q20. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

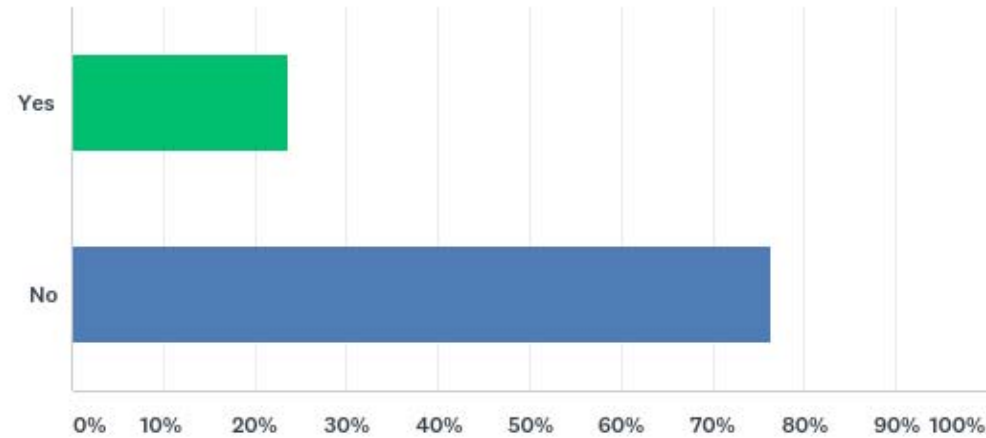
- Opposition on grounds of child protection fears;
- That many people don't have the option of using public transport;
- Generally in favour of it;
- Would need to ensure that there were enough seats available on the public buses.

Q21 Do you support the introduction of charges for post-16 transport? (To see the proposal please see para 2.5 of the policy)



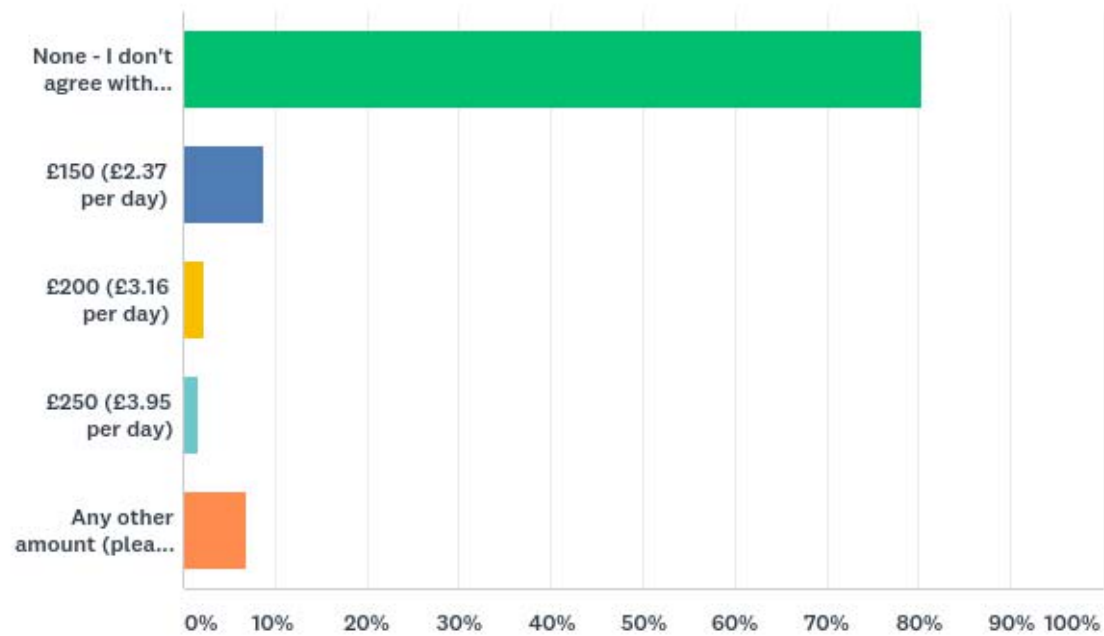
(Question answered by 304)

Q22 Would you support the introduction of charges for post-16 transport if the income received was invested in the overall schools delegated budget?



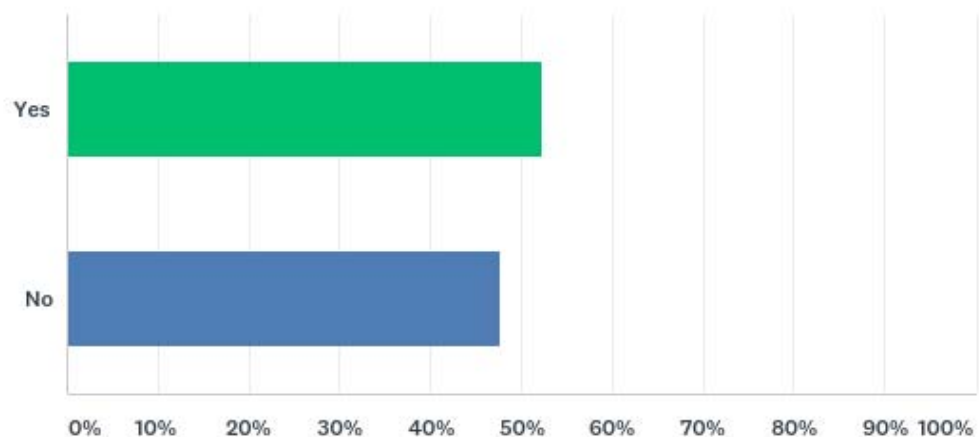
(Question answered by 293)

Q23 What level of charge per term would be reasonable:



(Question answered by 305)

Q24 Would you support a reduced or no charge for learners in receipt of the full EMA³ or Free School Meals (whichever is applicable)? ³ An income-assessed weekly allowance of up to £30 to help learners with the cost of post-16 education



(Question answered by 289)

Q25. If Yes, what level of termly charge would you consider to be appropriate?

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

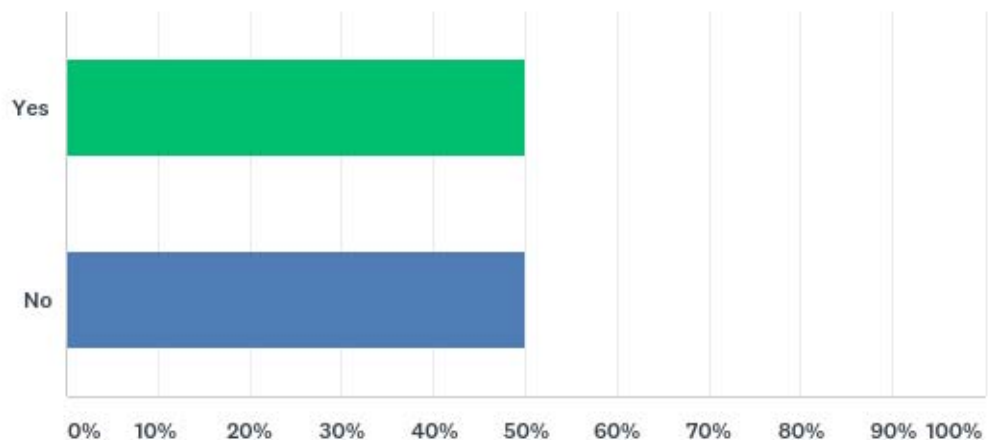
- £Nil;
- 50% for those on EMA;
- Less than £50;
- Should be dependent on income.

Q26. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- Strong opposition to charging for post-16 education;
- This would drive learners to establishments outside the county;
- This would discourage people from continuing education post 16;
- This would have an adverse impact on low income families

Q27 Do you support the proposal in respect of the Vacant Seats Payment Scheme? (To see the proposal please see para 3.15 of the policy)



(Question answered by 262)

Q28. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.

The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- Learners and their parents cannot rely on it as it can be cut at short notice. One respondent suggested that arrangements should be on an annual basis;
- That it should be free;
- That the seats should be available to post-16 students
- Supportive of it, if it raises funds;
- That the fees charged are not affordable for some;

Q29. Do you have any other comments on these proposals?

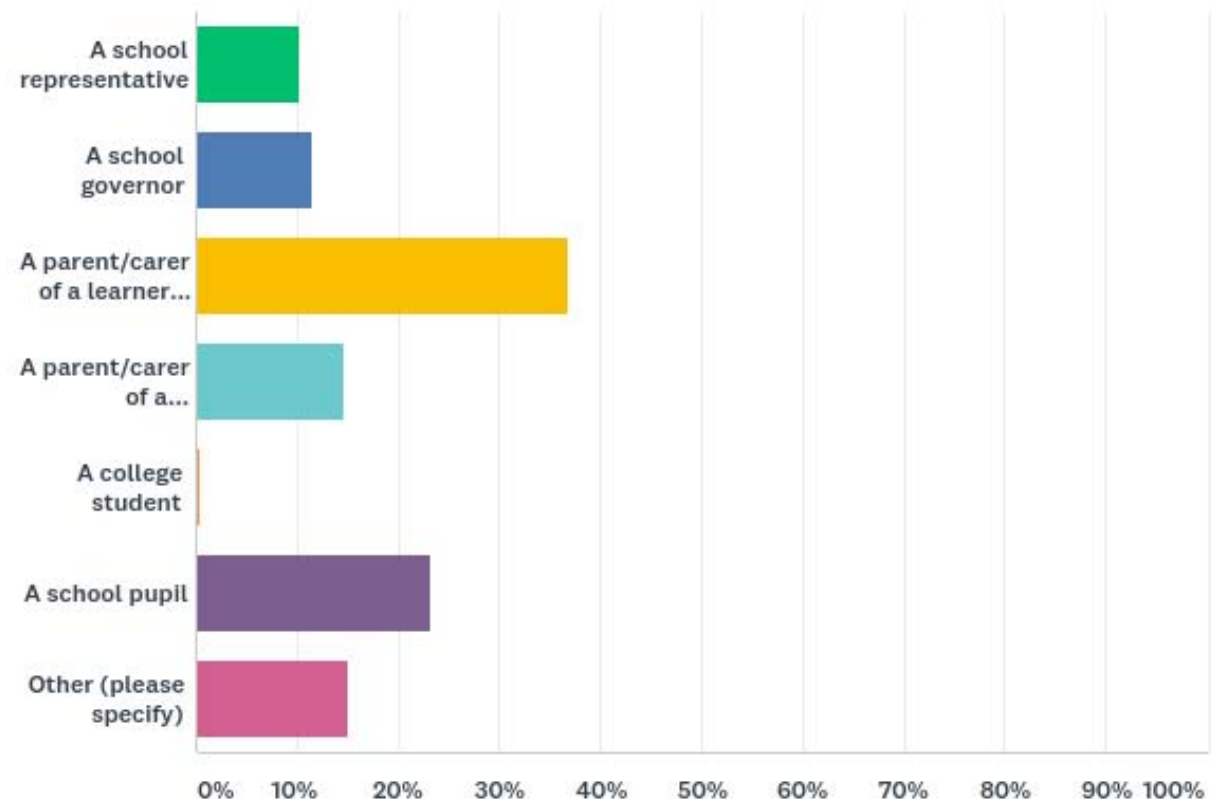
The main issues which arose in the responses received to this were:

- Arguing against post-16 charges for transport
- And that these charges will threaten the viability of the current 6th forms, driving people away from extending their education or possibly driving them over the border to post-16 provision in England.
- Positive about the provision of WM schools and how the transport policy should support such provision.
- Leave the policy as it is.
- That the charging policies will have a bigger impact on learners from low income families;
- Fears that learners may have to change schools as a result of the change to the policy;
- That there will be an undue impact on child wellbeing – partly because of the previous point
- Criticism of the council and/or the consultation;

Q30. What is your name?

(Not relevant to this report).

Q31 Which best describes you?



(Question answered by 294)

Q32. What is your home postcode?

Postcode	Area	Number	%
HR3	Hay On Wye	2	0.72
HR5	Kington	1	0.36
LD1	Llandrindod Wells	10	3.62
LD2	Builth Wells	7	2.54
LD3	Brecon	35	12.68
LD4	Llanwrtyd Wells	3	1.09
LD6	Rhayader	13	4.71
LD7	Knighton	4	1.45
LD8	Presteigne	2	0.72
LL11	Wrexham	1	0.36
LL23	Bala	1	0.36
LL36	Tywyn	1	0.36
LL40	Dolgellau	1	0.36
MK7	Caldecotte	1	0.36
NP8	Crickhowell	2	0.72
SA9	Ystradgynlais	2	0.72
SY10	Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant	8	2.90
Sy15	Montgomery	4	1.45
Sy16	Newtown	27	9.78
SY17	Caersws	23	8.33
SY18	Llanidloes	31	11.23
SY19	Llanbrynmair	5	1.81
SY20	Machynlleth	13	4.71
SY22	Llanfyllin	18	6.52
SY23	Aberystwyth	2	0.72
SY24	Borth	2	0.72
SY5	Pontesbury	2	0.72
SY9	Bishops Castle	2	0.72

Report by John Thomas, Communications and Engagement Officer, Powys County Council August 3rd, 2018